

THE ROMANCE  
OF  
A PRINCESS

AMY REDPATH ROBDICK

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The romance of a princess :



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# THE ROMANCE OF A PRINCESS

A COMEDY

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

AMY REDPATH RODDICK

Author of "The Flag and Other Poems"

"The Armistice and Other Poems"

"The Seekers, an Indian Mystery Play"

"The Birth of Montreal, a Chronicle Play, and Other Poems"

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Montreal  
JOHN DOUGALL & SON  
1922

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The romance of a princess  
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**THE ROMANCE OF A PRINCESS**  
*A Comedy.*

THE HISTORY OF A PEOPLE  
A. C. C.



This play is the outcome of many happy walks in the forests that border Charlemagne's ancient capital. The writer and her husband would often pause to view some beauty-spot; at times she would read aloud the rare legends collected by Joseph Muller.

She has now tried to catch some of the interest and joy of those gone by summers to pass on to relatives and friends. If she has failed it is not the fault of the theme.

Let none throw doubt on Emma's reality. Who lives in myth, lives for all time.

A.R.R.

Montreal  
Christmas, 1922.

The first is the outcome of every happy walk in the  
city that number of the city's present capital. The writer  
and his husband would often go to visit some family  
at these times would visit about the same persons selected by  
a small family.  
The two were tried to catch some of the interest and for all  
those who are anxious to see an interesting and to visit. It  
was the first time it was the first of the time.  
I at once then doubt as to the writer. He has been in  
the city for all time.

1882

London  
1882



## CHARACTERS.

Emma .....	<i>A Daughter of Charles</i>
Etta .....	<i>Her Waiting-woman</i>
Charles (Charlemagne) .....	<i>King-Emperor</i>
Eginhardt .....	<i>Secretary and Director of Public Works</i>
Albert .....	<i>Count of the Palace</i>
Hildebold .....	<i>Archbishop</i>
Ernst .....	<i>A Charcoal-burner</i>
Guta .....	<i>His Wife</i>
David .....	<i>A Precocious Boy</i>
Audulf	} .....
Herbert	
	<i>Courtiers</i>

Courtiers, Wish-maidens, Elves.

Time: The beginning of the ninth century.

Place: Aquisgranum, the Capital of Frankland.

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## ACT I.

*Scene.—Emma's boudoir. A door on the left leads to the palace courtyard; another, centre back, opens into private apartments, which have no other entrance. The room is furnished befitting the dignity of a princess. Emma, in gala-attire, has just returned from a great function in honour of the Calif Haroun-al-Rashid's ambassadors. Etta helps remove her cloak. The princess then throws herself on a couch, while Etta stands before her admiringly.*

*Emma.* A moment's rest to gather memories  
Of what this day has meant; those swarthy Eastern  
Ambassadors! the gifts their king has sent.

*Etta.* How beautiful you are! In Frankland, who  
Approaches you in mind or character?  
That's what the scholars say. The people though  
Dwell on your loveliness. What plaudits when  
You rode that bulky beast! the contrast! a Princess,  
Alive with happiness.

*Emma* 'Twas wonderful  
To mount so high, an elephant for steed,  
To feel that heavy, ambling gait, to know  
Such strength for mischief could be chained to work  
Man's will. How kind of great Haroun to give



The King, my Father, this unwieldy proof  
 Of his affection; to teach such animals  
 Are real, not fabled monsters, as some of us  
 Have whispered! 'Twas tremulous that ride, up-perched  
 Above the marvelling throng; to feel myself,  
 A Frankish maid, upon that leathery  
 Ungainliness. An elephant in Europe!  
 Who'd have thought to see the day? But now  
 Unbind my hair. [*In a low voice.*] I think he will not come  
 Tonight. [*A knocking is heard.*] 'Tis he! but no, my Father's  
     knock,  
 So tender yet so masterful. Thou may'st  
 Retire. I'll wait upon his royal pleasure,  
 Will then disrobe myself.

[*Etta opens door on the left.*  
*Enter Charles in ceremonial robes, wearing his crown.*  
*Exit Etta through the door at the centre back after mak-*  
*ing deep obeisance.*]

You come attired  
 In majesty. [*Courtesying.*] I must acclaim you King,  
 Not Father.

*Charles.* [*Pressing her against his breast.*] Nay, nay, my  
     birdling! nestle here;  
 My dear Fastrada's legacy; a father's  
 Sweet solace; the Esther of our court. I could  
 Deny thee nought, unless a lover should  
 Address thine ears; avaunt the thought! The well  
 Of our fair intercourse is clear, undimmed,  
 As cloudless skies of sun-blessed Eastern lands.

*Emma.* O Father! what dread shapes may lurk beneath  
 Those Eastern skies! each soul has got some stain,  
 Some hidden mystery.



*Charles.* This day's excitement  
 Has tired, provoked reaction. Once a Bishop  
 Complained to me that nuns need long confessing.  
 Imagined sins are culled for penitence;  
 In baser lives these specks would pass unnoticed.  
 We'll rid such faults as thine with kisses; perchance  
 A wayward thought when Holy Words were spoken.  
 And now uncrown the King, then help remove  
 This cumbrous mantle.—Cautiously! I've something  
 Of great import.

*Emma.* But not as great as that  
 Great beast, the elephant!

*Charles.* Far weightier,  
 As Heaven outvies the earth, as souls are more  
 Than flesh. See here, my birdling, what I've brought.

*Emma.* Some ragged silk, a joke!—It cannot be—

*Charles.* Thine eyes have guessed; the sacred coverings!  
 O to-day how all have gaped, and cheered  
 That elephant, at most a curious  
 Phenomenon, distracting from rich gifts  
 Of sober worth. In truth now royalty  
 Resides in this new Western Rome, a fairer  
 Than earthly crown implies. Haroun, my brother,  
 Has raised and honoured us.

*Emma.* Among the Scholars  
 I've heard some doubts expressed.

*Charles.* Most ill-advised,  
 Rank heresy, as well doubt Holy Church  
 Herself. The proofs are clear; nor flaw, nor break.  
 These hallowed relics, damped with tears by him



Of Arimathaea, held in sacred trust  
 By his descendants, traced each step till now  
 They rest within our great Basilica,  
 Are here to stay, to gratify, as long  
 As Franks are true and strong. See! see! my birdling,  
 This rosy silk was round the cloth that held,  
 One time, St. John the Baptist's bleeding head;  
 This white encased the Virgin's dress; this yellow,  
 The precious Infant's swaddling clothes; and this  
 That's dyed with scarlet pomp has clasped within  
 Its folds the loin-cloth, garment of the cross.  
 Yes! yes! my lips have pressed those objects, I  
 Am nearer God.

*Emma.* . This silk?

*Charles.* The holy relics  
 Are wrapped afresh in lustrous lengths of rare  
 Brocade, a further gift brought by Haroun's  
 Ambassadors—the Church's treasury  
 Holds them in state. This tattered silk that age  
 Unfits for service still retains great virtue  
 From sacredness long stored. And who is pure  
 Enough to shelter it? I know of none  
 But thee, Fastrada's living image!

*Emma.* A father's  
 Affectionate regard has blinded thee.  
 O take that stuff! 'Twould shrink to powdered dust  
 Did I but handle it.

*Charles.* Nay, nay, my Emma,  
 There is a point where modesty doth lose  
 Its charm and gives affront. That point is reached;  
 So fetch my cloak and fasten its jeweled clasp.  
 Now crown the Emperor, he prays that angels



May watch thy bed. [*He kisses Emma. Exit left.*]

*Emma.* That silk! how can I keep it?  
Its folds have touched what once hath touched God's Prophet,  
His Mother, His very Self. O some one come  
And take it hence.—Or—or is't possible  
To make me worthy? e'en though hearts be crushed.  
[*A light knock is heard.*]  
And so the test approaches! May I be strengthened.

[*Emma opens the door on the left. Enter Eginhardt.*]

*Eginhardt.* It promises a blustry night. Wait Love,  
Until I brush these flakes, a sudden swirl  
Of snow; but here there's warmth and comfort. [*Extending  
his arms.*] My Emma—

*Emma.* Not yours, a Princess speaks, a gulf has wid-  
ened  
Since last we met. You recognize that silk?  
It heals the secret breach I've made within  
A Father's confidence, it warns that you  
Must leave me now and instantly. You are  
The King, my Father's trusted friend.

*Eginhardt.* O Emma!  
Thy words bite deep—and yet not deep enough  
To overthrow the airy castles hewn  
From glowing hope. And see what thing has winged  
My steps, has brought me here to-night.

*Emma.* A ring!  
It seems to draw my hand; but no, 'tis for  
Some humble maid, who'll taste the happiness  
My rank denies.

*Eginhardt.* Who else can wear this ring



That Queen Fastrada prized?

*Emma.* [*Taking the ring.*] My Mother's ring!  
How came it here?

*Eginhardt.* [*Sitting on the couch.*] Thou know'st the story?

*Emma.* [*Sitting on a stool near him.*] A rumor,  
Unmeant to reach the King, my Father's ears,  
And so 'twas crushed. But now the ring I hold  
Demands the truth. O Eginhardt, tell all,  
Omitting nought, e'en though the listening hurts.

*Eginhardt.* A lesser soul might rather seek relief  
From words unsaid; but thou, with thy clear eyes,  
Need'st probe beneath like—

*Emma.* Like that Father; whose  
Sweet confidence has been outwitted.

*Eginhardt.* Rather  
Betrayed unwittingly, a force outside  
Ourselves.

*Emma.* That can be crushed; but first we'll hear  
Thy story. O Eginhardt, how easily  
The dear familiar "thy" slips mouthwards. Let  
It be, until the story's told; or as  
A master, well-beloved, thou mayest speak;  
Whilst I sit here, a mindful pupil.

*Eginhardt.* Thou hast  
Thy Mother's grace, her wit and understanding,  
Thy soul surpasses hers. I but repeat  
Archbishop Turpin's words.



*Emma.*

She lacked a something, a mother's tenderness;  
But then her smile would reassure.

I thought at times

*Eginhardt.*

Intelligence, her merry laughter, her fresh  
And dazzling beauty so enthralled the King;  
If she but raised her little finger, he,  
The Lord of millions, hastened to obey.  
And thus it went; although her wishes might  
Disturb a court, a city or a kingdom;  
The erst so pious Charles exalted one;  
Who should have grovelled at his feet.

Her bright

*Emma.*

About my Mother?

You speak

*Eginhardt.* Whose beauty is thy dower;  
Whose baser parts are long forgotten. Death  
Came stealthily—the King refused belief.  
For days and nights he knelt beside the couch,  
His arms supporting one whose soul had fled.  
“She is not dead,” he cried, “She sweetly slumbers.”  
He waved aside, as thou rememberest,  
All food and drink, became well-nigh demented,  
Completely losing that serene composure,  
That seemed as much himself as kingly might.  
“She is not dead;” his eyes blazed wrathfully,  
While honeyed murmurs passed his lips: “Thou wilt  
Awaken, little one.” None dared suggest  
The funeral plans, nor place of burial.  
At last his life seemed doomed with hers. A vague  
Uneasiness had turned to fear. ’Twas whispered  
His death would loosen war and misery,  
The century's near-close would end Earth's cycle.  
Lamenting moans were heard within the Church



And prayers of intercession. All this thou knowest.  
 But not what follows, the fruit of supplication.  
 The good Archbishop Turpin saw, one night,  
 Amid the Queen's long-braided tresses, the glint  
 Of hidden gold that shimmered through his dreams.  
 When daylight broke he stole beside the King  
 And softly slipped his hand beneath the dead  
 Fastrada's hair. He drew the visioned ring;  
 Whose magic power had slaved the mighty Charles.  
 Relieved, the King looked round in wonderment.  
 He recognized his loss—and God consoled.

*Emma.* He never afterwards remembered, nor knew  
 About the ring, although the story, much  
 Disguised, had somewhat leaked. Please tell me further.

*Eginhardt.* The kind Archbishop, ever the King's most  
 trusted  
 Adviser, now became his closest friend.  
 He used his influence for good; but Saints  
 Become discredited when fortune strews  
 Her favours. Tongues wagged ill-naturedly, until  
 Such wordy mud was stirred the Prelate felt  
 Its spatterings and realized the cause—  
 The fatal talisman. He stood beside  
 Those stringing ponds that rim so pleasantly  
 The new-built hunting lodge. A sudden splash  
 The ring had vanished.

*Emma.* My Father often sits  
 And broods beside the larger pond.

*Eginhardt.* I've noticed;  
 So had it searched most carefully. Last night  
 The ring was found. Conceal it 'mid thy pearls,  
 Then tell the King thou lov'st his servant. He will  
 Refuse thee nought.



*Emma.* Can we buy happiness  
At such a price? win lasting peace and true,  
Sustaining joy? [*She moves and, unnoticing,  
brushes the silk from the table.*] O see! the silk has  
fallen.

I cannot leave it crumpled there, nor can  
I touch it, while I touch this charm. I pray thee,  
Take it. [*She hands him the ring, then sobbing gathers  
up the silk and smooths it.*] 'Tis not like thee, my Eginhardt,  
To tempt with specious words. Return that ring  
To watery depths. May skies reflected cleanse;  
May lovers, bending o'er the forest pool,  
Gain bliss that's unalloyed with earth-born slime.

*Eginhardt.* How oft have we exchanged love's vows beside  
That selfsame pool, shall we no more, my Emma,  
Though others may?

*Emma.* Suppose I took that ring;  
The King, my Father, gave consent; the Church,  
Reluctant blessing; how long would'st thou escape  
The soot that smudged my Mother's fame, the good  
Archbishop? Suppose, without that slender circlet,  
We begged the King, my Father; would he not banish  
Whom he calls foster-son?—his minister  
Of public works, his faithful secretary,  
His youngest councillor, and, summing all,  
His poet-friend and mine. My fate would be  
A convent cell, to meditate on mischief  
That can be pushed aside. Dear Eginhardt,  
Bid me adieu and when we meet thou'lt be  
My teacher, who recites a nation's songs;  
But dwells not on his own, nor hers who sends  
Him forth.

*Eginhardt.* O Emma, pray God that I have strength.  
Our secret meetings gave fresh life, all else,



Methinks, is death.

