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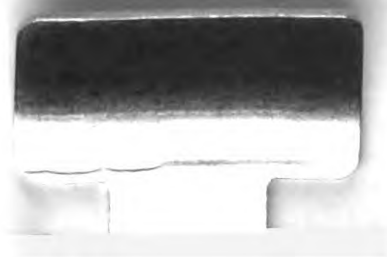
THE GODDESS OF REASON



BY MARY JOHNSTON



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SS·OF·REASON



JOHNSTON

er of the Company“

etc

THE
GODDESS
OF
REASON

MARY
JOHNSTON

THE GODDESS OF REASON

A poetic drama in five acts

by

Mary Johnston

Author of

"By Order of the Company"

"The Old Dominion"

"Audrey"

"Sir Mortimer"

7/6
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Constable
London

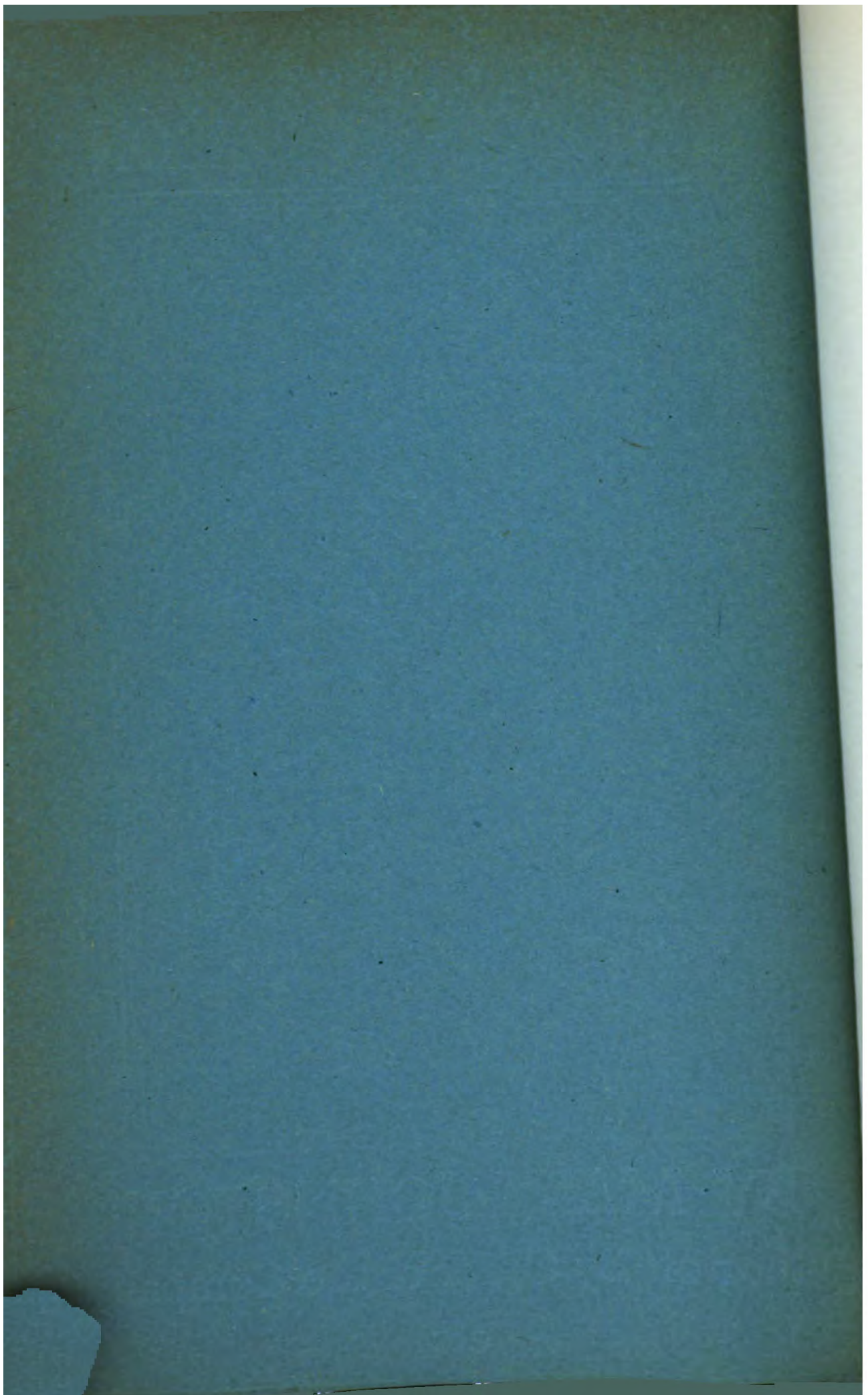
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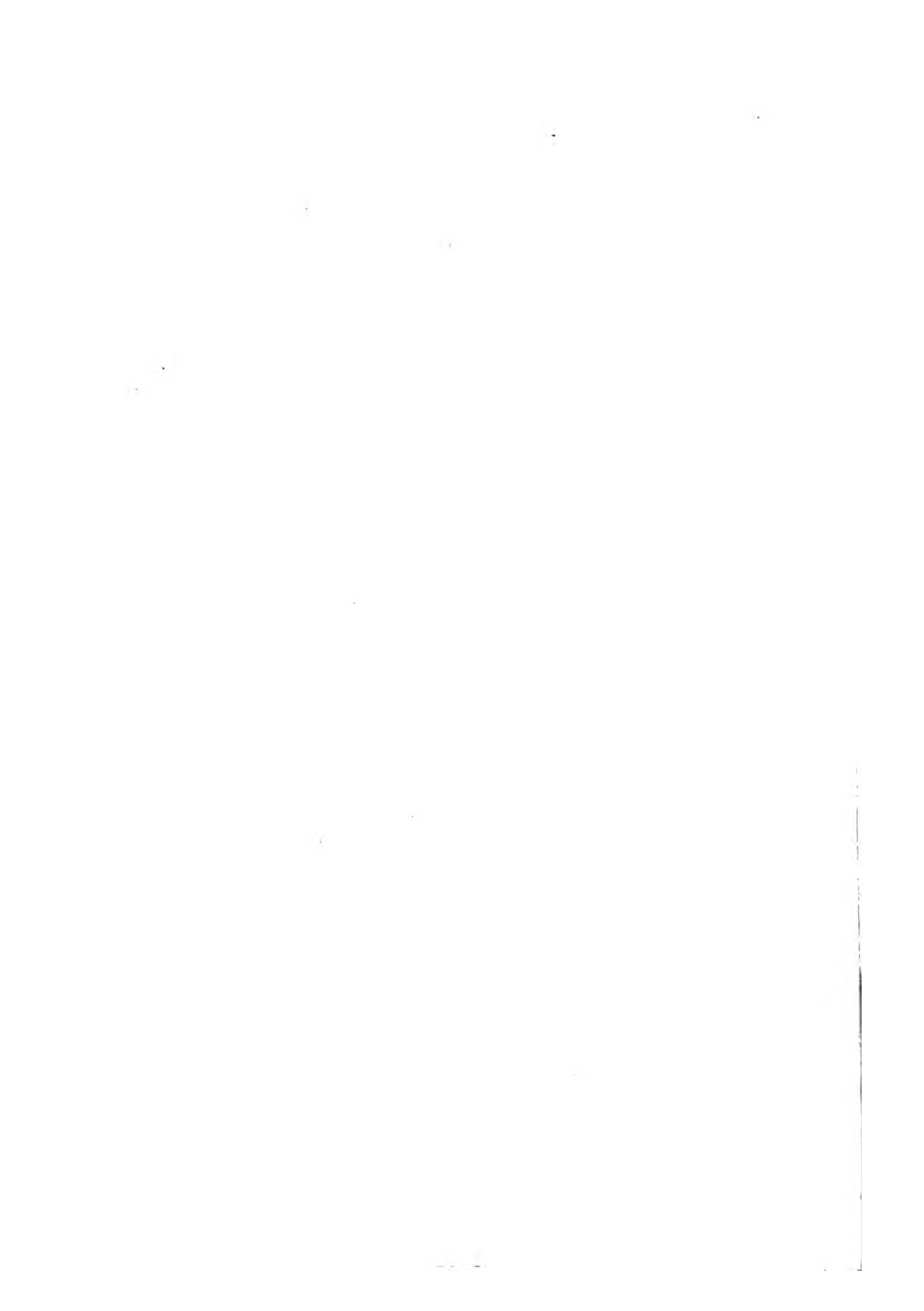
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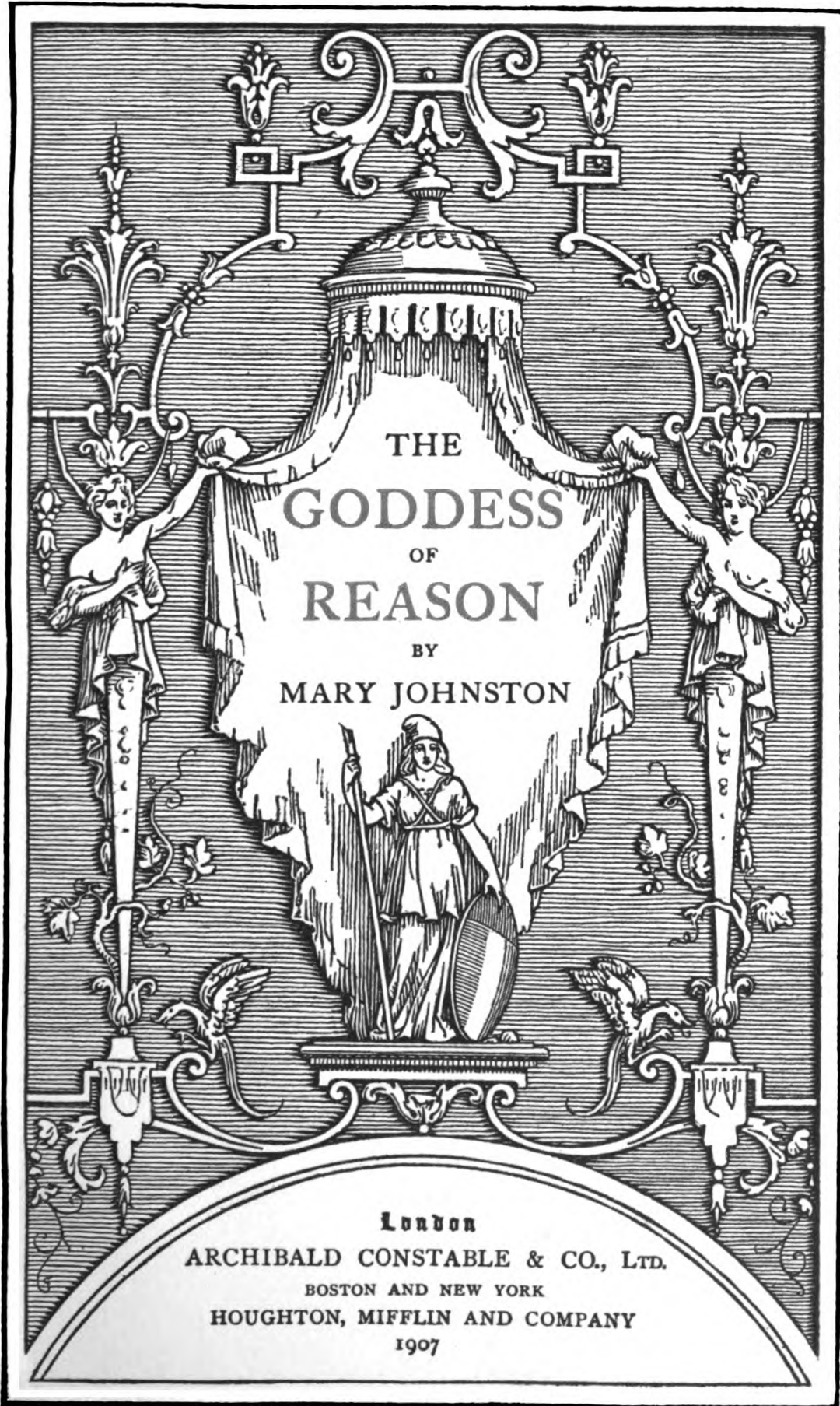




THE GODDESS OF REASON

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS





THE
GODDESS
OF
REASON

BY
MARY JOHNSTON

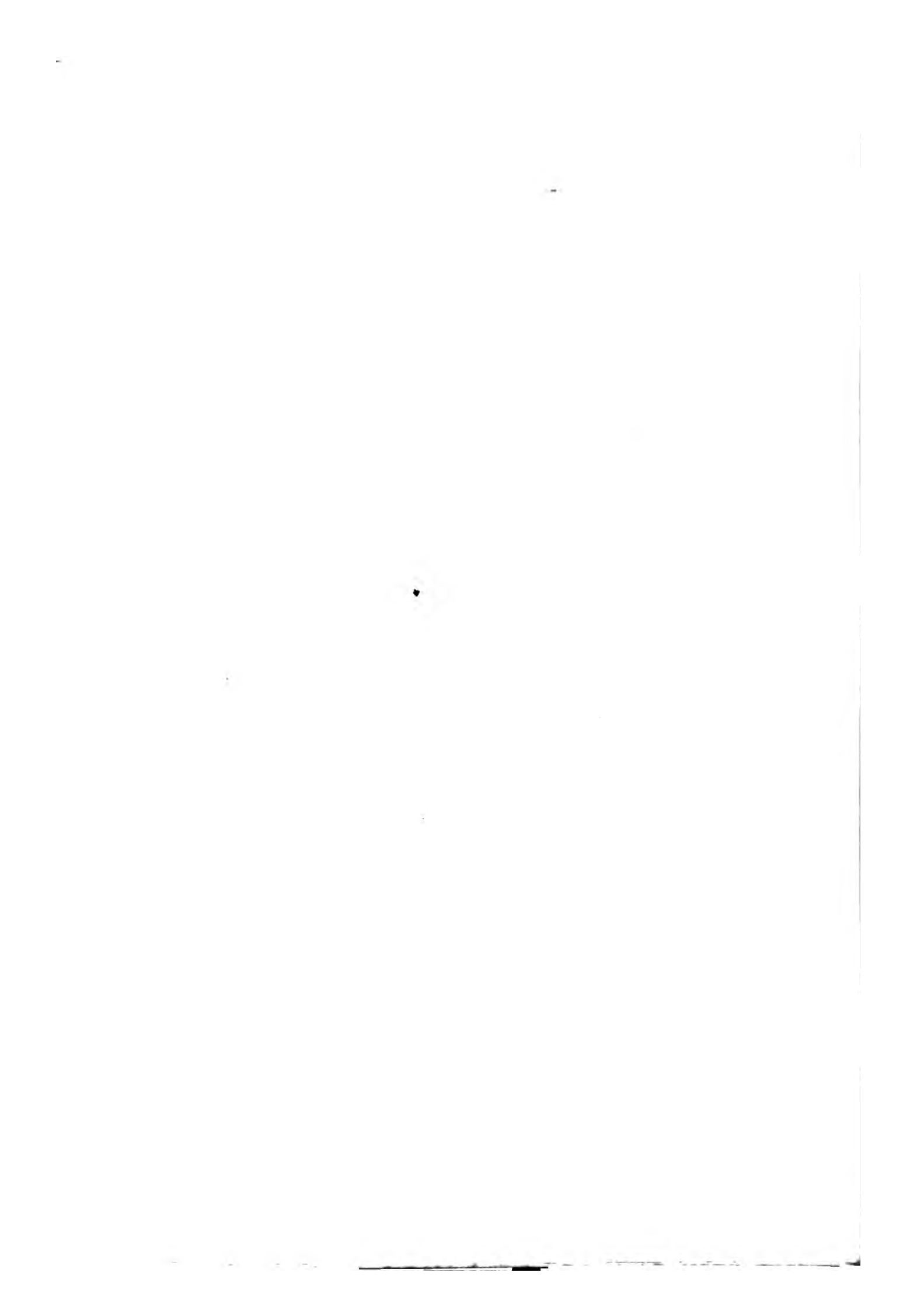
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TO
THE HOUSEHOLD AT WOODLEY
THIS DRAMA
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

RENÉ-AMAURY DE VARDES, *Baron of Morbec*

RÉMOND LALAIN, *Deputy from Vannes*

THE ABBÉ JEAN DE BARBASAN

COUNT LOUIS DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

CAPTAIN FAUQUEMONT DE BUC

MELIPARS DE L'ORIENT

ENGUERRAND LA FÔRET

THE VIDAME DE SAINT-AMOUR

THE ENGLISHMAN

GRÉGOIRE

RAÔUL THE HUNTSMAN

A SERGEANT OF HUSSARS

YVETTE

THE MARQUISE DE BLANCHEFÔRET

Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

MME. DE VAUCOURT

MME. DE MALESTROIT

MME. DE PONT À L'ARCHE

viii *DRAMATIS PERSONÆ*

SISTER FIDELIS	CÉLESTE
SISTER SIMPLICIA	ANGÉLIQUE
SISTER BENEDICTA	SÉRAPHINE
NANON	AN ACTRESS

Guests of De Vardes; Peasants; Lackeys; Soldiers; Nuns; Young Girls; The Mob at Nantes; Participants in the Fête of the Goddess of Reason; Republican Commissioners; National Soldiers; Women of the Revolution; Royalist Prisoners; Gaolers; Judges; Executioners; etc., etc.

TIME 1791–1794

- ACT I. The Château of Morbec in Brittany.
- ACT II. The Garden of the Convent of the Visitation in Nantes.
- ACT III. A Square in Nantes.
- ACT IV. A Church in Nantes used as a Prison.
- ACT V. *Scene I.* A Judgment Hall in Nantes.
Scene II. The Banks of the Loire.



THE
GODDESS OF REASON

ACT I

The Château of Morbec in Brittany. A formal garden and a wide terrace with stone balustrade. In the background the château, white and peak-roofed, with great arched doors. Beyond it a distant prospect of a Breton village and of the sea beating against a dangerous coast. To the left a thick wood, to the right a perspective of garden alleys, fountains, and flowering trees. On the terrace a small table set with bread, fruit, and wine. In the angle formed by the level of the terrace and the wide stone steps leading into the garden the statue of a nymph, its high and broad pedestal draped with ivy. Scattered on the terrace and steps a litter of stones, broken cudgels, rusty and uncouth weapons. The sun shines, the trees wave in the wind, the birds sing, the flowers bloom. It is a summer morning in the year 1791.

Enter from one of the garden paths a lackey and RÉMOND LALAIN. LALAIN wears a riding dress with a tricolour cockade.

LALAIN

SAY to Monsieur the Baron of Morbec,
Rémond Lalain, the Deputy from Vannes,
In haste is riding north, but hath drawn rein —

Hearing to-day of Baron Henri's death —
 And audience craves that he may homage pay
 To Morbec's latest lord!

THE LACKEY

I go, monsieur!

[Exit the lackey.]

LALAIN

These gloomy towers!

[He muses as he paces the garden walk before the terrace.]

Mirabeau is dead!

Gabriel Riquetti, dead, I salute thee,
 Great gladiator! Who treads now the sand
 That yesterday was trod by Mirabeau?
 Barnave, Lameth, ye are too slight of frame!
 There's Lafayette. No, no, *mon général!*
 Robespierre? Go to, thou little man!
 Jean Paul Marat, dog leech and People's Friend?
 Wild beast to fight with beast! Faugh! Down, Marat!
 Who stands this course, why, that man's emperor!
 Now how would purple look upon Marat?
 Jacques Danton? — Danton! Hot Cordelier!
 Dark Titan forging to a Titan's end!
 Shake not thy black locks from the tribune there,
 Nor rend the heavens with thy mighty voice!
 'T is not for thee, the victor's golden crown,
 The voice of France —

[The doors of the château open. Enter three lackeys bearing a great gilt chair, which they place with ceremony at the head of the steps which lead from the terrace into the garden.]

FIRST LACKEY (*stamping with his foot upon the terrace*)

The gilded chair place here !

We always judge our peasants from this chair,
We lords of Morbec ! North terrace, gilt chair !

SECOND LACKEY

Baron Henri sat here the day he died !

FIRST LACKEY

Now Baron René takes his turn !

[*They place the chair.*]

LALAIN (*as before*)

Danton !

Why not Lalain ? It is as good a name !
Mirabeau 's dead ! Out of my way, Danton !

THIRD LACKEY (*gathering up the stones which lie upon the terrace*)

I 'll throw these stones into the shrubbery !

SECOND LACKEY (*lifting a rusty scythe from the steps*)

This scythe I 'll fling into the fountain !

FIRST LACKEY (*his hands in his pockets*)

Hé !

One sees quite well that we have stood a siege !

[*The lackeys gather up the stones, the sticks, the broken and rusty tools and weapons.*]

LALAIN

Where lives the man who doth not worship Might ?
O Goddess All-in-All ! make me thine own,

THE GODDESS

As the bright moon did make Endymion ;
 And I will rim thy Phrygian cap with stars,
 And give thee for thy cestus the tricolour !

Enter GRÉGOIRE.

GRÉGOIRE

Monsieur Lalain !

LALAIN (*waving his hand*)
 My good Grégoire !

GRÉGOIRE (*to the lackeys*)

Despatch !

Monseigneur will be here anon !

[*He glances at the stones, etc.*

Rubbish !

Away with 't !

[*Passing the statue of the nymph, he strikes it with his hand.*

Will you forever smile ?

Stone lips that long have smiled at bitter wrong !

You might, my dear, have lost that smile last night !

FIRST LACKEY

Last night was something like !

SECOND LACKEY (*throwing the stones one by one into the shrubbery*)

Sangdieu ! last night

My heart was water !

GRÉGOIRE

Ah, poltroon ; your heart !

THIRD LACKEY (*making play with a broken stick*)
 Our baron's a swordsman! His rapier flashed!

FIRST LACKEY
Keen as the blade of the Sieur de Morbec!
 — And that is a saying old as the sea!

SECOND LACKEY
Hard as the heart of the Sieur de Morbec!
 — And that was said before the sea was made!
[They laugh.]

THIRD LACKEY (*pointing to LALAIN*)
 What's he?

GRÉGOIRE
 The advocate Rémond Lalain.

THIRD LACKEY
 A patriot?

GRÉGOIRE
 Hotter than Lanjuinais!

THIRD LACKEY
 What does he at Morbec?

GRÉGOIRE
 How should I know?
 His home was once within the village there,
 And now and then he visits the curé.

FIRST LACKEY
 The curé! He visits Yvette Charruel!

LALAIN (*as before*)
 Mirabeau and I were born in the south.

Oh, the orange flower beside the wall!
And the shaken olives when Mistral wakes!

GRÉGOIRE

Once they were friends, Baron René and he;
The Revolution came between —

FIRST LACKEY (*He sends a pike whirling into the
shrubbery*)

Long live

The Revolution!

GRÉGOIRE

My friend, 't will live
Without thy bawling!

THIRD LACKEY (*arranging the bottles upon the small
table*)

So! The red wine here,

The white wine there!

(*To a fallen bottle.*) Stand up, Aristocrat!

LALAIN

The sun is high!

[*He approaches the terrace and addresses the nearest
lackey.*]

How long must I await
The pleasure of Monsieur the Baron here?

THE LACKEY

Monsieur?

LALAIN

Go, fellow, go! and to him say,
Rémond Lalain —

O F R E A S O N

7

T H E L A C K E Y

I go, monsieur!

[*Exit the lackey.*]

L A L A I N

'T is well, *

René de Vardes, to keep me waiting thus!

[*GRÉGOIRE pours wine into a glass and descending the steps offers it to LALAIN.*]

G R É G O I R E

The old vintage, Monsieur Lalain!

L A L A I N

Thanks, friend.

The day is warm.

[*He raises the glass to his lips. Laughter and voices from the winding garden paths.*]

What 's that?

G R É G O I R E (*shrugging*)

More guests, no doubt!

The count, the vidame, and the young marquise!

All Morbihan felicitates Morbec,

And brings our baron bonbons and bouquets,

As if there were no hunger and no frost!

[*A distant sound from the wood of harsh and complaining voices.*]

L A L A I N

And that?

G R É G O I R E

Soldiers and huntsmen beat the woods;

For half the village is in hiding there,

Having assayed last night to burn Morbec!
 As if 't would burn! This time the soldiers came!
 Mon Dieu! the times are bad.

‡ LALAIN (*abruptly*)
 All the village!

Did Yvette Charruel—

GRÉGOIRE (*shrugging*)
 Yvette!

FIRST LACKEY (*from the terrace*)
 Yvette!

SECOND LACKEY
 I warrant monseigneur will hang Yvette!

[LALAIN *pours the wine upon the ground and throws the glass from him. It shatters against the balustrade. Laughter and voices. Guests appear in the garden walks, the women in swelling skirts of silk or muslin, powdered hair and large hats; the men in brocade and silk with cane swords, or in hunting dress.*

A LADY (*curtseying*)
 Monsieur le Vicomte!

A GENTLEMAN (*bowing*)
 Madame la Baronne!

MME. DE MALESTROIT
 A heavenly day.

ENGUERRAND LA FÔRET
 No cloud in the sky.

OF REASON

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THE VIDAME (*saluting a gentleman*)
Count Louis de Château-Gui!

COUNT LOUIS

Ah, monsieur!

[*Presents his snuff-box.*]

MME. DE PONT À L'ARCHE
For laces I advise Louise. Fichus?
The Bleeding Heart above the flower shop.

THE VIDAME

— *A lettre de cachet.* To Vincennes he went!

MME. DE MALESTROIT

But ah! what use of laces or fichus!
We emigrate so fast there's none to see!

THE ENGLISHMAN

I quote a great man — my Lord Chesterfield:
“Exist in the unhappy land of France
All signs that history hath ever shown” —

MME. DE PONT À L'ARCHE
The Queen wore carnation, Madame, pale rose,
The Dauphin —

LALAIN

What do I in this galley?

(*To GRÉGOIRE.*) I'll walk aside! [*Exit LALAIN.*]

COUNT LOUIS (*to GRÉGOIRE*)

Was that Rémond Lalain?

THE GODDESS

GRÉGOIRE

It was, Monsieur le Comte.

COUNT LOUIS

Ah, scélérat!

THE VIDAME

The talked-of Deputy for Vannes?

LA FÔRET

Tribune

Eloquent as Antony!

COUNT LOUIS

Demagogue!

THE ENGLISHMAN

I heard him in the Jacobins. He spoke,
And then they went and tore a palace down!

COUNT LOUIS

Stucco!

*Enter, laughing, Mlle. de CHÂTEAU-GUI, MELIPARS DE
L'ORIENT, and CAPTAIN FAUQUEMONT DE BUC. DE
L'ORIENT has in his hand a paper of verses.*My daughter and De L'Orient,
Captain Fauquemont de Buc!

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Messieurs, mesdames!

The poet and his verses!

THE COMPANY

Ah, verses!

OF REASON

· 11

COUNT LOUIS

Who is the fair, Monsieur de L'Orient?
Lalage or Lais or little Fleurette?
Men sang of Célestine when I was young, —
Ah, Célestine, behind thy white rose tree!

DE L'ORIENT

I do not sing of love, Monsieur le Comte!

