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"THE TALISMAN"

An Historical and Dramatic Play

IN SIX ACTS

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“THE TALISMAN”

An Historical and Dramatic Play

In Six Acts

Dramatized from Sir Walter Scott's
Famous Novel

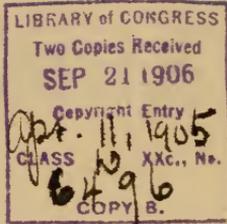
“*THE TALISMAN*”

By

A. S. Carpenter and Marie M. Price

Chicago, Illinois

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“THE TALISMAN”

SYNOPSIS

TIME: The Twelfth Century.

PLACE: On the shores of the Dead Sea.

HISTORY

During the Middle Ages, and especially throughout the period between A. D. 1000 and A. D. 1300, there was intermittent warfare and hostilities between the Christians and infidels. The Caliph Hakim, the son of a Christian woman, was described as a second Nero, who massacred Christians without mercy. These representations fanned the religious feeling of Christian Europe into a flame, and an ardor was developed among the Christians to deliver the Sepulchre of Christ from the possession of the infidels. The joys of Paradise were promised all who should fall in the Holy Cause. Thus the strongest religious sentiments were aroused; chivalrous devotion to women, hope of reward, of adventure, wealth, honor and heaven stirred the spirits of the Christian nations of Europe.

The first Crusade was in 1096, when numerous armies were sent forth. These armies met with defeat and failure. A second Crusade was made in 1144, A. D., which likewise failed of accomplishing its purpose.

In 1187, the Crusade with which “The Talisman” has to deal was projected. During that year the monarchs of the three principal countries of Europe, Frederick of Germany, Philip of France and Richard I. (Coeur de Lion) of England determined to lead their armies in person against the infidels. They were joined by some of the smaller principalities of Europe, the Archduke of Austria and William of Scotland each furnishing his quota.

During this Crusade, the camp was filled with dissensions among the leaders of the allied armies. King Richard and Philip of France had never been on very friendly terms, each being jealous of attentions paid to the other. Frederick of Germany sickened and died. Philip of France, tiring of the internal strife, turned his face homeward, leaving Richard of England the recognized leader of the Crusaders.

While the personal valour of Richard of England was marked, his success as a leader of men was not so great, and after suffering several severe reverses, the Crusade ended in a truce with the Soldan for three years and three months, wherein the Christians were to be permitted to visit the Holy Sepulchre without molestation.

Scene I represents the Holy Sepulchre in the time of the Crusade. Scene II represents the gathering of the Christians Hosts shortly after beginning of the Crusade, before the walls of Acre.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KING RICHARD—Sky-coloured velvet tunic covered with plates of silver; crimson silk hose, slashed with cloth of gold; battle ax, sword, shield, etc.

SIR KENNETH—Coat of mail and visor; legs and thighs in flexible mail, feet in plated shoes. Long straight sword with handle like cross, lance, mace and battle-ax. Surcoat of embroidered cloth, frayed and worn, with coat of arms a couchant leopard, with motto "I sleep—wake me not." Horse with breast-plate and iron hood with sharp pike projecting from nose like horn of unicorn.

NUBIAN SLAVE—Features almost jet black. White turban; black hair. Short white mantle over shoulders, open in front and at sleeves. Underneath a doublet of leopard skin reaching about to knees. Arms and legs bare; sandals on feet; collar and bracelet of silver. Javelin. Dog with chain.

SHEERKOHF—Medium sized; black beard, trimmed; skin shield, ornamented with silver loops; long spear; bow and arrows.

EL HAKIM—Turkish costume. Tartar cap of Astrachan wool; Turkish robe; long black beard; hair trimmed short.

- THE SOLDAN—Medium sized; black beard, well trimmed, richly dressed in Turkish costume, with sword and dagger. White turban, vest, wide trousers and scarlet sash.
- DE VAUX—Doublet reaching to knees; shoes of sandalwood; leggings to above bottom of doublet; buff coat with red cross cut in upper arm near shoulder; hair cut short.
- DE VAUX—(In king's tent) Same as above, only with Monk's cowl and mantle added.
- THEODORIC—Tall, muscular, ferocious-looking figure, long hair, long beard, shaggy eye-brows, bare legs and arms, doublet of goat-skin, and bare headed. Is armed with an iron-bound flail.
- GRAND MASTER—Bare-headed. White flowing robes; staff. Forbidding in appearance generally.
- MARQ. MONTSERRAT—Costumed as a French soldier of the 16th century, with battle-ax, sword, shield and mace.
- WALLENRODE—As Austrian soldier of the 16th century, etc.
- NECTABANUS—Ill-shapen dwarf with hideous visage, armed with small bow and arrows and shield.
- HANGMAN—Red shirt, big cap, high boots, girdle, dagger, and huge sword.
- DERVISH—Turkish costume; Jewish features; old man of fifty or thereabouts; thin and wiry; armed with dagger.
- SOLDIERS—In national costumes of the 16th century; Austrians, Italians, English, Scotch and French.
- QUEEN BERENGARI }
LADY EDITH } Court costumes of English Court
LADIES IN WAITING } 12th century.
- CARMELITE NUNS—Six in number, with black scapularies and black veils over white garments; with large rosaries.
- NOVICES—Six, dressed in white, with white veils, bearing chaplets of white and red roses.
- CHOIR BOYS (at chapel)—Eight in number, dressed in white robes, and wearing black scull caps.
- ATTENDANTS—

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

ACT I.—The Holy Sepulchre. The gathering of the Hosts. In the desert. The combat. The meeting with Theodorice. Theodorice's cave. The chapel of Engaddi.

- ACT II.—King Richard's tent. The envoy. The Physician.
- ACT III.—The plot. The Mount of St. George. Sir Kenneth saves King Richard's life. On guard.
- ACT IV.—The Queen's tent. The theft of the banner. King Richard threatens Sir Kenneth. Orders his execution. Intercedes with King Richard.
- ACT V.—The accusation. The Nubian slave. The Dervish. The denouncement. Queen Berengari's tent.
- ACT VI.—Meeting with the Soldan. The duel. Death of Conrade. Introduction of Prince of Scotland to Lady Edith.

FINALE

“THE TALISMAN”

SCENE I.—The Holy Sepulchre.

SCENE II.—Gathering of the Christian hosts before the walls of Acre.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The stage represents a scene in the desert near the borders of the Dead Sea. Palm grove in distance, and spring surrounded by palm trees.

A solitary horseman dressed in armor is wending his way toward fountain in desert, when an Arab horseman suddenly charges down upon him and challenges him to battle.

(The Arab charges close to Sir Kenneth, then suddenly halts and turns horse to left and rides twice around Kenneth. Kenneth siezes his mace and hurls it at head of Arab, who interposes his buckler, but is borne to ground by force of blow. Before Kenneth can reach Arab, Arab mounts his horse and is away again. Arab then plants his spear in the sand and shoots arrows at Kenneth, who reels and falls from saddle. Arab dismounts and approaches prostrate form of Kenneth, who reaches up and grasps Arab by the belt. Arab disengages his belt and slips away losing belt, sword and turban in the encounter.)

SHEERKOHF. There is a truce betwixt our nations; [*advancing toward Sir Kenneth*] wherefore should there be war betwixt thee and me? Let there be peace betwixt us.

SIR KENNETH. [*Bowing*] I am well contented, but what security dost thou offer that thou wilt observe the truce?

SHEERKOHF. The word of a follower of the Prophet was never broken. It is thou, brave Nazarene, from whom I should demand security, did I not know that treason seldom dwells with courage.

SIR KENNETH. By the cross of my sword [*Holding up sword, handle uppermost*], I will be true companion to thee, Saracen, while our fortune wills that we remain in company together.

SHEERKOHF. By Mohammed, Prophet of God, and by Allah, [*prostrating himself in obeisance at name of Allah*] God of the Prophet, there is not treachery in my heart towards thee. And now wend we to yonder fountain, for the hour of rest is at hand, and the stream had hardly touched my lip when I was called to battle by thy approach. [*Mounting horses and riding forward.*] *Exeunt from stage.*

At fountain. Prepares evening meal consisting of dried meat for Sir Kenneth; a handful of dates and some barley bread for the Arab. [Sitting eating.]

SHEERKOHF. Valient Nazarene, [*pointing to dried hog-meat being eaten by Sir Kenneth*] is it fitting that one who can fight like a man should feed like a dog or a wolf? Even a misbelieving Jew would shudder at the food which you seem to eat with as much relish as if it were fruit from the trees of Paradise?

SIR KENNETH. Valient Saracen, know thou that I exercise my Christian freedom in using that which is forbidden to the Jews, being, as they esteem themselves, under the bondage of the old laws of Moses. We, Saracen, be it known to thee, have a better warrant for what we do. [*Drinking from leather bottle.*]

SHEERKOHF. Thy words, [*grasping his dagger in anger*] O Nazarene, might create anger, did not thy ignorance raise compassion. Seest thou not, O thou more blind than any one who asks alms at the door of the mosque, that the liberty thou dost boast of is restraint even in that which is dearest to man's happiness and to his household; and that thy law, if thou didst practice it, binds thee in marriage to a single mate, bring she comfort and joy, or clamour and strife to thy table and to thy bed? This, Nazarene, I do indeed call slavery.

SIR KENNETH. [*With a scornful laugh*] "Now, by his name that I most reverence in Heaven, and by hers whom I most worship on earth, thou art but a blinded and a bewildered infidel.

SHEERKOHF. Now, by the Holy Caaba, thou art a madman who hugs his chain of iron as if it were gold! Look more closely. [*Showing Sir Kenneth ring*] This ring of mine would lose half its beauty were not the signet encircled and enchased with these lesser brilliants, which grace it and set it off. The central diamond is man, firm and entire; this circle of lesser jewels are women, borrowing his lustre. It is the favour of man which giveth beauty and comeliness to woman, as the stream glitters no longer when the sun ceaseth to shine.

SIR KENNETH. Thou speakest like one who never saw a woman worthy the affection of a soldier. The beauty of our fair ones gives points to our spears and edges to our swords.

SHEERKOHF. I have heard of this frenzy among the warriors of the West, and have ever accounted it one of the accompanying symptoms of that insanity which brings you hither to obtain possession of an empty sepulchre. So highly have the Franks whom I have met with extolled the beauty of their women, I could be well contented to behold with mine eyes those charms which can transform such brave warriors into the tools of their pleasure.

SIR KENNETH. Brave Saracen, if I were not on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, it should be my pride to conduct you, on assurance of safety, to the camp of Richard of England, than whom none better knows how to do honour to a noble foe; and though I be poor and unattended, yet have I interest to secure for thee, or any such as thou seemest, not safety only, but respect and esteem. There shouldst thou see several of the fairest beauties of France and England form a small circle, the brilliancy of which exceeds ten-thousandfold the lustre of mines of diamonds such as thine.

SHEERKOHF. Now, by the corner-stone of the Caaba, I will accept thy invitation as freely as it is given, if thou wilt postpone thy present intent; and, credit me, brave Nazarene, it were better for thyself to turn back thy horse's head towards the camp of thy people, for to travel towards Jerusalem without a passport is but a wilful casting away of thy life.

SIR KENNETH. I have a pass, under Saladin's hand and signet. [*Producing parchment and showing same.*]

Arab bows to dust, kisses paper, presses it against his forehead and returns same to Sir Kenneth.

SHEERKOHF. Rash Frank thou hast sinned against thine own blood and mine, for not showing this to me when we met.

SIR KENNETH. But you came at me with levelled spear; had a troop of Saracens so assailed me, it might have stood with my honour to have shown the Soldan's pass, but never to one man.

SHEERKOHF. And yet one man was enough to interrupt your journey.

SIR KENNETH. True, brave Moslem; but there are few such as thou art.

SHEERKOHF. Thou dost us but justice; from us thou should have had no wrong, but well was it for me that I failed to slay thee. But I swear to thee by the turban of the Prophet, shouldst thou miscarry in any haunt of such villains, I will myself undertake thy revenge with five thousand horse. I will sow with salt the foundations of their village, and there shall never live thing dwell there, even from that time forward.

SIR KENNETH. I had rather the trouble which you design for yourself were in revenge of some other more important person than of me, noble Emir, but my vow is recorded in Heaven, for good or for evil, and I must be indebted to you for pointing me out the way to my resting place for this evening.

SHEERKOHF. That must be under the black covering of my Father's tent. [*Pointing to the sky.*]

SIR KENNETH. This night must I pass in prayer and penance with a holy man, Theodoric of Engaddi, who dwells amongst these wilds and spends his life in the service of God.

SHEERKOHF. Then I will at least see you safely thither.

SIR KENNETH. That would be pleasant convoy for me, yet might endanger the future security of the good father; for the cruel hand of your people has been red with the blood of the servants of the Lord. Therefore do we come hither in plate and mail, with sword and lance to open the road to the Holy Sepulchre.

SHEERKOHF. I will myself guide thee to the cavern of the hermit, which, methinks, without my help thou wouldst

find it a hard matter to reach. And on the way, let us leave to Mollahs and to Monks to dispute about the divinity of our faith, and speak on themes which belong to youthful warriors; upon battles, upon beautiful women, upon sharp swords and bright armour.

SIR KENNETH. I would I knew the name of this delicious fountain, that I might hold it in my grateful remembrance. [*Pointing to spring.*]

SHEERKOHF. It is called in the Arabic language by a name which signifies the "Diamond of the Desert."

SIR KENNETH. And well it is so named.

SHEERKOHF. You say truth, for the curse is still on yonder sea of death, and neither man nor beast drink of its waves, nor of the river which feeds without filling it, until this inhospitable desert be passed. You have asked the name of a mute fountain; but let me be pardoned for asking the name of the companion whom I have this day encountered here among the deserts of Palestine?

SIR KENNETH. It is not yet worth publishing. Know, however, that among the soldiers of the cross I am called Kenneth—Kenneth of the Couching Leopard. At home I have other titles, but they would sound harsh in an eastern ear. Brave Saracen, let me ask which of the tribes of Arabia claims your descent, and by what name you are known?

