

THE CREOLE;

OR,

LOVE'S FETTERS.

AN ORIGINAL DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

BY

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"THE WIGWAM," ETC., ETC.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, LYCEUM,
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MAY BE HAD OF ONWHYN, CATHERINE-STREET, STRAND;
BARTH, BRYDGES-STREET: ALL BOOKSELLERS;
AND AT THE THEATRE:

P R E F A C E .

FROM THE LYCEUM PLAYBILL.

" THE dramatic form of composition, more than any other, demands completeness; and it is not with an idea of appending explanation to the picture he has endeavoured to paint, that the writer of the play now presented offers the following extract from an historical work. But in illustration of the state of society in the Isle of France, previously to its becoming a British possession, a few lines from Mr. Pridham's valuable and interesting history of "England's Colonial Empire," may be acceptable, as justifying whatever use the dramatist has made of the recorded prejudices and antipathies of the various classes of residents in the Island:—

" The Creole part of the population made themselves remarkable by the intrepidity they displayed on board the fleets of France, or by the efforts of individual enterprise."

"But the European looked with disdain upon the Creole, who, in turn, regarded the former as an adventurer."

"The Islanders were held in contempt by the poor noblesse of Mauritius, on account of their ignoble extraction."

" It was remarked also, that towards the latter end of the century, the French inhabitants of Mauritius appeared neither independent in their circumstances, nor easy in their minds, though they affected dress and gaiety."

" The condition of the Slave was that of the lowest and most abject degradation. Numbers of these unfortunates had European blood in their veins, being the offspring of *liaisons* between the Planters and their Slaves, but such a pedigree only increased their misfortune."

The unqualified success of this drama, and the kindness with which it has been treated by the whole press, leave the writer nothing to add, except an expression

of his acknowledgments to the artists who have so admirably interpreted his ideas. He has so often had the pleasure of entrusting a drama to the energetic and intelligent management of the Lyceum Theatre, and of witnessing the most satisfactory result, that he has long ceased to have any " first-night" apprehensions, except in regard to his own share in a new production. But well as he had appreciated the intellectual power and artistic skill of the company, the author of " The Creole" had not been prepared for the complete and finished portrait which every performer in the cast contributed to the general effect of the first representation. Something is always allowed, upon such an occasion, for haste, for nervousness, for inexperience in the full bearing and proportion of character; but at the production of the following play no such allowance was needed. To use the words of the journal under the direction of the first dramatist of the day—"Never did a piece of the kind play more completely on the first night. The three acts went, not only swiftly, but with all their variety of involution, smoothly as a ballet."*

It is not to any unusual number of rehearsals (there were, indeed, but six) that this completeness was attributable ; but to the indefatigable exertions of the actors, to all of whom the author begs to express his most sincere thanks, coupled with as sincere a regret that uncontradicted rumour assigns an early termination to the present prosperous management of the theatre. Where all was so admirable, it would be pleasant and easy to bear an appropriate tribute in each case; but this has been so ably done by the various gentlemen connected with the public Journals, that the author prefers leaving it in their hands. He cannot, however,

* "Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper."

deny himself the gratification of saying how much he owes to Mrs. KEELEY'S exquisite personation of the fiery, reckless, kind-hearted Vivandière. The character is a difficult one—more difficult to a first-rate, than to an inferior performer—but its mixed impulses, and double audacities of habit and of heart, are all inimitably given by this accomplished artist.

The author may add—but by no means as matter of boast—that Mrs. Keeley's request that he would write her a play, was made on the morning of Tuesday, March the 16th, at which time one scene only of "The Creole" had been written, and that on the evening of the following Saturday, the completed drama (which is entirely original) was in the theatre.

Percy-street, Bedford-square,
April 14, 1847

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GENERAL MALARTIC (Governor
of the Isle of France MR. KINLOCH.
DAMIRON (a Planter) MR. F. MATTHEWS.
ALPHONSE DE NYON (an Officer
in the Revolutionary Army . MR. LEIGH MURRAY.
HYACINTHE ST. EMILION (ano-
ther Officer) MISS DICKINSON.
ANTONY LATOUR (a Creole) . . MR. EMERY.
BOKES (a Jew) MR. KEELEY.
A NAVAL OFFICER MR. SILVER.
OFFICER IN ATTENDANCE ON
THE GOVERNOR MR. BRADY.
SERVANT TO M. DAMIRON . . . MR. RICHARDSON.
SERVANT TO M. DE NYON . . . MR. ANDREWS.
MDLLE. VIRGINIE DAMIRON . MISS MARY KEELEY.
LOUISE FAURIEL MISS MAY.
BELLONA ST. MARS (a Vivandiere). . . . MRS. KEELEY.

LADIES—Misses Travers, Healy, Hicks, Sidney, Sanders, M. Sanders, Brady, Edgar, Page, E. Healy, Horn, and Hart.

INHABITANTS—Messrs. Hogan, Mark, Askill, Kirk, Charlton, &c., &c.

OFFICERS—Messrs. Gough and Hunt.

Time of the action, one day.

THE
CREOLE; OR, LOVE'S FETTERS.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—*The Scene represents a large open space, known as the " Place d'Armes." Port Louis, Mauritius. A lofty range of mountains in the distance, in some places grassy, in others topped by the projecting rocks. Houses at side, white, and interspersed with trees. As the curtain rises, distant cannon heard.*

Enter DAMIRON and VIRGINIE-

Dami. (*pointing*) Yes,- there she is, that's the vessel; do you see her, my dear, there? (*Virginie looks in the direction he indicates.*) There she comes, with the troops we have expected so long. I confess to you, now that I see all's safe, that I sadly feared she had fallen into the hands of the English. Their cruisers keep us in constant hot water; one never knows when they will be down upon us. But why the deuce don't the fort answer her signal?

[Loud cannon, supposed to be on the island.

Virg. How long will it be before they land?

Dami. Oh! not long, not long. I wonder where our young soldier is, by the bye. He ought to be on the spot to welcome his comrades.

Virg. How little we see of Alphonse, papa.

Dami. Ah! you have noticed that, have you? Yes, true enough, we do see very little of him, and, considering that we are his oldest acquaintances on the island, and considering that I was his father's most intimate friend for years before Master Alphonse de Nyon was born, and considering that when he came to take possession of his estate a month ago I gave him all sorts of information and assistance, and considering that my house cannot be called a dull one, seeing that I

am a very pleasant, amiable, lively old man, and that you are not a very disagreeable young woman, I think the gallant lieutenant might pay us the compliment of spending a little more time in our society.

Virg. Well, papa, you must excuse him for the present. It is a new thing to have a fine estate left to one, and a month is not a very long time to devote to visiting all its corners. If it were mine——

Dami. (aside) Which I heartily hope it will be one of these fine days.

Virg. I should never be at rest until I knew every field, cottage, and garden, and every horse, and dog, and slave I had in the world.

Dami. But he is never on his estate.

Virg. Not ?

Dami. Never. For a day or two after he took possession all was well enough. But in the course of one of his rides he met with somebody—I don't know whom, mind, and, of course, I have no right to inquire—but he met with somebody, and since that meeting I find that he has neglected his estate altogether. He mounts his horse early in the morning, and goes away, nobody knows where, and comes back late in the evening, nobody knows why. I dare say he has discovered that our island produces something else beside sugar, rats, bats, lizards, monkeys, and boa constrictors. Perhaps he has found some pretty slave girl a little too pretty. These young men from Paris are easily caught, but such things don't last. Don't be alarmed for your prospects.

Virg. I am very thankful for your kind designs for my happiness, but could I really suppose Alphonse de Nyon capable of debasing himself by such a liaison as you hint at, I would spurn his hand though it offered me the whole Isle of France.

Dami. When you talk of spurning a hand which, by the way, has never yet been offered you, you do not seem quite aware——

Virg. I assure you, Sir——

Dami. Aware that I owed to this young man's father, and now owe to himself, a sum of money which I shall never be able to pay, and to raise which the sale of every atom of property I have in the world would be insufficient; and that he holds, among the rest of his father's papers, certain bonds and mortgages from me, which give him absolute power over my estate and my person.

Virg. I remember all, Sir; but Alphonse is far too generous, too high-minded, to avail himself of such power.

Dami. Don't suppose I doubt his good intentions; but he is young, confiding, thoughtless, and may be extravagant—such a creditor becomes, spite of himself, more cruel than the very

usurer. I would not buy my own safety at the price of your happiness, but if Alphonse de Nyon should become your husband——

Virg. We shall see, papa; we shall see. Only you must own, you yourself have been trying to damage any little regard I might fancy I felt for him, by telling me your wicked suspicions. But here he is, to confute them all.

Enter ALPHONSE,

Dami. Ah! young truant! (*ALPHONSE raises his hat and greets them cordially.*) Did the cannon disturb you in casting up your account books? or in purifying your tubs of molasses? Your industry does you so much credit, that your friends must forgive you for neglecting them.

Alph. Don't say neglecting them, my dear sir, though I own I have been remiss. Still (*politely to VIRGINIE*), the loss to myself has been so great, that I——

Dami. Come, come, no compliments; the Jacobins have denounced them in Paris itself. But I fear you are but half a revolutionist, citizen soldier.

Alph. But half, indeed, sir; and less than half, if to be more implies Jacobinism.

Dami. Ha, you are a philanthropist, and repudiate the guillotine; thinking, like an excellent Christian and soldier, that throats should be cut only with the sword. Had you remained in France——

Alph. Who could remain in France, my dear Damiron? A human shambles, with fiends for the butchers? I am no bigot. Born an aristocrat, I saw but too clearly the crimes of my order. I saw that we were dancing on the volcano. I saw millions ground down to hopeless misery that a few might madden through fevered revels, almost less to be envied than the squalid despair which they mocked. Then the volcano awoke, and hideous was the retribution. At first, it was justice—wild justice; but the doom of still wilder guilt. For myself, though my order was no more, my title abolished, I could not condemn the struggles of a nation, which, shattering her dungeons, and shivering her chains, bade man, the image of his Maker, stand erect in the presence of his brother clay. But when a people, frantic in its new found liberty, turned to vengeance—not upon its oppressors, who had fled from the storm—but upon the guiltless and the helpless, when I saw the grey hairs of age, the golden curls of the child, and the bright tresses of woman, mangled day after day by the accursed axes of a rabble, my very heart sickened, Damiron, and I left my country for ever. But I am a Frenchman still, and my arm and my sword are France's to the last.

Dami. You intend, I suppose, to join your regiment, which is now arriving?

Alph. I am here to meet it; and as we shall, in all probability, be stationed here for some time, I shall hope for the happiness of cultivating an acquaintance to which I owe so many advantages.

[*They exchange bows.*]

Dami. But the superintendence of your estate will doubtless continue to occupy you. Had your father expected that you would be so (*ironically*) prudent and careful, he would hardly have imposed so many restrictions upon the disposal of your property.

Alph. To what restrictions do you refer ?

Dami. Oh, you must study his will. For example, fearing you might bring idle notions of the rights of man—is not that the phrase?—from France with you, he wisely provided against your emancipating your slaves.

Alph. But is there no such power reserved to me?

Dami. None. You are absolutely precluded from setting any of them free. I suppose your excellent father feared that, with your fashionable, new-fangled notions of liberty, you could be insensible of the value of such property. But you are so completely a man of business that you may safely be trusted.

Alph. I regret that hitherto my exertions have not been very assiduous.

Dami. Don't be modest, fame does you more justice.

Virg. Hush, papa ! (*to him.*)

Dami. Nonsense. Yes, my good young friend, we are rejoiced to hear such good accounts of you.

Alph. (*aside*) Aha!

Dami. That you devote hour after hour every day, to a pursuit which——

Alph. (*aside*) Which enraptures me!

Dami. To cares which most young men would think wearisome.

Alph. (*aside*) I rather doubt that. What does he mean ?