M L L E . D E C H Â T E A U - G U I

He sings of this day —

DE BUC

The Eve of Saint John.

DE L'ORIENT

It is a Song of Welcome to De Vardes!

DE BUC

But yesterday poor Colonel of Hussars!

M L L E . D E C H Â T E A U - G U I

To-day Monsieur the Baron of Morbec!

DE L'ORIENT

Mars to Bellona leaves the tented field.

DE BUC

That's Bouillé at Metz! Kling! rang our spurs —
De Vardes' and mine — from Verdun to Morbec!

DE L'ORIENT

The warrior hastens to his native weald.

COUNT LOUIS

Would I might see again Henri de Vardes!

DE BUC

It would affright you, sir! The man is dead.

COUNT LOUIS

Ah, while he lived it was as did become
 A nobleman of France and Brittany!
 He was my friend; together we were young!
 From dawn to dusk, from dusk to dawn again,
 We searched for pleasure as for buried gold,
 And found it, too, in days when we were young!
 From every flint we struck the golden sparks,
 We plucked the thistle as we plucked the rose,
 And battle gave for every star that shone!
 O nymphs that laughing fled while we pursued!
 O music that was made when we were young!
 O gold we won and duels that we fought!
On guard, monsieur, on guard! Sa! sa! A touch!
What shall we drink? Where shall we dine? Ma foi!
There's a melting eye at the Golden Crown!
The Angel pours a Burgundy divine!
Come, come, the quarrel's o'er! So, arm in arm!
 O worlds we lost and won when we were young!
 O lips we kissed within the jasmine bower!
 O sirens singing in the clear moonlight! —
 With Bacchus we drank, with Apollo loved,
 With Actæon hunted when we were young!
 The wax-lights burned with softer lustre then.
 The music was more rich when we were young.
 Violet was the perfume for hair powder,

Ruffles were point and buckles were brilliant
 And lords were lords in the old land of France!
 We did what we would, and *lettres de cachet*,
 Like cooing doves they fluttered from our hands!

D E L' O R I E N T

Our tribute take, last of a noble line!

C O U N T L O U I S

Women! There will come no more such women!

D E L' O R I E N T

The laurel and the empress rose we twine.

C O U N T L O U I S

And Henri's gone! And now his cousin reigns, —
 René de Vardes that hath been years away!
 The King is dead. Well, well, long live the King!
 They say he's brave as Crillon, handsome too,
 With that *bel air* that no De Vardes's without!

Enter MME. DE VAUCOURT *followed by the* ABBÉ JEAN DE
 BARBASAN.

M L L E. D E C H Â T E A U - G U I

Monsieur l'Abbé!

D E B U C

Madame de Vaucourt!

M M E. D E V A U C O U R T (*with outspread hands*)
 You've heard? Last night they strove to burn Morbec!

A L L

What?

THE GODDESS

MME. DE VAUCOURT

The peasants!

COUNT LOUIS

Again!

DE BUC

Ah, I am vexed.

Messieurs, mesdames, the Baron of Morbec
 Silence enjoined, or the tale I'd have told!
 The abbé is so bold —

THE ABBÉ

De Buc's so proud!

And just because he brought us help from Vannes!
 The red Hussars to hive the bees again!

THE ENGLISHMAN

The seigneur and his peasants are at odds?

THE ABBÉ

Slightly!

COUNT LOUIS (*complacently*)

Henri was hated! Hate descends
 With the land.

DE L'ORIENT

There is a girl of these parts —

COUNT LOUIS

Eh?

DE L'ORIENT

She plays the firebrand.

C O U N T L O U I S

Bah!

D E L ' O R I E N T

She hath

The loveliest face!

C O U N T L O U I S

Hm!

T H E A B B É

I am unscathed.

De Vardes is slightly wounded!

A L L

Oh!

C O U N T L O U I S

Morbleu!

And how did it happen, Monsieur l'Abbé?

T H E A B B É

Behold us at our ease in the great hall,
De Vardes and I, a-musing o'er piquet!
Voltaire beside us, for we read "Alzire,"
A wine as well, more suave than any verse;
A still and starlit night, soft, fair, and warm;
Wax-lights, and roses in a china bowl.
He laid aside his sword and I my cap,
All tranquilly at home, the Two Estates!
He held carte blanche, I followed with quatorze.
The roses sweetly smelled, the candles burned,
At peace we were with nature and mankind. —
A crash of painted glass! a whirling stone!

A candle out! the roses all o'erturned!
 The thunder of a log against our doors!
 A clattering of sabots! a sudden shout!
Morbec, Morbec, it is thy Judgment Night!
Admission, admission, Aristocrats!
 Red turns the night, the servants all rush in.
Sieur! Sieur! the lackeys moan and wring their hands.
Give, give! the terrace croaks. *Burn, Morbec, burn!*
 The great bell swings in the windy tower
 Till the wolves in the forest pause to hear.
Fall, Morbec, fall! France has no need of thee!
 Upsprings a rosy light! a smell of smoke!
 Mischief's afoot! The Baron of Morbec
 Lays down his cards and takes his rapier up,
 Hums *Le Sein de sa Famille*, shuts *Alzire*,
 Resignedly rises —

COUNT LOUIS (*rubbing his hands*)

Expresses regret

That monsieur his guest —

THE ABBÉ

Should be incommoded

And turns to the door. I levy the tongs.
 The seneschal Grégoire hauls from the wall
 An ancient arquebus! The lackeys wail,
 And nothing do, as is the lackey's wont!
 Again the peasants thunder at the door!
Open, De Vardes! Oh, hated of all names!
The new is as the old! Death to De Vardes!
 The log strikes full, and now a panel breaks;
 In comes a hand that brandishes a pike;

A voice behind, *We've come to sup with thee!*
For thou hast bread and we have none, De Vardes!

T H E E N G L I S H M A N

Ha, ha! ha, ha! ha, ha!

C O U N T L O U I S

You laugh, monsieur?

T H E A B B É

I like calmness myself. Calm of the sea,
 Calm skies, the calm spring, and calmness of mind!
 A tempest's plebeian! So I admired
 René de Vardes when he walked to the door
 And opened it! Behold the whole wolf pack,
 As lean as 't were winter! canaille all!
 Sans-culottes and tatterdemalions,
 Mere dust of the field and sand of the shore;
 Humanity's shreds would follow the mode,
 And burn the château of their rightful lord!
 De Vardes' peasants in fine. *Mort aux tyrans!*
À bas Aristocrat! Vive la patrie!
Vive la Révolution! In they pressed,
 Gaunt, haggard, and shrill, and full in the front—
 Young and fair, conceive! dark-eyed and red-lipped—
 A fury, a mænad, a girl called—

D E L ' O R I E N T

Yvette!

T H E A B B É

So they named her, the peasants of Morbec,
 Named and applauded the dark-eyed besom!

When, De Vardes' drawn rapier just touching
 Her breast-knot of blue as she stood in his path,
 Up went her brown hand, armed with a sickle! —
 De Vardes is a known fencer, — 't is lucky!
 His wound is not deep, and in the left arm!

THE VIDAME

She may hang for that! How high I forget
 The gallows should be —

COUNT LOUIS (*offering his snuff-box*)

Monsieur le Vidame,

Thirty feet, I believe!

THE VIDAME

But not in chains —

COUNT LOUIS

No! It was the left arm.

DE L'ORIENT

What did De Vardes?

THE ABBÉ

De Vardes, with Liancourt and Rochefoucauld,
 Holds that the peasant doth possess a soul!
 I think it hurt him to the heart that he,
 New come to Morbec, and unknown to these,
 His vassals of the village, field, and shore,
 Should be esteemed by them an enemy,
 A Baron Henri come again, forsooth!
 But since 't was so, out rapier! parry! thrust!
 Diable! he 's a swordsman to my mind!

The mænad with the sickle he puts by;
 Runs through the arm a clamourer of corvée,
 Brings howling to his knees a sans-culotte,
 And strikes a flail from out a claw-like hand!
 They falter, they give way, the craven throng!
 The women cry them on; they swarm again.
 His bright steel flashes, rise and fall my tongs!
 But the lackeys are naught, and Grégoire finds
 A flaw in his musket; he will not fire!
 Pardieu! the things this Revolution kills!
 There is no faithfulness in service now!
 Our peasants grow bold. Ma foi! we're at bay!
 De Vardes and De Barbasan, rapier, tongs!
 Wild blows and wild cries, blown smoke and a glare,
 And the girl Yvette with her reaping hook
 Still pushed to the front by the women there!
 Upon De Vardes' white sleeve the blood is dark,
 And his breath comes fast! I see the event
 As 't will look in print in Paris next week,
 In *L'Ami du Peuple* or *Journal du Roi*!
 "The Vain Defence of an Ancient Château!
 When we Burn so Much, why not Burn the Land?"
 And I break with my tongs a young death's-head
 That's bawling — What think you? — *Vive la République.*

C O U N T L O U I S

Death and damnation!

T H E A B B É

So I said! And then,
 Quite, I assure you, in time's very nick,
 The saint De Vardes prays to smiled on him!

A thunder clap! — *Pas de charge! En avant!*
 Captain Fauquemont de Buc and his Hussars!

DE BUC

Warned by the saint, we galloped from Auray!

THE ABBÉ

Like the dead leaves borne afar on the blast,
 Or like the sea mist when the sun rises,
 Or like the red deer when the horn's sounded, —
 Like anything in short that's light o' heel, —
 Vanished our peasants! The women went last;
 And last of all the mænad with the eyes!
 Jesu! She might have been Jeanne d'Arc, that girl!
 The man who captures her has a hand full! —
 To the deep woods they fled, are hunted now. —
 De Vardes and I gave welcome to De Buc,
 Put out the fire, attended to our wounds,
 Resumed our cards, and finished our *Alzire* —
 The Château of Morbec stands, you observe!

[*The company applauds.*]

M L L E. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

But who was the saint? —

DE BUC

Ah, here is De Vardes!

Enter DE VARDES. He is dressed in slight mourning and carries his arm in a sling.

THE GUESTS

Monsieur the Baron of Morbec!

D E V A R D E S

 Welcome,
The brave and the fair, my old friends and new!
Welcome to Morbec!

C O U N T L O U I S

 Ah, your wounded arm! —
Our regret is profound!

D E V A R D E S

 It is nothing.
The fraternal embrace of the people!

C O U N T L O U I S

Oh, the people!

M M E . D E V A U C O U R T

The people!

D E L ' O R I E N T

The people!

C O U N T L O U I S

My friend, permit us to hope you will make
Of the people a signal example!

D E V A R D E S

They are misguided.

C O U N T L O U I S

Misguided! Morbleu!

D E V A R D E S

I will talk to them.

THE GODDESS

COUNT LOUIS

Monsieur le Baron,

Let your soldiers talk with a bayonet's point,
Your bailiffs with a rope —

MME. DE VAUCOURT

But what good saint

Brought warning to Auray ?

DE L'ORIENT

I guess that saint !

[*A lackey appears upon the terrace.*]

THE LACKEY

Madame la Marquise de Blanchefôret !

THE GUESTS

Ah !

La belle marquise !

Enter THE MARQUISE.

DE BUC

The saint !

DE VARDES

My neighbour fair,

And to De Barbasan and me last night

A guardian angel — [*He greets* THE MARQUISE.

Madame la Marquise !

THE MARQUISE

Monsieur le Baron !

(To the company.) Messieurs, mesdames !

D E V A R D E S

From Blanchefôret to Auray through the night
This lady rode —

T H E M A R Q U I S E (*with gayety*)

Ah, how I rode last night,
To Auray through the dark! This way it was:
I overheard two peasants yestereve
As in a lane I sought for eglantine.
“How long hath Morbec stood?” said one. “Too long!
But when to-morrow dawns ’t will not be there!
And we were born, I think, to burn châteaux! —
Ten, by the village clock — forget it not!”

T H E A B B É

Ah, ay, the while I dealt the clock struck ten.

T H E M A R Q U I S E

It was already dusk. — Like grey death moths
They slipped away! I knew not whom to trust,
For in these times there ’s no fidelity,
No faithful groom, no steadfast messenger!
My little page brought me my Zuleika.
I knew the red Hussars were at Auray,
And that ’t was said they loved their colonel well!
So to Auray came Zuleika and I!

D E B U C

We thought it was Dian in huntress dress!

D E V A R D E S

How deeply am I, Goddess, in thy debt!
No gold is coined wherewith I may repay!
[Music within.]

THE GODDESS

THE MARQUISE

Give me a rose from yonder tree!

[Laughing voices within.]

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

More guests,

They 're on the south terrace!

DE L'ORIENT

Violins too!

Ah, the old air —

[He sings.]

*There lived a king in Ys,
In Ys the city old!
Beside the sounding sea
He counted o'er his gold.*

DE VARDES

Let us meet them.

*[He gives his hand to THE MARQUISE. Exeunt
COUNT LOUIS, THE ABBÉ, DE BUC, DE L'ORIENT,
etc. GRÉGOIRE approaches DE VARDES.]*

GRÉGOIRE

Monseigneur — Monsieur the Deputy!

DE VARDES

Ah!

Say to monsieur I'm not at leisure now.

*[Exeunt DE VARDES and THE MARQUISE. The
terrace and garden are deserted save for GRÉGOIRE,
who seats himself in the shadow of the balustrade.]*

G R É G O I R E

Humph! — Monseigneur's not at leisure.

[He draws a Paris journal from his pocket and reads, following the letters with his forefinger.]

What news?

What says Jean Paul Marat, the People's Friend?

[A cry from the wood and the sound of breaking boughs. YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE enter the garden. RAÛL THE HUNTSMAN'S voice within.]

T H E H U N T S M A N

Hilloa! — Hilloa! — Hilloa!

[YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE turn towards one of the garden alleys. Laughter and voices.]

Y V E T T E

Go not that way!

S É R A P H I N E

There is no way!

T H E H U N T S M A N (*within*)

Hilloa! — Hilloa!

S É R A P H I N E

We're caught!

Y V E T T E

The terrace there! Behind the stone woman!

[They cross the garden to the terrace.]

S É R A P H I N E (*She stops abruptly and points to the table*)

Bread!

THE GODDESS

THE HUNTSMAN (*nearer*)

Hilloa! — Hilloa!

[YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE turn from the table and hide behind the tall, ivy-draped pedestal of the statue. GRÉGOIRE looks up from his paper and sees them.]

Enter RAÔUL THE HUNTSMAN.

THE HUNTSMAN

This way they came!

GRÉGOIRE (*jerking his thumb over his shoulder*)
Down yonder path! — plump to the woods again!

THE HUNTSMAN

The Hussars from Auray have twenty rogues!

GRÉGOIRE

Indeed!

THE HUNTSMAN

These two and my bag's full!

[Exit THE HUNTSMAN.]

GRÉGOIRE

Diable!

[He reads aloud.]

*Weary at last of intolerable wrong,
The peasants of Goy in Normandy rose
And burned the château. Who questions their right?*

[He folds his paper.]

Saint Yves! this stone is much harder than Goy!

[He looks fixedly at the statue and raises his voice.]

Ma'm'selle who would smile at the trump of doom,

I think that all the village will be hanged !
 And at its head that brown young witch they call
 Yvette —

Reënter DE VARDES *and* THE MARQUISE.

DE VARDES (*to* GRÉGOIRE)

Begone !

[*Exit* GRÉGOIRE. DE VARDES *and* THE MARQUISE
rest beside the statue, YVETTE listening.

Why, what 's a soldier for ?

But pity me, pity me, belle Marquise !
 Since pity is so sweet !

T H E M A R Q U I S E

I'm sure it is

A fearful wound !

D E V A R D E S

A fearful wound indeed !

But 't is not in the arm !

T H E M A R Q U I S E

No, monsieur ?

D E V A R D E S

No !

The heart ! I swear that it is bleeding fast !
 And I have naught wherewith to stanch the wound.
 Your kerchief —

T H E M A R Q U I S E

Just a piece of lace !

DE VARDES

'T will serve.

THE MARQUISE (*giving her handkerchief*)
Well, there! — Now tell me of last night.

DE VARDES

Last night!

Why, all this tintamarre was but a dream,
Fanfare of fairy trumpets while we slept.
A night it was for love-in-idleness,
And fragrant thoughts and airy phantasy!
There was no moon, but Venus shone as bright;
The honeysuckle blew its tiny horn
To tell the rose a moth was coming by.
Clarice-Marie! sang all the nightingales,
Or would have sung were nightingales abroad!
Hush, hush! the little waves kept whispering.
The ivy at your window still was peeping;
You lay in dreams, that gold curl on your breast!

THE MARQUISE

No, no! You cheat me not, monsieur! Last night
I did not sleep!

DE VARDES

Nor I!

THE MARQUISE

Miserable brigands!

DE VARDES

No, not brigands! Just wretched flesh and blood.

THE MARQUISE

You pity them?

D E V A R D E S

Ay.

T H E M A R Q U I S E

Were I a seigneur,

Lord of Morbec —

D E V A R D E S

Were I a poor fisher,

Sailing at sunrise home from the islands,
 Over the sea, and all my heart singing!
 And you were a herd girl slender and sweet,
 With the gold of your hair beneath your cap,
 And you kept the cows and you were my *douce*,
 And you waved your hand from the green cliff head
 When the sun and I came up from the sea! —
 And there was a seigneur so great and grim
 Who walked in his garden and said aloud,
 “ How many fish has he taken for me?
 Which of her cows shall I keep for myself?
 I leave him enough to pay for the Mass
 The day he is drowned, and the girl shall have
 The range of the hills for her one poor cow!
 Why should the fisher fret, the herd girl weep?
 There is no reason in a serf’s dull heart!
 I might have taken all. It is my right!”
 La belle Marquise, what would the herd girl do?
 And should the fisher suffer and say naught?

T H E M A R Q U I S E

There is no fisher nor no herd girl here.
 How fair the roses of Morbec, monsieur!

THE GODDESS

DE VARDES

Ay, they are lovely queens. They know it too!
I better like the heartsease at your feet.

THE MARQUISE

It is a peasant flower! — *Sieur de Morbec*,
Have you never loved?

DE VARDES

How fair is the day!
For loving how fit! 'T is the Eve of Saint John.

THE MARQUISE

Yes.

DE VARDES

Last year I loved on this very day.
Take the omen, madame!

THE MARQUISE

We had not met,
You and I!

DE VARDES

Ah, 't is true! We had not met! —
And so, fair as you are, you were not there,
In Paimpont Wood, on the Eve of Saint John?

THE MARQUISE

No!

DE VARDES

I wonder who was!

THE MARQUISE

In Paimpont Wood!
It is haunted!

D E V A R D E S

On the Eve of Saint John

I rode from Morbec here to Chatillon,
And through the wood of Paimpont fared alone.
It is a forest where enchantments thrive,
And a fair dream doth drop from every tree !
The old, old world of bitterness and strife
Is remote as winter, remote as death.
It was high noon in the turbulent town ;
But clocks never strike in the elfin wood,
And the sun's ruddy gold is elsewhere spent.
The light was dim in the depths of Paimpont,
Green, reverend, and dim as the light may be
In a sea king's palace under the sea.
The wind did not blow ; the flowering bough
Was still as the rose on a dead man's breast.
On velvet hoof the doe and fawn went by ;
In other woods the lark and linnet sang ;
A stealthy way was taken by the fox ;
The badger trod upon the softest moss ;
And like a shadow flitted past the hare.
Without a sound the haunted fountain played.
The oak boughs dreamed ; the pine was motionless ;
Its silver arms the beech in silence spread ;
The poplar had forgot its lullaby.
It was as still as cloudland in the wood,
For in a hawthorn brake old Merlin sleeps,
And every leaf is hushed for love of him.
There through the years they sleep and listless dream,
The wood of Paimpont and the wizard old.
They dream of valleys where the lilies blow ;
They dream of woodland gods and castles high,

Of faun and Pan and of the Table Round,
 Of dryad trees and of a maiden dark —
 That Vivien whom old Merlin once did love,
 Vivien le Gai whose love was poisonous!

THE MARQUISE

I've heard it said by women spinning flax,
 "Who wanders in Paimpont wanders in love;
 Let him who loves in Paimpont Wood beware!"

DE VARDES

Ah, idle word! Oh, many silver bells
 Since Vivien's day have rung, Beware, beware!
 And rung in vain, for in every clime
 Lies Paimpont Wood, dawns the Eve of Saint John!

THE MARQUISE

And in the forest there whom did you love?

DE VARDES

I do not know. I have not seen her since,
 Unless — unless I saw her face last night!

YVETTE (*behind the base of the statue*)

Oh! —

DE VARDES

Did you not hear a voice?

THE MARQUISE

'T is the wind. —
 You're riding through the wood to Chatillon.

DE VARDES

It was a lonely forest, deep and vast,
 A secret and a soundless trysting-place,

Where one might meet, nor be surprised to meet,
 From out his past, or from his life to come,
 A veiled shape, a presence bitter-sweet,
 A thing that was, a thing was yet to be!
 It seemed a fatal place, a destined day.
 Down a long aisle of beechen trees I rode,
 And came upon a small and sunny vale,
 And there I met a face from out a dream,
 An ancient dream, a dark and lovely face. —
 Give me your fan of pearl and ivory!

[*He takes the fan from* THE MARQUISE.

I'll turn enchanter, use it for my rod,
 And make you see, Marquise, the very place!

[*He points with the fan.*

Here sprang the silver column of a beech;
 There, mossy knees of a most ancient oak;
 Yonder a wall of thickest foliage rose;
 And here a misty streamlet flowed
 With a voice more low than the dying fall
 Of a trouvère's lute in Languedoc,
 And on its shore the slender flowers grew;
 Upon a foxglove bell hung *papillon*;
 And all around the grass was long and fine.
 Within this sylvan space, ah, ages since!
 The white-robed Druids in the cold moonlight
 Had reared an altar stone of wondrous height;
 The fane was there, the Druids were away.
 All fragrant was the air, and sunny still, —
 On the Eve of Saint John 't is ever so!
 Above, the sky was blue without a cloud;
 The sun stood sentinel o'er the haunted wood.
 And there she lay, the woman of a dream,

Against the Druid Stone, amid the bloom;
 Her eyes were on the stream; she leaned her ear;
 From far away the trouvère played to her;
 In flakes of gold the sunlight blessed her hair;
 Her lips were red; she seemed a princess old;
 Mid purple bloom she lay and gazed afar,
 In the magic wood on a magic day,
 Listening to hear the mighty trouvère play.
 Was she a princess or a peasant maid?
 I do not know, pardie! She may have been
 That Vivien who wrought old Merlin wrong.
 I cannot tell if she were rich or poor;
 I only saw her face; I only know
 I loved the dream I met in Paimpont Wood
 As I did ride last year to Chatillon
 On Saint John's Eve. —

[He lays the fan upon the table.
 So I have loved, Marquise!

THE MARQUISE

What did your pretty dream?

DE VARDES

As other dreams;

She fled!

THE MARQUISE

And you pursued?

DE VARDES

Yes, but in vain!

Trouble no dream that is dreamed in Paimpont!
 The wood closed around her; she vanished quite.
 It must have been that evil Vivien,
 Since you, Marquise, have never trod the wood!

THE MARQUISE

Would I have fled?

DE VARDES

Why, then, without doubt
It was Vivien! But yet do you know
'T is the Eve of Saint John, and here, last night,
I dreamed that I saw my dream again!

*[The hand and arm of the statue fall, broken, to the
ground at the feet of THE MARQUISE.]*

THE MARQUISE

Ah!

DE VARDES (*pushes the marble aside with his foot*)
It is nothing! The stone was cracked last night.
Some crack-brained peasant had no better mark!

THE MARQUISE

'T is a *présigne*! — I feel it. —

DE VARDES

You shudder!

THE MARQUISE

One trod near my grave! I'm suddenly cold!

DE VARDES

The sun never shines on this terrace!

THE MARQUISE

No!

'T was an air from the Forest of Paimpont
Came over me!

[Voices within. DE L'ORIENT sings.]

THE GODDESS

DE L'ORIENT

*In Ys they did rejoice,
In Ys the wine was free;
The Ocean lent its voice
Unto that revelry!*

THE MARQUISE

Oh, come away!

Let us find the violins and the sun!

There are other woods than Paimpont. Come away!

[*Exeunt DE VARDES and THE MARQUISE.*]YVETTE (*leaves the shadow of the statue*)

'T was he! That horseman who did waken me

That Saint John's Eve I strayed in Paimpont Wood!

O Our Lady —

SÉRAPHINE (*from the statue*)

Saint Yves! There is bread!

[*YVETTE takes from the table a loaf of bread and throws it to SÉRAPHINE, who springs upon it like a famished wolf.*]

Ah—h—h!

[*Setting her teeth in the loaf.*][*YVETTE, about to lay her hand upon another round of bread, sees the fan lying upon the cloth. She leaves the bread and takes up the fan. It opens in her hand.*]

YVETTE

Oh! —

[*She sits in the great chair and waves the fan slowly to and fro.*]

Were I a lady fair and free,
I would powder my hair with dust of gold,

I would clasp a necklace around my throat,
 Of jewels rare, and a gown I would wear,
 Blue silk like Our Lady of Toute Remède !
 My shoes should be made of golden stuff,
 And a broidered glove should dress my hand,
 My hand so white that a lord might kiss !
 I would spin fine flax from a silver wheel,
 I would weave a web for my bridal sheets,
 I would sing of King Gradlon under the sea,
 Were I a lady fair and free !

Enter GRÉGOIRE.

SÉRAPHINE (*from the statue*)

Yvette !

Yvette !

YVETTE

Peace, peace !

GRÉGOIRE

What have you there ?

YVETTE

A fan.

So long I've wanted one !

GRÉGOIRE

A fan, forsooth !

You cannot eat a fan, drink it, wear it !

YVETTE

I would look on 't.

One day at Vannes the deputy's sister
 Showed me a fan, but it was not like this !

Oh, not like this with these wreaths of roses,
These painted clouds, this fairy ship!

GRÉGOIRE

The price

Would keep a peasant from starvation!
And belike it fell from the lifted hand
Of Madame la Marquise de Blanchefôret!

[The fan breaks in YVETTE's hand.]

SÉRAPHINE (*leaving the statue*)

Thou evil-starred!

YVETTE

What have I done?

GRÉGOIRE

Diantre!

Now you will be beaten as well as hanged!

YVETTE

She called us miserable brigands!

Enter DE VARDES.

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Yves! Saint Hervé! Saint Herbot!

DE VARDES (*to GRÉGOIRE*)

Voices?

GRÉGOIRE

Monseigneur?

DE VARDES

The fan of Madame la Marquise.

G R É G O I R E

Monseigneur?

D E V A R D E S (*perceiving YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE*)

What will you have, good people?

S É R A P H I N E

Saint Guenolé! Saint Thromeur! Saint Sulic! —
 He did not see us in the dark last night!

[D E V A R D E S *regards them more closely.*]

G R É G O I R E

Séraphine Robin — Yvette Charruel —
 They are not bad folk, monseigneur!

S É R A P H I N E

No, faith!

[D E V A R D E S *studies the name written upon a playing card which he holds in his hand.*]D E V A R D E S (*to G R É G O I R E*)

Say to Monsieur the Deputy from Vannes
 That I await him here.

