

# **RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY**

Edward Bulwer Lytton



## Table of Contents

<u>RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY</u> .....	1
<u>Edward Bulwer Lytton</u> .....	2
<u>ACT I. First Day</u> .....	3
<u>SCENE I</u> .....	4
<u>SCENE II</u> .....	13
<u>ACT II. Second Day</u> .....	30
<u>SCENE I</u> .....	31
<u>SCENE II</u> .....	45
<u>ACT III. Second Day (Midnight)</u> .....	57
<u>SCENE I</u> .....	58
<u>SCENE II</u> .....	66
<u>SCENE III</u> .....	72
<u>SCENE IV</u> .....	74
<u>ACT IV. Third Day</u> .....	80
<u>SCENE I</u> .....	81
<u>SCENE IV</u> .....	92
<u>ACT V. Fourth Day</u> .....	100
<u>SCENE I</u> .....	101
<u>SCENE II</u> .....	107
<u>SCENE III</u> .....	116

# **RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY**

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

**Edward Bulwer Lytton**

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• ACT I. First Day.

- SCENE I.
- SCENE II.

• ACT II. Second Day.

- SCENE I.
- SCENE II.

• ACT III. Second Day (Midnight).

- SCENE I.
- SCENE II.
- SCENE III.
- SCENE IV.

• ACT IV. Third Day.

- SCENE I.
- SCENE IV.

• ACT V. Fourth Day.

- SCENE I.
- SCENE II.
- SCENE III.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY:  
A Play, IN FIVE ACTS.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

**ACT I. First Day.**

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE I.

*A room in the house of Marion de Lorme; a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, &c.), at which are seated Baradas, Four Courtiers, splendidly dressed in the costume of 1641–2;—the Duke of Orleans reclining on a large fauteuil;—Marion de Lorme, standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table, De Beringhen, De Mauprat, playing at dice; other Courtiers, of inferior rank to those at the table of the Duke, looking on.*

ORLEANS (*drinking*).

Here's to our enterprise!—

BARADAS (*glancing at Marion*).

Hush, Sir!—

ORLEANS (*aside*).

Nay, Count,  
You may trust her; she doats on me; no house  
So safe as Marion's. At our statelier homes  
The very walls do play the eaves-dropper.  
There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors  
But seems a glance from that malignant eye  
Which reigns o'er France; our fatal greatness lives  
In the sharp glare of one relentless day.  
But Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword  
The myrtle hides; and Marion's silken robe  
Casts its kind charity o'er fiercer sins  
Than those which haunt the rosy path between

The lip and eye of beauty.—Oh, no house  
So safe as Marion's.

BARADAS.

Still, we have a secret,  
And oil and water—woman and a secret—  
Are hostile properties.

ORLEANS.

Well—Marion, see  
How the play prospers yonder.

*Marion goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments, then Exit.*

Baradas (*producing a parchment*).

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

I have now  
All the conditions drawn; it only needs  
Our signatures: upon receipt of this,  
(Whereto is joined the schedule of our treaty  
With the Count—Duke, the Richelieu of the Escorial,)  
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,  
March on to Paris,—there, dethrone the King:  
You will be Regent; I, and ye, my Lords,  
Form the new Council. So much for the core  
Of our great scheme.

ORLEANS.

But Richelieu is an Argus;  
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,  
And then—good bye to life.

BARADAS.

To gain the prize  
We must destroy the Argus:—ay, my Lords,  
The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins,  
Of our design;—while this despatched to Bouillon,  
Richelieu despatched to Heaven!—The last *my* charge!  
Meet here to—morrow night. *You*, Sir, as first  
In honour and in hope, meanwhile select  
Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon;  
Midst Richelieu's foes *I'll* find some desperate hand  
To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

ORLEANS.

So be it;—to—morrow, midnight.—Come, my Lords.

*Exeunt Orleans, and the Courtiers in his train. Those at the other table rise, salute Orleans, and re-seat themselves.*

DE BERINGHEN.

Double the stakes.

DE MAUPRAT.

Done.

DE BERINGHEN.

Bravo; faith it shames me  
To bleed a purse already *in extremis*.

DE MAUPRAT.

Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself  
So long, no other doctor should despatch it.

SCENE I.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*De Mauprat throws and loses.*

OMNES.

Lost! Ha, ha—poor De Mauprat!

DE BERINGHEN.

One throw more?

DE MAUPRAT.

No; I am bankrupt (*pushing gold*). There goes all—except  
My honour and my sword. (*They rise.*)

DE BERINGHEN.

Long cloaks and honour  
Went out of vogue together, when we found  
We got on much more rapidly without them;  
The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion,—  
The devil has care of *that*.

First gamester.

Ay, take the sword  
To Cardinal Richelieu:—he gives gold for steel,  
When worn by brave men.

DE MAUPRAT.

Richelieu!

*DE BERINGHEN (to Baradas).*

At that name  
He changes colour, bites his nether lip.  
Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "Richelieu,"  
And you cloud all his sunshine.

BARADAS.

I have mark'd it,  
And I will learn the wherefore.

DE MAUPRAT.

The Egyptian  
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught:  
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,  
And drain it thus (*drinking*).

DE BERINGHEN.

Come, gentlemen, what say ye,  
A walk on the Parade?

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

OMNES.

Ay; come, De Mauprat.

DE MAUPRAT.

Pardon me; we shall meet again ere nightfall.

BARADAS.

I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

DE BERINGHEN.

Comfort!—when

We gallant fellows have run out a friend

There's nothing left—except to run him through!

There's the last act of friendship.

DE MAUPRAT.

Let me keep

*That* favour in reserve; in all beside

Your most obedient servant.

*Exeunt De Beringhen, &c. Manent De Mauprat and Baradas.*

BARADAS.

You have lost—

Yet are not sad.

DE MAUPRAT.

Sad!—Life and gold have wings,

And must fly one day:—open, then, their cages

And wish them merry.

BARADAS.

You're a strange enigma:—

Fiery in war—and yet to glory lukewarm;—

All mirth in action—in repose all gloom—

These are extremes in which the unconscious heart

Betrays the fever of deep—fix'd disease.

Confide in me! our young days roll'd together

In the same river, glassing the same stars

That smile i'the heaven of hope;—alike we made

Bright-winged steeds of our unform'd chimeras,

Spurring the fancies upward to the air,

Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud.

Fortune of late has sever'd us—and led

*Me* to the rank of Courtier, Count, and Favourite,—

*You* to the titles of the wildest gallant

And bravest knight in France;—are you content?

No;—trust in me—some gloomy secret—

DE MAUPRAT.

SCENE I.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Ay:—

A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old,  
Men were possess'd of fiends!—Where'er I turn,  
The grave yawns dark before me!—I *will* trust you;—  
Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,  
You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt—  
Was captured—sent to the Bastile—

BARADAS.

But shared

The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans  
Won for himself and all in the revolt,  
Who but obey'd his orders.

DE MAUPRAT.

Note the phrase;—

"*Obey'd his orders.*" Well, when on my way  
To join the Duke in Languedoc, I (then  
The down upon my lip—less man than boy)  
Leading young valours—reckless as myself,  
Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced  
The Royal banners for the Rebel. Orleans,  
(Never too daring,) when I reach'd the camp,  
Blamed me for acting—mark—*without his orders:*  
Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name  
Out of the general pardon.

BARADAS.

Yet released you

From the Bastile—

DE MAUPRAT.

To call me to his presence,

And thus address me:—"You have seized a town  
Of France, without the orders of your leader,  
And for this treason, but one sentence—Death."

BARADAS.

Death!

DE MAUPRAT.

"I have pity on your youth and birth,

Nor wish to glut the headsman;—join your troop,  
Now on the march against the Spaniards;—change  
The traitor's scaffold for the soldier's grave;—  
Your memory stainless—they who shared your crime  
Exil'd or dead—your king shall never learn it."

BARADAS.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

O tender pity!—O most charming prospect!  
Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drill'd  
Into a cullender by gunshot!—Well?—  
DE MAUPRAT.

You have heard if I fought bravely.—Death became  
Desired as Daphne by the eager Daygod.  
Like him I chas'd the nymph—to grasp the laurel!  
I could not die!  
BARADAS.

Poor fellow!  
DE MAUPRAT.

When the Cardinal  
Review'd the troops—his eye met mine;—he frown'd,  
Summon'd me forth—"How's this?" quoth he; "you have shunn'd  
The sword—beware the axe!—'twill fall one day!"  
He left me thus—we were recall'd to Paris,  
And—you know all!  
BARADAS.

And, knowing this, why halt you,  
Spell'd by the rattle-snake,—while in the breasts  
Of your firm friends beat hearts, that vow the death  
Of your grim tyrant?—Wake!—Be one of us;  
The time invites—the King detests the Cardinal,  
Dares not disgrace—but groans to be deliver'd  
Of that too great a subject—join your friends,  
Free France, and save yourself.  
DE MAUPRAT.

Hush! Richelieu bears  
A charmed life:—to all, who have braved his power,  
One common end—the block.  
BARADAS.

Nay, if he live,  
The block your doom;—

DE MAUPRAT.

Better the victim, Count,  
Than the assassin.—France requires a Richelieu,  
But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this;—  
All time one midnight, where my thoughts are spectres.  
What to me fame?—What love?—  
BARADAS.

Yet dost thou love *not* ?  
DE MAUPRAT.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Love?—I am young—  
BARADAS.

And Julie fair! (*Aside*) It is so,  
Upon the margin of the grave—his hand  
Would pluck the rose that I would win and wear!  
(*Aloud*) Thou lovest—  
DE MAUPRAT.

Who, lonely in the midnight tent,  
Gazed on the watch—fires in the sleepless air,  
Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts  
To bless it in the name of some fair face  
Set in his spirit, as that star in Heaven?  
For our divine Affections, like the Spheres,  
Move ever, ever musical.  
BARADAS.

You speak  
As one who fed on poetry.  
DE MAUPRAT.

Why, man,  
The thoughts of lovers stir with poetry  
As leaves with summer—wind.—The heart that loves  
Dwells in an Eden, hearing angel—lutes,  
As Eve in the First Garden. Hast thou seen  
My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull  
To live in the common world—and talk in words  
That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd?—  
Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips—  
As on his native bed of roses flush'd  
With Paphian skies—Love smiling sleeps:—Her voice  
The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure  
As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,  
Or Fairies dip their changelings!—In the maze  
Of her harmonious beauties—Modesty

(Like some severer Grace that leads the choir  
Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion  
Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds  
His burning breath, and will not with a sigh  
Dissolve the spell that binds him!—Oh those eyes  
That woo the earth—shadowing more soul than lurks  
Under the lids of Psyche!—Go!—thy lip  
Curls at the purpled phrases of a lover—  
Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,  
Thou wilt not laugh at poets.

BARADAS (*aside*).

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

With each word  
Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,  
And my hand clutches at my hilt—

*DE MAUPRAT (gaily).*

No more!—  
I love!—Your breast holds both my secrets;—Never  
Unbury either!—Come, while yet we may,  
We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life:—  
Lounge through the gardens,—flaunt it in the taverns,—  
Laugh,—game,—drink,—feast:—If so confined my days,  
Faith, I'll enclose the nights.—Pshaw! not so grave;  
I'm a true Frenchman!—*Vive la bagatelle!*

*(As they are going out, Enter Huguet, and four arquebusiers.)*

HUGUET.

Messire De Mauprat,—I arrest you!—Follow  
To the Lord Cardinal.

DE MAUPRAT.

You see, my friend,  
I'm out of my suspense!—the tiger's play'd  
Long enough with his prey.—Farewell!—Hereafter  
Say, when men name me, "Adrien de Mauprat  
Lived without hope, and perished without fear!"  
*[Exeunt De Mauprat, Huguet, &c.*

BARADAS.

Farewell!—I trust for ever! I design'd thee  
For Richelieu's murderer—but, as well his martyr!  
In childhood you the stronger—and I cursed you;  
In youth the fairer—and I cursed you still;  
And now my rival!—While the name of Julie  
Hung on thy lips—I smiled—for then I saw

In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death  
Hang o'er thy head the pall!—Ambition, Love,  
Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,  
Sit in my house of Life!—By the King's aid  
I will be Julie's husband—in despite  
Of my Lord Cardinal—By the King's aid  
I will be minister of France—in spite  
Of my Lord Cardinal;—and then—what then?  
The King loves Julie—feeble Prince—false master—

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*(Producing and gazing on the parchment.)*

Then, by the aid of Bouillon, and the Spaniard,  
I will dethrone the King; and all—ha!—ha!—  
All, in despite of my Lord Cardinal.

*[Exit.]*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE II.

*A room in the Palais Cardinal, the walls hung with arras. A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, &c. A rude clock in a recess. Busts, statues, bookcases, weapons of different periods, and banners suspended over Richelieu's chair.*

*Richelieu.—Joseph.*

RICHELIEU.

And so you think this new conspiracy  
The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox?—  
Fox!—Well, I like the nickname! What did Plutarch  
Say of the Greek Lysander?

JOSEPH.

I forget.

RICHELIEU.

That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it  
Out with the fox's! A great statesman, Joseph,  
That same Lysander!

JOSEPH.

Orleans heads the traitors.

RICHELIEU.

A very wooden head then! Well?

JOSEPH.

The favourite,

Count Baradas—

RICHELIEU.

A weed of hasty growth;  
First gentleman of the chamber—titles, lands,  
And the King's ear!—it cost me six long winters  
To mount as high, as in six little moons  
This painted lizard—But I hold the ladder,  
And when I shake—he falls! What more?

JOSEPH.

A scheme

To make your orphan-ward an instrument  
To aid your foes. You placed her with the Queen,  
One of the royal chamber,—as a watch  
I'th'enemy's quarters—

RICHELIEU.

SCENE II.



## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

And the silly child  
Visits me daily,—calls me "Father,"—prays  
Kind heaven to bless me—And for all the rest,  
As well have placed a doll about the Queen!  
She does not heed who frowns—who smiles; with whom  
The King confers in whispers; notes not when  
Men who last week were foes, are found in corners  
Mysteriously affectionate; words spoken  
Within closed doors she never hears;—by chance  
Taking the air at keyholes—Senseless puppet!  
No ears—nor eyes!—and yet she says—"She loves me!"  
Go on—

JOSEPH.

Your ward has charm'd the King—  
RICHELIEU.

Out on you!  
Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots  
Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love?  
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree  
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music  
That spirits in Heaven might hear?—They're sinful too,  
Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,  
The Church condemns them; and to us, my Joseph,  
The props and pillars of the Church, most hurtful.

The King is weak—whoever the King loves  
Must rule the King; the lady loves another,  
The other rules the lady—thus we're balked  
Of our own proper sway—The King must have  
No goddess but the State:—the State—That's Richelieu!

JOSEPH.

This not the worst;—Louis, in all decorous,  
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,  
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,  
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas!

RICHELIEU.

Ha! ha!  
I have another bride for Baradas.

JOSEPH.

You, my Lord?  
RICHELIEU.

Ay—more faithful than the love  
Of fickle woman:—when the head lies lowliest,  
Clasping him fondest;—Sorrow never knew

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

So sure a soother,—and her bed is stainless!

*JOSEPH (aside).*

If of the grave he speaks, I do not wonder  
That priests are bachelors!

*Enter François.*

FRANÇOIS.

Mademoiselle De Mortemar.

RICHELIEU.

Most opportune—admit her.

*[Exit François.*

In my closet  
You'll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell  
Three hundred beads, I'll summon you.—Stay, Joseph;—  
I did omit an Ave in my matins,—  
A grievous fault;—atone it for me, Joseph;  
There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong,  
It were but charity to take my sin  
On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.

JOSEPH.

I! guilty of such criminal presumption  
As to mistake myself for you—No, never!  
Think it not!—*(Aside)* Troth, a pleasant invitation!

*[Exit Joseph.*

*Enter Julie de Mortemar.*

RICHELIEU.

That's my sweet Julie!—why, upon this face  
Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the Morning  
Were come to visit Tithon.

*JULIE (placing herself at his feet).*

Are you gracious?—  
May I say "Father?"

RICHELIEU.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Now and ever!  
JULIE.

Father!  
A sweet word to an orphan.  
RICHELIEU.

No; not orphan  
While Richelieu lives; thy father loved me well;  
My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I'm great,  
In other phrase, I'm friendless)—he died young  
In years, not service, and bequeath'd thee to me;  
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy  
Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping?—sighs?—  
Art thou not happy at the court?  
JULIE.

Not often.

*RICHELIEU (aside).*

Can she love Baradas?—Ah! at thy heart  
There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,  
All in a breath!—Thou art admired—art young;  
Does not his Majesty commend thy beauty—  
Ask thee to sing to him?—and swear such sounds  
Had smooth'd the brows of Saul?—  
JULIE.

He's very tiresome,  
Our worthy King.  
RICHELIEU.

Fie; kings are never tiresome,  
Save to their ministers.—What courtly gallants  
Charm ladies most?—De Sourdiac, Longueville, or  
The favourite Baradas?  
JULIE.

A smileless man—  
I fear, and shun him.

RICHELIEU.

Yet he courts thee?  
JULIE.

Then  
He is more tiresome than his Majesty.  
RICHELIEU.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Right, girl, shun Baradas.—Yet of these flowers  
Of France, not one, in whose more honied breath  
Thy heart hears Summer whisper?

*Enter Huguet.*

HUGUET.

The Chevalier  
De Mauprat waits below.

*JULIE (starting up).*

De Mauprat!  
RICHELIEU.

Hem!  
He has been tiresome too!—Anon.  
*[Exit Huguet.]*

JULIE.

What doth he?—  
I mean—I—Does your Eminence—that is—  
Know you Messire de Mauprat?  
RICHELIEU.

Well!—and you—  
Has he address'd you often?  
JULIE.

Often! No—  
Nine times;—nay, ten;—the last time, by the lattice  
Of the great staircase.—*(In a melancholy tone)* The Court sees him rarely.  
RICHELIEU.

A bold and forward royster?  
JULIE.

*He?*—nay, modest,  
Gentle, and sad methinks.  
RICHELIEU.

Wears gold and azure?  
JULIE.

No; sable.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

RICHELIEU.

So you note his colours, Julie?  
Shame on you, child, look loftier. By the mass  
I have business with this modest gentleman.

JULIE.

You're angry with poor Julie. There's no cause.

RICHELIEU.

No cause—you hate my foes?

JULIE.

I do!

RICHELIEU.

Hate Mauprat?

JULIE.

Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father.

RICHELIEU.

Adrien!

Familiar!—Go, child; no,—not *that* way;—wait  
In the tapestry chamber; I will join you,—go.

