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ZOHARITA

PLAY IN FIVE ACTS





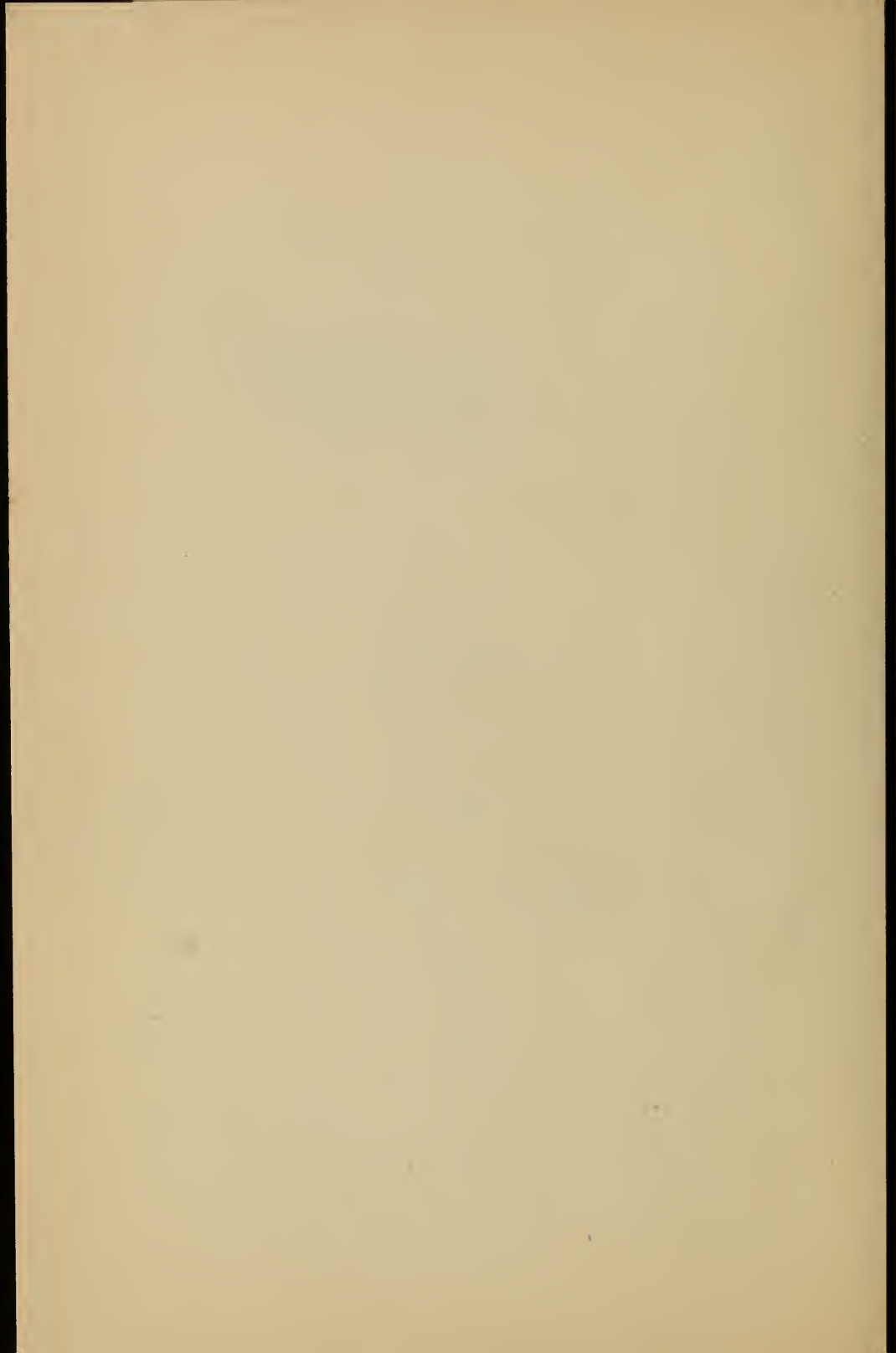
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ZOHARITA

PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

Mistocles & Jenova



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By
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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

EARL MELTON—Politician and Reformer.

LILLITH—His Wife.

GRACE—Their Daughter.

The maid at Melton's House.

ZOHARITA—A woman well versed in the esoteric teachings and mysteries.

The servant in Zoharita's home.

ALDRICH—A capitalist and business man.

A clerk in Aldrich's office.

FRANKLIN—His attorney, and also politician.

INGLEHART—Publisher and Editor.

MRS. INGLEHART—His Wife.

MRS. LENOX—A wealthy Widow.

STEVENSON—A Minister.

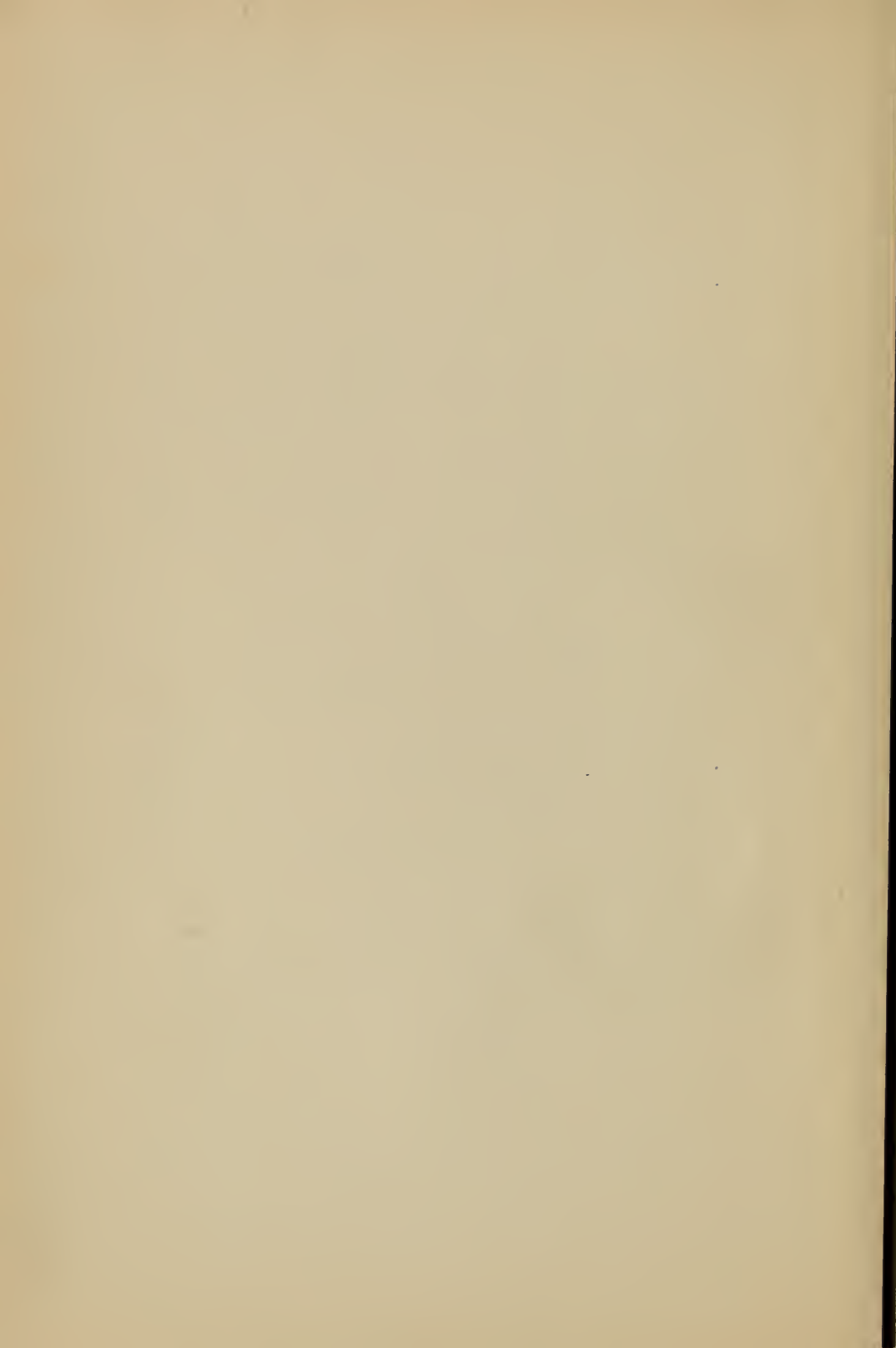
PRINCE OF EDOM—Black magician.

A policeman.

Some dwarfs and an Apparition.

A working man's wife and her little girl.

Other women, a man, and some town's-people.



ACT I.

SCENE I.

The play is enacted in a city in the Eastern part of the United States. The first four acts take place during a political campaign, and the fifth act some time later.

Aldrich's private office. A desk with telephone and some papers upon it, to the left. One door in the back and one on the right; also a window on the right, at the left of the door. Some chairs are placed near the desk.

John Aldrich, a corpulent man passed his fifties, and Prince of Edom, who is disguised as an army officer, enter.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Gesticulating as they enter.) Preparedness! Preparedness! I stand for an ever increasing armament! I am proud to say I have gained the confidence of the president. Moreover, I have seen two ex-presidents and some patriotic senators and congressmen, and they all accept my view that the safety of the nation can be guaranteed only by a great army and a mighty navy.

ALDRICH.

That's what I have maintained myself. We agree perfectly.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

I suggested to the president and the house committee on naval and military affairs that fifty battleships be built, and that a standing army of two million strong be created at once.

ALDRICH.

(*Clasps his hand.*) I certainly appreciate to know that this preparedness movement is a product of your brain, general!

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Well, as I stated when I made your acquaintance, I am much interested in American affairs, otherwise you would have reason to wonder why I, an European army officer, should recommend and even plan preparedness for war in this country.

ALDRICH.

I think I see your point. In other words, you mean to say that you keep on the business side of the fence, like myself—

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bowing.*) Very well that you realize my

motive, although my business may be a secret to you.

ALDRICH.

Business is business all the same, and I highly appreciate a business talent. Be seated, General. (*They both sit down.*)

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Although I am proud to say that the gentlemen in charge of the affairs of State have unhesitatingly accepted my views, and incorporated my ideas into their public speeches, it worries me to see that I have a mighty opponent fast rising into prominence. I make reference to this candidate for Congress, Melton. He is bent on putting an end to all the armament of all the world. (*Clinches his fist.*) That man has stirred me to anger!

ALDRICH.

(*With emphasis.*) As I have said, Melton is a revolutionist and the most dangerous man to the business interest of the country that could ever enter Congress.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

He is a specialist in concentrating his power in words of telling effect. Thus I heard him say, with the emphasis of a statesman, in a public

speech recently: (*rises*) "Suppose we could make guns powerful enough to shoot across the Atlantic, and explosives powerful enough to make tidal waves and cataclysms, why could not a supposed enemy do the same thing? Where would be your safety under this most formidable preparedness? (*He looks inquiringly at Aldrich.*)

ALDRICH.

He is always poking at something, and always trying to hurt big business.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

But he should not be tolerated. I heard him say, on the same occasion, that if each great nation had expended, only during a few decades, the cost of one modern battleship in an effort to unite all nations into a United States of the world, which he said some day would become an accomplished fact, there would now have been no need of armies or navies.

I was exceedingly surprised. Over in my countries a man would have been imprisoned for pointing out the fallacy of the government.

ALDRICH.

I have heard you are much ahead of us in discipline over there, (*with a gesture and emphasis*) but I hope we shall make some improvement in that respect ourselves, before long.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

To ridicule the wisdom of the government couldn't be too promptly punished. Look out, Mr. Aldrich! Melton will be a great power in politics, and I see in him much danger to our common interests.

ALDRICH.

(*Rises excited.*) Well, we are pushing the campaign with great energy, and I hope Mr. Franklin, my noted attorney, who is running against him, will win out.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Yes, but to hope isn't enough. Hope in a political campaign amounts to as much as a prayer in war. (*With emphasis.*) We must make sure!

ALDRICH.

(*Strikes the desk with his fist.*) That's just it, General!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

One of the most dangerous features about Melton, you will have to overcome in this campaign, is the people's confidence in him.

ALDRICH.

I know it, General, I know it. (*Gesticulates.*) That he has gained such a hold on the people is

deplorable, to say the least, but I shall fix Melton in one way or another, don't you forget it.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Draws his sword and swings it.*) I wish I had him on a battlefield.—(*Strikes the desk with his sword.*) But, listen—

ALDRICH.

Very well, General.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Shut down your factories and mills and even mines until after the election. Thousands of working men who now favor Melton would then soon begin to realize that their welfare rests with you and with the success of your candidates for public offices.

ALDRICH.

(*Snaps his finger.*) By George! That's a bright idea! Maybe I better turn those calamity howlers out on their own resources, and perhaps they will discover they have at least had a good thing.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Go ahead! Let it be a warning to the workers that under the uncertainty as to the result of the election and the future stability of business condi-

tions, you are forced to suspend operation in order to protect yourself against threatening financial loss. (*Laughs.*)

ALDRICH.

(*With glee.*) Yes, I shall sound a warning that shall not easily be forgotten. And when the election day comes, the people will know what to do for their own good.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Well, I am on a flying visit and must be going; but to aid matters I will go and see Mrs. Melton and put her wise to the danger of her husband. (*He grins.*)

ALDRICH.

(*Smiling.*) I wish you would, General.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

I also intend to see pastor Stevenson and the editors in town. I am having a hand in this game myself.

ALDRICH.

(*Pleased.*) Well, well; I certainly appreciate your good will, General.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

I have too great investments in ammunition—

manufacturing and navy yards to stand inactive while enemies try to destroy my business.

ALDRICH.

There you spoke a wise word, General! I have similar investments myself, and am on the defensive for the same interests.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Rests his sword on Aldrich's shoulder.*) It is well, my mighty financier, that we can thus work together. (*Grins.*) I have whispered a suggestion into the ear of Mr. Franklin as to how you may attack Melton's character and blast people's confidence in him.

ALDRICH.

(*Delighted.*) If you have a practical scheme we can work successfully to that end, I shall be glad to do you some valuable service in return.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Puts the sword into the scabbard.*) That pleases me much. See Mr. Franklin on the matter at once, and act without delay. (*He goes toward the door, to the right.*)

ALDRICH.

(*Steps forth.*) Yes, yes, but don't be in such a hurry—

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Approaches Aldrich a few steps.*) I suppose you will go to the church next Sunday, as usual?

ALDRICH.

(*With an interrogating look.*) I think so.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Then I may come and sit in your pew.

ALDRICH.

Indeed, indeed. I would esteem it a great honor.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

And I shall regard it a pleasure—(*Bows.*) Au revoir. (*He goes out to the right.*)

ALDRICH.

(*To himself.*) That was a peculiar geyser—and he cut his sword into my desk, too. (*Scrutinizes the desk and draws his fingers along the edge.*) That was strange. Not a mark—

FRANKLIN.

(*Enters from the right.*) Well, Mr. Aldrich, have you heard the latest news?

ALDRICH.

(*Interested.*) What news?

FRANKLIN.

That a European army officer has suddenly popped up in the city and throws no shadow.

ALDRICH.

(Surprised.) What? That general? I sized him up to be very natural, and a man of business sagacity at that.

FRANKLIN.

(Also surprised.) You did? When did you see him?

ALDRICH.

Why, didn't you meet him? He went out through that door this very minute.

(Franklin and Aldrich look astonished at each other and sit down.)

FRANKLIN.

(After a brief silence.) I am not superstitious, and no one ever took me for a fool, but I will be hanged if anybody has gone through that door for the last ten minutes, as I stood right out there, on the street, for some time, talking with a man.

ALDRICH.

(Raises his fist and laughs.) Now I see through it. You are trying to play a joke on me. But neither am I superstitious, and neither have I

ever passed for a fool. No, no, Mr. Franklin, your scheme will not work!

FRANKLIN.

I am in earnest, and I was just told that some newspaper men tried to snap the officer on the street, but that the camera failed to take his picture.

ALDRICH.

(*Turns to the telephone.*) What in thunder—Main 345, please—Hello! This is John Aldrich talking. Let me speak to Editor Inglehart, please—Say: what do you know about this European army officer who has just come to town?— — — — Is that true? The camera wouldn't take his picture—eh? (*Hangs up the receiver.*) What devil's yarn is this anyhow?

FRANKLIN.

Well, didn't I tell you the truth?

ALDRICH.

I will be damned if you aren't both trying to fool me! However, the general was here and was much interested in our campaign. He talked and acted as if he were an old acquaintance of mine, and I simply did the same to him in return. In fact, he was well informed and gave me some val-

uable hints. (*Passes cigars.*) Have a smoke.
(*They both light a cigar.*)

FRANKLIN.

Well, coming down to business, you are aware that this clever and remarkable woman, Zoharita, who recently came to the city, is Melton's inspiring power, or at least appears to be.

ALDRICH.

Yes—

FRANKLIN.

The very fact that Melton appears to be in league with this woman, who is looked upon as a revolutionist, can well be used as a danger-sign on his politics.

ALDRICH.

(*Rises with glee.*) Of course! We shall trap him! We shall crush him! He may fool the people on philosophical and religious questions, but they will not stand for any revolutionary politics.

FRANKLIN.

Not at all. But he diverts their attention from the real issue. Being that we stand for a great army and navy as the only means of national defense, he has brought up the question of international peace and disarmament as a side issue in this

campaign, and fired the people to enthusiasm with his scheme of a Federation of the World.

ALDRICH.

(*Gesticulates.*) He is playing a devilish trick on us, but we must counteract his effort at any cost.

FRANKLIN.

I have it all figured out.

ALDRICH.

(*Delighted.*) Have you—

FRANKLIN.

We are compelled to attack Melton's character. But of course, inasmuch as he is a member of our church and has formerly been a friend of us both, I have hesitated in attacking him on moral grounds.

ALDRICH.

To hell with the friendship!

FRANKLIN.

I have thought matters over like this: Having the press in your grip, you may suggest the proposition to the proper man and hint, that Melton's character is questionable. You may put it this way, that there is reason to mistrust a man who sets out as a reformer and a preacher of morals and, although having wife and family, keeps fre-

quent company with another woman, whose ideas he has made his gospel.

ALDRICH.

(*Snaps his fingers.*) There you struck it, by Jupiter! The general told me he had whispered a suggestion into your ear as how to attack Melton's character.

FRANKLIN.

That confounded liar! I never saw the man.

ALDRICH.

(*Laughing.*) No, of course not.

FRANKLIN.

Let me state further, that it would be of great advantage to us to get Mrs. Melton jealous of this woman, Zoharita, in order that she may begin to complain of her to her bosom friends. This would give our proposed publication on the subject a true light, and the publication would in turn fan her jealousy. The sensation would be tremendous, and Melton and this woman would soon be subject to public resentment. There can be no doubt but this would greatly affect the issue and spell defeat for Melton.

ALDRICH.

Certainly! I am going to take the case in my own hands and see to it that it is done according to

your suggestion. The first move is to get something published. Let us proceed to see Editor Inglehart and have him set the wheels moving.

FRANKLIN.

As you say.

ALDRICH.

(Puts some cigars into his pocket.) That damned general was no fool. *(They both go out to the right, with Franklin leading, while Aldrich continues.)* I think we have solved the problem, by Jove! —

ACT I.

SCENE II.

The next day. A room in Earl Melton's house. One door to adjoining rooms, on the right, and one door on the left. The main entrance is in the back, to the left. To the right of the entrance is a large window with view of high ground with trees, rising in the background. The room is richly furnished.

(Mrs. Melton sits looking at some photographs. Grace enters with a vase of flowers which she places on a table.)

GRACE.

What pictures are those?

MRS. MELTON.

I am looking for the picture of Baron Huntington.

GRACE.

Oh, to be a Baroness would be great though. I wish I had luck like that.

MRS. MELTON.

My dear Grace, I have been thinking the same, and that's why I am looking for the picture of Baron Huntington.

GRACE.

Ha-ha-ha, you do not mean that I should become the wife of that old Englishman, I hope?

MRS. MELTON.

Don't mind the age. He is a wealthy Baron and is moving in royal circles. Think of that.

GRACE.

Oh, mother, how absurd even to think that a young girl would marry an old thing like that.

MRS. MELTON.

But, suppose you could become a baroness, with a castle and royal honors, even if it were as

the wife of Baron Huntington. Wouldn't that be great?

GRACE.

(*Dancing.*) Air-castle, air-castle, air-castle, air-castle.

(*As Grace dances Melton enters.*)

MELTON.

What are you doing, you two. Building air-castles, what?

GRACE.

Just think, mother wants me to marry an old skinny baron and a castle. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. MELTON.

Grace, what an awful expression you use.

MELTON.

(*Laughing.*) There isn't an old man of any title who can get my little girl. (*Folds her in his arms.*) No, no, my little girl is not for sale. Neither does Mother mean that. (*To Mrs. Melton.*) Do you, dear?

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, you know I wish to make Grace happy.

GRACE.

Yes, think of it. I be happy with an old baron. (*They all laugh, and Grace departs.*)

MELTON.

Well, Lillith, the campaign is growing hotter every day.

MRS. MELTON.

Please, don't press your reform ideas too strongly on the people. Your effort will be of no avail.

MELTON.

(*Seriously.*) The people suffer under their burden, and it is part of my work to show them how relief may be gained.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Anxiously.*) But Earl, you worry me! Being a candidate for Congress, and right in the heat of the campaign, you must be careful.

MELTON.

(*Takes both her hands in his.*) My life work is to help the people to a higher understanding and a better life for soul and body. To do the right thing and the most needed thing is my politics and my duty.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Withdraws her hands.*) You are off entirely. Whether it be good or bad, this is out of place just now. Postpone it until a future date. Your

enemies will take note of whatever you say or do, and make use of all utterances, which may be misconstrued. Think of the election!

MELTON.

I think of all that is involved in my struggle, and I wish you would sacrifice, if need be, some cherished dream in order to make life worth living for others.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Emphatically.*) I will sacrifice no happiness; and I will not give up one single cherished dream for the sake of your fanatical reform-work.