[*Exit G R É G O I R E.* D E V A R D E S *looks intently at YVETTE.*]

Y V E T T E

It was so beautiful,
 The fan — I took it in my hand — it broke!

S É R A P H I N E

All that she touches breaks!

D E V A R D E S (*to YVETTE*)

Wast ever thou
 In the Forest of Paimpont?

THE GODDESS

YVETTE

Oh, monseigneur!
Last Eve of Saint John, by the Druid Stone!

DE VARDES

Ah!—

[He takes the fan from YVETTE's hand and examines it.]

Beyond all remedy!— Well, 't is done.
Do not tremble so!

YVETTE

I tremble not!

Enter LALAIN.

SÉRAPHINE (to YVETTE)

Here's Monsieur Lalain!

YVETTE

I care not, I!

DE VARDES

Ah,

Rémond Lalain!

LALAIN (*stiffly*)

Monsieur—

DE VARDES

A moment, pray,
Until I've spoken with these worthy folk!

LALAIN (*coldly*)

Monsieur the Baron's pleasure!

[He moves aside, but in passing speaks to YVETTE.]

Yvette! Yvette!

Y V E T T E

Monsieur the Deputy?

L A L A I N

Too fair art thou!

Beware! This is the Seigneur of Morbec!

Y V E T T E

I know.

L A L A I N

He is the foe of France!

Y V E T T E

I know.

D E V A R D E S (*to SÉRAPHINE*)

Your business, well?

SÉRAPHINE (*stammering*)

Our business, monseigneur? —

Oh, give me help, Saint Yves le Véridique! —

Our business? — Saint Michel! — Well, since we're here! —

Monseigneur, was the pullet plump and sweet?

D E V A R D E S

The pullet?

Y V E T T E

Our pullet, monseigneur.

L A L A I N

Distrained for rent!

SÉRAPHINE

And Lisette, monseigneur?

May we enquire for Lisette's health?

D E V A R D E S

Lisette?

THE GODDESS

YVETTE

Our cow, monseigneur.

LALAIN

Taken for taxes!

SÉRAPHINE

It was the best Lisette!

YVETTE

She followed me
Through the green lanes, and o'er the meadows salt.
Her breath was sweet as May!

DE VARDES

It would please you
To have your cow again?

YVETTE

Oh, monseigneur!
Monseigneur, I'm the herd girl of Morbec!

LALAIN (*aside*)

They gaze into each other's eyes!

DE VARDES

What is
Thy name?

YVETTE

Yvette.

SÉRAPHINE

Ay, ay, 't is so! — Yvette.
Called also The Right of the Seigneur! —

D E V A R D E S

The Right of the Seigneur !

S É R A P H I N E (*nodding*)

Just so.

L A L A I N (*aside*)

Recall

Just one of a great seigneur's privileges !

Baiser des mariées, in short, my friend !

S É R A P H I N E

O holy Saints ! the night that she was born !
 The thunder pealed, the sea gave forth a cry,
 The forked lightnings played, the winds were out !
 And in the hut her mother lay and wailed,
 And called on all the saints, the while Jehan
 (That was her mother's husband, monseigneur),
 He stood and struck his heel against the logs.
 Up flew the sparks, for all the wood was drift,
 Salt with the sea, and every flame was blue.
 I held the babe — Yvette, show monseigneur
 The mark beneath the ear !

Y V E T T E

No !

S É R A P H I N E

Stubbornness !

'T is there !

L A L A I N

A birthmark — a small blue flower !

DE VARDES

Ah!

SÉRAPHINE

Ay! a little mark. — Jehan Charruel!
 He was a violent man, — the sea breeds such!
 He cursed Yvonne upon her pallet there,
 So pale she was, and dying with the tide!
 He cursed the saints, the purple mark, the babe,
 And some one else I dare not name —

LALAIN

I dare!

Henri-Etienne-Amaury de Vardes,
 Late Baron of Morbec!

SÉRAPHINE

Then out he goes,
 A-weeping hard — Jehan — into the night.
 Ouf! how it blew! —
 The sea ran high, he met it in the dark,
 Was drowned! Yvonne went with the ebb. Behold
 Yvette!

*[SÉRAPHINE retreats to the table, where she furtively
 drinks from a half-emptied wineglass. LALAIN fol-
 lows her and the two talk together.]*

DE VARDES

That purple flower, that violet
 By nature limned upon thy slender throat, —
 From north to south, from east to west 't is known!
 A De Vardes bore that mark at Poitiers.
 The marshal, Hugues the Fair, and black Arnaud,
 The late baron — Why, what hast thou to do

With burning down châteaux to make a light
To show the Morbihan that purple flower?

Y V E T T E

O Our Lady of Thorns!

D E V A R D E S

Herd girl too fair!
And vision of Paimpont, fair as I dreamed!
How fair was thy errand last night?

Y V E T T E

Monseigneur!

D E V A R D E S

In the ashes of Morbec what shouldst thou find?

Y V E T T E

We only wished to make a little light —
A little light to let the neighbours know
That we were hungry!

D E V A R D E S

What neighbours hast thou?

Y V E T T E

Normandy and Maine, Anjou and Poitou,
The sea, the sky, and somewhat far away,
The Club of the Jacobins at Paris.

D E V A R D E S

Thy father was a nobleman of France!

Y V E T T E

I never had a father, monseigneur!
I had a mother, and she loved, they say,

She dearly loved the fisherman Jehan !
When for the dead I pray, I pray for them.

DE VARDES

How old art thou ?

YVETTE

How old? Ah, let me see !

[She counts upon her fingers.]

The year the hailstones fell and killed the wheat;
The year the flax failed and we made no songs;
The year I begged for bread; the bitter year
We buried Louison who died of cold,
And Jacques was hanged who shot the seigneur's deer;
The Pardon of Sainte Anne I had a gown;
Came Angélique from Paris, told us how
The wicked Queen was smiling, smiling there;
Justine pined away, they shot Michel If,
Down fell the Bastille, I learned *Ça ira*;
The deputy came to the curé's house,
Beside the deep blue sea I walked with him.
A day there was at Vannes, a glorious day,
When music played, and every banner waved,
And all the folk went mad and rang the bells!
Vive la Révolution! Vive Mirabeau!
Vive Rémond Lalain! I wept when 't was o'er,
Last summer was so fair! I wandered far,
One day I wandered through a darksome wood —
'T was on the Eve of good Saint John, I know!

DE VARDES

Ah —

YVETTE

The summer fled, the light, the warmth did go,

The winter came that was so cruel cold,
 Cold as the dead ! And hunger, monseigneur,
 With bread at the château ! — Died Baron Henri. —
 The summer came again, the roses bloomed,
 The roses bloomed, but they were not for us !
 For us the dank seaweed, the thorny furze.
 The lark sang well, but ah, it sang too high !
 We could not lift our hearts to heaven's gate ;
 We only heard the wind moan at our door.
 We cried to the saints, but they took no heed !
 One told us what they did at Goy and Vannes,
 At Goy and Vannes, pardieu ! they helped themselves !
 We heard there had come a new lord to Morbec,
 A soldier and a stranger to us all !
 Three days have gone since I did sit alone
 Upon the cliff edge in the waving grass ;
 The mew and curlew cried, the night wind blew,
 And in the sunset glow red turned Morbec !
 I thought of my mother, I thought of France,
 I looked at the château cruel and high,
 And as I was hungry I ate my black bread ! —
 I think, monseigneur, that I am nineteen.

D E V A R D E S

Pauvre petite !

Y V E T T E

Ah, poor indeed !

D E V A R D E S

How dark

Thine eyes !

Y V E T T E

My mother's were darker, they say !

DE VARDES

Thy face is the face of a picture there.

YVETTE

I know — the Duchess Jeanne, who died for love.

DE VARDES

Did Vivien teach thee magic in the wood?

YVETTE

Monseigneur?

DE VARDES

Pauvre petite!

YVETTE

O Our Lady!

The roses smell so sweet —

[LALAIN comes forward.]

LALAIN

I pardon crave,

But I must sup to-night at Rennes. Please you,
Release this peasant girl! Affairs there are
Of which I'd speak —

DE VARDES

Ay, presently!

LALAIN

Now!

DE VARDES

Monsieur!

LALAIN

Citoyen René-Amaury Vardes —

DE VARDES

Is that, monsieur, the latest Paris mode?

*Citoyen René-Amaury Vardes,*The *De* left off, our hats (*Glances at LALAIN*) left on!LALAIN (*removing his hat*)

Monsieur

The Baron of Morbec!

DE VARDES (*bowing*)

Monsieur

The Deputy for Vannes!

*[Laughter and voices within.]**Enter from the château THE MARQUISE and MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI with DE L'ORIENT and DE BUC.*DE L'ORIENT (*sings*)*Then spake the king of Ys**Above the song and shout,**Bring here the golden key**That keeps the ocean out!*

THE MARQUISE

Monsieur le Baron,

My lost fan!

YVETTE (*aside*)

Oh me!

DE VARDES

Madame la Marquise,

I will give you a fan that's to my taste;

By Watteau painted, mounted by Laudet,

Fragile and fine, an Adonis of fans!
This that I broke I will keep for myself.

[*Pockets the fan.*]

Forgive the mere accident!

YVETTE

Ah!

SÉRAPHINE (*from the table*)

Ah—h—h!

LALAIN (*aside*)

Gods!

If I forgive!

THE MARQUISE

At Blanchefôret, monsieur,
The Watteau, Laudet, Adonis of fans,
I'll take from your hand —

DE VARDES

I ride there anon,
(*Aside.*) But not through the Forest of Paimpont
And not on the Eve of Saint John.

THE MARQUISE

Come soon,
My garden is sweetest in June.

DE L'ORIENT (*sings*)

*In Ys they sing no more,
In Ys the city old!
The waves are rolling o'er
The king and all his gold.*

M L L E . D E C H Â T E A U - G U I

Look at *my fan*, Monsieur le Baron!

[LALAIN *crosses to* YVETTE.

L A L A I N

Hast thou forgot, hast thou forgot, Yvette,
Thy part, thy lot, the very name they give thee?
This is Morbec, this is the brazen castle!
There are no roses here.

Y V E T T E

So generous

He was!

L A L A I N

Generous! Oh, well are you called
The Right of the Seigneur!

Y V E T T E (*passionately*)

Give me not that

Detestable name!

L A L A I N

So meek under wrongs—

Y V E T T E

Oh!

L A L A I N

So quick to forget—

Y V E T T E

Oh!

L A L A I N

La patrie—

Sworn oaths — the tricolour —

YVETTE

Anger me not!

LALAIN

On your lips *Ça Ira!* but in your heart
O Richard, O mon Roi!

YVETTE

'T is false!

LALAIN

And I — and I — Yvette!

YVETTE

Speak not to me!

LALAIN

You gaze at that man! I tell you he woos
 Madame la Marquise de Blanchefôret!

[YVETTE *crosses to* THE MARQUISE, DE VARDES,
and the guests.

YVETTE (*to* THE MARQUISE)

Madame!

I broke the fan! I would pay if I might.
 I would keep your cows, or spin your flax—

THE MARQUISE

The fan!

You broke the fan — not monsieur there!

YVETTE

No, I!

THE MARQUISE

Sainte Geneviève!

Enter COUNT LOUIS, THE VIDAME, MME. DE VAUCOURT,
etc.

SÉRAPHINE

Yvette!

COUNT LOUIS

La belle Marquise!

[SÉRAPHINE *draws* YVETTE *back to the base of the statue.* COUNT LOUIS, THE MARQUISE, *and the guests talk together.* LALAIN *crosses to* DE VARDES.

LALAIN

René de Vardes!

DE VARDES

Rémond Lalain!

LALAIN

This day I bury our friendship of old!

DE VARDES

So!

LALAIN

I owe to you a thousand louis
Which I'll repay, monsieur!

DE VARDES

I doubt it not.

LALAIN

Touch not the girl Yvette!

DE VARDES

At last the heart of the matter! I see
You have been through the Forest of Paimpont.

LALAIN

Or touch at your peril!

DE VARDES

Monsieur!

LALAIN

Oh, if

You lay your hand upon your sword, monsieur,
I'm for you there!

DE VARDES

Art mad, or drunk with power,
Monsieur the favourite of the Jacobins?

LALAIN

There'll come a day when to be Jacobin
Is something more, monsieur, than to be king!

DE VARDES

Indeed!

[A Sergeant of Hussars appears on the terrace and salutes.]

Sergeant!

THE SERGEANT

My Colonel!

DE VARDES

Well, your report.

THE SERGEANT

My Colonel, wood and shore we've searched since dawn,
And twenty bitter rogues we've found, no less!

They crouched behind the tall grey stones, or lay
 Prone in the furze, or knelt at Calvaries!
 Two women remain —

[He stares at YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE.]

SÉRAPHINE

O Saint Thégonnec!
 Saint Guirec! Saint Servan!

YVETTE

O Our Lady!

Enter THE ABBÉ.

THE ABBÉ

De Vardes, your precious peasants — *[He sees YVETTE.]*
 Who is here?

The De Méricourt, the mænad, I swear!
 Who wounded De Vardes!

YVETTE

Oh!—

MME. DE VAUCOURT

The Egyptian!

SÉRAPHINE

Monseigneur, monseigneur, she's none of mine!

Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

The poor girl!

SÉRAPHINE

Ah, mademoiselle, it is
 The innocentest creature!

THE ABBÉ (*touches YVETTE upon the cheek*)

Good-morning,

My dear!

COUNT LOUIS

Hm—m—m!—pretty!

THE VIDAME

Certainly the gallows

Should be thirty feet high.

COUNT LOUIS

Hm—m—m! Something less,

Monsieur le Vidame!

LALAIN

Diable!

DE VARDES (*to the sergeant*)

Where are your captives?

THE SERGEANT

My Colonel,

I have them safely here! Ha! you within!

[Enter from the hall of the château soldiers and huntsmen with peasants, men and women; some sullenly submissive, others struggling against their bonds. They crowd the terrace before the great doors. The guests of DE VARDES to the right and left upon the terrace, the stairs, and in the garden. YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE beside the statue; LALAIN near them; DE VARDES with his hand upon the great chair.]

MME. DE VAUCOURT

Oh, the brigands!

COUNT LOUIS (*rubbing his hands*)

Here, Sergeant, range them here,
Upon the terrace! And take the great chair,
De Vardes! Ma foi! We will teach them, the rogues!
Monsieur l'Anglais, have you peasants at home
Plague you at times? — Word of a gentleman!
It seems like old days and Henri again!

*[The soldiers thrust their prisoners forward with
the butts of their muskets.]*

A MAN

Monseigneur!

ANOTHER

Monseigneur!

A WOMAN

Madame la Marquise!
My father was your father's foster brother!

THE MARQUISE

Is that a reason you should burn châteaux?

A YOUNG WOMAN

Where's Yvette Charruel?

YVETTE

Here, Angélique!

SÉRAPHINE (*aside to ANGÉLIQUE*)

Of course! Betray the girl! I knew you would.

AN OLD WOMAN

Yvette said God would have mercy! I faint —

DE VARDES (to GRÉGOIRE)

Give her wine!

A PEASANT

See! There is Rémond Lalain!

LALAIN

Patience, compatriot! Thursday I speak
In the Jacobins!

ANGÉLIQUE

Ah, monseigneur!

Ah, monseigneur, there 's she who led us here!
There 's she who said the shadow of Morbec
Blackened the land as sin blackens the soul!

THE GUESTS

Ah!—

ANGÉLIQUE

That same Yvette, who said, monseigneur,
That delving the earth, the peasants of France
In a long age had delved up a thought!

THE GUESTS

Ah!—

ANGÉLIQUE

She said that we were never born to starve!
She said the seigneur's dues were all *infame!*

THE GUESTS

Ah!—

THE VIDAME

Burn the witch!

DE VARDES

Have you done?

ANGÉLIQUE

Monseigneur,

She said the forest deer, the hare, the birds,
Were just as much the peasant's as the lord's !

T H E E N G L I S H M A N

What? What?

ANGÉLIQUE

She said the saints they wished no tithes !

T H E A B B É

I give her up !

ANGÉLIQUE

Monseigneur, monseigneur,
She said that all our hope was the tricolour !

D E B U C

O lilies of Bourbon !

SÉRAPHINE (*to ANGÉLIQUE*)

Thou little beast !

ANGÉLIQUE (*shrilly*)

Yvette said bitter hunger, cold, and want
Came with *noblesse* and with *noblesse* would go !
Yvette said the Queen was an Austrian !
Yvette said the King was a *fainéant* !
Yvette said the princes were traitors !
Yvette said the armies would turn to us !
Yvette heard the drums of the Republic !

T H E G U E S T S

Out !

THE GODDESS

COUNT LOUIS

Enough!

SÉRAPHINE

Thou hellicat!

A PEASANT

Monseigneur!

Saint Yves le Véridique knows it is truth!
 She ever rings the tocsin in our hearts!

ANOTHER

Yvette Charruel!

A WOMAN

She led us here!

ANOTHER WOMAN

Yvette!

Yvette Charruel!

ANGÉLIQUE

Yvette? —

[Several of the women laugh.]

DE VARDES

Why, you are all cowards!

SÉRAPHINE

So they are, monseigneur, so they are!

DE VARDES *(to the peasants)*

Who speaks for you?

[A silence.]

THE PEASANTS

Monseigneur — monseigneur —

[They break off. DE VARDES stands waiting for them to speak, his hand upon the chair.]

OF REASON

61

AN OLD WOMAN

Yvette —

AN OLD MAN

Yvette —

THE PEASANTS

Monseigneur —

[They break off. They make a sighing sound. The old woman begins to say her beads.]

YVETTE

Monseigneur,

They are so hungry ! Monseigneur, 't is said
You are a soldier and have been to war !
Oh, to us all there comes one battle-field
When we must look into a conqueror's eyes !
Think then upon that last dark plain and show
Mercy to us who in the shadow stand !
We are your enemies !

DE BUC

Faith of an officer !

De Vardes —

YVETTE

The children are crying at home,
Monseigneur !

A WOMAN

O Sainte Vierge, have pity !

YVETTE

With bowed heads the old men wait !

THE GODDESS

A WOMAN

Oh, my father!

YVETTE

The young men hear the ravens crying!

THE PEASANTS

Aie! —

YVETTE

The nets are dry, the red sails laid away,
And all the boats lie idle by the shore.

A FISHERMAN

Star of the Sea! Pray for poor fisherfolk!

A PEASANT

I left my sickle in the standing corn.

YVETTE

The wheat must fall, the flax be gathered soon,
Or else we 'll sing no songs in Morbihan!

THE PEASANTS

Aie! The songs of the *diskanerien*!

YVETTE

The hearths are cold and the wheels turn not,
And Hunger sits on every doorstep!

THE PEASANTS

Aie! —

YVETTE

To-morrow is the Pardon of the Birds.
The birds go free — the birds go free, monseigneur!

DE BUC

And so I swear should you!

THE PEASANTS

The birds go free!

A WOMAN

My little bird at home!

THE MARQUISE

Give her, monsieur,

Another fan to break!

YVETTE

Not one of yours,

Madame la Marquise!

DE VARDES (*to the sergeant*)

Give them liberty.

THE SERGEANT

My Colonel?

DE VARDES

Cut their bonds; set them free!

Make way for them there!

(*To the peasants.*) Peasants of Morbec!

Last night you rose against your lord and strove

To burn his house, to slay his guest and him.

How shall he speak to you to-day? Poor fools!

Distraught and blind you struck ere that you looked,

And struck at one who fain would be your friend,

Who has his vision of a seigneur's right!

These are the towers of Morbec, but I

Am not Baron Henri, blind that ye are!

I am Baron René, remember my name.
 Bread you shall have, I will think of your wrongs.
 No foe am I! There are the open doors.
 Back to the village go! but look you well.
 Mistake no more, it will be dangerous!
 Creep not this way again in the dark night,
 Or you may meet an ancient Lord of Morbec!
 More loyal grow, cease all your traitorous talk,
 Raise not Rebellion's head or it will find
 A soldier of the King with armèd heel!
 Mistake no more! This once I pardon you.
 Begone! The fields await you and the wind
 Sits fair for Quiberon! Begone.

(*To YVETTE and SÉRAPHINE.*) Stay!

*[The peasants press in confusion toward the doors
 of the château.]*

THE PEASANTS

Live Baron René!

LALAIN.

O Breton fools! — Yvette!

[YVETTE does not answer. She looks at DE VARDES.]

THE MARQUISE (*with strained laughter*)

High justice at Morbec!

THE VIDAME

Mille diables!

The wretches all go free!

COUNT LOUIS

Is this Morbec?

Mort de ma vie! What is it that you do,
Monsieur le Baron de Morbec?

D E V A R D E S

My pleasure,
Monsieur le Comte de Château-Gui, upon
My peasants of Morbec!

C U R T A I N



—

—

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ACT II

The garden of the Convent of the Visitation at Nantes. Long lines of fruit trees which appear to sleep in the sunshine. In the middle of the garden a stone fountain, where rises and falls a little jet of water. To the left the white buildings of the convent; in the background, between the convent and the street, a high garden wall, the tops of trees, and the roof and spire of a church. There is a barred door in the wall. The doors and windows of the convent parlour giving upon the garden are open. It is the summer of 1792.

A nun appears for a moment at the door of the convent, then vanishes, and DE VARDES and YVETTE enter the garden.

DE VARDES

WHAT hast thou learned to-day?

YVETTE

In history:

The battles of Rossbach and of Minden!
The Peace of Paris —

DE VARDES

Indeed!

YVETTE

Philosophy:

Man is born free — but who will break his chains?

DE VARDES

It is a question truly !

YVETTE

Theology :

God is the father of us all — and yet
I think I know how feels an orphan child !

DE VARDES

Defeat of France, Rousseau, and Modern Doubt !
And hast thou learnt all this in convent walls ?

YVETTE

No !

DE VARDES

They are good to thee, the Sisters all ?

YVETTE

Monseigneur, yes !

DE VARDES

When I did place thee here
After that day thou didst not burn Morbec !
I gave the Reverend Mother straitest charge, —
This convent oweth much to the De Vardes.
They have enriched it oft, and it in turn
Refuge hath given unto noble dames.
Oft did she sit beside the fountain there,
That Duchess Jeanne whose look thou wearest now !

YVETTE

Oh ! —

DE VARDES

How mournfully thou sighest ! Yet

How glorious are thine eyes this lovely day!
Thou 'rt well, and thou art happy, art thou not?

Y V E T T E

There is no hunger here, no cold, no care!
I ever wished to learn and here I learn,
Here where the Duchess Jeanne did sit forlorn, —
And then I pray within the chapel there,
And then I count the stars as they are lit, —
And then I think of all the lights of Nantes!

D E V A R D E S

It hath been many days I 've been away,
To Morbec and to Vannes and to Vitré.

Y V E T T E

I thought that thou wouldst never come again!

D E V A R D E S

Didst think the night had ceased to long for day?
Didst think the tide no more obeyed the moon?
The reed no longer bowed unto the wind?

Y V E T T E

Ah, do not jest! — There 's blood upon thy coat!

D E V A R D E S

'T is nothing! — We have had hard words to-day,
My men and I! [*He gazes around at the quiet garden.*

O holy peace! O balm!

O green and sunny quietude! Outside
There 's tumult, heat, confusion, enmity!
Here is a haven, here 't is blissful sweet!

[*They sit upon the marge of the fountain.*

All is dismay and doubt in France to-day.
 With troubled eyes men question destiny!
 Outside I front the storm as best I may,
 But here is anchorage profound and fair —
 There fruit trees drifting bloom, this fountain marge!

YVETTE

I better love the wild and desolate shore!

DE VARDES

What is that ribbon closed within thy hand?

[YVETTE opens her hand and shows a ribbon cockade.
 The tricolour!

YVETTE

Wilt thou not wear it?

DE VARDES

No!

YVETTE

It was my favour — Fare you well, monsieur!

DE VARDES

I might not wear that ribbon, no, not if
 It were thy favour truly, Vivien!
 Ah, when will cease this discord of our minds?
 Wilt thou forever be a Jacobin?

[A distant bugle, followed by a roll of drums and
 martial music.

YVETTE

*Aux armes, Citoyens!
 Formez vos bataillons!*

D E V A R D E S

Where learned'st thou the Marseillaise?

Y V E T T E

'Tis in the air! Oh, on these moonlight nights
I dream of France and how he spoke to me
Of all the wrongs of France we should redress!

D E V A R D E S

Who spoke to thee?

Y V E T T E

Rémond Lalain.

D E V A R D E S

Rémond Lalain was once my closest friend.
He travels now a dark and winding way!

Y V E T T E

Where is she now, that lady bright and fair
Who's named La Belle Marquise in Morbihan?

D E V A R D E S

She is in Nantes.

Y V E T T E

Ah! — Is she not fair?

D E V A R D E S

Most fair.

Y V E T T E

And nobly born?

D E V A R D E S

And nobly born.

YVETTE

Alas!

Enter SISTER BENEDICTA.

SISTER BENEDICTA

Monsieur le Baron de Morbec, —
 A courier, in haste, foam-flecked and spent,
 Demands to speak with you.

DE VARDES

What tidings now?

Ill news like ravens to a cumbered field!

I come, my Sister!

(To YVETTE.) I'll return.*[Exeunt* DE VARDES *and* SISTER BENEDICTA.

YVETTE

Alas!

She is in Nantes! He sees her every day.

What is this pain that's tearing at my heart?

*[Laughing voices of young girls. Enter from the
 convent SISTER FIDELIS and SISTER SIMPLICIA
 with a cluster of young girls, pupils of the nuns or
 refugees from Royalist families. They seat them-
 selves upon the wide steps of the fountain. YVETTE
 leans against the basin and plays in the water with
 her hand.*

A YOUNG GIRL *(to* YVETTE)

We're telling stories!

ANOTHER

Finish thine, Louise!

L O U I S E

'T is told. The beau prince wed the belle princesse,
And they lived happily ever after !

A Y O U N G G I R L

Whose turn now?

A N O T H E R

Tell us a story, Yvette !

Y V E T T E (*turning from the fountain*)

*Beneath the halfway tree,
'Tween Fosselin and Pontivy,
Suddenly, out of the dark,
I heard a grey wolf bark !
Hoée ! Hoée ! Hoée !*

*The snow was on the ground,
The shadows all around,
Laid a finger on my lip,
As I stood, hand on hip,
Listening the grey wolf bark.
Hoée ! Hoée ! Hoée !*

*Beneath the halfway tree,
'Tween Fosselin and Pontivy !*

*A little child came by.
" Yvette, the wolf is nigh !
Yvette, take thou me up,
I've neither bite nor sup !"
Hoée ! Hoée ! Hoée !*

*The child came to my arm.
He was so fair and warm !*

THE GODDESS

*The child came to my arm,
I kept him safe from harm!
Hoée! Hoée! Hoée!*

*A light grew round his head,
I felt all cheered and fed.
"Yvette, have thou no fear!
Who giveth aid, to me is dear!"
Hoée! Hoée! Hoée!
The child no longer pressed,
White snow lay on my breast!*

*The grey wolf ran away,
Hoée! Hoée! Hoée!
There broke a splendid day,
Beneath the halfway tree,
'Tween Fosselin and Pontivy!*

SISTER FIDELIS

A miracle?