SHEERKOHF. Sir Kenneth, I joy that your name is such as my lips can easily utter. For me, I am no Arab, yet derive my descent from a line neither less wild nor less warlike. Know, Sir Knight of the Leopard, that I am Sheerkohf, the Lion of the Mountain, and that Kurdistan, from which I derive my descent, holds no family more noble.

SIR KENNETH. I have heard that your great Soldan claims his blood from the same source.

SHEERKOHF. Thanks to the Prophet that hath so far honored our mountains as to send from their bosom him whose word is victory, but I am as a worm before the King of Egypt and Syria, and yet in mine own land something my name may avail. Stranger, with how many men didst thou come on this warfare?

SIR KENNETH. By my faith, with aid of friends and kinsmen I was hardly pinched to furnish forth ten well

appointed lances with maybe some fifty more men, archers and varlets included.

SHEERKOHF. Christian, [*holding up quiver of arrows*] here I have five arrows in my quiver, each feathered from the wing of an eagle. When I send one of them to my tents a thousand warriors mount on horseback; when I send another an equal force will arise; for the five I can command five thousand men; and if I send my bow ten thousand mounted riders will shake the desert. And with thy fifty followers thou hast come to invade a land in which I am one of the meanest.

SIR KENNETH. Now, by the rood, Saracen, thou shouldst know, ere thou vauntest thyself, that one steel glove can crush a whole handful of hornets.

SHEERKOHF. Ay, but it must first enclose them within its grasp. And is bravery so much esteemed amongst the Christian princes that thou, thus void of means and men, cans't offer, as thou didst of late, to be my protector and security in the camp of thy brethren?

SIR KENNETH. If thou wouldst hear of love and broken lances, venture thyself as thou sayest to the camp of the Crusaders, and thou wilt find exercise for thine ears and if thou wilt for thy hands, too.

SHEERKOHF. Hardly, I fear, shall I find one with a crossed shoulder who will exchange with me the cast of the jerrid.

SIR KENNETH. I will not promise for that, though there be in the camp certain Spaniards who have right good skill in your eastern game of hurling the javelin.

SHEERKOHF. Dogs, and sons of dogs! With them I would mix in no warlike pastime.

SIR KENNETH. Let not the Knights of Leon or Asturias hear you speak this of them; but if, instead of a reed, you were inclined to stand the cast of a battle-ax, there are enough western warriors who will gratify your longing. [*Presenting battle-ax.*]

SHEERKOHF. By the beard of my Father, sir, the game is too rough for mere sport; I will never shun them in battle, but my head [*pressing hand to brow*] will not for awhile permit me to seek them in sport.

SIR KENNETH. I would that you saw the ax of King Richard, to which that which hangs at my saddle-bow weighs but as a feather. But come, let us forward.

Mounting and riding forward in the fading light.

SCENE II.

[Twilight. Sir Kenneth and Sheerkohf riding along through desert. Theodoric dogs their footsteps. Sheerkohf singing. Theodoric suddenly rushes upon them, grasps Sheerkohf's horse by the bridle, brandishing a flail of wood, bound with iron: catches Sheerkohf around the waist and drags him to the ground where they struggle, Theodoric on top: Sir Kenneth on horse looking on.]

SHEERKOHF. *[Struggling on ground with Theodoric.]* Hakamo,—Fool,—unloose me—this passes thy privilege,—unloose me or I will use my dagger.

THEODORIC. *[Still struggling]* Thy dagger, infidel dog! Hold it in thy grip if thou canst. *[Wrenching it from him.]*

SHEERKOHF. *[To Sir Kenneth]* Help! Nazarene! Help, or the Hakamo will slay me.

THEODORIC. Slay thee! And well hast thou merited death for singing thy blasphemous hymns to the praise of thy false Prophet.

SIR KENNETH. Whosoe'er thou art, whether of good or evil, know that I am sworn for the time to be true companion to the Saracen whom thou holdest under thee; therefore I pray thee to let him arise, else I will do battle with thee in his behalf.

THEODORIC. And a proper quarrel it were for the sake of an unbaptized dog to combat one of his own holy faith. Art thou come forth to the wilderness to fight for the Crescent against the cross? A goodly soldier thou art to listen to those who sing the praises of Satan!

Arising and permitting Sheerkohf to arise, and returning to Sheerkohf his dagger.]

THEODORIC. Thou seest to what a point of peril thy presumption hath brought thee, and by what weak means thy practised skill and boasted agility can be foiled. Wherefore, beware, O Ilderim, for know that were there not a twinkle in the star of thy nativity which promises something

good for thee, we had not parted until I had torn asunder the throat which so lately trilled forth blasphemies.

SHEERKOHF. Hakamo, I pray thee, good Hakamo, to beware how thou dost again urge thy privilege over far; for though, as a good Moslem, I respect those whom Heaven hath deprived of ordinary reason in order to endow them with the spirit of prophesy, yet I like not other men's hands on the bridle of my horse, neither upon my own person. Speak, therefore, what thou wilt, but gather so much sense as to apprehend that if thou shalt again proffer me any violence I will strike thy shagged head from thy meagre shoulders. And to thee, friend Kenneth [*mounting steed*] I must say that in a companion I love friendly deeds better than fair words. Of the last thou hast given me enough; it had been better to have aided me more speedily in my struggle with Hakamo, who had well nigh taken my life in his frenzy.

SIR KENNETH. [*Smiling*] By my faith, I did somewhat fail, but it was as if thy wild and wicked lay had raised the Devil among us, and such was my confusion that it was too or three minutes ere I could take to my weapon.

☉ SHEERKOHF. [*Very much disheveled*]. Thou art but a cold and considerate friend, and had the Hakamo been one grain more frantic, thy companion had been slain by thy side [*pointing to the ground*] to thy eternal dishonour, without thy stirring a finger in his aid, although thou satest by, mounted and in arms.

SIR KENNETH. By my word, Saracen, if thou wilt have it in plain terms, I thought that strange figure was the Devil; and being of thy lineage I knew not what family secrets you might be communicating to each other, as you lay lovingly rolling together on the sand.

SHEERKOHF. Thy gibe is no answer, Brother Kenneth, for had my assailant been the Prince of Darkness, thou wert bound not the less to enter into combat with him. Know also, that whatever there may be foul or fiendish about the Hakamo belongs more to *your* lineage than to *mine*, this Hakamo being, in truth, the anchorite whom thou art come hither to visit.

SIR KENNETH. This? This? Thou mockest, Saracen: this cannot be the venerable Theodoric.

SHEERKOHF. Ask him thyself, if thou wilt not believe me.

THEODORIC. I am Theodoric of Engaddi; I am the walker of the desert, the friend of the Cross and flail of all heretics and devil-worshippers. Avoid ye,—avoid ye!—Down with Mahound, Termagaunt and all their adherents. [*Brandishing flail and dancing.*]

SHEERKOHF. Thou seest thy saint?

SIR KENNETH. This is a madman.

SHEERKOHF. Not the worse saint. Know, Christian, that when one eye becomes extinguished the other becomes more keen; when one hand is cut off, the other becomes more powerful; so when our reason —

THEODORIC. [*Interrupting Sheerkohf, and singing at top of voice*] I am Theodoric of Engaddi; I am the torch-brand of the desert; I am the flail of the infidel. The lion and the leopard shall be my comrades and draw nigh to my cell for shelter, neither shall the goat be afraid of their fangs. [*Ending his chant with a short run and three bounds*].

SHEERKOHF. You see that he expects us to follow him to his cell, which is our only place of refuge for the night. You are the Leopard; I am the Lion; by the goat, he means himself. We must keep him in sight for he is as fleet as a dromedary.

[*Exeunt Sir Kenneth and Sheerkohf, after Theodoric.*]

SCENE III.

[*Enter Theodoric*]. *Sir Kenneth and Sheerkohf following. Theodoric's cave. Dismounting and horses are led away. Interior of cave. One table and two chairs. Lighted with two wax tapers which Theodoric lights. Cave hung with dried herbs and flowers. Sandy floor. Sir Kenneth and Sheerkohf eat slight repast, after which, Sheerkohf turns his face toward Caaba and prays. Sir Kenneth plants his sword in the sand, point down with the handle for a cross, kneels before and prays. Then lie down to sleep.*

Sir Kenneth awakened by Theodoric standing over him with lighted silver lamp.]

THEODORIC. Be silent; I have that to say to thee which yonder infidel must not hear. Arise, put on thy mantle; speak not, but tread lightly and follow me.

Sir Kenneth arises, puts on his mantle, and picks up his sword.

THEODORIC. [*Motioning Sir Kenneth to put down sword.*] It needs not; we are going where spiritual arms avail much, and fleshly weapons are but as the reed and the decayed gourd. [*Moving forward and leading Sir Kenneth.*]

THEODORIC. Look into yonder recess, my son, there thou wilt find a veil; bring it hither. [*Sir Kenneth brings cloth.*]

THEODORIC. Thou bringest me a greeting from Richard of England?

SIR KENNETH. I come from the council of Christian Princes; but the King of England being indisposed, I am not honoured with his Majesty's commands.

THEODORIC. Your token?

SIR KENNETH. My pass word is this: "Kings begged of a beggar."

THEODORIC. It is right; I know thee well. Take the veil which I hold and bind mine eyes, for I may not look on the treasure thou art presently to behold, without sin and presumption.

Handing veil to Sir Kenneth, who takes the same and binds it over the eyes of Theodoric. [*Curtain rises.*]

THEODORIC. *Leading Sir Kenneth to door of chapel* Knock thou on this door three times, and thou wilt be admitted.

[Theodoric prostrates himself upon the floor beside the door of chapel in the form of a cross. Sir Kenneth knocks upon the door three times; door opens and Sir Kenneth enters. As door is opened by Sir Kenneth, sounds of "Gloria Patria" is heard sung by altar boys in rear. At back is altar hidden by curtains. Sir Kenneth kneels at center of chapel. Curtains drawn aside for a moment disclose cross on which is emblazoned the words "Vera Crux." Enter eight altar boys, two by two, singing "Gloria Patria." First four bearing censers swinging same from side to side; second four carrying and scattering flowers.

Enter six Carmelite nuns; also six novices, who surround the chapel three times. On second and third time, a novice drops rose bud at feet of Sir Kenneth.

Exeunt. Altar boys face in two lines; nuns same; novices pass between; nuns follow, then altar boys, still singing.]

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Sick chamber of King Richard in his tent. King lying on couch: De Vaux in attendance. Camp of allied armies in rear. Soldiers.

KING RICHARD. So thou hast no better news to bring me from without, Sir Thomas? All our knights turned women and our ladies turned devotees and neither a spark of gallantry nor of valour to enlighten a camp which contains the choicest of Europe's chivalry—ha!

DE VAUX. The truce, my Lord, the truce prevents us bearing ourselves as men of action, and for the ladies I am no great reveller, as is well known to thy Majesty, and seldom exchange steel and buff for velvet and gold; but thus far I know, that our choicest beauties are waiting upon the Queen's Majesty and the Princess to a pilgrimage to the convent of Engaddi, to accomplish their vows for your Highness's deliverance from this trouble.

KING RICHARD. And is it thus that royal matrons and maidens should risk themselves where the dogs who defile the land have as little truth toward man as they have faith toward God?

DE VAUX. Nay, my Lord, they have the Saladin's word for their safety.

KING RICHARD. True, true! I did the heathen Soldan injustice; I owe him reparation for it. Would God I were but fit to offer it him upon my body between the two hosts, Christendom and Heatheness both looking on. [*Tossing and flinging arms.*]

DE VAUX. [*Rising in attendance upon the King.*] There, my Lord.

KING RICHARD. Thou art a rough nurse though a willing one, De Vaux; methinks a coif would become thy lowering features as well as a child's biggin would beseem mine. We should be a babe and nurse to frighten girls with.

DE VAUX. We have frightened men in our time, my liege, and, I trust may live to frighten them again. What is a fever-fit that we should not endure it patiently in order to get rid of it easily?

KING RICHARD. Fever-fit! Thou mayest think, and justly too, that it is a fever-fit with me, but what is it with all the other Christian Princes? What is it with all of them? I tell thee it is a cold palsy, a dead lethargy; a disease that deprives them of speech and action; that has made them false to the noblest vow ever knights swore to; has made them indifferent to their fame and forgetful of their God.

DE VAUX. For the love of Heaven, my liege; take it less violently. You will be heard out doors where such speeches are but too current already among the common soldiery, and engender discord and contention in the Christian host. Bethink you that a mangonel will work without screw and lever better than the Christian host without King Richard?

KING RICHARD. Thou flatterest me, De Vaux. This is smoothly said to soothe a sick man. But does a league of monarchs, an assemblage of nobles, a convocation of all the chivalry of Europe, droop with the sickness of one man, though he chances to be King of England? Why should Richard's illness or Richard's death check the march of thirty thousand men as brave as himself? Why do not the powers assemble and choose some one to whom they may entrust guidance of the host?

DE VAUX. Forsooth, and if it please your Majesty, I hear consultations have been held among the royal leaders for some such purpose.

KING RICHARD. Ha! Am I forgot by my allies ere I have taken the last sacrament: do they hold me dead, already? But no, they are right. And whom do they select as leader of the Christian host?

DE VAUX. Rank and dignity point to the King of France.

KING RICHARD. Oh, ay, Philip of France and Navarre—Denis Mountjoie—his Most Christian Majesty—mouth-filling words these. There is but one risk, he might mistake the words *En arriere* for *En avant*, and lead us back to Paris instead of marching to Jerusalem.

DE VAUX. They might choose the Archduke of Austria.

KING RICHARD. What, because he is big and burly like thyself, Thomas, nearly as thick-headed, but without thy indifference to danger and carelessness of offence. I tell thee that Austria has in all that mass of flesh no bolder ani-

mation than is afforded by the peevishness of a wasp and the courage of a wren. Out upon him! *He* a leader of chivalry to deeds of glory?

DE VAUX. Then there is the Grand Master of the Templars, undaunted, skilful, brave in battle, and sage in council; what thinks your Majesty of the Master as a general leader of the Christian host?

