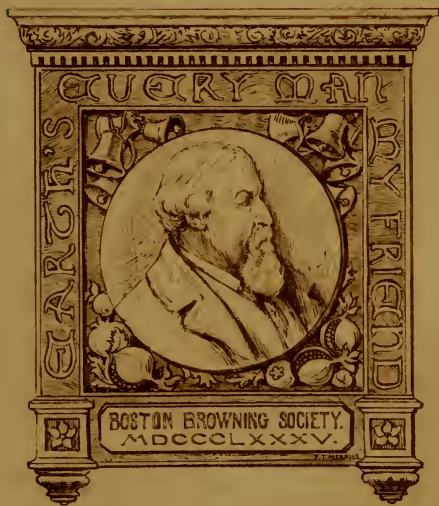
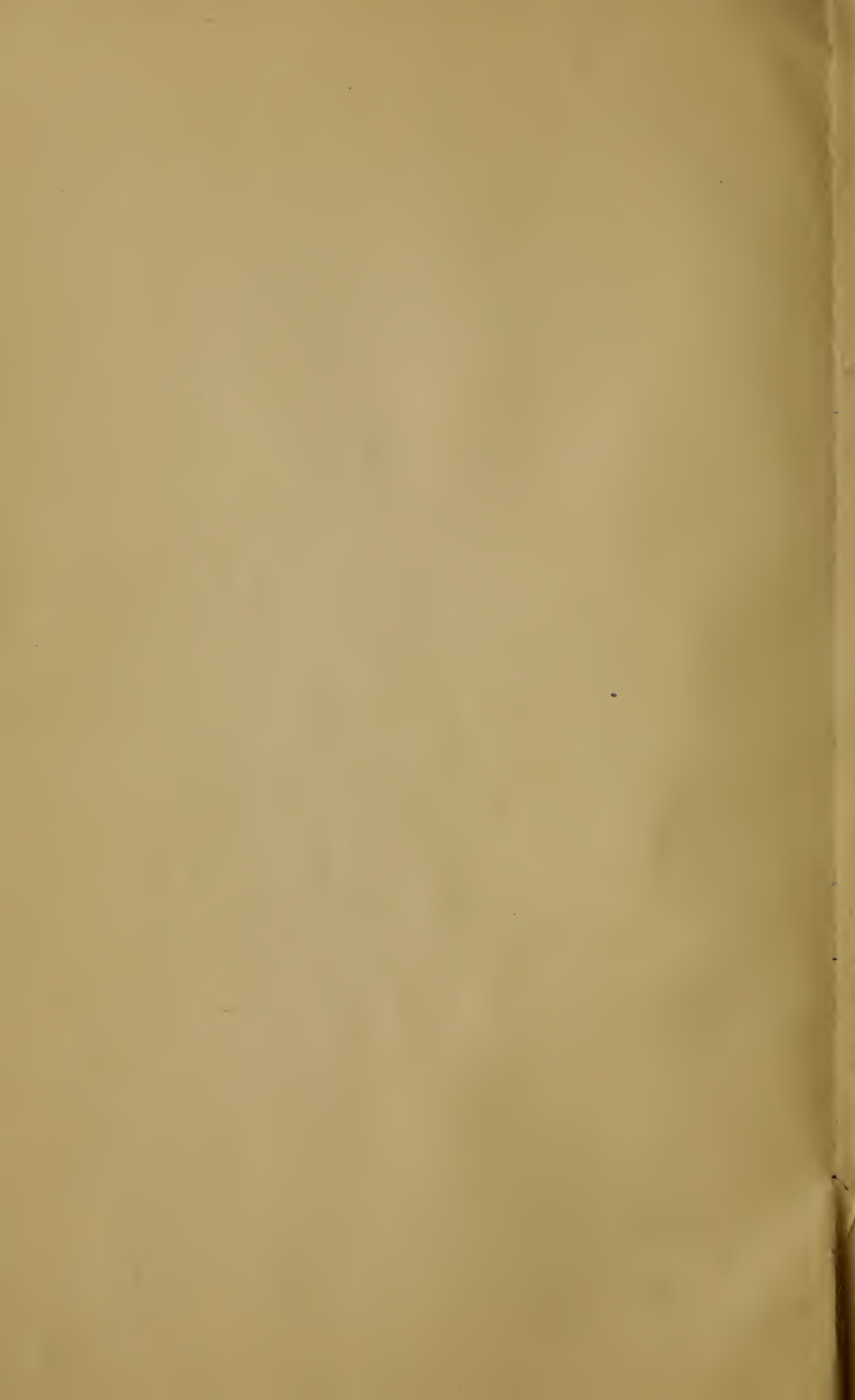


STAGE VERSION
of Browning's *Return of the Druses*

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STAGE VERSION OF
BROWNING'S TRAGEDY
THE RETURN
OF THE DRUSES



STAGE VERSION OF
BROWNING'S TRAGEDY

THE RETURN
of the DRUSES

By CHARLOTTE PORTER

*Performed under her direction for the first
time on any stage by the BOSTON BROWNING
SOCIETY at CHICKERING HALL, Boston,
March 25, 1902*

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ARGUMENT OF THE PLAY.

ACT I. opens at dawn of the day when the Druses, long oppressed by the Knights of Rhodes, are about to throw off their yoke. They had placed themselves under the Knights' protection on settling in the island, driven there when Osman the Turk overran their country. Their "protectors" have become oppressors; but Djabal, the son of their old sheiks, saved by Maani from the Prefect's massacre of his family, is on this day to slay the Prefect, assume the divinity which according to the Druse creed is made manifest at intervals in great leaders, and conduct them, a free people, once more to their home on Mount Lebanon.

A group of men, initiated in this plan and in the Druse mysteries, are exulting fiercely in their anticipated vengeance. They begin to loot the Hall. Khalil enters, upbraiding them that at this critical moment they thus risk ruin. Their Prefect is on his way back from Rhodes. He has given the island up to the Church, selling the bishopric to the Nuncio, also on his way thither. But Djabal outwits them by a treaty with Venice, whereby the great republic will befriend the Druses, and they in turn give the island to her on their departure.

Three watchers enter successively. The Prefect's ship is at hand, the Nuncio's approaching, the Venetian ships are in sight. But, with the Prefect, Loys comes too, the one Knight Djabal would spare.

Loys enters. He embarrasses the rebellion. Karshook proposes to stab him and clear their path. Khalil saves him, and goes to tell Djabal. Loys, left alone, rejoices in the tidings he bears. He has had the Prefect deposed and been made governor in his stead.

Djabal enters. At this climax of his work he is stricken with loathing for the imposture he must now practise in pretending to become a god. He resolves to confess himself no Hakeem, merely a human leader.

Khalil enters, showing him how nothing short of godship will suffice the people, then summons him to Anael, his bride. But it is she who has aroused his conscience. Her pure devotion has accused his falsity. He goes, bent upon confessing to her.

INTERLUDE. Dance of the Druse Maidens in honor of the Khalif, his deliverance of the people, and his divine exaltation.

ARGUMENT of the PLAY

ACT II. Anael enters with her mother, Maani, to await Djabal's coming. She glories with her mother in the story of his heroic deeds, but reproaches herself for her unbelief. So she craves sign of his divinity, and cannot let her need of it alone. When Djabal enters he feels he cannot bereave her of that faith to which her mind so clings. That she may never know the truth, he resolves to give up both her and his vengeance. If he leaves her now, none but Loys could undeceive her; and he rejoices in his absence, as Khalil enters to tell of his return. His presence threatens Djabal with exposure and failure. To delay seeing him and to keep him from the people till the revolution is ripe, Djabal bids Anael see him. She has feared that Loys, if she loved him, would seem as divine to her as Djabal. She awaits Loys, thinking Djabal has read her thoughts and given her this chance to test her doubts.

ACT III. Loys meets her. His love for her breaks out, overmastering the vows he is that day to take. Her fear is deepened that love like this, not divinity, gives Djabal his supremacy in her eyes. The emotion which shakes her Loys takes to be love for him. She declares she can love that one only who frees her people. This fires Loys, since to free them is he come; but his vows restrain him. He rushes for the Prefect, that he may take or else abjure those vows.

More conscious than ever of the humanity of her love, Anael is driven toward the one test remaining to show that faith in Djabal's divinity which her creed demands.

Djabal returns, full of his decision to part with her. All she now reveals of her love makes this need more poignant. All he says but strengthens her purpose to correct her skepticism by a supremely desperate deed.

Khalil enters, announcing the Prefect's arrival. Djabal is driven to action. The Nuncio's arrival brings the Prefect to the alcove, ready to receive him. There Djabal is to slay the despot, while Ayoob admits the Nuncio to imprison him and let none in or out thereafter till the sign is given him that the Prefect is slain and Venice come, when he is to open the doors to all the people. The sign, Djabal's ring, he gives to Anael. The trumpet sounds. They go.

The Prefect enters, laying bare to Loys his villainy, his extortions, bargains, the Knights' connivance, the peril of the place from which Loys, ignorant dupe! provides him an unexpected release. For the first time in years he now enters the alcove without fear of assassination.

The disillusioned Loys finds one ray of comfort in this. He has learned in time. He will abjure knighthood and join Anael's tribe.

ACT IV. Djabal, about to enter the alcove to kill the Prefect, discovers Anael. She has just killed the tyrant. This was the desperate test of faith she had assigned herself. She calls upon Djabal now to exalt himself, sustain, and justify her. Overcome with this result of his duplicity, he

ARGUMENT *of the* PLAY

tells the truth. Her revulsion is extreme. She curses his imposture. Then her love conquers. Let them go together and publish the truth to the people. As human merely, in shame instead of triumph, she will love him more than ever. He refuses, would join her with him in the imposture. Then she sees another step to take, and goes silently to take it. The key of the plot is in her hands. She holds the ring.

To the obtuse Djabal, Loys enters, pouring forth his news, at last, his love for Anael, his determination to become a Druse.

The guards rush in upon them with discovery of the Prefect's body. They accuse Djabal of murder and a long-planned insurrection just revealed by one of his confederates. He admits it, but promises Loys, if one Druse accuse him, to stab himself.

ACT V. The people pour into the Hall. Anael has caused the doors to be opened prematurely.

The Nuncio enters to learn of the Prefect's death, and to seize what slender chance of escape is left himself before Venice arrive, by trying to corrupt and dupe the ignorant rabble, and turn them against their leaders.

He almost succeeds: Khalil and Djabal can scarcely stem the tide. The veiled Druse who has confessed, and upon whom now all hinges, is brought in. It is Anael. Loys exults as Khalil unveils her, bidding her choose between Djabal's love and his. Djabal, confessing his love — now chastened, submits to take his death sentence at her hand.

With one cry, "HAKHEEM!" the overwrought maiden falls dead at his feet. To her this meant an overwhelming vision of the divinity incarnate in such pure human love. To the terrified Druses it is proof of Djabal's Hakeemship. They can believe nothing less, though Djabal scourges them with the summary of the actual human services he has done them, and, deputing his leadership to Khalil, under Loys's protection, stabs himself, as the Venetian admiral enters and the people triumph in their Return to Lebanon.



CAST.