Dami. But you will be richly rewarded for so much attention.

Alph. (*aside*) I *am* richly rewarded, and I hope to be rewarded still more highly.

Dami. Though it is not often that a military man has such a taste.

Alph. (*aside*) The army is sadly belied then.

Dami. I trust you do not meet with many difficulties.

Alph. (*with meaning*) Yes, with several.

Dami. Ah! patience will overcome them, if you go on with your present energy.

Alph. (*aside*) I cannot discover his drift.

Virg. Papa is jesting with you, Lieutenant de Nyon; before you arrived, he had been complaining bitterly that you

neglected your fine property, and spent your time in—in riding about the island.

Alph. (aside) I have been observed, then, it appears.
(*Aloud*) Indeed, Mademoiselle Damiron, I own—

Enter LATOUR, observing them.

Dami. Yes, that's it; a man who owns the estate you do, ought to look after it. If you were a poor man, or a man who had no property to lose; such a man as——

Latour. (advancing between DAMIRON and ALPHONSE)
As Antony Latour, for example, here present. Confess, M. Damiron, that I was the unhappy Helot you were about to expose, for the instruction of this young Spartan.

Dami. Well, you are not a model, it must be admitted, M. Antony.

Latour. Except in personal appearance, you were going to add. I salute you, Mdlle Damiron (*she bows haughtily*), and you, also, Lieutenant. The Isle of France ought to pension me handsomely, for my services in playing the part of an awful warning to her inhabitants.

Alph. The warning will be lost upon me, I fear, until I am made aware of your offence, and its punishment.

Latour. Sir, I am in debt.

Alph. Is that all ?

Latour. All, sir! No, sir, it is not all. I am haunted.

Alph. Haunted!

Latour. Yes, sir, and by a ghost which obstinately declines to be laid in the Red Sea.

Alph. Why?

Latour. Because, being a Jew, he is not on speaking terms with the ghosts of the Egyptians. Here he is.

Enter BOKES.

Don't be frightened, Bokes, I'm not dead.

Bokes. (with irritation) I wish you were dead, I wish the whole world was dead. I wish I was dead myself. I do. I wish I may die if I don't.

Latour. Bokes, you are ungrateful to Providence, which forwarded you to this delightful island, and then gave you such a debtor as myself.

Bokes. Damn the island, and all the people upon it. In course I don't mean you, M. Damiron, because you're an honourable man, and pays your way; but——

Latour. But you mean me, because I owe you four thousand francs or so.

Bokes. Which, it's my opinion, I shall never see a stiver of in this here world.

Latour. Well, do you know, it's rather my opinion too ? But that ought not to make you forget the delicacies of life.

Bokes. If *you'd* have forgot the delicacies of life, you

wouldn't have wanted my money. It's all gone in wines, and liqueurs, and ices, I believe.

Latour. Then you believe a great lie, for at least half of it is gone in gambling.

Bokes. There now ! he owns it, he says it, he avouches it, and there's never a blush on that copper-coloured Creole skin of his.

Latour. (*suddenly changing his careless, arrogant manner, for extreme passion*) Hark you, sir, as you value your own skin. (*In this speech, the bitterness of the Creole is made apparent.*) You have contrived to sneak into an island, where it is the custom of certain persons (*he looks round*) to treat the Creole as if his blood were not far better than their own. But no taunt (*sinking his voice*) from a Jew, if he prizes anything except his gold—such a trifle as his neck, for example. But (*recovering his ease*) I ought to apologise for allowing him to irritate me (*he bows slightly*) into passion.

Bokes. Well, I think you ought. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings ; but four thousand francs is a deal of money to lose. [ALPHONSE and VIRGINIE converse apart.

Virg. Papa, Lieutenant de Nyon thinks that, as he has been established in the island some time, it would be hospitable if he were to give a ball to the officers of his regiment on their arrival.

Bokes. It'll cost a deal of money. [They laugh.

Dami. With all my heart. But, as his own house is hardly adapted for such a thing, had he not better take ours ?

Alph. You are most kind. Let us talk about it.

[DAMIRON, ALPHONSE, and VIRGINIE converse.

Bokes. Now, that was a stupid offer for a man of sense to make. Why couldn't he let the young fellow have his own plates and glasses broke, eh, Mr. Latour ?

Latour. Everybody has not your mixture of courtesy, liberality, and prudence, Mr. Bokes.

Bokes. Now, that's said very prettily; and I take it kind in you, Mr. Latour, after what's passed—I do.

Latour. (*aside*) With all his avarice and cunning, the little animal's easily softened by a few smooth words. If I didn't hate him as a creditor, I should call him kind-hearted. (*Aloud*) The fact is, my friend, you and I are a good deal in the same boat. People here despise me as a Creole, and you as a Jew.

Bokes. Despise me! I'll take any wager, now, that I could buy up the estates of both them men as stands bowing and talking there, about dancing and nonsense. Come !

Latour. (*aside*) In buying one you buy the other, as I happen to know, and as they shall find I do. (*To him*) But you have not much money in the island, I think.

Bokes. Do you ? I don't know what you call much, but

I've got half a million of francs, and more to that, in the island, if you call that much.

Latour. Half a million of francs! (*Aside*) And no way I can get at it (*smiling*). It seems horrible. I *must* devise something.

(DAMIRON, VIRGINIE, and ALPHONSE *advance*.)

Alph. Then that is settled. The ball to take place to-night.

Latour. May I venture to hope for the honour of Mdlle. Damiron's hand early in the evening ?

[*She looks at her father.*]

Dami. We will talk about that when the invitations are issued. (*Aside to ALPHONSE*) We don't want him at all.

Latour. (*Biting his lip, but bowing, and then coming down*) Insult again ! But the time will come.

Alph. But unless there is any other objection than his birth—

Dami. We think *that* enough here. But as you please.

Alph. Then I should wish to show him some courtesy. Monsieur Latour, you have only anticipated me—I was about to ask you to favour us with your presence.

Latour. I thank you sincerely, sir. (*Aside*) If I find he intends courtesy, I may not forget it.

Bokes. Nobody asks me ; but I suppose I may come.

Dami. Certainly; unless Monsieur Latour objects.

Bokes. Oh! he won't object. He likes me. We love one another like brothers .

Latour. Cain and Abel, for choice.

[*Cannon heard again.*]

Dami. The troops have arrived ! Let us go down and see them disembark.

Alph. I will remain. For the moment, adieu !

[*Exeunt DAMIRON and VIRGINIE.*]

Latour. Unless you are otherwise occupied, I should be glad of a word with you, Monsieur de Nyon.

Alph. By all means.

Bokes. I'll bet he's going to try to borrow money of him, and t'other's just the sort of fellow to lend it. If I don't go, he'll appeal to me for a character, and then I shall be let in. (*Going.*)

Latour. Bokes—

Bokes. (*To him*) No; I dare say you're solvent and responsible, and strictly honourable, and your name's as good as the Bank of France; but I haven't time to stop and tell Mr. De Nyon so just now.

Latour. You mistake.

Bokes. Do I ? So much the better for him—and I'll go, before the mistake's made into the true story. [*Exit.*]

Latour. I shall venture to speak to you, Monsieur de Nyon, with some freedom; although what you have heard here is not likely to increase your wish for my acquaintance.

Alph. (smiling) If you allude to pecuniary matters, remember that I have lived among the luxurious prodigality of Paris. If—but I hope you do not—you refer to any class prejudices, pray remember, also, that in the army of the Republic we do not ask by what right a man bears arms, but how he bears them.

Latour. The answer I expected. (*With his former tone of ease.*) You appear to be on the most intimate terms with this worthy Monsieur Damiron, Lieutenant ?

Alph. Naturally, is it not so ? He was my father's friend.

Latour. He was ; and you are doubtless aware that everything Damiron has in the world is your own.

Alph. Mine !

Latour. At least, you have so much that he is very anxious you should have a little more. When you have time to examine your box of deeds, you will find an excellent reason why Damiron should be attentive to you; and a still better—why his daughter should do her best to secure your affections.

Alph. My affections! Mdlle. Damiron!

Latour. Unless you are blinded by some other light, (*significantly*) one would say that you have less penetration than is usual to men of your age.

Alph. They are both very obliging; but I have not noticed any especial assiduity.

Latour. Notice it now. I will tell you one thing. Their observation of yourself and your movement is far more vigilant.

Alph. Ha! is it so? And what do you suppose is the result ?

Latour. What should it be? Your daily visit, and protracted stay at a cottage, *not* upon your own estate, have not escaped the knowledge of so careless a person as myself, who have no concern in your affairs. Is it likely that interested parties are worse informed?

Alph. And by what right has any one played spy upon me ?

Latour. In Damiron's case, the right of self-preservation.

Alph. I do not comprehend.

Latour. Not? May I speak out?

Alph. I entreat it.

Latour. Why, Damiron, of course, discovered that there was a lady in the case. His next step, and his comfort, was to discover that marriage between that lady and you was out of the question.

Alph. Why ?

Latour. (surprised) Why?

Alph. Yes. Knowing what you do know, you are, I suppose, aware that she is young, beautiful, and accomplished. I have no reason for concealing from you that I love her with an ardour——

Latour. You astonish me!

Alph. What?—is there anything astonishing in a man's loving such a person as I have described.

Latour. No; but are you ignorant, then. (*Aside*) If she *should* have kept him in the dark! (*Aloud*) How, may I ask, were you introduced to this lady?

Alph. By one of those simple accidents, almost too commonplace to tell. I was riding one morning on the verge of my own estate, when, seeing a smooth piece of turf extending down a forest avenue, I thoughtlessly gave my horse spur and rein, and dashed down the path at full speed. Halfway in the race, a white object, hitherto unseen, rose, and startled him. He swerved violently, and I, who was riding carelessly, was flung upon the turf, slightly stunned by the fall, but not hurt. When I recovered, I found the white object was the dress of a young lady, who was sedulously sprinkling me with water—and there is the whole story.

Latour. Then this young lady, at whose feet you threw yourself so early in your acquaintance, is the person you visit so constantly?

Alph. Certainly.

Latour. May I ask her name?

Alph. There is no reason for concealment. Her name is Louise Fauriel.

Latour. (*aside*) She has kept to the truth, so far.

Alph. Do you know the name, or the owner?

Latour. Both. But where does she reside?

Alph. In a cottage not far from the scene of my accident. I insisted on attending her home—she refused—I pressed it, and succeeded. All that remains to be told is, that I love her to madness.

Latour. And intend to prove your madness by marriage?

Alph. I do.

Latour (*aside*). This is very strange! (*Aloud*) Pray did you, like a *preux chevalier*, disclose your name, estate, and prospects, or——

Alph. No, I am ashamed to say that I dared to doubt her—that I was eager to be loved for myself alone—and that I described myself as a young and fortuneless traveller, named Henri Briseux. She loves me; of that I have been assured by her own sweet lips. But even while making that avowal, she declared, with tears, that our union was impossible.

Latour. (*aside*). That is true!

Alph. She has hinted that a dreadful barrier exists between us, which she dares not indicate more clearly; and, but that in the earnestness of my love I have vowed that all barriers shall be overcome, I should despair of my heart's destiny.

Latour. You need not. I will ensure you against failure. Nay, your success shall be immediate.

Alph. You!

Latour. You doubt me—not unreasonably.

Alph. Nay, not you ; but the promise is so large.

Latour. If the performance fall short of it, stamp me as a braggart—join in the popular scorn of the Creole. This hour, before your soldiers are released from duty, you will hear of me. *[Exit.*

Alph. If it should be so. A strange promise; but he spoke with apparent sincerity. Dearest Louise, to love her, to be loved by her, were ecstasy enough for a life ; yet it will be no mean joy when, with her white hand upon my heart, I tell her to whom she has yielded her own—when I hail her as mistress of yonder noble estate, the noblest in the island, yet not too rich an offering to lay at her feet. (*Distant march.*) Ah ! (*He goes to the terrace.*) The troops are forming on the beach. I will join my old companions there.

