

КОЛЛЕКТИВ АВТОРОВ

THE GERMAN CLASSICS
OF THE NINETEENTH
AND TWENTIETH
CENTURIES, VOLUME 03

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Содержание

THE LIFE OF SCHILLER	6
BY CALVIN THOMAS, LL.D	6
POEMS	16
TO THE IDEAL (1795)	17
THE VEILED IMAGE AT SAÏS (1795)	19
THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL LIFE (1795)	22
GENIUS (1795)	27
VOTIVE TABLETS	29
MOTTO TO THE VOTIVE TABLETS	29
THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL	29
VALUE AND WORTH	29
THE KEY	29
THE DIVISION OF RANKS	30
TO THE MYSTIC	30
WISDOM AND PRUDENCE	30
THE UNANIMITY	30
THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS	31
TO ASTRONOMERS	31
THE BEST GOVERNED STATE	31
MY BELIEF	31
FRIEND AND FOE	32
LIGHT AND COLOR	32
FORUM OF WOMEN	32
GENIUS	32
THE IMITATOR	33
CORRECTNESS	33
THE MASTER	33
EXPECTATION AND FULFILLMENT	33
THE PROSELYTE MAKER	34
THE CONNECTING MEDIUM	34
THE MORAL POET	34
THE SUBLIME THEME	34
SCIENCE	35
KANT AND HIS COMMENTATORS	35
THE MAIDEN FROM AFAR (1796)	35
THE GLOVE (1797)	36
THE CRANES OF IBYCUS (1797)	42
THE WORDS OF BELIEF (1797)	46
THE WORDS OF ERROR (1799)	47
THE GERMAN ART (1800)	58
COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW CENTURY (1801)	59
CASSANDRA (1802)	60
RUDOLPH OF HAPSBURG (1803)	63
DRAMAS	67
INTRODUCTION TO WALLENSTEIN'S DEATH	67
THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN	70

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ	70
THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN (1800)[23]	70
ACT I	71
SCENE I	71
SCENE II	72
SCENE III	73
SCENE IV	76
SCENE V	78
SCENE VI	85
SCENE VII	86
ACT II	93
SCENE I	93
SCENE II	94
SCENE III	98
SCENE IV	102
SCENE V	102
SCENE VI	105
SCENE VII	111
ACT III	114
SCENE I	114
SCENE II	115
SCENE III	118
DUCHESS	118
SCENE IV	120
WALLENST	120
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	122

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Masterpieces of German Literature
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THE LIFE OF SCHILLER

BY CALVIN THOMAS, LL.D

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He kept the faith. The ardent poet-soul,
Once thrilled to madness by the fiery gleam
Of Freedom glimpsed afar in youthful dream,
Henceforth was true as needle to the pole.
The vision he had caught remained the goal
Of manhood's aspiration and the theme
Of those high luminous musings that redeem
Our souls from bondage to the general dole
Of trivial existence. Calm and free
He faced the Sphinx, nor ever knew dismay,
Nor bowed to externalities the knee,
Nor took a guerdon from the fleeting day;
But dwelt on earth in that eternity
Where Truth and Beauty shine with blended ray.[2]

Friedrich Schiller, the greatest of German dramatic poets, was born November 10, 1759, at Marbach in Swabia. His father was an officer in the army which the Duke of Württemberg sent out to fight the Prussians in the Seven Years' War. Of his mother, whose maiden name was Dorothea Kodweis, not much is known. She was a devout woman who lived in the cares and duties of a household that sometimes felt the pinch of poverty. After the war the family lived a while at the village of Lorch, where Captain Schiller was employed as recruiting officer. From there they moved, in 1766, to Ludwigsburg, where the extravagant duke Karl Eugen had taken up his residence and was bent on creating a sort of Swabian Versailles. Here little Fritz went to school and was sometimes taken to the gorgeous ducal opera, where he got his first notions of scenic illusion. The hope of his boyhood was to become a preacher, but this pious aspiration was brought to naught by the offer of free tuition in an academy which the duke had started at his Castle Solitude near Stuttgart.

This academy was Schiller's world from his fourteenth to his twenty-first year. It was an educational experiment conceived in a rather liberal spirit as a training-school for public service. At first the duke had the boys taught under his own eye at Castle Solitude, where they were subjected to a strict military discipline. There being no provision for the study of divinity, Schiller was put into law, with the result that he floundered badly for two years. In 1775 the institution was augmented

by a faculty of medicine and transferred to Stuttgart, where it was destined to a short-lived career under the name of the Karlschule. Schiller gladly availed himself of the permission to change from law to medicine, which he thought would be more in harmony with his temperament and literary ambitions. And so it proved. As a student of medicine he made himself at home in the doctrines and practices of the day, and for several years after he left school he thought now and then of returning to the profession of medicine.

For posterity the salient fact of his long connection with the Karlschule is that he was there converted into a fiery radical and a banner-bearer of the literary revolution. Just how it came about is hard to explain in detail. The school was designed to produce docile and contented members of the social order; in him it bred up a savage and relentless critic of that order. The result may be ascribed partly, no doubt, to the natural reaction of an ardent, liberty-loving temperament against a system of rigid discipline and petty espionage. The *élèves*—French was the official language of the school—were not supposed to read dangerous books, and their rooms were often searched for contraband literature. But they easily found ways to evade the rule and enjoy the savor of forbidden fruit.

So it was with Schiller: he read Rousseau more or less, the early works of Goethe, Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*, and plays by Klinger, Leisewitz, Lenz and Wagner—all more or less revolutionary in spirit. He also made the acquaintance of Shakespeare and steeped himself in the spirit of antique heroism as he found it in Plutarch.

Perhaps this reading would have made a radical of him even if he had just then been enjoying the normal freedom of a German university student. Be that as it may, the time came—it was about 1777—when the young Schiller, faithfully pursuing his medical course and doing loyal birthday orations in praise of the duke or the duke's mistress, was not exactly what he seemed to be. Underneath the calm exterior there was a soul on fire with revolutionary passion.

It was mainly in 1780—his last year in the Karlschule—that Schiller wrote *The Robbers*, altogether the loudest explosion of the Storm and Stress. The hero, Karl Moor, was conceived as a "sublime criminal." Deceived by the machinations of his villainous brother Franz, he becomes the captain of a band of outlaws and attempts by murder, arson and robbery to right the wrongs of the social order. For a while he believes that he is doing a noble work. When he learns how he has been deluded he gives himself up to the law. The effect of the play is that of tremendous power unchecked by any of the restraints of art. The plot is incredible, the language tense with turbulent passion, and the characters are extravagantly overdrawn. But the genius of the born dramatist is there. It is all vividly seen and powerfully bodied forth. What is more important, the play marks the birth of a new type—the tragedy of fanaticism. We are left at the end with a heightened feeling for the mysterious tangle of human destiny which makes it possible for a really noble nature such as Karl Moor to go thus disastrously wrong.

Toward the end of 1780 Schiller left the academy and was made doctor to a regiment of soldiers consisting largely of invalids. He dosed them with drastic medicines according to his light, but the service was disagreeable and the pay very small. To make a stir in the world he borrowed money and published *The Robbers* as a book for the reader, with a preface in which he spoke rather slightly of the theatre. The book came out in the spring of 1781—with a rampant lion and the motto *in Tirannos* on the title-page. Ere long it came to the attention of Dalberg, director of the theatre at Mannheim, who saw its dramatic qualities and requested its author to revise it for the stage. This Schiller readily consented to do. To please Dalberg he set the action back from the eighteenth to the sixteenth century and made many minor changes. The revised play was performed at Mannheim on January 12, 1782, with ever-memorable success. The audience, assembled from far and near, went wild with enthusiasm. No such triumph had been achieved before on a German stage. The author himself saw the performance, having come over from Stuttgart without leave of absence. For this breach of discipline, or rather for a repetition of the offense in May, he was sent to the guardhouse for a fortnight and forbidden to write any more plays. The consequence was a clandestine flight from

a situation that had become intolerable. In September, 1782, he escaped from Stuttgart with his loyal friend Streicher and took his way northward toward the Palatinate. He had set his hopes on finding employment in Mannheim.

Before leaving his native Swabia he had virtually completed a second play dealing with the conspiracy of Count Fiesco at Genoa in the year 1547. He had also won his spurs as a poet and a critic. His *Anthology for 1782* contains a large number of short poems, some of them evincing a rare talent for dramatic story-telling, others foreshadowing the imaginative sweep and the warmth of feeling which characterize the best poetic work of the later Schiller. Such, notably, are the poems to Laura, in which the lover's raptures are linked with the law of gravitation and the preestablished harmony of the world. He also contributed several papers to the *Württemberg Repertorium*, especially a review of *The Robbers* in which, dissecting his own child with remorseless impartiality, he anticipated nearly everything that critics were destined to urge against the play during the next hundred years. Having left his post of duty and being a military officer, Schiller was technically a deserter and had reason to fear pursuit and arrest. At Mannheim his affairs went badly. The politic Dalberg was not eager to befriend a youth who had offended the powerful Duke of Württemberg; so *Fiesco* was rejected and its author came into dire straits. Toward the close of the year he found a welcome refuge at Bauerbach, where a house was put at his disposal by his friend Frau von Wolzogen. Here he remained several months, occupied mainly with a new play which came to be known as *Cabal and Love*. He also sketched a historical tragedy, *Don Carlos*, being led to the subject by his reading of St. Réal's historical novel *Don Carlos*. During the first part of his stay at Bauerbach Schiller went by the name of Dr. Ritter and wrote purposely misleading letters as to his intended movements. By the summer of 1783, however, it had become apparent that the Duke of Württemberg was not going to make trouble. Relieved of anxiety on this score, and not having had very good success of late with his theatre, Dalberg reopened negotiations with Schiller, who was easily persuaded to emerge from his hiding-place and become theatre-poet at Mannheim under contract for one year.

During this year at Mannheim *Fiesco* and *Cabal and Love* were put on the stage and published. The former is a quasi-historical tragedy of intriguing ambition, ending—in the original version—with the death of Fiesco at the hands of the fanatical republican Verrina. While there is much to admire in its abounding vigor and its picturesque details, *Fiesco* lacks artistic finality and is the least interesting of Schiller's early plays. Much more important is *Cabal and Love*, a domestic tragedy that has held the stage to this day and is generally regarded as the best of its kind in the eighteenth-century German drama. Class conflict is the tragic element. A maid of low degree and her high-minded, aristocratic lover are done to death by a miserable court intrigue. Far more than in *The Robbers* Schiller was here writing with his eye on the facts. Much Württemberg history is thinly disguised in this drastic comment on the crimes, follies and banalities of German court life under the Old Régime.

Notwithstanding his success as a playwright and his receipt of the honorable title of Councilor from the Duke of Weimar, Schiller was unhappy at Mannheim. Sickness, debt and loneliness oppressed him, making creative work well-nigh impossible. In June, 1784, when the sky was looking very black, he received a heartening letter from a quartet of unknown admirers in Leipzig, one of whom was Gottfried Körner. Schiller was deeply touched. In his hunger for sympathy and friendship he resolved to leave Mannheim and seek out these good people who had shown such a kindly interest in him. Fortunately Körner was a man of some means and was able to help not only with words but with cash. So it came about that in the spring of 1785 Schiller forsook Mannheim, which had become as a prison to him, and went to Leipzig. Thence, after a short sojourn, he followed Körner to Dresden. The relation between the two men developed into a warm and mutually inspiring friendship. A feeling of jubilant happiness took possession of Schiller and soon found expression in the *Song to Joy*, wherein a kiss of love and sympathy is offered to all mankind.

During his two years' sojourn in Dresden Schiller was mainly occupied with the editing of a magazine, the *Thalia*, and with the completion of *Don Carlos*, the first of his plays in blank verse.

Hitherto he had written with his eye on the stage, and in the savage spirit of the Storm and Stress. Now, however, the higher ambition of the dramatic poet began to assert itself. His views of life were changing, and his nature craved a freer and nobler self-expression than was possible in the "three hours' traffic of the stage." He had begun *Don Carlos* at Bauerbach, intending to make it a love-tragedy in a royal household and incidentally to scourge the Spanish inquisition. Little by little, however, the centre of his interest shifted from the lovesick Carlos to the quixotic dreamer Posa, and the result was that the love-tragedy gradually grew into a tragedy of political idealism with Posa for its hero. As finally completed in the summer of 1787, *Don Carlos* had twice the length of an ordinary stage-play and, withal, a certain lack of artistic unity. But its sonorous verse, its fine phrasing of large ideas, and its noble dignity of style settled forever the question of Schiller's power as a dramatic poet. The third act especially is instinct with the best idealism of the eighteenth century.

After *Don Carlos* Schiller wrote no more plays for some nine years, being occupied in the interval chiefly with history and philosophy. His dramatic work had interested him more especially in the sixteenth century. At Dresden he began to read history with great avidity and found it very appetizing. What he most cared for, evidently, was not the annals of warfare or the growth of institutions, but the psychology of the great man. He was an ardent lover of freedom, both political and intellectual, and took keen delight in tracing its progress. On the other hand, play-writing had its disadvantages. Thus far it had brought him more of notoriety than of solid fame, and his income was so small that he was dependent on Körner's generosity. To escape from this irksome position he decided to try his fortune in Thuringia. Going over to Weimar, in the summer of 1787, he was well received by Herder and Wieland—Goethe was just then in Italy—and presently he settled down to write a history of the Dutch Rebellion. His plan looked forward to six volumes, but only one was ever written. It was published in 1788 under the title of *The Defection of the Netherlands* and led to its author's appointment as unsalaried professor of history at the University of Jena. He began to lecture in the spring of 1789.

Meanwhile he had taken up the study of the Greek poets and found them very edifying and sanative—just the influence that he needed to clarify his judgment and correct his earlier vagaries of taste. He was fascinated by the *Odyssey* and in a mood of fleeting enthusiasm he resolved to read nothing but the ancients for the next two years. He translated the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides and a part of *The Phenician Women*. Out of this newborn ardor grew two important poems, *The Gods of Greece* and *The Artists*; the former an elegy on the decay of Greek polytheism conceived as a loss of beauty to the world, the latter a philosophic retrospect of human history wherein the evolutionary function of art is glorified. At the same time he revived the dormant *Thalia* and used its columns for the continued publication of *The Ghost-seer*, a pot-boiling novel which he had begun at Dresden. It is Schiller's one serious attempt at prose fiction. His initial purpose was to describe an elaborate and fine-spun intrigue, devised by mysterious agents of the Church of Rome, for the winning over of a Protestant German prince. The story begins in a promising way, and the later portions contain fine passages of narrative and character-drawing. But its author presently began to feel that it was unworthy of him and left it unfinished.

Begas]

On the 22d of February, 1790, Schiller was married to Lotte von Lengefeld, with whom he lived most happily the rest of his days. His letters of this period tell of a quiet joy such as he had not known before. And then, suddenly, his fair prospects were clouded by the disastrous breakdown of his health. An attack of pneumonia in the winter of 1790-1791 came near to a fatal ending, and hardly had he recovered from that before he was prostrated by a second illness worse than the first. He bade farewell to his friends, and the report went abroad that he was dead. After a while he rallied, but never again to be strong and well. From this time forth he must be thought of as a semi-invalid, doomed to a very cautious mode of living and expectant of an early death. It was to be a fourteen years' battle between a heroic soul and an ailing body.

For a while, owing to the forced cessation of the literary work on which his small income depended, he was in great distress for lack of money. His wife, while of noble family, had brought nothing but herself to the marriage partnership. And then, just as in the dark days at Mannheim in 1784, help seemed to come from the clouds. Two Danish noblemen, ardent admirers quite unknown to him personally, heard of his painful situation and offered him a pension of a thousand thalers a year for three years. No conditions whatever were attached to the gift; he was simply to follow his inclination, free from all anxiety about a livelihood. Without hesitation he accepted the gift and thus found himself, for the first time in his life, really free to do as he chose. What he chose was to use his freedom for a grapple with Kant's philosophy. Today this seems a strange choice for a sick poet, but let Schiller himself explain what lay in his mind. He wrote to Körner:

"It is precisely for the sake of artistic creation that I wish to philosophize. Criticism must repair the damage it has done me. And it has done me great damage indeed; for I miss in myself these many years that boldness, that living fire, that was mine before I knew a rule. Now I see myself in the act of creating and fashioning; I observe the play of inspiration, and my imagination works less freely, since it is conscious of being watched. But if I once reach the point where artistic procedure becomes natural, like education for the well-nurtured man, then my fancy will get back its old freedom and know no bounds but those of its own making."

From these words we understand the nature of Schiller's enterprise—he wished to fathom the laws of beauty. It seemed to him that beauty could not be altogether a matter of changing taste, opinion, and fashion; that somehow or other it must be grounded in eternal laws either of the external world or of human nature. He felt, too, that a knowledge of these laws, could it once become second nature, would be very helpful to him as a dramatic poet. Whether he was right in so thinking is a question too large to be discussed here, nor can we follow him in the details of his esthetic speculation. The subject is too abstruse to be dispatched in a few words. Suffice it to say that a number of minor papers, the most important being *On Winsomeness and Dignity* (*Über Anmut and Würde*) and *On the Sublime*, prepared the way for a more popular exposition of his views in the *Letters on Esthetic Education* and in the memorable essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, which deserves to be called, next to Lessing's *Laocoon*, the weightiest critical essay of the eighteenth century. The Letters contain a ripe and pleasing statement of Schiller's philosophy in its relation to the culture-problems of his epoch.

Along with these philosophic studies Schiller found time for much work more closely related to his professorship of history. To say nothing of his minor historical writings, he completed, in 1793, his *History of the Thirty Years' War*. It appeared in successive numbers of Göschen's *Ladies' Calendar*, a fact which in itself indicates that it was not conceived and should not be judged as a monument of research. The aim was to tell the story of the great war in a readable style. And in this Schiller succeeded, especially in the parts relating to his hero, the Swedish king Gustav Adolf. Over Schiller's merit as a historian there has been much debate, and good critics have caviled at his sharp contrasts and his lack of care in matters of detail. But the great fact remains that the *Defection of the Netherlands* and the *Thirty Years' War* are the earliest historical classics in the German language. Schiller was the first German to make literature out of history.

The year 1794 brought about a closer relation between Schiller and Goethe, an event of prime moment in the lives of both. On Goethe's return from Italy, in the summer of 1788, Schiller was introduced to him, but the meeting had no immediate consequences. In fact, Schiller had quietly made up his mind not to like the man whom, for a whole year, he had heard constantly lauded by the Weimar circle. He thought of Goethe as a proud, self-centred son of fortune, with whom friendship would be impossible. Goethe, on the other hand, was not drawn to the author of *The Robbers*. He looked on the popularity of the detestable play as a shocking evidence of depraved public taste and was not aware how its author had changed since writing it. So it came about that, for some six years, the two men lived as neighbors in space but strangers in the spirit. At last, however, an accidental

meeting in Jena led to an interchange of views and prepared the way for the most memorable of literary friendships.

By this time Schiller had undertaken the editorship of a new literary magazine to be called *Die Horen*, which was to be financed by the enterprising publisher Cotta in Stuttgart. The plan was that it should eclipse all previous undertakings of its kind. But it was to eschew politics. Germany was just then agitated by the fierce passions of the revolutionary epoch, and this excitement was regarded by Schiller as ominous for the nation. There was need of esthetic education. So he proposed to keep the *Horen* clear of politics and try to divert the minds of men into the serener regions of letters and art. To Goethe, who also hated the Revolution, this was a highly acceptable program. So he readily undertook to write for the *Horen*, and thus he and Schiller soon became linked together in the public mind as allied champions of a cause. It is for this reason that the Germans are wont to call them the Dioscuri.

By way of signalizing their community of interest the Dioscuri presently began to write satirical distichs at the expense of men and tendencies that they did not like. For example:

Gentlemen, keep your seats! for the curs but covet your places,
Elegant places to hear all the other dogs bark.

The making of these more or less caustic epigrams amused them. Sometimes one would suggest the topic and the other write the distich; again, one would do the hexameter, the other the pentameter. They agreed that neither should ever claim separate property in the *Xenia*, as they were called. The number grew apace, until it reached nearly a thousand. About half the number on hand were published in 1797 in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* and had the effect of setting all Germany agog with curiosity, rage or solemn glee. Some of those hit replied in kind or in vicious attacks, and for a little while there was great excitement. But having discharged their broadside Goethe and Schiller did not further pursue the ignoble warfare. They wisely came to the conclusion that the best way to elevate the public taste was not to assail the bad in mordant personal epigrams, but to exemplify the good in creative work.

After his nine years of fruitful wandering in other fields Schiller returned at last, in 1796, to dramatic poetry. Once more it came in his way to write for the stage, since Goethe was now director of the Weimar theatre. After some hesitation between *Wallenstein* and *The Knights of Malta*, both of which had long haunted his thoughts, he decided in favor of the former. It occupied him for three years and finally left his hands as a long affair in three parts. Yet it is not a trilogy in the proper sense, but a play in ten acts, preceded by a dramatic prelude. At first Schiller found the material refractory. The actual *Wallenstein* had never exhibited truly heroic qualities of any kind, and his history involved only the cold passions of ambition, envy, and vindictiveness. Whether he was really guilty of treason was a moot question which admitted of no partisan treatment. But Schiller's genius triumphed splendidly over the difficulties inherent in the subject. In the *Camp* we get a picturesque view of the motley soldatesca which was the basis of *Wallenstein's* power and prestige. In *The Piccolomini* we see the nature of the dangerous game he is playing, and in *Wallenstein's Death* the unheroic hero becomes very impressive in his final discomfiture and his pitiable taking-off. The love-tragedy of Max and Thekla casts a mellow light of romance over the otherwise austere political action.

EDUCATED]

"THE ROBBERS," "FIESCO," AND "LOVE AND INTRIGUE" WERE FIRST PLAYED]

During the years 1795-1800 Schiller wrote a large number of short poems in which he gave expression to his matured philosophy of life. His best ballads also belong to this period. Pure song he did not often attempt, his philosophic bent predisposing him to what the Germans call the lyric of thought. Perhaps his invalidism had something to do with it; at any rate the total number of his singable lyrics, such as *The Maiden's Lament*, is but small. As a poet of reflection he is at his best in *The Ideal and Life*, *The Walk*, *The Eleusinian Festival*, and the more popular *Song of the Bell*. The

first-named of these four, at first called *The Realm of Shades*, is a masterpiece of high thinking, charged with warm emotion and bodied forth in gorgeous imagery. Its doctrine is that only by taking refuge in the realm of the Ideal can we escape from the tyranny of the flesh, the bondage of Nature's law, the misery of struggle and defeat. Yet it is not a doctrine of quietism that is here preached, as if inner peace were the supreme thing in life, but rather one of hopeful endeavor. *The Walk*, one of the finest elegies in the German language, is a pensive retrospect of the origins of civilization, loving contemplation of Nature giving rise to reflections on man and his estate. *The Song of the Bell*, probably the best known of all Schiller's poems, gives expression to his feeling for the dignity of labor and for the poetry of man's social life. Perhaps we may say that the heart of his message is found in this stanza of *The Words of Illusion*:

And so, noble soul, forget not the law,
And to the true faith be leal;
What ear never heard and eye never saw,
The Beautiful, the True, they are real.
Look not without, as the fool may do;
It is in thee and ever created anew.

In 1797—*Hermann and Dorothea* was just then under way—Goethe and Schiller interchanged views by letter on the subject of epic poetry in general and the ballad in particular. As they had both written ballads in their youth, it was but natural that they should be led to fresh experiments with the species. So they both began to make ballads for next year's *Musenalmanach*. Schiller contributed five, among them the famous *Diver* and *The Cranes of Ibycus*. In after years he wrote several more, of which the best, perhaps, are *The Pledge*, a stirring version of the Damon and Pythias story, and *The Battle with the Dragon*, which, however, was called a *romanza* instead of a ballad. The interest of all these poems turns mainly, of course, on the story, but also, in no small degree, on the splendid art which the poet displays. They are quite unlike any earlier German ballads, owing nothing to the folk-song and making no use of the uncanny, the gruesome, or the supernatural. There is no mystery in them, no resort to verbal tricks such as Bürger had employed in *Lenore*. The subjects are not derived from German folk-lore, but from Greek legend or medieval romance. Their great merit is the strong and vivid, yet always noble, style with which the details are set forth.