DJABAL, Leader of the Druses	Mr. Pietro Benedetto Caccatori Isola
KHALIL, Chief Initiate Druse	Miss Katherine Jewell Everts
ANAEL, Khalil's Sister	Mrs. Mary Cornwall Collar
MAANI, Mother of Khalil and Anael	Mrs. Clara Bancroft Beatley
KARSHOOK	Mr. Frank S. C. Wicks
ABDULLAH	Mrs. E. J. E. Thorpe
RAGHIB	Mr. John Clement
AYOOB	Dr. Thomas Irving Deacon
First Watcher	Mr. Archibald Willis
Second Watcher	Miss Ella R. Shull
Third Watcher	Miss Marion Nottage
and other Initiate Druses	
Mrs. M. F. Bagley	
Miss Kate Landell Greene	Miss Ina Redpath
Miss Fawcett	Miss S. E. Macdonald
Mr. F. W. Tully	Mr. Binney Gunnison
Miss A. C. Macdonald	Mr. Robert E. Maddock
LOYE DE DREUX, of Brittany, Knight Novice	
	Mr. C. E. A. Winslow
THE PREFECT, Governor of the Island for the Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes	Mr. L. H. Richard
THE NUNCIO, Ambassador from the Knights' Patriarch for the Church	Prof. D. L. Maulsby
THE ADMIRAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE	Mr. Harold B. Warren
NASIF	Mr. John C. Abbott
ELKEB	Mr. Roger Burnham
and other Uninitiate Druses, by other members of the Jefferson Dramatic Club of Brookline, and by	
Mrs. H. B. Armstrong	Master Vico Caccatori Isola
Mr. L. H. Richard	Master George Mixer
Mr. James Macdonald	
PAPAL GUARD	Mr. Harold Keefe
	Miss Gordon Walker
	Miss Marion Peabody
	Miss Amsden
	Miss Melita Knowles
	Miss Abbie Farwell Brown
DRUSE MAIDENS	Miss Ethel Brown
	Miss Day
	Miss Capen
	Miss Ethel Blanchard
	Miss Amy Rand
	Miss Harriet B. Newhall



ROBERT BROWNING'S TRAGEDY
OF THE
RETURN OF THE DRUSES

STAGE VERSION BY CHARLOTTE PORTER.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DJABAL, Leader of the Druses.

KHALIL, Chief Initiâte Druse.

ANAEL, Khalil's Sister.

MAANI, Mother of Khalil and Anael.

KARSHOOK.

ABDULLAH.

RAGHIB.

AYOOB.

FIRST WATCHER.

SECOND WATCHER.

THIRD WATCHER.

And other Initiâte Druses.

LOYS DE DREUX, of Brittany, Knight Novice.

THE PREFECT, Governor of the Island for the
Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers
of Rhodes.

THE NUNCIO, Ambassador from the Knights'
Patriarch for the Church.

THE ADMIRAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE.

ELKEB.

NASIF.

And other Uninitiate Druses.

Guards, Druse Maidens, Minstrels, Attendants.

TIME, 14 —. Action continuous; one morning
from daybreak till noon.

PLACE. — An Islet of the Southern Sporades,
colonized by Druses of Lebanon, and garrisoned
by the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes.

SCENE. — A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

ACT I.

The curtain rises on a sunken Oriental hall, just before daybreak, obscure, at first, save for the dim glimmer of the hanging Oriental lamps; afterward disclosing little by little as the dawn-light purples and flushes, then grays, and finally whitens, colonnades at either side of the hall and at rear with Moorish serpentine pillars and horse-shoe arches. At centre, back, a three-arched portal, up three steps, opening at back upon an outer court and balustrade, the Mediterranean sea blue in the vista. At left a pillared porch leading up three steps to the luxurious private Alcove of the Prefect, the Governor of the Island. It is adorned with fret-work of carven wood, and the entrance is hidden by gold and silver en-wrought hangings, both sumptuous and delicate. Displayed above the porch, on its pediment, is the eight-point silver cross of the Knights of Rhodes. At right, a similar archway, up three steps, leads through a corridor to the inner rooms of the Palace. Rich hangings and decorations. A stand of knightly armor, mail coats, hauberks, helmets, swords, etc., at side, near right entrance. On pillars near, jewelled Oriental knives and scimetars. Between the pillars costly hangings gold-fringed.

Immediately upon rise of curtain while the light is still obscure, RAGHIB steals forward swiftly at right side from behind the pillars, and AYOUB in the same furtive way from the left. Behind each of them appear lurking by the pillars the stealthy figures of other Druses, waiting as if met by signal. Enter to them, at once, from centre, at first with suppressed excitement, then advancing and giving a loose to exultation, ABDULLAH and KARSHOOK.

ABDULLAH. (*Right centre.*) The moon is carried off in purple fire:
Day breaks at last!

ACT ONE: *The First Scene*

KARSHOOK. (*Left centre.*) Break glory,
with the day,
On Djabal's dread incarnate mystery
Now ready to become God Hakeem!

RAGHIB. (*Right.*) — Death
Sweep to the Christian Prefect that enslaved
Us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea, so long!

AYOOB. (*Left.*) Most joy be thine, O
Lebanon! Thy brood
Returns to thee!

RAGHIB. No outcasts as we left,
But thus — but thus! Behind, our Prefect's
corse!

ABDULLAH. Before, a presence like the
morning — thine,
Absolute Djabal late, — God Hakeem now
That day breaks!

KARSHOOK. [*Tossing off outer colored cloak,
concealing the distinctive black vest and
white robe and turban of the Initiate
Druse. Others same action.*] Off then,
with disguise at last!

As from our forms this hateful garb we strip,
Lose every tongue its glozing accent too,
Discard each limb the ignoble gesture!

AYOOB. Cry,
The Druse Nation, warders on Lebanon
Of the world's secret, since the birth of time!

RAGHIB. No kindred slips, no offsets from
thy stock,

No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we —

KARSHOOK. Who rise —

AYOOB. Who shout —

RAGHIB. Who seize — [*darts
back (right) where the glitter of a jew-
elled scimeter and baldric, hanging
against a pillar catches his eye. Dashes it
to the ground with a clang.*] A first fruits,
[*picking it up, comes forward with it, and
putting it on with self-satisfaction*], ha —
Spoil of the spoiler! Brave!

[*AYOOB, following his example, pounces on
the gold fringe of a rich wall-hanging,
between pillars right, tearing off a long*

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

strip of the fringe; KARSHOOK rushing upon him disputes his possession of it. Thereupon all begin to loot the hall; one group riving off with their knives the gold cresset-rings from the pillars to the right, forward; another group settling like bees upon the stand of armor, donning hauberks, helmets, etc., disputing for swords and spears, etc.]

KARSHOOK. [*To AYOOB.*] Hold!

AYOOB. — Mine, I say;

And mine shall it continue!

KARSHOOK. Just this fringe!

Take anything beside! [*Cunningly pointing to the alcove, to divert his attention.*] Lo, all the porch

Is jewelled o'er with frostwork characterly!

And, see, yon eight-point cross of white flame,
winking

Hoar-silvery like some fresh-broke marble stone!
Raze out the Rhodian cross there, so thou leav'st
me

This single fringe! [*Snatches at it.*]

AYOOB. [*Holding on.*] Ha, wouldst thou,
dog-fox? [*To the others.*] Help!

— Three hand-breadths of gold fringe, my son
was set

To twist, the night he died!

KARSHOOK. [*Also, appealing to the rest.*]
Nay, hear the knave!

And I could witness my one daughter borne,
A week since, to the Prefect's couch, yet fold
These arms. be mute, lest word of mine should
mar

Our Master's work. Hear me denied my right
By such a knave!

ABDULLAH. [*Calling out from the entrance-steps (right centre) with his arm around a brazen jar he has taken down from the balustrade.*]

Each ravage for himself!

Booty enough!

RAGHIB. [*Striding forward, inflaming them to follow him.*] On, Druses! Be there found

ACT ONE: *The First Scene*

Blood and a heap behind us; with us, Djabal
Turned Hakeem; and before us, Lebanon!
Yields the porch? Spare not. [*Leading them
towards the alcove.*] There his minions
dragged — [*Turning back to KARSHOOK,
who is foremost among those who have fol-
lowed him.*]

Thy daughter, Karshook, to the Prefect's couch!
[*KARSHOOK curses.*]

Ayoob! [*Turning to AYOOB who has followed
hard upon KARSHOOK*] Thy son, to soothe
the Prefect's pride,

Bent o'er that task, the death-sweat on his brow,
Carving the spice-tree's heart in scroll-work
there! [*AYOOB snarls.*]

Onward in Djabal's name! [*General onslaught
upon the Prefect's Alcove, leaving some
groups undisturbed, however, intent upon
their booty. RAGHIB, with one foot
planted on the steps of the alcove, lays one
hand on the arras, about to dash it wide
when, with the tumult at its height, enter
from centre KHALIL, for a moment un-
noticed. Then a pause and silence.*]

KHALIL. (*Centre.*) Was it for this,
Djabal hath summoned you? Deseve you thus
A portion in to-day's event? What, here —
When most behoves your feet fall soft, your eyes
Sink low, your tongues lie still, — at Djabal's
side,

Close in his very hearing, who, perchance,
Assumes e'en now God Hakeem's dreaded
shape, —

Dispute you for these gauds?

AYOOB. [*Abashed.*] How say'st thou, Khalil?
Doubtless our Master prompts thee! [*Turning
to KARSHOOK, throws the fringe at him.*]

Take the fringe,
Old Karshook! [*Apologetically, to KHALIL*]
I supposed it was a day —

KHALIL. For pillage?

KARSHOOK. Hearken, Khalil! [*Advanc-
ing to him, craftily.*] Never spoke
A boy so like a song-bird; we avouch thee

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

Prettiest of all our Master's instruments
Except thy bright twin-sister; thou and Anael
Challenge his prime regard: [*fawning*] but we
may crave [*to the others*]

(Such nothings as we be) a portion too
Of Djabal's favor; in him we believed,
His bound ourselves, him moon by moon obeyed,
Kept silence till this daybreak — so, may claim
Reward: who grudges me my claim?

AYOOB. [*Nodding and tossing his head
toward the others.*] To-day

Is not as yesterday!

RAGHIB. [*To KHALIL, defiantly.*] Stand off!

KHALIL. Rebel you?

Must I, the delegate of Djabal, draw

His wrath on you, the day of our Return?

AYOOB. Wrench from his grasp that fringe!
Hound!

KHALIL. Oh, shame!

Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic tribe
Who, flying the approach of Osman, bore
Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's ridge
Its birthplace, hither! "Let the sea divide
These hunters from their prey," you said; "and
safe

In this dim islet's virgin solitude

Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time

Fan it to fire; till Hakeem rise again,

And, reinstating all in power and bliss,

Lead us himself to Lebanon once more."

Was't not thus you departed years ago,

Ere I was born?

AYOOB. 'T was even thus!

ABDULLAH. Years ago!

KHALIL. And did you call — Did you? —
or no? — to stand

'Twixt you and Osman's rage a race self-vowed

To endless warfare with his hordes and him —

These White-cross Knights of the adjacent Isle?

KARSHOOK. And why else rend we down,
wrench up, raze out?

These Knights of Rhodes we thus solicited

For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest

Than aught we fled — their Prefect!

ACT ONE: *The First Scene*

RAGHIB. He began
His promised mere paternal governance
By a prompt massacre of all our Sheikhs
Able to thwart these Knights in their foul
scheme
Of crushing, with our nation's memory,
All hope of our return, and taming us
Bondslaves to Rhodes forever —

KHALIL. Say I not?
You, fitted to the Order's purposes,
Your Sheikhs cut off, your rites, your garb pro-
scribed,
Must yet receive one degradation more;
The Knights at last throw off the mask — trans-
fer,
This islet they are but protectors of,
To their own ever-craving liege, the Church,
Who licenses all crimes that pay her thus.
You, from their Prefect, were to be consigned
(Pursuant of I know not what vile pact)
To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to outvie
His predecessor in all wickedness,
When suddenly rose Djabal in the midst,
Djabal, the man in semblance, but our God
Confessed by signs and portents. Ye saw fire
Bicker round Djabal, heard strange music flit
Bird-like about his brow?

KARSHOOK. We saw!

RAGHIB. We heard!

AYOUB. Djabal is Hakeem!

ALL. [*Prostrating themselves, arms for-
ward, murmuring reverently.*] Ay!
Hakeem! Hakeem!

