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Whitelocke placing the Crown before Cromwell.

FRONTISPICE—Victor Hugo, Vol. XIX., p. 87.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OLIVER CROMWELL.
ELIZABETH BOURCHIER.
MISTRESS FLEETWOOD.
LADY FALCONBRIDGE.
LADY CLEYPOLE.
LADY FRANCES.
RICHARD CROMWELL.
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL FLEETWOOD.
MAJOR-GENERAL DESBOROUGH.

EARL OF WARWICK.
THURLOË.
LORD BROGHILL.
WHITELOCKE, *commissioner of the seal.*

EARL OF CARLISLE.
STOUPE, *secretary of state.*
SERGEANT MAYNARD.
MR WILLIAM LENTHALL.
COLONEL JEPHSON.
COLONEL GRACE.
WALLER.
SIR CHARLES WOLSELEY.
PIERPOINT.
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAMBERT.
COLONEL JOYCE.

MAJOR-GENERAL HARRISON.
 LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LUDLOW.
 COLONEL OVERTON.
 COLONEL PRIDE.
 MAJOR WILDMAN.
 BAREBONE, *currier*.
 GARLAND, *member of Parliament*.
 PLINLIMMON, *member of Parliament*.
 LIVE-FOR-RESURRECTION-JEROBOAM-
 OF-EMER.
 PRAISE-GOD-PIMPLETON.
 DEATH-TO-SIN-PALMER
 SYNDERCOMB, *soldier*.

LORD ORMOND.
 WILMOT, LORD ROCHESTER.
 LORD DROGHEDA.
 LORD ROSEBERRY.
 LORD CLIFFORD.
 SIR PETERS DOWNIE.
 SEDLEY.
 DAVENANT.
 DOCTOR JENKINS.
 SIR RICHARD WILLIS.
 SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.
 JOHN MILTON.
 CARR.
 MANASSES-BEN-ISRAEL.
 TRICK,
 GIRAFF,
 GRAMADOCH,
 ELESPURU, } *Cromwell's four fools*.
 DAME GUGGLIGOY.

DUKE DE CRÉQUI, *embas-*
sador from France. } *their Suite.*
 MANCINI.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS, *embassador*
from Spain, and his Suite.

FILIPPI, *envoy from Christina of Swe-*
den, and his Suite.

Three Deputies from Vaud.

Six Envoys from the United Prov-
inces.

HANNIBAL SESTHEAD, *cousin to the*
King of Denmark, and his two
Pages.

THE LORD MAYOR.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF PAR-
 LIAMENT.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF PARLIA-
 MENT.

A Town Bailiff.

THE HIGH SHERIFF.

THE CHAMPION OF ENGLAND *and his*
Suite.

DOCTOR LOCKYER.

Town Crier, Servants of the Town, Lords and
Noblemen, Workmen, Body-Guards of the
Protector, Archers, Halberdiers, Par-
tisans, Pages, Sergeants-at-Arms,
Citizens, the Parliament, the
crowd.

LONDON, 1657

CROMWELL

ACT I

THE CONSPIRATORS

SCENE.—*Inn of the Three Cranes. Tables, chairs of rough wood. In the background a door leading out into a square. Interior of an old house of the Middle Ages*

SCENE I

LORD ORMOND, *disguised as a Roundhead, hair cut very close, tall hat with large brim, black coat, breeches of black serge, high boots; he is seated at a table in a dark corner of the room.* LORD BROGHILL, *elegant morning costume of a Cavalier, hat with feathers, breeches and doublet of satin, slashed; small boots*

LORD BROGHILL (*enters by the door in the back, which remains half open, disclosing the Square and the old houses lighted up by the dawn. He holds an open letter in his hand and reads it attentively.*)

“To-morrow, on the twenty-fifth of June,
Year sixteen hundred fifty-seven, one

Whom Lord Broghill once cherished tenderly
 Will be at the Three Cranes at early morn
 And wait for him near the wine market, at
 The corner of the streets.”

[*He looks around.*] This is the tavern—
 The same place that Charles, whom God forsook
 At Worcester, in great stress to save his head,
 Chose, here in London, to escape Cromwell.

[*He turns to the letter again.*
 Whence comes this letter I received last night?
 The writing—

LORD ORMOND (*rising*).

May God keep Lord Broghill!

LORD BROGHILL (*examining him from head to
 foot with a contemptuous air*).

What!

'Tis you, my friend, who cause me to leave home
 For this smoke-smothered hole? What is your
 name?

Whence come you? Why? From whom? What
 do you want?

I've seen that fellow somewhere!

LORD ORMOND.

Lord Broghill!

LORD BROGHILL.

Well, answer, can't you? Knaves like you were
 made

To ply your tricks for servants at our door.
 That's all the honor, sirrah, to pay you well,
 Which your degree in life can claim from ours.
 I find you bold!

LORD ORMOND.

Without displeasing you,
Do words like these become a mighty lord,
The friend of Cromwell?

LORD BROGHILL.

The old Puritan,
Should you rouse him by chance at such an hour,
Would let you hang some twenty cubits high
Till you had changed the color of your thoughts.

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

I hope to make him sleep, not waken him!

LORD BROGHILL.

When Cromwell's firmly seated on the throne,
He will know how to punish insolence.

LORD ORMOND.

His throne's a scaffold, and his robes are blood.
False servant of the Stuarts, you forget—

LORD BROGHILL.

That look, that tone— Who are you?

LORD ORMOND.

Broghill asks!

Have you forgot the Irish wars, my lord?
Together, in those days, we served the King.

LORD BROGHILL.

Lord Ormond, my old friend—'tis you!

[*Taking his hand affectionately.*

In London,

And you come here the evening of that day

When Cromwell's to be crowned. A price is on
Your head. Ah, if this visit should be known—
What brings you here, unhappy man?

LORD ORMOND.

My duty!

LORD BROGHILL.

How is it possible I knew you not?
That gloomy look, that ministerial dress,
The years— You are so changed!

LORD ORMOND.

Less changed than you!
You've bent the knee to Cromwell, Lord Brog-
hill!

You bow low down before this regicide.
I've changed my clothes; you've changed your
heart and soul.

Can it be you, our mighty warrior!
You soared so high only to fall so low!

LORD BROGHILL.

Proscribed, I honor you; vanquished, I pity.
But such words—

LORD ORMOND.

They are less severe than just.
However, you can make amends for all:
Serve me—

LORD BROGHILL.

With Cromwell! Willingly. I fly!
Your life I can save, for it is proscribed.

LORD ORMOND.

Hold, friend! Ask me to save your head instead.

Your insolent support, protector, king,
Your Cromwell is more near his fall than I.

LORD BROGHILL.

What do I hear?

LORD ORMOND.

This truth: consumed by sadness,
Weary of petty titles, such as highness
Or lord protector, Cromwell wants to be
Hailed on a royal throne as Majesty.
Among the spoils, of which each claims his share,
He asks the bloody heritage of Charles.
He shall receive it all—his throne; his shroud.
The kingly regicide in that proud hour
Shall learn that crowns are heavy, and although
They may be seized by treachery, their weight
Oft bends the head which wears them to the
earth.

LORD BROGHILL.

What's this?

LORD ORMOND.

To-morrow just as Westminster
Shall open to this king, by hell's will crowned,
Upon that throne which his mad pride usurps
He'll fall a bloody corpse beneath our swords.

LORD BROGHILL.

Rash man! The army's with him. He ne'er
moves
Without this living wall of iron for
Defense. Know you the number of his guards?
Break through three rows of halberds, if you
can;

Through heavy foot-guards, heralds, esquire
 beadles,
Through his red cuirassiers, black musketeers!

LORD ORMOND.

They're ours!

LORD BROGHILL.

With what vain hope you drug yourself,
To see Roundheads unite with Cavaliers!

LORD ORMOND.

Here, in an instant, will come Royalists
To mix with men of Parliament. It is
Fanaticism which rules Puritans.
They want no more of Oliver than Charles.
If Cromwell makes himself a king, he dies.
Lambert, his rival and their chief, is ours.
He dares to think he can take Cromwell's place.
That will be settled later. Spanish gold
And Flemish gold have made us many friends
Within these walls. In short, the time is ripe,
The chances good, and we throw down the dice.

LORD BROGHILL.

Cromwell is skillful; you will risk your head.

LORD ORMOND.

God knows to whom to-morrow will bring joy.
Our plot, Broghill, is certain of success.
This morning Rochester will bring Sedley,
Lord Clifford, Jenkins, Davenant the poet,
Which last is charged with secret message from
The King. To the same meeting will come Carr,
Sir Richard Willis, Harrison.

LORD BROGHILL.

But they
Are all in prison; they're his enemies,
Whom Cromwell has imprisoned in the Tower.

LORD ORMOND.

One word will answer that. Among our friends,
All urged by different motives, but all bent
On crushing Cromwell, we have gained Bark-
stead,
The Regicide, the keeper of the Tower,
Whom hope of pardon brings upon our side.
See, with what art the plot has been matured.
Within a giant net-work Cromwell's caught.
He'll not escape; all parties have conspired
To dig this precipice beneath his throne.
'Tis this which brings me from the Continent.
I want to save you. In the name of Charles,
My master, do you choose to die a traitor
Or live a faithful subject?

LORD BROGHILL.

What say you?

LORD ORMOND.

Return beneath the royal standard!

LORD BROGHILL.

Ah,
I was a loyal subject once, my friend.
In civil wars I've captured many castles;
I have defended cities for our king.
Hard fate has changed the soldier of the Stuarts
To Cromwell's courtier. Well, let it be so.
Leave a deserter to his gloomy fate.

But you, in your turn, listen; be my judge.
 It was during the war with Parliament.
 I had come here to arm a regicide,
 And like yourself, a price was on my head.
 I had a visit from an unknown man.
 'Twas Cromwell; and my life was in his hand.
 He saved me. I forgot all things for him.
 He took possession of me. I became
 Rebellious, sacrilegious like himself.
 I gave my arm to his republicans;
 And brought up for my king, I fought against
 him.

Cromwell, in turn, made me one of his peers,
 Lieutenant-general of artillery,
 Lord of his high court and his private council.
 Lifted by his protection to such power,
 If he should fall, I must go down with him.
 And since against my king legitimate
 I have rebelled, however great the love
 I bear unto his house, I can't return
 Into its service without treachery.

LORD ORMOND.

Sad consequence of private griefs. Alas!
 On what foundation public virtues rest!
 How many owe mistakes to cruel fate!
 How many are accounted noble who
 Are only fortunate! Broghill, throw off
 This yoke which crushes us! Prove your re-
 pentance!

LORD BROGHILL.

By added crimes? Oh, no! To you, Ormond,
 Though not accomplice, I can be a friend,

A confidant, and, neutral in this fight,
 Endure your triumph or soften your fall.
 Whoever be the victor, true to all—
 With Cromwell die, or pardon win for you!

LORD ORMOND.

Keep silence, and not act? Ah, you will be
 Untrue to Cromwell without helping us.
 Be faithful friend or faithful enemy;
 Do not be satisfied to stand half-way.
 Denounce me, rather!

LORD BROGHILL (*proudly*).

Were you not proscribed,
 I would have satisfaction for that speech.

LORD ORMOND (*extending his hand to him*).
 Your pardon! An old soldier, dear Broghill,
 For twenty years I've served my king.
 My battles and my services are written
 Upon my body in enduring scars.
 More than one expert chief instructed me,
 Montrose among the number, and Prince Rupert.
 I have commanded without pride, obeyed
 Without reluctance. I've grown gray beneath
 My helmet and grown old within my armor.
 I have seen Strafford die and Derby too.
 Seen Dunbar, Tredagh, Worcester and Naseby—
 Those giant arms which of themselves could
 shake
 The throne of England or could hold it up;
 I saw it fall at last, crushed by the camps.
 I've fought with ranters, preachers, saints; my
 hand,

In ceaseless slaughter exercised, well knows
 How many cuts it takes to blunt a sword.
 Well, I have reached the end of my hard fight.
 Cromwell is doomed! Our turn has come at
 last.

But 'midst our joy must poison steal its way?
 Must our success cost a dear friend his life?
 Remember, comrade, we have bathed our swords
 In the same blood and smelled the fire of the
 Same battles. For the second time—the last,
 In name of our dear master, I ask you
 Will you live faithful, or disloyal die?
 Reflect! Ormond gives you one hour to choose!
 [*He writes some words on a paper and gives
 it to BROGHILL.*

My name assumed and my secret address.

LORD BROGHILL (*rejecting the paper*).

Don't give it me! I know too much already.
 The same tent hath protected both of us
 For years, my friend; I know it well. But now
 I must fulfill my destiny. Farewell!
 Informer or accomplice I'll not be.
 I will forget, at once, what I have heard.
 But are you certain, friend, of your success?
 Nothing escapes this Cromwell. His bold glance
 Is over Europe: he sees everything.
 He holds all destinies within his hand.
 E'en when your arm seeks where to strike him
 best
 Perhaps he holds the string which moves the
 arm!
 Beware, my friend.

LORD ORMOND (*offended*).

Leave me, I beg of you!

I kiss your lordship's hands.

[LORD BROGHILL *exits through the door at the back, which closes after him.*

SCENE II

LORD ORMOND (*alone*).

I'll think no more

About it.

[*He sits and seems to reflect profoundly; while he is dreaming, a voice is heard, drawing nearer by degrees, which sings the following verses to a gay air:*

THE VOICE

A surly soldier in a rage
One night arrests a pretty page—

A page with roguish eye.

O page, O page, my beauty,

Why rush so quickly by?

To sleep is the world's duty

And you in satin. Fie!

Good soldier, since you curious are,

I bear a sword and a guitar

Concealed beneath my gown.

I'm going to a love-tryst, sir,

And dread the husband's frown,

The sword for him, the song for her,

When sweet my dame looks down.

[*The singing stops. Some one knocks at the door in the back, then the voice resumes its song:*

But the black sentinel on high
 Rolling his eyeballs furiously
 Cries from the dizzy tower,
 "We don't believe you, pretty page;
 Love wakes not at this hour.
 It looks more like a tryst of war
 Than hying to love's bower."

[*Louder knocking.*]

LORD ORMOND (*rising to open the door*).

Who is singing thus? Some fool,
 Or else it's Rochester!

[*He opens door and looks out into the street.*]

'Tis he; scribbling

Upon his knee!

[LORD ROCHESTER *enters gayly, a pencil and paper in his hand.*]

SCENE III

LORD ORMOND; LORD ROCHESTER, *very elegant costume of Cavalier, covered with jewels and ribbons, over which he wears a Puritan cloak of heavy gray cloth, large Round-head hat. His black skull-cap hardly conceals his blonde curls, which creep out under his ears, according to the fashion adopted by the young Cavaliers of the day.*

LORD ROCHESTER (*with a slight salutation*).

Forgive me, my lord count.
 I'm writing my new song. I must tell you—
 [*Begins to write upon his knee.*]

God save your Grace! Faith, I can hardly see.
You're waiting for our men? How is this air?

[*Singing.*

A surly soldier in a rage
One night arrests a pretty page—

Exile can teach us many things. I learned
That old French air in Paris.

LORD ORMOND (*shaking his head*).

I'm afraid

The soldier will arrest the pretty page,
In truth.

LORD ROCHESTER (*looking at his song*).

The rest is at the bottom of
The sheet.

[*Giving his hand to LORD ORMOND.*

You're first, as always, at the post.

Where are our friends? My lord, should you
have liked

If I had written thus—

A soldier with a surly face
Stops, as he hurries past the place,
A page with roguish eye.

Instead of thus:

A surly soldier in a rage,
Arrests one night a pretty page—
A page—*et cetera?*

The repetition of "a page" has charm,
It seems to me. The French—

LORD ORMOND.

Pray pardon me!
My mind's not formed to judge this sort of talent.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Indeed, my lord, your judgment's excellent.
To prove it to you, I will read you here
A quatrain which is new.

*[Draping his cloak around him and reciting
with animation.]*

“Egeria!—”

[Interrupting himself.]

Imagine, please, to whom this is addressed.

LORD ORMOND.

It seems to me the hour for jests is passed.
[Aside.] Charles is more mad than he to send
him here.

LORD ROCHESTER.

But this is serious; perhaps it is
The best of all my quatrains. And besides,
The object is so charming—Frances Cromwell!

LORD ORMOND.

Frances Cromwell?

LORD ROCHESTER *(assenting with his head)*.

I'm in love with her!

LORD ORMOND.

With Cromwell's youngest daughter?

LORD ROCHESTER.

She's divine!

Oh, God! she is an angel.

LORD ORMOND.

In Heaven's name!

Lord Rochester in love with—

LORD ROCHESTER.

Frances Cromwell.

Does it surprise you? 'Tis because you have
Not seen her radiant beauty. Seventeen,
Black hair, proud air, white skin, hands ex-
quisite.

A sylph, a nymph, a fairy, royal queen.
I saw her yesterday; her hair ill-dressed—
What matter? Everything becomes that face.
They say, she has been here only a month;
That, far from Cromwell, brought up by her
aunt,
At heart she cherishes the royal cause
And dearly loves the King.

LORD ORMOND.

Nonsense, my friend!

Where saw you this fair one?

LORD ROCHESTER.

At Westminster.

They gave a royal banquet to old Cromwell
Yesterday. May God confound him! I
Was curious to see the great Protector;
But when I reached his high platform
And saw this Frances, modest as a flower,
Absorbed and motionless I saw no more.
In vain the crowd pushed me on every side,
My eyes turned not an instant from her face.
When I had left the feast, I did not know
If Cromwell lifts his head or holds it down,
If his forehead is high or nose too long,
If he is sad or gay, or blonde or black,
Ugly or handsome. I saw nothing there

But this sweet woman, and, upon my soul!
I'm mad about her.

LORD ORMOND.

I believe you, sir!

LORD ROCHESTER.

This is the madrigal, in latest form—

LORD ORMOND.

'Tis all the same to me.

LORD ROCHESTER.

You don't mean that!

Shakespeare is a barbarian—that, of course,
You know—and Vithers is a genius. Can
You find a single love-song in Macbeth?
The English taste yields to the French; the
charm—

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

The devil take your English or French taste!
Your quatrain too. This folly will be fatal!
[*Aloud.*] Pray pardon me, my lord. To be
quite frank,
'Twould be more to the purpose at this hour
To give me information where we stand,
How many nobles are to meet us here,
If Lambert can be truly counted on,
Than to sing quatrains to fair enemies.

LORD ROCHESTER.

My lord is hasty. 'Tis no treachery
To fall in love.

LORD ORMOND.

In love with father too?

LORD ROCHESTER.

You are incensed! Wherefore, I do not see.
 The story, I am sure, would please the King.
 My love for daughter makes new war upon
 The sire. Besides, I do not mind him much.
 We never met, I think; but we shared once
 A charming mistress, Lady Dysert, who
 Reforms at present and weds Lauerdale.

LORD ORMOND.

I never thought to hear him slandered thus.
 Cromwell is chaste; wherefore deny the fact?
 He is austere, as true reformers are.

LORD ROCHESTER (*laughing*).

He? This austerity hides mysteries.
 By more than one act this old hypocrite
 Proves Puritans lack not humanity.
 But come back to our quatrain, if you please!

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

St. George! he stuffs his quatrain down my
 throat.

[*Aloud and solemnly.*] Lord Wilmot, Earl of
 Rochester, hear me.

You're young, while I am almost an old man.
 I know the legends of true chivalry,
 And that is why I dare to tell you now
 These quatrains, madrigals and foolish songs,
 Which fill the Paris idlers with delight,
 By truly noble minds are much despised
 And counted fit for only common men;
 Small lawyers make them, but your equals, lord,
 Would blush to write down madrigals.

Your family is noble, of great date.
 Upon your shield, if I remember well,
 You bear the crown of earl and cloak of peer;
 Above this legend: "Aut nunquam aut semper."
 Latin is not my strong point, I admit,
 But in plain English this is what it means:
 "Support your king, defend your feudal rights,
 But don't compose rondeaus and verses; that
 Belongs to common people." Peer of England,
 Have more respect for your high rank; refrain
 From what the smallest baronet, the most
 Ignoble country squire would scorn to do.
 Make no more verses.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Hear my lord's decree.

I will admit my fault is great; but then
 Among these rhymesters of base, common stock
 I have Armand du Plessis Richelieu,
 The cardinal-poet, for a colleague. Why
 Not speak the truth? If on my crest there stood
 The royal lion and the unicorn,
 I still would write my verses and my songs.

[*Aside.*] The old man has the temper of a bear.

[*Looking out of the door he exclaims:*

Ah, come and change our conversation, please!
 Hail, Davenant!

[DAVENANT *enters: simple black costume, long coat, and large hat.*

SCENE IV

LORD ORMOND, LORD ROCHESTER, DAVENANT.

LORD ROCHESTER (*rushing to DAVENANT*).

Dear poet, we await
Your presence to recite a quatrain.

DAVENANT (*saluting the two lords*).

Nay,
Another matter brings me here., May God
Be with you both!

LORD ORMOND.

From Germany you bring
Us orders?

DAVENANT.

From Cologne. I've just arrived.

LORD ORMOND.

You saw the King?

DAVENANT.

No, but I spoke with him.

LORD ORMOND.

I do not understand you.

DAVENANT.

I'll explain.

Before permitting me to go away,
Lord Cromwell sent for me. He made me give
My word of honor not to see the King.
I gave it, but when I had reached Cologne

I recollected tricks of Gascony :
I wrote and asked an audience of the King
By night, in an unlighted chamber.

LORD ROCHESTER (*laughing*).

Good!

DAVENANT (*to LORD ORMOND*).

His Majesty consented, talked with me,
Gave me an order to transmit to you.
Thus I was faithful to a double task;
I did not see the King, yet talked with him.

LORD ROCHESTER (*laughing still more heartily*).

Ah, Davenant! The ruse was well contrived;
'Tis not the least droll of your comedies.

LORD ORMOND (*low to ROCHESTER*).

'Twould not be wise to cavil at this point,
And to a poet's oath one pins no faith;
But subtleties like this bear other names,
And no true noble would descend to them.
[*To DAVENANT.*] Where is the order of the
King?

DAVENANT.

I bear

It in a velvet bag, hid in my hat.

'Tis safe; I'm sure no one would seek it there.

[*He draws from his hat a red velvet bag, takes out of it a sealed parchment which he hands to LORD ORMOND, who receives it on his knees and opens it after having kissed it respectfully.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

While he is reading I want you to hear
The verses—

LORD ORMOND (*half aloud, half to himself*).

“To John Butler, faithful, worthy
Earl and Marquis of Ormond: Unto
Cromwell at White-Hall Rochester must go.”

LORD ROCHESTER.

He wants me to seduce the daughter? Good!
[*To DAVENANT.*] My quatrain celebrates her
radiant charms.

LORD ORMOND (*continuing to read*).

“The wine he drinks at table must be drugged.
When he’s asleep, surround him in his bed
And bring him to me here, alive. We will
Avenge ourselves. Have faith in Davenant.
It is our will. Consider this as final.

CHARLES, *King.*”

[*He returns the royal letter with the same
ceremony to DAVENANT, who kisses it and
replaces it in the velvet bag and hides it
in his hat.*

That is much easier said than done.
How, under heaven, introduce this man
Into the palace? It needs skill—

DAVENANT.

I know
An old doctor of law who lives with him
As secretary and interpreter—
John Milton; he is blind. Good clerk enough,
But a distressing poet.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Who? this Milton,
The friend of regicides—the man who wrote

The "Iconoclast" and other senseless things?
Obscure antagonist of great Saumaise!

DAVENANT.

I'm glad enough to be his friend to-day.
They need a chaplain there, I have been told.
[*Indicating* ROCHESTER.
Milton can get the place for Rochester.

LORD ORMOND (*laughing*).

Make Rochester a chaplain! Droll disguise.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Why not, my lord? I've played in comedies—
I played a thief, you know,
[*To* DAVENANT.] In "Woodman King";
Now I will play a doctor puritan.
One only needs to preach to get one's self
Afloat, then always talk of golden calf,
Of dragons, caves of Endor, flutes of Jezer.
To get to Cromwell is an easy thing.

DAVENANT (*sitting at the table and writing*).

John Milton, at my wish, will recommend
You to his Satanship; and chaplain to
The devil you shall be.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Frances, my love!

[*He advances his hand eagerly for the letter.*

DAVENANT.

Pray, let me fold it.

LORD ROCHESTER.

I will see Frances!

LORD ORMOND (*to* LORD ROCHESTER).
No follies with the little one—I hope.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Oh, no!

[*Aside.*] Just get my quatrain to her eye!
A quatrain often helps things on.

[*Aloud to* DAVENANT.] When I
Am there, what must I do?

DAVENANT (*giving him a phial*).

Behold!

A strong narcotic is contained in this.
Each night they bring the future sovereign
Some hippocras with sprig of rosemary.
Put in some of this powder and buy up
The guard of the park gate.

[*Turning to* LORD ORMOND.] The rest is in
Our hands.

LORD ORMOND.

Why carry Cromwell off to-night
When he's to die to-morrow? His own people
Have decreed it.

DAVENANT.

That is just the reason.
From Puritans the King delivers him.
He wants to do without them; and besides,
'Tis good to hold a living enemy
For hostage.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Where's the money?

DAVENANT.

On the Thames
A brig bears a large sum destined for us.

In any urgent need, Manasses, Jew,
Will give us all we want at eight per cent.

LORD ORMOND.

Good!

DAVENANT.

We must keep the Roundheads on our side.
We strike an oak whose roots sink very deep;
We want their help, that if the wily fox
Escape our net, he'll fall beneath their swords.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Well said, dear Davenant. What splendid
words!

You make a poet's use of metaphor.
Cromwell is oak and fox at the same time.
A splendid thought! a fox stabbed to the heart.
You are the torch on England's Pindus, sir,
And I appeal, O master, for judgment—

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

The quatrain surges to the top once more!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Upon some verses, which I wrote last night.

LORD ORMOND.

My lord, is this the place?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What petty minds
Have these great noblemen. If a poor lord
Has just by chance a little sense, he loses
Caste.

DAVENANT (*to* LORD ROCHESTER).

When Charles the Second sits at Windsor-
Lodge

You can recite your verses, and we'll have
Vithers, Saint-Albans, Waller, to attend.
Will you permit me to abstain just now?

LORD ORMOND.

Let us conspire in peace.

[*To DAVENANT.*] You've spoken like
A prince, my lord.

[*Aside*] Wilmot should die of shame.
The poet Davenant is much less mad
Than he.

LORD ROCHESTER (*to DAVENANT*).

You will not listen?

DAVENANT.

No! I think

Lord Rochester himself will pardon me.
We've many points to settle for our plot.

LORD ROCHESTER.

My lord thinks that my quatrain is not good
Because I've done no tragi-comedies
Nor masquerades. So be it.
[*Low to LORD ORMOND.*] Rhapsodies!
'Tis jealousy, if he defends himself.

DAVENANT.

My lord's not angry?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Devil take you! Let
Me be!

DAVENANT.

I did not think to wound you, sir.

LORD ORMOND.

I beg, my lord—

LORD ROCHESTER (*turning away*).
What pride!

DAVENANT.

My lord, I beg—

LORD ROCHESTER (*repulsing him*).
And envy!

LORD ORMOND (*impatiently*).
Gentleness is not my forte.
A drop of water makes the vase o'erflow!
The greatest dandy who in Paris struts,
The silliest fop who haunts the Place Royale,
With all his feathers flying on his hat,
His bands of lace, his ribbons tied in bows,
His fluted wig and wide extended boots
Has much less rubbish in his head than you,
My lord.

LORD ROCHESTER (*furious*).
You're not my father, Lord Ormond!
In vain your gray hairs would redeem your
speech.
Your words are young and equalize our years!
You'll give me satisfaction for this wrong?

LORD ORMOND.
Most willingly! Let fly your sword, my spark!
[*They both draw their swords.*]
Faith! 'To my eyes 'tis but a flimsy reed.

DAVENANT (*placing himself between them*).
My lords, what are you thinking of? Have
done!
Upon the instant, peace!

LORD ROCHESTER (*fighting*).

Your peace

Is good: our war is better, friend!

DAVENANT (*trying to separate them*).

What if

The crier hears you? [*Knocking at the door.*

Some one knocks, I think!

[*Louder knocking.*

In name of Heaven, lords! [*They still fight.*

In the King's name!

[*The two adversaries stop and drop their swords. Knocking.*

All may be lost! Perhaps that is the guard.

Peace:

[*The two lords replace their swords in the scabbard, put their large hats on their heads and wrap their cloaks around themselves. More knocking. DAVENANT opens the door.*

SCENE V

The same. CARR, complete costume of Round-heads. He pauses solemnly on the threshold and salutes the three Cavaliers with his hand, without taking off his hat.

CARR.

Is not this the meeting-place of saints?

DAVENANT (*returning his salutation*).

It is.

[*Low to LORD ORMOND.*] That's what these
damned old humbugs call
Themselves.

[*Aloud to CARR.*] In this conventicle, you're
welcome,

Brother. [*CARR approaches them slowly.*]

LORD ORMOND (*low to LORD ROCHESTER*).

Our quarrel was ridiculous.

Let us abandon it. I was the first

At fault. Be friends.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing*).

Command me, Lord Ormond.

LORD ORMOND.

We will think only of our king whose wrongs
Demand that your hand should unite with mine.

LORD ROCHESTER.

It is my duty and my happiness,

My lord! [*They clasp hands.*]

And is it not enough, good God!

To have exile, proscription, hurled at us,

Death-sentences, a price put on our heads,

With how much more, the fruits of wretched
war, [*Indicating by gesture his disguise.*]

Without these fearful felt hats and cloth cloaks!

CARR (*takes a few steps forward slowly, joins
his hands upon his breast, lifts his eyes
to heaven, then turns them from one to the
other of the Cavaliers*).

Go on, my brothers; when I come to church

I am the humblest guest at the great feast.

Let no one rise for old man Carr. I see
This war of words, which in the street I heard,
Was but the noise of spiritual fight.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The deuce!

CARR (*continuing*).

These strifes are common things to me.
Resume the combats which sustain the soul.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

Or overcome it.

DAVENANT (*same tone*).

Peace, my lord.

CARR (*continuing*).

'Tis written

“Wander throughout the world and preach my
words.”

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

This is a study for my chaplain's part.

CARR (*after a pause*).

I won the hatred of Long Parliament.
For seven years the Tower has held me fast.
I've wept for liberty by Cromwell slain;
This morning when the jailer oped my door
He said, “Seek the Three Cranes: they wait for
you.

There Israel is gathering its tribes.
Cromwell and his abuses are to die.
Go forth!” I went, and came unto this door,
As Jacob to Mesopotamia came
In ages past. My salutation, friends!

My soul is waiting for your words of cheer,
 As waits the parchèd earth for Heaven's rain.
 The curse defies me and envelops me.
 With hyssop purify me, make me clean;
 For if your eyes don't turn their flames on me,
 I'm like a dead man going to the tomb.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).
 What gibberish is this?

DAVENANT (*low to LORD ROCHESTER*).
 Apocalypse.

CARR.
 My soul seeks light.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 Remove, then, the eclipse.

LORD ORMOND (*low to DAVENANT*).
 I gather from his "buts" and "thens" and
 "fors"
 He's from the Tower, and that his name is Carr.
 'Tis a conspirator whom Barkstead sends.
 He's a sectarian, an old bird of prey.
 Assisted by Strachan in the late war,
 He separated his camp from the camp
 Of Parliament. They put him in the Tower;
 But (this will be a great surprise to you)
 He hates Cromwell because, through treachery,
 He wrecked the Parliament which put him there.

DAVENANT (*low*).
 Is he one of the ordinary sort—
 A ranter, a socinian?

LORD ORMOND (*low*).

No, he is
 Millennialist; thinks the saints will rule
 O'er all the earth one thousand years. The
 saints—
 They are the Friends.

CARR (*who has been absorbed in a somber
 ecstasy*).

Brothers, I've suffered much.
 I was forgotten in the gloom, as are
 The dead, a century old, in their dark tomb.
 The Parliament, which to my grief I wronged,
 Was overthrown by Cromwell; in my cell
 I wept o'er England as the pelican
 Weeps by a lake deserted. Then I wept
 Over myself; for by the fires of sin
 My brow was branded, withered was my arm,
 Accursèd by the God whom I proclaim.
 I was like wood, when half consumed by fire.
 I've wept so much, lambs of the holy flock,
 That my poor bones are rotted in my flesh.
 At last the Lord has mercy, lifts me up;
 Upon the temple's stone he whets my ax.
 Cromwell he strikes, and far from Zion sends
 This desolation and pollution!

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

Zounds!

Harangues like his are damned original.

CARR.

I will resume my raiment virginal.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Indeed!

CARR.

Guide in the narrow path, my steps,
And glorify yourselves whose hearts are strong.
The thousand years are come! The saints will
rule
From Gog to Magog as God hath ordained.
You are the saints.

LORD ROCHESTER (*politely*).

You flatter us, I'm sure.

CARR (*with enthusiasm*).

The stones of Zion to the Lord are dear!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Well said.

CARR.

Unless God moves me unto speech,
I'm like a dumb man, and my lips are mute.
My heart will always hang upon your words,
For in them a celestial manna lies.

[*Indicating* LORD ORMOND.

It seems to me you were not quite agreed.
Upon what text arose your wise disputes?

LORD ROCHESTER.

When you were knocking, sir? About a verse,
[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! my quatrain, it might please
his taste!

He listens with unequalled ardor now.
What poet, worthy of the name, would fail
To launch his verses at that gaping ear.
I'll risk the madrigal, let come what may!
We'll make him drink first. Even Puritans
Relax their wrinkles when the cups are full.
[*Aloud.*] You're thirsty?

CARR.

Never thirsty, sir, nor hungry;
For I eat ashes as I would eat bread.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

If that's his dinner, let him eat alone!

No matter!

[*Aloud.*] Landlord—boy!

[*A tavern boy appears.*

Bring us a jug

Of muscadine, some wine, some hippocras.

[*The boy places jugs and two pewter mugs on a table. CARR and LORD ROCHESTER sit down. CARR pours out wine first, and offers it to the Cavalier, who continues:*

You asked us—I thank you—upon what text

We were disputing a short time ago.

It was a quatrain, sir—

CARR.

A quatrain?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Yes!

CARR.

What is a quatrain?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Certain kind of psalm.

CARR.

Ah, sir, I listen.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Tell me what you think.

“Egeria the Fair”—the one to whom

These verses are addressed—Frances is called.

But that's a vulgar name and at the end
 Of dainty love-songs would be out of place.
 I changed it, hesitating long between
 Griselidis and Parthenolicy.
 I chose the sweet name of Egeria!
 She was wise Numa's cherished nymph, you
 know.

He was law-giver; I'm in Parliament;
 That seemed in keeping. Have I chosen well?
 Judge you! This is the amorous epigram.

[*With a gallant and languorous air.*

"Egeria the Fair: you burn my soul!
 Your eyes, where Cupid lights a conquering
 flame,
 Are like two glowing mirrors which reflect
 The fires consuming me!"

What do you say to that?

[CARR, *who listened at first with attention and
 then with somber disapproval, rises, fu-
 rious, and overturns the table.*

CARR.

Damnation! devils!

Ye Saints and Heaven, pardon if I swear!
 But can one calmly listen to a flood
 Of bold obscenity at one's own side?
 Away! Back! Edomite, Amalekite,
 Madianite!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Good Lord! What rhymes in "ite"!
 He's more original than Ormond is.

CARR (*indignant*).

Like Satan, you have led me to a mount;

And you have said, "You've finished a long
fast;
You're thirsty. At your feet I place the earth."

LORD ROCHESTER.

I only offered you a cup of wine.

CARR.

I listened as if to a sainted soul.
My heart opened itself to his false lips,
As rose of Sharon opens to the dew!
Instead of holy treasures of the mind
He shows me a vile sore!

LORD ROCHESTER.

A sore? My quatrain!

CARR.

A fearful sore, which reeks with popery,
With love, voluptuousness and heresy,
Episcopacy! Horror! A vile plague
Which holds the filth of Moloch, Cupid, and
Astarte.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Pardon! Not Astarte, sir.
Egeria!

CARR.

Your lips are venom which
Infect my soul. Go back from me, you doers
Of iniquity; you fornicators—back!
You dry my bones e'en to the marrow, sir.
The saints will triumph! Your accursèd brood
Will not crush them as if they were but reeds.
The floods will burst o'er you, but will not reach
The level of their holy feet!

LORD ROCHESTER.

You rave!

What use will be your tall boots to you then?
If it won't rain on you, why wear big hats?

CARR (*with bitterness*).

Such words become a son of Zerviah.

[*At this instant LORD ROCHESTER'S cloak opens and discloses his rich costume, covered with bows, precious stones, and love-knots. CARR casts a look of horror upon it and continues.*

Look! A magician! Sphinx with a man's face,
Dressed and adorned in Sodom's latest style.
Satan's own doublet is not different:
He also struts with cuffs upon his wrists,
Covers his cloven foot, to hide it well from view,
With silken stockings and rosettes on shoes;
He wears his garter up above his knee;
Has rings and jewels sacred to Wishnon—
All amulets of Nabo, idol vile!
And that hell may be satisfied withal,
Behind his ears he hangs in shameless way
That rank abomination, a love-tress!

LORD ORMOND.

What fools!

CARR (*beside himself with indignation*).

No! These vile creatures are not saints.

LORD ROCHESTER (*laughing*).

You give us up?

CARR.

It is a club of demons;

A Papist vigil! These are Cavaliers.
Let me go hence!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Farewell, excited friend!

CARR (*going to door*).

My feet are treading on hot coals of hell.



SCENE VI

The same. COLONEL JOYCE, MAJOR-GENERAL HARRISON, BAREBONE *the currier*, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LUDLOW, COLONEL OVERTON, COLONEL PRIDE, SYNDERCOMB, *soldier*, MAJOR WILDMAN, *deputies* GARLAND, PLINLIMMON, *and other Puritans.* *Wrapped in their cloaks they enter in form of a procession, hats pulled down, tall boots, long swords which lift up the lower end of their cloaks*

JOYCE (*stopping CARR*).

What is the matter? Going as we come?

CARR.

Joyce, you're deceived. Come not to Nineveh. Leave this vile place. Barebone and Harrison, These men are Cavaliers; they are not saints. We are betrayed!

JOYCE (*low to CARR*).

These men belong to us.

Since we've no others, we must use their help.
These are allies.

CARR.

Death to the Royalists!
No union with the sons of Belial.

JOYCE (*to* OVERTON).

He's simple yet.

[*To* CARR.] Come, Carr, stay here with us.

CARR (*with gloomy resignation*).

To keep you from vile contact, I will stay.

[*The three Cavaliers have seated themselves around a table on the right: the Puritans, grouped on the left, talk among themselves in low tones and every now and then cast glances of hatred toward the Cavaliers. During all the scenes which follow, it must be supposed there is space enough between the two groups to make the conversation of the one inaudible to the other. CARR is the only one who watches the Cavaliers unceasingly. He holds himself somewhat apart from the Roundheads.*]

LORD ORMOND (*low to* DAVENANT).

That coward Lambert does not seem to come.
He must have dreamed of scaffolds this last night.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to the two others*).

Our saintly friends have a most somber look.
We're only three, and they are numerous.

St. George! [*Looking toward the door.*]

Here comes a re-enforcement. Clifford,
Sedley, Roseberry, and Lord Drogheda!

LORD ORMOND (*rising*).

Illustrious Jenkins whom the tyrant loves
Yet persecutes, because he fears his virtue!

SCENE VII

The same. SEDLEY, LORD DROGHEDA, LORD ROSEBERRY, SIR PETERS DOWNIE, LORD CLIFFORD, *Cavaliers in Puritan cloaks and wearing Puritan hats.* DOCTOR JENKINS, *an old man dressed in black, and other Royalists.* *The Cavaliers enter pell-mell; DOCTOR JENKINS alone preserves a dignified and solemn gait*

LORD ROSEBERRY (*gayly*).

Lord Ormond, Davenant, and Rochester,
It's warm!

CARR (*aside in a corner*).

Lord Ormond—Rochester!

LORD ORMOND (*low, and with a vexed look, to LORD ROSEBERRY*).

Our names a trifle lower— Please speak

LORD ROSEBERRY (*low, and looking toward the Roundheads*).

Ah, those crows!

I didn't see them.

LORD ORMOND (*low to LORD ROSEBERRY*).

Have a care, my lord,
Not to become their prey.

[*The Cavaliers go to the table where ORMOND, ROCHESTER, and DAVENANT, were seated. They notice the table and the pewter mugs which CARR overturned.*

LORD CLIFFORD (*gayly*).

A table turned

Already? Who began the fray? 'Sdeath!
Two cups for three? Which one of you keeps fast?
We'll straighten this disorder!

[*He picks up the table, calls a boy of the inn, who places new jugs of beer and wine upon the table; the young Cavaliers quickly seat themselves around it.*

I am hungry,

And thirsty too.

CARR (*aside with indignation*).

They've mouths only to bite,
These Pagans! Hunger, thirst—eternal cry!
They're buried in, their carnal appetites.

SCENE VIII

The same. SIR RICHARD WILLIS, *costume of the old Cavaliers; white hair, appearance of great suffering*

LORD ORMOND.

Sir Richard Willis!

[*All the Cavaliers arise and go to meet him; he seems to walk with difficulty. ROSEBERRY and ROCHESTER each offer an arm to help him.*

SIR RICHARD (*to the Cavaliers who surround him*).

From his weary chain
Freed for an instant, Richard drags himself
To you. Alas! my feebleness and pain
Come from the persecutions I endure.
My eyes have lost the habitude of light,
Cromwell has used such skill in torturing me.

LORD ORMOND.

My poor old friend—

SIR RICHARD.

Ah, do not pity me,
If, dragging one foot in the grave, my arm
Wounded with chains but strong with zeal, I come
To help restore the throne legitimate.
I glory in the cause; and if God wills,
I'll shed with joy my heart's blood for my king.

LORD ORMOND.

Oh, loyalty sublime!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Devotion rare!

SIR RICHARD.

I am of least importance 'mongst you all.
I have no other pride than to have been
Of all his servitors the most oppressed.

DOCTOR JENKINS.

What a grand model of fidelity!

SIR RICHARD (*with gesture of humility*).
Whom wait you for? The Roundheads are all
here.

LORD ORMOND.

Lambert is lacking: cowards all come late.

LORD ROCHESTER (*drinking, to LORDS ROSEBERRY and CLIFFORD*).

Look! with their black felts turned into a tower,
Are not our saints ridiculous?

SIR RICHARD (*to LORD ORMOND*).

Who are

All these sectarians?

LORD ORMOND.

Down there are Ludlow
And Plinlimmon—members of Parliament.
That one, who's watching us with hate, is Carr.
Then that inspired currier, damned Barebone.

SIR RICHARD.

Who is this Barebone?

DAVENANT (*low to SIR RICHARD*).

An uncommon man.

Declared an enemy to tyrant power,
He's currier to saints, upholsterer
To Lord Cromwell; he prays at double altars,
And ties double strings unto his bow.
With one hand he prepares a massacre,
And with the other ornaments a feast.
His voice proscribes the head of Cromwell,
crowned—
And makes a bargain for the coronation.
This great man, bound unto opposing ends,
Sings hymns to God while working Satan's will.
Obliging merchant and a heartless saint,

Fanatically fond of Noll, yet sells
Unto the highest bidder dear Noll's throne.

SIR RICHARD.

Was not his brother speaker of the House?

DAVENANT.

Of the late Parliament; and Barebone was
A member too.

SIR RICHARD (*to* LORD ORMOND).

The others?

LORD ORMOND.

Harrison,
A regicide, and Garland, regicide,
And Overton, a regicide.

LORD CLIFFORD.

Is't known

Which of the three is Satan?

LORD ORMOND.

Peace, my lord.
There speaks the ravisher of kingships—Joyce.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Accursed race!

LORD ROCHESTER.

What pleasure I would take
In jostling those Roundheads against each other
As they go on their sacrilegious way.
I'd crop their ears still shorter, for reward—
That they might bask in pure rotundity.
How many pleasant things I'd find to do
Unto these wretches, were they not our friends!

SCENE IX

The same. LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAMBERT,
*simple costume of the Roundheads; long
 sword with copper guard. On LAMBERT'S
 arrival all the Roundheads bow with great
 deference*

LORD ORMOND.

At last, Lambert is come!

CARR (*aside*).

Strange mystery!

LAMBERT.

A greeting to old England's oldest friends.

LORD ORMOND (*to his followers*).

The hour has come to risk the fatal stroke.

Let us conclude the bond and settle all.

[*He advances toward LAMBERT, who comes to
 meet him.*

Jesus the crucified—

LAMBERT.

For man's redemption.

We are ready!

LORD ORMOND.

At my command I have

Three hundred noblemen; these are the chiefs.

When shall we strike the cursèd one?

LAMBERT.

When he

Is king!

LORD ORMOND.

To-morrow!

LAMBERT.

We will strike to-morrow.

LORD ORMOND.

It is said!

LAMBERT.

'Tis said!

LORD ORMOND.

The hour—Speak!

LAMBERT.

At noon.

LORD ORMOND.

The place?

LAMBERT.

At Westminster.

LORD ORMOND.

Alliance.

LAMBERT.

Friendship.

[*They grasp hands.*]

[*Aside.*] I will possess the diadem. When you
 Have served my turn, the scaffold of Capell
 Will not be worm-eaten too much to hold
 A block for your proud head.

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

He thinks to mount

A throne; he'll mount the gallows in its place.

[*A pause.*]

LAMBERT (*aside*).

I've compromised myself. I'm chosen chief.
 Why did I suffer it? No matter! On!
 My fears are useless; and when one retreats
 Then, least of all, can one see clear the way.
 I'll speak!

[*He crosses his arms upon his breast and lifts his eyes to heaven. The Puritans take their attitudes of ecstasy and prayer. The Cavaliers are seated at the table, the young men drinking joyously. ORMOND, WILLIS, DAVENANT, and JENKINS are the only ones who appear to listen to LAMBERT'S speech.*]

My pious friends, 'tis known to us
 That, in defiance of this people's right,
 A man who calls himself the Lord Protector
 Intends to claim the title of our king.
 That reason brings us now to you, to ask
 If 'tis not fitting we rebuke his pride,
 If you will help us to avenge our wrongs,
 Regain our rights of franchise now usurped,
 And pass death-sentence on the serpent head
 Of Oliver Cromwell of Huntington.

ALL (*except CARR and HARRISON*).

Death unto Cromwell!

ROUNDHEADS.

Traitor, you shall die.

CAVALIERS.

Strike the usurper!

OVERTON.

We will have no king!

LAMBERT.

We'll have no master.

HARRISON.

I most humbly beg
 Permission to present a thought. Suppose
 He were an instrument in Heaven's hand!
 Although a tyrant, he is free of heart.
 Perhaps it is his fate Daniel foretells,
 When in his prophecy he says, "The saints
 Shall take the kingdom of the world, and will
 Possess it."

LUDLOW.

Yes, the text is plain; but yet
 The prophet will console your troubled mind,
 For elsewhere, general, great Daniel says,
 "Unto the saints the kingdom shall be given
 For my designs." Now, one has not the right
 To take it, ere 'tis given.

JOYCE.

Then, the saints!

We are the saints!

HARRISON.

I yield unto your wisdom.
 But, although I confess I'm vanquished, friend,
 [To 'LUDLOW.] I am not satisfied the texts mean
 just
 What you attribute to them. By-and-by
 We will confer together on these things,
 Which are prohibited to minds profane.

Unto ourselves we'll add some pious friends
Who, with their lights, will help to clear our doubts.

LUDLOW.

With all my heart. We'll call it Friday next.
[HARRISON bows in sign of acquiescence.

LAMBERT (*aside, as if absorbed in his reflections*).

What I've just said, in truth, is very bold.

JOYCE (*pointing out to LAMBERT a group of Roundheads, who until now have held themselves apart in the background*).

Three new conspirators are there. They feel
Most loth to come into the vineyard late,
But they present themselves to you in faith,
Since it is written, "Equal salary
To all."

LAMBERT (*sighing*).

Bid them approach.

[*The group advances to LAMBERT.*
What are your names?

ONE OF THE NEW CONSPIRATORS.

What-ever-the-unrighteous-may-conspire-
Against-you-Praise-God-Pimpleton.

LAMBERT.

And you?

A SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

Death-to-sin-Palmer.

A THIRD.

Live-for-resurrection
Jeroboam-of-Emer.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to LORD ROSEBERRY*).
Pray, what is that?

LORD ROSEBERRY (*low to LORD ROCHESTER*).
They have a crazy way of winding up
Their names in verses of the Bible.

LAMBERT (*holding an open Bible toward them*).
Will
You swear?

PRAISE-GOD-PIMPLETON.
We? Swear?

DEATH-TO-SIN-PALMER.
Away from us all oaths.

LIVE-FOR-RESURRECTION-JEROBOAM-OF-EMER.
Hell only hears, while Heaven denounces them.

PRAISE-GOD-PIMPLETON.
May faith deliver us from Pagan sins.

LAMBERT.
Then, will you promise—hand upon the Book—
[*He hesitates.*]
To strike down Cromwell?

ALL THREE (*hands on Bible*).
Yes!

LAMBERT (*more forcibly*).
To lend us help,
Keep silence, and to act?

ALL THREE.
We promise—yes.

LAMBERT.

Be welcome here!

[*The three conspirators take seats among the Puritans.*]

• OVERTON (*low to LAMBERT*).

All things move prosperously.
Have courage: all looks well.

LAMBERT (*aside*).

To-morrow night
I'll wear an added crown, or lack my head.

OVERTON (*indicating the conspirators, to LAMBERT*).

Look! all these friends, my lord.

LAMBERT (*aside*).

And witnesses.

SYNDERCOMB (*in the group of conspirators*).
Die, Oliver Cromwell!

CARR (*to Roundheads*).

After your ax
Has cut off Cromwell from his gorgeous dream,
After this Baal, men adore, is down,
What will you do?

LUDLOW (*thoughtfully*).

In truth, what will we do?

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

I know!

LAMBERT (*embarrassed*).

We'll form a council numbering ten.
[*Aside.*] And which will have one head.

HARRISON (*warmly*).

Ten members, Lambert?

Ten are too few. Let us have seventy,
As in the Hebrew Sanhedrim; it is
The sacred number.

CARR.

But the rightful power
Is the Long Parliament, dissolved by crime.

JOYCE.

A council made of officers?

HARRISON (*becoming excited*).

I'm right.

To govern well we must be seventy.

BAREBONE.

For England no salvation's possible
Unless, according to the Bible laws,
We claim from merchants from their higher gains
Support for temple and the chosen ones.
Give up Chaldea, Egypt, for dear Zion,
Resolving foot to palm and brace to cubit.

GARLAND.

That is most sensible.

JOYCE.

Is Barebone mad?

Is he a fool to see naught but his hole?
Does he mistake his counter for the throne,
His cap for crown, and his yard-stick for scepter?

PLINLIMMON (*to JOYCE indicating BAREBONE*).

Pray, do not jest. God oft inspires him.

[*To BAREBONE.*] My friend, I think with you!

BAREBONE (*air of great importance*).

To do things well
From every country we must take the best.

JOYCE (*with a contemptuous laugh*).

That means the carriers.

BAREBONE (*bitterly to JOYCE*).

You are polite.

I thank you! But before you got so proud
Were you not a tailor, Mr. Mob-cap?

[JOYCE *makes a gesture of anger*. BAREBONE
continues.

I, whom the city counts among its notables—

[JOYCE *menaces him with his fist, and is about
to rush upon him*.

OVERTON (*placing himself between them*).

Come, come!

LORD ROSEBERRY (*to Puritans. He rises, rolls
his eyes devoutly, puts on an air of com-
punction, and heaves a great sigh*).

The law of the twelve tablets, sirs—
The tables of the law—

[*The Puritans become attentive*.

CARR.

What does he mean?

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Demand not death by hunger nor by thirst.

I vote for a good meal; my stomach groans.

[*The Roundheads turn away with indignation*.

*The servants of the inn set the table of the
Cavaliers*.

CARR (*contemplating the Cavaliers who eat*).
How mad for flesh and wine these Satans are!

BAREBONE.

These Pagans!

CARR (*to Puritans*).

Ere we go too far, let's talk.
Is it so sure that Cromwell wants the crown?

OVERTON.

Too sure! To-morrow a base Parliament
Will place the hateful thing upon his head.

ALL (*except CARR*).

Death to his mad ambition!

HARRISON.

I don't see
What pushes Cromwell to this fatal step.
He must be mad indeed to want the throne.
Of all the crown's possessions none are left.
For public moneys we sold Hampton Court,
Woodstock's destroyed, and Windsor destitute.

LAMBERT (*low to OVERTON*).

Old plunderer! who on the brow of kings
Sees nothing but the rubies of a crown.
And in a throne, the goal of Cromwell's hope,
He sees but yards of velvet to re-sell.
Parched with a thirst for gold which naught can
quench,
He loves the scepter for the goldsmith's art.
And if some crown by chance should tempt his
soul,
He'd rather steal than win it.

BAREBONE (*with ecstasy*).

Ah, wherefore

To the despair of holy men has God
 Turned Jacob's lion to a scapegoat? Once,
 This Oliver, clothed with the robes of truth,
 Appeared to walk on the right hand of God.
 He was a ripened sheaf in our wheat-fields;
 He wore the Judah armor, battle-proof;
 And when he stood before their awestruck
 eyes
 The Philistines retreating cried, "'Tis he!"
 He was the pillow unto Israel's bed.
 But honey changed to poison on her lips.
 He made himself a Tyrian; Edom's sons
 Laughed loud at her abandonment.
 The Amorrheans trembled with delight
 To see the demons pushing him their way.
 Inflamed by the unrighteous Abishag
 He wants to be a king like David. Well!
 He shall be one like Agag.

SYNDERCOMB.

Death to him!

LAMBERT.

He's filled his measure to the top with crimes.

LORD DROGHEDA.

Drogheda reeks yet with his victims' blood.

