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THE DREAM:

A TRAGEDY, IN PROSE,

IN THREE ACTS.

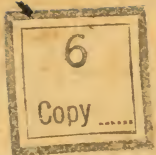
BY JOANNA BAILLIE.

[*from the first London edition, of 1812.*]

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Osterloo, *an imperial general,*
Prior of the monastery, .
Benedict, }
Jerome, } *monks.*
Paul, }
Morand, } *officers in the service*
Wovelreid, } *of the prior,*
The Imperial Ambassador,

Leonora, - - -
Agnes, - - -

Officers serving under Osterloo.

Sexton, monks, soldiers, peasants, &c.

SCENE—the monastery of st. Maurice, in Switzerland—a castle near it.

TIME—the middle of the 14th century.

THE DREAM.

ACT I.

SCENE 1—*a court within a monastery, with a grated iron gate opening into an outer court, through which are seen several peasants waiting.*

JEROME *walking backwards and forwards in a disturbed manner, then stopping and speaking to himself.*

Jer. Twice in one night the same awful vision repeated! and Paul also terrified with a similar visitation! this is no common accidental mimicry of sleep: the shreds and remnants of our day-thoughts, put together at night in some fantastic incongruous form, as the drifting clouds of a broken-up storm piece themselves again into uncertain shapes of rocks and animals. No, no! there must be some great and momentous meaning in this.

enter BENEDICT behind him.

Ben. Some great and momentous meaning in this! what art thou musing upon?

Jer. Be satisfied! be satisfied! it is not always fitting that the mind should lay open the things it is busy withal, though an articulate sound may sometimes escape it to set curiosity on the rack. Where is brother Paul? is he still at his devotions?

Ben. I believe so. But look where the poor peasants are waiting without: it is the hour when they expect our benefactions. Go, and speak to them: thou hast always been their favorite confessor, and they want consolation. (*beckoning the peasants, who thereupon advance through the gate, while Jerome stretches out his hand to prevent them*)

Jer. Stop there! come not within the gates! I charge you advance no farther. (*to Benedict angrily*) There is death and contagion in every one of them, and yet thou would'st admit them so near us. Dost thou indeed expect a miracle to be wrought in our behalf? are we not flesh and blood? and does not the grave yawn for us as well as other men? (*to the peasants, still more vehemently*) turn, I charge you, and retire without the gate.

1st Peas. Oh! be not so stern with us, good father! there are ten new corpses in the village since yesterday, and scarcely ten men left in it with strength enough to bury them. The best half of the village are now under ground, who, but three weeks gone by, were all alive and well. O do not chide us away!

2d Peas. God knows if any of us shall ever enter these gates again; and it revives us to come once a day to receive your blessings, good fathers.

Jer. Well, and you shall have our blessing, my children; but come not so near us; we are mortal men like yourselves, and there is contagion about you.

1st Peas. Ah! no, no! saint Maurice will take care of his own; there is no fear of you, fathers.

Jer. I hope he will; but it is presumptuous to tempt danger. Retire, I beseech you, and you shall have relief given to you without the gates. If you have any love for us, retire. (*the peasants retire*).

Ben. Well, I feel a strong faith within me, that our saint, or some other good spirit, will take care of us. How is it that thou art so alarmed and so vehement with those good people? it is not thy usual temper.

Jer. Be satisfied, I pray thee: I cannot tell thee now. Leave me to myself a little while—Would to god brother Paul were come to me! ha! here he is.

enter PAUL.

(*Jerome, after waiting impatiently till Benedict retires, advances to him eagerly*) Was it to a spot near the black monument in the stranger's burying vault, that it pointed?

Paul. Yes, to the very spot described by thee yesterday morning, when thou first told'st me thy dream: and, indeed, every circumstance of my last night's vision strongly resembled thine; or rather, I should say, was the same. The fixed frown of it's ghastly face—

Jer. Ay, and the majestic motion of its limbs. Did it not wear a mantle over its right shoulder, as if for concealment rather than grace?

Paul. I know not; I did not mark that: but it strode before me as distinctly as ever mortal man did before my waking sight; and yet as no mortal man ever did before the waking sight.

Jer. But it appeared to thee only once.

Paul. Only once; for I waked under such a deep horror, that I durst not go to sleep again.

Jer. When it first appeared to me, as I told thee, the night before last, the form, though distinctly, was but faintly imaged forth; and methought it rose more powerfully to my imagination as I told it to thee, than in the dream itself. But last night, when it returned, it was far more vivid than before. I waked indeed, as thou did'st, impressed with a deep horror, yet irresistible sleep seized upon me again; and, o, how it appeared to me the third time, like a palpable, horrid reality! (*after a pause*) what is to be done?

Paul. What can be done? we can stop no division of the imperial army till one shall really march by this pass.

Jer. And this is not likely; for I received a letter from a friend two days ago by an express messenger, who says, he had delayed sending it, hoping to have it conveyed to me by one of count Osterloo's soldiers; who, with his division, should have marched through our pass, but was now, he believed, to conduct them by a different route.

Paul. What noise and commotion is that near the gate? (*calling to those without*) ho, there! what is the matter?

1st Peas. (without) Nothing, father; but we hear a trumpet at a distance, and they say, there is an army marching amongst the mountains.

Jer. By all our holy saints if it be so—are ye sure it is trumpets you hear?

1st Peas. (*without*) As sure as we ever heard any sound, and here is a lad too, who saw from the top-most crag, with his own eyes, their banners waving at a distance.

Jer. What think'st thou of it?

Paul. We must go to the prior, and reveal the whole to him directly. Our own lives and those of the whole brotherhood depend upon it; there can be no hesitation now.

Jer. Come then; lose no time. We have a solemn duty imposed upon us. [exunt

SCENE II—*an open space by the gate of the monastery, with a view of the building on one side, while rocks and mountains, wildly grand, appear in every other direction, and a narrow pass through the mountains opening at a distance—several peasants, both men and women, are discovered, waiting as if to see some sight—a trumpet and warlike music heard.*

enter PEASANTS.

1st Peas. Hear how it echoes amongst the rocks: it is your true warlike sound, that makes a man's heart stir within him, and his feet beat the ground to its measure.

2d Peas. Ah! what have our hearts to do with it now, miserable as we are!

1st Peas. What have we to do with it! speak for thyself. Were I to be laid in the grave this very night, it would rouse me to hear those sounds which remind me of the battle of Laupen.

2d Peas. Well; look not so proudly at me: though I have not yet fought for my country, I am of a good stock nevertheless: my father lost his life at Morgarten. (*calling up to Morand, who now appears sliding down the sides of the rocks*) Are they near us, lieutenant?

Mor. They'll be here in a trice. I know their ensigns already : they are those brave fellows under the command of count Osterloo, who did such good service to the emperor in his last battle.

Woman Ay ; they be goodly men no doubt, and bravely accoutred I warrant ye.

Old Woman. Ay, there be many a brave man amongst them, I trow, returning to his mother again. My Hubert never returned.

2d Peas. (to *Morand*) Count Osterloo ! who is he !

Mor. Did'st thou never hear of him ? he has been in as many battles as thou hast been in harvest fields.

2d Peas. And won them too ?

Mor. Nay, some of them he has won, and some he has lost ; but whether his own side were fighting or flying, he always kept his ground, or retreated like a man. The enemy never saw his back.

1st Peas. True, lieutenant ; I once knew an old soldier of Osterloo's who boasted much of his general : for his men are proud of him, and would go through flood and flame for his sake.

Mor. Yes, he is affable and indulgent to them, although passionate and unreasonable when provoked ; and has been known to punish even his greatest favorites severely for a slight offence. I remember well, the officer I first served under, being a man of this kidney, and——

1st Peas. Hist, hist ! the gates are thrown open, and yonder come the monks in procession with the prior at their head.

enter PRIOR and MONKS from the monastery, and range themselves on one side.

Prior. Retire, my children, and dont come so near us. Dont stand near the soldiers as they pass neither, but go to your houses.

1st Woman. O bless st. Maurice and your holy reverence ! we see nothing now but coffins and burials, and hear nothing but the ticking of the death-watch, and the tolling of bells : do let us stand here and look

at the brave sight. Lord knows if any of us may be above ground to see such another, a'n it were to pass this way but a week hence.

Prior. Be it so then, daughter, but keep at a distance on the rocks, where you may see every thing without communicating infection. (*the peasants retire climbing amongst the rocks*)

enter by the narrow pass SOLDIERS marching to martial music, with OFFICERS and OSTERLOO.

Prior. Soldiers and officers, and the noble chief commanding this band! in the name of our patron, st. Maurice, once like yourselves a valiant soldier upon earth, now a holy, powerful saint in heaven, I conjure you to halt.

