

DE MONFORT: A TRAGEDY.

Baillie, Joanna . In The Dramatic and Poetical Works Of Joanna Baillie , Baillie, Joanna, 76-77. London: 1851.

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FULL TEXT

De Monfort.
Rezenvelt.
Count Freberg, <i>friend to De Monfort and Rezenvelt.</i>
Manuel, <i>servant to De Monfort.</i>
Jerome, <i>De Monfort's old landlord.</i>
Conrad, <i>an artful knave.</i>
Bernard, <i>a monk.</i>
Monks, gentlemen, officers, page, &c. &c.
Jane De Monfort, <i>sister to De Monfort.</i>
Countess Freberg, <i>wife to Freberg.</i>
Theresa, <i>servant to the Countess.</i>
Abbess, nuns, <i>and a lay sister, ladies, &c.</i>

Scene, a town in Germany.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Jerome's house. *A large old-fashioned chamber.*

Jer.

(speaking without).

1 This way, good masters.

Enter Jerome, bearing a light, and followed by Manuel, and servants carrying luggage.

1 Rest your burthens here.

2 This spacious room will please the marquis best.

3 He takes me unawares; but ill prepar'd:

4 If he had sent, e'en though a hasty notice,

5 I had been glad.

Man.5 Be not disturb'd, good Jerome;

6 Thy house is in most admirable order;

7 And they who travel o' cold winter nights

8 Think homeliest quarters good.

Jer.9 He is not far behind?

Man.9 A little way.

(To the servants.)

10 Go you and wait below till he arrive.

Jer.

(shaking Manuel by the hand).

11 Indeed, my friend, I'm glad to see you here;

12 Yet marvel wherefore.

Man.13 I marvel wherefore too, my honest Jerome:

14 But here we are; pri'thee be kind to us.

Jer.15 Most heartily I will. I love your master:

16 He is a quiet and a lib'ral man:

17 A better inmate never cross'd my door.

Man.18 Ah! but he is not now the man he was.

19 Lib'ral he'll be. God grant he may be quiet.

Jer.20 What has befallen him?

Man.20 I cannot tell thee;

21 But, faith, there is no living with him now.

Jer.22 And yet, methinks, if I remember well

23 You were about to quit his service, Manuel,

24 When last he left this house. You grumbled then.

*Man.*25 I've been upon the eve of leaving him
26 These ten long years; for many times he is
27 So difficult, capricious, and distrustful,
28 He galls my nature—yet, I know not how,
29 A secret kindness binds me to him still.

*Jer.*30 Some who offend from a suspicious nature,
31 Will afterwards such fair confession make
32 As turns e'en the offence into a favour.

*Man.*33 Yes, some indeed do so; so will not he:
34 He'd rather die than such confession make.

*Jer.*35 Ay, thou art right; for now I call to mind
36 That once he wrong'd me with unjust suspicion,
37 When first he came to lodge beneath my roof;
38 And when it so fell out that I was prov'd
39 Most guiltless of the fault, I truly thought
40 He would have made profession of regret.
41 But silent, haughty, and ungraciously
42 He bore himself as one offended still.
43 Yet shortly after, when unwittingly
44 I did him some slight service, o' the sudden
45 He overpower'd me with his grateful thanks;
46 And would not be restrain'd from pressing on me
47 A noble recompense. I understood
48 His o'erstrain'd gratitude and bounty well,
49 And took it as he meant.

*Man.*49 'Tis often thus.
50 I would have left him many years ago,
51 But that with all his faults there sometimes come
52 Such bursts of natural goodness from his heart,
53 As might engage a harder churl than I
54 To serve him still.—And then his sister too;
55 A noble dame, who should have been a queen:
56 The meanest of her hinds, at her command,
57 Had fought like lions for her, and the poor,
58 E'en o'er their bread of poverty, had bless'd her—
59 She would have griev'd if I had left my lord.

*Jer.*60 Comes she along with him?

*Man.*61 No, he departed all unknown to her,
62 Meaning to keep conceal'd his secret route;

[Pointing to certain things.

*De Mon.*91 Move what thou wilt, and trouble me no more.

[Manuel, with the assistance of other servants, sets about putting the things in order, and De Monfort remains sitting in a thoughtful posture).

Enter Jerome, bearing wine, &c. on a salver. As he approaches De Monfort, Manuel pulls him by the sleeve.
Man.

(aside to Jerome).

92 No, do not now; he will not be disturb'd.

*Jer.*93 What! not to bid him welcome to my house,

94 And offer some refreshment?

*Man.*94 No, good Jerome.

95 Softly a little while: I pri'thee do.

[Jerome walks softly on tiptoe, till he gets behind De Monfort, then peeping on one side to see his face.
Jer.

(aside to Manuel).

96 Ah, Manuel, what an alter'd man is here!

97 His eyes are hollow, and his cheeks are pale—

98 He left this house a comely gentleman.

*De Mon.*99 Who whispers there?

*Man.*99 'Tis your old landlord, sir.

*Jer.*100 I joy to see you here—I crave your pardon—

101 I fear I do intrude—

*De Mon.*102 No, my kind host, I am obliged to thee.

*Jer.*103 How fares it with your honour?

*De Mon.*103 Well enough.

*Jer.*104 Here is a little of the fav'rite wine

105 That you were wont to praise. Pray honour me.

[Fills a glass.

De Mon.

106 I thank you, Jerome, 'tis delicious.

De Mon.108 And how does she?

*De Mon.*109 Well, then she is at rest.

De Mon. 110 Is she not with the dead, the quiet dead,
111 Where all is peace? Not e'en the impious wretch,
112 Who tears the coffin from its earthy vault,
113 And strews the mould'ring ashes to the wind,
114 Can break their rest.

[De Monfort *walks across the stage, and wipes his eyes.*

De Mon.

125 I am, my friend. How long has she been dead?

*De Mon.*126 Would she were living still!

Jer.128 O no! she lov'd to serve you.

*De Mon.*129 What fool comes here, at such untimely hours,
130 To make this cursed noise?

(*To Manuel.*)

Go to the gate.

[*Exit Manuel.*

131 All sober citizens are gone to bed;
132 It is some drunkards on their nightly rounds,
133 Who mean it but in sport.

Jer. 134 I hear unusual voices—here they come.

Re-enter Manuel, showing in Count Freberg and his lady, with a mask in her hand.

Freb.

(*running to embrace De Mon.*)

135 My dearest Monfort! most unlook'd for pleasure!
136 Do I indeed embrace thee here again?
137 I saw thy servant standing by the gate,
138 His face recall'd, and learnt the joyful tidings!
139 Welcome, thrice welcome here!

De Mon. 140 I thank thee, Freberg, for this friendly visit,
141 And this fair lady too.

[*Bowing to the lady.*

Lady. 141 I fear, my lord,
142 We do intrude at an untimely hour:
143 But now, returning from a midnight mask,
144 My husband did insist that we should enter.

Freb. 145 No, say not so; no hour untimely call,
146 Which doth together bring long absent friends.
147 Dear Monfort, why hast thou so slily play'd,
148 Coming upon us thus so suddenly?

De Mon. 149 O! many varied thoughts do cross our brain,
150 Which touch the will, but leave the memory trackless;
151 And yet a strange compounded motive make,
152 Wherefore a man should bend his evening walk
153 To th' east or west, the forest or the field.
154 Is it not often so?

Freb. 155 I ask no more, happy to see you here
156 From any motive. There is one behind,
157 Whose presence would have been a double bliss:
158 Ah! how is she? The noble Jane De Monfort.

De Mon.

(confused).

159 She is—I have—I left my sister well.

Lady.

(to Freberg).

160 My Freberg, you are heedless of respect.

161 You surely mean to say the Lady Jane.

Freb. 162 Respect! No, madam; Princess, Empress, Queen,

163 Could not denote a creature so exalted

164 As this plain appellation doth,

165 The noble Jane De Monfort.

Lady.

(turning from him displeased to Mon.)

166 You are fatigued, my lord; you want repose;

167 Say, should we not retire?

Freb. 167 Ha! is it so?

168 My friend, your face is pale; have you been ill?

De Mon. 169 No, Freberg, no; I think I have been well.

Freb.

(shaking his head).

170 I fear thou hast not, Monfort—Let it pass.

171 We'll re-establish thee: we'll banish pain.

172 I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends,

173 And we shall spend together glorious hours,

174 That gods might envy. Little time so spent

175 Doth far outvalue all our life beside.

176 This is indeed our life, our waking life,

177 The rest dull breathing sleep.

De Mon. 178 Thus, it is true, from the sad years of life

179 We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike,

180 Keen, blissful, bright, never to be forgotten;

181 Which, through the dreary gloom of time o'erpast,

182 Shine like fair sunny spots on a wild waste.

183 But few they are, as few the heaven-fir'd souls

184 Whose magic power creates them. Bless'd art thou,

185 If, in the ample circle of thy friends,

186 Thou canst but boast a few.

Freb. 187 Judge for thyself: in truth I do not boast.

188 There is amongst my friends, my later friends,

*De Mon.*196 How is he call'd?

Lady.

De Mon.206 You honour me too much to be denied.

Feb.209 Must it be so? Good night—sweet sleep to thee!

De Mon.

210 Good night.

211 Good night, fair lady.

Lady.211 Farewell!

De Mon.

212 I thought Count Freberg had been now in France.

*Jer.*213 He meant to go, as I have been inform'd.

*De Mon.*214 Well, well, prepare my bed; I will to rest.

[*Exit Jerome.*

De Mon.

(*aside*).

215 I know not how it is, my heart stands back,
216 And meets not this man's love.—Friends! rarest friends!
217 Rather than share his undiscerning praise
218 With every table-wit, and book-form'd sage,
219 And paltry poet puling to the moon,
220 I'd court from him proscription, yea abuse,
221 And think it proud distinction.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A small apartment in Jerome's house: a table and breakfast set out. Enter De Monfort, followed by Manuel, and sits down by the table, with a cheerful face.

*De Mon.*1 Manuel, this morning's sun shines pleasantly:

2 These old apartments too are light and cheerful.
3 Our landlord's kindness has reviv'd me much:
4 He serves as though he lov'd me. This pure air
5 Braces the listless nerves, and warms the blood:
6 I feel in freedom here.

[*Filling a cup of coffee, and drinking.*

*Man.*6 Ah! sure, my lord,

7 No air is purer than the air at home.

*De Mon.*8 Here can I wander with assured steps,

9 Nor dread, at every winding of the path,
10 Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,
11 To move—

(*stopping short.*)

*Man.*11 What says your honour?

12 There are no serpents in our pleasant fields.

*De Mon.*13 Thinkst thou there are no serpents in the world,

14 But those who slide along the grassy sod,
15 And sting the luckless foot that presses them?
16 There are who in the path of social life
17 Do bask their spotted skins in Fortune's sun,
18 And sting the soul—Ay, till its healthful frame
19 Is chang'd to secret, fest'ring, sore disease,
20 So deadly is the wound.

*Man.*21 Heav'n guard your honour from such horrid scath!
22 They are but rare, I hope!

De Mon.

(shaking his head).

23 We mark the hollow eye, the wasted frame,
24 The gait disturb'd of wealthy honour'd men,
25 But do not know the cause.

*Man.*26 'Tis very true. God keep you well, my lord!

*De Mon.*27 I thank thee, Manuel, I am very well.

28 I shall be gay too, by the setting sun.
29 I go to revel it with sprightly dames,
30 And drive the night away.

[Filling another cup, and drinking.]

*Man.*31 I should be glad to see your honour gay.

*De Mon.*32 And thou too shalt be gay. There, honest Manuel,

33 Put these broad pieces in thy leathern purse,
34 And take at night a cheerful jovial glass.
35 Here is one too, for Bremer; he loves wine:
36 And one for Jaques: be joyful altogether.

Enter Servant.

*Ser.*37 My lord, I met e'en now, a short way off,
38 Your countryman the Marquis Rezenvelt.

De Mon.

(starting from his seat, and letting the cup fall from his hand).

39 Whom sayst thou?

*Ser.*39 Marquis Rezenvelt, an' please you.

*De Mon.*40 Thou liest—it is not so—it is impossible!

Ser.41 I saw him with these eyes, plain as yourself.

De Mon.42 Fool! 'tis some passing stranger thou hast seen,
43 And with a hideous likeness been deceiv'd.

Ser.44 No other stranger could deceive my sight.

De Mon.

(dashing his clenched hand violently upon the table, and overturning every thing).

45 Heaven blast thy sight! it lights on nothing good.

Ser.46 I surely thought no harm to look upon him.

De Mon.47 What, dost thou still insist? He must it be?

48 Does it so please thee well?

(Servant endeavours to speak.)

Hold thy damn'd tongue!

49 By heaven I'll kill thee!

(Going furiously up to him.)

Man.

(in a soothing voice).

50 Nay, harm him not, my lord; he speaks the truth;

51 I've met his groom, who told me certainly

52 His lord is here. I should have told you so,

53 But thought, perhaps, it might displease your honour.

De Mon.

(becoming all at once calm, and turning sternly to Manuel).

54 And how dar'st thou

55 To think it would displease me?

56 What is't to me who leaves or enters Amberg?

57 But it displeases me, yea e'en to frenzy,

58 That every idle fool must hither come,

59 To break my leisure with the paltry tidings

60 Of all the cursed things he stares upon.

[Servant attempts to speak—De Monfort stamps with his foot.

61 Take thine ill-favour'd visage from my sight,

62 And speak of it no more.

[Exit Servant.

63 And go thou too; I choose to be alone.

[Exit Manuel.

[De Monfort goes to the door by which they went out; opens it, and looks.