LIVE-FOR-RESURRECTION-JEROBOAM-OF-EMER.

Children of Tyre, Gomorrah, haunt his court.

LORD ORMOND.

Blood of the martyr king has stained his hands.

HARRISON.

To detriment of those who fought his wars
He gives back to the Cavaliers their lands.

DEATH-TO-SIN-PALMER.

At that vile banquet, in the city's name
Which the lord-mayor gave him yesterday,
He was presented with a sword, which he
Returned.

LAMBERT.

Thus aping royalty.

JOYCE.

We're slaves!

DOCTOR JENKINS.

He judges, taxes, pardons, punishes,
Without appeal.

SIR RICHARD.

He murdered Lord Capell,
Lord Holland too: this tiger's prey they were!

BAREBONE.

He boldly flaunts a fine doublet of silk.

OVERTON.

He has refused us things which are our rights.
He exiled Bradshaw.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Bradshaw was not hung.

PRAISE-GOD-PIMPLETON.

In spite of Holy Writ, he tolerates
The rites of popery, and prelateship.

DAVENANT.

He has profaned the tombs of Westminster.

LUDLOW.

He buried Ireton by torches' light.

CAVALIERS.

A sacrilege!

ROUNDHEADS.

Idolatrous!

JOYCE.

My friends,

No mercy!

SYNDERCOMB (*drawing his dagger*). √)
He must die!

ALL (*lifting their daggers*).
Exterminate

The tyrant and his race.

[*At this moment some one knocks violently on the door of the tavern; the conspirators pause: silence of terror and surprise. Knocking is repeated*

LORD ORMOND (*going to door*).

Who is it? Speak!

LAMBERT (*aside*).

The deuce!

A VOICE (*outside*).

A friend.

LORD ORMOND.

What do you want?

VOICE.

By Heaven!

I say, a friend! Open the door!

LORD ORMOND.

Your name?

VOICE.

I'm Richard Cromwell.

ALL THE CONSPIRATORS.

Richard Cromwell!

LORD ORMOND.

Son

Of the Protector!

LAMBERT.

We have been betrayed.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

We must open the door!

[*He opens the door.* RICHARD CROMWELL
enters.

SCENE X

The same. RICHARD CROMWELL, *costume of the Cavaliers.* Upon RICHARD'S entrance all the Puritans fold their cloaks around them and pull down their hats

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Well, my good friends,

I never saw so fortified a den.

No stronghold is defended half so well.

Clifford, without your voice and Roseberry's,

Which rose above the din of bottles, faith!

Poor Richard would have given up the fight.

[*Saluting the conspirators around him.*
Good-day, sirs! Whose good health were you
about

To drink? Unto your wishes, I add mine.

LORD CLIFFORD (*embarrassed*).

Dear Richard, we were saying—

LORD ROCHESTER (*laughing*).

Heaven bless you!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Of me? You talked of me? You are too kind!

BAREBONE (*aside*).

May hell burn out its cinders in your throat!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I'm not intruding?

LORD ROSEBERRY (*stammering*).

You? No. On the contrary—
We are much pleased. Some business brings
you here?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Yes; the same sort of business which brought
you.

CARR (*aside*).

Can he be one of them?

SIR RICHARD (*aside*).

What! Richard, too?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*raising his voice*).

Ah, gentlemen! You—Sedley, Clifford, Downie,
And Roseberry—I cry you treason!

LORD ROSEBERRY (*startled*).

What?

LORD CLIFFORD (*anxious*).

Dear Richard—

[*Aside.*] Damn my soul! he knows it all.

SEDLEY (*with anguish*).

I swear to you—we—

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Hear me out, I beg,

Then justify yourselves if possible.

LORD ROSEBERRY (*low to others*).

We are found out.

DOWNIE.

The fact is evident.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

For near ten years we've been the best of friends,
We've shared all things in common until now—
Balls, hunts, delights forbidden or allowed,
Our purse, our joys, our griefs, our mistresses.
Your dogs were mine, my falcons were your
own;

And we sought the same balconies by night.
Although my name dragged me in different
paths,

I've looked on you as if you were my brothers.
But now, in spite of this close comradeship,
You have a secret. What a secret, too!

LORD ROSEBERRY.

All's lost! What shall I say?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Question your soul!

Should I expect this? It is infamous!

SEDLEY.

Believe, dear Richard—

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Search for reasons, yes!

Have I not done unnumbered things for you?
 Who was your resource, in those direful days,
 'Gainst money-lenders, worse than Roundheads?
 Yes!
 Why did I pay the Jew Manasses those
 Five hundred nobles, and for whom?

LORD CLIFFORD (*confused*).

I know—

I won't deny! Accursed Jew!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Downie,

A bill struck down your banished family;
 Who was your surety when they came for you?

DOWNIE (*embarrassed*).

You were!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*to ROSEBERRY*).

Who kept in jail for you, for crime
 Of libel, on a certain night, the husband
 Of your dear one?

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

He looks like a good fellow!

BAREBONE (*low to CARR*).

The shameless Herod, lending despotism
To lechery.

LORD ROCHESTER (*to DAVENANT*).

He has a ready way
Of improvising widows.

LORD ROSEBERRY (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).

I have had
Innumerable proofs of your good-will—

RICHARD CROMWELL (*folding his arms across
his chest*).

And for this friendship, dangerous to me,
I am repaid by all—with treachery.

LAMBERT (*aside*).

With treachery?

LORD CLIFFORD.

What! treachery?

SEDLEY.

Just God!

CARR (*astonished*).

What do they mean?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*earnestly*).

You come to drink. and don't
Ask me!

LORD ROSEBERRY.

I breathe again.

[*Low to Cavaliers.*] The motive of

This meeting has escaped him. He has seen
The bottles, not the daggers.

[To RICHARD CROMWELL.
Richard, we—

RICHARD CROMWELL.

High treason, I tell you! If you but knew
How this base deed of yours goes to my heart!
Think of it—to get drunk and not tell me!
What have I done? Am I not good-for-nothing,
Like yourselves? To drink without me—ah,
'Twas wrong! You think I cannot hold my
tongue?

That you should keep it from the Puritans,
Disguise yourselves beneath those horrid hats,
And hide beneath their cloaks—that is all right;
But to conceal such things from me, when I
Was first to laugh at sumptuary laws
And sober Solons, whose despotic bills
Fixed tavern reckonings at a crown per head.
Is this an act of comradeship, my friends?
Have I held back from any of your schemes?
Am I less seen, in spite of stringent rules,
At cock-fights or at races? Have I not
Gone to the limit of your recklessness,
And taken part in comedies with you?

BAREBONE (*indignant*).

The Sadducee!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I'm ready for them all!
Gay feasts or duels, tricks of any sort.
With what can you reproach me?

LORD CLIFFORD.

Naught, indeed!

Your qualities, of an exalted sort,
Are dear to us.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I may deceive myself;
Our eyes are none too keen to see our faults,
And we look only on the brightest side.
I may have failings.

SEDLEY.

No!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Please point them out.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Richard—

RICHARD CROMWELL.

You do me that much justice, sure,
To think I hate these cursed Puritans
As much as you do!

BAREBONE.

We?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

That's what I said.

My God! how can one stand these stupid men,
Who stain their holy books with bloody thoughts,
Who murder every one, and worship God,
Preach endless sermons and then cheat at cards?

CARR (*under his breath*).

Play cards—you lie, you son of Herod, you!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I'm croaking quite as much as they. No more!
To prove I dread not being compromised,
How truly my desires accord with yours,
How much I love the cause on which your hopes
Are bent,

[He fills a glass and raises it to his lips.]

I drink the health of your King Charles.

ALL THE CONSPIRATORS (*surprised*).

King Charles!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Why all this terror? We're alone.

CARR (*aside*).

I had suspected Israel was a dupe.
At heart, it's for the Stuarts they come here.
We'll see!

SIR RICHARD.

And he is Cromwell's son! Well, well!
If he has joined this plot, he is most rash.
*[At this moment the sound of a trumpet is
heard outside; renewed silence of aston-
ishment and anxiety.]*

A LOUD VOICE (*outside*).

Open this inn in name of Parliament.
[Movement of terror among the conspirators.]

LORD ROCHESTER (*to DAVENANT*).

This is the time we're caught in our own tomb,
Like Cacus.

LAMBERT (*low to JOYCE*).

This means our arrest, by Cromwell.

JOYCE (*low*).

He knows all! This time there is no mistake.

OVERTON (*low*).

We'll have to cut a passage with our swords.

LAMBERT (*low*).

What's to be done? Of course the square is filled
With guards.

[*The sound of the trumpet is heard again.*]

RICHARD CROMWELL.

The devil! To disturb us now!

VOICE (*outside*).

Open this inn in name of Parliament.

BAREBONE.

Let us obey! [*He goes to open door.*]

LAMBERT (*aside*).

My head begins to turn

Upon its shoulders, ready for its fall!

[BAREBONE opens the inn door; the other conspirators lift off the blinds and the back drop appears, in which are large grated windows. Through these windows the wine-market place is visible; it is filled with people. In the center of the stage THE TOWN-CRIER is seen on horseback, surrounded by four Town-servants in livery, armed with pikes, and by a guard of Archers and Halberdiers. THE CRIER holds a trumpet in one hand and an unfolded parchment in the other.]

SCENE XI

The same. THE TOWN-CRIER, *Town-servants, Halberdiers, Archers, Populace.* *The conspirators range themselves on the right and on the left of the stage*

TOWN-CRIER (*after having blown his trumpet*).
Silence! This must be listened to by all.
“His Highness—”

HARRISON (*low to GARLAND*).
Soon his Majesty.

TOWN-CRIER. “The Lord
Protector Oliver Cromwell, unto
All citizens, all military subjects
And all civilians, this makes known—”

OVERTON (*low to LUDLOW*). The word
Subject returns.

TOWN-CRIER.
“To learn God’s holy will,
Touching the recent motion which was made
In Parliament by a most honored man—
Pack, alderman and cavalier—to wit,
That the aforesaid Lord Protector be
Proclaimèd king—”

LUDLOW (*low to OVERTON*).
Now, the usurper lifts
The mask!

TOWN-CRIER.

“Moreover, to protect this people
 From miseries which the eclipse foretells,
 And to entreat God to be merciful,
 The Commons sitting now in Parliament,
 On motion of those doctors whom all love
 Decree this day to be a day of fast;
 Enjoining every citizen to make
 Examination of his crimes and sins.”
 It is decreed.

TOWN-SERVANT.

Amen!

TOWN-CRIER.

And now—God bless
 The English nation evermore.

THE CHIEF OF ARCHERS.

According

Unto this bill of Parliament we bid
 All sutlers, landlords, innkeepers close up
 Their taverns and their shops upon the instant,
 Under the pain of twenty deniers fine.

LAMBERT (*aside*).

I've got off with a fright this time! Well done!
 [*Low to Puritan conspirators.*]
 Until to-morrow we must separate.

GARLAND (*low*).

When shall we meet again?

BAREBONE (*low*).

In the great hall
 Of Westminster. Before the fatal hour

I'll place you close beside this wicked throne,
 Which I, his own upholsterer, have raised.
 [*The conspirators, grouped around BARE-
 BONE, grasp his hand in sign of fidelity.*]

OVERTON.

Good! Without mystery, now separate.

TOWN-CRIER AND TOWN-SERVANTS.

God bless the English nation evermore!

PURITAN CONSPIRATORS (*low*).

Death unto Cromwell! [*They go out.*]

RICHARD CROMWELL (*to the Cavaliers who are
 about to go out*).

It's a stupid thing
 To be pursued by fasts at such a time.
 This is sure proof my father is not young.
 I wouldn't pay a fast to get a throne.
 [*He goes out with the Cavaliers.*]

ACT II

THE SPIES

SCENE.—*Banquet hall at White-Hall. In the background one sees the casement through which Charles I. passed to his execution. On the right stands a large gothic arm-chair beside a table covered with a velvet cloth on which are still distinguishable the initials C. R. (Carolus Rex). The same letters, gilt on a blue ground, cover the walls, although they are half effaced. As the curtain rises, the stage is filled with numerous groups of courtiers in gala dress, who appear to be talking together in low tones. The ambassadors from Spain and from France, with their Suites, are in front. The Spanish Ambassador is on the left, surrounded by pages, squires, court magistrates, alguazils; a herald of the council of Castile bears the chain of the order of the Golden Fleece on a black velvet cushion. The French Ambassador is on the right, surrounded by pages and noblemen. MANCINI stands near him; behind him stand two noblemen, one bearing on a cushion a magnificent sword, with a gold-wrought handle, the other bearing a letter, to which is suspended a great*

seal of red wax, also on a velvet cushion. The Spanish Ambassador wears the costume of a knight of the Golden Fleece; his Suite are dressed in black velvet and satin. The French Ambassador wears the costume of a knight of the Holy Ghost, his Suite displaying a great variety of costumes, uniforms, and liveries. Behind these two principal groups are groups of Swedish, Piedmontese, and Dutch Envoys, all remarkable for their divers costumes. In the back a final group of English lords, among whom one distinguishes HANNIBAL SESTHEAD, a young Danish lord, by his suit of gold brocade, and by two pages who follow him. Two Puritan sentinels, with musket and halberd on their shoulders, walk up and down before a large gothic door in the back of the hall

SCENE I

DUKE DE CRÉQUI, ambassador from France, MANCINI, nephew to Cardinal Mazarini, and their Suites; DON LUIS DE CARDENAS, ambassador from Spain, and his Suite; FILIPPI, envoy from Christina, and his Suite; three Deputies from Vaud; six Envoys from the Dutch Republic; HANNIBAL SESTHEAD, cousin to the King of Denmark, and two pages; Lords and English noblemen; two sentinels

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*to one of his pages*).
What time is it?

THE PAGE (*looking at a large watch which he carries at his side*).

'Tis noon, my lord.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS.

Then by
St. James the elder, I have waited here
Two hours. However great he be, I know
'Tis necessary for his fame to keep
A proud Castilian chafing at his door;
But by the Virgin! he keeps me too long.

THE PAGE.

Most worthy master, while your Highness deigns
To wait the pleasure of Don Cromwell here,
He's holding council—

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*severely, with a side glance at CRÉQUI*).

Peace! Who questioned you!

MANCINI (*low to DUKE DE CRÉQUI*).

What an amusing thing, to see a Spaniard
Begging the favor of a look from England.
How pride and shame are struggling to possess
His countenance.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*aside*).

How will he take my message?

DUKE DE CRÉQUI (*to MANCINI*).

What hall is this, in which we stand, my lord?

MANCINI.

We're in the banquet-hall, your Grace; which
serves

As general court. Of slaughtered Charles one
sees

The monogram forgotten on the walls.

To reach the scaffold, he passed out this way.

'Twas just one step out from his natal home;

And now a regicide, sectarian—

[The great folding-door is thrown open.]

AN USHER (*announcing with very loud voice*).

The Lord Protector!

[All uncover, and bow with great respect.]

CROMWELL *enters, his hat on his head.*

SCENE II

The same. CROMWELL, *in simple military dress; a close buff coat, a broad cross-belt embroidered with his arms, to which hangs a long sword.* WHITELOCKE, *lord commissioner of the Seal, long black satin robe bordered with ermine, large wig.* EARL OF CARLISLE, *captain of the Lord Protector's Guards, dressed in his own particular uniform;* STOUPE, *secretary of State for foreign affairs.* *During all this scene THE EARL OF CARLISLE stands behind the Protector's arm-chair, holding his sword unsheathed; WHITELOCKE stands to the right; STOUPE to the left, with an open book in his hand. As CROMWELL*

enters, the assembly ranges itself in two rows and remains with bowed head until the Protector has reached his seat.

CROMWELL (*standing beside his arm-chair*).

Peace and greeting to
All well-disposèd hearts. Since each of you
Is sent as deputy to us, in name
Of England's people we accord you welcome.
[*He sits, removes his hat, then puts it on again.*

Duke de Créqui, speak!

[THE DUKE DE CRÉQUI, *followed by MANCINI and his embassy, approach CROMWELL with the same salutations they would make to a king. The other people retire to the back of the hall, out of hearing distance.*

DUKE DE CRÉQUI.

My Lord Protector,
The alliance, of whose enduring loyalty
His most Christian majesty hereby sends you
Assurance, is drawn closer by new ties
To-day. My Lord Mancini will read you
The letter his illustrious uncle sends.

[MANCINI *approaches, kneels, presents the Cardinal's letter upon the cushion. CROMWELL breaks the seal and returns it to MANCINI.*

CROMWELL (*to MANCINI*).

It is from Cardinal Mazarini. Read!

MANCINI (*unfolds the letter and reads*).

TO HIS HIGHNESS MY LORD PROTECTOR OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ENGLAND.

MY LORD—The glorious share which your Highness' troops performed in the present war between France and Spain, and the useful help which they are lending to my master's arms in the campaign of Flanders, redouble the gratitude which his Majesty feels for an ally as illustrious as yourself, and for one who so efficiently aids him in repressing the aggressiveness of the house of Austria.

It has therefore been the King's good pleasure to send the Duke de Créqui as ambassador extraordinary to your Court, charging him to acquaint your Highness with the fact that the strong city of Mardyke recently captured by our troops is placed at the disposition of the generals of the English Republic, awaiting the hour when Dunkirk, which still holds out, shall be surrendered to them, according to treaty. Monsieur the Duke de Créqui is moreover charged with the duty of begging your Highness to accept a gold sword, which the King of France sends you as a token of his esteem and his friendship. Monsieur de Mancini, my nephew, will make you acquainted with the contents of this letter, and will also place at your feet a small present which I venture to add in my own behalf to that of the King; it is a tapestry of the new royal manufacturers, called the Gobelins. I trust that this expression of my devotion may

prove agreeable to your Highness. If I were not ill at Calais, I should go to England myself in order to pay my respects to one of the greatest men who ever lived, the one whom I should have been most ambitious to serve after my king. Deprived of that honor and gratification, I send the nearest to me in blood, to convey to your Highness all the veneration I feel for your person and the assurance that it is my resolve to preserve an eternal friendship between you and my master.

I have the temerity to subscribe myself, with passion, the very obedient and very respectful servant of your Highness,

GIULIO MAZARINI,

Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church.

[*With a profound obeisance MANCINI hands the letter to CROMWELL, who passes it to STOUPE; upon a sign from THE DUKE DE CRÉQUI, the pages in royal livery place the cushion which bears the sword upon CROMWELL'S table; and upon a sign from MANCINI, the pages in MAZARINI'S livery unroll a rich piece of Gobelin tapestry at the feet of the Protector.*]

CROMWELL (*to DUKE and to MANCINI*).

For these rich presents which are now received,

Pray give my thanks unto the Cardinal.

Tell him England will be sister to France.

[*Low to WHITELOCKE.*] This priest who flatters me on bended knee,

Shouts forth, "Great man!" and whispers,
 "Lucky fool!"

[Turning abruptly to the deputies from Vaud.
 What do you want?

[The men from Vaud advance respectfully.

ONE OF THE DEPUTIES.

With dire oppressèd heart
 We come to ask assistance.

CROMWELL.

Who are you?

DEPUTY.

We're deputies sent unto you from Vaud.

CROMWELL (*with kindly tone*).

Indeed!

DEPUTY.

Oppressive laws have laid upon
 Our lives a cruel yoke; we're Calvinists,
 Our prince is Roman Catholic. Our cities
 Have been o'erwhelmed with fire and sword
 To force us to accept his faith. In grief
 Our country sends us here to beg for help.

CROMWELL (*with indignation*).

Who dares oppress you thus?

DEPUTY.

Duke of Savoy!

CROMWELL (*to DUKE DE CRÉQUI*).

Embassador from France, do you hear this?
 Entreat your cardinal for love of us
 To help these people in their direful straits.

This most high duke is in the hands of France.
 Force him to yield. 'Tis 'gainst all law divine
 To persecute for faith. Besides, I like
 This Calvin. [DUKE DE CRÉQUI bows.

MANCINI (*low to DUKE*).

To write "public tolerance"
 He dipped his hand in holy Catholic blood!

CROMWELL (*to the Swedish Envoy*).

Your name!

[*Turning to the Deputies from Vaud, who are
 about to retire to the back of the hall.*

Count on us always, men of Vaud.

ENVOY FROM SWEDEN (*bowing*).

Filippi and I come from Terracine.

It is my privilege to place this gift

Sent by my royal mistress, Queen Christina,

At your proud feet.

[*He places a small casket, surrounded with
 rings of polished steel, before CROMWELL,
 and hands a letter to him which the Pro-
 tector passes to STOUPE.*

[*Low to CROMWELL.*] This letter tells you why
 And by whose order Monaldeschi was
 Assassinated close to Fontainebleau.

CROMWELL.

At last she has avenged herself, has she?

THE ENVOY (*still with low voice*).

The Cardinal allowed my outraged queen
 To strike this man e'en in the heart of France.

CROMWELL (*low to WHITELOCKE*).

To grant a hospitality to crime!

THE ENVOY (*continuing*).

My queen, who from her throne exiles herself,
Begs shelter near the Lord Protector.

CROMWELL (*surprised and displeased*).

Here?

Near me? I cannot give you answer now.
In this land we've no palaces for queens.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*aside*).

But they will have to find one for a king.

CROMWELL (*to FILIPPI, after a moment's
silence*).

Let her remain in France, for London air
Is fatal to dethronèd kings.

[*Low to WHITELOCKE.*] Bring here
This royal courtesan, this woman without
Morality, who will expose herself
To every shaft of public hate!

[*As he turns he observes the Envoy still stand-
ing beside him in the attitude of one wait-
ing for something. With surprise.*

What now?

FILIPPI (*bowing and indicating the casket*).

My task is not completed yet. The casket
Has not been opened!

CROMWELL.

What does it inclose?

FILIPPI (*bowing more profoundly*).
Pray, deign to look, my lord!

CROMWELL.

Amazing thing!
What is the mystery?

FILIPPI (*presenting a golden key*).
Here is the key,
My lord.

CROMWELL.

Give it to me.
[*He takes the key. FILIPPI places the casket on the table; CROMWELL prepares to open it; WHITELOCKE stops him.*]

WHITELOCKE (*low to CROMWELL*).

Beware, my lord.
More than one traitor by his master sent
To work the ruin of a mighty man
Has brought him poison or destroying fire
In just such golden coffers as this is.
Discovery kills the victim. Have a care;
You've enemies. This man is marked with
crime.

Beware of him. That casket may contain
Some artifice which threatens you with death.

CROMWELL (*low to WHITELOCKE*).

You think so? It may be. Well, open it
Yourself.

WHITELOCKE (*stammering with fright*).

I am devoted to your service—
[*Aside.*] Heavens!

CROMWELL (*with a smile*).

I know it, and make use of it.

[*Aside.*] I'll test it now!

[*Giving him the key.*

WHITELOCKE (*aside*).

What courage it requires

To be a courtier! Cruel circumstance!

To have to choose between disgrace and death.

Disgrace is but another name for death.

[*He approaches the casket and with trembling hand places the key in the lock.*

Let us die gracefully!

[*He opens the casket with the extreme carefulness of one who expects a violent explosion, casting a terrified look within, he exclaims:*

A crown!

[*The Swedish Envoy assumes a radiant look.*

CROMWELL (*astonished*).

A crown?

WHITELOCKE (*drawing a royal crown out of the box and placing it on the table. Aside*).

Another sort of trap!

CROMWELL (*frowning*).

What does this mean?

FILIPPI (*bowing with satisfaction*).

My sire!

CROMWELL (*indicating the crown*).

Is it good gold?

FILIPPI (*hurt*).

You doubt it, sire?

CROMWELL (*aloud to WHITELOCKE*).

Good! Have it melted. I'll present it to
The hospitals of London.

[*To FILIPPI, stupefied.*] Nothing better
Can I do with jewels—royal playthings!
For these women's trinkets, I have no use.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*aside*).

Intends he to remain Protector, then?

MANCINI (*low to DUKE DE CRÉQUI*).

He might have sent her back a royal head
In fair exchange.

DUKE DE CRÉQUI (*low to MANCINI*).

So bold a present would
Most fittingly unite a queen assassin
Unto a vassal regicide.

CROMWELL (*dismissing FILIPPI with a gesture
of displeasure*).

Farewell,

My Swedish lord, native of Terracine!

[*Low to WHITELOCKE.*] Filippi and Mancini!

What strong chains
Have always bound Italians to intrigue!
These bastard sons of ancient Rome, who know
Not law nor honor, are degraded heirs
Of the great masters of the earth, who bore
Aloft the battle scepter. This strange race
Still rules the earth, but 'tis from underneath.
Rome governs Europe, just as then she did;

But now the lynx creeps where the eagle
soared.

The chain which fettered twenty different lands
Is worn into a thread invisible,
Which jerks and pulls vile jumping-jacks.
Oh, dwarfèd progeny of giants, foxes
Conceived of wolves, you're known o'er the
broad earth

By your smooth tongues—Filippi, Mazarini,
Torti, Mancini. When the devil makes
A visit to this earth, I'm very sure
He chooses names that end in *i*.

*[After a moment of silence, to the Flemish
Envoys.]*

What wait
You for? The truce is at an end.

CHIEF OF THE DUTCH ENVOYS.

States-general of the United Provinces,
Free people, Protestants like you, ask peace.

CROMWELL (*roughly*).

It is too late. Moreover, Parliament
Finds you too worldly in your politics,
And will not sign fraternal treaties with
Allies so vain and carnal-minded.

*[He makes a gesture and the Flemish Envoys
retire; then he appears to perceive for the
first time DON LUIS, who until this mo-
ment has been making ceaseless efforts to
attract his attention.]*

Ah,
My lord ambassador from Spain, good-day!
We did not see you.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*concealing his mortification with a profound obeisance*).

God be with your Highness!

We come, for lofty interests of state,
To beg of you a private interview.
We are divided by the Flemish war,
But you will find our king can treat with you.
He feels for you a most profound esteem,
In sign of which he sends the Golden Fleece.
[*The pages bearing the Golden Fleece approach.*]

CROMWELL (*rising with indignation*).

What words are these which you dare speak to
me,

The chief of England's old republicans?
That I should desecrate this contrite heart
With such a Pagan symbol of earth's lust?
Upon the breast of one who conquered Sodom
You would fasten a Grecian idol and
Rome's rosary? Away, abominations—
Base vanities and pomps! Balthasar and
Cromwell are not allies!

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*aside*).

The heretic!

[*Aloud.*] The Catholic king was first to welcome you
As chief of the Republic.

CROMWELL (*interrupting him*).

Did he think

By recognizing Cromwell's strength, to change
A tower of Zion to a sepulcher?
The Golden Fleece to me? Idolaters!

I'll leave to them their temple-theaters,
 Their puppet-priests. In grim hell let them
 seek

Their gods and their salvation. Hell-fire keep
 Their Golden Fleece as well as golden calf.

*[He pauses a moment, casting a haughty glance
 over the entire Spanish Embassy, after
 which he continues warmly :*

But I? Am I to be affronted thus?

Does this great brother save his envoy from
 My wrath? How does your master dare insult
 Me to my face by his ambassador!

'Twould be a great mischance for him. Now go;
 You are dismissed.

DON LUIS DE CARDENAS (*furiously*).

Farewell! Then it is war!
 War to eternity! *[He goes out with his Suite.*

MANCINI (*low to DUKE DE CRÉQUI*).

Spain rubbed him wrong.

DUKE DE CRÉQUI (*aside, looking at the Golden
 Fleece, which the pages are bearing away*).

That insult I sued humbly for!

CROMWELL (*low to STOUPE*).

Since France

Was here, I had to break with Spain, in public.
 Go, follow Cardenas, appease him, try
 To learn what are the plans which brought him
 here.

*[STOUPE exits. The great folding-doors are
 opened and an Usher appears.*

USHER.

My lady Protectress!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

It is my wife!

[*Dismissing those present by a gesture.*

Farewell, Sir Duke and gentlemen.

[*All make profound obeisances and go out through a side door.* THE EARL OF CARLISLE and WHITELOCKE re-conduct the *Embassador of France with great ceremony.* While they are going out, ELIZABETH BOURCHIER, wife of CROMWELL, enters, accompanied by MISTRESS FLEETWOOD, LADY FALCONBRIDGE, LADY CLEYPOLE, and LADY FRANCES, her daughters. They make deep courtesies to their father.

SCENE III

CROMWELL, ELIZABETH BOURCHIER, MISTRESS FLEETWOOD, *both in black, the latter affecting a Puritan simplicity*; LADY FALCONBRIDGE, *dressed with great elegance and richness*; LADY CLEYPOLE *wrapped up like a sick person—a very languid manner*; LADY FRANCES, *a very young girl, in white, with a veil*

CROMWELL (*to the Protectress*).

Good-day.

You are not looking well. Did you sleep ill?

ELIZABETH BOURCHIER.

I did not close an eyelid until dawn.
 'Tis certain I am not a friend to fasts.
 The queen's room, where I sleep, is much too
 large;
 That bed with crests of Stuarts and of Tudors,
 Its canopy of silver, posts of gold,
 Tall plumes, and that high railing which shuts
 me
 A prisoner within my royal cell,
 The velvet furniture, the golden vases—
 They are horrible dreams which kill my sleep.
 Besides, to know this palace is an art.
 I never shall learn how to walk about;
 I'm always lost, here in this grand White Hall,
 And in a royal chair I can't sit well.

CROMWELL.

Your fortune is a burden hard to bear!
 Each day a new complaint.

ELIZABETH.

It wearies you—

I know it; but it's true. I'd rather be
 In our old house at Cock-Pit than live here.
 [To MISTRESS FLEETWOOD.] Ten thousand
 times we would prefer our home
 At Huntingdon, my daughter, would we not?
 [To CROMWELL.] Those happy days! To get
 up with the sun,
 Then go into the orchard or the park,
 To let the children play out in the fields;
 And you and I go to the brewery.

CROMWELL.

Hush!

ELIZABETH.

Happy days when Cromwell was no one,
When I was comfortable and slept well.

CROMWELL.

Forget those common tastes.

ELIZABETH.

No; they are mine!

My infancy prepared me not for this;
Grandeur and I are not congenial friends.
And your long trains are troublesome. At the
Lord Mayor's banquet yesterday, I wept.
What pleasure to eat dinner with all London?
You looked unhappy too, my friend. Alas!
We used to sup so gayly at Cock-Pit.

CROMWELL.

My present rank—

ELIZABETH.

Think of your mother.

How this strange, gloomy grandeur troubled
her;
Those thoughts, not years, laid her within her
grave.

Counting the perils which surrounded you,
While you climbed up, her heart measured your
fall.

Each time that you had gained new victories
And London celebrated your success,
If to her deadened ear the wild sounds came,
The cannon, bells, the march of soldiery,

The people shouting in their mad delight,
 She would jump up and lift her anxious head,
 And turn to horror all the sounds of joy
 By shrieking, "Mercy, God! My son is dead!"

CROMWELL.

She sleeps within the tomb of kings to-day.

ELIZABETH.

Great satisfaction! Sleeps one better there?
 Knows she if you will ever reach her side?
 God grant it may be long ere then!

LADY CLEYPOLE (*with feeble voice*).

'Tis I

Who will precede you there, my father.

CROMWELL (*to LADY CLEYPOLE*).

Always

These thoughts of death, and always ill.

LADY CLEYPOLE.

Yes, father.

The strength I had is almost gone;
 I need the air and sunshine of the fields.
 This gloomy palace is a grave to me.
 Through these long corridors and the vast
 halls
 The chill of misery appalls my soul.
 I'll soon die here.

CROMWELL (*kissing her forehead*).

Ah, no, my child, not that.

Soon we will find your pleasant fields for you.
 Just wait a short time longer for me here.

MISTRESS FLEETWOOD (*sharply*).

Time to complete your plans and gain your throne.
That is your purpose! Frankly, is it not?
Fleetwood, my husband, will prevent it though.

CROMWELL.

My son-in-law?

MISTRESS FLEETWOOD.

He wants no crooked lines.
In a republic he will have no king.
And I agree with him upon that point.

CROMWELL.

My daughter, too.

LADY FALCONBRIDGE (*to* MISTRESS FLEETWOOD).

A curious thing to say!
Is not our father free? His throne is ours!
Why not become a king, if 'tis his will.
And why deny us the extreme delight
Of royal highness and princess of blood.

MISTRESS FLEETWOOD.

Such vanities do not appeal to me!
My heart is fixed on saving of lost souls.

LADY FALCONBRIDGE.

I love the Court, and see no reason why,
Since I've a lord for husband, I can't have
A father for a king.

MISTRESS FLEETWOOD.

Eve's pride, my sister,
Destroyed the first man.

LADY FALCONBRIDGE (*turning away with scorn*).

'Tis easy seen

Her husband is no lord!

CROMWELL (*vexed*).

Be silent. Hush!

For both of you, it would be sensible
To copy your young sister's gentleness.

[*To FRANCES, who stands absorbed, with her eyes fixed on the casement of Charles I.*

What are you thinking of, my child?

LADY FRANCES.

Ah, me!

My heart grows heavy in this sacred place.
Your sister, in whose care I've always lived,
Taught me respect for—the unfortunate.
And ever since I've lived within these walls,
I've felt sad shadows passing close by me.

CROMWELL.

What shadows, child?

LADY FRANCES.

Our Stuarts!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Ah, that name,

No matter where I go, reaches my heart.

LADY FRANCES.

'Twas here the martyr died.

CROMWELL.

Alas! my child.

LADY FRANCES (*indicating the casement at the back*).

That is the window, father, is it not,
Through which the king, whom England had
disowned,
Passed, when he left White-Hall for the last
time?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

My innocent young daughter, how you hurt
Your father! [*Enter THURLOE.*
Thurloe comes!

SCENE IV

The same. THURLOE, *bearing a portfolio marked with the arms of the Protector; Puritan costume*

THURLOE (*bowing*).

'Tis pressing work,
My lord.

CROMWELL (*to his wife*).

Your ladyship will pardon me?
Your Highness, I would be alone.

ELIZABETH.

To whom

Speak you?

CROMWELL.

Unto your Highness!

ELIZABETH.

Oh! to me?

I must entreat your pardon. In this grandeur

My poor self is obliterated. Yes,
 I'm lost in all this turmoil; much I fear
 These borrowed titles and my simple name
 Will never mix. My lady Protectress
 Will never find a friend in Mistress Cromwell.
 [*She goes out with her daughters; CROMWELL
 signs to the two Musketeers on duty to
 retire.*

SCENE V

CROMWELL, THURLOE. *While THURLOE
 spreads the papers out on the table,
 CROMWELL appears to be absorbed in a
 sad reverie; at last he breaks the silence
 with a great effort*

CROMWELL.

I am not happy, Thurloe!

THURLOE.

These ladies

Adore your Highness.

CROMWELL.

But five women—five!

I'd rather rule by absolute decree

Five cities, counties—nay, five kingdoms more.

THURLOE.

What! You who govern England, Europe too?

CROMWELL.

Mate a good house-wife with a master-mind!

I am a slave, my friend.

THURLOE.

You might, my lord—

CROMWELL.

No! Of my fate the equilibrium's spoiled.
Europe is on one side; upon the other
Is my wife.

THURLOE.

If I could change my place
For yours, a wife—

CROMWELL (*severely*).

You are extremely bold
To have such thoughts.

THURLOE (*terrified*).

My lord, believe me, I—

CROMWELL.

Enough; dismiss the subject! Come, what
news? [*He sits in the armchair.*

THURLOE (*taking up the papers*).

From Scotland: the grand Provost will sur-
render.
The entire North submits to the Protector.

CROMWELL.

Well!

THURLOE.

From Flanders: Spaniards now are ready
To capitulate. Dunkirk ere long will be
Delivered to the Lord Protector.

CROMWELL.

Well!

THURLOE.

From London: twelve flat boats are lying in
The Thames; they're loaded with the millions
which
Blake won from Portuguese on three galleons.

CROMWELL.

Go on!

THURLOE.

The Duke of Holstein begs acceptance
Of eight horses from Fresland, gray.

CROMWELL.

Go on!

THURLOE.

To show that if he welcomed Rupert, he repents,
His Grace, the Duke of Tuscany, whom Blake
Has seen, gives you the pay for twenty mules
In golden sequins.

CROMWELL.

Well!

THURLOE (*taking up another parchment, to
which a seal hangs by a green silk thread*).

The clerks of Oxford,
Your rivals, have named you for Chancellor
Of University.

[*Presenting a parchment to the Protector.*
Here's the diploma.

CROMWELL.

Well!

THURLOE (*searching among the papers*).

The Russian Emperor implores
A public sign of your good-will.

CROMWELL.

Go on!

THURLOE (*holding a letter with an anxious manner*).

My lord, I am informed by secret means,
There is a plot to murder you to-morrow.

CROMWELL.

Well!

THURLOE.

Concerned in the conspiracy
Are military chiefs and Cavaliers.

CROMWELL (*interrupting him with impatience*)
Go on!

THURLOE.

Do you not wish to know the details
Of their plans?

CROMWELL.

No, it is some fable. What
Remains?

THURLOE (*continuing*).

The marshal of the Polish diets—

CROMWELL (*interrupting him again*).
Indeed! No letters from Cologne?

THURLOE (*seeking among the dispatches*).
Yes, one.

CROMWELL.

From whom?

THURLOE.

Your agent, Manning, who's near Charles.

CROMWELL.

Give it to me.

[*Takes the letter and breaks the seal hastily.*]

The fifth. How slow they are!
It takes these letters twenty days.

[*Reads, and exclaims while reading,*
Ah, ha!

Sir Davenant, the fraud was delicate.

At night, the lights extinguished; how could
one

More honorably break one's word? It takes
A Papist for that sort of thing! What's this?
A royal message hidden in his hat!

A wise precaution, but I'm curious.

Tell Mr. Davenant I wish to see him.

He's lodging at The Siren, London Bridge.

[THURLOE *goes out to execute the order.*

We'll see which one his artifice will wreck.
Malevolents! The darkness where you plot,
And which you think so safe, is lighted by
My torch, which nothing can extinguish.

[THURLOE *re-enters.*

[TO THURLOE.] Well,

What did the Spanish envoy say?

THURLOE.

He offers
Calais, if you will help him at Dunkirk.

CROMWELL (*reflecting*).

Spain offers Calais, France gives me Dunkirk.
What lessens much the value of their gift
Is that Dunkirk belongs to Spain, and Calais
Is part of France. Each king most royally
Gives me a city in his foe's domains;
And that I may appreciate the gift,
Gives me the chance of winning it myself.

With France's king we must remain at peace.
Wherefore betray? The other offers less.

THURLOE (*continuing his report*).
The Protestants of Nismes implore your help,
As lately did the deputies from Vaud.

CROMWELL.
We'll write the cardinal-minister for them.
When will this Mazarin be tolerant?

THURLOE (*continuing*).
The Catholic town of Armagh has been seized
By Devereux; the chaplain Peters sends
This letter, evangelic, on the victory.
He writes, "Jehovah this day showed himself
Most friendly to the arms of Israel.
Armagh is taken; with the sword and fire
We have exterminated old and young;
Two thousand at the least are dead, and blood
Flows everywhere. I've come from church,
where I
Gave thanks to God."

CROMWELL (*with enthusiasm*).
Peters is a great saint.

THURLOE.
Shall those remaining of this race be spared?

CROMWELL.
Wherefore? No mercy to the Papists! No!
Among this hateful people let us be
A burning torch within a field of wheat.

THURLOE (*bowing*).
It is decreed.

CROMWELL.

There is a pulpit vacant
In Armagh. Peters shall fill it, for his words
Are eloquent.

THURLOE (*bows again, continuing his report*).

The Emperor wants to know
Wherefore you keep new armaments afloat,
Which are so well equipped?

CROMWELL (*sharply*).

Bid him attend
To festivals and leave warfare to me.
He has his aulic council and an eagle
With double head. What does he want of me?
To frighten me perhaps! Good Emperor,
Because he carries round on gala days
A painted globe of wood and says it is
The world? His thunder's always rumbling, but
It never strikes.

[*He signs to THURLOE to continue.*]

THURLOE.

From Colonel Titus, who
Was seized for libel.

CROMWELL.

Yes; what does he want?

THURLOE.

He wants his liberty; for nine long months he's
lain
Forgotten on his prison bed of straw.

CROMWELL.

Nine months! That is impossible.

THURLOE.

They seized
Him in October, we are now in June.
Count it yourself, my lord!

CROMWELL (*counting on his hand*).

Yes, you are right.

THURLOE.

In direst want the wretched man has lived,
Alone, naked and frozen, all this time.

CROMWELL.

Nine months! How fast time flies! [*A silence.*
What is the mind
Of Parliament's secret committee on
The present project?

THURLOE.

Nicholas, Goffe, Pride,
Purefoy, and Garland above all have spoken
Against you.

CROMWELL (*angrily*).

Yes, Garland the regicide.

THURLOE.

But they have fought their bitter fight in vain.
Majority of votes are ours; and Pembroke,
That ancient peer who trims to every wind,
Declares the crown belongs to you.

CROMWELL (*with contempt*).

Dull man!

THURLOE.

There's only one, John Birch, who hesitates;

Although he leans to the majority,
Some Bible scruple holds him back, and keeps
The matter still unsettled.

CROMWELL.

Something's due
Him at the Excise Office; speedy payment
Will relieve his mind—above all, if
The clerk should make an error in his favor.
But as for you, speak more respectfully,
I beg you, of the holy Bible.

THURLOE (*after bowing humbly*).

Fagg

Says your ambition moves him to oppose you.

CROMWELL.

I will make him sergeant of the city.

THURLOE.

And

Trenchard is discontented too.

CROMWELL.

A tithe

Of the estates of Montrose shall be his.

THURLOE.

Sir Gilbert Pickering, whom all can buy,
Is obstinate.

CROMWELL.

Make him Lord of Exchequer.

THURLOE.

Leave the rest unto me. I will attend
To all. To-day you will be humbly begged,
In name of Parliament, to wear the crown.

CROMWELL.

At last, elusive scepter, you are mine!
 I've climbed the mountain huge of shifting
 sands;
 My feet are on the top.

THURLOE.

You've reigned already
 Many years.

CROMWELL.

I have had authority,
 But I've not had the name. You smile, Thurloe;
 But you don't know the cavern which ambition
 Digs in the depths of human hearts, nor how
 She goads us on through grief and work and
 peril

Unto an end which seems a petty thing.
 It's hard to leave one's fortune incomplete.
 Then there's a luster, which no eye resists,
 About a king; since ancient days the words
King, majesty, have been magicians. How
 Can one be arbiter of earth and not
 Be king? The thing without the name! The
 power

Without the title! Empty show! Trust me,
 Rank and dominion travel hand-in-hand.

You cannot understand the rankling hurt
 Of climbing from the gutter to the top
 To there find something which eludes the grasp.
 Though but one word, that word is everything.

[*Here, CROMWELL, who has forgotten himself
 so far as to lean his elbow familiarly
 on THURLOE'S shoulder, suddenly turns*

around, as if awakening from a dream, to see a door concealed by tapestry, slowly opened; MANASSES-BEN-ISRAEL appears and pauses upon the threshold, casting a scrutinizing look around the room, then bows profoundly.

SCENE VI

CROMWELL; THURLOE; MANASSES - BEN - ISRAEL, *old Jewish rabbi, gray, ragged robes, hump-backed, keen eye under long gray eyebrows, broad and wrinkled forehead, twisted beard*

MANASSES (*bowing profoundly*).

God keep you, my good master, to the end.

CROMWELL.

It is the Jew Manasses.

[*To THURLOE.*] Finish your
Dispatches, Thurloe.

[*THURLOE sits at the large table.* CROMWELL
goes near to the Rabbi and speaks in a low voice.

What brings you?

MANASSES (*low*).

Fresh news!

A Swedish vessel filled with caroluses
Sent to the friends of ancient exiled kings
Is anchored at this moment in the Thames.

CROMWELL.

The flag is neutral. If you can contrive
To let me confiscate it skillfully,
One-half the booty shall belong to you.

MANASSES.

In truth? Then is the vessel yours, my lord.
Give me the help of a strong hand, if needed.

CROMWELL (*writes a few words on a paper,
which he hands to the Jew*).

Here is your talisman, my sorcerer;
Make haste! Come back and tell me the effect.

MANASSES.

Another word, my lord!

CROMWELL.

Go on!

MANASSES.

I ought
To tell you your son Richard is conspiring
With the Cavaliers.

CROMWELL.

My son! Richard!

MANASSES.

He has
Paid Clifford's debts; that is sufficient proof.

CROMWELL (*laughing*).

Your strong-box tells you tales of every one.
My son is foolish; he makes thoughtless friends;
That's all.

MANASSES.

To pay, and never count pistoles;
'Tis serious.

CROMWELL (*shrugging his shoulders*).
Go, now!

MANASSES.

In mercy, sire,
Since in my humble way I've served you well,
For recompense, open our synagogues,
Revoke the law against astrologers—

CROMWELL (*dismissing him with a gesture*).
We'll see!

MANASSES (*bowing to the earth*).

We humbly kiss your feet.

[*Aside.*] Vile Christians!

CROMWELL.

Depart in peace!

[*Aside.*] Base Jew, fit to string up
Between two dogs!

[MANASSES *goes out by the small door, which
closes after him.*

SCENE VII

CROMWELL, THURLOE

THURLOE.

Will not your Highness trust
Me now? This foreign ship, this money which



CROMWELL AND CARR.

—Victor Hugo, Vol. XIX., p. 122.

It brings to malcontents, the Jew's strange
 news—
 Is not all this in keeping with my words?
 Will you not see?

CROMWELL.
 See what?

THURLOE.
 These wicked plots,
 Of which a friendly warning gives me clew.
 I tremble at the little which we know.

CROMWELL.
 If every time such news had come to me,
 I'd racked my brains about it, spent my time
 In ferreting the mystery, my days,
 My nights, my life, would not have half sufficed!

THURLOE.
 This case seems threatening, my lord.

CROMWELL.
 For shame!
 Blush, Thurloe, at your foolish fright. I know
 Full many think my yoke is tyrannous,
 And certain generals will be loth to see
 In their equal to-day their future king.
 But, friend, the army's mine! As to the gold
 This Jew discovered, 'tis a present sent
 By Charles, and is most welcome at this hour,
 When we need much a coronation fund.
 Be easy! Think of all the false alarms
 Which have tormented our poor brains. These
 plots

Are but the tricks of jealous malcontents,
 Whose power's reduced to making fun of us.
 [*Noise of footsteps. CROMWELL looks out
 through a side gallery.*]

The courtiers come, shining with festive looks.
 I'm going out. I'll leave you here to cope
 With them.

[*He goes out through the small door.*]

SCENE VIII

THURLOE, WHITELOCKE; WALLER, *poet of the
 day*; SERGEANT MAYNARD, *in his robes*;
 COLONEL JEPHSON, *in uniform*; COLONEL
 GRACE, *in uniform*; SIR WILLIAM MUR-
 RAY, *ancient court dress*; MR. WILLIAM
 LENTHALL, *formerly Speaker of Parlia-
 ment*; LORD BROGHILL, *in court dress*;
 CARR. CARR arrives the last, and pauses
*in the background, casting a scandalized
 glance around; the others talk without
 perceiving him*

WHITELOCKE (*to THURLOE*)

His Highness is away?

THURLOE.

He is.

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*to THURLOE*).

I wanted to remind him of my rights.

SERGEANT MAYNARD (*to THURLOE*).

I came for something most important.

COLONEL JEPHSON (*to THURLOE*).

Weighty

Affairs have brought me here!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to THURLOE*).

This petition which

I here present his lordship begs an office
In his future court.

WALLER (*to THURLOE*).

It has been long my rule

Not to molest his Highness, but—
[*They speak with great rapidity and all together; THURLOE tries in vain to make himself heard and to free himself from their importunities.*]

CARR (*in a loud voice, his eyes raised to the ceiling*).

Behold

The new made Sodom!

[*All turn with surprise and fix their eyes upon CARR, who stands motionless, his arms folded across his breast.*]

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

What strange animal

Is this?

CARR (*solemnly*).

It is a man. I realize
His face is unfamiliar in this den,
Which Baal lords with his vile countenance.
Here Pagans, actors, drunkards, wolves, and
hawks,
Winged serpents, dragons with a thousand heads,
Blasphemers, vultures, basilisks abound!

WALLER (*laughing*).

If you mean these to be our portraits, thanks,
Sir man!

CARR (*becoming animated*).

You boon-companions of the devil,
Ashes are hidden in the apple—eat!
Dead are the people; curse of Israel,
Devour their flesh—flesh of the saints elect;
Flesh of the strong, the warriors of the Lord;
Flesh of the steeds!

WALLER (*laughing more heartily*).

It is no vulgar meal.

We are o'erwhelmed with honor to be told
That we are basilisks and eat horse-flesh.

[*General laugh among the courtiers.*]

CARR (*furious*).

Laugh, hellish lips!

WALLER (*ironically*).

Politeness is so pleasant!

ALL.

Put him outside!

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*going up to CARR and
trying to lead him out*).

Good fellow, if his Highness—

[*They all try to get him out; CARR resists.*]

CARR.

If he should come, I would not have to go.
You would!

WHITELOCKE.

He is a saint.

WALLER.

He is a fool.

CARR.

You all are drunk—drunk with vain pride and
 sin,
 Drunk with the dregs of wine; and it is you
 Who call my wisdom folly!

LORD BROGHILL.

His Highness
 Will soon appear.

CARR.

It is for him I wait.

LORD BROGHILL.

Wherefore, in Heaven's name?

CARR.

I have some words
 To tell this Ichabod who's called "Highness."

LORD BROGHILL.

You'd better leave your message, sir, with me;
 I will deliver it. My power at Court—
 I'm Lord Broghill.

CARR (*bitterly*).

How Oliver is changed!

An old republican's a blot upon
 His retinue. Broghill, a Cavalier,
 Protects me at his court.

THURLOE (*who has watched CARR with atten-
 tion, aside*).

I know this man;

His words lack sense, but though he seems a fool
I think the Tower of London more than Bedlam
Is his affair. I'll find his Highness.

[*He goes out.*]

SCENE IX

The same, except THURLOE

LORD BROGHILL (*with protecting manner to
CARR*).

Yes,

I'll answer for you, friend, but how—

CARR (*with a sad smile*).

At Zion,

'Twas thus the devil bribed the Son of Man.

WHITELOCKE.

He is unmanageable.

WALLER.

Yes, past cure.

ALL.

Well, never mind. Let's put him out.

[*They advance again toward CARR, who looks
at them firmly.*]

CARR.

Go back!

I tell you, I must speak to him, this man,
This Judas Maccabæus who became
Judas Iscariot.

LORD BROGHILL.
You fool!

WALLER.
That is
A clever phrase to indicate Cromwell.

CARR.
Ere Heaven's fire consumes this Sodom, I,
An angel, have been sent to exhort Lot.

WALLER (*laughing*).
You dare to say God's angels are as sheared
As you!

COLONEL JEPHSON (*laughing*).
I'm glad to see you are promoted, friend;
From man you've climbed to angel.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to CARR, pushing him*).
Come, sir, come;
You can't annoy his Highness with your visions.
[*To the others.*] He will distract him from our
own affairs. [*Rudely to CARR.*]
Come, now, get out!

COLONEL JEPHSON.
Go out!

SERGEANT MAYNARD.
Out, sir!

ALL.
Come, come;
Move on!

CARR (*gravely*).
Cease troubling me with words like these.

SERGEANT MAYNARD.

His lordship will command you to the Tower.
[CARR *looks at him and shrugs his shoulders.*

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*indicating CARR'S
Puritan costume*).

Wear you a costume which befits the Court?

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL.

His lordship would demean himself to talk
To you.

ALL.

Go out!

[*They throw themselves upon CARR and try
to drag him out.*

CARR (*struggling, with loud lamentation*).

God of our warriors!

O Sabaoth, cast down thine eyes on me!

ALL (*pushing him*).

Go out!

CARR (*continuing his invocations and lifting
his eyes to heaven*).

I struggle with Leviathan

In thy behalf.

[CROMWELL *enters, accompanied by THURLOE:*
all pause, uncover, and bow to the earth.
CARR *replaces his hat, which fell off in the
struggle, and re-assumes his austere and
ecstatic attitude.*

CROMWELL (*looking at CARR with surprise*).

'Tis Carr, the independent.

[*To the others with a disdainful gesture.*

Retire at once! [*Aside.*] Oh, mystery!
 [*They are all amazed, and go out after making profound obeisances. CARR remains motionless.*]

WALLER (*low to MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL, indicating CARR*).

He said
 It would be so. We'll leave Lot with the angel.

SCENE X

CARR, CROMWELL. CROMWELL, *alone with CARR, looks at him for some time in silence, with a severe and threatening expression. CARR, calm and fearless, with his arms folded across his chest, looks the Protector full in the eyes, without flinching. At last CROMWELL speaks haughtily*

CROMWELL.

Long Parliament put you in prison; what
 Has brought you out?

CARR.

Treason has brought me out.

CROMWELL (*astounded and alarmed*).
 What do you say?

[*Aside.*] No doubt his mind is gone.

CARR (*dreamily*).

I grieved the high assembly of the saints.

Now we are all proscribed beneath thy law.
I, culpable, by them: they, innocent,
By you.

CROMWELL.

Since you approve your punishment,
Who broke your chains?

CARR (*shrugging his shoulders*).

I tell you, treachery!
They dragged me, blinded, to another crime;
I saw the trap in time.

CROMWELL.

What trap?

CARR.

Baal

Is born again.

CROMWELL.

Explain!

CARR (*seats himself in an armchair*).

Attend me well:

A dark plot is afoot.

[*To CROMWELL, who has remained standing and uncovered.*

Put on your hat:

[*Pointing to THURLOE'S stool.*

Sit down.

[*CROMWELL hesitates a moment with vexation, then covers his head and sits on the stool.*

Above all, do not interrupt.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

These airs, my friend, would cost you dear enough,
At any other time.

CARR (*with solemn gentleness*).

Although Cromwell

Keeps no account of crimes, although he feels
For scores of victims no pang of remorse,
Though ceaselessly he joins, in these dark days,
Hypocrisy to schism, ruse to rage—

CROMWELL (*indignantly rising*).

