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THE
RIVALS
OF
MADONNA,
THE
QUEEN OF THE WORLD.

A DRAMA,

[IN FOUR ACTS]

By A. STEWART WALSH.

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PUBLISHED BY S. F. McLEAN & Co.,

NEW YORK.

1903.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

1. SIR ST. GEORGE D'HEARTMYTHS, Crusader-Knight.
 2. SIR HENRI DE BETTERMAN, Crusader-Knight.
 3. ROKHAMA, Moslem Pasha.
 4. DOOBERDAB, Confidant of Rokhama.
 5. CAPTIO, Serving Brother of the Knights.
 6. BEATULUS, Serving Brother of the Knights.
 7. SHUMENTU, a Pagan Priest and a Renegade.
 8. PETER THE ROUSER, a Fanatic.
 9. MAIMONIDES, a Leader of the "Golden Empire League."
 10. CHAPLAIN FOREN, of the Knights.
 11. SIR LEROY D'Heartmyths, Brother of Sir St. George.
 12. { KAFADAR, }
 { CHARMAGLY, } Turkish Harem Agents.
 13. ASTARTE, Egyptian Princess, Necromancer and "Queen of the Pleasure Empire."
 14. AUREOLA, Daughter of Maimonides and "Queen of the Golden Empire."
 15. EDENA, Daughter of Dooberdab.
 16. JUDITH, Maid of Aureola.
 17. { EIMELIA, }
 { EDILULU, } Harem Prizes.
 18. ARDENTA, a Georgian Syren.
- Children, Knights, Mamelukes, Harem Beauties, etc.

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THE RIVALS OF
MADONNA,
THE
QUEEN OF THE WORLD.

TIME ABOUT 1230 A. D.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Overlooking Acre, a coast city, Palestine.
(*Christians, Crusaders, etc., passing in a route toward city. In the distance. CAPTIO and BEATULUS, Serving Brothers, running in.*)

BEATULUS. Oh, we dodged the Moslem, but we had a run for it, my Captio, ha, ha!

CAPTIO. Heroes for once! We made more than two score of them fly. Aye, and they would be running yet had they not missed our tracks. (*Puffing*) Oh, I am empty now of both wind and provinder.

BEATULUS. Ah, my Captio, thou shalt not be empty while we have ass-meat. Ha, ha! Wilt thou have some? (*Offers meat*)

CAPTIO. (*Seizing meat*) And thou darst offer such unholy provinder without crossing thyself. (*Eats voraciously*) To think that I, a Christian epicure, should come down to thistle-fed donkey! Oh, turning cannibal. One ass eating another.

BEATULUS. It might be worse. What if the other ass were eating thee? Ha, ha! But why dost thou everlastingly carp?

CAPTIO. I carp to keep up my courage. Dost thou not know that few grumblers commit suicide?

BEATULUS. Oh, it were better thou teach thy diaphragm to pump up laughter as a courage breeder. That is the way I do. Ha, ha.

CAPTIO. I have heard of the laughing jackass, but until I knew thee, I believed the creature a myth. Breed laughter? Pump up courage? Waagh! Come and look at our crumpled

up rear guard in its crawl-trot, trying to get into yonder city. (*Drew Beatulus to a hedge beyond which the refugees are passing*) Why did we ever leave dear England to come heroing in this Kill-All-Land as Serving Brothers of the Knights? As part of such an army of Britons, Franks, Dutchmen, Dagoes, and Nobodies from nowheres? Do any of these half-starved and altogether-ragged rables know why they came hither?

BEATULUS. Monk Peter, the Rouser, says that we came here to the Holy Land to crown at Bethlehem a new Eve and so to end all the troubles brought on us poor humans by the old Eve and her snake. Then comes the golden age. Ha, ha!

CAPTIO. Golden fiddlesticks! Peter promises like some of our modern politicians. In his Pinchbeck age there will be plenty to eat and nothing to pay? (BEATULUS *nods and laughs*) No clothes needed, none to wear out, and everybody in fashion all the time? (BEATULUS *nods*) No flitting and no divorces. Every man marry his own rib when lonely and be his own mother-in-law! (BEATULUS *laughs hilariously*) Lawyers never to take the wrong side of any case? Preachers all to agree as to the right way to save a soul? Public servants coming to believe that it is as short a way to Hades to steal wholesale as by highway robbery? Waagh! There will be no Golden Age until men are generally made over.

BEATULUS. But Peter says all will come right when the world is rid of tyrannical man-rule and given over to the care of the women, since all human troubles begin as soon as the kids get away from their cribs.

CAPTIO. So? Peter seeks to have us he's all go back to the blessed days when feeding followed spanking? Women's rule and women's rights! Do they not ever rule? Does not the hand that kneads the dough (*imitates kneading*) mould all creation? Ask the love-lorn youths, or the ever increasing crops of bald-heads whose bare pates prove their full subjection. Waagh.

BEATULUS. Oh, ho. Hither comes our good chaplain, Foren, with young De Roy D'Heartmyths the brother of our noble commander, Sir St. George. Ah, this Le Roy is the bravest of all the thirty thousand child crusaders who enlisted to aid the knights conquer Syria. Ha, ha.

CAPTIO. That is easy to say now, for none of the others will contradict thee. All of them not in Barbary slavery are at the bottom of the Adriatic Sea. Waagh!

(LE ROY *entering supported by* CHAPLAIN FOREN) Let me go back to my brother on the fighting line, good Chaplain.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. But thy brother commands that thou get into Acre to the Nuns of St. Magdaline that they may cure thy wound. Rest here a little, then we go on to the city.

CAPTIO. Poor kid, he needs his mother. Waagh! Hither moves thy Rouser, my Beatulus. That Peter which made half Europe mad to come upon this fateful crusade. His donkey is

well loaded with provinder. My tunic against thine, Chaplain, that whatever happens the Monk, he will keep near his donkey.

PETER THE ROUSER (*Enters leading donkey*) Turn back, turn back all. Panic the infidels. One shall chase a thousand; two put ten thousand to flight. (*E it*)

CAPTIO. Wilt thou charge them with thy long-eared ass, Peter? Gone so soon? And towards the place of safety? Waagh.

PETER THE ROUSER. (*Re-entering*) I go to call down from heaven winged chariots in which the faithful may ride in triumph to the coronation of the true Madonna at Bethlehem. (*Exit toward Acre*)

BEATULUS. Oh, but we will startle the Moslem when we go flying over their heads in golden chariots.

LE ROY. And Peter says I am to go back to France to raise another army of youths to help the knights chase the Moslem off the earth?

CAPTIO. Glory to St. Vitus and his dance. Every one about seems now to be raving. It is the fashion here. This is a cracked and crooked world. Only the cracked can understand it. Only the crooks bend to its ways, The straight sane people soon fall off of it into heaven—or the poor house. Waagh.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. It is well we all be moving. I hear horsemen in a large body moving this way. Moslem, most likely.

CAPTIO. No golden chariots for us yet? One shall chase a thousand, some other day! A thousand chase one to-day. Waagh. (*Exeunt*)

DOOBERDAB. (*Entering with PASHA ROKHAMA and Guard*) We cannot longer continue the pursuit of the Christians, as the night comes on.

ROKHAMA. (*Pointing to rising moon*) An omen. The crescent is blood red, but it rises. Victory, but a costly one for us, my Dooberdab, is predicted. (*Observing the path*) Some of the invaders passed here but recently.

DOOBERDAB. Yet we shall have them all soon. Two hundred thousand fighting men out of every Mohammedan quarter move against yonder doomed city, great Pasha.

ROKHAMA. Allah be praised! My faithful, now withdraw my guard to a distance. That Egyptian, Shumentu, comes hither, desiring to meet me, alone.

DOOBERDAB. Great Rokhama, thy pardon, but I must warn thee. That hooded priest is a cobra. Beware!

ROKHAMA. Loyal Dooberdab, fear naught for me on his score. I know how to charm, or kill any viper which either crawls or flies. (*Exit DOOBERDAB—enter SHUMENTU.*)

SHUMENTU. I haste to hail the rising sun of Moslemism, the glorious Rokhama. How doth Allah bless thee this hour?

ROKHAMA. Allah grants me to make the end of centuries of fighting between the followers of the cross and those of the cres-

cent. I have the Crusaders trapped in their last refuge yonder.

SHUMENTU. But thou leavest a dangerous enemy behind thee. At Bethlehem are the New Edenites, devoted to the glorification of Mary the mother of Christ. They claim that mysterious woman as the eternal example of what God thinks of her sex; they prate of the one wife home, deny to man the rights of his superiority to have as many of the inferior sex as he wills to minister to him, and even go so far as to teach the dangerous heresy that women have souls. All these things utterly oppose the crescent's supremacy.

ROKHAMA. Oh, if the preachers were all compelled to fight for the things concerning which they rant there would be far more fighting or much less preaching. Quacking about woman's rights has excited many in this life but revelutionized nothing. Let the New Edenites quack. There are no fighters there. They have with them for the most part only women and children.

SHUMENTU. Only women and children? Next to a fighter as the most dangerous enemy is the breeder or inspirer of a fighter. Hast thou not seen how the knights of this last crusade have gone desperately to the death inspired by devotion to their Madonna? Remember also that women make up half the world, and they rule the children. He that hath the women and children on his side will have the world at his will, sooner or later.

ROKHAMA. This debate is useless. I can do nothing as to New Eden. Our Sultan moved by the influence of that Baroness D'Heartmyths, of France, ha'h commanded that the Moslem leave the New Edenites undisturbed.

SHUMENTU. And they intend, as I have learned, to have a great coronation ceremony presently at which it is proposed to proclaim Mary of Bethlehem queen of women. At that coronation it is predicted that a miracle from heaven will appear to confirm the claim. Our faith cannot stand the appearing of such a miracle here in Syria.

ROKHAMA. Then let us hasten the proclamation of thy cunning invention, the Moslem Madonna. That done, I swear to Allah, from point to hilt of this (*uplifting scimitar*) to go about making New Eden desolate as soon as I have captured Acre. I will explain to the Sultan afterward.

SHUMENTU. Bravely spoken. Thy plan is worthy of a true son of the faith. Now go I into yonder Acre to plot for thy gain.

ROKHAMA. But I need thy counsel here, until Acre is taken, Shumentu.

SHEMENTU. Thou work without and I within, and they opposing us will need pity. Let me tell thee something. A secret league with world-wide branches has one of its councils in yonder city. Among other things that league proposes to set up a counterfeit of the Madonna of the Christians. By cunning devices I have promoted myself to power in that combination. I

must meet with its leaders at once,

ROKHAMA. To promote the candidate of the League? To abandon our Mo lem candidate?

SHEMENTU. It is cheaper to leap to the head of an excitement already made than to manufacture a new craze. That is the science of politics. Leave thy Shementu to work in his way and look for a good report from him, after Acre has fallen. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE II.—In Room of Tower of Out-Wall of Acre.

(CAPTIO and BEATULUS arranging place as Knights' Headquarters.)

BEATULUS. This will make a prime headquarters for our commander. (*Goes up stairway to a casement*) Our knights will have a fine lookout into the city here.

CAPTIO. (*Pointing to gate through outer wall*) And a fine run out that way which they will need soon, or the Lord hath not spoken by me. Waagh. (*Exeunt*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. (*Entering with SIR HENRI and LE ROY*) This will be the last move of our headquarters. When driven from here we will be beyond the need of any other.

SIR HENRI. Thy companion knights take much courage from thy appointment by King Henry, of Jerusalem, to be sole commander of the Christian forces.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Small thanks to that self-appointed king who now hath his throne wherever his shifty heels happen to stand. He should be here to share and shape the issue of this dread hour, but he is not. Likely he is courting safety at Cyprus Island. I would trample his commission under my foot but that I feel it my duty to try to help my companions out of their present plight.

BEATULUS. (*Entering*) A company of odd fish seek audience with thee. Ha, ha. Some of them look like brigands, some are dressed up very daringly with showy second-hand king-clothes, and—

SIR ST. GEORGE. Brief thy tale. Who art they?

BEATULUS. They told me not, except to say they are a delegation of Acre citizens. But I overheard one called most "honorable Maimonides," and another "respected Shapiro." They all kept up such gabbles, I had no let to receive any introduction. Ha, ha.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Shapiro? Oh, ho! My spies have placed him. He is none other than one Shementu, a Pagan priest of Egypt. What devilment is he up to, posing here as a citizen of Acre? Sir Henri, escort this party hither. (*Delegation enters*)

SHAPIRO. Respected commander, we come as worthy re

dents of this unhappy city. concerning matters of which our honored Maimonides, here, shall speak to thee.

MAIMONIDES. Will the commander of the knights be pleased to hear us?

SIR ST. GEORGE. Proceed to unfold thy matter.

MAIMONIDES. We are in perilous times. commander. The Moslem bombarding with basalt fire from without, have destroyed many dwellings within our Eastern walls. Outlaws are engaged in stealing for sale to the slave markets the women and children thus made homeless.

SIR ST. GEORGE. What demons war breeds.

MAIMONIDES. The nunnery of St. Magdaline has been raided by Acre ruffians. More than a score of its inmates have been smuggled through our lines for sale to Mohammedan harems.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Those holy women who ministered like angels for months past, to all suffering in this unhappy city. Great God, why sleep thy revenges!

MAIMONIDES. Famine is everywhere in Acre and dread plague is ravaging many parts of the city. Riotous mobs go about robbing whom they will. Beautiful Acre is become a hell upon earth. (*Weeps.*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Respected Maimonides, I heard of all these things before thy coming. Would to God I had the power to bring such acts to an end.

MAIMONIDES. Thou hast not such power, knight, and therefore we come to propose a remedy. Acre had peace and happiness before thy followers made it the place of their last stand. Let them now go forth and our city will renew its former quiet.

SIR ST. GEORGE. The Moslem will object to the knights leaving the city now in any way except as prisoners. We are not ready to throw ourselves upon their mercy. We too well foresee what that would mean.

MAIMONIDES. Then we would request that thy following surrender the rule of Acre to the League of the Golden Empire. A most potent and respectable body. It is ready to assume the government here, and to guarantee pacification.

SIR ST. GEORGE. But, Maimonides, thy League is committed to setting up some modern woman as a world queen, under the claim that she is the true madonna. This pretender is to try to supplant the one to whom for so many centuries millions have given their heart devotion. Would our acknowledgement of the rule of the Golden League here imply any submission to such a new would-be queen?

MAIMONIDES. Most likely.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Then this parley might as well end. Our knights would die gladly, if need be, but will never consent to any disloyalty to Mary of Bethlehem.

SHUMENTO. But, commander, it is not disloyalty to submit to the inevitable. The Golden Leagus is a mighty combine with

branches in many nations. No thing can resist its masterful diplomacy. It has but recently taken root here, and already the masses are ripe to rise and hail it as the saviour of all in desolate Acre.

SIR ST. GEORGE. (*Turning his back upon SHUMENTU*) Respected Maimonides, be pleased to see me to-morrow, alone. Then we may together devise some measures of relief for Acre.

SHUMENTU. But our great leader, Maimonides, hath commands from the highest councils of this League, who now issue their orders from Europe to take possession of authority here at once. Surely we must all pray that he be able to do so without bloodshed.

SIR ST. GEORGE. I have nought to say to thee, thou masquerader, beyond this; my sword is as cunning and as keen of edge as it was at Nazareth. By heavens, I will prove that to thee just now, if thou dost not betake thyself whence thou camest, Shapiro, or whoever thou art. (*To MAIMONIDES*) The standards of the knights will not be lowered before those of the pretenders of the League while one of my companions can fight.

SHUMENTU. Thy heroism wins our admiration, Sir St. George. The Golden League would make princely concessions to win thy services.

SIR ST. GEORGE. I am now nigh to serving it well without reward, by killing thee, thou marplot.

MAIMONIDES. Commander, it were well that thou reconsider our proposals.

SIR ST. GEORGE. The message of thy delegation is surrender, or insurrection. We will not surrender while we have a sword left.

MAIMONIDES. Then we may as well depart. (*Delegation retiring*) We give thee until sunset to reconsider. Here is an emblem which thou mayst place on thy tower if thou wouldst call for me. (*Delivers a small yellow streamer*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. That yellow rag? Symbol of the rule of gold and heresy. The knights will hate it more than they do the crescent. (*Tears it in two and flings the parts at MAIMONIDES and SHUMENTU*)

SHUMENTU. That means an uprising in Acre at once. (*Exit*)

MAIMONIDES. We give thee until sunset to reconsider. (*Exeunt delegation*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. And the knights will take until eternity.

SIR HENRI. Thou didst give that Shapiro a dose of bitter herbs.

SIR ST. GEORGE. He understood me. He is not a Jew, and his name is not Shapiro. He is one Shumentu. I crossed swords to his harm with him at the battle of Nazareth where he was fighting with the Moslem. He is a Pagan in religion, a Mohammedian when it pays him to be such, and just now with the Golden Leaguers for some deep reason of personal gain. It is

a pity that Maimonides hath fallen under the influence of such as he.