64 But is he gone indeed? Yes, he is gone.

[Goes to the opposite door, opens it, and looks: then gives loose to all the fury of gesture, and walks up and down in great agitation.]

65 It is too much: by heaven it is too much!

66 He haunts me—stings me—like a devil haunts—

67 He'll make a raving maniac of me—Villain!

68 The air wherein thou drawst thy fulsome breath

69 Is poison to me—Oceans shall divide us!

(Pauses.)

70 But no; thou thinkst I fear thee, cursed reptile;

71 And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.

72 Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,

73 I'll stay and face thee still.

[Knocking at the chamber door.]

73 Ha! who knocks there?

Freberg.

(without).

74 It is thy friend, De Monfort.

De Mon.

(opening the door).

74 Enter, then.

Enter Freberg.

Freb.

(taking his hand kindly).

75 How art thou now? How hast thou pass'd the night?

76 Has kindly sleep refresh'd thee?

De Mon. 77 Yes, I have lost an hour or two in sleep,

78 And so should be refresh'd.

Freb. 78 And art thou not?

79 Thy looks speak not of rest. Thou art disturb'd.

De Mon. 80 No, somewhat ruffled from a foolish cause,

81 Which soon will pass away.

Freb.

(shaking his head).

82 Ah no, De Monfort! something in thy face

83 Tells me another tale. Then wrong me not:
84 If any secret grief distract thy soul,
85 Here am I all devoted to thy love:
86 Open thy heart to me. What troubles thee?

*De Mon.*87 I have no grief: distress me not, my friend.

*Freb.*88 Nay, do not call me so. Wert thou my friend,
89 Wouldst thou not open all thine inmost soul,
90 And bid me share its every consciousness?

*De Mon.*91 Freberg, thou knowst not man; not nature's man,
92 But only him who, in smooth studied works
93 Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully
94 In all the splendid foppery of virtue.
95 That man was never born whose secret soul,
96 With all its motley treasure of dark thoughts,
97 Foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams,
98 Was ever open'd to another's scan.
99 Away, away! it is delusion all.

*Freb.*100 Well, be reserved then; perhaps I'm wrong.

*De Mon.*101 How goes the hour?

*Freb.*102 'Tis early still; a long day lies before us;
103 Let us enjoy it. Come along with me;
104 I'll introduce you to my pleasant friend.

*De Mon.*105 Your pleasant friend?

*Freb.*105 Yes, him of whom I spake.

[Taking his hand.]

106 There is no good I would not share with thee;
107 And this man's company, to minds like thine,
108 Is the best banquet feast I could bestow.
109 But I will speak in mystery no more;
110 It is thy townsman, noble Rezenvelt.

[De Mon. pulls his hand hastily from Freberg, and shrinks back.]

110 Ha! what is this?
111 Art thou pain-stricken, Monfort?
112 Nay, on my life, thou rather seemst offended:
113 Does it displease thee that I call him friend?

*De Mon.*114 No, all men are thy friends.

*Freb.*115 No, say not all men. But thou art offended.
116 I see it well. I thought to do thee pleasure.
117 But if his presence be not welcome here,
118 He shall not join our company to-day.

*De Mon.*119 What dost thou mean to say? What is't to me
120 Whether I meet with such a thing as Rezenvelt
121 To-day, to-morrow, every day, or never?

*Freb.*122 In truth, I thought you had been well with him;
123 He prais'd you much.

*De Mon.*124 I thank him for his praise—Come, let us move:
125 This chamber is confin'd and airless grown.

[*Starting.*
126 I hear a stranger's voice!

*Freb.*126 'Tis Rezenvelt.
127 Let him be told that we are gone abroad.

De Mon.
(*proudly.*)
128 No! let him enter. Who waits there? Ho! Manuel!

Enter Manuel.
129 What stranger speaks below?

*Man.*129 The Marquis Rezenvelt.
130 I have not told him that you are within.

De Mon.
(*angrily.*)
131 And wherefore didst thou not? Let him ascend.

[*A long pause. De Montfort walking up and down with a quickpace.*

Enter Rezenvelt, who runs freely up to De Montfort.
Rez.
(*to De Mon.*)

132 My noble marquis, welcome!

*De Mon.*132 Sir, I thank you.

Rez.

(to Feb.)

133 My gentle friend, well met. Abroad so early?

Feb. 134 It is indeed an early hour for me.

135 How sits thy last night's revel on thy spirits?

Rez. 136 O, light as ever. On my way to you,

137 E'en now, I learnt De Montfort was arriv'd,

138 And turn'd my steps aside; so here I am.

[Bowing gaily to De Monfort.]

De Mon. 139 I thank you, sir; you do me too much honour.

[Proudly.]

Rez. 140 Nay, say not so; not too much honour surely,

141 Unless, indeed, 'tis more than pleases you.

De Mon.

(confused).

142 Having no previous notice of your coming,

143 I look'd not for it.

Rez. 144 Ay, true indeed; when I approach you next,

145 I'll send a herald to proclaim my coming,

146 And bow to you by sound of trumpet, marquis.

De Mon.

(to Feb., turning haughtily from Rezenvelt with affected indifference).

147 How does your cheerful friend, that good old man?

Feb. 148 My cheerful friend? I know not whom you mean.

De Mon. 149 Count Waterlan.

Feb. 149 I know not one so nam'd.

De Mon.

(very confused).

150 O pardon me—it was at Basle I knew him.

Feb. 151 You have not yet inquir'd for honest Reisdale.

152 I met him as I came, and mention'd you.

153 He seem'd amaz'd; and fain he would have learnt

154 What cause procur'd us so much happiness.

155 He question'd hard, and hardly would believe;
156 I could not satisfy his strong desire.

*Rez.*157 And know you not what brings De Montfort here?

*Freb.*158 Truly I do not.

*Rez.*158 O! 'tis love of me.
159 I have but two short days in Amberg been,
160 And here with postman's speed he follows me,
161 Finding his home so dull and tiresome grown.

Freb.

(to **De Mon.**)

162 Is Rezenvelt so sadly miss'd with you?
163 Your town so chang'd?

*De Mon.*163 Not altogether so;
164 Some witlings and jest-mongers still remain
165 For fools to laugh at.

*Rez.*166 But he laughs not, and therefore he is wise.
167 He ever frowns on them with sullen brow
168 Contemptuous; therefore he is very wise;
169 Nay, daily frets his most refined soul
170 With their poor folly to its inmost core;
171 Therefore he is most eminently wise.

*Freb.*172 Fy, Rezenvelt! you are too early gay.
173 Such spirits rise but with the ev'ning glass:
174 They suit not placid morn.

[To **De Monfort**, who, after walking impatiently up and down, comes close to his ear and lays hold of his arm.

174 What would, you Monfort?

*De Mon.*175 Nothing—what is't o'clock?
176 No, no—I had forgot—'tis early still.

[Turns away again.

Freb.

(to **Rez.**)

177 Waltser informs me that you have agreed
178 To read his verses o'er, and tell the truth.
179 It is a dangerous task.

*Rez.*179 Yet I'll be honest:

180 I can but lose his favour and a feast.

[*Whilst they speak, De Monfort walks up and down impatiently and irresolute: at last pulls the bell violently.*]

Enter Servant.

De Mon.

(to ser.)

181 What dost thou want?

Ser.181 I thought your honour rung.

*De Mon.*182 I have forgot—stay. Are my horses saddled?

Ser.183 I thought, my lord, you would not ride to-day,

184 After so long a journey.

De Mon.

(impatiently).

184 Well—'tis good.

185 Begone!—I want thee not.

[*Exit servant.*]

Rez.

(smiling significantly).

186 I humbly crave your pardon, gentle marquics.

187 It grieves me that I cannot stay with you,

188 And make my visit of a friendly length.

189 I trust your goodness will excuse me now;

190 Another time I shall be less unkind.

(To Freberg.)

191 Will you not go with me?

*Freb.*192 Excuse me, Monfort, I'll return again.

[*Exeunt Rezenvelt and Freberg.*]

De Mon.

(alone, tossing his arms distractedly).

193 Hell hath no greater torment for th' accurs'd

194 Than this man's presence gives—

195 Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too,

196 A damned pleasure in the pain he gives!

197 Oh! the side glance of that detested eye!

198 That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!

199 It touches every nerve: it makes me mad.
200 What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo my hate?
201 Hate shalt thou have! determin'd, deadly hate,
202 Which shall awake no smile. Malignant villain!
203 The venom of thy mind is rank and devilish,
204 And thin the film that hides it.
205 Thy hateful visage ever spoke thy worth:
206 I loath'd thee when a boy.
207 That men should be besotted with him thus!
208 And Freberg likewise so bewitched is,
209 That like a hireling flatt'rer at his heels
210 He meanly paces, off'ring brutish praise.
211 O! I could curse him too!

[Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A very splendid apartment in Count Freberg's house, fancifully decorated. A wide folding-door opened, shows another magnificent room lighted up to receive company. Enter through the folding doors the Count and Countess, richly dressed.

Freb.

(looking round).

1 In truth, I like those decorations well:
2 They suit those lofty walls. And here, my love,
3 The gay profusion of a woman's fancy
4 Is well display'd. Noble simplicity
5 Becomes us less, on such a night as this,
6 Than gaudy show.

Lady. 7 Is it not noble then?

(He shakes his head.)

I thought it so;

8 And as I know you love simplicity,
9 I did intend it should be simple too.

Freb. 10 Be satisfied, I pray; we want to-night

11 A cheerful banquet-house, and not a temple.
12 How runs the hour?

Lady. 13 It is not late, but soon we shall be rous'd

14 With the loud entry of our frolic guests.

Enter a Page, richly dressed.

Page.15 Madam, there is a lady in your hall,
16 Who begs to be admitted to your presence.

Lady.17 Is it not one of our invited friends?

Page.18 No, far unlike to them; it is a stranger.

Lady.19 How looks her countenance?

Page.20 So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
21 I shrunk at first in awe; but when she smil'd,
22 For so she did to see me thus abash'd,
23 Methought I could have compass'd sea and land
24 To do her bidding.

Lady.24 Is she young or old?

Page.25 Neither, if right I guess; but she is fair:
26 For Time hath laid his hand so gently on her,
27 As he too had been aw'd.

Lady.27 The foolish stripling!
28 She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large in stature?

Page.29 So stately and so graceful is her form,
30 I thought at first her stature was gigantic;
31 But on a near approach I found, in truth,
32 She scarcely does surpass the middle size.

Lady.33 What is her garb?

Page.34 I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
35 She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,
36 But seems to me clad in the usual weeds
37 Of high habitual state; for as she moves
38 Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,
39 As I have seen unfurled banners play
40 With a soft breeze.

Lady.40 Thine eyes deceive thee, boy;
41 It is an apparition thou hast seen.

Freb.

(starting from his seat, where he has been sitting during the conversation between the lady and the page).

42 It is an apparition he has seen,
43 Or it is Jane De Monfort.

[Exit, hastily.

Lady

(displeased).

44 No; such description surely suits not her.

45 Did she inquire for me?

*Page.*46 She ask'd to see the lady of Count Freberg.

*Lady.*47 Perhaps it is not she—I fear it is—

48 Ha! here they come. He has but guess'd too well.

Enter Freberg, leading in Jane De Monfort.

Freb.

(presenting her to lady).

49 Here, madam, welcome a most worthy guest.

*Lady.*50 Madam, a thousand welcomes! Pardon me;

51 I could not guess who honour'd me so far;

52 I should not else have waited coldly here.

*Jane.*53 I thank you for this welcome, gentle countess.

54 But take those kind excuses back again;

55 I am a bold intruder on this hour,

56 And am entitled to no ceremony.

57 I came in quest of a dear truant friend,

58 But Freberg has inform'd me—

(To Freberg.)

59 And he is well, you say?

*Freb.*60 Yes, well, but joyless.

*Jane.*61 It is the usual temper of his mind;

62 It opens not, but with the thrilling touch

63 Of some strong heart-string o' the sudden press'd.

*Freb.*64 It may be so, I've known him otherwise:

65 He is suspicious grown.

*Jane.*66 Not so, Count Freberg; Monfort is too noble.

67 Say rather, that he is a man in grief,

68 Wearing at times a strange and scowling eye;

69 And thou, less generous than beseems a friend,

70 Hast thought too hardly of him.

Freb.

(bowing with great respect).

70 So will I say;
71 I'll own nor word nor will, that can offend you.

*Lady.*72 De Monfort is engag'd to grace our feast:

73 Ere long you'll see him here.

*Jane.*74 I thank you truly, but this homely dress

75 Suits not the splendour of such scenes as these.

Freb.

(pointing to her dress).

76 Such artless and majestic elegance,
77 So exquisitely just, so nobly simple,
78 Will make the gorgeous blush.

Jane

(smiling).

79 Nay, nay, be more consistent, courteous knight,
80 And do not praise a plain and simple guise
81 With such profusion of unsimple words.
82 I cannot join your company to-night.

*Lady.*83 Not stay to see your brother?

*Jane.*84 Therefore it is I would not, gentle hostess.

85 Here will he find all that can woo the heart
86 To joy and sweet forgetfulness of pain;
87 The sight of me would wake his feeling mind
88 To other thoughts. I am no doating mistress;
89 No fond distracted wife, who must forthwith
90 Rush to his arms and weep. I am his sister:
91 The eldest daughter of his father's house:
92 Calm and unwearied is my love for him;
93 And having found him, patiently I'll wait,
94 Nor greet him in the hour of social joy,
95 To dash his mirth with tears.—
96 The night wears on; permit me to withdraw.

*Freb.*97 Nay, do not, do not injure us so far!