1st Off. Say you so, reverend prior, to men pressing forward as we do, to shelter our head for the night, and that cold wintry sun going down so fast upon us?

1st Sold. By my faith! if we pass the night here amongst the mountains, it will take something besides prayers and benedictions to keep us alive.

2d. Sold. Spend the night here amongst chamois and eagles! some miracle no doubt will be wrought for our accommodation.

1st Off. Murmur not, my friends: here comes your general, who is always careful of you.

Ost. What is the matter?

Prior. You are the commander in chief?

Ost. Yes, reverend father: and, with all respect and deference, let me say, the night advances fast upon us, Martigny is still at a good distance, and we must not be detained. With many thanks, then, for your intended civilities, we beg your prayers, holy prior, with those of your pious monks, and crave leave to pass on our way.

Prior. If there be any piety in brave men, I conjure you in the name of st. Maurice to halt! the lives of our whole community depend upon it: men, who for your lives have offered to heaven many prayers.

Ost. How may this be, my lord? who will attack

your sacred walls, that you should want any defence?

Prior. We want not, general, the service of your arms: my own troops, with the brave captain who commands them, are sufficient to defend us from mortal foes.

Soldiers. Must we fight with devils then?

Ost. Be quiet, my good comrades. Well, my lord, proceed.

Prior. A fatal pestilence rages in this neighborhood; and by command of a vision, which has appeared three times to the senior of our order, and also to another of our brotherhood, threatening in case of disobedience, that the whole community shall fall victims to the dreadful disease, we are compelled to conjure you to halt.

Ost. And for what purpose?

Prior. That we may choose by lot from the first division of the imperial army which marches through this pass, so did the vision precisely direct us, a man, who shall spend one night within the walls of our monastery; there to undergo certain penances for the expiation of long concealed guilt.

Ost. This is very strange. By lot did you say? it will be tedious. There are a hundred of my men who will volunteer the service. What say ye, soldiers?

1st Sold. Willingly, general, if you desire it. Yet I marvel what greater virtue there can be in beleaguering the war-worn hide of a poor soldier, than the fat sides of a well-fed monk.

Ost. Wilt thou do it then?

1st Sold. Ay; and more than that, willingly, for my general. It is not the first time a cat-o'-nine-tails has been across my back for other men's misdeeds. Promise me a good flask of brandy when I'm done with it, and I warrant ye I'll never winch. As to the saying of paternosters, if there be any thing of that kind tacked to it, I let you to wit my dexterity is but small.

Ost. Then be it as thou wilt, my good friend; yet

I had as lief my own skin should smart for it as thine, thou art such a valiant fellow.

Prior. No, noble general, this must not be; we must have our man chosen by lot. The lives of the whole community depending upon it; we must strictly obey the vision.

Ost. It will detain us long.

Prior. Nay, my lord; the lots are already prepared. In the first place, six men only shall draw; four representing the soldiers, and two the officers. If the soldiers are taken, they shall draw by companies, and the company that is taken shall draw individually; but if the lot falls to the officers, each of them shall draw for himself.

Ost. Let it be so; you have arranged it well. Produce the lots. (*the prior giving the sign, a monk advances, bearing a stand, on which are placed three vases, and sets it near the front*)

Prior. Now, brave soldiers, let four from your body advance. (*Osterloo points to four men, who advance from the ranks*)

Ost. And two from the officers, my lord?

Prior. Even so, noble count. (*Osterloo then points to two officers, who, with the four soldiers, draw lots from the smallest vase directed by the prior*)

1st Sold. This is strange mummery i' faith! but it would have been no joke, I suppose, to have offended st. Maurice.

Prior. Soldiers, ye are free; it is your officers who are taken.

1st Sold. Ha! the vision is dainty it seems; it is not vulgar blood like ours, that will serve to stain the ends of his holy lash. (*a monk having removed two of the vases, the prior beckons the officers to draw from the remaining one*)

Prior. Stand not on order; let him who is nearest put in his hand first.

1st Sold. (*aside to the others as the officers are drawing*) Now by these arms! I would give a month's pay that the lot should fall on our prim, pompous

lieutenant. It would be well worth the money to look in at one of their narrow windows, and see his dignified back-bone winching under the hands of a good brawny friar.

Ost. (*aside, unrolling his lot*) Mighty heaven! is fate or chance in this?

1st Off. (*aside to Osterloo*) Have you got it, general? change it for mine, if you have.

Ost. No no, my noble Albert; let us be honest; but thanks to thy generous friendship!

Prior. Now show the lots. (*all the officers show their lots, excepting Osterloo, who continues gloomy and thoughtful*) Has no one drawn the sable scroll of election? (*to Osterloo*) you are silent, my lord; of what color is your lot?

Ost. (*holding out his scroll*) Black as midnight,—(*soldiers quit their ranks and crowd round Osterloo, tumultuously*)

1st Sold. Has it fallen upon our general! tis a damned lot—an unfair lot.

2d Sold. We will not leave him behind us, though a hundred st. Maurices commanded it.

3d Sold. Get within your walls again, ye cunning friars.

1st Sold. A'n we should lie i' the open air all night, we will not leave brave Osterloo behind us.

Prior. Count, you seem gloomy and irresolute: have the goodness to silence these clamors. I am in truth as sorry as any of your soldiers can be, that the lot has fallen upon you.

1st Off. (*aside to Osterloo*) Nay, my noble friend, let me fulfil this penance in your stead. It is not now a time for scruples: the soldiers will be mutinous.

Ost. Mutinous! soldiers, return to your ranks.—(*looking at them sternly as they seem unwillingly to obey*) Will you brave me so far that I must repeat my command? (*they retire*) I thank thee, dear Albert. Thou shalt do something in my stead; but it shall not be the service thou thinkest of. Reverend father, I am indeed somewhat struck at being marked out by

fate from so many men ; but, as to how I shall act thereupon, no wise irresolute. Continue your march. The brave Albert shall conduct you to Martigny ; and there you will remain under his command, till I join you again.

1st Sold. God preserve you then, my noble general ! and if you do not join us again by to-morrow evening, safe and sound, we will not leave one stone of that building standing on another.

Many soldiers at once. So swear we all ! so swear, &c.

Ost. Go to, foolish fellows ! were you to leave me in a den of lions, you could not be more apprehensive. Will watching all night by some holy shrine, or walking bare-foot through their midnight aisies, be such a hardship to one, who has passed so many nights with you all on the cold field of battle ? continue your march without delay ; else these good fathers will count you no better than a band of new raised city troops, with some jolly tankard-chief for your leader. A good march to you, my friends, with kind hostesses and warm fire-sides where you are going.

1st Sold. Ah ! what good will our fire sides do us, when we think how our general is lodged ?

Ost. Farewell ! march on as quickly as you may : you shall all drink my health to-morrow evening in a good hogshead of rhenish.

1st Sold. God grant we may ! look to it, reverend prior : if our general be not with us by to-morrow's sunset, st. Maurice will neither have monastery nor monks on this mountain.

Ost. No more ! (*embracing first officer, and shaking hands with others*) farewell ! farewell ! (*the soldiers, after giving him a loud cheer, march off with their officers to martial music*)

[*exeunt Osterloo, prior, and monks into the monastery while the peasants disappear amongst the rocks* (*manent Morand and Agnes, who has for some time appeared, looking over a crag*)

Agn. Morand, Morand !

Mor. Ha! art thou there? I might have guessed indeed, that so brave a sight would not escape thee. What made thee perch thyself like an eagle upon such a crag as that?

Agn. Chide not, good Morand, but help me down, lest I pay a dearer price for my sight than thou, with all thy grumbling, would'st wish. (*he helps her down*)

Mor. And now thou art going no doubt to tell the lady Leonora, what a band of gallant fellows thou hast seen.

Agn. Assuredly, if I can find in my heart to speak of any but their noble leader. What is his name? what meaning had all that drawing of lots in it? what will the monks do with him? walk with me a little way towards the castle, brave Morand, and tell me what thou knowest.

Mor. I should walk to the castle and miles beyond it too, ere I could answer so many questions, and I have duty in the monastery, besides.

Agn. Come with me a little way, at least.

Mor. Ah, witch! thou knowest too well that I must always do what thou bidest me. [exunt]

SCENE III—*the refectory of the monastery, with a small table, on which are placed refreshments, discovered in one corner.*

enter OSTERLOO, PRIOR, BENEDICT, JEROME, and PAUL, &c.

Prior. Noble Osterloo, let me welcome you here, as one appointed by heaven to purchase our deliverance from this dreadful malady; and I hope the price to be paid for it will not be a heavy one. Yet ere we proceed further in this matter, be entreated, I pray, to take some refreshment after your long march.

