

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

THE PICCOLOMINI

Friedrich Schiller
The Piccolomini

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The Piccolomini: A Play:

Содержание

PREFACE	5
DRAMATIS PERSONAE	8
ACT I	10
SCENE I	10
SCENE II	21
SCENE III	40
SCENE IV	49
SCENE V	63
ACT II	68
SCENE I	68
SCENE II	72
SCENE III	84
SCENE IV	88
SCENE V	93
SCENE VI	100
SCENE VII	114
ACT III	140
SCENE I	140
SCENE II	147
SCENE III	152
SCENE IV	162
SCENE V	176
SCENE VI	182

SCENE VII	187
SCENE VIII	189
SCENE IX	200
ACT IV	202
SCENE I	202
SCENE II	207
SCENE III	209
SCENE IV	212
SCENE V	219
SCENE VI	225
SCENE VII	231
ACT V	236
SCENE I	236
SCENE II	267
SCENE III	276

Friedrich Schiller

The Piccolomini: A Play

PREFACE

The two dramas, – PICCOLOMINI, or the first part of WALLENSTEIN, and the DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN, are introduced in the original manuscript by a prelude in one act, entitled WALLENSTEIN'S CAMP. This is written in rhyme, and in nine-syllable verse, in the same lilting metre (if that expression may be permitted), with the second Eclogue of Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar.

This prelude possesses a sort of broad humor, and is not deficient in character: but to have translated it into prose, or into any other metre than that of the original, would have given a false idea both of its style and purport; to have translated it into the same metre would have been incompatible with a faithful adherence to the sense of the German from the comparative poverty of our language in rhymes; and it would have been unadvisable, from the incongruity of those lax verses with the present taste of the English public. Schiller's intention seems to have been merely to have prepared his reader for the tragedies by a lively picture of laxity of discipline and the mutinous dispositions of Wallenstein's soldiery. It is not necessary as a

preliminary explanation. For these reasons it has been thought expedient not to translate it.

The admirers of Schiller, who have abstracted their idea of that author from the Robbers, and the Cabal and Love, plays in which the main interest is produced by the excitement of curiosity, and in which the curiosity is excited by terrible and extraordinary incident, will not have perused without some portion of disappointment the dramas, which it has been my employment to translate. They should, however, reflect that these are historical dramas taken from a popular German history; that we must, therefore, judge of them in some measure with the feelings of Germans; or, by analogy, with the interest excited in us by similar dramas in our own language. Few, I trust, would be rash or ignorant enough to compare Schiller with Shakspeare; yet, merely as illustration, I would say that we should proceed to the perusal of Wallenstein, not from Lear or Othello, but from Richard II., or the three parts of Henry VI. We scarcely expect rapidity in an historical drama; and many prolix speeches are pardoned from characters whose names and actions have formed the most amusing tales of our early life. On the other hand, there exist in these plays more individual beauties, more passages whose excellence will bear reflection than in the former productions of Schiller. The description of the Astrological Tower, and the reflections of the Young Lover, which follow it, form in the original a fine poem; and my translation must have been wretched indeed if it can have wholly overclouded the

beauties of the scene in the first act of the first play between Questenberg, Max, and Octavio Piccolomini. If we except the scene of the setting sun in the Robbers, I know of no part in Schiller's plays which equals the first scene of the fifth act of the concluding plays. [In this edition, scene iii., act v.] It would be unbecoming in me to be more diffuse on this subject. A translator stands connected with the original author by a certain law of subordination which makes it more decorous to point out excellences than defects; indeed, he is not likely to be a fair judge of either. The pleasure or disgust from his own labor will mingle with the feelings that arise from an afterview of the original. Even in the first perusal of a work in any foreign language which we understand, we are apt to attribute to it more excellence than it really possesses from our own pleasurable sense of difficulty overcome without effort. Translation of poetry into poetry is difficult, because the translator must give a brilliancy to his language without that warmth of original conception from which such brilliancy would follow of its own accord. But the translator of a living author is incumbered with additional inconveniences. If he render his original faithfully as to the sense of each passage, he must necessarily destroy a considerable portion of the spirit; if he endeavor to give a work executed according to laws of compensation he subjects himself to imputations of vanity or misrepresentation. I have thought it my duty to remain bound by the sense of my original with as few exceptions as the nature of the languages rendered possible. S. T. C.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

WALLENSTEIN, Duke of Friedland, Generalissimo of the Imperial Forces in the Thirty Years' War.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, Lieutenant-General.

MAX. PICCOLOMINI, his Son, Colonel of a Regiment of Cuirassiers.

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

ILLO, Field-Marshal, Wallenstein's Confidant.

ISOLANI, General of the Croats.

BUTLER, an Irishman, Commander of a Regiment of Dragoons.

TIEFENBACH, |

DON MARADAS, | Generals under Wallenstein.

GOETZ, |

KOLATTO, |

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

VON QUESTENBERG, the War Commissioner, Imperial Envoy.

BAPTISTA SENI, an Astrologer.

DUCHESS OF FRIEDLAND, Wife of Wallenstein.

THEKLA, her Daughter, Princess of Friedland.

THE COUNTESS TERZRY, Sister of the Duchess.

A CORNET.

COLONELS and GENERALS (several).

PAGES and ATTENDANTS belonging to Wallenstein.

ATTENDANTS and HOBOISTS belonging to Terzky.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR to Count Terzky.

VALET DE CHAMBRE of Count Piccolomini.

ACT I

SCENE I

An old Gothic Chamber in the Council-House at Pilsen,
decorated with Colors and other War Insignia.

ILLO, with BUTLER and ISOLANI.

ILLO

Ye have come too late-but ye are come! The distance,
Count Isolani, excuses your delay.

ISOLANI

Add this too, that we come not empty-handed.
At Donauwerth¹ it was reported to us,
A Swedish caravan was on its way,
Transporting a rich cargo of provision,

¹ A town about twelve German miles N.E. of Ulm.

Almost six hundreds wagons. This my Croats
Plunged down upon and seized, this weighty prize! —
We bring it hither —

ILLO

Just in time to banquet
The illustrious company assembled here.

BUTLER

'Tis all alive! a stirring scene here!

ISOLANI

Ay!
The very churches are full of soldiers.

[Casts his eye round.

And in the council-house, too, I observe,

You're settled quite at home! Well, well! we soldiers
Must shift and suit us in what way we can.

ILLO

We have the colonels here of thirty regiments.
You'll find Count Terzky here, and Tiefenbach,
Kolatto, Goetz, Maradas, Hinnersam,
The Piccolomini, both son and father —
You'll meet with many an unexpected greeting
From many an old friend and acquaintance. Only
Gallas is wanting still, and Altringer.

BUTLER

Expect not Gallas.

ILLO (hesitating)

How so? Do you know —

ISOLANI (interrupting him)

Max. Piccolomini here? O bring me to him.
I see him yet ('tis now ten years ago,
We were engaged with Mansfeldt hard by Dessau),
I see the youth, in my mind's eye I see him,
Leap his black war-horse from the bridge adown,
And t'ward his father, then in extreme peril,
Beat up against the strong tide of the Elbe.
The down was scarce upon his chin! I hear
He has made good the promise of his youth,
And the full hero now is finished in him.

ILLO

You'll see him yet ere evening. He conducts

The Duchess Friedland hither, and the princess² From
Caernthen³. We expect them here at noon.

² The Dukes in Germany being always reigning powers, their sons and daughters are entitled princes and princesses.

³ Carinthia.

BUTLER

Both wife and daughter does the duke call hither?
He crowds in visitants from all sides.

ISOLANI

Hm!

So much the better! I had framed my mind
To hear of naught but warlike circumstance,
Of marches and attacks, and batteries;
And lo! the duke provides, and something too
Of gentler sort and lovely, should be present
To feast our eyes.

**ILLO (who has been standing in the
attitude of meditation, to BUTLER,**

whom he leads a little on one side)

And how came you to know
That the Count Gallas joins us not?

BUTLER

Because
He importuned me to remain behind.

ILLO (with warmth)

And you? You hold out firmly!

[Grasping his hand with affection.

Noble Butler!

BUTLER

After the obligation which the duke
Had laid so newly on me —

ILLO

I had forgotten
A pleasant duty – major-general,
I wish you joy!

ISOLANI

What, you mean, of this regiment?
I hear, too, that to make the gift still sweeter,
The duke has given him the very same
In which he first saw service, and since then
Worked himself step by step, through each preferment,
From the ranks upwards. And verily, it gives

A precedent of hope, a spur of action
To the whole corps, if once in their remembrance
An old deserving soldier makes his way.

BUTLER

I am perplexed and doubtful whether or no
I dare accept this your congratulation.
The emperor has not yet confirmed the appointment.

ISOLANI

Seize it, friend, seize it! The hand which in that post
Placed you is strong enough to keep you there,
Spite of the emperor and his ministers!

ILLO

Ay, if we would but so consider it! —
If we would all of us consider it so!
The emperor gives us nothing; from the duke

Comes all – whate'er we hope, whate'er we have.

ISOLANI (to ILLO)

My noble brother! did I tell you how
The duke will satisfy my creditors?
Will be himself my bankers for the future,
Make me once more a creditable man!
And this is now the third time, think of that!
This kingly-minded man has rescued me
From absolute ruin and restored my honor.

ILLO

Oh that his power but kept pace with his wishes!
Why, friend! he'd give the whole world to his soldiers.
But at Vienna, brother! – here's the grievance, —
What politic schemes do they not lay to shorten
His arm, and where they can to clip his pinions.
Then these new dainty requisitions! these
Which this same Questenberg brings hither!

BUTLER

Ay!

Those requisitions of the emperor —
I too have heard about them; but I hope
The duke will not draw back a single inch!

ILLO

Not from his right most surely, unless first
From office!

BUTLER (shocked and confused)

Know you aught then? You alarm me.

**ISOLANI (at the same time with
BUTLER, and in a hurrying voice)**

We should be ruined, every one of us!

ILLO

Yonder I see our worthy friend [spoken with a sneer]
approaching

With the Lieutenant-General Piccolomini.

BUTLER (shaking his head significantly)

I fear we shall not go hence as we came.

SCENE II

Enter OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI and
QUESTENBERG.

OCTAVIO (still in the distance)

Ay! ah! more still! Still more new visitors!
Acknowledge, friend! that never was a camp,
Which held at once so many heads of heroes.

QUESTENBERG

Let none approach a camp of Friedland's troops
Who dares to think unworthily of war;
E'en I myself had nigh forgot its evils
When I surveyed that lofty soul of order,
By which, while it destroys the world – itself
Maintains the greatness which itself created.

OCTAVIO (approaching nearer)

Welcome, Count Isolani!

ISOLANI

My noble brother!
Even now am I arrived; it has been else my duty —

OCTAVIO

And Colonel Butler – trust me, I rejoice
Thus to renew acquaintance with a man
Whose worth and services I know and honor.
See, see, my friend!
There might we place at once before our eyes
The sum of war's whole trade and mystery —

[To QUESTENBERG, presenting BUTLER and ISOLANI
at the same time

to him.

These two the total sum – strength and despatch.

QUESTENBERG (to OCTAVIO)

And lo! betwixt them both, experienced prudence!

OCTAVIO (presenting QUESTENBERG to BUTLER and ISOLANI)

The Chamberlain and War-Commissioner Questenberg.
The bearer of the emperor's behests, —
The long-tried friend and patron of all soldiers,
We honor in this noble visitor.

[Universal silence.]

ILLO (moving towards QUESTENBERG)

'Tis not the first time, noble minister,
You've shown our camp this honor.

QUESTENBERG

Once before
I stood beside these colors.

ILLO

Perchance too you remember where that was;
It was at Znaeim ⁴ in Moravia, where
You did present yourself upon the part
Of the emperor to supplicate our duke
That he would straight assume the chief command.

QUESTENBURG

To supplicate? Nay, bold general!
So far extended neither my commission
(At least to my own knowledge) nor my zeal.

⁴ A town not far from the Mine-mountains, on the high road from Vienna to Prague.

ILLO

Well, well, then – to compel him, if you choose,
I can remember me right well, Count Tilly
Had suffered total rout upon the Lech.
Bavaria lay all open to the enemy,
Whom there was nothing to delay from pressing
Onwards into the very heart of Austria.
At that time you and Werdenberg appeared
Before our general, storming him with prayers,
And menacing the emperor's displeasure,
Unless he took compassion on this wretchedness.

ISOLANI (steps up to them)

Yes, yes, 'tis comprehensible enough,
Wherefore with your commission of to-day,
You were not all too willing to remember
Your former one.

QUESTENBERG

Why not, Count Isolani?
No contradiction sure exists between them.
It was the urgent business of that time
To snatch Bavaria from her enemy's hand;
And my commission of to-day instructs me
To free her from her good friends and protectors.

ILLO

A worthy office! After with our blood
We have wrested this Bohemia from the Saxon,
To be swept out of it is all our thanks,
The sole reward of all our hard-won victories.

QUESTENBERG

Unless that wretched land be doomed to suffer
Only a change of evils, it must be
Freed from the scourge alike of friend or foe.

ILLO

What? 'Twas a favorable year; the boors
Can answer fresh demands already.

QUESTENBERG

Nay,
If you discourse of herds and meadow-grounds —

ISOLANI

The war maintains the war. Are the boors ruined
The emperor gains so many more new soldiers.

QUESTENBERG

And is the poorer by even so many subjects.

ISOLANI

Poh! we are all his subjects.

QUESTENBERG

Yet with a difference, general! The one fill
With profitable industry the purse,
The others are well skilled to empty it.
The sword has made the emperor poor; the plough
Must reinvigorate his resources.

ISOLANI

Sure!

Times are not yet so bad. Methinks I see

[Examining with his eye the dress and ornaments of
QUESTENBERG.

Good store of gold that still remains uncoined.

QUESTENBERG

Thank Heaven! that means have been found out to hide
Some little from the fingers of the Croats.

ILLO

There! The Stawata and the Martinitz,
On whom the emperor heaps his gifts and graces,
To the heart-burning of all good Bohemians —
Those minions of court favor, those court harpies,
Who fatten on the wrecks of citizens
Driven from their house and home – who reap no harvests
Save in the general calamity —
Who now, with kingly pomp, insult and mock
The desolation of their country – these,
Let these, and such as these, support the war,
The fatal war, which they alone enkindled!

BUTLER

And those state-parasites, who have their feet
So constantly beneath the emperor's table,
Who cannot let a benefice fall, but they
Snap at it with dogs' hunger – they, forsooth,
Would pare the soldiers bread and cross his reckoning!

ISOLANI

My life long will it anger me to think,
How when I went to court seven years ago,
To see about new horses for our regiment,
How from one antechamber to another
They dragged me on and left me by the hour
To kick my heels among a crowd of simpering
Feast-fattened slaves, as if I had come thither
A mendicant suitor for the crumbs of favor
That fell beneath their tables. And, at last,
Whom should they send me but a Capuchin!
Straight I began to muster up my sins
For absolution – but no such luck for me!
This was the man, this Capuchin, with whom
I was to treat concerning the army horses!

And I was forced at last to quit the field,
The business unaccomplished. Afterwards
The duke procured me in three days what I
Could not obtain in thirty at Vienna.

QUESTENBERG

Yes, yes! your travelling bills soon found their way to us!
Too well I know we have still accounts to settle.

ILLO

War is violent trade; one cannot always
Finish one's work by soft means; every trifle
Must not be blackened into sacrilege.
If we should wait till you, in solemn council,
With due deliberation had selected
The smallest out of four-and-twenty evils,
I' faith we should wait long —
"Dash! and through with it!" That's the better watchword.
Then after come what may come. 'Tis man's nature
To make the best of a bad thing once past.
A bitter and perplexed "what shall I do?"
Is worse to man than worst necessity.

QUESTENBERG

Ay, doubtless, it is true; the duke does spare us
The troublesome task of choosing.

BUTLER

Yes, the duke
Cares with a father's feelings for his troops;
But how the emperor feels for us, we see.

QUESTENBERG

His cares and feelings all ranks share alike,
Nor will he offer one up to another.

ISOLANI

And therefore thrusts he us into the deserts
As beasts of prey, that so he may preserve
His dear sheep fattening in his fields at home.

QUESTENBERG (with a sneer)

Count! this comparison you make, not I.

ILLO

Why, were we all the court supposes us
'Twere dangerous, sure, to give us liberty.

QUESTENBERG (gravely)

You have taken liberty – it was not given you,

And therefore it becomes an urgent duty
To rein it in with the curbs.

ILLO

Expect to find a restive steed in us.

QUESTENBERG

A better rider may be found to rule it.

ILLO

He only brooks the rider who has tamed him.

QUESTENBERG

Ay, tame him once, and then a child may lead him.

ILLO

The child, we know, is found for him already.

QUESTENBERG

Be duty, sir, your study, not a name.

**BUTLER (who has stood aside with
PICCOLOMINI, but with visible
interest in the conversation, advances)**

Sir president, the emperor has in Germany
A splendid host assembled; in this kingdom
Full twenty thousand soldiers are cantoned,
With sixteen thousand in Silesia;
Ten regiments are posted on the Weser,
The Rhine, and Maine; in Swabia there are six,
And in Bavaria twelve, to face the Swedes;
Without including in the account the garrisons

Who on the frontiers hold the fortresses.
This vast and mighty host is all obedient
To Friedland's captains; and its brave commanders,
Bred in one school, and nurtured with one milk,
Are all excited by one heart and soul;
They are as strangers on the soil they tread,
The service is their only house and home.
No zeal inspires then for their country's cause,
For thousands like myself were born abroad;
Nor care they for the emperor, for one half
Deserting other service fled to ours,
Indifferent what their banner, whether 'twere,
The Double Eagle, Lily, or the Lion.
Yet one sole man can rein this fiery host
By equal rule, by equal love and fear;
Blending the many-nationed whole in one;
And like the lightning's fires securely led
Down the conducting rod, e'en thus his power
Rules all the mass, from guarded post to post,
From where the sentry hears the Baltic roar,
Or views the fertile vales of the Adige,
E'en to the body-guard, who holds his watch
Within the precincts of the imperial palace!

QUESTENBERG

What's the short meaning of this long harangue?