98 Disguise thyself, and join our friendly train.

*Jane.*99 You wear not masks to-night.

*Lady.*100 We wear not masks, but you may be con-ceal'd

101 Behind the double foldings of a veil.

Jane

(after pausing to consider).

102 In truth, I feel a little so inclin'd.

103 Methinks unknown, I e'en might speak to him,

104 And gently prove the temper of his mind;

105 But for the means I must become your debtor.

[To lady.

Lady. 106 Who waits?

(Enter her woman).

Attend this lady to my wardrobe,

107 And do what she commands you.

[Exeunt Jane and waiting-woman.

Freb.

(looking after Jane, as she goes out, with admiration).

108 Oh! what a soul she bears!

109 See how she steps!

110 Nought but the native dignity of worth

111 E'er taught the moving form such noble grace.

Lady. 112 Such lofty mien, and high assumed gait,

113 I've seen ere now, and men have call'd it pride.

Freb. 114 No, 'faith! thou never didst, but oft indeed

115 The paltry imitation thou hast seen.

(Looking at her.)

116 How hang those trappings on thy motley gown?

117 They seem like garlands on a May-day queen,

118 Which hinds have dress'd in sport.

[Lady turns away displeased.

Freb. 119 Nay, do not frown; I spoke it but in haste;

120 For thou art lovely still in every garb.

121 But see, the guests assemble.

Enter groups of well-dressed people, who pay their compliments to Freberg and his lady; and, followed by her, pass into the inner apartment, where more company appear assembling, as if by another entry.

Freb.

(who remains on the front of the stage with a friend or two).

122 How loud the hum of this gay-meeting crowd!

159 With lofty airs of puny majesty;
160 While potent damsels, of a portly make,
161 Totter like nurslings, and demand the aid
162 Of gentle sympathy.
163 From all those diverse modes of dire assault,
164 He owns a heart of hardest adamant,
165 Who shall escape to-night.

Freb.

(to De Mon., who has entered during Rezenvelt's speech, and heard the greatest part of it).

165 Ha, ha, ha, ha!
166 How pleasantly he gives his wit the rein,
167 Yet guides its wild career!

[De Mon. is silent.

Rez.

(smiling archly).

168 What, think you, Freberg, the same powerful spell
169 Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night?
170 Or that De Monfort is a woman turn'd,—
171 So widely from his native self to swerve,
172 As grace my folly with a smile of his?

De Mon. 173 Nay, think not, Rezenvelt, there is no smile
174 I can bestow on thee. There is a smile,
175 A smile of nature too, which I can spare,
176 And yet, perhaps, thou wilt not thank me for it.

[Smiles contemptuously.

Rez. 177 Not thank thee! It were surely most ungrateful
178 No thanks to pay for nobly giving me
179 What, well we see, has cost thee so much pain.
180 For nature hath her smiles of birth more painful
181 Than bitt'rest execrations.

Freb. 182 These idle words will lead us to disquiet:
183 Forbear, forbear, my friends! Go, Rezenvelt,
184 Accept the challenge of those lovely dames,
185 Who through the portal come with bolder steps
186 To claim your notice.

Enter a group of ladies from the other apartment, who walk slowly across the bottom of the stage, and return to it again. Rez. shrugs up his shoulders, as if unwilling to go.
1st gent.

(to Rez.)

187 Behold in sable veil a lady comes,
188 Whose noble air doth challenge fancy's skill
189 To suit it with a countenance as goodly.

[*Pointing to Jane De Mon., who now enters in a thick black veil.*

Rez.190 Yes, this way lies attraction.

(To Freb.)

191 With permission—

[*Going up to Jane.*

192 Fair lady, though within that envious shroud
193 Your beauty deigns not to enlighten us,
194 We bid you welcome, and our beauties here
195 Will welcome you the more for such concealment.
196 With the permission of our noble host—

[*Taking her hand, and leading her to the front of the stage.*

Jane.

(to Freb.)

197 Pardon me this presumption, courteous sir:
198 I thus appear
(*pointing to her veil*),
not careless of respect
199 Unto the generous lady of the feast.
200 Beneath this veil no beauty shrouded is,
201 That, now, or pain, or pleasure can bestow.
202 Within the friendly cover of its shade
203 I only wish, unknown, again to see
204 One who, alas! is heedless of my pain.

De Mon.205 Yes, it is ever thus. Undo that veil,
206 And give thy count'nance to the cheerful light.
207 Men now all soft and female beauty scorn,
208 And mock the gentle cares which aim to please.
209 It is most damnable! undo thy veil,
210 And think of him no more.

Jane.211 I know it well: e'en to a proverb grown,
212 Is lovers' faith, and I had borne such slight:
213 But he, who has, alas! forsaken me,
214 Was the companion of my early days,
215 My cradle's mate, mine infant play-fellow.
216 Within our op'ning minds, with riper years,

217 The love of praise and gen'rous virtue sprung:
218 Through varied life our pride, our joys were one;
219 At the same tale we wept: he is my brother.

De Mon. 220 And he forsook thee?—No, I dare not curse him:
221 My heart upbraids me with a crime like his.

Jane. 222 Ah! do not thus distress a feeling heart.
223 All sisters are not to the soul entwin'd
224 With equal bands; thine has not watch'd for thee,
225 Wept for thee, cheer'd thee, shar'd thy weal and woe,
226 As I have done for him.

De Mon.
(*eagerly*).

226 Ah! has she not?
227 By heav'n the sum of all thy kindly deeds
228 Were but as chaff pois'd against massy gold,
229 Compar'd to that which I do owe her love.
230 Oh, pardon me! I mean not to offend—
231 I am too warm—but she of whom I speak
232 Is the dear sister of my earliest love;
233 In noble, virtuous worth to none a second:
234 And though behind those sable folds were hid
235 As fair a face as ever woman own'd,
236 Still would I say she is as fair as thou.
237 How oft amidst the beauty-blazing throng,
238 I've proudly to th' inquiring stranger told
239 Her name and lineage! yet within her house,
240 The virgin mother of an orphan race
241 Her dying parents left, this noble woman
242 Did, like a Roman matron, proudly sit,
243 Despising all the blandishments of love;
244 While many a youth his hopeless love conceal'd,
245 Or, humbly distant, woo'd her like a queen.
246 Forgive, I pray you! O forgive this boasting!
247 In faith! I mean you no discourtesy.

Jane
(*off her guard, in a soft natural tone of voice*).
248 Oh, no! nor do me any.

De Mon. 249 What voice speaks now? Withdraw, withdraw this shade!
250 For if thy face bear semblance to thy voice,
251 I'll fall and worship thee. Pray! pray undo!

[Puts forth his hand eagerly to snatch away the veil, whilst she shrinks back, and Rezenvelt steps between to prevent him.]

Rez.252 Stand off: no hand shall lift this sacred veil.

De Mon.253 What, dost thou think De Monfort fall'n so low,
254 That there may live a man beneath heav'n's roof,
255 Who dares to say, he shall not?

Rez.256 He lives who dares to say—

Jane

(throwing back her veil, much alarmed, and rushing between them).

256 Forbear, forbear!

[Rezenvelt, very much struck, steps back respectfully, and makes her a low bow. De Monfort stands for a while motionless, gazing upon her, till she, looking expressively to him, extends her arms, and he, rushing into them, bursts into tears. Freberg seems very much pleased. The company then advancing from the inner apartment, gather about them, and the scene closes.]

SCENE II.

De Monfort's apartments. Enter De Monfort, with a disordered air, and his hand pressed upon his forehead, followed by Jane.

De Mon.1 No more, my sister, urge me not again:

2 My secret troubles cannot be reveal'd.

3 From all participation of its thoughts

4 My heart recoils: I pray thee be contented.

Jane.5 What, must I, like a distant humble friend,

6 Observe thy restless eye, and gait disturb'd,

7 In timid silence, whilst with yearning heart

8 I turn aside to weep? O no! De Monfort!

9 A nobler task thy nobler mind will give;

10 Thy true entrusted friend I still shall be.

De Mon.11 Ah, Jane, forbear! I cannot e'en to thee.

Jane.12 Then, fy upon it! fy upon it, Monfort!

13 There was a time when e'en with murder stain'd,

14 Had it been possible that such dire deed

15 Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous,

16 Thou wouldst have told it me.

De Mon.17 So would I now—but ask of this no more.

18 All other trouble but the one I feel

19 I had disclos'd to thee. I pray thee spare me.

20 It is the secret weakness of my nature.

*Jane.*21 Then secret let it be; I urge no farther.
22 The eldest of our valiant father's hopes,
23 So sadly orphan'd, side by side we stood,
24 Like two young trees, whose boughs in early strength
25 Screen the weak saplings of the rising grove,
26 And brave the storm together—
27 I have so long, as if by nature's right,
28 Thy bosom's inmate and adviser been,
29 I thought through life I should have so remain'd,
30 Nor ever known a change. Forgive me, Monfort,
31 A humbler station will I take by thee:
32 The close attendant of thy wand'ring steps;
33 The cheerer of this home, with strangers sought;
34 The soother of those griefs I must not know:
35 This is mine office now: I ask no more.

*De Mon.*36 Oh, Jane! thou dost constrain me with thy love!
37 Would I could tell it thee!

*Jane.*38 Thou shalt not tell me. Nay I'll stop mine ears,
39 Nor from the yearnings of affection wring
40 What shrinks from utterance. Let it pass, my brother.
41 I'll stay by thee; I'll cheer thee, comfort thee:
42 Pursue with thee the study of some art,
43 Or nobler science, that compels the mind
44 To steady thought progressive, driving forth
45 All floating, wild, unhappy fantasies;
46 Till thou, with brow unclouded, smil'st again;
47 Like one who, from dark visions of the night,
48 When th' active soul within its lifeless cell
49 Holds its own world, with dreadful fancy press'd
50 Of some dire, terrible, or murd'rous deed,
51 Wakes to the dawning morn, and blesses heaven.

*De Mon.*52 It will not pass away; 'twill haunt me still.

*Jane.*53 Ah! say not so, for I will haunt thee too;
54 And be to it so close an adversary,
55 That, though I wrestle darkling with the fiend,
56 I shall o'ercome it.

*De Mon.*56 Thou most gen'rous woman!
57 Why do I treat thee thus? It should not be—
58 And yet I cannot—O that cursed villain!
59 He will not let me be the man I would.

*Jane.*60 What sayst thou, brother? Oh! what words are these?

61 They have awak'd my soul to dreadful thoughts.

62 I do beseech thee, speak!

[He shakes his head, and turns from her; she following him.]

63 By the affection thou didst ever bear me;

64 By the dear mem'ry of our infant days;

65 By kindred living ties, ay, and by those

66 Who sleep i' the tomb, and cannot call to thee,

67 I do conjure thee, speak!

[He waves her off with his hand and covers his face with the other, still turning from her.]

67 Ah! wilt thou not?

(Assuming dignity.)

68 Then, if affection, most unwearied love,

69 Tried early, long, and never wanting found,

70 O'er gen'rous man hath more authority,

71 More rightful power than crown or sceptre give,

72 I do command thee.

[He throws himself into a chair, greatly agitated.]

73 De Monfort, do not thus resist my love.

74 Here I entreat thee on my bended knees.

[Kneeling.]

75 Alas! my brother!

[De Monfort starts up, and catching her in his arms, raises her up, then placing her in the chair, kneels at her feet.]

*De Mon.*76 Thus let him kneel who should the abased be,

77 And at thine honour'd feet confession make!

78 I'll tell thee all—but, oh! thou wilt despise me.

79 For in my breast a raging passion burns,

80 To which thy soul no sympathy will own—

81 A passion which hath made my nightly couch

82 A place of torment; and the light of day,

83 With the gay intercourse of social man,

84 Feel like th' oppressive airless pestilence.

85 O Jane! thou wilt despise me.

*Jane.*85 Say not so:

86 I never can despise thee, gentle brother.

87 A lover's jealousy and hopeless pangs

88 No kindly heart contemns.

*De Mon*88

A lover, sayst thou?

89 No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate!
90 Which thus hath driven me forth from kindred peace,
91 From social pleasure, from my native home,
92 To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth,
93 Avoiding all men, cursing and accurs'd.

Jane.94 De Monfort, this is fiend-like, frightful, terrible!

95 What being, by th' Almighty Father form'd,
96 Of flesh and blood, created even as thou,
97 Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake,
98 Who art thyself his fellow?
99 Unknit thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands.
100 Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom mates
101 To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother!
102 Strive bravely with it; drive it from thy breast;
103 'Tis the degrader of a noble heart:
104 Curse it, and bid it part.

De Mon.105 It will not part.

(His hand on his breast.)

I've lodg'd it here too long:
106 With my first cares I felt its rankling touch;
107 I loath'd him when a boy.

Jane.108 Whom didst thou say?

De Mon.108

Oh! that detested Rezenvelt!

109 E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps
110 Of hostile breed, instinctively reverse,
111 Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his ready pledge,
112 And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd
113 From youth to man's estate, his narrow art
114 And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd
115 In the affected carelessness of mirth,
116 Still more detestable and odious grew.
117 There is no living being on this earth
118 Who can conceive the malice of his soul,
119 With all his gay and damned merriment,
120 To those, by fortune or by merit plac'd
121 Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,
122 He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,
123 As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,
124 Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,
125 I could endure it; even as we bear
126 Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,
127 I could endure it. But when honours came,

128 And wealth and new-got titles fed his pride;
129 Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,
130 And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses on him;
131 Oh! then I could no longer suffer it!
132 It drove me frantic.—What! what would I give!
133 What would I give to crush the bloated toad,
134 So rankly do I loathe him!