Sir—

CARR.

You are interrupting!

[CROMWELL *re-seats himself with an air of enforced resignation*; CARR *continues*.

Yes, although

He lives with Moabites in Egypt-land,
With Babylonians, Pagans, Arians;
Though he does all for self, for Israel naught;
Though he repels the saints, and gives himself
To Amalekites, to Ammonites, to Edomites;
Although he worships Dagon, Astaroth,
And Elim; though the ancient serpent be
His dearest friend; although defying God
He boldly trod on people's rights, dispersed
The Parliament which Zion had evoked,
And to Christ's brethren shouted "Racca!" No,
In spite of all these crimes I cannot think
He has so hard a heart or black a soul,
Is so far lost from grace, that he'll refuse
To openly avow in Israel's sight
That for this English nation, bleeding, torn,
Upon Job's dung-hill dragging out its sores,
The greatest blessing it could ask of fate,
The noblest joy it e'er could hope to feel,
Would be your death, Cromwell!

CROMWELL (*starting back*).

My death, you say?

CARR (*with great gentleness*).

You interrupt me all the time. Come, come!
The incense of a corrupt world drugs you!
Judge not all things by selfish interest.
Let's argue without anger. A great good,
A wondrous benefit your death would be;
Admit it.

CROMWELL (*with rapidly increasing anger*).
What temerity!

CARR (*imperturbably*).

I am

So well convinced of it myself, that in
This aim I always carry underneath
My cloak this dagger, waiting for your time
To come.

[*He draws a long dagger from his breast and
presents it to the Protector.*]

CROMWELL (*starting back with horror*).

A dagger! An assassin! Ho!

What ho!

[*To CARR.*] At least, good Carr—

[*Aside.*] Thank God! I wear

A stout cuirass.

CARR (*replacing the dagger under his coat*).

Fear nothing. Do not call.

CROMWELL (*terrified*).

Hell-fire!

CARR.

The man who kills a tyrant does
Not show his knife; your hour is not yet come.
Be easy: I have come to save your head
From vengeful daggers much less pure than
mine.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What is he driving at?

CARR.

Sit down again.

Your life's more sacred at this hour to me
Than is the flesh of swine to thirsty hind,
Than were the bones of Jonah to the whale,
Whose gaping jaws preserved him from the
flood.

[CROMWELL *returns and seats himself, casting
a look of deep defiance and curiosity at*

CARR.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The shortest way will be to let him talk.

CARR.

Conspiracy assails you! Understand,
If you alone were to be sacrificed
I would not waste my breath in warning you;
I hope you do me greater justice still,
And feel I would assist the saints with pride.
But Israel is what I want to save.
And if you must be saved as well, Amen!

CROMWELL.

Is this plot earnest? Know you where they
meet?

CARR.

I come from them.

CROMWELL.

Who freed you from the Tower?

CARR.

Prepare to tremble; 'twas Barkstead.

CROMWELL.

The traitor!

And yet he signed the sentence of the King.

CARR.

The hope of pardon won him back.

CROMWELL.

'Tis to

Restore the Stuarts?

CARR.

When I went at dawn

To meet these people, I confess I hoped

Deliverance to Israel meant death

To you.

CROMWELL.

Thanks!

CARR.

'Twould give back to Parliament

The power your despotism had destroyed.

But hardly there, I saw a Philistine,

In velvet doublet slashed with satin. Three

There were of these. The chief of the cabal

Sang quatrains to me, briefs and bulls.

CROMWELL.

Sang quatrains?

CARR.

Yes, a new name for Pagan psalms. Soon came
 The saints and pious citizens; but they, bewitched
 By all this heathen glamour, smiling looked
 Upon the demons, who with angels moved.
 The demons cried, "Death unto Cromwell!" loud,
 And in low tones said, "Profit by their wars;
 Gomorrah shall give place to Babylon,
 The roofs of sycamore to cedar wood,
 Bricks unto stones; Dor shall succeed to Tyre,
 The yoke follow the bit; to brazen rod
 Succeed the iron scepter."

CROMWELL.

Charles the Second
 After Cromwell—eh, friend?

CARR.

It is their dream.
 But Jacob will not let them kill his ox
 With his own ax unless he gets his share!
 He'll not have Cromwell slaughtered for the
 Stuarts.
 No! However bad you are, you're not so bad
 As is this Herod, royal debauchee,
 This parasital mistletoe torn from
 Our ancient oak! Frustrate, therefore, their
 plot,
 Which I reveal to you.

CROMWELL (*striking him on the shoulder*).

I'm grateful, friend!
 Your words are timely.
 [*Aside.*] Thurloe was not wrong.

[*To CARR, with caressing tone.*] The factions
of the King and Parliament
Are leagued against me: name the Royalists.

CARR.

Think you I kept account of them? I care
For these accursèd Satans just as much
As for the straw I slept on seven years.
However, I remember Ormond's name,
And Rochester's.

CROMWELL (*seizing eagerly a paper and pen*).

You're sure? In London! They!

[*To CARR.*] Please make another effort.

[*He places himself opposite to CARR and interrogates him with look and gesture.*

CARR (*slowly and after much reflection*).

Sedley.

CROMWELL (*writing*).

Good!

CARR.

Lord Drogheda, and Clifford. Roseberry—

CROMWELL (*writing*).

The libertines!

[*Approaching CARR with increased gentleness and friendliness.*

What popular chiefs were there?

CARR (*starting back indignantly*).

No more! Think you I would deliver up
Our saints, the sinews of our heart? Not if
You offered me ten thousand golden shekels,
As to the Witch of Endor did King Saul;
Not if you commanded eunuchs to essay

The sharpness of their swords upon my neck;
 No, not if you should place me for refusing
 Like Daniel in the lion's den; not if
 You should kindle a fire bituminous
 Ten times more ardent than has ever glowed,
 And I, like Ananias, should behold
 The lurid flames rise, tower-like, around,
 Gilding the inundated homes of vice,
 And overtopping scaffolds to the height
 Of cubits, thirty-nine—

CROMWELL.

Pray, calm yourself.

CARR.

No, never! should you give the plains of Thebes,
 And those near by, the Tigris, Lebanon,
 Tyre with the golden gates, Ecbatana
 Built of well squarèd stones, a thousand oxen,
 Lemons from the Egyptian Nile, a throne,
 The magic art which makes fire leap from floods,
 And with one call brings from the ends of earth
 Across the open sky and its blue seas
 The fly from Egypt and the Assur bee!
 Not if you made me colonel of the army!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

A fatal thing, to open mouths long shut.

Oh, try it not!

[*To CARR, extending his hand.*] Carr, we
 have long been friends.

God placed us like two milestones in His field.

CARR.

You, for a milestone have moved fast.

CROMWELL.

To-day,
You've saved me from a danger imminent.
I'll not forget it. Cromwell's rescuer!

CARR (*abruptly*).
Do not insult me; I saved Israel.

CROMWELL (*aside*).
Sectarian arrogant, I'll deal with you!
On my heights must I kiss the hand which
wounds?
[*Very humbly, to CARR*] What am I? But a
worm upon the earth.

CARR.
Yes, we agree on that. In sight of God
You're nothing but a worm, like Attila.
For us, you are a serpent, since you wish
The crown.

CROMWELL (*with tears in his eyes*).
How you misjudge me! Pity me.
This purple decks an ulcerated heart.

CARR (*laughing bitterly*).
O God of Jacob, hear this Nimrod wail!

CROMWELL (*with an air of great grief*).
I merit condemnation from the saints.

CARR.
Fear not; through your own flesh you will
atone.

CROMWELL (*surprised*).
What do you mean by that?

CARR (*triumphantly*).

There's one more name
Which you can add unto your list. But why
Reveal it? Crime is disciplined by vice.
[CROMWELL, *whose suspicions are aroused by
this reticence, approaches CARR eagerly.*

CROMWELL.

What name? Tell me this name! For this last
word
You can demand what price you will.

CARR (*as if suddenly inspired with an idea*).
In truth!

You'll keep your promise?

CROMWELL.

Sacred as an oath.

CARR.

For certain price I can reveal this sore.

CROMWELL (*aside, with scornful satisfaction*).

To him who flatters them, or him who pays,
All these Republicans at heart belong.
Their virtues made of wax melt near my sun.
[*Aloud.*] What do you ask, my brother? Title,
grade,
Domain?

CARR.

Hein?

CROMWELL.

Speak! What can I do for you?

CARR.

This: abdicate!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Incorrigible man!

[*Aloud, after an instant's reflection.*

To abdicate, my friend? Am I a king?

CARR.

A subterfuge! You will not keep your word!

CROMWELL (*confused*).

Why not?

CARR.

You see yourself, you hesitate.

CROMWELL (*sighing*).

Alas! what violence I've done myself

To keep this power; it has been my cross.

CARR (*shaking his head*).

You don't improve. 'Tis easier for a camel
To travel through a needle's eye, or through
An eel's throat for Leviathan to slip,
Than for the great and rich to enter heaven.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What a fanatic!

CARR (*aside*).

Hypocrite!

[*To CROMWELL.*] You waste
Your strength in captious words like these.

CROMWELL (*with contrite air*).

Then hear!

I own my power is arbitrary, wrong,
But in all Judah, Gad, and Issachar
There's no one whom it crushes like myself.
I hate these vanities enough to fly

To catacombs, these words as vacuous
 As tombs, this throne, this scepter, these vain
 honors
 Which Charles has left behind him, these false
 gods
 Which are not Alpha and not Omega.
 But am I right to cast back selfishly
 This burden on a nation which I love?
 To yield, before the four and twenty old
 Men come to rule with the four animals?
 Go find St. John and Selden, jurisconsults,
 Judges and doctors of religion; ask
 Of them to form a plan of government
 Which will allow me to retire at once.
 Are you content?

CARR (*shaking his head*).

Not too much so. These doctors
 Give but vexing answers to one's prayers.
 I hate to leave you, though, unsatisfied.

CROMWELL (*with eagerness*).

Reveal the other enemy. Tell me
 His name.

CARR.

'Tis Richard Cromwell.

CROMWELL (*sadly*).

Mine own son!

CARR (*imperturbably*).

Himself. Are you content?

CROMWELL (*absorbed in painful reflection*).

Thus, blasphemy
 And vice have led him on to parricide.

The Jew was right! 'Tis Heaven's punishment.
I was my king's assassin; now my son
Turns on his father!

CARR.

Yes, it is the law.

The viper breeds a viper. It is hard
To recognize a felon in one's son.
To be no David, yet have Absalom.
As to Charles' death, which you call your great
crime,
It is your one act saintly, grand, and true,
By which you have redeemed your sinful ways.
It is the noblest part of your whole life.

CROMWELL (*without hearing him*).

My son, whom I thought frivolous and weak,
Light as a bird who sings and flies away—
He plots my death!
[*Earnestly to CARR, grasping his hand.*] My
friend, are you quite sure
'Twas Richard?

CARR.

He was with the rest to-day.

CROMWELL.

Where was this meeting?

CARR.

Inn of the Three Cranes.

CROMWELL.

What did he say?

CARR.

Things faded from my mind.

He sang, laughed a great deal, and swore he'd
paid
Lord Clifford's debts.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Thus said the wretched Jew.

CARR.

But—this you'll not believe—I saw him drink
To Herod's health!

CROMWELL.

What Herod?

CARR.

Yes, Balthasar.

CROMWELL.

What?

CARR.

To Pharaoh.

CROMWELL.

Will you be plain?

CARR.

The anti-Christ, who's called the King of Scot-
land—
To Charles the Second.

CROMWELL (*thoughtfully*).

What debauchery!

To drink his health was drinking to my death.
A festival of noisy laughs and songs;
Not one regret! O wanton parricide!
Some day, on your pale brow will it be Cain
Or Sardanapalus that is written?

CARR.

Both.

[THURLOE enters; he approaches CROMWELL with an air of mystery.

THURLOE (*low to CROMWELL*).

Sir Richard Willis waits, my lord.

[As soon as he perceives THURLOE, CROMWELL resumes his serene expression.

CROMWELL.

'Tis well.

[*Aside.*] He will explain all this to me.

[*To THURLOE.*] I go.

THURLOE (*indicating the large door through which the courtiers passed out*).

These gentlemen who wait about the door,
May they not enter?

CROMWELL.

Yes, since I go out.

[*Aside.*] Compose ourself; serenity repays.

My heart is flesh, but let my brow be bronze.

[The courtiers re-enter conducted by THURLOE; they salute CROMWELL, who returns their greeting by a gesture, and addresses himself to CARR.

CROMWELL (*taking CARR'S hand*).

My thanks to you, but not farewell. Join us.

A place of honor will be found for you.

My power is limitless in its good-will.

[He goes out with THURLOE; all bow except CARR.

CARR (*remaining alone, in front*).
 'Tis in this fashion that he abdicates.
 Thrice damned usurper!

SCENE XI

CARR, WHITELOCKE, WALLER, SERGEANT MAYNARD, COLONEL JEPHSON, COLONEL GRACE, SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL, LORD BROGHILL. *All the courtiers watch CROMWELL'S exit with disappointment, and gaze upon CARR with envy and surprise*

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to the other courtiers in the back*).

With what graciousness
 His Highness spoke to that man. What great
 favor
 He has shown him.

CARR (*alone at front of stage*).
 Rascality!

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL.

He deigned

To smile—

CARR.
 Insulting!

COLONEL JEPHSON.

What an honor!

CARR.

Shame.

Where shall I find revenge?

WALLER.

Some favorite.

CARR.

I am his victim. This base tyrant strikes
At every one—even at me.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

'Twas all

For him!

CARR.

He wants my riches, wants my virtue!
A servant to Nebuchadnezzar? I?
Live at his court? What, like a linen fine,
Once snow-white, but stained by temple-venders
With their saffron, purple, and indigo,
Shall I, called Carr, change to Abednego?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*examining* CARR).

He has a certain air of nobleness:
Our judgment was at fault.

CARR.

A satrap, I?

What does this Cromwell think of me?

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*to* SIR WILLIAM
MURRAY).

He's high

In favor.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to* MR. WILLIAM
LENTHALL).

Yes, a noble, certainly—
Although his costume is not quite correct.

CARR.

The traitor!

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*aside*).

Such great friendliness might serve
 Petitioners whom he would second. Ah,
 If he would use his power for me! Why not?
 He has the master's ear. My lord,
 [*Approaching CARR with a profound saluta-
 tion.*

Oh, deign,
 Out of your unexampled graciousness,
 To speak for me, to him whom we both know,
 One of those charming words you speak so well.
 I ought to be a lord. I'm master of
 The roles; and if your condescending heart—

CARR (*opening his astonished eyes*).
 Upon the willows I have hung my harp.
 I do not sing my country's holy songs
 To Babylonians who've invaded us.
 [*As soon as they perceive LENTHALL'S purpose,
 all the courtiers rush precipitately upon
 CARR and surround him.*

SERGEANT MAYNARD.

To our petitions—

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*discouraged to MAY-
 NARD*).

He bears us ill-will.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*breaking through the
 crowd*).

His lordship cannot recommend us all.
 Be my protector. We're to have a king,
 And I can be of greatest use to him.
 I am a noble Scotchman; in my youth

I was much honored by the Prince of Wales.
 Each time, surrendering to an evil thought,
 His royal Highness did commit a sin,
 'Twas I who had the glorious privilege
 Of bearing all the blows which were his due.

CARR (*with concentrated indignation*).

Poor sycophant, who doubly criminal,
 Vile with the Stuarts, is with Cromwell vile.
 Like Mephibosheth, crooked on both legs.

WALLER (*presenting a paper to CARR*).

I'm Waller, please your lordship; I have made
 A poem on the galleons won from Spain.

CARR (*between his teeth*).

For gold you wrote, and you are paid by gold.
 Poor worshiper of Noll.

COLONEL JEPHSON (*to CARR*).

Pray, speak my name
 Unto his Highness. Colonel Jephson, please.
 My mother was a countess. I would be
 A member of the House of Peers.

SERGEANT MAYNARD.

Inform

His lordship how much I have lost for him.
 George Cony, victim of illegal tax,
 Chose me for counsel. I am very poor,
 Yet I refused.

CARR (*aside*).

All their discourse is filled
 With venom of the asp and dragon's gall.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to CARR*).

Grant me your name at bottom of this page.

CARR (*rudely*).

Go ask Beelzebub to sign your scrawl.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

My lord is vexed—

[*To the others.*] 'Tis you who importune him.

WALLER (*to CARR*).

I much desire an office, please your lordship.

CARR.

In the lunatic asylum.

COLONEL GRACE.

Good! enough!

That is the place for poets.

[*To CARR.*] Please indorse

My application—

CARR.

No, sir, I will not.

In Noah's ark were not more animals.

COLONEL JEPHSON.

'Twas I who first proposed in Parliament

To make our Cromwell king—

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Your words, my lord—

CARR (*furiously*).

My lord—your lordship— What bedlam of
speech!

The clank of chains is sweet compared to this.

A jailer's pleasanter than Baal's priests,

The Tower of London better than this Babel.
I will go back to prison. Hell confound
These men!

[*He forces a way through the crowd of courtiers and exits.*]

SCENE XII

The same, except CARR; afterward THURLOE

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

He spoke about the towers of London
And of Babel.

SERGEANT MAYNARD.

What! The Protector's friend
Says he is going back to prison!

WALLER.

Fool—

That's all he is.

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL.

Why does his Highness treat
With so much kindness a demoniac?

[*THURLOE enters.*]

THURLOE (*bowing*).

The Lord Protector sends this word to you:
His levee can't be held to-day.

COLONEL JEPHSON.

'Tis strange

He can receive this fool and no one else.

[*They go out with a discontented air; as soon as they have all left, the door concealed by draperies, opens. CROMWELL enters and gazes carefully around.*

SCENE XIII

CROMWELL, SIR RICHARD WILLIS

CROMWELL (*turning to the opened door*).
They're gone; come in. Since you must not be
seen

You can go out this way.

[*SIR RICHARD WILLIS appears; he is enveloped in a cloak, and wears a hat which conceals his face; there is no longer any appearance of suffering or of lameness about him. CROMWELL and he start to cross the stage. CROMWELL stops abruptly.*

CROMWELL (*clasping his hands*).

I cannot doubt—

My eldest son!

SIR RICHARD.

He drank Charles Stuart's health.
E'en the conspirators, his bosom friends,
Your enemies, called it foolhardy.

CROMWELL.

Strange!
When to a throne I've raised his destiny.
Repeat the names of the false Puritans.

SIR RICHARD.

First, Lambert.

CROMWELL (*with a scornful laugh*).

That's a rankling thought to me;
To plot so well, and choose so base a chief!
By chance more oft than genius, empire goes.
Vitellius many times; a Cæsar once.
Amazing that a crowd's degraded hands
Must always on its great achievements
Place some petty mark. Rome had for standard
What? A stack of hay.

[*To WILLIS.*] Go on!

SIR RICHARD.

Ludlow.

CROMWELL.

A simple man who'll not go far; a brute
And not a Brutus.

SIR RICHARD.

Syndercomb, Barebone—

[*As WILLIS speaks the names, CROMWELL follows them on a list which he holds.*]

CROMWELL.

I think he's my upholsterer. A fool.

SIR RICHARD.

Joyce—

CROMWELL.

Clown!

SIR RICHARD.

And Overton.

CROMWELL.

The wit.

SIR RICHARD.

The next

Is Harrison.

CROMWELL.

A thief.

SIR RICHARD.

And Wildman,

CROMWELL.

Dolt,

Who dictates well turned phrases against me
 Unto his valet. This seems like a farce.

SIR RICHARD.

A certain Carr—

CROMWELL.

I know him.

SIR RICHARD.

Plinlimmon,

And Garland.

CROMWELL.

Plinlimmon, you say?

SIR RICHARD.

And Barkstead,

One of the King's executioners.

CROMWELL (*with a violent start*).

Whom are you speaking to?

SIR RICHARD (*bowing with great confusion*).

Your pardon, sire,

The habit's old—acquired in other days.
 Such words cannot affect your Majesty.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

His flattery adds venom to the sting.

An awkward man.

[*Aloud.*] Enough.

[*Showing the list.*] Are these the names
Of all the Puritans?

SIR RICHARD.

Yes, sire.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

We'll make

Inquiries.

[*To WILLIS.*] Now the Cavaliers.

SIR RICHARD.

My sire,

It was agreed I should not give their names.

They are old friends; I cannot ruin them.

Besides, they are all watched; they can't escape.

CROMWELL.

'Tis well. [*Aside.*] All traitors have their
scruples.

[*Aloud.*] Yes;

Respect the secrets of your comrades—

[*Aside.*] Since

I have their names. What very different men

Have made these lists! Willis gave Puritans;

Carr gave the Royalists.

SIR RICHARD.

You'll not condemn

Them, sire, to death. You promise? On my
honor,

My remorse would be too burdensome.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

His honor!

SIR RICHARD.

For I am doing them a service, sire,
And in advance entreat your clemency.
I have revealed their plot; 'tis so unwise!
But if I play the traitor, 'tis because
I am their friend.

CROMWELL.

Your salary is raised
Two hundred pounds.
[*Between his teeth.*] Of your own party's
blood,
Which you now shed for me, that is the price.
O tiger cat, who flatters, then devours,
And sells his friends out of humanity.

SIR RICHARD (*who only hears the last word*).
Yes, sire, humanity.

CROMWELL (*opening his portfolio and taking
out a paper which he gives to him*).
Here is the draft.

SIR RICHARD (*receiving it with a low bow*).
Upon the privy purse as usual, sire?

CROMWELL (*making an affirmative sign*).
Yes. By the way, did you see Davenant?—
Under the Stuarts, laureate. He comes
From Germany.

SIR RICHARD.

I saw not such a man,
My prince.

CROMWELL.

He brought a letter—from some one,
To Ormond.

SIR RICHARD.

I saw nothing given to
The marquis, yet I kept a faithful watch.
He was not one of the conspirators.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Weak instrument! I will see Davenant
Myself.

[ROCHESTER *appears in the background, wearing the costume of a Puritan minister.*

SCENE XIV

CROMWELL, SIR RICHARD WILLIS, LORD
ROCHESTER

LORD ROCHESTER (*at the back of the hall*).

I'm here. Let me repeat my lesson.
When one comes from Milton one must apply
A double dose of Puritanic style.
So far so good; thanks be to Davenant,
And Milton whom he fools, I'll be Noll's chaplain
Within an hour. If Satan calls me home
To-day, he'll take no less a personage
Than Oliver's own chaplain. Here begins
The tragi-comedy, Wilmot, my friend.
Thrust thy bold head into the lion's jaws,
And without murmuring, wear for thy King
This hat, and these cloth stockings which offend
The skin. You shall see Frances.

[*He here perceives CROMWELL and WILLIS, who while he has been talking, have been absorbed in private conversation.*

Who are these?

SIR RICHARD (*to CROMWELL*).

A Swedish brig transports the money here;
The chancellor assured me in his letter
That a Jew has promised them large credit.

LORD ROCHESTER (*in the background*).

What! They correspond with my Lord Hyde?
Might they—

CROMWELL (*to RICHARD WILLIS*).

Return unto the Tower of London,
Lest we should arouse suspicion.

LORD ROCHESTER (*still in the same place*).

What is that?

This is most curious!

SIR RICHARD (*to CROMWELL*).

Your Majesty

Knows the extent of my devotion.

LORD ROCHESTER (*still unseen*).

Strange!

“Your Majesty”—“devotion.” Cavaliers!
The faithful here?

CROMWELL (*to WILLIS, as they go toward the door*).

Look out for sentinels.

If you are seen all will be compromised.

[*They go out.*

LORD ROCHESTER (*alone*).

Most wonderful! It is—it must be true!
King Charles's friends are rash to come
To such a place as this to talk affairs,
Conspire in Cromwell's home. Audacity!

[*Looking out into the gallery.*

Now one is coming back. I'll frighten him.
I'll make him feel how he exposes us.
I'll hide.

[*He hides behind one of the pillars of the hall.* CROMWELL *re-enters*.

SCENE XV

LORD ROCHESTER, CROMWELL

CROMWELL (*without seeing ROCHESTER*).

Man plans and God accomplishes.
I thought I was in port, calm, sheltered, safe,
And here I am amid a raging sea
Of treachery. My head is on the dice
Once more. Come, courage! Face the final
storm.

Strike one last blow to paralyze thy foes.
Crush all resistance. England needs a king.

LORD ROCHESTER (*from behind the pillar*).
Upon my soul, a rampant Royalist!

CROMWELL.

Cast nets around them, follow in their tract,
Surround their feet with chains invisible,
Delude them, watch them; they shall not escape.

LORD ROCHESTER.

He dooms Cromwell and all his family.

CROMWELL.

Let them all die!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Except his daughter, please.

CROMWELL (*plunged in a somber reverie*).

What dost thou want, Cromwell? A throne?

What for?

Art Bourbon, Stuart, or Plantagenet?

Art one of those strange mortals who are born,

Thanks to a troop of ancestors, to view

One part of earth as their own sovereign right?

What scepter has not shivered 'neath thy
weight,

Thou warrior, and what crown is big enough

For thy broad brow? Thou son of destiny,

A king? The future races would account

Thy reign as one of thine adventures, and

Thy house—it would be called thy dynasty.

LORD ROCHESTER.

He's for the house of Stuart, certainly.

CROMWELL (*continuing*).

A king of Parliament! Dead bodies

For ascending steps! Is that the way

One mounts a throne legitimate? Art thou

Not tired of walking on so far, my friend?

This scepter, does it hide some magic charm?

Behold! the universe obeys thy law;

It lies in thy right hand, and it is naught.

The chariot of thy fortune rolls in strength,
 And splashes sovereigns with royal blood;
 In war triumphant, powerful in peace—
 All this is nothing, since thou hast no throne!
 Oh, base ambition!

LORD ROCHESTER.

He treats Cromwell ill.

CROMWELL.

And when thou hast this English throne and
 ten
 More thrones, what wilt thou do with them?
 On what
 Will thy next fancy fall? Must one
 Not have some object for his hopes, always,
 Poor fool!

LORD ROCHESTER.

If the Protector heard these things!

CROMWELL.

What is a throne? A stage beneath a dais—
 Some rough-hewn boards, which catch the
 public eye.
 It changes names according to its cloth.
 'Tis black—a scaffold! Velvet—'tis a throne.

LORD ROCHESTER.

A wise man!

CROMWELL.

And is that thy great desire,
 O Cromwell? Just a scaffold! Ah, that word
 Fills me with horror. Let me have some air!
 My head is burning!

[Approaching the casement of Charles I.]

The warm sun, the wind,
Will dissipate my gloom.

LORD ROCHESTER.

He's free enough!
He acts as though he were at home.

CROMWELL (*tries to open the window; it
resists*).

'Tis opened
Rarely and the lock is full of rust.

[*Starting back with a motion of horror.*
It is not rust. It is the blood of Stuart.
Yes, 'twas from here he mounted to the skies.
[*Walks thoughtfully to the front.*
If I were king, it might have opened easier.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Faith! he is not fastidious.

CROMWELL.

If all crimes
Are expiated, tremble Cromwell, for
This was an impious wrong. A nobler brow
Ne'er graced a royal crown—a just, kind
prince.

LORD ROCHESTER.

A loyal subject, this!

CROMWELL.

But could I check
Their murderous fury? Did I spare myself
In fasts, in prayers, in vigils, penances?
Did I leave aught undone to save him? No!
In heaven already was his warrant signed.

LORD ROCHESTER.

And signed by Cromwell, too, who falsified
The scales, and while you prayed, in darkness
schemed,
The honest man!

CROMWELL (*with profound dejection*).

How oft these walls have seen
Me weep the fate of this great Englishman!

LORD ROCHESTER (*wiping away a tear*).

Dear friend, you touch my heart.

CROMWELL.

How much remorse
This royal head has caused me!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Be more just
Unto yourself. Regrets, perhaps, but why
Remorse?

CROMWELL (*eyes bent upon the ground*).

What do these dead men think of us,
I wonder?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Grief is affecting his poor head.

CROMWELL.

What unknown misery a crime reveals!
To give back life to you, King Charles, how oft
I would have shed my blood!

LORD ROCHESTER.

He speaks too loud.
He might be overheard; that would be bad.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Prudence. All

Conspirators are armed unto the teeth.

I won't fight with a brother for Cromwell.

[*Aloud.*] I do not want to ruin you.

CROMWELL (*surprised, disdainfully*).

Indeed!

LORD ROCHESTER.

No; on the contrary, I want to give

You good advice. Your words were most
seditious

For such a place.

CROMWELL.

My words?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Yes, yours, my friend.

Go out, or I will call for help.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He's mad.

[*Aloud.*] What sort of man are you to talk
like this?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Remember you are at the Lord Protector's.

CROMWELL.

Well! who are you?

LORD ROCHESTER.

His humblest servant, sir.

I am his chaplain.

CROMWELL.

You? You lie with strange
Audacity! My chaplain? You?

LORD ROCHESTER (*terrified, aside*).

My God!

It's Cromwell. We've a traitor in our midst.

CROMWELL.

You ought to crawl upon the ground, you bold,
You impious impostor.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Pardon me,

Your Highness— [*Aside.*] Should I say “your
Highness” or
“Your Grace”?

[*Aloud.*] Excuse me. From excess of zeal
Against your enemies, I've erred. Some words
Half understood—

CROMWELL.

Why did you tell this lie?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Intense devotion realized my dream.
I've dared to beg the post of chaplain
Unto your Highness.

CROMWELL.

Are you doctor, by good right?
What is your name?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Zounds, my poor memory!

What is my saintly name, for heaven's sake?
[*Aloud.*] Of humble state—

CROMWELL.

Your name! The spring can burst
From cavern depths.

[ROCHESTER, *confused, appears to recollect something of importance, suddenly; he feels hastily in his pocket and draws out a letter which he presents to CROMWELL with a profound obeisance.*

LORD ROCHESTER.

This note will tell your Highness
Who I am.

CROMWELL (*taking the letter*).

From whom is it?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Mr. John Milton.

CROMWELL (*opening the letter*).

A worthy man. Blind—very sad.

[*Reads a few lines.*

Your name

Is Obededom.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing, aside*).

God forbid! That name?

[*Aloud.*] My lord has said it.

[*Aside.*] Obed—Obededom—

Zounds! A name to make the devil run.

Accursed Davenant. One can't pronounce

This name without a frightful grimace.

CROMWELL (*re-folding the letter*).

'Tis

A saintly name. This Obededom was

Of Geth. Within his home he welcomed once
The ark when it was traveling. My friend,
Prove yourself worthy of this noble name.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

So much for Obededom!

CROMWELL.

A great saint,
John Milton, council clerk, vouches for you.
[*Aside.*] He seems, in fact, a most devoted man,
His violence was hearty proof of it.
[*Aloud.*] But 'tis my duty to examine you,
And see that you have rigid views of faith,
Before I name you chaplain, sir.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing*).

Amen!

[*Aside.*] This is the moment critical.

CROMWELL.

Tell me
When Solomon began to build his temple.

LORD ROCHESTER.

In Zio, second month of sacred year.

CROMWELL.

When did he finish it?

LORD ROCHESTER.

The month of bull.

CROMWELL.

Had Thara not three children? Where?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Chaldea.

CROMWELL.

Who will appear to purify this earth?

LORD ROCHESTER.

The saints, who are to reign a thousand years.

CROMWELL.

By whom are saintly duties best fulfilled?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Believers bear within sufficient grace!
To preach, one mounts unto the desk and says,
Inspired by Carmel's light, not A B C,
But Aleph, Beth, and Ghimel.

CROMWELL.

'Tis well said.

Continue, friend; spread out your sails.

LORD ROCHESTER (*with enthusiasm*).

The Lord

Reveals his spirit to each human soul.
One can receive from Heaven the fecund light,
Yet not be priest, or minister.

[*Aside.*] Call the light

Sunshine.

[*Aloud.*] Without faith, man grovels: watch,
Illuminate your soul with this white lamp.

Each soul's a sanctuary and each man
A priest: bring to the common hearth your fire.
The prophets preached in public places, and
The holy temple had its darkened rooms.

[*Aside.*] Now, Obededom Wilmot, may you
hang

If any words of yours I understand.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

An anabaptist. In his logic strong,
But in his doctrine demagogic. Well!

LORD ROCHESTER (*continuing with ardor*).

The gift of languages comes unto those
Who speak often and much.

[*Aside.*] I'm proof of that!

[*Aloud.*] With prayer and vigilance one can
become

A Levite. Then can one o'ertake Satan,
Although he travels fast, and in one day,
Despite his cloven foot, goes from Beth-Lebaoth
Unto Beth-Marchaboth.

[*Aside.*] It's going well:

God's love! Keep on! Now for the ecstasy!

CROMWELL (*interrupting him*).

Sufficient! You have built your edifice
Upon a false foundation. We will speak
Of that hereafter. Name the animals
Impure.

LORD ROCHESTER.

All herons, ostriches, and bitterns,
The ibis, banished from the ark—

[*Aside.*] And Cromwell.

[*Aloud.*] Everything which flies or walks.

CROMWELL.

Which ones
Are safe to eat?

LORD ROCHESTER.

The attacus, my lord,
The bruchus and the serpent, please your honor!

CROMWELL.

But you forget the grasshopper, my friend.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The deuce! Who wants those beasts inside his stomach?

CROMWELL.

You have neglected this important word:
 "To touch dead bodies renders one impure
 Till evening."

[*Aside.*] Never mind. He's learned. One
 Can't ask such universal thoughts as mine.

[*Aloud.*] A final word. Does it become a saint
 To wear long hair or short?

LORD ROCHESTER (*boldly*).

Extremely short.

[*Aside.*] Rejoice, Roundhead!

CROMWELL.

Which leads one to believe—

LORD ROCHESTER (*warmly*).

Our hair is naught but sinful vanity.
 Was Absalom not hung by his long hair?

CROMWELL.

Truly; but Samson died when he was sheared.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, biting his lips*).

The devil!

CROMWELL.

To elucidate this thought
 I'll seek the Bible's penetrating light.

[*He goes out.*

SCENE XVI

LORD ROCHESTER (*alone*)

The first attack I have sustained with glory.
Although a Puritan, he is no fool.
I fear instead— Who can this traitor be?
A confidant of Cromwell and of Hyde!
Ah, but I've duped the old arch-demon well!
In what sermonic style he questions one,
And cross-examines with his canting eye.

[*Examining himself from head to foot.*

I'm a vile-looking fellow, thank the Lord!
A cross between a knave and regicide.
He took me for a robber at the start.
[*Laughing.*] This preaching soldier, brigand
patriarch,
Can have no respite; he must always go
Armed to the teeth, e'en in his palace walls.
Of psalms and pistols he makes constant use,
So that on all sides, he can hold his own.

SCENE XVII

LORD ROCHESTER, RICHARD CROMWELL

LORD ROCHESTER (*perceiving RICHARD, who is
coming toward him*).

'Tis Richard Cromwell! Zounds! I must be off.

If he should recognize me —rope or fire!
Then Obededom's Greek would not avail.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*examining ROCHESTER*).
I think I've seen that countenance somewhere.

LORD ROCHESTER (*putting on a gloomy Puritan expression; aside*).
The fox doth smell the counterfeit.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I'm sure!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Hard luck!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*still looking at LORD ROCHESTER*).

He's anything but Puritan.
He drank wine with the Cavaliers to-day.
Ah, now I know who 'tis! The scamp!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Confound him!

I never was in such a hole as this—
No, not since that vile *tête-à-tête*, when I
Kissed Lady Seymour, aged fifty years.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

Why should he doubt a man with whom he
drinks?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What hateful looks!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

One of my father's spies,

And will, no doubt, give full report of me.
 He'll tell him I carouse in taverns with
 Men who conspire against his government.
 That is a crime worthy imprisonment,
 My father thinks—*lèse-majesté*, high treason!
 I must try to bribe him, try to stem the storm.
 [Feeling in the pocket of his vest.
 I have some nobles in my purse.

LORD ROCHESTER (*watching his action, aside*).
 He means
 Attack. He carries pistols too.
 [He draws back with some anxiety.

RICHARD CROMWELL.
 So long
 As they are paid, what matters it to them
 Who pays?
[Approaching LORD ROCHESTER, with a smiling and affable manner.
 Good-day to you.

LORD ROCHESTER (*troubled*).
 God keep your Grace.
[Aside.] With an infernal smile he nears his
 prey.
[Aloud.] A humble prop of the Church-Militant
 Am I: my prayers are yours.

RICHARD CROMWELL.
 I've heard you, far
 From praying, swear most lustily.

LORD ROCHESTER.
 My lord,
 You are mistaken. Heard me swear?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I did—
First by St. George, then by St. Paul, then by—

LORD ROCHESTER.

In mercy! I—

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Swear that you did not swear!

LORD ROCHESTER.

I?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Come, my reverend, why can't you be frank?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The deuce!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

You're not at all what you appear.

You hide a traitor's eye beneath the mask
Of saint.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, with consternation*).

I'm lost!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Is it not true?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Damnation!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Yes, I know all! Look here; do not denounce
me!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, with surprise*).

What! I had the same prayer upon my lips.
What does he mean?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I have a reckless nature—
I make friends everywhere. This morn I drank
With Cavaliers, like you, my Puritan.
What use is it to tell my father that—
To tell him that his son clinked glasses there?
And for a little wine (I hardly drank)
Get me repudiated by the tribe?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

I'm saved!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Of course my father wants to know
All that is done and seen and thought; but then,
'Tis not with plots that we amuse ourselves.
For I know you, my friend; you are a spy.
I've guessed your secret.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Yes, and guessed it well.
I've made a hit tremendous in this part;
I've grasped so well the color of the sect
That I can pass for robber or for spy.

[*Aloud to RICHARD, with low bow.*
You honor me by far too much, my lord.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Spare me my father's morbid discipline.
Give me your word—I swear I'm rich enough—
That from the Lord Protector you'll conceal
What you have seen this morning.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Willingly.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*offering him a large purse, embroidered with his arms*).

Accept my purse. I'm not ungrateful, sir.

LORD ROCHESTER (*accepting it after a moment's hesitation*).

[*Aside.*] Why not? 'Tis a resource. Conspirators

Need money. And moreover, avarice
Is part of my disguise.

[*Aloud.*] You're generous, my lord!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Take it, my friend, and get a drink.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

This ends much better than I dared to hope.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

How much does such a trade as yours bring in—
Not counting gallows?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Doctor of the faith?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I mean as spy.

LORD ROCHESTER.

My lord confers a name.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Your kind of business needs philosophy.
Why should you blush?

LORD ROCHESTER.

My lord—

SCENE XVIII

The same. CROMWELL

CROMWELL (*holding a Bible marked with his arms*).

Hark to this verse,
Sir Obededom; 'tis about Dabir,
The King of Edom.

[*Perceiving his son.*] Ah!

[*To LORD ROCHESTER.*] Leave us alone!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What now? How he resumes his haughty air!
The tyrant takes the place of pedagogue.

[*He goes out.*]

SCENE XIX

RICHARD CROMWELL, CROMWELL. CROMWELL
*goes close to his son. Stands with his
arms folded, and looks at him fixedly*

RICHARD CROMWELL (*bowing profoundly*).

My father, whence this unexpected gloom?
What means this cloud upon your brow, my lord?
On what shall fall the thunder it prepares,
Whose lightning flashes now within your eyes?
What is it? What's been done? What do you
fear?

What grief strikes you 'midst universal joy?
 To-morrow the republic dies; and as
 It joins the ashes of departed kings,
 Bequeaths three kingdoms unto you. To-mor-
 row

Beholds your grandeur lifted to the throne.
 To-morrow Westminster proclaims your right;
 And throwing his hereditary glove
 At all your rivals, this armed champion
 Of ancient England shall defy the world
 In Cromwell's name, who now is made a king
 To roaring cannon and to ringing bells.
 What do you lack? Europe and England, Lon-
 don

And your entire family obey
 Your will. If I dared name my humble self,
 My father and my master, I would say
 I have no wish but for your happiness,
 Your health, your safety—

CROMWELL (*who has not taken his eyes from
 off his son's face*).

How is his Majesty,
 Charles Stuart?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*stupefied*).
 Oh, my lord!

CROMWELL.

Another time
 Choose mess-mates with more care, my son.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

My lord,
 May I be cut in pieces! oh, may I

Be viler than the pavement in the streets,
If I—

CROMWELL (*interrupting him*).

Drink they good wine at the Three Cranes?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

That damned spy had already told.

[*Aloud.*] I swear—

CROMWELL.

You seem abashed! Is it such grievous wrong
To gather a gay crowd around a jug
Of muscadine? You drank it to my health,
Of course?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

He knows of that accursed toast.

[*Aloud.*] My lord, this meeting was most inno-
cent.

Upon my soul, it was.

CROMWELL (*with a voice of thunder*).

Infamous wretch!

It was my son who drank with Cavaliers
His portion of my blood, in a wild feast.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

My father!

CROMWELL.

Drink with Pagans whom I hate!

Drink to King Charles's health! A fast day,
too!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I swear, my lord, I didn't know it was!

CROMWELL.

Reserve your oaths to give your Tyrian king.
 Don't come here, you blasphemous parricide,
 To flaunt your baseness in my very eyes.
 Some hellish wine has overpowered your mind—
 That was a poison which you drank to Charles.
 My vengeance, on the watch, observed your
 crime.

Although a son, my victim you shall be.
 The tree will fire itself to kill its fruit.

[*He goes out.*]

RICHARD CROMWELL (*alone*).

For one small glass of wine, what a great noise!
 Drink on a fast day—that's the crime! That
 makes

One traitor, parricide, blasphemous fiend.
 It costs much less, although a banquet's good,
 To fast with saints than to carouse with fools.
 I never had perceived, until to-day,
 That very precious truth! My father's lost
 His senses. [Enter LORD ROCHESTER.

SCENE XX

RICHARD CROMWELL, LORD ROCHESTER

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Richard seems to be distressed.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*perceiving ROCHESTER
 as he crosses the back of the stage*).

Ah, there's my spy! The liar! He had told!

Like a Scotch fox, I'll cross him on his path.
[*Advancing toward RICHARD with menacing air.*

I have you, traitor!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What! a new attack?

I thought we had sworn peace.

[*Aloud.*] What have I done?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

This time for jesting is inopportune.
You think you can conceal your perfidy?
I saw my father, fool, and he knows all.
[*Seeing that ROCHESTER stands motionless and confused.*

Reflect upon what answer you can make.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

It's true one of our men is Cromwell's spy.
Do they know me?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

He's laughing in his sleeve.

LORD ROCHESTER.

My lord!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Think you a wretch escapes me twice?
Your treachery has been at last revealed.
My father's wild.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Then I've been recognized.

Well, let us face the storm!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

You coward!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Time,

To put forth courage and drop artifice—

[*Aloud.*] Since, Mr. Cromwell, I am known to
you,

I beg the honor of a duel. Both

Of us have injuries which claim redress.

Arrange the hour, the place, the arms. I leave

All choice to you. I hold myself a champion

Most worthy of your sword.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I fight a spy!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

He's not got over that? Then all is well.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

You, in your serpent's skin, your churchly
dress—

You talk of duels? Do you hold yourself

Less vile than is a Jew? Pray, do yourself

More justice, recreant.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

A civil man!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

To secretly betray me, when I'd paid;

Take a man's purse and sell its owner, quick!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What does he mean?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

At least, give back the gold.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The deuce! To Ormond I have sent the purse.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Will you give it back, you wretched thief?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What shall

I do?

[*Aloud.*] The sum is not so very large—

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Indeed! It was too small! Upon your bones,
Your flesh, you'll pay it back at a good price.

[*Drawing his sword.*

Come, come, my purse!

LORD ROCHESTER (*retreating*).

He means to kill me, Heaven!

Accursed be that purse!

SCENE XXI

The same. EARL OF CARLISLE, *accompanied by four halberdiers.* RICHARD CROMWELL *recovers himself.* THE EARL OF CARLISLE *makes him a profound obeisance*

EARL OF CARLISLE

Lord Richard Cromwell,
In the Lord Protector's name, give me your sword.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*surrendering his sword
to THE EARL*).

For punishing a traitor 'twas in use.
You've come a bit too soon.

LORD ROCHESTER (*with loud voice and an air
of inspiration*).

Oh, blessed chance.
God saves Eleazar from Antiochus.

EARL OF CARLISLE (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).
Your honor will please pass into your room:
Two archers I must station at the door.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).
This is where I am brought by your deceit.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
'Tis most astounding! What! I am accused
Of getting Cromwell's son made prisoner?
And when with rage this son threatens my life
'Tis Cromwell who preserves me from his sword.
Yet I am doing all I can to hurt
The father, while I've never wronged the son.

RICHARD CROMWELL.
Dare you still face me with your insolence,
You coward?
[*To EARL OF CARLISLE.*] Do not trust this
man, my lord.
He's double-faced. I would not have complained
If I had paid him back as he deserved.
A double-face demands four kicks, my lord!
[*RICHARD CROMWELL exits, surrounded by
halberdiers.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
That's what it costs to pass for a Roundhead.

SCENE XXII

EARL OF CARLISLE, LORD ROCHESTER,
THURLOE

THURLOE (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).

My lord appreciates your learning, sir,
And chaplain of his household has named you.
You will deliver prayers at morn and night,
You'll preach a sermon to his body-guards,
You'll speak a benediction o'er his food,
And bless the hippocras he drinks at night.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing low, aside*).
That is our object—thanks!

THURLOE.

Such are your duties.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Rochester to pray for Cromwell! Good! enough!
A devilet pronouncing benediction
On a devil.

THURLOE (*to EARL OF CARLISLE, handing him
a parchment*).

A conspiracy's afoot
For Westminster, to-morrow.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

That's not all.

THURLOE (*to CARLISLE*).

Seize Rochester!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Yes! Find him first.

THURLOE (*continuing*).

And Ormond.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

If he received the message that I sent,
He will have changed his name and rooms ere
this.

THURLOE.

As to the others, watch them close! Trust
them

To throw themselves into our nets, in time.

[*They go out.*]

SCENE XXIII

LORD ROCHESTER (*alone*).

Our stratagem will bring to naught their plans:
To-night will place King Cromwell in our hands.
All things are moving well. Although betrayed
By some, we still are strong for Stuart's cause.
For their sake, we'll brave ridicule and rage,
Their pistols, sword-thrusts, biblical debates.
In fox's skin protected from these wolves,
We'll be impromptu chaplain, saint of luck,
On hand for catechism, skirmishes;
By day Ezekiel, Scaramouche by night.

[*He goes out.*]

ACT III

THE FOOLS

SCENE.—*The Painted Chamber at White-Hall.*

To the right a large gilded armchair, placed at the top of several steps, covered with the Gobelin tapestry sent by Mazarin. A semi-circle of tabourets opposite to the armchair. Near to the latter, a large table with velvet cover and a folding-chair

SCENE I

CROMWELL'S FOUR FOOLS. TRICK, *first fool, dressed in motley of yellow and black, hat similar in color, pointed, with golden bells; the arms of the Protector embroidered in gold on his breast.* GIRAFF, *second fool, motley yellow and red, cap similar, bordered with silver bells; the Protector's arms in silver on his breast.* GRAMADOCH, *third fool and trainbearer to his Highness, motley red and black, square cap similar, with gold bells; the Protector's arms in gold on his breast.* ELES-PURU (*pronounced Elespourou*), *fourth fool, costume entirely black; black three-cornered hat with silver bell at each corner; the Protector's arms in silver on his breast. All four carry at the side a small*

sword with big handle and a wooden blade.
 TRICK *has a fool's-cap in his hand. They gambol on to the stage*

ELESPURU (*sings*).

Hear this, nor mock :
 I went to hell.
 Moloch, Sadoch,
 Threw me pell-mell
 In the red loch.
 My linen flamed,
 My doublet burned.
 May none be blamed.
 Great Satan turned
 Me monkey named
 And my race spurned.

[*Hums.*

Great Satan turned—

GIRAFF (*gravely*).

He let you go? Who, think you, is Cromwell,
 Our temporal king and spiritual chief?

GRAMADOCH (*to GIRAFF*).

Can one be Satan just by wearing horns?
 At this rate devils must be limitless.

ELESPURU.

Can one suspect Elizabeth Cromwell?

GRAMADOCH.

Hark to this stanza which a Frenchman made :

[*He sings.*

“In Paris through two portals
 All dreams must pass in state :
 Through ivory ones to lovers
 Through horn to lawful mate.”

Lord Cromwell makes me bear his train. All right.
His wife makes him wear horns.

TRICK.

Have done! For shame!
Such words as those deserve the gallows, sir.
I'm cavalier of Dame Elizabeth;
'Tis Cromwell's and mine honor I defend.
Oh, I will vouch for her—a homely thing!

GRAMADOCH.

That's true. I'll not deny it, friend. I lied.
Where there is nothing new, we must invent.
I'm horribly afraid of *ennui*. Faith!
It makes me sick. I'll go and sing a ballad
To Mistress Echo. [*He sings.*]

Why such a plight,
Carmelite?
Has Rose betrayed you?
Hi!

Why so much rage,
Pretty page?
Are you her lover?
Aye!

Why so morose,
Dainty Rose?
The husband comes,
Sad.

To bed where passion
Took possession,
He's returning
Mad.

Your ear so keen
Strains, I ween,
To catch the hoof
Near.

Now ends the life
Of faithless wife.
Tremble! He is
Here.

The priest and page
Quick engage
To leave the place.
Fly!

Under the walls,
Laughter falls.
"Ho! you are caught;
Die!"

The high words flash,
Thunders clash:
"For vulture's food—
Swing.

"From the great top
Let them drop.
Crows o'er them—
Sing."

To sinful mirth
Open earth;
Marriage haters—
Grin!

When he started,
Broken-hearted,
She knew not guilt—
Sin!

Nor page nor priest
Shared love's feast.
Her chaste lips—
"No!"

When he returned
Twenty burned
At her feet.
Oh!

TRICK (to GRAMADOCH).

Hear my legend now! [*He sings.*]

Strange century!
Job, Lazarus
Wrapped in gold;
Lacedæmon
Offers alms
To King Cræsus.
Era strange;
Medley queer;
Angel is devil,
Black is white;
Maidens are
Virgins pure,
Or profess to be;
Easy beauties,
Docile husbands;
Silly fools,
Whom Lucretias
None too fierce
Change to Vulcans;
Democrites,
Hypocrites;
Kings who please;
Heraclites,
Heteroclites;
Thinking fools;
Halberds bold
For argument;
Tender lovers
Drink tisane;
Wolves and mules
And glow-worms;
Courtesans,
Courtiers.
Women loved;
Headsmen kind;
Gentle nuns
Unconfined;

Chiefless armies,
 Heathen clerks,
 Pygmy titans;
 Giant dwarfs—
 That's my age.
 Nothing lives
 In this whirl
 But the scourge.
 Bad to worse
 Goes the earth;
 Cæsars great
 Lizards small;
 Cyclopes are
 Myopes;
 Brutus proud
 Plutus is;
 Orpheus makes
 Morpheus.
 Our Jupin
 Is Scapin.
 Silly age,
 Crazy days.
 Hercules
 Always off.
 One climbs,
 Two fall;
 And Olympus
 Is a howl.

GRAMADOCH.

'Tis bad; form fights, and slaughters reason.

ELESPURU.

Mine! [*He sings.*]

You unto whom each night
 Hell grins with all its might,
 Angus and Errol sorcerers!
 Oh, you who knows the ways,
 And in your gloomy maze

Keep owls for nightingales.
Undines beneath your falls
Renounce their parasols.
Of sylphs the cavalcades
Surmounting barricades
Jump from the great Orcades
To spire of St. Paul's;
Bad hunters Tyrolese,
Whose packs scamper at ease
Through every woody turn;
Clerks Argant, troops of Roll
Hung to the halter's pall
Quick at the witches' call
Let your old dust reburn.
Pistol and Caliban,
Macduff, Zingaris ran
In murder's ghastly van;
Which is the devil, pray,
Old Nick or Noll? come, say.
Which of the snakes of earth
To which Satan gave birth
Thinks he of the most worth,
The asp or viper, eh?
The asp or basilisk,
Old Noll or the old Nick?
His left eye is old Nick,
But old Noll is his right.
Old Nick can skillful be,
Old Noll's as smart as he;
Beelzebub is cute, and he
Holds both in his grim might.
When this great couple ride,
Death follows at their side,
And hell relay provides.
Each one holds to his own;
The broom-handle for Nick,
For Noll the hatchet's stick,
And to conclude this quick,
Before he's hermit grown,
I wish, for virtues great

I might see Noll, in state,
 Hauled off by Nick the Great,
 Or else in his own place,
 See Nick's angelic face
 Appear, and with due grace
 Wring old Noll's neck.

[The Fools applaud with great bursts of laughter and repeat in chorus:]

Or else in his own place
 See Nick's angelic face
 Appear, and with due grace
 Wring old Noll's neck.

TRICK.

Know you strange things are passing here—
 abouts—
 Enough to furnish texts for parodies?

GIRAFF.

Yes, Cromwell makes himself a king. The devil
 Wants to become a god.

GRAMADOCH.

I hear it said
 Two plots have almost spoiled his game.

ELESPURU.

'Tis true.

The army is dissatisfied; the people
 Have begun to talk.

TRICK.

Should he renounce
 His armor for a crown, alas for him!
 An unprotected heart's an easy goal
 For daggers pointed by avenging hands.

GIRAFF.

This mad turmoil is greatly to my taste.

I'd like to set the dogs upon the wolves!
 If Satan would present to Oliver
 A red-hot scepter on a massive grill,
 Use Cavaliers for his disgraceful nags,
 And play at nine-pins with the Roundheads—eh?

TRICK.

What think you, brother, of the chaplain who
 Blessed us to-day with such a knowing look?

ELESPURU.

Hum!

GIRAFF.

Deuce!

GRAMADOCH.

The devil.

TRICK.

So! We think alike,

I see.

GRAMADOCH.

Friends, I'll unfold a tale to you!

