

Gore, Catherine. King O'Neil. Ed. with an Introduction by John Franceschina. British Women Playwrights around 1800. 15 October 2000. [date of access.] <<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/mirrors/romnet/wp1800/editions/king/king.html>>

King O'Neil

Catherine Gore

(1835)

Dramatis Personae

Louis XV (Blue silk coat with large crimson satin cuffs, crimson satin waistcoat, trimmed with silver, blue silk breeches, black slouched hat with feather trimming, high black shoes and ties, and yellow silk domino)

Duke de Richelieu (Pink silk full-skirted coat trimmed with silver, pink silk breeches, silver embroidered waistcoat, three-cornered hat trimmed with feather, domino, and dress sword)

Sir Henry Arundel (Puce-colored embroidered silk coat, satin embroidered waistcoat, white silk breeches, and hat trimmed with feather)

General Count Dillon (Scarlet broad-skirted coat with large yellow cuffs, trimmed with gold ribbon knots on each shoulder, white breeches, silk stockings, and shoes)

Major de Burgh (Scarlet broad-skirted coat trimmed with gold lace, large yellow cuffs, white breeches, high black boots, hat trimmed with feather, and sword)

Major Macnamara (Dressed as Major de Burgh)

Cornet O'Callaghan (Dressed as Major de Burgh)

Captain O'Neil (Dressed as Major de Burgh)

Rafe (Light drab poplin coat, embroidered waistcoat, white silk breeches, three-cornered hat trimmed with white feather)

Countess Dillon (Pink and silver brocade open dress, white satin petticoat flounced, and lace ruffles)

Marchioness de Clermont (White satin open dress, petticoat with flounce, and ruffles)

Duchess de Mailly (Blue and silver brocade dress, ruffles and gauze veil)

[Males and females all wear powder.]

Act I

Scene 1

[Apartment at an inn at Versailles. Enter Waiter shewing in Major de Burgh, L.]

Wai.

This way, Major. This way, sir!

De B.

A strange gentleman—a fellow-countryman, enquiring for me, you say? Have you no conjecture of his name?

Wai.

None, Major; never set eyes on him before! he arrived only this morning at Versailles, after traveling in double quick time—with deference to your honourable cloth—from Vienna.

De B.

From Vienna? *[Enter Arundel, R.]*

Aru.

De Burgh! my dear fellow! *[Shakes hands.]*

De B.

Ha! Arundel!

Aru.

[Stopping his mouth.] Hush! *[He signs to the Waiter to quit the room. Waiter exits L.]*

De B.

A thousand welcomes. *[Shakes his hand.]* No mysteries; but honestly tell me what brings you to Versailles—a woman, or a place?

Aru.

Both! you may remember that, while still at college, I was contracted in marriage to my cousin, Helena Dillon.

De B.

Daughter to the staunch old General, who commands our Irish Brigade?

Aru.

Exactly. We had never met! Helena was sewing a sampler at a convent in Paris, while you and I ran riot at the Military College of Vienna.

De B.

Whence the rumour of your wild exploits excited the vehement indignation of the General.

Aru.

Ah! at that unlucky moment he married again; and the new Countess Dillon soon persuaded him to break off his engagements with me.

De B.

Persuaded!

Aru.

For the advancement of her family interests, she united her step-daughter to the Marquis de Clermont, an infirm libertine, who, on the occasion of his marriage, was sent ambassador to the Court of Vienna.

De B.

[Significantly.] In order that his pretty bride might become acquainted with her wild cousin! Eh, my dear Arundel?

Aru.

[Embarrassed.] Why, considering the relationship between us, it was but natural I should form a sort of humdrum-cousinly acquaintance with De Clermont's wife.

De B.

Or that you should travel post to Versailles to improve it with his widow! Never deny it, man! 'Tis no sin to love a young and handsome widow, though she be *one's cousin*! Since his Excellency's death, Madame De Clermont has thrown aside her weeds, and appeared again at Court. The whole world is at her feet!

Aru.

The devil it is.

De B.

From His Majesty down to the smallest page in waiting; all bow the knee to the lovely Marchioness!

Aru.

[*Agitated.*] No doubt! 'tis mighty well! The King, too! [*Walks about.*]

De B.

Louis himself—nay, even the all-conquering Richelieu is her slave.

Aru.

The profligate Richelieu! Oh, woman! woman!

De B.

Further, 'tis whispered that, aided by the intrigues of Countess Dillon, she is about to obtain an appointment in the Queen's household!

Aru.

A place at Court? Never! Of the designs of the King, rumours had already reached me; I had hoped to have found them groundless, but they are too palpable! I will not hear of this place for her; I will die rather than consent to her accepting it.

De B.

Your humdrum-cousinly acquaintance, appears to endow you with great authority? hem!

Aru.

Paha! absurd! [*Walks again.*] She at Court!

De B.

You take the matter deucedly to heart.

Aru.

[*Stopping short.*] To be frank, then, I *do*! I am pledged, heart and hand, to my lovely cousin; but that Machiavel in petticoats, Countess Dillon, has already plotted another marriage for her! And my uncle, who so peremptorily broke off our early betrothment, is not likely to favor my pretensions now, as, unhappily, I am still a stranger to him.

De B.

And he is still so irritated against you, that were you to present yourself as a suitor to his

daughter, he would dismiss you the house with as little ceremony as one of his own orderlies.

Aru.

For which reason, my dear fellow, I depend on you to introduce me as a candidate for the first vacant commission in his regiment. Call me Fitzgerald. Say I'm a fellow-Conaught man. Tell him—

De B.

The imposture would still be useless; you are known to an officer who has lately joined our regiment. Do you remember, at the Military College, a little fellow named Phaidrig O'Neil?

Aru.

A right-hearted, wrong-headed Irishman! as brave as his sword—who insists that he is linearly descended from the kings of Ulster—who never got a glass over his usual stint but he became every inch a king, and exercised his prerogative right royally.

De B.

The same! A sabre cut on his head at the siege of Phillipsburg has not cooled either his courage or his pride. And now, whenever an extra glass of Burgundy inflames his blood, our friend actually proclaims himself king. Ha! ha!

Aru.

Ha! ha! ha! Poor O'Neil! Does he never get into mischief, when in these royal moods?

De B.

Why, his companions and brother-officers, who love him for his gaiety and his gallantry, in moments of frolic and wine usually keep a sharp eye upon him, whilst they humour his absurdity by doing all due homage to "King O'Neil"—till the fumes of the debauch leave his brain, when he lets his royal mantle slip quietly from his shoulders, and gracefully falls back on his troop in the Brigade.

Aru.

So cracked-brained an accomplice, I admit, would be the ruin of my plot.

De B.

But he will certainly recognize you!

Aru.

In that case I must trust to my own impudence, and protest I never beheld him in all my life:—unless campaigning has changed his character, he's simple as a child.

De B.

He conserves his native simplicity unimpaired, but when sober is *too* sagacious to be duped easily. [*Enter Waiter, L.*]

Wai.

Captain O'Neil is below, sir.

O'N.

[*Heard without, L.*] What's the Major's billet?

De B.

By Jove, here he is! I could swear to his brogue at half a league's distance. Show the Captain in. [*Exit Servant, L.*]

Aru.

Now to forswear my college chum, and half-cracked countryman, with the coolest possible countenance. [*Enter O'Neil, with letters, L.*]

O'N.

Beg pardon, my dear fellow, your ba'tman at the barracks told me he didn't know which way you were gone, so I followed ye, till I met ye *en face*. Orders! [*Gives papers.*]

De B.

Thank you, O'Neil, thank you! Orders from the general? [*Reads, retiring up C.*]

O'N.

[*Aside, eyeing Arundel.*] Why the devil didn't he introduce me to his friend I wonder? Sir! your most obedient! [*Crosses from I. to R, when Arundel turns and bows stiffly, R.*]

Aru.

Sir, your humble servant.

O'N.

[*Startled.*] Eh! blessed St. Patrick! It is; but yet it can't be though—but it is! I—sir—Arundle, my dear fellow! [*Tries to take his hand.*]

Aru.

Sir! I have not exactly the honour of—

O'N.

[*Interrupting.*] Och! then—I ask yer pardon, sir; the fact is, I took you for a scapegrace of a countryman of mine, and a schoolfellow, one Sir Henry Arundel; but, of course, you know best, whether or no you're yourself or somebody else; but, by my honour, you're as like my friend ould Harry, as Arundel is himself; but he was always up to his ears in waggery and wickedness, so I christened him ould Harry. Eh, don't you remember? You're not ould Harry, are you?

Aru.

Sir, I—

De B.

[*Ceremoniously, C.*] This, my dear O'Neil, is my friend, Mr. Fitzgerald—Fitzgerald, my friend, Captain O'Neil.

O'N.

At your service, my honey! Fitzgerald!

De B.

A candidate for the first commission vacant in the regiment, O'Neil, and a fine fellow!

O'N.

[*Crosses to center.*] He does us honour. [*Shakes hands.*] I trust we shall be better acquainted. But you must know our Roster's full just now, so that if you think to get easily in, you'll be plaguily out, Mr. Fitzgibbon.

