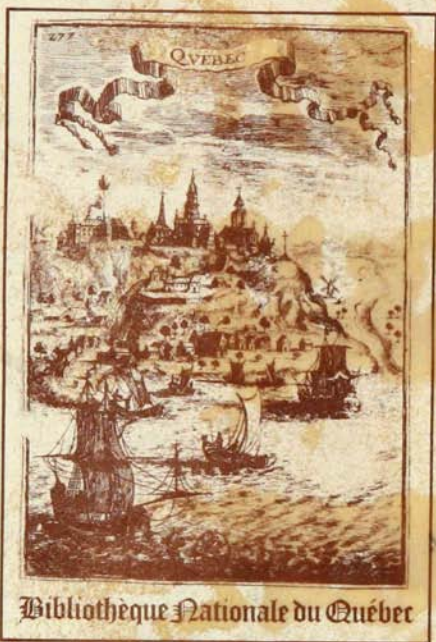


SAUL



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S A U L.

A DRAMA.

IN THREE PARTS.

[by Henrysage]

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HEARTY WELCOME TO ALL VISITORS

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PERSONS REPRESENTED IN

FIRST PART.

SAUL, King of Israel.

JONATHAN, his eldest son.

ABNER, a relative of Saul, and a General in his army.

SAMUEL, High Priest of Israel.

JEHOIADAH, a Priest.

AHIAH, a Priest.

DAVID, a young Shepherd, and subsequently King of Israel.

JESSE, father of David.

AHINOAM, Queen of Israel.

ANGELS.

GLORIEL, Chief of the celestial spirits who appear.

ZOE, Saul's guardian angel.

NARDIEL, an angel, who communicates the will of Jehovah to Samuel.

TYRANNEE.

DEMONS.

ZAPH, Chief of the evil spirits who appear.

MALZAH, "The Evil Spirit from the Lord."

TIPTOE, Zaph's messenger.

PEYONA.

ZOBAB.

WIDEWING.

SITSTILL.

SARDON.

GRAB.

CLUTCH.

TAKEM.

ZOB.

FLY.

Prophets, Elders, Messengers from Jabesh Gilead, Officers, Soldiers,
A Courtier, a Levite, a Tailor, a Toper, a Peasant, an Artizan, Saul's
Armour Bearer, Jonathan's Armour Bearer, a Rustic, a Physician,
Domestics of the Palace, &c.

SECOND PART.

SAUL, King of Israel.

JONATHAN.

ABNER.

DAVID.

JESSE.

ELIAB, David's Brother.

GOLIAH.

JOKIEL.

JARED.

ABINOAM, Queen of Israel.

TYRANNEE.

ZAPH.

TIPTOE.

Courtiers, Officers, Soldiers, Maidens, &c.

THIRD PART.

SAUL, King of Israel.

JONATHAN.

ABNER.

DAVID.

JESSE.

SAMUEL.

AHIMELECH, a Priest.

ABIATHER, his son.

DOEG.

AHIMELECH, the Hittite.

ABISHAI, David's Cousin.

ACHISH, King of Gath.

MICHAL, Saul's daughter.

The WITCH of Endor.

TYRANNEE.

ZAPH.

MALZAH.

TIPTOE.

Courtiers, Messengers, Ziphites, Soldiers, Saul's Armour Bearer, &c.

S A U L .

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Hill of God, with the Philistine garrison adjacent. A number of DEMONS dancing: ZAPH, their chief, observing them; and TIPTOE, his messenger, looking on smiling.

ZAPH.

Gently, this is sacred ground;
Foot it in a quiet round;
Tiptoe, keep a keen look out
Whilst I join awhile the bout.

TIPTOE (*aside*) *turning to keep watch.*

I wish Saltina had been here: long since
I would have spun her up the air, and made
Her sob with sweet gyration.

ZAPH, *having danced a measure, and left the circle.*

'Tis a vile hoax to dance with one's own gender!
I would have chosen of the other sex half my troop,
But that love making would have hindered affairs:
Besides, I should have had more brawls upon my hands
Than would employ ten of hell's readiest judges
To adjudicate,—passing by the peril of giving
Further cause for what is now so imminent, namely,
A law amongst us granting a divorce.
Tiptoe sees something: he is like a hound:
I'll take him out a hunting when I've leisure;
To scour the world with him must be a pleasure.
Tiptoe, what seest thou?

TIPTOE.

A great rabble.

ZAPH.

Of what composed?

TIPTOE.

Of Prophets mostly :
 With solemn sound they are coming ghostly,
 And, midst them's, one whose height and port
 Declare him of superior sort.

ZAPH.

Dost thou know him ? — stop your capering.—
 Dost thou know him ?

TIPTOE.

Methinks I do.

ZAPH.

Strain through the air thy lynx-like view :—
 Methinks thou wilt know him, thou'rt such a ranger.

TIPTOE.

Yes, now I know the towering stranger :
 His name is Saul, he is Kish's Son ;
 His father's asses, lost, he had gone
 To seek them, but a diadem
 Has found instead of finding them ;
 But they, now found, he home doth steer,
 Midst plaintive sound approaching here :—
 And this I learned as, passing Ramah,
 I heard its gossips, and small drama
 Beheld myself, — upon Saul's head
 Beheld a phial of oil shed
 By Samuel, who then hailed as king
 This Saul, and kissed him, promising
 That signs should happen to him three,
 The last of which you soon shall see :
 Two are already.

ZAPH.

Spirits all,
 A stranger comes whose name is Saul :
 He has lately been, I hear,
 By Samuel, the Authentic Seer,
 Anointed to hold future reign
 Within this now priest-ruled domain :
 With him come Prophets, waxing loud,
 And others, a miscellaneous crowd.

1st DEMON.

Then here's an end to dancing ! 'tis ever so :
 I'll even about my business go.

2nd DEMON.

No, prythee defer awhile adieu,
 They are near, and rather noisy too.

ZAPH.

Watch their motions,
Methinks they are coming to devotions.

3rd DEMON.

Here they are, each like a zany,
And braying loud, Jehovah, many.

*Enter SAUL and a company of PROPHETS and SPECTATORS, the PROPHETS
chanting.*

Jehovah, Jehovah, Oh, Israel's God,
In pity look from thine abode
Upon us low.

Thou who once brought our fathers up
From Egypt, and didst cause to stoop
Proud Pharoah, and his host o'erthrew,
At present for us interpose,
Ah, look again on Jacob's woes.

3rd DEMON.

This is doleful.

4th DEMON.

I'm in tears.

2nd DEMON.

Dry your eyes and ope your ears.

ZAPH.

Keep your countenances, be decorous,
There seems a pretty farce before us.

SAUL (*recitative.*)

On Jacob thou hast looked, Oh, Lord,
According to thine ancient word.

5th DEMON.

He knows not that.

ZAPH.

Your tongues restrain,
The Prophets are going to howl again.

PROPHETS, *in chorus.*

Thou who from bondage brought us forth,
Us saved from Moab's and Ammon's wrath;
From Amalek and Edom saved
Thy people, though they misbehaved;
And gave them manna from the skies,
And bade the rocks deep waters rise;
And led them to this promised land
Across Arabia's burning sand,
With cloud by day and fire by night—
An awful yet celestial light;
Jehovah, hear, and let the spear
Of vengeance terrify our foes;

Oh, God, attend, thine ear down bend,
Oh, let the time of sorrow close,
This access of thine Israel's woes.

3rd DEMON.

Were this not better than the last
I now from hence had fled aghast.

ZAPH.

Hist,
Let not a syllable be missed.

SAUL.

The Lord, at length, hath looked upon
His heritage; your cry hath gone
Even to his holy hill:
God shall your ardent wish fulfil.

PROPHETS.

How long, how long, how long, Oh, Lord,
Shall Israel mourn?

SAUL.

From sorrow turn.

PROPHETS.

Say, Lord, how long the land shall be
In shadow of an enemy:
How long shall violence us meet,
And wrong possess the judgment seat?

SAUL.

I heard the Lord arise and swear
Jeshurun was his special care.

DEMONS (*spoken in chorus.*)

Ha, ha; ha, ha; beware, beware;
Such was once *our* special fare:
Mocketh all things the Creator,
Mocketh his whole realm of nature;
Think not sons of earth he'll spare
Who smote the nobler things of air.

PROPHETS.

Oh, God, give ear, Jehovah, hear;
Is Israel not still to thee dear?
Did'st thou not once, for Abraham's sake,
Them thy peculiar people make?
Oh, God, arise, and Ammon shake!
Jehovah!

DEMONS.

Ha, ha; ha, ha.

PROPHETS.

Jehovah!

DEMONS.

Ha, ha ; ha, ha.

PROPHETS.

Jehovah !

DEMONS.

Ha, ha ; ha, ha.

PROPHETS.

Almighty one !

DEMONS.

He'll hear anon :

Ha, ha ; ha, ha ; pray on, pray on.

PROPHETS.

Oh, heal our hurt.

DEMONS.

'Tis princely sport

To hear them sue in such a sort.

ZAPH.

Grow not too loud and insolent ;

Who can God turn from his intent ?

Haply He indeed hath meant

Good quick coming and spread wide

Over Israel's mourning pride :

Cease your laughter, it may come after.

5th DEMON.

Master, it is many a day

Since we were allowed be gay,

Let us laugh, then, while we may.

ZAPH.

Peace, Saul sings.

SAUL, (*air.*)

I.

Oh, Canaan fair, my country dear,

Lo, thy deliverance draws near ;

The spear is raised, and bent the bow

That shall thine enemies o'erthrow.

II.

Thy grief is passed, thy mourning done ;

Put now bright hope's clean garments on ;

The Lord regards thee from the skies,

And bids the from the dust arise.

III.

Fair Land of Promise, clothe in smiles

Thy landscapes and neglected piles,

For thou shalt be redeemed ere long

From foreign and domestic wrong.

I V .

Oh, land that worships the true God,
Behold on high his outstretched rod ;
Rise, make the alien from thee flee,
The Lord, the Lord is yet with thee.

1st DEMON.

This seems the true prophetic vein.

3rd DEMON.

I should like to hear that song again.

4th DEMON.

He is deceived.

5th DEMON.

But who has deceived him ?

ZAPH.

There hath none

With a lie unto him gone.

2nd DEMON.

It is the confidence of his nature.

ZAPH.

Rather it is his Creator

Who this hour him works upon.

6th DEMON.

'Tis tedious here.

ZAPH.

Hence let us hie,

For I now hear, though faint, yet clear,

Spirits coming down the sky.

(The DEMONS vanish and a company of ANGELS, conducted by GLORIEL,
descend.)

GLORIEL.

I heard the sound of spirits in haste departing.

1st ANGEL.

Yonder o'er the hills they are darting.

GLORIEL.

If my sentiment be true,

They who lately hence withdrew

Belong unto the fallen crew.

Let Saul be guarded :—

Zoe, to thee that task's awarded :

Fare thee well.

[*Exeunt ANGELS, ZOE remaining.*

A PROPHET.

Tall stranger, whosoe'er thou art, we see

That God is with thee, therefore come with us.

SAUL.

I'll follow you. Three signs were promised me,

Which have in kind and number come to pass.

Soon as I had Samuel left my heart was changed ;
 And now I feel that which I cannot name :
 Solemnity and courage fill my soul
 That, war intending, yet sits throned in peace.

[*Exeunt SAUL and the PROPHETS.*

ZOE.

I must attend him whom to me is given
 To avert from hell and to assist towards heaven.

[*Exit ZOE.*

1st SPECTATOR.

Is Saul amongst the prophets ?

2nd SPECTATOR.

Thou perceivest.

3rd SPECTATOR.

He stalked like some great purpose hence.

1st SPECTATOR.

He did.

4th SPECTATOR.

The burden of his words was hope for Israel.

2nd SPECTATOR.

Shangar and Sampson were not likelier
 Than he.

3rd SPECTATOR.

Let us separate, we know not whether
 There be not here some spy of the Philistines.

[*Exeunt PROPHETS.*

SCENE II.

Country near Gibeah. Cattle grazing at a distance. SAUL, after being anointed king by Samuel, has returned home to Gibeah, and is there occupied as formerly.

SAUL, *musings.*

How tame now seems to me this herdsman life !
 Unprofitable too : I nought do here,
 Nought that can serve good purpose : I am like
 A taper that is left to burn to waste
 Within an empty house. Why do I stay ?
 Others could tend these herds as well as I, —
 And haply better, for my thoughts are far
 From meads and kine, and all the servile round
 Of household duties, same from year to year, —
 Alike far from the rural dull routine,
 And traffic of the town, when I it visit
 To exchange my herds and corn for silver shekels.
 Yet I will wait my time : — and yet the steer
 Puts forth his horns when his due months arrive,

And pushes with them though they are but tender ;
 The blade starts through the clod in spring ; the leaf
 Then on the bough sits in its pride of green :
 The blossom, punctual to its season, comes
 Milk-white or ruddy, and the perfect fruit
 Appears with autumn, nor the snow doth fail
 The hoary winter. Doth the snake not shed
 Its slough ? the fledgling leave its natal nest ?
 Twice what I once was now I feel to be !
 Down, proud imagination ; quiet keep,
 Thou rash impatience : — and yet Samuel said,
 “ Now God is with thee, act as thou seest fit.”
 What shall I do ? Deem this less zeal than pride,
 And here in all tranquillity abide.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Contiguous to a Hamlet.

Entre three HEBREWS and an ELDER.

1st HEBREW.

We are to assemble, saist thou, to morrow at Mizpeh ?

ELDER.

Yes, to receive a King from God and Samuel ;
 Loudly, with others, you demanded one.

1st HEBREW.

We did and do demand one, and with reason,
 For Samuel is aged and his sons are corrupt.

2nd HEBREW.

And yet 'tis said that Samuel was displeased
 At the idea, and gave, at first, no answer.

ELDER.

He did from us (for I was one of those
 Who were deputed by you to convey
 To him your wish) he did from us retire,
 As we supposed to ponder your request
 Alone, and lay it before the Lord, but soon
 Returned he, and in such a solemn style
 Foretold the issues of our granted wish,
 That, for a season, we stood wavering,
 Even as the headstrong wind, when, having blown
 Strongly out of one quarter it on sudden,
 As if uncertain of its next direction,
 Restlessly veers, neither travelling east nor west,
 Nor north nor south ; so we, surprised,
 Perplexed, revolving, and not knowing whether
 To retain this evil or to accept of that.

1st HEBREW.

What said he to you?

ELDER.

That our king should be
 Exacting and despotic ; that indeed,
 The nation no immunity should have
 Beneath his rule, nought sacred from his grasp :
 Our sons, our daughters, lands, our labor, skill ;
 In fine, our all should yield to him subscription.

2nd HEBREW.

Already a tenth the Levites are endowed with.

ELDER.

He said that our king would tithe the remainder.

1st HEBREW.

And

To that your answer ?

3rd HEBREW.

Did you not remonstrate ?

ELDER.

We said as we had been instructed : " Give us a king."

2nd HEBREW.

But did you not make stipulations, nor
 Propose abatement of the said prerogatives ?

ELDER.

No, for how could we since they to us were rather
 Foretold by the grieved prophet than ordained ;
 As though the king should don them with his crown,
 And wear them as a bright but natural garment.

3rd HEBREW.

I wish that I had been one of your number !
 I would have spoken boldly for the nation.
 What, were you not our representatives ?

ELDER.

What could we save reiterate our instruction ?
 " Let us be governed like the other peoples ;
 Let a king rule us in the days of peace,
 And lead us to battle in the hour of war."

3rd HEBREW.

Umph ! here's a fix.

1st HEBREW.

Well, I will render myself

At Mizpeh to morrow, and behold the man
 Who shall hereafter in the name of king
 Cause us to tremble ; will he dream to-night
 Of his approaching fortune ? if the choice
 Should fall on me, woe falls on you, good gentlemen.

ELDER.

Approach this crisis in a proper spirit ;
For it will be the Lord to morrow at Mizpeh,
And by his grace shall reign whom then is chosen.

3rd HEBREW.

Twixt king and levite little will be left us.
I shall not go to Mizpeh.

[Exit.

1st HEBREW.

Trudge thither with us,
Prythee. — Gone ? which way fled he ?

2nd HEBREW.

That way thou flee'st,
When thy wives, Tamar and Aholibamah,
Quarrelling, scream like two wild cats in thy house.

1st HEBREW.

Come, come ; — yet, Elder, tell me this : if heaven
Will, after all, be Arbiter to-morrow,
Why need we at Mizpeh ?

ELDER.

Go, nevertheless,
At the grave summons.

2nd HEBREW.

Grave it is for all ;
But most for those who have fair wives and daughters.

1st HEBREW.

Would the king take thy wives ?

2nd HEBREW.

Tell him to visit
Thine when they have their backs up, and he'll leave them
To thee for ever.

1st HEBREW.

I thank thee for the hint.

2nd HEBREW.

He would take our sons if strong.

1st HEBREW.

Ourselves if skilful.

2nd HEBREW.

Our property, our lands ; — that seems rather harsh :
I know not whether I shall go or not.

1st HEBREW.

None then thyself has been more loud for change.

2nd HEBREW.

Yes, yes, a change from bad to better : a curse
Upon our folly ! there is worse state than Priestdom.

1st HEBREW.

Our Fathers flourished under it.

2nd HEBREW.

And we must flourish

Over it,—that is to say, I would not say so,—

That is I would not say so in good earnest

Because 'twere blasphemy: let us prepare

To start betimes to morrow.

[*Exeunt the two HEBREWS.*]

ELDER.

We are ever dismayed

When heaven has granted our inordinate wishes.

These men aghast are at their answered prayer,

And wear but ill their merry face of courage.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

*Mizpeh.**A Sound of a multitude at a distance. Enter HEBREWS, meeting.*

1st HEBREW.

Have you seen the King?

2nd HEBREW.

We have.

3rd HEBREW.

How seems he to you?

4th HEBREW.

A lion, and a tiger, and a man,

Agreed to dwell in one magnificent den.

1st HEBREW.

If his spirit answer to his form,—and I

Believe it does,—he is the very being

For our occasion, which has grown so foul

That it needs the very devil to scour it fair,

And I suppose, from your description, sir,

That he is that Gentleman.

4th HEBREW.

I do not jest.

1st HEBREW.

Nor I.

4th HEBREW.

Have you not seen him?

1st HEBREW.

Yes, indeed.

To avoid it would have been most difficult;

Taller by the shoulders and upwards than the crowd,

He moved, and loftier bore his head above it
Than bears a swimmer his above the waves:
From every point he was conspicuous.

2nd HEBREW.

He is of strong passions doubtless.

3rd HEBREW.

I observed,
When Samuel told us that we had rejected
God's rule in asking for ourselves a king,
That his countenance fell, surprised; and I remarked
That he bit his lips, and symptoms of displeasure
Spread o'er his face, but they soon passed away
And left him as before.

4th HEBREW.

Had he a prescience
That he should be selected?

1st HEBREW.

Fitness always
Knows whether it be worthy, though it know not
Whether it be chosen; and though incompetency
Is oft mistaken in its estimate of itself,
Ability never is so. 'Tis a foolish
Saying, "The Wise know not their Wisdom, nor
The Fair their Beauty."

4th HEBREW.

Then, surely, it was strange
That he should hide himself amongst the baggage.

3rd HEBREW.

That he did so I cannot think arose
From his diffidence.

2nd HEBREW.

Diffidence might cause it.

4th HEBREW.

No,
Thence slowly he came and seemed to know his worth;
And once I fancied that he looked too proud,
Contemplating with a disdainful look
The myriads around him. — hark, they shout.

Shouts of "God save the King."

Let us join the throng.

Exeunt.

SCENE V.

Enter SAUL and HEBREWS following him.

SAUL.

You will accompany me you say : — so be it.
 If prompted, follow me and be the ball,
 Tiny at first, that shall, like one of snow,
 Gather in rolling.

A HEBREW.

We will follow thee
 Wherever thou shalt lead us.

SAUL.

To Gibeah, then ;
 And you shall soon have scope to prove you men.

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE VI.

The Country near Gibeah. SAUL, returning from the field, observes the people weeping.

SAUL.

Why are the people weeping?

A HEBREW.

Oh ! sorrow ! sorrow !

Thou too wilt weep when thou hast learned the reason.
 Nahash the king of Ammon has besiged
 Jabesh Gilead, which has promised to surrender
 To him in seven days, if none it rescue ;
 And on this sore condition, that the wretch
 Shall thrust out the right eye of every man
 Within the place, that with the hideous deed
 He may reproach, hereafter, every Hebrew.

SAUL.

Hear me, Oh God !

So be it done to me, and unto all
 To me belonging, yea, and tenfold more, —
 If more can be by living man endured, —
 If I shall fail to drive this monster back.
 Ye punishing ministers,
 Ye dark, invisible demons that do fly
 And do heaven's judgments, turn your course towards him.
 Go send them hither who have brought the news.

Exit HEBREW.

Now every motive that can my resolve
 Strengthen, come double to my heart : hear, God,
 If I should not perform more than my vow,
 May I and all in Israel be disfigured ;

Woman, youth and maiden, child and infant, all
Be brought to *total* darkness. Horrible !
Grimmer than night he seems, a dusky fiend ;
Who would come on us, bringing demi-night,
And quench for ever half our light of day.

Re-enter the HEBREW with the MESSENGERS.
Behold those here who can thine anger raise.

SAUL, *to the messengers.*
Go tell the men of Jabesh Gilead,
To fear not that foul Whelp of Twilight, Nahash ;
They shall have help.

A MESSENGER.
Seven days he has given us,
And, if we be not in that time relieved,
We must submit unto his pitiless terms.

SAUL.
Away, fear not.

Exeunt the HEBREW and MESSENGERS.
No further words, let deeds
Come next. Now herds and flocks, a last adieu :
Men are, henceforth, my flock, my pasture's Canaan :
I will forthwith to Bezek, and there raise
My standard, and woe unto them who follow
Not Saul and Samuel.

Exit.

SCENE VII.

Near Bezek. The Gathering of the Hebrews.

SAUL, *standing upon an eminence.*

SAUL.
The ground is hidden with men : the heights appear
Like to huge ant-hills, and the valleys swarm
With moving life. — Where will these numbers be
In fifty summers? even in thirty years
Half of these multitudes will be in the grave :
In twenty more a miserable remnant
(Drained of the vigor, if not of the courage,
That brings them here to-day) shall sole remain
To tell deeds yet undone : — in fifty summers
This opening day's yet uncommenced feat
Shall be a hoary tale ; yon thronging actors —
Now each impatient to perform his part —
Shall nearly all be quiet in the grave :
Even as the snowdrifts left on Lebanon
In the hot days of June, then few they'll be.

Enter MESSENGERS of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead.

Haste on to Jabesh Gilead, lest should fail
The hearts of its inhabitants, and they surrender
Themselves precipitately to the Dog,
Fondly thinking thereby to conciliate him :
To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot,
They shall have help : quick, get you over Jordan.

1st MESSENGER.

If ever blessing fell on man, mayest thou
Receive one, our Deliverer that shall be,
For is not Samuel with thee, and with him
Is not still the Lord, as once, at Ebenezer !

SAUL.

Go, I will succour you.

2nd MESSENGER.

The winds of heaven
Behind thee blow, and in our enemies' eyes
May the sun smite to-morrow, and blind them for thee.

Exeunt MESSENGERS.

SAUL.

If gratitude and earnest prayer, from them
Who have the greatest cause for both, be earnest
Of answering victory, we shall to-morrow,
Succeed in giving the idolaters such a wound
As all the balm of Gilead, which they claim,
Shall not be able to heal :—a wound so deep,
That they shall think that Jephtha lives again ;
Or that the old Zamzummim giants, whom
Their sires destroyed, have sent from the clods a spirit,
Who comes incarnate, leading Israel's ire ;
So dearly shall this arrogant siege yet cost them.
Our forces are beginning the swift march,
Which must throughout the day and night continue :
I will descend and lead them as is fit.

Exit.

SCENE VIII.

The vicinity of Jabesh Gilead. Time, Dawn.

SAUL, *pacing to and fro.*

The day breaks calmly, howsoe'er it end ;
And nature shews no great consent with man ;
Curtailling not the slumber of the clouds,
Nor rising with her clarion of the wind
To blow his signals. I hear the enemies'
Arousing hastily the sleepy legions :
Ammon has perceived us. — Would Abner would appear ?

Enter ABNER.

We are ready to assault.

SAUL.

And so am I.

Thy force lead as I bade thee: Jonathan
My orders has: like thee, he'll quit him well.
Now go, and may a sure success go with thee.

Exit ABNER.

Each moment to the foe is worth an hour: why comes
Not with my arms the youth who bears them! boy.—

(Calling on his armour bearer.)

