

Fourteenth scene. Adam is an old man now. He comes with Lucifer to a mountainous and almost treeless region which is covered with ice. The blood-red disc of the sun is growing cold, the world is nearing its end. Only a degenerate Eskimo is seen, in front of his miserable hut. He takes Adam for God and asks him to send more seals and less Eskimos into the world. When Adam questions him about his neighbours, he replies that he has succeeded in killing them all. With horror Adam looks at this last specimen of the human race who is not better than an animal. Eve appears as the Eskimo's wife and similarly degenerate. Adam implores Lucifer:

*Help, Lucifer! Away from here, away!
Oh, take me from my Future to my Past!
No more would I foresee my dreadful doom,
My useless struggle! Then shall I decide,
Whether I'll still defy the will of God!*

Fifteenth scene: Lucifer wakes Adam from his dream. He is in his hut as in the third scene, outside the Garden of Eden. Adam reflects on what he has dreamt. It was a bitter panorama! He did not find the aim of life, neither the meaning of life. He suffers agony. Then it occurs to him that he can still escape. He can still fight God! If God has life in his power, Man can have Death in his power. This is precisely what Lucifer aims at, the destruction of mankind through pessimism, which is the negation of life.

Adam ascends a cliff intending to throw himself down. (Madach himself night after night tired out by physical and mental torment contemplated suicide). But Eve comes out of the hut and tells Adam that she is going to have a child. Adam falls on his knees and exclaims:

*Lord, Thou hast conquered! See, I am in the dust!
In vain I strove, without Thee, and against Thee.
Raise me, or crush me, now . . . I bare my breast.*

Adam is redeemed by the Grace of God. But God keeps for Himself the secret of life, saying to Adam:

*. O seek not
To probe the secret that God's kindly hand
Hath wisely hidden from thy yearning eyes,*

and also tells him that, though in the course of time ideals may become obsolete, principles may become worthless and progress itself never lead to happiness, still life is worth living and struggling for. In the struggle man and woman are bound to each other and woman's rôle is to fill man's life with gentleness and love. Eve falls or rises with Adam. Whether beneath him or above him she is bound up with him forever. Then the Lord turns to Lucifer and tells him: Lucifer, you too must exist as a link to the universe, live on; your chilling knowledge, your

denials will be the yeast which will cause the progress of Humanity. The angels sing a hymn on man's liberty of choice between good and evil; they warn mankind that great deeds must be done and beauty created not for the masses but for the Ideal itself, and must not be the occasion of pride and self-conceit, since they issue from God Who honours man by making him His instrument. Adam and Eve are content. Yet Adam cannot forget that last picture, the end of the human race. (Indeed, during his life man will always ponder on his death). Adam does not rebel any more. He only grieves and prays for consolation. In shining glory the Lord appears and blessing the human couple, says:

Hark to Me, man! Strive on, strive on and trust in Me.

ELIZABETH JATRUĐAKIS.

EPIGRAMMATA

When I am dead may this of me be said:-
'His sins were scarlet but his books were read'. BELLOC.

De me defuncto sit talis in ore virorum
fama: 'Probrus homo, Musa probanda fuit'.
trans. by A.F. Dawson.

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Men have many faults, women only two:
Nothing right they say, nothing right they do. ANON.

Multa viri peccant, matronae nonnisi bina:
nilque boni dicunt, nil faciuntque boni.
trans. by A.F. Dawson.