BUTLER

That the respect, the love, the confidence,
Which makes us willing subjects of Duke Friedland,
Are not to be transferred to the first comer
That Austria's court may please to send to us.
We have not yet so readily forgotten
How the command came into Friedland's hands.
Was it, forsooth, the emperor's majesty
That gave the army ready to his hand,
And only sought a leader for it? No.
The army then had no existence. He,
Friedland, it was who called it into being,
And gave it to his sovereign – but receiving
No army at his hand; nor did the emperor
Give Wallenstein to us as general. No,
It was from Wallenstein we first received
The emperor as our master and our sovereign;
And he, he only, binds us to our banners!

OCTAVIO (interposing and addressing QUESTENBERG)

My noble friend,
This is no more than a remembrancing
That you are now in camp, and among warriors;
The soldier's boldness constitutes his freedom.
Could he act daringly, unless he dared
Talk even so? One runs into the other.
The boldness of this worthy officer,

[Pointing to BUTLER.

Which now is but mistaken in its mark,
Preserved, when naught but boldness could preserve it,
To the emperor, his capital city, Prague,
In a most formidable mutiny
Of the whole garrison. [Military music at a distance.
Hah! here they come!

ILLO

The sentries are saluting them: this signal

Announces the arrival of the duchess.

OCTAVIO (to QUESTENBERG)

Then my son Max., too, has returned. 'Twas he
Fetched and attended them from Caernthen hither.

ISOLANI (to ILLO)

Shall we not go in company to greet them?

ILLO

Well, let us go – Ho! Colonel Butler, come.

[To OCTAVIO.

You'll not forget that yet ere noon we meet
The noble envoy at the general's palace.

[Exeunt all but QUESTENBERG and OCTAVIO.

SCENE III

QUESTENBERG and OCTAVIO.

**QUESTENBERG (with signs
of aversion and astonishment)**

What have I not been forced to hear, Octavio!
What sentiments! what fierce, uncurbed defiance!
And were this spirit universal —

OCTAVIO

Hm!
You're now acquainted with three-fourths of the army.

QUESTENBERG

Where must we seek, then, for a second host
To have the custody of this? That Illo

Thinks worse, I fear me, than he speaks. And then
This Butler, too – he cannot even conceal
The passionate workings of his ill intentions.

OCTAVIO

Quickness of temper – irritated pride;
'Twas nothing more. I cannot give up Butler.
I know a spell that will soon dispossess
The evil spirit in him.

QUESTENBERG (walking up and down in evident disquiet)

Friend, friend!
O! this is worse, far worse, than we had suffered
Ourselves to dream of at Vienna. There
We saw it only with a courtier's eyes,
Eyes dazzled by the splendor of the throne.
We had not seen the war-chief, the commander,
The man all-powerful in his camp. Here, here,
'Tis quite another thing.
Here is no emperor more – the duke is emperor.

Alas, my friend! alas, my noble friend!
This walk which you have ta'en me through the camp
Strikes my hopes prostrate.

OCTAVIO

Now you see yourself
Of what a perilous kind the office is,
Which you deliver to me from the court.
The least suspicion of the general
Costs me my freedom and my life, and would
But hasten his most desperate enterprise.

QUESTENBERG

Where was our reason sleeping when we trusted
This madman with the sword, and placed such power
In such a hand? I tell you, he'll refuse,
Flatly refuse to obey the imperial orders.
Friend, he can do it, and what he can, he will.
And then the impunity of his defiance —
Oh! what a proclamation of our weakness!

OCTAVIO

D'ye think, too, he has brought his wife and daughter
Without a purpose hither? Here in camp!
And at the very point of time in which
We're arming for the war? That he has taken
These, the last pledges of his loyalty,
Away from out the emperor's dominions —
This is no doubtful token of the nearness
Of some eruption.

QUESTENBERG

How shall we hold footing
Beneath this tempest, which collects itself
And threats us from all quarters? The enemy
Of the empire on our borders, now already
The master of the Danube, and still farther,
And farther still, extending every hour!
In our interior the alarum-bells
Of insurrection – peasantry in arms —
All orders discontented – and the army,
Just in the moment of our expectation
Of aidance from it – lo! this very army

Seduced, run wild, lost to all discipline,
Loosened, and rent asunder from the state
And from their sovereign, the blind instrument
Of the most daring of mankind, a weapon
Of fearful power, which at his will he wields.

OCTAVIO

Nay, nay, friend! let us not despair too soon
Men's words are even bolder than their deeds;
And many a resolute, who now appears
Made up to all extremes, will, on a sudden,
Find in his breast a heart he wot not of,
Let but a single honest man speak out
The true name of his crime! Remember, too,
We stand not yet so wholly unprotected.
Counts Altringer and Gallas have maintained
Their little army faithful to its duty,
And daily it becomes more numerous.
Nor can he take us by surprise; you know
I hold him all encompassed by my listeners.
What'er he does, is mine, even while 'tis doing —
No step so small, but instantly I hear it;
Yea, his own mouth discloses it.

QUESTENBERG

'Tis quite
Incomprehensible, that he detects not
The foe so near!

OCTAVIO

Beware, you do not think,
That I, by lying arts, and complaisant
Hypocrisy, have sulked into his graces,
Or with the substance of smooth professions
Nourish his all-confiding friendship! No —
Compelled alike by prudence, and that duty
Which we all owe our country and our sovereign,
To hide my genuine feelings from him, yet
Ne'er have I duped him with base counterfeits!

QUESTENBERG

It is the visible ordinance of heaven.

OCTAVIO

I know not what it is that so attracts
And links him both to me and to my son.
Comrades and friends we always were – long habit,
Adventurous deeds performed in company,
And all those many and various incidents
Which stores a soldier's memory with affections,
Had bound us long and early to each other —
Yet I can name the day, when all at once
His heart rose on me, and his confidence
Shot out into sudden growth. It was the morning
Before the memorable fight at Luetzen.
Urged by an ugly dream, I sought him out,
To press him to accept another charger.
At a distance from the tents, beneath a tree,
I found him in a sleep. When I had waked him
And had related all my bodings to him,
Long time he stared upon me, like a man
Astounded: thereon fell upon my neck,
And manifested to me an emotion
That far outstripped the worth of that small service.
Since then his confidence has followed me
With the same pace that mine has fled from him.

QUESTENBERG

You lead your son into the secret?

OCTAVIO

No!

QUESTENBERG

What! and not warn him either, what bad hands
His lot has placed him in?

OCTAVIO

I must perforce
Leave him in wardship to his innocence.
His young and open soul – dissimulation

Is foreign to its habits! Ignorance
Alone can keep alive the cheerful air,
The unembarrassed sense and light free spirit,
That makes the duke secure.

QUESTENBERG (anxiously)

My honored friend! most highly do I deem
Of Colonel Piccolomini – yet – if —
Reflect a little —

OCTAVIO

I must venture it.
Hush! There he comes!

SCENE IV

MAX. PICCOLOMINI, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI,
QUESTENBERG.

MAX

Ha! there he is himself. Welcome, my father!

[He embraces his father. As he turns round, he observes

QUESTENBERG, and draws back with a cold and reserved air.

You are engaged, I see. I'll not disturb you.

OCTAVIO

How, Max.? Look closer at this visitor.

Attention, Max., an old friend merits – reverence

Belongs of right to the envoy of your sovereign.

MAX. (drily)

Von Questenberg! – welcome – if you bring with you
Aught good to our headquarters.

QUESTENBERG (seizing his hand)

Nay, draw not
Your hand away, Count Piccolomini!
Not on my own account alone I seized it,
And nothing common will I say therewith.

[Taking the hands of both.

Octavio – Max. Piccolomini!
O savior names, and full of happy omen!
Ne'er will her prosperous genius turn from Austria,
While two such stars, with blessed influences
Beaming protection, shine above her hosts.

MAX

Heh! Noble minister! You miss your part.
You come not here to act a panegyric.
You're sent, I know, to find fault and to scold us —
I must not be beforehand with my comrades.

OCTAVIO (to MAX.)

He comes from court, where people are not quite
So well contented with the duke as here.

MAX

What now have they contrived to find out in him?
That he alone determines for himself
What he himself alone doth understand!
Well, therein he does right, and will persist in't
Heaven never meant him for that passive thing
That can be struck and hammered out to suit
Another's taste and fancy. He'll not dance

To every tune of every minister.
It goes against his nature – he can't do it,
He is possessed by a commanding spirit,
And his, too, is the station of command.
And well for us it is so! There exist
Few fit to rule themselves, but few that use
Their intellects intelligently. Then
Well for the whole, if there be found a man
Who makes himself what nature destined him,
The pause, the central point, to thousand thousands
Stands fixed and stately, like a firm-built column,
Where all may press with joy and confidence —
Now such a man is Wallenstein; and if
Another better suits the court – no other
But such a one as he can serve the army.

QUESTENBERG

The army? Doubtless!

MAX

What delight to observe
How he incites and strengthens all around him,

Infusing life and vigor. Every power
Seems as it were redoubled by his presence
He draws forth every latent energy,
Showing to each his own peculiar talent,
Yet leaving all to be what nature made them,
And watching only that they be naught else
In the right place and time; and he has skill
To mould the power's of all to his own end.

QUESTENBERG

But who denies his knowledge of mankind,
And skill to use it? Our complaint is this:
That in the master he forgets the servant,
As if he claimed by birth his present honors.

MAX

And does he not so? Is he not endowed
With every gift and power to carry out
The high intents of nature, and to win
A ruler's station by a ruler's talent?

QUESTENBERG

So then it seems to rest with him alone
What is the worth of all mankind beside!

MAX

Uncommon men require no common trust;
Give him but scope and he will set the bounds.

QUESTENBERG

The proof is yet to come.

MAX

Thus are ye ever.
Ye shrink from every thing of depth, and think

Yourselves are only safe while ye're in shallows.

OCTAVIO (to QUESTENBERG)

'Twere best to yield with a good grace, my friend;
Of him there you'll make nothing.

MAX. (continuing)

In their fear
They call a spirit up, and when he comes,
Straight their flesh creeps and quivers, and they dread him
More than the ills for which they called him up.
The uncommon, the sublime, must seem and be
Like things of every day. But in the field,
Ay, there the Present Being makes itself felt.
The personal must command, the actual eye
Examine. If to be the chieftain asks
All that is great in nature, let it be
Likewise his privilege to move and act
In all the correspondences of greatness.
The oracle within him, that which lives,
He must invoke and question – not dead books,
Not ordinances, not mould-rotted papers.

OCTAVIO

My son! of those old narrow ordinances
Let us not hold too lightly. They are weights
Of priceless value, which oppressed mankind,
Tied to the volatile will of their oppressors.
For always formidable was the League
And partnership of free power with free will.
The way of ancient ordinance, though it winds,
Is yet no devious path. Straight forward goes
The lightning's path, and straight the fearful path
Of the cannon-ball. Direct it flies, and rapid;
Shattering that it may reach, and shattering what it reaches,
My son, the road the human being travels,
That, on which blessing comes and goes, doth follow
The river's course, the valley's playful windings,
Curves round the cornfield and the hill of vines,
Honoring the holy bounds of property!
And thus secure, though late, leads to its end.

QUESTENBERG

Oh, hear your father, noble youth! hear him

Who is at once the hero and the man.

OCTAVIO

My son, the nursling of the camp spoke in thee!
A war of fifteen years
Hath been thy education and thy school.
Peace hast thou never witnessed! There exists
An higher than the warrior's excellence.
In war itself war is no ultimate purpose,
The vast and sudden deeds of violence,
Adventures wild, and wonders of the moment,
These are not they, my son, that generate
The calm, the blissful, and the enduring mighty!
Lo there! the soldier, rapid architect!
Builds his light town of canvas, and at once
The whole scene moves and bustles momentarily.
With arms, and neighing steeds, and mirth and quarrel
The motley market fills; the roads, the streams
Are crowded with new freights; trade stirs and hurries,
But on some morrow morn, all suddenly,
The tents drop down, the horde renews its march.
Dreary, and solitary as a churchyard;
The meadow and down-trodden seed-plot lie,
And the year's harvest is gone utterly.

MAX

Oh, let the emperor make peace, my father!
Most gladly would I give the blood-stained laurel
For the first violet⁵ of the leafless spring,
Plucked in those quiet fields where I have journeyed.

OCTAVIO

What ails thee? What so moves thee all at once?

MAX

Peace have I ne'er beheld? I have beheld it.
From thence am I come hither: oh, that sight,
It glimmers still before me, like some landscape
Left in the distance, – some delicious landscape!
My road conducted me through countries where
The war has not yet reached. Life, life, my father —

⁵ In the original, —"Den blut'gen Lorbeer geb' ich hin mit FreudenFuers erste Veilchen, das der Maerz uns bringt, Das duerftige Pfand der neuverjuengten Erde."

My venerable father, life has charms
Which we have never experienced. We have been
But voyaging along its barren coasts,
Like some poor ever-roaming horde of pirates,
That, crowded in the rank and narrow ship,
House on the wild sea with wild usages,
Nor know aught of the mainland, but the bays
Where safest they may venture a thieves' landing.
Whate'er in the inland dales the land conceals
Of fair and exquisite, oh, nothing, nothing,
Do we behold of that in our rude voyage.

**OCTAVIO (attentive, with
an appearance of uneasiness)**

And so your journey has revealed this to you?

MAX

'Twas the first leisure of my life. O tell me,
What is the meed and purpose of the toil,
The painful toil which robbed me of my youth,
Left me a heart unsouled and solitary,

A spirit uninformed, unornamented!
For the camp's stir, and crowd, and ceaseless larum,
The neighing war-horse, the air-shattering trumpet,
The unvaried, still returning hour of duty,
Word of command, and exercise of arms —
There's nothing here, there's nothing in all this,
To satisfy the heart, the gasping heart!
Mere bustling nothingness, where the soul is not —
This cannot be the sole felicity,
These cannot be man's best and only pleasures!

OCTAVIO

Much hast thou learnt, my son, in this short journey.

MAX

Oh day, thrice lovely! when at length the soldier
Returns home into life; when he becomes
A fellow-man among his fellow-men.
The colors are unfurled, the cavalcade
Mashals, and now the buzz is hushed, and hark!
Now the soft peace-march beats, home, brothers, home!
The caps and helmet are all garlanded

With green boughs, the last plundering of the fields.
The city gates fly open of themselves,
They need no longer the petard to tear them.
The ramparts are all filled with men and women,
With peaceful men and women, that send onwards.
Kisses and welcomings upon the air,
Which they make breezy with affectionate gestures.
From all the towers rings out the merry peal,
The joyous vespers of a bloody day.
O happy man, O fortunate! for whom
The well-known door, the faithful arms are open,
The faithful tender arms with mute embracing.

QUESTENBERG (apparently much affected)

O that you should speak
Of such a distant, distant time, and not
Of the to-morrow, not of this to-day.

MAX. (turning round to him quick and vehement)

Where lies the fault but on you in Vienna!
I will deal openly with you, Questenberg.
Just now, as first I saw you standing here

(I'll own it to you freely), indignation
Crowded and pressed my inmost soul together.
'Tis ye that hinder peace, ye! – and the warrior,
It is the warrior that must force it from you.
Ye fret the general's life out, blacken him,
Hold him up as a rebel, and heaven knows
What else still worse, because he spares the Saxons,
And tries to awaken confidence in the enemy;
Which yet's the only way to peace: for if
War intermit not during war, how then
And whence can peace come? Your own plagues fall on
you!

Even as I love what's virtuous, hate I you.
And here I make this vow, here pledge myself,
My blood shall spurt out for this Wallenstein,
And my heart drain off, drop by drop, ere ye
Shall revel and dance jubilee o'er his ruin.

[Exit

SCENE V

QUESTENBERG, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI.

QUESTENBERG

Alas! alas! and stands it so?

[Then in pressing and impatient tones.

What friend! and do we let him go away
In this delusion – let him go away?
Not call him back immediately, not open
His eyes, upon the spot?

OCTAVIO (recovering himself out of a deep study)

He has now opened mine,
And I see more than pleases me.

QUESTENBERG

What is it?

OCTAVIO

Curse on this journey!

QUESTENBERG

But why so? What is it?

OCTAVIO

Come, come along, friend! I must follow up
The ominous track immediately. Mine eyes
Are opened now, and I must use them. Come!

[Draws QUESTENBERG on with him.

QUESTENBERG

What now? Where go you then?

OCTAVIO

To her herself.

QUESTENBERG

To —

OCTAVIO (interrupting him and correcting himself)

To the duke. Come, let us go 'Tis done, 'tis done,
I see the net that is thrown over him.
Oh! he returns not to me as he went.

QUESTENBERG

Nay, but explain yourself.

OCTAVIO

And that I should not
Foresee it, not prevent this journey! Wherefore
Did I keep it from him? You were in the right.
I should have warned him. Now it is too late.

QUESTENBERG

But what's too late? Bethink yourself, my friend,
That you are talking absolute riddles to me.

OCTAVIO (more collected)

Come I to the duke's. 'Tis close upon the hour
Which he appointed you for audience. Come!
A curse, a threefold curse, upon this journey!

[He leads QUESTENBERG off.]

ACT II

SCENE I

Changes to a spacious chamber in the house of the Duke of Friedland. Servants employed in putting the tables and chairs in order. During this enters SENI, like an old Italian doctor, in black, and clothed somewhat fantastically. He carries a white staff, with which he marks out the quarters of the heavens.

FIRST SERVANT. Come – to it, lads, to it! Make an end of it. I hear the sentry call out, "Stand to your arms!" They will be here in a minute.

SECOND SERVANT. Why were we not told before that the audience would be held here? Nothing prepared – no orders – no instructions.

THIRD SERVANT. Ay, and why was the balcony chamber countermanded, that with the great worked carpet? There one can look about one.

FIRST SERVANT. Nay, that you must ask the mathematician there. He says it is an unlucky chamber.

SECOND SERVANT. Poh! stuff and nonsense! that's what I call a hum. A chamber is a chamber; what much can the place signify in the affair?

SENI (with gravity)

My son, there's nothing insignificant,
Nothing! But yet in every earthly thing,
First and most principal is place and time.

FIRST SERVANT (to the second). Say nothing to him,
Nat. The duke

himself must let him have his own will.

SENI (counts the chairs, half in a loud, half in a low voice, till he comes to eleven, which he repeats)

Eleven! an evil number! Set twelve chairs.
Twelve! twelve signs hath the zodiac: five and seven,
The holy numbers, include themselves in twelve.

SECOND SERVANT. And what may you have to object
against eleven? I should like to know that now.

SENI

Eleven is transgression; eleven oversteps
The ten commandments.