We come back now to the province of art in which Schiller himself felt that his strength lay, and to which he devoted nearly all his strength during his remaining years. The very successful performance of the complete *Wallenstein* in the spring of 1799 added greatly to his prestige, for discerning judges could see that something extraordinary had been achieved. Weimar had by this time become the acknowledged centre of German letters, and its modest little theatre now took on fresh glory. Schiller had made himself very useful as a translator and adapter, and Goethe was disposed to lean heavily on his friend's superior knowledge of stage-craft. In order to be nearer to the theatre and its director, Schiller moved over to Weimar in December, 1799, and took up his abode in what is now called the Schillerstrasse. He was already working at *Mary Stuart*, which was finished the following spring and first played on June 14, 1800.

In *Mary Stuart*, as in *Wallenstein*, Schiller focused his light on a famous personage who was the subject of passionate controversy. But of course he did not wish to make a Catholic play, or a Protestant play, or to have its effect dependent in any way on the spectator's pre-assumed attitude toward the purely political questions involved. So he decided to omit Mary's trial and to let the curtain rise on her as a prisoner waiting for the verdict of her judges. This meant, however, according to his conception of the tragic art, a pathetic rather than a tragic situation; for the queen's fate would be a foregone conclusion, and she could do nothing to avert it. To give her the semblance of a tragic guilt he resorted to three unhistorical inventions: First, an attempt to escape, with resulting complicity in

the act of the murderous Catholic fanatic Mortimer; second, a putative love on the part of Mary for Leicester, who would use his great influence to bring about a personal interview between her and Elizabeth; and, finally, the meeting of the two queens, in which Mary's long pent-up passion would get the better of her discretion and betray her into a mortal insult of her rival. In reality, however, the meeting of the two queens, while theatrically very effective, is not the true climax of the play. That comes when Mary conquers her rebellious spirit and accepts her ignominious fate as a divinely appointed expiation for long-past sins. The play thus becomes a tragedy of moral self-conquest in the presence of an undeserved death.

Next in order came *The Maid of Orleans*, expressly called by its author a romantic tragedy. It is a "rescue" of the Maid's character. Shakespeare had depicted her as a witch, Voltaire as a vulgar fraud. Schiller conceives her as a genuine ambassadress of God, or rather of the Holy Virgin. Not only does he accept at its face value the tradition of her "voices," her miraculous clairvoyance, her magic influence on the French troops; but he makes her fight in the ranks with men and gives to her a terrible avenging sword, before which no Englishman can stand. But she, too, had to have her tragic guilt. So Schiller makes her supernatural power depend—by the Virgin's express command—on her renunciation of the love of man. A fleeting passion for the English general Lionel, conceived on the battle-field in the fury of combat, fills her with remorse and the sense of treason to her high mission. For a while she is deprived of her self-confidence, and with it of her supernatural power. There follow scenes of bitter humiliation, until her expiation is complete. At last, purified by suffering, she recovers her divine strength, breaks her fetters, brings victory once more to the disheartened French soldiers, and dies in glory on the field of battle. One sees that it is not at all the real Jeanne d'Arc that Schiller depicts, but a glorified heroine invested with divine power and called to be the savior of her country. Here, for the first time in German drama, the passion of patriotism plays an important part.

After the completion of *The Maid of Orleans* Schiller was minded to try his hand on a tragedy "in the strictest Greek form." He had been deeply impressed by the art of Sophocles and wished to create something which should produce on the modern mind the effect of a Greek tragedy, with its simple structure, its few characters, and above all its chorus. But the choice of a subject was not easy, and for several months he occupied himself with other matters. He made a German version of Gozzi's *Turandot* and took notes for a tragedy about Perkin Warbeck. In the summer of 1802 he decided definitely to carry out his plan of vying with the Greeks. *The Bride of Messina* was finished in February, 1803. While he was working at it there arrived one day—it was in November, 1802—a patent of nobility from the chancery of the Holy Roman Empire. It may be noted in passing that several years before he had been made an honorary citizen of the French Republic, his name having been presented at the same time with those of Washington, Wilberforce, and Kosciusko.

Among the later plays of Schiller *The Bride of Messina* is the one which shows his stately poetic diction at its best, but has proved least acceptable on the stage. As we have seen, it was an artistic experiment. A medieval prince of Messina has an ominous dream which is interpreted by an Arab astrologer to mean that a daughter to be born will cause the death of his two sons, thus making an end of his dynasty. When the child is born he orders it put to death. But meanwhile his queen has had a dream of contrary import, and thereby saves the life of her new-born daughter, but has her brought up remote from the court. In time the two quarrelsome brothers, ignorant that they have a sister, fall in love with the girl. One slays the other in a frenzy of jealous rage, the other commits suicide in remorse. This invention can hardly be called plausible. Indeed, so far as the mere fable is concerned, it is a house of cards which would collapse any moment at the breath of common sense. One must remember in reading the play that common sense was not one of the nine muses. The dreams take the place of the Delphic oracle, and the Greek chorus is represented by two semi-choruses, the retainers of the quarreling brothers, who speak their parts by the mouth of a leader, at one moment taking part in the action, at another delivering the detached comment of the ideal spectator. There is much

splendid poetry in these pseudo-choruses, but it was impossible that such a scheme should produce the effect of the Greek choral dance.

Did Schiller feel that in *The Bride of Messina* he had wandered a little too far away from the vital concerns of modern life? Probably, for he next set to work on a play which should be popular in the best sense of the word—*William Tell*. It is his one play with a happy ending and has always been a prime favorite on the stage. The hero is the Swiss people, and the action idealizes the legendary uprising of the Forest Cantons against their Austrian governors. There are really three separate actions: the conspiracy, the love-affair of Bertha and Rudenz, the exploits of William Tell. All, however, contribute to the common end, which is the triumph of the Swiss people over their oppressors. The exposition is superb, there is rapidity of movement, variety, picturesqueness, the glamor of romance; and the feelings evoked are such as warm and keep warm the cockles of the heart. When the famous actor Iffland received the manuscript of the first act, in February, 1804, he wrote:

"I have read, devoured, bent my knee; and my heart, my tears, my rushing blood, have paid ecstatic homage to your spirit, to your heart. Oh, more! Soon, soon more! Pages, scraps—whatever you can send. I tender heart and hand to your genius. What a work! What wealth, power, poetic beauty, and irresistible force! God keep you! Amen."

With *Tell* off his hands Schiller next threw his tireless energy on a Russian subject—the story of Dmitri, reputed son of Ivan the Terrible. The reading, note-taking and planning proved a long laborious task, and there were many interruptions. In November, 1804, the hereditary Prince of Weimar brought home a Russian bride, Maria Paulovna, and for her reception he wrote *The Homage of the Arts*—a slight affair which served its purpose well. The reaction from these Russophil festivities left him in a weakened condition, and, feeling unequal to creative effort, he translated Racine's *Phèdre* into German verse, finishing it in February, 1805. Then he returned with great zest to his Russian play *Demetrius*, of which enough was written to indicate that it might have become his masterpiece. But the flame had burnt itself out. Toward the end of April he took a cold which led to a violent fever with delirium. The end came on May 9, 1805.

No attempt can here be made at a general estimate of Schiller's dramatic genius. The serious poetic drama, such as he wrote in his later years, is no longer in favor anywhere. In Germany, as in our own land, the temper of the time is on the whole hostile to that form of art. We demand, very properly, a drama attuned to the life of the present; one occupied, as we say, with living issues. Yet Schiller is very popular on the German stage. After the lapse of a century, and notwithstanding the fact that he *seems* to speak to us from the clouds, he holds his own. Why is this? It is partly because of a quality of his art that has been called his "monumental fresco-painting"; that is, his strong and luminous portraiture of the great historic forces that have shaped the destiny of nations. These forces are matters of the spirit, of the inner life; and they persist from age to age, but little affected by the changing fashion of the theatre. The reader of Schiller soon comes to feel that he deals with issues that are alive because they are immortal.

Another important factor in his classicity is the suggestion that goes out from his idealized personality. German sentiment has set him on a high pedestal and made a hero of him, so that his word is not exactly as another man's word. Something of this was felt by those about him even in his lifetime. Says Karoline von Wolzogen: "High seriousness and the winsome grace of a pure and noble soul were always present in Schiller's conversation; in listening to him one walked as among the changeless stars of heaven and the flowers of earth." This is the tribute of a partial friend, but it describes very well the impression produced by Schiller's writings. His love of freedom and beauty, his confidence in reason, his devotion to the idea of humanity, seem to exhale from his work and to invest it with a peculiar distinction. His plays and poems are a priceless memento to the spirit of a great and memorable epoch. Hundreds of writers have said their say about him, but no better word has been spoken than the noble tribute of Goethe:

For he was ours. So let the note of pride
Hush into silence all the mourner's ruth;
In our safe harbor he was fain to bide
And build for aye, after the storm of youth.
We saw his mighty spirit onward stride
To eternal realms of Beauty and of Truth;
While far behind him lay fantasmally
The vulgar things that fetter you and me.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: Translated by Edward, Lord Lytton.]

[Footnote 2: This Sonnet, by the author of this sketch of Schiller's life, was written for the Chicago Schiller Celebration of 1905, but has not been printed before. EDITOR.]

* * * * *

POEMS

[All poems in this section are translations by Edward, Lord Lytton, and appear by permission of George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., London.]

* * * * *

TO THE IDEAL (1795)

Then wilt thou, with thy fancies holy—
 Wilt thou, faithless, fly from me?
With thy joy, thy melancholy,
 Wilt thou thus relentless flee?
O Golden Time, O Human May,
 Can nothing, Fleet One, thee restraint?
Must thy sweet river glide away
Into the eternal Ocean Main?
The suns serene are lost and vanish'd
 That wont the path of youth to gild,
And all the fair Ideals banish'd
 From that wild heart they whilome fill'd.
Gone the divine and sweet believing
 In dreams which Heaven itself unfurl'd!
What godlike shapes have years bereaving
 Swept from this real work-day world!
As once, with tearful passion fired,
 The Cyprian Sculptor clasp'd the stone,
Till the cold cheeks, delight-inspired,
 Blush'd—to sweet life the marble grown:
So youth's desire for Nature!—round
 The Statue so my arms I wreathed,
Till warmth and life in mine it found,
 And breath that poets breathe—it breathed;
With my own burning thoughts it burn'd;—
 Its silence stirr'd to speech divine;—
Its lips my glowing kiss return'd—
 Its heart in beating answer'd mine!
How fair was then the flower—the tree!—
 How silver-sweet the fountain's fall!
The soulless had a soul to me!
 My life its own life lent to all!
The Universe of things seem'd swelling
 The panting heart to burst its bound,
And wandering Fancy found a dwelling
 In every shape, thought, deed, and sound.
Germ'd in the mystic buds, reposing,
 A whole creation slumbered mute,
Alas, when from the buds unclosing,
 How scant and blighted sprung the fruit!
How happy in his dreaming error,
 His own gay valor for his wing,
Of not one care as yet in terror
 Did Youth upon his journey spring;
Till floods of balm, through air's dominion,

Bore upward to the faintest star—
For never aught to that bright pinion
Could dwell too high, or spread too far.
Though laden with delight, how lightly
The wanderer heavenward still could soar,
And aye the ways of life how brightly
The airy Pageant danced before!
Love, showering gifts (life's sweetest) down,
Fortune, with golden garlands gay,
And Fame, with starbeams for a crown,
And Truth, whose dwelling is the Day.
Ah! midway soon lost evermore,
Afar the blithe companions stray;
In vain their faithless steps explore,
As one by one, they glide away.
Fleet Fortune was the first escaper—
The thirst for wisdom linger'd yet;
But doubts with many a gloomy vapor
The sun-shape of the Truth beset!
The holy crown which Fame was wreathing,
Behold! the mean man's temples wore,
And, but for one short spring-day breathing,
Bloom'd Love—the Beautiful—no more!
And ever stiller yet, and ever
The barren path more lonely lay,
Till scarce from waning Hope could quiver
A glance along the gloomy way.
Who, loving, lingered yet to guide me,
When all her boon companions fled,
Who stands consoling yet beside me,
And follows to the House of Dread?
Thine FRIENDSHIP—thine the hand so tender,
Thine the balm dropping on the wound,
Thy task the load more lightly to render—
O! earliest sought and soonest found!
And Thou, so pleased, with her uniting,
To charm the soul-storm into peace,
Sweet TOIL, in toil itself delighting,
That more it labored, less could cease;
Tho' but by grains thou aid'st the pile
The vast Eternity uprears,
At least thou strik'st from Time the while
Life's debt—the minutes, days and years.[3]

* * * * *

THE VEILED IMAGE AT SAÏS (1795)

A youth, whom wisdom's warm desire had lured
To learn the secret lore of Egypt's priests,
To Saïs came. And soon, from step to step
Of upward mystery, swept his rapid soul!
Still ever sped the glorious Hope along,
Nor could the parch'd Impatience halt, appeased
By the calm answer of the Hierophant—
"What have I, if I have not all," he sigh'd;
"And giv'st thou but the little and the more?
Does thy truth dwindle to the gauge of gold,
A sum that man may smaller or less small
Possess and count—subtract or add to—still?
Is not TRUTH *one* and indivisible?
Take from the Harmony a single tone
A single tint take from the Iris bow—
And lo! what once was all, is nothing—while
Fails to the lovely whole one tint or tone!"
They stood within the temple's silent dome,
And, as the young man paused abrupt, his gaze
Upon a veil'd and giant IMAGE fell:
Amazed he turn'd unto his guide—"And what
Towers, yonder, vast beneath the veil?"

"THE TRUTH,"

Answered the Priest.

"And have I for the truth
Panted and struggled with a lonely soul,
And yon the thin and ceremonial robe
That wraps her from mine eyes?"

Replied the Priest,
"There shrouds herself the still Divinity.
Hear, and revere her best: 'Till I this veil
Lift—may no mortal-born presume to raise;
And who with guilty and unhallow'd hand
Too soon profanes the Holy and Forbidden—
He,' says the goddess."—

"Well?"

"SHALL SEE THE TRUTH!"

"And wond'rous oracle; and hast *thou* never
Lifted the veil?"

"No! nor desired to raise!"
"What! nor desired? O strange, incurious heart,
Here the thin barrier—there reveal'd the truth!"
Mildly return'd the priestly master: "Son,
More mighty than thou dream'st of, Holy Law
Spreads interwoven in yon slender web,

Air-light to touch—lead-heavy to the soul!"
The young man, thoughtful, turn'd him to his home,
And the sharp fever of the Wish to Know
Robb'd night of sleep. Around his couch he roll'd,
Till midnight hatch'd resolve—

"Unto the shrine!"

Stealthily on, the involuntary tread
Bears him—he gains the boundary, scales the wall,
And midway in the inmost, holiest dome,
Strides with adventurous step the daring man.
Now halts he where the lifeless Silence sleeps
In the embrace of mournful Solitude;—
Silence unstirr'd—save where the guilty tread
Call'd the dull echo from mysterious vaults!
High from the opening of the dome above,
Came with wan smile the silver-shining moon.
And, awful as some pale presiding god,
Dim-gleaming through the hush of that large gloom,
In its wan veil the Giant Image stood.

With an unsteady step he onward past,
Already touch'd the violating hand
The Holy—and recoil'd! a shudder thrill'd
His limbs, fire-hot and icy-cold in turns,
As if invisible arms would pluck the soul
Back from the deed.

"O miserable man!

What would'st thou?" (Thus within the inmost heart
Murmur'd the warning whisper.) "Wilt thou dare
The All-hallow'd to profane? 'No mortal-born'
(So spake the oracular word)—'may lift the veil
Till I myself shall raise!' Yet said it not—
The same oracular word—'who lifts the veil
Shall see the truth?' Behind, be what there may,
I dare the hazard—I will lift the veil—"
Loud rang his shouting voice—"and I will see!"

"SEE!"

A lengthen'd echo, mocking, shrill'd again!
He spoke and rais'd the veil! And ask'st thou what
Unto the sacrilegious gaze lay bare?
I know not—pale and senseless, stretch'd before
The statue of the great Egyptian queen,
The priests beheld him at the dawn of day;
But what he saw, or what did there befall,
His lips reveal'd not. Ever from his heart
Was fled the sweet serenity of life,
And the deep anguish dug the early grave
"Woe—woe to him"—such were his warning words,
Answering some curious and impetuous brain,
"Woe—for her face shall charm him never more!

Woe—woe to him who treads through Guilt to TRUTH!"

* * * * *

THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL LIFE (1795)

I

Forever fair, forever calm and bright,
Life flies on plumage, zephyr-light,
For those who on the Olympian hill rejoice—
Moons wane, and races wither to the tomb,
And 'mid the universal ruin, bloom
The rosy days of Gods—
With Man, the choice,
Timid and anxious, hesitates between
The sense's pleasure and the soul's content;
While on celestial brows, aloft and sheen,
The beams of both are blent.

II

Seek'st thou on earth the life of Gods to share,
Safe in the Realm of Death?—beware
To pluck the fruits that glitter to thine eye;
Content thyself with gazing on their glow—
Short are the joys Possession can bestow,
And in Possession sweet Desire will die.
'Twas not the ninefold chain of waves that bound
Thy daughter, Ceres, to the Stygian river—
She pluck'd the fruit of the unholy ground,
And so—was Hell's forever!

III

The Weavers of the Web—the Fates—but sway
The matter and the things of clay;
Safe from each change that Time to Matter gives,
Nature's blest playmate, free at will to stray
With Gods a god, amidst the fields of Day,
The FORM, the ARCHETYPE,[4] serenely lives.
Would'st thou soar heavenward on its joyous wing?
Cast from thee, Earth, the bitter and the real,
High from this cramp'd and dungeon being, spring
Into the Realm of the Ideal!

IV

Here, bathed, Perfection, in thy purest ray,
Free from the clogs and taints of clay,
Hovers divine the Archetypal Man!
Dim as those phantom ghosts of life that gleam
And wander voiceless by the Stygian stream,—
Fair as it stands in fields Elysian,
Ere down to Flesh the Immortal doth descend:—
If doubtful ever in the Actual life
Each contest—*here* a victory crowns the end
Of every nobler strife.

V

Not from the strife itself to set thee free,
But more to nerve—doth Victory
Wave her rich garland from the Ideal clime.
Whate'er thy wish, the Earth has no repose—
Life still must drag thee onward as it flows,
Whirling thee down the dancing surge of Time.
But when the courage sinks beneath the dull
Sense of its narrow limits—on the soul,
Bright from the hill-tops of the Beautiful,
Bursts the attained goal!

VI

If worth thy while the glory and the strife
Which fire the lists of Actual Life—
The ardent rush to fortune or to fame,
In the hot field where Strength and Valor are,
And rolls the whirling thunder of the car,
And the world, breathless, eyes the glorious game—
Then dare and strive—the prize can but belong
To him whose valor o'er his tribe prevails;
In life the victory only crowns the strong—
He who is feeble fails.

VII

But Life, whose source, by crags around it pil'd,
Chafed while confin'd, foams fierce and wild,
 Glides soft and smooth when once its streams expand,
When its waves, glassing in their silver play,
Aurora blent with Hesper's milder ray,
 Gain the Still BEAUTIFUL—that Shadow-Land!
Here, contest grows but interchange of Love;
 All curb is but the bondage of the Grace;
Gone is each foe,—Peace folds her wings above
 Her native dwelling-place.

VIII

When, through dead stone to breathe a soul of light,
With the dull matter to unite
 The kindling genius, some great sculptor glows;
Behold him straining every nerve intent—
Behold how, o'er the subject element,
 The stately THOUGHT its march laborious goes!
For never, save to Toil untiring, spoke
 The unwilling Truth from her mysterious well—
The statue only to the chisel's stroke
 Wakes from its marble cell.

IX

But onward to the Sphere of Beauty—go
Onward, O Child of Art! and, lo,
 Out of the matter which thy pains control
The Statue springs!—not as with labor wrung
From the hard block, but as from Nothing sprung—
 Airy and light—the offspring of the soul!
The pangs, the cares, the weary toils it cost
 Leave not a trace when once the work is done—
The Artist's human frailty merged and lost
 In Art's great victory won!

X

If human Sin confronts the rigid law
Of perfect Truth and Virtue, awe
Seizes and saddens thee to see how far
Beyond thy reach, Perfection;—if we test
By the Ideal of the Good, the best,
How mean our efforts and our actions are!
This space between the Ideal of man's soul
And man's achievement, who hath ever past?
An ocean spreads between us and that goal
Where anchor ne'er was cast!

XI

But fly the boundary of the Senses—live
The Ideal life free Thought can give;
And, lo, the gulf shall vanish, and the chill
Of the soul's impotent despair be gone!
And with divinity thou sharest the throne,
Let but divinity become thy will!
Scorn not the Law—permit its iron band
The sense (it cannot chain the soul) to thrall.
Let man no more the will of Jove withstand,
And Jove the bolt lets fall!

XII

If, in the woes of Actual Human Life—
If thou could'st see the serpent strife
Which the Greek Art has made divine in stone—
Could'st see the writhing limbs, the livid cheek,
Note every pang, and hearken every shriek
Of some despairing lost Laocoon,
The human nature would thyself subdue
To share the human woe before thine eye—
Thy cheek would pale, and all thy soul be true
To Man's great Sympathy.

XIII

But in the Ideal Realm, aloof and far,
Where the calm Art's pure dwellers are,
Lo, the Laocoon writhes, but does not groan.
Here, no sharp grief the high emotion knows—
Here, suffering's self is made divine, and shows
The brave resolve of the firm soul alone:
Here, lovely as the rainbow on the dew
Of the spent thunder-cloud, to Art is given,
Gleaming through Grief's dark veil, the peaceful blue
Of the sweet Moral Heaven.

XIV

So, in the glorious parable, behold
How, bow'd to mortal bonds, of old
Life's dreary path divine Alcides trod:
The hydra and the lion were his prey,
And to restore the friend he loved today,
He went undaunted to the black-brow'd God;
And all the torments and the labors sore
Wroth Juno sent—the meek majestic One,
With patient spirit and unquailing, bore,
Until the course was run—

XV

Until the God cast down his garb of clay,
And rent in hallowing flame away
The mortal part from the divine—to soar
To the empyreal air! Behold him spring
Blithe in the pride of the unwonted wing,
And the dull matter that confined before
Sinks downward, downward, downward as a dream!
Olympian hymns receive the escaping soul,
And smiling Hebe, from the ambrosial stream,
Fills for a God the bowl!