[*All draw near to him.*]

You know he haunts the park for archery—
 This Obededom—shooting near the gate
 Where stand the guards, to whom he talks, and
 feigns
 To edify their minds with texts, yet makes
 Them drunk and gives them money, and one
 time
 When they were close around him, said, “To-
 night.
 To enter, *White-Hall* and *Cologne* will be
 The password.”

GIRAFF (*clapping his hands with joy*).

Then he's working for King Charles!

ELESPURU.

No! Cromwell's spy, if what our master's son
Said in his rage against the saintly scamp
Be true. You know 'twas Obededom's words
Which locked poor Richard up.

GIRAFF (*laughing*).

That's true. How droll!
Richard, who soon will be condemned, desired
To kill his father. What rare fun!

TRICK.

I've something
Funnier yet.

GRAMADOCH.

Indeed!

GIRAFF.

Not possible.

TRICK (*showing a roll of parchment tied with
a pink ribbon*).

Look here!

ELESPURU.

Well, what is that?

TRICK.

This parchment fell
From the black doctor's pocket in my hands.

GRAMADOCH.

It is some sermon, terrible and long,
Opening with hell and ending with the devil.

Come, let's see it, quick! It is essential
That fools should master Puritanic cant.
[*Unfolding the roll which TRICK has given
him.*

This chaplain seems to be as mad as we.
He ties his thunder with pink ribbon. Hear!
[*He casts a glance on the open parchment and
bursts into a great fit of laughter. GIRAFF
takes the parchment, looks at it, and laughs
louder yet. ELESPURU, to whom he passes
it, laughs also, and TRICK, as he watches
the other two, laughs still more heartily.*

ELESPURU (*laughing*).

A pretty devil wrote this sermon—eh?

TRICK (*laughing*).

What think you of it?

ELESPURU (*reading*).

“Quatrain to my love:
Egeria the fair, you burn my soul!”

GIRAFF (*snatches the parchment and reads*).

“Your eyes, where Cupid lights a conquering
flame—”

GRAMADOCH (*snatching the parchment in his
turn*).

“Are like two glowing mirrors—

TRICK (*taking it from GRAMADOCH*).

“Which reflect
The fires consuming me.”

[*All burst into fits of increasing laughter.*

ELESPURU.

These verses fell from pockets Puritan,
Oh, fie!

GIRAFF.

The giddy man!

GRAMADOCH (*as if struck with an idea*).

Of course, that's it—
I'm sure of it! [*Drawing the rest toward him.*
You know Dame Guggligoy—
The Lady Frances' governess?

TRICK.

Of course.

GRAMADOCH.

I saw the chaplain whispering in her ear,
And he gave her a purse.

TRICK.

What did she do?

GRAMADOCH.

She said, "This night, my handsome fellow, you
Shall be alone with her." I sang a song.

[*He sings.*

The witch said to the pirate,
Lord of the nipping air,
"I will not be ungrateful;
Go, take your lady fair.
But give me, as my wage,
Some pretty, merry page
Who will ignore my age
And kiss for fun.
And add to that, for peace,
Two sheep with their white fleece,
A good whale's bones and grease,

Cameleon one,
 An idol, charm of tin,
 Six asps, a weasel's skin,
 Of your men the most thin
 To be my skeleton."

My faith! the Guggligoy should go for less;
 She is an active skeleton herself.
 But it is fair, I take it, to conclude
 This sheared seducer of the guards and maids
 Is here for neither Charles nor Noll, but Frances.

ELESPURU.

My mind is still more muddled than before.
 What does it mean?

GIRAFF.

I don't know; but it's droll.

GRAMADOCH.

This man who deems himself master of all,
 Might do much worse than borrow his fools'
 eyes.
 Suppose we tell him?

GIRAFF.

Tell him? We? Oh, no!
 No, Gramadoch; you're mad. It's naught to us.
 Why are we hired by Noll? To make him laugh.
 Well, let us hold ourselves within our sphere.
 He keeps us, and perhaps he pays us, more
 To cheer his days than to defend his life.
 Let them abduct his child, or force his door,
 Shear him or choke him, what is it to us?

GRAMADOCH.

He's right.

ELESPURU.

That's true.

TRICK.

Each one to his own trade.
He rules, we laugh. Let him be cut in quarters,
Be burned or flayed, he can't find fault with us
So long as we don't fail to laugh for him.

ELESPURU.

Our vengeful laughter will repay his scorn.
How his buffoons will jeer the failure king.

GRAMADOCH.

At bottom this false chaplain is like us,
For fools and lovers do go hand-in-hand.
His name of Obededom seems expressly
Fashioned to fit with Trick, Elespuru,
Giraff, and Gramadoch.

TRICK.

But he conspires.
We must defend ourselves. If Charles comes
back,
He'll have us hanged.

ELESPURU.

Hang four poor fools? For what?

TRICK.

Oh, just to see our grimace when we swing.
Men of our trade can't beg for mercy. No.
It's too much fun to see the jumping-jacks
Upon the string.

GIRAFF.

Hang us—the innocents?

Oh, never fear! Should Charles the Second come,
 He will need fools; and we are on the field.
 Where could he find profounder jesters, sir?
 The common sort are fools by instinct, we
 By principle. Don't be afraid. A fool
 Can always jump the falling bridge. To live
 To old age here, where all is fugitive,
 One studies folly—wisdom after all.

TRICK.

Moreover, Cromwell's tiresome. Charles is gay.

ELESPURU.

The tyrant's eagle eye, is it so tired?
 Is't possible, we know what he knows not;
 We hold the thread he does not even see—
 We, Cromwell's fools?

GRAMADOCH.

Oh, no, Elespuru.

We're his buffoons; but he—he is our fool.
 He thinks we are his puppets: he is ours.
 Has he deceived us with his liturgies,
 Or terrified us with the thundering voice,
 The pious eye-winks, which subdue the world?
 He cannot look at us without a smile.
 His secret policy and profound schemes
 Impose on all the world except four fools.
 His reign, so fatal to the people it destroys,
 Is but a stupid drama to our eyes.
 Yes, watch. We'll see, passing before our
 gaze,
 Some twenty actors, merry, awkward, sad:
 We stand aside, we; the philosophers,

And laugh at points, applaud at climaxes.
Let us leave Charles and Cromwell the whole
fight.

For our amusement they can rend themselves.
We hold the key to this strange mystery,
But we say nothing to the master.

ELESPURU.

No!

Let him find out!

GIRAFF.

Let us keep still and laugh.

TRICK.

We triumph everywhere. Satan has made
These tyrants for amusement to buffoons;
While all earth trembles 'neath the despot's
frown

We take his scepter for our hobby-horse.

SCENE II

The same. CROMWELL; JOHN MILTON, *black coat, white hair, rather long, black cap, chain of the secretaryship of the Council around his neck.* He is assisted by a young page who wears the livery of the Protector. WHITELOCKE; PIERPOINT; THURLOE; LORD ROCHESTER; HANNIBAL SESTHEAD

CROMWELL.

Here are my fools. 'Tis a good time to be
Diverted. [THURLOE enters.

THURLOE (*to CROMWELL*).

Parliament awaits your lordship
In the throne-room.

CROMWELL (*impatiently*).

Well! Let it wait!

THURLOE (*low to Protector*).

It bears

The Humble Address, which is a desire
From all the people to make the Protector
King.

CROMWELL (*radiant*).

At last!

[*Aside.*] Are they not dull?

[*To THURLOE.*] 'Tis well!

I will attend to them, but after council.

I must look at the Fresland horses which

The Duke of Holstein sends to me. Distract
them,

My friend; inflaming their great zeal, suggest
Discussion of a text until I come.

GRAMADOCH (*low to TRICK*).

Yes, in the book of Kings, for instance.

[*Thurloe goes out.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What!

Oh, Charles! oh, martyred king, you are
avenged!

What a base rod succeeds to thy bright scepter.

CROMWELL (*pointing out his Fools to LORD
ROCHESTER*).

Since we are all alone, I want to laugh.

These are my fools, Doctor. I present you.
 [LORD ROCHESTER *and the Fools bow to each other.*

When times are good, they are a merry set.
 We all makes verses. Even my old Milton
 Takes a hand, too. [*Indicating MILTON.*

MILTON (*with vexation*).

“Old Milton”! I beg you—
 I am nine years less old than you, my lord.

CROMWELL.

Have it your way.

MILTON.

You come from ninety-nine,
 I come from sixteen hundred eight.

CROMWELL.

Remembrance
 Has an eternal youth.

MILTON (*impatiently*).

You might treat me
 More civilly. I am a lawyer's son,
 One who was alderman in his own town.

CROMWELL.

Be calm. I know much better who you are;
 You're Milton, great theologian and good poet—
 Next unto Vithers and to Donne. Beware!
 God keeps account of all He gives—

MILTON (*as if talking to himself*).

Come next to them? Alas! what cruel words.
 We must be patient. In good time they'll know

What gifts I had. The future is my judge.
 Posterity will comprehend my Eve,
 Who falls like a sweet dream on night of hell;
 Good, guilty Adam; the archangel great
 And dauntless, proud of any reign eternal,
 Noble in his despair, wise in his madness,
 Arising from the lake of fire, which his
 Huge wing chastises. Yes, within my soul
 A genius travails: great, mysterious dreams
 Keep floating through my brain, when all is
 still.

I live within my thoughts, and Milton finds
 Sweet consolation there. Oh, in my turn,
 In emulation of almighty God,
 I want to make a world, somewhere between
 The earth, the sky, and hell.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What's that? The deuce!

HANNIBAL SESTHEAD (*to Fools*).

A ludicrous enthusiast.

CROMWELL (*looks at MILTON and shrugs his
 shoulders*).

You wrote

A noble thing in the "Iconoclast."
 But as for your great devil, meant to be
 A new Leviathan—he's very bad. [*Laughing*.

MILTON (*under his breath, indignant*).

'Tis Cromwell laughing at my Satan! Well!

LORD ROCHESTER (*approaching MILTON*).
 Pray, Mr. Milton—

MILTON (*without hearing him, continues looking at CROMWELL*).

'Tis all jealousy.

LORD ROCHESTER (*to MILTON, who listens with an absent air*).

You do not comprehend true poetry.
 You have some wit, but scarcely any taste.
 The French excel us all in everything.
 Go study Racan. Read his pastorals.
 Let Tircis with Aminta haunt your fields
 Leading a gentle lamb with a blue ribbon.
 But for your Eve, your Adam, and your hell,
 Your lake of fire—all that is hideous.
 Your naked Satan with his scorched wings!
 It might be done if he were clothed in silk
 And wore a golden helmet on his wig,
 A rich aurora jacket, Florence cape,
 As once I saw, if I remember well,
 The Sun dressed, at the opera in France,
 When all the Court was there.

MILTON (*astonished*).

What worldly talk
 To come from a saint's mouth.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, biting his lips*).

Another slip!

He listened ill, for my good luck. Beware!
 You play this Obededom sorry tricks,
 My lord.

[*Aloud to MILTON.*] I was but jesting, sir.

MILTON.

Bad jest.

[*Aside, and still turned toward CROMWELL.*
How Cromwell treats me. What great thing is
it

To govern Europe? Nothing but child's play.
I'd like to see him making Latin verses
As I do.

[*During these speeches, CROMWELL has been
talking with WHITELOCKE and PIERPOINT.
HANNIBAL SESTHEAD with the Fools.*

CROMWELL (*gruffly*).

Come, somebody, sirs, must laugh.
Fools, find some idiotic thing to say.
Sir Hannibal—

HANNIBAL SESTHEAD (*with an offended air*).

I beg to be excused.
I'm not your fool; I'm cousin to a king—
King of an ancient race, who rules Denmark.

CROMWELL (*aside, biting his lips*).
I comprehend. That is an insult. Why
Cannot my anger crush him now?
[*Rudely to fools.*] Come, laugh!

FOOLS (*laughing*).

Ha! ha!

CROMWELL (*aside*).
Their laughter is sardonic.
[*Aloud; angrily to Fools.*] Hush!
[*The Fools are silent, CROMWELL continues
with impatience.*

It's Milton, that infernal poet, who
Upsets us all with his Satanic visions.

[MILTON *turns proudly on CROMWELL, who continues.*

[*Aside.*] Calm thyself!

[*Aloud.*] Well! what were we discussing?
Trick, order beer and pipes.

TRICK.

I go at once!

My lord desires to smoke.

[*He goes out, and returns in a moment followed by two servants, bearing a table laden with pipes and mugs.*

CROMWELL.

I want to be

Diverted. Do you hear? I want to laugh.

[*Aside.*] Betrayed by mine own son!

[*Silence.* CROMWELL *seems to surrender himself to gloomy thoughts. The others sit in silence, their eyes fixed on the ground. LORD ROCHESTER and the Fools are the only ones who appear to observe the gloomy countenance of the Protector. Suddenly CROMWELL becomes conscious of the embarrassed attitudes of his companions, and rousing himself from his reverie, addresses the Fools.*

How many verses

Have you composed since I constructed those
Replying unto Colonel Lilburne's sonnet?

TRICK.

Hippocrene is most miserly,
Yet this—

[*Presenting a rolled parchment to the Protector.*]

CROMWELL.

Read it.

TRICK (*unfolding the parchment*).

“A quatrain” (verses bad)

“To my loved one: Egeria the Fair—”

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

My God! My quatrain.

[*He rushes to TRICK and snatches the parchment from his hand.*]

Devil and damnation!

My lord, pray pardon me—

[*Bowing to CROMWELL.*] If I have sworn!

But where's the blood that's sanctified enough
To hear this torrent of obscenity

Break forth at one's own side.

[*To TRICK, who is laughing heartily.*]

Go, Edomite!

Fly hence, impure Madianite! Avaunt—

[*Aside.*] I have forgot that other name in
“ite.”

My quatrain! Oh, those devils robbed my
pocket!

CROMWELL (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).

I fully understand the scorn you feel.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Not scorn.

CROMWELL.

But this is not a church, my friend.

I want to read what scandalizes you.
Give it to me.

LORD ROCHESTER.
A song from hell!

CROMWELL (*impatiently*).
Give quickly!

LORD ROCHESTER.
But—

CROMWELL (*imperiously*).

Obey me, sir.

[ROCHESTER bows and hands the parchment to
CROMWELL, who casts his eyes over it, and
says, as he gives it back :

Indeed, these verses
Are most detestable.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Detestable?

You lie, detestable old regicide!
Cromwell a judge of verses? Bah!

CROMWELL.

This quatrain
Is truly stupid.

LORD ROCHESTER (*casting a glance on the
parchment*).

Yes, of such vile songs
All authors are condemned; yet to my mind
The verses are most aptly turned.

TRICK (*low to the other Fools*).

He is
The author, never fear.

[*Aloud.*] I made those rhymes;
 But I admit, Apollo should inflict
 Me with a fourfold chastisement, they are
 So bad.

LORD ROCHESTER (*giving a side glance at the
 Fools; aside*).

Go on; jeer to your heart's content,
 You monkeys of a leopard, popinjays
 To the great vulture!

CROMWELL.

Learned Obededom,
 It is not in your line to criticise
 Such gallant, drowsy quatrains.

LORD ROCHESTER (*putting the quatrain in his
 pocket; aside*).

Frances may
 Look at my efforts with a friendlier eye.

TRICK (*making LORD ROCHESTER an ironical
 salutation*).

My lord is much too flattering.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Flatter you?
 I'd like to beat you while God's damning you,
 And ride you through the streets of London
 backward
 Upon a mule.

TRICK.

You think the author merits
 Such grievous punishment?

LORD ROCHESTER (*perplexed*).
I don't say that.

TRICK.

Do you suppose I would conceal his name?

LORD ROCHESTER (*whose anxiety increases*).
Enough!

TRICK.

I am not undertaking his
Defense; he well deserves the lash.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
The fool!

TRICK (*laughing; low to the other Fools*).
I've mixed him well.

[*Enter* EARL OF CARLISLE.
Deuce take my Lord Carlisle!
He's coming to upset our fun.

LORD ROCHESTER (*breathing freely*).
At last!

[CROMWELL *draws the* EARL OF CARLISLE *hastily into a corner of the stage; the rest all retire, but cease not to watch CROMWELL and CARLISLE.*

CROMWELL (*low to* EARL OF CARLISLE, *who makes a profound obeisance*).
Lord Ormond?

EARL OF CARLISLE.
He has changed his lodging-place.

CROMWELL.

And Rochester?

EARL OF CARLISLE.

Cannot be found. He's hiding.

CROMWELL.

Richard?

EARL OF CARLISLE.

He still persists in his denials.
The torture might perhaps force out the truth.

CROMWELL (*severely*).

Your head shall answer the least scratch on him.
You know my horror of these tortures! What!
My son upon the rack? Oh, no, my lord;
That shall be saved for his accomplices.
Where's Lambert?

EARL OF CARLISLE.

Gone back to his summer home,
Where he is diligently growing flowers.

CROMWELL (*bitterly*).

A touching occupation! All escape.
At least I hold the crown safe in my hands.

EARL OF CARLISLE.

To Westminster all London throngs. The
soldiers
And all the people boldly execrate
The name of king that's offered unto you!

CROMWELL.

Weigh well your words!

EARL OF CARLISLE.

Your Highness will forgive.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

All's going wrong.

[*Aloud and with vexation.*

I bade you to be gay!

What are you thinking of!

[*Aside.*] They're listening,

The varlets!

[*Low to* EARL OF CARLISLE.

Place a double guard, my lord,

Around this palace. [EARL OF CARLISLE *exits.*

Well! the quatrain; come!

[*Aside.*] I suffocate with rage.

[THURLOE *re-enters.*

THURLOE (*to* CROMWELL).

The sect of Ranters,

Whom the Holy Ghost inspires, have come to
you

To ask for light upon a point of faith.

They wait, my lord.

CROMWELL.

Let them come in at once.

[THURLOE *exits.*

[*Aside.*] If I were born a king, I'd send them
back.

A popular chief is doomed to lead the crowd

By satisfying it.

[THURLOE *re-enters, introducing the Ranters, who are dressed in black, with blue stockings, large gray shoes, large gray hats, on which a small white cross is distinguishable. They keep their hats on.*

CHIEF OF THE DEPUTATION (*with solemnity*).

To Oliver,

Captain and Judge in Zion, we are come.
The saints who now in London congregate
Holding your wisdom as a vase designed
To overflow, we ask must they be burned
Or hung, those men who speak not as St. John—
Those who say Sibboleth not Shibboleth?

CROMWELL (*meditating*).

The question is important and demands
Much thought. To speak it Sibboleth is to
Commit idolatry and merit death,
Which doth delight Beelzebub. But torment
Ought to pursue a twofold object, and
Humanity must claim its right. To give
The body up should be to save the soul.
Well, which is better, rope or fire, to win
The soul of sinners back unto their God?
Fire purifies—

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Ropes strangle.

CROMWELL.

It is true,
Daniel grew pure within the scorching flame,
But gallows have their virtues too. A gibbet
Was the cross.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

In all this I admire
The way this Cromwell glides 'mong all these
tortures
With the assured air of one at home.

He talks of this kind, now of that, and goes
 From halter to the fagot, and from gallows
 Unto the stake without so much as winking.
 And out of them he draws a thousand charms.

CROMWELL (*still reflecting*).

With what great care the truths are hid from us.
 It is an arduous task, and this one case
 I place among the most profound and delicate.
 [*After a moment's silence, turning abruptly*
to LORD ROCHESTER.

Clerk, you pronounce the verdict.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Pilate's method.

CROMWELL (*to the Ranters, indicating LORD
 ROCHESTER*).

He is another Cromwell.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing low*).

Words divine.

CHIEF OF THE RANTERS (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).

If any one should fall into this sin,
 Must it be rope or fire?

LORD ROCHESTER (*firmly*).

The gallows, sir!

And with him, 'neath the same anathema
 Shall die his Amorrhean father and
 His mother Cethean.

CHIEF OF THE RANTERS (*gravely*).

The gallows—why?



MILTON WARNING CROMWELL.

—Victor Hugo, Vol. XIX., p. 218.

LORD ROCHESTER (*embarrassed*).
 Wherefore? Because—the ladder leads to it;
 That is the reason. God revealed unto
 A shepherd, by a ladder one ascends
 The sky.

[*Aside.*] 'Tis with great effort I refrain
 From laughing in their faces.

CROMWELL (*looking at LORD ROCHESTER with
 satisfaction*).

He is wise,
 Our chaplain.

CHIEF OF THE RANTERS (*grasping ROCHESTER'S
 hand in thanks*).

You have argued well. They'll hang.
 [*They go out.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 Here are some wretches justly judged, my faith!

CROMWELL (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).
 I'm pleased with you.

LORD ROCHESTER (*with an obeisance*).
 Your Highness is most gracious.

GIRAFF (*to the other Fools*).
 Even we could not have cut the knot
 With better grace. [*Re-enter THURLOE.*]

THURLOE (*to CROMWELL*).
 The privy-council waits.

CROMWELL.
 'Tis well.

THURLOE.

Your lordship knows the object?

CROMWELL (*quickly*).

Yes,

I know; let them come in.

TRICK (*low to Fools*).

Come, merry-wits,

To the magicians let us yield our place.

[*Upon a gesture from CROMWELL the buffoons, LORD ROCHESTER, HANNIBAL SESTHEAD go out; two lackeys bear off the table laden with mugs, beer, and pipes. THURLOE introduces the privy-council, who advance in two rows, and stand each before a horseshoe seat, while CROMWELL mounts to his armchair, and MILTON, guided by his two pages, approaches the folding-chair and the table. WHITELOCKE, STOUPE, and the EARL OF CARLISLE take their respective places beside the Protector, upon the platform steps.*]

SCENE III

CROMWELL; EARL OF WARWICK; LIEUTENANT-GENERAL FLEETWOOD, *son-in-law* of CROMWELL; EARL OF CARLISLE; LORD BROGHILL; MAJOR-GENERAL DESBOROUGH, *brother-in-law* of CROMWELL; WHITELOCKE; SIR CHARLES WOLSELEY; MR. WILLIAM LEN-

THALL; PIERPOINT; THURLOE; STOUPE;
MILTON. *Each of these personages wears
the suit appropriate to his office. CROM-
WELL sits and puts on his hat; all sit,
but remain uncovered*

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Well! we must stand the chatter of these birds.
[*Aloud.*] Sir councilors of my government, be
seated

All, and let us pray.

[*He kneels; all the councilors do the same.
After a few instants of meditation the
Protector arises and re-seats himself.
All follow his example. He continues,
with a profound sigh.*

For government,

Alas! good sirs, I have no talent, but,
Our God, whom my disinclination chafes,
Has moved the Parliament to force on me
An overwhelming increase of my power.
That is the object of our meeting here.
I must confer, discuss this o'er, with you.
Is it desirable to have a king?
Am I the one to choose? On these two points
Give me your judgment absolute. Each one,
In turn, reveal to us his thought, and speak
As frankly as I'm speaking now to you.
The Earl of Warwick is most eminent
Among you; let him be the first. Pray listen,
Mr. Milton.

EARL OF WARWICK (*rising*).

There is naught on earth

To equal your ability, your truth,
 Your character; and if you needed more,
 You are related by maternal side
 Unto the Warwicks; on your crest you bear
 The selfsame helmet. Since we need a king
 In every kingdom, surely your great self
 Is more desired than some poor king of chance.
 Why can't a Rich as well as Stuart reign?
[*Re-seats himself.*]

CROMWELL (*aside*).

One needs but luck to own a family.
 Cromwell unknown was nothing: on the throne
 The Riches are his cousins, ancestors—
 My noble ancestors, inherited
 About four years ago!
[*Aloud.*] Now, Fleetwood, you!

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL FLEETWOOD (*rising*).

My lord, I vote republic! Father-in-law,
 I speak to you in all sincerity.
 For the republic we built Stuart's scaffold.
 We have made war for it; we need it now.
 Let God alone wear the true diadem.
 Not Oliver the First, nor Charles the Second,
 Do we desire. No king! [*Re-seats himself.*]

CROMWELL.

You are a child,
 My son-in-law. Now you, Carlisle.

EARL OF CARLISLE.

My lord,
 Your broad, triumphant brow was made to fit
 A crown. [*Re-seats himself.*]

CROMWELL.

Broghill!

LORD BROGHILL (*rising*).

My lord, I ask

Permission to give utterance to my thoughts
In private.

[*Aside.*] Ormond's plot disturbs my mind.
In this bold drama, what a part is mine!
The councilor of Cromwell, confidant
Of Charles. If silent, I'm a traitor; and
A traitor if I speak.

CROMWELL.

What reasons?

LORD BROGHILL.

State.

[CROMWELL *signs to him to approach*. STOUPE,
THURLOE, WHITELOCKE, and CARLISLE,
withdraw from them.

LORD BROGHILL (*low to CROMWELL*).

Why don't you try to treat with Charles—pro-
pose
Your daughter's hand?

CROMWELL (*surprised*).

What? To—to the—young man?

LORD BROGHILL.

Yes, Lady Frances' hand.

CROMWELL.

His family?

LORD BROGHILL.

You're crowned under the name of Oliver.
You are both kings.

CROMWELL.

And January thirtieth!

LORD BROGHILL.

You give a father to him.

CROMWELL.

Give—but not

Give back.

LORD BROGHILL.

He will forget.

CROMWELL (*with scornful laughter*).

My crime? Oh, no!

His mind will never comprehend it, nor
His eye discern the goal on which my heart
Was bent. He dissipates too much to pardon.
No! Your plan is mad.

[LORD BROGHILL *returns to his place; the
grand officers return to theirs.*

Speak, Desborough!

MAJOR-GENERAL DESBOROUGH (*rising*).

Your plans are daring, my dear brother-in-law.
What! Face again the woes of royalty?
No king whatever! Soldiers will acclaim
You Cromwell, and will curse you Oliver!
Let courtiers, doctors, and let systems die.

CROMWELL.

You wage your war against a word, a name.
If this good people want a king, why not?

This name of king, proscribed by your cheap
pride,

What is it to a soldier?—but a plume

Upon his helmet.

[*He signs to WHITELOCKE to speak. WHITELOCKE arises and DESBOROUGH sits.*]

WHITELOCKE (*aside, looking at DESBOROUGH*).

That plow-man to be questioned before me!

[*Aloud.*] My lord! I will be truthful, what-
e'er comes.

No people without laws: no laws without
A king. Hear me, the argument's worth while.

[*Aside.*] Before me, Desborough! *homuncio!*
dolt.

[*Aloud.*] The king was always legislator called.

Lator, bearer, *legis*, the law; whence comes

That prince to law is as Adam to Eve.

No people *sans* a king, I say once more;

And, to confirm my theory, refer

To Moses, Aaron, Glynn, St. John, Fountaine,

And Selden, third book, chapter on "Abuse":

"*Quid de his censetur modo codicibus.*"

You are decreed to reign, "*Dixi.*"

[*Re-seats himself.*]

CROMWELL (*complimenting him by look
and gesture*).

How well does Latin season a discourse!

Let us hear Wolseley.

SIR CHARLES WOLSELEY (*rising*).

Without artifice

I'll undeceive your Highness in my turn.

The chief of a free people, prophets say,
 "Tanquam in medio positus," not top.
 This chief, on whate'er seat he may be placed,
 Is *major singulis, minor universis*;
 Therefore, king's title hurts our privilege.
 "Rex violat legem." [Re-seats himself.]

CROMWELL.

'Tis college wit.
 I'm not familiar with your Latin words.
 Bad reasons.
 [To PIERPOINT.] You!

PIERPOINT (*rising*).

Proud staff of Israel,
 Which through you dominates the earth to-day,
 These are my words. This English nation whose
 High Parliament is called imperial,
 Holds the right immemorial and grand
 To have a king for chief; its dignity
 Requires it. Deign, your Highness, to accept
 A title which offends you. 'Tis your duty
 Unto the people. 'Twere a grievous wrong
 To them to reign and not to be a king.
 Re-seats himself.

CROMWELL.

You, Mr. Lenthall.

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*rising*).

Parliament commands
 The nation in which royalty resides.
 It rules the smallest as it rules the great.
 A Parliament proclaims you king, you should,
 Conformably to Roman law and to

The Decalogue, obey the Parliament
And reign.

CROMWELL (*aside*).
An artful courtier.

MR. WILLIAM LENTHALL (*aside*).
He'll consent.
I hope he'll put me in the House of Lords.

THURLOE (*low to CROMWELL*).
My lord, the Parliament is waiting still.

CROMWELL (*low and impatiently*).
Be silent!

THURLOE (*same*)
But—

CROMWELL (*low to THURLOE*).
Before accepting it
I must reflect.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL FLEETWOOD (*rising*).
Ah, yes! my lord, refuse!
For you—for your own honor—I—

CROMWELL (*dismissing them with his hand*).
Go, all,
And seek the Lord in prayer.

[*All go out slowly in processional form. MILTON, who goes out last, pauses on the threshold of the door, lets them all depart, then leads his guides back to CROMWELL, who has left his armchair and is seated at the front of the stage.*]

SCENE IV

CROMWELL, MILTON

MILTON (*aside*).

I can't refrain;

I must open my heart.

[*Walking straight to CROMWELL.*

Look at me well!

[*He folds his arms; CROMWELL turns around and fixes a surprised and haughty glance upon him.*

I know your eyes flash angrily. You think
 How dare this Milton speak without my leave!
 I have no place 'mong your wise councilors;
 If some one sought my face amid the crowd,
 They'd tell him: "These are orators beloved.
 This Warwick, Pierpoint; and that dumb man
 there,

That's Milton." Well, since he belongs to you,
 What part give you to him? The part of silence!
 That is his measure! I, whom worlds shall hear
 Some day, have not a voice in Cromwell's council.
 I, alone! But to be blind and dumb,
 That is too much to-day. Do you not see
 They're luring you to death with that gold
 crown?

I've come to plead against yourself, my brother!
 Cromwell wants to become a king! He says,
 "For me the people were victorious;

The goal of all their combats, all their prayers,
Their pious labōrs and their vigils brave,
Their flowing blood and all their bitter tears—
I was the goal of all that misery.

I reign, and they are satisfied. Why not
Be happy, since at cost of priceless toil
They've changed their kings, renewed their
heavy chains."

At such a thought, I blush e'en to my soul.
Oh, hear me, Cromwell; you are most concerned.
Thus, all the leaders of our civil wars,
Vane, Pym, who at a word roused every town,
The martyr of our rights, great Ireton,
Your son-in-law, whom your vain pride exiles
Within a royal sepulcher, and Sydney,
Hollis, Martyn, Bradshaw, the mighty man
Who read his death-warrant to Charles the First,
And Hampden, young descended to the tomb—
All worked for Cromwell and are now forgot.
'Tis you who ordered losses on each side,
And robbed the dead upon the battlefield.
Rebellious only in your interest,
For fifteen years we've played at liberty.
In this grand purpose you saw but a chance,
And in the King's death but a heritage!
I have no wish to humble you, my lord;
No one but you could have eclipsed yourself.
The mighty man of thought and man of sword,
You, only, filled the measure of our dreams.
In all of Israel I loved you best,
My-hero; and none placed you nearer to
God's throne than I. Now, for a title, just
A word as empty as it ringeth loud,

The hero, saint, apostle vilifies
Himself. Of his gigantic enterprise
This was the end—the purple, a soiled rag;
The scepter, bauble for a silly child.
Thrown by the storm upon the heights of fate,
Drunk with your destiny, you seek to bind
This faded tinsel round your brow. Beware!
None is so blind as he whose eyes are dazed.
Of Oliver we ask, Where is Cromwell?
Where is his glory, which you've turned to
shame?

Old man, where is the virtue of your youth?
Perhaps you say, 'tis good when one is tired
To fall asleep to murmurs of devotion
Upon a throne, to be a king, to fill
The towns with images of one's proud self,
To have one's rising an event, to ride
In chariots to Westminster, to pray
At Temple Bar, to lord it through a servile
Crowd, to be harangued by city clerks,
To add some flourish to one's crest! Oh, Crom-
well!

Can that be all? Remember Charles the First!
Dare you pick up that crown from out his blood,
And take his scaffold to rebuild a throne?
You want to be a king? Think of it well!
Have you no fear, draped as before with crape,
This White-Hall where your reckless grandeur
struts,
Shall ope its fatal window once again?
You smile, but in your star have you such
faith?

Think of Charles Stuart! Recollect! Reflect!

When this king died, when the sharp ax was
raised,

It was a headsman masked who struck the blow.

A king, he died in sight of all his people,

And none afforded help; nor did he know

What hand it was that robbed him of his life!

The road you travel leads to that same spot.

Your fate is also shrouded with a mask.

Fear lest the same veiled specter waits for you

Upon the scaffold which your acts have raised.

Oh, sad catastrophe of dreams so proud!

There's but one side from which one mounts the
throne;

On all the others yawns a precipice.

If you must grasp the tattered purple, dread

To see assembled in this chamber here

Another court, some day, where you've no place.

For it is possible, at last alarmed

By your rebellious sword to scepter changed,

The people whom you have impressed so long

Shall see your kingship, not your regicide.

You shrink not? Ah, for pity cast aside

This painted scepter and this mask of king.

Maintain the equilibrium of the world.

Be Cromwell! O'er the earth let a free nation

Rule. Don't fetter it. Respect its liberty.

How often this proud commonwealth has blushed

To see you begging from the Parliament

A little tyranny in change for gold.

Belie your base traducers! Stand aloft,

Pure, incorruptible. Judge, legislator,

Conqueror, apostle—how much more

Than king are these! Unto this pristine glory

Re-ascend. One word created light.
 Let Milton's voice now re-create Cromwell!
 [*He throws himself at CROMWELL'S feet.*]

CROMWELL (*bidding him rise with a scornful gesture*).

The fellow speaks to me in wondrous style.
 I fear, John Milton, secretary and
 Interpreter of the State Council, you
 Have too much of the poet 'bout your mind.
 You have forgotten, in your rhapsody,
 That I am called your Highness and my lord.
 This flimsy title much humiliates me,
 But for the people I do sacrifice;
 And since it reigns, who honors, must obey.
 I have resigned myself; do you the same.
 [MILTON *rises proudly and goes out in silence.*
 [Alone.] At heart, he's right. Yes, but he
 vexes me!

Forever Charles the First! Yes, you are blind.
 Kings like King Oliver do not die thus.
 Fanatics stab them, but they are not judged.
 I'll think about it though. A gloomy choice.

SCENE V

CROMWELL, LADY FRANCES

CROMWELL (*perceiving LADY FRANCES, who enters*).

Ah, Frances! One might think she felt my
 woes,

And came, a radiant joy, to banish grief.
 My fair young star, illuminating fate,
 Come hither, child. My human angel, come!
 What sweet instinct draws you most near to me
 When I'm most sad? Is it because you know
 I'm always happy when I see your face?
 Your brilliant eye, your pure and gentle voice,
 Have magic ways of bringing back my youth.
 With your dear arms give to your sire new life.
 You, who know naught of all the sins of life,
 Embrace me. You're my favorite child.

LADY FRANCES (*embracing him joyfully*).

My father,
 Tell me, is it the truth you will restore
 The throne?

CROMWELL.

'Tis said; I will.

LADY FRANCES.

Oh, joyful day!
 England will owe her happiness to you.

CROMWELL.

Her happiness has been my only aim.

LADY FRANCES.

My father and my lord, how pleased she'll be—
 Your good, kind sister! We are then to see,
 After eight years of waiting, our King Charles.

CROMWELL (*astonished*).

What do you say?

LADY FRANCES.

You are so just and good!

CROMWELL.

'Tis not a Stuart who will be the king.

LADY FRANCES.

Who then? A Bourbon. They've no lawful
right
Unto the throne of England.

CROMWELL.

No, they've not.

LADY FRANCES.

Who, then, would dare to touch the sacred
scepter?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

How to answer her! My name hangs heavy
Upon my lips: to speak it seems a crime.
[*Aloud.*] New days, my girl, demand new
governments.
Could you not think of one to fill the place?

LADY FRANCES.

Of whom?

CROMWELL (*gently*).

Why not your father—not Cromwell?

LADY FRANCES (*quickly*).

For such a thought God would have punished
me.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Alas!

LADY FRANCES.

I—do my father such a wrong?
I—name my father a usurper? No!

CROMWELL.

You overestimate my virtue, child.

LADY FRANCES.

That you have clothed yourself with transient
power

Is a misfortune of the times you keenly feel;
But from the martyr king to steal the crown,
Become one of his executioners,
Reign by his murder! Oh!

CROMWELL.

Who caused his death?

LADY FRANCES.

I do not know; then, I was young, alone.
I wept for him, but did not understand.

CROMWELL.

In the King's trial did you never read
The list of courtiers, judges, list of—

LADY FRANCES.

What?

The regicides?

CROMWELL.

Yes, Frances—regicides!

LADY FRANCES.

No, sir, I never heard their fearful names.
I nothing knew but hatred of their crimes.
Their names were never mentioned where we
lived.

CROMWELL.

My sister never spoke to you of me?

LADY FRANCES.

Of you, oh, yes. I learned to love you there.

CROMWELL.

I hope so. Then you hate, with all your heart,
Those daring men who sentenced him to death?

LADY FRANCES.

I hate them! May they be accursed—all!

CROMWELL.

All, Frances?

LADY FRANCES.

Yes, sir, all.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Ah, retribution!

By my sweet daughter cursed and by my son
Betrayed.

LADY FRANCES.

May each one share the fate of Cain.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Implacable are innocence and virtue!
And yet men think I go unpunished! Ah!
This dearest daughter and my last-born child
Is a relentless conscience in my path.
The sweetness of her youthful eye and voice
Abash this Cromwell who defied the world.
Before her purity I have no strength.
Shall I go on? Dare I attain the goal?
Prostrate beneath the weight of my firm throne,
The world will hold its peace. What will she
say?

What will her eyes say, in their eloquence—
 Those winsome eyes which stab me to the heart.
 With what abhorrence will she learn the truth
 That I, a regicide, have dared to be
 A king. We'll send her back to her old home.
 Success demands the sacrifice of joy.
 I will renounce the light of my last years.
 Reality shall never sadden her.
 No! I'll not undeceive the only heart
 Which in the whole wide world believes in me.
 Pure angel! my dark fate shall not blight
 yours.

We will be king, but you shall know it not.
 [*Aloud to FRANCES.*] Keep your white heart;
 I love you thus, my child. [*Goes out.*]

LADY FRANCES (*looking after him*).
 What is it? In his eyes I saw a tear.
 Good father! How he loves me!
 [*DAME GUGGLIGOY and LORD ROCHESTER enter.*]

SCENE VI

LADY FRANCES, LORD ROCHESTER, DAME
 GUGGLIGOY

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*to LORD ROCHESTER, in the
 background*).

There she is,
 Alone!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 What magic lies in gold doubloons!
 They've gained a grim duenna's complaisance

And won the saints who act as musketeers.
 The dame succumbed immediately; I feared
 At first Mount Tabor's pillars would not yield;
 But when gold touches these apostles' palms,
 The round heads whirl at a tremendous speed.
 They're tired of Cromwell, who oppresses them.
 To Ormond I've sent word that the park gate
 Will be surrendered to our men to-night.
 Now, for fair Frances. My heart's mad with
 love,
 And I've some sovereign methods of success—
 I've quatrains, and I've gold doubloons to
 spend.

Let's try our fate.

[He approaches LADY FRANCES, who does not see him; she seems absorbed in a deep reverie.]

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*looking at the purse which she holds in her hand*).

A sum by no means small.

[Aside, looking at LORD ROCHESTER.]

He's really handsome, this young nobleman.
 To be disguised, dare everything for love.
 Young men are mad. Alas! each has his turn.
 Thus Amadis of Gaul had done, I'm sure.
 Should I permit it? Am I doing right?
 This Cavalier said not one word to me.
 He only gave me money.

[Stopping LORD ROCHESTER, who is about to address LADY FRANCES.]

If you please,

One instant, sir.

LORD ROCHESTER (*turning around*).

For what?

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*leading him to the other corner of the stage*).

Only a moment.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Why?

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*smiling at him*).

You have no more to say to me?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The purse was heavy and should have sufficed.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside*).

I hope he'll not humiliate me by offering
More doubloons.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, feeling in his empty pockets*).

I've not another sou.

Let's play upon the weakness of old age
And stop her ears with gallantries.

[*Aloud.*] What tongue

Could ever say all that it wished to you?

Ah, if no weightier cares had brought me here—

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*stepping back*).

My lord, I fear you're flattering me.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Oh, no!

My time, alas! is short.

[*Takes a step toward* LADY FRANCES; DAME
GUGGLIGOY *stops him.*

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

You've only eyes
For my young mistress, that's the truth.

LORD ROCHESTER.

I swear
That you are charming. If I had to choose—
[*Aside.*] Does she intend to keep me till I
mould?

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside*).

He has good taste. I am worth looking at,
When I've had time to ornament myself.
Indeed, I am no subject for one's scorn
In my pink petticoat and farthingale;
When I've my love-knots and my gorgeous
sleeves
And my two panniers well poised on my hips.
[*Aloud.*] You think so?

LORD ROCHESTER (*turning to FRANCES*).

Suffer me—

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*holding him back*).

I feel remorse!
Sir, 'tis my duty to protect this child.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Your eyes, believe me, madame, in their prime,
Would have made Galaor faithless, Esplandian
Himself inconstant. *

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*still keeping him*).

Oh, I feel so culpable!
If any one should come!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Sir Pandarus
Of Troy had burned to wear your colors.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside*).

Oh,
How grand he talks!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Aren't we ridiculous,
We two?

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Yes, on my soul, I swear that now
I feel such scruples they congeal my blood.

[*Taking his hands.*]

LORD ROCHESTER.

Your hands are velvet—
[*Aside.*] Must I waste on her,
This old hag dried up even to her claws,
All that love's daintiest fancy has devised?
What will remain for Frances?

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Let me be!

LORD ROCHESTER.

For Guggligoy, Mars would have quitted
Venus.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

I suffocate! Surely, this must be love!
[*Aloud.*] None but a husband must address
me so.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

She wants a husband! God! I pity him.

And as for flattery, she'll get no more
 From me. The obstinate old fool! In Spain
 Alone, 'mid mules and old duennas will
 She find her like.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

You seem to me a man
 Of noble taste; I want your frank opinion.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

My blood boils!

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*indicating* LADY FRANCES).

Pray, what is there about
 Those giddy things to please—

LORD ROCHESTER.

There is, you know—

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Explain how they can rouse ardors of love.
 What charm about that pretty, vapid face?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

She asks, with her Chinese complexion! Oh!

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

They've youth, I grant; but that's not very
 much.
 Just devil's beauty—

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

While his ugliness
 You've got. The deuce! How to get rid of
 her?

[*Aloud.*] Let me converse two moments with
 your charge,

And afterward, my radiant rosebud, we—
 Faith of a Cavalier! I'll find for you
 Things which you do not even dream about.
 [*Aside.*] A door to Bedlam.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Good! I will wait near.

LORD ROCHESTER (*sighing with relief*).
 At last!

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Be careful. Whate'er else you do,
 Do not betray me. I'd be burned alive.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Be easy! Now walk off a little way.

[*Aside, watching her go off.*
 I'm sure her bones are dry enough to burn.

SCENE VII

LADY FRANCES, LORD ROCHESTER

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

I'm free of her. For love I'll now dare all.
 [*Looking at FRANCES, who sits motionless and
 thoughtful.*

What features and what grace! Oh, my fair
 soul!

I'll walk around before I make attack.

A young girl is a fort, I have observed.

The eye-winks and the charm one puts in dress,
 The gentle cares and tender words are trenches
 Made in zigzag shape; the declaration—

That is the assault; and on the quatrain
 A full surrender follows quick. I can't
 Do things quite systematically here,
 So I will cut preliminaries short.

[*Advancing to FRANCES. Aloud with a profound salutation.*

My lady—miss—

LADY FRANCES (*turns with an astonished air*).
 Sir!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 I am all confused.

LADY FRANCES (*smiling*).
 Ah, you're the chaplain!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 Yes, accursed garb,
 I can put on the gayest airs I please—
 She'll only see a parson and Roundhead.

LADY FRANCES.
 Give me a benediction, holy man!
 On what text will you speak?

LORD ROCHESTER.
 On passion, please.

LADY FRANCES.
 Your zeal inspires attention in my heart.
 A humble sinner stands before your eyes,
 My father.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 "Father"! My disguise is good.
 [*Aloud.*] My daughter, listen.

LADY FRANCES.

Yes, with great respect.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Respectability's a damnèd thing.

[*Aloud.*] My daughter, listen. 'Tis not kind
of you

To strew disaster broadcast in your path.

LADY FRANCES (*astonished*).

I?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Yes; one look destroys a hundred souls.

LADY FRANCES.

Oh, you are wrong!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Indeed, I'm not.

LADY FRANCES.

Explain.

LORD ROCHESTER.

One of your victims stands before you now.

LADY FRANCES.

What have I done to you? If I've wronged you,
I'll go and ask my father—

LORD ROCHESTER (*stopping her*).

Do not grieve.

Of all this sorrow you're quite innocent.

LADY FRANCES.

I do not understand you.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Candid soul!

LADY FRANCES.

If I unconsciously have done you harm,
I must make reparation.

LORD ROCHESTER (*placing his hand on his heart*).

Ah!

LADY FRANCES.

It is

My duty so to do.

LORD ROCHESTER.

What words are these?

You might be exorable to prayers of mine?
With joy you daze me, my adored princess.

[*He tries to take her hand; she moves away.*]

LADY FRANCES.

I am no princess. One adores but God.

You frighten me! [*Starting to go away.*]

LORD ROCHESTER.

Ah! Frances, do not go!

LADY FRANCES.

With what familiar tone he speaks!

[*Approaching LORD ROCHESTER with a com-
passionate manner.*]

Perhaps

He's suffering with his head.

LORD ROCHESTER.

No, with his heart.

LADY FRANCES.

Poor man!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Now let us scale the walls. She pities,
Therefore love lags not far behind that state.

[*Aloud.*] Give back my life—

LADY FRANCES.

Yes, you shall have a doctor.
This is a sudden fever, certainly.

LORD ROCHESTER.

For four years now I've hung upon your steps.
[*Aside.*] Lies are effective—

LADY FRANCES.

What is it you want?

LORD ROCHESTER.

To die! Your eyes alone can heal my wounds.

LADY FRANCES (*moving back*).

He terrifies me much.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

That's flattering.

[*Aloud, and clasping his hands with an air of supplication.*

My queen, my deity, my nymph, my all!

LADY FRANCES.

How many names! I have but one—Frances.

LORD ROCHESTER.

I'm all a-fire and all a-chill for you.

For love of you I came in this disguise.

I am no chaplain; I'm a Cavalier.

Had I but India's wealth to offer you!

Oh, to a love which lasts for twelve long years,

Will you be cold and cruel, with your gentle
 eyes,
 As Ophis, priestess, was to Tiridates?
 For your beauty, I would have crossed Asia.
 You fly from me, alas! and do not speak.
 Then must I die of this great pain of love!
 Just one small word, my splendid tigress, speak!
 That word will make you to this humble slave
 The most celestial object of earth's love.

LADY FRANCES (*opening wide and astonished
 eyes*).

What mean such words?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

She stands in ecstasy.

It must be, for I've spoken word for word,
 Text of "Ibrahim or Bassa the Great"—
 There, where Lysander, Turk, speaks to Zulmis.
 It is pure Scudéry. I will go on!
 [*Aloud.*] Ungrateful woman!
 [*Holding back* LADY FRANCES, *who seeks to go.*
 Stay, or I will drown
 Myself in the Euphrates.

LADY FRANCES (*laughing*).

The Euphrates?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Instead of that, fulfill your first design.
 Yes, take this sword and pierce my throbbing
 heart.
 [*Puts his hand to his side, searching for his
 sword; aside.*

No sword! With this damned costume, how
can one

Affect to kill himself, which must be done;

How to continue in this gallant strain?

We have a quatrain, though, if not a sword.

If she succumbs not now, God take my soul!

[*Aloud.*] Give ear unto your slave, my sov-
ereign.

[*Presenting a rolled parchment tied with a
pink ribbon.*

The picture of my heart is painted here.

It would have been destroyed by fire and flood,

If fire had not dried up my tears, madame,

And if, in turn, tears had not quenched the fire.

Take, read, and judge of my most ardent love.

[*Throwing himself at LADY FRANCES' feet.*

LADY FRANCES (*throwing his parchment to the
floor and stepping back with dignity*).

I understand you. You are insolent.

You've dared to force an entrance to this house.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

This little maid is not so easy won.

LADY FRANCES.

Rise, or I'll call for help.

LORD ROCHESTER (*still on his knees*).

No; I stay here.

LADY FRANCES.

You will repent your insolence with grief,

If my—

SCENE VIII

The same. CROMWELL

CROMWELL (*perceiving* LORD ROCHESTER at
LADY FRANCES' feet).

What brings you to my daughter's knees?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aghast, without changing
his position; aside*).

I'm lost. 'Tis Cromwell! For this trifling sin
I'll hate to hang! Caught in the very act.
He'll find no punishment too great for me.

CROMWELL.

Well done, my chaplain!

LADY FRANCES (*aside*).

Pity, one should have

For a poor fool.

CROMWELL (*to* LORD ROCHESTER, *stupefied*).

My vengeance you forgot.

LADY FRANCES (*aside*).

My father will annihilate this man.

CROMWELL.

This idiot has dared to love my daughter;
And my Eve harkèd to the serpent's wily tongue.
Oh, Frances, you allowed—

LADY FRANCES (*embarrassed*).

My father, no!

'Twas not of me this gentleman was speaking.

CROMWELL.

Upon what theme was he required to kneel?

LADY FRANCES.

He spoke in ardent terms of love, 'tis true;
But 'twas to win me to assist his suit.
He loves one of my women.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, rising with astonishment*).

What is this?

CROMWELL.

Which one?

LADY FRANCES (*smiling*).
Dame Guggligoy.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
For shame!

CROMWELL (*appeased*).
That alters all.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
And I must choose between
The gallows or the old duenna! Zounds!
She might have left selection unto me.

CROMWELL (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).
Why did you not speak out at once, my friend,
Since joys of flesh do yet appeal to you?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
Flesh? Yes—enough to stick a set of bones
Into an old duenna's shape.

CROMWELL.

Your wish
Shall be fulfilled. I like not to be feared.
I'm pleased with you. I'll give your beauty's
hand.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

My beauty?—an old specter to be damned;
A body to repel carnivorous beasts,
A face to make witches miscarry.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

True,
I thought him, first, a man of better taste.
[*Aloud.*] I wish you to be married.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing*).

You're too kind,
My lord.

CROMWELL.

All your desires shall be fulfilled.
[DAME GUGGLIGOY *enters*.]

SCENE IX

The same. DAME GUGGLIGOY

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside, terrified*).
The lovers and the father are together!
All is lost!

CROMWELL (*perceiving DAME GUGGLIGOY*).
'Tis you, good woman!

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside*).

Oh,
My knees bend under me.

CROMWELL.

You're wanted here.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*with terror*).

I—I—my lord?

CROMWELL.

You knew the chaplain loved you?

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Heaven!

CROMWELL.

And you approved?

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

I knew—approved?

I—oh, my lord, I swear to you—

[*Aside.*] He's told—

The little traitor! It is easy seen

By his dark looks that something has occurred.

CROMWELL.

I know the truth.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside*).

Indeed, I thought you did.

[*A pause.* DAME GUGGLIGOY *appears stupefied*; LADY FRANCES *smilingly watches* LORD ROCHESTER, *who turns his disappointed eyes from the young girl to the duenna.*

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The change is unexpected and most rude.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*throwing herself at CROMWELL'S feet*).

Have mercy on me! Mercy—oh, my lord!

CROMWELL (*turning away*).

She acts the part of prude.

[*Signing to her to get up.*

Come, come, arise.

This Master Obededom is our friend.

His heart holds nothing which is not allowed.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

May he aspire, then, to the one he loves?

CROMWELL.

Whom does he love so high up? You?

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

What, I?

CROMWELL.

You are the one—ask him.

[*To ROCHESTER.*] Is it not true?

LORD ROCHESTER (*embarrassed*).

I confess—

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Is it, in truth, for me you burn?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

As if I were in hell.

[*Aloud.*] Madame—

CROMWELL.

Come, come,

Let all the ardors of your love burst forth.

I give permission. Tell Dame Guggligoy

That on your knees you asked my daughter's
help—

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*to LORD ROCHESTER, who is
speechless*).

For that then, you abominable man—
Without my own consent—

LORD ROCHESTER (*casting a glance of reproach
at LADY FRANCES, who is laughing*).

I know I've done
Unpardonable things.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Audacious wretch!

My anger—dread it, sir!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

With her gray hair,
Which formerly was red.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*aside*).

A charming man!

[*Aloud.*] My little upstart, you're in love with
me?

LORD ROCHESTER.

I cannot say the contrary to you!

[*Aside.*] Oh, Wilmot, how thy straits would
please the King!

'Twi'x Lady Seymour and Dame Guggligoy!

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

You love me?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

If Cromwell heard not my words!

I must be tender under pain of death.
 [*Aloud.*] I love you!

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*lackadaisically*).
 'Tis too much!

LORD ROCHESTER.
 I'm of your mind.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.
 You wish to marry me?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, biting his lips*).
 Ah, there's the rub!
 [*Aloud, with embarrassment.*]
 I do not say—

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*indignant at his hesitation*).
 Know you that 'tis an honor!
 Insolent! concupiscence, for shame! [*Weeping.*]

CROMWELL (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).
 Console her, since you want her for your wife.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 Good God!
 [*Aloud to DAME GUGGLIGOY.*]
 Consent.

[*Aside.*] Old leather burned with temper.
 DAME GUGGLIGOY (*sighing, and dropping her eyes*).

I will sacrifice myself.
 [*Extending her hand to him, which he takes with loathing.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 And so will I!

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

I'm kind, and I consent to be embraced.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

A favor? Give me gallows and exemption!

[DAME GUGGLIGOY *presents her cheek to him.*
He forces himself to place a kiss and a grimace upon it.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

I'll turn to you also the other cheek.

LORD ROCHESTER.

A thousand thanks!

