



FRANCIS DE SALES GLIEBE

My Lady Poverty

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

The Santa Barbara books and the 1913 Old Mission pageant

No securely identified portrait of Gliebe was located. These nonrepeating plates instead document the original books and the public pageant that joined his verse to Santa Barbara performance and early film culture.

MY LADY POVERTY

A Drama in Five Acts

BY

**FRANCIS DE SALES GLIEBE
O. F. M.**

**ST. ANTHONY COLLEGE
SANTA BARBARA, CAL.**

*Title page of the 1912 first edition of *My Lady Poverty*, published at St. Anthony College, Santa Barbara.*



Original color wrapper of The Planting of the Cross (1913).

SERRA DAY IN CALIFORNIA

1. THE PLANTING OF THE CROSS

The memory of the noble Franciscan Padre Junipero Serra, founder of the California Missions and erector of the first cross on Santa Barbara soil, was celebrated at the latter city with great solemnities and a magnificent program.

The exercises opened on the afternoon of Sunday, November 23,

lofty character of Father Serra and of the narrow, meddlesome spirit of the government officials of that time. For the benefit of those readers of the *Herald* who may not have seen a copy of the play, we will give a brief summary of it here.

It begins with a procession of set-



Memorial Cross of Fr. Serra, O.F.M.

when the students of St. Antony's College presented the pageant play of Fr. Francis de Sales Gliebe, O. F. M., entitled "The Planting of the Cross." The play was staged on the steps of the Old Mission, and was attended by a throng of several thousand persons, who received it so enthusiastically that the hope was generally expressed that the students would continue to produce the drama annually.

The play is truly what the author calls it and intended it to be—a sketch—a dramatic sketch of the

tlers, soldiers, and officers to the place where the cross is to be erected. There the land is blessed, the cross erected, and Padre Serra delivers a sermon. At the conclusion of the sermon, all join in singing the "Alabado," the Spanish "Te Deum." In the second scene hot words are exchanged by some laboring settlers and one of the carping idle soldiers, and blows are only averted by the entrance of Serra. The third scene is made up of a monologue in which Serra expresses to God his thanks for the work

The Franciscan Herald report on the Old Mission performance, January 1914. It describes an audience of several thousand.

BIOGRAPHY

Franciscan teacher, verse dramatist, pageant-maker, and western pastor

Smuka, Oakland, and the Franciscan vocation, 1882–1906

Francis de Sales Gliebe was born Adolph Gliebe on June 17, 1882, in Smuka, a Gottschee German village then within Austria-Hungary and now in the municipality of Kočevje, Slovenia. His parents were George Gliebe and Mary Kraker Gliebe. The family emigrated in 1889 and settled in Oakland, California, joining the substantial movement of Gottschee Germans to the United States. Religious vocation ran with unusual force through the household. Adolph's older brother Joseph became the Franciscan Julius Joseph Gliebe, O.F.M.; a younger brother, Leo, became Father Richard Gliebe, O.F.M., and died at only thirty-one. Adolph entered the Franciscans of the Saint Barbara Province, studied at Teutopolis, Illinois, and adopted the religious name Francis de Sales. A Santa Barbara County naturalization index records "Salesius Gliebe," born in Austria, admitted to citizenship on August 6, 1904—evidence that he was already connected with Santa Barbara before ordination. Francis and Julius were ordained on June 29, 1906.

Teacher and dramatist at Santa Barbara, 1906–1913

Gliebe returned to Santa Barbara and taught Greek and Latin at St. Anthony's Seminary, also called St. Anthony's Seraphic College, beside the Old Mission. That setting placed classical verse, Franciscan history, student performance, and the region's mission mythology within the same institutional life. His first known book, *My Lady Poverty: A Drama in Five Acts*, appeared from St. Anthony College in 1912. Written largely in blank verse, it follows the young Francis of Assisi from worldly ambition through the renunciation of his father's property and his espousal of poverty. A contemporary notice in *Out West* praised the verse as "of an unusually high order," while the *Franciscan Herald* reported in early 1914 that four editions had appeared in little more than a year. That later review understood the dramatic form chiefly as a literary vehicle rather than a practical stage script, though the book's dialogue, entrances, and shared lines reveal Gliebe's close attention to theatrical pacing.

The Serra bicentenary pageant and motion picture, 1913–1914

For the bicentenary of Junípero Serra's birth, Gliebe wrote *The Planting of the Cross at Santa Barbara by Padre Junipero Serra*, a five-scene pageant printed by the Morning Press in 1913. Students of St. Anthony's presented it on the Old Mission steps on November 23 before a crowd described by the *Franciscan Herald* as numbering several thousand. The pageant combines liturgical blessing, a sermon in blank verse, the Spanish "Alabado," comic conflict between settlers and soldiers, and a final confrontation between Serra and Governor Felipe de Neve. The same journal soon reported that Lorimer Johnston had filmed the production, with about fifty student performers and additional players associated with Santa Barbara's Flying A company. The film has not been located. The surviving pamphlet and contemporary accounts nevertheless document an unusually early meeting of Southern California religious pageantry, school theatre, tourism, and motion-picture culture.

Pastoral assignments across the West

Gliebe's later career was principally pastoral. Surviving biographical records place him briefly at St. Mary's in Phoenix and later at St. George in Seattle and St. Rose de Viterbo in Longview, Washington. In California he served at St. Joseph's in Los Angeles, St. Francis of Assisi in Sacramento, St. Anthony of Padua in San Francisco, and during the 1940s at St. Mary Immaculate in Lakeport. He also served in later years at St. Francis of Assisi in Spokane. These assignments carried him repeatedly through the western province rather than fixing him permanently in one city. A family obituary offers a small personal glimpse of this long ministry: in 1957 Francis and Julius together officiated at the Sacramento wedding of their niece Joanne Patricia Gliebe.

A later Franciscan drama and the Rizzoli connection

Gliebe returned to his central Franciscan subject in *The Princess Poverty: A Dramatic Sketch*, issued by St. Anthony Guild in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1937. No accessible copy was located for this edition, so it is recorded bibliographically but not reprinted. Another unexpected trace belongs to the visionary architecture of A. C. Rizzoli. A catalogue of Rizzoli's works identifies sheet 319 under Rizzoli's recurrent coinage "Rev. Francis Gliebe's Heavenly Inheritance Earchitecturally Expressed" and notes that, after Gliebe's death, Rizzoli also called it "Priestly Citadel." The work suggests that Gliebe's pastoral presence entered the private symbolic world of one of California's most singular self-taught artists; the identification remains an art-historical lead rather than evidence of literary collaboration.

Final years, death, and textual afterlife

Gliebe eventually returned to the friary at Santa Barbara. He died there on September 7, 1962, aged eighty, and was buried in the Mission Santa Barbara Cemetery, where his brothers Julius and Richard are also interred. Library of Congress authority data later assigned him the erroneous death year 1974, apparently conflating Francis with Julius, who died that year; contemporary and cemetery records establish 1962. Reprints have kept both early dramas nominally available, but they have usually reproduced defective recognition text or facsimiles without dramatic reconstruction. This edition resets the 1912 play from the original page images and adds the complete 1913 pageant, preserving Gliebe's stage directions, character cues, shared-line indents, prose passages, songs, and verse lineation.

EDITORIAL METHOD

Copy-texts, dramatic typography, and historical framing

Scope and order

The 1912 first edition of *My Lady Poverty* is the principal work and supplies the volume title. The complete 1913 *Planting of the Cross* follows as an appendix because it is Glibe's other recoverable Santa Barbara verse drama. The 1937 *Princess Poverty* is listed but not reprinted because no copy was located.

Original witnesses

Both plays were transcribed anew from their original page images. The scans' embedded text and two independent recognition passes served only as finding aids. Every doubtful word, cue, scene heading, stage direction, line ending, and indent was checked against the scan; running heads, folios, library stamps, and handwritten scan annotations are omitted. Obvious typographical slips are corrected only where the intended reading is certain.

Dramatic setting

Character cues are centered and stage directions are italicized. Blank verse retains its printed lineation and shared-line indentation. Prose speeches are reflowed within the wider page rather than forced into the narrow hanging wraps of the originals. Italics and songs are retained, and publication notes follow each complete work.

A corrected scene number

Act III of *My Lady Poverty* prints two consecutive headings as "Scene 3." A pencilled note in the source identifies the first as a printing error. The first heading is therefore normalized to Scene 2 and the following Francis-at-home scene remains Scene 3.

Historical context

The Planting of the Cross is preserved as a document of 1913 pageant and film culture, not as an endorsement of its colonial account of the California missions. The biography and source notes distinguish the pageant's celebratory Franciscan viewpoint from the histories of Indigenous dispossession and coercion that its dramatic frame leaves outside the scene.

MY LADY POVERTY

A drama in five acts · Santa Barbara, 1912

Persons Represented

Francis

Pietro Bernardon —his father

Giovanni Neandrin —his friend and confidant

Guid —Bishop of Assisi

Orland —a nobleman of Assisi

Bernard de Ventadou —a troubadour

Giuseppe D'Amore

Alberto Madre

Ambrogio Renieri

Eduardo Scarpello

Leone Sandali

Leone Bellino

Luigi Caprini

Angelo Cuniett —a poor little boy

Servant to Pietro Bernardone

A physician

Nightwatchman of Assisi

Attendants

Scene: Assisi and Spoleto.

ACT I

SCENE 1.—Assisi. *An open place before Francis' home. Enter Francis and Giovanni.*

Francis

O joy! out in the open once again.
Unfettered now, and freed from stubborn ills,
I'd fain, like merry warbling bird, hie far
Away into some shady forest glen,
And there amid bright nature's melodies
Pour out to God my sweetest song of praise.

Giovanni

A joy it is even to hear you tell
Your joy. But listen, Francis, a kindly message:
The knot of your devoted friends did bid
Me come to greet you with their heart's best wish,
And say, how all rejoice to know you well
In health again.

Francis

So constant and so kind!

Giovanni

They hope ere long to see you in their midst.
To lead, as you were wont, their sports and feasts.

Francis

My hope as well; may 't soon be realized.

Giovanni

'All seems of late,' they say, 'so dull without
The smile of Francis' cheerful face; we miss
His gracious ways, his large resourceful mind
And noble heart forgetting self; we lack
Our troubadour's sweet songs of country, home,
Religion, love, and glorious chivalry.

Francis

To all my comrades, most to you, Giovanni,
Sincerest thanks. Oh never come the time

When I unworthy prove of worthy friends!

Giovanni

It will not, Francis.

Francis

Heaven grant it!—Now.

I pray, go with me into yonder wood.

I yearn to drink in nature's freshness pure,

And sate my longing eyes with gazing rapt

Her witching charms. Oh! how 't will glad my heart

To range on hill and plain, to breathe the fields'

Rich perfume, taste the leaping mountain rill,

Roam through thick wilds and over sylvan paths,

And linger as of old beneath the dome

Of gently swaying boughs, amid the lisp

Of rustling leaves, and scent of flowering herbs

And trees. There shall my fancy freely play,

My mem'ry fill with tender recollections,

And overflow my soul with grateful joy

To view the riches God has poured

On Italy's pride, fair Umbria's land.

Giovanni

Yes, Francis,

Of nature you were ever passionate fond;

And now, when to your large receptive sense

Her beauties she will new unfold, your blood

Will course with fresh and healthful life; and we

Again shall have what these drear days so sore

We lacked, the light and warmth diffusing air

Of your companionship.—Come, let us go.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 2.—Assisi. A street. Enter Orlando and Giuseppe meeting.

Giuseppe

Thy haste, my noble lord!

Orlando

How canst thou ask?

Hast not yet heard there's war afoot? The south.

Apulia is the scene; the German nobles

Rise up in rebel arms against the Pope,
Our gracious Innocent.

Giuseppe

That's news indeed.

Orlando

I haste to enlist with Walter of Brienne,
Defender of the Holy Father's rights;
The 'Gentle Count' he's called, the bravest knight,
They say, in Christendom.

Giuseppe

Not one of ours.

I ween, of this knows aught.