SECOND SERVANT. That's good? and why do you call
five a holy number?

SENI

Five is the soul of man: for even as man
Is mingled up of good and evil, so
The five is the first number that's made up
Of even and odd.

SECOND SERVANT. The foolish old coxcomb!

FIRST SERVANT. Ay! let him alone though. I like to
hear him; there is

more in his words than can be seen at first sight.

THIRD SERVANT. Off, they come.

SECOND SERVANT. There! Out at the side-door.

[They hurry off: SENI follows slowly. A page brings the staff of command on a red cushion, and places it on the table, near the duke's chair. They are announced from without, and the wings of the door fly open.

SCENE II

WALLENSTEIN, DUCHESS.

WALLENSTEIN

You went, then, through Vienna, were presented
To the Queen of Hungary?

DUCHESS

Yes; and to the empress, too,
And by both majesties were we admitted
To kiss the hand.

WALLENSTEIN

And how was it received,
That I had sent for wife and daughter hither
To the camp, in winter-time?

DUCHESS

I did even that
Which you commissioned me to do. I told them
You had determined on our daughter's marriage,
And wished, ere yet you went into the field,
To show the elected husband his betrothed.

WALLENSTEIN

And did they guess the choice which I had made?

DUCHESS

They only hoped and wished it may have fallen
Upon no foreign nor yet Lutheran noble.

WALLENSTEIN

And you – what do you wish, Elizabeth?

DUCHESS

Your will, you know, was always mine.

WALLENSTEIN (after a pause)

Well, then, —
And in all else, of what kind and complexion
Was your reception at the court?

[The DUCHESS casts her eyes on the ground, and remains silent.]

Hide nothing from me. How were you received?

DUCHESS

O! my dear lord, all is not what it was.
A canker-worm, my lord, a canker-worm
Has stolen into the bud.

WALLENSTEIN

Ay! is it so?
What, they were lax? they failed of the old respect?

DUCHESS

Not of respect. No honors were omitted,
No outward courtesy; but in the place
Of condescending, confidential kindness,
Familiar and endearing, there were given me
Only these honors and that solemn courtesy.
Ah! and the tenderness which was put on,
It was the guise of pity, not of favor.
No! Albrecht's wife, Duke Albrecht's princely wife,

Count Harrach's noble daughter, should not so —
Not wholly so should she have been received.

WALLENSTEIN

Yes, yes; they have taken offence. My latest conduct
They railed at it, no doubt.

DUCHESS

O that they had!
I have been long accustomed to defend you,
To heal and pacify distempered spirits.
No; no one railed at you. They wrapped them up,
O Heaven! in such oppressive, solemn silence!
Here is no every-day misunderstanding,
No transient pique, no cloud that passes over;
Something most luckless, most unhealable,
Has taken place. The Queen of Hungary
Used formerly to call me her dear aunt,
And ever at departure to embrace me —

WALLENSTEIN

Now she omitted it?

DUCHESS (wiping away her tears after a pause)

She did embrace me,
But then first when I had already taken
My formal leave, and when the door already
Had closed upon me, then did she come out
In haste, as she had suddenly bethought herself,
And pressed me to her bosom, more with anguish
Than tenderness.

WALLENSTEIN (seizes her hand soothingly)

Nay, now collect yourself.
And what of Eggenberg and Lichtenstein,
And of our other friends there?

DUCHESS (shaking her head)

I saw none.

WALLENSTEIN

The ambassador from Spain, who once was wont
To plead so warmly for me?

DUCHESS

Silent, silent!

WALLENSTEIN

These suns then are eclipsed for us. Henceforward
Must we roll on, our own fire, our own light.

DUCHESS

And were it – were it, my dear lord, in that
Which moved about the court in buzz and whisper,
But in the country let itself be heard
Aloud – in that which Father Lanormain
In sundry hints and —

WALLENSTEIN (eagerly)

Lanormain! what said he?

DUCHESS

That you're accused of having daringly
O'erstepped the powers intrusted to you, charged
With traitorous contempt of the emperor
And his supreme behests. The proud Bavarian,
He and the Spaniards stand up your accusers —
That there's a storm collecting over you
Of far more fearful menace than the former one

Which whirled you headlong down at Regensburg.
And people talk, said he, of – Ah!

[Stifling extreme emotion.

WALLENSTEIN

Proceed!

DUCHESS

I cannot utter it!

WALLENSTEIN

Proceed!

DUCHESS

They talk —

WALLENSTEIN

Well!

DUCHESS

Of a second —

(catches her voice and hesitates.)

WALLENSTEIN

Second —

DUCHESS

Most disgraceful

Dismission.

WALLENSTEIN

Talk they?

[Strides across the chamber in vehement agitation.

Oh! they force, they thrust me
With violence, against my own will, onward!

DUCHESS (presses near him in entreaty)

Oh! if there yet be time, my husband, if
By giving way and by submission, this
Can be averted – my dear Lord, give way!
Win down your proud heart to it! Tell the heart,
It is your sovereign lord, your emperor,
Before whom you retreat. Oh! no longer
Low trickling malice blacken your good meaning
With abhorred venomous glosses. Stand you up
Shielded and helmed and weaponed with the truth,
And drive before you into uttermost shame
These slanderous liars! Few firm friends have we —

You know it! The swift growth of our good fortune
It hath but set us up a mark for hatred.
What are we, if the sovereign's grace and favor
Stand not before us!

SCENE III

Enter the Countess TERZKY, leading in her hand the Princess THEKLA, richly adorned with brilliants.

COUNTESS, TEKLA, WALLENSTEIN, DUCHESS.

COUNTESS

How sister? What, already upon business?

[Observing the countenance of the DUCHESS.]

And business of no pleasing kind I see,
Ere he has gladdened at his child. The first
Moment belongs to joy. Here, Friedland! father!
This is thy daughter.

[THEKLA approaches with a shy and timid air, and bends herself as about to kiss his hand. He receives her in his arms, and remains standing for some time lost in the feeling of her presence.]

WALLENSTEIN

Yes! pure and lovely hath hope risen on me,
I take her as the pledge of greater fortune.

DUCHESS

'Twas but a little child when you departed
To raise up that great army for the emperor
And after, at the close of the campaign,
When you returned home out of Pomerania,
Your daughter was already in the convent,
Wherein she has remained till now.

WALLENSTEIN

The while
We in the field here gave our cares and toils
To make her great, and fight her a free way
To the loftiest earthly good; lo! mother Nature
Within the peaceful, silent convent walls,

Has done her part, and out of her free grace
Hath she bestowed on the beloved child
The god-like; and now leads her thus adorned
To meet her splendid fortune, and my hope.

DUCHESS (to THEKLA)

Thou wouldst not now have recognized thy father,
Wouldst thou, my child? She counted scarce eight years
When last she saw your face.

THEKLA

O yes, yes, mother!
At the first glance! My father has not altered.
The form that stands before me falsifies
No feature of the image that hath lived
So long within me!

WALLENSTEIN

The voice of my child!

[Then after a pause.

I was indignant at my destiny,
That it denied me a man-child, to be
Heir of my name and of my prosperous fortune,
And re-illumine my soon-extinguished being
In a proud line of princes.
I wronged my destiny. Here upon this head,
So lovely in its maiden bloom, will I
Let fall the garland of a life of war,
Nor deem it lost, if only I can wreath it,
Transmuted to a regal ornament,
Around these beauteous brows.

[He clasps her in his arms as PICCOLOMINI enters.

SCENE IV

Enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI, and some time after
COUNT TERZKY, the others remaining as before.

COUNTESS

There comes the Paladin who protected us.

WALLENSTEIN

Max.! Welcome, ever welcome! Always wert thou
The morning star of my best joys!

MAX

My general —

WALLENSTEIN

Till now it was the emperor who rewarded thee,
I but the instrument. This day thou hast bound
The father to thee, Max.! the fortunate father,
And this debt Friedland's self must pay.

MAX

My prince!

You made no common hurry to transfer it.
I come with shame: yea, not without a pang!
For scarce have I arrived here, scarce delivered
The mother and the daughter to your arms,
But there is brought to me from your equerry ⁶
A splendid richly-plated hunting dress
So to remunerate me for my troubles —
Yes, yes, remunerate me, — since a trouble

⁶ A reviewer in the Literary Gazette observes that, in these lines, Mr. Coleridge has misapprehended the meaning of the word "Zug," a team, translating it as "Anzug," a suit of clothes. The following version, as a substitute, I propose: —When from your stables there is brought to me A team of four most richly harnessed horses. The term, however, is "Jagd-zug" which may mean a "hunting equipage," or a "hunting stud;" although Hilpert gives only "a team of four horses."

It must be, a mere office, not a favor
Which I leaped forward to receive, and which
I came with grateful heart to thank you for.
No! 'twas not so intended, that my business
Should be my highest best good fortune!

[TERZKY enters; and delivers letters to the DUKE, which he
breaks open hurriedly.

COUNTESS (to MAX.)

Remunerate your trouble! For his joy,
He makes you recompense. 'Tis not unfitting
For you, Count Piccolomini, to feel
So tenderly – my brother it beseems
To show himself forever great and princely.

THEKLA

Then I too must have scruples of his love:
For his munificent hands did ornament me
Ere yet the father's heart had spoken to me.

MAX

Yes; 'tis his nature ever to be giving
And making happy.

[He grasps the hand of the DUCHESS with still increasing warmth.

How my heart pours out
Its all of thanks to him! O! how I seem
To utter all things in the dear name – Friedland.
While I shall live, so long will I remain
The captive of this name: in it shall bloom
My every fortune, every lovely hope.
Inextricably as in some magic ring
In this name hath my destiny charm-bound me!

COUNTESS (who during this time has been anxiously watching the DUKE, and remarks that he is lost in thought over the letters)

My brother wishes us to leave him. Come.

**WALLENSTEIN (turns himself round
quick, collects himself, and speaks
with cheerfulness to the DUCHESS)**

Once more I bid thee welcome to the camp,
Thou art the hostess of this court. You, Max.,
Will now again administer your old office,
While we perform the sovereign's business here.

[MAX. PICCOLOMINI offers the DUCHESS his arm; the
COUNTESS accompanies the PRINCESS.

TERZKY (calling after him)

Max., we depend on seeing you at the meeting.

SCENE V

WALLENSTEIN, COUNT TERZKY.

WALLENSTEIN (in deep thought, to himself)

She has seen all things as they are – it is so,
And squares completely with my other notices,
They have determined finally in Vienna,
Have given me my successor already;
It is the King of Hungary, Ferdinand,
The emperor's delicate son! he's now their savior,
He's the new star that's rising now! Of us
They think themselves already fairly rid,
And as we were deceased, the heir already
Is entering on possession – Therefore – despatch!

[As he turns round he observes TERZKY, and gives him a letter.

Count Altringer will have himself excused,
And Gallas too – I like not this!

TERZKY

And if
Thou loiterest longer, all will fall away,
One following the other.

WALLENSTEIN

Altringer
Is master of the Tyrol passes. I must forthwith
Send some one to him, that he let not in
The Spaniards on me from the Milanese.
– Well, and the old Sesin, that ancient trader
In contraband negotiations, he
Has shown himself again of late. What brings he
From the Count Thur?

TERZKY

The count communicates
He has found out the Swedish chancellor

At Halberstadt, where the convention's held,
Who says, you've tired him out, and that he'll have
No further dealings with you.

WALLENSTEIN

And why so?

TERZKY

He says, you are never in earnest in your speeches;
That you decoy the Swedes – to make fools of them;
Will league yourself with Saxony against them,
And at last make yourself a riddance of them
With a paltry sum of money.

WALLENSTEIN

So then, doubtless,
Yes, doubtless, this same modest Swede expects
That I shall yield him some fair German tract

For his prey and booty, that ourselves at last
On our own soil and native territory
May be no longer our own lords and masters!
An excellent scheme! No, no! They must be off,
Off, off! away! we want no such neighbors.

TERZKY

Nay, yield them up that dot, that speck of land —
It goes not from your portion. If you win
The game, what matters it to you who pays it?

WALLENSTEIN

Off with them, off! Thou understand'st not this.
Never shall it be said of me, I parcelled
My native land away, dismembered Germany,
Betrayed it to a foreigner, in order
To come with stealthy tread, and filch away
My own share of the plunder – Never! never!
No foreign power shall strike root in the empire,
And least of all these Goths! these hungry wolves!
Who send such envious, hot, and greedy glances
Toward the rich blessings of our German lands!

I'll have their aid to cast and draw my nets,
But not a single fish of all the draught
Shall they come in for.

TERZKY

You will deal, however,
More fairly with the Saxons? they lose patience
While you shift round and make so many curves.
Say, to what purpose all these masks? Your friends
Are plunged in doubts, baffled, and led astray in you.
There's Oxenstiern, there's Arnheim – neither knows
What he should think of your procrastinations,
And in the end I prove the liar; all
Passes through me. I've not even your handwriting.

WALLENSTEIN

I never give handwriting; and thou knowest it.

TERZKY

But how can it be known that you are in earnest,
If the act follows not upon the word?
You must yourself acknowledge, that in all
Your intercourses hitherto with the enemy,
You might have done with safety all you have done.
Had you meant nothing further than to gull him
For the emperor's service.

WALLENSTEIN (after a pause, during which he looks narrowly on TERZKY)

And from whence dost thou know
That I'm not gulling him for the emperor's service?
Whence knowest thou that I'm not gulling all of you?
Dost thou know me so well? When made I thee
The intendant of my secret purposes?
I am not conscious that I ever opened
My inmost thoughts to thee. The emperor, it is true,
Hath dealt with me amiss; and if I would
I could repay him with usurious interest
For the evil he hath done me. It delights me

To know my power; but whether I shall use it,
Of that I should have thought that thou couldst speak
No wiser than thy fellows.

TERZKY

So hast thou always played thy game with us.

[Enter ILLO.

SCENE VI

ILLO, WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY.

WALLENSTEIN

How stand affairs without? Are they prepared?

ILLO

You'll find them in the very mood you wish.
They know about the emperor's requisition,
And are tumultuous.

WALLENSTEIN

How hath Isolani
declared himself?

ILLO

He's yours, both soul and body,
Since you built up again his faro-bank.

WALLENSTEIN

And which way doth Kolatto bend? Hast thou
Made sure of Tiefenbach and Deodati?

ILLO

What Piccolomini does that they do too.

WALLENSTEIN

You mean, then, I may venture somewhat with them?

ILLO

If you are assured of the Piccolomini.

WALLENSTEIN

Not more assured of mine own self.

TERZKY

And yet
I would you trusted not so much to Octavio,
The fox!

WALLENSTEIN

Thou teachest me to know my man?
Sixteen campaigns I have made with that old warrior.

Besides, I have his horoscope;
We both are born beneath like stars – in short,

[With an air of mystery.

To this belongs its own peculiar aspect,
If therefore thou canst warrant me the rest —

ILLO

There is among them all but this one voice,
You must not lay down the command. I hear
They mean to send a deputation to you.

WALLENSTEIN

If I'm in aught to bind myself to them
They too must bind themselves to me.

ILLO

Of course.

WALLENSTEIN

Their words of honor they must give, their oaths,
Give them in writing to me, promising
Devotion to my service unconditional.

ILLO

Why not?

TERZKY

Devotion unconditional?
The exception of their duties towards Austria
They'll always place among the premises.
With this reserve —

WALLENSTEIN (shaking his head)

All unconditional;
No premises, no reserves.

ILLO

A thought has struck me.
Does not Count Terzky give us a set banquet
This evening?

TERZKY

Yes; and all the generals
Have been invited.

ILLO (to WALLENSTEIN)

Say, will you here fully
Commission me to use my own discretion?
I'll gain for you the generals' word of honor,
Even as you wish.

WALLENSTEIN

Gain me their signatures!
How you come by them that is your concern.

ILLO

And if I bring it to you in black on white,
That all the leaders who are present here
Give themselves up to you, without condition;
Say, will you then – then will you show yourself
In earnest, and with some decisive action
Try your fortune.

WALLENSTEIN

Get but the signatures!

ILLO

Think what thou dost, thou canst not execute
The emperor's orders, nor reduce thine army,
Nor send the regiments to the Spaniards' aid,
Unless thou wouldst resign thy power forever.
Think on the other hand – thou canst not spurn
The emperor's high commands and solemn orders,
Nor longer temporize, nor seek evasion,
Wouldst thou avoid a rupture with the court.
Resolve then! Wilt thou now by one bold act
Anticipate their ends, or, doubting still,
Await the extremity?

WALLENSTEIN

There's time before
The extremity arrives.

ILLO

Seize, seize the hour,
Ere it slips from you. Seldom comes the moment
In life, which is indeed sublime and weighty.
To make a great decision possible,
O! many things, all transient and all rapid,
Must meet at once: and, haply, they thus met
May by that confluence be enforced to pause
Time long-enough for wisdom, though too short,
Far, far too short a time for doubt and scruple!
This is that moment. See, our army chieftains,
Our best, our noblest, are assembled round you,
Their king-like leader! On your nod they wait.
The single threads, which here your prosperous fortune
Hath woven together in one potent web
Instinct with destiny, O! let them not
Unravel of themselves. If you permit
These chiefs to separate, so unanimous
Bring you them not a second time together.
'Tis the high tide that heaves the stranded ship,
And every individual's spirit waxes
In the great stream of multitudes. Behold
They are still here, here still! But soon the war
Bursts them once more asunder, and in small
Particular anxieties and interests

Scatters their spirit, and the sympathy
Of each man with the whole. He who to-day
Forgets himself, forced onward with the stream,
Will become sober, seeing but himself.
Feel only his own weakness, and with speed
Will face about, and march on in the old
High road of duty, the old broad-trodden road,
And seek but to make shelter in good plight.

WALLENSTEIN

The time is not yet come.

TERZKY

So you say always.
But when will it be time?

WALLENSTEIN

When I shall say it.

ILLO

You'll wait upon the stars, and on their hours,
Till the earthly hour escapes you. Oh, believe me,
In your own bosom are your destiny's stars.
Confidence in yourself, prompt resolution,
This is your Venus! and the sole malignant,
The only one that harmeth you is doubt.

