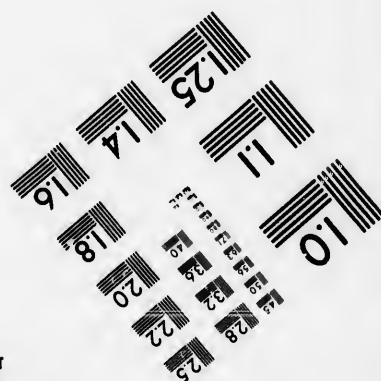
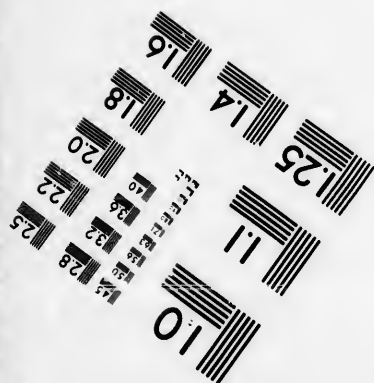
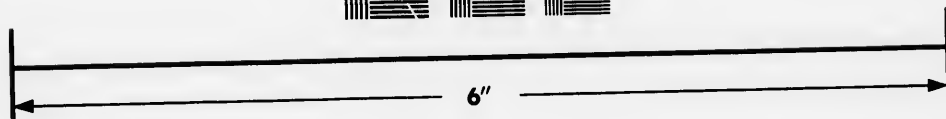
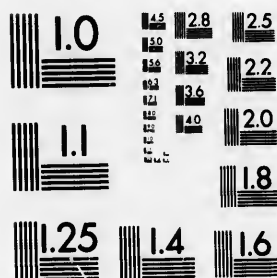


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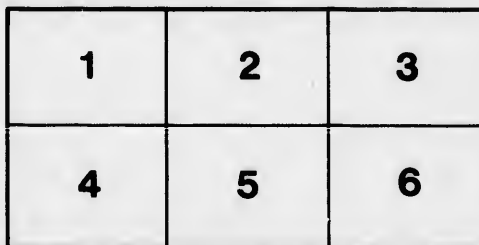
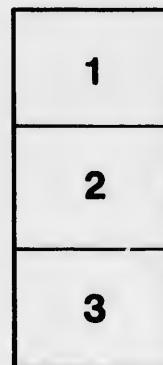
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THE
LITERARY LIFE,
AND
MISCELLANIES,
OF
JOHN GALT.

When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good.

MILTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH; AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.
M.DCCC.XXXIV.

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THE BETHERAL;

OR,

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

JAMES HOWKINGS.

CHAPTER I.

My grandfather was dominie, session-clerk, and precentor in the parish of Dozent, alias Bleakrigs, and, in his day, was a man of repute, as his manifold posts and places of doing testificate. He outlived my father well on to seven years, and how auld I was when he dee't, is a kittle question to the best skilled in the 'rithmeticals; but I was entered on my ninth year, and, as I have often heard it spoken, was a laddie of great smeddum, promising to be something, till I had the measles, which it was the Lord's will to smite me with, when auld daddy was lying ben the house a dead corpse, that was buried on the morn, which

was the Sabbatha-day. I mind it well ; for being his eldest oe, I was to have carried his head to the kirk-yard, but was obligated by the doctor to bide in my bed, and my mother was told by him, though it was a case of straits, not to think of it.

Having, as I have made a makemention, the measles, I had after them a sore time o't, terminating in the dregs, which are, it is well known, of a nature to make the stoutest for a long time very weakly, if ever in the course of life they get the better of it, which I in a sense never did, nor would I have been three-and-fifty years the betheral of Bleakrigs, for my name and surname is not James Howkings ; for it is but a country parish, and no a place that a man who has a capacity would sorn in all his days, if he had not a weakness by ordinar.

My mother, as I was saying, being his only dochter, was married in course of nature to my father, a weel-doing weaver ; but he departed this life soon after I was sent into the world, so that I have only a scrimp knowledge of him, especially of what he was like, and the kenspeckle points of his character. He, however, was untimeously ta'en away, and my

mother, being thereby diminished into a widow woman, with me, a bairn, was transported back into the dominie's bield, where we lived, keeping his house as long as the breath of life was in him, which was as long as he was in the land of the living, and till, as may be seen in the books of the session, I had reached the outside of my ninth year. Not that the particularity of my age is there—Gude forbid—for I'm yet a living man, warsling, with God's providence, in this world of sin and misery; an old man, it is true—more than three score and ten, with one foot in the grave, and the other fast following, but, although it's a blasphemy to say't, dead swear't to lift it in.

Syne the death of the dominie, we flitted from Dozent to Bleakrigs; for my mother not having his pock-neuk to go to, and having but a cold coal to blaw at, was blate because of her narrow means, and came o'er to the clachan to scog her needcessity; for Dozent, though no just a Dublin city, is a high-heeled place, and had in it in those days a Captain's leddy living on her income—besides crookit Miss Jenny, a genteel woman, with a house-rent, and who hain'd money, as I heard tell, by her seam.

CHAPTER II.

THE Bleakrigs is not a land flowing with milk and honey, nor will I say that Pharaoh's lean kine were pastured thereupon, though they might have been ; but it was a very suitable town to teach a lanerly widow how to pull in the horns of her pride, born and brought, as I have heard my mother herself say, in a gavauling vanity fair like Dozent, through which runs the king's road, and has besides a public, with stabling, a kind of a jail, with iron stancheoned window, and jouns for ill-doers in a state of repentance, at the black hole's door cheek.

But though Dozent is a sort of a sleeping borough-town, and stands upon the toll-road, it is not the capital, in a sense, of the parish ; for Bleakrigs is, and before the Rexes came to the Crown, was the thoroughfare, being in a sense a topping place, having

then both a kirk and a mill, as well as a Lucky Stoups, that was furthy with a gill and chappin. Shortly after the Forty-five, however, among the other heritable jurisdictions that were then put down, they gave canny auld Bleakrigs a dunkle, by taking the road round about by Dozent, and since then she has been very feckless, fashed with a decay of nature. However, the kirk stands by her like a true friend, by which I came, as you shall hear, to be promoted to the post of betheral; for it behoves him of that degree to be resident in Bleakrigs, as Dozent is out of the way to the kirkyard, and might cause an inconvenience, if the plague were to come again.

Every body kens what a betheral is, but in Bleakrigs he is a manifold man, or, as the schoolmaster once called me, a miscellaneous anthropos; for the parish being, like Elspeth Rheumatise, in an ailing condition, he is obligated to take much upon him. Not only must he ring the kirk bell, wet or dry, on Sunday, but place the minister's Bible on the poopit, howk graves for all manner of God's creatures of the human speshy, cover the stool for the brod every Lord's day, besides mending the fire in the

session-house in the winter time, whenever he sees that few of the Dozent women are coming to the kirk, and the men of the male gender hap in their big-coats.

It is very needful that I should state this here, for the commonalty might think, that if I did not expound what a betheral was in Bleakrigs, or, as it comes now to be called, the parish of Dozent, they might think that I had been no better than one of the clanjamphry; but a trust is a trust—and the man that holds many, is surely farther ben than a mere simpleton with only one commodity.

But I am cutting before the point, in speaking of this matter in this part of my book; for as yet I'm only a callan no overly forward in my edication, having the dregs of the measles in my eyes, and otherwise of a dwamling habit of body, drinking a cup of camovile tea every morning, which I would never have done, had the minister's wife of those days not said it was the best thing for a growing laddie ill of a complaint. Poor woman! she has now won awa'; but Bleakrigs will be bleak before her likes darken the manse door. She had indeed a way with her—only camovile is very bitter.

CHAPTER III.

FOR a considerable length of time after we had removed over into Bleakrigs, me and my mother, I cannot say it was just a summer day with us, for auld daddy's death caused her to fall into a straitened circumstance; and I need not say that a widow woman, with a heavy handful of a complaining get, is an object. However, when I turned my tenth year I began to outgrow my silliness, and it behoved mother to cast about and to see what use I was made for, as Thomas Aitken, the elder, used to say on the Sabbath gloaming, when he sometimes lookit in upon us, making the observe, that every thing in God's world was created for a purpose, and no doubt I was ordained for one in the councils of eternity.

This remark Thomas had made more than once in my hearing, and some how I did not like to hear't.

for I thought, callan as I was, it sounded vera like a circumbendibus way of saying that I was a cumberer of the ground, and a sediment in mother's cup o' life. But, as I was saying, about my tenth year my complaints began to moul't, and in the spring of that year I became like a bird of another nest ; for though my een were blear't with the dregs of the measles, I grew a stirring laddie, and as auld Girzel Flytings said, was as rank a ringing enemy as ony laddie that ever played at pitch and toss with a lumbie, which every right-minded person kens is an impossibility to do, because a lumbie has neither heads nor tails like a christian bawbee.

Being thus come to the summer of my tenth year, and of a spunkie nature, mother had a confable anent me with the minister, when he gave it as his solid opinion, that I was come to a time of life when I might be sent to the herding, and may be, or the har'st was over, my sight might enable me to be sent to a trade. But at all events, the sending me to the herding would be ae ease aff mother's mind, for I would get, as he righteously said, my pick for taking care of the cows of whomsoever they might be. Thus it came to pass,

that shortly after the first Mononday in May, mother agreed with James Stirk of the Goatditch, that I should herd his cows for the summer and the har'st, for which I was to be paid at the rate of a shilling for wage, and have my meat and drink free gratos, the which was thought a wonderful liberality, for I was the very first herd laddie in our parish that got a wage. No doubt there was a consideration for the repute auld daddy had maintained, that made me so lucky.

CHAPTER IV.

WELL do I mind that Mononday morning when I was taken by mother in her hand first into the world to be James Stirk's herd, because for ordinary she was not so particular. On this occasion, however, she led me by the hand—a sure sign, as I have since thought, that her heart at the time was heavy. But I had little thought of that then, for it was a blithe morning, with the dew on the grass, and the laverock in the lift, and I was as cagy with the thought of going to do for myself as if my een were haill, and I a skipping mawkin.

We got to the Goatsditch just as they had finished the morning exercise, for I could see by the way the stools and the chairs still stood that the family had just risen from their knees, and had not begun to their parritch; for it was the way of James Stirk's

house to begin the exercise when the parritch was poured, and by the time it was done, they were cooled for the supping, which was surely an ordinance that was most wholesome.

But what caused me to make the observe was, that we timeously came away from Bleakrigs, on purpose to reach the Goatditch in time to be in at the breakfast; for poor folk, like as mother was, are obligated to make now and then a reckoning, and we postponed accordingly the making of our own parritch that morning, counting on being invited to a share of James Stirk's, for he was a bien man, and the gude-wife was a managing body, and it came to pass as mother expectit it would be.

After a season, when James and mother had their crack anent the uncocs, both in Dozent and Bleakrigs,—the chief of which was, that Dr Junor's wean had the kingcost, which was thought to be a very strange thing, he being a doctor—and that Mr Dipper, the gauger, was to be married on Miss Lochrigg, who was by all accounts a wee light-headed. The kye being in the meantime milkit, James himself came out with me to show where they should be driven to

seek their meat for the remainder of the day. Indeed he was a considerate carle, and it was no wonder he was so well to do in the world.

My charge was seven cows, which, in the main, were very orderly; only there was one of them, by name called Crumbie, that was not quite so douce as the lave—she being a fantastical creature, and more given to the poeticals than any other cow I ever saw in my life. She was indeed rather of the comical order than even-down bad, for it was only in daffin that she gave me so much trouble, making me often marvel how a cow, that hasna a turn to do in this world but to eat grass, would fash herself with running about, and louping like a Highland gentleman cracking his fingers and crying halloo in a foursome reel. But the symptoms of the natures of the cows I did not discern for some time, and so should not speak of them yet. However, as I was in a manner constrained into the deviation, it is to be hoped that my fault is not one of the deadly sins.

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CHAPTER V.

WHEN James Stirk had shown me the cows I was to herd, and all the green places of the pasture, he went away, leaving me with the black cattle; and it is not to be told how careful I was of them, taking tent that none of them should stray into the corn-fields and eat the braird; but that Crumbie whereof I have made mention, soon kithed to be a sorrow. For no sooner did she see how the gudeman had left me, than she began to cut her capers, and never devault trying how she could get to the rigs, looking over her shoulder at me for a provocation to pursue, which in time made me very angry to see any decent man's cow so demented.

In the heat of the day, however, she, as well as the rest, grew moderate, and lay down on the grass to chew the cud, and to make observes on things

in general, as kine who are in that way inclined sometimes do; and I likewise sat down to eat my piece, and to look about me.

Then as I was sitting on the gowany grass, I be-thought me how King David was once a herd laddie till he felled the giant, what I should do if the Philistines were to come with a Goliath. But the bravery of these thoughts soon past away, and I likened myself to the twenty-third Psalm, which speaks of pastures green and still waters, wondering if the my Lord spoken of could be the Yerl of Feudlans, that had the castle in the wood—for I was then but a laddie, and, by course of nature, in a state of great ignorance, thinking a Lord was only a muckle laird, with twa men tooting trumpets before him, as I saw the Lords come into Ayr when the man was to be tried that was caught in the fact.

But although I thought meikle in a short time on that day, all the first days of my herding the hours were dreigh and plain-soled, being very heavy in the tread as they gaed by; yet as the summer weather came on, I was just as happy and as illess as a lamb, though but a lonely boy, with nobody to speak to in

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the meadow. As the days shortened, however, and the minister's apples grew red-cheekit, the weather began to break, and I was sometimes ourie as the shower drookit me, and I wished that I could be sent to another trade, than to trot at the tails of comstrarie cows; for as the grass was eaten, they travelled hither and yont, and that Crumbie was enough to provoke a saint. Howsever, the time of my tribulation with her was wearing done, and Hallowe'en was the day set when I should return to mother at the Bleakrigs, where she made her bread by going out among the neighbours to spin woo on the muckle wheel, drawing the thread from the rowan in a most majestic manner, with an outstretched arm, singing Death and the Leddy all the time in a very pityful manner. But before the time set was run out, I met with a come to pass by common. One wet day, when I was scoggin myself from a squally shower at the gavel end of a kind of outfield barn in the park where the cows were feeding on the stubble—and it is very necessar that I should speak of it, for it shows by this time that I was grown an auld-farrant chield, and could make an edification that would have been no ferlie

for one come to years of discretion, though, for one like me, no just come to the green years of eleven, it was more than could be expectit. I will rehearse, however, all the specialties in another chapter, made for it on purpose.

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CHAPTER VI.

JAMES STIRK'S farm was, as I have heard, in the days of antiquity when his grandfather lived, three mailings, of which the Goatsditch was his own and the chief; and in process of time the father of James, being a sikker hand, made money, and so, with pinching, and haining, and nearbegunness, came to coft the other two mailings, making the three one. Thus it came to pass, that both the farmsteads of the 'bolished mailings fell under the besom of destruction, and were clean swept away, all 'cepts the barn in the field standing alone, whereof I have spoken, which was a pendicle of one of the foresaid mailings, and being a gude bigging, was spared. It was not, however, overly convenient, for it was out of the gait, and, as James said, in a wet day it was a great detriment to precious time, in the going backwards and forwards between the dwelling-house and it.

Well, at the gavel of this barn I was standing, when a blattering October blast came frae the hill, with a shower that was like the lavish of a watering-can that the luckies of the clachan bleach with, in the spring of the year, the cuts and spynials that comes of their eydance in the winter. I mind the place right weel, for though it was a beild in a state of widowhood, as I may say, its gudeman, the dwelling-house of the farmstead it belonged to, having departed—I'll no say this life—but the earthly world, as I have rehearsed, made it very lanerly, standing by itself, surrounded with ash-trees, in one of which was a pyet's nest. There was likewise an outshot stone in the middle of the gavel, on which grew a stool of fues, a sovereign remedy for a burnt foot, though it was but seldom made use of, for a scrapit raw potato is far better.

Standing at the house end, scogging myself from the shower, and chittering with cold in my hap, who should come to me, likewise for shelter, but a packman laddie, that gaed up and down the country side selling excellent new songs, stay-laces, and curtain-rings, with papers of prins, in a basket.

We behoved to fall into discourse, and I said to him that the stock in his creel was vera laigh.

"'Deed is't," quo' he; "and what's mair, I'm no gaun to plenish it again; for when I've sold the residue, I intend to tak on for a drummer-boy, which is a good idleset trade, and stands more to reason than hirpling with a pack, tholing the snash of every auld runyon, though she hasna a teeth in her head."

So he expounded to me more of the advantages of a drummer-boy, and I said I would list too.

"Oh," quo' he, "but they'll no tak' you—for you have a water in your een, and maun just be a taylor, and pingle wi' patience at your needle."

So, after it cleared up, and he went away, I came to be very dolorous to think that the measle-dregs would be sic a mot in my marriage, as I couldna be even a drummer because of them, and it made me down-hearted; for till that day I did not know ony thing to hinder me from being ony trade, seeing, as the Scriptures tell, that Jacob was a herd, and King David himself was not driven demented with such a flea-lugged creature as that desperate Crumbie of ours was.

CHAPTER VII.

It thus came to pass, that at the hinder end of my herding with James Stirk's cows, I was turned to think of my want of a rightsome capacity to be of ony trade I pleased, and that maybe I was just ordained to be a taylor—a trade held in no repute by the lasses, especially James Cabbage and his pretice lad Archy, that the gudewife had for a day to make and mend the gudeman's cleeding, and Robin the wean's first breeks, when we had our har'st in. They jeered at James, and sung songs to Archy about the "Taylor fell through the bed, thumble and a'," till the poor whey-faced callan was like to greet. So on the night I went hame to my mother's in Bleakrigs, I had this thought in my head, and by course was not so full of glee as a bawkie bird flichtering gladsome in the summer gloaming.

Mother's house was the one end of a bigging, with a trance going through and through, into the whilk it opened, and there was a bed with slides on every side of the door, and the fire was fornent the door, and the elbow-chair that had been auld daddy's stood at ae lug of the chumley; opposite was my mother's seat with her wheel, where she sat from night to morning, drawing, as she often said herself, a tow thread, for the rock of her lot wasna of the lint of life, but the coorse and tawty tow.

When I had come hame, and was sitting in auld daddy's chair, I saw her now and then in her spinning, as she louted down to lick her fingers, casting a watry ee at me; but for a time she said nothing, which was vera dirgie like. Howsomever, she came to herself, and said to me with a mirth that was not deeper than the tongue root—

“Thou's vera down in the mouth. Is thou wae to leave James Stirk's cows?” and she added—“I dinna misdoubt but thou's wae, for beautiful are the feet of them that's on the mountains; and there's a unco difference between the reekit rafters of a widow's beild, and the heartsome blue brightness of the uni-

versal lift. But yet thou shou'dstna be cast down, for the Lord has turned mony a rainy morning into a shining day; and David was but a herd laddie when Samuel anointed him to be King over Israel."

"That," quo' I, "mother, was when men were patriarchs, and in the days of the prophets; but the time of the trades are come, and the sound of the drummer is heard on the loan."

"Gude be about us," cried she, "is he making a song of Solomon?"—But I told her what had been my warning. "It wasna," said I, "by an old man with a beld head, but a hempy packman callan that's mindet to list; but for me, he says they'll no tak me, because I'm a blinking mowdiwart, and maun ettle with a needle to pick up a living."

Then from less to more, my mother, when I told her what the fortune was that the gleg packman laddie had spae't to me, watered her plants, saying, surely it could not be, and that she would see the minister himself on the morn, adding—"For surely the brae is no sae stey but, with the Lord's help, we may warsle up." For all that, however, we had, on the night when I came home from James Stirk's, but

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no being fit for a drummer, and I saw by mother's
concern, that she feart it was o'er true. But the poor
are born to trouble; and if they did not inherit re-
signed hearts, they would be a fasherie to Providence
—even their ne'erdoweels are eggit on by scant and
want, but the sins of the rich are all free gratos.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next day mother went to the minister, the Rev. Mr Canny, to tell him how I had come home from James Stirks, and how she was obligated to put me into a better way of bread, now that I was coming to years of discretion, when a trade would be a mair solid method of making a living than herding nowt, and otherwise to take his College-learnt advice anent me.

The minister, as she went betimes in the morning, had just done with his tea-breakfast, but the table was not drawn, for he was shaving himself at it, having a looking-glass brought in from his bedroom on purpose; and she being seated, he shaved, and atween hands they conversed concerning me in a rational manner.

When they had discoursed some time, she speak-

ing and he harkening, razoring his beard, at last he made an end of his job, and said—

“ Really, Mrs Howkings, yours is a case of straits, and it’s no easy for a composed man like me to advise you ; but if the laddie is fashed with sore eyes, it makes a greater difficulty, for I dinna ken what’s to be done with him, unless it’s at the tayloring.”

“ That,” quo’ mother, as she told me herself, “ is just what we hae the ’prehensions about, for he does not like the wark ; but, poor orphan, it looks as it were his lot, for he has had his fortune spae’t, and a taylor was the upshot.”

Whereupon the minister made an observe, saying, that his advice and the spaewife’s prognostic going hand and hand, denoted a something. But mother told him that it was not a wife ava, but a packman laddie who saw what was ordained for me by the way of an instinct.

“ Ay,” quo’ Mr Canny, “ that makes the thing as sure as a certainty ; and it would be a counterveening of a gracious Providence, if ye offered to mak him any other thing than a taylor. Indeed it’s a gude

trade, and if you yourself are clever at the patching, ye may patch bed-covers out of the shapings of waist-coats, and mak money by selling them among the cotters."

Thus it came to pass, that, by the advice of the minister, I was doomed to be a taylor; but who was to be the maister of me, was a secret in what the great Dr Grope, who preached in the kirk next Lord's day, called, "the vistas of futurity." Well do I mind the word, for mother, who was there with me, said it gaed to her heart like a stang, when she thought of me by a constraint of grace, on account of my blear't een, ordain't to iron, as she said, button-holes with a pot-metal goose.

However, there is no contesting with what is ordaint for us, be it good or be it evil; so, after we had come to a resolution that I should learn to soople my elbows at the tayloring, our next quest was to get a maister, for crackit Baldy Thimble in the Bleak-rigs was not thought to be overly acquaint with the fashions, and had besides a drouth for drams, that was not slockent, as the neighbours said, with a ihteousness becoming an auld man with a gray

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head, and no thought to be of the elect. So mother
went o'er to see what was in store for us in Dozent,
where they had custom for more than two of the
trade, as I shall rehearse by and by.

CHAPTER IX.

THE two taylors of Dozent were vera upsetting, and one of them was a thought more of the beau speshy than his neibour. His name was Stephen Ell, and on Sunday there was not the likes of him for projinckness to be seen at the kirk, 'cept it was Mister Ettle, the gauger, who dress'd in a rufflet sark, and had his head powdert and frizzlet, as if he had been come of the pedigrees. The other clother of the naked was Peter Shears, a decent man, with a wife and a small family, for though sometimes he was seen in a hurry on the causeway with his breek knees no buttoned, Peter was just an extraordinar for eydencie, and one of Mr Canny's elders, a testificate, in a sense, that showed he was both sober and well doing.

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Ell, and to know if he would tak me for a prentice, but he was a corky man, with a light head, and spoke in a peremptor manner, looking at me, as if he was not, and telling mother that it would be as wise to think of making a pair of breeks out of auld boots as to think of putting me intil the clothier line ; in short, speaking with as little pleasantrie to us as the sang of a peacock, which made me resolute in the corner of my heart no to be a prentice to him, for he had no mense to poor folk seeking a way of well-doing, so I pooket mother's tail, and we came away wondring what made him sae proud, speiring at ourselves as we gaed to Mr Shears, what, in a world where a' was a warsle, was the advantage of pride ?

Peter Shears we likewise found no just a man of humility, but there was a carding of sense through Peter's particularity, that made his dry words no so salt as the chandler-pin terms o' that clip-clouts, Stephen Ell ; however, when he had conversed with us, he told mother that she was not weel advised to think of making a taylor of me, for I had not a right faculty in my een for the business, and that if he were so dishonest as to tak me for a prentice, it would

be to his own detriment—syne speiring who sent her?

When she told him that it was the minister, he seemed very confounded, and said, that he might as soon have sent her with me to the college to be a philosopher, for that I would be worth nothing in the tayloring to a man that had a family to provide for.

We were no overly courageous to hear this, and I was sorry for my sore eyes, and told him that I could not help it, which caused him to look at me, and then he said to mother in a hamely voice, sweetened with Christianity—

“’Deed, mistress, I’m grieved for you, for I’m the father of bairns myself, and ken but little what it may please the Maker to send among them, but they that advised you to make a taylor of the laddie had not a right knowledge of the geny for the business, and secrets of naturality, otherwise they might have seen by his sight, that unless he sewed with a darning needle, the shop-board, poor fellow, was fenced against him.”

He then called on his mistress to gie us a bit o’ bread and cheese, and behaved in a very civilized

manner; which caused me to remark ever after, that though Elders are austere carles, and think mickle o' themselves, they have a fund of a gospel nature cherished in them, and a principle that makes them do for the love of God what the carnality of their own hearts would maybe jouk.

However, after we had been with Mr Shears, me and mother returned to Bleakrigs, and for the remainder of that day we were not nightingales, for sometimes she caught me in her arms, and said, with the tear in her ee, that the Lord was obligated to provide for me, and would ne'er forget the widow's hope, that he had unbidden created.

CHAPTER X.

When the lark sings,
The heart has wings,

Is an auld byword and a true; for although me and mother drier dule on that night after we were so 'feckless on the tayloring job, Providence thought a pity of us from the time that Mr Shears relented in his elderliness, and devised of a way to put a sheath on the ill of life that it had permitted to be drawn against us.

It came a frost rather untimeously; the dubs were frozen, and the grass white with crannrach. It was nitre cauld, though lown; and every one that had a turn afield, couldna set about it fast enough. This was a Saturday, and on the Sabbath the frost continued rigorous, but the sun was glad in the firmament, and a lightsome spirit ettled the foot to the slide.

It being, however, most vicious cauld, my official forbear, deaf Geordie Morris, made a bleezing fire in the session-house, which enticed Mr Canny the minister, and the elders, afore the forenoon wark, to draw close round it, and to talk of this and that in a seasonable manner, wherein Peter Shears told how me and mother had on the Friday been at him to see if he would take me on for prentice, and then he told that it was a visibility I was not intended by the Lord for any trade, wishing, for he was in the main a pityful man, that something would cast up for me in the shape of looking after a horse, the which caused Mr Canny himself to say, that his man John was ill of the rheumatics, and couldna go about, so that he would take me to help John through the winter—thus showing, that as one door steeks another opens; and so, as it was a work of needcessity and mercy, the minister, at the kirk skailing, threw himself in mother's way in the kirkyard, and told her what was ordained for me, bidding her bring me over on the Mononday to the manse to look after his horse, and to clean the grumphies.

Blithe was the news to her; and though for glad-

ness I would have gone to the ice on the meadow in the afternoon, she gart me gang with her to the kirk as a token of thankfulness that the Lord was so mindful of us. But it never rains save it pours, that day being by ordinar fair, a Mrs Jointure, a widow lady, that then lived in Dozent, now dead and gone, as all God's creatures must one day be, stoppet to her tea at the manse in the afternoon, and to her Mr Canny rehearsed what Peter Shears the elder had been telling anent us, and it so worked with the affections on Mrs Jointure, that she thought, when she heard it, that it would be no loss to her in another world if on the morn she sent mother something to put in the basin, and me a shilling for handsel, and to help me to go into the world with a new pair of shoon; by which it was made manifest that the darkest hour is ever before the dawn, for surely it is beyond the comprehension of man to think how so soon after I was rejected from being a taylor's prentice, such a horn of abundance should have been poured at our feet; indeed it is not to be told what cause we had for thanksgiving, especially in the matter of the shoon, for the souter took the shilling, and trusted us

for the balance, rather than in such cauld weather I should be seen about the manse barefooted.

This was one Jock Roset, who had been a trooper in the French war, and though a wee ramplor, was a kind rough lad, with a heart that, mother said, it would be telling mony a leddy if she had as saft and warm a one under her muff.

Being thus well outfitted, I went to the manse, where I bided a long time, as I will relate, and how it came to pass that by reason of my weakly een it was put into the minds of the session to win a way to make me the betheral.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHNNY the minister's man was a daidlin sirkent body, who having the rheumatics, had of course an ettercap temper ; and Bauldy Mools, the betheral, was just his marrow—only Johnny complained of his feet, and Bauldy was fashed with the lumbagos in his rumple bone, which made the ringing of the kirk-bell a sore job to the kankry auld man. Thus it came to pass, that Johnny no being forthcoming in the winter when the day was wet, and Bauldy couldna lout and straight himself as he behoved to do with the tow, I was told by the minister himself to go and pull the bell ; by which in time I got such an insight of the craft, that many of the parish said I was as good at the ringing as Bauldy himself, and really more orderly than Johnny, for he grew often just wud when the bell whamlet, which it sometimes did when

he was in a fyke, and pulled with the birr of carnality.

This particular it is very necessar to mention here, because my true business being to look after the minister's horse, and snod the stye, if I did not, it would not be easy to rehearse how in time I got my promotion. Indeed, had Johnny not been a lamiter, I never would have got it, for he had a be-course right to the post, being in a sense already helper and successor to Bauldy the betheral. I set down this makemention, because the world was not without folk who insinuated, when, after Bauldy departed this life, I got the charge, that I was ower young, and no of a capacity to howk comfortable graves. To the which backbiting I said, that if the Lord was pleased to send a pestilence intil the parish, it would be seen what sort of graves I would provide. "The vera ne'erdoweels," quo' I, "will think themselves in Abraham's bosom when I hap them with the divots." However, I'm cutting before the point, for as yet I'm but a blear-eet callan, new come from the herding of James Stirk's six douce cows, and that loup-

the-dyke randy with the gale in her tail, that was called Crumbie. So to return.

Being transported to the manse, and Johnny's complaints growing, I had more to do than ought to have been trusted to a laddie; but Mrs Canny, the minister's wife, was a througal woman, and put no more peas in the broth than were just required; in short, she had an instinct which told her that shillings were not sixpence, and that black bawbees were fashioned out of red copper, which made the servitude of the manse nae luxury.

The minister himself was just like the rest of the black cattle, and knew that the salt water of the sea was not sweet oil; but he was an easy bolster of a man—going out and coming in with his shoon down i' the heel; and yet he was a capital hand at flauds of scripture—citing texts as if they came to him by naturality.

CHAPTER XII.

THOUGH it was sair work to pleasure the mistress, I yet tholt, for my mother gave me sober advice when I went to see her, telling me that what I had to do would be lightsome in my teens. Thus it came to pass that I made myself needful in the manse, for I was vera biddable, thinking I should be so, cause of the dregs of the measles in my een, which made my currency in service, especially among the gentry, no overly fluent; so, having warslet with the minister and his economical ledly for some time, I grew a buirdly chiel, and began to think that if the Lord did not soon take fashious Johnny to himself, whereby I might get wage, I would be obligated to look out for a new place—for I need not tell the courteous reader that there is a time atween the tining and the winning in every man's life, and that if a man does not then get

hire, the deil soon puts him in a way to help himself—which is not a comely thing in a lad that has been bred at the foot of such a Gamaliel as the minister of a parish.

But while thoughts of this fashion were kittling in my harn-pan, and I was well on towards sixteen, auld Bauldy Mools took his dead-ill, and had a hoast that was as the sound of the hammering of a coffin nail. This was about the end of the year, after Hallowmass, and the minister said to me,—“ My lad,” said he, “ poor Johnny that I mindet for the betheralship, he surviving the incumbent Bauldy, is in a frail condition, and I fancy we maun let him sorn about the manse till the bodie’s wick gangs out; but I have been thinking, that as ye’re coming to years of discretion, and no very passable in the world by reason of your blinking red eyes, ye might, for want of a better, if Bauldy slips a foot, put in for the place, and wi’ my help be installed the betheral, which in our parish is, ye ken, no a post to lift aff the midden with a pair of iron tongs. What, my lad, say you to this cogneevance yourself?”

I told Mr Canny that he made a vera good offer,

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but it was a thought o'er soon, for that Bauldy was still to the fore, and though he had a craichlin hoast, it was in the power of the Lord to spare him.

“ That,” said Mr Canny, “ is very pleasant to hear from a young man, but ye ken, while we are in the world, we must use the world’s means. The ravens fluster about the dying horse, but light not to taste while the life is in the body, only they make themselves ready for the death ; and it would not do to wait ower lang, for if I had not pewter’t with the patron before Mr Killfuddy was taken to the Maker, it’s my opinion Mr M’Dowre would have gotten the parish, but I was before hand ; so, if ye think the betheralship will suit, ye cannot be ower gleg about it : but I must not be seen in’t ; only I give you this gentle hint, that maybe ye have a friend in the court who will not be displeased to hear, if you like it yourself, that ye have a too-look to the latter end of Bauldy Mools.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE night of that day on which I had the confable with the minister, as soon as I got my turn of wark done, I went over to my mother's house to consult with her, Bauldy Mools being by all accounts in the jaws and jeopardy of death. But I met with what I did not expect, for my mother was a wee prideful, and could not away with a son of hers being a betheral. In short, she watered her plants when I first spoke anent the subject; but by and by, being a discreet woman, she thought more composedly, when she made a reflection that the betheral of our parish was a manifold character, and something by the common, no one in the country side having so great trust; for with us he had not only to make the last bed of corrupt mortality—to ring the kirk bell, wet or dry, every Sabbath morning—to dust the pews

of the heritors—to lay the minister's Bible on the front of the poopit—to place the stool for the brod at the principal door—to warn the elders to the session, and to make a fire therein, &c. In short, when she saw what a world of particularities our betheral behoved to look after, she had then a right understanding, that considering my eyes were still weakly, it was a place that might be taken for a time.

So having gotten her into a spirit of rationality, I came away with the intent of going to the manse; but somehow I had to pass Bauldy Mools' door, and I was obligated by a sense of Christianity to go in and speer for him, and to see how he warslet with death; for although it does not become me to say so, I was of a serious turn, as I have been all my days, and aye had a natural sympathy for scenes of sore affliction.

Hech sirs! it was a sight I saw in that house! There was he in the bed, and his wife with a cruise looking in his face, and three or four neighbour carlins standing round, ilk in a sort of praying posture. It was really moving, for the dead-rattle was in his craig,

and it was a visibility that he had gone from the uses of this world.

Seeing him so near his latter end, I resolved to abide the upshot, and so sat down on a chair by the fire-side, and was as humble as a man could be in the presence of Death ; but for all that, I could not but make an observe, which was, that one meets with few of the male speshy at deathbeds, women commonly have the most to do with such sort of ploys, which is a mystery that I cannot understand, but it comes of their tender hearts.

It was just at nine o'clock that Bauldy won away into Abraham's bosom, after which I went home to the manse, where the minister was up, and with a tumbler of toddy before him. He had heard how busy the Lord had been with Bauldy, and guessing that I might be at the handling, waited to see me, and hear if the end was pleasant.

When I had told him that all was over, then quo' he,—“ My man, ye'll have to howk his grave, which will be a quiet way of letting the parishioners understand that ye're fit for the betheralship ;

and mind and do it well, for it's a case that needs a management, and I'll take the opportunity of praising your parts; for ye ken, James, that maybe ye're a thought overly young for such a charge. However, I'm no without hope, for ye're a parish bairn, and if ye're no fit for a betheral, ochone, it's no saying for what ye were created."

Thus it came to pass, that on the third day after Bauldy's departal, I made his grave, and the minister himself, as he was going to the burial, came through the kirkyard to look at what I had done, and when he saw it, said it was as well a made grave as ever Bauldy in his best days could have done, and that no an heritor in the parish could desire one more comfortable—which I was blithe to hear, looking upon it as a prognostication I would be appointed the successor; and so it came to pass, though Gabriel Glower made an objeck on account of my years, and a ne'erdoweel cousin that he wished in my stead.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN I was installed in my office, I bethought myself, with mother's advice, that now having a charge, it was very necessary to be particular, and to eschew that generality in all things which youth is sorely prone to. Accordingly, as our parish is not overpopulated, and by course of nature cannot have many burials, I thought, and indeed we both thought, that I might employ the interim atween hands to some purpose, which was a conceit of sagacity, for because of my een, every trade would not suit me.