*Emma.* [holding her finger up.] Hark!  
[Distant singing is faintly heard... Emma  
opens door, left. Eginhardt throws a cloak  
over her. They stand looking out.]

*A watchman sings without.*

Here are lodged the sacred clothes;  
Bow your heads and stainless be.  
Earth is draped with glistening snows,  
Garbed anew with purity.

Let each soul be undefiled,  
God and man be reconciled.  
Let each soul be undefiled,  
God and man be reconciled.—

*Emma.* The watchman's song has drifted from his tower.  
He steps within. O seize the moment, fly!

*Eginhardt.* [He makes a movement, then stops.] But  
Emma! that snow—unspotted—

*Emma.* That glitters 'neath  
The moon! It seems a miracle. The day  
Was pleasant, almost summer-like, then came  
A sudden wind with flurries, and, though scarce  
Ten minutes since thou cam'st, the court is now  
Completely carpeted and all so still—  
So cold—but beautiful.

*Eginhardt.*  
Whose cost will be my life and thine mayhap.

A miracle

*Emma.* Thy words must have some meaning?



*Eginhardt.* A woeful one.  
 If I should dare the lightest step, that snow  
 Would hold its trace, would witness 'gainst this night's  
 Adventure; and death must be the penalty.  
 Death!—The chill of winter. Shut it out.  
 I'll spend my last few hours in warmth by thee.

*Emma.* I can't believe——let us but think, we'll find  
 A passage, some how, some where.

*Eginhardt.* But where? that is  
 The only path as blocked as though with walls  
 Of solid masonry.

*Emma.* A loophole glints,  
 Nay, now a streaming light. A woman's print  
 Might track the court and back, 'twould raise no comment.  
 The Princess Emma's maid has gone betimes  
 Some errand, has then returned.

*Eginhardt.* And what of that?

*Emma.* Hast thou no inkling? Dearest Eginhardt,  
 I'll carry thee across the court.

*Eginhardt.* Thou must  
 Be crazed, suggesting such a thought, an angel  
 To masquerade as beast of burden.

*Emma.* But 'tis  
 Our only chance; remembering, if we  
 Should fail, the King, my Father, who must pass judgment,  
 Would suffer consequence as we. We'll seize  
 The chance!

*Eginhardt.* O Emma, my sweetheart, beloved Princess,  
 What ills may happen thee if we should fail.



We'll take the chance.

*Emma.*

Then quickly.

*Eginhardt.*

But art thou strong

Enough to bear my weight so far? wilt thou  
Not suffer strain?

*Emma.*

Must I, a Frankish maid,

Explain my strength? Have I not heroes' blood  
Within my veins? Are not my sinews those  
That show descent from mighty warriors, prompt  
In action, swift of purpose? Would I not shame  
Such lineage, did I permit myself  
To slip or falter? Besides 'tis nought but child's play—  
My friend, thou hast a scholar's frame. Now take  
A breath! then place thine arms around my neck.  
I'll bear thee as a peasant's load upon  
My back. [*She totters for a second beneath Eginhardt's  
weight.*]

*Eginhardt.* Thou stagger'st?

*Emma.*

Nay,—but breathe a prayer,

Twill help. [*She straightens herself.*]

[*Exit Emma with Eginhardt on her back. After a  
time she returns, panting, and closes the door.*]

*Emma.* I've left him by the courtyard-gate  
And none have seen. And O I feel such strange  
Relief that dims the parting pang. Deceit  
Is ended. I've freed myself to guard this silk.  
May God protect!

[*She takes up a crucifix and kneels before the silk.*]



## ACT II.

*Scene.—The same as Act I. The following morning. Emma, in her gala attire, lies asleep on the couch, a mantle over her feet. Etta enters abruptly through centre door. She notices the Princess and seems relieved.*

*Etta.* Why there she lies and fast asleep. I had  
Such fright to find her bed untenanted.  
The day's excitement must have tired and then  
The King's late visit. I should have stayed or sent  
A waiting-maid; but she insists at times  
On privacy, the privilege of being  
As lesser folk. I have a shrewd suspicion!  
Well let it be! Her virtue's proof 'gainst fire  
Itself and Master Eginhardt is old  
In wisdom. Their talk is but of grammar-rules,  
Of ancient days and poetry. They have  
My sympathy; though scarce my understanding.  
Frivolity would seem more natural,  
Would better suit their youthfulness; but learning  
Has set its seal on courtly fashion, till even  
The cooks and pantry men discuss in terms  
Of rhetoric. Well, well the King attends  
The palace school and comprehends; while others,  
Of weaker wit, absorb the jargon, failing  
To delve for sense.— How sweet my Princess looks,  
Dear soul; her dimpling smile disarms all envy,



Else might one say 'tis most unfair that she  
 Should have so much; while houseless beggars crowd  
 Our narrow streets. Pretence may smirk and strut  
 And poverty may wince and crawl but here  
 There's restfulness. A knock! [*The door, left, is pushed  
 open... Enter Albert.*]

Hist, hist, you must  
 Not enter. The Princess is asleep. She's there—  
 Lies there upon that couch. Please slip away.  
 Go quietly.

*Albert.* I have a message. You  
 Must waken her.

*Etta.* Your tone is somewhat rude,  
 My Lord; the Princess wakens when she pleases;  
 And not before.

*Albert.* The message that I bear  
 Forbids delay. 'Tis from the King himself,  
 Of utmost urgency.

*Etta.* If you but say  
 The Princess sleeps, the King will pardon us.  
 He would not wish his bird disturbed.

*Albert.* His bird  
 Must wake and spread her wings. The other bird  
 Has flown. An unexpected play was staged  
 Last night—I would that I had witnessed it—  
 The King alone was privileged. He liked  
 It not. Deep creases line his face, his eyes  
 Flash steel. The Princess must be wakened, yet  
 I dread to mar that prettiness with grief.  
 O why will maids forget the beauty-sleep  
 That wards away next morning's tears. She fell  
 Asleep—too late, alas!



[*Emma wakes up, seems surprised to see her visitors, sits up and listens unnoticed by them.*]

*Etta.* My Lord, your head  
Is turned. I left her here last night 'tis true,  
But with the King. To her sweet care he must  
Have lent the holy silk, see there it lies  
And shimmers trustfully. You have an answer.  
'Twill satisfy the King.

*Albert.* But Charles himself  
Was witness. Listen! last night another came.  
Where were your eyes and ears? The King retired  
Alone, he practised Greek; when suddenly  
A knavish moonbeam danced its mischief through  
A chink and blurred the alpha-beta. The King  
Threw wide the casement hangings, and sought to wrest  
An ode, a monody from night's allurements,  
When lo! 'twas farce that greeted him, a farce  
That failed to tap his laughter.

*Etta.* A chill has knifed  
My heart. Speak on!

*Albert.* He clearly saw two forms  
That peered; they seemed to shrink beneath the moon's  
Cold gaze and then from out this very room  
There came a restless prancing jennet, that stayed  
Its curveting, that slid and well-nigh stumbled  
Beneath the slender weight of whom indeed?  
But solemn Master Eginhardt.

*Etta.* The Princess  
Has so demeaned herself! has so abused  
Her rank and sex! I'll not believe a word  
Of it, e'en though her pretty lips give their  
Consent.



*Emma.* He speaks the truth, dear Etta! 'Twas not  
In wanton play! 'twas dire distress. We hoped  
To hide our secret from the telltale snow.  
But now, that all's discovered; give me the worst,  
My Lord. What punishment is meted him  
I love?

*Albert.* 'Tis not so heavy, ease yourself.

*Emma.* Not death?

*Albert.* No. no—

*Emma.* Then tell me all.

*Albert.* The King  
Has seen ——

*Emma.* Of that you've said enough; but after?

*Albert.* Today the court has stirred betimes. A King,  
Who spent a sleepless night, would not respect  
Another's rest. His messengers flew back  
And forth, while rumors faster sped. A council  
At such unseemly hour! portending what?  
And few but nurse some covert guilt. The King  
Was grey with wrath—and fear disturbed. But when  
He spoke, recounting all, faint titters rose  
Unbidden, soon quelled beneath his iron glance.  
And then, with icy voice, he hurled the question:  
What judgment should be meted one who so  
Forgot—I pray your pardon—her royal rank?  
The councillors gazed mournfully at one  
Another and then, as though a signal prompted,  
They chimed together: "In love affairs we crave  
Indulgence." Scarce heeding them the King continued:  
"What punishment deserves that man, whom I



Have favoured? who brings my house to shame." Again  
The answer came: "In love affairs we crave  
Indulgence." But one dissentient voice: "Our laws  
Proclaim a speedy death." 'Twas Eginhardt,  
The youngest councillor, who spoke.

*Emma.*

You said—

*Albert.* That death was not the penalty; Ay! listen!  
The King replied: "My youngest councillor  
Gives wiser judgment. Yes he understands  
How stain can spread. Such doings, if left unpunished,  
Might influence court customs, Frankish habits;  
Deserving death, I pass a lighter sentence:  
'Tis banishment without repeal. Now go,  
Nor trouble more mine eyes!" The King had finished,  
A quivering silence reigned. Then slowly rose  
The one proscribed, nor made obeisance, nor bade  
Adieu, unless his footsteps echoed it.  
The air was chill as though a wraith had passed.

*Emma.* None offered him a kindly word? none gave  
A friendly glance?

*Albert.* Before the angered King,  
Was't possible? Besides a favorite,  
That's fallen from regard, must needs incite  
A wonder seldom damped with pity's dew.

*Emma.* Mayhap the gateman has inquired which way  
He went. Etta! go question him.

*Albert.*

He spoke

To none; but strode along, nor visited  
His rooms. His writing tools alone he carried,  
Unless a book or so that bulged his wallet.

*Emma.* You may depart, my Lord. Your story's told.



*Albert.* I would it were. Why are you still? can you  
Not ease the telling? Question me. Take you  
No interest in your fate?

*Emma.* 'Tis blank today.

*Albert.* Then woe must color it and I must speak  
Unhelped. Prepare yourself for greivous change.  
When heavy steps had ceased to echo, all  
Within the Council-Hall seemed moulded there  
By frost of death. Then spoke the King: "My daughter"—  
A moment's pause till words swelled through emotion.  
They thickly came as waters that soak their way  
From out a sodden, leaf-strewn ridge. "My daughter,  
Let her fare forth. The fault's the same and so  
The punishment!" and then he turned toward me.  
His words now sharply fell as waters freed  
That clang 'mid stones. "Go tell the Princess Emma,  
Mine eyes must dwell on her no more. Let her  
Leave home and friends, henceforth a wanderer.  
Bid her begone at once, nor moan her fate  
With others. Let her depart for presently  
I come to seal a tomb that holds the corpse  
Of erstwhile loving memory." His words  
Sank deep like waters pooled, his eyelids closed  
To stay the signs of grief. He blinked them back,  
Then called for state affairs. I hastened here,  
You may believe, unwillingly.

*Emma.*  
I've heard your message, listened patiently.  
Tell the King 'twas well delivered. Now  
I pray your absence, go!

So, finis.

*Albert.*  
Your promise of obedience. Nay rather  
To beg a Father's clemency, to wake

To take with me



His fond indulgence, haply some excuse.

*Emma.* Did Eginhardt reply? went he not forth  
In silence? go!

[*Exit Albert.*]

*Etta.* My dear, sweet Princess. O  
How has it happened? where's the cure?

*Emma.*  
Is past, a vain inquiry! where's the cure?  
The outlet from this coil? I see it not.

The "how"

*Etta.* Then haste! gain entrance to the Council-Hall,  
Implore the King—not with that stony look.  
Let tears entreat and fervent promises.  
Speak loving words; those little, winging words,  
That search a Father's heart. Let beauty plead,  
With clinging arms; till soft embrace wears wrath  
Away. My Princess! run, beg mercy! conjure  
With woman's art, insist! O pray arouse  
Yourself, throw off this bleak November mood,  
Weep April drops, and then come singing back,  
A lightsome smiling May.

*Emma.*  
When Eginhardt has gone. Besides what would  
The masses think did he, the new Augustus,  
Show weakness, bend beneath a daughter's pleadings.  
No Etta, the King is law, its fountain head;  
If it be questioned, the nations totter. Yes  
'Tis harvest month and I have harvested.  
Unfasten the stringing pearls that bind my hair,  
Then help me loose this festive frock, 'tis stiff  
With woven gold. A homespun hunting gown  
Will better serve the time's occasion. Bring  
The russet; 'twas worn that day my ankle twisted.

Impossible,



[*Exit Etta, centre door...She soon returns with the gown. Sighing and shaking her head she helps Emma make the change.*]

*Etta.* 'Tis torn and stained.

*Emma.* I know, nor would I part  
With it, nor have it mended. The rent will suit  
My shifted fortune. Eginhardt went forth  
With student's ware. I'll take my bow and arrows,  
My spear and ah, this silk, 'twas given me  
Last night to guard and am I different?  
My place in life may be; but not myself.  
So fare thee well, dear Etta, I find no words  
For messages. [*She opens the door left.*]

*Etta.* But stay! You cannot go  
Like this alone, to face a thieving world.

*Emma.* What have I here to tempt?

*Etta.* Those spangled pins,  
What's more, your beauty.

*Emma.* Pull the pins, now let  
My hair fall loose; divided o'er each shoulder  
It ripples to my feet. Am I not like  
The strange wild-women habiting the hills?  
I may draw glances; none will venture near.

*Etta.* Then fairy-folk will seize you trespassing.

*Emma.* O plague me not with fancied fears; but let  
Remembrance follow me and now and then  
A whispered prayer. [*A dove flies into the room and lights  
on Emma's arm.*] What's this? my dear, pet dove.  
It nestles faithfully, yet I must part



With it, alas! O guard it, nurture it.

[*She hands the dove to Etta. Exit, left, hastily. Etta makes a movement to follow her, then stops and soothes the bird.*]

*Etta.* Poor fluttering thing that shares unhappiness.  
How far doth sorrow spread? and can I stay  
Its murky flow? I'll importune the King,  
The Royal family. There must be some  
Recourse.