*Jane.*135 And would thy hatred crush the very man
136 Who gave to thee that life he might have ta'en;
137 That life which thou so rashly didst expose
138 To aim at his? Oh! this is horrible!

*De Mon.*139 Ha! thou hast heard it, then? From all the world,
140 But most of all from thee, I thought it hid.

*Jane.*141 I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd
142 Upon the instant to return to thee.
143 Didst thou receive my letter?

*De Mon.*144 I did! I did! 'twas that which drove me hither.
145 I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

*Jane.*146 Alas! that, tempted by a sister's tears,
147 I ever left thy house! These few past months,
148 These absent months, have brought us all this woe.
149 Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.
150 And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.
151 You dar'd him to the field; both bravely fought;
152 He more adroit disarm'd you; courteously
153 Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,
154 You did refuse to use against him more;
155 And then, as says report, you parted friends.

*De Mon.*156 When he disarm'd this curs'd, this worthless hand
157 Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd
158 From dev'lish pride, which now derives a bliss
159 In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected
160 With the vile favour of his poor forbearance;
161 While he securely sits with glibing brow,
162 And basely bates me like a muzzled cur
163 Who cannot turn again.—
164 Until that day, till that accursed day,
165 I knew not half the torment of this hell,
166 Which burns within my breast. Heaven's lightnings blast him!

*Jane.*167 O this is horrible! Forbear, forbear!

De Mon.169 Then let it light.
170 Torments more fell than I have felt already
171 It cannot send. To be annihilated,
172 What all men shrink from; to be dust, be nothing,
173 Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am!

De Mon.

(affectionately).

196 What shall I do?

*Jane.*196 Call up thy noble spirit;

197 Rouse all the gen'rous energy of virtue;

198 And with the strength of heaven-endued man,

199 Repel the hideous foe. Be great; be valiant.

200 O, if thou couldst! e'en shrouded as thou art

201 In all the sad infirmities of nature,

202 What a most noble creature wouldst thou be!

*De Mon.*203 Ay, if I could: alas! alas! I cannot.

*Jane.*204 Thou canst, thou mayst, thou wilt.

205 We shall not part till I have turn'd thy soul.

Enter Manuel.

*De Mon.*206 Ha! some one enters. Wherefore com'st thou here?

*Man.*207 Count Freberg waits your leisure.

De Mon.

(angrily).

208 Begone, begone!—I cannot see him now.

[Exit Manuel.

*Jane.*209 Come to my closet; free from all intrusion,

210 I'll school thee there; and thou again shalt be

211 My willing pupil, and my gen'rous friend,

212 The noble Monfort I have lov'd so long,

213 And must not, will not lose.

*De Mon.*214 Do as thou wilt; I will not grieve thee more.

[Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I. ^[2]

Countess Freberg's dressing-room. *Enter the Countess dispirited and out of humour, and throws herself into a chair: enter, by the opposite side, Theresa.*

*Ther.*1 Madam, I am afraid you are unwell:

2 What is the matter? does your head ache?

2 No,
3 'Tis not my head: concern thyself no more
4 With what concerns not thee.

*Lady.*6 Yes, thinkest thou I'll stay and fret at home?

Lady.8 I hate them all.

*Lady.*¹⁴ Didst thou o'erhear it?

Lady. 16 Well, all are not so greatly prejudic'd;
17 All do not think me like a May-day queen,
18 Which peasants deck in sport.

Lady
(*putting her handkerchief to her eyes*).
19 E'en my good lord, Theresa.

*Lady.*²¹ I know as well as thou he loves me well.
22 But what of that! he takes in me no pride:
23 Elsewhere his praise and admiration go,
24 And Jane De Monfort is not mortal woman.



28 Now greatly married, as I have been told,
29 From her most prudent care, may well excuse
30 The admiration of so good a man
31 As my good master is. And then, dear madam,
32 I must confess, when I myself did hear
33 How she was come through the rough winter's storm,
34 To seek and comfort an unhappy brother,
35 My heart beat kindly to her.

*Lady.*36 Ay, ay, there is a charm in this I find:

37 But wherefore may she not have come as well
38 Through wintry storms to seek a lover too?

*Ther.*39 No, madam, no, I could not think of this.

*Lady.*40 That would reduce her in your eyes, mayhap,

41 To woman's level.—Now I see my vengeance!
42 I'll tell it round that she is hither come,
43 Under pretence of finding out De Monfort,
44 To meet with Rezenvelt. When Freberg hears it,
45 'Twill help, I ween, to break this magic charm.

*Ther.*46 And say what is not, madam?

*Lady.*47 How canst thou know that I shall say what is not?

48 'Tis like enough I shall but speak the truth.

*Ther.*49 Ah, no! there is—

*Lady.*49 Well, hold thy foolish tongue.

[**Freberg's** voice is heard without. After hesitating.

50 I will not see him now.

[Exit.

[Enter **Freberg** by the opposite side, passing on hastily.

*Ther.*51 Pardon, my lord; I fear you are in haste.

52 Yet must I crave that you will give to me
53 The books my lady mention'd to you: she
54 Has charg'd me to remind you.

*Freb.*54 I'm in haste.

[Passing on.

*Ther.*55 Pray you, my lord: your countess wants them much:

56 The Lady Jane De Monfort ask'd them of her.

Freb.

(returning instantly).

57 Are they for her? I knew not this before.

58 I will, then, search them out immediately.

59 There is nought good or precious in my keeping,

60 That is not dearly honour'd by her use.

*Ther.*61 My lord, what would your gentle countess say,

62 If she o'erheard her own request neglected,

63 Until supported by a name more potent?

*Freb.*64 Thinkst thou she is a fool, my good Theresa,

65 Vainly to please herself with childish thoughts

66 Of matching what is matchless—Jane De Monfort?

67 Thinkst thou she is a fool, and cannot see,

68 That love and admiration often thrive

69 Though far apart?

[Re-enter lady with great violence.

*Lady.*69 I am a fool, not to have seen full well,

70 That thy best pleasure in o'er-rating so

71 This lofty stranger, is to humble me,

72 And cast a dark'ning shadow o'er my head.

73 Ay, wherefore dost thou stare upon me thus?

74 Art thou asham'd that I have thus surpris'd thee?

75 Well mayst thou be so!

*Freb.*75 True; thou rightly sayst.

76 Well may I be asham'd: not for the praise

77 Which I have ever openly bestow'd

78 On Monfort's noble sister; but that thus,

79 Like a poor mean and jealous listener,

80 She should be found, who is Count Freberg's wife.

*Lady.*81 Oh, I am lost and ruin'd! hated, scorn'd!

[Pretending to faint.

*Freb.*82 Alas, I have been too rough!

[Taking her hand and kissing it tenderly.

83 My gentle love! my own, my only love!

84 See, she revives again. How art thou, love?

85 Support her to her chamber, good Theresa.
86 I'll sit and watch by her. I've been too rough.

[Exeunt; lady supported by Freb. and Ther.]

SCENE II.

De Monfort *discovered sitting by a table reading. After a little time he lays down his book, and continues in a thoughtful posture Enter to him Jane De Monfort.*

*Jane.*1 Thanks, gentle brother.—

[Pointing to the book.]

2 Thy willing mind has rightly been employ'd:
3 Did not thy heart warm at the fair display
4 Of peace and concord and forgiving love?

*De Mon.*5 I know resentment may to love be turn'd,
6 Though keen and lasting, into love as strong:
7 And fiercest rivals in th' ensanguin'd field
8 Have cast their brandish'd weapons to the ground,
9 Joining their mailed breasts in close embrace,
10 With gen'rous impulse fir'd. I know right well
11 The darkest, fellest wrongs have been forgiven
12 Seventy times o'er from blessed heav'nly love:
13 I've heard of things like these; I've heard and wept.
14 But what is this to me?

*Jane.*14 All, all, my brother!
15 It bids thee too that noble precept learn,
16 To love thine enemy.

*De Mon.*17 Th' uplifted stroke that would a wretch destroy,
18 Gorg'd with my richest spoil, stain'd with my blood,
19 I would arrest, and cry, "Hold! hold! have mercy."
20 But when the man most adverse to my nature,
21 Who e'en from childhood hath, with rude malevolence,
22 Withheld the fair respect all paid beside,
23 Turning my very praise into derision,
24 Who galls and presses me where'er I go,
25 Would claim the gen'rous feelings of my heart,
26 Nature herself doth lift her voice aloud,
27 And cry, "It is impossible!"

Jane.
(shaking her head).

28 Ah, Monfort, Monfort!

[De Monfort and Freberg returning towards the front of the stage, still engaged in discourse.]

*Freb.*92 He is indeed a man, within whose breast

93 Firm rectitude and honour hold their seat,

94 Though unadorned with that dignity

95 Which were their fittest garb. Now, on my life!

96 I know no truer heart than Rezenvelt.

*De Mon.*97 Well, Freberg, well, there needs not all this pains

98 To garnish out his worth: let it suffice;

99 I am resolv'd I will respect the man,

100 As his fair station and repute demand.

101 Methinks I see not at your jolly feasts

102 The youthful knight, who sang so pleasantly.

*Freb.*103 A pleasant circumstance detains him hence;

104 Pleasant to those who love high gen'rous deeds

105 Above the middle pitch of common minds;

106 And, though I have been sworn to secrecy,

107 Yet must I tell it thee.

108 This knight is near akin to Rezenvelt,

109 To whom an old relation, short while dead,

110 A good estate bequeathed, some leagues distant.

111 But Rezenvelt, now rich in fortune's store,

112 Disdain'd the sordid love of further gain,

113 And gen'rously the rich bequest resign'd

114 To this young man, blood of the same degree

115 To the deceas'd, and low in fortune's gifts,

116 Who is from hence to take possession of it:

117 Was it not nobly done?

*De Mon.*117 'Twas right and honourable.

118 This morning is oppressive, warm, and heavy:

119 There hangs a foggy closeness in the air;

120 Dost thou not feel it?

*Freb.*121 O no! to think upon a gen'rous deed

122 Expands my soul, and makes me lightly breathe.

*De Mon.*123 Who gives the feast to-night? His name escapes me.

124 You say I am invited.

*Freb.*124 Old Count Waterlan.

125 In honour of your townsman's gen'rous gift,

126 He spreads the board.

Freb. 128 But not too old is he to honour virtue.
129 I shall partake of it with open soul;
130 For, on my honest faith, of living men
131 I know not one, for talents, honour, worth,
132 That I should rank superior to Rezenvelt.

*Feb.*134 Nay, longer, marquiss; but my friendship rests
135 Upon the good report of other men,
136 And that has told me much.

137 Would he were come! by heav'n I would he were!
138 This fool besets me so.

139 The sprightly dames of Amberg rise by times,
140 Untarnish'd with the vigils of the night.

De Mon. 142 He does not rashly praise who praises you;
143 For he were dull indeed—

*De Mon.*¹⁴⁴ I should have said—It has escap'd me now—

146 Nay, do not let me lose it so, my lord.

147 Some fair one has bewitch'd your memory,
148 And robs me of the half-form'd compliment.

Jane. 149 Half-utter'd praise is to the curious mind
150 As to the eye half-veiled beauty is,
151 More precious than the whole. Pray pardon him.
152 Some one approaches.

[Listening.]

Freb. 153 No, no, it is a servant who ascends;
154 He will not come so soon.

De Mon.

(off his guard).

155 'Tis Rezenvelt: I heard his well-known foot,
156 From the first staircase, mounting step by step.

Freb. 157 How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound!
158 I heard him not.

[De Monfort looks embarrassed, and is silent.]

Enter Rezenvelt.

[De Monfort, recovering himself, goes up to receive Rezenvelt, who meets him with a cheerful countenance.]

De Mon.

(to Rez)

159 I am, my lord, beholden to you greatly.
160 This ready visit makes me much your debtor.

Rez. 161 Then may such debts between us, noble marquis,
162 Be oft incurr'd, and often paid again!

(To Jane.)

163 Madam, I am devoted to your service,
164 And ev'ry wish of yours commands my will.

(To Countess.)

165 Lady, good morning.

(To Freb.)

Well, my gentle friend,
166 You see I have not linger'd long behind.

Freb. 167 No, thou art sooner than I look'd for thee.

Rez.168 A willing heart adds feather to the heel,
169 And makes the clown a winged Mercury.

De Mon. 170 Then let me say, that, with a grateful mind,
171 I do receive these tokens of good will;
172 And must regret, that, in my wayward moods,
173 I have too oft forgot the due regard
174 Your rank and talents claim.

Rez.174 No, no, De Monfort,
175 You have but rightly curb'd a wanton spirit,
176 Which makes me too neglectful of respect.
177 Let us be friends, and think of this no more.

Feb. 178 Ay, let it rest with the departed shades
179 Of things which are no more; whilst lovely concord,
180 Follow'd by friendship sweet, and firm esteem,
181 Your future days enrich. O heavenly friendship!
182 Thou dost exalt the sluggish souls of men,
183 By thee conjoin'd, to great and glorious deeds;
184 As two dark clouds, when mix'd in middle air,
185 With vivid lightnings flash, and roar sublime.
186 Talk not of what is past, but future love.

De Mon.

(with dignity).

187 No, Freberg, no, it must not.

(To Rezenvelt.)

No, my lord,

188 I will not offer you an hand of concord,
189 And poorly hide the motives which constrain me.
190 I would that, not alone, these present friends,
191 But ev'ry soul in Amberg were assembled,
192 That I, before them all, might here declare
193 I owe my spared life to your forbearance.

(Holding out his hand.)

194 Take this from one who boasts no feeling warmth,
195 But never will deceive.

[Jane smiles upon De Monfort with great approbation, and Rezenvelt runs up to him with open arms.