YVETTE

I do not know.

A YOUNG GIRL

I liked best
The beau prince and the belle princesse.

ANOTHER GIRL

Oh,
Thou 'rt an Aristocrat!

*[The young girls return to their embroidery. YVETTE
plays in the water of the fountain with her hand.]*

Y V E T T E

Gold fish, gold fish,
How are the fish of Quiberon?

A Y O U N G G I R L

Were I
A fairy prince, then my princess should be
Madamè la Marquise de Blanchefôret!

A N O T H E R

If I
Were a princess, I would have for my prince
Monsieur le Baron de Morbec.

[YVETTE turns from the fountain.]

A T H I R D G I R L

They say
That in all France there's none more brave than he!
And far and near she's called La Belle Marquise!
A little while and there'll a wedding be!

T H E F I R S T

But then, the poor Yvette! He is, you know,
Her prince!

Y V E T T E

[They laugh.]

Oh, mockery!

S I S T E R F I D E L I S

Hush, children, hush!
Monsieur le Baron is her benefactor!

S I S T E R S I M P L I C I A

He plucked her from the dreadful world outside!

THE GODDESS

SISTER FIDELIS

He placed her here beneath Our Lady's care.

SISTER SIMPLICIA

In everything he is her truest friend !

SISTER FIDELIS

But for his condescension, ah, who knows
What in these fearful days might be her lot !
Here in this fold she's safe.

YVETTE (*aside*)

Alas ! alas !

A YOUNG GIRL

Oh, she is fairer than the fairy queen !
Clarice de Miramand and Blanchefôret !

YVETTE (*aside*)

Is she so fair ? Is she so fair indeed ?
I broke her fan — now she will break my heart !

A YOUNG GIRL

He is a knight like Lancelot !

YVETTE

Oh me !

She is the Queen, she is that Guinevere !

*[Distant music. The noise of footsteps and voices in
the street beyond the wall.]*

A YOUNG GIRL

Oh, outside the wall what is there passing ?

SISTER FIDELIS (*severely*)

We have nothing to do with outside the wall.

A YOUNG GIRL (*indicating the door in the wall*)
Might we open the door a little way?

SISTER FIDELIS

The blessed saints forbid!

[From the street are heard the drums and fifes of passing National troops. The bayonets of the soldiers are visible above the wall.]

VOICES (*in the street*)

*Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!*

A YOUNG GIRL

Oh, soldiers!

ANOTHER

Were the wall only down!

[The circle about the fountain breaks. The young girls walk up and down beneath the trees. The Sisters watch them from a garden bench. The music dies away. YVETTE sits upon the stone marge of the fountain.]

YVETTE

What is this pain that's tearing at my heart?
What matters it to me whom he doth love?
And what concern of mine that she is fair?
I would she were not so! — Oh, misery!
She is in Nantes, she is La Belle Marquise!
I would that she were dead! *[The chapel bell rings.]*
O Seigneur Dieu!

Her death! I do not wish her death! Not I!
 O Our Lady! let not ill thoughts possess me!
 I would I were at Morbec this still eve,
 Herding the cows amid the golden broom,
 Above a sea of glass without a wind,
 As stagnant calm as is this prisoned water!
 I would gather the musk rose in the lane,
 I would tread the wet sand and count the ships,
 My brow would not burn, my heart would not ache,
 No tears from my eyes would I wipe away!
 Why should they not fall like the winter rain?
 I am the herd girl here as at Morbec,
 And she's a great lady, loved for herself!
 O love! is it love that stifles me so?
 O love! is it love that makes me weep?
 I thought that love was all splendour and light,
 The bow in the sky, the bird at its height,
 The glory and state of an angel bright!
 What is this pain that burdens all my heart?

[She bows her head upon her knees. The hum of the street deepens to a continuous and sinister sound. In the distance a roll of drums. YVETTE raises her head.]

I sit by this fountain, he'll not return!
 He cares not for me,—he's the Sieur de Morbec,
 And I a herd girl wandering through his fields!
 Mother, my mother, did you sit and wait,
 By the wild sea rim on a glowing eve,
 Mid the brown seaweed on the shining sands?
 Your heart did it beat, and your senses swim?—
 But your lover, the fisher, he came, he came!

[The voice of the street deepens.]

I will not have this pain! I'll tear it out!

[Her hand touches the purple mark on her throat.]

Ha! how burns this hateful mark to-day!

[There comes from the church towers of Nantes a sudden and violent crash of bells.]

SISTER FIDELIS (*rising*)

The tocsin!

THE YOUNG GIRLS (*They flutter forward to the fountain*)

The tocsin! Oh, the tocsin!

Like a hive of bees hums the street without!

YVETTE

Oh, all ye iron bells! ring on! ring on!

Enter MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI *and* SISTER BENEDICTA.

THE YOUNG GIRLS

Here is Mademoiselle de Château-Gui!

She'll tell us why the bells are ringing!

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

O Ciel!

Would you believe it? O blessed saints above!

The country is in danger!

A YOUNG GIRL

Oh! we thought

You brought us news!

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI (*joyously*)

Do you not hear the bells?

Oh, such a day outside! It is proclaimed!
La patrie est en danger! [Distant trumpets.
 Well you may wail,
 You brazen trumpets of the Revolution!
 The Duke of Brunswick he is marching now,
 And with him all our nobles back from Coblentz!
 O bliss! *La patrie est en danger!*

SISTER FIDELIS

Oh, hush!
 The very walls have ears!

MILLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

My father says
 The King shall have his own again, and all
 Will go as merry as a wedding bell!
La patrie est en danger!

Enter COUNT LOUIS, MELIPARS 'DE L'ORIENT, and the
 ABBÉ DE BARBASAN.

Oh, here are
 My father and Monsieur de L'Orient!

DE L'ORIENT

So sweet the flowers here —

COUNT LOUIS (*to the young girls*)

Mesdemoiselles,
 One garden of rosebuds time hath not touched!
 (*To the Sisters.*) In your prayers, my Sisters, name Châ-
 teau-Gui!

[*The young girls curtesy, then exeunt between the trees. YVETTE remains beside the fountain. COUNT LOUIS looks at her through his glass.*

Ha!

DE L'ORIENT

The herd girl of Morbec!

COUNT LOUIS

I have eyes,

De L'Orient!

THE ABBÉ

Hm!—Fair child!

YVETTE (*coldly*)

Citoyen!

MILLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Monsieur de L'Orient, you promised me
My father should not walk abroad to-day!

DE L'ORIENT

What could I do? He is so young and rash!

COUNT LOUIS (*taking snuff*)

'T is true that Nantes is dangerous to-day
To all save those wild beasts the sans-culottes!
But that's no reason I should stay at home.
Where is De Vardes? His man said he was here.
It is his wont, pardieu!

SISTER FIDELIS

Monsieur le Comte,

Monsieur the Baron of Morbec did come
To see that all was well with this our charge—
A peasant girl, monsieur, whom he did save
From cold and hunger and ill company.

But now she prospers and we think that he
Will come no more.

YVETTE

Jesu Maria!

COUNT LOUIS (*with satisfaction*)

Ma foi!

He is a soldier is De Vardes! He camps
One day beside the hedgerow in the field!
The next he's for some royal mount of love,
High as the snow and splendid in the sun!
Since he's not here I know where else he is!

DE L'ORIENT (*sings*)

Mignonne, Mignonne!

Kiss me, rose of to-day!

YVETTE

O heart! O world! O hedgerow in the field!

COUNT LOUIS

Well, well, her mother was as fair as she!
Clarice de Miramand, long-dead Clarice!
Her hair was golden too. — Old times, old times!
And now it is De Vardes and the Marquise!

[COUNT LOUIS, Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI, and DE
L'ORIENT walk up and down beneath the trees. DE
L'ORIENT sings.]

DE L'ORIENT

Mignonne, Mignonne!

The red rose fades away!

Mignonne, Mignonne!

The white rose will not stay!

THE ABBÉ

My dear, that is a pretty wrist of thine!

YVETTE

Citoyen!

THE ABBÉ

Hast said thy rosary to-day?

YVETTE

Citoyen!

THE ABBÉ

A melting eye!

YVETTE

Citoyen!

THE ABBÉ

Dame! She is only good to burn châteaux!

[He joins COUNT LOUIS, etc. They walk and talk beneath the trees.]

YVETTE

The high of heart bide no man's scorning! I
Will break these bonds! I will be free! I will!
O royal mount of love, snow-high, sun-kissed,
Kissed by the sun which once did shine on me!
If I am of the fields—

[Her hand touches the mark upon her throat. She laughs.]

O hated flower,
Which grew beneath no hedgerow on this earth!
Teach me, thou poison blossom, pride of heart!
Where is that Duchess Jeanne whom I am like?
They say for love her heart did rive in twain,

But now she smiles beside a shadowy stream
 In some far land where none do die of love!
 And where is he, Jehan the fisherman,
 Who loved Yvonne, who met the sea and died?
 They died for love who should have lived for hate!
 I'll live —

Enter DE VARDES. COUNT LOUIS, etc., come forward.

Oh, here's the soldier! Now we'll know
 How blow the winds around the camp of love!

COUNT LOUIS

What is it, René de Vardes? What is it, man?

DE VARDES

The King hath left the Tuileries! The mob
 Forced the château and put his life in danger.
 The Swiss are murdered, cut down to a man!
 The Grenadiers joined with the Marseillaise!
 De Maillé writes — the courier's just arrived —
 All is distraction, danger, and despair!

SISTER FIDELIS

Alas!

MILLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

O Ciel!

THE ABBÉ

The soldiers in revolt.

DE L'ORIENT

The Swiss all murdered — the stanch Swiss!

SISTER SIMPLICIA

Alas!

COUNT LOUIS

The King hath left the Tuileries!

DE VARDES

To-night

I ride to Paris.

YVETTE

O God!

THE ABBÉ

To Paris!

As well say that you ride to death, De Vardes!

COUNT LOUIS

Ah, were I young again, I'd ride with you!

SISTER FIDELIS

Alas, they say it is a fearful place!

SISTER SIMPLICIA

It is so safe in Nantes!

DE VARDES

Ah, my Sister,

Because it is so safe in Nantes I go!

Once I did love this people; once I thought

Beyond this Revolution lay the morn,

The dewy morn of a most noble day!

It may be so; I know not; but I am

A soldier of the King. Needs must I go,

My bugles call; I'm breaking camp. Farewell!

SISTER FIDELIS

You will return.

THE GODDESS

DE VARDES

If I'm in life I will!

YVETTE

O Our Lady! O Our Lady!

*[The noise in the street increases. The tocsin rings.
The sky begins to darken before an approaching
storm.]*

COUNT LOUIS

Ring on!

Ye bells! ring on to the deaf sky! O France,
Of old thou wast a pleasant land and free,
In palace and in field a courteous place!
Now thou art desolate! Come, Austria, come!
Come, D'Artois, come, Brunswick, and come, Provence!
Rend the tricolour from the breast of France
And plant the fleur-de-lis where stood the Jacobins!

VOICES (*from the street*)

*Quoi! ces cohortes étrangères
Feraient la loi dans nos foyers!*

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Hast said farewell to the Marquise?

DE VARDES

Not yet,

As far as Vannes I ride beside her coach.

YVETTE

Oh!—

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Soon or late, she'll draw you back to Nantes!
Now will she not?

DE VARDES (*smiling*)

Perhaps.

YVETTE

Jesu Maria!

SISTER FIDELIS

Monsieur, if you must go, oh, rest you sure
Jealously will we guard and spotless keep
The soul you stooped and drew from the foul mire! —
Yvette, come make your reverence to your lord!

YVETTE

I kiss your hand, monseigneur!

THE ABBÉ

There will be

A storm to-night!

COUNT LOUIS

Come, come, René de Vardes!

I'd see the courier who brought this news!

DE VARDES

I'll follow you, Monsieur le Comte!

[*Exeunt* COUNT LOUIS, *his daughter*, DE L'ORIENT,
THE ABBÉ, *and the Sisters.*]

YVETTE

Wilt thou go?

DE VARDES

I must.

YVETTE

Why must thou go?

To-day the kingdom fell ! Oh, in the dust
Of old things let it rest for evermore !

Take up the Revolution !

[*Lightning.*

Oh, see !

The flaming sword before the gates of Eden !
Thou 'rt safe within the garden ! Go not forth.

Go not to Paris ! Stay in Nantes, ah, stay !

Wear the tricolour —

[*Thunder.*

Hark ! It is the voice,

The menacing voice of the Republic !

It threatens thee, it threatens all who pass

That flaming sword, to lift the thing that was

And is not any more ! Oh, let it lie !—

Thou 'lt not to Paris ?

DE VARDES

To-night, Citoyenne !

Ah, thou art skilful at betraying !

YVETTE

Quoi !

Enter SISTER BENEDICTA.

SISTER BENEDICTA

Monsieur le Baron de Morbec, the page

Of Madame la Marquise de Blanchefôret

Attends —

YVETTE

Name of a name !

THE ABBE (*appearing in the door behind* SISTER
BENEDICTA)

De Vardes, De Vardes !

You gather the furze while the red rose waits !

D E V A R D E S

At once, my Sister!

(*To YVETTE.*) Ah, not in anger,
 Must thou and I part for this little while!
 If I'm in life I will return, be sure,
 To Nantes and all this garden loveliness,
 Those fruit trees and this fountain! — Fare thee well.
 The nuns will care for thee; I've ordered all.
 Too fierce of aspect is the world without!
 Here is fair peace, security, and calm;
 Here thou art fenced from storm and violence.
 Abide thou here until I come again!

[*Lightning.*]

Y V E T T E

The flaming sword!

D E V A R D E S

Hearest thou not, Yvette,
 How sings the lark in Paimpont Wood to-day?

Y V E T T E

I hear the dirge of the salt sea!

D E V A R D E S

And there,
 Seest thou not through yonder trees the stone,
 The Druid Stone where thou didst lie in sleep?

Y V E T T E

I see a broken fan!

D E V A R D E S

Abide thou here

And dream of Paimpont Wood until I come.
I too will dream, I too will dream, Yvette!

YVETTE

Is not Clarice a lovely name?

DE VARDES

Why, yes,
A very lovely name. — Farewell, farewell!
I'll see thy face, be sure, this very night,
Upon the road before me as I ride.

YVETTE

Oh, fare you well beneath the silver moon
As slow you ride beside a lady's coach,
Discoursing of the dazzling, snowy heights!
I kiss your hand, monseigneur! Fare you well!

[THE ABBÉ'S voice is heard from the doorway.]

THE ABBÉ

De Vardes! De Vardes!

DE VARDES

I come!

THE ABBÉ

The rose awaits!—

YVETTE

It is too much!

DE VARDES

Farewell, thou spirit of Paimpont!

[*Distant music.*]

YVETTE

Ah, ah! 't is worth all else — the Marseillaise!

DE VARDES

My Duchess Jeanne —

YVETTE

She is dead: cold and dead!

*Aux armes, Citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons!*

DE VARDES

Perverse and strange!

YVETTE

I'll to my beads. Adieu!

*Over Ys, the sunken town,
When thou sailest look not down,
Mariner, mariner!*

DE VARDES

What wine hast thou drunken?

YVETTE

An old wine —

*For there dwells a fairy there
Will drag thee down by the long hair,
Mariner, mariner!*

DE VARDES

Oh, thou art too wilful!

THE ABBÉ

De Vardes! De Vardes!

YVETTE (*to the fish in the fountain*)

Gold fish, gold fish, how are the fish of Quiberon?

DE VARDES

Thou sullen witch, adieu! [Exit DE VARDES.]

YVETTE

Monseigneur! ah!

He's gone! He's gone to meet the fairy queen!

He's for the roses and the dazzling peaks!

The seaweed and the furze he's left behind!

He's left the storm, he's left the storm and me!

[The convent bell rings.]

Toll, toll! as though thou'd toll my soul away!

Thou canst not toll him back! Oh, woe is me!

[The nuns sing in the chapel.]

VOICES

O salutaris Hostia!

Quae coeli pandis ostium:

Bella premunt hostilia,

Da robur fer auxilium!

[Above the wall where it is shadowed by a fruit tree, appear the head and shoulders of LALAIN. He draws himself up to the coping, watches YVETTE for a moment, then swings himself down to the garden. He has a rose in his hand.]

YVETTE

Where is the sunshine gone? Where is the gold?

It was a lovely day! 'Tis cold and dead;

No light, no warmth, no cheer! — Oh, presently

Those two will take the summer road to Vannes!

Ha ! does he think that I will meekly stay
 Within this convent close, will kneel and pray,
 Day in, day out, for all true lovers' weal?
 What is there now to do? — O Jealousy !
 I dream of Paimpont Wood in June ! I 'll dream
 Of sunlit peaks, of roses named Clarice ;
 I 'll dream of furze that's set about with thorns
 And clings unto the common earth which bore it !

[*A roll of thunder.*

On, on ! It suits my mood, the crashing sound ! —
 Jehan the fisherman ! rise from the sea,
 Lay thy cold hand upon the heart of her
 Who's not thy child, and teach her how to hate !
 Yvonne who parted from the earth one night,
 Come through the storm that darkens overhead
 And teach thy daughter how to hate ! Thou too,
 Thou other one, thou seigneur high and grand
 Whose signet burns upon my aching throat,
 Whose nature stirs within me suddenly,
 Arise from hell and teach me how to hate ! [Thunder.

VOICES FROM THE CHAPEL

*Tantum ergo sacramentum
 Veneremur cernui —*

Y V E T T E

O Our Lady ! O Our Lady ! O Our Lady !

[LALAIN *throws the rose. It falls beside YVETTE.*

Oh ! —

[*She raises the flower to her lips. LALAIN comes forward.*

Thou ! I thought it was — I thought it was.

Go! No rose of thine would I have kissed,
Rémond Lalain!

*[With a wild petulance she throws down the flower
and treads upon it.]*

LALAIN

Now for that deed of thine
I will not spare him when the day is mine!

YVETTE

Of whom speakest thou?

LALAIN

The Citoyen Vardes.

YVETTE

Let him be!

LALAIN

The Citoyenne Blanchefôret.

YVETTE

Again!

LALAIN

'T is said the two will shortly wed —
A fitting match! — She's fair and nobly born.
Thou mightst have seen, thou mightst have seen last night,
Walking by moonlight beside the Loire,
A lady the fairest and a great lord!

YVETTE

Say'st thou?

LALAIN

Beneath the trees, beside the flood,
Toying and whispering, the sword and fan!

YVETTE

Out and alas ! Begone, thou torturer !

LALAIN

Oh, those old days when by the shore we walked
While sank the sun beneath the emerald waves,
And wild sea birds flashed all their silver wings,
And long we talked of France and liberty !
How thou art tamed, Yvette, Yvette Charruel !
Thou carest not now for France and liberty !

YVETTE

It is not true ! Thou knowest that I care !

LALAIN

This sultry night I speak to patriot hearts
Of War, Dumouriez, Brunswick, Capet !
All Nantes will throng to hear me where I stand,
In the Church of Saint Jean, who's now become,
From crypt to spire, one mighty Jacobin !
High in the gilt tribune beneath the roof,
The starry roof where the archangels live !
Faces me Michael with his flaming sword,
And Raphael watches me with widened eyes,
And Gabriel frowns between his splendid wings
Because there's no more incense ! When I speak,
The painted walls all vanish like a mist !
On distant plains the drum begins to beat,
The great dome lifts — above the angel heads
I see the stars —

YVETTE

There are no stars to-night !

LALAIN

There are ! There are ! Eternally they shine
 Beyond this din, beyond these sulphurous clouds !
 And there 's a stairway, red and white and blue,
 By which to climb to some most famous star
 Of glory and of love ! Yvette ! Yvette !
 Climb thou with me unto that golden star !

YVETTE

Rémond Lalain —

LALAIN

Come thou with me, Yvette !
 Come thou with me from out this sluggish place !
 Come thou with me into the furious storm !
 What dost thou here, thou spirit of the wind,
 Restless, with deep eyes and with parted lips?
 Thou knowest thou hast naught to do with holy things.
 Tear off that white headdress ! Red is thy colour !

YVETTE

Ay, red is my colour !

LALAIN

Last night, the while
 I spake of War and all the place was still,
 A sudden vision blazed above the lights —
 I saw thee dance the Carmagnole !

YVETTE

Now, now !

What whispers he to her upon the road ?

LALAIN

To-night — ah, should I raise my eyes to-night

And see thee smiling there, Yvette, Yvette!
 Beside thy sisters in the galleries!
 Upon thy twilight hair the bonnet-rouge,
 At thy small waist a pistol and a dirk —
 Only the Revolution in thy soul
 And in thy heart my name, my name, Yvette! [*Thunder.*
 It thunders now, but 't will be clear to-night.
 The moon will shine, the roads will all be white.

Y V E T T E

The roads will all be white, the moon will shine,
 The poplars quiver and the eglantine,
 The broom and honeysuckle will be sweet,
 Upon the road to Vannes —

*[Lightning and thunder. LALAIN walks to the door
 in the wall, tries it, then with a stone from the
 ground beats back the rusty bolt.*

L A L A I N

An easy door!

Y V E T T E

The moon will shine —

L A L A I N

I'll go this way, ma foi!

Not by the wall!

Y V E T T E

The silver poplars sway!

L A L A I N

René de Vardes, once I did call thee friend
 And took a deal of pride in that possession!
 How runs the world away! 'T was long ago!

YVETTE

Ah, ah, that fearful dream I had last night!
And while I dreamed they walked beside the Loire!

LALAIN

This night he rides away. Didst know?

YVETTE

I knew!

LALAIN

He's said farewell to thee, but not to her!

YVETTE

Wilt thou begone!

LALAIN

Ay, through this door, Yvette!

'Tis easy, as thou seest. And ah, to-night —
The storm o'er past and shining bright the moon
And the cold nuns all telling o'er their beads,
How simple 't were — O priceless liberty!
Thou wouldst not be the only one, I trow,
Who may not walk beside the silver Loire!

YVETTE

Name of a name!

LALAIN

Adieu, adieu! To-night

I'll see thee sitting in the galleries — [Exit LALAIN.]

YVETTE

Ah, how the thunder shakes the air!

[She moves to the door in the wall and replaces the bolt, then returns to the fountain.]

'T is so!

He is her lover! Oh, he loves her true! —
 What will they say and whisper all the night
 Through light and shadow on the road to Vannes?
 Despair! — But I'll not stay within these walls!

[Knocking at the door in the wall. YVETTE crosses the stage to the door.]

Who is there?

SÉRAPHINE (*within*)

Yvette! Yvette!

YVETTE

Séraphine!

SÉRAPHINE (*within*)

And Nanon too!

YVETTE

The deputy's sister!

NANON

Let us in!

YVETTE

I dare not.

SÉRAPHINE

What!

YVETTE

Wait: I dare!

[She draws the bolts. The door opens. Enter SÉRAPHINE and NANON. The former is dressed in complete carmagnole: short skirt, rolled-up sleeves, sash of tricolour, and a bonnet-rouge. Pistols at her belt.]

NANON is more soberly attired but wears the bonnet-rouge. The door closes behind them.

Séraphine!

SÉRAPHINE

Chérie!

YVETTE

Nanon!

NANON

Dear Yvette!

YVETTE

How gay you are! What of the Revolution?

SÉRAPHINE

It goes.

NANON

It goes well.

SÉRAPHINE

We have a new song!

Faith! 'T is a greater song than *Ça Ira!*

YVETTE (*sings*)

Aux armes, Citoyens!

Formez vos bataillons!

SÉRAPHINE

That's it!

NANON (*looking about her*)

So very triste it is in here!

SÉRAPHINE

So gay outside! All Nantes is dressed in red!
There's a procession, and then to-night

We sit in the galleries to hear Lalain ! [*Distant music.*
 Hark to the fife ! *Formez vos bataillons !* —
 And your feet keep not time to the music !

Y V E T T E

But my heart, Séraphine, my heart keeps time.

S É R A P H I N E

Ho ! Your heart is in barracks, says Céleste.

Y V E T T E

Céleste !

N A N O N

And Angélique.

Y V E T T E

Angélique !

S É R A P H I N E

Faith !

Angélique is in feather now you 're gone !
 Cries *Vive la République !* here in Nantes.
 Rides on the cannon and handles a pike ;
 Thinks she 's in Paris and plays Théroigne,
 And high from the galleries applauds Lalain !

N A N O N

He thinks not of her ; he thinks of Yvette !

Y V E T T E

I care not of whom he thinks !

S É R A P H I N E

On a fête day,

In a car triumphal see her appear !
 Dressed like a goddess just down from the skies,
 All crowned with green oak leaves, borne shoulder high —

YVETTE

Angélique !

SÉRAPHINE (*nodding*)

Ah, you see you are not there !
 But between you and me, red does not become her !

YVETTE

I should think not! — little blonde !

SÉRAPHINE

Becomes you !
 Ah, but red

YVETTE

Yes !

SÉRAPHINE

Monseigneur's gone from Nantes.
 Yes, faith! I saw him ride away —

YVETTE

He's gone !
 Rememb'rest thou that lady fair and proud,
 Madame la Marquise de Blanchefôret ?

SÉRAPHINE

Ho !

(*To NANON.*) Rememb'rest thou the Citoyenne Blanche-
 fôret ?

N A N O N

The proud piece! We are mire beneath her feet!
 Last eve her coach threw mud upon my gown!
 Let her beware! One day she'll walk afoot.
 Let her beware! And let him too beware
 Who rode last eve beside her golden coach!

Y V E T T E

Ha, ha! ha, ha!

*[Music and voices in the street. Impatient knocking
 at the door in the wall.]*

V O I C E S

Holà, Aristocrats!

Nanon! Séraphine!

N A N O N

Our friends await us.

S É R A P H I N E

We have business with the smith upon the quai,
 Where by the old dovecot he fashions pikes!

V O I C E S

Allons, enfants de la patrie!

N A N O N

Come, come away! We'll leave the nun alone
 To say her beads for black Aristocrats!
 How triste to be for aye in prison here!

Y V E T T E (*angrily*)

Prison! I am no prisoner, I!

N A N O N

Then come with us into the merry streets!

SÉRAPHINE

'T will be a heavy storm — all are within.
How easy 't were to slip away with us!

YVETTE

No, no!

VOICES

Citoyennes! Citoyennes!

NANON

Ma'm'selle!

YVETTE

Ma'm'selle!

NANON

Aristocrat!

YVETTE

Aristocrat!

SÉRAPHINE

Well — kept by an Aristocrat —

YVETTE

You lie.

SÉRAPHINE (*angrily*)

Saint Yves! I lie! Do I? O Seigneur Dieu!
This is Yvette, the herd girl of Morbec!
This is Yvette, the daughter of Yvonne!
This is that same Yvette who swore one day
That rather would she meet the blight of hell
Than take one favour from a seigneur's hand!
Once you were hungry! Go you hungry now?

You went in rags. Where is your ragged gown?
 Barefoot — what's that about that throat of thine?
 I swear it is a jewel! — and we pine
 For bread, we women of the Revolution!