PETER THE ROUSER. (*Entering*) I am moved by the spirit to question thee, Commander. Dost thou know, Sir St. George, that the Golden Leaguers propose to seize and put into a great combine all the commerce of the world? To buy law-makers, judges, and such, so to come to universal dominion?

SIR ST. GEORGE. I have so heard.

PETER. Dost know that in that new government that there will be no aristocracy but that of money, and under it the poor will become the slaves of plutocrats.

SIR ST. GEORGE. I have heard certain ranters so declare

PETER. Thou thyself hath said that the Golden League proposes to set up a pretender who they would have filch the honors of that holy woman to whom twelve Christian centuries have given the supreme place as the triumphant Eve. Dost thou know that Aureola, the daughter of Maimonides is the queen elect of the conspirators?

SIR ST. GEORGE. Yes, what of it?

PETER. Much! Thou hast been a frequent visitor at the palace of Maimonides of late. It is reported that thou dost love, more than a little, that Jews.

SIR ST. GEORGE. The report is true, although the fact is not the business of any who give themselves to gossip concerning it.

PETER. I am divinely inspired to denounce thee for all this that thou doth confess.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Since coming to Syria thou hast denounced more than thou hast encouraged the defenders of the cross, Peter.

PETER. I am divinely inspired to command thee to arrest both Maimonides and his daughter.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Arrest? Art thou mad, Peter? Why arrest?

PETER. Why? To nip the rising revolution in the bud. To strike terror into the hearts of all opposing thee. Arrest the Jezibel and her father at once.

SIR ST. GEORGE. I doubt thy inspiration; but after the arrest—what?

PETER. Send both to Rome to be dealt with there, or that being impossible, execute them here as traitors. Swear that thou wilt, upon this. (*Extends medallion of the Virgin Mary*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Now listen, all here as well as this priest. One year ago I lay desperately wounded upon the battlefield of Nazareth. At night an angel in human flesh accompanied by a serving woman, went about over that field, moved only by sweet mercy to help the suffering, without regard to their creed or race. They found me, carried me to a place of safety, treated me as a brother, nursed me back to life and hope. That Angel in the flesh was none other than Aureola, the daughter of Maimoni.

des. Since coming here, I have gone to the Jew and his daughter to say that the swords of my knights would defend them in the name of public safety if any peril came nigh either. To say that much was knightly; to have proposed less would have been dastardly. My promise to them shall be kept.

PETER. I absolve thee from thy rash promise. Swear that thou wilt arrest and sternly deal with the pretender and conspirator. (*Extends medallion*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. I so swear? And upon the medallion of the Mother of Mercies? Out of my presence, Monk, until this monster mood hath left thee.

PETER. (*Retiring*) I go, but I will denounce thee to Christian Europe and to thy followers as an ally of the Golden Empire League of Mammonites. Oh, it is so pitiful! Our commander dawdling about a Jezibel pretender to the betrayal of his great cause.

SIR ST. GEORGE. One warning, Peter. The hour I hear of thee inciting any insubordination or stirring up any anarchy in this city, I will have thee hanged. It is a good thing in such times as these to hang a fanatic now and again. (*Exit PETER, with grumblings*)

SIR HENRI. So, by the the twin pillars of Hercules, there are to be two rivals of our blessed Mary. The Moslem have a candidate for her place as well as the Golden Leaguers. Yet methinks the followers of these two new aspirants will soon beat each other to pieces.

SIR ST. GEORGE. But that will not come about in time to prevent the impending insurrection of the Leaguers in Acre. Would to God we might hear soon of some success by my mother in winning from the Sultan permission for the Christians here to return in peace to Europe.

SIR HENRI Thy glorious mother! Whatever her success, Christendom will ever praise her holy devotion in braving possible Egyptian slavery to carry her plea to the throne.

SIR ST. GEORGE. There seems nothing left for us but to try to escape from Acre to some mountain fastness, there to wait for favorable report from my mother—or for swift doom. All retire except Sir Henry. (*Signals to others. They retire*)

SIR HENRI. Alas, no other way. The sooner we retreat the better.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Oh, my God, why am I in this great straight between love and duty. Aureola, wolves are all about thee, and I cannot help thee! I cannot help thee!

SIR HENRI. Commander, nay companion, dost so love the maid who saved thy life?

SIR ST. GEORGE. Yes; and with a devotion worthy of a knight of St. Mary, sworn to be faithless to none on earth. Nor wouldst thou wonder at my love, Sir Henri, couldst thou but know that masterpiece of nature. My Aureola is tenderness and

power incarnate. She hath ready tears for the suffering and her laughter is a music always nigh, no matter how gloomy the hour. She sits a horse like a desert Arab, is master of the rapier, daring to recklessness by times, but never at heart other than nobly womanlike. Small wonder if she wins multitudes to clamor for her crowning, for she is every inch a queen.

SIR HENRI. Enough, unless thou wouldst madden me to be thy rival. Clearly the maiden is gloriously dangerous to thee.

SIR ST. GEORGE. And now dread perils threaten her and I no power to save her. Her deluded father is made the tool of conspirators who fill him with hope that his daughter is to be proclaimed the long looked for Madonna and his race to be brought again to world dominion through his family. That Shapiro-Shumentu and others of the Golden Leaguers are in a conspiracy to abduct Maimonides and his daughter the very day of the latter's coronation. In this certain Moslem without are to aid the conspirators. They hope by the wrack or otherwise to come to the vast wealth of the Golden League Empire in this abduction.

SIR HENRI. But canst thou not show these perils to Maimonides and his daughter?

SIR ST. GEORGE. Maimonides would give me no ear. He is mad with his dream of power, and besides he would suspect any such warning from me as merely a cunning bid for the favor of his daughter. He suspects and abhors my love for her. Oh, if I could but see her now to tell her all. I cannot. The Leaguers these days keep her under constant watch. Was ever man so hedged about? How can I be loyal to my knightly duty as Commander here, and yet true to a love as dear to me as life?

SIR HENRI. Now by all the loves of Adam, Jacob, Solomon and Joseph of Judea, I am an unworthy companion knight, if I make not a tryst for thee and thy lover ere thou art much older.

SIR ST. GEORGE. But—

SIR HENRI. Ask me no questions; give me no commands.
(*Exeunt*)

SCENE 3, ACT I—Knights' Headquarters.

LE ROY. (*Entering*) Our knight, Sir Henri is coming this way with two prisoners. One is a nun and the other is a handsome youth. Such a handsome youth. He has a sword and armor and all that.

CAPTIO. Oh, now I will stake my tunic against a ripe pomegranate that it is an elopement, nipped in the bud. A knight and a nun eloping. A milk and water madness just fit to cap the climax of Acre follies. Waagh.

LE ROY. Let's away to tell my brother, Sir St. George.
(*Exeunt*)

SIR HENRI. (*Entering with prisoners*) Ye twain will do well to prepare to meet the awful wrath of Sir St. George. (*To Sir St. George, entering*) Commander, to aid me in the difficult task of keeping a certain knightly vow I made to thee but recently, I have arrested these two whom thou seest before thee.

JUDITH. (*Throwing off nun's garb*) Oh, I beg pardon of that pious rig. Thy knight here advised its use to prevent curious scrutiny on the way hither. I, a nun? I with a history of three husbands and willingness for a fourth? Ha, ha!

SIR ST. GEORGE. By my device, Judith? Oh, now thou wilt tell me how fares thy mistress, the beauteous Aureola?

JUDITH. Never happier, I do believe, than she is just now. But that fine young person in a corselet yonder can report of her better than I. (*Points to AUREOLA*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Why, now, may all angels bless everybody, this is my Aureola. (*To Sir Henri*) About face, ha, ha. (*Embracing AUREOLA*) All this is unconventional. (*Kisses*) And this, and this, and this. But I, as supreme in command here, decree such salute a war necessity.

AUREOLA. This is confiscation. methinks, Sir St. George.

SIR ST. GEORGE. But with promise of remuneration. Record, Aureola, thy claims and I will approve them. Even increase them, if desired by thee to do so.

AUREOLA. My claim, Commander, is that thou pardon my garb. I was dressed for a state meeting of the ancients of the Golden League Council when thy knight arrested me. He would not let me wait to change my tire.

SIR ST. GEORGE. That tire! It is to me an angel's. It is the same thou didst wear the night thou and Judith yonder picked me up on the bloody field of Nazareth. Dost remember, how while ye twain were lugging me along, my arms hung about thy girdle somewhat thus?

AUREOLA. Oh, impossible. Had thine arms shown as much life then as now I would have dropped thee as one dangerously lively.

JUDITH. (*To Sir Henri*) Thy Commander is as ardent as my first and as tender as my third. I knew not that the knights could be so.

SIR HENRI. Oh, yes; all good fighters come naturally by ardency with ye palpitating angels in the flesh.

JUDITH. I could bless the pretty pair for bringing me sweet memories—if thy commander were only a Jew. He being an alien, I must not countenance their doving. Be pleased, knight, to take me to some seclusion.

SIR HENRI. Methinks they do not just now desire the countenance of either of us. (*Exeunt SIR HENRY and JUDITH*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Oh, beloved, this meeting brings joy, but joy pursued by engulfing clouds. The Golden Leaguers are Mammon-mad and care naught for thee except through thee to use

the great wealth and the titles of thy ancient family, my beloved.

AUREOLA. But what can I do against the will of my father and that mighty League ?

SIR ST. GEORGE. Flee Acre at once !

AUREOLA. Absence from here, thou being left in all this sea of troubles, would be to me but added torture, my knight. My heart yearns for freedom to live just naturally in undisturbed love with its idol, but cruel fate rules otherwise ; therefore I shut my eyes and get what pleasure I may listening to the applause of the multitudes as I am pushed along the dangerous heights to a position promising to be loftier than that occupied by any other woman now living.

SIR ST. GEORGE. And I must stand powerless to help thee as thou art pushed among dread perils, or see thee soar forever beyond my reach.

AUREOLA. Nay, say not so. When I am a queen I may command, and I will. What use of being a queen if I must be as prudish as an uncrowned woman. Oh, this way will I rule. Ye ancients, stand back ; far back. Handsome youth, draw near. Now speak all the ardent nonsense which is in thy heart. Now embrace thy queen. Oh, knight, I fear that thou wilt prove thyself a rebellious—or a stupid subject.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Why ? Oh, I was stupid, but I promise that I never will be with thee again, my queen. (*Embrace*)

AUREOLA. And when the rabbles forsake me, as thou sayst they will, I shall be sure of thy fealty ever ? Remember there are three rival queens in the field.

SIR ST. GEORGE. True religion and true love never rival each other, Aureola. They can flourish together however different the creeds which lead the souls of lovers. I take thee to my heart as its queen and know still of no rival to the Madonna whom my soul adores, Aureola.

AUREOLA. I might have foreseen this. Thou art a Teutonic knight of St. Mary. Had I accepted any of the many courtiers of the League as my lover, such one would have no other queen in heart or soul except Aureola.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Thy mood seemeth over hilarious for the gravity of this debate, my beloved.

AUREOLA. Now thou art cruel, and I am wounded. Cheerfulness, at least in heart, I have not known for months. I laugh to force back the ever present tears and jest to keep from groaning. It is woman's way in trouble. What is there before me ? I see only confusion, separation from the one I love as my life, rivalries and likely scenes of bloodshed. Oh, it is all so horrible !

SIR ST. GEORGE. Now answer I thee as to thy challenge of my loyalty. Listen ; there is a conspiracy between certain treacherous Golden Leaguers and some of the Mohammedians without, to abduct both thee and thy father the day set for thy coronation. The abductors hope to come by the wealth of the

Golden Empire League through that abduction.

AUREOLA. Methinks that thou hast been misled, Sir St. George by some petty gossip, and yet this tale is very romantic. Very like some old fairy story. I know not whether to laugh or cry about it.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Hear the proof. I was offered a bribe, a large one, only to facilitate the abduction by not opposing it with any force. This parchment sets forth what I have said (*holding up parchment*)

AUREOLA. Oh, now I am curious. How much did the conspirators think this inconsequential Jewess worth? Did any one haggle about the price? Oh, yes; and more important, how near to the price that thou wouldst take did the bargainers come? Now, thou must confess, Sir St. George.

SIR ST. GEORGE. They offered me my safe escape to Europe, or a Pashaship in the Moslem army, if I so willed, and such sum as I might name. The space for the number of the gold shekels is here left blank for me to fill as I will. But there was no haggling, Aureola. Instantly the bribers knew from me that for this whole world piled upon all the other worlds bestudding yon sky, I would not sell mine honor, or make merchandise of thee, beloved. Dost thou now believe me all loyal to thee, my heart's queen. (*Embrace*)

SIR HENRI. (*Reentering with JUDITH*) Your pardon, but father Maimonides approaches in a rage. I heard his voice without just now wrangling with our Captio, who prevents his coming into this place.

JUDITH. Oh, now, this is dreadful. If Maimonides finds us here, he will kill us two poor women. Oh, these men, young and old, are ever destroying us poor creatures in this life with their hatings or their lovings. What shall we two do?

SIR HENRI. Commander, having arrested the daughter, may I not arrest also the father?

SIR ST. GEORGE. That would delay matters, but cure nothing, Sir Henri.

BEATULUS. (*Entering*) Commander, thy pardon, but Captio and I have a rope ladder we have used at the casement when desirous of a night's excursion without exposure, ha, ha! Here the ladder. (*Opens a box*) Ha, ha!

SIR HENRI. Beatulus, hurry to Captio. Tell him on some pretense to keep the Jew at the door for five minutes longer. (*Exit BEATULUS*) Now, Lady Aureola, the stair this side, the ladder on the other—

BEATULUS. (*Re-entering*) Captio is bellowing like a bull of Bashan at the Jew. Ha! ha! ha!

SIR ST. GEORGE. Thou, Beatulus, shalt go as a guard to these fair prisoners in their escape hence.

BEATULUS. Canst thou not send along, also, some man of war? I am not a fighter, but a cooker. Ha, ha!

SIR HENRI. Commander, having brought hither the pretty knight and the nun, I am in duty bound to escort them to their abode.

AUREOLA. (*Drawing her rapier*) And we two men will protect these two women. (*Pointing to JUDITH and BEATULUS*) Ladies, forward. Sir Henri next. I will be the rear guard. (SIR H., B. and J. *exeunt.* AUREOLA, *on the stairs*) When next we meet, St. George, I will be queen of all the world, at least by the voice of the Ancients of the Golden League. But whatever comes, thou shalt be my knight, lover and sovereign unto death.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Aureola, light of my soul, farewell. (*Exit AUREOLA*) Ah, so sets for me forever that sun. Thick, indeed, the darkness which now gathers about me.

MAIMONIDES. (*Entering, pushing CAPTIO aside*) Commander, thou wilt excuse my abruptness, but my concern is very great. My daughter and her maid were put under arrest, for what I know not, by one of thy knights. Are they here?

SIR ST. GEORGE. Thy daughter is not here. Her arrest was without any authorization from me. If on return to thy palace thou dost not find her, report the fact to me, and whosoever is found guilty of keeping her away from thee will be dealt with severely by my direction.

MAIMONIDES. My gratitude, Commander. (*Going*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Since thou art here, be pleased, respected Maimonides, to tarry a little. I would warn thee of great dangers which threaten both thyself and thy daughter. Thy proposed revolution certainly will end in disaster. I entreat thee to take thy daughter and flee at once out of this pandemonium. A friend of mine sails hence to-night. I can procure for thee and Aureola a passage on his ship, bound for Europe.

MAIMONIDES. I have no time to consider any such remarkable proposal as thou dost make to-day. To-morrow I shall see thee and then we may consider all matters relating to Acre.

SIR ST. GEORGE. To-morrow may be too late. Already the quays are covered with multitudes clamoring to escape the starvation and plague and impending massacre. Ere to-morrow, those clamoring for escape homeward, will become uncontrollable mobs. Then some of the strongest may get away, but the weak will be left to death or the slave pens.

(*Seven bugle blasts sounded.*)

MAIMONIDES. Didst hear the seven bugle blasts? That's Israel's covenant number. God brings my people to the covenanted promises of ages. The chosen people come to their own at last, even to the dominion of the world.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Maimonides, thy daughter once saved my life; I now would repay the debt by saving hers. I realize the peril she is in, thou dost not. Let her go hence by ship to-night. In days less full of peril, in some more fitting place, thou canst

have her proclaimed, if thou wilt.

MAIMONIDES. A very cunning knight art thou. Thou wouldst get her in thy power, make her think thee her saviour and so more completely win her heart. For what? To rob her of a throne and make her most likely thy paramour.

SIR ST. GEORGE. I am yet Commander here, and thy taunts may make me forget thy years. Mine honor shall not be impeached even by the father of the woman I love as I do my life.