KHALIL. And as he said has not our Khalif
done,
And so disposed events (from land to land
Passing invisibly) that when, this morn,
The pact of villany complete, there comes
This Patriarch's Nuncio with this Master's
Prefect
Their treason to consummate, — each will face
For a crouching handful, an uplifted nation:
For simulated Christians, confessed Druses:
And, for base slaves past hope of Lebanon,

THE RETURN of the DRUSES

Freedmen returning there 'neath Venice' flag;
That Venice which, the Hospitallers' foe,
Grants us from Candia escort home at price
Of our relinquished isle, Rhodes counts her
own —

Venice, whose promised argosies should stand
Toward harbor: is it now that you, and you,
And you [*to KARSHOOK, AYOOB, RAGHIB,*
especially], selected from the rest to bear
The burthen of the Khalif's secret, further
To-day's event, entitled by your wrongs,
And witness in the Prefect's hall his fate —
That you dare clutch these gauds? [*Stricken*
with shame and now quite quelled and
docile, RAGHIB, KARSHOOK, and others
loosen grip of their booty. Scimitar and
fringe, fall. The looting of the other
groups has also gradually stopped under
KHALIL's eloquence.] Ay, drop them!

KARSHOOK. [*Cunningly once more.*] True,
Most true, all this; and yet, may one dare hint,
Thou art the youngest of us? — though employed
Abundantly as Djabal's confidant,
Transmitter of his mandates, even now.
Much less, when'er beside him Anael graces
The cedar throne, his queen-bride, art thou like
To occupy its lowest step that day!
Now, Khalil, wert thou checked as thou aspirest,
Forbidden such or such an honor —

KHALIL. [*Breaking in.*] Karshook thinks
I covet honors? Well, nor idly thinks.
Honors? I have demanded of them all
The greatest.

KARSHOOK. I supposed so. [*Nodding tri-*
umphantly at the others, who gather
around with interest.]

KHALIL. Judge, yourselves!
Turn, thus: 't is in the alcove at the back
Of yonder columned porch, whose entrance now
The veil hides, that our Prefect holds his state,
Receives the Nuncio, when the one, from
Rhodes,
The other lands from Syria; there they meet.
Now, I have sued with earnest prayers—

ACT ONE: *The First Scene*

KARSHOOK. [*Uctiously, while the others press closer to hear.*] For what Shall the Bride's brother vainly sue?

KHALIL. That mine — Avenging in one blow a myriad wrongs — Might be the hand to slay the Prefect there! [*A silence, all fall back.*] Djabal reserves that office for himself.

Thus far, as youngest of you all, I speak — Scarce more enlightened than yourselves; since, near

As I approach him, nearer as I trust
Soon to approach our Master, he reveals
Only the God's power, not the glory yet.
Therefore I reasoned with you: now, as servant
To Djabal, bearing his authority,
Hear me appoint your several posts! Till noon
None see him save myself and Anael: once
The deed achieved, our Khalif, casting off
The embodied Awe's tremendous mystery,
The weakness of the flesh disguise, resumes
His proper glory, ne'er to fade again.

Enter from centre 1ST DRUSE WATCHER, a young man.

1ST DRUSE WATCHER. [*Saluting KHALIL.*] Our Prefect lands from Rhodes! — without a sign

That he suspects aught since he left our Isle;
Nor in his train a single guard beyond
The few he sailed with hence: so have I learned
From Loys.

KARSHOOK. Loys? Is not Loys gone
Forever?

AYOOB. Loys, the Frank Knight, returned?

2D DRUSE. [*To them.*] Loys, the boy,
stood on the leading prow
Conspicuous in his gay attire, and leapt
Into the surf the foremost. [*To KHALIL.*]

Since day-dawn
I kept watch to the Northward; take but note
Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!

KHALIL. Peace! [*Commands him to draw aside, right, turns*

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

then to KARSHOOK who advances to receive orders.]

Thou, Karshook, with thy company, receive
The Prefect as appointed: see, all keep
The wonted show of servitude: announce
His entry here by the accustomed peal
Of trumpets, then await the further pleasure
Of Djabal! [*To KARSHOOK, aside, anxiously,
detaining him.*] Loys back, whom Djabal
sent

To Rhodes that we might spare the single Knight
Worth sparing!

Enter from centre, 2D DRUSE WATCHER, a stripling.

2D DRUSE WATCHER. [*To KHALIL, saluting.*] I espied it first! Say, I
First spied the Nuncio's galley from the South!
Said'st thou a Crossed-keys' flag would flap the
mast?

It nears apace! One galley and no more.
If Djabal chance to ask who spied the flag,
Forget not, I it was! [*Joins 1ST DRUSE, right.*]

KHALIL. Thou, Ayoob, bring
The Nuncio and his followers hither! Break
One rule prescribed, ye wither in your blood,
Die at your fault! [*AYOOB cringes at KHALIL'S
feet, and is waiting his leave to go,
when—*]

*Enter from centre 3D DRUSE WATCHER,
an aged man faltering forward on his
staff.*

3D DRUSE WATCHER. [*Ecstatically to him-
self at first, then turning to KHALIL.*]
I shall see home, see home!

— Shall banquet in the sombre groves again!
Hail to thee, Khalil! Venice looms afar;
The argosies of Venice, like a cloud,
Bear up from Candia in the distance! [*Draws
aside, right.*]

KHALIL. [*His exultation at its height.*]
Joy!

Summon our people, Raghib! Bid all forth!
Tell them the long-kept secret, old and young!

ACT ONE: *The First Scene*

Set free the captive, let the trampled raise
Their faces from the dust, because at length
The cycle is complete, God Hakeem's reign
Begins anew! Say, Venice for our guard,
Ere night we steer for Syria! Hear you,
Druses?

Hear you this crowning witness to the claims
Of Djabal? Oh, I spoke of hope and fear,
Reward and punishment, because he bade
Who has the right; for me, what should I say
But, mar not those imperial lineaments,
No majesty of all that rapt regard
Vex by the least omission! Let him rise
Without a check from you!

ALL. [*With uplifted arms shouting.*] Let
Djabal rise!

*Enter LOYS, from centre (left side). Sudden
silence.*

LOYS. Who speaks of Djabal? — for I seek
him, friends! [*To group, right, advancing.*]

Peace to you, Druses! I have tidings for you.
[*Group right comes around him at this,
group left remains aloof, warily exchanging
glances.*]

But first for Djabal: where's your tall be-
witcher,

With that small Arab thin-lipped silver-mouth!

KHALIL. [*In group left, aside to KAR-
SHOOK.*]

Loys, in truth! Yet Djabal cannot err!

KARSHOOK. [*To KHALIL.*] And who takes
charge of Loys? Will he stand

And see his comrades slaughtered?

LOYS. [*As he passes forward right, glancing
for an instant at group left.*] How they
shrink

And whisper, with those rapid faces!

KARSHOOK. [*To KHALIL.*] Better
One lured him, ere he can suspect, inside
That corridor; [*pointing significantly to rear
right*] 't were easy to despatch
Him there.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

LOYS. [*To 1ST DRUSE WATCHER, who comes toward him from group right.*] Yes; I asked for Djabal —

KARSHOOK. [*Advancing, obsequiously to LOYS.*] Djabal
Passed some minutes since thro' yonder porch,
And —

KHALIL. [*Swiftly intervening.*] Hold!
What, him despatch? Loys, Djabal's friend
He sent to Rhodes for safety? Back, Karshook!
I take charge of him. [*To LOYS.*] Loys!
Sir Loys, —

[*Advancing.*] Djabal has intercourse with
few or none

Till noontide: but, your pleasure?

LOYS. [*Half offended.*] "Intercourse
With few or none"? — Ah, Khalil, when you
spoke

I saw not your smooth face! All health! — and
health [*Saluting, both coming forward,
centre.*]

To Anael! How fares Anael? — "Intercourse
With few or none"? Forget you, I've been
friendly

With Djabal long ere you or any Druse?

— Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath
The Duke my father's roof! He'd tell by the
hour,

With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow,
Plausiblest stories.

KHALIL. [*Resentfully.*] Stories, say you? Ha
— [*Checking himself, with suspicion.*]

What brings you back from Rhodes?

LOYS. How you island-tribe
Forget the world's awake while here you drowse!
What brings me back? What should not bring
me, rather!

Is not my year's probation out? I come
To take the knightly vows. But Khalil, prithee,
Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?

KHALIL. [*Embarrassed for an instant, then,
avoiding the question.*] Ah, the new sword!

LOYS. [*Letting him take it from his belt.*]
See now! You handle sword

ACT ONE: *The First Scene*

As 't were a camel-staff! Pull! [KHALIL *pulls it out of scabbard.*] That 's my motto,
Annealed "*Pro fide*," on the blade in blue.

KHALIL. No curve in it? Surely a blade
should curve!

LOYS. Straight from the wrist! Loose — it
should poise itself!

KHALIL. [*Waving with irrepressible exulta-
tion the sword.*] We are a nation, Loys,
of old fame

Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep
With the sword too!

[*Remembering himself.*] But I forget — you
bid me

Seek Djabal?

LOYS. What! A sword's sight scares you
not?

(The People I will make of him and them!

O let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)

Bring Djabal — say, indeed, that come he must!

KHALIL. [*Spiritedly.*] At noon seek Djabal
in the Prefect's Chamber,

And find — [*As LOYS astonished, at his tone,
turns on his heel*]. Nay, 't is thy cursed
race's token,

Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!

Tarry, and I will do your bidding, Loys!

[*To the rest.*] Now, forth you! [*They go out,
centre.*] [*To LOYS.*] I proceed to Djabal
straight.

[*To KARSHOOK who makes at LOYS again.*]
Leave this poor boy, who knows not what he
says! [*KARSHOOK goes out, centre.*]

O will it not add joy to even thy joy,

Djabal, that I report all friends were true?

[*KHALIL goes, centre.*]

LOYS. Long days to spend in th' Isle! and,
my news known

An hour hence, what if Anael turn on me

The great black eyes I must forget?

Why, fool,

Recall them, then? My business is with Djabal,
Not Anael! Djabal carries: if I seek him? —

THE RETURN of the DRUSES

[*He starts as if to go, centre, but turns forward again exclaiming brightly.*]

Tu Dieu! How happy I shall make these Druses!

Was 't not surpassingly contrived of me
To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,
Then take the first pretence for stealing off
From these poor islanders, present myself
Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,
Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,
This Prefect and his villanous career!
The princely Synod! All I dared request
Was his dismissal; and they graciously
Consigned his very office to myself —
Myself may cure the Isle diseased! [*Turning
back now, to go.*] Bright Isle! [*jubilantly,
looking out over the sea*]
Thou 'rt brighter even than thy wont to-day!
[*Goes out centre.*]

SCENE II.

The Same.

Enter DJABAL from the right, advancing meditatively.

DJABAL. How should a strong man think
himself a God!

I — Hakeem?

Hakeem? Why the God?

Shout, rather, "I — Djabal, the child, thought
slain

By this — Prefect, with all my race, the
Sheikhs, —

Was saved, and now return to you a man
Able to take revenge, lead back the march
To Lebanon!" — so shout, and who gainsays?

But now, because delusion mixed itself
Insensibly with this career, all's changed!

Have I brought Venice to afford us convoy?

"True — but my jugglings wrought that!"

Put I heart

Into our people where no heart lurked? — "Ah,

ACT ONE: *The SECOND Scene*

What cannot an impostor do!"

Not this!

That now I shall do — hasten to the few
Deceived, ere they deceive the many — shout,
"As I professed, I did believe myself!
I walked the world, asked help at every hand;
Came help or no? Not this and this? Which
helps

When I returned with, found the Prefect here,
The Druses here, all here but Hakeem's self,
The Khalif of the thousand prophecies,
Reserved for such a juncture, — could I call
My mission aught but Hakeem's? Promised
Hakeem

More than performs this Djabal — you absolve?
— Me, you will never shame before the crowd
Yet happily ignorant? — me, — no Khalif,
But Sheikh once more! Mere Djabal — not" —

Enter KHALIL hastily, from centre.

KHALIL. (*Left centre.*) — God Hakeem!
'T is told! The whole Druse nation knows thee,
Hakeem,

As we! and mothers lift on high their babes
Who seem aware, so glisten their great eyes,
Thou hast not failed us; ancient brows are
proud;

Our elders could not earlier die, it seems,
Than at thy coming! The Druse heart is thine!
Take it! my lord and theirs, be thou adored!

DJABAL. (*Right centre.*) [*Aside.*] Adored!
— but I renounce it utterly!

KHALIL. Already are they instituting choirs
And dances to the Khalif, as of old
'T is chronicled thou bad'st them.