KING RICHARD. Ha, Beau-Seant! Oh, no exception can be taken to Brother Sir Giles Amaury; he understands the ordering of a battle, and the fighting in front when it begins. But, Sir Thomas, were it fair to take the Holy Land from the heathen Saladin, so full of all the virtues which may distinguish unchristened man, and give it to Giles Amaury, a worse pagan than himself, an idolater, a devil-worshipper who practices crimes the most dark and unnatural in the vaults and secret places of abomination and darkness?

DE VAUX. The Grand Master of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem is not tainted by fame either with heresy or magic.

KING RICHARD. But is he not a sordid miser? Has he not been suspected, aye, more than suspected of selling to the infidels those advantages which they would never have won by fair force?

DE VAUX. Well then, I will venture but another guess. What say you to the gallant Marquis of Montserrat, so wise, so elegant, such a good man-at-arms?

KING RICHARD. Wise! Cunning you would say? Elegant in a lady's chamber, if you will. Oh, Conrade of Montserrat—who knows not the popinjay? Politic and versatile, he will change his purpose as often as the trimming of his doublet and you shall never be able to guess the hue of his inmost vestments from their outward colours. A man-at-arms! ay, a fine figure on horseback, and can bear him well in the tilt-yard and at the barriers, when swords are blunted at point and edge, and spears are tipped with trenchers of wood instead of steel pikes. Wert thou not with me when I said to that same gay Marquis, "Here we be, three good Christians, and on yonder plain there pricks a band of some three score Saracens, what say you to charge them briskly? There are but twenty unbelieving miscreants to each true knight."

DE VAUX. I recollect the Marquis replied that his limbs were of flesh, not of iron, and that he would rather bear the heart of a man than of a beast, though that beast were the lion. But I see how it is, we shall end where we began without hope of praying at the Sepulchre until Heaven shall restore King Richard to health.

KING RICHARD. [*Laughing heartily*] Why, what a thing is conscience, that through its means even such a thick-witted northern lord as thou canst bring thy sovereign to confess his folly. But hark! [*Sounds of trumpets in the distance.*] What trumpets are those?

DE VAUX. Those of King Philip, as I guess, my liege.

KING RICHARD. Thou art dull of ear Thomas; hearest not thou that clash and clang? By Heaven, the Turks are in the camp. I hear their lilies. [*Sounds of Turkish music in the distance.*] Thou art a false traitor, De Vaux. I would I were strong enough to dash thy brains out with my battle-ax. [*Starts up and grasps his battle-ax.*]

DE VAUX. I would you had the strength, my liege, and would even take the risk of its being so employed. The odds would be great in favour of Christendom, were Thomas Multon dead and Coeur-de-Lion himself again.

KING RICHARD. Mine honest, faithful servant, forgive thy master's impatience of mood. It is this burning fever which chides thee and not thy kind master, Richard of England. But go, I pray thee and bring me word what strangers are in the camp, for these sounds are not of Christendom.

[*Exeunt De Vaux.*] [*Curtain.*]

SCENE II.

[*Court-yard scene. Soldiers of England, and of the allied armies in national costume. Also a band of Saracens, in Arabic costumes wearing white turbans and bearing long pikes. Sir Kenneth in their midst. Kenneth advances to meet De Vaux.*]

DE VAUX. I know thee, but I will hold no communication with thee.

SIR KENNETH. My Lord De Vaux of Gilsland, I have in charge to speak with you.

DE VAUX. Ha, with me? But say your pleasure, so it be shortly spoken; I am on the King's errand.

SIR KENNETH. Mine touches King Richard yet more nearly; I bring him, I trust, health.

DE VAUX. Thou art no leech I think, sir Scot; I had as soon thought of your bringing the King of England wealth.

SIR KENNETH. Health to Richard is glory and wealth to Christendom. But my time presses; I pray you, may I see the King?

DE VAUX. Surely not, fair sir, until your errand be told more distinctly. The sick-chambers of princes open not to all who inquire, like a northern hostelry.

SIR KENNETH. My Lord, the cross which I wear in common with yourself, and the importance of what I have to tell, must for the present cause me to pass over a bearing which else I were unapt to endure. In plain language then, I bring with me a Moorish physician who undertakes to work a cure on King Richard.

DE VAUX. A Moorish physician! And who will warrant that he brings not poisons instead of remedies?

SIR KENNETH. His own life, my lord, his head, which he offers as a guarantee.

DE VAUX. I have known many a resolute ruffian who valued his own life as little as it deserved, and would troop to the gallows as merrily as if the hangman were his partner in a dance.

SIR KENNETH. But thus it is, my lord; Saladin hath sent this leech hither with an honorable retinue and guard befitting the high estimation in which El Hakim is held by the Soldan, and with fruits and refreshments for the King's private chamber, with a message praying him to be recovered of his fever, that he may be the fitter to receive a visit from the Soldan, with his naked scimitar in his hand, and an hundred thousand cavaliers at his back. Will it please you that some order be taken as to the reception of the learned physician?

DE VAUX. Wonderful! And who will vouch for the honour of the Saladin in a case where bad faith would rid him at once of his most powerful adversary?

SIR KENNETH. I, myself, will be his guarantee, with life, honour and fortune.

DE VAUX. Ha! sayest thou, but know, messenger of the kings and princes as thou mayst be, no leech shall approach the sick-bed of Richard of England without the consent of him of Gilsland; and they will come on evil errand who dare to intrude themselves against it.

SIR KENNETH. Well then, let me swear to you, Thomas of Gilsland, that by the blessed cross which I wear, I desire but the safety of Richard, Coeur-de-Lion, in recommending the ministry of this Moslem physician.

DE VAUX. I must now bid you adieu, having presently to return to the King's pavilion.

[*Exeunt De Vaux.*] [*Curtain.*]

SCENE III.

[*Sick chamber of King Richard.*] [*Enter De Vaux.*]

KING RICHARD. What now, De Vaux?

DE VAUX. My Lord, I sawest in the camp an Arab cavalcade; I learned then through this Scottish man called the Knight of the Leopard, who had just returned from the desert, that he had brought with him a Moorish leech who would undertake thy healing, my Lord, to which unheard of thing I would not listen. But he agreed to vouch for this Arab with his own life; furthermore toldest me that his own squire, who had been stricken with this selfsame fever, hadst been treated by this leech but two hours before and was now in a peaceful sleep, the fever having left him.

KING RICHARD. This is a strange tale, Sir Thomas; but to this piece of learned heathenness—sayest thou the Scot met him in the desert?

DE VAUX. No, my Lord, the Scot's tale runs thus: he was despatched to the old hermit of Engaddi, of whom men talk so much — —

KING RICHARD. Sdeath and Hell! By whom despatched, and for what? Who dared send any one thither when our Queen was in the convent of Engaddi upon her pilgrimage for our recovery?

DE VAUX. The Council of the Crusade sent him, my Lord; for what purpose he declined to account to me.

KING RICHARD. Well, it shall be looked into. So this Scottish man, this envoy met with a wandering physician at the grotto of Engaddi—ha?

DE VAUX. Not so, my liege, but he met I think near that place with a Saracen Emir with whom he had some melee in the way of proof of valor, and finding him worthy to bear brave men company, they went together to the grotto of Engaddi.

KING RICHARD. And there did they meet the physician?

DE VAUX. No, my Lord; but the Saracen learning of your Majesty's illness undertook that Saladin should send his own physician to you with many assurances of his good will and his eminent skill, and he came to the grotto accordingly after the Scottish knight had tarried a day for him or more. He is attended as if he were a prince, with drums and eatables and servants on horse and foot, and brings with him letters of credence from Saladin.

KING RICHARD. Have they been examined?

DE VAUX. I showed them to the interpreter ere bringing them hither, and behold their contents in English.

[*Handing scroll to King Richard*].

KING RICHARD. [*Reads*]. "The blessings of Allah and his Prophet, Mohammed"—(Out upon the hound) [*Spitting contemptuously*] "Saladin, King of Kings, Soldan of Egypt and of Syria, the light and refuge of the earth, to the great Melech Ric — Richard of England — greeting:

"Whereas, we have been informed that the hand of sickness hath been heavy upon thee, our royal brother, and that thou hast with thee only such Nazarene and Jewish medicines as work without the blessings of Allah and our Holy Prophet. We have therefore sent to tend and wait upon thee at this time the physician to our own person, Abondec el Hakim, before whose face the Angel Azrael spreads his wings and departs from the sick chamber; who knows the virtues of herbs and stones, and can save man from all that is not written on his forehead. And this we do, praying you heartily to honour and make use of his skill, not only that we may do service to thy worth and valour, but that we may bring the controversy which is at present between us to an end either by honourable agreement, or by open trial thereof with our weapons on a fair field; seeing that it neither becomes thy place and courage to die the death of a slave who hath been overwrought by his taskmaster, nor

befits it our fame that a brave adversary be snatched from our weapon by such a disease. And, therefore, may the holy —

Hold! Hold! I will have no more of this dog of a prophet. I will see his physician. I will put myself into the charge of this Hakim. I will repay the noble Soldan his generosity. I will meet Saladin in the fields, and he shall have no cause to term Richard of England ungrateful. I will convert him to Holy Church with such blows as he has rarely endured. Haste, De Vaux; why dost thou delay a conclusion so pleasing? Fetch the Hakim hither. [Exeunt De Vaux.]

[Claps hands for messenger.] [Enter messenger.]

Send hither Sir Kenneth, Knight of the Leopard.

[Exeunt Messenger.] [Enter Sir Kenneth.]

KING RICHARD. Thy name is Kenneth of the Leopard; from whom hadst thou degree of knighthood?

SIR KENNETH. I took it from the sword of William the Lion, King of Scotland.

KING RICHARD. A weapon well worthy to confer honour, nor has it been laid on an undeserving shoulder. But enough of this. I desire to know of you, Sir Knight, wherefore and by whose authority you took this recent journey to the wilderness of the Dead Sea and Engaddi?

SIR KENNETH. By order of the Council of the Princes of the Holy Crusade.

KING RICHARD. And how dared any one give such an order when I, not the least, surely, in the league, was unacquainted with it?

SIR KENNETH. It was not my part, please your Highness, to inquire into such particulars.

KING RICHARD. Thou sayest well, and the blame rests not with thee, but with those with whom, when it shall please heaven to raise me from this accursed bed of pain, I hope to reckon roundly. What was the purport of thy message?

SIR KENNETH. Methinks, and please your Highness, that were best asked of those who sent me, and who can render the reasons of mine errand; whereas I can only tell its outward form and purpose.

KING RICHARD. Palter not with me, sir Scot; it were ill for thy safety.

SIR KENNETH. My safety, my Lord, I cast behind me as a regardless thing when I vowed myself to this enterprise, looking rather to my immortal welfare than to that which concerns my earthly body.

KING RICHARD. By the mass, thou art a brave fellow. Hark thee, Sir Knight, I love the Scottish people: they are hardy, though dogged and stubborn, and I think true men in the main. I deserve some love at their hand, for I have voluntarily done what they could not by arms have extorted from me, any more than from my predecessors; I have restored and re-established the fortresses that lay in pledge to England; I have restored your ancient boundaries, and finally I have renounced a claim of homage upon the crown of England which I thought unjustly forced upon you.

SIR KENNETH. All this you have done, my Lord and King.

KING RICHARD. I grant it true; and for the good offices I have done your land I require you to remember that, as a principal member of the Christian league, I have a right to know the negotiations of my confederates. Do me, therefore, the justice to tell me what I have a title to be acquainted with, and which I am certain to know more truly from you than from others.

SIR KENNETH. My Lord, thus conjured, I will speak the truth. Be pleased, therefore, to know, my charge was to propose through the medium of the hermit of Engaddi, a holy man, respected and protected by Saladin, himself — —

KING RICHARD. A continuation of the truce, I doubt not?

SIR KENNETH. No, by St. Andrew, my Lord, but the establishment of a lasting peace.

KING RICHARD. And how?

SIR KENNETH. By the withdrawing of our armies from Palestine.

KING RICHARD. By St. George! Ill as I have justly thought of them, I could not have dreamed they would have humbled themselves to such dishonour. Speak, Sir Kenneth, with what will didst thou carry such a message?

SIR KENNETH. With right good will, my liege, because when we had lost our noble leader, under whose guidance alone I hoped for victory, I saw none who could succeed

him likely to lead us to conquest, and I accounted it well under such circumstances to avoid defeat.

KING RICHARD. And on what conditions was this hopeful peace to be contracted?

SIR KENNETH. These were not entrusted to me, my lord; I delivered them sealed to the hermit.

KING RICHARD. And for what do you hold this reverend hermit — for fool, madman, traitor or saint?

SIR KENNETH. His folly, sire, I hold to be assumed to win favour and reverence as the inspired from Heaven.

KING RICHARD. Shrewdly replied; now of his penitence?

SIR KENNETH. His penitence appears to me to be sincere, and the fruits of remorse for some dreadful crime."

KING RICHARD. And for his policy?

SIR KENNETH. Methinks, my Lord, he despairs of the security of Palestine, as of his own salvation by any means short of a miracle, at least since the arm of Richard of England hath ceased to strike for it.

KING RICHARD. And therefore the cowardly policy of this hermit is like that of these miserable princes who are only resolved and determined when the question is retreat, and, rather than go forward against an armed Saracen, would trample in flight over a dying ally.

SIR KENNETH. Might I so far presume, my Lord King, this discourse but heats your disease, the enemy from which Christendom dreads more evil than from armed hosts of infidels?

KING RICHARD. You can flatter Sir Knight, but you escape me not. I must know more from you than you have yet told me. But, begone for the present. Speed to De Vaux and send him hither with the Arabian physician. My life for the faith of the Soldan. [*Exeunt Sir Kenneth.*]

Enter Grand Master of the Templars, dressed in white robe with staff, and the Marquis of Montserrat.

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. We have come, Your Majesty by order of the Council of the Crusaders, to inquire into the health of their magnanimous ally, the valient King of England.

KING RICHARD. We know the importance in which the princes of the council hold our health, and are well aware

how much they must have suffered by suppressing all curiosity concerning it for fourteen days, for fear, doubtless of aggravating our disorder, by showing their anxiety regarding the event. But you, Grand Master of the Holy and Valiant Order of Knights Templars, and you, Most Noble Marquis of Montserrat, if it please you to retire, you shall presently see what account we make of the tender remonstrances of our royal and princely colleagues in this religious warfare.