[YVETTE *unclasps the jewel from her neck and lets it fall.*

I lie, do I? Diable! Just prove I lie!
 This night we make a little noise in Nantes
 Shall show Aristocrats who is in danger!
 Lalain will speak and all the bells will ring,
 And Angélique will deck herself in red!
 Steal through yon door, be of us evermore!
 I lie, do I? Then show me that I lie!

Y V E T T E

In Nantes where do you lodge?

S É R A P H I N E

With Angélique
 Under the Lanterne, Sign of the Hour Glass.

V O I C E S

Nanon! Nanon! You are missing the sights!

[*Distant music.*

O T H E R V O I C E S

*Allons, enfants de la patrie,
 Le jour de gloire est arrivé!*

N A N O N

Come, come away!

[SÉRAPHINE *unbars the door in the wall. It swings open.*

106 GODDESS OF REASON

SÉRAPHINE

Faith! One can see the Loire!
'T is fine to walk beside it 'neath the moon!

YVETTE

Oh!—

VOICES

Tremblez, tyrans! et vous perfides,—

NANON

Away! Away!

YVETTE

I'll go — I'll go with you.
Ye fruit trees and thou fountain, fare ye well!

[Exeunt YVETTE, SÉRAPHINE, NANON. The door swings to. Lightning and thunder. SISTER FIDELIS appears in the convent door.]

VOICES (*dying away*)

*Aux armes, Citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons!*

CURTAIN





ACT III

A square in Nantes. On the left the deep porch of a church with pillars. To the right and in the background, a perspective of streets with tall, many-windowed houses. Opposite the church a great plaster statue of Liberty. Over the church door is written in white lettering: "The Republic One and Indivisible. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death. National Property." A distant view of the Loire. Men and women in holiday garb, wearing liberty caps and great tricoloured cockades, cross and recross the square. Life, movement, colour. Red the dominant note. It is the year 1794.

Hoarse voices within. Hawkers of Revolutionary journals cross the square.

A HAWKER

LE *Journal des Jacobins!*

ANOTHER

Le Discours

De la Lanterne!

Enter GRÉGOIRE.

A THIRD

L'Orateur du Peuple!

A FOURTH

Le père Duchesne! Le Père Duchesne!

THE GODDESS

GRÉGOIRE (*stopping him*)

Here!— [*He buys a paper.*
And what to-day says Père Duchesne?

THE HAWKER

He says
That Paris envies Nantes her Carrier!

GRÉGOIRE

Humph!

A HAWKER

La Bouche de Fer!

ANOTHER

Les Actes des Apôtres!

A CITIZEN

I'll buy the *Actes*.

ANOTHER

I'll buy the *Bouche de Fer*.

[*Enter a man with a long brush and a pot of paste.*
He proceeds to cover the wooden base of the Statue
of Liberty with placards.

THE CROWD

The placards! The placards!

A BRETON SAILOR

I cannot read!

[*He catches by the arm a man in a long cloak, with*
a broad hat pulled low over his face.

Prithee, Citizen, what says the placard?

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK

It says Duport is dead ; Biron is dead ;
Barnave is dead.

THE CROWD

Ha, ha ! Biron ! Barnave !

A MAN

Through the little window they've looked at last !
À bas les Aristocrats ! Vive la Guillotine !

ANOTHER

Ah, here in Nantes we drown them in the Loire !

THE CROWD

Vive Carrier ! Vive Lambertye ! Vive Lelain !

[The man with the brush affixes a second placard.]

THE BRETON

And this, Citizen ?

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK

D'Alleray is dead ;
Bailly is dead ; Du Barry is dead.

THE CROWD

Ha !

A WOMAN

Ho ! ho ! The courtesan, she'll kiss no more !

THE CROWD

She'll kiss no more !

[The man with the brush affixes the third placard.]

THE GODDESS

THE BRETON

And this one, Citizen?

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK (*reads*)*The Republic One and Indivisible.**It is Decreed**There is no God. To-day we worship Reason.**[The crowd applauds.]*

A MAN

In a red mantle!

ANOTHER

That's the Paris Reason!

Our Reason wears blue.

A THIRD

And oak leaves in her hair.

THE BRETON

Is Reason truly a woman?

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK

God knows!

A MAN

Ha! he says God! God is a word forbid!

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK

Then Reason knows.

A MAN

That's better.

[Singing within. A band of dancers, men and women, whirl into the square.]

THE CROWD

Carmagnole !

THE DANCERS

Dansons la Carmagnole !

Vive le son, vive le son !

Dansons la Carmagnole !

Vive le son du canon !

[The crowd breaks and joins the dancers. They take hands and with uncouth and extravagant gestures circle once or twice around the statue, then with a long cry exeunt.]

A WOMAN

The great procession forms upon the quai !

ANOTHER

It winds and winds about and comes this way !

[Exeunt men and women. GRÉGOIRE and the man in the cloak remain.]

GRÉGOIRE

The priests are gone. It is Reason's fête day.

THE MAN IN THE CLOAK

Reason, being a woman, will have her way.

GRÉGOIRE

Still, Monsieur l'Abbé—

THE ABBÉ

I am known !

GRÉGOIRE

To serve

Monsieur, I had the honour at Morbec.

THE ABBÉ

Monsieur le Baron's seneschal, I think.

GRÉGOIRE

The same, — but I am gaoler now in Nantes.

THE ABBÉ

That night in June your musket would not fire!
Diable! I've played and lost! Well, fellow?

GRÉGOIRE

Hein?

THE ABBÉ

The wind blows cold in Nantes, and so I wear
This cloak! So long I've looked on fires of hell
I needs must have a hat to shade my eyes! —
But now I'll cock it in the face of all —
Cold, wind, darkness, devils, and Republic!

GRÉGOIRE

I think the citizen has lost his head.

THE ABBÉ

Ay, and my heart as well. Holà! what's that?

[A noise without. Clash of steel and excited voices.]

*Enter DE VARDES and FAUQUEMONT DE BUC pursued by
seven or eight red-capped men armed with pikes. DE
VARDES and DE BUC use their swords.*

THE RED CAPS

Aristocrats! Aristocrats!

DE VARDES (*thrusting*)

Take that,

Republican!

DE BUC (*thrusting*)

Out, canaille!

THE ABBÉ

Here's wine!

Have at you, brow-bound galley slaves!

DE VARDES (*over his shoulder*)

Ha! De Barbasan! [*Wounds his adversary.*]

We're at our last château!

THE ABBÉ

I've shut Voltaire! Here goes the candle out!

[*He throws his long cloak over the head of one of the red caps and makes at another with his dagger.*]

DE VARDES

The window splinters!

[*He sends the pike flying from a red cap's hand.*]

Take warning, sans-culottes!

THE ABBÉ

One, two, three!

DE BUC

My sword arm!

DE VARDES

Fight with your left.

I saw you do it at Nanci!

THE GODDESS

VOICES (*within*)*Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!**Les Aristocrats à la Lanterne!*

DE VARDES

*O Richard, O mon Roi,**L'univers t'abandonne!**[A howl from the mob.]*

THE MOB

Aristocrats!

GRÉGOIRE (*from the statue*)

Desperate!

*[The red caps, DE VARDES, THE ABBÉ, and DE BUC fight across the stage and exeunt. GRÉGOIRE follows them.]*VOICES (*within*)*Ça ira!**Enter women and children of the Revolution.*

A WOMAN

Upon the church steps I will take my stand!

ANOTHER

I have brought my knitting.

A THIRD

And I.

A FOURTH

And I.

ALL (*singing*)

*We are the tricoteuses!
Dyed wool we knit while rumbles by the cart.
Knit! knit! all knitting in the sun.*

*We are the tricoteuses!
Red wool we knit while soul and body part.
Knit! knit! the knitting now is done!
[They seat themselves upon the church steps.]*

A CHILD

Maman! Maman! how many carts will pass?

A WOMAN

None, sweeting, none! It is a holiday.

Enter CÉLESTE, ANGÉLIQUE, and NANON.

NANON

It was the very night of the great storm
From those dull convent walls she ran away!

CÉLESTE

Two years ago —

ANGÉLIQUE

Would she had stayed!

NANON

You had been Goddess, Angélique!

Ah, then,

ANGÉLIQUE

The witch!
With her dark skin and with her purple flower!
Let her beware! I know a thing or two!

CÉLESTE

I know who comes from Paris back to Nantes!
This morning on the quai I saw him!

NANON (*eagerly*)

Is't

That ci-devant, that black Aristocrat,
De Vardes?

CÉLESTE

The man your brother loves? The same.

NANON

I spit upon his name!

CÉLESTE

Denounced!

NANON

The set of sun

Will see him so, or my name's not Nanon!

CÉLESTE

The Loire—the Loire will close above his head!

Enter SÉRAPHINE.

SÉRAPHINE

Whose head?

NANON

The Citizen Vardes.

SÉRAPHINE

Monseigneur!

He's in the prison of La Force at Paris! —
One truly told me so — He's not in Nantes.

N A N O N

And if he were —

S É R A P H I N E (*stammering*)

Why — why —

N A N O N

And if he were,

You would not give him up ! I know you well !
I know you, Séraphine !

S É R A P H I N E

And if you do,

You know no ill of me, Citoyenne !

C É L E S T E

Yvette

Would not give him up either.

A N G É L I Q U E

No, i' faith !

I'll take my oath on that !

S É R A P H I N E

Your oath, lint-locks !

It's worth a deal, your oath ! *Your* mind I know !
You would be Goddess, you and not Yvette !

A N G É L I Q U E

Let her beware !

S É R A P H I N E

Yvette ! She's coming now !

Bright as the star that's highest in the night !
And all the men have turned astronomers !
Faith ! 't is easy work to worship Reason,
When Reason is a woman, and that fair !

ANGÉLIQUE

I've seen her gather seaweed on the shore!

SÉRAPHINE

And now she gathers hearts in her two hands.

ANGÉLIQUE

Oh! oh!

NANON

Would that my brother hated her!
Disdainful prude!

CÉLESTE

Oh, love may turn to hate.
She's Goddess now, but wait, but wait, but wait!

NANON

I join my brother at the Olive Tree.
Come, Angélique, Céleste!

[*Exeunt* NANON, ANGÉLIQUE, CÉLESTE.]

SÉRAPHINE

Were't not too late,
I'd warn monseigneur just for old time's sake!
When all is said and done, old times are best;
He gave us back Lisette, he fed us all—
Eh! 't were a pity. What now? Who's this?

Enter hurriedly THE MARQUISE. *She looks over her shoulder as if fearing pursuit, then, drawing her cloak and hood closely about her, attempts to cross the square unobserved. Enter a rabble of men and women.*

THE MOB

Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
Les Aristocrates à la Lanterne.

Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
Les Aristocrats on les pendra!

A TRICOTEUSE

She hides

Her face.

ANOTHER

She draws her cloak about her!

THE FIRST

Ho!

Her hand is white and there's a jewel on't!

A MAN (*accosting* THE MARQUISE)
 Citoyenne!

THE MARQUISE

Citoyen —

THE MAN

Citoyenne, come!

Join our *ronde patriotique*, our *carillon*!

THE MARQUISE

Sainte Geneviève!

THE MAN

What?

A WOMAN (*her hand upon* THE MARQUISE)

Where's your cockade?

ANOTHER WOMAN

Show!

THE MARQUISE

De grâce, Citoyennes!

THE GODDESS

THIRD WOMAN

The cloak! The cloak!

[They tear from THE MARQUISE her hood and cloak.]

A CHILD

Oh, the pretty lady!

THE MARQUISE

I'll give you gold!

There, there! — My rings, my brooch — take all!

Ah! let me peaceably depart —

THE MOB

Ha! ha!

Aristocrat!

A WOMAN

It is the emigrée

Clarice-Marie Miramand Blanchefôret!

Are not her gold locks known in Brittany?

ANOTHER

She fled to England.

A THIRD

She returned.

THE MARQUISE

O death!

(To a woman.) Citoyenne, your cockade! I'll wear it gladly,

Ay, o'er my heart I'll pin it —

[She takes the cockade from the woman and with trembling fingers pins it to her gown.]

THE WOMAN

Red cap as well —

THE MARQUISE

With pleasure, Citoyenne.

[She places the bonnet-rouge upon her head.]

THE MOB

Ha, ha!

A MAN

Now cry

Vive la République!

THE MARQUISE

Vive la République!

THE MAN

Mort aux tyrans!

THE MARQUISE

Mort aux tyrans!

THE MAN

*À bas**Les Aristocrats!**[Silence.]*

THE MOB

Ah—h—h!

THE MAN

*Vive la Guillotine!**[Silence.]*

A WOMAN

Take that!

[She strikes at THE MARQUISE.]

THE MOB

Down! Down!

[THE MARQUISE breaks through the ring of men and women and runs to SÉRAPHINE.]

THE GODDESS

THE MARQUISE

I know your face!
You are a Morbec woman! Save me! Save!

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Servan! Saint Gildas! Saint Mériadek!—
Ay, madame, you should have stayed in England!

Enter DE VARDES, torn and bleeding.

DE VARDES

De Buc taken and De Barbasan! Dieu!
The day's not old. I'll see them ere its close.
We'll meet, I think, at Carrier's judgment bar,
Then the dark river, — and then peace at last —

THE MARQUISE

À moi, Monsieur le Baron de Morbec!

DE VARDES

La belle Marquise!

[He forces his way to the side of THE MARQUISE.]

SÉRAPHINE (*from the church porch*)

Saint Yves le Véridique!

THE MOB

Both! Both!

A TRICOTEUSE

To prison with them!

ANOTHER

To the Loire!

Ho! ho! *Les Noces Républicaines!*

[*The mob surges forward, but with his sword DE VARDES keeps a clear space about him and THE MARQUISE. They move slowly backward to the church steps, which they mount.*

DE VARDES (*to THE MARQUISE*)

We'll smile and die!

THE MARQUISE

Together, yes!

THE MOB

Down! Down! Aristocrats!

[*DE VARDES sends a knife whirling from the hand of a red cap.*

DE VARDES

Follow! Follow!

(*To THE MARQUISE.*) I have been long in prison.

THE MARQUISE

In England I! — And there I pined for France —
This sunshine dazzles me —

DE VARDES

Clarice-Marie!

[*Trumpets within.*

SÉRAPHINE

Hark! Hark, Citoyens, to the trumpets blowing!

THE MOB

She comes! Nantes' goddess comes!

[*Faces appear at the windows of the tall houses.*

THE GODDESS

A TRICOTEUSE

The windows fill!

[The rolling of drums.]

ANOTHER TRICOTEUSE

The drums begin to roll!

A MAN

Citoyens, all!

We'll see best by the statue there!

ANOTHER (*pointing to DE VARDES and THE MARQUISE*)

But these? —

THE FIRST

They're safe! Let them await our pleasure! Peste!

We waited once on theirs!

A THIRD

That's true!

[The mob divides. Men and women cluster about the base of the statue or upon the doorsteps of the surrounding houses. Enter men with banners.]

THE MOB

Look! Look!

The painted banners! *Vive la patrie!*

SÉRAPHINE (*to THE MARQUISE*)

Hist!

Hist, madame! behind the pillar there!

[She points to the pillar of the church.]

D E V A R D E S

Go!

[THE MARQUISE *conceals herself behind the pillar.*
A crash of music.

Enter LALAIN and NANON.

L A L A I N

No blood to-day! I'd have clean sleep to-night,
 Pure sleep and sweet, in which to dream of love! —
 Hast seen her in her mantle blue?

N A N O N

Who stands
 So steadfast there with a drawn sword?

L A L A I N

Diable!

[*He makes as if to cross to the church steps, where*
 D E V A R D E S, *sword in hand, stands with his back*
against a pillar. The crowd comes between.

N A N O N

Patience, he'll not escape!

L A L A I N (*with affected indifference*)

It is as well, —

To her he's but a *ci-devant*, and he,
 O fool! shall see in her the Revolution!
 Then, then, when she has passed, I'll deal with him!

[*Singing within.*

A V O I C E

With sandals on her feet,
The Phrygian cap so red
Upon her sunny head,

THE GODDESS

*She comes, she's coming sweet!
Reason, to whom we pay
All homage on this day!*

THE CROWD

The singers! The actors!

*Enter actors and actresses of the Theatre of Nantes, dressed
as for the stage, and carrying garlands of paper flowers.*

AN ACTOR

Way for Tartufe!

The Citizen Jourdain, Phèdre, Célimène,
Acaste, Armide, Aucassin, Nicolette!
Make way! Make way!

THE SINGER

*Upon her lofty car
She sits in solemn state!
Of day the lovely mate,
Of night the shining star!
Reason, to whom we pay
All homage on this day!*

THE CROWD

Brava! What now?

THE ACTOR

Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin, Robespierre!

*[Enter a band of students drawing a garlanded float.
Upon the float the busts of Voltaire, Rousseau, Frank-
lin, and Robespierre.]*

THE CROWD

Vive Robespierre!

[The Marseillaise. Enter Republican soldiers.]

DE VARDES

Oh, for the red Hussars!

[Enter four men wearing tricolour scarfs and plumes, huge cockades, pistols and sabres.]

THE CROWD

The Commissioners!

DE VARDES

Hooded crows!

[There crosses the stage a float upon which is fixed a miniature guillotine.]

THE CROWD

Ha! ha!

Vive la Guillotine!

A MAN

Vive les noyades!

DE VARDES

Cold

Are thy baths, O Apollo!

[Enter red-bonneted men and women dragging a tumbril in which are heaped spoils of the church,—broken images, crucifixes, candelabra, chalices, patens, etc.]

THE CROWD

Ha—h—h!

DE VARDES

Jesu! *[He crosses himself.]*

[Music. The great tricolour flag of the Republic is borne across the stage.]

THE GODDESS

THE CROWD

La patrie! Vive la patrie!

DE VARDES

France! France!

[Stately music. Enter young men in Greek dress, bearing a gilded framework upon which is fixed a tall flambeau, wreathed with flowers. They advance and place the structure before the church steps.]

A PEASANT

Brave! But what is it?

ANOTHER

The torch of Reason!
The Goddess lights it,— then we worship her!

A THIRD

No, we worship Reason!

THE SECOND

'T is the same thing!

[Enter young girls clad in white, linked together with tricolour ribbons and carrying osier baskets from which they scatter flowers. They are followed by children swinging censers, then by a shouting throng drawing a triumphal car upon which sits the Goddess of Reason. She is clothed in a white tunic and a blue mantle; upon her loosened hair is a wreath of oak leaves and she has in her hand a light spear.]

THE CROWD

Reason! Reason! — Yvette! Yvette!

D E V A R D E S

Mon Dieu!

[The car stops. YVETTE rises.]

T H E C R O W D

*Vive la d esse! Vive Yvette! (LALAIN comes forward.)
Vive Lalain!*

L A L A I N

People of Nantes! Citoyens! Patriots!
 Old things are past. To-day we welcome new.
 Gone are the priests, gone is the crucifix;
 Chalice and paten whelmed beneath the Loire!
 Kings, princes, nobles, priests, all crumbled down!
 Death on a pale horse hath ridden o'er them,
 The ravens and the sea mews pick their bones.
 Theirs are the yesterdays, the ci-devants!
 The red to-day is ours, the purple morrow! —
 Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!
 We worship Thee, Triune and Indivisible! —
 O Mother Nature, pure, beneficent,
 Redeemed from darkness of the centuries,
 Smile on thy children, come to worship thee!
 And thou, supernal Reason, Crown of Man,
 Eyes of the blind, divine, ascending flame,
 Pearl without price, rose, light, music, warmth! —
 O gushing spring where else were desert waste!
 O flooding light, celestial melody!
 O flower that blooms on either side the grave!
 O steadfast star that burns the night away!
 We worship thee!

[He takes the censer from a boy and swings it to and fro before the standing goddess. Clouds of incense arise. The trumpets sound.]

THE GODDESS

THE CROWD (*with ecstasy*)

We worship thee, Yvette!

Yvette! Yvette! Reason! Yvette Charruel!

YVETTE

O God! I knew not 't was like this!

LALAIN

Reason, descend!

Illume thy torch, among us mortals dwell.

O sweetest Reason! ne'er regret the skies!

Descend —

[He gives his hand to YVETTE. She descends from the car.]

A MAN

She is the fairest Reason!

ANOTHER

Now

She'll light the torch!

[A boy brings her lighted touchwood. LALAIN fastens it to the point of her spear, and kneeling presents it to her. She advances to the church steps and raises the flaming lance in order to light the torch. She sees DE VARDES. The spear falls to the earth. The flame goes out.]

YVETTE

O Our Lady!

THE CROWD

Light the torch! Light the torch!

LALAIN

What witchcraft's this?

Y V E T T E

None, none! — Oh, see the heavens open!

[Murmurs of the crowd.]

A N G É L I Q U E

Goddess!

Goddess!

C É L E S T E

She hears not!

T H E C R O W D

Light the torch!

L A L A I N

I see

Hell gaping! What's that man to thee?

Death and damnation! Dost still gaze at him?

Then to the winds, Irresolution! *[He turns to the crowd.]*

See,

Patriots, see! The light of Reason dies!

Out went the sacred flame beneath the eyes,

The basilisk eyes of an Aristocrat!

T H E C R O W D

Away with him to prison! Death! The Loire!

Death to the emigré!

[A rush toward the church steps. DE VARDES throws himself on guard. YVETTE comes between him and the mob.]

Y V E T T E

Back!

T H E M O B

Ah—h—h!

LALAIN

Art mad?

Stand from between the lion and his prey!

DE VARDES (*to the mob*)

Men of Nantes! leave women to one side!

(*To YVETTE with a gesture toward the car.*) Goddess of Reason! Mount Olympus waits!

(*To LALAIN.*) At last, Rémond Lalain!

LALAIN

René de Vardes!

[*A man strikes at DE VARDES with a long pike. His sword arm falls, and the sword rattles to the ground. A shout of triumph from the mob. THE MARQUISE'S cry from the pillar is not heard. The mob moves forward.*]

YVETTE

Back, back, I say! You'll do no murder here!

What! One man against a score!— All Bretons!

THE MOB

Death to the emigré!

DE VARDES

Not emigré!

Good folk, I've been in prison in La Force.

Released, I journeyed home to Brittany!

A MAN

Thou'lt journey farther yet, Aristocrat!

ANGÉLIQUE

Thy boat shall travel down the Loire!

Y V E T T E

Shall it?

Shall it, indeed, thou gold-locked leprous woman!
Thy bark shall be sucked down by black Ahès!
 I see three Vannetois! — big Rubik, Yann,
 And Rivarol who won the singer's prize!
 À moi, Vannetois! — Who is that standing there?
 Huon! Rememberest thou the fields at dawn?
 Rememberest thou the dim green hazel copse?
 Rememberest thou one Pardon of Sainte Anne?

A P E A S A N T

Yvette!

Y V E T T E

The sun went down, the stars shone out;
 We wandered round the wreckage of a ship;
 Beneath a shell we found a golden coin.
 Rememberest thou, Hervé the Cornouillaise?

A B R E T O N S A I L O R

Yvette!

Y V E T T E

Baptiste! Michael! Monik! Ronan!
 How loudly rang the bells of Quiberon!
 To beat of drum we danced beside the sea!

Y O U N G M E N

Ho, ho! That day!

Y V E T T E

Eh, who spoke to us there,
 Of glory, of France, and of Liberty?
 Citoyen Deputy Rémond Lalain!

Red wine he gave to you, to me a flower!
 Mon Dieu! I was so proud —

LALAIN

Yvette!

YVETTE (*to an old woman*)

Margot!

'T was I who watched with thee one stormy night
 When all thy seven sons were out at sea!

THE OLD WOMAN

Ay, ay, and they came safely home to me!

YVETTE (*to a child*)

O little Jeanne, where is the doll I gave thee?

THE CHILD

Here! — 't is named 'Toinette!

A WOMAN (*with the child*)

She has another

Named Yvette!

YVETTE (*to a band of young women*)

Fifine, Laure, and Veronique!

The moon shone bright, there was no wind at all,
 Below the heights the violet shadows slept,
 All sweetly smelled the gorse and white buckwheat,
 And dewy was the grass beneath our feet,
 And wet with dew the poppies in our hair!
 There came a sound of singing from the sea,
 Our hands we linked, we sped around Tantad,
 Fair shone the moon —

A YOUNG GIRL

Oh, Eves of Saint John!

A BRETON

Iou! Iou! An Tan! An Tan! An Tan!

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Ronan! Saint Primel!

THE CROWD

Yvette! Yvette!

Yvette Charruel!

YVETTE

O folk of Nantes!

There is a thing I want so badly, I!
 Call it a fairing from the Fête of Reason,
 And give the trifle to the poor Yvette,
 The poor Yvette who's done her best to please you!
 Oh, I've music made for you to dance by,
 And for you held on high the great tricolour;
 And in the night-time sung to you of dawn!
 And for you, too, I've plucked the lilies up,
 Fast locked a door and flung away the key,
 And left the ravished garden evermore!—
 A priest would say my soul I had imperilled.

THE CROWD

No, no! No priests! Reason! Reason! Yvette.

YVETTE

This mantle blue, these oak leaves in my hair,
 These sandals and this spear, this tunic white,
 The wreathèd car, the music and the song!

All, all a mockery, unless, unless —
There is a thing I want so badly, I!

A COMMISSIONER

It is thine!

THE CROWD

Thine! Thine! Yvette Charruel!

YVETTE

Ah, I would play the goddess, that I would!
I'd have my pardon like a Breton saint,
And what I bound, it should be bound indeed!
And what I loosed, it should be loosed indeed!

A COMMISSIONER

Fast bind or freely loose, thy surety, I!

ANOTHER

Command me, and the silver moon I'll bring thee!

YVETTE

With what a sudden glory shines the sun!
It gilds the streets, it gilds the running Loire!
And from them both the blood-stains fade away!
Ah, let us rest from death in Nantes to-day,
And think how falls the eve in Bethlehem! —
There is a little village that I know,
A hungry village by a hungry sea,
As worn and grey as any calvary!
The hungry shadows ate the sunshine up;
The children cried, the women wailed at morn;
The very Christ looked hungry on the Cross;
When lo! a miracle! for suddenly

The starving, haggard folk began to laugh,
 The tender green put forth, the flowers bloomed,
 Blue shone the sky, the lark sang overhead,
 And mild the face of Christ and heavenly kind!
 The little village had its fill of bread,
 Yea, wine it drank, and cheerful breath it drew,
 And, by the well, of this strange plenty talked,
 Of tolls withdrawn, of perfect friendliness!

[*She moves from before* DE VARDES.]

And then it blessed the man who gave it bread,
 Who had a heart to feel with wretchedness,
 And a strong arm to drive the hunger forth
 As Arthur drove the giants from the land!
 O men of Nantes! you 'll keep your oath to me!
 In Nantes to-day 't is mine to loose or bind! —
 I loose this man —

L A L A I N

Out, witch!

(*To* DE VARDES.) Think not, think not,
 René de Vardes, that she shall save thee thus! —
 Mine, mine she is, she shall be, soul and all!