DJABAL. [*Abstractedly.*] I abjure it!
'T is not mine — not for me!

KHALIL. Why pour they wine
Flavored like honey and bruised mountain-
herbs,

Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit?
Oh, let me tell thee — Esaad, we supposed
Doting, is carried forth, eager to see

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

The last sun rise on the Isle: he can see now!
The shamed Druse women never wept before!
They can look up when we reach home, they
say.

Smell! — sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast
thus long —

Sweet! — it grows wild in Lebanon. And I
Alone do nothing for thee! 'T is my office
Just to announce what well thou know'st — but
thus

Thou bidst me. At this self-same moment tend
The Prefect, Nuncio and the Admiral
Hither by their three sea-paths; nor forget
Who were the trusty watchers! — thou forget?
Like me, who do forget that Anael bade —

DJABAL. [*Aside.*] Ay, Anael, Anael — is
that said at last?

What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,
To the people? Till that woman crossed my path,
On went I, solely for my people's sake:
I saw her, and I then first saw myself,
And slackened pace: "if I should prove indeed
Hakeem — with Anael by!"

KHALIL. [*Aside.*] Ah, he is rapt!
Dare I at such a moment break on him
Even to do my sister's bidding? Yes:
The eyes are Djabal's and not Hakeem's yet,
Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.

DJABAL. [*Aside.*] To yearn to tell her, and
yet have no one
Great heart's word that will tell her!

[*To* KHALIL.] You said
That Anael —

KHALIL. Fain would see thee, speak with
thee,
Before thou change, discard this Djabal's shape
She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know.
Something to say that will not from her mind!
I know not what — "Let him but come!" she
said.

DJABAL. My nation — all my Druses!
[*To* KHALIL.] How fare they?
Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif
too?

ACT ONE: *The Second Scene*

KHALIL. All at the signal pant to flock
around

That banner of a brow!

DJABAL. [*Aside.*] And when they flock,
Confess them this: and after, for reward,
Be chased with howlings to her feet!

I lose myself.

Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now?
I need the veriest child — why not this child?

[*Turning abruptly to KHALIL.*
You are a Druse too, Khalil; you were nour-
ished

Like Anael with our mysteries: if she
Could vow, so nourished, to love only one
Who should avenge the Druses, why made you
No effort? What have I done, you could not?
You who know more than Anael the prostra-
tion

Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life
Of this detested —

Does he come, you say,
This Prefect? All's in readiness?

KHALIL. The sword,
The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic tiar,
Laid up so long, are all disposed beside
The Prefect's chamber.

DJABAL. — Why did you despair?

KHALIL. I know our nation's state? Too
surely know,
As thou who speak'st to prove me! Wrongs
like ours

Should wake revenge: but when I sought the
wronged

And spoke, — “The Prefect stabbed your son
— arise!

Your daughter, while you starve, eats shameless
bread

In his pavilion — then arise!” — my speech
Fell idly: 't was, “Be silent, or worse fare!
Who mayst thou be that takest on thee to thrust
Into this peril — art thou Hakeem?” No!

Only a mission like thy mission renders
All these obedient at a breath, subdues
Their private passions, brings their wills to one.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

DJABAL. You think so?

KHALIL. Even now — when they have witnessed

Thy miracles — had I not threatened all
With Hakeem's vengeance, they would mar the
work,

And couch ere this, each with his special prize,
Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main hope
To perish. No! When these have kissed thy
feet

At Lebanon, the past purged off, the present
Clear, — for the future, even Hakeem's mission
May end, and I perchance, or any youth,
Shall rule them thus renewed.— I tutor thee!

DJABAL. And wisely. (He is Anael's brother,
pure
As Anael's self.) Go say, I'll meet her, here.

[KHALIL goes centre.

Oh, not to these, the multitude — confess,
Before at least the fortune of my deed
Half-authorize its means! Only to her
Would I confess. On the gulf's verge I pause.
Anael, be mine to guard me, not destroy!

CURTAIN.



ACT TWO: *The First Scene*

INTERLUDE.

“ Already are they instituting choirs
And dances to the Khalif, as of old
'T is chronicled thou bad'st them.”

The same scene. Triumphant Processional and Dance of Druse Maidens, some bearing garlands, wreaths, flowers, others double pipes, psalteries, tabrets, and shawms. They weave the pillars in green; lay crimson flowers on the steps of the Alcove; and dance accompanied by strains of exultant, mystically religious music, with occasional wild outbreaks, at times suggestive of righteous vengeance, and again of a divine delirium; to which they keep time, not alone with their bodies, but also with tabrets, shawms, plaintive rippings from the harps and psalteries, and low, simple singing.

ACT II.

The same scene, but garlanded and in yellow sunlight.

The Druse Maidens, resting from their dancing, remain grouped at the rear of the scene on the steps at the central portal.

Enter ANAEL, and MAANI from centre, advancing.

ANAEL. (*Left centre.*) Those saffron vestures of the tabret-girls!
Comes Djabal, think you?

MAANI. (*Right centre.*) Doubtless Djabal comes.

ANAEL. Dost thou snow-swathe thee king-
lier, Lebanon,
Than in my dreams? — Nay, all the tresses off
My forehead! Look I lovely so? He says
That I am lovely.

MAANI. Lovely: nay, that hangs
Awry.

ANAEL. You tell me how a khandjar hangs?
The sharp side, thus, along the heart, see, marks
The maiden of our class. Are you content
For Djabal as for me?

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

MAANI. Content, my child. [*Sits right.*]

ANAEL. [*Crosses to her.*] Oh mother, tell
me more of him! He comes
Even now — tell more, fill up my soul with him!
[*Kneels by her.*]

MAANI. And did I not — yes, surely — tell
you all?

ANAEL. What will be changed in Djabal
when the change
Arrives? Which feature! Not his eyes!

MAANI. 'Tis writ
Our Hakeem's eyes rolled fire and clove the dark
superbly.

ANAEL. [*By turns to herself and then to
her mother.*] Not his eyes! His voice
perhaps?

Yet that's no change; for a grave current lived
— Beneath the surface ever grandly lived,
That, scattering, broke as in live silver spray
While — ah, the bliss — he would discourse to
me

In that enforced still fashion, word on word!
'T is the old current which must swell thro' that,
For what least tone, Maani, could I lose?
'T is surely not his voice!

He lived with you?
Well — and that morning Djabal saw me first
And heard me vow never to wed but one
Who saved my People — on that day — proceed!

MAANI. Once more, then: from the time of
his return
In secret, changed so since he left the Isle
That I, who screened our Emir's last of sons,
This Djabal, from the Prefect's massacre
— Who bade him ne'er forget the child he was,
— Who dreamed so long the youth he might
become —

I knew not in the man that child; the man
Who spoke alone of hope to save our tribe,
How he had gone from land to land to save
Our tribe — allies were sure, nor foes to dread.
And much he mused, days, nights, alone he
mused:

But never till that day when, pale and worn

ACT TWO: *The First Scene*

As by a persevering woe, he cried
"Is there not one Druse left me?" — and I
showed

The way to Khalil's and your hiding-place
From the abhorred eye of the Prefect, — till
He saw you, heard you speak — never did he
Announce his mission was the promised mission.
The cycle had revolved; all things renewing,
He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead
His children home anon, now veiled to work
Great purposes: the Druses now would change!

ANAEL. [*Rising.*] And they have changed!
And obstacles did sink,
And furtherances rose! And round his form
Played fire, and music beat her angel wings!

[*Crosses.*

My people, let me more rejoice, oh, more
For you than for myself! Did I but watch
Afar the pageant, feel our Khalif pass,
One of the throng, how proud were I — tho' ne'er
Singled by Djabal's glance! But to be chosen
His own from all, — exalted with him, —
Lead the exulting Druses, meet, — ah, how
Worthily meet the maidens who await
Ever beneath the cedars — bright are they
Who saffron-vested sound the tabret there,
The girls who throng there in my dream! One
hour

And all is over: how shall I do aught
That may deserve next hour's exalting? — How?

[*Suddenly to MAANI.*

Mother, I am not worthy him! I read it
Still in his eyes! He stands as if to tell me
I am not, yet forbears. Why else revert
To one theme ever? — how mere human gifts
Suffice him in myself — whose worship fades,
Whose awe goes ever off at his approach,
As now, who when — he comes! —

[*DJABAL enters from right.*

*On his entrance the Maidens and MAANI
(who has stepped toward him) kneel. He
lifts MAANI and faces ANAEL.]* Oh why
is it

I cannot kneel to you?

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

DJABAL. (*Centre.*) Rather, 't is I
Should kneel to you, my Anael!

ANAEL. (*Left centre.*) Even so!
For never seem you — shall I speak the truth? —
Never a God to me! 'T is the Man's hand,
Eye, voice! Oh do you veil these to our people,
Or but to me? To them, I think, to them!
And brightness is their veil, shadow — my truth!
You mean that I should never kneel to you
— So, thus I kneel!

DJABAL. [*Preventing her.*] No — no!
[*Feeling the khandjar as he raises her.*

Ha, have you chosen —

ANAEL. The khandjar with our ancient garb.
But, Djabal,

Change not, be not exalted yet! Give time
That I may plan more, perfect more! My blood
Beats, beats! [DJABAL *withdraws right,*
MAANI *addresses him, they talk aside.*]
[*Aside.*] Oh must I then — since Loys
leaves us

Never to come again, renew in me
These doubts so near effaced already — must
I needs confess them now to Djabal? — own
That when I saw that stranger, heard his voice,
My faith fell, and the woful thought flashed first
That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken
For proof of more than human attributes
In him, by me whose heart at his approach
Beat fast, whose brain while he was by swam
round,

Whose soul at his departure died away,
— That every such effect might have been
wrought

In other frames, tho' not in mine, by Loys
Or any merely mortal presence? Doubt
Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now?
How shall I meet the rapture presently,
With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed? [*One of
the Druse Maidens comes from rear of
stage, with wreaths, addresses ANAEL,
then MAANI. The three talk aside.*]

DJABAL. [*Aside.*] Avow the truth? I can-
not! In what words

ACT TWO: *The First Scene*

Avow that all she loved in me was false?
— Which yet has served that flower-like love of
hers

To climb by, like the clinging gourd, and clasp
With its divinest wealth of leaf and bloom.

'Tis not for my sake but for Anael's sake

I leave her soul this Hakeem where it leans.

Oh could I vanish from her, quit the Isle!

[*Pause. Then with resolution and change
of tone.*]

My work is done. The Druses must return —
Have convoy to their birth-place back, whoe'er

The leader be, myself or any Druse —

Venice is pledged to that: 't is for myself,

For my own vengeance in the Prefect's death,

I stay now, not for them. My own reward!

Then, mine I will forego. It is foregone!

Let him escape with all my House's blood!

Ere he can reach land, Djabal disappears,

And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall, fresh as first,

Live in her memory, keeping her sublime

Above the world. She cannot touch that world

By ever knowing what I truly am,

Since Loys, — of mankind the only one

Able to link my present with my past,

My life in Europe with my Island life,

Thence, able to unmask me, — I've disposed

Safely at last at Rhodes, and —

Enter KHALIL, from centre.

KHALIL. (*Centre.*) Loys greets thee!

DJABAL. Loys? To drag me back? It cannot be!

ANAEL. [*Aside.*] Loys! Ah, doubt may not be stifled so!

KHALIL. Can I have erred that thou so gazest? Yes,

I told thee not in the glad press of tidings

Of higher import, Loys is returned

Before the Prefect, with, if possible,

Twice the light-heartedness of old. As though

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

On some inauguration he expects,
To-day, the world's fate hung!

DJABAL. — And asks for me?

KHALIL. Thou knowest all things. Thee in
chief he greets,

But every Druse of us is to be happy
At his arrival, he declares: were Loys
Thou, Master, he could have no wider soul
To take us in with. [DJABAL *turns aside mood-
ily, sits right.*] How I love that Loys!

[KHALIL *falls back, turning to MAANI
first, later to ANAEL.*]

ANAEL. [*Aside.*] Loys? I take the trial!
Ay! Advance

Close to my fear, weigh Loys with my Lord,
The mortal with the more than mortal gifts!