* * * * *

GENIUS (1795)

Do I believe, thou ask'st, the Master's word,
The Schoolman's shibboleth that binds the herd?
To the soul's haven is there but one chart?
Its peace a problem to be learned by art?
On system rest the happy and the good?
To base the temple must the props be wood?
Must I distrust the gentle law, imprest,
To guide and warn, by Nature on the breast,
Till, squared to rule the instinct of the soul,—
Till the School's signet stamp the eternal scroll,
Till in one mold some dogma hath confined
The ebb and flow—the light waves—of the mind?
Say thou, familiar to these depths of gloom,
Thou, safe ascended from the dusty tomb,
Thou, who hast trod these weird Egyptian cells—
Say—if Life's comfort with yon mummies dwells!—
Say—and I grope—with saddened steps indeed—
But on, thro' darkness, if to Truth it lead!
Nay, Friend, thou know'st the golden time—the age
Whose legends live in many a poet's page?
When heavenlier shapes with Man walked side by side,
And the chaste Feeling was itself a guide;
Then the great law, alike divine amid
Suns bright in Heaven, or germs in darkness hid—
That silent law—(call'd whether by the name
Of Nature or Necessity, the same),
To that deep sea, the heart, its movement gave—
Sway'd the full tide, and freshened the free wave.
Then sense unerring—because unproved—
True as the finger on the dial moved,
Half-guide, half-playmate, of Earth's age of youth,
The sportive instinct of Eternal Truth.
Then, nor Initiate nor Profane were known;
Where the Heart felt—there Reason found a throne:
Not from the dust below, but life around
Warm Genius shaped what quick Emotion found.
One rule, like light, for every bosom glowed,
Yet hid from all the fountain whence it flowed.
But, gone that blessed Age!—our wilful pride
Has lost, with Nature, the old peaceful Guide.
Feeling, no more to raise us and rejoice,
Is heard and honored as a Godhead's voice;
And, disenhalloved in its eldest cell
The Human Heart—lies mute the Oracle,
Save where the low and mystic whispers thrill

Some listening spirit more divinely still.
There, in the chambers of the inmost heart,
There, must the Sage explore the Magian's art;
There, seek the long-lost Nature's steps to track,
Till, found once more, she gives him Wisdom back!
Hast thou—(O Blest, if so, whate'er betide!)—
Still kept the Guardian Angel by thy side?
Can thy Heart's guileless childhood yet rejoice
In the sweet instinct with its warning voice?
Does Truth yet limn upon untroubled eyes,
Pure and serene, her world of Iris-dies?
Rings clear the echo which her accent calls
Back from the breast, on which the music falls?
In the calm mind is doubt yet hush'd—and will
That doubt tomorrow, as today, be still?
Will all these fine sensations in their play,
No censor need to regulate and sway?
Fear'st thou not in the insidious Heart to find
The source of Trouble to the limpid mind?
No!—then thine Innocence thy Mentor be!
Science can teach thee naught—she learns from thee!
Each law that lends lame succor to the Weak—
The cripple's crutch—the vigorous need not seek!
From thine own self thy rule of action draw;
That which thou dost—what charms thee—is thy Law,
And founts to every race a code sublime—
What pleases Genius gives a Law to Time!
The Word—the Deed—all Ages shall command,
Pure if thy lip and holy if thy hand!
Thou, thou alone mark'st not within thy heart
The inspiring God whose Minister thou art,
Know'st not the magic of the mighty ring
Which bows the realm of Spirits to their King:
But meek, nor conscious of diviner birth,
Glide thy still footsteps thro' the conquered Earth!

* * * * *

VOTIVE TABLETS

[Under this title Schiller arranged that more dignified and philosophical portion of the small Poems published as Epigrams in the *Musen Almanach*; which rather sought to point a general thought, than a personal satire.—Many of these, however, are either wholly without interest for the English reader, or express in almost untranslatable laconism what, in far more poetical shapes, Schiller has elsewhere repeated and developed. We, therefore, content ourselves with such a selection as appears to us best suited to convey a fair notion of the object and spirit of the class.—Translator]

* * * * *

MOTTO TO THE VOTIVE TABLETS

What the God taught—what has befriended all
Life's ways, I place upon the Votive Wall.

* * * * *

THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

(ZWEIERLEI WIRKUNGSARTEN)

The Good's the Flower to Earth already given—
The Beautiful, on Earth sows flowers from Heaven!

* * * * *

VALUE AND WORTH

If thou *hast* something, bring thy goods—a fair return be thine;
If thou *art* something, bring thy soul and interchange with mine.

* * * * *

THE KEY

To know *thyself*—in others self discern;

Wouldst thou know others? Read thyself—and learn!

* * * * *

THE DIVISION OF RANKS

Yes, in the moral world, as ours, we see
Divided grades—a Soul's Nobility;
By deeds their titles Commoners create—
The loftier order are by birthright great.[5]

* * * * *

TO THE MYSTIC

Spreads Life's true mystery round us evermore,
Seen by no eye, it lies all eyes before.

* * * * *

WISDOM AND PRUDENCE

Wouldst thou the loftiest height of Wisdom gain?
On to the rashness, Prudence would disdain;
The purblind see but the receding shore,
Not that to which the bold wave wafts thee o'er!

* * * * *

THE UNANIMITY

Truth seek we both—Thou, in the life without thee and around;
I in the Heart within—by both can Truth alike be found;
The healthy eye can through the world the great Creator track—
The healthy heart is but the glass which gives creation back.

* * * * *

THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS

All that thou dost be right—to that alone confine thy view,
And halt within the certain rule—the All that's right to do!
True zeal *the what already is* would sound and perfect see;
False zeal would sound and perfect make the something that's to be!

* * * * *

TO ASTRONOMERS

Of the Nebulæ and planets do not babble so to me;
What! is Nature only mighty inasmuch as you can see?
Inasmuch as you can measure her immeasurable ways,
As she renders world on world, sun and system to your gaze?
Though through space your object be the Sublimest to embrace,
Never the Sublime abideth—where you vainly search—in space!

* * * * *

THE BEST GOVERNED STATE

How the best state to know?—It is found out,
Like the best women—that least talked about.

* * * * *

MY BELIEF

What thy religion? Those thou namest—none!
None! Why?—Because I have religion!

* * * * *

FRIEND AND FOE

Dear is my friend—yet from my foe, as from my friend, comes good;
My friend shows what I *can* do, and my foe shows what I *should*.

* * * * *

LIGHT AND COLOR

Dwell, Light, beside the changeless God—God spoke and Light
began;
Come, thou, the ever-changing one—come, Color, down to Man!

* * * * *

FORUM OF WOMEN

Woman—to judge man rightly—do not scan
Each separate act;—pass judgment on the Man!

* * * * *

GENIUS

Intellect can repeat what's been fulfill'd,
And, aping Nature, as she buildeth—build;
O'er Nature's base can haughty Reason dare
To pile its lofty castle—in the air.
But only thine, O Genius, is the charge,
In Nature's kingdom Nature to enlarge!

* * * * *

THE IMITATOR

Good out of good—that art is known to all—
But Genius from the bad the good can call;
Then, Mimic, not from leading-strings escaped,
Work'st but the matter that's already shaped
The already-shaped a nobler hand awaits—
All matter asks a Spirit that *creates!*

* * * * *

CORRECTNESS

(FREE TRANSLATION)

The calm correctness, where no fault we see,
Attests Art's loftiest or its least degree;
Alike the smoothness of the surface shows
The Pool's dull stagner—the great Sea's repose.

* * * * *

THE MASTER

The herd of scribes, by what they tell us,
Show all in which their wits excel us;
But the True Master we behold,
In what his art leaves—just untold.

* * * * *

EXPECTATION AND FULFILLMENT

O'er Ocean, with a thousand masts, sails forth the stripling bold—
One boat, hard rescued from the deep, draws into port the old!

* * * * *

THE PROSELYTE MAKER

"A little earth from out the Earth-and I
The Earth will move:" so spake the Sage divine.
Out of myself one little moment—try
Myself to take:—succeed, and I am thine!

* * * * *

THE CONNECTING MEDIUM

What to cement the lofty and the mean
Does Nature?—What?—Place vanity between?

* * * * *

THE MORAL POET

[This is an Epigram on Lavater's work, called "Pontius Pilatus, oder der Mensch in Allen Gestalten," etc.—TRANSLATOR.]

"How poor a thing is man!" Alas, 'tis true
I'd half forgot it—when I chanced on you!

* * * * *

THE SUBLIME THEME

[Also on Lavater, and alluding to the "Jesus Messias, oder die Evangelien und Apostelgeschichte in Gesängen."—TRANSLATOR.]

How God compassionates Mankind, thy muse, my friend, rehearses—
Compassion for the sins of Man!—What comfort for thy verses!

* * * * *

SCIENCE

To some she is the Goddess great, to some the milch-cow of the field;
Their care is but to calculate—what butter she will yield.

* * * * *

KANT AND HIS COMMENTATORS

How many starvelings one rich man can nourish!
When monarchs build, the rubbish-carriers flourish.

* * * * *

THE MAIDEN FROM AFAR (1796)

Within a vale, each infant year,
When earliest larks first carol free,
To humble shepherds doth appear
A wondrous maiden, fair to see.
Not born within that lowly place—
From whence she wander'd, none could tell;
Her parting footsteps left no trace,
When once the maiden bade farewell.
And blessèd was her presence there—
Each heart, expanding, grew more gay;
Yet something loftier still than fair
Kept man's familiar looks away.
From fairy gardens, known to none,
She brought mysterious fruits and flowers—
The things of some serener sun—
Some Nature more benign than ours.
With each, her gifts the maiden shared—
To some the fruits, the flowers to some;
Alike the young, the aged fared;
Each bore a blessing back to home.
Though every guest was welcome there,

Yet some the maiden held more dear,
And cull'd her rarest sweets whene'er
She saw two hearts that loved draw near.

* * * * *

THE GLOVE (1797)

A TALE

Before his lion-court,
To see the gruesome sport,
Sate the king;
Beside him group'd his princely peers;
And dames aloft, in circling tiers,
Wreath'd round their blooming ring.
King Francis, where he sate,
Raised a finger—yawn'd the gate,
And, slow from his repose,
A LION goes!
Dumbly he gazed around
The foe-encircled ground;
And, with a lazy gape,
He stretch'd his lordly shape,
And shook his careless mane,
And—laid him down again!
A finger raised the king—
And nimbly have the guard
A second gate unbarr'd;
Forth, with a rushing spring,
A TIGER sprung!
Wildly the wild one yell'd
When the lion he beheld;
And, bristling at the look,
With his tail his sides he strook,
And roll'd his rabid tongue;
In many a wary ring
He swept round the forest king,
With a fell and rattling sound;—
And laid him on the ground,
Grommelling!
The king raised his finger; then
Leap'd two LEOPARDS from the den
With a bound;
And boldly bounded they
Where the crouching tiger lay
Terrible!

And he gripped the beasts in his deadly hold;
In the grim embrace they grappled and roll'd;
Rose the lion with a roar!
And stood the strife before;
And the wild-cats on the spot,
From the blood-thirst, wroth and hot,
Halted still!
Now from the balcony above,
A snowy hand let fall a glove:—
Midway between the beasts of prey,
Lion and tiger; there it lay,
The winsome lady's glove!

Fair Cunigonde said, with a lip of scorn,
To the knight DELORGES—"If the love you have sworn
Were as gallant and leal as you boast it to be,
I might ask you to bring back that glove to me!"
The knight left the place where the lady sate;
The knight he has pass'd thro' the fearful gate;
The lion and tiger he stoop'd above,
And his fingers have closed on the lady's glove!
All shuddering and stunn'd, they beheld him there—
The noble knights and the ladies fair;
But loud was the joy and the praise, the while
He bore back the glove with his tranquil smile!
With a tender look in her softening eyes,
That promised reward to his warmest sighs,
Fair Cunigonde rose her knight to grace;
He toss'd the glove in the lady's face!
"Nay, spare me the guerdon, at least," quoth he;
And he left forever that fair ladye!

* * * * *

THE DIVER (1797)

A BALLAD

[The original of the story on which Schiller has founded this ballad, matchless perhaps for the power and grandeur of its descriptions, is to be found in Kircher. According to the true principles of imitative art, Schiller has preserved all that is striking in the legend, and ennobled all that is commonplace. The name of the Diver was Nicholas, surnamed the Fish. The King appears, according to Hoffmeister's probable conjectures, to have been either Frederic I. or Frederic II., of Sicily. Date from 1295 to 1377.]

"Oh, where is the knight or the squire so bold,
As to dive to the howling charybdis below?—
I cast in the whirlpool a goblet of gold,
And o'er it already the dark waters flow;
Whoever to me may the goblet bring,
Shall have for his guerdon that gift of his king."

He spoke, and the cup from the terrible steep,
That, rugged and hoary, hung over the verge
Of the endless and measureless world of the deep,
Swirl'd into the maelstrom that madden'd the surge.
"And where is the diver so stout to go—
I ask ye again—to the deep below?"
And the knights and the squires that gather'd around,
Stood silent—and fix'd on the ocean their eyes;
They look'd on the dismal and savage Profound,
And the peril chill'd back every thought of the prize.
And thrice spoke the monarch—"The cup to win,
Is there never a wight who will venture in?"
And all as before heard in silence the king—
Till a youth with an aspect unfearing but gentle,
'Mid the tremulous squires—stept out from the ring,
Unbuckling his girdle, and doffing his mantle;
And the murmuring crowd as they parted asunder,
On the stately boy cast their looks of wonder.
As he strode to the marge of the summit, and gave
One glance on the gulf of that merciless main;
Lo! the wave that forever devours the wave
Casts roarily up the charybdis again;
And, as with the swell of the far thunder-boom,
Rushes foamingly forth from the heart of the gloom.
And it bubbles and seethes, and it hisses and roars,[6]
As when fire is with water commix'd and contending,
And the spray of its wrath to the welkin up-soars,
And flood upon flood hurries on, never-ending.
And it never *will* rest, nor from travail be free,
Like a sea that is laboring the birth of a sea.
Yet, at length, comes a lull O'er the mighty commotion,
As the whirlpool sucks into black smoothness the swell
Of the white-foaming breakers—and cleaves thro' the ocean
A path that seems winding in darkness to hell.
Round and round whirl'd the waves-deeper and deeper
still driven,
Like a gorge thro' the mountainous main thunder-riven!
The youth gave his trust to his Maker! Before
That path through the riven abyss closed again—
Hark! a shriek from the crowd rang aloft from the shore,
And, behold! he is whirl'd in the grasp of the main!
And o'er him the breakers mysteriously roll'd,
And the giant-mouth closed on the swimmer so bold.
O'er the surface grim silence lay dark; but the crowd
Heard the wail from the deep murmur hollow and fell;
They hearken and shudder, lamenting aloud—
"Gallant youth-noble heart-fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well!"
More hollow and more wails the deep on the ear—
More dread and more dread grows suspense in its fear.

If thou should'st in those waters thy diadem fling,
And cry, "Who may find it shall win it and wear;"
God wot, though the prize were the crown of a king—
A crown at such hazard were valued too dear.
For never shall lips of the living reveal
What the deeps that howl yonder in terror conceal.
Oh, many a bark, to that breast grappled fast,
Has gone down to the fearful and fathomless grave;
Again, crash'd together the keel and the mast,
To be seen, toss'd aloft in the glee of the wave.
Like the growth of a storm, ever louder and clearer,
Grows the roar of the gulf rising nearer and nearer.
And it bubbles and seethes, and it hisses and roars,
As when fire is with water commix'd and contending;
And the spray of its wrath to the welkin up-soars,
And flood upon flood hurries on, never ending;
And as with the swell of the far thunder-boom
Rushes roaringly forth from the heart of the gloom.
And, lo! from the heart of that far-floating gloom,[7]
What gleams on the darkness so swanlike and white?
Lo! an arm and a neck, glancing up from the tomb!—
They battle—the Man's with the Element's might.
It is he—it is he! In his left hand, behold!
As a sign!—as a joy!—shines the goblet of gold!
And he breathed deep, and he breathed long,
And he greeted the heavenly delight of the day.
They gaze on each other—they shout, as they throng—
"He lives—lo the ocean has render'd its prey!
And safe from the whirlpool and free from the grave,
Comes back to the daylight the soul of the brave!"
And he comes, with the crowd in their clamor and glee,
And the goblet his daring has won from the water,
He lifts to the king as he sinks on his knee;—
And the king from her maidens has beckon'd his daughter—
She pours to the boy the bright wine which they bring,
And thus spake the Diver—"Long life to the king!
"Happy they whom the rose-hues of daylight rejoice,
The air and the sky that to mortals are given!
May the horror below never more find a voice—
Nor Man stretch too far the wide mercy of Heaven!
Never more—never more may he lift from the sight
The veil which is woven with Terror and Night!
"Quick-brightening like lightning—it tore me along,
Down, down, till the gush of a torrent, at play
In the rocks of its wilderness, caught me—and strong
As the wings of an eagle, it whirl'd me away.
Vain, vain was my struggle—the circle had won me,
Round and round in its dance, the wild element spun me.
"And I call'd on my God, and my God heard my prayer

In the strength of my need, in the gasp of my breath—
And show'd me a crag that rose up from the lair,
And I clung to it, nimbly—and baffled the death!
And, safe in the perils around me, behold
On the spikes of the coral the goblet of gold!
"Below, at the foot of the precipice drear,
Spread the gloomy, and purple, and pathless Obscure!
A silence of Horror that slept on the ear,
That the eye more appall'd might the Horror endure!
Salamander—snake—dragon—vast reptiles that dwell
In the deep-coil'd about the grim jaws of their hell.
"Dark-crawl'd—glided dark the unspeakable swarms,
Clump'd together in masses, misshapen and vast—
Here clung and here bristled the fashionless forms—
Here the dark-moving bulk of the Hammer-fish pass'd—
And with teeth grinning white, and a menacing motion,
Went the terrible Shark—the Hyena of Ocean.
"There I hung, and the awe gather'd icily o'er me,
So far from the earth, where man's help there was none!
The One Human Thing, with the Goblins before me—
Alone—in a lonesomeness so ghastly—ALONE!
Fathom-deep from man's eye in the speechless profound,
With the death of the Main and the Monsters around.
"Methought, as I gazed through the darkness, that now
IT[8] saw—the dread hundred-limbed creature-its prey!
And darted—O God! from the far flaming-bough
Of the coral, I swept on the horrible way;
And it seized me, the wave with its wrath and its roar,
It seized me to save—King, the danger is o'er!"
On the youth gazed the monarch, and marvel'd; quoth he,
"Bold Diver, the goblet I promised is thine,
And this ring will I give, a fresh guerdon to thee,
Never jewels more precious shone up from the mine,
If thou'lt bring me fresh tidings, and venture again
To tell what lies hid in the *innermost* main?"
Then outspoke the daughter in tender emotion
"Ah! father, my father, what more can there rest?
Enough of this sport with the pitiless ocean—
He has served thee as none would, thyself has confest.
If nothing can slake thy wild thirst of desire,
Let thy knights put to shame the exploit of the squire!"
The king seized the goblet—he swung it on high,
And whirling, it fell in the roar of the tide:
"But bring back that goblet again to my eye,
And I'll hold thee the dearest that rides by my side;
And thine arms shall embrace, as thy bride, I decree,
The maiden whose pity now pleadeth for thee."
In his heart, as he listen'd, there leapt the wild joy—
And the hope and the love through his eyes spoke in fire,

On that bloom, on that blush, gazed delighted the boy;
The maiden-she faints at the feet of her sire!
Here the guerdon divine, there the danger beneath;
He resolves! To the strife with the life and the death!
They hear the loud surges sweep back in their swell,
Their coming the thunder-sound heralds along!
Fond eyes yet are tracking the spot where he fell:
They come, the wild waters, in tumult and throng,
Roaring up to the cliff—roaring back, as before,
But no wave ever brings the lost youth to the shore.

* * * *

THE CRANES OF IBYCUS (1797)

From Rhegium to the Isthmus, long
Hallow'd to steeds and glorious song,
Where, link'd awhile in holy peace,
Meet all the sons of martial Greece—
Wends Ibycus-whose lips the sweet
And ever-young Apollo fires;
The staff supports the wanderer's feet—
The God the Poet's soul inspires!
Soon from the mountain-ridges high,
The tower-crown'd Corinth greets his eye;
In Neptune's groves of darksome pine,
He treads with shuddering awe divine;
Nought lives around him, save a swarm
Of CRANES, that still pursued his way.
Lured by the South, they wheel and form
In ominous groups their wild array.
And "Hail! beloved Birds!" he cried;
"My comrades on the ocean tide,
Sure signs of good ye bode to me;
Our lots alike would seem to be;
From far, together borne, we greet
A shelter now from toil and danger;
And may the friendly hearts we meet
Preserve from every ill—the Stranger!"
His step more light, his heart more gay,
Along the mid-wood winds his way,
When, where the path the thickets close,
Burst sudden forth two ruffian foes;
Now strife to strife, and foot to foot!
Ah! weary sinks the gentle hand;
The gentle hand that wakes the lute
Has learn'd no lore that guides the brand.
He calls on men and Gods—in vain!
His cries no blest deliverer gain;
Feebler and fainter grows the sound,
And still the deaf life slumbers round—
"In the far land I fall forsaken,
Unwept and unregarded, here;
By death from caitiff hands o'ertaken,
Nor ev'n one late avenger near!"
Down to the earth the death-stroke bore him—
Hark, where the Cranes wheel dismal o'er him!
He hears, as darkness veils his eyes,
Near, in hoarse croak, their dirge-like cries.
"Ye whose wild wings above me hover,

(Since never voice, save yours alone,
The deed can tell)—the hand discover—
Avenge!"—He spoke, and life was gone.
Naked and maim'd the corpse was found—
And, still through many a mangling wound,
The sad Corinthian Host could trace
The loved—too well-remember'd face.
"And must I meet thee thus once more?
Who hoped with wreaths of holy pine,
Bright with new fame—the victory o'er—
The Singer's temples to entwine!"
And loud lamented every guest
Who held the Sea-God's solemn feast—
As in a single heart prevailing,
Throughout all Hellas went the wailing.
Wild to the Council Hall they ran—
In thunder rush'd the threat'ning Flood—
"Revenge shall right the murder'd man,
The last atonement-blood for blood!"
Yet 'mid the throng the Isthmus claims,
Lured by the Sea-God's glorious games—
The mighty many-nation'd throng—
How track the hand that wrought the wrong?—
How guess if that dread deed were done,
By ruffian hands, or secret foes?
He who sees all on earth—the SUN—
Alone the gloomy secret knows.
Perchance he treads in careless peace,
Amidst your Sons, assembled Greece;
Hears with a smile revenge decreed;
Gloats with fell joy upon the deed.
His steps the avenging gods may mock
Within the very Temple's wall,
Or mingle with the crowds that flock
To yonder solemn scenic[9] hall.
Wedg'd close, and serried, swarms the crowd—
Beneath the weight the walls are bow'd—
Thitherwards streaming far, and wide,
Broad Hellas flows in mingled tide tide—
A tide like that which heaves the deep
When hollow-sounding, shoreward driven;
On, wave on wave, the thousands sweep
Till arching, row on row, to heaven!
The tribes, the nations, who shall name,
That guest-like, there assembled came?
From Theseus' town, from Aulis' strand—
From Phocis, from the Spartans' land—
From Asia's wave-divided clime,
The Isles that gem the Ægean Sea,

To hearken on that Stage Sublime,
The Dark Choir's mournful melody!
True to the awful rites of old,
In long and measured strides, behold
The Chorus from the hinder ground,
Pace the vast circle's solemn round.
So this World's women never strode—
Their race from Mortals ne'er began;
Gigantic, from their grim abode,
They tower above the Sons of Man!
Across their loins the dark robe clinging,
In fleshless hands the torches swinging,
Now to and fro, with dark red glow—
No blood that lives the dead cheeks know!
Where flow the locks that woo to love
On *human* temples—ghastly dwell
The serpents, coil'd the brow above,
And the green asps with poison swell.
Thus circling, horrible, within
That space—doth their dark hymn begin,
And round the sinner as they go,
Cleave to the heart their words of woe.
Dismally wails, the senses chilling,
The hymn—the FURIES' solemn song;
And froze the very marrow thrilling
As roll'd the gloomy sounds along.
And weal to him—from crime secure—
Who keeps his soul as childhood's pure;
Life's path he roves, a wanderer free—
We near him not-THE AVENGERS, WE,
But woe to him for whom we weave
The doom for deeds that shun the light:
Fast to the murderer's feet we cleave,
The fearful Daughters of the Night.
"And deems he flight from us can hide him?
Still on dark wings We sail beside him!
The murderer's feet the snare enthralls—
Or soon or late, to earth he falls!
Untiring, hounding on, we go;
For blood can no remorse atone I
On, ever—to the Shades below,
And there—we grasp him, still our own!"
So singing, their slow dance they wreathe,
And stillness, like a silent death,
Heavily there lay cold and drear,
As if the Godhead's self were near.
Then, true to those strange rites of old,
Pacing the circle's solemn round,
In long and measured strides—behold,

They vanish in the hinder ground!
Confused and doubtful—half between
The solemn truth and phantom scene,
The crowd revere the Power, presiding
O'er secret deeps, to justice guiding—
The Unfathom'd and Inscrutable
By whom the web of doom is spun,
Whose shadows in the deep heart dwell,
Whose form is seen not in the sun!
Just then, amidst the highest tier,
Breaks forth a voice that starts the ear;
"See there—see there, Timotheus,
Behold the Cranes of Ibycus!"
A sudden darkness wraps the sky;
Above the roofless building hover
Dusk, swarming wings; and heavily
Sweep the slow Cranes, hoarse-murmuring, over!
"Of Ibycus?"—that name so dear
Thrills through the hearts of those who hear!
Like wave on wave in eager seas,
From mouth to mouth the murmur flees—
"Of Ibycus, whom we bewail!
The murder'd one! What mean those words?
Who is the man—knows *he* the tale?
Why link that name with those wild birds?"
Questions on questions louder press—
Like lightning flies the inspiring guess—
Leaps every heart—"The truth we seize;
Your might is here, EUMENIDES!
The murderer yields himself confest—
Vengeance is near—that voice the token—
Ho!-him who yonder spoke, arrest!
And him to whom the words were spoken!"
Scarce had the wretch the words let fall,
Than fain their sense he would recall
In vain; those whitening lips—behold!
The secret have already told.
Into their Judgment Court sublime
The Scene is changed;—their doom is seal'd!
Behold the dark unwitness'd Crime,
Struck by the lightning that reveal'd!