JULIE.

His brows are knit;—I dare not call him father!  
But I *must* speak—Your Eminence—

*RICHELIEU (sternly).*

Well, girl!

JULIE.

Nay

Smile on me—one smile more; there, now I'm happy.  
Do not rank Mauprat with your foes; he is not,  
I know he *is* not; he loves France too well.

RICHELIEU.

Not rank De Mauprat with my foes? So be it.  
I'll blot him from that list.

JULIE.

That's my own father.

*[Exit Julie.]*

*RICHELIEU (ringing a small bell on the table.)*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Huguet!

*Enter Huguet.*

De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmur'd?

HUGUET.

No; proud and passive.

RICHELIEU.

Bid him enter.—Hold:

Look that he hide no weapon. Humph, despair  
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd,  
Glide round unseen;—place thyself yonder (*pointing to the screen*); watch him;  
If he show violence—(let me see thy carbine;  
So, a good weapon;)—if he play the lion,  
Why—the dog's death.

HUGUET.

I never miss my mark.

*Exit Huguet; Richelieu seats himself at the table, and slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter De Mauprat, preceded by Huguet, who then retires behind the screen.*

RICHELIEU.

Approach, Sir.—Can you call to mind the hour,  
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,  
Your presence honour'd me?

DE MAUPRAT.

It is, my Lord,

One of my most—

*RICHELIEU (drily).*

Delightful recollections. [Note: There are many anecdotes of the irony, often so terrible, in which Richelieu indulged. But he had a love for humour in its more hearty and genial shape. He would send for Boisrobert "to make him laugh,"—and grave ministers and magnates waited in the ante-room, while the great Cardinal listened and responded to the sallies of the lively wit.]

*DE MAUPRAT (aside).*

St. Denis! doth he make a jest of axe  
And headsman?

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*RICHELIEU (sternly).*

I did then accord you  
A mercy ill requited—you still live?  
DE MAUPRAT.

To meet death face to face at last.  
RICHELIEU.

Your words  
Are bold.

DE MAUPRAT.

My deeds have not belied them.  
RICHELIEU.

Deeds!  
O miserable delusion of man's pride!  
Deeds! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,  
Men butcher'd! In your hour of doom behold  
The *deeds* you boast of! From rank showers of blood,  
And the red light of blazing roofs, you build  
The Rainbow Glory, and to shuddering Conscience  
Cry,—Lo, the Bridge to Heaven!  
DE MAUPRAT.

If war be sinful,  
Your hand the gauntlet cast.  
RICHELIEU.

It was so, Sir.  
Note the distinction:—I weigh'd well the cause  
Which made the standard holy; raised the war  
But to secure the peace. France bled—I groan'd;  
But look'd beyond; and, in the vista, saw  
France saved, and I exulted. You—but you  
Were but the tool of slaughter—knowing nought,  
Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,  
And for nought fit,—save cutting throats for hire.  
Deeds, marry, deeds!  
DE MAUPRAT.

If you would deign to speak  
Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,  
Perchance your Eminence might have the pain  
Of the throat—cutting to yourself.

*RICHELIEU (aside).*

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

He has wit,  
This Mauprat—(*Aloud*)—Let it pass; there is against you  
What you can less excuse. Messire de Mauprat,  
Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed  
The time allotted thee for serious thought  
And solemn penitence?

*DE MAUPRAT (embarrassed).*

The time, my Lord?  
RICHELIEU.

Is not the question plain? I'll answer for thee.  
Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth chafed

Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head  
Have not, with pious meditation, purged  
Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast *not* done  
Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,  
Turbulent riot:—for the morn the dice-box—  
Noon claim'd the duel—and the night the wassail;  
These, your most holy, pure preparatives  
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, Sir?

DE MAUPRAT.

I was not always thus:—if changed my nature,  
Blame that, which changed my fate.—Alas, my Lord,  
There is a brotherhood which calm-eyed Reason  
Can wot not of betwixt Despair and Mirth.  
My birth-place mid the vines of sunny Provence,  
Perchance the stream that sparkles in my veins  
Came from that wine of passionate life which, erst,  
Glow'd in the wild heart of the Troubadour:  
And danger, which makes steadier courage wary,  
But fevers me with an insane delight;  
As one of old who on the mountain-crag  
Caught madness from a Mænad's haunting eyes.  
Were you, my Lord,—whose path imperial power,  
And the grave cares of reverent wisdom guard  
From all that tempts to folly meaner men,—  
Were you accursed with that which you inflicted—  
By bed and board, dogg'd by one ghastly spectre—  
The while within you youth beat high, and life  
Grew lovelier from the neighbouring frown of death—  
The heart no bud, nor fruit—save in those seeds  
Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither  
In the same hour—Were this your fate, perchance,  
You would have err'd like me!

RICHELIEU.

SCENE II.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

I might, like you,  
Have been a brawler and a reveller;—not,  
Like you, a trickster and a thief.—

*DE MAUPRAT (advancing threateningly).*

Lord Cardinal!—  
Unsay those words!—

*(Huguet deliberately raises the carbine).*

*RICHELIEU (waving his hand).*

Not quite so quick, friend Huguet;

Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,  
And he can wait!—

You have outrun your fortune;—  
I blame you not, that you would be a beggar—  
Each to his taste!—But I do charge you, Sir,  
That, being beggar'd, you would coin false monies  
Out of that crucible, called DEBT.—To live  
On means not yours—be brave in silks and laces,  
Gallant in steeds—splendid in banquets;—all  
Not *yours*—ungiven—unherited—unpaid for;—  
*This* is to be a trickster; and to filch  
Men's art and labour, which to them is wealth,  
Life, daily bread,—quitting all scores with—"Friend,  
You're troublesome!"—Why this, forgive me,  
Is what—when done with a less dainty grace—  
Plain folks call "*Theft!*"—You owe eight thousand pistoles,  
Minus one crown, two liards!—

*DE MAUPRAT (aside).*

The old conjuror!—  
Sdeath, he'll inform me next how many cups  
I drank at dinner!—

RICHELIEU.

This is scandalous,  
Shaming your birth and blood.—I tell you, Sir,  
That you must pay your debts.—

DE MAUPRAT.

With all my heart,  
My Lord.—Where shall I borrow, then, the money?

SCENE II.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*RICHELIEU (aside and laughing).*

A humorous dare—devil!—The very man  
To suit my purpose—ready, frank, and bold!

*(Rising, and earnestly).*

Adrien de Mauprat, men have called me cruel;—  
I am not;—I am *just!*—I found France rent asunder,—  
The rich men despots, and the poor banditti;—  
Sloth in the mart, and schism within the temple;  
Brawls festering to Rebellion; and weak Laws  
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths.—  
I have re-created France; and, from the ashes  
Of the old feudal and decrepit carcase,  
Civilization on her luminous wings  
Soars, phoenix-like, to Jove!—What was my art?

Genius, some say,—some, Fortune,—Witchcraft some.  
Not so;—my art was Justice!—Force and Fraud  
Misname it cruelty—you shall confute them!  
My champion YOU!—You met me as your foe,  
Depart my friend—You shall not die.—France needs you.  
You shall wipe off all stains,—be rich, be honour'd,  
Be great.—

*(De Mauprat falls on his knee—Richelieu raises him.)*

I ask, Sir, in return, this hand,  
To gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,  
Yet not exceed, her beauty.  
DE MAUPRAT.

I, my Lord,—*(hesitating)*  
I have no wish to marry.  
RICHELIEU.

Surely, Sir,  
To die were worse.  
DE MAUPRAT.

Scarcely; the poorest coward  
Must die,—but knowingly to march to marriage—  
My Lord, it asks the courage of a lion!  
RICHELIEU.

Traitor, thou triflest with me!—I know *all!*  
Thou hast dared to love my ward—my charge.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

DE MAUPRAT.

As rivers  
May love the sunlight—basking in the beams,  
And hurrying on!—

RICHELIEU.

Thou hast told her of thy love?

DE MAUPRAT.

My Lord, if I had dared to love a maid,  
Lowliest in France, I would not so have wrong'd her,  
As bid her link rich life and virgin hope  
With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side,  
Pluck at the nuptial altar.

RICHELIEU.

I believe thee;

Yet since she knows not of thy love, renounce her;—  
Take life and fortune with another!—Silent?

DE MAUPRAT.

Your fate has been one triumph—You know not  
How bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour  
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.  
Love hath no need of words;—nor less within  
That holiest temple—the heaven—builted soul—  
Breathes the recorded vow.—Base knight,—false lover  
Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief,  
Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.  
Revoke your mercy;—I prefer the fate  
I look'd for!

RICHELIEU.

Huguet! to the tapestry chamber  
Conduct your prisoner.

*(To Mauprat.)*

You will there behold  
The executioner:—your doom be private—  
And Heaven have mercy on you!—

DE MAUPRAT.

When I'm dead,  
Tell her, I loved her.

RICHELIEU.

Keep such follies, Sir,

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

For fitter ears;—go—

DE MAUPRAT.

Does he mock me?

*Exeunt de Mauprat, Huguet.*

RICHELIEU.

Joseph,

Come forth.

*Enter Joseph.*

Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies;  
I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh;  
The scourge is heavy.

JOSEPH.

Pray you, change the subject.

RICHELIEU.

You good men are so modest!—Well, to business!  
Go instantly—deeds—notaries!—bid my stewards  
Arrange my house by the Luxembourg—*my* house

No more!—a bridal present to my ward,  
Who weds to-morrow.

JOSEPH.

Weds, with whom?

RICHELIEU.

De Mauprat.

JOSEPH.

Penniless husband!

RICHELIEU.

Bah! the mate for beauty  
Should be a man, and not a money-chest!  
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,  
I vow'd to be a father to his Julie:—  
And so he died—the smile upon his lips!—  
And when I spared the life of her young lover,  
Methought I saw that smile again!—Who else,  
Look you, in all the court—who else so well,  
Brave, or supplant the favourite;—balk the King—  
Baffle their schemes?—I have tried him:—He has honour

SCENE II.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

And courage;—qualities that eagle-plume  
Men's souls,—and fit them for the fiercest sun,  
Which ever melted the weak waxen minds  
That flutter in the beams of gaudy Power!

Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat:—When my play

Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers, [Note: The Abbé Arnaud tells us that the Queen was a little avenged on the Cardinal by the ill success of the tragi-comedy of Mirame—more than suspected to be his own—though presented to the world under the foster name of Desmarets. Its representation (says Pelisson) cost him 300,000 crowns. He was so transported out of himself by the performance, that at one time he thrust his person half out of his box to show himself to the assembly; at another time he imposed silence on the audience that they might not lose "*des endroits encore plus beaux*!" He said afterwards to Desmarets: "Eh bien, les Français n'auront donc jamais de goût. Ils n'ont pas été charmés de Mirame!" Arnaud says pithily, "On ne pouvoit alors avoir d'autre satisfaction des offenses d'un homme qui étoit maitre de tout, et redoutable à tout le monde." Nevertheless his style in prose, though not devoid of the pedantic affectations of the time, often rises into very noble eloquence.]

Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him  
Applaud in the proper places: trust me, Joseph,  
He is a man of an uncommon promise!

JOSEPH.

And yet your foe.

RICHELIEU.

Have I not foes enow?—

Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.

Remember my grand maxims:—First employ

All methods to conciliate. [Note: "Vialart remarque une chose qui peut expliquer la conduite de Richelieu en d'autres circonstances:—c'est que les seigneurs à qui leur naissance ou leur mérite pouvoit permettre des prétensions, il avoit pour système, de leur accorder au-delà même de leurs droits et de leurs espérances, mais, aussi, une fois comblés—si, au lieu de reconnoître ses services ils se levoient contre lui, il les traitoit sans miséricorde."—*Anquétil*. See also the Political Testament, and the Mémoires de Cardinal Richelieu, in Petitot's collection.]

JOSEPH.

Failing these?

*RICHELIEU (fiercely).*

All means to crush: as with the opening, and  
The clenching of this little hand, I will  
Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers.  
So, so, we've baffled Baradas.

JOSEPH.

And when

Check the conspiracy?

RICHELIEU.

Check, check? Full way to it.

Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i'the day, and burst  
To fruit,—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes; ashes  
Which I will scatter to the winds.

Go, Joseph;

When you return, I have a feast for you;  
The last great act of my great play: the verses,  
Methinks, are fine,—ah, very fine.—*You* write

SCENE II.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Verses! [Note:

"Tantôt fanatique—tantôt fourbe—fonder les religieuses de Calvaire—*faire des vers*." Thus speaks Voltaire of Father Joseph. His talents, and influence with Richelieu, grossly exaggerated in his own day, are now rightly estimated.

"C'étoit en effet un homme infatigable—portant dans les entreprises, l'activité, la souplesse, l'opiniâtreté propres à les faire réussir."—*Anquetil*. He wrote a Latin poem, called "La Turciade," in which he sought to excite the kingdoms of Christendom against the Turks. But the inspiration of Tyrtæus was denied to Father Joseph. ]—(*aside*) *such* verses!—You have wit, discernment.

*JOSEPH (aside).*

Worse than the scourge! Strange that so great a statesman  
Should be so bad a poet.

RICHELIEU.

What dost say?

JOSEPH.

That it is strange so great a statesman should  
Be so sublime a poet.

RICHELIEU.

Ah, you rogue;  
Laws die, Books never. Of my ministry  
I am not vain! but of my muse, I own it.  
Come, you shall hear the verses now (*Takes up a MS.*).

JOSEPH.

My Lord,  
The deeds, the notaries!

RICHELIEU.

True, I pity you;  
But business first, then pleasure.  
*[Exit Joseph.*

*RICHELIEU (seats himself and reading).*

Ah, sublime!

*Enter De Mauprat and Julie.*

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh, speak, my Lord—I dare not think you mock me,  
And yet—

RICHELIEU.

Hush—hush—This line must be consider'd!

JULIE.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Are we not both your children?

RICHELIEU.

What a couplet!—

How now! Oh! Sir—you live!

DE MAUPRAT.

Why, no, methinks,

Elysium is not life!

JULIE.

He smiles!—you smile,

My father! From my heart for ever, now,

I'll blot the name of orphan!

RICHELIEU.

Rise, my children,

For ye are mine—mine both;—and in your sweet

And young delight—your love—(life's first-born glory)

My own lost youth breathes musical!

DE MAUPRAT.

I'll seek

Temple and priest henceforward;—were it but

To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.

RICHELIEU.

Thou shalt seek

Temple and priest right soon; the morrow's sun

Shall see across these barren thresholds pass

The fairest bride in Paris.—Go, my children;

Even *I* loved once!—Be lovers while ye may!

How is it with you, Sir? You bear it bravely:

You know, it asks the courage of a lion.

*[Exeunt Julie and De Mauprat.]*

RICHELIEU.

Oh! godlike Power! Woe, Rapture, Penury, Wealth,—

Marriage and Death, for one infirm old man

Through a great empire to dispense—withhold—

As the will whispers! And shall things—like motes

That live in my daylight—lackies of court wages,

Dwarf'd starvelings—mannikins, upon whose shoulders

The burthen of a province were a load

More heavy than the globe on Atlas,—cast

Lots for my robes and sceptre? France! I love thee!

All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart!

My mistress France—my wedded wife,—sweet France,

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me!

*[Exit Richelieu.]*

END OF ACT I.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

**ACT II. Second Day.**

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE I.

*A splendid Apartment in Mauprat's new House. Casements opening to the Gardens, beyond which the domes of the Luxembourg Palace.*

*Enter Baradas.*

BARADAS.

Mauprat's new home:—too splendid for a soldier!  
But o'er his floors—the while I stalk—methinks  
My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom  
The old rude towers of the Bastile cast far  
Along the smoothness of the jocund day.—  
Well, thou hast scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu;  
But art thou farther from the headsman, fool?  
Thy secret I have whisper'd to the King;—  
Thy marriage makes the King thy foe.—Thou stand'st  
On the abyss—and in the pool below  
I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirror'd;—  
Thy likeness ere the marriage moon hath waned.  
Meanwhile—meanwhile—ha—ha, if thou art wedded,  
Thou art not wived.

*Enter Mauprat (splendidly dressed).*

MAUPRAT.

Was ever fate like mine?  
So blest, and yet so wretched!

BARADAS.

Joy, de Mauprat!—  
Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day!

DE MAUPRAT.

Jest not!—Distraction!

BARADAS.

What your wife, a shrew  
Already? Courage, man—the common lot!

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh! that she were less lovely, or less loved!

BARADAS.

Riddles again!

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

DE MAUPRAT.

You know, what chanced between  
The Cardinal and myself.

BARADAS.

This morning brought  
Your letter:—faith, a strange account! I laugh'd  
And wept at once for gladness.

DE MAUPRAT.

We were wed  
At noon;—the rite perform'd, came hither;—scarce  
Arrived, when—

BARADAS.

Well?—

DE MAUPRAT.

Wide flew the doors, and lo,  
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle!

BARADAS.

'Tis the King's hand!—the royal seal!

DE MAUPRAT.

Read—read—

*BARADAS (reading).*

"Whereas Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of High Treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has presumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to connect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan attached to the person of Her Majesty, without our knowledge or consent—We do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a Demoiselle attached to the Court of France, until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned for his own sake to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

"Given under our hand and seal at the Louvre.

"LOUIS."

*BARADAS (returning the letter).*

Amazement!—Did not Richelieu say, the King  
Knew not your crime?

DE MAUPRAT.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

He said so.  
BARADAS.

Poor de Mauprat!—  
See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death,  
Of which you are the victim?  
DE MAUPRAT.

Ha!

*BARADAS (aside).*

It works!

*(Julie and De Beringhen in the Gardens.)*

You have not sought the Cardinal yet to—  
DE MAUPRAT.

No!  
Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the shock;  
Now I will seek him.  
BARADAS.

Hold, beware!—Stir not  
Till we confer again.  
DE MAUPRAT.

Speak out, man!—  
BARADAS.

Hush!  
Your wife!—De Beringhen!—Be on your guard—  
Obey the royal orders to the letter.  
I'll look around your palace. By my troth  
A princely mansion!  
DE MAUPRAT.

Stay—  
BARADAS.

So new a bridegroom  
Can want no visitors;—Your servant, Madam!  
Oh! happy pair—Oh, charming picture!  
*[Exit through a side-door.]*

JULIE.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Adrien,  
You left us suddenly—Are you not well?  
DE MAUPRAT.

Oh, very well—that is—extremely ill!  
JULIE.

Ill, Adrien? (*taking his hand*).  
DE MAUPRAT.

Not when I see thee.