D E V A R D E S

Rémond Lalain —

L A L A I N (*to the mob*)

It is an emigré!
 A traitor and a black Aristocrat,
 The ci-devant De Vardes!

T H E C R O W D

De Vardes! De Vardes!

YVETTE

Rémond Lalain, stand from my path, I say!
(To the crowd.) Not emigré, but prisoner in La Force!
 Not traitor! That's a wretch who doth betray!
 Aristocrat? — Who chooseth his birth star?
 Crieth at Life's gate, "Of such an house I'm heir!"
 But in we drift from the great sea without;
 A current takes us — "Of my house are ye!"
 So you, so I, so this citizen here,
 Rémond Lalain, who is Lalain by chance,
 And might have been Capet or Mirabeau!
 And so this other, standing gravely there
 Alone, a man alone upon a rock,
 And the tide mounts! — The current swept him there!
 Another drift, and he had been Lalain,
 Orator and idol of the Jacobins! —
 Names! They are the mist through which the man
 Is scarce discerned, the sea-drift hides the pearl.
 Ghosts of the past the present spurns! Dead leaves!
 Masks for the pauper and the prince! Mere names!
 I would not have them rule my spirit thus! —
 Aristocrat! I know not, but I know
 The man's been known to lift a peasant's load
 And gather seaweed with a fisher's child!

A BRETON SAILOR

'T is true! And in my boat he's been with me,
 When Ahès and the storm made black the sea!

A PEASANT

He walked beside me in the field and told
 Name of the silver star above the fold!

A SOLDIER

I was a red Hussar! He fought like Mars.
Eh, my Colonel —

A WOMAN

We know, we Morbec folk!
Vive Baron René!

SÉRAPHINE

Eh, eh, monseigneur!

YVETTE

Nantes! Nantes! you'll keep the oath you've made to me!
My fairing I shall have this holiday,
And what I bind it shall be bound indeed,
And what I loose is loosed to me for aye!
I ask one gift — I shall not ask again!
This is my hour, no other hour I want.
I ask one life — is't mine, is't mine, Citoyens?

THE CROWD

Yes, yes! 'T is thine!

A COMMISSIONER

Thine, Goddess!
(*To DE VARDES.*) Citoyen, thou art free!

LALAIN

Diable!

YVETTE

I'm faint. —

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Iguinou! What of the pillar there?

THE GODDESS

A COMMISSIONER

Make way for the Citoyen Vardes!

THE CROWD

Make way!

SÉRAPHINE

Eh, eh, monseigneur; thou hadst best begone!

DE VARDES (*to the Commissioner*)Citoyen, thanks! but here I'll watch awhile
These pleasing rites, this worship new of Reason!

THE COMMISSIONER

'T will do thee good, Aristocrat!

DE VARDES

No doubt,

Citoyen!

LALAIN

Oh, depth of hell!

NANON

Oh, patience!

LALAIN

Why takes he not his liberty? He stays!
To feast his eyes upon her face he stays!
Diable! He speaks to her—

NANON

Patience! Patience!—

What flutters there behind the pillar?

L A L A I N

Where?

[She points. They move together to the base of the statue.]

D E V A R D E S (to Y V E T T E)

I owe my life to thee, thou hapless child!
Ah, couldst thou make this throng depart the place!

Y V E T T E

Monseigneur —

T H E C R O W D

Goddess of Reason! light the torch!

Y V E T T E

I'm faint! — The houses all are dancing there! —
Give me drink!

A M A N

Here's wine!

[He pours wine into a great gold cup.]

Y V E T T E

'T is in a chalice!

T H E C R O W D

Drink!

[YVETTE drinks.]

Y V E T T E

Nom de Dieu! 'T is right good wine, indeed! —
Not now I'll light the torch — 'T is out for good!
And while we linger here the sunlight goes!
Let's to the quai, let's to the quai and dance —
And dance the Carmagnole!

THE GODDESS

THE CROWD

The Carmagnole!

[Men and women take hands and begin to dance.]

YVETTE

Away! Down the long street, and to the quai!

Take hands! Away! *Dansons la Carmagnole!**[She snatches from a boy a tambourine and strikes it.]**Vive le son, vive le son,**Vive le son du canon!**[The crowd disperses. DE VARDES remains standing before the pillar behind which crouches THE MARQUISE. SÉRAPHINE watches from the church steps; LALAIN and NANON from the base of the Statue of Liberty.]*

Monseigneur!

DE VARDES

Ay.

YVETTE

Now, now while the lark sings,

And while the fairy wood is green, begone!

Oh, 't is not safe in Nantes! They gave thy life,

But oh, they're fierce and fickle! Back they'll come!

I've enemies in Nantes, and there's Lalain,

Rémond Lalain who'll work me woe at last!

Thou must begone, but list, ah, list to me!

I know a secret place where thou mayst bide,

* So safe! so safe! and I will bring thee food,

White bread and wine, and find for thee a way

Forth from the town —

DE VARDES

Ah, I may trust thee, sure!

Y V E T T E

I never knew thou wast in prison there!
 So sad, so dark the prison life, they say!
 My caged bird I freed the other day.
 There are so many prisoners in Nantes,
 I would not have it one!—

D E V A R D E S

My life I owe—

Y V E T T E

The spring draws on; 't will soon be June again!

D E V A R D E S

Now for another life I make my suit—

Y V E T T E

In Paimpont Wood the trees are greening now,
 In sun and shade the purple violets blow!

D E V A R D E S

In those old convent days, ah, ages gone!
 Beneath the fruit trees, by the fountain there,
 I've seen thee nurse a little fluttering bird,
 Wounded and frightened, fallen from the blue,
 But yet God's bird, and with a life to save!
 And thou didst stroke its plumage tenderly,
 And gently fostered it between thy hands
 Awhile, and up it soared into the blue;
 A moment since and thou didst save my life.
 Lo now, there is another thing to do!
 Before my own life, I've a life in charge,

And to thee now I turn, and plead for help.
 In this wild town thou rulest o'er the hour;
 Be now the goddess and the woman too,
 Pitiful, tender, generous, and true!—
 Lo! here a wounded bird—

*[He moves aside. THE MARQUISE leaves the shadow
 of the pillar.]*

YVETTE

Death of my life!

THE MARQUISE

Oh, guard me, all ye saints!

DE VARDES

Yvette! Yvette!

[LALAIN comes forward from the statue.]

LALAIN (to YVETTE)

Right of the Seigneur!

YVETTE

So! Thou hast returned,
 Beneath the trees, along the moonlit road!
 And in thine arms the rose and eglantine,
 And on thy lips the song of all the birds!
 Back! There is a furze field bars thy way!

THE MARQUISE

Mon Dieu!

YVETTE

Hast thou another fan to break?
 Ha! shrinkest thou?

THE MARQUISE
Sainte Geneviève!

YVETTE (*raising her voice*)

Nantes! Nantes!

DE VARDES

By all the gods! —

YVETTE

À moi! À moi! Nantes!

[*An answering cry from within.*]

DE VARDES

Herd girl of Morbec —

LALAIN

Right of the Seigneur!

YVETTE

À moi! Citoyens! Patriots!

Reënter mob.

DE VARDES

Courage,

Clarice!

THE MARQUISE

O all ye saints!

YVETTE

Citoyens!

This ci-devant, this black Aristocrat!

Oh! all this while she was in hiding here!

Beside the pillar there she kneeled and laughed.
 Do I not know her laughter, rippling sweet
 Or o'er a broken fan or broken heart,
 Or in green Morbec and a garden fair,
 Or on the moonlit road to ancient Vannes? —
 She, she the *ci-devant*, the *émigrée*!
 Who to false England with her jewels fled, —
 Rubies, emeralds, and long strings of pearls!
 The while in barren fields her peasants starved! —
 I denounce the *Citoyenne Blanchefôret*!

THE CROWD

Ah—h—h!

THE MARQUISE

O terror!

DE VARDES

Thy hand in mine, Clarice!

YVETTE

What of, what of the dark line of De Vardes?
 What tales are told of Morbec's black château?
 More wicked and more lost than sunken Ys!
 Wolves were they all, the seigneurs of Morbec!
 Henri, Philippe, Gil, René, Amaury —
 All, all were wolves who lurked, who sprang, who tore,
 No heart of lamb, but just the heart of man!
 Heart of a man, heart of a woman too!
 Morbec! De Vardes! No direr names in France!
 Right hands of kings, priests, soldiers, cardinals,
 Courtiers and lovers of the fleur-de-lis!
 Passionate, proud, a whirlwind and a flame!

Morbec! De Vardes! 'Ware all who came between
The whirlwind and its goal, the stubble and the flame!

D E V A R D E S

Thou lost soul!

L A L A I N

Thou lovely fiend!

Y V E T T E

De Vardes! De Vardes! The name comes on the blast
Up from the gulf where lie the thrones of kings.
Battle, oppression, tyranny and wrong —
Miramand, Blanchefôret! on sea winds in they float
From that dim palace where that lost Ahès
Down to her emerald windows beckons man
And spreads the bridal bed in sunken Ys!

N A N O N

Mon Dieu! The bridal bed!

Y V E T T E

By all the wrongs
That both their houses through the ages long
Have wrought us! By the blood that they have shed,
The tears, the groans, the sweat, the servile knees,
The bitter bread they gave us, and the cry
From lonely graves of anguish and of wrath!
By all the hunger and the freezing cold!
By all the toil and all the hopelessness,
The smitten cheek, the taunt, the burning heart!
By all the Rights of all the Lords of Wrong!
By *Corvée* and *Gabelle* and *Gibier*,

*Quintaines, Milods, Ban d' Août and Bordelage,
Fouage, Leide, Corvée à miséricorde,
Banvin, Chansons, Baiser des Mariées!*

I do denounce these two Aristocrats:
La Force's prisoner, and the emigrée,
La belle Marquise, the Hussar of the King,
Citoyen Vardes, Citoyenne Blanchefôret!

LALAIN

So!

THE MOB

Away! Away! Prison! Death! The Loire!
Down, down, Aristocrats.

*[They close around DE VARDES and THE MAR-
QUISE.*

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Maturin!

Saint Corentin! Saint Jean!

THE MARQUISE

O bitter death!

DE VARDES

I am thy death, who thought to save thee so!

*[The soldiers lay hands upon DE VARDES and THE
MARQUISE and force them from the church steps
and across the square.*

THE MOB

Away!

A COMMISSIONER

The nearest prison!

A MAN

That's the Church
Of Saint Eustache!

A COMMISSIONER

Away! They shall be judged
By Carrier!

THE MOB

Carrier! — The Loire!

YVETTE

Ah!

ANGÉLIQUE

Ha, ha! *Le Mariage Républicain!*

YVETTE

Quoi!

ANGÉLIQUE

Eh, they're lovers, are they not?

CÉLESTE

The Loire shall marry them, the ci-devants!

ANGÉLIQUE

Yvette has made the wedding, eh, Yvette?

THE MOB

Ha, ha! *Le Mariage Républicain!*

[*Exeunt the mob, soldiers, DE VARDES, and THE
MARQUISE, guarded, etc.*]

VOICES (*within*)*Le Mariage Républicain!* Ha, ha!

150 *GODDESS OF REASON*

YVETTE

What have I done? —

VOICES (*dying away*)

Ha, ha! ha, ha! The Loire!

YVETTE

The Loire! — O God!

CURTAIN





ACT IV

The interior of a church in Nantes used as a prison. Great broken windows of stained glass, purple and crimson, through which streams the sunlight. Prisoners of both sexes and all ages and conditions of life move to and fro, or lean against the pillars which support the vaulted roof. Some rest or kneel upon the steps before the altar rail. Three children play beside a broken font. Against a door at the left of the great altar lounge several turnkeys dressed in blue woollen with red liberty caps. THE MARQUISE sits beside a pillar. She talks with DE BUC and ENGUERRAND LA FÔRET. Near her are COUNT LOUIS and Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI. DE L'ORIENT stands upon a bench beneath a shattered window. DE VARDES sits at a rude table writing.

A butterfly enters at the broken window and flutters through the church.

A CHILD

THE butterfly! The butterfly!

Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Oh, see

Its painted wings!

A CHILD

There! There!

Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

It comes my way! — I've caught it! — No!

AN ACTRESS (*dressed as a shepherdess*)

I!

I have it fast, the pretty prisoner!

DE L'ORIENT

It will not stay —

COUNT LOUIS

It soars into the roof!

No! down again on yon long ray of light! —
Give chase!

DE L'ORIENT

Here!

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

There!

THE ACTRESS

Oh, oh! It sails this way,

The fairy boat —

DE L'ORIENT

With freight of heart's desire!

THE ACTRESS

I have it!

COUNT LOUIS

No, I!

[The butterfly lights upon his hand.

'T is youth!

DE L'ORIENT

'T is gone! —

[The butterfly brushes his shoulder.

'T is joy!

THE ACTRESS

Fled! — Ah, ah! — 'T is hope!

[The butterfly touches her outstretched arm, then rises again.]

No longer!

*[The butterfly rests upon the fair hair of THE MAR-
QUISE.]*

THE MARQUISE

As I was saying, then I felt despair —

[The butterfly rises, flutters in a shaft of sunshine, then passes out of the window. The prisoners watch its flight.]

A CHILD

The butterfly has gone!

Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Whither!

DE L'ORIENT

'T is for

The blue skies and the sunny fields!

THE ACTRESS

The flowers

We shall not gather any more!

DE L'ORIENT

High hills,

The water running in the sun and shade!

MME. DE MALESTROIT

A garden old beside a winding stream —

Oh, death in life!

THE GODDESS

A NUN

It was a soul set free.

By now a thousand shining leagues it's mounted!

*[The door at the left of the altar opens.]**Enter GRÉGOIRE.*

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Here is Grégoire!

GRÉGOIRE

Good-morrow, Citoyens!

COUNT LOUIS

Good-morrow, Gaoler.

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Ah, this place, Grégoire!

It is so triste! Shall we forever stay
Imprisoned in a church?

LA FÔRET

Oh, gayer far

The Bastille or Vincennes!

THE ACTRESS

These frowning saints!

The wind that whistles in!

MME. DE MALESTROIT

The stones so cold!

COUNT LOUIS

The Church will make us martyrs ere our time!

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

And did you buy, Grégoire, the cards for ombre?

THE ACTRESS

Masks for our play?

DE L'ORIENT

A violin?

THE ACTRESS

Wax-lights?

DE BUC

The foils?

A CHILD

My ball, Grégoire?

GRÉGOIRE

I've nothing bought —

The judges sit to-day. Complain to them.

The church is cold! 'T is not so cold as Loire!

The prisons are too crowded! Well, to-day

We'll weed them out!

DE BUC

So!

GRÉGOIRE

You are warned! Prepare!

Make your farewells — the time is very short!

[Exit GRÉGOIRE.]

DE BUC

Strike camp!

THE GODDESS

DE L'ORIENT

The open road!

COUNT LOUIS

Who goes?

LA FÔRET

Who stays?

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Our comedy! — we cannot have it now!

THE ACTRESS

Oh, we will rearrange the parts!

[DE VARDES *folds his letter and rises from the table.*]

DE VARDES

We'll play,

Though all the world is sliding 'neath our feet!

DE BUC

The world's a stage —

THE NUN

*De profundis clamavi**Ad te Domine!**Enter the ABBÉ JEAN DE BARBASAN, pale, wounded, and with
disordered dress.*

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Monsieur l'Abbé!

DE VARDES

Ah!

De Barbasan, we feared for you!

T H E A B B É

Morbleu!

I am reprieved! Lambertye proved my friend!
 It seems that once I saved the villain's life! —
 Pure accident! — stumbled on him in a ditch,
 Played the Samaritan! — so now I'm spared,
 Come forth like Daniel from the lions' den,
 That Judgment Hall of theirs across the way!
 Lions! They are not lions, they are wolves,
 Hyenas, tigers, and baboons. Faugh!

D E B U C

So!

They are hungry yet?

T H E A B B É

Oh, they are portents!

And portents are the folk that fill that hall!
 Not women they who sit aloft and knit;
 Not men, those scarecrow visages below;
 For robed judges, wolves at Lammas tide,
 And Nantes the winter forest for the pack! —
 But ah, the deer at bay, the little lambs! —
 The earth gives 'neath their feet, they face the Loire!

[A confused sound from the square without the window; voices, menacing and execrating, a cry, then silence.]

D E V A R D E S

One has not gained the Loire!

T H E A B B É

Ah, oftentimes,

They fall before they reach the Judgment Hall!

There in the street, before that fatal door —
 Both youth and age, fair women and brave men.
 Their blood cries to another judgment seat!
 From yonder window you may see it all!

THE MARQUISE

We will not look!

COUNT LOUIS

Fie, fie, De Barbasan!

There is a time for everything! Not now,
 Nor in this place is 't meet or debonair
 To speak of ravening wolves or stricken deer!
 To work, my friend! You find us much concerned
 About this play of Molière's! We give
Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

THE MARQUISE

You'll play Jourdain?

Béjart had promised us, but then he went.
 He's not returned.

THE ABBÉ

Nor will, I think. But, yes,
 I'll take the part; I'll speak in prose to you
 To whom I else would speak in poetry!

THE MARQUISE (*with a curtesy*)

Monsieur Jourdain, your prose is ravishing! —
 I'm Dorimène.

DE BUC

And I Dorante!

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

Lucille.

MME. DE MALESTROIT

Nicole!

THE ACTRESS

I am, Monsieur Jourdain, your wife!

LA FÔRET

Your son-in-law the Turk!

DE VARDES

Behold, monsieur,
Your fencing master!

DE L'ORIENT

Your *maître de danse*.

Imagine, pray, you hear my violin:

La, la — The minuet! — La, la, la!

[He plays an imaginary violin. The prisoners hesitate, laugh, then begin to step a minuet. The children and the gaolers watch them. DE VARDES does not dance. He leans against a pillar to the left.]

Enter a turnkey, CÉLESTE, ANGÉLIQUE, NANON, and SÉRAPHINE.

SÉRAPHINE (*crossing herself*)Eh! Eh! They dance! — Well, what a thing it is
To be a noble born!CÉLESTE (*jealously*)

We dance as well!

SÉRAPHINE

Ay, the Carmagnole!

ANGÉLIQUE

'T is a swifter dance!

Why came we here? I never liked this church,
 They are too gay of heart, these ci-devants!
 Let's to the Judgment Hall, or to the Loire.

CÉLESTE

Séraphine would come —

SÉRAPHINE

Patience, Citoyennes,
 No haste! I've just a little word to speak
 Unto monseigneur there.

CÉLESTE

Monseigneur!

SÉRAPHINE

Oh,
 The Citoyen Vardes! You know my tripping tongue.

NANON (*to the turnkey*)

Where is that ci-devant men once did call
 La belle Marquise?

THE TURNKEY

'T is she who dances there,
 Fair-haired and dressed in violet.

NANON

Awhile

I'll watch her dance.

CÉLESTE

Their cheeks are pale.

ANGÉLIQUE

They smile.

I would not smile if I were they.

[NANON, CÉLESTE, and ANGÉLIQUE watch the dancers. SÉRAPHINE approaches DE VARDES.

SÉRAPHINE (*in a low voice*)

Monseigneur!

DE VARDES

Séraphine Robin, I believe?

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Yves!

Now just to think! Monseigneur knows my name! —

Eh! Morbec was my home for many a year.

When all is said and done, Home is just Home,

Hut or château — and always the De Vardes

Were lords of Morbec did they good or ill!

Most like 't was ill — but they were proper men!

And when they smiled we always said 't was day;

And old men say — but it was long ago —

A baron lived was named René the Good!

Saint Gil! Monseigneur gave us back Lisette.

Saint Maudez! 'T is a dangerous thing, but see!

[*She takes from her bosom a silken purse.*

Eh, monseigneur, 't is yours! Take it! Quick, quick,

Before Céleste — the baggage! — turns her head!

[*She thrusts the purse into his hand.*

DE VARDES

From whom?

SÉRAPHINE

Look in it! You will see. 'T is gold.

DE VARDES

Gold!

SÉRAPHINE

And something more. — Here is Angélique!

ANGÉLIQUE

Aristocrat — That ring upon thy finger —

SÉRAPHINE

Out!

DE VARDES

Not yet, Citoyenne!

ANGÉLIQUE

Then afterwards!

I'll have it at the trenches or the Loire!

[She rejoins CÉLESTE and NANON. They watch the dancers.]

DE L'ORIENT

Nicole — Lucille — Cléonte —

SÉRAPHINE

My errand's done —

Look in the purse, monseigneur, look at once!

DE L'ORIENT

La, la, la, la!

DE VARDES

I have no need of gold.

SÉRAPHINE

Look, monseigneur !

D E V A R D E S

Again, from whom ?

SÉRAPHINE

A friend.

D E V A R D E S

I have no friend in Nantes. Take back thy purse !

SÉRAPHINE

It is not mine, the pretty, silken thing !

I swore that I would leave it, so I will !

And I was told to tell you, "Look within."

[NANON approaches.

N A N O N

In Nantes one is Suspect when one is seen

Whispering in shadows with Aristocrats !

SÉRAPHINE

Nothing I said you might not hear, Nanon !

Come, come away !

(To D E V A R D E S as she turns from him.) Monseigneur, have
a care !

[SÉRAPHINE, NANON, CÉLESTE, and ANGÉLIQUE
watch the dancers. A grating sound is heard with-
out the door to the left of the altar. The turnkeys
move aside, the door opens and discloses a passage
lined with gaolers and soldiers.

Enter GRÉGOIRE with three or four Patriots. They wear
great boots, plumed hats, sashes of tricolour, sabres and
pistols.

D E L' O R I E N T

La, la, la, la, la !

THE GODDESS

GRÉGOIRE

The list for the day.

[*The dance ceases.*]

CÉLESTE

Now, now we'll see the birds drop one by one!

ANGÉLIQUE

It is what I love!

GRÉGOIRE (*He descends the step from the choir*)

The list, Citoyens!

You whom I name pass out at yonder door.

Across the square the judges sit —

DE BUC

Just so!

Who leads?

GRÉGOIRE

Citoyen, you!

DE BUC

Promotion, by God! —

Messieurs, mesdames, I have marching orders!

(*To the Actress and Mlle. de Château-Gui.*) I cannot
play Dorante! Is't not a shame?

De L'Orient there must take my part — Adieu!

(*To THE MARQUISE.*) Ah, Dorimène, you'll let me kiss
your hand?

THE MARQUISE

Monsieur, monsieur —

DE BUC (*to DE VARDES*)

I'm breaking camp.

D E V A R D E S

Ma foi!

We'll meet at the end of the march, my friend!
 Meantime I'll tell thee that Bouillé once said,
 " Brave as a Gascon, or Fauquemont de Buc!"

D E B U C

Did he so? Old Bouillé!

[*He salutes.*

My Colonel!

D E V A R D E S

Captain de Buc!

[*DE BUC mounts the step into the choir and passes
 out of the door, between the lines of soldiers. There
 is heard the voice of the mob in the square without.*

D E L ' O R I E N T

Away with Melancholy!

The curtain's up, the play begins! Grégoire,
 My name is Thalia! Is't on thy list?

GRÉGOIRE (*his eyes upon the paper in his hand*)
 No, Citoyen.

D E L ' O R I E N T

Another lifetime here!

C O U N T L O U I S

A golden louis to a paper franc,
 The next is Château-Gui! —

G R É G O I R E

No, Château-Gui,

You are reserved.

COUNT LOUIS (*taking snuff*)

Why, that is welcome news !

Eh, my daughter, we will not miss the play !

GRÉGOIRE

The Citoyen Charles Le Blanc.

LE BLANC

What damned star

Flared and went out the night that I was born ?

[*Exit* LE BLANC.]

GRÉGOIRE

Hervé Rauderendec, called the Breton !

THE BRETON

Good people all, it has been pleasant here,

But now the tide draws to the full — Adieu !

I must make sail !

[*Exit the Breton.*]

GRÉGOIRE

The Citoyenne Gérard.

THE ACTRESS

I ?

GRÉGOIRE

Delphine Gérard.

THE ACTRESS

Oh, I knew, I knew

The butterfly that touched me was ill luck !

I named it Hope, — it fled, it fled away !

THE ABBÉ

We're loth to let you go, Delphine Gérard.

THE ACTRESS

There is no choice — I have my cue, you see ! —
 And after all the play's a tragedy. *[Exit the Actress.]*

CÉLESTE

'T is better worth our while across the square !

ANGÉLIQUE

'T is so ! Let's to the Judgment Hall.

NANON

Agreed.

Come, Séraphine !

SÉRAPHINE

I'll follow presently.

ANGÉLIQUE

Do not delay. We'll keep a place for you !

[Exeunt NANON, CÉLESTE, and ANGÉLIQUE.]

GRÉGOIRE

The Citoyenne Vaucourt.

MME. DE VAUCOURT

Children, children !

Your father's calling me from Paradise ! —

Thérèse, Philippe, farewell, farewell, farewell !

Oh, clasp me close and kiss ! — Forget me not ! —

Yes, yes, I'll buy the bonbons and the doll !

I'll not forget —

GRÉGOIRE

The boy goes with you.

MME. DE VAUCOURT (*wildly*)

With me! He's but a babe! Not eight till June!

THE BOY (*clinging to her*)

To the toy-shop, mother!

MME. DE VAUCOURT

Oh, yes, child, yes!

To the toy-shop!

[*They go out together.*]

GRÉGOIRE

Maria Innocenta Sombreuil!

[*A young girl in the habit of a Carmelite novice leaves the shadow of a pillar, with raised face and hands crossed upon her breast mounts the step and passes out between the soldiers.*]

Gaspard Le Borgne!

LE BORGNE

An angel leads me on.

[*He follows the novice.*]

GRÉGOIRE

Enguerrand La Fôret!

LA FÔRET

Ha, ha! — ha, ha!

Ha, ha! —

[*Hysterical and continued laughter. GRÉGOIRE and the turnkeys look stolidly on, but the prisoners are disturbed.*]

COUNT LOUIS

For shame, Enguerrand La Fôret!

Before women! — Die like a gentleman!

LA FÔRET (*He leans against the balustrade of the choir*)
Ha, ha!

COUNT LOUIS

Fie, fie! You shame us all!

LA FÔRET

Ha, ha!

I laugh because — ha, ha! — 't is such a joke!

[He mounts the step still laughing, then suddenly recovers himself and turns with fury.]

Who calls me coward? I laughed because I laughed!

[He wrests a musket from the nearest soldier and stabs him with the bayonet.]

Take that! — There's one at least will laugh no more!

[Oaths and confusion among the gaolers and soldiers. A sigh of satisfaction from the prisoners. LA FÔRET is dragged out. GRÉGOIRE looks at his list, then at DE VARDES. The latter advances.]

GRÉGOIRE (*hurriedly to himself*)

To-morrow — not to-day! I'll risk that much, —

Just for the way he fought that Morbec night!

(*Aloud.*) Stand back, Citoyen Vardes! Your time's not yet.

[A murmur of pleasure and congratulation from the prisoners.]

MILLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

We are so pleased, Monsieur le Baron!

GRÉGOIRE

Citoyens Rochedagon and Pincornet!

[The men named go out. There is heard from the square without and from the passage a sound of acclamation. The door is flung open and the Actress enters.]