[*Exeunt Grand Master and Marquis of Montserrat.*]

[*Grand Master meeting physician on leaving tent of King Richard.*]

GRAND MASTER. [*To physician.*] Infidel! Hast thou the courage to practise thine art upon the person of an anointed sovereign of the Christian host?

EL HAKIM. [*Bowing low.*] The sun of Allah shines on the Nazarene as well as on the true believer, and His servant dare make no distinction betwixt them, when called upon to exercise the art of healing. I understand you, but I pray you interpose no delay between me and my office.

[*El Hakim and De Vaux enter King Richard's tent, followed by Sir Kenneth, the Grand Master and Marquis of Montserrat.*]

DE VAUX. [*To Grand Master and Marquis of Montserrat*] If you will hold your patience, you are welcome to enter with us, but if you interrupt, by action or threat, this accomplished physician in his duty, be it known that without respect to your high quality I will enforce your absence from Richard's tent. Move on, El Hakim.

King Richard. [*As they enter.*] So ho! a goodly fellowship come to see Richard take his leap in the dark? My noble allies, I greet you as the representatives of our assembled league; Richard will again be amongst you in his former fashion, or ye shall bear to the grave what is left of him. There is yet another — but this fever hath wasted my eyesight. What, the bold Scot, who would climb Heaven without a ladder? He is welcome too. But come, Sir Hakim; to the work, to the work. [*El Hakim mixes potion for King.*] But hold an instant. Thou hast felt my pulse; let me lay my finger on thine. I too, as becomes a good knight, know

something of thine art. [*To the bystanders.*] His blood beats as calm as an infant's. So throb not theirs who poison princes. De Vaux, whether we live or die, dismiss this Hakim with honour and safety. Commend us, friend, to the noble Saladin. Should I die, it is without doubt of his faith; should I live, it will be to thank him as a warrior would desire to be thanked. Mark what I say, and let my royal brethren pledge me in Cyprus wine. To the immortal honour of the first Crusader who shall strike lance or sword on the gate of Jerusalem; and to the shame and eternal infamy of whomsoever shall turn back from the plough on which he hath laid his hand.

EL HAKIM. [*To those in attendance.*] Leave us alone.
 [*Administers medicine to King Richard. Exeunt attendants.*]

(CURTAIN)

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The camp of the Allies in distance. King Richard's tent on the foreground, surrounded by sentries with reversed arms.

Marquis of Montserrat and Grand Master of the Knights Templar conversing together.

GRAND MASTER. There is a change of cheer among these island dogs. What hoarse tumult and revel used to be before this pavilion.

MARQUIS. Mastiffs are a faithful race, and the King, their master, has won their love by being ready to wrestle, brawl or revel amongst the foremost of them.

GRAND MASTER. He is totally compounded of humours. Mark you the pledge he gave us, instead of a prayer, over his grace-cup yonder?

MARQUIS. He would have felt it a grace-cup, and a well-spiced one, were Saladin like any other Turk that ever wore turban. But he affects faith, and honour and generosity, as if it were for an unbaptized dog like him to practice the virtuous bearing of a Christian knight. It is said he hath applied to Richard to be admitted within the pale of chivalry.

GRAND MASTER. By St. Bernard, it were time to throw off our belts and spurs and renounce our burgonets if the highest honour of Christianity were conferred on an unchristened Turk.

MARQUIS. You rate the Soldan cheap? Might it consist with your valour and sanctity, I would pray you for once to lay aside the dark vizor you wear and converse with a friend barefaced.

GRAND MASTER. There are light-coloured masks as well as dark vizors, and the one conceals the natural features as completely as the other.

MARQUIS. [*Making motion of tearing off mask.*] Be it so; there lies my disguise. And now, what think you as touching the interests of your own order?

GRAND MASTER. This is tearing the veil from *my* thoughts, rather than exposing your own.

MARQUIS. Left to ourselves, we might have bent to the storm, or, moderately supported with money and troops, we might have compelled Saladin to respect our valour and give us peace and protection on easy terms.

GRAND MASTER. You say well, My Lord Marquis, and your words find an echo in my bosom. Yet must we be cautious; Philip of France is wise as well as valiant.

MARQUIS. True, and he will be therefore the more easily diverted from an expedition to which in a moment of enthusiasm he rashly bound himself. Any fair pretense will serve him for withdrawing from a scene in which he is aware he is wasting the force of his kingdom.

GRAND MASTER. And the Duke of Austria?

MARQUIS. Oh, the Duke, his self-conceit and folly lead him to the same conclusions as do Philip's policy and wisdom. He conceives himself ungratefully treated because men's mouths are filled with the praises of King Richard, whom he fears and hates. But wherefore tell I this to thee, save to show that I am in sincerity in desiring that this league be broken up and the country freed of these great monarchs with their hosts.

GRAND MASTER. Thou startest somewhat suddenly for so bold a steed. However, I swear to thee I will keep counsel with thee as a true comrade.

MARQUIS. I will swear truth to thee, by the earl's coronet which I hope to convert, ere these wars are over, into something better.

GRAND MASTER. Enough; thou hast indeed convinced me of thy sincerity. Others may hold the same opinion, but few save Conrade of Montserrat dared frankly avow that he desires not the restitution of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

MARQUIS. Thou wilt not betray my counsel? Know for certain that my tongue shall never wrong my head, nor my hand forsake the defence of either.

GRAND MASTER. But lift yet thy mask an inch higher and tell me thy real reason for pressing upon the council that northern Englishman or Scot, or whatever you call yon Knight of the Leopard, to carry their proposals for a treaty?

MARQUIS. That he might not, upon his return, hold any communication with the sick-bed of Richard, to whom his presence was ever unacceptable.

GRAND MASTER. Oh, too fine-spun policy! See you not that the envoy whom you have selected so carefully hath brought us this physician in whom is the means of restoring the lion-hearted, bull-necked Englishman to prosecute his Crusading enterprise? And so soon as he is able once more to rush on, which of the princes dare hold him back?

MARQUIS. Be content; ere this physician accomplish Richard's cure, it may be possible to put some rupture between the Frenchman, at least the Austrian, and his allies of England; and Richard may arise from his bed to command his own troops, but never again to wield the force of the whole crusade.

GRAND MASTER. Richard arise from his bed, sayst thou Conrade, he must *never arise*.

MARQUIS. What! spoke you of Richard of England—of Coeur-de-Lion—the Champion of Christendom?

GRAND MASTER. Know'st thou what thou look'st like, Sir Conrade, at this moment? Not like the politic and valiant Marquis of Montserrat, but like a novice who has raised the Devil when he least thought of it. Let us hold that there has nothing passed between us; that we have spoken in our sleep. Having awakened, the vision is gone.

MARQUIS. The vision can never depart.

GRAND MASTER. Visions of ducal crowns and kingly diadems are indeed somewhat tenacious of their place in the imagination.

MARQUIS. Well, let me first try to break the peace between Austria and England. [*Exeunt Grand Master.*]

[*To himself.*] I have, in truth, raised the Devil with a vengeance. [*Exeunt Marquis.*]

[*Enter Archduke of Austria with retinue. Marquis of Montserrat hastens to meet him.*] [*Conversing in low tones.*]

MARQUIS. [*Aloud*] Nay, it was not of the Venetian Lion that I spoke, but of the three lions of England; formerly they were leopards, but now they are become lions at all points and must take precedence, or woe to the gainstander.

ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA. Mean you seriously, my lord? Think you that Richard of England asserts any pre-eminence over the free sovereigns who have been his voluntary allies in this crusade?

MARQUIS. I know not, but yonder hangs his banner alone in the midst of our camp as if it were King and generalissimo of our whole Christian army.

ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA. And do you endure this so patiently, and speak of it so coldly?

MARQUIS. Nay, my lord, it cannot concern the poor Marquis of Montserrat. What dishonour you are pleased to submit to cannot be a disgrace to me.

ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA. I submit! I, the Archduke of Austria? I, submit myself to this king of half an island? This grandson of a Norman bastard? No, by Heaven! The camp and all Christendom shall see that I know how to right myself and whether I yield ground one inch to the English bandog. We will place the Eagle of Austria where she shall float as high as ever floated the cognizance of King or Kaiser.

MARQUIS. Nay, my lord, it will blemish your wisdom to make an affray in the camp at this hour; perhaps it is better to submit to the usurpation of England a little longer—

ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA. Not an hour—not a minute longer.

[*Hastens to the Mount of St. George where he plants the Austrian banner beside the flag of England; soldiers and followers clamoring and shouting.*]

KING RICHARD. [*In tent*] Hark! what mean these shouts and that distant music in the camp? Go, Thomas De Vaux and make inquiry. [*De Vaux steps to corner of tent and looks.*]

DE VAUX. [*To King Richard*] It is the Archduke Leopold who makes with his pot-companions some procession through the camp.

KING RICHARD. The drunken fool; can he not keep his brutal inebriety within the veil of his pavilion that he must need show his shame to all Christendom?

[*Enter Marquis of Montserrat.*]

MARQUIS. Thus much, honoured prince, I delight to see your Majesty so well and so far recovered, and that is a long speech for any one to make who has partaken of the Duke of Austria's hospitality.

KING RICHARD. What! you have been dining with the Teutonic wineskin? And what frolic has he found out to cause all this disturbance?

MARQUIS. What the Archduke does is of little consequence, yet to say truth, it is a gambol I should not care to share in, since he is pulling down the banner of England from St. George's mount in the center of the camp yonder, and is displaying his own.

KING RICHARD. What sayst thou?

MARQUIS. Nay, let it not chafe your Highness that a fool should act according to his folly.

KING RICHARD. Speak not to me, Lord Marquis! De Multon, I command thee speak not a word to me; he that breathes but a syllable is no friend to Richard of England. Hakim, be silent, I charge thee!

[*King Richard springs from couch, dons his armour, grasps his shield, battle-ax and sword and rushes to the Mount St. George.*]

DE VAUX. [*To the Marquis.*] Fly to Lord Salisbury's quarters and let him get his men together and follow me instantly to St. George's Mount. Tell him the King's fever has left his blood and settled in his brain.

[*Exeunt De Vaux and Sir Kenneth hurrying after King Richard, to Mount of St. George.*]

KING RICHARD. [*On Mount of St. George.*] Who has dared to place this paltry rag beside the banner of England?

ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA. It was I, Leopold of Austria.

KING RICHARD. Then shall Leopold of Austria presently see the rate at which his banner and his pretensions are held by Richard of England. Thus [*Tearing down banner and trampling it under foot*] I trample on the banner of Austria! Is there a knight among your Teutonic chivalry that dares to impeach my deed?

AUSTRIAN KNIGHTS. I, and I, and I.

EARL WALLENRODE. Why do we dally thus? Brethren, this man's foot is on the honour of your country. Let us rescue it from violation, and down with the pride of England.

[*Rushes up the side of the mount and strikes at King Richard with his sword. Sir Kenneth intercepts the blow with his shield and stops Wallenrode.*]

KING RICHARD. I have sworn never to strike one whose shoulder bears the cross; therefore, live, Wallenrode, but live to remember Richard of England.

[*Catches Earl Wallenrode about the waist and throws him headlong down the side of mount. (Clamour) Cries of "Cut the Island Mastiff to pieces."*]

(CURTAIN)

SCENE:—*Same as before. King Richard, Sir Kenneth and De Vaux at foot of Mount of St. George. Soldiers.*

KING RICHARD. There is a sort of glow-worm courage that shows only by night: I must not leave this banner unguarded in the darkness. By day-light the look of the lions alone will defend it. Here, Thomas of Gilsland, I give thee charge of the standard; watch over the honour of England.

DE VAUX. Her safety is yet more dear to me, and the life of Richard is the safety of England. I must have your Highness back to your tent without further tarriance.

KING RICHARD. Thou art a rough and peremptory nurse, De Vaux. [*To Sir Kenneth*] Valiant Scot, I owe thee a boon, and I will pay it richly. There stands the banner of England; watch it as a novice does his armour on the night before he is dubbed. Stir not from it three spear lengths, and defend it with thy body against injury or insult. Sound thy bugle if assailed by more than three at once. Dost thou undertake the charge?

SIR KENNETH. Willingly, and will discharge it upon penalty of my head.

[*Exeunt De Vaux and King Richard.*]

Light fades. Twilight. Sir Kenneth standing guard over flag of England on Mount of St. George, with hound by his side.

SIR KENNETH. [*Peering into the darkness.*] Who goes there!

A VOICE. In the name of Merlin, tie up your four-footed demon there, or I come not at you.

SIR KENNETH. And who art thou that thou wouldst approach my post? Beware! I am here for life or death.

A VOICE. Take up thy long-fanged Sathanas, or I will conjure him with a bolt from my arblast.

SIR KENNETH. Unbend thy arblast and come into the moonlight, or by St. Andrew I will pin thee to the earth, be what or whom thou wilt. [*Raising his lance as if to throw same.*]

[*Enter Nectabanus with small cross-bow in his hand.*]

NECTABANUS. Soldier, wherefore renderest thou not to Nectabanus the homage due to his dignity? Or, is it possible thou canst have forgotten him?

SIR KENNETH. Great Nectabanus, that were difficult for any one who has ever looked upon thee. Pardon me, however; being a soldier upon my post I may not give thee the advantage of coming within my guard, or of mastering my weapon. I reverence thy dignity, and submit myself to thee as humbly as a man-at-arms in my place may.

NECTABANUS. It shall suffice so that you presently attend me to the presence of those who have sent me hither to summon you.

SIR KENNETH. Great sir, neither in this can I gratify thee, for my orders are to abide by this banner till daybreak; so I pray you to hold me excused in that matter also.

NECTABANUS. Either obey me, Sir Knight, or I will lay the command upon thee in the name of one whose beauty could call down the genii from their sphere. But look you here, as thou knowest this token, so obey or refuse her commands who hath deigned to impose them on thee. [*Showing ring to Sir Kenneth.*]

SIR KENNETH. In the name of all that is sacred, from whom didst thou receive this witness? Tell me the person by whom thou art sent, and take heed what thou sayest.

NECTABANUS. Foolish knight, we list not to parley with thee farther than to command thee in the name and by the power of that ring, to follow us to her who is the owner of that ring. Every minute that thou tarriest is a crime against thy allegiance.