*(He is about to lift her hand to his lips when De Beringhen coughs and pulls his mantle. Mauprat drops the hand and walks away.)*

JULIE.

Alas!  
Should he not love me?

*DE BERINGHEN (aside).*

Have a care, I must  
Report each word—each gesture to his Majesty.  
DE MAUPRAT.

Sir, if you were not in his Majesty's service,  
You'd be the most officious, impudent,  
Damn'd busy-body ever interfering  
In a man's family affairs.  
DE BERINGHEN.

But as  
I do belong, Sir, to his Majesty—  
DE MAUPRAT.

You're lucky!—Still, were we a story higher,  
'Twere prudent not to go too near the window.  
JULIE.

Adrien, what have I done? Say, am I changed  
Since yesterday?—or was it but for wealth,  
Ambition, life—that—that—you swore you loved me?  
DE MAUPRAT.

I shall go mad!—I do, indeed I do—

*DE BERINGHEN (aside).*

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Not love her! that were highly disrespectful.

JULIE.

You do—what, Adrien?

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh! I do, indeed—

I do think, that this weather is delightful!

A charming day! the sky is so serene!

And what a prospect!—(*to De Beringhen*) Oh! you Popinjay!

JULIE.

He jests at me!—he mocks me!—yet I love him,

And every look becomes the lips we love!

Perhaps I am too grave?—You laugh at Julie;

If laughter please you, welcome be the music!

Only say, Adrien, that you love me.

*DE MAUPRAT (kissing her hand).*

Ay;

With my whole heart I love you!—

Now, Sir, go,

And tell that to his Majesty!—Who ever

Heard of its being a state—offence to kiss

The hand of one's own wife?

JULIE.

He says he loves me,

And starts away, as if to say "I love you"

Meant something *very* dreadful.—Come, sit by me,—

I place your chair!—fie on your gallantry!

*(They sit down; as he pushes his chair back, she draws hers nearer.)*

JULIE.

Why must this strange Messire de Beringhen

Be always here? He never takes a hint.

Do you not wish him gone?

DE MAUPRAT.

Upon my soul

I do, my Julie!—Send him for your *bouquet*,

Your glove, your—anything—

JULIE.

Messire De Beringhen,

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

I dropp'd my glove in the gardens by the fountain,  
Or the alcove, or—stay—no, by the statue  
Of Cupid; may I ask you to—  
DE BERINGHEN.

To send for it?  
Certainly (*ringing a bell on the table*). Andrè, Pierre (your rascals, how  
Do ye call them?)

*Enter Servants.*

Ah—*Madame* has dropp'd her glove  
In the gardens, by the fountain,—or the alcove;  
Or—stay—no, by the statue—eh?—of Cupid.  
Bring it.  
DE MAUPRAT.

Did ever now one pair of shoulders  
Carry such waggon—loads of impudence  
Into a gentleman's drawing—room?  
Dear Julie,  
I'm busy—letters—visitors—the devil!  
I do beseech you leave me—I say—leave me.

*JULIE (weeping).*

You are unkind.

*Exit. (As she goes out, Mauprat drops on one knee and kisses the hem of her mantle, unseen by her.)*

DE BERINGHEN.

Ten million of apologies—  
DE MAUPRAT.

I'll not take one of them. I have, as yet,  
Withstood all things—my heart—my love—my rights.  
But Julie's tears!—When is this farce to end?  
DE BERINGHEN.

Oh! when you please. His Majesty requests me,  
As soon as you infringe his gracious orders,  
To introduce you to the Governor  
Of the Bastile. I should have had that honour  
Before, but, gad, my foible is good nature;  
One can't be hard upon a friend's infirmities.  
DE MAUPRAT.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

I know the King can send me to the scaffold—

Dark prospect!—but I'm used to it; and if  
The Church and Council, by this hour to-morrow,  
One way or other settle not the matter,  
I will—

DE BERINGHEN.

What, my dear Sir?  
DE MAUPRAT.

Show you the door,  
My dear, dear Sir; talk as I please, with whom  
I please, in my own house, dear Sir, until  
His Majesty shall condescend to find  
A stouter gentleman than you, dear Sir,  
To take me out; and now you understand me,  
My dear, most dear—Oh, damnably dear Sir!

DE BERINGHEN.

What, almost in a passion! you will cool  
Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's* absent,  
I'll take a small refreshment. Now, don't stir;  
Be careful;—how's your burgundy?—I'll taste it—  
Finish it all before I leave you. Nay,  
No form;—you see I make myself at home.

*[Exit De Beringhen.]*

*DE MAUPRAT (going to the door through which Baradas had passed).*

Baradas! Count!

*Enter Baradas.*

You spoke of snares—of vengeance  
Sharper than death—be plainer.

BARADAS.

What so clear?  
Richelieu has but two passions—

DE MAUPRAT.

Richelieu!  
BARADAS.

Yes!  
Ambition and revenge—in you both blended.  
First for ambition—Julie is his ward,

SCENE I.



## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Innocent—docile—pliant to his will—  
He placed her at the court—foresaw the rest—  
The King loves Julie!

DE MAUPRAT.

Merciful Heaven! The King!

BARADAS.

Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's wings:  
But the court etiquette must give such Cupids  
The veil of Hymen—(Hymen but in name).  
He look'd abroad—found you his foe:—*thus* served  
Ambition—by the grandeur of his ward,  
And vengeance—by dishonour to his foe!

DE MAUPRAT.

Prove this.

BARADAS.

You have the proof—the royal Letter:—

Your strange exemption from the general pardon,  
Known but to me and Richelieu; can you doubt  
Your friend to acquit your foe? The truth is glaring—  
Richelieu alone could tell the princely Lover  
The tale which sells your life,—or buys your honour!

DE MAUPRAT.

I see it all!—Mock pardon—hurried nuptials—  
False bounty!—all!—the serpent of that smile!  
Oh! it stings home!

BARADAS.

You yet shall crush his malice;

Our plans are sure:—Orleans is at our head;  
We meet to night; join us, and with us triumph.

DE MAUPRAT.

*To night?*—Oh Heaven!—my marriage night!—Revenge!

BARADAS.

What class of men, whose white lips do not curse  
The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant?  
We, noble-born—where are our antique rights—  
Our feudal seignories—our castled strength,  
That did divide us from the base Plebeians,  
And made our swords our law—where are they?—trod  
To dust—and o'er the graves of our dead power  
Scaffolds are monuments—the Kingly House  
Shorn of its beams—the Royal Sun of France  
'Clips'd by this blood-red comet. Where we turn,

SCENE I.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Nothing but Richelieu!—Armies—Church—State—Laws,  
But mirrors that do multiply his beams.

He sees all—acts all—Argus and Briaræus—  
Spy at our boards—and deathsman at our hearths,  
Under the venom of one laidley nightshade,  
Wither the lilies of all France.

*DE MAUPRAT (impatiently).*

But Julie—

*BARADAS (unheeding him).*

As yet the Fiend that serves hath saved his power  
From every snare; and in the epitaphs  
Of many victims dwells a warning moral  
That preaches caution. Were I not assured  
That what before was hope is ripen'd now  
Into most certain safety, trust me, Mauprat,  
I still could hush my hate and mark thy wrongs,  
And say "Be patient!"—*Now*, the King himself  
Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers  
Will rid him of his Priest. You knit your brows,  
Noble impatience!—Pass we to our scheme!  
'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, within his chapel,  
(Hypocrite worship ended,) to dispense  
Alms to the Mendicant friars,—in that guise  
A band (yourself the leader) shall surround  
And seize the despot.

DE MAUPRAT.

But the King? but Julie?

BARADAS.

The King, infirm in health, in mind more feeble,  
Is but the plaything of a Minister's will.  
Where Richelieu dead—his power were mine; and Louis  
Soon should forget his passion and your crime.  
But whither now?

DE MAUPRAT.

I know not; I scarce hear thee;  
A little while for thought: anon I'll join thee;  
But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe  
The face of man!

*[Exit De Mauprat through the Gardens.*

BARADAS.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Start from the chase, my prey,  
But as thou speed'st the hell-hounds of Revenge  
Pant in thy track and dog thee down.

*Enter De Beringhen, his mouth full, a napkin in his hand.*

DE BERINGHEN.

Chevalier,  
Your cook's a miracle,—what, my Host gone?  
Faith, Count, my office is a post of danger—  
A fiery fellow, Mauprat!—touch and go,—  
Match and saltpetre,—pr—r—r—r—!

BARADAS.

You  
Will be released ere long. The King resolves  
To call the bride to court this day.

DE BERINGHEN.

Poor Mauprat!  
Yet, since *you* love the lady, why so careless  
Of the King's suit?

BARADAS.

Because the lady's virtuous,  
And the King timid. Ere he win the suit  
He'll lose the crown,—the bride will be a widow,—  
And I—the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.

DE BERINGHEN.

Is Louis still so chafed against the Fox,  
For snatching yon fair dainty from the Lion?

BARADAS.

So chafed, that Richelieu totters. Yes, the King  
Is half conspirator against the Cardinal.  
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted,—  
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu,—  
The man, whose name the synonym for daring.

DE BERINGHEN.

He must mean me!—No, Count, I am—I own  
A valiant dog—but still—

BARADAS.

Whom can I mean  
But Mauprat?—Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's,  
There shall we sign:—thence send this scroll (*showing it*) to Bouillon.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

You're in that secret (*affectionately*)—one of our new Council.  
DE BERINGHEN.

But to admit the Spaniard—France's foe—

Into the heart of France,—dethrone the King,—  
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.  
BARADAS.

Oh, Sir, too late to falter: when we meet  
We must arrange the separate—coarser scheme,  
For Richelieu's death. Of this despatch De Mauprat  
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,  
And he would start from treason.—We must post him  
Without the door at Marion's—as a sentry.  
(*Aside*)—So, when his head is on the block—his tongue  
Cannot betray our more august designs!  
DE BERINGHEN.

I'll meet you, if the King can spare me.—(*Aside.*)—No!  
I am too old a goose to play with foxes,  
I'll roost at home. Meanwhile, in the next room  
There's a delicious pâté, let's discuss it.  
BARADAS.

Pshaw! a man fill'd with a sublime ambition  
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.  
DE BERINGHEN.

Pshaw!  
And a man fill'd with as sublime a pâté  
Has no time to discuss ambition.—Gad,  
I have the best of it!

(*Enter Julie hastily with first Courtier.*)

JULIE (*to Courtier*).

A summons, Sir,  
To attend the Louvre?—On *this* day, too?  
COURTIER.

Madame,  
The royal carriage waits below.—Messire (*to De Beringhen*) .  
You will return with us.  
JULIE.

What can this mean?—  
Where is my husband?  
BARADAS.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

He has left the house  
Perhaps till nightfall—so he bade me tell you.  
Alas, were I the lord of such fair treasure—

*JULIE (impatiently).*

Till nightfall?—Strange—my heart misgives me!  
COURTIER.

*Madame,*  
My orders will not brook delay.

*JULIE (to Baradas).*

You'll see him—  
And you will tell him!  
BARADAS.

From the flowers of Hybla  
Never more gladly did the bee bear honey,  
Than I take sweetness from those rosiest lips,  
Though to the hive of others!

*COURTIER (to De Beringhen).*

Come, Messire.

*DE BERINGHEN (hesitating).*

One moment, just to—  
COURTIER.

Come, Sir.  
DE BERINGHEN.

I shall not  
Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,  
I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's the best of it!

*Exeunt Julie, De Beringhen, and Courtier.*

BARADAS.

Now will this fire his fever into madness!  
All is made clear: Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu—

SCENE I.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Die for that crime:—I shall console his Julie—  
This will reach Bouillon!—from the wrecks of France  
I shall carve out—who knows—perchance a throne!  
All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.—

*Enter De Mauprat from the Gardens.*

DE MAUPRAT.

Speak! can it be?—Methought, that from the terrace  
I saw the carriage of the King—and Julie!  
No!—no!—my frenzy peoples the void air  
With its own phantoms!

BARADAS.

Nay, too true.—Alas!  
Was ever lightning swifter, or more blasting,  
Than Richelieu's forkèd guile?

DE MAUPRAT.

I'll to the Louvre—  
BARADAS.

And lose all hope!—The Louvre!—the sure gate  
To the Bastile!

DE MAUPRAT.

The King—  
BARADAS.

Is but the wax,  
Which Richelieu stamps! Break the malignant *seal*,  
And I will rase the print! Come, man, take heart!  
Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial  
Than a few hours of cold imperious courtship.  
Were Richelieu *dust*—no danger!

DE MAUPRAT.

Ghastly Vengeance!  
To thee and thine august and solemn sister  
The unrelenting Death! I dedicate  
The blood of Armand Richelieu! When Dishonour  
Reaches our hearths Law dies, and Murther takes  
The angel shape of Justice!

BARADAS.

Bravely said!  
At midnight,—Marion's!—Nay, I cannot leave thee  
To thoughts that—

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

DE MAUPRAT.

Speak not to me!—I am yours!—

But speak not! There's a voice within my soul,  
Whose cry could drown the thunder.—Oh! if men  
Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,  
Let them, who raise the spell, beware the Fiend!

*[Exeunt.]*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE II.

*A room in the Palais Cardinal (as in the First Act).*

*Richelieu.—Joseph.*

*François, writing at a table.*

JOSEPH.

Yes;—Huguet, taking his accustom'd round,—  
Disguised as some plain burgher,—heard these rufflers  
Quoting your name:—he listen'd,—"Pshaw!" said one,  
"We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace  
To-morrow!"—"How?" the other ask'd;—"You'll hear  
The whole design to-night; the Duke of Orleans  
And Baradas have got the map of action  
At their fingers' end."—"So be it," quoth the other,  
"I will be there,—Marion de Lorme's—at midnight!"

RICHELIEU.

I have them, man, I have them!

JOSEPH.

So they say  
Of you, my Lord;—believe me, that their plans  
Are mightier than you deem. You must employ  
Means no less vast to meet them!

RICHELIEU.

Bah! in policy  
We foil gigantic danger, not by giants,  
But dwarfs.—The statues of our stately fortune  
Are sculptured by the chisel—not the axe! [Note: Richelieu not only employed the lowest, but would often consult men commonly  
esteemed, the dullest. "Il disoit que dans des choses de très grande importance, il avoit expérimenté, que les moins sages donnoient souvent les meilleurs  
expédiens."]

—*Le Clerc.*

]

Ah! were I younger—by the knightly heart

That beats beneath these priestly robes, [Note: Both Richelieu and Joseph were originally intended for the profession of arms. Joseph had  
served before he obeyed the spiritual inspiration to become a Capuchin. The death of his brother opened to Richelieu the Bishopric of Luçon; but his military  
propensities were as strong as his priestly ambition. I need scarcely add that the Cardinal, during his brilliant campaign in Italy, marched at the head of his  
troops in complete armour. It was under his administration that occurs the last example of proclaiming war by the chivalric defiance of herald and cartel.  
Richelieu valued himself much on his personal activity,—for his vanity was as universal as his ambition. A nobleman of the house of Grammont one day  
found him employed in *jumping*, and, with all the *savoir vivre* of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the Cardinal to jump  
higher, and soon after found himself rewarded by an appointment. Yet, strangely enough, this vanity did not lead to a patronage injurious to the state; for  
never before in France was ability made so essential a requisite in promotion. He was lucky in finding the cleverest fellows among his adroitest flatterers.] I  
would

Have pastime with these cut-throats!—Yea,—as when,

SCENE II.



## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe,—  
I clove my pathway through the plumed sea!  
Reach me yon falchion, François,—not that bauble  
For carpet-warriors,—yonder—such a blade  
As old Charles Martel might have wielded when  
He drove the Saracen from France.

*(François brings him one of the long two-handed swords worn in the Middle Ages.)*

With this  
I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage  
The stalwart Englisher,—no mongrels, boy,  
Those island mastiffs,—mark the notch—a deep one—  
His casque made here,—I shore him to the waist!  
A toy—a feather—then!

*(Tries to wield, and lets it fall.)*

You see a child could  
Slay Richelieu, now.

*FRANÇOIS (his hand on his hilt).*

But *now*, at your command  
Are other weapons, my good Lord.

*RICHELIEU (who has seated himself as to write, lifts the pen).*

True,—THIS!  
Beneath the rule of men entirely great  
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold  
The arch-enchanter's wand!—itself a nothing!—  
But taking sorcery from the master-hand  
To paralyse the Cæsars—and to strike  
The loud earth breathless!—Take away the sword—  
States can be saved without it!

*(Looking on the clock.)*

'Tis the hour,—  
Retire, Sir.

*[Exit François.*

*(A knock is heard. A door, concealed in the arras opens cautiously. Enter Marion de Lorme.)*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*JOSEPH (amazed).*

Marion de Lorme!  
RICHELIEU.

Hist!—Joseph,  
Keep guard.

*(Joseph retires to the principal entrance.)*

My faithful Marion!  
MARION.

Good, my Lord,  
They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke  
Of Orleans heads them.  
RICHELIEU.

Yes—go on.  
MARION.

His Highness  
Much question'd if I knew some brave, discreet,  
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,  
And who had those twin qualities for service,  
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.—  
RICHELIEU.

You?—  
MARION.

Made answer, "Yes—my brother;—bold and trusty;  
Whose faith, my faith could pledge;"—the Duke then bade me  
Have him equipp'd and arm'd—well-mounted—ready  
This night to part for Italy.  
RICHELIEU.

Aha!—  
Has Bouillon too turn'd traitor!—So, methought!—  
What part of Italy?  
MARION.

The Piedmont frontier,  
Where Bouillon lies encamp'd.

RICHELIEU.

Now there is danger!  
Great danger!—If he tamper with the Spaniard,

SCENE II.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

And Louis list not to my council, as,  
Without sure proof, he will not,—France is lost.  
What more?

MARION.

Dark hints of some design to seize  
Your person in your palace. Nothing clear—  
His Highness trembled while he spoke—the words  
Did choke each other!

RICHELIEU.

So!—Who is the brother  
You recommended to the Duke?

MARION.

Whoever  
Your Eminence may father!—

RICHELIEU.

**Darling Marion!** [Note: Voltaire openly charges Richelieu with being the lover of Marion de Lorme, whom the great poet of France, Victor Hugo, has sacrificed History to adorn with qualities which were certainly not added to her personal charms.—She was not less perfidious than beautiful.—Le Clerc, properly, refutes the accusation of Voltaire, against the discretion of Richelieu; and says, very justly, that if the great minister had the frailties of human nature, he learnt how to veil them,—at least when he obtained the scarlet. In earlier life he had been prone to gallantries which a little prepossessed the King (who was formal and decorous, and threw a singular coldness into the few attachments he permitted to himself) against the aspiring intriguer. But these gayer occupations died away in the engagement of higher pursuits or of darker passions.]