MAIMONIDES. Love? Oh, what madness! Love her not. Love of her, if it dare to come to wedlock, would be the death of ye both, even though these hands needed to make the bridal bed a bed of double murder. I swear it. Nay, thou dost seek to degrade, not to exalt my child, St. George.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Listen. My knights carry one of their companions to burial. (*Passing procession without sing*)

THE GRAIL KNIGHTS' FAREWELL.

Thy wards, all earth's needing, Oh, Grail knight,

Those smitten by life's darkest storms,
Unceasingly thou for the weakest,
All bravely uplifting thy arms.

CHORUS.

Farewell, farewell, thou knight so true,
Farewell thou prince of men:
Because thy heart so pure, so brave,
Thy strength the strength of ten.

To triumph arising, Oh, pure knight,
With angels of wide sweeping wings,
Exulting finding thy life's quest.
Where morning eternally springs.—*Chorus.*

SIR ST. GEORGE. They voice in the presence of death the inmost thought of every true knight.

MAIMONIDES Words! words! But thy knights rule by swords. Swords now rule in-side and outside of Acre. Such processions as this pass hourly. An omen, knight. So passes thy power to help any. My daughter hath the Golden League and her father for her defence and needs none of thy puny help.

(*Noises without. Masses shouting THE GOLDEN LEAGUE! QUEEN AUREOLA!*) Listen thou now. That means help! victory! triumph! I must go. I will see thee once more to-morrow. But there will be great changes in Acre by to-morrow. Very great changes, St. George. (*Exit*)

SIR HENRI. (*Entering*) I heard that Jew's ragings. By the sword of the Lion Hearted Richard, I had a mind to drag him back hither to chain him.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Didst safely deliver at her father's palace thy charge?

SIR HENRI. Nay, nor could I. The Mohammedians having broken through the northern walls, move this way, robbing all before them. As our party went upon its way the leaders of the Golden League took from us Aureola to proclaim her queenship at once in the public square. The fools believed that as soon as she was proclaimed the Moslem would retire respectfully to await her royal orders. (*Noises of rabble without*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Now is my Aureola among treacherous wolves. The fitful populace will abandon her at the first show of danger. Call, my faithful comrade, any who will join a forlorn hope. We must go to try to baulk the plotters and save her life when the certain emergency comes. (*Exeunt*)

CAPTIO. (*Entering*) Everybody gone to see a fight. So will I, but in a safe place. (*Goes up outlook stairs*)

BEATULUS. (*Running in*) Oh, my Captio, there is more topsy-turvy afoot. The pretty Jewess hath been proclaimed queen of everything and everywhere. Mobs are fighting all about her. Some to pull her down; some to set her up. Our Commander is in the thick of the fight, trying to keep them from killing the pretty lady.

CAPTIO. Our Commander? Alas, every Caesar hath his Cleopatra. That is the danger of being a Caesar. But why didst thou not help a maiden in distress, brave Beatulus? Waagh.

BEATULUS. I was enlisted as a Serving Brother to cook for and nurse fighters not to fight. I have nothing against any one concerning which I wish to get myself killed. Ha, ha!

CAPTIO. Then call the uproar a show, and come up with me to the outlook, to see it. (*Ascends stairway*)

BEATULUS. I want not to see a show, nor be a show that is bloody. Not I.

(*A huge stone flies over wall and falls near Beatulus,*)

BEATULUS. Now moderate thy curiosity, or catch upon thine now head the missels intended for it. Thou art dangerous company. Flee down or I flee out of this place.

CAPTIO. (*From the outlook*) Oh, but this is a fine fracas. All the factions belt each other choicely. Oh, Beatulus, thou art missing a comedy. Ha! ha! Bring up thy cackle, Beatulus. An old woman is on the back of some kind of a dandy. One arm she has about his neck and with the other she swings a ladle against his side. Waagh! Had we a regiment of such cavalry we might chase the Sultan's men into the sea. Now twain are dragging Aureola from her dromedary. They take all her royal trappings. Now one is dragging at the beast's head, the other at its tail. If the tail holds the hump will be flattened. Waagh. Now Aureola spits them that rob her with her rapier. Lord, how our Commander mows the mob-gang. Oh, my Beatulus, the Moslem rush into the fray. Two to one—ten to one against our

side. Be a hero. Run to help our Commander.

BEATULUS (*Gyrating. Offers a pot of water*) Nay, but go thou. Take this pot of scald. It is a most dangerous weapon.

CAPPIO It is all like a pot of lobsters, this religious warring. Fanatics stir the fire and the human lobsters grapple each other for God's sake till all are done for. Waagh.

(*Tumult near door of headquarters*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. (*Entering with SIR HENRI*) Help me to bind up this, (*pointing to wound on his head*) Sir Henri, (*Flinging aside his broken sword*) Beatulus, get me another blade.

BEATULUS. There is none true here, except this jewelled gift to thee from King Henry. (*Rummaging in arms chest*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. It is time to polish its jewels. What better way than by carving dastards in defense of woman's honor.

SIR HENRI. I cannot stop the flow of blood. It were better thou rest here for a time.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Rest? There is no rest for me but in the grave. Out again to the fray. (*Exeunt SIR GEORGE and SIR HENRI. Conflict near exit*)

LE ROY. (*Entering with MAIMONIDES*) They were hot after thee, father Maimonides. But have no fear, our Commander will keep the robber rabbles out of this place.

SIR ST. GEORGE. (*Entering supporting AUREOLA who is faint and wounded*) Sir Henry; help! Oh, Aureola, I did my best to rescue thee. God, God, God, let not this maiden die! Where is the Chaplain? He hath skill in surgery.

CHAPLAIN. Here. (*Business in recovering AUREOLA*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Sir Henri, never mind my wound. Signal all our companions to rally at this center. We must at once cut our way out of Acre into some mountain fastness, there to await for favorable news from my mother's Egyptian mission—or find an early doom.

SIR HENRI. I gave the signal to rally here as we were coming along. Some of our knights escaped by sea. The few we have left are at hand. (*points to those present*)

CHAPLAIN. The maiden revives. All is well.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Thank God! (*To AUREOLA*) Now thou knowst thou canst not trust the fickle rabbles. Thy fate is fixed anew. Canst thou trust this? (*pointing to his sword*) and this (*pointing to his heart*) to go with our knights, to what, God only knows?

AUREOLA. I trust thee, Sir George, and Him who sees the sparrows fall.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Companions, now give ye before going forth the symbols of faithfulness unto death. (*Knights form in two lines which cross. Swords outstretched horizontally. Blades overlapping. Feet crossed as were those of Christ upon the cross. Lines then break. Knights kneel in a circle. Cross on sword hilts up lifted. Rise*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Before leaving Acre forever let there be sung as requiem for the unburied comrades we leave behind
"The Grail Knight's Farewell"

SIR ST. GEORGE. So be it, Chaplain Foren.

(Second stanza sung, See words in loco)

MAIMONIDES. Daughter, we have fallen into a strange straight, but thou art still a Queen, every inch! Thou dost not give up that claim. Hast told Sir St. George this?

AUREOLA. Drop thy staff of office, my beloved father, and let me dress thee for the hour. *(Puts upon her father a helmet. Gives him a sword and shield)*

MAIMONIDES. Pray God none of the Council see me in this harness. Ah! This sword hilt hath a cross upon it. I shiver at its touch!

AUREOLA. In such a time as this, signs are little, common humanity everything.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Are our mounts ready, Sir Henri?

SIR HENRI. Ready in the stables without. I brought thee thine. *(Exit)*

BEATULUS. *(Entering loaded down with pots, etc.)* What shall I ride?

CAPTIO. Waagh! Ride? Ride a hedge-hog! Nay, an ostrich! He might teach thee to bury thy empty head when in danger, Drop thy pots and arm thyself! *(Exit Beatulus)*

SIR ST. GEORGE. Companions, if I fall, delay only long enough to cover me with this Madonna banner. Then onward,

(Noises without of horses in stampede)

LE ROY. Commander, I beg to go at thy side and under that banner, in the retreat.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Brave brother, so be it.

BEATULUS. Oh, blood will tell. Ha, ha!

SIR HENRI. *(Re-entering)* Commander, a marauding gang has stripped our horses from us, all except thine.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Another disaster. Now we must make to a refuge on foot. *(to Aureola)* Beloved, thou shalt take my steed. He may know how precious his load to me and because of his love for me show thee full faithfulness.

AUREOLA. But thou, Commander, wilt need thy steed to rightly lead us all.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Knights do not sit while women stand, nor ride while women walk. Sir Henri, *(pointing to AUREOLA)* thy hand *(AUREOLA mounted)* When the great gate yonder is flung open, a'1 out together, to the right. *(Gate flung open)* Forward! God be with us. *(Exeunt)*

Sounds of conflict. CHAPLAIN FOREN returns with LE ROY, who is wounded. AUREOLA, carrying knights banner, hurried into headquarters by SIR ST. GEORGE. He running back by times to flight. Knights and MAIMONIDES enter in panic, pursued

SIR ST. GEORGE. (*To SIR HENRI*) It is Rokhama! Help as soon as all our party is in to close again the great gate. Too late! (*Moslem rush in and overpower the Christians, etc.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

TIME, TWO MONTHS AFTER ACT I.

SCENE I—On the Great Highway to Egypt. Near River Eschol, Gaza.

(*Noises of troops cheering without*)

ROKHAMA. By the bones of the ancient Shepherd Kings, that cheering is like a cooling breeze to one in a fever. It is the first applaase I have heard from my troops for weeks. Our triumphal march to Egypt is becoming much like the gliding along of an army of discontented ghosts.

DOOBERDAB. Those cheering just now, Great Pasha, are the Centaurs of the Nile, thy body guard. Being well fed, they are happy, and also loyal to thee. The rest of thy soldiers are, for the most part, too near hunger to cheer thee.

ROKHAMA. But by the frog plagues of Moses, I cannot dance the rocks into dromedaries. Acre was nearly bare on account of its long seige when we took it. We got therefrom little more than the Christians whom we captured. Thou must stir up our hired ranters to placate our malcontents by some fine tales about the glories which await patient patriots hereafter.

DOOBERDAB. The hungry are wont to laugh to scorn those who offer a far off heaven to satisfy present famine. Some of thy followers are now on the point of even refusing to cross the Egyptian border, being ashamed to meet their kinsmen at home with no spoil to show as reward of their long campaigning in Palestine,

ROKHAMA. By set of the Infernals I have mind to let loose upon the malcontents those of my army yet loyal. Report is brought me that my Princess Astarte comes from Egypt to meet me as a conqueror. Am I to be shamed in her presence, because half my following is in rebellion?

DOOBERDAB. It were well that thou send to thy Princess to command her not to come to Gaza. Oh, my glorious Pasha, I

must tell thee that thy Mamelukes rage in secret because thou hast permitted the rich Jew, Maimonides, and his followers to set up yonder by Eschol River their encampment. The Jew was thy prisoner at Acre's fall. Thy men not understanding why he has liberty with plenty now, demand that his encampment be raided and its abundance distributed to them.

ROKHAMA. By all the deaf and blind crocodiles of the Delta, hast thou not told them that this Maimonides hath immunity by royal firman of the Sultan?

DOOBERDAB. But thy Mamelukes are going about to whisper that thou wert ever anxious to execute that royal order, because infatuated by the beautiful daughter of the Jew. Horrible to tell, but I must. Many of thy men at night about their bivouac fires sing ribald songs, likening thee, great Pasha, to the ancient Samson of Gaza, who was led to destruction by that syren called Delillah.

ROKHAMA. Gods of the Nile, my Astarte must not hear these slanders! My faithful, thou shalt arrange for the sale of knight St. George and all his following at once. Strip my harem to swell the number to be sold and with the proceeds feed my fine rebels into quiet.

DOOBERDAB. The division of the sales proceeds will not give much to each. But all shall be done as thou hast said, great Rokhama. (*Exit*)

TROOPS (*without in a carouse*):

Samson, Samson, great giant Samson;
Deillah, Delillah, got the hair of Samson.
Ho! ho! ho!
Samson, Samson, poor silly Samson;
Delillah, Delillah, got the eyes of Samson.
Oh! ho! ho! ho!

SHUMENTU. (*Entering*) It is a pity, great Pasha, that some of thy men go about staining their holy Moslem faith by getting as drunk as do Christians. Now listen to their carousings. (*Singing without*)

ROKHAMA. They are lampooning me with their doggerel. These same men were shouting themselves hoarse a few weeks since to acclaim me the conqueror of all Syria's invaders.

SHUMENTU. A soldier of fortune becomes a football of his foes when he ceases to hold the hearts of his fighting men. Thy hungry Mamelukes rage for spoil. Let the most restless go raiding.

ROKHAMA. There are none nighabouts whom they might raid except loyal subjects of the Sultan. He hath forbidden that any such be robbed.

SHUMENTU. Except by the regular tax collector. I presume to appoint thee such, as a war measure. See to it in making thy

assessments, that thou leavst each victim enough upon which to survive until thy next taxing time. That is practical politics. What more hath any good citizen a right to expect?

ROKHAMA. But my followers demand that Golden Empire Encampment over there by Eschol river be raided.

SHUMENTU. Thy men are right.

ROKHAMA. But the Sultan hath expressly forbidden that.

SHUMENTU. He desires that the raiding be deferred until he in person can supervise it. He doth not trust thee to make the division of the spoil. Canst thou trust him?

ROKHAMA. By Karnac, thy words smell of treason, Shumentu!

SHEMUNTU. Treason, if successful, is called patriotism. Didst ever hear, great Rokhama, that all the Pagan gods were at the beginning devils? Success brought them worship. But the unsuccessful ones remained poor devils to the last. (*Music of timbrels, pipes, etc. approaching*) It is thy Astarte's band. It comes to serenade thee, most likely.

ROKHAMA. Ah, that is music, indeed. A Lotus-Land Love Song. I know it well. It was the music at our wedding. It tells me my Princess Astarte comes herself to lead in the serenading.

ASTARTE'S GUARD (*Entering*) Most powerful Pasha, thy noble consort, the sister of our sublime Sultan comes this way. (*Exeunt obsequiously*)

ASTARTE. (*Entering with great pomp*) Hail, invincible Rokhama!

ROKHAMA. With all the ardent words the love-gods have coined for mortals, I welcome thee, my beautiful princess-wife. (*Embrace*)

ASTARTE. The instant news reached Egypt that thy scimeter had made a finish of the Christian invaders, I sped hither to join in acclaiming thee the greatest defender of the Crescent that our Islam nation hath. (*Waves away attendants*)

ROKHAMA. My Allah grant that my victories do much to promote thee, my princess, to become the Mohammedian Madonna. When I enter Egypt to be hailed as conqueror, I shall as my reward ask that thou be proclaimed as such. And thy priest, Shumentu, shall help us. But thou hast not greeted him as yet, Princess. (*ASTARTE effects not to see SHUMENTU when the latter bows*)

SHUMENTU. We all rejoice at thy great husband's conquests, and at thy condescension in visiting us here, Princess.

ROKHAMA. (*A side to ASTARTE*) Thou wilt gravely offend Shumentu by cutting him thus.

ASTARTE. (*Aside*) A cut is better than a kiss, when surgery is needed. I know not whether to fear or hate most that priest. Come. (*Leads ROKHAMA to one side*)

SHUMENTU. Thanking ye both for your hospitality, I will

retire. (*Aside*) A year's absence from each other leaves no room for pious exhortations from me just now. But they will both need my exhortation very much, some day. (*Exit*)

ROKHAMA. By Karnac, thy snub of the priest was daring, but, methinks impolitic, beloved.

ASTARTE. Shumentu left me to fight alone in Egypt against my adverse fates just when I needed him. That after I had given him princely sums of gold, When I besought him to tell me if my pleasure Empire was to stand against the rising splendors of that Madonna of the Christians, he was silent. Alas, all our oracles are dumb when that question is asked.

ROKHAMA. And thy cause prospers not in thine own country?

ASTARTE. Alas, our Egypt is fickle. Not long ago my name there was upon every tongue for promotion, but of late the populace forgets me. A certain baroness of France, on some kind of mission of world peace, hath won all classes at our capitol.

ROKHAMA. But does she aspire to be the Moslem Madonna?

ASTARTE. Nay; quite otherwise. She is devoted to Mary of the Christians and hath won from the Sultan not only a decree of perpetual defence for her New Eden at Bethlehem, but permission for the Christian knights to establish a garrison at Jerusalem for the protection of all non-combatant sojourners of their faith in that region. What all this may lead to I cannot foresee, beyond that it murders my ambitions. It is now time to light my altar fires to Osirus. I will go to my tents now. Thou wilt come to my encampment soon, beloved Rokhama? There I will tell thee all.

ROKHAMA. Surely, light of my life. Look for me ere moon-set
(*Some Christian captives lead past.*)

ASTARTE. Some of thy prizes? Now, thou shouldst give me one as a present. This is my birthday. Hast forgotten that?

ROKHAMA. Shame covers my countenance that I did not propose the gift first. Dooberdab, bring to the Princess that cackling Kangaroo.