THE ACTRESS

They harmed me not! "No, no!" they said. "No, no!
 Delphine Gérard must play for us in Nantes."
 Oh, the people! Oh, the dear good people!
 Oh, blessed fortune!

DE VARDES

We are most happy!

THE ABBÉ

Delphine Gérard!

COUNT LOUIS

Welcome, mademoiselle!

You see the play is still a comedy!

GRÉGOIRE

Marneil, Delille!

[Exeunt the men named.]

DE L'ORIENT

The leaves fall fast,

The tree will soon be bare!

GRÉGOIRE

The Citoyenne

Clarice-Marie Miramand Blanchefôret.

DE VARDES

Oh, wretch!

THE PRISONERS

La belle Marquise!

THE MARQUISE

It is my name! —

I had no thought I would be called to-day! —

Unwarned! That's horrible! Ah, good Grégoire!
A little while —

GRÉGOIRE (*stolidly*)
Citoyenne Blanchefôret.

THE MARQUISE

Ah, villain!

DE VARDES (*to GRÉGOIRE*)
Five minutes!

[*He slips into GRÉGOIRE's hand the purse of gold. GRÉGOIRE hesitates a moment, then his hand closes upon the purse. He thrusts it into his bosom.*]

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Michel!

[*DE VARDES comes to THE MARQUISE and they speak together. GRÉGOIRE turns to another group of prisoners.*]

GRÉGOIRE

Montfaçon and Guistelles.

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Guenolé!

He hath the purse! The paper in it too!
He's rock; he, black Grégoire! Alack the day!
Saint Huon! What's to do? —

GRÉGOIRE

Sorel and Mornay!

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Yves le Véridique! I will away!

[*Exit SÉRAPHINE.*]

DE VARDES (*to THE MARQUISE*)
 Would I might die for thee!

THE MARQUISE
 'T is but a dream!

DE VARDES
 Clarice! Clarice!

THE MARQUISE
 A vision of the night!

DE VARDES
 Clarice-Marie!
 THE MARQUISE
 I will awake!

DE VARDES
 My friend!

THE MARQUISE
 Ah, only that!

DE VARDES
 La belle Marquise!

THE MARQUISE
 No more!

DE VARDES
 How long have we been friends! And now —

THE MARQUISE

And now! —

DE VARDES
 My friend, my friend!

T H E M A R Q U I S E

Alas! Alas, 't is true
 We are good friends — in life and death good friends!
 'T is much — though there are lovers too in Nantes,
 And when one loves 't is not so hard to die!
 Or so I 've heard, monsieur.

D E V A R D E S

O destiny!

T H E M A R Q U I S E

The jasmine is my flower — a luckless bloom!
 Wear not the too-sweet jasmine flower,
 For then one loves, but is not loved again!

D E V A R D E S

No, no! the rose —

T H E M A R Q U I S E

The rose unloved! Ay, ay!
 Last night I dreamed of roses and of lights,
 Beside a water still they burned and bloomed —
 Lit candles and pale roses with gold hearts,
 Like those that bloomed within my garden once,
 When you rode by, when you rode by, my friend!

D E V A R D E S

Alas!

T H E M A R Q U I S E

They 're dead, my garden roses, dead!
 They 'll bloom no more, nor wilt thou ride that way;
 Nor, Sieur de Morbec, dost thou love the rose.
 For once thou said'st to me upon a day

When I did find the Morbec roses fair,
 "I better love the heartsease at thy feet."
 The peasant flower! Rememb'rest thou that day?
 'T was Saint John's Eve —

DE VARDES

Would I remembered not!

THE MARQUISE

The heartsease —

DE VARDES

The heartsease withered.

[A roar from the square. DE L'ORIENT turns from the window.]

DE L'ORIENT

Ah!

COUNT LOUIS

What do you see?

DE L'ORIENT

Too much!

[A turnkey laughs.]

THE TURNKEY

Carrier! Lalain!

Oh, they judge quickly! *Vive la République!*

THE MARQUISE

It was a summer day when first we met,
 And now we part within a prison here,
 And never shall we see each other more!

DE VARDES

Oh, briefer than the fairest summer day

The little hour before we meet again !
 Soon, soon I 'll follow thee, and all of these !
 The reaper hath his sickle in the corn.
 He is a madman, but the field is God's,
 And God will garner up the fallen ears,
 And in another life we two shall meet !

T H E M A R Q U I S E

And wilt thou love me then? Ah, no! Ah, no!

D E V A R D E S

Thou art a lady brave and fair—

T H E M A R Q U I S E

Alas!

G R É G O I R E

The Nun Benôte, an Ursuline !

[A nun rises from her knees, makes the sign of the cross, and passes out between the soldiers.]

T H E M A R Q U I S E

Ah me!

The unknown land, just guessed at and no more,
 To which this loud wind sends my cockle boat!—
 Where are my beads? Lost, lost with all things else!
 Jewels and gold and friends and lovers too!—
 Ah, short my shrift with Grégoire glowering there.
 My hatred of Madame la Maréchale,
 I'm sorry for 't. The Captal de Montgis
 Once did me wrong. Well, well, I can forgive!—
 Sieur de Morbec, where's she that flung us down,
 Lifted her finger and behold us here!

Her face is fair — ah, very fair her face.
She was your mistress, yes?

DE VARDES

No!

THE MARQUISE

What then?

DE VARDES

Cold that I warmed, and hunger that I fed.

THE MARQUISE

O strike her, Frost! O Hunger, with her wed!

DE VARDES

Ah, curse her not! She knew not what she did!

THE MARQUISE

Alas! Alas!

GRÉGOIRE

The Citoyenne L'Esparre!

THE MARQUISE

The women go— He'll call my name! Ah, look!
The purple saints within the windows there,
See how they wave their palms and smile at me!
They wave their palms, they strike their golden harps,
Their aureoles are brighter than the sun!

GRÉGOIRE

The Citoyenne Blanchefôret!

THE MARQUISE

The clock has struck!

DE VARDES

All angels guard thee!

THE MARQUISE

Fatal is my name
And hated through long years in Brittany.
Perhaps I shall not live to cross the square!

[The noise of the mob without.]

Oh, hear!

DE VARDES

Take courage!

THE MARQUISE

From the window there,
Wilt watch me on my way?

DE VARDES

Ay!

GRÉGOIRE

Citoyenne!

THE MARQUISE

Farewell! Ah, not my hand, my friend!

DE VARDES *(He kisses her upon the brow)*

Farewell!

Farewell—

[THE MARQUISE turns to the remaining prisoners.]

THE MARQUISE

Messieurs, mesdames, 't is with regret
I take my leave of this fair company!
My part of Dorimène — it must be played

By some more able, not more willing, one;
 For me — I'm bidden to a wider stage.
 Adieu! Adieu! Adieu!

THE PRISONERS

La belle Marquise!

[*Exit THE MARQUISE. DE VARDES crosses to the window. DE L'ORIENT gives him place, and he stands upon the bench and watches the square without.*

COUNT LOUIS

There are three names that most of all they hate:
 De Vardes and Château-Gui and Blanchefôret!

GRÉGOIRE

Pasquier, Harlebeque, and Damazan.

[*There is heard from the street without a confused sound of execration and triumph. The now small company of prisoners exchange glances.*

DE VARDES (*at the window*)

Grand Dieu!

DE L'ORIENT (*beside him*)

They dare not! — Ah!

[*The sound without grows to a roar.*

COUNT LOUIS

What seest thou?

DE L'ORIENT

Malediction!

[*A cry without. DE VARDES, at the window, raises his voice.*

D E V A R D E S

Clarice! Clarice!

[There is a faint answering cry, followed by a roar from the mob, then silence.]

M L L E . D E C H Â T E A U - G U I

O Ciel!

T H E A C T R E S S

Miséricorde!

D E V A R D E S

'T is done — 't is past — she 's dead.

O God who makest man, forbear, forbear!

[He covers his face with his hands. There is a silence. GRÉGOIRE folds his papers.]

C O U N T L O U I S *(with a shaking voice)*

'T is well with her at last ; we need not weep.
 We all must die, for so the play goes on !
 Her father was a lord of Gascony ;
 A golden spur he wore, and loved the chase !
 Her mother was more fair than Montespan.
 A thousand times we 've hunted with the King,
 De Miramand and I ; a thousand times
 We 've watched the moon, that first Clarice and I !

G R É G O I R E

To-morrow, at this hour, another list!
 Meantime, Citoyens, you and you and you,
 And you, Citoyennes, who petitioned so,
 Your prayer is heard. Lalain is merciful!
 You shall not sleep on these cold stones to-night,
 Another gaol 's provided. Follow me!

Mlle. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

O welcome change !

COUNT LOUIS

The stones were very cold !

THE ACTRESS

And can we have our play there just the same ?

GRÉGOIRE

Just the same.

[The prisoners move toward the door. DE VARDES touches GRÉGOIRE on the arm.]

DE VARDES

I find the stones no colder than their wont,
Time moves no heavier here than everywhere,
And here, Grégoire, I will remain. The Church
Will give me up when Carrier calls my name !

DE L'ORIENT

I will keep you company —

GRÉGOIRE

As you will —

To-morrow you 'll be called — you have one night.
(*To the other prisoners.*) Follow me.

[Exeunt all but DE VARDES and DE L'ORIENT. The latter flings himself upon the bench beneath the window ; DE VARDES paces to and fro. A silence, then DE L'ORIENT sings.]

DE L'ORIENT

*There is an herb, they say,
Gives light to all the blind.*

*'T will be a gracious day
When I that herb shall find,
And lighten all the blind!*

*There is a leaf that springs,
Will heal the very sad.
Ah, would that I had wings
To find that leaf so glad,
And heal the very sad!*

*There is a bloom o' grace
Will bring the dead again.
Ah, for the flowret's face!
Ah, for an end to pain!
Ah, for the dead again!*

D E V A R D E S

Why, that's a mournful thing!

D E L ' O R I E N T

It was so meant.

Oh, happy days we sing the saddest things! —
My heart is eased. I'll sleep awhile and dream.

*[He pillows his head upon his arm and sleeps. DE
VARDES walks slowly to and fro.*

D E V A R D E S

Sleep! — How long has it been since Sleep and I
Met in the heavy road and laid us down,
Took our dear ease, and let the world go by? —
I well remember in the north one time, —
Beside Moselle, where all the live-long day
Upon a stairway old we stood on guard,

De Buc and I, and looked on Mutiny,
 Brazen and bold, Death visible and dark ! —
 And all the night before in council spent,
 After a day's forced march from Lunéville,
 And a wild night of wine and rapiers drawn. —
 As the sun set we heard a bugle blown,
 Beat of the drums, and thunder of the guns,
 And Bouillé's voice, assurance of relief ! —
 Another night of council, then at dawn
 We slept. The moon was crescent and a star
 Shone on to guide the white, enchanted boat
 Through seas of ether coloured like a shell;
 The trees were dark beneath ; there was no sound ;
 The air was cold, — we laid us down and slept.
 Saint Gris ! No dreams did trouble us that day ! —

[He rests upon the choir step.]

To bring the dead again ! No flowret blooms,
 No herb, no leaf, shall bring the dead again.
 No garden is there where for all one's gold,
 The weightiest sceptre or the keenest sword,
 Might one obtain the happy gardener's place,
 And find the bloom that brings the dead again.
 It grows not here, and there is naught will serve,
 No rain of tears, no delving earnestly,
 No lift of hope, no squandered treasury,
 Love nor remorse, nor longing nor great pain.
 The star has shot. The dead come not again.

[He rises and again walks to and fro.]

Happy the dead. — Ah, what of one who lives ?
 What of that mask in this fantastic dance
 Who crowned herself with poison flowers and laughed
 To see the lilies fade before her breath ? —

O death ! O love ! O blasting treachery !
 O face that in the prison of La Force
 Visited my dreams —

*[The door opens. YVETTE leans against it, panting,
 then comes forward.]*

Y V E T T E

Where is the paper ?

D E V A R D E S

The paper ?

Y V E T T E

The letter to the judges !
 Folded and hidden in the purse I sent —

D E V A R D E S

You sent ? —

Y V E T T E

By Séraphine ! You have it, sure ?

[She looks about her.]

Where is she ? — The Citoyenne Blanchefôret ?

D E V A R D E S

She 's dead.

Y V E T T E

No.

D E V A R D E S

Yes.

Y V E T T E

All is black before me !

DE VARDES

They called her name — She said adieu and went.
They slew her in the street.

YVETTE

Alas!

DE VARDES

She's dead,
Who was so fair. Why do you say alas?

YVETTE

Too late! — O God, I thought that all was well!

DE VARDES

Why, so it is! With her 't is well. She's dead.
They say the dead are happy.

YVETTE

You loved her!

DE VARDES

Goddess of Reason, no! Mere friends were we.
But I've a preference for my friends alive!

YVETTE

Oh, woe is me!

DE VARDES

Thou hast what thou didst seek.
Return to Olympus and hear "All hail,
Well done, and like a deity!"

YVETTE

The paper!

DE VARDES

Thou dream of Paimpont Wood!—

YVETTE

The purse of gold!

DE VARDES

Thou picture of the Duchess Jeanne!

YVETTE

The purse!

Give, give!

DE VARDES

The purse!—I gave it to Grégoire.

YVETTE

What!

DE VARDES

It bought five minutes — I did not know
'T was thine.

YVETTE

To Grégoire! You did not open it!

DE VARDES

No!

YVETTE

Oh, woe, woe is me!

DE VARDES

Thou standest there!

Still, still the herd girl on the green cliff head
Who waves her hand to a lost boat at sea!
Still, still the vision of a haunted wood

Soulless as is the stone thou leanest on, —
 Vivien musing on the thing she's done!

YVETTE

A slip of paper in a silken purse —

DE VARDES

Wilt thou begone? The Mountain waits.

YVETTE

Too late!

Where is Grégoire?

DE VARDES

I know not. He's away;
 He has thy gold — I'm sorry for 't.

YVETTE

No hope? —

I thought the bridge was built and both were o'er.
 Then as I passed I heard "To-morrow morn
 Carrier himself will judge that ci-devant."

DE VARDES

The Mountain waits —

YVETTE

I'll to Lalain again.

DE VARDES

Ha!

YVETTE

She is dead; I'm lost. But thou — But thou —
 Farewell! Farewell!

DE VARDES

Thou said'st, *I'll to Lalain.*

I do forbid it utterly.

YVETTE

Oh!

DE VARDES

Obey!

It is thy seigneur's last command.

(To himself.) Thou fool!

Touch not her hand. 'Tis red!

YVETTE

Monseigneur!

DE VARDES

Why art thou both so fair and foul a thing?

YVETTE

Ay, call me that — I care not!

DE VARDES

I'll call thee "Death,
Sweet Death — fair Treachery!"

YVETTE

Forgive, forgive!

DE VARDES

There's blood upon thy hand.

YVETTE

Forgive!

DE VARDES

Alas!

Thou didst betray!

YVETTE

I would that I were dead
In Paimpont Wood, beside the Druid Stone!

DE VARDES

I would that I had never strayed that way!

YVETTE

I won that paper in that purse of gold!
And it was life, I tell thee, life for both!
O God! how all things here miscarry!

DE VARDES

I would that I had never seen thy face!

YVETTE

Oh, much I hated her, la belle Marquise,
And yester morn I did betray her there,
Just in the moment God gave o'er my soul!
And she is dead — I cannot bring her back.
Oh, swift the madness passed and came remorse,
And I did hate myself, and strove to save! —
Oh, woe, and double woe! He promised me!
Oh, I have striven with a fiend from hell
And not prevailed, though sorely I did strive!
O God! O God! I'm weary of the light!
Now, now thou too wilt die unless — unless —
Ah, let me go — Farewell, a little while!

DE VARDES

Not till I know where thou dost go, and why.

Y V E T T E

Rémond Lalain gave me that paper.
 It was an order, written by himself,
 Whom even Carrier would not offend —
 A secret paper not for every eye.
 Reward he asked for certain services, —
 Two lives, your life and hers — and hers, I swear!
 He does not leave his villa all this day,
 But at the judgment bar you were to show
 That paper to Lambertye or Sarlat,
 And both were saved — both, both, I swear it, both!
 And now she's dead — 'T was life you flung away
 Shut in that purse! You gave it to Grégoire!
 Grégoire! He serves the Revolution,
 Is flint to all beside! Oh me! Oh me!
 I could not come myself, I could but send.
 I won it not till cockcrow of this morn!

D E V A R D E S

Till cockcrow!

Y V E T T E

The dawn came slowly on.
 The cock crew and I drew the curtain by
 And saw the morning star above the Loire!

D E V A R D E S

The morning star!

Y V E T T E

'T was like the eye of God!
 I used to watch it from the fields at dawn;
 This morn 't was watching me!

THE GODDESS

DE VARDES

Rémond Lalain!

YVETTE

'T was all in vain. She's dead — ah, ages since!
You'll not forgive — So fare you well again!

DE VARDES

Where goest thou, Yvette?

YVETTE

To Séraphine,
Beneath the Lanterne, Sign of the Hour Glass!

DE VARDES

Hear and obey! It is a dying man
Speaks to thee now and with authority! —
Thy seigneur too, and head of all thy house.
When I am dead, the last of the De Vardes
Will be thyself, my cousin! — All song doth say
That Duchess Jeanne who lived so long ago,
Whose pictured face and thine are counterparts,
E'en to the shadowy hair, the cheek's soft curve,
The light of eye, the slow, enchanting smile, —
All song doth say she had a bruised heart,
But in God's sight a height of soul! So thou.
Go thou to Morbec. Leave this Babylon.
Back! from the travelled road thy foot's upon!
List not unto the music that is played;
Touch not the scarlet flowers, the honey-sweet,
They'll poison thee! Think not the light is fair,
It is false dawn. Take thou the darkling way
Shall lead thee to white light and lasting bloom!

Go thou to Morbec. Take thy distaff up,
 Spin thou thy flax and listen to old tales,
 Peacefully, with that smile upon thy lip!
 Or in the dewy dawn lift up thy head
 From dreamless sleep and drive thy cows afield,
 Stand mid the golden broom and mark the mist
 Rise from the hidden sea, and hear the lark
 Singing afar his strain of heavenly hope,—
 So wear thy years away, ah, tranquilly!—
 Thou art so young — All this will come to seem
 A dream of yesternight —

Y V E T T E

Dost thou forgive?

D E V A R D E S

And at the last when Death shall take thy hand,
 Smile at the due caress, and lightly come —
 If I am I, I'll meet thee on the strand!

Y V E T T E

Dost thou forgive?

D E V A R D E S

I love!

Y V E T T E

Me?

D E V A R D E S

Thou sayest.

Y V E T T E

Where is the music playing?

D E V A R D E S

Long ago,

To Paris and my King I rode away,
 Long ago, in the freshness of the world!
 I left thee there, all safe in convent fold —
 Fair were the fruit trees in that garden old,
 Warm shone the sun, the silver fountain played.
 I left thee there and thought to find again,
 When King and Crown were saved and devoir done,
 The battle o'er, the bugles sounding peace! —
 The King he is in heaven, the Crown is lost,
 The battle's to the strong, the war drum rattles on.
 Long lay I in the prison of La Force;
 A dream I had that thou wouldst wait for me,
 Beside the fountain, by the bright fruit trees.
 Thou must have known that bars kept me from thee!
 Thou must have known that I did love thee true!
 Thou must have known that I did longing wait
 The rainbow after storm, the halcyon time
 When, stilled the jar and discord of the mind,
 The all unfettered heart might speak of love!
 But ah, the garden's sealed. Thou art not there!
 Thou wouldst not wait the while —

Y V E T T E

Outside I kneel;

Outside the garden, outside Paradise!
 Oh, woe! Oh, bliss!

D E V A R D E S

Weep not!

Y V E T T E

I love thee so!

D E V A R D E S

Paimpont! Paimpont! I feel thy magic wind!

Reënter GRÉGOIRE.

GRÉGOIRE

Citoyen Vardes —

YVETTE

Grégoire, Grégoire ! the purse —

The purse of gold !—

GRÉGOIRE

Hein ?

D E V A R D E S

Let be ! Let be !

No purse was there ! Dost hear, dost hear, Yvette ?

No purse, no gold, no paper, no Lalain !

Thou dost not think that I would take my life ?

YVETTE

No !

D E V A R D E S

Well said, and like the Duchess Jeanne !

Let not Grégoire mistake thee either !

YVETTE

I said I know not what, Grégoire, nor why !

Sometimes a woman says she knows not what.

Why should I talk of purses, faith, now why !

GRÉGOIRE

What do you here, Citoyenne ?

YVETTE

I know not.

I strayed this way, a gaoler let me in.

'T is of the sights of Nantes, this church, this gaol !

THE GODDESS

GRÉGOIRE (to DE VARDES)

I have in charge to guard you through the street
To the old Prison of the Séminaire.
They who lodge there go onward to the Loire!

[*He turns to DE L'ORIENT.*]

DE VARDES (to YVETTE)

Oh, sunken eyes! Oh, cheek so deadly pale!
Oh, rest thee, rest thee, child, in still Morbec!
Our Lady guard thee, guide thee with her hand.
Farewell—

YVETTE

I'll walk upon the banks of Loire.

DE VARDES

No; come not there!

YVETTE

I must: It is my road.

GRÉGOIRE (*He touches DE L'ORIENT upon the
shoulder*)

Awake, poet, and go along with us!

DE L'ORIENT

I am awake! 'T is trudge again, De Vardes!

*Come, Fanchon and Babette,**Olympe and Joséphine!**The dancers all are met**Within the forest green!**Cerise to me,**Denise to thee,**But none to Léontine!*[*He turns with GRÉGOIRE to the door at left of the
altar.*]

DE VARDES

Farewell—my *douce!*

YVETTE

Farewell—my fisherman!

Oh —

GRÉGOIRE

Come!

DE L'ORIENT

*The dancers all are met**Within the forest green!*

[*Exeunt* DE VARDES, DE L'ORIENT, and GRÉGOIRE.
*The church darkens. YVETTE moves to the choir
 step.*

YVETTE

Oh, love in my heart! Oh, splendour and light!

The bow in the sky, the bird at its height!

The glory and state of the angels bright!

[*She kneels and stretches out her arms to the altar.*

Oh, mother of sorrows!

CURTAIN







ACT V

SCENE I

A Judgment Hall in Nantes. A dais upon which at a heavy table sit several members of the Revolutionary Committee. Behind them soldiers and a great tricolour flag. To one side a tribune draped with tricolour; opposite the tribune a gallery filled with women of the Revolution. Upon the floor of the hall a throng of red-capped men. To the right of the dais a number of the accused, men and women. To the left a small group of the condemned.

Uproar in the hall. An accused who has been standing before the judges rejoins the right-hand group of prisoners. One of the judges rings the bell on the table before him.

THE JUDGE

SILENCE, Citoyennes in the gallery!
You disturb judgment!

CÉLESTE (*leaning from the gallery*)

We would know up here
Why you did free that man?

THE JUDGE (*soothingly*)

Ah, Citoyenne!
He's not free — he's but acquitted!

CÉLESTE

Ah, well!

That 's different!

(To the women about her.) He 's but acquitted!

THE WOMEN *(They nod their heads)*

Ah!

Enter LALAIN with NANON and ANGÉLIQUE.

CÉLESTE

Hé! Angélique! Nanon!

[NANON and ANGÉLIQUE make their way through the press to the gallery stairs.]

THE CROWD

Rémond Lalain.

A JUDGE

Thy place is here, Lalain!

LALAIN

Make way, my friends.

The Levée 's thronged to-day.

THE CROWD

Ha, ha, 't is so!

Levée of the Citoyen Carrier!

Vive la République! Vive Rémond Lalain!

[LALAIN sits beside the judges.]

A JUDGE *(to a gaoler)*

The next.

THE GAOLER

Dog of a priest!

[THE ABBÉ approaches the bar.]

T H E A B B É

On yesterday,
Messieurs the Judges, you acquitted me.

A J U D G E

It is to-day.

T H E A B B É

Citoyen Lambertye —

L A M B E R T Y E (*hastily*)

I give thee o'er — I give thee o'er —

T H E A B B É

Parbleu!

Samaritan! Would I had played Levite!
And left thee in the ditch with every wound
Till Satan came to hale his minion forth! —
Well, with this life I've done!

F I R S T J U D G E

Thou art a priest.

T H E A B B É

Granted.

S E C O N D J U D G E

Death!

A T R I C O T E U S E (*from the gallery*)

Hé! Citoyen, below there!
I've dropped my knitting. Throw it here to me!

T H I R D J U D G E

Thou hast aided emigrés.

T H E A B B É

Granted.

THE GODDESS

SECOND JUDGE

Death!

FIRST JUDGE

And written unto exiles.

THE ABBÉ

Granted.

SECOND JUDGE

Death!

THIRD JUDGE

Thou hast been heard to scorn and to lament
That which the Revolution hath achieved!

THE ABBÉ

Scorn and lament! Why, no, I've wept with joy
To see the things the Revolution hath achieved!
As —

FIRST JUDGE

As what?

THE ABBÉ

Why, thou death's-head, many things!
It did achieve, for one, my brother's death!

THIRD JUDGE

Dost thou mourn for him?

THE ABBÉ

Ay!

SECOND JUDGE

Death!

T H E A B B É

Achieve! I like the word. Achieve, achieve!
 Ruin and downfall, death and waste of fame!
 Achievement of the Revolution! Ha,
 I'll tell thee, farceur, what it hath achieved:
 It hath achieved the death of the Gironde,
 Death of Marat, and death of D'Orléans,
 Death of great part of its abhorrèd brood!
 It hath achieved the Company of Marat;
 It hath achieved Jacques Carrier in Nantes;
 It shall achieve more death and infamy!
 Death! The word you are so fond of. Death!
 And Infamy, the thing you can't bestow!
 It shall achieve the death of Carrier,
 The death of Lambertye and of Lalain,
 The death of Danton and of Robespierre!—
 Nature will give a grave obscene and dark,
 And Time will see that docks and darnels grow!

[Uproar.]

T H E F I R S T J U D G E

Death, — stand aside, condemned.

Enter SÉRAPHINE.

C É L E S T E

Ah, Séraphine,

Come up here, Séraphine!

[SÉRAPHINE *mounts the stair and sits beside CÉLESTE,*
 ANGÉLIQUE, *and NANON.*

N A N O N

Where is Yvette?

S É R A P H I N E

I know not, I!

ANGÉLIQUE

I saw her gliding by,
Beneath the moon, last night when all was still.
Against a cannon in the empty square
She leaned, and on the river looked.

SÉRAPHINE

What harm?

ANGÉLIQUE

Why, none!

CÉLESTE (*her eyes upon the prisoners below*)

Ha, ha! it is the old man's turn!

A GAOLER

Château-Gui!

THE WOMAN

Ah, Château-Gui!

FIRST JUDGE

Château-Gui!

MILLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

O my father!

COUNT LOUIS

Unclasp thy hands, my child!

What is it, Lambertye?

FIRST JUDGE

Thou ci-devant,

Thou art accused, imprimatur, of this:

Once thou didst serve Capet!