WALLENSTEIN

Thou speakest as thou understandest. How oft
And many a time I've told thee Jupiter,
That lustrous god, was setting at thy birth.
Thy visual power subdues no mysteries;
Mole-eyed thou mayest but burrow in the earth,
Blind as the subterrestrial, who with wan
Lead-colored shine lighted thee into life.
The common, the terrestrial, thou mayest see,
With serviceable cunning knit together,
The nearest with the nearest; and therein
I trust thee and believe thee! but whate'er
Full of mysterious import Nature weaves,

And fashions in the depths – the spirit's ladder,
That from this gross and visible world of dust,
Even to the starry world, with thousand rounds,
Builds itself up; on which the unseen powers
Move up and down on heavenly ministries —
The circles in the circles, that approach
The central sun with ever-narrowing orbit —
These see the glance alone, the unsealed eye,
Of Jupiter's glad children born in lustre.

[He walks across the chamber, then returns, and standing still,
proceeds.

The heavenly constellations make not merely
The day and nights, summer and spring, not merely
Signify to the husbandman the seasons
Of sowing and of harvest. Human action,
That is the seed, too, of contingencies,
Strewed on the dark land of futurity
In hopes to reconcile the powers of fate
Whence it behoves us to seek out the seed-time,
To watch the stars, select their proper hours,
And trace with searching eye the heavenly houses,
Whether the enemy of growth and thriving
Hide himself not, malignant, in his corner.
Therefore permit me my own time. Meanwhile
Do you your part. As yet I cannot say
What I shall do – only, give way I will not,
Depose me, too, they shall not. On these points

You may rely.

PAGE (entering)

My lords, the generals.

WALLENSTEIN

Let them come in.

TERZKY

Shall all the chiefs be present?

WALLENSTEIN

'Twere needless. Both the Piccolomini
Maradas, Butler, Forgoetsch, Deodati,

Karaffa, Isolani – these may come.

[TERZKY goes out with the PAGE.

WALLENSTEIN (to ILLO)

Hast thou taken heed that Questenberg was watched?
Had he no means of secret intercourse?

ILLO

I have watched him closely – and he spoke with none
But with Octavio.

SCENE VII

WALLENSTRIN, TERZKY, ILLO. – To them enter QUESTENBERG, OCTAVIO, and MAX. PICCOLOMINI, BUTLER, ISOLANI, MARADAS, and three other Generals. WALLENSTEIN motions QUESTENBERG, who in consequence takes the chair directly opposite to him; the others follow, arranging themselves according to their rank. There reigns a momentary silence.

WALLENSTEIN

I have understood,
'Tis true, the sum and import, Questenberg,
Of your instructions. I have weighed them well,
And formed my final, absolute resolve;
Yet it seems fitting that the generals
Should hear the will of the emperor from your mouth.
May it please you then to open your commission
Before these noble chieftains?

QUESTENBERG

I am ready
To obey you; but will first entreat your highness,
And all these noble chieftains, to consider,
The imperial dignity and sovereign right
Speaks from my mouth, and not my own presumption.

WALLENSTEIN

We excuse all preface.

QUESTENBERG

When his majesty
The emperor to his courageous armies
Presented in the person of Duke Friedland
A most experienced and renowned commander,
He did it in glad hope and confidence
To give thereby to the fortune of the war
A rapid and auspicious change. The onset

Was favorable to his royal wishes.
Bohemia was delivered from the Saxons,
The Swede's career of conquest checked! These lands
Began to draw breath freely, as Duke Friedland
From all the streams of Germany forced hither
The scattered armies of the enemy;
Hither invoked as round one magic circle
The Rhinegrave, Bernhard, Banner, Oxenstiern,
Yea, and the never-conquered king himself;
Here finally, before the eye of Nuernberg,
The fearful game of battle to decide.

WALLENSTEIN

To the point, so please you.

QUESTENBERG

A new spirit
At once proclaimed to us the new commander.
No longer strove blind rage with rage more blind;
But in the enlightened field of skill was shown
How fortitude can triumph over boldness,
And scientific art outweary courage.

In vain they tempt him to the fight. He only
Entrenches him still deeper in his hold,
As if to build an everlasting fortress.
At length grown desperate, now, the king resolves
To storm the camp and lead his wasted legions,
Who daily fall by famine and by plague,
To quicker deaths and hunger and disease.
Through lines of barricades behind whose fence
Death lurks within a thousand mouths of fire,
He yet unconquered strives to storm his way.
There was attack, and there resistance, such
As mortal eye had never seen before;
Repulsed at last, the king withdrew his troops
From this so murderous field, and not a foot
Of ground was gained by all that fearful slaughter.

WALLENSTEIN

Pray spare us these recitals from gazettes,
Which we ourselves beheld with deepest horror.

QUESTENBERG

In Nuernberg's camp the Swedish monarch left

His fame – in Luetzen's plains his life. But who
Stood not astounded, when victorious Friedland
After this day of triumph, this proud day,
Marched toward Bohemia with the speed of flight,
And vanished from the theatre of war?
While the young Weimar hero⁷ forced his way
Into Franconia, to the Danube, like
Some delving winter-stream, which, where it rushes,
Makes its own channel; with such sudden speed
He marched, and now at once 'fore Regensburg
Stood to the affright of all good Catholic Christians.
Then did Bavaria's well-deserving prince
Entreat swift aidance in his extreme need;
The emperor sends seven horsemen to Duke Friedland,
Seven horsemen couriers sends he with the entreaty
He superadds his own, and supplicates
Where as the sovereign lord he can command.
In vain his supplication! At this moment
The duke hears only his old hate and grudge,
Barters the general good to gratify
Private revenge – and so falls Regensburg.

WALLENSTEIN

Max., to what period of the war alludes he?

⁷ Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, who succeeded Gustavus in command.

My recollection fails me here.

MAX

He means
When we were in Silesia.

WALLENSTEIN

Ay! is it so!
But what had we to do there?

MAX

To beat out
The Swedes and Saxons from the province.

WALLENSTEIN

True;
In that description which the minister gave,
I seemed to have forgotten the whole war.

[TO QUESTENBERG.

Well, but proceed a little.

QUESTENBERG

We hoped upon the Oder to regain
What on the Danube shamefully was lost.
We looked for deeds of all-astounding grandeur
Upon a theatre of war, on which
A Friedland led in person to the field,
And the famed rival of the great Gustavus
Had but a Thurn and Arnheim to oppose him!
Yet the encounter of their mighty hosts
Served but to feast and entertain each other.
Our country groaned beneath the woes of war,
Yet naught but peace prevailed in Friedland's camp!

WALLENSTEIN

Full many a bloody strife is fought in vain,
Because its youthful general needs a victory.
But 'tis the privilege of the old commander
To spare the costs of fighting useless battles
Merely to show that he knows how to conquer.
It would have little helped my fame to boast
Of conquest o'er an Arnheim; but far more
Would my forbearance have availed my country,
Had I succeeded to dissolve the alliance
Existing 'twixt the Saxon and the Swede.

QUESTENBERG

But you did not succeed, and so commenced
The fearful strife anew. And here at length,
Beside the river Oder did the duke
Assert his ancient fame. Upon the fields
Of Steinau did the Swedes lay down their arms,
Subdued without a blow. And here, with others,
The righteousness of heaven to his avenger
Delivered that long-practised stirrer-up
Of insurrection, that curse-laden torch

And kindler of this war, Matthias Thurn.
But he had fallen into magnanimous hands
Instead of punishment he found reward,
And with rich presents did the duke dismiss
The arch-foe of his emperor.

WALLENSTEIN (laughs)

I know,
I know you had already in Vienna
Your windows and your balconies forestalled
To see him on the executioner's cart.
I might have lost the battle, lost it too
With infamy, and still retained your graces —
But, to have cheated them of a spectacle,
Oh! that the good folks of Vienna never,
No, never can forgive me!

QUESTENBERG

So Silesia
Was freed, and all things loudly called the duke
Into Bavaria, now pressed hard on all sides.
And he did put his troops in motion: slowly,

Quite at his ease, and by the longest road
He traverses Bohemia; but ere ever
He hath once seen the enemy, faces round,
Breaks up the march, and takes to winter-quarters.

WALLENSTEIN

The troops were pitiably destitute
Of every necessary, every comfort,
The winter came. What thinks his majesty
His troops are made of? Aren't we men; subjected
Like other men to wet, and cold, and all
The circumstances of necessity?
Oh, miserable lot of the poor soldier!
Wherever he comes in all flee before him,
And when he goes away the general curse
Follows him on his route. All must be seized.
Nothing is given him. And compelled to seize
From every man he's every man's abhorrence.
Behold, here stand my generals. Karaffa!
Count Deodati! Butler! Tell this man
How long the soldier's pay is in arrears.

BUTLER

Already a full year.

WALLENSTEIN

And 'tis the hire
That constitutes the hireling's name and duties,
The soldier's pay is the soldier's covenant.⁸

QUESTENBERG

Ah! this is a far other tone from that
In which the duke spoke eight, nine years ago.

⁸ The original is not translatable into English: — Und sein Sold Muss dem Soldaten werden, darnach heisst er. It might perhaps have been thus rendered: — And that for which he sold his services, The soldier must receive — but a false or doubtful etymology is no more than a dull pun.

WALLENSTEIN

Yes! 'tis my fault, I know it: I myself
Have spoilt the emperor by indulging him.
Nine years ago, during the Danish war,
I raised him up a force, a mighty force,
Forty or fifty thousand men, that cost him
Of his own purse no doit. Through Saxony
The fury goddess of the war marched on,
E'en to the surf-rocks of the Baltic, bearing
The terrors of his name. That was a time!
In the whole imperial realm no name like mine
Honored with festival and celebration —
And Albrecht Wallenstein, it was the title
Of the third jewel in his crown!
But at the Diet, when the princes met
At Regensburg, there, there the whole broke out,
There 'twas laid open, there it was made known
Out of what money-bag I had paid the host,
And what were now my thanks, what had I now
That I, a faithful servant of the sovereign,
Had loaded on myself the people's curses,
And let the princes of the empire pay
The expenses of this war that aggrandizes
The emperor alone. What thanks had I?
What? I was offered up to their complaint

Dismissed, degraded!

QUESTENBERG

But your highness knows
What little freedom he possessed of action
In that disastrous Diet.

WALLENSTEIN

Death and hell!
I had that which could have procured him freedom
No! since 'twas proved so inauspicious to me
To serve the emperor at the empire's cost,
I have been taught far other trains of thinking
Of the empire and the Diet of the empire.
From the emperor, doubtless, I received this staff,
But now I hold it as the empire's general, —
For the common weal, the universal interest,
And no more for that one man's aggrandizement!
But to the point. What is it that's desired of me?

QUESTENBERG

First, his imperial majesty hath willed
That without pretexts of delay the army
Evacuate Bohemia.

WALLENSTEIN

In this season?
And to what quarter wills the emperor
That we direct our course?

QUESTENBERG

To the enemy.
His majesty resolves, that Regensburg
Be purified from the enemy ere Easter,
That Lutheranism may be no longer preached
In that cathedral, nor heretical
Defilement desecrate the celebration
Of that pure festival.

WALLENSTEIN

My generals,
Can this be realized?

ILLO

'Tis not possible.

BUTLER

It can't be realized.

QUESTENBERG

The emperor
Already hath commanded Colonel Suys

To advance towards Bavaria.

WALLENSTEIN

What did Suys?

QUESTENBERG

That which his duty prompted. He advanced.

WALLENSTEIN

What! he advanced? And I, his general,
Had given him orders, peremptory orders
Not to desert his station! Stands it thus
With my authority? Is this the obedience
Due to my office, which being thrown aside,
No war can be conducted? Chieftains, speak
You be the judges, generals. What deserves
That officer who, of his oath neglectful,
Is guilty of contempt of orders?

ILLO

Death.

**WALLENSTEIN (raising his voice,
as all but ILLO had remained silent**

and seemingly scrupulous).
Count Piccolomini! what has he deserved?

MAX. PICCOLOMINI (after a long pause)

According to the letter of the law,
Death.

ISOLANI

Death.

BUTLER

Death, by the laws of war.

[QUESTENBERG rises from his seat, WALLENSTEIN follows, all the rest rise.

WALLENSTEIN

To this the law condemns him, and not I.
And if I show him favor, 'twill arise
From the reverence that I owe my emperor.

QUESTENBERG

If so, I can say nothing further – here!

WALLENSTEIN

I accepted the command but on conditions!
And this the first, that to the diminution
Of my authority no human being,
Not even the emperor's self, should be entitled
To do aught, or to say aught, with the army.
If I stand warranter of the event,
Placing my honor and my head in pledge,
Needs must I have full mastery in all
The means thereto. What rendered this Gustavus
Resistless, and unconquered upon earth?
This – that he was the monarch in his army!
A monarch, one who is indeed a monarch,
Was never yet subdued but by his equal.
But to the point! The best is yet to come,
Attend now, generals!

QUESTENBERG

The Prince Cardinal
Begins his route at the approach of spring
From the Milanese; and leads a Spanish army
Through Germany into the Netherlands.

That he may march secure and unimpeded,
'Tis the emperor's will you grant him a detachment
Of eight horse-regiments from the army here.

WALLENSTEIN

Yes, yes! I understand! Eight regiments! Well,
Right well concerted, Father Lanormain!
Eight thousand horse! Yes, yes! 'tis as it should be
I see it coming.

QUESTENBERG

There is nothing coming.
All stands in front: the counsel of state-prudence,
The dictate of necessity!

WALLENSTEIN

What then?
What, my lord envoy? May I not be suffered

To understand that folks are tired of seeing
The sword's hilt in my grasp, and that your court
Snatch eagerly at this pretence, and use
The Spanish title, and drain off my forces,
To lead into the empire a new army
Unsubjected to my control? To throw me
Plumply aside, – I am still too powerful for you
To venture that. My stipulation runs,
That all the imperial forces shall obey me
Where'er the German is the native language.
Of Spanish troops and of prince cardinals,
That take their route as visitors, through the empire,
There stands no syllable in my stipulation.
No syllable! And so the politic court
Steals in on tiptoe, and creeps round behind it;
First makes me weaker, then to be dispensed with,
Till it dares strike at length a bolder blow,
And make short work with me.
What need of all these crooked ways, lord envoy?
Straightforward, man! his compact with me pinches
The emperor. He would that I moved off!
Well! I will gratify him!

[Here there commences an agitation among the generals,
which increases continually.

It grieves me for my noble officers' sakes;
I see not yet by what means they will come at
The moneys they have advanced, or how obtain

The recompense their services demand.
Still a new leader brings new claimants forward,
And prior merit superannuates quickly.
There serve here many foreigners in the army,
And were the man in all else brave and gallant,
I was not wont to make nice scrutiny
After his pedigree or catechism.
This will be otherwise i' the time to come.
Well; me no longer it concerns.

[He seats himself.

Forbid it, Heaven, that it should come to this!
Our troops will swell in dreadful fermentation —
The emperor is abused – it cannot be.

ISOLANI

It cannot be; all goes to instant wreck.

WALLENSTEIN

Thou hast said truly, faithful Isolani!
What we with toil and foresight have built up

Will go to wreck – all go to instant wreck.
What then? Another chieftain is soon found,
Another army likewise (who dares doubt it?)
Will flock from all sides to the emperor,
At the first beat of his recruiting drum.

[During this speech, ISOLANI, TERZKY, ILLO, and
MARADAS talk

confusedly with great agitation.

**MAX. PICCOLOMINI (busily and passionately
going from one to another, and soothing them)**

Hear, my commander! Hear me, generals!
Let me conjure you, duke! Determine nothing,
Till we have met and represented to you
Our joint remonstrances! Nay, calmer! Friends!
I hope all may yet be set right again.

TERZKY

Away! let us away! in the antechamber

Find we the others.

[They go.

BUTLER (to QUESTENBERG)

If good counsel gain
Due audience from your wisdom, my lord envoy,
You will be cautious how you show yourself
In public for some hours to come – or hardly
Will that gold key protect you from maltreatment.

[Commutations heard from without.

WALLENSTEIN

A salutary counsel – Thou, Octavio!
Wilt answer for the safety of our guest.
Farewell, von Questenberg!

[QUESTENBURG is about to speak.

Nay, not a word.
Not one word more of that detested subject!
You have performed your duty. We know now

To separate the office from the man.

[AS QUESTENBERG is going off with OCTAVIO, GOETZ, TIEFENBACH,

KOLATTO, press in, several other generals following them.

GOETZ

Where's he who means to rob us of our general?

TIEFENBACH (at the same time)

What are we forced to bear? That thou wilt leave us?

KOLATTO (at the same time)

We will live with thee, we will die with thee.

**WALLENSTEIN (with
stateliness, and pointing to ILLO)**

There! the field-marshal knows our will.

[Exit

[While all are going off the stage, the curtain drops

ACT III

SCENE I

A Small Chamber.
ILLO and TERZKY.

TERZKY

Now for this evening's business! How intend you
To manage with the generals at the banquet?

ILLO

Attend! We frame a formal declaration,
Wherein we to the duke consign ourselves
Collectively, to be and to remain
His, both with life and limb, and not to spare
The last drop of our blood for him, provided,
So doing we infringe no oath or duty
We may be under to the emperor. Mark!

This reservation we expressly make
In a particular clause, and save the conscience.
Now hear! this formula so framed and worded
Will be presented to them for perusal
Before the banquet. No one will find in it
Cause of offence or scruple. Hear now further!
After the feast, when now the vaporing wine
Opens the heart, and shuts the eyes, we let
A counterfeited paper, in the which
This one particular clause has been left out,
Go round for signatures.

TERZKY

How! think you then
That they'll believe themselves bound by an oath,
Which we have tricked them into by a juggle?

ILLO

We shall have caught and caged them! Let them then
Beat their wings bare against the wires, and rave
Loud as they may against our treachery;
At court their signatures will be believed

Far more than their most holy affirmations.
Traitors they are, and must be; therefore wisely
Will make a virtue of necessity.

TERZKY

Well, well, it shall content me: let but something
Be done, let only some decisive blow
Set us in motion.

ILLO

Besides, 'tis of subordinate importance
How, or how far, we may thereby propel
The generals. 'Tis enough that we persuade
The duke that they are his. Let him but act
In his determined mood, as if he had them,
And he will have them. Where he plunges in,
He makes a whirlpool, and all stream down to it.

TERZKY

His policy is such a labyrinth,
That many a time when I have thought myself
Close at his side, he's gone at once, and left me
Ignorant of the ground where I was standing.
He lends the enemy his ear, permits me
To write to them, to Arnheim; to Sesina
Himself comes forward blank and undisguised;
Talks with us by the hour about his plans,
And when I think I have him – off at once —
He has slipped from me, and appears as if
He had no scheme, but to retain his place.