BEATULUS. He I give thee, Astarte, is glib in the Syriac of this country and will mightily amuse thee.

(*Beatulus dragged in roughly.*)

BEATULUS. What a way to escort a cook gentleman to a princess?

ASTARTE (*to Dooberdab*). Is this odd creature vicious?

BEATULUS. Excuse me, most Beautiful-Lofty, let me tell thee all. I have no politics, no religion and never was in love; so I am docile. I came to this country merely to get a situation as a cook. I had heard that all the troubles of the Holy Land came to it because of its bad cooks. Ha ha! If thou wilt to try me, I can produce good recommendations. Ha ha!

ASTARTE (*to Rokhama*). Adieu. Remember, before moon-set. (*To Beatulus.*) Come, I will introduce thee to my imps, none of whom more unhandsome than thyself.

BEATULUS. Introduce me to thy imps? Imps? I? Imps? Ha ha! Imps? O-o-o-o I—

(*Exeunt Astarte's company. Business ad lib. Processional music, &c.*)

SHUMENTU. (*Re-entering.*) Neighbors who exchange servants quickly end friendships. But thou art radiant, glorious Pasha. Has heard good tidings?

ROKHAMA. All Egypt is in a fever to give me a triumphal reception ou rivaling those given by ancient Rome to her conquering generals.

SHUMENTU. Thy fame spreads from the Christian capitol to Stoppes of Asia; but priests of mine lately arriving here from Cairo report to me that thou hast many enemies in Egypt. Made such by their jealousy?

ROKHAMA. I have been accustomed to facing enemies all my life.

SHUMENTU. Facing enemies is one thing; having them behind thy back and disarming thee with pretense of friendship is quite another. Great Caesar could not cope with such. Oh, Rokhama, thou walkst in a fool's paradise. What will thy triumphal entrance to Egypt mean? Thou, a great show for seven days. Given thunderous applause for a brief time, then the dismal indifference of a forgetful populace. Given by the nation glittering baubles, ponderous titles, a pension, and then—dignified oblivion. Ah, when a great soldier outshines his home government, he must needs expect praise well seasoned with humiliation.

MAMELUKES. (*Without. Singing "Samson, Great Giant Samson!"*)

ROKHAMA. By Set of the Infernalles, I cannot endure this lampooning.

SHUMENTU. Then dare to seize thine opportunity. Understand that medals cannot shout nor titles fight when legions rush to battle. Arrest thy march to Egypt. Decline the meaningless triumph—show, possess thyself at once of all there is in the Golden Empire encampment. By its spoil win back the hearts of thy veterans. Then wipe from the face of the earth every vestige of that New Eden community.

ROKHAMA. And then?

SHUMENTU. Proclaim, then, a world queen of thy naming and defy any who would oppose thee anywhere.

ROKHAMA. It shall be done. Now dawn Astarte's Pleasure Empire with my princess as the new Madonna.

SHUMENTU. Thy magician wife is a pagan by origin and a Mohammedian by training. Changeless Jewery and Christian spiritualism will never accept as their ideal one from polygamous Mohammedism or worn-out Paganism.

ROKHAMA. What is this thou sayst? Thou that hast received all of Astarte's vast inheritance on pretense that thou wert devoted to her promotion to this Madonnaship? Dost thou con-

fess that thou hast been cheating both her and me all these years ? By all the gods of the Lower Judgment thou hast lived too long. (*Approaching Shumentu with menacing.*)

SHUMENTU. Oh, great Pa-ha, do not get thyself excited about a little thing such as this. Astarte gave me gold and I gave her pleasant dreams. It is time for her to awaken, but she will have the memory of the dreams to console her. Thou art not cheated, for I come to show thee glory's path.

ROKHAMA. Explain and quickly, thou plotting Pagan.

SHUMENTU. I see a triumphal arch, wide as a continent. Nations wait for a magic word. That spoken, through that arch they march to shout King Universal. May be Rokhama, King Universal. But there are many ambitious men. Some other than thou may deal with me as to that mighty word. It would be a pity if he did, since the one getting it might feel called upon to cut off the heads of my friends, Astarte and Rokhama, as his rivals !

ROKHAMA. I understand thy covert threat. What is the price of that wonder word by which I may mount that splendid throne ?

SHUMENTU. Wise Rokhama. (*Extending palm.*) The earnest now ; two hundred gold shekels. Next moon, four hundred ; the moon after, eight hundred.

ROKHAMA. Yes ; certainly. A prophet for revenue only. Here, the two hundred first arguments. The rest will come as named. But let my words burn into thy soul. Upon the first sign of any treachery in this from thee I will stop thy black heart's beatings.

SHUMENTU. (*Counting.*) Good. Now hearken to the secret of dominion. Thy heroism for the Crescent assures thee Mohammedian devotion. Win Aureola. Like a courtier, if possible ; like a brigand, if thou must. (*Counting.*) Then with her gold buy rabbles and all purchable oracles to proclaim that in the person of thy Jewess the Madonna of the Christians reappears. (*Counting.*) No one could disprove that claim ! It will dazzle millions of the unthinking and gain to thy support Christians and Jews in all parts of the world. (*Counting.*) Making reincarnation thy slogan, thou can ride the whirlwind thou dost invoke to glory limitless. (*Exit, counting.*)

ROKHAMA. (*Soliloque.*) That pagan makes all women and all religions but pawns in ambition's great game. But I must mount his whirlwind and ride as my fate points. Win Aureola, that Golden Jewess ? Claim that Mary has returned to earth in Aureola ? Reincarnation. That the master key to everything ? The world is mine. Mine ! Mine !

DOOBERDAB. (*Entering.*) Thou art well rid of that chameleon priest. He is a pagan and paganism now being outlawed in Egypt, thy loyalty will be brought under suspicion through his frequent visits to thee.

ROKHAMA. He has the cunning of an hundred generations of pagan intrigue and is useful to me.

DOOBERDAB. Useful? Dangerous. Taking money to promote thy Prince's wife, he is the Eastern head of the League of the Golden Empire, secretly. I saw Shumentu praying one evening with Mahomedians and the next morning selling pagan god images by the pound and span. A joiner of everything he is loyal to nothing.

ROKHAMA. He has his price. I have paid it, and he is mine.

DOOBERDAB. Because of what I have done for thee, my glorious master, I dare now to warn thee. That Shumentu hath inflamed thy brain until thy tongue tells me under the moon while thou sleepest, things I dread to think of under the sun.

ROKHAMA. One having such a fool tongue should never sleep. But tell me, my faithful, do its mumblings much move thee?

DOOBERDAB. Move me? They by times chill me to the very core. (*Looking anxiously about.*) Thou dost seem often to dream of rising to the throne of the Sultan. (*Goes to look for eavesdroppers.*) Treason. (*Falls upon his knees*) and murder (*Falls almost to the ground and covers his face*) are in thy sleeping thoughts!

ROKHAMA (*placing his hand upon Dooberdab's head.*) Wouldst thou flee such a dreamer?

DOOBERDAB. Flee? Flee? Thenceforth to be a masterless dromedary in a waterless desert? Years ago I pawned my mother's mummy to buy thee fine robings with which to pay court to the Princess Astarte. And not being able to redeem that pawn, every hour since I have feared my mother's shade would come to rage at me for the profanation. Yet, had I an hundred mothers dead, the mummies of them all I would pledge to lift thee up, my glorious one.

ROKHAMA. Divine constancy. Thou shalt soar with an eagle towards the eye of the sun. Know that I do aspire to the throne of the Sultan, but only that it may be a stepping stone to one vaster far than any now held by mortal.

DOOBERDAB. But is Astarte with thee in thy plans?

ROKHAMA. Her wings are too puny to fly with eagles. Aureola is the woman of destiny, for she has gold, and gold, like death, is a last argument in all world debates. Yet, I must keep Astarte my daring, useful darling for a time. Her caravan is not far away. Go to my magician wife often. Cajole her with pretty inventions.

DOOBERDAB. Nay, my Glorious One; but thou go. That beautiful necromancer is a woman of the world. Such can be cajoled finely only by their husbands. But remember she is politic, cunning and dangerously daring. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II (Act II)—Rokbama's Camp.

(Slave sale going on beyond a nearby hedge.)

ROKHAMA. How goes thy revolution whirlwind to-day, Shumentu?

SHUMENTU. I have sent to Maimonides a message as from thee, commanding a visit at once to thy camp. Before the Jew arrives let us have thy prisoner, Sir. St. George, before us. We must bribe him in some way to become our ally.

ROKHAMA. Dost thou forget how miserably we failed with him at Acre in all attempts at bribery?

SHUMENTU. I do not forget that misery modifies many a moral code, nor that everything that mortals have is for sale for something its owner thinks of more worth. Conscience itself is the auctioneer. If thou dost not offend it by too gross bluntness thou canst buy what thou wilt.

ROKHAMA—That is, if thou hast the sufficient price. What price shall we name to trap the knight?

SHUMENTU. Try the oldest and newest trap of earth; the sweetest and yet the bitterst. A pretty woman. That first. The Luna Feast slave sale is on to-day. Plunge Sir. St. George into the midst of it. Hospitably give him somehow a little of this Egyptian decoction. *(Holds up bottle.)* Balm of lotus and poppy! Then we shall see what we see. *(Dooberdab enters.)*

ROKHAMA. Doth hear, my faithful Dooberdab. Take the captive St. George to our Ladies' Fair, where the sale of the prizes goes on. Tell my Ardentia the luxurious Georgian her prized locks and coraline ears will be shorn close to her head if she fail to allure him into tender glances.

(Exit Dooberdab. Procession of captives pass toward mart.)

SHUMENTU. That group swells the display to at least ten score. The charm of fools; the pawn of ambition! For such some have sold the world, and some bought perdition. *(Exit.)* *(Rokhama stands by Rose of Sharon Hedge and gazes out on mart. Voices of those bartering for captives without.)*

VENDOR. Who would take this waif from Paradise?

(Bartering voices.)

VENDOR. Now have we a prize fit for a Sultan. Supple in the dance is she. Her voice makes the birds envious.

(Bartering voices.)

VENDOR. Behold the prize of the day! Color rivaling the sky and the gardens of the palace. Angels left heaven of old for such as this Georgian Aphrodite.

(Voices bargaining.)

KAFADAR. *(A Turkish Trader passing back from sale.)* One would need to offer a province to buy that Georgian. Me thinks she was put up merely to get bids of which her owner could after oast.

CHARMAGLY. (*A trader.*) I wanted the pretty little Persian, but she was dead when taken out of the river. Likely she has had a hard master, who drove her to suicide.

EIMELA. (*A little Greek slave girl dragged from mart by her new owner.*) Oh, do not part me from Zoe; she is my twin sister. We were never separated. (*Exit, weeping.*)

EDILULU. (*Passing out from mart. Breaks away from buyers, runs back into mart.*) Oh, do not let that dreadful black man take me!

(*Sounds of lashing and cries in mart.*)

KAFADAR. This is very bad work. Very.

CHARMAGLY. I never lash any of the women I buy. I treat them quite as kindly as I do my horses. Then they wear well. (*Exeunt traders.*)

ROKHAMA (*standing by hedge.*) By the gods of the frozen North, that Knight moves like one in some stupor. Neither the sinuous Armenian dancers nor those pretty Greek girls, sporting in Eshcol's waters Naid-like as nature made them, gain a glance from him. My patient Dooberdab, weary of his task of tempter, brings the chaste knight this way.

(*Dooberdab enters with Sir St. George. Shumentu slinks along behind.*)

DOOBERDAB. Great Pasha, thy servant and thy prisoner. (*Bowing humbly.*)

ROKHAMA. Nigh two hundred years costing thy people countless gold and millions of men end with the Crescent above the Cross, Knight.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Our cause seems here and now a lost one. I am a last fragment. Art thou the executioner?

ROKHAMA. Thy thick neck and ruddy cheek prove that life is sweet to thee. I admire thy valor, and my mercifulness prompts me to offer thee triumphant Mohammedianism. Thou mayst command conquering soldiers and learn of a life that is here constant rounds of delight; hereafter perpetual youth; an hundred senses instead of five; with pleasure ever growing as the moons crescent from the silvery ribbon to the glorious full.

(*Ardenta the Georgian ssars by.*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Rhapsody builds many air castles.

ROKHAMA. By all that is ardent (*pointing to Ardenta*) thou hast won already that waif from Paradise.

DOOBERDAB (*aside*). He has eyes only for the face upon his medallion.

ROKHAMA (*aside*). Whose is it?

DOOBERDAB (*aside*). The Madonna's.

ROKHAMA (*aside to Dooberdab*). Contrive to steal that medallion. His talisman gone his courage may ebb. (*To the Knight.*) With heaped up gold and vast flocks for princess, our Ardenta was sought to-day. Vainly! Her sweet spirit and beautiful form goes only where her heart goes. That heart goes

to the brave Frank, so freely I give her to thee. Proof of my good will.

(Ardena reclines upon a mat near Knight)

SIR ST. GEORGE. *(Gazing upon his medallion.)* He who buys a woman's body bonds himself to pay tax to all eternity for her lost soul.

(Ardena startled, moves away.)

ROKHAMA. Bah! Women have no souls.

SIR ST. GEORGE. To emancipate women the knights came to Syria. In the name of my adored queen of purity, I set free thy gift to me. *(Kisses medallion.)* Go, and sin no more, Ardena! *(Exit, Ardena, weeping.)*

ROKHAMA. *(Aside to Shumentu.)* Thy traps fail. Now see him fall into one of my inventions. *(To Sir St. George.)* I would join thee to make thy Madonna the acknowledged queen of women the world over.

SIR ST. GEORGE. I am only thy prisoner; it is not worth while to mock me.

ROKHAMA. I do not mock thee, Knight. Listen! Join me in declaring that thy Mary of Bethlehem has come to earth again in the form of a modern woman! The brave surviving knights of Syria claiming that she appeared to them in a vision announcing such reincarnation would be believed by millions of their faith. I know how to win the Moslems in multitudes to the novel and brilliant claim. If we put forth the Jewess Aureola, who already has many adherents, as the one in whom the Madonna appears, we insure the support of all Jewery. As goes the Jews, Mohammedians and Christians so goes the world.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Prodigious dreamer!

SHUMENTU. True, Knight, but mortals usually believe prodigious dreams, if they be frequently affirmed and daringly fought for.

SIR ST. GEORGE. The Pasha never works except for some profit to himself. What is thy gain in all this, Rokhama?

ROKHAMA. Wise knight. Bluntly, this my reward! We set up the Jewess as world-queen, I marry her and become world-king. Now for thy share—half of the wealth of the rich Jewess, half the vast revenues of our new empire, and above all the joy of having been the instrument of making thy Mary queen of all human hearts to the end of time. Thou surely wilt run to seize the grandest offer ever made to any man who ever lived!

SIR ST. GEORGE. Upon these Syrian mountains long ago, the devil offered the Christ a world he did not own, but he had not the audacity to offer also a noble woman without consulting her.

ROKHAMA. Thou speakst in riddle, Knight.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Then speak I plainly. To all thy propositions, no. Eternally no. As for the daughter of Maimonides she would scout any proposal of marriage with thee as hotly as I now fling from me any suggestion of disloyalty on my part to the mother of the Christ.

ROKHAMA. Thy heroics are most laughable, Knight. Aureola will have the choice within a few days of entering my harem as tenth in rank. or of undertaking the queenship I offer.

SIR ST. GEORGE. A merciful God leaves even to slaves the emancipation of friendly death. Neither Aureola nor I fear to die, therefore we may both defy thee, Pasha.

SHUMENTU. (*Aside.*) Crush this purity Knight, now as I told thee how!

ROKHAMA. (*Aside to Shumentu.*) Now play I eloquent prevaricator. (*To Sir St. George.*) So by the beard of the Prophet, thou dost merrily refuse half the world! Dooberdab, let this fool's wracking be done near where we have his mother imprisoned. When she hearing his bellowing and his cracking bones asks the fellow's offense, tell her he is a heartless son who let his mother be sold to the embraces of a negro rather than perform a trifling service to save her!

SIR ST. GEORGE. Rokhama, my mother? What mean thy words?

ROKHAMA. Thy mother is a prisoner in my camp. The Sultan sent her to me as a token of his regard for me as his most loyal Pasha and as a proof to all that for the future I am to be absolute dictator in this Syria as to all matters between Christians and Moslem. (*Aside, to Shumentu.*) Load thy memory with my lying.

SIR ST. GEORGE. My mother here? And I knew it not? No, no, no! Thou doth mock me. Say that thou doth, Great Pasha. Thou doth affirm her here? Then in mercy let me for one brief moment embrace her. O, Rokhama, send my saintly mother to her people and then thou mayst wrack me, send me a slave to the galleys, or do with me what thou wilt. My mother! Oh, my mother! (*Falls weeping to the ground.*)

SHUMENTU. He has brawn and his mother yet charms enough to please the black Moroccos. Keep mother and son apart and they will bring a good price in any mart.