Ost. I thank you, my lord; this is a gentle beginning to my penance: I will, then, by your leave. (*sitting*) I have fasted long, and am indeed somewhat exhausted. (*eats*) Ah! my poor soldiers! you must still

endure two hours' weary march, before you find such indulgence. Your wine is good, reverend father.

Prior. I am glad you find it so ; it is old.

Ost. And your viands are good too ; and your bread is delicious. (*drinks another cup*) I shall have vigor now for any thing.—Pray tell me something more of this wonderful vision: was it a saint or an angel that appeared to the senior brother ?

Prior. (*pointing to Jerome*) He will answer for himself, and (*pointing to Paul*) this man saw it also.

Jer. It was neither angel nor saint, noble count, but a mortal form wonderfully noble.

Ost. And it appeared to you in the usual manner of a dream ?

Jer. It did ; at least I know no sensible distinction. A wavy envelopement of darkness preceded it, from which appearances seemed dimly to wake into form, till all was presented before me in the full strength of reality.

Paul. Nay, brother, it broke upon me at once ; a vivid distinct apparition.

Ost. Well, be that as it may ; what did appear to you ? a mortal man, and very noble ?

Jer. Yes, general. Methought I was returning from mass, through the cloisters that lead from the chapel, when a figure, as I have said, appeared to me, and beckoned me to follow it. I did follow it ; for at first I was neither afraid, nor even surprised ; but so wonderfully it rose in stature and dignity as it strode before me, that, ere it reached the door of the stranger's burying vault, I was struck with unaccountable awe.

Ost. The stranger's burying vault !

Prior. Does any sudden thought strike you, count ?

Ost. No, no ! here's your health, fathers ; (*drinking*) your wine is excellent

Prior. But that is water you have just now swallowed : this is the wine.

Ost. Ha ! is it ? no matter, no matter ! it is very good too. (*a long pause—Osterloo with his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the ground*)

Prior. Shall not our brother proceed with his story, general?

Ost. Most certainly: I have been listening for it.

Jer. Well then, as I have said, at the door of the stranger's burying vault it stopped, and beckoned me again. It entered, and I followed it. There, through the damp mouldering tombs, it strode still before me, till it came to the farther extremity, as nearly as I could guess, two yards westward from the black marble monument; and then stopping and turning on me its fixed and ghastly eyes, it stretched out its hands——

Ost. Its hands! did you say, its hands?

Jer. It stretched out one of them? the other was covered with its mantle; and in a voice that sounded—I know not how it sounded——

Paul. Ay, brother; it was something like a voice, at least it conveyed words to the mind, though it was not like a voice neither.

Jer. Be that as you please: these words it solemnly uttered——“Command the brothers of this monastery, on pain of falling victims to the pestilence now devastating the country, to stop on its way the first division of the imperial army that shall march through your mountain pass; and choose from it, by lot, a man who shall abide one night within these walls, to make expiation for long concealed guilt. Let the suffering be such as the nature of the crime and the connexion of the expiator therewith shall dictate. This spot of earth shall reveal——” It said no more, but bent its eyes steadfastly upon me with a stern threatening frown, which became, as it looked, keener than the looks of any mortal being, and vanished from my sight.

Paul. Ay, that look; that last terrible look! it awoke me with terror, and I know not how it vanished.

Jer. This has been repeated to me three times; last night twice in the course of the night, while brother Paul here was at the same time terrified with a similar apparition.

Prior. This, you will acknowledge, count, was no common visitation, and could not but trouble us.

Ost. You say well.—Yet it was but a dream.

Prior. True ; it was but a dream, and as such these pious men strove to consider it ; when the march of your troops across our mountains, a thing so unlikely to happen, compelled them to reveal to me, without loss of time, what had appeared to them.

Ost. A tall figure, you say, and of a noble aspect?

Jer. Like that of a king, though habited more in the garb of a foreign soldier of fortune than of a state so dignified. (*Osterloo rises from table agitated*)

Prior. What is the matter, general? will you not finish your repast?

Ost. I thank you ; I have had enough. The night grows cold ; I would rather walk than sit. (*walks to and fro in the back ground*)

Jer. What think ye of this?

Prior. His countenance changed several times as he listened to you : there is something here different from common surprise on hearing a wonderful thing.

enter a PEASANT bearing a torch.

Peas. We have found it.

Ost. (*stopping short in his walk*) What hast thou found?

Peas. What the prior desired us to dig for.

Ost. What is that?

Peas. A grave. (*Osterloo turns suddenly and strides up and down very rapidly*)

Prior. Hast thou found it?

Peas. Ay, please you, and in the very spot, near the black monument, where your reverence desired us to dig. And it is well you sent for my kinsman and I to do it, for there is not a lay-brother in the monastery strong enough to raise up the great stones that covered it.

Prior. In the very spot, sayest thou?

Peas. In the very spot.

Prior. Bear thy torch before us, and we'll follow thee.

Omnes. (*eagerly, Osterloo excepted*) Let us go immediately.

Prior. (to *Osterloo*) Will not count *Osterloo* go also? it is fitting that he should.

Ost. O, most assuredly: I am perfectly ready to follow you. [exunt

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE I—a burying vault, almost dark—the monuments and grave-stones being seen very dimly by the light of a single torch, stuck by the side of a deep open grave, in which a *SEXTON* is discovered, standing leaning on his mattock, and *MORAND*, above ground, turning up, with his sheathed sword, the loose earth about the mouth of the grave.

Mor. There is neither scull nor bone amongst this earth: the ground must have been newly broken up, when that coffin was let down into it.

Sex. So one should think; but the earth here has the quality of consuming whatever is put into it in a marvellous short time.

Mor. Ay; the flesh and more consumable parts of a body; but hath it grinders in its jaws, like your carnivorous animal, to cransh up bones and all? I have seen bones in an old field of battle, some hundred years after the action, lying whitened and hard in the sun.

Sex. Well, a'nt be new ground, I'll warrant ye somebody has paid money enough for such a good tenement as this: I could not wish my own father a better.

Mor. The coffin is of an uncommon size: there must be a leaden one within it, I should think.

Sex. I doubt that: it is only a clumsy shell that has been put together in haste; and I'll be hanged if he who made it ever made another before it. Now it would pine me with vexation to think I should be laid in such a bungled piece of workmanship as this.

Mor. Ay; it is well for those who shall bury thee;

sexton, that thou wilt not be a looker on at thine own funeral.—Put together in haste, sayest thou! how long may it be since this coffin was laid in the ground?

Sex. By my fay, now, I cannot tell; though many a grave I have dug in this vault, instead of the lay-brothers, who are mighty apt to take a colic or shortness of breath, or the like, when any thing of hard labor falls to their share. (*after pausing*) Ha, now! I have it. When I went over the mountain some ten years ago to visit my father-in-law, Baldwick, the stranger, who died the other day, after living so long as a hermit amongst the rocks, came here; and it was shrewdly suspected he had leave from our late prior, for a good sum of money, to bury a body privately in this vault. I was a fool not to think of it before. This, I'll be sworn for it, is the place.

enter the PRIOR, OSTERLOO, JEROME, PAUL, BENE-DICT, and other monks, with the peasant carrying light before them—they enter by an arched door, at the bottom, and walk up to the front, when every one but Osterloo, crowds eagerly to the grave, looking down into it.

Prior. What hast thou found, friend?

Sex. A coffin a'nt please you, and of a size, too, that might almost contain a giant.

Omnes. The inscription—is there an inscription on it?

Sex. No, no! they who put these planks together had no time for inscriptions.

Omnes. Break it open:—break it open. (*they crowd more eagerly about the grave, when, after a pause the sexton is heard wrenching open the lid of the coffin*)

Omnes. What is there in it? what hast thou found, sexton?

Sex. An entire skeleton, and of no common size.

Ost. Is it entire?

Sex. No, the right hand is wanting, and there is not a loose bone in the coffin. (*Osterloo shudders and steps back*)

Jer. Will you not speak to him, father? his countenance is changed, and his whole frame seems moved by some sudden convulsion. (*the prior remains silent*) How is this? you are also changed, reverend father. Shall I speak to him?

Prior. Speak thou to him.

Jer. What is the matter with you, general? has some sudden malady seized you?

Ost. Let me be alone with you, holy prior; let me be alone with you instantly.

Jer. This is the prior.—He would be alone with you, father: he would make his confession to you.

Prior. I dare not hear him alone: there must be witnesses. Let him come with me to my apartment.

Jer. Let me conduct you, count. (*after walking some steps*) Come on, my lord, why do you stop short?

Ost. Not this way—not this way, I pray you.

Jer. What is it you would avoid?

Ost. Turn aside, I pray you; I cannot cross over this.

Jer. Is it the grave you mean? we have left it behind us.

Ost. Is it not there? it yawns across our path, directly before us.

Jer. Indeed, my lord. it is some paces behind.