ILLO

He give up his old plans! I'll tell you, friend!
His soul is occupied with nothing else,
Even in his sleep – they are his thoughts, his dreams,
That day by day he questions for this purpose
The motions of the planets —

TERZKY

Ah! you know
This night, that is now coming, he with Seni,
Shuts himself up in the astrological tower
To make joint observations – for I hear
It is to be a night of weight and crisis;
And something great, and of long expectation,
Takes place in heaven.

ILLO

O that it might take place
On earth! The generals are full of zeal,
And would with ease be led to anything
Rather than lose their chief. Observe, too, that
We have at last a fair excuse before us
To form a close alliance 'gainst the court,
Yet innocent its title, bearing simply
That we support him only in command.
But in the ardor of pursuit thou knowest
Men soon forget the goal from which they started.
The object I've in view is that the prince
Shall either find them, or believe them ready

For every hazard. Opportunity
Will tempt him on. Be the great step once taken,
Which at Vienna's court can ne'er be pardoned,
The force of circumstances will lead him onward
The farther still and farther. 'Tis the choice
That makes him undecisive – come but need,
And all his powers and wisdom will come with it.

TERZKY

'Tis this alone the enemy awaits
To change their chief and join their force with ours.

ILLO

Come! be we bold and make despatch. The work
In this next day or two must thrive and grow
More than it has for years. And let but only
Things first turn up auspicious here below —
Mark what I say – the right stars, too, will show themselves.
Come to the generals. All is in the glow,
And must be beaten while 'tis malleable.

TERZKY

Do you go thither, Illo? I must stay
And wait here for the Countess Terzky. Know
That we, too, are not idle. Break one string,
A second is in readiness.

ILLO

Yes! yes!
I saw your lady smile with such sly meaning.
What's in the wind?

TERZKY

A secret. Hush! she comes.

[Exit ILLO.]

SCENE II

The COUNTESS steps out from a closet.
COUNT and COUNTESS TERZKY.

TERZKY

Well – is she coming? I can keep him back
No longer.

COUNTESS

She will be here instantly,
You only send him.

TERZKY

I am not quite certain,
I must confess it, countess, whether or not
We are earning the duke's thanks hereby. You know

No ray has broke out from him on this point.
You have o'erruled me, and yourself know best
How far you dare proceed.

COUNTESS

I take it on me.

[Talking to herself while she is advancing.

Here's no heed of full powers and commissions;
My cloudy duke! we understand each other —
And without words. What could I not unriddle,
Wherefore the daughter should be sent for hither,
Why first he, and no other should be chosen
To fetch her hither? This sham of betrothing her
To a bridegroom⁹, whom no one knows – No! no!
This may blind others! I see through thee, brother!
But it beseems thee not to draw a card
At such a game. Not yet! It all remains
Mutely delivered up to my finessing.
Well – thou shalt not have been deceived, Duke Friedland,
In her who is thy sister.

⁹ In Germany, after honorable addresses have been paid and formally accepted, the lovers are called bride and bridegroom, even though the marriage should not take place till years afterwards.

SERVANT (enters)

The commanders!

[Exit.

TERZKY (to the COUNTESS)

Take care you heat his fancy and affections —
Possess him with a reverie, and send him,
Absent and dreaming to the banquet; that
He may not boggle at the signature.

COUNTESS

Take care of your guests! Go, send him hither.

TERZKY

All rests upon his undersigning.

COUNTESS (interrupting him)

Go to your guests! Go —

ILLO (comes back)

Where art staying, Terzky?
The house is full, and all expecting you.

TERZKY

Instantly! instantly!

[To the COUNTESS.

And let him not
Stay here too long. It might awake suspicion
In the old man —

COUNTESS

A truce with your precautions!

[Exeunt TERZKY and ILLO.]

SCENE III

COUNTESS, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. (peeping in on the stage slyly)

Aunt Terzky! may I venture?

[Advances to the middle of the stage, and looks around him with uneasiness.

She's not here!

Where is she?

COUNTESS

Look but somewhat narrowly
In yonder corner, lest perhaps she lie
Concealed behind that screen.

MAX

There lie her gloves!

[Snatches at them, but the COUNTESS takes them herself.

You unkind lady! You refuse me this,
You make it an amusement to torment me.

COUNTESS

And this the thanks you give me for my trouble?

MAX

O, if you felt the oppression at my heart!
Since we've been here, so to constrain myself
With such poor stealth to hazard words and glances.
These, these are not my habits!

COUNTESS

You have still

Many new habits to acquire, young friend!
But on this proof of your obedient temper
I must continue to insist; and only
On this condition can I play the agent
For your concerns.

MAX

But wherefore comes she not?
Where is she?

COUNTESS

Into my hands you must place it
Whole and entire. Whom could you find, indeed,
More zealously affected to your interest?
No soul on earth must know it – not your father;
He must not, above all.

MAX

Alas! what danger?

Here is no face on which I might concentrate
All the enraptured soul stirs up within me.
O lady! tell me, is all changed around me?
Or is it only I?

I find myself,
As among strangers! Not a trace is left
Of all my former wishes, former joys.
Where has it vanished to? There was a time
When even, methought, with such a world as this,
I was not discontented. Now how flat!
How stale! No life, no bloom, no flavor in it!
My comrades are intolerable to me.
My father – even to him I can say nothing.
My arms, my military duties – O!
They are such wearying toys!

COUNTESS

But gentle friend!
I must entreat it of your condescension,
You would be pleased to sink your eye, and favor
With one short glance or two this poor stale world,
Where even now much, and of much moment,
Is on the eve of its completion.

MAX

Something,
I can't but know is going forward round me.
I see it gathering, crowding, driving on,
In wild uncustomary movements. Well,
In due time, doubtless, it will reach even me.
Where think you I have been, dear lady? Nay,
No raillery. The turmoil of the camp,
The spring-tide of acquaintance rolling in,
The pointless jest, the empty conversation,
Oppressed and stifled me. I gasped for air —
I could not breathe — I was constrained to fly,
To seek a silence out for my full heart;
And a pure spot wherein to feel my happiness.
No smiling, countess! In the church was I.

There is a cloister here "To the heaven's gate,"¹⁰ Thither I
went, there found myself alone.

Over the altar hung a holy mother;
A wretched painting 'twas, yet 'twas the friend

¹⁰ I am doubtful whether this be the dedication of the cloister, or the name of one of the city gates, near which it stood. I have translated it in the former sense; but fearful of having made some blunder, I add the original, —Es ist ein Kloster hier zur Himmelsforte.

That I was seeking in this moment. Ah,
How oft have I beheld that glorious form
In splendor, 'mid ecstatic worshippers;
Yet, still it moved me not! and now at once
Was my devotion cloudless as my love.

COUNTESS

Enjoy your fortune and felicity!
Forget the world around you. Meantime, friendship
Shall keep strict vigils for you, anxious, active.
Only be manageable when that friendship
Points you the road to full accomplishment.

MAX

But where abides she then? Oh, golden time
Of travel, when each morning sun united
And but the coming night divided us;
Then ran no sand, then struck no hour for us,
And time, in our excess of happiness,
Seemed on its course eternal to stand still.
Oh, he hath fallen from out his heaven of bliss
Who can descend to count the changing hours,

No clock strikes ever for the happy!

COUNTESS

How long is it since you declared your passion?

MAX

This morning did I hazard the first word.

COUNTESS

This morning the first time in twenty days?

MAX

'Twas at that hunting-castle, betwixt here
And Nepomuck, where you had joined us, and

That was the last relay of the whole journey;
In a balcony we were standing mute,
And gazing out upon the dreary field
Before us the dragoons were riding onward,
The safeguard which the duke had sent us – heavy;
The inquietude of parting lay upon me,
And trembling ventured at length these words:
This all reminds me, noble maiden, that
To-day I must take leave of my good fortune.
A few hours more, and you will find a father,
Will see yourself surrounded by new friends,
And I henceforth shall be but as a stranger,
Lost in the many – "Speak with my Aunt Terzky!"
With hurrying voice she interrupted me.
She faltered. I beheld a glowing red
Possess her beautiful cheeks, and from the ground
Raised slowly up her eye met mine – no longer
Did I control myself.

[The Princess THEKLA appears at the door, and remains standing, observed by the COUNTESS, but not by PICCOLOMINI.

With instant boldness
I caught her in my arms, my lips touched hers;
There was a rustling in the room close by;
It parted us – 'Twas you. What since has happened
You know.

**COUNTESS (after a pause, with
a stolen glance at THEKLA)**

And is it your excess of modesty
Or are you so incurious, that you do not
Ask me too of my secret?

MAX

Of your secret?

COUNTESS

Why, yes! When in the instant after you
I stepped into the room, and found my niece there;
What she in this first moment of the heart
Taken with surprise —

MAX. (with eagerness)

Well?

SCENE IV

THEKLA (hurries forward), COUNTESS, MAX.
PICCOLOMINI.

THEKLA (to the COUNTESS)

Spare yourself the trouble:
That hears he better from myself.

MAX. (stepping backward)

My princess!
What have you let her hear me say, Aunt Terzky?

THEKLA (to the COUNTESS)

Has he been here long?

COUNTESS

Yes; and soon must go,
Where have you stayed so long?

THEKLA

Alas! my mother,
Wept so again! and I – I see her suffer,
Yet cannot keep myself from being happy.

MAX

Now once again I have courage to look on you.
To-day at noon I could not.
The dazzle of the jewels that played round you
Hid the beloved from me.

THEKLA

Then you saw me
With your eye only – and not with your heart?

MAX

This morning, when I found you in the circle
Of all your kindred, in your father's arms,
Beheld myself an alien in this circle,
O! what an impulse felt I in that moment
To fall upon his neck, to call him father!
But his stern eye o'erpowered the swelling passion,
It dared not but be silent. And those brilliants,
That like a crown of stars enwreathed your brows,
They scared me too! O wherefore, wherefore should be
At the first meeting spread as 'twere the ban
Of excommunication round you, – wherefore
Dress up the angel as for sacrifice.
And cast upon the light and joyous heart
The mournful burden of his station? Fitly
May love dare woo for love; but such a splendor
Might none but monarchs venture to approach.

THEKLA

Hush! not a word more of this mummery;
You see how soon the burden is thrown off.

[To the COUNTESS.

He is not in spirits. Wherefore is he not?
'Tis you, aunt, that have made him all so gloomy!
He had quite another nature on the journey —
So calm, so bright, so joyous eloquent.

[To MAX.

It was my wish to see you always so,
And never otherwise!

MAX

You find yourself
In your great father's arms, beloved lady!
All in a new world, which does homage to you,
And which, were't only by its novelty,

Delights your eye.

THEKLA

Yes; I confess to you
That many things delight me here: this camp,
This motley stage of warriors, which renews
So manifold the image of my fancy,
And binds to life, binds to reality,
What hitherto had but been present to me
As a sweet dream!

MAX

Alas! not so to me.
It makes a dream of my reality.
Upon some island in the ethereal heights
I've lived for these last days. This mass of men
Forces me down to earth. It is a bridge
That, reconducting to my former life,
Divides me and my heaven.

THEKLA

The game of life
Looks cheerful, when one carries in one's heart
The unalienable treasure. 'Tis a game,
Which, having once reviewed, I turn more joyous
Back to my deeper and appropriate bliss.

[Breaking off, and in a sportive tone.
In this short time that I've been present here.
What new unheard-of things have I not seen;
And yet they all must give place to the wond
Which this mysterious castle guards.

COUNTESS (recollecting)

And what
Can this be then? Methought I was acquainted
With all the dusky corners of this house.

THEKLA (smiling)

Ay, but the road thereto is watched by spirits,
Two griffins still stand sentry at the door.

COUNTESS (laughs)

The astrological tower! How happens it
That this same sanctuary, whose access
Is to all others so impracticable,
Opens before you even at your approach?

THEKLA

A dwarfish old man with a friendly face
And snow-white hairs, whose gracious services
Were mine at first sight, opened me the doors.

MAX

That is the duke's astrologer, old Seni.

THEKLA

He questioned me on many points; for instance,
When I was born, what month, and on what day,
Whether by day or in the night.

COUNTESS

He wished
To erect a figure for your horoscope.

THEKLA

My hand too he examined, shook his head
With much sad meaning, and the lines, methought,
Did not square over truly with his wishes.

COUNTESS

Well, princess, and what found you in this tower?
My highest privilege has been to snatch
A side-glance, and away!

THEKLA

It was a strange
Sensation that came o'er me, when at first
From the broad sunshine I stepped in; and now
The narrowing line of daylight, that ran after
The closing door, was gone; and all about me
'Twas pale and dusky night, with many shadows
Fantastically cast. Here six or seven
Colossal statues, and all kings, stood round me
In a half-circle. Each one in his hand
A sceptre bore, and on his head a star;
And in the tower no other light was there
But from these stars all seemed to come from them.
"These are the planets," said that low old man,
"They govern worldly fates, and for that cause
Are imaged here as kings. He farthest from you,
Spiteful and cold, an old man melancholy,

With bent and yellow forehead, he is Saturn.
He opposite, the king with the red light,
An armed man for the battle, that is Mars;
And both these bring but little luck to man."
But at his side a lovely lady stood,
The star upon her head was soft and bright,
Oh, that was Venus, the bright star of joy.
And the left hand, lo! Mercury, with wings
Quite in the middle glittered silver bright.
A cheerful man, and with a monarch's mien;
And this was Jupiter, my father's star
And at his side I saw the Sun and Moon.

MAX

Oh, never rudely will I blame his faith
In the might of stars and angels. 'Tis not merely
The human being's pride that peoples space
With life and mystical predominance;
Since likewise for the stricken heart of love
This visible nature, and this common world,
Is all too narrow; yea, a deeper import
Lurks in the legend told my infant years
Than lies upon that truth, we live to learn.
For fable is love's world, his home, his birth-place;
Delightedly dwells he among fays and talismans,

And spirits; and delightedly believes
Divinities, being himself divine
The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
That had her haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms, and watery depths, all these have vanished.
They live no longer in the faith of reason!
But still the heart doth need a language, still
Doth the old instinct bring back the old names;
And to yon starry world they now are gone,
Spirits or gods, that used to share this earth
With man as with their friend¹¹, and to the lover
Yonder they move, from yonder visible sky
Shoot influence down: and even at this day
'This Jupiter who brings whate'er is great,
And Venus who brings everything that's fair!

THEKLA

And if this be the science of the stars,
I, too, with glad and zealous industry,
Will learn acquaintance with this cheerful faith.

¹¹ No more of talk, where god or angel guest
With man, as with his friend familiar,
used To sit indulgent. Paradise Lost, B. IX.

It is a gentle and affectionate thought,
That in immeasurable heights above us,
At our first birth, the wreath of love was woven,
With sparkling stars for flowers.

COUNTESS

Not only roses
And thorns too hath the heaven, and well for you
Leave they your wreath of love inviolate:
What Venus twined, the bearer of glad fortune,
The sullen orb of Mars soon tears to pieces.

MAX

Soon will this gloomy empire reach its close.
Blest be the general's zeal: into the laurel
Will he inweave the olive-branch, presenting
Peace to the shouting nations. Then no wish
Will have remained for his great heart. Enough
Has he performed for glory, and can now
Live for himself and his. To his domains will
He retire; he has a stately seat
Of fairest view at Gitschin, Reichenberg,

And Friedland Castle, both lie pleasantly;
Even to the foot of the huge mountains here
Stretches the chase and covers of his forests:
His ruling passion to create the splendid
He can indulge without restraint; can give
A princely patronage to every art,
And to all worth a sovereign's protection.
Can build, can plant, can watch the starry courses —

COUNTESS

Yet I would have you look, and look again,
Before you lay aside your arms, young friend!
A gentle bride, as she is, is well worth it,
That you should woo and win her with the sword.

MAX

Oh, that the sword could win her!

COUNTESS

What was that?

Did you hear nothing? Seemed as if I heard
Tumult and larum in the banquet-room.

[Exit COUNTESS.]

SCENE V

THEKLA and MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

THEKLA (as soon as the COUNTESS is out of sight, in a quick, low voice to PICCOLOMINI)

Don't trust them! They are false!

MAX

Impossible!

THEKLA

Trust no one here but me. I saw at once,
They had a purpose.

MAX

Purpose! but what purpose?
And how can we be instrumental to it?

THEKLA

I know no more than you; but yet believe me
There's some design in this; to make us happy,
To realize our union – trust me, love!
They but pretend to wish it.

MAX

But these Terzkys —
Why use we them at all? Why not your mother?
Excellent creature! She deserves from us
A full and filial confidence.

THEKLA

She doth love you,
Doth rate you high before all others – but —
But such a secret – she would never have
The courage to conceal it from my father.
For her own peace of mind we must preserve it
A secret from her too.

MAX

Why any secret?
I love not secrets. Mark what I will do.
I'll throw me at your father's feet – let him
Decide upon my fortune! He is true,
He wears no mask – he hates all crooked ways —
He is so good, so noble!

THEKLA. (falls on his neck)

That are you!

MAX

You knew him only from this morn! But I
Have lived ten years already in his presence;
And who knows whether in this very moment
He is not merely waiting for us both
To own our loves in order to unite us?
You are silent!
You look at me with such a hopelessness!
What have you to object against your father?

THEKLA

I? Nothing. Only he's so occupied —
He has no leisure time to think about
The happiness of us two.

[Taking his hand tenderly.

Follow me
Let us not place too great a faith in men.
These Terzkys – we will still be grateful to them
For every kindness, but not trust them further

Than they deserve; – and in all else rely
On our own hearts!

MAX

O! shall we e'er be happy?

THEKLA

Are we not happy now? Art thou not mine?
Am I not thine? There lives within my soul
A lofty courage – 'tis love gives it me!
I ought to be less open – ought to hide
My heart more from thee – so decorum dictates:
But where in this place couldst thou seek for truth,
If in my mouth thou didst not find it?
We now have met, then let us hold each other
Clasped in a lasting and a firm embrace.
Believe me this was more than their intent.
Then be our loves like some blest relic kept
Within the deep recesses of the heart.
From heaven alone the love has been bestowed,
To heaven alone our gratitude is due;
It can work wonders for us still.

SCENE VI

To them enters the COUNTESS TERZKY.

COUNTESS (in a pressing manner)

Come, come!