Aru. and De B.

[*Together.*] Fitzpatrick, sir! Fitzgerald, O'Neil.

De B.

You perceive there's a difference.

O'N.

I do, and a distinction! Only settle what I am to call your friend, Major. Is it to be Fitzgerald or Fitzpatrick?

Aru.

I am called Sir Fitzpatrick Fitzgerald. You've no objection to the names I hope?

O'N.

None in life; only a couple of Fitz at a time might bother any man—no offense I hope to Mr. Fitzgerald Fitzpatrick.

Aru.

No offense if none be intended, Captain O'Neil.

O'N.

Harry Arundel's voice all the world over! Major, only look at the man's voice! Am I in my right senses? [*To De B.*] Are you in yours? [*Pointing to Arundel.*] Is he in his? Or maybe this is one of Ovid's metamorphoses.

De B.

[*Aside.*] If you persist, he will grow angry.

O'N.

Do you think there's a chance of that; I'd like to see how he looks when angry.

De B.

Hush! these orders, my dear O'Neil, acquaint me that we are to escort the King tomorrow to Court.

O'N.

The devil we are! Then I shall see the French King! This is the first chance I've had of beholding his Majesty's gracious features since I joined the Brigade. [*To Arundel.*] You, I suppose, have seen the face of King Louis, Mr. Fitz—Fitz—excuse the observation.

Aru.

Oh yes; I have seen his face very often! That is, upon a *louis d'or*.

O'N.

Often upon a *louis d'or*—you're a lucky lad!

Aru.

Why, Captain, you receive his pay, and ought to look gratefully on his golden portraits.

O'N.

That's true; but I'm sorry to say my familiarity with the golden pictures of the King would not enable me to recognize the royal original. Our pay's not regular enough—eh, Major?

De B.

Prudence, Major! remember, we are now in the limits of the royal Court, and must be delicate on the subject of our claims here.

O'N.

Oh, manners! I know it would be the height of indelicacy to ask for your own at Court; but if I had a hold of the royal ear, I'd—

De B.

Pray be silent, Captain, and have patience.

O'N.

Oh, mum! I'll be as patient as a pig under a grate, and as silent, if that's manners!

De B.

I must now lose no time in presenting Fitzgerald to the General. Let us leave him to dress.

O'N.

[*Slaps Arundel on shoulder.*] To be sure. Full fig. Mr. Fitz—

De B.

[*Endeavours to walk him to the door.*] Good bye, then, for the present; remember that Fitzgerald dines with us at our barrack to-night.

O'N.

Bravo! We'll give him the "Cead Mille faltha," for the honour of the corps.

De B.

Go and give orders then.

O'N.

I'll do that thing with all the veins of my heart! And, I say, Major, we'll make a Christian of this lad. I'll be his godmother! Och, won't we make a night of it— and, maybe, a next day on it. [*Exit L.*]

Aru.

Success! De Burgh! Success! O'Neil is all abroad! Ha! ha! ha!

De B.

Success beyond my hopes; and now to your toilet: the hour of the King's levee approaches, we must lose no time with the General.

Aru.

Allons! you shall equip me with the last sword-know, *à la Richelieu!* and my first bold stroke shall be to rival *myself*, as our friend O'Neil would say, in the smiles of my sweet cousin Helena. [*Exeunt R.*]

Scene 2

[*A saloon richly furnished. Count Dillon discovered writing, Orderly Officer waiting. In front, Countess Dillon knitting.*]

Dil.

[*To Orderly.*] This to Captain Jerningham. This, to Quarter-master O'Grady. [*Exit Orderly C.*]

Cou.

Are you at leisure now to listen to me?

Dil.

Not on the old chapter, madam; I must decline all further interference with the destinies of my daughter. 'Twas at your suggestion I broke off her match with my nephew Harry, and united her to one who lived to make her wretched, and who died to leave her penniless.

Cou.

You talk, my dear General, as if the widow of one of our first nobles, were likely to be reduced to a workhouse.

Dil.

And so she might, had not her father's home and heart been open to receive her!

Cou.

A word from you to the King would secure her a pension, and a place at Court.

Dil.

How often must I repeat to you, that 'tis not in my nature to go cringing and begging to his Majesty. It is not for an Irish gentleman, madam, to become a hanger-on in the antechambers of courts, hungering after ribbons and pensions, and soliciting for this grace, and for that favor.

Cou.

Yet, your daughter's interests! Consider your daughter's interests.

Dil.

Never fear! young and handsome as she is, Helena will marry again.

Cou.

She never will!

Dil.

And why not?

Cou.

She wants the better half of widowhood—a jointure. My kinsman, the Duke of Richelieu, indeed, is a disinterested suitor; but the Marchioness has made up her mind to a second marriage.

Dil.

Who says so?

Cou.

Herself! Ask her! Apropos—here comes your daughter. [*Enter Marchioness, L.*]

Mar.

Good morning, Countess. [*Crosses to C.*] Good morning, my dear father!

Dil.

[*Kisses her forehead.*] The Countess tells me, Helena, that you have decided against marrying again.

Mar.

Yes, papa!

Dil. Your first marriage has prejudiced you against matrimony.

Mar.

[*C.*] Yes, papa!

Dil.

Should, then, any noble of the Court tender proposals, I may, in short, decline his overtures.

Mar.

Without a moment's hesitation.

Dil.

Reflect—as a widow, you must remain obscure, neglected, poor—

Mar.

[Caressing him.] Dare you to say so— when you have once more received me into your arms; once more installed me as your daughter.

Dil.

These grey hairs, Helena, should remind you that your father is mortal.

Mar.

Why remind me of that which it is my happiness to forget?

Cou.

[Aside.] A little crocodile!

Dil.

The sword of my ancestors constitutes my fortune. When I am gone, my child, you will be friendless. The Countess Dillon informs me that the Duke de Richelieu aspires to your hand.

Mar.

Richelieu! who made his first wife miserable, whose hotel is besieged by creditors, and whose dissipation and profligacy have made his name a proverb. Suffer me, my dear father, to remain in retirement! to live under your protection! I have here a thousand avocations that will render me useful—to read to you—to write for you—to ride—to walk with you when you are well and cheerful. And when the gout comes to render your winter evenings tedious, I will then nurse you, like a petted child, into your wonted good humour. Let me remain with you, my dear father, if you love your Helena.

Dil.

[Affected.] A gypsy! Bless her! *[Goes up R.]*

Cou.

[Aside.] Artful little hypocrite! *[Aloud.]* Are you quite sure, my dear Marchioness, that this passion for domestic life is not twin-brother to a tenderer passion? *[Servant enters C., whispers to Dillon, and then goes off C.]*

Mar.

You have no grounds, Madam, for the supposition.

Cou.

Nor you, perhaps, a favored lover at Vienna.

Mar.

Heavens!

Dil.

Ladies, I have a visitor coming up, who will amuse you. Captain O'Neil, just arrived here from Phillipsburg, where he led the "Forlorn Hope," and greatly distinguished himself. *[Servant enters, ushering O'Neil, C.]*

Ser.

Captain Patrick O'Neil!

O'N.

Phadrig, my dear. Phadrig is the true classical pronunciation! General, your humble servant!

Dil.

Captain—"Caed Mille faltha!"—I'm glad to take you by the hand: Helena, child, let me present you to a countryman, a most loyal subject of King James, and one of the bravest soldiers in the pay of King Louis.

O'N.

My modesty, General! consider my modesty!

Dil.

Captain Phadrig O'Neil, Countess—a lineal descendant of the old Kings of Ulster—eh, Captain?

O'N.

The poorest soldier in King James's guards, and your servant always to the death.

Cou.

Are you, too, an Irishman, Captain?

O'N.

I am, madam, every inch of me, though by accident a native of France; owing to my mother being away from home at the time of my birth.

Mar.

But how came you by so pure an accent, Captain?

O'N.

By inheritance, my lady! His brogue and his sword were all my father brought with him from Ireland; these he bequeathed to me, and I hope to carry to the grave my sword and my brogue, as

pure and untarnished as I received them, both the one and the other!

Dil.

Well said, Captain; and that you will do so, I will be your guarantee. [*Servant enters L.*]

Ser.

Major De Burgh and Mr. Fitzgerald.

Dil.

I'll wait on them; but who is Mr. Fitzgerald? Do you know the gentleman, Captain?

O'N.

Why, I thought I did; that is, I mistook him for somebody else, but he insists upon it he's himself, and I presume he knows best.

Cou.

Ha! ha! ha! what an amusing creature.

O'N.

Mighty diverting, isn't it, madam? I can tell you 'tis himself, General: he comes to take service, and is as hopeful looking a recruit as ever shouldered a half-pike.

Cou.

Shall we retire, Count?

Dil.

Oh, by no means; I desire to present De Burgh, who commands the regiment just arrived here. No time like the present. I regard my officers as a part of my family, since I feel they regard me as a father. [*Exit L.*]

O'N.