Rez.196 Away with hands! I'll have thee to my breast.

197 Thou art, upon my faith, a noble spirit!

De Mon.

(shrinking back from him).

198 Nay, if you please, I am not so prepar'd—
199 My nature is of temperature too cold—
200 I pray you pardon me

(Jane's countenance changes).

201 But take this hand, the token of respect;
202 The token of a will inclin'd to concord;
203 The token of a mind, that bears within
204 A sense impressive of the debt it owes you:
205 And cursed be its power, unnerv'd its strength,
206 If e'er again it shall be lifted up
207 To do you any harm!

Rez. 208 Well, be it so, De Monfort, I'm contented;
209 I'll take thy hand, since I can have no more.

(Carelessly.)

210 I take of worthy men whate'er they give.
211 Their heart I gladly take, if not their hand;
212 If that too is withheld, a courteous word,
213 Or the civility of placid looks:
214 And, if e'en these are too great favours deem'd,
215 'Faith, I can set me down contentedly
216 With plain and homely greeting, or "God save ye!"

De Mon.

(aside, starting away from him some paces).

217 By the good light, he makes a jest of it!

[Jane seems greatly distressed, and Freberg endeavours to cheer her.

Freb.

(to Jane).

218 Cheer up, my noble friend; all will go well;
219 For friendship is no plant of hasty growth.
220 Though rooted in esteem's deep soil, the slow
221 And gradual culture of kind intercourse
222 Must bring it to perfection.

(To the Countess.)

223 My love, the morning, now, is far advane'd;
224 Our friends elsewhere expect us; take your leave.

Lady

(to Jane).

225 Farewell, dear madam, till the evening hour.

Freb.

(to De Mon.)

226 Good day, De Monfort.

(To Jane.)

227 Most devoutly yours.

Rez.

(to Freb.)

228 Go not too fast, for I will follow you.

[Exeunt Freberg and his lady.]

(To Jane.)

229 The Lady Jane is yet a stranger here:

230 She might, perhaps, in this your ancient city

231 Find somewhat worth her notice.

Jane. 232 I thank you, marquis, I am much engag'd;

233 I go not out to-day.

Rez. 234 Then fare ye well! I see I cannot now

235 Be the proud man who shall escort you forth,

236 And show to all the world my proudest boast,

237 The notice and respect of Jane de Monfort.

De Mon.

(aside impatiently).

238 He says farewell, and goes not!

Jane

(to Rez.).

239 You do me honour.

Rez. 240 Madam, adieu!

(To Jane.)

Good morning, noble marquis.

[Jane and De Monfort look expressively to one another, without speaking, and then exeunt severally.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A hall or antechamber, with the folding doors of an inner apartment open, which discovers the guests rising from a banquet. They enter and pass over the stage, and exeunt; and after them enter Rezenvelt and Freberg.

Freb. 1 Alas, my Rezenvelt!

2 I vainly hop'd the hand of gentle peace,
3 From this day's reconciliation sprung,
4 These rude unseemly jarrings had subdu'd;
5 But I have mark'd, e'en at the social board,
6 Such looks, such words, such tones, such untold things,
7 Too plainly told, 'twixt you and Monfort pass,
8 That I must now despair.
9 Yet who could think, two minds so much refin'd,
10 So near in excellence, should be remov'd,
11 So far remov'd, in gen'rous sympathy?

Rez.12 Ay, far remov'd indeed!

Freb.13 And yet, methought, he made a noble effort,
14 And with a manly plainness bravely told
15 The galling debt he owes to your forbearance.

Rez.16 'Faith! so he did, and so did I receive it;
17 When, with spread arms, and heart e'en mov'd to tears,
18 I frankly proffer'd him a friend's embrace:
19 And, I declare, had he as such receiv'd it,
20 I from that very moment had forborne
21 All opposition, pride-provoking jest,
22 Contemning carelessness, and all offence;
23 And had caress'd him as a worthy heart,
24 From native weakness such indulgence claiming.
25 But since he proudly thinks that cold respect,
26 The formal tokens of his lordly favour,
27 So precious are, that I would sue for them
28 As fair distinction in the public eye,
29 Forgetting former wrongs, I spurn it all.
30 And but that I do bear that noble woman,
31 His worthy, his incomparable sister,
32 Such fix'd, profound regard, I would expose him;
33 And, as a mighty bull, in senseless rage,
34 Rous'd at the baiter's will, with wretched rags
35 Of ire-provoking scarlet, chafes and bellows,
36 I'd make him at small cost of paltry wit,
37 With all his deep and manly faculties,
38 The scorn and laugh of fools.

Freb.39 For heaven's sake, my friend, restrain your wrath!
40 For what has Monfort done of wrong to you,
41 Or you to him, bating one foolish quarrel,
42 Which you confess from slight occasion rose,
43 That in your breasts such dark resentment dwells,
44 So fix'd, so hopeless?

*Rez.*83 Well, then, to-morrow I'll attend your call.

84 Here lies my way. Good night.

[*Exit.*

Enter Conrad.

*Con.*85 Forgive, I pray, my lord, a stranger's boldness.

86 I have presum'd to wait your leisure here,

87 Though at so late an hour.

*Freb.*87 But who art thou?

*Con.*88 My name is Conrad, sir,

89 A humble suitor to your honour's goodness,

90 Who is the more embolden'd to presume,

91 In that De Monfort's brave and noble marquis

92 Is so much fam'd for good and gen'rous deeds.

*Freb.*93 You are mistaken, I am not the man.

*Con.*94 Then, pardon me: I thought I could not err;

95 That mien so dignified, that piercing eye

96 Assur'd me it was he.

*Freb.*97 My name is not De Monfort, courteous stranger;

98 But, if you have a favour to request,

99 I may, with him, perhaps, befriend your suit.

*Con.*100 I thank your honour, but I have a friend

101 Who will commend me to De Monfort's favour:

102 The Marquis Rezenvelt has known me long,

103 Who, says report, will soon become his brother.

*Freb.*104 If thou wouldst seek thy ruin from De Monfort,

105 The name of Rezenvelt employ, and prosper;

106 But, if aught good, use any name but his.

*Con.*107 How may this be?

*Freb.*107 I cannot now explain.

108 Early to-morrow call upon Count Freberg;

109 So am I call'd, each burgher knows my house,

110 And there instruct me how to do you service.

111 Good night.

[Exit.

Con.

(alone).

112 Well, this mistake may be of service to me:

113 And yet my bus'ness I will not unfold

114 To this mild, ready, promise-making courtier;

115 I've been by such too oft deceiv'd already.

116 But if such violent enmity exist

117 Between De Monfort and this Rezenvelt,

118 He'll prove my advocate by opposition.

119 For if De Monfort would reject my suit,

120 Being the man whom Rezenvelt esteems,

121 Being the man he hates, a cord as strong,

122 Will he not favour me? I'll think of this.

[Exit.

SCENE II.

A lower apartment in Jerome's house, with a wide folding glass door, looking into a garden, where the trees and shrubs are brown and leafless. Enter De Monfort with a thoughtful frowning aspect, and paces slowly across the stage, Jerome following behind him, with a timid step. De Monfort hearing him, turns suddenly about.

De Mon.

(angrily).

1 Who follows me to this sequester'd room?

Jer.2 I have presum'd, my lord. 'Tis somewhat late:

3 I am inform'd you eat at home to-night;

4 Here is a list of all the dainty fare

5 My busy search has found; please to peruse it.

De Mon.6 Leave me: begone! Put hemlock in thy soup,

7 Or deadly night-shade, or rank hellebore,

8 And I will mess upon it.

Jer.8 Heaven forbid!

9 Your honour's life is all too precious, sure.

De Mon.

(sternly).

10 Did I not say begone?

Jer.11 Pardon, my lord, I'm old, and oft forget.

[Exit.

De Mon.

(looking after him, as if his heart smote him).

12 Why will they thus mistime their foolish zeal,
13 That I must be so stern?
14 O, that I were upon some desert coast!
15 Where howling tempests and the lashing tide
16 Would stun me into deep and senseless quiet;
17 As the storm-beaten trav'ler droops his head,
18 In heavy, dull, lethargic weariness,
19 And, 'mid the roar of jarring elements,
20 Sleeps to awake no more.
21 What am I grown? all things are hateful to me.

Enter Manuel.

(Stamping with his foot.)

22 Who bids thee break upon my privacy?

Man. 23 Nay, good my lord! I heard you speak aloud,
24 And dreamt not surely that you were alone.

De Mon. 25 What, dost thou watch, and pin thine ears to holes,
26 To catch those exclamations of the soul,
27 Which heaven alone should hear? Who hir'd thee, pray?
28 Who basely hir'd thee for a task like this?

Man. 29 My lord, I cannot hold. For fifteen years,
30 Long-troubled years, I have your servant been,
31 Nor hath the proudest lord in all the realm,
32 With firmer, with more honourable faith
33 His sov'reign serv'd, than I have served you;
34 But if my honesty be doubted now,
35 Let him who is more faithful take my place,
36 And serve you better.

De Mon. 37 Well, be it as thou wilt. Away with thee!
38 Thy loud-mouth'd boasting is no rule for me
39 To judge thy merit by.

Enter Jerome hastily, and pulls Manuel away.

Jer. 40 Come, Manuel, come away; thou art not wise.
41 The stranger must depart and come again,
42 For now his honour will not be disturb'd.

[Exit Manuel sulkily.]

*De Mon.*43 A stranger, saidst thou?

[Drops his handkerchief.

*Jer.*44 I did, good sir, but he shall go away;

45 You shall not be disturb'd.

[Stooping to lift the handkerchief.

45 You have dropp'd somewhat.

De Mon.

(preventing him).

46 Nay, do not stoop, my friend, I pray thee not!

47 Thou art too old to stoop.

48 I'm much indebted to thee.—Take this ring—

49 I love thee better than I seem to do.

50 I pray thee do it—thank me not.—What stranger?

*Jer.*51 A man who does most earnestly intreat

52 To see your honour; but I know him not.

*De Mon.*53 Then let him enter.

[Exit Jerome.

A pause. Enter Conrad.

*De Mon.*54 You are the stranger who would speak with me?

*Con.*55 I am so far unfortunate, my lord.

56 That, though my fortune on your favour hangs,

57 I am to you a stranger.

*De Mon.*58 How may this be? what can I do for you?,

*Con.*59 Since thus your lordship does so frankly ask

60 The tiresome preface of apology

61 I will forbear, and tell my tale at once,

62 In plodding drudgery I've spent my youth,

63 A careful penman in another's office;

64 And now, my master and employer dead,

65 They seek to set a stripling o'er my head,

66 And leave me on to drudge, e'en to old age,

67 Because I have no friend to take my part.

68 It is an office in your native town,

69 For I am come from thence, and I am told

70 You can procure it for me. Thus, my lord,

71 From the repute of goodness which you bear,
72 I have presum'd to beg.

*De Mon.*73 They have befool'd thee with a false report.

*Con.*74 Alas! I see it is in vain to plead,
75 Your mind is prepossess'd against a wretch,
76 Who has, unfortunately for his weal,
77 Offended the revengeful Rezenvelt.

*De Mon.*78 What dost thou say?

*Con.*79 What I, perhaps, had better leave unsaid.
80 Who will believe my wrongs if I complain?
81 I am a stranger, Rezenvelt my foe,
82 Who will believe my wrongs?

De Mon.

(eagerly catching him by the coat).

82 I will believe them!
83 Though they were base as basest, vilest deeds,
84 In ancient record told, I would believe them!
85 Let not the smallest atom of unworthiness
86 That he has put upon thee be conceal'd.
87 Speak boldly, tell it all; for, by the light!
88 I'll be thy friend, I'll be thy warmest friend,
89 If he has done thee wrong.

*Con.*90 Nay, pardon me, it were not well advis'd,
91 If I should speak so freely of the man
92 Who will so soon your nearest kinsman be.

*De Mon.*93 What canst thou mean by this?

*Con.*93 That Marquis Rezenvelt
94 Has pledg'd his faith unto your noble sister,
95 And soon will be the husband of her choice.
96 So I am told, and so the world believes.

*De Mon.*97 'Tis false! 'tis basely false!
98 What wretch could drop from his envenom'd tongue
99 A tale so damn'd?—It chokes my breath—

(Stamping with his foot.)

100 What wretch did tell it thee?

*Con.*101 Nay, every one with whom I have convers'd

102 Has held the same discourse. I judge it not.
103 But you, my lord, who with the lady dwell.
104 You best can tell what her deportment speaks;
105 Whether her conduct and unguarded words
106 Belie such rumour.

[De Monfort pauses, staggers backwards, and sinks into a chair; then starting up hastily.]

De Mon. 107 Where am I now? 'midst all the cursed thoughts,
108 That on my soul like stinging scorpions prey'd,
109 This never came before—Oh, if it be!
110 The thought will drive me mad.—Was it for this
111 She urg'd her warm request on bended knee?
112 Alas! I wept, and thought of sister's love,
113 No damned love like this.
114 Fell devil! 'tis hell itself has lent thee aid
115 To work such sorcery!

(Pauses.)

I'll not believe it.
116 I must have proof clear as the noon-day sun
117 For such foul charge as this! Who waits without?

[Paces up and down, furiously agitated.]

Con.

(aside).

118 What have I done? I've carried this too far.
119 I've rous'd a fierce ungovernable madman.

Enter Jerome.

De Mon.

(in a loud angry voice).

120 Where did she go, at such an early hour,
121 And with such slight attendance?

Jer. 122 Of whom inquires your honour?

