

SCENE V -The Lady of Lyons

In Act III, Scene I of "The Lady of Lyons; Or, Love and Pride," the story unfolds outside the Golden Leon at twilight, transitioning to moonlight. The landlord and his daughter, Janet, exit the inn, amused by Claude Melnotte's sudden elevation to nobility due to his carriage breaking down at their establishment. Their conversation hints at an air of superiority assumed by guests, particularly a young lady, likely Pauline, who inquires about the quality of their best room with disdain.

Shortly after, Beauseant and Glavis enter, mocking the situation and foreseeing an unfortunate end to Pauline's journey, fantasizing about a beautiful palace at the foot of the Alps. Their conversation drips with sarcasm about the accommodations provided by the Golden Leon and the overall deceit they have spun.

Claude Melnotte then emerges from the inn, confronting Beauseant and Glavis. He speaks of his disgrace in deceiving Pauline and declares his protection over her, warning them against any disrespect. His change from a betrayer to a protector is driven by remorse, urging Beauseant and Glavis to leave with threats of retribution for any insult towards Pauline.

Beauseant mockingly refers to Melnotte's nobility and offers him a purse of money as a wedding gift, which Melnotte vehemently rejects, equating Beauseant's actions to those of Judas. Despite this, Beauseant nonchalantly plans to return the next day to see how Pauline has adjusted to her "new dignity," leaving with a sarcastic farewell.

Melnotte, filled with anger and self-loathing, fears the public discovery of their situation. Determined to protect Pauline's honor, he plans to remove her from the public eye, contemplating refuge at his mother's house. However, as he resolves to call for her, Pauline steps out from the inn, lamenting the rudeness of the people within, unaware of the unfolding drama and Melnotte's internal turmoil.

This scene captures the pivotal moment where Melnotte's façade of nobility starts to crumble, propelling him towards repentance and the defense of the woman he has wronged, setting the stage for the consequences of his and Beauseant's deceptive schemes.