One Patrick Johnstone had introduced into Dozent the art and manufacture of sacking, and I was just a suitable vessel for his calling, as the threads were coarse, and I could see them well enough; so the second week of my betheralship, I went to Patrick, and pac-tioned to serve him faithfully in all leisure time spared

from my business, which he agreed to, and that was the way I came to be a by-hands weaver.

When I had agreed with Patrick Johnstone, I had a consideration with myself how I could exercise with the best honour and credit my lawful vocation; and for some time after the interment of my worthy predecessor, (for he was that, though a wee short in the temper,) I had time to think thereon, for we had not a kirkyard job for three weeks and more. In the resolution I came to, I had both heartening from Mr Canny the minister, and mother, who, though of the womankind gender, was a deacon at an advice.

They thought it would be a most edifying thing, and a sanctification to my calling, that had so much to do with mortality, to keep an account of the folk I buried—their characters, luck, and tribulations—and which I have since done, and which now that I am come to more years than threescore and ten, enables me to put out this book. Not that I intend to show forth every 'dividual case of man and woman that came under the clapping of my spade—that would be too tedious to mention. As for some of them, they were not pearlets, and bairns die before.

they come to any repute or character. Much indeed about them cannot be said in the chronicles of a country-side, which this will no doubt be, for, except by their own mothers, they are soon forgotten by the residue of the world.

At first, I should mention, that my task did seem more of a fashious nature than I foresaw could be thold, for I got a book with a parchment cover, in which I began to be very particular with my notamdums; but I soon discernt that such summering and wintering about auld folk would never do, for really they were not in our parish a very remarkable race. One thing, however, I could not but observe ere long, and that was, that Bleakrigs, as the parish was called in law, being a country parish, very few young men departed this life in it, which, I thought with other gammorals, must be owing to not a doctor biding in all the bounds; for shortly before I was put on as betheral, Mr Gallipot, that lived in Dozent, was gathered to his fathers, and a new one did not come among us for mair than a year after. But when I came to be more considerate, I saw that the young lads stravagued away into foreign parts, leaving only

their fathers to be behauden to me, wherewith I was well content; for out of sight out of mind, as the by-word says, and it surely was a great relaxation of the severities of death to hear of it in a foreign land. For although the stang was sharp to the parents, poor folk were spared the outlay of the funeral, which I have more than once seen makes the affliction in proportion to their means fall the heavier, for births, bridals, and burials, are the three great occasions on which hampert folk think they should gauval, and it would be wise in the King's government if they were put down with a tax upon them.

CHAPTER XV.

As it would not be thought a convenience by the public for me to give an account to posterity of all the folks that died in our parish, and were buried by me, I only intend in this book to mention them that had any thing by the common about them, as what I say shall be very orthodox ; and first and foremost, let me observe, that I skip over twa decent bodies who, like the generality of the respectable, went out of the world as they had lived in it, eating and drinking—by no manner of means were they of the kenspeckle speshy—to speak of Babby Clink, who was in a sort the leftenant betheral in Bauldy Mools' time, for he was her gudeman, and mickle she thought of him.

Babby was an auld woman, and of a patient spirit, for which she was greatly tried, as her gudeman Bauldy was not of a gospel temper, and fashed when

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he had to do a duty in wet weather, because then the rain falleth down, and graves become like the wells that the children of Israel dug when they passed thorough Bacca's vale. She did not die till a toumond gude after the roof-tree of the house in auld fractious Bauldy was removed, and it was a marvel to many that she died then, for it was thought by very creditable people, that there would have been an easement to her in his departal, that would have been a kind of compensation ; but although Bauldy was not of the elect nature, it turned out as daft Jock Spears said, very sagaciously, to Lord Eglintoun, when he remarked to Jock that the blood was sottering out of his shoe mouth—" Ay," quo' Jock, " I was ca'ing a nail in the sole, and the point kittles my foot in a sair manner, but in time they'll grow friens, and put up with one another's use and wont ; " whilk it seems was the case with Babby and her gudeman, for after his dirgie she never was herself, but went along the dyke sides making a wally wally and a moan, sitting aneath the elm-tree in the glebe, with her gown over her head, as if waiting and wearying for death, that she thought taiglet.

Concerning Babby, however, it becomes me to speak more at large, for she was a wife that is no every day seen ; moreover, like my own mother, she was a dominie's dochter, and had of course of nature an edication that in a sense made her one of some degree. Like mother, however, she had not a son as I was, for her and Bauldy reached the moorland of old age without chick or chicken, having lost them all as they warsled up the brae of life together, and had buried, as I was told, five bonny weans before they got to the brow of the hill. But what I have to say anent Barbara Clink is well entitled to a chapter by itself, for it's no of him, but only of herself, that I have to speak, for how she ever came to marry that crab-apple bodie, showed, as folk said, that Love has indeed lost his precious sight, especially when it was a lo and behold that she wandered up and down, a demented woman, after he went, as the history-book says, to that supper, where he is ate, and thinks not of eating.

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CHAPTER XVI.

BARBARA CLINK, the widowed wife of Archibald Mools, sometime betheral of Dozent, by the blessing of HIM who knows what is best for us, was not born in our parish, but had reached the years of discretion, being done with her teens before she came among our forebears, as I may well say, for she was an old woman in all the days of my remembrance. How she came to Dozent I never rightly heard; but shortly before a regiment of soldiers was billeted in that great Western Babylon, the city of Glasgow, and there were not wanting tongues that thought Babby was of the trooper clanjamphry, wha like to gallant among valiant men. Be this true or scandalous, Babby, when she came to the clachan, was a downcast young woman, and maybe they were no far wrang, wha said she had ance been a sorrowful

creature. But she was well edicated, and could read the tenth chapter of Nehemiah without hipping a word; for her father, as I have said afore, keepit the school at Auchtercloots. However, there is no need to claut the glar; between Babby and her father there was a difference, and it was, as the byword says, no because he would haud and she would draw.

But the upshot of it was, that unscrapped tongues gaed the length of saying, how in the wud of the difference, she took on with the soldiers, and led with them a cutty's life, till, being inclined to more composity, she repented, and came to our parish a needful stranger, when Leddy Jinglings, a widow of a soldier officer, that had not been married, being in want of a serving lass, fee'd Babby; for the one was not plagued with mickle scrupulosity, and Babby behoved her for a reason to keep a calm sough, so they were thought accordingly to have then been weel met. But poor donsie Babby knew she had transgressed, and couldna look ony decent woman in the face; in short, she went about with the tear of penitence in her eye, and in this state was lang lanerly.

By and by, Bauldy, as it came to pass, having

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been settled in the world as betheral, felt himself to be in want of a wife, and no being of a blate habit of body, said his gude-e'ens and gude-days to misfortunate Babby in such a manner that he atchievet a conquest of her tender affections; but although she made a most douce and eydent wife, she keepit aye aloof from other men and womenkind, and lived a life of shame, though they spoke with foul mouths that would have wyted her with a fault. In short, Babby lived among us as if she had not been of this world, and put herself under the care of a husband to gang into a greater concealment than she found in servitude.

It was thought when Babby had become a married wife, and had motherly prospects, that she would have turned better; and, certainly, when she was seen to shoot out her horns in the shape of a new bonnet on Sunday, there was an expectation. But when the bairn died of the kinkhost, there was an end of all her bravery. Her bairns, as regular as possible, were interred within the year after they were born. It really was like a come-to-pass not of this world, for when it was kent in the parish that Babby was

biggent, it was a saying that there would be soon a burial; for as I heard mother often tell, the newspapers being scant in those days, folk thought more for themselves, and noted the particularities of ordinations that newspapers watch and make matters of sale.

But no to be overly circumstantial, if ever there was a penitential woman on the face of God's earth, it was Babby; and of all within our bounds and the adjacent parishes, she was the only one that was heard of who married a gudeman to hide her from the world. Had he been a pleasant man, there would have been no wonder, but her's was a sorrow; and when he was in his cups, for Bauldy would sometimes take a dram, if all tales be true, the girning bodie lifted his hands to her. She was, in short, as the minister said, in the words of improvement at the close of his sermon on the Sunday after her burial, one that would be led into Heaven by the hand of Mary Magdalen.

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CHAPTER XVII.

I TROW Saunders Watt didna come of the same seed as Babby. He was a gauger, and went about, going to and fro like the Little Gude, seeking whom he might devour. He was only in the middle of life, but the measure of his iniquity was full. "Oh! but he was in his day," as Luckie Mutchkins of the clachan change-house said, when she heard of his latter end, "a veshel seasoned for perdition." Well do I recollect her words, for I was standing hard by when she made the utterance, adding, that he seized a brandy keg with the glee and satisfaction of a baudrons loupng at a mousie, jumping at it like a cock at a grosset. But whatever his life had been as a mere man, his death was a warning and admonishment that every professing Christian should lay to heart. For I being, as they say in the 'Rabian

Nights, the Grand Vizier of our parish, the minister being the Kaliph, could think it no less than a capitation to himself. He dropped down dead, clean dead, at the door of Widow Herrings of Dozent, when going to make out a perjury on her barrel with his gauging-rod.

He had been, in the sinful days of his youth, a serving-lad with the Laird of Riglands, when my lord set the laird up for a Member of Parliament—one of thae things that have a hand in the taxification—a harriment that the reform or cholera will surely put in some way an end to, either by doing away with the excise, or sending to the likes of me all free livers—that's those who live upon the taxes. So, being a serving-lad with Riglands, he played some plastick with a bailie who was the delegate of a burough, by stealing his breeks on the day of election, by which Riglands won, for before the bailie thought of going in his landlady's petticoats to the council-room, the votes were counted, and the whole *pro forma* was over.

The stealing of Bailie Daidle's breeks bred mickle sport, and was, even by those of the same side,

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thought such a souple trick, that when my lord, as he naturally did, rewarded Alexander, as Saunders was then called, with the exciseman's post, they were like to split with laughing, and said it was, by slight of hand, a weel-earned fee.

Saunders, though overly gleg about brandy, jars of Jamaica rum, and Dutch ankers of gin, was not, as I always thought and said, an ill fellow, though he had, as I maun allow, a sediment of servitude about him; for he had learnt wi' Riglands to have no moral consideration, and had learnt London ways that would have made the hair on the head of any country parish stand on end, let a be such a douce one as Dozent, where he had no mercy in his conscience for those that tried to make an honest livelihood by smuggling. But I ought not to say so, for he never had a right godly fear, but used to say, I have heard him myself, that if there was ony sin in seizing, the King was answerable for it, for he was answerable to the King, the which, I say, is a sentiment of servitude; for as no human power can give the King, who is but a man, a right to break any one of the Ten Commands, how can he, without the sin of diso-

bedience, hire men to steal; and is not stealing robbery, and what is seizure but taking a man's goods without his consent, which is robbery; and therefore is it not against the Ten Commands to seize, and against common sense to connive at seizures? But this is no the place to be political, nor is it my intention in any place to be so; having, however, in course, gotten the best of edications, it must be allowed me sometimes to speak out the truths of philosophy; indeed, it was to do so that I thought of putting out a book at all. The words of my mouth are but the words of a betheral, but the words of a writing are the words of a pen, which is a horn that speaketh great things.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER I had bigget the last house for Saunders Watt, the gauger, it could not be said that I had much to do in the regular way, for although in the winter there was what auld Bauldy would have called a smashrie of weans, I never counted such jobs as the right employment that I was promoted to see done. There is indeed a great odds between the labour of making a kirkyard hole for a grown up bodie and a bairn, as those that have an experiment in the betheral's craft well know; for I used to observe, that before I had done howking for a man or a woman, I took a pain in my back, but it was not the case when I had only to homulgate the sederunt place of a silly bit wean, carried off in its wee troubles.

Though prospering in the weaving of sackcloth, and my burial duties, I was in a sense well to do for

some time, but nobody of any note in the parish cam through my hands till I was out of my teens and in my twenties; then there was, to be sure, a dawn of hope; for a murrain, as I should call it, fell on the gentry, and mony a ane was taken away that, as Will Scruple, the lawyer of Dozent, said, ye might have taen a share in the Glasgow Tontine, with a moral certainty of getting it.

The coming to pass of the calamity causes me to make an observe, which I ne'er forgot, and which the longer I live, I am well persuaded is ower true, and that all of a thoughtful mind should lay it to heart. It was, that there are certain seasons when cruel death feeds on tender fare, making his grusome meals of babes and sucklings; others, when folk come to years of discretion are all the go with him; and others again, when, like a boutyer with game, no less will serve him than the wise and the auld, as if he had a relish of one thing more than another, like an honest man called to a provostry. However, as I was going to record, but for this comical deviation, that after Saunders Watt, the next public man I had to deal with was a Mr M'Kyte.

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He had come from the borough of Irville, where he keepit a cloth shop, and was a bailie. It was after a contested election for a member of Parliament, in which he was chosen to be the delegate, and gave his vote clean contrarie to what was expected, by which there was some hobbleshow that caused him to shut his shop, and to come to enjoy our parish.

Of Bailie M'Kyte's colleaguin I never heard the particulars, but by what I did hear, it was a good parliamenting for him; the moths, it was said, might have aten all the cloth that he had in his shop, stoop and roop, before he would have made sick a nest egg as he got on that occasion. Poor Mr Mixtre, the meal-monger, that was his successor, I trow, had to claw where it was not yucky, for in attempting to sup the same kail, he scalded his lips with the silver spoon. However, it's of Mr Bailie M'Kyte that I am speaking, and he had a great latter end, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFÖRE the interment of Bailie M'Kyte, burials in our parish were conducted very soberly, at least as far as the dead were concerned. There might, now and then, on a cauld day, be a dram negotiated over much, but upon the whole, we were a very douce people, taking our hats off at the grave, and coming away, leaving the coffin with the betheral, to cover at his convenience. On the bailie's occasion, however, things were greatly altered. First and foremost we had a hearse—a fine thing that—they had got it new at Irville, and it had never been used before. Besides, we had the body carried on men's shoulders from the hearse to the kirkhole, and spakes, thocht vulgar, were not used at all. But I must be allowed to indulge in the circumstantial.

From the time, as I have said, that the bailie gave

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a contrarie vote as a delegate in the election of the member, he lived in a very genteel manner, in the manse-looking house at the end of Dozent, as ye come in from the eastward, and living there he took some curmurring in his inside, and gaed off like a snuff of a candle.

It was an unlooked-for consternation, and gentle and semple could speak of nothing else. Thus it happened, that his wife being come of an Edinburgh pedigree, resolved that he should be buried in the genteelest fashion; and what was said to me on the occasion, was very explanatory how it happens that bailies and provosts, and siclike, have all after death great headstones, with images upon them, and other carved work, standing biggit most grand in the kirk-yard dyke, for otherwise, if they had not such tombstones, they would be forgotten, like other creditable shopkeepers.

I got other insight also, when I was instructed concerning the latter end of the bailie. It is weel known that genteel people, such as lairds and heritors, are really, when weel looked into, no what they should be; and few think, when they hear of family vaults,

that it's a very 'conomical contrivance. For my pairt, I think it's an evendown cheatery of the betheral of his fees, for with all the fandangas they make about their kith and kin, they, for the most part, just keep their ancestors in a lockit ill-smelling cellar under the kirk, and a turn of a key is just as good to a man who has had fathers before him, as the best grave that ever was made. Bailie M'Kye no being come of a stock, his leddy wife, after some fasherie, got leave to bury him close to the kirk wall, but she was obligated to make his last bed in a grave howkit by me. She, however, gied me many charges about it, and to be sure and make it deep enough. No that she was feared for collegianers, for then the dead was not taken away under cloud of night, as we sometimes read of now in the newspapers, making the hair on our head to stand on end like the teeth of a heckle.

To be sure I did my best to make as comfortable a place for the bailie as could be, and he was brought in the hearse to the kirkyard yett, with all the parish nobility standing round it, looking at the memento moris with which it was adorned, the skulls, cross bones, and sand-glasses, which showed that it be-

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Then they took the black kist out of the vechle, and put it on men's shoulders, covering it with a mortcloth, and it happened that James Deell, a bearer of the body, was a short man, and in coming to the grave, stepping over the lying tombstones, he fell down between twa monuments, and lost his grup, which gart the coffin come with such a surge on the other men, that they all staggered, and it fell to the ground, at which a great number of laddies from the school set up a shout—oh, such a sight as was to be seen in our kirkyard that day! However, with a fash we got the bailie aneth the mools, in as creditable a manner as could be then luiked for, considering that it was our first burial from a hearse, which is a chariot that requires use and wont to make practical.

CHAPTER XX.

SHORTLY after the sough had lowned which was caused by the bailie, there was an accident that cannot be enough told.

As I have said, the high-road went through the town of Dozent, in which there was a creditable public, if it might not be called an inn, insomuch that it was not a great hardship for wayfaring people to put up at it for the night. It came to pass, about three month after I had done my duty to the retired magistrate, that a grand burial with the Irville hearse came in at the heel of the evening to the town, and word was sent to me that I must make a grave outright that night, as the weather was warm. I cannot say that, as this was an aromatical job, it just gave me pleasure to hear, but as no man can say that I stand in the way of a work of necessity, I made the

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grave; and in a manner very decent the interment took place, but it was late at night, and with candles, which were very dismal to see.

Owing to the hurry in which every thing was necessarily done, there was no time to bid a company to the occasion. The minister, however, Mr Canny, was there unbidden, and different of the best sort of the inhabitants, so that although the solemnity was rather hastily got up, it was not ill performed when the burial took place; and as it was late, the folk with the hearse agreed to stop till break o' day at the public, and, as I have made mention, there being no sufficiency of beds in the house, the men and the callan that carried the head agreed to sit up. Nothing could be more respectable than all this, and the minister himself was so moved, that he invited the callan to stay at the manse, but the pawkie deevil kenned better.

About the small hours, when all the clachan was gone to bed, they went over to the kirkyard, howkit the grave, lifted the coffin, which, instead of a dead body, was full of green tea, for the smuggling at the Laignhlands was then in a thriving condition, and the men bethocht themselves that the hearse might be

put to a more profitable use in helping them than in carrying corporations to the grave like a Reform Bill, and this was their trial exploit.

Having lifted the coffin, they carried it to the hearse, and sure enough they were off and away with it bodily before the dawn. They were, however, not deacons at the business; so that, after getting out the coffin, they forgot that there would be a want in the grave, and that it would not be filled up, and appear as I had left it. Thus, it came to pass, that when old Peggy Pry looked out in the twilight of the morning, there was a dreadful to do. Some thocht the doctors had been there; but Mr Gauge, the exciseman, made a guess, which was very sagacious, and I was directed to see what was in the grave. Lo and behold, the bird was flown as I have related; but it was a soup's trick, and some had the irreverence to laugh at what was done; 'deed, if the minister himself had not been of a gospel composity, I saw, by the watch which he set on the door of his lips, that he would have been himself very ridiculous.

It was on this occasion that Mr Maggot, the elder, said, that hearses could not be sanctified things, when

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they could be put to such a reprobate use ; moreover, they were not mentioned in scripture, said he ; and mother, when I told her of this, bled her een in the attempt to search the scriptures for the word. However, the hearse was held in no sort of estimation with us, in consequence, and for long after we had no employment for it till the smuggling cantrip was forgotten ; and yet, between ourselves, a hearse is a very commodious vechle when it's wanted for any of the genteeler orders, accustomed to keep their own carriages.

CHAPTER XXI.

No doubt grave-digging has its jocosities, like the law, or any other creditable profession, as may be seen by what I have rehearsed anent the smugglers' ploys; but it has likewise its dules, which in a special manner were experienced in our parish, where the betheral is not just a commoner of that calling.

It happened that we had among us, about the time of the rigmarole interment of the tea, a weel-faur't lassie in her blithesome teens, of a weel-doing nature, and most obliging. How it came about, I cannot tell, but she forgathered with one of the Laighland men that were at the sham interment; and from less to more, it kithed in time that she had gotten more than did her good on that occasion. In short, it was seen upon her that she was in the way of being a mother before she was a wife, and every heart was sore at

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the discovery ; for saving a bit thoughtlessness—a wee glaikit, it might be—there was no ill in Maggy Kilsythe.

At last the fulness of time drew on, and Maggy was laid in the straw, and brought forth a brave man-child ; but, ochon ! the donsie damsel was taken away into Abraham's bosom, before she had time to tell the name of the father of the get. There was not a dry eye, especially among the women folk, when they heard of the come to pass, with the mystical death of poor Maggy ; and every body was in a terrification about her son, what would come of it, and wha would bring it up ; for her mother had died when she was young, and it had no more kith nor kin than the dove had in the drowned world, when Noah sent it out of the ark. The minister's wife was spoken to ; but she said that she had enough to do with her own kittlings—a most unsavoury speak ; and the rest of the towns, baith Bleakrigs and Dozent, were equally hard-hearted.

I was, however, very wae for Maggy, and gaed about with disconsolation, seeking whom I might find with Christianity in their bosoms to take the innocent

baby—the session paying for the nursing; but I came little speed, till the Lord put charity in the breast of the randy, Peg Cannon, that in her youth had been with the soldiers in America, and she said, that being used to fatherless brats in the army, she would ettle to bring up the orphan, with the help of the session, and a good word in the shape of a dram from the minister's lady, by which I got the stress of the calamity overcome, and in due season donsie Maggy, that had been so left to herself, put aneath the ground—a job that was not done without an endeavour; for I maun confess, that to see it was very heart-burning, as I had begun to look behind when Maggy gaed past me, and had queer thoughts about marrying, that might have come to an asking. However, all that is passed now; but I thought I could not better manifest the regard I had for the mother than by looking after her wee wailing baby, so I took by ordinar care of it, and aften went to see the helpless thing; for really Peggy Cannon was a randy, though maybe as ruth in the heart as those who could better read the Scriptures, of which she did not know a B from a bull's fit.

CHAPTER XXII.

For the reasons of which I have given an inkling in the foregoing chapter, I regarded Maggy's residue, as the orphan was called, with a compassionate understanding. By and by, we got him baptized Moses Waft, not knowing what else to call him; and Peggy said he was thriving like a puppy dog sucking the spout of a teapot, as she saw a pointer's whelp once educated in a transport, when taken untimeously from its mother.

Till she happened to tell me of this, I never thought how wee Moses got suck; but she showed me, and when she did, weel content was I, though I said nothing, how she was a randy; though no circumspect woman would ever have thought of bringing up a motherless orphan with such a contrivance. She just had some milk in a saucer, and, rolling up a bit of

rag, she dipped it in, held it to the bairn's mouth, and he was as cagy about it as if it had been a pap of the motherly gender.

Belyve, Moses Waft grew into a totum, as we call a running wean, and had his mother's bonny blue een, that sometimes brought up a remembrance, and I wanted mother to take it home, but she would not, so it continued to bide with Peggy, who was sometimes, to tell the truth, no example; but Providence has a use for poor folk as well as for rich ones, for Lazarus as well as Dives; and the forlorn laddie prospered in health, if he did no better, while he bided with Peggy, which was till he reached his fifth birth-day, when, with near a whole shilling that I had helped him to gather, he espoused his fortune.

Mrs Canny, the minister's wife, gave him an old bread-basket. I bought for him threepence worth of excellent new songs, three stay-laces, twa thimbles, and a beautiful penknife, that cost twopence half-penny; and with this cargo of commodities, he went to try his luck at the fair of Dozent, which fell on that very day, and was the cause of putting it into

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our heads, to make a beginning of the world with Moses.

Nor were we deceived in him, for he was a gleg callan, and would hold his place with any one, so that for his tenpence-halfpenny, he brought hame to Peggy nearly half-a-crown, with which she gart him treat her with a gill for good luck, which, though he did, he was, as she told me, as dour to fleech, as to draw a rusty ramrod.

But as I'm no writing the history of Moses, I need not be overly particular; however, he warslet on till he got his seventh year behind him, and then he took on for a drummer, with a recruiting serjeant that came out for the king and country, to Dozent from Glasgow. He caught, however, no fish in our parish, but only that whittering trout, Moses.

What became of him, we never heard for many a day, till sixteen years and better after, he being with the regiment again in Glasgow, came out to see us, a brave lad and a serjeant, for he was a sorrow for cleverness. He called Bleakrigs his home, for it's natural for man to have a home, and we were all very vogie to see him, but auld Peggy Cannon was long

dead, which he was right sad to hear, saying she was the only mother he ever knew; and what the heart misses in the true way, it tries to make up for with an artifice. But he was a braw lad, and when he went to thank Mr Canny for the days of his youth, the minister was so well pleased that he gave him a glass of whisky; and Mrs Canny was most jocose, and speer't what he did with her basket, which he told her he niffer't with another pack laddie for three-pence, which, she said, was a whole penny more than it was worth.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

BUT for ane that's weel liked in the world, twa does well, which is the reason that things go on so regular; for, had likings the upper hand, it's no saying what would be the upshot. A' the do-weels are of a soberly staid character, and ony variorum that's to be found among men, herds with those that are well likit; no that they make themselves meickle profit of it, for men do not like others so as to do them service, but for their own pleasure, which does not lie in doing service.

I make the foregoing remark, calling to mind the repute that Moses Waft was of from a boy among us. He had naebody in all the world that he could be said to have a claim of legality upon, and yet from his very birth he was the best likit laddie in the whole parish, and mony a one said kind things of him for

the way he bore with Peg Cannon in her rampaues. However, I have no more for the present to say of Moses, but to return to my regular record of the folk with whose interment I had a handling.

After Moses' mother, as I was saying, was buried, I was long of having to do with a remarkable character; for although our parish is not without a something worthy of remembrance, it's not, as Mr Beta the schoolmaster says, a Temple of Fame, the generality of the people being mediocres, and more given to see what a shilling is made of, than to sing anthems. However, at last I had a job, and it's not to be skipped over without a notandum.

It happened, as I have frequently rehearsed, that the king's high-road went through the town or clachan of Dozent; and there came to it one night a man that was troubled with an inward calamity, and died the next day of an inflammation, in spite of all the doctors could do.

He being a stranger, nobody knew who he was, and being dead, he was buried by me and two-three decent folk, leaving a portmanty in the public.

With the help of the minister's advice, Mr Scruple,

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the lawyer, broke open his trunk, to see if there was any thing in it whereby a discovery could be made, but nothing was found, although his clothes were most respectable ; and we came to a conclusion, from the shape of the shirts, that he was an Englisher. In the corner of the box, however, there was a stock-buckle wrapped up in the back of a letter, and on the letter was a superscription to Rupert Manners, Esq. ; but no one among us could make out what the lave of the writing was, only Mr Scruple, who was a far-seeing man, said, that the portmanty with the clothes should be sent to the minister's, and he himself would take charge of the bit of paper. Farther than this, nothing more occurred at that time ; but we had all our guesses concerning Rupert Manners, Esq., being persuaded he was of a genteel stock.

Many a day, however, passed, and we had not an inkling about who he could be, and all the expenses of his obsequy was considered by the session as lost money. At last, when Mr Scruple was in on a job in his way at the court in Edinburgh, he saw an advertisement in a newspaper, offering a great reward to anybody that could give an account of one Ru-

pert Manners, Esq. of Crockling Hall, in the county of Devon.

The name, and something in the shape of the direction, caused Mr Scruple to ponder, and when he came home, he had a confabbe with the minister; and, from less to more, he sent off a very purposedlike letter, telling how a gentleman had died forlorn in our town, and nothing was known about him but that he had a pair of knee-buckles in a back of a letter, that had a similitude to the name in the advertisement.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

It is well known that inheritors, before they can make a free use of the inheritance that comes to them, are very anxious to have a good right to it, which it seems was the case with a near friend of Mr Manners, who caused the advertisement to be put in the papers, for it was about no other than him that it was publicated.

Instead of a reply to Mr Scruple's epistle, the heir came, a young Englisher, the heir-at-law, to quest the truth of the whole story, by which the session was fully damnified for their outlay for the burial. The minister got a braw picking, and it was said that Mr Scruple's count was vera reasonable, not being much above twenty pounds, all which was duly paid, and a gratos gift left for the poor of the parish, that was most contenting, being a five-pound Edinburgh bank note.

It was not to be thought, when all this was done, that there would be any o'ercome; but it happened, in distributing the five pound among the poor, one Janet Glasham got what would pay her house-rent, and had a shilling over and abune. Hech, sirs! but that was a most misfortunate shilling, for poor Janet thoct she might lay it out for winter coals, whereof she mended a good fire; and, alack! fell on it herself, and suffered a prejudice that she never got the better of, by which the coming in among us of Rupert Manners, Esq., was a clear calamity; for if he had not come, died, and been sought after by his heir, Janet might have been to the fore for many a day.

She was a douce, haining, considerate creature, who lived by herself in a small back-house, and her wheel was all the gudeman she had. The whole day she did nothing but draw a thread from a tow rock, and at night she went to her bed, and got up in the morning again to spin. No life could be more methodical than hers—the bell in the town clock of Dozent had more variety in its way of passing the time than auld Janet, inasmuch as it had twelve times a variety in its vocation of chapping the hours; yet, for all that,

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she was a well-contented patient body, and when the sun in the summer day glinted in at her window, she would sing a soft sang in a very pitiful manner, like a laverock that has grown old in a cage.

The death of Janet, which, as I have related, was brought on by her falling into the fire, occasioned many a remark, folk thinking that it betokened something, seeing that we were all so vogie about finding out who was Rupert Manners. But when Janet was gone, I had a consideration with mysell anent her, and the generality of the poor, for it was found, when she was lifted out of the fire, that she had not a neiveful of meal in her basin, and was just on the lip of poverty. What would have become of her had she not partaken of the Manners' mortification, is not easy to be known ; but it gave me much to think of, and how it is that the poor of this world live on, from day to day, picking a morsel on the edge of want, like a goat on the cornice of a craig, and they all come at last to the likes of me, borne on spakes, and are buried in a way of genteelity not to be told.

CHAPTER XXV.

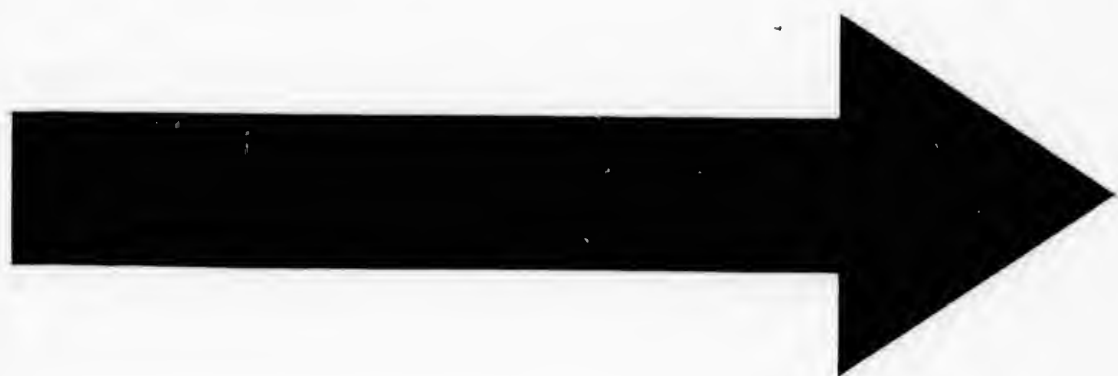
It would not be easy to tell how it happens that men, in my way of life, especially those in the grave-digging line, come to learn philosophy. But it surely comes of the fear of the mort-cloth and the winding-sheet ever before us, that makes us moral in our way of thinking, for what is habitude is no a kittle question.

Sometimes when I thought of the dead I grew eerie, and having reached the sobriety of thirty-five years, mother thought that I might be looking out for a wife, especially as the sacking weaving had been long on the thrive, and I had, gude kens how, scrapet together a bit haining, for I had turned the corner of pounds; but what sort of a wife I should wale, according to mother's advice, was not soon found. Young men may have a natural instinct in

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discerning suitable classes to make spouses ; but, as they grow older, they think what was prime at five-and-twenty, is out of season aboon thirty, and few women, however, will allow that they ever grow overly auld for young men. But a wedding is no a time for moralizing, and so, without saying much about it, I was quite of mother's opinion, that a wife was a useful article, and that I was come to such years of discretion as I ought to make a choice. Thus in the course of nature I became a gudeman, and in this way being all day on the sacking-loom, 'cept when I had a duty to perform in the kirk-yard, which was not so often as could sometimes have been wished, for life is a douce commodity in a country parish, I said to mother to look about and tell me who she thought would do, and then I would-na grudge to waur the time for a courtship, when she had lighted on a satisfaction.

Accordingly, the first fine mornings she went abroad like a butterfly, or a bumbee, that prees at every flower in the garden, and many a confabble we had at night before we found a proper object on which I should waur my tender affections. At last we condescended



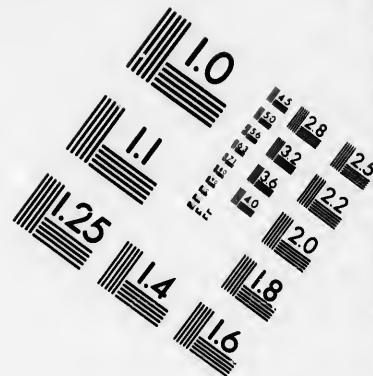
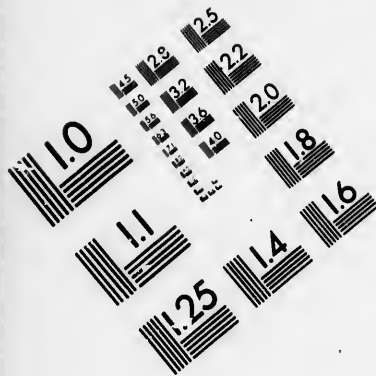
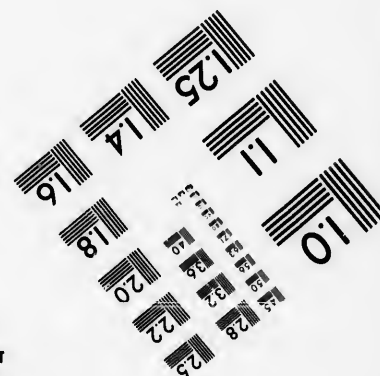
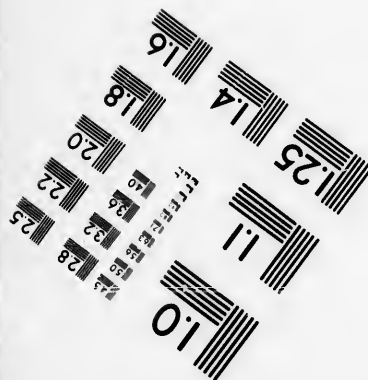
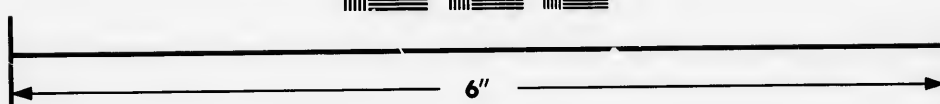
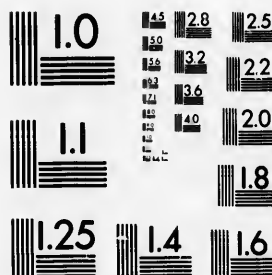


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on Leezy Bains, who, to say the truth, was neither tough nor contumacious to woo, but a sensible woman who caused no inroads on my work, for she knew the value of a day's darg, and had a wean before to a perjured wretch, who, notwithstanding he had given her marriage-lines, had fled the country, and was shotten in America as a soldier.

Sometime before mother went on her voyage of discovery, Leezy had lost her bairn, which was a fact well known to me, as I had not only howkit the grave, but helpit to bury it; and being thus as good as a single young woman, my thoughts turned that way, but I keepit a calm sough till I heard what the old hen would say.