My husband sends me for you. It is now
The latest moment.

[They not appearing to attend to what she says,
she steps between them.

Part you!

THEKLA

Oh, not yet!

It has been scarce a moment.

COUNTESS

Ay! Then time
Flies swiftly with your highness, princess niece!

MAX

There is no hurry, aunt.

COUNTESS

Away! Away!
The folks begin to miss you. Twice already
His father has asked for him.

THEKLA

Ha! His father!

COUNTESS

You understand that, niece!

THEKLA

Why needs he
To go at all to that society?
'Tis not his proper company. They may
Be worthy men, but he's too young for them;
In brief, he suits not such society.

COUNTESS

You mean, you'd rather keep him wholly here?
THEKLA (with energy).
Yes! You have hit it aunt! That is my meaning,
Leave him here wholly! Tell the company —

COUNTESS

What! have you lost your senses, niece?
Count, you remember the conditions. Come!

MAX (to THEKLA)

Lady, I must obey. Fairwell, dear lady!

[THEKLA turns away from him with a quick motion.

What say you then, dear lady?

THEKLA (without looking at him)

Nothing. Go!

MAX

Can I when you are angry —

[He draws up to her, their eyes meet, she stands silent a moment, then throws herself into his arms; he presses her fast to his heart.

COUNTESS

Off! Heavens! if any one should come!

Hark! What's that noise! It comes this way. Off!

[MAX. tears himself away out of her arms and goes. The COUNTESS accompanies him. THEKLA follows him with her eyes at first, walks restlessly across the room, then stops, and remains standing, lost in thought. A guitar lies on the table, she seizes it as by a sudden emotion, and after she has played awhile an irregular and melancholy symphony, she falls gradually into the music and sings.

SCENE VII

THEKLA (plays and sings)

The cloud doth gather, the greenwood roar,
The damsel paces along the shore;
The billows, they tumble with might, with might;
And she flings out her voice to the darksome night;
Her bosom is swelling with sorrow;
The world it is empty, the heart will die,
There's nothing to wish for beneath the sky
Thou Holy One, call thy child away!
I've lived and loved, and that was to-day;
Make ready my grave-clothes to-morrow.¹²

¹² I found it not in my power to translate this song with literal fidelity preserving at the same time the Alcaic movement, and have therefore added the original, with a prose translation. Some of my readers may be more fortunate. THEKLA (spielt and singt) Der Eichwald brauset, die Wolken ziehn, Das Maegdlein wandelt an Ufers Gruen; Es bricht sich die Welle mit Macht, mit Macht, Und sie singt hinaus in die finstre Nacht, Das Auge von Weinen getruebet: Das Herz is gestorben, die Welt ist leer, Und weiter giebt sie dem Wunsche nichts mehr. Du Heilige, rufe dein Kind zurueck, Ich babe genossen das irdische Glueck, Ich babe gelebt and geliebet. LITERAL TRANSLATION THEKLA (plays and sings). The oak-forest bellows, the clouds gather, the damsel walks to and fro on the green of the shore; the wave breaks with might, with might, and she sings out into the dark night, her eye discolored with weeping: the heart is empty, the world is empty, and further gives

it nothing more to the wish. Thou Holy One, call thy child home. I have enjoyed the happiness of this world, I have lived and have loved. I cannot but add here an imitation of this song, with which my friend, Charles Lamb, has favored me, and which appears to me to have caught the happiest manner of our old ballads: —The clouds are blackening, the storms are threatening, The cavern doth mutter, the greenwood moan! Billows are breaking, the damsel's heart aching, Thus in the dark night she singeth alone, He eye upward roving: The world is empty, the heart is dead surely, In this world plainly all seemeth amiss; To thy heaven, Holy One, take home thy little one. I have partaken of all earth's bliss, Both living and loving.

SCENE VIII

COUNTESS (returns), THEKLA.

COUNTESS

Fie, lady niece! to throw yourself upon him
Like a poor gift to one who cares not for it,
And so must be flung after him! For you,
Duke Friedland's only child, I should have thought
It had been more beseeching to have shown yourself
More chary of your person.

THEKLA (rising)

And what mean you?

DUCHESS

I mean, niece, that you should not have forgotten

Who you are, and who he is. But perchance
That never once occurred to you.

THEKLA

What then?

COUNTESS

That you're the daughter of the Prince Duke Friedland.

THEKLA

Well, and what farther?

DUCHESS

What? A pretty question!

THEKLA

He was born that which we have but become.
He's of an ancient Lombard family,
Son of a reigning princess.

COUNTESS

Are you dreaming?
Talking in sleep? An excellent jest, forsooth!
We shall no doubt right courteously entreat him
To honor with his hand the richest heiress
In Europe.

THEKLA

That will not be necessary.

COUNTESS

Methinks 'twere well, though, not to run the hazard.

THEHLA

His father loves him; Count Octavio
Will interpose no difficulty —

COUNTESS

His!
His father! His! But yours, niece, what of yours?

THERLA

Why, I begin to think you fear his father,
So anxiously you hide it from the man!

His father, his, I mean.

COUNTESS (looks at her as scrutinizing)

Niece, you are false.

THEBLA

Are you then wounded? O, be friends with me!

COUNTESS

You hold your game for won already. Do not
Triumph too soon!

**THEKLA (interrupting her,
and attempting to soothe her)**

Nay now, be friends with me.

COUNTESS

It is not yet so far gone.

THEKLA

I believe you.

COUNTESS

Did you suppose your father had laid out
His most important life in toils of war,
Denied himself each quiet earthly bliss,
Had banished slumbers from his tent, devoted
His noble head to care, and for this only,
To make a happier pair of you? At length
To draw you from your convent, and conduct
In easy triumph to your arms the man
That chanced to please your eyes! All this, methinks,

He might have purchased at a cheaper rate.

THEKLA

That which he did not plant for me might yet
Bear me fair fruitage of its own accord.
And if my friendly and affectionate fate,
Out of his fearful and enormous being,
Will but prepare the joys of life for me —

COUNTESS

Thou seest it with a lovelorn maiden's eyes,
Cast thine eye round, bethink thee who thou art; —
Into no house of joyance hast thou stepped,
For no espousals dost thou find the walls
Decked out, no guests the nuptial garland wearing;
Here is no splendor but of arms. Or thinkest thou
That all these thousands are here congregated
To lead up the long dances at thy wedding!
Thou see'st thy father's forehead full of thought,
Thy mother's eye in tears: upon the balance
Lies the great destiny of all our house.
Leave now the puny wish, the girlish feeling;

Oh, thrust it far behind thee! Give thou proof
Thou'rt the daughter of the mighty – his
Who where he moves creates the wonderful.
Not to herself the woman must belong,
Annexed and bound to alien destinies.
But she performs the best part, she the wisest,
Who can transmute the alien into self,
Meet and disarm necessity by choice;
And what must be, take freely to her heart,
And bear and foster it with mother's love.

THEKLA

Such ever was my lesson in the convent.
I had no loves, no wishes, knew myself
Only as his – his daughter – his, the mighty!
His fame, the echo of whose blast drove to me
From the far distance, weakened in my soul
No other thought than this – I am appointed
To offer myself up in passiveness to him.

COUNTESS

That is thy fate. Mould thou thy wishes to it —

I and thy mother gave thee the example.

THEKLA

My fate hath shown me him, to whom behoves it
That I should offer up myself. In gladness
Him will I follow.

COUNTESS

Not thy fate hath shown him!
Thy heart, say rather – 'twas thy heart, my child!

THEKLA

Faith hath no voice but the heart's impulses.
I am all his! His present – his alone.
Is this new life, which lives in me? He hath
A right to his own creature. What was I
Ere his fair love infused a soul into me?

COUNTESS

Thou wouldst oppose thy father, then, should he
Have otherwise determined with thy person?

[THEKLA remains silent. The COUNTESS continues.

Thou meanest to force him to thy liking? Child,
His name is Friedland.

THEKLA

My name too is Friedland.
He shall have found a genuine daughter in me.

COUNTESS

What! he has vanquished all impediment,
And in the wilful mood of his own daughter
Shall a new struggle rise for him? Child! child!
As yet thou hast seen thy father's smiles alone;

The eye of his rage thou hast not seen. Dear child,
I will not frighten thee. To that extreme,
I trust it ne'er shall come. His will is yet
Unknown to me; 'tis possible his aims
May have the same direction as thy wish.
But this can never, never be his will,
That thou, the daughter of his haughty fortunes,
Shouldest e'er demean thee as a lovesick maiden
And like some poor cost-nothing, fling thyself
Toward the man, who, if that high prize ever
Be destined to await him, yet with sacrifices
The highest love can bring, must pay for it.

[Exit COUNTESS.]

SCENE IX

THEKLA (who during the last speech had been standing evidently lost in her reflections)

I thank thee for the hint. It turns
My sad presentiment to certainty.
And it is so! Not one friend have we here,
Not one true heart! we've nothing but ourselves!
Oh, she said rightly – no auspicious signs
Beam on this covenant of our affections.
This is no theatre where hope abides
The dull thick noise of war alone stirs here,
And love himself, as he were armed in steel,
Steps forth, and girds him for the strife of death.

[Music from the banquet-room is heard.

There's a dark spirit walking in our house.
And swiftly will the destiny close on us.
It drove me hither from my calm asylum,
It mocks my soul with charming witchery,
It lures me forward in a seraph's shape,
I see it near, I see it nearer floating,
It draws, it pulls me with a godlike power —

And lo! the abyss – and thither am I moving —
I have no power within me not to move!

[The music from the banquet-room becomes louder.

Oh, when a house is, doomed in fire to perish,
Many and dark Heaven drives his clouds together,
Yea, shoots his lightnings down from sunny heights,
Flames burst from out the subterraneous chasms,
And fiends and angels, mingling in their fury,
Sling firebrands at the burning edifice.¹³

[Exit THEKLA.

¹³ There are few who will not have taste enough to laugh at the two concluding lines of this soliloquy: and still fewer, I would fain hope, who would not have been more disposed to shudder, had I given a faithful translation. For the readers of German I have added the original: —Blind-wuethend schleudert selbst der Gott der Freude Den Pechkranz in das brennende Gebaeude.

ACT IV

SCENE I

A large saloon lighted up with festal splendor; in the midst of it, and in the centre of the stage a table richly set out, at which eight generals are sitting, among whom are OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, TERZKY, and MARADAS. Right and left of this, but further back, two other tables, at each of which six persons are placed. The middle door, which is standing open, gives to the prospect a fourth table with the same number of persons. More forward stands the sideboard.

The whole front of the stage is kept open, for the pages and servants-in-waiting. All is in motion. The band of music belonging to TERZKY's regiment march across the stage, and draw up around the tables. Before they are quite off from the front of the stage, MAX. PICCOLOMINI appears, TERZKY advances towards him with a paper, ISOLANI comes up to meet him with a beaker, or service-cup.

TERZKY, ISOLANI, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

ISOLANI

Here, brother, what we love! Why, where hast been?
Off to thy place – quick! Terzky here has given
The mother's holiday wine up to free booty.
Here it goes on as at the Heidelberg castle.
Already hast thou lost the best. They're giving
At yonder table ducal crowns in shares;
There Sternberg's lands and chattels are put up,
With Eggenberg's, Stawata's, Lichtenstein's,
And all the great Bohemian feudalities.
Be nimble, lad! and something may turn up
For thee, who knows? off – to thy place! quick! march!

**TIEFENBACH and GOETZ (call
out from the second and third tables)**

Count Piccolomini!

TERZKY

Stop, ye shall have him in an instant. Read
This oath here, whether as 'tis here set forth,
The wording satisfies you. They've all read it,
Each in his turn, and each one will subscribe
His individual signature.

MAX. (reads)

"Ingratis servire nefas."

ISOLANI

That sounds to my ears very much like Latin,
And being interpreted, pray what may it mean?

TERZKY

No honest man will serve a thankless master.

MAX

"Inasmuch as our supreme commander, the illustrious Duke of Friedland, in consequence of the manifold affronts and grievances which he has received, had expressed his determination to quit the emperor, but on our unanimous entreaty has graciously consented to remain still with the army, and not to part from us without our approbation thereof, so we, collectively and each in particular, in the stead of an oath personally taken, do, hereby oblige ourselves – likewise by him honorably and faithfully to hold, and in nowise whatsoever from him to part, and to be ready to shed for his interests the last drop of our blood, so far, namely, as our oath to the emperor will permit it. (These last words are repeated by ISOLANI.) In testimony of which we subscribe our names."

TERZKY

Now! are you willing to subscribe to this paper?

ISOLANI

Why should he not? All officers of honor
Can do it, ay, must do it. Pen and ink here!

TERZKY

Nay, let it rest till after meal.

ISOLANI (drawing MAX. along)

Come, Max!

[Both seat themselves at their table.]

SCENE II

TERZKY, NEUMANN.

TERZKY (beckons to NEUMANN, who is waiting at the side-table and steps forward with him to the edge of the stage)

Have you the copy with you, Neumann? Give it.
It may be changed for the other?

NEUMANN

I have copied it
Letter by letter, line by line; no eye
Would e'er discover other difference,
Save only the omission of that clause,
According to your excellency's order.

TERZKY

Right I lay it yonder and away with this —
It has performed its business – to the fire with it.

[NEUMANN lays the copy on the table, and steps back again
to the side-table.

SCENE III

ILLO (comes out from the second chamber), TERZKY.

ILLO

How goes it with young Piccolomini!

TERZKY

All right, I think. He has started no object.

ILLO

He is the only one I fear about —
He and his father. Have an eye on both!

TERZKY

How looks it at your table: you forget not
To keep them warm and stirring?

ILLO

Oh, quite cordial,
They are quite cordial in the scheme. We have them
And 'tis as I predicted too. Already
It is the talk, not merely to maintain
The duke in station. "Since we're once for all
Together and unanimous, why not,"
Says Montecuculi, "ay, why not onward,
And make conditions with the emperor
There in his own Venice?" Trust me, count,
Were it not for these said Piccolomini,
We might have spared ourselves the cheat.

TERZEY

And Butler?

How goes it there? Hush!

SCENE IV

To them enter BUTLER from a second table.

BUTLER

Don't disturb yourselves;
Field-marshal, I have understood you perfectly.
Good luck be to the scheme; and as to me,

[With an air of mystery.

You may depend upon me.

ILLO (with vivacity)

May we, Butler?

BUTLER

With or without the clause, all one to me!
You understand me! My fidelity
The duke may put to any proof – I'm with him
Tell him so! I'm the emperor's officer,
As long as 'tis his pleasure to remain
The emperor's general! and Friedland's servant,
As soon as it shall please him to become
His own lord.

TERZKY

You would make a good exchange.
No stern economist, no Ferdinand,
Is he to whom you plight your services.

BUTLER (with a haughty look)

I do not put up my fidelity
To sale, Count Terzky! Half a year ago
I would not have advised you to have made me
An overture to that, to which I now
Offer myself of my own free accord.
But that is past! and to the duke, field-marshal,
I bring myself, together with my regiment.

And mark you, 'tis my humor to believe,
The example which I give will not remain
Without an influence.

ILLO

Who is ignorant,
That the whole army looks to Colonel Butler
As to a light that moves before them?

BUTLER

Ay?
Then I repent me not of that fidelity
Which for the length of forty years I held,
If in my sixtieth year my good old name
Can purchase for me a revenge so full.
Start not at what I say, sir generals!
My real motives – they concern not you.
And you yourselves, I trust, could not expect
That this your game had crooked my judgment – or
That fickleness, quick blood, or such like cause,
Has driven the old man from the track of honor,
Which he so long had trodden. Come, my friends!

I'm not thereto determined with less firmness,
Because I know and have looked steadily
At that on which I have determined.

ILLO

Say,
And speak roundly, what are we to deem you?

BUTLER

A friend! I give you here my hand! I'm yours
With all I have. Not only men, but money
Will the duke want. Go, tell him, sirs!
I've earned and laid up somewhat in his service,
I lend it him; and is he my survivor,
It has been already long ago bequeathed to him;
He is my heir. For me, I stand alone
Here in the world; naught know I of the feeling
That binds the husband to a wife and children.
My name dies with me, my existence ends.

ILLO

'Tis not your money that he needs – a heart
Like yours weighs tons of gold down, weighs down millions!

BUTLER

I came a simple soldier's boy from Ireland
To Prague – and with a master, whom I buried.
From lowest stable duty I climbed up,
Such was the fate of war, to this high rank,
The plaything of a whimsical good fortune.
And Wallenstein too is a child of luck:
I love a fortune that is like my own.

ILLO

All powerful souls have kindred with each other.

BUTLER

This is an awful moment! to the brave,
To the determined, an auspicious moment.
The Prince of Weimar arms, upon the Maine,
To found a mighty dukedom. He of Halberstadt,
That Mansfeldt, wanted but a longer life
To have marked out with his good sword a lordship
That should reward his courage. Who of these
Equals our Friedland? There is nothing, nothing
So high, but he may set the ladder to it!

TERZKY

That's spoken like a man!

BUTLER

Do you secure the Spaniard and Italian —
I'll be your warrant for the Scotchman Lesly.
Come to the company!

TERZKY

Where is the master of the cellar? Ho!
Let the best wines come up. Ho! cheerly, boy!
Luck comes to-day, so give her hearty welcome.

[Exeunt, each to his table.]

SCENE V

The MASTER OF THE CELLAR, advancing with NEUMANN, SERVANTS passing backwards and forwards.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. The best wine! Oh, if my old mistress, his lady mother, could but see these wild goings on she would turn herself round in her grave. Yes, yes, sir officer! 'tis all down the hill with this noble house! no end, no moderation! And this marriage with the duke's sister, a splendid connection, a very splendid connection! but I will tell you, sir officer, it looks no good.

NEUMANN. Heaven forbid! Why, at this very moment the whole prospect is in bud and blossom!

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. You think so? Well, well! much may be said on that head.

FIRST SERVANT (comes). Burgundy for the fourth table.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. Now, sir lieutenant, if this aint the seventieth flask —

FIRST SERVANT. Why, the reason is, that German lord, Tiefenbach, sits at that table.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (continuing his discourse to NEUMANN). They are soaring too high. They would rival kings and electors in their pomp and splendor; and wherever the duke leaps, not a minute does my gracious master, the count, loiter

on the brink – (to the SERVANTS). What do you stand there listening for? I will let you know you have legs presently. Off! see to the tables, see to the flasks! Look there! Count Palfi has an empty glass before him!