[As the music grows louder, ALPHONSE exit, and scene closes.

SCENE II.—*Interior of a cottage.*

Enter LOUISE—she has been weeping. She buries her face in her hands, and sobs bitterly.

Louise. No more—no more—to see him no more—slight words—slight words—but an agony—a despair. To see him no more—to listen no more for the light step that came as a signal to the pulse to dance in joy—to meet no more the bright and ardent glance that sparkled with the delight it was bringing—to hear no more the gentle words that I loved so, that I loved for the love they spoke, and for the tones of music in which they fell—no more—oh ! Heaven, have mercy on me ! (*Weeps passionately.*) But the doom is spoken—the dreadful barrier looms hideously upon me. I dared not disclose it to him—I could not bear that he should learn it from my lips—that I should see him shudder—it might be, repulse me from his arms.—No ! that he could never do—not that, not that ! But to have told him—to have seen him stricken into mourning silence, and turning hopelessly away, while I—I—with a brain of fire, and lips of ashes, should have avowed my shame—(*wildly*) it could not be—the sacrifice could not be demanded from a wretched girl. (*Moaningly*) No more—no more.

Enter LATOUR (unobserved by her.)

Latour. (*aside*) Tears ! As I expected. Let me try my powers of drying them. *Mdlle. Fauriel* (*she raises her head, but gazes on him without speaking*) I have the honour of bringing a message to you.

Louise. (*in a melancholy voice*) To me ?

Latour. A message which it will probably give you pleasure to hear.

Louise. (*despairingly*) Pleasure to me ?

Latour. I trust so (*LOUISE relapses into indifference*) when I mention the name of Monsieur Henri Briseux.

Louise. (*springs to her feet*) Of him! No.—In mercy's name, do *not* speak of him. Leave me, Monsieur Latour, leave me to my misery.

Latour. On the contrary, I would separate you from it.

Louise. You have seen him, Monsieur Latour. You have told him all. Is it not so? Do not deceive one who has no means of redress or revenge, let who will injure her.

Latour. I have told him nothing.

Louise. Nothing?

Latour. On my honour—you, at least, will not sneer at the honour of a Creole. But we have no time for talk. Will you accompany me to the town? I am charged to introduce you to a friend.

Louise. I have no friends.

Latour. More than you know of. But this is a friend of my own—M. de Nyon.

Louise. M. de Nyon—the name is familiar.

Latour. (*aside*) It ought to be.

Louise. The new owner?—the—(*shuddering*)

Latour. The young proprietor of the splendid estate of L'Etoile. (*significantly*)

Louise. (*with an expression of terror*) Must I go? (*helplessly*) Must I go, M. Latour?

Latour. Allow me to be your escort.

Louise. Cannot—will not—another day—to-morrow—I am very sad—very ill—

Latour. You will regret postponement.

Louise. (*in terror*) I will go.

Latour. Right.

Louise. In a few moments I—

Latour. I will wait you in the garden.

Louise. (*passionately*) I was wrong, I was wrong to say there was no comfort in the intensity of my grief—this meeting—this humiliation—dreaded so long, seem trifles now. Wretched—most wretched! [*Exit.*]

Latour. This meeting will be strange. Two persons at more singular cross purposes have hardly met. But whether one or both will thank me for the introduction remains to be seen. The proud blood of the Frenchman, and the fiery current which animates our pretty friend here, may both blaze out with a fury which will make the experiment hazardous. But we shall see—we shall see. If matters go as I have planned, there will fall to my share two very delightful things—money and revenge! [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—(*Same as first.*) *Music heard, gradually nearer. Then a rush upon the stage by spectators of the*

paraded troops—native), in their picturesque dresses—and group right and left. Then, more leisurely, the respectable inhabitants, with slates attending upon them. When the stage is nearly filled, enter, as at the head of soldiers, HYACINTH ST. EMILION, with his sword drawn. He makes signals, and the troops enter, and are drawn up at the back—stand at ease. Amid the bustle, DAMIRON and VIRGINIE enter, and take their places. Then ALPHONSE enters, and HYACINTHE rushes down to salute him.

Alph. Welcome to the Isle of France !

Hyac. Thank you, my friend—thank you! Your Isle of France is charming; but, by all the Saints we have blotted out of the calendar, after such a voyage as we have had, I don't think we should have complained if we had landed, by mistake, at the Isle of Devils.

Alph. We have been impatient for your arrival.

Hyac. The impatience was mutual, I can tell you. I hate the sea, and ships, and everything about them! It's a fine thing to be able to lift up your foot with a certainty of finding a place to put it down upon. There—there—once more I tread as firmly as if I were in the Place de Caroussel.

Alph. And what news from France ?

Hyac. Oh! I don't know. Vulgar, vulgar—all vulgar—cutting off heads, and abolishing Sundays, and I don't know what. Ask the other fellows—I've no time to waste on such things. What sort of women have you here ?

Alph. Angels!

Hyac. Cieux ! what a change from those of Paris ! But, do you know, I think I like the Paris breed best—I've rather a prejudice against angels.

Alph. We shall please you. Let me introduce you to some of my oldest friends here.

Hyac. Old angels ? *(laughing.)*

Alph. No—no. Come here. *(Takes him up to DAMIRON and VIRGINIE, and introduces him.)* The most thoughtless and the least heartless of my comrades.

Hyac. Ah! that is unfair. But to the second part of the charge I must plead guilty. Since my introduction to Mdlle. Damiron, I am utterly heartless. *(VIRGINIE smiles and bows: the others laugh.)* If she is one of the angels, I retract what I said against them. But I suppose the young lady is your conquest ?

Alph. Not at all. Take your chance.

[They go up closer, and talk to VIRGINIE.]

Dami. But I miss somebody. Where is that dashing little lady with the saucy swagger, and the merry laugh who has amused us so much ?

[BELLONA'S voice heard singing, "Cadet Rouselle e³is maisons," &c.]

Enter BELLONA, dressed as a Vivandiere, very smart and military.

Bellona. Here she is, most respectable civilian, and delighted to contribute to the happiness of yourself or any other friend, (*gravely*) supposing him to be a friend of France. Lieutenant Alphonse, I am charmed to see you again. I have kept the manners and morals of our regiment in tolerable order, but I wanted you sadly; (*confidentially*) the notions of the younger men are not quite what they ought to be, you see, upon several subjects. Lieutenant Hyacinthe!

Hyac. (*looking round*) Bellona!

Bellona. Approach me, if you please.

Hyac. (*Laughing, and to Virginie*) She is despotic, you observe.

[*Comes up to BELLONA.*]

Bellona. (*severely*) What are your intentions in regard to that young person you are talking to?

Hyac. Strictly honourable. She's rich.

Bellona. You have leave. (*HYACINTHE laughs and returns to VIRGINIE. BELLONA suddenly returns to her usual vivacity.*) So, this is the Isle of France. I respect it for its very name. I say, Alphonse, we have had such a race for our lives.

Alph. You!

Bellona. I, and the regiment, and the ship—in fact, all of us.

Alph. Who has been chasing you?

Bellona. Our natural enemies, of course.

Alph. The English?

Bellona. Oh, don't mention them! How I do hate them!

Alph. I did not hear of this.

Bellona. Well, it's not pleasant to talk about, but you ought to be *au fait* at the history of the regiment. You see, one afternoon during the voyage, I was lying in a hammock they had hung for me on deck, that I might keep my eye upon the soldiers. I was mending my model of the guillotine here (*shows a silver ornament*)—what a fine thing the guillotine is!—and I was nursing a poor dear little baby that was born on board, when I saw the English flag in the distance.

Dami. That's where I like to see it—in the extreme distance.

Bellona. I shouted at the captain—the captain shouted at the first lieutenant—the first lieutenant shouted at the second lieutenant—he shouted at the men—the men shouted at one another—and, in short, everybody shouted at everybody.

Hyac. It's a way they have in our navy. I think it's vulgar, but I suppose it's useful.

Bellona. You be quiet—you shouted as much as anybody. Well, out came the telescopes, and we soon made out that our

enemy was a celebrated English cruiser. So we crowded all sail, and bore away as fast as we could.

Dami. Why the vessel there carries nearly twice as many guns as any of the English cruisers.

Bellona. That was just it. We agreed that it would be treason to France to risk the loss of all our guns against such a miserable handful. So away we went. But the cruiser was alive, and in a few minutes we found that she, too, was crowding all sail to chase us. Away we flew, tearing through the blue water like a frightened sea monster, and flinging the spray aside till it fell like the roar of a cataract. But after us came the cruiser, swift, steady, and spiteful as a hawk, and it was easy to see that she was rapidly gaining upon us. On we raced, and raced. Presently came a flash, and a puff of white smoke, and then the roar of a gun, and a cannon ball went splashing along the water. "The next won't miss," said the Captain, and sure enough he was right. Another flash, and puff, and roar, and down came our maintop gallant mast upon deck, as if it had fallen from the clouds. "Oh! my blessed baby," said I, "you'll be christened at Portsmouth and educated on beer."

Alph. However, you escaped.

Bel. Yes; but however we escaped I don't know, for the cruiser kept on throwing us those infernal *bon bons*, until the light shone through our sails in a most remarkable manner, while she gained upon us so terribly that I could see clusters of half-naked brawny-looking men, with cutlasses in their hands, clinging to the shrouds and chains, and obviously intending to honour us with their particularly unwelcome presence on deck. So I ran down stairs, or what d'ye call it, put baby to bed, and got a blunderbuss.

Dami. You, a blunderbuss!

Bel. Yes; I wasn't going to Portsmouth, without fighting for it, I can tell you. While I was tucking up baby, and kissing it, and tying its night gown for the last time, as I thought, all of a sudden darkness came on—a sea fog swallowed us all up—and when it cleared away there was no cruiser to be seen, and so here we are. (*Sings, and takes a step or two to the music, "Cadet Rouselle a trois enfans, &c."*)

Hyac. Who is this? Another angel of the island?

Enter BOKES, hastily.

Bokes. I won't stay in this island. The island's a disgrace to the ocean, and that's all about it. I wish it was sunk for twenty, or five-and-twenty minutes, under the water.

Bel. That's treason to France, you good-for-nothing little creature! Who are you, and what's the matter with you?

Bokes. And who are you as asks, and why ain't your petticoats longer?

Bel. What's that to you? What harm has the island done you, and what harm have my petticoats done you?

Bokes. Curse the island.

Bel. Energetic, but not explicit.

Bokes. I have been half killed.

Bel. Who has been fool enough to do things by halves?

Bokes. A woman.

Bel. It's not the general fault of our sex. What woman?

Bokes. A Malagash, they call her, whatever that means.

Dami. I advise you, my friend, to leave the Malagash women alone.

Bokes. And why the deuce couldn't you tell me so before, instead of after?

Bel. What was your offence.

Bokes. Nothing. I lost my way.

Bel. Ah! that's often an excuse for a gentleman's being found where he has no business.

Bokes. So, seeing a woman sitting on a bit of wood, I bawled to her, to know where I was. She took no notice, so I pulled her dress—I call it dress, but it was nothing but an old sheet. The moment I touched her, up she flew—out came a knife, and if I hadn't run harder than I ever ran in all my life, I should have forgotten all my complaints in about five minutes. She followed me a long way, and I knew she meant to murder me.

Dami. She will. You have inflicted what is the deadliest insult in the eyes of one of these Malagash women—you have touched her dress. Make your mind easy—there is no doubt on the matter—she'll kill you.

Bokes. She won't, for I'll leave the island, and throw myself into the hands of the English. One good thing about them English is, that though they bully you themselves, they won't let anybody else do it.

Dami. I may as well inform you, that if you are detected in the slightest communication with an English vessel, the governor will hang you.

Bokes. What! without a trial?