SIR KENNETH. Can my Lady know where and upon what duty I am this night engaged? Is she aware that my life, my honour depends upon my guarding this banner till daybreak, and can it be her wish that I shouldst leave it even to pay homage to her? It is impossible; the princess is pleased to be merry with her servant.

NECTABANUS. Oh, keep your belief; it is little to me whether you be traitor or true man to this royal lady; so fare thee well.

SIR KENNETH. Stay, I entreat you, stay; answer but one question; is the lady who sent thee near to this place?

NECTABANUS. What signifies it? Ought fidelity to reckon furlongs or leagues? I tell thee, the fair owner of the ring is not more distant from this place than this arblast can send a bolt.

SIR KENNETH. The words of truth, though in the mouth of folly. And doth my lady really summon me to some deed of action in her name and for her sake? And may it not be postponed till daybreak?

NECTABANUS. She requires thy presence instantly and without the loss of so much time as would be told by ten grains of sand. Harken, thou suspicious knight; these are her very words: "Tell him that the hand which dropped roses, can bestow laurels."

SIR KENNETH. Nectabanus, I conjure thee once more to say, are you to conduct me far from here?

NECTABANUS. But to yonder pavilion since you must needs know.

SIR KENNETH. I can return in an instant; I can hear from thence the bay of my dog if any one approaches my standard; I will throw myself at my lady's feet and pray her leave to return to conclude my watch. Here Roswal [*calling*

hound and throwing mantle down by spear standard], watch thou here, and let no one approach. Come now, good Nectabanus, let us hasten to obey the commands thou hast brought.

NECTABANUS. Haste he that will; thou hast not been in haste to obey my summons, nor can I walk fast enough to follow your long strides; you do not walk like a man, but bound like an ostrich, in the desert.

[*Sir Kenneth grabs Nectabanus and stowing him under his arm starts away on the run.*]

(CURTAIN)

ACT IV.

SCENE—*Queen Berengari's tent with ladies in waiting in attendance. Time midnight. Nectabanus in tent.*

[*Sir Kenneth standing close by tent, waiting.*]

LADY IN WAITING. Nectabanus, thou shalt be made Ambassador to Prester John's court, to show them how wisely thou canst discharge thee of a mission.

ANOTHER LADY IN WAITING. If the princely Nectabanus be not over-jealous of his most transcendent bride and empress, let us send her to get rid of this insolent knight-errant.

THE QUEEN. But how shall we rid us of the spirit which Nectabanus hath raised, my maidens?

LADY IN WAITING. It were but justice, me thinks, that the Princess Genevra should dismiss by her courtesy him whom her husband's wisdom hath been able to entice hither.

[*Enter Lady Edith.*]

LADY EDITH. Your majesty seems in a merry mood, though, methinks the hour of night prompts a sleepy one. I was well disposed bedward when I had your Majesty's commands to attend you.

THE QUEEN. I will not long delay you, cousin, from your repose though I fear you will sleep less soundly when I tell you your wager is lost.

LADY EDITH. Nay, Royal Madam, this surely is dwelling on a jest which has rather been worn out. If your Majesty have no other commands for me than to hear the jibes of your waiting-women, I must crave your permission to withdraw.

THE QUEEN. Forgive me, but what is the great offense after all? A young knight has been wiled hither; has stolen or has been stolen from his post which no one will disturb in his absence, for the sake of a fair lady, for to do your champion justice, sweet one, the wisdom of Nectabanus could conjure him hither in no name but yours.

LADY EDITH. Great Heavens! your Majesty does not say so? Say you were but jesting with me, my royal mistress and forgive me that I could think it possible you could be in earnest?

THE QUEEN. The Lady Edith regrets the ring we have won of her. We will restore the pledge to you, only you must not grudge us a little triumph over the wisdom that has often been spread over us as a banner over a host.

LADY EDITH. A triumph! A triumph will be with the infidel when he hears that the Queen of England can make the reputation of her husband's kinswoman the subject of a light frolic.

THE QUEEN. You are angry, fair cousin, at losing your favourite ring.

LADY EDITH. Madame, you know well that your Grace could not wish for anything of mine, but it becomes instantly yours. I would give a bushel of rubies ere name or ring of mine had been used to bring a brave man into a fault, and perhaps to disgrace and punishment.

THE QUEEN. Oh, it is for the safety of your brave knight that you fear? You rate our power too low when you speak of a life being lost for a frolic of ours. Oh, Lady Edith, others have influence on the iron breasts of warriors, as well as you, and believe me, I have interest enough with Richard to save this knight.

LADY EDITH. For the love of the blessed cross, beware what you do. You know not King Richard. For God's sake dismiss this gentleman if indeed you have lured him hither. [*Falling on her knees before the queen.*]

THE QUEEN. Arise cousin, arise, and be assured all will be better than you think. I tell thee, I will take all the blame on myself with King Richard in behalf of thy fair northern friend, thine acquaintance, I would say since thou ownest him not as a friend. We will send Nectabanus to dismiss

this Knight of the Standard to his post. He is, I warrant, but lying perdu in some neighboring tent.

NECTABANUS. By the crown of lilies, your Majesty is mistaken; he is nearer at hand than you wot; he lieth esconed there behind that canvas partition.

THE QUEEN. And within hearing of each word we have said! Out, monster of folly and malignity! [*Slaps Nectabanus.*] [*Exeunt Nectabanus.*]

THE QUEEN. What can now be done?

LADY EDITH. We must see this gentleman, and place ourselves at his mercy. [*Arising and starting toward partition.*]

THE QUEEN. For Heaven's sake, forbear; consider, my apartment, our dress, the hour, my honour.

[*Lady Edith pulls down the partition disclosing Sir Kenneth.*]

LADY EDITH. Hasten to thy post, valiant knight; thou hast been deceived in being trained hither. Ask no questions.

SIR KENNETH. I need ask none.

LADY EDITH. Have you heard all? Gracious saint, then wherefore wait you here when each minute that passes is loaded with dishonour?

SIR KENNETH. I have heard that I am dishonoured, lady, and have heard it from you. What reck I how soon punishment follows? I have but one petition to you and then I seek among the sabres of the infidel whether dishonour may not be washed out in blood.

LADY EDITH. Do not so, neither. Be wise, dally not here; all may yet be well if you will but use dispatch.

SIR KENNETH. [*Kneeling*] I wait but for your forgiveness, for my presumption in believing that my poor services could have been required or valued by you.

LADY EDITH. I do forgive you. Oh, I have nothing to forgive. I have been the means of injuring you. But oh, begone. I will forgive—I will value you—that is, as I value every brave Crusader, if you will but begone.

SIR KENNETH. Receive first, this precious yet fatal pledge. [*Holding out ring to Lady Edith.*]

LADY EDITH. Oh, no, no, keep it as a mark of my regard—my regret, I would say. Oh, begone, if not for your own sake, for mine. [*Cry of hound. Sir Kenneth dashes out.*]

(CURTAIN)

Sir Kenneth rushes to Mt. St. George, and finds hound wounded and banner gone; the broken staff sticking in the mound. [Enter El Hakim.]

EL HAKIM. Adversity is like the period of the former and the latter rain, cold, comfortless, unfriendly to man and to animal. The poet hath said, the ox for the field, the camel for the desert. Were not the hand of the leech fitter than that of the soldier to cure wounds, though less able to inflict them?

SIR KENNETH. This patient, Hakim, is beyond thy help and besides, he is by thy law an unclean animal.

EL HAKIM. Where Allah hath deigned to bestow life and a sense of pain and pleasure it were sinful pride to refuse to prolong life or assuage pain. Let me examine this wounded animal? [*Examining dog.*] The animal may be cured if you will permit me to carry him to my tent.

SIR KENNETH. Take him with you; I bestow him on you freely, if he recovers. For myself I will never again wind bugle or halloo to hound. Fare thee well Roswel.

[*El Hakim claps hands and two slaves rush in and carry dog away on litter.*]

EL HAKIM. It is written, that all creatures are fashioned for the service of man.

SIR KENNETH. A dog who dies in discharging his duty is better than a man who survives the desertion of it. Leave me Hakim; thou hast on this side of miracle the most wonderful science which man ever possessed, but the wounds of the spirit are beyond thy power.

EL HAKIM. Not if the patient will explain his calamity and be guided by the physician.

SIR KENNETH. Know, then, that last night the banner of England was displayed from this mound—I was an appointed guardian for it; morning is now breaking and there lies the broken banner-spear, the standard itself is lost and here I stand, a living man.

EL HAKIM. How! Thy armour is whole; there is no blood on thy weapons and report speaks thee unlikely to return thus from fight? Thou hast been trained from thy post by the rosy cheeks and black eyes of those houris; for so hath man ever fallen, even since the days of Sultan Adam.

SIR KENNETH. And if it were so, physician, what remedy?

EL HAKIM. Knowledge is the parent of power. Listen to me. Man is not a tree, bound to one spot. Thine own Christian writings command thee when persecuted in one city to flee to another.

SIR KENNETH. And what does this concern me?

EL HAKIM. Much. Even the sage flies before the tempest which he cannot control. Use thy speed therefore, and fly from the vengeance of Richard.

SIR KENNETH. I might indeed hide my dishonour in a camp of infidel heathens where the very phrase is unknown. Does thy advice stretch so far as to recommend me to take the turban? Methinks I want but apostacy to consummate my infamy.

EL HAKIM. Blaspheme not, Nazarene; Saladin makes no converts to the law of the Prophet, save those on whom its precepts shall work conviction.

SIR KENNETH. I would rather that my writhen features should blacken, as they are like to do in this evening's setting sun.

EL HAKIM. Yet thou art not wise, Nazarene, to reject this fair offer; for I have power with the Saladin and can raise thee high in his grace.

SIR KENNETH. I know not and care not. What avails it to me, when ere night I shall be gibbeted and dishonoured?

EL HAKIM. Nay, I speak that it may not be so with thee, Thou art, then, wilfully determined not to fly? Remember thou stay'st to certain destruction.

SIR KENNETH. Go to, Hakim; leave me to recollect my sins and reconcile myself to Heaven.

EL HAKIM. I leave thee in thine obstinacy.

[*Exeunt El Hakim.*]

[*Day-light. Sir Kenneth enters King Richard's tent.*]

DE VAUX. Whence this bold intrusion, Sir Knight?

KING RICHARD. Hold De Vaux; Sir Kenneth cometh like a good soldier to render an account of his guard; to such the general's tent is ever accessible. Speak, Sir Scot, thou comest to tell me of a vigilant, safe, and honourable watch, dost thou not? The rustling of the folds of the banner of England were enough to guard it, even without the body of such a Knight as men hold thee.

SIR KENNETH. As men will hold me no more; my watch hath neither been vigilant, safe nor honourable. The banner of England has been carried off.

KING RICHARD. And thou alive to tell it? Away! It cannot be! There is not even a scratch on thy face. Why dost thou stand thus mute? Speak the truth; it is ill jesting with a king, yet I will forgive thee if thou hast lied.

SIR KENNETH. Lied, Sir King! But this also must be endured. I have spoken the truth.

KING RICHARD. By God and St. George. De Vaux, go view the spot. This fever has disturbed his brain. This cannot be. The man's courage is proof. It *cannot* be! Go speedily; or send, if thou wilt not go."

[*Enters Sir Henry Neville.*]

SIR HENRY NEVILLE. The banner is gone. The valiant knight who guarded it has been overpowered and most probably murdered; the banner-spear lies shattered near a pool of blood—but whom do I see here?

KING RICHARD. A traitor! A traitor whom thou shalt see die a traitor's death. [*King Richard raises his battle-ax to strike Sir Kenneth, who stands with bowed head before him.*] But there was blood, Neville, there was blood upon the place. Hark thee, Sir Scot, brave thou wert once, for I have seen thee fight. Say thou hast slain two of the thieves in defence of the standard—say but one—say thou hast struck but a good blow in defence of the standard and get thee out of the camp with thy life and thy infamy.

SIR KENNETH. Thou hast called me a liar, my Lord King, and therein at least thou hast done me wrong. Know that no blood was shed in defence of the standard save that of a poor hound, which, more faithful than his master, defended the charge which he deserted.

KING RICHARD. Now, by St. George! [*Hastily raising battle-ax to strike Sir Kenneth, when De Vaux interposes in Kenneth's behalf.*]

DE VAUX. My Lord, this must not be. It is enough of folly for one night, to have entrusted your banner to a Scot; said I not they were ever fair and false?

KING RICHARD. Thou didst, De Vaux; thou wast right. I should have known him better. I should have remem-

bered how the fox William deceived me touching this Crusade.

SIR KENNETH. My Lord, William of Scotland never deceived; but circumstances prevented his bringing his forces.

KING RICHARD. Peace, shameless! Thou sulliest the name of a prince even by speaking it. And yet, De Vaux, to see the bearing of the man. Coward or traitor he must be, yet he abode the blow of Richard of England, as our arm had been raised to lay knighthood on his shoulder. Had he shown the slightest sign of fear; had but a joint trembled or an eyelid quivered, I had shattered his head like a crystal goblet. But I cannot strike where there is neither fear nor resistance.

SIR KENNETH. My Lord —

KING RICHARD. Ha! thou hast found thy speech. Ask grace from heaven, but none from me, for England is dishonoured through thy fault; and wert thou mine own and only brother, there is no pardon for thy fault.

SIR KENNETH. I speak not to demand grace of mortal man, but whether I die on the instant, or half an hour hence, I beseech you Grace for one moment's opportunity to speak that to your royal person which highly concerns your fame as a Christian King.

KING RICHARD. Say on!

SIR KENNETH. There is treason around you, King of England.

KING RICHARD. It may be well as thou sayest; I have here a pregnant example.

SIR KENNETH. Treason that will injure thee more deeply than the loss of an hundred banners on a pitched field. My Lord, there is a scheme on foot to disgrace your royal lineage by bestowing the hand of the Lady Edith on the Saracen Soldan, and thereby purchase a peace most dishonourable to Christendom, by an alliance most shameful to England.

