THE STORY OF FRANCESCA DA RIMINI
IN POETRY, DRAMA, AND MUSIC

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

One of the immortal romances of world literature is the Italian story of Francesca da Rimini and her lover Paolo Malatesta. Paolo and Francesca belong among such famous pairs of lovers as Paris and Helen, Aeneas and Dido, Antony and Cleopatra, Tristram and Isolde, Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, and Romeo and Juliet. We of the English speaking world may think first of the Arthurian lovers because of our familiarity with them, but few lovers have been more often represented in art than these Italian ones whose sad story was first told by Dante.

It is in the fifth canto of Dante's Inferno that this first version of the Francesca story appears. Boccaccio gives the second version about 1373. In addition to the many full translations of the Commedia, several writers have made separate translations of Dante's fifth canto because of its special appeal. Byron thought his own far superior to any which had yet been done. Hunt and Rossetti made their own translations. But for 450 years after Boccaccio's version, as far as I have been able to discover, there is no trace of full new versions. A general European revival

of interest in the story coincides with the Romantic Movement. It is marked in England by the appearance of Henry Cary's translation of the Divine Comedy in 1805-1814, and by the publication of Leigh Hunt's long narrative poem of the fated lovers in 1816.

The story has had even greater appeal in drama and opera than in narrative, however. In 1810[1] Pellico wrote his Italian tragedy. In 1807 and 1850, Uhland and Heyse, two Germans, wrote their dramatic versions. In recent years another German, Greif, has treated the story in drama. Two American dramatists, Boker (1855) and Crawford (1902), wrote plays on the Francesca story some fifty years apart. At the turning of the twentieth century versions by Maeterlinck (much modified), D'Annunzio, and Phillips appeared. Slightly later dramas are by Cesario (1906) and Nernda (1909.)

The first operatic treatment of the Francesca story was by Mercadante in 1828. In the same century operas by Goetz and Thomas appeared. Debussy, in his use of Maeterlinck's French version, brought a revolution to the world of opera. Rachmaninoff's most ambitious operatic effort was based on the Francesca story. Zandonai, in 1914, used D'Annunzio's drama for an opera.

Liszt and Tschaikowsky have given us orchestral versions. And within recent years Paul Gibson has written a dramatic

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[1] See footnote, p.31.

cantata based on the story of Francesca.

A short passage from Canto V,

> No greater grief than to remember days
> Of joy, when misery is at hand....

has taken its place among the most-beloved and often-quoted gems of world poetry.

The versions of the Francesca and Paolo story thus extend from 1300 to 1909, with the possible gap which I have already mentioned. And the tale has come to be of international significance, since versions appear in Italian, German, French, Russian, and English. Its lyrical and human elements have appealed to translators, poets, dramatists, musicians, and painters.

The following chapters will be devoted to a study of the various treatments of the Francesca story. My comments upon certain authors and composers, because of the lack of available materials, must of necessity be brief. Others will be discussed briefly because of the very nature of their work. Those which have had the greatest influence upon later works, which have stood the test of time, or which embody most fully the requirements of good art are discussed at length. Though my approach is largely historical, I also hope, to some extent, by the use of the comparative method to reveal the merits and weaknesses and the relative importance of each piece of work.

CHAPTER I

DANTE AND BOCCACCIO

The first poet to lend his pen to the story of Paolo and Francesca was Dante, whose Canto V of the Inferno (11.70-138) is principally concerned with his meeting with these two lovers. The story's later fame is no doubt largely due to the narrative concentration and suggestiveness and the lyric intensity of Dante's incomparable version, and to the elements of universal humanity in the story itself.

Summarizing the entire canto, we find Dante entering the second circle of Hell accompanied by his guide, Virgil. He first sees Minos, the Infernal Judge, by whom he is admonished to beware how he enters those regions. Proceeding, nevertheless, he soon beholds the carnal sinners, whose reason was swayed by lust, borne ceaselessly about, like starlings and cranes, in the dark air by violent winds. He sees Cleopatra, Helen, Paris, Tristan, Dido, and "those two together coming, which seem so light before the wind."[1] When Dante hears Virgil name the inhabitants of this circle, he says "o'er-power'd By pity, well-nigh in amaze my mind was lost." He asks to speak with two lovers whom he recognizes. Without naming herself, the woman tells Dante of the land of her birth "situate on the coast, where Po descends To rest in Ocean." She tells that he who now accompanies her (whom neither speaker in the colloquy ever calls by name), enraptured by her fair

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[1] The translation used here is by Henry F. Cary.

form, loved her first and thereby caused her to love him in return. Her death occurred, she says, "in such cruel sort, as grieves me still." (Later I shall discuss this translation of the line in the light of a recent theory.) She concludes, "Caina waits The soul, who spilt our life." But Dante, now speaking Francesca's name for the first time, is curious as to what sweet thoughts and fond desires brought them to this sad pass; whereupon Francesca, remarking that there is "No greater grief than to remember days Of joy, when misery is at hand," relates the episode of their reading the story of Lancelot. When they read how Lancelot kissed the smile of his beloved, Paolo kissed Francesca.

> The book and writer both
> Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day
> We read no more." While thus one spirit spake,
> The other wail'd so sorely, that heart-struck
> I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
> From death, and like a corse fell to the ground.[2]

In approximately twenty-eight lines Francesca has unfolded her story. When she has spoken about half these lines, it appears that she has finished; but Dante asks her a question which leads her, weeping, to recount the most vivid scene. The movement is swift, creating a piercing emotion of pity. Many of the details are not included, but the essence of the sorrow is here. Dante himself swoons at the telling of the tale.

In these few lines, Dante by use of faint suggestions has given a reflection of the life which they led on earth. We see Paolo falling in love with the beautiful Francesca, we see

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[2] Dante, Inferno, Canto V, ll. 133-8.

them reading the book, their kiss, and the slayer. The picture of their torment in the second circle of Hell, where these lovers, mere shades of their former beings, are wafted through the air like starlings and cranes never to part, often casts its shadow over later settings of the story. Among the other lovers in the circle these two are conspicuous because they are so deeply in love that they never separate. During the narration, the only real sounds are the voices--Dante's and Francesca's, Virgil's in one brief question, and Paolo's who "wail'd so sorely." But there are overtones which linger from the first description: vague flittings of other spirits in the background, and the remembered rush of incessant winds.

Let us note here, that we may understand the other versions the better, that Dante said Paolo loved Francesca first. Here is the first mention of the Lancelot book, the similes of the starlings and the doves, and the great sorrow, features which appear in other works.[3]

In this first of all stories, the problem of ethical motivation and the justness of the retributive justice is vitally involved and will, of course, lie at the very foundation of the dramatic element in later relations. Dante's attitude, though not explicitly stated, is clear. All the lovers in the Second Circle have "subjected reason to desire." The sight of their torment confounds Dante, and Francesca's

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[3] Sir Theodore Martin says it may be that the book, open at the fatal passage, was found by their dead bodies and that for this reason Dante uses it.

story literally stuns him with pity. The lowest circle of Hell awaits the treacherous murderer of the lovers. Besides, their love had been kindled without their suspecting it. But thereafter they, apparently, did not assert their reason against it, and in no detail does Dante hint that he challenges the justness of their punishment. The only response possible to such high tragedy is, for him, the extreme of tragic pity and terror. This interpretation of the story is often either beyond the reach or counter to the temperament of romantic artists and critics, who incline to read different elements into the lines from those which Dante, the medieval Christian, intended.

For example, Sir Theodore Martin supposes that Francesca means us to think the kiss mentioned was the first and last one. And like a typical Romantic, he questions how one kiss could make a carnal lover. (According to the Bible, the Christian view is that lust, even if it goes no further than desire, is sin.) Would Dante have sent a man, Martin asks, who at least by the unwritten law of Italy was justified in slaying his adulterous wife, to the ninth circle of Hell? But apparently Dante considers the murderer worse than the lovers because treachery was involved(though he omits the details.) Since Dante was "perplexed" at the terrible fate of the lovers, it appears to Martin that Dante would agree that Minos, the Infernal Judge, was at fault in placing them in Hell. Francesca's never-dying love of Paolo and her seeming obliviousness to her misery are, to Martin, other proofs of their innocence.

A point which, according to Martin and other Romantic critics, substantiates the innocence of the lovers is that not all of the manuscripts read "il modo ancor m'offende." "A very considerable portion of the best [manuscripts] have the reading mondo." Here, he feels that the question arises why should the manner of her death offend Francesca--for death is death--unless she, knowing herself to be innocent, felt injustice at being slain by her husband. If the word mondo is used, it strongly implies her innocence. The world has laid the blame upon her for centuries now. Is it now possible that criticism may sting an innocent person? Well, then, the world offends her and does her an injustice, much as Minos has done by putting her in the wrong place.[4]

According to the strict interpretation of Matthew 5:27-28, one kiss removed Francesca far from innocence. Despite her pleasure in the inseparable presence of her lover in the Inferno, she says herself that she suffers "mal perverso." Besides her death by a fierce stabbing (probably the modo) might still pain her in memory. A Christian would never question the judgment of Minos, as God's mere representative, for the ways of God are inscrutable to men. The phrase "il modo ancor m'offende" can be easily explained by a good Catholic. The justness of the murderer's extreme punishment could easily be explained (though Dante does not mention it) by the supposition that he took the justice of God into his

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[4] These last two paragraphs are condensed from Sir Theodore Martin's article, "Dante's Paolo and Francesca," Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. 182 (September, 1907), pp.316-25.

own hands by killing two people before they had a chance to confess to a priest. Such a failure to confess alone would place the parties in Hell. In any case, the nature of the murderer's vengeance as involving treachery is clearly proved by the specific punishment assigned him. An Italian critic mentions two reasons why Dante does not speak more clearly of the details of the sin and the nature of the morality involved: first, he drew the veil because of the carnal nature of the sin; second, he drew the veil because it was a woman speaking. Another possibility is suggested by Dr. Oelsner, the commentator of the Temple Classics Edition: Il modo may be Dante's veiled reference (just as well as to some treachery in the actual slaying) to the treacherous circumstances involved in Francesca's betrothal explicitly reported in Boccaccio's account.

But although the reader who knows his Middle Ages finds Martin's views superficial, he may do well to bear them in mind, for the moral motivation later becomes an important question.

Dante knew the Polenta family better than Boccaccio, who later repudiates portions of Dante's story. Although the following quotations disagree as to the year of Dante's stay in the Polenta house, they at least serve to show that he did have an intimate acquaintance with the family of the Francesca he immortalized.

> He knew Paolo as Capitano del Popolo in Florence, and enjoyed in 1317 the hospitality of Guido da Polenta, Francesca's nephew.[5]

> Indeed it was only fifteen years after the tragic event recorded in the Inferno that Dante went to live as the guest and friend of Guido Novello da Polenta, own nephew to the Francesca whom Dante had immortalized. It was this same Polenta who ultimately gave Dante a funeral of ceremony and impressiveness, crowning the dead poet with a wreath of laurel.[6]

Boccaccio had an interest in the story because he was one of Francesca's own close relatives.[7] Dr. Archibald Henderson, however, regards Boccaccio as a lively teller of tales who gave the story a turn to suit his imagination. Boccaccio's story appears in his Commento Sopra la Commedia[8] (1373) almost one-hundred years after the tragedy occurred.

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5 M. Joubert, "Francesca da Rimini in Art and Literature," Contemporary Review, Vol. 152 (September, 1937), p. 334.

6 Archibald Henderson, "The Story of Rimini," Arena, Vol. 39 (June, 1908), p. 20.

7 "Paolo and Francesca Through the Ages," The Golden Book, Vol. 20 (December, 1934), p. 705.

8 I reprint the entire narrative here, for Boccaccio has added to Dante's account many details which have adhered to the nucleus in more modern versions. So many, even of the minor details, are either adopted or made conspicuous by their alteration or absence that a condensed summary of this second source-version would be inadequate. Moreover, his version is not so well known to the average reader as Dante's.

You must know that this lady, Madonna Francesca, was daughter of Messer Guido the Elder, lord of Ravenna and of Cervia, and that a long and grievous war having been waged between him and the lords Malatesta of Rimini, a treaty of peace by certain mediators was at length concluded between them; the which, to the end that it might be the more firmly established, it pleased both parties to desire to fortify by relationship; that the said Messer Guido agreed to give his young and fair daughter in marriage to Gianciotto, the son of Messer Malatesta.

Now, this being made known to certain of the friends of Messer Guido, one of them said to him: "Take care what you do; for if you contrive not matters discreetly, such relationship will beget scandal. You know what manner of person your daughter is, and of how lofty a spirit, and if she see Gianciotto before the bond is tied, neither you nor any one else will have power to persuade her to marry him; therefore, if it so please you, it seems to me that it would be good to conduct the matter thus: namely, that Gianciotto should not come hitherto himself to marry her, but that a brother of his should come and espouse her in his name.

Gianciotto was a man of great spirit, and hoped after his father's death, to become lord of Rimini; in the contemplation of which event, albeit he was rude in appearance and a cripple, Messer Guido desired him for a son-in-law above any one of his brothers. Discerning, therefore, the reasonableness of what his friend counselled, he secretly disposed matters according to this device; and a day being appointed, Paolo, a brother of Gianciotto, came to Ravenna with full authority to espouse Madonna Francesca.

Paolo was a handsome man, very pleasant, and of a courteous breeding; and passing with other gentlemen over the courtyard of the palace of Messer Guido, a damsel who knew him pointed him out to Madonna Francesca through an opening in the casement, saying, "That is he that is to be your husband"; and so indeed the poor lady believed, and incontinently placed in him her whole affection; and the ceremony of the marriage having been thus brought about, and the lady conveyed to Rimini, she became not aware of the deceit till the morning ensuing the marriage, when she beheld Gianciotto rise from her side; the which discovery moved her to such disdain, that she became not a whit the less rooted in her love for Paolo.

Nevertheless, that it grew to be unlawful I never heard, except in what is written by the author Dante, and possibly it might so have become; albeit I take what he says to have been an invention framed on the possibility, rather than anything which he knew of his own knowledge. Be this as it may, Paolo and Madonna Francesca

> living in the same house, and Gianciotto being gone into a certain neighboring district as governor, they fell into great companionship with one another, suspecting nothing; but a servant of Gianciotto's, noting it, went to his master and told him how matters looked; with the which Gianciotto being fiercely moved, secretly returned to Rimini, and seeing Paolo enter the room of Madonna Francesca the while he himself was arriving, went straight to the door, and finding it locked inside, called to his lady to come out; for, Madonna Francesca and Paolo having descried him, Paolo thought to escape suddenly through an opening in the wall, telling the lady to go and open the door.
>
> But his hope did not turn out as he expected; for the hem of a mantle which he had on caught upon a nail, and the lady opening the door meantime, in the belief that all would be well by reason of Paolo's not being there, Gianciotto caught sight of Paolo as he was detained by the hem of the mantle, and straightway ran with his dagger in his hand to kill him. Whereupon the lady, to prevent it, ran between them; but Gianciotto having lifted the dagger and put the whole force of his arm into the blow, there came to pass what he had not desired--namely, that he struck the dagger into the bosom of the lady before it could reach Paolo, and slay him.
>
> And so leaving them both dead, he hastily went his way and betook him to his wonted affairs; and the next morning the two lovers, with many tears, were buried together in the same grave.[9]

The points Boccaccio has added to the story have been most useful to later writers. Here we first learn of the feud between the lords of Ravenna and Rimini. We did not know before that Gianciotto was lame and rude in appearance--nor did we know how or when he slew the lovers--or even that it was he who did the slaying. (Francesca merely tells Dante that the ninth circle--for fratricides--awaits him who slew them.) Of course the slayer had to be Gianciotto if Paolo had no other brothers.) Boccaccio indicates that there

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9 Reprinted from the Commento Sopra la Commedia, in The Golden Book, Vol. 20 (December, 1934), pp. 705-8.

were other brothers. Other contributions of Boccaccio are Paolo's wooing of Francesca as proxy (the deception having been suggested to her father by a friend and approved by him), Gianciotto's sudden return home, Paolo's thwarted attempt to escape through the opening in the wall, the manner of slaying the lovers, and the burial in one grave amid tears of the people. He throws further light upon Gianciotto's character by saying that after the double murder he "hastily went his way and betook him to his wonted affairs."

Martin, observing that Boccaccio names Il Vecchio (the elder) instead of Il Minore as the father of Francesca, discredits the story as a whole. Although Boccaccio professes himself to have a high regard for fact, to Martin he appears by this initial error to be telling only a high-sounding tale. But such a mistake made almost one-hundred years later should not discredit Boccaccio's story entirely. Martin also accuses Boccaccio of inventing the feigned journey which D'Annunzio and Phillips have used.

> And upon the strength of it such writers of our own time as D'Annunzio and Stephen Phillips have robbed Dante's pathetic episode of its mysterious and pathetic charm, and converted those whom the poet apparently intended to present as ideal lovers into commonplace violators of the Seventh Commandment.[10]

A glance at the text of the Commento reveals that Gianciotto was governor of another district and that upon hearing an unfavorable report from a servant, he returned suddenly to his home.

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10 Martin, op. cit., p. 320.

Viewed in the light of historical fact, the story has a somewhat different aspect. Certain of the later dramatists, having learned of these features, have employed them in their versions of the story.

Mr. Charles Yriate went to Rimini in 1883 to examine the records.[11] There he found that Francesca was given in marriage because the Malatesta family had helped her father conquer the Ghibelines. There is no mention in the records of any deception practised upon Francesca. She was married in 1275 and met her fatal death in 1285. In the course of these ten years she had a daughter whom they named Concordia after Gianciotto's mother, and also a son who died in infancy. Henderson says it was true that Paolo was sent to bring Francesca back, "but it does not appear from contemporary records that Francesca believed Paolo was destined for her husband."

We are told that Francesca was seventeen years old at the time of her marriage in 1275. Paolo was twenty-seven, and Gianciotto thirty. In 1269 Paolo for political reasons had been married to Orabile Beatrice. They had two children. The date of this woman's death is not certain, but it is likely (according to Martin) that she died before the marriage of Francesca. Gianciotto died twenty-two years after the murder (1307.) It was not until 1295, after his father's death, that Gianciotto became lord of Rimini. We learn too that when Uberto, son of Paolo, grew to be a young man, he let it be known that he meant to avenge his father's murder;

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[11] Henderson, op. cit., p. 22.

whereupon Gianciotto, hearing that his life was in danger, had Uberto stabbed at a banquet. Concordia, the daughter of Francesca, upon becoming of age, wished to apply for her mother's dowry. Her grandfather, Guido il Minore, advised her to let it alone for the sake of peace. Martin sees in this another proof of Francesca's innocence, for if the mother had been an adulteress, the daughter could not have got the dowry under any circumstances. Concordia surely thought the law would give it to her or she would not have mentioned applying for it.[12]

The historical facts, in comparison with the versions of Dante and Boccaccio, have not often been the basis of new versions. But at least in one drama an entirely new slant has been given to the story because of the historical records discovered.

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[12] Martin, loc., cit.

CHAPTER II

LEIGH HUNT

Leigh Hunt, between 1813-15 while he was in prison for libel against the prince regent, wrote a long narrative poem in four cantos entitled The Story of Rimini. It was first published in 1816. Hunt changed the lover's name to Paulo so that it might be pronounced in two syllables.

In Canto I, amid all the festival-making which attended an Italian wedding during the Pre-Renaissance, Paulo, the Beautiful, comes as a proxy to wed Francesca, who, being uninformed as to his true identity, receives him to her heart as her future husband. The title of the first canto is "The coming to fetch the Bride from Ravenna." In Canto II she is told by her father that Paulo is a proxy, but is reassured: "When you see the one, you know the other." "Quick were the marriage rites," and then the bride and Paolo and attendants started on the road to Rimini. The greater portion of Canto II, "The Bride's journey to Rimini," is descriptive of nature--the mulberry, the bay, the pine, grass, rooks, gulls, doves, sun, moon, the chill of night, and then the towers of Rimini. Canto III, "The Fatal Passion," portrays Giovanni with an "ill-tempered pride" and a countenance "martialler" than his brother's. In his way he has done many things for the comfort and happiness of his new wife. But from the beginning

her situation is hopeless, for she has unwittingly given

> Her hope, belief, love, passion, to one brother,
> Possession (oh, the misery!) to another![1]

At first Paulo and Francesca try to put from them their secret love for each other, but at last it finds expression in the fatal kiss when they meet in the summer house. Canto IV, "How the Bride returned to Ravenna," tells how a love scene between Paulo and Francesca took place only once more; and how then sensing the misery it brought them, they tried to avoid each other. By this change from their former friendly attitude, Giovanni, perhaps also aided by some babbler, was led to suspect them. After he has heard Francesca crying out her love for Paulo in her sleep, Giovanni immediately challenges Paulo to a duel. The result is that Paulo deliberately throws himself upon his brother's sword, and Francesca dies grieving. Giovanni sends their bodies back to Ravenna for burial, for he feels "That he, who joined them once, should keep to part no more."[2]

The poem of four cantos is written, for the most part, in iambic pentameter couplets, but the sense is run on from line to line so that they are not really heroic couplets. At times there are substitutions of dactylic and trochaic feet. In no way can Hunt's couplets compare to the classical ones which have polish and restraint. It is not necessarily to be expected that a narrative poem should have the close-

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1 Leigh Hunt, The Story of Rimini, in The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt. Oxford University Press, London, 1923, Canto III, ll.20-1.