If Jonathan should fall in his first fight!
He will not fall: and this is not thought's time. —
When this day's work is done, and serious night
Disposes to reflection and gives leisure,
We will review the hours of coming slaughter;
And while around to heaven ascends a dew
Distilled from blood now in the throbbing veins,
Sorrow for whom we must. Till then we'll act:
Survive who may, retain who shall his breath,
We'll now assault and start the work of death.

Enter a youth bringing the shield of SAUL.

Why loiteredst thou? quick, give to me my shield;
Now quit thee well on this thy virgin field.

Exeunt both.

A sound of trumpets heard, and an increasing noise of the onset. At length Ammonitish soldiers are seen fleeing across the hills, and Hebrew soldiers pursuing them.

Enter three Hebrew SOLDIERS.

1st SOLDIER.

The king hath overthrown them, and the flight
Of Nahash each man of Jabesh Gilead sees
With *both* his eyes.

2nd SOLDIER.

Abner and Jonathan

Let none escape that venture to oppose them:
Leaders like ours make vain all opposition.

3rd SOLDIER.

Opposition now is changed to flight and chase.
In loose array our army chases Ammon's
Which is past rallying broken, and both are driving
Like two black, ragged clouds before a gale.

Enter ABNER, followed by more SOLDIERS.

ABNER.

Still onward, men, and do not stop for breath
So long as there are Ammonites in view.

Exeunt omnes.

Enter JONATHAN and SOLDIERS, hastening across the scene.

JONATHAN.

Slacken not your speed, for the foe hath at his heels
Gotten wings of such astonishment and terror,
That he is marvellously swift of foot.

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE IX.

Another part of the Country.

Enter SAUL and a TRUMPETER, OFFICERS and SOLDIERS.

SAUL, *to the TRUMPETER.*

Now let the trumpet sound the call to halt,
For two of the enemy are not left together;
And all of them have thrown away their arms.
Look, and say what descry ye.

1st OFFICER.

Saving where

Yon scattered quarry flees before our hounds, —

Forgive my using such a simile, —

The landscape cleared is of the Ammonites.

So quick a thaw I have not seen before,

Nor vapor melted faster into nought.

2nd OFFICER.

They have gone much faster than they came, and left

Behind them baggage and rich trophies many.

3rd OFFICER.

They will remember this day as long as they

Shall keep a calender. Blow, boy, and let

Thine heart skip up into thine instrument,

And dance for joy therein a saraband:

In thine horn thou wilt not stumble o'er the dead.

The TRUMPETER blows the recall.

SAUL, *putting his sword into its scabbard.*

Now let us sheathe these trenchant ministers,

For, by the souls for whom they have hewn a passage

Unto some far, mysterious gehenna,

Or to the troubled sepulchre of the air,

They have well done.

[The others sheathe their swords.]

They, aided by the bow and spear, have made

A very shambles of the enemy's slain,

That lie in heaps before the walls of Jabesh,

And thence to here grow fewer, like the drops

Of blood that fall from the wounded animal

Which flees before the hunter, till 'tis drained.

We have drained this day the pride of Ammon. Lo!

As when October strews the land with leaves,
 So hath our fury larded it with dead.
 We came upon them as upon young lambs
 Come the remorseless wolves, or as Night's blast
 Sweeps down from Carmel on the dusky sea :
 Our march was through the darkness : the stars beheld it,
 And Phosphor led us with his waning beam,
 Like to a scout, upon the fated foe.
 Surprised they saw us but it was too late ;
 The snare had closed upon them to their ruin.

4th OFFICER.

May our invaders ever know such quick ruin !

SAUL.

And yet I pity them, poor breathless wretches,
 And would revive them, if I could do so,
 And would not the exasperating memory
 Of those dire terms provoke me to rekill them.

4th OFFICER.

Would you reanimate the ruffians, who
 From Jabesh-gilead, might have crossed the Jordan ?
 Or would you that one Ammonite less had suffered ?

SAUL.

No, they are all too few, though many, for Nahash
 Is not amongst them ; for his fault they fell :
 Huge holocausts they are of Nahash's cattle ;
 Who did in ill hour drive them to this slaughter.
 How fares it with thee ?

[Enter JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

How fares it with you, father ?

SAUL.

Well, as it ought, so ill faring with the foe.

JONATHAN.

This well begins your regin.

SAUL.

It does. See here

Our friends.

JONATHAN, *to the rest.*

To you our enemies' doom reversed.

They'll rue the day in which they crossed our borders.

1st OFFICER.

But few of them are remaining to recross them.

JONATHAN.

Ere the far pealing note of the re-call
 Reached us, our soldiers were quarrelling for the victims,
 That had so far dimisined.

1st OFFICER.

Is 't possible,
That we so soon have reaped so rank a field,
And now scuffle for the gleanings! Nahash is
Escaped.

JONATHAN.

He has.

4th OFFICER.

Greater curse yet overtake him!
May lightnings wither his eyes, and may the stars be
By him no more beheld: assail him, Sun,
He hath insulted thee; Light, second-born,
And child of Darkness, hurl him to thy Sire!

1st OFFICER.

Thou Moon, rise not to him, nor break again
On him, thou Dawn.

2nd OFFICER.

Ye hearth, ye altar fires,
Expire when he looks on you!

3rd OFFICER.

Ye women's eyes,
When he admires you, grow bleared with sudden age,
Or express but horror.

4th OFFICER.

Ay, let all bright things—
Eyes, gems, sun, stars, moon, dawn, domestic fire,
And that which the soul-cleaving sacrifice
Devours, and (what the truculent fiend loves more)
The lustre of the sword and shield and chariot,
War's glare, be dark unto him as the grave.

JONATHAN.

Amen, amen, 'tis well. Is my Father
Angry or sorrowful?

1st OFFICER.

He has not appeased
His vengeance' hunger, yet is surfeited
Grown with its food.

JONATHAN.

He is given to reverie:
I'll speak to him. Father, but yesterday,
These Ammonites at Israel scoffed secure,
To day, they are destroyed.

SAUL.

Like swaggering
Of lusty corn, upright we are to day;
To-morrow we are laid low by the sickle

Of something unforseen.

JONATHAN.

Now Jabesh-gilead

May point in safety the living finger of scorn
At those cold heaps of dead around her walls ;
And boys, and women, even tottering hags,
Go pull them by the beard, or, with their nails
Extract, unchecked, pale corpses eye-balls, angling
Unhurt within those reservoirs of tears :
Yea, out of dead men's mouths' may pluck the tongues
That yesterday at this hour bullied them.

SAUL.

Let us return, and leave it to the vulture,
Smelling the odour of mortality,
To hasten here and batten. Boy, blow again,
And louder, the recall.

Exeunt all except the TRUMPETER, who again sounds as he has been bidden.

TRUMPETER.

There, not a man in Israel, not even Saul,
Could wind a louder and more clear recall.

[*Exit.*

SCENE X.

The Country.

*Enter, amidst a flourish of trumpets, SAUL, JONATHAN, SAMUEL, SOLDIERS,
and PEOPLE returned from pursuing the Ammonites.*

SAUL.

Ye men of Israel, thank the Lord to day ;
For 'tis His power that hath before you driven
Nahash and all the Ammonitish crew.
All did I say ? how little now their all !
You have destroyed them in their arrogance ;
You have dissolved them with the wand of change.
Never was retribution more complete,
Nor sudden ! Grimly they lay down last evening
Within their tents, that gleamed in star-light, — grimly
Lay down 'neath star-light, but no more shall see
Star-light nor morning, for their eyelids down
Are sealed by frosty death. Where now is Nahash ?
Fallen, fallen is the cruel pride of Ammon !
Its warriors strew for many a league our land,
And the wild beasts devour them : they no grave
Shall have except the fox's maw, and belly
Of unclean beasts. But few escaped your ire,
For as the dust-cloud rose up with their flight
We laid it with their blood : dearly they've paid

For their grim proposition ! Let them come
 Back for their slaughtered unless tears do blind
 Them who with bloody deeds had this day thought
 To have blinded others : let Nahash gnash his teeth ;
 Now let him howl at home, and ask his gods
 Wherefore they thus forsook him : joy, oh, joy ;
 The God of Israel is above all gods.

Acclamation of the multitude.

ONE of the multitude.

Let those who said " Shall Saul reign over us !"
 Be put to death.

ANOTHER.

Yes, let them die.

SAUL.

There shall

No other violent death take place to day.

Further acclamation, and cries of, God save the King, God save King SAUL.

SAMUEL.

Let us go

To Gilgal, and there crown him.

Exeunt all amidst acclamations and flourishing of trumpets.

SCENE XI.

The Country. Enter HEBREWS.

1st HEBREW.

Pray which of you were at the coronation ?

2nd HEBREW.

I.

1st HEBREW.

And how went it ?

2nd HEBREW.

Why, well, mixed with ill.

1st HEBREW.

What happened ? did the people change their minds ?

2nd HEBREW.

No, but we had committed a great sin

In asking for a king, so Samuel told us,

And, to confirm his saying, called on God

To send down rain and thunder though 'twas harvest.

1st HEBREW.

Ah, then your revelry was changed to sorrow.

2nd HEBREW.

'Twas for awhile ; but Samuel re-assured us ;

Shewing us, that as in the past Jehovah

Had saved us by Jerubaal, Bedan, Jephthah,

So He would now, — if we were faithful to Him, —
By our anointed king.

1st HEBREW.

How good is God

Towards Israel !

2nd HEBREW.

Yes ; but 'twas a fearful moment
To see the sky sudden darkening, and to hear
The thunder growl approaching, until one
Wide flash of lightning quivered from the clouds
And hung above us, glaring like the eye
Of God looking down upon us in his wrath.
All trembled, all stood mute, excepting some
Who, motionless, low muttered deprecation.
Few dared to raise their eyes, and the hurled deluge
Smoking upon the ground, that shook with din
Beneath us, seemed speak intense displeasure.

1st HEBREW.

'Tis

A serious thing to leave heaven's jurisdiction !

3rd HEBREW.

We have not left it.

SEVERAL HEBREWS.

No, by no means, no !

1st HEBREW.

But how looked Samuel ?

2nd HEBREW.

Rapt.

1st HEBREW.

And Saul ?

2nd HEBREW.

I saw him stand, methought, half frowning ; but
Terror so shook me and confused my sight,
That I scarcely knew what was and what was not.

4th HEBREW.

This augurs ill.

2nd HEBREW.

The worst is past, and all
Depends, it seems, on us and our behaviour.

5th HEBREW.

Did Samuel say aught more deserving mention ?

2nd HEBREW.

Much, much before this climax ; but 'twas chiefly
In his own vindication ; challenging us
To prove injustice 'gainst him in his rule,
And in the event of it offering restitution.

5th HEBREW.

Referred he to his sons' flagitious doings?

2nd HEBREW.

No.

4th HEBREW.

Let their evil in his good be lost,
 Even as the filthy and defiling smoke
 Is lost in the pure air.

5th HEBREW.

Yet recollections

Will stick like smuts upon one's memory :
 And Samuel's whiteness, though it may reflect
 A light on his sons' blackness, but thereby
 Shews it to be more ugly than we thought it ;
 And they unfitter, alike both now to aid him,
 And him succeed hereafter ; and which shews plainlier
 When on their fraud we shed the light of his justice ;
 Even as the dusty atmosphere of a room,
 When bars of sunshine are projected through it,
 Shews more polluted than we had believed it.
 But let that pass : what more declared the Prophet ?

2nd HEBREW.

He shewed us that the Priestly government
 Had come from God by Moses and by Aaron.

5th HEBREW.

His Order, yes, the spirit of his Order
 Gave utterance there : he spake the truth, yet still
 Remember his Order ; all power it had before,
 Which now must be divided with another.
 The old man, doubtlessly, is stung at seeming
 To be by us cast off in his old age ;
 But what is done is done, and for the best.
 Huzzah for the King !

THE OTHERS.

Huzzah for King and Priest !

Exeunt omnes.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Michmash. A handsome Apartment.

Enter SAUL and JEHOIADAH a priest.

SAUL.

I know that tempest and a foul disease
 Discomfited and humbled the Philistines ;
 But, nor the weather, nor poignant emerods
 Are always at your bidding ; nor is Samuel
 Immortal that he should have power to pray
 Ever for you, and for you raise new Eben-ezers ;
 And when he's gone what's Levi ! You will say,
 The Lord will raise new Samuels up in Israel.
 Hath not the Lord raised me ? caused mine anointing ?
 God is our helper, our deliverer, saist thou ?
 God now shall help us in another way :
 He shall assist me to transform the Hebrews
 Into men, they who, till late, were children,
 Unstable, offending Him by fresh relapses ;
 But, in the hour of danger, crying to Him,
 As babes when smitten halloo for their mothers ;
 Or as spendthrifts, clutched by angry creditors,
 Beg from their sires new sums to purchase pleasures.
 This now is changed, for none again awhoring
 After strange Gods shall go as once was, neither
 Consult the Demons nor the Stars shall any.
 Henceforward war and agriculture shall
 Be ours, as war and commerce are our foes',
 Whose discipline with discipline we'll meet,
 Nor think continue, with raw and instant levies,
 To cope with the trained armies that Philistia
 Persists to send against us : I more men
 Must have, and more of Israel's substance ere
 I open the campaign which shall not close
 Until the land is cleared of aliens ;
 When I will turn within and look for foes
 Intestine, those who wear friend's faces
 Yet are masked traitors, and, with envy filled,
 Go about carping at us : Nahash's ruin
 Was but the beginning of the rude purgation

That I intend for Israel ; her at length
 No enemy shall ravage, neither any
 Of her own malign her king without a cause.
 I have too patient been of opposition,
 Hence my scant force whose numbers are no more
 Than, say, two thousand here and at Mount Bethal,
 And Jonathan hath one thousand at Gibeah.

[JEHOIADAH *remains silent.*

Why ponderest thou ? Might they be stationed better ?

JEHOIADAH.

The people murmur because your majesty
 Has taken these men by force ; likewise because
 They are the superexcellence of the nation.

SAUL.

The people have instigators whom if I
 Discover I will cut off ! Tell me, dost thou,
 When thou need'st for the altar a victim, not require
 A beast without a blemish ? And shall I,
 Shall I who have the ability to select,
 Lay hands on the offscouring ? Can I work
 Without the means ? And, if I am a king,
 Shall I forego the pomp and state with which
 A king is ever surrounded ? Let beware
 All idle tongues, or I will pluck them out,
 And haply, in my exasperation, throw them
 Into their owner's faces.

Enter a COURIER.

What news hast ? for

That news thou bring'st thy way-worn plight declares,
 And good should be its burden by thine eye : —
 Comest thou from Jonathan ?

COURIER.

From him I come,

Your majesty, and bring you joyful tidings :
 I all the night have hurried on to bring
 Unto you day : — his highness, Jonathan,
 Has overthrown the Philistine garrison
 At Geba.

SAUL.

My brave son ! foremost in danger,
 And eager to begin to clear his country
 Of its invaders : — say, how happened it ?
 What provocation, other than their presence,
 Incited him to assail them ? — or were they
 Our son's assailants ?

COURIER.

Them the Prince assailed ;

And for he would, and gave no reason save
He could and would.

SAUL.

Well done by him, and as
Well said by thee ! — Now we shall stink i'th' nostrils
Of proud Philistia, who will all her war
Soon launch against us : — well, so let it be. —
At Gilgal we must quickly now assemble.
My welcome messenger, I will reward thee.
Follow me, Jehoiadah.

Exit SAUL.

COURIER.

You scarcely seem

To relish my news, good Father.

JEHOIADAH.

Sirrah, check

Your tongue. Would'st thou have me rush into the street
And there cry, Hallelujah.

Exit JEHOIADAH.

COURIER.

Did'st Sirrah me,

Lean Levite ? 'Tis well that thou art gone,
Or, by my soul, thou sour, disdainful Priest,
This hand had else profaned thee. All the tribe
Of Levi have been cankered since the hour
When we obtained a king. Why, let them fret,
And fall away like watered lime ; their pride
Long time has needed humbling. Let me see :
" I will reward thee," said the king. I merit
Reward for being thus scurvily scratched by brier,
And posting like a wizzard through the mire.
I'll seek for prey ; — night air and haste breed hunger.

Exit.

SCENE II.

*The Country near Gibeah.**Enter, in haste, four HEBREWS from different quarters.*

1st HEBREW.

The Philistines are advancing like their sea,
And lashed to fury by the gale from Geba.
" To Gilgal, unto Gilgal," is the cry : —
The king is gone and with him the three thousand.

2nd HEBREW.

I heard the tocsin bellow in the night.
The king is prompt.

3rd HEBREW.

Ay, let us after him,
For Samuel is to join him when at Gilgal.
What is thy weapon?

2nd HEBREW.

The sword: what thine?

3rd HEBREW.

The spear.

Fellow, what thine?

4th HEBREW.

A cudgel.

3rd HEBREW.

Let's along,

And, if we fight not, we shall swell the throng.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.

*Gilgal. Time, night.**Enter SAUL and JEHOIADAH, disguised.*

SAUL.

Now through the darkness to our enemies let us,
And in the morning play the spy upon them.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

*Near Michmash.**Enter SAUL and JEHOIADAH reconnoitering the Philistine encampment.*

SAUL.

Stand still and let us view the spectacle.
Would that that host were mine, or that mine were
Accoutred like it and for war appointed!
But I must meet it with such as I have gotten:
The presence of Samuel, and the belief that heaven
Has ordained for us victory, shall enable us
To wrest a victory from the iron palms
Of yonder military, and which deed will be,
As though for us a victory had been inscribed
Within the weired and fabulous book of fate.
Let us on, for yonder gives an ampler view.

Exeunt and enter elsewhere.

SAUL.

More than the burning stars in number, and
With arms and armour making the dull earth
More shining than the heavens! How like a bivouac
Of bright, descended angels they appear!

JEHOIADAH.

Can you conceive our foes like aught celestial ?

SAUL.

Distance, the sunshine, brazen armour, and
Their silver-'sembling arms of glittering steel
Prompted the fancy, and I know they have many
Tall fellows; they have chariots too I see
Which fly on wheels like angels fly on wings.

JEHOIADAH.

Why did Prince Jonathan rashly meddle with Geba !
Unless God interpose, we are unable
To meet the anger of enraged Philistia.

SAUL.

I prythee peace.

JEHOIADAH.

'Twas premature, your majesty.

The set time of Jehovah had not come.
He had not been enquired of, but headily
This struggle was begun : 'twas ill advised
To vex the enemy without permission :
We cannot withstand, much less o'erthrow yon armament,
With which compared we are a rabble rout.

SAUL.

Thou lately thought a rabble good as soldiers.

JEHOIADAH.

Thou hast no chariots, thy cavalry are poor riders :
Thy followers are many, but the enemy's horse
Are twice the number of thy chosen men :
In vain will be our uttermost resistance.

SAUL.

How often have our ancestors driven back
The bold begetters of that mail-clad host.

JEHOIADAH.

Jonathan is brave, but was too forward at Geba.

SAUL.

Would'st thou hold the Prince's virtue as a vice ?
Let Samuel come and thou shalt see what thou
Hast only heard of, Jonathan's bravery ;
At Gilgal we await the Prophet's coming
To sacrifice.

JEHOIADAH.

Faint is already our army.

SAUL.

Had he not me enjoined to tarry for him
I would at once against the foe have led it,
Expecting heaven's assistance. — But he's right ;

The vulgar to whom courage is not native,
And who have not acquired, by proud traditions,
The fear of shame and dainty sense of honor,
Must from religion's rites the valor obtain
Which is best carried ready in the heart.

JEHOIADAH.

If Samuel come, and if the Lord be willing,
Doubtless our army shall have victory.

SAUL.

We are not serving other gods ; His altars
Attend ye, and I'm punishing those who
Resort to demons instead of unto Urim ;
Then wherefore downcast hangest thou thine eyes,
Even as if Dagon, Seignior of the Sea,
Could cope with Him who rules both land and main ?

JEHOIADAH.

If Samuel come not.—

SAUL.

Come not ! He has promised.

JEHOIADAH.

Our army is as water, their's as fire.

SAUL.

This is the most dettractive spirit I've known. [aside.
Come, let us back to Gilgal.

[Exit SAUL.

JEHOIADAH.

Samuel loves him,

But I detest him, and should any king
Detest, for kings must overshadow our order.

Exit JEHOIADAH.

SCENE V.

In the Hebrew's camp, at Gilgal.

Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

Come, Samuel, come !
Wherefore is Samuel lingering ? for time in war
Is force ; and opportunity that moment
When he who takes it is irresistible.
Age ought to prize the present, so brief its future.
May all the blest fortuities combine
To hasten him hither.

[enter ABNER.

Well, what cheer ?

ABNER.

Not well ;

Our army are by far too faint of heart.

SAUL.

So I suspected.

SAUL.

ABNER.

They ashame me, for
They are appalled, even by the report
Of the foe's mien, as he lies couched at Michmash.

SAUL.

I knew it; yet half unman me do thy words,
That strengthen in me uneasy apprehension
Of evil threatened by Samuel's delay;
For, should we be attacked ere he arrive,
What were all generalship and zeal and courage,
The bravery of a few conjoined with cowards:
I never thought them heroes, but so soon
To fall a trembling does indeed enrage me.
Go whisper that Samuel is expected hourly.

[Exit ABNER.]

A gently-floating rumour will reassure them
More than a confident blast: Come, Samuel, come.

[Exit SAUL.]

SCENE VI.

*Another part of the camp.**Enter three Hebrew OFFICERS, meeting.*

1st OFFICER.

What news?

2nd OFFICER.

The King has issued an injunction
To kill all found deserting.

3rd OFFICER.

Then he'll kill us

As fast as the Philistines could desire him:
Oh shame, oh shame! I am ashamed to own
The craven herd to be my countrymen.
How the foe must be scoffing if they know it!
Even as the countenance of the sun dispels
Hoarfrost, so has the enemy's mere presence
Made vanish half our army, which now hides,
Even by whole companies, in caves and thickets,
In clefts of rocks, on mountains and in pits;
And some have over Jordan beat retreat
To Gad and Gilead, and what remain
Tremble like women.

2nd OFFICER.

Lo, the king come's hither.

[Exit.]

Enter SAUL, ABNER, and Saul's ARMOUR BEARER, a youth.

SAUL.

He who retreats from the Philistine's eyes
Now runs directly into death's black jaws ;
None can escape, I have the camp surrounded,
With them who will not spare : if more choose flight,
Let them dig downwards for it to the grave.

ABNER.

Ay, let them dig to hell, for they no outlet
Above the ground shall find to pass our lines.

SAUL.

Had but our pack of mongrel hounds kept heart,
Our lines were a leash from which they might have sprung
At the enemy's throat, as soon as I had slipped them ;
Nay, at the very worst of death and defeat,
These fields, to the perished, might have been the gates
And earthly entrance into heavenly meads.

ARMOUR BEARER.

'Tis said that all who fall in righteous battle,
Go instant thither.

ABNER.

Yes, whither else.

SAUL.

My boy,

All patriots are made angels after death :
'Tis not for the soul that, in its country's cause,
Has staked and lost its sum of future days,
To visit Gehenna, or darkle down Perdition. —
This is a dreary day but it may brighten.
Go furbish now my armour for to-morrow.

Exit ARMOUR BEARER.

ABNER.

Here comes our friend the Levite.

SAUL.

No friend of mine !

[Enter JEHOIADAH.]

So, hie thee home : I too much for thee care

To let thee risk thee here longer.

[Exit JEHOIADAH.]

ABNER.

He is gone.

SAUL.

A hundred Philistines in the camp, were better
Than he through it walking with that villianous look.

ABNER.

What different spirits animate mankind !
How different his from thy young Armour Bearer's.

SAUL.

My Armour Bearer! were all such as he
But little Samuel's absence 'd trouble me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

*A part of the Hebrew camp. Time, Night-fall.**Enter SAUL and ABNER.*

SAUL.

To-morrow is the seventh day: let some
Be sent to hasten Samuel should they meet him.

ABNER.

I have sent some already for that purpose.

SAUL.

Abner, Abner, if all go well to-morrow,
(As it is possible, even yet, that it may,)
And if, instead, we are not forced to flee
Then, or before, from the Philistine horde,
I will in peace raise all the means for war,
As doth the husbandman in summer raise
The crops that are to be his food in winter;
I will have soldiers plenty, ready made;
No rabble from their fields and city crafts,
Running in haste with various, uncouth arms
To the rendezvous, at the dread sound of the tocsin;
And, when 'tis silenced, or at the sight o'th' foe
Grimmer than they hoped him, running home again.
This has been my intention since the day
On which I routed Nahash, as thou knowest,
And knowest how sloth and greed have it retarded.