Dami. No; there'll be a trial whether the rope is strong enough.

Bokes. Then what am I to do? I musn't be killed. I'm a rich man, and I can't afford to die.

Bel. Yes, yes, be extravagant for once.

Bokes. You mind your own business.

Bel. Listen to me, you dissatisfied wretch! The people here can't protect you, and the English shan't. I will.

Bokes. You!

Bel. I. In the name of France, I take you into alliance I annex you.

Bokes. Thank you. I accept your offer.

Bel. Henceforth, then, you are under the flag of France; and whoever kills you will incur her displeasure.

Bokes. And mine, most heartily. What am I to do ?

Bel. Keep close to me, and obey orders.

Enter LATOUR.

Latour. Still here. I can hardly prevail on her to remain with me. I must hasten the introduction. Lieutenant de Nyon!

Alph. Ha! returned! (*Comes down to him: the others draw back, speaking in groups.*) You have seen her ?

Latour. I have.

Alph. And where is she ?

Latour. Close at hand.

Alph. Let me hurry to her——

Latour. That were to break her commands. I will conduct her to you.

Alph. Dear Louise! Then be speedy, my friend.

Latour. (*aside*) The crisis of the experiment. It is like waiting the throw of the dice, after you have called. Now !
[*Exit.*]

Hyac. (*comes down*) You seem excited.

Alph. My dear Hyacinthe, I am expecting the presence of one whom I love better than life itself.

Virg. (*to HYACINTHE*) What is disturbing your friend ?

Hyac. Nothing. He is merely expecting a lady to whom he tells me he is deeply attached.

Virg. Attached ! (*In a low voice*) Papa——

Dami. Silence, my love! I am attending.

[*Enter LATOUR with LOUISE. LOUISE shrinks tremblingly back, but DAMIRON and VIRGINIE see her.*]

Ha! a load is off my mind. No fear, then !

Virg. (*smiles, as satisfied; then gravely*) Yet, how disgraceful, this public recognition !

Dami. Hush!

Louise. Which—which is my—my——

Latour. De Nyon!

[*ALPHONSE advances. As he does so LOUISE is brought forward a few steps before she looks in his face: then, suddenly recognising him, she gazes, astounded.*]

Alph. Louise!

Louise. That, Monsieur de Nyon!

Latour. One moment. Everything in form. Mdlle. Louise Fauriel, I have the honour of pointing out to you your MASTER. Monsieur Alphonse de Nyon, permit me to present you with your SLAVE.

Alph. Slave! Are you mad?

Latour. Your slave, Monsieur de Nyon. Accident prevented her meeting you on your arrival. You know how, and why—the secret has since been kept.

Alph. A slave!

Louise. That Monsieur de Nyon! (*faintly*). Henri (*with piteous reproach*), should you have done this?

Dami. The poor girl is certainly your property, De Nyon. The proofs are among your papers.

[*BELLONA has come down, and looks with interest at each, and with compassion at LOUISE.*

Alph. A slave! Yet—yet—I—Louise!

Louise. (*tremulous, but hoping that he is going to embrace her, half advances; but he draws himself up haughtily. She stops, and presses her hand suddenly upon her brow.*) I had forgotten—THE SLAVE'S PLACE IS AT HER MASTER'S FEET!

[*With an hysteric cry, she falls at his feet. BELLONA rushes forward to raise her as the Drop descends.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A handsome apartment in the house of ALPHONSE DE NYON. Table with fruits, flowers, and cut glasses. He is seated with wine near him.*

Alph. Why, why did she deceive me? Why leave me to frame, in the buoyant subtlety of love, a thousand imaginary obstacles to our union, obstacles over each of which, in its turn, I could meditate and triumph, while the dreadful truth remained to annihilate at a blow all strength, all hope. A slave! My slave! I have here (*takes up papers*) the accursed proof which separates us for ever, while declaring her irrevocably mine. The slave whose beauty, whose grace, whose intellect—charms that might intoxicate the very soul of the prostrate lover, exulting in the thought that they were for him alone—the slave, whom the law pronounces incapable of uttering the marriage vow, the slave is mine! And such is the end of my day dream.

Enter BELLONA.

Bel. How melancholy he looks! It does him credit (*tries to sing, but her voice changes to a cry*), "Cadet Rouselle est bon enfant," &c. No, it's no use. Lieutenant!

Alph. You here!

Bel. Why, where would you have me be? Who was there

to take care of that poor girl but me, when all the rest of you stood up as coldly as if the beautiful creature lying on the ground wasn't made of flesh and blood, and much better flesh and blood than most of those who were too proud to help her. Who was there to bring her here ?

Alph. Here!

Bel. And where else ? Whose roof has a right to shelter her, but your own ? For that matter, she won't want shelter long, I think, if her poor heart is to go on beating at the rate it has kept for the last hour, to say nothing of her eyes, which are trying to drown themselves (*half crying all this time*).

Alph. And my name, does she mention that ? But don't tell me. What is the knowledge to me ?

Bel. I tell you what, Lieutenant; my opinion is, that everybody is behaving very ill to this girl; and, and (*struggling to regain her usual off-hand manner*) I won't allow it—at least, for the honour of the regiment, I won't allow you to have any share in the matter.

Alph. Nobody has so much cause to complain as myself.

Bel. (*regaining her sauciness*) Of course, that is the belief of every man who misconducts himself. Oh, it's no use your looking angrily at me. You forget that I once looked Robespierre himself full in his ugly face, and I'm alive to tell it.

Alph. I cannot jest with you, Bellona.

Bel. I shouldn't advise it, Lieutenant.

Alph. You do not understand the affair.

Bel. Do I not ? I own it's difficult to understand a story that a poor creature tells you in a passion of sobs, but one woman has great helps in trying to comprehend another.

Alph. Louise, then, has confided in you ?

Bel. That's right, call her Louise, and I shall have hopes for you and for her. Yes, she has told me everything.

Alph. How she deceived me, concealing the fact that she was my slave?

Bel. How you deceived her, concealing the fact that you were her master.

Alph. On my part, the concealment was an instinct of love.

Bel. And on her's, the instinct of nature, grateful for that love. Come, De Nyon, do justice to her character and your own. You loved; but in the very outset you dared to doubt, and to satisfy that unworthy distrust you forged a falsehood. Had you spoken the truth, all your suffering, and her's, would have been saved.

Alph. You plead earnestly for her, but not half so earnestly as her advocate here (*touches his heart*).

Bel. Trust to both counsellors then, and all may be well.

[*Servant announces " Monsieur LATOUR."*

And (*in a lower voice*) do not trust to *that* counsellor, or nothing will be well.

Alph. You are deceived ; his intentions are good.

Bel. I don't know ; but good intentions are the pavement of a certain place, and (*aside*) I shouldn't care if Monsieur Latour went to survey his own paving. I should like to know what he is come about; and what's more I *will* know. (*Aloud*) Adieu, for the present, Lieutenant.

[*Sings as she goes out, " Cadet Rouselle a trois belles sœurs," &c.*

Enter LATOUR.

Latour. I do not know whether I am welcome.

Alph. Be seated. I have not much cordiality to spare for anybody, as you will conjecture.

Latour. (*sits*) Can I serve you further in the affair in which you have done me the honour to consult me ?

Alph. What possible service can you, or any other mortal, render me in—in—such a matter ?

Latour. (*with an affectation of surprise*) You surprise me! I must have misunderstood the words you used this morning.

Alph. To what do you refer ? Circumstances may have changed with me, but I have nothing to retract—nothing to forget.

Latour. Then, forgive me, if I understood you to say you loved this girl.

Alph. Loved ! At least there is no change there.

Latour. But this morning your thoughts went even beyond love; or, as some would say, not so far; you spoke of marriage.

Alph. Assuredly! I looked forward to an union with Mdlle. Fauriel as the one object for which life was dear.

Latour. That idea you have given to the winds ?

Alph. Such a question from *you* ! Do you ask me if I have resigned the idea of marrying Louise Fauriel ?

Latour. That is my inquiry.

Alph. The—the—slave ?

Latour. Is her state of slavery the obstacle, Monsieur de Nyon

Alph. Is it not an insurmountable one ?

Latour. I seldom believe in insurmountable obstacles. Not in this, at all events. For argument's sake, suppose it surmounted—would the proud blood of France forget the past, forgive the absence of pedigree, and rest satisfied with youth, beauty, and love ?

Alph. Gladly! oh, most gladly! To call LOUISE my wife,

I would defy the prejudices of a world. But why present an impossibility? Louise Fauriel is a slave.

Latour. You are her master—her sole irresponsible owner. Why not enfranchise her? An oath, and a stroke of the pen will do it. Louise is free, and then if you can induce her to assume another chain—

Alph. Unhappily, by the will of my father, I am precluded from enfranchising a slave for five years to come. I am powerless.

Latour. (*aside*) I am perfectly aware of the fact—all goes well! (*To him*) That indeed destroys hope. (*Affects to consider*) Yet—yet—I—a suggestion crosses my brain—I hardly know whether—

Alph. Speak!

Latour. Can you trust me, De Nyon?

Alph. I am prepared to execute anything you can propose, provided it be consistent with honour.

Latour. Even the Creole (*bitterly*) would propose nothing dishonourable, Monsieur de Nyon.

Alph. Speak, I beg of you.

Latour. (*aside*) Now my project trembles in the balance. One grain of enthusiasm, or one grain of suspicion will turn either scale. (*To him*) You would enfranchise Louise Fauriel, Monsieur de Nyon, but your father's will prevents you. I once had some slaves, but, unfortunately, having no father's will to show, they became the property of the creditors to whom I disposed of them.

Alph. And why tell me this?

Latour. To show you that I have absolute power over any slave I may possess. Suppose, for a moment—and do not start at the idea—that Louise were mine.

Alph. Your's?

Latour. I repeat it—you are surely not boy enough to be terrified by words?

Alph. Proceed, Sir.

Latour. Suppose she were mine—absolutely, unconditionally—so far as documents go—otherwise, my power would be insufficient. Any friend who should then say to me "Antony Latour, will you possess Louise Fauriel as a slave, or enfranchise her, and possess ten thousand francs," would speedily be called upon to disburse.

Alph. I understand you now, Latour. But how could Louise become yours.

Latour. As her mother became your father's—by purchase.

Alph. And you would have me sell Louise to you—sell to you the object of my heart's passion—the being whom the treasure of a world were too poor to buy?

Latour. (*rising*) Stay, Sir. No unnecessary display of eloquence. I have no more to say. Had you condescended to

hear me, you would, perhaps, have replied differently. I spoke, as I foolishly supposed, for your benefit. Good morning, M. de Nyon.

Alph. Stay, Latour, stay ! You have never loved, Latour, or you would not weigh so scrupulously a lover's words. But you spoke of a purchase, of a sum of money, and of Louise in a breath.

Latour. (*aside*) My scale descends. (*Aloud*) No, M. de Nyon, I did not speak of a sum of money in reference to our present subject. I said that *any* friend might so command the freedom of a slave.

Alph. The transfer to you——

Latour. Though apparently *bone fide*, would, of course, be nominal. In an hour Mdlle. Fauriel would be as much her own mistress as Mdlle. Damiron.

Alph. (*aside*) Damiron! Ah! (*aloud*) I thank you sincerely for the proposal, Latour. Have you any objection to my consulting M. Damiron upon it ?

Latour. I ? None ! What is it to me ?

Alph. I would simply ask Damiron's opinion of the plan.

Latour. But if you tell him our object he will, of course, vehemently oppose it.

Alph. He will oppose it, from regard to my father.

Latour. He will oppose it from regard to his daughter. I observed his pleased look this morning when he found that her rival was only a slave. Tell him one half of the project only—say nothing about your matrimonial intentions—or rather, for here he comes, let me be spokesman—you will correct me if I make an error.

Enter DAMIRON. At the same time BELLONA steals in behind them, and hides herself behind some orange plants.