* * * * *

THE WORDS OF BELIEF (1797)

Three Words will I name thee—around and about,
From the lip to the lip, full of meaning, they flee;
But they had not their birth in the being without,
And the heart, not the lip, must their oracle be!
And all worth in the man shall for ever be o'er
When in those Three Words he believes no more.
Man is made FREE!—Man, by birthright, is free,
Though the tyrant may deem him but born for his tool.
Whatever the shout of the rabble may be—
Whatever the ranting misuse of the fool—
Still fear not the Slave, when he breaks from his chain,
For the Man made a Freeman grows safe in his gain.
And Virtue is more than a shade or a sound,
And Man may her voice, in this being, obey;
And though ever he slip on the stony ground,
Yet, ever again to the godlike way,
To the *science* of Good though the Wise may be blind,
Yet the *practice* is plain to the childlike mind.
And a God there is—over Space, over Time;
While the Human Will rocks, like a reed, to and fro,
Lives the Will of the Holy—A Purpose Sublime,
A Thought woven over creation below;
Changing and shifting the All we inherit,
But changeless through all One Immutable Spirit!
Hold fast the Three Words of Belief—though about
From the lip to the lip, full of meaning, they flee;
Yet they take not their birth from the being without—
But a voice from within must their oracle be;
And never all worth in the Man can be o'er,
Till in those Three Words he believes no more.

* * * * *

THE WORDS OF ERROR (1799)

Three Errors there are, that for ever are found
On the lips of the good, on the lips of the best;
But empty their meaning and hollow their sound—
And slight is the comfort they bring to the breast.
The fruits of existence escape from the clasp
Of the seeker who strives but those shadows to grasp—
So long as Man dreams of some Age in *this* life
When the Right and the Good will all evil subdue;
For the Right and the Good lead us ever to strife,
And wherever they lead us, the Fiend will pursue.
And (till from the earth borne, and stifled at length)
The earth that he touches still gifts him with strength! [10]
So long as Man fancies that Fortune will live,
Like a bride with her lover, united with Worth;
For her favors, alas! to the mean she will give—
And Virtue possesses no title to earth!
That Foreigner wanders to regions afar,
Where the lands of her birthright immortally are!
So long as Man dreams that, to mortals a gift,
The Truth in her fulness of splendor will shine;
The veil of the goddess no earth-born may lift,
And all we can learn is—to guess and divine I
Dost thou seek, in a dogma, to prison her form?
The spirit flies forth on the wings of the storm!
O, Noble Soul! fly from delusions like these,
More heavenly belief be it thine to adore;
Where the Ear never hearkens, the Eye never sees,
Meet the rivers of Beauty and Truth evermore!
Not *without* thee the streams—there the Dull seek them;—No!
Look *within* thee—behold both the fount and the flow!

* * * * *

THE LAY OF THE BELL [11] (1799)

"*Vivos voco—Mortuos plango—Fulgura frango.*" [12]

I

Fast in its prison-walls of earth,
Awaits the mold of bakèd clay.
Up, comrades, up, and aid the birth—
THE BELL that shall be born today!

Who would honor obtain,
With the sweat and the pain,
The praise that Man gives to the Master must buy!—
But the blessing withal must descend from on high!
And well an earnest word beseems
The work the earnest hand prepares;
Its load more light the labor deems,
When sweet discourse the labor shares.
So let us ponder—nor in vain—
What strength can work when labor wills;
For who would not the fool disdain
Who ne'er designs what he fulfils?
And well it stamps our Human Race,
And hence the gift To UNDERSTAND,
That Man within the heart should trace
Whate'er he fashions with the hand.

II

From the fir the faggot take,
Keep it, heap it hard and dry,
That the gathered flame may break
Through the furnace, wroth and high.
When the copper within
Seethes and simmers—the tin
Pour quick, that the fluid that feeds the Bell
May flow in the right course glib and well.
Deep hid within this nether cell,
What force with Fire is molding thus
In yonder airy tower shall dwell,
And witness wide and far of us!
It shall, in later days, unfailing,
Rouse many an ear to rapt emotion;
Its solemn voice with Sorrow wailing,
Or choral chiming to Devotion.
Whatever Fate to Man may bring,
Whatever weal or woe befall,
That metal tongue shall backward ring
The warning moral drawn from all.

III

See the silvery bubbles spring!
Good! the mass is melting now!
Let the salts we duly bring

Purge the flood, and speed the flow.
From the dross and the scum,
Pure, the fusion must come;
For perfect and pure we the metal must keep,
That its voice may be perfect, and pure, and deep.
That voice, with merry music rife,
The cherished child shall welcome in,
What time the rosy dreams of life
In the first slumber's arms begin;
As yet in Time's dark womb unwarning,
Repose the days, or foul or fair,
And watchful o'er that golden morning,
The Mother-Love's untiring care!
And swift the years like arrows fly—
No more with girls content to play,
Fast in its prison-walls of earth,
Awaits the mold of bakèd clay.
Up, comrades, up, and aid the birth—
The BELL that shall be born to-day!
Bounds the proud Boy upon his way,
Storms through loud life's tumultuous pleasures,
With pilgrim staff the wide world measures;
And, wearied with the wish to roam,
Again seeks, stranger-like, the Father-Home.
And, lo, as some sweet vision breaks
Out from its native morning skies,
With rosy shame on downcast cheeks,
The Virgin stands before his eyes.
A nameless longing seizes him!
From all his wild companions flown;
Tears, strange till then, his eyes bedim;
He wanders all alone.
Blushing, he glides where'er she move;
Her greeting can transport him;
To every mead to deck his love,
The happy wild flowers court him!
Sweet Hope—and tender Longing—ye
The growth of Life's first Age of Gold,
When the heart, swelling, seems to see
The gates of heaven unfold!
O Love, the beautiful and brief! O prime,
Glory, and verdure, of life's summertime!

IV

Browning o'er, the pipes are simmering,
Dip this wand of clay[13] within;

If like glass the wand be glimmering,
Then the casting may begin.
Brisk, brisk now, and see
If the fusion flow free;
If—(happy and welcome indeed were the sign!)
If the hard and the ductile united combine.
For still where the strong is betrothed to the weak,
And the stern in sweet marriage is blent with the meek,
Rings the concord harmonious, both tender and strong:
So be it with thee, if forever united,
The heart to the heart flows in one, love-delighted;
Illusion is brief, but Repentance is long.
Lovely, thither are they bringing,
With her virgin wreath, the Bride!
To the love-feast clearly ringing,
Tolls the church-bell far and wide!
With that sweetest holyday,
Must the May of Life depart;
With the cestus loosed—away
Flies ILLUSION from the heart!
Yet love lingers lonely,
When Passion is mute,
And the blossoms may only
Give way to the fruit.
The Husband must enter
The hostile life;
With struggle and strife,
To plant or to watch,
To snare or to snatch,
To pray and importune,
Must wager and venture
And hunt down his fortune!
Then flows in a current the gear and the gain,
And the garners are filled with the gold of the grain,
Now a yard to the court, now a wing to the centre!
Within sits Another,
The thrifty Housewife;
The mild one, the mother—
Her home is her life.
In its circle she rules,
And the daughters she schools,
And she cautions the boys,
With a bustling command,
And a diligent hand
Employed she employs;
Gives order to store,
And the much makes the more;
Locks the chest and the wardrobe, with lavender smelling,
And the hum of the spindle goes quick through the dwelling,

And she hoards in the presses, well polished and full,
The snow of the linen, the shine of the wool;
Blends the sweet with the good, and from care and endeavor
Rests never!

Blithe the Master (where the while
From his roof he sees them smile)
Eyes the lands, and counts the gain;
There, the beams projecting far,
And the laden store-house are,
And the granaries bowed beneath
The blessed golden grain;
There, in undulating motion,
Wave the corn-fields like an ocean.
Proud the boast the proud lips breathe:—
"My house is built upon a rock,
And sees unmoved the stormy shock
Of waves that fret below!"
What chain so strong, what girth so great,
To bind the giant form of Fate?—
Swift are the steps of Woe.

V

Now the casting may begin;
See the breach indented there:
Ere we run the fusion in,
Halt—and speed the pious prayer!
Pull the bung out—
See around and about
What vapor, what vapor—God help us!—has risen?—
Ha! the flame like a torrent leaps forth from its prison!
What friend is like the might of fire
When man can watch and wield the ire?
Whate'er we shape or work, we owe
Still to that heaven-descended glow.
But dread the heaven-descended glow,
When from their chain its wild wings go,
When, where it listeth, wide and wild
Sweeps the Free Nature's free-born Child!
When the Frantic One fleets,
While no force can withstand,
Through the populous streets
Whirling ghastly the brand;
For the Element hates
What man's labor creates,
And the work of his hand!
Impartially out from the cloud,

Or the curse or the blessing may fall!
Benignantly out from the cloud,
Come the dews, the revivers of all!
Avengingly out from the cloud
Come the levin, the bolt, and the ball!
Hark—a wail from the steeple!—aloud
The bell shrills its voice to the crowd!
Look—look—red as blood
All on high!
It is not the daylight that fills with its flood
The sky!
What a clamor awaking
Roars up through the street!
What a hell-vapor breaking
Rolls on through the street!
And higher and higher
Aloft moves the Column of Fire!
Through the vistas and rows
Like a whirlwind it goes,
And the air like the steam from a furnace glows.
Beams are crackling—posts are shrinking—
Walls are sinking—windows clinking
Children crying—
Mothers flying—
And the beast (the black ruin yet smoldering under)
Yells the howl of its pain and its ghastly wonder!
Hurry and skurry—away—away,
The face of the night is as clear as day!
As the links in a chain,
Again and again
Flies the bucket from hand to hand;
High in arches up-rushing
The engines are gushing,
And the flood, as a beast on the prey that it hounds,
With a roar on the breast of the element bounds.
To the grain and the fruits,
Through the rafters and beams,
Through the barns and the garneries it crackles and streams!
As if they would rend up the earth from its roots,
Rush the flames to the sky
Giant-high;
And at length,
Wearied out and despairing, man bows to their strength!
With an idle gaze sees their wrath consume,
And submits to his doom!
Desolate
The place, and dread
For storms the barren bed!
In the blank voids that cheerful casements were,

Comes to and fro the melancholy air,
And sits despair;
And through the ruin, blackening in its shroud,
Peers, as it flits, the melancholy cloud.
One human glance of grief upon the grave
Of all that Fortune gave
The loiterer takes—then turns him to depart,
And grasps the wanderer's staff and mans his heart:
Whatever else the element bereaves
One blessing more than all it reft—it leaves
The face that he loves!—He counts them o'er,
See—not one look is missing from that store!

VI

Now clasped the bell within the clay—
The mold the mingled metals fill—
Oh, may it, sparkling into day,
Reward the labor and the skill!
Alas! should it fail,
For the mold may be frail—
And still with our hope must be mingled the fear—
And, ev'n now, while we speak, the mishap may be near!
To the dark womb of sacred earth
This labor of our hands is given,
As seeds that wait the second birth,
And turn to blessings watched by heaven!
Ah seeds, how dearer far than they
We bury in the dismal tomb,
Where Hope and Sorrow bend to pray
That suns beyond the realm of day
May warm them into bloom!
From the steeple
Tolls the bell,
Deep and heavy,
The death-knell,
Guiding with dirge-note—solemn, sad, and slow,
To the last home earth's weary wanderers know.
It is that worshipped wife—
It is that faithful mother! [14]
Whom the dark Prince of Shadows leads benighted,
From that dear arm where oft she hung delighted.
Far from those blithe companions, born
Of her, and blooming in their morn;
On whom, when couched her heart above,
So often looked the Mother-Love!
Ah! rent the sweet Home's union-band,

And never, never more to come—
She dwells within the shadowy land,
Who was the Mother of that Home!
How oft they miss that tender guide,
The care—the watch—the face—the MOTHER—
And where she sate the babes beside,
Sits with unloving looks—ANOTHER!

VII

While the mass is cooling now,
Let the labor yield to leisure,
As the bird upon the bough,
Loose the travail to the pleasure.
When the soft stars awaken!
Each task be forsaken!
And the vesper-bell, lulling the earth into peace,
If the master still toil, chimes the workman's release!
Homeward from the tasks of day,
Through the greenwood's welcome way
Wends the wanderer, blithe and cheerily,
To the cottage loved so dearly!
And the eye and ear are meeting,
Now, the slow sheep homeward bleating;
Now, the wonted shelter near,
Lowing the lusty-fronted steer
Creaking now the heavy wain,
Reels with the happy harvest grain;
While, with many-colored leaves,
Glitters the garland on the sheaves;
For the mower's work is done,
And the young folks' dance begun!
Desert street, and quiet mart;—
Silence is in the city's heart;
And the social taper lighteth
Each dear face that HOME uniteth;
While the gate the town before
Heavily swings with sullen roar!
Though darkness is spreading
O'er earth—the Upright
And the Honest, undreading,
Look safe on the night
Which the evil man watches in awe,
For the eye of the Night is the Law!
Bliss-dowered! O daughter of the skies,
Hail, holy ORDER, whose employ
Blends like to like in light and joy—

Builder of cities, who of old
Called the wild man from waste and wold,
And, in his but thy presence stealing,
Roused each familiar household feeling,
And, best of all, the happy ties,
The centre of the social band—
The Instinct of the Fatherland!
United thus—each helping each,
Brisk work the countless hands forever;
For naught its power to Strength can teach,
Like Emulation and Endeavor!
Thus linked the master with the man,
Each in his rights can each revere,
And while they march in freedom's van,
Scorn the lewd rout that dogs the rear!
To freemen labor is renown!
Who works—gives blessings and commands;
Kings glory in the orb and crown—
Be ours the glory of our hands,
Long in these walls—long may we greet
Your footfalls, Peace and Concord sweet!
Distant the day, oh! distant far,
When the rude hordes of trampling War
Shall scare the silent vale—
The where
Now the sweet heaven, when day doth leave
The air,
Limns its soft rose-hues on the veil of Eve—
Shall the fierce war-brand, tossing in the gale,
From town and hamlet shake the horrent glare!

VIII

Now, its destined task fulfilled,
Asunder break the prison-mold;
Let the goodly Bell we build,
 Eye and heart alike behold.
 The hammer down heave,
 Till the cover it cleave:—
For not till we shatter the wall of its cell
Can we lift from its darkness and bondage the Bell.
 To break the mold the master may,
 If skilled the hand and ripe the hour;
But woe, when on its fiery way
 The metal seeks itself to pour,
Frantic and blind, with thunder-knell,
 Exploding from its shattered home,

And glaring forth, as from a hell,
Behold the red Destruction come!
When rages strength that has no reason,
There breaks the mold before the season;
When numbers burst what bound before,
Woe to the State that thrives no more!
Yea, woe, when in the City's heart,
The latent spark to flame is blown,
"Freedom! Equality!"—to blood
And Millions from their silence start,
To claim, without a guide, their own!
Discordant howls the warning Bell,
Proclaiming discord wide and far,
And, born but things of peace to tell,
Becomes the ghastliest voice of war:
"Freedom! Equality!"—to blood
Rush the roused people at the sound!
Through street, hall, palace, roars the flood,
And banded murder closes round!
The hyena-shapes (that women were!)
Jest with the horrors they survey;
They hound—they rend—they mangle there,
As panthers with their prey!
Naught rests to hallow—burst the ties
Of life's sublime and reverent awe;
Before the Vice the Virtue flies,
And Universal Crime is Law!
Man fears the lion's kingly tread;
Man fears the tiger's fangs of terror;
And still, the dreadliest of the dread,
Is Man himself in error!
No torch, though lit from Heaven, illumines
The Blind!—Why place it in his hands?
It lights not him—it but consumes
The City and the Land!

IX

Rejoice and laud the prospering skies!
The kernel bursts its husks—behold
From the dull clay the metal rise,
Pure-shining, as a star of gold!
Neck and lip, but as one beam,
It laughs like a sunbeam.
And even the scutcheon, clear-graven, shall tell
That the art of a master has fashioned the Bell!
Come in—come in,

My merry men—we'll form a ring
The new-born labor christening;
And "CONCORD" we will name her!
To union may her heart-felt call
In brother-love attune us all!
May she the destined glory win
For which the master sought to frame her—
Aloft—(all earth's existence under)
In blue-pavilioned heaven afar
To dwell—the Neighbor of the Thunder,
The borderer of the Star!
Be hers above a voice to raise
Like those bright hosts in yonder sphere,
Who, while they move, their Maker praise,
And lead around the wreathèd year!
To solemn and eternal things
We dedicate her lips sublime,
As hourly, calmly, on she swings,
Fanned by the fleeting wings of Time!
No pulse—no heart—no feeling hers!
She lends the warning voice to Fate;
And still companions, while she stirs,
The changes of the Human State!
So may she teach us, as her tone
But now so mighty, melts away—
That earth no life which earth has known
From the last silence can delay!
Slowly now the cords upheave her!
From her earth-grave soars the Bell;
'Mid the airs of Heaven we leave her!
In the Music-Realm to dwell!
Up—upwards—yet raise—
She has risen—she sways.
Fair Bell to our city bode joy and increase,
And oh, may thy first sound be hallowed to—PEACE.[15]

* * * * *

THE GERMAN ART (1800)

By no kind Augustus reared,
To no Medici endeared,
German Art arose;
Fostering glory smil'd not on her,
Ne'er with kingly smiles to sun her,
Did her blooms uncloze.
No! She went, by Monarchs slighted
Went unhonored, unrequited,
From high Frederick's throne;
Praise and Pride be all the greater,
That Man's genius did create her,
From Man's worth alone.
Therefore, all from loftier mountains,
Purer wells and richer Fountains,
Streams our Poet-Art;
So no rule to curb its rushing—
All the fuller flows it gushing
From its deep—The Heart!

* * * * *

COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW CENTURY (1801)

Where can Peace find a refuge? Whither, say,
Can Freedom turn? Lo, friend, before our view
The CENTURY rends itself in storm away,
And, red with slaughter, dawns on earth the New!
The girdle of the lands is loosen'd[16]—hurl'd
To dust the forms old Custom deem'd divine,—
Safe from War's fury not the watery world;—
Safe not the Nile-God nor the antique Rhine.
Two mighty nations make the world their field,
Deeming the world is for their heirloom given—
Against the freedom of all lands they wield
This—Neptune's trident; that—the Thund'rer's levin
Gold to their scales each region must afford;
And, as fierce Brennus in Gaul's early tale,
The Frank casts in the iron of his sword,
To poise the balance, where the right may fail—
Like some huge Polypus, with arms that roam
Outstretch'd for prey—the Briton spreads his reign;
And, as the Ocean were his household home,
Locks up the chambers of the liberal main.
On to the Pole where shines, unseen, the Star,
Onward his restless course unbounded flies;
Tracks every isle and every coast afar,
And undiscover'd leaves but—Paradise!
Alas, in vain on earth's wide chart, I ween,
Thou seek'st that holy realm beneath the sky—
Where Freedom dwells in gardens ever green—
And blooms the Youth of fair Humanity!
O'er shores where sail ne'er rustled to the wind,
O'er the vast universe, may rove thy ken;
But in the universe thou canst not find
A space sufficing for ten happy men!
In the heart's holy stillness only beams
The shrine of refuge from life's stormy throng;
Freedom is only in the land of Dreams;
And only blooms the Beautiful in Song!

* * * * *

CASSANDRA (1802)

[There is peace between the Greeks and Trojans—Achilles is to wed Polyxena, Priam's daughter. On entering the Temple, he is shot through his only vulnerable part by Paris.—The time of the following Poem is during the joyous preparations for the marriage.]

And mirth was in the halls of Troy,
Before her towers and temples fell;
High peal'd the choral hymns of joy,
Melodious to the golden shell.
The weary had reposed from slaughter—
The eye forgot the tear it shed;
This day King Priam's lovely daughter
Shall great Pelides wed!
Adorn'd with laurel boughs, they come,
Crowd after crowd—the way divine,
Where fanes are deck'd—for gods the home—
And to the Thymbrian's[17] solemn shrine.
The wild Bacchantic joy is madd'ning
The thoughtless host, the fearless guest;
And there, the unheeded heart is sadd'ning
One solitary breast!
Unjoyous in the joyful throng,
Alone, and linking life with none,
Apollo's laurel groves among
The still Cassandra wander'd on!
Into the forest's deep recesses
The solemn Prophet-Maiden pass'd,
And, scornful, from her loosen'd tresses,
The sacred fillet cast!
"To all its arms doth Mirth unfold,
And every heart foregoes its cares;
And Hope is busy in the old;
The bridal-robe my sister wears.
But I alone, alone am weeping;
The sweet delusion mocks not me—
Around these walls destruction sweeping
More near and near I see!
"A torch before my vision glows,
But not in Hymen's hand it shines;
A flame that to the welkin goes,
But not from holy offering-shrines;
Glad hands the banquet are preparing,
And near, and near the halls of state
I hear the God that comes unsparing;
I hear the steps of Fate.
"And men my prophet-wail deride!
The solemn sorrow dies in scorn;

And lonely in the waste, I hide
The tortured heart that would forewarn.
Amidst the happy, unregarded,
Mock'd by their fearful joy, I trod;
Oh, dark to me the lot awarded,
Thou evil Pythian god!
"Thine oracle, in vain to be,
Oh, wherefore am I thus consign'd
With eyes that every truth must see,
Lone in the City of the Blind?
Cursed with the anguish of a power
To view the fates I may not thrall,
The hovering tempest still must lower—
The horror must befall!
"Boots it the veil to lift, and give
To sight the frowning fates beneath?
For error is the life we live,
And, oh, our knowledge is but death!
Take back the clear and awful mirror,
Shut from mine eyes the blood-red glare
Thy truth is but a gift of terror
When mortal lips declare.
"My blindness give to me once more[18]—
The gay dim senses that rejoice;
The Past's delighted songs are o'er
For lips that speak a Prophet's voice.
To me *the future* thou hast granted;
I miss *the moment* from the chain—
The happy Present-Hour enchanted!
Take back thy gift again!
"Never for me the nuptial wreath
The odor-breathing hair shall twine;
My heavy heart is bow'd beneath
The service of thy dreary shrine.
My youth was but by tears corroded,—
My sole familiar is my pain,
Each coming ill my heart foreboded,
And felt it first—in vain!
"How cheer'ly sports the careless mirth—
The life that loves, around I see;
Fair youth to pleasant thoughts give birth—
The heart is only sad to me.
Not for mine eyes the young spring gloweth,
When earth her happy feast-day keeps;
The charm of life who ever knoweth
That looks into the deeps?
"Wrapt in thy bliss, my sister, thine
The heart's inebriate rapture-springs;—
Longing with bridal arms to twine

The bravest of the Grecian kings.
High swells the joyous bosom, seeming
Too narrow for its world of love,
Nor envies, in its heaven of dreaming,
The heaven of gods above!
"I too might know the soft control
Of one the longing heart could choose,
With look which love illumines with soul—
The look that supplicates and woos.
And sweet with him, where love presiding
Prepares our hearth, to go—but, dim,
A Stygian shadow, nightly gliding,
Stalks between me and him!
"Forth from the grim funereal shore,
The Hell-Queen sends her ghastly bands;
Where'er I turn—behind—before—
Dumb in my path—a Spectre stands!
Wherever gayliest, youth assembles—
I see the shades in horror clad,
Amidst Hell's ghastly People trembles
One soul for ever sad!
"I see the steel of Murder gleam—
I see the Murderer's glowing eyes—
To right—to left, one gory stream—
One circling fate—my flight defies!
I may not turn my gaze—all seeing,
Foreknowing all, I dumbly stand—
To close in blood my ghastly being
In the far strangers' land!"
Hark! while the sad sounds murmur round,
Hark, from the Temple-porch, the cries!—
A wild, confused, tumultuous sound!—
Dead the divine Pelides lies!
Grim Discord rears her snakes devouring—
The last departing god hath gone!
And, womb'd in cloud, the thunder, lowering,
Hangs black on Ilion.