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

You're sulking.

LORD ROCHESTER.

I am not.

CROMWELL.

No scandal here. We'll end the matter now.
You shall be married on the spot. Your joys
Are not well suited to a long delay.
I will content you both at once.

LORD ROCHESTER.

But I—

CROMWELL.

Love is impatient. I know that. What ho!
[*Three Musketeers enter.*

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Who would believe this is my wedding day?

CROMWELL (*to Chief of Musketeers*).
Cham Biblechan, one of our Scottish seers

Must marry instantly, by Holy Book,
Sir Obededom and Dame Guggligoy.

[*To LORD ROCHESTER and DAME GUGGLIGOY.*
He will conduct you.

[*To LORD ROCHESTER.*] Cham's an Anabaptist,
Like yourself.

LORD ROCHESTER (*bowing respectfully, aside*).
What thoughtfulness!

CROMWELL.

I know

You are a dogmatist.

LADY FRANCES (*smiling, and looking sidewise
at LORD ROCHESTER as he bows to
her, aside*).

Well caught, young man!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

She's played me a fine trick. I like her, though.
I love that ruse and innocence well mixed.
Her childish malice and her kindly heart
Defends from sire and gives me to the maid.
She's found a way to punish and to save.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).

Come, come, my love! How motionless you
stand!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, sighing deeply*).

I follow Sibyl into hymen's hell.

[*He goes out with DAME GUGGLIGOY and the
Musketeers.*

CROMWELL (*to* LADY FRANCES).

I leave you, to attend a sermon preached
By Lockyer upon Rome and Ammon's priests.
[*He goes out.*]

SCENE X

LADY FRANCES, *alone*

LADY FRANCES.

He cut a sorry figure, the poor man!
I fear the punishment was too severe—
Thus to be wedded, without knowing why,
And to be forced to love Dame Guggligoy.
I half repent! I did him wrong. But then,
My father would have treated him still worse.
[*Perceiving the rolled parchment which has re-
mained on the floor.*]

There is his note. I wonder what he said.

I will not read it.

[*Looking at the parchment with curious and
eager eyes.*]

Shall I not forgive?

No pity for him? Yes, I'll read his words.

No harm is done if I replace them quick.

I owe it to him, he endured so much.

[*Picks up the parchment hastily, unfastens it,
unrolls it, and pauses.*]

'Tis wrong! Shall I, since all is ended now?

Come, let me read! [*Reading.*]

“My lord”—my lord? Strange man!

He called me object, princess, nymph, queen,
angel;

And now he says, "my lord"! A lunatic!

[*Continuing to read.*

"All has worked well;" he writes just as he talks.

No one can understand. "All has worked well"—
What has? Let us go on. [*Reading.*

"To-night, at midnight,
At the gate, present yourself." In love
With me— He meant to take me off!

[*Reading.*

"I have

Seduced the guard." That's it: the fool was sure
He could not be refused. "The password's
given,

And our success is sure." A modest man!

[*Continuing.*

"You are to say 'Cologne'; they'll say the rest."

Less clear. [*Reading.*

"You can, thanks to their friendly aid,
Seize Cromwell, whom I shall have put to sleep.
"The Devil's Chaplain."

Ah! what have I read?

What light breaks on my horrorstricken eyes?

It is my father that this villain wants!

[*Examining the paper carefully.*

What is the address? "Bloum, Rat House, The
Strand."

The traitor handed this note by mistake.

I must go warn my father of the plot.

Some one is coming. Let me hurry, quick!

It may be the assassin.

[*Rushes off hastily, taking the parchment with
her.* DAVENANT enters.

SCENE XI

DAVENANT, *afterward* LORD ROCHESTER

DAVENANT (*alone*).

The Protector

Has sent for me. I wonder why he did.

Oh, nothing! Just pure curiosity. [*Enter*
ROCHESTER.

[*Perceiving* ROCHESTER.] Who is this hypocrite? God, what a sight!

A saint, of course; some holy Puritan.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, without perceiving*
DAVENANT).

Alas! it's done. I am a married man.

[*Advancing to the front and recognizing*
DAVENANT.

Why, Davenant!

DAVENANT (*aside*).

He knows my name!

[*Aloud.*] Well, sir—

Do I not recognize Lord Rochester?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Be silent!

[*They grasp hands.*

DAVENANT (*indicating disguise*).

You're a master-hand at this.

I think, if you were married, your own wife
Would hardly know you under this disguise.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, with profound sigh*).
God grant it!

[*Aloud.*] Davenant, no pleasantries.

DAVENANT.

Your lordship never has refused before
To crack a joke at husbands.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Different now'

Can any one be married and still laugh?
I'd like to see that sort of man.

[*Aloud.*] Enough!

What chance has brought you to our house?

Your face

Quite startled me!

DAVENANT (*laughing*).

"Our house"! You speak with ease.

My lord has soon acclimatized himself.

Fear nothing. Cromwell always bids me here
When I return from foreign journeyings.

How do you like your life with him?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Full well.

Since Milton is my sponsor, he's most kind,
And does me many favors in his way.

[*Aside.*] I'd gladly have dispensed with the
last one.

[*Aloud.*] You know, of course, I came here
just in time.

A traitor, unknown spy within our ranks,
Has told this Cromwell everything; but, thanks

To my discovery, Ormond disappeared, and I
Concealed myself at Cromwell's.

DAVENANT.

Dastard spy!
Sir Richard wished to have him flayed alive.
We've charged him to unearth the villain.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Well!
We're fortunate to have the counter-mine.
[*Showing his vest.*]
I have your vial here. All terminates
To-night.

DAVENANT.

Naught is suspected by Cromwell?

LORD ROCHESTER.

No. Only three of us prepared the plan.

DAVENANT.

The guards are won?

LORD ROCHESTER.

They are.

DAVENANT.

'Twas difficult?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Not so. Puritanism is dying fast.
Gold renders saints quite docile.

DAVENANT.

You are sure
Old Noll has no suspicions about me?

LORD ROCHESTER.

You'd be arrested if he had your name.

SCENE XII

DAVENANT, LORD ROCHESTER, DAME GUGGLIGOY

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).
What, sir? You fly already from your love?

DAVENANT (*starting back*).
Whom is she after?

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).
I lament in vain,
I call, I weep, I languish, and I die;
I wail enough to melt a rock to tears,
But you come not. Abandoned wife am I.
Oh, is your passion so soon spent, my lord?
Behold my grief! My heart to water turns.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside, turning away his eyes*).

The awful creature! Is this sad or droll?
[*Low to DAVENANT, indicating DAME GUGGLIGOY.*

What do you think of her?

DAVENANT (*same*).
What specter is't?

LORD ROCHESTER (*same low tones*).
It is my wife.

DAVENANT (*laughing*).
Your wife?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Yes, on my word.
Come, poet, an epithalamium, quick!

DAVENANT.

My lord is jesting!

LORD ROCHESTER.

Nothing is less droll.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Where are your ardent vows, you traitor?

DAVENANT (*low to LORD ROCHESTER*).

Faith!

Your mistress is of most uncommon sort.
My compliments upon such rare good luck.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

Luck? She's my wife—that's all. No insults,
please.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Superfluous are my tears. He heeds me not!

DAVENANT.

While she is raving, please explain to me.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

Lord Cromwell gave me, out of his kind heart,
The woman and her dowry.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*pulling LORD ROCHESTER'S
sleeve*).

My dear husband—

DAVENANT (*low to LORD ROCHESTER, who is
trying to keep DAME GUGGLIGOY off*).

How—

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to DAVENANT*).

I will tell you by-and-by. Just now
This Sibyl has a right to use that name.
We did it; in a chapel made of guards,
A drum rolled out the sermon, and we were
United by a corporal. I feared
We might be forced by martial law to use
A camp-bed for a nuptial couch; but no,
That we escaped.

DAVENANT (*laughing*).

I wish I could have seen
The soldier marry this duenna to
Our almoner.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low*).

That is the way we do.

DAVENANT.

Such weddings make a grand conclusion to
Dramatic work. The corporal joins the beauty
Unto the lover. All is said.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*sharply*).

Of whom

Speak you in those low tones? He flies from
me!

Did fate ordain I should descend to this—
I, not bad-looking, who have safe and sound
Two hundred jacobuses bright as new!

DAVENANT (*to LORD ROCHESTER*).

You've gained, my friend, a great inheritance—
Two hundred jacobuses and three teeth.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*to* LORD ROCHESTER).
 You treacherous man, who gave me such fair
 words!

LORD ROCHESTER (*to* DAVENANT).
 She dreamed that.
 [*To* DAME GUGGLIGOY.] I beg you, leave us in
 peace,
 And may God damn you, madame.
 [*Pushing her off.*]

DAME GUGGLIGOY.
 All alike!
 They're tender to their loves, hard to their
 wives;
 Cats before marriage, tigers afterward.
 [*To* LORD ROCHESTER.] Barbarous man, to
 change myrtle to cyprus! Ah!
 Abandon your young wife!

LORD ROCHESTER.
 Hush, you old witch!
 Were Satan dead, you'd be his dowager.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.
 What language for a saint!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).
 Yes, I forgot.
 [*Aloud.*] O woman, I have made a vow—
 [*Aside.*] Come forth,
 My parson air!
 [*Aloud.*] Of chastity.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.
 Of what?

LORD ROCHESTER.

In vain you do entreat, "Come sleep with me."
I have renounced voluptuousness.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Indeed!

You drive me from our couch connubial?

LORD ROCHESTER.

No, madame, you can stay long as you please.
'Tis only mine own self I must exile.

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

This outrage! Serpent, monster, adder, wretch,
Beware of my revenge!

LORD ROCHESTER (*drawing back*).

Look out for eyes.

This fairy has hooked nails.

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*weeping*).

Yet hear me! Since

A husband's rights have come to you—

LORD ROCHESTER.

Oh, rage!

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

What ice has come to chill your former fire?
Why fly? What demon holds you in his power?

LORD ROCHESTER.

You ask me that?

DAME GUGGLIGOY.

Come here; sit down by me.

I long for you!

LORD ROCHESTER (*hurrying off*).

What shall I do to-night?

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*running after him*).

Ungrateful wretch! [Goes out after him.

DAVENANT (*alone, shrugging his shoulders*).

Wilmot must be insane.

What folly's this? Unite to tragedy

This masquerade!

[Goes to the back of stage and watches them off.

CROMWELL enters.

SCENE XIII

DAVENANT, CROMWELL

CROMWELL (*holding LORD ROCHESTER'S parchment in his hand; without seeing DAVENANT and without being seen by him*).

Behold! another trap,

In which I almost fell. From mine own palace
They would abduct me! All their madness
may

Mean triumph in the end. Without my
daughter,

A simple child, the kings had lost their master.

Oh, fools, who dare not face the light of day,

To come to London to abduct Cromwell!

How could I have foreseen this madman's plan?

I vainly seek instruction from this note.

But fortunately, they are all insane.

To court the daughter and dethrone the sire!
 Go to his den to set the lion's trap,
 And frolic with his whelps before his eyes!
 Were they not madmen, they'd be idiots.
 The "Devil's Chaplain." Ah, you double face!
 This Obededom is a saint—outside.
 Who is he? Some young chief of Cavaliers.
 Which? Wilmot Rochester or Buckingham?
 A gallant at the Court—apostle here!
 It must be either Wilmot or Villiers.
 My soldiers won! Then I am loved no more!
 We'll see! I have already made my plan.
 But yet, to tempt them better to the bait,
 I wish I knew the rest of the password.
 However, I am ready for them all—
 Ormond, and his Episcopalians too.
 [DAVENANT, *coming to the front, perceives*
 CROMWELL.

DAVENANT (*aside*).

'Tis Cromwell!

[*Aloud, bowing.*] Highness—

CROMWELL (*with an air of agreeable surprise*).

You've arrived in time,

Good Davenant.

DAVENANT (*with another profound obeisance*).

Entirely at your service.

CROMWELL (*smiling*).

Are you still lodging at The Siren, sir?

DAVENANT.

I am, my lord.

CROMWELL.

A comfortable place.

How is your health, by grace of God?

DAVENANT (*bowing*).

My health

Is excellent.

CROMWELL.

You had a pleasant journey?

Were you quite satisfied?

DAVENANT.

I was, my lord.

[*Aside.*] Mere words!

CROMWELL.

You had some object in your travels?

Business or pleasure?

DAVENANT.

For my health, my lord.

CROMWELL.

Your health?

[*Aside.*] I doubt if that improved it, sir.[*Aloud.*] 'Tis well to make a change of domicile

And breathe new air. What places did you visit?

DAVENANT (*embarrassed*).

The north of France, my lord—

CROMWELL.

Too small a place;

The borders of the Rhine are better far.

I've always longed to visit them myself.
Did you go there?

DAVENANT (*with increasing embarrassment*).
I did.

CROMWELL.

And you did well.
You saw Frankfort and Maintz and Freves, of
course;
Cologne?

DAVENANT (*aside*).

His smiling manner frightens me.
[*Aloud.*] I did, my lord.

CROMWELL.

Cologne—city of wisdom!
The land of sainted Bruno and Agrippa!

DAVENANT (*anxiously to himself*).

Let us make haste to leave Cologne.
[*Aloud.*] I went
To Bremen, stopped at Spa—

CROMWELL.

Suppose we tarry
At Cologne.

[*Aside.*] He'd like to be in Bremen now.
[*Aloud.*] The University? What century?

DAVENANT.

Fourteenth.

CROMWELL.

A very interesting place
Unto a cultured mind. You saw it?

DAVENANT (*aside*).

God!

Can he suspect.

[*Aloud.*] I? No! See what, my lord?

CROMWELL.

That great cathedral! 'Tis the lateral door
Which is the most admired.

DAVENANT (*aside*).

He does not know.

[*Aloud.*] Yes, but the whole effect is in bad
taste.

CROMWELL.

Bad taste? That's such an easy thing to say.
It is a noble edifice, and ought
To be admired. There's naught to mar its
beauty
Except the thought that heathens worshiped
there. [*After a pause.*]
So, in the city, you saw nothing more?

DAVENANT.

Nothing, my lord.

CROMWELL (*smiling*).

You did not even make
A courteous visit to a certain Stuart?

DAVENANT (*aside, stupefied*).

An unexpected blow!

[*Aloud.*] I swear to you
I saw him not, my lord.

CROMWELL.

I know how faithful

Are all true Papists to their vows. Who then
Put out the candles? Was it Lord Mulgrave?

DAVENANT (*aside*).

He must know all.

CROMWELL.

I've confidence in you,
And do believe you did not see the King.
You wear a hat of a most curious shape;
Will you not kindly make exchange with mine?

DAVENANT (*aside*).

I am betrayed!

[*Aloud.*] My lord—

CROMWELL (*snatching the hat from him*).

Give it to me.

I thank you.

[*He feels inside of the lining and draws out the royal message, which he reads with eagerness. He breaks out into expressions of triumph while reading it.*]

It is well. The "Devil's Chaplain"
Is my Lord Rochester. 'Tis well arranged—
Quite wonderful. It seems a simple thing
To pull wool o'er my eyes, deceive me, drug me,
To carry me away! A splendid plan!

[*To DAVENANT.*] Your tragi-comedies can have
no peers

If they are equal to your perfidies.

[*To THURLOE, who enters.*] See that this man's
conducted to the Tower.

[*THURLOE goes out, and comes back accompanied by six Puritan musketeers, be-*

tween whom DAVENANT places himself without resistance. CROMWELL dismisses him with a bitter and ironical laugh.

Charles Stuart coiffed you; I give you a home.
God keep you well!

DAVENANT (*aside*).

Oh, sad catastrophe!

[*Goes out with guards.*]

THURLOE (*to CROMWELL*).

The Parliament, your Highness, which has been
Exhorted by a saint, at your command,
Brings divers bills for sanction unto you,
And notably the Humble Address or law
Offering the crown to you.

CROMWELL.

Let them come in.

[*Alone.*] A gloomy project this. And they
must fall

By their own artifice. I want to catch
Them in the trap which they've prepared for me.
[*Looking first at ROCHESTER'S parchment, then
at DAVENANT'S message.*]

Now, I hold everything in my own hands.

[*Making a gesture of shutting the two hands
together.*]

There's nothing left to me but to crush them.
God has declared for me. Behold! here comes
The Parliament.

[*The Parliament, conducted by THURLOE, en-
ter in their dress of ceremony. At the
head of the members marches THE SPEAK-*

ER, *in robes, followed by the clerks of the Parliament; he is preceded by the sergeants of the House, the mace-bearers carrying their maces, and the usher, with the black rod.* CROMWELL mounts to his protectorial chair and the Parliament pauses a few steps away from him, outside of the circle of stools.

SCENE XIV

CROMWELL, *the Parliament*, EARL OF CARLISLE, WHITELOCKE, STOUPE, THURLOE.
Upon a sign from CROMWELL, CARLISLE and THURLOE draw near to the Protector

CROMWELL (*low to THE EARL OF CARLISLE*).

My lord, see that the soldiers
 Who are stationed at the park gate for this night
 Be all arrested on the instant.

[EARL OF CARLISLE *bows and goes out.* *Low to THURLOE, while handing him ROCHESTER'S parchment.*

This

Must go at once to Bloum, upon the Strand.

[*Indicating the superscription on the letter.*
 You'll find there his address—or better still,
 Sir Richard Willis shall be messenger.
 Go!

THURLOE (*bows, and takes parchment*).

Yes, my lord. [Goes out.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

This Bloum conceals Ormond,
Whom my star now gives up to me.

[*Sits himself, and puts his hat on.*

Ah, yes!

[WHITELOCKE and STOUPE take their places
at his side; aloud.

We give you our attention, gentlemen.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT
(*standing, and uncovered, as are all those
who accompany him*).

My lord, we bear the bills of Parliament.
Your Highness will perceive in its designs
Our strong allegiance to the good old cause.
Deign to confirm our laws.

CROMWELL.

We'll see anon.

THE SPEAKER (*turning to THE CLERK*).
Your duty, clerk of Parliament.

THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT (*with loud voice,
holding open the record of deliberation*).

“This day

June twenty fifth, ninth year of liberty
Which God has given us. These are the bills,
Last voted on in Parliament. *Primo:*
Considering we may sin imprudently
As Noah did, from love of vintage fruit,
And swear by saints' names not maliciously.
Aforesaid Parliament declares its will
To soften penalties upon these points,

And limits punishment unto the lash
For drunkards, rope for those who swear."

CROMWELL.

Too mild!

He who blasphemes the God to whom we pray
Is equal to assassins and actors.

Why a less punishment? These laws are tran-
sient;

We do consent.

THE SPEAKER *and members of Parliament*
make a profound obeisance.

THE CLERK (*continuing to read*).

"*Secundo: Victories*

Which Robert Blake, our admiral, has won
Are to be honored by a general fast.

The House, having long searched the holy books,
Presents a diamond worth five hundred pounds
To him. Moreover it decrees his triumph
Shall be immortalized in its report."

CROMWELL.

To that

We give consent.

[*All bow profoundly. THURLOE re-enters and*
takes his place beside the Protector.

THURLOE (*low to CROMWELL*).

'Tis done.

THE CLERK (*continuing*).

"*Tertio: In York*

The mobs, excited by the malecontents,
Have filled with great affright all English hearts,

So that afcresaid Parliament decrees
 York rebels to be placed outside the law,
 And to that end places *quo warranto*
 Upon their city charters.”

CROMWELL (*low to THURLOE*).

Twenty soldiers
 Would do more than hundred *quo warranto*.
 But I will manage that.

[*Aloud.*] We do consent.

[*All bow again.*]

THE CLERK (*continuing*).

“*Quarto*: The House decrees in order to
 Replenish the exhausted treasury,
 Each Englishman who would atone past crimes
 Shall fast one day per week at profit of
 The State—a method authorized to saints,
 To save one’s soul and help the treasury.”

CROMWELL.

We do consent.

[*All bow again.*]

THE CLERK (*continuing with a louder voice*).

“*Quinto*: Humble Petition, and
 Advice unto the warrior of Zion.

[*All the members of Parliament make a profound obeisance to CROMWELL, who answers by a sign of the head.*]

Considering that it is an ancient mode
 To close domestic wrangling by a king;
 That God Himself, when giving His wise laws,
 Changed desks to thrones and judges into kings;
 Having heard the speakers for and those against,
 To the Protector Parliament affirms

The nation needs an individual chief,
 To whom the name of king shall be restored.
 And she begs Cromwell to accept the crown,
 With all hereditary rights."

THE SPEAKER (*to CROMWELL*).

My lord,

I beg to speak.

CROMWELL.

Speak on!

THE SPEAKER.

In every age,

My lord, times present and times far remote,
 Kings have directed the affairs of earth.
 The primal book in which all truths abound
 Has written everywhere. *Reges gentium*.
 We meditate on Gibeon, Actium,
 And see, wherever has been civil war
 It is a sword which cuts the gordian knot.
 That sword becomes a scepter, and is proof,
 That every question's settled by a king.
 I know of scholars it has been the thought
 That Christ, assisted by His saints, might reign.
 But the lord of eternal destinies
 Cannot appear as king to carnal eyes.
 Kingdoms of earth need human sovereigns—
Rex substantialis, as the precepts say.
 Such arguments one cannot well refute.
 Republics are, of all conditions, worst.
 The people need to lean upon a king;
 For they, my lord, no matter what is said,
 Are like the heron, who sleeps on one foot.
 The sleeping heron, is he crippled? Well,

The people are this heron. Has it wars?
 The army is its beak, the Houses wings.
 But when the bark is anchored once again,
 Let it sleep on, *Stans pede in uno*.
 This thought is much too clear for argument.
 Then let your Highness over Europe stretch
 The sword of Judah and great Aaron's rod.
 Be King of England; be the heron's foot.
 We make appeal to laws common to earth.
Dixi quid dicendum—we speak for all.

[THE SPEAKER ceases, and CROMWELL, absorbed in his thoughts, remains silent for a few moments; finally he lifts his eyes to heaven, folds his arms across his breast, and sighs profoundly.]

CROMWELL.

We will consider the request.

[General astonishment.]

THE SPEAKER (*aside*).

What's this?

WHITELOCKE (*low to THURLOE*).

Does he refuse? What does he say?

THURLOE.

He fears

Some peril, and he hesitates.

CROMWELL (*low to THURLOE*).

I must.

Let us delay this. 'Gainst the Cavaliers

'Twill serve to neutralize the Puritans.

We must not, in this coming struggle, place

Two burdens on our back, two thorns upon
 Our feet. No! let us first destroy the net
 Which Ormond casts about me. There is time
 To seize upon the crown when we get through.
 'Twill calm the Puritans, if I avoid
 This honor. *[Aloud to those present.*

Go in peace and seek God's grace.

[All, excepting THURLOE, go out with profound obeisances and signs of great astonishment.

SCENE XV

CROMWELL, THURLOE

THURLOE (*aside*).

Something has happened here within the hour.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Until to-morrow let this act deceive.

[Both stand silent and motionless for a moment; CROMWELL, leaning on the arm of his chair, seems to be thinking deeply.

THURLOE advances to him and bows.

THURLOE.

'Tis late, my lord.

CROMWELL (*abruptly*).

Then let them ring

The curfew bell.

THURLOE.

Do you not need some rest?

CROMWELL.

I do; but I have now no wish to sleep.

THURLOE.

Where will you sleep to-night, my lord?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Hard life—

To hide as if I were a criminal!

Be sovereign, to change one's bed each night!

Forever, everywhere death lurks for me.

[*Aloud to THURLOE.*

Make my bed here.

THURLOE.

The Painted Chamber? No!

Charles' judges—

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Ah, forever that one thought!

THURLOE.

'Twas here they came to meet together.

CROMWELL.

Well?

[*Aside.*] This Charles![*Aloud.*] Your memory is too good, my friend.

Obey.

[THURLOE bows, exits, comes back followed by servants, who arrange a bed and bring two candles. CROMWELL, who has remained silent, goes up to THURLOE when the servants have gone out.]

Besides, when everything is dark,
If specters haunt this room they'll not see me.

[*Grasping THURLOE'S hand and pointing to the bed.*

This bed is not for me.

THURLOE (*surprised*).
For whom?

CROMWELL (*whispering*).

Speak low.

The one for whom this bed is made fears not King's phantoms—no, nor headless ghosts.

THURLOE.

What means—

CROMWELL.

Hush! Do my will, and you will understand Hereafter.

THURLOE (*aside*).

I am all amazed. 'Tis thus

That he makes use of us. Forever mute!

Do all he bids and never know wherefore.

Be dumb and deaf and blind, when he commands,

Then have a hundred eyes, a hundred arms,

A hundred voices if need be.

[*Aloud to CROMWELL.*] My lord,

Your pardon, if I venture— Danger threatens?

Whence comes it?

[*Indicating bed.*

And who is he who takes your place?

CROMWELL.

Be silent. Is not our good chaplain late?

[*Aside, walking hastily to and fro at the front of the stage.*

How proud they are! They think they hold me now!

On one side Ormond laughs, and Rochester
Laughs on the other. Good! Their genius has
A chance to match itself with mine. My grave
They've dug; but 'tis a narrow one,
And matches them in size.

[*Pausing before a table on which two candles
are burning, as if disturbed by their light,
and says rudely to THURLOE:*

Why so much light?

One candle is enough. Economy
In my affairs, I beg you.

[*Blows out one of the candles.*

Thus we may

Extinguish enemies. A breath!—all's done.

Well, where's my chaplain?

[*LORD ROCHESTER enters accompanied by a
page, who bears a golden salver; on it is
a golden goblet in which floats a sprig of
rosemary.*

THURLOE.

Here he comes, my lord.

CROMWELL.

At last!

[*Rubbing his hands with joy.*

SCENE XVI

The same. LORD ROCHESTER

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

The goblet's full! Old Noll must drink
It all, and then, my faith! he will sleep well.

I emptied the whole phial. A good turn
 I do him, for I tear him from remorse.
 He'll not have slept so well for a long time.
 [*Taking the salver from the page, who goes
 out, he presents it to CROMWELL with a
 humble obeisance.*]

[*Aloud.*] My lord—

[*Aside.*] Our final ceremonious act.

[*Aloud.*] Pray drink this liquor which my hands
 have blessed.

CROMWELL (*sneeringly*).

So you have blessed it?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Yes.

[*Aside.*] The frightful look!

CROMWELL.

It ought to benefit me, don't you think?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Yes, hippocras contains the wondrous power
 Of bringing sleep, my lord.

CROMWELL.

Then drink yourself.

[*Takes the goblet from the salver and presents
 it suddenly to LORD ROCHESTER.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*drawing back with terror*).
 I—drink?

[*Aside.*] A thunder clap!

CROMWELL (*with a dubious smile*).

You hesitate?

Habituate yourself to favors, sir!

We have yet greater ones in store. Take this;
 Throw off the awe which seems to trouble you,
 And drink.

[*Forces* LORD ROCHESTER, *who is consternated,*
to take the goblet.

You know not how you're cherished here,
 Nor how your blessings will come home to roost.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

I'm stupefied.

[*Aloud.*] My lord—

CROMWELL.

I tell you, drink!

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Something most wonderful has happened here.
 [*Aloud.*] I swear to you!

CROMWELL.

Drink first, then you can swear.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What will become of our great plot, and all
 Our clever preparations?

CROMWELL.

Won't you drink?

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Old Noll is more malicious than we are.

CROMWELL.

You need much urging.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

Let me drink it down.

[*Drinks.*

CROMWELL (*with a sardonic laugh*).
How does it taste?

LORD ROCHESTER (*placing the goblet on the table*).

May God protect the King!
[*Aside.*] At least, I'm saved from Madame Guggligoy.

Old Noll can do whate'er he will to me.
My new-made wife was waiting at the door.
This time my shipwreck's fortunate; I fall
From Charybdis to Scylla—from her arms
To Cromwell's. One puts you to sleep by force,
The other forces you to fight all night.
I've changed my torturer, and that is all.
I yawn—already—

[*Sits down on one of the folding-chairs.*]

THURLOE (*to CROMWELL*).
Was it poisoned?

LORD ROCHESTER.

Humph!
That's flattering to Cromwell and to me.

CROMWELL (*low to THURLOE*).
We'll see!

THURLOE (*aside, looking at LORD ROCHESTER*).
Poor man!

LORD ROCHESTER (*yawning*).
My head is turning round.
[*Yawning again.*]
When one has played a comedy all day,

Has preached so much, and sworn so little,
 prayed
 And fasted, worn a saintly countenance,
 And borne a Hebrew name; when one has been
 Examined—on the Bible—by old Noll—
 To go to sleep [*yawns*] just as the climax comes—
 Is hard— [*Yawning again.*

I hope I shall not wake up, hanged.
 Alas! poor Ormond will go down with me.
 That's all that I regret. Away, bad dreams!
 [*Yawning.*

Oh, hellish drink! I cannot raise my head.
 Good-night, Mr. Cromwell—God save the King!
 [*His head falls on his shoulder, and he sleeps.*

CROMWELL (*eyes fixed on LORD ROCHESTER*).
 That is devotion. Who'd do that for me?
 [*To THURLOE.*] We'll place him on the bed.
 [*They take up LORD ROCHESTER and carry him to the bed on which they place him without awakening him. At this moment some one knocks at a low door leading to one of the side corridors of the Painted Chamber.*

THURLOE (*anxiously to CROMWELL*).
 Some one is knocking
 At that door.

CROMWELL.
 I know. Go open it.

THURLOE (*opening the door*).
 The rabbi.

SCENE XVII

CROMWELL, THURLOE, MANASSES-BEN-ISRAEL;
LORD ROCHESTER, *asleep*

CROMWELL (*to MANASSES, who prostrates himself on the threshold*).

Well, what does the Jew bring me?
[MANASSES *rises and draws near to CROMWELL with a mysterious air.*

MANASSES (*low to CROMWELL*).
Some gold—
[*Opens his robe and reveals a heavy bag, which he carries with difficulty.*

CROMWELL (*to THURLOE*).
Go out. [*Low.*] But do not go too far.
[THURLOE *bows and goes out.*

MANASSES (*to CROMWELL*).
The Swedish brig is taken, and I come
Immediately to bring your lordship's share.

CROMWELL (*examining the bag*).
What jest is this? My share?

MANASSES (*biting his lips*).
My lord, I mean
A first installment.

CROMWELL.
That is better, sir!
[*Takes the bag and puts it on the table beside him.*

MANASSES (*aside*).
No thing on earth escapes that lynx's eye!

The Cavaliers, thank God, are easy fooled.
 I take their ship, and let them use my bank.
 Thanks to my care, they're destitute of gold;
 And I, according to the bargain made,
 Sell back at eight per cent all that I steal.
 To steal from Christians is no sin at all.

CROMWELL.

What news have you, my purgatory face?

MANASSES.

Nothing, save that in London it is said
 They've hanged at Dover an astrologer.

CROMWELL.

Then they did well. You're an astrologer
 Yourself, I think.

MANASSES (*after a moment's hesitation*).

Bear not false witness, says
 The Decalogue. 'Tis true, I know this book,
 Obscure to devils, read by Solomon
 And spelled by Zoroaster. Yes, I can
 Read in the skies your trials and your joys.

CROMWELL (*aside, eyes fixed on the Jew*).
 Strange destiny! To watch mankind and stars:
 Up there astrologer; down here a spy.

MANASSES (*with eagerness, approaching an
 open window in the back of the room,
 through which one sees the star-be-
 sprinkled heavens*).

Look! Wonderful! Look, beside Scorpion—
 there!

Strange! at this moment I can see—

CROMWELL.

See what?

MANASSES (*without taking his eyes from the sky*).

Your star. [*Turning solemnly to CROMWELL.*
Yes, from your future I can lift

The veil.

CROMWELL (*thrilled*).

You can? oh, no! you lie, old man.
Aren't you afraid to tempt a dagger's point?

MANASSES (*solemnly*).

If 'tis a lie, may Death, who waits for all,
Close instantly these eyes, which read the truth.

CROMWELL (*aside, thoughtfully*).

Why not? To pluck away the veil from destiny;
Far in the heavens read a far-off fate;
Decipher every life and every soul;
To hold the key to all the mysteries
Which a supreme, an unseen hand
Has traced upon heaven's surface by these suns—
Oh, what a power! 'Tis sharing God's own
crown!

And I was satisfied with a small throne:
Proud to ascend it after petty kings.
I scorned this Jew. Beside him what am I?
What is my power when compared to his?
How humble my attempts, beside the goal
Which he has won! His kingdom is the world,
And no horizon marks its end. But no!
It can't be true. Our reason must forbid—
Our reason? Cavern into which we throw

All that we have, and which gives nothing back.
 Blind doubt denying everything
 It cannot understand. Oh, yes! the fool
 Quotes reason, then he laughs. It's easy done.
 Whence might this power come from, after all?
 God has assigned a goal to every one.
 Of all these beings circling Nature's breast
 Each has his center, each his place and sphere.
 Beasts know not men. Man knows not God.

The skies

Keep their own secrets, just as we keep ours.
 Can souls from this world into others look?
 Bring to the living, torches from the dead?
 Must they stay always this side of the tomb?
 Once dead, cannot they leave the catacombs,
 Or living penetrate the sealed tombs?
 Who knows? Must we deny all things we do
 Not see? Does death break every bond? Have
 not

Things terrible and strange been seen on earth?
 But man to scan the heaven's flaming page!
 Who knows what God puts in a new-made soul?
 And yet this man, this Jew, this varlet, wretch,
 Can he interpret earth in its grand sense?
 To Holy of Holies can his base look pierce?
 Why not? What do we know? All things are
 strange—

A reason why, perhaps. If to my mind
 He could explain the language of my star,
 Tell when this struggle which I wage, shall cease!
 We are alone—no witnesses. I'll try.

[*Aloud to MANASSES.*

Jew!

MANASSES (*who has not ceased his contemplation of the heavens, turns and bows*).

Lord!

CROMWELL.

If it is true these rays of light
 Illuminate your soul with mystic force,
 And lend your eye the gleams of prophecy—
 [*Pausing and appearing to hesitate.*]

MANASSES.

What does the master of his servant ask?

CROMWELL (*lowering his voice*).

I want the future.

MANASSES (*rising, and drawing himself up proudly*).

Dare you aim so high?
 Uncircumcised, you lift your eyes to this?
 Your soul, in spite of barriers of flame,
 Would see the stars, the gold, the diamond dust,
 Which firmaments roll in their bottomless
 Abyss. The heavens you would penetrate,
 Behold the sanctuary with its gloom,
 The fiery laboratory where He stands,
 The great Jehovah, holding in His grasp
 Pivot and compass of eternity?
 You'd pierce the flames, the ether, and the seas,
 The triple veil of heaven, triple wall
 Of earth, to learn what suns are they which
 burn
 Their words of fire on God's white diadem?
 You read the future! Could you, heart pro-
 fane,

Support the glory of this mystery?

You, always buried in the cares of earth,
Have you spent nights and days unto this end?
What marvels have you grasped? What trials
stood?

Behold my pallid brow! Tobias' age
Is mine. I've passed through this delusive life
And never turned my gaze from that great
world.

Think—in a century—no hour, no day!
And many times at night I've left my home
To go and listen at the door of tombs,
To find but worms devouring putrid flesh.
How happy was I, king of the dark realms,
When I could change a corpse into a ghost,
And make some dead man from the gallows cut
Breathe just a word of the great alphabet.
The dead revealed the mystery of worlds;
And my weak eyes almost obtained a glimpse
Of the Great Being in His awful home,
Who on the heaven's orbit, as upon
The folds of every shroud, inscribes His name—
His fatal name, known unto Him alone.
But for your eyes, blind in their first dark
night,

The constellations are but smoldering fires.
Absorbed in contemplation of these sights,
Has your hair fallen, has your beard turned
white?

Ah! Tell me, have you passed your weary
days

As did the old magicians, in despair,
Despised, proscribed 'mongst men?

CROMWELL (*interrupting him impatiently*).

Enough! I pay

You for your services.

MANASSES.

'Tis a mistake!

Man can indeed subserve himself to men.
While I am living my ignoble life,
While flesh covers my skeleton, in truth,
I am the servant of your haughty plans;
But when, my lord, did I agree to spy
Upon the heavens?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

This is no hypocrite.

He's loyal to his science, and proscribed,
He honors it. [*Aloud, and with violence.*

Discover if my planet
Is propitious. I command you!

MANASSES.

I cannot.

CROMWELL.

I wish it.

MANASSES.

Do you wish it?

CROMWELL (*quickly grasping his dagger*).

That will make
You speak, or this will make you dumb.

MANASSES (*after hesitating*).

What if

I add to heaven, hell; by the Koran
The Talmud place? Will you not shrink?

CROMWELL.

Not I.

MANASSES.

The spirit yields to sword: unto the tyrant
The magician yields. Speak on, my son!

CROMWELL.

To my astounded soul, reveal, I beg,
The secret of my life and destiny.
While yet a child I had a vision strange:
Because of humble birth, I'd been sent forth
From those fair lawns, of which proud Oxford
boasts,
And which are trod by none but noble born.
When I regained my cell, with bursting heart
I wept and cursed the rank which branded me.
Night came: I slept not, sitting by my couch.
A breath that chilled me to the very soul
Passed by, and near to me I heard a voice
Which said, "All honor unto Cromwell—king!"
This voice, which was almost inaudible,
Was menacing, yet full of pathos too.
Pale, seized with terror, in the gloom I rose.
I sought the place from whence the sound had
come.
I found it. There a trunkless head stood bathed
With livid light, in that dark spot. A halo,
A blood-colored halo, decked the brow,
And to it hung the remnants of a crown.
There, motionless—old man, I tremble yet—
It watched me with a leer upon its lips,
And murmured, "Honor unto Cromwell—
king!"

I took one step—all disappeared, and left,
 Except upon my frozen heart, no trace.
 "All honor unto Cromwell!"—what think you,
 Manasses, of this vision? What was meant?
 At night! those ghastly vapors of the air!
 A hideous head, the shreds of a grim specter
 Pledging me kingdoms with its taunting laugh!
 Oh, it was horrible! was't not, old Jew?
 That head, I saw it once again—one day
 In winter, when I faced a maddened crowd;
 Then it was dumb—but from the headsman's
 hand
 'Twas hanging!

MANASSES (*reflecting*).

Well! Ezekiel, son-in-law
 To Jethro, had some visions, much less strange,
 Belshazzar's warning at the festival
 Was not equal to this; Toldos Jeschut
 Gives us no history resembling yours.
 To see the head of a still living king!
 'Twas strange.

CROMWELL.

Nothing could be more horrible.

MANASSES (*reflecting*).

Perhaps—but no! The ghosts I have in mind
 Claimed vengeance for crimes past, but yours
 Concerned the future. You were not asleep?

CROMWELL.

No.

MANASSES.

Vision without parallel: for if

You had been sleeping, it was but a dream,
And I know many that are worse than that.

[*Resuming his reflections.*

The only specter that rose not from graves.
In my long life I've nothing seen like that!

[*Turning to CROMWELL.*

What odor did its absence leave behind?

CROMWELL (*abruptly*).

No matter. Tell me what my vision means.
Was it a truth or an illusion? Speak!
"All honor unto Cromwell!" Come, reveal
My destiny. Shall I be made a king?"

MANASSES (*fixing his eyes on the heavens*).

I see it, yes! From zenith to the nadir
I would always recognize that star. 'Tis fixed,
And seems to grow while one is watching it.
'Tis brilliant, but a spot is in its heart.

CROMWELL (*impatiently*).

Your eyes have been turned up there long
enough.
Shall I be king?

MANASSES.

In vain I'd flatter you;
Upon the firmament one reads no lies.
I can't withhold the fact that in its course
Your star forms not the triangle mystic
With the stars Jod and Zain.

CROMWELL.

Triangle! Come,
What matters that? Out on you, son of Cain!

Tell me the meaning of the trunkless head!
Am I to be a king? Answer me that!

MANASSES.

No king, except a miracle transpires.

CROMWELL (*rudely*).

What mean you by a miracle?

MANASSES.

I mean—

CROMWELL.

Well, what?

MANASSES.

A miracle.

CROMWELL.

And what am I?

Am I a miracle?

MANASSES (*thoughtfully*).

Perhaps.

CROMWELL.

It is a throne

You promise me?

MANASSES.

I cannot, for your sake,
Change the replies of heaven.

CROMWELL.

Can you not!

What was the vision then—a mockery
Of death? Oh, as for you astrologers,
I think you are impostors—all of you!
Working these planets for your private ends.

MANASSES (*seriously*).

Do not blaspheme, my son. Give me your hand.

[CROMWELL, *apparently subjugated by the authority of the astrologer, gives his hand.*

MANASSES *seizes it, examines it, and sings in a monotone, without taking his eyes from it.*

Avaunt! all workers of untruth
 And sorcerers restored to youth
 By magic philters venomous;
 All dragons, spirits luminous;
 And all the centenary kind
 Who cannot run for lack of wind.

Ávaunt! all phantoms robed in white;
 The asp, who robs with grim delight
 The mad crows of their putrid prey;
 All demons hunting souls away;
 All monstrous dwarfs, and fires which
 blaze

Around the tombs in wild amaze,

The patriarchal robe put on;
 The belt zodiacal now don;
 Gold rings put on your fingers all,
 The Amess, miter conical;
 The purple ephod, tunic red
 Which twice in strong dye has been
 spread.

[*Aloud to CROMWELL, after a moment of silence.*

A danger threatens you!

CROMWELL.

What sort?

MANASSES.

Your death.
If you accept a crown your death is sure!

CROMWELL.

My death is sure?

MANASSES (*pointing to CROMWELL'S heart*).
The wound, it will be there.

CROMWELL (*placing his hand on his heart*).
Here?

MANASSES (*with an affirmative gesture*).
There!

CROMWELL.

Speak! When?

MANASSES.

To-morrow.

CROMWELL.

Lie you not?

MANASSES.

O son of Ammon! Lie? Shall I call up
Your demon? To control him, you must speak
With me eight lines, each one beginning with
The self-same letter—

[CROMWELL *appears to hesitate at this proposition. At this moment LORD ROCHESTER turns on his bed and sighs.*

MANASSES (*troubled*).

Some one listens—

[*Draws near to the bed and perceives LORD ROCHESTER asleep.*

Yes!

The charm is broken; he has heard it all.

CROMWELL.

You think he can have heard us?

MANASSES.

Without doubt.

CROMWELL.

Then he must die!

[*Draws his dagger and approaches* LORD
ROCHESTER, *who is still asleep.*

MANASSES.

Yes, strike! You could not do

A nobler deed.

[*Aside.*] Yes, let a Christian's hand strike
down

A Christian—

CROMWELL.

He has heard the interview

Between the Jew and Cromwell! Let him die!

[*Raises his dagger, and then pauses.*

But yet he sleeps!

MANASSES (*pushing his arm*)

Well, well!

CROMWELL (*still undecided*).

He is so young.

MANASSES.

It is the Sabbath day. Then strike!

CROMWELL (*starting*).

Alas!

A day of fast, of vigil, and of holy rest.

I to commit a murder, lend my ear
 To this astrologer! [*Throwing aside dagger.*
 [*To MANASSES.*] Jew! get you hence!

[*Calling.*] Thurloe!

THURLOE (*running in*).

My lord!

MANASSES (*astonished*).

Your Highness—

CROMWELL (*to MANASSES*).

Leave me, I tell you!

MANASSES (*aside*).

What vertigo has sudden seized his mind?

CROMWELL (*in low tone to Jew*).

Go; if you speak one word of what's passed
 here,

Consider yourself doomed to death. Now go!

[*Jew prostrates himself and goes out.*

[*To THURLOE.*] Oh, save me from this Jew
 and from myself,

Thurloe!

THURLOE (*anxiously*).

What is the matter, my good lord?

CROMWELL (*composing himself*).

I—nothing! Nothing! Thurloe, I love you.

THURLOE.

You said—and you appear so troubled—

CROMWELL.

What?

Did I say anything?

THURLOE.

My lord, you said—

CROMWELL (*abruptly*).

No, I said nothing. Hush! and follow me.

THURLOE.

How pale you are, my lord!

CROMWELL.

It is the light

Of these sepulchral candles. Come! I need
you;

Come, follow me!

[THURLOE *follows* CROMWELL; *he pauses,*
while passing, at LORD ROCHESTER'S bed.

THURLOE.

He sleeps!

CROMWELL.

Yes, a hard sleep—

One much resembling death. [They go out.

ACT IV

THE SENTINEL

SCENE.—*The park gate at White-Hall. To the right, groups of trees; in the background groups of trees, above which the gothic projectures of the castle are outlined on the dark sky. To the left, the park gate, a small door under a deep arch, and very much ornamented with sculpture*

SCENE I

CROMWELL, *disguised as a soldier, heavy musket on his shoulder, a buff cuirass, hat of high conical shape with large brim, tall boots. He walks up and down in front of the gate after the manner of a guard. Some instants after the curtain has risen, one hears the cry of a distant sentinel*

SENTINEL.

All's well!

Do you keep watch?

CROMWELL (*resting his musket on the ground, repeats*).

All's well! Do you keep watch?

A THIRD SENTINEL (*in the distance*).

All's well! Do you keep watch?

CROMWELL (*after a moment's silence*).

I watch for all.

Cromwell, whom a wise Providence sends here,
Will open to his murderers the door.

[*Noise of footsteps and voices in the distance.*

Already? No, midnight has not yet tolled :

It is some passer-by.

[*Indistinct singing is heard.*

What! Singing songs?

The fellow has not kept his fast to-day.

[*The voice approaches, and one hears these words sung to a monotonous air.*

Toward setting sun,
Oh, you who run
To seek fortune, beware!
Don't slip, don't fall,
Beneath night's pall:
Darkness is everywhere.

Treacherous sea
With mystery
Covers the downs at night;
As far as eye
Can earth descry,
Not any house in sight.

Thieves come behind.
At night you'll find
They follow every one.
The forest dame
Oft gives us blame
For what we have not done.

They wander wide,
Oh, woe betide
Whoever meets them there!

The goblins light,
 With mad delight,
 Dance in the moonbeams'
 glare.

[*The voice approaches nearer and nearer, and then ceases.*

CROMWELL.

'Tis one of my own fools. Elespuru,
 I think.

— — —

SCENE II

CROMWELL, TRICK, GIRAFF, ELESURU, GRAMADOCH. *The Fools, led by GRAMADOCH, enter cautiously, on tip-toe*

ELESURU (*humming*).

The goblins light,
 With mad delight,
 Dance in the moonbeams'
 glare.

GIRAFF (*low to ELESURU*).

Elespuru, be still! You're mad.

GRAMADOCH (*to the others, indicating a turf bank behind a hedge*).

Let us hide there.

CROMWELL (*without seeing them*).

My fool is coming home.

[*The four Fools sit on the turf bank.*

GRAMADOCH (*low to his comrades*).

At this point all the action concentrates.
 Here we'll see everything.

TRICK (*low*).

With a clerk's eye!

See? It is lighter in the devil's kiln.

ELESPURU (*low*).

If any of these actors see our face,
This spectacle will cost us a round sum.

GRAMADOCH (*low*).

We're here in time. Naught has been yet be-
gun.

GIRAFF (*low*).

Be silent, will you?

[All are silent and remain motionless.]

CROMWELL.

Yes, the fool's gone by!

He knew not that this place, where he sung loud,
Would see an empire's fate decided soon.

A happy man, this fool. E'en in White-Hall

He carries with him his ideal world.

He has no subjects, has no throne; he's free!

He has no aching fiber in his heart.

He does not wear upon his careless breast

A steel cuirass! Wherefore? Who wants his
blood?

What need has he of court or retinue

Or guard? He laughs, he sings, he passes by;
None heeds. About the future, what cares he?

He'll always find some velvet rags to wear

In winter, and some jokes to pay for bread.

He sleeps at night, and fears no traitor's snares.

He has no frightful dreams; he wakes and smiles

And has no memories. Thrice happy man!

His speech is noise; his life is but a dream.
When he attains that point where all things end,
Death's scythe, which is a terror unto all,
Will be a bauble to this worn-out child.
Meanwhile, his voice will always laugh or weep,
Give any sound you wish or any cry,
Will talk on everything, and sing when bid.
His flippancy conceals eternal rest;
A plaything of the world, void, resonant,
Whose words are water that evaporates,
Responsive to each touch, and easier moved
Than are the silver bells upon his cap.
This fool would never do so mad a thing
As try to hold the world in his small brain.
No weighty words, no thoughts surcharged with
sighs,
Come from his heart as from volcano's fire;
His soul—has he a soul?—can always sleep.
To-day he knows not what he did last night;
Remembering naught! Alas! how fortunate.
Ah never, harassed by relentless thoughts,
Fears he, in passing by some gloomy spot,
To look behind, lest he a specter see.
He does not pray his name may be forgot,
Nor wish the thirtieth of January
Had never been. Oh, enviest thou thy fool,
Great Cromwell? Thou art the all-powerful,
Yet with thy life, what hast thou done? To
reign?
Prevail against a world aghast with fear?
For such vain glamour what a price thou'st paid.
All parties have abandoned thee; the people
Have disowned thee, and thine own family

Are in continual strife against thy hopes;
 They make their wishes a rude law to thee,
 And torture thee with taunts at thy kingship.
 Thy son himself— I'm hated everywhere!
 O'er all the earth my foes implacable
 Wait to o'erwhelm me; yes, and elsewhere too—
 At bottom of the tomb! Good days must come,
 Some better days, at last! What do I say?
 For fifteen years life's been a miracle.
 What wish had I that has not been fulfilled?
 The nations underneath my yoke are bent;
 With but one word, to-morrow, I am king.
 What more foreshadowed my ambitious dreams?
 Reformer, judge, a conqueror, potentate—
 Have I not all my joy? The great result,
 To be a watchman here, paid by the night!
 What pomp outside; what festering sore within!
[A pause.

It is a freezing night, almost the hour—
 Yes, hour—when specters from their coffins rise
 And show to murderers, with their blood-red
 hands,
 Their wounds which always gape and bleed
 afresh,
 Their shroud all covered with its loathsome
 stains.
 Oh, hideous thought! Because I am alone,
 Am I a child? Alas! I wish I were.
 That damnèd Jew has chilled me to the heart
 With all the visions he aroused to-night.
 I'm shaken, and I tremble—with the cold.
 To neutralize these sacrilegious thoughts
 I'll speak some verses against sorcery.

[*Midnight begins to toll from the belfry; he starts.*

That noise! The belfry! The expected hour!

[*Listening.*

I never heard it at this time before.

'Tis like a knell—a human voice that weeps.

[*Stops and listens again.*

That tolled the last hour of a martyr, once.

[*After the last strokes of the bell.*

Midnight! Alone! I will invoke the saints.

[*Sound of footsteps behind the trees.*

I'm reassured. Here my assassins come.

SCENE III

The same. LORD ORMOND, LORD DROGHEDA, LORD ROSEBERRY, LORD CLIFFORD, DOCTOR JENKINS, SEDLEY, SIR PETERS DOWNIE, SIR WILLIAM MURRAY. *The Cavaliers enter stealthily, LORD ORMOND and LORD ROSEBERRY at the head. They wear large hats, pulled over their eyes, and great black cloaks, lifted up by their swords; they speak together in low tones. CROMWELL replaces his musket on his shoulder and stands before the arched gate.*

LORD ROSEBERRY (*to the others*).

'Tis here.

LORD ORMOND.

Yes, here. I recognize the place.

[*Indicating the gate whose shadow conceals
CROMWELL from them.*

Through that gate used the royal hunt to pass.

CROMWELL (*musket on his shoulder, aside*).
'Tis they! At last I know with whom I deal.

SIR PETERS DOWNIE (*to LORD ORMOND*).
Should Wilmot not await us here?

CROMWELL (*aside, shrugging his shoulders*).
He's sharp.

LORD DROGHEDA (*to DOWNIE*).
How can he? He has duties to perform;
Think you his halter is so very loose?

CROMWELL (*aside*).
Assassins, you shall have a like one soon.
And Haman's gibbet's none too high for you.

LORD ORMOND (*to Cavaliers*).
He would most likely spoil the whole affair.
If they have kept him, I, for one, am glad.

CROMWELL (*aside*).
And I, for two.

LORD ORMOND.
Wilmot is dangerous.
But let us end this

CROMWELL (*aside*).
End is the right word.

LORD ORMOND (*to Cavaliers*).
To see how far this madman's folly goes,
Hear this: Old Noll a pretty daughter has.
Wilmot's in love with her; that's naught to me.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What insolence!

LORD ORMOND (*continuing*).

He writes a madrigal

About her. Rochester a rhymester! Shame!
Still worse; forgetting what is due my age
And rank, he wants to read the verse to me.
That insult I received in fitting way.
But here, just now, while I was waiting, lo!
There came a letter, an important one.
Impatiently I broke the seal—and found
The quatrain to his little Cromwell!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Knave!

To speak of her, before me, in this way.

LORD ROSEBERRY (*laughing to LORD ORMOND*).

Your persecution was most rigorous.

SIR PETERS DOWNIE (*laughing*).

His verses must be read! Quite like a king!
Ah, that's a poet's style!

LORD ORMOND.

There is yet more.

After these verses, sealed with so much care,
A second messenger from Wilmot came.
That was the word which told us to be here;
But this time 'twas a parchment, rolled with
grace,
And tied with a pink ribbon.

ALL THE CAVALIERS.

Is that true?



Cromwell as Sentinel, and the Cavaliers.

—Victor Hugo, Vol. XIX., p. 306.

LORD ORMOND.

See how that idiot betrays our cause!

LORD CLIFFORD.

It's frightful! Does he think such jests are droll?

LORD ORMOND.

This last to Willis was confided; but
It might have fallen in disloyal hands.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Then we would need nothing so much as wings.

DOCTOR JENKINS.

Upon what frail support we rest our faith!
'Tis terrible to think of all the things
Which fate holds trembling o'er a poor fool's
head.

At the least noise, the slightest change of wind,
The frightful structure totters, and by night
Thrones, nations, worlds vanish for evermore.

SEDLEY.

It seems to me that Davenant's not here.

LORD ORMOND.