Ost. There is delusion in my sight then; lead me as thou wilt. [*exeunt*

SCENE II—*the private apartment of the prior.*

enter BENEDICT, *looking round as he enters.*

Ben. Not yet come; ay, penitence is not very swift of foot. Miserable man!—brave, goodly creature!—but alas, alas! most subdued; most miserable; and, I fear, most guilty.

enter JEROME.

Jerome here!—dost thou know, brother, that the prior is coming here immediately to confess the penitent?

Jer. Yes, brother ; but I am no intruder ; for he has summoned me to attend the confession as well as thyself.

Ben. Methinks some other person of our order, unconcerned with the dreaming part of this business, would have been a less suspicious witness.

Jer. Suspicious ! am I more concerned in this than any other member of our community ? heaven appoints its own agents as it listeth : the stones of these walls might have declared its awful will as well as the dreams of a poor friar.

Ben. True, brother Jerome ; could they listen to confessions as he does, and hold reveries upon them afterwards.

Jer. What dost thou mean with thy reveries and confessions ? did not Paul see the terrible vision as well as I ?

Ben. If thou hadst not revealed thy dream to him, he would have slept sound enough, or, at worst, have but flown over the pinnacles with his old mate the horned serpent, as usual : and had the hermit Baldwick never made his death-bed confession to thee, thou wouldst never have had such a dream to reveal.

Jer. Thinkest thou so ? then what brought Osterloo and his troops so unexpectedly by this route ? with all thy heretical dislike to miraculous interposition, how wilt thou account for this ?

Ben. If thou hadst no secret intelligence of Osterloo's route, to set thy fancy a working on the story the hermit confessed to thee, I never wore cowl on my head.

Jer. Those, indeed, who hear thee speak so lightly of mysterious and holy things, will scarcely believe thou ever didst.—But hush ! the prior comes with his penitent ; let us have no altercation now.

enter PRIOR *and* OSTERLOO.

Prior. (after a pause, in which he seems agitated)
—Now, count Osterloo, we are ready to hear your confession. To myself and these pious monks ; men ap-

pointed by our holy religion to search into the crimes of the penitent, unburthen your heart of its terrible secret ; and god grant you afterwards, if it be his righteous will, repentance and mercy.

Ost. (making a sign as if unable to speak, then uttering rapidly) Presently, presently.

Jer. Dont hurry him, reverend father ; he cannot speak.

Ben. Take breath awhile, noble Osterloo, and speak to us when you can.

Ost. I thank you.

Ben. He is much agitated. Lean upon me, my lord.

Prior. (to *Benedict*) Nay, you exceed in this. (to *Osterloo*) Recollect yourself, general, and try to be more composed. You seem better now ; endeavor to unburthen your mind of its fatal secret ; to have it laboring within your breast is protracting a state of misery.

Ost. (feebly) I have voice now.

Jer. Give to heaven then, as you ought——

Ben. Hush, brother Jerome ! no exhortations now ! let him speak it as he can. We attend to you most anxiously.

Ost. (after struggling for utterance) I slew him.

Prior. The man whose bones have now been discovered ?

Ost. The same : I slew him.

Jer. In the field, count ?

Ost. No, no ! many a man's blood has been on my hands there : this is on my heart.

Prior. It is then premeditated murder you have committed.

Ost. Call it so, call it so.

Jer. And is this all ? will you not proceed to tell us the circumstances attending it ?

Ost. Oh ! they were terrible ! but they are all in my mind as the indistinct horrors of a frenzied imagination. I did it in a narrow pass on st. Gothard, in the stormy twilight of a winter day.

Prior. You murdered him there ?

Ost. I felt him dead under my grasp ; but I looked at him no more after the last desperate thrust that I gave him. I hurried to a distance from the spot : when a servant, who was with me, seized with a sudden remorse, begged leave to return and remove the body, that, if possible, he might bury it in consecrated ground, as an atonement for the part he had taken in the terrible deed. I gave him leave, with means to procure his desire : I waited for him three days, concealed in the mountains ; but I neither saw him, nor heard of him again.

Ben. But what tempted a brave man like Osterloo to commit such a horrible act ?

Ost. The torments of jealousy stung me to it.—
(*hiding his face with his hands and then uncovering it*) I loved her, and was beloved :—he came,—a noble stranger—

Jer. Ay, if he was in his mortal state, as I in my dream beheld him, he was indeed most noble.

Ost. (*waving his hand impatiently*) Well, well ! he did come, then, and she loved me no more. With arts and enchantments he besotted her. Even from her own lips I received—(*tossing up his arms violently, and then covering his face as before*) But what is all this to you ? maimed as he was, having lost his right arm in a battle with the turks, I could not defy him to the field. After passing two nights in all the tossing agony of a damned spirit, I followed him on his journey across the mountains. On the twilight of the second day, I laid wait for him in a narrow pass ; and as soon as his gigantic form darkened the path before me—I have told you all.

Prior (*eagerly*) You have not told his name.

Ost. Did I not say Montera ? he was a noble hungarian.

Prior. (*much agitated*) He was so ! he was so. He was noble and beloved.

Jer. (*aside to prior*) What is the matter with you, reverend father ? was he your friend ?

Prior. Speak not to me now, but question the murderer as ye will.

Ben. He is indeed a murderer, reverend father, but he is our penitent.

Prior. Go to! what are names? ask him what questions you will, and finish the confession quickly.

Ben. But have you never till now confessed this crime; nor in the course of so many years reflected on its dreadful turpitude?

Ost. The active and adventurous life of a soldier is most adverse to reflection; but often, in the stillness of midnight, the remembrance of this terrible deed has come powerfully upon me; till morning returned, and the noise of the camp began, and the fortunes of the day were before me.

Prior. Thou hast indeed been too long permitted to remain in this hardened state. But heaven, sooner or later, will visit the man of blood with its terrors.— Sooner or later, he shall feel that he stands upon an awful brink; and short is the step which engulfs him in that world, where the murdered and the murderer meet again, in the tremendous presence of him, who is the lord and giver of life.

Ost. You believe then in such severe retribution?

Prior. I believe in it as in my own existence.

Ost. And you, good fathers, you believe in this?

Ben. Nature teaches this as well as revelation: we must believe it.

Jer. Some presumptuous minds, dazzled with the sunshine of prosperity, have dared to doubt; but to us, in the sober shade of life; visited too, as we have now been, by visions preternatural and awful, it is a thing of certainty, rather than of faith.

Ost. That such things are! it makes the brain confused and giddy. These are tremendous thoughts.—
(*leans his back against the wall, and gazes fixedly on the ground*)

Prior. Let us leave him to the bitterness of his thoughts. We now must deliberate with the brethren on what is to be done. There must be no delay: the

night advances fast. Conduct him to another apartment: I must assemble a council of the whole order.

Jer. We must lead you to another apartment, count, while we consider what is to be done.

Ost. Ay, the expiation you mean: let it be severe; if atonement in this world may be made. (*turning to prior, as Jerome leads him off*) Let your expiation be severe, holy father: a slight penance matches not with such a crime as mine.

Prior. Be well assured it shall be what it ought.

Ost. (*turning again and catching hold of the prior's robe*) I regard not bodily pain. In battle once, with the head of a broken arrow in my thigh, I led on the charge, and sustained all the exertions of a well-fought field, till night closed upon our victory.—Let your penance be severe, my reverend father; I have been long acquainted with pain.

[*exeunt Osterloo and Jerome*]

Ben. You seem greatly moved, father; but it is not with pity for the wretched. You would not destroy such a man as this, though his crime is the crime of blood?

Prior. He shall die: ere another sun dawn on these walls, he shall die.

Ben. Oh, say not so! think of some other expiation.

Prior. I would think of another, were there any other more dreadful to him than death.

Ben. He is your penitent.

Prior. He is the murderer of my brother.

Ben. Then heaven have mercy on him, if he must find none here!—Montera was your brother?

Prior. My only brother. It were tedious to tell thee now, how I was separated from him after the happy days of our youth.—I saw him no more; yet he was still the dearest object of my thoughts. After escaping death in many a battle, he was slain, as it was conjectured, by banditti, in travelling across the mountains. His body was never discovered. Ah! little did I think it was lying so near me!

Ben. It is indeed piteous; and you must needs feel

it as a brother : but consider the danger we run, should we lay violent hands on an imperial general, with his enraged soldiers, within a few hours' march of our walls.

Prior. I can think of nothing but revenge. Speak to me no more. I must assemble the whole order immediately. [exeunt

SCENE III—*another apartment.*

enter OSTERLOO as from a small recess at the bottom—paces backwards and forwards several times in an agitated manner—then advances slowly to the front, where he stands musing and muttering to himself for some moments.