ABNER.

Our nation are unwarlike, and the Philistine
Is the perfection of the well-trained soldier:—

SAUL.

Knowing that, I am surprised that they should linger
Yonder in Michmash:—have they harlots, think'st thou?
Or do they drench in wine, or chew the drug
Of lazy satisfaction that their ships
Bring from the furthest corner of the east?—
Or, as we wait for Samuel and Jehovah,
Are they awaiting the special aid of Dagon,
Who now, down revelling in his waters green,
Or lulled in the embrace of some sea goddess,
Forgets Philistia's legions?

ABNER.

'Tis most strange:—

Surely 'tis heaven that restrains them from us.

SAUL.

I do believe that most of our pale remnant
Would flee at the first echo of the bugle,
Blown by them to the tune of an advance.

ABNER.

I know that numbers to night will slink away,
Snake-like upon their bellies.

SAUL.

I think the guards are trusty.

ABNER.

So think I, —

And yet I'm doubtful.

SAUL.

Would that there were no night,
For half the world abuse it, — let them go,
Although it is ungrateful as 'tis cowardly
Thus to desert me coldly by degrees,
Like breath from off a mirror. Set the watch ;
I'll to my tent although I shall not sleep. [Exit.

SCENE VIII.

The Camp. SAUL, ABNER, OFFICERS and SOLDIERS.

SAUL.

Seven days we have waited and he is not come.
Bring hither a burnt offering and peace offering to me :
'Tis not the sacrificer but the victim ;
'Tis not the hand but 'tis the heart God looks at.

SAUL offers and, having finished, SAMUEL enters.

SAMUEL.

What hast thou done !

SAUL.

Chide me not, only listen :

Seven days I have seen my forces wasting from me,
And thou camest not within the time appointed ;
Then I said unto myself, "the enemy
Will us attack before we shall have made
Our supplication," so I forced myself,
And have this moment finished offering.

SAMUEL.

Thou hast done wrong, thou hast been disobedient :
Unhappy man ! for now thy dynasty
Upon the throne was to have been confirmed
Perpetually, and the sceptre finally
To thy posterity given, which now no crown
Shall ever wear, them by thyself discrowned,
Dethroned, thy throne now given unto another

Whom God hath chosen, a man after his own heart,
To be the Captain over Israel
Instead of thee, presumptuous and daring.

Exit SAMUEL.

SAUL.

Why let him go :—how little it requires
To expose a man when taken by surprise !
I know the cause of this denunciation :
He fears I would be Priest as well as King.
Not I.—indeed, we live and see strange things.
Is it true ? can he, so old and wise have been
So snatched away by anger ?—wrath with me too ;—
Am I not higher than he ?—he cannot have
Such strange and foul suspicion,—kingly cares
Alone are surely a sufficient burden
For one man's spirit to carry !—ah, when last
We parted here 'twas in a different mode.—
He said my throne was given unto another ;—
By me were my posterity discrowned ;
I had done wrong, been disobedient ;—
I may have erred, but how been disobedient ?
Seven days I waited, ay till the skirts of the term
Had disappeared, and with it—Oh, foul shame !
Near all my army. Oh, fond Saul, fond fool,
To agree to such a monstrous proposition
As a weeks waiting for him ! Why should slow age
Chain the swift wheels of manhood ? but for his
Most stupid interdiction I had urged
At once my road stained car of battle down
On the Philistines. Weak willed Saul ! considerate
Of a proud Dotard's reeling authority :
Now mine reels too : Philistines now approach,
Saul is no longer able to oppose you :
Saul who advanced upon you wet with speed,
And would have cast against you such a tempest,—
But for the o'erblowing of this old man's week,—
That the whole world hereafter should have doubted
When told of the horrid mischief.

ABNER.

My good cousin,
My high, undaunted, and anointed Sovereign,
Cease raging thus in public.

SAUL.

It is false,
Not changed towards me is God's purpose, only Samuel's :
I will not fear : though men desert me, God

Is not among the faithless :—yet how can I hope
 With such an army all composed of mist ;
 Such dastard wretches, such predestined bondsmen ;
 How can I hope to quell the enraged Philistines ?
 Oh, that I had myself been born but a Philistine !
 They, at the least, are brave and claim respect ;—
 But on the unwarlike Hebrews scorn I fling,
 And rue that I was ever made their King.

Exit SAUL.

ABNER.

I'll after him ; I know not what he may do
 In his violence.

Exit ABNER, the rest retiring in silence.

SCENE IX.

Near Gilgal.

Enter SAUL and JONATHAN.

SAUL.

All's over here ;—let us withdraw and weep
 Down in the red recesses of our hearts,
 Or, in our spirits, silent curse the cravens
 Whom uttered execration'd too much honor.
 Home, home, let us, dishonored, home, if there
 Be for us a home, and the Philistines
 Drive us not forth to miserable exile.
 Will they allow us, like to a breathed hare,
 Spent to return and repossess our form ;
 Will they endure us in Gibeah ? Or must we
 Discover some dark den on Lebanon,
 And dwell with lions, or must we with foxes
 Burrow, and depend on cunning for our food ?
 Better with lions and with foxes mating
 Than being companions of the brood of Israel ;
 Yea better with the hill-wolf famishing
 Than battenning with the drove that form the world.

JONATHAN.

Alas, my Sisters,—

SAUL.

Alas, thy Mother ;—she
 The silent critic on my life ;—thy mother
 And sister, may be forced, ere long, to dwell
 In some dank cave, or o'er the borders flee
 With us, and seek in some strange realm asylum.
 Why, let it be so ; we can live midst strangers.
 Of all the myriads who followed us hither,
 How many are left us ?

JONATHAN.

A poor six-hundred.

SAUL.

Ay, is my picked three thousand dwindled so !
 What next, what next ?—there is no virtue left
 In mortal man, nay women had done better ;
 Oh, Jonathan, thy glorious deed at Geba,
 Put out unto unworthy usury,
 Is lost in Gilgal's issue !

JONATHAN.

Yearn not o'er me ;

What we have done, Oh king and sire, is ours ;
 Part of ourselves, yea more, it will not die
 When we shall, nor can any steal it ;
 For honor hath that cleaving quality,
 It sticks upon us and none may remove it,
 Except ourselves by future deeds of baseness.

SAUL.

We never were so poor since we grew rich.

JONATHAN.

We will grow richer than we yet have been ;
 And, from this need, yet heap up such abundance,
 That we shall wonder that we ever sorrowed
 At this petty pilfering.

SAUL.

Pilfering ! that's the word.

Yes, Jonathan, we have been meanly pilfered ;
 Rats have been stealing the grain from out our garner :
 Each runaway was a rat, and for seven days
 An ancient friend kept open our granary's door,
 Then snapped on me the recuperated trap
 That should have caught the vermin.

JONATHAN.

Rate not Samuel.

SAUL.

He rated me too low when he rebuked me,
 And talked of ban on us when he his garment
 Aught to have rent, and his white head with ashes
 Covered at sight of what his tardiness
 Had caused, the dissolution of my ranks,
 And the fair tower of my well-won prestige
 Mouldering and all dismantled.—Let us go.

JONATHAN.

Let us take with us the remnant of our guard.
 They shew the fairer from their comrades foulness.

SAUL.

I have lost all faith in others, they will be home
Before us; if not, I'll drive them but not lead them.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE X.

*The Country near Michmash. Time, Evening.**Enter GLORIEL and another ANGEL.*

ANGEL.

My errand done, I must return above;
Farewell, give unto all my ardent love.

GLORIEL.

Farewell sweet cherub.

Exit ANGEL.

Heaven works again for Saul,

Nor will allow him utterly to fall.

Where is that able but rebellions spirit

Zaph, ruler of the band that haunt the earth

To compass Satan's malice? At the pole

I lately saw him sitting. Him and his band

I will compell to be my ministers

With the Philistines, whilst I will myself

Inspire with hardihood Prince Jonathan.

Enter another ANGEL.

What news?

ANGEL.

Zaph hovering is o'er Palestine:

I have him dogged from morning until now.

I think he knows he's watched.

GLORIEL.

Go fetch him hither.

Exit ANGEL.

Now let a blast from out the deep arise

And push behind him, for he will not come

Unless compelled.

A Tempest suddenly arises, and ZAPH is driven in followed by the ANGEL.

ZAPH.

What dost thou want with me?

GLORIEL.

To morrow let the day break gloomily,

And, at the hour when I shall instigate thee,

Enter the Philistine garrison at Michmash,

And so infatuate them that each man

Shall take his fellow for an enemy.

ZAPH.

Cannot thine own do this? I'll not obey thee.

GLORIEL.

At the same hour, let all thy company
Wander beneath the surface of the ground
And simulate an earthquake; and let some
Emit low moanings like to those you utter
When, lonely meditating in hell's caverns,
You feel yourselves undone.

ZAPH.

Oh, bitter fullness of expression! Oh,
Amplification of a sad idea!
Insult me not, old comrade; Gloriel,
Think that I once thine equal was in heaven,
And spare me, then, this drudgery. Cannot one
Of my band perform the trick with the garrison?

GLORIEL.

Thou hast mine orders, and obey them strictly.
Remember, there is nought betwixt us now
Of high respect and deep consideration,
And old equality has vanished for ever.

ZAPH.

Thou pitiless cherub! Angel punctillious!—but
I must obey thee;
For thou hast power given to thee to subject me.
Alas, that ever such exorbitant might
Should to one spirit o'er another be given!
May the gnawing fires of hell, spirit, yet exhaust thee;
And mayst thou feel, some day, the bitterness
Thou now inflictst on me. Curse thee, thou tyrant!
May acheron yet torment thee.

GLORIEL.

I'll gag thee, spirit, if thou longer cursest.

ZAPH.

I'll curse thee at my pleasure! What art thou
That I should scruple to blister thee with my words,
And cover thee with epithets envenomed?
I hold thee light, officary angel,
And if the God who made us would be neutral,
Or would abandon thee as He hath done me,
Then thou shouldst be the slave and I the tyrant.
A curse upon thee, and a curse upon thee.

[Exit.

GLORIEL.

These demons mock their liberty of speech,
And turn it into licence to abuse us.
I cannot lay an embargo on their thoughts,
But they, unuttered, in their souls shall rankle

If this last insolence should be repeated.
 If I should ever hear another whisper
 Of malediction 'gainst us, I will bind them
 To forced respect; nor in our presences
 Allow them audibly to increase their sins.

Exit.

SCENE XI.

A Street in Michmash. Time, morning.

Enter a TAILOR and a TOPER, meeting.

TOPER.

How now Snip!

Hanging the head as is now the mode in Israel?
 List; thy goose-warmer, Obadiah, says
 That of the gallants who repaired to Gilgal,
 None pricked away like thee.

TAILOR.

Let Gilgal fall

To Limbo! I did not go to Gilgal, for
 When Sarah saw my spirit was arousing
 She took from me my garments.

TOPER.

Did she strip thee?

But what's the news? 'Tis rumoured that the king
 With all his house has fled into the desert.

TAILOR.

'Tis false, 'tis false; for he, full fierce, as yet
 Bides at Gibeah, and seems to keep at bay
 (But, with his means, it only is a seeming)
 The enemy who menace him from Michmash.
 It is a gloomy day.

TOPER.

A gloomier

I never saw; and the foaming yeast of my spirits
 Falls at this muggish weather. What's the hour?

TAILOR.

It is past sunrise.

TOPER.

Yet the sun's abed,

And has a cursed black nightcap on his head.
 A drop would do us both a kindness; come.

TAILOR.

Whither?

TOPER.

To the Sign of the "Eschol" where are soldiers
 Of the Philistines drinking; let's go cheat them

At a game of chance : the maid shall overlook them
 And give us the wink as at the fire she stands
 And brews the negus.

TAILOR.

I'll go with thee for I
 A strange anxiety have upon me, like
 As if bad influences were at work around us ;
 And when I met thee I was going to prayers.

Exeunt.

SCENE XII.

A Road leading to Michmash. Time, immediately following that of the last scene.

Enter a young PEASANT, carrying a coulter, and a ARTIZAN, meeting.

PEASANT.

Thou art a Gilgal swallow.

ARTIZAN.

What bird art thou ?

PEASANT.

No Gilgal swallow, trust me.

ARTIZAN.

A dirtier bird ;—

For thou, when others flocked with Saul to Gilgal,
 Stayed in thy nest and fouled it in thy terror.
 Master Swallow, swallow that.

PEASANT.

Now I know thee of Gilgal :

The Gilgal swallows are all filthy thoughted.
 Faugh !

ARTIZAN.

Faugh not me.

PEASANT.

Most filthy coward.

ARTIZAN.

Hound, my sword

Is in the Philistines keeping or I'd slay thee.

I'd rip thee up : fellow, I'd serve thee out :

I'd tap thy kilderkin ; I'd stop thy crowing ;

I'd find thine inmost bowels !

[*Exit ARTIZAN.*]

PEASANT.

What a brawl !

There is now more threatening in one day in Israel.

Than was within ten years when we had weapons.

We cannot sharpen our coulters, pitchforks, mattocks,

Save at the Philistines smithies, but sharp words

Are to be had anywhere in the land :—the enemy,

Having taken our warlike tools, yet leave us
 The little scarlet tongue to scratch and sting with.
 I've scratched that fellow deeper than I meant.
 Lord, how he threatened! I'd have threatened too
 Had he left room; for Dandelion says
 That courtesies should be reciprocated,
 And then there would have been indeed a torrent
 Of raillery and ceremony valient.
 Well, swords are dangerous things in angry hands,
 And my coultter would have done but awkward fencing.

Proceeds, singing.

I'll down with my coultter unto the foe's forge,
 Lay my hand on his bellows, my eyes on his gorge;
 And think, could I span it, oh, oh, could I span it!—
 Never mind, boys, never mind, boys, some day we will
 [plan it.]

I cannot crackle up; I cannot sing;
 This gloomy morning quite extinguishes me.
 It is not damp, but there's a nameless vapor
 That puts out merriment. I'll try to smoke.

[filling his pipe.]

Oh, blest tobacco! Friend to man, and given
 Whence (it is said) was woman, even from heaven.
 Stuff! I'll say so when I have a design
 To take unto myself a concubine.
 Something with a moral in it were now proper,
 For the weather's as dismal as mortality.

Man is a pipe that life doth smoke
 As saunters it the earth about;
 And when 'tis wearied of the joke,
 Death comes and knocks the ashes out.

I'll get a light at Solomon's as I pass,
 And if his hoydens dare to tumble me,
 I'll charge them with my coultter.

[Exit.]

SCENE XIII.

A solitary place near Gibeah. A ravine near, and on the opposite side of it the Philistine Garrison at Michmash. Time, immediately succeeding that of the last scene.

Enter JONATHAN and his ARMOUR BEARER, the former pacing to and fro

ARMOUR BEARER.

The day as lowering is as Israel's fortunes;
 And it, or they, or both combined oppress me;
 For I'm as gloomy as the sky is, or
 As Jonathan.—Alas, Poor Prince, how changed!
 Once he would jest with me, or chat on trifles

Of home or heart, disdaining not to tell me
 His boyish loves ; and shew me how to use
 The spear and dart, how best to draw the bow,
 How bear the shield, and how with rapid fences
 To make the falchion hoarsely growl i'th air :
 But not so now, as a deserted mansion,
 He dwells absorbed in cold and stately grief,
 And half against me shut :—Gilgal's vile field,
 And the eastwind of Samuel's threatening
 Seem to have withered in him sense of pleasure ;
 No wonder !—Unto all so kind he was,
 So open ; it makes me melancholy when
 I think upon the sunshine of the past,
 And I return—if not for shelter, yet
 In very madness, to the drizzling thoughts
 Engendered by the present. I would he'd speak,
 His bearing so disturbed appears and threatening.
 I like it not ; now sudden standing still,
 Fixed in some dark and earnest reverie,
 Now off at quickened pace. He's muttering,
 And casts his eyes towards heaven ; I will accost him.

The ARMOUR BEARER approaches JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

Come, let us go over to the Philistine's Garrison,
 It may be God will help us :—fear not, come,
 For there is no restriction on the Almighty
 To work by many or to work by few.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Alas, he's growing demented ! [Aside.]
 What would your Highness do if you were there ?

JONATHAN.

I cannot tell thee yet, but come and see.

ARMOUR BEARER.

'Tis desperate ; abandon the idea.

JONATHAN.

No, 'tis an inspiration.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Madness call it,
 Bred from your disappointment and galled heart.
 Your highness broods too much : adversity
 Acts on you as harness acts upon the steed
 That is as yet unbroken, it inciting,
 Even by its very, uncomprehended touch,
 To violent and self-injurious efforts
 To cast it off, which only make the Tamer
 To strengthen it, and rudelier ply the bit

'Till the proud beast consents to do its paces.

JONATHAN.

No, never shall we consent to the Philistine !
 Peace. Though the iron curb is in our mouths,—
 No smith being let by our politic foe
 To forge new arms nor to repair the old,
 The very ploughshares, that make war with earth
 And rip up its brown bowels, being bound
 To be engendered in their licensed forges,—
 We never shall to slavery be tamed
 By the Philistines, whom we oft have driven
 Across the borders, like a frantic steed
 Rushing car-bound across the rugged plain,
 And badged at mouth and nostrils with a beard
 Of mingled blood and foam. Men are not cattle.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Being greater, they are thence exposed to evils
 That the low brute escapes, even as high hills,
 Experience blasts of which the plain feels nothing :
 Pardon me, so much the more may you, being higher
 In station than the rest of Israel,
 And more endowed than most with the fair gifts,
 But dangerous impulse of an ardent mind,
 Grandly err than I :—my life is nought, but yours
 Is much, or I had not withstood you ; think,
 The times are evil, and what influence
 There may be hovering in this dismal air,
 Or thoughts pernicious coming from the clouds,
 Wherein, they say, hide demons, we not know ;
 Suffice, that your intent wears shape suspicions :—
 Haply this trusted inspiration comes
 From some bad spirit, who would tempt your Highness
 To instant death, or unto what were worse,
 The sad estate of prisoner to the foe,
 Who, by slow process might to death on lead you,
 Or hale you prompt from hence unto the sea
 And drown you in it for to please their Dagon ;
 Or, should their vengeance merge in policy,
 Spare you to manacle the hands of Israel,
 Who might not dare to strike your captors, lest
 She should but bruise herself in bruising those
 That, holding you, could every future blow
 Retaliate by nameless cruelties
 On you, great hostage, and of which we should
 Be duly warned.

JONATHAN.

Then I must go alone.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Your are not bent ?

JONATHAN.

I am.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Then take me, though

Unto the mouth of sure destruction ; I

Can only perish, or live and with you suffer.

JONATHAN.

Fear not.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Lead on, I'll follow you whither you will.

JONATHAN.

God will precede ut ; bring with thee our arms.

ARMOUR BEARER.

I will, and use them to the last if need be.

Exeunt.

SCENE XIV.

*The bottom of the ravine.**Enter JONATHAN and his ARMOUR BEARER.*

ARMOUR BEARER.

The garrison seem quiet.

JONATHAN.

Happy omen !

Now wear a moment a foul traitor's front ;
 Seem timid but be brave : affect misgiving,
 But have within thee steady confidence,
 For we must shew ourselves now. Mark, if they cry,
 " Wait till we come to you," we will stand still,
 And not ascend to them ; but if they say,
 " Come up to us" we will to them go up.
 For God will have consigned them to our hands.

They commence climbing towards Michmash and its garrison, observing them, are hailed by JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

What, ho !

A SENTINEL.

Who are you ?

JONATHAN.

Hebrews.

The Philistine,s laughing.

Ha, ha, ha.

SENTINEL.

Crept from your holes !

One of the garrison.

Come up to us and we will shew you something.

JONATHAN, (*to his ARMOUR BEARER.*)

Follow me, they are ours.

JONATHAN and his ARMOUR BEARER, *climbing on their hands and feet, disappear. Presently clashing of swords heard from the fortress and great uproar, mingled with rumbling noise, as of an earthquake.*

SCENE XV

The Gibeon side of the ravine. The tumult and noise as of an earthquake still heard.

A HEBREW SENTINEL, *gazing across the ravine.*

What sound do I hear as if the earth on sudden
Bayed like the ocean, and the clang of arms
Coming from Michmash ?—it grows louder ; and now,
Behold the whole Philistine garrison
Come tumbling like a torrent on the field.
What meaneth this ? Arms glance like lightnings ;
Helmets and shields, and heads and bodies bare,
(As if half the combatants had been surprised,)
Dance in confusion ;—none have gone from us ?
I do remember hearing once an earthquake
And this is like its sound. Surely with terror
At this great note of nature, our Oppressor
Imagines not that we have come upon him !
I'll haste and tell the King.

Exit.

SCENE XVI.

Mignon, in the furthest part of Gibeah.

SAUL, *seated under a pomegranate tree, and with his troops around him ; the sound of the earthquake heard, and that of the fighting, faintly.*

SAUL.

Number us and see who is absent : quick,
I hear the sound of action and severe.

Enter the HEBREW SENTINEL, running.

SENTINEL.

The King, the King, where is the King ?

SAUL.

Lo, here.

SENTINEL.

Your Majesty, our foes are fighting, but
With whom I know not.—Over all the field
The tumult spreads like fire among the stubble.
The earth, too, seemed to shake ; and I believe

I hear a noise that is not made by man,—
The earthquake's it so mighty is and dismal.

SAUL, *to those who have been counting the soldiers.*

Well, who is missing?

Enter another SENTINEL, running.

Rise, rise, your Majesty;

Up, up, our foes are stirring; arms on armour
Ring, and strange thunder mutters o'er the ground
Which either man or God is causing tremble.

A OFFICER, *to SAUL.*

Jonathan is absent, and his Armour Bearer.

SAUL, *unto ABIAH the Priest.*

Bring hither the Ark of God.

The Ark is brought, and ABIAH the Priest having lain his hand upon it, SAUL and he converse together, during which the noise increases.

SAUL, *to the Priest.*

Withdraw thine hand.

ABIAH.

The Lord hath not yet spoken.

SAUL.

He calls us by the earthquake to the fray.

To succour Jonathan let all come away.

Exeunt omnes in haste.

SCENE XVII.

The country between Michmash and Mount Ephraim.

Enter a Group of Hebrews of that part. The noise of the pursuit heard.

1st HEBREW.

Why, I suppose it was thus; our countrymen,
Prisoners whom they have taken in their forays,
And who at Michmash did for them their drudgery,
Have turned upon them.

2nd HEBREW.

Joy! our valor now,
Red as the morn, can scoff poor Gilgal's palor:—
Why was it not thus there!

3rd HEBREW.

Where is the King?

1st HEBREW.

With lengthy strides he's after the pale foe,
And woe to them o'ertaken.

4th HEBREW.

And Jonathan?

1st HEBREW.

I saw him nimble as the mountain roe,
And his huge Armour Bearer;—on they swept,

And cut down every knave that hailed from Gath.

Enter another HEBREW, crying,

Come, come, the King comes yonder, and brave Abner;
They mow the foe down like two mighty scythes,
Nought leaving unto those who follow them,
Except to stumble o'er the stony dead.

2nd HEBREW.

Some are yet left for us: let's on and kill,
Bludgeons and stones Philistine's blood can spill.

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE XVIII.

Mount Ephraim. The noise of the pursuit continued.

Enter a HEBREW, shouting, and during the scene HEBREWS rushing in.

Come forth from out your hiding, for the land
Is covered with the fugitive Philistines.
Give the alarm; loud be the trumpet blown;
Revenge! revenge! let's swoop upon them down.

Enter a Second.

Oh, joy! joy!

Enter a Third.

What is there?

2nd HEBREW.

Lo, they flee;

After them, down, spare not an enemy.

Exit.

1st HEBREW.

Threefold what Nahash got let them receive.

[A trumpet sounds.]

Hark, the hoarse trumpet! Lo! the mountain yeans
Down; let's all down, nor spare the Philistines.

Exeunt omnes, wildly.

SCENE XIX.

The country near Beth-aven.

Enter and cross the stage SAUL, ABIAH, and people, the latter wearied and panting.

SAUL.

Let none eat food till evening, that revenge
May glut itself, and the etherial maw
Of the starved soul be gorged ere bodily need
Be served.—Let this be known, and evil fall
On him who disregards it.

Exeunt.

SCENE XX.

Enter ABNER and a HEBREW OFFICER.

ABNER.

Oh, I am faint, and there is honey lying

Upon the ground, and dropping from the tree,
Cool to allay both thirst and hunger.

OFFICER.

Taste

It not, the King refreshment hath forbidden
Till evening falls and with it his last enemy ;
I die myself of toil, but let us on.