"Jemmy, my dear," said she, one night, when she had been a-wife-hunting all day—"it's my cordial opinion that, with all her blemish, there's no such a quean neither in Dozent nor Bleakrigs, nor in all the country-side for seven mile about, as Leezy Bains—odd, she'll make a capital wife; for now that the wean's away, she's no a prin the waur o't."

I was most glad to hear mother speak this way, for I was afraid she would make an objek anent the

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wear, for it is not very usual for mothers, at our gate end, to approve of brides who have had families; but she saw that I was in want of a wife, and Leezy, at the very worst, as she said to me, was no waur than a widow.

Having settled that I should speer her price, I one night came off the loom early, and going home, put on my Sunday's clothes, and brushed my Sabbath-day's hat, and a-wooving then I went.

Leezy's father was a cotter that lived at a place they called the Rigend, and after going into the fire, where I cracked couthly some time, her mither speert at me pawkylie, if I was not going to take a wife yet; at the which I laughed, and by way of a gentle hint, said to Leezy, that maybe I had a quiet word to say when she was at leisure, by and by. Thus it came to pass we were alone by ourselves, walking in the minister's carse, in less than half an hour.

I was not mealy-mouthed, but told her, that being a man of several adoes, I could not spend time in idle talk, for there is nothing, in a purpose of marriage, like a man being on his peremptors. Her reply was, as mother said, when I told her, most judicious,—

"James," said she, "I have had an injury, and it's no every honest man would now mell with me; but if thine handmaid has found favour in thine eyes, the Lord's will be done."

So, from less to more, we had an occasion, and as mother had less to do, she married Thomas Grant, the elder, soon after our wedding, for a convenience, and me and Leezy had the house to ourselves; for Thomas was a bien man, and took his wife, that was my mother, home to his own dwelling.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER my marriage with Leezy Bains, we had a pleasant quiet time, and it was likewise not without a profit to me, for the season was unwholesome, and most wet, and Death had his own adoes in the parish with inflammations among frail folk, the scarlet fever just rampaging among the weans. Yet in all that smashrie, the sare stroke fell on no selected head. There was, to be sure, a moan made about Widow Troups, the midwife, when her soul creepit aneath the grass into Abraham's bosom, for she had been long an instrument in the plenishing of the world. I cannot say I was, however, besotted, like many others, concerning her talents; for, although they might be great in their way, it would not be natural if betherals did not look on howdies with an instinct like what dogs cherish against cats.

How, indeed, can it be otherwise, for the midwife's trade is to bring a superabundant population, which is an evil, as the dominie calls it, into the world, and the betheral's, to bury whom the Lord weeds from among them? So that, for three years, I do not find in my notes a necessity to make a spoke.

It's true, no doubt, we had in the meantime meickle to mak a reflecting head think, and having been by this time many years in my post, I began to mak observes, the foremost of which was very edifying, and well deserving of a quest.

Being in the kirkyard vera often, and called thither from the sacking loom, it came into my head, for I have a geny for seeing the falling-out of come-to-passes, that we live in a whirling world, and that there is no end to any thing, the chain of Providence being made, in a sense, of circularities: in short, that auld grannie Nature, leaning on a head-stane, plainly told that, as sure as there are times and seasons, there is a coming round of the same course of aspects in the moon and stars to tell men the end and the duration of tacks, and that it was little better to make a deviation from what she had appointed for

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them, than to think a day's darg could be carried into the night, or that Sunday could be changed to Thursday, or any other day of the week.

I was led to make the notandum concerning this, by reason of an alteration that my lord was seduced to make in the length of farm-leases, by an English surveyor that he invited from London to tell him how he best could fatten his income, every heritor having a turn that way.

This newfangled man gart my lord trow that spade-shafts could bear plums, and egged him on to all manner of mischief, insomuch that he persuaded him that the earth would yield her increase manifold, if his lordship would shorten the tacks of his farms, and make an introduction among his tenants of that outlandish practice from the east countrie, which, for a better name, is called rotation of crops. This whig-maleerie, I need not say, bred a stramash in the brains of decent folk; and Thomas Harrow, who was a long-headed man, said to me, when he consulted me on the subject, that it was vera sinful, for that the Creator made the world after himself, unchangeable, and that the natural cleading of the earth was green

grass, and that wheat and corn would in time come to be that; and that the labour of man was just an ettle to prevent it. Thus I was set on observing.

At first, I must allow, my progress in philosophy was small, for it is a kittle study; but at last, being in the kirkyard one day by myself, I happened to observe that the lettering of auld tombs was, on many, filled up with green moss, most particular to behold, and that the trees, where the plague is buried, had, on the north side, a hap of fog, like a fur-cloke on an auld leddy; and in time I came to notice, that although every year was not like its ancestor, there was a family-likeness; which led to the following discourse with the dominie, on a Saturday afternoon.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"MR M'SCUD," quo' I to the dominie, as he came towards me, "do you ken that I have made an observe?"

"No possible," quo' he; "what is it about?"

"Ye're acquaint," quo' I, "nae doubt, with this necromancie of my Lord's, for raising his rents, by doing clean away with leases and tacks, which have been sanctioned, as Mr Gallon, the exciseman, says, by the wisdom of our ancestors."

"I have kenn'd o't, and I think it a very notable way of putting money in his purse."

"Nae doubt, but it can never come to a bearing," was my well pondered reply, "for it's an even down contrariness to the laws of nature."

"How do you make out that?" cried he, a thought startled to hear me speak of the laws of nature, which

are as tough to understand as if they were king's statues, written in the Latin tongue.

"You see," quo' I, with the height of discretion, "that I have been meditating among the tombs—thinking of the bee in my lord's bonnet, I came to the braw table monument with six legs, under whilk Bailie M'Kyte's dear spouse is lying, as the 'pitaph testifies, and looking at it for a moral edification, reading anent her manifold merits, which are all set forth in a fine style of language, written by the minister of the parish, who was a deacon with a pen, I happened to notice by the date, that it had been erected just nineteen years, and noticing the date, I looked at the lettering, and lo and behold all the moss that should have been in them, was as clean gone as if it had never been there."

"Ay," said he, with a douce smile, "what of that?"

"What of that, Mr M'Scud?" quo' I; "does it not show, as the Belfast almanack tells us, that the golden number is complete in nineteen years, when the moon again recapitulates her courses, and all things have, as it were, a new beginning? I therefore say my lord is cloking on adle eggs with his rents,

when he would make a change in tacks. The King and Parliament might as soon expect to blot the Sabbath out of the week. No, no ; tacks are ordinations, and it's a sin to meddle with them."

"I give you great credit, Jamie," quo' Mr M'Scud, "for your observe and demonstration ;" which surely was saying something, and I answered and said—

"The books of sederunt and session, Mr M'Scud, are no doubt very instructive on all matters concerning sculduddery ; and if a man wants to see excellent characters, let him go to the kirkyard. However, it pleasures me to hear you connive at my motion anent nineteen years being the naturality of tacks."

"'Deed, Jamie," said he, "I have not read any thing like your observe, but I have a bit misdoot of the naturality of the thing, for I met the Dozent painter, who told me that he was going to paint the bailie's lady's monument, and had been cleaning the letters, so I am thinking, that maybe he had as much to say in your observe as Luckie Luna in the lift."

"Mr M'Scud," was my reply, "it's my opinion that you have not an enlightened understanding, for, in the work of nature, it does not signify what does

the turn, so that the turn be done; and surely ye must allow that Jock Slake, the painter, is just as efficacious for a job as any man that was ever in the heavens."

I said this with some birr, for I did not think Dominie M'Scud a sincere man, the bodie!

Seeing me a little snell, he began to spoot out his clishmaclavers of philosophy, saying that my observe about the return of the nineteen years deserved a consideration, and from less to more, rehearsed a vast deal out of paper books anent parades and processions of the 'quinoxes, saying that "nineteen years was not the exact period, for that every year was a thought ajee from another, which," quo' he, "leads me to think that this globe is only a sautlet of the sun, which is itself going in an orbit as a planet round another sun, that we maybe see only as a star, whilk star is only another sun, and so on another and another, for neither size nor numbers are of any account in infinite space."

I listened, to be sure, but I thought he spoke something very like nonsense, and then said—

"So ye think that the steadfast earth, as it is called in Scripture, is just a whirlygig?"

"If it's steadfast," said he, "on what does it stand?"

I looked at the man vera calmly, and replied, as I turned away with a contempt—"On the loof of the Almighty."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DURING the term of time when I had little professional duty to do, my *interregnum*, as it is called in law, towards the end of it my leisure was occupied with very serious considerations. Mr Canny, soon after the confabble with Mr M'Scud, that was then dominie and session-clerk—he would have been precentor too, but he was timber-tuned, and had no more voice than a lidless butter-firkin—departed this life. He had been long complaining of an income in his right leg—some said it was the rheumatics, others that it was a gouty complaint, but I kent better, for it was just a sore leg. It's however, no for me to give a name to the calamity—I leave that to the doctors. Whatever it was, it gaed to his heart like a stang, and he coupit one night off his chair, and was cauld dead in the licking of a low.

There was a great willywaying in the parish for Mr Canny, because, although he was a man that kent the frailty of our poopit, and didn't lay on overly hard, he was weel liket, especially by the old women, who only came to the kirk in the lown summer afternoons, and were of a dozy disposition, saying, with a wee pawkerie, that it was just as pleasant to hear Mr Canny as to take a dram, or five-and-twenty drops of laudanum, adding, with a laigh sniggering laugh, and as effectual. However, he was an illess bodie, and if he was a preacher in a state of moderation, they would have dunkled the side of the truth, had they said that there was any harm in him.

After his death, the widow, with her five dochters, went to sojourn in the douce town of Irville, and we had a to-do with the successor to the minister, for he was a stern and masterful ecclesiastic, with a nose that a partan's-toe was not redder, and a blae potato's not rounder.

He was a man rather above the years of discretion, and had been the incumbent of a neighbouring parish of which my lord was also the patron ; but it was weel to be seen that Dr Forkail did not need any other

help for a translation from Duckdubs to Bleakrigs, than that the stipend of Bleakrigs was several bolls better than that of Duckdubs, foreby the kane, of which Duckdubs had none; and I should here observe, that it is not a comfortable Christianity in which ministers are given inordinately to glebes and stipends, and I say this with some contrition, seeing that I belong to the kirk myself, being a betheral, and should not speak out of doors of what is done in the school.

When it was first minted that Dr Forkail was to get a sort of a call to be our minister, several sober and sagacious carles made a very just remark, saying, that he should stay where he was, for he was owre weel known, and that a minister, be the difference of stipend what it might, committed a great trespass on prudence, who changed from one neighbour parish to another. "He should always," said they, "go to some place farther off"—a saying which, I thought, was a kithing of a discerning spirit. Thus it came to pass, that although it could not be said that Dr Forkail's coming bred a riotous hobbleshaw among us, for he was well known as the preacher on the Thurs-

day when we had the occasion, yet there was a murmuring among the people, and he had a thin kirk to preach to when he mounted the poopit for the first time as the minister.

Howsomever, the doctor was not a man to fash himself with a heart-break grief for such a deficiency ; indeed, I was more wae for him than I think he was himsell, for when he lookit about from on high in the poopit, and saw the want that was in the seats, my heart sank with shame ; but if there was ony change in his countenance, it couldna be seen—maybe, however, that might be owing to his having for a constancy a red-cabbage complexion.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BUT although Dr Forkail was a more extraordinary man than Mr Canny, I kenna how it came to pass that he was never among us held in such estimation as the Psalm sings of the man that lifted up his axe thick trees upon. Partly it might be owing to his looking overly glegly into the matters of his stipend, as he was just desperate about the kane, and was vera fond of a roasted fat hen to his supper. 'Deed, the ill speakers of the parish did not stop at saying that he was in a sense a bootyer, for they said it even down. Upon the whole, however, the gentry were well pleased with the doctor, for he was a man surely of great parts, and my lord had him to dine at the Castle every time the family came down from London, to keep up their connexion, and that was very nearly every summer.

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But in one respect the doctor, like many other ministers, was a most ill-used man, and an object of pity. When minister of Duckdubs, as in duty bound, being incumbent, he drew up the statistical account of that parish, for Sir John's wonderful work, as it was called by the clergy. It was a doing, and was as thick as a Bible, having in it all manner of particularities, and great things were expected of the honour and fame it would bring to him ; but before it appeared, he came over to be our minister. Soon after, however, the book it was in came out, and, oh dear ! but there was a sight to be seen—all his account of the frae Dan to Beersheba of Duckdubs, was clippit and dock't into such a small commodity, that it was a shame to be seen. Peggy Murdock, his lass, said he was driven speechless to see his inditing made ignorantly concise.

This was bad enough, no doubt, but the first woe was a flea-bite compared to the second ; for it happened that in the parish of Duckdubs a goose had been born that was most comical, and in his account, he had spoken at large anent this immethodical made-up beast, and had talked much of the consternation it

would cause to the learned, particularly to the professors of colleges, and the like philosophers. But, lo! when the book came out, all about the goose, and many another equally interesting fact, was nowhere to be found; which is a clear proof what sort of store should be set by Sir John's book, when things so important, indicating, as the doctor himself said, a disposition in nature to change the conformation of the inhabitants of the world. The goose of Duckdubs was no more like a common goose than is a member of Parliament, although it is the fashion to speak of some of them, in a metaphorical sense, as things of that speshy. However, 'cepting this observe, I shall say no more about it here, for it fasht the doctor, and it was thought his sermons were the waur of it till folk got used to them.

But surely Dr Forkail was a man well deserving of being a pattern, for about the end of ten months—it was within the year—there came to resident in the parish, for the benefit of his health, a pale and wan whey-faced man, that was by trade a poet, and to him the minister was very kind—for you know that folk afflicted with the poeticals, are real objects of

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charity. This invalid being white in the ginulls, and the doctor for colour a perfect peony rose, that misleart birkie, Mr Gallon, the exciseman, who had been a wally-de-sham to my lord's brother, had not a right reverence for them, and called the one, by reason of his white face, the lily, and the doctor he called the rose. Thus the lily and the rose came to be adhesive to both, though it could not be said either of them deserved the honour, for they could not help their looks.

Nevertheless, the lily was a very indefatigable man, rising often in the dead hour of the night, putting his thoughts on a sklate which lay on the window-sole beside the candle that he always in the night kept burning; I have seen it myself, in the likeness of a stern, when I had occasion to go under the cloud to Dozent. Mr Gallon, who was addicted to misca', ay spoke of it as the poet's spunkie.

Quo' I, "What do you mean by that?"

Quo' he, "It's his geny."

Now, I had often heard of Mr Metre's geny; but how he worshipped it in the night, under the shape of a candle, is beyond my comprehension. Never-

theless, though he was a man of a nerve, and given to comstrainties, he was a very commendable character, only he was surely at times a wee daft, for he had a way of talking to himself on the roads, that made me wae to see him ; and when the weather was warm, he would sit on a table tomb-stone in the kirk-yard, to the hinderance often and detriment of my duty, making his hands go like a demented man, playacting. But of his latter end it behoves me to be more special, as will be seen in the next Chapter.

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CHAPTER XXX.

MR METRE was, as I have said, afflicted with a decay of nature when he came to the parish, and he was not long among us till he was a perfect atomy; ye might have seen the soul in his body as plainly as a candle burning in a horn bowit; and it was evident, as Mr Gallon said, that he was in Death's market-cart, trintling away to the other world. For all that, he was nevertheless a particular man, though not without a vagarie, for he suffert much detriment by staying out ower lang and late in the dewy evenings, looking at the stars, and playing at boo-peep with the moon, as she geided lamping against and through a swift carry.

At last he grew all mouth and een, and not being able to converse after gloaming with the powers of the air, he used to sit at the window, in a heigh-ho

posture, making a moan as if there had been a something in going out o' a sinful world, never thinking that, as it is ordained for all flesh once to die, there cannot be an uncommonality in death, though it must be allowed that it is a sore thing, when the time comes, for the stoutest heart to go through the trial.

Having a notion that he would soon need my help to put him aneath the yird, I went to speer for him every morning after getting my breakfast, which is certainly an earthly, not a moral pastime; and sometimes we had on those occasions a few words of edification, wherein he surely spoke as a man that had words of a bonny sound at command. But although it was pleasant to hear him when the kittling in his hass was not molesting, there was at times a kind of a dream in his spirit, that often made me eerie, and really I had my doubts an he was quite orthodox; but that is the nature of human creatures troublet with the poeticals. God be thankit! our parish is clear of them, though now and then we have had the measles and small-pox. Mr Metre did not of right pertain to us, but was an incomer.

At last he came to his dead-ill, and on that morn-

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ing, as was my wont, I went to see him, and he was the first soul I ever saw weeded from the world, though my trade and calling obligated me to have many han'lings with the dead.

He was lying on the bed in a very disjasket condition, his blue een as if they had been boiled, his teeth standing out, and his lips drawn back; he was a humling sight, and he was just living, and no more.

Around the bed were several decent women, neighbours, looking on, and saying, hech, sirs!—and every thing betokened that the Lord was busy there. For myself, I was consternated at the sight, and every body was in the solemnities. By and by, however, he gave a startling flush, as if his departing spirit looked from the threshold of life, and was laith and afraid to face the mirk night of death. Oh! but I was terrifiet, for one of the carlins that was standing at the bedfoot said to me, in a whisper, that the poeticals were upon him, and shaking her head, added, but “it soon will be all over:” nor was she far wrong, for he then just gave a greathoast, and his gentle spirit flew away, leaving its earthly vestment behind.

I am the more particular about the latter end of Mr Metre, because I was there and saw it, and because he was the only corpse that I ever heard of that died of the poeticals in the parish of Bleakrigs. No doubt, some said that it was only a common consumption that untimeously carried him off, and the minister, I will allow, rather leant that way; but what had a natural consumption to do communing with the stars, or holding untimely dalliance with the moon?

After his death, a great sough ran about the country-side concerning it, and in two days the Irville hearse came for the body, and balked me of my fee, for it took him home to his own parish, and made a grand kyllylvie about his clay, just as if it had been a living human commodity. The bleak wind is, however, tempered to the shorn lamb, for although I was whisked out of the grave-digging after all my pains, yet there was a mercifulness in his removal to another part of the country, that cannot be told, and which pacified in me the spirit of disappointment. By the by, as a *nota bene*, I should state that his coffin was the first in my time covered with black cloth, for a

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remnant was gotten in Mr Tamin's cloth-shop in Irville ; it was, to be sure, a thought moth-eaten, but that maun be in a bad condition that's no good enough for the cannibal worms of the kirkyard.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FOR mony a day after the departal of Mr Metre, and which was more on account of himself than for the advent and coming to pass, I had only plain parish work, just cases of common fever and siclike; at last, however, we had a doing that was a great cause of sympathizing. Long before my time, two outlandish kind of folk, Irishers or Englishers, came to Dozent for a change of air, the wind in that place never biding lang in one airt; and they lived very soberly and much by themselves. Having only one child, a brave well-bred laddie, when he had gotten what schooling they could afford to give him, he was sent to a friend in an o'ersea land like America, and shortly after the father and mother died, none knowing whence they had come—as little indeed as it

was known into what world they had departed. But they were removed, and in time their memory faded from among us.

By and by—I was then of some repute as the betheral—this son, grown into a portly gentleman, came home, with the notion of spending the residue of his life among us, and in the neighbourhood where his parents had at last, as he said, found a resting-place.

He was a quiet, calm, and thoughtful man, of a composed countenance, putting up with the inconveniences of life with great temperance. But he had not long come, when he was smitten with a mortal malady, and while yet a stranger, was gathered to the yird as if he had never been. Some of the elderly people recollected his father and mother, and spoke of them as of aloof sojourners; but nothing was known of their pedigree, nor of their native land; and if Mr Blemish, as the deceased gentleman was named, knew aught of their nation or kindred, the scent died with him.

Nothing could be more clear and simple seemingly than this affair, but when it came to pass, great was

the to-do it caused, the very minister, Dr Forkail, then stricken in years, speaking of it from the poopit, as a thing that should be laid to heart, and meditated thereon in the watches of the night. Not a tongue was within the four corners of our bound but wondered what the Blemishes could be, and not a bosom that was not sorrowful to think of them, and yet knew not wherefore it was so. Upon the subject, Dr Forkail made a preaching, that many good judges said had a pith in it, and which proved he could be a man of talent when he chose. Well-do I mind the discourse.

He likened Mr Blemish to this world—which we come into, not knowing whence we come, and going away, not knowing whence we go; and his words of improvement, at the end of his sermon, left not a dry eye in the congregation. Indeed, it was one of the marvels of the time, to think how Mr Blemish was spoken of, and the piteous compassion that filled to overflowing every breast when he was mentioned, as if because he was so little known, he was so well liked.

There was a great congregation at his funeral, gentle and semple were there; the very weans followed

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in silence, hand in hand, and the kirkyard was as the burying of an idol among the heathen ; and a spirit was upon us all, like as if it were the interment of the last of a generation. The very mools, as they fell on the coffin, had an echo in my heart, and I was very sad, though well used to bury very worthy people.

Never could I understand what made the end of Mr Blemish so mystical ; and it was well said by old Janet Pettigrew, that it was like the burial of Malchedic, who was without father or mother, and thought, in the days of the ancient delusion, to be ordained a priest for ever.

But strange things come to pass at times, and there is no wisdom in rejecting what we do not understand. Who can tell what is death, or wherefore the wicked and the afflicted are sent into the world. There is no doubt a pleasure in seeing the fortunate and the happy ; but although in a sense I am but a betheral, it is no be sought for in this world of time to know that man is incapable of understanding for what he is made. Mr Blemish, however, was a good

man ; but the iniquities of the fathers are visited on the children, and if he had not an ancestor that had brought a curse on the race, what for did loneliness environ them, and awe attend his burial ?

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CHAPTER XXXII.

FOR divers seasons after the departal of that lanerly man, Mr Blemish, we had no great uncocs in the parish. The weather was generally drier than wont, and my income suffered a thought in consequence; for it was as if life grew tougher. We had, however, a sprinkling of bairns; but though they served to keep my hand in, it cannot be said that they are the proper gear to turn the penny with; but the interim was not without a commotion, and it is very necessar that posterity should be made acquainted with the right outs and ins of the job.

It is well known that the heritors of a parish are among the most ne'er-begun of the human speshy, making an ado about a nail as if it were a clawfoot table; and the heritors of Bleakrigs, feuars and sub-feuars, had of course the natural contraction, and

were most sikker about any sort of outlay to uphold the kirk. This being the case, the stramash whereof I have to make mention fell out in this way.

The King, as he had a right to do, waged a war after the King of France had gotten his head haggled off by the democrawls, and there was one Yerl Howe that he sent out with ships to captivate the French men of war, which the Yerl did in a most obedient manner, bringing them in all in a disjaskit condition. So bringing them in, when the news came amang us, there was great gladness in our parish ; but I could not see the rightful cause of such mirth, for it was a defrauding of the kirkyard of its righteous dues, to put so many men to death, and drown their bodies without Christian burial. However, I said nothing, but let the fools and weans take their daffin.

It happened, however—the Gude kens how—that a swarm of birkie callans and bardie lasses took it into their heads in the gloaming to perform an exploit ; and, accordingly, with shouts and glee, they went in a troop to the kirkyard, and in a blasphemous manner loosened the rope of the bell, and began to make it

jow and jow with profanity, setting up every now and then a laugh that was dreadful.

I hearing the bell capering and clamouring as if it was gaen by itself, went to the place, and told the childer that I would end their sport, for they ought to have gotten my leave or the minister's first. Not that I was contrary, but being an official, I had naturally a regard for the maintenance of a lawful authority. They, however, hooted and scooted me, and the lasses were waur than the laddies, who were busy at the ringing, while they stood around on the tombs and graves, and held out their fingers at me in a most sacrilegious way. So from less to more, my corruption began to rise, and I made an endeavour to disperse the riotous mob, but it was only ripping the ribs, and making the fire burn fiercer. At last I grew perfectly wud at seeing such condumacity, and running into the bell-rope, tried to wring it out of their talons; but whether with them pulling against me, or that Providence was slack on its post, the bell was drawn out of its hauding, and came to the ground among us with a birr that made all the hobbleshow flee like chaff before the wind, and I cooled with

thankfulness that nobody was brained by the fall of the demented bell.

But the catastrophe did not end here. It was needful to make a reparation of the damage, and I was directed by the session to see it done. When, however, the account came in, the session made a referando to the heritors, and the heritors, with their inherent sikkerliness, refused to pass it, saying it ought to be paid by the parishioners in general, which was most iniquitous; but I lose my temper when I call to mind the wickedness of heritors, feuars, and sub-feuars, for it would make a dry-stone-dyke sweat with agony to hear what a trouble I had on the head of that calamity, and which gars me say, that if all victories cost the nation as dear as the first of June did to me, they would be ill aff for a turn that would fight for them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BRING by this time well stricken in years, mother an old woman, and Leezy, my wife, skewered with a siatyca in her hip joint, it could not be said that time ran so smoothly on the trintle with me as when my head was green, and my heart plump with the jocundity of youth; for although I was never, as Dr Forkail declared of my Lord's second son, a chartered libertine, I had been younger, and it comes from nature to the young to be blither than the older creatures. I was, in truth, of the douce order of lads, and being in my nonage elevated to the post of betheral, came to be of a sedate and methodical character. I say this, because it may be thought from the foregoing chapter and hobblement, that brought down the kirk bell among us, that I was sometimes

not overly judicious, but I assure the courteous reader this was not the case. I have reached the age of three-score and ten, with all manner of respect in my calling, which is more than mony can say who hold their heads higher.

It lay far, however, from my hand to meddle with politickals, but you see because of the accident and the fasherie of the 'count I could not skip the bell, and something almost as bad came to pass that I ought likewise to notice.

From the time that Dr Forkail came into the incumbency, there was a murmuring among the people. Some did not like his preaching, because it was rather in a fine style of language. Others said he had a cast of the new light, but I thought him a great comfort to any parish, especially in a warm afternoon. But it's a thing plain to be seen, that whenever it is ordained that a change is to come about in religious matters, it is sure to kythe at the commencement of a new ministry. So he had not long been translated into Bleakrigs, than men of a ruling spirit began to talk of bigging, by superscription, a seceder meetinghouse, kirk it could not be, as

they had not the privilege of building a steeple to it, and from a bell they were utterly debarred.

When I heard the resolution to this upshot had come among us, it birzt, as I may well say, my inward parts, and quo' I to myself, they will next abolish the parish kirk, and if death were not, luckily, stronger than mortal man, their sinfulness would make a bowling-green of the kirkyard, shovelling to smoothness its crunkliness of graves and headstones.

It was not, however, for many a year after, that the seceding interest came to any head; but as the war raged, folk grew more and more religious, especially the better order, who became sensible of the error of their way. The commonalty, however, did not mend, and some of them thought that a parish minister was a very unnecessary stipendary extravagance. In short, one Peter Headles, a weaver, was moved by the Little Gude one day to go among his friends for a collection to set the seceding job a-going, and the corruption of human nature was manifested by the heartening he got, notwithstanding that next Lord's day Mr Doitle, from Irville, a probationer, showed, in his discourse, that schisms were a type and fore-

runner of the end of the world ; he was not, however, a daunting preacher, for which cause he never got a kirk, but his ettle to make a solemnity with big words was surely by common.

By and by, when Peter Headles and his treasonous clanjamphry had collected a penny sufficient to authorize them to show head-rape, they got a plan for a holding-forth houff, from an architecturer in Glasgow, and began their edification ; but there was not a trowel of lime wasted thereon that did not play clash on my heart, for I thought if seceder bikes were allowed in the land, it would not be long till God's gorbies were fleeing, and that if the ministers were driven like peelings of onions, it would not be long till betherals and kirkyards were sent after them ; nor was this an apprehension without a reason, for when Peter Headles' convenience, as it was called, was ready and opened, we had a very thin kirk that day, and Dr Forkail was, no doubt, a mortified man. As for me, I could not all the night open my lips, being persuaded the latter days were come. However, the right sooner or later aye comes in sight. After the newfangleness anent Peter Headles' folly had abated,

the sheep that had strayed from us began to return ; but opinion after was ay a wee coggly, which shows that there is a danger to the establishment whenever ye see such pestiferous iniquities, as relief kirks, burgher, and antiburgher gatherings growing rife. As to annabaptists, it is well known they are no better than idolators.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

As it is as natural for a man to be buried as to be born, it stands to reason that the betheral's due is as righteous a charge as the cess that the session-clerk lays on for a baptism; and so it was accounted in our parish, time out of mind, till a man that had made his fortune in London town came back to resident among us.

This man, I have heard, was, besides being in a topping way in London, a member of the vestry, which is something about the Government, and was a most clever 'dividual, looking into every thing, and thinking how he could skin a bawbee for a saving—being, as I have heard, of his Majesty's Opposition. Well, it so fell out, soon after he came among us, that the influenza rampaged in the parish; and after it came a new kind of fever that they called the

typus, which was most deadly, making all other calamities bairns' play compared to the rank ringing rabiator which it was.

This typus, being as it were an inmate with the poor, death had most to do with them, insomuch, that there was a depopulation of poor folk, which some thought one thing of, and some another; but Mr Tint, the London drysalter, of whom I have made mention, saw in it only a reason to lower the kirkyard fees, which, for many a day and generation, had suffered no sort of detriment; on the contrary, if there was any change, it was for the better.

I cannot say that I was just overly well pleased to hear of this political economy, and thought Mr Tint was surely fashed with an idleset to think of filing his hands with the mools; for, said I, it is well known that all afflictions soon pass away, and no man of a right understanding would think of making an alteration in the course of nature, because of the temporality of an affliction; and I made it manifest to the minister himself that it was very indiscreet to meddle with what concerned the dead. However, Mr Tint being of the seed of the Reformers, got, by

dint of speechifications, what was called a regulation of the betheral fees, especially in the case of poor folk that drew their support from the parish, and I had no help for it but to submit. Indeed, I saw that the spirit of Reform, or, as I should call it, the spirit of niggerality, was abroad, and that all degrees of public men, from the King sitting on his throne with the crown on his head doing nothing, to the betheral toiling with his spade in the kirkyard, howking a grave in wet weather, was obligated to thole hampering in their vocation. But, nevertheless, I made myself a reflection, saying, that formerly haining and saving were twa words of the same significance; but in latter days we skippet haining altogether, and whamlet savings upside down, or rather putting scrimpit in sense to serve for both. Indeed, for the haining and saving of the good old fashion, we have gotten scrimpit and abridging, which are unco different. In the auld time, it was a saying, that what we hain we gain, and what is saved is profit. But things are all changed, and we make nothing now but a cauldrie penny by our savings. No residue is to be taken up in baskets by the kind of saving that the

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newfangled meconomists fash themselves and other folk about. There is no remnant to be saved; in short, a clean clipping away, and yet we think that we should grow richer by becoming more narrow contracted.

This sagacity in me bred an upshot which I will presently rehearse; for being by now well stricken in years, I jaloused it was time to retire from business, giving up trade, and to resolve on spending the gloaming of life, not in howking graves, but in, as they say in the Latin tongue, digging taties.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE courteous reader will have seen, by the foregoing chapter, that I was drawing to an end with what I had to say, and really, among other trades that are on the go, a betheral's is no thriving, which is a thing I can't understand; but surely it is the case, for every body says the nation is over-peopled, and how that could be if people died as fast now as they did in old time, I leave to men of a mathematical understanding to judge; but seeing that this was ower true, I made a reflection one sleety, snowy, blustering winter day, and it came to pass in this manner.

For some time before, I had been ourie, sitting by the fire, and thinking flosophy, when the gude-wife brought in word that Thomas Groceries, that keepit the shop in Dozent, had departed this life

with a poplexy, saying that she hoped there would be a change in the weather before the day of his burial.

I wished so too; for being ourie, as I have said, it was not a savory vocation to howk graves when the ground was constipated with frost. However, both me and my wife were disappointed; the ill weather continued, and a day was set for the interment that was really like a judgment. However, though the snow was on the ground, the cloud in the lift, and the storm in the air, a grave must be provided.

I thought to play off a diplomatical in this matter, and as it was coorse wark to make the grave in such weather, I reasoned with myself that I ought to keep my bed, which would allow time for a change, if it was so ordained. Mr Groceries, however, had a son who was not overly civilized, and he, having covenanted with his kith and kin to be at the occasion, was just neither to bind nor to hold when he heard that I was ill, and more like one that would be soon in a grave than in a condition to howk one.

So, from less to more, he made a complaint to

the session, and the session, like all other public bodies, having no conscience, sent word to me that it was a most extraordinary thing to neglect Mr Groceries' grave, saying, that if I was a lamiter man, and no in a condition to do my duty in all weather, it behoved them to provide a helper and successor.

I was very theiveless at hearing this, and said they might do as they pleased, but I was not laid in the bed by the hand of man. This was a truth, for the wife helped me.

The answer, that I had no thought would please them, had a clean contrary effeck; a helper was gotten affhand, and except for a pleasantrie now and then in fine weather, I was spared from the laborious part of my post; so having come thus into some leisure, I have put together the contents of this book, being sure that it will be most acceptable to the remotest posterity.

END OF THE BETHERAL.

ATHOL;

A TRAGEDY.

INSCRIBED AS A TESTIMONY OF OBLIGATION,

TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD GLENLYON.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

KING JAMES THE FIRST OF SCOTLAND.

DUKE OF ALBANY.

ATHOL, *Uncle to King James.*

LORD JAMES STUART, }
LORD ALEXANDER STUART, } *Sons of the Duke of*
 } *Albany.*

BISHOP WARDLAW.

STUART.

GRAHAM.

DUNBAR.

SIR WILLIAM CRICHTON.

FRIAR.

HERALD.

WOMEN.

THE QUEEN.

DUCHESS OF ALBANY.

LADY ATHOL.

MIRKELYNE.

MAUD. .

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ATHOL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Interior of a Cave obscurely lighted.

MIRKELYNE, *sola*.

Mirk. Some one did knock, or have I dreamt the
sound,

That from my lonely couch at this dread hour
Hath summon'd me to rise ? *[Knocking.]*

Again—Who comes,
In such a night, at this unhallow'd time,
To break the rest of a deserted wretch,
Whom all the world rejects ?

Athol (without.) Open, good dame.

Mirk. Who and what art thou ? say what would'st thou here ?

Athol (without.) Unbolt thy door—give me admission.
[*She opens the door.*]

Mirk. Athol !

Athol. Ha ! dost thou know me ? (*Aside*). Hath her airy agents,

By their mysterious inspiration, told
The purport of my coming ?

Mirk. How is this,
That you, my lord, forego the holy sleep,
And through the hurtling of the winter's storm,
Invade my drear abode ?

Athol. I would consult thee.

Mirk. In what may one that thirty years forlorn,
In this dark cavern nursing but grim thoughts
Of fatal wrongs that never can be sooth'd,
Advise the darings of ambitious Athol ?
Why look you pale ? I know the country round
Hath call'd me witch, and oft in tower and hall
The whisper'd fables of my art obtain
The thrilling faith of many a heart that mocks

'Th' attested miracles of relics shrined.

And you have come to bid me draw aside

The curtain of your destiny? 'Tis so.

Athol. If thou canst thus the unutter'd thought
discover,

Then show me what I ask.

Mirk. My lord—my lord—

You would have that which may not be enjoyed

Without some wondrous chance. Beware—beware—

It is not good, else had you rather strove

To reach it by the daylight path of honour,

'Than sought to know if Fate had order'd it.

Athol. And has she?

Mirk. Yes, if——

Athol. What?

Mirk. Dare you attempt—

By bloody stratagem?——

Athol. Shall I succeed?

Mirk. Success will ever crown determined guilt.

Athol. Who shall succeed King James?

Mirk. Avaunt! Avaunt!

There is a sheathless dagger in thy grip,

Crimson'd at midnight with thy kindred's gore—

Lo ! on thy head a dreadful hand doth place
A glowing circlet like the kingly crown.

[*Exit MIRKELYNE.*]

Athol. Stay, dreadful oracle, and tell me more.

SCENE II.

The Cloisters of an Abbey.

FRIAR and GRAHAM.

Friar. Remorseless homicide, hadst thou died then,
A gentle tear from some religious eye
Perhaps had dropt on thy untimely tomb.