2 Ibid., Canto IV, ll. 469.

knit unity of a drama. Hunt has used his imagination to supply details to his poem which no other author admits in his work. He describes the scenery at great length, and it appears that he attempted to break up the real story and make his poem longer by inserting lyrical passages. Scarcely any part of the poem can be said to attain sublimity or even elegance.

The poem was developed in two different versions. The first version (1816) was approximately 1700 lines, the second (1844) was about 1200 lines. The first version was reprinted in 1817, 1819, 1832, and 1844 (this last in Boston.) In 1855, the first version was printed with alterations. The second was printed in London in 1844, and reprinted in 1846, 1849, 1857, and 1860. Hunt altered the ending and some other passages, but as Sidney Colvin says "without any great improvement."[3] The later version is truer to the stories of Dante and Boccaccio. In 1857 and 1860, the first version of Canto IV, ll. 1-412, was printed with alterations as a separate poem called Corso and Emelia. The original names of the characters were changed to those in the title. This is about the lovers, the duel, Emelia's pining away, and the return of the bodies to the father who never smiled afterwards.

In both of Hunt's versions of the Rimini story we understand that as Boccaccio says, Francesca is a pawn--"A bride

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3 Sidney Colvin, "Stephen Phillips's Tragedy of Paolo and Francesca," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 46 (December, 1899), p. 918.

to ransom an exhausted land"[4] --"A bride, to crown the comfort of the land."[5] In 1844, Hunt inserts twelve lines into Canto II (the ride through the forest) giving Boccaccio's story of the lady pursued by the hounds.[6] (D'Annunzio later makes use of this for Francesca's dream.) Hunt brings in the story rather neatly by having the knights look up among the foliage of the trees as if they half expected to see the face of the lady who was pursued by the dark knight and the hounds.

In the first version, Giovanni is thus described:

> A lofty spirit the former was, and proud,
> Little gallant, and had a sort of cloud
> Hanging forever on his cold address,
> Which he mistook for proper manliness.[7]

In 1844, this substitution (and another one of Giovanni which we shall see later) is in accordance with Boccaccio:

> The former said to have a handsome face,
> Though lame of foot (some victory's very grace!--
> So Guido call'd it), yet was stern and proud.[8]

Upon the meeting of Giovanni and Francesca in Canto III, an altered description appears in 1844. It is substituted for ll. 1-35.

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4 Hunt, op. cit., Canto I, l. 31, versions 1832-60.

5 Ibid., versions 1816-19, notes, p. 665.

6 Decameron, Book V, Tale viii. Twelve lines in the notes, p. 670. Dryden in his poem on this tale names the knight Theodore and the lady Honoria.

7 Hunt, op. cit., Canto II, ll. 20-23.

8 Ibid., notes p. 668.

The gentle lady of a fiery lord
Is welcom'd, and is borne straight to the halls
That hold his presence in the palace walls.
And there, as pale as death, the future wife
Looks on his face that is to sway her life.
It stoop'd; she knelt; a kiss was on her brow;
And two huge hands rais'd her she scarce knew how.

Oh, foolish, false old man! now boast thine art,
That has undone thee in a daughter's heart.

Great was the likeness that the brothers bore;
The lie spoke truth in that, and lied the more.
Not that the face on which the lady stared
Was hideous; nay, 'twas handsome; yet it scared....

The brows were shadow'd with a stormy fire....
The whole big face o'erhung a trunk deform'd,--
Warp'd in the shoulder, broken at the hip
Though strong withal, nor spoilt for soldiership.[9]

The large hands seem to be Hunt's own invention, nor does Boccaccio mention the hunchback and the lame hip, describing Gianciotto simply as rude in appearance and a cripple. In Hunt's first version the lady was not afraid, for Giovanni was a totally different person. Special emphasis on the deception is achieved by the two lines inserted about Guido. We are given to understand that Giovanni did not know that Francesca's father had deceived her.[10] Even though Giovanni, being unaware of the trickery, has a right to expect more consideration from Francesca than he receives, one may still feel that Hunt, with his vivid imagination, makes Giovanni a worse character than he need be. At a banquet he dismisses Francesca's ladies who hover close around her, and his actions which follow result in Francesca's swooning.

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[9] Ibid., Canto III, substitution for ll. 1-35, notes, p.671.

[10] Ibid., substitution for ll. 55-58, notes, p. 672.

> And the Prince rose, but with no gentle looks;
> He bade them give her air, with sharp rebukes,
> Grasp'd her himself with a suspicious force,
> And altogether show'd a mood so coarse,
> So hasty, and to love so ill attun'd,
> That, with her own good will, the lady swoon'd.[11]

"Two fiends possess'd Giovanni's eyes,--Will and Scorn."

A third "murderous Jealousy" was preparing a place.

Another alteration in the 1844 version is between ll. 248-381. It begins with one line set apart which again puts the blame upon Francesca's father. "Oh wretched sire! thy snare has yet but half been wrought." Then comes the story of a fop who tried to make love to Francesca and was repulsed. At first he feared Giovanni, but when nothing happened, he suspected that Francesca feared to tell her husband and that he might have a rival. Accordingly, he spies upon Francesca and is present when she and Paulo meet in the summer house. Between ll.503 and 504, Guido is accused again:

> Oh weak old man! Love, saintliest life, and she,
> Might all have dwelt together, but for thee.[12]

The ending of this canto (III) in the second version is akin to Dante. They read the book and kiss mouth to mouth.

> Oh then she wept,--the poor Francesca wept
>
> And pardon oft he pray'd; and then she swept
> The tears away, and look'd him in the face,
> And, well as words might save the truth disgrace,
> She told him all, up to that very hour,
> The father's guile, th'undwelt-in bridal bower,--
> And wish'd for wings on which they two might soar
> Far, far away, as doves to their own shore,
> With claim from none.--That day they read no more.[13]

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11 Ibid., a part of a substitution for ll. 55-66, notes, p.672.

12 Ibid., Canto III, verses inserted between 503-4, versions 1844-60, notes p.677.

13 Ibid., for ll.605-8, notes p.678.

The first version dealt only with the reading and the kiss. It did not contain her mention of her father's guile. The wings and the doves and the phrase, "That day they read no more," had their beginning in Dante. In 1855 these words of foreshadowing closed the canto, "Oh thou unhappy father! Woes in store await thy craft."

From the second version of Canto IV, Hunt has omitted the duel with Paulo's intentionally falling on his brother's sword to die and has substituted eighty-eight lines for ll. 1-427. The fop betrays the lovers, for he spied upon them in Canto III. When they meet in the summer house the next day, Giovanni is returned from war and listening without the house. He opens the door noiselessly, sees them "Lost in the heaven of one another's eyes," and hears Francesca saying to Paulo,

> To thee it was my father wedded me,...
> I never lov'd but thee.
> The rest was ever but an ugly dream!--
> "Damn'd be the soul that says it," cried a scream.[14]

Here Giovanni hesitates long enough so that shrieks and prayers may fill the room. Then,

> Hot is the dagger from the brother's heart
> Deep in the wife's;--dead both and dash'd apart.[15]

Hunt is the only writer who makes them fall apart and remain that way. "Back was the slayer in his camp that night." As

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14 Ibid., a part of the 88 lines substituted in Canto IV, notes, p.679.

15 Ibid.

usual in his ego Giovanni felt mighty and fierce, but he pondered Francesca's words to Paulo--"It was to thee my father wedded me." Upon questioning a handmaid and a priest, he found out the deception; and henceforward he laid the blame on Guido as all the lines of foreshadowing in the poem attempted to do.

> His fancy gaz'd
> On the new scene that made his wrath less wild--
> The sire ensnaring his devoted child.
> Him foremost he beheld in all the past,
> And him he now ordain'd to gather all at last.[16]

With these words, Hunt returned to line 428 and followed the first version, with some alterations, to the end of the poem.

To Boccaccio, Hunt owes his description of the deformed Giovanni of the second version, the deception practiced upon Francesca, the lofty personality of Francesca which causes her later to resent this deception, Giovanni's return to camp after the murder, and the burial of two bodies in one grave.

In the preface of 1832, Hunt wrote that it was Dante who inspired him to write his poem. Strangely enough, he gives no credit to Boccaccio. The subject forced upon him the consideration for those first causes of error. He states that his purpose was to lay the blame upon society because it was in the habit of lying so that Guido thought nothing about it. He wished to show up society's "want of better knowledge." He had even thought of using the motto, "Guard well against the first, unfit mistake."[17] Dante has no reference to lying or

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16 Ibid., ll.84-88, notes, p.679.

17 Ibid., Preface of 1832, p.xxiii.

deception, unless such is the implication of the words il modo and the assignment of the murderer to the circle of treacherous fraud.[18] What Hunt does owe to Dante is the book, the smile, the kiss, and the sentence, "That day they read no more." He has added the summer-house (unless Pellico or the German versions have it), the "huge hands" of Giovanni, the story of the knight and the hounds, the moral lesson upon lying, the fop lover, and, in the first version, the duel.

A study of foreshadowings discloses that Hunt is more artful in predicting the final tragedy in the second version. The speeches of Hunt's own invention which throw the blame of the deception on Guido are very effective in this sense. Boccaccio and Dante include nothing like "Oh weak old man" and similar lines of Hunt. In Canto I, we are led by the description of Francesca to expect an unhappy turn of events:

> A lip for endless love, should all prove just;
> An eye that can withdraw into as deep distrust.[19]

The deformed Giovanni of the second version by his harsh treatment of Francesca seems to have the qualities of potential tragedy. The knights suggest tragedy as they look up among the foliage of the trees, half expecting to see the face of Boccaccio's woman pursued by the hounds. The mention of Alcina and her amorous knights who lived in a long round of blisses in the

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[18] See above, p.9.

[19] Hunt, op. cit., Canto I, for ll.123-8, notes, p.666.

summer-house foreshadows the meeting of Paulo and Francesca there. Even as Hunt describes the summer-house, he stops to foreshadow the final tragedy.

> Ah, happy place! balm of regrets and fears,
> E'en when thy very loveliness drew tears!
> The time is coming when to hear thee nam'd
> Will be to make Love, Guilt, Revenge's self asham'd.[20]

Hunt waxes melodramatic in foreshadowing the murder as he describes Giovanni riding home:

> Alone he rode, yet ever in disguise,
> His hat pull'd over his assassin eyes.[21]

The word pictures of this poem are original with the author. Some of them are very good despite the fact that verbal pictures cannot equal in vividness the direct presentations of drama. The first one is the courtyard of Ravenna thronged with curious people and Francesca and Guido sitting in a pavilion watching the approach of Paulo and his train. A second is Francesca and her escorts on their winding journey through the woods to Rimini. Another is Francesca's room at Rimini which Giovanni, out of his anxious effort to do something for a new wife, had furnished with Francesca's most cherished possessions transported from Ravenna to Rimini. There is the white falcon, the embroidery frame, her books, the hour glass, the crimson chair, and the "urn of silver for the flowers."[22] The picture which will be best remembered

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20 Ibid., Canto III, part of a substitution between ll.485-6, notes, p.677.

21 Ibid., Canto IV, part of the substitution between ll.1-427, notes, p.678.

22 Ibid., Canto III, ll.152-9.

by the majority of readers is the summer house. Hunt describes its position on the grounds of the estate, its architecture and history, the interior decoration, and the solace which a visitor may find there.

The reader often feels that Hunt's diction is not truly poetical. It frequently strikes the modern critic as merely rhymed thoughts or an exercise in verse rather than a work of art. Some of the best passages were complimented by Byron in his notes upon the back of Hunt's manuscript.[23] At times we may even suspect Byron of being ironical. Byron, probably because the work was dedicated to him, made an effort to point to the best passages--the exceptions. For the most part the diction is very commonplace. The following passages which lack the marks of really good poetry are examples showing the style and diction of nearly the entire poem.

> All the green garden, flower bed, shade, and plot,
> Francesca loved, but most of all this spot.[24]

> It was a lovely evening, fit to close
> A lovely day, and brilliant in repose.[25]

One of the worst passages is in Canto III at their first meeting in the summer house. Here what medieval tone the poem did possess is entirely lost. In dealing with such a theme as this the words lack propriety.

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23 He thought the knights looking up among the trees, Paulo's keeping Francesca as a companion of his thoughts, Giovanni's introspective behavior, and "lady lily" were excellent passages.

24 Hunt, op. cit., Canto III, ll.124-5.

25 Ibid., Canto II, ll.124-5.

'May I come in?' said he:--it made her start,--
That smiling voice;--she coloured, pressed her heart
A moment, as for breath, and then with free
And usual tone said, 'Oyes,--certainly.'[26]

The most dramatic moment of the poem occurs when Giovanni stealthily opens the door of the summer-house while Francesca is talking. It would be melodrama on the stage, but to me it seems almost as good as Crawford's Giovanni coming through the window with a dagger between his teeth. In the first version Hunt's technique of build-up for the duel and the death of Paulo is very weak. It does not reach a dramatic climax which the reader can really enjoy. The ending instead of rising to any poetical height falls into sentimentality.

They say that when Duke Guido saw them come,
He clasped his hands, and looking round the room,
Lost his old wits forever. From the morrow
None saw him after. But no more of sorrow.
On that same night, those lovers silently
Were buried in one grave, under a tree.
There side by side, and hand in hand, they lay
In the green ground:--and on fine nights in May
Young hearts betrothed used to go there to pray.[27]

Hunt puts the lovers in one grave and has the townspeople present as did Boccaccio. Boccaccio has them buried in the morning at Rimini, Hunt in the night at Ravenna.

In 1855 there were seven closing lines which made an attempt at retributive justice, but which languished into sentimentality:

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26 Ibid., Canto III, ll.581-584.

27 Ibid., Canto IV, ll.511-519.

> Bringing him thus in that one dismal sum,
> The whole amount of all for which his heart
> Had sunk the father's in the schemer's part.
> He rose, in private where he wept, and seem'd
> As though he'd go to them, like one that dream'd,
> Right from the window, crying still, 'My child!'
> And from that day henceforth he never smil'd.[28]

Sidney Colvin gives a good criticism as far as the weaknesses of the style of the poem are concerned.

> A Dryden tale after Chaucer in immeasurably weak dilution--such is perhaps the fittest formula to define the quality of Leigh Hunt's Francesca. His was a spirit radically cheerful, airy, and garrulously complacent. He was incapable of striking powerfully any deep chord of passion or romance, though capable of appreciating them when struck by others. Accordingly he never in this poem gets beyond a superficial chirping vein of descriptive prettiness and mild sentimental pathos; things intolerable in dealing with such a theme.[29]

To Colvin the device of the duel and Paulo's voluntary death is one of the most absurd which could be imagined.

Although the story of Rimini is not without its merits, Hunt's defense of himself in his preface to the 1832 edition is in general hardly borne out by the poem itself.

> Poetry, in its highest sense, belongs exclusively to such men as Shakespeare, Spenser, and others, who possessed the greatest insight into the spirit and sympathies of all things; but poetry, in the most comprehensive application of the term, I take to be the flower of any kind of experience, rooted in truth, and issuing forth into beauty. All that the critic has a right to demand of it, according to its degree, is, that it should spring out of a real impulse, be consistent in its parts, and shaped into some characteristic harmony of verse....All I can be sure of is, that I was in earnest; that the feelings, whatever they were, which I pretended to have, I had.[30]

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28 Ibid., notes, p.682.

29 Sidney Colvin, loc. cit.

30 Hunt, op. cit., preface to 1832 edition, pp.xviii, xxi. See Appendix on the influence of Dante's fifth canto and Hunt's Rimini on John Keats.

Byron and Rossetti, two other English poets besides Hunt,[31] have shown an interest in Dante's fifth canto and have made separate translations of the Francesca story. Byron, as we see by his letter to Murray, was egotistically proud of his translation of "Fanny" and placed it far superior to Henry Cary's. His translation of the famous lines on sorrow is:

> ...The greatest of all woes
> Is to remind us of our happy days
> In misery, and that thy teacher knows.[32]

Rossetti has translated these famous lines of Dante:

> ...There is no greater woe
> Than the remembrance brings of happy days
> In misery; and this thy guide doth know.[33]

Before the time of these translations, Chaucer paraphrased Dante's lines:

> For of fortunes sharpe adversitee
> The worste kynde of infortune is this,
> A man to han ben in prosperitee,
> And it remembren, whan it passed is.[34]

Tennyson's version in Locksley Hall (ll.75-76) reads:

> ...This is true the poet sings
> That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

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31 Hunt's translation of Francesca's story from the Commedia may be found in the volume of his complete works cited on p.17.

32 Lord Byron, Francesca da Rimini, in Complete Poetical Works of Lord Byron. The Macmillan Company, New York, p.565.

33 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Francesca da Rimini, in The Complete Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ed. William S. Rossetti, Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1895, p.250.

34 Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, Book III, ll. 1625-28.

In the dramas the nearest approach to the Dante passage is the six lines which D'Annunzio places at the last of the fifth act of his Francesca da Rimini. D'Annunzio's meaning is really reversed, for Francesca is in a gloriously happy mood:

> And the low voices of the night turn back
> My soul to things that were,
> And joys enjoyed are they that now weigh down
> My heart, and as you were
> I see you still, and not as you shall be,
> My fair friend, my sweet friend.[35]

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35 Gabriel D'Annunzio, Francesca da Rimini, translated by Arthur Symons, in Modern Continental Plays, ed. S. Marion Tucker. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1909, p.322.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST DRAMATIC VERSIONS

One quotation serves to show all that I have been able to learn of the first dramatic version of the Francesca story. It is a German work by Uhland.

> The earliest dramatic treatment of the story is to be found in Johann Ludwig Uhland's Franceska da Rimino, written in 1807. It is only a fragment and was not, of course, put on the stage. The complete "Plan of the Tragedy" outlined by Uhland included Dante as one of the characters and pictured Lanciotto[1] as not physically deformed, but suspicious of all who expressed affection for him. Paolo is the elder brother and a warrior, and the catastrophe is to be brought on by a jealous lover of Francesca who sows suspicion in Lanciotto's mind.[2]

Silvio Pellico (1788-1854) may have either begun or completed the first draft of his drama Francesca da Rimini in 1810. According to another account it was while Leigh Hunt was writing his poem in prison, 1814-15, that Pellico, a young man of twenty-three, was writing his drama.[3] The Italian acting version was not ready for the stage until 1818. Carlotta

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1 In the different versions there are variations in the name of the chief antagonist. Boccaccio gives his true name, Giovanni. The name Lanciotto (according to Henderson, p.21) seems to have been derived from a nickname, Lo Scancioto (lame at hip). In D'Annunzio's drama he is named Gianciotto, the suffix implying strength and vigor. Maeterlinck changed the names of all the characters. Quinn (see below) gives "il Sciancato" as the nickname.

2 Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Drama. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1923, p.351.

3 A Spanish dictionary in the possession of Professor Arnold gives the date of Pellico's play as 1810. M. Joubert assigns it to 1814. The Encyclopaedia Britannica lists 1818 as the acting date. The Saturday Review of Literature, Vol. 6, p.43 (August 10, 1929), dates it 1818.

Marchionni, celebrated actress, read Pellico's play and "recognized at once its striking merits." She took the title role and "aroused unbounded enthusiasm throughout all Italy."[4] This drama of the Italian story was the first actually to see the stage. A summary by Quinn lends us some idea of its treatment.