* * * * *

RUDOLPH OF HAPSBURG (1803)

A BALLAD

[Hinrichs properly classes this striking ballad (together with the yet grander one of the "Fight with the Dragon") amongst those designed to depict and exalt the virtue of Humility. The source of the story is in Ægidius Tschudi, a Swiss chronicler; and Schiller appears to have adhered, with much fidelity, to the original narrative.]

At Aachen, in imperial state,
In that time-hallow'd hall renown'd,
At solemn feast King Rudolf sate,
The day that saw the hero crown'd!
Bohemia and thy Palgrave, Rhine,
Give this the feast, and that the wine:[19]
The Arch Electoral Seven,
Like choral stars around the sun,
Gird him whose hand a world has won,
The anointed choice of Heaven.
In galleries raised above the pomp,
Press'd crowd on crowd their panting way,
And with the joy-resounding tromp,
Rang out the millions' loud hurra!
For, closed at last the age of slaughter,
When human blood was pour'd as water—
LAW dawns upon the world![20]
Sharp force no more shall right the wrong,
And grind the weak to crown the strong—
War's carnage-flag is furl'd!
In Rudolf's hand the goblet shines—
And gaily round the board look'd he;
"And proud the feast, and bright the wines
My kingly heart feels glad to me!
Yet where the Gladness-Bringer—blest
In the sweet art which moves the breast
With lyre and verse divine?
Dear from my youth the craft of song,
And what as knight I loved so long,
As Kaiser, still be mine."
Lo, from the circle bending there,
With sweeping robe the Bard appears,
As silver white his gleaming hair,
Bleach'd by the many winds of years;
"And music sleeps in golden strings—
Love's rich reward the minstrel sings,
Well known to him the ALL
High thoughts and ardent souls desire!
What would the Kaiser from the lyre
Amidst the banquet-hall?"

The Great One smiled—"Not mine the sway—
The minstrel owns a loftier power—
A mightier king inspires the lay—
Its hest—THE IMPULSE OF THE HOUR!"
As through wide air the tempests sweep,
As gush the springs from mystic deep,
Or lone untrodden glen;
So from dark hidden fount within
Comes SONG, its own wild world to win
Amidst the souls of men!
Swift with the fire the minstrel glow'd,
And loud the music swept the ear:—
"Forth to the chase a Hero rode,
To hunt the bounding chamois-deer;
With shaft and horn the squire behind;—
Through greensward meads the riders wind—
A small sweet bell they hear.
Lo, with the HOST, a holy man—
Before him strides the sacristan,
And the bell sounds near and near.
"The noble hunter down-inclined
His reverent head and soften'd eye,
And honor'd with a Christian's mind
The Christ who loves humility!
Loud through the pasture, brawls and raves
A brook—the rains had fed the waves,
And torrents from the bill.
His sandal-shoon the priest unbound,
And laid the Host upon the ground,
And near'd the swollen rill!
"What wouldst thou, priest?" the Count began,
As, marveling much, he halted there,
"Sir Count, I seek a dying man,
Sore-hungering for the heavenly fare.
The bridge that once its safety gave,
Rent by the anger of the wave,
Drifts down the tide below.
Yet barefoot now, I will not fear
(The soul that seeks its God, to cheer)
Through the wild wave to go!"
"He gave that priest the knightly steed,
He reach'd that priest the lordly reins,
That he might serve the sick man's need,
Nor slight the task that heaven ordains.
He took the horse the squire bestrode;
On to the sick, the priest!
And when the morrow's sun was red,
The servant of the Savior led
Back to its lord the beast.

"Now Heaven forbend!" the Hero cried,
That e'er to chase or battle more
These limbs the sacred steed bestride
That once my Maker's image bore;
If not a boon allow'd to thee,
Thy Lord and mine its Master be,
My tribute to the King,
From whom I hold, as fiefs, since birth,
Honor, renown, the goods of earth,
Life and each living thing!"
"So may the God, who faileth never
To hear the weak and guide the dim,
To thee give honor here and ever,
As thou hast duly honor'd Him!"
Far-famed ev'n now through Swisserland
Thy generous heart and dauntless hand;
And fair from thine embrace
Six daughters bloom,[21] six crowns to bring,
Blest as the daughters of a KING,
The mothers of a RACE!"
The mighty Kaiser heard amazed!
His heart was in the days of old;
Into the minstrel's heart he gazed,
That tale the Kaiser's own had told.
Yes, in the bard the priest he knew,
And in the purple veil'd from view
The gush of holy tears!
A thrill through that vast audience ran,
And every heart the godlike man
Revering God—reveres!

Wagner]

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 3: Though the Ideal images of youth forsake us, the Ideal itself still remains to the Poet. It is his task and his companion, for, unlike the Phantasies of Fortune, Fame, and Love, the Phantasies of the Ideal are imperishable. While, as the occupation of life, it pays off the debt of Time, as the exalter of life it contributes to the Building of Eternity.—TRANSLATOR.]

[Footnote 4: "Die Gesalt"—Form. the Platonic Archetype.]

[Footnote 5: This idea is often repeated, somewhat more clearly in the haughty philosophy of Schiller. He himself says, elsewhere—"In a fair soul each single action is not properly moral, but the whole character is moral. The fair soul has no other service than the instincts of its own beauty."—Translator]

[Footnote 6: "Und es wallet, and siedet, und brauset, and zischt," etc. Goethe was particularly struck with the truthfulness of these lines, of which his personal observation at the Falls of the Rhine enabled him to judge. Schiller modestly owns his obligations to Homer's descriptions of Charybdis, Odys. I., 12. The property of the higher order of imagination to reflect truth, though not familiar

to experience, is singularly illustrated in this description. Schiller had never seen even a Waterfall.—TRANSLATOR.]

[Footnote 7: The same rhyme as the preceding line in the original.]

[Footnote 8: "—da kroch's heran," etc. The *It* in the original has been greatly admired. The poet thus vaguely represents the fabulous misshapen monster, the Polypus of the ancients.]

[Footnote 9: The theatre.]

[Footnote 10: This simile is nobly conceived, but expressed somewhat obscurely. As Hercules contended in vain against Antæus, the Son of Earth,—so long as the Earth gave her giant offspring new strength in every fall,—so the soul contends in vain with evil—the natural earth-born enemy, while the very contact of the earth invigorates the enemy for the struggle. And as Antæus was slain at last, when Hercules lifted him from the earth and strangled him while raised aloft, so can the soul slay the enemy (the desire, the passion, the evil, the earth's offspring), when bearing it from earth itself and stifling it in the higher air.—Translator.]

[Footnote 11: Translated by Edward, Lord Lytton (Permission George Routledge & Sons.)]

[Footnote 12: "I call the Living—I mourn the Dead—I break the Lightning." These words are inscribed on the Great Bell of the Minster of Schaffhausen—also on that of the Church of Art near Lucerne. There was an old belief in Switzerland that the undulation of air, caused by the sound of a Bell, broke the electric fluid of a thunder-cloud.]

[Footnote 13: A piece of clay pipe, which becomes vitrified if the metal is sufficiently heated.]

[Footnote 14: The translator adheres to the original, in forsaking the rhyme in these lines and some others.]

[Footnote 15: Written in the time of the French war.]

[Footnote 16: That is—the settled political question—the balance of power.]

[Footnote 17: Apollo.]

[Footnote 18: "Everywhere," says Hoffmeister truly, "Schiller exalts Ideal Belief over real wisdom;—everywhere this modern Apostle of Christianity advocates that Ideal, which exists in Faith and emotion, against the wisdom of worldly intellect, the barren experience of life," etc.—TRANSLATOR.]

[Footnote 19: The office, at the coronation feast, of the Count Palatine of the Rhine (Grand Sewer of the Empire and one of the Seven Electors) was to bear the Imperial Globe and set the dishes on the board; that of the King of Bohemia was cup-bearer. The latter was not, however, present, as Schiller himself observed in a note (omitted in the editions of his collected works), at the coronation of Rudolf.]

[Footnote 20: Literally, "*A. judge (ein Richter)* was again upon the earth." The word substituted in the translation is introduced in order to recall to the reader the sublime name given, not without justice, to Rudolf of Hapsburg, viz., "THE LIVING LAW."—TRANSLATOR.]

[Footnote 21: At the coronation of Rudolf was celebrated the marriage-feast of three of his daughters—to Ludwig of Bavaria, Otto of Brandenburg, and Albrecht of Saxony. His other three daughters married afterward Otto, nephew of Ludwig of Bavaria, Charles Martell, son of Charles of Anjou, and Wenceslaus, son of Ottocar of Bohemia. The royal house of England numbers Rudolf of Hapsburg amongst its ancestors.—TRANSLATOR.]

* * * * *

DRAMAS

INTRODUCTION TO WALLENSTEIN'S DEATH

By WILLIAM H. CARRUTH, PH.D.

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Schiller wrote in rapid succession, during his Storm and Stress period, *The Robbers*, *Fiesco*, *Cabal and Love*, and the beginning of *Don Carlos* (finished in 1787). Between this time and his last period, which opens with *Wallenstein*, he devoted himself assiduously to the study of philosophy, history, and esthetic theory. Even in writing *Don Carlos* he had felt that he needed to give more care to artistic form and to the deeper questions of dramatic unity. His own dissatisfaction with the results achieved was one of several reasons why for nearly ten years he dropped dramatic composition. He felt, too, that he needed more experience of life. He himself said of the greatest of his Storm and Stress dramas that he had attempted to portray humanity before he really knew humanity.

In 1788 he published the first part of his *History of the Rebellion of the Netherlands*, which brought him the appointment to the chair of history in the University of Jena. The occupation with his next historical work, the *History of the Thirty Years' War*, suggested to him the thought of dramatizing the career of Wallenstein. But he was not yet clear with himself on questions of artistic method. He was studying Homer and dramatizing Euripides, lecturing and writing on dramatic theory. Further delays were due to marriage and to serious illness. It was not until 1796 that Schiller felt ready to begin work on the long planned drama of *Wallenstein*.

The first scenes were written in prose, but soon the poet realized that only the dignified heroic verse was suited to his theme. Then "all went better." Constant discussions with Goethe and Christian Gottfried Koerner helped him to clear up his doubts and overcome the difficulties of his subject. He found that history left too little room for sympathy with Wallenstein, for he conceived him as really guilty of treason. He decided early to lighten the gloom of his theme by introducing the love episode of Max and Thekla. He modified also his view of the nature of Wallenstein's guilt. Gradually the material grew upon him. What he had planned as a Prologue became the one-act play, *Wallenstein's Camp*, which, when it was produced in October, 1798, at the reopening of the Weimar Theatre, was preceded by 138 lines of Dedication, since printed as the *Prologue*. Already Schiller had foreseen the development into more than five acts, and accordingly *The Piccolomini* appeared separately, January 30, 1799, and the whole series in order about the middle of April, upon the completion of *Wallenstein's Death*.

Wallenstein is a trilogy, but in name rather than in real connection and relation of parts. *Wallenstein's Camp* is a picture of masses, introducing only common soldiers and none of the chief personages of the other parts of the composition. Its purpose is to present something of the tremendous background of the action proper and to give a realizing sense of the influence upon Wallenstein's career of the soldiery with which he operated—as Schiller expressed it in a line of his Prologue: "His camp alone explains to us his crime." By this he meant that, on the one hand, the blind confidence of the troops in the luck and the destiny of their leader made him arrogant and reckless, and, on the other hand, perhaps, that the mercenary character of these soldiers of fortune forced Wallenstein to steps which his calm judgment would have condemned.

In a succession of eleven scenes of very unequal length the various arms of the service are introduced, together with camp followers and a Capuchin preacher; in reminiscences the earlier features of the great war and some feats of the general are recalled; in discussions the character of Wallenstein and of his leading officers is sketched; finally the report of the recent demand of the

Emperor, that Wallenstein detach 8,000 men to escort the Cardinal Infant to the Netherlands, reveals the opposition of the army to such an order and its unconditional loyalty to Wallenstein.

The second and third parts of the trilogy, *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein's Death*, constitute, in fact, one ten-act play, which requires two evenings for presentation. So slight is the organic division between the two plays that, as first presented, in the fall of 1798 and the spring of 1799, *The Piccolomini* included the first two acts of *Wallenstein's Death* as later printed and here given, while the last three acts were so divided as to constitute five.

The Piccolomini, which could not be reprinted in this anthology, presents essentially what is called the "exposition" of the entire drama, together with a *part* of the complication of the plot. Questenberg, the imperial commissioner, visits Wallenstein's headquarters in Pilsen to present the order of the Emperor for the detachment of eight regiments of Wallenstein's best cavalry to serve as escort to the Cardinal Infant on his way to the Netherlands. He meets distrust and almost incredible defiance from Wallenstein's officers, excepting Octavio Piccolomini, one of the oldest and most trusted, to whom he brings secret dispatches directing him to supersede Wallenstein in case of the latter's open rebellion, which the court believes he has already determined upon. Wallenstein himself meets the demands with a reproachful reference to the violation of the plenary powers intrusted to him by the Emperor as the condition of his assuming the command, but announces that he will relieve him from embarrassment by resigning. This announcement is received with a storm of protests from his officers. Questenberg and Octavio are deeply concerned to make sure of the adherence to their cause of Octavio's son, Max, a child of the camp and an especial favorite with Wallenstein. Max has just arrived at Pilsen as escort of Wallenstein's wife and of his daughter Thekla, to whom he has lost his heart. Wallenstein and his masterful sister, Countess Terzky, are also eager to secure Max to their side in the coming conflict, and the Countess tries to persuade Thekla to govern her actions accordingly. Thekla, however, is nobly frank with Max and warns him to trust only his own heart; for she realizes that the threads of a dark plot are drawing close about herself and Max, though she does not clearly understand what it is. Meanwhile Terzky and Illo have planned a meeting of Wallenstein's officers to protest against his withdrawal. In a splendid banquet scene they present a written agreement (*Revers*) to stand by the general *so far as loyalty to the Emperor will permit*, and then, when all are heated with wine, secure signatures to a substituted document from which this reservation of loyalty to the Emperor is omitted. It is the hope of Illo and Terzky, through the sight of this document, to persuade Wallenstein to open rebellion. Max Piccolomini, coming late to the banquet from the interview with Thekla, refuses to sign the pledge, not because he sees through the deception, but because he is in no mood for business. Before morning his father summons him, thinking Max has refused to sign because he scented the intended treason, and reveals to him the whole situation—the plots of the officers, Wallenstein's dangerous negotiations with enemies of the Emperor, and his own commission to take command and save whatever he can of loyal troops. Max is thunder-struck. He can believe neither Wallenstein's purpose of treason nor his father's duplicity in dealing behind the back of his great commander. He refuses to follow his father's orders and leaves him with the avowed intention of going to Wallenstein and calling upon him to clear himself of the calumnious charges of the court. At this point begins the action of *Wallenstein's Death*.

In all of his later dramas excepting *William Tell*, Schiller endeavored to introduce a factor which is called "the dramatic guilt," a circumstance, usually in the character of the hero but sometimes in his environment, which makes the tragic outcome inevitable and yet leaves room in the breast of the reader or spectator for sympathy with the hero in his fate. In the case of Wallenstein this "guilt" is the dalliance with the love of power and the possibility of rebellion, not a deliberate intention to commit treason. In the close of his treatment of Wallenstein in *The Thirty Years' War* Schiller says: "No one of his actions justifies us in considering him convicted of treason. * * * Thus Wallenstein fell, not because he was a rebel, but he rebelled because he fell."

The circumstances are urged that Wallenstein was a prince of the Empire, and had as such the right to negotiate with foreign powers; that his delegated authority from the Emperor gave him the right to do so in the Emperor's name; that the Emperor had not kept faith with Wallenstein, and had thus justified him in at least frightening the court; that self preservation seemed to indicate rebellion as the only recourse; that Wallenstein's belief in his destiny and the fatuous devotion of his army led him to reckless action; and finally that he did not originally intend to commit actual treason.

Thus prepared, the reader can easily sympathize with Wallenstein in his downfall; this sympathy is entirely won by the admirable courage with which Wallenstein bears the successive blows of fate, and it is strengthened by consideration of the mean motives of the men who serve as the tools of his execution, and by the remembrance that the fate of Max and Thekla is bound up in his. Schiller was concerned lest the love episode should detract from the interest due the chief persons of the tragedy; his art has effected the exact opposite.

The influence of Shakespeare is more or less obvious in all of Schiller's later dramas. Aside from the splendid rhetoric of the monologues, the character of Countess Terzky, so similar to that of Lady Macbeth, suggests this. But such influence is not so controlling as to be in any respect a reproach to Schiller. Goethe in his generous admiration considered Wallenstein "so great that nothing could be compared with it." "In the imaginative power whereby history is made into drama, in the triumph of artistic genius over a vast and refractory mass of material, and in the skill with which the character of the hero is conceived and denoted, *Wallenstein* is unrivaled. Its chief figure is by far the stateliest and most impressive of German tragic heroes." [22]

* * * * *

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

WALLENSTEIN, *Duke of Friedland,*

Generalissimo of the Imperial

Forces in the Thirty Years' War.

DUCHESS OF FRIEDLAND, *Wife of*

Wallenstein.

THEKLA, *her Daughter, Princess of*

Friedland.

The COUNTESS TERZKY, *Sister of the Duchess.*

LADY NEUBRUNN.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, *Lieutenant-General.*

MAX PICCOLOMINI, *his son, Colonel of a regiment of Cuirassiers.*

COUNT TERZKY, *the Commander of several Regiments, and Brother-in-law of Wallenstein.*

ILLO, *Field Marshall, Wallenstein's*

Confident.

ISOLANI, *General of the Croats.*

BUTLER, *an Irishman, Commander of a regiment of Dragoons.*

GORDON, *Governor Egra.*

MAJOR GERALDIN.

CAPTAIN DEVEREUX.

CAPTAIN MACDONALD.

AN ADJUTANT.

NEUMANN, *Captain of Cavalry, Aide-de-Camp to Terzky.*

COLONEL WRANGEL, *Envoy from the*

Swedes.

ROSENBURG, *Master of Horse.*

SWEDISH CAPTAIN.

SENI.

BURGOMASTER *of Egra.*

ANSPESSADE *of the Cuirassiers.*

GROOM OF THE } *Belonging to*

CHAMBER, } *the Duke.*

A PAGE, }

Cuirassiers, Dragoons, Servants.

Municipal Theatre, Hamburg, 1906.]

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN (1800)[23]

TRANSLATED BY S.T. COLERIDGE

ACT I

SCENE I

A Room fitted up for astrological labors, and provided with celestial Charts, with Globes, Telescopes, Quadrants, and other mathematical Instruments—Seven Colossal Figures, representing the Planets, each circle in the background, so that Mars and Saturn are nearest the eye.—The remainder of the Scene, and its disposition, is given in the Fourth Scene of the Second Act.—There must be a Curtain over the Figures, which may be dropped, and conceal them on occasion.

[In the Fifth Scene of this Act it must be dropped; but in the Seventh Scene it must be again drawn up wholly or in part.]

WALLENSTEIN *at a black Table, on which a Speculum Astrologicum is described with Chalk.*
SENI *is taking Observations through a window.*

WALLENSTEIN.

All well—and now let it be ended, Seni. Come,
The dawn commences, and Mars rules the hour.
We must give o'er the operation. Come,
We know enough.

SENI.

Your Highness must permit me

Just to contemplate Venus. She's now rising;
Like as a sun, so shines she in the east.

WALLENST.

She is at present in her perigee,
And now shoots down her strongest influences.

[Contemplating the figure on the table.]

Auspicious aspect! fateful in conjunction,
At length the mighty three corradiate;
And the two stars of blessing, Jupiter
And Venus, take between them the malignant
Slily-malicious Mars, and thus compel
Into *my* service that old mischief-founder:
For long he viewed me hostilely, and ever
With beam oblique, or perpendicular,
Now in the Quartile, now in the Secundan,
Shot his red lightnings at my stars, disturbing
Their blessed influences and sweet aspects.
Now they have conquer'd the old enemy,
And bring him in the heavens a prisoner to me.

SENI *(who has come down from the window).*

And in a corner house, your Highness—think of that!
That makes each influence of double strength.

WALLENST.

And sun and moon, too, in the Sextile aspect,
The soft light with the vehement—so I love it;

SOL is the heart, LUNA the head of heaven;
Bold be the plan, fiery the execution.

SENI.

And both the mighty Lumina by no
Maleficus *affronted*. Lo! Saturnus,
Innocuous, powerless, *in cadente Domo*.

WALLENST.

The empire of Saturnus is gone by;
Lord of the secret birth of things is he
Within the lap of earth, and in the depths
Of the imagination dominates;
And his are all things that eschew the light.
The time is o'er of brooding and contrivance,
For Jupiter, the lustrous, lordeth now,
And the dark work, complete of preparation,
He draws by force into the realm of light.
Now must we hasten on to action, ere
The scheme and most auspicious posture
Parts o'er my head, and takes once more its flight,
For the heavens journey still, and sojourn not.

[*There are knocks at the door.*]

There's some one knocking there. See who it is.

TERZKY (*from without*).

Open, and let me in.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ay—'tis Terzky.

What is there of such urgency? We are busy.

Municipal Theatre, Hamburg, 1906.]

TERZKY (*from without*).

Lay all aside at present, I entreat you.

It suffers no delaying.

WALLENSTEIN.

Open, Seni!

[*While SENI opens the door for TERZKY, WALLENSTEIN draws the curtain over the figures.*]

SCENE II

WALLENSTEIN. COUNT TERZKY

TERZKY (*enters*).

Hast thou already heard it? He is taken.

Gallas has given him up to the Emperor.

[*SENI draws off the black table, and exit.*]

WALLENSTEIN (*to TERZKY*).

Who has been taken? Who is given up?

TERZKY.

The man who knows our secrets, who knows every

Negotiation with the Swede and Saxon,
Through whose hands all and everything has pass'd—
WALLENSTEIN (*drawing back*).

Nay, not Sesina?—Say, No! I entreat thee.

TERZKY.

All on his road for Regensburg to the Swede
He was plunged down upon by Gallas' agent,
Who had been long in ambush, lurking for him.
There must have been found on him my whole packet
To Thur, to Kinsky, to Oxenstiern, to Arnheim:
All this is in their hands; they have now an insight
Into the whole—our measures and our motives.

SCENE III

To them enters ILLO.

ILLO (*to TERZKY*).

Has he heard it?

TERZHY.

He has heard it.