[*Enter, left, Albert.*]

*Albert.* And has the Princess gone?

*Etta.*  
Where is the King?

But now.

*Albert.* He comes this way. He wishes  
An empty cage, nor view of hapless bird.

*Etta.* And I've one here that may remind.

[*Exit, left, Albert. Etta seeks to soothe the bird. Enter Charles, in ordinary Frankish attire, attended by Albert. Etta kneels imploringly.*]

O Sire!

I beg for her. Where are the tears that flowed  
Beside her Mother's bier? Do they not force  
Forgiveness, if indeed what's pure requires  
Such word. O send for her lest harm may come  
To one so gently nurtured.

*Charles.* [*Sitting down heavily.*] Harm has come.  
If more ensues it scarce can blacken what's  
Already black. Begone, I've said enough.

[*The dove escapes through doorway, left.*]

## THE ROMANCE OF A PRINCESS.

*Etta.* [*Rising.*] The bird! O Sire, the bird!

*Charles.*

What's that?

*Etta.*

Her dove.

She treasured it.

*Charles.*

Then let it follow her.

Sir Count, remove the woman. Fail not to give  
My message. None must speak the words proscribed,  
Nor hint we had such daughter.

[*Exeunt Etta, door centre;*  
*Albert door left... Charles stares round moodily. A*  
*knock is heard.*]

Who raps? Can I

The Emperor, Augustus, not have some hours  
Alone to toy with grief?

[*Enter Hildebold, left, closing the*  
*door after him.*]

*Hildebold.*

My gracious Lord,

You sent for me?

*Charles.*

And you have tarried long.

The judgment's given. Leave me here in peace.

*Hildebold.* If peace reigned here, I'd gladly go. Methinks  
A wounded soul awaits my help. I missed  
You, Sire, at mass.

*Charles.*

I had excuse. You may

Have heard. Respect my sorrow. Leave me now.

*Hildebold.* [*Sitting down.*] One time, long since, you



rode with Eginhardt;  
 Nor stayed for pomp of retinue, your wish  
 Was speed, to reach a mother's side; who gasped  
 Your name while breath still lingered. Not a word  
 You spoke; but peered the gloom, as on you raced  
 'Gainst death itself. The night was dark and still,  
 The thudding horses woke strange echoes, hark!  
 That tinkling bell betokens mass, though dawn  
 Has scarcely greyed the sky. A mother's blessing  
 Depends on haste and yet God's call was heeded.  
 You turned aside to find the forest church,  
 My dear, first charge; and there you humbly knelt.  
 At that same hour, you later heard, the Queen,  
 Your Mother's breath came evenly. She smiled  
 And seemed content to wait. Three days of sweet  
 Communing God allowed his servants ere  
 The parting came.—You raced 'gainst death that night  
 And won. Today, I fear, God's face is turned,  
 His help rejected.

*Charles.* [*Wearily.*] My Lord Archbishop, I  
 Have scarcely followed, have indeed no will  
 To argue; granting all your premises,  
 Pray leave me now.

*Hilдеболд.* Your rank and mine we'll set  
 Aside. Consider me that Hilдеболд  
 Whom you have raised to be your chosen friend,  
 Who comes to offer——

*Charles.* Not the golden coins  
 This time but useless words. O would that you  
 Had kept my largess then, nor parted with  
 Humility.

*Hilдеболд.* [*Reminiscently.*] And how surprised I was  
 To see those gulden left by seeming huntsmen.



I felt such gold might burn a simple monk;  
 Besides our chapel needed nought and so  
 I hailed you back and asked instead a doeskin,  
 Soft and pliable, to bind my mass-book,  
 That time had sadly ragged.

*Charles.*

Your modesty

Appealed. I sent you one deep-purple dyed  
 And lymned with gold—'twas not enough; a ring,  
 A staff, a bishopric were further added,  
 And so a mentor saddles me. Pray take  
 The hint, begone! [*He leans on the table and sinks his head  
 on his arms, oblivious to everything. Hildebold ad-  
 vances as though to touch him, then steps back and  
 sits down, casting pitying glances at him. After a  
 while Charles looks up.*]

My hints are lost, well stay;

A humbled man may wish an audience.  
 O yesterday what glory streaked my life.  
 Those blessed relics brought uplift, a sense  
 That I, above all others, was indeed  
 God's chosen vessel, Emperor and Chief  
 Of millions. Yes, I had a deeper sense  
 Of His abiding grace and awesome trust  
 Than even on that Christmas morn when vast  
 St. Peter's thundered forth the ancient plaudits:  
 "Long life and victory to Charles, the pious  
 Augustus, crowned by God, the great, pacific  
 Emperor!" while on my head there rested  
 The precious diadem. Ah, then I felt  
 Some fear, a dread that I perchance usurped  
 A mighty privelege. But yesterday  
 'Twas peace, as though the all-pervading God  
 Communed with me, not as man talks with man;  
 But as the angels gain instruction, thought  
 That comes unvoiced, yet glows with warmth of knowledge.



And so, deluded, I kissed goodnight. Outside  
 'Twas bleak, rough winds assailed, snow flurries pricked.  
 Within my chamber's solitude I sought  
 Relief through study; tossed my books aside;  
 Revulsion gripped my soul. What had I done  
 With power? Some cruel acts grew large and then  
 The future glowed uncertain. Everywhere  
 Dissensions rise; they say the brazen cock  
 That crowns our palace points the spot, so swift  
 Comes punishment; but age may weaken, have  
 My sons the force that pushes me? I see  
 The Northmen's snake-like galleys nosing, feel  
 The Saracens' sharp sword; to meet them warriors  
 With discipline relaxed, disordered laws,  
 False judges, ignorance, a church debased.

*Hildebold.* Hold, hold, my Son, mirage is in your eyes  
 To-day, transforming faults to giant-size.

*Charles.* And then I pulled the curtain back and saw  
 God's eye of night, the lustrous moon, that stared  
 Suggestive quiet. Prophet of storms, it failed  
 To prophesy; but shed meek rays along  
 Fresh-fallen, smirchless snow, ay spotless! spotless!  
 My thoughts now strayed to her, my youngest daughter,  
 Her baby hands that clutched my beard, her soul  
 Developing; her proud, young ways and later  
 Her matchless maidenhood, her sweet accord  
 With all my moods, her soothing charm, ah then  
 A door was opened furtively, I saw—

[*Covering his face with his hands.*]

Are we God's care or Devil's sport?

*Hildebold.*

My Son,

You saw not far enough; but thus it is  
 And God is blamed. Was't love of justice made



You banish her; or jealousy, or fret  
That things went not to please your wishes?

*Charles.*  
Excuse such conduct?

You'd

*Hildebold.* I'd seek its cause and seek  
The cure. The cause, those two so thrown together;  
The cure to separate or sanction.

*Charles.*  
Draw them apart or close. They blow without.  
I've said my say. And now give orders that  
This room be sealed, a memory that's ended.  
My Lord Archbishop, take the silk, I know  
Of none else worthy.

Let winds

[*Exit, left, hastily.*]

*Hildebold.* Take the silk? I see  
It not. Poor Princess! Poor Emperor! [*He opens centre  
door, against which Etta has evidently been leaning.*]

But Etta,  
Thou stumblest! Is't sympathy that holds thee near?  
Well let it be. Thy reddened eyes do penance.  
Now beg the Palace Count to seal this room,  
That none may enter. Would the deed were done  
With lowered head and lips that move in prayer.  
But give me first the sacred silk.

*Etta.*  
Has taken it.

The Princess

*Hildebold.* That proves her innocence.  
'Twas but a youthful prank. I'll follow her.  
A convent wall will guard her charm until  
The King relents.

[*Exit, left.*]



*Etta.* I fear his mind is set.  
And what can change whom all obey?—who has  
So changed himself.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery to the present time. It is written in a clear and concise style, and is well adapted for use in schools and colleges.

The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from the discovery of the continent to the present time. It is written in a clear and concise style, and is well adapted for use in schools and colleges.

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## ACT III.

*Scene.*—*A clearing in the forest near Aquisgranum. At the back, amid trees, a charcoal-burner's hut and a kiln. On the left a linden and copse leading to a grove once sacred to heathen deities; but now feared and shunned. On the right a barricade of logs and fallen trees so placed in one part to form steps. Ernst advances from his kiln, looks over the barricade as though expecting some one. He is joined by Guta who comes out of the hut.*

*Ernst.* 'Tis mild for harvest-moon and yet the wind's  
Unsettled, portending what? How strange the snow  
That came so suddenly then disappeared  
As some night wraith that fears clear-visioned day.

*Guta.* The Devil must have pinched his wife she drop-  
ped  
Such frozen tears. 'Tis most unfair that when  
She's disciplined poor folk should feel so oft  
The dripping moisture of her grief; 'tis bad  
For rheumatism.

*Ernst.* And good for forest trees.  
The witch deserves to spill some tears, she has

So often damaged them; what branches crunch  
And fall, when she, amount her broomstick, rides  
A gale through serpent-hissing, midnight skies.

*Guta.* And so thou'rt in the skies and never wilt  
Thou heed my limping gait, that cries a life  
In town, some gaiety before a coffin  
Completes this stiffening.

*Ernst.* And leave our home?

*Guta.* That hovel!

*Ernst.* What could I do?

*Guta.* Thou might'st instruct  
The palace school, save Master Eginhardt  
These many visits here.

*Ernst.* If I had been  
A cleric, had learnt to read and write, maybe,  
May be—

*Guta.* Thou hast a head well stacked with knowledge.  
Do books all boast as much? 'Tis odd that thou,  
A peasant, hast such stuff within, that courtiers  
Must come to pump it out then serve it for  
The King.

*Ernst.* The King loves ancient hero-tales.  
A proper King! a proper Emperor!  
What's more, a proper man. I wonder why  
Good Master Eginhardt delays; I promised  
Some verse, it quivers on my lips. That's just  
The way, he comes when I am disinclined  
And now he dallies.

*Guta.* . . . Last night I dreamt of death,



Royal mourners wailed. In fright I woke. The wind  
 Blew fluted dirge-like notes; but dreams are ay  
 Contrariwise. Most like 'twas wedding bells.  
 I wish good Master Eginhardt would come;  
 I thirst to hear Court gossip, e'en the bits  
 He doles with grudging tongue. And he could tell  
 Us of the long-nosed beast with dragon skin  
 That I so dread, yet wish to see.

*Ernst.*

A crackling!

Hist! but not our scholar's steed, nor yet  
 A wandering huntsman's. Such a footfall, quiet  
 And even, forewarns at least a Bishop's palfrey.  
 As I'm alive 'tis Father Hildebold;  
 Who now dismounts and ties his horse. [*He mounts the  
 barricade and stoops to help Hildebold up.*] The steps  
 Are steep so have a care. We welcome you.

[*Enter Hildebold, appearing over the barricade.*]  
*Hildebold.* Thou bar'st thy citadel, good friend.

*Ernst.*

Against

Four-footed beasts, not two. Step gingerly.  
 I beg your Lordship's pardon. Come Guta, kneel  
 And kiss the ring. Our old Confessor climbs  
 Too high for peasant jokes; so let us help  
 Him down.

[*After helping him, the peasants kneel to receive a blessing.*]

*Hildebold.* My children, it pleases me to greet  
 Old friends. Receive God's blessing.—Tell me now  
 Has Master Eginhardt been lately here?  
 Or Princess Emma?

*Ernst.*

The Princess once was here,



While hunting with the King; who has himself  
 Broke fast with me and stayed awhile to rest.  
 He talked of Master Eginhardt, whom both  
 Call foster-son, which makes a kind of sweet  
 Relationship between our Lord, the King,  
 And me, his servant.

*Hildebold.*  
 This gifted foster-son?

And dost thou soon expect

*Ernst.*  
 He fails to come.

Ay, surely, unless

*Hildebold.* Hark then! If he should come  
 Or Princess Emma, use a kind detention,  
 Some artifice, then steal away and bring  
 Me news or send a trusty messenger.  
 Remember as thou valuest salvation.—  
 Is there no easier exit? well, thy hand.  
 Remember! and beg thy wife to curb her tongue.

[*Exit with Ernst who soon returns. Guta mutters to herself.*]

*Guta.* 'Tis always thus, a woman's tongue, a woman's—  
 Depend upon it, some ill has chanced; my dream,  
 The winds have prophesied; but what indeed?  
 Why should the Princess visit us? There is  
 No reason; nor that Master Eginhardt  
 Should be detained; for that is what, through love  
 Of company, we ever strive; nor is  
 Their reason to inform 'gainst her or him  
 Or them. Canst thou, good man, make ought of this?

*Ernst.* Why puzzle, when time brings plain solution.  
 Let time  
 Then bear the brunt and weight of ravelling riddles,



Nor goad ourselves with useless questionings.

[*A cry for help is heard. It dies down, then comes again.*]

But hark, that erie cry! or is't the wind?  
Hark! Some poor soul has missed her path and dreads  
The forest loneliness. I'll succour her.

*Guta.* Thou must not go, that cry is not from tongue  
Made true through taste of Holy Sacrament.  
Such shrilling gentleness is not the moan  
Of fagot-picker in distress. 'Tis like  
The dirge of last night's dream. I recognize;  
'Tis some wild woman of the woods that seeks  
To lure a Christian soul—Nay husband, stay!  
I warn thee. [*Clutching his coat, then wringing her hands.*  
*Exit Ernst, by the steps. He soon returns supporting*  
*Emma.*]

O the foolish man and worse  
Than foolish—what will come of this? He brings  
Her here, alas! our happiness has flown.

*Ernst.* Quick *Guta*, fetch some water, haste, she faints.

*Guta.* Then let her lie; but no; discourtesy  
Might bring revenge. They say 'tis best to flatter,  
To wheedle with fair words and deeds. [*She goes into the hut*  
*and brings out some water in a horn mug.*] My pretty!  
A sip will freshen thee; another! See  
Thy colour comes and delicate as that  
Pink robe that's bundled 'neath thy mantle, frayed  
And torn most like in some uproarious  
Fandango, some brawling midnight junketing,  
Some screech-owl revels.

*Emma.* [*Reviving.*] Thou dost forget thyself







And thou'rt my angel guide.