MELTON.

Oh, Lillith, don't oppose me like this. I need your good will and your kindest thoughts. Be with me instead of against me, and you will be happy yourself by working for the good of others.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Indignant.*) I never mixed with the common people and I never will do it. Your reform work is becoming too offensive, and I hate it. Everything you declare to be false and crooked, and you criticise even our religion. You have changed so much of late that I fear something strange has possessed you.

MELTON.

So it has.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Frightened.*) Do you mean it?

MELTON.

I have changed gradually into another Earl than the one you have known. That is, I have been born anew.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Pacified.*) Oh, but that can't hurt anybody.

MELTON.

If I have become a reborn Christian, I am, as a politician, a reborn politician also. It is held that religion and politics are essentially two different things; but the fact has been overlooked that man has only one moral principle, and that politics as well as religion originate within man and must therefore be identical in spirit and principle. Thus, what I am as a politician, I am as a Christian. That's the law.

MRS. MELTON.

Well, then be a moderate Christian. A conservative one that can be a practical politician also. Whatever you do, don't be so extraordinarily good

that you endanger our honor and position in society.

MELTON.

What would you say if a messenger of God came and entrusted me with a mission essentially contrary to your wishes?

MRS. MELTON.

Don't ask me! I can't consider this question at all.

MELTON.

And yet I have responded to such a call.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Surprised.*) You worry me! Who has called you and changed you so completely?

MELTON.

None else but Zoharita, of whom you have read in the newspapers.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Staring at him for a brief moment as if stunned.*) Zoharita? For goodness sake! Have you responded to the call of that strange woman—
(*Sinks down into a chair weeping.*) I could understand that another woman had come between us. (*She bends forward sobbing.*)

MELTON.

(*Strokes her hair pacifyingly.*) Zoharita is not parting you and me in the way you seem to think. She came and called me from among the dead, and that's why I now must go to work as one of the living. (*With an inspired look.*) The world is new to me now, and I know the purpose of creation! The whole of life has become to me a revelation in which I can read wonders, unknown and unknowable to the dead!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Rises, wiping her face.*) You are misled, Earl! She must have thrown over you a magic spell that has reversed everything before your senses.

MELTON.

Not quite so, Lillith. Zoharita is a holy being and possésses the same magic power as did the ancient prophets. Her whole ambition is to enlighten people spiritually and to improve social conditions.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Angrily.*) I don't care! I denounce her! There shall be no peace for her between you and me.

MELTON.

Zoharita has not come to harm you, but to bless you. And no one can come between you and me if you only will accept the spirit of regeneration and work with me for the uplift of the world.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Bitterly.*) As I have said, I hate all this! What have we to do with other people's worry? What have we to do with the social conditions of the future? You look out for our interests, and let others take care of themselves.

MELTON.

(*With emphasis.*) Oh, wake up, Lillith! A man's duty and responsibility are proportional to his ability and understanding. Therefore, the claim against me would rise mountain high if I resisted my calling.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With changed attitude, pleading.*) No, no, no! Throw off this spell of strange ideas. It would be unbearable for me if our friends should begin to sneer at you and the newspapers to ridicule you. Oh, try do be your former self again!

MELTON.

My old self? Never again!

MRS. MELTON.

(With outstretched arms.) You must! I can't bear to listen to all this. Think of our own welfare and forget Zoharita.

MELTON.

She is a goddess incarnated in flesh. This you can't understand as yet, but it will all become plain to you some day.

MRS. MELTON.

I don't care what she is or who she is. *(Stamps her foot.)* Away with her!

MELTON.

Zoharita is the new light of our land. It is she who gave me the message from God to call upon all mankind to unite into a federation for everlasting peace. She speaks about a united world and an international government for all nations. *(He is going out to the left.)*

MRS. MELTON.

(Following.) You are entirely bewitched.

(After a brief moment Pastor Stevenson and Grace Melton enter through the main entrance.)

GRACE.

Please be seated, Pastor Stevenson, and I will look for Father. *(She goes out to the left.)*

STEVENSON.

(*By himself, looking around.*) What a strange thing after all that great men become infidels—

MELTON.

(*Enter from the left.*) How do you do, Pastor Stevenson?

STEVENSON.

(*Shaking hands with Melton.*) How do you do, Mr. Melton. I was fortunate in finding you at home.

MELTON.

Well, what can I do for you?

STEVENSON.

By the way, you will recall I approached you a month ago for some aid for our new Church. That is, in the form of a voluntary donation. We need in all about a hundred thousand dollars, besides what we expect to get for the old one. The wealthiest members have already, with a few exceptions, given their share. Mr. Aldrich, the financial head of the Church, has given a beautiful lot, valued at twenty thousand dollars. Mrs. Lenox has given five thousand. Others have pledged themselves for sums of fifty to a thousand dollars each, and the fund is growing rapidly. Soon we shall begin

to lay the foundation, and before long the new church will be in the course of construction. That is, if we are able to raise enough money. If you too, would now help the grand work along with a few thousand dollars, you would stand high in the sight of the Lord.

MELTON.

And you will recall likewise that I asked you to start a crusade against the hypocrites of the church. What about that?

STEVENSON.

(Patting him on the shoulder.) Dear brother Melton, let us not discuss that matter at this time.

MELTON.

We may agree to that, Pastor Stevenson, and as you well know I am much interested in honest religion and in the spiritual as well as the physical welfare of the people.

STEVENSON.

I know it. Long have I admired your lucid mind and noble character; and I am happy that you are a member of my church.

MELTON.

Oh, leave that out. But let me say with respect to the doctrine of the Church that there are

things I would like to have some light upon, especially if you expect me to contribute thousands of dollars to its support.

STEVENSON.

Very well, Mr. Melton. Ask questions. I shall only be too glad to try to make matters clear to you.

MELTON.

That will please me very much. According to the doctrine of the Church, Jesus had to be killed in order to save mankind. Is that it?

STEVENSON.

(*Astonished.*) Killed! Had to be killed?

MELTON.

Yes, in plain words. Or wasn't he to die to save mankind?

STEVENSON.

That's one of the fundamental facts of the church, Mr. Melton.

MELTON.

And this was part of the plan of God, of course? (*Points to a chair.*) Take a seat.

STEVENSON.

It couldn't be otherwise. (*They both sit down.*)

MELTON.

According to this, the Jews would have upset and defeated the plan of the Almighty God by accepting the teachings of Jesus, as they then would not have killed him. This being the case, why did Jesus preach love and justice and thus oppose God's purpose respecting salvation of the human race?

STEVENSON.

(*As if stunned.*) Well—

MELTON.

Well, what about it?

STEVENSON.

(*Glancing away.*) Your question is interesting, although it has much in common with similar questions by men who have not studied the scriptures. But as long as many others might like to have light upon this matter, I shall reserve my answer, at this time, and give it in my sermon next Sunday, if that is satisfactory.

MELTON.

That will do, if you so wish.

STEVENSON.

(*Straightens himself.*) But let me ask you something. As you know, the large cities are so

infested with vice and criminals that the police and the bulwark of the law are unable to check the tide of evil. The churches do their utmost, and so do the Salvation Army and the City Mission, in order to make the word of God heard and obeyed, but the evil is worse than ever. I wish to know, therefore, if you have any remedy to propose against this flood of sin, that feeds on the very marrow of the nation.

MELTON.

Yes, I may have some serviceable suggestions to offer in this matter.

STEVENSON.

(Smiling.) I am glad to hear it.

MELTON.

Well, but I am surprised at you, Pastor Stevenson.

STEVENSON.

(Surprised.) Why so, my friend?

MELTON.

Because you are blind to facts.

STEVENSON.

Why, you must be joking.

MELTON.

Not at all.

STEVENSON.

But, Mr. Melton, you surprise me.

MELTON.

I fear there are more surprises in store for you.

STEVENSON.

(Rises hastily.) What are you aiming at?

MELTON.

(Rises and speaks with increasing force.) I am astonished at your failure to realize, that your assurance to criminals, as well as to people in general, that some one has paid for their sin, is an assurance in like manner to all who contemplate evil deeds, that no sin can hinder them from spiritual happiness. In that way, and through such teaching, you encourage falsehood and hypocrisy, and promote crime and vice.

STEVENSON.

(Overcome.) Do you really mean all this?

MELTON.

Every word of it! When a man loses sight of spiritual responsibility and the value of virtue, he becomes subject to the forces of darkness both

from within and from without. The chief cause of the "flood of sin" you complain of, Pastor Stevenson, is this, that the church has done away with spiritual responsibility and thereby nullified all moral teachings.

STEVENSON.

(*Wiping his brow.*) God help us.

MELTON.

It is expedient for the sake of the public good that you be told the truth plainly. Yet, I don't blame you alone. I censure all intelligent men of influence for being silent as to this systematical corruption of the people in the name of God and religion. What's the use of prattling about promoting knowledge as an uplifting power of the race as long as we maintain a misleading doctrine of ethics that counteracts and paralyzes reason?

STEVENSON.

But you are mistaken! I have always maintained that all men have to make account for their sins.

MELTON.

Account or no account, what's the difference as long as another is held for the debt? It is an easy matter to run up a big debt and to make account when some one else pays the bill. Therefore, shame

on you, Pastor Stevenson, who pretend to be so exceedingly reverent before God, but care little for the truth or falsity of what you preach in His Holy name! Shame on you and all who misguide people knowingly!

STEVENSON.

(*Excited.*) Least did I expect this of you. The denizens of the underworld don't believe in anything: and, as I said, the religious workers of all faiths alike are powerless among them.

MELTON.

(*Points his finger.*) And yet none of you ever went a step out of your way to correct those who are responsible for the underworld conditions of our cities. The successful crooks, who send scores of victims to the underworld, and build fortunes on their ruins, you praise as fortunate in the grace of God, while they, in return for praise, give alms to the poor. If you want to save men, Pastor Stevenson, try to remove the danger to men.

STEVENSON.

(*After a brief silence, facing Melton.*) I am sorry, very sorry—

MELTON.

For me, of course.

STEVENSON.

(*Bowing and goes.*) Yes, for you.

MELTON.

(*By himself.*) It is a great, great pity—
(*Mrs. Melton and Grace enter from the left.*)

GRACE.

(*As they enter.*) Has Pastor Stevenson already gone?

MELTON.

Yes, he is busy raising money for the new church.

MRS. MELTON.

I hope you didn't say anything that might be embarrassing to us.

MELTON.

No, not a word. (*He goes out to the left.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*As he goes.*) Oh, that's good.

GRACE.

(*Looking into a mirror.*) My complexion is very good, don't you think so, mother?

MRS. MELTON.

You are the most beautiful girl in the city.

GRACE.

Thanks to my destiny!

MRS. MELTON.

And then, all the praise the newspapers give you.

GRACE.

It is fortunate for me that I have followed strictly the instructions of the beauty lecturer. Just think of all the water I have drunk. A gallon a day, and at times even more. And then all the exercise I take. One has to become beautiful by living so scientifically.

MRS. MELTON.

Yet it may not be well to drink that much water continually, as it may tend to make you fleshy.

GRACE.

(With a worried look.) Mercy! Do you think so? Why have you not suggested that before? *(Petulantly.)* Why have you been so neglectful as not to warn me before?

MRS. MELTON.

(Consolingly.) You are all right, my darling. By the way, I have just read in the *Modiste* today that tango trousers and hoop skirts will be in style this coming season.

GRACE.

(*Laughing.*) Oh, ye gods! If I should meet you on the street in such a ludicrous costume, I would laugh myself sick. (*The door bell rings, and Grace goes out to the left. The maid announces John Aldrich.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*Surprised.*) Aldrich here?

THE MAID.

Yes, Ma'am.

MRS. MELTON.

Show him in. (*The maid goes out, and Aldrich enters.*)

ALDRICH.

How do you do, Mrs. Melton.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Smiling.*) How do you do, Mr. Aldrich. I haven't seen you for ever so long. I suppose you are busy with politics nowadays, like many others.

ALDRICH.

I am always busy, but not in politics; for as you know, I am not a politician. I leave that to the proper men. (*Looks around.*) Is Mr. Melton at home?

MRS. MELTON.

Not just at present. Take a seat.
(*They both sit down.*)

ALDRICH.

(*Leans back in the chair and crosses his legs. He speaks cautiously and now and then with a twinkle in his eye.*) As you know, Mrs. Melton, politicians are all reformers, or think they are, and thus you see I have ample reason to keep off the grass.

MRS. MELTON.

Yet I shouldn't think you would be disinterested any more now than in former days —

ALDRICH.

(*Reverses the crossing of his legs.*) Well, not exactly disinterested either. I am a strong patriot and don't like to see things go down hill politically. Still, I take no active part in politics in the way of opposing or supporting certain candidates. My politics consists merely in giving suggestions, when I see an opportunity to benefit the people as a whole.

MRS. MELTON.

That's ideal politics, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

That's what I think, Mrs. Melton, not only in a strenuous campaign like this, but always. The welfare of the people, at all times, rests with a few powerful men, and, consequently, we have a fight on hand always. Power rules, you know. The great men who always are themselves the supreme law of the land, take the initiative and go according to their own mind. As you see, we are to the people, what parents are to their children.

MRS. MELTON.

You remind me of some of Mr. Melton's sayings. He, too, talks about taking the initiative. The people will follow him, he says. He is taken up with so many new ideas.

ALDRICH.

I know it. Mr. Melton, although a great man, has become much unlike himself lately.

MRS. MELTON.

That's true. (*She rises.*)

ALDRICH.

(*Rises.*) Although public opinion isn't of much account, we have to figure on it during political campaigns. But, Mr. Melton has turned his back upon the practical side of life. To tell the truth;

I never heard of a political candidate setting forth ideas revolutionary to all order of things, as he does.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Sighing.*) That's what I tell him every day.

ALDRICH.

I don't wish him defeated or anything of that sort; but we don't need any new religion or any new politics just now, as we are well supplied with stuff of that kind. You pardon my views, I hope.

MRS. MELTON.

Certainly. I wish you would speak to him with regard to these matters, for he will not listen to me any more.

ALDRICH.

I understand the situation fully, and for that reason I have come to see you about something special.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Interested.*) Something special—What can it be?

ALDRICH.

(*Looks about.*) It is a delicate matter, and I wish you would promise not to tell that I have called your attention to it.

MRS. MELTON.

I promise.

ALDRICH.

There is a mysterious woman in the city, known by the name of Zoharita, and it is generally known that she has been seeking Mr. Melton's company for some time, ostensibly for political purposes, but for the very reason that Melton seems to be taken with her. They are frequently seen together. They visit the poor quarters together, inspect mills and factories—defying public opinion. It is said that Melton worships the very ground this woman walks on. All this is very bad, indeed, and I am sorry for your sake.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With emotion.*) Oh, can this be true? Can it be possible—

ALDRICH.

It is only too true. People know it all over the city and express sympathy for you, Mrs. Melton.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Walks about and wrings her hands.*) Oh God!

ALDRICH.

(*Takes a newspaper out of his pocket.*) There

is quite a piece about the scandal in the Press today. (*Hands her the paper.*) You may read it yourself and be convinced.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Grasps wildly for the paper and throws it on the floor.*) Published in the paper too? Yes, yes; I know, I feel, I understand. I have known it and felt it and understood it of late! Oh, God, that it should come to this, that I should live to be informed of Melton's unfaithfulness to me, his wife! (*She throws herself into a chair and weeps bitterly.*)

ALDRICH.

(*Glances around, listening, and touches her carefully.*) Don't feel so badly, Mrs. Melton. I am in hearty sympathy with you; and I am at your service at any time you feel like calling on me.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Between sobs.*) Oh, that Earl could so forget himself! And Grace, and me— He has ruined our prospects, our home and our happiness.

ALDRICH.

Be strong, and face the music! I will help you!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Wiping her face and springs up, clenching her*

hands.) Oh, I hate her! I hate them both! And to think that the newspapers have gotten hold of it——.

ALDRICH.

Yes, that's the worst of it, and my sympathy for you actuated me in coming to see you in spite of seeming impropriety; for it is awfully disgusting that Mr. Melton has turned against even his own wife. To speak the truth, I think it isn't more than right that he should be publicly denounced.

MRS. MELTON.

(In grief.) Yes, but think of his campaign!

ALDRICH.

He has ruined his own cause. It is absolutely out of the question for him to be elected in the face of this revelation.

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, don't say that. He musn't be defeated.

ALDRICH.

Well, but it is safe to say that he will have to make a wonderful change for the better if he expects to regain the people's confidence, before the election. Then, again, it depends upon that crafty woman with whom he is keeping company. *(With a disdainful grin.)* Think of that woman,

Mrs. Melton! Think of that woman who has the heart to put herself between wife and husband.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Vehemently.*) I shall assail that woman and drive her out of the city. I hate her so that I could burn her alive!

ALDRICH.

You are right, Mrs. Melton, and I admire your attitude and feeling. (*Looks at his watch.*) But I must be going. Give no explanation. That paper speaks for itself.

MRS. MELTON.

Be sure of that, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

Then remember to call on me should you need my help in your private trouble.

MRS. MELTON.

Thanks, many thanks. (*Aldrich bows and departs.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*Looks about reflectingly, and after a brief moment she talks passionately.*) This is the limit! This is awful! To think that another woman should come between Earl and me! Heavens, how could

I have thought this in former days? (*She picks up the paper and reads.*)

GRACE.

(*Enters excited.*) Mother! Just think of it, Mrs. Lenox's dog party is called off! Her little terrier died yesterday.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Surprised and concealing her emotion.*) Oh, for heaven's sake!

GRACE.

Yes, and now it will be a fine dog funeral instead. Mrs. Lenox told me that Mrs. Aldrich and the bankers' wives were all to be invited. And, of course, you and I were to be there, she said.

MRS. MELTON.

Of course.

GRACE.

The funeral is to cost thousands of dollars, and a minister is going to give a funeral oration.

MRS. MELTON.

Poor Mrs. Lenox! How badly she must feel. I ought to go and see her at once.

GRACE.

Yes, you ought to, mother, I think. (*Looks*

curiously at her mother.) What's the matter? Is anything wrong?

MRS. MELTON.

No, certainly not. I am just feeling badly for Mrs. Lenox that she lost her dog. It is simply wonderful how a dog gets around one's heart, and I can so easily sympathize with her.

(The door in the back opens slowly and Zoharita enters in a long dark cloak with a hood over her head. She walks up to Mrs. Melton and Grace, who both look at her with surprise.)

ZOHARITA.

Peace be with you.

MRS. MELTON.

Who are you?

ZOHARITA.

An echo from the past.

MRS. MELTON.

From the past?

ZOHARITA.

Ay, from the past, entering into the present, pointing into the future.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Mystified.*) Pointing into the future? What is your name, stranger?

ZOHARITA.

You may call me Zoharita.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Surprised.*) For heaven's sake! (*Looks her up and down.*) So you are the one—

GRACE.

Mother, what's the matter?

ZOHARITA.

(*To Mrs. Melton.*) Fear me not. I love you and wish to help you.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With dignity.*) Your so-called love and help are uncalled for here!

GRACE.

(*Rebukingly.*) Mother, please, how can you talk like that to one with such a face and such a sweet voice. (*To Zoharita.*) I know that you must be good. Didn't you just say that you could look into the future?

MRS. MELTON.

(*Sternly.*) Grace—

ZOHARITA.

(*To Grace.*) Are you much interested in knowing about the future?

GRACE.

Of course I am. (*With a confident smile she reaches out her hand to Zoharita.*) Can you read my palm? Then here it is.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Haughtily.*) I wish you would desist from inquiring of her.

ZOHARITA.

(*With a kind smile to Mrs. Melton, while she takes the hand of Grace.*) It is not strange that she takes me for a fortune teller, as she has concluded from my remarks.

GRACE.

Yes, indeed, and we are all so anxious to know about the future.

ZOHARITA.

Your future life depends upon your past and present lives.

GRACE.

How can you talk about a plurality of lives for

one and the same person? I don't understand you—

ZOHARITA.

No, you don't understand me now, but the day is fast coming when you will both see and understand. As to the future, you are building it hour by hour.

GRACE.

(*Eagerly.*) Oh, I wish I could build a Baroness castle then. Oh, I wish, I wish—

ZOHARITA.

A beautiful spiritual home on a solid foundation. Dear child, you have tuned your soul to this world and remain unconscious of the real life. Your finer senses are yet slumbering in the depth of your being. They are powers which some day will open the windows of your soul. Then you will realize what it means to be in union with those who have attained spiritual illumination. Therefore, I beg of you to sink yourself into the shrine of your inner being, that you may rise above the ramble of the multitude, up to the height of immortality.

GRACE.

(*Awed.*) How strangely you talk. This is all new to me. Which are my slumbering powers?

MRS. MELTON.

(Who has moved restlessly about and looked from one thing to another.) Don't ask questions, Grace!

(Grace shakes her head impatiently to her mother.)

ZOHARITA.

(Turns to Mrs. Melton and throws off her cloak and hood and stands radiantly beautiful in a white garment, with a circlet of glittering jewels around her head, having a six-pointed star in the center.)

Also within your worldly make-up is hidden the jewel of immortality. It has been covered up by the dust of the world, but I will help you to uncover it and make it sparkle.

GRACE.

(Looking at Zoharita with awe.) Oh gracious!

MRS. MELTON.

(To Zoharita with a surprised look.) Angel or witch, I want you to leave me alone! You have made unhappiness enough for me already.

ZOHARITA.

Not so, dear soul, not so.

GRACE.

(*Excited.*) Mother! Please don't—(*Looking at Zoharita.*) She is as lovely as an angel.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With anger.*) Or a demon—

ZOHARITA.

(*Raising her hand.*) Hush, let not your tongue say what you will regret. I have come to make light in dark places and to bring happiness into your home.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Same attitude.*) There was no unhappiness in my home before you came to our city. You have robbed me of my husband's love and overpowered him with your witchery. (*Pointing at her, sneeringly.*) You come with light? Ah, and with happiness into my home? Yes, for whom?