ABNER.

Nay, I must rest awhile ; I can no longer
Pursue nor kill :—why should I also die
Of very eagerness, and o'ertake ith' grave
The souls whom I have thither sent to day ;
• Why should I yield them orgies for to night,
To see me come who struck them from the light ?
I'll rest although I eat not.

OFFICER.

No, away ;

See how the foe is wasted like the day.—
Hark, I hear footsteps coming through the wood ;
With me away, nor rest you shall nor food.

Exeunt.

Enter JONATHAN, who dips a reed which he has in his hand into the honey and eats ; while he is doing so enter HEBREW SOLDIERS.

A SOLDIER.

The King hath strictly charged us not to eat
Till evening, and hath cursed whoe'er should do so.

JONATHAN.

Wherefore ?

SOLDIER.

That we might intermit not slaughter.

JONATHAN.

My Father hath trouble made for many ; and thwarted,
By this stern ordinance, his own intention
Of full destruction ! See how I am refreshed
By tasting but a little of this honey.
How much, then, greater, could we have eaten freely,
Wound the ruin of the enemy have been. *Exeunt.*

SCENE XXI.

A wooded part near Ajalon. Time, evening.

SAUL, JONATHAN, ABNER, ABIAH, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS and PEOPLE.

SAUL, *having cast himself reclining against a bank.*

Now for a little rest, for though my spirit
Is fresh, my body has no longer vigor.
Bring me a drink.

A SOLDIER *presents to him a cup of wine.*

No, give me water ; I, to day, have poured
Out wine sufficient in the blood of foes.

Water is brought and he drinks.

Sweeter, methinks, that draught is unto me,
Than ever was the warm, spiced juice of grape.
How little delights us when we truly need !
Sit, friends, for we are equals all to day.
Now bring some food, and let those eat who may.

ABNER.

I cannot eat, and yet I'm hungry, too.

1st OFFICER.

Nor I.

2nd OFFICER.

Nor I.

SAUL.

Pray you, do not forego
Some needful nourishment ; through my example
Abstaining. Freely eat, and hoard up strength
To repursue the enemy, before
The young moon has gone down.

AHIAH.

Low in the west
Even now she is, and from her lighted censer
Gives but a weak though sacred beam : same time,
The fragrance born of yon adjacent wood,
Along the dewy air diffusing incense,
Both ministers seem at this great sacrifice,
And wonderful oblation of our foes,
Who by miraculous power this day have been
Discomfited and wasted.

SAUL.

Jonathan,

Why art thou silent ?

JONATHAN.

Gratitude and weariness

O'ercome me.

SAUL.

Take some food, and be revived
While light remains for labor. See, the clouds
Clear off, and leave the expanse o'th sky serene,
Although obscure.

1st OFFICER.

This is the most romantic

Of all time's hours !

2nd OFFICER.

Witchcraft now seems to hang

Between the horns o'th moon, that cannot shine
Through the vast darksome chamber of the night,
Which now appears, to my imagination,
Upgiven to magic and the spells profane
Of sorcerers ; and the hags whose bodies bend
Ever forward, from their long continued gazing
Into caldrons of incantation. Art thou not,
O Saul, afraid of the magican's charms
Directed 'gainst thee for their rooting out ?

SAUL.

I fear them not, nor anything that comes
Within the range of their claimed ministry, —
Whether ghosts of the departed, or bad angels
Who ('tis affirmed) are sold into their service
For the price of their own souls : yea, if the Devil
Now stood alone by me on this dusk field,
I'd snub him with ill manners. Yet the moon
Wears unto me the same weired aspect as
She wears to thee ; and, when I was a boy,
I was (as even to this hour I am)
Fascinated by the horror of this quarter ;
Loving it more than when, her face expanding,
The dim equivocation wears away,
Until at full she languishes 'ith sky
And shines down like an angel.

1st OFFICER.

Spectre like,
And with a few spectator stars, she goes
Down westward, as if leading the obsequies
Of those of her idolatrous worshippers,
Who, by their own swords or by ours, have perished
Since broke to day's strange morn.

SAUL.

Hearken ; the blast
Sighs through yon cypress' tops the dismal dirge
Of the remainder ; whom their own cusped goddess,
Pale Ashtaroath, yon moon, shall from heaven's verge
See scud like spectres, over the dim ground ;
For soon we will reurge the invader's flight,
Nor leave one breathing by the morning light.

[Enter a LEVITE.

LEVITE.

Your majesty, the ravening multitude
Eat from the quivering carcasses of the cattle,
Which they have summarily slaughtered on the ground,
And but half drained of blood ; offending heaven.

SAUL.

This must not be: roll hither a large stone,
 And let each man, whatever he has to kill
 Bring hither, and dress it lawfully in our presence.
 Disperse yourselves awhile among the people,
 And send all hither who have aught to kill for food.

Exit the LEVITE.

Now my first alter to the Lord I'll build [aside.
 And Him at once propitiate, that so
 He may continue this sudden prosperity,
 That, like a copious, unexpected shower
 After long drought, makes green my heart, long sere,
 And withering 'neath misgivings. Ahiah, choose
 From out the cattle the fairest for an offering.

Exit AHIAH.

Let some an alter build, for it is meet
 We did acknowledge this deliverance,
 Heaven-wrought; and, ere we gratulate Jonathan, —
 Chief warrior in this wondrous feat of arms, —
 Upsend the smoke of peace unto the skies.

*A rude alter is quickly built and AHIAH having sacrificed thereon.*SAUL, (*aside.*)

There, with a conscience cleared, and apprehensions,
 That ruffled up the down of my existence,
 Allayed, let me resume the grateful toil
 Of war defensive, and whose aim is peace.

Turning to those before him.

Friends, ere the moon, gone down, shall us no longer
 Enable to distinguish friends from foes,
 We will retake us unto the pursuit:
 The rallied (if any have rallied, and not all
 That live and have yet left the power of flight,
 Be not fast rallying home) we will o'ertake;
 And leave no sullying dreg of the invaders
 Alive upon our soil at peep of morn.

Acclamation.

AHIAH.

Let us consult Jehovah; all draw near.

SAUL.

Ask whether I shall pursue them; and, pursuing them,
 Shall I be able to destroy their remnant.

Whilst AHIAH seeks an answer from God, enter two of ZAPH'S DEMONS, meeting.

1st DEMON.

Ah, my gossip, art thou here?

2nd DEMON.

Ah, old crony, pray what cheer?

1st DEMON.

Moderate.

2nd DEMON.

They say that's best.

1st DEMON.

Prythee grant me my request.

Tell me, tell me, pray,

Thinkest thou the Lord will say

Whether Saul shall further slay?

2nd DEMON.

Pshaw! I've no vaticination.—

To thee what's Saul and his probation?

1st DEMON.

Thou'rt a Critic.

2nd DEMON.

Am I?

1st DEMON.

Yes.

2nd DEMON.

Critics are nor more nor less

Than arrant fools.

1st DEMON.

Thou seemst in dudgeon.

2nd DEMON.

I'm as I seem: come let us trudge on.

1st DEMON.

Whither goest thou?

2nd DEMON.

To Mount Tabor,

To rest me from my morning's labor.

1st DEMON.

Labor! Sport, for we'd much mirth

This morning, churning up the earth.

2nd DEMON.

Had you? Then you do not rue it.—

But 'twas sheer tyranny to make us do it.

Mirth, indeed!

1st DEMON.

Who made that moaning?

2nd DEMON.

'Twas I that played the part of groaning;

And with a will too, in the key due,

A natural sorrow from me toning.

1st DEMON.

Had Zaph commanded thee to howl?

2nd DEMON.

He had, and grief seemed on his soul:
Wilt come along?

1st DEMON.

I'll see the end on't.

2nd DEMON.

But so so, thou mayest depend on't.
Come away.

1st DEMON.

No, let us stay.

2nd DEMON.

Then I shall thee bid good-day,—
Or rather night, I'm pensive, so shall
Up the tender moonbeams stray. [Vanishes.

1st DEMON.

I doubt he's right! for much I fear
There'll be but scant amusement here;
So will take wing myself, and drop
Ere midnight down on Pisgah's top. [Vanishes.

AHIAH.

God doth not answer thee.

SAUL.

And wherefore?

AHIAH.

I

Know not, but He is silent.

SAUL.

What is the wrong,

And who is the wrong doer? for as God lives,
Although it were my own Son Jonathan,
He for it should die.

SAUL pauses and none answer him.

Are ye all silent? Yes.

Now every one of you to one side gather,
And I and Jonathan will take the other;
Then let the lot be cast, which God dispose.*The people having retired to one hand, and the KING and JONATHAN to the other.*

Lord God of Israel, give a perfect lot.

*AHIAH draws the lot, and the KING and JONATHAN are taken, the people escaping.*How is it that evil must thus dog my steps! [aside.
Now cast the lot between my Son and me.

JONATHAN is taken.

Now God assist me to endure my portion ! [aside.
Jonathan, what hast thou done ?

JONATHAN.

I did but take

A little honey with a rod I bore,
And for this simple deed, then, I must die.

SAUL.

Oh that my curse should fall upon myself !
Hear me, Oh God, and pardon me, if Thou canst,
This latest rashness !—Now let the sceptre drop
Out of my hands, for I have slain its heir.
Jonathan, my dear Son Jonathan, thou must die.

One of the crowd.

Oh, hideous wrong ! what wouldst thou do, O King ?
Thy Son too,—God forbid ! Shall Jonathan die,
He who began this victory ;—as God lives
Thou shall not hurt a hair of him, for he
Hath worked with heaven to day.

*A great uproar, midst which the people rescue JONATHAN,
and bear him away.*

SAUL.

They break my oath,

Not I. Oh, Jonathan, thou art saved, but I
Had near destroyed thee ! Foolishly I swore ;
Forbidding to eat, but who can see the end
Of every fine beginning ? my commandment
Has acted as a goad acts on an ass
For it has brought us to a stand. Abner,
Go post our sentries, and betimes to-morrow
We'll turn about and cause other enemies sorrow.

Exit ABNER.

Surely there is a blight within mine ear
Forbidding me a harvest ; Jonathan
May reap when I am dead, but I shall never
Garner within my bosom sheaves of peace.
Heaven hath a quarrel with me ; heaven
Surely denies perfection to my deeds.
Ye fast appearing and sky-peopling stars,
Ye see me, in victory, sorrowful. I'll seek rest,
And ye, whilst o'er my head you vigils keep.
Kindle dreams of home and Ahinoam in my sleep.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT SECOND.

A C T I I I .

SCENE I.

*A sequestered part near Gibeah.**Enter ZAPH.*

ZAPH.

The insult that proud Gloriel on me put
 In the affair at Michmash rankles in me.
 Injuries there are which never can be pardoned.
 Moreo'er revenge is pleasant ; Satan never
 Forgives ; neither will Zaph in this case do so.
 I Gloriel hate, first on the general score
 Of our antagonistic offices,
 Then on the especial of his last oppression :
 And now I know what I will do. Towards Saul
 I bear no malice, neither is there out
 Against him Satan's warrant, since he is
 Scarcely Jehovah's minion. But I will bait him,
 I will set one of my troop upon his soul,
 On purpose to spite Gloriel.

Exit ZAPH.

SCENE II.

*Gibeah. An apartment in Saul's palace.**TWO OFFICERS of the royal household.*

1st OFFICER.

Now, surely, we shall have a lasting peace ;
 For since the king arose from his prostration,
 After the base desertion of him at Gilgal,
 He has dealt around him such a storm of battles,
 That all the enemies of our race are down,
 And buried beneath his heap of victories.

2nd OFFICER.

Talk of the Devil and he will appear ;
 Though that's a saying ungracious towards the King,
 Who can be very gracious when he wills.
 He is coming hither to walk and talk alone,
 And never is in company more to his mind
 Than his own thoughts in words half muttered. Come.
Exeunt OFFICERS and enter SAUL.

SAUL.

All have succumbed before me ; Moab, Ammon, Edom ;
 The Kings of Zobah, and the Philistines ;
 Nor have the Amalekites unhumbled gone ;
 None now dare spoil us, and my throne seems settled,
 Which Samuel said was given unto another.—
 Surely it was the pevishness of dotage
 That to the outbreak prompted the old man.
 Hither he comes :—there's something in his look :
 What is the burden that he will deliver ?

Enter SAMUEL.

What wouldst thou, Samuel ?

SAMUEL.

Jehovah caused me to anoint thee King ;
 Over his people Israel : now therefore
 Harken unto his voice. Jehovah saith,
 Go and smite Amalek, for I remember
 How he laid wait for Israel in the desert
 As he came up from Egypt. Utterly
 Destroy man, woman, youth, and maiden ; infant,
 Camel, ox, ass and sheep ; spare nought whatever.

SAUL.

Exterminate them ?

SAMUEL.

Utterly destroy them.

SAUL.

Women and babes ; and those by years made helpless ?
 Dearly indeed now will the children pay
 For what their Sires did in a long-past day.

SAMUEL.

Moses hath told us that the parent's sin
 Upon the children should be visited :
 And what are days to the Eternal ?

Exit.

SAUL.

Samuel, thou art too imperious, or I am
 Too proud and unforgiving !—No adieu
 He deigned me, nor, with hands imposed
 Left me his blessing,—but I can forgo it ;
 And could with ease have now foregone his presence.
 'Tis strange, this visit ; it is very strange.
 Why comes he unto me with God's commission
 If I'm of God dismissed ? This looks dishonest :
 This contradicts his declaration of
 My forfeiture of the sceptre ; that which often
 Appears a prophecy hanging o'er me dire
 One day to be fulfilled. I'll think no more

Of that ! Why was I shaken with words, when deeds
 Have not the power to move me ?—Samuel, Samuel,
 Either the Lord spoke not by thee at Gilgal
 Or speaks not by thee now. I have heard tell
 Of hoary men being perjured ; of false Prophets ;
 Of lying spirits sent to them from the Lord.
 None are beyond the compass of temptation.—
 Haply the Prophet and others have conspired
 For my dethronement ;—or they seek my life,
 That they may gain possession of my crown ;
 Hence with this mandate Samuel comes to me,
 (Whom, haply, he has found too unobsequious,)
 Thinking that Death shall meet me on the field
 Of this grim expedition. No, 'tis wild,
 And horrible to think so ! Yet wild things
 And horrible have happened. Ah, if there
 Indeed, be somewhere an ambitious wight
 Now coveting my throne, let him beware ;
 For, if my eye should light on him, and know him,
 I will not say the horror of his doom,
 But it shall be appalling. 'Tis the mood ;
 This is the very pitch of heaven's harsh rythm.
 Though Gilgal feigned, herein I feel heaven speaks
 To me by Samuel : Mercy, hence, and Sword,
 Come forth and do the bidding of the Lord.

Exit.

SCENE III.

Before a City of the Amalekites.

SAUL, ABNER, HEBREW SOLDIERS, and KENITES.

SAUL, *addressing the Kenites.*

Haste, and depart from among the Amalekites,
 Lest I destroy you with them.

A KENITE.

Our fathers once to yours assistance rendered.

SAUL.

They did, hence my goodwill ; escape at once.

Exeunt KENITES.

Saidst thou the city was surrounded, Abner ?

ABNER.

I did.

SAUL.

We will surprise it then : do thou
 Lead on those at the rearward of the place,
 Whilst I assault its front.—When we remeet
 'Twill be midway in a domain of death,

And we'll shake hands o'er a bank of bloody corpses.
Drive pity from thy breast ; no quarter give,
For to destruction are devoted all.

ABNER.

All ?

SAUL.

All.

ABNER.

Women and children, infants and hoaryheads ?

SAUL.

Even just born babes that have not drawn the breast
Must die ; and those that have not seen the light,
Within expectant mothers killed by fright.
There must no seed be left to raise new harvest.
Remorse hear not though strongly it plead in thee.
Drown them in their own blood : pound them together,
And trample out the living fire of Amalek.
There, I have finished ordinance as dire
As ever mortal gave. 'Tis heaven requires
This rigorous execution at my hand,
Or I could not have given such fell command.

ABNER.

Oh, let us cover us with the cowl of night
When we perform it. Yet would that but little
Avail us, for at whatsoever hour
We paint this picture, its pervading crimson
Shall set the heavens on fire. Oh, Saul, Oh, Saul,
What go we do ? I dreamed not that our mission
Urged us so far into the realm of vengeance.

SAUL.

Go, now begin : go, ere I cry out, spare.
Go, and believe it to be but *manslaughter*
When women's and children's blood is shed like water.

Exit ABNER.

Now let me tighten every cruel sinew,
And gird the whole up in unfeeling hardness ;
That my swollen heart, which bleeds within me tears,
May choke itself to stillness. I am as
A shivering bather who upon the shore,
Looking lugubrious on the cold, black waves,
Thus, starting from his reverie, with a rush
Abbreviates his horror. Now to the deed.
Hebrews, come on ; glut your dislike of old,
And cursed be he who spares for love or gold.

Exeunt SAUL and SOLDIERS.

SCENE IV.

The midst of the town. Noise of the massacre. Screams and groans heard amidst great uproar, which having subsided, enter SAUL and SOLDIERS from one hand, and ABNER and SOLDIERS from the other, meeting.

SAUL.

Art thou with blood not blinded ?

ABNER.

Thou lookst grimmer
Than I before ever saw thee, even when Nahash
Thou huntedst down from morning until noon,
And dyed his flight-path red.

SAUL.

No more ; 'tis done.

ABNER.

Would it were not ! I hated the Amalekites ;
But such a deed,—

SAUL.

It is not thine, nor mine.

ABNER.

Thou knowest that if this had not been of God,
I had disobeyed thee.

SAUL.

I had not commanded
Without heaven's sanction. Samuel stands alone
Herein responsible. Let us cut short
Our colloquy. Leave some to bury the dead,
Lest pestilence fill the air.—Cease grieving, man :
The agony is passed ; the slain are easier
Now than the slayers : it is we want pity.
No one now suffers from thy trenchant blade.
The lambs which thou hast killed and wrapped in gore.
Sleep painless, and will wake to pain no more.

ABNER.

Who will not call me butcher !

SAUL.

What's done is done :

Moreover, have not I in this red pool
Waded as deep as thou ? Be comforted :
Remember, when our Fathers Canaan took
All to the sword were put : This is not new.

ABNER.

There's some relief in that.—

SAUL.

Much, all sufficient :

Consider, too, men move not much our pity :
Men are our counterparts, and these were all
Hereditary enemies of ours.

ABNER.

But women ! The resemblance of our mothers,
And of our sisters, as methought they seemed,
As with their upraised hands and frantic looks
They fled before us ; or, without defenders,
Of fathers, husbands, brothers, all cut off,
Stayed kneeling and bowed down their meek white necks
Before us to receive the horrid scymetar.

SAUL.

I pray thee, peace ; Abner, I pray thee, peace.

ABNER.

I often in my rage thought on my daughter,—
And, oh, to see the little ones, that those
Damned brutes carved up so cheerfully, or dashed
Against the stones their brains out.

SAUL.

Prythee, peace.

ABNER.

I cannot hold.

SAUL.

Ah, I could rave, too, Abner.

But that I dare not let my thoughts have birth,
Much less to array those embryo thoughts in words,
I should deliver me of such conception
As would appall the reverent ear of men,
And make me seem, even what I fear I am,
The Omnipotent's accuser.

ABNER.

Let's both cease.

SAUL.

Let us our mouths close from this very day
Touching this dreadful business ; let our hearts
(Like smoky rooms) blacken with their down-pent grief,
But never let us willingly it mention.

ABNER.

Be it so, and whatsoever tint may wear
My other deeds, past or to come, I'll say,
Be I bloody red, or be I ingrained black,
Herein I am white as childhood's innocence.

SAUL.

Let's go, our troops are wondering at our parle.

Exeunt SAUL, ABNER and SOLDIERS.

SCENE V.

Country near to Shur, an Amalekitish town, shewing ruined.

Enter two HEBREW SOLDIERS.

1st SOLDIER.

Let us put up our blades, for not a blade
Seems standing on the Amalekite's wide mead ;
So ruthless we have mown down life thereon,
And with the sudden sickle of our coming
Reaped red, prodigious harvest of old hate.

2nd SOLDIER.

From Havilah to Shur we have destroyed them.
By the reward that waits on deeds well done,
Will not Jehovah smile upon us now !

1st SOLDIER.

Doubtless He will : 'tis pleasant, too, to feed
Thus the keen appetite of a gnawing grudge,
Whilst we perform the mandate of Jehovah,
And work with His commission. It is as
We banqueted on meats that, while they gave
The present palate exquisite delight,
We knew should us supply with surplus strength
To last for many days ; or it is as
We feasted with soft music floating round us.
When I was killing, such thoughts came to me like
The sound of cleft-dropped waters to the ear
Of the hot mower, who, thereat, stops oftner
To wet his glittering scythe, and with pleased grinning,
With the harsh, sharpening hone, beats their fall's time,
And, dancing to it in his heart's strait chamber,
Forgets that he is weary.

2nd SOLDIER.

Even so

During this wild destruction I have found it :
It seemed as though some pliant, deep, bass voice
Made—whether the note was from babe's voices shrill,
Or frantic women's, or oaths or howls of men—
Harmony to each occasion.

1st SOLDIER.

None are spared.

Enter two other SOLDIERS.

3rd SOLDIER.

Yes, Saul hath spared their King.

4th SOLDIER.

And we have spared
The Choicest of their cattle and their sheep.

As sacrifice to Jehovah.

1st SOLDIER.

Is their King

Spared for a sacrifice?

2nd SOLDIER.

Why hath Saul spared

Their King?

3rd SOLDIER.

He has not told us,—mayhap to be

A mockery for the rabble in Gibeah.

4th SOLDIER.

Dost thou not know that like affects its like?

The king hath spared the king.

2nd SOLDIER.

But we have not

The subjects spared who are our like: besides

We were to finish them: I have obeyed

To my utmost.

3rd Soldier.

And so have I.

4th SOLDIER.

And I, little thanks

To me: it is not in man's nature, more

Than it is in the beasts full, panting heart

To spare his quarry when he's roused by hunting't.

There goes our King. How conqueror like he stalks!

And yet methinks that he is sorrowful.

3rd SOLDIER.

I could be sad too, but I shall not.

4th SOLDIER.

Let us

Follow the King: 'tis said we back by Carmel.

3rd SOLDIER.

With song let's purge our ears still ringing out murder.

Sings.

By Carmel, by Carmel,

We travel back from war will:—

Old Carmel, old Carmel,

Behind us slaughter, before us water

We'll see from ancient Carmel.

Exeunt the third and fourth SOLDIERS.

1st SOLDIER.

Those two are stupid fellows; why, they seem

Disgusted with their work. Murder!

2nd SOLDIER.

Ay, ay,

They are surfeited : but one of them's no fool.

1st SOLDIER.

I wonder which of them is wisest. Come.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

Ramah ; an apartment in the house of Samuel.

An ANGEL descends.

ANGEL.

Saul's early piety having wasted quite,
Jehovah rues that he hath made him King ;
And so to inform old Samuel, from heaven's height
It is which doth me down the morning bring
To the Seer, who, when day's latest beams take flight,
To learn God's will must droop beneath the light,
Descending on him from my hovering wing.

Here 't is he sleeps, and here by daily prayer
Labors for Israel : here upon the law
By day he ponders, and when shadows draw
Around him, lain upon his silent couch,
Oft sees me through the stary air approach ;
And I to night must access to him find,
And stamp on his Jehovah's altered mind.

ANGEL disappears.

SCENE VII.

Near Gilgal. Time, morning.

The army of Saul seen marching home.

Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

The morn opens wildly 'twill be rain to day.
I never marched so heavily, although
The gladsome rank and file dance on before me.

Enter AHINOAM.

My Ahinoam ! what is it brings thee hither ?

AHINOAM.

Ask of the swallow what 'tis brings him to us,
And he will tell thee 'tis the approach of summer :
So thine approach has drawn me to thee hither.

SAUL.

Am I thy summer, my Gibeon Queen ?
But thou art not the swallow, Ahinoam :
For, now that I think on't, is not happily chosen
Thy simile of that wanderer, since he leaves us
At peep of wintry weather. Remember,

The swallow has a byeword grown in Israel,
Since Gilgal's sudden chill.

AHINOAM.

Forget that now.

SAUL.

I read thine eye. The Amalekites have perished.
None 's saved, save he who merited the sword,
Haply, beyond the others who were doomed
To feel its keen destruction.

AHINOAM.

Who ?

SAUL.

Their King.

AHINOAM.

And didst thou think on me when sparing him,
And so, too, spare for him a Ahinoam ?

SAUL.