*Emma.* [*Sinking in his arms.*] O Eginhardt,  
'Tis peace at last!

*Ernst.* [*Addressing Guta.*] She seeks a younger prey  
Than us old folk and one, methinks, that's more  
Susceptible; but we must warn—

*Guta.* Let us  
Away, advise good Father Hildebold.  
He'll exorcise with book and candle.

*Ernst.* And while  
Our backs are turned what harm may come. I'll pluck  
His sleeve and warn. Dear Master Eginhardt,  
I'd speak with you.

*Eginhardt.* [*Testily.*] Well! well!

*Ernst.* Not here, but step  
Aside; one moment! pray.

*Eginhardt.* Think'st thou I'd tempt  
The winds? All day they've strangely whirled. But now  
The air is still, this precious burden rests  
With me. If I should loose my grasp might not  
Some mischievous air-current spirit her  
Afar.

*Ernst.* If only such could happen!

*Eginhardt.* Man,  
Thou must be mad to e'en suggest the thought.  
Has dotage crept thus suddenly? Begone,  
Let thy old wife coax reason back.



*Emma.*  
Instructor! She's mad as he.

A poor

*Guta.* O Master, you  
Alone are crazed. Quick cross yourself, break loose,  
Use Latin words, delve deep within your learning;  
From useless lumber pluck some magic art;  
Whose strength will free from love's bewitching power,  
From spectral glamour.

*Eginhardt.* Break loose from love? O *Guta*;  
Each golden hair, that showers its wealth about  
This yielding form, holds me in closer bondage  
Than shackling chains of adamant. Break loose  
From love? this head, that leans its gentle weight,  
Impresses more than all the rolling skies  
That bowed great-shouldered Atlas, steadying.  
Break loose from love? 'Twould be a harsher fall,  
Than Satan's fierce descent from Heaven's peace  
To Hell's contentious flame. Break loose from love?  
Not while there's breath to seal its troth, to pledge  
Its honour. [*He kisses Emma.*]

*Guta.* [*Addressing Ernst.*] Pray come! let us obey!  
seek help  
From Father Hildebold, lest worse should follow.  
If that most sober scholar is thus enmeshed  
By magic wile, what hope is there for thee?  
Who spinnest love tales as others gossip. Come!  
A lengthy walk!

*Ernst.* And leave the youth? O youth!  
First love! sweet raptures, mine no more—no more—

*Guta.* Come, come away; thou moonstruck fool! white  
hairs  
Are no safe shielding 'gainst man's foolish bent.



[*Ernst and Guta mount the steps but as they descend the other side they pause and look round unnoticed by Emma and Eginhardt.*]

*Emma* They speak of Father Hildebold, most like  
The Bishop. Would that he or some poor monk  
Were here to give God's blessing.

*Eginhardt* My Lord Archbishop  
Would give such duteous advice that we,  
In following, might find ourselves constrained  
To cloistered cells; to hold, apart, sad vigils,  
Remembering the happiness that's ours  
To grasp. But I, like thee, would have God's blessing.  
See Love! two lengthy sticks! we'll form them crosswise;  
So notched, this silken cord will serve. [*He gathers two heavy  
sticks to make a cross, using some string that bound the  
silk.*] I'll plant  
The longest end; how easily it slides!  
And firm as though God truly wished it here.  
And now we'll drape with this most blessed silk.  
See Love, 'tis woman's work.

[*Emma drapes the cross with the white silk.*]

*Ernst.* [*Whispering to Guta.*] A solemn rite,  
And e'en a pious, stay! 'tis worth the watching.

*Guta.* Nay, let us fly! 'tis impious, a wild  
Hill-woman to hide the sign of Christendom  
'Neath tattered rags of vile debauchery.  
A worn ball gown that's torn in lengths.

*Ernst.* Whist! Silence!  
[*Some leaves of the linden rustle slightly.*]

*Emma.* A sound, a fluttering sound, and voices! no,



All's quiet. O would that we had witnesses,  
 Those mad-brained peasants if none else and yet  
 We're kindly rid of them.—The forest hush  
 Breathes thoughts of God. This mellowed silk was once  
 Around the Virgin's dress and now it decks  
 The marriage cross. O we have audience.

[*Emma and Eginhardt kneel before the cross and repeat together.*]

O Lord! be witness to our mutual vow.

*Emma.* My husband!

*Eginhardt.* My treasured wife!

*Together.* Whom none may part.

[*They kneel in silent prayer. Suddenly from the linden tree a dove flits down and lights on Emma's shoulder.*]

*Emma.* My dove, my own pet dove. O God has sent  
 This sign.

*Ernst.* [*Whispering to Guta.*] It seems like some  
 strange miracle;  
 Yet what it is I fail to grasp; yes, yes,  
 We'll go to Father Hildebold. He'll straight  
 This tangle, if any can.

[*Exeunt Ernst and Guta.*]

..*Emma.* [*Resting with Eginhardt against a log.*] O  
*Eginhardt,*  
 To think the bird has followed us! It links  
 The past and present, soothes the sting, and brings



A sweet assurance. Soft, wee nestler! a bit  
 Of pampered yesterday; that tears with us  
 The veiling morrow, fearing nought for love  
 Encompasses. O husband of my dreams,  
 Thou art reality. No tempest can  
 Disturb—And see, look round, 'twas here those dreams  
 Grew strong from sudden birth. Incredible  
 That chance has drifted us to this same spot.  
 A higher agency methinks has forced  
 Our steps. They say this world is evil, 'tis but  
 A tottery stepping stone; I say 'tis wrought  
 Of solid bliss; whence beauty springs and all  
 That holds and satisfies.

*Eginhardt.* Thou speak'st the truth,  
 My Emma, the world is passing good; whate'er  
 Its slips and fallacies some moments since.  
 Ay, here it was that Love surprised. Unasked  
 The lusty teaser flashed his bolt, exciting  
 The carmine to thy cheeks, a shining moist  
 To soft thine eyes, a shrinking tenderness  
 Through all thy being.

*Emma.* But thou wert bold, my friend.

*Eginhardt.* So saved a nasty fall. I see thee now  
 As then. Thou stood'st upon that fallen oak  
 In this same garb methinks. Thy hair neat-tucked  
 Within a huntsman's cap, some tendrils though  
 Fell gently loose, thy lips were curved to smile.  
 Asudden there came a stir from out the black  
 Of those deep woods that yonder lie, a stag  
 Brushed by, sprang lightly forward; ere the dogs  
 Caught scent or vision, an arrow whirred; thy sister,  
 The Princess Bertha's aim was good, beside  
 Thee lay the struggling beast. To end its pain  
 Thou raisedst thy hunting spear, but stumbling would



Have wrenched I know not what of this most dear  
 Anatomy, had I not seized thine arm  
 And righted thee. In that same flash of time  
 Two lives were changed, our eyes had met. Pray God  
 The ill averted may not lead to worse.

*Emma.* Who speaks of ill upon his wedding day  
 Deserves the same. Fie, shame, my Eginhardt.  
 Must we not fashion plans together, "together."  
 Ay, a precious word! what matters else?  
 "Together; together"—Hark! a stir! are we  
 Repeating history? Another stag!  
 Quick! my bow. [*She shoots toward the copse, a heavy  
 animal falls at its entrance. She and Eginhardt walk  
 over and examine it.*] I've brought him down. There is  
 No need to spear. He's dead, quite dead. See here  
 An ancient wound that's scabbed and healed. Indeed  
 The very stag. He must have 'scaped that day  
 But we, enamoured, had no thought to spare.  
 What ages since that hunting party; so  
 It seems, my sister's merry laughter, the King,  
 My Father's kind solicitude.—And now  
 This cruel break—but Eginhardt, I'll wink  
 Salt drops away, lest one should fall to splash  
 Our luck, to mar our wedding-day. Why is't  
 When joy is keenest, there lurks beneath a pool  
 Of woe? Well, well 'tis far beneath, we'll lid  
 It with a stern forgetfulness. "Together;"  
 That's the word, "together;" and now we'll plan  
 To make a wild and beautiful adventure.

*Eginhardt.* Brave Heart, together, yes together we'll  
 stem  
 The tide; but 'tis for thee I fear, for one  
 So gently nurtured.

*Emma.*

Remember, Eginhardt,



My ancestors: the Pepin of Landen, the Pepin  
 Of Herestal; iron-handed Charles who cowed  
 The Saracen; his son who trembled not  
 From royal power; and his, in turn, my Father,  
 Who scaled fresh heights and slipped not back when offered  
 Imperial pomp and dignity. Each rose  
 To circumstance. Shall I, who boast such race,  
 Grow pale, show fear, lay down my arms before  
 So slight a foe as seeming poverty.  
 For poverty, what is't? but just a nought,  
 A nothingness and I have thee so I  
 Am rich.

*Eginhardt.* And I far richer! So let us shape  
 Our future. This stag will nourish us and more  
 Whence it has come. For shelter here's a hut  
 With fire, utensils—poor but clean.

*Emma.* Could we  
 Not further go from those old folk? I liked  
 Them not! A something calls me toward the thickets,  
 As though the inky depth they fringe held safe  
 Asylum. There must be entrance where the stag  
 Came forth. Let us push through the coppice, search  
 What lies beyond.

*Eginhardt.* 'Tis mystery, unsafe  
 To penetrate. The peasants say that dwarfs  
 Dwell there, that wild hill-women dance. They say  
 Some few of mortal birth have forced a way;  
 But what they saw none know, for none have since  
 Returned.

*Emma.* Ay, peasants' talk; but e'en if true—  
 St. Augustine, I've heard, hath not denied  
 There may be other hidden agencies  
 Than those of scriptural warrant—yet this silk



Will serve as amulet. I have no fear.  
Hast thou?

*Eginhardt.* I'd be ashamed to so confess  
And once indeed I peeped.

*Emma.* And saw?

*Eginhardt.* We'll let  
It be for now. Thou'rt weak and famished. Rest  
Thee here. I'll do some foraging.  
[*Exit through door of hut.*]

*Emma.* [*After a pause, gathering up the silk.*] Yes, yes  
We must go further then. A call from out  
Those tangled depths comes loud, insistent. There  
Solution lies. But first this precious silk  
Must be repacked, the cross unwound. What's here?  
A shimmering droplet, a gem that must have slipped  
Its setting. *Eginhardt!* please come!

[*Enter Eginhardt*  
*with some hunks of bread and a mug of milk.*]

A jewel  
Has fallen from its royal resting place.  
Last night I handled the King, my Father's crown.  
It lay beside the holy silk, whose folds  
Have not disdained earth's wealth though they were used  
To fairer things. The sun gives warmth; but this  
Pale imitation chills my hand, what shall  
We do with it? and how return?

*Eginhardt* Now eat  
This bread, and drink; then we'll consider.

[*They both eat hastily.*]



*Emma.*

Listen!

For our adventure in those mazy woods,  
 For go we must, we need some wherewithal,  
 Some first provisions, some household stuff. We'll leave  
 This gem, and in its place take our requirements;  
 Reward, that's offered, would more than pay for such  
 Poor odds and ends as we may choose to plunder.

*Eginhardt.* Thou'st said the word. If thou'rt refresh-  
 ed, we'll make

A kindly start before the day grows late;  
 But I must bear this stag, so wilt thou help  
 As would a peasant woman?

*Emma.*

With joyous heart!

My life has seemingly begun—so free.  
 I'll take deep breaths.

[*They go into the hut and come out laden.*]

*Eginhardt.* [*Laughing.*] Dost think we have enough?

*Emma.* Enough and e'en to spare! 'Tis laughable  
 The troubles ta'en preparing 'gainst one's wedding;  
 The puckered brow, the oft vexatious thought,  
 The wondering if this or that becomes  
 One most; what furnishings are suitable;  
 What friends invited. Well, we're saved some burdens.  
 Compared, this sack is light; but canst thou manage?  
 Then sling the stag upon thy back. Now let  
 Us venture? Where's my dove? Ah here still perched  
 Upon my shoulder, our only wedding guest;  
 Who shows the confidence we feel.

*Eginhardt*

I would

'Twere better witnessed.

*Emma.*

Tush, Eginhardt, lead on.

*Eginhardt.* Then bend thy head, protect the bird, protect  
Our confidence against recoiling twigs.  
'Twas by this linden tree I one time found  
A path; but thou must stoop, be careful! Love.

[*Exeunt, the trees closing on them.*]



## ACT IV.

*Scene.—The same as Act III, six years later. It has a more deserted appearance. Some smoke escapes the kiln. The steps of the barricade are broken down, leaving a narrow passage, through which enter Charles in hunting attire and Albert, whose court finery is somewhat dishevelled.*

*Charles.* Why, Albert, see, there's smoke, haste thee! Inquire!

*Albert.* [*Looks into the hut.*] No sign of life within the hut, my Lord.  
Nor little else. An emptiness that weighs  
Like what's inside my belt. Will you not blow  
Your horn, my Lord, that baskets may be brought.

*Charles.* My courtiers think of food, of clothes; thou'rt dressed  
As for a festival and so the rest.  
Indeed 'twould shock our simple ancestors  
Could they but see the follies prevalent  
To-day, the love of luxury, the splurge,  
The flaunt of silk and jewels, the rich-piled velvets,



The pranking plumes, the strut and swagger. Yet  
 Methinks, on closer view, thy feathers have  
 A languid droop, thy coat has lost its vain  
 Bravado, thy ribboned finery agrees  
 But ill with huntsman's sport.

*Albert.*

My Lord, if I

Am privileged to speak, we dressed prepared  
 For Council work; but you withdrew, changed plans,  
 Made call for dogs and horses, spears and bows;  
 Gave us no time to change.

*Charles.*

Do I want fops

For Councillors? Grave work needs grave attire.  
 Ye came arrayed for dance and spectacle  
 So I was forced to holiday. The chase  
 Has made some spectacles, I trow. [*Laughing.*] Nay stay  
 Thy sulks, seek now thy friends, beg them retain  
 This morning's lesson; hark! and come not back  
 Until my horn wakes echoes.

*Albert.* [*Turns to go, then stops.*] But is it wise  
 To leave you here alone, my Lord; this place  
 Is ill reputed.