Dami. Our arrangements for the ball are very forward, De Nyon ; we don't take long to fit up rooms here, so I told Virginie I would come round for any final directions you might wish to give.

Alph. Your visit is well timed, Damiron; for I am about to ask your advice.

Dami. As much of it as you think worth having, my dear boy!

Latour. The point is this, Monsieur Damiron; and nobody can advise Monsieur de Nyon better than yourself.

Dami. (*to them*) I am all attention.

Bel. (*aside*) So am I.

Latour. Of course the unhappy scene of to-day has dwelt upon our friend's mind.

Dami. And upon mine; and I may add, upon poor Virginie's too. The child is quite miserable about it.

Latour. (*aside*) That's false—the old humbug! (*To him*

Following the natural bent of his disposition, Monsieur de Nyon would have at once enfranchised the girl Louise, given her the means of subsistence, and sent her out of the island.

Bel. (aside) Oh ! what a——! Never mind.

Dami. (aside) I wish he could. *(To them)* Our friend's humanity is great, and renders him liable to be led into traps.

Latour. (aside) Not such traps as you can bait. *(Aloud)* But, as you, sir, are aware, his father's will makes that impossible. So he has resolved—subject to your advice always—on selling the girl to me.

Bel. (aside) I shall rush in directly, and scatter them all right and left!

Dami. (aside) Latour must be buying her wonderfully cheap. He hasn't a sou in the world. But I don't care: De Nyon can afford to lose the price, and she'll be out of the way. *(To him)* I think, Latour, that De Nyon evinces great good sense, and I quite approve of the plan.

Bel. (aside) The old wretch! the cold-blooded old wretch ! But not half so bad as the young ones.

Alph. (aside) How hard it is to hear the affair discussed with such brutal coldness ! Yet I must bear it.

Latour. Forgive me. Supposing that hereafter our friend's wish of liberating and providing for the girl should be carried out, there will be no difficulty, I imagine ?

Dami. None in the world—none. The slave is yours.

[ALPHONSE *shudders.*]

Latour. You hear Monsieur Damiron's opinion, Lieutenant de Nyon?

Alph. Yes. Nothing can be more satisfactory.

Bel. They will murder the girl among 'em; but I'll save her yet! [*Rushes out.*]

Dami. If you wish to effect this at once—and the sooner the better—the proper officer is now in attendance.

Alph. Instantly! *(Aside)* I seem to revolt at the means; and yet there are no others. Damiron's advice, too—it shall be done. She shall be free in an hour.

Dami. I will go down and prepare the necessary contract. Follow me as soon as you please. [*Exit.*]

Latour. (aside) How eager the old fox is to get Louise out of the way! How little he thinks of what I am preparing for him, and his disinterested darling of a daughter ! *(Aloud)* Are you ready, De Nyon?

[*Noise without.* LOUISE'S voice is heard.]

Louise. (without) Where—where? Let me see him—let me see him !

Latour. (aside) Ha! she will spoil all. *(Aloud)* Stay, De Nyon; I hear Mdlle. Fauriel's voice. You had better come at once.

Alph. Nay ; I will speak to her.

Latour. Peste ! Very well. But one word. (*Energetically*) The whole transaction will be vitiated and legally void if she knows its object. You must not tell her. Rely on this, as law.

Alph. Is it so ? Then I will be silent. It is only an hour.

Enter LOUISE wildly, followed by BELLONA.

The moment she sees ALPHONSE she runs to him, and clasps his arm. LATOUR draws back to watch. BELLONA on the other side of ALPHONSE.

Alph. What! Why is this, Louise?

Louise. Oh ! forgive me. What have I done ! what have I done ! I did not mean it to offend you, whatever it was. But forgive me, Henri ! Do not—do not, in mercy, send me away !

Alph. (covers his eyes with his hand) You are talking wildly, Louise.

Louise. I have called you Henri. I had no right to call you so. The word came unbidden. It was the name by which you taught me to love you. But I was wrong. I will not call you so again. But speak to me—speak to me, Monsieur—Monsieur de Nyon. Tell me that you will not let me be sold!

Alph. (to LATOUR) She has heard it!

Latour. (to him) Perhaps not all.

Louise. Do not drive me from your doors. Let me stay—let me but hear your footstep once in the day, once in the week, the footstep for which I used to watch and listen. M. de Nyon, will you not hear the prayer of your poor Louise ? (*falls on her knees, sobbing.*)

Alph. Louise—dear Louise! (*She looks up with sudden joy—LATOUR touches him warningly; he makes an effort to be calm*) Be assured that whatever I do, is for your happiness. Who has told you otherwise ?

Bel. (who has evinced strong excitement) I, I, Lieutenant de Nyon. It was I. I have been listening, while you have plotted. I heard your project.

Alph. If so, you must approve it.

Bel. Approve it! Alphonse de Nyon, we are not friends of yesterday. I have a right to plead with you. We have shared hardship and suffering; have we not, Alphonse ? I have attended the march of your soldiers by day and by night; we have toiled together through the storm, and over the snow, to many a glorious battle field, where all was forgotten but the banners of France. I have seen you on those long and dreary marches, riding from rank to rank, cheering the strong, helping the weak, and making all love you for the firm but gentle spirit, in which you bore on those wearied ranks to the light, where no troops were ever more forward than your own. I have seen you tending the sick, the wounded, with a kindli-

ness which has made the fevered eye overflow with tears of gratitude, which has raised the mangled arm to wave for you and France.

Alph. Silence—silence, for Heaven's love!

Bel. Not yet—not yet—I *will* plead for her, to whom you were once proud to plead. Is not the blow which has fallen upon her heavy enough? Will you add to the agony of the bruised heart? How has she wronged you that you would take this cruel vengeance? Look at her, De Nyon, and say if it is upon that trembling, stricken thing, that you would heap more misery. Look at her, Alphonse, look at her! It is not much she asks. Even if I asked it, for the sake of old times, you would hardly deny it me. I ask it now, I ask it for her. Let her remain under the roof of one who taught her to love him, and who now hates her for having learned that lesson too easily. She will not annoy you—she will not reproach you—you shall not even be angered by the sight of her pale face, and wasting form, as she lingers, rather than lives, to pray for you and death.

Alph. (in extreme agitation) If I listen a moment longer, I must disclose all, come. [*Rushes out, followed by LATOUR.*]

[*LOUISE looks piteously at BELLONA, who clasps her in her arms.*]

Bel. My poor girl—my poor girl! But you have one friend left, who has vowed to see justice done you, and who will stay by you, while there is a pulse in her veins to beat for you! Come, dear child, come!

[*She supports LOUISE from the apartment. Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.—A Garden, belonging to the house of DE NYON.

Enter BOKES.

Bokes. Matters are looking a little better with me, I think, for here's the middle of the day, and I ain't either stabbed or hanged. Anyveres  the people mightn't say that was much to brag on, but it's better than my expectations. What a confounded island it is. If I thought there was no one listening, I'd say something—and that is, that I hope, from the very bottom of my heart, the English may come and take the place. I do fervently wish they may get it. I wish I may die if I don't.

Enter BELLONA, wiping her eyes.

Here's France, my respected ally, crying. I wonder what's happened to her now.

Bel. She's asleep, poor child—nature could bear it no longer—no more could I. What on earth is to be done for her? In Paris, I'd have got up a little revolution for myself, and hanged that Latour from a lamp. But here, there's a great absence of

all moral feeling. I might as well cry *ca ira* to a shoal of porpoises. Ah! my protégé. Come here, you Bokes.

Bokes. What's the matter—anybody picked your pocket ?

Bel. Mine ! ha, ha! They wouldn't find much, except my cigar-case, and baby's coral, and a little gunpowder, and a few songs, and a couple of horse-shoes, and some nails, and my night-cap, and a few little things of that sort.

Bokes. That's right, take care of everything. I always do.

Bel. And what on earth have you got to take care of ?

Bokes. Myself.

Bel. But setting aside rubbish ?

Bokes. Rubbish! I'm worth five hundred thousand francs.

Bel. You're rich, then ?

Bokes. Do you want a little bill done ?

Bel. I ! what do I want with money ?

Bokes. But why do you ask if I'm rich ?

Bel. Because it occurs to me that I see a way—(*aside*) ha! a splendid thought!—(*aloud*) Yes, I see a way in which you could lay out some money to my satisfaction.

Bokes. Very likely; but I'm not sure that it would be to mine.

Bel. What ? Refuse a subsidy to your ally ! You'll break the *entente cordiale* between us.

Bokes. I haven't a guess what that is; perhaps it's the French for humbug.

Bel. Bokes, you know Monsieur Latour ?

Bokes. If I do, why remind me of my misfortunes ?

Bel. I think you'll have to give him some money.

Bokes. If I do, I hope I may be particularly well d——

[*She puts her hand on his mouth.*]

Bel. As I should certainly compel you to break your oath, I advise you, as a moralist, not to take it. I'll tell you, Bokes. This Latour has bought something which I want.

Bokes. Latour bought! That proves that you're out. How should *he* buy anything ?

Bel. I don't know, and, what's more, I don't care. He has bought something, and you must buy it of him for me (*aside*).

Bokes. But I can get it for nothing. You are sure it is Latour's own ?

Bel. Certain; I know *how* he got it, and *why*.

Bokes. Then it's mine. You see, I have been fool enough to lend this Monsieur Latour a great many francs, which I don't suppose I shall ever see any more.

Bel. I don't care!

Bokes. Come, don't snap one up, like that. I tell you I took a security from him, which gives me the sole and entire right, not only over everything he had, which was nothing, but over everything he might have. Now, of course, if you

are sure this thing you speak of, and which I hope ain't a pig in a poke, is Latour's own, it's mine this very minute, or whenever I choose to claim it.

[BELLONA *rushes about, clapping her hands, dancing, and singing very loud indeed*—"Cadet Rouselle a trois enfans," &c.

France is certainly cracked.

Bel. Victory ! Vive la France ! En avant.

[*Seizes him, and makes him dance round, and then off with her—she singing "Cadet Rouselle" as loud as she can.* [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—(*Same as first.*) Enter ALPHONSE and LATOUR. *In this scene the manner of LATOUR is marked by a composed decision, as of triumph and power.*

Latour. So, the formality is complete, and Mdlle. Louise Fauriel is now the absolute property of Monsieur Antony Latour.

Alph. Enfranchise her from her unhappy state, and——

Latour. Not so fast, my good friend.

Alph. Surely, that is the next step.

Latour. No; the next but one.

Alph. What intervenes, in the fiend's name ?

Latour. I am about to tell you, De Nyon.

Alph. Pray be explicit, and make allowances for the ardour of a lover.

Latour. Agreed, if you will do the same.

Alph. I! And who is the lover ?

Latour. Myself.

Alph. You?

Latour. At least, I choose to play the part, and, under the circumstances, the lady can ask no more.

Alph. This is new. Who is the lady ?

Latour. I fear I must avow myself your rival.

Alph. Mine! Latour——

Latour. Unequal as is the competition, it is true.

Alph. I dare hardly trust my senses. My rival! In the affections of Louise Fauriel.

Latour. No; I should admit no rivalry there, for the best of reasons—she is mine already. But do not be furious—I am sneaking of another person.

Alph. Of——

Latour. Of Mdlle. Damiron.

Alph. (*astonished*) Mdlle Damiron!

Latour. Aided by your eloquence, I have no doubt of her father's favour.

Alph. You know his prejudice against——. Forgive me, —against your race.

Latour. But I have great faith in your advocacy.

Alph. I confess you puzzle me. I am inclined to think that within the moment that Damiron comprehends my object, he will order me from his presence, and that within the next hour we shall cross swords.

Latour. I will ensure you against insult or injury.

Alph. Usually I can do both for myself; but in this particular case I own I shall be glad of such security. I would not willingly outrage the feelings, still less harm the person, of my father's friend.