The poet Davenant! The mountebank!
He's hiding. Who would count on such a clown?

DOWNIE.

Our good friend Richard, the usurper's son,
Is now in prison. Did you know, some spy—

LORD DROGHEDA.

Alas, poor Richard!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The poor parricide!

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Such a good fellow!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Yes?

SEDLEY (*to LORD ROSEBERRY*).

His father learned

Of his too loyal toast this morning?

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Yes.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The traitor!

LORD ORMOND (*to Cavaliers*).

Shall we waste our time in words?

Let us begin.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Now let their plot unfold.

To these Egyptian rats, these royal souls,
Let's open White-Hall as we would a trap.
Lord Rochester's the bait, Cromwell's the trap,
Which, once it closes, will let nothing out.

LORD ORMOND (*low to Cavaliers*).

Let's try the soldier.

[*Aloud, approaching CROMWELL.*

Hem!

CROMWELL (*presenting his musket to him*).

Who goes there?

LORD ORMOND (*low to CROMWELL*).

Friend!

Cologne!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

I've not the password! What to do?

LORD ORMOND.

Cologne!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What shall I say?

[LORD ORMOND, *astonished at the sentinel's silence, steps back with an air of mistrust.*

LORD ROSEBERRY (*to LORD ORMOND*).

What is it? Speak!

LORD ORMOND (*indicating CROMWELL*).

He's silent.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

What if Cromwell should suspect?

What if he'd changed the palace guard to-night?

LORD ORMOND (*to Cavaliers, who gather uneasily around him*).

When one has entered on a plot like this,

To go back is to lose. Let us advance.

[*Approaches CROMWELL again.*

CROMWELL (*aside*).

To be too easy would excite their doubts.

[*To LORD ORMOND, who is advancing.*

Who goes there? Speak!

LORD ORMOND.

Cologne!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

How to cheat them?
How catch them without help of this password?

LORD ORMOND (*low to Cavaliers, who have retired to a corner of the stage on the right*).

Still silent!

LORD CLIFFORD (*low and eagerly*).

Let us kill this sentinel!

DOCTOR JENKINS (*low to LORD CLIFFORD*).
What? Send a soul to God without the time
To make one prayer?

LORD CLIFFORD (*low to DOCTOR JENKINS*).
What matters that to us?

LORD ORMOND (*low to LORD CLIFFORD*).
What? Strike him from the back?

LORD CLIFFORD (*low to LORD ORMOND*).
We must pass on.
I'm sorry for the man.

ALL (*low to ORMOND*).

Yes; kill him, quick!

DOCTOR JENKINS (*low to Cavaliers*).
Stained with his sins, to send him to his judge?

ALL (*low to DOCTOR JENKINS*).
It must be. He must die.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What do they say?

[*The Cavaliers draw their daggers and advance on CROMWELL. SIR WILLIAM MURRAY stops them.*]

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You're wrong. I'm sure that man belongs to
us,

Else when he saw us grouped against this wall
He would have given the alarm at once.

A little gold, I think, will make him speak.

There is no danger, save to money, here.

If he is silent, 'tis for more doubloons;

If to your password a deaf ear he turns,

'Tis but the greedy nature Puritan.

'Tis easier to pay for a passport

Than kill for one, which is a noisy way.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

'Tis true. The boor won't hesitate to call
For help if we attack him.

LORD CLIFFORD (*sighing*).

Well, then we

Will pay our ransom.

SIR PETERS DOWNIE.

Gold is very scarce

With us, unfortunately.

SEDLEY.

Because he,

That robber Cromwell, stole our brig from us.

Oh, that this thief should sit on England's throne!

LORD ORMOND.

Manasses, that old rat who gnaws at crowns,

Lent me some money, but it is all spent.

Wait—there's a purse I got from Rochester.

[*Feels in his coat.*]

Yes, here it is.

[*Draws a purse from his pocket and shows it to the Cavaliers.*]

LORD ROSEBERRY.

A providential help.

LORD CLIFFORD (*indicating CROMWELL*).

It's hard to pay that hypocrite with gold,
When a good dagger-thrust would do as well.

LORD ORMOND (*handing the purse to SIR WILLIAM MURRAY*).

Go, William Murray, and negotiate;
You know more of their saintly ways than we.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*taking the purse*).
Count upon me.

CROMWELL (*aside, seeing SIR WILLIAM MURRAY approach him slowly*).

They've held their council! Why?
Just for a word, a nothing, all this fuss.
They want to enter: I desire it too.
We ought to come to terms.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

I must arrange
This matter skillfully.

CROMWELL (*to SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, who is approaching*).

Stop! Who goes there?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

A saint, my brother.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Hypocrite!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

A blessing

On the steel which girds you—

CROMWELL (*aside*).

I am rich

To get a blessing from these Royalists.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

In their own tongue one must address these
fools.

[*Aloud to CROMWELL.*

On Zion's tower, my brother, archers stood
And watched, and called each other night and
day;
You are their counterpart.

CROMWELL.

My thanks to you.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

The night is cold.

CROMWELL.

It is.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

The birds do sleep
Within their nests, the ox sleeps in his stall:
All rest; you watch.

CROMWELL.

It is my destiny.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You would be better off in a good bed.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Say, rather, you!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Alone, on frozen ground,

A heavy musket to encumber you,

You keep the watch; and he whose cross you
bear,

Your Cromwell, sleeps in full content.

CROMWELL.

Does he?

Not so: he never sleeps when I keep watch.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

With those illusive words he drugs your ear.

CROMWELL.

You think he sleeps?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I know he does. To you

He owes this gentle calm, this dreamless sleep.

He takes the pleasure, leaves the toil to you.

CROMWELL.

That's acting ill.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

Ah, we have won him now!

He is dissatisfied.

[*Aloud.*] You do so much
For him. This great man, does he know your
name?

CROMWELL.

I think so.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*shrugging his
shoulders*).

You're an honest simpleton.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He's clever—he!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

And from his splendid throne
Think you he'll ever cast a look at you?
Oh, no, my friend; he does not know your
name,
I'm sure.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Sure of all things, except your head.
'Twould seem, he had made me!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You're honest, but
About these things you think yourself too wise.

CROMWELL.

That's wrong.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

We lived at court of the late king.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The idiot, he forgets. He drops his mask,
And to the Puritan adds Cavalier.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

My friend, all courts at heart are just the same.
Of course, you don't know that.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

How wise he is!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You sacrifice your life to Cromwell?

CROMWELL.

Yes.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Well, for him shed your blood too, drop by drop,
He'll care about it just as much, my man,
As he cares for the water clear or foul
That runs beneath his bridges.

CROMWELL.

No! I think

My matters go much nearer to his heart.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*laughing*).

A simple mind you have. What does he care
If you are dead or living?

CROMWELL.

As for that,

What do you know about it?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Does your life

Touch his in any way?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

It touches closer

Than you conceive, for your misfortune, friend.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Have you not right to ask for recompense?
What are you? But a guard. The crying
shame!

I daresay you have stood by him through all.

CROMWELL.

I have.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You've shared in all his battles?

CROMWELL.

Yes.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Many are sergeants who have done much less.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

To win me over, that is a good card.
[*Aloud.*] You flatter?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

No. Why show you such disdain?
Is he so great a captain, pray, himself?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Impertinence!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

To have his palaces,
His carriages of state, his guards, his men,
Who is this Cromwell you adore so much?
A soldier like yourself.

CROMWELL.

That's all he is.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

Our way is won!

[*Aloud.*] He's nothing more than you.

CROMWELL.

That's true!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Why serve him, then, upon your knees?

CROMWELL.

I don't do so.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

He's stepping in my net.

[*Aloud.*] Why not usurp that place as well as he?

CROMWELL.

There'd be no incongruity, in truth.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Not any. Soldier for a soldier—good!

How can you fill your arduous duties here?

For this hard labor what's your salary?

CROMWELL.

I am not paid.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Not paid? Upon my soul!

Thus to abandon an old soldier; shame!

I pity you.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He pities me!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

No pay!

This Cromwell is a tyrant.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He arrives.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

A righteous anger chokes me.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Touching thing!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*taking his hand*).

I want to comfort, ay, avenge you, too.

CROMWELL.

Avenge me?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Yes, on Cromwell.

[*Whispering in his ear.*] Ope the gate.
Judith by Holofernes shall be slain.

CROMWELL.

You mean Judith slay Holofernes—eh?
Don't quote the Bible wrong.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

A just rebuke.

CROMWELL.

For Judith, friend, your beard is pretty black.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

Why did I meddle with this history?
Of course Judith's a woman. Never mind!
[*Aloud.*] Let us surprise your sleeping general,
And 'twill be well for you.

CROMWELL.

You think so, sir?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

What matter if six men pass through this gate?

'Tis fortune creeping in its sleep to you.

CROMWELL.

It's sleep?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*giving him a purse*).

Accept this on account. You have
No other duty than to say "White-Hall,"
When others say "Cologne."

CROMWELL (*aside*).

White-Hall's the word!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Here, take the money. Men of our sort pay.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

And men of my sort, too.

[*Aloud, to SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, taking the purse.*

This is a debt
Which I contract with you, my friend.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You'll watch
For us, while we complete our task?

CROMWELL.

I will.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

'Tis well. [*Offering his hand.*
Touch hands. By heaven, you are a man!

CROMWELL.

When you've got Cromwell, what do you propose
To do with him?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I think—it seems to me—
We'll kill him—that is all.

CROMWELL.

That is not much.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

We'll be contented with an easy death.
We are not cruel.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Neither will I be.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

It is agreed.

CROMWELL.

You've said the word.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to the Cavaliers, who
have been waiting in a corner of the
stage*).

Come! Haste!

The temple we can enter if we pay
The priest. I knew it would be so.

LORD ORMOND (*to SIR WILLIAM MURRAY*).
'Tis done?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

It is.

LORD ORMOND (*to Cavaliers*).

Let us move on.

[*The Cavaliers form themselves in a double line and advance to CROMWELL, who presents his musket.*

CROMWELL.

Stop! Who goes there?

LORD ORMOND.

Cologne!

CROMWELL.

White-Hall! Pass on!

LORD ORMOND (*aside*).

Well done!

CROMWELL.

[*Watching the Cavaliers as they pass through the gate.*

That's right.

LORD ORMOND (*low to SIR WILLIAM MURRAY*).

You'd better stay, my lord, and watch that man.

[*To CROMWELL.*] Where's Cromwell to be found?

CROMWELL.

He's sleeping in

The Painted Chamber.

LORD ORMOND (*to CROMWELL*).

Night obscures our steps,

But keep strict watch.

CROMWELL.

Be satisfied; pass on.

LORD ORMOND (*joyfully*).

At last I touch the goal; my final years
 Are to be crowned with a triumphant joy.
 I have him; I will seize him 'neath the dais!
 God grants the boon that I have prayed for long.
 I hold this Cromwell, sleeping, in my hand.
 Kind Heaven abandons him to me.

CROMWELL (*aside, watching him as he goes off*).

What one

Asks heaven vainly for, hell sometimes gives.
 [LORD ORMOND *hurries through the gate, which
 the Cavaliers have already passed, with
 the exception of SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.*

SCENE IV

CROMWELL, SIR WILLIAM MURRAY; THE FOUR
 FOOLS, *still in their hiding-place*

CROMWELL (*his eyes fixed on the gate through
 which the Cavaliers have passed*).

At last!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*rubbing his hands*).

We have achieved it, by the rood!
 This Cromwell who on earth has had no peer,
 This famous general, statesman astute,
 To whom all Europe chants eternal praise,
 This master for whose kingship men have deemed
 The throne too narrow, the scepter too light—
 Is taken like a bird without its wings,

By eight fools: not two brains among them all—
 For mine's the only brain that has served here.
 Without me nothing had been done. A tramp,
 This Cromwell—not even a nobleman;
 A poor adventurer—to reign o'er kings
 As Cæsar did o'er Rome! A lesson rare
 We give to royalty. He, whose dominion
 Oppressed them all, has been captured by us
 In his own home—an ignominious fate.
 Yet fifteen years he's been a genius. Ha!
 [*Turning to CROMWELL, who listens imper-*
turbably.]

Can you conceive a reason? Just because
 He won some battles—

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Where you were not seen!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*continuing*).

Because with fine grimaces, words, and sounds
 He knows enough to draw the multitude,
 Behold! all Europe kneels when she should hiss
 A boor, who cannot even make a bow.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Perhaps he can't, but he can teach the rest.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

It's true: his manners are almost like yours.

CROMWELL.

Almost?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You have the manners for your place.
 You never have aspired to lofty rank.

Your attitudes befit a trooper Swiss
Who leads the charge and drills.

CROMWELL.

You're much too kind.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Each man unto his trade, my friend. I'm sure
You'd not be such a fool as ask the world
To watch you, strutting to an usurped throne.
This Cromwell's just about your caliber.
Imagine how grotesque the sight must be
To see him hoisted on a royal throne.
This life of his is destiny's debauch;
His levee proved him awkward as a lout.

CROMWELL.

You went there—eh?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Not so familiar, please;
We are not traveling at an equal gait.
I am a noble Scottish lord, while men
Of your estate should run before my coach.
Know you I bear a wolf upon my crest?
And that, under King James the First, I had
The honor to be whipped for young Prince
Charles?

CROMWELL.

You're right. Our station has been different.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I'm glad you understand it.

CROMWELL.

Pray return
To Cromwell's levees. So you do attend
This man's receptions, whom you so despise?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

To see what I can get. One can't be fighting
Forever, like Montrose.

CROMWELL.

Yes, beg a place
While you are waiting to betray the man,
In favor of your king.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

How blunt you are.

CROMWELL.

I have no gift for the poetical.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*aside*).

Plebeian!

CROMWELL.

How did Cromwell welcome you?
I wager he refused—

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

No, he did not.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The liar!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

He received me courteously;
He felt the honor I accorded him,
And gave me choice of places in his gift.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

A choice between the door and window, yes!
[*Aloud.*] Why do you then conspire against
his power?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I have reflected. Can one serve a boor?
A man who rules like corporal of the guard?
A dunce who wants to smile and show his teeth,
Who can't make any but a knock-kneed bow?

CROMWELL.

I understand.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I heard his fall was near.

CROMWELL.

Then you bethought you of the Stuarts' rights.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

The Stuarts' rights and Cromwell's clumsiness,
My friends who urged me, and our sure success
Won me unto the plot.

CROMWELL.

Good reasons, all.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

You understand. These are my principles.
The Norman William violated them,
But he atoned by marrying his son
To Princess Maude of Scotland; and from them,
And from the Athelings, the Stuarts came.
So Charles the Second in his person blends
The rights of Norman and of Saxon blood.

CROMWELL.

'Tis clear.

[*Aside.*] I do not grasp his reasoning.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I'll make you judge.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

His choice is excellent!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

The rights of our young king are manifest.

CROMWELL.

Doubtless.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

And they are what Cromwell contests.

Is't not unheard of that this vulture cock
Should leave his cellar for the eaglet's lair?
If he had genius, yes! But I tell you
It's falling Jericho without the drums.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Well said!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

His fate stalks on in royal state,
But 'tis a phantom crumbling at one's touch.

CROMWELL (*ironically*).

An idol with gold head and waxen feet.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I've always thought him a fine counterfeit.
No reputation dazzles me, my man.
I judged this Cromwell. *It* would be a king!
In what an age we live! *It* does not know

How to frustrate a plot, foresee a snare.
 You have yourself a thousand-fold more wit
 Than has that fool they're taking from his bed.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

If he but knew what truth he spoke!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Does he
 Think reigning is an easy matter? King?
 I wouldn't even have him for a courtier.

CROMWELL.

You would be right.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

He may have sense enough
 To brew good beer, but has he even right
 To don the greaves or to shoulder the gun?
 Well, just about. Provincial family—
 His name's not even equal to Milton's.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What insolence!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

He might have been a brewer
 Of excellent repute; instead of that
 He wants to act the great man, play the hero,
 Cut down the tyrants. Oh, these little squires!
 Aren't they ridiculous? Distilling cider
 Has taught him how to curb the populace,
 Vanquish the hydra, govern all the earth!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The fool!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Because fortune abetted him,
He thinks himself a Cæsar, Moses, a Capet!
What most amazes me is that Warwick
Should condescend to cousin with this cheat.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Chameleon! This man groveled at my feet
But yesterday.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*as if seized with an
idea*).

I am a simpleton!

CROMWELL.

Indeed! Why so?

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

While our hawks snatch their prey,
They've left me here, that when the pay goes
round,
As it must do, they can keep all themselves.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Poor sharper!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Will they give my honest share?
What I, old hawk, shall I wait idly here?
No! I'll deserve his Majesty's reward.

CROMWELL.

You will not be forgotten, trust to me.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

I want my hand on the old devil too.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Then go.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*grasping his hand*).

Your help has been invaluable.

When we shall settle up the whole account,

You'll have your share. I'll make you corporal.

[*Goes out.*]

CROMWELL (*alone, shrugging his shoulders*).

The court dwarf, who rates me at his size!

Go, cackling goose, to hiss the eagle's flight.

[MANASSES *enters cautiously, holding a dark-lantern.*]

SCENE V

CROMWELL, MANASSES

MANASSES (*without seeing CROMWELL*).

The Puritans, the Cavaliers, Cromwell,

And Charles the Second—they are Christians all.

CROMWELL (*perceiving MANASSES, on whom
the gleam of the lantern falls*).

The odious Jew! How now! What brings him
here?

Comes he out of a tomb?

MANASSES (*without seeing CROMWELL, who
listens to him*).

What matters it

Which of the rival factions falls? 'Tis but

The blood of Christians vile which shall be shed.

That's the advantage of conspiracies.
 If Cromwell die, or Ormond's plot be foiled,
 'Tis here their fate must soon decided be.
 I want to see it. All's against Cromwell—

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The traitor!

MANASSES (*continuing, with eyes lifted to heaven*).

All, except the heavenly signs.
 He seems to be advancing to his doom,
 Yet shines his star with undiminished light.
 In vain I note the lines upon his palm.
 I see no danger there, until to-morrow.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What says he? Do these damned astrologers
 Cheat even when communing with themselves?

MANASSES (*continuing*).

What matter? One of them must be destroyed.
 They mean to kill each other.

[*Watching the star-covered sky.*

What a night!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

First, the glib courtier, then this impious Jew.
 The loathsome crow replaces the magpie.
 Without disgust or pity or remorse,
 He comes to get his share of death's decay.

MANASSES (*pointing his glass to the sky*).

While waiting here for our conspirators,
 Let me observe the curves which are described
 By satellites of He in Thau's orbit;

With holy vane I'll strike on heaven's door.
 [*Places his eye to the glass, then interrupts himself.*]

At eight per cent! In such a time as this
 I might have charged him double rates.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Banker to Cavaliers; to Cromwell, spy.

MANASSES (*looking through the glass*).

Into a ram's horn has the line been turned
 (I've got the caroluses from Cologne,
 And caroluses bring, e'en when they're chipped),
 From this I think that the eclipse is sure.
 (Eleven, when they are dollars; ducats, nine!)
 Yes, Cromwell, Ormond, I've deceived them all.
 [*At this moment he hears the periodical cry of the distant sentinel.*]

SENTINEL.

All's well! Do you keep watch?

CROMWELL (*impatiently, aside*).

Why break they in
 Upon us now? Their cry but frightens owls.
 I must reply.

[*Aloud.*] All's well! Do you keep watch?
 [*At the sound of this voice the Jew turns suddenly.*]

MANASSES (*aside*).

Jacob! I did not see this sentinel.
 What a thick veil has age hung o'er my eye!

SENTINEL (*in the distance*).

All's well! Do you keep watch?

MANASSES (*approaching CROMWELL respectfully*).

Good-evening, friend.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Unlucky cry to change his train of thought.
How he revealed himself!

[*Aloud.*] Good-evening, Jew!

MANASSES (*with another bow*).

You're stationed by Lord Ormond there?

CROMWELL.

You, prophet's son, be answered? Why should
Yes.

MANASSES.

I'm glad
To see your triumph. Cromwell falls at last,
And I congratulate you.

CROMWELL.

Thanks!

MANASSES (*bowing*).

The power
Of former kings will be revived for us.
What happiness for you!

CROMWELL.

Indeed!

MANASSES.

Accept
My best felicitations. You expect
To be advanced, of course!

CROMWELL.

I do. I am

To be a corporal.

MANASSES.

A noble grade!

To be a corporal is a great thing.

I think a corporal commands four men.

Magnificent! And gold lace, too, he wears.

CROMWELL.

Superb!

MANASSES.

How quickly the Protector's fall
Builds up your fortune, my lord soldier—eh?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The traitor!

MANASSES.

Yes, accursed Cromwell, now
You'll expiate your crimes against the Jews.
Fanatic, hypocrite, and miser!

[*Addressing CROMWELL.*] Zounds!
This Lord Protector reckons up a bill.
Don't talk to me of crownèd citizens!
Their minds are narrow as their fortunes were.
No brilliant festivals, no games, no balls,
No money loans! What business can one do?
If, by their will, you seize a Swedish brig,
They search your pocket, feel of both your hands;
And to repay for all the dangers run,
Give you, perhaps, three quarters of the prize.

CROMWELL.

That is a swindle!

MANASSES.

Yes; the shabby kings!
They know the odds 'twixt sequins and besants.

CROMWELL.

A frightful state!

MANASSES.

That Cromwell—mark you this—
Did he not insolently fine me once,
Because, I know not now at just what rate,
I doubled, by good luck, the sums I lent?

CROMWELL.

It was a shame!

MANASSES.

He has killed industry.
Was it his business, tell me, any way?
What right had he, to please his fellow cranks,
To stop all theaters and concerts, balls
And races, where the young men of the day,
Drunk with excitement, squandered their estates?
Was't legal, thus to rob them of their rights?
Sly, hateful, economical, and stern,
He is a monster! England lives through you.
Your noble arm saves it from tyranny
More dire than hell can e'er again conceive.
I say not all these things to flatter you.

CROMWELL.

I am convinced of that.

MANASSES (*aside, shrugging his shoulders and
looking down on CROMWELL*).

Machines of war!

Incense is ne'er too thick to please their taste.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

How many masks that odious visage wears!
Suppose we tear them off now, one by one.
[*Aloud.*] Tell me my fortune, Jew!

MANASSES (*bowing*).

Your destiny?

'Twould be an honor, my lord corporal.

[*Aside.*] The fool!

[*Aloud.*] Your way leads unto happiness.

[*Aside.*] A telescope to see a candle—bah!

[*Aloud.*] So be it, gentle lord, I'll read your
fate.

In polished Latin this method is called,
Experience *in anima vili*.

[*Aside.*] I laugh in Latin in this booby's face.

[*Aloud.*] Extend to me your hand; I will re-
veal—

This infamous Cromwell—

[*Examining CROMWELL'S hand by the light of
the lantern.*

I'm a dead man!

[*Falls prostrate at CROMWELL'S feet.*

CROMWELL (*smiling*).

What is it, speak? What devil's bitten you?

MANASSES (*striking his forehead on the
ground*).

A dead man!

CROMWELL.

Then you know me, wretched Jew?

MANASSES (*with inaudible voice*).

I know that hand, whose palm can hold the world;

I know them, all those lines where Heaven wrote
 The limitless extent of Cromwell's power.
 Your star lied not.

CROMWELL.

I hear you speak, old man.
 You are a wretched knave. I could, no doubt,
 In my turn, with this bit of polished steel,
 Experiment *in anima vili*.
 But I've no strength to waste in crushing worms.
 Arise!

[MANASSES rises. CROMWELL indicates a stone
 bench near the door.

Sit there.

[The Jew sits, overcome, in the darkest corner
 of the bench.

Above all things, keep still:
 A single word, and your false soul shall fly
 To heaven to read its fatal alphabet.

[The Jew lets his head fall on his breast.

CROMWELL comes to the front of the stage
 and continues, watching him from the
 corner of his eye.

This Jew served Ormond. Fate betrays them
 all,

And adds this night-bird to the other hawks.
 [Walking up and down, breaking into speech
 from time to time.

My crimes, according to their evidence,
 Are, that I don't bow well and count too close.
 Of English charter or of Charles the First
 They do not say one word.

[Putting his hand on the pocket of his coat.

What have I here?

[*Drawing from his pocket the purse which*

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY *gave him.*

The price of blood! Ah, yes, I had forgot;

They paid me to assassinate myself.

I wonder how much gratitude I owe!

I'll count, to judge of their munificence.

The head of Cromwell, how much is it worth?

'Twould not be civil to buy it too cheap.

[*Takes the lantern from the Jew's hands and
turns its light upon the purse; at the first
look he starts back with horror.*

My God! My son's own name is on this purse.

He furnished money for this parricide.

[*Examining it with attention.*

I'm not mistaken: 'tis indeed his crest.

What proof is lacking to his treachery?

Ah! wretched father and more wretched son!

You were not then content to seek their den,

To take your part in all their plots and feasts,

Inspire their deeds and drink unto my death;

You had to pay the funeral trappings too!

He gave his gold to them to buy my life,

And sharing everything without remorse

Pays the great banquet, which shall be my death.

[*Throwing the purse violently upon the
ground.*

His prodigalities included parricide.

[RICHARD CROMWELL *enters, and appears to
be seeking his way.*

Some one is coming.

SCENE VI

The same. RICHARD CROMWELL

RICHARD CROMWELL (*advancing slowly to the front*).

'Tis not very light.

CROMWELL (*without being seen*).

Impossible! Is it my son?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I'm free

At last!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Delivered by your friends, no doubt,
To whom you sold me. Yes, go add your hand
In brother's love to theirs which drip with blood.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*without seeing his father*).

Result of paying well the sentinel.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He owns it!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

I am free!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

At what a price!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

It cost a sum; but no ingrate am I.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

No, not ungrateful to assassins hired
To rob you of your father.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

One more spree!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

With what a careless tone this Joas speaks
Of murdering me.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

My father is asleep.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Is he?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

He suspects nothing.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He keeps watch,

And he hears you.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*laughing*).

I'll have to pay for this!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

My God! that laugh to follow such a crime.
The wretch has come to ask them, "Is it done?"
What if I gave him, now, his punishment?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Come, come, have courage! How the saints
will fret
When they find that the bird has flown his cage.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

If I should stab him?

[*Draws his dagger, takes a step toward RICHARD CROMWELL, and pauses behind him.*

No, it is my son.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

The Cavaliers will laugh at my exploit.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He has the heart to jest o'er my own blood.

[*Taking a step.*

I'll strike.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

This end is a good thing for me.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Is it?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

He never would have pardoned me;
But now paternal anger I escape.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

No, you'll escape it not, you fiend! I'll strike.
No pity; I am firm.

[*Starts toward RICHARD CROMWELL, then pauses.*

My first-born child!

It was a day of joy when God gave him.
This steel will find my own blood in his veins.
What care and trouble did his childhood give,
And what great happiness! When I appeared,
His little eyes would dance and shine; his arms
Would reach their tender strength to touch mine
own;

His little body fluttered as with wings.

Oh, when he smiled, the stars shone in my sky!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

He is a tyrant! All the worse for him.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

That last word is enough. No more a son
Is one who has become a parricide.

[*Gets close to his son, lifts his dagger.*

Die, traitor!

[*A noise of footsteps outside the gate. CROMWELL pauses, and turns around.*

Hold! what noise in this dark path?

Lord Ormond, coming with his Cavaliers.

To its conclusion let us see his crime;

We can conclude the drama afterward.

[*Replaces his dagger in its sheath; the Cavaliers enter, with drawn swords, bearing ROCHESTER asleep and gagged, with a handkerchief covering his face.*

SCENE VII

The same. LORD ORMOND, LORD CLIFFORD, LORD DROGHEDA, LORD ROSEBERRY, SIR PETERS DOWNIE, SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, SEDLEY, DOCTOR JENKINS, LORD ROCHESTER. *As the Cavaliers enter, CROMWELL resumes his place and RICHARD CROMWELL turns with astonishment*

RICHARD CROMWELL (*without being seen by the Cavaliers*).

These men have a suspicious air. I'll watch.

[*Retires to the left of the stage, among the trees.*

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to CROMWELL, with a triumphant air*).

This mighty lord had no brocaded bed.
A flickering candle on his table burned;
We could not see. Thanks to the lethargic,
He didn't move as we conveyed him hence.
We gagged him without trouble; here he is.

CROMWELL.

'Tis he?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).
What does this mean?

LORD CLIFFORD.

We've seized him. Yes,
'Tis victory!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).
What says he?

SIR PETERS DOWNIE.

Now the worst
Is done. The night is dark; let us make haste.
Move on!

[*To DROGHEDA, ROSEBERRY, SEDLEY, and CLIFFORD, who are the bearers of the sleeping prisoner and who have stopped.*
What is the matter?

LORD ROSEBERRY (*to DOWNIE*).

Easy said
By those who carry naught.

SEDLEY (*to DOWNIE*).

Since no relays
Have been provided, we must stop and rest.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

I know these voices.

LORD ORMOND (*his eyes fixed on the burden which the Cavaliers have placed upon the ground*).

Here lies Cromwell then,
Most justly punished for his monstrous crimes.
We hold him, this Colossus of earth's fame,
In whom the world more than in God believed.
'Tis he, and he lies helpless at our feet.
There's nothing strong, nor wise, nor bold enough
To wrest the culprit now from his great judge.
All fled before him; where's his shelter now?
Unhappy soldier, to what end have you
Kept fifteen years this nation under yoke?
What use are all your battles, all your wounds?
The substitution of your name for Stuart's.
Your reign of hate and terror and despair;
The royal calvary which you have made?
These crimes, sealed with the mark of Charles's
crown,

Are a most awful load to carry now!
What an account! How will you render it?
All powerful, I hated you; but crushed,
I pity. Had I killed you in fair fight—
Oh, cruel fate! to seize, not overcome.
A triumph without battle! 'Tis our fate.
The sword gave place to daggers. What a head
Has destiny thrown down upon the scales
To make them drop upon the Stuarts' side.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

What do I hear? In silence, I'll keep watch.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

I like that Ormond; he speaks generously.
A soldier's heart can be depended on.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*to LORD ORMOND, indicating the prisoner*).

Your lordship does great honor to the knave.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Vile courtier!

SIR PETERS DOWNIE (*to those who are to bear the prisoner*).

Let us get away.

LORD DROGHEDA.

Pray, wait.

He is as heavy as if he were dead.

SEDLEY.

It is no easy task to bear this load
Unto its destination. What to do?
We must deliberate.

LORD CLIFFORD.

Let's kill our man

And finish, quick.

LORD DROGHEDA.

So say I. Kill our man.

SEDLEY.

It is the shortest way.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).

What fiends they are!

Who is the prisoner?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

The spear is lodged;
Now let us give it rope.

MANASSES (*who has observed all this in profound silence, lifting his head; aside*).

This spectacle
Relieves my grief. Now they will kill themselves.
That will be consolation.

LORD CLIFFORD (*to Cavaliers, brandishing his sword over ROCHESTER*).

Is't agreed?

DOCTOR JENKINS (*stopping CLIFFORD*).

What? Without witnesses? Without a judge?
No jury, law, procedure? Gentlemen,
This is assassination. The term's hard,
But what especial warrant has made you
A court of justice or council of war?
To prove you do not violate the law,
Where's your commission, signed with royal
seal?

Which is attorney, which is president?
I do not see two lawyers pleading here,
One for the Crown, one for the criminal;
What legal apparatus have you? Speak!
Who knows Latin enough to be a judge,
Or to confront, examine, witnesses;
Give sentence, in accordance with the texts,
To gallows or to hurdle? What's the day
Of session? How will you your judgment date?
Where is the instigator of the crime, and where

Are the accomplices? On what offenses
 Do you base your punishment? My lords, 'tis
 not

Cromwell I here defend; it is the law.
 I hold him, though unjudged, a criminal.
 He faltered in allegiance to his king—
 A crime which has its punishment in law.
 "Qui laedit in rege majestatem Dei."
 'Tis England's law which has been disobeyed.
 That this great criminal should lose his head,
 In order to enforce the sacred rights,
 Is very just; but we must have the forms.
 You can't condemn him in this lawless way.
 You've usurped qualities not in accord;
 You can't be witnesses, accuser, judge,
 And executioner. It is absurd!
 I must protest 'gainst the attempt, my lords.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

That must be Jenkins; honest magistrate!

LORD CLIFFORD (*to the Cavaliers, shrugging
 his shoulders*).

What does he think his croaking words will do?

LORD DROGHEDA (*to JENKINS, with an aggrieved
 manner*).

You think us ignoramuses, good sir?

SIR PETERS DOWNIE.

Think you to rule the court from the king's
 bench?

SEDLEY (*laughing*).

Since when said the owl to his friend the gos-
 hawk—

[*Counterfeiting the voice and gestures of Doctor JENKINS.*

“We’ll sit
And pronounce sentence on the animal.”

LORD ROSEBERRY (*laughing*).
He talks to us in Latin.

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.
Stupid talk!

LORD CLIFFORD.
My dagger is the judge, without appeal.
I strike.

CROMWELL (*aside*).
Well, let him strike!

ALL THE CAVALIERS.
We’ll make an end!
[LORD CLIFFORD *advances with lifted sword toward the prisoner, whose face is still concealed.*

DOCTOR JENKINS (*gravely*).
I do protest.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).
This scene is horrible!
Is it some fearful dream?

LORD CLIFFORD (*pushing Doctor JENKINS aside*).

Protest away!

LORD ORMOND (*stopping CLIFFORD*).
One moment, Clifford; what he says is right,
And I approve. The King commanded us

To bring the prisoner to him, alive.
It is his will; submit.

LORD CLIFFORD (*to LORD ORMOND*).

After to-night

'T will cost a hundred battles to bear him
Away.

SIR PETERS DOWNIE.

Besides, when we have got him there,
Intends his Majesty to ticket him
And keep him in a cage?

LORD DROGHEDA.

Well! we can send

The animal well stuffed.

LORD CLIFFORD (*to LORD ORMOND*).

When once the sword

Has left the scabbard, it must strike, my lord.
This hour belongs to us; make use of it.
He's in our hands. I say, let Cromwell die.

ALL THE CAVALIERS (*except LORD ORMOND
and JENKINS*).

Yes!

[*With drawn swords they rush upon the
prisoner, who does not stir.*]

DOCTOR JENKINS (*solemnly*).

I protest.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside, beside himself
with anxiety*).

They'll kill my father! Heaven!

[*Throwing himself into their midst.*]

Assassins, stop!

ALL THE CAVALIERS.

It's Richard Cromwell. 'Sdeath!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

What is he doing?

RICHARD CROMWELL (*to the Cavaliers*).

Stop, for pity's sake!

If of our friendship there is left one trace,

Oh, hear me, Downie, Sedley, Roseberry!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*impatiently*).

The devil!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Spare my father!

SEDLEY.

Did he spare

His king?

RICHARD CROMWELL.

What's that you say? It was a crime.

But am I guilty, must I die for it?

In killing him, you kill me too, my friends.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Is that my Richard, hardened parricide?

I do not understand.

LORD ROSEBERRY (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).

You are our comrade,

Good Richard, but our duty we must do.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

You shall not kill him!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

He defends my life.

What happiness! How I misjudged my son!

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Was it in preparation for this end
You made me welcome at your table, friends?
For this we shared our games and feasts and
 revels;
That my purse was ever open to your needs?
Oh, my once kind associates, compare
What I have done, with what you do for me.

LORD ROSEBERRY (*low to Cavaliers*).
Is he so wrong?

DOCTOR JENKINS (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).
 Go on, young man; that's good!
But harp upon the radical defect,
They have no right. Oh, plead your cause!
 Plead! Plead!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*to DOCTOR JENKINS*).
Sir—

DOCTOR JENKINS.
 Yes, with you, I am opposed.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*to Cavaliers, clasping
 his hands*).

My friends!

CROMWELL (*aside*).
I see all things in a much fairer light.
My son— I have been most unjust to him.
I'm sure he knew naught of a plot so dark
Except the part of drinking with his friends.

LORD ORMOND (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).
Your father played a heavy game with us.
Each staked his head. He lost.

RICHARD CROMWELL.,

Assassinate

A father while his son looks on! Good God!

[*Cries with all his strength.*

Help! murder! help!

[*To Cavaliers.*] I'm not his only hope!

[*Cries again.*

Help! murder! soldiers, here!

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*interrupting him*).

The men are ours.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Then I, alone—I will defy you all!

[*Putting his hand to his side to seize his sword.*

Ah, what! No sword assists my vengeful arm.

My father, why deprive me of my sword?

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Poor Richard!

LORD ORMOND (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).

I am sorry, sir. But go,

Leave us, and let the King's men work their will.

RICHARD CROMWELL.

Oh, Heaven! work their will? I want no favor.

Kill me upon his body, which I clasp.

[*Throws himself on the sleeping LORD ROCHESTER and presses his arms around him closely.*

CROMWELL (*aside*).

My son! He goes too far. 'Twould be too hard

To die on a false Cromwell's breast.

LORD ROSEBERRY (*trying to calm RICHARD*).
Come, Richard!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*still clasping LORD ROCHESTER*).

No! Either strike me with your steel, or let
Me save him.

[*The Cavaliers try to drag RICHARD from off LORD ROCHESTER'S body; he struggles with them, and clings to LORD ROCHESTER with greater violence. During this struggle CROMWELL watches all the movements of the Cavaliers, and is ready at any moment to give assistance to his son. MANASSES lifts his head and watches all intently, without speaking a word.*]

LORD ROCHESTER (*waking with a violent start, and struggling in his turn*).

Oh, you're strangling me! The deuce!
[*All pause with consternation.*]

LORD ORMOND.

What voice was that, just God?

[*LORD ROCHESTER tears off the handkerchief which has covered his face, and CROMWELL turns the light of the lantern upon him.*]

RICHARD CROMWELL (*starting back*).
It is the spy.

ALL THE CAVALIERS.

It's Rochester!

LORD ROCHESTER (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).
You are the headsman, sir?

You choked me hard enough to make me yield
 Two ghosts instead of one. Now, couldn't you
 Be a bit gentler, act in harmony -
 With me, and hang me with less energy?

LORD ORMOND (*amazed*).

Lord Rochester!

LORD ROCHESTER (*half awake, touching the
 handkerchief around his neck*).

The cord's already on,
 But I don't see that any gibbet's here.
 Are they to hang me on some rusty nail,
 As if I were an owl?

LORD ORMOND.

Where is Cromwell?

CROMWELL (*with a voice of thunder, disclos-
 ing himself*).

He is here! Come forth, out of your tents,
 Jacob
 And Israel.

[*At CROMWELL'S words the astonished Cava-
 liers turn around and see the back of the
 stage entirely filled by a multitude of sol-
 diers, bearing torches; they have come out
 from all parts of the garden, and all the
 doors of the palace; among them THURLOE
 and the EARL OF CARLISLE are visible. All
 the windows of White-Hall are suddenly
 illuminated, and reveal armed soldiers
 everywhere. CROMWELL'S shadow is
 thrown out against this brilliant back-
 ground.*

SCENE VIII

The same. EARL OF CARLISLE, THURLOE,
Musketeers, Halberdiers, Noblemen,
- Cromwell's Body-Guard

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY (*terrified*).

How many soldiers! God!

I'm a dead man.

THE CAVALIERS.

Ah, this is treachery!

LORD ORMOND (*fixing his eyes first on LORD
 ROCHESTER, then on CROMWELL*).
 Cromwell and Rochester!

LORD ROCHESTER (*rubbing his eyes*).

Well, am I hanged?

Perhaps I am in hell; these fearful lights,
 These specters, all these demons with their fire—
 Of course it's hell: Wilmot had never counted
 Upon heaven. [*Looking at the Protector.*]

Yes, there is Satan. On my soul,
 He looks exactly like the Lord Protector!

CROMWELL (*indicating the Cavaliers, to
 THURLOE and the EARL OF CARLISLE*).

Arrest these gentlemen.

[*A crowd of Puritan soldiers rush upon the
 Cavaliers, seize them, and take away their
 swords, before they have time to resist.*]

LORD ORMOND (*breaking his sword on his knee*).
None takes my sword!

RICHARD CROMWELL (*aside*).
What is all this? For this new escapade
I'll undergo another punishment.
I broke from prison. I am lost!

LORD ROCHESTER (*looking around with astonishment*).

How now?
Here's Drogheda and Downie, Roseberry—
I'll burn in most distinguished company.
The Jew who ransomed Clifford—he is here.
They'll roast him in his strong-box, sure. It seems
We all are dead and damned. Good-night, my
friends.

[*To Cavaliers.*] Let us defy old Satan! To
the devil
With hell! Let's jeer Beelzebub unto
His face!

LORD ORMOND.
In what a fatal trap we fall!

LORD ROCHESTER (*to Cavaliers*).
Our noble scheme has had a sorry end.
Cocytos, Cromwell puts into our wine.
[*Until now CROMWELL has remained silent in
his triumph, arms folded across his chest,
eyes turned haughtily upon the crushed
and terrorstricken Cavaliers.*

CROMWELL (*aside, looking at LORD ORMOND*).
I did not know Ormond. In spite of me,
His character inspires me with respect.

LORD ORMOND (*eyes fixed upon CROMWELL*).
 How he deceived us! What audacity!
 What skill!

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Alone, he looks me in the face.

A noble adversary, he! He was
 Commissioned, and he did obey. Let's speak
 Unto this soldier.

[*Approaching LORD ORMOND and looking at
 him proudly; aloud.*

Speak! Your name.

LORD ORMOND.

'Tis Bloum.

[*Aside.*] Not even dying will I let him know
 He conquered Ormond.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

For pride's sake, he lies.

[*Aloud.*] Who are you?

LORD ORMOND.

One rebellious against you,
 Because of England and its lawful king.

CROMWELL.

What do you think of me?

LORD ORMOND.

Of you, Cromwell?

CROMWELL.

Yes, speak.

LORD ORMOND.

No tongue describes you but the sword.

CROMWELL.

Despotic argument. It has one fault;
To daggers off the scaffold makes reply.

LORD ORMOND.

What matters that?

CROMWELL (*folding his arms*).

You thirsted for my blood?

LORD ORMOND.

My steel would have chastised the regicide.

CROMWELL.

Chastised? What right?

LORD ORMOND.

Retaliation's right.

CROMWELL.

You dared to seek the lion in his den!

LORD ORMOND.

You mean the tiger?

CROMWELL.

In the master's home?

LORD ORMOND.

Cromwell, call him the regicide.

CROMWELL.

Always!

That is their speech, their reason, their reply,
To every purpose and to every thought.
Have I deserved the name of regicide?
The people rose against illegal tax:
I was severe and honest, Charles was rash.

His fall was necessary, and his death
 Was a sad accident. I venerate
 The virtues which he had. The king I killed
 While praying for the man.

LORD ORMOND.

Oh, hypocrite!
 You can't beguile me.

CROMWELL.

We must disagree
 Upon this point.

LORD ORMOND.

A place by Ravailac
 Is saved for you.

CROMWELL.

Hate heats your heart too much,
 Old man! Your white hair should make you
 more wise.
 Cromwell or Ravailac! Can you compare
 The hand which guides the world to that base
 one,
 The ax a people swings unto the knife
 Of an assassin? Scripture proves this truth.
 Blood branded Cain and honored Samuel.

LORD ORMOND.

Well, Ravailac, whose memory is scorned,
 Does he not share your glory lawfully?
 Like you, he killed a just and noble king.
 What's lacking to his deed?

CROMWELL.

He struck too low.
 Kings should be struck nowhere but at the head.

LORD ORMOND.

Oh, Charles, my master! Clear I see him
 now. [Repelling CROMWELL.
 Away from me—you who have raised your
 hand
 Against the sacredness of royalty!

CROMWELL.

Blood can defile and blood can purify.
 [Aside.] Wherefore? He judges; I defend
 myself.

I let him stand before me and parade
 His foolish honor and his virtues dull.
 His petty mind cannot conceive how fate
 Drives on, remorselessly, a giant soul!
 He is incurable. Leave him alone.

[Turns his back on LORD ORMOND and ap-
 proaches DOCTOR JENKINS.

Ah, Doctor Jenkins!

[Indicating LORD ORMOND and SIR WILLIAM
 MURRAY.

'Mongst these madmen—you?
 [Indicating SEDLEY, LORD CLIFFORD, and
 LORD ROCHESTER.

And with these knaves? You who are wise and
 just!

DOCTOR JENKINS (*gravely*).

You have a right to say what pleases you;
 You've conquered.

CROMWELL.

To my favor, you preferred
 To share with dreamers a catastrophe
 Which must be rudely punished.

DOCTOR JENKINS.

If you please,

Make just distinction in the words you use.
 You can avenge yourself, not punish us.
 It is as well, I think, to be exact.
 "Tyrannus non judex"—a tyrant is
 Not judge. If, thanks to traitors, to deserters,
 You have been the most skillful in the fight
 And force declares for you, with us stands right.
 You can condemn us, true, by violence.
 What's that? We die an arbitrary death,
De facto; pray consult your men of law,
 Your Whitelocke, Pierpoint, Maynard. I'll agree
 To stand by their decision, though Whitelocke
 Has a false system, and your other two
 Oft plead for fox against the poulterer.

CROMWELL.

Well, then! accept the gallows for your share.

DOCTOR JENKINS.

I will; but we have the advantage still.
 An incensed tyrant's gibbet is our fate.
 The pillory of posterity is yours.

[CROMWELL *shrugs his shoulders*.

LORD ROCHESTER (*still half awake*).

Where are my wits gone? If I'm not asleep,
 I must be dead. This Cromwell puzzles me.
 Already here? I left him, yesterday,
 Up there.

[*Addressing Soldiers who surround him.*
 Come, can't one change one's dreams, one's hell?
 Deliver me from Noll, you've a kind look.

CROMWELL (*after a moment of reflection, folds his arms and speaks smilingly to the Cavaliers*).

Well, sirs! You have prepared a wondrous plot.
You thought to catch Cromwell in a child's trap,
To murder him—for your triumphant knives
Would not have treated me, before the gate,
As David treated Saul within the cave.
I think no one of you had been content
To gently cut the border of my cloak.
I understand. 'Tis simple. I approve;
But, in approving, I must frankly say
You might have stumbled on a better plan.
For this attempt is weak in all its points.
I'm sorry that I knew it not in time
To offer you my counsel, my good friends;
But do not blame me. You have sweated hard
To think this out. And I, like Joshua,
Whom twenty kings united could not harm,
Have cut the sinews of your steeds of war.
We all have acted as became our place.
You made attack, and I planned my defense.
As for your project, in itself, I own
I like the ardor of such loyal hearts.
Audacity and courage suit my taste.
Although success has not been quite complete,
I shall esteem your efforts none the less.
You worked with boldness, firm and disciplined;
You did not falter, hesitate, nor blench;
You are—accept these compliments sincere—
Good foemen, not unworthy of my steel.
I see no reason to disparage you.
I value you too high to let you go.

These feelings shall be publicly expressed,
 And with proud honors I will have you hanged.
 Don't thank me; pardon me instead, if I
 [*Indicating* SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, *who is*
overcome with terror.

Must place this weeping braggart by your side.
 To me he is not worth the rope he costs.

He ought to thank you; for without your aid
 He'd not have had a chance to rouse my ire.

[*Indicating* MANASSES, *who stands motionless.*

Forgive me, also, if I add this Jew—

A sin, with Christians mix a deicide,
 To honest robbers join Barabbas; but

I'll favor you: he shall be hanged low down.

I beg each one of you to pardon me

For such scant pay; I give what I have got:

Compared unto your merit, 'tis not much.

Go now; prepare your own account with God.

We all are sinners, friends. In a few hours,

When dawn shall cast its light upon these walls,

You will be hanged. Now go—and pray for me.

[*The Guards, with the* EARL OF CARLISLE *at*
their head, lead off the prisoners, who,
with the exceptions of MURRAY *and the*
Jew, preserve a proud and scornful atti-
tude. CROMWELL stands reflecting a few
moments and then turns suddenly to
 THURLOE.

Let them prepare Westminster. I am king!

[*He re-enters White-Hall through the gate,*
and THURLOE *with a profound obeisance*
exits through the park.

SCENE IX

THE FOUR FOOLS. *As CROMWELL and THURLOE go out, GRAMADOCH advances his head from the Fools' hiding-place, then comes out cautiously, looking around to see if any one is present; after an instant he makes a sign to the others, who follow, and the four Fools, standing close together, look from one to the other and burst into violent fits of laughter*

GRAMADOCH (*to the others*).

What do you say to that?

GIRAFF (*laughing*).

Whew! how ridiculous!

ELESPURU.

The nether world is visible in this.

TRICK.

'Tis something mad, idiotic, unheard of!

GIRAFF.

It's a gay spectacle. Cromwell unmasked,
Fire without smoke, and Satan true to life.

GRAMADOCH.

Of all the actors in this fateful scene,
Which was the maddest? Come, to whom the
prize?

TRICK.

To Murray, who on Cromwell spent his scorn,
Then turns from Noll to Charles in pirouette,
And swears a weather-vane is a true flag.

GIRAFF.

No, 'tis to Richard, son of Belial,
Who dies for Rochester from filial love.

TRICK.

If Cromwell had killed Richard in his rage,
'Twould have been fine.

GIRAFF.

That would have ended all.

TRICK.

A shame!

GRAMADOCH.

So then to Richard you award
The noble fool's-cap, trophy of our art?

ELESPURU.

The Doctor's learned frankness I prefer.

TRICK.

Lord Ormond preached to Cromwell! That was
good.

Was't not amusing? I would have preferred
To teach justice unto a man of law,
To comb a polar bear, a panther track,
Or stir the crater of Vesuvius.

GIRAFF.

This Jew has no conception of romance—
This rabbi-spy, miser-astrologer,

Who, while his thoughts gloat o'er the glint of
gold,
Comes with his lantern to decipher stars.

ELESPURU.

Amphibious animal, to both spheres strange.
This Jew appeared upon the scene as comes
A bat to pierce the darkness of the tomb.

GIRAFF.

Most apt is your comparison, because
Upon a cross, before some tall church door,
Old Noll will nail him for a scare-crow. Ha!

TRICK.

Thus Cromwell settles with the Cavaliers.
Upon his gallows many ropes has he.

GRAMADOCH.

Yet, though he bears a world upon his back,
Cromwell's more mad than all the rest, because
He will be king; and death waits at the door.
*[These words arrest the attention of the Fools;
they draw close to GRAMADOCH.]*

GIRAFF (*to* GRAMADOCH).

What's that?

GRAMADOCH.

You'll see.

TRICK (*to* GRAMADOCH).

But, tell us—

GRAMADOCH.

By-and-by.

ELESPURU (*to GRAMADOCH*).

Why should you care?

GRAMADOCH (*shaking his head*).

A mystery's an egg.

Don't break it if you wish the chicken hatched:
Have patience. Cromwell, who in all succeeds,
If he takes this step, finds his precipice.
Death's waiting. At the coronation, friends,
You'll see, you'll laugh. Ah, he is much more
mad

Than are the dwarfs he crushes as he walks!
A thousand times more mad, because he thinks
He is so wise.

TRICK.

But, to conclude this talk,
The most idiotic, counting Cromwell, are
Ourselves. If we were wise, we would not waste
Our time on these stupidities, when we
Might pass the hours in idleness or sleep,
In singing to the echoes all our woes,
Or looking at the moon down in a well.

[*They go out.*]

ACT V

THE WORKMEN

SCENE.—*The great Hall at Westminster. On the left, toward the back, the main door of the hall seen obliquely; in the background semi-circular steps, rising to a good height. Rich hangings of tapestry fill the spaces between the gothic pillars all around the hall, allowing but the capitals and cornices to be seen. To the right, a frame covered with boards, which are to form the steps of the throne's platform. Several men are working on them, as the curtain rises; some are nailing the final boards on the steps, while others are covering them with a rich scarlet velvet carpet, fringed with gold; others are arranging a dais of the same material and the same color above the platform. Under the canopy, the arms of the Protector are embroidered in gold. Divers implements belonging to the carpenters and upholsterers are scattered on the floor; and some ladders placed against the pillars show that the draping has just been terminated. Opposite to the throne is a pulpit. All around the hall are tribunes and balconies richly draped. It is three o'clock in the morning; day is beginning to dawn, and*

rays of light fall through the half-opened door and through the casements, making the light of the lamps look pale. Numerous brass lamps are hung around the room for the benefit of the night laborers

SCENE I

SOME WORKMEN

THE FOREMAN (*by gesture encouraging those who are arranging the dais*).

The work progresses. Good! The dais is large
Enough.

[*To a Workman who stands near with a Bible in his hands.*

Come, brother, edify us. Read.

THE WORKMAN (*reading*).

“Now, the temple had a cedar wainscot,
A floor of spruce—”

THE FOREMAN (*to Workmen*).

Eat of the holy feast.

THE READER (*continuing*).

“King Solomon supported it, from space
To space, by plateaus with five sides and by
Four-cornered tiles; he covered this great work
With plates of gold, and in the oracle
Beside the altar placed two cherubim
With outstretched wings.”

A WORKMAN (*casting a glance over the preparations*).

Our hands accomplished much

Last night. That his work should be left complete
 King Solomon gave seven years unto
 His temple and fifteen unto his palace.
 But for our labor, we had one short hour.

THE FOREMAN.

Well said.

[*To the Workmen who are arranging the dais.*

That ladder is a better one.

[*To ENOCH.*] Can one make too much haste—
 [*To the Workmen who are putting the curtain
 on the dais.*

That is the height—

[*To ENOCH.*] When one for the Protector builds
 a throne?

SECOND WORKMAN.

The ceremony will take place to-day?

THE FOREMAN.

Yes; by good luck the platform will be ready.

[*To ENOCH.*] We never worked—

[*To the Workmen who are nailing the boards.*

Less noise, come, over there!

[*To ENOCH.*] Naught was e'er done so quick,
 except that night—

ENOCH.

What night?

THE FOREMAN.

Your memory is not very good.

Eight years ago: it was a cold, dark night—

The night of January thirtieth,

Or twenty-ninth. We also worked that time

For my Lord Oliver.

SECOND WORKMAN.