It was too late ; no one had thought of mercy ;
And all of woman kind who called him husband,
Had been cut off ere he was taken.

AHINOAM.

Alas !

What else ? have all his children perished ?

SAUL.

All.

AHINOAM.

Then let him die. If he be man he'll live not,
He will request thee, yet, to end him, Saul.

SAUL.

I do repent, already, that I saved him.

AHINOAM.

Couldst thou cast him back into his harried realm,
As might some fisher from his bursting net,
Throw back a scaly monster to its flood :—
But no, why do I fondly talk,—he can
No more return to that which is no more :
Nor can he live, if he indeed be man,
Ever in the power of his conqueror and destroyer,
More than the fish can live left on the shore.
And has all perished, all except himself ?

SAUL.

Nothing of his we have spared, except a few
Of the choice sheep and cattle, that the people
Have hither brought to serve as sacrifices :
Some to the Lord were sacrificed at Carmel.

AHINOAM.

Saul, thou art made a minister of vengeance,
And must perform thine office ; but may God
Forgive me weeping o'er thy finished mission.

SAUL.

My Morning Star, let me wipe off these dew
That dim thee in this unexpected rising.
Ah, Ahinoam, dearer than that star
Is to the hour of dawn, art thou to me,
Now when home coming gloomy though successful.
Lift up thine eyes upon me, love, and drive
From out of me my darkness.

AHINOAM.

Husband dear,
Home with me to Gibeah, where new sights
May cause you to forget what you've late seen.

SAUL.

I never can forget what I've late seen :—
Oh, I could paint thee pictures with my tongue
(Scenes drawn from out of Amalek's great anguish)
From morn till midnight, till thine eyes grew redder
Than blood itself with weeping,—forget them ! no ;
Such scenes are not like unto children's figures,
Drawn on the stones and which the rain outwashes.
Ahinoam, I am a soldier, and have seen
War many times, but all here seemed like murder.
Such cries of youths, such shrieks, such looks of women ;
Such chorus of promiscuous sounds, imploring
Mercy from men,—nay, let me not such call them,—
Who met those melting sounds with hideous laughter,
And out of countenance grinned the encircling air,
That stagnant stood with horror.

AHINOAM.

It was wrong
To scoff at the poor wretches in their ruin.

SAUL.

Their ruin made the revel of our men ;
Who've made the massacre a carnival,
And fleshed their souls even deeper than their swords.
Pshaw ! the broad multitude know nought of judgment :
Revenge, with them, was at the bottom of it,
Whilst sensuality rose to the top like scum :
Revenge is hunger of the mind, and hunger
Makes all things cruel ;—yet, the wolf not sports with,
But rends its victim and its sharp-head plunges,
At once into its bowels. Oh, 'twas foul

Behaviour! but I fear that most of men,
If they were licensed by Divine decree,
Would change to Demons, and for aught be ready.

AHINOAM.

Beware lest thou blaspheme Jehovah, Saul.
His holy will depraves not those who work it.

SAUL.

It does when they exceed it. The Dead they've stoned,
And made the Holiest's order an excuse
To glut their basest passions.—But I'll punish:
They shall sneak in at the back door of Gibeah;
There shall be pageant none! I could not bear
To see thee smile—and with thee all Gibeah—
On half those men.

AHINOAM.

I see that they are flushed,
Even yet, and looking lewd as savage.

SAUL.

Ay,
As Amalek's daughters, even i'th agony, found them.
Babe-killers are a third of them by nature;
Nor e'er for Age felt reverence: oh!—but I
Never held that men were noble, for, in truth,
There is a latent treachery in us all;—
Ay, and mayhap in women; though I think
That in your essence you are gentle, and
Admire no bravery in men save that
Which has been married to a tender spirit,
That, like an indwelling angel, causes them
To grieve even while they punish. Such not these:
Look at the gazing fellows who are nearst us:
Blood-shotten are their eyes with rage, and where
The wine has not the cheek incarnadined,
The tawny jaundice mantles on the skin,
And speaks of yet edged malice. I am sorry,
That thou hast stolen from Gibeah to meet us;
For in their vain and ignorant misconstruction,
Thy coming here may seem to mean special welcome.

AHINOAM.

'Twas love for you that did impel me hither.

SAUL.

I know it; but, sweet chuck, return at once:
Go back, dear wife, and wait me in Gibeah.

AHINOAM.

And must I be discharged so soon? and when
You are moody too,—for I can see you are troubled.

SAUL.

Not much, love, now : so let us separate, for,
On thee attending, I could not compell
This force to march twixt discipline's strait borders.

AHINOAM.

I see 'twas foolish to forestall your coming,
And disallow your soldiers natural frenzy
To ebb lower down the sloping bank of time
Before this greeting : but I'll say farewell ;
To-morrow you will rest you in Gibeah.

SAUL.

I hope so, darling : and by that time, surely,
These men will don their old and lying faces,
And from their mistresses and wives conceal
The dark truths of their nature. Now, farewell,
And better fare for th' love that brought thee hither.

Exit AHINOAM.

I'm glad she's gone ! for, staying, she might see trouble.
Even now, I have within me a misgiving,
That I have hurt myself in sparing Agag.

Enter SAMUEL.

Hail !

The Lord's command given by thee is performed.

SAMUEL.

What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep,
And lowing of the oxen that I hear ?

SAUL.

The people have brought the choicest of the cattle
And sheep, to sacrifice unto the Lord.
All else destroyed they.

SAMUEL.

Thou unhappy man,
Listen, and I will tell thee what the Lord
Said unto me last night.

SAUL.

Say on.

SAMUEL.

When thou

Wert humble, void of pride, God chose thee
To be his Chief o'er Israel ; wherefore, then,
Hast thou not been obedient since, and when
He sent thee to extirpate the Amalekites,
Why hast thou not obeyed Him, but allowed
Thyself to make exception, and take spoil ?

SAUL.

I have obeyed Him, I have executed

The Lord's behest. The Amalekitish King
 I have brought captive, and have all his subjects,
 Man, woman, youth and babe put to the sword.
 Their cattle, dead or dying, strew the land,
 Except a few which should have been destroyed,
 The choicest, which the people have brought hither,
 As sacrifice unto the Lord thy God.

SAMUEL.

Hath God in sacrifice and in burnt offerings
 As great delight as in obedience given
 To his command? Know that to obey is better
 Than sacrifice; and that to hearken to Him,
 Is more acceptable than the fat of rams
 Unto Him offered: for rebellion
 Is even as bad as is the sin of witchcraft;
 And stubbornness as is injustice, or
 Idolatry; hence since thou hast again
 Rejected God's commandment, so He thee
 Hath finally rejected from being King.

SAUL, *aside*.

How shall I answer this? Oh, Ahinoam,
 Well thou didst leave me when thou didst! it is
 For thine and Jonathan's sake I'll humble me.
 Down heart, down to the dust if it must be so.

aloud.

I have done wrong; I have not perfectly
 Performed my errand, for I have deferred
 Unto the people, granting their request
 To save some cattle. Pardon me, and now
 Go back with me, that I may worship God.

SAMUEL.

I will not go with thee, for thou again
 Rejected hast God's voice, and He doth thee
 Reject from longer being King o'er Israel.

SAMUEL turns to go away from Saul, who seizes him by the mantle, which
 rends in Saul's grasp.

Spirit perverse, and toward but to evil,
 Thus hath God rent from thee this day the kingdom,
 And given it finally unto another,
 Better than thou. Remember, the Strength of Israel
 Lies not, nor will repent; nor is He man
 To change his mind.

SAUL.

I do confess my sin!

SAMUEL.

That comes too late to hold thee on the throne.

SAUL.

Too late ! Is there no pardon in the world ?—
 Why, I myself dispense forgiveness, even
 To culprits who have forfeited their lives.
 Is not thy God as merciful as his creatures ?

SAMUEL.

He mercy shews to thousands who do keep
 His great commandments.

SAUL.

They who keep them need

No mercy,—say, what have I done that calls
 For this huge penalty now thrice denounced ?
 Omitted what, which cannot yet be done ?
 He has not said that which thou hast declared.
 Thou art mine enemy ; art jealous of me.
 Wouldst wish to see me trip and tumble down.—
 Prophet, I now impeach thee. Why didst thou linger
 Away from Gilgal, and, when I supplied
 Thy lack, come thither and ban me for my trouble ?
 And wherefore comest thou now in this proud style,
 Requiting me for toil and life imperilled,
 By second deposition ?—and forsooth,
 Because some sundry sheep and calves and beeves
 Yet snuff the air—of which there is abundance—
 And a poor realmless king still lives to weep ;
 Or curse, in secret, thee, myself, and God ;
 The obvious triad who (for an offence,
 Not his, but his dead Ancestors,) have conspired
 To dash him and his Idols. Answer these
 Strong accusations, then come here, and with
 Thine own soul pure arraign me.

SAMUEL.

God arraigns thee.

SAUL.

Nay !—and yet take the cattle, and take Agag,
 And kill him out for kindness. I know thou lovest
 Not kings, so lovest not me, although I am
 One half of thine own making ;—hence it is
 That I've endured thy schooling, for I cannot
 Forget the early days of our acquaintance,
 Ere thou hadst learned to chide me.

SAMUEL.

I still love thee,

Even in this thy last and deep disaster.

SAUL.

Is this sincerely spoken ?—if it be

Give me some proof: my anger towards thee dies.
Say that Jehovah is not wrath.

SAMUEL.

How can I?

For He has cast thee off.

SAUL.

But not for ever;—

Such cannot be for aught that I have done,
Or for what I've omitted,—or if He has,
Still honor me before my people's eyes,
By me accompanying to worship Him.

SAMUEL.

Lead on, but never more for favor ask me.

Exeunt, and enter, soon, a SUBALTERN, who paces to and fro; and presently a confused noise arises.

SUBALTERN, *stopping suddenly.*

What means that hubbub?

Here comes one who can scarce contain himself.

Enter a SOLDIER.

What now? Thou lookst surprised.

SOLDIER.

No wonder, when

The gentle Samuel's executioner turned,
And finisher of our labor. Agag is
No more.

SUBALTERN.

Has judgment, then, been so exact
That it has not allowed one dole of mercy,
Though 'twere to have been bestowed upon a King!
This is not true:—and how of Samuel?—Pshaw!
I Agag saw but now and he was living.

SOLDIER.

He lives no longer, not at least amongst men.
Agag is now a ghost, and would not know
The carcass that three minutes ago contained him.
So felled it is, so lopped, so strewn on th' ground,
The bird, his soul, now would not know the tree
That it for forty years has sat and sung in.
He'll pipe no more.

SUBALTERN.

Did Samuel order his death?

SOLDIER.

He summoned to him the Idolater, who came
Bareheaded, and yet delicately, forth;
Approaching him, and, with forced smile, exclaiming,
"Surely the bitterness of death is passed!"

But Samuel cried aloud with kindled eyes,
 "As thy sword hath made woman childless, so
 Thy mother shall be childless among women."
 Then hewed him into pieces.

SUBALTERN.

Is't possible!

SOLDIER.

Come with me, and I'll shew him thee divided
 Into five Agags,—ay, and more, let's reckon.
 His hands are off, that sought to save his head,
 Which is disparted, and his arms and shoulders
 Are carbonadoed, minced; and gashed his loins;
 And all the cunning ways and means of life,
 The coiled bowels, liver, heart, and lungs.—

SUBALTERN.

A curse upon thee! hold.—Why Saul and Samuel
 Even now to worship went. I'll not believe thee.

SOLDIER.

What not believe? I tell thee that from worship
 Samuel arose and slew him, and away is gone
 Saul to Gibeah, and Samuel back to Ramah,
 And certainly in mutual displeasure.

SUBALTERN.

Here's Gilgal o'er again! Alas! alas!
 With this division betwixt the Throne and Alter,
 Israel can never prosper.

SOLDIER.

Wil't go see Agag?
 Thou'lt say he makes no handsomer a corpse
 Than any of his subjects.

SUBALTERN.

I will follow thee.

*Exeunt, and re-enter near. SOLDIERS looking at the remains of Agag.
 An altar still smoking at a distance.*

SUBALTERN.

Oh, horrible! This deed had better become
 Saul's bloodstained hand.

SOLDIER.

Thou saw him whilst he lived.
 Wouldst know him now that he is dead?

SUBALTERN.

His own
 Wives would not know him, who should know him best.
 Poor child, but this sight melts me!

SOLDIER.

Pity him not;

He would have done as much for thee and me ;
 Ay, or for Saul or Samuel : listen how
 The ground, after the soaking draught of blood,
 Smacks its brown lips ; it seems to like royal wine
 Better than small-beer that leaks from beggar's veins.

SUBALTERN.

All sceptreless he lies, and none to bury him.
 Sceptre ! he has no hands wherewith to wield it.

1st OF THE SPECTATOR SOLDIERS.

No, but he has two heads, or something like them ;
 So, were he living, he might wear two crowns :
 His face is cloven like a pomegranate.

SUBALTERN.

'Tis a sad dissolution.

SOLDIER.

Why, all perish,
 Even kings, for all meet death at sometime.

SUBALTERN.

True ;

Some crawling to it over eighty years,
 And some cast down from life's bright top and summit,
 Like Agag, into darkness. Though an enemy
 He was, let's not insult him, but remember,
 That if his life was profligate and cruel,
 His end 's untimely and most tragical.
 Let us not leave him thus ; but some assist
 To gather his scattered relics, and them cover
 Over with his bloody robe : quick, for methinks
 I hear the recommencement of the march.

They gather him.

2nd SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

All's here ; bones, brains, and merry thought.

3rd SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

Peace, peace.

SUBALTERN.

Now extricate his robe, and let it be
 His purple pall.

1st SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

No need of covering.

He'll scare away the beasts that come to taste him.

SUBALTERN.

He is indeed a hideous sight. How soon
 The sword destroys the living workmanship !

4th SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

Let's close his chine and make his double face one.

5th SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

Lord ! how his eyes distend, and gape his jaws.

SUBALTERN.

Ay, stricken with terror at Samuel's sword, his spirit
Seems to have leaped both out at doors and windows.

2nd SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

Stay, here's a regal tooth that sprang in terror
From the red gum, like a white angel from hell fire :
Let's put it in.

3rd SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

Blasphemous wretch, and void

Of decency.—

2nd SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

Why, and what better shall the
Whole body of the Idolater receive
In Tophet ? Idolaters are hell's fuel.

6th SPECTATOR SOLDIER.

There,

I have done nothing except watch you, and
May heaven forgive me if I've done too much.
I'm off.

Others.

And I.

Others.

And I.

All save the SUBALTERN, run off laughing.

SUBALTERN.

Ay, go, ye herd

Of bears, and apes, and other unlicked cattle :
One day may your bones whiten in the weather.
Good bye, poor King ; for wails and solemn mutes,
Thou hast had laughter and the gaze of brutes.
Thou canst not say I've mocked thee.

Exit SUBALTERN, and enter an exceedingly illfavored DEMON, named GRAB.

GRAB.

Seven days have vagabonds from the bottomless pit
Been driving thither the Amalekitish ghosts,
Till few are now on earth. I think no demon
(And their are many scoundrels up) has taken
A greater booty than myself has done :
And now I'll droop to Acheron. Ah, what's this ?

removing the robe from the corpse of Agag.

Here is fiend's work ! no, 'tis not in our style ;
Or if it be there's been as fierce contention
For the possession of this worthless case,

As once there was twixt Lucifer and Michael
 Over the slough of Moses. I know this form :
 It was the King of the Amalekites.
 I'll look about me, for it is yet warm,
 And clapperclaw the royal sprite myself,
 Save some one has forestalled me : usually
 The spirit lingers near its mortal clay :
 Perhaps this is scared by the body's spectacle.
 Yonder it trembling stands, and yonder come
 Sailing two goblins to appropriate it.
 I know them both, their names are Clutch and Takem :
 But they're anticipated.

GRAB *flies towards the Shade of Agag, which he reaches just before*
 CLUTCH and TAKEM.

CLUTCH, *shouting*.

That's ours, we smelt it from afar.

GRAB.

You lie,

A sweeter spirit never left foul body.

TAKEM.

We'll have it, or it never shall go down
 To the abyss.

GRAB.

In your company it never shall.

Varlets, go bury you in the smoke of hell :—
 Ay, pummell me as you will for I'm immortal.
 Satan shall know of this :—leave go, I say ;
 It is a King, would you disfigure it ?
 Look how it trembles at your horrid visages.

CLUTCH.

A king ! We'll have it then.

GRAB.

No, never, ruffians ;—

Ay, tug yourselves to nothing : I'll fight the rounds,—

TAKEM.

And so will we.

GRAB.

To hell and back.

CLUTCH.

We farther ;

Down to the purlieus o'th seven quickened fire,
 Where this contested Monarch shall be lost,
 Or melt into ungatherable ether.
 We'll singe both him and thee if thou beest willing.

GRAB.

Ah, hound, take breath.

TAKEM.

What mean'st thou ?

GRAB.

Prigs, avaunt !

CLUTCH.

Grow not too scurrilous : we mean thee well.
 Let us assist thee bear this sprite below.

GRAB.

No, did you ask me with a good intent !
 What ! shall a cousin and a peer of Lucifer
 Be borne and ushered to his sight by rowdies ?
 Go, empty down, go, or the royal ghost,
 Shall help to buffet you, ye pair of brigands.
 Infernal prigs !

TAKEM.

Now shalt thou smart for that.

GRAB.

Aerial Pirates !

CLUTCH.

Calm thee, compound with us ;

Give us a lost Priest's value (which is not much.)

GRAB.

Impudent villains, Hell-scum vagabonds !
 Ye vile, outprowling, ugly plunderers,
 I'll give you nought, but carry off the King,
 And hell shall soon of you, ye miscreants, ring.

GRAB breaks from them, and bears away the spirit of Agag.

CLUTCH.

A most determined fellow at a pull !
 I saw that we must carry him, too, with us
 If we persisted to convey that soul ;
 And our reward were not worth half that labor :
 So let him have it for he'd first possession.

TAKEM.

But we were two to one.

CLUTCH.

Never mind, there are others :

Besides, that ghost, to be pleasant carrying,
 Expressed too strongly all the recollections
 Of a past life that left it to remorse.

TAKEM.

I was not called aright in the great day
 When we rejected our celestial names,
 And took unto us others. I'll change Takem,
 Which has become mere irony unto me,
 Who have taken so little lately.

CLUTCH.

I next time,

Will better vindicate my cognomen.

Meantime, let's not give way to disappointment,

For there will always be departing spirits.

They skim away heavily, and ZOB and FLY, two of a superior sort, enter.

FLY.

Now let us down to hell, we've seen the last.

ZOB.

Stay, for the road thereto is yet encumbered

With the descending spectres of the killed :

'Tis said they choke hell's gates, and stretch from thence,

Out like a tongue upon the silent gulf,

Wherein our spirits,—even as terrestrial ships

That are detained by foul winds in a offing,—

Linger perforce, and feel broad gusts of sighs,

That swing them on the dark and billowless vacuum ;

O'er which come sounds more dismal than the boom

At midnight, of the surf of the salt-flood ;

Even dead Amalek's moan and lamentation.

FLY.

He's lost, but not as we. I've neither pity,

Nor spite regarding him,—for who can pity

Others in that which his own self-endures

In greater measure ? Amalek is strange

To his vicissitude, but he will grow

Inured unto it, even as others have grown,

At length, inured to theirs. Rememberest thou

When, with those vast, inexorable rains,

Jehovah drowned the people of this world,

How long they lay upon the lumeless deep ;

How long they drifted through hell's gates, how roared

Their grief ?

ZOB.

I do, and laughter at them shook us,—

But they have been revenged upon us.

FLY.

How ?

For many a mistress, many a dalliance

Within Gehenna's undelightful walls,

That Godsend gave us ; and on us bestowed

Some pleasure of change.

ZOB.

With pain repaid, for jealousy

Came to us with the Antedeluvians ;—

Those groundless taxings with unfaithfulness,

Those unhymeneal bickerings, but chiefly
 Those ever-damning doubts that scourge so many
 Worse than hell-flames, were brought with them from
 [earth.]

FLY.

Say rather, here, three thousand years ago,
 'Twas found by us 'midst the sweet girls of Cain,
 Granddaughters of first Eve, and equal to her
 In those soul-sensuous charms, which she employed
 On Adam to his ruin long before
 The Deluge (which I deem that they deserved)
 Sent the whole bevy to us,—but, why trifle we?
 Say, whereunto shall we betake ourselves,
 To pass the hours, until we are compelled
 Again to droop unto our fiery prison?

ZOB.

Let's go and bathe us in the Atlantic Sea.

They turn to go.

FLY.

Ah, who comes towards us?—I know her: 'tis my fair
 [friend]

Peyona, Malzah's lover.—Thou knowest Malzah:
 Him, the facetious spirit who, with mirth
 Infectious, can at times provoke half hell
 To snap their fingers at both it and heaven.
 I will accost her; Malzah's lately grown—
 And here's the fruit of that forbidden tree
 Which we first tasted on this carnal world—
 Groundlessly jealous of her, for sure never
 More constant creature than herself ere fell
 From light,—indeed from thence she did not fall,
 But wandered freely to our gloomy pit
 After her lover, whom to seek was ruin.

Enter PEYONA.

Peyona, my pale pilgrim, whence art from?

PEYONA.

Tophet. Whence you?

ZOB.

The Land of Amalek.

PEYONA.

Ah, the poor realm!

'Tis said, that since the days of Jonathan,
 Who conquered this, there has not been such slaughter.

FLY.

It is too true; Peyona, 'tis too true:
 These mortals are continually frantic

Either with lust, or changes of the moon ;
 Or lust of power, or lapses into rage
 At their own wrongs, or those their fathers left them,
 To school them into malice.—Yes, Peyona,
 This hour, from Havilah to Shur is red
 As Eygpt was, when we with heaven's angels,
 (Beneath the forms of Moses and the Priests)
 Contending in the gamesome lists of magic,
 Changed all her streams and lucid pools to blood.

PEYONA.

Ha, ha, those were the days of frolic ! Malzah laughed
 For a whole century afterwards :—he would titter
 Up in his sleep, and kissing and caressing,
 Call me his frog, or louse, or pretty serpent :
 And once he smote me such a blow, that I
 Still bear the mark on't, for he dreamed he saw
 Me, fascinated, speeding through the jaws
 Of one of Aaron's sacerdotal hydras ;
 At which he aimed the blow that fell on me.
 Have you not seem him lately ? for I seek him ;
 'Tis many a day since I beheld his face.

FLY.

Yonder he comes, if I may know his gait.

PEYONA.

'Tis he indeed ;—oh, how this sight revives me !
 And yet I almost fear to look upon him :—
 You'll stay and greet my mate ?

FLY.

Excuse us, for

We are on eve of urgent business, so
 We will not stay to greet him, least he should,
 With mystic charm seduce us to his vein,
 And lead us, bound, to fields of dissipation.

Exeunt ZOB and FLY, and enter MALZAH, stepping to the measure of his own words.

MALZAH.

Home to Gibeah the king is gone,
 With God's grace off, and Man's dudgeon on ;
 Oh, yes he is gone, yes, home he is gone,
 And I there to meet him will surely make one.
 His Queen, Ahinoam, will wonder and pine,
 His servants will pity, and some shall divine ;
 And I will all hear, as midst them I steer,
 And take from my hearing my strategy's line.

PEYONA.

I've watched thy folly.

MALZAH.

Ah, one embrace!—But stay;
What brings thee hither? [Enter ZOE.]

Here comes a puritan.

Exeunt MALZAH and PEYONA, hastily.

ZOE.

Hell's ministers avoid my path,
As though I moved in latent wrath;
But I, on melancholy wing,
Muse on my own late ministering.
'Tis ended now; 'tis ended now;
And I unto the issue bow.
On Saul himself resides the blame:
Saul could not more attention claim:
A stronger influence from me
Would have destroyed his liberty.
His fault was found in his own heart;
Faith lacking, all his works fell short.
I for him sigh,—why should not I?
I loved him when to me first given;
But I'll forget him now, and fly
Again unto my seat in heaven.
Exit ZOE, and re-enter MALZAH and PEYONA.

MALZAH.

I do believe thee; nay, I know thou'rt true.—
I am the very Ass of Acheron
To have brayed thus in thine ear. I promise thee
That I will snort out no more jealousy.

PEYONA.

Yea, let hell's pains, which I endure because
Without thee I would not reap heaven's pleasures,
Still vindicate me to thee.

MALZAH.

Oh, no more
Towards there: for ten hells burn in that one thought!

PEYONA.

Malzah, be thou to me
Ever as constant as I am to thee.

MALZAH.

Thou knowest I am the creature of my mood,
And when I doubt thee, I do love thee most.
Come, let us kiss ere parting. (kisses her.)