> Here there is no deception of Francesca, but she has met Paolo years before and they have loved each other. They do not marry, for he has killed her brother and he spends years in the eastern wars, where he distinguishes himself. She pretends to hate him, in order to conceal her real feelings from her husband. Lanciotto loves her deeply and offers to allow her to return to Ravenna when he finds she does not love him, but when he suspects the mutual passion of his brother and his wife, he quickly changes to a revengeful husband and kills them both. The play is simple in structure and while slow in the beginning, has some fine moments in the later scenes. Paolo and Francesca declare to Lanciotto and Guido their love for each other, and at the same time their innocence.[5]

But one critic has said there is "lack of dramatic grip and realism" in Pellico's work.[6]

Uhland and Pellico show similarity in that Paolo is portrayed as a warrior. Uhland is the only dramatist who makes Paolo the older of the two brothers. The drama of Pellico is, so far as I know, the first to give Francesca a brother. Lanciotto's offer of permission to return to Ravenna is a new addition which makes him appear noble. Leigh Hunt mentioned the pretended hatred of Francesca for Paolo which Pellico uses.

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4 Archibald Henderson, "The Story of Rimini," op. cit., p.20.

5 Quinn, op. cit., p.352.
I was unable to secure a copy of Pellico's play although I discovered that it had been translated into English and is published in My Prisons by Wagner. The Chicago University Press printed the Italian version.

6 M. Joubert, "Francesca da Rimini in Art and Literature," op. cit., p.338.

In passing through Milan in October of 1817 Lord Byron borrowed from Pellico his unpublished play. After four days he returned it to the dramatist saying that he had translated it, but nothing is now known of the translation. Then in 1821 Byron wrote to Murray that he intended to write a five-act tragedy on the story of Francesca da Rimini. No one knows why it was not written.[7]

Paul Heyse in 1850 wrote a German drama entitled Francesca da Rimini.[8] I have had no access to any account of it.

In the 1850's, George Henry Boker (1823-1890), who was once United States Minister to Constantinople, wrote a drama with the title Francesca da Rimini. The injured husband here becomes the central figure without lessening our interest in the lovers. Old Malatesta and Old Guido, the fathers, play important parts in the drama. Old Malatesta forces the marriage upon his lame, hunchbacked, warrior son. Lanciotto fears the marriage (later even to the extent of trying to avoid it by suicide) because an old nurse had in his childhood marked a cross upon his forehead with the blood of her husband who was killed by the Ghibelines and prophesied that the blood of Guido would mingle with the Malatesta's, but this the old man jestingly interprets as a sign that the marriage is ordered by Fate.

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7 Henderson, op. cit., p.21.

8 "Paul Heyse," in Der Grosse Brockhaus, Vol. 7, p.481.

While these two talk of the arranged marriage (Act I, ii) the pranks of the court jester, Pepe, disturb Lanciotto until he seizes him and smites the fool on the cheek. A motive for revenge is thus laid down.

> Cousin, you laid your hand upon my coat--
> 'Twas the first sacrilege it ever knew--
> And you shall pay it. Mark! I promise you.
> Lan. (Laughing.) Ha, ha! you bluster well. Upon my life,
> You have the tilt-yard jargon to a breath.
> Pepe, if I should smite you on the cheek--
> Thus, gossip, thus--(Strikes him) what would you then demand?
> Pepe. Your life![9]

In Act I, scene iii, Lanciotto tells how in passing through the hall he saw his sword leap from its scabbard and form a circle of blood on the oaken floor at his feet. Paolo, noble and loving brother who is aware only of Lanciotto's famous deeds in war rather than his deformities, is able to rouse Lanciotto from his brooding over this omen.

> You have been ever played on in this sort
> By your wild fancies.[10]

During their conversation Lanciotto hits upon the plan that Paolo shall go after Francesca and speak of him as he is.

> Dear Paolo, now I have it. You shall go,
> To bring Francesca; and you'll speak of me,
> Not as I ought to be, but as I am.
> If she draw backward, give her rein; and say
> That neither Guido nor herself shall feel
> The weight of my displeasure. You may say,
> I pity her--[11]

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9 George H. Boker, Francesca da Rimini, p.339, in Representative American Dramas, ed. by Arthur H. Quinn. The Century Company, New York, 1919.

10 Ibid., p. 341.

11 Ibid., p. 342.

They tell Old Malatesta that Paolo is to go because Old Guido, the fox, might try to trick them by putting Lanciotto in prison and that the warrior is needed at home.

In Act II the cardinal warns Guido against this marriage.

Guido. The Guelfs are masters, we their slaves;...

...It is well for you
To say you love Francesca. So do I;
But neither you nor I have any voice
For or against this marriage.[12]

Francesca, who has just met the poet Dante in the corridor (Dante never actually appears on the stage), is much disturbed by his queer attitude toward her. Then in a scene of gaiety and color they sit upon a dais to receive Paolo and his train while in the courtyard about are crowds of spectators. A messenger has informed Old Guido that Paolo will come as a proxy. When Nitta, the maid, recognizes the man as Paolo, she almost tells Francesca; but Old Guido quickly stops her by mention of the boiling pot. At length Nitta can deceive her mistress no longer. Contrary to the expectation of the reader, Francesca does not appear to be hurt at all, but only the wiser.

What if I'd thrown my heart before the feet
Of this sham husband! cast my love away
Upon a counterfeit!...

His showy person, and his fulsome talk,
Almost made me contented with my lot....

Ha! ha! I'm glad it went no further, girl; (Laughing.)
I'm glad I kept my heart safe, after all.

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[12] Ibid., p.344.

> There was my cunning. I have paid them back,
> I warrant you! I'll marry Lanciotto....[13]
>
> ...On my faith,
> I would not live another wicked day
> Here, in Ravenna, only for the fear
> That I should take to lying, with the rest.
> Ha! ha! it makes me merry, when I think
> How safe I kept this little heart of mine![14]

Here Francesca is trying to assume a hardness and cynicism, really foreign to her, when she realizes she has been deceived. One suspects that she has really fallen in love more than she cares to admit. When she reproves her father for not being truthful about the identity of her wooer, he accepts the reproof, but continues the deception on another line by saying that his old eyes are dim and that "One brother is the other's counterpart, in fact."[15] Although she says in the next speeches that she hopes her father may yet be wrong and that the young man may be her future husband, she is probably already practicing the art of deception. There can be no doubt when a servant announces "Count Paolo." The act ends by Francesca's listening to Paolo, while he, being over-desirous of speaking of the excellences of Lanciotto, adds even more to the deception. After he has related all the good traits of Lanciotto, he confesses,

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13 Though Boker in the acting version corrected the lines so that Paolo correctly becomes two syllables, he left the pronunciation of Lanciotto wavering between four syllables and the correct three (unless he meant an anapestic substitution to keep the four syllables).

14 Quinn, op. cit., p.350.

15 Ibid., p.352.

Since I came
Heaven bear me witness how my traitor heart
Has fought against my duty; and how oft
I wished myself in Lanciotto's place,
Or him in mine.[16]

Paolo means that he finds it difficult not to steal Lanciotto's place by expressing his own love of Francesca and telling her the truth about Lanciotto. But these words Francesca interprets merely as a wish that Lanciotto had come to do his own wooing. Then she places her hand in Paolo's as an agreement to the marriage with Lanciotto.

Act III is principally concerned with the reception of the bride, Paolo, Old Guido, and the Ravenna soldiers into Rimini. Francesca shows her surprise upon meeting Lanciotto; whereupon he knows that people have deceived her, and he resolves to be patient in an attempt to win her love. Here she is offered a choice:

Lan. That you have seen me, and conversed with me,
If you object to anything in me,--
Go, I release you.
Fran. But Ravenna's peace?
Lan. Shall not be periled.
Guido. (Coming behind, whispers her.)
Trust him not, my child;
I know his ways; he'd rather fight than wed.
'T is but a wish to have the war afoot.
Stand firm for poor Ravenna!
Lan. Well, my lady,
Shall we conclude a lasting peace between us
By truce or marriage rites?
Guido. (Whispers her.)
The devil tempts thee;
Think of Ravenna, think of me![17]

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16 Ibid., p.353.

17 Ibid., p.362.

When she answers yes, Lanciotto is a changed man:

> Lan. Now shall I cry aloud to all the world,
> Make my deformity my pride, and say,
> Because she loves me, I may boast of it?[18]

Her speech tells us something different:

> Fran. (Aside.) Thus I begin the practice of deceit,
> Taught by deceivers, at a fearful cost....
>
> I have betrayed the noblest heart of all![19]

A note on the page remarks that his speech ("which is essential to the tragedy")[20] is omitted in both the acting versions.. Here is one of the important turning points of the play. Although Lanciotto loves her, Francesca, because of the deception worked upon her, definitely states that she will begin the practice of deceit.

In Act IV, Lanciotto is again cast into gloom because Francesca says all the nice things she can to him without saying "I love you." He is also disturbed by the jibes of Pepe. In this act, Ritta discovers that Francesca loves Paolo before she goes to be married to Lanciotto. After the marriage there occurs another crucial incident of the play when Lanciotto notes Francesca's sigh when he kisses her and sees her turn a sickly, miserable look upon Paolo. Lanciotto, being quick to suspect, says he will make Paolo tell the mystery that hangs around her if it be at the point of a dagger. He denies the name brother and accuses Francesca and Paolo who as yet have never even confessed their love openly to each other:

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18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

> Pshaw! brother! You deceive me, sir!
> You and that lady have a devil's league,
> To keep a devil's secret. Is it thus
> You deal with me?[21]

The nature of this devil's league is ambiguous, but certainly it is the first breach between the brothers who have always loved each other. From a scene in the cathedral, without the least protest from the bride, Lanciotto is summoned to a Ghibeline uprising.

In Act V, the lovers sit upon a bank to read in broad daylight some of Boker's own verses about Lancelot and Guenevra. The purpose for the reading is worked out very well, but the verses themselves are the poorest of all the versions used in the Francesca story. The book belongs to Paolo instead of Francesca. Ritta, the maid, senses impending tragedy and at first refuses to leave the couple alone, but finally yields to Francesca's command. After the reading scene where Paolo kisses Francesca and flings the book aside saying, "I'll read no more,"[22] Paolo falls into bewilderment and remorse, whereas Francesca gloats in her one little hour which has come about through the deception practiced upon her. Tomorrow's sun may awake

> On love that laughs at the impending sword,
> And puts aside the shield of caution: cries,
> To all its enemies, "Come, strike me now!--
> Now, while I hold my kingdom, while my crown

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21 Ibid., p.370.

22 Ibid., p.374.

Of amaranth and myrtle is yet green,
Undimmed, unwithered; for I cannot tell
That I shall e'er be happier!" Dear Paolo,
Would you lapse down from misery to death,
Tottering through sorrow and infirmity?
Or would you perish at a single blow,
Cut off amid your wildest revelry...?

The present whispers joy to us; we'll hear
The voiceless future when its turn arrives.
Paolo. Thou art a siren. Sing, forever sing.[23]

Pepe, who has overheard all this, steals from the bushes, picks up Paolo's dagger which he laid aside as he read, and slips off to camp to tell Lanciotto.

At the camp we see Lanciotto inspired by the stars and thoughts of God to feel at peace with Paolo and Francesca. He enjoys dreaming that perhaps Francesca wishes him back, though he knows it is a dream. Evil signs appear: his horse had cast a shoe that day, his sword-hilt feels uneasy in his grasp, the page is urged to see that his sword is ground sharply for the next day's battle. Then enters Pepe with his evil story of the lovers which Lanciotto at first refuses to believe. When Lanciotto seizes the fool, Pepe draws Paolo's dagger, but Lanciotto, wresting the dagger from Pepe, stabs him. Pepe's dying words go home to Lanciotto:

This I expected; it is naught--Ha! ha!
Paolo hired me, swine, to murder you.[24]

Lanciotto is not sure that there is one grain of truth in this hideous lie, doubtless because Pepe overstepped the bounds of

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23 Ibid., pp.374-5.

24 Ibid., p.378.

probabiltiy in confessing that he was an accomplice of Paolo's in an intended murder, but Lanciotto does remember the signals of the eyes which he saw made and returned. Since his suspicions had been aroused in the cathedral just after the marriage, he cannot now resist the impulse to go back to investigate. He, with the cross which his old nurse put upon his forehead burning his brain, rushes "like a famished eagle scenting blood" to Rimini. There in the garden he finds Francesca clinging to Paolo and begging him not to leave her. When he hears Francesca ask Paolo for a kiss, Lanciotto steps from behind to advise her to take it since it will be the last. Francesca, without fear of Lanciotto, boldly kisses Paolo, saying that what she can do in the sight of heaven she can do before Lanciotto, for he is not above heaven. Lanciotto asks them to deny their love, but each lover confesses himself guilty, trying to prove the other innocent. (Pellico's lovers too made an open confession to Lanciotto.) They ask for death. Then he shows them Paolo's dagger which he had taken from Pepe. Paolo speaks,

> It is false!
> If you received my dagger from his hand,
> He stole it.
> Lan. There, sweet heaven, I knew! And now
> You will deny the rest? You see, my friends,
> How easy of belief I have become![25]

Paolo again refuses. Paolo who now has a sword refuses to fight his brother; whereupon Lanciotto becomes mad with rage.

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[25] Ibid., p.381.

Lan. Can man sink lower? I will wake thee, though:--
Thou shalt not die a coward. See! look here!
(Stabs Francesca.)
(Paolo draws, rushes at him, but pauses.)
Strike, strike!
Ere thy heart fail.
Paolo. I cannot. (Throws away his sword.)[26]

After Paolo is wounded, he asks Lanciotto to help him to the side of Francesca. The lovers die saying that they do not blame Lanciotto. The two fathers enter here to view the scene of retributive justice. Lanciotto will return to war now that he nas cleared the honor of the Malatesti. But at the very last his will breaks, and he at length knows remorse.

...I am very ill.
I killed thy son for honour: thou mayst chide.
O God! I cannot cheat myself with words!
I loved him more than honour--more than life--
This man, my Paolo--this stark, bleeding corpse!
Here let me rest, till God awake us all!
(Falls on Paolo's body.)[27]
(Curtain.)

His love of Paolo comes before his love of Francesca-- a woman whom he had seen for only a few hours. A note tells that the version of 1853 had for its last line, "Here let me rest till all together wake!"[28] This change was made probably because it seemed a more suitable closing line for an acting play, but to me it also seems more appropriate because the three, according to Dante, waked in Hell where Minos was judge.

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26 Ibid., p.382.

27 Ibid., p.384.

28 Ibid.

Francesca is noble enough to sacrifice herself for the good people of Ravenna. She is young, yet strong of character. She takes ironic pleasure in the deception which she intends to practice upon Lanciotto. She remarks that she has learned the art from her father. Her staggering on the stage after she has been stabbed, crying "help, murder," somewhat foreshadows Sarah Bernhardt in the similar melodramatic scene in Crawford's Francesca da Rimini. Ritta is the most amusing of the maids and by far the most talkative and stubborn. The choice given Francesca by Lanciotto is a good feature of the play. (A similar choice was used by Pellico.) The fact that her father then influences her decision calls forth the final poetic justification of the murder. Deception brought forth deception. The motives given Pepe are very well worked out. After Paolo, too, has slapped him once, Pepe says, "Another life for that."[29] Pepe had been a privileged character, and a blow to him was almost unknown. The characterization of Lanciotto is particularly fine when he has hopes that a beautiful woman may have enough kindness of heart to love him. His glooms and his joys are very real. Francesca herself calls him "the noblest heart of all."[30] Paolo says,

> I can count virtues in you, to supply
> Half Italy, if they were parcelled out.[31]

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29 Ibid., p.344.

30 Ibid., p.362.

31 Ibid., p.342.

Boker's play has numerous features which distinguish it from the others, the most unusual being that Lanciotto is indisputably the lead. Pepe, Old Guido, Old Malatesta, and Ritta are mixtures of comedy and wisdom. Pepe's stories of the red-haired baby which had a red-haired uncle, and Vulcan's supposed child which had wings like Mercury, and the song, "'Tis jolly to walk in the shady greenwood...They say--but I never tried"[32] are all sources of laughter. Ritta and the boiling pot has already been mentioned. Old Guido and Old Malatesta's mistrust of each other in their attempt to combine a regard for war and playing the gentleman is amusing. However, the comedy is now and then dangerously near burlesque.

Besides romance and comedy, the play contains several passages of philosophy and ethical observation, and a considerable amount of poetic material.

> Lan. ...This life
> Is one unending struggle to conceal
> Our baseness from our fellows.[33]
>
> Cardinal. Treachery with enemies is bad enough,
> With friends 'tis fatal....
>
> Each wicked action spawns a brood,
> And lives in its succession....
>
> You, who shake
> Man's moral nature into storm, should know
> That the last wave which passes from your sight
> Rolls in and breaks upon eternity! (Exit.)
> Guido. Why, that's a very grand and solemn thought:
> I'll mention it to Dante.[34]

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32 Ibid., p.371.

33 Ibid., p.341.

34 Ibid., p.347.

Pepe's idea of marriage in a commonwealth fits in very well with the theme of illicit love.[35]

The play is pleasant to read, but it cannot rank with the finer workmanship of D'Annunzio. Portions of it contain obvious melodrama. Yet it is a far better piece of work than Hunt's Story of Rimini. To my thinking the worst diction in the entire play is that which Paolo reads from his book. Generally speaking, the language of books issuperior to ordinary conversation. The reverse is true of the romance Paolo reads, and yet despite the inferior quality of the story, the lovers find in it a motivation for expressing their love. Some of the speeches are "purple patches" in the sense that they are far superior to the general diction of the play. (Note the one on pages thirty-nine and forty of this thesis.) But others are purple in the derogatory sense. The long speeches, asides, and soliloquies mark this play as belonging to the older type of drama. The action is often retarded by their use.

The popularity of the play is evident by the fact that it was printed in an edition of Boker's plays in 1856, 1857, 1883, and 1891. Since then Francesca da Rimini has been republished in a popular edition. It was first performed at the Broadway Theatre, New York, September 26, 1855, and ran until October 5th. Quinn writes that the cast did not do justice to the play. E. A. Davenport as Lanciotto was "unimaginative, mechanical, and melodramatic."[36] In 1882

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35 Ibid., p.356.

36 Quinn, op. cit., p.349.

Lawrence Barrett assisted by William Winter made a new acting version. It was played in Philadelphia with Mr. Barrett taking the leading role of Lanciotto. Otis Skinner played Paolo, and Miss Marie Wainwright Francesca. It ran for nine weeks in 1883 at the Star Theatre in New York, and became Barrett's mainstay for two years in the chief cities of the United States.[37] In 1901 Mr. Skinner revived the play at the Grand Opera House, Chicago. It was played throughout the winter in 1901-2 with Skinner in the leading role, Aubrey Boucicault as Paolo, and Marcia Van Dresser as Francesca.[38] Henderson wrote in 1908 that the drama had been played throughout the country recently with success by Mr. Skinner.[39]

Boker's manuscript acting version differs somewhat from what he considered the best reading version of the play. In 1853 Boker gave instructions that the play should begin with Act II unless Lanciotto was the most important character; then it should begin at Act I as in the reading version and omit the entire scene one of Act II at Ravenna.

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37 W. P. Trent, "Mr. Stephen Phillips's Play," in the Forum, Vol. 29 (March, 1900), p.120.

38 Quinn, loc. cit.

39 Henderson, op. cit., p.21.

Martin Greif in 1892 wrote a drama in German entitled Francesca da Rimini.[40]

Marion Crawford, distinguished Italian-American novelist, wrote his play Francesca da Rimini for Sarah Bernhardt. Archibald Henderson calls it the best acting play of all,[41] but since I have been unable to secure a copy of the text, I shall perforce discuss it briefly. It was written in simple English diction, for it was intended for translation into French.[42] Marcel Schwob was the French translator. On April 22, 1902, it was presented at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt with Bernhardt playing the leading role. M. Marx played Paolo.

Giovanni and Francesca were married in 1275. The date of Crawford's tragedy is 1289. At this time Francesca's daughter Concordia is thirteen years old. It is this child who unwittingly betrays to the father the love of her mother for Paolo (a variant on Maeterlinck's use of Yniold). Beatrice, wife of Paolo, appears as a mad woman in disguise to call Paolo a traitor. The lovers fear that she will out with their secret which they have kept for fourteen years, for apparently the mad stranger knows a great deal. Francesca insists that she be brought

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40 "Martin Greif", in Der Grosse Brockhaus, Vol. 7, p.603.

41 Henderson, op. cit., p.142.
I quote the letter received in reply to my inquiry about Crawford's play from the Macmillan Company which has published most of Crawford's works.

"We have searched through the various book indexes here but do not find a translation of Francis Marion Crawford's Francesca da Rimini nor do we find the original French play listed. This was, as you probably know, published in Paris in 1902 for Bernhardt. Beyond this fact we have no information."