KING RICHARD. Silence! Infamous and audacious! By Heaven, I will have thy tongue torn out with hot pincers for daring to mention the name of a noble Christian damsel. Know, degenerate traitor, that I was already aware to what height thou hadst dared to raise thine eyes, and endured it,

though it were insolence even when thou hadst cheated us into holding thee of some name and fame. But now, with lips blistered with the confession of thine own dishonour, that thou shouldst dare to name our noble kinswoman as one in whose fate thou hast part or interest! What is it to thee if she marry Saracen or Christian? What is it to thee if, in a camp where princes turn cowards by day and robbers by night,—where brave knights turn to paltry deserters and traitors,—what is it, I say, to thee or to any one, if I should please to ally myself to truth and to valour in the person of Saladin?

SIR KENNETH. Little to me, indeed, to whom all the world will soon be as nothing; but were I now stretched on the rack, I tell thee, Sir King, that if thou dost in thought entertain the purpose of wedding thy kinswoman, the Lady Edith—

KING RICHARD. Name her not! And for an instant, think not of her!

SIR KENNETH. Now, by the Cross on which I place my hopes, her name shall be the last word in my mouth, and her image the last thought in my mind. Try thy boasted strength on this bare brow and see if thou canst prevent my purpose.

Enter attendant; also the Queen and Lady Edith following upon the stage.

ATTENDANT. The Queen, Your Majesty.

KING RICHARD. [*To Sir Neville.*] Detain her, detain her Neville; this is no sight for women. Away with him, De Vaux! Coop him up close and answer for his safe custody with your life. And stay; hark ye! He shall die knight-like in his belt and spurs; for if his treachery be as black as Hell, his boldness may match that of the Devil himself.

Exeunt Sir Kenneth and De Vaux. Enter the Queen and Lady Edith. Also Hangman to receive orders from the King.

KING RICHARD. [*To hangman.*] Go, speed thy office quickly, sirrah. And hark thee, villian; mark me the smallest twitch of the features or wink of the eyelid; I love to know how brave souls meet death.

THE HANGMAN. If he sees my blade aloft without shrinking, he is the first that ever did so. [*Brandishing huge sword.*]

THE QUEEN. Pardon me, my Lord.

KING RICHARD. What needs this, Berengaria?

THE QUEEN. Send that man away; his look kills me.
[Pointing to the hangman.]

THE HANGMAN. Your Highness' pleasure touching the head?

KING RICHARD. Out with thee, dog; a Christian burial.
[Exeunt hangman.]

KING RICHARD. And now, foolish wench, what wishest thou? What seeks the lady of my heart in her knight's pavilion, at this early and unwonted hour?

THE QUEEN. Pardon, my Lord.

KING RICHARD. Pardon! for what?

THE QUEEN. For entering thy royal presence too boldly

KING RICHARD. *Thou* too boldly? The sun might as well ask pardon because its rays entered the windows of some wretch's dungeon.

THE QUEEN. But thou art not well.

KING RICHARD. Ha! ha! ha! [Laughing] well enough to break a lance on the bold crest of that champion who shall refuse to acknowledge thee the fairest dame in Christendom.

THE QUEEN. Thou wilt not then refuse to me one boon,—only one—only a poor life?

KING RICHARD. Ha! proceed. [Scowling.]

THE QUEEN. This unhappy Scottish knight.

KING RICHARD. Speak not of him, madam; his doom is fixed.

THE QUEEN. Nay, my Lord and love, 'tis but a silken banner neglected; I will give thee another broidered with my own hand, and as rich as ever dallied with the wind. Every pearl I have shall go to bedeck it, and with every pearl I will drop a tear of thankfulness to my generous knight.

KING RICHARD. Thou know'st not what thou say'st. Pearls! Can all the pearls of the East atone for a speck upon England's honour? Go to, Madam, know your place, and your time and sphere.

LADY EDITH. My Lord, I crave you for justice rather than mercy, and to the cry of justice, the ears of a monarch should be open at every time, place and circumstance.

KING RICHARD. Ha! our cousin Edith.

LADY EDITH. My Lord, this good knight whose blood thou art about to spill, hath done in his time service to Christendom. He hath fallen from his duty through a snare sent to him in the name of one—why should I not speak it—it was in my own—induced him for an instant to leave his post. And what knight in the Christian camp might not thus transgress at command of a maiden who, poor howsoever in other qualities, hath yet the blood of Plantagenet in her veins.

KING RICHARD. Can this be Edith Plantagenet, or is it some lovesick woman who cares not for her fame in comparison of the life of her paramour? Now, by King Henry's soul! Little hinders but I order thy minion's skull to be brought from the gibbet and fixed as a perpetual ornament by the crucifix in thy cell.

LADY EDITH. And if thou dost send it from the gibbet to be placed forever in my sight, I will say it is a relic of a good knight cruelly and unworthily done to death by one—by one who should have known better how to reward chivalry. Minion, call'st thou him [*with increasing vehemence*], he was indeed my lover, and a most true one. Work thy will on this worthy knight. Edith, for whom he dies, will know how to weep his memory; to me no one shall speak more of politic alliances, to be sanctioned with this poor hand. I could not, would not have been his bride living, but death unites the high and the low; I am henceforth the spouse of the grave. [*Enter Carmelite Monk.*]

KING RICHARD. Now, by both sword and sceptre, the worlds are leagued to drive me mad. Fools, women and monks cross me at every step. How comes he to live still?

THE MONK. My gracious liege, I entreated of the Lord of Gilsland to stay the execution until I had thrown myself at your royal — —

KING RICHARD. And he was wilful enough to grant thy request? It is a piece of his wonted obstinacy. And what is it thou hast to say? Speak, in the Devil's name?

THE MONK. My Lord, there is a weighty secret, but it rests under the seal of confession; I dare not tell or even

whisper it, but I swear to thee by my holy order, if I might confide it to thee, it would utterly turn thee from thy bloody purpose concerning him.

KING RICHARD. Give me to know this secret, and I shall do what shall seem fitting in the matter. But I am no blind Bayard to take a leap in the dark under the stroke of a pair of priestly spurs.

THE MONK. [*Throwing back his cowl.*] For twenty years have I macerated this miserable body in the caverns of Engaddi, doing penance for a great crime. Think you I, who am dead to the world, would contrive a falsehood to endanger my own soul, or that I would betray the secrets of the confessional?

KING RICHARD. So thou art that hermit of whom men speak so much? Richard fears no hobgoblins. Thou and they may content yourselves; I will not put my neck into the loop of a Carmelite's girdle. And, for your envoy, he shall die the sooner because thou dost entreat for him.

THE MONK. Now, God be gracious to thee, Lord King; thou art setting that mischief on foot which thou wilt hereafter wish thou hadst stopt though it had cost thee a limb. Rash, blinded man, beware!

KING RICHARD. Away, away! The sun has risen on the dishonour of England, and it is not yet avenged. Ladies and priests, withdraw if ye would not hear orders which would displease you; for by St. George, I swear — —

[*Enter El Hakim.*]

EL HAKIM. Swear not! [*raising hand.*]

KING RICHARD. Ha! My learned Hakim; come, I hope, to tax our generosity?

EL HAKIM. I come to request instant speech with you.

KING RICHARD. Dearest Berengari, begone! Edith, go, if you are wise.

[*Exeunt the Queen and Edith.*]

THE MONK. [*As he passes out of the door of tent, turning back and raising hand.*] Woe to him who rejects the counsel of the Church and betaketh himself to the foul divan of the infidel. King Richard, I do not yet depart from thy encampment; the sword falls not, but it hangs by a hair. We shall meet again.

KING RICHARD. Be it so, haughty priest. [*To El Hakim*]
In what can I pleasure thee, my learned physician?

EL HAKIM. [*Bowing low*] Let thy servant speak one word and yet live; I would remind thee that thou owest, not to me but to the Intelligences whose benefits I dispense, a life.

KING RICHARD. And I warrant thou wouldst have another in requittal.

EL HAKIM. Such is my humble prayer to the great Melech Ric; even the life of this good knight who is doomed to die, and but for such fault as was committed by Sultan Adam, the father of all men.

KING RICHARD. And thy wisdom might remind thee, Hakim, that Adam died for it. [*Getting up and pacing tent with some emotion, and talking to himself.*] Why, God-americy, I knew what he desired just as soon as he entered the pavilion! Here is one poor life justly condemned to extinction, and I, a King and a soldier who have slain thousands by my command, and scores with my own hand, am to have no power over it although the honour of my arms, of my house, of my very Queen hath been attainted by this culprit. By St. George! It makes me laugh. [*Laughing*] Ha! ha! ha! No sooner one goes than another appears. Wife, kinswoman, hermit, Hakim; each appears in the lists as soon as the other is defeated. Why, this is a single knight fighting against the whole melee of the tournament—ha! ha! ha! [*laughing*]. [*To El Hakim.*] Take the freedom of a thousand captives instead, and I will give the warrant instantly. This man's life can avail thee nothing, and it is forfeited.

EL HAKIM. All our lives are forfeited, but the great Creditor is merciful and exacts not the pledge rigorously or untimely.

KING RICHARD. Thou canst show me no special interest thou hast to become intercessor betwixt me and the execution of justice to which I am sworn, as crowned King?

EL HAKIM. Thou art sworn to the dealing forth of mercy as well as justice; ask no further questions; it is enough that by sparing this man's life at my request you will deliver yourself, Great King, and thy servant from great danger.

KING RICHARD. Are these terms to me, vile infidel? Art weary of thy life? [*Angrily grasping battle-ax.*]

EL HAKIM. Strike! Thine own deed shall then paint thee more worthless than could my words, though each had an hornet's sting.

KING RICHARD. [*Fiercely. Walking up and down tent with folded arms.*] Thankless and ungenerous! As well be termed coward and infidel. Hakim, thou hast chosen thy boon, though I had rather thou hadst asked my crown jewels. Go! Take this Scot, therefore, to thy keeping; the provost will deliver him to thee on this warrant. [*Writing and handing paper to El Hakim who passes out.*]

(CURTAIN)

ACT V.

SCENE:—*King Richard's tent in camp of allies.*

KING RICHARD. [*Soliloquizing.*] Strange pertinacity in this Hakim, and a wonderful chance to interfere between that audacious Scot and the chastisement he has so richly deserved. Yet, let him live! There is one brave man the more in the world. And now for the Austrian. Ho! is the Baron of Gilsland there without?

[*Enter De Vaux, followed by Hermit wrapped in goat-skin mantle.*]

KING RICHARD. Sir Thomas of Gilsland, take trumpet and herald and go instantly to the tent of him whom they call Archduke of Austria and see that it be when the press of his knights and vassals be greatest around him; enter his presence with as little reverence as thou mayst and impeach him on the part of Richard of England, that he hath this night, by his own hand or that of others, stolen from its staff the banner of England. Wherefore, say to him our pleasure that within an hour from the time of my speaking, he restore the said banner with all reverence, he himself and his principal barons waiting the whilst with heads uncovered and without their robes of honor. That, moreover, he pitch beside it on the one hand, his own banner reversed, as that which hath been dishonoured by theft and felony, and on the other, a lance bearing the head of him who was

his nearest counsellor or assistant in this base injury. And say, that such our behests being punctually discharged we will forgive his other forfeits.

DE VAUX. And how if the Duke of Austria deny all accession to this act of wrong and of felony?

KING RICHARD. Tell him, were he backed with his two bravest champions will we prove it, on foot or on horse; in the desert or in the field; time, place and arms, all of his own choice.

DE VAUX. Bethink you of the peace of God and the Church, my liege — —

KING RICHARD. Bethink you how to execute my commands, my liege vassal. [*Impatiently.*]

De Vaux turns to go, but is detained by a gesture from the Hermit.

HERMIT. In the name of God and the most Holy Father, I prohibit this defiance betwixt two Christian princes whose shoulders are signed by the blessed mark under which they swore brotherhood. Richard of England, recall the most unhallowed message thou hast given to that baron. Danger and death are nigh thee; the dagger is glancing at thy very throat.

KING RICHARD. Danger and death are playmates to Richard of England, and he hath braved too many swords to fear a dagger.

HERMIT. Danger and death are near [*sinking voice*] and after death, the judgment!

KING RICHARD. Good Father, you of the Church seem to me to presume somewhat upon the dignity of your holy character. Without challenging your right to take charge of our conscience, methinks you might leave us the charge of our own honour.

HERMIT. Presume! is it for me to presume, Richard of England, who am but the bell obeying the hand of the sexton? See, on my knees [*throwing himself on his knees before the King*], I implore thee to have mercy on Christendom, on England and on thyself.

KING RICHARD. Rise, rise; what danger awaits us, reverend father? And when stood the power of England so low that the noisy bluster of this new-made duke's displeasure should alarm her or her monarch?

HERMIT. There sits an enemy in thy house of life, Lord King, Richard of England, malign at once to thy fame and thy prosperity, menacing thee with instant and bloody peril, and which, dost thou not yield thy proud will to the rule of thy duty will crush thee, even in thy pride.

KING RICHARD. Away; this is heathen science; Christians practice it not; wise men believe it not. Old man, thou dotest.

HERMIT. I dote not, Richard of England. I am the blind man who holds the torch to others, though it yields no light to himself. Ask me touching the weal of Christendom and of this Crusade, and I will speak with thee as the wisest counsellor on whose tongue persuasion ever sat.

KING RICHARD. I would not break the bands of unity asunder among the princes of the Crusade; but what atonement can they render me for the insult and injustice which I have sustained.

HERMIT. Even of that I am prepared and commissioned to speak by the council, which, meeting hastily at the summons of Philip of France, have taken measures for that effect.

KING RICHARD. Strange, that others should treat of what is due to the wounded Majesty of England.

HERMIT. They are willing to anticipate your demands and consent that the banner of England be replaced upon St. George's Mount.

KING RICHARD. And Austria?

HERMIT. Austria will clear himself of the suspicion.

KING RICHARD. Will clear himself by the trial by combat?

HERMIT. Peace, Richard; oh, peace. For shame, if not for charity. Who shall praise or honour princes who insult and calumniate each other? The destroying angel hath stood as of old by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jesubite, and the blade is drawn in his hand, by which at no distant date Richard, the lion-hearted, shall be as low as the meanest peasant.