*Charles.* See that rustic cross,

Some pious pilgrim's work. Six years ago  
 'Twas noticed first; since then long winters have  
 Unloaded snow and whipped the biting blast,  
 Yet there it stands assuringly. How oft,  
 When unsought vigils have distressed, my mind  
 Has flown to this same spot, has tried to pierce  
 Its mystery, has lingered round those branchlets,  
 Gleaned a strange relief; and now again  
 Smoke floats above the charcoal kiln. All haste,  
 Count Albert, comb the woods, make nearby search,  
 Discover him who caused that smoke, who stirs



A smouldering hope; but still my heart! the flame  
 May yet die down as has so oft occurred.  
 Haste, haste Count Abert, I would know the worst  
 Or best.

[*Albert starts to go. Enter Ernst who collides with him.*]

*Ernst.* Dost wish to murder me? a bandit!  
 Ho! Help!

*Albert.* [*Holding Ernst by his collar.*] Didst thou cause  
 yonder smoke?

*Ernst.* And if  
 I did, where is the crime? the kiln is mine,  
 Though long deserted. Unhand me pray.

*Albert.* The King  
 Desires thy presence.

*Ernst.* A fitter one I'd show,  
 Didst thou remove thy knuckles; though, in truth,  
 Thou flatterest. To hold me so presumes that I  
 Have still the nerve and mettle of rash youth,  
 His racing-wind, his wiry limbs unfettered  
 By time's harsh reckoning. Ay, that is better,  
 I breathe again. A nobleman! it seems.  
 I must have dreamt a cutthroat throttled me,  
 But, by our Lady, thy dress belongs to neither.  
 Gentility cast-off and mired. May be  
 Thou art some actor who practises his part.

*Albert.* Thou shouldst have studied thine. Servility  
 Becomes a peasant's tongue.

*Charles.* Polite to whom?  
 To dainty nobles who presume on birth

And wide possessions, whose love of play and sport  
 Bids them forget the useful arts, the work  
 That makes life passable, their Emperor's  
 Renown, the safety of the realm? No, no.  
 My love is for the striving man whate'er  
 His station be. Is not the peasants' wisdom,  
 His industry, the backbone of our nation?  
 Ah woe the day when he forgets his high  
 Estate and seeks to ape his so-called betters.

*Ernst.* Great King, I kneel to you, the peasants' friend.

*Charles.* And thou art truly Ernst whom we have sought  
 These many years. Tell me, where is my daughter,  
 The Princess Emma? My foster-son? whom we  
 In sport called "ours."

*Ernst.* How should I know?

*Charles.* Why did'st  
 Thou disappear?

*Ernst.* My Guta was afraid.

*Charles.* Afraid? Speak on! Impatience frets, afraid  
 Of what?

*Ernst.* Of telling tales.

*Charles.* Thy trade of yore;  
 But now I ask the simple truth unvarnished.

*Ernst.* My Lord, 'twas truth we feared; when witch-  
 craft plays,  
 A silent tongue is safest. We had seen  
 Too much. We slipped away. And now, alas!  
 Poor Guta! [*He weeps.*]



*Charles.* If she be dead I pity thee.  
 'Tis heartfelt! I have drained the bitter cup.  
 I understand. A worthy woman! a dear  
 Companion! Friend Ernst thou hast my sympathy,  
 But grief with thee is indexed, chapter and verse,  
 Each last sad smile, each parting word. Thou mayst  
 Read slowly this remembrance, skip the next,  
 Avoid what is most harassing. It can't  
 Be changed, the book is writ; but mine is blank.  
 Where is my daughter? write the lines for me.

*Ernst.* My Lord, why ask a charcoal-burner? If she  
 Be missing, those of higher rank will know,  
 Not I.

*Charles.* But thou hast just confessed a knowledge.  
 Shall I stand longer here and wheedle words,  
 Or shall I blow my horn? Let torture bring  
 Some sense.

*Ernst.* My Lord, have mercy!

*Charles.* Then out with it!  
 Why did'st thou fly six years ago? nor bring  
 The Lord Archbishop news.

*Ernst.* My Lord, that is  
 A simple question, simple as thin ice,  
 That skins the depth, yet holds till rudely struck.  
 Let us reach shallows far from here before  
 We test its brittleness.

*Charles.* Nay speak, and promptly.

*Ernst.* Then take the onus, Sire, I've warned. For me  
 Nought matters now, my Guta's dead. Besides  
 A king's hot temper may extrude more sparks  
 Than witch's fell bedevilment. So listen!



Six years ago a semblance, a strange wild woman,  
 Not of mortal birth, escaped the hills,  
 Came moaning here, cast amorous glances, trapping  
 With beauty's mesh the soul of our dear friend,  
 Our foster-son. Before this feeble cross,  
 Whose magic keeps it firm spite time's decay,  
 An awesome rite took place; those two exchanged  
 The marriage oath, scarce said the words, when skies  
 Blew open, a bird descended, 'twas like a dove;  
 But well we knew 'twas come from Odin's shoulder  
 To perch upon the smiling hag.

*Charles.*  
 So call my child, insulting her as me.  
 It was the Princess Emma.

Thou darest

*Ernst.*  
 Although methinks there was some likeness, still  
 She came without attendants, her hair dishevelled,  
 Her garments torn; besides I've proof. But patience!  
 We sought good Father Hildebold, mistook  
 The way, took council, agreed 'twas well to wait  
 Developments, so found an ancient friend  
 And visited the elephant, a beast  
 Of weirdest size, whose arm-like nose, whose trunk,  
 Was sucking from a bucket, then mouthwards curved  
 And poured the flow until we heard the water  
 Gushing through his mighty stomach. O—

Nay, my Lord,

*Charles.* Away with rounding O's. Keep straight thy tale.

*Ernst.* 'Twas late one night when we crept back, the place  
 Was still, no movement, deserted; ay and more;  
 The hut was vacant, our belongings gone.  
 A light though strangely gleamed, a moon ray or—  
 We plucked it, troth a goblin stone; 'twas left  
 As pay; but could it pay for goods endeared



By use? No, no, a thousand times. We wept;  
 So passed the hours till ruthless day affirmed  
 Our loss. Provisions, tools, utensils, all  
 Were gone, and e'en some garnered seeds. If such  
 Could happen, why not worse? Our lives? We'd find  
 A safe asylum, work elsewhere, poor Guta!  
 And now my proofs: the goblin stone, this bit  
 Of beldame finery, a scrap, the cross  
 Had kept. [*He unwraps his treasures.*]

*Charles.* Why Ernst, thou hast a royal stone.  
 'Tis worth a noble's ransom, and thou dost cry  
 For peasant chattels, a royal stone indeed!  
 It must have slipped my crown that night six years  
 Ago. What corners have been swept for it.  
 What countries searched for them; who left it here.  
 And this frayed scrap is holy silk; I feel  
 Its texture. Where? O where can they have gone?

*Ernst.* Those thickets yonder hide the secret. Fierce  
 Carousing, banqueting from golden plate  
 Or grave-yard bones, who knows? No mortal has  
 Retraced his steps though more than they have dared  
 The bosky growth. Far, far within are dwarfs,  
 Wild women of the hills and mystic stags  
 That lure to doom. O Sire, return! it is  
 Not safe to meddle, nor speak where trees have ears.

[*A rustling is heard 'mid the trees.*]  
 What's that? a rustling breath that warns.

*Charles.* More like  
 A prying zephyr. The woodman's axe will fell  
 This mystery. I'll give prompt orders—yet  
 A pause—to think, prepare myself for what?  
 Hope fanned afresh? or chilled to ash? So leave me  
 Ernst, and thou Count Albert, a moment's rest



Before we prize the lock. I would be strong.

*Albert.* 'Tis injudicious, most unsafe, my Lord.  
We've heard enough to fright the staunchest saint  
Of Holy Church.

*Charles.* And thou art far from that.  
Well cross thyself, tell beads, or what thou wilt;  
But leave me here. Go, quiet the horses. Hark!  
They champ impatience. I must curb myself.  
If kingdoms fell would I be so disturbed?

*Albert.* Come Ernst, we'll tarry near, thou must know  
more,  
I'd hear it all.

[*Exeunt Albert and Ernst.*]

*Charles.* I'm strangely tired, this bank  
Affords repose, though peace is far.

[*He falls asleep. The scene grows perfectly dark. After a time the twinkling light of candles gradually discloses three mushroom-shaped tables, on which the candles stand among golden goblets and dishes. Around each table sits a group of three Wish-maidens, aetherially dressed, with long flowing locks.*]

*Wish-maidens.*

Sisters, we quaff to the past,  
When forests were thick and daylight dim.  
Sisters, we quaff to the past.  
Once sacred this grove, here heard Woden's hymn.  
Sisters, we quaff to the past.  
The past! the past! [*They drink deeply.*]

Wind-spirits are we, wild women called,  
Substance of water and air,



Of fabric whence breathed the ancient scald  
Verses that seize and ensnare.

Through tempests we ride, upheaval's din,  
Light as a figment of dreams,  
And sometimes we flash a visioned sin,  
Sometimes a virtue that gleams.

The bubbles of thought we puff at night  
Enter the soul that is cursed,  
Awaking a shameless appetite,  
Perfidy, shuffling, war-thirst.

The bubbles of thought we throw from light  
Enter the soul that is blessed,  
Like dust of the rainbow, pearly and bright,  
Singing of hope and of quest.

But Sisters the future stores for us  
Obloquy, exile, and wrong;  
Already the signs grow ominous,  
Seldom man hearkens to song.

So spill from our cups—earth honouring,  
Earth that will triumph one day;  
Let earth play the tune round faery ring,  
Twanging the strings we obey.

[*Where the wine is spilt on the ground dwarfs spring up,  
each clad in green and bearing a golden harp.*]

Clear tables away, come dwarfs, come elves  
Harp for us, harp long and loud!  
Let fingers that grasp the golden helms  
Work strings with music endowed.

[*The tables are pushed back. In front sit the dwarfs*



*who first play slow dance music, gradually quickening the time. The Wish-maidens dance in three groups. From a slow gliding step they arrive at a dizzy whirl. Then suddenly they stop, break up their groups and sing while making steps and motions to imitate weaving.]*

We dance to the past while weaving tales,  
 Rosy with mist of the dawn,  
 Astir with the mood of wilful gales,  
 Lightsome as leap of a fawn.

We dance to the present, weaving fears.  
 Daylight strews shadows behind;  
 The dazzle of noon dissolves in tears,  
 Man is the sport of the wind.

We dance to the future, weaving death,  
 Purpled with evening sky;  
 A knowledge has come with failing breath,  
 The courts of Valhalla on high.

So round and around we faster spin,  
 Straightening the tangles of time;  
 We dance to the earth, find spirit within,  
 Hark! to the music sublime.

*[They stand prettily poised listening, each with the right forefinger raised. The scene grows quite dark again while delightful strains of heavenly music are heard. After a time they die away. The scene lightens, Charles is discovered still sleeping. All trace of Wish-maidens, tables and dwarfs have disappeared unless it be David, a little green-clad figure, who enters from the copse, losing his hat on a thornbush. He looks round wonderingly, then comes and examines Charles.]*

*David.* Goliath as my name is David, Giant



Goliath. Indeed I've found adventure. Yet  
 I have no sling. Might I not steal his sword,  
 To carry home a giant's head, would not  
 The ancient's envy me? My Father, though  
 A mighty hunter, has never brought such game.  
 Soft, soft, he sleeps. I'll lightly pull. The sword  
 Slips loose from out its sheath, a bolder tug;  
 Ah now it comes.

[*Enter Ernst. He sees David and stands transfixed.*]

Charles. [*Waking.*] What's that? who drags my sword.  
 Am I asleep? do I still dream? a dwarf,  
 A tiny green-clad man like those who harped  
 The magic tune. Have pagan times returned?  
 My Lord Archbishop warned me 'gainst the tales  
 Of ancient days. An old man's mind should steep  
 Itself in gospel truth; what troubles have  
 I brewed? And yet the sky seems natural,  
 The sun and trees. What art thou? elf or child?  
 Of goblin birth or Christian ancestry?

David. [*Singing.*]

Pass the loving cup,  
 Kling, klang, klung.  
 Let us brightly sup,  
 Ting, tang, tung.

What's disturbed by light,  
 Ting, tang, tung.  
 Let us mend at night,  
 Kling, klang, klung.

Ernst. That song has answered you. My mother heard  
 It in her youth and hers before and alway  
 A little man like this made music. See,



Thorn-caught, there hangs the hat that blurs and hides  
 Its goblin wearer. Never have I seen  
 Such mannikin until to-day; though oft  
 On winter nights annoyed by raps and creaks;  
 Strange pranks they play, themselves invisible.

*David.* 'Tis true, my hat was flicked away. This sword  
 Will help recovery. Alack the tear!  
 A nasty rent.

*Charles.* Before thou fad'st in space,  
 Return my sword.

*David.* Nay, nay, Goliath, we'll  
 Consult my mother.

*Charles.* Thy Mother?

*David.* Ay, my Mother.  
 Her favoured stag, the one she trained and petted,  
 Came flagging home to die, a pool of blood  
 Around.

*Charles.* A wounded stag but lately 'scaped  
 Our dogs.

*David.* I knew thou wert the culprit, Giant  
 Goliath. If thou hadst not waked, I would  
 Have sawed thy neck as Father saws great logs,  
 Then carried home thy gory head, that long  
 White beard would serve as handle. Instead I'll take  
 Thee prisoner! so follow, march. They call  
 Me David, a name that strikes some fear.

*Charles.* Indeed,  
 My little man, it does, and some have called  
 Me David too and some have shrunk from me.



But I will follow thee. Lead on!

*David.*

If thou'lt

Play fair, will promise not to snatch the sword,  
I'll lend my help, hold back the twigs that else  
Might blind; but thou must make a giant's promise.

*Charles.* I promise!

*David.* And I can trust thy word for giants  
Like dwarfs and elves must speak what's in their hearts.  
They are all through as clear as bright spring-water.  
'Tis otherwise with man, my Father says,  
His lips may smile the softest "yes" while "no"  
Is boring through his heart. There's one who plucks  
Thy coat. He has a baneful eye. Come shake  
Him off, I wait.