42 Edith Wharton, "The Three Francescas," North American Review, Vol. 175 (July, 1902), p.26.

brought to trial before Giovanni as lord of the haute et basse justice. Paolo, having recognized his wife, bribes the gaoler that she may escape. When Francesca insists on the woman's being brought to trial, Paolo in desperation makes a sign to the gaoler which is misconstrued. In a few minutes the gaoler returns with the word that the woman has strangled herself. Then the body is brought in and uncovered where all may recognize the face of Beatrice. This murder of his wife then rests heavily upon the soul of Paolo. The scene ends with the solemn words of Giovanni, "Paolo Malatesta, bury your wife."[43]

Paolo then goes to Florence as Capitano del Popolo, but soon returns. Giovanni's suspicions were aroused by the mad woman and by the unconscious betrayal by Concordia. "The poison has been at work, and Giovanni has turned from a blunt, open-hearted man into a crafty conspirator."[44] This, as well as the extension of the love episodes over fourteen years until it has grown to a mature passion, is racially characteristic of that Italian age.[45] Giovanni suspects that Francesca expects Paolo to return. He cleverly concocts a story about Paolo's turning traitor to the Florentine government and wanting Rimini as a base of operations. He tells Francesca that if the story is untrue Paolo will probably stay there and face his enemies, or that he might come to Rimini to escape them. Then he asks Francesca which she thinks Paolo will do. In a

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43 Henderson, op. cit., p.143.

44 Ibid.

45 Wharton, op. cit., p.29.

faltering voice she says, "I--I think he may come here"; and thereupon she is caught in a trap. At that time Paolo was hiding in a room off the balcony. Francesca then asks her husband to do nothing until he has an opportunity to talk with Paolo. His question in reply is, "Will you give me nothing for this, Francesca?" At this idea she shrinks in abhorrence. Then he clasps her with passion and exclaims, "I love you. I love you. I shall love you still when you are dead."[46] This gives the audience a presentment of death.

In the final scene Paolo and Francesca meet in a chamber to talk of former days. They mention the book which they used to read, and which Paolo now calls for. As they read, Giovanni enters at the window with a dagger between his teeth. A shadow falls upon the book and Francesca innocently and symbolically says, "It grows so dark I can hardly see."[47] She glances up in time to receive the wound intended for Paolo. Paolo, of course, receives his death blow immediately. At the end Francesca drags herself to Paolo's side crying exultantly "in a melodramatic tirade doubtless inspired by Bernhardt herself":[48]

> Look! Look! This is what you have asked in vain and I have refused--what you have longed for day and night--what you shall never have of me--look well! The kiss of love--supreme--eternal--true.[49]

Archibald Henderson and Edith Wharton agree that this is the best acting play of all. Poetry was here abandoned for prose.

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46 Ibid., p.28.

47 Ibid.

48 Henderson, op. cit., p.143.

49 Ibid., pp.143-4.

The omission of the feigned departure has made a tighter plot construction. The vast difference in this play from all the others is that Crawford makes use of the material discovered by Yriate in 1883. In fact he extends the time from 1285 to 1289--a little beyond their death. The use of the deception is not from any authentic records, but from the story of Boccaccio which may or may not have been true. It was Yriate who discovered the existence of the child Concordia. Crawford by use of these materials has presented a new Francesca--one mature who has been a wife and a mother for several years and whose youthful passion for Paolo has grown into something eternal.[50]

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50 In the article "Francesca da Rimini" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th edition, it is mentioned that Cesario, an Italian, wrote a tragedy on the story in 1906, and Nernda, a Bohemian, in 1909, but I have no further information on these two. Also the Saturday Review of Literature, Vol. 6 (August 10, 1929), mentions both Cesario and Nernda.

CHAPTER IV

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Maurice Maeterlinck's Pelleas and Melisande (1892) is most unlike the other dramas based on the Francesca story. The love triangle is used, and the same idealistic, fatalistic love exists between the wife and the brother-in-law. The lovers meet death by the brother's sword; and here the apparent similarity ends, for even the names of the characters are changed from the original story, though the name Pelleas vaguely suggests Paolo.

Since Maeterlinck was accustomed to write so often of the realm of shadows, we can hardly expect him to reveal distinctly his debt to the original story of Paolo and Francesca when he was in the habit of writing of emotions which extended beyond those of the sensory world. Final proof on such a point would necessarily consist in some statement in an autobiography, or in his correspondence, or in some directly quoted conversation which I have been unable to obtain. Especially in his later works does Maeterlinck show acquaintance with the Pre-Renaissance and the Renaissance of Italy. It is unthinkable that his great interest in world literature and his wide reading would not have made known to him this famous Italian story. Various critics state that Maeterlinck based Pelleas and Melisande upon the Francesca story. In fact all of the books I have seen which mention Pelleas and Melisande in any detail state in the introductory sentence (usually) that the drama is based upon

the Paolo and Francesca story. Smith,[1] Henderson,[2] and Bellinger[3] mention the similarity. Chandler says the story "is as old as Dante's Inferno"[4] and mentions it along with Phillips's and D'Annunzio's treatment of the Francesca story.[5] Lewisohn states:

> Pelleas and Melisande is clearly a variation upon the story of Paolo and Francesca.[6]

Charles Huntington Whitman, one of today's well-known anthologists, writes:

> The plot of Pelleas and Melisande is built out of the age-old story of the hapless lovers Paolo and Francesca, first told by Dante, and thereafter woven into effective verse dramas by George Boker, Stephen Phillips, and Gabriel D'Annunzio. Maeterlinck's version is the least tangible of all.[7]

The play is composed of a series of impressionistic pictures. It is in five acts with nineteen scenes. All the scenes contain a great deal of symbolism and some are completely symbolical. Some scenes foreshadow a dreadful end. The overtones

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1 Hugh A. Smith, Introduction to Pelleas and Melisande. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1929, p.xv.

2 Henderson, op. cit., pp.23-4.

3 Martha Fletcher Bellinger, A Short History of the Drama. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1927, p.331.

4 F. W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1914, p.105.

5 F. W. Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights. Harper and Brothers, New York and London, pp.223, 550.

6 Ludwig Lewisohn, The Modern Drama. B. W. Huebsch, New York, 1923, p.230.

7 Charles Huntington Whitman (ed.), Representative Modern Dramas. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1936, p.406.

increase in meaning with the shifting of scenes. Most of the scenes are quite short. These shorter ones last only long enough to give a faint impression of that half-world, and then comes a shift to add a new tone to the melodic composition. With each new emotion of the reader, the play grows to be more and more a thing of fatal beauty until the main drama seems to be one of overtones. The tonal movement is not one of overt dramatic life, but of soul. Except in about six big scenes, very little action occurs in the play. The scene is set, the characters speak, there are a few poetic gestures and actions, and their souls come forth to the audience. The first stage-picture is that of the women servants beating upon the great gate demanding that the porter open it. They need hardly take a step. In the forest scene (scene ii) Melisande stays by the fountain weeping until Golaud finally persuades her to come with him at the end of the scene. In scene three, Grandfather Arkel and Queen Genevieve sit in their chairs while the queen reads Golaud's letter telling of his marriage to Melisande. The entrance of Pelleas is the most pronounced movement in this scene. Many of the scenes are almost static enough to be set like pictures in a frame. There is the forest, the garden, the first fountain scene, the grotto, the dungeon, Yniold and the rock, Yniold and the sheep, and the servants waiting before the gate and in the hall of the castle in Act V, scene one.

Through Acts II, III, and IV, we find the love scenes scattered. The first hint of the love element is at the end of Act I when Pelleas tries to take Melisande's hand to lead her along the seashore as they with Queen Genevieve watch the lights from the lighthouses. Melisande is frail, unhappy, mystified by life, and very much like a poor little bird in a cage. She is willing to wait upon Golaud when he has been hurt, but she does not hesitate to lie to him. Pelleas is a genial and warm-hearted youth. He would go to his dying friend; yet he must stay at home because his own father is ill. Early in the play he recognizes that his soul is the counterpart of Melisande's. His desire to go to his friend is very much an attempt to escape Melisande. Although in the scenes we see, Pelleas and Melisande are often together, there is an indication that he sometimes avoided her and pretended a dislike of Melisande. Golaud says to Melisande, "Come, is it Pelleas?--I think he does not often speak to you."[8] Again he warns Pelleas to avoid Melisande as much as possible, but "without affectation, moreover; without affectation."[9] If the child's report can be taken as true, we may say that Melisande shrank from being alone with Pelleas for fear that he might tell her of his love for her. Yniold tells Golaud that little mother always says to him, "Don't go away; don't go away!"[10] Little

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8 Maurice Maeterlinck, Pelleas and Melisande, in Chief Contemporary Dramatists, ed. Thomas H. Dickinson. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1915, p.556.

9 Ibid., p.561.

10 Ibid., p.562.

Yniold, Golaud's son by a former marriage, plays the unconscious role of betrayer as did Concordia, the real daughter of Francesca in Crawford's drama. Golaud, the half-brother with his graying beard, is much older than Pelleas. When Melisande sees him in the forest, she thinks him a giant, but he informs her he is a man like the rest.

Throughout the play the diction is poetic even though it be written in prose. In the French manner the sentences are very brief, and the diction simple. There are many questions and answers. Melisande in her fears and lack of understanding is most naïve. She repeats phrases like a marionette whose strings are pulled by fate. Although she is pensive and sad, she seems seldom to stop to think what to say. Her speech tinkles forth in its innocence.

> Melisande. Do not touch me! do not touch me!
> Golaud. Do not be afraid....I will not do you any...Oh, you are beautiful!
> Melisande. Do not touch me! do not touch me! or I throw myself in the water!...
> Golaud. I will not touch you....See, I will stay here, against the tree, Do not be afraid. Has any one hurt you?
> Melisande. Oh! yes! yes! yes!...[11]

She speaks to Pelleas:

> Melisande. Why sayest thou always thou wilt go away?...
> Pelleas. I must tell thee what thou knowest already?--Thou knowest not what I am going to tell thee?
> Melisande. Why, no; why, no; I know nothing--...
> Pelleas. Thou knowest not why I must go afar....Thou knowest not it is because...(He kisses her abruptly.) I love thee....
> Melisande (in a low voice). I love thee, too....
> Pelleas. Oh! oh! What saidst thou, Melisande?...I hardly heard it!...Thou sayest that in a voice coming from the end of the world!...I hardly heard thee....Thou lovest me?--Thou lovest me, too?...Since when lovest thou me?...
> Melisande. Since always....Since I saw thee....[12]

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[11] Ibid., p.551.

[12] Ibid., pp.566-7.

Pelleas is the lover and the friend; always his speech becomes him. Golaud is not by any means the fearful giant Melisande thought him to be. He hunts and rides in the forest, but he speaks kindly to Melisande in the forest and tries to assure her that he will protect her. He gently questions her about her name and whence she came. When in her excitement she will not listen to reason, Golaud speaks some short, commanding sentences which make her obey. There is dignity and kindness in his command to Pelleas to leave Melisande alone. Nothing could be clearer than his brief and pointed sentences:

> Speaking of Melisande, I heard what passed and what was said last night. I am quite aware all that is but child's play; but it need not be repeated....
>
> You are older than she; it will suffice to have told you.[13]

Arkel's voice is that of wisdom and dignity. He is yet king. Somehow in his wisdom he understands Melisande. It is he who speaks profoundly of the grave duties of life and the silence of the human soul in a voice befitting his subject.

There is incidental music to Pelleas and Melisande written by Gabriel Fauré and William Wallace, and Garnet Wolseley Cox has written an overture to the drama.[14] Since it is claimed that Maeterlinck knew nothing of music and even failed to appreciate it, the writer doubts that the music was written at the request of Maeterlinck. Certainly it was not essential--except for Melisande's song. Fabre's music was used in Paris, 1893:

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13 Ibid., p.561.

14 Lawrence Gilman, "Maeterlinck in Music," Harper's Weekly, Vol. 50 (January 18, 1906), p.59. It seems that this music was written near the time of the first productions.

> On the occasion of the first production of Maeterlinck's drama in France, the song in the third act had been put to music by Gabriel Fabre, a young amateur, very much in vogue in literary circles at that time.[15]

Briefly these are the details of the story: Golaud finds Melisande lost and weeping in the forest, marries her, and returns to his grandfather Arkel's castle. Pelleas, the half-brother, and Melisande have a vague, mystical affinity for each other which does not express itself in words until a few minutes before they are slain. In playing with her wedding ring, Melisande drops it into a well. Golaud sends her and Pelleas to look for it in the grotto where Melisande said it was lost. Two scenes later when Pelleas and Melisande look at the lamp which Golaud brought, they cry, for they long for the light and happiness. The tower scene (III,ii) where Pelleas is almost beside himself with rapture when Melisande's hair falls from the window around him is one of the climaxes. Golaud, passing by, sees them and laughs calling them children. The main climax is reached when, Golaud, suspecting them, lifts Yniold to the window and asks the child to tell him what Melisande and Pelleas are doing. The highest point of the scene is the moment when the child fears to look any longer and begs his father to lift him down. Golaud says, "Come; we will go and see what has happened."[16] The next time we see Golaud he will not allow Melisande to touch him, he wishes to examine his sword, and threatens to close Melisande's

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15 Leon Vallas, Claude Debussy, His Life and Works, translated from the French by Maire and Grace O'Brien. Oxford University Press, London, 1933, p.83.

16 Maeterlinck, op. cit., p.563.

big eyes forever. When he sees that she trembles, he is both pleased and disgusted. The scene ends frightfully with Golaud's haling Melisande about by her hair and Arkel's remarking, "If I were God, I would have pity on men's hearts."[17] On the eve of Pelleas's departure to be with the family of his dead friend, Pelleas and Melisande meet in the garden by the fountain. Golaud is spying upon them. This they discover; but feeling that the situation is hopeless and that they must enjoy their love now or never, they embrace passionately and Golaud rushes upon them to kill Pelleas whose body rolls into the fountain. He then pursues Melisande who flees in terror. At the first of the fifth act, we learn that Golaud gave Melisande a slight wound and that he attempted to kill himself. In the final scene Melisande, because of the wound and shock, has given birth prematurely to a tiny daughter. Golaud, now repentant , tries to discover whether or not she was innocent in her love of Pelleas. Her answers give him no comfort, for they are first "yes" and then "no." After Melisande is dead, Arkel says the little one must live in her place. He probably does not expect life to be any better for the "poor little one" than it has been for other human beings, but A. E. Keeton calls this a final note of hope and happiness like spring after winter.[18]

Intricately woven into this plot are a number of symbols. In fact they are so numerous that I shall here mention only a few.

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17 Ibid., p.565.

18 A. E. Keeton, "Debussy: His Science and His Music," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 66 (October 30, 1909), pp.492-502.

The setting is Allemonde, "an imaginary Kingdom," which represents placelessness and timelessness. It is by the sea, a source of light and healthful inspiration, but also of mystery, danger, and endless distance; it is the universe at large. (Allemande was the old name for Germany, but there may be something of a bi-lingual pun produced by the combination of the German adjective alle with the French noun monde, as if it were to signify "all the world"). The castle with its underground passages, the weakening foundations, and the stagnant pool which erodes its foundation is age--or life grown old. Melisande's crown which she had dropped into the fountain in the forest was girlish youth and innocence. Her long hair was the glamour of romance. The fountain was love which opened the eyes of the blind to the mystery of life, and the weeding ring lost was wifely fidelity, as were the doves which describe graceful sweeps around Melisande in the tower scene and then fly away. Little Yniold cannot lift the big boulder--there is something here which he does not understand. The sheep bleating on their way to slaughter foreshadow innocence in death.

The atmosphere of the drama is that of another world. Despite the fact that the story is clothed in symbols, the simplicity of the characters, their actions and speeches, reveal to us the drama of the inner person. Maeterlinck shows us the purity of the soul, how it has never known the sins of the flesh. The soul is good, but at the same time he reveals its moral unconsciousness in all the main characters except Arkel. Humanity wanders in

the dark longing for light. But fate is a crushing force. Usually death is the fate which crushes, but here Maeterlinck came near to saying it was love which crushed these characters and that death was the welcome escape. The scenes move in an iridescent half-world and are full of double-meaning and allegory. The strange glow of half lights in the stage background gives unity and an almost monotonous effect to the drama as a whole. Weird, mystical scenes produce the effect of hypnotism upon the eye.

Maeterlinck himself explains why he felt free to use new forms for his dramas.

> Dramatic art is a method of expression, and neither a hairbreadth escape nor a love affair more befits it than the passionate exposition of the most delicate and strange intuitions; and the dramatist is as free as the painter of good pictures and the writer of good books. All art is passionate, but a flame is not the less flame because we change the candle for a lamp or the lamp for a fire; and all flame is beautiful.[19]

Hugh A. Smith reminds us that since the characters cannot act against fate, we are not interested in their actions but in their "thoughts and emotions, their visions and fears."[20] Maeterlinck said he admired "Hamlet because he has the time to live because he does not act."[21] To Smith the philosophy of being unable to act is "demoralizing." It is an "unhealthy

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19 Quoted by Lawrence Gilman, in "Pelleas and Melisande as an Opera," Harper's Weekly, Vol. 52 (March 21, 1908), p.25.

20 Smith, op. cit., p.xxiv.

21 Ibid., pp.viii-ix.

conception of life and Maeterlinck himself realized this"[22] (later). Smith also thinks the drama should have ended with the fourth act with the fatal kiss beside the fountain. (If he knew that the dramas of Uhland, Pellico, and Boker ended with the murder, this may have influenced his decision.)

Pelleas and Melisande was given in Paris in 1893. Georgette Leblanc, who later became the wife of the author, acted the leading role. In 1895, the play was given in London in French. The first to act it in English were Forbes Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell (1898).

Mr. Rollo Peter's performance in New York, December 4, 1923, was reviewed by Stark Young. Peters designed the scenes for the set. These were complimented highly. Of the acting, Young says that Mr. Peters was excellent most of the time, but that on the other hand, he was "too purely personal...as in the short soliloquy at the beginning of the scene by the spring where Melisande is to lose her wedding ring." Miss Jane Cowl in the part of Melisande was "very mystical and good." Her presence was not well defined, and it is thus that it should have been. Especially did they express "the solitude of the human soul" when they entered the cave to hunt the ring.[23]

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22 Ibid., p.xxvi.

23 Stark Young, "Pelleas and Melisande," New Republic, Vol. 37 (December, 1923), p.123.

CHAPTER V

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

Stephen Phillips, an English dramatist, published his Paolo and Francesca in 1901.[1] It is written in four acts of effective blank verse. Acts one and four are unbroken, but Act II is divided into two scenes and Act III into three scenes. This play stands apart from the others because of its neatness of form and the pleasantness of its poetry. After a reading of D'Annunzio's drama with its wealth of materials and its blend of various arts, one would be tempted to call Phillips's play Greek in its economy. The impression of classic restraint may be somewhat specious, for the tragic conflict within the souls of the main characters is not uniformly one of intense exaltation. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to deny that in certain of the big scenes the characters of Giovanni and Lucrezia, and even Paolo, do achieve the effect of a throbbing inner life which the dramatist restrains from excess in expression. The characters are clear, but hardly bold. They find themselves in a dilemma in which fate urges them forward. In some respects they are like the characters in other Francesca dramas, but in many ways they are Phillips's own poetic creations.

Giovanni's first speech informs the throng of waiting guests, citizens, and servants that he has sent Paolo his

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[1] The Saturday Review of Literature, Vol. 6 (August 10, 1929), p.43, gives the date 1899.

beloved brother ("who is indeed myself--For scarcely have we breathed a separate thought"), for "Ravenna's child" because he was "deep in affairs."[2] Here there is no deception. Although Giovanni has a "sullen gait" as in other versions, Francesca shows no surprise upon seeing him for the first time. His manners are not at all uncouth like those of some of the other husbands, though he is somewhat harsh and forceful. The following speech shows his Italian nature:

> Yet one word more--be sure
> That, though I sheath the sword, I am not tamed.
> What I have snared, in that I set my teeth
> And lose with agony.[3]

Because Paolo has either fallen in love with Francesca on the return trip or knows that he will if he remains near her, he decides to leave. It is his wish to be absolutely true to his elder brother. First Francesca asks him to stay because he brought her there and he is the only one she knows. Then Giovanni commands him to attend the marriage feasts out of respect to him and the bride. Here the brothers' love of each other develops something akin to a flaw, for because of love for Giovanni Paolo, remains to fall in love with Francesca. Later when Giovanni wishes to leave Francesca in Paolo's care, he protests, "'tis a duty I would not willingly take up."[4]

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2 Stephen Phillips, Paolo and Francesca. John Lane, The Bodley Head, New York and London, 1901, p.12.