Grah. I have confess'd—why will you not absolve
me?

Friar. Oh, what avails the verbal tale of guilt,
While the foul heart delights still in the sin?

Grah. Do you refuse?

Friar. Why ask you absolution,
When no contrition moves you to repentance?
I do but ill to hear you—go your ways,
And, 'till with penitence, come not to me.

Grah. Thou saucy priest! [*He draws his dagger, but disturbed, retires.*]

Enter ATHOL.

Athol. My cousin Graham with you,
And with his dagger drawn!—What does he here?

Friar. He came in hopes to gain the royal pardon,
And as a prelude, but without compunction,
Confess'd the outrage on the Lomond's side.

Athol. Why did he threaten you?

Friar. My holy duty
Would not allow me, to such wanton guilt,
To grant the absolution. Oh! my lord,
If e'er high Heaven for its occult designs
Permits the demon of malignity
To be incarnated with human form,
The hellish spirit lurks within that man.
But you are thoughtful—and I do forget
He is your kinsman.

Athol. But a man unblest'd—
And should he fail to gain the royal pardon,
Heaven knows what treason may infect his vengeance!

Friar. Hard is the task that waits upon King James.

Athol. He is expected with the Court at Edinburgh.

Friar. So I have heard.

Athol. And thither I am going.

Come with me—come. But we must make good speed.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Hall in Holyrood-house. KING JAMES, the QUEEN,
ATHOL, LADY ATHOL, STUART, &c.

GRAHAM *enters aside, and having given ATHOL a Petition, retires.*

Queen. The chilling gloom of these old low'ring
halls

Strikes to my heart a superstitious dread,
As if the sullen Genius of the place
Grudged to allow us entrance.

King. Say not so.

A gentle heart may dwell in a rough breast.

Queen. Ah me ! how oft shall I, foreboding, rue
That fatal hour which, with the name of freedom,
Made you the bondsman of this rugged race !

King. That thou dost love me, Jane, my faithful heart,

In every fold with thy fair image glowing,

Believes as fondly and as fervently

As ever worshipper had faith in shrine.

But as my life, my honour would be loved,

And thou shouldst see, with more dejected care,

My mind relaxing in the regal trusts,

Than my fond eyes light wandering from thyself.

Queen. But you too sternly urge avenging justice.

King. Kings have two natures and two characters.

The one they share with all man's erring race,

And in their passions, weaknesses, and sins,

Move like their meanest vassal ; but the other

Makes them like gods—abstracted and sublime,

And as in act they favour right or wrong,

They thence become as powers of heaven or hell.

[*ATHOL comes forward with the petition.*]

Athol. My sovereign liege.

[*Presents the petition.*]

King. What would our worthy uncle ?

Athol. Your highness' pardon for a loyal kinsman.

King. It grieves me to refuse you any boon.

[*Returns the petition.*]

Athol. My gracious liege—

King. We cannot be entreated

Till we have search'd the troubles of the realm,
And found from what corrupted source they flow.

Queen (to Athol). For whom did you entreat?

Athol. My cousin Graham.

Queen (to King). It was not, sir, for any common
vassal,

But for a kinsman, one of noble blood.

King. I'm sorry for't, but if the nobly born
Will lend themselves to deeds that shame the basest,
The degradation which impartial justice
Brings with their punishment as common felons,
Is but apportion'd to the rank they stain.

Athol. But he is, sir, a bold and dangerous man.

King. And therefore should be pardon'd. Is it so?
Then he is Scotland's King. No more of this.
Eighteen long years, an exile from our throne,
We have in England pass'd, unthought of here,
Hearing how crime with you had grown to custom :
Then did we vow, if heaven should e'er restore

The ancient sceptre of our royal state,
To use all faculty of head and hand
In its suppression. As we swore, my lord,
Here we in Edinburgh ratify the vow.
Come let us in. My gentle Jane, thy hand.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

An Apartment.

STUART and ATHOL.

Stuart. He treats us all, his poor submissive
subjects,

As if we ne'er had felt the pride of man,
But were as tame to brook his rigid service
As the bought eunuchs of an Eastern despot.
Let those that fear him to his humour bend;
He'll find no slave in me.

Athol. Hush, nephew, hush—

'Tis my wife's steps; this theme is not for her.

Go, leave me now, we'll speak of it again.

[*Exit* STUART.]

Enter LADY ATHOL.

Lady A. Why keep you thus of late so much apart,
Musing, as 'twere, of some indignity?

Athol. Indignity!

Lady A. Ay, my dear lord, what is't?
You were not wont to ask such strict enforcement
Of the accustom'd homage of your train.
Has aught in me offended, that you now
Withhold your love and wonted confidence?

Athol. I am disturb'd by these unsettled brawls
Throughout ill-fated Scotland. Our young king
Moves as a lordly war-ship o'er the waves,
Still reckless of all danger. Let him sail;
He knows not well the waters, nor what rocks
Lurk prompt with destiny to mar his voyage.

Lady A. You much amaze me, Athol.

Athol. Could you think,
The first request that I have stoop'd to make
He has refused?

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Lady A. That might be wisely done.
What did you ask?

Athol. But pardon for my cousin.

Lady A. Did you then sue for Graham?

Athol. And was refused.

Lady A. My dearest lord, who tempted you to that?
Sure some malignant planet ruled the hour
When you were ravell'd with that bad man's fate.

Athol. What unsubstantial terror shakes thee thus?
Look to thy household cares, and leave me mine.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

An Apartment in the Castle of Falkland.

DUCHESS of ALBANY. *Her sons, LORD JAMES and
ALEXANDER STUART—the latter a mute.*

Duchess. Let me not hear again these ribald
threats :
The king is just ; and though his weeding hand

May pluck with tares some wholesome wheat away,
Yet his great purpose gains all good men's praise,
And should by you, the princes of his blood,
Be honour'd and uphel .

Lord James. Would you have us,
Like common hinds, stoop to implore his mercy,
And be as haughtily repulsed as Graham ?

Duch. Yes, I would see you—for you need his
pardon—

Implore with penitence the gracious boon.

Lord James. You speak not, mother, as becomes
your station.

Duch. Thou heretic of nature ! hence, and learn
The honour to thy prince and parent due.
Unfilial boys ! what but your father's power
Has saved you from the vengeance of the law ?
Do you forget he has that power no more ?

Enter the DUKE of ALBANY with letters.

Alb. Now ye intemp'rate spirits, shall ye know
The fearful difference of a monarch's rule,
And an indulgent father's.

Duch. What has happened ?

Alb. Last night their brother Walter was arrested,
And on the instant to the Bass convey'd.

Duch. These are not tidings, Murdo, to renew
The bickerings of our hearth. O speed to court ;
Go with your father there.

Lord James. What ! shall we drop
Like trembling larks into the adder's mouth !

Duch. (to ALBANY). Why did you e'er recall this
ruthless king ?

I see but in the justice of King James
Thine and their fate.

Alb. And yet you did rejoice.

Duch. A joy of hope without assurance bred ;
Already by their moody looks 'tis plain
The rebel fiend is egging on revenge.

[Exit DUCHESS.

Lord James. Away to court !—Cringe, and be
spurn'd again !

Alb. Wherefore this heat ? What moves your cho-
ler, James ?

Lord James (pointing to his brother). He's but a
spaniel in the lion's lair. [Exit LORD JAMES.

[Cries of the DUCHESS and Women heard.

Alb. What mean these cries ?

Re-enter LORD JAMES, with Attendants.

Lord James. To arms !—my lord, to arms !

A herald claims our persons at the gate.

Alb. Which of us ?

Lord James. All—all pris'ners to the king—

But I will not surrender. Ho ! without !

Make fast the gates, and stoutly man the wall.

Enter Herald attended.

Her. In the king's name, ye are my pris'ners.

Lord James. Will no one pluck that bauble from
his grasp ?

Traitors ! Do all refuse me ?

Alb. (to Herald). Sir, lead on.

The curse that weighs upon the blood of Stuart

Hath fall'n heavily on me and mine.

END OF FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment.

ATHOL and Friar.

Athol. Warrants are out for Murdo and his sons.

Friar. Who moved the King to that high act of
justice ?

Athol. Think you he could forget his brother's
death,

And his own long exile ?

Friar. Forget he could not—

But if with mercy justice might be served,

I know his royal nature is so bland,

That he would nobly pardon.

Athol. Will he punish ?—

Friar. Ay, to the death, if they deserve to die.

But who advised him to arrest Duke Murdo ?

It is the act of a sublime avenger.

Athol. I was then in the council.

Friar. You, my lord ?

Athol. But took no part, for Murdo is my kinsman,
And, by the law, between me and the crown.

Friar. But he is also kinsman to the King ;
So, Murdo standing nearer to the throne,
You could not seemly urge his overthrow ?

Athol. It might have bred suspicions of my zeal.

Friar. It might, but not had you implored his pardon.

Athol. How ! Do you question my integrity ?

Friar. I am, my lord, an old sequester'd man,
Whom lonely meditation long hath taught,
That those who square themselves by men's opinion,
Lack in their homage to a greater master.
Age is suspicious—and it is my calling
To teach, that ever in the human heart
A latent enemy to virtue lurks.
Those whom the prudence of the world applauds,
Are, to the filmless ken of Heaven, as foul
As sins of livid shame. What you have done
Becomes not me to question—but, my lord,

What the King undertakes, he will perform.
Let those beware, who, with the plea of justice,
Attempt to move him for their own intents.

[*Exit Friar.*

ATHOL, *solus.*

Athol. He has look'd in upon my very heart,
And seen what I would fain hide from myself;
But if Duke Murdo justly merit death,
Can I be blamed that he receives his doom?
And if by *that* my fortunes are advanced,
I thrive by fate, guiltless of any wrong.
Let the avenger still triumphant ride;
Fate is the sponsor of what may betide. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Hall of State.

KING JAMES, BISHOP WARDLAW, &c.

King. Not king till crown'd!

Ward. Such is the ancient law;

Nor till th' investiture be all complete
With robe and diadem, may King of Scotland
Demand the homage of his feudal chiefs.
But for the chance of a minority,
Or such mishap as held your Highness long
A stranger to our customs, 'tis ordain'd
That the next kinsman exercise the rule.

King. How! say you so? Now do we plainly see
The treacherous cause of our deplored exile.
Duke Murdo held the regency by right,
And not by deputation.

Ward. Good, my lord;
But touch not age with an irreverent hand.

King. And yet our laws but speak our fathers' sense
Of what their wants required, and shall not we
Accord the expedient to the need we feel?
But, since old usage so requires, we'll on
To sacred Scoone, and there complete the rites.

Ward. But Murdo and his sons are justly sentenced.
They merit death; yet teach not the bad world
The dreadful lesson of their execution.

King. What would you have me do? I dare not
pardon.

Ward. But in the customs of the storied East,
Where light and truth flow purest from their springs,
I have been told that when ill-fated princes
Are there (like Murdo and his sons) condemn'd,
A solemn sound rolls through the midnight air,
And all asleep, by that dread signal roused,
Start from their beds, and at their windows listen
To the deep plunge of something in the wave.

King. Be ever far from us and ours the arts
That darken justice to the hue of crime.
(*To an attendant.*) Send forth the warrants without
more delay. [Exeunt the Court.

SCENE III.

A Room.

ATHOL and STUART.

Athol. 'Midst sweating rogues and crowds of
capless beldames,
Must poor old Murdo and his gallant sons
Like common felons stoop their royal heads!

Justice and vengeance, nephew, now are words
That bear in Scotland only one import.
Yes; now to all the princes of the stem
Of our great ancestor, the second Robert,
Justice is but the name that vengeance takes,
And law the fashion of the tyranny.
O, to have breathed against the dignities
And old free rights of our undaunted sires
But half the moiety of what this king
Has dared attempt by sleights of legal sway,
Had, as a whirlwind ranging sea and land,
Fill'd all the width of Scotland and the Isles
With uproar and rebellion!

Stuart. How, my lord,
Can you who feel these things so sharply pain,
So tamely suffer them to hold their course?

Athol. Nature will stir against them, but, alas!
I have no son to help me in the task.

Stuart. What any son could do, I may attempt.

Athol. Thanks, dearest nephew—are we not both
rash?

For you are heir to me and all my rights;
But come at sunset to my private chamber,

'There we in safety may discourse of this.
No more at present; when the sun is set
I will expect you, fail not then to come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*A Savage Moor.*GRAHAM, *solus.*

Grah. To be an outlaw, and live ever thus!
A hunted deer, that hears in every gale
Which stirs the brambles of his wild retreat,
The rustling search of the pursuing hounds!
I can endure no more: the time has been
When, like the magic of a wizard's spell,
My bugle horn has changed the mountain fern
To crested warriors—now the mocking echo
Alone replies to my impassion'd call.
Better it were to 'bide the priest's exhorting
At the black altar which the hangman serves,
Than live the alms-guest of a raving beldame.
She comes to chide.

Enter MIRKELYNE.

Mirk. What wouldst thou here, unhappy ?
Back to thy den, and in its darkness hide thee,
For the fell beagles of King James's chase
Now skir the country, and not one of all
The mountain wolves shall 'scape the fierce pursuit.

Grah. What new oppression drives our ancient
clans ?

Mirk. At sunrise, when I took my wonted seat
On the high ledge of yon hoar precipice,
To gaze upon the lands that should be mine,
Like the first waters of a rushing torrent,
Murm'ring and sparkling as they spread, I saw
A gorgeous multitude of horse and foot
Come glittering from the wood, and as they near'd,
High waving bright o'er many a vassal banner,
The Scottish lion, in his golden field,
Seem'd, as it frequent faced the rising sun,
Another sun, but bloodily eclipsed.

Grah. Well hast thou said, and ominous of ill.
Saw'st thou, or heard, on which way passed they on ?

Mirk. Straight towards Perth.

Grah. For Scoone. I will go there,

And at the coronation take my place ;
He can but rid me of a ling'ring pain—
All else of life I have already lost.

[*Exit GRAHAM.*

Mirk. What, but some sympathy with his curs'd
nature,

That craves to lap in murder's bloody trough,
Hath made me shelter, not betray the traitor ?
Yet, not like me has he had cause to pray
Wreck and perdition to the prosp'rous throng.
I was a fondled child—an honour'd heiress—
A maiden loved—my bridal morn advancing,
When hideous foemen burst my father's gates,
Slew all but one—they left me with the dead,
A rifled wretch, whose prayers have since been
curses !

[*Exit MIRKELYNE.*

SCENE V.

*A Wood.*STUART, *solus.*

Stuart. He bade me come at sunset to his chamber,
And when I went, faithful to the appointment,
He scarcely spoke to me, but paced the room,
With folded arms, and visage dark with care.
All in the instant, as I wond'ring sat,
He brighten'd up like one at once inspired,
And bade me meet him here. Ha! who goes there?

Enter ATHOL.

Athol. Thy hand—thy hand, my son—son of my
love!

Fate is with us. I have discoursed with one
That can unclasp the book of destiny,
And read the eternal shall-be's writ therein.

Stuart. With whom have you discoursed?

Athol. Beneath yon cliff,
In a deep cavern solitary dwells

A gifted prophetess—mysterious sibyl!
All day she dens herself within the cave,
And with the evening-star she trims her lamp,
Making the night her day ; thence 'till the morn
She reads the suff'rings of the saints and martyrs,
To soothe her spirit, for it would repine.

Stuart. Tremendous being ! but what has she told ?

Athol. To me a glorious and a great prediction.
And by the death of Murdo and his sons,
I have already stept to the fulfilment.
But of their execution ?

Stuart. All went well.

The crowd was countless ; but so overawed
To see that princes might be brought so low,
That they beheld the axe successive fall,
As if they witness'd, in that fearful work,
Portents and prodigies done in the sky.

Athol. Heard you aught of the duchess ?

Stuart. From the castle

She has not stirr'd since they were doom'd to die.

Athol. She is a woman of a royal spirit,
And doubtless meditates some stern revenge.
And let her, nephew—she but works for us.

Though to my house the king denies his favour,
Grace in your duty should the more appear ;
As when the goodly sun withdraws his light,
Each petty star, that by his radiance shines,
Beams with increase of lustre. What wouldst thou ?

Herald. A letter.

Duch. Give it me.

[*She takes it and reads—then adds,*

They all have suffer'd !

My sons—my three brave boys—and their old father.

Maud. Alas ! alas !

Duch. Stop thy lament, weak maid.

If they deserv'd to die, 'twas just they should.

(*To the Herald.*) Have you, sir, any other business
here ?

Herald. No, madam—none.

Duch. Conduct him from the castle.

[*Exeunt Herald and Attendants ; MAUD re-
mains with the Duchess.*

Duch. Maud, is he gone ? make doubly fast the
door ;

Shut out the espionage of eye and ear.

Let us sit down—sit down and weep with me,

And tell me stories of the times that were,
When wives might freely mourn their husbands dead ;
When the distraction of a mother's sorrow
For all her children on one scaffold slain,
Was not accounted treason. Stern avenger !
The bloody Herod in his jealousy
But infants slew : thy justice thirsts for men.
When Heaven in anger pour'd its fiercest vials
On guilty Egypt, only the first-born
Fell in that night ; and the sad mother's sorrow
Was mitigated by the father sharing.
But in one hour mine, children, husband, all—
All swept away. I could have given one
To spare the others ; but to take them all,
With one dread flash to strike down every tree—
The thunderbolt falls not so merciless !
Their father, too—why went I not with him ?
No chidings for our manly boys would then,
No, no, old Murdo, have escap'd from me.

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Gallery in the Palace.

SIR WILLIAM CRICHTON *and* DUNBAR.

Dunb. When heard you of Lord Athol ?

Crich. Not of late ;

Not since the death of his much honour'd lady.

Dunb. 'Tis said he gathers a great store of gold,
To serve a journey to the Holy Land.

Crich. And so, to earn by saving, stays from court.
Heaven speed him well, but my misgiving fancy
Lacks to that man the kindness of good thoughts.
Have you heard aught beside the vulgar tale ?

Dunb. No—nothing—nothing.

Crich. Not even of the man

Who came from Uremburg, an alchemist ;
That dwelt in Lithgoe, near the Western Port,
A lean and sallow wretch, whose sleeky head
Was cover'd with a Barbareseo cap,
Changed from the crimson to a greasy black,
By the mephitics of his crueible ?
His shatter'd casement was fill'd up with rags,
Save a few panes patch'd with rude seraps of vellum,
Traced with some hieroglyphic diagram.
On the same night the Lady Athol died,
That meagre beggar hied him thence to Leith,
And the next morning paid a baron's ransom
For a vile bark wherein he sail'd for Helviot.

Dunb. But what had Athol with his sudden flight ?

Crich. It has been said—but lo ! the Court appears.
It is the vesper bell—they move to chapel.

[*The bell rings—Procession enters, King and
Friars, &c.* SIR WILLIAM CRICHTON and
DUNBAR stand apart.

Friar (to King). But yet, though safety now reigns
in the land,

Within the roofless church and ravaged abbey,
 The owl doth worship desolation still.
 All temporal weal is cherish'd and thrives well,
 But things of sacred and eternal use
 Are drooping to decay. How many seats
 Of pious rest rear'd by the sainted David,
 Your royal ancestor, lie waste and ruin'd!

King. He was a saint indeed, *dear* to his country—
 There is not one of all the church, good father,
 With mitre or with cowl, who more reveres
 The blissful tidings our religion tells,
 Than does the sinner who now stands before you;
 But piercing heaven with golden pinnacles,
 In my poor judgment, is not the best way
 To gain admission there.

[*Re-enter DUNBAR hastily.*]

King. What now, Dunbar?

Dunb. The proud Northumberland from Alnwick
 towers

Has pass'd the marches; and the Cheviot deer
 Bounds not so nimbly from his eager hounds,
 As Douglas' men have spurr'd to change the chase.

King. Let then this Cheviot hunt be but between

The Douglas and the Percy. Mark me well—
For well I know how your prompt Scottish valour
Would, from the feud of these contentious barons,
Delight to fire the stifled torch of war.

I know the English—eighteen years among them
Has taught me what they are—a noble race,
Somewhat too heady, but most fair in quarrel ;
Their faults and virtues father'd in their pride.

It is the nature of the English clime
To nurse a bold and proud temperament :
The dog is there a creature fierce and jealous ;
The horse partakes the insolence of the groom ;
And man, congenial with the native oak,
Is firm, unbending, muscular and stern.

(*To the Friar.*) Yours is the task to make religion
flourish,

The humbler ours to guard our native land.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Outside of a ruinous Mansion.

DUCHESS of ALBANY and MAUD.

Duch. It is believed that I have gone to France,
And letters soon will come that I am dead.

Maud. The safe seclusion of some sainted house
Had better suited with your former greatness.

Duch. What house is holier than this spacious
temple,

Within whose measureless concave the sun,
A lamp of universal glory, shines ?

Maud. But unprotected ; should the savage clans
Attempt our fenceless doors, we have no guard.

Duch. They dare not injure me. Dost thou forget
The pledge the King took for his subject's safety ?
Shall I that gave it, husband—children—all—
It cannot be that I have aught to dread.

Maud. Ha ! look ! what men are these ? They
come this way :
They wear the tartan of the Earl of Athol.

Duch. The fraudulent enemy of me and mine.
I knew him well : oft has his weeping wife
Told me some mystery lurk'd within his blood.—
In the same convent we were bred together,
And, like two captive linnets in one cage,
Sung o'er our flowery tasks the hours away.
Our confidence outlived that happy time.
Oft—oft she told me, shedding pious tears,
With what dread rites and sorceries unblest,
Wizards, and horoscopes, and divinations,
He question'd destiny to know his fortune—
Tremendous Heaven ! It is the Earl himself !
He cannot know me in this abject garb.

Enter ATHOL, attended.

Duch. What would ye, strangers ?

Athol. Shelter for the night.

Duch. Your name, sir ?

Athol. Athol.

Duch. What, the Earl !

Athol. The same.

I have been hunting on the Campsie hills,
And lost my way.

Duch. (*aside*). Now he is in my power.
When Judith slew the tyrant Holofernes,
Who did but threaten to cut off her kindred,
Applauding Israel gloried in the deed,
And Heaven look'd pleased upon her sacred crime.

Athol (*aside*). My rank hath overawed her, and
she seems
Abash'd and shaken. (*Aloud.*) You will not deny
The wonted rites of hospitality?

Duch. My lord—my lord—come not within my
house,
For I have made a dread and solemn vow.
Here moody vengeance hath an altar raised
That I do nightly serve with naked knife;
There's a fiend, too, that goes the rounds with me,
Might urge the dagger to your royal breast.

Athol. She is beside herself. Alas! poor soul!
What wrongs have wrought thee into such despair?

Duch. What! know ye not the tale of my distress?
Give me your hand, and look well in my face.
My lord——

Athol. I do attend thee.

Duch. Mark, my lord.

My husband had a brother—not a brother—
A man he seem'd, but, oh! too near of kin;
And I had then a flock of blooming boys.
The vernal daisies on the mountain sward
Were not so lovely as their glad young eyes.
Now, heed me well, my lord—my good Lord Athol.

Athol. Why dost thou lay thy hand so on my heart?

Duch. For I would waken it to feel my sorrow.
That dreadful kinsman would possess our lands,
My children stood between him and his greatness.
Turn not away—but look me in the face.

Athol. Why dost thou tell this maniac tale to me?

Duch. I do, my lord, forget myself and you.
You are a prince, bred in that lofty sphere
Where such offences never can have place,
And I would win you to avenge my woe.
Our cruel kinsman labour'd night and day,
Till he had found a poison more occult
Than ever shrewd Italian's malice mix'd.

Athol (aside). She has dropt molten fire into my
soul.

O, Ruthven—Ruthven—I'll not stay to-night!

[*Exeunt ATHOL and Attendants.*]

Duch. (to MAUD.) Thank Heaven, he has departed, and my spirit
Is from the presence of the demon freed !
O ! I have such persuasion of his guilt
As hath the eye of sights, the ear of sounds,
Yet cannot tell why they are so impress'd.
I dreamt last night that on a throne of state
I saw Lord Athol wear the regal crown ;
But as I gazed, repining at his greatness,
The phantom wither'd, and some dreadful thing,
That scarcely bore the stamp of mortal man,
Did clothe his shoulders with a funeral pall.—
Anon, methought, where all that pomp had been,
I saw but ashes, which the winds dispersed,
While four bright seraphs, sitting on a cloud,
Look'd down and smiled. O ! in their smiles I saw
My noble husband in his youthful prime,
And my three boys, as they play'd at my knee.

Maud. Why doubt you thus of good Lord Athol's
virtue ?

Duch. Art thou his advocate—his fee'd defender ?
Nay, do not weep. I know thou art too faithful.
Forgive me, Heaven, if I do wrong the man. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

ATHOL and GRAHAM.

Grah. The worst that can ensue, if we should fail,
Is but to die—to pay the debt of nature.
All that the vengeance of the law can do
Is to the cook and carver's art akin.

Athol. I could that you could think of other means ;
We might uncrown him, and yet spare his life.
My heart recoils from the dread task of blood.

Grah. The spade—the spade, is the best warden
now.

Athol. The man himself has never injured me.

Grah. What ! Is he not the same that scorn'd your
suit ?

Who drove me homeless like a beast of prey,
Gave me the stars for candles—the cold moon
For the bright hearth of my own castle's hall ?
When for a blanket I had but the snow,
And for my minstrel but the ominous owl ;
When but the wet blasts were my visitors,

And roaring waters hoarsely urged revenge,
I swore the oath that still I swear to keep.

Athol. Ha ! see—we are observed—away—away !

Enter DUNBAR and Guards.

Dunb. It is the ruffian Graham—arrest him !

Grah. Hold ! I am the Graham, and who shall
dare to touch me !

Unhand me, soldiers !—Shame to you, Lord Athol !

But, men, I will submit myself to you,

If so the Earl commands. My Lord Dunbar,

I humbly crave, that, to the King himself,

You will present this penitent petition,

[*Gives a petition from his bosom.*

Since my stern cousin here has so refused.

Dunb. As a petitioner he may go free.

[*To LORD ATHOL.*

This was not kind, my lord. You know the King

Would grant his pardon now at your request.

Athol. Give that then to me. Now, make haste
away.

Grah. (to ATHOL.) Thanks, my good lord.—

Which is the devil here ?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Gallery.

Queen (*rushes in, exclaiming*)—Help! help!—

The King! the King!

Crich. Heavens! what hath chanced?

Queen. Will no one send his Highness to me here?

Enter the King and Attendants. The Queen rushes into his arms.

King. Why do you clasp me with such eager love?

Queen. A dreadful voice has sounded in my ear,
And I do almost doubt I hold you safe.

Crich. What hath alarm'd your Highness?

Queen. As I knelt
Within my oratory, tranced in prayer,
A shrill wild beldame at the window shriek'd,
“A knife is whetting for the heart of James;
Rise—rise—and warn thy husband to beware!”

King. Fie on these tears, sweet love! 'tis nothing
new

That I am standing on the verge of life,
A high-shown glittering mark to every shaft
That war, or malice, or disease, impels.
Death is the last of all the tasks of man ;
And as all others must be first perform'd,
They'll do it best who do the others well. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

*A Cloister.**Enter ATHOL.*

Athol. What shall be done ? I may myself succeed
By poison or by poniard—but from me
His death would set the paling land aghast.
By me it must not be. I must stand clear,
And punish the assassin if need be.
Ha ! am I sunk to that abhorr'd abyss ?
For hell doth palter with me to forego
The very honour of iniquity,
Which binds the guilty faster than their vows.
Ha ! some one comes. I must not be seen here.

Enter GRAHAM and STUART.

Stuart. The guests will this way quit the banquet-room,

And we shall be discover'd.

Grah. Hark the din

Of that luxurious mirth we come to mar!

Stuart. Hush—some one approaches.

Grah. Hush—hush—hush!

Stuart. Yon folding doors lead to the oriel,
There let us wait.

Grah. And strike him at his prayers?

Stuart. Away! away! they come. The moon
gives light. [*Excunt.*

*Folding doors open—the King and Queen, attended,
enter from them.*

Queen. All night a superstitious heaviness
Has hung upon me—and my boding fancy
Was smit with sadness by the minstrel's song.

King. Strange! for I thought it was a gentle
voice

Bidding me come into some happy land
Where life is light, and all that's labour's love.

But I grow drowsy—on my weary eyelids,
Methinks the dead-weight of a leaden hand
Weighs with unwonted pressure. All, good night !

[They all retire but the King and Queen.]

King. Ye heavenly guardians, in your vigils watch
My native land, my kindred, and my friends.

Queen. You pray not for yourself.

King. No—that I leave

To those that love me—to you and my people.

Queen. But once again, now that we are alone,
I would entreat you to look well to Athol.
I have remark'd his alter'd looks of late ;
His face seems wither'd to a ghastly pallor.
I know not why I shrink when he is near,
As if I had some strange foretaste of harm.

King. Thou art grown fanciful—thy dreams be-
come

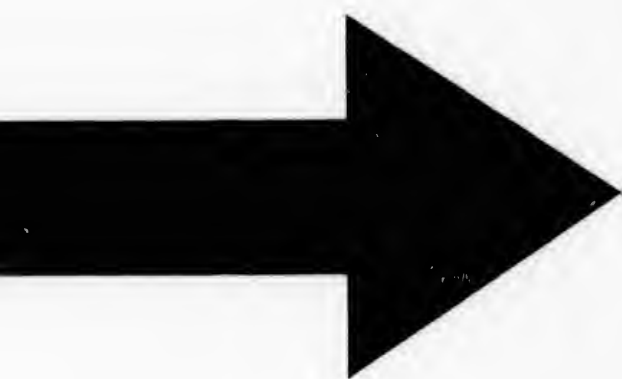
Enrich'd with prophecy. But to our chamber :

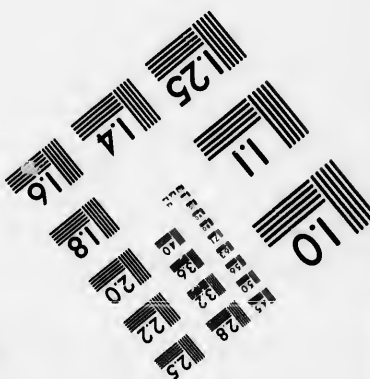
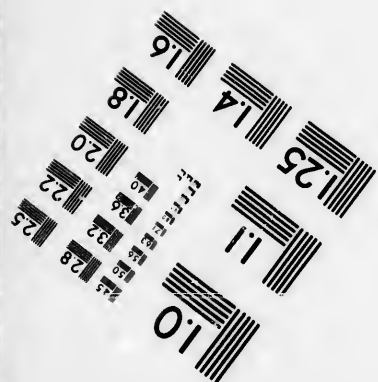
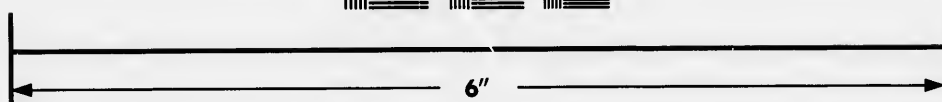
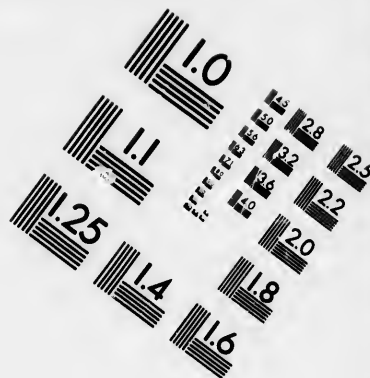
Perchance the oracle, shrined in thy sleep,

May speak its bodelements less equivocal.

*[The King and Queen pass off at the one
side—STUART and GRAHAM follow them—]*







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A noise of a scuffle is heard—ATHOL comes running in, and cries,

Oh! treason! treason! burst the guilty doors.

*[The alarm-bell rings—clamour on all sides—
Guards rush in—the doors are forced—
GRAHAM and STUART are seized over the
dead body of the King—the rest of the
Dramatis Personæ come forward.]*

Stuart (to Athol). Why are you here? He's dead,
and you are king.

Crichton. Make fast the doors—let no one quit
the room.

Friar. What fiends are leagued with you?

Graham. What fiends? my wrongs.

Friar (to Stuart). Oh! who hath set you on to do
this deed?

Stuart. Ask at Lord Athol—I will speak no more.

Graham (to Athol). The work is done, and you
shall share the gains.

Crichton. Ah! you, Lord Athol!

Dunbar. Now is the traitor known—
The king of traitors!

Crichton. And it shall be so.

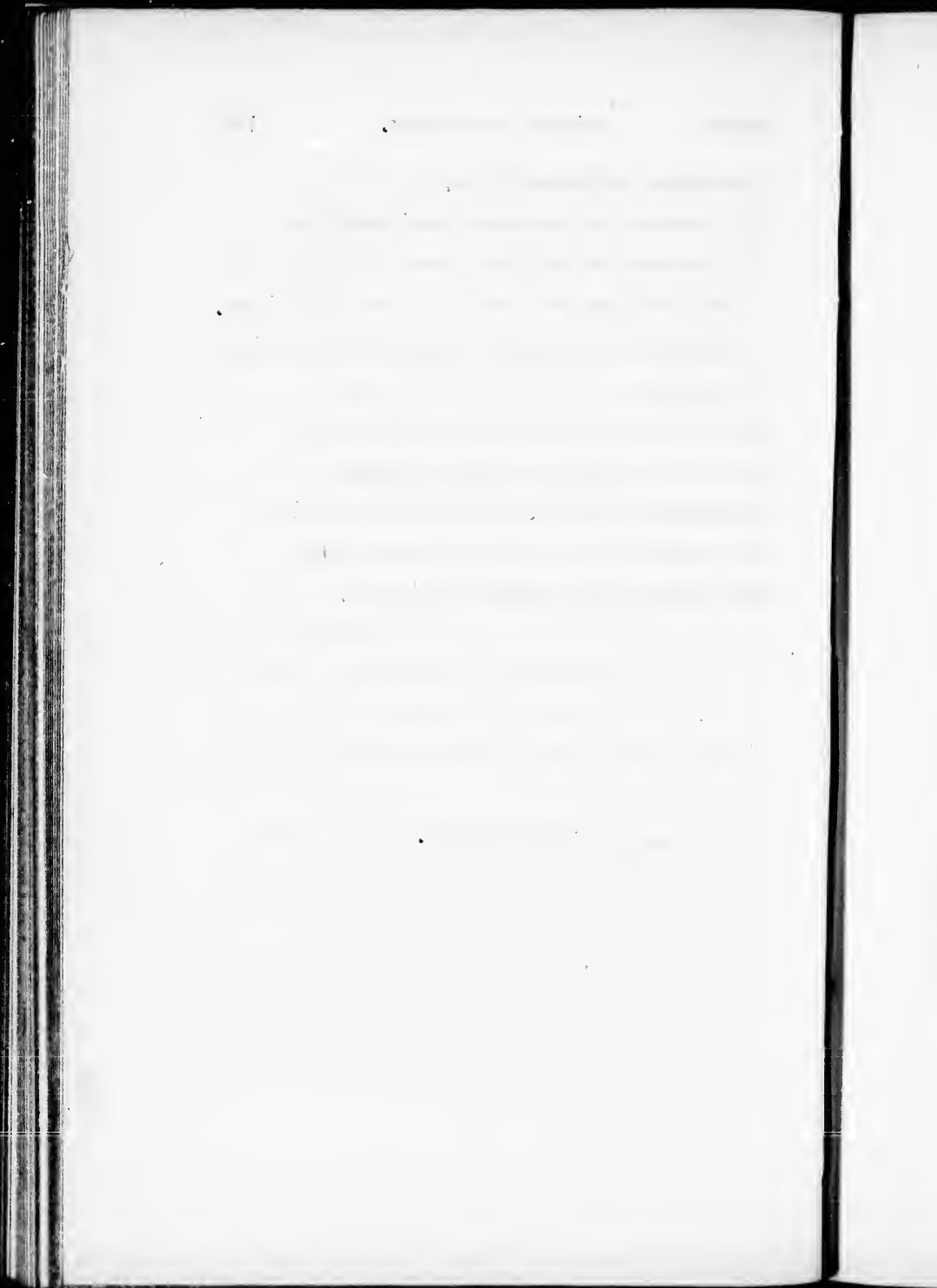
Upon his head the hangman's hand shall place
An iron crown, red sparkling from the forge.