Did we not build
The scaffold of King Charles that night?

THE FOREMAN.

Yes, Tom!
Of King Barabbas is it thus one speaks?
Of English Pharaoh?

ENOCH (*as if recalling memories*).

I recollect.

The scaffold rested 'gainst the palace wall.
Faith! those were no rough steps on which to
hang
The rabbis, and burn witches: no indeed!
A scaffold, black, well built, as one should be.
'Twas on a level with the window, too.
No need of ladder: most convenient.

THE FOREMAN.

And strong enough to bear all Herod's sons.
Robin himself could find no better joists.
One could die comfortably without a fear.

TOM (*on the platform*).

This throne is not as solid: see, it shakes.

ENOCH.

The scaffold was not built so rapidly.

THE WORKMAN (*who holds the Bible, shaking
his head*).

No, 'twas not finished in a single night.

ENOCH.

Why not?

THE WORKMAN (*indicating the throne*).

It was a part of this same scene.
This is one higher step which Cromwell mounts.
What he began then, terminates to-day.
The scaffold is completed by this throne.

TOM.

Inspirèd Nahum sees things in their truth.

NAHUM (*eyes fixed upon the throne*).

Yes, stage for stage, I like that one the best.
'Twas Charles' turn then: now, it will be ours.
On the black cloth Cromwell but slew a king;
Upon that purple, now, the nation dies.

THE FOREMAN (*to NAHUM*).

Dare you speak thus? What if some one should
hear?

NAHUM.

To sack-cloth and to ashes am I doomed!
What does it matter? Would that Cromwell
heard.

If he insists on being crowned, he falls.
He is accursed; and I predict his death.
Yes, I, poor miserable man, who am
Worth more than he, with all his vile renown.
For God preferred a desert unto Tyre,
The grape of Ephraim to Abiezer's vine.

THE FOREMAN (*watching NAHUM, who stands
in ecstasy*).

Imprudent man!

[*To ENOCH.*] The royal armchair must
Be placed upon the platform. Lend your help.

[*Both mount the steps, carrying a large armchair covered with scarlet velvet, and heavily gilded; upon its back the arms of the Protector are embroidered and heavily embossed in gold. They place the armchair in the center of the platform.*

TOM (*looking at the royal seat*).

A good armchair. He'll sit there like a king.

ENOCH (*giving the final touches to the armchair; to THE FOREMAN*).

That night you speak of, I prepared the block—
A fine oak block it was—for Charles's head,
All furnished with its cramps and double chain,
Quite new: used only for Lord Strafford.

THIRD WORKMAN.

Yes!

Who came to bid us stop our hammering?

THE FOREMAN.

'Twas Tomlinson, colonel on duty then.
He said the torture we need not begin,
And that our hammers with their violent noise
Deprived the criminal of his last sleep.

NAHUM.

He slept: how strange!

FOURTH WORKMAN.

During those gloomy hours,
If any one had seen us working there
Building a scaffold by the torches' light,
As if we were grave-diggers at a grave,

Or demons, who by witchcraft in one night
 Can build up an abnormal edifice,
 That person would have been well terrified.

ENOCH.

I like nocturnal work; it pays us well.
 I lived, with my ten children, for two weeks
 On Charles's scaffold.

FIFTH WORKMAN.

I wonder if Cromwell
 Will pay as much for thrones as scaffolds.

TOM.

But

'Tis Master Barebone, the upholsterer,
 Who gets the most out of this whole affair.
 He furnishes the curtains, seats, brocades,
 And of our salary three quarters takes.

NAHUM.

A temple-vender!

FIFTH WORKMAN.

Mede!

FOURTH WORKMAN.

True son of Eve,
 Who blindly steps upon the ax's edge.

NAHUM (*rejoining*).

A pillar of the ark, buttress of Babel;
 One foot in heaven, the other one in hell.

TOM.

Be silent! He'll dismiss us if he finds

We treat him as he treats his master. Hark,
He comes!

[BAREBONE enters. *All the Workmen resume their work in silence; NAHUM, alone, remains standing, motionless, his eyes fixed on the old, much-worn open Bible which he holds.*

SCENE II

The same. BAREBONE

BAREBONE (*looking over the work which has been done*).

This is encouraging.

[*To Workmen.*] I'm pleased

With you. I think there's nothing left to do.

[*Aside.*] I am extremely gratified to find
They've finished their abominable task so soon;
For the conspirators, who now are due,
Can hold a council without witnesses;
Can overlook the place, and decide how
To strike the surest blow at Oliver.

How fortunate for this conspiracy
That I'm upholsterer to this anti-Christ!
Let me dismiss them.

[*Aloud to Workmen.*] Go, my brothers, go!
Be strong against all spirits that seduce.
Love well your neighbors—even wicked men.

[*To THE FOREMAN.*] Sir Nehemias,
[THE FOREMAN approaches BAREBONE, while
the Workmen pick up their tools and load
themselves with their lamps and ladders.

Get the buff cuirass
Completed instantly, for Cromwell's use,
Whom may the Lord protect.

[*Low, and whispering in THE FOREMAN'S ear.*

From what is left,
Make at your leisure, when no one can see,
Some scabbards for the daggers of our saints.

[*THE FOREMAN bows his head in acquiescence,
and goes out accompanied by all the Workmen.*

SCENE III

BAREBONE (*alone, standing before the throne,
as if in contemplation*).

Behold this throne—unrighteous edifice
On which we're placed, a sacrifice to Nesroch;
Where the successful chief becomes a king;
Where this rejuvenated serpent casts
His skin. By this he thinks to clinch his power,
This Zerubbabel in whom Nimrod breathes,
This priest of hell; corrupter of mankind,
Who, prostituting our most sacred church,
Designs within the depths of his vile soul
To make the spouse of saints his concubine.
God's fierce oppressor and betrayer too,
Than Stharnabusai thousand-fold more base.
Behold this throne decked with anathema!
All is correct: six feet by nine, and draped
In crimson velvet. Yes, it took ten bales
To cover it like this. 'Twas not enough

For this irreverent son to wield a power
 Usurped from God Himself; to trample
 On our Israel as on a broken reed;
 More than Adonibesec to be feared;
 To ape the glutton, over Europe stretched,
 Beneath whose table sixty kings shall feed.
 No, he must have a throne! And what a
 throne!

A mass of fringe, of damask, satin, plumes,
 Whereon, as of the Holy Lamp 'twas writ,
 The sculptor and the lapidary joined
 Their arts. This tinsel he must have as well—
 When I say tinsel, I mean solid gold;
 Pure gold of Hungary. These tassels fine
 Would furnish four republics with gold coin.
 I chose them all myself; of lesser weight
 They would have hurt the velvet's grand effect—
 Rare Spanish velvet. Let him reign and die.
 The crown shall glorify his final hour.
 We'll put Sisera's nail upon his brow.

[Looking at the throne cushions.]

I paid five dollars for each yard of this;
 I'll sell it now for ten—an ancient mode.
 This Ehud's a good customer, were't not
 For avarice. His death is close at hand.
 Under the mighty dais, with its folds,
 Where his plebeian crest usurps a crown,
 The royal steps will yield beneath his tread.
 The place is suited to the dagger's act.

*[Walks up and down before the throne, and
 his countenance changes its expression of
 rage to one of admiration for all the
 ornaments which decorate it.]*

He's capable of beating me down yet;
Of letting Maynard mutilate the bill;
Clipping the gold brocades, cheapening the
moires;

Then, if I dare complain, in his good faith,
He sends his soldiers to talk law to me.
Serve Pharaohs? Ingratitude always
Is the first impulse of their frozen hearts.
However, he should be content with me.
To parody the majesty of kings,
There's nothing wanting to this corrupt throne,
This hideous theater, this altar vile.
All is magnificent. I spared no pains.
To Moloch's splendor I resigned myself.
Carpets, Bohemian leather, I've exposed
To all the peril blasphemy invites.
Die, Jebusite! [*Seized by a sudden thought.*]

Where will I get my pay
When he is dead? Great Deborah left not
Her nail in the unholy brow she struck.
When Samson's drowsy vigor overturned
The alien temple, what great risk ran he?
When, in her splendor, from the bloody feast,
Where Holofernes had succumbed to her,
Fled Judith, she contrived to save her life
And all her jewels. Who'll defray my bill?
What profit will accrue me from his death?
I must leave something for my widow's needs.
I see the matter in a different light.
Let me reflect.—Here are our friends, the saints.
[*Enter the Puritan conspirators with LAMBERT at their head. They all wear long cloaks, and large conical-shaped hats with*

wide brims, which are pulled down over their dark and somber countenances. They walk slowly, as if absorbed in profound reflection; several seem to be murmuring prayers. The gleam of dagger-blades is visible through their half-open cloaks.

SCENE IV

BAREBONE, LAMBERT, JOYCE, OVERTON, PLINLIMMON, HARRISON, WILDMAN, LUDLOW, SYNDERCOMB, PIMPLETON, PALMER, GARLAND, PRIDE, JEROBOAM-OF-EMER, and other Roundhead conspirators

LAMBERT (*to BAREBONE*).

Well?

[*For all answer BAREBONE points to the throne and the regal decorations, on which the conspirators cast glances of hatred. LAMBERT turns to his companions and addresses them solemnly.*

You behold! Faithful to his designs, Cromwell completes his sacrilegious work. At Westminster all things have been prepared. The platform's raised, and all may see the steps Where Parliament will grovel at his feet. Of our last chance let us make noble use. We judge this second king; his crime is clear— That throne is proof.

OVERTON.

It is his scaffold, friends.

He will ascend to make a fatal fall.

His last hour is determined by himself.

Here, resurrected from the tomb of kings,

This pomp shall be his funeral display.

Our knife will join his soul to Stuart's ghost.

To come to this! This tyrant, hypocrite,

Exhumes the royalty which we proscribed.

There, where we threw it, in the tomb he seeks

The bloody scepter that he envied Charles.

He dares purloin the crown from out the grave.

But back 'twill fall, and drag down Cromwell
too;

And if some other one should dare as much,

May every royal robe be a new shroud.

LAMBERT (*aside*).

He goes too far!

OVERTON (*continuing*).

Anathema to him!

ALL.

Anathema!

OVERTON (*continuing*).

All have conspired with us—

Cromwell himself. His fortune blinded him,

This Attila inspired by Machiavel.

Without his help, hate had been powerless

To undermine his popular control.

He lost himself, because he did not know

When his firm tread encountered different
ground.

He, who forsook his native heath, must die.
 To be a king, he is become a man;
 And Death, beneath that title, claims her prey.
 The crowd, once his support, leaves him to us.
 'Twas he who signed this ill-omened divorce;
 In yielding up the people, he renounced
 His strength. They're willing to be crushed
 and wronged,
 But by a Lord Protector, not a king.
 As a plebeian tyrant he was safe.
 Had he been worse than Herod, to the world
 His uncrowned brow was deemed the only one
 Strong to support the burden of the State;
 But on that brow let shine a diadem,
 And all things change: to those who loved him
 most,
 'Tis but a king's head, and belongs by right
 Unto the executioner.

ALL (*excepting LAMBERT and BAREBONE. Since
 the conspirators arrived, BAREBONE seems
 to be absorbed in deep reflection.*)

Well said!

JOYCE.

We've drawn our swords, and reeking they
 shall go
 Back to our scabbards, to the hilt besmeared
 A second time with blood of traitor kings.

PRIDE.

Yes, 'tis his tomb he seeks at Westminster.
 He was the high-priest of his insincere,
 His hell-bespoken sect; he wants to be

Its idol. He has raised the altar; now
Upon it he shall immolate himself.

LUDLOW.

Goffe, Skippon, Wolseley, chiefs of his own
guard,
Will strike with us, if he puts on the crown.
Naught can defend him from our thirsty knives.
His son-in-law Fleetwood, his brother-in-law,
Will let him fall, to freedom true in heart.
They'd rather see him dead than crowned a
king.

HARRISON.

To Fleetwood honor, and to Desborough!
Their souls are not weakened by childish fears
Or women's pity.

GARLAND (*who has remained silent up to this
time, his eyes fixed on the first rays of the
rising sun*).

I ne'er saw a brighter sun.

A worthy victim do we strike to-day.
I never felt such joy nor such great pride
In following a path God hath revealed.
No, not when we forced Strafford's head to lie
Between the sainted ax and holy block;
Nor when Laud died, that execrable fiend,
Infernal meteor of the Star Chamber,
That prelate in whose temple Bethel rose,
And who turned to the east his altar vile;
Who scoffed with hatred at our Sabbath rights,
And spent the day of prayer in shameful games.
Nor yet, when Stuart, proud of ancient rights,
Deeming a royal crest was God's own mark,

Knelt in his royalty, superb and calm,
 Before the ax of a rebellious world.
 In each, I thought we slew an anti-Christ
 In human form, according to the text.
 But now I see triumphant Zion strike
 At Cromwell, the base sycophant, and from
 The steps whereon he mounts with dizzy tread,
 Cast him to Tophet, whence hell threw him up.
 Oh, what a day! Goliath, England's scourge,
 Shall bite the dust beneath the patriots' feet.

SYNDERCOMB.

No finer dagger-thrust was ever made.

PRIDE.

What honor for God's warriors!

JOYCE (*mounting the throne*).

His blood
 Shall stream upon the purple, where our net
 Awaits him.

[*At these words, BAREBONE, who has listened
 in silence all this time, starts, as if seized
 with a sudden and terrible anxiety.*

BAREBONE (*aside, striking his brow*).

Out upon me! Was I mad?
 They'll spoil my throne with their great streams
 of blood.

Twenty per cent I'll lose upon it, then.

[*Aloud, after a moment's reflection.*

Your speech is soft as amber to my soul.
 I'm but the humblest member of the fold,
 Yet listen. To the law obedient,

You will stab Cromwell. Are you sure 'tis right?
Remember Malchus: when Peter cut off
His ear, the sword by Jesus was accursed.
Is't not in God Almighty's name forbid
To strike with steel and cause the blood to flow?
If in this matter still your hearts feel doubt,
Read chapter ninth of Genesis, and Numbers,
Chapter the thirty-fifth.

[*A great movement of indignation among the
Roundheads.*]

JOYCE.

Who dares speak thus?

LUDLOW.

Pray, what has softened you, Barebone?

GARLAND.

You wish

To spare the anti Christ?

BAREBONE (*stammering*).

No! I do not—

I did not mean—

SYNDERCOMB.

Are you false to the cause?

HARRISON.

Are we then brigands, to be so condemned,
Assassins?

OVERTON.

No! to kill is not perforce
To commit murder; for on altar fires
The goat becomes a holy sacrifice,
And his destroyer is a sacred priest.
Agag was killed by Samuel, and we

Kill the Protector. We are the ministers
Of the Most High, and of the multitude.

JOYCE (*to BAREBONE*).

From your dark looks I argued nothing good.
You wished to save Cromwell? You hear our
words.

BAREBONE.

Barebone save Attila? May God forbid!

SYNDERCOMB (*casting indignant looks upon
BAREBONE*).

He is a pheresite or gueber.

GARLAND.

Whence

This mortuary pity for Cromwell?

BAREBONE.

To shed blood is to violate the law.

SYNDERCOMB (*striking him on the shoulder*).
Must one not dye the purple of this king?

PRIDE.

Barebone is mad.

WILDMAN.

Do you mean to withdraw?

LUDLOW (*shaking his head*).

Oft treason borrows scruples for a cloak.

BAREBONE (*terrified*).

You'd think that—

SYNDERCOMB (*furious, to BAREBONE*).
Silence!

GARLAND (*to BAREBONE*).

Have you drunk, by chance,
The waters of the Dead Sea?

HARRISON.

He upholds
Balthasar.

OVERTON.

Are you Acham who has come
To spoil the peace of the afflicted tribes?

PRIDE.

I do not recognize Barebone! May be
Some devil has borrowed his countenance
To succor Ammon!

GARLAND.

That must be the case.
I had a most atrocious dream last night.

SYNDERCOMB (*drawing his dagger*).

We'd better test his magic with our swords.
[*As he beholds the flashing steel, BAREBONE,
who has tried in vain to get a chance to
speak, cries out violently.*]

BAREBONE.

But listen!

LAMBERT.

Speak!

BAREBONE (*terrified*).

My friends, I have no wish
To save this English Ehud from his fate;
But there are holier ways of killing him—
To strangle, poison, beat, and many more.

SYNDERCOMB (*replacing his dagger in its scabbard*).

That's fortunate!

GARLAND (*grasping BAREBONE'S hand*).
I did not understand.

WILDMAN (*to BAREBONE*).
I'm glad you've not abandoned your high thoughts.

OVERTON (*to BAREBONE*).
Although to shed his blood is a great sin,
We have not time to kill him righteously.

BAREBONE (*yielding with bad grace*).
So be it: stab him, if it is your will.
[*Aside.*] It's frightful, all the same!

GARLAND.
Yes, Judith's sword
Is brother to the knives with which we strike;
Their place is waiting in heaven's arsenal.

HARRISON.
Now to Almighty God we render thanks
For sparing us the aid of Cavaliers;
Their help had hurt our task and dimmed our
fame.
But God, who to us wills the victory,
Confounds Ormond and Cromwell in their plans.
Gives Ormond unto Cromwell, and gives him
Unto the saints.

ALL (*brandishing their daggers*).
Almighty God be praised!

LAMBERT.

The hours are passing, gentlemen. Ere long
The people unto Westminster will rush.
If we should be surprised—

OVERTON (*low to JOYCE*).

He always fears.

LAMBERT.

Let us not lull ourselves in a false hope.
What have we settled? Come, let us conclude.

SYNDERCOMB.

In spite of armor, we must strike Cromwell;
That's all.

LAMBERT.

But where and when and how!

OVERTON.

Listen to me!

Among the actors or spectators placed,
We'll be attentive to the great display,
Holding our daggers hidden in our hand.
At first the rhetoricians will be heard,
The aldermen, and afterward the preachers.
Then will come Cromwell, who, upon his throne,
From Warwick's hands will take the royal
purple,
While the Lord Mayor will bestow the ax.
Whitelocke will give the seals; and, greater
sacrilege,
The Bible with gold clasps will be offered
By Thomas Widdrington. Lambert, at last,
Will place the crown: that is the time for us.

Let us surround him, and as soon as gleams
The gold upon his forehead, let us strike.

ALL.

Amen!

LAMBERT.

Who will strike first?

SYNDERCOMB.

I will!

PRIDE.

I will!

WILDMAN.

I will!

OVERTON.

The honor is my due.

GARLAND.

'Tis mine!

I've blessed this blade: it cannot miss his heart.

HARRISON.

I will begin: I owe his corrupt heart
A blow for each of the Lord's hundred names.
For four weeks now I have been practicing
The blow upon a Cromwell made of wax.

LUDLOW.

The glory of a deed like this is great;
'Tis natural we all should urge our claim.
As for myself, if I have ever asked
Of Heaven a conspicuous sign of grace,
'Tis that my arm might strike this monster
down.

I hoped my sons should one day say of me,

“He overthrew the Stuarts and Cromwell;
Twice did Ludlow demolish tyranny.”
But this same Ludlow is a citizen,
And holds the people’s good above his own.
Lambert is highest here among us all:
He bears the crown, he stands beside the throne;
He, best of all, can strike the fatal blow.

LAMBERT (*aside, with alarm*).
What does he say?

LUDLOW (*continuing*).
In such an hour as this
Each one should sacrifice to public weal.
Do as I do. To General Lambert
I yield the honor of the opening blow.

LAMBERT (*aside*).
Who asks him for it? God! he ruins me.

PRIDE.
So be it. I agree to Ludlow’s words.

SYNDERCOMB.
I sacrifice myself.
[*To LAMBERT.*] To you the blow!

LAMBERT (*hesitatingly*).
Such honor, gentlemen, consoles my grief.
[*Aside.*] Frightful embarrassment!

WILDMAN (*to LAMBERT*).
Yes, it is you,
Who shall strike Cromwell. Happy fate is
yours!

GARLAND.

Like an archangel you will crush Satan.

LAMBERT (*troubled*).

I am confused—

OVERTON (*low to JOYCE*).

He changes color, look!

JOYCE (*low to OVERTON*).

The coward!

LAMBERT (*continuing*).

I am overjoyed.

[*Aside.*] My God!

What shall I do? I'm in despair. Curse Lud-
low!

[*Aloud.*] Thus honored by your choice—I can't
express—

OVERTON (*low to JOYCE*).

He's white with terror.

LAMBERT (*continuing*).

I—

GARLAND (*to LAMBERT*).

The god of strength

Reveal himself in you!

SYNDERCOMB (*to LAMBERT*).

Your part

Will be as easy as magnificent.

[*He mounts the platform and points to the
armchair.*

There sits Cromwell or Nabo, both together
Making one devil—

[*Taking one step, he indicates the place* LAMBERT *should occupy near the throne.*

You are to stand here.

LAMBERT (*aside*).

'Tis unavoidable!

SYNDERCOMB (*continuing his demonstration*).

With perfect ease

You can displace his mantle when you give
The crown; then you can stab him to the heart.
I envy you!

LAMBERT (*to SYNDERCOMB*).

As a true friend, I yield
The honored place to you.

LUDLOW (*eagerly to LAMBERT*).

'Tis you we need;
Your place alone can guarantee the blow.
To yield to Syndercomb, were to risk all.

LAMBERT (*insisting*).

I'm the least worthy—

OVERTON.

Lambert hesitates!

LAMBERT (*aside*).

Well, then!

[*Aloud.*] I'll strike!

ALL (*brandishing their daggers*).

Then die, Amalekite!
Die, Oliver Cromwell!

BAREBONE (*with supplicating tone*).

Pray, Zion, hear me!

O great deliverers of Israel,
 In stabbing Cromwell, do not spoil my throne.
 This velvet's dear—ten dollars by the yard.
 [*At BAREBONE'S words all the Puritans move
 back and look at him with indignation.*

BAREBONE *continues without noticing it.*
 Save the rich curtains, as you strike him, please,
 And make him, if you can, fall on his back,
 In order that this Moloch's ruddy blood
 May stain my carpets the least possible.
 [*Renewed demonstration of anger from the
 conspirators.*

SYNDERCOMB (*looking sidewise at BAREBONE*).
 Who is this publican?

PRIDE.

What, Barebone—more!

GARLAND.

Of Nebuchadnezzar I've heard men speak.

WILDMAN (*to BAREBONE*).

Know you the parable of the rich man?

LUDLOW.

We give our life: you count your farthings—
 faugh!

OVERTON (*laughing*).

That's it. Our friend, upholsterer of Cromwell,
 Invokes the aid of Heaven to save his goods,
 And puts them under God's protection.

GARLAND.

'Tis

A sin to mix such matters, and deserves
 To draw God's idle thunder on our heads.

WILDMAN.

Erastianism vile!

BAREBONE (*aside*).

'Tis the right word.

Alas!

[*Aloud.*] Allow me to explain myself.

Does one rebel 'gainst God, betray the State,
 Because one feels a love for Heaven's gifts,
 Which God gives man who lives on earth an
 hour,

As consolation for his loneliness?

[*Indicating the throne.*

Six cubits from the base unto the top!

Such decorations should not one regret?

All I possess is there!

HARRISON (*casting envious looks upon the
 splendid trappings to which BARE-
 BONE points*).

A splendid sight!

Upon my soul! I did not look before.

Those tassels of pure gold; look, Syndercomb,

That armchair of brocaded velvet cost

A thousand jacobuses.

BAREBONE.

At the least!

HARRISON (*to SYNDERCOMB*).

What do you say?

SYNDERCOMB (*devouring the armchair with
 his eyes*).

What booty!

BAREBONE (*starting*).

What said he?

SYNDERCOMB (*to the other conspirators*).

God, who stands by us, gives His saints good things.

Therefore all things belong to us. He dies
Beneath our blows; we will divide the spoils.

BAREBONE.

Now, God forbid! My gold cloth, curtains, silk!

SYNDERCOMB.

Of Lebanon's eagles the gold calf is prey!

BAREBONE.

Of eagles—why not crows? You would do that?

OVERTON (*separating them*).

Come, let us kill first; afterward divide!

ALL.

Amen!

BAREBONE.

Damnation! They are pirates—these!
They want to pillage! Plunderers! Alack!
They'll make an infidel of me. What shall
I do? Divide my fortune among them!
Damnation!

[BAREBONE *retires to the center of the conspirators' circle and gives himself up to gloomy thoughts.*

OVERTON (*to the Roundheads, who are grouped around him*).

While waiting for Israel

To struggle with this King of Babylon,
 And lift with us, 'gainst Oliver the First,
 The banner on which stand the harp and palm,
 Six must remain in the Guards' Hall.

ALL.

E'en so!

OVERTON (*continuing*).

Hiding their daggers from the partisans,
 Twelve of us shall be grouped around the steps
 Where Richard fastened Norfolk's spurs. Four
 more

Within the waiting-chamber, and four more
 Within the court of Tutellage; the rest
 Dispersed among the chapels of the Stuarts,
 Tudors, and Plantagenets, must guard
 The stairs and hold the corridors; so that
 If Cromwell lose or win, we may have power
 To open or to close the right of way.

These last must help, by speech, to fan the fire
 Which will be smold'ring in the active crowd,
 And by inciting the great tribes to rage
 Quicken the eruption of the volcano.

ALL (*except BAREBONE, clutching their dag-*
gers).

Devour Abiron! Dathan be consumed!

GARLAND (*throwing himself on his knees in*
the center of the Puritan circle, lift-
ing his dagger to heaven).

O God! creator of the atom and
 Leviathan, assist our enterprise.
 To manifest thy power, which men fear not,

Let fire burst flaming from this Cromwell's
breast.

Direct our blows, Redeemer God, kind God,
God merciful! Yield up thy enemies.

Since we are thy obedient servants, Lord,
Let shine within our hands, upon our brows,
Thy flaming swords and lurid tongues of fire.

*[He rises; the Puritans, remaining a few
seconds with bowed heads, seem to pray
with him.]*

BAREBONE (*aside*).

Abomination dwells within their thoughts.
Divide my fortune!

LAMBERT.

Friends, the hour is past.

Let us go forth.

[Aside.] How shall I strike this blow?

LUDLOW.

We'll speak no more; we'll strike. Let the ac-
cursed

Render account to the elect.

*[All the conspirators, except BAREBONE, go
out with the same processional solemnity
which marked their entrance. As LAM-
BERT is about to cross the threshold, OV-
ERTON holds him back by the arm.]*

SCENE V

LAMBERT, OVERTON, BAREBONE. *During this entire scene, BAREBONE, who is still absorbed in melancholy reflections, is concealed from the two men by the platform of the throne*

OVERTON.

My lord!

LAMBERT.

What is it?

OVERTON.

General, I beg a word!

LAMBERT.

Go on!

[*Both return to the front of the stage and remain an instant in silence—LAMBERT in the attitude of expectation, OVERTON as if not knowing just how to begin.*]

OVERTON.

Is yours a steady hand?

LAMBERT.

What! do

You question it?

OVERTON.

I do!

LAMBERT (*haughtily*).
How dare—

OVERTON.

Hear me!

To cut down Cromwell in his pride, they've
placed

The sword of Israel within your hand.

You have been chosen to destroy these schemes,
And cut the knot of this great tragedy.

Well, you received with a debasing fear
The honor I'd have bought with my heart's
blood.

You would have shirked your task with joy. I
know

Your heart, ambitious coward, you!

[LAMBERT *makes a gesture of anger*; OVERTON
restrains him.

Oh, let

Me speak! I'll not consider now your plans,
Covered by a most penetrable mask.

I need not tell you that my eye reads you,
That I discern your plot, yet to be born,
Which travails now in our conspiracy.

You think our arms will help to make your tide.
You think, for pride is a false reckoner,
A giant is replaced by a dwarf.

You want the heritage that Cromwell leaves,
And all its burdens do not stagger you.

The load is rather heavy for your back.

I see the hand which takes, but not the arms

Which can sustain. There's nothing simpler
than

Your thoughts, which plan things as your heart desires.

You think the people will support your claim—
As if 'twere ever seen in the world's course
That when a yoke bends Liberty's bold brow
A tyrant is less burdensome when small.

LAMBERT (*furious*).

Colonel, this injury—

OVERTON.

Whene'er you will,
I'm at your service, sir. Now you must hear
The brutal frankness of an honest voice.
You are no king as yet to be deceived.
Without dwelling on your ambitious dreams,
This is what I am moved to say to you:
You are to strike a blow which you redoubt,
I am to stand near you. If your hand fails
To punish Cromwell's regal insolence,
When he has placed the crown upon his brow
If you don't stab him, I will be more prompt!
Look at this knife.

[*Showing his dagger to LAMBERT.*

In lack of other, this,
To strike his heart, will pass first through your
OWN.

[LAMBERT *starts back, aghast with anger and
astonishment.*

I leave you choice between two dastard acts.

[*Goes out.*

SCENE VI

LAMBERT; BAREBONE, *still in the corner of the stage*

LAMBERT (*trembling with rage, following OVERTON to the great door*).

You dare this? Insolent! Hear me! He's gone!

And on my brow a burning blot of shame
 Upbraids my hand, too slow for punishment.
 Gone! Did the traitor humble me enough?
 With what madmen fate now associates me!
 As a conspirator, what is my life?
 Always far distant from the goal I seek;
 Threatened with loss of all, now that we win;
 Exposed to thousand perils through affronts;
 Crushed by the tyrant, outraged by the slaves!
 Retreat? A precipice! Advance, on lava beds.
 Cromwell or Overton, headsman or prey!
 What! draw his sword against me? Yes, he would.

I know him! I must strike the fatal blow!

BAREBONE (*without being heard or seen by LAMBERT*).

This guilty race would plunder me!

LAMBERT (*musings*).

Strike him
 Among his friends, in sight of his own guards!

Strike him, who lavished benefits on me!
 What base ingratitude! If I should miss—

BAREBONE (*thoughtfully*).

Rob me of capital to found a bank!

LAMBERT.

Fatal ambition! You've led me too far.
 I sought the throne, and stumble 'gainst the
 block.

[*Walking up and down with agitation, casting glances outside.*

Some one is coming. Let us go. The crowd
 Is here already. I will go prepare
 Myself. [Goes out.

BAREBONE.

False friends, all envious of my wealth.
 Misfortune unto you, to me, to all. [Goes out.

SCENE VII

TRICK, GIRAFF, ELESPURU, *afterward* GRAMA-
 DOCH. *The Three Fools come into the
 Great Hall by the main door and look
 sidewise at BAREBONE as he goes out*

TRICK.

Barebone!

GIRAFF.

He is not gay.

ELESPURU.

The idiot!

TRICK.

A Samuel behind the counter. Ha!
A Jeremiah in a shop!

ELESPURU.

'Twas he
Who furnished this for Cromwell.

TRICK.

He robs him.

GIRAFF.

And he does better still—he kills him.

TRICK.

Yes!

Noll satisfies his thirst for gold and blood;
He takes his purse and life at the same time.

ELESPURU.

What matters it to us?

GIRAFF.

Where shall we stand?

TRICK (*indicating a narrow alcove in a bay*).
In this tribune.

ELESPURU.

Yes, it will hold us all.

[*The three Fools pass under the hangings and
in a moment re-appear in the tribune.*]

TRICK.

'Tis comfortable here.

GIRAFF.

We will see well.

ELESPURU (*stretching himself on a cushion
and yawning*).

Good place to sleep, on one ear, then the other;
I'll need it. We were fools to keep awake
All night out there to watch the garden scene,
To sit through all that drama of night air
And run the risk of getting cold and gout.

TRICK.

Cromwell will pay us when he gets his crown;
Gramadoch promises a startling end.

GIRAFF.

Gramadoch! We will see him in his state,
Bearing the train, armed with the ivory rod.

ELESPURU.

His state? Yes, call it so. Faith! though a
fool,
I'd not be train-bearer to that vile king.
What a disgrace! In sight of all the world
To be seen dragging Satan by his tail.

TRICK (*sings*).

As for myself, I can't deny
In love with Oliver the last am I,
And Gramadoch, a philosophic fool—
Two pieces of the self-same wool.
There's nothing funnier to see
In all the melancholy show
Than this fool who doth proudly go,
Bearing the train of royalty.

GIRAFF.

If Gramadoch had but a noble air,
He'd look the fool leading in leash, the wise!

ELESPURU.

The fool would be in front.

TRICK.

Why does Cromwell
Have his train carried?

ELESPURU.

Sharp, indeed, is Trick!
He wants to keep the royal mantle clean:
Save it from sweeping up the dirt that's 'round.

TRICK.

I understand. The reason's natural,
But who can do it when he wears the robe?

GIRAFF.

Ormond had done it.

ELESPURU.

Cromwell sends him off,
With naked feet and haltered neck, to make
Apology.

GIRAFF.

I wonder if he's hanged,
Poor man!

TRICK.

Not yet.

GIRAFF.

So much more fun for us.
When we have finished with this tiresome play,
We may have time to go and see the hanging.
We must laugh somehow.

TRICK.

Judging by the looks,

We'll find sufficient chance for laughter here.
 Death plays his part in this fine spectacle.
 If I have eyes, Cromwell walks to his doom.
 I've been all over London to observe,
 And mourning everywhere attracts the eye.
 At Temple Bar, at Gate House, on the Strand,
 I saw the military blush with hate
 At sound of king. They've plotted in the gloom
 'Gainst Oliver; all parties have combined.
 All's threatening.

ELESPURU.

The people, what think they?

TRICK.

They're on the watch. They lie in wait like
 leopards.

They gaze upon these wolves who rend themselves.
 They wait and let them fight the battle out,
 Knowing the victor will remain for them.
 The mine is primed; and if I'm not deceived,
 At Cromwell's feet 'tis ready now to burst.

GIRAFF (*joyously*).

What a mad noise the saints and fools will make!
 They'll clash their swords, and we will clap our
 hands.

ELESPURU (*sings*).

Good Master Oliver, beware,
 All traitors meet their match somewhere.
 Maybe that Satan did prepare
 This stately throne of yours!
 I'm sure the platform Death did make.
 Perhaps during the scene he'll wake
 And turn you out of doors.

Around yon fatal edifice
 There lurks some dangerous artifice.
 Your stars have lied, my friend.
 Upon this fête which looks so well
 The sorcerers have cast their spell.
 Beneath the flowers which sweet do smell,
 The dais' spangled end,
 You'll find, if once that purple falls,
 Some ghastly skeletons, in palls,
 Beneath you there,
 And that those haughty steps that rise
 Resplendent with their draperies,
 Conceal from only your blind eyes,
 A gallows-stair.

TRICK AND GIRAFF (*applauding*).
 A charming thing!

TRICK.
 My friends, I have a thought.
 [ELESPURU and GIRAFF draw near to TRICK
with an expression of great interest.
 While Gramadoch, in stately dignity,
 Holds at arms-length the great Protector's train,
 In sight of all the solemn Parliament,
 Under the nose of all the sober clerks,
 We'll make up faces and get him to laugh!

ELESPURU (*clapping his hands*).
 A great idea!

GIRAFF (*frisking around*).
 Good! Good!

A VOICE OUTSIDE (*sings*).
 Above all, when the lady Abbess drops
 Her eyes,
 One knows that all her sweet devotions are,
 But lies.

Her heart beats in that gloomy cell of stone
 With fire;
 Her soul is God's. She gives her heart to
 Love
 Entire.

No relics cold and lifeless does she sell
 To him
 Who comes to barter for the cloister's grace
 His sin.

When one is abbess, all of Love ignored
 Is but
 His name; naught else is of the gentle god
 Forgot.

[GRAMADOCH *enters*.

TRICK.

It is himself.

'Tis Gramadoch who comes.

GIRAFF (*to* GRAMADOCH).

What brings you back

To us to-day?

TRICK (*to* GRAMADOCH).

Since when do train-bearers
 Come in advance of him whose train they bear?

GRAMADOCH.

To pay subservient court to his new king,
 Lord Roberts' son entreated for my place.
 Since a most noble lord competed, I
 Am but an honorary slave to-day.

ELESPURU.

A lord's son bear the train of Oliver!
 Our shame is his ambition; he descends

To envy of it. Let him have his way.
 Friend, I embrace you, and my pride returns;
 Thanks to the Lord for honoring the fools.
 [GRAMADOCH *mounts into the tribune and his
 comrades crowd around him.*

GIRAFF.

Your wit was lacking to our merriment.

TRICK.

More fools there are, more fun there is, they
 say.
 I'm glad one place gives shelter to all four.

ELESPURU.

Together we taste pleasures of the gods,
 We fools, united.

GRAMADOCH.

That is what I like.

[*Enter MILTON.*

Here's Master Milton. Now our group's com-
 plete.

SCENE VIII

THE FOUR FOOLS, MILTON

MILTON (*accompanied by his guide, advances
 slowly, and stands a long time turned
 toward the throne, as if crushed by a
 great despair*).

It must be! It is done. I drink the dregs;
 Exempted from no pang, I face the pain.
 I'll see this king made. All is now prepared.

Before the day is past, Cromwell shall be
Within the tomb or lost upon a throne.

TRICK (*low to GRAMADOCH*).

The devil's poet preaches sermons well.

MILTON (*continuing*).

Whether he reigns or dies, this fatal day
Opens the coffin of his noble fame.
The hero to the king surrenders him,
Barters his halo for a diadem—
Oh, rare debasement of a god-like brow!
Cromwell a prince! With eagerness he gives
For rank, his glory; for a sound, his name!

GRAMADOCH (*low to TRICK*).

For a non-mitered soul he is not bad.

MILTON (*continuing*).

To hate this archangel is a hard task,
Whose name I would have carved on altar
stones.

With futile errors he beguiled us all;
This man I looked on as incarnate truth.
I come to take my everlasting leave
Of you, revolted against God and man.
Grasp Cæsar's royalty and that of Guise;
The crown is gilded and the dagger's sharp.

[*Retires into a corner of the stage, opposite
to the Fools' retreat. Remains there motionless.*]

SCENE IX

The same. Populace, afterward WILLIS, afterward OVERTON, SYNDERCOMB, and the Puritan conspirators. A group of the people enter, men, women, old men, in Puritan dress; they seem to belong to divers professions. Among them is an old reformed soldier. They arrive in a crowd and in great haste. The first call to those behind

CITIZENS.

This way!

MILTON (*to his page*).

Who comes?

PAGE.

The populace.

MILTON.

Ah, yes!

The people, always ignorant and dazzled!
They come to watch a scene for which they pay;
To see a strange hand risk their destiny.

A CITIZEN.

No guards here yet?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Thank goodness, we're the first.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Let's take the best positions, quick.

[*They place themselves near the throne. SIR RICHARD WILLIS enters; he is enveloped in a long cloak.*

TRICK (*indicating the citizens and WILLIS to his companions*).

Behold

The citizens and that man with a squint.
The common feeling is not shared by him.
They come to see; but this man comes to watch.
'Tis the spy Willis.

GIRAFF.

Why condemn the man?

On empty words must wise men always feed?
But curiosities of different sort,
These are; that's all!

[*Enter OVERTON and SYNDERCOMB. In silence they join the group of spectators already assembled.*

FIRST CITIZEN (*indicating the platform, to his neighbor*).

This is a splendid throne!

SECOND CITIZEN.

Magnificent!

THIRD CITIZEN.

Our Oliver does naught
Half way.

A WOMAN.

The throne is made of solid gold.

ANOTHER WOMAN.

These fringes are superb.

THIRD WOMAN.

At last we'll have
Some games, some feasts, some spectacles!

A MERCHANT (*in the crowd*).

Indeed,

Barebone is a most lucky man. It pays
To have a brother in the Parliament.

FIRST CITIZEN (*to THE MERCHANT*).

Yes, he was Barebone of the Rump, that one!

THE MERCHANT (*examining the hangings of
a pillar*).

He sells them that for Chinese goods! Well
done!

Upholsterer to the Court. If I were that,
I would put my commission in the Book,
And on my knees at that. He must get gold
In tons.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Long live King Oliver!

FIRST WOMAN.

No more
Preaching monotonous. We will have balls.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Horse racing—

THIRD WOMAN.

Actors who'll defy the provost.

SECOND WOMAN.

Gypsies, who used to come before in crowds
To dance the saraband in Mulberry Garden.

THE SOLDIER (*who has been silent and motionless, steps toward the women and cries with a loud voice*).

Be silent, women! Hush!

[*Movement of surprise from all.*]

FIRST CITIZEN.

It is a soldier!

SECOND CITIZEN.

E'en so, what has he got to say against
The wives of citizens?

THE SOLDIER (*to the Citizens*).

Hush! Women, hush!

THE CITIZENS.

Women—we?

THE SOLDIER.

Yes, women, you! And more
Than they. [*Indicating women.*]

These creatures are poor souls, but you—
What shall I say of you who surpass them
In naught but foolish laughter, giddy looks!

OVERTON (*striking THE SOLDIER on the back*).

Good fellow! You have had your fill of wrongs!
After long years of service you have been
Reformed; deprived of your employment—eh?

THE SOLDIER.

Worse still than that. I am to have a king.

OVERTON (*to the crowd*).

He's in the right. Is it indeed an hour
To laugh when Israel weeps and God is wroth;

When one oppresses those who protect him,
 And heaps a throne on people overwhelmed;
 When all augments the woe England endures?

FIRST CITIZEN.

That's true enough, but his words were too
 harsh.

[*The crowd increases little by little; the work-
 man NAHUM enters.*

OVERTON.

Oh, pardon him! A noble martyr, friends,
 Whose heart is harrowed by this Tyrian pomp.
 Let him join his expression of deep grief
 Unto our country's cry of agony—
 Our mother, whose proud loins are rent to-day
 In giving birth unto this monster king.

THIRD CITIZEN.

A king! That word hurts, but I know not why!

SECOND CITIZEN.

All that I thought, this man explains to me.

NAHUM.

A king's a tyrant.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Live the republic!

OVERTON.

And what a king! A despot, liar, cheat!
 What was he yesterday?

THE SOLDIER.

A soldier!

THE MERCHANT.

Brewer.

THIRD CITIZEN.

From this mad festival who will save us?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Of Cromwell, who'd have thought it? Terrible!
Usurper!

NAHUM.

Dares to call himself a king!
'Tis sacrilege!

SECOND CITIZEN.

A crime!

FIRST CITIZEN.

All royalty
Has been proscribed.

OVERTON.

You all have rights unto
This throne.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Of course! What has he more than we?

OVERTON.

Hell has planned out his route: resuscitates
Old kings and their abuses.

NAHUM.

It's old name
Of Jebus giving to Jerusalem.

OVERTON.

To crush us with the weight of a vile throne!

SECOND WOMAN.

They say his eyes glare at one in the night.

THIRD WOMAN.

He's got three rows of teeth inside his mouth,
They say.

[All the Puritan conspirators come in by degrees, except LAMBERT. They grasp each other's hands when they meet, and then mingle silently with the crowd.]

NAHUM.

It is the monster which Saint John
Announced.

SECOND CITIZEN.

The beast of the Apocalypse.

THE SOLDIER.

It is.

OVERTON.

Cromwell will bring the nine plagues on
Our heads.

NAHUM.

He's an Assyrian.

OVERTON.

He is.

Our misery has reached its limit now.

THE MERCHANT.

I sell no goods.

THE SOLDIER.

No food; our feet are bare;
On the hard ground we sleep. If this lasts long,
While Noll upon each pillar hangs his crest,
We will be forced to use our teeth for nails
To mend our shoes.

OVERTON.

We'll stand before his door
And wait for charity.

NAHUM.

What Cromwell needs
Is not a throne, but Haman's gibbet and
Barabbas' cross.

SYNDERCOMB.

Yes, death to Cromwell!

SIR RICHARD WILLIS (*among the crowd*).

Death!

MILTON (*starting at WILLIS's voice; to the
Puritan conspirators*).

Speak lower, men!

SIR RICHARD WILLIS.

To the usurper, death!

THE SOLDIER.

Speak lower? Why! What do I care? I'll go
And on his threshold cry out, "Death to you!"

NAHUM (*to THE SOLDIER*).

God speaks His judgments in no hidden voice.
Your lips are pure.

THE SOLDIER (*to NAHUM*).

Just as you see me now,
Poor and forgotten like a clod upon the field,
Left naked by the flood of human strife,
If I can see this child of Sirah killed,
I'll die consoled.

OVERTON (*leading him aside and showing dagger to him*).

Friend, you shall be consoled.

[THE SOLDIER *makes a movement of surprise and joy which OVERTON restrains*.

Be still!

[A detachment from CROMWELL'S regiment enters. *They wear red uniforms, with cuirass; musket and partisan on their shoulder*.

The guard arrives. We must keep still.

[The Soldiers *push back the people on both sides*

CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT (*with loud voice*).

Room for the English Lion's Ironsides.

[To some citizens whom he thrusts back.

Move back!

ONE OF THE CITIZENS (*to another citizen*).

'Tis plainly seen from their proud looks
They are from the Protector's regiment.

[The Soldiers *form in line from the throne to the door*.

THE SOLDIER (*low to OVERTON, indicating the officer*).

The officers of Ahab wear silk coats.

A YOUNG SENTINEL (*pushing him back among the crowd*).

Keep in your place, my friend.

OVERTON (*low to THE SOLDIER*).

How they push you!

These hired assassins take their master's tone,
And the recruit insults the veteran.

THE SOLDIER (*pressing his hand*).
Patience, my friend!

CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT (*to his troops*).
Soldiers, the Holy Ghost
Has called us here. Pray for our general!

OVERTON (*to CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT*).
Your general! Why not say for your king?

CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT.
Our king? Who dares insult him thus?

OVERTON.

I dare!

CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT.
You lie!

OVERTON.
I do not lie.

CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT.
Our Cromwell king!
Now, God forbid!

OVERTON.
He will be king to-day.

CHIEF OF THE DETACHMENT.
Who told you that?

[THE CHAMPION OF ENGLAND *enters; he is in complete armor, on horseback, and flanked by four Halberdiers, who carry in front of him a banner on which are the Protector's arms.*

OVERTON.
Behold!

SCENE X

The same. THE CHAMPION OF ENGLAND

THE SOLDIER (*low to OVERTON*).

Let's see what words
He comes to cast upon the wind.

THE CHAMPION (*on horseback, in front of the throne*).

Hosannah!

I speak to you in God's eternal name!
The most high Parliament, which long has prayed
Unto the Holy Ghost for special light
To put an end unto the nation's woes,
Ordains that Oliver Cromwell be king!

[*Murmurs among THE CROWD.*

TRICK (*low to his companions, indicating the people*).

Watch these psalm-singers fly into a rage.

THE CHAMPION (*continuing*).

Should there in London, or Three Kingdoms, be
An old or young man, boor or Cavalier,
Who dares contest the right of my Lord Oliver,
We, England's champion, do defy him here,
With dagger, hatchet, sword or cimeter!
We'll immolate him without tolerance,
And hang his crest upon this horse's mane.
If such a man is here, let him stand forth
And speak, and with his sword confirm his words.

You are my witnesses, that free from sin,
I throw down at his feet this glove torn off
From my right hand.

[THE CHAMPION *throws down his gauntlet before the people, draws his sword and lifts it above his head.*

STANDARD BEARER, AND THE CHAMPION'S
HALBERDIERS.

Hosannah!

[*Amazed silence among the people. All eyes are fixed on the gauntlet.*

THE CHAMPION.

No one speaks!

OVERTON (*aside*).

Must one always keep silence?

MILTON (*with loud voice*).

Why only one,
Great Champion? If such be your master's plans,
He should throw down as many gloves as he
Thinks he has subjects.

[*Movement of approbation in THE CROWD.*

THE CHAMPION.

Who is this, who speaks?

The blind man! Go away from here, my man.
[*The Soldiers push MILTON aside. OVERTON approaches the officer who commands the Guard and interrogates him with a look.*

OFFICER (*casting down his eye, with somber countenance*).

All goes ill.

OVERTON (*low to SYNDERCOMB*).

All goes well.

THE CHAMPION (*looking around upon the people*).

Well! no one speaks?

OVERTON (*to MILTON, pressing his hand*).

We'll send Lord Cromwell to rejoin his glove.

MILTON (*aside*).

Alas!

THE CHAMPION.

I wait!

THE SOLDIER (*aside, looking at THE CHAMPION*).

Puppy! Proud satellite!

SYNDERCOMB (*low to OVERTON*).

I know not what keeps me from flogging him.

[*Takes one step toward the glove; OVERTON stops him.*]

OVERTON.

Let us be prudent.

GRAMADOCH (*low to his companions, indicating the group of Puritan conspirators*).

Those fools will spoil all.

If they pick up that glove, farewell the rest.

We must not let them ruin everything.

TRICK.

How shall we stop it?

[GRAMADOCH *twists his head with a knowing air.*]

THE CHAMPION (*still holding his sword high*).

No one answers me!

GRAMADOCH (*jumping from the tribune into the hall*).

Yes, one! I do! [*Surprise among the people*].

THE CHAMPION (*astonished*).

You lift that glove?

GRAMADOCH (*picking up the glove*).

I do!

THE CHAMPION.

Who are you?

GRAMADOCH.

A grimace-vender like you!

We both wear masks to mystify the world!

Mine makes men laugh, and yours makes them afraid;

That's all the difference.

THE CHAMPION.

A knavish air

Have you.

GRAMADOCH.

You have the same!

THE CHAMPION (*to Halberdier*).

It is a fool.

GRAMADOCH.

Just so! A fool by taste and principle.

Yes, that is my position at the Court.

You've guessed it.

VOICE IN THE CROWD.

Harlequin defies the rope!

It is Noll's fool; the action is most bold!
A real fool?

MILTON.

What is this parody?
[*Great bursts of laughter from the Fools' tribune.*]

GRAMADOCH.

Come, let us take the field!

THE CHAMPION.

Poor jester you!
Go hence, or I will have you whipped.

GRAMADOCH.

Oh, ho!

What fine disdain! A puppet like myself,
Except your faces are not gay like mine.
I tell you once again, Cromwell pays us
To make a little noise in this droll scene.
A bell is your voice, and a clapper mine!

THE CHAMPION.

You knave—

GRAMADOCH.

Without hurting our characters,
We might measure our strength for or against
King Oliver. I am his train-bearer;
His trumpet, you!

THE CHAMPION (*angrily*).

Which weapon do you choose?

GRAMADOCH.

I choose— [Unsheathing his lath.
My wooden sword.
[Brandishing it with a martial air.]

'Gainst a straw soldier,
It is a fitting weapon. Captain—guard!

[To THE CROWD.

Come, battle, battle, come!

[To THE CHAMPION.

I want to see

If we can furnish a second Dunbar,
And if your durandal is worth my blade.

[To THE CROWD.

Come, see—

[Indicating MILTON.

I mean no disrespect to him—

See singing Falstaff fight with bugling Stentor.
See a fool thrash a bully!

OVERTON (*low to SYNDERCOMB*).

Looks this not

As though the scene had been prepared before?

GRAMADOCH (*strutting before THE CHAMPION*).

Well, well, my champion! What! Are you
afraid?

You hesitate—you who defied us all!

I only want to smash you in two blows,

You can pick up the pieces afterward.

THE CHAMPION (*indicating GRAMADOCH*).

Arrest this fool!

[*The Guards surround and seize GRAMADOCH.*

GRAMADOCH (*fighting, and laughing to him-
self*).

Why? I am in the right!

He is a coward! He's afraid! Enough!

If he gets me enraged, I will begin

A suit against him—"quare impedit."

[*The Fools in the tribune applaud and laugh immoderately.*

THE CHAMPION (*with solemn voice*).

Since none of you contests what I have said,
Except a blind man and a fool, I now,
Before the entire world, proclaim this truth,
That Oliver Cromwell is England's king!

THE SATELLITES OF THE CHAMPION.

God save King Oliver!

[*Profound silence among the people and the troops.*

THE CHAMPION.

Let us pass on!

[*Goes out slowly with his escort.*

SYNDERCOMB (*low to OVERTON, indicating
GRAMADOCH, who is laughing*).

'Twas to amuse the people!

OVERTON (*same tone, pointing to the aston-
ished populace*).

Yes. He threatens;

They are dumb!

SCENE XI

THE CROWD

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Old Noll is long!—When do you think
He'll leave White-Hall?—'Tis hard to wait like
this.

[*Violent ringing of bells is heard outside;
distant cannon is heard at intervals.*

—Be silent! Do you hear the bells, the cannon?

—He's starting!—Will he pass Old Bailey?—No!

By Piccadilly he will go.—Look there!

How many people stand now in the Square.

—It is the populace: how many heads!

—Above, below, all swarms with life.—Although

It is hot weather, there is not a roof,

Not any inch of pavement, uncovered

By jarring faces.—Balconies up there

Were rented at a fabulous price, I know.

—Just to behold Cromwell, a human face.

—The Babylonians are insane.—I stifle!

May God protect me!—The procession comes:

It spreads over the Square.—At last!

[*Movement among THE CROWD: all eyes are
eagerly turned to the main door.*

—Tell me,

Who marches at the head?—Major Skippon.

—What, Skippon?—A good soldier of repute.

—At Worcester, of the army he was first

To cross the Severn on the bridge of boats.

—The saints made good use of their swords that
day.

—They used them better still at White-Hall on
The thirtieth of January!—Man!

You say that in a manner to procure

Your death.—Be silent!—Well, I laugh!—Be
still!

—Laughing's not talking.—If I were not crushed,
I'd go and strangle you!—Have done!—Behold,
Here's the Lord Mayor.

[THE LORD MAYOR *enters with the Aldermen, the City Clerks, the Constables; all are in costume.* THE LORD MAYOR *and the city officers halt on the left of the main door.*

—Admire Pack, alderman,
There in the file, whom Noll, to please the city,
Made knight with a fagot-staff.—With what an
air

He rides his high horse!—It was he who put
The motion which made Pilate king.

[*The courts enter in procession; the courts of justice take their places on the top benches at the back of the hall.*

—Behold!

The barons of the courts in scarlet robes.

—Huzza! Judge Hale.—Sergeant Wallop, huzza!

—Look at the colonels who go flying by!

—What! are there not sufficient guards on pay?

The long robed corporations fall in line.