ROKHAMA. Away with the pair to-morrow.

SIR ST. GEORGE (*rising slowly.*) Hold, Rokhama, by interpretation vulture! For myself I care nothing, ask nothing. When I have done what I shall do, it were better I were dead. Write out the damnable lie about the reincarnation. I will attest it! (*Gazing upon his medallion.*) Oh, all who love thee, thou peerless mother of our Lord, will scout the vile invention. Ah, Rokhama, thou couldst not bribe me by offer of the crown of all the world, but though it were my own damnation written by devils I would certify thy fable to save my mother. To save my mother! (*In frenzy of grief.*)

SHUMENTU. (*Aside to Rokhama.*) Our lie about his mother being thy prisoner here was a masterly stroke. He will sign the reincarnation myth.

ROKHAMA (*aside.*) But, by Karnak, he will defeat us after all if he commit suicide and lead the Jewess to follow him in that!

SHUMENTU (*aside.*) Oh, but we must lie about him to her until she comes to hate him, then will she side with thee, if only for revenge sake. A scorned woman is the devil's pitchfork.

DOOBERDAB (*aside to Rokhama and Shumentu.*) A wonderful thing happened at the sale. Sir St. George's brother was bought, as it seems, by one from the camp of Maimonides.

SHUMENTU (*aside.*) Ha, ha. The rivals are arming, woman-like, with the agencies of gossip. Beatulus at the camp of Astarte and Le Roy at the camp of Aureola. Now for petty fencings!

ROKHAMA. See, the weeper is recovering. (*Pointing to Sir St. George*) Away with him to his pen. (*Sir St. George lead out.*)

DOOBERDAB. Maimonides and the Jew arrives. (*Business.*)

ROKHAMA (*to Maimonides.*) I sent for thee, father Maimonides, to inform thee that the knight Sir St. George, of late my prisoner, has escaped and is roving about the country at the head of a band of outlaws. He proposes to raid thy encampment and abduct thy daughter. Shameful to say he plots to wed thy daughter that he may come by thy wealth but only to abandon her as soon as he has it, for he is enamored of a luxurious Georgian whom he has stolen from my harem. (*Aside*) Load thy memory, Shumentu.

MAIMONIDES. Impossible! Sir St. George is an honorable man, even if he be a Christian. Oh, some one lies to thee, great Pasha. But if all should be as thou sayst, yet would the knight fail. We at the Golden League camp would meet him steel with steel, to his confounding.

ROKHAMA. It is reported, Maimonides, that notwithstanding all the Sultan hath done for thee thou art plotting against him with intent to capture all Syria for the Golden Empire. The report had induced the Sultan to command me to aid the giving over of thy encampment to spoilers from any source.

MAIMONIDES. I am put into a great strait by lies, lies, lies. Jehovah, help me and mine.

ROKHAMA. Maimodes, I being a pious Mohammedian would rather suffer even unto death than lie to one in such straits as thou art. I love thee and thine too well to deceive thee or them. But here is Shapiro of Antioch, one of thy own people and in high honors as a Counselor of thy Golden League. He will confirm all I have reported to thee.

SHUMENTU. Revered Maimonides, it was I, thy almost brother, who moved this pious Rokhama to warn thee. He can help thee full well. He adores thy daughter and he is the trusted right arm of the Sultan. Give thy Aureola to Rokhama

for wife. So thou wilt balk the knight who would never dare cross our great leader and at the same time thou wouldst show thy loyalty to the Sultan.

MAIMONIDES. Why am I astounded. Rokhama has a wife already and a harem. My people abhor polygamy. Oh, impossible. Impossible!

ROKHAMA. My harem is dispersed by sale. My wife, an Egyptian Princess, has many lovers and now is soon to divorce me that she may select from them one that pleases her roving fancy more than do I. Listen; my mother, of a royal Jewish line, had it from oracles of many lands that the daughter of Maimonides was this very day to be espoused to me and that such espousal was to be necessary to the elevation of the Jewess to world queen-ship. Thou wouldst not fly in the face of Providence wouldst thou? (*Aside to Shumentu.*) Load thy memory!

MAIMONIDES. Great Pasha, I will hurry to my tent to commune with my daughter and our sacred writings. If the writings confirm thee, then all be as thou doth say.

SHUMENTU. Maimonides thou knowst I am Supreme Councillor for the far East in the League of the Golden Empire. Thou knowst that my rank is equal to thine own. This espousal I demand, as Rokhama's oracles decree. Otherwise the East will reject thy daughter and name another for the crown.

MAIMONIDES. Thy blow from out the League is most cruel! But let it smite me. In the name of purity's God and the holy traditions of Jewry I do declare that Aureola though she be driven to shepherd flocks or beg from door to door shall never be given to an adulterous marriage!

SHUMENTU. I have the espousal contract ready, Jew. (*Presents parchment.*)

ROKHAMA. Sign it, or thou shalt feel the sting of Rokhama, the so-called Devil of Syria.

MAIMONIDES. But my safe conduct? I was promised a safe return to my tents.

SHUMENTU. What mockery! Pleading a little thing like that. Sign this, or I sign it for thee, Maimonides. (*Shumentu signs espousal*)

ROKHAMA. Loyal Jew! Generous Maimonides! I thank thee for the gift to me of thy daughter. What dowery goes with her?

MAIMONIDES. Take all I have, but leave that maiden her honor.

ROKHAMA. We accept thy generous dowery. All thy possessions! How much are they? Whence hast thou thy wealth? From some alchemy or from the mines of Solomon?

MAIMONIDES. I do not comprehend thy question. Alchemy? Mines of Solomon?

SHUMENTU (*aside to Rokhama.*) He will not tell thee except upon the wrack.

ROKHAMA (*aside.*) But Aureola will spurn me if she hear that I wracked her father.

SHUMENTU (*aside.*) Get his secret, then kill him. Report that he has gone to Europe to see Council leaders, get wedding presents, or what not.

ROKHAMA. The wrack, Dooberdab.

MAIMONIDES (*led out.*) Help! Lord, Lord God, Jehovah, help! Aureola! Oh, Aureola!

SHUMENTU. The knight and Maimonides are in the toils of our plot. Two steps finely taken. Now for the third. Thou must contrive to hurry Astarte to Egypt to tie up any storris rising there against thee, until we are ready to defy all who would thwart our new empire.

ROKHAMA. I dread to meet Astarte with my proposal that she lay herself a victim upon the altar of my ambitions.

SHUMENTU. Dread Astarte? Then dread to live. Fail to bend her to our purposes and all our labors up to this are failure. Thy dream throne is in the balance. (*Exeunt.*)

[END OF ACT II.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Palatial Tent of Princess Astarte. Instruments of conjuration, images, &c. Patrons coming and going for messages from her Sorceries.*

ASTARTE. (*To a cripple.*) Thou art under some Christian spell. Burn two cypress crosses in the wane of the moon.

(*To one in mourning.*) A widow? The dead one being so delightful why not take the only balm for widowed hearts? A living man is such.

(*Rokhama enters with face partly disguised by his tunic.*)

BEATULUS (*aside to Astarte.*) O, Moon, Queen, Rokhama! He is yonder!

ASTARTE. All here consulting the oracles must depart at once. (*Stirs urn on altar.*) The omens are mysteriously disturbed and they direct as I have spoken. *Patrons depart. Enter Rokhama.*

ROKHAMA. My Princess bids me welcome by making this fine seclusion.

ASTARTE. My heart announced thy coming long before thou didst appear, my lover, lion, so I prepared this seance in love's sweet solitude for thee and me. (*Embrace.*)

ROKHAMA. And my heart tells me I am now most happy amid love's conjuring embraces.

ASTARTE. Ah, this loving is life's supreme necromancy. All these are but petty toys. (*Tossing aside instruments of her cult.*) With them I while away the hours thy absence makes most heavy. (*Embracing.* Thou hast earned a long rest by campaigning for the Crescent. Now will we home to Egypt to renew our rapturing honey moon where I will—I will—tell thee the rest under the stupefying lotus, my lover lion. (*Pats cheek.*)

ROKHAMA. But I cannot go back to little, cramped up Egypt, all fameless, to make myself brother of the crocodile which sleeps its life away upon some Nile mud-bank. In our early courtship days thou didst promise me a crown, Astarte. Where's the fulfillment?

ASTARTE. But I promised, when my brother was thought to be dying. I am his sole heir, and rising to his throne would glory to have thee by my side as the real ruler. (*Kneels by Rokhama.*)

ROKHAMA. Thou wert his nurse, but he lived.

ASTARTE. O, he is my only, and twin brother. I could not kill him. (*Weeping.*)

ROKHAMA. Yet thou wert cruel enough to teach me thy cult of all entrancing, exacting, tempestuous loving and then kill my heart ambitions. In lover days thou didst make me join thee to swear that neither god nor man should come between us and our desires. In Egypt women for a certain sin have their noses cut off, but thou hast thy fatal beauty still; and because, amid the hells of just jealousy, I perjured myself to prove thee pure when thou were not! There has not been a time from the day of our torrid espousal until now that I would not have done murder for thee.

ASTARTE. Thy burning eyes and heaped up muscles maddened me long ago and they do so yet, Rokhama. Thou wert a swine herd, of the class most despised in all Egypt, yet I, a Princess, gave thee all myself with full abandon and forever. To win thee powerful friends, I shamed my womanhood in the Temples of the Sacred Bulls. For thee, buying oracles proclaiming that I was the destined world queen, I have beggared myself. All, all for thee, hath my mad love done. And now, my beloved Rokhama, except that hideous murder, ask what sacrifice thou wilt of me and I shall joy to grant it. Before yon gods of love I swear it. (*Points to Apollo ana Aphrodite.*)

ROKHAMA. I accept thy vow. Fulfil it as I demand and I will condone thy failure to kill thy brother. Thou shalt go to Egypt at once, there to plot against those who are mine enemies. But before going, thou art to announce that thou goest intending to divorce me.

ASTARTE. Divorce thee? Why such report?

ROKHAMA. Such report is necessary that I may espouse Aureola. All that thou canst do thou must to favor, and nothing to prevent such alliance.

ASTARTE. Rokhama! Thou say this? I — give thee to another? To my great rival? Oh, no woman's love could endure such test! At last, I understand. I need not kill my brother to feed thy ambitions, but I must kill myself. I could not live an hour after consenting to give thee to Aureola!
(Weeping.)

ROKHAMA. (*With pretense of grief.*) Alas, gold is the invincible, brutal giant which forces this cruel separation, Astarte. The Golden Empire of Aureola rises every hour toward successful establishment because vast treasure supports it. I must have the Jewess as my consort or give up my darling hopes of dominion.

ASTARTE. Thou art blinded, my Rokhama. Cruel gold is not the ruling giant of life. Gold is and ever was the slave of glorious all conquering love. Oh, be thou loyal to me. To me alone, Rokhamo (*Embracing*), and suffer thyself to be utterly emeshed by thy passion queen's heavenly enchantments and I will put thee upon a throne (*Embracing*) dazzling to men and angels (*Embracing.*) Dost think that any mortal could withstand such a whirlwind as I, when once aroused. (*Embracing a long time.*)

ROKHAMA. Think? (*Embrace.*) A man enamored as I am now, does not want to think. Cannot think!

ASTARTE. Now dost thou begin to understand. Oh, when the millions of the world come to know that our Pleasure Empire means the revival of great mother Nature, the enthronement of impulse, the liberation of all hearts to mate by love's royal law, those millions will flock with pulsing raptures to our standards. (*Embrace.*) Kiss me again. Ah, thy lips are moist and trembling. (*Kissing*) Thou now hast the kiss which dost not satisfy, but makes another needful, and another, and another. (*Exeunt.*)

BEATULUS. (*Entering from behind a curtain.*) Now that is what I call scorching, but some people seem to like it. Ah, ha, and that wholesale wifer, Rokhama, could not stand out against such a sirroco. But I wonder that that hoo doo queen is not wise enough to know that a man who needs such hot-housing wont stay in love bloom very long with any one. Such a climate as this is! I wonder if I am to be kept as her spy for long. Oh,

this hoo doo woman will soon drop me. That is my fate—
Dropped as a foundling when only a day old, I have been regu-
larly dropped and adopted ever since. Ha, ha. Yet how
fortunate. Six pairs of parents instead of one pair and every
time I was adopted a new name given me! I think of myself as
a large family of happy, big-nose brothers. Ha, ha! My
adopters, although first and last teaching me enough various
religions to save a nation of sinners, generally ending in saying
to me, go to the devil! Oh, oh, oh! (*Pausing before a huge
image with devil's head and fish's tail.*) I guess I have arrived.
Now what a place for a Christian Serving Brother to be in!
(*Gong rings.*)

Come in. That is for all me come in. (*Gong.*) No one comes?
I wonder if these bells are for fighting, feeding or fires. (*Gong.*)
Holy uniformity, I forgot that Dooberdab told me that I was
henceforth a Moslem and to pray whenever I heard these bells!
Pray? But how? Some stand to pray, some kneel, and some
lie down. Some lie which ever way they pray. Ha, ha! I will
try all fashions, and so hit the right one. But to whom pray?
Everybody, I suppose, prays to the biggest god he has near, so
do I. (*Kneels before image of fish devil.*) Great he, or she, how
art thou? Please rid me of a part of my nose in some easy,
healthy way. Hast any spare sheckles, please drop them into
my purse unbeknown to me. My Captio is sent a slave to Egypt.
Get him out of that black hole and I will give thee back all the
sheckles I cajole from thee, as long as I live. Please give me a
tip as to which of the three world queens is to win the race, so I
may go over loyally to the winner. Astarte hath made me her
spy. That is the devil's own business. I do not like it, it is so
dangerous. Please thou, get her to give it back to thee. Get
me out of this unholy, Holy Land, with a whole skin please. Do
not let the women take all the politics away from the men as they
have taken, already, almost all the religion! (*Gong.*) Ah, that
is for stopping. Good, I might make a fool of myself or over
pray myself not knowing the trade. (*Rises.*) My regards to thy
family. Please do not trouble to follow me, for I have prayed
enough to last for the other half of my life. (*Moves away, look-
ing back.*)

ASTARTE. The Christian pig is very pious?

BEAUTULUS. Oh, now I swell with pride. So I did hit the
fashion of this place without a teacher, the first time.

ASTARTE. Shall I wave hither some of my grim familiars to
silence thee? (*Waving her arms mysteriously.*)

BEAUTULUS. O, no no! (*Runs and falls before Fish-god.*)
Help. (*Crawls to another image.*) Tell your mistress that I
behaved like one of ye, when here alone. (*Creeps toward Astarte.*)
Good, beautiful, saint witch-queen, I am thine to serve like a

dog. But thou didst send me spying for thee and I am bursting with the news I have gathered.

ASTARTE. Out with it, but beware of retailing any of the lying gossip of fools!

BEATULUS. I have dreadfulness to tell. Thy Pasha hath brought Maimonides to the wrack. The Jew is dead. All dead. Here is the amulet I took from his body to prove that. (*Extends the amulet.*) But what a way to do! Wracking the father to win the daughter instead of hugging the daughter to win the father. Ha, ha! That husband of thine is about adding to his war business that of general marriage contractor. He is about to unite himself to the wealth of Aureola by matrimony. That whether she will or no. Slyng about I heard these things.

ASTARTE. Fool. Rokhama was born a swine-herder. One of mean origin marrying into the royal blood cannot get divorce in Egypt for any cause, unless the wife consent. But I demean myself arguing with such as thou.

BEATULUS. Oh, but a faithful ape is better than a wise hyena for company at dinner. Ha, ha! Thy Husband and thy priest, the one sworn to save thy body and the other thy soul, plan to be rid of thee altogether by—just simply tying thee up in a sack presently and dropping thee into the sea. Ha, ha! I behind a bush heard them say so. It is so sorrowful. Hugging a woman as I saw that Rokhama hugging thee; then he going about to sack thee so coolly. Oh, what a climate this is.

ASTARTE. Sir St. George, the lover of Aureola, will find a way to prevent the Pasha's plot if he must needs kill both himself and Rokhama, or I misjudge the brave devotion of that knight.

LE ROY. (*Running in.*) Save me! Help me! (*Looking about in amazement.*) Oh, where am I?

BEATULUS. Hallelujah! Our bouncing LeRoy. (*Embracing.*) Oh, Princess Mocn-Queen, he is the dearest youth in Christendom. Hug him. Oh, he is good. Ha, ha.

ASTARTE. What means this audacity? Who is this?

LEROY. Oh, the traders are after me! They want to steal me to take me to Egypt. Thou wilt not let them? They have no right so to do.

ASTARTE. None dare take thee from my shrines. But explain thyself.

BEATULUS. Yes, talk right out LeRoy. Do not be afraid of any of these imps hereabouts. They are all tame, when our mistress, the Moon Queen, is here. Ha, ha.