Peyona,

The scents of heaven yet hover round thy lips,
That are a garden of well watered sweets,

Which I must leave now for the arid desert
Of vexing Saul.

PEYONA.

I know thy taste for mischief;
And all love's round, from this to summed desire,
Gladst thee not more than does occasion offered
To gratify it: I pray thee use Saul gently.—
What thing is that? [*pointing to the corpse of Agag.*]

MALZAH.

A pie, a pie merely;
But made methinks, lass, when the cook was angry.
Look on it, it is worthy thine inspection:
It is concocted of a certain King,
Agag by name: his bloody, stiffening robe,
Around it thrown, makes a fine encrustation.
Upon this grand updishing of his kingdom,
He is brought in at the last as the dessert:
And I opine he has here his descert,
Being served up in a most royal fashion.

PEYONA.

Oh, canst thou jest at such a piteous sight?
I'll go no nearer to it, no not I.

MALZAH.

We must now rip ourselves asunder: come,
Bid me farewell again; and I'll expire
'Till quickened 'ith resurrection of thy countenance.
Farewell, my squeamish, ever-gentle goblin.

Exit PEYONA.

I like not blood myself, and such dread carving
Makes one both sick and savage: but 'tis true
(For I beheld this tragedy performed)
These priests delight to school and humble Kings.
Ay, ay, dead Tyrant, this is degradation;
The flies already take thee for a dunghill.
Faugh! who'd stay here who did rejoice in nostrils!
Now over sweeter fields and running brooks
I'll follow Saul, who has just now lost his relish
For man-killing; grown surfeited and sick,—
As well he may have, after his bloody courses.—
I'll follow him and see if he'll take bitters.

Exit.

SCENE VIII.

The Ether. The ANGEL that appeared in the sixth scene, descending.

ANGEL.

Again, from near the throne down sent,
To earth I take my way ;
Commanded by the Omnipotent,
These words to Samuel say.

“ How long wilt thou lament for Saul,
Rejected from his regal height ?
Fill, now, thine horn with oil, and go
To Jesse the Beth-lehemite :
For I have to myself, a king
Provided from amongst his sons.”

Thus said the Lord, and whispering
Arose amongst the angelic thrones,
And mournful looks, as I took wing,—
I, who am of the chosen seven,
Whose occupation is to bring
To earth the high behests of heaven.

Disappears amongst the clouds beneath.

SCENE IX.

Ramah. Time, morning. A room in SAMUEL's dwelling.

Enter SAMUEL.

SAMUEL.

No hope, no more probation now for Saul !
I must depart ; this vision was divine :—
Yet Saul will kill me if he know my errand.
They tell me that he rages, and in chief
’Gainst me. What shall I do, Lord ? Speak to me.

The voice of the ANGEL.

Fear not, to Beth-lehem go,
And take a heifer fair ;
To sacrifice to me
Say that thou comest there.

Call Jesse and his sons
Unto the feast ;—now go
And, from amongst them, him anoint
Whom I shall to thee shew.

SAMUEL.

It is enough ! Now, Saul, I fear thee not.

Exit SAMUEL and enter the ANGEL.

ANGEL.

My errand done,
I'll upwards bend a beam o'th sun;
And cause it, in its hasty flight,
Transport me to my seat of light.

Vanishes.

SCENE X.

Gibeah. An apartment in SAUL's palace.

SAUL.

If I rejected be, I, too, may have
Rejected, for I feel that I am changed.
Revulsion cold and hot resentment fill me.
I am as him, who, to his enemy
Having made fair overtures which are disdained,
Pays his Disdainer with malicious scorn.
Is it the skies I scorn? Oh, no; for who
So hardy as to scorn the Omnipotent?—
Samuel I scorn, for he unjust is towards me!—
Yea heaven unjust is too.—Oh, peace, my tongue.—
And yet I am indubitably changed:
My heart now never beats up heavenward.
I once was as a bird that took slight soars,
But now I never rise above the ground.
I have no God-towards movings now: no God
Now, from his genial seat of light remote,
Sends down a ray to me.

Exit.

SCENE XI.

Beth-lehem. A spacious apartment in the house of Jesse.

SAMUEL, ELDERS, JESSE, and others who have been called to the sacrifice,
which has just been offered.

SAMUEL.

Now bid thy sons come hither that I may see them.

The messenger ANGEL enters, and hovers, invisible, over SAMUEL.

ELIAB enters.

Surely the Lord's Anointed is before him.

ANGEL, *heard only by SAMUEL.*

Regard thou not his countenance
Nor stature;—he's refused:
The Lord's regard is not as man's,
For man is ta'en by outward shews,
The Lord observes the heart.

Exit ELIAB, and ABINADAB passes.

SAMUEL.

Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

SHAMMAH *passes.*

Nor this.

Enter, and pass consecutively, seven other sons of JESSE.

Nor any one of these. Are all thy children Here?

JESSE.

There remains the youngest and he tends The sheep.

SAMUEL.

Send for him, for we will not Sit down until he come.

DAVID *is brought in.*

ANGEL.

Arise, anoint him, this is he.

SAMUEL, *anointing* DAVID.

As I upon thy head now pour this oil,
So may the Lord on thee outpour his spirit.

To the company.

Now let us eat, for I must soon be gone.

The repast being finished SAMUEL *rises.*

1st ELDER.

Thou wilt not go to day.

JESSE.

We pray thee linger.

SAMUEL.

It cannot be, I must reach home to night.

2nd ELDER.

Thou wilt not tempt the darkness?

SAMUEL.

The Lord will light

His servant. Farewell all. 'Tis always day
To those for whom Jehovah lights their way.
I too long linger from the shades of Ramah.

Exeunt all but DAVID.

DAVID.

What meaneth this? Why am I singled out,
The youngest born, for this unusual honor?
Blessed be the holy Prophot: and may his prayer
For the descent of grace on me be answered.

Exit.

SCENE XII.

The Neighborhood of Gibeah. Time, before daybreak.

Enter ZAPH *and* TIPTOE.

ZAPH.

Tiptoe, our spirits come not: what's the matter?

Surely they cannot have been intercepted !
 I know that heaven's proud gendarmerie
 Are more than ever upon the alert.
 Be watchful, for I apprehend intrusion,
 Either from Gloriel or from his troop.

TIPTOE.

Nor Gloriel, nor any of the flunkies,
 Who with him wear the livery of heaven,
 And who have lately shewn such zeal to thwart us,
 Shall steal upon your session whilst I'm sentinel.

ZAPH.

Thou art mine own true squire. [*A cock crows at a distance.*
 Hark, Chanticleer

Breaks with his voice the bubble of the night.
 Even now the dawn is in the east fermenting.

Enter ZAPH'S DEMONS hastily.

Is this the hour that you were summoned for ?
 Marshal yourselves about me ; and now, Tiptoe,
 Around about us wing continually,
 And warn me if thou hear aught.

TIPTOE.

I will fly

So swiftly around you that I'll be a fence,
 Like the Divine, in every part at once.

Exit TIPTOE.

ZAPH.

Now, laggards, tell me of your cheer
 Since you last assembled here.
 Zobah, what hast thou been doing ?

ZOBAB.

Marry, I have been awooing.

ZAPH.

Fellow, thou wert aye a jester !
 Even in heaven thou didst pester
 Those who ruled thee : now, be sober ;
 Or I will bind thee on October's
 Raging wings, and to the north
 Send thee of the frozen earth :
 There unto thyself to gibber,
 In the pangs of cold to quiver ;
 Where the pinching climate *must*
 Separate thee from thy lust.

ZOBAB.

None labor harder.—

ZAPH.

What hast thou done ?—

I see thou toiled last at the larder :—
 Grossest spirit, that can steal
 Into drugs that warp the will ;
 And consent to dwell in wine
 Poured down throats of men like swine :
 Or, provoking rank congestion,
 Squat thee, littled, in confection :
 Smothered thus, or drowned in cream,
 Strive of Heaven's Ambrosia dream.
 Fallen spirit, 'tis the mind
 Stiff and stubborn makes our kind.
 What art thou ? Celestial Sow.
 Go, and let the Arctic wind
 Through and through thee purge and find.

ZOBAB.

Oh ! oh ! oh !
 Shall I do wrong and then deny it ?
 'Tis grief, and hell's abstemious diet,
 That makes me thus on earth run riot.
 Oh, master, hold !

ZAPH.

I've caught thee, varlet, playing the harlot ;
 Drawing forth maid's fragrant breath ;
 Like the cat on th' cradle infant,
 On them thou hast sat, a death :
 Purring in thy fulsome zest,
 Till I, coming on thee instant,
 Struck thee thencefrom, loathsome pest.
 Thou wert a lecher ere the flood ;
 And tall Anak's spiry brood
 Point towards thee.

ZOBAB.

'Tis calumny.

ZAPH,

Begone !
 A goblin of ignoble mind !—
 Were all like him,
 Gigantic had become mankind.
 Widewing, what hast thou been doing ?
 I hope some lawful mischief brewing.

WIDEWING.

O'er the earth, and up the air,
 Passing regions cool and fair
 I have voyaged ; beyond the bounds
 Of our customary rounds.
 Even soared to heaven's gate

[Exit ZOBAB sullenly.]

Even on heaven's threshold sate ;
 And there sang a plaintive ditty,
 That moved many a soul to pity
 Among the angels. I o'erheard them
 Whisper that my music stirred them :
 Rashly some expressed desire
 Listen to us in full choir.
 One said, (but was for saying it blamed,)
 " Genius dwelt but with the damned.

ZAPH.

Ha, ha, ha, ha : by their own shewing,
 We have the talents ; that's worth knowing.
 But proceed.

WIDEWING.

I oft took heed,
 Amongst them of a strange uneasiness,
 Which men call ennui ; want of business :
 Such as I myself have felt
 Many a hour, when there I dwelt
 Watching stray leaves as they fell ;
 Or contemplating Asphodel :
 Or regarding lazy clouds ;
 Or the coming evening's shrouds :
 Longing, pining, for a breeze ;
 Wishing there were tongues in trees ;
 Thoughts in rocks, and locomotion
 In the distant, stagnant ocean :
 Dozing now, and now upwaking ;
 In the air my wings now shaking ;
 Then, descended on the soil,
 Challenging to run a mile.—
 Such a languid, soft sensation
 As befits us for temptation ;
 And I now am of opinion,
 We of heaven might get dominion,
 Could we but contrive to throw
 Half a legion in, or so ;
 Who should tempt them in that vein
 Of pleasure fading into pain.—
 But let that be for the debating
 Of hell's bold Peers and subtle Satan.

ZAPH.

Indefatigable spirit,
 Great indeed I find thy merit !—
 Thou dost deserve to find the clue
 Leads back to heaven hell's valient crew.

Couldst thou therein thyself not smuggle,
 And quick with their Ambrosia juggle?
 Or spice their nectar? or, sly creeping,
 Inspire rebellion whilst they're sleeping?
 Ponder. For honors thee await on
 When this I shew to royal Satan.
 Now, Sitstill, thee;
 My spirit sage and sedentry;
 What hast thou done?

SITSTILL.

A general view

I've taken of that hybrid crew,
 Mankind,—that procreated race,
 Which holds twixt us and brutes the place,—
 And have to this conclusion come,
 We might as well abide at home:
 Or, from earth's peaks and mountains high,
 Gaze up into the cheerful sky;
 For dull is Acheron, and would range
 Thence many for mere search of change;—
 Let's leave Man, master; let's exempt him:
 Wealth, wine and women they can tempt him:—
 And women, they can tempt themselves.
 This conduct many troubles shelves,
 And leaves us leisure:— ne'er expect
 Good, where sense wars with intellect;
 With men their senses are but holes
 Through which creep sins to tempt their souls.

ZAPH.

Thou say'st not well. Next Sardon speak;
 Quick, the morn apace doth break.
 Whence art thou from?

SARDON.

I come from Tophet:

Thither sent by Gloriel's buffet;—

ZAPH.

How?

SARDON.

Struck down whirling into hell.

ZAPH.

So dread a fall, and thou here well!—
 This surely is a guarantee,
 Given of our immortality:
 For what mere mortal wight could keep
 His life, cycloiding down the steep?
 For this I'll Gloriel meet some day,

And call him to account, — but stay,
I hear the air commence to sing :—
It does, but not from Tiptoe's wing.

Enter MALZAH.

Welcome, Malzah ; welcome, sprite ;
Welcomer than longer night
Just now would be ! What hast for me ?

MALZAH.

Tidings of the royal Saul,
King of Israel.—

ZAPH.

Shall he fall ?

MALZAH.

I deem he will, for much he dares :—
Twice he has tripped half unawares ;—
Twice, in spite of Zoe's cares.
Zoe's she who him defended :—
Zoe's guardianship is ended.
If thou wilt I'll at him venture.

ZAPH.

Go, brave spirit, strive him enter.

Exit MALZAH.

It grows too light : — lo ! withering are
Both Jupiter and the Morning star :
And, lo ! Aurora peeping there
On the eastern eaves, — of her beware :—
She's lovely as she was of yore,
But coming now is nigh a bore,
Because her pale, untinted ray
May light our enemies this way ;
So, with low voice and accents brief,
Tell me, conjointly and in chief,
What you have suffered, or what done
To spread the power of Acheron.
Me answer all ;
And let your quick words muffled fall.

All.

Master, master, some disaster
Hath befallen us, but much more
Hath success ; and mortals sore
We have troubled, having doubled
Evil, latent in their core.

ZAPH.

This is well ; 'twill gladden hell,
Pass away and work it more.

The DEMONS vanish.

TIPTOE, *from without.*

There's some one coming.

ZAPH.

Come thou hither.

Enter TIPTOE.

The spirits are gone, and for the ether
I am ready.

TIPTOE.

On my shoulders take thy seat.

ZAPH vaults upon TIPTOE's *shoulders.*

Sir, be steady!

Whither shall I bear thee fleet?

ZAPH.

I have business, if I choose,
Beckons me to Tartarus,
But I will not :—to the moon
Let me now be carried soon.

TIPTOE.

When last there thou soon grewst weary,
'Twas so full of valleys dreary;
Nor thereon a rood of sea
Wherein thou mightest mirror thee.
Let's to Limbo.

ZAPH.

Then to Limbo : in a trice,
Lay me in th' Fool's Paradise.—
They're here upon us, : scour away.

TIPTOE.

Let them catch us if they may.

TIPTOE flies off with ZAPH ; *and a* RUSTIC *enters.*

RUSTIC.

There's no one ; but if I did not hear voices
May I never hear voice again. Thieves, perhaps, it was,
Who were, in too loud whispers, quarrelling
Touching their spoils dividing ; or I have
Divided, perhaps, a pair of crossed true lovers ;
Or haply done good deed, scared some lewd creatures
Who have 'ith fields abused the dewy night.
Now should the thieves look back,—ay, or the lovers,
And see 'twas only I, they'll turn and punish me ;
For things grow angry when they're balked in pleasure.
I think that it were better I returned.

'Tis said

That, at the day spring, dark and evil spirits
Break up their nightly meetings, where they dance
To parodies of strains they've learned in heaven.

I would not, for my life, offend the devil ;
 For he is subtler than the shrewdest magician,
 And, twixt the setting and the rising sun,
 Takes his malicious pastime in the air ;
 Breaking, sometimes, benighted wights their ribs
 By a stroke of his wings, or with his ghostly kicks ;
 Or hurrying them o'er precipices, where
 They lie ith' obscure bottom till discovered ;
 And many a time, regardless of their screeches,
 Takes them in flames of brimstone down to hell.
 Shall I go forwards? Yes ; why not ? here's nothing
 Except myself and my hobgoblin fears :—
 By this the air is purged from evil angels,
 Which is at dusk delivered unto them,
 Wherein to brew the midnight thunder, and to
 Make shoot November lightning, or spread fogs
 O'er the drenched lea. Toadstools, and fustballs plant
 They in the darkness, or, hovering in mid air,
 Thence, in the form of stars, down vomit fire :
 And drifting on the night-breeze, seem a light
 Borne by some evening hind, and lure the stranger
 To the morass, or th' unsuspected stream.
 All night the air's their feoff and foul domain ;
 But at the dawn they flee, and holy angels,
 Opening the gates o'th east, as now they're doing,
 Guard the awakening world. Yet then 'tis said,
 Appollyon's self, or some one of his creatures,
 Like a shy reveller, is seen stealing homewards ;
 Now in the likeness of a rook, and now
 Low scudding o'er the twilit common, as
 A grey and silent owlet ; and sometimes
 In the disguise of a grim footpad's met,
 Hastening from out of yonder dark Gibeah.
 Now should he come upon me—and what likelier ?
 Ha ! ha ! oh dear, I thought that I was clutched !
 And yet it was only a small gust of wind.
 What shall I do ?—nay, I know that which I shall do ;
 I will return, ere, at the least, a fiend
 Should catch me up and in the dead sea drown me.

He sinks down.

Thus low, for my poor, palsy-stricken legs
 Cannot carry me off erect.

Exit.

SCENE XIII.

Gibeah. Interior of SAUL's palace.

MALZAH.

God's permitted me,
He's admitted me
Into King Saul's heart ;
Wherein shall work strange wickedness,
Ere I from it depart.

Hory, gory, already Saul's story
Hath a tragical chime ;
Hory, gory, how Saul's glory
'S perishing in its prime :—
Ha, ha, ha, it shall be my aim
To drag him into crime.

I've him visited,
Improvised
Him with his first rage ;
And from his groans and threats I do
Some merriment presage.

Himble, nimble ! never so nimble
Since fell I from the sky :
And whilst I'm out I'll take a route
And ramble up the sky.
Ha, ha ; ha, ha ; ere this, on earth,
I've seen a dancing bear ;
But nought, in pure, exalted mirth,
That could with me compare.
I'm happy very : I'm growing merry ;
And company I can spare,
Whilst I the empyrean pierce to see
If heaven still hangeth there.

Yes, were it not the roarer of all jests,
To up and peep at the outside of heaven ?
Beyond all questioning it would be so :
Therefore I'll treat Saul with becoming leisure,—
For business should still alternate with pleasure.

Exit gaily.

SCENE XIV.

Space. An angel, by name TYRANNEE, descending, and the angel lately messenger to SAMUEL, ascending.

MESSENGER ANGEL.

Whither art thou descending, Tyrannee ?

TYRANNEE.

To earth, thereon to seek a certain spirit
Who has been trespassing on heaven's light ;
And whom we deem to be—like to that other one,
Who lately was cast howling from heaven's threshold—
One of the troop of the notorious Zaph.

MESSENGER ANGEL.

Hath he a roguish look ?

TYRANNEE.

He hath.

MESSENGER ANGEL.

Then I,
Even now, as I was leaving earth, have met him,
Downwards towards Lebanon flying. Steer thou by
Yon orient cloud. Farewell.

Disappears ascending.

TYRANNEE.

'Tis Nardiel,

The ever-journeying angel of the Lord.
What an aurorial hue and morning tinge,
The constant-fanning ether gives his form !
I did not deem, before, that he had known me :
'Tis well I met him, for he'll save me search
For that malevolent, aspiring fiend,
Whom I am seeking for. Yonder he is ;
And must be in my thralldom until heaven
Release both him and me from Saul, and I'll
Deal rudely with him at the first, for hell
Has lately grown defiant and refractory.
disappears descending between the clouds.

SCENE XV.

Interior of SAUL's palace at Gibeah.

MALZAH, driven in with great violence, and having fallen on the floor.

Oh, hurt, unutterably hurt ! Oh, oh,—
Here's an adventure ! here's Amazon !—
I know her though ; her name is Tyrannee :
But let her not think tyrannize o'er me.
Oh, oh,—I am cut up : I'm dashed to pieces ;
There's nothing whole within me, nothing straight ;

My very thoughts and essence are in spirals.
Horror! Sheer from the top of Lebanon,
Through cedar trees and snowdrifts spun!—
And yet I half forgive the bold she-fellow,
When I consider that she has but swept me
Whither I meant to come,—no thanks to her.
Oh, oh, these throes:—but I will be revenged!
I have not felt before such ghastly torment.
I've all the arrows of the frosty wind
Sticking within me, and the forest's boughs
Have sliced and torn me. Let me not laugh;
I cannot bear to laugh:—oh, oh, that shake.—
'Tis hard that a wretch cannot grin at his own disaster.
For I could crack day's tympanum with laughter;
I shall expire, I shall expire, oh, oh,
I shall expire, even yet, twixt rage and laughter.
I've got a twist, nevertheless, about my reins,
One which will hold me, perhaps, a thousand years.
Confound the dazzling jade and her stout gust!
May she fade from this very hour, when she forgot
The gentleness that most adorns her sex.
Nay, nay; the very strumpets of the Hebrews,
The dirty commoners who walk the streets
Of this Gibeah, or prowl i'th environs,
Contaminated and contaminating,
Do yet retain compassion. This is terrible:
Since the great rough and tumble down the skies,
When sex and friendship were alike forgotten
Throughout heaven's host, there has been nothing like it.
But I will be revenged, even yet, for this:
I'll turn it into verses, yet, which shall
Be sung, or howled, at the heels of heaven's bright fops,
Till they, for very shame, shall shun the earth;
And leave it echoing to us in our mirth.
Now could I drink up Nile, so much I thirst,
Or suck the vapors rising to the clouds
That do preserve the earth from drought. Alas,
Thirst will depart, but the insult never. Oh,
'Tis the most scandalous assault ever known;
Most unprovoked: forsooth, because (for what
Is't more?) because, forsooth, I yesterday
Flew up towards heaven, down pops me this virago;
And with no warning, save her coming's brightness,
(Which I will dim when I next on her come,)
Even as I whistling sat upon a bank,
Dastardly hurls a whirlwind at my flank.

And then to see the cunning of the skies :
 They send the privileged gender, knowing that
 I should be loth to combat with a seraph.
 The flying tyke ! curse her, I would not kiss her
 Unless my lips were snakes to sting and hiss her.

Oh, oh :

[*Rising.*]

I'm stiff already, and I shall grow stiffer.

May the rigidity that haunts the age

Of mortals hamper her aerial sinews !

Oh, oh, but now I ache. A thunderbolt

Would not have so disabled me. Fie, fie ;

There is no love instinctive twixt the sexes,

Or she would never have thuswise abused me.

'Tis true she is a saint, and I a sinner,—

But what of that ? do we not feel alike ?

No, they feel not for pain, who have known but pleasure :

Curse her again then say I, the young beldam.

May she grow bleared for this like antique mortals ;

May rottenness and decay yet eat her up.

I'll curse no more for nothing ;—and indeed,

I feel the anguish of my frame decreasing :

My strength returns, I feel my joints reknitting ;

Though it will be years before I'm lthe and sound :

And my big injury *cannot* be removed

Except by her o'erthrowal :—never mind ;

I'll meet her yet and bang her.

Now to redeem the time, and, as I think,

'Tis the full moon, the most auspicious season

For operating on the human reason.

I'll go seek Saul, and vex him while I'm savage.

Exit and after awhile re-enter.

I cannot do it !

Nay, nay ; I'll brave Zaph's uttermost displeasure.

What hath Saul done to me that I should plague him ?

It goes against my heart and conscience, thus

To rack his body and deprave his mind.

Oh, how he groans, and sighs, and swears, and reasons !

Nay, by the pith of goodness yet left in me,

It me unfriends to see and listen to him.

Give me a ground of quarrel with him, let

Me know that he habitually derides us,

Or that he charges us with the corruption

Of his own heart, as many do with theirs,

And I will touzle him to Zaph's desire ;

Or pitt me against a standing enemy,

An angel ; bid me bite my thumb at one,
 And I will do it ; but for this poor king,
 I have no provocation to sustain me
 In the process of his injuring. Would that heaven
 Might hither send in force its Nonpareils
 And drive me away from him. Here comes one.

[Enter TYRANNEE.]

Creature !

Why hast thou followed me hither ? Out, thou Quean.
 Ah, wouldst thou steal a second time upon me
 With cunningest concealment of thy blast ?
 Or deemst that I will not oppose a fair one ?
 Hence, or it shall be said that we have striven
 In wrath, who should have graced a softer tale ;
 Hence, or I'll drive thee instant up to heaven,
 Or drag thee downwards to the pit of bale.
 Oh, thou empyreal minion, but there was
 A time when thou couldst not have thus compelled me.
 Back, back ; I bid thee back ; go back to heaven.

TYRANNEE advances.

May all the essence from thy form distil,
 And waste thee into blank oblivion !

TYRANNEE.

If thou doest curse me I will punish thee,
 For I have given me o'er thee special power.
 Go and plague Saul.

MALZAH.

Not at thy bidding. No !

TYRANNEE.