*(Goes to the table, and returns with a large bag of gold.)*

There—pshaw—a trifle!—What an eye you have!  
And what a smile—child!—*(kisses her)*—Ah! you fair perdition—  
'Tis well I'm old!

*MARION (aside and seriously).*

What a great man he is!  
RICHELIEU.

You are sure they meet?—the hour?

MARION.

At midnight.  
RICHELIEU.

And  
You will engage to give the Duke's despatch  
To whom I send?

MARION.

Aye, marry!

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*RICHELIEU (aside).*

Huguet? No;  
He will be wanted elsewhere.—Joseph?—zealous,  
But too well known—too much the *elder* brother!  
Mauprat—alas—it is his wedding-day!—  
François?—the Man of Men!—unnoted—young—  
Ambitious—(*goes to the door*)—François!

*Enter François.*

RICHELIEU.

Follow this fair lady:  
(Find him the suiting garments, Marion,) take  
My fleetest steed:—arm thyself to the teeth;  
A packet will be given you—with orders,  
No matter what!—The instant that your hand  
Closes upon it—clutch *it*, like your honour,  
Which Death alone can steal, or ravish—set  
Spurs to your steed—be breathless, till you stand  
Again before me.—Stay, Sir!—You will find me  
Two short leagues hence—at Ruelle, in my castle.  
Young man, be blithe!—for—note me—from the hour  
I grasp that packet—think your guardian Star  
Rains fortune on you!

FRANÇOIS.

If I fail—  
RICHELIEU.

Fail—fail?  
In the lexicon of youth, which Fate reserves  
For a bright manhood, there is no such word

As—*fail!*—(You will instruct him further, Marion)  
Follow her—but at distance;—speak not to her,  
Till you are housed;—Farewell, boy! Never say  
"*Fail*" again.

FRANÇOIS.

I will not!

*RICHELIEU (patting his locks).*

There's my young hero!—

*[Exeunt François—Marion.*

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

RICHELIEU.

So, they would seize my person in this palace?—  
I cannot guess their scheme:—but my retinue  
Is here too large!—a single traitor could  
Strike impotent the faith of thousands;—Joseph,  
Art sure of Huguet?—Think—we hang'd his Father!

JOSEPH.

But you have bought the Son;—heap'd favours on him!

RICHELIEU.

Trash!—favours past—that's nothing.—In his hours  
Of confidence with you, has he named the favours  
To *come*—he counts on?

JOSEPH.

Yes:—a Colonel's rank,  
And Letters of Nobility.

RICHELIEU.

What, Huguet!—

*(Here Huguet enters, as to address the Cardinal, who does not perceive him.)*

HUGUET.

My own name, soft—*(glides behind the screen!)*

RICHELIEU.

Colonel and Nobleman!  
My bashful Huguet—that can never be!—  
We have him not the less—we'll *promise it!*

And see the King withholds!—Ah, kings are oft  
A great convenience to a minister!  
No wrong to Huguet either!—Moralists  
Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession!—Yes—  
We'll count on Huguet! Favours *past* do gorge  
Our dogs; leave service drowsy—dull the scent,  
Slacken the speed;—favours *to come*, my Joseph,  
Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,  
A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest cur  
Would make a Cerberus.—You are right, this treason  
Assumes a fearful aspect:—but once crush'd,  
Its very ashes shall manure the soil  
Of power; and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,  
That all the summer of my fate shall seem  
Fruitless beside the autumn!

SCENE II.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*Huguet holds up his hand menacingly, and creeps out.)*

JOSEPH.

The saints grant it!

*RICHELIEU (solemnly).*

Yes—for sweet France, Heaven grant it!—O my country,  
For thee—thee only—though men deem it not—  
Are toil and terror my familiars!—I  
Have made thee great and fair—upon thy brows  
Wreath'd the old Roman laurel:—at thy feet  
Bow'd nations down.—No pulse in my ambition  
Whose beatings were not measured from thy heart!  
In the old times before us, patriots lived [Note: Omitted, in representation, from l. 402 to 419.]  
And died for liberty—

JOSEPH.

As you would live

And die for despotry—

RICHELIEU.

False monk, not so,  
But for the purple and the power wherein  
State clothes herself.—I love my native land  
Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss,  
But as a Noble and a Priest of France;  
"All things for France"—lo, my eternal maxim!  
The vital axle of the restless wheels  
That bear me on! With her, I have entwined

My passions and my fate—my crimes, my virtues—

Hated and loved [Note: Richelieu did in fact so thoroughly associate himself with the State, that, in cases where the extreme penalty of the law had been incurred, Le Clerc justly observes that he was more inexorable to those he had favoured—even to his own connections—than to other and more indifferent offenders. It must be remembered as some excuse for his unrelenting sternness that, before his time, the great had been accustomed to commit any disorder with impunity—even the crime of treason, "auparavant on ne faisoit poser les armes aux rebelles qu'en leur accordant quelque récompense." On entering into the administration, he therefore laid it down as a maxim necessary to the existence of the State, that "no crime should be committed with impunity." To carry out this maxim, the long-established licence to crime made even justice seem cruel. But the victims most commiserated from their birth or accomplishments, as Montmorenci, or Cinq Mars, were traitors in actual conspiracy against their country, and would have forfeited life in any land where the punishment of death existed, and the lawgiver was strong enough to vindicate the law. Richelieu was in fact a patriot unsoftened by philanthropy. As in Venice (where the favourite aphorism was, Venice first, Pria Veneziana, poi Christiane." Christianity next), so, with Richelieu, the primary consideration was, "what will be best for the Country?" He had no abstract principle, whether as a politician or a priest, when applied to the world that lay beyond the boundaries of France. Thus he, whose object was to found in France a splendid and imperious despotism—assisted the Parliamentary party in England, and signed a treaty of alliance and subsidies with the Catalan rebels for the establishment of a Republic in Barcelona;—to convulse other Monarchies was to consolidate the growing Monarchy of France.—So he, who completely crushed the Protestant party at home, braved all the wrath of the Vatican, and even the resentment of the King, in giving the most essential aid to the Protestants abroad. There was, indeed, a largeness of view in his hostility to the French Huguenots, which must be carefully distinguished from the intolerance of the mere priest. He opposed them, not as a Catholic, but as a Statesman. The Huguenots were strong republicans, and had formed plans for dividing France into provincial commonwealths; and the existence of Rochelle was absolutely incompatible with the integrity of the French Monarchy. It was a second capital held by the Huguenots, claiming independent authority, and the right to treat with Foreign Powers. Richelieu's final conquest was marked by a humanity, that had nothing of the bigot. The Huguenots obtained a complete amnesty, and had only to regret the loss of privileges and fortifications which could not have existed with any security to the rest of France.], and schemed, and shed men's blood,

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

As the calm crafts of Tuscan Sages teach  
Those who would make their country great. Beyond  
The Map of France—my heart can travel not,  
But fills that limit to its farthest verge;  
And while I live—Richelieu and France are one.  
We Priests, to whom the Church forbids in youth  
The plighted one—to manhood's toil denies  
The soother helpmate—from our wither'd age  
Shuts the sweet blossoms of the second spring  
That smiles in the name of Father—We are yet  
Not holier than Humanity, and must  
Fulfil Humanity's condition—Love!  
Debarr'd the Actual, we but breathe a life  
To the chill Marble of the Ideal—Thus,  
In thy unseen and abstract Majesty,

My France—my Country, I have bodied forth  
A thing to love. What are these robes of state,  
This pomp, this palace? perishable baubles!  
In this world two things only are immortal—  
Fame and a People!

*Enter Huguet.*

HUGUET.

My Lord Cardinal,  
Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.  
RICHELIEU.

Did I?—True, Huguet.—So—you overheard  
Strange talk amongst these gallants? Snares and traps  
For Richelieu?—Well—we'll balk them; let me think—  
The men at arms you head—how many?  
HUGUET.

Twenty, [Note: The guard attached to Richelieu's person was, in the first instance, fifty arquebussiers, afterwards increased to two companies of cavalry and two hundred musqueteers. Huguet is, therefore, to be considered merely as the lieutenant of a small detachment of this little army. In point of fact, the subdivisions of the guard took it in turns to serve.]

My Lord.

RICHELIEU.

All trusty?  
HUGUET.

Yes, for ordinary  
Occasions—if for great ones, I would change  
Three-fourths at least.  
RICHELIEU.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Ay, what are great occasions?

HUGUET.

Great bribes!

*RICHELIEU (to Joseph).*

Good lack, he knows some paragons

Superior to great bribes!

HUGUET.

True Gentlemen

Who have transgress'd the Laws—and value life

And lack not gold; your Eminence alone

Can grant them pardon. *Ergo* you can trust them!

RICHELIEU.

Logic!—So be it—let this *honest* twenty

Be arm'd and mounted—(*aside.*) So they meet at midnight,

The attempt on me to-morrow—Ho! we'll strike

'Twixt wind and water.—(*Aloud.*) Does it need much time

To find these ornaments to Human Nature?

HUGUET.

My Lord—the trustiest of them are not birds

That love the daylight.—I do know a haunt

Where they meet nightly—

RICHELIEU.

Ere the dawn be grey,

All could be arm'd, assembled, and at Ruelle

In my old hall?

HUGUET.

By one hour after midnight.

RICHELIEU.

The castle's strong. You know its outlets, Huguet?

Would twenty men, well posted, keep such guard

That not one step—(and Murther's step is stealthy)—

Could glide within—unseen?

HUGUET.

A triple wall—

A drawbridge and portcullis—twenty men

Under my lead, a month might hold that castle

Against a host.

RICHELIEU.



## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

They do not strike till morning,  
Yet I will shift the quarter—Bid the grooms  
Prepare the litter—I will hence to Ruelle  
While daylight last—and one hour after midnight  
You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither!  
You're made to rise!—You are, Sir;—eyes of lynx,  
Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow;

You are a valiant fellow;—yea, a trusty,  
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,  
And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet!  
If I live long enough,—ay, mark my words—  
If I live long enough, you'll be a Colonel—  
Noble perhaps!—One hour, Sir, after midnight.

HUGUET.

You leave me dumb with gratitude, my Lord;  
I'll pick the trustiest (*aside*) Marion's house can furnish!

[*Exit Huguet.*]

RICHELIEU.

How like a spider shall I sit in my hole,  
And watch the meshes tremble.

JOSEPH.

But, my Lord,  
Were it not wiser still to man the palace,  
And seize the traitors in the act?

RICHELIEU.

No; Louis,  
Long chafed against me—Julie stolen from him,  
Will rouse him more.—He'll say I hatch'd the treason,  
Or scout my charge:—He half desires my death;  
But the despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme  
Against *his* crown—*there* is our weapon, Joseph!  
With that all safe—without it, all is peril!  
Meanwhile to my old castle; *you* to court,  
Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts,  
As ghostly churchmen should do! See the King,  
Bid him peruse that sage and holy treatise,  
Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should  
Be chosen from the Priesthood—how the King  
Should never listen to a single charge  
Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper  
That the rank envies of a court distil  
Into his ear—to fester the fair name  
Of my—I mean his Minister!—Oh! Joseph,

A most convincing treatise. [Note: This tract, on the "Unity of the Minister," contains all the doctrines, and many more to the same effect,

SCENE II.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

referred to in the text, and had a prodigious influence on the conscience of the poor king. At the onset of his career, Richelieu, as deputy of the clergy of Poitou, complained in his harangue to the king that ecclesiastics were too rarely summoned to the royal councils, and invoked the example of the Druids!]

Good—all favours,  
If François be but bold, and Huguet honest.—  
Huguet—I half suspect—he bow'd too low—  
'Tis not his way.

JOSEPH.

This is the curse, my Lord,  
Of your high state;—suspicion of all men.

*RICHELIEU (sadly).*

True;—true;—my leeches bribed to poisoners;—pages  
To strangle me in sleep.—My very King  
(This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven  
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me.  
Old—childless—friendless—broken—all forsake—  
All—all—but—

JOSEPH.

What?  
RICHELIEU.

The indomitable heart  
Of Armand Richelieu!

JOSEPH.

Nought beside?  
RICHELIEU.

Why, Julie,  
My own dear foster-child, forgive me!—yes;  
This morning, shining through their happy tears,  
Thy soft eyes bless'd me!—and thy Lord,—in danger  
*He* would forsake me not.

JOSEPH.

And Joseph—

*RICHELIEU (after a pause).*

You—  
Yes, I believe you—yes—for all men fear you—  
And the world loves you not.—And I, friend Joseph,  
I am the only man, who could, my Joseph,  
Make you a Bishop. [Note: Joseph's ambition was not, however, so moderate; he refused a bishopric, and desired the Cardinal's Hat, for which favour Richelieu openly supplicated the Holy See, but contrived somehow or other never to effect it, although two ambassadors applied for it at Rome.]—Come, we'll go to dinner,

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

And talk the while of methods to advance

**Our Mother Church.** [Note: The peculiar religion of Père Joseph may be illustrated by the following anecdote:—An officer, whom he had dismissed upon an expedition into Germany, moved by conscience at the orders he had received, returned for farther explanations, and found the Capucin *disant sa messe*. He approached and whispered "But, my father, if these people defend themselves—" "Kill all" (Qu'on tue tout), answered the good father, continuing his devotions.] —Ah, Joseph,—*Bishop Joseph!*

END OF ACT II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

**ACT III. Second Day (Midnight).**

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

### SCENE I.

*Richelieu's Castle at Ruelle—A Gothic chamber—Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.*

*RICHELIEU (reading). [Note: I need not say that the great length of this soliloquy adapts it only for the closet, and that but few of the lines are preserved on the stage. To the reader, however, the passages omitted in representation will not, perhaps, be the most uninteresting in the play, and may be deemed necessary to the completion of the Cardinal's portrait,—action on the stage supplying so subtly the place of words in the closet. The self-assured sophistries which, in the text, mingle with Richelieu's better-founded arguments in apology for the darker traits of his character, are to be found scattered throughout the writings ascribed to him. The reader will observe that in this self-confession lies the latent poetical justice,—which separates happiness from success.—[Lines retained on the stage from 28 to 40.]]*

"In silence, and at night, the Conscience feels  
That life should soar to nobler ends than Power."  
So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist!  
But wert thou tried?—Sublime Philosophy,  
Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven,  
And bright with beck'ning angels—but, alas!  
We see thee, like the Patriarch, but in dreams,  
By the first step—dull—slumbering on the earth.  
I am not happy!—with the Titan's lust  
I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a cloud.  
When I am dust, my name shall, like a star,  
Shine through wan space, a glory—and a prophet  
Whereby pale seers shall from their aery towers  
Con all the ominous signs, benign or evil,  
That make the potent astrologue of kings.  
But shall the Future judge me by the ends  
That I have wrought—or by the dubious means  
Through which the stream of my renown hath run  
Into the many-voiced unfathomed Time?  
Foul in its bed lie weeds—and heaps of slime,  
And with its waves—when sparkling in the sun,  
Oft times the secret rivulets that swell  
Its might of waters—blend the hues of blood.  
Yet are my sins not those of CIRCUMSTANCE,

That all-pervading atmosphere, wherein  
Our spirits, like the unsteady lizard, take  
The tints that colour, and the food that nurtures?  
O! ye, whose hour-glass shifts its tranquil sands  
In the unvex'd silence of a student's cell;  
Ye, whose untempted hearts have never toss'd  
Upon the dark and stormy tides where life  
Gives battle to the elements,—and man  
Wrestles with man for some slight plank, whose weight  
Will bear but one—while round the desperate wretch  
The hungry billows roar—and the fierce Fate,  
Like some huge monster, dim-seen through the surf,  
Waits him who drops;—ye safe and formal men,  
Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand  
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the Great,

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Ye cannot know what ye have never tried!  
History preserves only the fleshless bones  
Of what we are—and by the mocking skull  
The would-be wise pretend to guess the features!  
Without the roundness and the glow of life  
How hideous is the skeleton! Without  
The colourings and humanities that clothe  
Our errors, the anatomists of schools  
Can make our memory hideous!

I have wrought

Great uses out of evil tools—and they  
In the time to come may bask beneath the light  
Which I have stolen from the angry gods,  
And warn their sons against the glorious theft,  
Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.  
I have shed blood—but I have had no foes

Save those the State had [Note: It is well known that when, on his death-bed, Richelieu was asked if he forgave his enemies; he replied, "I never had any, but those of the State." And this was true enough, for Richelieu and the State were one.]—if my wrath was deadly,

'Tis that I felt my country in my veins,

And smote her sons as Brutus smote his own. [Note: Richelieu's vindication of himself from cruelty will be found in various parts of Petitot's Collection, vols. xxi. xxx. (bis.)]

And yet I am not happy—blanch'd and sear'd  
Before my time—breathing an air of hate,  
And seeing daggers in the eyes of men,  
And wasting powers that shake the thrones of earth  
In contest with the insects—bearding kings

And braved by lackies [Note: Voltaire has a striking passage on the singular fate of Richelieu, recalled every hour from his gigantic schemes to frustrate some miserable cabal of the ante-room. Richelieu would often exclaim, that "Six pieds de terre (as he called the king's cabinet) lui donnaient plus de peine que tout le reste de l'Europe." The death of Wallenstein, sacrificed by the Emperor Ferdinand, produced a most lively impression upon Richelieu. He found many traits of comparison between Ferdinand and Louis—Wallenstein and himself. In the Memoirs—now regarded by the best authorities as written by his sanction, and in great part by himself—the great Frenchman bursts (when alluding to Wallenstein's murder) into a touching and pathetic anathema on the *misère de cette vie* of dependence on jealous and timid royalty, which he himself, while he wrote, sustained. It is worthy of remark, that it was precisely at the period of Wallenstein's death that Richelieu obtained from the king an augmentation of his guard.]—murder at my bed;

And lone amidst the multitudinous web,  
With the dread Three—that are the Fates who hold  
The woof and shears—the Monk, the Spy, the Headsman.  
And this is Power! Alas! I am not happy.

*(After a pause.)*

And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds  
Its rising roots not up; but never yet  
Did one least barrier by a ripple vex  
My onward tide, unswept in sport away.  
Am I so ruthless then that I do hate  
Them who hate me? Tush, tush! I do not hate;  
Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes the doom,  
But the Priest sends the blessing. I forgive them,  
But I destroy; forgiveness is mine own,  
Destruction is the State's! For private life,  
Scripture the guide—for public, Machiavel.  
Would Fortune serve me if the Heaven were wroth?