Latour. But he is surely too much a man of business to be offended at being treated as your father's debtor.

Alph. Ha! What are you suggesting ?

Latour. What I am sure your good sense will approve. I avow to you plainly that I hate this Damiron. His prejudice has insulted me, and his hollow wealth has given him a title to do so. For that passable prettyness, his daughter, I am very anxious to wed her; less for her own sake than because the union would humble Damiron's pride to the very earth. You have given me a right to be confidential with you, and you see I avail myself of it.

Alph. And is it to Alphonse de Nyon that you make a proposal that he should avail himself of the power given him by Monsieur Damiron's debts to control his disposal of his daughter's hand ? You carry a sword, sir ! [*Draws*

Latour. Which I can use, when necessary. But what excuse should I offer to Mdlle. Louise for having run her lover through the body ?

Alph. You will need no such excuse. Draw, sir!

Latour. True-true. You remind me well that a master makes no excuses to his slave.

Alph. (*about to threaten him, but suddenly drops his sword point*) His slave!

Latour. (*exultingly*) His slave, sir—his slave! Louise Fauriel is mine—mine by all the force of law—mine irrevocably ! Now, Frenchman, choose your course ! You have assigned your bride to me—to me, the despised Creole. She is my slave; and if you dare to dispute my will, I may—do you hear ?—I may——. Her eyes, though tearful, are still bright; her hair, though dishevelled, is still beautiful. Do you hear, Monsieur de Nyon ?

Alph. Miscreant!

[*Rushes at him. LATOUR suddenly draws, and their swords cross.*

Latour. Come on, Lieutenant, as you would charge a regiment of the English---come on ! With swords in their hands, men are equal! Lunge, sir, at your pleasure, and think you are fighting for Louise !

[*ALPHONSE, in fury, makes several lunges. LATOUR parries them all, and eventually disarms him.*

Latour. (*raising ALPHONSE'S sword with his, and presenting it*) Take your life, Sir. I have no present intention of banning, or even of insulting you. But you will go to Mons. Damiron's house, and plead my cause with the haughty planter and his daughter. You will succeed, I know, for you can tell them, in addition to the argument, you will find in your desk, that I am, above all things, (*with strong intention*) an excellent master to my female slaves. Adieu, Sir, we shall meet at the ball. *[Exit.*

Alph. Fool! miserable fool!—duped—defeated—disgraced!—Louise, Louise, how dearly do I pay for having deceived you. —Miscreant! But words are idle. I have no course but that chalked out for me by him. At any price, she must be saved!

[Exit.

Drop descends.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Near DAMIRON'S House. Front Grooves.* ALPHONSE is crossing the stage, moodily, when BELLONA follows him rapidly.

Bel. Lieutenant de Nyon!

Alph. (*looking round*) Do not stop me. I am in no mood to be crossed.

Bel. But for a moment.

Alph. I have not a moment.

Bel. You will not lose time by hearing me.

Alph. Quickly, then—especially if you come to speak of—of *her*.

Bel. No, no, I have nothing more to urge to you upon that subject. An inward voice is speaking far more bitterly to you, than I could dare to do.

Alph. (*aside*) Aye—bitterly, indeed!

Bel. But I have reason to believe that something is about to happen, for which you would do well to prepare. I have been into the town, and I find a strange agitation amongst the inhabitants.

Alph. And the cause?

Bel. I cannot ascertain it; but it is said that a strange communication has been made by telegraph from a ship now in the offing—a ship which reports itself direct from France. She is supposed to bring important despatches from government.

Alph. Mere rumour.

Bel. But rumour very widely circulated. The inhabitants couple it with the sudden arrival of our troops, and are apparently expecting some event hostile to their interests. They

scowl at our soldiers; and I myself have received several insults and menaces, in my search for you.

Alph. You hare done well to make it. I have an errand at Damiron's, which admits of no delay. That discharged, I will go down to the barracks. *[Exit.*

Bel. An errand at Damiron's! What errand can he have there? His servants declare they heard the clash of swords in the garden, and that M. Latour came out, as flushed and haughty as if he had just won a battle. Yet Alphonse is the best swordsman in the regiment, except that preternatural coxcomb, Hyacinthe St. Emilion, who swears he was born with a foil and mask. All this is mysterious, and I must clear it up. I must see after my ally, and then I'll go to Damiron's myself, and question them all. They'll be impertinent, perhaps, but I think I carry rather too many guns for them, and, indeed, for the world in general. *[Exit.*

SCENE II. — *An Apartment at DAMIRON'S. Enter VIRGINIE.*

Virg. I am perfectly ashamed of myself for feeling so happy when I recollect that the only reason is my thinking that I am likely to be married—married—and married to Hyacinthe. We won't stay here, that I am resolved upon. No, I will make him take me away to France. Dear, dear France! beautiful as this island is, I can never, never learn to love it as a home.

SONG.*

Waves of gold, in music breaking
Foam around our rosy Isle,
Here the Day-God, early waking,
Wears for her his warmest smile.
Winds are ours, with every motion
Gently wafting odours by;
E'en the mighty heart of Ocean
Seems to heave with passion's sigh.
Yet, though fair the home may be,
'Tis no home, no home for me.
There's a land, whose castles hoary
O'er her aged forests frown,
Where a thousand years of glory
Through her bannered aisles look down.
Where my sires, in marble sleeping,
Hallow scenes they guarded long;
While their fame, in minstrel keeping,
Still survives to swell the song.
Far away, o'er many a sea,
There's the home, the home for me.

Enter DAMIRON.

So then, papa, M. de Nyon, after all, disposed of this poor girl as coldly, and unhesitatingly, as if he had never cared about her.

Dami. Quite. You surely do not censure him for that. He

* Poetry by SHIRLEY BROOKS. Music by ALEXANDER LEE.

had committed an error, and he repaired it as soon as possible.

Virg. Far too soon. I wish he had shown more feeling for her.

Dami. For a slave ? Your sentiments, young lady, have taken a very sudden turn. This morning you had no such sympathies.

Virg. That is true, papa. But (*aside*) this morning I had not learned what love means, and now it is teaching me to feel even for a slave.

Dami. I hope M. St. Emilion, who seems hardly to have left you for a moment since he arrived, has not been embuing you with any such folly. Remember the cards you hold, and the game you have to play.

Virg. Yes, sir. There are no hearts in the pack—(*aside*) ah ! here's Hyacinthe again.

Enter HYACINTHE ST. EMILION.

Hyac. You see I profit by your kind permission to make myself at home among you, my dear M. Damiron.

Dami. (*sarcastically*) Delighted, of course (*aside*), but I could wish Alphonse would propose, and then I should have an excuse for shutting the door in his face.

Hyac. And the preparations for the ball, Mademoiselle?—all made, I suppose. You will not forget to place me very high, and very often, in your list of partners. I don't boast, but I think you will approve my dancing.

Virg. We must pay particular attention to so distinguished a performer. I can't promise for the first place in the list, for that is of course reserved for M. de Nyon, who gives the ball.

Hyac. Ah ! that's all right—all etiquette—but the second, perhaps.

Virg. And for the second dance I am half engaged ; but we shall see if my partner claims me.

Hyac. May I ask the wretch's name ? I hate him by anticipation.

Virg. Monsieur Latour.

Hyac. The brown man. Oh, decidedly I trust he will not appear. We may—differ.

Virg. I hope not.

Hyac. Then you take some interest in my destiny ? Happy Hyacinthe !

Virg. (*laughing*) Why not suppose I take some in the destiny of Monsieur Latour ?

Hyac. This time it is my turn to hope not. (*In a lower voice*) I adore you, Virginie : and I will run anybody through who looks at you !

Virg. (*laughing*) Hush! hush! or papa—

Hyac. (*aside*) I'll begin with him, if he interferes.

Dami. Surely there is Alphonse coming up the path ?

Hyac. (*looks*) Yes—it is. Except myself, there is nobody in the regiment can put his clothes on so well as Alphonse. But he does not look very brilliant now. Let us meet him, and tell him he's a disgrace to society. Allow me—

[*He takes her hand, and they go off with a playful formality.*]

Dami. I shall stop this boy-and-girl affair before mischief is done. Aha! they meet him. What are they saying? He is motioning them to go to the aviary. He comes up. I wish he would take it into his head to propose for Virginie to-day.

Enter ALPHONSE.

Ah ! my young friend ! But you look quite melancholy and dispirited.

Alph. My spirits are not very buoyant this afternoon, certainly, sir.

Dami. Thinking of the little scene of the morning, perhaps ? That recollection will soon wear away.

Alph. (aside) Never! *(With a struggle)* But, Monsieur Damiron, one must not allow feelings to interfere with business.

Dami. A most proper remark, Monsieur Alphonse. And what business have you now to transact ? Nothing disagreeable, I trust ?

Alph. It is of a kind usually considered interesting.

Dami. Well, my friend, do I understand that you intend to confide it to me ?

[They sit.]

Alph. You are deeply concerned in it.

Dami. (aside) 'Gad, if my hope should be realized ! *(Aloud)* I am all attention.

Alph. Will you, then, allow me to ask whether you have formed any definite design for the disposal of the hand of Mdlle. Damiron ?

Dami. A father's hopes, my dear Alphonse, will sometimes —. But, to answer you more explicitly, Mdlle. Damiron is disengaged.

Alph. I have recently, my dear Monsieur Damiron, been looking over my papers, securities, and so forth. I find, among other things—we are speaking merely for form's sake (*DAMIRON nods and smiles*)—that you, sir, and my late father had various transactions between you.

Dami. We had, my boy—we had. I was not at all times rich, and he materially assisted me. I may safely say to you, in confidence, that your desk contains all I have in the world. I know I may safely confess that to you.

Alph. I may, perhaps, infer that, presuming a proposal for the honour of Miss Damiron's hand were submitted to her and to you, there is no reason why it should fail of approval ?

Dami. I do not think *(smiling)* that Monsieur de Nyon is likely to suggest a very ineligible match for Virginie.

Alph. Suppose, Sir, that on the wedding-day, instead of asking a dowry with the bride, the intended husband should present her father with all his mortgages and securities, cancelled and destroyed.

Dami. I can hardly misunderstand you, Monsieur de Nyon as there is nobody but yourself who has the power to do what you mention. Such a son-in-law shall meet the most favourable reception from Virginie and myself. *(Aside)* Settled !

Alph. I can offer you a son-in-law upon those terms.

Dami. I accept him and them.

Alph. Then I may tell the suitor that he will be received whenever he pleases?

Dami. Tell him?

Alph. Yes; I have promised him the earliest possible account of this interview.

Dami. We are misunderstanding one another, Sir; and yet it seems hardly possible. This proposal, is it not made on your own account?

Alph. (*very coldly*) On mine, Sir?

Dami. (*indignantly*) On yours, Sir!

Alph. It is not, Sir.

Dami. Not? Sir.

Alph. Did I even mention my own name in opening the subject, Monsieur Damiron?

Dami. Did you—did you—did you? but didn't you—didn't you make me believe you meant yourself? Who else, Sir, who else could I suppose you meant?

Alph. I know not, Sir.

Dami. And pray, Sir, (*struggling with his rage*) for whom have you done me the honour to obtain my promise?

Alph. One who has known Mdlle. Damiron far longer than myself, and who declares that he loves her—well.

Dami. Damn'd kind of him, Sir, damn'd kind! And his name, Sir, unless you are ashamed of it?

Alph. Monsieur Antony Latour.

Dami. The Creole? Don't say you mean him.

Alph. It is for him I make the offer, Monsieur Damiron, and for him I am willing to make, also, the sacrifice I have promised.