ILLO (*to WALLENSTEIN*).

Thinkest thou still

To make thy peace with the Emperor, to regain
His confidence? E'en were it now thy wish
To abandon all thy plans, yet still they know
What thou hast wish'd: then forwards thou must press,
Retreat is now no longer in thy power.

TERZKY.

They have documents against us, and in hands,
Which show beyond all power of contradiction—

WALLENST.

Of my handwriting—no iota. Thee

I punish for thy lies.

ILLO.

And thou believest,

That what this man, and what thy sister's husband,
Did in thy name, will not stand on thy reck'ning?
His word must pass for thy word with the Swede,
And not with those that hate thee at Vienna?

TERZKY.

In writing thou gavest nothing—But bethink thee,
How far thou ventured'st by word of mouth
With this Sesina! And will he be silent?
If he can save himself by yielding up
Thy secret purposes, will he retain them?

ILLO.

Thyself dost not conceive it possible;
And since they now have evidence authentic
How far thou hast already gone, speak!—tell us,
What art thou waiting for? Thou canst no longer
Keep thy command; and beyond hope of rescue
Thou'rt lost, if thou resign'st it.

WALLENSTEIN.

In the army

Lies my security. The army will not
Abandon me. Whatever they may know,
The power is mine, and they must gulp it down—
And if I give them caution for my fealty,
They must be satisfied, at least appear so.

ILLO.

The army, Duke, *is* thine now—for this moment—
'Tis thine, but think with terror on the slow,
The quiet power of time. From open violence
The attachment of thy soldiery secures thee
Today—tomorrow: but grant'st thou them a respite
Unheard, unseen, they'll undermine that love
On which thou now dost feel so firm a footing,
With wily theft will draw away from thee
One after the other other—

WALLENSTEIN.

'Tis a cursed accident!

ILLO.

Oh! I will call it a most blessèd one,
If it work on thee as it ought to do,
Hurry thee on to action—to decision.
The Swedish General—

WALLENSTEIN.

He's arrived! Know'st thou

What his commission is—

ILLO.

To thee alone

Will he intrust the purpose of his coming.

WALLENST.

A cursed, cursed accident! Yes, yes,
Sesina knows too much, and won't be silent.

TERZKY.

He's a Bohemian fugitive and rebel,
His neck is forfeit. Can he save himself

At thy cost, think you he will scruple it?
And if they put him to the torture, will he,
Will *he*, that dastardling, have strength enough—
WALLENSTEIN (*lost in thought*).
Their confidence is lost, irreparably!
And I may act which way I will, I shall
Be and remain forever in their thought
A traitor to my country. How sincerely
Soever I return back to my duty,
It will no longer help me—
ILLO.

Ruin thee,

That it will do! Not thy fidelity,
Thy weakness will be deemed the sole occasion—
WALLENSTEIN (*pacing up and down in extreme agitation*).
What! I must realize it now in earnest,
Because I toy'd too freely with the thought!
Accursed he who dallies with a devil!
And must I—I *must* realize it now—
Now, while I have the power, it *must* take place?
ILLO.
Now—now—ere they can ward and parry it!
WALLENSTEIN (*looking at the paper of signatures*).
I have the Generals' word—a written promise!
Max Piccolomini stands not here—how's that?
TERZKY.
It was—he fancied—
ILLO.

Mere self-willedness.

There needed no such thing 'twixt him and you.
WALLENST.
He is quite right; there needed no such thing.
The regiments, too, deny to march for Flanders—
Have sent me in a paper of remonstrance,
And openly resist the Imperial orders.
The first step to revolt's already taken.
ILLO.
Believe me, thou wilt find it far more easy
To lead them over to the enemy
Than to the Spaniard.
WALLENSTEIN.

I will hear, however,

What the Swede has to say to me.

ILLO (*eagerly to TERZKY*).

Go, call him

He stands without the door in waiting.
WALLENSTEIN.

Stay!

Stay but a little. It hath taken me
All by surprise; it came too quick upon me;
'Tis wholly novel that an accident,
With its dark lordship, and blind agency,
Should force me on with it.
ILLO.

First hear him only,

And after weigh it.
[*Exeunt TERZKY and ILLO.*]

SCENE IV

WALLENSTEIN (*in soliloquy*).

Is it possible?

Is't so! I *can* no longer what I *would*?
No longer draw back at my liking? I
Must *do* the deed, because I *thought* of it?
And fed this heart here with a dream? Because
I did not scowl temptation from my presence,
Dallied with thoughts of possible fulfilment,
Commenced no movement, left all time uncertain,
And only kept the road, the access open?
By the great God of Heaven! it was not
My serious meaning, it was ne'er resolved.
I but amused myself with thinking of it.
The free-will tempted me, the power to do
Or not to do it—Was it criminal
To make the fancy minister to hope,
To fill the air with pretty toys of air,
And clutch fantastic sceptres moving t'ward me!
Was not the will kept free? Beheld I not
The road of duty close beside me—but
One little step, and once more I was in it!
Where am I? Whither have I been transported?
No road, no track behind me, but a wall
Impenetrable, insurmountable,

Rises obedient to the spells I muttered
And meant not—my own doings tower behind me.
[*Pauses and remains in deep thought.*]
A punishable man I seem; the guilt,
Try what I will, I cannot roll off from me;
The equivocal demeanor of my life
Bears witness on my prosecutor's party.
And even my purest acts from purest motives
Suspicion poisons with malicious gloss.
Were I that thing for which I pass, that traitor,
A goodly outside I had sure reserved,
Had drawn the coverings thick and double round me,
Been calm and chary of my utterance;
But being conscious of the innocence
Of my intent, my uncorrupted will,
I gave way to my humors, to my passion:
Bold were my words, because my deeds were *not*.
Now every planless measure, chance event,
The threat of rage, the vaunt of joy and triumph,
And all the May-games of a heart o'erflowing,
Will they connect, and weave them all together
Into one web of treason; all will be plain,
My eye ne'er absent from the far-off mark,
Step tracing step, each step a politic progress;
And out of all they'll fabricate a charge
So specious that I must myself stand dumb.
I am caught in my own net, and only force,
Nought but a sudden rent, can liberate me.

[*Pauses again.*]
How else! since that the heart's unbiased instinct
Impell'd me to the daring deed, which now
Necessity, self-preservation, *orders*.
Stern is the on-look of Necessity,
Not without shudder may a human hand
Grasp the mysterious urn of destiny.
My deed was mine, remaining in my bosom:
Once suffer'd to escape from its safe corner
Within the heart, its nursery and birth-place,
Sent forth into the Foreign, it belongs
Forever to those sly malicious powers
Whom never art of man conciliated.

[*Paces in agitation through the chamber, then pauses, and after the pause breaks out again into audible soliloquy.*]

What is thy enterprise? thy aim? thy object?
Hast honestly confess'd it to thyself?
Power seated on a quiet throne thou'dst shake,
Power on an ancient consecrated throne,
Strong in possession, founded in all custom;
Power by a thousand tough and stringy roots

Fix'd to the people's pious nursery-faith.
This, this will be no strife of strength with strength.
That fear'd I not. I brave each combatant,
Whom I can look on, fixing eye to eye,
Who, full himself of courage, kindles courage
In me too. 'Tis a foe invisible
The which I fear—a fearful enemy,
Which in the human heart opposes me,
By its coward fear alone made fearful to me.
Not that, which full of life, instinct with power,
Makes known its present being; that is not
The true, the perilously formidable.
O no! it is the common, the quite common,
The thing of an eternal yesterday.
What ever was, and evermore returns,
Sterling tomorrow, for today 'twas sterling!
For of the wholly common is man made,
And custom is his nurse! Woe then to them
Who lay irreverent hands upon his old
House furniture, the dear inheritance
From his forefathers! For time consecrates;
And what is gray with age becomes religion.
Be in possession, and thou hast the right,
And sacred will the many guard it for thee!
[*To the PAGE who here enters.*]
The Swedish officer?—Well, let him enter.
[*The PAGE exit, WALLENSTEIN fixes his eye in deep thought on the door.*]
Yet is it pure—as yet!—the crime has come
Not o'er this threshold yet—so slender is
The boundary that divideth life's two paths.

SCENE V

WALLENSTEIN *and* WRANGEL

WALLENSTEIN (*after having fixed a searching look on him*).

Your name is Wrangel?

WRANGEL.

Gustave Wrangel, General

Of the Sudermanian Blues.

WALLENSTEIN.

It was a Wrangel

Who injured me materially at Stralsund,
And by his brave resistance was the cause
Of the opposition which that sea-port made.

WRANGEL.

It was the doing of the element
With which you fought, my Lord! and not my merit.
The Baltic Neptune did assert his freedom:
The sea and land, it seem'd, were not to serve
One and the same.

[WALLENST.

You pluck'd the Admiral's hat from off my head.

WRANGEL.

I come to place a diadem thereon.]

WALLENSTEIN (*makes the motion for him to take a seat, and seats himself*).

And where are your credentials?

Come you provided with full powers, Sir General?

WRANGEL.

There are so many scruples yet to solve—

WALLENSTEIN (*having read the credentials*).

An able letter!—Ay—he is a prudent

Intelligent master whom you serve, Sir General!

The Chancellor writes me, that he but fulfils

His late departed Sovereign's own idea

In helping me to the Bohemian crown.

WRANGEL.

He says the truth. Our great King, now in heaven,

Did ever deem most highly of your Grace's

Preëminent sense and military genius;

And always the commanding Intellect,

He said, should have command, and be the King.

WALLENST.

Yes, he *might* say it safely.—General Wrangel,

[*Taking his hand affectionately.*]

Come, fair and open. Trust me, I was always

A Swede at heart. Eh! that did you experience

Both in Silesia and at Nuremberg;

I had you often in my power, and let you

Always slip out by some back door or other.

'Tis this for which the Court can ne'er forgive me,

Which drives me to this present step: and since

Our interests so run in one direction,

E'en let us have a thorough confidence

Each in the other.

WRANGEL.

Confidence will come

Has each but only first security.

WALLENST.

The Chancellor still, I see, does not quite trust me;

And, I confess—the game does not lie wholly

To my advantage. Without doubt he thinks,
If I can play false with the Emperor,
Who is my sovereign, I can do the like
With the enemy, and that *the one* too were
Sooner to be forgiven me than the *other*.
Is not this your opinion, too, Sir General?

WRANGEL.

I have here a duty merely, no opinion.

WALLENST.

The Emperor hath urged me to the uttermost:
I can no longer honorably serve him;
For my security, in self-defence,
I take this hard step, which my conscience blames.

WRANGEL.

That I believe. So far would no one go
Who was not forced to it.

[*After a pause.*]

What may have impell'd

Your princely Highness in this wise to act
Toward your Sovereign Lord and Emperor,
Beseems not us to expound or criticise.
The Swede is fighting for his good old cause,
With his good sword and conscience. This concurrence,
This opportunity, is in our favor,
And all advantages in war are lawful.
We take what offers without questioning;
And if all have its due and just proportions—

WALLENST.

Of what then are ye doubting? Of my will?
Or of my power? I pledged me to the Chancellor,
Would he trust *me* with sixteen thousand men,
That I would instantly go over to them
With eighteen thousand of the Emperor's troops.

WRANGEL.

Your Grace is known to be a mighty war-chief,
To be a second Attila and Pyrrhus.

'Tis talked of still with fresh astonishment,
How some years past, beyond all human faith,
You call'd an army forth, like a creation:

But yet—

WALLENSTEIN.

But yet?

WRANGEL.

But still the Chancellor thinks

It might yet be an easier thing from nothing

To call forth sixty thousand men of battle,
Than to persuade one sixtieth part of them—

WALLENST.

What now? Out with it, friend!

WRANGEL.

To break their oaths.

WALLENST.

And he thinks *so*? He judges like a Swede,
And like a Protestant. You Lutherans
Fight for your Bible. You are interested
About the cause; and with your *hearts* you follow
Your banners. Among *you*, whoe'er deserts
To the enemy hath broken covenant
With two Lords at one time. We've no such fancies.

WRANGEL.

Great God in Heaven! Have then the people here
No house and home, no fireside, no altar?

WALLENST.

I will explain that to you, how it stands:—
The Austrian *has* a country, ay, and loves it,
And has good cause to love it—but this army,
That calls itself the Imperial, this that houses
Here in Bohemia, this has none—no country;
This is an outcast of all foreign lands,
Unclaim'd by town or tribe, to whom belongs
Nothing except the universal sun.
And this Bohemian land for which we fight—
[Loves not the master whom the chance of war,
Not its own choice or will, hath given to it.
Men murmur at the oppression of their conscience,
And power hath only awed but not appeased them;
A glowing and avenging mem'ry lives
Of cruel deeds committed on these plains;
How can the son forget that here his father
Was hunted by the blood-hound to the mass?
A people thus oppress'd must still be feared,
Whether they suffer or avenge their wrongs.]

WRANGEL.

But then the Nobles and the Officers?
Such a desertion, such a felony,
It is without example, my Lord Duke,
In the world's history.

WALLENSTEIN.

They are all mine—

Mine unconditionally—mine on all terms.
Not me, your own eyes you must trust.

[*He gives him the paper containing the written oath. WRANGEL reads it through, and, having read it, lays it on the table, remaining silent.*]

So then?

Now comprehend you?

WRANGEL.

Comprehend who can!

My Lord Duke, I will let the mask drop—yes!
I've full powers for a final settlement.
The Rhinegrave stands but four days' march from here
With fifteen thousand men, and only waits
For orders to proceed and join your army.
Those orders *I* give out, immediately
We're compromised.

WALLENSTEIN.

What asks the Chancellor?

WRANGEL (*considerately*).

Twelve regiments, every man a Swede—my head
The warranty—and all might prove at last
Only false play—

WALLENSTEIN (*starting*).

Sir Swede!

WRANGEL (*calmly proceeding*).

Am therefore forced

T'insist thereon, that he do formally,
Irrevocably break with the Emperor,
Else not a Swede is trusted to Duke Friedland.

WALLENST.

Come, brief, and open! What is the demand?

WRANGEL.

That he forthwith disarm the Spanish regiments
Attached to the Emp'ror, that he seize on Prague,
And to the Swedes give up that city, with
The strong pass Egra.

WALLENSTEIN.

That is much indeed!

Prague!—Egra's granted—but—but Prague!—"T won't do.
I give you every security
Which you may ask of me in common reason—
But Prague—Bohemia—these, Sir General,
I can myself protect.

WRANGEL.

We doubt it not.

But 'tis not the protection that is now
Our sole concern. We want security
That we shall not expend our men and money
All to no purpose.

WALLENSTEIN.

'Tis but reasonable.

WRANGEL.

And till we are indemnified, so long
Stays Prague in pledge.

WALLENSTEIN.

Then trust you us so little?

WRANGEL (*rising*).

The Swede, if he would treat well with the German,
Must keep a sharp look-out. We have been call'd
Over the Baltic, we have saved the empire
From ruin—with our best blood have we sealed
The liberty of faith and gospel truth.
But now already is the benefaction
No longer felt, the load alone is felt.
Ye look askance with evil eye upon us,
As foreigners, intruders in the empire,
And would fain send us, with some paltry sum
Of money, home again to our old forests.
No, no! my Lord Duke! no!—it never was
For Judas' pay, for chinking gold and silver,
That we did leave our King by the Great Stone[24]
No, not for gold and silver have there bled
So many of our Swedish Nobles—neither
Will we, with empty laurels for our payment,
Hoist sail for our own country. *Citizens*
Will we remain upon the soil, the which
Our Monarch conquer'd for himself, and died.

WALLENST.

Help to keep down the common enemy,
And the fair border land must needs be yours.

WRANGEL.

But when the common enemy lies vanquish'd,
Who knits together our new friendship then?
We know, Duke Friedland! though perhaps the Swede
Ought not to have known it, that you carry on
Secret negotiations with the Saxons.
Who is our warranty, that *we* are not
The sacrifices in those articles
Which 'tis thought needful to conceal from us?

WALLENSTEIN (*rises*).

Think you of something better, Gustave Wrangel!

Of Prague no more.

WRANGEL.

Here my commission ends.

WALLENST.

Surrender up to you my capital!

Far liever would I face about, and step

Back to my Emperor.

WRANGEL.

If time yet permits—

WALLENST.

That lies with me, even now, at any hour.

WRANGEL.

Some days ago, perhaps. Today, no longer;

No longer since Sesina's been a prisoner.

[WALLENSTEIN *is struck, and silenced.*]

My Lord Duke, hear me—We believe that you

At present do mean honorably by us.

Since *yesterday* we're sure of that—and now

This paper warrants for the troops, there's nothing

Stands in the way of our full confidence.

Prague shall not part us. Hear! The Chancellor

Contents himself with Altstadt; to your Grace

He gives up Ratschin and the narrow side.

But Egra above all must open to us,

Ere we can think of any junction.

WALLENSTEIN.

You,

You therefore must I trust, and not you me?

I will consider of your proposition.

WRANGEL.

I must entreat that your consideration

Occupy not too long a time. Already

Has this negotiation, my Lord Duke,

Crept on into the second year! If nothing

Is settled this time, will the Chancellor

Consider it as broken off for ever.

WALLENST.

Ye press me hard. A measure such as this,

Ought to be *thought* of.

WRANGEL.

Ay! but think of this too,

That sudden action only can procure it

Success—think first of this, your Highness.

[*Exit* WRANGEL.]

SCENE VI

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY, *and* ILLO (*re-enter*)

ILLO.

It's all right?

TERZKY.

Are you compromised?

ILLO.

This Swede

Went smiling from you. Yes! you're compromised.

WALLENST.

As yet is nothing settled: and (well weighed)

I feel myself inclined to leave it so.

TERZKY.

How? What is that?

WALLENSTEIN.

Come on me what will come,

The doing evil to avoid an evil

Cannot be good!

TERZKY.

Nay, but bethink you, Duke.

WALLENST.

To live upon the mercy of these Swedes!

Of these proud-hearted Swedes!—I could not bear it.

ILLO.

Goest thou as fugitive, as mendicant?

Bringest thou not more to them than thou receivest?

WALLENST.

How fared it with the brave and royal Bourbon

Who sold himself unto his country's foes,

And pierced the bosom of his father-land?

Curses were his reward, and men's abhorrence

Avenged th' unnatural and revolting deed.

ILLO.

Is that thy case?

WALLENSTEIN.

True faith, I tell thee,

Must ever be the dearest friend of man:

His nature prompts him to assert its rights.

The enmity of sects, the rage of parties,

Long cherish'd envy, jealousy, unite;

And all the struggling elements of evil

Suspend their conflict, and together league
In one alliance 'gainst their common foe—
The savage beast that breaks into the fold,
Where men repose in confidence and peace.
For vain were man's own prudence to protect him.
'Tis only in the forehead nature plants
The watchful eye—the back, without defence,
Must find its shield in man's fidelity.

TERZKY.

Think not more meanly of thyself than do
Thy foes, who stretch their hands with joy to greet thee;
Less scrupulous far was the Imperial Charles,
The powerful head of this illustrious house;
With open arms he gave the Bourbon welcome;
For still by policy the world is ruled.

SCENE VII

To these enter the COUNTESS TERZKY

WALLENST.

Who sent for you? There is no business here
For women.

COUNTESS.

I am come to bid you joy.

WALLENST.

Use thy authority, Terzky; bid her go.

COUNTESS.

Come I perhaps too early? I hope not.

WALLENST.

Set not this tongue upon me, I entreat you:
You know it is the weapon that destroys me.
I am routed, if a woman but attack me:
I cannot traffic in the trade of words
With that unreasoning sex.

COUNTESS.

I had already

Given the Bohemians a king.

WALLENSTEIN (*sarcastically*).

They have one,

In consequence, no doubt.

COUNTESS (*to the others*).

Ha! what new scruple?

TERZKY.

The Duke will not.

COUNTESS.

He *will not* what he *must*!

ILLO.

It lies with you now. Try. For I am silenced
When folks begin to talk to me of conscience
And of fidelity.

COUNTESS.

How? then, when all

Lay in the far-off distance, when the road
Stretch'd out before thine eyes interminably,
Then hadst thou courage and resolve; and now,
Now that the dream is being realized,
The purpose ripe, the issue ascertain'd,
Dost thou begin to play the dastard now?
Plann'd merely, 'tis a common felony;
Accomplish'd, an immortal undertaking:
And with success comes pardon hand in hand,
For all event is God's arbitrament.

SERVANT (*enters*).

The Colonel Piccolomini.

COUNTESS (*hastily*).

Must wait.

WALLENST.

I cannot see him now. Another time.

SERVANT.

But for two minutes he entreats an audience:
Of the most urgent nature is his business.

WALLENST.

Who knows what he may bring us! I will hear him.

COUNTESS (*laughs*).

Urgent for him, no doubt? but thou may'st wait.

WALLENST.

What is it?

COUNTESS.

Thou shalt be inform'd hereafter.

First let the Swede and thee be compromised.

[*Exit* **SERVANT**.]

WALLENST.

If there were yet a choice! if yet some milder
Way of escape were possible—I still
Will choose it, and avoid the last extreme.

COUNTESS.

Desirest thou nothing further? Such a way
Lies still before thee. Send this Wrangel off.
Forget thou thy old hopes, cast far away
All thy past life; determine to commence

A new one. Virtue hath her heroes too,
As well as fame and fortune.—To Vienna
Hence—to the Emperor—kneel before the throne
Take a full coffer with thee—say aloud,
Thou didst but wish to prove thy fealty;
Thy whole intention but to dupe the Swede.

ILLO.

For that too 'tis too late. They know too much;
He would but bear his own head to the block.

COUNTESS.

I fear not that. They have not evidence
To attain him legally, and they avoid
The avowal of an arbitrary power.
They'll let the Duke resign without disturbance.
I see how all will end. The King of Hungary
Makes his appearance, and 'twill of itself
Be understood that then the Duke retires.
There will not want a formal declaration;
The young King will administer the oath
To the whole army; and so all returns
To the old position. On some morrow morning
The Duke departs; and now 'tis stir and bustle
Within his castles. He will hunt, and build,
And superintend his horses' pedigrees;
Creates himself a court, gives golden keys,
And introduces strictest ceremony
In fine proportions, and nice etiquette;
Keeps open table with high cheer: in brief,
Commences mighty King—in miniature.
And while he prudently demeans himself,
And gives himself no actual importance,
He will be let appear whate'er he likes;
And who dares doubt that Friedland will appear
A mighty Prince to his last dying hour?
Well now, what then? Duke Friedland is as others,
A fire-new Noble, whom the war hath raised
To price and currency, a Jonah's gourd,
An over-night creation of court-favor,
Which with an undistinguishable ease
Makes Baron or makes Prince.

WALLENSTEIN (*in extreme agitation*).

Take her away.

Let in the young Count Piccolomini.

COUNTESS.

Art thou in earnest? I entreat thee! Canst thou
Consent to bear thyself to thy own grave,
So ignominiously to be dried up?

Thy life, that arrogated such an height
To end in such a nothing! To be nothing,
When one was always nothing, is an evil
That asks no stretch of patience, a light evil;
But to become a nothing, having been—
WALLENSTEIN (*starts up in violent agitation*).
Show me a way out of this stifling crowd,
Ye powers of Aidance! Show me such a way
As *I* am capable of going. I
Am no tongue-hero, no fine virtue-prattler;
I cannot warm by thinking; cannot say
To the good luck that turns her back upon me,
Magnanimously: "Go; I need thee not."
Cease I to work, I am annihilated.
Dangers nor sacrifices will I shun,
If so I may avoid the last extreme;
But ere I sink down into nothingness,
Leave off so little, who began so great,
Ere that the world confuses me with those
Poor wretches whom a day creates and crumbles,
This age and after ages[25] speak my name
With hate and dread; and Friedland be redemption
For each accursed deed.

COUNTESS.