LEROY. Oh Princess, Aureola, the daughter of Maimonides, bought me at a great price. I belong to her. She sent me with a message to my brother, Sir St. George, whom the Moslem now are taking to Africa. He is in a slave caravan passing here just now.

BEATULUS. (*Gyrating.*) Sir St. George going to African slavery? Oh, to have lashings for provender! To sleep on ant hills! Oh, to be made to wed half a dozen big, fat blacks! Ha, ha!

LEROY. I could not get nigh enough to speak to my brother, for the traders tried to kidnap me into the gang of captives. Oh, thou wilt not let them, Princess? (*Kneeling.*)

ASTARTE. (*To Beatulus.*) Take this to the Captain of my guards. (*Delivers to Beatulus a peculiar dagger.*) He will know how imperious my command from that. Tell him to rescue and bring hither Sir St. George at once.

LEROY. (*Dancing about.*) Oh, glory! Glory!

ASTARTE. (*Waving her arms mysteriously. To Beatulus.*) Go, but creep as thou goest thou audacious chatterer! The youth will show the way to the knight.

BEATULUS. (*Creeping out, dodging images, &c.*) I creep, I crawl for thee, queen of queens.

(*Astarte turns away. Beatulus slowly rises.*)

I crawl no more to-day. Black or white, East or West these she's are all alike! One of them goes crazy over some one man, then she expects all the rest of us lords of creation to crawl for her, But there be worse things than crawling for a pretty witch. Ha, ha, (*Exit.*)

(*LeRoy in amazement. Exit.*)

ASTARTE. (*Re-entering. Stands before images of Apollo and Aphrodite.*) Apollo and Aphrodite! Gods of Love and Beauty! Powerless things! Never more wear crowns in my presence. (*Takes off their crowns and hurls them to the earth. Covers with a veil a picture of Rokhama.*) Thine eyes entrance me never again, Rokhama.

SHUMENTU. (*Entering.*) I come thou most honored Princess, and sister of the Sultan, with my cortege upon an important mission.

ASTARTE. Thy priestship will please be direct and brief as well.

SHUMENTU. Thy commands are law here, but Princess, it is the will of our great Pasha, thy spouse, that thou return at once to Egypt. I go thither also, and ask the honor of having my company go with thine.

ASTARTE. Thou canting hypocrite, why not bluntly tell me all the truth? Why not say that thou and my husband plot to get me out of the way so that he may wed the affluent Aureola? But this my answer. I will stay here as long as I choose, and go when I go, without thy company. More, I will yet thwart both thee and Rokhama. That will I, although to so do I must needs kill that woman Aureola with these hands.

SHUMENTU. Beware of any rashness, Princess! Do not forget that thy royal brother, the Sultan, hath commanded every protection to the family and following of Maimonides.

ASTARTE. What I do will be done to defend the honor of the royal blood and for what I do in that line the Sultan will praise me. When I go to Egypt, I shall not fail to tell him that thou art in Egypt secretly the head of outlawed paganism, That makes thee a traitor.

SHUMENTU. Have a care Princess, the gods suffer not their priests to be affronted.

ASTARTE. If thy gods give oracles for money as thou hast claimed, and when the shekels cease to flow go about to reverse their predictions they and their priests are beneath contempt. Say to those that thou art the nearer of heaven or of hades that Astarte despises and defies all such gods and such priests!

SHUMENTU. (*Waving his arms.*) Holy men, come. (*Priests and scribes run in.*) The Princess blasphemes. Write out her impious words. If they be not at once repented, I will call down vengeance from on high!

ASTARTE. Now that thy pompous play is ended, listen to me. I shall call for vengeance, but from thy duped followers. I shall soon rage from end to end of Egypt telling them thou dost not believe thine own teachings, that thou dost tremble before the rising splendors of the Christian Madonna, that thou dost sell thy religion as a commodity. Then they will raise thy temples, smash their dumb gods, hunt thee from Nile land and know that utter infidelity is better far than any pious fraud.

SHUMENTU. Declare war upon me and thy last hope of being the Mohammedian Madonna dies.

ASTARTE. A puny threat. My dream of a Pleasure Empire is ended. I henceforth espouse Mary of Bethlehem, the fairest star of all the galaxy. Her mother heart will never repel one so miserable and tricked as I have been. (*Weeps.*) Craven impostors, all, begone.

(*Pursues with a lance. Priests flee out.*)

BEATULUS. (*Entering. Trying to suppress laughter.*) Ha ha, he he. O he he. O he he queen. Ah ha ha, may I laugh. Ha ha. O, he he. It is ha ha awful to ha ha, to laugh he he, among thy he he imps. Thy he he men all, he he, dressed as ha ha, red as he he, red devils, are all ha ha after that ha ha caravan. And the he he night ha ha coming on. He he. O he he. Forgive me my he he. My beautiful he he. My he he queen. Thy ha ha laughing. Thy he he jack. Thy laughing jackass is he he, loose. Ha, ha. Didst ever ha ha? Didst ever feel he he, like one he he? Like one such as ha ha? As he he I! Oh, he he. Ah, ha ha. That he he carvan, will ho ho ho. Will run for their he he lives. Oh, ho ho. That he he knight will ha ha ha.

Will soon, soon be he he, be he he here. Ah, ha ha (*breathlessly.*)
Oh, he he, Ah, ha ha. (*sinks exhausted.*)

ASTARTE. No w silence. Go to my tent yonder. Some one comes.

BEATULUS. O, most beautiful Moon-Queen, do not send me among thy goblins and the night coming on. I would die in there, with fright! Thou wouldst miss me did I so. Thou needst me as thy dog.

ASTARTE. Then climb yon cedar! Keep thine eyes alert while there.

BEATULUS. (*Climbing tree.*) I creep! I crawl! I climb for thee, Gracious, Beautiful. (*Climbs tree.*)

AUREOLA. (*Entering partly disguised.*) Princess, I come needing help, my misery my sole plea.

ASTARTE. I, the Priestess of Osirus, can penetrate all disguised, but still deem it an affront for any one to approach my august shrine, nameless and under masks. Begone.

AUREOLA. (*Throwing aside disguise.*) I am Aureola the daughter of Maimonides.

ASTARTE. My rival?

AUREOLA. Oh, I rival thee in nothing, unless thou art most miserable of women. My father's encampment hath been assailed, and I was seized therefrom by those assailing it. Pasha Rokhama, thy husband, was my captor. He demands that I be his wife. By asking time to think of his proposal I made opportunity to escape from him. I come to thee as a woman to a woman. Yea, I come to thee, the wife of the one who would drag me to a state worse than death to me. Thou wilt help me, Princess? (*Wseping.*)

ASTARTE (*extending amulet of Maimonides.*) Knowst thou this?

AUREOLA. My father's amulet. He never parted with that, except under some fearful stress! Oh, Princess, tell me where is my father, if thou dost know?

ASTARTE. Canst thou swear upon this amulet that thou dost not intrigue to win Rokhama?

AUREOLA. Win Rokhama? I abhor him. The sea shall embrace me in death ere he shall take me to his arms. By Israel's God, I swear it! (*Kisses her father's amulet.*)

ASTARTE. Dost thou love the knight, Sir St. George?

AUREOLA. Aye. He saved my life and my father's at bloody Acre. All that I am belongs to him, if he so will.

BEATULUS. (*From tree. Laughing*) Oh, Princess, moon-crowned, thy men come with the knight. Ha, ha.

SIR ST. GEORGE (*entering with LeRoy.*) Accept my everlasting gratitude, Princes of Egypt for my timely deliverance.

AUREOLA. St. George! (*Embracing.*)

BEATULUS. (*From tree.*) Horsemen come this way. They are in some search. They have the standard of Rokhama.

ASTARTE. Now is there no time for any delayings. Ye hear my outlook's warning. Ye twain must put mountains and miles between ye and Rokhama, at once.

AUREOLA. But I cannot leave my father. Oh, where is he?

ASTARTE. I never before pitied a woman, but now I do pity thee. I must tell thee all. Here is thy father's amulet! He will never need it more! Let thought of vengeance dry thy tears! It was Rokhama's work.

AUREOLA. My father; oh, my father. Dead! (*Weeping.*)

SIR ST. GEORGE. Fate fixes thy course, anew, my Aureola. Canst thou trust this (*hand to his heart*) and this (*pointing to sword on wall*) which I hope to have.

AUREOLA. Trust thee? Yes; anywhere, by night or day, and forever. (*Weeping.*) Oh, my father! my fathea!

LEROY. If the commander lets me go with ye, I will help him fight for thee, Aureola.

BEATULUS. Ha, ha. The rooster's spurs are growing. Blood will tell, Ha, ha.

ASTARTE (*To Aureola.*) Thou hast a rapier. It is well. Now take this jeweled girdle. Thou more worthy to wear it than that dumb thing. (*Strips girdle from Aphrodite.*) It jewels may serve thee in some want. (*To Sir St. George.*) Thy wish granted. (*Takes sword from wall.*) This is a gift to me from Rokhama. If he try to take this maiden from thee give him his sword point foremost, and tell him Astarte told thee so to return it. By Egyptian law, I, being a royal priestess, may espouse ye. Cross four arms with hands clasped tightly so making the symbol of a double star. That the ancient Syrian sign of immortality. Immortal be your love.

BEATULUS. (*From his perch.*) And for a Christian blessing take mine. It is not worth much, yet better than none. (*Laughs and cries.*) Crying like a woman, because I am so glad. (Ha, ha.)

ASTARTE (*embracing Aureola.*) And now farewell. Thy God speed ye both.

(*Thunder in distance.*)

BEATULUS. Thunder on the Wedding day is a sign that there will be none after the honeymoon! Ha, ha.

AUREOLA. (*Weeping.*) Oh, my father! My father! (*Exeunt.*)
Aureola, St. George and LeRoy.

ASTARTE. (*Calling after them.*) Follow the glen path. One of my guards will meet ye with dromedary mounts. Now, I will unveil my Pasha just long enough to laugh in his face. (*Moves toward veiled picture of Rokhama. Unveils it.*) Thou wretch. (*Pauses and gazes.*) How like a fool I love thee. That Jewess would give up the whole world for the man she loves. So

would I for thee and hope of heaven as well. (*Extends her arms.*) No, no! We never embrace again. Thou didst plot to murder me. Yet, that I might forgive hadst thou not given thy heart's throne to another. (*Seizes a scimiter and menaces.*) Henceforth between thee and me it is war to the death. (*Slashes the picture to pieces.*) I shall soon laugh at thy downfall. (*Laughs hysterically.*) Yet will I weep for thee. Oh, my Rokhama, Rokhama. Rokhama. (*Exit weeping.*)

LEROY (*Re-entering.*) Three Moslem are at them. Give me something with which to fight.

ASTARTE (*Re-entering.*) Take this spear. Beatulus, arm thyself. We must to the rescue. (*Seizes a lance.*)

(*Exit LeRoy. Beatulus descends from tree.*)

BEATULUS. I fight? I? At last it is that or be quietly carved. But there is nothing left here that will cut. I take this. It is loose and also tough Ha, ha, (*Picks up a piece of a tail of one of the imp images.*) Oh, now good he or she imp, I will return thy tail. (*Business.*)

(*Sir St. George, Aureola and LeRoy, driven in by Rokhama, Shumentu and Dooberdab. A fight. Astarte sounds a horn blast. Her guards in their grotesque garb rush in to aid.*)

ASTARTE. Shall I order my men to fight?

ROKHAMA. No. A truce. We are outnumbered.

ASTARTE. (*Aside to Sir St. George.*) Flee ere reinforcements come to Rokhama. Beatulus will show thee a secret pass out. My guards will go to defend ye for the present. Beatulus. (*Gives latter a signal. The wedding party and Beatulus retire.*)

SHUMENTU. The Princess is a very adroit matchmaker.

(*Noises of boisterous cheering without and singing of "Samson, Samson, Great Giant Samson."*)

ROKHAMA. What can that mean?

DOOBERDAB. I will quickly find out, great Pasha. (*Exit.*)

(*Thunder without.*)

ROKHAMA. So, Astarte, thou hast aided the escape of Sir St. George, a prisoner of war. That is treason toward the Sultan.

ASTARTE. Treason, great Pasha, seems rampant these days. Thy Cairo concubine recently hath confessed that thou didst bribe her to poison, slowly, our monarch. The bribe, the promise that her son and thine should succeed thee on my brother's throne.

ROKHAMA. Lies! Ridiculous, damnable lies!

(*Cheering without.*)

ASTARTE. Something pleases thy Mamelukes. The news from Egypt, likely.

DOOBERDAB. (*Re-entering.*) Oh, my glorious master, it is reported that another comes to take thy command and that thou art ordered, in chains, to the Capitol. (*Kneels and weeps.*)

(*Thunder without.*)

SHUMENTU. (*Aside to Rokhama.*) Now, with all thy might cajole the Princess.

ROKHAMA. (*Extending his arms toward Astarte*) Oh, my faithful, tender wife, in trouble's hour true love rises to its noon, and we see through the trickeries of those who envy us our happiness! For years, amid many toils, often misunderstood, I have wrought to make thee a queen above all who ever ruled upon the earth, Just now we are balked a little, but thy consort will triumph yet!

ASTARTE. (*Moving away.*) Superb hypocrisy. A most dexterious player! What a pity that now when thou needst so much a friend, there is not in all the world one knowing thee to trust thee.

ROKHAMA. (*Dropping upon one knee and moving toward her.*) Yes, there is one, my passion queen! Such as thou, once loving to the full, can never forget the heart's idol. I am of those pulsing human millions who bow rapturously at the feet of the queen of the pleasure Empire. On the wrack that lying cup-bearer shall recant and thou standing before thy brother by thy peerless eloquence spurred by a love the gods might envy, prove me innocent!

ASTARTE (*moving away, draws a dagger.*) All this is too late. Keep off. I am armed. Oh, didst promise the wrack to the pretty cup-bearer, years ago, when thou wert letting her come between thee and me? (*Moving out.*)

ROKHAMA. (*Creeping after her.*) Wait! Wait! My heart's sole idol! Believe! Trust! Once more!

ASTARTE. I go to Egypt, but with mine own escort, not thine! I shall not be murdered on the way as thou didst plot to have me, but live to denounce thee from the steps of the throne as traitor to every trust of God and man. (*Exit.*)

ROKHAMA (*runs after her and drags her back.*) Now by the shrines of Memphis where we were wed thou shalt not go thus! Thou shalt never live to accuse me at the Capitol.

ASTARTE (*struggling.*) Help! Help! Is there not a man here? (*Shumentu draws near and observes placidly.*)

DOOBERDAB (*running into midst.*) Now must I touch thy sacred person. My glorions one! Do not forget! She is a Princess of Egypt! (*Astarte falls. Strangled to death.*)

(*Thunder without.*)

ROKHAMA (*Binding up wounded arm.*) A lucky omen. She aimed thrice at my heart and missed it.

DOOBERDAB (*examining body.*) Dead? Woe. Woe! Our Pleasure Empire ruined! And my mother's mummy unredeemed. Only this left. (*Draws a dagger.*) Which goes first Rokhama?

ROKHAMA. We go together, my faithful. But not by suicide, confessing that Rokhama is outwitted by a Cairo concubine and a Nile witch.

SHUMENTU (*Examines body cooly.*) Dead. Rokhama's Golden Empire sweeps away another obstacle. This means revolution. Now at any cost Anreola must be captured.

(*Thunder and lightning without.*)

DOOBERDAB. Doom! Doom! Doom! The thunders bellow only doom!

ROKHAMA. No; say rather that the storm demons light their torches to guide us in our pursuit of glory, gold and beauty. Ere to-morrow noon I shall have the Golden Jewess. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Outside gate of "New Eden," Bethlehem.

(*Voice within park, singing, "Shepherds Watch."*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. (*To Baroness D'Heartmyth's.*) Our New Eden sendth forth song and Goldshine to all the region round about, these days. In truth, it seemeth that we are tasting here the dawn of the golden age, Baroness.

BARONESS.—Thou hearest our Edena singing, just now. She hath been with me most of the day in mercy works. Her songs have gladdened many. But now she comes hither and will be overjoyed to see thee, father.

EDENA. (*Entering.*) Baroness—Oh, father Foren here? Thy blessing, father.

BARONESS. Now I must make way to my wards, who much neen me. If so thou wilt, Father Foren, our Edena can recite to thee the things she saw in our rounds to-day. (*Exit.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN.—So Sunshine thou hast been adding to the cheer of this, the most happy day our New Eden hath known.

EDENA. And wiltst then good father, tell me all abou thow this day is so much happier for those here than any which hath gone before it?