Athol. My hope and punishment are in the doom.

Crichton. Ill-fated James, though thy tremendous
justice

Too much akin to heaven's own awful sway,
Thou wast, alas ! to our dark anarch state,
Like the first light that on the formless world
Came forth in perfect brightness—and to all
Gave order, energy, delight, and beauty.

END OF ATHOL.



AULD REEKIE;
OR,
A MISTAKE IN EDINBURGH.

VOL. III.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

GENERAL.

CAPTAIN MACDONALD BOIDIART.

CAPTAIN MACDONALD BENDHU.

MR SUBTLE.

SAM, *his Servant.*

SAUNDERS, *Servant to the General.*

CADDY.

JEM.

JOHN.

SERVANT.

WOMEN.

LADY KILFOGGIE.

MISS CAMPBELL DARKNISH, *her Niece.*

MRS CAMPBELL ARDMOR.

MISS CAMPBELL ARDMOR, *her Daughter.*

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AULD REEKIE ;
OR,
A MISTAKE IN EDINBURGH.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Prince's Street.

SAM and JEM. SAM *with a letter in his hand.*

Sam. And how long do you intend to remain in Edinburgh?

Jem. Master says as how he will go to-morrow, being, as you sees, so fagged, you can't think, with them there 'ills. I never see'd such big 'ills in all my life.

Sam. Oh, you sha'n't have time to see the curiosities, and will have nothing to tell the maids for a little fun !

Jem. Sha'n't I tell 'em of them 'ills, and that castle in the clouds, and them 'ouses like water under the bridge? But I say, Sam, couldn't you just now show me the lions for half an hour or so?

Sam. I might; but this devil of a letter, which I must deliver, and take the answer to master at the Parliament House.

Jem. Why, odds heart! have they got that there thing a Parliament here too?

Sam. Ay; but it's not the same, for here the Parliament is all under the law, and the London Parliament is all above it. But I will give the letter to a caddy, and go with you for a little while. Hark ye!

Enter a Caddy.

Caddy. Weel, what's your wull?

Sam. Take this letter, and bring the answer to me in the Parliament Close.

Caddy. Vera weel, sir; but bide a wee. (*Going.*)
Wha's't for?

Sam. Can't you read? I thought every Scotchman could do that.

Caddy. And write too. But the letter's no directed.

Sam. The devil! What's that?

Caddy. "Miss Campbell, George's Street."

Sam. And who is she?

Jem. Why, sure, Miss Campbell, George's Street.

Caddy. Nae doubt you're a clever lad, but whatna Miss Campbell do ye mean? I ken twa-and-thirty in George's Street, besides widows. Noo, for whilk is this? what's her teetle?

Sam. Curse these Scotch titles! I don't know.

Caddy. Wha does it come frae? 'cause I can speer at the servants anent their leddy's acquaintance.

Jem. Why this chap doesn't want nob.

Caddy. Be ceevil, sir.

Sam. The letter is from Captain Macdonald.

Caddy. Gude guide us! whatna Macdonald? There are sixteen in the toon for the advice of the Faculty about their wounds won in the wars.

Sam. Oh, never mind which! Take the letter, and ask for an answer, and when you get it, you are sure you're right.

Caddy. Weel, I'll do my best, and ye'll mind ye promised me a whole sixpence for my trouble.

[*Exeunt SAM and JEM.*

Caddy. It would be fashious to deal with the London flunkies, they are so ignorant; but a body maun put up with their snash, for they dinna stand about a bawbee.

[*Exit Caddy.*

SCENE II.

A Room.

Miss CAMPBELL DARKNISH, and Lady KILLFOGGIE.

Lady K. I don't think Monday too soon. Miss Peggy Shapins, the mantuamaker, will have your things ready; and Leddy Boidiart, the Captain's mother, will be in town this week—so let the wedding day be Monday-week.

Enter a Servant with a Letter.

Serv. A letter—the messenger waits.

Miss C. It is from Macdonald.

Serv. Oh, then all's right.

Lady K. What does he say?

Miss C. That, being obliged to meet the colonel of his regiment, he cannot call this forenoon—nothing more.

Serv. Is there any answer?

Miss C. Yes—stop a minute.

[*MISS CAMPBELL writes an answer, and gives it to the Servant—Exit Servant.*]

Miss C. What can Macdonald have been about? his writing appears so altered since yesterday—it doesn't look like the same hand.

Lady K. Oh, he has been only up late last night. Some of his friends who were at Waterloo have come home, and they have been fighting their battles o'er again.

Miss C. Well—I never saw such a change—however, that "t" 's like.

Lady K. Oh, it's a hurried note—put it up; and since he is not to be here, we have time to make a few visits—it's getting something done that must be done.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Parliament Square of Edinburgh.

MR SUBTLE *and* CAPTAIN MACDONALD BENDHU.

Macd. For Heaven's sake, Subtle, give over this absurd practice ; it may be true that an orator never can acquire proper confidence until he feels himself superior to those whom he addresses—but this notion of yours to consider every body as cabbages in your father's garden, makes you at once insufferable and ridiculous.

Sub. (*He begins to speak naturally, but at last declines.*) But, my dear friend, I assure you that I am sensible every day of the advantage which I derive from the resolution I have adopted to practise on all strangers—to address them either by statement, argument, or interrogation—to adhere to that system which you condemn with more asperity than the case requires, and without that due consideration of those manifold facilities which may——

Macd. Pshaw ! I am no cabbage.

Sub. I only intended to convince you of my proficiency.

Macd. I would rather take your word for the fact, than a speech of three hours' standing.

Sub. Think of it as you may, eminence in the profession of the law is not to be obtained without perseverance ; my efforts may be still a little crude, yet when practice shall have taught me ease, the effect will be so different, that admiration may be produced, where at present attention is with difficulty obtained. Nothing is more ridiculous than a youth learning to dance ; but when he has acquired the mastery of the movements, his steps are graceful, his motions gay, his whole gestures elastic, and——

Macd. Pshaw ! But he doesn't practise his lessons in the street, nor pester every body he happens to meet with, by asking them to dance with him. Believe me, Subtle, a man is never so absurd as when he attempts to regulate his manners by a theory at variance with his natural disposition.

Sub. Do you mean to say that I am not qualified to excel at the Bar ?

Macd. No—I do not; but I think your cabbage theory right down insanity. Reflect with what silent astonishment you filled the whole party last night, by declaiming on the association of ideas connected with the extinguishment of a candle.

Sub. But you confessed yourself, that at the conclusion of my oration, you thought I reached a strain of impressive pathos.

Macd. Yes—but on such a topic—pathos on the snuff of a candle !

Sub. That is not the point; what I intended was produced—what I proposed was accomplished.

Macd. I bar that action—there is no occasion for such a vehement elevation of the hand—but yonder is Sam with an answer to my note.

[*Enter SAM, who gives a letter to CAPTAIN MACDONALD, and retires aside with SUBTLE, who appears to question him.*]

Macd. This is most singular—the most singular thing I ever knew. Subtle, I say—ha! is Sam one of your cabbages ?

Sub. (coming forward). Not exactly ; he is an idle,

worthless rascal, but he speaks with a very good English accent, and I have taken him to improve my pronunciation.

Macd. So, for this reason, you never see him without holding more conversation than enough with him? But here is something very odd; Miss Campbell, with whom I danced last night at the Assembly, and never saw before, has already made an appointment with me. My note was an apology for not calling, and she invites me to accompany her with her aunt to drink tea at Professor Blether's.

Sub. It sometimes does happen in human affairs that accidents so extraordinary occur, that the inventions of the most extravagant fictions appear scarcely more incredible than the fact; and this may be of that description. I would therefore advise you, sir, to——

Macd. Go to the devil with your nonsense!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Room.

GENERAL and SAUNDERS.

Gen. When I resided in the wilds of America——

Saund. General, I have served you twenty years with fidelity, and I have been with you in the wilds of America—might I speak ?

Gen. To be sure, Saunders—what would you say ?

Saund. I would say something.

Gen. No doubt you did not interrupt me for the purpose of saying nothing, although that is very much the case with those who always interrupt good speakers.

Saund. I was going to advise you, General.

Gen. Indeed ! proceed.

Saund. Then, General, we are now in Edinburgh.

Gen. Well !

Saund. And the people here are not like those in the wilds of America.

Gen. That's very true.

Saund. Sir, they laugh here at many things that made us cry yonder.

Gen. I know it—I know it—otherwise my services would not have been so long unrewarded.

Saund. Now, sir, don't you think it would be as well if you wouldn't tell those untrue-like stories with which you used to amuse the young officers in the wilds of America? They may do for ourselves in an evening, General, but they won't take with the *beau monde* of Edinburgh.

Gen. *Beau monde!* Where did you learn that French word, you rascal? Do you expect now to be my evening party as you were in the bush? But why do you object to my stories? Weren't they always very funny?

Saund. Because, sir, when we were in London, I was shockingly strapoled about them.

Gen. About my stories?

Saund. It is the plain truth, sir.

Gen. And who the devil strapoled you?

Saund. All the servants that knew us.

Gen. And why did you not knock them down?

Saund. Because what they said was quite true.

Gen. And what did they say ?

Saund. That the savages had taught you to shoot the long bow.

Gen. Hem ! I believe, indeed, Saunders, that habit does make me carry the joke a little too far.

Saund. It does, indeed, sir.

Gen. Well, then, when you hear me going a little beyond the mark, give a cough or a nod.

Saund. You may depend I'll serve you faithfully ; but it would be better, General, if you would not tell any stories at all, for I am told that the folk in Edinburgh are very critical.

Gen. So I've heard. But see who knocks.

[*Exit* SAUNDERS.]

The fellow is in the right, and I must lay some restraint on myself.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

*A Room. MISS CAMPBELL ARDMOR, and
MRS CAMPBELL.*

Miss C. I am surprised that Captain Macdonald has not called. He promised to come, and 'tis now almost four o'clock, -

Mrs C. Has he made such an impression? What like is he?

Miss C. Really an uncommonly sensible, well-informed gentleman.

Mrs C. Would he make a good husband, think you?

Miss C. I am not so far advanced in my opinion as to form any judgment of him in that respect.

Enter JOHN.

John. Lady Kilfoggie, and Miss Campbell Dark-nish.

Mrs C. Oh, show them in.

Miss C. By the by, have you heard any thing of the young lady's marriage?

Mrs C. Hush ! She is here.

Enter LADY KILFOGGIE, *and* MISS CAMPBELL

DARKNISH.

Mrs C. Be seated, ladies.

Miss C. A. (to Miss C. D.) I have seen little of you of late ; but if report is to be trusted, you have very important reasons for keeping the house.

Miss C. D. Indeed !

Miss C. A. Ay—and I see by your looks that you understand me. Well, I wish you every happiness. Captain Macdonald is, I am sure, an agreeable person ; I have seldom seen any man of whom I know so little, that I think so much.

Miss C. D. I didn't know you were acquainted at all.

Miss C. A. Only since last night. I danced with him at the Assembly.

Miss C. D. Was he at the Assembly ?

Miss C. A. What, did you not know ? I expect him to call every minute.

Miss C. D. Do you ? I'm very much surprised.

Miss C. A. Goodness, Mary, what's the matter ?
Walk this way to the window.

[*LADY KILFOGGIE and MRS CAMPBELL come forward.*]

Mrs C. It is a very satisfactory settlement, and from what my niece says, the Captain is a most superior man.

Lady K. Does your niece know him ?

Mrs C. O yes ; she was introduced to him last night ; he promised to call on her this morning, and we have been expecting every minute to see him. I congratulate you on the connexion—his family is very good.

Lady K. You astonish me ! Captain Macdonald left us soon after tea last night ; spoke of being engaged, and had no intention of going to the Assembly ; but this morning he sent an excuse for not calling.

Mrs C. I hope there is no harm in all this ? Surely he doesn't mean to draw back now ?

Lady K. You are very hasty in your conclusions, madam.

Mrs C. I mean no offence ; but I think the affair should be sifted.

Lady K. Some people are not so indelicate in their notions as others. Mary, my dear, we must be going. Mrs Campbell, good morning ; and, Miss Campbell, your most obedient.

Miss C. A. and Mrs C. Adieu !

[*Exeunt LADY KILFOGGIE and MISS CAMPBELL DARKNISH.*]

Mrs C. Dear me ! that poor Lady Kilfoggie is frightened out of her wits.

Miss C. How ! what has happen'd ? for Mary herself didn't appear quite easy.

Enter SUBTLE.

Miss C. Mercy on us, Mr Subtle, why do you start in upon us that way ?

Sub. I like to see unpremeditated effects.

Miss C. Do, pray, be reasonable, and not always studying.

Mrs C. Tell us the news.

Sub. Oh, nothing, nothing ; the tongues of the women are standing still till the Review comes out.

Act I.

Mrs C. Well, then, I can tell you something—
Mary Campbell Darknish was to be married to Cap-
tain Macdonald.

Sub. Don't believe it ; he is my particular friend,
and I never heard a word of it. But, cousin, how
came you to ask him to meet you in the street and
accompany you to Professor Blether's?—Wasn't that
a little troppo?

Miss C. What do you mean?

Mrs C. Oh, never mind him—he's at his cabba-
ging.

Sub. I never was more serious in my life.

Mrs C. So you seem ; but come into the other
room, and I will tell you all about it.

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A Street.**MACDONALD BOLDIART, hesitating.*

Macd. B. This is very odd : She expected me this forenoon to decide on the day of our marriage, and both she and her aunt have either gone out to avoid me, or have ordered themselves to be denied. I cannot understand it, but here they come. What shall I say ?

*Enter LADY KILFOGGIE, and MISS CAMPBELL**DARKNISH.*

Macd. B. Lady Kilfoggie, how do you do ?

Lady K. How do *you* do, Captain Macdonald ?

Macd. B. This is fine walking weather—have you been far ?

Lady K. Not far, Captain Macdonald, and the weather is very fine.

Macd. B. What is the meaning of this? How have I incurred your displeasure? Why this alteration in you, Mary?

Miss C. I must refer you to my aunt. But, sir, explanation is not necessary; you cannot be surprised that others should change their minds.

Macd. B. Others!—that would imply I had. I entreat you, Lady Kilfoggie, to satisfy me.

Lady K. Really, sir, you are very importunate. What satisfaction would you have?

Macd. B. Importunate!—What can this language mean?

Lady K. To rue in time is very prudent. Circumstances may arise to justify greater changes; but the honour of my family will not allow me to be more particular. Come, Mary. Good-morning, Captain Macdonald! (*Going.*)

Macd. B. I am thunderstruck! I beseech you to stay.—I have a right to an explanation of this mystery. What does the honour of your family call for to-day, that was not due to it last night?

Lady K. Ay, Captain Macdonald, and what was due to it last night ? You know what I mean.

Macd. B. I have heard, indeed, that your brother has returned with a vast fortune ; but I did not imagine such an occurrence was likely to have produced such a change.

Lady K. Ay, ay, it was very right you should pay your respects to your commanding-officer ; but the General wasn't at the Assembly last night.

Macd. B. I am bewildered, confounded !—but this is not the proper place to insist on an explanation of what I have certainly a right to expect.

Lady K. Whenever Captain Macdonald requests, in a proper manner, an explanation of that change in our behaviour which he affects to feel so much, it will be frankly given—till then, the obligation which Lady Kilfoggie owes to herself and her niece, requires her to say it is not necessary that any thing further should take place in this thoroughfare.—Good-morning, Captain Macdonald !

[*Exeunt LADY KILFOGGIE and MISS CAMPBELL.*]

Macd. B. Angels and ministers of grace defend us !

Enter Caddy.

Caddy. Would you be pleased to tell me, sir, gin ony o' thae leddies live in George's Street?

Macd. B. Sir! What have you to do with the ladies?

Caddy. Because, sir, if it's a Miss Campbell, I may tell her my erran', and so jouk a walk.

Macd. B. And what is your errand?

Caddy. O, no great matter, but just to say the gentleman will wait upon her.

Macd. B. How!—where!—what gentleman!

Caddy. I'm no acquaint with him, for it was his lad that brought the message. Ye see, sir, the hempie had got a neebor from London that he wanted to show the Castle, and sicklike ferlies; and so, to get time for himself, he hired me.

Macd. B. Get about your business!

Caddy. The man's no true douce. Sir, it wasna the stranger's servant, but Mr—— od, I forget his name; but it was Mr Whoslacat's London flunky that sent me.

Macd. B. Mr who?

Caddy. I dinna just mind his name ; but he stays in Mrs M'Thrift's lodgings, the English widow-woman that came down lately to set up in that line—it's wonderfu' that I should forget his name. Oh ! Mr Subtle ! he stays with them because she speaks a proper style of language ; but, sir, ye'll excuse me—od's sake, I maun rin. [*Exit Caddy.*]

Maed. B. Mr Subtle's servant !—an answer from his master that he would meet her ! I have but one way left, and—— [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Door of LADY KILFOGGIE'S House.

MR SUBTLE and the Servant.

Sub. But you are sure she is at home ?

Ser. Yes ; and I had no orders to deny her.

Sub. (aside). This is a hard-mouth'd fellow—but a good subject to practise on. I'll browbeat him.

Ser. Sir !

Sub. And your lady will not be offended if I go up stairs?

Ser. That, sir, I can't answer.

Sub. But if she should happen to be offended?

Ser. I can't help it, sir—but if you're afraid, you may go away.

Sub. I didn't ask your advice, Mr What's-ye'r-name?

Ser. John Street.

Sub. Well, then, John Street, on your oath, tell me the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Ser. My oath! the truth! nothing but the truth!

Sub. Don't stand gaping as if your mouth were open to catch flies, but answer my question. On your oath, did you not say that your lady was at home?

Ser. I did, sir, but——

Sub. But what, John Street?—Come, come, let us have it all.

Ser. Well then, sir, I don't think my lady ought to be at home to you.

Sub. And, pray, why should she not be at home to me?

Ser. I can't say, but I think so.

Sub. This is very extraordinary.

Ser. It is, sir ; and I won't be bothered in this way any longer. I will not admit such a madman into the house—so be off ! [*Slamming the door in his face.*]

Sub. What an excellent cabbage !—But I forgot Miss Campbell's commission.

[*He approaches the door, and* MACDONALD

BENDHU *enters.*]

Macd. Ben. What's the matter, Subtle ? You look confoundedly out of countenance.

Sub. Why, a stupid fellow of a servant here, whose manner was such that I could not refrain from considering him as in the witness-box.

Macd. Ben. You have been cabbaging him, I suppose ?

Sub. And the rascal lost his temper—in fact, slammed the door in my face.

Macd. Ben. I rejoice to hear it—I do indeed. Nothing but something inconceivably mortifying will convince you of your ridiculous system. But come, it is almost dinner time, and the General requested me to bring you with me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Room.

LADY KILFOGGIE, MISS CAMPBELL DARKNISH, and
Servant.

Lady K. You did perfectly right to shut the door in his face—John, you may retire.—(*Exit Servant.*) This is all of a piece with the rest of his behaviour. To send a mad puppy, is adding insult to injury.

Miss C. Perhaps the person whom John has turned away did not come from him.

Lady K. I have no doubt on the subject—From whom else could he have come?—For what, but to widen the breach by more provoking impertinence?

Miss C. He might have come to——

Lady K. I hope, Mary Campbell, that you have more spirit than to allow yourself to be so treated by any man. I expect in this you will be guided entirely by me.

Miss C. But, my dear aunt, I do not see the matter in this light; there was no harm in going to the Assembly, nor in dancing with any lady he chose.

Lady K. No! Young women now-a-days must, indeed, be anxious for husbands. In my time no such slights would have been endured—but hark!

Enter MRS CAMPBELL.

Mrs C. My dear ma'am, I am so glad that I have found you. There has been a great mistake, and I could not rest till I had ascertained the truth, as it materially concerns my daughter.

Lady K. Indeed! and pray what is it?

Mrs C. Did Miss Campbell receive a note this morning from Captain Macdonald?

Miss C. I did.

Mrs C. And appoint to meet him in the street?

Miss C. I do not disguise that I did so; the state of matters between us did not make it improper.

Mrs C. Oh not at all, but the note was intended for my daughter.

Lady K. For your daughter? Mary, d'ye hear that?

Mrs C. But the matter being explained, I am satisfied.

Lady K. May I ask you, madam, how you came to know all this?

Mrs C. My relation, Mr Subtle, heard it from Captain Macdonald himself.

Lady K. Then the Captain seems to be in the practice of writing to her?

Mrs C. It cannot be called a practice, for he saw her for the first time only last night, but I trust there is no harm done?

Lady K. Not to your family, but "light come, soon gone;" and Captain Macdonald's behaviour shows how little value should be set on the triumph. But here he is!

[Exit MISS CAMPBELL.]

Enter MACDONALD BOLDIART.

Lady K. Well, sir!

Macd. B. I come to obtain some satisfaction for the unaccountable treatment which I have received. To what, madam, is it owing?

Lady K. Ask that lady.

Macd. B. Well, madam, although I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you, yet it seems the cause of the change in the behaviour of this lady and more particularly of the young lady who has so abruptly left the room, is known to you. I must beg you to be explicit.

Mrs C. I believe, sir, it is altogether owing to the attentions which you paid to my daughter at the Assembly last night.

Macd. B. Hold, madam ! I know nothing of your daughter, nor was I at the Assembly last night.

Lady K. Well, after that——

Mrs C. You surely do not mean to say so ?

Macd. B. I do say so.

Lady K. Oh, Mrs Campbell, you see what sort of a man he is. Sir, I hope few words will serve, and I need scarcely request that this may be your last visit, and terminated as soon as possible.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*A Room.**General, solus.*

Gen. How I should like to quiz an Edinburgh Reviewer! (*Enter SAUNDERS.*) Oh! I say! Lay covers for three to-day, and, I say, Saunders, you leave the room as soon as the cloth is removed. Captain Macdonald and his friend have some particular business to talk to me about, and we must be private.

Saun. But if, when I am out of the room, and the wine is going round, you should happen to tell any of your stories? I shouldn't be able to prevent you.

Gen. Oh, don't trouble yourself, I shall be on my guard. I say, Saunders, don't be making errands into the room when we are set in for business, for you've a cursed deal of curiosity, and if you take it into your head that I am telling one of my stories, you will make fifty fetches to interrupt me.

Saun. I am sorry, sir, you should have taken

such a bad opinion of me. I was your confidant in every thing. I knew all your affairs, and I am sure that I've done nothing wittingly to lose your good opinion.

Gen. The fellow's crazy ! you have not lost my good opinion, although you did offer me advice ; but you should recollect that Edinburgh is not the City of the Wilderness. Why, man, this is the Athens of the North !

Saun. Ah ! General, you are going to begin.

Gen. How ! What do you mean ?

Saun. Were you not on the lip of one of your stories ?

Gen. What the devil put that in your head ?

Saun. You began, sir, by saying that Edinburgh was Athens. Now, with such a beginning, what would have been the end of the tale ?

Gen. Come, come, Saunders ! Although I do give you leave to joke with me when alone, you must remember your distance before company. So, lay the cloth while I take a short turn. I say, Saunders, by the by, you'll mind what I have said, because it won't do to oblige me to bid you leave the room—that would look as if I sent you out of the way on

purpose to be at liberty to tell my stories. So mind that !

[*Exit General.*]

Saun. Well, I'm sure if he cannot give over his stories, I wish we had never come home ; for what with the shame he brought upon me among the servants in London, and the constant alarm that I am kept in for fear of the tricks and stratagems of civilized life, my heart is almost broken. I'm sure it is much more comfortable to have a rattle-snake in a hollow-tree at your door than an old watchman in a box at the corner of the street ; for the one always gives you notice before he attacks, but the other never springs his rattle till the mischief is done. God help me !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

A Room.

SUBTLE. *Enter SAM.*

Sam. A gentleman of the name of Macdonald wishes to see you.

Sub. Is it not the Captain?

Sam. Not the one that comes here sometimes.

Sub. Yet he is a captain?

Sam. He said so.

Sub. Oh, then you have only his word for it?

Sam. Sir, the gentleman is at the door.

Sub. Confound it, I forget. Show him in.

Enter MACDONALD BOLDIART.

Sub. Captain Macdonald, pray be seated.

Macd. I beg pardon for intruding upon you, but a misunderstanding has arisen in a matter that dearly concerns the happiness of my life, and I believe you can give me some explanation. I depend on your honour as a gentleman.

Sub. No apology is necessary. I am sorry to see you so distressed. I shall have infinite pleasure if I can remove in any degree the cause. (*Aside.*) He seems very intelligent—a capital cabbage!

Macd. I will be frank with you, sir. I was on the point of marriage with a young lady.

Sub. And something has occurred to cloud the prospect of your happiness?

Macd. Even so : and yet on my part I cannot divine a cause for the change.

Sub. Her affections have then changed ?

Macd. Her manner certainly has.

Sub. (*aside*). This is as good as a real crim. con.

Macd. My knowledge of her disposition will not allow me to think that her affections could alter so suddenly ; but the point I wish to ascertain is, were you at the Assembly last night ?

Sub. To the best of my recollection I was.

Macd. Then you must know that I was not there.

Sub. I certainly did not notice you.

Macd. Then you could not have stated that I was particular in my attentions to Miss Campbell Ard-
mor ?

Sub. I never said such a thing. On the contrary, Miss Campbell is my cousin, and I know that she danced all the evening with a particular friend of mine.

Macd. I am much obliged to you, sir. I regret that I have been so misled as to trouble you. I wish you good morning. (*Going.*)

Sub. What an opportunity ! Sir, I beg your pardon. Sir, will you allow me to ask a question ?

Macd. Certainly.

Sub. I think you said that your affections were not only engaged, but that the marriage-day was fixed ?

Macd. Not exactly so. The day was to have been fixed this forenoon, but on going to the house I was denied admittance.

Sub. Very extraordinary indeed ! most perplexing ! and can you charge yourself with no indiscretion that might account for so sudden a change ?

Macd. Certainly none.

Sub. You are quite sure of that ?

Macd. Sir !

Sub. Because if you are, it is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that the fault of the breach does not rest with you—and therefore we must turn our attention to the conduct of the other party. Can any thing have happened last night to so affect the interests of the lady as to induce that dereliction of affection of which you have so much cause to complain, and, I may say, justly to resent ?

Macd. The thought did strike me that the arrival of her uncle with a large fortune may have had some

effect, but my heart rejected the thought as injurious to her character.

Sub. The arrival of her uncle! hem! with a large fortune, too! ah, sir! you must give due weight to that circumstance. Has the lady, independent of this uncle, any fortune of her own?

Macd. Like the generality of Scottish heiresses, she is of course not rich—but my fortune rendered that of minor consideration.

Sub. I fear, sir, that I ought rather to congratulate you on having escaped from sordid vanity, than to regret the accident that may for a moment have disturbed your peace. Women, sir, as we see every day, act in such a manner, that the man who founds his hopes of happiness on their constancy, is like him that builds his house upon sand. The world is full of examples of beauty bound in golden chains by deformity, and of paralytic age leading virgin youth into captivity.

Macd. It is very true, sir, but I cannot think so meanly of the lady whom I still hope to call my wife. She knew of her uncle's fortune before, and she is not his only heir.

Sub. He may have assured her since his arrival that he intends that she shall be his heir.

Macd. Granting even that improbability, what then?

Sub. What then, sir? May she not have thought that if with comparatively a limited fortune she had succeeded in attracting a gentleman of your figure, she might aspire with her uncle's wealth to more distinguished advancement?

Macd. She is not such a calculator.

Sub. You think her a woman of understanding, though?

Macd. I do.

Sub. Then, sir, I would ask you if ever yet you knew a woman of understanding that had not a proper respect for the circumstances of life? Depend upon it, the arrival of her uncle is an occurrence that should be investigated.

Macd. I shall be very miserable if your surmises be correct. Good morning.

Sub. Good morning!—poor fellow! he is much affected. What an incomparable cabbage! [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Room.

LADY KILFOGGIE, MISS CAMPBELL DARKNISH, MRS
and MISS CAMPBELL ARDMOR.

Lady K. I am satisfied, and I hope Mary will exert herself with becoming spirit to throw him off.

Miss C. D. I thank you, Mary; but I never heard before that Macdonald was acquainted with Subtle.

Lady K. *That*, my dear, is another proof of his art. You know that Subtle has the name of being the critic who so mangled my nephew's Castalian Drops in the Review, and he might have thought

that had we supposed them to be connected, it would have been an obstacle to the marriage.

Miss C. D. It is very odd. I am in the mist.

Mrs C. But I never was so astonished in my life as when he denied that he was at the assembly.

Lady K. Miracles will never cease ; but this matter must be sifted. Mary, my dear, Miss Campbell will wait with you here while Mrs Campbell and I go to your uncle, and inform him of what has happened.

Miss C. D. Before taking so decisive a step, I wish that I could see Macdonald.

Lady K. My love, you must not give way to your affections, but summon up the pride of an injured and insulted woman. Go to your piano, and endeavour with Miss Campbell to amuse yourself till we return.

Mrs C. Don't be so dejected ; the man is not worth a sigh.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room.

*The General, MACDONALD BENDHU, and SUBTLE,
at table.*

Sub. Yes, I can thoroughly believe *that* !

Enter SAUNDERS.

Saun. (aside). Ah ! he has been at his stories, and this poor greenhorn believes them !

Sub. Every thing in the new continent is indeed on a stupendous scale—the Andes sink the Alps into hillocks—the forests of the Old World sink into shrubberies in a square when compared with the interminable woods of America ! There, nature delights to show her greatness, and all is young, vigorous and gigantic ; nothing indeed so convinces me that the Indian tribes are not the aborigines of the country as their ordinary stature ; we must look in those parts of the Continent most distant from Asia for the original

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race of the Americans, and we shall find in Patagonia inhabitants suitable.

Macd. I give you credit Subtle for so well demonstrating that there must be giants in Patagonia.

Gen. Well, gentleman, I can assure you that there are very wonderful things indeed in America.

Saun. (*aside*). Oh, Lord !

Gen. What Mr Subtle says is very true. One day when I commanded a blockhouse in the woods. (*SAUNDERS coughs violently.*)

Macd. Bless me, what a bad cough your servant has got !

Sub. Send him out of the room, he'll disturb us. Well, General.

Saun. Oh ! it's all over. [*Exit SAUNDERS.*]

Sub. Proceed, General.

Gen. I may tell it—I may tell it—but the thing is very incredible—(*aside.*) He'll bite, Mac.

Macd. Oh yes, try him.

Gen. I cannot expect you to believe me, but a man must believe what he has himself seen.

Sub. Very true. What we have experienced ourselves out of the common course of things, we cannot

expect others to credit—but the fact is not the less certain.

Gen. Well, then, as I was saying, one day at the close of the American war, I happened to go into the woods; it was a sunny, sultry day, not a breath was stirring, when I heard a great murmur at a short distance from me. It was like the sound of a conventicle when the Psalm's singing.

Sub. What, a hum!

Gen. And on turning round I saw such a swarm of bees—they were as big, those that I saw, as cocks and hens.

Macd. No, no, General, that is an exaggeration—they might be like sparrows—but cocks and hens, you know, is too much!

Gen. I certainly was surprised.

Sub. It is the very nature of fear to magnify its objects, and you might think them somewhat too large.

Gen. I assure you that I can compare them only to poultry in a farm-yard—one of them that I very particularly observed had a proboscis—you may believe me or no—but it was of a brown colour.

Sub. Pray, General, what sort of a hive had they?

Gen. Oh, just like any other hive; but that big particular bee had a proboscis like a sausage.

Sub. But, General, if the hive were like another hive, how could such bees get out and in?

Gen. Ha! ha! let the bees look to that! (*Aside.*)
What, a Johnny Raw it is, Mac!

Enter SAUNDERS.

Saun. Two ladies desire to speak with you.

[*Exit General and SAUNDERS.*

Macd. Now, my dear friend, you see to what ridiculous lengths your constant endeavour to shine betrays you. Had any strangers been here, how you must have suffered in their opinion, by giving credit to this story of the General's.

Sub. But I did not give credit to it.

Macd. You absolutely thought about reasoning yourself into its probability—acknowledge yourself to have been for once most egregiously quizzed.

Enter the General.

Gen. Gentlemen, I ask your pardon, a domestic misfortune obliges me to wish you good afternoon.

Macd. What has happened? Can I be of any use to you?

Gen. I don't know, but you may as well come. A young gentleman to whom my niece was to be married has acted in a most unaccountable manner—the match must be broken off. It seems that last night they parted good friends, but he went afterwards to the Assembly, and there he met with another lady, with whom he fell souse over head and ears in love—nay, what is more, the fellow denies that he was at the Assembly.

Sub. (aside). I've got into a scrape.

Gen. He has added insult to injury—he sent a coxcomb to the house with some trumped-up excuse, and the fellow behaved in such a manner that the servant was obliged to shut the door in his face.

Sub. Oh, it is quite clear.

Macd. I'm astonished at you—be serious.

Sub. Serious! I tell you I am serious—I am ashamed, distracted! Oh, there never was any thing equal to this.

Macd. Are you mad?

Sub. Almost—almost—but come—come—stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Room.

MRS CAMPBELL, MACDONALD BOLDIART, *and the*
MISSSES CAMPBELL.

Macd. I hope you will at least afford me some explanation. On this morning, how buoyant were my hopes !

Miss C. D. It is not surely for me, Captain Macdonald, to enter into any explanation. The style of your note gave me sufficient reason to think that some extraordinary change had taken place in your sentiments. You could not have written any thing more politely insignificant as an excuse for not waiting on the lady you danced with last night.

Miss C. A. Is this your Captain Macdonald ?

Macd. B. It is, madam :—The most wretched of mankind !

Miss C. A. But it is not my partner.

Miss C. D. How !

Miss C. A. It is not, nor did I observe him at the

Assembly ; at least I am sure he did not dance with me.

Macd. B. I never danced with her in all my life.

Enter LADY KILFOGGIE, bridling with passion.

Lady K. Captain Macdonald, I thought I had been as plain with you as I was pleasant, in letting you know that your absence would be a cordial.

Macd. B. That there has been some unfortunate mistake between your niece and me, which circumstances have induced you, madam, to avail yourself of, in order to break off the match, I can have no longer any doubt. Mary is not to blame, but I see you know the full advantage of the General's arrival.

Lady K. Insolent ! It is indeed fortunate that he has arrived, and *that* I trust, sir, he will make you shortly know.

Miss C. D. My dear aunt——

Lady K. Do not interrupt me. I had hoped more from your spirit than to have allowed him another interview.

Macd. B. Madam, I insist on being heard.

Lady K. Sir, you shall not insist here. If you make use of such language to me, sir, I will order the footman to turn you to the door, sir.

Miss C. A. I can assure you, madam——

Lady K. I need no assurance.

Mrs C. One word! My daughter has just told me the whole affair.

Lady K. And did you ever hear any thing more shocking in your life? It is hardly credible that any man, born and bred a gentleman, could act in such a manner.

Macd. B. My dear Mary, surely she has lost her senses.

Lady K. Here comes somebody that I trust will bring back yours. This, General, is the person.

Enter General.

Mrs C. My dear sir, she is in the greatest——

Lady K. He knows I am. My agitation must convince him of my distress. Nothing provokes me more than to see Mary flatters herself the whole has been

a mistake. There has been no mistake!—there shall be no mistake!

Gen. Patience, my dear sister, patience. I have got a key to the whole mystery. Macdonald and Mr Subtle are coming.

Lady K. Mr who? What do you say about Macdonald?

Gen. I left them in the street.

Lady K. Why, surely you're all enchanted. Brother, do you see that gentleman?

Gen. I do.

Lady K. And really you see him?

Gen. Why yes; but here they come.

Enter MACDONALD BENDHU and SUBTLE, followed by JOHN.