3 Ibid., p.15.

4 Ibid., p.37.

Francesca is at first little more than a fragile, innocent child just come from the convent. The purity and delicacy of her nature is comparable only to Melisande's. Giovanni treats her with tenderness, for he takes pleasure in his choice of one "Hither all dewy from her convent fetched, [To] lead me gently down the slant of life."[5] Her first speech is prettily phrased:

> My lord, my father gave me to you: I
> Am innocent as yet of this great life;
> My only care to attend the holy bell,
> To sing and to embroider curiously:
> And as through glass I view the windy world.[6]

In Act II, she is gradually awakening to life. After Paolo has kissed her hand and departed, she feels a difference in herself and runs to the mirror to see whether or not a change is noticeable in her features. She suspects too that her face has made him depart into the darkness of which he spoke.

Paolo shows that he loves Francesca first with a passionate love, while her regard for him is yet an innocent one.

> How shall I tell you and sow in you thoughts
> Which are not there as yet?[7]

Francesca is forward in her innocence:

> Will you not kiss my hand at least?[8]

Paolo replies, "Child," as if she were another Melisande.

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5 Ibid., p.13.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p.40.

8 Ibid.

Giovanni in Act II realizes with a shock that his Paolo, whom he used to hold on his knee, is the lover of blind Angela's vision. The fourth important character in the play, his cousin Lucrezia, brings him to understand this by her saying that "Youth goes toward youth"[9] and by her reminder that Angela said the lover was near. (Lucrezia, because she was childless and a widow, had developed into an introspective "menace."[10]) Giovanni, who cannot put aside his love of Paolo in an instant, admires him for leaving, but immediately seeks to find a love potion to ensure his wife's love of himself.

Giovanni's decision to buy a potion for Francesca leads him to be in the apothecary's shop at the time Paolo comes to buy poison for his suicide. Although Giovanni overhears Paolo's own confession that he loves his brother's wife, he cannot bring himself to use his dagger, for Paolo is still his beloved brother. He is touched to think his Paolo would buy poison for himself rather than deceive him in loving his wife.

Love of Francesca overpowers Paolo until he cannot commit suicide, but returns to Rimini to find Francesca in the garden with the book containing the story of Launcelot and Guenevere. He knows their meeting will be undisturbed, for he has just seen Giovanni ride away after being sought by a messenger. At dawn the lovers read the book and seal their fate with the fatal kiss. Their eyes grow dim with tears over the pages of

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9 Ibid., p.23.

10 Lucrezia calls herself a "menace", p.26.

the book, for it represents so clearly their own relations to each other and to Giovanni. After the kiss, Francesca says, "Ah, Launcelot."[11]

Upon his return two days later, Giovanni is disturbed to find that Paolo has come back to Rimini. Lucrezia, again playing the part of the villainess, tells him to give out that this return is only temporary, to ride away, and to return suddenly. When Giovanni announces to Francesca that he must leave, she shows plainly that she fears to be left without his protection. Giovanni places her in the care of Lucrezia; and Lucrezia, despite the fact that she is moved by the helpless petitions of Francesca, calls in Paolo to help pass the lagging time. Everything seems to conspire to force these lovers together. After Lucrezia, through Francesca's plea that she be as a mother to her, has found the child of all her longings, she hastily departs to stop Giovanni from slaying the lovers.

When she returns, the room is empty. Soon the curtains part to show the bloody hand of Giovanni. The catastrophe is reached when Lucrezia understands that the lovers have been slain off stage. Phillips, in the Greek manner, has avoided presenting any violent deed of blood on the stage. The final part of the fourth act is a moving spectacle. Here Giovanni calls for lights. Servants half-dressed rush into the room and stand in clumps whispering. Then into the room are carried the bodies. Giovanni speaks as in a frenzy that there must be

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[11] Ibid., p.88.

rejoicing at this marriage. The last little picture is Giovanni kissing the dead, remarking as he looks upon them:

> Not easily have we three come to this--
> We three who now are dead. Unwillingly
> They loved, unwillingly I slew them. Now
> I kiss them on the forehead quietly.
> (He bends over the bodies and kisses them on the forehead. He is shaken.)
> Luc. What ails you now?
> Gio. She takes away my strength.
> I did not know the dead could have such hair.
> Hide them. They look like children fast asleep!
> (The bodies are reverently covered over.)
> (Curtain.)[12]

Phillips has made several additions to the Francesca story. Giovanni as in other versions has a "mounded back and sullen gait." Paolo is still Il Bello, the younger brother. But Francesca here is even more innocent than Hunt's or Boker's heroine. Lucrezia, the cousin of Giovanni, is an entirely new addition to the story. Indeed she would make an interesting psychological study. At first, because of her own disappointments in life, she wishes to see other people suffer too. After Giovanni has waked from his swoon (under circumstances similar to the trance into which Othello falls), Lucrezia says, "Thou wast so rich--now thou art poor as I !"[13] There is an undertone that she cared for Giovanni and thought he should be married to someone near her age instead of a young girl like Francesca. She finds a solace in holding his head while he has swooned. Because of the bitterness of her heart, she is at first able to betray the lovers. At the last she shows as great a potentiality of

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12 Ibid., p.120.

13 Ibid., p.50.

love for Francesca as she has been showing for hate. She becomes involved in suffering again because of the mesh she wove for the lovers. Despite the fact that Phillips has endeavored to account for her change in character, the reader may feel disturbed at the sudden turn of events. Here too I should mention that Phillips has given a new turn to the plot by having Lucrezia try to stop Giovanni's plan after she had urged him forward. No other person in all the other plays wavers after he has once been the betrayer.

The prophecy of Blind Angela, the old nurse, who saw two lying slain in a rose bower, may have been created from the suggestion of Boker's nurse who was temporarily a prophetess. Her story of the dead rushing through the air bears a marked resemblance to Dante.

The maid, Nita, though herself not at all to favor rigid marital fidelity, is employed here to awaken Francesca by her crude conventionality to the thought of sin. She even reproves her: "He is, my lady, your husband's brother." Francesca replies with astonishment, "O, I had not thought. I have sinned, and I am stained!"[14] Here she falls into weeping--a characteristic of Melisande. Her innocence and tears make her something of a Victorian lady.

Paolo here becomes a different person from the Paolos of other versions. He is so anxious to preserve his honor that he decides to die by poison. He abhors the sight of blood

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[14] Ibid., p.43.

in a most Victorian manner and hence decides that he must not kill himself with his dagger because the sight of blood would not be pleasant for Francesca to see. Paolo is here as conscious of his own ego as of his seeming concern for Francesca:

> And they that find me dead shall lay me down
> Beautiful as a sleeper at her feet.[15]

Phillips did something new in introducing the poison episode. It was an elaborate device for bringing the two brothers together in a place where neither would suspect the other's presence. Paolo was forced to tell that he wanted the poison for himself before Pulci would sell it to him; however, he was not obliged to say he loved his brother's wife. Here is the revelation which urges Giovanni's anger almost to its height. No other Giovanni wished so much to keep his wife's love that he desired to bind her by a charm. Phillips's Paolo is the only one who planned suicide as a way out. Boker's Paolo had thought of it, but desired rather a noble death so that he might look God in the face.

Phillips is the only dramatist who has the murder performed off stage. At the last when the two bodies are brought in upon a litter, Giovanni speaks of their marriage rather than of death. Hunt approaches this treatment by sending the bodies back to Ravenna. To me it seems Phillips has shown a weakness in prolonging the play four pages after we know of the death of the lovers. It seems unnecessary to work up a scheme to

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15 Ibid., p.61.

have the dead lovers brought upon the stage. Edith Wharton says, however, that the most characteristic Italian note in the whole play is this scene.[16] Maeterlinck added a fifth act after Pelleas's death--but not without criticism.[17] Here Giovanni by calling for lights and servants is justifying his act.

Phillips has given a new turn to the old story when he has Giovanni wait to perform murder until the fourth act when he knows of the love of Paolo for Francesca in the second act. It is his great love for both of them which stays his sword. This plot arrangement has made possible the love poetry of many of the speeches. The characters, finding themselves in a dilemma, have time to speak soliloquies because of the slow movement of the play. This use of soliloquies dates back to Elizabethan drama. There are times when one can see vague shadows of Elizabethan drama in the plot and character construction of this play of Phillips. But there are also touches of Victorian sentiment.

Some of the minor materials of the plot are of interest. The unusual bond of brotherly love is akin to that in Boker.

> Is but one heart, one honor, and one death. And ours
> Any that came between us I would kill.[18]

There are hints of tragedy in the lives of the old shopkeeper and his daughter, the girls who come to the shop to buy potions,

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16 Edith Wharton, "The Three Francescas," North American Review, Vol. 175 (July, 1902), p.25.

17 Smith, op. cit., p.xvi.

18 Phillips, op. cit., p.18.

and the laughing, chattering girls who bid their lovers good-bye--one of whom especially suggests tragedy.

The fear Francesca expresses in the last act is tied closely to a conception of the moral nature of the universe. She and Paolo because they are two helpless human beings love each other, but their state of mind reminds one of the words of Dante's Francesca:

> If, for a friend, the king of all, we own'd,
> Our prayer to him should for thy peace arise.[19]

> Pao. What do you fear?
> Fran. One watches quietly.
> Pao. Who?
> Fran. I know not: perhaps the quiet face
> Of God: the eternal Listener is near.[20]

These characters have been unable to battle against fate.

> Unwillingly he comes a wooing: she
> Unwillingly is wooed: yet shall they woo.[21]

At last they think upon death as an escape. Boker's Francesca asked for death at the hands of Paolo in a somewhat melodramatic manner. But when Phillips's Francesca too asks Paolo to kill her, the diction is sincere.

> Break open then the door,
> And let my spirit out. Paolo, kill me!
> Then kill thyself: to vengeance leave these weeds,
> And let our souls together soar away.[22]

A clear reference to Dante's fifth canto is seen in the following:

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19 Dante, Inferno, Canto V, ll.92-3.

20 Phillips, op. cit., p.108.

21 Ibid., p.30.

22 Ibid., p.110.

Fran. (Slowly.) I felt a wind pass over me.
Pao. I too:
Colder than any summer night could give.

Fran. Ah, Paolo! if we
Should die to-night, then whither would our souls
Repair? There is a region which priests tell of
Where such as we are punished without end.
Pao. Were we together, what can punish us?
Fran. Nothing! Ah! think not I can love you less--[23]

The thought of Paolo's last lines, addressed to God, rises to an elevation which strongly suggests Dante's punishment of the lovers, but with an entirely different set of moral notions involved and in an entirely different style. The only faint suggestion of this kind of romanticism is Dante's clause: "he who ne'er From me shall separate."

How wilt Thou punish? For what ecstasy
Together to be blown about the globe!
What rapture in perpetual fire to burn
Together!--where we are is endless fire.
There centuries shall in a moment pass,
And all the cycles in one hour elapse!
Still, still together, even when faints Thy sun,
And past our souls Thy stars like ashes fall,
How wilt Thou punish us who cannot part?[24]

Phillips uses symbols and foreshadowings in his drama, but with restraint. Symbols of romantic love are the book, the mirror, and the trinket which Francesca gives to Angela. When Angela drops the trinket presented her and stands trembling on the stage, we know that Francesca is the girl in the rose bower and the one on the bier in Angela's vision. Francesca's vision of "men hunted on the air by hounds"[25] seems to be a reference to Boccaccio's story used by Hunt. Paolo,

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23 Ibid., p.111.
24 Ibid., p.112.
25 Ibid., p.97.

at the time he plans suicide, says that he refused the rose when he means Francesca's love, for she had not offered him a rose. (D'Annunzio's Francesca does give Paolo a rose.) When Paolo was ready to leave, Francesca attempted to loosen his armor and keep him with her. She remarks that she is unable to unfasten it, and Paolo departs. The tears which come to Francesca's eyes while Giovanni grasps her hand at their first meeting are an ominous sign. Lucrezia's words "Youth goes toward youth" and Angela's prophecy are effective omens. When Francesca says, "We sway and rock and suffer ere we fall," the reader expects disaster in her life. Giovanni foreshadows his own actions during the major part of the drama by his speech in Act II, scene one. He speaks of his sword: "This steel is true that I can bend it Into a hoop!"[26] Because of his great love for his brother, he too will bend a long way before he will break. Other foreshadowings are: Giovanni's statement that he has not sheathed his sword forever; Francesca's finding the air difficult to breathe upon her first entrance into the palace at Rimini; Francesca's expecting Paolo in the garden, for "It could not be otherwise"; Lucrezia's admission that she had become a danger, a menace, and a disappointed force; and Paolo's remark, "To-night all points of swords are to me dull."[27] This last contains irony.

Of Phillips's diction I shall say that it is in general essentially poetic. The speeches are, to be sure, too often

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[26] Ibid., p.48.

[27] Ibid., p.108.

touched with a prettiness which approaches sentimentality. They are sometimes the words of people who stand still upon the stage, who soliloquize, and wander aimlessly through the dusk and dawn with arms entwined about each other's waists. Some of the speeches of Lucrezia may be unduly tumid. The last speech of Paolo's (already quoted) is a fine example of repetitions and imagery which make good poetic diction. The speeches of the common people--soldiers, their sweethearts, Tessa, and Pulci--are in prose. The ease of transition from prose to poetry is a merit of Phillips's style of writing. The sweetness of the diction as a whole gives pleasure.

Paolo and Francesca was first performed in 1902 by the Oxford Company of beginners. Edmund Gosse, writing of the performance, mentions the poetical dramas of the preceeding century which failed and gives as a cause of their failure their lack of consideration for the ear and eye of the audience. He feels that Mr. Phillips has succeeded because he did consider the ear and the eye of the audience.[28]

After Jane Cowl had played Francesca in its first production in America which took place in New York 1929, Euphemia Wyatt criticized Phillips for enveloping his characters with sentiment rather than tragic punishment as did Dante. The Francesca portrayed was one with long pale tresses so beloved by the Pre-Raphaelites.

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28 Edmund Gosse, "The Revival of Poetic Drama," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 90 (August, 1902), p.165.

> Her husband seems a kindly sort of tyrant....One expects almost anything from Giovanni but what he has to do, according to history.[29]

Miss Wyatt observes that the Francesca of D'Annunzio was much better than Phillips's--a daughter of her people, unafraid in battle, aware of sin, and above all not pale. The murder in the open where Gianciotto bends speechless to break his sword seems much better to Miss Wyatt than Phillips's Giovanni saying, "I did not know the dead could have such hair."[30] She asserts that the brothers are Victorian gentlemen; yet "A double murder is not part of a Victorian gentlemen's possibilities."[31]

W. P. Trent says Phillips's play is not good acting and spoken drama, for it has short words and the sense too often closes at the end of a line. The style is polished instead of conversational. But he speaks well of Paolo's lovely lyrics which send one back to Dante, and he accords Phillips this compliment:

> His mastery of rhythm and diction is remarkable,... and he has an unusual sense for beauty.[32]

Trent says that the passion of Lucrezia was exaggerated and not led up to sufficiently. The timidity of Francesca is exaggerated too, but both appealed to the end-of-the-century audience. "The situation is tense and strong, but can hardly be called natural." After Nita calls Paolo, "He enters with

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29 Euphemia Wyatt, "Victoria and Dante," Catholic World, Vol. 129 (May, 1929), pp.200-1.

30 Phillips, op. cit., p.120.

31 Wyatt, loc. cit.

32 W. P. Trent, "Mr. Stephen Phillips's Play," Forum, Vol. 29 (March, 1900), p.117.

a speech too dreamy for the situation; and we are once more ravished by poetry as beautiful as any which has ever been given us since Tennyson was in his prime." Of the ending Trent writes:

> Children? Have we here in the weakness of the central characters, the weak note of the play? Perhaps so, since drama depends upon struggle, and children do not struggle sufficiently. But perhaps on the other hand the audiences...will be quite satisfied by the struggle made against Destiny by these old-time lovers.[33]

Edith Wharton objects to the fact that the play is prolonged unduly when in the second act Giovanni discovers Paolo's love of Francesca. She also thinks Giovanni should not be given to "introspection and melancholia." The really good part of the play, she says, comes when Giovanni calls for lights, rouses the servants, and says there will be a marriage. This according to Wharton is in the manner of thirteenth century Rimini.[34] As a whole she says the play needs local color.

Edmund Gosse hints that Phillips might have written a more masterful drama if he had not been writing to please.

> He is fond of those familiar types which are consecrated to romantic ideas in the minds of all cultivated people, and which relieve them of the strain of following an unknown fable. He realizes that modern audiences will not think after dinner, and he is most adroit in presenting to them romantic images, rich costumes, and vivid emotions, without offering to their intellects the smallest strain.[35]

In case we have been too unkind in our criticism let us remember in parting from our subject a final tribute to Phillips's Paolo and Francesca:

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33 Ibid., p.128.

34 Wharton, op. cit., pp.17-25.

35 Gosse, op. cit., p.166.

> It will encourage us to go on hoping for good poetic drama , even though such a triumph should not occur again for another two-hundred and fifty years.[36]

To me the play is of interest because Phillips, without aiming at historical accuracy, has created for us two youthful and romantically brave lovers and has shown youth and age alike in his drama struggling in a dilemma as love affects their lives and fate urges them forward. The principal characteristics of the play are its inoffensiveness and the delicate beauty of its poetry, but these do not make it a great play.

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36 Ibid., p.156.

CHAPTER VI

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

Gabriele D'Annunzio's drama Francesca da Rimini, which was first produced in 1901, is written in five acts. Every act except the fourth one begins with an extended and rather undramatic introduction, and this is followed by three or four rather sharply marked sections, but there are no shifts of scene within an act. The acts alternate in shades of light and dark. The first act laid in the sunshine of Ravenna is one of beauty, despite one incident of blood-shed. The life of thirteenth century Italy is actually throbbing and teeming on the stage. Here there is very little of the mystical--if we may except the prologue to the fifth act. The atmosphere of this play is the closest of all to the Italian age in which the real characters lived. Women in gay costumes flit about the court enjoying the wit and music of the jester. D'Annunzio shows the atmosphere of Italy when the half-brother who has guessed the secret of the deception to be practiced upon Francesca is openly wounded upon the stage by another half-brother. (Bannino, however, is not related to the main plot.) A slave must wash the stain of blood from the stones. The second act changes from a light shade to a darker one. I know of no author who has brought to the stage a truer representation of Ghibelline and Guelph warfare than D'Annunzio has done in the second act. One feels actual danger and fear upon seeing the

Greek firebrands, arrows, catapults, burning lead, and the open window through which the men look upon the field of horsemen and the sea. The bright, colorful life of that time is again shown in Act III when the merchant comes to sell his precious cloths, many of which Francesca buys and gives to her maids-in-waiting. In this act occurs the swallow dance and the music of the ensemble. Both the setting and the plot here are entirely romantic. The overtones are those of pulsating life in Pre-Renaissance times. In Act IV, the setting is a bleak octagonal room decorated with the trappings of war. Final doom is about to descend upon the lovers. The setting of the fifth act is again Francesca's bedroom. The soft stage lights and hushed voices of the women tell us it is night. After a scene of romantic love, the final tragedy falls quickly.

Each act has an intense climax of its own, while the main climax falls in the fourth act when Gianciotto learns from Malatestino that Paolo and Francesca love each other. The mass of material in the play and its blending of various arts has made it a diversified, complex piece of work. D'Annunzio has employed spectacle, the song, the dance, lyric poetry, wit, and old stories along with bloodshed. There is much overt action on the stage.

In the first act sympathy is aroused for Francesca when we see her brother plotting the deception of her marriage to the Lamester. Her brother and his friend, a notary, contrive and hasten the marriage before the father can interfere. Ser Toldo offers the suggestion that a brother should come instead

of Gianciotto. When one of the women sees Paolo, she points him out to Francesca saying he is to be her husband. Somehow we feel as Francesca hands Paolo the rose across the railing that heaven sanctions their love. The overtones of Act I are fate and beauty.

During the war scene of Act II, Paolo and Francesca meet for the first time since her marriage. There is as much tumult in her own soul as without on the field of battle, for she, being misinformed by the woman and apparently strongly, if unintentionally, mislead by Paolo's courtly behavior, has loved Paolo since she first saw him. But at the same time she hates him for his part in the deception. She accuses him of coming to Ravenna in a deceitful way,

> Clothed in a garment that is called, I think,
> Fraud, in the gentle world.[1]

She says God will forgive him the killing of men, but not the draught he gave her at the ford of the beautiful river as they were on their way to Rimini:

> With your false heart,
> Filled full with madness and treachery.[2]

Thus aroused, Paolo fights furiously in an effort either to die for his sin or to be pardoned of his guilt. He is able to slay the enemy and save Gianciotto's life. Francesca, kneeling, her face convulsed in prayer, holds the cord which raises the window, while Paolo hurls arrow after arrow upon the enemy, and,

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1 Gabriele D'Annunzio, Francesca da Rimini in Modern Continental Plays, ed. Samuel Marion Tucker. Harper and Brothers, New York and London, 1929, p.282.