That I'll answer for, ladies! and I only wish, madam, you could see the whole of your family under arms, horse and foot—by my soul you might feel proud of your children—for you'd see ten thousand of the tightest boys ever manufactured in Ireland, and that's saying a good deal for them.

Mar.

Pity such faithful services should be lost to our country, Captain O'Neil.

O'N.

Not exactly lost, madam, since we will bequeath

to our country the example of loyalty and fidelity to her sovereign, an example which I trust our latest posterity will ever be proud to recollect, and always be prompt to imitate. [*Enter O'Dillon, De Burgh, and Arundel, L.*]

Dil.

Ladies, I have the honour to present to your favour, my gallant friend Major de Burgh, and Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mar.

Harry here! Heavens! What audacity! What imprudence!

Dil.

[*To Arundel.*] You have lately arrived from England?

Aru.

[*L.*] I—I reached Versailles only this morning.

Dil.

[*L. C., to De Burgh.*] Has he been educated for the service?

De B.

He has, General.

Dil.

And where, pray?

Aru.

At the Military College of Vienna.

O'N.

The devil you were!

Dil.

You must be about the same standing, Captain O'Neil.

O'N.

Within half an inch, General.

Dil.

Pooh! pooh! I mean at college, Captain.

O'N.

As near as buds of the same sprig, General!

Dil.

You were acquainted, I presume, sir, with my wild, graceless nephew, Sir Harry Arundel!

O'N.

I knew him well, General. I was on excellent terms with him, and the fun of the thing was, that when I met Mr. Fitzgerald here this morning, I thought—

De B.

You thought you discovered an old school-fellow, O'Neil! Be silent! *[Aside.]*

O'N.

Why, this is no treason! *[Turns up L.]*

Dil.

[Takes De Burgh up the stage.] But allow me, Major, to ask you a question. *[Retires up L. Arundel and the Marchioness gradually approach each other, the Countess watching them.]*

Mar.

[Aside to him.] Harry! What madness has brought you hither?

Aru.

Let your own heart suggest the answer: once more to look upon your face.

Mar.

[Aside to him.] And be once more rejected by my father!

Aru.

No! Give me but time to—

Mar.

Hush! the Countess is observant. *[They approach the rest.]*

De B.

[Conversing with Dillon.] I fancy, General, these rumours belie poor Arundel! They tell me that he has formed an honourable attachment—the best proof of amendment.

Dil.

On the contrary! I learn from the Countess that my nephew still frequents the most dissipated society.

O'N.

He was a little loose in his company, now and then, I remember.

Aru.

How, sir?

Dil.

What, he was wild, eh, Captain?

O'N.

As a three-year old colt! and is yet, I'll answer for him!

Dil.

Aye—wilful and headstrong!

O'N.

Wilful as a woman, and headstrong as a buffalo!

Aru.

[Aside.] Devil take this fellow!

De B.

Ha! ha! ha! Be quiet. But a true fellow in the main, eh, O'Neil?

O'N.

Oh, true as steel from poin to hilt, with the kindest spirit and the softest heart of any boy in the college, or out of it!

Mar.

Your picture is, I fear, a flattering one, Captain; but thank you, for my cousin. *[Servant enters, and announces, "The Duke de Richelieu," and exits, C.]*

Aru.

[Aside.] Ha! Richelieu here!

Dil.

Attend the Duke! Gentlemen, you will excuse me. I have to attend the levee of the King.

De B.

General, we'll take our leave. Come away, man: don't you see we are dismissed. Ladies, your most obedient.

Dil.

Rely on my good services, Mr. Fitzgerald. Your desire shall be laid before King James this day. *[They exit, C.]* Captain O'Neil, I am glad to welcome you once more to Versailles.

O'N.

I desire no better, General! Ladies, yours

devotedly to the death, and a day further if I can serve you! [*Exeunt O'Neil, De Burgh, and Arundel, C.*]

Cou.
Ha! ha! ha! what a strange creature!

Dil.
Poor O'Neil! with the simplicity of a child, and the heart of a Bayard! What say you to our King of Ulster, Helena, eh?

Mar.
Oh! his Irish Majesty has quite won my heart!

Cou.
[*Aside.*] What, by his eulogy on Arundel, child?
[*Enter Servant, ushering the Duke de Richelieu. The Duke enters, C.*]

Ric.
[*Bows and crosses to Marchioness.*] You designed not, madam, last night, to grace the circle of the Queen.

Mar.
Among so many attractions, was my absence noticed?

Ric.
'Twas attested by their very number; on moonless nights, a thousand stars are visible in the sky; but when the Queen of Heaven herself appears—

Cou.
[*Sneering.*] The world is struck with wonder at her charms! Very gallant, my dear Duke! bravo!

Ric.
I have news for you, ladies! the Queen's jealousy is appeased; the Cardinal silenced; and the favorite Duchess de Mailly is dismissed for ever!

Cou.
'Tis said that the entertainment given this evening at Court, is intended to celebrate the departure of Madame de Mailly.

Ric.
[*To Marchioness.*] At the ball of to-night, may I solicit, madam, the honour of your hand?

Dil.
You must go to this ball, Helena!

Mar.
At my father's request, Duke, I shall attend the ball.

Ric.
Ever, madam, at your commands. [*Crosses to her, and bows.*]

Dil.
We are forgetting the hour of his Majesty's levee, my dear Richelieu! [*Looks at his watch.*]

Ric.
[*Looking at the Marchioness.*] Who could remember it, amid the attractions that surround us! [*Bows the ladies off, R.*] General, you are happy in possessing such a daughter: I hope you will not find my selfishness unpardonable, if I seek to rob you of her.

Dil.
I should not merit her love, if I only consulted my own wishes—however, you will find me no mean rival, my Lord Duke. We shall be late at the levee.

Ric.
His Majesty would excuse me, General, having so fair an excuse to plead for my delay. [*Exeunt, C.*]

Scene 3

[*Terrace in the Royal Gardens at Versailles. Two Centinels discovered R. and L. Steps in C. Enter the Duke and Rafe, down steps of Terrace, U.E.L.*]

Ric.
Did I not request you, sir, to secure this terrace from intrusion? [*Soldiers present arms to the Duke.*] Who were the ill-looking dogs with whom you were in conference?

Rafe.
[*Bowing.*] A select few of your excellent creditors! I had not so much as a purse to fling at the beasts' heads.

Ric.

[Throws a purse, which Rafe catches.] This for your next occasion! Be careful that it arrive not over soon.

Rafe.

[Pockets it.] Long live my noble lord! to be in debt, in favor, and in love!

Ric.

She has made her appearance then!

Rafe.

[Affecting surprise.] She!

Ric.

The fair divinity at whose mysterious summons I am here.

Rafe.

Fair divinity! I conceived it was a dark one your excellency came here to worship! I thought the Cardinal—

Ric.

[Interrupting.] The Cardinal! when did you know me so assiduous in waiting on an old woman? 'tis with the young ones, sirrah, my interest lies—the young ones, for whose dear sake—*[sighs]* I am about to rush upon destruction!

Rafe.

My lord—

Ric.

And commit matrimony! Yes, Rafe. I am about to drive one fair creature into ingratitude, and a thousand to despair! This very morning, on my way from the King, I tendered proposals to General Dillon for the hand of his daughter.

Rafe.

The Marchioness de Clermont. *[Aside.]* A woman without a single moral quality—

Ric.

How, sirrah!

Rafe.

That is, my lord, without a single *louis d'or* in the world—

Ric.

The old soldier referred me to his daughter, who, heaven reward her charity, appears no way backward in encouragement; for, as I quitted the house, a page whispered an assignation for this terrace at this hour.

Rafe.

The page of Madame de Clermont!

Ric.

He was too well taught to hazard the utterance of his lady's name: but the place of our meeting, and my heart, assures me 'twas from no other. *[Crosses R.]*

Rafe.

Apropos—a lady, masked and attended, is bending her steps this way.

Ric.

'Tis herself! 'Tis the fair Helena, doubtless! Richelieu, thou art a happy man! Leave me, Rafe. Vanish! *[Exit Rafe at the top. As he goes out, enter the Duchess de Mailly, masked, attended by two servants, L. They remain at the back. Richelieu meets her, and leads her obsequiously forward.]*

Ric.

You behold, madam, the most impatient of mankind.

Duc.

[Hurriedly.] I have been intercepted by hundreds of importunate people. Are we safe here from intrusion?

Ric.

My people are in waiting yonder. Rely on their vigilance! *[The Duchess unmasks.]* The Duchess de Mailly!!

Duc.

My page surely apprised you!

Ric.

Your page, was it! Diable! That is, madame, I scarcely esteemed myself so fortunate.

Duc.

You, at least, my dear Duke, do not desert me in my adversity; you have not plotted with my enemies. *You* do not revel at the fête with which the Queen has resolved to celebrate my exile from Court.

Ric.

[*Embarrassed.*] But are you wise, madam, to enhance the victory of your enemies, by thus remaining at Versailles in opposition to the mandate of the King?

Duc.