Orlando

Not strange: the gay

And gaudy troop that Bernardone's son
Doth lead are champions bold in banquet halls,
And paladins at routs; theirs are battles
With dainty dishes, feasts are all their deeds,
Carousals their contests.—Fie on such knights!
Knights of the table long, not Table Round.'

Giuseppe

Mock us not, Lord Orlando. Young in years,
We still are young in knightly deeds. But wait,
And those whom now thou tauntst will startle yet
The Christian world with wondrous feats for God,
For Pope, and King, and country, truth and faith.

Orlando

Fair dream, Giuseppe; and still I would your dream
Might be fulfilled.

Giuseppe

It shall, I warrant you.

Have we not earnest of our future greatness?
Mark: walking with our captain not long since,
There met our crew a man of saintly fame,
Who stepped before us, doffed his mantle, spread
It out for Francis' tread, and solemn spoke
In prophet guise and tone: 'My deep respect

To him who will in time great wonders work,
Whom all the world will yet extol and love.'—
But pardon, I detain you.

Orlando

My blame 't is,
Not yours, that I delay; I'll leave at once.
Success to you and all your fellow knights.—
Farewell.

Giuseppe

Farewell, noble sir. Prosper God
Your enterprise.

[Exit Orlando.]

A hardy soldier this,
Adorned with every grace of knighthood. But—
A trifle too sedate for me and grave.
Give me the sprightly disposition of Francis,
Our jovial circle's gallant knight, Francis,
Whose worth we've learned of late by loss to th' full
To prize. O fortunate we! he'll soon be ours
Again.—But who are these? My friends?

[Enter Alberto, Ambrogio, Eduardo, Leone Sandali, Leone Bellino and Luigi.]

Well met,
Companions! You go to our captain's, do you not?

Alberto

We do. And your intent?

Giuseppe

The same. Long live
Our leader Francis!

ALL

Long live our leader Francis!

Leone Sandali

Oh what a joy, that he's restored to us
Whose absence was for all so keen a trial!

Luigi

Life seemed a sickly thing without the spice
Of's racy speech and animated song:

Darkened and chilled was our youth's day when sank
The sun of Francis' glowing eye, and fled
The warmth of Francis genial fellowship.

Leone Bellino

The good old times return; anon we'll have
The full delights of former days to enjoy.

Ambrogio

Ha! how we'll make the streets resound with song
And cheer, as we were wont, o' nights to crown
The festive day.

Giuseppe

Come, comrades, come. Long live
Our leader Francis!

ALL

Long live our leader Francis!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.—*A wood near Assisi. Enter Francis and Giovanni.*

Giovanni

Here will we sit and rest.—You seem fatigued.

Francis

And so indeed I am.

Giovanni

I wonder much,
Your long desired converse with nature done,
You wear an anxious look.

Francis

So much you read
E'en from my face? Giovanni, could you look
Into my heart, you'd see and wonder more.

Giovanni

What do you mean?

Francis

I know not whence, nor why,
But certain 't is, a change is come on me.

Giovanni

A change?

Francis

My love for nature 's vanished quite.

Giovanni

A foolish thought! Assuredly now 't is not
My Francis, but his sickness speaks. I know
Whence comes your troubled state: too much you hoped
From your yet feeble health. You do forget
That where the body 's ill, the soul can not
Unmixed delight in life, and prize to th' worth
The bounteous Maker's gifts. Believe it not:
Not vanished is your former love; asleep
A while it is, and with returning health
'T will wake again refreshed.

Francis

No, no, 't is gone

Giovanni

Oh, say not so! See farther than the cloud
That hoods your wonted temper's unflecked sky;
When you shall lead again your jovial band,
This darkling mood will pass, and your delight
Of old in God's fair world will big revive.

Francis

Pray, call it not a passing mood that's now
Upon me. That vain comfort I too spoke
To my distracted mind; but now more clear
I see. No, not my spirit dulled by pain,
Nor yet my senses dimmed by long and close
Confinement caused the change which you remark.

Giovanni

Why then what was the cause?

Francis

Ah! as I speak,

E'en now, my vision seems revisited
By those faint glimpses of celestial things
Which ever and anon in painful hours,

Like fleeting rays, did steal into my soul.

Giovanni

Your former self from slumber slow awaking.

Francis

Nay, dying rather to my former self,
And rising to a higher life. In truth,
I feel as I were born anew, and still
Travailed my spirit in the throes: Heaven draws
My strong reluctant will, and earth is loth
To leave my worldly mind.

Giovanni

A strife it is

'Tween good and evil health.

Francis

'Tis more, 't is more.

Giovanni

Your robust make the issue will decide,
And then, the struggle over, the battle won,
Your eye new-fired will keen again discern
The fair, and smile on all that God's bright sun
Doth smile upon.

Francis

Oh never more my eye

Shall look on things of earth as it was used!
An inner light, Giovanni, now to me
Discovers what before I never saw:
This world we see, and think so great and fair,
The thin and fragile shell it is, no more,
Of a far greater, fairer world; this orb
Of ours, so seeming large and firm, is yet
In truth as frail and small as th' wondering orb
That full takes in the universe: it waits
But for the Almighty's touch to burst ablaze
Into immortal life and robe itself
In endless glory. All nature 's but a glass
Which dim reflects the light of a divine
Kingdom, that everlasting realm above,

Whose sun the Sun of Justice is, whose light
The Brightness of Eternal Light.—O woe!
That I so long this light have shunned, alas!
Have been so utter blind as not to look
Beyond the passing pageant, and to pierce
The veil that hides from view what lies behind.
Fool that I was, my hungry soul so long
To feed with such unsound, yea baneful food.
The straw and husks of this world's fleeting goods!

Giovanni

O Francis! leave these sad depressing thoughts.
If much you suffer them to hold the mind
You will renew your illness, not regain
Your former health.

Francis

In sorrow, not in gloom
I speak 't: I fear I have not known myself
Till now. My youth is gone, a sad record
Of wasted time.—To've spent life's golden days
In empty pleasures, idle dreams!

Giovanni

No cause

Have you to pine: never from virtue's path
You've strayed, no deed of shame your honor smirched,
Nay, not a word that e'en to holy ears
Might give offense has ever 'scaped your lips.
Your hand was always open to the poor,
Your heart to the distressed, your hand and heart
Belonged to all that called you friend or foe.

Francis

Your friendly eye more goodness in me sees
Than I'm possessor of, and your kind love
Keeps from discernment faults my own self-love
Has long kept undescried. At last less dark
Within my soul it grows, and I begin
To see, another way I must pursue
Than I have hither walked. I seem to hear
A sweet voice whispering soft: 'Come, follow me.'

Oh would that He who draws with mighty cords
Made me as generous now in following Him,
As I was given long to chase and serve
This failing world!

[Enter Angelo.]

Angelo

Oh there is Francis, good master Francis! Good morning, master Francis.

Francis

God's blessing on you, boy.

Angelo

O Francis! are you well again? I am so glad to see you. And how glad father will be, when I tell him that I saw you! But Francis, kind master Francis, are you really well? Tell me.

Francis

As well, my boy, as I can well expect. And how does my little friend Angelo?

Angelo

I am always well. But oh, how much I missed you! Every day I waited and waited, but you would not come.

Francis

Your good old father, and your neighbors, how do they all?

Angelo

They are all so sad that you are sick.—This morning, before I left to fetch wild berries in these woods, my father said how hard it was that good master Francis stayed away so long. But now you'll come again to visit us, won't you, dear Francis? Tell me that you will.

Francis

I will, my boy, I will.

Angelo

Oh, thank you, thank you! I will run at once to bring the joyful news to father. Goodbye, master Francis.

[Exit.]

Francis

A lovely flower, Giovanni, out of God's

Own garden, sent into this desert world
To spread the perfume of a guileless life,
And shame the greed of a luxurious race.
Content in humble means, this winsome child
Thanks God's kind Providence e'en for a cold
And lowly hearth.

Giovanni

A bright and charming lad
This boy indeed.

Francis

A kingly lot is his,
Nor his alone, but too the lot of all
Who meekly, smilingly bear up the yoke
Of pressing poverty. For all our ease
And merriment, doth not a secret pain
And weariness rankle our in'most heart?
Not so with those who must forever strive
With want: the heavy weight of life on them
Doth lighter lie than us who never need.
In sooth, the peace and rest which all our lives
We mortals toil to find, more oft in hut
Than palace dwells.—There must be something then
In poverty that's hid away within
A rugged shell, entreaured far too deep
For this wise melancholy world to see.
Yet sweetness has and power to spell and bless.

Giovanni

Your words ring true; you reason well. But yet,
I fear, you overleap the Master's word:
'More blessed 't is to give than to receive.'
Are you not blessed to have given alms
So oft and so profusely to Christ's poor?

Francis

'More blessed 't is to give than to receive'—
There is some comfort in the thought: 'tis true,
I've given to the poor, nay never heard
A cry of need but I was inly touched,
And moved to lavish richest gifts; but much,

Alas! too much, I've also given to self,
And little, oh how little! to my God.
Have I not humored my fastidious tastes
With every blandishment, apparelled rich
In flowing robes, spending whole nights in wild
And wanton revelries? In fine, Giovanni,
I've loved the poor, but loved not to be poor
Myself.

Giovanni

You are too strict a judge. Though free
In mirth, and liberal to your friends, no less,
Yea more, you've been munificent to God,
Ministering so largely to His poor.
Is not this praise enough? Who does as much?
Oh why not, Francis, be content to keep
The godly path you have so nobly trod?

Francis

God calls to loftier heights: no longer may
I tarry here in listlessness and play
Away my life.

Giovanni

Do you recall those words
You spoke when in Perugia we did pine
A dreary year's captivity, and sad
We let our spirits droop, the while you laughed
And kept up cheer? 'You look amazed at me,'
You said, 'and wonder that so brave I bear
Our fortune; some day you will marvel more,
When all the world will worship me.' Francis,
Now verify your words, lead on the band
Of your admiring friends, and win renown
That never dies.

Lead on! they'll follow you
To any enterprise that's worth the name
Of chivalry.

Francis

A dream of long ago
You reawaken, one of many visions

That filled my youthful fantasy; of knights
And talismans and famed chivalric deeds,
All that the songs of troubadours and tales
Of bards so fascinating celebrate,
And in my childhood days my mother would
So often sing and tell to me. But these
Are fairy sights fit for romantic youth,
Itself so fairy-like. 'Tis time I left
The shadowy realm of romance to go forth
And wrestle with life's grim realities.
'Tis time to do, to live: dreams are but dreams,
And songs but songs, and words and fancies air
Without the deeds. Some great thing I must do
For God;—and soon I will. What it shall be
I know not yet, but this I know: A knight
Of Heaven's King I'll be, a soldier of Christ,
And champion of His Holy Cross. To Him
I swear eternal fealty.

Giovanni

Not words

Of sick or petulant moodiness are these,
I know it now, but God inspired thoughts.
Too bold and worldly wise if I have spoken,
Your pardon, dearest Francis. Heaven forbid,
I should make bold to step between your soul
And God! Only I pray: whate'er may chance,
May you be spared to us, and most to me,
Who love you as my very soul.

Francis

Place we,

Giovanni, ourselves, our destiny entire
In God's paternal care. His Providence
Will guide all safe, and bring to happy end
Whate'er His unsearched Wisdom has ordained.
Come now, my father will be seeking me,
And mother will grow anxious for her son.
'T've said, now I begin; the Most High God
Hath wrought this change.'

[Exeunt.]

ACT II

SCENE 1.—*Outskirts of Assisi. Enter Giuseppe, Alberto, Ambrogio, Eduardo, Leone Sandali, Leone Bellino, Luigi: last of all Bernard de Ventadour between Giovanni and Francis.*

Giovanni

Here then we've come to our city's utmost bounds.
And here, alack! the sad word must be spoken:
Our noble guest from fair Provence, esteemed
Signor Bernard de Ventadour, mid grief
We now bid you a kind farewell, and wish
You godspeed on the way.