Dami. (*bursting into a terrific rage*) So, so! Hark ye, Monsieur de Nyon. For the sake of your father I will not order my servants to turn you into the street; but get out of my house, Sir, instantly, and take with you this message to the rascal who has --Heaven knows how--prevailed upon a gentleman's son to offer such an insult to a gentleman. Tell him that if, in addition to the bait you offer, his brown carcase were weighed against gold, and the gold laid on my carpet in exchange for my child's hand, I would spurn it, Sir, spurn it—and spit upon it—as I do on him and his offer—and, but for your father's sake—

Alph. (*who has borne the earlier part of this speech with composure, gradually becomes excited, and at last springs up, and interrupts, in a voice of thunder*) Stop, Sir!—for your own sake, stop!

Dami. I comprehend your menace, Sir, well. It befits the errand on which you come—the vagabond for whom you plead. But I care not, Sir—use your power—seize, sell all I have in the world—end my life of industry and struggle in penury and shame—drive me and my child to the street, to starvation—but dare not to imagine that the fear of all you can do will induce me to debase my house by stooping to herd with your Creole. (*With bitter irony*) Such are the tactics of a soldier of France.

Alph. (*moved*) Monsieur. Damiron, if you knew—if you could judge—nay, I will reveal to you---

Dami. (*with dignity*) Nothing, Sir—nothing. Take your own course.

Alph. Your feelings, as compared with *mine*----

Dami. (*with dignity*) Spare me the comparison, sir. Listen. I was over-hasty on one point. The ball in my house to-night is yours. It must take place—the guests are bidden, and the hospitality of the Isle of France must sustain no slur. You will attend; and, as far as appearances go, no one shall suspect what has passed between us. But, as the last guest departs, you will attend him to the door—and will never return. Adieu, Monsieur de Nyon.

[*Bows formally, and exit.*]

Alph. As I anticipated, bribe and threat alike derided, and the bitterest scorn poured upon him who employed them. Louise! Louise! what new expedient to save her from the fate to which I have so madly consigned her? By this hour, long ago, I had pictured her free and happy; and now she is the victim of a revengeful wretch, who—. But there is no time for words. I will seek him again; and if gold—threats—fail, this time my sword may do me better service.

[*Exit hastily.*]

SCENE III.—*Apartment in the house of LATOUR, meagrely furnished. Enter LATOUR, bringing in LOUISE.*

Latour. This, Mademoiselle, is my house — your home. When I have reminded you that it is the house of your master, I am sure I shall need no further argument to ensure your obedience.

Louise. Spare me! spare me!

Latour. Why this terror? Pray be calm. Do you think that I am a wild beast, to injure you without cause?

Louise. Why, oh! why have I fallen into your hands?

Latour. That you can demand of your late owner and lover, who saw fit to sell you to me.

Louise. Oh, Heavens! But it is (*vehemently*) false—false! There is some atrocious juggle of which I am the victim! He—he willingly expose me to such a doom—he? I will *not* believe it!

Latour. Yet you pleaded so earnestly to himself, in my presence, that even I was half inclined to renounce my bargain.

Louise. I did. Yes, I prayed in abjectness and terror, and he refused to hear me. And yet—while I clasped his arm, when I sank at his knee, I could see the convulsive struggle of his frame—I could see the cold drops upon his brow. He suffered even more than I. I know it—I swear it! Love can never read love wrongly.

Latour. Yet you are here—*mine*!

Louise. I am! I am the victim of some dark, foul plot, which I understand not. But let what will fall upon me, I

will never believe that my doom has come from *his* hand. He has loved me—he loves me still !

Latour. (*aside*) I trust so, or my power ends. (*Aloud*) Louise, he does!

Louise. Ah! you tell me so? Blessings on you—blessings on you! I forgive you all, so that you assure me of *that*!

Latour. He loves you, and has never ceased to love you. He imagined himself wroth with you for concealing from him that you were a slave; but that thought vanished with the hour of its birth. I tell you he is yours—and you are mine.

Louise. (*radiantly*) So be it. I can die; but I cannot doubt.

Latour. Die! no—that would inconvenience me materially.

Enter BELLONA, running.

Bel. Ha! Then they were right! They told me you had dared to take her from her chamber, and drag her to your abominable house! Oh I how lucky for you that I was not there at the time! Wouldn't I——! Never mind, my child! (*Caressingly to LOUISE.*)

Louise. Dear Bellona! I have heard such words of comfort since I came here.

Bel. Not from him. I should say that shop was quite out of comfort, and very uncertain when any would come in.

Louise. Yes; he has told me what I would give worlds to hear.

Bel. What? Not that he is likely to be hanged? That's too good to be true.

[LATOUR *smiles contemptuously.*

Louise. Bellona, he has told me that Alphonse loves me!

Bel. I could have told you that; so you owe him nothing. I have seen Monsieur de Nyon.

Latour. On his way to Monsieur Damiron's?

Bel. (*imitating his voice*) Yes, on his way to Monsieur Damiron's?

Latour. That is well.

Bel. Oh, he looked so melancholy. He has been cheated in some way, however, and I have a great guess at the rascal who did it.

Latour. It was myself.

Bel. I meant you, on my honour.

Latour. I have no wish to give Louise needless pain—she rather deserves my pity—she, like myself, is of a proscribed race.

Bel. (*eagerly*) Yourself? I wish you were proscribed! You'd know what that meant, if you lived in Paris; but as my ally, Bokes, says, nobody understands anything here. This is what proscribing means, in a civilized country (*holds up her model guillotine*).

Latour. Silence! I have told the girl that she is loved. I tell her also that she would never have been sold to me (*LOUISE listens intently*) but for De Nyon's anxiety to liberate her from slavery. I bought her to effect this, which, he could not do. I promised to set her free.

Bel. And why, then, Monsieur Latour, don't you keep your promise, if you please?

Latour. (*calmly*) Because it suits me better to break it.

Bel. You audacious, cheating, swindling, deceiving, venomous, abominable, treacherous, good for nothing——

Latour. Creole.

Bel. Yes, in saying that, you say all the rest.

Latour. (*bitterly*) So thinks the Isle of France ; it would be uncivil to prove it in the wrong.

Louise. Let him do his worst; Henri, I mean, Monsieur Alphonse, is true!

Enter BOKES.

Bokes. You here, France?

Latour. What brings you over my threshold 

Bokes. Eh? *Your* threshold ! Nevermind. It's not (*looking round*) so charming a place, or furnished so elegantly, as to make one anxious to come here for nothing.

Latour. What do you want ?

Bokes. Well, since you're so pressing, I want four thousand francs. Shall I give you a receipt ?

Latour. You know well that you will not get the money.

Bokes. Do I ? I happen to know that I shall.

Latour. I'm glad of it. In the meantime, go away.

Bokes. When I please. In the meantime, as those chairs were bought with my money, and as that table was bought with my money, and as that sofa was bought with my money, I should think I might take the liberty of using which of 'em I please.

Latour. Insolent——

Bokes. No, not as you may say, insolent. I speak my mind, and I've bought the right to do it. I didn't ask you to have my money, you know ; you asked me.

Latour. I now ask you to get out of my house. (*In fury*) You will make me forget myself.

Bokes. Oh, that's nothing new to me. I don't mind that a bit.

[BELLONA *laughs tauntingly.* *This enrages*
LATOUR.

Latour. (*in a voice of passion*) Bokes, don't force me to turn you out of the house !

Bokes. Well, I don't—if I was the debtor, and you was the creditor, and all the things here were yours, I might, by being saucy.

Latour. (*seizes him and thrusts him roughly out*) Thank yourself for this ! (*returns*) an insolent reptile !

Bokes. (*looking in again, white with passion*) Now, Antony Latour, you have ruined yourself! As long as you kept a civil tongue, I bore a deal from you—but now you've chosen to lay hands on me, I'll never forgive you ; and I'll ruin you, as sure as I stand here ! I'll ruin you—I'll ruin you—I'll ruin you!
[Exit.

Bel. I know that little man well. He has a great knack of keeping his word, whatever you may think of the accomplishment.

[*A servant announces "M. de Nyon."* LATOUR starts—BELLONA looks delighted.

Latour. I do not wish to see him. Say, with my compliments, that I am dressing for his ball, and that I will then hear what he has to say. (*Exit servant.*) You observe, Louise, that he is completely at my command.

[*Noise.*

Bel. Yes, I should say that noise looks like it.

Enter ALPHONSE, hastily.

Alph. Such a message to me—how dare—(*sees LOUISE*) Louise here !

[LOUISE is about to rush to him, when LATOUR raises his hand forbiddingly—she stops.

Alph. To my arms, Louise ! (*with great warmth*)

Latour. What! against her master's orders?

Alph. And if I strike that—that master dead upon the spot.

Latour. (*laughs tauntingly*) That his property (*pointing at her*) may devolve upon his cousin, Jerome, of the Isle of Bourbon (*all said slowly*) a worthy man, but rather violent in his habits.

Alph. Villain !

Latour. Yet you would recommend me as your friend's husband. How speeds my wooing ?

Alph. How should it speed ?

Latour. I comprehend. We may mend it at your ball. Adieu, M. de Nyon. Till after the ball you have nothing to fear for her (*points to LOUISE*).

Bel. (*bursts out*) After, nor before, nor at any time, Alphonse, while I have life and breath ! I love her for your sake, and for her own, and I tell her, and I tell you, and I tell that copper-coloured creature there, that I will never leave her, from this moment, until she is happy and free, and ready to become your wife. Perhaps that may be sooner than he imagines—but, whether or not, I am her friend, and wherever she goes, I go with her; and whatever she does, I help her to do. So let him take care what he gives her to do, and how he behaves to her while with him; for the very first moment that he does or says anything I disapprove of, I will declare war upon him in the name of France, tear his eyes out of his head, set fire to his abominable house, and carry away Louise under cover of the smoke !

[*Takes LOUISE by the hand, and exits with her.*

Latour. The ball decides her destiny and mine, Monsieur de Nyon. Till then---- --[*Exit.*

Alph. It does, indeed ; for I will bear this no longer. My regiment will be under arms to be ready for this apprehended disturbance, and, if there be no better way, I will tear her from this place, convey her to the Fort, and behind a line of glittering bayonets, in the hands of my gallant troop, she may defy all the slaveholders in the world !

[*Exit.*

SCENE THE LAST.—*A magnificent ball-room in the house of Damiron, with columns clustered with green leaves and flowers. In the back ground is seen the sea, with stars shining through a colonnade. Couches, chairs, &c. Music. Short general dance.*

Enter DAMIRON.

Dami. And all this display is perhaps for the last time. A single day may see me a houseless beggar. The revenge of the Creole is insatiable, and he will doubtless avail himself of his strange influence over this young man to ruin and disgrace me. But were the scene to occur again, I would repeat the words used. *Virginie* to him ! As I gaze on her, (*VIRGINIE is seen coming down*) the very thought is profanation !

Virg. Alone, papa ! That is well, for I want to ask you a favour.

Dami. What, my darling ?

Virg. As you tell me I am not to marry Monsieur Latour, and as Monsieur de Nyon will not marry me—if you please, may I marry Monsieur St. Emilion ?

Dami. Has he asked you the question ?

Virg. Hm—no—I told him not to ask me until I had spoken to you, as I should be exceedingly sorry to refuse him.

Dami. Let him speak to me, then, in the first instance.

Virg. But don't be offended at his levity, papa, it's only manner—in reality, he's as honourable as Bayard, and as brave as Dumouriez.

Dami. So he has told you, I presume.

Virg. Oh ! I know he is—nobody can deceive me.

[Servant announces—"His Excellency the Governor !" Enter the Governor, GENERAL MALARTIC, followed by a numerous suite with cocked hats and feathers. As DAMIRON comes forward to receive the Governor, HYACINTHE comes on, as from apartment at the side.]

Gov. (*salutes VIRGINIE and DAMIRON*) M. Damiron, your magnificent apartments look to-night more brilliant than ever.

Dami. I fear any increased attraction your Excellency may see is derived from no merit of mine, but from the presence of so many gay soldiers of France.