What more have I to lose? The Queen, the Cardinal, are triumphant! I am disgraced by him for whom I gave up all!

Ric.

Yet, surely the King will deign—

Duc.

Not a word of consolation! pity would, indeed, deride me! The King has deceived, betrayed, deserted! a newer face attracts him, and I am banished! No matter—I deserve it!

Ric.

A newer face—yet you have ventured.

Duc.

All! all! to secure a parting interview with him I love! to your gallantry, Duke, I appeal, to procure me a secret audience!

Ric.

But how can my poor services be rendered available against the King's commands?

Duc.

I have foreseen all! To-night, during the ball, I shall present myself, masked, at the western door; a word from you to the usher in waiting will secure me admittance. I implore it in the name of our former friendship. I demand it in the name of all you love!

Ric.

You shall be obeyed, madame. I accept the risk! the door will open at your bidding; your own

influence must effect the rest. [*Enter Rafe, running from U.E.L.*]

Rafe.

My lord! my lord! the King is seeking you, accompanied by my Lord Cardinal!

Duc.

The Cardinal here! [*To Richelieu.*] Whither shall I turn? I am lost!

Ric.

Compose yourself. Resume your mask. Leave the rest to me. [*She resumes her mask. Enter Usher, announcing "the King." Enter the King, four Pages, Courtiers, Ushers. They range themselves in the background. Richelieu bows.*]

King.

You are not easily to be met with, my dear Duke! I have been in pursuit of you through half the avenues of the gardens. [*Sees the Duchess.*] Aha! a lady! your retirement is at once explained. Pardon my intrusion. [*Going.*]

Ric.

[*Respectfully detaining him.*] Your Majesty's gracious presence at this moment—

King.

[*Lowering his voice.*] Might, I fancy, at this moment, be very well dispensed with—[*Crosses R.*] eh, Richelieu?

Ric.

You are in the mood, sire, for pleasantry.

King.

[*With spirit.*] Have I not motive to be gay? Just emancipated from a chain long grown too heavy for my patience! In dismissing the de Mailly, I have consulted only my inclinations, whilst I gain the credit of having sacrificed her to the prayers of Fleury, and the tears of the Queen! Yes, Richelieu, the Cardinal is appeased, the peevish Duchess de Mailly gone, [*She starts.*] and I am free as air—free to form lighter and happier ties.

Ric.

Yet, the Duchess de Mailly, sire—

King.

Name her not! She has quitted Versailles forever.

Duc.

[Aside.] Oh! Heavens!

Ric.

[Aside, approaching her.] Command yourself, madam.

King.

[R.] Ever complaining—her presence was like the ocean, a perpetual murmur—a frequent storm. *[The Duchess raises her hands. The King's attention is attracted.]* But I interfere with your engagement, Richelieu; your fair friend here seems to reproach my stay!

Ric.

[Aside.] Permit the lady, sire, to retire unnoticed.

King.

Heaven forbid that I should play the spy upon the gallantries of my friends! *[Crosses and leads the Duchess to the side.]* Go, madam, and rely upon it none here will either follow or observe you. *[To Courtiers.]* Let no one stir from hence. *[Bows gallantly on her hand and turns up the stage. Duchess and servants exeunt. L.]*

Ric.

[Aside.] What a hazard for her, and what an escape for me!

King.

[Returning, aside.] And now, my dear Duke, a word for your private ear. A mysterious billet was given me this very hour as I left the chapel, bidding me expect a visitor, this evening, in my private apartments.

Ric.

How, sire! assign a rendezvous to your Majesty?

King.

[With affection.] To say the truth, I have some slight suspicions who the lady is.

Ric.

Indeed! *[Aside.]* Does he suspect the Duchess?

King.

There is one, my dear duke, to whom my homage has long been silently devoted, one who has hitherto accorded me no grounds for hope. One who, should she ever smile upon me, will, I feel, obtain a paramount influence over my heart.

Ric.

[Cautiously.] May I presume to ask her name?

King.

Can you not guess it? There is but one so fair—so bright—so lovely—so all commanding!

Ric.

[Advancing anxiously.] And that is—

King.

The Marchioness de Clermont! *[Crosses to R.]*

Ric.

Dillon's daughter! *[Aside.]* Confusion!

King.

Prepare all, therefore, for this expected happiness. Let Lebel be in waiting in the corridor, to escort a lady to my private closet of audience, who will present herself at the western door, as from the ball. That corridor is obscure enough to enable me to hear her suit, and yet conceal her conscious blushes.

Ric.

Your Majesty commands it!

King.

I command it! *[Turning to his suite.]* And now, gentlemen, to the tennis court! Richelieu! *[As he goes out.]* I commend my desires to your vigilance! *[Exeunt R., Gentlemen, Usher, King, two Pages, and four Courtiers, two and two.]*

Ric.

[Solus.] If my good fortune waited on my diligence I should owe it a little I fear. Umph! The Duchess de Mailly's influence is gone, that's clear! What *sottise* was it prompted me to promise to introduce her tonight. However, I did

not promise to keep her design a secret, so the King shall be informed of her neighborhood, in due time to meet or avoid her. If she yet lives in his errant fancy, he will see her, her tears will prevail over his irresolution, and her gratitude be mine. If not, my information will save him from a scene, and give me a new claim on his Majesty, which I'll take care shall not grow stale in his recollection. *[Exit.]*

End of Act I

Act II

Scene 1

[An apartment at Count Dillon's. Enter the Marchioness de Clermont, and the Countess Dillon meeting.]

Mar.
You wished to speak to me, madam.

Cou.
I am anxious to learn your intentions towards the Duke of Richelieu.

Mar.
Intentions!

Cou.
He has this morning proposed for you!

Mar.
Proposed for *me*!

Cou.
Ha! ha! ha! For *you*! It certainly was not for me he was likely to make proposals.

Mar.
And my father accepted them?

Cou.
With submission always to the pleasure of the King, whose wish will be to the General a command.

Mar.
Without even consulting me! I know that my poverty is a burthen to him; but I know that he

would not sacrifice his child from such a motive. My father has not affianced me to Richelieu.

Cou.
It is your duty to spare him the alternative by appealing to the King!

Mar.
True! I ought not to be an incumbrance on my father-my generous-my noble father!-by encroaching on his pittance. I am robbing the soldier's widow, the soldier's orphan. I *will* speak to the King! *[Turns up R.]*

Cou.
[Aside.] All's well then, let me but accomplish an interview, her influence is established, and fortune our own.

Mar.
Were I openly to demand a private audience, my father would guess my motives, and refuse to let me become a *suitor* to his Majesty.

Cou.
Let all seem unpremeditated: as his majesty retires tonight from the ball, let him find us in the great gallery; he will not pass without addressing you. Solicit a few minutes audience-the gallery is obscure, to none other will you be known even.

Mar.
Tonight! So soon? *[R.]*

Cou.
The Duke of Richelieu is urgent in his suit; the General will lose no time in addressing the King-his desire expressed in Richelieu's favor-

Mar.
And I am again sacrificed! It is too severe a fate!

Cou.
Consider that your interests are those of your father. No excuses! No idle apprehensions! But away to your toilet!*[Going.]* Summon up all your charms, and my life on your success! Expect me in an hour, to accompany you to the circle of the Queen!

Mar.

I go, but still with a heavy heart!

Cou.

The King will prevent your marriage with the Duke. Courage! And success! [*Exeunt, Marchioness, R., Countess, L.*]

Scene 2

[*The mess-room of the Royal Irish. A long table around which are seated eight officers: De Burgh at bottom of table; Arundel by his side; O'Neil seated opposite, at the head of the table. A fireplace, S.E.R., before which is placed a high screen, and over it the colors of the French King. Tables, with trays, decanters, bottles, salvers, glasses, &c., &c., near the flats, L. and R. Practicable door, occupying S.E.L., over which hangs the regimental standard of the Irish Brigade. Two mess Waiters in attendance, R. and L., at the side tables.*]

All.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Bravo! bravo!

De B.

Excellent, O'Neil! Excellent! And now, gentlemen, our usual toast, and its accompaniment-"The land of our gallant forefathers!"

O'N.

And of our gallant foremothers! [*All drink.*] I'll never omit the ladies. Honour to the name of a petticoat! Every glass one fills to it is as good as two.

De B.

By making you see double, eh, O'Neil? But we have another toast, gentlemen, which must not be neglected! [*Rises. All rise and fill.*]

O'N.

Is it absolutely necessary to stand?

De B.

Absolutely, O'Neil! What ails you?

O'N.

Oh, nothing particular.

De B.

[*Smiling at O'Neil.*] I propose the health of his majesty.

All.

The King! hip! hip! hip! hurra! hurra! hurra!

O'N.

[*Tipsy.*] As the only representative of royalty present-

All.

Oh! oh!

O'N.

Is myself, gentlemen, one Phaidrig O'Neil, a poor trooper in the Irish Brigade, I'd be glad to know what king's health you're drinking? Is it the King of France, whose money you'll get when he comes to his fortune? Or the King of Ulster's, whose money you never did get, nor ever will get, for the best of all possible reasons-he never had any to give?