Miss C. A. This is the gentleman who was my partner last night.

Macd. Bend. And this note was written by me to that lady.

Lady K. Now, I see how it is; the whole has been a trick of Mr Subtle's. This is not the first time that he has caused trouble in our family. He put out a

writing in the Review of my nephew's Castalian Drops that was a shame to be seen.

John. Madam, this is the very person—(*pointing to* SUBTLE)—who obliged me to shut the door in his face.

Sub. Madam, I believe I may have carried my practices a little too far.

Lady K. There now! he confesses his practices.

Sub. If you will give me leave, I will explain the origin, as I conceive it to be, of this unfortunate business, and the accidents that have arisen to involve and perplex it. The note which this gentleman wrote I most solemnly declare——

Lady K. Heed not his declarations. He is making a speech, with as little sense in the words, as if he were addressing the Lords. Sir, we will not take your ipsis dixy for this.

Sub. Then my servant is below, and he will verify the truth. Sam! (*Enter SAM.*) Did not I give you a letter this morning for that lady!

Sam. You certainly gave me a letter.

Sub. Was not the letter addressed to that lady? Answer me.

Sam. That I cannot say ; it was addressed to "Miss Campbell, George's Street," but as there are many more than one Miss Campbell in that street, how could I know whether it was for this lady or another ?

Sub. Understand me, Sam. I am not now practising. I am serious.

Lady K. Doesn't all this look preconcerted ?

Gen. It is very like it.

Macd. Ben. Well, proceed. Subtle, you cut a fine figure.

Sub. On my honour, ladies, I hired this fellow for his knavery.

Lady K. I don't doubt it.

Sub. Merely, at my leisure, to practise a little.

Lady K. Oh, nothing more probable.

Sub. Now do, Sam, for once speak seriously, and do not suppose that I am trifling.

Sam. Upon my word, sir, I have stated the truth.

Sub. The whole truth, and nothing but the truth ? Did you deliver the letter ?

Sam. I did, sir.

Sub. To that lady ?

Sam. No, sir.

Sub. To whom, then?

Sam. To a caddy, and he, I suppose, has made some mistake, that's all!

Lady K. That's all!

Macd. Ben. But how came you to bring back this note, which it now appears was written by this lady under a false impression?

Sam. I chanced to meet with an old fellow-servant from London, and hired a caddy to carry the letter, while I took him to see the lions.

Lady K. I don't believe one word of it—there is not a lion at this time in Edinburgh; Wombwell's Show left the Mound with Wallace last Saturday.

Gen. Come, come, dear sister, I see all how it is.

Lady K. Oh, it's been nothing but a mistake! The wisest may err. I hope, however, (*to the audience,*) ladies and gentlemen, that there is no mistake here.

THE END OF AULD REEKIE.

Act III.

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THE BETROTHMENT;

A TRAGEDY.

PREFACE.

THE story of this Play, as sung by Dante, is not of a kind to obtain much indulgence in the present day, notwithstanding its beautiful pathos. Even the version of Mr Leigh Hunt, in his poem of Rimini, is perhaps too strong for a drama. I have therefore attempted still more to dilute its energy.—I had not even heard of Pelico's tragedy until long after the Betrothment was written.

PROLOGUE.

THE tragic pathos of an ancient tale
To-night we bid the mimic scene display,
And try if still the pomp of woe avail,
Which nature mingles with the muse's lay.

That solemn song that sacred Dante sung,
Stript of its horror, we attempt to give ;—
The bridal bell that the sad requiem rung
Of knight and maid that love forbade to live.

He was the noblest youth, as poets sing,
That trode on daisies in the summer light,
And she the fairest flower of maiden spring,
Whose fragrant eyelids charm the bravest knight.

No guilty cunning drugs the fatal spell
That works the sorrow of two guileless hearts,
Nor other craft than courtiers know full well,
The wary statesman's diplomatic arts.

O gentle love ! whose soft insidious wile,
Untaught, unseen, within the bosom lies ;
The hook that's baited with a simple smile
Lurks in the languish of the purest eyes.

They saw, they lov'd, nor till 'twas woe to love,
Dreamt that dread Fate had barb'd with guilt that woe ;
Beheld the glorious flash burst from above,
Nor deem'd it lightning till they felt the glow.

But, ah ! not long the winged doom-fire blazed,
Not long unscath'd the conscious victim stood—
They smiled and sigh'd, and, starting as they gazed,
Soon found the fire would only quench in blood.

But I forbear th' impassion'd grief to paint,
I but come here your patience to bespeak ;
O, as you hear the lover's fond complaint,
Pity the anguish and the hearts that break !

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

GUIDO, DUKE OF RAVENNA.

MALVOGLIO, *his Minister.*

1ST OFFICER.

2D OFFICER.

ANSELMO.

OFFICER OF GUIDO.

GIOVANNI, DUKE OF RIMINI.

GERARD, *his Minister.*

TRISTRAM, *an Officer of Giovanni.*

SIR LAUNCELOT, *Brother of Giovanni.*

ERNESTO, *Squire of Sir Launcelot.*

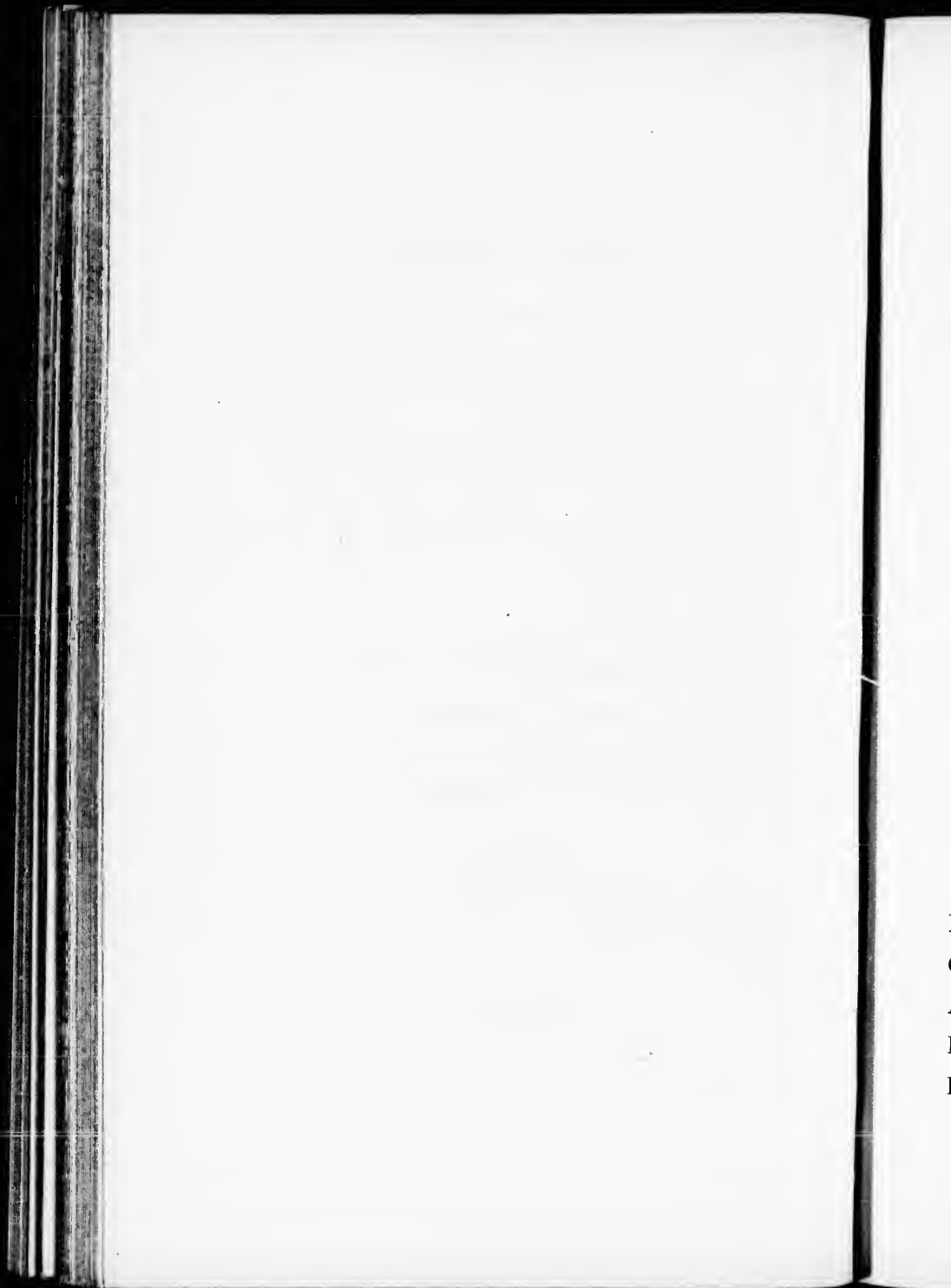
WOMEN.

FRANCESCA, *Daughter of Guido.*

AGATHA, *her Nurse.*

LADY.

Mutes, &c.



THE BETROTHMENT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in the Palace of Ravenna.

GUIDO and MALVOGLIO. *The Duke with a letter
in his hand.*

Malv. This letter troubles you.

Guido. It does, it does ;

For on his coming rested all my hope
Of Francesca's consent. Though she is soft
As summer airs, she will not be controll'd
In ought wherein the sacred breath of prayer
Invokes an obligation ; I did promise,

Unless her heart approv'd the Duke Giovanni,
No marriage should ensue ; for this I urged
Perhaps too earnestly that he should come.

Malv. He is a statesman ; your highness' suit,
In these suspicious times, to such a man
Would seem as policy to bribe his friendship.

Guido. It was not so—I sought but to ensure
To my dear Francesca ! last of my line,
A husband worthy of her honour'd race.
I have no aim but for her weal and honour.

Malv. What says he ?

Guido. Read—alas ! I have no hope
That she will now forego the veil.

Malv. My lord,
There is no cause for sadness in this letter ;
The press of circumstances that detain him,
Are with a cordial spirit frankly told.
Besides, he sends his brother as his proxy,
With such a show of princely equipage,
That all her little pride of sex must yield.

Guido. You do not know her well. 'Tis not the
pride
To be implored, and as a conquest won,

Which makes me fear that she will not consent,
But the integrity of her pure breast,
That will not love upon constraint of duty.

Malv. But she has still the nature of her sex,
And we must rule her humours by our skill.
The prince Sir Launcelot, that Rimini sends,
Is his own counterpart. I have seen both,
And when together, scarce an eye could trace
Ought of a difference in their twinlike forms ;
In absence, which was which were hard to tell.

Guido. But this, Malvoglio, was when they were
boys.

Malv. The Duke, 'tis said, has grown the better
man,

And bears a name for staidier dignity.

—Conceal this letter—Let Sir Launcelot come—

And should he win fair Francesca's good-will,
We shall persuade her then to be betroth'd,
In the assurance that the Duke, his brother,
Is, as in truth he is, the nobler man.

Guido. I like the thought, but—if——

Malv. What would your highness ?

Guido. It is not safe to tamper with the heart.

Malv. 'Tis but a trial ; should it not succeed,
'There's no harm done, we are but as we are.

Guido. True—and my life is set upon this match.
Tell you my daughter that the Duke is near,
For till the Princee arrives I would avoid her.

Malv. The seeret must remain between us two.

Guido. Before they are betroth'd it must be told.

Malv. If need require, no doubt.

Guido. If she refuse ?

Malv. We cannot count on what has yet to be.

Guido. I am not thrie well satisfied with this ;
But, as you say, we know the worst already.

Malv. Oh, we must laugh her highness into love.

Guido. Go then—but yet——

Malv. My lord ?

Guido. Let it be so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. FRANCESCA, AGATHA, and
Ladies.

Fran. Fie, ladies, fie ! This decking is unehaste ;

It ill accords with maiden modesty.—
 I will not wear these diamonds, take them off,
 I hate their libertine and restless glance.
 These rubies, too—they are rank bacchanals,
 And give me jewels of a meeker beam ;
 Give me yon sapphire set with modest pearl,
 Like a sweet novice, trembling as she stands
 Encircled by the pale benignant nuns.

Aga. But you would please the Duke ?

Fran. Not if he think

That paltry trinkets can be qualities
 To heighten love. But wherefore ask you that ?

Aga. For I have heard he has a public heart,
 And loves high rule and gorgeous banqueting.

Fran. And do you fancy it would please him well
 To see his bride apparel'd in her best ?
 Thou art too fond of stately pageantry.
 The Duke, I trust, is a far other man.

Aga. What ! Would you have him musing all the
 day,
 Beside some brook beneath the greenwood shade,
 Like the sad shepherd in the tapestry ?
 Away, pale girl ! I'll not believe thou wouldst.

I have not nursed thee for a pastoral.
Put on thy diamonds, child. Why dost thou sigh ?

Fran. Oh, what is slavery, if it be not felt
By her who must submit her loathing breast
To one she knows not, and may never love !

Enter MALVOGLIO.

Malv. Shame, tardy priestesses. What, not yet
done

With garlanding your victim ?

Fran. Victim !

Aga. Lo,

Another sigh ! As I do live, my lord,
You daunt her spirits like an evil omen.

Malv. Brides are all dull upon their wedding-day.

Aga. Not so was I. The merry bird that sung
Its early carol at my chamber-window,
Was not that morning half so gay as I.

Malv. But he is coming that will gladden her,
As the bright star, the herald of the sun.
His nimble page has come to us before.

[*Drums, trumpets.*

Hark ! gentle lady, 'tis your own true love.

Fran. Did you so style him in the treaty, sir?
Where is my father? I would speak with him,
Before this dreaded stranger's proud approach.

Malv. He sent me to conduct you to the hall,
Where he now waits to give your suitor welcome.
Your hand.

Fran. I go reluctant.

Malv. Without reason.

Fran. My boding spirit all this day has shrunk,
As if instructed by its own fine sense
Of some inevitable sorrow near.

SCENE III.

A Saloon of State.

DUKE GUIDO on his Throne, attended.

Enter 1st Officer.

1st Officer. 'Tis not the Duke Giovanni, but his
brother.

Guido. Who told you that?

1st Officer. I know Sir Launc'lot well :
We served together in the Venetian war.
Ev'n at the utmost scope of sight I knew him.
A braver knight, or sweeter gentleman,
Never found favour in a lady's eye.
And yet his brother is a nobler prince.

Guido. See why Malvoglio comes not with our
daughter.

2d Officer. Behold, they come.

Enter MALVOGLIO, with FRANCESCA and Ladies.

Guido. Conduct her to a seat.

Fran. Why are we placed so far apart, my lord ?

Malv. It is an accident.

Fran. Out upon state,
That such a chance should put my fate in peril.
I would speak with my father.

Malv. 'Tis too late ;
For hark, the trumpets sound Rimini's entrance.

A Procession enters. Music.

Fran. Which is the Duke ?

Malv. He has not yet appear'd.

A Flourish of Trumpets. SIR LAUNCELOT.

Malv. How like you him ?

Fran. I may not answer you.

Malv. A-well, I guess'd you would approve the
choice ;

But this gay youth, beside his nobler brother,
Looks like the moon when the bright sun is up.

Fran. Well, if the heart is worthy of its casket,
I am content with this.

[*The Prince advances to the throne, and pays
his respects to the Duke.*

Guido. There is our daughter.

Launc. O, blest is he who this fair hand may press,
And claim it as his own.

Malv. A truce, my lord,
Till the betrothment shall have been fulfill'd.
Where are the bride's-maids ? let them lead her on.

Guido. Dearest Francesca, how it warms my heart
To see thine eyes again shine out so gay !

Malv. There is no time for words—let's to the
church.

She's won, your highness, and will now depart
As willingly as expectation leads.

Guido. Have you then told her it is not the Duke ?

Malv. I have assured her that he can but help
To guess at the perfections of his brother.

Guido. Thou art the very pillar of my state,
The trusted, tried upholder of my house.

[*The procession moves off.*]

Remain ANSELMO and 1st Officer.

Ans. This match was made when stars of happy
aspect

Shed their auspicious influence on the earth.

1st Officer. Pray heaven, the sequel realize our
wishes.

Ans. It is an envious sprite that makes thee doubt.
Saw ye not mutual passion interchang'd
In their first glances ?

1st Officer. May it soon be quenched !

Ans. Art thou beside thyself to wish such ill ?

1st Officer. You know not, then, that it is not the
Duke.

Ans. How ! not the Duke, who and what is he, then ?

1st Officer. His proxy and his brother.

Ans. Impossible. To all th' assembled court
It was announced the Duke would come in person.

1st Officer. But who can fathom curs'd Malvoglio's craft?

He has no faculty for honest work,
Nor thinks ought well done that is not achiev'd
By some bewildering sleight of stratagem.

Ans. I cannot credit that our good old master
Would lend his sanction to a needless fraud.

1st Officer. Malvoglio rules him, though he knows
it not.

But come—we shall be late—the chapel bell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Chamber.

GIOVANNI and GERARD.

Giov. Would I had gone to bring her home myself!——

There are occasions in affairs of state,

When prudence is not policy, and this
My heart and judgment say is one of them.

Ger. But Count Malvoglio, whom your highness
keeps

Fee'd to your interests in her father's council,
Warn'd us the Princess never would consent
Unless that she herself approved the choice.
With such a doubt, honour forbade your going.

Giov. With such a doubt 'twere wiser to have
gone.

Ger. Should she refuse in her caprice to come,
Your highness 'scapes the personal rejection.

Giov. My proxy should have been a better choice.

Ger. At the suggestion of the shrewd Malvoglio,
Your brother, for his likeness, was preferr'd ;
For, pleased with him, she will approve your highness.

Giov. Malvoglio's craft may overreach itself.
My brother is a gay and gallant man,
With easy grace, and gentle sentiments,
And may succeed where I might well despair ;
So much we are unlike, though yet so like,
As you and old Malvoglio sagely think.

A village maid, scarce enter'd in her teens,
Would foil you both in Cupid's politics.

Enter TRISTRAM.

Trist. A largess from your highness ! It is done,
The fairest lady in all Christendom
Obeys you as her lord. My horse has flown
Less with his speed than with his master's gladness.
To-night she comes—like the fair moon she comes,
With all her stars, to shine on Rimini.

Giov. Here, take this chain, and wear it for her
sake,

Thy news and rapture well deserve the meed.

Ger. But canst thou tell us of no circumstance,
Some happy omen cackling gossips drew
From crowing cock, or pigeon on the tiles—
No prank of page or stately abigail,
Or ought of all the mirth-conceited haps,
The charter'd frolics of a wedding-day ?

Trist. The match were luckless had there been no
sport.

Ger. Tell us what chanced—why dost thou hesitate ?

Trist. The princess——

Ger. Well——

Trist. Heard half the service read
Before she knew 'twas but his highness' brother.

Giov. What hast thou said? Did they deceive her
so?

Trist. 'Twas a conceit of cunning old Malvoglio,
Who kept, 'tis said, your highness' letters up,
Wherein you wrote the sending of the proxy.

Giov. Indeed! she took Sir Launcelot, then, for
me,
The proxy for the principal. My lord,
In such a case there should have been no error.
What said the Princess when she found the cheat?

Trist. She paus'd, grew pale, and timidly look'd
round;
The Duke, her father, fondly caught her arm,
And whisp'ring to her, brought her colour back.
She then sustain'd the ritual complete,
With a severe and solemn dignity
That fill'd us all with awe.

Giov. What did my brother?

Trist. He smil'd, and chid Malvoglio for the trick.

Giov. Had he no sword to plunge it in his heart?

Ger. My gracious lord—

Giov. Send hence that officer. (*Exit TRISTRAM.*)

As I do live, one of the three is lost.

Ger. He said the Princess soon resumed herself.

Giov. Yes, he described her conscious and sublime:

Iphigenia at the dreadful altar,

The victim of her father and her country !

Ger. In a short time it will be all forgotten,

When in your highness she has found confirm'd

The merits that she fancied in your brother.

Giov. I am not jealous ; but in this my reason

Says, I have cause to doubt the heart she brings.

You praised her to me as a lovely maid,

With whose meek wishes much of heaven was blent.

Ger. I did but faintly echo the report

Which all who knew her worth and beauty bore.

Giov. And her own wish was to assume the veil ?

Ger. So I was taught by Count Malvoglio's letter.

Giov. Curs'd be the wiles of his pernicious brain—

The worst that can be at the worst is that.

Ger. What, my good lord ?

Giov. To let her take the veil.

Ger. Wait till you see her, till you try her heart.

Giov. What ! till I love her, wounding my own
breast

With pains as cureless as I fear she feels—
One victim to Malvoglio's craft, one victim
Is quite enough, and more than I can spare.
Ha ! what is that ?

Ger. The cannon on the walls,
Telling the marriage to th' applauding people.

Giov. They sound like thunder heralding to woe.

Ger. I am amaz'd, my lord, to see you thus.

Giov. The deadly venom of a scorpion's sting
Is not the tithe of a tear's quantity ;
Yet is it fatal as the swallowing wave
That gulfs the shipwreck'd mariner. Again—

Ger. Will you not come to give her welcome ?

Giov. Yes.

Lead, I will follow. Ye have chain'd my will.
I was your lord, but this accursed guile
Has sunk me to a puppet. Come, lead on.

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace of Ravenna.

GUIDO and MALVOGLIO.

Guido. No pleasure has this wedding brought to
me,

But only doubts and fears I may not utter.

'Tis strange, most strange, that yet no messenger
Has come with tidings of my child's reception.

I wish that thou hadst gone with her, Malvoglio,
That had there been ought wanting in the welcome,
Thou mightst have seen it thoroughly supplied.

Malv. Sir, nothing would be wanting. Love and
honour

Stood eager for her coming. Not a prince
In all the wide extent of Christendom,

So to the utmost syllable performs
The dues and courtesies of princely state,
As Rimini.

Guido. Is he, then, so austere ?
My sweet and artless child will ill abide
The tedious worship of his idol forms.

Malv. I have not well express'd what I would say.
In frank and gracious equanimity—
The universal spirit which still meets
The moment's need, the individual's humour—
All duties and proprieties of life,
With the appropriate act and sentiment,
The Duke has no superior; and he gives
Each several claim of courtesy and duty
Its just degree of precedence so wisely,
That none can say his public care relaxes,
When most his private wishes are indulged.

Guido. He is too uniformly high and wise
For my poor Francesca—a kindlier will,
With pleasantry, and virtues that possess
More of good nature than of reason in them,
Were better suited to her gentle heart.
Malvoglio !

Malv. Sir—what would my lord ?

Guido. Malvoglio,

Thou canst do for me a most special service.

Malv. It is the very purpose of my life
To do whate'er your highness may command.

Guido. Prepare with speed to go to Rimini,
And well observe how Francesca appears ;
Should she be sad, find out her cause of grief,
And give me early notice.

Malv. My good lord,
Why do you doubt that she is else than happy ?

Guido. By every means that honour would employ,
I labour'd for the match ; but, in the end,
Somewhat of wrong, or error, did arise,
All on our part, Malvoglio, and my mind
Misgives with the reflection. But make haste ;
Be on the spot with her, should harm ensue,
Apply thy wisdom to forestall its issue.

Malv. But what pretext shall I have for this
mission ?

Guido. Here, take this ring, present it to the
Duke ;
It is an antique gem inestimable.

Tell him, from times unknown it has been worn
By all the heirs of our age-honoured dukedom,
And Francesca, in whom the line will end,
Gives him a sacred right to put it on.
Go, bear it, with my blessing to them both.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Palace of Rimini.

SIR LAUNCELOT.

Sir Laun. O! aid me, Heav'n, to break this fatal
spell

Which draws my fond enchanted spirit on
To madness, guilt, or death. My brother's wife
In the rich moment of forgotten duty,
When but her charms, like inspiration, fill'd me,
The dreadful thought came like awakening thunder
On my entranced soul.—It is not love,
For love is gentle as a smiling child,
That leads his victim by a flowery garland—

The giant fiend that holds me as his thrall,
Drags to perdition with a heavy chain.

Enter ERNEST.

Ern. Why have you left the banquet?

Sir Laun.

I am ill ;

The heat, the throng, the minstrelsy, and mirth,
With strange distraction shake my erring brain.

Ern. Came it so like a sudden blight upon you,
That, in the moment of such happy ease,
When your gay earnestness withheld the bride
From noting else your brother's cold regards,
You should, as 'twere in wildness, quit the room?

Sir Laun. My brother's coldness! What is that
to me?

Did you mistake? It is but rapt delight ;
His sense is lock'd in wonder at her charms ;
He stands in doubt of his benignant fortune.

Earn. Is it your malady that prompts this rapture?

Sir Laun. O, interpose between me and my fate !
O, save me from despair !

Ern. Alas! my lord,
I have suspected this.

Sir Laun. O, say not so :
Say not I ever yet, by look or sigh,
Have pass'd the threshold of a brother's love.
Sure in that fatal hour when first we met,
All fraudulent fiends had license to betray ;
For she, so holy, innocent, and true,
Would not have bent on me such eyes of kindness,
But in belief I was her destined husband.

Ern. My lord, dear lord, you must forget it all.

Sir Laun. When the blind wretch that mourns his
perish'd sight,
Forgets the glorious sun, I may forget,
Amidst my hopelessness, those gentle eyes
That beam'd upon me such a light of love.

Ern. This fond remembrance only moves to grief ;
And yours is sinful, craving guilt and crimes.

Sir Laun. I know it all, and shudder at the
brink

Whereon remorseless destiny has placed me.

Ern. Arrest such blasphemy—be more a man,
Set free your spirit for a nobler part.

Sir Laun. When the famed sufferers in the sculp-
tured stone

Have wrench'd themselves from the infolding ser-
pents,

I may shake off the fetters of my fate.

Ern. You have no purpose in these guilty thoughts.

Sir Laun. I have, I have.

Ern. O Heavens! what would you?

Sir Laun. Die!

Ern. Alas! why yield you to such dread intents?

Sir Laun. What! see you not who stands at my
right hand?

Ern. My lord, there's no one there.

Sir Laun. —Ha, not the fiend!

Who prompts me then to love my brother's wife?

Who jogs my arm to pluck my rapier out,

And plunge it in thy breast?

Ern. My lord, in mine?

Sir Laun. Ay, even in thine, lest thou divulge the
secret.

If hell's not here, and thoughts so curs'd as these

Spring up spontaneous in my alter'd nature,

Oh! what am I?

Ern. It is the lofty honour of your heart,
Indignant at a lapse of dangerous passion,

That gives this foretaste of remorse to save you.
Hark! steps approach; I pray you, come with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Room.

GIOVANNI *and* GERARD.

Giov. Did you observe my brother at her side?

Ger. I did, my lord. With maiden bashfulness
She seem'd to listen to his gay discourse.

Giov. O! she was charm'd to hear him; and as oft
As I would fain her gentle favour earn,
In the sweet pauses of the minstrelsy,
She shrunk away, and ever turn'd her ear
To the more pleasing music of his tongue.

Ger. His native ease, and sprightly elegance,
Bespeak a ready audience of the fair.
Proud is the heart Sir Launcelot may not bend,
And cold the breast his ardour cannot warm.
To-night his gaiety delighted all.

Giov. But most the bride; she largest shared his art.

you.
with me.
[*Exeunt.*

Ger. In that his courteous knighthood best was
seen.

She is a stranger, and all eyes around
Search'd her so eagerly, that, but for him,
Who interposed like a soft shade between,
She had been dazzled by the general gaze.

Giov. Was I not there to bear her courage up?

Ger. But he, your highness, is an older friend.

Giov. An older friend! say you? how, by how
much?

Ger. By the companionship of a day's journey.
But—

Giov. Well.

Ger. —My gracious Lord—

Giov. Retire; good-night.

[*Exit GERARD.*

He would conceal from me the dreadful truth,
That she prefers my brother. O, what bliss
Had lull'd my cares in dreams of heavenly joy,
Could I have called her maiden heart my own!
But life grows loathsome when I dare to think
How her pure spirit must now hate, reject me.

Enter AGATHA.

Aga. Ha, you pray long, my lord, on such a night,
Your wedding-night ; to give so much to Heaven,
Lacks in the worship that your bride expects.
Come, go you in—your saint to-night is there.

Giov. Does she expect me ?

Aga. Ay ; what should she else ?

Giov. But love or hatred may alike expect ;
Couldst thou but change the word, and say desire !

Aga. Does she not hang her head and faintly sigh ?
Stands she not thus, communing with herself ?
Gods ! from a maid, what bridegroom would have
more ?

Giov. Nurse, good-night. [*Exit.*

Aga. Well—yet he looks like a man,
A lover too ; but so to hesitate,
To doubt, to fear ; can it be jealousy
That sends such megrims to the poor man's brain ?
O, I will school her how to manage him.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A Chamber.

Francesca. Hence, ye vain trappings ! O, my
heart, my heart !

The wreaths that deck'd the victim are unbound—

But what kind hand will now undo the knot

That ties me to a miserable doom ?

Oh, thou good angel, guardian of my fate,

For what unknown offence didst thou desert me,

In that dire moment when I gave my hand ?

Thine eyes, O Launcelot, have ruin in them ;

And I forgot that their fond eloquence

Was used but for thy brother. Was it so ?

Why should that doubt come to me with delight,

Like a sweet cup empoison'd to destroy ?

It cheats me in the taste, while guilt and death

Wait eager for their prey. O, I am lost—

Undone, undone ! Tremendous destiny

Has bound me fast, and drags me to despair.

Enter GIOVANNI.

My lord!

Giov. Why this alarm, sweet Francesca?
Why heaves thy bosom with these painful sighs?
Why so avert from me that beauteous face,
Which, but to look on, is to love for ever?
Nay, be not wayward; thou mayst leave thy
hand.

This, this at least is mine.

Fran. Ah me, my lord!
I cannot help it. Bear with me awhile.
These weak emotions soon will pass away,
And all that duty may of love require,
Shall with my hand be yours.

Giov. Oh, must thy love
Be then so menial? But the slave of duty—
The odious servitude cannot last long.

Fran. My gracious lord—though fated man and
wife,
We still are strangers to each other's hearts;
And love that comes not straight like light from
heaven,
To kindle in them one bright mingling flame,

We must, by patient duty, strive to raise
 Out of the hard condition of our fortune,
 Like fire from flint, and it will come, my lord.

Giov. Thy voice has the persuasion of a charm,
 And I believe thou dost already love me.
 Come, let me lead thee, for the night wears out.
 Why dost thou tremble, and withdraw thy hand?

Fran. Not yet, my lord—not yet. O righteous
 heaven!

This invitation has the taint of incest.
 Leave me, my lord—O, leave me yet awhile:
 I have forgot my wonted orisons.

[She retires apart, and falls on her knees.]

Giov. This strong reluctance has a horror in't,
 Beyond the passion of a maiden's fear:
 It is too holy to be lightly conquer'd.
 There, on her knees, how like a saint she looks!
 A weeping Magdalen, with the soft eyes
 Of virgin innocence. O, hear her, Heaven!

Fran. Mock not the pious anguish of my soul.

[Arises.]

Giov. Mock thee, adored! Tell me but with what
 penance

I may redeem that fault in my demeanour
Which makes thee think I could be so profane.

Fran. It is not you—it is not you, my lord,
That in this crisis of my fate offends :
Some strange distemper has incensed my brain.
Oh, I am ill, and would be left alone.

Giov. By this time all the palace is abed,
And quench'd in sleep the poor man's cares are laid.
None but the guilty and the wretched wake :
To which, my Francesca, do we belong ?

Fran. My lord, my lord—

Giov. Oh, I have mark'd thy tears,
Saw the controll'd aversion of thine eyes,
Felt thy hand dead in the fond press of mine,
And heard the heavenly accents of thy tongue
Promise but cold endeavour for my love.
What can be misery if I know it not,
To know all these upon my wedding-night ?

Fran. My gracious lord—

Giov. I will not call that guilt
Which so affects thy pure religious soul ;
But it is drugg'd with some pernicious stuff,
As nauseous as the surfeit of remorse.

Fran. My noble wedded lord—my husband—hear me!

The vows I took shall be as blameless held
As ever woman pledged faith maintain'd!
All I can give my lord I will bestow.

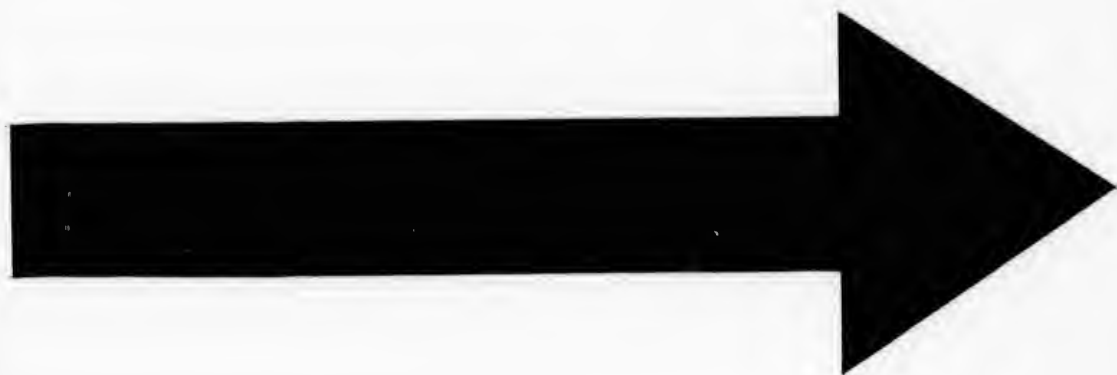
Giov. Alas! how little is that all to me!
The heart, the will, the kindly thought that comes
Like fragrance from the rosebud to the sun,
A sweet return to fond affection's wish,
Is lost to all my hopes!—Ha! what are these?

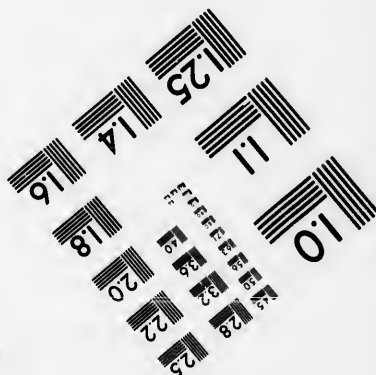
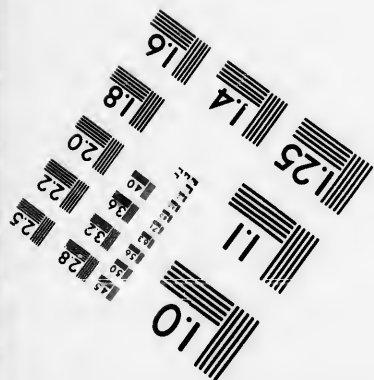
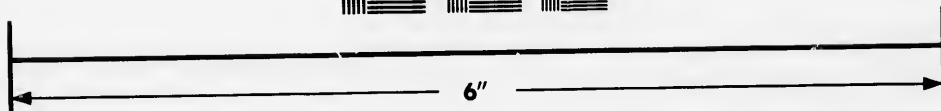
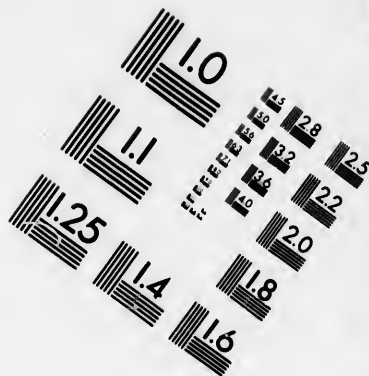
Fran. The morn begins to dawn—

Giov. Out—out on state—

It is the minstrels come to sing good-morrow,
And hail us happy from our bridal bed.
Oh, we must forth with our best smiles to meet
The public joy, and answer with content,
With looks of love and eyes of happiness,
Those gratulations that, like poison'd daggers,
Will strike but fest'ring anguish to our hearts.
Come, loveliest, come—oh, I could spare thee this!

END OF ACT SECOND.





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ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Room at Ravenna.

MALVOGLIO and ERNEST.

Mal. I shall be happy to report it all
To our good Duke : how it would gladden him
To hear this princely welcome told so well !
Now tell me how your noble master fares ;
The bride with him was marvellously pleas'd—
I think she would have been content with him.