Bernard

Most hearty thanks,
My gracious hosts. Rejoicing in the thought
Of home, regret still steals into my heart
That I must leave your sunny land, and lose
The excellent friends who know to prize and love
The singer's art. On all my tours, I vouch,
'Such ardent patrons I've not found as you
Of high and sacred minstrelsy.

Giovanni

Accept,
Sweet bard, as keepsake of your sojourn here
Our parting tokens of regard and love:
May God's protecting hand bring you unharmed
To lovely France. And may that Prince of th' court
Of heaven, who tracks the pious traveller's ways,
In future years again direct your thoughts
And steps to azure Italy, with harp
And song to cheer the feasts of your attached
And deeply grateful friends.

Bernard

May Angel hands take up your eager hope,
And carry aloft your fervent prayer e'en up
To heaven's throne.—Ah, heaven! the home of song
And harmony, where not the faltering tones

Of mortal bards are heard, but constant strains
Of Angel choirs, the immortal minstrel hosts
Chanting for aye in rapturous hymns of praise
The unveiled glory of their deathless King.
Heaven! where mingle with the angelic lays
The paeans of triumphant Martyr bands,
And psalms and canticles and jubilant songs
Of Saints, accompanied still by sweetest notes
Of hundred thousand thousand harps of gold:
Till all the wide celestial realm resounds
With ever growing, never waning swells
Of infinite music, whose echoes roll out
Into the boundless round of space, and thence
Reverberating gather all before
The Almighty's crystal throne, and wondrous blend
To one concordant voice of praise, and one
Sublime harmonic of created sound
And music of the Eternal Years.—
O gentle friends, kind hearts, oh may we there,
If not again on earth, meet all to sing
That endless song in endless joy! Ah me!
The thought of that supernal home my heart
Doth melt; my tears begin to flow, and more
I'm drawn to look upon its sweet, though faint
And distant type, my stay and rest below,
My earthly home. Then let me haste to part.
So Heaven will, I'll come to you again.
Adieu, my friends, adieu!

ALL

Adieu, Adieu!

[Exit Bernard.]

Francis

Attend bright Angel throngs the parting bard,
And lightsome music wing his wandering steps
Whose strains have oft revived the failing strength,
And smoothed the weary pilgrim's rugged path.
How glowed his melting words as flushed he told
Harmoniously our Home's enchanting music!
And how his face, like blushing setting sun,

Shed kindred rays upon our mien, when far,
Like seer, he looked beyond our earthly abode!
O loving hearts! if 't set our souls on fire
Merely to hear the singer tell of heaven,
The entrancing, endless music there, what then
Will 't be when we ourselves, changed, glorified,
Shall be incorporate to that blessed choir
Of ceaseless singing Saints and Angel hosts!
That prize, my comrades, let us ever seek,
That treasure we must find.

Giovanni

Yes, Francis, yes;
With God above to illumine our path, and you
Our valiant leader here, we'll seek and find.

Giuseppe

Well said, Giovanni. Comrades all, the bard
From France is gone, but look! have we not here
Our own Assisi's tuneful bard? Is not
Our Francis ours again? and always ours?
His rich attire proclaims the blithesome youth
Of former days, his smiling face reveals
The joy of 's heart to be with us again.
All hail to our captain! Long live Francis!

ALL

All hail to our captain! Long live Francis!

Francis

Companions, this show of loyal love
Affects my joyful heart with growing joy:
A pleasure, sure, it is to see my friends
Again, and know them constant as of old;
But I have still a further cause of joy
Which you yet know not of.

Giuseppe

Then quickly tell 't.
That with you we may all rejoice.

Alberto

Yes, do:

Imparted joy, you're 'ware, increases joy.

Luigi

Indeed, they say divided joy is twice
A joy.

Ambrogio

Give up the secret, Francis.

Francis

Then hear:

I have the assurance now that I'll become
A mighty prince.

Alberto

Why, that you are e'en now.

Ambrogio

Who would deny 't? Pray, are you not our prince?

Eduardo

And prince of all Assisi's youth?

Giuseppe

All hail

To our noble prince!

ALL

All hail to our noble prince!

Francis

Nay listen! In yesternight's repose I had
A dream, a vision fair: I saw a palace
Spacious, exalted placed on pompous heights,
Encompassed round by nature's fullest wealth,
A great, majestic hall, whose vast spread rooms
And rich decked walls with flashing arms and shields
Of glittering gold were all o'erhung.

Luigi

Ah! that's

The temple of glory, Francis, where you'll shine
Among the brightest stars of warrior fame.

Francis

On every shield there gleamed embossed a cross

Of brilliant hue, which blazoned seemed in sooth
By master hand of heraldry.

Luigi

The cross
Of Christian knighthood, the brave and virtuous knight's
Most gloried blazonry.

Francis

Now by your leave,—
Amid this sumptuous splendor then appeared
A still more charming beauteous sight, the pearl
And crown, methought, of all the castle's treasures:
A lady fair it was, transporting fair,
Her graceful form swathed round in dazzling light;
In bridal robes she was arrayed: her gown
Of silk was sapphire deep: a spotless white
Her veil and chaplet showed; of ruby stones
Her necklace strung, her ring and bracelets wrought
Of clearest gold. And so surpassing sweet
A smile inwreathed her lovely face, that thoughts
Of earthly loves fled all my spellbound mind,
And from my mem'ry dimmed and paled away
All forms of beauty else and loveliness.

Giuseppe

A most auspicious sight! foretokening plain
Our prince's coming bliss.

Luigi

A dream of fair
Import indeed! The lady of your heart.
Francis, you saw, her whom in time you'll woo
And win and make your princess.

Giuseppe

Hail to our noble prince and his fair princess!

ALL

Hail to our noble prince and his fair princess!

Francis

As lost in wonderment I stood, and gazed
Upon these marvels, I heard a voice from heaven:

‘Thine, Francis, are all these, they’re destined all
For thee and for thy knights.’

Giuseppe

Bravo! bravo!

Luigi

O most propitious words! My comrades, say,
Did you remark: ‘for thee they’re destined all,
For thee and for thy knights’? Who are these knights
But Francis’ group?

Giuseppe

Yes, Francis shall be king,
His courtiers we. Our Arthur will be be,
And we his paladins, his loyal knights,
Knights of the Table Round.

ALL

Bravo! bravo!

Giuseppe

Long live our king! Long live his loyal knights!

ALL

Long live our king! Long live his loyal knights!

Francis

Hold, friends! temper your fervor awhile. I fear,
When I have done, your zeal will cool, your hope
Will sink; I’ve told you but the vision yet,
Not what did go before ’t; still that it is
Which seals the call as truly from above.

Luigi

And what is that?

Giuseppe

Speak further, Francis.

Francis

Hear:

’Twas yesterday that I, unwitnessed save
By one, most firmly did resolve to leave
My worldly course, and lead a godlier life;

And, so 't please God, to accomplish some great deed
For my Creator. This purpose was still warm
Within my breast, when some good Angel sent
The noble Lord Orlando's squire to me, who informed
That on the following day his master meant
To leave Assisi for a holy war.
The news came like a flash upon my soul:
'The finger of God!' stammered my beating heart,
'The call to noble deeds!' Straightway I went
To enlist, and Heaven the step did quick and plain
Approve by giving me that night the vision
To see on which I've just discoursed.—Companions,
I've now delivered all; you know God's will,
You know too my resolve: I leave to-night.

ALL

To-night!

Francis

It is decreed: to-night.

Giuseppe

Impossible!

Leone Sandali

To war again?

Ambrogio

A dream!

Alberto

It cannot be!

Giuseppe

It shall not be!

Francis

Heaven calls; I cannot choose.

Giovanni

'T is time that I did speak. My comrades, know
So long I've held my peace, because to me
'T was no surprise what so astonished you.
I was the witness of that wondrous change;
And I protest, not blind impulse it was

Led Francis on, but Heaven's kindly light;
His conscience, not a whim or shifty mood
Inspired his high resolve: contend not then
With God's designs. Rather, dear comrades, cast
We a look beyond the present grief, and see
The future looming up with prosperous head:
Our leader knighted, glory-dight, returned,
To lead us up the heights which he himself
Has reached.

Giuseppe

For all you say, I like it not.

Ambrogio

Nor I.

Alberto

Nor I.

Luigi

Who could? Yet must we fear
To hinder Heaven's appointed course.

Leone Sandali

Well urged;

'Tis not for us to rule or reason here,
Our part it is humbly to take what God
Decrees.

Giuseppe

I'll say no more.—

Giovanni

Companions,

Raise we our spirits; and, ere our Francis parts,
Let's join to show him to the last our true
Undying devotion: We'll all escort him home,
And grace tonight his leave with kindest wishes.
Not long the night that clasps the drowsy day
Doth hold the eager morn in its embrace;
And through each night's dark pall bright peers
At length the sleepless eve of th' rising sun.
Come, friends.—

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 2.—Assisi. Before Bernardone's house. Enter Bernardone and a servant.

Bernardone

You're sure in last night's din and haste my son
Did nothing leave behind which he might lack?

Servant

I've searched all his apartments, as you bade,
And have found nothing.

Bernardone

'T was well done.

Servant

You may,
Good master be at ease. Your son set forth
Not well provided only, but equipped
Most splendidly.

Bernardone

I am assured.

Why, like
A practiced horseman on his mettled steed
He sat, a very knight your excellent son
Did seem. From Francis resolute mien, thought,
The smile of thousand ancient victories shone.

Bernardone

'Tis well: go now, and do what waits your service.

[Exit servant.]

Now, when he's gone, I feel regret that not
More strongly I opposed.—Strange, strange, how quick
I was prevailed upon to give my loth
Consent. Well, wails are no avails, therefore
I will forbear to think what might have been,
And think alone on what will be, the health
Of Francis full restored, and that dark cloud
Removed of strained religious zeal, which late
Obscured his temper's cheerful sun.

[Enter Giovanni.]

Giovanni

Good morrow, Bernardone!

Bernardone

Good morrow, Giovanni!

About so early?

Giovanni

Ah, refreshing sleep
And vexing thoughts are deadly foes. The thought
Of Francis haunted me all night, and kept
Far off reposeful slumber; the morning hour
Came sluggish on and found me still awake;
So I arose betimes, and mean today
To leave all serious work and ease my mind
With light converse and listless sauntering.

Bernardone

A prudent course.—To my rest, too, this thing
Disquiet brought. And now, as I review
The past night's scene, my pride is stung to think
That I was overruled. A blank refusal
My answer should have been. Still, now 't is done.—
The first warm blaze will soon have spent itself,
And Francis will return a cooler youth,
A wiser man.

Giovanni

I am not with you there;
Your son's is not a fickle nature blown
About by freaks and whimseys.

Bernardone

Why, Giovanni,
What was it but a freakish impulse drove
Him hence?

Giovanni

Nay, judge not rash; why may't not be
A higher impulse led him on, the motion
Of grace, the Spirit of God?

Bernardone

Youth's giddiness

It was, so oft mistaking its own blind
Enthusiasm for God's inspiration.—
At all events I say: let him not foil
My plans with him. 'bove all let him not bring
Disgrace upon my house.

Giovanni

That I will vouch
For him; he's far too good to act ignobly.
Too well his duty Francis knows to fail
In aught he owes his family's unstained honor.

Bernardone

His grieved mother's tender heart will claim
Many a sigh and tear, ere he comes back.

Giovanni

The meek and gentle Pica, virtuous lady,
Full worthy mother of so good a son,
Knows too to reconcile her will to Heaven.

Bernardone

You're more devout than wise, Giovanni.—
Come, rest awhile within.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.—*Spoleto. A room in an inn. Enter Orlando and a physician,*

Orlando

Sad, doctor, sad; the fever none abated?

Physician

Not so as to warrant his leaving here today.

Orlando

Unfortunate! only ten short leagues advanced,
And this mishap befalls. Howbeit, I may
Not tarry. I pray you, doctor, tend him well;
Here's that will pay for all.

[*Giving money.*]

And when his strength
Is far enough regained to leave this place,
Tell him he's free to follow me, or go
To Assisi back till better health attend

His eager and courageous soul—Farewell.