De B. and the others.

Bravo, O'Neil. Ha! ha! ha! Bravo, O'Neil!

O'N.

Speak out like true subjects. Is it Louis, or Leopold, or Charles, Edward, or George? Or is it your own natural born monarch, Captain Phaidrig O'Neil?

De B.

O'Neil, aboo! Ha! ha! ha!

All.

O'Neil! O'Neil! Long live King O'Neil!

O'N.

Amin! Long may he reign over you, for a darlin' rebellious set of subjects as ever an O'Neil had to his back.

De B.

You regard the reigning dynasties of Europe, then, as mere mushrooms, eh, O'Neil?

O'N.

[*Heated with wine.*] And so would you, was it the blood royal of Ulster was coursing through your veins. Who ever heard, pray, of the

Bourbons, and Hapsburgs, two thousand years back?

All.

Ha! ha! ha! ha!

O'N.

And wasn't the ancient Kings of Ireland, reigning with their gould crowns upon their heads, in glory, ages and ages afore the flood?

De B.

When their crowns didn't happen to be cracked!

O'N.

They were too busy breaking bright swords, and broad axes, to be troubled with breaking heads! Talk of chivalry, your golden eagles, and yer blue garters. By St. Dennis, and that's a big oath, the ouldest order of knighthood in the world is the royal Ulster order of the "Guardians of Jorus," and that same was flourishing in all power and glory, according to the best heraldic authority, anno domino, according to the Christian Era, one hundred and one.

All.

One hundred and one! ha! ha! ha!

Aru.

You despise such upstarts, then, as Charlemange, or your Bourbons; eh, O'Neil?

O'N.

Seed, breed, and generation. Didn't Gol Mac Moruil's own cousin to Fin Mac Coul, bate the Danes to perpetual smithereens, when they became besaging him in his castle, in County Latrim; and wasn't himself own cousin *ancestor* to O'Neil, the King of Ulster? From whose noble stem, as you all know, I am a broken twig-a scattered leaf, blown from the parent tree, and left to wither on some foreign soil, and be forgotten! But no matter! No matter for that!

De B.

[Aside to Arundel.] His humour is on him-the moon's at full-don't cross his mood.

O'N.

By the powers! I'd rather be as I am, of the blood

royal of Ulster, with a sword for my sceptre, than reign here at Versailles, over a set of spangled courtiers, and furbelowed dowagers. *[Enter Usher, S.E.L.]*

All.

Bravo! O'Neil! Bravo! King O'Neil! Long life to King O'Neil!

Ush.

[Delivering a sealed paper to De Burgh.] A dispatch from Cardinal Fleury.

De B.

[Coming forward, with Usher on his R.] How, at this late hour?

Ush.

You will perceive, sir, that his eminence's letter is superscribed "immediate."

De B.

[Having read it.] A troop of horse! Doubtless to escort some state prisoner. It shall be ready.

Ush.

What time, sir, do you require for preparation?

De B.

Ten minutes to boot and saddle, and my men are at your service. *[Exit Usher, S.E.L. Going up to table.]* I have received pressing orders, gentlemen, and am under the necessity of saying good night!

[All rise and come forward.]

O'N.

Another glass, Major, just to lay the dust of the road afore ye. Another glass! *[Detains Arundel.]* Mister Fitzgerald, another glass! Boy! Parade! Some glasses! Fill full. *[Waiters bring wine glasses, &c., on salvers, and all fill.]*

Aru.

I have just toasted the Irish Brigade, in a bumper.

O'N.

I know you have. Ye're a fellow of the right sort, and now a stirrup cup to the Major!

All.

The Major! [*They drink to the Major.*] The Major!

De B.

And I have the honour, sire, to wish your majesty good night! [*Kisses O'Neil's hand.*]

O'N.

I wish you many happy returns.

De B.

Don't get into the guard-house. Extend your royal protection to my friend Fitzgerald; and let no man get more royally drunk under your authority. [*To the rest.*] Au revoir. [*Aside.*] Arundel, don't lose sight of his Majesty! now, for heaven's sake! [*Exit, S.E.L.*]

O'N.

Go thy ways, Francis de Burgh! and he who says I have a better subject, deserves to be kicked out of my service.

Mac.

And now a song from King O'Neil.

All.

Aye, aye! A song! a song! a song!

O'N.

Well, with all my heart! Doich an doriuish! and a song! [*Sings.*]

Oh, why should I sing ye of Roman or Greek,
The boys we hear tell of in story?
Come match me for fightin', for frolic, or freak,
An Ulster man reigning in glory!
There's Ajax, and Hector, and bould
Agamemnon,
Were up to the tricks of our trade!
But the rollickin boys for war, women, and noise,
Are the boys of the Irish Brigade!

Chorus.

But the rollickin boys, &c.

O'N.

What for should I sing you of Helen of Troy,
Or the mischiefs that come of her flirtin';
Sure there's Biddy O'Flanagan, pride of Fermoy,
Twice as much of a Helen-that's certain.
Then for Venus, Minerva, or Queen Cleopatra,

Oh! bad luck to the word, shall be said
By the rollickin boys for war, women, and noise-
The boys of the Irish Brigade!

Chorus.

By the rollickin boys, &c.

O'N.

What for would I sing ye of classical fun,
Of games, boys, Olympic or Partseon?
Sure the Curragh's the course, where the known
ones done,
And there's Mallon that flogs for *divarsion*!
For fightin'! for drinkin'! for females and all,
No times like our times e'er were made;
For the rollickin boys for war, women, and noise,
Are the boys of the Irish Brigade!

Chorus.

The rollickin boys, &c.

All.

Bravo! bravo! bravo!

Aru.

And now suffer me, in my turn, to propose a toast.

All.

Aye, aye! A toast! a toast!

O'N.

As many toasts as ever you please, so they be not dry toasts?

Aru.

Here's the health of King O'Neil! [*Kneels, L.*]

All.

[*Kneeling.*] The health of King O'Neil! Hurrah, hurrah! hurrah!

O'N.

Now, ain't I a king? Any way I'd like to make that gentleman's personal acquaintance, who would dispute my regality at this moment. I'd measure him for a crown he'd find uneasy to wear; as Shakespeare, our Irish bard, beautifully expresses it-"Uneasy is the head that wears a crown!" So I'd let him know. Rise up boys, and keep on your legs, if it is quite convenient. I'll remit all taxes on pipe-clay; your tailor's bills shall be repected gratis; and that'll be convenient

to some o' ye, I believe! Your marchin' money shall be doubled! Ye shall have heaps o' fightin' for two-thirds o' the year, and free quarters for the remaining six months.

All.

Bravo! bravo! bravo!

Aru.

[To Officers.] I should be glad to see him safe at home. *[To O'Neil.]* Will your majesty permit one of your faithful lieges to escort you to your palace? *[Officers go up, get their hats and swords, &c. One brings down O'Neil's and assists him on with it.]*

O'N.

Will I permit? Will a cat eat fish? Go before!

Mac.

'Tis for your majesty to go before.

O'N.

Never! when the liquor's behind me. That's a rule: Phaidrig O'Neil, first to advance, last to retire. Ask the boys.

All.

Aye, aye, all true, your majesty.

O'N.

Write it on my tombstone; and when I'm beneath it, let me hear any gentleman gainsay it, that's all.

All.

Well, good night, your majesty! Good night, to King O'Neil!

Chorus.

[Sing.] But the rollickin boys for war, &c.
[Exeunt, S.E.L. As soon as they are off, O'Neil bolts the door and staggers forward.]

O'N.

Whoo! I have got all my subjects on the wrong side of the door, and his majesty will try the window. It's only one story high, I think; however, I'll know better about it when I come to the bottom. Those boys want to lade their master into mischief. I'll shew them O'Neil's not a king to be led by his ministers. Here goes O'Neil, aboo! If I get to the ground with whole bones, I'll

drive the world before me this night! *[Staggers up to the window, opens it, and gets on balcony. A loud knocking is heard without, S.F.L. Cries of "O'Neil."]*

Aru.

[Without.] O'Neil! What keeps you? O'Neil! O'Neil!

O'N.

Hark! The populace is getting impatient. No rioting, you villains!

Aru.

[Without.] O'Neil! Come along! *[Coaxing.]* Won't you? Won't you come with your people?

O'N.

Indeed I won't come. Familiarity breeds contempt. I'll make myself scarce, and my people will like me the better. Here goes! Luck's all! Look out below! *[Drops from the window. Crash and screams heard from below. The door is burst open, and Arundel and Officers rush on in confusion.]*

Aru.

Where the devil is the king? *[Cries without: "Murder! Stop him! Stop him!"]*

O'N.

[Without.] Who'll stop the king? Fague a Ballagh!

Mac.

[Looking out of window.] 'Tis our royal master. The streets are full of persons of quality thronging to the ball. He has dropt on a sedan chair, and is off up the street in a gallop! Ha! ha! ha!

O'C.

Drunk as he is, he's running like a greyhound.

Aru.