Ost. That this smothered horror should burst upon me at last! and there be really such things as the darkened fancy imageth to itself, when the busy day is stilled. An unseen world surrounds us: spirits and powers, and the invisible dead hover near us; while we in unconscious security—oh! I have slept upon a fearful brink! every sword that threatened my head in battle, had power in its edge to send me to a terrible account.—I have slept upon a fearful brink.—Am I truly awake? (*rubbing his eyes, then grasping several parts of his body, first with one hand and then with the other*) yes, yes: it is so! I am keenly and terribly awake. (*stalks rapidly up and down, and then stopping short*) Can there be virtue in penances suffered by the body to do away offences of the soul? if there be—o, if there be! let them runnel my body with stripes; and swathe me round in one continued girth of wounds! any thing, that can be endured here, is mercy compared to the dreadful abiding of what may be hereafter.

enter WOVELREID, behind, followed by soldiers, who range themselves at the bottom—Osterloo turning round, runs up to him eagerly.

Ha! my dear Albert, returned to me again, with all

my noble fellows at thy back ! pardon me ; I mistook you for one of my captains.

Wov. I am the prior's captain.

Ost. And those men too ?

Wov. They are the prior's soldiers, who have been ordered from distant quarters to repair to the monastery immediately.

Ost. In such haste ?

Wov. Ay, in truth ! we received our orders after sun set, and have marched two good leagues since.

Ost. What may this mean ?

Wov. Faith I know not. My duty is to obey the prior, and pray to our good saint ; and whether I am commanded to surprise the strong hold of an enemy, or protect an execution, it is the same thing to me.

Ost. An execution ! can aught of this nature be intended ?

Wov. You turn pale, sir : wearing the garb of a soldier, you have surely seen blood ere now.

Ost. I have seen too much blood.

enter PRIOR, JEROME, PAUL, and MONKS, walking in order—the prior holding a paper in his hand.

Prior. Count Osterloo, lieutenant-general of our liege lord the emperor ; authorised by this deed, which is subscribed by all the brethren of our holy order here present, I pronounce to you our solemn decision, that the crime of murder, as, by the mysterious voice of heaven, and your own confession, your crime is proved to be, can only be expiated by death : you are therefore warned to prepare yourself to die this night.—Before day break, you must be with the inhabitants of another world ; where may the great maker of us all deal with you in mercy ! (*Osterloo staggers back from the spot where he stood, and remains silent*)—it is a sentence, count, pronounced against you from necessity, to save the lives of our whole community, which you yourself have promised to submit to ; have you any thing to say in reply to it ?

Ost. Nothing : my thoughts are gone from me in the darkness of astonishment.

Prior. We are compelled to be thus hasty and severe : ere day-break, you must die.

Ost. Ere day-break ! not even the light of another sun, to one so ill prepared for the awful and tremendous state into which you would thrust him ! this is inhuman ! it is horrible !

Prior. He was as ill prepared for it, who with still shorter warning, was thrust into that awful state in the narrow pass of st. Gothard.

Ost. The guilt of murder was not on his soul. Nay, nay, holy prior ! consider this horrible extremity : let the pain of the executioner's stroke be twenty fold upon me ; but thrust me not forth to that state from which my soul recoils with unutterable horror.—Never but once, to save the life of a friend, did I bend the knee to mortal man in humble supplication. I am a soldier ; in many battles I have bled for the service of my country : I am a noble soldier, and I was a proud one ; yet do I thus——contemn not my extremity ! my knee is on the ground.

Prior. Urge me no further. It must not be ; no respite can be granted.

Ost. (*starting up furiously from the ground, and drawing his sword*) Then subdue as you may, stern priest, the strength of a desperate man. (*Wovelreid and soldiers rush forward, getting behind him, and surrounding him on every side, and after a violent struggle disarm him*)

Wov. What a noble fellow this would be to defend a narrow breach, though he shrinks with such abhorrence from a scaffold. It is a piteous thing to see him so beset.

Prior. What sayest thou, fool !

Wov. Nay, it is no business of mine, my lord, I confess. Shall we conduct him to the prison chamber ?

Prior. Do so ; and see that he retain no concealed arms about him.

Wov. I obey, my lord : every thing shall be made secure.

[*exit Osterloo, guarded by Wovelreid and soldiers enter BENEDICT, by the opposite side, who stands looking after him piteously.*]

Prior. What brings thee here ? dost thou repent having refused to concur with us in an act that preserves the community ?

Ben. Say rather, reverend father, an act that revenges your brother's death, which the laws of the empire should revenge.

Prior. A supernatural visitation of heaven hath commanded us to punish it.—What ; dost thou shake thy head ? thou art of a doubting and dangerous spirit ; and beware lest, sooner or later, the tempter do not lure thee into heresy. If reason cannot subdue thee, authority shall.—Return again to thy cell ; let me hear of this no more.

Ben. I will, reverend father. But for the love of our holy saint, bethink you, ere it be too late, that though we may be saved from the pestilence by this bloody sacrifice, what will rescue our throats from the swords of Osterloo's soldiers, when they shall return, as they have threatened, to demand from us their general ?

Prior. Give thyself no concern about this. My own bands are already called in, and a messenger has been despatched to the abbess Matilda ; her troops, in defence of the church, will face the best soldiers of the empire.—But why lose we time in unprofitable contentions ? go, my sons, (*speaking to other monks*) the night advances fast, and we have much to do ere morning. (*knocking heard without*) Ha ! who knocks at this untimely hour ? can the soldiers be indeed returned upon us ?—run to the gate ; but open it to none.

(*exeunt several monks in haste and presently re-enter with a lay-brother*)

Lay-B. Please ye, reverend father ; the marchioness has sent a messenger from the castle, beseeching

you to send a confessor immediately to confess one of her women, who was taken ill yesterday, and is now at the point of death.

Prior. I'm glad it is only this.—What is the matter with the penitent ?

Lay-B. I know not, please you : the messenger only said, she was taken ill yesterday.

Prior. Ay, this malady has got there also.—I cannot send one of the brothers to bring infection immediately amongst us.—What is to be done ? Leonora is a most noble lady ; and the family have been great benefactors to our order.—I must send somebody to her. But he must stop well his nostrils with spicery, and leave his upper garment behind him, when he quits the infected apartment. Jerome, wilt thou go ? thou art the favorite confessor with all the women at the castle.

Jer. Nay, father ; I must attend on our prisoner here, who has most need of ghostly assistance.

Prior. Go thou, Anselmo ; thou hast given comfort to many a dying penitent.

Monk. I thank you, father, for the preference ; but Paul is the best of us all for administering comfort to the dying ; and there is a sickness come over my heart, o'the sudden, that makes me unfit for the office.

Prior. Thou wilt go then, my good son.

Paul. I beseech you, dont send me, reverend father ? I ne'er escaped contagion in my life, where malady or fever were to be had.

Prior. Who will go then ? (*a deep silence*)

Ben. What ; has no one faith enough in the protection of st. Maurice, even purchased, as it is about to be, by the shedding of human blood, to venture upon this dangerous duty ? I will go then, father, though I am sometimes of a doubting spirit.

Prior. Go, and st. Maurice protect thee !

[exit Benedict

Let him go ; it is well that we get rid of him for the night, should they happily detain him so long at the castle.—He is a troublesome, close-searching, self-willed

fellow. He hath no zeal for the order. Were a miser to bequeath his possessions to our monastery, he would assist the disappointed heir himself to find out a flaw in the deed.—But retire to your cells, my sons; and employ yourselves in prayer and devotion, till the great bell warn you to attend the execution. [*exeunt*]

SCENE III—*an apartment in the castle.*

enter LEONORA and AGNES, *speaking as they enter.*

Ag. But she is asleep now; and is so much and so suddenly better, that the confessor, when he comes, will be dissatisfied, I fear, that we have called him from his cell at such an unreasonable hour.

Leo. Let him come, nevertheless; dont send to prevent him.

Agn. He will be unwilling to be detained, for they are engaged in no common matters to night at the monastery. Count Osterloo, as I told you before, is doing voluntary penance at the shrine of st. Maurice to stop the progress of this terrible malady.

Leo. I remember thou didst.

Agn. Ah, marchioness! you would not say so thus faintly, had you seen him march through the pass with his soldiers. He is the bravest and most graceful man, though somewhat advanced in years, that I ever beheld.—Ah, had you but seen him!

Leo. I have seen him, Agnes.

Agn. And I spoke of him all the while, yet you did not tell me this before! ah, my noble mistress and friend! the complexion of your cheek is altered; you have indeed seen him, and you have not seen him with indifference.

Leo. Think as thou wilt about this. He was the friend and fellow-soldier of my lord, when we first married; though before my marriage I had never seen him.

Agn. Friend! your lord was then in the decline of life; there must have been great disparity in their friendship.