DJABAL. [*Aside.*] Before, there were so
few deceived! and now

There's doubtless not one least Druse in the Isle
But, having learned my superhuman claims,
And calling me his Khalif-God, will clash
The whole truth out from Loys at first word!
While Loys, for his part, will hold me up,
With a Frank's unimaginable scorn

Of such imposture, to my people's eyes! [*rises*]
Could I but keep him longer yet awhile
From them, amuse him here until I plan
How he and I at once may leave the Isle!

Khalil [KHALIL *starts forward at his name*]

I cannot part with from my side —

My only help in this emergency:

There's Anael!

ANAEL. [*Advancing.*] Please you?

DJABAL. Anael — none but she!

[*To ANAEL.*] I pass some moments in the
chamber there, [*pointing right.*]

Ere I see Loys: you shall speak with him

Until I join you. Khalil follows me.

[*To KHALIL*] Khalil, along with me! while
Anael waits

Till I return once more — and but once more.

[DJABAL and KHALIL *go out, right.*]

ACT TWO: *The First Scene*

ANAEL. As I divined: he bids me save
myself,
Offers me a probation — I accept.
Let me see Loys, then!

Yes, let myself
Probe this delusion to the core!

LOYS. [*from centre outside.*] Djabal!

[*Loys is seen at central entrance, ANAEL
turns.*]

CURTAIN.



THE RETURN of the DRUSES

ACT III.

Same scene. ANAEL and LOYS at corner of steps back, right centre, discovered at rise of curtain, both agitated as in the midst of a moving conversation. LOYS is standing to her left, back, leaning over her.

ANAEL. (*Right centre, rising from her seat, steps right.*) Here leave me! Here I wait another. 'T was
For no mad protestation of a love
Like this you say possesses you, I came.

LOYS. Love? how protest a love I dare not feel?

Mad words may doubtless have escaped me:
you
Are here — I only feel you here!

ANAEL. [*Crosses.*] No more! [*Both come forward.*]

LOYS. But once again, whom could you love?
I dare,

Alas, say nothing of myself, who am
A Knight now, for when Knighthood we embrace,

Love we abjure: so, speak on safely: speak,
Lest I speak, and betray my faith! And yet
To say your breathing passes through me,
changes

My blood to spirit, and my spirit to you,
As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it —
This is not to protest my love! You said
You could love one —

ANAEL. [*Left centre.*] One only! We
are bent
To earth — who raises up my tribe, I love;
The Prefect bows us — who removes him; [*LOYS starts*] we
Have ancient rights — who gives them back to
us,

I love. [*Rushes toward her.*] Forbear me!
[*Seizes her hand.*] Let my hand go!
[*She passes toward left.*]

LOYS.

Him

ACT THREE: *The First Scene*

You could love only? Where is Djabal? [ANAEL makes toward right exit.] Stay!
[She stops involuntarily. Their eyes meet. Pause. ANAEL again turns away, right.]

She sees into my heart's core! What is it
Feeds either cheek with red, as June some rose?
Why turns she from me? Ah fool, over-fond
To dream I could call up —

— What never dream
Yet feigned! 'T is love! [Going to her.] Oh
Anaël, speak to me!

Djabal —
ANAEL. [Avoiding him.] Seek Djabal by
the Prefect's chamber

At noon! [Passes left to alcove steps.]

LOYS. [Turning aside.] And am I not the
Prefect now?

Is it my fate to be the only one
Able to win her love, the only one
Unable to accept it?

For her sake
I left the Isle, for her espoused the cause
Of the Druses, all for her I thought, till now,
To live without!

— As I must live! To-day
Ordains me Knight, forbids me — [turns, crossing
to ANAEL's feet, kneels, offering her
his sword] never shall

Forbid me to profess myself, heart, arm,
Thy soldier!

ANAEL. Djabal you demanded, comes.

LOYS. [Rises right. Aside.] See him? What
else! He brought me here, made known
The Druses to me, drove me hence to seek
Redress for them. But shall I meet him now,
When naught is wanting but a word of his,
To — what? — induce me to spurn hope, faith,
pride,

Honor away, — to cast my lot among
His tribe, become a proverb in men's mouths,
To break my vows of high companionship
With those who graciously bestowed on me
The very opportunities I turn

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

Against them! Let me not see Djabal now!

ANAEL. The Prefect also comes.

LOYS. [*Aside.*] *Him* let me see,
And after, Djabal!

Anael, ere my vows
Irrevocably fix me — [*she turns toward him*]

Let me fly!

The Prefect, or I lose myself forever!

[*Goes centre.*]

ANAEL. Yes, I am calm now; just one way
remains —

One, to attest my faith in him: for, see,
I were quite lost else: Loys, Djabal, stand
On either side — two men! I balance looks
And words, give Djabal a man's preference,
No more. In Djabal, Hakeem is absorbed!
And for a love like this, the God who saves
My race, selects me for his bride? [*Goes to
main portal, pauses outside, standing by
the balustrade, waiting.*] One way!

Enter DJABAL from right.

DJABAL. [*To himself, coming forward
centre.*] No time to waste then; if Khalil
lead back

My Druses, — Loys be lured out of the Isle —

All's over. Even now my bark awaits:

I reach the next wild islet and the next,

And lose myself beneath the sun forever.

And now, to Anael!

ANAEL. [*Coming down right centre.*]

Djabal, I am thine!

DJABAL. [*Meeting her.*] Mine? Djabal's?

— As if Hakeem had not been?

ANAEL. — Do you
read my thought? — Why speak, if you
can —

DJABAL. I do not, I have said a thousand
times.

ANAEL. (My secret's safe, I shall surprise
him yet!) [*Sits right at steps inviting
him toward her, he kneels at her left.*]

Djabal, I knew your secret from the first:

ACT THREE: *The First Scene*

Djabal, when first I saw you — (by our porch
You leant, and pressed the tinkling veil away,
And one fringe fell behind your neck — I see!)
I knew you were not human, for I said
“ This dim secluded house where the sea beats
Is heaven to me — my people’s huts are hell
To them ; this august form will follow me,
Mix with the waves his voice will, — I have
him ;

And they, the Prefect ! Oh, my happiness
Rounds to the full whether I choose or no !
His eyes met mine, he was about to speak,
His hand grew damp — surely he meant to say
He let me love him : in that moment’s bliss
I shall forget my people pine for home —
They pass and they repass with pallid eyes ! ”
I vowed at once a certain vow ; this vow —
Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved.
Embrace me !

DJABAL. [*Checking the impulse to take her.*
Aside.] She loved me ! Nay, Anael, is
The Prefect dead ?

ANAEL. Ah ! True, his death crowns all,
I know — or should know : and I would do
much,
Believe ! but, death ! Oh, you, who have known
death,

Would never doom the Prefect, were death fear-
ful

As we report !

Death ! — witness, I would die,
Whate’er death be, would venture now to die
For Khalil, for Maani — what for thee ?
Nay, but embrace me, Djabal, in assurance
My vow will not be broken, for I must
Do something to attest my faith in you,
Be worthy you !

DJABAL. [*Restraining his passion.*] I
come for that — to say
Such an occasion is at hand : ’t is like
I leave you — that we part, my Anael, — part
Forever !

ANAEL. We part ? Just so ! I have suc-
cumbed, —

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

I am, he thinks, unworthy — and naught less
Will serve than such approval of my faith.
Then, we part not! Remains there no way
short

Of that? Oh not that! Death!

DJABAL. Anaël — I come
To bid a last farewell to you: perhaps
We never meet again. But, ere the Prefect
Arrive —

Enter KHALIL from centre breathlessly.

KHALIL. He's here! The Prefect! Twenty
guards,
No more: no sign he dreams of danger. All
Awaits thee only. Ayooob, Karsbook, keep
Their posts — wait but the deed's accomplish-
ment

To join us with thy Druses to a man.
Still holds his course the Nuncio — near and
near

The fleet from Candia steering.
And I have laid the sacred robe,
The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch — the
place
Commanded. Thou wilt hear the Prefect's
trumpet.

DJABAL. Then I keep Anaël, — him then,
past recall,
I slay — 't is forced on me. As I began
I must conclude — so be it!

KHALIL. [*Right centre.*] For the rest,
Save Loys, our foe's solitary sword,
All is so safe that . . . I will ne'er entreat
Thy post again of thee: tho' danger none,
There must be glory only meet for thee
In slaying the Prefect. [*Kneels to him.*]

ANAEL. [*Aside.*] And 't is now that Djabal
Would leave me! — in the glory meet for him!

DJABAL. [*Centre.*] As glory, I would yield
the deed to you
Or any Druse; what peril there may be,
I keep.

KHALIL. [*Crossing to ANAEL.*] Anaël, and
no part for us!

ACT THREE: *The First Scene*

[*To DJABAL.*] Hast thou possessed her with—
DJABAL. [*To ANAEL at alcove steps, with fixed gaze, trembling.*] What is it you behold there? Shudder you? The man must die,

As thousands of our race have died thro' him.
One blow, and I discharge his weary soul
From flesh polluting it!

ANAEL. My brother said,
Is there no part in it for us?

DJABAL. [*Forward centre, vigorously.*] For Khalil, —

The trumpet will announce the Nuncio's entry;
Here, I shall find the Prefect hastening
In the Pavilion to receive him — here
I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayoob leads
The Nuncio with his guards within: once these
Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayoob bar
Entry or egress till I give the sign
Which waits the landing of the argosies
You will announce to me: this double sign
That justice is performed and help arrived,
When Ayoob shall receive, but not before,
Let him throw ope the palace doors, admit
The Druses to behold their tyrant, ere
We leave forever this detested spot.
Go, Khalil, hurry all! No pause, no pause!
Whirl on the dream, secure to wake anon!

[*All toward right exit.*]
KHALIL. [*Suddenly checking himself and them.*] What sign? and who the bearer?

DJABAL. Who shall show
My ring, admit to Ayoob. How she stands!
Have I not — I must have some task for her.
Anaël, not that way! 'Tis the Prefect's chamber!

Anaël, keep you the ring — give you the sign!
(It holds her safe amid the stir.) You will
Be faithful?

ANAEL. [*Taking the ring.*] I would fain
be worthy. Hark! [*Trumpet without.*]

KHALIL. He comes.

DJABAL. And I too come.

ANAEL. One word, but one!

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

Say, shall you be exalted at the deed?

Then? On the instant?

DJABAL.

I exalted? What?

He, there — we, thus — our wrongs revenged,
our tribe

Set free? Oh, then shall I, assure yourself,

Shall you, shall each of us, be in his death

Exalted!

KHALIL. He is here!

DJABAL.

Away — away! [*They*

go out right.]

SCENE II.

The Same.

*Enter from centre the PREFECT, right centre
with Guards, and LOYS, left centre.*

THE PREFECT. [*At main portal to Guards
outside dismissing them.*] Back, I say, to
the galley every guard!

That's my sole care now; see each bench retains
Its complement of rowers; I embark

O' the instant, since this Knight will have it so.

[*Coming on with LOYS.*]

Alas me! Could you have the heart, my Loys!

Loys, a rueful sight, confess, to see

The gray discarded Prefect leave his post,

With tears i' the eye! So, you are Prefect now?

You depose me — you succeed me? Ha, ha!

LOYS. And dare you laugh, whom laughter
less becomes

Than yesterday's forced meekness we beheld . . .

PREFECT. — When you so eloquently
pleaded, Loys,

For my dismissal from the post? Ah, meek

With cause enough, consult the Nuncio else!

And wish him the like meekness: for so stanch

A servant of the Church can scarce have bought

His share in the Isle, and paid for it, hard
pieces!

You've my successor to condole with, Nuncio!

I shall be safe by then i' the galley, Loys!

ACT THREE: *The SECOND Scene*

LOYS. You make as you would tell me you
rejoice
To leave your scene of—

PREFECT. Trade in the dear Druses?
Blood and sweat traffic! Spare what yesterday
We heard enough of! Drove I in the Isle
A profitable game? Learn wit, my son,
Which you'll need shortly! Did it never breed
Suspicion in you, all was not pure profit,
When I, the insatiate — and so forth — was
bent

On having a partaker in my rule?
Why did I yield this Nuncio half the gain,
If not that I might also shift — what on him?
Half of the peril, Loys!