*Ernst.* [*Holding Charles' coat.*] My Lord, consider, I  
pray you.

Remember your high station. You are the Star;  
Whose rays shed peace on countless millions. O  
Imperil not the light of Christendom!  
My voice may crack and quiver from the strain  
Of time. It carries though authority,  
Thy peoples' need!

*Charles.* [*Shaking Ernst off.*] Back Ernst, my mind is set.  
I'll sift the matter through, take consequence.  
Lead on, my boy; let briars, thorns and nettles  
Prick doubt to shreds. Lead on! Give me that peace  
My humblest subject craves.

*David.* [*Parting the shrubs by the linden.*] Then stoop,  
Goliath,  
Stoop. Here is the secret entrance. Canst thou  
Bend low enough?



*Charles.* [*Stooping.*] Ay low enough, God knows,  
May He protect!

[*As Charles disappears, following David,  
enter Albert.*]

*Albert.* The King?

*Ernst.* Enticed away  
Like Master Eginhardt. Those woods have closed  
On Majesty, ah woe the day!

*Albert.* Ah woe  
Indeed! where shall we turn? Old man, come steer  
My course; the ship is rudderless, the captain  
Has gone.

*Ernst.* And so you call on me, a peasant;  
Forgetting noble birth and heritage!  
Go search your prized gentility, your schooling,  
Your war-time prowess, your hunting skill, your pride,  
Vain-glory, your anything. Leave me. I have  
A friend—another friend, to mourn. When one  
Is old and poorly circumstanced, good friends  
Are sadly missed, alas!

*Albert.* Thou weep'st a friend—  
The surging ocean 'broils the land and thou  
Dost cower above a puddle! A friend, nay, nay;  
A King, an Emperor, the one strong man.

*Ernst.* Did I not plead?—but grief digs as it will.

*Albert.* And thou art right. Have I not cause for fear?  
Who is responsible? will I be blamed?  
Old man dry up thy tears, give thought, help break  
This hush that tantalizes. Hark! a rumble!  
The clash of horses; our friends arrive. Ho there!



Come help!—The King is lost.

[*Enter Audulf, Herbert and other courtiers scrambling over the barricade. Their rich attire, like Albert's, has suffered somewhat from the chase.*]

*Audulf.* Is lost? How can  
That be when you Lord Count are found? Ay hang  
Your head, 'twill need explaining. Is lost? but here's  
His hunting-spear. You jest, Lord Count, he can't  
Be far. Is this a game?

*Albert.* I would it were!

*Audulf.* Then let us search; which way went he?

*Ernst* Where ways  
Are none, whence none have yet returned.

*Audulf.* Thou mean'st  
The King is dead. Impossible!

*Ernst.* See there  
That tanglement. Could you alone, unweaponed  
Pierce far? And vet those branches swung apart  
As once the Red Sea waves, then swiftly closed  
Upon our Charles as surged the swelling tide  
O'er Egypt's host. Alas! no fiery pillar  
Has guided him; there skipped before a dwarf,  
Greenhued, a morsel from the nether world,  
A thievish imp, an elf-enchanter.

*Albert.* It seemed  
As though the King stooped low, 'twas here he went.

*Audulf.* I see no passage.

*Herbert.* Let us break through with swords



And spears.

*Ernst.* Take heed for magic dwells within.  
 'Twere pity to impair those silken fabrics;  
 Though somewhat rent and smeared, still maids might find  
 Some trimmings. Your lives no doubt concern yourselves.  
 Who else would grieve?

*Albert.* If we were lost or dead  
 Would majesty let fall a scalding tear?  
 The King has oft rebuked. This morning too  
 He led a wilful chase. Indeed our clothes  
 Can testify. Have we not cause for quarrel?  
 Upbraiding us forsooth because times change  
 And fashions too. Is he not Emperor?  
 Why prate of ancient days? of meek, out-worn,  
 Out-lived simplicity? Instead should we  
 Not rival Eastern Courts in luxury,  
 In pomp and ease? the trappings of success—  
 Success! and there's the jolt, has he not paved  
 Its way? whate'er his faults he must be found  
 And that right speedily. Will none suggest?  
 If we but had a charm of Baltic amber,  
 A phial of spittal, at least some pungent herbs.  
 There's Ernst, whose mind is stored with peasant-tales  
 Who tunes the old heroic sagas; who  
 Pretends a knowledge of those deities  
 That cradled our great race. Does he not know  
 Some runic sign, some spell, some heathen rite  
 To drown this vile uncertainty? If age  
 Has not undone thy wit, give us some nostrum,  
 Some countenance from out the crafty past.

*Ernst.* My Lord, you sport with words, have you not  
 said  
 Times change and fashions too? Has daily Mass,  
 The Palace School left you thus weaponless?



Must you, of this ninth century, turn back  
To pagan thought to fight the power of ill?  
O fie! fie! fie! a peasant must accoutre,  
Must offer arms to noblemen? If help  
There be, 'tis by that cross. Fall on your knees  
In humble supplication, tell your beads,  
Make Christian vows, invoke the Saints, wake Heaven  
With moans and pleading sobs. But he, whose horse  
Outstrips the rest, must foam its mouth and froth  
Its flanks until good Father Hildebold  
Be traced,—our Lord Archbishop. Say to him  
That Ernst has sent—six years may be too late.

[*Exit Audulf. The rest kneel round the cross.*]

That you of the north bearing, bear back  
 To pass through to find the way of life  
 O feel the light's power and glory  
 Most often come to me, I hope  
 There for the light's power, I'll be your guide  
 In humble conversation, till you find  
 What Christian love means, the light which Heaven  
 With mercy and wisdom sends - But let your heart  
 Outrage the rest, and from its mouth and lips  
 The words that good Father speaks, let  
 Be heard - one word, I hope, will  
 That Earth has sent - its voice to the stars

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## ACT V.

*Scene—The interior of a log hut. The walls are draped with rare skins and decorated with horns and heads. The furniture is covered with skins. There are interesting collections of curios, dried grasses and ferns; and everywhere freshly gathered asters in horn mugs. The whole presents a most artistic appearance. Emma sits on a couch beside a cradle, crooning a slumber song to the infant in her arms. Beside her sits Eginhardt, attaching feathers to his arrows. Through the door, centre back, fruit trees are seen. Six years have greatly changed Emma and Eginhardt. The latter has a long black beard; both are tanned and seem stouter.*

*Emma.*

Little one, close fast thine eyes,  
Thy guardian angel near thee flies;  
Close thy rosebud-mouth, thine ears  
To all want and needless fears.

Little one, lie still and rest,  
Mother holds thee at her breast,  
Like a flower by lover plucked,  
Kissed and in maid's kerchief tucked.

Little one, thou'rt sweeter far  
 Than any petal-textured star,  
 Sweeter than a lover's gift;  
 Thou art joy that God hath whiffed.

Little one, keep pure and true,  
 Let no taint thy heart bedew.  
 Mother's prayer is spent for thee,  
 Now and through eternity.

Little one, if dreams should come,  
 Hurt, or aught that's troublesome,  
 Put thy trust in God above  
 As now thou lean'st on mother-love.

Little one, thy cradle's here,  
 Mother stays and watches near.  
 Swansdown-pillowed, slumber long,  
 Mother ends her drowsy song.

[*Emma gently rocks the cradle in which she has laid the  
 sleeping child.*]

*Emma.* O Eginhardt, he's fast asleep, nought will  
 Disturb. I never knew so good a child.  
 He's like his father, his dumpy nose upturned;  
 A smile that lingers through his sleep as though  
 His spirit babbled angel-talk.

*Eginhardt.* Thou may'st  
 Revile my nose, in troth it doth admit  
 Plebeian birth; but what of that? when thou,  
 Who own'st the straightest nose in Christendom,  
 Art well content with it. As for my smile,  
 I must demur, has it not character,  
 When thou art cause? and yet thou liken'st it  
 To that which flushes this wee bit of soft



Inanity.

*Emma.* Away with thee, rude scoffer.  
Nay, look again. Admire as we have done  
These hundred times, the long, black silky lashes,  
That fringe so restfully; a modish damsel  
Would give her soul for such possession. Ay  
'Tis true the smile resembles thine, the same  
Calm confidence, a hint of humour, yes,  
A tryst with higher things that leaves me far  
Behind. Now David's smile is like the King,  
My Father's, a flash of wit or merriment  
Or tender love, or pleased concern that fades  
As graver thoughts come uppermost. 'Tis strange  
Of late my Father's face has haunted me.  
It bears a wistful look. Dost think he grieves  
For us?

*Eginhardt.* Six years should act as poppy balm,  
Besides his Jove-like mind has such to grapple,  
That private woes are soon reduced to pricks,  
Scarce felt and then forgotten. If thou had'st kept  
The magic ring—but that is long ago.  
I see it now upon the frozen pond.  
I could not sleep that night and so stole forth—  
A walk might ease my pain. Unrealized  
The hunting-lodge was reached and I had thrown  
The ring. It glittered 'neath the moon, then I  
Would have it back; but suddenly, a crack;  
It disappeared, black water bubbled—my dream  
Seemed over.

*Emma.* To begin! dear Eginhardt!  
If we, through magic, had secured the king's  
Affection; courtly pomp, its undercurrents  
Of jealousy and constant bickerings  
Had swallowed us and what we hold most dear,



Our liberty and close companionship.  
 How free we are! how happy! this wondrous home  
 With nought superfluous to hamper; but just  
 Enough for daily needs—a little more  
 To please one's sense of beauty, and all has grown  
 With married life. There's not a skin that decks  
 Those walls; but 'tis the fruit of hardy chase,  
 No graceful antler, but thou hast bent the bow;  
 Each has its story. As for curios,  
 Have I not helped discover them? and David  
 Has rooted well. The mountain-dwarfs must scatter  
 Rarities to satisfy the lad,  
 To hear his piping notes of childish triumph,  
 His chubby hand tight-clutching some gay stone,  
 Or weathered fossil, spotted egg, or fern,  
 Or tufted grass for drying, or rusty lichen;  
 Each a worthwhile specimen. 'Tis strange  
 That blindfold avarice should grope in towns,  
 While forests are thus generous with gifts.

*Eginhardt.* True, true, the forest is man's natural home,  
 And yet at times ambition stirs. Was I  
 Not once great Charles' youngest councillor?  
 Have I not planned his palaces? laid out  
 His gardens? supervised his public works?  
 The ever-famed basilica; have I  
 Not felt his love? He called me foster-son.

[*He drops his head in his hands.*]

*Emma.* Weep not, dear Eginhardt, we are content.

*Eginhardt.* Ay wife, we are content and happiness  
 Doth flood; still far beneath strange eddies surge,  
 Nay rather purl; but there they are—a vague  
 Uneasiness—

*Emma.*

Thou frighten'st me.



*Eginhardt.*

Then lay

Thy cheek 'gainst mine and smile, the mood has passed.  
 But let us talk of him whose towering genius  
 Projects such sparks that lesser minds are fired,  
 A galaxy illumines the sky, great deeds  
 Are done!—and we stay trifling here. The mood  
 I said had passed—and we are quite content.  
 But still we'll talk of him, our Charles, whose fame  
 Will ring throughout the centuries while we,  
 Dear Emma, are forgot or sunk to myth.  
 His age we've known, when fires are somewhat dimmed,  
 What must his ardent youth have been! surpassing  
 Hannibal, yea Caesar, in art of war;  
 Manoeuvring, until a tiny force,  
 Thrown here and there, has downed a mighty host.  
 Persistency through good, through evil fortune,  
 Till restive Europe feels the curb of peace,  
 Acknowledging its blessing. The Saxon idol  
 Has crumbled, the Arab-crescent stays its distance;  
 The Northman dares not venture. One man, one mind  
 Accomplishing so much! and now he seeks  
 To cleanse the Church, to make a roadway 'mid  
 The brambles of divergent laws, to wake  
 A nation's pride, reviving tales, rude songs  
 Of hero-ancestry. With pause, he would  
 Himself have ventured more than playful verse.  
 There is that vibrant hymn he wrote, asserting  
 The Holy Ghost comes from the Son as Father.  
 In truth he hath a poet's soul and that  
 Maybe explains! An autocrat and yet  
 The servant of his people; fathoming  
 Their needs, to satisfy or wisely guide.

*Emma.* Some say he hath worked miracles, thou know'st  
 The story of the flowers.

*Eginhardt.*

Ay, but let



It fall again from thy sweet lips.

*Emma.*

The King,

My Father, had shamed the Saracen; but O  
 At what a cost! Archbishop Turpin, brave Roland,  
 And many another paladin returned  
 No more. O war, it is a ghastly thing!  
 The victor suffers as the vanquished, though pride  
 May not acknowledge it. Our hardy troops,  
 Who struggled past the Pyrannees, brought plague,  
 That Southern ill. It spread through Rhenish towns,  
 Death stalked from house to house, all nostrums failed.  
 The learned Doctors could but shake their heads,  
 Fear seized each heart—and then man turned to God.  
 He fasted, prayed and promised. The King, my Father,  
 Nor slept, nor eat, imploring constantly,  
 Until celestial voices spoke: "The Lord  
 Hath heard thy prayer. The meadow holds reply;  
 Ride forth, His name upon thy lips, then string  
 Thy bow and upward shoot." The King arose,  
 Nor felt the chilling dawn, a silent figure,  
 Upon his great black charger, he passed the gate;  
 His lips were mumbling prayer and so he went.  
 The open reached, they say, a wondrous light  
 Passed o'er his face as looking heavenward,  
 He sprung the bow. High winged the shaft as though  
 To pierce the firmament, then wavering fell,  
 And lo its blunted end had crushed the stem  
 Of that small golden flower, whose thistle-bloom  
 Has since been called "carlina," bearing thus  
 The King, my Father's name to blazon through  
 The centuries how God lent heed to prayer.  
 The arrow-head was damped with juice, so found  
 The remedy. Again was laughter heard,  
 As eager children gathered plants; a flush  
 Returned to pallid cheeks, the light of hope  
 To sunken eyes. And so the plague was stayed



And death slunk off disconsolate.—But where's  
Our David? and this his special tale, why at  
This point he likes to thrust his wooden sword  
As though to stab a threatening foe. Ay youth  
Can combat death; but what of age?