We must follow and recover our mad king, or he'll get into some royal scrape! After him gentlemen! Follow! follow!

All.

Ha! ha! ha! Follow the king! Ha! ha! *[Exeunt L.]*

Scene 3

[Entrance to the Palace of Versailles by moonlight. The Palace illuminated. Two Centinels on duty. Enter the King and Richelieu, in cloaks.]

Sen.
Stand! Who goes there?

Ric.
Friends.

Sen.
The word?

Ric.
Mantua!

Sen.
Pass.

King.
'Tis most mysterious! To propose an interview, induce me to quit the ball room; then fail to make her appearance.

Ric.
Be assured, sire, the billet was addressed to you by Madame de Mailly.

King.
To solve that question we have made enquiries at every entrance of the palace; yet you find no Duchess has presented herself. No, Richelieu, I have still hopes.

Ric.
[Irritated.] As your Majesty pleases.

King.
The lovely de Clermont may have been detained by the Queen-may still linger in the ballroom.

Ric.
Let us return then, sire, let us return to the palace, and clear your doubts. Let us return to the fete. *[O'Neil, singing, without, R.]*

King.
What means this strange tumult at the palace gates?

Ric.
'Tis an Irish officer of the guard, returning from some carousal. *[O'Neil, sings without; after the verse he enters, R.]*

O'N.
Whew! I'm mighty out of wind, as the bagpipes said to the hole in the bellows. I wish I'd a pair of infant legs. *[Sings.]*

Sen.
Stand! Who goes there?

O'N.
A friend.

Sen.
The word, friend-give the word.

O'N.
Knockaeroghery.

Sen.
That's not the word.

O'N.
So much the better for you.

Sen.
Stand fast. Give the word, or I fire.

O'N.
Blaze away, and be damned. I'll hold ye two to one ye miss fire or miss me.

Sen.
Once, twice-the word-or-*[Presenting. Arundel enters hastily, U.E.R.]*

Aru.
Hold, for heaven's sake! Don't fire!

O'N.
[Stopping him.] Fire and turf, would ye be after shooting the king?

All.
The king!

Ric.
[Coming forward.] The king! Why, what king are you?

O'N.

King! King O'Neil, at your service. And you, as you seem a fine fellow, why I'll make you my lord of my bedchamber-my Jack in office-my knave. In fact, you shall be my Richelieu.

King.

[*To Richelieu.*] 'Tis Dillon's crack-brained Captain, who fought so bravely at Phillipsbury.

Ric.

[*Aside.*] Would he were there now.

King.

The humor of the soldier diverts me. [*Music heard within the palace, U.E.L. Piano.*] Discover yourself to the centinel, and bid him offer no opposition to my representative, for such we'll make our brother king here. [*Richelieu throws open his cloak, and discovers his blue ribbon to the sentry, who presents arm.*]

Aru.

His Majesty's guests seem to be making merry.

O'N.

Not at my majesty's *expinse*, more luck to the treasury. Sure isn't it a murdering shame then, for the palace, here, there, and everywhere, to be guarded by a set of whiskered fellows, as big as Bryan Boru, with baggonets on their shoulders, and powdher in their pouches, and never a civil word in their mouths; instead of doors wide open, as in the *rale* ould ancient times of the King O'Neil, when every mother's son was welcome, so long as there was a turf on the hearth, or a bite and sup on the board, or a hap'orth in the bottle.

Aru.

Times are altered. Times are hard.

O'N.

You see, Fitz my boy, them ancient Kings O'Neil had never a meddling old woman of a Cardinal keeping them in leading strings, plundering them out of house and home like some I've heard tell of-but-mum!

Ric.

You hear, sire!

O'N.

Nor tinsel-and-buckram lords in waiting, my darlin', to throw away the coin o' the realm, at Ombre and Lasquet, like others I've heard tell of; but mum-again.

King.

You hear, Richelieu.

O'N.

Nor old Duchesses of ladies in waiting, bedizened with diamonds and brick dust, to drive them out of their senses; but mum-again.

Ric.

[*To the King.*] It were well if Madame de Mailly could profit by this lesson, sire.

King.

I will accost him and promote this interview.

Ric.

I entreat your Majesty to consider.

King.

Nay, 'tis my pleasure. [*Takes off his hat and respectfully addresses O'Neil.*] Your presence, sire, is impatiently expected at your palace.

O'N.

At the where?

King.

At your palace, sire, your majesty is expected.

O'N.

The devil I am! Where did he start from! Faith there's two of 'em, and two make a pair, as the devil said to shoe buckles

King.

Is it your majesty's pleasure that your chamberlain should announce you? [*Pointing to Richelieu.*]

O'N.

You are a mighty civil gentleman; he shall do that. [*To Richelieu.*] Be off with you, my fine fellow, and tell 'em I'm coming.

Ric.

Sire, reflect-I-

King.

Not a word! Do you not hear his majesty's commands?

O'N.

Yes, don't you hear his majesty's commands?
[Richelieu exits.] Hurrah! Come along, Fitz.
 Sure, ain't I acknowledged at last O'Neil, aboo!
 Every inch a king from boot to bonnet!-barrin'
 the best crown I've got to my head is a
 Connamara nightcap.

Aru.

For the love of heaven, my dear O'Neil, recollect yourself.

O'N.

Be aisy! Be aisy! If I recollect myself, I'll forget
 I'm a king, which everybody else seems to
 remember perfectly.

Aru.

These strangers are making a jest of you.

O'N.

Are they? I'll see how far their impudence will
 carry them. Get out of my way.

Aru.

Retire to your quarters.

O'N.

What! abdicate before my coronation? I scorn it!
 Bah! *[About to enter the palace.]*

Aru.

Surely you're not thinking of-

O'N.

Thinking! Is it thinking? A king to be thinking?
 What for do I pay my ministers? So begins the
 reign of Phaidrig O'Neil, of the fifty-first of the
 name.

Aru.

One moment's deliberation.

O'N.

Deliberate for yourself! See here! I'll make you
 my lord chancellor, and then you'll have nothing
 else to do but to deliberate.

Aru.

What folly! I must, for the present, leave him to
 his fate! *[Exit, R. Music. Re-enter Richelieu,
 Pages, ushers, &c., with lights, U.E.L.; they form
 a lane for O'Neil, who exits, followed by all but
 the King and Richelieu.]*

Ric.

Ha! ha! All is prepared for his majesty's
 reception.

King.

Ha! ha! ha! You really fancy that Madame de
 Mailly intends me the honour of a visit?

Ric.

I am certain, sire, 'tis her design to waylay you in
 the private passage, leading from the Salle de
 Mars to your own closet. Will your Majesty have
 courage to resist her tears?

King.

I've too much policy to trust my courage. She
 evidently intends to surprise me with a parting
 scene, so faith she shall have the full benefit of
 it. Hark ye, Richelieu, see that the passage is
 completely darkened, let me be informed when a
 lady wants me, my Irish representative here shall
 be ushered towards the private apartments, and
 on him shall fall her whole battery of tears and
 reproaches. *[Crosses to L.]* 'Tis fitting, as he
 shares the honours, that he takes his portion of
 the penalties of royalty. Allons! Let him be
 humoured in the utmost. Summon the court-
 quick, or we shall lose our sport! Ha! ha! ha!
[Music. Exeunt at gates, U.E.L.]

Scene 4

*[Vestibule of the Salle de Mars, at Versailles.
 Enter the Countess Dillon and the Marchioness,
 S.E.R.]*

Mar.

His Majesty has not yet honoured the ball with
 his presence; Richelieu, too, is absent. Does the
 council sit to-night?

Cou.

On the night of a ball at Court? Novice! *[Looks
 back.]* Ha! your father, bending his steps this
 way from the gallery!

Mar.

My father! How unfortunate! My interview with the King is now impossible.

Cou.

Then Richelieu will secure his sanction.

Mar.

[*Looking round eagerly.*] Is there no way to evade my father's notice?

Cou.

Yonder door opens to the gallery leading to the King's private apartments. [*Points off, R.*]

Mar.

But on what pretext can I present myself to the page in waiting?

Cou.

[*Taking off a ring.*] It will suffice to shew this ring; a signet given by the late king to your father, to grant him access at all hours to the royal presence.

Mar.

[*Taking ring.*] It will insure admittance?

Cou.

At every door of the palace. Go! [*Looks back.*]

Mar.

Alone! I dare not seek the King alone.

Cou.

Remain here then, my dear, and let Richelieu claim you tomorrow. The alliance is a noble one. I have no motive to oppose this suit.

Mar.

Become the wife of the Duke of Richelieu? Never! [*Going; aside.*] Harry-my hopes-my happiness upon the hazard! [*Exit, R.*]

Cou.

[*Panting as if relieved.*] At last! What a waste of eloquence to effect that which every other woman of the Court burns to accomplish-an interview with the King! Well, the first step is taken; now triumph the impoverished house of Dillon! [*Exit, L.*]

Scene 5

[*Ante-chamber of the private apartments. On either side, a door, guarded by Pages. The King's chair, C. O'Neil, seated; the King attending him as chamberlain. A suit of Courtiers, Officers, etc., etc.*]

O'N.