LOYS. Peril?

PREFECT. Hark you!
I'd love you if you'd let me — this for reason,
You save my life at price of — well, say risk
At least, of yours. I came a long time since
To the Isle; our Hospitallers bade me tame
These savage wizards, and reward myself —

LOYS. The Knights who so repudiate your
crime?

PREFECT. Loys, the Knights! we doubtless
understood

Each other; as for trusting to reward
From any friend beside myself . . . no, no!
I clutched mine on the spot, when it was sweet,
And I had taste for it. I felt these wizards
Alive — was sure they were not on me, only
When I was on them: but with age comes cau-
tion:

And stinging pleasures please less and sting
more.

Year by year, fear by fear! The girls were
brighter

Than ever ('faith, there's yet one Anael left,
I set my heart upon — Oh, prithee, let
That brave new sword lie still!) — These joys
looked brighter,

But silenter the town, too, as I passed.
With this alcove's delicious memories
Began to mingle visions of gaunt fathers,

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the mine, the
oar,
Stealing to catch me. Brief, when — when, I
say,

Just when, for the remainder of my life,
All methods of escape seemed lost — that then
Up should a young hot-headed Loys spring,
Talk very loud and long, — in fine, compel
The Knights to break their whole arrangement,
have me

Home for pure shame — from this safehold of
mine

Where but ten thousand Druses seek my life,
To my wild place of banishment, San Gines
By Murcia, where my three fat manors lying,
Purchased by gains here and the Nuncio's gold,
Are all I have to guard me, — that such fortune
Should fall to me, I hardly could expect.
Therefore I say, I'd love you.

Loys.

Can it be?

I lay into your hands then? Oh no, no!
The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order
Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pity?
But I will back — will yet unveil you. [*Crosses.*]

PREFECT.

Me?

To whom? — perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chap-
ter

Shook his white head thrice — and some dozen
times

My hand next morning shook, for value paid!

To that Italian saint. Sir Cosimo? —

Indignant at my ringing year by year

A thousand bezants from the coral-divers,

As you recounted: felt the saint aggrieved?

Well might he — I allowed for his half-share

Merely one hundred. To Sir —

Loys.

See! you dare

Inculcate the whole Order; yet should I,

A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change

Their evil way, had they been firm in it?

Answer me!

PREFECT. Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,
And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,
And the young arm, we'll even say, my Loys,

ACT THREE: *The SECOND Scene*

—The fear of losing or diverting these
Into another channel, by gainsaying
A novice too abruptly, could not influence
The Order! You might join, for aught they
cared,

Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well,
I thank you for my part, at all events.
Stay here till they withdraw you! You'll in-
habit

My palace — sleep, perchance, in the alcove
Whither I go to meet our holy friend.
Good! and now disbelieve me if you can, —
This is the first time for long years I enter
Thus [*lifts the arras*] without feeling just as if
I lifted

The lid up of my tomb.

LOYS. They share his crime!

God's punishment will overtake you yet.

PREFECT. [*Turning back to LOYS.*] Thank
you it does not! Pardon this last flash:

I bear a sober visage presently
With the disinterested Nuncio here —
His purchase-money safe at Murcia, too!
Let me repeat — for the first time, no draught
Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.
When we next meet, this folly may have passed,
We'll hope. Ha, ha! [*Goes through the
arras.*]

LOYS. Assure me but — He's gone!

He could not lie. Then what have I escaped,
I, who had so nigh given up happiness
Forever, to be linked with him and them!
Oh, opportunist of discoveries! I
Their Knight? I utterly renounce them all!
Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio?

Yes,

The same hyæna groan-like laughter! Quick —
To Djabal! I am one of them at last,
These simple-hearted Druses — Anael's tribe!
Djabal! She's mine at last. Djabal, I say!

CURTAIN.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

ACT IV.

Same scene. The KHALIF's sacred mantle, sword, and tiar, left, by the alcove.

Enter DJABAL from the right.

DJABAL. Let me but slay the Prefect. The end now!
To-morrow will be time enough to pry
Into the means, the ignoble means I took
To hurl my true revenge. [*Seeing the robe, tiar, and sword disposed, goes toward alcove.*]

Then must I dare
Assume my nation's Robe! [*Taking the robe.*
I dare! Why not
The Tiar? I rule the Druses, and what more
Betokens it than rule? — yet — yet —

[*Lays down the tiar.*
Footsteps in the alcove.] He comes!

[*Taking the sword.*
If the Sword serve, let the Tiar lie! So, feet
Clogged with the blood of twenty years can fall
Thus lightly! Round me, all ye ghosts! He'll
lift

Which arm to push the arras wide? — or both?
Stab from the neck down to the heart — there
stay!

Near he comes — nearer — the next footstep!
Now! [*As he dashes aside the arras,*
ANAEL is discovered.]

Ha! Anael! Nay, my Anael, can it be?
I slay him here! 'T is not a sight for you.
Till you go, I must be idle — idle,
I risk all! — Anael! the Prefect comes!

[*ANAEL screams.*]
And with the dagger 't is, I have to do!
ANAEL. With mine! [*Holding out to him*
her bloody khandjar.]

DJABAL. Blood — Anael?
ANAEL. [*Coming down the steps and forward*
step by step.] Djabal, 't is thy deed!
It must be! I had hoped to claim it mine —

ACT FOUR: *The First Scene*

Be worthy thee — but I must needs confess
'T was not I, but thyself — not I have — Djabal!

[*Lets her khandjar fall.*]

Speak to me!

DJABAL. [*Overwhelmed, retreating, as she advances.*] Oh, my punishment!

ANAEL. Speak to me

While I can speak! touch me, despite the blood!
When the command passed from thy soul to mine,

I went, fire leading me, muttering of thee,
And the approaching exaltation, — “make
One sacrifice!” I said, — and he sat there,
Bade me approach; and, as I did approach,
Thy fire with music burst into my brain.

'T was but a moment's work, thou saidst —
perchance

It may have been so! Well, it is thy deed.

DJABAL. It is my deed.

ANAEL. His blood all this! — this!
and —

And more! Sustain me, Djabal! Wait not —
now

Let flash thy glory! Djabal, blood gushed
forth —

He was our tyrant — but I looked he'd fall
Prone as asleep — why else is death called sleep?
Sleep? He bent o'er his breast! 'T is sin, I
know, —

Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let him?

Be it thou that punishest, not he — who creeps
On his red breast — is here! 'T is the small
groan

Of a child — no worse! Bestow the new life,
Then!

Too swift it cannot be, too strange, surpassing!

[*Following him as he retreats.*]

Now! Change us both! Change me and change
thou!

DJABAL. [*Sinks on his knees.*] Thus!
Behold my change! You have done nobly.

I! —

ANAEL. Can Hakeem kneel?

DJABAL. No Hakeem, and scarce Djabal!

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

I have dealt falsely, and this woe is come.
[*Rises.*]

Hear me ere scorn blast me! The deed is mine!

ANAEL. [*To herself crossing left.*] Did I strike once, or twice, or many times?

DJABAL. Anael, I saw my tribe: I said,
“ Without

A miracle this cannot be ” — I said

“ Be there a miracle! ” — for I saw you.

ANAEL. His head lies south the portal.

DJABAL. — Weighed with this

The general good, how could I choose my own?

What matter was my purity of soul?

Little by little I engaged myself —

ANAEL. Is it this blood breeds dreams in me?

Who said

You were not Hakeem? And your miracles —

The fire that plays innocuous round your form?

[*Again changing her whole manner.*]

Ah, thou wouldst try me — Thou art Hakeem still!

DJABAL. Woe — woe! As if the Druses understood

The subtle lore of Europe! A few secrets —

ANAEL. [*After a pause springs to his neck.*]

Djabal, in this there can be no deceit!

Why, Djabal, were you human only, — think,

Maani is but human, Khalil human,

Loys is human even — did their words

Haunt me, their looks pursue? Could I, with the

Prefect and the blood, there — see only you?

— Hang by your neck over this gulf of blood?

Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal! Am I

saved? [*As DJABAL slowly unclasps her arms, and puts her silently from him she falls upon her knees in anguish.*]

Hakeem would save me. Thou art Djabal.

[*Suddenly springs to her feet.*] Crouch!

Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!

The pile of thee, I reared up to the cloud —

Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,

Based on the living rock, devoured not by

The unstable desert's jaws of sand, — falls prone

Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there

ACT FOUR: *The First Scene*

A ruin, obscene creatures will moan through.
— Let us come, Djabal!

DJABAL. Whither come?

ANAEL. At once —

Come to them, hand in hand, with me!

DJABAL. Where come?

ANAEL. Where? — to the Druses thou hast
wronged! Confess,

Now that the end is gained — (I love thee
now —)

That thou hast so deceived them — (perchance
love thee

Better than ever.) Come, receive their doom

Of infamy! O, best of all I love thee! [*Taking
up khandjar.*]

Shame with the man, no triumph with the God,
Be mine! Come!

DJABAL. Never! More shame yet? and
why?

You called this deed mine — it is mine!

The past

Is past: my false life shall henceforth show true.

Hear me! The argosies touch land by this;

They bear us to fresh scenes and happier skies.

What if we reign together? — if we keep

Our secret for the Druses' good? — by means

Of even their superstition, plant in them

New life? I learn from Europe: all who seek

Man's good must awe man, by such means as
these.

We two will be divine to them — we are!

I wrest the weapon from your hand! [*Wrests
the khandjar from her.*] I claim

The deed! Retire! You have my ring — you bar

All access to the Nuncio till the forces

From Venice land.

ANAEL. Thou wilt feign Hakeem then?

DJABAL. [*Putting the tiar of Hakeem on
his head.*] And from this moment that I
dare ope wide

Eyes that till now refused to see, begins

My true dominion: for I know myself,

And what am I to personate. No word? [*Lays
down tiar.* ANAEL goes out centre.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

'T is come on me at last! [*Drooping against a pillar, collapsed.*] His blood on her —

What memories will follow that! [*Rousing.*]
Ah, fool!

Wouldst work in this foul earth by means not
foul?

Scheme, as for heaven, — but, on the earth, be
glad

If a least ray like heaven's be left thee! [*Erecting himself, grasping the khandjar.*]

Thus

I shall be calm — in readiness — no way

Surprised. [*A noise without.*]

This should be Khalil and my Druses.

Venice is come then! [*Crosses to alcove.*]

Druses! In! Behold!

Enter LOYS (*from centre*). DJABAL *hides the khandjar in his robe.*

LOYS. (*Right centre.*) Oh, well found,
Djabal! — but no time for words.

You know who waits there? [*Pointing to the alcove.*]

Well! — and that 't is there

He meets the Nuncio? Well? Now, a sur-
prise —

He there —

DJABAL. (*Left centre.*) I know —

LOYS. — is now no mortal's lord,

Is absolutely powerless — call him, dead —

He is no longer Prefect — you are Prefect!

Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the dark,

I have, boldly, face to face, confronted

The Prefect in full Chapter, charged on him

The enormities of his long rule; I spoke

Of you, and of your tribe, and all you urged

Of old to me: I spoke, too, of your goodness,

Your patience — brief, I now hold the Isle, —

Am nominally lord, — but you, you are

Associated in my rule — you are

The true Prefect! Hear greater wonders yet —

Oh, Djabal, I shall never be a Knight!

Here first I throw all prejudice aside,

ACT FOUR: *The First Scene*

And call you brother! I am Druse like you:
My wealth, my friends, my power, are wholly
yours,
Your people's, which is now my people: for
There is a maiden of your tribe, I love —
She loves me — Khalil's sister —
DJABAL. Anael?

Enter one of the NUNCIO'S Guards from the alcove.

1ST GUARD. Oh, horrible! Sir Loys! Here
is Loys!
And here —

[2D GUARD *enters from the alcove.*
Pointing to DJABAL.] Secure him, bind him
— this is he! [*They go to right and left*
of DJABAL and seize him.]