Ern. I know not that ; but he had been with her,
Had fortune and you statesmen so allow'd.

Mal. Indeed !

Ern. O, he was smitten to the core,
And play'd so earnestly the lover's part,
That he forgot he was but in't a proxy.

Mal. Ha ! say not so—you must not speak of that ;
It may beget ill fancies, and their rumour,
Like light reflected from the speculum,
May waste with fire the thing whereon it falls.
This must not reach her husband : should he think
Sir Launcelot was so treach'rous in his trust,
It might engender evil thoughts of her,
And so provoke the wrong he but suspected.

Ern. Gods ! what a mountain you would make of
this !

The thing is but a tale to relish wine—
A shuttlecock when the well-flavoured glass
Becomes the nimble battledore of wit.

Mal. I would that it, sir, might be quite forgotten.
Why do you laugh ?

Ern. That it should vex a statesman,
And make him shake his pond'rous locks like Jove,
As if the matter boded change to kings.
Look where Count Gerard comes, as rapt and sad
As if he bore the weight of this great secret,
For he is deep in the Duke's confidence,
And shares the burden of his heaviest cares.
I have a mind to break his back with this.

Mal. Forbear, forbear ; do not make mischief, sir.

Enter GERARD.

Ern. Count Gerard, ho !

Ger. Unhand the gentleman !

Ha, Count Malvoglio, here in Rimini !

When came you, sir ?

Mal. I am but just arrived.

My friend would have run on to tell the bride,
But seeing you approach, I check'd his rashness.

Ern. (aside). How the dog lies ! What can have
brought him here ?

Why all this mystery for Sir Launcelot's freak ?
Is then the bride such tinder as to catch
So easily—and with her husband's brother ?
How they prest on this marriage ! Was the maid
So very ripe that she would keep no longer ?
Has she proved false before ? I do her wrong ;
This crafty rogue puts ill thoughts in my head.
What he forbids, it were but right to do.
I will inform my master of his coming.

[*Exit ERNEST.*

Mal. Is he then jealous ? Oh, poor Francesca !

How oft her artless nature may offend,
 And that sweet ease, which wins on ev'ry heart,
 Bring to her gentle self suspicious wrong!

Ger. Count, you surprise me; for your letters
 bore

Far other portraiture, and which report
 Largely confirm'd: in her own serious beauty
 We found that rich description well sustain'd.
 You painted her with saintly piety,
 Lofty and distant in her freest hours,
 Investing all the offices of life
 With the bless'd halo of religious purpose—
 In sooth to say, one more prepar'd for heaven,
 Than fitted for the base concerns of earth.

Mal. And such she is in her religious mood—

Ger. Mood! capricious, too! this is discovery!

Mal. You lay great stress, Count Gerard, on my
 words.

'Tis no state matter that we talk about.

Ger. And yet you told me that her anxious father
 Had sent you hither on a special mission;—
 What is it, then, if not to smooth the way
 For some expected levity?

ke mischief, sir.

!

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o.

Exit ERNEST.

r Francesca!

Mal. My friend—

My worthy friend, mine is a task of kindness.
This antique, fam'd, inestimable gem,
From immemorial time has been the badge
That mark'd the heirs of Guido's honour'd line.
Your Duke, now husband to its latest scion,
Her father recognising as his heir,
Requests him to accept, and I am come
To give the gift with due solemnity.

Ger. My lord, you might have told me this before,
Nor left conjecture to supply a motive
So different from the true; for who could think
That Count Malvoglio's well-considered words
Should, in this instance, be like gossip's prattle,
Heard without heed, and spoken without aim?—
But, come—let me conduct you to the Duke.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room at Rimini.

SIR LAUNCELOT.

Sir Laun. Lie still, lie still—my flutt'ring heart,
lie still !

Thy fond desiring pulses throb in vain ;
For she, whose image wakes this rapture in thee,
Must never, never know thy hopeless love !
Mine eyes, unconscious of their guilty roving,
Pursue her form, as by enchantment drawn ;
And when, in courtesy, her gentle hand
Is placed in mine, through all my tingling frame
A thrilling ecstasy electric flies.—
Oh, fate, relentless fate ! why was I led,
With eyes intent upon that lovely vision,
To fall into this bottomless despair ?

Enter AGATHA.

Ah, my good Agatha, why dost thou weep ?
What hath mischanced to make thee sad so soon ?

Aga. So soon, indeed; but it is of the air,
Some sickly vapour of the sullen clime
Taints with infectious sadness ev'ry breast.
The bride, that should have been as sparkling bright
As the gay morning star, comes forth in tears;
And the bridegroom, who should, to-day, have shone
More life-inspiring than the cheerful sun,
Moves with a clouded and tempestuous visage.—
You heed me not—are you infected too?

Sir Laun. Thou said'st that she was sorrowful—
Alas!

Can aught but sympathy for others' woe
Chill like a blighting shadow that bless'd heart,
Where every virtue blossoms in the warmth
Of heaven's immediate influence? My brother!
He that indeed should have been as the sun,
Triumphant, glorious, boundless in his joy,
As is the universal light of noon—
He, with disastrous aspect too, appear!

Aga. He is too stately for sweet Francesca.
Oh, would that fortune—but 'tis said she's blind,
And could not see what nature did intend,
In making such a pair as her and you.

Curse on Malvoglio's craft ! I felt my heart
Ring as if smitten with a stroke of fate,
When I was told that you were not the man.

Sir Laun. I, gentle nurse, I too must rue that
fraud.

Aga. And who may not ? I know my lady does.

Sir Laun. Thou hast not said it—prithee say not
so.

Aga. I do—I will—till I shall see her happy.
When we had from the priest and altar come
Back to her chamber, and all else shut out,
She hid her face on this maternal bosom,
And wept that she had yielded to the cheat.

Sir Laun. But I was innocent—I knew it not.

Aga. Oh, wherefore then look'd you so like her
lover ?

Sir Laun. I look'd but as I felt.

Aga. Oh, sinful man,
To let thine eyes the hopes of passion speak
Even to thy brother's bride !

Sir Laun. Good Agatha.

Aga. Avaunt ! away ! there's a contagion near
thee,

Which every chaste and holy mind should shun.

[*Exit AGATHA.*

Sir Laun. Stay! hear me, Agatha! I charge thee,
stay! [He follows.

SCENE III.

A Room in the Palace of Rimini.

FRANCESCA and Lady.

Lady. How is your highness?

Fran. Wherefore ask you that?

I am not sick, that you should so enquire.

Lady. Yet health wears never look so sadly wan,
Nor fetches sighs from such a depth of heart.

Fran. Thou art too curious—it becomes thee not
To watch thy mistress with invidious eyes.

Lady. Blame not the carefulness of humble duty—
I did but ask with wishes to relieve.

Fran. I know thou didst—I know thy kind intent;
But grief is petulant to be disturb'd,
And I would hush my sorrows here alone.

shun.

AGATHA.

charge thee,

He follows.

Lady. Alas ! your h'ghness, what hath grief with
you,

Placed on the brightest heavenward height of fortune—

Cloth'd with most envied beauty, yet so guarded

With gentle virtues that pale Envy breathes

A soft amen to Love imploring blisses ?

Look not in tears to the benignant skies,

That shed upon you their selectest favour.

Fran. I would not be ungrateful for my lot ;
No—Heaven, I thank thee ; let thy will be done.

Lady. So might the pious in affliction say,
But you—alas ! it sounds not well from you.

Fran. Have I no cause for sadness, here a stranger !

My native land for ever left behind—

From all those household, dear, familiar things,

Which I have known before I knew myself,

Parted, as 'twere, by the divorce of death ?

The thought is sorrow, and my tears will flow.

My kind old father, too, for ever left—

O ! he is dead to me, without that boon,

That silent safety from terrestrial woe,

Which death confers upon such good old men.

O, I must weep, for he will mourn for me.

Lady. Oh, rather think, how in your noble husband

More than a father claims this fond regard.

Fran. Alas ! my wayward heart ! it should be so.

Enter AGATHA.

Aga. I have strange news ; the Count Malvoglio's here !

Fran. Art thou beside thyself to fancy this ?

Aga. I saw him enter at the Palace gate,
With the Count Gerard ; arm-in-arm I saw them.

Fran. Pray Heaven it be not true !

Lady. Why so, your highness ?
He will bring tidings of the Duke, your father.

Fran. There's a fatality to me about him,
That makes me tremble but to hear his name.
The evil fiend that wars with my good angel,
Fights with the very virtues of that man.
For ever when he would me serve the most,
The worst that malice can inflict, ensues.
Hark ! 'tis his tread—the dismal tread of fate !

Enter MALVOGLIO and GERARD.

Fran. My lord, what would you here?

Mal. The Duke, your father,

Ever most kind in his paternal care,

Would have me witness to your happiness.

Fran. Had he no other messenger to send?

Mal. Whom could he fitter for the mission choose,
Than him by whom the labour was achiev'd?

Ger. (to the Lady). Mark you the grief of that
heart-loaded sigh.

Fran. Was this the sole end of your embassy?

Mal. It was the principal, but not the sole.

Fran. What else, my lord, if I am free to ask?

Mal. To bear this antique jewel to your lord.

Fran. Impossible! that ring of right is mine,
Nor may my father gift it from his blood,
Without a breach of sacred covenants,
By which, in failure of our line, it passes
Back to the Pope, who, by possession, then
May claim the dukedom, being thereby heir.
Say not, my lord, that this could be your business.

Ger. He then is here for some unspoken purpose.

Lady. 'Tis strange she thinks of this, and so forgets

The soft remembrance of her father's love!

Ger. Hush! hush! Lo! the Duke comes.

Enter Duke, attended.

Ger. The Count Malvoglio.

Giov. Welcome to Rimini.

Aga. How coldly said!

Giov. How fares our friend—I should have said
our father?

How fares the venerable Duke, your master?

Mal. Happy as hope can make him! And with this,
The symbol that you have become his heir,
He sends a father's blessing to you both.

Fran. Put it not on, my lord—put it not on;
He knows my father may not part with it,
Without the forfeiture of all his dukedom.

Giov. Why has he brought it, then?

Fran. I know not that—

It gives a solemn purpose to his coming,
But I distrust the motive. O, my lord,
Send him back quickly, and return the ring.

Mal. My gracious lady, you impeach my honour :
To bear a blessing, and to give this ring,
Was the sole end and purpose of my coming.

Fran. Thou didst deceive me in the holiest act
Which man or woman can in life perform,
And I will not believe thee though thou swear'st.—
Send him away, my lord—send him away.

[*Exit FRANCESCA.*

Giov. Follow her, Count, and calm her—if you can.

[*Exit MALVOGLIO.*

Think'st thou his mission was but with the ring ?

Ger. 'Tis hard to tell, for honesty with him
Assumes so oft the base disguise of craft,
That when I least should doubt, I doubt him most.
The Duchess fears him, too—would have him hence.

Giov. What dost thou mean ?

Ger. She said he had betray'd her.

Giov. I heard it well—believ'st thou it not true ?
It was not her alone that he betray'd.

Ger. Whom else, your highness ?

Giov. Whom ? dost thou not know ?

Ger. I saw him first in converse with Ernesto.

Giov. My brother's squire—why went he first to him?

Ger. 'Tis that which makes me dubious of his mission ;

His business should have brought him first to me.

Giov. But what avails it? Nothing can I learn That will appease the kindling anguish here.

To know the lov'd and lovely being wrong'd

Beyond all virtuous effort of relief,

Is woe sufficient—and I am content.

Were there but any sacrifice that man

Could make to purchase back her bosom's peace,

My dukedom and my life I would resign.

Ger. May she prove worthy of such generous love!

Giov. She is most worthy; and I doat the more Because her worthiness denies my hope.

Ger. What means my lord? What hope can she deny?

Giov. Nothing—nothing—she must take the veil.

Ger. Must, your Highness?

Giov. Ay, there's no cure else—
The tie of life to her is broken, Count;

The blossom of all pleasure here is nipp'd,
And she, though loving, lovely, and belov'd,
Must, like a gather'd flower, untimely perish.

What would it now avail were I to die ?

Ger. My noble-minded master !

Giov. 'Tis too late. [Exit GIOVANNI.]

Enter ERNEST.

Ern. He seems perplex'd, but I will speak to him.

My lord, was not the Count Malvoglio here ?

Ger. He was, but he is gone—gone with the Duchess.

Ern. Has he not seen the Duke ?

Ger. Why ask you that ?

Ern. I thought his mission was but with his highness ?

Ger. You know his mission, then ?

Ern. How, sir, should I,

Who have no part in the concerns of state ?

Ger. Tell me, I pray you, what you guess of him.

Ern. He has some doubt—some lurking fear.

Ger. Of what ?

Ern. Lest the reception of the bride had lack'd.

Ger. Think you he came to question but of that ?

Ern. He sifted me with such shrewd earnestness,
That I did think he came for little else,
And therefore doubted that there might be cause
Why he should fear some stinting in the welcome.
Was she not once reluctant to the match ?

Ger. Thou know'st she was.

Ern. But whence did it proceed ?

Ger. Of her great piety ; religious vows
Not to bestow her hand against her heart.

Ern. Yet she has wedded one she never saw.

Ger. She saw him mirror'd in his brother's form.

Ern. So lov'd by proxy !—Count, believe it not ;
If she did love, it was the substance seen,
Not the unknown invisible—the thing of fancy.

Ger. Thou wouldst impeach her honesty—

Ern. I do—for she has wreck'd my noble master's
peace,
Glanc'd on him smiles as fatal to his honour

As the fell fire that blights the blossom'd bough
Of some fair tree in pride of vernal beauty.

Ger. Hush, hush, my friend ; there's danger in thy
words ;

Come with me to some safer, secret place.

END OF ACT THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Palace of Rimini.

FRANCESCA, *followed by* AGATHA.

Fran. It is too much—just Heaven! it is too much—

To set my heart and reason so oppos'd.
Oh, wherefore may I not my husband love?
Why ever, even while I count his virtues,
To frame a charm against this strange aversion,
Does the ill angel of my fate prevail,
And, in the form of his deceitful brother,
Have such a license to subdue my heart?

Aga. Alas! Sir Launcelot was not to blame.

Fran. Ha! who art thou? what fiend has spoken here,

To tempt me with that thought? He did deceive me.

Oh! he knew well I might not dare to love him;
Yet looked he on me with such eyes of passion,
That my weak heart, believing him his brother,
Was lost in guilt, yet thought it innocence.

Aga. Sir Launcelot knew not of Malvoglio's
fraud;

He was no party to that fatal fault.

Fran. O, say not so, for if he can but think
That I believed he was indeed a proxy,
He must abhor me as a wanton lost;
For my rash answer to his speaking eyes,
Save bride to bridegroom, none unblam'd may give.

Aga. Dry up thy tears, for, see, the Duke ap-
proaches.

Fran. Then leave me—leave me!

[*Exit AGATHA.*

Enter Duke.

Fran. How aghast he looks!
I ever heard he was a man severe;
That gentleness which almost soothed my dread,
Has been but courtesy, and now he comes
To tax me with the treach'ry of my heart.

Giov. O Francesca !

Fran. My lord—what would my lord ?

Giov. Fool, that I am, to doat so on this hand,
The glove that covers it should be as dear ;
In thy rare beauty I but see a casket,
Which makes me rue with more intense affliction,
The robbery of the riches it contain'd.

Fran. My lord—my lord—why do you scan me
thus ?

Giov. That I may find some error in thy charms,
Some fault of nature in thy loveliness,
To make my judgment combat with my passion.

Fran. Why, if you love me, would you love me less ?

Giov. For that I have no hope of a return,
And must resign thee.

Fran. How, my lord ! resign ?

Giov. Yes—part for ever ; for to see thee thus
Averted from me, trembling at my gaze,
In horror flying from thy bridal bed,
Is the perdition of all good in life.
My brother too—why dost thou start appall'd ?—
That thou dost love him all thine actions speak ;
But he is conscious of the fatal flame,

And flies the danger—he departs to-night
For the Venetian war. Fame is his mistress ;
The radiant glory of resounding arms
Delights him more than lady's looks of love.

Fran. Thank Heaven ! thank Heaven ! and may
he prosper well,

In his rude dalliance with heroic death !

Giov. How ! art thou pleased that he should danger court ?

Fran. Nothing is dangerous that protects from guilt ;

The grave alone can save the outcast me !

Giov. Can fortune's fault thus taint thy innocence ?

Fran. 'Till thou know'st all, call me not innocent.

[*Exit* FRANCESCA.

Giov. Not innocent !

Enter GERARD.

Ger. My lord—I pray your highness—

Giov. Say what thou wouldst ! O Heavens ! not innocent !

Ger. I do most earnestly beseech your highness—

Giov. She shall not walk this world another night,
For if pollution take so fair a form,
Virtue herself is false.—Not innocent!

Ger. I would speak of the Duchess.

Giov. What of her?

Tell me the sun's a foul blot in the sky,
And I'll believe thee now.—Not innocent!

Ger. My gracious prince, for more than forty
years,

With blameless honour have I served your house,
In all the trusts wherein I favour earn'd.

Giov. And hast thou too deceived me?

Ger. Me, my lord!

Giov. Heed not my words—proceed, my friend,
proceed.

Ger. May I, without offence, then, dare to utter
Aught that may touch the honour of your bride?

Giov. What, is her guilt so widely spread abroad,
That gossips' tongues are free with my disgrace?

Ger. I said not guilt, my lord; give me a hearing.

Giov. Wretch! thou know'st well she is not what
she seems.

Rack me no more, but say what thou hast heard.

Ger. She left no look untried to win your
brother ;

All that the eyes could say, hers said to him,
Till he forgot what barrier stood between them.

Giov. Were she as lewd as Helen, as she's fairer,
His noble spirit would disdain the thrall.
She is a stranger, and not innocent—
But him I know : until my eyes and ears
Have demonstration of their mutual guilt,
I'll say thou liest, to say he would so sin.
Go, get thee hence, old man ! If this be true,
All that is faith will but the soul undo. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room.

Lady and SIR LAUNCELOT.

Lady. I grieve, unhappy youth, for thy sad fate ;
What would you say ? You cannot speak of love.

Sir Laun. But I may tell her how I prize her
worth,

How best my noble brother may be rul'd ;
And when we part, the mem'ry of that meeting,
Like the sweet perfume where the rose has been,
Will dwell upon my heart.

Lady. It is not wise
To let infection take a double taint.
Be counsell'd, sir, and part without adieu.

Sir Laun. You were my sainted mother's trusted
friend ;
And from a child, on your maternal bosom
My cares and fears have still been lull'd to rest.
Oh, sure the virtuous wish that prompts me hence,
Will not deny, when I am far away,
The soft enjoyment of that scented gale
Which memory breathes from pleasures left behind.
How many favours, like rich beds of flowers,
Will bliss my recollection of your kindness !
O, but persuade fair Francesca to see me,
And the sweet gratitude that I will cherish
Will freshen all, like drops of heavenly dew.

Lady. My heart would serve thee, but my judgment will not.

Sir Laun. O let not judgment, that poor thing of art,

That erring child, begotten of our frailties,
Control the heart, whose instincts and desires
Spring from the impulse of the hand divine,
Which set it first in motion.—On my knees
I do conjure you, by the kindness done me,
By all the love and tenderness you bear me,
By the pale thought that we shall meet no more,
To be my advocate with Francesca
For one short interview—one—only one !
The last—the last—and then we part for ever !

Lady (aside). I may consent—she is his brother's wife,

And there's a holy influence in that
Which will restrain the ardour of his love.
Rise—rise, ill-fated ! thou hast overcome me.
Be in the gardens when the sun is down,
And I will bring what answer I obtain.
Alas ! that fate should stand so dread in arms,
To interdict a hopeless lover's passion ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

An Abbey at a distance.

GUIDO and Officer, attended.

Officer. It is too late—the sun is almost down,
And Rimini is at a weary distance.

Guido. Where are my horses ? I am better now.
I can proceed—I will—I must proceed.

Officer. My gracious lord, be rul'd, and rest to-
night ;

We are as yet but midway in the journey.
The neighbouring convent is the only house
For many a dismal league of heath and common,
Haunted by desp'rate men.

Guido. What's that to me ?
I, too, am desp'rate as the wildest there.
Would I could meet with one more lost to hope,
That I might know what thing a man becomes
When he is rack'd with keener grief than mine !
Why do you whisper, and look at me so ?
This is a savage place, and in such places

Bad thoughts find ready entrance to the mind.
 But it were good to kill me. Treason, now,
 Would be the happiest service of your duty.

Officer. He did but say, that would you rest
 to-night,

Before the morn some messenger might come
 From Count Malvoglio, or perhaps himself.

Guido. 'Tis false ! I know it is—I will no more
 Believe what man will say, shaped like that man.
 The devil, when he tempted me to ill,
 When he betray'd me, like another Jephtha,
 To sacrifice my child, came like Malvoglio—
 Like honest, old Malvoglio he appear'd !
 And when the sin was done, vanish'd away.

(*Several voices cry*)—The Count—the Count Mal-
 voglio comes !

Enter MALVOGLIO.

Mal. My gracious lord——

Guido. How fares my child ?

Is she content ? Didst thou speak with herself ?

What says her nurse, the trusty Agatha ?

Is she not blithe and cackling ?—Tell me all—

Why hast thou left me such a tedious time ?
I could no longer brook thy long delay,
But came myself to see my children well.
Alas ! my friend, my heart was ill at ease.
But wherefore tell'st thou nothing of my child ?

Mal. Your highness will not hear me.

Guido. Is she well ?

Mal. As when she left you.

Guido. Then what would I more ?

For she was then as lov'd as doating fondness
Could love its idol. I shall be content
If Rimini but love her half so well.
Now, gentlemen, I will rest here to-night,
And by the early summons of the cock
We will set forward.

Mal. Forward, my lord !

Guido. Ay, on to Rimini, by all the Gods !
I will partake the revels of the wedding.

Mal. Not without notice ?

Guido. Ay, even as we are,
Booted and spurr'd we'll enter in their court ;
We will confound our stately son-in-law,
And play the jester with him when he's gravest.

Mal. Come, gentlemen, come, let us to the convent.

Guido. The friars shall bring forth their best to drink

Joy to the happy pair—Count, thy arm.

Nay, look not sad—she was my only child ;

Thou shouldst not grudge an old man's harmless mirth,

Although it suit not with his dignity. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Room.

GERARD and ERNEST.

Ger. This cannot be, or she is worse than all
The worst I could imagine. In what place ?

Ern. Here in this garden, and in yonder arbour,
At an hour after sunset, they will meet.

Ger. O monstrous ! horrible ! what, in the twilight !
When dew falls softest—flowers their sweetest breathe.
She's a voluptuary in her guilt ;
It is the very time when lovers meet,

When mingling shadows better screen than darkness,
And low retiring sounds of honest day,
In murmuring concord with their am'rous whispers,
Conceal them from the ear.

Ern. You are much mov'd.

Ger. But mov'd! O heavens! my very heart has
started

Out of its seat, to think how in this business
We have been dup'd by a perfidious knave.

Ern. By whom, my lord?

Ger. By fraudulent Malvoglio.

He was the spring, the organ of the whole,
The very faculty by which I work'd
Her father's dotage to bring on the match;
And he has trick'd me with an impious strumpet.
The Duke suspects her, but he shall know all.

Ern. You will not, surely, sir, betray me so?
I told you but to vindicate my master,
And to convince you he was not to blame.
Should he e'er know my rash officious zeal,
I shall for ever forfeit his esteem.

Ger. Go, get thee hence! See where his highness
comes.

Ern. My lord, my lord, I do conjure you, spare me !

Ger. Away ! begone, and leave me now—begone !

Ern. O heavens ! what wreck this mad old man will make !
[*Exit ERNEST.*]

Enter GIOVANNI.

Giov. It is the lot of man ! Day after day
Comes to the heart, like pilgrims to a shrine,
With some new tale of fear, or guilt, or sorrow.
Count Gerard here !

Ger. Alas ! what would your highness ?

Giov. How is my bride ? How is my Francesca ?
Hast thou got other proof of her dishonour ?
Thy duty now must be to spy her faults,
To watch the glances of her wand'ring eyes,
And tell me whom they light on.

Ger. O, my lord !

Giov. Why was she form'd so ravishingly fair,
With looks so full of heavenly holiness,
And with so little art to hide her sin ?
O, the discovery has made her dearer—

Justice and love contend about my heart,
And fix her image on it deep and deeper.

Ger. Were she indeed as guilty as you dread—

Giov. She is not guilty—I believe it not ;

'Tis some phantasma that deceives us both.

Ger. Would it were so, my lord, but I have
heard——

Giov. What hast thou heard? O, I will hear no
more.

If thou wouldst speak of her, speak of her beauty;
Paint her with clasped hands and heav'nward eyes,
Like Piety in monumental marble.

Tell me that all who see her needs must love—
And when thou speak'st of her replying smiles,
Call the fond passion in them that bless'd kindness
Which warms the heart with thoughts of charity
For all of human kind.

Ger. O my good lord,
Might I persuade you but to meet me here——

Giov. When? for what purpose?

Ger. When the sun is down.

Giov. That must be now ; for on the western hill,
Lo ! where he stands like a refulgent spirit,

After a glorious transit o'er the earth,
Prepar'd to enter heaven.—O Francesca !
Thou hast come o'er me with a black eclipse,
And I must set in darkness.

Ger. An hour hence.

Giov. What's to be done that you would have me
witness ?

Ger. I will not wound your highness' sorrow further.

Giov. Ay, say no more, I guess what thou wouldst
say ;

Yes, I will meet thee here, and with my sword.

END OF ACT FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Chamber.

GUIDO, MALVOGLIO, and *Friars.*

Guido. I am not what I was—old age and care
Weigh on my strength with such a heavy load,
That even this short, hasty journey tires.
Leave me, good friends—I would be let alone;
I will repose me here awhile till supper time.

[Exeunt Friars.]

I pray thee, Count, see where my page is gone.

Mal. He's in the antechamber—shall I call him?

Guido. Let him bide there, but with his flute
awhile

Play that soft measure which so pleas'd my daughter;

I love it for her sake.

[*Exit MALVOGLIO.*

'Tis a sweet air,

Artless and simple as the voice of childhood,

And it reminds me when she was a babe,

That could but speak its pleasure by a smile.

[*Air on a flute, and GUIDO falls asleep. GUIDO awakes, and cries—*

Help! help! my horse!

Enter MALVOGLIO and Attendants.

Mal. My lord, my gracious lord—

Guido. O, my child—my child!

Mal. Alas! your highness!

Guido. O, she is murdered! O, my Francesca!

Her blood is on my hands: I have but dreamt.

Methought I witness'd what must not be told,

And then, anon, the haughty Duke, her husband,

Grasping a bloody sword in his right hand,

Came bearing on his left a new-born babe,

The unblest'd fruit of crime. Sternly he eyed me.

With outstretch'd arms I took from him the child;

It seem'd Francesca, as I did receive her

First from the nurse's arms ; with such delight
As I did press her to my yearning breast,
I bent towards *that* babe—when, oh ! dread sight !
It melted into blood, and drench'd me all !—
My horse—my horse—we must to Rimini.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Garden.

SIR LAUNCELOT.

Sir Laun. Oh ! thou fair crescent of the virgin
moon,

That like a bashful maid, with sidelong look,
Peers at the meeting lovers of the earth,
Then hurries home,—stay yet with thy chaste light,
To guide the feet of her that should be here.
Hark ! she approaches—music hath no sounds
Fraught with such pleasure as the coming steps
Of those we love and wearily expect.

Enter FRANCESCA.

Fran. I have consented, sir, to your request.
With what intent hast thou, unhappy youth,
Wished for this dark and secret interview?
He answers not. Sir, wherefore do you kneel?
From you such homage must not be endured;
Rise—raise thyself, and tell me what thou wouldst?

Sir Laun. I did not count on majesty so stern;
Thou art too awful for a thing so mean,
As thy solemnity has made of me,
To do aught else than to confess its frailties.
But O, if thou, in the soft hour of eve,
Can spare one thought from virtue so austere,
To mercy or compassion, in that hour
Let the remembrance of this meeting come,
And my despair put in a claim for pardon.

Fran. I know not why that word is used to me,
For in thy duty as thy brother's proxy,
Thou hast done all that duty could demand;—
O, hadst thou done but less!

Sir Laun. Why, lady, why!
Dread Heavens! couldst thou have loved me for
myself?

Fran. Away! away! O, we must meet no more!

Enter GIOVANNI, behind.

Sir Laun. Say not no more! Alas! I did intend
This very night to part for ever hence,
But the assurance which these tears impart,
Almost persuades me to forego my purpose.

[*GIOVANNI rushes forward.*

Giov. Incestuous villain!

Sir Laun. Ha! my brother! you!

[*Exit FRANCESCA.*

Giov. Draw! draw, detested—or my furious sword
Will of itself let out thy guilty soul!

Sir Laun. Hear me, Giovanni! brother—on my
knees.

Giov. Draw—or the guards that in attendance
wait,

Will drag you and the partner of your crime,
Straight to the market place, and burn you there!

Sir Laun. Will you not hear me?

Giov. I but vengeance hear;
Out with thy sword! Incestuous, dar'st thou live,
Thus in the dalliance of thy guilt detected.

Sir Laun. By Heavens!

Giov. By the hoarse throat of Hell I swear!
Thou blot of Nature, and offence of Heaven!

Sir Laun. This is too much—then, madman, have
thy will.

[*They fight.*

Giov. You but defend yourself—we fight for life,
One of the two must die!

Sir Laun. Then be it so.

[*They fight*—SIR LAUNCELOT allows himself
to be wounded, and falls.

Sir Laun. Rash man! 'tis done—but I will not
upbraid—

O, my ill-fated brother! soon thy heart
Will rue the frenzy of this fatal hour.

I am not guilty, though I lov'd thy wife,
And she—O Heavens! to mouth such thoughts of
her,—

The dewdrop in the bosom of the rose,
Is not so pure as her heart's innocence—
But I grow faint—cherish thy Francesca—
Love her as thou wouldst virtue—O, Giovanni!

[*Dies.*

Enter ERNEST and GERARD.

Ern. I heard contention and the clash of swords:
Who has done this? O, my true noble master!
Be who he may, I will avenge thy death!

Giov. Not all the thrones of all the earth avenging,
Could hurl such misery on the rash assassin,
As the perdition he already suffers;
Death were relief to him—wilt thou bestow't?

Ern. Mylord—my lord—fell he by your own hand?

Ger. Take up the body—bear it to the palace.
What look you for, my lord?

Giov. She is not here—
She's gone—gone—gone! She's fled—O, whither,
whither? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Chamber leading to an Oriel.

Lady and AGATHA.

Lady. See who so loud and rashly knocks for entrance?

My heart sinks in me—O ! this fatal meeting !

[AGATHA goes to the door, utters a shriek as she admits FRANCESCA, who enters in a state of distraction, and runs towards the doors of the Oriel.

Lady. My gracious lady—

Fran. Ha ! where is the lock ?

'Tis bolted fast !

Lady. Help ! help ! Oh, help ! she's mad !

Fran. Break this door open—the avenging fiend
Dare not pursue me to this holy place.

Inexorable doors—I will be in !

[Doors burst open—she rushes in—falls on her knees, and the doors shut.

Lady. Hark ! heard you that ?

Aga. What ?

Lady. Listen !—Heavens ! my lord—

Enter GIOVANNI, with the sword in his hand.

Giov. Where is thy mistress ?

Lady. There !—at prayer.

Giov. At prayer !

Lady. Why came you with that bloody weapon
here ?

Giov. Still in my grasp !—thou bloody fratricide !

Lady. My lord—my lord—do not yet enter there.

Giov. No ! wherefore not ?

Lady. I heard a noise within.

Giov. What was it, thinkst thou ?

Lady. O, some dreadful thing !

Giov. A voice—a tread—an action ?

Lady. Neither—neither.

Giov. Tell me what it was.

Lady. A low, sad sound,

More full of horror than the dismal note

That murmurs from the coffin in the grave,

When the first earth is flung on some dear friend.

Giov. Be heaven or hell within, I'll enter !

[*Throws open the door.*

Ha ! undisturb'd—so calm—so still—she's dead !

Gone from her knees at once into the heavens.

Enter GERARD, hastily.

Ger. My lord, my lord, Ravenna's Duke is coming !

Giov. Who's coming here! Didst thou not say
Ravenna?

The father of—— she that now prays within?

The good old man! he comes to wish us joy—

To give a father's blessing ere he lays

His grey hairs in the grave—but these foul hands—

We cannot welcome him with hands like these.

Bring me some water—stay! where wouldst thou go?

Ger. Did not your highness say that you would
wash?

Giov. I will when heaven's mercy goes to hell,
And holds the basin to the howling fiends!

Ger. Alas! his senses wander.

Giov. See ye this?

Why start ye back? she's dead!—she cannot harm—

Come, take the corpse to where my brother lies.

Ger. O, my good lord, what phantasy besets you?

Giov. Where he lies baken'd in his blood. How
now?

Take up the body, slaves. Come, follow me.

[*Exeunt into the Oriel.*]

SCENE IV.

*The Palace of Rimini at a distance—lights hurrying
to and fro.*

GUIDO and MALVOGLIO.

Guido. See'st thou not yonder how the hurrying
lights

Partake the frenzy of their frantic bearers?

There's dreadful business in that fatal palace.

Malv. I see but there bright signs of preparation.
My seryant, mounted on the swiftest steed,
Sped on before to warn them of your coming.

Guido. Why sent you him? he will defeat my
purpose.

I would have come upon them unawares—

But now we shall be met with hollow pomp.

There's no sincerity in their proud Duke.

If on my daughter's cheek I find a tear,

I'll—but this arm is weak, and I am old;

I can but drop my head, and meekly die.

Malv. Why will your highness nourish thoughts
like these ?

Guido. Because I have done wrong, and dread the
issue :

But come, let us go on.—Hark ! what is that ?

Malv. The sound of high and cheerful minstrelsy.

Guido. Thine ears are spell-bound.—With such
notes as these

The Brahmins drown the Indian widow's cries,

When they have fired her impious fun'ral pile.

My knees fail under me—thine arm—thine arm.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A room in Rimini.

ERNEST and GERARD.

Ern. Know you what he has done ?

Ger. Hush ! he's within.

Ern. May you not enter ? Are the bodies there ?

Ger. O, both—they both were brought.

Ern. What does he with them ?

Ger. Some horror frenzy only could conceive.

Ern. Is he alone ?

Ger. None but the dead are with him.

Ern. And speaks ?

Ger. Ay—often—and laughs loudly too—
Stand back—he comes.

Ern. How ghastly wild he looks !

Enter GIOVANNI.

Giov. Thyestes' feast was crumbs to this of mine.
Where are the musicants ? Why have they ceas'd ?
Oh ! I forget—they are gone forth to meet him.
This head of mine is as a smoky fire,
There's nothing clear in it but still it burns.
O, I could sleep—my pillow will be clay,
The worm my bedfellow when next I sleep.
O what a wretch, a cheating, sordid wretch
Was he that brib'd me with so fair a maid,
And now compels me to bed with the worm.
Well, he shall share the second bridal feast—
But, hark ! he comes—and I must take my place
When he has enter'd, let the music sound.

[A procession enters, with GUIDO, to wild music. A curtain is furled asunder, and displays within a magnificent throne, on which SIR LAUNCELOT appears erect, and FRANCESCA, in the attitude of prayer, at his right hand. GIOVANNI points to them with his bloody sword.]

Guido. Where is my daughter ?

Giov. There !—where should she be

But blest with him the lover she lov'd best ?

Guido. Will this dream never end or the day dawn ?

Giov. The phantom is still there !

Guido. O villain ! villain !

[He draws his sword and makes a rush at GIOVANNI.]

Ger. Hold ! hold !

[He arrests GUIDO.]

Giov. Can the dead stir themselves ?

Ern. Her trance unlocks itself.

Omnes. She moves ! she lives !

Guido. My child ! my child ! my life ! my Francesca !

[FRANCESCA awakens, rushes into the arms of her father. The curtain falls and conceals the throne.]