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

For chance makes half my greatness. I was born  
Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,  
And my triumphant adamant of soul  
Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.

Ah!—here!—that spasm!—again!—How Life and Death

Do wrestle for me momentarily!—And yet  
The King looks pale. I shall outlive the King!

And then, thou insolent Austrian—who didst gibe

At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring lover, [Note: Richelieu was commonly supposed, though I cannot say I find much evidence for it, to have been too presuming in an interview with Anne of Austria (the Queen), and to have bitterly resented the contempt she expressed for him. The Duke of Buckingham's frantic and Quixotic passion for the Queen is well known.]

Sleeking thy looks to silken Buckingham,—  
Thou shalt—no matter!—I have outlived love.

O! beautiful—all golden—gentle Youth!

Making thy palace in the careless front  
And hopeful eye of man—ere yet the soul  
Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)

Breath'd glory from the earlier star it dwelt in—

O! for one gale from thine exulting morning,

Stirring amidst the roses, where of old

Love shook the dew-drops from his glancing hair!

Could I recall the past—or had not set

The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt soul

In one slight bark upon the shoreless sea;

The yoked steer, after his day of toil,

Forgets the goad and rests—to me alike

Or day or night—Ambition has no rest!

Shall I resign—who can resign himself?

For custom is ourself;—as drink and food

Become our bone and flesh—the aliments

Nurturing our nobler part, the mind—thoughts, dreams,

Passions, and aims, in the revolving cycle

Of the great alchemy—at length are made

Our mind itself; and yet the sweets of leisure—

An honour'd home—far from these base intrigues—

An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights of wisdom—

*(Taking up the book.)*

Speak to me, moralist!—I'll heed thy counsel.

Were it not best—

*(Enter François hastily, and in part disguised.)*

*RICHELIEU (flinging away the book).*

Philosophy, thou liest!

Quick—the despatch!—Power—Empire! Boy—the packet!

FRANCOIS.

Kill me, my Lord.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

RICHELIEU.

They knew thee—they suspected—  
They gave it not—

FRANCOIS.

He gave it—*he*—the Count  
De Baradas—with his own hand he gave it!

RICHELIEU.

Baradas. Joy! out with it!

FRANCOIS.

Listen,  
And then dismiss me to the headsmen.

RICHELIEU.

Ha!

Go on.

FRANCOIS.

They led me to a chamber—There  
Orleans and Baradas—and some half-score,  
Whom I know not—were met—

RICHELIEU.

Not more!  
FRANCOIS.

But from  
The 'adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,  
The clattering tread of armed men;—at times  
A shriller cry, that yell'd out, "Death to Richelieu!"

RICHELIEU.

Speak not of *me*: thy *country* is in danger!  
The 'adjoining room—So, so—a *separate* treason!  
The one thy ruin, France!—the meaner crime,  
Left to their tools, my murder!—

FRANCOIS.

Baradas  
Questioned me close—demurr'd—until, at last,  
O'erruled by Orleans,—gave the packet—told me  
That life and death were in the scroll—this gold—

RICHELIEU.

Gold is no proof—  
FRANCOIS.

SCENE I.



## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

And Orleans promised thousands,  
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris  
Rang out shrill answer;—hastening from the house,  
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole  
Across the threshold, whispering "Lose no moment,  
Ere Richelieu have the packet: tell him too—  
Murder is in the winds of Night, and Orleans  
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."  
She said, and trembling fled within; when, lo!  
A hand of iron griped me; thro' the dark  
Gleam'd the dim shadow of an armed man:  
Ere I could draw—the prize was wrested from me,  
And a hoarse voice gasp'd—"Spy, I spare thee, for  
This steel is virgin to thy Lord!"—with that  
He vanish'd.—Scared and trembling for thy safety,  
I mounted, fled, and, kneeling at thy feet,

Implore thee to acquit my faith—but not,  
Like him, to spare my life.—

RICHELIEU.

Who spake of *life*?

I bade thee grasp that treasure as thine *honour*—  
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives!  
Begone—redeem thine honour—back to Marion—  
Or Baradas—or Orleans—track the robber—  
Regain the packet—or crawl on to Age—  
Age and grey hairs like mine—and know, thou hast lost  
That which had made thee great and saved thy country.—  
See me not till thou'st bought the right to seek me.—  
Away!—Nay, cheer thee—thou hast not fail'd yet,—  
*There's no such word as "fail!"*

FRANCOIS.

Bless you, my Lord,

For that one smile!—I'll wear it on my heart

To light me back to triumph. [Note: The fear and the hatred which Richelieu generally inspired were not shared by his dependants and those about his person, who are said "to have adored him."—*Ses domestiques le regardaient comme le meilleur des maîtres.*—Le Clerc. In fact, although *il étoit orgueilleux et colère*,—he was, *en même temps, affable et plein de douceur dans l'abord*; and he was no less generous to those who served than severe to those who opposed him.] (*Exit.*)

RICHELIEU.

The poor youth!

An elder had ask'd life!—I love the young!  
For as great men live not in their own time,  
But the next race,—so in the young, my soul  
Makes many Richelieus.—He will win it yet.  
François!—He's gone. My murder! Marion's warning!  
This bravo's threat! O for the morrow's dawn!—  
I'll set my spies to work—I'll make all space  
(As does the sun) an Universal Eye—

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Huguet shall track—Joseph confess—ha! ha!—  
Strange, while I laugh'd I shudder'd, and ev'n now  
Thro' the chill air the beating of my heart  
Sounds like a death-watch by a sick man's pillow;  
If Huguet *could* deceive me—hoofs without—  
The gates unclose—steps near and nearer!

(*Enter Julie.*)

JULIE.

Cardinal!  
My father! (*falls at his feet*).

RICHELIEU.

Julie at this hour!—and tears!  
What ails thee?

JULIE.

I am safe; I am with thee!—  
RICHELIEU.

Safe! why in all the storms of this wild world  
What wind would mar the violet?

JULIE.

That man—  
Why did I love him?—clinging to a breast  
That knows no shelter?

Listen—late at noon—  
The marriage-day—ev'n then no more a lover—  
He left me coldly,—well,—I sought my chamber  
To weep and wonder—but to hope and dream.  
Sudden a mandate from the king—to attend  
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.

RICHELIEU.

Ha!—  
You did obey the summons; and the king  
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials.—

JULIE.

Were that all!  
He frown'd and chid;—proclaim'd the bond unlawful:  
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace,  
And there at night—alone—this night—all still—  
He sought my presence—dared—thou read'st the heart,  
Read mine!—I cannot speak it!

RICHELIEU.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

He a king,—  
You—woman; well,—you yielded!

JULIE.

Cardinal—  
Dare you say "yielded?"—Humbled and abash'd,  
*He* from the chamber crept—this mighty Louis;  
Crept like a baffled felon!—yielded! Ah!  
More royalty in woman's honest heart  
Than dwells within the crowned majesty  
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings!  
Yielded!—Heavens!—yielded;

RICHELIEU.

To my breast,—close—close!  
The world would never need a Richelieu, if  
Men—bearded, mailed men—the Lords of Earth—  
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,  
As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn  
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power!—  
He left you—well!

JULIE.

Then came a sharper trial!  
At the king's suit the Count de Baradas  
Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while  
On his smooth lip insult appear'd more hateful  
For the false mask of pity: letting fall  
Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs  
That heaven had granted to so base a Lord  
The heart whose coldest friendship were to him  
What Mexico to misers! Stung at last  
By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense  
Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder light,  
And THEN—ah! then, my haughty spirit fail'd me!  
Then I was weak—wept—oh! such bitter tears!  
For (turn thy face aside, and let me whisper  
The horror to thine ear) then did I learn  
That he—that Adrien—that my husband—knew  
The king's polluting suit, and deemed it *honour*!  
*Then* all the terrible and loathsome truth  
Glared on me;—coldness—waywardness—reserve—  
Mystery of looks—words—all unravell'd,—and  
I saw the impostor, where I ha' loved the God!—

RICHELIEU.

I think thou wrong'st thy husband—but proceed.

JULIE.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Did you say "wrong'd" him?—Cardinal, my father,  
Did you say "wrong'd?" Prove it, and life shall grow  
One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.

RICHELIEU.

Let me know all.

JULIE.

To the despair he caused  
The courtier left me; but amid the chaos  
Darted one guiding ray—to 'scape—to fly—

Reach Adrien, learn the worst—'twas then near midnight:  
Trembling I left my chamber—sought the queen—  
Fell at her feet—reveal'd the unholy peril—  
Implored her aid to flee our joint disgrace.  
Moved, she embraced and soothed me; nay, preserved;  
Her word sufficed to unlock the palace-gates:  
I hasten'd home—but home was desolate,—  
No Adrien there! Fearing the worst, I fled  
To thee, directed hither. As my wheels  
Paused at thy gates—the clang of arms behind—  
The ring of hoofs—

RICHELIEU.

'Twas but my guards, fair trembler.  
(So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wrong'd him.)

JULIE.

Oh, in one hour what years of anguish crowd!

RICHELIEU.

Nay, there's no danger now. Thou needest rest.  
Come, thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush! be cheer'd,  
My rosiest Amazon—thou wrong'st thy Theseus.  
All will be well—yes, yet all well.

*[Exeunt through a side door.]*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE II.

*Enter Huguet—De Mauprat, in complete armour, his vizor down.*

*(The moonlight obscured at the casement.)*

HUGUET.

Not here!

DE MAUPRAT.

Oh, I will find him, fear not. Hence, and guard  
The galleries where the menials sleep—plant sentries  
At every outlet—Chance should throw no shadow  
Between the vengeance and the victim! Go!—  
Ere yon brief vapour that obscures the moon,  
As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,  
The mighty shall be ashes.

HUGUET.

Will you not

A second arm?

DE MAUPRAT.

To slay one weak old man?—

Away! No lesser wrongs than mine can make  
This murder lawful.—Hence!

HUGUET.

A short farewell!

*[Exit Huguet.]*

*Re-enter Richelieu (not perceiving De Mauprat).*

RICHELIEU.

How heavy is the air!—the vestal lamp  
Of the sad Moon, weary with vigil, dies  
In the still temple of the solemn heaven!  
The very darkness lends itself to fear—  
To treason—

DE MAUPRAT.

And to death!

RICHELIEU.

My omens lied not!

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

What art thou, wretch?

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy doomsman!

RICHELIEU.

Ho, my guards!

Huguet! Montbrassil! Vermont!

DE MAUPRAT.

Ay, thy spirits

Forsake thee, wizard; thy bold men of mail

Are *my confederates*. Stir not! but one step,

And know the next—thy grave!

RICHELIEU.

Thou liest, knave!

I am old, infirm—most feeble—but thou liest!

Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand

Of man—the stars have said it [Note: In common with his contemporaries, Richelieu was credulous in astrology and less lawful arts. He was too fortunate a man not to be superstitious.] —and the voice

Of my own prophet and oracular soul

Confirms the shining Sibyls! Call them all—

Thy brother butchers! Earth has no such fiend—

No! as one parricide of his father—land,

Who dares in Richelieu murder France!

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy stars

Deceive thee, Cardinal; thy soul of wiles

May against kings and armaments avail,

And mock the embattled world; but powerless now

Against the sword of one resolved man,

Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame!

RICHELIEU.

I breathe;—he is not a hireling. Have I wronged thee?

Beware surmise—suspicion—lies! I am

Too great for men to speak the truth of me!

DE MAUPRAT.

Thy *acts* are thy accusers, Cardinal!

In his hot youth, a soldier, urged to crime

Against the State, placed in your hands his life;—

You did not strike the blow—but, o'er his head,

Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,

Hovered the axe.—His the brave spirit's hell,

The twilight terror of suspense;—your death

Had set him free:—he purposed not, nor prayed it.

One day you summoned—mocked him with smooth pardon—

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Showered wealth upon him—bade an Angel's face  
Turn Earth to Paradise—  
RICHELIEU.

Well!  
DE MAUPRAT.

Was this mercy?  
A Cæsar's generous vengeance?—Cardinal, no!  
Judas, not Cæsar, was the model! You  
Saved him from death for shame; reserved to grow  
The scorn of living men—to his dead sires  
Leprous reproach—scoff of the age to come—  
A kind convenience—a Sir Pandarus  
To his own bride, and the august adulterer!  
Then did the first great law of human hearts,  
Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's, name

Crowned the first Brutus, when the Tarquin fell,  
Make Misery royal—raise this desperate wretch  
Into thy destiny! Expect no mercy!  
Behold De Mauprat!

*(Lifts his vizar.)*

RICHELIEU.

To thy knees, and crawl  
For pardon; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live  
For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I  
Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged!—  
It was to save my Julie from the King,  
That in thy valour I forgave thy crime;—  
It was, when thou—the rash and ready tool—  
Yea, of that shame thou loath'st—did'st leave thy hearth  
To the polluter—in these arms thy bride  
Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.

*(Goes to the side door.)*

Julie de Mauprat—Julie!

*Enter Julie.*

Lo! my witness!  
DE MAUPRAT.

What marvel's this?—I dream! My Julie—*thou!*  
This, thy beloved hand?  
JULIE.

Henceforth all bond

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Between us twain is broken. Were it not  
For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost  
The right—now mine—to scorn thee!

RICHELIEU.

So, you hear her?

DE MAUPRAT.

Thou with some slander hast her sense infected!

JULIE.

No, Sir: he did excuse thee in despite  
Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy *friend*—  
Thy *confidant*—familiar—*Baradas*—  
Himself revealed thy baseness,

DE MAUPRAT.

Baseness!

RICHELIEU.

Ay;

That *thou* didst *court* dishonour.

DE MAUPRAT.

Baradas!

Where is thy thunder, Heaven?—Duped!—snared!—undone!  
Thou—thou could'st not believe him! Thou dost love me!  
Love cannot feed on falsehoods!

*JULIE (aside).*

Love him!—Ah!

Be still, my heart! Love you I did:—how fondly,  
Woman—if women were my listeners now—  
Alone could tell!—For ever fled my dream:  
Farewell—all's over!

RICHELIEU.

Nay, my daughter, these

Are but the blinding mists of day—break love  
Sprung from its very light, and heralding  
A noon of happy summer.—Take her hand  
And speak the truth, with which your heart runs over—  
That this Count Judas—this Incarnate Falsehood—  
Never lied more, than when he told thy Julie  
That Adrien loved her not—except, indeed,  
When he told Adrien, Julie could betray him.

*JULIE (embracing De Mauprat).*



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

You love me, then!—you love me!—and they wrong'd you!  
DE MAUPRAT.

Ah! could'st thou doubt it?  
RICHELIEU.

Why, the very mole  
Less blind than thou! Baradas loves thy wife;—  
Had hoped her hand—aspired to be that cloak  
To the king's will, which to thy bluntness seems  
The Centaur's poisonous robe—hopes even now  
To make thy corpse his footstool to thy bed!  
Where was thy wit, man?—Ho! these schemes are glass!  
The very sun shines through them.  
DE MAUPRAT.

O, my Lord,  
Can you forgive you?  
RICHELIEU.

Ay, and save you!  
DE MAUPRAT.

Save!—  
Terrible word!—O, save *thyself*:—these halls  
Swarm with thy foes: already for thy blood  
Pants thirsty Murder!  
JULIE.

Murder!  
RICHELIEU.

Hush! put by  
The woman. Hush! a shriek—a cry—a breath  
Too loud, would startle from its horrent pause  
The swooping Death! Go to the door, and listen!—  
Now for escape!  
DE MAUPRAT.

None—none! Their blades shall pass  
This heart to thine.

*RICHELIEU (drily).*

An honourable outwork,  
But much too near the citadel. I think  
That I can trust you now (*slowly, and gazing on him*):—yes; I can trust you.  
How many of my troop league with you?

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

DE MAUPRAT.

All!—

We *are* your troop!

RICHELIEU.

And Huguet?—

DE MAUPRAT.

Is our captain.

RICHELIEU.

A retribution Power!—This comes of spies!  
All? then the lion's skin too short to-night,—  
Now for the fox's!—

JULIE.

A hoarse, gathering murmur!—

Hurrying and heavy footsteps!—

RICHELIEU.

Ha!—the posterns?

DE MAUPRAT.

No egress where no sentry!

RICHELIEU.

Follow me—

I have it!—to my chamber—quick! Come, Julie!

Hush! Mauprat, come!

*Murmur at a distance* —Death to the Cardinal!

RICHELIEU.

Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye!—ha! ha!—we will  
Baffle them yet.—Ha!—ha!

*Exeunt Julie, Mauprat, Richelieu.*

*HUGUET (without).*

This way—this way!

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE III.

*Enter Huguet and the Conspirators.*

HUGUET.

De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle;—  
Strange, if it falter now! Ha! gone!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Perchance  
The fox had crept to rest; and to his lair  
Death, the dark hunter, tracks him.

*Enter Mauprat (throwing open the doors of the recess, in which a bed, whereon Richelieu lies extended.)*

MAUPRAT.

Live the King!

Richelieu is dead!

*HUGUET (advancing towards the recess; MAUPRAT following, his hand on his dagger).*

Are his eyes open?  
DE MAUPRAT.

Ay.

As if in life!

*HUGUET (turning back).*

I will not look on him.  
You have been long.  
DE MAUPRAT.

I watch'd him till he slept.  
Heed me.—No trace of blood reveals the deed;—  
Strangled in sleep. His health hath long been broken—  
Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale,  
Remember! Back to Paris—Orleans gives  
Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,  
To him who first gluts vengeance with the news  
That Richelieu is in heaven! Quick, that all France  
May share your joy!

HUGUET.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

And you?  
DE MAUPRAT.

Will stay, to crush  
Eager suspicion—to forbid sharp eyes  
To dwell too closely on the clay; prepare  
The rites, and place him on his bier—this *my* task.  
I leave to you, sirs, the more grateful lot  
Of wealth and honours. Hence!  
HUGUET.

I shall be noble!  
DE MAUPRAT.

Away!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Five thousand crowns!  
OMNES.

To horse!—to horse!  
*[Exeunt Conspirators.]*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE IV.

*Still night.—A room in the house of Count De Baradas, lighted, &c.*

*Orleans, De Beringhen.*

DE BERINGHEN.

I understand. Mauprat kept guard without:  
Knows nought of the despatch—but heads the troop  
Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his protectors.  
Save us from such protection!

ORLEANS.

Yet, if Huguet,  
By whose advice and proffers we renounced  
Our earlier scheme, should still be Richelieu's minion,  
And play us false—

DE BERINGHEN.

The fox must then devour  
The geese he gripes, (I'm out of it, thank Heaven!)  
And you must swear you smelt the trick, but seem'd  
To approve the deed—to render up the doers.