De Mon. 123 Why, of your lady. Said I not my sister?

Jer. 124 The Lady Jane, your sister?

De Mon.

(in a faltering voice).

125 Yes, I did call her so.

Jer. 126 In truth, I cannot tell you where she went.

*De Mon.*134 No, stop them not. I will remain unseen,
135 And mark them as they pass. Draw back a little.

De Mon. 136 I hear their footsteps on the grating sand:
137 How like the croaking of a carrion bird,
138 That hateful voice sounds to the distant ear!
139 And now she speaks—her voice sounds cheerly too—
140 Curs'd be their mirth!—
141 Now, now, they come; keep closer still! keep steady!

Jer.142 My lord, you tremble much.

Jer.143 You do, in truth, and your teeth chatter too.

[Jane, Rezenvelt, and Countess Freberg appear through the glass door, pursuing their way up a short walk leading to the other wing of the house.

(Pauses and looks eagerly.)

*[Letting go his hold of **Jerome**, he throws out his hands vehemently, and thereby pushes him against the scene.]*

*Jer.*151 Oh! I am stunn'd! my head is crack'd in twain:
152 Your honour does forget how old I am.

*De Mon.*153 Well, well, the wall is harder than I wist.

154 Begone, and whine within.

[Exit **Jerome**, with a sad rueful countenance.

[**De Monfort** comes forward to the front of the stage, and makes a long pause expressive of great agony of mind.

155 It must be so: each passing circumstance;

156 Her hasty journey here; her keen distress

157 Whene'er my soul's abhorrence I express'd;

158 Ay, and that damned reconciliation,

159 With tears extorted from me: Oh, too well!

160 All, all too well bespeak the shameful tale.

161 I should have thought of heaven and hell conjoin'd,

162 The morning star mix'd with infernal fire,

163 Ere I had thought of this—

164 Hell's blackest magic, in the midnight hour,

165 With horrid spells and incantation dire,

166 Such combination opposite unseemly,

167 Of fair and loathsome, excellent and base,

168 Did ne'er produce—But every thing is possible,

169 So as it may my misery enhance!

170 Oh! I did love her with such pride of soul!

171 When other men, in gay pursuit of love,

172 Each beauty follow'd, by her side I stay'd;

173 Far prouder of a brother's station there,

174 Than all the favours favour'd lovers boast.

175 We quarrell'd once, and when I could no more

176 The alter'd coldness of her eye endure,

177 I slipp'd o'tip-toe to her chamber-door;

178 And when she ask'd who gently knock'd—Oh! oh!

179 Who could have thought of this?

[Throws himself into a chair, covers his face with his hand, and bursts into tears. After some time, he starts up from his seat furiously.

180 Hell's direst torment seize the infernal villain!

181 Detested of my soul! I will have vengeance!

182 I'll crush thy swelling pride—I'll still thy vaunting—

183 I'll do a deed of blood!—Why shrink I thus?

184 If by some spell or magic sympathy,

185 Piercing the lifeless figure on that wall

186 Could pierce his bosom too, would I not cast it?

[Throwing a dagger against the wall.

187 Shall groans and blood affright me? No, I'll do it.

188 Though gasping life beneath my pressure heav'd,

189 And my soul shudder'd at the horrid brink,

190 I would not flinch.—Fie, this recoiling nature!

191 O that his sever'd limbs were strew'd in air,

192 So as I saw it not!

Enter Rezenvelt behind from the glass door. De Monfort turns round, and on seeing him, starts back, then drawing his sword, rushes furiously upon him.

193 Detested robber! now all forms are over;

194 Now open villainy, now open hate!

195 Defend thy life!

Rez.195

De Monfort, thou art mad.

De Mon.196 Speak not, but draw. Now for thy hated life!

[They fight: Rezenvelt parries his thrusts with great skill, and at last disarms him.]

197 Then take my life, black fiend, for hell assists thee.

Rez.198 No, Monfort, but I'll take away your sword,

199 Not as a mark of disrespect to you,

200 But for your safety. By to-morrow's eve

201 I'll call on you myself and give it back;

202 And then, if I am charg'd with any wrong,

203 I'll justify myself. Farewell, strange man!

[Exit.]

[De Monfort stands for some time quite motionless, like one stupified. Enters to him a servant: he starts.]

De Mon.204 Ha! who art thou?

Ser.204

'Tis I, an' please your honour.

De Mon.

(staring wildly at him).

205 who art thou?

Ser.206 Your servant Jacques.

De Mon.206

Indeed I knew thee not.

207 Now leave me, and when Rezenvelt is gone,

208 Return and let me know.

Ser.208

He's gone already.

De Mon.209 How! is he gone so soon?

Ser.209

His servant told me,

210 He was in haste to go; as night comes on,

steadfastly at its point, and exit hastily.

SCENE III.

Moonlight. A wild path in a wood, shaded with trees. Enter De Monfort, with a strong expression of disquiet, mixed with fear, upon his face, looking behind him, and bending his ear to the ground, as if he listened to something.

*De Mon.*1 How hollow groans the earth beneath my tread!

2 Is there an echo here? Methinks it sounds

3 As though some heavy footstep follow'd me.

4 I will advance no farther.

5 Deep settled shadows rest across the path,

6 And thickly-tangled boughs o'erhang this spot.

7 O that a tenfold gloom did cover it,

8 That'mid the murky darkness I might strike!

9 As in the wild confusion of a dream,

10 Things horrid, bloody, terrible do pass,

11 As though they pass'd not; nor impress the mind

12 With the fix'd clearness of reality.

[An owl is heard screaming near him.

(Starting.)

13 What sound is that?

[Listens, and the owl cries again.

14 It is the screech-owl's cry.

15 Foul bird of night! what spirit guides thee here?

16 Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horror?

17 I've heard of this.

[Pauses and listens.

18 How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path,

19 With whisp'ring noise, as though the earth around me

20 Did utter secret things.

21 The distant river, too, bears to mine ear

22 A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!

23 Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.

24 A distant gath'ring blast sounds through the wood,

25 And dark clouds fleetly hasten o'er the sky:

26 O! that a storm would rise, a raging storm;

27 Amidst the roar of warring elements

28 I'd lift my hand and strike! but this pale light,

29 The calm distinctness of each stilly thing,

30 Is terrible

(starting).

Footsteps, and near me too!

31 He comes! he comes! I'll watch him farther on—

32 I cannot do it here.

[Exit.

Enter Rezenvelt, and continues his way slowly from the bottom of the stage: as he advances to the front, the owl screams, he stops and listens, and the owl screams again.

Rez.33 Ha! does the night-bird greet me on my way?

34 How much his hooting is in harmony

35 With such a scene as this! I like it well.

36 Oft when a boy, at the still twilight hour,

37 I've leant my back against some knotted oak,

38 And loudly mimick'd him, till to my call

39 He answer would return, and, through the gloom,

40 We friendly converse held.

41 Between me and the star-bespangled sky,

42 Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,

43 And through them looks the pale and placid moon.

44 How like a crocodile, or winged snake,

45 Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length!

46 And now transformed by the passing wind,

47 Methinks it seems a flying Pegasus.

48 Ay, but a shapeless band of blacker hue

49 Comes swiftly after.—

50 A hollow murm'ring wind sounds through the trees;

51 I hear it from afar; this bodes a storm.

52 I must not linger here—

[A bell heard at some distance.

52 The convent bell.

53 'Tis distant still: it tells their hour of prayer.

54 It sends a solemn sound upon the breeze,

55 That, to a fearful superstitious mind,

56 In such a scene, would like a death-knell come.

[Exit.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The inside of a convent chapel, of old Gothic architecture, almost dark: two torches only are seen at a distance, burning over a newly covered ^[3]grave. Lightning is seen flashing through the windows, and thunder heard, with the sound of wind beating upon the building. Enter two monks.

1st monk.1 The storm increases: hark how dismally

2 It howls along the cloisters. How goes time?

*2nd monk.*3 It is the hour: I hear them near at hand:

4 And when the solemn requiem has been sung

5 For the departed sister, we'll retire.

6 Yet, should this tempest still more violent grow,

7 We'll beg a friendly shelter till the morn.

*1st monk.*8 See, the procession enters: let us join.

[The organ strikes up a solemn prelude. Enter a procession of nuns, with the abbess, bearing torches. After compassing the grave twice, and remaining there some time, the organ plays a grand dirge, while they stand round the grave.]

SONG BY THE NUNS.

9 Departed soul, whose poor remains

10 This hallow'd lowly grave contains;

11 Whose passing storm of life is o'er,

12 Whose pains and sorrows are no more;

13 Bless'd be thou with the bless'd above,

14 Where all is joy, and purity, and love!

15 Let **Him**, in might and mercy dread,

16 Lord of the living and the dead;

17 In whom the stars of heav'n rejoice,

18 And the ocean lifts its voice;

19 Thy spirit, purified, to glory raise,

20 To sing with holy saints his everlasting praise!

21 Departed soul, who in this earthly scene

22 Hast our lowly sister been,

23 Swift be thy way to where the blessed dwell!

24 Until we meet thee there, farewell! farewell!

Enter a young pensioner, with a wild terrified look, her hair and dress all scattered, and rushes forward amongst them.

*Abb.*25 Why com'st thou here, with such disorder'd looks,

26 To break upon our sad solemnity?

*Pen.*27 Oh! I did hear through the receding blast,

28 Such horrid cries! they made my blood run chill.

*Abb.*29 'Tis but the varied voices of the storm,

30 Which many times will sound like distant screams:

31 It has deceiv'd thee.

*Pen.*32 O no, for twice it call'd, so loudly call'd,

33 With horrid strength, beyond the pitch of nature;
34 And murder! murder! was the dreadful cry.
35 A third time it return'd with feeble strength,
36 But o' the sudden ceas'd, as though the words
37 Were smother'd rudely in the grappled throat,
38 And all was still again, save the wild blast
39 Which at a distance growl'd.—
40 Oh! it will never from my mind depart!
41 That dreadful cry, all i' the instant still'd:
42 For then, so near, some horrid deed was done,
43 And none to rescue.

Abb.44 Where didst thou hear it?

Pen.44 In the higher cells,
45 As now a window, open'd by the storm,
46 I did attempt to close.

1st monk.47 I wish our brother Bernard were arriv'd;
48 He is upon his way.

Abb.49 Be not alarm'd; it still may be deception.
50 'Tis meet we finish our solemnity,
51 Nor show neglect unto the honour'd dead.

[Gives a sign, and the organ plays again: just as it ceases, a loud knocking is heard without.]

Abb.52 Ha! who may this be? hush!

[Knocking heard again.]

2d monk.53 It is the knock of one in furious haste.
54 Hush! hush! What footsteps come? Ha! brother Bernard.

Enter Bernard bearing a lantern.

1st monk.55 See, what a look he wears of stiffen'd fear!
56 Where hast thou been, good brother?

Bern.57 I've seen a horrid sight!

[All gathering round him and speaking at once.]
57 What hast thou seen?

Bern.58 As on I hasten'd, bearing thus my light,
59 Across the path, not fifty paces off,
60 I saw a murder'd corse, stretch'd on his back,

61 Smear'd with new blood, as though but freshly slain.

*Abb.*62 A man or woman was't?

*Bern.*62 A man, a man!

*Abb.*63 Didst thou examine if within its breast

64 There yet were lodg'd some small remains of life?

65 Was it quite dead?

*Bern.*65 Nought in the grave is deader.

66 I look'd but once, yet life did never lodge

67 In any form so laid.

68 A chilly horror seiz'd me, and I fled.

*1st monk.*69 And does the face seem all unknown to thee?

*Bern.*70 The face! I would not on the face have look'd

71 For e'en a kingdom's wealth, for all the world!

72 O no! the bloody neck, the bloody neck!

[Shaking his head and shuddering with horror. Loud knocking heard without.

*Sist.*73 Good mercy! who comes next?

*Bern.*73 Not far behind

74 I left our brother Thomas on the road;

75 But then he did repent him as he went,

76 And threatened to return.

*2d monk.*76 See, here he comes.

Enter Brother Thomas, with a wild terrified look.

*1st monk.*77 How wild he looks!

Bern.

(going up to him eagerly).

78 What, hast thou seen it too?

*Thom.*79 Yes, yes! it glared upon me as it pass'd.

*Bern.*80 What glared upon thee?

[All gathering round Thomas, and speaking at once.

80 O! what hast thou seen?

*Thom.*81 As striving with the blast I onward came,
82 Turning my feeble lantern from the wind,
83 Its light upon a dreadful visage gleam'd,
84 Which paus'd and look'd upon me as it pass'd;
85 But such a look, such wildness of despair,
86 Such horror-strained features, never yet
87 Did earthly visage show. I shrank and shudder'd.
88 If a damn'd spirit may to earth return,
89 I've seen it.

*Bern.*89 Was there any blood upon it?

*Thom.*90 Nay, as it pass'd, I did not see its form;
91 Nought but the horrid face.

*Bern.*92 It is the murderer.

*1st monk.*92 What way went it?

*Thom.*93 I durst not look till I had pass'd it far.
94 Then turning round, upon the rising bank,
95 I saw, between me and the paly sky,
96 A dusky form, tossing and agitated.
97 I stopp'd to mark it; but, in truth, I found
98 'Twas but a sapling bending to the wind,
99 And so I onward hied, and look'd no more.

*1st monk.*100 But we must look to't; we must follow it:
101 Our duty so commands.
(*To 2d monk.*)
Will you go, brother?

(*To Bernard.*)
102 And you, good Bernard?

*Bern.*102 If I needs must go.

*1st monk.*103 Come, we must all go.

*Abb.*103 Heaven be with you, then!