FATHER FOREN. That will I. Five years ago to-day our loved Aureola, her brave knight Sir St. George, his brother Le Roy, a faithful servant and I were together, in the wilderness this side of Gaza. We were all in flight from muderous Mohammedians. That Christmas eve, under the stars with Christian rites I

wedded Aureola and Sir St. George. The day following our pursurers attacked us. They were five to our one, but Sir St. George made a great defence and his bride in that was but little behind him. Rokhama, the Moslem leader, tried to drag Aureola away but faithful Beatulus clung to him; although wounded again and again. As Aureola, having marked the Pasha for life with her rapier, escaped that Beatulus fell to laughing. Laughed his soul into heaven. But Sir St. George was wounded, bound and dragged away. As he went he waved us to flight exclaiming, Save my Aureola. Save my Aureola. Often even to this day that cry rings in my ears. After many tribulation we came to this place, but from that day five years ago until now none here could learn Sir St. George's fate. Each Christmas anniversary hitherto has been full of sad memories to some of us. Thank God it will not be so this year. Sir St. George has been heard from. He is likely to be with us soon; may be ere to-morrow. That hope makes this day to New Eden joyful indeed.

AUREOLA. (*Passing, in abstraction*). Oh yes thou wilt soon be here, my knight. My heart sees thee coming. (*Exit*).

CHAPLAIN. Poor Aureola. She goeth about much of late like this, in some kind of a trance.

EDENA. She is not like herself these days. She does not seem to know me when she passes. And I love her so much. (*Weeps*). She goes daily to yonder little outlook-hill and sits in solitude gazing far off. There over and over she repeats such words as she has just now. She cannot endure much longer the pain of her long waiting for the loved one who comes not.

CHAPLAIN FORIN. Sublime constancy! Methinks in ages to come the story of her devotion and how she has expended princely sums to send out searching expeditions, year after year, to every known quarter of the earth, to find her spouse, will be sung by poets as having close parallel with that romance quest of the Holy Grail.

(*A night heron's call in the distance*).

EDENA. Didst hear that, Chaplain?

CHAPLAIN. Yes. It is strange that the night heron should be calling and the sun not yet set.

EDENA. That is a signal to me from my father! Some danger is nigh. I must go to him, to the little hill yonder.

CHAPLAIN. To thy father, I ooberdab, the outlaw? My child, he yet associates with desperate men. It is at peril, thou dost go to him.

EDENA. He may be bad to all others but he is good to me. He would sooner die than call me in o danger. I confide in thee, Chaplain. If I be missed pray make some excuse for me, but do not at this time mention my going to meet my father.

CHAPLAIN FORIN. God keep thee, my child.

(Exit Edena, enter Sir Henri).

SIR HENRI. Now why flits away our little Armenian sweet-singer?

CHAPLAIN FOREN. On mercy's missions, as usual. That girl is a wonder. She is the daughter of the outlaw, Dooberdab; but he never was much of a father to her. Left motherless when but a little child, she fell into the care of those not a kin to her and had a sorry lot. One day she was abducted by villians who sought to sell her to the harem market. Our Aureola, then but recently here heard the child's cry, and rapier in hand rescued her. After that the girl was named Edena and became one of the New Eden wards. She and Aureola have come to love each other as dearest sisters. But hast thou heard further from Sir LeRoy, our young surgeon?

SIR HENRI. Yes, he hath arrived and brings a staggering report. The Sultan Khatil, so long the friend of the New Edenites and the Hospitaller Knights of Jerusalem, is dead. Worse than that, a revolution has broken out in Egypt. A so called Rokhama party is striving to take possession of the government.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. But Sir St. George? He came with his brother?

SIR HENRI. Alas, no. The Sultan had helped to find him and was about to send him hither with an escort for protection, when death prevented his good intentions. Sir St. George has been seized by the revolutionists, whose watch cry is down with all Christians. Our commander, it is reported, has been sent a slave to a pirate galley. That means sure and swift death. Sir Le Roy, by mere accident, escaped from the Egyptian capitol just after his brother was taken by the rebels.

AUREOLA. *(Passing in abstraction).* Yes, thou wilt come, my St. George. My heart says thou art coming, nearer and nearer, every hour. *(Exit).*

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Now that is inspiration and I believe it. Oh those truly loving have mysterious ways of communicating, which we can neither understand nor flout. But, Sir Henri, thy reports must not be given out at present. Many here were hoping that Sir St. George would appear at our coming Christmas Eve feast. Let the hope live and we will trust that it ripen full soon. That Rokhama was crushed in his first attempt at revolution, pray God he may be in this his second attempt. Be pleased thou to go to speed those preparing for the feast and I will confer with our young LeRoy whom I see coming this way. *(Exit Sir Henri).*

(Sir Le Roy enters. Embraces Chaplain).

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Sir Henri hath told me all the painful disappointments thou hast met, my son, but we are very far from hopelessness as yet.

SIR LE ROY. Disappointments multiply with me. I have lost both a brother and a bride. Both were to greet me here the coming Christmas day. Now I shall have neither. Edena insists upon her resolve never to leave Aureola to wed any one unless that bereaved woman hath the care of her husband. I cannot stay here to meet the sad entreating eyes of Aureola, and the entreating yet denying eyes of Edena. I shall depart at once in one more effort to bring my brother hither. But the revolution in Egypt seems certain to make the attempt a vain one. Oh, Chaplain wilt thou not use thy good offices. Even thy authority. to have Edena wed me ere I go away again?

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Oh, I marry youngsters, but they must do their own courting. In truth most of them so prefer to do?

SIR LE ROY. Yet Edena should cleave to one alone, and not let any one come between us.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Ah, but the cleaving to one alone, leaving all others, begins after, not before wedlock. It is well not to draw the rein too tightly upon a sweetheart before the harness is fully on, for the rein might break and the filly run away. And mark this, my son, one as true to duty-friendship's claim as is thy Edena, is certain to be true to wifely claims as a wife. Such a one is worth waiting for a long time. One otherwise is not worth waiting for any time.

SIR LE ROY. I cannot argue with thee, father, but I entreat thee after I am gone, to say for me an adieu to Edena. I will depart for Egypt at once.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Oh, do not so! Stay at least until after the feast of this Christmas eve. There may be some encouraging report of St. George's coming. Now what if a bride shouldst jump out of the Christmas tree's branches into thy arms?

SIR LE ROY. Thy words but tantalize. Thou are almost unkind, father.

(Edena enters. Stands at a distance).

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Oh no. I would not be so. But just now I must go to the Baroness. Yonder is a New Eden maiden, with flowers, to sell likely. Keep her company for a time. And have no fear that I will tell thy Edena that thou art here with some other beauty than herself. I promise thee, that even though she asked me if such was the case, I would deny it.

SIR LE ROY. Thou wouldst not prevaricate for any one good father. I know that. Yet I beg thee not to mention to Edena that I am going away. I cannot bear to meet her. Her stubborn denials of my desires crush me. I must away without seeing her again.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. But mark my words; do not go until after the feast of to-night. *(Exit)*

EDENA. *(Drawing near to SIR LE ROY)* Wouldst thou buy some of my flowers, Knight?

SIR LE ROY. (*Turning about quickly*) Ah, my Edena. (*Embrace*) Now am I overjoyed. Oh beloved, let me run after our good Chaplain to ask him—

EDENA. So? To ask him to warn me not to meet in lonely places such as these, any handsome youth? No, do not go after him. I like this, as it is. (*Embrace*)

SIR LE ROY. Oh, not that would I ask him, but rather that he come this instant to command thee to hasten our long deferred wed—

EDENA. (*Placing the hand over the mouth of SIR LE ROY*) Wait, just a time span. The length of my little hand. Let me teach thy lips a pretty thing to say. Now I will run away unless thou dost promise to say it. Nod thy head, if thy wilt.

(SIR LE ROY *nods*)

My father told me once upon a time, that this is the way they made Masons, who ever they may be, long ago in the days of a great king called Solomon, who lived some where in this country. Now ready! Repeat what I say. About each true heart, three bands—Love of God, that is duty—love of friendship, that is beauty—Lover love, that is heaven. Oh thou are restless! Be a good scholar, until thy lesson is learned. Now once more: Because each of these bands holds my Edena's heart. Oh do not try to hug me, yet. There, what a dunce! Do not repeat that last sentence. Now ready: Because each of these bands holds my Edena's heart, she ever will be true to—me!

SIR LE ROY. Oh, Edena, my own, canst thou not understand that thy resolve as to our wedding makes an everlasting separation between us? My brother is lost to us, now, forever. The Rokhama party hath sent him to the oar locks of a pirate galley. From such none escape,

EDENA. Beloved, hope. To-night I was abroad on the call of a night heron. I heard some things I cannot tell thee now, but Rokhama may be near his doom. After to-night's feast I will tell thee more. Let us in to join thy companion knights who are gathering. Now look cheerful. And do not blush when meeting the company, as if we were ashamed of being lovers. (*Exit. Embraces*)

(SHUMENTU and DOBERDAB *enter cautiously*)

SHUMENTU. We may wait safely here, for a time. The New Edenites are engaged in their Christmas feasting and will not come this way. Let them enjoy it. It will be their last, at New Eden.

DOBERDAB. Methinks our Sheik was foolhardy to go spying in yonder. He seems to trust no one, but himself, these days.

SHUMENTU. This the last desperate blow for all for which we have many years plotted, and Rokhama is bent on knowing just how to make our entrance a success.

DOOBERDAB. Methinks this present attempt at revolution will end like our first, five years ago, in failure.

SHUMENTU. Believe it not. Reports from Egypt show that the revolution there is already under way. The death of Sultan Khatil hath opened the flood gates of discontent, long pent up. Multitudes there believe Rokhama to have been persecuted by our late monarch, because of our pasha's loyalty to the Moslem faith. The revolution proclaimed here now will have instant support from the thousands of pilgrims at this season on their way to Mohammed's shrine at Mecca. But see; some one approaches with haste and caution. Rokhama.

ROKHAMA. (*Throwing off a pilgrim garb*) Such trappings ill fit a soldier. I know all the defences, having had good opportunity to observe them during the three days I played sick pilgrim within. The thing most to be dreaded is their Madonna banner and that because so many of our followers are infected with the superstition that that banner hath power to blast any assailing those fighting under it.

SHUMENTU. In the attack, my Mongolian slave who fears nought but the wish-bone of the Chinese chick shall be in the van and tear down that feared emblem, at the first onslaught.

ROKHAMA. The plan of a genius, Shumentu.

SHUMENTU. This to be the master stroke of thy insurrection, Rokhama. The Christians have announced a great coronation ceremony to take place here a few moons hence. The priests of her faith have predicted that at that coronation a great miracle from heaven surely will confirm Mary's title. There is a fever of expectancy on their side and a tremendous fearfulness on our side. Thy crushing New Eden, so preventing the coronation and proving the woman of Bethlehem powerless to help her devotees, will give thee, great Pasha, glorious fame through all the Moslem world.

DOOBERDAB. It may be an old wife's tale but there is a report that Sir St. George is expected to be with the Jerusalem Knights soon. If by any chance the knights came to know of our raid and their old commander led to oppose us, we would be doomed.

ROKHAMA. Sir St. George will not be here to confront us. My friends in Egypt have seized him. This time he will go to a pirate's oar locks. From such few escape and none continuing at the oars live long. The only thing I fear is that we may not find the secret hiding place or source of the treasure of Maimonides now devoted by his daughter Aureola to New Eden.

SHUMENTU. Allah provides again. One of the Jerusalem Knights spends his evenings in yonder with a pretty young Edentite. On entering threaten the maid with ravishment and her lover with fiery torture. Then they will serve thee as thou dost command, from confessing all they know to setting the place on fire. Oh, lovers are prime cowards when either of the mating pair is put in any peril.

(DOOBERDAB *menaces* SHUMENTU *from behind*)

ROKHAMA. Thou devil's chaplain. Satan must miss thee in thy absence here.

DOOBERDAB. Now pardon me, while I ask ye both a question which much concerns me! What is to be done with the women in New Eden?

SHUMENTU. Divided, of course, among the men who do our fighting. Our great Pasha will claim as his, most likely Aureola. He does not yet quite give up his ancient dream of a Golden Empire.

ROKHAMA. Aureola marked me for her own the day after her wedding to Sir St. George. I would have her for a time if only to mock her in revenge for this (*points to scar on head*) but more because I may get from the Christians a great ransom for her redemption.

SHUMENTU. I shall choose a pretty little Armenian that is in there.

(*Menaced from behind by* DOOBERDAB)

DOOBERDAB. Great Pasha, in any desire however dastardly until now, I never counted any cost of serving thee. Listen. In yonder is my only earthly kin, a daughter. There she has the only home worthy the name that she ever knew. The little conscience I have, rebels at aiding in its destruction. I go to its assault, but only on thy giving oath to me that no harm shall come to my daughter from our side.

SHUMENTU. A daughter in there? How dreadful! It is well that we rescue her from danger of having her faith corrupted by the Christian heresies! But cheer up, Dooberdad, if the maid is lost, thou canst easily buy in this country of cheap women another to take her place. Daughters are only an encumbrance any way—at least to such tramps as thou. Ha ha.

DOOBERDAB. Thou beastly blot upon all who bear the title priest: Mark this. My daughter is the one now known as Edena, the Armenian. If any harm come to her from our side, I swear that instant to turn my sword to the defence of the Edenites, even though in so doing I need to rip out thy black heart. (*Aside*) Oh, my mother's mummy. My daughter. My daughter.

SHUMENTU. And thou wouldst have us believe that pretty Edena couldst have such a ruffian sire as thou. Ha ha. Thou wouldst forestall my claiming her by pretense of fatherhood. Cunning Dooberdab.

DOOBERDAB. (*Pointing to his sword*) This will defend my title!

SHUMENTU. (*To* ROKHAMA) When the Moslam minarets announce prayer time to-morrow evening, we strike New Eden. Its burning ruins will be the first beacon of thy long delayed Egyptian triumph, Rokhama. But this time thou art not to pass as a how before the throne, but to mount that throne a king indeed. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. In New Eden Park near Gate. Knights about table feasting. New Edenite children and others singing near.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Knights Hospitallers, we are all here this night before Christmas by invitation of the women of New Eden. At midnight we must be back to our garrison chapel to celebrate the Nativity Mass. Until then let merriment hold full sway.

KNIGHTS. (*In concert*) Viva the beautiful saints who feast us. Fill the bowl. Glad the soul. (*Laughter*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. (*Undrapping a Christmas tree on which the sign, "To the brave defenders of New Eden." See this, (Points to tree)*) The women of New Eden have given us a Christmas tree. Rejoice as a lad over his first razor! We are to be boys again for to-night!

KNIGHTS. Angelica! Angelicae! Angelicis! Angels! New Eden!

FATHER FOREN. This is to be a night of surprises. Women of our far off home lands send ye tokens of undying regard. I will present you an old time friend, just returned from England. He brings a camel-load of gifts to prove we are not forgotten over the sea. Captio, once serving brother of the Knights. Stand up, Captio!

KNIGHTS. Hallelujah! England! England! France and England! Captio! Carp! Carp!

CHAPLAIN. At this feast we need a King of Disorder, according to custom. One to keep up the excitement and tell us our sins of the year past.

KNIGHTS. Captio! Captio! Captio! King of Disorder!

SIR HENRI. The King should have a crown and sceptor. (*One Knight thrusts a broom in Captio's hand another a huge funnel on his head. Uprorious laughter.*)

CHAPLAIN. Now let me introduce the one who shall act as representative of our hostesses the ladies of New Eden, Sir Knight Santa Claus. (*Sir LeRoy disguised as Santa Claus enters.*)

KNIGHTS. A-a-a-a! See me, me, me, me, Old Kriss Kringle! (*Laughter.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. As our Knight Santa hands out the presents, I will name the one to whom each goes, (*reads: "A tunic lining for him whom it will fit." A roast kid. This must be for thee. (Hands to a very fat Knight. Laughter. Receiving a sword from tree, reads:)* "For the Chivalrous Knight."

CAPTIO. He did not come here, this evening! Waagh!

KNIGHTS. A beauty. Give it to me. Me. Me. (*Laughter.*)

CAPITO. Only a crank or a coward would try to take from a fellow veteran the honor belonging to him. Waagh.

CHAPLAIN. There is a sword for each upon the tree.

KNIGHTS. Bravo! Beauties! Viva ea Edenites!

CHAPLAIN. This fine Madonna banner is presented to our garrison by Edena, the adopted sister of our loved Aureola.

SIR HENRI. Up with your tankards all. To Little Sunshine, the Flower of Syria soon to be sister-in-law to all the knights, excepting the lucky one who is to wed her.

KNIGHTS (Rising and pointing quizzically towards each other) Who? Who? Who?

CAPTIE. Ye dried up mummies, ye say who? Waagh.

CHAPLAIN. Who could win Sunshine except our handsom young saw bones, Sir LeRoy.

KNIGHTS. Bones! Bones! Bones hath the beauty! (*Laughter*).

CAPTIO. By the crown I this night wear, I denounce ye all as pagans! All bowing the knee to yon mischief making god (*Points to statue of Cupid*) Now see the leer on the face of it (*Approaching statue with uplifted fist.*) Thou marplot! Thy mixing, mismatings and match-marrings kill more than all the wars and all the other distempers of this world full of fools. Waagh.