ZOHARITA.

For you, dear soul. The time is near that you shall see light and know happiness.

MELTON.

(*Enters and observes happily the presence of Zoharita.*) Zoharita! (*Reaches her his hand.*) At last!

ZOHARITA.

Ay, at last.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Scornfully.*) Yes, think of it, she even has the audacity to come right into my home —

GRACE.

(*Who has been looking uneasily from one to another.*) Mother, what in the world is the matter?

MELTON.

I am ashamed of you, Lillith.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Retorting.*) And so am I of you.

ZOHARITA.

(*To Mrs. Melton.*) Dear sister, listen! Think not I have come to do you harm. Inasmuch as your husband is a true man and a politician who understands how to frame just laws, I have appealed to him in behalf of the misguided and overburdened people, that he shall be their spokesman and leader. To this he has consented, and the eyes of thousands will be looking to him with great hope. Multitudes shall gain freedom and become happy through his labor.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Scornfully.*) Well, well, just think of it! You, a woman from heathen Asia, come to advise us, enlightened people of the Western World, in politics. It is simply foolish of my husband to deign to listen to you.

GRACE.

Mother, you are rude.

ZOHARITA.

(*To Mrs. Melton.*) Be it the case that we Eastern people are so unworthy of your attention, I deplore it grievously. Yet, how comes it that you have received your spiritual light as well as the science of mathematics from "heathen Asia"? Or are your foremost scholars in error when declaring that even your fundamental law has come from that great land of the East?

GRACE.

(*To the mother.*) She knows more than you, Mother.

MRS. MELTON.

(*To Grace vehemently.*) Are you too bewitched?

GRACE.

(*Clinging to her mother.*) Mother dear, I didn't mean to hurt you, but you mistreat this lady.

MELTON.

Oh, dear Lillith, be kind and rational.

MRS. MELTON.

Only on this condition, that you sever your connection with that woman.

ZOHARITA.

(*Turning to Melton.*) Work then, for the coming of the kingdom of God to all men, and servants from above and from below shall gather around you in the ineffable name and circumvent the plans of your enemies and help you to reach the height where shines the Light.

MRS. MELTON.

(*In anxiety.*) No, no, Earl! God forbid! What do these veiled expressions mean? Talk plainly, don't work for any new and great reform during the campaign. So great a risk you can't afford.

MELTON.

I am out to risk and to battle for you and myself, and for all who are in need of help; and the greater the risk the greater the victory.

MRS. MELTON.

(*In despair.*) And the greater the risk the

greater the defeat! Oh, think of our home and honor!

ZOHARITA.

(*To Melton.*) Nothing of all that you risk for the holy cause shall you lose. Though receding for a time it must return eventually, in one form or another, singing to you the salutation of victory.

MRS. MELTON.

No, no; too great a risk!

ZOHARITA.

(*Bows and makes the sign of the cross.*) Have faith in me and in the one who sent me. (*She takes her cloak on her arm and goes, and Melton follows her.*)

MRS. MELTON.

Don't follow that woman, Earl! (*Hastens after them.*)

GRACE.

(*Rushing after.*) Mother—

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Aldrich's office. Aldrich sits at his desk. Great noise and clamoring of people outside. An office clerk comes rushing in.

THE CLERK.

A demonstration of working men! They seem to be desperate.

ALDRICH.

(*Harshly.*) Let them clamor! They are all paid off, and I owe them nothing.

(*The clamoring is growing more intense, and the name of John Aldrich is called.*)

THE CLERK.

They want to see you, sir.

ALDRICH.

Let them howl and yell! Ha-ha-ha! Let those cursed dogs howl and yell, I say! And I give them just as long as I please to stay, before I have the police force or a squad of gunmen on the scene.

(The name of Aldrich is again called from the outside, followed by another loud clamor.)

ALDRICH.

(Springs up, gesticulating with glee.) It does me good to hear those everlasting kickers come to time! This will fix them. Now they realize that John Aldrich is the man who has fed them and their families. Now their stomachs talk!

(A stone is thrown through the window, just passing Aldrich, with pieces of glass flying. Aldrich jumps to one side and the clerk is frightened. Jeering and yells outside.)

ALDRICH.

(To the clerk.) Call the police! Quick! *(The clerk rushes out the back door, and Aldrich opens the door to the right.)* What's the matter with you, men! Are you all turning crazy?

A VOICE.

(Outside.) We demand of you to open your shops and factories at once!

ALDRICH.

(Standing at the door with raised fist.) You demand me! You command me! Whose are the shops and the factories? And whose are the mills and mines?

A VOICE.

The people's.

ALDRICH.

If so, then go to the people with your demand!

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

You better look out, Aldrich! If you don't let us go back to work we will fix you.

ALDRICH.

You clear away from here at once, all of you, or I will fix you.

ANOTHER WOMAN'S VOICE.

Please, Aldrich, reopen the factories and put us back to work. For God's sake, don't be so cruel!

A MAN'S VOICE.

What does he care? We have worked and struggled till we are ready for the bone-yard and this is his thanks for our faithful service. But by God, Mr. Aldrich, your day will come! You may starve us, or you may turn on us your gun-men, but we will stand for no more Ludlow or Calumet massacres.

ALDRICH.

Shut up, you wind-mill! If some of your kind have been massacred, as you say, evidence shows

that there are plenty of you left, thank God; and even if fate should remove you all, I shall shed no tears!

THE SAME VOICE.

If you are determined, we are. And when a few million of us take up arms, if need be, we shall settle the dispute to suit ourselves.

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

All we ask is work and a living wage.

ALDRICH.

(*With raised fist.*) Go to the blazes for your living wage! You people were never satisfied and never will be, no matter how you are treated. Now take your medicine, you d——.

FRANKLIN.

(*Comes rushing in and takes hold of Aldrich and flings him around and away from the door.*) For God's sake, be careful, man! You must have lost your senses. You spoil it all!

ALDRICH.

(*Surprised, and his face livid with rage.*) Don't you interfere! I am the master here!

FRANKLIN.

(*Emphatically.*) Surely, but calm down! We must have their votes.

(Clamor and noise outside.)

VOICES.

There come the gun-men! There come the police!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Now to jail or be shot because we want our work back.

ALDRICH.

(In a changed attitude.) You talk to them then. I give you authority to say what you like.

FRANKLIN.

(Steps hastily to the door, with raised hand.) Attention! Police, please don't molest these people! They are all my friends and I intend to protect them.

(Aldrich laughs scornfully.)

A VOICE.

We were called here to disperse them or jail them.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Or shoot us.

A THIRD VOICE.

Or burn us.

(General clamor.)

ALDRICH.

Listen to those slaves—

FRANKLIN.

Attention, ladies and gentlemen! It must have been a false alarm, and I shall see to it that you will be given free speech and protection. Believe me, all of you, that I have always been proud of the toilers of my country. Only a few generations ago nothing but buffalos and redskins roamed over this great continent, where now stand proud and magnificent cities; where now stretch cultivated plains with happy homes of civilized men; where systems of railroads cross the country in all directions; where are built up the greatest commerce and the greatest industries under the heavens; where gold glitters and petroleum flows, and everything is plentiful. I marvel at it all! And when I ask myself who has brought all these things into existence, it appears as if every object becomes animated with life, and gives this singular answer: "The working people, the producers of all things."
(*Applause.*)

(*Aldrich, who follows the speech attentively, smiles, grins, or snaps his fingers, according to his liking of Franklin's expressions.*)

A LOUD VOICE.

(*Outside.*) Can't you men understand that he is gunning for votes?

ANOTHER VOICE.

Surely, he is a fox—

A THIRD VOICE.

Give him a chance to speak!

A FOURTH VOICE.

Yes, yes, fire off, Mr. Franklin!

FRANKLIN.

It is said that Moses did a great thing, and might well have been mistaken for an American, when he reached forth his hand toward the Red Sea and parted the waters, but lo, you have done greater things than Moses! (*Applause, and Aldrich laughs.*)

It is written that God promised to show mercy unto Sodom and Gommorah if there were ten righteous men therein. But if so, how much more mercy may He not be willing to show unto our land and our cities for your sake, who are more righteous than were the best men of Sodom, and numerous as the stars? I can face Heaven with cheerful face and with joy in my heart for your sake! And I offer my service in your interests

because of your just stand, and because of your honesty, your sincerity and your ability. (*Loud applause.*)

A VOICE.

(*Outside.*) You must have had a revelation—

FRANKLIN.

I am not a prophet that I am favored with revelations, but I know my people and have their welfare at heart. And when you vote for me on election day you shall make no mistake; for I intend to go to Congress as a spokesman for you and for all the workingmen and workingwomen.

A VOICE.

What about John Aldrich? Are you going to put in a word for him too?

FRANKLIN.

Certainly I will. Moreover, I will do so only because John Aldrich is your best friend, whether you believe it or not. And in order to put things right between you and him I regard it my painful duty to inform you of the sad fact, that he suffers from nervousness, brought about by hard work and business worry. He is now under the constant care of a specialist who has advised him to take a rest. I trust in your sympathy. (*Applause, yells and hooting, intermingled.*)

ALDRICH.

(*With a quick turn of his head toward Franklin.*) You confounded liar—

FRANKLIN.

(*To the crowd outside.*) I am authorized to assure you that the shops and factories will open with full force as soon as the election is over, permitting, in the meantime, oiling and painting and much needed repair.

I will not dictate to you how you shall vote. Still, having the burden of the working people on my mind, it is only natural that I hope you will support me with your votes. But I need not worry about the outcome of the election. Our great industries and all the wonders of human achievements, which adorn our land, and upon which you have left your finger marks, testify to the wisdom of your mind as much as to the strength of your arms, and show that you have always known how to vote in the past.

You always knew, in the past, how to insure firm business conditions and yourselves a job by sending men of business sagacity to our national congress as your representatives. What reason have I then to fear that you now will overlook this most potent element in our common welfare? You are the ones who will open the shops and

mills and factories by your own decision, or keep the industries closed down indefinitely. You are the people. You are the power behind all machinery. You are the masters of all situations.

(He bows and turns from the door amidst applause and yells.)

ALDRICH.

(Grasps Franklin's hand happily.) You can certainly jumble together a dish of stew in a hurry.

FRANKLIN.

(Takes him by the arm and leads him to the door.) Show yourself before the crowd and acknowledge my statements. Hurry! There must be thousands out there.

ALDRICH.

(Hesitating, but goes to the door.) Men and women: *(He pauses.)*

A VOICE.

(Outside.) You can see, he is all in.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Shut up!

ALDRICH.

Mr. Franklin has stated the truth. It is true, in the first place, that I need a rest because of my

health, but you need not let that worry you. It is true in the second place that you are the supreme power of the country. (*Applause.*) You will prove that on the election day. (*Applause.*) On the day following we will all go to work. (*Great applause, and Aldrich bows and turns from the door laughing.*)

FRANKLIN.

(*Shakes hands with Aldrich.*) You did splendidly, Mr. Aldrich! (*They sit down laughing.*)

ALDRICH.

You certainly mastered the situation. I was almost losing my head over those confounded doughnuts.

FRANKLIN.

(*Looks at his watch and rises.*) I have an appointment and must hasten.

ALDRICH.

We have some pressing matters to discuss, and I wish you would return at once.

FRANKLIN.

(*Going out to the right.*) Very well.
(*Editor Inglehart enters from the rear.*)

INGLEHART.

(*To Aldrich, as he enters, bowing and smiling.*)

I can assure you that our article about Melton and that woman has made a hit with the people.

ALDRICH.

(*Shakes hands with Inglehart.*) I told you so. You are the man who can do things on paper.

INGLEHART.

I am proud that you think so. In fact I believe that I can prove my ability.

ALDRICH.

And you may be sure I appreciate it most highly.

INGLEHART.

Thank you, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

And if I can do anything for you in return, just say so.

INGLEHART.

Yes indeed, Mr. Aldrich. A heavy payment is about due on my paper and I hope you will help me out in accordance with your former promise.

ALDRICH.

(*After some consideration.*) I suppose I better stand by you, if you stand by me.

INGLEHART.

(*Grasps Aldrich's hand.*) I am glad to hear that, Mr. Aldrich. You can always rely on me.

ALDRICH.

How is it, is your paper fully covered with insurance? Take a seat.

INGLEHART.

(*Hesitating, and with an inquiring look.*) Yes, rather too well. You will recall you have before warned me with respect to the insurance. (*Sits down.*)

ALDRICH.

I remember. It has been a matter of much concern to me that your paper may never be of influence and importance enough to pay for itself. Of course I hope for the best. (*He sits down.*)

INGLEHART.

By what reasoning have you come to this conclusion, so entirely contrary to your former way of thinking?

ALDRICH.

A business man's thoughts, Mr. Inglehart, are much like the wind; at times they change from day to day.

INGLEHART.

There is something in that, I suppose.

ALDRICH.

If it hadn't been my own building, I should advise you, confidently, to put fire to the whole damn thing. (*Lights a cigar.*)

INGLEHART.

What? I wouldn't dream of such a thing?

ALDRICH.

Oh, well, one dreams very unexpectedly at times. (*Carefully and with suppressed voice.*) By the way, when I think of it, the building is well insured, if anything should happen.

INGLEHART.

What do you mean?

ALDRICH.

(*Leans toward him.*) You have a large family, and it would be bad for you if the paper shouldn't pay—and should you like to make a drastic move, why, suit yourself. There is a world of material from which to build, and men enough to do the work. So, I can't see where the wrong would come in, as the purpose is to protect home and family.

INGLEHART.

(*Pondering.*) It is the motive that counts. That's true.

ALDRICH.

Most certainly; the highest law in the world is a man's duty to his family. But as I say, suit yourself.

INGLEHART.

You mean in setting fire to the Press Building?

ALDRICH.

(*Carefully, with a look around the room.*) That may be a fitting interpretation, if you so like.

INGLEHART.

But just think of it.

ALDRICH.

Let me give you a little talk on the matter, that you may be able to see things straight.

INGLEHART.

Yes, but remember I am a law-abiding citizen, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

Certainly you are, and that's why I have such confidence in you. Still, you might profit some by my experience.

INGLEHART.

Most assuredly, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

I have found the most practical way the most profitable in all matters. Of course, you will understand, we must always respect the law, but being an editor you know that the laws are getting so numerous nowadays, that we must stand bowing, like Frenchmen, all the time in order to pay homage to them all, without knowing what to think or what to do that is not a crime. It has become the policy of the legislators that every one of them shall now and then make or cause to be made a new law in order to be spoken well of, that they may have a chance of being re-elected. Well, it is all a matter of business. What I mean to emphasize is the principle and motive of things.

INGLEHART.

You are right, Mr. Aldrich. You are right.

ALDRICH.

Well, as you say, it is the motive that counts.

INGLEHART.

Exactly, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

And what don't we find in the medical profession. Those learned men know who is insane and who is not, and this too we find to be a matter of

business; for it so happens that a rich man never becomes insane unless he commits a crime.

INGLEHART.

(*Laughing.*) Yes, that is a strange phenomenon, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

Well, suppose you set fire to the Press Building and are caught at it. I can get all the scientific experts I desire to testify in court that you were insane. That is, if I pay the bill. We can't expect experts to render scientific opinions for a song.

INGLEHART.

No, of course not.

ALDRICH.

This is the point, Mr. Inglehart, that people, foremost in society, must train their conscience to be pliable and responsive to any need, whether it be in journalism, religion, politics, science or business. This is the only practical way in which one may command respect.

INGLEHART.

You ought to have been an editor, Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

Not necessarily. I have my mission in business.

It takes men with trained and practical consciences to stand as pillars of this great nation's welfare, which rests on able business men exclusively.

INGLEHART.

What about us editors? Haven't we also something to do with the nation's welfare?

ALDRICH.

Indeed you have, Mr. Inglehart. You are the salt of the earth. (*Pretends to be busy and looks at his watch.*) Well, my time is precious.

INGLEHART.

Then let us come to the point. (*Cautiously, looking around.*) I mean with regard to the fire—

ALDRICH.

(*Also cautiously.*) Let it go until after the election, or until that time. In the meantime we can talk the matter over. If the building is to be destroyed, we must make a good job of it; for I intend to put up a modern and a much larger building in place of it.

FRANKLIN.

(*Enters.*) How do you do, gentlemen! (*To Inglehart, who rises.*) Well, Mr. Inglehart, that piece you put up about Melton and Zoharita was

simply excellent, and it did splendid work. All are down on Melton and lavish sympathy on Mrs. Melton. The sensation spreads like a prairie fire.

INGLEHART.

I am delighted!

ALDRICH.

(*Laughing.*) I knew Mr. Inglehart was the man who best understood how to write that story.

(*Franklin and Inglehart both sit down.*)

FRANKLIN.

But I have a new idea which, by speedy execution might promote our cause very much.

ALDRICH.

(*Delighted.*) Good!

FRANKLIN.

Yes, we will make a move to have Melton expelled from the church. This sensation, already published, gives us ample reason to insist upon this for the sake of the good name of the church, as well as for our own prestige and honor.

ALDRICH.

(*Snaps his fingers.*) That idea is worth a treat, by George!

INGLEHART.

It will be a gold mine of newspaper material!

THE CLERK.

(*Enters.*) A lady asks to see Mr. Aldrich.

ALDRICH.

(*With a look at the others.*) Who in the devil—? (*To the clerk.*) Show her in!

(*The clerk goes, and Zoharita enters. The men appear surprised and look interrogatively at one another.*)

ZOHARITA.

May peace be with you.

ALDRICH.

(*Rises.*) How do you do, lady. (*Points to a chair.*) Please take a seat.

(*Zoharita bows, and both sit down.*)

ZOHARITA.

It is of the most urgent need, Mr. Aldrich, to put your laboring people back to work without delay, as they are in a very distressed condition.

ALDRICH.

(*Leaning back in the chair.*) I am sorry to disappoint you, lady, and you may save yourself the trouble of speaking about it, as my mind is decidedly settled regarding the matter.

ZOHARITA.

What about your duty to the people?

ALDRICH.

(*With a side glance at Franklin.*) My duty to the people? Well, in what respect do you find I am not doing my duty, lady?

ZOHARITA.

(*Rises.*) I just came from a trip through the factory district. I talked with hungry children and famished mothers and I visited the homes of many of them. Poor people! Oh, that man of God's creation can so crush his brother! Oh, that selfish greed can be so cruel!

ALDRICH.

(*Indignant.*) Pooh! We need no preaching here, lady. I have heard enough faultfinding in my days, and I venture to say that it has given less consolation and food for the poor than have my greed and cruelty. Furthermore, I am in position to say that these brainless lobsters, you are bewailing, are treated as well as they deserve.

ZOHARITA.

These brothers and sisters of ours are suffering want, Mr. Aldrich. Their credit is cut off and they have no food. For the sake of all that is good.

please put them back to work for a just wage, and remove the misery you have placed them in.

ALDRICH.

I? Have I placed the people in misery? Am I responsible for their situation?

ZOHARITA.

(Sternly, pointing at him.) Beware, Mr. Aldrich! You are your brother's keeper, and God holds you responsible.

ALDRICH.

(Rises angrily.) I resent all this! My brother's keeper? I—

ZOHARITA.

Responsibility goes with power. And for all those whom you sway with your power you are responsible before the great law which will call you to account.

ALDRICH.

(Points to the door.) That's enough! There is the door—

(Zoharita looks at him without moving.)

FRANKLIN.

(Rises and points to the door likewise.) You are requested to leave—

ZOHARITA.

Nay; it behooves you but ill to mistreat a woman. I shall leave your presence, but not at your command.

ALDRICH.

(*With rage.*) Go, I say!

ZOHARITA.

(*With a commanding look and emphasis, points her finger at Aldrich and as she continues speaking, Aldrich and Franklin show the influence of a compelling force, crouch and sink into their seats.*) Cain says he is not his brother's keeper, but the answer rolls back to him from the eternal heights: "Lo, I gave all my children the beautiful earth with its mountains, hills and valleys, with its green fields, its golden grain, its fruits, its beasts and treasures; but thou Cain hast robbed and maltreated my children and made them thy slaves, and thou actest as if thou wert my householder. Woe unto thee! The cries of my children have reached heaven, and I have decreed, that unless thou makest amends, thou shalt in turn suffer poverty in spirit, when thy present earth life is ended. Then shalt the cruelty thou hast practised upon my children be visited upon thee, and thou shalt cry in agony. Behold, my laws are just! "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," is no idle saying.

(She pauses, with her gaze fixed upon them.) Repent, ye servants of the Prince of Edom! *(She goes out to the right, while the men in astonishment follow her with their gaze.)*

ACT II.

SCENE II.

Melton's house; the same room as in the first act. Grace stands with hat on, ready for a trip out. She looks into a mirror. On the table is a pitcher of water and a glass. An automobile chauffeur is blowing a signal outside and thereupon a telephone rings in the adjoining room, to the left.

GRACE.

(To herself.) Nothing like water for the complexion. *(She fills the glass and drinks, and looks again into the mirror.)* Every drink has its effect.

MRS. MELTON.

(Enters from the left.) Mrs. Lenox is coming to the house. *(The chauffeur is blowing again.)* Your party is waiting for you. I think you better be going before Mrs. Lenox comes.

GRACE.

Yes, yes, just a minute. (*She is adjusting her hat.*)

(*Prince of Edom, elegantly attired, carrying a cane and wearing a silk hat, enters smiling and bowing.*)

GRACE.

(*Surprised.*) For goodness sake!

MRS. MELTON.

Who are you, who dare enter like this without ringing the door bell, I demand to know!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Excessive in gestures and politeness, smiling.*)
I beg your pardon, ladies. I know you both well, and you please me exceedingly. I am a friend of Baron Huntington and am myself a baron, yes, even more than a baron. It is below my dignity to rap or ring at people's doors. I am of royal blood, and I am the Prince of Edom.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Surprised and bowing.*) Pardon us, your Majesty. We were not aware of your Royal Highness.

GRACE.

(*Making obeisance.*) Pardon us, most noble Prince.