—Noll is a tyrant! A usurper base!

—A Titan who would climb the heavens high.

No right but force has this Enceladus!

He scales the Stuarts' throne; he mounts it not!

—Escaped Oxonian, peace.—The learned fool,

Speaks he not Latin?—I've a right to curse

This Appius in his curule chair.—He thinks

He can slay Cromwell with a ferrule!

AN USHER (*in black, appears on the threshold and cries*).

Room!

Room for the Parliament!

[*The Parliament enters in double file, preceded by THE SPEAKER before whom walk the Mace-bearers, the Ushers, the Clerks, and the Sergeants of the House. Great attention among THE CROWD. While the Parliament seat themselves on the first row of benches, conversation among THE CROWD continues.*

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

—The Speaker's name,
What is it?—'Tis Sir Thomas Widdrington,
I think.—A handsome man!—He is a Judas!

OVERTON (*low to WILDMAN*).
The people hold resentments; did you note
None cried, "God save the House of Commons!"

WILDMAN (*low to OVERTON, indicating the
Parliament*).

No!
May God confound them! they're all sold to
him.
They worship him and Belatucadrus.

TRICK (*fixing his eyes on the assembly*).
The courts, the aldermen, and Parliament,
These are poor England's only deities.
Behold them!

GIRAFF.
The amusing gods!

ELESPURU.
What think
You of them, brother?

GIRAFF.

Gods in the same way
That we are fools.

TRICK.

I sorely long to see
This tempest burst on grave Olympus!

GIRAFF.

Yes;

Like yours, my mind holds pandemonium
More entertaining than this pantheon.

ELESPURU (*indicating GRAMADOCH, who, guarded in a corner of the hall by four Halberdiers, is making a thousand contortions.*)

Look! Gramadoch is making signs to us.

GRAMADOCH (*making faces to his comrades.*)
Hum! [*The Fools burst out laughing.*]

ELESPURU.

Faith! his joke was just a bit too strong.

TRICK.

How will he extricate himself?

GIRAFF.

That's no
Concern of ours.

ELESPURU.

True! We laughed heartily,
And for the present moment 'tis enough.

AN USHER (*on the balcony of a great tribune, facing the throne, and richly decorated*).

My Lady Protectress!

[*All the city functionaries rise, uncover and make a profound obeisance to the Protectress, who enters accompanied by her four daughters, each dressed after her own style. The Protectress, MISTRESS FLEETWOOD and LADY CLEYPOLE are in black with jet ornaments; LADY FALCONBRIDGE in full court dress, with mantle of brocaded gold cloth, skirt of ginger-colored velvet embroidered with Venetian scorpions, feathers, and a peeress's crown; FRANCES in dress of white gauze worked with silver. The Protectress returns the salutation of THE LORD MAYOR and the Aldermen with a profound courtesy, then seats herself with her daughters, in the front of the tribune; the back is occupied by their women.*

TRICK (*to the Fools*).

'Tis fortunate

That face has not yet donned the name of queen.

A SOLDIER (*in the Fools' tribune*).

Peace, knights of Hellebore!

TRICK (*sneeringly*).

Trust a soldier

To always cry out peace!

[THE SOLDIER *makes a threatening gesture;*

TRICK *re-seats himself, shrugging his*

shoulders. The entrance of CROMWELL'S family causes a great commotion, and all eyes are fixed on the tribune.

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

—What! it is she?

The Lady Protectress! How stout she is!

—The daughter of a man named Bouchier.

—'Tis a fine dream she's having now.—Sir, who is that young Eve at her right hand?—What, here?

—No, there!—That's Lady Frances.—His daughter?—Yes.

—Old Noll has five or six, eh?—He has four.

Look at them.—The youngest is a pretty thing!

—How warm it is!—Oh, how uncomfortable.

—The crowd increases.—We are crowded here as were those sons of hell whose numbers matched

The sands beside the sea.—What luck to be

A bird and have a pair of wings!—I'm crushed!
[*Suddenly the sound of a cannon is heard close to Westminster.*]

SYNDERCOMB (*low to the group of conspirators*).

He comes!

[*Second cannon. Great noise in the square outside: intense expression of interest in the hall.*]

OVERTON (*low to Conspirators*).

The faithful to their posts!

[*The conspirators scatter themselves among the crowd. The sound of cannon is heard*]

at regular intervals: noise of trumpets and shouts. The city officials advance to meet the Protector.

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

—'Tis he!

—There!—Let us see!—Himself!—At last!—Oh!

—Ah!

—The Achan of nations—Pharaoh-Necho!

—He rides alone!—He's looking at his watch.

—The mayor and sheriffs go to meet him, look!

—If you can see, sir, tell me how he's dressed.

—Black velvet! Neighbor, your elbow is sharp.

—The mayor accosts him.—Ah, the carriage stops!

—They make a speech.—He signals with his head.

—They hand him a petition: he passes it To Lord Broghill.—The mayor is speaking yet.

—What, yet?—When will he finish?—He is on His knees, almost.—Eunuch to Holofernes!

Haranguer to any chance government!

—The Lord Protector answers.—Listen!—Hark!

—The wolf is lecturing the sheep! For shame!

—At Dunbar, Noll's beard was much dirtier.

—He's getting out.—Where is he going?—Oh, To say his prayers in the chancellor's office.—

Humph!

—He prays to Satan.—How his Ironsides Surround him!—Vain precaution, that!—His guards

Are ill content to keep a king!—Be still!

—A new delay!—How do you think he looks?

—He's gloomy!—He is gay!—A heavy man!
 —Majestic!—He's much aged!—No, he is tired.
 —The sunshine troubled him!—He has the gout!
 —Drawn by eight horses: I'm disgusted with
 The monster.—This is hauling rubbish in
 Triumphal chariots!—He's coming back!
 —Good! now to Westminster!—Behold! there
 goes

His sword-bearer and his train-bearer, too.

—The reverend minister with his blue cape!

—Is it not Lockyer?—Yes.—The palace clerks,
 The sergeants of the court, pages, lackeys!

—On horseback, the Lord Mayor precedes his
 coach,

Drawn sword, uncovered!—Oh, usurper bold!

—Airs of our ancient kings!—Die Oliver

The Last!—Lord Halberdier, please let me see!

—He comes!

[*Surrounded by his escort. CROMWELL appears upon the threshold of the main door; immense agitation in the crowd. All the assembly arise and stand uncovered, in attitude of great respect. The Protector is in black velvet costume without sword and without cloak. His escort, at some distance behind him, forms a flashing circle of gold and steel. Nearest to the Protector, in front, stands THE LORD MAYOR with drawn sword; back of him stands the EARL OF CARLISLE with drawn sword. Among the escort the following men are to be distinguished: GENERALS DESBOROUGH and FLEETWOOD, THURLOE,*

STOUPE, *the Secretaries of State and the private secretaries of the cabinet*; RICHARD CROMWELL; HANNIBAL SESTHEAD, *with his gorgeous costume of gold brocade, his pages and his Danish dogs*; a crowd of generals, of colonels, whose brilliant uniforms and resplendent cuirasses make a strong contrast to the blue cloak and brown robe of the preacher LOCKYER, who stands among them. To the right of the door stand a group of high dignitaries who are to figure in the ceremony; on a red velvet cushion the EARL OF WARWICK bears the purple robe, on another red cushion LORD BROGHILL bears the scepter, GENERAL LAMBERT bears the crown, WHITELOCKE, *the state-seals*; an Alderman bears for THE LORD MAYOR the sword; a clerk of the House of Common bears for THE SPEAKER the Bible.

SCENE XII

CROMWELL, *his family, his escort, THE CROWD.* As CROMWELL appears on the threshold of Westminster Hall, amid the noise of cannon which has not ceased during the entire preceding scene, amid the bells, the trumpet flourishes and the rolling drums, one hears the acclamations which follow him from outside

VOICES (*outside*).

Hurrah for England's Lord Protector!

OVERTON (*low to GARLAND*).

These shouts are paid for! We will hush them soon!

'Twas just the same when Noll, at Grocers-Hall,

Made Thomas Viner loyal baronet.

He was acclaimed at Cheapside, for his cash!

[CROMWELL *pauses a few seconds on the threshold and makes several salutations to the people outside.*

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Lord Cromwell!—Is that Cromwell?—What, the king?

—The regicide!—He's very homely!—What A little man to be a hero!—Yes!

I thought him taller!—I thought him less fat!

—How that man with a big hat spoils my view!

Take off your hat, sir!—I—since when, madame, Do we doff hats before the anti-Christ?

[CROMWELL *turns to the people inside; profound silence.*

CROMWELL (*taking a few steps*).

In name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Peace be with you!

[*Silence among the assembly; acclamations continue outside on the square.*

VOICES (*outside*).

God keep you, Oliver!

—Long live Cromwell!

[CROMWELL *turns back again and salutes the people outside in the square.*

THURLOE (*low to CROMWELL*).

Success smiles on your act.
What acclamations! What enthusiasm!
What a grand day!

CROMWELL (*low and bitterly to THURLOE*).

Yes; these tremendous crowds,
Intoxicated with delight and love, who seem
A proud accomplice of my triumph now,
Would be as eager to applaud my death.
In my success they see a spectacle;
They run to it rejoicing, and nothing
Could better rouse their transports and their
hopes
Than thus to see me crowned—except it were
To see me hanged. Look now, how still they
are!
Good people!

THURLOE (*low*).

The saints' levelers did this.
[*The Parliament, with THE SPEAKER at their head, advance in double file toward CROMWELL; they respectfully salute the Protector, who takes off his hat and replaces it.*

THE SPEAKER (*to CROMWELL*).

My lord! When Samuel made sacrifice
He kept the heifer's shoulder for King Saul,
To prove to him, behind the sacred veil,
How great the burden of a nation is—
Which fact has led Maximilian to assert

'Tis hard to fit one's self for government.
Few mortals who have gained control o'er men
Know how to guide the progress of the world.
The chariot of life rolls heavily,
Loaded with human souls; fate drags it on.
To steer it skillfully o'er tortuous roads
Necessitates a firm arm and strong hands.
Ofttimes at night, when clouded are the skies,
We 'scape the rut to fall o'er precipice.
This car, whose groaning axle all earth hears,
Can't be unharnessed and can have no brake.
It must move onward, without halt or pause;
The steeds whom God has bound to the great
pole
Forever, wildly as on battlefield,
In spite of lash must kick, in spite of bit
Must run, and crushing kings, cities, nations,
Drag the blind wheels over their fatal course.
When chance sometimes directs its destiny,
In the deep ruts flows such a sea of blood
That dogs, when dry, do quench their thirst in it.
Then all earth totters and great kingdoms fall.
Therefore, you see what hangs upon the choice
Of driver for this car which all men dread.
A double right must place him there—God's
will,
Above all, and the people's honest voice.
To diadem be joined the tongues of fire.
Then is he proven one of those rare men
Whom people follow as a beacon light.
But ah, not easily is such rank won!
This master spirit needs omniscient force.
Like to the suns, which God alone creates,

They roll, and drag worlds with them in their
course;

Their heights are lighted by the rays of God,
And burning always, never can they rest.

From all I've said, the people must conclude
There is but one arm strong enough to guide
our fate.

'Tis time a chieftain should appear 'mongst us!
Earth needs a man! That man, my lord, is you.
[*The Parliament and the entire assembly bow
low.*

Assume direction of our destinies.

Accept your House of Commons' loyal faith!

[*Profound silence among the people.*

OVERTON (*low to MILTON*).

His House of Commons!

CROMWELL (*to THE SPEAKER*).

I am grateful, sir!

This land is prosperous, by grace of God.

In Ireland, in spite of civil wars,

Faith holds its own and conquers fresh domain.

Bent on suppressing the foul Papist sore,

Harry, my deputy, by fire and sword

Extirpates with one hand; with the other, sears.

Armagh is burning. Rome has no priest there.

The clans in Scotland have resumed their yoke.

Outside, all's well! Dunkirk has no more hope.

Old England, with the French Alliance, holds

Spain, humbled, in the palm of her broad hand.

Our Indian commerce has made giant strides.

The envious Castilian burns with rage.

God's help has proven that our cause is just.

Much blood has flowed at Madrid and Lisbon;
 Vast sums of gold has their rebellion cost.
 Blake fills our treasury with their galleons.
 Unto Jamaica I've dispatched two fleets;
 Meanwhile the army works out its old plans.
 The Tuscan's penitent, we'll pardon him;
 And when all other matters are arranged,
 Since he invites us and entreats our aid,
 We'll save the Russian from the Turkish
 hordes.

God grants immediately whate'er we ask;
 You see no nation stands so high as ours.
 Live, then, protected by celestial grace;
 But that the Lord should manifest His love,
 We needs must supplicate on bended knees.
 Let us all pray, and may His gracious spirit
 come

And rest upon us.

[CROMWELL *kneels; his entire escort, Parliament, the city officials, courts of justice, soldiers, kneel also: moment of silence and meditation, during which one hears only the bells, the cannon, the trumpets, and the noise of the crowd outside.*

SYNDERCOMB (*low to OVERTON and GARLAND, who have drawn near to the throne.*

They are kneeling, all!
 The tyrant and his guards; their swords are
 down.

No eye is watching us; why don't we strike?

GARLAND (*repulsing him with indignation.*)
 Wretch!

SYNDERCOMB.

Hush! Why cry so loud?

GARLAND.

Strike him at prayer?

SYNDERCOMB.

What else to do?

GARLAND.

Against him, let us pray!

Enough of murderous rage! Let God make
choice

Between our prayers!

[*The Puritans bow their heads and pray; si-
lence.*CROMWELL (*rising*).

Proceed!

[*All arise. EARL OF WARWICK advances with
slow and stately step toward the Protector,
bends one knee, and presents to him the
purple robe bordered with ermine.*EARL OF WARWICK (*to CROMWELL*).

Vouchsafe to wear

This royal purple.

[CROMWELL, *assisted by WARWICK, puts on
the robe.*OVERTON (*low to Puritans*).

'Tis his shroud he wraps

Around him, friends!

GARLAND (*low*).Behold him now! It is
The scarlet son of prostituted Tyre.

WILDMAN (*low*).

Heaven's thunder, burst!

[CROMWELL, *robed in the purple mantle, whose train is borne by the young LORD ROBERTS, richly dressed, advances gravely toward the throne. EARL OF WARWICK precedes him with drawn sword. EARL OF CARLISLE follows, his sword's point bent to the ground.*

SYNDERCOMB (*aside*).

What a brilliant escort
He's borrowed from the nether world! Fine
purple,
Soldiers of iron, gilded noblemen,
Ermine, a throne beplumed, with haughty dais,
Women unchaste, and men who know not shame;
Pomp, power, and triumph; the great man lacks
naught.

He floats in pride and rapturous joy! E'en so!
To make it vanish like a fleeting dream,
The shadow of a chariot, or flash of sword,
What needs Almighty God? What needs the
Lord? [*Hugging his dagger to his breast.*
A bit of steel in a poor sinner's hand!

[*Having crossed the hall slowly, amid profound silence, CROMWELL reaches the foot of the throne and prepares to ascend it. The conspirators quietly mingle with the crowd and surround the platform.*

MILTON (*from the crowd, with startling voice*).
Cromwell, beware!

CROMWELL (*turning toward the people*).
Who speaks?

SYNDERCOMB (*low to GARLAND*).

May God confound
This blind man whose voice puts them all on
guard.

MILTON (*to CROMWELL*).
Beware the Ides of March!

OVERTON (*low to MILTON*).
Do not reveal
Our secrets.

CROMWELL (*to MILTON*).
Explain yourself!

MILTON (*to CROMWELL*).
Mene, Tekel,
Upharsin.

[CROMWELL *shrugs his shoulders and ascends
the throne*.

OVERTON (*to GARLAND*).
He ascends. I breathe again.

GARLAND (*low*).
The alarm was forcible.
[CROMWELL *seats himself upon the throne*.
THE EARLS OF WARWICK and CARLISLE,
*with drawn swords, stand behind his arm-
chair. THURLOE and STOUPE stand be-
side him. THE LORD MAYOR, bearing
the cushion which holds the sword, and
followed by his Aldermen, approaches the*

throne; he ascends a few steps, bends one knee, and presents the sword to CROMWELL.

THE LORD MAYOR (*to CROMWELL*).

This which I place
 Within your hands, Lord Cromwell, is the sword.
 For lack of anvil, on the tyrant's brow
 Its steel, by the whole nation, has been forged.
 This sword has double blades—for justice one,
 And one for war; alternately they shine
 In battle and in holy place, now in
 The soldier's grasp, now flaming in God's hand.
 The city of London yields it now to you.

[CROMWELL *girds on the sword, draws it from the sheath, holds it over his head, and then returns it to THE LORD MAYOR, who replaces it in its sheath and retires backward.*

WHITELOCKE (*approaching CROMWELL with the same ceremony*).

My lord, I bring the seals.

[CROMWELL *receives the seals, then returns them to WHITELOCKE who retires. THE SPEAKER, followed by the officers of the House of Commons, approaches in his turn, bearing the Bible with gold clasps.*

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT
 (*kneeling before CROMWELL*).

I bring the Book,

My lord.

[CROMWELL *receives the Bible, and THE SPEAKER retires, making profound obei-*

sances. LAMBERT, *pale and anxious, approaches next, bearing the crown on a rich crimson velvet cushion. OVERTON breaks through the crowd and takes position beside him.*

LAMBERT (*kneeling upon the steps of CROMWELL'S platform*).

My lord—

OVERTON (*low to LAMBERT*).

'Tis I. Be brave!

LAMBERT (*aside*).

He stands

Here at my side!

[*Aloud to CROMWELL, stammering.*

Receive the crown!

OVERTON (*drawing his dagger, low to LAMBERT*).

And death!

[*All the conspirators scattered among the crowd place their hands upon their daggers.*

CROMWELL (*as if awakening with a start*).

Hold! What is this? Wherefore bring you this crown?

What shall I do with it? Who gave it me?

Is this a dream? Is that the diadem?

What right have you to force me among kings?

Who adds such scandal to our holy feast?

His crown to me who caused his head to fall?

Has this occasion been misunderstood?

My lords, my brothers, Englishmen, hear me!

I come not here to don the diadem.
To dip my title in the people's heart,
I came; to refresh my power and renew
My rights. The sacred crimson twice was dyed.
This people owns the purple, and with loyal
heart

I take it from them; but a royal crown!
When did I ask it? Who says I desire it?
I would not give one hair from this poor head,
Which has grown white in serving England's
needs,

For the gold crests of all the kings of earth.
Take it from here! Go, bear this bauble hence—
The vainest of all human vanities!

Don't wait for me to crush it under foot.
Alas! how little they know me, these men
Who with base flattery bid me crown myself.
What they can never give, I have received
From God—grace inadmissible. Of self
I'm master; when one is a son of God,
Can one be less? Of our prosperity
The universe is jealous; what need I
More than this knowledge of your happiness?
I've said this nation is the chosen one,
And Europe is a satellite to her.

All yields before our star: the infidel
Is cursed. It seems by this, as if God said,
"Grow, England, and my eldest daughter be.
Among all nations I have crownèd you;
Be my beloved, and walk close to my side."
He pours upon us constant benefits;
Each day that ends, each new day that begins,
Adds one more golden link to this great chain.

'Twould seem as if our God, to Philistine
 So terrible, had, like a laborer,
 Hewn out our path: as if His arm, upon
 An axis indestructible by time,
 Had fastened the machinery of this
 Vast edifice. Oh, grand, mysterious work,
 Which through long ages His great hand pre-
 pared.

All things move thus. The wheels, together
 chained,

Gnaw with their iron teeth at the machine.
 The living labyrinth of beams and yards
 And weights starts into motion; without halt
 Continuing its inexorable route
 Accomplishes its herculean task!
 Nations entire, caught in its myriad arms,
 Were crushed to atoms fled they not aside.
 That I should impede God, whose glorious law
 Prepares a special destiny for us;
 Of this people elect, scorning the rights,
 I'd place my wish before their interest;
 I, pilot, open sails to adverse winds?
 No! To false friends I give no joy like this.
 The English fleet is still Queen of the Waves.
 Colossus stands erect. What use serve plots
 Against Great Britain's noble destiny?
 What harm can pickax do to mountain-side?

[*Casting lynx glances around him.*

This warning to the ill-disposed: we know
 All that they do; transparent is the sea
 Although the precipice is deep. We see
 The bottom of the trap where their hopes crawl.
 Sometimes the viper's wounded by his sting.

The fire we kindle often burns ourselves.
And the Lord's eye can pierce through every-
thing.

Between kings and the people who decreed
Divorce? I did! With such a silly bait
Thought men to trap me? Crown? I crushed
one once.

Although I've worn it not, I know its weight.
What! for a Court give up the camp I love?
To scepter change my sword, for diadem
Renounce my helmet? Come, am I a child?
Was I born yesterday? Do I not know
That gold weighs more than iron. Erect a throne
For me? Ah, would you dig my grave? Crom-
well

Knows well how one descends from such a height.
And then, what weariness assails the brow
Wrinkled with care, and furrowed with its gems;
Each one of them conceals a biting thorn.
The crown kills men. Grim anguish undermines
Their heart; it changes e'en the gentlest soul
Into a tyrant—crushing him, it makes
Him crush us in his turn. The crowd delight
In all this show; oblivious of self.
They count the rubies shining in his crown.
But they would pity those who bear the weight
If they observed the brow, not diadem.
O'erwhelmed with trouble, soon their sovereign
hands

Blindly confuse the reins of government.
Take back the execrable sign! Away!
Too oft it falls from brow to blind the eyes.

[*With pathos.*]

What should I do with't? Not born to power,
 My tastes are simple and are innocent.
 If I, with sling in hand, have watched the fold,
 Have taken the helm when rocks appeared ahead,
 I sacrificed myself to common weal.
 Could I but have grown old in my own sphere;
 If, in the shadow of my hut, my woods,
 I could have seen the vanquished tyrant fall!
 God is my witness, dearer far to me
 Than all the pomp of empire, were my fields;
 And thousand-fold more charm had life for me
 As shepherd, than as combatant 'gainst kings.
 [*Weeping.*] Speak you of scepter? What a
 failure I
 Have made of life! That bit of tinsel holds
 Naught that attracts me. Pity me, my friends,
 Don't envy; pity your old general—
 Old Oliver, who feels his arm is weak,
 And that his end is near. I'm old; I'm weary.
 I ask compassion. Is't not time to rest?
 Each day I ask it of God's holy will;
 Each day, before His throne, I strike my breast!
 To wish to be a king? So frail, so proud!
 This project—oh, I swear it!—is as far
 From me, as is the sunlight to a babe
 Within its mother's womb. Away with it,
 Forever! I accept not anything from you
 But the hereditary right. In proof
 Of what I say, I will entreat at once
 Some theologian of great light to read
 My soul. If need be, I will consult two.
 To the Most High I owe a full account
 Of all your rights; unto His will I bow,

And will accomplish what the hundred and
Tenth psalm commands.

[Applause and acclamations burst forth from every side. The people and the soldiers, losing by degrees all feeling of hostility, give vent to their enthusiasm. The Parliament and the Protector's escort are stupefied. CROMWELL prepares to resume his discourse, and makes a gesture to the people; all become silent.]

Now let us pray to God
With humble and obedient heart, asking
That He may keep you all in His good care.
We have revealed to you our inmost soul;
We ask your pardon in a last request,
For such long speech upon so warm a day.

[He re-seats himself. The acclamations and the enthusiasm of the people burst forth again. The disconcerted Puritan conspirators stand gloomy and silent, casting aside their daggers.]

OVERTON (*low to GARLAND*).

He will die in his bed.

GARLAND (*low*).

They want him, now
They've got him!

THE CROWD.

Hurrah!

WILDMAN (*low*).

Hereditary right
He's gained, the juggler!

THE CROWD.

To the Protector, hail!
Hurrah! Long live Cromwell! Live Oliver!
Glory unto the conqueror of Tyre.

OVERTON (*low to Puritans*).

He fooled us well! Some one betrayed our
plans.
He has been warned; a case of forfeiture!

BAREBONE (*aside*).

It was the only way to save my bill.
[*Most of the Puritan conspirators mix in the crowd, which continues rapturously to acclaim the triumph of CROMWELL. LAMBERT, pale and stupefied, prepares to come down from the platform. CROMWELL stops him.*

CROMWELL.

You are to dine with us to-day, Lambert.
[*Low to LAMBERT, who turns to him with amazement.*

Why tremble, since he is no longer there?

LAMBERT (*stammering*).

Who?

CROMWELL (*still low*).

He—this Overton, who was to push
Your faltering hand. [*With a sardonic smile.*
You were in league with them.

LAMBERT.

My lord, I swear—

CROMWELL.

Swear about nothing!

LAMBERT.

But—

CROMWELL.

I have good witnesses. You were the chief
Of the conspiracy!

LAMBERT.

The chief!

CROMWELL.

In name,

At least. You feared your own audacity,
And were not brave enough to dare to stab
Me face to face!

LAMBERT.

My lord!

[*Aside.*] For this man's eye
Each mortal has his thoughts writ on his brow!

CROMWELL (*aloud, to LAMBERT, smiling*).
Have I been well informed? A tattling voice
Says you have taste for a retired life—
That you are passionately fond of flowers.

[*Low, and grinding his teeth.*

You will return me your commission, sir!

[*He dismisses him with a gesture.* LAMBERT
*descends from the platform and mingles
with the crowd. At this moment CROM-
WELL perceives the scepter which LORD
BROGHILL placed upon the steps of the
throne.*

What's this? A scepter? Take this fool's toy
hence. [*Turning to TRICK.*

For you, my fool.

[*The people and soldiers redouble their cheers.*

TRICK (*from his throne*).

Not so! 'Tis the concern

Of bigger fools than we!

[A BAILIFF *enters; he bows before the throne, and addresses CROMWELL.*

BAILIFF (*to CROMWELL*).

The High-Sheriff

Awaits your pleasure.

CROMWELL.

Let him come in.

[*Enter THE HIGH-SHERIFF, followed by two Sergeants-at-arms.*

Well!

THE HIGH-SHERIFF (*saluting CROMWELL*).

These prisoners who have been condemned to death,

My lord—this Bloum—

CROMWELL (*starting*).

What! Is't already done?

THE HIGH-SHERIFF.

Not yet, my lord?

CROMWELL.

That's fortunate!

THE HIGH-SHERIFF.

Hewlet

Prepared the gallows at Tyburn by dawn.

Upon their way unto the fatal spot

They beg an audience of you, my lord.

Shall their request be granted or refused?

CROMWELL.

What reason do they urge?

THE HIGH-SHERIFF.

A prayer to make!

CROMWELL.

You may admit them.

THE HIGH-SHERIFF.

Here, my lord?

CROMWELL.

Yes, here.

[*Upon a sign from CROMWELL, THE HIGH-SHERIFF bows and goes out. For some instants CROMWELL remains silent amid the acclamations of the people and the whisperings of the Generals and the Parliament. Then he suddenly rouses himself and addresses DOCTOR LOCKYER, who is among his escort.*

Come, Master Lockyer, were you not advised
To edify us with the Holy Word?

We wait: time passes and grace takes its flight.

[*DOCTOR LOCKYER mounts the pulpit opposite the throne, slowly and with evident embarrassment.*

DOCTOR LOCKYER.

My lord, this is my text—

[*Hesitates, and appears troubled.*

CROMWELL.

Continue! Speak!

DOCTOR LOCKYER (*reading from a Bible which he holds in his hands*).

“One day the assembled trees, to choose a king,
Said to the olive-tree, ‘Become our king—’ ”

CROMWELL (*angrily, interrupting him*).

Where did you find that text? ’Tis a bold one.

DOCTOR LOCKYER.

My lord, ’tis in the Bible.

CROMWELL.

What?

DOCTOR LOCKYER.

Behold!

Judges, ninth chapter and eighth verse.

CROMWELL.

Silence!

With this hour what connection has your text?
Can you find nothing better in the Holy Book?
Could you not choose a chapter or a verse
Which had a bearing on our present need?
This, for example: “May he be accursed
Who leads the wandering blind astray.” Or
this,
“The truly wise man dares and doubts”; or
“The
Archangel went to bind the devil in
The wilderness.” Then there are other themes
Which preachers who are eloquent can touch,
And which the present scene had dignified.
“Is mankind double?” “Must the angels of
God,

When they come to us, change their sphere?"

Or else:

What consequence, if Whiggamores, who are
Strict dogmatists, were antipoedo Baptists?
Such things at least would have been under-
stood.

For this people, wise and intelligent,
You might have treated twenty subjects such
As these. I'm wearied to the death to hear
These college pastors preach all day, talk through
The nose, and praise, in the same breath, the
sun,

The moon, and my Lord Eglington. Come down!
[*Renewed acclamations. LOCKYER, much con-
fused, leaves the pulpit and mingles in
the crowd. A BAILIFF enters, pauses on
the threshold of the door and calls out.*

BAILIFF.

The prisoners, my lord!

CROMWELL.

Let them come in.

[*The condemned Cavaliers enter, LORD OR-
MOND at their head. They are preceded
by THE HIGH-SHERIFF and are surrounded
by Archers and Sergeants-at-Arms.*

SCENE XIII

The same. LORD ORMOND, LORD ROCHESTER,
LORD ROSEBERRY, LORD CLIFFORD, SIR
PETERS DOWNIE, LORD DROGHEDA, SED-

LEY, SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, DOCTOR JENKINS, MANASSES-BEN-ISRAEL, *all, with hands bound behind their back, naked feet, and rope around the neck.* THE HIGH-SHERIFF, Archers of the city, Sergeants-at-Arms. *The crowd watch with interest and curiosity the entrance of the Cavaliers and step back as they appear*

THE SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS.

Room—room!

[*The Cavaliers pause before CROMWELL'S throne, ORMOND and ROCHESTER are in the front row; they are firm and tranquil. MURRAY and MANASSES are the only ones who appear dejected. For some instants CROMWELL watches the prisoners, the assembly, the crowd, and seems to enjoy the anxious silence which pervades the place.*]

CROMWELL (*folding his arms and turning to the Cavaliers*).

What do you want?

[*Aside.*] If they would ask
For pardon!

LORD ORMOND (*with steady voice*).

We are men of courage, and
Ask neither pity nor pardon from you!
Men who die as we are to die are proud.
Naught troubles nor debases us. What can
We hope to gain from you, a murderer,
A vassal, who upon his vulgar shield

Puts crest and robe and royal scepter, till
He has the arms of England quartered there!

CROMWELL (*interrupting him*).

Then wherefore come to me?

LORD ORMOND.

To ask one word.

What path shall lead us to our heavenly home?
Your men conduct us to the gallows: do
You know our rank?

CROMWELL.

We know that you are traitors
Condemned to death.

LORD ORMOND.

But we are noblemen.

You do not seem to understand: I will
Explain. The gallows are not made for men
Who bear our names; however low your rank
The rope, dishonoring us, hurts you as well.
There is no hanging between men of taste
And men of quality. We claim our rights.

CROMWELL.

Is that all?

[*Aside.*] It is life they ask.

LORD ORMOND.

It is.

Consider the request.

CROMWELL.

What do you wish?

LORD ORMOND.

To have our heads cut off: freedom from gallows,
And its indignities. We have the right
To be beheaded.

CROMWELL (*low to THURLOE*).

Humanity is strange!

They have no fear, no shame: to scaffold mounts
Their pride with them. They face eternity
With thoughts governed by prejudice; for them
The block is but a scene of vanity.

[*To the Cavaliers with a bitter smile.*

I understand: when you appear in heaven
You want the folding-doors to open wide.
For a rough hemp, the honor were too great
To choke this high and mighty English lord!
It has been done, however. In your ranks
There are those whose ancestors would not blush,
Because they have not any! There's the Jew,
And the plebeian magistrate.

DOCTOR JENKINS.

I am

Not judged; you have no right to fine, nor kill,
Nor send me unto prison. I am free!
The Norman charter reads: "Nullus homo
Liber imprisonmentur."

LORD ROCHESTER (*laughing, to SEDLEY*).

'Sdeath!

Will he quote laws to him from Arthur's time?

CROMWELL (*to Cavaliers*).

We hold you, gentlemen. Accomplices,

Lieutenants, chiefs, you're caught in your own
trap.

The hour has tolled; the avenging arm is raised;
The moment is unfortunate to ask
For favors!

LORD ORMOND (*interrupting him*).

Favors, sir? May God forbid!
A right of England's old nobility
We claim. A right! Do you hear? Favor?
Faith!
A block, the ax!

CROMWELL.

Peace, you who speak so loud.
Last night you came girded with swords and
knives
Into my house. You bribed or fooled the guard.
You thought to seize me helpless in my bed.
What end had you in store for me?

LORD ORMOND.

No gallows!

CROMWELL.

Doubtless; you were in too much haste. The
knife
Works faster. But since God delivered you
Into my hands, my gentlemen assassins,
What do you ask of me?

LORD ORMOND.

To die as knights;
To die for our king.

LORD ROCHESTER.

Die for Rowland—yes!

[*Low to ROSEBERRY.*

I'm always ready; 'twas my money first,
 And now it is my head. Another debt
 To his account.

CROMWELL (*to LORD ORMOND, after a moment's reflection*).

Old man, I make you judge.
 If chance had put me in your place, and you
 In mine, tell me, what would you do?

LORD ORMOND.

I would

Not pardon!

CROMWELL.

Well, I pardon you!

[*Movement of surprise in the assembly.*

ALL THE CAVALIERS.

What's this?

CROMWELL.

You're free!

LORD ORMOND.

Just Heaven!

[*To CROMWELL.*] If you but knew my name—CROMWELL (*interrupting him*).

That does not matter.

[*Low to THURLOE.*] If he names himself
 We can't control the people.

[*Turning suddenly to LORD BROGHILL, who
 has stood among the escort in solemn
 silence.*

An old friend

Of yours, Lord Broghill, is in London.

[LORD ORMOND and LORD BROGHILL turn away with astonishment.]

LORD BROGHILL.

Who?

CROMWELL.

Lord Ormond.

LORD BROGHILL.

Ormond!

[*Aside.*] What if he should know!

CROMWELL.

He has been here five days, my dear Broghill.

[*Feels in his coat and takes out the sealed packet which he seized from DAVENANT.*

Here is a packet of great interest

To him; his name is on the fold. Do you

Know his address?

LORD BROGHILL (*troubled*).

No, I do not, my lord!

CROMWELL.

'Tis Bloum, the Rat House, on the Strand.

LORD BROGHILL (*stammering*).

Wherefore—

LORD ORMOND (*aside, examining the parchment CROMWELL holds*).

The royal message! Davenant was false.

CROMWELL (*giving package to LORD BROGHILL*).

Give it to Ormond with my compliments;

This letter falling into other hands

Might compromise him. Beg him to depart

At once and be content not to return.
If he needs money, give him some.

LORD ROSEBERRY. (*low to LORD ORMOND*).
Money!

Thrice happy man! If he had offered me
But surety for my debts!

LORD ROCHESTER (*low, congratulating LORD ORMOND*).
A pleasant act.

I'm charmed he spared the mention of our name.

CROMWELL (*with loud, gruff voice*).
Lord Rochester!

LORD ROCHESTER (*starting with surprise*).
What?

CROMWELL.
I have pardoned you!
Go to the devil!

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to LORD ROSEBERRY*).
Less civility
He shows to me. No matter. Proteus
Is this man, a magician? On approach
He seems a royal lion; try to make
Him go to sleep: a touch of wand—presto!
The sleeping lion is a wakeful cat;
The cat becomes a tiger, and roars loud;
Presto! the claw is changed to velvet paw,
But through the velvet one can feel its clutch.

CROMWELL.
My learned chaplain, we entreat you not
To stay too long among us.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

I agree!

CROMWELL (*continuing*).

Thanks to the fines, imposed by a just law,
To swear in England is expensive, friend.
Since you, with best intentions, can't keep still,
Taxed by this law at every syllable,
You would be ruined speedily.

LORD ROCHESTER.

My thanks

For the good counsel.

[*To the people who follow him with derisive laughter.*

Yes, applaud, vile race!

CROMWELL.

Wait, Doctor! Take your wife away with you.

LORD ROCHESTER (*trembling*).

My wife?

CROMWELL.

My Lady Rochester.

[DAME GUGGLIGOY *hastily descends from the Lady Protectress's tribune and throws herself on ROCHESTER'S neck. Hooting in the crowd.*

DAME GUGGLIGOY (*embracing ROCHESTER*).

Dear spouse!

LORD ROCHESTER (*trying to free himself*).

God's mercy!

CROMWELL.

Yes, you must united be!

What would men say to see one half depart

Without the other? [To DAME GUGGLIGOY.
Go, follow your husband.

[DAME GUGGLIGOY *takes* ROCHESTER'S arm,
who resigns himself sadly.

LORD ROCHESTER (*aside*).

What amnesty! You are the most chastised
And most ridiculous, Wilmot! Behold
The strange appearance which your two halves
make!

One with this coat, the other with that face—
And Frances sees me! God! 'twill make me wise!

CROMWELL (*pointing to* SIR WILLIAM MUR-
RAY, *in the group of Cavaliers*).

Go, Murray, once again receive the blows
Due Charles, in common parlance Prince of Wales,
For this bad plot, which failed so stupidly.

[*The populace applaud. The Archers and
Constables seize MURRAY, who hides his
face in his hands and seems to be over-
whelmed with shame and despair. CROM-
WELL addresses the Rabbi.*

This Jew who would have graced the astragal
Of gallows, is now free.

[MANASSES *joyfully lifts his face; CROMWELL
continues, turning to* BAREBONE, *who
stands beside the throne.*

If he consents

To pay your bill, Barebone.

[BAREBONE *draws a long parchment from his
pocket, which he hands to* MANASSES.

MANASSES (*examining the bill*).

'Tis dear.

CROMWELL (*to the other prisoners*).

You are

All free! [*The Archers unbind the Cavaliers.*

THURLOE (*low to CROMWELL*).

All? Think, this plot was serious!

CROMWELL (*low*).

I have the people; no use for gibbets now!

[*SIR WILLIAM MURRAY, whom the Archers are dragging away, throws himself on his knees and turns his clasped hands to CROMWELL.*

SIR WILLIAM MURRAY.

Mercy, my lord!

CROMWELL.

What, from the whip? Away!

Is such not a fit service for your back—

Whipped for your king? You serve a noble cause.

You'll call yourself a martyr, a Montrose!

[*Makes a sign and the Archers drag MURRAY away. The Protector addresses the crowd with an imperious and an inspired air.*

O sainted people, spare our fallen foes!

The elephant forbears to crush the snake.

Thus may Heaven save you from all future snares,

You chosen vessels!

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to SEDLEY*).

They are naught but jars.

[*The people respond to the Protector's words by prolonged shouts; with a gesture, he commands silence and continues.*

CROMWELL.

By clemency I wish to mark this day!

[*To THE HIGH-SHERIFF.*

Seek Carr, a prisoner in the Tower.

[THE HIGH-SHERIFF goes out. CROMWELL leans on the arm of his chair and seems to meditate. Silence and attention among the audience. SIR RICHARD WILLIS, who was absent a short time and has now returned, accosts ORMOND among the group of Cavaliers.

SIR RICHARD (*saluting LORD ORMOND*).

My lord,

Accept my compliments.

LORD ORMOND (*surprised*).

What! It is you?

Free also? An enigma is that man!

He apes kingcraft to pardon us like this!

[*Pressing SIR RICHARD'S hand.*

I owe him thanks for you, if not for me.

[*With a mysterious air he bends to SIR RICHARD'S ear.*

The traitor's Davenant! If I meet him—

SIR RICHARD.

Do you think so? There are some reasons for

And some against. Mistrust him, if you will.

Be prudent, now that you've escaped!

LORD ORMOND (*pressing his hand again*).

My friend,

How much we are deceived!

CROMWELL (*rousing himself from his reverie, designating the Cavaliers to STOUPE*).

Embark these fools

To-morrow on the Thames. Their punishment

I here remit in full.

[*Rudely addressing HANNIBAL SESTHEAD, who has displayed his luxurious equipment on the steps of the platform.*

Sir Hannibal,

Though cousin of a king, you must be taught
That I am master in my own domain.
You're light of character, and have strange ways
Not much in harmony with our elect.
Pray, take them hence. Go forth, and sin no more.

HANNIBAL SESTHEAD (*aside*).

He pardons treason sooner than satire.
I am the only sufferer.

[*Goes out with his pages and his dogs. The crowd hoots at him and applauds CROMWELL.*

OVERTON (*low to GARLAND*).

Behold

The people's transports! Just a speech, a word,
And they are changed.

LORD ROCHESTER (*low to ROSEBERRY*).

From the Protector's arm
God saves us. Let us be content!

GARLAND (*low to OVERTON*).

Our weapons with a single word!
He broke

CROMWELL (*perceiving GRAMADOCH between the Guards*).

What does
My fool between four constables?

GRAMADOCH (*boldly*).

Oh, these
Are the Fool's guard.

AN ARCHER.

This idiotic dwarf
Took up the gauntlet which your Highness threw.

CROMWELL (*irritated, to GRAMADOCH*).
You knave!

GRAMADOCH.

Only a fool dared do it, lord.

CROMWELL (*smiling, and signing to the Archers
to release him*).

Go! Go!

[GRAMADOCH *hastens to rejoin his comrades
in their tribune; they embrace him, and
give him a cordial welcome. In the mean-
time CROMWELL has turned to MILTON.*

Milton, is he content?

MILTON.

He waits!

CROMWELL.

I am content with you. Speak to me now.
Have you nothing to ask me?

MILTON.

Yes, I have.

CROMWELL.

What is it?

MILTON.

A favor!

CROMWELL.

I grant it. Speak!

MILTON.

Your Highness pardoned all your enemies;
But one is left.

CROMWELL.

Who?

MILTON.

Davenant.

CROMWELL.

What, he?

The Papist! Davenant! The royal spy!
Ask something else.

MILTON.

Ah, no! Let me insist.

He was of the conspiracy—too true.
He is a Papist, and he sought your death.
But since that you have pardonèd these men!

CROMWELL.

No,

I cannot.

MILTON.

He was sharer in these plots,
I know, but—

CROMWELL (*impatiently*).

Speak no more of him to me.

The man writes comedies.

[MILTON, *disappointed, turns away*; CROM-
WELL *recalls him with a gentler tone.*

It is our will

To make you poet-laureate, Milton.

MILTON.

Such title I could not accept, my lord;
The post is not yet vacant.

CROMWELL (*surprised*).

No? By whom

Is it then filled?

MILTON.

By Davenant!

CROMWELL (*shrugging his shoulders*).

Under
The reign of the late James the First!

MILTON.

Since he
Must keep his chains, leave him his laurels too.

CROMWELL.

There's logic worthy of a poet, yes!
Phrases an arm in length; bombastic soul!
You'd govern and reprove your governors,
You who pass all your time forcing poor words
Into strange meter!

MILTON.

Solomon composed
Five thousand proverbs.
[CROMWELL *turns away and signs to his son*
RICHARD *to approach*.

CROMWELL (*to RICHARD CROMWELL*).

Come, Richard, my heir,
The army and the Parliament must ope
Its doors to you. I make you colonel, peer
Of England, member of the Privy Council.

RICHARD CROMWELL (*saluting his father with*
embarrassment).

The duties of the House—my tastes—you are
My father and my master too, my lord.
But so much honor quite confuses me.
If you'll allow me, I will frankly say
I have more than I'm worth—more than I want.
I love the woods, the fields; leisure I love,
And also rest. I like to hunt the deer
And stags in herds. I like the open plains,

Where I fear no revolts except among
My hawks, my falcons, and my hounds.

[*Dissatisfied and disconcerted, CROMWELL dismisses him with a gesture.*

CROMWELL (*aside, with bitterness*).

Alas!

Would that the other were my eldest son!

What use is all I do?

[*Enter CARR, accompanied by THE HIGH-SHERIFF. He forces his way slowly through the crowd; looks with indignation upon all the royal decorations, and advances gravely to the tribune where CROMWELL stands.*

SCENE XIV

The same. CARR

CARR (*folding his arms and looking CROMWELL in the face*).

What do you want?

Base tyrant by the right of crime, are cells
No refuge from your tyranny? What wants
The apostate with me now? The turn-coat, what
Says he?

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Down with the madman!

CROMWELL (*to the people*).

Let him speak!

God wishes to try David; he permits
The son of Semei to curse him thus!

[*To CARR.*] Go on!

CARR.

Yes, hypocrite, that is your plan!
With fine outside you cover base designs;
On your infernal brow put heaven's veil;
Jeer while you torture, ornament your chains,
And on a bleeding heart pour irony.
That I might crush your scepter and your mask,
God kept me in His quiver until now.
He said, "Go to the city with your lute,
From Cromwell's temple drive a servile crowd,
Destroy the altar, let the idol burn,
Tell them the Egyptian is a man, not God."
Behold you, Cromwell, on your shining throne!
Tremble! Night follows close on gorgeous day.
Think of Nimrod the hunter. Our great Lord
Shattered his crossbow as if 'twere a toy.
Remember Ishbosheth: that foolish king
Was first to make the people line his path;
One hundred warriors of Issachar
Went on their horses in advance of him.
But God brings forth—and 'tis the soul's despair—
Grief out of joy, and ashes from the flame!
Proud Ishbosheth fell like abortive fruit,
As falls an echo borne off by the winds!
Remember Shalmaneser! On fleet steeds
This king, surrounded by his armed hosts,
Passed, as in summer 'neath a heavy sky
The lightning passes, ominous and still!
Remember Sennacherib, as he came
With his fierce army from Assyria;
Nine hundred thousand men, so furious
And proud their breath had pushed the heavens up!
Unclean magicians, centaurs hideous,

Arabs clashing their cymbals mightily,
Oxen and leopards to the bridle trained;
War chariots armed with brazen scythes; mad
steeds

Which tigresses had suckled; great elephants
Six hundred strong, like moving fortresses,
Among the legions planting their huge feet
And shaking towers upon their monstrous backs.
Camels and buffaloes and mastodons,
Zebras and mammoths of extinguished worlds—
A roaring herd through which crashed wheels
of steel

Belonging to the chariots scaled with gold.
At night the camp looked like a field of fire;
And when this monstrous army roused itself
The fishermen, sailing their barks of reed,
Imagined that they heard the ocean roar.
All added glory to this splendid king.
His mares had wings, and crushed earth as they
flew.

With brow banded by stars, he grander seemed
Than his grand chariot drawn by elephants.
Around him banners, flags, and flames streamed
forth,

As stream gold fires around a comet's course.
But Heaven had pity on this wretched world:
God blew upon this star with shining mane,
And suddenly the wonder disappeared,
As dies the flickering lamp of vigils lone!
Proud sycophant, you deem yourself more strong
Than such great kings, the suns of eastern worlds!
Can you, like eagles, swoop, at any hour
Upon Damascus, Carchemish, Samaria?
Have you, like sand, invaded the bazaar,
Destroyed Sochoh-Benoth, Tiglath-pileser?
Have you with chariots, horses, rushing crowds,
Disturbed the solitude of Lebanon?
No, you have not! O Sovereign of Kings,
Your arm has changed the boundaries of States;
Mankind at sight of you draws back in fear.

You hold the world as prey, within your fangs—
 But that is all! In all your wars and deeds
 God helped above, the people helped below.
 Yourself did naught. You're but an instrument—
 The flail which beats the wheat on threshing-
 floor!

Where are the gods of Ava and Emathia?
 What can the Sepharvaim do when touched
 By God? These idols reigned: you'll pass away
 As they have done, inconsequent as is
 The bell which rattles on a camel's neck.
 Soon will the saints gird on their robes 'gainst you!
 Gad, Asher, Benjamin, and Naphtali
 Will stand upon Mount Ebal and curse you.
 The women's and the children's jeers will taunt
 And follow you. Unto your eyes, blinded
 By hell; unto your feet, earth will be iron,
 And bronze will be the skies. A purple night
 Enshrouds your haughty eyelids, but our God
 Will crush your head beneath two stones; and we
 Shall see the people, who have won their rights,
 Stone future tyrants with your whitened bones.
 On impious thrones, the world has often seen
 Its Pharaohs of Memphis and Sultans
 Of Ethiopia; its popes, its dukes,
 And emperors, who have amused themselves
 By torturing their subjects and their slaves.
 But such a man as you, magician, king,
 And satrap, a mind so cruel and astute
 And bold the sun of heaven has not yet looked
 Upon! Be you accursed!

CROMWELL.

Is this the end?

CARR.

Not yet! Be cursed at setting sun and cursed
 At break of day; be cursed upon your steed
 And in your chariot; accursèd be
 Your wooden weapons and your arms of steel.

CROMWELL.

Is that all?

CARR.

No! Accursèd be the air
Which Zephyr brings; accursèd be your bed,
The threshold of your door. Be you accursèd!

CROMWELL.

Well, is that all?

CARR.

No! Be accursèd!

CROMWELL.

Come, come!
You'll rend your lungs! Have you finished?
Hear me!
You are in prison for an ancient crime!
I pardon you. Go! You are free!

CARR.

Tyrant!

By what right, free? Have you not sinned enough?
Do you wish to increase your list of crimes?
With your ballista wherefore strike my tower?
Why drag me from the cell where I must spend
My days? To break my chains? Speak, were
they forged
By you? You pardon me? Heartless despot!
Your clemency brings ruin like your rage!
Long Parliament placed me within my cell;
My treachery deserved the punishment,
For I rebelled against the sacred yoke.
I had marked two portions of the heroes' spoil,
And I am punished. I live in the depths
Of a dark tower where iron bars shut out
All glint of day; the spider hangs his web
Upon my bed, and in its meshes oft
The bat tangles his wings; at night, I hear
The worm arise and toil within the tomb.
I hunger and I thirst; in summer I

Am warm; in winter I am cold. 'Tis well!
 To all things I submit and give example.
 But you, how dare you touch the temple, Noll?
 How dare you even move a post? What they,
 The saints, have bound can you unbind? Alas!
 Of thunder can one hide the consequence?
 Condemned by them, no one can set me free.
 No! and I proudly walk among these men,
 The last vestige of their authority.
 A shattered pine, deep in the precipice,
 I flaunt the noble scar upon my brow.
 You wish to break my chains by force, do you?
 [*To people.*] See, how your tyrant treads you
 underfoot!

No, I prefer—I, Carr, who face you now,
 Prefer the chain of captive to the yoke
 Of slave. What do I say? I much prefer
 My destiny to yours. I like my tower
 Far better than your palace heaped with spoil.
 I'd not exchange my sentence for your crime,
 My honest chains for your usurped throne.
 We are both criminals, and when we die
 The Lord will count your crimes and my remorse.
 Re-ope my prison doors, or, if you wish
 My freedom, restore the equilibrium
 Of our great State: give back our Parliament;
 Then, come with me. Both of us with bowed
 head,

Bound with one rope, with ashes on our face,
 Before its bar we'll stand and sue for grace.
 But while I wait for that auspicious day,
 Give back my chains; respect my liberty!

[*Bursts of laughter from the multitude.*]

Hush, yonder rabble! In my cell, I am
 The only Englishman you do not rule!
 The only free man. There I curse you; there
 I offer our two selves as holocaust
 To Heaven! My prison! In vain you bid me
 break
 Its bars! My prison! If profane laws you need

And worldly texts for your corrupted hearts,
By right of *habeas corpus* I go back!

CROMWELL.

So be it! He invokes a law without
Repeal.

TRICK (*in the Fools' tribune*).

His prison! 'Tis a mistake; he means
His private box.

[CARR *exits proudly amid the hisses of the
populace.*

SYNDERCOMB (*low to GARLAND*).

He is the only man
Amongst us all.

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Hail! Glory to the saints!
Glory to God! The God of Sinai!
—Long life to the Protector!

[SYNDERCOMB, *exasperated by the imprecations
of CARR and the acclamations of the peo-
ple, draws his dagger and rushes toward
the platform.*

SYNDERCOMB (*waving his dagger*).

To the King
Of Sodom, death!

EARL OF CARLISLE (*to Halberdiers*).

Arrest the assassin!

CROMWELL (*restraining the Guard by a
gesture*).

For this man! Make way
[To SYNDERCOMB.
Speak! What do you want?

SYNDERCOMB.

Your death!

CROMWELL.

Depart in liberty! Depart in peace!

SYNDERCOMB

I am the risen avenger! If your guard
Did not restrain my lips—

CROMWELL (*motioning to the Soldiers to
release him*).

Speak on!

SYNDERCOMB.

No words
Of mine should touch you. Did they not hold
back
My arm—

CROMWELL.

Strike!

SYNDERCOMB (*advancing one step and lifting
his dagger*).

Die, O tyrant!

[*The people rush upon him and disarm him.*

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Murder is
The answer that he makes to pardon. Let
Him perish! Let the murderer die!
[*The infuriated people seize SYNDERCOMB and
drag him, struggling desperately, out of
the hall.*

CROMWELL (*to THURLOE*).

Is done to him. See what
[THURLOE *goes out*.

VOICES IN THE CROWD.

Annihilate the traitor!

CROMWELL.

My brothers, I have pardoned him. He knows
Not what he does.

VOICES IN THE CROWD (*outside*).

Away! Unto the Thames!
Drown him! [Re-enter THURLOE.

THURLOE (*to CROMWELL*).

The people are satisfied. The Thames
Received the mad apostle.

CROMWELL (*aside*).

Clemency
Is, after all, a method too. 'Tis one
Foe less; but to such deeds the people must
Not get too well accustomed.

[*Moment of silence; cries of joy and triumph
among THE CROWD. CROMWELL, seated
on his throne, seems to quietly relish the
delirious acclamations of the populace
and the army.*

OVERTON (*low to MILTON*).

To this idol

A human victim has been sacrificed.
All is for him; the frivolous multitude,
The army too. He lacks not anything. He has
All that he needs. Our efforts served
To raise him higher, that was all. In vain
Do men defy him; vainly shall they dare
To attack him; he has the power to crush us,
one

By one. Devotion he inspires; terror
He inspires also; he should be satisfied.

CROMWELL (*dreamfully*).

When am I to be king?

END OF VOLUME NINETEEN