*Enter Baradas.*

BARADAS.

Julie is fled:—the King, whom now I left  
To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge  
On her—on Mauprat—and on Richelieu! Well;  
We loyal men anticipate his wish  
Upon the last—and as for Mauprat,—  
(*Showing a writ.*)

DE BERINGHEN.

Hum!  
They say the devil invented printing! Faith,  
He has some hand in writing parchment—eh, Count?  
What mischief now?

BARADAS.

The King, at Julie's flight  
Enraged, will brook no rival in a subject—  
So on this old offence—the affair of Faviaux—  
Ere Mauprat can tell tales of *us*, we build

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

His bridge between the dungeon and the grave.

ORLEANS.

Well; if our courier can but reach the army,  
The cards are ours!—and yet, I own, I tremble.  
Our names are in the scroll—discovery, death!

BARADAS.

Success, a crown!

*DE BERINGHEN (apart to Baradas).*

Our future regent is

No hero.

*BARADAS (to De Beringhen).*

But his rank makes others valiant;  
And on his cowardice I mount to power.  
Were Orleans Regent—what were Baradas?  
Oh! by the way—I had forgot, your highness,  
Friend Huguet whisper'd me, "Beware of Marion:  
I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace."  
Upon that hint—I've found her lodgings elsewhere.

ORLEANS.

You wrong her, Count:—Poor Marion!—she adores me.

*BARADAS (apologetically).*

Forgive me, but—

*Enter Page.*

PAGE.

My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,  
Breathless with haste, demands an audience.

BARADAS.

—So!

The archers?

PAGE.

In the ante-room, my Lord,  
As you desired.

SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

BARADAS.

'Tis well—admit the soldier.

*[Exit Page.]*

Huguet! I bade him seek me here!

*Enter Huguet.*

HUGUET.

My Lords,  
The deed is done. Now, Count, fulfil your word,  
And make me noble!

BARADAS.

Richelieu dead?—art sure?  
How died he?

HUGUET.

Strangled in his sleep:—no blood,  
No tell—tale violence.

BARADAS.

Strangled? monstrous villain!  
Reward for murder! Ho, there!  
*[Stamping.]*

*Enter Captain, with five Archers.*

HUGUET.

No, thou durst not!

BARADAS.

Seize on the ruffian—bind him—gag him! Off  
To the Bastile!

HUGUET.

Your word—your plighted faith!

BARADAS.

Insolent liar!—ho, away!

HUGUET.

Nay, Count;  
I have that about me, which—

BARADAS.

SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Away with him!  
*[Exeunt Huguet and Archers.]*

Now, then, all's safe; Huguet must die in prison,  
So Mauprat:—coax or force the meaner crew  
To fly the country. Ha, ha! thus, your highness,  
Great men make use of little men.

DE BERINGHEN.

My Lords,  
Since our suspense is ended—you'll excuse me;  
'Tis late—and, *entre nous*, I have not supp'd yet!  
I'm one of the new Council now, remember;  
I feel the public stirring here already;  
A very craving monster. *Au revoir!*  
*[Exit de Beringhen.]*

ORLEANS.

No fear, now Richelieu's dead.

BARADAS.

And could he come  
To life again, he could not keep life's life—  
His power,—nor save De Mauprat from the scaffold,—  
Nor Julie from these arms—nor Paris from  
The Spaniard—nor your highness from the throne!  
All ours! all ours! in spite of my Lord Cardinal!

*Enter Page.*

PAGE.

A gentleman, my Lord, of better mien  
Than he who last—

BARADAS.

Well, he may enter.  
*[Exit Page.]*

ORLEANS.

Who  
Can this be?

BARADAS.

One of the conspirators:  
Mauprat himself, perhaps.

SCENE IV.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*Enter François.*

FRANCOIS.

My Lord—  
BARADAS.

Ha, traitor!

In Paris still?

FRANCOIS.

The packet—the despatch—  
Some knave play'd spy without, and reft it from me,  
Ere I could draw my sword.

BARADAS.

Play'd spy *without*!

Did he wear armour?

FRANCOIS.

Ay, from head to heel.

ORLEANS.

One of our band. Oh, heavens!

BARADAS.

Could it be Mauprat?

Kept guard at the *door*—knew *nought of the despatch* —  
How HE?—and yet, who other?

FRANCOIS.

Ha, De Mauprat!

The night was dark—his vizor closed.

BARADAS.

'Twas he!

How could he guess?—'sdeath! if he should betray us.  
His hate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu—and  
He was not great enough for treason.—Hence!  
Find Mauprat—beg, steal, filch, or force it back,  
Or, as I live, the halter—

FRANCOIS.

By the morrow

I will regain it, (*aside*) and redeem my honour!

(*Exit François.*)

ORLEANS.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Oh! we are lost—

BARADAS.

Not so! But cause on cause  
For Mauprat's seizure—silence—death! Take courage.

ORLEANS.

Should it once reach the King, the Cardinal's arm  
Could smite us from the grave.

BARADAS.

Sir, think it not!

I hold De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow  
And France is ours!—Thou dark and fallen Angel,  
Whose name on earth's Ambition—thou that mak'st  
Thy throne on treasons, stratagems, and murder—  
And with thy fierce and blood-red smile canst quench  
The guiding stars of solemn empire—hear us—  
(For we are thine)—and light us to the goal!  
END OF ACT III.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

**ACT IV. Third Day.**

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE I.

*The Gardens of the Louvre.—Orleans, Baradas, De Beringhen, Courtiers, &c.*

ORLEANS.

How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death?

BARADAS.

With grief, when thinking of the toils of State;  
With joy, when thinking on the eyes of Julie:—  
At times he sighs, "Who now shall govern France?"  
Anon exclaims—"Who now shall baffle Louis?"

*(Enter Louis and other Courtiers. They uncover.)*

ORLEANS.

Now, my liege, now, I can embrace a brother.

LOUIS.

Dear Gaston, yes.—I do believe you *love* me;—  
Richelieu denied it—sever'd us too long.  
A great man, Gaston! Who shall govern France?

BARADAS.

Yourself, my liege. That swart and potent star  
Eclipsed your royal orb. He serv'd the country,  
But did he *serve*, or seek to *sway* the *King*?

LOUIS.

You're right—he was an able politician—  
That's all:—between ourselves, Count, I suspect  
The largeness of his learning—specially

*In falcons* [Note: Louis XIII. is said to have possessed some natural talents, and in earlier youth to have exhibited the germs of noble qualities; but a blight seems to have passed over his maturer life. Personally brave, but morally timid,—always governed, whether by his mother or his minister, and always repining at the yoke. The only affection amounting to a passion that he betrayed was for the sports of the field; yet it was his craving weakness (and this throws a kind of false interest over his character,) to wish to be loved. He himself loved no one. He suffered the only woman who seems to have been attached to him to wither in a convent—he gave up favourite after favourite to exile or the block. When Richelieu died, he said coldly, "Voilà un grand politique mort!" and when the ill-fated but unprincipled Cinq Mars, whom he called le cher ami, was beheaded, he drew out his watch at the fatal hour, and said with a smile, "I think at this moment that le cher ami fait une vilaine mine." Nevertheless his conscience at times (for he was devout and superstitious) made him gentle, and his pride and his honour would often, when least expected, rouse him into haughty but brief resistance to the despotism under which he lived.]—a poor huntsman, too!

BARADAS.

Ha—ha!

Your Majesty remembers—

LOUIS.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Ay, the blunder  
Between the *greffier* and the *souillard* when—  
(Checks and crosses himself.)

Alas! poor sinners that we are! we laugh  
While this great man—a priest, a cardinal,  
A faithful servant—out upon us!—

BARADAS.

Sire,  
If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the Cardinal  
No longer shades the King.

*LOUIS (looking up at the skies).*

Oh, Baradas!  
Am I not to be pitied?—what a day  
For—

BARADAS.

Sorrow?—No, sire!  
LOUIS.

Bah! for *hunting*, man.  
And Richelieu's dead; 'twould be an indecorum  
Till he is buried—(*yawns*)—life is very tedious.  
I made a madrigal on life last week:  
You do not sing, [Note: Louis had some musical taste and accomplishment, wherewith he often communicated to his favourites some of that  
wearisome ennui under which he himself almost unceasingly languished.] Count?—Pity; you should learn.  
Poor Richelieu had no ear—yet a great man.  
Ah! what a weary weight devolves upon me!  
These endless wars—these thankless Parliaments—

The snares in which he tangled States and Kings,  
Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,  
Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes, and changing  
Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself:  
Oh, a great man!

BARADAS.

Your royal mother said so,  
And died in exile.

*LOUIS (sadly).*

True: I loved my mother! [Note: One of Louis's most bitter complaints against Richelieu was the continued  
banishment of the Queen Mother. It is impossible, however, not to be convinced that the return of that most worthless intrigante was wholly incompatible  
with the tranquillity of the kingdom. Yet, on the other hand, the poverty and privation which she endured in exile, are discreditable to the generosity and the  
gratitude of Richelieu—she was his first patron, though afterwards his most powerful persecutor.]

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

BARADAS.

The Cardinal dies.—Yet day revives the earth;  
The rivers run not back. In truth, my liege,  
Did your high orb on others shine as him,  
Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am

Would glow as brightly with the borrowed beam. [Note: In his Memoirs Richelieu gives an amusing account of the insolence and arts of Baradas, and observes, with indignant astonishment, that the favourite was never weary of repeating to the King that he (Baradas) would have made just as great a minister as Richelieu. It is on the attachment of Baradas to La Cressias, a maid of honour to the Queen Mother, of whom, according to Baradas, the King was enamoured also, that his love for the Julie de Mortemar of the play has been founded. The secret of Baradas' sudden and extraordinary influence with the King seems to rest in the personal adoration which he professed for Louis, with whom he affected all the jealousy of a lover, but whom he flattered with the ardent chivalry of a knight. Even after his disgrace he placed upon his banner, "Fiat voluntas tua."]

LOUIS.

Ahem!—He was too stern.

ORLEANS.

A very Nero.

BARADAS.

His power was like the Capitol of old—  
Built on a human skull.

LOUIS.

And, had he lived,  
I know another head, my Baradas,

That would have propp'd the pile: I've seen him eye thee  
With a most hungry fancy.

*BARADAS (anxiously).*

Sire, I knew  
You would protect me.

LOUIS.

Did you so: of course!  
And yet he had a way with him—a something  
That always—But no matter—he is dead.

And, after all, men called his King "The Just," [Note: Louis was called The Just, but for no other reason than that he was born under the Libra.]

And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,  
I know not why, she takes my fancy. Many  
As fair, and certainly more kind; but yet  
It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,  
And do abhor the bold and frontless vices  
Which the Church justly censures; yet, 'tis sad

On rainy days to drag out weary hours [Note: Louis XIII. did not resemble either his father or his son in the ardour of his attachments; if not wholly platonic, they were wholly unimpassioned: yet no man was more jealous, or more unscrupulously tyrannical when the jealousy was aroused.]—

Deaf to the music of a woman's voice—  
Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes.

SCENE I.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

It is no sin in Kings to seek amusement;  
And that is all I seek. I miss her much—  
She has a silver laugh—a rare perfection.

BARADAS.

Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.

*LOUIS (querulously).*

He knew that Julie pleased me:—a clear proof  
He never loved me!

BARADAS.

Oh, most clear!—But now  
No bar between the lady and your will!  
This writ makes all secure: a week or two  
In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love,  
And leave him eager to dissolve a hymen  
That brings him such a home.

LOUIS.

See to it, Count;  
*(Exit Baradas.)*

I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.

*(Takes aside First Courtier and De Beringhen, and passes, conversing with them, through the gardens.)*

*Enter Francois.*

FRANCOIS.

All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat!—Not  
At home since yesternoon—a soldier told me  
He saw him pass this way with hasty strides;  
Should he meet Baradas—they'd rend it from him—  
And then—benignant Fortune smiles upon me—  
I am thy son!—if thou desert'st me now,  
Come, Death and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,  
There's a great Spirit ever in the air  
That from prolific and far-spreading wings  
Scatters the seeds of honour—yea, the walls  
And moats of castled forts—the barren seas,  
The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds  
Talk with melodious science—all are sown  
With everlasting honours, if our souls  
Will toil for fame as boors for bread—

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

(Enter Mauprat.)

MAUPRAT.

Oh, let me—  
Let me but meet him foot to foot—I'll dig  
The Judas from his heart;—albeit the King  
Should o'er him cast the purple!

FRANCOIS.

Mauprat! hold:—  
Where is the—

MAUPRAT.

Well! What would'st thou?  
FRANCOIS.

The despatch!  
The packet.—Look ON ME—I serve the Cardinal—  
You know me.—Did you not keep guard last night  
By Marion's house?

MAUPRAT.

I did:—no matter now!—  
They told me, *he was here!*—

FRANCOIS.

O joy! quick—quick—  
The packet thou didst wrest from me?

MAUPRAT.

The packet?—  
What art thou he, I deem'd the Cardinal's spy  
(Dupe that I was)—and overhearing Marion—

FRANCOIS.

The same—restore it!—haste!

MAUPRAT.

I have it not:—  
Methought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,  
And, as we mounted, gave it to—

(Enter Baradas.)

Stand back!  
Now, villain! now—I have thee!  
(To François.)—Hence, Sir!—Draw!

SCENE I.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

FRANCOIS.

Art mad?—the King's at hand! leave *him* to Richelieu!

Speak—the despatch—to whom—

*MAUPRAT (dashing him aside and rushing to Baradas).*

Thou triple slanderer!

I'll set my heel upon thy crest!

*(A few passes.)*

FRANCOIS.

Fly—fly!—

The King!—

*Enter at one side Louis, Orleans, De Beringhen, Courtiers, &c.—at the other, the Guards hastily.*

LOUIS.

Swords drawn—before our very palace!—

Have our laws died with Richelieu?

BARADAS.

Pardon, Sire,—

*My crime but self-defence.* [Note: One of Richelieu's severest and least politic laws was that which made duelling a capital crime. Never was the punishment against the offence more relentlessly enforced; and never were duels so desperate and so numerous. The punishment of death must be evidently ineffectual so long as to refuse a duel is to be dishonoured, and so long as men hold the doctrine, however wrong, that it is better to part with the life that Heaven gave than the honour man makes. In fact, the greater the danger he incurred, the greater was the punctilio of the cavalier of that time in braving it.]

*(Aside to King.)* It is De Mauprat!

LOUIS.

Dare he thus brave us?

*(Baradas goes to the guard and gives the writ.)*

MAUPRAT.

Sire, in the Cardinal's name—

BARADAS.

Seize him—disarm—to the Bastile!

*(De Mauprat seized, struggles with the guard—François restlessly endeavouring to pacify and speak to him— when the gates open. Enter Richelieu—Joseph—followed by arquebussiers.)*

BARADAS.

The Dead

Return'd to life!

LOUIS.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

What a *mock* death! this tops  
The Infinite of Insult.

*DE MAUPRAT (breaking from the guards).*

Priest and Hero!—  
For you are both—protect the truth!—

*RICHELIEU (taking the writ from the guard.)*

What's this?  
DE BERINGHEN.

Fact in Philosophy. Foxes have got  
Nine lives, as well as cats!—  
BARADAS.

Be firm, my liege.  
LOUIS.

I have assumed the sceptre—I will wield it!  
JOSEPH.

The tide runs counter—there'll be shipwreck somewhere.

*(Baradas and Orleans keep close to the King—whispering and prompting him when Richelieu speaks.)*

RICHELIEU.

High treason—Faviaux! still that stale pretence!  
My liege, bad men (ay, Count, most *knavish* men!)  
Abuse your royal goodness.—For this soldier,  
France hath none braver—and his youth's hot folly,  
Mised—(by whom *your Highness* may conjecture!)—  
Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.—  
I, Sire, have pardoned him.

LOUIS.

And we do give  
Your pardon to the winds.—Sir, do your duty!  
RICHELIEU.

What, Sire?—you do not know—Oh, pardon me—  
You know not yet, that this brave, honest, heart  
Stood between mine and murder!—Sire! for my sake—  
For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

See, let me read the sentence.

LOUIS.

At your peril!

This is too much:—Again, Sir, do your duty!

RICHELIEU.

Speak not, but go:—I would not see young Valour

So humbled as grey Service!

DE MAUPRAT.

Fare you well!

Save Julie, and console her.

*FRANCOIS (aside to Mauprat).*

The despatch!

Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word!—to whom?

DE MAUPRAT.

To Huguet.

FRANCOIS.

Hush—keep council!—silence—hope!

*(Exeunt Mauprat and Guard.)*

*BARADAS (aside to François).*

Has he the packet?

FRANCOIS.

He will not reveal—

*(Aside.)* Work, brain!—beat, heart!—"There's no such word as fail."

*(Exit François.)*

*RICHELIEU (fiercely).*

Room, my Lords, room!—The minister of France

Can need no intercession with the King.

*(They fall back.)*

LOUIS.

What means this false report of death, Lord Cardinal?

RICHELIEU.

Are you then anger'd, Sire, that I live still?

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

LOUIS.

No; but such artifice—

RICHELIEU.

Not mine:—look elsewhere!

Louis—my castle swarm'd with the assassins.

*BARADAS (advancing).*

We have punish'd them already. Huguet now  
In the Bastile.—Oh! my Lord, *we* were prompt  
To avenge you—*we* were—

RICHELIEU.

We?—Ha! ha! you hear,

My liege! What page, man, in the last court grammar  
Made you a plural?—Count, you have seized the *hireling* :—  
Sire, shall I name the *master*!

LOUIS.

Tush! my Lord,

The old contrivance:—ever does your wit  
Invent assassins,—that ambition may  
Slay rivals—

RICHELIEU.

Rivals, sire!—in what?

Service to France? *I have none!* Lives the man  
Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems  
Rival to Armand Richelieu?

LOUIS.

What, so haughty!

Remember, he who made, can unmake.

RICHELIEU.

Never!

Never! Your anger can recall your trust,  
Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,  
Rifle my coffers,—but my name—my deeds,  
Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre!  
Pass sentence on me, if you will; from Kings,  
Lo, I appeal to Time! Be just, my liege—  
I found your kingdom rent with heresies  
And bristling with rebellion; lawless nobles  
And breadless serfs; England fomenting discord;  
Austria—her clutch on your dominion; Spain  
Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind  
To armed thunderbolts. The Arts lay dead,

SCENE I.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,  
Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke

Your trust, so be it! and I leave you, sole  
Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm,  
From Ganges to the Icebergs:—Look without  
No foe not humbled!—Look within; the Arts  
Quit for your schools—their old Hesperides  
The golden Italy! while through the veins  
Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides  
Trade, the calm health of nations!