*Eginhardt.* Talk'st thou  
Of age? whose cheeks are soft and round. I will  
Admit thou hast enough of woman's wisdom  
To delve some criscross lines or tiny crowsfeet.  
But none I see, not one wee crease and that  
Reflects some credit on thy husband's care;  
Six years! and lovers still! was ever known  
Such foolish pair. [*He kisses her.*]

*Emma.* Was ever? Eginhardt.  
But not of self I thought, a father's face!  
That may have deeper lines because of us.  
Ah, 'tis ever so, that face obtrudes—  
But where has David gone? I now remember,  
He asked to gather acorns—and oaks are near  
The zigzag path that leads—that leads beyond  
The realms of happiness, O let us search  
And quickly, if harm should come—

*David.* [*Without.*] Ting, tang!

*Emma.* His voice,  
Thank God, his clear shrill treble.  
[*Enter David.*]  
O David, thou

Hast frightened me!

*David.* [*Twirling the sword.*] That's nought but play-pre-  
tence;  
But now thy hair shall stand on end, see what  
I brandish here.



*Emma.* My son, pray heed, take care!  
A real sword! and one of consequence?  
It is, it is—

*David.* A giant's sword! O Mother!  
Thy son's a dauntless hero, as those thou sing'st  
About.

*Eginhardt.* A naughty vagabond, more like,  
Where hast thou been? Give me the sword.

*David.* [*Handing the sword to Emma.*] Nay, nay!  
'Tis mother's; but I've outrun the prisoner,  
An honest giant, although he killed our stag.  
Hi there! Goliath!

[*Enter Charles, who stoops to pass the doorway. He does not recognize his hosts.*]

See Mother the captive I  
Have taken. Now proudly smile and call me hero.

*Charles.* This door was never built for captive giants  
But gladly I'll acknowledge, dame, thou hast  
A stalwart hero! a splendid boy!

*David.* [*Clapping his hands and dancing round.*] There!  
there!  
I said as much, a hero! a hero! a hero!

*Emma.* [*Who, with Eginhardt, recognizes Charles, laying her hand on her heart as though to still its throbbings.*]

Quiet boy! let others sing thy praise.  
I welcome you, my Lord, your face, this weapon  
Proclaim nobility; we are unused  
To strangers here. Forgive a trembling voice.

*Charles.* [*Looking round.*] But not a peasant's voice, I



swear, and this  
 No peasant's hovel; such skins, so well arranged,  
 Such forest wealth would grace our hunting lodge.  
 I've never seen a room so strangely decked,  
 Nor one that suits me better. If magic's here,  
 Then let it be, I'm well content. [*He sits by the central table.*]

*David.* Without  
 Thy sword, Goliath?

*Charles.* [*Receiving his sword.*] Ay, without my sword,  
 And yet I'd handle it. Joyeuse! thy title  
 Becomes thee well to-day. Dear blade; a sweet  
 Adventure has wiped thee clean. Thy name is freed  
 From irony. Joyeuse! Joyeuse! Joyeuse—  
 A happy languor steals.

*David.* O Mother, Goliath  
 Seems quite at home. His head is nodding sleep;  
 'Tis well I did not sever it. A tame,  
 Old giant for playmate, how the boys in tales  
 Would envy me! We'll feed and treat him well.  
 O Mother! Father! say that I may keep  
 My prisoner.

*Emma.* Indeed my son thou mayst.  
 If there be strength in human love, 'twill hold  
 Him close. [*David jumps delight.*] But softly boy, thou must  
 be more  
 Polite, more circumspect. O Eginhardt!  
 He looks so peaceful. Think you that mood will change,  
 That passion will distort his brow when he  
 Discovers?

*Eginhardt.* He has not realized and yet  
 Has felt thy soothing presence. O 'twould be  
 Impossible to meet thy tender gaze



And then to break from it. Ay love will hold  
Him here; but let the truth come leaking out,  
Lest joy disturb his age.

*Emma.* Thou hast more hope  
Than I, who am his daughter.

*David.* The giant's daughter?

*Eginhardt.* Hush David, help bring the dishes, not one  
word  
Until I give consent. [*Addressing Emma.*] Hast thou pre-  
pared  
The venison?

*Emma.* The way he likes it, ay,  
Well seasoned, with relish and proper garnishings  
That blend with forest wine. I've but to serve.

*Eginhardt.* Then haste thee, Wife, while I make search  
within  
This precious book, "God's City," to find the place  
Left off six years ago, when last I read  
At meal-time. Ah, 'tis here; a tiny mark  
Bears witness, blurred with tears, with frequent handling.

[*While Emma places the venison on the table, David, who has his eyes on Charles, drops a dish, waking the latter.*]

*Charles.* By all the Saints, a feast! the table set  
As at the palace e'en though wood and horn  
Replace our silver ware. And venison  
That smells like roasted meat, not boiled to shreds  
As my dull doctors have prescribed. I smell  
An old time flavour. Surely, Dame, thou hast  
Not been at court?



*Emma.* My Lord, some years ago  
I served as kitchen-wench. The Princess Emma—

*Charles.* Talk not of her—unless thou knowest aught.

*Emma.* My Lord, you come from court; why question  
then  
My ignorance? But see the venison  
Awaits, we wish a kind report; we trust  
Our cheer will strengthen you.

*Charles.* Then sit ye here  
And eat. Consider me a humble guest.  
My lad, canst thou say grace?

*David.* Indeed, Sir Giant,  
A Latin Ave too. [*He mumbles an Ave Maria while all cross  
themselves and sit down. Emma carves the venison,  
Eginhardt opens his book. Charles stares wonderingly  
round.*]

*Charles.* Such culture so far removed from influence,  
In this unknown retreat is surely most  
Uncommon, an element of mystery  
That suits me well. I feel a living part  
Of it—untrammelled, so much at home. Good people!  
Ye practise kindly spells, weave on! weave on!  
Nor let me wake.

*Eginhardt.* Then taste our venison,  
My Lord. [*Addressing Emma.*] A goodly helping! whilst I  
do read  
A passage as our custom—once—

[*He reads from Chapter XII. of the Nineteenth Book of  
"The City of God."*]



“For joy and peace are desired alike of all men. The warrior would but conquer: war’s aim is nothing but a glorious peace; what is victory but a suppression of resistants, which being done, peace follows?—So that peace is war’s purpose, the scope of all military discipline, and the limit at which all just contentions level. All men seek peace by war, but none seek war by peace. For they that perturb the peace they live in, do it not for hate of it, but to show their power in alteration of it. They would not disannul it; but they would have it as they like;”—

*Charles.* “As they like;”—and so they suffer! but that  
Is past. O Eginhardt, ’tis thee! thy voice!  
Thy gesture! and Emma, my daughter Emma, I know  
Thee now. Come let me feel, make certain, my dear,  
Dear child, ay, ay; ’tis not a dream. O God  
Is good to my old age. My pet, lean here.  
These arms have ached for thee. O dearest one,  
Why hast thou been so cruel? nor understood  
A father’s love, when time elapsed, would conquer  
A moment’s ire.—To hide from me, it was  
Not kind, not Emma-like. My child! my child—

*Emma.* Then Father thou dost love me still? but what  
Of him who kneels imploringly, yet not  
Repenting, for am I not his wife?

*Charles.*

If I

Have missed him once, ’twas every day, for six  
Long years and is there more to say? The earth  
Was combed for him and thee, our agents sent  
To foreign courts, to seats of learning; alway  
A “no” came back that pierced my heart with stabs  
Of pain! ’Tis easier to face the slaps  
Of life when punishment is undeserved;  
When one can say at least: “’twas not my fault;”  
But O the lingering torture, when one’s own act



Has brought fell consequence. If only one  
 Could backwards turn, how different! Emma!  
 Eginhardt! help kill the memory  
 Of those six years, make glad the few that stretch  
 Before me. Ah my children! dear children! dear children!

*David.* Goliath! hast thou forgotten me?

*Charles.* Nay, nay  
 Brave lad. [*The baby cries.*] but hark! a cry.

*Emma.* [*Takes the baby from the cradle.*] Our youngest  
 son  
 Awakes, bids welcome, completes our happy group.

*Charles.* 'Twould test an artist's brush to paint such bliss;  
 But let me look, a healthy child, well-formed,  
 Most promising; but not a David! I  
 Have never seen a finer lad, a braver!  
 Pray God, court life will keep him so, and that  
 Reminds there is a court and etiquette  
 And problems, eternal problems! well, so be!  
 If duty weighs, good Eginhardt, we'll lean  
 On younger arms; so take my horn and blow  
 A lusty blast, we have the heart to work;  
 And God will aid.

[*Eginhardt blows the horn, while Charles turns to his  
 venison and Emma quiets the baby. An answering call  
 comes faint, then louder.*]

*Eginhardt.* Run David, run, and point  
 The way. [*Exit David.*] I'll go a step to greet old friends,  
 Prepare their minds. [*Exit.*]

*Emma.* [*Laying the baby in his cradle.*] Hush, hush—  
 [*She pours some wine for Charles.*]



*Charles.* [*Drinking.*] Thy health, dear Emma.

*Emma.* [*Pointing to the holy silk that drapes an altar.*]  
Perhaps this holy silk has helped with thought  
Beyond our daily round. See Father, I  
Have guarded it—no harm has come to us  
In this old pagan grove.

*Charles.* Nor will it come,  
While simple faith dwells here. I tell thee, Emma,  
We'll build a castle round this shrine-like home,  
Protecting it and all that love has reared  
Within and here, at times, we'll seek respite.

*Emma.* And laughter too! O Father, those first few  
nights.  
How silently we stole without and emptied  
The charcoal-burner's deserted hut; the jewel  
We left reward enough for paltry stuff—  
The wedding dower of Princess Emma—but hark!

[*After a pause enter Hildebold, Eginhardt, David,  
Albert, Ernst and Courtiers.*]

*Charles.* What Hildebold! our dear disheveled court,  
And old man Ernst and none afraid to venture!  
My Lord Archbishop, the Church has proved its strength  
To lead through lanes of mystery and soon  
My children here will ask its further blessing.  
But later, when we are more composed and now  
A hunting song to make all seem more real.

*Courtiers.*

Ya ho! ya ho! let Frankland ring  
With daring deeds, with battles won;  
Great Lords submit to Charles, our King,  
As stars that fear the rising sun.



Ya ho! ya ho! for Victory!  
 Now Frankland's voice is heard afar,  
 It trumpets peace o'er land and sea,  
 The War God lists and stays his car.

Ya ho! ya ho! for huntsman's horn  
 Awakes once more the forest glade,  
 With mirth and joy that put to scorn  
 The battle scar, the murky blade.

Ya ho! ya ho! the quarry's traced,  
 Six years of search have ended now,  
 The fairest doe that ere was chased,  
 To her we make a lowly bow.

[*The courtiers all make obeisance to Emma.*]

*Emma.* And I do thank you, friends; my husband,  
 The King permitting, will speak for me.

*Charles.*

Nay I

Myself will speak. Good people, listen all,  
 I oft have chided, seeking the City of God  
 On earth, an Empire as St. Augustine  
 Once visioned—I have failed—but in this home,  
 I clearly see the germ.

The first settlement was made in 1630 by a group of Puritan  
 emigrants from England, led by John Winthrop. They  
 sailed on the ship *Arcturion* and landed in Boston on  
 September 7, 1630. The settlement was initially  
 known as Boston, but was later renamed  
 in honor of the city of Boston in England.  
 The settlement was founded on a hillside  
 overlooking the harbor. The first  
 church was built in 1630, and the  
 first school was founded in 1635.  
 The settlement grew rapidly, and  
 by 1640 it had a population of  
 about 1,000 people. The settlement  
 was a center of Puritanism and  
 played a leading role in the  
 development of the New England  
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THE TALL PALMETTO  
and  
OTHER POEMS

THE FALL PATRIOT  
and  
OTHER POEMS



The dense live-oaks were swept with wrath,  
The rubber trees swung roots in mire,  
A fine-leaved cedar tittered spite,  
Magnolias were flushed with ire.

Alone within the garden pale  
A tall palmetto gently swayed,  
Serenely straight its feathered head  
Above all else had skywards strayed,

To catch the first, faint blush of dawn,  
To linger long with sunset's glow,  
To trace the moon's illusive course  
From orange disc to silvery bow.

So strove the palm and was content  
To glimpse at times a furtive clue,  
To pierce the haze of mystery,  
Emerging thence with leaflet new.

And as the leaf, fanlike, unfurled,  
Its green was showered with radiance,  
Eternal truth had shed fresh light,  
Another phaze! another glance.

And so the palm in stature grew,  
In lofty thought and vision wide,  
Unmindful of a carping world,  
Outdistancing the trees beside.

Nor hearkened to their small-leafed tones,  
The rustling of close-quartered boughs,  
Nor dreamt of murky depths beneath  
Whose dark no errant sunbeam ploughs.

An ancient oak, mishapen, knarled,  
Whose prideful age man's care had crutched,  
Whose groaning branches bent toward earth  
Until the barren soil was touched,

Spoke low with mirthless muttering:  
"A scrub palmetto! cabbage palm!  
A worthless sprout but yesterday  
Disdaining us with saucy calm!"

The rubber tree now sputtered back  
While dropping rootlets scratched the dirt:  
"The palm makes bold to grasp the clouds,  
With gauzy forms it seeks to flirt."

The rounded cedar, clipped and dwarfed,  
Agreed with snickers scarce-repressed:  
"A slender form might tempt the clouds,  
But never earthlings verdure dressed."

The richly decked magnolias,  
Who boasted cultured lineage  
And garden-birth in foreign climes,  
Made inward flutterings of rage.

A country yokel! cabbage palm!  
To air itself in heaven's blue!  
So far above their august heads,  
What was this new world coming to?

The slim palmetto gave no sign  
And yet at last these murmurings



Had forced attention, drawn its thoughts  
From godly height to baser things.

It sought the reason, paused awhile;  
Though skies had greyed there pearled some light;  
Then flashed the truth, itself could see;  
Those other trees had vision slight.