[*Rises pompously.*] Thanks, my good lords! thanks for loyal civility! [*Familiarly.*] I'd say as much to the ladies, only in this Court the faymale half of the craytion's wantin'; and in my mind, that half is more than the whole put together!

King.

Your majesty's household, sire, wait your commands.

O'N.

Let a dinner of superlative magnificence be prepared for tomorrow. [*Familiarly.*] Fish, soup, and patties-roasting pig, and everything illegal.

Ush.

[*R.*] For how many guests, your majesty?

O'N.

Is it for *how* many, spalpeen? For *too* many to be sure, of course! Am I such a skinflint as to count my company, like my troop horses?

Ush.

But the table may be too full, your majesty.

O'N.

Och, my honey! there never was an Irish table too full yet, while a single guest wanted a corner.

King.

For how many nobles of the Court, sire, shall we issue invitations?

O'N.

Not to a butterfly of them, I invite General Dillon, and as many as are left of the veterans who fought in the breach at Phillipsbury: and, for once, let the gallant fellows be nobly feasted, within the walls of the king they have bled for.

King.

[*To Usher.*] You hear this order?

Ush.

The Irish soldiery will doubtless be made welcome within the *King's* walls! [*Sneeringly.*]

O'N.

And why not, Powder Puff, why not? The Irish soldiers have made freer than welcome, within the highest walls that encircle the King's enemies.

King.

Has your majesty no further commands?

O'N.

Not at present, I'm intirely obliged to you. That's the civilest fellow among them, and very much of a gentleman. Stay, now I think on't, there's a big thief of a Cardinal, somewhere among the ministers.

King.

[*Embarrassed.*] Sire-I-I-I-

O'N.

Aye, aye, aye! I know he keeps your face to the grindstone; but the first time his Eminence comes with a full claw out of the pocket of the people, grip a hould of his wrist, and squeeze a big pension out of him for ould Count Dillon-too much of a soldier to be rich-too much of a gentleman to own himself poor.

King.

Ha!

O'N.

Ha! yes. Next, to Major Francis de Burgh, promotion to a regiment, and the cross of St. Louis. He won it fairly in the trenches of Phillipsbury.

King.

Major de Burgh. Who is Major de Burgh?

O'N.

Oh, ho! and who the devil's yourself not to know Major de Burgh? Och! the country is well served by you here. Not know Major de Burgh. Why where have you been all your life, man alive? To be sure it is not every man alive ought to know everybody that serves him, as well as the King, whose business it is indeed never to lose sight of bravery and merit.

King.

[*R.*] Any other name suggested itself to your majesty?

O'N.

[*L.*] Bushels o' names; but we must not make promotion chape. Stay, I'd almost forgot; give my-that is-I mean give Sergeant Major Dolan, B troop, second regiment, a cornetcy. I owe him that turn.

King.

A Sergeant Dolan. Was his father a gentleman?

O'N.

That's hard to answer for; but his mother was, I'll swear. She was a Finch, of Rathnaduddery-gentleman's blood for seven hundred years, anyway. There's not a man in the brigade will carry a standard farther, or kape it better, than Sergeant Dolan, on foot, or on horseback.

King.

There's one name I would suggest, with your leave, sire.

O'N.

What name is that now?

King.

One Captain O'Neil, sire.

O'N.

Who! who did you say?

King.

Captain Phaidrig O'Neil.

O'N.

I never heard tell of the fellow-don't know him from Adam. Where the devil now did you ever hear tell of his name? Eh?

King.

It has become mentioned with honour in the *Gazette*, more than once.

O'N.

Aha! Serve him right! it's more than he deserved. It's a royal old Milasian name that's on him any way. But I say, between you and I, the name is the best of that rascal, and I know him.

King.

Your majesty surely accords him some mark of distinction.

O'N.

Well, well, I'll consult my council o' war. Devil a man shall say that King O'Neil's charity begins at home.

King.

Are we to understand then, sire-

O'N.

Oh! bother-no more understanding or misunderstanding, my chancellor will tell you the rest-and where is my chancellor? *[Goes up. Enter Usher, who whispers to the King, R.C.]*

King.

And closely veiled? 'Tis the Duchess de Mailly; bid her await in the small saloon. My representative shall hear her complaint-*he* shall legislate in her case. Ha! ha! ha! *[Enter Richelieu, R.D.F.; Rafe attending with domino and mask.]*

Ric.

[Comes down C., bowing.] All is prepared for your Majesty in the private gallery.

King.

Have the lights been sufficiently subdued?

Ric.

They have, sire.

King.

Permit us, sire, to escort you to the ballroom.

O'N.

With all my heart, I love a dance. *Allons!*

Ric.

Your majesty's domino.

O'N.

Oh, aye!

Ric.

Your mask, sire.

O'N.

No, I don't need it; I'm not ashamed to shew my

own face, or to look in the faces of my subjects. That's more than all kings can say, eh?

King.

Very true, sire. This way.

O'N.

A mighty civil man this, I'll do something for him before I go! Come, come, let's go and see the butler, I've got as dry as a cartridge box. Lade the way. *[Richelieu marshals the way for O'Neil and the King, who exeunt ceremoniously, R.D.F.]*

Ric.

[As they exit.] Ha! ha! ha! The Irish trooper *kings* it, as rarely as the true King *fools* it. And now, sir, your business? Why did you pluck me by sleeve as I crossed the guard room?

Rafe.

Strange news-rare news for your Excellency. You may remember, my gracious lord, how eloquently I represented to you the folly of sacrificing your noble person, and ignoble creditors, to the Irish widow.

Ric.

[Impatiently.] Well, sir?

Rafe.

Know then, my lord, know it with pain and grief, that-*[Enter Arundel, L.]*

Ric.

[Surprised.] Your pleasure, sir?

Aru.

I am in search, my lord, of a gallant officer of the Irish Brigade, whom you and others have made the sport of a frolic, that may lead him into serious trouble here.

Ric.

Fear nothing. All that has been practiced on Captain O'Neil, has been by order of the King.

Aru.

The King! Impossible!

Ric.

His Majesty and his representative will be back here anon. You are at liberty to stay and witness the result. [*Impatiently to Rafe.*] Now what of the Marchioness de Clermont? [*Arundel starts, and seems to retire.*]

Rafe.

[*R.*] While waiting with the domino your lordship ordered on the vestibule, I myself beheld the Marchioness enter from the ballroom, and take her stand within the door of the King's apartment.

Ric.

[*Aloud.*] Alone?

Rafe.

Alone.

Ric.

Without a rendezvous, she would not have been admitted to that gallery. Are you sure it was the Marchioness de Clermont?

Rafe.

Certain, the strong light from the outer door shone full on her as she entered. She is still in that dark gallery, waiting the passing of his Majesty, I imagine, my Lord.

Aru.

Ha! [*Points to the door of the private apartments, through which exit Arundel.*]

Ric.

So I have escaped the honour of bestowing my name and fortune-

Rafe.

Fortune! say debts! [*Aside.*]

Ric.

Upon the successor of the de Mailly. Richelieu, my friend, thy stars have better care of thee than thou deservest.

Rafe.

The stars! the stars had left your Excellency to your destinies, had not your humble servant watched them and you.

Ric.

The Marchioness! the prudish Marchioness. Dupe that I have been.

Rafe.

Hush! my lord! her father. [*Enter Count Dillon, L.*]

Dil.

[*Cheerfully.*] You have been missed, my lord, from the ball room. We looked for more alacrity in so gallant a lover. [*Exit Rafe, R.D.F.*]

Ric.

[*Coldly.*] You did me much honour.

Dil.

I had announced to my daughter that your lordship's homage would be laid this evening at her feet.

Ric.

[*Ironically.*] Among the numberless votaries of the Marchioness de Clermont, 'tis unlikely that a suit, so humble as mine, should have obtained attention. [*Takes snuff.*]

Dil.

Since when, my dear duke, have you been so diffident? Do you suppose I undervalue the honour of your alliance.

Ric.

The honour? [*Sneers.*] Oh! pardon me! a poor noble of the realm-a simple subject, like myself.

Dil.

A subject? [*Regards him intently.*] You are facetious, my lord duke! Reflect that I am past the age of jesting.

Ric.

Indeed! allow me to condole with you! I mean to go laughing to my grave; this wicked world affords such food for mirth-ha! ha!-for scorn.

Dil.

Again my lord! Have a care! This ill-timed merriment seems to connect itself to my daughter.

Ric.

In truth my laughter is ill-timed! Matrimony is a

serious business: and now that I am compelled to withdraw my pretensions to the hand of Madame de Clermont-

Dil.

Decline my daughter's hand? You will have at least the courtesy to assign a cause for your change of sentiment.

Ric.

To what end? Choose any cause you please! Suppose my affairs embarrassed, my creditors untractable, or say my humility prompts me to resign alliance with the house of Dillon. *[Takes snuff.]* Your daughter, sir, has soared too high above me.

Dil.