LOYS. Madmen — what! Stand from my
friend!

1ST GUARD. The Prefect
Lies murdered there by him thou dost embrace.

LOYS. By Djabal? Miserable fools! How
Djabal? [1ST GUARD *lifts DJABAL'S robe;*
DJABAL flings down the khandjar.]

LOYS. [*After a pause.*] Thou hast received
some insult worse than all,
Some outrage not to be endured —

[*To the Guards.*] Stand back!
He is my friend — more than my friend. [*To*

DJABAL.] — Thou hast
Slain him upon that provocation.

1ST GUARD. No!
No provocation! 'T is a long devised
Conspiracy: the whole tribe is involved.
He is their Khalif — 't is on that pretence —
All is just now revealed, I know not how,
By one of his confederates —

DJABAL. [*Aside.*] Who broke
Faith with me?

LOYS. [*To DJABAL.*] Hear'st thou? Deny
this story!
Till thou speak, I keep off these, or with thee
Die. Thou a Khalif, an impostor? Speak!

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

DJABAL. Loys, I am as thou hast heard.
All 's true.
No more concealment! As these tell thee, all
Was long since planned. Our Druses are
enough
To crush this handful: the Venetians land
Even now in our behalf. [*The Guards go out*
centre.] Loys, we part.
It might not be. I thank thee. Fare thee well!

LOYS. The Druses? Do they share thy
crime? Khalil,
My friend, I saw but now! he spoke— no word
Of this! Anael! — No word of this!

DJABAL. Poor boy!
— Khalil is my right-hand, my delegate! —
Anael — my bride!

LOYS. Anael, thy bride?
DJABAL. My bride!

LOYS. And she retains her glorious eyes!
Thy bride!
She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's
guilt! [*Sits right.*]

Ah — who but she directed me to find
Djabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil
Bade me seek Djabal there, too. All is truth.

DJABAL. Loys, I wronged thee — but un-
wittingly:
I never thought there was in thee a virtue
That could attach itself to what thou deemest
A race below thine own. I wronged thee, Loys,
But that is over: all is over now,
Save the protection I ensure against
My people's anger. By their Khalif's side,
Thou art secure and mayst depart: so, come!

LOYS. Thy side? I take protection at thy
hand?

Re-enter 1ST GUARD, *centre.*

1ST GUARD. Fly with him! Fly, Sir Loys!
'T is too true:
And only by his side thou mayst escape.
The whole tribe is in full revolt: they flock
About the palace — will be here —
Even we

ACT FOUR: *The First Scene*

Had stayed to meet our death in ignorance,
But that one Druse, a single faithful Druse,
Made known the horror.

Keep by him!

He is their God, they shout, and at his beck
Are life and death! [Guard goes out centre.]

LOYS. [*Springing at the khandjar* DJABAL
had thrown down, seizes him by the
throat.] Thus by his side am I!

Thus I resume my knighthood and its warfare.
How? Hakeem? God art thou! but also here
Is the least, youngest, meanest the Church calls
Her servant, and his single arm avails!

The Cross

And Faith, 'gainst Hell, Mahound and thee.

Die! [DJABAL remains calm.] Implore my
mercy, Hakeem, that my scorn

May help me! Nay, I cannot ply thy trade;

I am no Druse, no stabber: and thine eye,

Thy form, are too much as they were.— my
friend

Had such. Speak! Beg for mercy at my foot!

[DJABAL still silent.]

Heaven could not ask so much of me — not,
sure,

So much. I cannot kill him so. [*After a pause.*

Heardst thou?

One of thine accomplices, thy people,

Has accused thee? Meet that Druse! Be thou
tried

By him, nor seek appeal! Face me! Consent!

DJABAL. Give me again my khandjar, if
thou darest! [*A pause.* LOYS gives it.]

Let but one Druse accuse me, and I plunge

This home. Let us go! [*Shouts without.*

Hearest thou? I hear

No plainer than long years ago I heard

That shout—but in no dream now. They
return!

CURTAIN.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

ACT V.

The Same.

Enter, from centre, passing down left, NASIF, ELKEB, heading many Uninitiated Druses in vari-colored robes who fill the Hall tumultuously talking together, some of them pointing to the Alcove and gesturing.

NASIF. [*Jocularly.*] Here flock we, obeying the summons!

ELKEB. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon!

NASIF. My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there.

ELKEB. Come, old Nasif — link thine arm in mine — we fight, if needs be.

NASIF. Come, what is a great fight-word? — “Lebanon?”

KARSHOOK. [*From behind the crowd outside, fiercely.*] My daughter — my daughter!

ELKEB. But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?

NASIF. [*Shrewdly.*] Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves.

ELKEB. Where is Hakeem?

NASIF. [*Chuckling.*] The only prophet I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once, in my youth: a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent.

Enter the NUNCIO, with Guards from centre passing down right.

Is this he? Biamrallah!

ELKEB. Biamreh! HAKEEM!

ALL. [*In a tumult, hailing and worshipping.*] Hakeem! Hakeem! Hakeem!

NUNCIO. [*To a Guard outside at portal.*] Hold both, the sorcerer and his accuser!

[*Right centre, coming forward, dismayed at the crowd, for the whisper has passed from*

ACT FIVE: *The First Scene*

KARSHOOK *at rear to the front, swiftly, and all are suddenly silent, sullen, and unfriendly.*] Lo, this black disem-boguing of the Isle!

[*To the Druses.*] Ah children, what a sight for these old eyes!

I came to gather all you wandering sheep [*at a word passed along from KARSHOOK the Druses at the rear spread out, manning the exits, and cutting off the NUNCIO from escape*]

Into my fold, as though a father came — [*the falters, noticing the ominous movement in the crowd, and eyes the guarded doors*]

As though, in coming, a father should —

[*To his Guards*] One —

Two — three — guards of you! No outlet? Keep close!

[*To the Druses.*] As if one came to a son's house, I say,

So did I come — no guard with me — to find —
[*The Druses fold their arms, scowl, thrust out nether lips.*]

Alas — Alas!

ELKEB. Who is the old man? Eh!

NASIF. [*Chuckling.*] Oh, ye are to shout! Children, he styles you.

ELKEB. [*Shaking his fist at the NUNCIO.*]
Ay, the Prefect's slain!

Glory to the Khalif, our Father!

NUNCIO. Even so

I find (ye prompt aright) your father slain,
While most he plotted for your good. [*Druses nudge one another at this and laugh.*]

[*Aside.*] (And hell's

Worm gnaw the glozing knave for duping me!
Are these the Christians? These the docile crew

My bezants went to make me Bishop o'er?)

[*To his Guards who whisper.*] What say ye
does this wizard style himself?

Hakeem? Biamrallah?

NASIF. He mutters! Hear ye?

He is blaspheming Hakeem.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

ELKEB. The old man
Is our dead Prefect's friend. Tear him! [NASIF
*with ELKEB cross stage drawing their
khandjars at him, others half follow,
whole crowd swaying upon the NUNCIO,
who braves them in desperation.*]

NUNCIO. Ye dare not. [*They
waver and fall back.*]

I stand here with my five-and-seventy years,
The Patriarch's power behind me, God's above.
Those years have witnessed men rebel ere now
Who found excuse; but ye, to be enslaved
By sorceries, cheats — alas! the same tricks,
tried,

Exploded, laughed to scorn, all nations through:
“*Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi,* [*the
Druses taking this for a spell, shrink back,
shivering with fright, they cower, put
out their hands as if to ward off the
curse*]

Cretes and Arabians” — you are duped the last.
[*Seeing his advantage, boldly.*]

Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye
Tear me! Shall I return to tell the Patriarch
That so much love was wasted — every gift
Rejected, from his benison I brought,
Down to the galley-full of bezants [*at “bezants,”
the Druses look at one another, impressed*],
sunk

An hour since at the harbor's mouth, by that —
That — sorcerer!

[*To his Guards.*] What? Eh? Oh, [*they
whisper*] Djabal was 't?

ELKEB. But how a sorcerer?

NASIF. False wherein?

NUNCIO. How false? Ye know not, Djabal
has confessed — [*Sensation among the
Druses.*]

Nay, that by tokens found on him we learn —
How by his spells the demons were allured
To seize you: By lies he would have led you
Into a monstrous ruin: follow ye?

Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my sons? —

ELKEB. [*To the others.*] Hark ye!

ACT FIVE: *The First Scene*

NUNCIO. — Be of one privilege
amerced?

No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies are!
No! With the Patriarch's license, still I bid
Tear him to pieces who misled you! Haste!

ELKEB. [*To the others.*] The old man's
beard shakes, and his eyes are white fire! After
all, I know nothing of Djabal beyond what Kar-
shook says; he knows but what Khalil says,
who knows just what Djabal says himself. [*The
others nod.*]

NASIF. [*Drawing.*] Now, the little Copht
Prophet, I saw at Cairo in my youth, began by
promising each bystander three full measures of
wheat —

*Enter KHALIL from centre, leading KAR-
SHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, ABDULLAH, the
three Watchers and other Initiate Druses.*

KHALIL. (*Left centre.*) Venice and her
deliverance are at hand:

Their fleet stands through the harbor. Hath he
slain

The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change come yet?

NUNCIO. [*To Guards.*] What 's this of
Venice? Who 's this boy?

[*Guards whisper.*] One Khalil?
Djabal's accomplice! [*To the Druses.*]

Ye'd have my troops as-
sist? [*Pointing at KHALIL.*]

Doth he abet him in his sorceries? [*The Ini-
tiates gaze about them in alarm, bewil-
dered.*]

Down with the cheat, guards, as my children
bid!

[*They spring at KHALIL; as he beats them
back.*]

Stay! No more bloodshed! Spare deluded
youth!

[*To KHALIL.*] Whom seek'st thou? [*To
Druses.*] I will teach him -- [*To KHALIL.*]
whom, my child?

Art thou the only fond one of thy tribe?

'T is I interpret for thy tribe.

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

KHALIL. Oh, this
Is the expected Nuncio! Druses, hear —
Endure ye this? Unworthy to partake
The glory Hakeem gains you! While I speak,
The ships touch land: who makes for Lebanon?
They plant the winged lion in these halls!

NUNCIO. [*Aside.*] Venice! Oh, never true!

KHALIL. Ere *He* appear
And lead you gloriously, repent, I say!

NUNCIO. [*To the Druses.*] *He?* Bring
him forth! You'd judge him, say you!
Where's

Our short black-bearded sallow friend who
swore

He'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by one stab?
Bring Djabal forth at once!

NASIF. Ay, bring him forth!
The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and silk,
And we're the Patriarch's children — true men,
we!

ELKEB. Where is the glory?

ALL. [*Led by ELKEB.*] Show us all the glory!

KHALIL. [*To Druses.*] You dare not so in-
sult him! What, not see —

I tell thee, Nuncio, these are uninstructed,
Untrusted: they know nothing of our Khalif!
[*To Druses*] — Not see that if he lets a doubt
arise

'T is but to show ye would have trusted him
Without the all-convincing glory — ay,
And did! Embrace the occasion, friends! For,
think —

What wonder when his change takes place?
But now

For your sakes, he should not reveal himself.
No: could I ask and have, I would not ask
The change yet!

Enter DJABAL and LOYS from the right.

[*To DJABAL.*] Spite of all, reveal thyself!
I had said, pardon these besotted men —
Yet now — this Nuncio couples shame with
thee,

ACT FIVE: *The First Scene*

Imposture! — bitter things he said — Hakeem!
Reveal thyself! See!

LOYS. [*Right centre, to DJABAL.*] Keep
thy word to me!

DJABAL. [*Centre, to the NUNCIO.*] Who of
my people hath accused me?

NUNCIO. So!

So this is Djabal, Hakeem, and what not?
I, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge
Of the Isle here, I claim thee [*turning to*

DJABAL] as these bid me,
Forfeit for murder done thy lawful prince,
Thou conjurer that workest miracles?
Let him but move me with his spells! I,

Nuncio —

DJABAL. Which how thou camest to be, I
say not now,
Though I have also been at Stamboul, Luke!