KING RICHARD. Must it then be so soon? Yet, even so be it. May my course be bright, if it be but brief.

HERMIT. Alas! Noble King, short and melancholy is the span that divides thee from the grave which yawns for thee;

a grave in which thou shalt be laid without lineage to succeed thee, without the tears of a people exhausted by thy ceaseless wars.

KING RICHARD. [*To himself.*] He raves.

HERMIT. Oh, heart of steel and hand of iron, upon whom example as well as advice is alike thrown away! Yet thou shalt be spared for a season, and in case it so be, thou shouldst turn and do that which is acceptable in the sight of heaven.

[*Exeunt Hermit.*]

KING RICHARD. A mad priest. [*To De Vaux.*] After him, De Vaux, and see that he comes to no harm; a juggler hath more reverence amongst our varlets than a priest or a saint, and they may put some scorn upon him.

[*Exeunt De Vaux.*]

(CURTAIN)

CRIES [*from within.*] “Lead us on gallant Lion’s heart—none so worthy to lead where brave men follow. Lead us on to Jerusalem—to Jerusalem! It is the will of God; it is the will of God! Blessed is he who shall lend an arm to its fulfillment. Zion, Zion! War, war! Instant battle with the infidels! It is the will of God; it is the will of God!”

[*Grand Master and Conrade walking slowly.*]

GRAND MASTER. I ever told thee that Richard would burst through the flimsy wiles you spread for him, as would a lion through a spider’s web. Thou seest he has but to speak, and his breath agitates these fickle fools as easily as the whirlwind catches scattered straws, and sweeps them together or disperses them at his pleasure.

MARQUIS CONRADE. When the blast has passed away the straws which it made dance to its pipe will settle to earth again.

GRAND MASTER. But knowest thou not, besides, that it seems if this new purpose of conquest shall be abandoned and pass away, but Richard may yet probably become King of Jerusalem by compact, and establish those terms of treaty with the Soldan, which thou thyself thoughtest him to spurn at. I will trust thy fine-spun measures no longer, but will try my own. Knows’t thou not the people whom the Saracens call Charegites?

MARQUIS CONRADE. Surely; they are desperate and besotted enthusiasts, who devote their lives to the advancement of religion—somewhat like Templars—only they are never known to pause in the race of their calling.

GRAND MASTER. Jest not; know, that one of these men has set down, in his bloody vow, the name of the Island Emperor yonder, to be hewn down as the chief enemy of the Moslem faith.

MARQUIS. A most judicious paynim. May Mahomet send him his paradise for his reward.

GRAND MASTER. He was taken in the camp by one of our squires, and, in private examination, frankly avowed his fixed and determined purpose to me.

MARQUIS. Now the Heavens pardon them who prevented the purpose of this most judicious Charegite.

GRAND MASTER. He is my prisoner, but prisons have been broken, chains left unlocked, and captives have escaped. When loose he resumes his quest, for it is the nature of this sort of bloodhound never to quit the slot of the prey he has once scented.

MARQUIS. Say no more of it. I see thy policy, It is dreadful, but the emergency is imminent.

GRAND MASTER. I only told thee of it that thou mayst keep thyself on thy guard, for the uproar will be dreadful, and there is no knowing on whom the English may vent their rage.

(CURTAIN)

[*King Richard's tent. Enter equerry announcing the arrival of a messenger from Saladin.*]

KING RICHARD. Admit him instantly.

Enter Nubian slave, who, prostrating himself, and having touched the earth with his forehead, on bended knee presents letter to King Richard.

KING RICHARD. [*Reads. To slave.*] Art thou a pagan?

[*Slave indicates by motion that he is unable to talk.*]

KING RICHARD. I understand thee; thou dost suffer under the infliction of God, not by the cruelty of man. Cans't thou clean an armour and belt, and buckle it in time of need? Thou art an apt and will be a useful knave; thou shalt wait in my chamber and on my person. If thou hast no tongue,

thou canst carry no tales; neither provoke me by any unfit reply. Thou shalt commence thy office presently for I see a speck of rust darkening on that shield.

Taking down shield and handing it to slave who proceeds to polish the same. Enter Lord Neville, with dispatches.

LORD NEVILLE. [*Handing packet to King Richard.*] From England, my lord.

KING RICHARD. From England, our own England. [*Gazing at packet.*] Alas! they little think how hard their sovereign has been beset by sickness and sorrow, faint friends and forward enemies. Ha! this comes from no peaceful land; they too have their feuds. Neville, begone; I must peruse these tidings alone and at leisure.

[*Exeunt Neville.*]

SCENE. *King Richard's tent. Camp of the Allies. Soldiers coming with Dervish in their midst, approaching King Richard's tent.*

A VOICE. [*To Dervish, pulling him about.*] Dance, marabout, dance or we will scourge thee with our bow-strings.

A VOICE: Give him water, they always crave a drink after their merry-go-round.

A VOICE. Aha, water thou say'st; how wouldst like such beverage thyself after such a morrice-dancing?

A VOICE. The devil a water-drop he gets here. We will teach the old heathen to be a good Christian and drink wine.

A VOICE. Ay, ay, and in case he be restive, fetch thou Dick Hunter's horn that he drenches his mare with.

A VOICE. The horn, the horn, little difference between a Turk and a Turkish horse, and we will use him conforming.

A VOICE. By George, you will choke him; besides, it is a sin to throw away so much wine on a heathen dog.

A VOICE. I tell thee, man, this flagon will set his brains spinning. Choke? He will no more choke on that than Ben's black bitch on a pound of butter.

A VOICE. Be active a bit, man, wilt thou, and force open his teeth with the haft of thy dagger. [*Prying open his mouth and pouring wine down.*] Oop sey es; down it goes like lamb's wool. [*Shouting and laughter.*]

KING RICHARD. [*Stepping to the door of his tent.*] How, knaves; no respect, no observance?

Soldiers immediately salute King who turns back into his tent. Soldiers thereupon start to disperse, when one of them starts to pull the Dervish about.

A VOICE. [*To soldier pulling at Dervish.*] Leave him still, ye fool; leave him alone.

Soldiers retire leaving Dervish upon the ground. Dervish raises his head slightly, then commences to crawl toward the tent of King Richard. When within a few feet of the King's tent the Dervish springs to his feet and rushes forward and, with dagger uplifted strikes at King, who is standing with his back to him. Nubian slave catches the blow intended for King on his shield. Dervish strikes at Nubian, inflicting wound in the arm. King Richard turns, and picking up a camp stool strikes Dervish, killing him. Guards hurriedly surround tent.

KING RICHARD. [*To guards.*] Ye are careful warders; watchful sentinels ye are to leave me to do such work with my own hand. Here! cast that carrion out of camp; stick the head on a lance and turn the face to Mecca that he may the easier tell the foul imposter on whose inspiration he came hither how he sped on his errand. For thee, [*turning to the Nubian*] my swart and sable friend — But how is this! Thou art wounded; and with a poisoned weapon, I warrant. [*To the soldiers.*] Here, suck the poison from his wound, one of you.

[*Soldiers stand and gaze at King.*]

KING RICHARD. How now, sirrahs, are you dainty-lipped, or do you fear death that you dally thus?

A VOICE. Not the death of a man, but methinks I would not die like a poisoned rat for the sake of a black chattel there.

[*Pointing at the Nubian.*]

A VOICE. His Grace speaks of men sucking poison as if he said "Go, to, swallow a gooseberry!"

KING RICHARD. Nay, I never bade man do what I would not do myself. [*Applying lip to arm of Nubian slave.*]

LORD NEVILLE. Nay, nay, my Lord, thou shouldst not endanger thine own life for the sake of a slave.

A VOICE. I'll eat the nigger, if necessary, rather than your Grace should do that again.

KING RICHARD. Peace; make no more of it. But take this Nubian to thy quarters, Neville. I have changed my mind touching him. Let him be well cared for. But hark in thine ear; see that he escapes thee not; there is more in him than seems. And you, ye beef-devouring, wine-swilling English mastiffs, get ye to your guard again and be sure you keep it more warily.

LORD NEVILLE. My Lord, think thou not these caitiffs should be punished for permitting so suspicious a character to approach the tent of your Majesty?

KING RICHARD. Speak not of it, Neville. Wouldst thou have me avenge a petty risk to myself more severely than the loss of England's banner? It has been stolen—stolen by a thief or delivered up by a traitor and no blood has been shed for it. [*To the Nubian.*] My sable friend, thou art an expounder of mysteries, saith the illustrious Soldan; now would I give thine own weight in gold if thou couldst show me the thief who did mine honour that wrong. What say'st thou—ha?

[*Nubian slave bows.*]

KING RICHARD. Wilt thou undertake to make discovery in this matter? [*Slave nods assent.*] But how shall we understand each other? Can'st thou write, good fellow?

[*Slave nods.*]

KING RICHARD. Give him writing tools. [*Slave writes.*] [*To Lord Neville.*] Why, this fellow is a jewel, a black diamond, Neville.

LORD NEVILLE. So please you, my liege, if I might speak my poor mind, it were ill dealing in this ware.

KING RICHARD. Peace, Neville. [*Takes paper slave has written and reads.*]

“To Richard, King of England: This from the humblest of his slaves. Mysteries are the sealed caskets of heaven. Were your slave stationed where the leaders of the Christian host were made to pass before him in order, doubt not that if he who did the injury whereof my King complains shall be among the number, he may be made manifest in his iniquity, though he be hidden under seven veils.”

Now, by St. George! thou hast spoken most opportunely. Neville, when we muster our troops tomorrow, the princes have agreed that, to expiate the affront offered to England in the theft of her banner, the leaders shall pass our new standard as it floats on St. George's Mount and salute it with formal regard. Believe me, the secret traitor will not dare to absent himself from an expurgation so solemn, lest his absence should be matter of suspicion. There will we place our sable man of counsel, and if his art can detect the villain, leave me to deal with him.

SIR HENRY NEVILLE. My liege, beware what work you begin. Here is the concord of our holy league unexpectedly renewed; will you upon such suspicion as a negro slave can instill, tear open wounds so lately closed, or will you use the solemn procession adopted for the reparation of your honor and establishment of unanimity amongst the discording princes as the means of again finding out new cause of offence, or reviving ancient quarrels?

KING RICHARD. Neville, thy zeal makes thee presumptuous and unmannerly. Never did I promise to abstain from taking whatever means were most promising to discover the infamous author of the attack upon my honor. Ere I had done so, I would have renounced my kingdom, my life.

SIR HENRY NEVILLE. But what hope that this juggling slave of Saladin will not palter with thy Grace?

KING RICHARD. Peace, Neville; thou thinkest thyself mighty wise, and art but a fool. Mind my charge touching this fellow. There is more in him than thy Westmoreland wit can fathom. And thou [*to the Nubian*], swart and silent, prepare to perform the feat thou hast promised, and by the word of a King, thou shalt choose thine own recompense. Lo, he writes again. [*Taking paper from slave and reading.*] "The will of the King is the law of his slave, nor doth it become him to ask guerdon for discharge of his devoir." GUERDON and DEVOIR! These Eastern people will profit by the Crusaders; they are acquiring the language of chivalry! And see, Neville, how discomposed that fellow looks. Were it not for his colour, he would blush."

SIR HENRY NEVILLE. The poor slave cannot endure your Grace's eyes. It is nothing more.

KING RICHARD. Well, this bold scroll proceeds to say that our trusty mute is charged with a message from Saladin to the Lady Edith Plantagenet, and craves means and opportunity to deliver it. What thinkest thou of a request so modest? Ha, Neville?

SIR HENRY NEVILLE. I cannot say how such freedom may relish with your Grace; but the lease of the messenger's neck would be a short one, who should carry such a request to Soldan on the part of your Majesty.

KING RICHARD. Nay, I thank heaven that I covet none of his sunburnt beauties; and for punishing this fellow for discharging his master's errand, and that, when he has just saved my life, methinks it were something too summary. I'll tell thee, Neville, a secret, for although our sable and mute minister be present, he cannot, thou knowest, tell it over again, even if he should chance to understand us. I tell thee, that for this fortnight past I have been under a strange spell, and I would I were disenchanted. There has no sooner any one done me good service, but lo you, he cancels his interest in me by some deep injury; and, on the other hand, he who hath deserved death at my hands for some treachery or some insult, is sure to be the very person of all others who confers upon me some obligation that overbalances his demerits, and thus renders respite of his sentence a debt due from my honour. Thus, thou seest, I am deprived of the best part of my royal function, since I can neither punish men nor reward them. I will say nothing concerning the request of this our sable attendant, save that it is an unusually bold one.

SCENE II.

Camp of the Allies. Mount of St. George. Queen and attendants on top of Mount of St. George. King Richard and retinue in review at foot of Mount. Nubian slave with hound watching ranks as they pass by.

KING RICHARD. [*To Nubian.*] Thy success in this enterprise, my sable friend, I fear will not place thee high in the rank of wizards, or much augment thy merits towards our person.

Armies passing in review, and as Conrade of Montserrat passes, the hound springs upon him and bears him to the earth.

KING RICHARD. Thy hound hath pulled down the right quarry. Pluck off the dog lest he throttle him.

CRIES OF "Cut the slave and his hound to pieces."

[By attendants of the Marquis of Montserrat.]

KING RICHARD. He dies the death who injures the hound. He hath but done his duty. Stand forward, traitor. Conrade, Marquis of Montserrat, I impeach thee of treason.

CRIES OF "Cut the slave and his hound to pieces."

KING RICHARD. Let no man lay hand upon them as he loves his life. Conrade, stand forth, if thou darest and deny the accusation which this mute animal hath brought against thee, of injury done him and foul scorn to England!

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. I never touched the banner.

KING RICHARD. Thy words betray thee, Conrade, for how didst thou know save from conscious guilt that the question is touching the banner?

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. Dost thou impute to a prince and an ally a crime which after all was probably committed by some paltry felon for the sake of the gold thread? Wouldst thou now impeach a confederate on the credit of a dog?

KING RICHARD.

[Casts his glove upon the ground in front of Conrade.]