Physician

Farewell, my noble lord.

[Exeunt severally.]

[Enter Francis.]

Francis

Who says that man is master of his fate?—
But yesterday it was I fancied fond
Myself, my firm unbending will to enter
Upon a life of Christian knighthood, shaped
In germ, and fixed forever a whole career
Of glorious deeds. But ah! how soon, how soon
I'm undeceived! how soon, how soon my light
And airy castle, toppled, crumbled, vanished!
Today I've manifest, yea palpable proof,
Not man, but God it is that forms and moulds
And wields man's aims and ends.—
My hopes, but late so fresh with glistening dew
Of youthful life, within a few hours' space
Are withered waste; my plans, yet warm with heat
Of first conception, are crossed and quenched before
They've well begun to live. God's ways, in truth,
Are not our ways; and do we what we will,
'Tis He that marks our paths and guides our steps.—
O dread dismaying change! Behold me now:
Struck down with fever here; by strange hands served;
Uncertain what good Heaven intends with me,
But certain soon to meet the staring looks,
The silent scorn, perhaps the loud reproach
Of those I left with tearless eye, and will
(As they did call 't) of iron stubbornness.
But God above doth know, not sinful pride
It was in me, or peevish wilfulness,
That I did leave what was so dear to me.
My worldly sense did worldly judge: that vision
Of castle, trophies, arms and shining shields,
I know it now, I wholly misconstrued.
The heavenly voice last night, the same I know,
That spoke before, how loving it did chide!

‘Why, Francis, dost abandon God, the Rich
And Master, for the poor and servant, man?
‘What is it, Lord, thou ‘It have me do?’ I cried.
‘Return,’ the answer came, ‘to Assisi, there
It shall be told thee, child! too human you
Interpret things divine: not man, but I
Your dream will in my own good time accomplish.’ —
Thus am I plainly bid retrace my steps,
But dark, uncertain left what will now be
My changed career. Yet I’ll not flag, but sue
For light and strength, and meanwhile blind obey.
No, not to war in far Apulia I’ll go,
But home, to my own native city, taunts
And sneers though I must look to encounter.
What is the gain, my soul, of earthly fame?
Nay, what’s the loss of name, however great,
So thou but win the sovereign boon: to obey
The call of Him whose eye unerring sees
The intrinsic worth of man, no jot too large
Nor yet too small, in spite of fame and name
Bestowed by fallible lips or taken again
By slanderous mouths? —
O God, O God, that I did know my course!
Yet patience, patience, fretful, chafing heart!
Better than peace is struggling righteousness;
With God in blackest gloom to walk is light
Enough. Yes, light of God, be thou a lamp
To my weak stumbling feet. Oh never, never,
Thou Shaper of my being and life, let me
Thy holy will forestall again, or thwart
In aught Thy wisdom, which from end to end
Doth mighty reach, and all things sweet ordain!
‘My heart is ready, O God! my heart is ready.
Show me, O Lord! Thy ways, teach me Thy paths;
Direct me in Thy truth, instruct me, Lord!
My Saviour art Thou and my God.

[Exit.]

ACT III

SCENE 1.—*Assisi. A street. Enter Giuseppe. Alberto. Eduardo. Leone Sandali, Leone Bellino, and Luigi.*

Giuseppe

I do assure you more I feel than show.
But tell me, friends, how you do bear the loss.

Leone Sandali

Ah. Giuseppe! 't is the third day now
He's gone from us, and the bereavement smarts
As 't were but one hour old.

Eduardo

I've hardly slept
Since that unlucky night.

Alberto

Try how I will
To bend and fix my mind on other things,
My thoughts will stubborn still revert to him.

Luigi

It is but natural, though wise 't is not,
To give the mem'ry scope, and linger much
On what's past remedy.

Alberto

Cold comfort this,
Be it ever so wise.

[Enter Ambrogio.]

Ambrogio

Good morrow, comrades. News!

Giuseppe

What news, Ambrogio?

Leone Sandali

Something, I hope,
Concerning Francis.

Ambrogio

A report is come

To Bernardone's ear, that ere ten leagues
From here advanced, his son fell grievous ill,
And at Spoleto lies detained.

Giuseppe

Detained?

Just what I feared. Blind, senseless haste!

Alberto

But the report is true, Ambrogio, is 't?

Ambrogio

I have it from Giovanni, who's as like
In this as anyone to know the truth.

Leone Bellino

Relapse, I fear, our Francis has sustained.

Leone Sandali

No wonder 't is; he was not whole restored
When he did leave.

Giuseppe

If this be found confirmed,

The father will recall the son; and we
From a mischance will draw a greater good.

Ambrogio

My very thought, Giuseppe; Heaven smiles
E'en while it frowns; the cloudlet soon will pass,
And we will be the happier for the eclipse.
Away therefore with cares and gloomy thoughts!
Let me see, comrades, is 't not near the time
To hold our regular feast?

Giuseppe

'Tis very near.

Ambrogio

Why, then let's straight arrange.

Giuseppe

What say you all?

ALL

Agreed.

Giuseppe

Where shall it be?

Ambrogio

I'll take the honor;

At my house.

Giuseppe

And the time?

Ambrogio

Tomorrow night.

Giuseppe

Agreed?

ALL

Agreed.

Ambrogio

Good; I'll expect you all.

Till then I'll leave you. I have a charge to fill

Which cries dispatch: that done, my time will serve

The needful preparations for the feast.

[*Exit.*]

Giuseppe

I burn to know if this report be true,

And if it be, what Pietro means to do

In this emergency. Come, friends, with me;

'T will humor Bernardone much to see,

We're thoughtful of his son in time of need

No less than days of health.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.—Assisi. Another street. Enter Leone Bellino and Angelo meeting.

Angelo

Good evening, master Leone; have you heard

The news? Oh, happy, happy news!

Leone

No, boy,

Not if they're so happy.

Angelo

They are, Leone,

And true. Just listen: as I was coming back
From rambling in the woods I met a man,
A good and honest man, who would not lie,
I'm sure he would not, he's my father's friend,
He said good master Francis is returned;
Right by his house, he said, did Francis pass.

Leone

Thank God! my torturing dread was but vain fear.

Angelo

Now, is not this good news and true?

Leone

Indeed,

My boy, indeed. And will you, Angelo,
If you do meet my friends, tell them these news?

Angelo

I will.—Oh, Francis back! I long to see
Kind master Francis; I will tell him never
Again to go away to horrid war,
Where men do fight and lose their lives; with us,
Who love him, always shall our Francis stay.—
Good bye, master Leone.

Leone

Goodbye.

[Exit Angelo.]

How fortunate the illness is not grave!
Already he returns; and opportune
He comes in mirth to drown discomfiture.
Ambrogio I must quick of this inform,
And he'll give over the lead of our great feast
To Francis. Giovanni we will send
To urge our plea; his prayers will prevail.—
Oh, good is God! who visits us with trials

To give us after greater joy.

[Exit.]

SCENE 3.—Assisi. Francis' home. Enter Francis.

Francis

At home again! And now who knows but God
What lies before me? Who can say what time
'T will please good Heaven to remove the veil?
Oh! not the gibes of sharp-tongued men I fear,
Or jests of snickering friends; these are but trifles.
To encounter human scorn I'm full prepared.
Yea, all the world I feel as I could meet
And bold defy; but oh the uncertainty
Of what's to come! this, this my spirit glooms.
Yet hold! did I not docile patience vow?
Did I not solemn pledge, e'en though my way
Through groping darkness lie, to follow Him
Whose palm records my very name, 'my Light,
My Safety, and Protector of my life'?—
Supporter of the weak, oh bear me up!
Director of the erring, lead me on!
Thou that dwellest in unapproachable light,
Ye: deignst with simple souls to hold commune.
And understanding givest to little ones,
Bend loving down to Thy poor faltering wight!
O sovereign Parent of my breath and life,
Make me a child in guileless simpleness,
A babe in humble lowliness! 'My heart,
O God! to Thy attested words incline;
My supplication come before Thy face,
Give knowledge, Lord! according to Thy word.'

[Kneels.]

[Enter Giovanni.]

Giovanni

Oh welcome, dearest Francis! welcome home!

Francis

[Rising.]

Giovanni! Blessings on thee, friend!

Giovanni

How slow,
My Francis, oh how tedious slow these days
Did drag along! A void in this sad breast
Your absence made which nothing, so I felt,
In all this world could ever fill, and lo!
You come yourself to fill the void. O joy!
To enfold thee again with brother love.

Francis

I know
The laving and devoted heart that beats
In my Giovanni's breast; but tell me now,
Are you not much surprised to find me here?

Giovanni

Not so surprised, good Francis, as o'erjoyed;
The rumor did at first astonish me,
And disinclined I was to credit it,
But when my comrades the report confirmed,
And urged me from them all to greet you well,
With hurried steps, which love and gladness winged
More than surprise, I hither sped to bring
Our dues of love and friendship.

Francis

My best thanks

Giovanni

Pardon me, Francis, indifferent if I seem
To your reverse: pity gives way to joy.

Francis

Be calm, Giovanni; and know I'm not so sad
As you would intimate. Deep in my heart,
In spite of balks and blows without, there bides
A soothing solace: Heaven's will is done.
You know to God's service I have myself
Surrendered whole, how then should I complain?
He called me back, he too will trace my course.
It not as soldier, squire or gallant knight,
As servant of his favored children then,
The lepers and the poor, I'll serve my King.

Giovanni

Full clear, I know, before the all-seeing Eye
You stand; and this your townsmen recognize.
Though your return is in the mouth of all,
No word is heard that breathes the faintest reproach.

Francis

I've learned the praise and blame of men to deem
As smoke. Can feeble words of human tongue
Conduce one tittle to my inner worth,
Or lessen one hair's breadth my real desert?
Sure, man is what he is in Heaven's sight.

Giovanni

That none of your comrades aught finds in you
To chide, here have you proof: in their behalf
I'm come to offer you the leadership
In their great feast tomorrow at Ambrogio's.

Francis

It must not be. Have you forgotten, friend,
The break between the world and my changed mind?
I've lost all taste for pomp and vain display,
No relish have I left for feasts and games;
I pray you ply not your petition.

Giovanni

And yet

I must. Do bear with me, if harsh I seem
To press my entreaty so. Reflect, dear friend,
No wrong it is to share in harmless mirth,
Nay, virtue 't is to joy with the rejoicing.
Do not your comrades with full cause rejoice?
And will your kind heart now deny them that
Which it can blameless, nay, religious give?
Oh say you'll come!—for my sake, if not theirs;—
This one time yet,—just once,—will you?—do say,
Good Francis, you accept.

Francis

You have prevailed,

Giovanni; I accept: not to appear
Uncivil or unkind to your companions,

And for your sake I'll come.

Giovanni

'Tis nobly spoken;

An echo from my Francis' magnanimous spirit.

Directly I must break this joyous news

To our expecting friends.—We'll meet again

Tomorrow at Ambrogio's; till then be you

In Heaven's loving care. Good night.

Francis

Good night.

[Exit Giovanni.]

Pardon, O Lord! this worm who dares to think

Thy spirit placed the yielding words upon

His lips. A clear presentiment lingers still

Within my mind, tomorrow's feast the end

Of all such empty amusements marks for me.

I feel I've made my last, my very last

Concession to this pleasure-seeking world.—

Myself the expenses of the feast will bear,

And labor former banquets all to outdo

In splendid dress and costly meats and wines,

And then—farewell, elaborate vanities!

Farewell, ye solemn trifles, golden toils,

All treacherous gloss of glory, fame, renown!

'Conduct me, Lord, upon Thy ways; I'll walk,

My Saviour, in Thy truth. Oh! let my heart

Rejoice that it may fear Thy name'

[Exit.]

SCENE 4.—Assisi. A street at night. Nightwatchman walking to and fro.