2 Ibid., p.283.

though he exposes himself insanely to the enemy's missiles, none which enter harm him. His miraculous escape is a sign to Francesca that Paolo's soul is purged of his guilt in the deception. She says:

> This hazard
> Shall be God's judgment, this judgment of the arrow.[3]
>
> Saved!
> O saved and pure! cleansed utterly of fraud![4]

D'Annunzio has made Francesca at first try to keep Paolo from expressing his love for her--not as the pining, delicate, weak Francesca of Hunt avoided Paulo--but more as the bold, strong character Boker creates. When she does accept Paolo's love, it is something in the manner of Crawford's Francesca--as a mature woman who takes love because she thinks it is her just desert.

In the third act, the one dramatic action affecting the plot occurs when Paolo and Francesca sitting at the lectern reading the story of Lancelot du Lac acknowledge their love. After their fatal kiss they are hopelessly lost. Francesca and Paolo had fared very well in their love until Malatestino, in the fourth act, guessed. When Malatestino would speak to Francesca of his love for her, she repulses him saying, "I call your brother."[5] Here he gives the first clue of his knowledge by answering, "Which?" Malatestino subtly threatens Francesca by saying he will betray her love of Paolo because

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3 Ibid., p.285.

4 Ibid., p.286.

5 Ibid., p.307.

she refuses to treat him as anything more than a brother. It is this youth who brings about the catastrophe of the play by urging Gianciotto to investigate for himself the relation between Paolo and Francesca. Gianciotto grasps Malatestino roughly and forces him to swear to the truth of his statement. Golaud's treatment of Yniold in the discovery scene is similar to this.

The character of Giovanni grows before our eyes. His nearest parallel in a modern play would be Boker's Lanciotto. His movements clearly show his deformity, power, and jealousy. Before Malatestino has talked to him, he remarks to Francesca that Malatestino gave her a falcon, he gives her war arms to hold, and "Paolo gives you flowers perhaps."[6] In his anger later he is able to crush a silver cup which he throws away. Gianciotto, left alone upon the stage after listening to Malatestino, harbors a murderous glance in his eyes while he looks after Paolo and moves to swear an oath. Before his departure, Gianciotto shows his craftiness by asking that the three of them drink from the same cup again as they had done in Act II, but he rushes away without himself drinking.

The main action of Act V begins with Paolo's appearing in embroidered dress with his girdle shining splendidly and his long curls hanging about his shoulders. Again the lovers read of Lancelot, and the overtones are distinctly deathly.

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6 Ibid., p.310.

> It says here in the book where you have not read:
> "We have been one life; it were a seemly thing that
> We should be also one death."
>
> Let the book be closed![7]

After the book is closed, D'Annunzio writes of Francesca's lips "swollen with delight." They retire to the couch where Francesca lies back upon the cushions forgetful of everything. The quietness of this section is in sharp contrast to the following and concluding one of the play where a shock is heard at the door. Paolo attempts to go through the trapdoor while Francesca opens the door at the demanding voice of Gianciotto. Paolo is caught head and shoulders above the stage trying to disengage his cloak from the bolt of the trap door, and Gianciotto rushes in to stab him. Here Francesca throws herself between them and receives the stab in her breast. Paolo, who by this time has jumped out and has drawn his dagger, drops it and catches the falling Francesca to seal her dying lips with a kiss. Gianciotto mad with rage and sorrow gives Paolo a thrust in the side and the two lovers fall together. Gianciotto bends painfully and breaks his sword across his knee. This sudden catastrophe can be acted more quickly than one can read an explanation of it.

D'Annunzio's play contains more overt action than any of the others. Incidents are continually happening before the eyes of the audience. From the first act there is deception and bloodshed. There is violent action when Ostasio wounds

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7 Ibid., p.322.

Bannino in the cheek with his sword and the half-brother falls upon the pavement crying he will not tell what he knows about the deception of Francesca and the time Ostasio tried to poison their father.

The war scene is filled with overt action. There are Francesca swinging the fire brand, Paolo shooting the arrows, Francesca praying, Malatestino carried in with one eye put out, and the three principal personages drinking from one cup. Act III, although there is much movement on the stage, is primarily decorative rather than contributory to the main plot of the drama, except toward the end. The principal forceful actions in Act IV are: Gianciotto holds Malatestino between his knees to make him tell the truth; the prisoner's head is brought and flung upon the floor; Paolo shuns the bloody bundle; and at the last two drink from the same cup while the third rushes away. The overt action of the fifth act has already been described.

D'Annunzio employs a number of minor details which add to the beauty of the entire composition. The executed prisoner is something new, also the merchant. Hunt and D'Annunzio both introduce a falcon. D'Annunzio's Francesca received her falcon as a gift from Malatestino. Francesca had one at home in Ravenna which Giovanni had brought to Rimini for her in Hunt's poem. (D'Annunzio worked the bird into the symbolic material of his drama as will be shown later.) Here Paolo is married to Orabile, but she has no part in the play except mere mention. Gianciotto

reminds Paolo that Orabile is accustomed by this time to being a widow. Francesca has a younger sister, Samaritana, who helps to bring out the sweetness of Francesca's character in recalling their happy childhood and their beautiful nights together. Bannino, the half-brother "hatched by a jay," seems entirely new. Only one other play of which I know has a brother for Francesca. Pellico says Paolo could not marry Francesca because he had killed her brother in the eastern wars. A faithful slave is substituted by D'Annunzio for the maids--Ritta and Nita--of Boker and Phillips. The women-in-waiting do not speak in other versions, whereas D'Annunzio's maids chatter garrulously. No third brother of the Malatesti had a part in the drama until D'Annunzio introduced one who also loved Francesca. Francesca's having to care for a wounded, one-eyed, evil youth is certainly in contrast to her life in Ravenna. Here again a woman's long hair is mentioned in connection with romance. Malatestino remembers how Francesca's hair fell over him when he was ill.

D'Annunzio uses more dance, music, and spectacle than any other dramatist here discussed--in fact, he is the only one who uses the dance. The play is opened by the jester entertaining the girls with his viol and his songs. On the second page there is a dance by the women who shake out their perfumed skirts as they dance around the jester. This drama abounds in dramatic pictures, but pictures presented differently

from those in Pelleas and Melisande. Here the pictures are flooded first with sunlight, then with shadow. The first picture is the court surrounded by a balcony, stairs, arches, and railing. A rose-tree grows in an ancient sarcophagus. The jester and the women despite their agile movements are a part of the picture. Later the women with their distaffs singing present spectacle. D'Annunzio has Francesca enter for the first time with her arm around her little sister, Samaritana. The women remain on the loggia as in a singing gallery. Their tall headdresses and their colored distaffs shine in the sunlight. In a few minutes they seem to be looking instinctively for something as their sharp eyes glance over the railing. Later they descend the steps and form a circle on the stage. The girls enter with garlands and three of them carry lutes, viols, and flutes. The final spectacle of the first act is Francesca handing Paolo a rose through the fence and each of them gazing into the lovely face of the other. Meanwhile Francesca's women stand as in a singing gallery and sing of Iseult. The war scene on the stage is certainly one of the most spectacular in modern drama. The furnishings of Francesca's room in Act III may be mentioned again as appealing vividly to the eye--the chamber-organ, the lute, the viol, the lyre on which Francesca catches her dress, the musicians' gallery, and the book on the lectern. While the musicians sit here on the stage to play, the girls do the swallow dance. They wear garlands

and carry wooden swallows as they dance to the music and to Adonella's whistle which imitates the chirping of swallows. This dance is one of the high peaks of spectacle in the play. In the fifth act, when Francesca learns Paolo waits without, she dismisses the girls. The girls make a ceremony of lighting their little silver lamps at the flame of the candle before they depart for the night. Biancofiore is too short to reach the flame. A fair proportion of this spectacle is excessively elaborate and somewhat obstructs the plot.

Another accessory feature of the drama is the political background given at the beginning. In fact some of the early speeches lead us to think wars and political affairs are going to play a larger part in the play than they actually do. The references to important men of the country (Frederick, Charles, the King of Hungary) are false leads. The main purposes served by the political material are to broaden the setting and to produce the situation which enabled Paolo to prove his valour and to be forgiven for his part in the deception. Later, Gianciotto is led to suspect his brother because he returns from his political post as Capitano del Popolo so soon, but not much is made of the politics. The lovers feel free to meet on the last evening, for they understand that Gianciotto has ridden away on urgent business. Some of these elements we have already seen in Boccaccio, Hunt, Crawford, Boker, and Phillips, but no one makes so large a use of the political background

as does D'Annunzio in the very beginning of his drama. The setting of the play contains a wealth of accessory materials. The repetitions and the imagery of his lyric poetry, all the accessory materials, and the beauty of his spectacle have produced romantic qualities which belong peculiarly to this play.

D'Annunzio uses various interesting symbols. (They are not, however, so numerous as those of Maeterlinck.) There are the larger symbols of romantic and tragic love. The rose is fertilized by a brother's blood, as tragedy often enhances the beauty of passionate love. The basil plant (of love) outgrows its pot. This is a symbolic application of Boccaccio's story of Isabella, or The Pot of Basil,[8] which Biancofiore summarizes. The women refer to the lady in Boccaccio's sad tale as Lisbetta. The book of Lancelot du Lac symbolizes the romance and tragedy of the eternal triangle. The swallows, which may parallel the doves in Dante and Maeterlinck, make a shadow on the sea as they fly away. This fact is noted both times before Paolo and Francesca read and symbolizes a departure of fidelity. Throughout the play an interest is shown by Francesca and her women not only in the Arthurian story of Lancelot and Guenevere but also in the parallel story of Tristan and Iseult. The Tristan story parallels the main story here since both Paolo and Tristan escorted home a bride for their kinsmen, both of

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[8] See Keats in the Appendix.

whom were more or less defective in body and soul. During the wooing, in both cases, a fatal love is kindled. The symbol of the cups is definitely a potion in the Tristan story. And there is the final parallel of the treacherous vengeance of the husbands. When the women sing of Iseult at the first meeting of Paolo and Francesca, they symbolize the type of love to be experienced by these two. The tapestries on the wall of Francesca's bedroom and the embroidery on the curtains of her bed are taken from the Tristan story. The torch in Act II may be explained as the flaming intensity of a blended love and hate, together with an unquenchable desire for truth and the purification of Paolo from his treachery. Francesca says boldly, "And I light it." She will see that flame burn regardless of what it does, for she wants to know the mysteries of life. Merely a minor poetic symbol is Paolo's precious line, "The stars have all gone down into your hair"; for him all points of the universe converge in Francesca.

The two drinking scenes are reminiscent of the Tristan story. In Act II, three drink from one cup to symbolize that the two men love Francesca. In Act IV, although Gianciotto suggests that they drink, he evades the cup leaving after Paolo and Francesca have drunk. The fact that the husband does not drink symbolizes that he resigns Francesca to Paolo and fate.

The riddle which D'Annunzio uses early in the play is a symbol of Francesca's difficulties with three brothers. The

falcon, eagle, and crane represent Paolo, Gianciotto, and Malatestino. Malatestino killed the falcon because it flew too high and brought down an eagle instead of a crane. "I did but justice," he protests. This seems to foretell the death of Paolo. Francesca's terrible dream (the one which she often dreams of the woman pursued by the hounds)[9] is symbolical of her passion and approaching death.

D'Annunzio uses omens, too, as a type of dramatic symbol. In Act II, Gianciotto says that he fears no treachery, for his horse has not yet stumbled under him. Maeterlinck also uses this incident of the stumbling horse, giving it much greater force than D'Annunzio. Perhaps it was based on a popular superstition. There are two excellent omens in the third act. Francesca's dress catches on the lute causing it to fall. When Paolo enters, she takes a cluster of flowers from her head and gives it to him, but as Paolo moves to receive it from her hand his foot catches against the trapdoor. This suggests betrayal, and indeed at the end his escape is hindered when his cloak is caught on the bolt of this trapdoor.

This drama is translated by Arthur Symons in irregular blank verse. (I have not been able to examine the original.) Throughout the speeches I cannot see that there is ever any faltering in the splendor of D'Annunzio's style. By his own enthusiasm, which is apparent, he holds the reader to the last.

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9 See note on Boccaccio in Chapter II, p.19.

The diction is ornamental, but the ornamentation is not without dramatic usefulness. He is powerful, sincere, medieval throughout. Indeed he is very close to the spirit of Italy. After a comparison of two speeches of Ser Toldo's with that of the friend in Boccaccio's version (Chapter I, pp. 11-12) it is evident that D'Annunzio borrowed from Boccaccio. What he has borrowed he has made his own by putting the words into a new form.

> Ser Toldo: Yet you know well, what sort
> Of woman is your sister, and how high
> Of heart and mind. If she see this Gianciotto
> So lamed and bent, and with those eyes of his,
> As of an angry devil,
> Before the marriage-contract
> Be signed and sealed, why, neither will your father
> Nor you, nor any, of a certainty
> Bring her to take
> The man for husband, not although you set
> Your dagger at her throat, or haled her through
> Ravenna by the hair....
>
> If you do all, as all this should be done,
> With secrecy and prudence, Madonna Francesca
> Will find out nothing till at Rimino,
> She wakes, the morning after
> Her wedding day, and sees
> Beside her...
>
> Gianciotto.[10]

Francesca's lyrics to her little sister at the end of Act I are those of a sublime spirit embracing both joy and suffering. The lyrics of Paolo and Francesca in Act V surpass certain other parts of the play; yet, they do not appear as a "purple patch." The songs of the women are lovely. Even their common speech seems to breathe a perfume into the air. They talk of

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[10] D'Annunzio, op. cit., p.267.

the swallows, Iseult, the pot of basil, and Lisbetta. D'Annunzio's conception and his arrangement of words is by far the best of any. The reading scene is the finer because he uses the Old French romance Lancelot du Lac put literally into Italian.[11]

D'Annunzio's play was first acted by Eleonora Duse and her Italian company in Rome, December 9, 1901. It caused almost a riot and took five hours to perform. Many speeches were inaudible because of the riot. Then the play was "freely cut" and was acted with success in the chief cities of Italy. It was given once in America at Cleveland, 1924, under Frederick McConnell.

The uncut version was said to be "tainted with pruriency and indecent suggestions."[12] Archibald Henderson who saw the performance stoutly defends it. He says that the suggestions were such as those in "pre-Elizabethan drama" and that no one could be offended as Duse acted the play, for she purified it. Eleonora Duse (according to Henderson) was the greatest actress in the world. It is interesting that at the age of eleven she had been the interpreter of Pellico's Francesca.[13]

Henderson tells of the settings and the wealth of characters on the stage which made the production seem "in all verity a palpitating segment of the living world." He writes that the "costumes and architecture were faithful in every detail."

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11 Henderson, op. cit., p.145.

12 Ibid., p.144.

13 Ibid.

The third act he calls the "very jewel of the play" with its room "panelled with pictures from the romance of Tristan, while upon the pale-blue curtains of the bed are embroidered some lines from a love song." Mr. Henderson thinks the supreme moment was in the kiss. At the words "No, Paolo, " the divine Duse turned her head. "For dramatic effectiveness this situation is unequaled throughout the play." D'Annunzio has surpassed all the versions in the presentation of thirteenth century Italy.[14]

Edith Wharton in her essay "The Three Francescas" observes that D'Annunzio's is the truest Italian lady. She criticizes the structure by saying that Act III does not further the action, although it is beautiful and true to Italy, and that Act II should have ended with the three drinking from one cup.[15]

Arthur Symons, whose English translation of the play is a fine piece of work, comments: "By a great sweep we are borne back to Italy, Dante, and the Pre-Renaissance."[16]

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14 Ibid., pp.144-8.

15 Wharton, op. cit., pp.17-30.

16 Henderson, op. cit., p.148.

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY IN MUSIC

(Exclusive of Debussy)

In the nineteenth century the story of Francesca da Rimini was seen to possess musical value. I do not know that it inspired any earlier composers. The number of compositions on the theme may be identified with the development of the romantic and the modern schools of music. The tender pathos of the story is well adapted to song. The dramatic incidents readily inspire opera and concert music. These I shall discuss first.

Mercadante is said to have produced an opera in 1828 based upon this story, but I have been unable to learn anything about this work.

The next appearance of the story in opera was on September 30, 1877, at Mannheim, Germany. The opera was intitled Francesca da Rimini by one Hermann Goetz. The drama by Uhland mentioned in Chapter III formed the basis for Goetz's opera. Joseph V. Widmann wrote the original German operatic book which was rewritten by Goetz. There is now an English translation of this libretto by Marmaduke Browne.[1] Goetz eompleted the first and second acts and sketched the third act. After his death his friend Ernst Frank, a conductor, completed the opera and produced it at Mannheim. I have found no report of the success of the opera, but the quality of Goetz's work and the encour-

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[1] It is obtainable from the Nichols Press in Westminster (I presume the section of London), and is dated 1908.

agement he received from Frank have been described by the statement that without them "the world would undoubtedly have been the poorer by many beautiful compositions."[2]

At the grand opera in Paris, April 14, 1882, was produced an opera by the same name written by Ambroise Thomas. The libretto for the four acts was arranged by Mm. Barbier and Carré. Sidney Colvin calls it "original with a vengeance."[3] The most striking features of the opera are a prologue in hell and an epilogue showing hell opened and Beatrice appearing in the glory of angels to redeem the forgiven lovers and escort them into Paradise somewhat in the manner of Gounod's conclusion to Faust.

Debussy's opera, Pelleas and Melisande, was the next to be written upon this story; however, because of its epoch-making importance, it will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Rachmaninoff's Francesca da Rimini has been called his most ambitious operatic effort.[4] It is one of three operas which he wrote. It was produced in Moscow in 1906.[5]

The opera which stands second in success to Debussy's is that of Riccardo Zandonai based upon the drama by D'Annunzio. Tito Riccordi made the Italian libretto for the opera.

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2 "Ernst Frank" in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. J. A. Fuller Maitland. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1910, Vol. 2, p.103.

3 Sidney Colvin, "Stephen Phillips's Tragedy of Paolo and Francesca," Nineteenth Century, Vol. 46 (December, 1899), p.920.

4 Joubert, op. cit., p.336.

5 "Rachmaninoff" in Larousse du XX^e Siécle, Librairie Larousse, Paris, 1932, Vol. 5, p.455.

The English version is from Arthus Symons's translation of the drama. When it was given at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, December 22, 1916, the comments were that we were very fortunate to have Mr. Symons's excellent, poetic version rather than the monstrous cuts of Riccordi. Madam Alda sang Francesca; Martinelli, Paolo; and Amato, Giovanni. Giorgio Polacco conducted the orchestra. The opera was broadcast in America in 1937. Zandonai's opera was first heard in Turin, February 1, 1914. On July 16, 1914, it was produced at Covent Garden Theatre, London. A week after it was produced at the Metropolitan, New York, "It was selected by Mr. Gatti-casazza as the principal novelty of the season."[6]

It is said that Zandonai writes better for instruments than for the voice. His love scenes fail to convey the proper impression because there are no striking melodies for the voice. It is indeed strange that a poetic text such as this one when expressed in music should lack melody.

> It is fascinating in spots, but there is no trace of the melodic genius which made Italy famous.[7]

But in the orchestration, Zandonai by the use of obsolete instruments has recaptured the remote beauty of certain idyllic scenes.

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6 Henry T. Finck, "An Operatic Francesca da Rimini," The Nation, Vol. 103 (December 28, 1916), p.617.

7 Ibid.

> The music also has a mediaeval coloring, imparted to the score by the use of obsolete instruments like the lute, the viola pomposa, the piffero (a small oboe used by Italian mountaineers), besides the old Roman buccina in the turbulent scenes. The effect is charming, making one wonder why Richard Strauss and other seekers of local color do not make more frequent use of such devices.[8]

The solo lute and the viola pomposa are played on the stage. The effect is a general heightening of the spectacle and beauty of the entire opera.

The two crucial scenes--the reading and the murder--come in for a great deal of criticism by music critics. In the reading scene the composer and D'Annunzio must "come into actual competition with Dante."[9] Lawrence Gilman agrees with Arthur Symons that D'Annunzio is better in the reading scene than Stephen Phillips. But he regrets that Zandonai failed in his composition of music for this scene which D'Annunzio, "coming straight out of a situation,"[10] had done so artistically. Because the murder occurs on the stage, Gilman says, "This is not even effectual melodrama."[11] He preferred the way Phillips managed the murder. At this point I feel free to disagree with Gilman. He goes on to say that Zandonai was very good in the murder scene for the requirement was that it be "conventionally violent and tumultuous; and that requirement he fulfills without

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8 Ibid.