And then the palm began to talk  
And told of dawn and afterglow,  
How skies touched earth with brilliancy,  
It traced the seven-coloured bow.

It spoke of rifts in frothy clouds,  
Of silent lakes illumed with stars,  
Of earth-mirage in misty air,  
Of spirit force that light unbars.

The trees were still and hearkened now;  
But shallow cups hold little draught  
And soon the weary listeners tired,  
Some curled their leaves, while others laughed.

Then beauty spilled and fell to earth  
Where tiny flowers sucked up the drops.  
No single thought had gone awaste,  
From some there came rich harvest crops.

Long afterward, when death had chilled,  
A fallen log lay swathed in vine,  
Whence sword-like cacti pushed their blades  
And orchids peered 'mid tufted pine.

Such beauteous decay still blessed  
As once the wishful, dreamy palm  
And trees, that erst reviled, made boast  
That they had heard its twilight psalm.

*THE TALL PALMETTO.*

And little flowers that humbly trail,  
Content to star unseen, unsought,  
'Neath grass to spread their milky-way,  
Remember what the palm once taught.

Florida,  
January, 1922.



## I.

An ancient house, thrice tiered its galleries  
 And sideways placed, its gardens tucked behind  
 High walls and iron gates, with taste designed,  
 Whence peeps are caught of palms and mossy trees;  
 The passion-flamed poinsettia at ease  
 With quiet pansy bloom, and jonquils lined  
 In stiff array, and rose that holds enshrined  
 Man's love, and English ivy trailing these.

Within the stately home such tales unfold  
 As flowers and weathered brick have writ without:  
 Adventure, proud success, war's agony,  
 And now the gentle calm that cloaks the old,  
 That stills the heart and gives a sense devout;  
 So, Charleston, thou reveal'st thyself to me.

## II.

I've wandered much through Charleston's cobbled streets  
 And found each corner's turn a fresh delight;  
 Old churches, with their memories, invite,  
 Their yards, grave-strewn, suggestive, calm retreats.  
 A court, with one-time slave annex, completes  
 The tale of life gone by, while gardens bright  
 Make known a Southern town; whose homes unite  
 This land with charm of English country seats.

Gay cavaliers imprint their rank and mirth  
 And courage proven well; sad \*Huguenots  
 Bequeath the virtue tried by terror's reign;  
 And Charleston folk are proud to trace their birth,  
 When forefathers such gracious gifts bestow;  
 Through changing times the days long past remain.

*\*Pronounced as in French.*

## III.

Now hark! those slow-drawled cries: "Fine chucks, pecans!"

"Crabs, crabs!—live crabs!" then, "Caba<sup>o</sup>. cabagees!"

"Yes ma-am! raw shrimps, yes ma-am." Still further pleas:  
 "Sweet potats. I-rish' potats!" "Banans."

And so each passing vendor stays and scans

Some friendly gate, whose ancient hinges wheeze;

There's soft-voiced bargaining 'neath spiky trees;

The turbaned cook and tempter—Africans.

Africans! nay, nay, Americans!

Their comeliness well suits this smiling clime;

Unwilling captives once, now citizens,

Whose hearts hold scarce a trace of savage clans;

If childlike still, so be! the hand of time

Is stretched past legacies to shape and cleanse.



Where cedars taper, there's a lake beyond;  
Once visioned from the hill, it beckons me;  
Soft-hazed with heat's grey, slumbrous canopy,  
Or bright with glittering dust of diamond,  
Or calmed when waning day wafts glances fond,  
Or freighted with the moon's pale poesy,  
Or blown till sobbing wavelets plash the lea,  
Or sunk in starless night like fabled pond.

Whate'er thy mood, O dream-kissed, mountain lake;  
It lingers still, my inmost self replies;  
But where's the song that plumbs the depth of thought?  
The lyre has lost its strings, the words forsake.  
What Art's so high; but Nature far outvies?  
In silent wonderment, God's voice is caught.

Beneath a weight of glistening snow each bough was bent,  
 Ice-glued the crystal cushions took strange form,  
 Like ghosts of prehistoric ferns whose palour blent  
 With earth and sky—the aftermath of storm.

The splattering rain had stayed its noisy, windblown course  
 And now the padding flakes had ceased to come.  
 A silent world that stilled all passion and remorse,  
 Heart-throbbings, grief, thoughts dull and burthensome.

And in the shanty's warmth a child lay stretched at rest,  
 As delicate as winter tracery.  
 A mother's eyes sought hers in anxious, tender quest,  
 Then turned with prayerful light toward western sky,

As though to wrest the secret of the universe  
 From silver drapery and peeps beyond,  
 As though one added effort would avail to pierce  
 The cloaking space, that something must respond.

A something e'en more wonderful than branchlets sprayed  
 In weird fantastic tire 'gainst heaven's deep;  
 And lo the mystic blush of evening gently rayed,  
 Wee cloudlets strayed from mist like flocks of sheep.

A wind! or was't a cry? The infant gasped for breath.  
 Belike soft bleating lambs had wakened her,  
 Belike the new-born soul was lured toward lanes of death,  
 The rosy flush had held a messenger.

Ah woe that Mother's heart as close she pressed her child;  
 Poor quivering nameless thing and O so frail  
 To penetrate that void—her thoughts grew fierce and wild.  
 An infant unbaptised, what fears assail?



An erie wind had risen; hark its shrilling cry!  
A flickering candle loosed deep shadows round  
That emphasized despair and cruel misery;  
The night had come, a sullen night that frowned.

And nought remained but burning love for help was far,  
Nor remedies; and grief had surged and ebbed.  
Again the Mother sought the sky and lo a star  
Had forced the clouds; it peered through boughs close-web-  
bed.

A bright and steadfast star that shot its friendly rays.  
"O Evening Star," the woman softly sobbed,  
"Be sponsor, shed celestial light through trackless haze."  
Asudden within her heart the answer throbbed,

Or winds had drifted: "Innocence." She hearkened, yes  
"Innocence," the Star had sanctioned it:  
Her baby's name! Upon its brow with fond caress  
And moistened touch the crossing sign was writ.

And Innocence looked up and smiled and caught the light  
That streamed from Evening Star and breathed a sigh  
That held content; a faint, sweet sigh that put to flight  
A mother's fear, that hushed anxiety.

And so the Babe was named and Innocence still cheered  
The lonely hut. A father heard the tale;  
How Evening Star had given aid as he had steered  
Through her his homeward course, obscured by gale.

And oft at sunset hour the parents sat and watched  
Receding day with grave expectancy,  
At times through lattice work of branches gaunt and notched,  
At times through leafy boughs that swathed the sky.



And when the rosy prelude, orchestra of tint,  
 Had dimmed; with deep, upwelling thought that strives  
 And gladsome awe, they faced the Evening Star; whose print  
 Was on their baby's brow, had marked their lives.

Then Innocence would laugh and stretch her hands and prayer  
 Half-breathed would rise that happiness remain.  
 The Evening Star flung beams of trust and through the air  
 Oft "Innocence" was voiced by winds again.

And Innocence grew tall as passed the years; but frail  
 At times she seemed, still more when strangers neared.  
 Ah then she'd seek some ferny haunt, 'mid flowerlets pale  
 She'd cower, nor knew what dreaded ill she feared.

A lily-maid in homespun garb of softest white,  
 Her winter coat of silky rabbit skin  
 Or ermine brought by Indian guide. Her cheeks as white  
 Unless the flush to evening skies akin.

And so time passed, the near-by settlement became  
 A village, then a boastful town and road  
 And searching railway broke the still and helped defame  
 Sequestered charm that God, through Grace, bestowed.

And Innocence would shrink from noise and close her eyes  
 When drifting smoke showed progress near, like plant  
 That's sensitive, that shrivels from man's touch and lies  
 So piteous with tremulous leaves aslant.

Too weak for woodland stroll, a hammock-couch was strung  
 'Neath lofty pines and there the young girl lay  
 And watched a robin's second brood, or chipmunk swung  
 On sapling bent, or butterflies at play.

One heavy night she stayed without, till Evening Star  
 Had blown a kiss, then dipped beneath some clouds.



A silence crept, scarce broke by owlet's hoot afar,  
While mists arose like ghosts in flaunting shrouds.

A rustling sound! but Innocence had dropped asleep;  
Within her hand a dangling lily stem,  
Whose cool, white bud unfolded tales that willows weep  
Where broad green leaves and starry petals gem,

Where waters pause from maddened rush to catch the calm  
That slips through foliage, to rest awhile  
In reedy bays as man fatigued might search for calm  
'Neath roofing church, immunity from guile.

A rustling sound, a stealthy tread, some broken twigs,  
And Guilt peeped low through scrubby briar growth,  
Then pushed his ruthless way, nor cared that tender sprigs  
Refused to bloom, once heard his muttered oath.

He plucked a burr that pulled his coat askew, then brushed  
Aside some pollen dust, some larva-thread;  
His outward garb so sleek and glossed, with step that hushed  
He fast approached—above dark clouds had spread;

But through the gloom, the lily bud was visible,  
The pallid curve of maiden's cheek; one stride,  
He stood befogged, a something stayed against his will.  
A something childlike, Godlike that defied.

For Innocence had wakened now and unabashed,  
Unharm'd she gazed at Guilt and pity lay  
Within her eyes, a pity blent with pain that lashed,  
Till Guilt one blinding moment felt its play.

He sank to earth beseeching what? He scarcely knew.  
Respite? was pardon past? He felt a touch  
As light as though from highest Heaven a Seraph blew  
A kiss that floated downwards bringing much.

*THE EVENING STAR.*

And on his heart he pressed the flower that Innocence  
Had proferred him, the lily bud that erst  
Had lain on waters cool and clear. It brought from thence  
Some mirrored truth that Nature's self had nursed.

But Innocence had breathed her last, one gasp, 'twas all,  
While Guilt affright, scarce pausing, fled; once more  
The Evening Star shone forth, winds sobbed a lingering call,  
The parents listened—useless to implore.

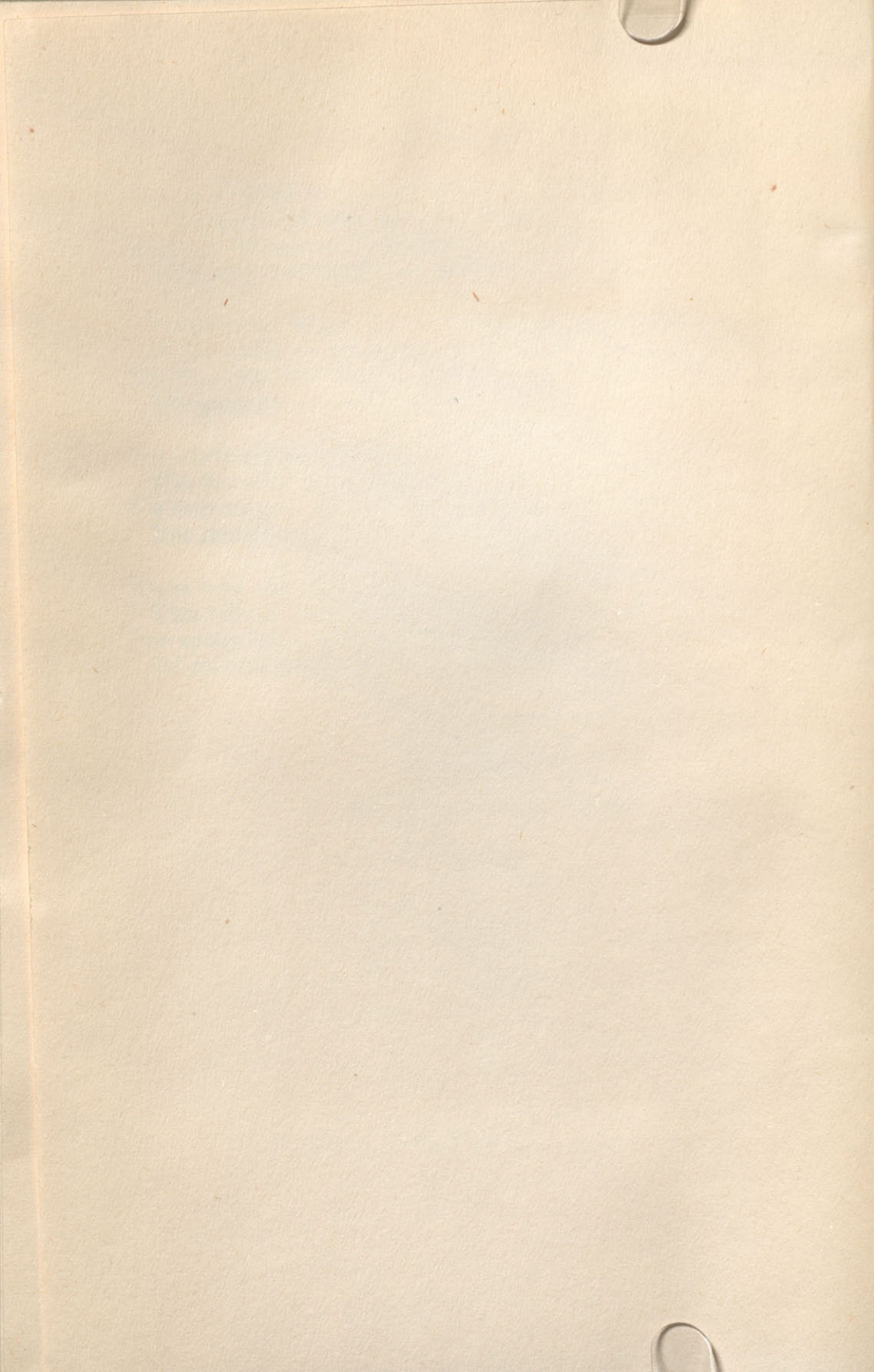
The grave awoke with crimson flowers; new birth attained,  
The Evening Star had guided faithfully;  
For ever since no grovelling soul has been so stained  
But moments come that give some chance to free.

'Twas long ago, in our old Province of Quebec,  
This tale at evenfall was whispered me.  
One spoke—and was that one alive? or but a speck  
Of spirit-world, of God's Eternity?

THE END.











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