(The chauffeur blows for the third time.)

GRACE.

And I beg leave for a moment's absence, your Royal Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Certainly, most gracious maiden.

GRACE.

(Bowing as she goes.) Adieu, your Royal Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Farewell, thou American Beauty.

MRS. MELTON.

And you are a friend of Baron Huntington, your Royal Highness?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(Nodding his head.) And he is one of those Barons on whom is bestowed royal favor.

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, I rejoice to hear that, your Highness. You are an English prince, I suppose?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

I am not altogether English, Lady Melton. It may sound strange perhaps, but stating the truth,

I find it always difficult to make a true account of myself; for most all the now living royal families on earth are my relations.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Looks at him with awe.*) Well, I can imagine the relations of the royal families are quite complicated. To which royal family is your Highness most closely related, may I ask?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

There was a time, in the past, my relation-tie was strongest with the Royal House of Russia, and I have a palace at St. Petersburg. In later times, however, I have been more closely attached to the Imperial House of Berlin, and felt especially at home in Germany. Yet, without boasting of myself, or without speaking vaingloriously of my achievements, I am more practical than princes in general. Besides having much to say in the foremost royal houses of Europe, saying nothing about the smaller countries, in all of which I have my say on important questions, I have studied ministry, commerce, and magic, both red and black.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Amazed.*) Oh, your Highness, how wise and busy you must be!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I have mentioned but a trifle, Lady Melton. Besides watching and influencing the diplomacy of the world, and every move of the church, I attend also the great political and ecclesiastical conventions in all countries. Nor is that all. When bills of national importance are discussed in the parliaments of the world, then I am there to defend my interests. Still, never at any time, am I so busy as in the American political campaigns.

MRS. MELTON.

But, your Imperial Highness, how can you attend to it all?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I have many servants, Lady Melton, and they do my work faithfully.

MRS. MELTON.

I understand, I understand, your Highness. I suppose you tried your utmost to prevent this terrible war over in your countries.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

No, Lady Melton, I wanted the war; and there would have been no war had I not so decided.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Surprised.*) I am surprised, your Highness. War is terrible.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

War is a great sport for princes and gives impetus to business, Lady Melton.

MRS. MELTON.

Yes, but think of the horror of it.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Serious.*) Pardon me, Lady Melton, if I call your attention to a thing or two.

MRS. MELTON.

Most assuredly, your Royal Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

According to our religion, war must be a good thing. It is fitting that I should lay stress on our religion, for the officials of the church, over in my countries, have from time immemorial prayed, during hours of worship, that God shall strengthen and maintain the military forces on land and sea. This being so, what reason have Christian people for denouncing war? If the forces and implements of war are demanded by the church, and sanctioned and blessed by God, war itself must be a holy affair.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Wonderingly.*) Well, but great Prince of Edom—

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Serious, and with great emphasis.*) Or has it come to this that the church prays for damnation, or that God supports forces of destruction for unholy purposes? Or does man's wisdom amount to this, that he tears down with one hand what he builds up with the other, and prays God to bless his work? No, no, far be it from that, according to our books! And again, according to our religion, we princes and rulers and dictators of war fill our positions by the grace of God. Why then should we oppose war, or oppose anything fitting for a prince? Or has it come to this, that men dispute with God what is right or wrong in the world? Has it come to this, that men are turning heretics and reject God's supremacy through His own chosen agents in the affairs of church and state? Be it so, then welcome His vengeance; and may famines, epidemics and war re-establish due respect for God's authorities on earth!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Looking amazed.*) But, your Imperial Highness, this I simply can't understand at all.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Emphatically.*) Let us praise God through the exercise of those powers for which we have prayed and worked so faithfully under the guidance of His representatives! (*Waves his hand.*) Fire on, ye legions of my armies! I rejoice in war! Sally forth, ye missionaries of my faith, and tell the heathens of my God! To His glory I will place a gun on every mountain top and on every island of the sea, and all nations shall know that the Christian faith prevails, and that Prince of Edom rules the earth!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Looks astonished.*) But, your Royal Highness—

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Assuming a pleasant attitude, bows and smiles.*) I am only emphasizing my high regard for the Christian faith, Lady Melton.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Much relieved.*) Oh, I admire your Christian spirit, most gracious Prince. I am a true Christian myself.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*With a sweeping bow.*) I know it, I know it, most charming lady!

MRS. MELTON.

And what is your speciality in magic, may I ask?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

That's more than I can reveal. Still I can tell you this much, that I know how to fly through the air, and how to change color before people's eyes, and how to change form and even how to make myself invisible. Besides these things, I can use hypnotism freely and successfully.

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, but you are the greatest wonder I ever heard of. I wish your Royal Highness would kindly perform some magic feat, as I never saw anything of the kind.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

If you promise to be calm.

MRS. MELTON.

Would there be any danger?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

No.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Eagerly.*) Oh, then show me your art!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Swings his cane.*) Come forth, ye servants of

my court, and make this human woman aware of her company, that she may strive still more to become like one of you!

(A reddish light fills the room immediately, and some small, stooped, dwarf-like beings, in grey, enter the room from all sides, croaking and uttering peculiar sounds.)

MRS. MELTON.

(Appalled.) Oh, mercy! Who are all these?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(Laughs heartily.) They are some of my servants, Lady Melton. Wherever men come from in the world, they all become like these, in my service—

(Mrs. Melton, frightened, rushes to one door after the other, trying to get out, and the small beings bar her way.)

MRS. MELTON.

(Hastens to the left, trying to get out, and a being stops her at the door.) Let me out!

THE ONE AT THE DOOR.

(In a hoarse voice.) Stay back until you can call me by name. I am a doorkeeper in your house.

MRS. MELTON.

(Rushing for the door, in the back.) Away, I must out!

THE ONE AT THE DOOR.

Stay back until you know who I am.

MRS. MELTON.

(Hastens toward the door, on the right.) Give way! I must out!

THE ONE AT THE DOOR.

Not before you have power over me.

MRS. MELTON.

(In despair, wringing her hands, turns to Prince of Edom.) Oh, your Imperial Majesty, I have seen enough!

PRINCE OF EDM.

(Laughing.) Seen enough already? No, you have just begun to see. I will show you a thousand times more!

MRS. MELTON.

(Imploringly.) For mercy sake, no! I beg you to cease your magic performance!

(The beings gather around her croaking and whistling, while Prince of Edom makes gestures. Mrs. Melton raises her hands and cries.)

God help me! For Christ's sake, help me! (*As she prays, Prince of Edom grins and shrugs his shoulders.*)

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*In a hollow voice, swinging his cane.*) It is enough. Retreat!

(*The small beings disappear, and the red glare ceases.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*Looking at Prince of Edom with consternation.*) For heaven's sake, don't frighten the life out of me!

PRINCE OF EDOM.

My Dear Lady, you don't seem to think much of your royal company.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Gasping for breath.*) But, your Highness, it was dreadful!

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Oh, that was nothing compared to the creatures which are to be seen at royal festivals.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With her hand on her bosom.*) Do you exercise your art at royal festivals too?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Always, my dear lady, and we generally have a splendid time—(*He laughs.*)

MRS. MELTON.

Does Baron Huntington take part in royal festivals, I wonder?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

He is a favorite of mine, Lady Melton, and so are the barons in general, and they all think the world of me.

MRS. MELTON.

They know all about your wonderful greatness, I suppose?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

They don't know much about me. In fact, anyone who becomes a favorite of mine must be mistaken in all important undertakings, and his main work in life, that I may guide him—

MRS. MELTON.

Why, that's strange, your Royal Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Maybe so; but that's why it was necessary for me to study all things, even the ministry.

MRS. MELTON.

Where did you study the ministry, your Majesty?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I studied the ministry at various places along the coasts of the Mediterranean and finished at Rome, where I finally settled down and built myself a palace.

MRS. MELTON.

(With a distrustful look.) When?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

In the early centuries. It took me many hundred years to revise the writings of Paul alone.

MRS. MELTON.

(In painful fear.) You are but jesting, or you are more than a man.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Smiling and bowing.) Pardon me, Lady Melton, if I have told you too much. When a Prince enjoys the presence of a beautiful woman he becomes extravagant with words, for his heart is opened.

MRS. MELTON.

But I am afraid you don't tell the truth, Your Royal Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

You are not familiar with the ways of princes, Lady Melton. You must consider they have an extraordinary education and are experts in conversing with ladies.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Consoled.*) Well, I can understand that, and I beg your pardon, your Highness, for doubting you.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bows and acts with profound courtesy.*) And you will pardon me in turn for causing you uneasiness. Believe me, that I am delighted in being so fortunate as to have gained the confidence of such an exceedingly charming and superior woman.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Smiling.*) You are flattering me, your Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*With the hand on his heart.*) I never flatter, but speak from my heart. And believe me, Lady Melton, you are one of the foremost of the "Four Hundred," all of whom hold me in the highest esteem.

MRS. MELTON.

I am delighted to learn that you think so. But

what does your Royal Highness know about our "Four Hundred," anyway?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

They are just the company for princes, Lady Melton, and they all throw roses at me and bow before me.

MRS. MELTON.

You must indeed be a happy man, having so many admirers.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*In a sober voice.*) No, Lady Melton, I am not. Unfortunately for me, I am pestered by bad omens always, and it makes me restless and worried. In former times I had easy days and hardly knew what struggle was, but times have gradually changed disadvantageously to me; and according to the omens, I may have to suffer great reversals before long.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Sympathetically.*) I greatly sympathize with your Royal Highness. Do you know how to interpret omens, too?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

For a certainty, I do. When I observed, some time ago, that the walls of my palace at Rome were

cracking, I knew immediately what it meant to me, and it worried me exceedingly.

MRS. MELTON.

How deplorable, your Highness! Is your palace at Rome damaged beyond repair?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

My local workmen have long tried to repair it, and the foreman has reported, several times, the safety and imposing grandeur of the palace fully restored, but the restoration has been false. I found the workmen had filled the cracks with clay and painted over so as not to show, but the cracks were there, and new cracks are occasionally coming into view. The great trouble is, that the ground is sinking. It is a matter of time before the whole palace will be a total wreck.

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, how deplorable!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Yes, the loss will be appalling.

MRS. MELTON.

How about your palace at St. Petersburg?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Even that is showing signs of a sinking ground.

The porticos are already unsafe, and cracks can be seen in the walls on all sides.

MRS. MELTON.

You have had bad luck of late, your Royal Highness.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Was it not for my practicality and knowledge I would soon be bankrupt; however, I figure like this, that I shall make good in one undertaking what I have lost in another. In this respect I have been very successful. What I have lost on my palaces, I have more than made good in the liquor business, wars and such.

MRS. MELTON.

Are you in the liquor business too?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Yes, very extensively. Moreover, I deal in foodstuffs also. By special permission from the government I control the food prices throughout the land; and this has netted me great fortunes.

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, then you may well afford to lose a palace or two, if need be.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Well, notwithstanding threatening disasters, I

am quite prosperous as yet. I am now engaged both in steel manufacturing and mining, besides doing some oil business and making munitions of war. Heavenly favors are bestowed upon me, and in appreciation thereof, and because of my religious inclination, I am conducting a Bible class in New York.

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, I marvel at you! (*Steps back.*) Or are you but jesting?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I can swear to every word; and as to my business I can swear it is far more extensive still. To mention a thing or two, I have many shops and factories, especially here in the East, where I employ child labor freely. You need not marvel at this, most charming lady.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Amazed.*) But how in the world—

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I am always telling the truth, Lady Melton, and I hope you don't take me for an imposter, a polar discoverer or the like.

MRS. MELTON.

Wonderful Prince of Edom, you are marvel-

ous! It is strange, however, that I have never seen your name associated with any of the great business enterprises of the country.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(His voice is from now on growing more stern.)
One will have to study a business before he knows whether it is mine or not; for I do nothing in my own name. Whatever I do, I do it in the name of some other person. This has been my policy always, even from my earliest dealings with man; and I have profited by the experiences of ages.

MRS. MELTON.

(In great fear, rushes a few steps away from him.) Experiences of the ages—! Who are you? You can't deceive me on your age—

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Bowing.) You ladies always lay such stress upon a man's age. It makes one disgusted, especially if he is a prince.

MRS. MELTON.

(Hesitatingly.) But I doubt you now, if you insist on being as old as the ages and a survivor of the earliest man.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

We are all survivors from the past in more than

one sense. But believe me, I am the Prince of Edom, who as yet has suffered from no catastrophe and who is faithful to his duty in the world.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Trembling with fear.*) Your duty is what?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Grins.*) To curse all who contend with me and to confuse their work.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With a cry of fear.*) Oh, Lord!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Excitedly.*) Don't disgrace your royal company! I am here on a special errand for your sake, and it makes me shiver to think of it—

MRS. MELTON.

(*In painful suspense.*) What is your errand?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

You know best yourself how you are mistreated by your husband, who is an enemy of mine, and how he disregards your views and tastes in all things.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With a curious look.*) Yes—

PRINCE OF EDMON.

You know also that he has chosen another woman for his companion, who is an enemy of both of us.

MRS. MELTON.

You mean Zoharita?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Don't mention her name! She is the terror of my life and the destroyer of my peace. (*Talks fast and excitedly.*) She has a strange power which affects even me; and wherever she intends to appear I am bound to precede her to defend my interests. Yet the most deplorable phase of the case is the mistakes I am doomed to make in all these instances. It is for me to keep out of her way, that her eyes shall not look into mine! I have watched her from the time she descended on the earth in the likeness of a white flame of mystic light. It was a tempestuous night. I was awake and at work then as always, and I heard a song in the air, like unto a celestial host. I shivered to the marrow of my bones from fear; for it is written on the foundation of the world that Prince of Edom shall be slain by a flaming sword—(*He shivers and shakes*) I have hoped against the omens of my destiny, that I should be able to circumvent this last flame also, as I have done with so many others,

but as yet the omens speak against me. (*Grins and shakes his fists.*) Still I shall fight my case to the finish! And she who tries to overthrow everything I have done in the world, and who has robbed you of your husband's love, shall find she has a job on hand before she has dethroned me. (*He groans and looks about.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*Moves slowly and frightened a step or two nearer.*) Your Royal Highness—(*She pauses and gazes at him.*) Zoharita has done me unspeakable harm.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*More composed.*) You need my help, and I need your service. Believe me, I will help him who helps me.

MRS. MELTON.

(*With an inquiring look.*) Do you need my help?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

I am at issue with Earl Melton as well as with his accomplice. They have conspired against me, and I have just put my forces to work to discomfit them.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Shrinks back.*) Oh!—

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Your husband has pretended to love you, while he has in secret loved another woman. Stand up for your rights! Avenge! Avenge!

MRS. MELTON.

(In agony.) Oh, it is unbearable! I have no power over them!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

Accuse them publicly! Therein lies your power. *(Looks as if he sees somebody.)* Well, well, I see one of my people coming to the house. My time is up. Remember my advice. *(With a deep bow.)* Au revoir! *(He goes out the main door.)*

MRS. MELTON.

(By herself, sighing with relief.) What a strange man. *(She sits down in a chair as if exhausted.)*

(Mrs. Lenox comes rushing in frightened and excited.)

MRS. LENOX.

(As she enters.) Oh, Mrs. Melton, I am frightened to death! *(She seizes hold of a chair to lean on, and breathes heavily.)*

MRS. MELTON.

(*Rises startled.*) For heaven's sake—(*Staring at her.*) What's the matter?

MRS. LENOX.

(*Excited.*) I know all about your trouble and came to console you, and a big black bird, with fiery eyes, met me on the porch, glaring at me and said in plain English: "I make calls, as you ladies term it." Then with a whistling sound, he flew down in the direction of the church. (*With hand on her bosom.*) Oh, I am terrified!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Appalled.*) It was a man you saw!

MRS. LENOX.

(*Insistingly.*) No, it was a big black bird!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Excited.*) A strange man was here, posing as Prince of Edom, and just left, this very minute. He was a black magician and frightened me almost out of my senses.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Overcome with fear.*) It must have been that general—Mercy, that he should show himself to me—!

MRS. MELTON.

(With a shriek.) And to me, too!

MRS. LENOX.

God save us! *(She reels and falls fainting on the floor.)*

MRS. MELTON.

(With a scream, staggering.) Oh, it was the devil!

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Pastor Stevenson's studio a week later. Door on the right and a door opening, with drapery, in the rear, and a window on the left. A table with books and papers and a telephone, to the left of the room, and a book case against the back wall, to the left of the drapery. A few chairs are placed near the table.

Aldrich and Stevenson enter from the right.

ALDRICH.

(With his head turned toward Stevenson, as they enter.) The new church must be a great imposing structure.

STEVENSON.

I hope so. Take a seat. *(They seat themselves.)*

ALDRICH.

I like always to pay the price for the right thing.

STEVENSON.

(Nodding his head.) Exactly.

ALDRICH.

In these days of church building and prosperous

business, the success of the church and the success of business seem to depend on each other. That is, on each other's good will and co-operation.

STEVENSON.

Wisely said, Mr. Aldrich. I look at it in the same way, and I agree most heartily with you, that we must exert all our energy to keep the foremost place in the rank of church institutions.

ALDRICH.

That's what I think, and that's why I am always ready to donate now and then some round sums in order to help things along and to reduce the burden of my less fortunate brothers of the church.

STEVENSON.

You are one of the main pillars of the church, Mr. Aldrich, and I appreciate most highly your generosity and noble interest in its welfare. It displays a characteristic peculiar to great men.

ALDRICH.

Thank you, Pastor Stevenson. It always does a man good to be appreciated. But allow me to lay before you my important errand. Considering that Melton is stirring up the people against both law and religion, besides having joined an infidel woman, and according to the newspapers and the way

people talk, has practically deserted his wife, I think it is time that he be expelled from the church.

STEVENSON.

(*Serious.*) I am sorry all this trouble has arisen, for I have long known Mr. Melton to be a good and wise man.

ALDRICH.

True enough. So have I. But the facts speak for themselves in this case.

STEVENSON.

Even so, let us remember how well we have been treated in his home. God forbid, that you and I should be the first ones to throw stones at him.

ALDRICH.

(*Emphatically.*) His actions and ideas are intolerable; and for the sake of religion and the prestige of the church, it is our duty to disclaim any relation with him whatever. And it will greatly surprise me if you do not share my views.

STEVENSON.

(*Rises.*) The question is, if we can't stretch our view a little in this particular case.

ALDRICH.

Impossible! The welfare of the church de-

pend upon the good repute and unimpeachable character of its members.

STEVENSON.

Ah, indeed, brother Aldrich, our hearts ought therefore, to beat in sympathy for Mr. Melton. As men of unimpeachable character let us love and forgive.

ALDRICH.

You are impractical. Should we remain inactive and pray for Melton while he misleads the people and ruins this very church? No, that wouldn't do. It is for this church and for all churches to unite forces against him and put a stop to the spreading of his ideas, which are permeated with lawlessness and infidelity.

STEVENSON.

As it has come to this, let us appoint a committee to investigate the charges against him.

ALDRICH.

Very well, Pastor Stevenson. The officers of the church may be summoned to a special meeting.

STEVENSON.

Moreover, we will have to notify Mr. Melton of this move that he may have a chance to be heard in his own defense.

ALDRICH.

(*Hesitatingly.*) I don't approve of that.

STEVENSON.

That is a pre-requisite condition for this proceeding, considering we shall act as honorable men. I shall even notify Zoharita, for in her there is a depth of goodness, although her ideas look erroneous to us.

ALDRICH.

(*Rises hastily.*) I don't care for that kind of goodness that works distrust and confusion among the people, and I intend to see to it that Zoharita's goodness and Melton's fanciful ideas shall not be tolerated in this church. (*Clenches his fist.*) What I have to say in this matter I shall say with all my power.

STEVENSON.

(*Determined.*) And so shall I.

ALDRICH.

(*Hesitating as if stunned by the unexpected answer.*) But, there must be no discord between us. (*Mrs. Melton enters, looking pale.*)

MRS. MELTON.

Oh, Pastor Stevenson, I am so heartbroken! I don't know what to do. My trouble is in my mind continually.

STEVENSON.

(*Clasping her hand.*) Poor Mrs. Melton!

MRS. MELTON.

(*Weeping.*) If you only could help me! This published scandal about Melton and that woman is a topic of conversation all over the city.

ALDRICH.

(*To Mrs. Melton.*) How true, didn't the paper state that story?

MRS. MELTON.

It seems so, Mr. Aldrich. Oh, what shall I do?

ALDRICH.

(*To Stevenson.*) Well, then I will go and attend to that matter. It is our duty to help Mrs. Melton.

STEVENSON.

Very well, you may proceed to do so.

(*Aldrich shakes hands with them both and departs.*)

MRS. MELTON.

I wish you would speak to Mr. Melton in my behalf, Pastor Stevenson.

STEVENSON.

I shall. This was all unexpected of him. (*Points to a chair.*) Please be seated.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Sits down.*) How could I have thought this of him. Gradually, as by inches, has he slipped away from me.

STEVENSON.

(*Sits down beside her.*) But tell me, have you taken any interest in Mr. Melton's reform work? Have you ever made yourself his comrade in his thoughts, in his work and in his love for the world?

MRS. MELTON.

I? The idea— Should that be expected of me?

STEVENSON.

It is on that point you two have parted. Because of her interest in Melton's work, and her love for the people, Zoharita is where you should have been.

(*Melton enters, and Stevenson rises and extends his hand to greet him. Mrs. Melton shows uneasiness.*)

MELTON.

(*With a smile, as he shakes hands with Stevenson.*) Well, how are you proceeding with that sermon, Pastor Stevenson? I expected to get your promised explanation last Sunday and was much disappointed.

STEVENSON.

(*Pointing to a chair.*) Please take a seat.

MELTON.

(*To Mrs. Melton, kindly.*) Are you here, Lillith? — (*He sits down.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*With a stiff demeanor.*) Yes, Earl.

STEVENSON.

(*Sits down beside Melton.*) There was much more work with that sermon than I at first anticipated. However, as I now have the main points pretty well in mind, I feel sure I shall be able to deliver it next Sunday without fail.