[*The NUNCIO winces.*
Ply thee with spells, forsooth! What need of
spells?

If Venice by her Admiral refuse
Convoy to Lebanon — refuse this Isle
We leave — time then to try what spells can do!
Dost thou dispute the Republic's power?

NUNCIO. [*To the Druses.*] Lo ye!
He tempts me too, the wily exorcist!
No! The renowned Republic was and is
The Patriarch's friend: 't is not for courting
Venice

That I — that these implore thy blood of me.
Lo ye, ye Druses! Where's the miracle
He works? I bid him to the proof — fish up
Your galley-full of bezants that he sank!
That were a miracle! One miracle!
Enough of trifling, for it chafes my years.
I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand forth
To save you from the good Republic's rage
When she shall find her fleet was summoned here
To aid the mummeries of a knave like this.
Why, we hold one who proves this Djabal cheat,
Each miracle a cheat. Who throws me now
His head? I make three offers, once I offer, —
And twice —

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

DJABAL. Let who moves perish at my foot!

KHALIL. Thanks, Hakeem, thanks!

NASIF. He can! He can! Live fire —

ELKEB. [*To the NUNCIO.*] I say he can,
old man? Thou know'st him not.

Live fire like that thou seest now in his eyes,
Plays fawning round him. See! The change
begins.

All the brow lightens as he lifts his arm.

Look not at me! It was not I!

DJABAL. What Druse
Accused me, as he saith? I bid each bone
Crumble within that Druse! [*The Druses
cover.*]

NUNCIO. [*Aside.*] Venice to come! Death!

DJABAL. [*Continuing.*] Seest thou my
Druses, Luke? I would submit

To thy pure malice did one Druse confess!

NUNCIO. [*To his Attendants.*] Bring in
the witness, then, who, first of all,

Disclosed the treason! [*Guards go out.*] Now
I have thee, wizard! [*To Druses*]

Ye hear that? If one speaks, he bids you tear
him

Joint after joint: well then, one does speak!
One,

Befooled by Djabal, even as yourselves,

Who expiates confessing thus, the fault

Of having trusted him. [*Guards re-enter with
a veiled Druse.*]

LOYS. Now, Djabal, now!

NUNCIO. Friend, Djabal fronts thee! Make
a ring, sons. Speak!

LOYS. Thou hast the dagger ready, Djabal?

DJABAL. [*With a look at Loys, to the veiled
Druse.*] Speak,

Recreant! [*KHALIL pushes forward zeal-
ously.*]

ELKEB. Stand back, fool! farther! Suddenly
You shall see some huge serpent glide from
under

The empty vest, or down will thunder crash!

NASIF. Back, Khalil!

KHALIL. I go back? Thus go I back!

ACT FIVE: *The First Scene*

[*To veiled Druse.*] Unveil! Nay, thou shalt face the Khalif! Thus!

[*He tears away the veil and discloses ANAEL; DJABAL folds his arms and bows his head; the Druses fall back; LOYS springs from the side of DJABAL and the NUNCIO.*]

LOYS. Then she was true — she only of them all!

True to her eyes — may keep those glorious eyes,

And now be mine, once again mine! Oh, Anael!

Dared I think thee a partner in his crime — That blood could soil that hand? [*Starts to seize it. She rebuffs this.*] Nay, 'tis mine — Anael. [*Seizes it. She withdraws it.*]

— Not mine? — who offer thee before all these My heart, my sword, my name — so thou wilt say

That Djabal, who affirms thou art his bride, Lies — say but that he lies!

DJABAL. Thou, Anael?

LOYS. Nay, Djabal, nay, one chance for me — the last!

Thou hast had every other; thou hast spoken Days, nights, what falsehood listed thee — let me

Speak first now; I will speak now!

NUNCIO. Loys, pause!

Thou art the Duke's son, Bretagne's choicest stock,

Loys of Dreux, God's sepulchre's first sword: This wilt thou spit on, this degrade, this trample To earth?

LOYS. [*Turns from the NUNCIO to ANAEL.*]

Who had foreseen that one day Loys

Would stake these gifts against some other good In the whole world? I give them thee! I would My strong will might bestow real shape on them, That I might see, with my own eyes, thy foot Tread on their very neck! 'Tis not by gifts I put aside this Djabal: we will stand —

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

We do stand, see, two men! Djabal, stand forth!

Who's worth her, I or thou? I who purely
Kept my way without or lies or blood, — or
thou!

Love me, Anael! Leave the blood and him!
[*To DJABAL.*] Now, quick on this, speak if
thou art a man!

DJABAL. [*To ANAEL.*] I have deserved
this of thee, and submit.

Nor 't is much evil thou inflictest: life
Ends here. The cedars shall not wave for us:
For there was crime, and must be punishment.
By thee I perish: yet — can I repent?
As a Frank schemer or an Arab mystic,
I had been something; — now, each has de-
stroyed

The other — and behold, from out their crash,
A third and better nature rises up —
My mere man's-nature! And I yield to it:
I love thee, I who did not love before!

ANAEL. Djabal!

DJABAL. It seemed love, but it was not
love:

How could I love while thou adoredst me?
Now thou despisest, art above me so
Immeasurably! Thou, no other, doomest
My death now; this my steel shall execute
Thy judgment; I shall feel thy hand in it.
Oh luxury to worship, to submit,
Transcended, doomed to death by thee!

ANAEL. My Djabal!

DJABAL. Dost hesitate? I force thee! Speak
the doom!

Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and hear, Loys!

ANAEL. HAKEEM! [*She falls dead.*

The Druses scream grovelling before him.

ELKEB. [*On his knees, only uplifting his
head to plead.*] Ah Hakeem! — not on
me thy wrath!

NASIF. Biamrallah, pardon! never doubted
I!

Ha, dog, how sayest thou? [*Crossing stage,
swoops on the NUNCIO, ELKEB following*

ACT FIVE: *The First Scene*

with others, they seize the old man. Loys flings himself upon his knees beside ANAEL'S prostrate body, at the head, right, on which DJABAL continues to gaze as stupefied.]

NUNCIO. [*Struggling with those who have seized him.*] Catiffs! Have ye eyes?
Whips, racks should teach you! What, his fools?
his dupes?

Leave me! Unhand me!

KHALIL. [*Over ANAEL at DJABAL'S feet, left, behind the body, to DJABAL timidly.*]
Save her for my sake!

She was already thine; she would have shared
To-day thine exaltation: think, this day
Her hair was plaited thus because of thee!
Yes, feel the soft hair — feel!

Restore her life!

So little does it! there — the eyelids tremble!
'T was not my breath that made them: and the
lips

Move of themselves. I could restore her life!
Hakeem, we have forgotten — have presumed
On our free converse: we are better taught.
See, I kiss — how I kiss thy garment's hem
For her! She kisses it — Oh, take her deed
In mine! Thou dost believe now, Anael? —
See!

She smiles! Were her lips open o'er the teeth
Thus, when I spoke first? She believes in thee!
Go not without her to the cedars, lord!
Or leave us both — I cannot go alone!
I have obeyed thee, if I dare so speak:
Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal knew?
Thou feelest then my tears fall hot and fast
Upon thy hand, and yet thou speakest not?
Ere the Venetian trumpet sound — ere thou
Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! save thou her!

NUNCIO. [*To ELKEB and NASIF, observing DJABAL'S face.*] — What ails your Hakeem? Ah, that ghastly face!

[*Desperately to the Druses, again seeking to rally them.*] Look to your Khalif, Druses!
Is that face

THE RETURN *of the* DRUSES

God Hakeem's? Where is triumph — where is
— what

Said he of exaltation — hath he promised
So much to-day? [*To DJABAL.*] Why then,
exalt thyself!

Cast off that husk, thy form, set free thy soul
In splendor! [*To the Druses.*] Now, bear wit-
ness! here I stand —

I challenge him exalt himself, and I
Become, for that, a Druse like all of you!

ALL THE DRUSES. [*The Initiate Druses be-
seaching reverently, the Uninitiated clam-
oring.*] Exalt thyself! Exalt thyself, O
Hakeem!

DJABAL. I can confess now all from first to
last.

There is no longer shame for me. I am —
[*The Venetian trumpet sounds: the Druses
shout “The Lion!” “Lebanon!”
DJABAL'S eye catches the expression of
those about him, and, as the old dream
comes back, he is again confident and
inspired.*]

— Am I not Hakeem? And ye would have
crawled

But yesterday within these impure courts
Where now ye stand erect! Not grand enough?
— What more could be conceded to such beasts
As all of you, so sunk and base as you,
Than a mere man? A man among such beasts
Was miracle enough: yet him you doubt,
Him you forsake, him fain would you destroy—
With the Venetians at your gate, the Nuncio
Thus — (see the baffled hypocrite!) and, best,
The Prefect there!

ALL THE DRUSES. [*Worshipping.*] No!
Thine! Hakeem! Thine! Thine!

NUNCIO. He lies — and twice he lies — and
thrice he lies!

Exalt thyself, Mahound! Exalt thyself!

DJABAL. Druses! We shall henceforth be
far away —

Out of mere mortal ken — above the cedars —
But we shall see ye go, hear ye return,

ACT FIVE: *The First Scene*

Repeopling the old solitudes, — through thee,
My Khalil! Thou art full of me: I fill
Thee full — my hands thus fill thee! Go thou!
Lead

My people home!
[*Turning to the Druses.*] Ye Druses, Now!
Ye take
This Khalil for my delegate? To him
Bow as to me? He leads to Lebanon —
Ye follow?

ALL THE DRUSES. Ay! We follow! Ay!
Lord! Ay!

DJABAL. [*Raises LOYS.*] Then to thee,
Loys! How I wronged thee, Loys!
Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt have full
revenge,

Fit for thy noble self — and thus:
Guard Khalil and my Druses home again!
Justice, no less, God's justice and no more!
And, this obtained them, leave their Lebanon,
— One cedar-blossom in thy ducal cap,
One thought of Anael in thy heart, — perchance,
One thought of him who thus, to bid thee speed,
His last word to the living speaks! This done,
Resume thy course, and, first amidst the first
In Europe, take my heart along with thee!

[*He bends over ANAEL.*]
Ah, did I dream I was to have, this day,
Exalted thee? A vain dream: hast thou not
Won greater exaltation? What remains
But press to thee, exalt myself to thee?
Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul!

[*He stabs himself. As he falls, right centre, supported by KHALIL and LOYS, the Venetians enter, left centre. The Druses part to right and left; the ADMIRAL advancing among them between their uplifted arms amid their shouts of "Hail Venice!" "Lebanon!" "Lebanon!"*

ADMIRAL. [*With gesture ordering his Guard to plant the Venetian standard at alcove, left, in front of the Rhodian Cross.*] God and St. Mark for Venice! Plant the Lion!

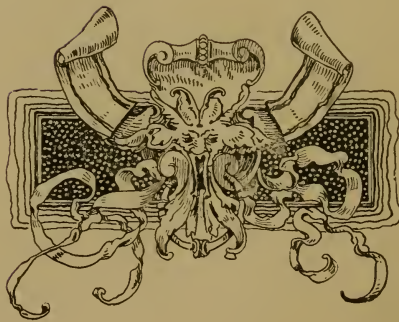
THE RETURN of the DRUSES

[At the clash of the planted standard, the Druses shout, drawing their knives, flourishing them above their heads, and moving tumultuously on toward central exit as if pouring out of the portal from all sides. LOYS draws his sword.

DJABAL. [Centre, on the steps, as if leading them, between KHALIL left and LOYS right.] On to the Mountain! At the Mountain, Druses! [Dies.

CURTAIN.

END.



MAY 4 1903



... "Forbid"

*That any irreverent fancy or conceit
Should titter in the Drama's throne-room, where
The rulers of our art, in whose full veins
Dynastic glories mingle, sit in strength
And do their kingly work, — conceive, command,
And from the imagination's crucial heat
Catch up their men and women all a-flame
For action, all alive and forced to prove
Their life by living out heart, brain, and nerve,
Until mankind makes witness, 'These be men
As we are, ...'*

EDGAR W. HARRETT HENNING.

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