Sire, I know

Your smoother courtiers please you best—nor measure  
Myself with them,—yet sometimes I would doubt  
If Statesmen rock'd and dandled into power  
Could leave such legacies to kings!

*(Louis appears irresolute.)*

*Baradas (passing him, whispers).*

But Julie,  
Shall I not summon her to Court?

*LOUIS (motions to Baradas and turns haughtily to the Cardinal).*

Enough!

Your Eminence must excuse a longer audience.  
To your own palace:—For our conference, this  
Nor place—nor season.

RICHELIEU.

Good my liege, for *Justice*

All place a temple, and all season, summer!—  
Do you deny me justice?—Saints of Heaven!  
He turns from me!—*Do you deny me justice?*  
For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,  
The humblest craftsman—the obscurest vassal—  
The very leper shrinking from the sun,  
Tho' loathed by Charity, might ask for justice!—  
Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien  
Of some I see around you—Counts and Princes—  
Kneeling for *favours*;—but, erect and loud,  
As men who ask man's rights!—my liege, my Louis,  
Do you refuse me justice—audience even—

In the pale presence of the baffled Murther? [Note: For the haughty and rebuking tone which Richelieu assumed in his expostulations with the King, see his Memoirs (passim) in Petitot's collection, vols. 22–30 (*bis*). Montesquieu, in one of his brilliant antitheses, says well of Richelieu, "Il avila le roi, mais il illustra le règne."]

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

LOUIS.

Lord Cardinal—one by one you have sever'd from me  
The bonds of human love. All near and dear  
Mark'd out for vengeance—exile or the scaffold.  
You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,  
My closest kindred;—you would tear them from me;  
They murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love.  
Eno' of plots and treasons for one reign!  
Home!—Home! and sleep away these phantoms!

RICHELIEU.

Sire!

I—patience, Heaven!—sweet Heaven!—Sire, from the foot  
Of that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft  
On an Olympus, looking down on mortals  
And worshipp'd by their awe—before the foot  
Of that high throne,—spurn you the grey-hair'd man,  
Who gave you empire—and now sues for safety?

LOUIS.

No:—when we see your Eminence in truth  
At the *foot* of the throne—we'll listen to you.

*[Exit Louis.]*

ORLEANS.

Saved!

BARADAS.

For this deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat!

RICHELIEU.

My Lord de Baradas—I pray your pardon—  
You are to be my successor!—your hand, sir!

*BARADAS (aside).*

What can this mean?—

RICHELIEU.

It trembles, see! it trembles!  
The hand that holds the destinies of nations  
Ought to shake less!—poor Baradas!—poor France!

BARADAS.

Insolent—

*[Exeunt Baradas and Orleans.]*

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU.

Joseph—Did you hear the king?

JOSEPH.

I did—there's danger! Had you been less haughty [Note: However "*orgueilleux*" and "*colère*" in his disputes with Louis, the Cardinal did not always disdain recourse to the arts of the courtier;—once, after an angry discussion with the king, in which, as usual, Richelieu got the better, Louis, as they quitted the palace together, said, rudely, "Sortez le premier; vous êtes bien le roi de France." "Si je passe le premier," replied the minister, after a moment's hesitation, and with great adroitness, "ce ne peut être que comme le plus humble de vos serviteurs;" and he took a flambeau from one of the pages, to light the king as he walked before him—"en reculant et sans tourner le dos." ]—

RICHELIEU.

And suffer'd slaves to chuckle—"see the Cardinal—  
How meek his Eminence is to-day"—I tell thee  
This is a strife in which the loftiest look  
Is the most subtle armour—

JOSEPH.

But—

RICHELIEU.

No time

For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors!  
François shall witness that De Baradas  
Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,  
And told him life and death were in the scroll.  
I will—I will—

JOSEPH.

Tush! François is your creature;  
So they will say, and laugh at you!—*your witness*  
*Must be that same Despatch.*

RICHELIEU.

Away to Marion!

JOSEPH.

I have been there—she is seized—removed—imprison'd—  
By the Count's orders.

RICHELIEU.

Goddess of bright dreams,  
My Country—shalt thou lose me now, when most  
Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!  
Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,  
And die—but on thy bosom!

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*Enter Julie.*

JULIE.

Heaven! I thank thee!  
I cannot be, or this all-powerful man  
Would not stand idly thus.

RICHELIEU.

What dost *thou* here?

Home!

JULIE.

Home!—is *Adrien there* ?—you're dumb—yet strive  
For words; I see them trembling on your lip,  
But choked by pity. It *was* truth—all truth!  
Seized—the Bastile—and in your presence too!  
Cardinal, where is *Adrien*? Think—he saved  
Your life:—your name is infamy, if wrong  
Should come to his!

RICHELIEU.

Be sooth'd, child.

JULIE.

Child no more;  
I love, and I am woman! Hope and suffer—  
Love, suffering, hope,—what else doth make the strength  
And majesty of woman?—Where is *Adrien*?

*RICHELIEU to JOSEPH.*

Your youth was never young—you never loved:—  
Speak to her—

JOSEPH.

Nay, take heed—the king's command,  
'Tis true—I mean—the—

*JULIE to RICHELIEU.*

Let thine eyes meet mine;  
Answer me but one word—I am a wife—  
I ask thee for my *home*—my FATE—my ALL!  
Where is my *husband*?

RICHELIEU.

SCENE IV.



## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

You are Richelieu's ward,  
A soldier's bride: they who insist on truth  
Must out-face fear;—you ask me for your husband?  
*There*—where the clouds of heaven look darkest, o'er  
The domes of the Bastile!

JULIE.

I thank you, father,  
You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you  
The sin of this desertion!

*RICHELIEU (detaining her).*

Whither wouldst thou?

JULIE.

Stay me not. Fie! I should be there already.  
I am thy ward, and haply he may think  
Thou'st taught *me* also to forsake the wretched!

RICHELIEU.

I've fill'd those cells—with many—traitors all.  
Had *they* wives too?—Thy memories, Power, are solemn!  
Poor sufferer!—think'st thou that yon gates of woe  
Unbar to love? Alas! if love once enter,  
'Tis for the last farewell; between those walls  
And the mute grave [Note: Selon l'usage de Louis XIII., faire arrêter quelqu'un pour crime d'état, et le faire mourir, l'était à peu près le même chose.

—*Le Clerc.*

I—the blessed household sounds  
Only heard once—while, hungering at the door,  
The headsman whets the axe.

JULIE.

O, mercy! mercy!  
Save him, restore him, father! Art thou not  
The Cardinal-King?—the Lord of life and death—  
Beneath whose light, as deeps beneath the moon,  
The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow?—  
Art thou not Richelieu?

RICHELIEU.

Yesterday I was!—  
To-day, a very weak old man!—To-morrow,  
I know not what!

JULIE.

Do you conceive his meaning?  
Alas! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses

SCENE IV.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Are duller than they were!

JOSEPH.

The King is chafed  
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,  
The lackey of the ante-room is not  
More powerless than the Minister of France.

RICHELIEU.

And yet the air is still; Heaven wears no cloud;  
From Nature's silent orbit starts no portent  
To warn the unconscious world;—albeit, this night  
May with a morrow teem which, in my fall,  
Would carry earthquake to remotest lands,  
And change the Christian globe. What would'st thou, woman?  
Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill,  
Are woven threads. In my vast sum of life  
Millions such units merge.

*Enter First Courtier.*

FIRST COURTIER.

Madame de Mauprat!  
Pardon, your Eminence—even now I seek  
This lady's home—commanded by the King  
To pray her presence.

*JULIE (clinging to Richelieu).*

Think of my dead father!—  
Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,  
And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care  
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,  
Fresh from the dews of heaven! Think of this,  
And take me to your breast.

RICHELIEU.

To those who sent you!—  
And say you found the virtue they would slay  
Here—couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,  
And shelter'd by the wings of sacred Rome!  
Begone!

FIRST COURTIER.

My Lord, I am your friend and servant—  
Misjudge me not; but never yet was Louis  
So roused against you:—shall I take this answer?—

SCENE IV.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

It were to be your foe.

RICHELIEU.

All time my foe,  
If I, a Priest, could cast this holy Sorrow  
Forth from her last asylum!

FIRST COURTIER.

He is lost!  
*(Exit First Courtier.)*

RICHELIEU.

God help thee, child!—she hears not! Look upon her!  
The storm, that rends the oak, uproots the flower.  
Her father loved me so! and in that age  
When friends are brothers! She has been to me  
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears? [Note: Like Cromwell and Rienzi, Richelieu appears to have been easily moved to tears. The Queen Mother, who put the hardest interpretation on that humane weakness, which is natural with very excitable temperaments, said that "Il pleurait quand il voulait."]

Oh! shame, shame!—dotage!

JOSEPH.

Tears are not for eyes  
That rather need the lightning, which can pierce  
Through barred gates and triple walls, to smite  
Crime, where it cowers in secret!—The Despatch!  
Set every spy to work;—the morrow's sun  
Must see that written treason in your hands,  
Or rise upon your ruin.

RICHELIEU.

Ay—and close  
Upon my corpse!—I am not made to live—  
Friends, glory, France, all rest from me;—my star  
Like some vain holiday mimicry of fire,  
Piercing imperial heaven, and falling down  
Rayless and blacken'd, to the dust—a thing  
For all men's feet to trample! Yea!—to—morrow  
Triumph or death! Look up, child!—Lead us, Joseph.

*As they are going out, enter Baradas and De Beringhen.*

BARADAS.

My Lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence  
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,  
As to resist his mandate! Pray you, Madam,  
Obey the King—no cause for fear!

SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

JULIE.

My father!

RICHELIEU.

She shall not stir!

BARADAS.

You are not of her kindred—

An orphan—

RICHELIEU.

And her country is her mother!

BARADAS.

The country is the King!

RICHELIEU.

Ay, is it so;—

Then wakes the power which in the age of iron  
Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.  
Mark, where she stands!—around her form I draw  
The awful circle of our solemn church!  
Set but a foot within that holy ground,  
And on thy head—yea, though it wore a crown—  
I launch the curse of Rome!

BARADAS.

I dare not brave you!

I do but speak the orders of my King.  
The church, your rank, power, very word, my Lord,  
Suffice you for resistance:—blame yourself,  
If it should cost you power!

RICHELIEU.

That *my* stake.—Ah!

Dark gamester! *what is thine?* Look to it well!—  
Lose not a trick.—By this same hour to-morrow  
Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!

*BARADAS (aside to De Beringhen).*

He cannot

Have the despatch?

DE BERINGHEN.

No: were it so, your stake

Were lost already.

SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

*JOSEPH (aside).*

Patience is your game:  
Reflect you have not the Despatch!

RICHELIEU.

O! monk!  
Leave patience to the saints—for *I* am human!  
Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan?  
And now they say thou hast *no* father!—Fie!  
Art thou not pure and good?—if so, thou art  
A part of that—the Beautiful, the Sacred—  
Which in all climes, men that have hearts adore,  
By the great title of their mother country!

*BARADAS (aside).*

He wanders!

RICHELIEU.

So cling close unto my breast,  
Here where thou droop'st—lies France! I am very feeble—  
Of little use it seems to either now.  
Well, well—we will go home.

BARADAS.

In sooth, my Lord,  
You do need rest—the burthens of the state  
O'ertask your health!

*RICHELIEU (to Joseph).*

I'm patient, see!

*BARADAS (aside).*

His mind  
And life are breaking fast!

*RICHELIEU (overhearing him).*

Irreverent ribbald!  
If so, beware the falling ruins! Hark!  
I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,  
When this snow melteth there shall come a flood!

SCENE IV.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Avaunt! my name is Richelieu—I defy thee!

Walk blindfold on; behind thee stalks the headsman.

Ha! ha!—how pale he is! Heaven save my country!

*[Falls back in Joseph's arms.]*

*(Baradas exit, followed by De Beringhen, betraying his exultation by his gestures.)*

END OF ACT IV.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

**ACT V. Fourth Day.**

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE I.

*The Bastile—a corridor—in the back—ground the door of one of the condemned cells.*

*Enter Joseph and Gaoler.*

GAOLER.

Stay, father, I will call the governor.  
*[Exit Gaoler.]*

JOSEPH.

He has it, then—this Huguet;—so we learn  
From François;—Humph! Now if I can but gain  
One moment's access, all is ours! The Cardinal  
Trembles 'tween life and death. His life is power:—  
Smite one—slay both! No Æsculapian drugs,  
By learned quacks baptised with Latin jargon,  
E'er bore the healing which that scrap of parchment  
Will medicine to Ambition's flagging heart.  
France shall be saved—and Joseph be a bishop!

*Enter Governor and Joseph.*

GOVERNOR.

Father, you wish to see the prisoners Huguet  
And the young knight De Mauprat?

JOSEPH.

So my office,  
And the Lord Cardinal's order warrant, son!

GOVERNOR.

Father, it cannot be: Count Baradas  
Has summon'd to the Louvre Sieur De Mauprat.

JOSEPH.

Well, well! But Huguet—  
GOVERNOR.

Dies at noon.

JOSEPH.

At noon!  
No moment to delay the pious rites



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Which fit the soul for death—quick, quick—admit me!  
GOVERNOR.

You cannot enter, monk! Such are my orders!  
JOSEPH.

Orders! vain main!—the Cardinal still is minister.  
His orders crush all others!

*GOVERNOR (lifting his hat).*

Save his king's!  
See, monk, the royal sign and seal affix'd  
To the count's mandate. None may have access  
To either prisoner, Huguet or De Mauprat,  
Not even a priest, without the special passport  
Of Count de Baradas. I'll hear no more!  
JOSEPH.

Just Heaven! and are we baffled thus!—Despair!  
Think on the Cardinal's power—beware his anger.  
GOVERNOR.

I'll not be menaced, Priest! Besides, the Cardinal  
Is dying and disgraced—all Paris knows it.  
You hear the prisoner's knell.  
*[Bell tolls.]*

JOSEPH.

I do beseech you—  
The Cardinal is *not* dying—But one moment  
And—hist!—five thousand pistoles!—  
GOVERNOR.

How! a bribe!  
And to a soldier, grey with years of honour!  
Begone!—  
JOSEPH.

Ten thousand—twenty!—  
GOVERNOR.

Gaoler—put  
This monk without our walls.

JOSEPH.

By those grey hairs,  
Yea, by this badge (*touching the cross of St. Louis worn by the Governor*)—

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

the guerdon of your valour—  
By all your toils—hard days and sleepless nights—  
Borne in your country's service, noble son—  
Let me but see the prisoner!—  
GOVERNOR.

No!—  
JOSEPH.

He hath  
Secrets of state—papers in which—

*GOVERNOR (interrupting).*

I know—  
Such was his message to Count Baradas,  
Doubtless the Count will see to it—  
JOSEPH.

The Count!  
Then not a hope!—You shall—  
GOVERNOR.

Betray my trust!  
Never—not one word more—you heard me, gaoler!  
JOSEPH.

What can be done?—distraction!—Richelieu yet  
Must—what?—I know not—thought, nerve, strength, forsake me.  
Dare you refuse the Church her holiest rights?  
GOVERNOR.

I refuse nothing—I obey my orders—  
JOSEPH.

And sell your country to her parricides!  
Oh, tremble yet!—Richelieu—  
GOVERNOR.

Begone!  
JOSEPH.

Undone!  
*(Exit Joseph.)*

GOVERNOR.

A most audacious shaveling—interdicted  
Above all others by the Count—

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

GAOLER.

I hope, Sir,  
I shall not lose my perquisites. The Sieur  
De Mauprat will not be reprieved?

GOVERNOR.

Oh, fear not:  
The Count's commands by him who came for Mauprat  
Are to prepare headsmen and axe by noon;  
The Count will give you perquisites enough;  
Two deaths in one day!

GAOLER.

Sir, may Heaven reward him!  
Oh, by the way, that troublesome young fellow,  
Who calls himself the prisoner Huguet's son,  
Is here again—implores, weeps, raves, to see him.

GOVERNOR.

Poor youth, I pity him!

*Enter De Beringhen, followed by François.*

*DE BERINGHEN (to François).*

Now, prithee, friend,  
Let go my cloak; you really discompose me.

FRANCOIS.

No, they will drive me hence: my father! Oh!  
Let me but see him once—but once—one moment!

*DE BERINGHEN (to Governor).*

Your servant, Messire,—this poor rascal, Huguet,  
Has sent to see the Count de Baradas  
Upon state secrets, that afflict his conscience.  
The Count can't leave his Majesty an instant:  
I am his proxy.

GOVERNOR.

The Count's word is law!  
Again, young scapegrace! How com'st thou admitted?

DE BERINGHEN.

Oh! a most filial fellow: Huguet's son!

I found him whimpering in the court below.

SCENE I.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

I pray his leave to say good bye to father,  
Before that very long unpleasant journey  
Father's about to take. Let him wait here  
Till I return.

FRANCOIS.

No; take me with you.  
DE BERINGHEN.

Nay;  
After *me*, friend—the Public first!  
GOVERNOR.

The Count's  
Commands are strict. No one must visit Huguet  
Without his passport.  
DE BERINGHEN.

Here it is! Pshaw! nonsense!  
I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,  
He is no Hercules!  
GOVERNOR.

Well, you're responsible.  
Stand there, friend. If, when you come out, my Lord,  
The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.  
DE BERINGHEN.

So it is!  
*[Exit through the door of the cell, followed by the Gaoler.]*

GOVERNOR.

Be calm, my lad. Don't fret so. I had once  
A father too! I'll not be hard upon you,  
And so stand close. I must not *see* you enter:  
You understand. Between this innocent youth  
And that intriguing monk there is, in truth,  
A wide distinction.

*Re-enter GAOLER.*

Come, we'll go our rounds;  
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour;  
And if my Lord leave first, make my excuse.  
Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark; no sentry  
Until he reach the grate below. He'd best  
Wait till I come. If he should lose the way,  
We may not be in call.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

FRANCOIS.

I'll tell him, Sir,—  
*[Exeunt Governor and Gaoler.]*

He's a wise son that knoweth his own father.  
I've forged a precious one! So far, so well!  
Alas, what then? this wretch has sent to Baradas—  
Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh, Heaven!  
On what a thread hangs hope!  
*[Listens at the door.]*

Loud words—a cry!  
*[Looks through the key-hole.]*

They struggle! Ho!—the packet!!!