Gov. You have the merit of assembling them, at least, M. Damiron. But do I see Lieutenant de Nyon here ?

Hyac. De Nyon will be here instantly, your Excellency. In consequence of certain reports—(*Governor makes him a sign of caution*) with which I need not trouble your Excellency, he thought it desirable, at the last moment, to visit the barracks, and see that all is in readiness.

Gov. I duly appreciate his zeal and forethought.

[BOKES enters, dressed in great splendour. DAMIRON advances, not recognising him, but the moment he makes him out, seems mortified, as the Governor is looking at them.]

Bokes. How d'e do, M. Damiron ? Do me the favour to present me to the Governor.

Dami. You, Bokes? Impossible!

Bokes. Then I shall present myself.

Dami. Be quiet, pray! Such a thing would be outrageous!

Bokes. But why not? Have I not taken pains to do you and your party honour? Look at me, sir. Is there anybody in the room dressed like this?

Dami. Not precisely, I confess. But the Governor is fastidious.

Bokes. He'll like me, I can tell you. Besides, it is necessary that I should know him, because I shall want him presently.

Dami. Want the Governor!

Bokes. Yes. Which is he?

Dami. That. But if you have any regard for me, do nothing absurd.

Bokes. Sir, you have invited me to your house, and I beg to state that I shall behave myself as such, Fear nothing. An exciting scene, Governor.

Gov. (smiling) Very.

Bokes. There! I knew we should be friends. But it will be more exciting presently, Governor.

Gov. Agreeably, I hope.

Bokes. To some people, very—to others, less so. But you have nothing to apprehend, nothing.

Gov. (laughing) You take a weight off my mind, sir.

Enter ALPHONSE, handsomely dressed.

Bokes. Ah! there's Monsieur de Nyon. I wonder where the other is?

[ALPHONSE *passes* DAMIRON and VIRGINIE, *bowing to each, the salute being formal—then goes to the Governor, who receives him very courteously.*

Gov. The vessel has not yet come in, I presume, Lieutenant?

Alph. Her despatches will be in your Excellency's hand in half an hour.

Enter LATOUR, richly dressed.

Bokes. There he is. Now let him look out.

[LATOUR *approaches the Governor's seat, and bows, the Governor returns the salute slightly—he then looks round, but nobody seems anxious to recognise him.*

Latour. The same cold reception as usual, but my time is coming. M. Damiron's plumes will soon be plucked by de Nyon, or de Nyon's fate shall be worse still! Why do I waste time? (LATOUR *advances.*) The honour of Mademoiselle Damiron's hand?

Virg. I fear I am engaged.

Latour. To me, if I remember aright.

Hyac. No, to me!

[*He in about to lead her away, when LATOUR attempts to touch her hand.*

Latour. Surely, this morning I ventured to ask—

Hyac. (angrily) The engagement is to me, sir, I repeat! (*aside*) These half-bloods can never take an answer.

[*Takes her to place in dance.*

Latour. (who has overheard him following) M. St. Emilion!

Hyac. (haughtily) When the dance is over, sir, you may speak to me!

Latour. And I will, fear not!

[LATOURE *leans at the side*, BOKES *watching him*.]

Bokes. Now the rooms are as full as they are likely to be, so now's the time, (*calls*) Governor Malartic !

Gov. (smiling.) How can I please M. Bokes?

Bokes. Might I ask your Excellency to step this way ?

Gov. (laughing to those around) The request is so unusual, that I think we must grant it.

[*He comes down, followed by a great number of the guests. LATOUR looks on.*]

Bokes. The liberty is awful that I have taken, Governor. It makes my hair stand on end to think of it!

Gov. Do not think of it, sir, I pray, Only explain it.

Dami. This dreadful little Jew will be my death !

Bokes. Will your Excellency condescend to cast your eyes in the direction I am about to point out ? [*points at LATOUR, who draws himself up*] The prospect is no ways inviting, perhaps, but very instructive.

Gov. You will take care, sir, that you allow no jest to become disagreeable.

Bokes. He ain't thin skinn'd, Governor, though I see he looks as if he wanted to sneak away. Look at him, and observe how fine he is dressed. Yet he has no money, not a sou, and is nothing more nor better than a common swindler.

Latour. Your Excellency will probably order this mad little creature to be put out of the house.

Bokes. His Excellency won't do nothing of the sort. His Excellency won't take a leaf out of your book, I can tell you. You may do such things, ill treating an honest man, who asks for his own, but the Governor's a cut above such swindling and bullying, or two cuts, for that matter! [*Guests smile.*]

Gov. Any complaint of this sort, M. Bokes, should be reserved for the proper place.

Bokes. And so it would, your heavenly Excellency, but there's worse behind. This fellow entrapped M. Alphonse there, into selling him a slave, on condition of setting her free, and now he has got her, he vows to keep her, and threatens her with all sorts of humiliations, to break the heart of M. de Nyon, who's in love with her.

Dami. Ha!

Alph. What, why is this subject brought forward here?

Bokes. Because here's the right place for it. What's the use of being mealy mouthed ? I ain't. There's the Governor, and here's all the parties—make an end of the thing at once.

Latour. Is this exposure from revenge, M. Damiron, for a certain honour I intended you ?

Dami. No, sir, contempt is my only revenge for any insult from you.

Latour. (in rage) Monsieur de Nyon may feel it necessary to change your opinion of me.

Dami. De Nyon. Ha ! (*reflects*) I see it now.

Latour. I am glad of it, M. Damiron.

Gov. I had hoped, gentlemen, that one intimation of my wish would have been sufficient. I must now desire that this subject be instantly dropped.

Bokes. Now he means earnest. I daren't say no more. I've done all I could to oblige my ally, France, and now she must be patient, and watch the turn of the market.

Latour. I am accustomed to insult, your Excellency—my colour justifies it, and prevents its expiation.

Hyac. (in a low voice) We have no such prejudices in France.

Latour. Ha! coxcomb!

Hyac. No noise, if you mean anything beside noise.

Latour. (touching his sword) Dare you ?

Hyac. (smiling) Dare—this from a demi-savage to a Parisian !

Latour. The gardens are large—the moon is bright.

Hyac. How romantic—follow me, but cautiously, if you really mean fighting.

Latour. (aside) Unless my sword arm have lost its skill since the morning, in five minutes there will be one fool the fewer.

[HYACINTHE and LATOUR go out.]

Bokes. I think he won't forget that exposure in a hurry, and that's nothing to what I'll do for him yet. I'll teach him to keep his hands off folks!

Dami. (aside) What a strange net has been spread for poor De Nyon. I must forgive him. But the worst of it is, he is not out of the meshes.

Virg. Papa, have you seen M. Hyacinthe ? He was here a few moments ago. I want him to stand up with me in a minuet.

Dami. He cannot be far off. Alphonse!

Alph. Sir!

Dami. Nay, I have thought over your conduct, and now that I have heard something of its cause, of which you must tell me more, we shall perhaps know one another better.

Alph. (takes his hand) If anything could give me pleasure while that villain Latour—

Enter BELLONA.

Bel. Everybody's pardon, but death's the matter!

All. Death !

Bel. It soon will be, at least.

Gov. But whose death, girl ?

Bel. M. Hyacinthe and M. Latour have been out into the garden to fight. I saw them begin.

Gov. And why not have called for help ?

Bel. There was no time, sir. They are both splendid swordsmen. They lost not a moment—their swords crossed but three times, and M. Latour fell. They are bringing him in, but he can't live many minutes.

[Great sensation.]

Alph. Hyacinthe has deprived me of the task I proposed to myself, when Louise should be free.

Bokes. Killed my debtor? What right had he to do that ? I shall lose all chance of my four thousand francs.

[LATOUR is brought in wounded, and placed in a chair.]

He is brought from the back and supported by two officers. His coat and waistcoat are off, and his shirt is stained with blood.

Gov. M. Latour, this is a most unhappy affair.

Latour. It is so, sir. Allow me to recommend M. Hyacinthe for promotion. He is the best fencer with whom I ever engaged—he ran me through with great skill.

Gov. Have surgeons been summoned?

Latour. They are useless—I am dying, and I acquit my adversary of any unfair dealing. The Creole can be just—

Gov. At such a moment—

Latour. True! Your Excellency as chief officer of this colony, will now hear, and will hereafter bear witness to the few words in which I shall make my will.

[They all attend.]

Gov. Proceed, sir. *(to an officer)* Make a note.

Latour. I have no property in the world, except a slave—*(ALPHONSE comes forward)* Louise Fauriel, purchased of that gentleman.

Bel. Shall she come in?

Latour. Ah! is she here?

Bel. Did I not say, I would never forsake her? She came with me. I will bring her.

[Exit.]

Latour. Aye, do, then my revenge will be perfect. *(BELLONA re-enters with LOUISE)* Stand here, Louise, near me, I command you. I am your master still. *(ALPHONSE places himself near LOUISE—LATOUR smiles.)* This slave I give and bequeath to my cousin, M. Jerome, of the Isle of Bourbon. I described his character to you, M. de Nyon.

[Officer writes.]

Alph. This in your dying hour!

Latour. Yes, what could sweeten such an hour so much as a parting act of vengeance? Louise, you hear your doom!

[LOUISE buries her face in her hands.]

Bel. Stay, there is protection yet for the helpless. This person, *(pointing to BOKES)* a money lender, under a document which he holds, is entitled to whatever property M. Latour may have at any time. Surely the slave becomes his, your Excellency.

Gov. If the document be correct, undoubtedly.

Bel. Then, Louise, dearest, you are safe—your destiny is in my hands—you shall be free in an hour! *[Embraces her.]*

Latour. Hardly. But speaking becomes painful. If your Excellency will condescend to listen. *(Whispers.)*

[All look intent.]

Gov. That, if true, alters the case once more.

Bel. What—how—why?

Gov. This person is an alien, and is incapable of owning a slave.

[Despair in the features of BELLONA, ALPHONSE, and LOUISE.]

Latour. Could you—ha! ha!—imagine that I had forgotten the Jew? Louise, I repeat it, you are a bequest to my cruel cousin.

Alph. Never ! She shall not go !

Latour. Even against a Creole, the law will hardly allow robbery.

Gov. This person has an absolute right, and it must be respected. (*Great disturbance, and shouting.*) What is this disturbance?

[*Renewed shouting. Enter an officer, with despatches, which he gives the GOVERNOR.*]

Officer. The despatches from the vessel, direct from Paris!

Gov. (reads) Good Heavens, we shall have a revolution in the island !

Latour. Ha ! (*raising himself*).

Gov. Lieutenant de Nyon, bring up your regiment, and surround this house, before the people hear the news, and the uproar commences.

[*March heard. HYACINTHE enters at the head of soldiers, who draw up at back.*]

Hyac. I have ventured to anticipate your Excellency's order?

Gov. So far you have done well. But (*pointing to LATOUR*), consider yourself under arrest.

Latour. Might one hear the last news from Paris ? I should like to take it with me.

Gov. Listen, all. It concerns nearly all present; and you, my poor girl, more than all. (*All attend.*) "By a decree of the National Convention of France, slavery is henceforth abolished in all her colonies." [LATOUR falls dead.]

Alph. Mine—mine for ever—Louise !

[*Shout —waving of plumes, handkerchiefs, &c. As the applause ceases, BELLONA comes down to the front.*]

Bel. The day for claptraps is gone by, and a wiser rule has left the moral to be learned from the play, rather than to be pointed by the actor. But may we be permitted to remind those who have sympathised in the fortunes of our poor slave girl, that at this very hour there exist, in other countries, speaking our own language, thousands of maidens as young, as fair, as loving, and as liable to be bought and sold like beasts of the field. We can perhaps do but little towards lightening *their* fate; but may we not remember, with a thankful pride, that *our own* is cast in a land where (with all its faults) the chain is unknown—where GOD'S image is unsullied by the brand of slavery ?

(*Curtain falls.*)