Fran. In what abyss of ocean am I plunged !
O, I shall drown. My breath—my breath is gone !
Thanks—thanks—now softly lay me on the shore,
I breathe again ; there is no water here.
Whence have ye brought me ? and did I but fancy
That I was shipwreck'd in a stormy sea ?

Guido. Dost thou not know me ?—thy unhappy
father ?

Fran. Then I am safe—for being in your arms,
The horrors that like chaos sank me down,
Have been the nightmare, and yet in my sight
Are things that were not in our home, my father,
Would I could turn from them and fall asleep.

[*GIOVANNI steps forward.*

Giov. If heaven will make such things, who dare
find fault ?

We are but creatures all. Give me thy hand,
For who shall tell which is the choicest work,
The smallest gnat in air, or hugest thing
Within the gulf and bowel of the sea ?
Or which the primest of the earth, proud man,
Or dainty worm that banquets upon beauty ?
Which universal nature's deadliest bane—

The asp of death, or a wise wary statesman ?

But I forget that we have other cares.

[GIOVANNI goes in and draws aside the curtain
—and displays the throne with SIR LAUN-
CELOT. He goes up to the body.

Giov. He does not move—his hand is stiff and cold.

Ger. Alas ! my lord ! know you not he is dead ?

Giov. Why, she too there was dead, and yet you
see

With what fond earnestness so like a dove

She nestles in her father's close embrace,

The place thou sitt'st in, Launcelot, is mine—

Was't not enough to filch my bride's affection ?

Out on thy ghastly stare—the basilisk

Looks like the antelope compar'd with thee.

Guido. O move that wretched maniac from the
dead—

Remove him hence.

Giov. The old man does speak well,

And it is fit that I should be away,

Take too away that pale, bewilder'd maid.

Fran. I will not go—my senses now are rous'd
To the full horror of my dreadful state.

O my ill-fated lord, had but a while,
A little respite to my wish been given,
My wander'd heart had found its path of duty,
And sooth'd the anguish of thy virtuous guilt ;
For it was virtuous, tho' in issue crime.

Gior. The flashing fire that revell'd in my brain
Begins to be appeas'd. O ! Francesca !

*[He sinks into the arms of Officers, and, turning
to GUIDO, says,*

Bear her my lord—oh ! bear her from this scene,
I can no more. O ! in some lonely spot
Lay us together—we may sleep in peace,
Where never foot unblest shall dare to tread,
Nor tongue profane our guiltless guilty tale.

[Dies.

THE END OF THE BETROTHMENT.

Act V.

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ANTHROPOS;
A MASQUE;
OR,
ALLEGORICAL MYSTERY.

TO

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART, Esq.

DEAR LOCKHART,

I hope your critical taste will not prevent you from allowing the following piece to be inscribed to a very worthy private gentleman. It was composed between the tenth and eleventh aggravations of my anomalous disease, and is on that account, in some sort, a curiosity; but I dedicate it to you as a testimony of esteem.

I remain, Dear Lockhart,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN GALT.

Edinburgh, 27th June, 1834.

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PREFACE.

This piece is either good or bad. If understood at the first perusal, I shall be disappointed, and if, at the second, it do not excite mysterious awe, the reader should throw the volume away—it will ever remain to him a sealed book.

It is not for the Author to speak of the execution, but the conception was dark and solemn, tinted (if the expression may be allowed) with sublimity.

I was reading, at the time when it was formed, a Memoir of the celebrated Mirabeau, in which no attempt was made to interest either the imagination or the feelings, but it was very earnestly written, simple in the expression, and pervaded with an impressive spirit. The details exceedingly affected me, and the subsequent Masque is an attempt to embody the feelings; but I may not have been able to exhibit what was meant by representing the Marquis as the Spirit of the Age, nor in describing the characteristics of the French Revolution, and I do fear that but a weak image of the mystery is given to which my mind dismally listened in the perusal,

“And heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road.”—COWPER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FIRST SPIRIT—*The Guardian of the World.*

RED ANGEL—*The Genius of Reason.*

HATE—*The Genius of that Passion.*

LOVE—*The Genius of that Passion.*

FRIAR—*The Genius of Religion.*

ANTHROPOS.

VAURIEN, *in love with Sophia.*

COUNT LEGERE, *the father of Sophia.*

SOPHIA, *in love with Anthropolos.*

JEALOUSY.

PRESIDENT, *the Representative of Law.*

MATILDA, *his Wife.*

ANGEL FROM THE EARTH.

CHERUB, *who presides over Births.*

GENIUS OF ANTHROPOS.

CHORUS OF DEMONS.

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ANTHROPOS;

A MASQUE.

PART I.

SCENE I.

The Spirit of the World.

Spirit. Heaven guides by instinct, and Hell saps
by reason ;

Impell'd direct, man only sins and errs
As motives influence his course of action.
Such is his state ; and yet the world he lives in
(Whose nature is my own peculiar care)
Forgets the energies at work about him,
Adverse and opposite, and deems the thrall
From liking or from choice alike exempt.
Him instinct drives, the impulse of God's hand,

And charter'd reason, ever far astray,
Is but a dim and narrow faculty,
Meted to finitude,—the power to err.
But now the era long foreseen is nigh,
When the true myst'ry may be render'd plain,
And man discern in his prone being's weakness
That mind's as fetter'd as the flesh is finite.
In every age within evolving time
A master genius is ordain'd to rule,
Who with revealments to his spirit given,
Errands the advents which shall come to pass.
Now a new cycle is about to be—
Honour, renown, the aim and prize of arms,
Delight no more, and as the morning moon,
Waning and fading in the sun's blest light,
Thrift sinks unnoticed in the blaze of day.
Men's thoughts are full of liberty and peace,
Impartial good-will to the human race,
With all begins to stir, and wants but some
Mighty and glorious leader to advance,
The end and use for which the world was made.
Such is the youth, who drows'd with seeming slum-
bers,

Listless reclines, or far aloof, unsocial,
Leaps on the mountains in his dreams of joy.
But Heaven inscrutable, bids me permit
The crimson Entity that toils for woe,
To ply on him the dark conceits of reason,—
And now I mission to his charge the fiend.

[*The Spirit of the World waves his wand, and
presently, amidst terrific dissonance, a Red
Angel makes his appearance.*]

R. Ang. I was untask'd, and dozing, lay,
The dogs of war had ceas'd to bay ;
The drum was hushed, the banner furl'd,
A syncopy entranc'd the world.
Men called it peace, but ere the earth
Brings the green braird to sunshine forth,
It herbless lies. What seed is sown ?
What corn that never shall be grown ?

Spirit. Seest thou embosom'd in yon ancient wood,
Whose mossy boles and wide-embracing boughs,
Stand the spared elders of another time,
The ivied turrets of a sullen castle ?
Within the twilight of the echoing hall
Desertion has made vocal, sits a youth,

Swinging his seat as on the hearth he gazes,
Musing of visions in the embers seen.

R. Ang. Yon dark-hair'd one, who moody sits,
On carved chair and smiles by fits,
As vernal gleams that summer throws
On uplands? lo! his visage glows.
Anon, he frowns,—the wrathful wrack
Low'rs not in vengeance half so black—
Say, why to him wouldst thou direct
My fated service? Why affect
Th' unfashioned chaos of a mind
Unstable as the wave or wind?

Spirit. Thou mayst assay the metal he is made of.

R. Ang. Prepared to do thy dread behest,
How may I probe his bosom best?

Spirit. Ha! crafty fiend! canst thou do aught but ill?
Wouldst thou betray me to instruct thy art?
Know that permission pledges no approval,
For ill permitted may conduce to good.
High Heaven vouchsafes that thou shalt work in this.
Hence to thy task! the issues are unknown.

[*The Red Angel disappears, and the Spirit of
the World is enveloped in cloud.*]

SCENE II.

*A faded hall in a feudal Castle. ANTHROPOS sitting
as described in the preceding Scene.*

Anthropos. The life I lead is innocent. Methinks
The quiet tenor of my taskless hours
Flows in accordance with benignant Nature,
That reigns in her tranquillity without.
I may be idle as the chestnut-trees,
Whose mindless purpose seems but to grow old—
Yet like them too, in sunshine or in shower,
I blameless share the blandishments of Heaven.
The soft sweet hue—that green benevolence
Which speaks around so kindly to the heart,
Still as I look on't moves to gentleness,
And every flow'ret smiling from the earth,
Is as an eye that beams intelligence ;
The rooks and ravens wear in their debates,
The form of wisdom, and the little birds
Sing their sweet ditties to detain me here.

Yes ; I will stay, and seek no gayer scene
Than the calm arches of these silvan aisles.
A storm impends—the skies are overcast—
God help the traveller in this airy riot !

[*A knocking heard.*

Who knocks ? Come in—

[*The Red Angel enters in a peasant's garb.*

A stranger ! Sir, most welcome
To such poor shelter as this roof can give.

R. Angel. Thanks, my young master. By your
leave awhile—

[*He sits down.*

For I am old, and this unomen'd tempest
Is too impartial in its ire for eild. [*A second knocking.*

Anth. Again, another—seek no bidding—Enter.

The house I own has room enough for all.

[*Enter a Friar.*

Come, holy father—you are drench'd with rain,
The social fire invites you to the hearth.

[*The Red Angel eyes the Friar with evident
uncasiness.*

Friar. Kind gentleman, you do the will of heaven
To ask so cheerfully the weary in.

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VOL.

R. Ang. It comes of youth to be so unsuspicious.
There may be danger in too many strangers.

Friar (to R. A.) Does he know you?—(to AN-
THROPOS.)—Sir, in this prompt compassion
I see but heavenly charity obey'd.

Anth. How the fierce hurricane and hurtling hail
Rattle in anger on the storied lozens !
Another flash ! How the almighty thunder
Rolls his loud larum on the rumbling drum !
His ears are dull, who in great nature's anthem
Hears not grim voices bass with pond'rous tone,
When the dread organ of the tempest blows.
But come—I lack in hospitality—
You must partake a woodman's frugal fare.

R. Ang. Kind welcome, sir, is better than good
cheer.

[*They move off, ANTHROPOS showing the way—
the Red Angel attempts to take precedence
of the Friar, who looks at him sternly, and
he shrinks back.*

SCENE III.

On a cloud.

HATE and LOVE.

Hate. What special task, shrewd and refin'd,
Would the Red Angel of the mind
On me impose? Ah! wherefore now,
Fair Spirit, mission'd, comest thou?

Love. Though oft he tries to rule the hour
When hearts enthrall'd confess my power,
Yet ever with insidious wile
His artifice my arts beguile.

Hate. I, too, an equal influence shed,
When vaunts he most as chartered—
Luring awry resolv'd conceit,
To aid the purposes of Fate.—
But how yon falling star illumines!
Ha! 'tis himself! be hush'd—he comes.

[*The Red Angel descends in his apparitional garb.*]

R. Ang. Well done, brisk slaves, such willingness

Your lord in mind will still possess.
That youth, who threads the motley throng,
So gaily courtier-crowds among,
With many air and generous eye—
On him attend, and deftly try
To win him from yon mystic one,
Who seems a priest—by mantle shown.
I would his servitude obtain,
That reason on the earth may reign ;
For in his bosom nestling dormant,
Behold the cycles' charm and torment.—
When won, to me——

Love. What shall succeed ?

Hate. The destiny by heaven decreed.

R. Ang. Peace, wayward, peace ! your jibes forbear.

If once the vantage-ground we share,
E'en heav'n itself must stoop to own
Reason supreme with robe and crown.

Hate. Yes, if——but still in sequence rise
What is ordain'd, and still is wise.

R. Ang. Pert, spiteful imp, obedient prove—
Hence to thy hests ; and, gentle Love,

Do thou thy soft enticements join
To make the fated mortal mine. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV.

A Saloon.

COUNT LEGERE and SOPHIA.

Legere. The only child of an old friend, long dead,
Rear'd with such playmates as the deer and trees,
His thoughts are spiced with fancies rich and rare,
Trick'd out and gnarl'd with shrewd simplicity.

Sophia. And is in person ?

Legere. Ah ! a maiden's question.
The blithe Apollo, when he drove his sheep
To fragrant pastures upon Ida's side,
Was quaint to him as the hoof-footed Pan.

Soph. You make me wish to see this paragon.
What is his humour ? Is he grave or gay ?

Legere. No : various—pensive, mild, and playful.
The summer air that dandles the young rose
Breathes no such pleasantries.—But hark ! they come.

[Enter ANTHROPOS and LOVE and HATE—
the Red Angel, as an old man, is seen walk-
ing among the guests. LEGERE introduces
ANTHROPOS to SOPHIA, and retires among
the crowd. LOVE joins ANTHROPOS and
SOPHIA, and HATE is seen in consultation
with VAURIEN. Music plays, and presently
HATE and VAURIEN come forward, looking
towards ANTHROPOS and SOPHIA.]

HATE and VAURIEN.

Hate. Sir, mark you that?

Vau. I do.

Hate. He seems quite smit.

There's fondness in her eyes—'tis more than plea-
sure—

Look! how she smiles! How on his arm that youth,
With dainty nothings helps him in his wooing.

Vau. Wooing! It cannot be.

Hate. The sight disturbs you?

Vau. Oh, not a jot—it is her sex's nature.

Hate. True; he has that familiar carelessness
Which easiest charms the light inconstant fair.

Vau. I had resolved to speak to-night my passion,
But this comes o'er me like the with'ring east,
And turns it into sour and bitter doubt.

[*They move off, and the Red Angel, in his
disguise, comes forward.*

R. Ang. Now all works well. Of love assur'd,
He lingers with her, and allur'd
By beauty's glow new motives take
(As serpents glide into the brake)
Possession of the stripling's breast.
Where instinct triumph'd unrepress'd.
Reason hereafter there shall sway,
And guide the ardent youth astray ;
While visions bright, unreal dreams,
Illusions, fantasies, and schemes,
Shall thence his sated passions charm,
And sleeping energies awake and arm !

END OF PART FIRST.

PART II.

SCENE I.

A Room.

ANTHROPOS and Friar.

Ant. I lov'd her once, and with more earnestness
 Than glows the worship of the pious heart—
 But never prayed to her—I was so lowly—
 That had implied deserving in myself.
 The merest creature has a claim on Heav'n,
 And may, unblam'd, petition for a boon,
 Being, unask'd, thrust into life to suffer—
 But woman's favour cannot be so won ;
 Like the blest light that makes the bud expand,
 It shines spontaneously, or is not love.
Friar. And yet you shun her, and inconstant, fly

To other scenes than where her sunshine falls.
How comes it then that she remains unchang'd,
And only you the transmutation own?

Anth. For now I know her, a dull earthly toy—
He never comes but sated from the bower,
Who finds not in the mind his chief delight.

Friar. But she is fair, and spotless as she's fair.

Anth. True, true—I grant it all; surpassing fair,
A lovelier vision than the poet's dream.
The marble goddess has not half her charms,
Yet is it but cold stone—and she is stone—
I would as soon, clasp'd in my fond embrace,
The sculptur'd monumental Patience hold,
That smiling sits on my ancestral tomb,
As such a churchyard piece of mortal clay!

Friar. You make me sad: sir, with your ardent
passion,

There was too much of a fine spirit mingled—
You sought an angel, and obtain'd a woman.

Anth. 'Twas even so; and 'tis my nature's bias,
Ever to deem the intellectual being
Far more endearing than the tinted flesh;

Yet as a man I feel enticements lure,
And mortal love assert his soft dominion.

Friar. Say that with you the mind predominates,
And sense obedient owns subordination?

Anth. But wherefore, father, do you question me?
The rash intemp'rance of my youthful blood
May fire awhile the wheels of my career,
But righteous reason will at last prevail.

Friar. What! righteous reason! think you, sir,
that man,

So weak, so blind, so finite, and so frail,
May from the dim conclusions of himself,
Deduce a wisdom bright as Heav'n inspires?
For such is reason—When his wayward mind
Does more than regulate th' instincts innate,
It wrests, as 'twere, prerogatives denied.

Anth. Sir, you perplex me; but here enters one
Who can these subtle metaphysics sift.

[*Exit ANTHROPOS. The Red Angel comes forward. On seeing the Friar's face, he retires abashed—still as an old man.*]

SCENE II.

Friar and Red Angel.

R. Ang. What power is this—serene, severe,
Who lingers with the fated here ?
A muffled mystery, far and nigh
He awes me with a master's eye :
I'll speak to him, as spirits hold
Communion with the quaint and old,
And by his answer know him. Ho !
Thy errand tell, and purpose show.

Friar. 'Tis not to thee I'm erranded,
Nor mine with thine, though with it bred.
Whate'er high Heav'n ordains shall be,
And omens blab of destiny ;
The chance that seems to come unsent,
But brings a pre-ordained event.
Hence ! Go ! thy servitor I'm not—
A greater rules us both I wot.

R. Ang. Who, and what art thou, mystic ?—say—

Friar. Avaunt ! begone ! thy lord obey.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*The Clouds.**The Spirit of the World.*

Spirit. 'Tis done : the chosen youth to whom is
given

The genius of the age, now feels the mantle
Of rule and prophecy descending fall.
No more the instincts of mysterious nature
Guide his volitions and impel to action,
But the inductions of presiding Reason ;
For reason reigns, high-thron'd and crown'd supreme.
She, in the estimation of mankind,
Sits in the seat of God, who now must be
Awhile forgotten, 'till disasters sown
Come into fruitage—then dread Providence
Will reap the harvest of the sower's toil.
To man it may seem but remorseless woe
And wrath unmitigated—yet to God,
The corn and nourishment of good ordain'd.
Sated with love, and eager for renown,

—say—

Exeunt.

The minion works for destiny, and now
 Weighs well the worth of value and advantage—
 Not yet, however, only for himself.
 With the free ardour of impetuous youth,
 He finds his motive still to serve mankind,
 But sordid hopes will marshal him to fate.
 Ha! who is he that comes enspher'd in fire,
 A meteor gliding 'thwart th' abysm's gloom,
 Where ev'ry sun shines dwindled to a star?
 It is the demon by whose wav'ring sway
 The heavens work out their undivulged intents.

Enter Red Angel with an air of triumph.

Spirit. Stern spirit, whose empurpled hue
 Betrays the joy of triumph new,
 Say why unsummon'd com'st thou here
 A truant from the mortal sphere?
 'Twas thine to tend the ravell'd thought,
 And right or wrong with error fraught.
 But wherefore thus, with joyful eye
 Dost thou thy solemn vigil fly?

R. Ang. Thy hest is done—the task perform'd;
 No more the youth, by Nature charm'd,

Shall the unbridled wish bestride,
But Reason guard, and Reason guide;
And in the cycle henceforth now
It shall be right what men allow,
Nor in its course shall laws impress'd,
Unscann'd control the human breast.

Spirit. Hence, braggart, hence ! repress thy joy,
Agent of error and decoy ;
What boots it thee if good or ill
Spring from thy bidding or thy will ?
All purposes thou canst achieve,
May gladden the unborn or grieve.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Room.

VAURIEN and PRESIDENT.

Vau. Yes, as a star looms thro' the hazy air,
Large, red, and dim, we cannot reckon well
The natural brightness of his hue and beam,
He is with mystery so much invested.

Pres. 'Tis ever so ; the high in faculty,
In whom the impulse straight from heav'n is strong,
Seem to inferiors strange, inscrutable ;
And nature, working all awry in such,
Oft barbs the sneer with poison-dipt detraction.

Vau. But he has found a haven in your house,
And your fair wife sees not, I sometimes think,
Aught of that mystical predominance
That awes our spirits thus to do him homage.

Pres. How ! my wife !

Vau. Ay—she has bright beauty, and
That flatt'ring tact and shrewd detecting mind,
Which more than beauty tempts to err and sin.

Pres. What ! deem you then my wife so little
fenc'd
With her own virtue as to be so won ?

Vau. Oh, not at all—but fickle womankind
Need the protection of a guardian's eye.
The hallow'd custom of the Orient clime
Hath in it wisdom that to watchful slaves
Assigns the keeping of the harem gems.

Pres. He hath, I grant, a gracious bland endow-
ment,

Not art, I think, that may weak women win,
 And by its gay untaught simplicity
 Veil to himself the guilt of gross desires.
 But come—the banquet in my house to-night
 Will wait for me—I must not be expected. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

The outside and entrance of the Cavern of Jealousy.

LOVE and HATE, with attendant Spirits.

ODE.

Stern, green-ey'd demon, sullen fiend,
 That feeds on doubts, and rav'nous craves
 To gnaw thyself, with vengeance den'd

In dark, forbidden caves—

Whether the embers red and fierce
 Of faded fires thou cowering stirs,

Or in the beams of day,

With fits of blandishment and kindness,
 Prattling fondness, wilful blindness,

Thou wouldst deceit betray,

Come forth, come forth !

Grim genius, in whose bosom ire,
Like venom in the viper, lurks,
And hopes of wrong spring from desire,
In other breasts for good that works;
With thee scoff and scorn attain
What phrases sheath'd in tenderness
With mortals gain;
Thy aim is woe, and in distress
Thou find'st perverted happiness,
Content, in pain,

Come forth, come forth!

Why dost thou, shrin'd in gloom,
Sequester'd hide?
Come forth, and launch the doom
On wife and bride.
Tears are prepared, and sighs to heave
The injured husband's throbbing breast—
Come, teach the wounded wretch to grieve—
His anguish will augment thy zest.

Come forth! come forth!

[Jealousy comes from the cavern.]

Jeal. Who calls me from my cavern cell,
Where, lodg'd with Fate and Fear, I dwell?
Which seeks to rule?—or Love or Hate?
Which would by me predominate?
If to rekindle love, I'll bring
Drops filter'd from the bosom's spring.
But if impassion'd ire is sought,
Th' envenom'd chalice shall be brought.

Love. Neither.

Hate. Neither.

Jeal. Wherefore, then,
Come ye, molesters, to my den?

Love. The deed is done.

Hate. We only seek
Thy potent power mischief to wreak.
Not heaven itself the past can change—
It was—but with perversion strange,
Our subject bodes of may-be pain,
As if what was could be again.

Jeal. Enough,—your bidding I attend,
Let Wrath be foe, or Grief be friend.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

The margin of the Ocean, presenting an unbounded horizon.

Enter Friar.

Friar. Now, from the earth awhile I must retire.
Presumptuous man confides but in himself;
He lives in mystery, and sees around,
And in himself, but mysteries prevail,
The least of which, in his laboratory,
Escapes the searching of his crucible.
And yet lost in the fog, where day but seems,
All nature mantled with obscurity,
He deems, forsooth, the glow-worm in his breast,
A guide as glorious as the heavenly sun.
The gifted youth, who struggled with my power,
Has now submitted to the mortal demon,
And, in the hurricane of mad desires,
Unconscious of the height he might have gain'd,
Grovels with vice. By his intemperance
He will provoke the rulers of the earth

To arm against his flagrant courses, which
Shall breed retaliation ; till mankind,
Amidst the hurling earthquake and the storm,
Crashing with ruin, have forgot the cause,
And in the riot of their mad debauch
Vaunt of great things.—But they again will pray,
And in their prayers invoke me to return.

*[The Friar is suddenly transformed into the
apparition of Religion, and ascends to hea-
ven.]*

END OF PART SECOND.

PART III.

SCENE I.

In the Air.

The Spirit of the World.

Spirit. The cauldron seethes, and with the anarchy,
The hell-broth, mix'd are crimes of sensual taint,
And lies refin'd of more corrosive greed—
But only good can come of this. Dread Heav'n
Works in the woe, it therefore must be good,
As pleasure is the eldest born of pain.
Yet who the mystery can penetrate?
All things unfinished ever have some lack,
And nought of heaven is finished that's not perfect—
Nor should the end be judged of by the process—
The turbid must ferment to ruby wine,
And mortal life precludes immortal bliss.

Ha! what are these? The energies of Fate
Flocking on baleful wing towards the earth;
They are the passions of the human heart.
Now is their jubilee, and unrestrained,
They may awhile assert their bad dominion,
For he that seemed the priest forsakes mankind.
Star-crested, lo! the imperial demon comes—
Ambition—and new horrors black behind,
Dim in his shadowy rear, by glimpses seen;
As the plum'd hearse in a funereal pageant,
Low'rs a mad chaos of fantastic forms,
As when, fierce fluttering all his wings of flame,
Roaring Destruction rages in the woods.
It is not all—now the Apocalypse,
Of one with cords of mental strength to bind,
Mighty majestic, tow'ring as he moves,
The types of Judgment after him—Alas!
The cycle of unrule is not yet done!
But from the earth a messenger appears,
And I must give him heed.

[*Enter an Intelligence, disguised as an Angel.*
Thine errand show?

Angel. The hurricane is sweeping fast;

The hills are overthrown, and cast
Into the ocean depths ; on high
Disasters bode perplexity.
The stars are shaken from their spheres,
And daunt the wise with nameless fears—
The moon, strayed northward, holds her course
Far from her travell'd path—and worse,
The sun's extinguished in the heaven—
His place is to a meteor given.
All is awry—yet reasoning man
Finds in confusion rule and plan.*

* I remember, about five-and-twenty years ago, seeing an astrological commentary on the Revelation of St John, in which were introduced remarks on the Horæ Apollo, and attempts to explain some hieroglyphical emblems. Hills and mountains were deemed metaphors of governments. One passage smacked of Radicalism : it spoke of the Roman priesthood as typified by the locust, and the tails of the locust as the Protestant clergy that followed them. In noticing disasters, allusion was made to the passage in Scripture which describes the stars as fighting against Sisera, meaning that his fortune was adverse. The heaven was represented as the seat of power, and when the stars were spoken of as deviating from their spheres, it was meant that great persons lost their places—viz., a change of ministry : the moon was mentioned as the emblem of delegated power, and the sun as the chief power. I was amused with an attempt to discover Bonaparte in the angel of the sun, and that the emigration of the

Spirit. Angels, though made of heavenly mould, and
shine

With purer intellect than earth-sprung man,
Are finite, momentary scintillations,
Within a meted space, compared with God,
And therefore cannot comprehend how he
Will the harsh elements constrain to good.
Thinkst thou that yonder stirring in the earth
Can e'er affect this vast tranquillity ?
Look but around. Seest thou these starry orbs,
These glittering points and particles of light,
Which, as a sower showers the pregnant seed,
He sprinkles space with from his mighty hand ?
Think'st aught of earth, my own especial charge,
Can mar that universal harmony ?
The veriest insect that man can discern
Sees other insects to itself as small,
And these again see others smaller still.
Unto the rim even of infinitude,
The grades of beings organized extend.
And dost thou think that aught of mortal advent
French nobility was a disastrous configuration in the heavens.
In the text I have attempted to introduce the astrological figures..

Can shake his purposes who made them all ?
But with the substance of the angel's frame
He mingled more than's in the human breast
Of that pure element, by man call'd feeling,
And 'tis but meet that thou shouldst sadd'ning tell
Of woe careering on the shudd'ring earth.
But lo ! the cherub of the silv'ry wings
Comes with the tidings of one born to reign.

[*The Angel disappears, and the Cherub enters.*

Cherub. I come to note the birth of one
Destin'd the scatter'd sheaf to bind ;
The dismal cycle shall be run,
But not with him, howe'er inclin'd. [*Exit Cherub.*

Spirit. 'Tis even so : that dread portentous thing
That gloom'd in sequence to the gorgeous vision
Betoken'd pause, and then ordain'd confusion.
It was the Genius of the following age
That tower'd majestic. What shall ensue,
Howe'er malign it seem, foretokens good.
But I again must to my watch-tower hie,
For heaven is busy with the earth's concerns.

[*Exit Spirit of the World.*

SCENE II.

A Room, with a large window in the background shut.

ANTHROPOS *solus*.

Anth. I have too eagerly toil'd for distinction,
 But I have earn'd and purs'd the hire in power,
 Which I must now put out to usury.
 The only question is the trader's question—
 Security. Which is the best? To trust
 What I have gather'd by such enterprise,
 On fickle fortune's frail unstable fabric
 Or risk it, as it were, across the sea
 In some commodity of use to man,
 And have my profit in a rich return?
 The last is more accordant to my nature.
 'Twere fame to stay the hurry caught from me.
 All I cannot, but *that* at least I may do;
 What came from others owns another cause.—
 I stand upon the crisis of my fortune,
 And must consider well before I leap.

[*He looks at his watch.*]

'Tis near the hour that the Convention meets—
I must not be too soon—time drags with me.

*[He opens the window, and an evening landscape
is seen beyond.]*

How beautiful ! The sun has just gone down,
And all the west is in an amber glow.
E'en the green earth seems to enjoy the calm.
The glitt'ring waterfall in yon dark wood
Gleams as a vision of sweet poesy.
I never saw an evening half so still—
So like the evenings of my peaceful childhood !
The gale soft fondling comes ; but the pure air,
Kind Nature's breath, breathes in such heavenly peace
But of benevolence—why is't that man
Should be to gentleness still so averse ?—
Yes, I will go, and do what in me lies
To mitigate the tempest of debate ;
It should be pleasant passion to appease.

*[Enter the Red Angel, disguised as a Mem-
ber of the Convention.]*

Red Ang. Your friends wait for you and request
your presence.

Much hangs, they say, upon to-night's decision.

Anth. I know it well, and have prepared myself:
My mind is fix'd—it shall not now be alter'd—
I will resist the madness we are prone to.

Men are too headlong for reform and change.

Red Ang. You have judg'd wisely, for in haste
there's peril;

If nought mischance, you doubtless will succeed.

Anth. I *shall* succeed: the wise and good will bless
me—

Nothing can move me from my firm intent.

[*The Angel of Death enters invisibly to AN-*
THROPOS, and strikes him with his dart.

The Red Angel sees the demon, and is
agitated.

Anth. A chill has smote me! 'tis as if the touch
Of ice had suddenly froze up my blood.

Red Ang. The open window may have caused the
shock.

Anth. A heavy languor creeps into my thoughts:
I cannot go; I must repose awhile:
Leave me, I pray, and go thou on before,
And tell my friends of this unlook'd-for blight.

[*The Red Angel leaves him, but the Angel of
Death remains. ANTHROPOS sits down.*

I feel unwell—dread sounds are in mine ears—
All things around me seem to swim and swing :
The very thought in thinking flies away,
And mem'ry comes, like an upbraiding ghost,
With strange recitals of departed joy.

*Enter LOVE and HATE, disguised as SOPHIA and
MATILDA.*

Anth. Ha ! who are these that come to break my
rest ?

Hadst thou, Sophia, been a wiser beauty,
With love and blamelessness had pass'd my days ;
But thou wast clay, and my fond fiery nature
Had no affinity with aught so cold.

Go, statue, go ! thou freezest up my heart !
Ah ! my Matilda !—but thou wast too kind ;
We both forgot how much thou wast another's—
Hadst thou been less, this tumult had not been.
Oh ! woman, woman ! beauteous bane and woe !
The earth and man were happy till you came—
And she of Troy, that set the world in arms,

Was not that Helen of your faithless sex?
The cause and mother, since old Homer's time,
Of all the woes that wait on dismal war,
By changing tiger acts to glorious virtues.
But oh! this head—this head is overthrown,
And the bright world is fading into darkness. [*Dies.*
[*Exit Angel of Death.*

SCENE III.

In the Air.

The Spirit of the World.

Spirit. Heaven has withdrawn him by its angel
Death;

Yet still the tempest rages on the earth,
And havoc, with its talons dropping gore,
Unfurls its wings, impatient to destroy.—
'Tis not yet midnight, and a darker gloom
Is hastening on. All fix'd is shaken.—Hark!
The crash of engines and the gush of blood!
Oh! righteous Heaven! but let thy will be done—

Forgive in me, a brief created thing,
This awe of th' omens of thy dread intentions.
That which was honour'd for its emblem-value,
Is only valued for its native worth ;
The Lord's anointed sinks again to man.
Outlin'd and dismal on the dreadful scaffold
Are shapes and things with blood incarnadin'd,
And yet great Nature reigns serene around.
Rise, thou pale phantom ! Genius of the Dead !
Rise to my bidding—a new hest awaits thee.

Enter the Genius of ANTHROPOS.

Spirit. Behold yon babe that low, unhonour'd lies ;
Make him thy charge, for by his horoscope
To him awhile men's destinies are given,
To work the purposes of Providence.

[The Genius of ANTHROPOS indicates obedience, and in the same instant a terrific peal of laughter is heard.]

The powers of hell exult with mirthless joy ;
I may not with their license interfere.

[Exeunt the Spirit of the World and the Genius of ANTHROPOS.]

Chorus of Demons enters.

Come, come, dread demons !

Let all rejoice !

Be each in the anthem,

A note and a voice.

Be loud, wild, and shrilly ;

Sing as the storm—

The waves and the forests

Shall chorus perform.

The thunders of battle,

Tempests of flame,

The hoarse roaring torrents

And earthquakes grow tame.

The anarch, stern Reason,

Exults with man,

And their power departed

When his reign began.

Hell is the victor—

Evil, come forth !

Proud Heaven is vanquish'd,

Unrule is on earth. [Exeunt.

ODE TO HOPE.

WHY wouldst thou fly, fair Hope,
So languid, sad, and pale?
O linger yet, sweet Hope,
And tell again thy tale.

'Tis but a passing cloud
That shades the gen'rous sun,
And long, my dial says,
'Twill be ere day be done.

Why dost thou haste away?
Blithe summer is not gone—
Dost thou forget the time
When I was all thy own?

But since thou wilt not stay,
Nor e'er renew thy spell,
What can a sad man say,
But " Hope, sweet Hope, farewell!"

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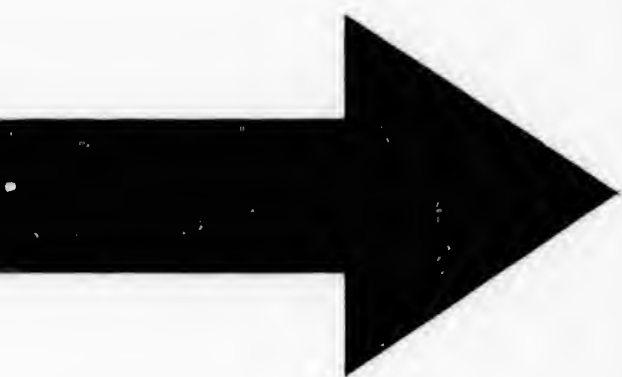
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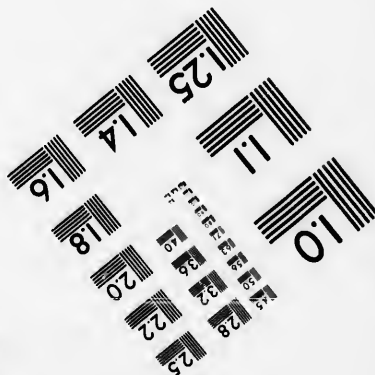
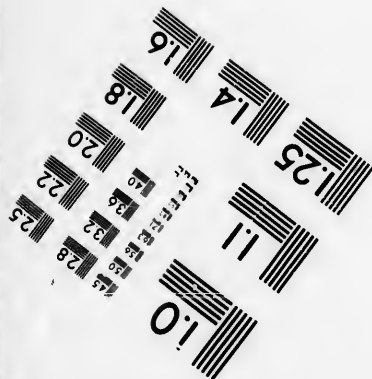
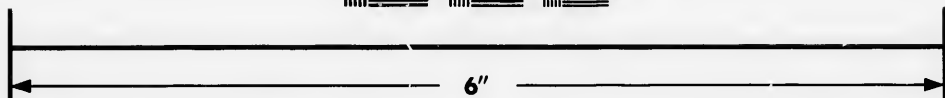
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I should add, that when I published the list of my works, I thought it was necessary to do so in a biographical sketch, and conceived, when I particularly marked those which were anonymous, it would have saved me from the imputation of being

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actuated by vanity. Indeed, I did not of my own accord give my name to any work of fiction; but for works which treated of real characters and actual transactions, I have ever held myself bound to acknowledge my responsibility.

It is my intention, if able, to collect my dramatic pieces, and to publish them in numbers, in a cheap form.

J. G.

THE END.

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J. G.

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