MELTON.

Very well, Pastor Stevenson. I am pleased to hear that, because of the help I promised you with the new church.

STEVENSON.

(*Smiling.*) I am happy to hear this, Mr. Melton, and I foresee with pleasure that there shall be no rupture between us.

MELTON.

Well, it is all up to you. To be frank with you, I am much disappointed with your passive attitude

with regard to the outrage of John Aldrich upon the factory hands and mill workers and, in fact, upon the people in general.

STEVENSON.

But, dear Mr. Melton, I have no jurisdiction in this matter, and I sincerely hope you will see that I can't undertake to inquire into John Aldrich's business, or in any way start to meddle with his affairs.

MELTON.

It is imperative that you show your colors in this case. Considering the welfare of society and your duty to the church, you can no longer afford to be silent regarding it.

STEVENSON.

You ask too much of me, Mr. Melton. I have always regarded labor troubles as disassociated with church affairs, and a minister's attention to be claimed by other duties.

MELTON.

(Insistingly with emphasis.) You should have been the first and the foremost to protect the people; for you should know, more than any one else, that the treatment, to which they have now been subject, will discourage the average man and injure him spiritually as well as physically and make

him revolt against both law and religion. And God knows he is justified.

You ought to realize and bear in mind always, that the church can keep the love and respect of the people only by protecting them. That is, after they become enlightened.—

STEVENSON.

Yes, very true indeed; still, it is also true that any attempt on my part to criticise the action of John Aldrich would be resented by the leading members of the church as well as by Mr. Aldrich himself, save you alone.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Indignantly.*) Of course, you are right, Pastor Stevenson! The idea, that you should side with the working class and cause discomfort for all respectable people, is absurd indeed. It seems to me, Earl, you should restrain your offensive notions a little.

MELTON.

(*Rises, pauses and points his finger at Stevenson. Both he and Mrs. Melton twist uneasily in their seats.*) Any man, who, in a crisis like this, puts his position, or his esteem in the eyes of others, above his duty and dare neither speak nor act in behalf of the defenseless, is a contemptible hypocrite.

STEVENSON.

(*Rises.*) I am sorry to say it, Mr. Melton, but it appears to me that you are yourself much to blame in this trouble, which you seem bent on having others suffer for.

MELTON.

I appreciate hearing your real opinion.

STEVENSON.

(*Accusingly.*) You have been stirring up the laboring people against the authorities and made them dissatisfied with the place in which God has put them. (*With emphasis.*) The Church stands for peace, but you are creating strife and making the people unruly and contemptuous. You have raised your hand against God, my brother, and I caution you to halt on your march, lest disaster shall befall us all.

MELTON.

Well, well—

(*Mrs. Melton smiles.*)

STEVENSON.

I don't approve the action of John Aldrich in closing down his works; neither do I approve your action in stirring up his employes to strike and rebel; for in so doing you have offended John Ald-

rich and given rise to the serious conditions now prevailing among the people.

MELTON.

(*Aroused.*) Am I to blame for the people's suffering because I have offended John Aldrich? Are you blind as to the true cause of strife and discontentment in this community? When wages are too small to afford the toilers a decent living under any circumstances, do you suppose there is any justification for rebellion on their part, or do you suppose that men of influence have any duty with regard to their struggles? What do you stand for? What is your mission among the people?

STEVENSON.

(*With dignity.*) I stand for peace—

MELTON.

(*Forcefully.*) Peace with whom and peace for whom? You stand for peace with John Aldrich at any cost, and you use your sacred office in procuring peace for him, no matter what he does. His avarice is no discredit in your eyes, and although being well aware of the long trail of wrecks and ruins which mark his career, you have no fault to find with him as a Christian and a member of this church; but because I try to guide the people out of his clutches, you claim I am raising my hand against

God and I am putting us all in danger of disaster. If disaster comes and must come because the people want their rights, then I welcome disaster both for you and for John Aldrich. (*He bows and departs.*)

MRS. MELTON.

(*Gasping for breath.*) It was well you found out for yourself how he has changed.

STEVENSON.

(*With bowed head.*) Yes, Mr. Melton is a changed man. I am sorry, very sorry.

(*Prince of Edom enters as an old monk, with a long grey beard. He smiles, and bows profoundly as he enters.*)

PRINCE OF EDMON.

How do you do, most noble Pastor Stevenson! Pardon me for entering your presence unannounced. My name is Elemento. I am a linguist, and a missionary by vocation. (*He reaches forth his hand and moves a few steps toward Stevenson.*)

STEVENSON.

I am glad to make your acquaintance, brother Elemento. (*They shake hands.*)

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Moves a step aside, bowing.*) I have worked in the interest of the church throughout nearly the

whole world, especially in Spain, Italy, France, and Russia, although I have travelled and preached more or less throughout all Europe, besides having made some strenuous trips into all the heathen countries in behalf of our cause.

STEVENSON.

Well, I declare! I do not often have such a visitor. You must certainly have worked hard and faithfully.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bowing.*) Permit me to state that my field of missionary work has been more extensive still. I have interpreted the scriptures throughout all of South and Central America, Mexico, Boston, New York, and Chicago. Now I am what you may call a *Missionary at Large* in the United States.

STEVENSON.

(*Surprised.*) Oh, this is truly marvelous!

PRINCE OF EDOM.

People have wanted my advice and teachings and have called upon me from all sides. Thus, it has been easy for me to travel, although I have never known peace or rest. But new teachers have now come into the field and dispute with me over the word of truth and the rights of man. This has

caused me much provocation and worry, but to my consolation, I am informed of your virtues, (*With a bow.*) and that you are at peace with the pillars of society. (*With great emphasis, reaches forth his hands.*) Receive me then, I pray, as I come to you with open heart and great hope!

STEVENSON.

You come just in an opportune moment, as I am much in need of a word of cheer myself. (*Points to a chair.*) Will you take a seat?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*With a deep bow.*) Thanks, many thanks; but I shall not tarry. A cheer to you— Yes, cheer to him who has cheer deserved! Much have I to thank and praise you for, Pastor Stevenson, as you have been true to your mission and preached the precepts of our dear old doctrine, as it was worked out and laid down by our early ecclesiastics.

STEVENSON.

(*Wonderingly.*) I don't really understand you, brother Elemento. Are we not preaching the gospel of the Lord?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*With a grin and shudder.*) We are preaching something even better. (*Bowing.*) And permit

me to say, that it is of much comfort to me that there is no friction between us—

(Mrs. Melton, who has been looking inquiringly at Prince of Edom, becomes suspicious and, without Stevenson observing it, expresses fear. She rises and goes over to the drapery and steps behind it.)

STEVENSON.

There can be no question but that we agree, though your expressions are not quite clear to me.

PRINCE OF EDM.

(Bowling.) Allow me to say, that I never approved of the solemn and stern teachings of—of—well, pardon me for not mentioning names.

STEVENSON.

Do you mean the teachings of Christ?

PRINCE OF EDM.

(Grins.) Yes, yes,—I mean that it has never appealed to me.

STEVENSON.

(Surprised.) Do you, a missionary of the gospel, mean to say that the teachings of Christ never appealed to you?

PRINCE OF EDM.

(Bowling and smiling.) Don't misunderstand

me, my distinguished ecclesiast. I simply mean to say that His teaching has no comfort for criminals and sinners in general. If we missionaries should content ourselves with His teachings, and preach for instance: "Blessed be the pure of heart; or they who do God's will among men," which has no bearing on religious beliefs, what would become of our doctrine of salvation?

STEVENSON.

(*Pondering.*) Yes, I see the point—

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*In profound sincerity.*) That's what I thought. Think the matter over, and you will see how we are fortunate in being provided by our wise predecessors of the church with a salvation for good and bad men alike; a salvation which sets aside all virtue and the law itself. (*He looks at Stevenson with a broad smile.*)

STEVENSON.

(*Wonderingly.*) Is that what you preach to the heathen?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Profoundly serious.*) I preach what you preach, and thus you know what I preach. And as for the scriptures, I have studied them long and carefully

and grown old interpreting them. (*With emphasis.*) You hold, like myself, that the moral teaching of our religion is but a secondary matter, since it is only the doctrine of redemption we must insist upon; and you hold, like myself, that it is not the good deeds which count, but the faith alone, such as set forth by our early brothers of the church.

STEVENSON.

Well, but brother Elemento, although we agree respecting the doctrine, you surprise me with your allegation as to its origin.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

You must have overlooked some facts in this matter, my able co-worker. As you and I may well admit in secret, the Lord declared, before being captured by the Jews, that His mission on earth was already finished. Well, I suppose you know all about that fourth verse of the seventeenth chapter of John, a statement I fear may be more disastrous to our doctrine than any war or calamity.

STEVENSON.

Certainly.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

It should then be evident to you, that the so-called Lord and Master contradicts our doctrine and gives evidence that the last, tragic chapter of

His life was no part of His mission in the world. (*Bows deeply.*) But thanks to you, Pastor Stevenson, who has always been silent on this point—

STEVENSON.

You must have studied these things with great care.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*With a deep bow.*) So I have indeed; and I trust you see how sorely the church was in need of a practical doctrine of salvation. (*Takes a little book out of his pocket.*) Here I have the missionaries' text book, which sets it all forth clearly and specifically. (*Holds the book forth.*) This teaching, that all sin is paid for, is the golden word in peace and war, radiating comfort to priests and kings and slaves alike, and is the smiling sunshine upon all deeds and upon all kinds of politics and business. (*He looks at Stevenson with a broad smile and makes a deep bow.*)

STEVENSON.

(*As the Prince of Edom straightens himself.*) Yes, these are all accepted facts, and I am glad we agree on the fundamentals.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Bows.*) Well be it so, my friend, and I am proud to say that long have my views been gener-

ally accepted by the foremost men of church and state. (*With emphasis.*) But now, because of the new teachers in the field, I am worried exceedingly that my views shall be relegated to the background, (*Holds the book forth with trembling hand.*) and this, my beloved little book, be destroyed. Oh, Pastor Stevenson, come to my aid! I foresee social upheavals and great changes! Be prepared! Unexpected as the thief at night the Mighty Hand may reach for you.

STEVENSON.

(*Anxious.*) Are we to undergo a revolution?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

It is written that the world of old shall be destroyed by fire; and behold, I see a little flame, with the energy of immensity, threatening to do the work! You know how a certain politician and a heathen woman are firing the minds of the populace in your great city, against the old order of things. (*Exclaims.*) Stop that fire, Pastor Stevenson, or it will become a conflagration that shall reduce to ashes all that we have built in the world!

STEVENSON.

I deplore the seriousness of the situation myself. Probably the worst of it is that Mr. Melton

is a member of my church, and the most intelligent member at that.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I know it, and have already discussed the matter with other members of the church and hinted, that you ought to expel him. And as for that heathen woman—She teaches, as did the most ancient philosophers, that man leaves this world, and, after some time, returns in another body, reaching, as a rule, a higher plane in spiritual evolution for each earth-life. In view of this, no man ever went to hell to stay forever. (*With emphasis.*) Suppose this teaching takes root among the people, what message shall we then bring to the heathen, and how shall we then threaten infidils? It will do away altogether with this little book—

STEVENSON.

I am very sorry, indeed, that this woman has gained a hearing before the people. Still, I must frankly admit, that I am deeply impressed by many of her sayings myself.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Steps back with a worried look, exclaiming.*)
By my soul, it mustn't happen, that even you shall go the way of the lost!

STEVENSON.

Well, I don't mean to say that I have surrendered any part of our faith or doctrine as yet, but—

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(Steps forth with a happy smile.) You almost frightened me. *(He appears startled by something and looks about anxiously.)* My great enemy is coming! I better go. *(Goes on tiptoe a few steps toward the door.)* No peace for me, never! *(Turns with a deep bow.)* Au revoir! *(He goes, and Stevenson stands looking thoughtfully toward the door.)*

MRS. MELTON.

(With a frightened look, and white in her face, parts the drapery slowly, staring interrogatively at Stevenson.) Oh, Pastor Stevenson! *(Walks forth much affected.)* That you couldn't realize who he was—*(Rests herself against the desk with both hands.)*

STEVENSON.

(In great suspense.) Who in the world—

MRS. MELTON.

(Breathing heavily.) That awful one—

STEVENSON.

(Surprised.) Who?

MRS. MELTON.

The Prince of Edom! It is the Prince of Edom you have been entertaining.

STEVENSON.

(Excited.) Can it be possible? I feared so myself. *(Hurries out.)* I must be sure! *(Mrs. Melton looks anxiously towards the door, and Stevenson returns with the little book in his hand.)* Gone! He is nowhere! Has disappeared like a ghost, and here is his book. He had left it on the step. To think that the Devil should come here! *(Paces to and fro, half bewildered, then stops.)* I felt he had a peculiar influence. Well, well, I have seen him at last. *(Looks at the little book.)* What a curious little thing! *(Smells of it.)* But for goodness sake! *(Smells again.)* It smells of sulphur. But wasn't that strange—*(Reflecting.)* But how shall we understand this? *(Pauses and looks at Mrs. Melton, and then exclaims:)* Ah, Mrs. Melton, we are in dangerous waters! See the breakers all about us! We must out of here, or down we go! *(Pauses again and looks fixedly at her.)* Great God, Zoharita may be a messenger of light after all!

MRS. MELTON.

(Straightens up, vehemently.) No, no! She is a disturber of religious peace and a home-destroyer!

STEVENSON.

Look out, Mrs. Melton! The Prince of Edom is on your side!

MRS. MELTON.

(Points her finger at him.) And on yours!

(The door bell rings.)

STEVENSON.

(Wiping his face in haste.) Maybe the Prince comes back for his book—*(He throws the book on the desk.)*

(It rings again.)

STEVENSON.

Come!

(Zoharita and a poor, shabbily dressed woman with a little girl, enter. Mrs. Melton looks disdainfully at Zoharita and, turning to the book case, picks up a book and pretends to read.)

ZOHARITA.

(To Stevenson, as she enters.) Peace be with you! I am Zoharita, about whom you may have heard.

STEVENSON.

(Gives her his hand.) How do you do, madam! I am much pleased to make your acquaintance.

ZOHARITA.

I brought this poor and unhappy sister with me, hoping you might be able to help her.

STEVENSON.

(*Extends his hand to the poor woman.*) It was well you came, poor sister! What may I do for you?

THE WOMAN.

(*Submissively.*) My story is hard to tell. (*Sobs.*) We are many in the family and have nothing to eat. Our credit was cut off when the factories closed.

ZOHARITA.

She is one of John Aldrich's many victims.

STEVENSON.

I am very sorry, but when the appeal concerns food, I must admit my inability to help anyone. You better see some merchant or the city authorities.

ZOHARITA.

I am informed that John Aldrich is a member of your church—

STEVENSON.

(*Nodding his head.*) Yes, what of it?

ZOHARITA.

I thought you might intercede with him in behalf of these people for whom he has caused starvation and unhappiness.

STEVENSON.

Well, I tell you, lady: Depressions like this, though very bad indeed, are not new in the world. They come and go like clouds in the sky. They are beyond human control!

ZOHARITA.

Pastor Stevenson, I am here with a message for you: Take this unhappy sister and her child with you into the church next Sunday morning and place them beside you before the people. Then tell their story and point out their rights as God's children in the world. Also lay bare the character and doings of John Aldrich, and preach the salvation which is in love and righteousness.

Thus says the Lord: Because thou hast taught a salvation and a way to heaven according to the precepts of the Prince of Edom, hast thou kept the light from my people. But behold, I speak anew unto all men and call all life out of darkness.

STEVENSON.

(*Wonderingly.*) Who are you, anyway?

ZOHARITA.

As yet it matters little to you. Listen to me, and ministering angels shall help you. Or stand up for John Aldrich, and you shall share with him the curse of the world and the lot of the wicked.

STEVENSON.

(*Sits down, wiping his forehead.*) Your Lord is a strict Lord.

ZOHARITA.

Aye, strict is He whom no one can cheat, and whose laws repay all deeds justly. His love extends to these humblest of His, whom He calls upon you to help and protect. He is my God, and through obedience to Him alone is the gateway to eternal life.

STEVENSON.

(*Rises.*) Lady, you are either a prophetess or an impostress.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Who has been stealing ominous glances at Zoharita, throws the book on the desk with a bang.*) Of course, she is an impostress. Pretends to be a holy being and sneaks about to capture the attention of men and to break up people's homes.

ZOHARITA.

(*Kindly.*) You don't mean what you say, sister Melton.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Retorting wrathfully.*) I mean it all, and I mean that you have robbed me of my life's happiness!

STEVENSON.

Hush, Mrs. Melton! (*Seizing her arm.*) You must be out of your mind—

MRS. MELTON.

(*To Stevenson, scornfully.*) You too, are bewitched! She knows how to turn weak men.

(*Stevenson lets go of her arm and shakes his head.*)

ZOHARITA.

(*To Mrs. Melton, tenderly.*) Let me help you, dear sister, and a new joy shall come to you, greater than the former.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Looking at her angrily.*) Get out of my sight, you high-priestess and home-destroyer! (*Stamps her foot.*) And call me not your sister, you unholy impostress.

(*Zoharita looks sympathetically at Mrs. Melton.*)

A radiant white light gradually encircles her, the sign of the cross appearing above her head.)

STEVENSON.

(Astonished, bends on his knees before Zoharita.) Forgive me, oh thou angel of light! I shall comply with thy request and make amends.

MRS. MELTON.

(With her hands to her face, staggering.) My God!

ZOHARITA.

(Seizing her arm.) Fear not!

ACT III.

SCENE II.

Zoharita's apartment about two weeks later. The furnishing is Oriental and artistically arranged. Zoharita is attired in an Oriental silken costume.

ZOHARITA.

(Standing at the center of the room with hands folded and her eyes raised in supplication.) Oh, I implore thee, my Master, to answer thy servant!

Nay, I command thee by the power invested in me, as a worker for the uplift of man, not to withhold thy counsel; for I ask it not for my own sake, but for the sake of the work thou hast given me to do. Thou knowest the forces of darkness are rampant in the world and act most cruelly through ignorance, avarice and war. Invest me therefore with more power that I may conquer the evil.

(A solemn and powerful voice answers, and Zoharita kneels down, with her face and hands raised.)

THE VOICE.

Faithful servant; thy love vibrates into the innermost, and thy powers increase according to thy use of them. The one who is willing to give his life for the uplift of the world, and has prepared himself in the Great name, is a god among men and holds the keys to all the closed gates which cross his path. Powers and principalities must come to his service; and they will continue the work in his name, long after he has gone.

Be faithful to thy trust, and according to thy faith and great love for humanity, so be it unto thee.

ZOHARITA.

(Remaining kneeling.) I thank thee, oh, thou great Master and Comptroller of this world, for answering my daring request!

THE VOICE.

My beloved, thy light gives thee the privilege to call on my name and to ask my aid.

(A white light envelopes Zoharita, and she prostrates herself. The voice continues.) We are witnessing the grewsome conflict between many nations on your beloved earth. Proud in their evanescent glory the rulers of men worship their own glory and compel brother to kill brother for the possession of ant hills. Yet if we but gave the word to the Muspels in the depth of the earth, they would sink the warring nations below the sea in the same moment.

For nineteen centuries have the Christians prayed for peace on earth and "thy kingdom come and thy will be done," yet, at the same time, they have worked for war and hell on earth and let the coming of the kingdom of God depend on empty prayers. Now they pray for peace in the hell of their own creation and wonder why God permits the war, or why He doesn't stop the war.

Speak thou, my servant, to the blind leaders of the blind and tell them this: that man will gain that only which he creates and lives in his own heart. Speak, thus saith the Lord: "Behold how the celestial bodies and systems of bodies are united in the alliance of the cosmos, and how the least and the

greatest alike have peace and splendor under the provision of immutable laws. All nations and races of men, unite, therefore, in a similar alliance, in a *Federation of the World* for peace and mutual happiness.

Wars and dangers of wars, on your beloved earth, are due mainly to the multiple governments and separate interests of the nations; and national defenses are due to the same separateness. Unite, therefore, all nations into one brotherhood, for mutual protection and mutual interest, and the need of national defenses ceases. And this is the law of peace and justice for nations and individuals alike: that they accord the same rights and privileges to others that they expect others to accord to them.

Mayest thou, my messenger, succeed in helping man to learn to know himself. He is destined to become more than man, and in the grand and glorious future he will reach that stage where he can leave this little planet to enter a new cycle of evolution on a shining orb of a higher order. Eons of ages shall come and pass, but man shall go onward from attainment to attainment, possessing and ruling radiant worlds, grandiose beyond expression of human language.

(Zoharita rises on her knees and weeps silently. She raises her face upward, and it is illumined for an instant. The door bell rings, and presently the

servant, who is also garbed in an Eastern costume, announces Earl Melton. Zoharita rises and directs the servant to bid him enter.)

MELTON.

(Enters.) Pardon my audacity in coming here.
(He extends his hand to Zoharita, who greets him.)

ZOHARITA.

Please be seated, Mr. Melton! *(They both sit down.)*

MELTON.

(Noticing Zoharita's solemn expression.) Has anything unusual occurred?

ZOHARITA.

(With a smile.) Yes, something. Yet I am all right, as you Americans say. I am only overcome with a great joy, concerning which I shall not speak at this time.

MELTON.

(Relieved.) I am not so presumptuous as to ask you to reveal the secret of your joy to me. I am eager to sit at your feet and listen to your wise sayings. Thanks to you, my teacher, who came and opened my eyes to the hidden truths of life.

ZOHARITA.

When the disciple is ready, the teacher is always there to help and instruct.

MELTON.

(*Wonderingly.*) Then you must have been aware of me before we ever met?

ZOHARITA.

Aye, I have known you, or rather we have known each other ere we met on this physical plane—

MELTON.

(*Passing his hand across his brow.*) What a strange glimpse of something more than half forgotten—I have for years, at intermittant periods, dreamt about a woman, attired, sometimes in white and sometimes in rose-colored raiment. And then—yes, when you and I met, I thought I recognized you as the woman of my dreams.