RUNNER (comes). The great service-cup is wanted, sir, that rich gold cup with the Bohemian arms on it. The count says you know which it is.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. Ay! that was made for Frederick's coronation by the artist William – there was not such another prize in the whole booty at Prague.

RUNNER. The same! – a health is to go round in him.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (shaking his head while he fetches and rinses the cups). This will be something for the tale-bearers – this goes to Vienna.

NEUMANN. Permit me to look at it. Well, this is a cup indeed! How heavy! as well it may be, being all gold. And what neat things are embossed on it! how natural and elegant they look! There, on the first quarter, let me see. That proud amazon there on horseback, she that is taking a leap over the crosier and mitres, and carries on a wand a hat together with a banner, on which there's a goblet represented. Can you tell me what all this signifies?

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. The woman you see there on horseback is the Free Election of the Bohemian Crown. That is signified by the round hat and by that fiery steed on which she is riding. The hat is the pride of man; for he who cannot keep his

hat on before kings and emperors is no free man.

NEUMANN. But what is the cup there on the banner.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. The cup signifies the freedom of the Bohemian Church, as it was in our forefathers' times. Our forefathers in the wars of the Hussites forced from the pope this noble privilege; for the pope, you know, will not grant the cup to any layman. Your true Moravian values nothing beyond the cup; it is his costly jewel, and has cost the Bohemians their precious blood in many and many a battle.

NEUMANN. And what says that chart that hangs in the air there, over it all?

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. That signifies the Bohemian letter-royal which we forced from the Emperor Rudolph – a precious, never to be enough valued parchment, that secures to the new church the old privileges of free ringing and open psalmody. But since he of Steiermark has ruled over us that is at an end; and after the battle at Prague, in which Count Palatine Frederick lost crown and empire, our faith hangs upon the pulpit and the altar – and our brethren look at their homes over their shoulders; but the letter-royal the emperor himself cut to pieces with his scissors.

NEUMANN. Why, my good Master of the Cellar! you are deep read in the chronicles of your country.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. So were my forefathers, and for that reason were they minstrels, and served under Procopius and Ziska. Peace be with their ashes! Well, well! they fought for

a good cause though. There! carry it up!

NEUMANN. Stay! let me but look at this second quarter. Look there! That is, when at Prague Castle, the imperial counsellors, Martinitz and Stawata, were hurled down head over heels. 'Tis even so! there stands Count Thur who commands it.

[RUNNER takes the service-cup and goes off with it.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. Oh, let me never more hear of that day. It was the three-and-twentieth of May in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and eighteen. It seems to me as it were but yesterday – from that unlucky day it all began, all the heartaches of the country. Since that day it is now sixteen years, and there has never once been peace on the earth.

[Health drunk aloud at the second table.

The Prince of Weimar! Hurrah!

[At the third and fourth tables.

Long live Prince William! Long live Duke Bernard! Hurrah!

[Music strikes up.

FIRST SERVANT. Hear 'em! Hear 'em! What an uproar!

SECOND SERVANT (comes in running). Did you hear? They have drunk the Prince of Weimar's health.

THIRD SERVANT. The Swedish chief commander!

FIRST SERVANT (speaking at the same time). The Lutheran!

SECOND SERVANT. Just before, when Count Deodati gave out the emperor's health, they were all as mum as a nibbling mouse.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR. Po, po! When the wine goes in strange things come out. A good servant hears, and hears not! You should be nothing but eyes and feet, except when you are called to.

SECOND SERVANT

[To the **RUNNER**, to whom he gives secretly a flask of wine, keeping his eye on the **MASTER OF THE CELLAR**, standing between him and the

RUNNER

Quick, Thomas! before the Master of the Cellar runs this way; 'tis a flask of Frontignac! Snapped it up at the third table. Canst go off with it?

RUNNER (hides it in his, pocket). All right!

[Exit the Second Servant.

THIRD SERVANT (aside to the **FIRST**). Be on the hark, Jack! that we may have right plenty to tell to Father Quivoga. He will give us right plenty of absolution in return for it.

FIRST SERVANT. For that very purpose I am always having something to do behind Illo's chair. He is the man for speeches to make you stare with.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (to **NEUMANN**). Who, pray,

may that swarthy man be, he with the cross, that is chatting so confidently with Esterhats?

NEUMANN. Ay, he too is one of those to whom they confide too much. He calls himself Maradas; a Spaniard is he.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (impatiently). Spaniard! Spaniard! I tell you, friend, nothing good comes of those Spaniards. All these outlandish fellows are little better than rogues.

NEUMANN. Fy, fy! you should not say so, friend. There are among them our very best generals, and those on whom the duke at this moment relies the most.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR

[Taking the flask out of RUNNER'S pocket.

My son, it will be broken to pieces in your pocket.

[TERZKY hurries in, fetches away the paper, and calls to a servant for pen and ink, and goes to the back of the stage.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (to the SERVANTS). The lieutenant-general stands up. Be on the watch. Now! They break up. Off, and move back the forms.

[They rise at all the tables, the SERVANTS hurry off the front of the stage to the tables; part of the guests come forward.

SCENE VI

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI enters, in conversation with MARADAS, and both place themselves quite on the edge of the stage on one side of the proscenium. On the side directly opposite, MAX. PICCOLOMINI, by himself, lost in thought, and taking no part in anything that is going forward. The middle space between both, but rather more distant from the edge of the stage, is filled up by BUTLER, ISOLANI,

GOETZ, TIEFENBACH, and KOLATTO

ISOLANI (while the company is coming forward). Good-night, good-night, Kolatto! Good-night, lieutenant-general! I should rather say good-morning.

GOETZ (to TIEFENBACH). Noble brother! (making the usual compliment after meals).

TIEFENBACH. Ay! 'twas a royal feast indeed.

GOETZ. Yes, my lady countess understands these matters. Her mother-in-law, heaven rest her soul, taught her! Ah! that was a housewife for you!

TIEFENBACH. There was not her like in all Bohemia for setting out a table.

OCTAVIO (aside to MARADAS). Do me the favor to talk

to me – talk of what you will – or of nothing. Only preserve the appearance at least of talking. I would not wish to stand by myself, and yet I conjecture that there will be goings on here worthy of our attentive observation. (He continues to fix his eye on the whole following scene.)

ISOLANI (on the point of going). Lights! lights!

TERZKY (advances with the paper to ISOLANI). Noble brother; two minutes longer! Here is something to subscribe.

ISOLANI. Subscribe as much as you like – but you must excuse me from reading it.

TERZKY. There is no need. It is the oath which you have already read. Only a few marks of your pen!

[ISOLANI hands over the paper to OCTAVIO respectfully.]

TERZKY. Nay, nay, first come, first served. There is no precedence here.

[OCTAVIO runs over the paper with apparent indifference.]

TERZKY watches him at some distance.

GOETZ (to TERZKY). Noble count! with your permission – good-night.

TERKZY. Where's the hurry? Come, one other composing draught. (To the SERVANTS). Ho!

GOETZ. Excuse me – aint able.

TERZKY. A thimble-full.

GOETZ. Excuse me.

TIEFENBACH (sits down). Pardon me, nobles! This standing does not agree with me.

TERZKY. Consult your own convenience, general.

TIEFENBACH. Clear at head, sound in stomach – only my legs won't carry me any longer.

ISOLANI (pointing at his corpulence). Poor legs! how should they! Such an unmerciful load!

[OCTAVIO subscribes his name, and reaches over the paper to TERZKY, who gives it to ISOLANI; and he goes to the table to sign his name.

TIEFENBACH. 'Twas that war in Pomerania that first brought it on. Out in all weathers – ice and snow – no help for it. I shall never get the better of it all the days of my life.

GOETZ. Why, in simple verity, your Swedes make no nice inquiries about the season.

TERZKY (observing ISOLANI, whose hand trembles excessively so that he can scarce direct his pen). Have you had that ugly complaint long, noble brother? Despatch it.

ISOLANI. The sins of youth! I have already tried the chalybeate waters. Well – I must bear it.

[TERZKY gives the paper to MARADAS; he steps to the table to subscribe.

OCTAVIO (advancing to BUTLER). You are not over-fond of the orgies of Bacchus, colonel! I have observed it. You would, I think, find yourself more to your liking in the uproar of a battle than of a feast.

BUTLER. I must confess 'tis not in my way.

OCTAVIO (stepping nearer to him friendlily). Nor in mine

neither, I can assure you; and I am not a little glad, my much-honored Colonel Butler, that we agree so well in our opinions. A half-dozen good friends at most, at a small round table, a glass of genuine Tokay, open hearts, and a rational conversation – that's my taste.

BUTLER. And mine, too, when it can be had.

[The paper comes to TIEFENBACH, who glances over it at the same time with GOETZ and KOLATTO. MARADAS in the meantime returns to OCTAVIO.]

All this takes place, the conversation with BUTLER proceeding uninterrupted.

OCTAVIO (introducing MADARAS to BUTLER.) Don Balthasar Maradas! likewise a man of our stamp, and long ago your admirer.

[BUTLER bows.]

OCTAVIO (continuing). You are a stranger here – 'twas but yesterday you arrived – you are ignorant of the ways and means here. 'Tis a wretched place. I know at your age one loves to be snug and quiet. What if you move your lodgings? Come, be my visitor. (BUTLER makes a low bow.) Nay, without compliment! For a friend like you I have still a corner remaining.

BUTLER (coldly). Your obliged humble servant, my lord lieutenant-general.

[The paper comes to BUTLER, who goes to the table to subscribe it.]

The front of the stage is vacant, so that both the

PICCOLOMINIS, each on the side where he had been from the commencement of the SCENE, remain alone.

OCTAVIO (after having some time watched his son in silence, advances somewhat nearer to him). You were long absent from us, friend!

MAX. I – urgent business detained me.

OCTAVIO. And, I observe, you are still absent!

MAX. You know this crowd and bustle always makes me silent.

OCTAVIO (advancing still nearer). May I be permitted to ask what the business was that detained you? Terzky knows it without asking.

MAX. What does Terzky know?

OCTAVIO. He was the only one who did not miss you.

ISOLANI (who has been attending to them for some distance steps up). Well done, father! Rout out his baggage! Beat up his quarters! there is something there that should not be.

TERZKY (with the paper). Is there none wanting? Have the whole subscribed?

OCTAVIO. All.

TERZKY (calling aloud). Ho! Who subscribes?

BUTLER (to TERZKY). Count the names. There ought to be just thirty.

TERZKY. Here is a cross.

TIEFENBACH. That's my mark!

ISOLANI. He cannot write; but his cross is a good cross, and

is honored by Jews as well as Christians.

OCTAVIO (presses on to MAX.). Come, general! let us go.
It is late.

TERZKY. One Piccolomini only has signed.

ISOLANI (pointing to MAX.). Look! that is your man, that statue there, who has had neither eye, ear, nor tongue for us the whole evening.

[MAX. receives the paper from TERZKY, which he looks upon vacantly.

SCENE VII

To these enter ILLO from the inner room. He has in his hand a golden service-cup, and is extremely distempered with drinking;

GOETZ and BUTLER follow him, endeavoring to keep him back.

ILLO. What do you want! Let me go.

GOETZ and BUTLER. Drink no more, Illo! For heaven's sake, drink no more.

ILLO (goes up to OCTAVIO, and shakes him cordially by the hand, and then drinks). Octavio! I bring this to you! Let all grudge be drowned in this friendly bowl! I know well enough you never loved me – devil take me! and I never loved you! I am always even with people in that way! Let what's past be past – that is, you understand – forgotten! I esteem you infinitely. (Embracing him repeatedly.) You have not a dearer friend on earth than I, but that you know. The fellow that cries rogue to you calls me villain, and I'll strangle him! my dear friend!

TERZKY (whispering to him). Art in thy senses? For heaven's sake, Illo, think where you are!

ILLO (aloud). What do you mean? There are none but friends here, are there? (Looks round the whole circle with a jolly and triumphant air.) Not a sneaker amongst us, thank heaven.

TERZKY (to BUTLER, eagerly). Take him off with you,

force him off, I entreat you, Butler!

BUTLER (to ILLO). Field-marshal! a word with you. (Leads to the side-board.)

ILLO (cordially). A thousand for one. Fill; fill it once more up to the brim. To this gallant man's health!

ISOLANI (to MAX., who all the while has been staring on the paper with fixed but vacant eyes). Slow and sure, my noble brother! Hast parsed it all yet? Some words yet to go through? Ha?

MAX. (waking as from a dream). What am I to do?

TERZKY, and at the same time ISOLANI. Sign your name. (OCTAVIO directs his eyes on him with intense anxiety).

MAX. (returns the paper). Let it stay till to-morrow. It is business; to-day I am not sufficiently collected. Send it to me to-morrow.

TERZKY. Nay, collect yourself a little.

ISOLANI. Awake man, awake! Come, thy signature, and have done with it! What! Thou art the youngest in the whole company, and would be wiser than all of us together! Look there! thy father has signed; we have all signed.

TERZKY (to OCTAVIO). Use your influence. Instruct him.

OCTAVIO. My son is at the age of discretion.

ILLO (leaves the service-cup on the sideboard). What's the dispute?

TERZKY. He declines subscribing the paper.

MAX. I say it may as well stay till to-morrow.

ILLO. It cannot stay. We have all subscribed to it – and so must you. You must subscribe.

MAX. Illo, good-night!

ILLO. No! you come not off so! The duke shall learn who are his friends. (All collect round ILLO and MAX.)

MAX. What my sentiments are towards the duke, the duke knows, every one knows – what need of this wild stuff?

ILLO. This is the thanks the duke gets for his partiality to Italians and foreigners. Us Bohemians he holds for little better than dullards – nothing pleases him but what's outlandish.

TERZKY (in extreme embarrassment, to the Commanders, who at ILLO's words give a sudden start as preparing to resent them). It is the wine that speaks, and not his reason. Attend not to him, I entreat you.

ISOLANI (with a bitter laugh). Wine invents nothing: it only tattles.

ILLO. He who is not with me is against me. Your tender consciences! Unless they can slip out by a back-door, by a puny proviso —

TERZKY (interrupting him). He is stark mad – don't listen to him!

ILLO (raising his voice to the highest pitch). Unless they can slip out by a proviso. What of the proviso? The devil take this proviso!

MAX. (has his attention roused, and looks again into the paper). What is there here then of such perilous import? You

make me curious – I must look closer at it.

TERZKY (in a low voice to ILLO). What are you doing, Illo? You are ruining us.

TIEFENBACH (to KOLATTO). Ay, ay! I observed, that before we sat down to supper, it was read differently.

GOETZ. Why, I seemed to think so too.

ISOLANI. What do I care for that? Where there stand other names mine can stand too.

TIEFENBACH. Before supper there was a certain proviso therein, or short clause, concerning our duties to the emperor.

BUTLER (to one of the Commanders). For shame, for shame! Bethink you. What is the main business here? The question now is, whether we shall keep our general, or let him retire. One must not take these things too nicely, and over-scrupulously.

ISOLANI (to one of the Generals). Did the duke make any of these provisos when he gave you your regiment?

TERZKY (to GOETZ). Or when he gave you the office of army-purveyancer, which brings you in yearly a thousand pistoles!

ILLO. He is a rascal who makes us out to be rogues. If there be any one that wants satisfaction, let him say so, – I am his man.

TIEFENBACH. Softly, softly? 'Twas but a word or two.

MAX. (having read the paper gives it back). Till to-morrow therefore!

ILLO (stammering with rage and fury, loses all command

over himself and presents the paper to MAX. With one hand, and his sword in the other). Subscribe – Judas!

ISOLANI. Out upon you, Illo!

OCTAVIO, TERZKY, BUTLER (all together). Down with the sword!

MAX. (rushes on him suddenly and disarms him, then to COUNT TERZKY). Take him off to bed!

[MAX leaves the stage. ILLO cursing and raving is held back by some of the officers, and amidst a universal confusion the curtain drops.

ACT V

SCENE I

A Chamber in PICCOLOMINI's Mansion. It is Night.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI. A VALET DE
CHAMBRE with Lights.

OCTAVIO

And when my son comes in, conduct him hither.
What is the hour?

VALET

'Tis on the point of morning.

OCTAVIO

Set down the light. We mean not to undress.
You may retire to sleep.

[Exit VALET. OCTAVIO paces, musing, across the chamber;
MAX.

PICCOLOMINI enters unobserved, and looks at his father for
some moments in silence.

MAX

Art thou offended with me? Heaven knows
That odious business was no fault of mine.
'Tis true, indeed, I saw thy signature,
What thou hast sanctioned, should not, it might seem,
Have come amiss to me. But – 'tis my nature —
Thou know'st that in such matters I must follow
My own light, not another's.

OCTAVIO (goes up to him and embraces him)

Follow it,
Oh, follow it still further, my best son!
To-night, dear boy! it hath more faithfully
Guided thee than the example of thy father.

MAX

Declare thyself less darkly.

OCTAVIO

I will do so;
For after what has taken place this night,
There must remain no secrets 'twixt us two.

[Both seat themselves.

Max. Piccolomini! what thinkest thou of
The oath that was sent round for signatures?

MAX

I hold it for a thing of harmless import,
Although I love not these set declarations.

OCTAVIO

And on no other ground hast thou refused
The signature they fain had wrested from thee?

MAX

It was a serious business. I was absent —
The affair itself seemed not so urgent to me.

OCTAVIO

Be open, Max. Thou hadst then no suspicion?

MAX

Suspicion! what suspicion? Not the least.

OCTAVIO

Thank thy good angel, Piccolomini;
He drew thee back unconscious from the abyss.

MAX

I know not what thou meanest.

OCTAVIO

I will tell thee.
Fain would they have extorted from thee, son,

The sanction of thy name to villany;
Yes, with a single flourish of thy pen,
Made thee renounce thy duty and thy honor!

MAX. (rises)

Octavio!

OCTAVIO

Patience! Seat Yourself. Much yet
Hast thou to hear from me, friend! Hast for years
Lived in incomprehensible illusion.
Before thine eyes is treason drawing out
As black a web as e'er was spun for venom:
A power of hell o'erclouds thy understanding.
I dare no longer stand in silence – dare
No longer see thee wandering on in darkness,
Nor pluck the bandage from thine eyes.

MAX

My father!

Yet, ere thou speakest, a moment's pause of thought!
If your disclosures should appear to be
Conjectures only – and almost I fear
They will be nothing further – spare them! I
Am not in that collected mood at present,
That I could listen to them quietly.