Nightwatchman

An odd life this, nightly walking the streets, waking while others sleep, watching while others rest. And that these five and forty years. But I complain not; the work fits to the man: he's odd too.—Some people think I'm as crazy as the moon, in whose light I have grown old; but these lunatics forget that with all their sunlight they're no whit wiser than I am. Many a man I saw in my days who, though he kept no company with Signora Luna, and composed no verses, went nevertheless to the madhouse, whilst the old reliable nightwatchman of Assisi, who has so often gazed upon Selene's silvery face, and sighed sonnets to her beauteous form, still faithful stands at his post, with clear head, ready arm, and—

[Shouts heard.]

Past the midnight hour, and that noisy crew still carousing: Bernardone's son and his gay company at Renieri's.—There's wisdom bred in the sun!—"T will shine full blaze anon; for this way soon 't will come.—Ha! an excellent rhyme: there's wisdom bred in the sun; 't will shine full blaze anon; for this way soon 't will come.

[Sings:] There's wisdom bred in the sun,]

'T will shine full blaze anon, For this way soon 't will come.

[Singing heard.]

I hear them singing.—This way the air wafts their bacchanalians.—I see them now, coming down this street.—Well, let foolery have its course, so I don't witness it.—I'll move, lest I imbibe some of that sunny wisdom which would make me play the fool.

[Exit.]

[Enter in procession Giuseppe. Eduardo. Leone Bellino. Leone Sandali, Luigi, Alberto. Ambrogio. Giovanni; last of all, as king of the feast.]

Francis, who is suddenly arrested by a heavenly light upon which he gazes intently.

Ambrogio

Halt!

Alberto

Halt, comrades!

Giovanni

Halt! Francis is not well.

Giuseppe

Why, what has happened?

Leone Sandali And Luigi

What's amiss?

Ambrogio

Speak Francis!

Giovanni

O Francis! speak.

Leone Bellino

No fresh relapse, I hope.

Eduardo

He seems all rapt.

Luigi

Transported Francis is.

Giuseppe

Transported? where? with what?

Ambrogio

I know: with love;

He's found the lady of his dream.

Giovanni

Oh speak!

Good Francis, speak, explain.

Ambrogio

He's deep in love.—

Francis

Giovanni, comrades, I saw my love,
My love whom not the blinking pick of man,
But God's infallible choice to me is decreed.

Alberto

Fast courtship; and upon whom fell the choice?

Francis

A lady, none such have you e'er admired,

So rich, so noble and so fair, the pride,
The crown, the paragon of womankind.

Giuseppe

An enviable prospect, which may time approve.

Francis

The engagement's closed, the nuptials soon will seal
The life-long bond that Heaven has tied.

Ambrogio

'Tis not

To-night, I hope.

Francis

Oh speed that day of days
The Father of lights!—Companions, you stand aghast,
And stare as I a seething lover were
Who lost his reason; but assure yourselves
My mind is clear, I speak the sober truth;
You marvel now, you'll marvel more in time.
Pray, for this night, sweet friends, depart; the hour
Is late, and sleep does call 's to rest.—Good night.

[Exeunt all but Francis and Giovanni.]

Giovanni

How is 't with you, Francis?

Francis

Be undisturbed,
My dear Giovanni, you will soon know all.
I beg you, sweetest friend, do you too part,
And leave me to my thoughts.

Giovanni

Good night, Francis.

[Exit.]

Francis

How changed I feel!—I feel as I had bathed
In light, which new informed my frame, and deep
Invaded to my heart's darkest recess.
Methought a flash did straight from heaven descend,
Endued me round, pierced me with cleaving beam,

And burned with purging fire away the dross
As if some mighty invisible Power did lift
Of my alloyed soul. And then it was
Me out of my own fleshly self, and raised
The facile buoyant spirit far aloft
To a higher sphere, where it was given to see
Such lofty ecstatic sights, such secret things
Divine, as blind and baffle mortal sense
And human tongue defy.—
Immersed in this beatific stream, I felt
Uprising in my now disburdened soul
A deep dislike for all that men call great,
That all the world did seem to me a vile
And loathsome thing, a crawling, sickening thing,
Not worth the worthless dust on which it lived.
That sight alone my being engrossed; naught else,
I deemed, could ever again I see or hear,
Or love; on nothing fix my ravished mind.
Enough of bliss it seemed to feed for aye
On that one glimpse of paradise.—
Thou, who in mercy hast shed upon my soul
The light of Thy benignant face, I know,
I know the purport of Thy illumining ray:
Thou’st knighted me, great King of heaven, to fight
Not ’gainst battalions hostile, and not with arms
Of steel, but with Thy Spirit’s two-edged sword,
Against my soul’s dread foes, the siren world,
My mutinous flesh, and Satan’s wily snares.
O Lord God! strong and mighty in battle, equip
Thy weakling soldier with the armor of truth;
Put on his head the helmet of salvation,
That in this war he may the victory win.
To Thee alone, my God! my Leader! here
I swear eternal faith. ‘My heart hath said:
My face hath sought Thee, Lord! Thy countenance
I still will seek. Turn not away Thy face,
Decline not from Thy servant in Thy wrath.’
O Beauty Thou of ancient days, yet new
Forever, too late I’ve known Thee! oh, too late,
Too late. I’ve loved Thee!

[Exit.]

ACT IV

SCENE 1.—Assisi. A street. Enter Eduardo, Leone Sandali and Luigi.

Leone

Ill ending of a fair beginning 't was.
Full hundred times my fancy since rehearsed
In somber-dreamy pictures that night's scene.
With heavy, burning eyes at an early hour
Each morn I awake, my mind exhausted, dull,
As I with intricate algebraic sums
Had tortured all night long my weary brain.

Eduardo

What think you, Luigi? was 't Heaven marred
Our feast's finale, or Francis' turning mind?

Luigi

No easy thing to say; but slow I'd be
To think that Francis' mind's affected. True,
He ever was an enthusiastic youth,
His heart athrob with warm and generous blood,
But vigorous too, and calm in mind, as sober
With all his youthful fire as made of him
Assisi's boasted nonpareil.

Leone

Quite so;

I judge the thing as from above. To me
'T has always seemed there was a something deeper
In Francis' soul, which needed but God's call
To bring it out.

Eduardo

I know not what to think;
Unlike 't is not that Francis is a bit
Religion-mad; his late behavior seemed
To point that way.

Luigi

Giuseppe's very word;
Yet not a trifle 't is to clear discern

Where wisdom goes and folly comes.

Leone

Come, friends,

Let us to Giovanni's, and hear his mind.

Eduardo

Yes, he knows more than we. He's doubtless seen
And heard his strangely stricken friend. Come.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 2.—Assisi. Before Bernardone's house. Enter Bernardone and Giovanni.

Bernardone

Why, no, not these three days he's been at home;
My anger drove him hence; but 'twas too much.

Giovanni

What was it that so much provoked you?

Bernardone

A thousand things, Giovanni; ever since
That cursed night he has not been himself.

Giovanni

What does he amiss?

Bernardone

Not half his one time zest
He shows at work: he plies his hands indeed,
But lets his thoughts rove on far other things.
And then he prays so much, and runs so oft
To lazarets, to churches and to shrines.
He's growing mad, I fear.

Giovanni

You see too dark.

Distinctive of his large and fervid soul
I find the conduct of your son; he does,
Whatever he does, intently; heart and soul
He lives for a proposed end; with zeal
Aflame, he heeds no obstacles, but strives
Steadfastly, undaunted pushing onward still,

Till he doth reach ideal altitudes.

Bernardone

Bah! how you prattle! Ideal altitudes!
Confound ideals! What good ere comes of dreams?
What is to me his hot pursuit of goods
That never will be real? What profit brings
His frenzied chase of visionary goals?
Give me results, results alone are test.

Giovanni

You look at things with partial eye, Pietro,
The mercenary eye of Mammon zealots.
Other and broader points there are of vision,
Which, rayless to your practical view and bent,
Open wide tracks of light to a keener gaze
And larger sight. Remember, saintly souls
Deserve and seek to climb far loftier heights,
Than this base world vaunting displays
as worthy
Alone of man's regard and upward toil:
Great name, high rank and affluent wealth.

Bernardone

Wisdom for book worms and arm chair savants;
Those lofty heights are up in the clouds, the
abode
Or poets, dreamers, drones, not practical men.

Giovanni

Yet know, superior claims religion has,
Which are not measured by the rule of gain;
A godly life, my practical friend, 's not gauged
By standard of this world.

Bernardone

Religion?

A godly life? You mean not, sure, to call
My son's misconduct these revered names.
Religion? Fie! religion-mad he is,
And not religious. To grieve whom we should comfort,
And anger those we are bound to love, are these
The fruits that grow on th' heights?

Giovanni

Most certain not.

Nor does your son think that religion's part.
He deeply mourns the unwilling grief he inflicts
On you; as sharp, I know, your sorrow affects
Your child as 't does your own paternal heart.

Bernardone

Were 't so, he would remove the cause of grief;
He need but will to obey, and sorrow is vanished,
But he is obstinate and intractable grown.

Giovanni

I stake my honor, as security
My very life I'd give, that Francis' will
Is not perverse in disobeying you;
Convinced he is that he is called by God,
Whom more than men 't is meet to obey.—
Be patient, Bernardone.—

Bernardone

Easily said;

But when his misdemeanors heap disgrace
Upon our heads, what patience have we left?—
Giovanni, would you for your life believe 't?
In tatters, sordid rags, a short time back
Our Francis home returned from what he called
A pilgrimage to Rome. He mingled there,
He said, with beggars, begged and ate with them
Their scanty meal, and, in compassion,
With one, the neediest wretch, exchanged attire,—
The fool!

[Enter Angelo.]

Angelo

Good morning, Signor Bernardone.
Good morning, Giovanni.—Is Francis in?

Giovanni

No, boy.

Angelo

Will he be in when I come back?

Bernardone

No! go your way, you only come to beg.

Giovanni

Go, Angelo, some other time you'll see your friend.

Angelo

I will; excuse me if I broke
Into your talk.—Good bye.

[Exit.]

Bernardone

Hear further, Giovanni, and then say
If my impatience is not justified.
'T is five days now, without my leave he takes
A deal of my most costly stuffs, rides then
To Foligno, sells goods and horse, and turns
The price entire to San Damiano's priest.
'Tis there that Francis spent much time of late,
And would have stayed, had I not come enraged
To drag him thence and close at home confine.
His mother found this lenient punishment
Severe; and, too indulgent, let escape
The prisoner in my absence; ever since
He's not been seen, but likely hides for fear
In some sequestered thicket-nook or cave.
I'll wait another day; if then no son
Appear, I'll have him hunted down and cast
Into the city prison, where he'll lie
Till from his madness he recuperate.

Giovanni

Forbear, forbear, Pietro; do not you
Forget the father's touch, e'en though the child
Should filial duty disregard. Not spite,
I'm certain, apprehension of your rage
Made Francis fly. He'll soon take heart and come
Before his father to explain. Meantime,
I beg you, be appeased. I'll search the woods
Myself, and find his hiding-place; I know
All his retreats and favorite haunts. And then,
I'm confident, he'll listen to the plea

Which in his father's name and mine I'll make.

Bernardone

Do so; and tell him, too, my fixed design
If stubborn he refuse to be persuaded.

Giovanni

This way 't is like he took.—If not today,
To morrow, Bernardone, here your son
And your son's friend together will appear.