ZOHARITA.

What more do you remember about her—?

MELTON.

(*Looking into vacancy.*) In our movements through what here we may call invisible realm, we frequently passed obstinate and contending forces. And as she was much stronger than I, she was my

leader. We often visited a beautiful island where we saw exalting wonders and where she taught me—(*Passes the hand over his brow.*) Oh, I can't name it. Only this is clear to my mind, that she was a wonderful teacher, and I her devout disciple, and that we loved one another. My heart burns when I think of her.

ZOHARITA.

(*Passes her hand over his head.*) What more do you remember?

MELTON.

(*In the same dreamy way.*) That's strange. I begin to remember more clearly. There were white and almost transparent edifices, schools, and temples of grand and imposing architecture. (*Rises and exclaims.*) You bring all those wonders back to me! Now I recall the people! Oh, such beautiful and magnanimous looking people, with voices sweet as the songs of seraphims. I find it difficult to believe such lived or ever will come to live on this earth. Yet it seemed plain to me that they had all been here at various periods in the past. Some seemed to hail from ancient Egypt, others from Babylonia, and still others from Phenicia, Greece, and Rome. Moreover, we were saluted by them all as friends of theirs from those various countries at various ages

in the past. But the woman of my dreams, as I now remember her, was even fairer than they. She was radiant, and they knelt before her and said: "Blessed be thou above others who wert chosen to carry thy light into the world; and blessed be the world for thy sake." (*He looks inquiringly at Zoharita and sits down beside her.*)

ZOHARITA.

(*With a happy smile, again passes her hand over his head.*) What else do you recall?

MELTON.

(*Thoughtfully for a moment.*) Oh, now I see as if by an inner sight that wonderful Master-teacher who instructed throngs of people in the laws of the universe, and I perceived that far more did he know than has been revealed by man through the sciences.

ZOHARITA.

Aye, of a truth he did—

MELTON.

(*With a beaming look at Zoharita.*) That remark admitted something—

ZOHARITA.

What more do you recall about that great teacher?

MELTON.

(*Leaning back in his seat, reflecting.*) Speaking about the evolution of the human soul he said, that every one makes progress in proportion to his own labor, and must pay, by his own struggle, for every degree of perfection attained. Consciousness and realization, he said, grow by the unfoldment of one's divine inheritance, whether it be in the corporeal or incorporeal state of the being.

ZOHARITA.

(*Nodding her head.*) Aye, aye, this we must teach men.

MELTON.

I also recall that master saying, that teachers from other stars came with the first spiritual light to mankind and founded the earliest civilizations. He said that many culture periods of the past endured for thousands of years, stretching across time with intermediate periods of dark ages.

ZOHARITA.

(*Nodding her head and passing her hand over his brow.*) And what about the music you heard?

MELTON.

(*Exclaiming.*) Oh, I remember! That music was grander than any human ear has ever heard.

ZOHARITA.

(*Smiling.*) No wonder you think so. You heard millions of stars singing. Or, in other words, you heard the vibrations and grand symphony of the stellar universe.

MELTON.

(*Wonderingly.*) I think I have read something in a prophetic writing about the stars singing together—but is it a fact that they really sing?

ZOHARITA.

Each star is tuned to a certain key, and they all vibrate in harmony, creating music throughout immensity.

MELTON.

Grand! Marvelous! It baffles my senses (*Looking intently at Zoharita.*) But greater to me than anything else I saw and heard in the Astral Realm, is the woman of my dreams whom I now know was you.

ZOHARITA.

(*Nodding her head admittingly.*) Yes, I helped you and taught you on the inner planes ere you beheld me on the outer.

MELTON.

(*Joyously.*) And do you still teach me on those inner planes?

ZOHARITA.

(*Seriously, looking him in the eyes.*) Thou dost know, but the shroud of matter beclouds thee, O soul, and hinders thee from fully conveying to thy outer mask those truths and teachings from the inner planes that thou knowest so well.

MELTON.

(*Emotionally.*) And even so; to be satisfied that those dreams were real experiences of my inner self, and to be convinced that you were my companion, are to me truth and teachings enough. Yet, I will ask you this question: If matter beclouds the soul when the physical body is awake, why doesn't it becloud the soul when the physical body sleeps?

ZOHARITA.

Because, when the physical body sleeps the soul generally wanders away from the body, projects itself, as it were, often to distant places and even far away from the earth. But only the higher developed man can do this. These wanderings you remember as dreams, but in which your physical body has had no part and could not hinder.

MELTON.

(*Nodding his head thoughtfully.*) I see, I understand——

ZOHARITA.

All, who, in their daily life, aspire to spiritual attainment, ascend into higher spiritual realms as soon as their physical body sleeps, and draw new strength and stimulus for the next day's struggle in the world of contention and temptation. And well be it for the human that the physical brain remains unaware of it all, lest his life here should become unbearable.

MELTON.

How I would love to speak to the people of the sacred truths you have taught me. But the paramount question of the day is that of bread and liberty. Before that question is settled, with the same rights and privileges assured to all, spiritual light is only of secondary interest to the people.

ZOHARITA.

Be therefore more determined than ever in your battle for the people's rights, and greater things than you have dared to hope for, shall come to pass.

MELTON.

(Eagerly.) Am I allowed to know?

ZOHARITA.

The time is near when there shall arise in this country the highest civilization this world has ever

known. Lightgivers of the past, renowned masters of old, shall reincarnate and establish anew their schools of wisdom and culture among men.

MELTON.

(*Delightfully.*) Is it possible!

ZOHARITA.

Aye, of a truth. Go you hence and prepare the way.

MELTON.

Yes, with joy in my soul, I shall.

ZOHARITA.

Much of what the future holds in store could I reveal to you; and to many great truths, yet unknown to you, will you be able to listen after having further qualified yourself in the service of humanity. (*She rises.*)

MELTON.

(*With emotion, as he too, rises.*) You truly know how to spur me on. I feel a power within me rushing onward like rapid waters; rushing onward to help and to save; rushing onward to proclaim peace and justice on earth! (*Grasps her hand.*) Thanks to you, oh woman of my dreams! (*Tenderly.*) How can I ever express my gratitude to you? Words are inadequate.

ZOHARITA.

(*Withdrawing her hand gently.*) By unflinching devotion and true service to the cause, and with love to all men, do you pay for received blessings and earn treasures that shall never perish.

MELTON.

When I am in your presence I expand in consciousness and increase in my love for the world. Could I but be with you always I would sooner become like you in all virtues. (*Grasps her hand emotionally.*) Oh, God, if I only could be with you always! You, the most wonderful woman on earth, has entered my heart forever! Oh, vastly more are you than a mere woman! You are a goddess, while I, a poor mortal, love you, love you! (*The last sentence is much suppressed.*)

ZOHARITA.

(*Withdrawing her hand and raising it against him.*) Hush, brother! Not so. Do not so forget yourself as to make it impossible for us to work together.

MELTON.

(*Emotionally.*) Forgive, oh forgive me! But I never knew what true love was before I met you in my dreams; and it has grown ever since. It is a living fire of divine essence, and I am powerless to check it!

ZOHARITA.

But Melton, Melton, be strong!

MELTON.

(*With the same emotion.*) I know I have trespassed on forbidden ground and have no so-called legal right to express myself like this to you. Yet, should you banish me from your sight forever, I love you still with the most sacred love that ever flamed from a human heart. (*Talks rapidly and excitedly.*) I have struggled against it and thought I would drown it in silence, but to no avail. Like a radiant corona it bursts forth from my suffering soul, and I know it will never die! It is a powerful and impelling force, and on its shining wings I will rush through the heavens wherever you go! (*He closes his fists with a strained look, showing effort to restrain his emotion.*)

ZOHARITA.

I must not let you go on like this. Although I know the character of your love is what you say, yet I forbid you to express it in the way of man. Be master over your emotions and do not forget that as my disciple you have been taught to live in the impersonal and not in the personal self. The one who has entered the narrow path must be will-

ing to give himself in full as a living sacrifice on the altar of humanity.

MELTON.

(Bending his head in sad submission.) So be it, and have I sinned against you—I beg your pardon.

ZOHARITA.

True love can never sin. But it is for you to think of your mission, and let nothing divert your mind from your great work. That alone requires all your love and all your strength.

MELTON.

(Kisses her hand.) I realize it all, and I promise to be faithful, yet my soul will always be yearning for you, the white woman of my dreams. *(He gives indication of wanting to weep and hastens out with bowed head.)*

ZOHARITA.

(After looking toward the door for a moment, turns her head and covers her face with both hands. Presently, she flings both hands upward with lifted face.) Oh, I musn't be weak! My strength must help him through all his trials and tests, to endure the pricks of thorns on the narrow path, which so few can walk to its uppermost height, where it

ends in victory over all the lower propensities of man, and the forces of the spheres beneath the rank of man. Help him, my Master! Well may I serve as hope and anchor to his soul; and well for him that the identity of us both is hidden to him. Aye, well for him, while here, that he doesn't know—

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Inglehart's newspaper office. A desk, with some newspapers and a telephone, to the right, and a waste basket near by. There are a few chairs and a couch in the room also, and some newspapers strewn about; one door and a window on the left, and a door in the rear.

Inglehart sits at his desk with a pair of long scissors, making out clippings from a newspaper.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Enters bowing and is attired as on his visit to Mrs. Melton.) How do you do, Mr. Editor! Is a stranger welcome at your office?

INGLEHART.

(Turns in his chair and looks at him scrutinizingly.) Who are you, sir?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Bowling.) I am a practical man like yourself, Mr. Editor. I am interested in many issues, have had some experience in journalism and write a good deal. I have been dabbling some in politics

also. I am a man with education and can always get a job. At present I am a traveling agent.

INGLEHART.

(*Rises with an interrogating look.*) You answer to the description of a man of bad repute. What is your name, sir?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bowing.*) You may call me Johnson or Hanson for the sake of convenience.

INGLEHART.

Not Prince—?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bowing.*) Do as you like. A travelling man, and a stranger at that, can never be so particular.

INGLEHART.

(*More considerate.*) Maybe I am mistaken as to your identity. Is there anything I can do for you, sir?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Well, as to my errand, I should like to know what you have to say about the coming eclipse of the sun.

INGLEHART.

(*With an inquiring look.*) What eclipse have you reference to?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

The impending eclipse today, at this very hour.
(*Bowing.*) It may turn dark any minute.

INGLEHART.

(*Surprised.*) It is the first I have heard of it.
Eclipse of the sun today! It can't be possible—

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Bowing.*) Well, we will soon find out.

INGLEHART.

Whence have you your information?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I wish to have your opinion first on another subject, about which I am exceedingly anxious, then, later, we may talk eclipse.

INGLEHART.

Very well.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

I would much like to know your opinion respecting destiny. As everybody has his troubles, so have I mine, and I have thought about destiny of late, until things have turned around in my head. Knowing that editors are well posted on all questions, it occurred to me that I might do well to see

you on this subject. (*Bowing.*) Destiny or no destiny. That's the question.

INGLEHART.

This is an interesting topic, and I am glad to make your acquaintance, stranger. (*Gives him his hand.*) Of course, this is one of the questions we editors have not yet quite settled. Still, for my part, I believe in destiny.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bowing.*) So do I. You believe then, with me, that a man's deeds, be they great or small, few or many, good or bad, of no account or of great significance, are parts and impulses of his destiny?

INGLEHART.

(*Pondering a little.*) Well, I would rather assume they are.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Then there ought to be justifiable excuses for both you and me?

INGLEHART.

(*With a questioning look.*) What do you mean?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

Well, as a travelling agent, I am lacking somewhat in moral development, and my ethics are

rather primitive, according to the views of religious people. (*With a deep bow.*) However, I regard you as a perfect gentleman with many virtues.

INGLEHART.

You better not lay too much stress on my virtues, as I don't pretend to be a saint.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Bowing.*) Neither do I pretend to be a saint, and I am encouraged to know that we might be good company after all; at least, there ought to be ample excuses for both of us, inasmuch as our deeds are but phenomena of destiny.

INGLEHART.

(*Smiling.*) This is interesting. Phenomena of destiny, you say?

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(*Bowing.*) Yes, incontrovertibly so. For example: Suppose it should fall to my lot to burn a man alive, or to your lot to set fire to this building, they would merely be deeds of destiny.

INGLEHART.

(*With a suspicious look.*) You then include all deeds in destiny?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

All or none. Or where would you draw the line? Destiny or no destiny, that's the question.

INGLEHART.

Your view is broad and impressive. To include all our doings in the destiny of our lives is quite satisfactory, when I come to think of it.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bows, smiling.*) So it is, indeed. It relieves the mind and eases the conscience, for it shows we are irresponsible and that things have other causes than people believe. Of course, as a travelling agent, I hate the truth, as a rule. Nevertheless, there are exceptions. In this case, the truth is highly recommendable to everybody, and not the least because of the light it throws on many disputed questions. For instance, statistics show, that there are immensely more criminals among people of certain religious ideas than among people of other sects, indicating that crime originates with a misleading religion; whereas, the fact is, they are due to people's destiny. (*He makes a deep bow.*)

INGLEHART.

Your view is really inspiring. Why, it is true as the saying goes: "There is always something to learn from a stranger."

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*Bowing.*) I am delighted, Mr. Editor! (*It is turning dark.*) Behold, the eclipse is taking place! (*Swings his hand emphatically.*) Darkness is upon us!

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Comes excited from another room.*) For goodness sake, it is turning dark!

INGLEHART.

(*As bewildered.*) It is an eclipse of the sun! (*It is getting inky dark, and no one can be seen.*)

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*In a hollow voice.*) I rejoice and feel strong in darkness! Darkness is my sign and my abode and the mother of my children. Darkness do I give my servants, and by darkness am I remembered! Good-bye, my friends; may darkness be your handmaiden. (*He laughs.*)

INGLEHART.

(*Shouting in the darkness.*) Get thee hence, thou hideous one!

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Screams.*) For goodness sake, is the devil here?

INGLEHART.

Yes, yes, look out!

(Hideous laughter is heard for a brief moment.)

MRS. INGLEHART.

(With a cry.) Oh, mercy, he is here!

(The light is gradually returning and Inglehart is seen stumbling about.)

INGLEHART.

He is gone—

MRS. INGLEHART.

Bless the Lord; the eclipse is over!

(They face each other with an expression of relief.)

MRS. INGLEHART.

(With her chest heaving.) Oh, how I was frightened!

INGLEHART.

How shall we account for this?

MRS. INGLEHART.

The apparition of the devil is a bad omen, I have heard.

INGLEHART.

(Looks about, with his fists closed tightly.)

He may have a trap laid, but he cannot fool me twice.

MRS. MELTON.

(*Enters and bows to them both.*) How do you do?

(*They are both surprised and assume a gentle attitude, bowing in return.*)

INGLEHART.

Well, well, how do you do, Mrs. Melton! I can assure you, we are very pleased to have you call on us.

MRS. INGLEHART.

Yes, indeed we are, Mrs. Melton.

MRS. MELTON.

(*To Inglehart.*) The tide has turned, and I now come to ask you to announce in your paper, that I no longer oppose Melton's reform work, and no longer oppose Zoharita. Announce further, I pray, that all I have said unfavorably about my husband and her has been due to misunderstanding on my part, and greatly fostered by false stories in your paper.

INGLEHART.

I am no longer head of the paper. You better see Mr. Aldrich on this matter.

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Moving about nervously.*) The devil has been here, too. Has just gone—

MRS. MELTON.

(*To Inglehart, determinedly.*) I will accept no excuse, Mr. Inglehart. I even request you to retract your scandalous story and malicious statements about Zoharita and my husband.

INGLEHART.

I shall do nothing of the kind, and I refuse to admit having mistreated either of you.

MRS. MELTON.

No more parley about this, Mr. Inglehart. We have all the evidence we need against you, and I hope you don't desire the law to settle the matter.

INGLEHART.

I have nothing more to say.

MRS. MELTON.

I am very, very sorry. (*She goes.*)

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Turns to Inglehart, anxiously,*) Do you suppose they can do us any harm?

INGLEHART.

The matter is serious enough.

MRS. INGLEHART.

Oh, I am afraid they may take it to court.

INGLEHART.

Very likely they will—

MRS. INGLEHART.

Mercy! First the devil and the darkness, and then this.

INGLEHART.

Yes, but I would rather be beaten in court than make a confession.

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Anxiously.*) Oh, it mustn't happen! It would ruin us!

INGLEHART.

You can thank Aldrich for the whole blame trouble.

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Emphatically.*) But you were too willing to listen to him; too willing to serve him; too willing to be his slave. (*Comes closer.*) Isn't there any way out at all?

INGLEHART.

(*Significantly.*) Yes, there is one way out.

MRS. INGLEHART.

Oh, is there—

INGLEHART.

I mean fire. Let the whole thing burn!

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Steps back with her hands on her bosom.*) Oh, God, after all—

INGLEHART.

(*As to himself.*) Destiny, or no destiny.

ACT IV.

SCENE II.

A street on election day. A poll or voting place, with the United States flag displayed, near the corner, to the right.

A band wagon, with music, is heard passing on the opposite street, in the background. Men are going in and out at the poll, where a policeman is patrolling.

(*Two men enter from the left.*)

FIRST MAN.

(*As they enter.*) What about this European general who has mixed up in our politics? Is it all newspaper talk do you suppose? (*They stop.*)

SECOND MAN.

I should think there must be some basis for all this talk. It is at any rate certain that the general

knows his business; or why should he make intimate friends of John Aldrich and the government officials, and advocate preparedness on such a stupendous scale?

FIRST MAN.

There is something about all this I can't get into my block. It isn't only John Aldrich and the government officials the general is befriending; he makes calls even on our women folks.

SECOND MAN.

Yes, Mrs. Melton has taken sick as the result of his visit, I have heard.

FIRST MAN.

And it has turned to the worst quite suddenly, I understand. The doctors think she will never recover.

SECOND MAN.

But what interest can the general have in opposing this harmless woman Zoharita, who now has started to build a temple of worship out on Melton Hill?

FIRST MAN.

Well, I suppose he is aware that the effect of her teaching is counteracting his proposals to the government.

SECOND MAN.

(*As they proceed to the poll.*) I see, I see.
(*As the two men go into the poll, Zoharita enters slowly and observingly from the left, and Mrs. Lenox from the right.*)

MRS. LENOX.

(*To the policeman, in great disgust, as Zoharita is nearing.*) It certainly is a shame that drunkards and ignorant men are allowed to vote while highly educated women are forbidden. It is clear enough that men have made the laws.

THE POLICEMAN.

(*With a twinkle in his eye and a side-glance at Zoharita, who is listening.*) I never thought there was any dispute as to who made the laws.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Haughtily.*) The idea!

THE POLICEMAN.

Well, women, idiots and convicts aren't permitted to vote in this state.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Turning to Zoharita, with a contemptuous glance at the policeman.*) The idea! I certainly ought to stand a degree above the idiot and the convict in my political rights. I am educated in

one of the best colleges in the country and pay taxes on more than a million dollars' worth of property.

(The policeman looks at Mrs. Lenox with surprise and walks off to the right.)

ZOHARITA.

Women are evidently man's inferior in the eyes of the lawmakers, regardless of intelligence and education.

MRS. LENOX.

(As they proceed slowly towards the left.) It shows the primitive man is yet expressing himself through the lawmakers with respect to the rights of women.

(A young woman, ordinarily dressed, enters quickly from the left, followed, at a distance, by an elderly woman, who is stooped forward and shabbily dressed.)

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(Much exhausted as she enters hurriedly.)
Wait! Maybe I can help you—

(The young woman recognizes Mrs. Lenox and stops. She looks inquiringly at both her and Zoharita.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

(To the elderly one, as the latter is reaching up to her.) Poor woman, who can you help?

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(With difficulty, and her hand on her bosom.)

You can have free shelter over your head in my little old house, though poor it be.

ZOHARITA.

(With a look at the woman, turns to Mrs. Lenox.) Women are trying to get suffrage, and there is indeed need of it. But what would you propose to do with your vote, when you get it? Would you help to combat those enemies of human welfare, who force all kinds of undue suffering upon the people?

MRS. LENOX.

(Nodding her head gracefully.) It is just what I am longing to do. I am doing the best I can now, too. Not that I look for any praise, yet permit me to tell you, that I am connected with the foremost reform movements in the country, and that I give thousands of dollars every year, to foreign and heathen missions, to home missions, to churches, charitable institutions, libraries, and universities. Still, if I only had the vote, I hope I should be able to do much more.

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

(Ironically.) Yes, Mrs. Lenox is always so willing to give, if she sees her way clear to have

it blown out in the newspapers." (*She laughs sarcastically*).

MRS. LENOX.

(*With a disdainful glance at the young woman.*) The idea—

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

Would she only pay her poor working girls enough to save them from starving and going down the gang-plank of perdition, she would do infinitely better than by giving money to the Christianization of the heathen.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Looking hard at the woman.*) Who are you, may I ask, who dare attack respectable people on the street?

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(*Attempting to straighten herself.*) I am one of your shirtmakers, if you wish to know.

ZOHARITA.

(*To the elderly woman, kindly.*) Do you work for this lady?

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

Yes, Ma'am. I am, or rather have been, making shirts in the Aldrich & Lenox shirt factory. (*Sarcastically.*) For one kind of shirts, I have had

twenty-five cents a dozen, and for another kind, I have had thirty-five cents a dozen. I have made even as much as four dollars a week. A neighbor of mine, a widow with three children, has done even better than I, as she has been allowed to bring the goods home to be sewed on her machine, and with her own thread. She has been paid five cents a dozen more than I, besides having been fortunate enough to have a chance to work both night and day. Now, we all have a vacation. You see, lady, the working people's vacation came rather early this year, on account of the closing of the factories.

ZOHARITA.

(*Sympathetically.*) And no one to help you, dear sister?

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(*With forced laughter.*) Sister? Ha-ha-ha! Did you say sister? You must be a stranger in our city?