[*Exeunt monks.*

*Pen.*104 Amen! amen! Good heav'n, be with us all!
105 O what a dreadful night!

*Abb.*106 Daughters, retire; peace to the peaceful dead!

107 Our solemn ceremony now is finish'd.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A large room in the convent, very dark. Enter the abbess, young pensioner bearing a light, and several nuns; she sets down the light on a table at the bottom of the stage, so that the room is still very gloomy.

Abb.1 They have been longer absent than I thought:

2 I fear he has escap'd them.

1st nun.2 Heaven forbid!

Pen.3 No, no, found out foul murder ever is,

4 And the foul murderer too.

2d nun.5 The good Saint Francis will direct their search;

6 The blood so near this holy convent shed

7 For threefold vengeance calls.

Abb.8 I hear a noise within the inner court—

9 They are return'd

(*listening*);

and Bernard's voice I hear:

10 They are return'd.

Pen.10 Why do I tremble so?

11 It is not I who ought to tremble thus.

2d nun.12 I hear them at the door.

Bern.

(*without*).

13 Open the door, I pray thee, brother Thomas;

14 I cannot now unhand the prisoner.

(*All speak together, shrinking back from the door, and staring upon one another.*)

14 He is with them!

[*A folding door at the bottom of the stage is opened, and enter Bernard, Thomas, and the other two monks, carrying lanterns in their hands, and bringing in De Monfort. They are likewise followed by other monks. As they lead forward De Monfort, the light is turned away, so that he is seen obscurely; but when they come to the front of the stage, they turn the light side of their lanterns on him at once, and his face is seen in all the strengthened horror of despair, with his hands and clothes bloody.*]

(*Abbess and nuns speak at once, and start back*).

15 Holy saints be with us!

Bern.

(to abb.)

16 Behold the man of blood!

Abb. 17 Of misery too; I cannot look upon him.

Bern.

(to nuns).

18 Nay, holy sisters, turn not thus away.

19 Speak to him, if, perchance, he will regard you:

20 For from his mouth we have no utterance heard,

21 Save one deep groan and smother'd exclamation,

22 When first we seiz'd him.

Abb.

(to De Mon.)

23 Most miserable man, how art thou thus?

[Pauses.

24 Thy tongue is silent, but those bloody hands

25 Do witness horrid things. What is thy name?

De Mon.

(roused, looks steadfastly at the abbess for some time; then speaking in a short hurried voice).

26 I have no name.

Abb.

(to Bern.)

27 Do it thyself; I'll speak to him no more.

Pen. 28 O holy saints! that this should be the man

29 Who did against his fellow lift the stroke,

30 Whilst he so loudly call'd.—

31 Still in my ears it rings: O murder! murder!

De Mon.

(starting).

32 He calls again!

Pen. 33 No, he did call, but now his voice is still'd.

34 'Tis past.

De Mon. 35 'Tis past.

Pen. 36 Yes, it is past! art thou not he who did it?

[**De Monfort** utters a deep groan, and is supported from falling by the monks. A noise is heard without.

*Abb.*37 What noise is this of heavy lumb'ring steps,

38 Like men who with a weighty burthen come?

*Bern.*39 It is the body: I have orders given

40 That here it should be laid.

[Enter men bearing the body of **Rezenvelt**, covered with a white cloth, and set it down in the middle of the room: they then uncover it. **De Monfort** stands fixed and motionless with horror, only that a sudden shivering seems to pass over him when they uncover the corpse. The abbess and nuns shrink back and retire to some distance, all the rest fixing their eyes steadfastly upon **De Monfort**. A long pause.

Bern.

(to **De Mon.**)

41 Seest thou the lifeless corpse, those bloody wounds?

42 See how he lies, who but so shortly since

43 A living creature was, with all the powers

44 Of sense, and motion, and humanity!

45 Oh! what a heart had he who did this deed!

1st monk

(looking at the body).

46 How hard those teeth against the lips are press'd,

47 As though he struggled still!

*2nd monk.*48 The hands too, clench'd: nature's last fearful effort.

[**De Monfort** still stands motionless. Brother **Thomas** then goes to the body, and raising up the head a little, turns it towards **De Monfort**.

*Thom.*49 Knowst thou this ghastly face?

De Mon.

(putting his hands before his face in violent perturbation).

50 Oh, do not! do not! Veil it from my sight!

51 Put me to any agony but this!

*Thom.*52 Ha! dost thou then confess the dreadful deed?

53 Hast thou against the laws of awful heaven

54 Such horrid murder done? What fiend could tempt thee?

[Pauses, and looks steadfastly at **De Monfort**.

*De Mon.*55 I hear thy words, but do not hear their sense—

56 Hast thou not cover'd it?

Bern.

(to Thom.)

57 Forbear, my brother, for thou seest right well

58 He is not in a state to answer thee.

59 Let us retire and leave him for awhile.

60 These windows are with iron grated o'er;

61 He is secur'd, and other duty calls.

Thom. 62 Then let it be.

Bern.

(to monks, &c.)

63 Come, let us all depart.

[Exeunt abbess and nuns, followed by the monks, one monk lingering a little behind.]

De Mon. 64 All gone!

(Perceiving the monk.)

64 O stay thou here!

Monk. 64 It must not be.

De Mon. 65 I'll give thee gold; I'll make thee rich in gold,

66 If thou wilt stay e'en but a little while.

Monk. 67 I must not, must not, stay.

De Mon. 67 I do conjure thee!

Monk. 68 I dare not stay with thee.

[Going.]

De Mon. 68 And wilt thou go?

[Catching hold of him eagerly.]

69 O! throw thy cloak upon this grizly form!

70 The unclos'd eyes do stare upon me still.

71 O do not leave me thus!

[Monk covers the body, and exit.]

De Mon.

(alone, looking at the covered body, but at a distance).

72 Alone with thee! but thou art nothing now.

73 'Tis done, 'tis number'd with the things o'erpast;
74 Would! would it were to come!—
75 What fated end, what darkly gathering cloud
76 Will close on all this horror?
77 O that dire madness would unloose my thoughts,
78 And fill my mind with wildest fantasies,
79 Dark, restless, terrible! aught, aught but this!

[Pauses and shudders.

80 How with convulsive life he heav'd beneath me,
81 E'en with the death's wound gor'd! O horrid, horrid!
82 Methinks I feel him still.—What sound is that?
83 I heard a smother'd groan.—It is impossible!

[Looking steadfastly at the body.

84 It moves! it moves! the cloth doth heave and swell.
85 It moves again! I cannot suffer this—
86 Whate'er it be, I will uncover it.

[Runs to the corpse, and tears off the cloth in despair.

87 All still beneath.
88 Nought is there here but fix'd and grisly death,
89 How sternly fixed! Oh! those glazed eyes!
90 They look upon me still.

[Shrinks back with horror.

91 Come, madness! come unto me, senseless death!
92 I cannot suffer this! Here, rocky wall,
93 Scatter these brains, or dull them!

[Runs furiously, and dashing his head against the wall, falls upon the floor.

Enter two monks hastily.

*1st monk.*94 See: wretched man, he hath destroy'd himself.

*2d monk.*95 He does but faint. Let us remove him hence.

*1st monk.*96 We did not well to leave him here alone.

*2d monk.*97 Come, let us bear him to the open air.

[Exeunt, bearing out De Monfort.

SCENE III.

Before the gates of the convent. Enter Jane De Monfort, Freberg, and Manuel. As they are proceeding towards the gate, Jane stops short and shrinks back.

Feb.1 Ha! wherefore? has a sudden illness seiz'd thee?

Jane.2 No, no, my friend.—And yet I am very faint—

3 I dread to enter here.

Man.3 Ay, so I thought:

4 For, when between the trees, that abbey tower

5 First show'd its top, I saw your count'nance change.

6 But breathe a little here: I'll go before,

7 And make inquiry at the nearest gate.

Feb.8 Do so, good Manuel.

[Manuel goes and knocks at the gate.

9 Courage, dear madam: all may yet be well.

10 Rezenvelt's servant, frighten'd with the storm,

11 And seeing that his master join'd him not,

12 As by appointment, at the forest's edge,

13 Might be alarm'd, and give too ready ear

14 To an unfounded rumour.

15 He saw it not; he came not here himself.

Jane

(looking eagerly to the gate, where Manuel talks with the porter).

16 Ha! see, he talks with some one earnestly.

17 And seest thou not that motion of his hands?

18 He stands like one who hears a horrid tale.

19 Almighty God!

[Manuel goes into the convent.

19 He comes not back; he enters.

Feb.20 Bear up, my noble friend.

Jane.21 I will, I will! But this suspense is dreadful.

[A long pause. Manuel re-enters from the convent, and comes forward slowly with a sad countenance.

22 Is this the face of one who bears good tidings?

23 O God! his face doth tell the horrid fact:

24 There is nought doubtful here.

Feb. 24 How is it, Manuel?

Man. 25 I've seen him through a crevice in his door:

26 It is indeed my master.

[Bursting into tears.]

[Jane faints, and is supported by Freberg. — Enter abbess and several nuns from the convent, who gather about her, and apply remedies. She recovers.]

*1st nun.*²⁷ The life returns again.

*2d nun.*²⁷ Yes, she revives.

Abb.

(to Freb.)

28 Let me entreat this noble lady's leave

29 To lead her in. She seems in great distress:

30 We would with holy kindness soothe her woe,

31 And do by her the deeds of christian love.

*Freb.*³² Madam, your goodness has my grateful thanks.

[Exeunt, supporting Jane into the convent.]

SCENE IV.

De Monfort *is discovered sitting in a thoughtful posture. He remains so for some time. His face afterwards begins to appear agitated, like one whose mind is harrowed with the severest thoughts; then, starting from his seat, he clasps his hands together, and holds them up to heaven.*

*De Mon.*¹ O that I ne'er had known the light of day!

2 That filmy darkness on mine eyes had hung,

3 And clos'd me out from the fair face of nature!

4 O that my mind in mental darkness pent,

5 Had no perception, no distinction known,

6 Of fair or foul, perfection or defect,

7 Nor thought conceiv'd of proud pre-eminence!

8 O that it had! O that I had been form'd

9 An idiot from the birth! a senseless changeling,

10 Who eats his glutton's meal with greedy haste,

11 Nor knows the hand which feeds him.—

[Pauses; then in a calmer sorrowful voice.]

12 What am I now? how ends the day of life?

13 For end it must; and terrible this gloom,

14 This storm of horrors that surrounds its close.

15 This little term of nature's agony

16 Will soon be o'er, and what is past is past;

17 But shall I then, on the dark lap of earth

18 Lay me to rest, in still unconsciousness,

19 Like senseless clod that doth no pressure feel
20 From wearing foot of daily passenger;
21 Like a steep'd rock o'er which the breaking waves
22 Bellow and foam unheard? O would I could!

Enter Manuel, who springs forward to his master, but is checked upon perceiving De Monfort draw back and look sternly at him.

*Man.*23 My lord, my master! O my dearest master!

[De Monfort still looks at him without speaking.]

24 Nay, do not thus regard me, good my lord!
25 Speak to me: am I not your faithful Manuel?

De Mon.

(in a hasty broken voice).

26 Art thou alone?

*Man.*27 No, sir, the Lady Jane is on her way;

28 She is not far behind.

De Mon.

(tossing his arm over his head in an agony).

29 This is too much! all I can bear but this!
30 It must not be.—Run and prevent her coming.
31 Say, he who is detain'd a prisoner here
32 Is one to her unknown. I now am nothing.
33 I am a man of holy claims bereft;
34 Out of the pale of social kindred cast;
35 Nameless and horrible.—
36 Tell her De Monfort far from hence is gone
37 Into a desolate and distant land,
38 Ne'er to return again. Fly, tell her this;
39 For we must meet no more.

Enter Jane De Monfort, bursting into the chamber and followed by Freberg, abbess, and several nuns.

*Jane.*40 We must! we must! My brother, O my brother!

[De Monfort turns away his head and hides his face with his arm. Jane stops short, and, making a great effort, turns to Freberg, and the others who followed her, and with an air of dignity stretches out her hand, beckoning them to retire. All retire but Freberg, who seems to hesitate.]

41 And thou too, Freberg: call it not unkind.

[Exit Freberg: Jane and De Monfort only remain.]

*Jane.*42 My hapless Monfort!

[De Monfort turns round and looks sorrowfully upon her; she opens her arms to him, and he, rushing into them, hides his face upon her breast, and weeps.

Jane.43 Ay, give thy sorrow vent; here mayst thou weep.

De Mon.44

(in broken accents).

45 Oh! this, my sister, makes me feel again

46 The kindness of affection.

47 My mind has in a dreadful storm been tost;

48 Horrid and dark—I thought to weep no more—

49 I've done a deed—But I am human still.

Jane.50 I know thy suff'rings: leave thy sorrow free!

51 Thou art with one who never did upbraid;

52 Who mourns, who loves thee still.

De Mon.53 Ah! sayst thou so? no, no; it should not be.

(Shrinking from her.)

54 I am a foul and bloody murderer,

55 For such embrace unmeet: O leave me! leave me!

56 Disgrace and public shame abide me now;

57 And all, alas! who do my kindred own,

58 The direful portion share.—Away, away!

59 Shall a disgrac'd and public criminal

60 Degrade thy name, and claim affinity

61 To noble worth like thine?—I have no name—

62 I'm nothing now, not e'en to thee: depart.

[She takes his hand, and grasping it firmly, speaks with a determined voice.