What is there here, then,

So against nature? Help me to perceive it!
O let not Superstition's nightly goblins
Subdue thy clear bright spirit! Art thou bid
To murder?—with abhorr'd, accursed poinard,
To violate the breasts that nourish'd thee?
That *were* against our nature, that might aptly
Make thy flesh shudder, and thy whole heart sicken,[26]
Yet not a few, and for a meaner object,
Have ventured even this, ay, and perform'd it.
What is there in thy case so black and monstrous?
Thou art accused of treason—whether with
Or without justice is not now the question—
Thou art lost if thou dost not avail thee quickly
Of the power which thou possessest—Friedland! *Duke!*
Tell me where lives that thing so meek and tame,
That doth not all his living faculties
Put forth in preservation of his life?
What deed so daring, which necessity
And desperation will not sanctify?

WALLENST.

Once was this Ferdinand so gracious to me;
He loved me; he esteem'd me; I was placed

The nearest to his heart. Full many a time
We like familiar friends, both at one table,
Have banqueted together. He and I—
And the young kings themselves held me the basin
Wherewith to wash me—and is't come to this?

COUNTESS.

So faithfully preserves thou each small favor,
And hast no memory for contumelies?
Must I remind thee, how at Regensburg
This man repaid thy faithful services?
All ranks and all conditions in the empire
Thou hadst wronged, to make him great,—hadst loaded on thee,
On *thee*, the hate, the curse of the whole world.
No friend existed for thee in all Germany,
And why? because thou hadst existed only
For the Emperor. To the Emperor alone
Clung Friedland in that storm which gather'd round him
At Regensburg in the Diet—and he dropp'd thee!
He let thee fall! he let thee fall a victim
To the Bavarian, to that insolent!
Deposed, stript bare of all thy dignity
And power, amid the taunting of thy foes,
Thou wert let drop into obscurity.—
Say not the restoration of thy honor
Has made atonement for that first injustice.
No honest good-will was it that replaced thee;
The law of hard necessity replaced thee,
Which they had fain opposed, but that they could not.

WALLENST.

Not to their good wishes, that is certain,
Nor yet to his affection I'm indebted
For this high office: and if I abuse it,
I shall therein abuse no confidence.

COUNTESS.

Affection! confidence!—they *needed* thee.
Necessity, impetuous remonstrant!
Who not with empty names, or shows of proxy,
Is served, who'll have the thing and not the symbol,
Ever seeks out the greatest and the best,
And at the rudder places *him*, e'en though
She had been forced to take him from the rabble—
She, this Necessity, it was that placed thee
In this high office; it was she that gave thee
Thy letters patent of inauguration.
For, to the uttermost moment that they can,
This race still help themselves at cheapest rate
With slavish souls, with puppets! At the approach
Of extreme peril, when a hollow image
Is found a hollow image and no more,

Then falls the power into the mighty hands
Of Nature, of the spirit giant-born,
Who listens only to himself, knows nothing
Of stipulations, duties, reverences,
And, like the emancipated force of fire,
Unmaster'd scorches, ere it reaches them,
Their fine-spun webs, their artificial policy.

WALLENST.

'Tis true! they saw me always as I am—
Always! I did not cheat them in the bargain.
I never held it worth my pains to hide
The bold all-grasping habit of my soul.

COUNTESS.

Nay rather—thou hast ever shown thyself
A formidable man, without restraint;
Hast exercised the full prerogatives
Of thy impetuous nature, which had been
Once granted to thee. Therefore, Duke, not *thou*
Who hast still remained consistent with thyself;
But *they* are in the wrong, who fearing thee,
Intrusted such a power in hand they fear'd.
For, by the laws of Spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself.
Self-contradiction is the only wrong.
Wert thou another being, then, when thou
Eight years ago pursuedst thy march with fire,
And sword, and desolation, through the Circles
Of Germany, the universal scourge,
Didst mock all ordinances of the empire,
The fearful rights of strength alone exertedst,
Trampledst to earth each rank, each magistracy,
All to extend thy Sultan's domination?
Then was the time to break thee in, to curb
Thy haughty will, to teach thee ordinance.
But no, the Emperor felt no touch of conscience;
What served him pleased him, and without a murmur
He stamp'd his broad seal on these lawless deeds.
What at that time was right, because thou didst it
For him, today is all at once become
Opprobrious, foul, because it is directed
Against him.—O most flimsy superstition!
WALLENSTEIN (*rising*).
I never saw it in this light before;
'Tis even so. The Emperor perpetrated
Deeds through my arm, deeds most unorderedly.
And even this prince's mantle, which I wear,
I owe to what were services to him,
But most high misdemeanors 'gainst the empire.

COUNTESS.

Then betwixt thee and him (confess it Friedland!)
The point can be no more of right and duty,
Only of power and the opportunity.
That opportunity, lo! it comes yonder
Approaching with swift steeds; then with a swing
Throw thyself up into the chariot-seat,
Seize with firm hand the reins, ere thy opponent
Anticipate thee, and himself make conquest
Of the now empty seat. The moment comes;
It is already here, when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, "Now's the time!" The starry courses
Hast thou thy life long measured to no purpose?
The quadrant and the circle, were they play-things?
[*Pointing to the different objects in the room.*]
The zodiacs, the rolling orbs of heaven,
Hast pictured on these walls, and all around thee
In dumb, foreboding symbols hast thou placed
These seven presiding Lords of Destiny—
For toys? Is all this preparation nothing?
Is there no marrow in this hollow art,
That even to thyself it doth avail
Nothing, and has no influence over thee
In the great moment of decision?—

WALLENSTEIN. (*during this last speech walks up and down with inward struggles, laboring with passion; stops suddenly, stands still, then interrupting the COUNTESS*).

Send Wrangel to me—I will instantly
Dispatch three couriers—
ILLO (*hurrying out*).
God in heaven be praised!

WALLENST.

It is *his* evil genius and *mine*.
Our evil genius! It chastises *him*
Through me, the instrument of his ambition;
And I expect no less than that Revenge
E'en now is whetting for *my* breast the poinard.
Who sows the serpent's teeth, let him not hope
To reap a joyous harvest. Every crime
Has, in the moment of its perpetration,
Its own avenging angel—dark misgiving,
An ominous sinking at the inmost heart.
He can no longer trust me. Then no longer
Can I retreat—so come that which must come.
Still destiny preserves its due relations,
The heart within us is its absolute
Vicegerent.

[*To TERZKY.*]

Go, conduct you Gustave Wrangel

To my state-cabinet.—Myself will speak to
The couriers.—And dispatch immediately
A servant for Octavio Piccolomini.
[_To the _COUNTESS, *who cannot conceal her triumph.*]
No exultation! woman, triumph not!
For jealous are the Powers of Destiny.
Joy premature, and shouts ere victory,
Encroach upon their rights and privileges.
We sow the seed, and they the growth determine.
[*While he is making his exit the curtain drops.*]

* * * * *

ACT II

SCENE I

Scene, as in the preceding Act

WALLENSTEIN, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI

WALLENSTEIN (*coming forward in conversation*).

He sends me word from Linz that he lies sick;
But I have sure intelligence that he
Secretes himself at Frauenberg with Gallas.
Secure them both, and send them to me hither.
Remember, thou takest on thee the command
Of those same Spanish regiments,—constantly
Make preparation, and be never ready;
And if they urge thee to draw out against me,
Still answer YES, and stand as thou wert fetter'd;
I know that it is doing thee a service
To keep thee out of action in this business.
Thou lovest to linger on in fair appearances;
Steps of extremity are not thy province;
Therefore have I sought out this part for thee.
Thou wilt this time be of most service to me
By thy inertness. The mean time, if fortune
Declare itself on my side, thou wilt know
What is to do.

Enter MAX PICCOLOMINI

Now go, Octavio.

This night must thou be off, take my own horses

Him here I keep with me—make short farewell—
Trust me, I think, we all shall meet again
In joy and thriving fortunes.
OCTAVIO (*to his son*).

I shall see you

Yet ere I go.

SCENE II

WALLENSTEIN, MAX PICCOLOMINI

MAX. (*advances to him*).

My General?

WALLENSTEIN.

That I am no longer, if

Thou stylest thyself the Emperor's officer.

MAX.

Then thou wilt leave the army, General?

WALLENST.

I have renounced the service of the Emperor.

MAX.

And thou wilt leave the army?

WALLENSTEIN.

Rather hope I

To bind it nearer still and faster to me.

[*He seats himself.*]

Yes, Max, I have delay'd to open it to thee,

Even till the hour of acting 'gins to strike.

Youth's fortunate feeling doth seize easily

The absolute right, yea, and a joy it is

To exercise the single apprehension

Where the sums square in proof;

But where it happens that of two sure evils

One must be taken, where the heart not wholly

Brings itself back from out the strife of duties,

There 'tis a blessing to have no election,

And blank necessity is grace and favor.

—This is now present: do not look behind thee,—

It can no more avail thee. Look thou forwards!

Think not! judge not! prepare thyself to act!

The Court—it hath determined on my ruin,

Therefore I will be beforehand with them.

We'll join the Swedes—right gallant fellows are they,

And our good friends.

[*He stops himself, expecting PICCOLOMINI's answer.*]

I have ta'en thee by surprise. Answer me not.

I grant thee time to recollect thyself.

[*He rises, retires at the back of the stage. MAX remains for a long time motionless, in a trance of excessive anguish. At his first motion WALLENSTEIN returns, and places himself before him.*]

MAX.

My General, this day thou makest me
Of age to speak in my own right and person,
For till this day I have been spared the trouble
To find out my own road. Thee have I follow'd
With most implicit unconditional faith,
Sure of the right path if I follow'd thee.
Today, for the first time, dost thou refer
Me to myself, and forcest me to make
Election between thee and my own heart.

WALLENST.

Soft cradled thee thy Fortune till today;
Thy duties thou couldst exercise in sport,
Indulge all lovely instincts, act forever
With undivided heart. It can remain
No longer thus. Like enemies, the roads
Start from each other. Duties strive with duties.
Thou must needs choose thy party in the war
Which is now kindling 'twixt thy friend and him
Who is thy Emperor.

MAX.

War! is that the name?

War is as frightful as heaven's pestilence,
Yet it is good. Is it heaven's will as that is?
Is that a good war, which against the Emperor
Thou wagest with the Emperor's own army?
O God of heaven! what a change is this!
Beseems it me to offer such persuasion
To thee, who like the fix'd star of the pole
Wert all I gazed at on life's trackless ocean?
O! what a rent thou makest in my heart!
The ingrain'd instinct of old reverence,
The holy habit of obedience,
Must I pluck live asunder from thy name?
Nay, do not turn thy countenance upon me—
It always was as a god looking upon me!
Duke Wallenstein, its power has not departed.
The senses still are in thy bonds, although,
Bleeding, the soul hath freed itself.

WALLENSTEIN.

Max, hear me.

MAX.

O! do it not, I pray thee, do it not!
There is a pure and noble soul within thee
Knows not of this unblest, unlucky doing.
Thy will is chaste, it is thy fancy only
Which hath polluted thee; and innocence—
It will not let itself be driven away
From that world-awing aspect. Thou wilt not,
Thou canst not, end in this. It would reduce
All human creatures to disloyalty
Against the nobleness of their own nature.
'Twill justify the vulgar misbelief
Which holdeth nothing noble in free will
And trusts itself to impotence alone
Made powerful only in an unknown power.

WALLENST.

The world will judge me sternly, I expect it.
Already have I said to my own self
All thou canst say to me. Who but avoids
The extreme, can he by going round avoid it?
But here there is no choice. Yes—I must use
Or suffer violence—so stands the case;
There remains nothing possible but that.

MAX.

O that is never possible for thee!
'Tis the last desperate resource of those
Cheap souls to whom their honor, their good name
Is their poor *saving*, their last worthless *keep*,
Which, having staked and lost, they stake themselves
In the mad rage of gaming. Thou art rich
And glorious; with an unpolluted heart
Thou canst make conquest of whate'er seems highest!
But he, who once hath acted infamy,
Does nothing more in this world.

WALLENSTEIN (*grasps his hand*).

Calmly, Max!

Much that is great and excellent will we
Perform together yet. And if we only
Stand on the height with dignity, 'tis soon
Forgotten, Max, by what road we ascended.
Believe me, many a crown shines spotless now
That yet was deeply sullied in the winning.
To the evil spirit doth the earth belong,
Not to the good. All that the powers divine
Send from above are universal blessings,
Their light rejoices us, their air refreshes,
But never yet was man enrich'd by them
In their eternal realm no *property*

Is to be struggled for—all there is general
The jewel, the all-valued gold we win
From the deceiving Powers, depraved in nature,
That dwell beneath the day and blessed sun-light.
Not without sacrifices are they render'd
Propitious, and there lives no soul on earth
That e'er retired unsullied from their service.

MAX.

Whate'er is human, to the human being
Do I allow—and to the vehement
And striving spirit readily I pardon
The excess of action; but to thee, my General,
Above *all* others make I large concession.
For thou must move a world, and be the master—
He kills thee who condemns thee to inaction.
So be it then! maintain thee in thy post
By violence. Resist the Emperor,
And, if it must be, force with force repel:
I will not praise it, yet I can forgive it.
But not—not to the *traitor*—yes!—the word
Is spoken out—

Not to the traitor can I yield a pardon.
That is no mere excess! that is no error
Of human nature—that is wholly different;
O that is black, black as the pit of hell!
[WALLENSTEIN *betrays a sudden agitation.*]
Thou canst not hear it *named*, and wilt thou *do* it?
O, turn back to thy duty! That thou canst
I hold it certain. Send me to Vienna:
I'll make thy peace for thee with the Emperor.
He knows thee not. But I do know thee. He
Shall see thee, Duke, with my unclouded eye,
And I bring back his confidence to thee.

WALLENST.

It is too late! Thou knowest not what has happen'd.

MAX.

Were it too late, and were things gone so far,
That a crime only could prevent thy fall,
Then—fall! fall honorably, even as thou stood'st!
Lose the command. Go from the stage of war,
Thou canst with splendor do it—do it too
With innocence. Thou hast lived much for others,
At length live thou for thy own self. I follow thee;
My destiny I never part from thine.

WALLENST.

It is too late! Even now, while thou art losing
Thy words, one after the other are the milestones
Left fast behind by my post couriers
Who bear the order on to Prague and Egra.

[MAX stands as convulsed, with a gesture and countenance expressing the most intense anguish.]

Yield thyself to it. We act as we are forced.

I cannot give assent to my own shame

And ruin. *Thou*—no—thou canst not forsake me!

So let us do what must be done, with dignity,

With a firm step. What am I doing worse

Than did famed Cæsar at the Rubicon,

When he the legions led against his country,

The which his country had delivered to him?

Had he thrown down the sword he had been lost,

As I were if I but disarm'd myself.

I trace out something in me of this spirit;

Give me his luck, *that other thing* I'll bear.

[MAX quits him abruptly. WALLENSTEIN startled and overpowered, continues looking after him and is still in this posture when TERZKY enters.]

SCENE III

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY

TERZKY.

Max Piccolomini just left you?

WALLENSTEIN.

Where is Wrangel?

TERZKY.

He is already gone.

WALLENSTEIN.

In such a hurry?

TERZKY.

It is as if the earth had swallow'd him.

He had scarce left thee when I went to seek him.

I wish'd some words with him—but he was gone.

How, when, and where, could no one tell me. Nay,

I half believe it was the devil himself;

A human creature could not so at once

Have vanish'd.

ILLO (*enters*).

Is it true that thou wilt send

Octavio?

TERZKY.

How, Octavio! Whither send him?

WALLENST.

He goes to Frauenburg, and will lead hither

The Spanish and Italian regiments.

ILLO.

No!

Nay, Heaven forbid!

WALLENSTEIN.

And why should Heaven forbid?

ILLO.

Him!—that deceiver! Wouldst thou trust to him

The soldiery? Him wilt thou let slip from thee,

Now in the very instant that decides us—

TERZKY.

Thou wilt not do this—No! I pray thee, no!

WALLENST.

Ye are whimsical.

ILLO.

O but for this time, Duke,

Yield to our warning! Let him not depart.

WALLENST.

And why should I not trust him only this time,

Who have always trusted him? What, then, has happen'd

That I should lose my good opinion of him?

In complaisance to your whims, not my own,

I must, forsooth, give up a rooted judgment.

Think not I am a woman. Having trusted him

E'en till today, today too will I trust him.

TERZKY.

Must it be he—he only? Send another.

WALLENST.

It must be he whom I myself have chosen;

He is well fitted for the business. Therefore

I gave it him.

ILLO.

Because he's an Italian—

Therefore is he well fitted for the business!

WALLENST.

I know you love them not—nor sire nor son—

Because that I esteem them, love them—visibly

Esteem them, love them more than you and others.

E'en as they merit. Therefore are they eye-blights,

Thorns in your foot-path. But your jealousies,

In what affect they me or my concerns?

Are they the worse to *me* because you hate them?

Love or hate one another as you will,

I leave to each man his own moods and likings;

Yet know the worth of each of you to me.

ILLO.

Von Questenberg, while he was here, was always

Lurking about with this Octavio.

WALLENST.

It happen'd with my knowledge and permission.

ILLO.

I know that secret messengers came to him
From Gallas—

WALLENSTEIN.

That's not true.

ILLO.

O thou art blind,

With thy deep-seeing eyes!

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou wilt not shake

My faith for me—my faith, which founds itself
On the profoundest science. If 'tis false,
Then the whole science of the stars is false;
For know, I have a pledge from Fate itself,
That he is the most faithful of my friends.

ILLO.

Hast thou a pledge, that this pledge is not false?

WALLENST.

There exist moments in the life of man,
When he is nearer the great Soul of the world
Than is man's custom, and possesses freely
The power of questioning his destiny:
And such a moment 'twas, when in the night
Before the action in the plains of Lützen,
Leaning against a tree, thoughts crowding thoughts,
I look'd out far upon the ominous plain.
My whole life, past and future, in this moment
Before my mind's eye glided in procession,
And to the destiny of the next morning
The spirit, fill'd with anxious presentiment,
Did knit the most removed futurity.
Then said I also to myself: "So many
Dost thou command. They follow all thy stars
And as on some great number set their All
Upon thy single head, and only man
The vessel of thy fortune. Yet a day
Will come when Destiny shall once more scatter
All these in many a several direction:
Few be they who will stand out faithful to thee."
I yearn'd to know which one was faithfullest
Of all, this camp included. Great Destiny,
Give me a sign! And he shall be the man,
Who, on the approaching morning, comes the first

To meet me with a token of his love.
And thinking this, I fell into a slumber.
Then midmost in the battle was I led
In spirit. Great the pressure and the tumult!
Then was my horse kil'd under me; I sank;
And over me away, all unconcernedly,
Drove horse and rider—and thus trod to pieces
I lay, and panted like a dying man;
Then seized me suddenly a savior arm;
It was Octavio's—I awoke at once;
'Twas broad day, and *Octavio* stood before me.
"My brother," said he, "do not ride today
The dapple, as you're wont; but mount the horse
Which I have chosen for thee. Do it, brother!
In love to me. A strong dream warn'd me so."
It was the swiftness of his horse that snatch'd me
From the hot pursuit of Bannier's dragoons.
My cousin rode the dapple on that day,
And never more saw I of horse or rider.

ILLO.

That was a chance.

WALLENSTEIN (*significantly*).

There's no such thing as chance.

[And what to us seems merest accident
Springs from the deepest source of destiny.]
In brief, 'tis sign'd and seal'd that this Octavio
Is my good angel—and now no word more.
[*He is retiring.*]

TERZKY.

This is my comfort—Max remains our hostage.

ILLO.

And he shall never stir from here alive.
WALLENSTEIN (*stops and turns himself round*).
Are ye not like the women who forever
Only recur to their first word, although
One had been talking reason by the hour!
Know that the human being's thoughts and needs
Are not like ocean billows, blindly moved.
The inner world, his microcosmus, is
The deep shaft out of which they spring eternally.
They grow by certain laws, like the tree's fruit—
No juggling chance can metamorphose them.
Have I the human *kernel* first examined?
Then I know, too, the future will and action.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

Chamber in the residence of Piccolomini

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI (*attired for traveling*), AN ADJUTANT

OCTAVIO.

Is the detachment here?

ADJUT.

It awaits below.

OCTAVIO.

And are the soldiers trusty, Adjutant?

Say, from what regiment hast thou chosen them?

ADJUT. From Tiefenbach's.

OCTAVIO.

That regiment is loyal;

Keep them in silence in the inner court,
Unseen by all, and when the signal peals
Then close the doors; keep watch upon the house,
And all ye meet be instantly arrested.

[*Exit Adjutant.*]

I hope indeed I shall not need their service,
So certain feel I of my well laid plans;
But when an empire's safety is at stake
'Twere better too much caution than too little.

SCENE V

A Chamber in PICCOLOMINI's Dwelling-House.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, ISOLANI, *entering*

ISOLANI.

Here am I—Well! who comes yet of the others?

OCTAVIO (*with an air of mystery*).

But, first, a word with you, Count Isolani.

ISOLANI (*assuming the same air of mystery*).

Will it explode, ha?—Is the Duke about
To make the attempt? In me, friend, you may place
Full confidence—Nay, put me to the proof.

OCTAVIO.

That may happen.

ISOLANI.

Noble brother, I am

Not one of those men who in words are valiant,
And when it comes to action skulk away.
The Duke has acted toward me as a friend.
God knows it is so; and I owe him all—
He may rely on my fidelity.

OCTAVIO.

That will be seen hereafter.

ISOLANI.

Be on your guard,

All think not as I think; and there are many
Who still hold with the Court—yes, and they say
That those stolen signatures bind them to nothing.

[OCTAVIO.

Indeed! Pray name to me the chiefs that think so.

ISOLANI.

Plague upon them! all the Germans think so;
Esterhazy, Kaunitz, Deodati, too,
Insist upon obedience to the Court.]

OCTAVIO.

I am rejoiced to hear it.

ISOLANI.

You rejoice

OCTAVIO.

That the Emperor has yet such gallant servants,
And loving friends!

ISOLANI.

Nay, jeer not, I entreat you.

They are no such worthless fellows, I assure you.

OCTAVIO.

I am assured already. God forbid
That I should jest!—In very serious earnest,
I am rejoiced to see an honest cause
So strong.

ISOLANI.

The Devil!—what!—Why, what means this?

Are you not, then—For what, then, am I here?

OCTAVIO.

That you may make full declaration, whether
You will be call'd the friend or enemy
Of the Emperor.

ISOLANI (*with an air of defiance*).

That declaration, friend,

I'll make to him in whom a right is placed
To put that question to me.

OCTAVIO.

Whether, Count,

That right is mine, this paper may, instruct you.

ISOLANI (*stammering*).

Why,—why—what! this is the Emperor's hand and seal! [*Reads.*]

"Whereas, the officers collectively

Throughout our army will obey the orders

Of the Lieutenant-General Piccolomini.

As from ourselves."—*Hem*—Yes! so I—

Yes! yes!—

I—I give you joy, Lieutenant-General!

OCTAVIO.

And you submit you to the order?

ISOLANI.

I—

But you have taken me so by surprise—

Time for reflection one *must* have—

OCTAVIO.

Two minutes.

ISOLANI.

My God! But then the case is—

OCTAVIO.

Plain and simple

You must declare you, whether you determine

To act a treason 'gainst your Lord and Sovereign,

Or whether you will serve him faithfully.

ISOLANI.

Treason!—My God!—But who talks then of treason?

OCTAVIO.

That is the case. The Prince-duke is a traitor—

Means to lead over to the enemy

The Emperor's army.—Now, Count!—brief

and full—

Say, will you break your oath to the Emperor?

Sell yourself to the enemy?—Say, will you?

ISOLANI.

What mean you? I—I break my oath, d'ye say,

To his Imperial Majesty?

Did I say so!—When, when have I said that?

OCTAVIO.

You have not said it yet—not yet. This instant

I wait to hear, Count, whether you *will* say it.

ISOLANI.

Ay! that delights me now, that you yourself

Bear witness for me that I never said so.

OCTAVIO.

And you renounce the Duke then?

ISOLANI.