ZOHARITA.

(*To the young woman.*) And where do you work, sister?

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

I? I too, used to work in that rich lady's shirt factory, but I was starved out.

MRS. LENOX.

(*To Zoharita.*) The idea; they are too absurd to listen to. Our charity organizations provide for those who are in need.

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(*Mocking Mrs. Lenox.*) *The idea!* I would much prefer to have decent pay for my work that I might not need be so *absurd* as to enjoy *charity* and hard work both!

MRS. LENOX.

(*Looking hard at the woman.*) I shall certainly dispense with you.

ZOHARITA.

(*To Mrs. Lenox.*) She is poor, and forsaken and needs your love. Her dreams of happy days to come, and her hope for joy in this world, are crushed; and I much deplore to think she has suffered this in your service, while you have been busy with charity work and the like elsewhere—

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(*Breaks down weeping.*) No one has ever defended me and spoken kindly to me like she. People have looked down upon me and left me to struggle alone.

MRS. LENOX.

(*To Zoharita, emphatically.*) My goodness, we can't permit ourselves to be carried off our feet by all sorts of lamentation. These people never take care of their money and that's why they never have a dollar saved up. And no sooner do they get a raise in wages before they imitate their betters.

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

(*With forced laughter.*) Like us, for instance—ha-ha-ha!

MRS. LENOX.

(*Haughtily.*) I didn't speak to you.

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

(*Upbraidingly.*) Don't you think we have human desires too, a nature very much like your own?

MRS. LENOX.

(*Indignantly.*) The idea!

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

(*Moving closer, her eyes flashing defiance.*) Yes, the idea that I dare to speak to you. I am not your slave any more.

MRS. LENOX.

(*In great wrath.*) How dare you—I never saw you before—

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

(With the same defiance.) But you have seen your shirtmakers at work, and I used to be one of them. A whole committee of us informed you that we could never afford to buy a full meal; and you told us you would see what you could do for us, and that's all it amounted to. One by one we were leaving, only to let others come and take our places and share our fate. *(Vehemently.)* Yes, leaving for what, after despair had taught us we could not live at honest work? Who is to blame?

(A brief silence, and Mrs. Lenox turns her eyes away.)

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(To the young woman mildly, taking her hand.) You come and stay with me, and never give up the fight.

THE YOUNG WOMAN.

Oh, it is useless to fight against poverty! It grips at my very soul! *(Throws her arms wildly over her head.)* I fear it! I fear it! I suffer the pangs of hunger, and my mind is in a whirl. I can't stand it any longer! *(She sobs bitterly and leans on the elderly woman.)*

THE ELDERLY WOMAN.

(Wiping her eyes with the apron and petting the young woman tenderly.) Poor child, I will

help you all I can. (*To Zoharita.*) Oh, I knew her mother and father well. They were both so good, but died early.

ZOHARITA.

(*To the elderly woman.*) Blessed be you and blessed be she. (*Turns to Mrs. Lenox.*) There is something wrong somewhere, and I would much like to help you correct that wrong, if you would permit our working together for the good of this community.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Looks inquiringly, through her lorgnette, at Zoharita.*) Who are you, who offers to assist me in my charitable undertakings? Mrs. Aldrich and myself, with some other ladies are just busy arranging a charity ball to raise funds for relieving the sufferings that have befallen the working class of the city. Would you probably like to take a hand in the work with us, may I ask?

ZOHARITA.

I must tell you plainly, that none of our social evils are ameliorated in the least by any of your donations or endeavors, here mentioned.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Surprised.*) You surprise me! Are not our missions both at home and abroad, our charitable

institutions, our charity balls, churches and institutions of learning all working harmoniously for the good of humanity?

ZOHARITA.

Yes, much, in the same way as our Red Cross workers in wars; they try to bandage the bleeding. But why not prevent the war and thus prevent its horrors and the need of the Red Cross workers? Don't you see that all this is misspent energy?

MRS. LENOX.

(*Astonished.*) But my goodness—. Here is expended millions of dollars in missionary and charity work every year, and it must certainly do much good.

ZOHARITA.

It would be well for you to let me impress on your mind that this expenditure is mostly wasted in an attempt at self-deception. (*Points at the two women*). There is the field where your charity should have begun. (*The women look approvingly.*) (*Mrs. Lenox expresses defiance, but Zoharita raises her hand against her*). No, my sister, let us talk this over in a loving spirit, and with sympathy for the suffering world. You are misinstructed and misguided, like most of the people, and it is well for you to become aware thereof, that

you may make such corrections as will enable you to begin a real mission and a real work of love.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Pacified.*) Well, I am willing to reserve judgment until you have spoken.

ZOHARITA.

Then observe, that although it is good and well to give alms, to prevent the need of alms is still better. And although it is a deed of mercy as well as a duty to act as a Good Samaritan to the one who has fallen victim among the robbers on the way, to help rid the way of robbers, with no more victims to aid, is still better.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Approvingly.*) Yes, yes; I agree with that.

ZOHARITA.

Then you will also agree, that true reform, which is always the most important charity work, must begin with the causes and not with the effects of wrongs.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Nodding her head.*) Yes, that sounds reasonable. You talk very learned. You must be a college graduate yourself. (*Smiling.*) Your suggestions are really philosophical. But where shall we

strike at the causes of the wrongs of society? We can no longer pay attention to our distinguished Pastor Stevenson, as he is an apostate; and we cant' listen to Earl Melton, as he is a revolutionist; neither can we go by what Zoharita says, as she is a heathen; and least of all can we hearken to the socialists, for they are crazy.

ZOHARITA.

(*Cautiously.*) Well, we need to make a little change in business methods.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Interrogatively.*) Yes, probably. (*Looking aside reflectively.*) I wonder if that would help.

ZOHARITA.

There is something called "big business," is there not?

MRS. LENOX.

(*Nodding her head suspiciously.*) Yes—

ZOHARITA.

It is there the evil hand, you wish to stay, works its greatest mischief. For big business, under its present general principle, can't make wealth and luxury on the one hand without at the same time making poverty and abomination on the other.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Astonished.*) The audacity! To insinuate that poverty and misery are due to our legal industrial manipulations. (*Throwing back her head.*) The idea!

ZOHARITA.

(*Assuming authority.*) The legal feature of the matter you need not mention; it is the results which testify.

MRS. LENOX.

(*On the defensive.*) Are you aware that most of the people can't think and act for themselves, and that someone must plan and act for them? Is it then not right that the one whose mind and energy have created employment for the many shall have his due return in profit?

ZOHARITA.

A due return in profit, you say. Aye, of a truth, but no undue profit. No one has the right before God to use his superior ability or inherited wealth to enrich himself on the labor of his less fortunate fellow-men and let them suffer want. It is your duty, therefore, to pay those who work for you, enough to live decently, before you keep from their earnings any percentage as your profit. Because you haven't done so, you are responsible for their condition and suffering.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Indignant.*) My employes are all free and may go elsewhere, if they can better themselves. I don't keep them as slaves by any means. I pay them according to a mutual agreement, and I feel free from any responsibility for them whatever.

ZOHARITA.

(*Determinedly.*) That's where you make a great mistake, dear sister. You have the power and are well aware, that the mutual agreement between yourself and your employes is a forced agreement on their part. The great trouble is that people are false to their inner convictions and live a lie. The principle of Christ is held not applicable in business, and the church has disregarded it as essential, even to spiritual happiness, which is held to be obtainable by other means. Hence your laws are made accordingly. (*Points at the unfortunate women*). Behold the victims of it all! (*Pauses, and then reaches forth her arms*). Oh, come, dear soul! Open your heart to their woe! Let the teaching of Christ be your religion and your law. Then you will become a center of strength and consolation to the people. (*Mrs. Lenox bows her head.*)

(*Fire bells are heard at a distance and fire wagons with bells and whistles are heard passing on*

an opposite street. A man enters hurriedly from the right, and an explosion is heard at a distance.)

THE MAN.

(As he comes running.) The Press Building is on fire. *(He continues out to the left, and other men follow him hurriedly from the right.)*

MRS. LENOX.

(To Zoharita, reaching forth her hand.) You have given me much to think about, and I wish to thank you. I shall try to make changes in various ways according to your suggestion. *(To the two women)*. And you—let the past be forgotten. A new light has appeared to you as well as to me. From now on you shall have all you need. Follow me home. *(To Zoharita.)* And you I must learn to know more fully, whoever you are.

(The two women are greatly surprised, looking at one another.)

ZOHARITA.

(To Mrs. Lenox.) I thank you in behalf of the many whose hearts you will gladden. And as you proceed to help the world by helping to remove the causes of sin and suffering, you will look back upon this moment with thanks to God. *(With a gentle bow)*. My name is Zoharita.

MRS. LENOX.

(*As if stunned, gazes inquiringly at her for a moment; then with a happy smile again gives her her hand.*) I have been mistaken.

ZOHARITA.

(*Takes her hand.*) All men have been mistaken, but hail to the one who makes correction.

ACT IV.

SCENE III.

John Aldrich's office the evening of the same day. Aldrich is walking back and forth, smoking a cigar, and is in an ugly mood. A brass band is heard passing by, to the right, with people yelling—three cheers for Earl Melton!

ALDRICH.

(*Throws the cigar, disgusted.*) Damn this election, anyhow!

An office clerk enters from the back room with election returns and reads from a slip of paper:

80 precincts completed:

Earl Melton—15,000.

Thos. Franklin—970.

ALDRICH.

(*In unrestrained fury.*) Shut up!

THE CLERK.

Very well, sir! (*He goes.*)

ALDRICH.

(*Gesticulates.*) May the red fire and deep waters swallow those worm eating voters! If Stevenson hadn't caved, this would never have happened.

A NEWSBOY.

(*Outside, to the right.*) Journal-Extra! All about the big fire! Many men hurt!

ALDRICH.

(*Visibly affected.*) One thing on top of the other. If one could only get out of it safely.

THE CLERK.

(*Enters from the rear room, bringing a newspaper.*) It looks bad for Inglehart! It says here that he, and the editorial staff, and practically all who were connected with the paper, were out for lunch when the explosion took place.

ALDRICH.

(*Sits down back of his desk as if greatly shocked.*) You don't say—

THE CLERK.

It relates also that the fire chief had found the janitor lying unconscious near the stairway, on the main floor, with some fuse in his pocket.

ALDRICH.

(*Wipes his brow.*) Oh, it must be a lie! Don't you know it is the election day?

THE CLERK.

(*Hands him the paper.*) The janitor has been taken to the City Hospital, it says.

ALDRICH.

Who in the world could ever have thought anything crooked about Inglehart.

(*The clerk goes.*)

STEVENSON.

(*Enters from the right—much moved.*) I am sorry, very sorry!

ALDRICH.

(*Rises with a vicious look.*) It is about time you were getting sorry.

STEVENSON.

(*Sternly.*) Never mind me this time. The omens speak of you.

ALDRICH.

(*Angrily, coming forth from his seat.*) Am I to stand more charges from you?

STEVENSON.

(*Sternly, as before.*) I don't come to accuse, I would only like to know if you need my help.

ALDRICH.

(*With a bitter grin.*) I see, you come and wish to be my friend again, eh?

STEVENSON.

Something serious concerns you in what has now taken place. The man who was taken unconscious from the Press Building to the City Hospital is recovering and has made a confession, stating that he was hired by Inglehart to set the building on fire.

ALDRICH.

(*In a changed attitude.*) That looks bad for Inglehart. I pity him, foolish man— (*He sits down and wipes his face.*)

STEVENSON.

I, too, pity him; but I pity the other man more. And those who got hurt. All do I pity.

ALDRICH.

I too, by God. We better bury our hatchets and take up a collection for them; or what?

THE CLERK.

(*In the door, in the back.*) Do you wish for any more election returns, Mr. Aldrich?

ALDRICH.

Of course! What have you got?

THE CLERK.

(*Reading from a slip of paper.*) A landslide for the Reform Party. Earl Melton is elected by an overwhelming majority.

ALDRICH.

(*Jumps up from his seat.*) To Hades with the majority! (*Turns his face to Stevenson with a vicious look, hesitating for a moment, and then exclaims.*) The majority, the majority! Shall the majority have the right to ruin me?

(*The clerk goes.*)

STEVENSON.

(*Looking disgustedly at Aldrich.*) And yet there is some news worse than that—

ALDRICH.

(*With a threatening look.*) Look out now for what you say—

STEVENSON.

No sooner had the man at the hospital made

his confession, before a policeman brought in Inglehart to face his accuser. He attempted at first to deny his guilt, but broke down, and then he also made a confession.

ALDRICH.

(*Wiping his brow.*) I suppose he blamed it on somebody else, like the other fellow. Inglehart never had any conscience, anyhow, so a lie more or less wouldn't matter— (*He sits down.*)

STEVENSON.

(*Firmly.*) Yes, he implicated somebody higher up.

ALDRICH.

(*Jumps to his feet, with clenched fists.*) Do you mean to say—

FRANKLIN.

(*Enters disgusted from the right and throws down his hat.*) I am out and you are all in, Mr. Aldrich!

ALDRICH.

(*To Franklin.*) What kind of a government expert are you? Do also you know where the wind blows from?

FRANKLIN.

Wind? You will get wind, good and plenty! I

predict rough sailing before long. After implicating you, Inglehart committed suicide.

STEVENSON.

(Surprised.) My God!

ALDRICH.

(With a look of satisfaction on his face.) I am glad he is dead! I am glad for the good of the whole city that the confounded liar is out of the way.

(Mrs. Inglehart enters—grief-stricken and accuses Aldrich bitterly.)

MRS. INGLEHART.

You wicked gorilla! Now my husband is out of your grip at last. You persuaded him to destroy the Press Building, and—

ALDRICH.

(Cries out, with both fists raised against her.)
You crazy woman!

MRS. INGLEHART.

(Defiantly.) You did! I heard it, although you were not aware of it. I know also that this tool of yours, Mr. Franklin, suggested the scandalous story about Melton. And now, when my husband no longer could stand the disgrace you

brought upon him, he ended his life. You murdered him!

ALDRICH.

(*Angrily.*) No more of this! Look out for what you say! You are insane.

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*Unflinchingly.*) Yes, I shall look out for you! Everybody shall look out for you! I am insane when telling you the truth about yourself, and so is everybody else when laying bare your deeds. But think of what you have done! Think of what you have done, all of you! You have worked harmoniously to the same end with the result that a great city suffers. You all deserve to be shot!

STEVENSON.

(*Overwhelmed.*) I have already begun a new life and a new work.

MRS. INGLEHART.

Then, what business have you here?

STEVENSON.

(*Emphatically.*) Because it is my hope that also Mr. Aldrich will begin a new life and a new work.

MRS. INGLEHART.

(*With raised voice.*) Yes, in the penitentiary!

And I shall produce evidence that will place him there!

THE CLERK.

(In the door, at the rear, calls aloud.) Do you wish for any more election returns, Mr. Aldrich?

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Some years later. A road rising along a hillside, from left to right. Treetops are seen in the background, rising above the hill from the lowland, below.

Temple bells ring in the distance for a brief moment, and faint thunder is heard, far away.

Prince of Edom, wearing a black toga and a black skull cap, comes running from the left and stops, half way up the hill.

PRINCE OF EDMOM.

(*Excited.*) The hill-climbers are all about me! All are persisting in reaching the summit and the new temple; and if they do, I have no more power over them! (*With emphasis, swinging his hand.*) Forces, blind but willing, strike at my command! (*Thunder sounds nearer.*)

A MAN'S VOICE.

(*To the right.*) Hard climbing—

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Yes; see to it that you don't slip!

PRINCE OF EDMOM.

(*Shakes his fist toward the right.*) But I shall

see to it that you do slip! I am the warden here!
Who dares ascend?

(A woman dressed in white, with a basket of white flowers, climbs up the hill from the right, followed by a man, in a dark gray suit.)

THE MAN.

You are a great climber.

THE WOMAN.

(Stops and looks back.) Yes, I have been climbing much, and I love to climb.

(Another woman dressed in white comes up the hill, from the right.)

SECOND WOMAN.

What a struggle to ascend this hill for one who doesn't know the way.

THE MAN.

That's my experience also.

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(Who has been watching and listening with tense attention.) You are trespassing on forbidden ground! Not before you have conquered me shall you ever reach your goal.

THE MAN.

(*To Prince of Edom.*) To hell with you! What have we to do with you?

PRINCE OF EDOM.

I am here to block your way. (*The women and the man advance up the hill, to the road. Prince of Edom tries to evade the women but attacks the man. The women stand off, looking with anxiety. After wrestling for some time Prince of Edom prevails, and carries the man up to the crest and throws him down out of view, in the background.*)

PRINCE OF EDOM.

(*As he hurls the man.*) Down to your doom!

(*The women scream and hurry up to the crest, while Prince of Edom steps aside, laughing sarcastically.*)

FIRST WOMAN.

(*Looking down the hill, in the background.*)

Oh, he is still rolling and sliding! There he got hold of a little tree, on the hillside! Oh, he is safe! (*Calls down the hill, pointing towards the left.*) Go round about! There is a road leading up from the left!

THE MAN.

(*Below the hill.*) I am not through with that

devil yet! Had I been aware of his tricks he would never have thrown me.

FIRST WOMAN.

(Takes some flowers out of her basket and waves them with her hand.) I know you will have power over him. Remember my white temple-lilies!

THE MAN.

Ah, yes!

FIRST WOMAN.

(With raised voice, moving toward Prince of Edom.) You dare not touch us! And get you out of our way!

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Retreating along the hillside toward the right.) Your white garments save you. *(He hastens out to the right.)*

SECOND WOMAN.

Oh, what a dangerous man!

FIRST WOMAN.

Yes, thank God that he has no power over us.

SECOND WOMAN.

It was our good fortune we had white garments which he couldn't touch.

FIRST WOMAN.

Yes, so he said. Neither could he touch these lilies, which I have cultivated especially for Zoharita. (*They proceed out to the right, and at the same time, Pastor Stevenson and Mrs. Lenox enter from the left, both attired in white.*)

MRS. LENOX.

(*As they enter.*) I well remember even from my childhood days how Melton Hill was regarded as an abode of trolls.

STEVENSON.

(*As they stop.*) So do I.

MRS. LENOX.

I used to believe in trolls myself.

STEVENSON.

I not only used to believe in trolls, but I even used to be guided by trolls.

MRS. LENOX.

Maybe the saying is true that all men have been ruled by trolls?

STEVENSON.

(*Pondering.*) It is a queer saying, Mrs. Lenox; yet I think it is true.

MRS. LENOX.

Perhaps that's why Zoharita came to our city that the people might be saved from the trolls, and from the belief in trolls?

STEVENSON.

You are impressed with a remarkable truth, Mrs. Lenox, a truth which makes me reflect on strange circumstances.

MRS. LENOX.

How so?

STEVENSON.

Legends tell us that an old Indian tribe that dwelt in this region, and who evidently invented the myth about the trolls, entertained the belief that the Great Spirit would some day descend upon Melton Hill and dwell there as an everlasting light to His people. The legend goes on to say that the trolls shall then be transformed into men and do the will of the Great Spirit and worship Him. Strange was it therefore, that Zoharita came and built a temple upon that hill as a dwelling place for the Great Spirit and a reformatory for trolls.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Looking at Stevenson much mystified.*) Oh, how remarkable! And think of the wonderful

change the people and conditions have undergone since Zoharita came to the city.

STEVENSON.

Like the storm and the rain, the light and the heat, all in one force at the coming of spring, so a transforming power came upon us. At first the elements were agitated, and pains and pangs were felt, we did not know why; but song and summer followed, and we now realize it all came to pass because a new life was born.

MRS. LENOX.

(*Nodding her head approvingly.*) Yes, how true. That John Aldrich was sent to the penitentiary was in itself a notable event. And wasn't it strange, too, that as one change followed the other in rapid succession, and as a new political party came into power, and the industries were taken over by the municipality, Mrs. Melton died, just as if she, too, was a unit of that old regime that went under?

STEVENSON.

(*Nodding his head.*) Even we were units of that old regime and went under in a way. It so had to be, that truth and justice might triumph. Only then was it possible for religion to come to its right. Now, moral teachings have taken the

place of false theories, and people praise God in understanding and happiness.

(The thunder strikes hard, near by.)

STEVENSON.

(As they both look visibly concerned about the weather.) We better hasten on, Mrs. Lenox, lest we shall be overtaken by a thunderstorm. *(He starts toward the right, with Mrs. Lenox following, when suddenly the whole hill trembles and shakes.)*

MRS. LENOX.

(Frightened.) Earthquake! God help us!

(People scream "earthquake" farther off both to the right and to the left. Prince of Edom raises his head above the crest of the hill, in the background, and laughs scornfully.)

MRS. LENOX.

(Frightened, and holding on to Stevenson with both hands.) That's Prince of Edom! Oh God, that's Prince of Edom!

(Stevenson holds Mrs. Lenox protectingly and looks about in amazement.)

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Rises to his feet, on the top of the hill. He is followed by several small quacking dwarfs, and, with a grin, shakes his fist threateningly.) You

people have deserted me, but as yet I have not deserted you. By tempest and earthquake I shall make you return to the low land, and my curse shall follow you!

STEVENSON.

(*Raises his fist against him.*) You have no power over us!

(*Earl Melton enters from the left, wearing a white toga, and followed by a group of people dressed in white; Grace and Mrs. Inglehart are among them. Prince of Edom observes Melton with surprise. He grins and shakes his fist, exclaiming*): I shall be ahead of you all at the temple door! (*He hastens out to the right, with the dwarfs following, quacking.*)

MELTON.

(*With a forceful gesture, looking back to his followers.*) Despite thunder and earthquake and imps from Hades we still proceed!

(*Stevenson and Mrs. Lenox bow to Melton and step aside. Melton continues up the road, towards the right, and all the others follow. Temple bells again ring in the distance.*)

ACT V.

SCENE II.