Jane.63 De Monfort, hand in hand we have enjoy'd

64 The playful term of infancy together;

65 And in the rougher path of ripen'd years

66 We've been each other's stay. Dark low'rs our fate,

67 And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us;

68 But nothing, till that latest agony

69 Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose

70 This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house;

71 In the terrific face of armed law;

72 Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,

73 I never will forsake thee.

De Mon.

(looking at her with admiration.)

74 Heav'n bless thy gen'ro us soul, my noble Jane!
75 I thought to sink beneath this load of ill,
76 Depress'd with infamy and open shame;
77 I thought to sink in abject wretchedness:
78 But for thy sake I'll rouse my manhood up,
79 And meet it bravely; no unseemly weakness,
80 I feel my rising strength, shall blot my end,
81 To clothe thy cheek with shame.

*Jane.*82 Yes, thou art noble still.

*De Mon.*83 With thee I am; who were not so with thee?

84 But, ah! my sister, short will be the term:
85 Death's stroke will come, and in that state beyond,
86 Where things unutterable wait the soul,
87 New from its earthly tenement discharg'd,
88 We shall be sever'd far.
89 Far as the spotless purity of virtue
90 Is from the murd'rer's guilt, far shall we be.
91 This is the gulf of dread uncertainty
92 From which the soul recoils.

*Jane.*93 The God who made thee is a God of mercy:

94 Think upon this.

De Mon.

(shaking his head).

95 No, no! this blood! this blood!

*Jane.*96 Yes, e'en the sin of blood may be forgiv'n,

97 When humble penitence hath once aton'd.

De Mon.

(eagerly).

98 What, after terms of lengthen'd misery,
99 Imprison'd anguish of tormented spirits,
100 Shall I again, a renovated soul,
101 Into the blessed family of the good
102 Admittance have? Thinkst thou that this may be?
103 Speak, if thou canst: O speak me comfort here!
104 For dreadful fancies, like an armed host,
105 Have push'd me to despair. It is most horrible—
106 O speak of hope! if any hope there be.

[**Jane** is silent, and looks sorrowfully upon him; then clasping her hands, and turning her eyes to heaven, seems to

De Mon. 107 Ha! dost thou pray for me? heav'n hear thy prayer!
108 I fain would kneel.—Alas! I dare not do it.

[She kneels and prays to herself; he kneels by her, and clasps his hands fervently, but speaks not. A noise of chains clanking is heard without, and they both rise.]

Jane.
(moving towards a side door).
113 Then let us enter here.

De Mon.
(*catching hold of her with a look of horror*).
114 Not there—not there—the corpse —the bloody corpse!

De Mon. 116 A sudden thought has come across my mind;
117 How came it not before? Unhappy Rezenvelt!
118 Sayst thou but this?

[De Monfort utters a deep groan.
121 What means this heavy groan?

Enter abbess and monks, with two officers of justice carrying fetters in their hands to put upon De Monfort.

1st off.¹²³ Lady, we are the servants of the law,
124 And bear with us a power, which doth constrain
125 To bind with fetters this our prisoner.



*Jane.*126 A stranger uncondemn'd? this cannot be.

*1st off.*127 As yet, indeed, he is by law unjudg'd,
128 But is so far condemn'd by circumstance,
129 That law, or custom sacred held as law,
130 Doth fully warrant us, and it must be.

*Jane.*131 Nay, say not so; he has no power t'escape:
132 Distress hath bound him with a heavy chain;
133 There is no need of yours.

*1st off.*134 We must perform our office.

*Jane.*135 O! do not offer this indignity!

*1st off.*136 Is it indignity in sacred law
137 To bind a murderer?
(*To 2d off.*)
Come, do thy work.

*Jane.*138 Harsh are thy words, and stern thy harden'd brow;
139 Dark is thine eye; but all some pity have
140 Unto the last extreme of misery.
141 I do beseech thee! if thou art a man—

[*Kneeling to him.*

[**De Monfort**, roused at this, runs up to **Jane**, and raises her hastily from the ground: then stretches himself up proudly.

De Mon.

(*to Jane*).

142 Stand thou erect in native dignity;
143 And bend to none on earth the suppliant knee,
144 Though cloth'd in power imperial. To my heart
145 It gives a feller gripe than many irons.

(*Holding out his hands.*)

146 Here, officers of law, bind on those shackles;
147 And, if they are too light, bring heavier chains,
148 Add iron to iron; load, crush me to the ground:
149 Nay, heap ten thousand weight upon my breast,
150 For that were best of all.

[*A long pause, whilst they put irons upon him. After they are on, Jane looks at him sorrowfully, and lets her head sink on her breast. De Monfort stretches out his hand, looks at them, and then at Jane; crosses them over his*

breast, and endeavours to suppress his feelings. ^[4]

1st off.

(to De Monfort).

151 I have it, too, in charge to move you hence,

152 Into another chamber more secure.

De Mon. 153 Well, I am ready, sir.

[Approaching Jane, whom the abbess is endeavouring to comfort, but to no purpose.

154 Ah! wherefore thus, most honour'd and most dear?

155 Shrink not at the accoutrements of ill,

156 Daring the thing itself.

[Endeavouring to look cheerful.

157 Wilt thou permit me with a gyved hand?

[She gives him her hand, which he raises to his lips.

158 This was my proudest office.

[Exeunt, De Monfort leading out Jane.

SCENE V.

An apartment in the convent, opening into another room, whose low arched door is seen at the bottom of the stage. In one corner a monk is seen kneeling. Enter another monk, who, on perceiving him, stops till he rises from his knees, and then goes eagerly up to him.

1st monk. 1 How is the prisoner?

2d monk

(pointing to the door).

2 He is within, and the strong hand of death

3 Is dealing with him.

1st monk. 3 How is this, good brother?

4 Methought he brav'd it with a manly spirit;

5 And led, with shackled hands, his sister forth,

6 Like one resolv'd to bear misfortune bravely.

2d monk. 7 Yes, with heroic courage, for a while

8 He seem'd inspir'd; but soon depress'd again,

9 Remorse and dark despair o'erwhelm'd his soul:

10 And, from the violent working of his mind,

11 Some stream of life within his breast has burst;

12 For many a time, within a little space,

13 The ruddy tide has rush'd into his mouth.

14 God grant his pains be short!

1st monk.14

How does the lady?

2d monk.15 She sits and bears his head upon her lap.

16 Wiping the cold drops from his ghastly face

17 With such a look of tender wretchedness,

18 It wrings the heart to see her.

19 How goes the night?

1st monk.20 It wears, methinks, upon the midnight hour.

21 It is a dark and fearful night; the moon

22 Is wrapp'd in sable clouds; the chill blast sounds

23 Like dismal lamentations. Ay, who knows

24 What voices mix with the dark midnight winds?

25 Nay, as I pass'd that yawning cavern's mouth,

26 A whisp'ring sound, unearthly, reach'd my ear,

27 And o'er my head a chilly coldness crept.

28 Are there not wicked fiends and damned sprites,

29 Whom yawning charnels, and th' unfathom'd depths

30 Of secret darkness, at this fearful hour,

31 Do upwards send, to watch, unseen, around

32 The murd'rer's death-bed, at his fatal term,

33 Ready to hail with dire and horrid welcome,

34 Their future mate?—I do believe there are.

2d monk.35 Peace, peace! a God of wisdom and of mercy,

36 Veils from our sight—Ha! hear that heavy groan.

[A groan heard within.

1st monk.37 It is the dying man.

[Another groan.

2d monk.38 God grant him rest!

[Listening at the door.

39 I hear him struggling in the gripe of death.

40 O piteous heaven!

[Goes from the door.

Enter Brother **Thomas** from the chamber.

41 How now, good brother?

Thom.42 Retire, my friends. O many a bed of death

43 With all its pangs and horrors I have seen,

[Leans on 2d monk: a pause.

(turning away his head).

36 No, no! I cannot look upon him now.

*Man.*37 Didst thou not come to see him?

*Jer.*38 Fy! cover him—inter him in the dark—

39 Let no one look upon him.

Bern.

(to Jer.)

40 Well dost thou show the abhorrence nature feels

41 For deeds of blood, and I commend thee well.

42 In the most ruthless heart compassion wakes

43 For one, who, from the hand of fellow man,

44 Hath felt such cruelty.

[Uncovering the body of Rezenvelt.

45 This is the murder'd corse:

[Uncovering the body of De Monfort.

45 But see, I pray!

46 Here lies the murderer. What thinkst thou here?

47 Look on those features, thou hast seen them oft,

48 With the last dreadful conflict of despair,

49 So fix'd in horrid strength.

50 See those knit brows; those hollow sunken eyes;

51 The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distent;

52 That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,

53 In agony, to gnash the nether lip.

54 Thinkst thou, less painful than the murd'rer's knife

55 Was such a death as this?

56 Ay, and how changed too those matted locks!

*Jer.*57 Merciful heaven! his hair is grizly grown,

58 Chang'd to white age, that was, but two days since,

59 Black as the raven's plume. How may this be?

*Bern.*60 Such change, from violent conflict of the mind,

61 Will sometimes come.

*Jer.*61 Alas, alas! most wretched!

62 Thou wert too good to do a cruel deed,

63 And so it kill'd thee. Thou hast suffer'd for it.

64 God rest thy soul! I needs must touch thy hand,

65 And bid thee long farewell.

[Laying his hand on De Monfort.

Bern.66 Draw back, draw back: see where the lady comes.

Enter Jane De Monfort. Freberg, who has been for some time retired by himself at the bottom of the stage, now steps forward to lead her in, but checks himself on seeing the fixed sorrow of her countenance, and draws back respectfully. Jane advances to the table, and looks attentively at the covered bodies. Manuel points out the body of De Monfort, and she gives a gentle inclination of the head, to signify that she understands him. She then bends tenderly over it, without speaking.

Man.

(to Jane, as she raises her head).

67 Oh, madam, my good lord!

Jane.68 Well says thy love, my good and faithful Manuel:

69 But we must mourn in silence.

Man.70 Alas! the times that I have followed him!

Jane.71 Forbear, my faithful Manuel. For this love

72 Thou hast my grateful thanks; and here's my hand:

73 Thou hast lov'd him, and I'll remember thee.

74 Where'er I am, in whate'er spot of earth

75 I linger out the remnant of my days,

76 I will remember thee.

Man.77 Nay, by the living God! where'er you are,

78 There will I be. I'll prove a trusty servant:

79 I'll follow you, even to the world's end.

80 My master's gone; and I indeed am mean,

81 Yet will I show the strength of nobler men,

82 Should any dare upon your honour'd worth

83 To put the slightest wrong. Leave you, dear lady!

84 Kill me, but say not this!

[Throwing himself at her feet.

Jane

(raising him).

85 Well, then! be thou my servant, and my friend.

86 Art thou, good Jerome, too, in kindness come?

87 I see thou art. How goes it with thine age?

Jer.88 Ah, madam! woe and weakness dwell with age:

89 Would I could serve you with a young man's strength!

90 I'd spend my life for you.

Jane.90

Thanks, worthy Jerome.

118 A death that kills the noble and the brave,
119 And only them. He had no other wound.

1st off. 120 And shall I trust to this?

Jane. 120 Do as thou wilt:
121 To one who can suspect my simple word
122 I have no more reply. Fulfil thine office.

1st off. 123 No, lady. I believe your honour'd word,
124 And will no further search.

Jane. 125 I thank your courtesy: thanks, thanks to all;
126 My rev'rend mother, and ye honour'd maids;
127 Ye holy men, and you, my faithful friends;
128 The blessing of the afflicted rest with you!
129 And He, who to the wretched is most piteous,
130 Will recompense you.—Freberg, thou art good;
131 Remove the body of the friend you lov'd:
132 'Tis Rezenvelt I mean. Take thou this charge:
133 'Tis meet, that with his noble ancestors
134 He lie entomb'd in honourable state.
135 And now I have a sad request to make,
136 Nor will these holy sisters scorn my boon;
137 That I, within these sacred cloister walls,
138 May raise a humble, nameless tomb to him,
139 Who, but for one dark passion, one dire deed,
140 Had claim'd a record of as noble worth,
141 As e'er enrich'd the sculptur'd pedestal.

[*Exeunt.*

[5]

NOTES

[2] This scene has been very much altered from what it was in the former editions of this play, and scene fifth of the last act will be found to be almost entirely changed. These alterations, though of no great importance, are, I hope, upon the whole, improvements.

[3] I have put above *newly-covered* instead of *new-made* grave, as it stands in the former editions, because I wish not to give the idea of a funeral procession, but merely that of a hymn or requiem sung over the grave of a person who has been recently buried.

[4] Should this play ever again be acted, perhaps it would be better that the curtain should drop here; since here the play may be considered as completed, and what comes after, prolongs the piece too much when our interest for the fate of De Monfort is at an end.

[5] *Note.* —The last three lines of the last speech are not intended to give the reader a true character of *De Monfort*, whom I have endeavoured to represent throughout the play as, notwithstanding his other good qualities, proud, suspicious, and susceptible of envy, but only to express the partial sentiments of an affectionate sister, naturally

more inclined to praise him from the misfortune into which he had fallen.

DETAILS

Editor:	Baillie, Joanna
Publication title:	The Dramatic and Poetical Works Of Joanna Baillie
Pages:	76-77
Publication date:	1851
Publication year:	1851
Publisher/Imprint:	Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans
Physical description:	viii, 847 p.
Place of publication:	London
Country of publication:	London
Series:	Literature Online - English Poetry, Literature Online - English Drama
Publication subject:	Literature
Source type:	Books
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	Book Chapter, Poem
Publication note:	Only verse included; comedies omitted.
Accession number:	E2084853
ProQuest document ID:	2148080115
Document URL:	http://pitt.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2148080115?accountid=14709
Database:	Literature Online

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