To him, and leave him not until the hour
 When thou hast done thy work.

MALZAH, (*aside.*)

I must obey her, I feel I must ; I feel
 That she hath power to shrivel up my tongue :
 And I believe she knows my inmost thoughts.

(*aloud.*)

How long wilt thou enthrall me ? I'll not obey thee ;
 I am Zaph's minister, not thine : I am
 The serf of Lucifer, and I will pay.
 For I do owe, no service to Jehovah.
 Curse thee, thou cruel slander of thy sex.

TYRANNEE advances threateningly towards him.

Oh, spare me, spare me ; I will go vex Saul.

Exit followed by TYRANNEE.

SCENE XVI.

*The same.*SAUL (*now possessed by MALZAH*) *rushing in wildly.*

What ails me? what impels me till
 The big drops fall from off my brow? Whence comes
 This strange affliction?—Oh, thus to be driven
 About!—I will stand still: now move me aught
 That can. Ah shake me, thing; shake me again
 Like an old Thorn 'ith blast! 'Tis leaving me,
 And my cleared understanding sees once more
 Things in their true relations. Oh, how long shall
 This malady continue; these dread seasons
 Of awful visitation? I am ill;
 My strength is wasting in these paroxysms;
 Expending in one hour's evil labor
 The vigor for the day.—'Tis here again!—
 What's here again? Or who? Here's none save I:—
 And yet there's some one here,—'tis here, 'tis here,
 Within my brain,—no, it is in my heart,—
 Within my soul! It has returned, it has
 Returned; again arise black thoughts within me,
 And horrible conceptions, that from hell
 Might have come up.—All blasphemies that my ears
 Ever heard; my horridest ideas in dreams;
 And impious conceits, that even a fiend,
 Me thinks, could scarcely muster, swarm within
 Me rank and black as summer flies on ordure.
 Oh, what a den this moment is my breast!
 How cold I feel, how cruel and invidious.
 Now let no child of mine approach me; neither
 Do thou come near unto me, Ahinoam,
 Their mother, and the wife I dearly love.—
 'Twill pass away; 'twill pass away anon.
 I'm bound; I've bound myself; I am self bound;—
 I am a fury, but a fury bound;
 To whom the universe appears one field
 On which to spend its rancour. Oh, disperse
 Fit, nor return with thy o'erwhelming shadows.
 Oh, that it would begone and leave me in
 My sorrow;—surely 'tis enough to live
 In lone despair: to reign is care enough,
 Even in rude health, but to be harassed thus
 By an unnamed affliction;—and why harassed?
 Oh, why am I thus harassed?—I have heard
 Of wretches raging under sharp remorse;
 Of cruel monarchs in their latter days,

Falling a prey to an accusing conscience ;
 But why should I, whose faults smite but myself,
 Be thus tormented ? [Enter AHINOAM

AHINOAM.

Oh, be soothed, my Saul :
 My husband, oh, my King, be calmed.

SAUL.

Am I not calm ?

AHINOAM.

You were not lately : far off I heard you ; yea,
 Your servants must have heard you.

SAUL.

Let them hear me,
 Since God will hear me not. I tell thee, wife,
 I'll on Him call no more, nor sacrifice.

AHINOAM.

Oh, speak not thus.

SAUL.

I will thus speak.

AHINOAM.

Wherefore ?

SAUL.

Because He shuts my heart when I would open it
 To Him : and I curse Him, when I strive to praise.

AHINOAM, (*weeping.*)

What shall I do !

SAUL.

Ay, what shall I do too,—

I have no tears to shed as woman hath :
 My grief must burn within me, or o'erflow
 In tragic deeds, or those foul blasphemies
 Which, from my soul's ooze, are uplifted by
 My horrid agitation. Weep ? No, no.
 And yet I have wept too, but secretly ;—
 Ay, ay, convulse me once again strange forces :
 Whate'er thou art that rends me I defy thee !
 Ah me ! to be thus clutched ! what shall I do ?
 Oh, Ahinoam, help me, help me, I
 Would pray but cannot ;—pray for me, Ahinoam.

AHINOAM.

Oh, Thou who can control the furious storm,
 Rescue my husband from his gusty pangs.
 Cure his distemper, lighten his sad heart ;
 Assuage, oh God, assuage his torment, or
 Let me endure it and to him give ease.

SAUL.

Oh, wife, it is not these corporeal pains—
 Though they are past description—that unman me :
 But 'tis the horrid overthrow of my mind,
 My will's harsh subjugation that doth humble me.
 I know the strength of man : I know a spasm
 Can paralyse it : I know his cogitation
 May fail at an impertinent idea :
 But to have the soul swallowed up of its own self,
 Like ocean by its own devouring sands,
 Or the clear sun high in the firmament,
 Thence downwards sucked and quenched in a volcano,—
 Oh, no stouthearted courage can brave that.
 I would that I could guide my thoughts ! but no ;
 The king's most lawless subject is himself.
 His thoughts have lately strangely scorned his rule.
 They are as shifting winds that scorn the sun's,
 And fickler than the April hours they are ;
 Some fair enough, some sorrowful, and some
 I know not what they are like, nor whence they come ;
 Inconsequential, so like imps of hell,
 That I would not be their Progenitor
 For half my crown :—no, no, I loathe
 Such inspirations, in me but not of me ;
 Things that seem to me on the hot winds blown
 Of some infernal desert ; scorpions, dragons ;
 Inbreathings,—no acknowledged brood of mine,
 By thought on thought begotten.—Dry thy tears ;
 My paroxysm is ended for to day.

AHINOAM.

Would that you had some cure !

SAUL.

Would that I had !

But let us hence, I am no longer mad.

Exeunt.

SCENE XVII.

An apartment in the palace.

The QUEEN, and a PHYSICIAN.

PHYSICIAN.

His majesty's general health seems to me perfect ;
 For, save when he is suffering in the fit,
 (When I have marked his pulse most riotous,)
 His frame exhibits no symptom of disease.

QUEEN.

No ? Looks his eye as clear and bright as ever,

As healthful his complexion? Is his voice
 Strong, nor ever rumbles hollowly in his breast,
 Like a spirit speaking from a sepulchre?
 Does he never seem to sigh without occasion?
 I hear him groan throughout the livelong night,
 And he informs me that he's vexed with dreams,
 Wherein a form seems ever beckoning him
 To rise and follow it to violent deeds;
 Or, in his otherwise sound slumber, something
 Beats at the doors and windows of his senses,
 Urging for entrance. Tell me what these mean.

PHYSICIAN.

Whate'er their meaning, they're of the same complexion
 As his day's paroxysms. This much I know, [*Enter SAUL*
 His majesty certainly hath a mania, [*unobserved.*
 An intermittent mania, but of such
 Unusual kind, that I am ignorant
 Of its true nature, and, thence, hesitate
 To treat him for it.

SAUL.

Look deeper than the skin;
 Then go and find me out a cure. Canst thou
 Not purge a heart from care, a soul from gloom?
 Hast thou no balm to strengthen a faint mind,
 No caustic that will sear foul recollections?
 Find me amongst thy compounds or thy simples,
 An anodyne for undeserved distress.
 Doctor, I have a stubborn melancholy;
 Move it, and I will make thee king of Physic.

PHYSICIAN.

Your Majesty bids me exercise an art
 That I profess not: but as water droppings
 Slowly remove whate'er they fall on, so may
 The cadent moments of your Majesty's life
 Gently remove your trouble. Time is the skillfullest
 Physician and tenderest Nurse.

SAUL.

But memory

Is time's defier.

PHYSICIAN.

To know, is not to suffer
 Always; for wrongs, like men, grow weak when old.—
 But I'm to bold, your majesty.

SAUL.

I have heard say
 That, to the west, a people live believing

There is a river that can wash the past
From out the memory.

PHYSICIAN.

I've travelled 'mongst them :
But they believe 'tis only after death
That those dark waters can avail the spirit ;
Which, losing the remembrance of past evil,
Resigns therewith the memory of past good.

SAUL.

I ask not such oblivion ! But hast thou nothing
That can avail a mortal whilst he lives ?
What are the Dead to thee !

PHYSICIAN.

Your majesty,
Herein I cannot help you :—I've no opiate
That can assuage the anguish of the spirit ;
Nor subtle, fine astringent is there that
Can bind the vagaries of a lawless fancy,
No soft, insinuating balsam which
Can through the body reach the sickly soul.—

SAUL.

What hast thou in thy dispensatory ?

PHYSICIAN.

I've sedatives, narcotics, tonics too,—

SAUL.

Give me a tonic for the heart.

PHYSICIAN.

The King
Is strong of heart, or he had not delivered
Us from our 'enemies as he hath done.

SAUL.

Oh Prince of Flatterers, but the Beggar of Doctors !
How poor thou art to him who truly needs.
The mind, the mind's the only worthy patient.
Were I of thy faculty, ere this I'd have
Anatomized a Spirit.—I'd have treated
Soul-wounds of my own making ; and, especially,
I would have sought out sundry wasted wretches,
And striven to cauterize to their satisfaction,
Certain gangrenes in their past.—Ye are imposters,
After all ye are imposters ; fleas ; skindeep
Is deep with you ; you only prick the flesh,
When you should probe the overwhelmed heart,
And lance the horny wounds of old despair.
Away, Death is worth all the Doctors.

PHYSICIAN, (*aside.*)

I

Will speak the truth to him whate'er the result.
 My Liege, forgive me, for you have encouraged
 Me, by your gracious freedom, to be bold.
 You have an Evil Spirit from the Lord.

SAUL.

Ay, I am filled with evil whilst my fit
 Continues, and do a score of murders then,
 In fancy, and, in my excited hour,
 Abominations work for which there is
 No name in our vocabulary, whose worst
 Expressions seem soft terms of innocence,
 Compared with the big syllables required
 To express me fully, when, in cruelty
 And guile, the very soul of Moloch and
 The machinations of the cunningest fiends
 That walk the bottomless pit, and therein ply
 Their fruitful fancies to deceive the world,
 Move me midst black temptation. Oh, I breathe
 Then the live coals of hell, and all my heart
 Glows ruddier than Tophet's angry noon,
 So bloody is my soul and wrapped in sable.
 Say, what's our cure?

QUEEN.

Oh, fail not now his need!

PHYSICIAN.

Music can make the raging maniac gentle
 As is the slumbering babe; and hold the demon
 In thrall untill he smile like to an angel,
 And creep from out his victim to the air,
 To walk enrapt and harmless on the earth,
 As erst he trod the blue abyss of heaven.

SAUL.

I envy him his dole. A minstrel seek
 Me then.

PHYSICIAN.

Your majesty, I have seen a son
 Of Jesse the Beth-lemite; an excellent player:
 Handsome and prudent, and religious also.
 He keeps his father's sheep: his name is David.

SAUL.

Straight send a messenger to his father, bidding
 Him send his son to the court.

[*Exit* PHYSICIAN.]

Dost hear, chuck,

How that the Devil is subdued by sound?

He cannot be all evil then, for music
 Moves but that portion of us which is good.
 Nay, dry thy tears. Come, come. Sweet medicine
 Were music, and effective I doubt not;
 For I remember, lately, when possessed,
 Wandering beyond the limits of the garden
 Into the wood upon a breezy day,
 The sound of the swift brook assuaged my madness,
 That, as I stood absorbed upon the bank,
 Ebbd from me in unconscious, tender sighs.

Exeunt.

SCENE XVIII.

The Garden of the palace.

Enter two DOMESTICS.

1st DOMESTIC.

How is the King to day?

2nd DOMESTIC.

He's furious;
 None dare approach him, and the very dogs
 Shrink from him howling as they cross his path.

1st DOMESTIC.

Oh, horrible! A King to be so vexed.

2nd DOMESTIC.

I met him even now, and he did fix
 His eyes upon me in such savage sort,
 I turned to avoid him, but he followed me
 With vigorous strides, and on me poured hoarse curses,
 Hissing twixt each like a serpent.—horried,
 I looked behind me, and him saw returning
 Upon his steps, but his deep growls I heard,
 And sound as if of horrid chidings, which
 He seemed reply to in an abject sort,
 And cast himself at last sheer on the ground,
 And struggled amongst the shrubs like to a dragon,
 Dust covered, and as contending with a foe;
 Then writhed in helplessness as if o'ercome,
 And panting lay at last, supine keen moaning.

1st DOMESTIC.

What didst thou then?

2nd DOMESTIC.

I dare not reapproach him:—
 I stood and watched him till he seemed to sleep,
 Then came I hither.

1st DOMESTIC.

Dost thou think that he

Will awake, and prowling in his mood malicious
Come stumbling here upon us?

2nd DOMESTIC.

Heaven forefend!

For he would not respect us,—nay, 'tis said
That madmen are most bitter against them
Whom they most love in their clear hours of saneness.

1st DOMESTIC.

Hearken, what sound is that?

2nd DOMESTIC.

It is the harp

O'th stripling David, whom the king hath sent for
To soothe him in his hour. See where he sits,
Like to a youthful angel on a mount
In Paradise. The Queen hath set him
Hard by the lattice of the royal chamber,
So that the King may hear him, and be taken
In his own lure.

1st DOMESTIC.

But will the Evil Spirit

Permit him to approach its enemy?

2nd DOMESTIC.

I've heard, all spirits—fallen ones as well as those
Which are unfallen—have delight in music,
It being that which gave most zest to heaven.
Hearken, is it not sweet?

1st DOMESTIC.

'Tis more than sweet;

'Twould soothe a tiger, or the wretch that droops
Beneath despair, or him whose soul is chafing
Against itself at some sharp irritation,
Even as doth the squall-smitten and vexed sea's
White, boiling waves. 'Twould lift that back to hope;
This back to peace.

2nd DOMESTIC.

Lo, where the King comes back.

How formidable he seems! but now thou'dst think
Him tame, hadst thou but seen him lately. Mark him.

1st DOMESTIC.

I do, even in fear, for yet his lips
Are muttering, and roll his cloudy eyes:
I hope he will not pass us: he's dangerous yet.

2nd DOMESTIC.

He will: this way he comes with heavy steps;
Stooping, and with his tongue lolling out and bloody.
Alas, how brutalized, how laden with sorrows!

He seems to feel his degradation, and snorts,
Shaking his uncombed and luxuriant locks,
Like to an angry steed that meditates
To throw its rider.

1st DOMESTIC.

I am terrified

To look upon him.

2nd DOMESTIC.

He is smeared and foul
With stains of earth; and foam's churned to his lips;
Clenched are his fists, and vertically his arms,
Working consensive to his heavy tread,
He seems to pound both earth and air.

1st DOMESTIC.

And is

That Saul, our King, our royal master?

2nd DOMESTIC.

Austere he always looks, but always noble;
But now abstracted of his manly gait,
And champing at the bridle of the fiend,
He's dreader than the rank and brindled boar,
Whose drip-white tusks are draped with liquid gore.

1st DOMESTIC.

Art not afraid to stand here? let's be going.
Art not afraid?

2nd DOMESTIC.

He will not come this way
I'm certain, but I would not be within
Yon chamber where the young musician sits
For a year's wages.

1st DOMESTIC.

Thitherward he turns.

2nd DOMESTIC.

He has caught the sound, and due approaches it;
But whether in dudgeon or in softening temper
I cannot tell.

1st DOMESTIC.

He hesitates on'th threshold.

2nd DOMESTIC.

He is like the ox that snuffs the slaughter-house
Before it enters.

1st DOMESTIC.

He has entered now,
And may heaven grant this music may assuage him.

2ND DOMESTIC.

It either will, or else the more enrage him.
Come let us hence.

Exeunt.

SCENE XIX.

A Chamber of the palace.

DAVID, *playing upon his harp.* SAUL *enters and listens.* *At length*

DAVID *sings, accompanying himself with his harp.*

Oh, Lord, have mercy on the King,
The Evil Spirit from him take ;
Him, while I thus devoutly sing,
Deliver for thy mercy's sake.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

He for me prays.

Oh, heal thine own Anointed's hurt,
Let health again to him be given ;
And breathe upon his troubled heart
The balmy sense of fault forgiven.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

Why does he cease ? this invocative strain
Falls on me, in its awful gentleness,
Like a Superior's blessing : may he give
Unto me more of this sweet benefit !

DAVID *sings again.*

Great God, thou art within this place,
The Universe is filled with thee ;
And unto all thou givest grace,
Oh, give the King thy grace to see.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

" Oh, give the King thy grace to see " !
I know not why I lost the Highest's grace.
I cannot say amen ; or if I did
My feeble amen would be blown away
Before it had reached heaven. I cannot say it :
The demon plucks the word from off my tongue.

As after Winter cometh Spring,
May joy unto his soul return ;—
And me, in thy good pleasure, bring
To tend my flock where I was born.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

So able yet so humble ! how admirably
He joins himself with me without offence ;
His suit preferring like a Pleader, who,

Whilst urging the great interest of his client,
 Begg gracefully of the admiring Court
 Not to delay the judgment. I will speak
 My mind at once unto him.

(*To DAVID.*) Thou shalt not leave me.
 What! wouldst thou seek again the idle downs,
 Midst senseless sheep to spend the listless day,
 And watch the doings of thy ewes and rams?
 Bide with me, for thou pleasest me. I'll make thee
 My Armour Bearer, and will take thee with me
 Unto the martial field to see thereon
 Great deeds performed: thou shalt thyself be taught
 To use the sword and spear, and draw the bow;
 How to advance, how to surprise the foe,
 And how to leaven others with thy courage.
 We'll teach thee military lessons; how
 To tell the enemies numbers, how to find
 His vulnerable points, how to lay snares
 To draw him from his posts of vantage; how
 To win from Ammon and the strong Philistine
 The double prize of vengeance and renown;
 And how, at last, to drink aright, out of the
 Goblet of a victorious return,
 The blood-red wine of war. This is thy calling.
 Meantime thy lyric pleasures need not end;
 For the fair maidens of the court affect
 Music and song. Now let me thank thee,—which
 I had forgot,—and when my fit returns,
 Thou shalt again thine influence display,
 And chase the demon as thou hast to day.

DAVID.

I'm dumb with joy to see your majesty better.

SAUL.

Go tell the Queen, and be thine own honor bearer.

DAVID, (*aside.*)

The Lord is surely with me, and the prayer
 Of Samuel answered, or I could not have
 Checked and at least, suspended, thus the demon.

Exit.

SAUL.

Dear Ahinoam, dear girl, never gladder news
 Approached thine ears,—whether of victory
 By me achieved, or our son Jonathan,—
 Than the few words in which he will relate
 (For I perceive that he in speech is modest)
 Of his behoof to me in this affliction.

Oh, music, thou art a Magician : I
 Wonder we did not sooner think of thee :
 'Tis strange we did not sooner think of music,
 And meet (for I know not whether this distemper
 Be not caused by Samuel's own sprite-ruling power)
 Conjunction with conjuration, and by thee,
 Thyself a sorcerer, cast out sorcery.
 But let me to my closet hie, and there
 Straight wash myself from these degrading stains.

Exit.

SCENE XX.

Within the Palace.

Enter a Military OFFICER and a COURTIER.

COURTIER.

It is most wonderful.

OFFICER.

'Tis so indeed,
 This youth hath made the King a King again.
 Whose evil term day after day's grown shorter
 Till 'tis no more,—thanks to that noble shepherd,
 Who, with the engines of his harp and voice,
 Has since his coming hither, planned and laid
 Such heavy seige to this king-entering demon,
 That now our Master stands erect and sound,
 His royal mind's strong citadel being freed
 And purged from evil influence.

COURTIER.

I feel at this deliverance !
 Oh, great joy

OFFICER.

Abner wept,
 Nor could restrain his tears for very bliss,
 To see his royal cousin look so bravely,
 And bear his helm as wont was 'fore the troops,
 Who with their myriad tongue-blast rent the sky,
 And shook the marble basis of Gibeah.

COURTIER.

I saw the Queen, too, watch him from her window,
 (For I to-day am gentleman in waiting,)
 With looks composed of gladness, pride, and love ;
 Yet wherein some misgivings seemed to lurk
 And check her exultation.

OFFICER.

She's discreet,
 As he is brave ; more timorous, and less sanguine

Than he, (even as she should be being woman.)

COURTIER.

Jonathan was at the review.

OFFICER.

Yes ; at the side

Of his great Sire he moved, as if he meant
Preclude all other tendance.

COURTIER.

Possibly

He was suspicious of an access, even
I'th very midst and presence of the soldiery.
'Twas somewhat rash so soon to venture forth,
But very like the King. What age's the moon ?

OFFICER.

I know not ; con the calender.

COURTIER.

Not now :

I go to attend the Princes and Princesses,
And greet them on the end of their distresses.

Exit.

OFFICER.

Ha, ha, how sudden shoots this bolt of peace !
I wish, my blooming, jaunty sprig of clover,
Your joy may last, and their distress be over.

Exit and enter MALZAH.

MALZAH.

I see those fellows were talking about me.
Well, well ;

Music, music hath its sway,
Music's order I obey ;
I have unwound myself at sound
From off Saul's heart where coiled I lay.
'Tis true, awhile I've lost the game,
Let fate and me divide the blame.
And now away, away, but whither,
Whither, meantime, shall I go ?
Ere long I must returned be hither.
There's Jordan, Danube, and the Po,
And Western rivers huge I know :
There's Ganges, and the Euphrates,
Nilus, and the stretching seas :
There's many a lake and many a glen
To rest me as in heaven again ;
With Alps, and the Himmalyan range,—
And there's the Desert for a change.
Whither shall I go ?

I'll sit 'ith sky,
 And laugh at mortals and at care ;
 (Not soaring, as before, too high
 And bring upon myself a snare ;)
 But out my motley fancies spin
 Like cobwebs on the yellow air ;
 Laugh bright with joy, or dusky grin
 In changeful mood of seance there :—
 The yellow air, the yellow air,
 He's great who's happy anywhere.
 To be the vassals and the slaves of music,
 Is weakness that afflicts all heaven-born spirits ;
 But touch whom with the murmur of a lute,
 Or swell and fill whom from the harmonious lyre,
 And man may lead them wheresoever he wills ;
 And stare to see the nude demoniac
 Sit clothed and void of frenzy. I'll now begone,
 And take a Posy with me from Saul's garden.

Exit, and soon re-enter bearing a huge nosegay, and thereat snuffing.
 Shall I fling it in the earth's face from whence I took it !
 Albeit I've seen, perhaps, flowers as mean in heaven.
 Well, I will think that these are heaven's. Alack,
 This is a poor excuse for Asphodel :
 And yet it has the true divine aroma.
 Here's ladslove, and the flower which even death
 Cannot unscent, the all-transcending rose.
 Here's gilly flower, and violets dark as the eyes
 Of Hebrew maidens : there's convolvulus,
 That sickens ere noon and dies ere evening ; and
 Here's monkey's cap, Egad ! 'twould cap a monkey
 To say what I have gathered, for I spread my arms
 And closed them like two scythes ; I have crushed many,
 I've sadly mangled my lilies, however, here
 Is the august camelia, and here's marigold,
 And, as I think, 'ith bottom are two vast sunflowers.
 There are some bluebells and a pair of foxgloves ;
 (But not the kind that Samson's foxes wore ;)
 'That's mint ; and here is something like a thistle
 Wherewith to prick my nose should I grow sleepy.
 Oh, I've not half enumerated them !
 Here's that and that, and many trifling things,
 Which, had I time, and were 'ith vein for scandal,
 I could compare to other trifling things,
 But shall not :—ah, here's head-hanging-down Narcissus,
 A true and perfect emblem of myself.
 I'll count it as my likeness, and so leave it

For the delectation of bold Tyrannee,
Who, lieu of gazing in delight on me,
May gaze awhile on my pale effigy.

drops the Narcissus.

Oh, hang her, hang her !
I'll hang this matchless rose upon my lips,
And whilst I'm flying will inhale its breath.

Exit.

END OF PART FIRST.

S A U L .



PART SECOND.

SAUL.

SECOND PART.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Gibeah. Interior of the Palace. Enter JOKIEL, an aged member of the royal household, and JARED, a youth, also of the same, but who has been some time absent.

JARED.

Now that we are at leisure, thou canst tell me,
Somewhat at greater length, how fares our house :
How the clouds float in'ts sky, which one looks threatening ;
What minister in the sea of state affairs,
Or in his own particular bay of office,
Hath struck a rock or run his craft ashore ;
Who is wrecked for ever, who is stranded in disgrace,
Who is riding now the waves with oar and sail,
And who is just foundered ;—come, the King is better—
What next ?—how fares the stripling David ?

JOKIEL.

Oh,
Gone home ; he pined for home, and the clear brooks
Near Beth-lehem.

JARED.

Thou sayest not so ! he took the King
Vastly.