Bernardone

Be 't so.—Come, part of th' way I'll go with you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.—*A wood near Assisi. A grotto in the distance. Enter Francis.*

Francis

O God of light eternal! who am I,
That Thou shouldst visit me, and shed upon
The vilest dust the lustre of Thy face,
And send into my inmost soul a beam
Of Thy effulgent, life-imparting Sun?
With infinite praise I'd fain proclaim Thy name,
Thy boundless mercies endless sing.
Oh sweetness 'bove all sweetness to converse
With Thee! From Thy pure stream these latter days
What torrents of delight did flow upon
My thirsting soul!—Not till that night Thy flash
Did strike my worldly heart, had I, my God!
Remotest thought Thou wert so near to me.
Immeasurable space, I thought, impassable gulf,
Divided creature and Creator wide;
And yet one step, I see, the distance spans:
One step, and lo! beyond all barriers far
Of time and place the unencumbered spirit
Lightly soars to a clement clime serene
And winged move through fresh perennial fields.
Prayer! thou heaven-born claim, thou Godgiven right,
Primordial privilege of created mind;
Prayer! whose priceless, worth and mighty power
Ungrateful, ignorant man so underrates,

Thy fragrance 't is that wafts us to the heaven
Of heavens, thy gentle force transports us swift
Into God's awful sight, and presses us
To our Father's loving heart.—
The first faint streaklets of approaching dawn
Have now expanded into blazing day:
Those tender rays that on my swart horizon
Appeared when illness held my mortal frame
In sullen stubborn grasp, have widened now,
And clearer, warner, fuller fall their light
Upon my groping laboring soul. And ah!
How much more, bright is now the sun of day
Than darksome was the gloom of night! Thank God,
That night is past, that time of racking doubt,
Of wavering hopes, and agonizing fears.
The day has come, the season of certain light,
To illumine my path and point my journey's goal.
Come now what clouds and storms there will, my course
Divinely traced distinct, unchanged remains,
The single aim of all my days: to live
With Him who had not where to lay His head,
A life of abject poverty.—
Come then, spare want, be thou my spacious fill,
Be thou my fruitful riches, poverty.
Oh come, sweet mistress, heaven-appointed spouse!
Let me clasp thee whom all men shun. Be thou
My life-long love, My Lady Poverty.—
But soft! a noise.—Am I discovered?—
'Tis Angelo; I see his angel face
Shine through the leafy hanging boughs.—This way
He comes.—

[Enter Angelo.]

Angelo

O Francis! dear, good master Francis!
Do I find you here?

Francis

That rather I should ask,
My Angelo; how came you to this place?

Angelo

My Guardian Angel must have led me here.

Francis

You're not afraid, my little lad, to stray
So far into this dense, unvisited woods?

Angelo

No, Francis, I am not afraid; I just
Walked on and on, and thought how much I longed
To see you; and I wondered when again
You would come home, and take me in your house,
And show me many things, and give me much
For father and myself.

Francis

I fear, my boy,
Those days are past.

Angelo

Oh why? you will not live
Here always in the forest, will you, Francis?
Oh do come back! I think your father is much
Impatient that you stay away so long.
He looked at me so angry when I asked
This morning if you were at home; he snapped
A surly 'No,' and sent me off.

Francis

Forget
The unkindness, Angelo. I will be kind
To you instead. Awhile be patient yet,
And then some day, when you become a man,
I'll take you as my constant friend, you'll be
My son, and always live with me.

Angelo

Thanks, Francis.
O happiness! Oh may that joyous day
Soon come!

Francis

Go now, my child, and be consoled.
God's blessing go with you, and keep your way;

His Blessed Mother Mary smile on you;
Your holy Angel hover over you,
And shield his little client from all harm.

Angelo

Farewell, good master Francis. Do come home soon.

[Exit.]

Francis

My father angry? I can well believe 't,
Nay, I foresaw my flight would swell his rage.
Oh! why then did I flee? I fear, my God!
That I did play the coward in the trial:
Did I not know that e'en a parent's wrath
The soul must face intrepid for the God
Who calls to spiritual combat? Did I forget
That I must persecution from without
As boldly meet as battle bravely 'gainst
My inner sinful self? No right have I
To call myself God's soldier if I fly
The field. Heaven's King will not acknowledge me
His true knight till in all I overcome.—
'Tis true, I have essayed my feeble might
In some small measure, and by strength of grace
Have several victories gained; but ah! how keen
I felt I was a tyro in the lists,
Unskilled in warfare with such crafty foes.
The strife within was long: luxurious tastes,
Indulged for years, would not leave unavenged,
But like a wanton, wilful troop of elves
Before my fancy wildly danced and danced,
And struck my memory sharp, my conscience lashed
With many a blow of full deserved force.
The lower self in man will not be expelled
By violence; by hard, persistent fight, by long,
Continuous self-denial is sin destroyed,
And evil habits razed.—What strain it cost,
What shudder of abhorrence chilled my soul
When my nice arms the leprous form embraced,
And my fastidious lips did kiss the lazar hand!
But Thou who wast Thyself by prophet voice

A leper called, didst strong my weakness nerve,
And after poured upon me greater joy
Than I had great repugnance felt before.—
O God in battle powerful! oh steel
Each sinewy limb in this frail fabric! fix
The fickle, fluttering heart in this faint breast,
And steady, firm support and fortify
My skittish infant spirit, fearless now
That I may go to meet my father's wrath,
And calmly, boldly stand for my account.
'Judge me, O God! defend my cause, my Strength!
Deliver me from unjust, cunning man.
Send forth Thy light and truth; unto Thy hill
They'll lead me, to Thy tabernacles sweet;
And I will go to the altar of God, to God
Who gladness gives unto my youth.'

[Retires to grotto.]

[Enter Giovanni.]

Giovanni

At last, at last! there he kneels.—O Francis!
How long I searched, how much I sighed for you!

Francis

Giovanni!—Welcome to my heart.—You're come
To fetch me home, say 't, friend.

Giovanni

I am

Francis

'Tis well;

I am prepared.

Giovanni

Well said, well said, my Francis.
Your father is indignant at your flight,
And madly threats, if you return not prompt,
He'll have you hunted, seized, and strict immured.

Francis

No need of violent means; I'll willing come,
Yet not because he threatens force; his threats

Are vain: no suffering, nay, not even chains,
Can sadden me, or fetter my free soul.
No longer am I tossed on doubtful waves;
Calmed is the writhing surge; the tempest's roar
Is stilled; the murky clouds are blown away;
And from the cleared sky mildly descends
The light of God's unwavering ken, whose sheen
And warmth such flood of inner joy outpour
Upon my universal being, as naught
On earth can turbid stir or roll away.

Giovanni

How strangely true! your emaciated face
Mirrors your soul e'en through your tearstained eyes;
It seems to me that never did you wear
Upon your brow a look so light and bland,
A smile so heavenly suave.

Francis

Oh! think 't not strange;
Now first I 'gin to live; so far my life
Was all a dream.

Giovanni

A dream?

Francis

My life began
That night.

Giovanni

Oh yes! that night, that night!—O Francis!
How all your friends regret what chanced that night!
They daily come, and ask me to explain;
Some are amazed, and angered some, and all
Most deeply grieved.

Francis

Let them not mourn for me,
But joy with me, for I have found a treasure.

Giovanni

I understand you not.

Francis

I tell you true:

A treasure exceeding rich.

Giovanni

A treasure?

Francis

I've found

The pearl of great price.

Giovanni

You speak riddles, Francis.

Francis

Come, dear Giovanni, let me solve them now.

Here in this grotto is 'my treasure. Here 's

The scene of my profound delights; the place

Where I mid bitter-sweet emotions hold

Converse with my Beloved. Here I wail

Amidst unspeakable groanings my lost youth,

And revel in the contrite love of Him,

My Love, whom all too late I've known, too late,

Too late I've loved.—See, where my Treasure hangs!

When I contemplate His bare, stripped form

My spirit burns with irrepressible flames

Of love which sweep aloft to His embrace,

And penetrate my soul with glowing love

For His unspotted fair, His faithful spouse,

The Lady Poverty. And when I hear

The voice of my Beloved, ineffable joy

My being o'erflows; hot, scalding tears suffuse

My eyes when I behold His pallid face,

My heart with infinite pity breaks, for—

My Love is Crucified.—

[Francis enters grotto: Giovanni kneels without.]

[Amid soft, angelic music Francis is heard to pray.]

Flow, tears! on flow! fall freely, fast;

Bathe, bitter streams, my sordid past:

Weep, eyes! oh weep! weep to the last:

My Love, my Love is Crucified!

Burn, soul, oh burn with keen desire!

Melt in the flame thy God's just Ire;
Warm thy chill being In His love's fire;
Thy Love, thy Love is Crucified!
Break heart! oh break! thy Love is dead;
Thy Love who for thy love has bled;
With pierced limbs and thorn-crowned head;
Thy Love, thy Love is Crucified!
Love! O Saviour Crucified!
Oh take me in Thy wounded side!
There, sweetest Lord! let me abide,
And die for love, Love Crucified!

[Re-enter Francis.]

Francis

Arise, and let us go.—
O Father! 'as the apple of Thy eye
Keep me, and 'neath the shadow of Thy wings
Protect Thy child.'

[Exeunt.]

ACT V

SCENE 1.—Giuseppe's country seat in an outlying district of Assisi. Enter Giuseppe. Alberto. Ambrogio, Eduardo and Luigi.

Giuseppe

Welcome, companions. What news from th' city?

Ambrogio

Nothing but talk of Francis.

Alberto

They say he's mad.

Ambrogio

Some even whisper disinheritance.

Giuseppe

It seems that both are mad, with rage the father,
And with religion-craze the son.—Strange world!

Alberto

A sad and sudden fall it is indeed:
A butt of ridicule he has become
To all who once by all was idolized.

Luigi

Inconstant as the sportive vane 's the applause
Of men, unstable as the river's flood;
No test it is of good or ill desert
To gain or lose the vulgar's grace.

Giuseppe

And yet,

I think the popular voice in this correct.
And, to speak unreserved, I long have thought
The poet's frenzy lurked in him, which late
Or soon would burst its bonds and reckless rave.

Luigi

Why may 't not be, he's but a fool for Christ?

Giuseppe

More kind than true.

Luigi

Perhaps he sees too far
For our contracted view to comprehend.
Who knows but he is called by God great things
To execute.

Alberto

[The two Leones speak]

Of seeking Francis out to associate
Themselves with him, convinced that not a mad
Caprice inspirits him, but God's behest.

Eduardo

Giovanni is gone to search, perhaps to join,
His hiding friend.

Giuseppe

No hot enthusiast
But always finds a goodly following.

Luigi

The reason deeper lies: their loving natures
Do find it hard to untie the friendly knot.
And pardon me to say 't: we'd be inclined
As they, were we but candid to ourselves.

Eduardo

For me, I'm not repelled, albeit I disapprove;
Something in him magnetic draws and spells
The heart.

Alberto

Francis has power to charm; some touch
He knows which strikes the sympathetic cord
That consonous to the music of his heart
Responds.

Luigi

He's born to lead and rule his fellows.

Ambrogio

I thought so once; and hoped he'd lead us all
To fame and glory.

Giuseppe

My hopes in him are dead.

Luigi

Nay, why so pessimistic? The untoward day,
Remember, at last into the restful bosom
Of evening sinks, transformed on the morrow
With brighter sun to rise. Our little life's
Most happy hours are born of gentle Patience,
The laboring mother of a thousand joys.
More cheer, therefore, and hopeful thoughts, Giuseppe.—
And friends, now let us off to Bernardone's.—
If aught, Giuseppe, ere night we learn of Francis,
Directly we will send you word. Farewell.

Giuseppe

Farewell, comrades.

ALL

Farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.—Assisi. A street. Enter Leone Sandali and Leone Bellino.

Leone Sandali

But will he, think you, Francis find?

Leone Bellino

There's none

Knows better where to seek, and none whose voice
So sure will win our loved fugitive.

Leone Sandali

A noble youth, to 's friend unflinching true.

Leone Bellino

Of all our number 't was Giovanni alone
Who not a moment palled mid Francis' change.

Leone Sandali

A deep religious soul, a heart of gold.

Leone Bellino

Look! Bernardone.

[*Enter Bernardone.*]

Bernardone

Where's that headstrong son
Of mine? Speak! have you heard of him?

Leone Bellino

Not we,
Except that he is fled, and that to-night
He might return. BERNARDONE,
I heard loud distant cheers;
You heard them not?

Leone Bellino

We heard the far off cries
As of a flouting crowd, but heeded them
No further.

Bernardone

Most like the herald-cry of Francis,
That boasted leader of your set, who's shamed
His house and drawn upon himself the scorn
Of all Assisi.

Leone Sandali

Oh! here comes Francis.

Bernardone

Where?

Leone Bellino

With Giovanni.

Bernardone

'Tis he.—Now bend or break.

[Enter Francis and Giovanni.]

