

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

THE PICCOLOMINI

Friedrich Schiller
The Piccolomini

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The Piccolomini: A Play:

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The Piccolomini: A Play

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

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

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, Lieutenant-General.

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

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

ILLO, Field-Marshal, Wallenstein's Confidant.

ISOLANI, General of the Croats.

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

TIEFENBACH, |

DON MARADAS, | Generals under Wallenstein.

GOETZ, |

KOLATTO, |

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

VON QUESTENBERG, the War Commissioner, Imperial Envoy.

BAPTISTA SENI, an Astrologer.

DUCHESS OF FRIEDLAND, Wife of Wallenstein.

THEKLA, her Daughter, Princess of Friedland.

THE COUNTESS TERZRY, Sister of the Duchess.

A CORNET.

COLONELS and GENERALS (several).

PAGES and ATTENDANTS belonging to Wallenstein.

ATTENDANTS and HOBOISTS belonging to Terzky.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR to Count Terzky.

VALET DE CHAMBRE of Count Piccolomini.

ACT I

SCENE I

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

ILLO, with BUTLER and ISOLANI.

ILLO

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

ISOLANI

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

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

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

ILLO

Just in time to banquet
The illustrious company assembled here.

BUTLER

'Tis all alive! a stirring scene here!

ISOLANI

Ay!
The very churches are full of soldiers.

[Casts his eye round.

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

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

ILLO

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

BUTLER

Expect not Gallas.

ILLO (hesitating)

How so? Do you know —

ISOLANI (interrupting him)

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

ILLO

You'll see him yet ere evening. He conducts

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

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

³ Carinthia.

BUTLER

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

ISOLANI

Hm!

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

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

whom he leads a little on one side)

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

BUTLER

Because
He importuned me to remain behind.

ILLO (with warmth)

And you? You hold out firmly!

[Grasping his hand with affection.

Noble Butler!

BUTLER

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

ILLO

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

ISOLANI

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

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

BUTLER

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

ISOLANI

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

ILLO

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

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

ISOLANI (to ILLO)

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

ILLO

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

BUTLER

Ay!

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

ILLO

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

BUTLER (shocked and confused)

Know you aught then? You alarm me.

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

We should be ruined, every one of us!

ILLO

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

With the Lieutenant-General Piccolomini.

BUTLER (shaking his head significantly)

I fear we shall not go hence as we came.

SCENE II

Enter OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI and
QUESTENBERG.

OCTAVIO (still in the distance)

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

QUESTENBERG

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

OCTAVIO (approaching nearer)

Welcome, Count Isolani!

ISOLANI

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

OCTAVIO

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

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

to him.

These two the total sum – strength and despatch.

QUESTENBERG (to OCTAVIO)

And lo! betwixt them both, experienced prudence!

OCTAVIO (presenting QUESTENBERG to BUTLER and ISOLANI)

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

[Universal silence.]

ILLO (moving towards QUESTENBERG)

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

QUESTENBERG

Once before
I stood beside these colors.

ILLO

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

QUESTENBURG

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

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

ILLO

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

ISOLANI (steps up to them)

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

QUESTENBERG

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

ILLO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

ILLO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

ISOLANI

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

QUESTENBERG

And is the poorer by even so many subjects.

ISOLANI

Poh! we are all his subjects.

QUESTENBERG

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

ISOLANI

Sure!

Times are not yet so bad. Methinks I see

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

Good store of gold that still remains uncoined.

QUESTENBERG

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

ILLO

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

BUTLER

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

ISOLANI

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

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

QUESTENBERG

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

ILLO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

BUTLER

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

QUESTENBERG

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

ISOLANI

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

QUESTENBERG (with a sneer)

Count! this comparison you make, not I.

ILLO

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

QUESTENBERG (gravely)

You have taken liberty – it was not given you,

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

ILLO

Expect to find a restive steed in us.

QUESTENBERG

A better rider may be found to rule it.