9 Lawrence Gilman, "An Operatic Paolo and Francesca," North American Review, Vol. 205 (February, 1917), p.295.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

difficulty....Signor Zandonai is a competent music-maker.... But he should have kept his hands off Paolo and Francesca."[12]

Charles L. Buchanan says this thirty-three-year-old composer (in 1917) is "considered by many excellent authorities the most significant composer of today," and for that reason his work should merit "a serious and tolerant consideration." Yet he charges Zandonai with being dramatic and dynamic, but getting nowhere. His work lacks "vitality" and "eloquence," and it is "padded." He says, however, that the opera is worth seeing because of the

> ...opportunity it offers those excellent artists, Martinelli and Alda. But it is not a work of genius; it is merely one more Italian opera.[13]

The Francesca da Rimini of Marion Crawford has been set to music by Gabriel Pierne.[14] I have discovered nothing concerning the type of work, its date of composition, or its public performance. Another late development is the dramatic cantata by Paul Gibson which was broadcast in 1937.[15]

A portion of Franz Liszt's Dante Symphony treats the Francesca story. Its complete title is A Symphony to Dante's Divina Commedia. The divisions are 1. Inferno, 2. Purgatorio. Magnificat.[16] It is with the first part only, the Inferno, that

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12 Ibid., p.296.

13 Charles L. Buchanan, "One More Italian Opera," Independent, Vol. 89 (January 8, 1917), p.60.

14 Joubert, op. cit., p.336.

15 Ibid.

16 The Purgatorio is comprised of a restful theme in choral

we are here concerned. The symphony begins with a characteristic phrase in the bass with crashing accompaniment announcing in recitative the inscription over the door of hell, "Through me pass on to horror's dwelling place." A warning, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter!" is sounded by the trombones and horns. Liszt paints the infernal regions with "unnatural combinations of instruments , chromatic phrases, grating dissonances, and weird cries picturing the horror and suffering of the damned amid which the curse appears with literally 'damnable iteration.'" After a lull come the tinkling of harps and graceful figures for the strings and flutes. Whereupon, "the bass clarinet intones a recitative (the 'Nessun maggior dolore' of the original), and the English horn replies, the two instruments joining in a dialogue which tells the mournful fate of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini." At its close the curse sounds again, and the movement comes to a close amid the shrieks and blasphemies of the damned in an Allegro frenetico which is graphic enough not to need words."[17] The similarity of this work to Tschaikowsky's is noticeable in the warning sounded by the instruments at the beginning, the use of the English horn for the voice of Francesca, and the tumult of Hell for a conclusion.

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style and a fugue of resignation and melancholy. The Magnificat suggests the Paradiso with its hosannas in old classic style sung by a chorus accompanied by the orchestra, which employs all its resources to enhance the effect of the chant.

17 Upton and Borowski, The Standard Concert Guide. A. C. McClurg and Company, New York, 1908, pp.304-5.

Joubert mentions Liszt's Fantasia quasi Sonata apres une lecture de Dante as pertaining to the Francesca story. I have been unable to verify this and have come to believe that the composition had nothing to do with Francesca.[18]

Tschaikowsky's "orchestral fantasia," op. 32, called Francesca da Rimini was written and performed in 1876.[19] This work by Tschaikowsky was first conceived as an opera; but when the librettist imposed certain unsatisfactory conditions, the plan was abandoned and the fantasia written. James G. Heller's program notes for the Cincinatti Symphony Concert March 6, 1929, state that the work was first performed at the tenth Symphony Concert in Moscow, March 9, 1877, Nicholas Rubinstein conducting. It was repeated in the month of March and produced in Paris and Berlin in 1878. Moszkowski and von Bülow were charmed with it,

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18 During the summer of 1848, Madame d'Agoult and Liszt resided at Bellaggio, a pretty village on Lake Como. In the greatest heat of the day they went and rested under the plane-trees of their Villa Melzi and read the Divine Comedy at the foot of a statue showing Dante led by Beatrice. Marie turned the pages while she ate figs ripened by the sun. Her love of Faust and the Commedia was almost a mania. It was a joy to her to explain passages to Franz. "What I do not understand," he would interrupt, "is why the poet has conceived Beatrice not as the ideal of love but as the ideal of learning." Then Marie explained and they read again. The fruit of the autumn was the Fantasia quasi Sonata entitled After a Reading of Dante.

This account is condensed from Guy de Pourtales's book Franz Liszt (L'Homme d'Amour), translated from the French by Eleanor Stimson Brooks. Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1926, pp.67-9.

19 Grove, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 94, "Francesca da Rimini."

while other critics named it a "musical monstrosity." Grove tells us that it was "first played in England at the Cambridge University Musical Society's Concert, June 12, 1893, when the degree of Mus. D. was conferred on the composer."[20] A commentary in Grove's dictionary calls it

> one of those fateful and poignant subjects so perfectly adapted to Tschaikowsky's temperament that he made of it the most poetical and beautiful of all his examples of programme music.[21]

On February 19, 1939, John Barbaroli conducted this number as the final one on the New York Philharmonci Orchestra's concert. I hope it is not presumptuous of me to give my own impressions as I listened to the performance. In some detail, I wish to show how the words of Dante have been transformed in a new medium.

The announcer told that the fantasia was based upon Dante's and Virgil's conception of Hades. It depicts "spirits driven through the dark air by the violent winds of Hades." He said Tschaikowsky always insisted that the following memorandum should be printed on the title page of the composition and on all programs.

1. Introduction. The Gateway to the Inferno. Leave hope behind all ye who enter here.
2. Francesca tells her story.
3. The Turmoil of Hades. Conclusion.

The three parts are to be played without pause. The program notes of the Cincinatti Symphony Concert certainly do not appear

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[20] Ibid., Vol. 2, p.94, "Francesca da Rimini."

[21] Ibid., Vol. 5, p.47, "Tschaikowsky."

in this form. They state that the score is prefaced by a quotation of Henry Cary's to the fifth canto of Dante's Inferno and give the passage beginning "No greater grief" which ends with Dante's falling in a swoon. Really to appreciate Tschaikowsky's treatment of the story, it is necessary to understand what arrangements of instrumental tones Tschaikowsky used to give the composition form and to change Dante's word picture into a musical picture.

Throughout the first section, Andante lugubre, broad, slow tones of the 'cello and bass are heard over and over again going down and down as if descending into Hades. Lighter, higher tones of the violins and woodwinds are ornamental with turns and mere fragments of melody (perhaps thirty-second and sixteenth notes broken by quarter rests). Then comes a dramatic build-up by the strings accompanied by the rumble of tympani and drums and with marked crescendos in the brass and woodwinds. A sort of mysterious futility is expressed by the succeeding diminuendo and the frequent recurrence of a motif of three notes. The horror of descending and passing underground is expressed by heavy tones. Very light tones of flute and violin suggest the wind and the flittings of spirits. It appears that the aim of the first part is to produce mystery and fear and the sense of approaching something never before seen. Then the music grows bombastic. It is "fortiss-iss-issimo"--and that for a goodly number of measure. Descending chromatics fall hurriedly, and

we know the descent into Hell is accomplished. All becomes very quiet.

Then the 'cello begins a new melody which is even more doleful and mysterious than the first one at the introduction. This one too has an ornamentation by the woodwinds, but here it is employed at the end of a phrase rather than after a quarter rest. I am not informed as to what Tschaikowsky really intended by these few measures, but it appears possible that it is the voice of Dante asking Francesca to tell her story. Immediately begins the English horn solo representing the voice of Francesca. The English horn produces its sustained, mournful tones which arouse the pity of Dante and the spirits. Soon the orchestra takes up the theme repeating it in much lower and heavier tones--really only about MP. All the tones are sustained, melodic, flowing. There is an intellectual sweetness here, not overdone, but as of mature and never-dying passion and sorrow. For about eight measures, the song is sung by 'cellos and three flutes against string pizzaccato. Then there is a rise of the whole orchestra as if all the spirits were in distress at having heard the sad story. Each section seems to have a melody which wanders hither and yon by itself; yet all of them interfuse and blend against the steady roll of the tympani. Again comes the 'cello melody with flute or clarinet ornamentation as of flitting spirits. Prominence is given to the harp at the end

of phrases. After a measure or two for the horn above others, Francesca's story is finished.

Immediately comes a rigorous movement among the 'cellos which creates almost the feeling of a marching rhythm--tum tum; tum tum. Meanwhile the fluting spirits flit wildly here and there. This is the introduction to the third part. Great chords stir up the confusion of Hades. High, forte violin tones almost pierce the ear. There is a blare of brass; the tympani and snare roll on continuously while their power is augmented and refreshed approximately every other count by lifting the sticks and letting them fall heavily on the conductor's down beat. The violins rush from high to low. Then there is tremlo of the strings while the melody is subdued in the brass section; again we hear sustained tones against the ornamental flute. There are spirits everywhere--and horror. Up to this time the composition has consisted of single outstanding melodies and interwoven melodies (only once were there chords--at the beginning of the Turmoil of Hades), now huge chords- signify the approach of the end.

The last section resembles the first with its return of the wind and the moaning spirits. Three tremendous chords are succeeded by three hurried flute figures. This occurs several times in succession. Then two terrific chords--even louder than the three--are followed by two flute figures. The cymbals crash. Woodwinds and strings rush chromatics up and down almost incessantly. Just when the emotional listener thinks he too

like Dante must faint, the music subsides--but only for a very few measures. Finally comes a terrific ending which is comparable to Wagner--tympani, cymbal, brass, chromatics, wild measures for the strings and woodwinds, and one huge prolonged chord against the rumble of the tympani.

To me it was significant that the chord kept its forte and did not die away. I had expected the spirit world and Francesca to fade away gradually when Dante fainted. This was not at all the case. If wind-instrument players were out of breath on the last note, they simply caught a fresh one and kept holding the note as loudly as ever. String players used new bow strokes in order to prolong the final note. There was not the slightest hint of a diminuendo until the tympani ceased its roll.

Tschaikowsky like Dante has showed his mastery by painting his picture deftly and rapidly to create a sharp emotion which he does not endeavor to prolong longer than is emotionally possible. He has set forth in music the very same mysterious, sorrowful, and passionate feelings which Dante embodies in his lines of the Inferno. If Dante could hear this music, I can hardly doubt that he would recognize that his poetic emotions had been repeated in another artistic medium.

Other composers have drawn inspiration from Francesca's famous lines in Dante beginning "Nessun maggior dolore." Rossini made use of them in his opera Otello. At the beginning of the third act, in which Othello comes to kill Desdemona, is a gondolier's song set to Francesca's words and sung in the distance.

> The insertion of this was Rossini's own idea, maintained in face of the opposition of the cultured Berio, who not unreasonably objected that gondoliers would scarcely be familiar with Dante. He probably realized the beauty of the melody to which he had wedded the words and would not on any account sacrifice what in fact remains one of the high-water marks of his inspiration.[22]

Perhaps upon first hearing of it, there is no adaptation so puzzling or intellectually amusing as that of Boito's setting a lyric portion of Dante's Canto V to Schumann's "Abendlied." A very excellent reason he had though we can see when we understand the condition of music in Italy in his day. In 1860-70 in Italy music and opera were synonymous words. "Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, were as much unknown as if they had never been born."[23] Boito endeavored to make his countrymen acquainted with new forms of music. To this end it is possible that he used a familiar, loved text and set it to Schumann's music as an introduction of the composer into Italy. Grove's Dictionary throws some light on the subject:

> The state of things was absolutely alarming, and several more enlightened persons, amongst them the publisher Ricordi, Mazzucato, Boito, etc., decided to start a Society of Concerts and a newspaper, in order to improve the public taste, and make it at least possible for the new composers to have a chance of being heard and appreciated.[24]

In the chapter on Maeterlinck I mentioned the song of Melisande written by Gabriel Fabre[25] and the overture by

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22 Francis Toye, Rossini, A Study in Tragi-Comedy. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1937, pp.66-7.

23 Grove, op. cit., Vol. I, p.354, "Boito."

24 Ibid.

25 Vallas, op. cit., p.83.

Garnet Wolseley Cox.[26] The musical world seems to attach little importance to them. Gabriel Faure in 1898 composed a suite, Pelleas and Melisande, op. 80.[27]

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26 Lawrence Gilman, "Maeterlinck in Music," Harper's Weekly, Vol. 50 (January 13, 1906), p.59.

27 The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, ed. Oscar Thompson, "Gabriel Fauré." Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1939.

CHAPTER VIII

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Claude Achille Debussy's opera based on Maeterlinck's Pelleas and Melisande has won more recognition in the musical world than any other musical composition based upon the Rimini story.[1] Because of its continued good reception after the passing of years, it is worthy of a chapter by itself. But in 1902 when opera crowds of Paris first saw the "music-drama,"[2] it was appreciated by few and criticized severely by many.

In the summer of 1892, Debussy bought a copy of Maeterlinck's play in Paris. He read it with enthusiasm and immediately thought of developing it into an opera. At that time he wrote in his notebook Golaud's rhythm, the five-note arabesque which describes Melisande, and a sketch of the theme in six-four time which accompanies these words sung by Pelleas: "On dirait que ta voix a passe sur la mer au printemps." The following year he made up his mind to write the score. Pierre Louys, reflecting the attitude of his time toward Maeterlinck's drama and feeling that Debussy's ambition was scarcely a worthy or profitable one, did not encourage Debussy to go to see Maeterlinck. However, when Debussy would not be influenced to give up the idea, Louys accompanied him to the home of Maeterlinck that he might obtain permission to use the drama for an opera. At first Maeterlinck

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1 Up to March 30, 1928, Pelleas has been given over 250 times in foreign countries. Those which rank highest are: Germany 49, Belgium 32, Australia 29, England 31, United States 22, and Switzerland 14.

2 Debussy preferred to call it a music-drama rather than an opera.

was pleased and even went so far as to offer suggestions as to cuts which might be made effectually for opera. The two later carried on a correspondence concerning the work, for it was Debussy's aim to present the play as Maeterlinck had intended it to be.[3]

Pelleas and Melisande represents the work of ten if not twelve years of the composer's life. Though in 1895 he announced that it was completed in its first form, almost immediately it was begun again. In 1897 it was offered for production in Paris, but Debussy continued to revise it until 1902.

Bits of his correspondence show how faithfully he worked. After finishing the "Fountain Scene" Act IV, sc.iv, he decided

> it isn't at all right. It is like a duet by Mr. So-and-So, or any one at all. And worst of all, the ghost of old Klingsor, alias Richard Wagner, appeared at a turning in one of the bars. So, I tore up the whole thing, and set out in search of some more characteristic compound of phrases, and I tried to be as Pelleas and Melisande.[4]

Debussy eventually abandoned portions of Maeterlinck's libretto.[5] He cut it and rearranged word order.

His apology to Ernest Chausson for not writing sooner shows how hard and earnestly he was at work on his music-drama.

> The fault is Melisande's, but please forgive us both. I have spent days in the pursuit of those airy trifles of which she (Melisande) is made, and I sometimes lacked the courage to tell you about it all. In any case, you know whether, like me, you have ever gone to bed with a vague desire to weep, feeling as if you had not been able to see some beloved friend during the day. Now it

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3 Vallas, op. cit., pp.82-84.

4 Ibid., p.86.

5 Ibid., pp.83, 87, 122.

> is Arkel who is tormenting me. He belongs to the world beyond the grave, and he is full of the disinterested and far-seeing affection of those who are about to pass away. And one has to express all that with do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do. What a life![6]

In an article published at the time of the production of Pelleas, Debussy explains to the public what he was trying to do.

> ...I have tried to obey a law of beauty which appears to be singularly ignored in dealing with dramatic music. The characters of this drama endeavor to sing like real persons, and not in an arbitrary language built on antiquated traditions. Hence the reproach levelled at my alleged partiality for monotone declamation, in which there is no trace of melody....To begin with, this is untrue. Besides, the feelings of a character cannot be continually expressed in melody. Also, dramatic melody should be different from melody in general....
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> By a singular irony, this public, which cries out for something new, is the very one which shows alarm and scoffs whenever one tries to wean it from old habits and customary humdrum noises....This may seem incomprehensible; but one must not forget that a work of art or an effort to produce beauty are [sic] always regarded by some people as a personal affront.
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> I do not pretend to have discovered everything in Pelleas; but I have tried to trace a path that others may follow, broadening it with individual discoveries which will, perhaps, free dramatic music from the heavy yoke under which it has existed for so long.[7]

Debussy stated in an interview that he wished to return to the orchestra of Mozart for he above all musicians was enamoured of simplicity. Gaston Carraud in the review Minerva calls Debussy classical:

> He has the lucidity, the tact, the restraint, and the sense of proportion that characterizes the classical

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6 Ibid., p.86.

7 Ibid., pp.137-8.

> composers. He has the same controlled emotion as they; he has their charm and dignity of expression, their scorn of emphasis, exaggeration, and mere effect.[8]

Some of the music seems to be evolved from Greek and Ecclesiastical modes.[9] There is frequent use of whole-tone scales, and the singers have the habit of slipping a bit below the note to employ fourth tones.[10] (Apparently Debussy wished the singers to use fourth tones.) Because of its conversational vocal declamation it might be likened to the first opera Dafne by Peri (Florence, 1594) which was called dramma per musica.

Even before the production Debussy had his troubles. Maeterlinck had just married Georgette Leblanc, and he expected her to sing the leading role since she had acted it in the drama. Madame Maeterlinck wrote that the three of them had spent several evenings together going over the music and that her husband made gestures of disapproval when Debussy had his back turned at the piano. They were surprised one day to hear that Debussy was training another soprano too. (She turned out to be Mary Garden who in the end did create the role.) Maeterlinck was so enraged that he appealed to the Society of Authors to stop the opera, but he found that musicians have preference over authors and that he could do nothing about it.

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8 Ibid., p.131.

9 Katharine Metcalf Roof, "Maeterlinck and Debussy," Craftsman, Vol. 15 (November, 1908), p.130. Also Gilman, "Debussy's Pelleas and Melisande," Harper's Weekly, Vol. 52 (March 7, 1908), p.25.

10 Roof, op. cit., p.137. Also Keeton, op. cit., pp.492-502.

Furthermore he himself had written, "The piece may be played where, how, and when you like."[11] But he protested publicly against the alterations to which he had given his approval ten years previously and even went so far as to wish for the "immediate and utter failure" of the work which he would no longer claim.[12] Georgette Leblanc states in her Souvenirs that she is sure Debussy liked her singing and her interpretation of the "music-drama," and that the difficulty arose with the Opera-Comique because of her failure in Carmen. (Mary Garden took the role of Carmen after Miss Leblanc failed.)

Among the orchestra players there was a difference of opinion. Lengthy rehearsals, twenty-one last minute ensemble rehearsals, and mistakes in copying instrumental parts did not put them in a good humor.

> They were altogether so bewildered by the unusual style of the music that they declared the score to be unplayable, outrageous, and doomed to failure.... [Yet] some of the instrumentalists displayed the greatest enthusiasm for this new art which was so different from the usual repertoire works.[13]

On the day of presentation at the Opera-Comique both libretto and music were the subject of laughter.

> Maeterlinck's libretto came in for a great deal of ridicule on the part of witty members of the theatrical world. They thought it ridiculous. Some unknown persons, either enemies or ignorant fools, drew up a programme entitled the Select Programme, that was sold at

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11 Georgette Leblanc, Souvenirs (1895-1918), Bernard Grasset, Paris, p.171.

12 Vallas, op. cit., p.122.

13 Ibid., p.123.

> the doors of the Opera-Comique, and which parodied the drama in a would-be witty, grotesquely worded, satirical analysis. In spite of rumors to the effect, it is impossible to believe that it was inspired by Maeterlinck himself.[14]

After the first performance, Debussy was forced to make some cuts to please the censors in order that his opera might not be banned from all performances. (The first performance was called the dress rehearsal, but the house was full.) The audience simply would not endure little Yniold's babbling and the sheep in Act IV. In Act III where Golaud and Yniold are at the window, Debussy was forced to omit fifteen bars to get rid of the word lit ("bed"). This one word would have banned the whole work. Debussy's comment was: "The majority understood very little about the poem and practically nothing about the music."[15]

The older professors of the Conservatoire stood vehemently against the work. Emile Vuillermoz was sent away from the State Academy in 1902 because he had disobeyed his harmony

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14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., p.125.