Leone S. And Leone B

Welcome home, Francis!

Francis

Thanks.—My greetings, father.

Bernardone

Refractory son, come at last to obey?

[Exit Leone S. and Leone B.]

Francis

My father, in all that's right I will obey,
But never may I do what God offends.

Bernardone

Do you not God offend breaking His law?
You'd fly to mawkish piety, the while
You've not yet learned the good child's primal rule:
'Honor thy father and thy mother.'

Francis

My father,
Always I honor you, love and obey,
But when your precept contradicts the voice
Of God, my Heavenly Father, I invoke
That other word which binds no less and says:
'More meet it is God to obey than men'

Bernardone

My son, in you I placed my hopes, with you
I shared my gains; your filial love, I thought,
Would comfort my declining years, your gifts,
So full of promise, honor bring to our house,
And its respected name perpetuate.
Oh! do shake off the silly pious fit
That so disfigures you, and so much grieves
Your father's heart! Come, live with me again,
And be your former self.

Francis

Good father, I know and feel with you your grief,
But to console you stands not with me now.
May He who came to sunder the tenderest ties
Comfort my dearest father in this trial.
God calls; and Him I must, I will obey.

Bernardone

A plague on such cold sympathy! Hear me,
Unnatural child: since you are obstinate,
And steel your heart against your father's prayers,
He'll trample nature too, and let you feel
A parent's wrath. Here I reclaim from you
The money which by me was freely given,

Or which yourself did from my treasury take.

Francis

You shall have all; here's the untouched purse
Which at Foligno I procured and brought
To San Damiano's.

Bernardone

Further, wilful son,
I disinherit you.

Giovanni

What!—Bernardone!

Bernardone

And do demand that you appear in court
To-morrow to renounce in legal form
Before the magistrate all right and claim
To be my heir.

Francis

I plead immunity:
The small remainder of my days I've vowed
To God's sole service in the Church; no more
Am I amenable to secular power.

Bernardone

Miserable wretch! to th' Bishop then you'll come,
Escape you shall not, that I warrant you.

[Exit.]

Francis

Yes, father, before the Bishop I'll appear;
He is the Lord and father of souls. Whate'er
The holy Guido will decide I'll take
Full as from God.—Come, faithful friend.
Giovanni, pity me not, rejoice with me that I,
Unworthy sinner, am worthy held to suffer
For Christ, my Lord; the pupil's tardy mind
Opens at last to take the serious word
Which is the Master's test of scholarship:
'He who renounces not all he possess
Cannot be my disciple?

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 3.—Assisi. A room in the Bishop's house. Guido seated on a throne, surrounded by attendants. A concourse of people, among them Giuseppe. Alberto, Ambrogio, Eduardo. Leone Sandali. Leone Bellino. Luigi, and Angelo; most conspicuous are Giovanni. Bernardone, and Francis.

Guido

Now Francis, Pietro Bernardone's son, Step forth.

Francis

Thy humble servant, gracious lord.

Guido

My son, thy father grievous is incensed
Against thee. For what cause thou knowst. If then.
Thou purpose, as we hear, to consecrate
Thyself to God and give thy days to serve
His Church, this is our counsel, yea, our command:
Restore to Signor Bernardone all
He claims as his. It may well be, that part,
At least, of what thou hast, no claim can plead
Of absolute right; besides, it can not be
God's will thou use, e'en though for sacred ends,
Such money as your father occasion brings
Of sin.—Now then, my son, what hast to say?

Francis

Your lordship's voice to me 's the voice of God;
In this and all things humbly I obey.

Guido

A noble and a dutiful reply.
Thy reverential and submissive spirit
Doth greatly in my eyes commend thy cause.
And for the rest fear not. If from above
Thy mission truly come, then He who inspired
The work will also happy issue give.
In naught, 'my son, God needs man's petty help:
No impotent hand Omnipotence requires
To finish marvellous deeds divine. If God
Calls thee to high things He wants not the means
To bring thee to the loftiest heights. But know,
These only they safe climb and prosperous reach

Who start e'en at the lowest base, the deep
Of humbleness, and keep their constant view
On Him by whose sole grace they do ascend
The Holy Mount.—Be thou then strong, my son;
God who exalts the humble, and the proud
Doth from their seat cast down, will lead thee still,
And lead thee to the end, who hast so well
Begun to walk the footsteps of the meek
And humble Saviour.—

Francis

Most Reverend Pastor and Father of my soul,
How shall I, unlettered man, express my thanks?
Thy words, so full of saintly unction, I felt,
Like quickening dew, fall softly on my soul.
Each thing that I till now have called my own,
The very garments that do cover me,
With willing, yea, with joy-exulting heart
I now return to him who gave them me.
Never was I so eager to accept
As now I am desirous to renounce.—

Guido

Well said, my son, well said.

Francis

Today, ah! yes today, O heavenly Father!
Thy hand doth loving set Thy erring child
On's way of life traced by Thy Providence:
From kin divided, of plush and scarlet stripped,
All worldly goods bereft, yet rich enough
Secure on Thy great Bounty thrown.
O blessed Saviour! Thy own fair spouse, who ne'er.
From crib to cross did leave Thy side, today
Thou givest me as bride and portion here:
May I, my sweetest Lord! this sacred trust
Forever inviolate keep, may I ne'er prove
Unfaithful to my plighted love.
And Thou, O Holy Spirit! keep this bond
Forever tied: upon the espousals blest
Breathe life and ever fruitfulness.—
O fairest fair! my God's own fair: oh come!

And be my love, My Lady Poverty.

[Puts all he has at Bernardone's feet; doffs his mantle, and appears in a hair shirt.]

[Bernardone snatches all, and exit.]

Now know ye all: up to this hour I called
Signor Pietro Bernardone father,
Henceforth most truly I will say and pray:
'Our Father who art in heaven.'

Publication. *My Lady Poverty: A Drama in Five Acts* (Santa Barbara: St. Anthony College, 1912), complete reset text, printed pp. 5–80.

Textual note. Act III's duplicated first "Scene 3" heading is corrected to Scene 2. Narrow-page hanging continuations are rejoined; shared-line dramatic indents remain. A small number of evident typographical slips are silently corrected.

APPENDIX

The Planting of the Cross at Santa Barbara · 1913

The Planting of the Cross

A sketch written for the bicentenary of the birth of Junípero Serra, O.F.M., founder of the California missions, celebrated at Santa Barbara, November 24, 1913.

SCENE 1. Procession; Settlers, Soldiers, Officers, last, vested in alb and stole. Junípero Serra, who proceeds to bless the new land.

V

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R

Who made heaven and earth.

V

O Lord, hear my prayer.

R

And let my cry come unto Thee.

V

The Lord be with you.

R

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Bless ☩ O Lord, Almighty God, this place; that in it may be health, chastity, victory, strength, humility, goodness and meekness, the fulness of the law, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and let Thy blessing remain upon this place, and upon them that dwell therein now and for ever. Amen.

[The settlers raise and firm set the new cross which Padre Junípero proceeds to bless.]

V

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R

Who made heaven and earth.

V

O Lord, hear my prayer.

R

And let my cry come unto Thee.

V

The Lord be with you.

R

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

We beseech Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless ✠ this sign of the cross; that it may be a remedy for the human race, a bulwark of faith, increase of good works and salvation of souls; be it a solace and a protection, and a shield against the cruel shafts of the enemy. Through Christ our Lord.

R

Amen. Bless ✠ O Lord Jesus Christ, this cross, by which Thou didst wrest the world from the power of the evil spirits and by Thy Passion didst overcome the author of sin who rejoiced in the prevarication and the fall of the first man through the eating of the forbidden tree; may this sign of the cross be sanctified in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost; that those who for God's sake pray and bow before it may enjoy health of body and soul. Through Christ our Lord.

R

Amen.

Serra's Sermon.

Ecce crucem Domini,

Fugite, partes adversae;

Vicit Leo de tribu Juda,

Radix David. Alleluja.

Behold the cross of Christ, flee, counter powers;

The Lion overcame of Juda's tribe,

The Root of David. Praise the Lord.
My honored countrymen and most dear children,
Blessed are we today to witness here
And celebrate the newest victory
Of our great King and Leader, Christ the Lord.
Behold the cross, the banner of God's might!
'Tis lifted high in triumph to the skies,
Unfolding glorious conquests made—of souls
Gained by that Blood which flowed from veins divine,
And ruddied o'er and o'er the banner's furls.
The saving wood is raised to extend its arms
In blessing and in loving invitation:
Calling to rest poor aimless wanderers,
Shedding sweet light upon a groping race,
And giving life to famished souls who ne'er
Have tasted of the tree of life.—
Flee, adverse powers! a stronger power has come.
Be ye dispelled, dark shades of death! a light
Rises unto the nations. A budding morn
Now blows to open day. Soon, soon shall shine
The Sun of Justice, and reign above in heaven,
The Brightness of Eternal Light.—Hail, Life!
Now, death, where is thy victory! O death,
Where is thy sting! Praise God who through His Son
Gave us to fight and win, through Jesus Christ,
Our Saviour God.—
The Lion strong of Juda's tribe hath conquered:
Depart then, hellish wolf, to thy grim lair,
Thou shalt not snatch the lambs from out the fold.
Good Shepherd, they are Thine. Oh let no more
The enemy wrench from Thy grasp the prize
Which Thou didst win in that great bitter fight.
Thou art the Lion that hath overcome,
The promised Great One of great Juda's tribe.
Thou art the Root of David, David's son,
Whilom foretold the Bringer of Salvation,
The Holy One, the Anointed of the Lord,
The Saviour of Thy people, the Light and Life
Of all the world.—
Bend we our knees, O brethren, and adore

This sign of faith, and anchor of our hope,
And pledge of charity. Pray we our God
To prosper this new land, and send His grace
In fulness on our work. Combine we then
To give our strength to what we've here begun.
Let's labor wholly for religion's cause:
Seek we no glory but our God's, no gain
But souls, immortal souls. And even so
We'll work most honor to our gracious king,
Do filial service to our country's name
And stretch the sway of our illustrious Spain.—
In this sign shall we conquer:— Then hold we fast
The cross of Christ. In it alone is light,
In it alone salvation. The cross alone
Will keep us safe on th' Highway of the King,
Lift up the eternal mansion's golden gates,
Escort us to the Lamb that is the light
Thereof, and set us 'fore the throne of Him
Who reigns the King of Ages and the Lord of all.—
Brave cavaliers, knights of the cross, brethren,
Oft have I prayed to do what now is done:
Long years my soul hath yearned here on this ground,
In Santa Barbara's honor named, to plant
The cross of Christ, and build a Mission burgh,
To make men citizens with Saints, and God's
Domestics, built on Apostolic base,
Whose corner-stone is Jesus Christ, the Lord.
Praise God with me, my children, my cry is heard,
Fill full your hearts with jubilee, and raise
Your hands in thankful prayer. Come, let's adore,
And prostrate kneel, and hymn a song of praise.

Alabado, y ensalzado,
Sea el Divino Sacramento,
En quien Dios oculto asiste,
De las almas el sustento.
Y la limpia Concepcion,
De la Reyna de los Cielos,
Que quedando Virgen pura,
Es Madre del Verbo Eterno.
Adorote Santa Cruz,
Puesta en el Monte Calvario,
En ti murio mi Jesus.
Para darme eterna luz,
Y librarme del contrario.
O dulcissimo Jesus!
Yo te doy mi corazon,
Para que estampes en el
Tu santissima Pasion.
Madre llena de dolor,
Hazed, que quando espiremos

Alabado

Y el Bendito San Joseph,
Electo por Dios inmenso
Para Padre estimativo
De su Hijo el Divino Verbo.
Esto es por todos los siglos,
Y de los siglos Amen.
Amen Jesus y Maria,
Jesus, Maria, y Joseph.
Nuestras almas entreguemos,
En las manos del Señor.
Quien a Dios quiere seguir,
Y en su gloria quiere entrar,
Una cosa ha de asentar,
Y de corazon decir,
Antes morir, que pecar;
Antes que pecar morir.
V. Ave Maria.
R. En gracia concebida.