If he's planning Treason—why, treason breaks all bonds asunder.

OCTAVIO.

And are determined, too, to fight against him?

ISOLANI.

He has done me service—but if he's a villain,
Perdition seize him!—All scores are rubb'd off.

OCTAVIO.

I am rejoiced that you are so well disposed.
This night, break off in the utmost secrecy
With all the light-arm'd troops—it must appear
As came the order from the Duke himself.
At Frauenburg's the place of rendezvous;
There will Count Gallas give you further orders.

ISOLANI.

It shall be done.—But you'll remember me With the Emperor—how well-disposed you found me.

OCTAVIO.

I will not fail to mention it honorably.

[*Exit ISOLANI. A Servant enters.*]

What, Colonel Butler!—Show him up.

ISOLANI (returning).

Forgive me too my bearish ways, old father!
Lord God! how should I know, then, what a great
Person I had before me.

OCTAVIO.

No excuses!

ISOLANI.

I am a merry lad, and if at time
A rash word might escape me 'gainst the Court
Amidst my wine—You know no harm was
meant.

[*Exit.*]

OCTAVIO.

You need not be uneasy on that score
That has succeeded. Fortune favor us
With all the others only but as much!

SCENE VI

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, BUTLER

BUTLER.

At your command, Lieutenant-General.

OCTAVIO.

Welcome, as honor'd friend and visitor.

BUTLER.

You do me too much honor.

OCTAVIO (*after both have seated themselves*).

You have not

Return'd the advances which I made you yesterday—

Misunderstood them as mere empty forms.

That wish proceeded from my heart—I was

In earnest with you—for 'tis now a time

In which the honest should unite most closely.

BUTLER.

'Tis only the like-minded can unite.

OCTAVIO.

True! and I name all honest men like-minded.

I never charge a man but with those acts

To which his character deliberately

Impels him; for alas! the violence

Of blind misunderstandings often thrusts

The very best of us from the right track.

You came through Frauenburg. Did the Count Gallas

Say nothing to you? Tell me. He's my friend.

BUTLER.

His words were lost on *me*.

OCTAVIO.

It grieves me sorely,

To hear it: for his counsel was most wise.

I had myself the like to offer.

BUTLER.

Spare

Yourself the trouble—me th' embarrassment,

To have deserved so ill your good opinion.

OCTAVIO.

The time is precious—let us talk openly.

You know how matters stand here. Wallenstein

Meditates treason—I can tell you further,

He has committed treason; but few hours

Have past since he a covenant concluded

With the enemy. The messengers are now

Full on their way to Egra and to Prague.

Tomorrow he intends to lead us over

To the enemy. But he deceives himself;

For Prudence wakes—The Emperor has still

Many and faithful friends here, and they stand

In closest union, mighty though unseen.

This manifesto sentences the Duke—

Recalls the obedience of the army from him,
And summons all the loyal, all the honest,
To join and recognize in me their leader.
Choose—will you share with us an honest cause?
Or with the evil share an evil lot?

BUTLER (*rises*).

His lot is mine.

OCTAVIO.

Is that your last resolve?

BUTLER.

It is.

OCTAVIO.

Nay, but bethink you, Colonel Butler!

As yet you have time. Within my faithful breast
That rashly utter'd word remains interr'd.
Recall it, Butler! choose a better party;
You have not chosen the right one.
BUTLER (*going*).

Any other

Commands for me, Lieutenant-General?

OCTAVIO.

See your white hairs: recall that word!

BUTLER.

Farewell!

OCTAVIO.

What! Would you draw this good and gallant sword
In such a cause? Into a curse would you
Transform the gratitude which you have earn'd
By forty years' fidelity from Austria?

BUTLER (*laughing with bitterness*).

Gratitude from the House of Austria!

[He is going.]

OCTAVIO (*permits him to go as far as the door, then calls after him*).

Butler!

BUTLER.

What wish you?

OCTAVIO.

How was't with the Count?

BUTLER.

Count? what?

OCTAVIO (*coldly*).

The title that you wish'd, I mean.

BUTLER (*starts in sudden passion*).

Hell and damnation!

OCTAVIO (*coldly*).

You petition'd for it—

And your petition was repelled—Was it so?

BUTLER.

Your insolent scoff shall not go by unpunish'd.

Draw!

OCTAVIO.

Nay! your sword to 'ts sheath! and tell me calmly,

How all that happen'd. I will not refuse you

Your satisfaction afterward. Calmly, Butler!

BUTLER.

Be the whole world acquainted with the weakness

For which I never can forgive myself.

Lieutenant-General! Yes; I have ambition.

Ne'er was I able to endure contempt.

It stung me to the quick, that birth and title

Should have more weight than merit has in the army.

I would fain not be meaner than my equal,

So in an evil hour I let myself

Be tempted to that measure. It was folly!

But yet so hard a penance it deserved not.

It might have been refused; but wherefore barb

And venom the refusal with contempt?

Why dash to earth and crush with heaviest scorn

The gray-hair'd man, the faithful veteran?

Why to the baseness of his parentage

Refer him with such cruel roughness, only

Because he had a weak hour and forgot himself?

But nature gives a sting e'en to the worm

Which wanton Power treads on in sport and

insult.

OCTAVIO.

You must have been calumniated. Guess you

The enemy who did you this ill service?

BUTLER.

Be't who it will—a most low-hearted scoundrel!

Some vile court-minion must it be, some Spaniard,

Some young squire of some ancient family,

In whose light I may stand; some envious knave,

Stung to his soul by my fair self-earn'd honors!

OCTAVIO.

But tell me, did the Duke approve that measure?

BUTLER.

Himself impell'd me to it, used his interest

In my behalf with all the warmth of friendship.

OCTAVIO.

Ay? are you sure of that?

BUTLER.

I read the letter.

OCTAVIO.

And so did I—but the contents were different.

[*BUTLER is suddenly struck.*]

By chance I'm in possession of that letter—

Can leave it to your own eyes to convince you.

[*He gives him the letter.*]

BUTLER.

Ha! what is this?

OCTAVIO.

I fear me, Colonel Butler,

An infamous game have they been playing with you.

The Duke, you say, impell'd you to this measure?

Now, in this letter, talks he in contempt

Concerning you; counsels the minister

To give sound chastisement to your conceit,

For so he calls it.

[*BUTLER reads through the letter; his knees tremble, he seizes a chair, and sinks down in it.*]

You have no enemy, no persecutor;

There's no one wishes ill to you. Ascribe

The insult you received to the Duke only.

His aim is clear and palpable. He wish'd

To tear you from your Emperor: he hoped

To gain from your revenge what he well knew

(What your long-tried fidelity convinced him)

He ne'er could dare expect from your calm reason.

A blind tool would he make you, in contempt

Use you, as means of most abandoned ends.

He has gained his point. Too well has he succeeded

In luring you away from that good path

On which you had been journeying forty years!

BUTLER (his voice trembling).

Can e'er the Emperor's Majesty forgive me?

OCTAVIO.

More than forgive you. He would fain compensate

For that affront, and most unmerited grievance

Sustain'd by a deserving gallant veteran.

From his free impulse he confirms the present,

Which the Duke made you for a wicked purpose.

The regiment, which you now command, is yours.

[*BUTLER attempts to rise, sinks down again. He labors*

inwardly with violent emotions; tries to speak, and cannot.

At length he takes his sword from the belt, and offers it to

PICCOLOMINI.]

OCTAVIO.

What wish you? Recollect yourself, friend.

BUTLER.

Take it.

OCTAVIO.

But to what purpose? Calm yourself.

BUTLER.

O take it!

I am no longer worthy of this sword.

OCTAVIO.

Receive it then anew, from my hands—and

Wear it with honor for the right cause ever.

BUTLER.

Perjure myself to such a gracious Sovereign!

OCTAVIO.

You'll make amends. Quick! break off from the Duke!

BUTLER.

Break off from him!

OCTAVIO.

What now? Bethink thyself.

BUTLER (*no longer governing his emotion*).

Only break off from him? He dies! he dies!

OCTAVIO.

Come after me to Frauenburg, where now

All who are loyal are assembling under

Counts Altringer and Gallas. Many others

I've brought to a remembrance of their duty:

This night be sure that you escape from Pilsen.

BUTLER (*strides up and down in excessive agitation, then steps up to OCTAVIO with resolved countenance*).

Count Piccolomini! dare that man speak

Of honor to you, who once broke his troth.

OCTAVIO.

He, who repents so deeply of it, dares.

BUTLER.

Then leave me here upon my word of honor!

OCTAVIO.

What's your design?

BUTLER.

Leave me and my regiment.

OCTAVIO.

I have full confidence in you. But tell me

What are you brooding?

BUTLER.

That the deed will tell you.

Ask me no more at present. Trust to me.

Ye may trust safely. By the living God

Ye give him over, not to his good angel!

Farewell.

[*Exit BUTLER.*]

SERVANT (*enters with a billet*).

A stranger left it, and is gone.

The Prince Duke's horses wait for you below.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

OCTAVIO (*reads*).

"Be sure make haste! Your faithful Isolan."

—O that I had but left this town behind me.

To split upon a rock so near the haven!—Away!

This is no longer a safe place

For me! Where can my son be tarrying!

SCENE VII

OCTAVIO and MAX PICCOLOWINI

[*MAX enters almost in a state of derangement, from extreme agitation; his eyes roll wildly, his walk is unsteady, and he appears not to observe his father, who stands at a distance, and gazes at him with a countenance expressive of compassion. He paces with long strides through the chamber, then stands still again, and at last throws himself into a chair, staring vacantly at the object directly before him.*]

OCTAVIO (*advances to him*).

I am going off, my son.

[*Receiving no answer, he takes his hand.*]

My son, farewell.

MAX.

Farewell.

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt soon follow me?

MAX.

I follow thee?

Thy way is crooked—it is not my way.

[*OCTAVIO drops his hand, and starts back.*]

O, hadst thou been but simple and sincere,

Ne'er had it come to this—all had stood otherwise.

He had not done that foul and horrible deed,

The virtuous had retain'd their influence o'er him:

He had not fallen into the snares of villains.

Wherefore so like a thief, and thief's accomplice

Didst creep behind him, lurking for thy prey!

O, unblest falsehood! Mother of all evil!

Thou misery-making demon, it is thou

That sink'st us in perdition. Simple truth,

Sustainer of the world, have saved us all!

Father, I will not, I cannot excuse thee!

Wallenstein has deceived me—O, most foully!

But thou hast acted not much better.

OCTAVIO.

Son!

My son, ah! I forgive thy agony!

MAX. (*rises and contemplates his father with looks of suspicion*).

Was't possible? hadst thou the heart, my father,

Hadst thou the heart to drive it to such lengths,

With cold premeditated purpose? Thou—

Hadst thou the heart to wish to see him guilty

Rather than saved? Thou risest by his fall.

Octavio, 'twill not please me.

OCTAVIO.

God in heaven!

MAX.

O, woe is me! sure I have changed my nature.

How comes suspicion here—in the free soul?

Hope, confidence, belief, are gone; for all

Lied to me, all that I e'er loved or honored.

No, no! not all! She—she yet lives for me,

And she is true, and open as the heavens!

Deceit is everywhere, hypocrisy,

Murder, and poisoning, treason, perjury:

The single holy spot is our love,

The only unprofaned in human nature.

OCTAVIO.

Max!—we will go together. 'Twill be better.

MAX.

What? ere I've taken a last parting leave,

The very last—no, never!

OCTAVIO.

Spare thyself

The pang of necessary separation.

Come with me! Come, my son!

[*Attempts to take him with him.*]

MAX.

No! as sure as God lives, no!

OCTAVIO (*more urgently*).

Come with me, I command thee! I, thy father.

MAX.

Command me what is human. I stay here.

OCTAVIO.

Max! in the Emperor's name I bid thee come.

MAX.

No Emperor has power to prescribe

Laws to the heart; and wouldst thou wish to rob me

Of the sole blessing which my fate has left me,

Her sympathy? Must then a cruel deed
Be done with cruelty? The unalterable
Shall I perform ignobly—steal away,
With stealthy coward flight forsake her? No!
She shall behold my suffering, my sore anguish,
Hear the complaints of the disparted soul,
And weep tears o'er me. Oh! the human race
Have steely souls—but she is as an angel.
From the black deadly madness of despair
Will she redeem my soul, and in soft words
Of comfort, plaining, loose this pang of death!

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt not tear thyself away; thou canst not.
O, come, my son! I bid thee save thy virtue.

MAX.

Squander not thou thy words in vain.
The heart I follow, for I dare trust to it.
OCTAVIO (*trembling, and losing all self command*).
Max! Max! if that most damned thing could be,
If thou—my son—my own blood—dare I *think* it?
Do sell thyself to him, the infamous,
Do stamp this brand upon our noble house,
Then shall the world behold the horrible deed
And in unnatural combat shall the steel
Of the son trickle with the father's blood.

MAX.

O hadst thou always better thought of men
Thou hadst then acted better. Curst suspicion,
Unholy, miserable doubt! To him
Nothing on earth remains unwrench'd and firm,
Who has no faith.

OCTAVIO.

And if I trust thy heart,

Will it be always in thy power to follow it?

MAX.

The heart's voice *thou* hast not o'erpowered—as little
Will Wallenstein be able to o'erpower it.

OCTAVIO.

O, Max! I see thee never more again!

MAX.

Unworthy of thee wilt thou never see me.

OCTAVIO.

I go to Frauenburg—the Pappenheimers
I leave thee here, the Lothrings too; Tsokans
And Tiefenbach remain here to protect thee.
They love thee, and are faithful to their oath,
And will far rather fall in gallant contest

Than leave their rightful leader, and their honor.

MAX.

Rely on this, I either leave my life
In the struggle, or conduct them out of Pilsen.

OCTAVIO.

Farewell, my son!

MAX.

Farewell!

OCTAVIO.

How! not one look

Of filial love? No grasp of the hand at parting?

It is a bloody war to which we are going,

And the event uncertain and in darkness.

So used we not to part—it was not so!

Is it then true? I have a son no longer?

[MAX falls into his arms, they hold each other for a long time in a speechless embrace, then go away at different sides.]

[The Curtain drops.]

* * * * *

ACT III

SCENE I

A Chamber in the House of the Duchess of Friedland

COUNTESS TERZKY, THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN (*the two latter sit at the same table at work*)

COUNTESS (*watching them from the opposite side*).

So you have nothing to ask me—nothing?

I have been waiting for a word from you.

And could you then endure in all this time

Not once to speak his name?

[THEKLA remaining silent, the COUNTESS rises and advances to her.]

Why, how comes this!

Perhaps I am already grown superfluous,

And other ways exist, besides through me?

Confess it to me, Thekla: have you seen him?

THEKLA.

Today and yesterday I have not seen him.

COUNTESS.

And not heard from him, either? Come, be open.

THEKLA.

No syllable.

COUNTESS.

And still you are so calm?

THEKLA.

I am.

COUNTESS.

May 't please you, leave us, Lady Neubrunn. [*Exit LADY NEUBRUNN.*]

SCENE II

The COUNTESS, THEKLA

COUNTESS.

It does not please me, Princess, that he holds
Himself so *still*, exactly at *this* time.

THEKLA.

Exactly at *this* time?

COUNTESS.

He now knows all:

'Twere now the moment to declare himself.

THEKLA.

If I'm to understand you, speak less darkly.

COUNTESS.

'Twas for that purpose that I bade her leave us.

Thekla, you are no more a child. Your heart

Is now no more in nonage: for you love,

And boldness dwells with love—that *you* have proved

Your nature molds itself upon your father's

More than your mother's spirit. Therefore may you

Hear, what were too much for her fortitude.

THEKLA.

Enough: no further preface, I entreat you.

At once, out with it! Be it what it may,

It is not possible that it should torture me

More than this introduction. What have you

To say to me? Tell me the whole, and briefly!

COUNTESS.

You'll not be frighten'd—

THEKLA.

Name it, I entreat you.

COUNTESS.

It lies within your power to do your father

A weighty service—

THEKLA.

Lies within *my* power?

COUNTESS.

Max Piccolomini loves you. You can link him

Indissolubly to your father.

THEKLA.

I?

What need of me for that? And is he not
Already link'd to him?

COUNTESS.

He was.

THEKLA.

And wherefore

Should he not be so now—not be so always?

COUNTESS.

He cleaves to the Emperor too.

THEKLA.

Not more than duty

And honor may demand of him.

COUNTESS.

We ask

Proofs of his love, and not proofs of his honor.

Duty and honor!

Those are ambiguous words with many meanings.

You should interpret them for him: his love

Should be the sole definer of his honor.

THEKLA.

How?

COUNTESS.

The Emperor or you must he renounce.

THEKLA.

He will accompany my father gladly

In his retirement. From himself you heard,

How much he wish'd to lay aside the sword.

COUNTESS.

He must *not* lay the sword aside, we mean;

He must unsheath it in your father's cause.

THEKLA.

He'll spend with gladness and alacrity

His life, his heart's blood in my father's cause,

If shame or injury be intended him.

COUNTESS.

You will not understand me. Well, hear then:—

Your father has fallen off from the Emperor,

And is about to join the enemy

With the whole soldiery—

THEKLA.

Alas, my mother!

COUNTESS.

There needs a great example to draw on
The army after him. The Piccolomini
Possess the love and reverence of the troops;
They govern all opinions, and wherever
They lead the way none hesitate to follow.
The son secures the father to our interests—
You've much in your hands at this moment.

THEKLA.

Ah!

My miserable mother! what a death-stroke
Awaits thee!—No! she never will survive it.

COUNTESS.

She will accommodate her soul to that
Which is and must be. I do know your mother;
The far-off future weighs upon her heart
With torture of anxiety; but is it
Unalterably, actually present,
She soon resigns herself, and bears it calmly.

THEKLA.

O my foreboding bosom! Even now,
E'en now 'tis here, that icy hand of horror!
And my young hope lies shuddering in its grasp;
I knew it well—no sooner had I enter'd,
An heavy ominous presentiment
Reveal'd to me that spirits of death were hovering
Over my happy fortune. But why think I
First of myself? My mother! O my mother!

COUNTESS.

Calm yourself! Break not out in vain lamenting!
Preserve you for your father the firm friend,
And for yourself the lover, all will yet
Prove good and fortunate.

THEKLA.

Prove good! What good?

Must we not part?—part ne'er to meet again?

COUNTESS.

He parts not from you! He cannot part from you.

THEKLA.

Alas for his sore anguish! It will rend
His heart asunder.

COUNTESS.

If indeed he loves you,

His resolution will be speedily taken.

THEKLA.

His resolution will be speedily taken—

O do not doubt of that! A resolution!

Does there remain one to be taken?

COUNTESS.

Hush,

Collect yourself! I hear your mother coming.

THEKLA.

How shall I bear to see her?

COUNTESS.

Collect yourself.

SCENE III

To them enter the DUCHESS

DUCHESS (*to the COUNTESS*).

Who was here, sister? I heard someone talking,

And passionately too.

COUNTESS.

Nay! there was no one.

DUCHESS.

I am grown so timorous, every trifling noise

Scatters my spirits, and announces to me

The footstep of some messenger of evil.

And you can tell me, sister, what the event is?

Will he agree to do the Emperor's pleasure,

And send the horse-regiments to the Cardinal?

Tell me, has he dismiss'd Von Questenberg

With a favorable answer?

COUNTESS.

No, he has not.

DUCHESS.

Alas! then all is lost! I see it coming,

The worst that can come! Yes, they will depose him;

The accursed business of the Regensburg diet

Will all be acted o'er again!

COUNTESS.

No! never!

Make your heart easy, sister, as to that.

[THEKLA, *in extreme agitation, throws herself upon her mother, and enfolds her in her arms, weeping.*]

DUCHESS

Yes, my poor child!

Thou too hast lost a most affectionate godmother
In the Empress. O that stern unbending man!
In this unhappy marriage what have I
Not suffer'd, not endured? For even as if
I had been link'd on to some wheel of fire
That restless, ceaseless, whirls impetuous onward,
I have pass'd a life of frights and horrors with him,
And ever to the brink of some abyss
With dizzy headlong violence he bears me.
Nay, do not weep, my child. Let not my sufferings
Presignify unhappiness to thee,
Nor blacken with their shade the fate that waits thee.
There lives no second Friedland: thou, my child,
Hast not to fear thy mother's destiny.

THEKLA.

O let us supplicate him, dearest mother!
Quick! quick! here's no abiding place for us.
Here every coming hour broods into life
Some new affrightful monster.

DUCHESS.

Thou wilt share

An easier, calmer lot, my child! We too,
I and thy father, witnessed happy days.
Still think I with delight of those first years,
When he was making progress with glad effort,
When his ambition was a genial fire,
Not that consuming flame which now it is.
The Emperor loved him, trusted him: and all
He undertook could not but be successful.
But since that ill-starr'd day at Regensburg,
Which plunged him headlong from his dignity,
A gloomy uncompanionable spirit,
Unsteady and suspicious, has possess'd him.
His quiet mind forsook him, and no longer
Did he yield up himself in joy and faith
To his old luck and individual power;
But thenceforth turn'd his heart and best affections
All to those cloudy sciences, which never
Have yet made happy him who follow'd them.

COUNTESS.

You see it, sister, as your eyes permit you,
But surely this is not the conversation
To pass the time in which we are waiting for him.
You know he will be soon here. Would you have him
Find *her* in this condition?

DUCHESS.

Come, my child!

Come wipe away thy tears, and show thy father
A cheerful countenance. See, the tie-knot here
Is off—this hair must not hang so dishevell'd.
Come, dearest! dry thy tears up. They deform
Thy gentle eye.—Well now—what was I saying?
Yes, in good truth, this Piccolomini
Is a most noble and deserving gentleman.

COUNTESS.

That is he, sister!

THEKLA (*to the COUNTESS, with marks of great oppression of spirits*).

Aunt, you will excuse me?

[*Is going.*]

COUNTESS.

But whither? See, your father comes.

THEKLA.

I cannot see him now.

COUNTESS.

Nay, but bethink you.

THEKLA.

Believe me, I cannot sustain his presence.

COUNTESS.

But he will miss you, will ask after you.

DUCHESS.

What now? Why is she going?

COUNTESS.

She's not well.

DUCHESS (*anxiously*).

What ails then my beloved child?

[*Both follow the PRINCESS, and endeavor to detain her. During this WALLENSTEIN appears, engaged in conversation with ILLO.*]

SCENE IV

WALLENSTEIN, ILLO, COUNTESS, DUCHESS, THEKLA

WALLENST

All quiet in the camp?

ILLO.

It is all quiet.

WALLENST.

In a few hours may couriers come from Prague

With tidings that this capital is ours.

Then we may drop the mask, and to the troops

Assembled in this town make known the measure

And its result together. In such cases

Example does the whole. Whoever is foremost
Still leads the herd. An imitative creature
Is man. The troops at Prague conceive no other
Than that the Pilsen army has gone through
The forms of homage to us; and in Pilsen
They shall swear fealty to us, because
The example has been given them by Prague.
Butler, you tell me, has declared himself?

ILLO.

At his own bidding, unsolicited,
He came to offer you himself and regiment.

WALLENST.

I find we must not give implicit credence
To every warning voice that makes itself
Be listen'd to in the heart. To hold us back,
Oft does the lying Spirit counterfeit
The voice of Truth and inward Revelation,
Scattering false oracles. And thus have I
To entreat forgiveness, for that secretly
I've wrong'd this honorable, gallant man,
This Butler: for a feeling, of the which
I am not master (*fear* I would not call it),
Creeps o'er me instantly, with sense of shuddering
At his approach, and stops love's joyous motion.
And this same man, against whom I am warn'd,
This honest man is he, who reaches to me
The first pledge of my fortune.

ILLO.

And doubt not

That his example will win over to you
The best men in the army.

WALLENSTEIN.

Go and send

Isolani hither. Send him immediately;
He is under recent obligations to me:
With him will I commence the trial. Go.

[*Exit* ILLO.]

WALLENSTEIN (*turns himself round to the females*)

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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