> In 1907 Pelleas and Melisande was a triumph in Brussels. But as in Paris there were difficulties in rehearsal. Debussy, who had gone to Brussels to superintend rehearsals, wrote of his fears to his publisher. The bell there rang on C instead of G marring the sad death scene of Melisande. Debussy said it sounded like a dinner bell. "So far I have seen only half a tower....a fountain in white wood.... The subterranean regions are so realistic that it is impossible to get through them. Little Yniold is so young that he hasn't learnt music yet, and the dress rehearsal is tomorrow." (Vallas, p.186.)

professor, Taudou, by going to see this "dangerous work."[16]

Victor Debay's criticism is that of an unbiased person who listened to the music of Pelleas and Melisande. He discovered that the mood of the words and the music are one.

> During the first scenes, I lost my way, like Melisande and Golaud, in the forest where they met. But gradually the spell began to work, and I was able to understand the perfect relationship, the intimate union, that exists between the work of the poet and that of the musician; I realized that the musician's aim was to evoke rather than describe. To a dream poem, M. Debussy has written dream music, exquisitely melancholy, so subtle that it is sometimes morbid.[17]

Vincent d'Indy, another critic, was one of the first to compliment Debussy openly on placing the text first and the music second. Auguste Mangeot in the Monde Musical wrote that Debussy had adapted his music to Maeterlinck's drama.

> He gave the composer high praise for having "managed to create invertebrate music to a structureless drama. Just as the characters have neither minds, nor energy, nor will, the music has neither rhythm, nor time, nor tonality. It is as vague and indefinite and uncertain as they are. What can one put around a tapestry? Nothing but a border. M. Debussy's music supplies such a border....The orchestra is quite right not to worry about what is happening on the stage, for most of the time nothing happens. It does not even notice when the curtain falls, but flows on while the scenery is being changed, without a single jerk or jolt."[18]

Perhaps one of the most appreciative criticisms of Debussy is the statement by Pierre Lalo in Le Temps.

> It has that utter refinement, which betrays no sign of effort, and which seems inborn and instinctive with

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16 Ibid., p.20.

17 Ibid., p.133.

18 Ibid., p.132.

> M. Debussy; so much so, that one fancies he could not write otherwise....A lively, subtle, almost intangible rhythm animates it with an undulating, quivering life. Its brief, delicate, melodic ideas are expressed in the most individual manner, in the most persuasive accents, and the most suggestive idiom.[19]

In other European countries the reception of the opera varied greatly, though gradually it won its way. For example, when it was first produced at La Scala, Milan in 1908, Milanese aesthetic ideals were not in sympathy with it, for Italy had a taste for bel canto and lively dramatic effects. It was sung in Italian with Toscanini conducting. There were hostile demonstrations--in fact a real battle. The pupils of the conservatoire, however, desiring the new in art, saw that the performance went on despite the "public hissing," and in three weeks eight performances were given.

In 1907, before the opera was brought to New York, Walter Damrosch gave a lecture recital on the work in New York. The opera was well received at the Manhattan where it was presented in 1908 with Mary Garden (Melisande), Jean Perier (Pelleas), Hector Dufranne (Golaud), and Mm. Gerville-Réache (Genevieve), all of the original cast. Lawrence Gilman says the five acts were presented in "twelve tableaux" as in Paris, April 30, 1902. Another critic writes that the opera had fourteen scenes, but only thirteen were presented at the Manhattan.[20] (The scene with the sheep was supposed to be omitted.) At any rate, America was favorably impressed in 1908. Lawrence Gilman speaks of

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[19] Ibid., p.130.

[20] Anonymous, "Pelleas and Melisande," Outlook, Vol. 88 (March 20, 1908), p.674.

the production as the most memorable event in the history of opera in America since the performance of Tristan and Isolde twenty-one years before.[21] He describes the music as "opalescent", yet neither pallid nor wan. He sees in it a "magical blend of tenderness and fire." His one adverse criticism is that the production lacked illusion because there was too much light on the stage. Upon hearing Debussy accused of having no melody, Gilman analyzes twenty-five motives in the score. Of the cast he says, "They were consummate."[22]

> This French Tristan and Isolde is embroidered with grottoes and dungeons, the sound of the sea, and the prattle of the boy Yniold....The stage pictures are beautiful and moving. It wanders in a world of tone without key....The music is adjectival, so to speak; it rarely comes firmly to a noun....One might say that in staging, in music, in costume, in acting, Pelleas and Melisande is a piece of moving decoration rising at the end into drama.[23]

In 1917, after a production in America the criticism is not so favorable.

> What the Debussy-Maeterlinck drama indubitably and dangerously lacks is passionate, irresponsible, cumulative force. The repression stifles us; we cry out in vain for one memorable and moving rush and blare of sound.[24]

In Boston in 1912, Madame Maeterlinck sang the role of Melisande for the first time.[25] The comments upon her per-

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21 Gilman, "Debussy's Pelleas and Melisande," op. cit., p.25

22 Ibid.

23 Anonymous, op. cit., pp.673-4.

24 Buchanan, loc. cit.

25 When she first stepped from the boat, her display of leopard skins and a diamond pendant on her forehead repelled the American public. Literary Digest, Vol. 44 (February 27, 1912), p.163.

formance were not very favorable. "Its distinction was its beautiful posings when she did not hold them too long or too artificially....It also made Melisande explicitly mediaeval, wherein the vague, visionary being that was hardly human vanished."[26] A study of photographs reveals a marked contrast between the dark, somber clothes which she wore as Melisande in Boston and the delicate, fairy-like costumes which she wore when she played in the drama in her own country. Mary Garden's costumes resembled the latter.

Lucrezia Bori evidently revived the opera in 1930. Although I have read no articles upon her performance, I discovered a list of short articles and references to portraits of her as Melisande in the New York Times Index for 1930. (Our library does not have the papers for 1930.)

Debussy's music-drama, as was Maeterlinck's play on which he based his libretto, was something highly original in his field of art. He was ever conscious of trying to break the bonds and do something new. Although he tried to avoid the ghost of Richard Wagner, he really owed to him his freedom from the brilliant, set forms of Italian opera music. Never before had a composer, somewhat reversing Wagner, subordinated his vocal music to the emotions of the characters on the stage in this manner. Here the orchestra did not, as it occasionally did in non-Wagnerian opera, rise to any sublime height; it merely rose and fell with the natural cadence of the voices

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[26] Ibid.

of the characters. At times it dissolved so much into the background that it became no more than the threads of an exquisitely woven tapestry. Debussy says that the melody is always in the orchestra, never in the voice. Moreover, in such melodic line as the voice parts develop, Debussy explained that he did not approve of a sonorous syllable being more stressed in music than it would be in conversation.

> Discretion is the essential virtue of the orchestra in Pelleas and Melisande. Debussy does not want us to miss a single word of Maeterlinck's poem. He succeeded in his object in all the scenes, except, perhaps towards the end of the third act: the last phrases of the breathless dialogue between Golaud and Yniold are not quite audible.[27]

To obtain this mystical, illusive quality of music Debussy was careful to avoid all unnecessary doubling in the woodwinds and bassoons. He scored the string voices in ten or twelve parts to avoid a unison which might drown the voices on the stage.[28]

The indefiniteness of the music permits the voices on the stage to carry to the audience.[29] Golaud firmly but calmly, in almost a natural voice, questions Melisande beside the spring where she is lost in the forest. Her responses, unhampered by vocal melody and orchestral accompaniment, are the natural ones of a lonely, frightened child.

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[27] Vallas, op. cit., p.141.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Much of what I write in the following is based on my impressions from listening to Victor records of the opera. The records are : A Forest, A Room in the Castle, A Well in the Park, Tower Scene, A Room in the Castle, Interlude.

When Genevieve is reading Golaud's letter to the old King Arkel, Debussy's music is phrased in accordance with the phrases of the libretto. Genevieve pronounces her words slowly as if she were really reading a letter for the first time. Certain sentences because of their content are stressed more than others. The music rises accordingly. In the fountain scene the voices of Pelleas and Melisande, musical as tinkling water yet almost in the speaking voice, float out from their fairy world to the audience while the instruments of the orchestra produce the effect of bubbling, sparkling, falling water in the fountain. In the tower scene, when Pelleas, ardent and naive dreamer appears, we hear the orchestra weaving the melody of Melisande's beautiful, long hair. The circling of the doves around Melisande is also revealed in the music. But earlier in the same scene, Melisande's song comes unaccompanied. It is like the music of another world floating easily upon the air, born of a soul which was scarcely conscious that it had sung a melody.

I have not heard the records of the final scenes, but from reading I have learned that at the most emotional point in the garden scene the actors in the opera resort to speech.[30] Countless times in the records accessible to me the song is so near to the spoken voice that it should be called musical speech rather than pure music.

> Here music and drama twine inextricable about each other like mist about a wood.[31]

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30 Roof, op. cit., p.137.

31 Buchanan, op. cit., p.60.

CONCLUSION

As the story of Francesca da Rimini has come to us through the centuries, it has gathered to itself new characters, new incidents, and a world of symbols and lyrical overtones. From the few lines preserved in Dante plus the additions of Boccaccio, poets, dramatists, and musicians have produced some of their most significant works.

There are in the bare outlines of the story several basic factors of moral and dramatic motivation which a dramatist must work out one way or another. These in turn involve certain universal problems of romantic love, the nature of marriage, the relations of brothers and sisters, parents and children, and the sense of personal honor. According to the various interpretations of these fundamental problems, the individual dramas differ from each other in tragic quality. It may be well by way of summary to note some of the most important of these points. A comparison shows that Pellico, Maeterlinck, and Phillips are the only three who do not use the deception motif first mentioned by Boccaccio. In all other cases, except in D'Annunzio's drama, the father has most to do with the deception. In D'Annunzio, Ostasio, Francesca's brother, arranges the details of the marriage before his father can arrive from Valdoppio. In both Boccaccio and D'Annunzio a friend offers the suggestion of having a brother come instead of Gianciotto. Boker's Lanciotto sends Paolo, but he has no deception in mind when he does so. In D'Annunzio's drama, Francesca was given "for the sake of that

poor hundred infantry." There is no mention that the two families warred with each other--merely that because of the marriage Gianciotto would help the House of Polenta fight the Ghibelines. In Hunt's, Boker's, and Phillips's dramas, the bride is a seal to lasting peace.

In all the versions, Paolo and Francesca seem to have fallen in love with the fair form of each other almost upon their first meeting, but they wait until much later to reveal it. In several plays, Boker's, Maeterlinck's, D'Annunzio's, and Phillips's, the lover is forced to remain near Francesca when his reason demands that he leave. Hunt, Boker, Phillips, and D'Annunzio use the reading scene to weaken the reserves of the lovers and cause them finally to express their love in the fatal kiss. D'Annunzio's and Crawford's reading scenes are different from others in that they occur in Francesca's room instead of outdoors or in a summer-house. In D'Annunzio and Crawford the double murder occurs almost immediately after the reading. D'Annunzio employs a reading scene twice as does Hunt. Pellico, Boker, and Crawford mention that the lovers have read the book at other times. The final passage about one death being "a seemly thing" for Lancelot and Guinevere is read only by D'Annunzio's characters.

Every play depends upon a different person to bring about the turning point. The fop (his name is not given), Pepe, Yniold, Concordia and Beatrice, Lucrezia, and Malatestino are used in various ways to reveal the lovers' secret to the husband.

Boker's play stands apart from the others because he has given the leading role to Lanciotto. The audience pities him and Phillips's Giovanni and Maeterlinck's Golaud, but all the other husbands seem to be decidedly villainous. The great love which these three exhibit for their younger brother deepens the tragedy. Gianciotto and Hunt's and Crawford's Giovannis are unusually crafty and repulsing lions. In all the plays the warrior husband is practically devoid of any quality which would appeal to a young, romantic girl.

The reasons assigned for Gianciotto's departure and his return are of interest in all the plays. In D'Annunzio's drama, Gianciotto was going to war anyway. Malatestino gives him the suggestion of returning unexpectedly. In Phillips, the husband gives out that his return is only temporary and feigns an exit at the suggestion of Lucrezia. Boker's Lanciotto was called to an uprising of the Guelphs. In Crawford's play, there is no feigned exit. D'Annunzio is very close to Boccaccio in having Gianciotto find the lovers behind a locked door. Phillips's Giovanni found the pair off stage in the great chamber which Francesca feared. Pelleas and Melisande and Boker's lovers are murdered in a garden.

D'Annunzio's play ends with a symbolical gesture of Gianciotto bending in silence to break his inflexible sword. In Hunt, he rides back to camp. In Boker, he says he will go back to war, but at the last falls upon the two dead bodies overcome with grief. Crawford's Giovanni is made jealous by the final speech of Francesca. Phillips's is broken because he had killed two he loved.

D'Annunzio and Maeterlinck have drawn the best lovers, although Boker's and Crawford's Francescas are bold, strong characters. The romantic Francesca of Phillips is faintly akin to Melisande. Boker's, Crawford's, and D'Annunzio's lovers are well aware of sin and capable of bearing the punishment of their guilt. Although Phillips's lovers are at first as innocent as Pelleas and Melisande, they become aware of guilt at the last and look forward bravely to a punishment of which the priests tell. Boker's, Crawford's, and D'Annunzio's Francescas deliberately deceive their husbands. Fate is more to blame in Hunt, Maeterlinck, and Phillips.

Dante with lyrical intensity filled his original version with beauty, pity, and terror. The universal human elements of the story as further expanded by Boccaccio have appealed to men of different nationalities and have produced powerful dramatic work, though it is doubtful whether any later treatment equals in sheer power that matchless Fifth Canto of Dante.

APPENDIX

JOHN KEATS

Early in Keats's young manhood, he fell under the influence of Leigh Hunt. In his first adolescent years, he poured over copies of the Examiner edited by Hunt and his brother. On the day that Hunt left prison, February 3, 1815, although he had never met Hunt and scarcely recognized that he himself had a flare for poetry, Keats wrote a sonnet about Hunt's regained freedom. Sidney Colvin points out that the earliest Epistles (1815) of Keats to his friends are steeped in the sentiment and rhythm of Hunt when Keats neither knew Hunt nor had read Rimini unless it had been in manuscript form. This would prove that at least a part of the likeness of his poetry to Hunt's arose independently, for he did not meet Hunt until 1816. Colvin admits, however, that as a youth Keats admired Hunt's "liberal" ideas and "optimistic view of things,"[1] and that "Keats at first falls, or is near falling, into it Hunt's style more than once."[2]

Moreover, Amy Lowell definitely names Rimini as the main influence upon Keats's early works.

> ...but there was one book published early in 1816 which he read and fairly doted upon. He could not have enough of it. It got into his blood and started him off in fervent imitation. This epoch-making book was the little parlour-table volume, The Story of Rimini, by Leigh Hunt.

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1 Sidney Colvin, John Keats. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1899, p.34.

2 Ibid., p.32.

> Keats was all prepared to worship anything Hunt did.... Having elected Hunt into the chair of prophet and arbiter, Keats was ready to find Rimini a masterpiece.[3]

Miss Lowell's defense of Keats's taste is, to say the least, neat:

> It may seem incredible that Keats should have found beauty in the trivial little piece of tawdry sentiment which is The Story of Rimini. But such a sweeping condemnation is really beside the mark. It gives me pause to remember that, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, I, too found it both beautiful and absorbing....But the early nineteenth century was an age of sentimentalism. Keats was steeped to his eyes in it, as we know. The influence of Rimini is over all his early work, especially the Induction to a Poem, Calidore, and parts of Sleep and Poetry. There is everything in the poem to attract him, and we may thank Haydon, probably, and tough old Chapman, for so soon lifting him out of the point of view which could delight in it. But when Keats first read Rimini, Haydon and Chapman were still over the horizon. There was nobody to show him its shallowness. He simply tumbled into it head first, and there and then determined to write a poetic romance as much like this wonderful new model as possible.[4]

For the said poem Keats chose a theme of chivalry. When the poem, as with many first attempts, did not turn out well, he called it merely Specimen of an Induction to a Poem.

Although Endymion shows something of the influence of Hunt upon Keats, the younger poet has begun in this poem to show his independence. A letter January 23, 1818, shows that Keats was disappointed in Hunt's criticism of Endymion as being "unnatural and too high-flown" because his characters "could not speak like Francesca in the Rimini."[5] By December 1818, he was

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3 Amy Lowell, John Keats. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1925, Vol. I, p.119.

4 Ibid., pp.123-4.

5 Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends, ed. Sidney Colvin. Macmillan and Company, London, 1928, Letter xxx, p.58.

openly criticizing Hunt for making "fine things petty."[6] But Amy Lowell makes it clear that Keats's change in attitude toward Hunt had taken place before the publication of Endymion.

> Early in 1817 Rimini is still "that sweet tale"; by May of the same year he is "not in humour" with either Hunt's poetry or his own.[7]

Despite the fact that Keats could see the short-comings of Hunt and in his own mind knew that Endymion was a better piece of work than Hunt gave it credit for being, he on April 27, 1818, according to a letter he had written to Reynolds, had finished a poem, The Pot of Basil, which, although better in rhyme and management of lines, still reflected the influence of Hunt. Evidencing his love of the medieval in the manner of Hunt, he selected a story from Boccaccio. Isabella, "a lilly of the dell" with "veiling hair," is very much like Hunt's Francesca. She and her lover, Lorenzo, meet in the evenings in a bower of hyacinth which is reminiscent of Hunt's summerhouse. Isabella's older brothers, who speak of Lorenzo as the youngster, see in his eye a straying from his daily toil for them and thus grow to suspect his love of their sister. These older brothers are treacherous: "a brother's bloody knife" kills the handsome lover, Lorenzo, in Keats's poem. Isabella sits weeping over her pot of basil in which she has buried her lover's head. Her brothers, fearing to be discovered, flee the country in much the same manner that Hunt's Giovanni hastened back to camp. Isabella

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6 Colvin, op. cit., p.38.

7 Lowell, op. cit., p.264.

sits weeping and pining in her bedroom in a manner similar to Hunt's Francesca, who, trying to hide her sorrow, finally pined away in death. (D'Annunzio also saw a similarity between the stories of Francesca and Isabella and introduced the Lisbetta passage for symbolic effect and foreshadowing.)

In addition to the fact that the theme and the source of The Pot of Basil are similar to those of Hunt's Rimini, the style too is very much like Hunt's:

> When, looking up, he saw her features bright
> Smile through an in-door lattice all delight.[8]

Amy Lowell calls Keats's poem a retrograde of emotion after he had found fault with Hunt:

> The poem is really mawkish. The very thing Keats most feared and hated overtook him in it, and the sad part is that it is mawkish in exactly the same way that Hunt is mawkish in Rimini. In spite of his firmer grasp and vivid envisioning of the subject, there is not a little in the Pot of Basil which reminds one of Rimini. It is just this note which I had in mind when I said that as far as emotion was concerned the poem was a retrogression. The emotion is distinctly a harking back to the Huntian mood of the year before. Even Hunt's jaunty colloquialism is not absent, for witness Lorenzo's farewell to Isabella: "Good bye! I'll soon be back."[9]

From Keats's letter to Haydon dated March 21, 1818, we can see that he grew to be almost bitter toward Hunt when he had finally broken from his influence.

> It is a great Pity that People should by associating themselves with the finest things, spoil them. Hunt has damned Hampstead and Masks and Sonnets and Italian tales.[10]

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8 John Keats, Isabella, stanza XXV.

9 Lowell, op. cit., pp.625-6.

10 Keats's Letters, op. cit., Letter XLIII, p.87.

The influence of Dante's Francesca story is reflected in Keats in a more definite way during the year, 1819. In a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, April 18 or 19, 1819, Keats tells how the reading of Canto V of the Inferno caused him to dream, and how after the dream he wrote the sonnet which is included in the letter.

> The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more--it is that one in which he meets with Paolo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind, and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere, as it is described, with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined as it seemed for an age--and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm--even flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it--there are fourteen lines, but nothing of what I felt in it--O that I could dream it every night.[11]

Keats afterwards printed the sonnet with the signature "Caviare" in The Indicator for June 28, 1820. The title was A Dream After Reading Dante's Episode of Paolo and Francesca.

> As Hermes once took to his feathers light,
> When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept
> So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright
> So play'd, so charm'd so conquer'd, so bereft
> The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;
> And, seeing it asleep, so fled away--
> Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
> Nor unto Tempe where Jove grieved a day;
> But to that second circle of sad hell,
> Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
> Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
> Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
> Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
> I floated with, about that melancholy storm.[12]

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11 Ibid., p.246.

12 Ibid.

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