SCENE 2. The Presidio site. Settlers and Soldiers lounging.

1 Soldier

Slow work, neighbors, slow work!

2 Soldier

And bad work too!

3 Soldier

Do look at it! The Captain cannot praise
Such bungling work.

1 Settler

We look not for his praise,
As you do, self appointed critic.

2 Soldier

Call you

This botching work?

3 Soldier

So ill matched with the site!

2 Soldier

But well matched with their efforts: both mere spurts.

3 Soldier

They need a sharp rebuke to prick them on.

3 Settler

Spare your flings, stupid censor, they're aimed amiss.

2 Settler

There were no need of reprimand did not
The soldiers fear to soil their hands.

1 Settler

Indeed,
'Twere better you fell to with pick and axe
In place of flinging taunts and grinning sneers.

2 Settler

Or fondling your dull swords and trimming fine
Your gaudy uniforms.

2 Soldier

Forbid your tongue,
Churl, or I'll stop it with my fist.

2 Settler

Away,
You upstart, put your fist to useful work.

2 Soldier

Insult more, I'll soil my hands with your blood.

2 Settler

Go vent your threats on cowards, I fear you not.

2 Soldier

You challenge so my wrath?

Then stand and fight,

You vulgar peasant.

[Serra enters.]

Serra

Forbear, my children, forbear; what is between you?

2 Soldier

This bumpkin has insulted our profession,
And he must pay for it.

2 Settler

And he must pay

For rating and insulting me.

Serra

Be calm.

2 Settler

What right have these to give rebukes?

1 Settler

Let them reproach themselves, who all the day
Sit idly by whilst we must work.

2 Settler

Who play

And drink and sleep away the time.

2 Soldier

Coward!

And liar! Are we not his Majesty's men?
And soldiers of his Excellency Felipe Neve?

Serra

Allay your anger. I pray you, children, break not
Sweet charity's law. Remember we left our home
To bring the peace of God to those who still
In darkness sit and shades of death,—our poor
Unfortunate brethren, no less than we redeemed
By Christ's atoning death. How then shall we
Make good our noble purpose if thus we break
The peace among ourselves?—Brother, forgive
The insult. Forget the assault, brother, for love
Of Him who dying prayed for deicides.
Be reconciled for love of Him whose Gospel
Of kind forgiveness we have come to announce
By word and deed.—Here comes our honorable Captain.

[Ortega enters.]

Ortega

The trouble, Father Presidente?

Serra

All's well again; a few ill tempered words

Which cooled as fast as they grew hot.

Ortega

'Tis well.

Serra

The work progresses. How good! The field is fair,
Is't not, Señor, to start the Mission now?

Ortega

That, Padre, his Excellency will judge;
No word from him has yet come to the men.

Serra

I will remind the Governor; there seems
No cause for more delay. Heaven prospers well
The present work; may 't bless as well what's yet
To do. Fair Santa Barbara's soil will sprout
The flower of all the fairest in the wreath
Of Missions that with glory and honor crowns
Our lovely California's sunny brow.

[Serra goes out]

Ortega

Well, companions, how far is work advanced?

1 Settler

See, Captain, for yourself.

Ortega

Done well enough.

1 Soldier

Enough to merit rest awhile; yet now
The further task doth press-the Mission buildings.

Ortega

That urges not: the Governor's not inclined,
Though nothing hinders him to set the task.

2 Soldier

I thank the Governor.

3 Soldier

So do we all.

2 Soldier

The Padre is much too careful for the redskins.
Look we to our comfort first, then to the needs
Of th' heathen savage.

Ortega

Howe'er it be, await
His Excellency's command. Meanwhile to work!
'Tis past the hour of rest. Complete your task,
And earn the Governor's praise who'll soon be here
To view and plaud your faithful service.
SCENE 3. Serra enters.

Serra

So much is done, thank God. The cross stands firm
On new blest ground; the garrison builds fast.
It now remains the fortress strong to raise
Where God His tabernacle rears with men,
Where Angel spirits hold a sleepless guard,
And weary souls find rest and strength and life.
This little chapel serves a present need,
But better room and larger space must soon
Be had to gather souls into the Fold.
What a favored site! More charming yet
Than San Buenaventura by the sea.
May Santa Barbara's Mission rise to excel
In size and beauty the first of Channel Missions,
And grow to flowering health beyond the rest.
The chain is strengthened by another link,
The line will soon be full. O how great thanks
Are due to God! The harvest ripens more
And more; if but the Lord send laborers now
To reap and garner home the store.

[He kneels.]

[Indians enter; they come to Serra and show him beads; the Padre caresses them and dismisses them with his blessing.]

The children cry for bread. Speed God our work
That soon these babes may sate their hungering souls.
O Master, lover Thou of little ones,
Hasten the time: give them the faith that makes

them Thine and forms them heirs of endless life.—
My years on earth cannot be many more,
Yet what is left to me, O God, of life
I dedicate, each moment I devote
To Thee, my Lord, to labor in Thy vineyard,
Heavenly Husbandman, till th' evening comes
When Thou wilt call the laborer to his rest
And mete to him a just reward.—
I must go press the Governor to start
The Mission buildings and the church. He'll not
Defer the task beyond the need, I trust.
Yet, though I find rebuke, I shall not flag:
Heaven's designs will not be foiled: no work
Is born but in travail, none reared and wrought
To end but in the crucible of pain.
'Tis true, O God, heavy may lie the cross
Upon Thine own; yet strong art Thou who first
The cross didst bear and on its wood expire
To give us might to bear the weight, yea die
As Thou, if so it please Thy blessed Will.

[He kneels.]

SCENE 4. Ortega sits reading. Neve enters.

Ortega

Respectful greetings, Gobernador.

Neve

And mine

To you. What read you, Commandante?

Ortega

The first

Record of our new colony.

Neve

By whom?

Ortega

The Father Presidente.

Neve

And tells?

Ortega

Of Santa Barbara's spiritual birth.

Neve

You mean—

Ortega

The planting of the cross.

Neve

Read it, Señor.

Ortega

So't please your Excellency.

[Reads]

Live Jesus Mary Joseph.

Book I of Baptisms, wherein are recorded the names of those who were Christianized in this new and royal Presidio of Santa Barbara, Virgin and Martyr. Under the administration of the Rev. Fathers Missionaries Apostolic of the College of the Propagation of the Faith, of San Fernando, Mexico, of the Order of our Father Saint Francis of the Observance.

Founded

By the request and command of the Catholic King of Spain and the Indies, His Majesty, Charles III, (whom may God ever prosper), Santa Barbara Channel, in the new and superior California situate in the same mainland and coast, our actual Guardian being, for the second time, the Rev. Fr. Lector, Francis Pangua.

And Commenced

on the third Sunday after Easter, the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, Patriarch, spouse of Holy Mary, April 21st,

In The Year Of Our Lord 1782

on which day, I, the undersigned Fr. Junipero Serra, President of these Missions among infidels, of said and by said College Apostolic, having arranged all necessary preliminaries in a chapel made of brush and decorated as best the circumstances permitted, blessed water and with it dedicated the land to God our Lord. We then raised a large and high cross, which we venerated, and I thereupon celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the first time in these lands and preached a sermon appropriate to the occasion. Owing to the absence of an assistant, it was necessarily a low Mass, and, for the same reason, the service was concluded with the Alabado instead of the Te Deum. May it be for the glory of God, the propagation of the faith, and the welfare of souls.

Neve

Reads true enough.

Ortega

His first entry.

Neve

Perhaps

His last.

Ortega

His last! why say you so, Señor?

Will he not stay to found and launch the Mission?

Neve

I think he 'll not abide my time and order.

Ortega

You mean then to put off the work?

Neve

I do.

Ortega

But he'll insist.

Neve

Insist! he'll fret in vain.

Ortega

A heavy trial for his zealous soul.

Neve

I'll teach him prudent zeal and patience.

'Tis time the Friars learned who's Governor

Of California. I grow weary

Of pert demands and hence shall grudge to yield

To boring mendicants.

Ortega

But, Governor,

The Colorado Massacre.—

Neve

I catch

The shaft, but break its point. No, no, Captain,

Think not that one defeat discomfits me.
It takes far more to unnerve Felipe Neve.

[Serra enters.]

Serra

My greetings, Gobernador;—Commandante.
Your Excellency will guess my suit before
I speak it. Is't not full time to break the ground?
The rest is all in progress, what hinders then
The most important work of all-the Mission?

Neve

That, Padre, belongs to me to know, and say.
Know then, no Mission shall be founded here
Till the Presidio is completed.

Serra

Then am I needless here. There's much to do,
And little time to do it. I will pass
To Monterey, and spend what yet remains
Of strength to me in tilling tenderer soil.
To work the new less yielding ground requires
New hands and vigorous strength, the which,
I pray, may God in time provide. Myself
Shall leave, but Father Dumet shall come to serve
Your souls. The love of Christ doth press me on.

[He goes out.]

Ortega

Teach that man patience? How calmly he bore the trial!

Neve

Bear 't as he may, 't is good he's gone, the remnant,
The last, I hope, of a decrepit system
That has survived too long.

Ortega

Say what you will,
God knows he is a tried and saintly soul;
And if a better system will supplant
His own is doubtful yet,—that, time must show.

Neve

Right, and time will show it very soon.—

Captain, I will review the work tomorrow:
Have all in readiness. Till then, adios!

Ortega

Adios, Gobernador, adios!

SCENE 5. Serra kneeling at the Cross.

Serra

We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee,
Because by Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.
Yes, faithful cross, by Thee the world is saved,
By Thee too every soul is shaped unto
Its Saviour a vessel of His grace
And clean abode of His enduring love.
O Master Crucified! how shall I thank
For this Thy newest token? I am not worthy
To suffer so for Thee; yet do I beg
Most humbly, Lord, accept my worthless gift
In reparation for my sins, and turn
My disappointment into joy for Thee
By calling worthier workers to this field,
Who'll slake Thy burning thirst, my dying Lord,
For souls redeemed by Thy most Precious Blood.—
'T is true, I merit not to see my hope
And ardent wish fulfilled. Enough for me
That I have sown the seed; another hand
Will water the plant when it shall please
Sweet Providence to let it sprout, and God
Will give Himself th' increase and cull the fruit.—
Enough for me, indeed, more than enough.
Yet toil I will, yet labor hard I must,
For woe is me if I preach not the Gospel:
To preach Christ Crucified is my one claim
To live, if claim can be where all is grace
And nothing is desert.—To Carlos Mission,
The loved of my heart, I will return,
And there work on until the final call.
Unworthy I to see, or say, what yet
This Virgin Martyr's ground will grow in time.
Why may not Santa Barbara's Mission be
A nursery of godly men who'll bring

To glorious spread and prosperous state the Church
Of God and Kingdom of His Son? For me,
My life's sun hastens to its setting; soon
The still small voice will speak. O may I then
Be alert to hear its faintest tones, and answer
The summons of my Judge. And may I find
Repose in my dear California's soil,
And Rest Eternal in the arms of God.—
If I am needful for Thy people's good,
Lord, I refuse not yet to work, albeit
My soul thirsts for Thee, strong and living God,
I long to be dissolved and live with Christ.

Publication. *The Planting of the Cross at Santa Barbara by Padre Junipero Serra* (Santa Barbara: Morning Press Print, November 1913), complete reset text, printed pp. 11–36.

Performance. First staged by students of St. Anthony's College on the steps of the Old Mission, November 23, 1913; subsequently filmed under Lorimer Johnston's direction.

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Primary witnesses and biographical evidence

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- Library of Congress authority record for Francis de Sales Gliebe. Its death year 1974 is rejected in favor of the 1962 cemetery and contemporary record.

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond at a six-by-nine-inch trim. The cover uses the editor's unlettered St. Francis artwork with live Extremes typography. Both plays were fully reset from original scans. Verse lineation, shared-line indents, character cues, prose passages, songs, and italic stage directions are retained; page-width hanging wraps and scan furniture are not. Three distinct archival plates appear near the front of the book, and publication information follows each work.