Melton Hill a while later. Zoharita's temple, to the left and partly in the background, with only the front and entrance in view. In the background, farther to the right, is seen lower landscape with hills and trees in the distance.

A storm is raging with thunder and lightning and drifting clouds. During the storm the light oscillates between normal and semi-darkness. At each flash of lightning the scene is lighted up for an instant during the darkest moments.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(On the outside, to the right, in a voice of great stress and worry.) Fatal hour if defeat must come! In spite of my efforts Melton is nearing! If he enters the temple it means he is my conqueror. *(He enters with long sweeping steps from the right, wearing the same costume as in the preceding scene. He is accompanied by dwarfs, carrying guns, and swings his hands over his head).* Oh, hear me, forces of nature and tempest mighty! Stay their march and triumph!

(He listens, and the dwarfs quack. The storm is raging and the clouds drifting; lightning flashes, and thunder rumbles. Presently there is a lull in the thunder, and Prince of Edom continues in the same manner.)

Worry upon worry, and defeat upon defeat have made my life miserable! Here I am, looking

back upon a long career of struggle! Early and late, night and day, have I been at work from the beginning, and of all creatures I alone am without rest. My lot it is, and always was, to put mind against mind and hand against hand. But with grief I must witness, that because of my labor man is ever in search for new powers and new means of protection, elevating himself through an ever shifting conflict.

I have labored with skill and precaution, yet, no sooner have I completed a work of marvel and greatness than it has faded away as a cloud of vapor. No sooner have I built myself a palace and ascended the throne of my kingdom than the ground and royal edifice begin to sink, with cracks opening, and pillars leaning and falling.

No sooner have I established a business before my trusted servants have proved untrue and handed my goods over to another lord and left me. And now, as I enjoyed the consummation of my military development of the ages, and had succeeded in teaching man to pride himself in the belief, that this achievement was his protection and blessing, he suddenly discovers it to be his curse. Yes, well do I know, and with grief I must witness, that he will not rest before he has destroyed it all. Yet, in the meanwhile, I shall not be idle. The denizens of the dark deep shall fight for my cause.

(*Looks about, gesticulating*). Press on, press on, ye demons of darkness, and let it be known, far and near, that Prince of Edom claims the earth!

(*The thunder and lightning increase for a moment, and Prince of Edom pauses. Presently another lull, and he continues more calmly, while, occasionally, flashes of lightning, unattended by thunder, illuminate the scene and the drifting clouds.*)

In high places I have dwelt through ages long and misty, and the faith of man I have controlled at will. But lo, here a magic light from yonder star crystallizes in a woman and affirms the long rejected teaching of the renowned conqueror from Nazareth, that by the condition of his heart and his own deeds alone can man rise or fall before his Maker.

This woman has caused me worry and she has caused me defeat. Her light has driven me from one stronghold after another and made me homeless as the drifting clouds. The spirit of revolt has seized the people, and grievous beyond bounds is my disappointment.

Press on, press on, ye forces of my dwelling plane! May the rage of the elements voice my grief!

(*The thunder increases violently for a brief moment, and Prince of Edom pauses, lightning*

flashes, and drifting clouds continue, as he again proceeds, emphatically.)

Yet, if the world should now at last reject me, I rejoice that I have had my day and paid in full for all the service rendered me. My ordinances have been kept by the whole of Christendom in preference to the commandments of its founder. He taught love and forgiveness, and advocated justice on earth as it is in heaven; I have instigated hate and revenge, and advocated strife and conflict. (*Clenches and shakes his fist*). And behold, I have prevailed! By having had dominion in Christendom I have cursed the earth with wars and bloodshed and made nations weep and suffer (*The dwarfs flourish their guns.*) But, to my great regret, it will come to pass in the days of the coming race, that, whenever guns are fired, people shall remember the transgressions of their fathers, and their retribution at the hands of Prince of Edom, and pity them. (*The storm and lightning have ceased gradually, and he looks about in anxiety.*) I fear I am losing out in this game—

(*The organ plays softly in the temple for a moment, and Prince of Edom raises his fist toward the temple.*) Half of all that thou art thou owest me!

A POWERFUL VOICE.

(*Speaks solemnly within the temple, and a*

stream of light shines through the open door from within.) "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

(The dwarfs quack, lower their guns and look up into the face of Prince of Edom.)

SEVERAL VOICES.

(Sing within the temple). Amen, Amen! And the tree of life shall give unto him immortality.

PRINCE OF EDMON.

By my soul, that voice sounds familiar to me! It calls on man to overcome me, *(Shakes his fist.)* but I defy it, and I defy all who contend with me!

(The sign of the cross appears suddenly in the light-stream, in the temple door, and Prince of Edom looks at it with awe.) It is an omen that seems to bespeak my defeat. *(Moves back a step as if in fear.)* It is the sign of him who dwells in the temple. *(Clinches his fist.)* But I still defy—

(The sign of the cross changes into a human shape, in the image of Jesus Christ, robed in a flowing garment. The apparition looks at Prince of Edom.)

PRINCE OF EDMON.

(Looking terror-stricken at the apparition.) My doom is sealed! *(The dwarfs flee, quacking,*

disappearing to the right, near the foreground; while Prince of Edom retreats sideways and laboriously to the right, shielding himself with hands and arms, as he moves slowly). Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

(At this time Zoharita enters from the background, at the right, and is robed as a bride with the circlet of jewels, she has formerly worn, around her head. Prince of Edom stands amazed as he sees her enter. He points toward her and continues:) And yours is the victory and the renown! *(He disappears to the right. Zoharita moves forward a few steps and kneels before the apparition).*

THE APPARITION.

Well done, good and faithful servant, who has carried the light to my children. Enter thou into the glory of thy Lord. *(He vanishes, and Zoharita rises, facing the temple.)*

ZOHARITA.

Thy light shall illuminate the world at last. Glory to thy name! *(She turns slowly and looks toward the background, at the right, and, after a brief moment, Melton enters with his flock of white-dressed followers. Zoharita proceeds to meet him.)*

MELTON.

(To Zoharita, as she takes his arm.) At last, my joy and my bride!

ZOHARITA.

I have been waiting for thee these many days, and wondered if Prince of Edom hindered thee from coming.

MELTON.

(Holding her arm.) No, thanks to you, he could no longer hinder me. *(The organ plays for a moment, and they proceed into the temple with the people following. At this time the procession is joined by other white-dressed people that enter from all sides.)*

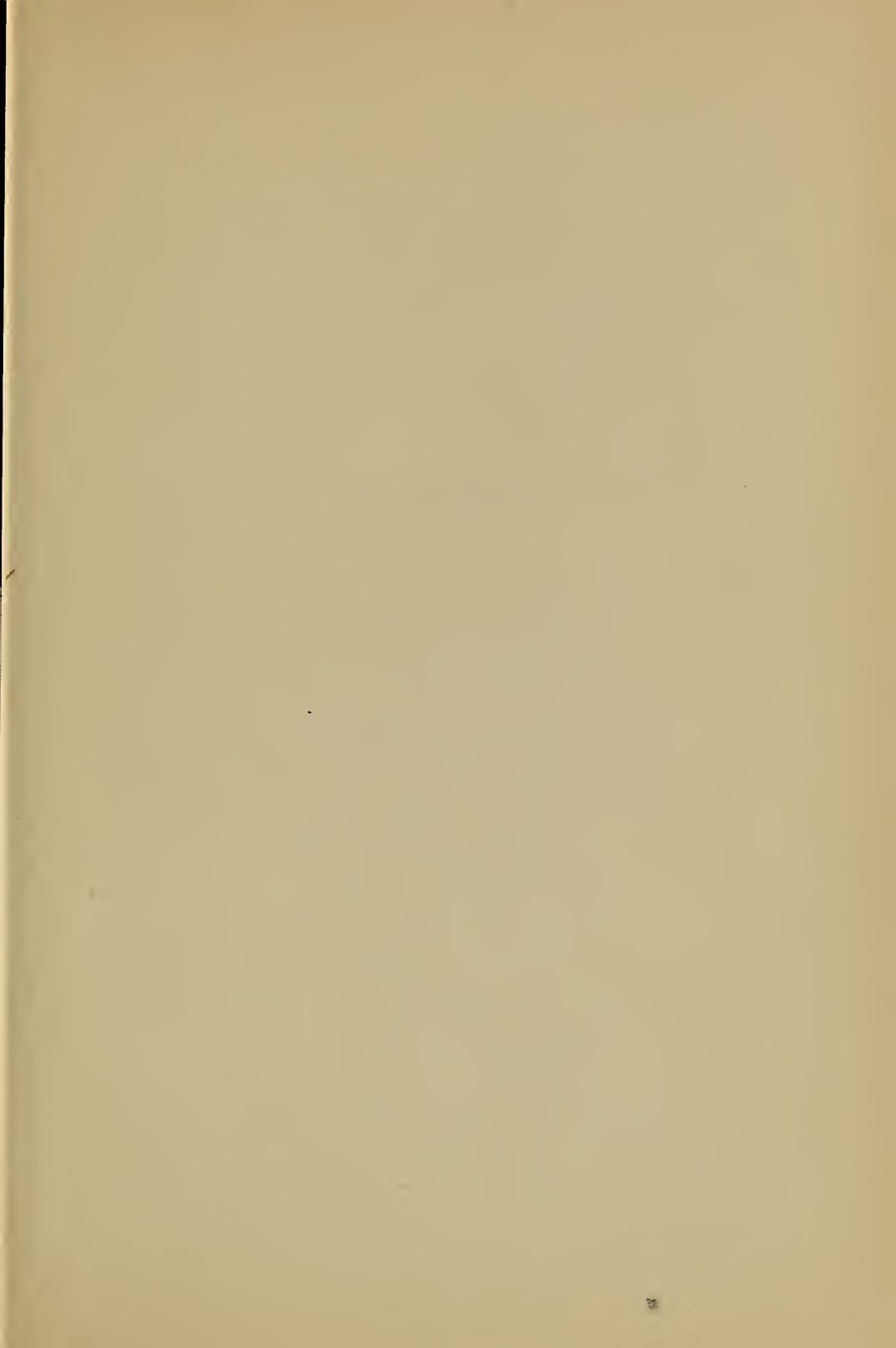
THE VOICE.

(Within the temple, as the people enter.) Behold, I make all things new! The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.

MANY VOICES.

(Singing, as the organ again plays.) Amen, Amen!

(The organ continues to play.)



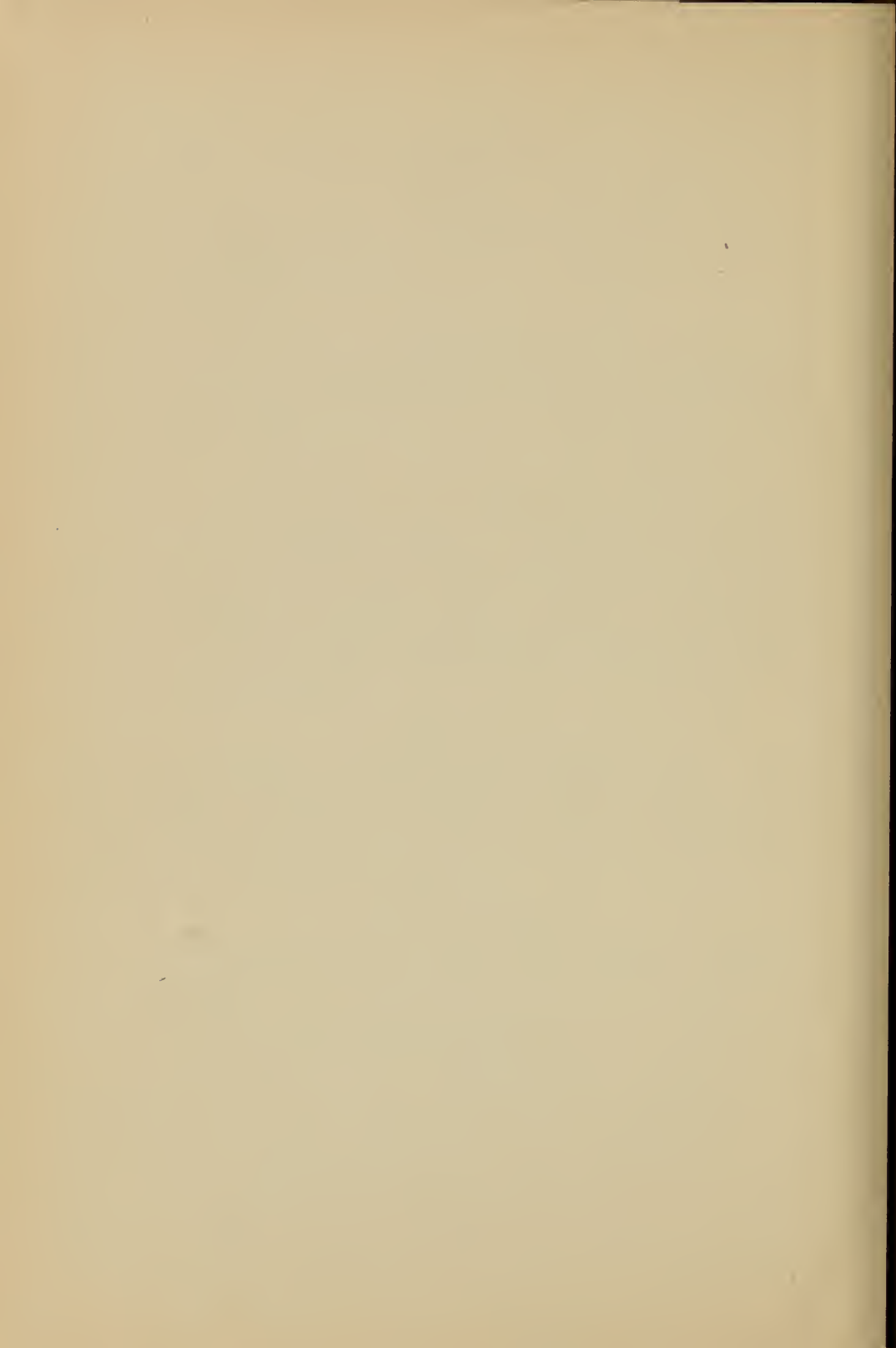
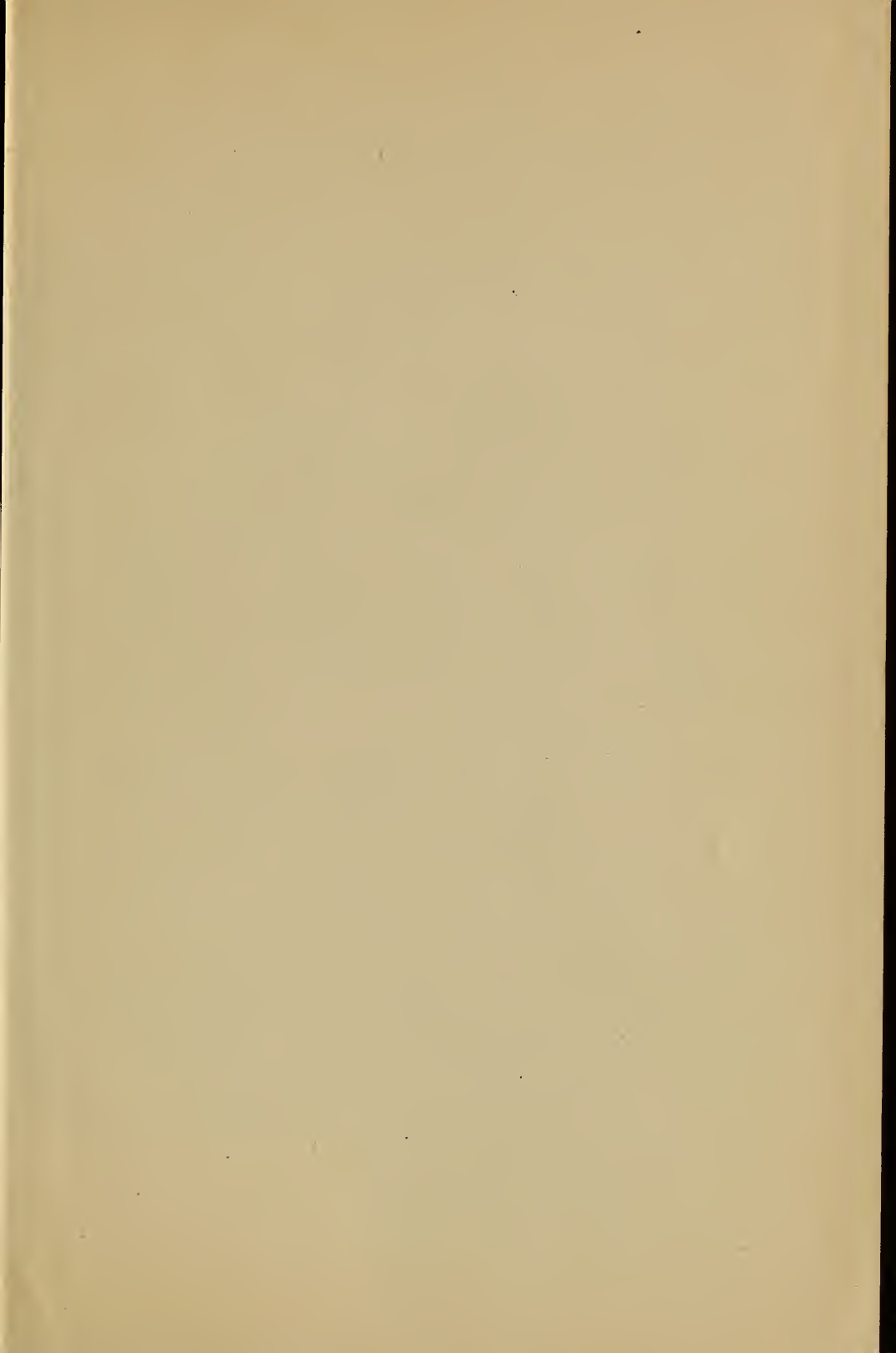


Table of Contents.

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Cast of Characters</i>	3
<i>Act I</i>	5
<i>Act II</i>	58
<i>Act III</i>	107
<i>Act IV</i>	152
<i>Act V</i>	189



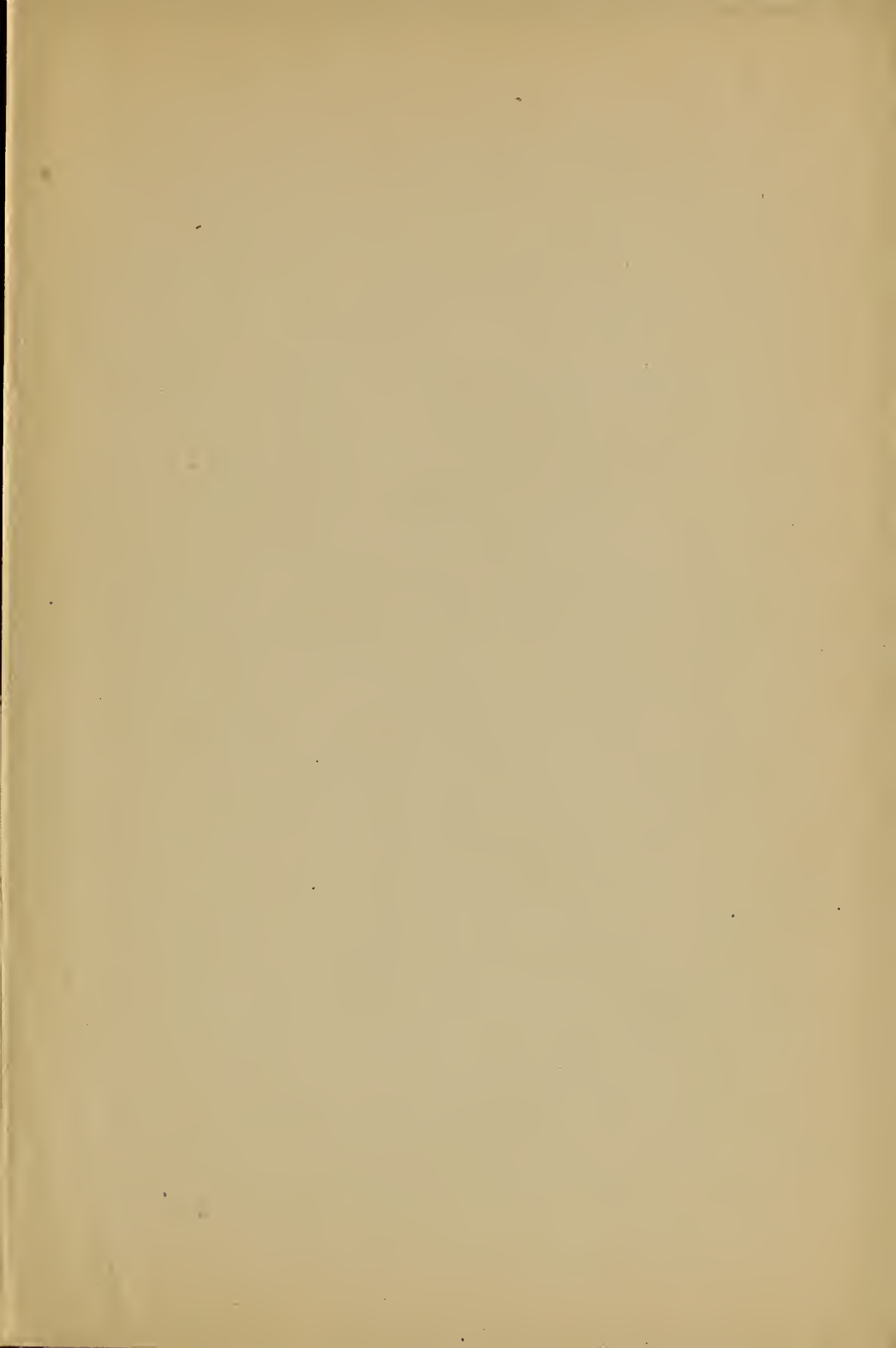


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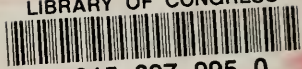
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