SIR LEROY. (*In Santa disguise.*) Now Knights this Carp must not mar that Cupid. I made it myself for Edena.

KNIGHTS (*Laughing.*) Oh, old Kriss in love! No fool like an old fool!

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Captio must not touch to harm the image, but King Disorder does as he pleases to night.

CAPTIO (*Toppling over image.*) If the devil were dead he would not be missed, thou surviving. (*Grinds fragments under his feet.*) Now feel I better.

SIR LEROY (*Throwing aside disguise.*) Oh this is too much. It is shameful!

KNIGHTS. Hear! Hear! Hear! Hear the Carp, King of Disorder! (*Laughter.*)

CAPTIO (*Taking off his crown.*) Yes it is well that ye hear the Carp. Veteran like, I boast at every chance of utterance. When we were all slung out of Gaza five years ago, I was lugged away a slave to Egypt. But I roundly cursed every cat and cow worshipper from Carmel to Cairo, I cursed by—

CHAPLAIN. Oh, Captio no samples on Christmas eve.

CAPTIO. A veterans feast, without the spice of swearing. Waagh!

CHAPLAIN. Do it by pantomine.

KNIGHTS. Bravo! Carp the wordless poet. (*Laughter.*)

CAPTIO. Then these be my quotations, so to speak, of honest swearing. (*Holds up hands and twirls two fingers upon each.*) I so pleased the Sultan by my (*fingers up*) he promoted me, I think, to be Court fool. (*Fingers up.*) Wonder of wonder,

there I found the Lady D'Heartmyths in high favor for having saved in some way the life of some princess belonging to those dried humans!

KNIGHTS. Halleluja! Heroine! Heroine! Baroness!

CAPTIO. Oh, I needed to jog your minds ye praying, royster-ing, fighting swashbucklers from giving all your shouting to a sprig of a maid in forgetfulness of the founder of your garrison. Now raise cheers, also for the one who hath given all the wealth of her Golden Empire to the needy of this lobster pot of a land where every one having any religion usually goes to fight it into some other one.

KNIGHTS. Baroness! Aureola! Angels! Angels!

SIR HENRI. Captio should hear the proclamation the Jerusalem Knights are sending every where to call true believers to a grand Coronation of the Madonna next Easter day at this place (*Reaas*) Here has been established by the Baroness De Heartmyths a group of the most splendid charities the world has known. They are devoted to ministering to human need regardless of race or creed. To their work the Jewess Aureola has consecrated all her affluences in the name of the one human family of the one Divine Father. So interpreting the spirit of Mary of Bethlehem the Baroness and Aureola have done more to prepare the way for the crowning of the Madonna as the triumphant Eve, to defending religion as the friend of man and to bringing in the Golden Age when all who worship God shall be as brethren, than all the statemen or armies that have fought their battles in ages past in this Palestine.

AUREOLA. (*Entering in abstraction.*)

CAPTIO. Silence, all.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Poor Aureola! She is in one of her waking dreams.

AUREOLA. (*Gazing at each of the Knights in turn.*) Not here? Oh, but my heart saith thou art very very near St. George. I want thee to go with me to crown the Madonna. See, I have the flowers (*Holds up flower crown.*) We women give her all our crowns. (*Exit.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. She seemeth as one inspired!

(*A woman's voice exclaiming, without* "St. George! Sir St. George is free! He has escaped! He is coming!")

SIR LEROY. Edena's voice!

EDNA (*running in.*) Sir St. George! The good Knight! He comes!

SIR HENRI. What mad jest is this?

EDENA. Sir LeRoy! Chaplain! It is true. (*To Chaplain Foren, in undertone.*) The night heron. Thou knowst my messenger. Sir St. George escaped from the rebels. He is nigh, and likely to be at Jerusalem any hour.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Knights all. Peace on earth and glory to God! I will stake my honor upon the truth of the report. I have its seal of genuiness. (*Exit.*)

KNIGHTS. Hallelujah! Hero! Hero! High! High! St. George!

(*Edena and Sir LeRoy moving apart, in embrace.*)

SIR HENRI. Where hath our Chaplain gone?

CAPTIO. Where? Where? Waagh! Where should he go but to bring Aurecla and the Baroness to the gate of heaven with this great message.

SIR HENRI (*Pointing to Sir LeRoy and Edena in embrace.*) Those two got to their heaven gate full soon. Ah, Captio, Cupid broken or not, rules the world. Ha, ha!

CAPTIO. Waagh!

(*Bugles sound "To Mount."*)

SIR HENRI. Our signal to mount. Now away for Jerusalem. Perhaps our Commander, Sir St. George, will be there ere Christmas morning dawns.

KNIGHTS (*Going.*) Hero! Hero! Sir St. George! Big Heart! Fighter! Big Heart! Fighter! Hero! Hero! (*Exeunt.*)

SIR LEROY. Oh, my Edena, I live once more, if this nights tidings prove to be true.

EDENA. Thou didst not think me bold in holding thee back, when thy companions went LeRoy?

SIR LEROY. See how the sun's last rays linger to kiss the flowers, again and again, good night. May I not emulate the sun's example.

EDENA. But at this hour on another evening thou didst say that light was the moon's. He like an old watchman going about to warn maids to sleep and Knights to duty. But I must tell thee of grave matters. While with my father, he told me that Rokhama with a desperate gang of pilgrims will attempt to raid New Edena to-morrow night. Thou will tell thy companions, so that we here be well guarded from any such attack?

SIR LEROY. Rokhama? He nigh? By the eternal justice of an avenging God, if he shows himself in these parts, the Knights will send him to his doom swiftly. There will be a trap set for him to-morrow night. No fear of that.

EDENA. And thou wilt come hither early, to-morrow morning my LeRoy?

SIR LEROY. Why, surely, Father Foren often said that when Sir St. George returned he would remarry him to Aureola so that he and his bride might celebrate their interrupted honeymoon. I must see thee in the morning so as to arrange for a double wedding and a double honeymoon.

EDENA. Good night, my LeRoy. The old watchman warns to sleep and duty.

SIR LEROY. It is to be a double wedding?

EDENA. Yes, beloved, patient LeRoy. (*Embrace. Exit, LeRoy.*) Poor, broken Love-god! (*Gathering up Cupid's fragments.*) What a moonlight for two. (*Kisses the broken image.*) To-morrow night under this Syrian moon four happy hearts will put together love's perfect image. (*Kisses the image.*) That and that, for the giver. Oh, but I wish it were the giver. His lips move, and he has such a mustache! (*Exit.*)

SCENE III.—ACT IV.—In the "Madonna House" of "New Eden."

(*New Edenites gathering in.*)

EDENA (*To Aureola.*) Just before coming hither, I rode forth until I saw Sir LeRoy with a company of Knights, not far away. We shall be safe from any attack from the brigands to-night.

AUREOLA. Yes. And surely my St. George will be on hand if needed. My heart saith so.

CHAPLAIN FOREN (*To Captio.*) On Christmas night it is the custom here to present a kind of Passion Play arranged by our good mother, the Baroness. It is to be grandly presented at the Great Coronation of the Madonna next Easter.

EDENA. Our good mother, Lady Heartmyths, calls this "The Dawn of the Golden Age in Story and Song," but our Aureola calls it "The Crowing of Love!" Which think'st thou, father, is the better name?

CHAPLAIN FOREN. It fits both titles so well, I cannot say which is the better.

BARONESS. As the scenes pass, Father Foren, our wards will sing the songs they so well know, and do thou be pleased to name the tableaux.

(*Tableau of Shepherd's and angels.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Angels announce to Shepherd's of Bethlehem the coming of the King of Peace.

CHILDREN (*Singing.*)

To watching toiler angels bring,
Peace on earth; good will to men.
They most needy hear them sing,
Peace on earth; good will to men.

Chorus—The age of gold, so will it come,
With rights for all and wrongs for none,
Peace, peace on earth; good will to men.
Oh, sing that song again, again,
Yes sing the song the world around,
In ev'ry clime where man is found.

(*Tableau. The Birth of Christ.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. The Manger of Bethlehem.

CHILDREN (*singing.*)

The wisest men of all the earth adored the little baby,
The meanest man of all the earth hated a little baby,
The greatest man of all the race was once a little baby,
The greatest queen of all the earth, the mother with her baby.

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Now come we to Christ and his mother at the wedding of Cana.

CHILDREN. (*Sing.*)

Solo.—"A story sweet and often told,

Cho.—With clasp and kiss and ring of gold.

Solo.—Two lovers wed to make a home,

Cho.—The fairest scene beneath our dome.

Solo.—The King of Joys the feasters joins,

Cho.—His mother brings the ruby wines.

Solo.—O, who that sees such lovers true,

Cho.—But longs to be one of such two?

Solo.—At Car a's feast then find this sign

Cho.—In wedded love is heaven's wine."

(*Pictures ad. lib. of Mary and the Christ, prior to the crucifixion.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. Now follow we the Mother of our Lord along the via Dolorosa, or way of sorrow. (*Crucifixion pictures.*)

CHILDREN. (*Singing.*)

"Alone, in the night of gloom, now weeping,

By the Cross of her dead son.

The mother's heart the love watch keeping

In hope of joys to come.

Chorus—From lowly cot to highest throne,

This grandest truth is sung and known,

That women loveth still the most

When seems to man that all is lost.

Yea, blest is he, what ere betide,

While women true is at his side."

(*Classic Tableau of Mary's Coronation.*)

CHAPLAIN FOREN. The Divine Son crowning His Mother. True love never dies in this world, or the next.

AUREOLA. The triumph of love. The triumph of love! (*Exit.*)

CAPTIO (*To Chaplain*). Aureola comes to herself again!

SIR LEROY (*Entering*). Pardon, but attention all! A force of vile marauders move hither to raid this place. The Knights of Jerusalem hearing of the matter sent me and my companions to prevent the attack; but we coming found that the number of the brigands is much larger than was expected. We deemed it best therefore to hurry here and defend this place until reinforcements could be secured from Jerusalem. We are at New Eden to serve you all.

(*Alarm among New Edenites.*)

CAPTIO. If I be given a mount, I volunteer to carry an alarm to the other Jerusalem Knights to hurry them hither.

SIR LEROY. Most likely Edena will let thee take her swift dromedary. But if thou goest have a care, my good man, of any seeming pilgrims on thy way. As such the raiders are disguised.

(Exit Captio. Enter Edena.)

EDENA. Baroness, that old man cannot get the full speed out of my dromedary! I go. My father is among the brigands, and will answer with his life, if need be should I, in peril, give the night-heron's call—I will bring help! *(Exit.)*

CAPTIO *(Reentering.)* Pushed around by a slip of a maid! That girl, on her white dromedary, plunged into the night like a white streak into a black hole.

SIR LEROY. Our Captain calls all who will, to join the skirmish line without.

AUREOLA *(Reentering.)* Sir LeRoy, this the trusty rapier I had at in Acre, and upon my wilderness wedding day. It is ready once more.

CAPTIO *(To Chaplain Feren.)* Ah, ha! Aureola is herself again. Oh I tell thee a good fight is many times a better cure than prayer, good Chaplain. Hah! Waagh!

(Exeunt Sir LeRoy and Knights.)

BARONESS. Aureola wouldst stand up here on this balcony to watch by our banner? *(Aureola ascends.)*

(Noises of conflict without.)

AUREOLA. In my heart I see Sir St. George coming nearer and nearer.

(Wards of New Eden in Alarm.)

BARONESS. Go within and fear not, children. Our God will help and that right early.

EDENA *(Reentering.)* Oh, I could not get through the lines of the brigands, Baroness. *(Weeping.)*

BARONESS. Dry thy tears, brave girl, and go within to console the children.

(Raiders drive in LeRoy, Captio and others. LeRoy bound. Mongolian covertly goes up balcony snatches "Madonna" banner and hurls it down. Aureola descends to recover it. Mongolian stands aloft shouting in extacy.)

SIR LEROY *(Struggling to free himself.)* Would to God our emblem were set up again.

RAIDER *(Pointing to Sir LeRoy.)* Our Commander orders that this fellow be saved for torturing until he confess the hiding place of the treasure.

(Aureola recovers banner. Fences back those trying to prevent her ascending the balcony. Struggle with Mongolian on balcony.)

RAIDERS. Ah, bah China, down with the devil sign!

AUREOLA (*Cuts down Mongolian.*) So be it to any other of ye coming up hither!

(*Sounds of bugles in the distance.*)

BARONESS. I hear bugles! God grant that the Jerusalem Knights now come to our help.

ROKHAMA (*running in.*) Naught this night can help any here, against Rokhama,

(*Shumentu drags out Edena. She screaming.*)

SIR LEROY. Edena! Oh, Edena!

ROKHAMA (*To one of his comrades.*) Are the bitumen torches ready for you weepers eyes? (*Pointing to Sir LeRoy.*) Some one go up after the pretty bird on the perch (*Points to Aureola.*) She's the prize of the first one up. Down with her banner!

AUREOLA (*To Baroness.*) Rokhama thinks me Edena. This (*pointing to her rapier*) will tell him otherwise, if he comes up hither.

(*The bugles! Louder!*)

Bugles! Baroness, doesn't hear? Sir LeRoy, thou know'st that strain. It is the Charge of the Lion Heart! Our St. George's favorite. The Knights of Jerusalem come. My Knight surely is with them. We are saved! Saved!

(*Noises of conflict increase without.*)

ROKHAMA. Far off bugles are no present help against Rokhama this hour (*addressing his men who falter on stairway.*) Hell's simoons blast ye, ye cowards. Fear ye that witch with her painted rag? Where is Shumentu's Mongolian? Dead? Then I go up! (*To Sir LeRoy.*) Where's the treasure of this place? They who baulk me now will soon taste my fiery tortures. Answer ye, here, ere I have counted ten! (*Going up stairs counting.*) One, two, three, four, five—

(*Great clamor without.*)

AUREOLA. (*Embracing Baroness.*) Oh, this suspense is awful. Mother D'Heartmyths, take this. (*Places dagger on balcony rail.*) For once thou mayst need such dreadful defence.

DOOBERDAB. (*Staggers, in pushing Edena before him.*) I forewarned Shumentu that I would kill him, if he attempted harm to thee, my loved child, I kept my vow. Use this thou henceforth. I shall never need it more. (*Gives sword to Edena.*) I am cut here. (*Points to his heart.*) Cling, Edena, to these here that have loved thee so well.

ROKHAMA. All furies haunt thee, Dooberdab, for faltering now. Out to the fighting line. Five minutes more, and then we win our great prizes!

DOOBERDAB. Five minutes more and then destruction. Thy men are in panic, before the Jerusalem Knights. (*Embracing Edena.*) My only beloved! O, my mother's mummy, never redeemed! (*Falls dead.*)

ROKHAMA. (*Looking down.*) Edena there? (*To Aureola.*) I should have known thee, peerless woman, by thy rapier. Oh, now one last appeal, Aureola. It was undying love for thee more than aught else which pushed me to this assault. Surrender now, and I swear that with my life I will protect thee forever. I only can save the now. (*Moving upward. His way barred by Aureola's rapier.*) Fight? By the Gods of the Lower Judgment do so, and I give thee to my wolves! (*Disarms her. Attempts embrace. Aureola escapes. Catches up dagger. Holds it pointing to her heart.*)

AUREOLA. Stop where thou art, Rokhama. Death hath no terrors to me. Living or dead, I shall be forever and only the loyal wife of Sir St. George!

SIR ST. GEORGE. (*Running in.*) Where is that Syrian devil, Rokhama?

SIR LEROY. Sir St. George! Sir St. George! Up the stairs! Up to the balcony!

AUREOLA (*embracing Baroness.*) My lover! My husband!

SIR LEROY (*cut loose by Knights runs to Edena.*) St. George is here! (*Bows with her by her father's body.*)

ROKHAMA (*running down toward St. George.*) Now for our last debate, thou curse of all my life.

SIR ST. GEORGE (*engaging with Rokhama.*) And for the first time upon equal footing, man to man! (*Waving away Knights who draw near as if to aid.*) Leave me alone, to deal out God's retributions to this monster.

(*The duel.*)

ROKHAMA (*Falling.*) Lost! Make thy finish, accursed Knight.

SIR ST. GEORGE (*Dropping sword point.*) My blade abhors such carrion. Away with the wretch to the kinsmen of Astarte. They are hunting for him not far away and will deal out to him Egyptian justice.

ROKHAMA. Amid their fortunes I will curse ye all, to the last.

SIR ST. GEORGE. Thy murdered Astarte waits for thee before the throne—of Judgment. (*Rokhama dragged away.*)

SIR ST. GEORGE (*embracing wife and mother.*) For what ye twain have done, wife, mother, true men everywhere, will join to glorify the constancy of woman.

FATHER FOREN (*Pointing to banuer.*) And to proclaim FOR EVER, THE QUEEN OF THE WORLD IS MARY.

CHORUS OF NEW EDENITES. "From lowly cot to highest throne."

GRAND FINALE.

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