Leo. They were friends, however ; for the marquis liked society younger than himself ; and I, who had been hurried into an unequal marriage, before I could judge for myself, was sometimes foolish enough to compare them together.

Agn. Ay, that was natural enough. And what happened then ?

Leo. What happened then ! (*drawing herself up proudly*) nothing happened then, but subduing the foolish fancy of a girl, which was afterwards amply repaid by the self-approbation and dignity of a woman.

Agn. Pardon me, madam ; I ought to have supposed all this. But you have been long a widow, and Osterloo is still unmarried ; what prevented you when free.

Leo. I was ignorant what the real state of his sentiments had been in regard to me. But had this been otherwise ; received as I was, into the family of my lord, the undowried daughter of a petty nobleman ; and left as I now am, by his confiding love, the sole guardian of his children and their fortunes ; I could never think of supporting a second lord on the wealth entrusted to me by the first, to the injury of his children. As nothing, therefore, has ever happened in consequence of this weakness of my youth, nothing ever shall.

Agn. This is noble.

Leo. It is right. But here comes the father confessor.

enter BENEDICT.

—You are welcome, good father ! yet I am almost ashamed to see you ; for our sick person has become suddenly well again, and is now in a deep sleep. I fear I shall appear to you capricious and inconsiderate in calling you up at so late an hour.

Ben. Be not uneasy, lady, upon this account : I am glad to have an occasion for being absent from the monastery for some hours, if you will permit me to remain here so long.

Leo. What mean you, father Benedict? your countenance is solemn and sorrowful: what is going on at the monastery? (*he shakes his head*) ha! will they be severe with him in a voluntary penance, submitted to for the good of the order? what is the nature of the penance? it is to continue, I am told, but one night.

Ben. It will, indeed, soon be over.

Leo. And will he be gone on the morrow?

Ben. His spirit will, but his body remains with us for ever.

Leo. (*uttering a shriek*) Death, dost thou mean? o horror! horror! is this the expiation? o, most horrible, most unjust!

Ben. Indeed I consider it as such. Though guilty, by his own confession, of murder, committed many years since, under the frenzy of passion; it belongs not to us to inflict the punishment of death upon a guilty soul, taken so suddenly and unprepared for its doom.

Leo. Murder! didst thou say murder? oh, Osterloo, Osterloo! hast thou been so barbarous? and art thou in this terrible state? must thou thus end thy days, and so near me too!

Ben. You seem greatly moved, noble Leonora:—would you could do something more for him than lament.

Leo. (*catching hold of him eagerly*) Can I do any thing? speak, father: o tell me how! I will do any thing and every thing. Alas, alas! my vassals are but few, and cannot be assembled immediately.

Ben. Force were useless. Your vassals, if they were assembled, would not be persuaded to attack the sacred walls of a monastery.

Leo. I did indeed rave foolishly: but what else can be done? take these jewels and every thing of value in the castle, if they will bribe those who guard him, to let him escape. Think of it—o think well of it, good Benedict!

Agn. I have heard that there is a secret passage, leading from the prison-chamber of the monastery un-

der its walls, and opening to the free country at the bottom of the rocks.

Ben. By every holy saint, so there is ! and the most sordid of our brothers is entrusted with the key of it. But who will be his conductor ? none but a monk of the order may pass the soldiers who guard him ; and the monk who should do it, must fly from his country for ever, and break his sacred vows. I can oppose the weak fears and injustice of my brethren, for misfortunes and disgust of the world, not superstitious veneration for monastic sanctity, has covered my head with a cowl ; but this I cannot do.

Agn. There is the dress of a monk of your order in the old wardrobe of the castle, if some person were disguised in it.

Leo. Thanks to thee ! thanks to thee, my happy Agnes ! I will be that person.—I will put on the disguise.—Good father ! your face gives consent to this.

Ben. If there be time ; but I left them preparing for the execution.

Leo. There is, there is !—come with me to the wardrobe, and we'll set out for the monastery forthwith. Come, come ! a few moments will carry us there.

[Exit, hastily, followed by Agnes and Benedict

SCENE IV—*a wood near the castle—dark.*

enter two SERVANTS with torches.

1st Ser. This must surely be the entry to the path, where my lady ordered us to wait for those same monks.

2d Ser. Yes ; I know it well, for yonder is the postern. It is the nearest path to the monastery, but narrow and difficult. The night is cold : I hope they will not keep us long waiting.

1st Ser. I heard the sound of travellers coming up the eastern avenue, and they may linger belike ; for monks are marvellously fond of great people and of strangers ; at least the good fathers of our monastery are.

2d Serv. Ay, in their late prior's time, they lived like lords themselves ; and they are not very humble at present. But there's light from the postern : here they come.

enter BENEDICT, LEONORA *disguised like a monk,*
and AGNES *with a peasant's cloak thrown over her.*

Leo. It is well thought of, good Benedict. Go thou before me to gain brother Baldwin, in the first place ; and I'll wait without on the spot we have agreed upon, until I hear the signal.

Ben. Thou comprehendest me completely, brother ; so god speed us both !—torch-man, go thou with me. This is the right path, I trust ?

1st Serv. Fear not, father ; I know it well.

[exit Benedict and 1st servant

Leo. *(to Agnes, while she waves her hand to 2d servant to retire to a greater distance)* After I am admitted to the monastery, fail not to wait for me at the mouth of the secret passage.

Agn. Fear not : Benedict has described it so minutely, I cannot fail to discover it.

Leo. What steps are those behind us ? somebody following us from the castle ?

enter 3d SERVANT in haste.

3d Serv. There are travellers arrived at the gate, and desire to be admitted for the night.

Leo. In an evil hour they come. Return, dear Agnes, and receive them. Benighted strangers, no doubt. Excuse my absence any how : go quickly.

Agn. And leave you to proceed alone ?

Leo. Care not for me : there is an energy within me now, that bids defiance to fear. *(beckons to 2d servant, who goes out before her with the torch, and exit)*

Agn. The evil spirit hath brought travellers to us at this moment : but I'll send them to their chambers right quickly, and join her at the secret passage, notwithstanding.

[exeunt

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE I—*the prison-chamber of the monastery—OSTERLOO is discovered, sitting in a bending posture, with his clenched hands pressed upon his knees and his eyes fixed on the ground, JEROME standing by him.*

Jer. Nay, sink not thus, my son; the mercy of heaven is infinite. Let other thoughts enter thy soul: let penitence and devotion subdue it.

Ost. Nothing but one short moment of division between this state of humanity and that which is to follow! the executioner lets fall his axe, and the dark veil is rent; the gulf is uncovered; the regions of anguish are before me.

Jer. My son, my son! this must not be; thine imagination overpowers thy devotion.

Ost. The dead are there; and what welcome shall the murderer receive from that assembled host? oh! the terrible form that stalks forth to meet me! the stretching out of that hand! the greeting of that horrible smile! and it is thou, who must lead me before the tremendous majesty of my offended maker! incomprehensible and dreadful! what thoughts can give an image of that which overpowers all thought! (*clasping his hands tightly over his head, and bending himself almost to the ground*)

Jer. Art thou entranced? art thou asleep? art thou still in those inward agonies of imagination? (*touching him softly*) Speak to me.

Ost. (*starting up*) Are they come for me? they shall not yet: I'll strangle the first man that lays hold of me. (*grasping Jerome by the throat*)

Jer. Let go your hold, my lord; I did but touch you gently to rouse you from your stupor. (*Osterloo lets go his hold, and Jerome shrinks to a distance*)

Ost. I have grasped thee, then, too roughly. But shrink not from me thus. Strong men have fallen by my arm, but a child might contend with me now. (*throwing himself back again into his chair, and bursting into tears*)

Jer. Forgive me, my son, there was a wildness in your eyes that made me afraid.

Ost. Thou need'st not be afraid: thou art a good man, and hast days of life still before thee; thou need'st not be afraid.—But, as thou art a good man, speak to me, I conjure thee, as a man, not as a monk: answer me as the true sense and reason of a man doth convince thee.

Jer. I will, my son.

Ost. Dost thou in truth believe, that the very instant after life has left the body, we are forthwith awake and conscious in the world of spirits? no intermediate state of slumbering insensibility between?

Jer. It is indeed my belief. Death is but a short though awful pass; as it were a winking of the eyes for a moment. We shut them in this world and open them in the next: and there we open them with such increased vividness of existence, that this life, in comparison, will appear but as a state of slumber and of dreams.—But wherefore dost thou cross thine arms so closely on thy breast, and coil thyself together so wretchedly? what is the matter, my son? art thou in bodily anguish?

Ost. The chilly night shoots icy coldness through me.

Jer. O regard not the poor feelings of a fleshy frame, which thou so soon must part withal: a little time will now put an end to every thing that nature can endure.