COUNT LOUIS

The King?

FIRST JUDGE

Capet.

COUNT LOUIS

I served the King of France.

FIRST JUDGE

Twice over, death! For thou didst serve Capet;
For thou dost dare say the King of France!

COUNT LOUIS

The King of France!

THE CROWD

Ah!—

COUNT LOUIS

Son of Saint Louis!

THE CROWD

Ah!—

COUNT LOUIS

Royal Martyr!

THE CROWD

Ah—h—h.

MLLE. DE CHÂTEAU-GUI

O my father!

THIRD JUDGE

All titles, terms of honour and of state,
Majesty and reverence are forbid,

Not to be spoken! They are ci-devants,
They are condemned.

THE CROWD
Condemned!

COUNT LOUIS

Ha, ci-devants,
Titles and symbols, names and attributes,
Condemned for splendour and for high estate!
Ha, Croix de Saint Louis! Ha, Château-Gui!
Thou goest to heaven in famous company:
King, Saint, Martyr, Reverence, Majesty. —
Best make the company a regiment —
Regiment du Roi, in vestments gorgeous!
Forbidden words! Who says to me "forbid"?
Ye sans-culottes, ye bourgeois, creeping things,
Adders and asps that slew a king and queen!
I am a courtier of the olden time
Who served le Grand Monarque, knew Mazarin,
And in a Court shall still be courtier,
Croix de Saint Louis, with the *grande entrée*,
While ye do prowl in filthy ways of hell,
Nor hardly see its red-lit Œil-de-bœuf
Where everlasting Terror, groaning, reigns, —
But, being lackeys, keep the lackeys' place!

FIRST JUDGE

Enough!

SECOND JUDGE

Death!

THE CROWD

Death! The Loire!

COUNT LOUIS

O Kings of France !

O sons of Clovis and of Charlemagne !
 Louis the Pious and the Debonair !
 Philippe August and Fair, and Charles the Wise !
 And thou the sainted King, the Blessed Louis !
 And Charles Bien-Aimé, Victorieux,
 Crowned by the maiden of Domrémy !
 And the good King Henri, Henri the Great !
 Louis the Just, Louis le Grand Monarque !
 Louis the Loved, and Louis lately dead,
 The Martyr King, the Martyr, Martyr King ! —
 O Kings of France in that fair land ye be,
 To your châteaux and to your palaces
 Prepare to welcome dying loyalty !
 For knightly faith is marching forth from France.
 Throne, sceptre, orb, and majesty have passed,
 Ermine and coronet and spur of gold,
 Renown and splendid honour, valiant sway,
 Ancien Régime, noblesse of old France !
 The oriflamme upon its golden stem,
 The banner of the lilies waving high ! —

THE CROWD

Ah —

COUNT LOUIS

The lily banner and the oriflamme !
 Forgotten yonder stripes of shame and woe !

THE CROWD

The tricolour ! Death ! The Loire !

FIRST JUDGE

Death to-night!

COUNT LOUIS

Nightshade, mandrake, and hemlock o'er ye wave! —
 But I am going where, I make no doubt,
 The favourite flower is still the fleur-de-lis!

THE CROWD

Ah!

COUNT LOUIS

And the word forbid is *république!*

THE CROWD

Down! down!

COUNT LOUIS

Princes and peers of France!

FIRST JUDGE

Have done!

COUNT LOUIS

Anjou, Lorraine!

THE CROWD

Ah—h—h!

COUNT LOUIS

Bourbon and Valois!

*[Uproar in the hall. Mlle. de Château-Gui
 clings to her father's arm.]*

Forbidden words! Well, well, my child, I'm done!
 My breath is out. — Forbidden words! Ma foi!
 'T is to my taste to deal in contraband!

*[The First Judge rings the bell violently. The tu-
 mult subsides.]*

A GAOLER

Château-Gui, take place beside the priest!

THE ABBÉ

Ah,

Monsieur le Comte!

COUNT LOUIS

Monsieur l'Abbe!

[*He offers his snuff-box.*]

FIRST JUDGE

The next.

Enter YVETTE. The crowd murmurs as it makes way.

THE CROWD

Yvette Charruel!

A MAN

Goddess of Reason!

[*YVETTE mounts the stair to the gallery and sits beside SÉRAPHINE.*]

CÉLESTE

So pale!

ANGÉLIQUE

No rose?

NANON

Only her lips are red.

CÉLESTE

So heavy-eyed?

YVETTE

I have not slept.

A YOUNG GIRL (*near her*)

Oh, oh,

Thy voice! 'T is like a violin playing!

ANGÉLIQUE

I know thou didst not sleep. — How looked the Loire
Beneath the moon last night?

YVETTE

Much as 't will look
Beneath the moon to-night.

*[With her chin upon her hand she studies the throng
below.]*

SÉRAPHINE

The prisoners —

YVETTE

Who rises there?

FIRST JUDGE

Thou ci-devant, De Vardes!

THE CROWD

De Vardes! De Vardes! Aristocrat! De Vardes!

DE VARDES

Rémond Lalain —

LALAIN

René de Vardes.

DE VARDES

This court —

Pray you conceive it is some greensward trim,
My cartel sent, received, the duel fought,
And thou the victor, since so wags the world,
Heart's blood of mine upon thy rapier dark!
And I the vanquished in the sight of men,
Drowsing to death upon the bloody sod.
And all this folk but seconds, witnesses,

They are not here, nor there ; we are the men !
 Now, seeing death hath some prerogative,
 I charge thee stand, antagonist ! nor leave
 This sunny field with thy triumphant friends
 Until I bid thee go !

L A L A I N

I hear !

(*To the crowd.*) Silence !

D E V A R D E S

When I do think that once I called thee friend,
 My wonder grows ! The orchard 's blooming now
 Where we did lie at length on summer eves
 The while the mavis sang and sea winds blew,
 And to the nodding clover droned the bee, —
 Two striplings couched beneath an apple tree,
 Talking of knights at arms and paladins
 And what we each would dare in worthy cause !
 That brow of thine was not so swarthy then,
 Thine eyes were frank, we read from the same book
 The deeds of Palmerin and Amadis.
 Then up we lightly rose and went our way,
 Hand touching hand, — Orestes, Pylades !
 I, Jonathan the Prince, and David thou !
 The figure holds, for Jonathan will die,
 But wilt thou mourn him, David ? No, I say ! —
 Nor o'er his kingdom shalt thou reign, Rémond !

L A L A I N

René —

D E V A R D E S

I am, monsieur, the Baron of Morbec !

THE CROWD

Ah!

LALAIN

Silence!

(To DE VARDES.) As thou wilt! He is long dead
That youth thou namest David.

DE VARDES

Ay, Citoyen,
He slew himself. I see his punishment.

LALAIN

Oh! —

DE VARDES

Wretched man! What hast thou done? I know,
And thou, Rémond, dost know I know! Enough.
O better far to lie upon this sod
And hear the wings of death above my head,
Than to be thou, thou stained conqueror!
Dishonoured thou from helm to bloody heel!
Enough! When the cock crows and the morning star
Shines steadfast over Loire I shall be gone.
One stays, that's God. Do thou beware, Rémond,
For God will hearken unto Jonathan —
Thou canst not hurt a flower that he loved!

LALAIN

No?

DE VARDES

No! *

LALAIN

Thou mightst have had thy life —

D E V A R D E S

I?

[*He laughs.*]

Y V E T T E

Air!

You hem me in, Citoyennes! Air! *de grâce!*

N A N O N

The air is good enough for us, Yvette!

A N G É L I Q U E

Why do you grow so pale, so pale, Yvette,

[*YVETTE takes from her hair the bonnet-rouge.*]

S É R A P H I N E

Psst! Little fool! Put on the cap again!

Y V E T T E

It is too heavy!

S É R A P H I N E

Saint Yves! Put it on!

D E V A R D E S

The duel's o'er; the night is drawing on;
 Dark is thy form against the crimson sky,
 Rémond Lalain! Stand further off, my foe!
 And now I think I see thee not at all,
 And that is well! I would forget thee quite.
 Live out thy life unto its sordid close!
 Live on, and in the future find the past!
 But while thou treadest earth touch not again
 That flower I spoke of! Touch it not, Lalain!

L A L A I N

Draws on the night—

THE GODDESS

DE VARDES

I'll bathe me in the Loire!
 Death has been ever called a River wide.
 This ford I fear not! — Soldier of the King,
 I'll pass the stream, though cold, though cold and dark!
 The bivouac lights are shining through the trees,
 He waits within my tent, my General!

FIRST JUDGE

Death!

SECOND JUDGE

Death!

DE VARDES

Now sheath thy sword, Rémond!
 The field of honour leave to death and me!

[He crosses to the condemned.]

COUNT LOUIS

Monsieur le Baron!

THE ABBÉ

René de Vardes!

DE VARDES

Monsieur le Comte, Monsieur l'Abbé, again
 I find myself in best of company!

[The judges whisper together. LALAIN, his eyes upon the floor, drums upon the table with his hand. YVETTE unpins the tricolour cockade from her breast, gazes upon it for a moment, then throws it from her. The women about her watch her greedily.]

SÉRAPHINE

Name of a name! Yvette!

YVETTE

I like white best.

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Gildas! Saint Maudez!

YVETTE

I ever loved

The fleur-de-lis!

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Yves le Véridique!

YVETTE (*She rises*)

God and the King!

[Uproar in the hall. All turn toward the gallery.]

A JUDGE

Who cried that?

A BRETON SAILOR

Sainte Vierge!

Yvette Charruel!

LALAIN

No!

DE VARDES

Mon Dieu!

THE CROWD

Yvette —

Yvette Charruel!

SÉRAPHINE

Saint Servan! Saint Linaire!

YVETTE

I denounce the Citoyen Rémond Lalain !

THE CROWD

Ah! —

NANON

Ah, let me get at her !

LALAIN

Citoyens !

Heed her not — she 's mad ! — The next prisoner !

YVETTE

I denounce Carrier and Lambertye !
 Chicanneau, Sarlat, Petit-Pierre, and Gaye,
 The Company of Marat, the hideous deaths,
 The Noyades and the Dragonades of Nantes !
 I tell you that the blood you shed must stop !
 One cannot sleep at night with thinking on 't.
 You put to sleep, O God ! too many !

THE CROWD

Ah! —

A VOICE

There is no God ! nor ever was in Nantes !

ANOTHER VOICE

She has spoken against the Republic !

YVETTE

There was a glory in the morning sky,
 Where now is naught but miserable red !
 A trumpet blew, but we have listened since

To the false jingle of a tambourine !
 There stood a mighty judge, robed, calm and proud,
 Where is he now ? I see but murderers !

A VOICE

But murderers !

YVETTE

I denounce the Republic !

[Uproar.

THE CROWD

Oh, harlotry ! — No, blasphemy ! — Down, down !
 The Bar ! the Judgment Bar ! — The river ! — Death !
 The Loire !

YVETTE

I am coming.

[*She descends the stair. Men and women clutch her
 and thrust her forward to the bar.*

I am here !

I am Yvette, called Right of the Seigneur.
 My mother was the peasant girl, Yvonne ;
 My father was the Baron of Morbec.
 I am tired of *Ça ira*, *Carmagnole*,
 I would sleep with the Loire for my pillow !

THE CROWD

Ah—h—h !

LALAIN

A head beside thine on that pillow !

DE VARDES

Mon Dieu !

YVETTE

Perhaps, Citoyen !

A VOICE

I denounce

Yvette Charruel !

OTHER VOICES

And I!— And I!— And I!

CURTAIN

SCENE II

The banks of the Loire. Night. Branching trees; between their trunks is seen the river. There is a full moon, but a drifting mist obscures the scene. In the background, upon the river bank, dimly appears a crowd of the condemned, men, women, and children, soldiers and executioners of the Company of Marat. From this throng comes a low, continued, confused sound of command, entreaty, distress, and lamentation. In the foreground the condemned form into groups or move singly to and fro.

Enter YVETTE from the shadow of the trees.

A SOLDIER (*following her*)

HOLA! Give us not the slip!

YVETTE

Thou soldier!

There is no gold could make me flee this place!

How long dost think before they throw me in?

THE SOLDIER

A little while!

[He returns to the river. YVETTE sits upon the earth at the foot of a tree, and with her chin upon her hand watches those who come and go.

Y V E T T E

He comes not yet! O Our Lady!
I would not drown till I have seen him once!

A W O M A N (*passing with a man*)

How shines the moon! Did we not always say,
We two would die by such a moon as this?
Rememberest thou—

T H E M A N

Rememberest thou that night,
That Versailles night within the Orangerie?

T H E W O M A N

Rememberest thou—

[*They pass.*]A S O L D I E R (*calling to another*)

To bind them hand and foot,
We need more rope!

T H E S E C O N D S O L D I E R

Just thrust them in the stream
With bayonets!

A C R Y F R O M T H E R I V E R

Miséricorde!

[*A child with flowers in her hand speaks to YVETTE.*]

T H E C H I L D

I'm tired—

Y V E T T E

Rest here, thou little bird!

THE GODDESS

THE CHILD

My name's Aimée.

I did not know that flowers grew at night.
Is that the moon?

YVETTE

It is the silver moon!

Aimée's a pretty name. My name's Yvette.

THE CHILD

Kiss me, Yvette — I'll look now for Ursule!

YVETTE

Who is Ursule?

THE CHILD

My *bonne* — Adieu, Yvette!*[The child passes on.]*

VOICES FROM THE RIVER

Hélas! Hélas! Miséricorde!

*[A nun advances from the shadow. She is in ecstasy,
her hands clasped, her eyes raised.]*

THE NUN

The skies open: heaven appears!
Heaven my home!
O for the wings of the dove,
The eagle's speed!
The gates of pearl are opening,
My harp is strung.
The Virgins come to meet me.
Sainte Agnès, Sainte Claire!
Our Lady stoops to greet me.

My father smiles.
 My brothers two I see there!
 Who is that one
 Who kneels and to me beckons?
 'T is he I loved!
 What radiance grows, what splendour?
 Who waiting stands?
 Light! O Light! O Christ my Lord!
 Heaven my home!
 O Love! O Death, come quickly!
 I would be gone!

[A soldier touches her on the arm.]

* THE SOLDIER

Thy time it is!

[The nun regards him with a radiant and dazzling smile, then turns and moves swiftly before him to the river.]

THE VOICES

Woe, woe! Miséricorde!

YVETTE

Heaven my home! Shall I see heaven then?
 Oh me! so much of ill thou 'st done, Yvette!
 Alas! Alas! What if I cannot win
 To heaven! but must ever weeping stand
 With all the lost and strain my eyes to see
 The form I love move 'neath the living trees,
 And all in vain, so great the distance is! —
 Not see him! O Our Lady, let me in!

THE VOICES

Woe, woe! — I die! — I die! — O countrymen!

YVETTE

O God, and is it true I murdered her,
 That lady high, that fair, so fair Clarice?
 O God! I would that she were happy here,
 Alive and laughing, gay of heart again!
 O God! I do repent me of my sin!

THE VOICES

Ayez pitié!

[From a group of the condemned is heard the voice
 of THE ABBÉ.]

THE ABBÉ

*Miserere mei Deus
 Secundum magnam misericordiam tuam!*

THE CONDEMNED (*kneeling*)

Have mercy, O God!

VOICES FROM THE RIVER

Miséricorde!

[YVETTE *kneels*.]

THE ABBÉ

*In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum,
 Redemisti me Domine Deus veritatis!*

THE CONDEMNED

O God, receive our souls!

VOICES FROM THE RIVER

Woe, woe! We die!

SOLDIERS

That one is swimming there! Your musket! Fire!—

[A musket shot.]

Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

THE ABBÉ

*Dulcissime Domine Jesu Christe,
Per virtutem sanctissimae Passionis tuae
Recipe me in numerum electorum tuorum!*

THE CONDEMNED

O Christ, receive our souls! O Christ who died!

THE ABBÉ

*Maria, Mater gratiae, Mater misericordiae,
Tu me ab hoste protege, et hora mortis suscipe!*

THE CONDEMNED

O mother of God!

VOICES

Miséricorde!

THE ABBÉ

*Omnes sancti Angeli, et omnes Sancti
Intercedite pro me, et mihi succurrite!*

VOICES

Miséricorde!

SOLDIERS

Petit-Pierre! — André!

'T is time for yonder folk beneath the trees!

THE ABBÉ

*Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis,
In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.
Amen!*

[The condemned arise from their knees.]

THE GODDESS

THE SOLDIERS

Come your ways!

[THE ABBÉ and the condemned vanish into the mist upon the river bank.

VOICES

Ayez pitié!

[YVETTE rises from her knees. She plucks the yellow broom that grows beneath the trees.

YVETTE

And if I may I will her servant be,
And I will bring her posies every day!

THE VOICES

We die!

SOLDIERS

So, two and two! Ha, ha!

[There appears in mid-stream on the river Carrier's festal barge. It is lit from stem to stern. There is music aboard, singing and revelry of men and women.

LAUGHTER FROM THE RIVER

Ha, ha! Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

THE VOICES

They laugh! They sing!

[A sound of singing from the passing barge.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

Fair Chloris bathed her in the flood,
Young Damon watching, trembling stood,
Behind the frailest hawthorn wall!
The month was May —

A MAN'S VOICE

No, Prairial!

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

*Her ivory limbs they gleamed and turned,
Young Damon's heart so hotly burned,
Into the stream he leaped therefor!
It seemed July —*

THE MAN'S VOICE

No, Thermidor!

[The barge passes.]

VOICES FROM THE RIVER

O hearts so hard!

OTHER VOICES

Oh, woe! Adieu! Adieu!

[An old woman speaks to YVETTE.]

THE OLD WOMAN

They've drowned my son, my sailor son Michel!
Oh, oh, my heart! he's drifting out to sea!

YVETTE

Poor mother!

THE OLD WOMAN

Oh, to and fro he sailed, he sailed!
The Indies knew him and the Northern Seas!
He'd bide at home a bit, then off he'd go,
Another voyage make, strange things to see!
Then home he'd come and of his travels tell.
Oh, oh, my son, my sailor son Michel!

[The old woman passes on.]

Enter SÉRAPHINE.

SÉRAPHINE

I've sought her here, I've sought her there, in vain!
And perilous it is to seek one here!

YVETTE

Séraphine!

SÉRAPHINE

Yvette!

YVETTE

Where is monseigneur?

SÉRAPHINE (*weeping*)

I know not, I! — Saint Lazaire and Saint Jean!
I nursed thee ere thou wast so high!

YVETTE

Poor Séraphine! Dear Séraphine!

SÉRAPHINE

Alack!

They're watching there!

YVETTE

Oh, then away!

'T is death to weep for one who dies! Away!

SÉRAPHINE (*weeping*)

Oh, oh! When thou wast but a little thing
Thou hadst the coaxing ways! Alack! Alack!

YVETTE

Poor Séraphine!

SÉRAPHINE

Dost mind the sunny path
Up the steep cliff to chapel in the woods?

YVETTE

I mind — I mind — To thy warm hand I clung,
A little child. Now I must walk alone!

SÉRAPHINE

Oh, oh! And thou wast Goddess yesterday,
The fairest Goddess ever seen, they say!

YVETTE

Speak not of that!

A VOICE (*calling*)

Séraphine! Séraphine!

YVETTE

It warns, that voice! Adieu, adieu, adieu!
Thou must begone!

SÉRAPHINE

If I do look at thee

I'll stay forever here! Adieu! Adieu! —
Oh well-a-day! Oh well, oh well-a-day!

[*Exit* SÉRAPHINE.]

YVETTE

So late it grows, so long I've waited here!
I feel the morning air! — Will he not come?
O God! what if they've slain him elsewhere?
Ha! Death is busy far and near to-night!
They may have shot him yonder by the sea!
He may have sunk above, below this place!

Though Grégoire swore to me it would be here,
 Here where they brought me would they bring him too,
 And ere the set of moon we would be gone!—
 O God! The cries of drowning men I've heard,
 But not his voice among them! No, no, no!
 He'll make no moan, he will die loftily!—
 Ah, God! only to see him ere I drown!

THE VOICES

Miséricorde!

SOLDIERS

Prenez garde! Halte là!

A MAN'S VOICE

I die who fought for France in bloody fields;
 At Lille I fought, at Bordeaux, Avignon!

YVETTE

A soldier!

[Another voice sings hoarsely.

THE VOICE

*Tremblez, tyrans! et vous perfides,
 L'opprobre de tous les partis!
 Tremblez, vos projets parricides
 Viennent enfin recevoir leur prix!
 Tout est soldat pour vous combattre—*

[The voice dies.

YVETTE

A soldier!

ANOTHER VOICE

Diantre! A whiff of grapeshot now,

A sabre-cut, or e'en a trampling charge!

But this cold death —

[*The voice dies.*]

Y V E T T E

A soldier!

A N O T H E R V O I C E

Baste! I'll tell

The Duc de Biron —

Y V E T T E

All soldiers!

Enter DE VARDES and GRÉGOIRE.

G R É G O I R E

I tell you truth, monsieur —

D E V A R D E S

So dense the throng

I have looked up and down for this long hour, —

This hour so long, this hour so fatal short,

Seeing it is my latest hour of life,

And that I cannot find her whom I seek!

G R É G O I R E

She is not dead, monsieur!

D E V A R D E S

So many are!

G R É G O I R E

I would have known.

THE GODDESS

DE VARDES

Some æons past thou wast
 A serviceable fellow! Get thee gone!
 And if thou findest her, I'll give thee thanks,
 I have no gold —

GRÉGOIRE

Monsieur le Baron —

DE VARDES

Go!

[Exit GRÉGOIRE.]

And if I find her not, if time shall fail,
 Then through thy labyrinth, Eternity,
 Love's silken clue shall lead me safe at last —

YVETTE

Monseigneur!

[DE VARDES turns.]

DE VARDES

Yvette!

[Two soldiers of the Company of Marat pass beneath
 the trees.]

THE FIRST SOLDIER

'Tis near the cockcrow!
 What devil's work we've had, and have!

THE SECOND SOLDIER

Courage!
 There are not so many now! Then home and sleep!

[They pass.]

DE VARDES

Oh, rest thee on thy lover's breast, my heart!

My life, my love, my dear, my Duchess Jeanne!
Oh, 'neath the moon thou 'rt like a lily flower!

Y V E T T E

René, René!

D E V A R D E S

Thy lips!

[*They kiss.*

No, no, thou 'rt not
That Vivien whom I did call thee once.
She was an evil fay; thou 'rt pure and good!
Nor art thou that fair piteous Duchess Jeanne
Who died for love, whose look thou wearest now!
Thou never wast that woman star-begirt,
Whom they did hail as Goddess here in Nantes.
No Goddess thou, thou wan and broken flower! —
This is green Morbec, thou 'rt the herd girl there
And I thy fisher, home from out the west.
My heart, my love, my silver rose, my *douce!*

Y V E T T E

The flowers drifting from the fragrant trees!
Unearthly light —

[*They kiss.*

D E V A R D E S

Now come, Eternity!

V O I C E S F R O M T H E R I V E R

It is so sad to die! — No, no, 't is sweet!
Adieu, adieu!

S O L D I E R S

So, down! Ha, ha! *Les Noces*
Républicaines!

THE GODDESS

DE VARDES
Les Noces Républicaines!

YVETTE

'T is what they call this death —

SOLDIERS

So near the dawn!

Here are the *tricoteuses*.

VOICES OF WOMEN

Not yet they've done!

Diantre! So many weddings in one night!

Here are the girls from Carrier's barge at last!

OTHER VOICES

* Petit-Pierre! André!

SOLDIERS

Céleste — Nanon!

Zephine, 'Toinette!

THE WOMEN

*Vive le son! vive le son!**Dansons la Carmagnole!*

A TRICOTEUSE

'T is light enough to knit! I'll sit me down.

Fi! how the grass is trampled here!

A SOLDIER

Lalain and Lambertye —

A WOMAN

We left them there

Upon the barge, Lalain and Lambertye;

And they were drinking deep, and dicing too,
And Lalain had his arm round Angélique!

[They laugh.]

DE VARDES

Seest thou not through yonder trees the stone,
The Druid Stone where I did see thee first
When thou didst lie asleep upon the grass?
How long I stood and looked, thou dost not know!

YVETTE

Beside the stream I slept and dreamed of thee!
I knew it not, but sure I dreamed of thee,
For in my sleep I thought I saw a king!

DE VARDES

O love!—

YVETTE

It is Morbec arises there!
The sands that stretch above the idle waves,
And all the little shells upon the shore!

DE VARDES

The convent bell is ringing! Seest thou not
The fountain old, the fruit trees in the sun?

YVETTE

Oh, life was never made for happiness!
The hour's too short, the wine spills from the cup,
The blossom's shaken ere we know 't is sweet!

VOICES FROM THE RIVER

Miséricorde!

THE GODDESS

A SOLDIER

Those two have waited long!
Hi! Petit-Pierre, 't is time to marry them —

DE VARDES

This Saint John's Eve we'll walk in other woods!
And we will find and name a castle fair,
And rose and heartsease we will plant thereby!
Here ends this road, but we must onward go.
There is a longer hour, a deeper cup!
The blossom's gone, but we shall see the fruit.
And life was made for happiness, my *douce!*

A VOICE FROM THE RIVER

*Mourir pour la patrie,
Mourir pour la France.*

DE VARDES

It is a hymn of Chénier's. — France! France!
Not since the days of Clovis hast thou lacked
Strong sons to die for thee, thou Lioness!
But now thy own brood hast thou eaten up,
And in the desert shalt thou roar alone,
Seeing the hunters nearer, nearer creep!
They'll snare thee fast, they'll make of thee a show!
France, France! — and yet thy sons shall ransom thee!

A SOLDIER

A length of rope, André!

ANOTHER

Petit-Pierre —

YVETTE

They come!

DE VARDES

I will go first.

YVETTE

'T is not their way !

They 'll bind us fast together, throw us in
Bound fast together —

DE VARDES

Is it so? Why, then

We are together still, my heart, my life !
We will not struggle as we sink to rest.

A SOLDIER

Man and woman, come your ways !

SECOND SOLDIER

The river

Waits, your marriage bed is spread !

[The knitting women sing from the river bank.]

THE WOMEN

We are the tricoteuses !

Our wool we knit beneath the sun and moon !

Knit! knit! knitting every one !

We are the tricoteuses !

The skein we knit is ravelled out full soon !

Knit! knit! the knitting now is done !

YVETTE

The light is growing in the east ! My heart
It is so full I cannot speak to thee !

DE VARDES

Put thou thine arms about my neck, Yvette,
And lay thy head upon thy lover's heart,
And veil thine eyes with all thy shadowy hair.
Now let them bind us with what cords they will,
The spirit moves unbound, triumphant, free,
Not through the Loire, but through a vaster stream !
Oh, it is something dimly great to die !
And then to die together, is 't not sweet ?
And not through illness, age, decrepitude,
But the armed man is ready for new wars.
And thou —

YVETTE

I hear the lark !

A SOLDIER

Come, come away !

[YVETTE and DE VARDES move together towards
the river, into the mist and the shadow of the trees.

A VOICE FROM THE RIVER

Vive la République !

CURTAIN



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