*[Tries to open the door.]*

Lost! He has it—  
The courtier has it—Huguet, spite his chains,  
Grapples!—well done! Now—now!  
*[Draws back.]*

The gallery's long!  
And this is left us!  
*[Drawing his dagger, and standing behind the door. Re-enter De Beringhen, with the packet.]*

Victory!  
Yield it, robber—  
Yield it—or die—  
*[A short struggle.]*

DE BERINGHEN.

Off! ho!—there!—

*FRANCOIS (grappling with him).*

Death or honour!—  
*[Exeunt struggling.]*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE II.

*The King's closet at the Louvre. A suite of rooms in perspective at one side.*

*Baradas—Orleans.*

BARADAS.

All smiles! the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday  
Heralds his death to-day;—could he survive,

It would not be as minister—so great  
The king's resentment at the priest's defiance!  
*All smiles!*—and yet, should this accurs'd De Mauprat  
Have given our packet to another—'Sdeath!  
I dare not think of it!

ORLEANS.

You've sent to search him?

BARADAS.

Sent, Sir, to search?—that hireling hands may find  
Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,  
That scroll, whose every word is death! No—no—  
These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.  
I dare not leave the palace, night or day,  
While Richelieu lives—his minions—creatures—spies—  
Not one must reach the king!

ORLEANS.

What hast thou done?

BARADAS.

Summon'd De Mauprat hither?

ORLEANS.

Could this Huguet,  
Who pray'd thy presence with so fierce a fervour,  
Have thieved the scroll?

BARADAS.

Huguet was housed with us,  
The very moment we dismiss'd the courier.  
It cannot be! a stale trick for reprieve.  
But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend  
To see and sift him.—Hist! here comes the King—  
How fare you, Sire?

*Enter Louis.*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

LOUIS.

In the same mind I have  
Decided! yes, he would forbid your presence,  
My brother,—your's, my friend,—then Julie, too;  
Thwarts—braves—defies—(*suddenly turning to Baradas*) We make you minister.  
Gaston, for you—the baton of our armies.  
You love me, do you not?

ORLEANS.

Oh, love you, Sire?  
(*aside.*)—Never so much as now.

BARADAS.

May I deserve  
Your trust (*aside*)—until you sign your abdication!  
My liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,  
And Julie to divorce.—We must prepare  
The death—writ; what, tho' sign'd and seal'd? we can  
Withhold the enforcement.

LOUIS.

Ah, you may prepare it;  
We need not urge it to effect.

BARADAS.

Exactly!  
No haste, my liege (*looking at his watch, and aside*). He may live one hour longer.

(*Enter Courtier.*)

COURTIER.

The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.

LOUIS.

Aha! repentant of her folly!—Well,  
Admit her.

BARADAS.

Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon,  
And the conditions—

LOUIS.

You are minister,  
We leave to you our answer.

(*As Julie enters,—the Captain of the Archers, by another door,—and whispers Baradas.*)

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

CAPTAIN.

The Chevalier  
De Mauprat waits below.

*BARADAS (aside).*

Now the despatch!  
*[Exit with Officer.*

*Enter Julie.*

JULIE.

My liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief  
*Should* come when guiltless, while the name of King  
Is holy on the earth!—Here, at the feet  
Of Power, I kneel for mercy.

LOUIS.

Mercy, Julie,  
Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should  
In this be your interpreter.

JULIE.

Alas!  
I know not if that mighty spirit now  
Stoop to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,  
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne  
Where Kings themselves need pardon; O my liege,  
Be father to the fatherless; in you  
Dwells my last hope!

*Enter Baradas.*

*BARADAS (aside).*

He has not the despatch;  
Smiled, while we search'd, and braves me.—Oh!

*LOUIS (gently).*

What would'st thou?

JULIE.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

A single life.—You reign o'er millions.—What  
Is *one man's* life to you?—and yet to *me*  
'Tis France—'tis earth—'tis everything!—a life—  
A human life—my husband's.

*LOUIS (aside).*

Speak to her,  
I am not marble,—give her hope—or—  
BARADAS.

Madam,  
Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,  
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.

*[Louis walks up the stage.]*

JULIE.

You *were* his friend.  
BARADAS.

I *was* before I loved thee.

JULIE.

Loved me!  
BARADAS.

Hush, Julie: could'st thou misinterpret  
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,  
Here—in this palace?  
JULIE.

Now I know I'm mad;  
Even that memory fail'd me.  
BARADAS.

I am young,  
Well-born and brave as Mauprat:—for thy sake  
I peril what he has not—fortune—power;  
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone  
Can save thee from you tyrant, now my puppet!  
Be mine; annul the mockery of this marriage,  
And on the day I clasp thee to my breast  
De Mauprat shall be free.  
JULIE.

Thou durst not speak

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Thus in *his* ear (*pointing to Louis*). Thou double traitor!—tremble.  
I will unmask thee.

BARADAS.

I will say thou ravest.  
And see this scroll! its letters shall be blood!  
Go to the King, count with me word for word;  
And while you pray the life—I write the sentence!

JULIE.

Stay, stay (*rushing to the King*). You have a kind and princely heart,  
Tho' sometimes it is silent: you were born  
To *power*—it has not flush'd you into madness,  
As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband—  
Dissolve our marriage—cast me to that grave  
Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,  
In the dark convent's everlasting winter—  
(Surely eno' for justice—hate—revenge)—

But spare this life, thus lonely, scathed, and bloomless;  
And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,  
The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.

*LOUIS (much affected).*

Go, go, to Baradas: annul thy marriage,  
And—

*JULIE (anxiously, and watching his countenance).*

Be his bride!  
LOUIS.

A form, a mere decorum,  
Thou know'st I love thee.  
JULIE.

O thou sea of shame,  
And not one star.

*(The King goes up the stage, and passes through the suite of rooms at the side in evident emotion.)*

BARADAS.

Well, thy election, Julie;  
This hand—his grave!  
JULIE.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

His grave! and I—  
BARADAS.

Can save him.—

Swear to be mine.  
JULIE.

That were a bitterer death!  
Avaunt, thou tempter! I did ask his life  
A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.  
The heart can break, and scorn you: wreak your malice;  
Adrien and I will leave you this sad earth,  
And pass together hand in hand to Heaven!  
BARADAS.

You have decided.

*[Withdraws to the side scene for a moment, and returns.]*

Listen to me, Lady;  
I am no base intriguer. I adored thee  
From the first glance of those inspiring eyes;  
With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.  
*I will not lose thee!* I can place thee nearest—

Ay, to the throne—nay, on the throne, perchance;  
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me;  
Hast thou decided?  
JULIE.

No, no; you can see  
How weak I am: be human, Sir—one moment.

*BARADAS (stamping his foot, De Mauprat appears at the side of the stage, guarded).*

Behold thy husband!—Shall he pass to death,  
And know thou could'st have saved him?  
JULIE.

Adrien, speak!  
But say you wish to *live!*—if not your wife,  
Your slave,—do with me as you will?  
DE MAUPRAT.

Once more!—  
Why this is mercy, Count! Oh, think, my Julie,  
Life, at the best, is short,—but love immortal!

*BARADAS (taking Julie's hand).*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Ah, loveliest—  
JULIE.

Go, that touch has made me iron.  
*We have decided—death!*

*BARADAS (to De Mauprat).*

Now, say to whom  
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.  
DE MAUPRAT.

I'll tell thee nothing!  
BARADAS.

Hark,—the rack!  
DE MAUPRAT.

Thy penance  
For ever, wretch!—What rack is like the conscience?  
JULIE.

I shall be with thee soon.

*BARADAS (giving the writ to the Officer).*

Hence, to the headsman.

The doors are thrown open. The Huissier announces "His Eminence the Cardinal Duke de Richelieu."  
Enter Richelieu, attended by Gentlemen, Pages, &c., pale, feeble, and leaning on Joseph, followed by three Secretaries of State, attended by Sub-secretaries with papers, &c.

*JULIE (rushing to Richelieu).*

You live—you live—and Adrien shall not die!  
RICHELIEU.

Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death,  
Can aught avail thee, daughter! Count, you now  
Hold what I held on earth:—one boon, my Lord,  
This soldier's life.  
BARADAS.

The stake,—my head!—you said it.  
I cannot lose one trick.—Remove your prisoner.  
JULIE.

SCENE II.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

No!—No!—

*Enter Louis from the rooms beyond.*

*RICHELIEU (to Officer).*

Stay, Sir, one moment. My good liege,  
Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you  
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes.  
I do resign my office.

DE MAUPRAT.

You!  
JULIE.

All's over!  
RICHELIEU.

My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love them,  
I do not ask his life; but suffer justice  
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,  
Charged with an old man's blessing.

LOUIS.

Surely!  
BARADAS.

Sire—  
LOUIS.

Silence—small favour to a dying servant.

RICHELIEU.

You would consign your armies to the baton  
Of your most honour'd brother. Sire, so be it!  
Your minister, the Count de Baradas;  
A most sagacious choice!—Your Secretaries  
Of State attend me, Sire, to render up  
The ledgers of a realm.—I do beseech you,  
Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn  
The nature of the glorious task that waits them,  
Here, in my presence.

LOUIS.

You say well, my Lord.

*(To Secretaries, as he seats himself.)*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

Approach, Sirs.

RICHELIEU.

I—I—faint!—air—air—

*(Joseph and a gentleman assist him to a sofa, placed beneath a window.)*

I thank you—

Draw near, my children.

BARADAS.

He's too weak to question,

Nay, scarce to speak; all's safe.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SCENE III.

*Manent Richelieu, Mauprat, and Julie, the last kneeling beside the Cardinal; the Officer of the Guard behind Mauprat. Joseph near Richelieu, watching the King. Louis. Baradas at the back of the King's chair, anxious and disturbed. Orleans at a greater distance, careless and triumphant. The Secretaries. As each Secretary advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the Sub-secretaries.*

FIRST SECRETARY.

The affairs of Portugal,  
Most urgent, Sire;—One short month since the Duke  
Braganza was a rebel.

LOUIS.

And is still!

FIRST SECRETARY.

No, Sire, *he has succeeded!* He is now  
Crown'd King of Portugal—craves instant succour  
Against the arms of Spain.

LOUIS.

We will not grant it  
Against his lawful king. Eh, Count?

BARADAS.

No, Sire.

FIRST SECRETARY.

But Spain's your deadliest foe: whatever  
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal  
*Would send* the succours:—(*solemnly*)—balance, Sire, of Europe!

LOUIS.

The Cardinal!—balance!—We'll consider.—Eh, Count?

BARADAS.

Yes, Sire;—fall back.

FIRST SECRETARY.

But—

BARADAS.

Oh! fall back, Sir.

JOSEPH.

Humph!

SECOND SECRETARY.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent: Charles  
The First has lost a battle that decides  
One half his realm,—craves moneys, Sire, and succour.  
LOUIS.

He shall have both.—Eh, Baradas?  
BARADAS.

Yes, Sire.  
(Oh that despatch!—my veins are fire!)

*RICHELIEU (feebly, but with great distinctness.)*

My liege—  
Forgive me—Charles's cause is lost! A man,  
Named Cromwell, risen—a great man!—your succour  
Would fail—your loans be squander'd!—Pause—reflect. [Note: See in "Cinq Mars," vol. v., the striking and brilliant chapter from  
which the interlude of the Secretaries is borrowed.]  
LOUIS.

Reflect.—Eh, Baradas?  
BARADAS.

Reflect, Sire.  
JOSEPH.

Humph!

*LOUIS (aside).*

I half repent!—No successor to Richelieu!—  
Round me thrones totter!—dynasties dissolve!—  
The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake!  
JOSEPH.

Our star not yet eclipsed!—you mark the King?  
Oh! had we the despatch!  
RICHELIEU.

Ah! Joseph!—Child—  
Would I could help thee!

*Enter Gentleman, whispers Joseph, who exit hastily.*

*BARADAS (to Secretary).*

Sir, fall back.



RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

SECOND SECRETARY.

But—  
BARADAS.

Pshaw, Sir!

*THIRD SECRETARY (mysteriously).*

The *secret correspondence*, Sire, most urgent,—  
Accounts of spies—deserters—heretics—  
Assassins—poisoners—schemes against yourself!—  
LOUIS.

*Myself!*—most urgent!—(*looking on the documents.*)

*Re-enter Joseph with François, whose pourpoint is streaked with blood. François passes behind the Cardinal's attendants, and, sheltered by them from the sight of Baradas, &c., falls at Richelieu's feet.*

FRANÇOIS.

O! my Lord!  
RICHELIEU.

Thou art bleeding!  
FRANÇOIS.

A scratch—I have not fail'd!—(*gives the packet.*)  
RICHELIEU.

Hush!—(*looking at the contents.*)

*THIRD SECRETARY (to King).*

Sire, the Spaniards  
Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.  
The Duc de Bouillon—  
RICHELIEU.

Hold!—In this department—  
A paper—here, Sire,—read yourself—then take  
The Count's advice in't.

*Enter De Beringhen hastily, and draws aside Baradas.*

*(Richelieu, to Secretary, giving an open parchment.)*

*BARADAS (bursting from De Beringhen).*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

What! and reft it from thee!

Ha!—hold!

JOSEPH.

Fall back, son,—it is your turn now!

BARADAS.

Death!—the Despatch!

*LOUIS (reading).*

To Bouillon—and sign'd Orleans!—

Baradas, too!—league with our foes of Spain!—

Lead our Italian armies—what! to Paris!—

Capture the King—my health require repose—

Make me subscribe my proper abdication—

Orleans, my brother, Regent!—Saints of Heaven!

These are the men I loved!

*(Baradas draws,—attempts to rush out,—is arrested. Orleans, endeavouring to escape more quickly, meets Josephs eye, and stops short.)*

*(Richelieu falls back.)*

JOSEPH.

See to the Cardinal!

BARADAS.

He's dying!—and I yet shall dupe the King!

*LOUIS (rushing to Richelieu).*

Richelieu!—Lord Cardinal!—'tis *I* resign!—

Reign thou!

JOSEPH.

Alas! too late!—he faints!

LOUIS.

Reign, Richelieu!

*RICHELIEU (feebly).*

With absolute power?—

SCENE III.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

LOUIS.

Most absolute!—Oh! live!—  
If not for me—for France!  
RICHELIEU.

France!  
LOUIS.

Oh! this treason!—  
The army—Orleans—Bouillon—Heavens!—the Spaniard!—  
Where will they be next week?—

*RICHELIEU (starting up).*

There,—at my feet!

*(To First and Second Secretary.)*

Ere the clock strike!—The Envoys have their answer!

*(To Third Secretary, with a ring.)*

This to De Chavigny—he knows the rest—

No need of parchment here—he must not halt  
For sleep—for food.—In *my* name,—MINE!—he will  
Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head  
Of his army!—Ho! there, Count de Baradas

Thou hast lost the stake!—Away with him! [Note: The passion of the drama requires this catastrophe for Baradas. He, however, survived his disgrace,—though stripped of all his rapidly-acquired fortunes—and the daring that belonged to his character won him distinction in foreign service. He returned to France after Richelieu's death, but never regained the same court influence. He had taken the vows of a knight of Malta, and Louis made him a Prior!]

*(As the Guards open the folding-doors, a view of the ante-room beyond, lined with Courtiers. Baradas passes through the line.)*

Ha!—ha!—

*(Snatching de Mauprat's death-warrant from the officer.)*

See here De Mauprat's death-writ, Julie!—  
Parchment for battledores!—Embrace your husband!—  
At last the old man blesses you!

JULIE.

O joy!

SCENE III.

## RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

You are saved; you live—I hold you in these arms.  
MAUPRAT.

Never to part—  
JULIE.

No—never, Adrien—never!

*LOUIS (peevishly).*

One moment makes a startling cure, Lord Cardinal; [Note: The sudden resuscitation of Richelieu (not to strain too much on the real passion which supports him in this scene) is in conformance with the more dissimulating part of his character. The extraordinary mobility of his countenance (latterly so deathlike, save when the mind spoke in the features) always lent itself to stage effect of this nature. The queen mother said of him, that she had seen him one moment so feeble, cast down, and "semi-mort," that he seemed on the point of giving up the ghost—and the next moment he would start up full of animation, energy, and life.]

RICHELIEU.

Ay, Sire, for in one moment there did pass  
Into this wither'd frame the might of France!—  
My own dear France—I have thee yet—I have saved thee!  
I clasp thee still!—it was thy voice that call'd me  
Back from the tomb!—What mistress like our country?

LOUIS.

For Mauprat's pardon—well! But Julie,—Richelieu,  
Leave me one thing to love!—  
RICHELIEU.

A subject's luxury!  
Yet, if you must love something, Sire,—*love me!*

*LOUIS (smiling in spite of himself).*

Fair proxy for a young fresh Demoiselle!  
RICHELIEU.

Your heart speaks for my clients:—Kneel, my children,  
And thank your King—  
JULIE.

Ah, tears like these, my liege,  
Are dews that mount to Heaven.  
LOUIS.

Rise—rise—be happy.

*(Richelieu beckons to De Beringhen.)*

*DE BERINGHEN (falteringly).*

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

My Lord—you are—most—happily—recover'd.

RICHELIEU.

But you are pale, dear Beringhen:—this air  
Suits not your delicate frame—I long have thought so:—  
Sleep not another night in Paris:—Go,—  
Or else your precious life may be in danger.  
Leave France, dear Beringhen!

DE BERINGHEN.

I shall have time,  
More than I ask'd for,—to discuss the pâté.  
*[Exit De Beringhen.]*

*RICHELIEU (to Orleans).*

For you, repentance—absence—and confession!

*(To François.)*

Never say *fail* again.—Brave Boy!

*(To Joseph.)*

He'll be—  
A Bishop first.

JOSEPH.

Ah, Cardinal—  
RICHELIEU.

Ah, Joseph!

*(To Louis—as De Mauprat and Julie converse apart.)*

See, my liege—see thro' plots and counterplots—  
Thro' gain and loss—thro' glory and disgrace—  
Along the plains, where passionate Discord rears  
Eternal Babel—still the holy stream  
Of human happiness glides on!

LOUIS.

And must we  
Thank for *that* also—our prime Minister?

RICHELIEU.

SCENE III.

RICHELIEU; OR, THE CONSPIRACY

No—let us own it:—there is One above  
Sways the harmonious mystery of the world  
Ev'n better than prime ministers;—

Alas!

Our glories float between the earth and heaven  
Like clouds which seem pavilions of the sun,  
And are the playthings of the casual wind;  
Still, like the cloud which drops on unseen crags  
The dews the wild flower feeds on, our ambition  
May from its airy height drop gladness down  
On unsuspected virtue;—and the flower  
May bless the cloud when it hath pass'd away!

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