[Aside, agitated.] Let not his insolence provoke me beyond my self control! Let me not-*[Aloud.]* Richelieu, if you are a man, speak out! no more of these hints, these black, these damnable implications! speak out.

Ric.

Permit me to refer you, for an explanation, to the Marchioness your aspiring daughter.

Dil.

Presume to name her in that tone again; and I shall forget the sacred place we stand in! She is my only child, my lord; good, virtuous, fair; I watched over her motherless youth. I saw her grow to womanhood, pure as the flower fresh opening into beauty! No cloud has ever rested on her name. Beware, my lord! A sneer from lips like yours is fatal. Beware! I am old; but when my only child is made a victim *[Raising his arm.]* there is nerve left here to-*[Gasps.]* Why do I suffer this thing so to move me!

Ric.

Nay, Count, if you *approve* her assignations with his Majesty.

Dil.

My lord.

Ric.

Are you aware that this very hour the Marchioness waits yonder *[Points to private apartment.]* the homage of the King?

Dil.

[Draws.] Defend yourself.

Ric.

Not while those grey hairs-

Dil.

You have insulted them; repair the injury! Draw, coward.

Ric.

[Soothingly.] Count Dillon.

Count.

Draw! or I will kill you where I stand.

Ric.

[Draws.] Nay then to my defense!*[They fight. Enter the King and Usher, R.D.F. They are separated.]*

King.

Richelieu! What means this outrage?

Ric.

[Putting up his sword.] Address yourself, my liege, to General Dillon; I drew but in self defense.

King.

Is this your respect for the roof of your sovereign?

Dil.

The Duke of Richelieu, sire, asserts, my child, my daughter, to be concealed in your apartments. Have I leave to prove the falsehood of this charge? *[About to enter door.]*

King.

Stay! *[Aside.]* If it were true! The billet-my representative is now hearing her appeal.

Dil.

Sire, my honour.

King.

Richelieu is deceived, I fancy. There *is* a lady yonder, but 'tis the Duchess de Mailly who-

Dil.

The Duchess de Mailly-so! You hear my lord!
The Duchess de Mailly.

Ric.

[Aside.] Could Rafe have so blundered?

Dil.

Sire, you would not trifle with the fame of your
oldest soldier's only child.

King.

You shall be satisfied, Count. Lead forth the
lady, now occupied with my representative. *[Exit*
Usher, C.D.]

Dil.

Thanks, sire! I'll answer for my Helena with my
life. *[Enter De Burgh, L.]*

De B.

On the part of Cardinal Fleury, sire-

King.

What now? speak.

De B.

I am charged by his eminence to acquaint your
Majesty that, the Duchess de Mailly having been
detected in an attempt to intrude herself under
sanction of the Duke de Richelieu, she has been
this night arrested, and is now on her way into
Touraine.

Dil.

Ha! What do I hear? *[In great agitation.]*

Ric.

[Smiling.] Your Majesty, it appears, was
mistaken in supposing the Duchess de Mailly to
be your guest tonight.

King.

This mystery is inexplicable! Can he be right?

Ric.

I have to regret that the *petulance* of General
Dillon should have rendered the *whole court*
witnesses of your Majesty's good fortune.

Dil.

I defy you, duke. Forgive me, sire, but *my*

daughter's fame must not be thus vilely
suspected.

King.

'Tis just, my lord; you shall be satisfied of our
faith. Lead forth the lady. Be she whom she
may! *[During these speeches, the Usher enters*
the private apartments, and leads forth the
Marchioness, who unveils, surprised.]

Mar.

The King *here!* To whom, then, have I pleaded?

All.

The Marchioness de Clermont. *[The*
Marchioness kneels to Dillon.]

Dil.

[Throwing her off.] Out of my sight! Go! Quit
this place, and hide your shame for ever!
[Frantically to the King.] What have I done, that
you should thus dishonour me? *I* who defended
your infancy; I who could have served you with
my heart's blood! Heaven pardon you! Heaven
pity me that I should be thus wronged in my
desolate old age-and by you!

King.

Believe me, my General, I-

Dil.

Your General! I disclaim the title, and your
service! *[Draws his sword and throws it at the*
King's feet.] I shall never see my gallant veterans
more! this arm is nerveless now! *[Sobs.]*

Mar.

[Whose face has been hidden in her hands.]
Father! father! If you ever loved me, only hear
me.

Dil.

[Throwing her off.] Away! your voice is torture
to me.

Mar.

I *have* a witness; who if a *true* man will answer
for my purpose with the King. Where is he?
[Looking round.] I am innocent. Father, I am
innocent. *[Enter O'Neil, Arundel, Courtiers, &c.,*
R.D.F.]

O'N.

[*Entering.*] That you are-innocent as I am myself.

All.

[*On seeing Louis.*] The king!

O'N.

How well I'm known. One would think they'd seen my coronation! Now, General, you are welcome; you're the man of all others-I wanted to see you here.

Dil.

What means this mummary, Captain?

O'N.

It means, General, that your daughter here has been on her knees to me in the passage beyond where I could see my nose, and has asked me to intercede for your consent to her marriage with my schoolfellow there, Sir Harry Arundel, who had the assurance to pass himself on me for a Fitzgerald, tho' I knew the voice the moment I saw it.

Dil.

My nephew, Sir Henry Arundel, a suitor to my daughter? Explain these mysteries.

Arun.

Suffice it, my dear uncle, that they entail no disgrace upon you. Give me your daughter's hand, and you will confer on me an honour, kings might be proud of.

O'N.

Spoken like a lover and an Irishman, and you shall have my vote.

King.

[*After a word apart with the Usher, comes down, C.*] I see it all! The lovely Marchioness has made my representative her confidant. And now, O'Dillon, what excuse can you offer your King?

O'N.

Aye, General, what can you say to your King?

Dil.

[*To the King.*] Sire I confess my fault. [*Bows.*]

King.

Be it expiated by your consent to the union of your children.

O'N.

Hollo! My worthy friend, you're makin' over free here; not but I must own, you took the very word out of my mouth.

Dil.

[*Kneels.*] Sire, may I hope for pardon.

O'N.

Now I'm bothered! I say, do you help me out here: you seem to have the speechifying gift. Say something civil and kind to the ould General.

King.

[*Crossing to General, R.*] Then let me say-the loyal service of fifty years must not be effaced by a single error-let me replace the sword, so long devoted to my defense [*Taking off his sword.*] by one that will acquire lustre in your hands. [*Gives it. King raises Dillon. All go up C. He bows on the King's hand.*]

O'N.

Very well! My chamberlain seems quite easy in my office; does it as if he'd been used to it. Well, we'll all be king's in our turn, and turn about's fair play, as the devil said to the smoke jack. It's all right, but now where's my- [*During this, the King puts on his hat and seats himself. All form a circle. Arundel and Marchioness kneeling.*]

King.

Versailles I find cannot longer sustain two monarchs. Either King O'Neil or Louis XV must now lay down the sceptre.

O'N.

[*Looks a moment, then kneels.*] Och! Murder! King Louis himself, by the pope! I'll abdicate, and all the retiring pension I ask is-your gracious pardon. The reign of King O'Neil never before extended beyond our mess-room, and never shall again, for I find the affairs of a Court much too puzzling for any honest man.

King.

Rise, my brave friend; this *jest* was of my own imagination, but the lesson I have received is

yours. I herewith confirm, without reserve, all the just decrees of my honest representative which at once reprove, and repair my own neglects. Major O'Neil accept my thanks for-

O'N.

Major! *Captain* O'Neil, sire, at your service.

King.

In my service, *Major* from this hour, and with the cross of St. Louis. [*Louis takes cross off his neck and puts it on O'Neil. Then brings him forward.*] But, hark ye, Major, no more royal adventures-you comprehend?

O'N.

[*Kissing the King's hand.*] Oh mum! I've abdicated entirely. By the powers, I feel I'm no longer a king, for I'm the happiest man alive- [*Sings.*] Bryan O'Lyn, hem!

King.

[*To Dillon.*] Count Dillon, let the marriage of your fair daughter be solemnized in the royal chapel. I charge myself with the dowry of the bride. But some punishment is due here: Richelieu, you will this night quit Paris. [*Looks at him. Richelieu kneels, L. corner.*]

O'N.

Will your Majesty allow me another word.

King.

Oh, by all means, Major.

O'N.

As your Majesty seems in the height of good humour and I seem in high favour, will you allow me to speak a word for Pilgarlick in the corner here.

King.

Ha! ha! Richelieu approach. You have his Majesty's pardon. [*Richelieu kneels and kisses the King's hands.*]

O'N.

Bless your royal clemency, may you live a thousand years, and I live to bury you, and now if the great Public will but imitate the example of the King, I shall be the happiest monarch that ever laid down a sceptre. For I shall fall back into the ranks of private life with the conviction

that it will be written in history, and go down to my ancestors, that every man, woman, or child, was content under the reign of poor King O'Neil. [*The King smiles assentingly. Richelieu kisses his hands. All form towards the throne bowing. Picture as curtain falls. Flourish of Courtly music.*]

The End