Ost. Ha! how soon? has the bell struck again since I listened to it last?

Jer. No; but it will soon strike, and day-break is at hand. Rouse ye then, and occupy the few minutes that remain in acts of devotion becoming thine unhappy state. O, my son, pour out thy soul in penitent prayers to an offended but merciful god. We, too, will pray for thee. Months, nay years after thy death, masses shall be said for the repose of thy soul, that it may at last be received into bliss. O my unhappy son! pour forth thy spirit to god; and let thy prayers also ascend to our blessed saint and martyr, who will intercede for thee.

Ost. I cannot; I have not thoughts for prayer.—

The gulf yawns before me—the unknown, the unbounded, the unfathomable!—prayers! prayers! what prayers hath despair?

Jer. Hold, hold, refractory spirit! this obstinacy is destruction.—I must call in brother Bernard to assist me: I cannot be answerable alone, in a service of such infinite moment.

[*exit (after a pause, in which Osterloo seems absorbed in the stupor of despair, enter LEONORA disguised)*]

Leo. (*coming eagerly forward, and then stopping short to look at him*) There is some mistake in this: it is not Osterloo.—It is, it is! but oh, how changed! thy hand, great god! has been upon him. (*going closer to him*) Osterloo; Osterloo.

Ost. I hear thee, father.

Leo. (*throwing aside her disguise*) O no! it is no father. Lift up thine eyes and see an old friend before thee, with deliverance in her hand. (*holding out a key*)

Ost. (*looking up wildly*) Is it a sound in my ears, or did any one say deliverance? (*gazing on her*) what thing art thou? a form of magic or delusion?

Leo. Neither, count Osterloo; but an old friend, bringing this key in her hand for thy deliverance. Yet much I fear thou hast not strength enough to rise and follow me.

Ost. (*bounding from his seat*) I have strength for any thing if there be deliverance in it.—Where go we? they will be upon us immediately.

Leo. (*lifting a small lamp from a table and holding it to examine the opposite wall*) The door, as he described it, is to the right of a small projection of the wall.—Here—here it is! (*opens a small door, and beckons Osterloo to follow her*)

Ost. Yes, blessed being! I will follow thee.—Ha! they are coming! (*strides hastily to the door, while Leonora holds up the lamp to light him into it, and then going in herself, locks the door*)

SCENE II—an old ruinous vault, with a strong grated door on one side, through which the moon-beams are

gleaming—on the other side, an old winding staircase, leading from the upper ranges of the monastery, from which a feeble light is seen, increasing by degrees—and presently LEONORA appears, descending the stairs with a lamp in her hand, followed by OSTERLOO—as she enters, something on the wall catches her robe, and she turns round to disentangle it, bending her face close to the light.

Ost. (stopping to assist her, and then gazing on her) Thou art something I have known and loved somewhere, though it has passed away from my mind with all my better thoughts.—Great power of heaven! art thou Leonora?

Leo. Dost thou know me now?

Ost. I do, I do! my heart knew thee before, but my memory did not. (*kneeling and kissing both her hands*) And so it is to thee—thou whom I first loved—pardon me, pardon me!—thou whom I loved and dared not love;—thou from whom I fled to be virtuous—thou art my deliverer. Oh! had I never loved another after thee, it had been well.—Knowest thou it is a murderer thou art saving?

Leo. Say no more of this; I know thy story, and I came—

Ost. O! thou camest like a blessed spirit to deliver me from many horrors. I was terribly beset: thou hast snatched me from a tremendous brink.

Leo. I hope so, if this key prove to be the right one.

Ost. (*alarmed*) Dost thou doubt it?

Leo. It seems to me smaller than it ought to be, when I consider that massive door.

Ost. Give it me. (*snatches the key from her, and runs to the door—then turns the key in the lock, and finding it too small, stamps with his feet, throws it from him, and holds up his clenched hands in despair*)

Leo. Oh, cross fate! but I'll return again for the right one. Baldwin cannot be so wicked as to deceive me, and Benedict is still on the watch, near the door of the prison-chamber. Stay here till I return. (*she ascends the stairs, whilst Osterloo leans his back to the wall, with impatient agitation—a bell tolls—Osterloo starts*

from his place, and Leonora descends, and re-enters)

Leo. Oh! I cannot go now: that bell tolls to warn them to the great hall: I shall meet them on their way. What is to be done? the strength of three men could not force that heavy door, and thou art feeble and spent.

Ost. (*running furiously to the door*) Despair has strength for any thing. (*seizes hold of the door, and, making two or three terrible efforts, bursts it open*)

Leo. Supernatural strength has assisted thee: now thou art free. (*as Osterloo and Leonora are about to pass on through the door, Wovelreid and three soldiers appear in the porch beyond it, and oppose their passage*)

Wov. Hold! we are the prior's soldiers, and will suffer no prisoner to escape.

Ost. Those who dare prevent me! (*wrests a sword from one of the soldiers, and forces his way past them all, they not daring to pursue him—when Wovelreid seizing on Leonora, she calls out*)

Leo. O let me pass! and I'll reward you nobly.

Ost. (*returning to rescue Leonora*) Let go thine unhallowed grasp.

Leo. For heaven's sake care not for me! save thyself—save thyself! I am in no danger. Turn not again to fight, when such terrible odds are against thee.

Ost. I have arms in my hand now, and my foes are before me! (*fights fiercely again, till Morand, with a band of soldiers, entering the porch behind him, he is overpowered and secured—Leonora sinks down in a swoon*)

Wov. Give me a rope. We must bind him securely; for the devil has put the strength of ten men into him, though, but half an hour ago, his face was as pale as a moon-light icicle, and he could scarcely walk without being supported.

Mor. Alas, alas! his face has returned to its former color; his head sinks on his breast, and his limbs are again feeble and listless. I would rather see him fighting like a fiend than see him thus.

Wov. Let us move him hence; would'st thou stop to lament over him?

Mor. It was base work in Baldwin to betray their plot to the prior, for he took their money first I'll be sworn.

Wov. He had betrayed the prior then, and all the community besides.

Mor. Well, let us move him hence: this is no business of ours. [*exeunt Morand, Wovelreid and soldiers, leading out Osterloo*
enter AGNES by the grated door, and discovers Leonora on the ground.

Agn. O holy virgin on the ground, fainting and ill! have the barbarians left her thus? (*chafing her temples and hand*) she begins to revive. It is me, my dearest lady: look up and see me: those men are all gone.

Leo. And Osterloo with them?

Agn. Alas, he is.

Leo. It is fated so. Let me lie where I am: I cannot move yet, my good Agnes.

Agn. Nay, do not yet despair of saving the count.

Leo. (*starting up and catching hold of her eagerly*) How so? is it possible?

Agn. The travellers arrived at the castle, are the imperial ambassador and his train. Night overtook them on the mountains, and they are now making merry in the hall.

Leo. Thank heaven for this! providence has sent him hither. I'll go to him instantly, and conjure him to interpose his authority to save the life of Osterloo. Representing his liege lord, the emperor, the prior dare not disobey his commands, and the gates of the monastery will be opened at his call. Who comes here? let us go.

re-enter MORAND.

Mor. (*to Leonora*) You are revived again: I am glad so see it. Pardon me, lady, that I forgot you in your extremity, and let me conduct you safely to the castle.

Leo. I thank you; but my servants are without.— Let me go. Dont follow me, I pray you.

Mor. Let me support you through the porch, and I'll leave you to their care, since you desire it.

Exeunt Leonora, supported by Morand and Agnes

SCENE III—*a grand hall, prepared for the execution—soldiers are discovered drawn up on each side of the scaffold, with BENEDICT and several of the MONKS front—a bell tolls at measured intervals, with a deep pause between—after which enter MORAND, hanging his head sorrowfully.*

Ben. Is he come forth ?

1st Monk. Hast thou seen him ?

Mor. They are leading him hither, but they move slowly.

1st Monk. Thou hast seen him then ; how does he look now ?

Mor. I cannot tell thee. These few hours have done on him the work of many years : he seems broken and haggarded with age, and his quenched eyes are fixed in their sockets, like one who walks in sleep.

Ben. Alas, alas ! how changed in little time the bold and gallant Osterloo !

1st Monk. Have I not told thee, Morand, that fear will sometimes couch under the brazen helmet as well as the woolen cowl ?

Mor. Fear dost thou call it ! set him this moment in the field of battle, with death threatening him from a hundred points at once, and he would brave it most valiantly.

Ben. *(preventing 1st Monk from answering)*—Hush, brother ! be not so warm, good lieutenant ; we believe what thou sayest most perfectly. The bravest mind is capable of fear, though it fears no mortal man. A brave man fears not man, and an innocent and brave man united, fears nothing.