EARL OF SALISBURY. I protest against my royal brother periling his life which is the property of the people of England, in such a cause. Here *[picking up glove and handing same to King]*, noble brother, receive back your glove. Mine shall lie in its stead. *[Casting glove on ground.]*

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. Princes and Nobles, I will not accept of King Richard's defiance, but touching his bastard brother, or any other who shall dare to stand god-father to this most false charge, I will defend my honour in the lists and prove whosoever impeaches it a false liar.

KING RICHARD. I have charged yonder Conrade as a thief. I still believe and charge him to be such, and when a day is appointed for the combat, I will find a champion to appear in support of my challenge; for thou, William, must not thrust thy long sword into this quarrel.

(CURTAIN)

SCENE III.

King Richard's tent. King Richard and Lord Neville.]

KING RICHARD. Bring in the Nubian! [*Exit Neville, returning with the Nubian, who, having prostrated himself, remains standing before the King.*] Thou canst well of woodcraft, and hast started thy game and brought him to bay as ably as if Tristram himself had taught thee. But this is not all, he must be brought down at force. I myself would have like to have leveled my hunting-spear at him. There are, it seems, respects which prevent this. Thou art about to return to the camp of the Soldan, bearing a letter, requiring his courtesy to appoint neutral ground for the deed of chivalry, and, should it consist with his pleasure, to concur with us in witnessing it. Now, we think thou might'st find in that camp some cavalier, who, for the love of truth and honour, will do battle with this same traitor of Montserrat. [*Nubian bends his head.*] It is well I see thy desire to oblige me in this matter. And now, to another point. Have you yet seen Edith Plantagenet? Why, lo you there! the very sound of the name of a royal maiden, of beauty so surpassing as that of our lovely cousin, seems to have power enough to well nigh make the dumb speak. What miracle, then, might her eye work upon such a subject! I will make the experiment, friend slave. Thou shalt see this choice beauty of our court, and do the errand of this princely Soldan. Let me in one thing warn you, my sable envoy. Even if thou shouldst feel that the kindly influence of her whom thou art soon to behold should loosen the bonds of thy tongue, presently imprisoned, as the good Soldan expresses it, within the ivory walls of its castle, beware how thou changest thy taciturn character, or speakest a word in her presence, even if thy powers of utterance were miraculously restored. Believe me, that I should have thy tongue extracted by the roots, and its ivory palace, that is, I presume, its range of teeth, drawn out one by one. Wherefore, be wise and silent still. This behest we lay on thee as on a slave. Wert thou knight and gentleman, we would require thine honour in pledge of thy silence, which is one especial condition of our trust. [*To Neville.*] Go, Neville, with this slave to the tent of our royal consort, and say that it is our pleasure that he have

an audience—a private audience—of our cousin Edith. He is charged with a commission to her. Thou canst show him the way, also, in case he require thy guidance. And thou, too, friend Ethiop, what thou dost, do quickly, and return hither within the half hour! *[Exit Neville and Nubian.]*

(CURTAIN)

SCENE IV.

Pavilion of Lady Edith. Lady Edith and her Maid.

[Lord Neville presents message to Maid, who, after presenting it to Lady Edith, returns to Neville, who ushers in Nubian and retires, when maid, too, on signal from Lady Edith, retires. Nubian throws himself on one knee, with looks bent on ground and arms folded on his bosom, and Lady Edith, coming within a step of him, holds the light towards his face, then turns from him and places lamp so as to throw the shadow of his face in profile upon the curtain.]

LADY EDITH. Is it you? Is it indeed you, brave Knight of the Leopard—Gallant Sir Kenneth of Scotland—is it indeed you—thus servilely disguised—thus surrounded by an hundred dangers? I see, I know, I have guessed right. I marked you from your first appearance near the platform on which I stood with the Queen. I knew, too, your valiant hound. She is no true lady, and unworthy the service of such a knight as thou art, from whom disguise of dress or hue could conceal a faithful servant. Speak, then, without fear, to Edith Plantagenet. She knows how to grace in adversity the good knight who served, honoured and did deeds of arms in her name, when fortune befriended him. Still silent! Is it fear or shame that keeps thee so? Fear should be unknown to thee; and for shame, let it remain with those who wronged thee. *[Slave lays his finger upon his lips. Edith steps back somewhat displeased.]* What! The Asiatic mute in very deed, as well as in attire? This I looked not for—or thou may'st scorn me, perhaps, for thus boldly acknowledged that I have heedfully observed the homage thou hast paid me? Hold no unworthy thought of Edith on that account. She knows well the bounds which reserve and modesty prescribe to high-born maidens, and she knows when and how far

they should give place to gratitude—to a sincere desire that it were in her power to repay services and repair injuries, arising from the devotion which a good knight bore towards her. Why fold thy hands together and wring them with so much passion? Can it be that their cruelty has actually deprived thee of speech? Thou shakest thy head. Be it a spell, be it obstinacy, I question thee no farther, but leave thee to thine errand after thine own fashion. I also can be mute. [*Slave presents letter of Soldan, wrapped in silk and cloth of gold. She takes and surveys it carelessly, then lays aside and turns to him.*] Not even a word to do thine errand to me? Begone! I have spoken enough, too much, to one who will not waste on me a word in reply. Begone! and say, if I have wronged thee, I have done penance; for if I have been the unhappy means of dragging thee down from a station of honour, I have, in this interview, forgotten my own worth, and lowered myself in thy eyes and in my own. [*Covering her face with hands. Nubian rises, but she waves him back.*] Stand off! thou whose soul Heaven hath suited to its new station! Aught less dull and fearful than a slavish mute had spoken a word of gratitude, were it but to reconcile me to my own degradation. Why pause you? Begone! [*Nubian points toward letter. She snatches it up.*] I had forgotten. The dutiful slave waits an answer to his message. How is this? From the Soldan! [*Reading letter; laughs in bitter anger.*] Now, this passes imagination! No jongleur can show so deft a transmutation! His legerdemain can transform zechins and bezants into doits and marvedies; but can his art convert a Christian knight, ever esteemed among the bravest among the Holy Crusade, into the dust-kissing slave of a heathen Soldan—the bearer of a paynim's insolent proposals to a Christian maiden—nay, forgetting the laws of honourable chivalry, as well as of religion! But it avails not talking to the willing slave of a heathen hound. Tell your master when his scourge shall have found thee a tongue, that which thou hast seen me do. [*Throwing letter on ground and placing her foot on it.*] And say to him, that Edith Plantagenet scorns the homage of an unchristian pagan. [*As she turns from him he kneels at her feet and attempts to grasp her robe and detain her.*] Heardst thou not

what I said, dull slave? Tell the heathen Soldan, thy master, that I scorn his suit as much as I despise the prostration of a worthless renegade to religion and chivalry—to God and to his lady. Go!

[*Voice of Neville from without, who enters and conducts him out.*]

(CURTAIN)

ACT VI.

SCENE:—*The "Diamond of the Desert."* Queen and female attendants. King Richard and retinue. The Soldan and retinue. King and Soldan dismount and embrace.

THE SOLDAN. The Melech Ric is welcome to Saladin as water to this desert. I trust he hath no distrust of this numerous array. Excepting the armed slaves of my household, those who surround you with eyes of wonder and of welcome, are, even the humblest of them, the privileged nobles of my thousand tribes; for who that could claim a title to be present would remain at home when such a Prince was to be seen as Richard, with the terrors of whose name even on the sands of Yemen, the nurse stills her child, and the free Arab subdues his restive steed?

KING RICHARD. And these are all nobles of Araby?

THE SOLDAN. They claim such rank, but though numerous they are within the conditions of the treaty and bear no arms but the sabre. Even the iron of their lances is left behind.

DE VAUX. I fear they have left them where they can soon be found. A most flourishing House of Peers, I confess, and would find Westminster Hall something too narrow for them.

KING RICHARD. Hush, De Vaux, I command thee. Noble Saladin, suspicion and thou cannot exist on the same ground. Seest thou, I too have brought some champions with me, though armed, in breach of agreement, for bright eyes and fair features are weapons that cannot be left behind.

THE SOLDAN. [*Making obeisance towards the ladies.*]

KING RICHARD. Nay, they will not fear a closer encounter brother; wilt thou not ride toward them and the curtains will be presently withdrawn.

THE SOLDAN. That may Allah prohibit, since not an Arab looks on who would not think it shame to the noble ladies to be seen with their faces uncovered.

KING RICHARD. Thou shalt see them, then, in private, brother. [*De Vaux removes the riding cloak from the King's shoulders.*] Where is my sage Hakim? I trust I shall see the learned leech; I have much to thank him for, and had brought some small presents.

THE SOLDAN. [*Exchanging his turban for a Tartar cap*] The sick man knoweth the physician by his step; but when he is recovered he knoweth not even his face when he looks upon him.

KING RICHARD. A miracle, a miracle. That I should lose my learned Hakim merely by absence of his cap and robe, and that I should find him again in my royal brother Saladin!

THE SOLDAN. Such is oft the fashion of the world; the tattered robe makes not always the dervish.

KING RICHARD. And it was through thy intercession that yonder Knight of the Leopard was saved from death, and by thy artifice that he revisited my camp in disguise?

THE SOLDAN. Even so; I was physician enough to know that unless the wounds of his bleeding honour were stanch'd, the days of his life must be few. His disguise was more easily penetrated than I had expected from the success of my own.

KING RICHARD. An accident let me first know that his skin was artificially discoloured; and that hint once taken, detection became easy, for his form and person are not to be forgotten. I confidently expect that he will do battle for me on the morrow.

(CURTAIN)

SCENE:—“*The Diamond of the Desert.*” *Conrade of Montserrat's tent. Guard before door.*]

GRAND MASTER. [*To guards.*] Do you not know me, ye knaves?

THE GUARD. We do, most valiant and reverend, but even *you* may not at present enter. The Marquis is about to confess himself.

GRAND MASTER. Confess himself! and to whom, I pray thee?

THE GUARD. My master bid me be secret.

GRAND MASTER. [*Entering tent.*] What means this, Marquis? Up, for shame. If you must needs confess, am I not here?

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. I have confessed to you too often already. For God's sake, Grand Master, begone, and let me unfold my conscience to this holy man.

GRAND MASTER. In what is he holier than I am? [*To Hermit of Engaddi.*] Hermit, prophet, madman, say if thou darest in what thou excellest me?

HERMIT OF ENGADDI. Bold and bad man, know that I am like the latticed window, and the devine light passes through to avail others, though, alas, it helpeth not me. Thou art like the iron stanchions, which neither receive light themselves, nor communicate it to any one.

GRAND MASTER. Prate not to me, but depart from this tent! The Marquis shall not confess this morning, unless it be to me.

HERMIT OF ENGADDI. [*To Marquis.*] Is this your pleasure? For think not I will obey that man, if you continue to desire my assistance.

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. Alas, what would you have me say? Farewell for awhile; we will speak anon.

HERMIT OF ENGADDI. Oh, procrastination! Thou art a soul murderer! Unhappy man, farewell; not for a while, but until we shall both meet, no matter where. And for thee, [*turning to Grand Master,*] tremble! TREMBLE!

[*Exeunt Hermit.*]

GRAND MASTER. Tremble! [*Laughing scornfully.*] I cannot, if I would. [*To Marquis.*] Come! To this gear hastily, since thou needs go through the foolery. Hark thee, I think I know most of thy frailties by heart, so we may omit the details and begin with the absolution.

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. Know what thou art thyself. It is blasphemous to speak of pardoning another.

GRAND MASTER. Thou art more scrupulous than orthodox. The absolution of the wicked priest is as effectual as if he were himself a saint, otherwise, God help the poor penitent.

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. No, I would rather die unconfessed than mock the sacrament.

GRAND MASTER. Come, rouse up your courage and speak not thus. In an hour's time thou shalt stand victorious in the lists, or confess thee in thy helmet, like a valiant knight.

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. Alas, it augurs ill for this affair. The strange discovery by the instinct of a dog; the revival of this Scottish knight who comes into the lists like a specter. [*shudders*] all betokens evil.

GRAND MASTER. Pshaw! I have seen thee bend thy lance boldly against him in sport, and with equal chance of success. Think thou art in a tournament and who bears him better in a tilt-yard than thou? [*Aside.*] The craven will loose the day in pure faintness and cowardice of heart. I should have fought the combat myself. Would to God the Scot may strike him dead on the spot.

(CURTAIN)

SCENE:—*Place of combat. Sunrise. The Prayer.*

[*Knights mounting for the duel.*]

GRAND MASTER. [*To Conrade.*] Coward and fool; recall thy senses, and do me this battle bravely, else by Heaven, shouldst thou escape him, thou escapest not me.

[*Soldan drops handkerchief as signal for duel.*]

(THE DUEL)

SIR KENNETH. [*Standing over Conrade with uplifted sword.*] Avow thy guilt, traitor, Conrade of Montserrat.

MARQUIS OF MONTSERRAT. I am guilty, but there are worse traitors in the camp than I.

[*Shouts and cries of Allah, Allah, drums, trumpets, clarions and cymbals.*]

KING RICHARD. [*Raising hand toward Sir Kenneth.*] Brave Knight of the Leopard, thou hast shown that the Ethiopian may change his skin, and the Leopard his spots. Yet I have more to say to you when I have conducted you to the presence of the ladies, the best judges, the best rewarders of deeds of chivalry. And thou, too, princely Saladin, wilt also attend them. [*Addressing the Soldan.*] Hark! The timbrils announce that our Queen and her attendants

are leaving their gallery. [*Enter Queen Berengari, Lady Edith and attendants.*] [*To the ladies, motioning toward Sir Kenneth.*] Unarm him! Undo his spurs! Berengari, Queen though thou art, thou owest him what marks of favor thou canst give. [*To Lady Edith.*] Unlace his helmet. And what expect you from beneath this shell? [*Motioning toward Sir Kenneth's helmet.*] What think ye of him, gallants and beauties? Doth he represent the Ethiopian slave, or doth he present the face of an obscure and nameless adventurer? No, by my good sword. Here terminates his various disguises. He hath knelt before you unknown save by his worth; he arises equally distinguished by birth and by fortune. The adventurous Knight Kenneth arises DAVID, EARL OF HUNTINGTON, PRINCE ROYAL OF SCOTLAND! Give me thy hand, fair cousin; and, PRINCE OF SCOTLAND, thine.

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(FINALE)

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