ILLO

He only brooks the rider who has tamed him.

QUESTENBERG

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

ILLO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

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

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

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

QUESTENBERG

What's the short meaning of this long harangue?

BUTLER

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

OCTAVIO (interposing and addressing QUESTENBERG)

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

[Pointing to BUTLER.

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

ILLO

The sentries are saluting them: this signal

Announces the arrival of the duchess.

OCTAVIO (to QUESTENBERG)

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

ISOLANI (to ILLO)

Shall we not go in company to greet them?

ILLO

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

[To OCTAVIO.

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

[Exeunt all but QUESTENBERG and OCTAVIO.

SCENE III

QUESTENBERG and OCTAVIO.

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

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG (walking up and down in evident disquiet)

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

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

It is the visible ordinance of heaven.

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

You lead your son into the secret?

OCTAVIO

No!

QUESTENBERG

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

OCTAVIO

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

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

QUESTENBERG (anxiously)

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

OCTAVIO

I must venture it.
Hush! There he comes!

SCENE IV

MAX. PICCOLOMINI, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI,
QUESTENBERG.

MAX

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

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

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

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

OCTAVIO

How, Max.? Look closer at this visitor.

Attention, Max., an old friend merits – reverence

Belongs of right to the envoy of your sovereign.

MAX. (drily)

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

QUESTENBERG (seizing his hand)

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

[Taking the hands of both.

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

MAX

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

OCTAVIO (to MAX.)

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

MAX

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

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

QUESTENBERG

The army? Doubtless!

MAX

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

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

QUESTENBERG

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

MAX

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

QUESTENBERG

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

MAX

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

QUESTENBERG

The proof is yet to come.

MAX

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

Yourselves are only safe while ye're in shallows.

OCTAVIO (to QUESTENBERG)

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

MAX. (continuing)

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

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

Oh, hear your father, noble youth! hear him

Who is at once the hero and the man.

OCTAVIO

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

MAX

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

OCTAVIO

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

MAX

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

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

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

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

And so your journey has revealed this to you?

MAX

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

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

OCTAVIO

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

MAX

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

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

QUESTENBERG (apparently much affected)

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

MAX. (turning round to him quick and vehement)

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

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

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

[Exit

SCENE V

QUESTENBERG, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI.

QUESTENBERG

Alas! alas! and stands it so?

[Then in pressing and impatient tones.

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

OCTAVIO (recovering himself out of a deep study)

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

QUESTENBERG

What is it?

OCTAVIO

Curse on this journey!

QUESTENBERG

But why so? What is it?

OCTAVIO

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

[Draws QUESTENBERG on with him.

QUESTENBERG

What now? Where go you then?

OCTAVIO

To her herself.

QUESTENBERG

To —

OCTAVIO (interrupting him and correcting himself)

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

QUESTENBERG

Nay, but explain yourself.

OCTAVIO

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

QUESTENBERG

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

OCTAVIO (more collected)

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

[He leads QUESTENBERG off.]

ACT II

SCENE I

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

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

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

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

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

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

SENI (with gravity)

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

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

himself must let him have his own will.

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

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

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

SENI

Eleven is transgression; eleven oversteps
The ten commandments.

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

SENI

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

SECOND SERVANT. The foolish old coxcomb!

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

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

THIRD SERVANT. Off, they come.

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

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

SCENE II

WALLENSTEIN, DUCHESS.

WALLENSTEIN

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

DUCHESS

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

WALLENSTEIN

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

DUCHESS

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

WALLENSTEIN

And did they guess the choice which I had made?

DUCHESS

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

WALLENSTEIN

And you – what do you wish, Elizabeth?

DUCHESS

Your will, you know, was always mine.

WALLENSTEIN (after a pause)

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

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

Hide nothing from me. How were you received?

DUCHESS

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

WALLENSTEIN

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

DUCHESS

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

Count Harrach's noble daughter, should not so —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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