Mor. Ay, now you speak reason : call it fear then if you will.—But the prior comes ; let us go to our places. *(they arrange themselves—and then enter the PRIOR, with a train of MONKS, who likewise arrange themselves—a pause, in which the bell tolls as before, and enter OSTERLOO, supported by JEROME and PAUL, WOVELREID, and soldiers following)*

Prior. Count Osterloo ; in obedience to the will of heaven, for our own preservation, and the just punishment of guilt, I am compelled with the monks of this

monastery over whom I preside, to see duly executed within the time prescribed, this dismal act of retribution.—You have, I trust, with the help of these holy men, as well as a few short moments would allow, closed your mortal account with heaven: if there be aught that rests upon your mind, regarding worldly concerns which you leave behind you unsettled, let me know your last will, and it shall be obeyed. (*to Jerome, after pausing for an answer*) Dost thou think he understands me?

Jer. Did you hear, my son, what the prior has been saying to you?

Ost. I heard words through a multitude of sounds.

Jer. It was the prior, desiring to know if you have any wishes to fulfil regarding worldly affairs, left behind you unsettled.—Perhaps to your soldiers you may.

Ost. (*interrupting him eagerly and looking wildly round*) My soldiers! are they here?

Jer. Ah, no! they are not here; they are housed for the night in their distant quarters: they will not be here till the setting of to-morrow's sun.

Ost. (*groaning deeply*) To-morrow's sun!

Jer. Is there any wish you would have conveyed to them? are there any of your officers to whom you would send a message or token of remembrance?

Ost. Ye speak again imperfectly, through many ringing sounds.

(*Jerome repeats the question in a slow distinct voice*)

Ost. Ay there is: these, these——(*endeavoring to tear off his cincture and some military ornaments from his dress*) I cannot hit upon these fastenings.

Jer. We'll assist you, my son. (*undoing his cincture or girdle, &c*)

Ost. (*still endeavoring to do it himself*) My sword too, and my daggers.—My last remembrance to them both

Jer. To whom, my lord?

Ost. Both—all of them.

Ben. (*who has kept sorrowfully at some distance, now approaching eagerly*) Urge him no more: his officers will themselves know what names he would

have uttered. (*turning to Osterloo with an altered voice*) Yes, noble count; they shall be given as you desire with your farewell affection to all your brave followers.

Ost. I thank ye.

Jer. And this is all?

Ost. Nay, nay!

Ben. What is there besides?

Prior. There is too much of this: and some sudden rescue may prevent us.

Ben. Nay, reverend father, there is no fear of this: you would not cut short the last words of a dying man?

Prior. And must I be guided by thy admonitions? beware; though Baldwin has not named thee, I know it is thou who art the traitor.

Ben. There is but one object at present to be thought of, and with your leave, reverend father, I will not be deterred from it. (*to Osterloo again in a voice of tenderness*) What is there besides, noble Osterloo, that you would wish us to do?

Ost. There is something.

Ben. What is it, my lord?

Ost. I wot not.

Ben. Then let it rest.

Ost. Nay, nay! this—this——(*pulling a ring from his finger which falls on the ground*) My hands will hold nothing.

Ben. I have found it; and what shall I do with it?

Ost. (*in a faint hurried voice*) Leonora—Leonora.

Ben. I understand you, my lord.

Prior. I am under the necessity, count Osterloo, of saying, your time is run to its utmost limit: let us call upon you now for your last exertion of nature. These good brothers must conduct you to the scaffold.—(*Jerome and Paul support him towards the scaffold, while Benedict retires to a distance, and turns his back to it*)

Jer. Rest upon me, my son, you have but a few paces to go.

Ost. The ground sinks under me; my feet tread upon nothing.

Jer. We are now at the foot of the scaffold, and

there are two steps to mount ; lean upon us more firmly.

Ost. (*stumbling*) It is dark ; I cannot see.

Jer. Alas, my son ! there is a blaze of torches round you. (*after they are on the scaffold*) Now, in token of thy faith in heaven, and forgiveness of all men, raise up thy clasped hands. (*seeing Osterloo make a feeble effort, he raises them for him in a posture of devotion*) And now to heaven's mercy we commit thee. (*Jerome and Paul retire, and two executioners prepare him for the block, and assist him to kneel—he then lays down his head, and they hold his hands while a third executioner stands with the raised axe*)

1st Ex. (*speaking close to his ear*) Press my hand when you are ready for the stroke. (*a long pause*)—He gives no sign.

2d Ex. Stop, he will immediately. (*a second pause*) Does he not ?

1st Ex. No.

Prior. Then give the stroke without it. (*3d executioner prepares to give the stroke, when the IMPERIAL AMBASSADOR rushes into the hall, followed by LEONORA and AGNES, and a numerous train*)

Am. Stop the execution ! in the name of your liege lord the emperor, I command you to stop upon your peril. My lord prior, this is a treacherous and clandestine use of your seignorial power. This noble servant of our imperial master—(*pointing to Osterloo*) I take under my protection ; and you must first deprive an imperial ambassador of life, ere one hair of his head fall to the ground.

Ben. (*running to the scaffold*) Up, noble Osterloo ! raise up thy head ; thou art rescued ; thou art free.

Leo. Rise, noble Osterloo ! dost thou not know the voice that calls thee ?

Ben. He moves not ; he is in a swoon.—(*raises Osterloo from the block whilst Leonora bends over him with anxious tenderness*)

Leo. He is ghastly pale ; yet it surely can be but a swoon. Chafe his hands, good Benedict, while I bathe his temples. (*after trying to restore him*) Oh, no,

no! no change takes place. What thinkest thou of it? is there any life here?

Ben. In truth I know not; this seems to me the fixed ghastly visage of complete death.

Leo. Oh, no, no! he will be restored. No stroke has fallen upon him: it cannot be death. Ha! is not that something? did not his lips move?

Ben. No, lady; you but deceive yourself: they moved not: they are closed for ever.

Leo. (*wringing her hands*) Oh it is so! it is so! after all thy struggles and exertions of despair, this is thy miserable end! alas, alas! thou who didst bear thy crest so proudly in many a well-fought field; this is thy miserable end! (*turning away and hiding her face in the bosom of Agnes*)

Am. (*examining the body more closely*) I think in very truth he is dead.

1st Gentleman of his train. Yes; the face never looks thus, till every spark of life is extinguished.

Am. (*turning fiercely to the prior*) How is this, prior? what sorcery has been here, that your block alone should destroy its victim, when the stroke of the axe has been wanting? what account shall I carry to my master of the death of his gallant general?

Prior. No sorcery hath been practised on the deceased: his own mind has dealt with him alone, and produced the effects you behold. And, when you return to Lewis of Bavaria your master; tell him that his noble general, free from personal injury of any kind, died, within the walls of this monastery, of fear.

Am. Nay, nay, my good prior; put the fool's cap on thine own head, and tell him this tale thyself.—Fear! Osterloo and fear coupled together! when the lion and the fawn are found couching in the same lair, we will believe this.

Prior. All the brothers of the order will attest it.

Am. Away with the testimony of your cowed witnesses! (*beckoning Morand to come near*) Morand, thou art a brave fellow; I have known thee of old.—Thou art the prior's officer indeed; but thou art now under my protection, and shalt be received into the em-

peror's service with encreased rank : speak the truth then, boldly ; how died count Osterloo ?

Mor. In very truth then, my lord, according to my simple thoughts, he died even as the prior has told you.

Am. Out upon thy hireling's tongue ! art thou not ashamed, thyself wearing a soldier's garb, to blast a soldier's fame ? there is no earthly thing the brave Osterloo was ever known to fear.

Mor. You say true, my lord ; and on my sword's point I'll maintain it against any man as stoutly as yourself. But here is a pious monk who will explain to you what I should speak of but lamely.

Jer. With the prior's permission, my lord, if you will retire with me a little while, I'll inform you of this mysterious event, even simply as it happened. And perhaps you will then confess, that, called upon suddenly, under circumstances impressing powerfully the imagination, to put off this mortal frame, and stand forth in that tremendous presence, before which this globe, with all its mighty empires, hangs but as a crisped rain-drop, shivering on the threaded gossamer ; the bravest mind may, if a guilty one, feel that within which is too powerful for human nature to sustain.

Am. Explain it as thou wilt ; I shall listen to thee ; but think not to cheat our imperial master of his revenge for the loss of his gallant general. I shall not fail, my lord prior, to report to him the meek spirit of your christian authority, which has made the general weal of the community subservient to your private revenge ; and another month, I trust, shall not pass over our heads, till a worthier man (*pointing to Benedict*) shall possess this power which you have so greatly abused. Let the body be removed, and laid in solemn state, till it be delivered into the hands of those brave troops, who shall inter it with the honors of a soldier.

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