OCTAVIO

The deeper cause thou hast to hate this light,
The more impatient cause have I, my son,
To force it on thee. To the innocence
And wisdom of thy heart I could have trusted thee
With calm assurance – but I see the net
Preparing – and it is thy heart itself
Alarms me, for thine innocence – that secret,

[Fixing his eyes steadfastly on his son's face.

Which thou concealest, forces mine from me.

[MAX. attempts to answer, but hesitates, and casts his eyes to the ground embarrassed.

OCTAVIO (after a pause)

Know, then, they are duping thee! – a most foul game
With thee and with us all – nay, hear me calmly —
The duke even now is playing. He assumes
The mask, as if he would forsake the army;
And in this moment makes he preparations
That army from the emperor to steal,
And carry it over to the enemy!

MAX

That low priest's legend I know well, but did not
Expect to hear it from thy mouth.

OCTAVIO

That mouth,
From which thou hearest it at this present moment,

Doth warrant thee that it is no priest's legend.

MAX

How mere a maniac they supposed the duke;
What, he can meditate? – the duke? – can dream
That he can lure away full thirty thousand
Tried troops and true, all honorable soldiers,
More than a thousand noblemen among them,
From oaths, from duty, from their honor lure them,
And make them all unanimous to do
A deed that brands them scoundrels?

OCTAVIO

Such a deed,
With such a front of infamy, the duke
No way desires – what he requires of us
Bears a far gentler appellation. Nothing
He wishes but to give the empire peace.
And so, because the emperor hates this peace,
Therefore the duke – the duke will force him to it.
All parts of the empire will he pacify,
And for his trouble will retain in payment

(What he has already in his gripe) – Bohemia!

MAX

Has he, Octavio, merited of us,
That we – that we should think so vilely of him?

OCTAVIO

What we would think is not the question here,
The affair speaks for itself – and clearest proofs!
Hear me, my son – 'tis not unknown to thee,
In what ill credit with the court we stand.
But little dost thou know, or guess what tricks,
What base intrigues, what lying artifices,
Have been employed – for this sole end – to sow
Mutiny in the camp! All bands are loosed —
Loosed all the bands that link the officer
To his liege emperor, all that bind the soldier
Affectionately to the citizen.
Lawless he stands, and threateningly beleaguers
The state he's bound to guard. To such a height
'Tis swollen, that at this hour the emperor
Before his armies – his own armies – trembles;

Yea, in his capital, his palace, fears
The traitor's poniard, and is meditating
To hurry off and hide his tender offspring —
Not from the Swedes, not from the Lutherans – no,
From his own troops to hide and hurry them!

MAX

Cease, cease! thou torturest, shatterest me. I know
That oft we tremble at an empty terror;
But the false phantasm brings a real misery.

OCTAVIO

It is no phantasm. An intestine war,
Of all the most unnatural and cruel,
Will burst out into flames, if instantly
We do not fly and stifle it. The generals
Are many of them long ago won over;
The subalterns are vacillating; whole
Regiments and garrisons are vacillating.
To foreigners our strongholds are intrusted;
To that suspected Schafgotch is the whole
Force of Silesia given up: to Terzky

Five regiments, foot and horse; to Isolani,
To Illo, Kinsky, Butler, the best troops.

MAX

Likewise to both of us.

OCTAVIO

Because the duke
Believes he has secured us, means to lure us
Still further on by splendid promises.
To me he portions forth the principedoms, Glatz
And Sagan; and too plain I see the bait
With which he doubts not but to catch thee.

MAX

No! no!
I tell thee, no!

OCTAVIO

Oh, open yet thine eyes!
And to what purpose think'st thou he has called
Hither to Pilsen? to avail himself
Of our advice? Oh, when did Friedland ever
Need our advice? Be calm, and listen to me.
To sell ourselves are we called hither, and
Decline we that, to be his hostages.
Therefore doth noble Gallas stand aloof;
Thy father, too, thou wouldst not have seen here,
If higher duties had not held him fettered.

MAX

He makes no secret of it – needs make none —
That we're called hither for his sake – he owns it.
He needs our aidance to maintain himself —
He did so much for us; and 'tis but fair
That we, too, should do somewhat now for him.

OCTAVIO

And know'st thou what it is which we must do?
That Illo's drunken mood betrayed it to thee.
Bethink thyself, what hast thou heard, what seen?
The counterfeited paper, the omission
Of that particular clause, so full of meaning,
Does it not prove that they would bind us down
To nothing good?

MAX

That counterfeited paper
Appears to me no other than a trick
Of Illo's own device. These underhand
Traders in great men's interests ever use
To urge and hurry all things to the extreme.
They see the duke at variance with the court,
And fondly think to serve him, when they widen
The breach irreparably. Trust me, father,
The duke knows nothing of all this.

OCTAVIO

It grieves me
That I must dash to earth, that I must shatter
A faith so specious; but I may not spare thee!
For this is not a time for tenderness.
Thou must take measured, speedy ones, must act.
I therefore will confess to thee that all
Which I've intrusted to thee now, that all
Which seems to thee so unbelievable,
That – yes, I will tell thee, (a pause) Max.! I had it all
From his own mouth, from the duke's mouth I had it.

MAX (in excessive agitation)

No! no! never!

OCTAVIO

Himself confided to me
What I, 'tis true, had long before discovered

By other means; himself confided to me,
That 'twas his settled plan to join the Swedes;
And, at the head of the united armies,
Compel the emperor —

MAX

He is passionate,
The court has stung him; he is sore all over
With injuries and affronts; and in a moment
Of irritation, what if he, for once,
Forgot himself? He's an impetuous man.

OCTAVIO

Nay, in cold blood he did confess this to me
And having construed my astonishment
Into a scruple of his power, he showed me
His written evidences – showed me letters,
Both from the Saxon and the Swede, that gave
Promise of aidance, and defined the amount.

MAX

It cannot be! – cannot be! cannot be!
Dost thou not see, it cannot!
Thou wouldst of necessity have shown him
Such horror, such deep loathing – that or he
Had taken thee for his better genius, or
Thou stood'st not now a living man before me.

OCTAVIO

I have laid open my objections to him,
Dissuaded him with pressing earnestness;
But my abhorrence, the full sentiment
Of my whole heart – that I have still kept safe
To my own consciousness.

MAX

And thou hast been
So treacherous? That looks not like my father!

I trusted not thy words, when thou didst tell me
Evil of him; much less can I now do it,
That thou calumniatest thy own self.

OCTAVIO

I did not thrust myself into his secrecy.

MAX

Uprightness merited his confidence.

OCTAVIO

He was no longer worthy of sincerity.

MAX

Dissimulation, sure, was still less worthy
Of thee, Octavio!

OCTAVIO

Gave I him a cause
To entertain a scruple of my honor?

MAX

That he did not evince his confidence.

OCTAVIO

Dear son, it is not always possible
Still to preserve that infant purity
Which the voice teaches in our inmost heart,
Still in alarm, forever on the watch
Against the wiles of wicked men: e'en virtue
Will sometimes bear away her outward robes
Soiled in the wrestle with iniquity.

This is the curse of every evil deed
That, propagating still, it brings forth evil.
I do not cheat my better soul with sophisms;
I but perform my orders; the emperor
Prescribes my conduct to me. Dearest boy,
Far better were it, doubtless, if we all
Obedyed the heart at all times; but so doing,
In this our present sojourn with bad men,
We must abandon many an honest object.
'Tis now our call to serve the emperor;
By what means he can best be served – the heart
May whisper what it will – this is our call!

MAX

It seems a thing appointed, that to-day
I should not comprehend, not understand thee.
The duke, thou sayest, did honestly pour out
His heart to thee, but for an evil purpose:
And thou dishonestly hast cheated him
For a good purpose! Silence, I entreat thee —
My friend, thou stealest not from me —
Let me not lose my father!

OCTAVIO (suppressing resentment)

As yet thou knowest not all, my son. I have
Yet somewhat to disclose to thee.

[After a pause.

Duke Friedland

Hath made his preparations. He relies
Upon the stars. He deems us unprovided,
And thinks to fall upon us by surprise.
Yea, in his dream of hope, he grasps already
The golden circle in his hand. He errs,
We, too, have been in action – he but grasps
His evil fate, most evil, most mysterious!

MAX

Oh, nothing rash, my sire! By all that's good,
Let me invoke thee – no precipitation!

OCTAVIO

With light tread stole he on his evil way,
And light of tread hath vengeance stole on after him.
Unseen she stands already, dark behind him
But one step more – he shudders in her grasp!
Thou hast seen Questenberg with me. As yet
Thou knowest but his ostensible commission:
He brought with him a private one, my son!
And that was for me only.

MAX

May I know it?

OCTAVIO (seizes the patent)

Max!

In this disclosure place I in thy hands

[A pause.]

The empire's welfare and thy father's life.
Dear to thy inmost heart is Wallenstein
A powerful tie of love, of veneration,
Hath knit thee to him from thy earliest youth.
Thou nourishest the wish, – O let me still
Anticipate thy loitering confidence!
The hope thou nourishest to knit thyself
Yet closer to him —

MAX

Father —

OCTAVIO

Oh, my son!
I trust thy heart undoubtingly. But am I
Equally sure of thy collectedness?
Wilt thou be able, with calm countenance,
To enter this man's presence, when that I
Have trusted to thee his whole fate?

MAX

According
As thou dost trust me, father, with his crime.

[OCTAVIO takes a paper out of his escritoire and gives it to him.]

MAX

What! how! a full imperial patent!

OCTAVIO

Read it.

MAX. (just glances on it)

Duke Friedland sentenced and condemned!

OCTAVIO

Even so.

MAX. (throws down the paper)

Oh, this is too much! O unhappy error!

OCTAVIO

Read on. Collect thyself.

**MAX. (after he has read further, with a look
of affright and astonishment on his father)**

How! what! Thou! thou!

OCTAVIO

But for the present moment, till the King
Of Hungary may safely join the army,
Is the command assigned to me.

MAX

And think'st thou,
Dost thou believe, that thou wilt tear it from him?
Oh, never hope it! Father! father! father!
An inauspicious office is enjoined thee.
This paper here! – this! and wilt thou enforce it?
The mighty in the middle of his host,
Surrounded by his thousands, him wouldst thou
Disarm – degrade! Thou art lost, both thou and all of us.

OCTAVIO

What hazard I incur thereby, I know.
In the great hand of God I stand. The Almighty

Will cover with his shield the imperial house,
And shatter, in his wrath, the work of darkness.
The emperor hath true servants still; and even
Here in the camp, there are enough brave men
Who for the good cause will fight gallantly.
The faithful have been warned – the dangerous
Are closely watched. I wait but the first step,
And then immediately —

Max

What? On suspicion?
Immediately?

OCTAVIO

The emperor is no tyrant.
The deed alone he'll punish, not the wish.
The duke hath yet his destiny in his power.
Let him but leave the treason uncompleted,
He will be silently displaced from office,
And make way to his emperor's royal son.
An honorable exile to his castles
Will be a benefaction to him rather

Than punishment. But the first open step —

MAX

What callest thou such a step? A wicked step
Ne'er will he take; but thou mightest easily,
Yea, thou hast done it, misinterpret him.

OCTAVIO

Nay, howsoever punishable were
Duke Friedland's purposes, yet still the steps
Which he hath taken openly permit
A mild construction. It is my intention
To leave this paper wholly unenforced
Till some act is committed which convicts him
Of high treason, without doubt or plea,
And that shall sentence him.

MAX

But who the judge

OCTAVIO

Thyself.

MAX

Forever, then, this paper will lie idle.

OCTAVIO

Too soon, I fear, its powers must all be proved.
After the counter-promise of this evening,
It cannot be but he must deem himself
Secure of the majority with us;
And of the army's general sentiment
He hath a pleasing proof in that petition,
Which thou delivered'st to him from the regiments.
Add this too – I have letters that the Rhinegrave
Hath changed his route, and travels by forced marches

To the Bohemian forests. What this purports
Remains unknown; and, to confirm suspicion,
This night a Swedish nobleman arrived here.

MAX

I have thy word. Thou'lt not proceed to action
Before thou hast convinced me – me myself.

OCTAVIO

Is it possible? Still, after all thou know'st,
Canst thou believe still in his innocence?

MAX. (with enthusiasm)

Thy judgment may mistake; my heart cannot.
[Moderates his voice and manner.
These reasons might expound thy spirit or mine;
But they expound not Friedland – I have faith:
For as he knits his fortunes to the stars,

Even so doth he resemble them in secret,
Wonderful, still inexplicable courses!
Trust me, they do him wrong. All will be solved.
These smokes at once will kindle into flame —
The edges of this black and stormy cloud
Will brighten suddenly, and we shall view
The unapproachable glide out in splendor.

OCTAVIO

I will await it.

SCENE II

OCTAVIO and MAX. as before. To then the VALET OF THE CHAMBER.

OCTAVIO

How now, then?

VALET

A despatch is at the door.

OCTAVIO

So early? From whom comes he then? Who is it?

VALET

That he refused to tell me.

OCTAVIO

Lead him in:
And, hark you – let it not transpire.

[Exit VALET: the CORNET steps in.]

OCTAVIO

Ha! cornet – is it you; and from Count Gallas?
Give me your letters.

CORNET

The lieutenant-general

Trusted it not to letters.

OCTAVIO

And what is it?

CORNET

He bade me tell you – Dare I speak openly here?

OCTAVIO

My son knows all.

CORNET

We have him.

OCTAVIO

Whom?

CORNET

Sesina,
The old negotiator.

OCTAVIO (eagerly)

And you have him?

CORNET

In the Bohemian Forest Captain Mohrbrand
Found and secured him yester-morning early.
He was proceeding then to Regensburg,

And on him were despatches for the Swede.

OCTAVIO

And the despatches —

CORNET

The lieutenant-general
Sent them that instant to Vienna, and
The prisoner with them.

OCTAVIO

This is, indeed, a tidings!
That fellow is a precious casket to us,
Enclosing weighty things. Was much found on him?

CORNET

I think, six packets, with Count Terzky's arms.

OCTAVIO

None in the duke's own hand?

CORNET

Not that I know.

OCTAVIO

And old Sesina.

CORNET

He was sorely frightened.
When it was told him he must to Vienna;
But the Count Altringer bade him take heart,
Would he but make a full and free confession.

OCTAVIO

Is Altringer then with your lord? I heard
That he lay sick at Linz.

CORNET

These three days past
He's with my master, the lieutenant-general,
At Frauenburg. Already have they sixty
Small companies together, chosen men;
Respectfully they greet you with assurances,
That they are only waiting your commands.

OCTAVIO

In a few days may great events take place.
And when must you return?

CORNET

I wait your orders.

OCTAVIO

Remain till evening.

[CORNET signifies his assent and obeisance, and is going.

No one saw you – ha?

CORNET

No living creature. Through the cloister wicket
The capuchins, as usual, let me in.

OCTAVIO

Go, rest your limbs, and keep yourself concealed.
I hold it probable that yet ere evening
I shall despatch you. The development
Of this affair approaches: ere the day,
That even now is dawning in the heaven,
Ere this eventful day hath set, the lot
That must decide our fortunes will be drawn.

[Exit CORNET.]

SCENE III

OCTAVIO and MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

OCTAVIO

Well – and what now, son? All will soon be clear;
For all, I'm certain, went through that Sesina.

MAX. (who through the whole of the foregoing scene has
been in

a violent and visible struggle of feelings, at length starts
as one resolved).

I will procure me light a shorter way.
Farewell.

OCTAVIO

Where now? Remain here.

MAX

To the Duke.

OCTAVIO (alarmed)

What —

MAX. (returning)

If thou hast believed that I shall act
A part in this thy play, thou hast
Miscalculated on me grievously.
My way must be straight on. True with the tongue,
False with the heart – I may not, cannot be
Nor can I suffer that a man should trust me —
As his friend trust me – and then lull my conscience
With such low pleas as these: "I ask him not —
He did it all at his own hazard – and
My mouth has never lied to him." No, no!
What a friend takes me for, that I must be.

I'll to the duke; ere yet this day is ended
Will I demand of him that he do save
His good name from the world, and with one stride
Break through and rend this fine-spun web of yours.
He can, he will! I still am his believer,
Yet I'll not pledge myself, but that those letters
May furnish you, perchance, with proofs against him.
How far may not this Terzky have proceeded —
What may not he himself too have permitted
Himself to do, to snare the enemy,
The laws of war excusing? Nothing, save
His own mouth shall convict him – nothing less!
And face to face will I go question him.

OCTAVIO

Thou wilt.

MAX

I will, as sure as this heart beats.

OCTAVIO

I have, indeed, miscalculated on thee.
I calculated on a prudent son,
Who would have blessed the hand beneficent
That plucked him back from the abyss – and lo!
A fascinated being I discover,
Whom his two eyes befool, whom passion wilders,
Whom not the broadest light of noon can heal.
Go, question him! Be mad enough, I pray thee.
The purpose of thy father, of thy emperor,
Go, give it up free booty! Force me, drive me
To an open breach before the time. And now,
Now that a miracle of heaven had guarded
My secret purpose even to this hour,
And laid to sleep suspicion's piercing eyes,
Let me have lived to see that mine own son,
With frantic enterprise, annihilates
My toilsome labors and state policy.

MAX

Ay – this state policy! Oh, how I curse it!
You will some time, with your state policy,

Compel him to the measure: it may happen,
Because ye are determined that he is guilty,
Guilty ye'll make him. All retreat cut off,
You close up every outlet, hem him in
Narrower and narrower, till at length ye force him —
Yes, ye, ye force him, in his desperation,
To set fire to his prison. Father! father!
That never can end well – it cannot – will not!
And let it be decided as it may,
I see with boding heart the near approach
Of an ill-starred, unblest catastrophe.
For this great monarch-spirit, if he fall,
Will drag a world into the ruin with him.
And as a ship that midway on the ocean
Takes fire, at once, and with a thunder-burst
Explodes, and with itself shoots out its crew
In smoke and ruin betwixt sea and heaven!
So will he, falling, draw down in his fall
All us, who're fixed and mortised to his fortune,
Deem of it what thou wilt; but pardon me,
That I must bear me on in my own way.
All must remain pure betwixt him and me;
And, ere the daylight dawns, it must be known
Which I must lose – my father or my friend.

[During his exit the curtain drops.]