JOKIEL.

Ay, so he did, and cowed the Spirit
That did so sore torment him, that, at length,
'Twould flee before the opening of the strain ;
That was prolonged to charm the royal ears,
While all the household did suspend its cares,
And post itself on stairs and passages
To banquet on the sounds :—but he is gone.

JARED.

Alas, that he should go.—such a brave youth,—

So handsome too.—

JOKIEL.

He hindered labor.

JARED.

How ?

JOKIEL.

Even from the cellars to the garrets, all
The palace's industrious economy
Worked under a dull clog on every wheel ;
And every operant shuttle of the loom
Would catch and stop mid-way as he went by it.
He was the song of the fat, smuttled slut,
As she knelt scouring—and with the labor sweating
Into—her own greasy kettles ; and the maid
O'th chamber murmured his euphonious name,
As she stroked down the milk-white coverlet ;
While minxes from the town and country near,
Came rank and zealous to serve for nought the Queen.
Nor were the ladies of the court much better.
They scarce concealed their loves, and antique maids,
Gazing abstracted, browsed upon his cheeks,
And drank long at the clear brook of his eyes,
Neath some excuse of empty colloquy.
The youthful damsels I have caught, ha, ha,
Peering from lattice corners at him, and
Each other pulling thence, that each might view
The Adolescent, and, with wanton image,
Tenant the empty chamber of her mind ;
Or the desire-scorched desert of her soul
Invade with Ishmaelites of unlawful thoughts,
To rove at leisure o'er her virgin rock,
And love unwatered fancy.

JARED.

Ah, poor youth !

Unfortunate in his excess of fortune.

An Idol kissed away by its adorers :—

Well might he flee to Beth-lehem !

JOKIEL.

Well indeed,

And well indeed men were not fairer formed,
Or, by the ark, the world's work had stood still,
Yea, the whole garden of our State run wild,
Our household flower beds gone untrimmed, whilst women
Had on us hung like bees on honeyed flowers.
Oh, they are fond, they are fond,—but not of thee.
This David hath been to us both as key and mirror,

To unlock the nature of woman, and to shew it
Uplighted to our eyes.

JARED.

Thou art a cockscomb !

JOKIEL.

Hast thou a weapon that can cut a comb ?
Art thou aware the Philistines are approaching ?

JARED.

No.

JOKIEL.

Then I tell thee, and I tell thee also,
That on to-morrow Saul goes forth to meet them.
I tell thee truth, there's bloodshed now in train,
And though thou fight not thou mayest scratch the slain.
Let us go, thou lookest enlightened.

Exeunt, and enter SAUL.

SAUL.

Philistia's forth again, and our pale swords
Must blush once more 'ith livery of war.
With instant speed we'll meet the foe halfway ;—
He shall not say that he hath wasted us :
My army from me melt not now away
As at accursed Gilgal : many a field
Of slaughter hath inured them to death's terror :
They fear not violent end ; and discipline,
Combined with stern selection of each man,
Hath made my standing legions thrice the value
Of raw, unbroken levies : so let come
Again these martial traders of the shore,
To be driven back as they have been before.

Enter ABNER.

ABNER.

All's ready for the march.

SAUL.

Then we'll begone :

Hast parted from thy wife ?

ABNER.

I have not.

SAUL.

Nor

Thy children ?

ABNER.

No.

SAUL.

Then do not : like me go
To this arena of uncertain strife,

Without leave-taking or of child or wife ;
 For of all things that may unnerve a man,
 Is thinking we may never meet again.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A sylvan country.

ZAPH seated, and TIPTOE standing near him.

TIPTOE, (*aside.*)

My Master seems but ill at ease to day.

ZAPH, (*musings.*)

Tiptoe.

TIPTOE.

What says my Master to his servant ?

ZAPH.

Tiptoe,

The Jewish King now walks at large and sound,
 Yet of our emissary Malzah hear we nothing :
 Go, now, sweet spirit, and, if need be, seek
 The earth all over for him : find him out
 Be he within the bounds of heaven and hell.
 He is a most erratic spirit, so
 May give thee trouble (as I give thee time)
 To find him, for he may be now diminished,
 And at the bottom of some silken flower,
 Wherein, I know, he loves when evening comes
 To creep, and lie all night, encanopied
 Beneath the manifold and scented petals ;
 Fancying, he says, he bids the world adieu,
 And is again a slumberer in heaven :
 Or, in some other vein, perchance thou'lt find him
 Within the halls or dens of some famed city.
 Give thou a general search, in open day,
 I'th town and country's ample field ; and then
 Seek him in dusky cave, and in dim grot ;
 And in the shadow of the precipice,
 Prone or supine extended motionless ;
 Or, in the twilight of o'erhanging leaves,
 Swung at the nodding arm of some vast beech.
 By moonlight seek him on the mountain, and
 At noon in the translucent waters salt or fresh ;
 Or near the dank-marg'd fountain, or clear well,
 Watching the tadpole thrive on suck of venom ;—
 Or where the brook runs o'er the stones, and smooths
 Their green locks with its current's crystal comb.
 Seek him in rising vapors, and in clouds

Crimson or dun, and often on the edge
 Of the grey morning and of tawny eve :
 Search in the rock alcove and woody bower,
 And in the crow's nest look, and every
 Pilgrim-crowd-drawing Idol, wherein he
 Is wont to sit in darkness and be worshipped.
 If thou should find him not in these, search for him
 By the lone melancholy tarns of bitterns ;
 And in the embosomed dells, whereunto maidens
 Resort to bathe within the tepid pool.
 Look specially there, and if thou seest peeping
 Satyr or faun, give chase and call out Malzah,
 For he shall know thy voice and his own name.

TIPTOE.

Good, if I catch it not, call me not Tiptoe.

ZAPH.

Go now my spirit.

Exit TIPTOE.

How shall I feed the hungry grudge that gnaws me ?
 My machination against Gloriel

Was all too late :—what cares he now for Saul ?

Ay, or did ever, for the spirits of heaven

Cannot feel sympathy, since they cannot feel sorrow.

What shall I do, for pardon lies not in me ?

I will set Malzah upon Samuel,

Whom, if my spies report to me aright,

Now Gloriel guards 'gainst Saul with half a legion.

How shall I wait Tiptoe's return, for he

By time and faithfulness has grown to be

As portion of myself. Oh, Tiptoe,

Thy swift talents, and thy willingness

Have made thee dearer unto me than any

Consort o'th other sex, who, while they please us,

Assume their proudest privilege is to vex us.

Thou vexed me never, and, if I commend thee,

Flyest high or low or wide : success attend thee.

I shall be dull without thee I am sure.

Ascend, ye meretricious singers, now

Ascend, ye wantons, and, with sedant music,

Compose my thoughts that are divided twixt

Loving and hating, for I Tiptoe love,

And Gloriel hate all other things above.

A solemn music heard.

Sing to me, Paphians ; let me hear your voices.

Voices heard singing.

When care is here, and Tiptoe gone,

And whilst revenge doth tarry ;
Take from thy slaves a loving one ;
Thy noble soul not harry.

ZAPH.

I will it harry.

VOICES.

Chafe not thy lusty sides 'gainst fate,
And if thy plans miscarry ;—

ZAPH.

Pshaw !

Begone, ye mean-souled minstrels ; go, ye strumpets,
And take yourselves and counsels back to hell.
I love not these abhorred things of Acheron,
Who ever turn their talent to misuse.
They are gone, and I will seek myself some task.

Exit.

SCENE III.

*The Hebrew camp amongst the Hills by the Valley of Elah. Time,
after midnight.*

Enter SAUL and ABNER.

SAUL.

Let discipline be strictly kept ; remember,
Fertile are these Philistines in war's wiles ;
And much experience hath made them apt
At seizing on advantage : still our tactics
May balance the goodness of positions, which
At present lies with them. Thou seest that they
Respect us, for they dare not leave their heights,
But wait, instead, untill we shall leave ours,
And in the open and exposing vale
Deploy defenceless ; but which shall not be
Till I forget all warlike policy.

ABNER.

So be it, for we can wait, since all behind
Are ours, and glad to minister unto us ;
But, for his food and warlike store, the foe
Must either steal or for them homewards go.

SAUL.

And yet it irks me that I here must stand
And watch your small encounters, nor the less
Does it arouse my still impatient blood,
Because beyond they rob us, nor that this
Audacious Giant comes, and day by day
Defies us with his challenge, whereat I
Perceive our men's souls sagging ; and at times

I fear some ambushed ill is in delay,
 As formerly at Gilgal : I still fear
 Fortune, and, wert not madness, would assail
 Th' Philistine ere the dawning ; for we wait
 Not now the enquiring of the Lord :—say, Abner,
 Say, art thou not afraid to follow one
 Who leads you in his own unaided might ?

ABNER.

Sometimes. And yet full many a field we've won
 Under thy banners since no sacrifice
 Them consecrated, or Divine assurance
 Gave to our people courage not their own ;—
 People, not soldiers, for thou art the first
 Who made in Israel soldiers, and has bidden
 Them follow war and learn it as a trade.

SAUL.

It is a trade, a terrible one too !
 Whilst with the ambition of the human soul,
 And greediness of the insatiate spirits
 Of many,—to say nought of honor, and
 Of stern religion, neither of which can
 Allow unto their claims a compromise,—
 I see not how the world can well forego it,
 At those recurring, violent occasions,
 When the distempered bodies politic
 Of neighboring states shall to the surface throw
 Their evil humours. What is thine opinion ?

ABNER.

'Tis scarce for luxury men fight ; neither
 Is it for conquest always, nor to throw
 Away home tyranny, nor break foreign yoke.

SAUL.

One half the pleasure there is in this world
 Seems, unto me, devolved and spun through pain,
 Ev'n as some sweet medicaments and syrups
 Provided are through filthy processes.

ABNER.

'Tis true this very pang of war brings with it
 Delight.

SAUL.

Much did I feel of that once, Abner ;
 But now, the buoying wings of novelty,
 Shorn down or plucked, together with my spirits
 Maiming by priestly treachery and scorn,
 (Yet by that very scorn I'm strengthened,) now,
 When comes heroic war, my blunted mind

Feels little more than th' pressure of its care :
 Yet welcome care ; aye, welcome priestly scorn,
 Aye, welcome treachery, which I scorn to fear,—
 'Tis what I have scorned and will scorn to fear :
 For what I am I am because I've scorned,
 Not God, but the haughtiest hierarchy
 That ever sought be paramount i'th world :—
 Moreo'er, these ills now keep me from one greater.

ABNER.

And what is that ?

SAUL.

Oh, the old malady,
 Devil possession : war abroad me keeps
 In peace at home : thou understandest me ?
 Oh, Abner, Abner, 'tis no easy thing
 To be demoniac yet to act the king.

ABNER.

Cousin, I thought that you were quite delivered
 From that sad harrassment !

SAUL.

I have been charmed
 Awhile by music : and the trumpets din,
 And clang of arms, and all this warlike care
 Divert me, that the fiend now lays not hold
 Upon my soul,—but, when this crisis's o'er,
 He will return and me torment the more.

ABNER.

Alas !

SAUL.

Pity me not ; but wonder why
 I am in that plight that doth provoke thy pity.

ABNER.

Jehovah's ways are dark.

SAUL.

If they be just I care not :
 I can endure till death relieve me ;—ay,
 And not complain : but doubt enfeebles me,
 And my strong heart, that gladdeth to endure,
 (And stronger grows, perhaps, from rude fits of trouble,
 Even as the health does from the days of frost,)
 Falters 'neath its misgivings, and, vexed, beats
 Into the speed of fever, when it thinks
 That the Almighty greater is than good.

ABNER.

Beware how thou do charge Him who hath made thee !

SAUL.

I did not crave my making ; did not solicit
 To be a ruler :—what I am I am
 Perforce : yet would I loyally perform
 The work imposed upon me by my Maker
 And Samuel ; would faithfully discharge
 The functions that, thou knowest, I never sought.—
 Lo ! did I not me hide amongst the baggage
 At Gilgal's great convention, and had need
 To be sought out and dragged before His crowded
 Tribunal, as it were, and, like a proud
 Criminal, to stand confessed, and be admired
 For this unusual stature ?—What have I done
 Since then ? What left undone ? I've sacrificed ;—
 And had I not apology ? I spared the king
 Of Amalek :—and Samuel afterwards slew him.

ABNER.

Samuel never looked less like himself than then.

SAUL.

He did become the executioner—Oh,
 I could have run between him and the blade
 That did make ready the poor fainting King
 For th' shambles !

ABNER.

And yet 'twas retribution.

SAUL.

Pshaw !

ABNER.

He had made women childless, Samuel said,
 And so his mother should that day be childless.

SAUL.

Have we not all, who draw the sword, so done ?
 Shall not Philistia's mothers curse again,
 Ere long, our arms that shall bereave them ? Shall
 Not Israel's matrons do the like, and howl
 By hill and valley their young darlings slain ?
 Thrice helm thy head, for soon will at it beat
 Such storm of curses, both from sires and mothers,
 As thou hast never seen the counterpart of,
 Not even when darts came at thee thick as hail.—
 But cease we this : now to the left, and I,
 Will take the right, to see our sentries walk
 And take no sleep, ensconced in cosy crannies ;
 And snoring bass to dream-heard symphonies,
 And strains engendered by the mountain winds.
 Good night.

ABNER.

Good night ; a storm seems brewing, which
Will scarcely let our weariest guards doze, even
Those of them who have learned to keep their watch,
Awalking but not waking.

SAUL.

Among these hills

The air is fitful, as in Highest circle—
Be Samuel's denunciation sooth—
Would seem the favor ; but, thou knowest, Abner,
By the fact of armies often being surprised,
That the uncarepricked hind, and careless soldier
Will sleep while thunder peals shake up the world,
And earthquakes round them yawn untill they topple
Into the chasm still nodding, or untill,
Regardless of the voice o'th watchman thunder,
The hurrying lightning wakens them in Hades.
Albeit, my own experience tells me, and
Many besides me think, the body holds
An ever-waking spirit, that obtains,
Even when sleep has sealed up all the senses,
Frequently through these gross and fleshly walls,—
Perhaps by mystic whisperings from without,
Or motelike elfins passing through the pores—
As intimation of surrounding things :
A notion with which thou mayst coincide,
If thou have e'er awoke from transient dream,
And found it even as thou hadst been dreaming.

ABNER.

As far as I can see through retrospection,
Thrice, at the least, I've woke, and not from nap,
But from my longest, soundest slumber, when
Sleep, like a jealous miser with his gold bags,
Has put my senses under its very pillow,
And found my wake perceptions so much like
My sleeping fancies, that I've been in doubt
Whether I then watched, or had at all been sleeping.

SAUL.

Ay, we're strange birds : again to thee good night.

Exit ABNER.

Now let their be a curfew in the air.
Ye stars that seem the shining hearths of heaven,
Draw its blinds down and cover me with darkness.
Close up, ye clouds, and shutter with your shadow
Heavens windows. Down, gust, down, thus flapping,
Like an ensnared spirit, in my mantle :

Out, angry, nothing ; this business nor requires
Ear-warning gusts, nor eye-directing fires.

Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Country near Beth-lehem.

DAVID tending his flock. *Sings.*

Ah, who can give to sheep his pains,
Or unto lambs his care ;
When camped upon his country's hills
The proud Philistines are ?

Oh, that my sire would let me go !
I know not what he means,
When he affirms that I'm too young
To fight the Philistines.

Enter JESSE.

JESSE.

Son, cease to long for danger.

DAVID.

Listen, Father ;

(And be not angry with me ;) are not our days
All numbered for us ? It would seem to me,
The field of battle is as safe a place
As is this quiet and unhazardous mead,
Where nought more hurtful comes than the sheep's tooth,
Or hoof of ox, or heedless tread of men,
Fatal to flowers.

JESSE.

These are mysterious themes,—

But whether this unhazardous, quiet mead
Be even as the noisy, crowded scene
O'er which war chariots drive, or not, be sure,
War is not man's true trade. To till the soil,
Excell in arts, not arms; and, unto all,
To do the deeds of love and charity
In fear of God, are our whole duty: these
Do thou, and thou shalt happy be: all other
Pleasure but ends in pain. Know, he, whose hand
Is red with human blood, must not approach
Jehovah nearly, which is evidence
Of war's essential evil.—Wouldst thou wish
In youth to play the slayer? Lo, the day
That dawns blood-red matures in wind, and fades
Midst drizzling rains spread o'er the gloomy west;
Or goes 'fore lightning bellowing down the darkness,
A warning for all morrows;—hence, do thou
Extinguish this red spark that may consume thee,
And far from violence live content. As day
Now fails serene so doth the Peaceful's life.

DAVID.

And yet three of my brothers are with Saul,
Risking their lives to drive back the invader.

JESSE.

I know they are; and thou to-morrow shalt
Start early for the camp, and take them something;
And thence return with tidings of their fare.
So, then, when evening calls to fold the sheep,
Give orders to the shepherd's for thine absence.
Lead on thy flock now gently towards its fold,
As warm the day, so will the night prove cold.

Exit.

DAVID.

To go is well; to stay there would be better.
But, if I do nought, I shall haply see
The valient deeds that Saul once promised me.

Exit.

SCENE II.

The Hebrew camp overlooking the valley of Elah.

SAUL, (*entering.*)

No surer sign have we of deep respect,
Than when our enemies, all mannerly,
Preserve their distance, for 'tis certain that
Familiarity not only breeds,
But manifests contempt. They still their tops
Of vantage keep, nor halfway in the vale
Invite us to shake hands. How different once!
Now are we at a balance in the scales,
And this here issue shall determine soon
Which of us kicks the beam. This Giant still
Comes to insult us, but he's a mere harlot,
Sent out before them to decoy us down
Into the bottoms, whither if we should venture,
They, doubtlessly, intend full fledged to swoop,
And terribly embrace us. [*A noise heard.*]

There he bellows,

With voice like to a gong's, his proud defiance.
Skies! why the roar is huger than the man.
Why do my officers oppose me, when
I wish to meet this bully? for it seems
As though this challenge were meant but for me,
Who, though not his, am of gigantic mould.
Perchance I honor this event too much.
Yet, dear unto me as a victory,
Would the backed Giants demolition be.
There is no mettle left in Israel
Or 't were not thus. I grow impatient: come,
Soon, Giant slain, or battle's general slaughter;
Come victory won, or come loss of my daughter.

Exit, and enter Hebrew SOLDIERS.

1st SOLDIER.

Goliath is forth again! come on and look:
By heaven, he groweth bigger every day,
His voice more thunder like;—come and look down
Into the valley, and see him in his mail
Move like a fulgent cloud.

2nd SOLDIER.

Does one with a shield

Precede him?

1st SOLDIER.

Yes, and looks no bigger than

A child, compared with him,—hark ye again :
This is the second time to day.—attend.

2nd SOLDIER.

Not I ; I'm weary of his insult.

3rd SOLDIER.

It

For forty days hath now continued thus.

4th SOLDIER.

Oh, might some Samson pull him to the ground !

2nd SOLDIER.

What wouldst thou have the land shake with his fall ?
For it would be as though an armed tower
Were toppled to the dust.

4th SOLDIER.

Oh, shame to us ! Is there
None who can cope with him : none, is there none
In all our army dare accept the duel ?

3rd SOLDIER.

None dare except the King, and all the army
Excepteth him from entering the lists.
'Tis said that he with Abner quarrelled because
The latter did withstand him, even to force,
Holding him when he would have straight gone down
Into the valley to the huge Philistine.

5th SOLDIER.

It was a madness in the King to think
Contend with one, excelling him even more,
In size and strength than he therein doth others.

3rd SOLDIER.

And yet he would have done it, and now says,
Whoe'er shall kill the Giant he'll enrich,
And give his daughter unto him in marriage,
And make his kindred free.

2nd SOLDIER.

His Majesty

May spare his singular bounty, since the Giant's
Mien will prevent all comers, for he looks
Terrific at this distance : his threatenings boom
Up hither like to fearful prophecies,
And do dishearten our total host which, now,
Thinks the most ordinary Philistine thing of terror.

Enter a SIXTH SOLDIER.

The monster is retiring.

2nd SOLDIER.

Then we'll go

And eat our dinner. Let him mind, or yet

We will eat him, the uncircumcised sinner.

4th SOLDIER.

Stay ; who comes here ? Job, and a strange youth with
[him.

Enter a Hebrew SOLDIER and DAVID talking together.

DAVID.

My brothers are with the army and, I think,
Serve in your company.

The SOLDIER JOB.

I know them well ;

And somewhere hereabouts they ought to be.

3rd SOLDIER.

Again his challenge is loud upon the wind.

2nd SOLDIER.

Then let the wind it answer, what care we ?

4th SOLDIER.

That insolence like this should still be thus
Repeated !—do not say we care not.

2nd SOLDIER.

Why,

Can caring crop a cubit from his stature ?

DAVID.

Of whom thus speak they ?

JOB.

Of a Giant whom,

When thou'rt returned unto Beth-lehem's maids,
Thou mayest declare to them that thou hast seen,
And say what grim foes soldiers do encounter.
Goliath is his name, and forth he comes,
Each day to stalk like horror in the vale.
He is so tall he'd reach thee from a tree,
And stronger is than a rhinoceros ;
Nor looks the hyena or the wolf so cruel.
He surely must have been begot in blood,
And some ever angry tigress suckled him ;
For when he looks about him, unaroused,
So much inflamed is his regard, his eyes
Are like unto a turrets windows which,
While flaming faggots crackle on the hearth,
Receive a portion of the ruddy light
That dances on the walls.—None dare approach him.
Listen, and tell me what thou thinkst thou hearest.
For what thou'lt hear will not appear like man's.—
Indeed 'tis said the Devil was his father.

DAVID.

I hear a sound like boom of distant thunder.

JOB.

A Thunderer he is, and his huge mail,
Whene'er he moveth is a heaven of lightnings.
Listen again and tell me what's the tune.

DAVID.

'Tis lower, and comes up like weak moan of beeves.

JOB.

'Tis said he eats a beeve each day to dinner.

DAVID.

But now 'tis swelling like the sound of torrents,
Even as I have often stood and heard them,
When, swollen with rain, they've down the gullies galloped
To plunge themselves in Jordan.

JOB.

How is't now ?

DAVID.

'Tis dying away, like the receeding wheels
Of Chariots o'er the valley. Let me see
This Giant : come, and shew me him near hand.

JOB.

Not nearer than this top :—I dare not venture
Upon the crags, lest, chancing topple from them,
He should devour me, as a wild beast would
A tame one in its den.

DAVID.

Art thou so faint ?

JOB.

All faint before him, for where'er he comes
Our men from thence retire.—I wonder thou,
Even at Beth-lehem, hast not heard of him,
For he this forty days hath challenged Israel
To send him down her champion. List again ;
He is defying us.

DAVID, (*after having listened.*)

What says the king

To this ?

JOB.

He says that whosoe'er shall kill

This proud, insulting monster, he'll enrich ;
Give him his daughter, too, in marriage, and
Make all his family free.—But who'd descend
For riches, wife, or freedom, to the dead ?

Enter David's brother ELIAB.

DAVID.

Oh Israel where is thy valor ! Then has none
Yet offered to remove from us this shame ?

For what is this uncircumcised one,
That he for forty days hath been allowed,
Defy the army of the Living God!

JOB.

How thou dost speak! as though this warrior were
But a huge mastiff that was sent to bark.
Try him; he'll worry thee. See there's thy brother.

ELIAB, (*roughly.*)

Why art thou come down hither? and with whom
Hast thou left in the wilderness yonder those few sheep?
I know thy vanity and carelessness;
Thou art come hither but to see the fight.

DAVID.

Do I offend thee with my presence? or have I
Spoken indignantly without a cause?
To fight with this Philistine I am willing,
And let the King straight know it.

5th SOLDIER.

My brave youth,
Thy words are folly's,—why, our stoutest soldiers
Shrink from him: he would trample thee to death,
Yes, crush thee like a beetle 'neath his feet.

DAVID.

Yet take me to the King. [*Laughter.*

3rd SOLDIER.

I'll take thee, boy;
Though I fear he'll think thou comest to insult him.
Exit along with DAVID.

2nd SOLDIER.

Now what young fool is that?

JOB.

He is Eliab's brother.

2nd SOLDIER.

A maniac's brother,—but he knows the King
Would scorn to fling the Gath hound such a bone.
Haply he thinks the offer of his life
Is worth the offer of the princess Merab.

4th SOLDIER.

He is handsomer by far than e'er was Merab,
And brave as handsome if I be not cheated.

3rd SOLDIER.

I wonder Eliab did not tell us, but
This is the very stripling that at court,
With harpen strains allayed the King's distemper.

2nd SOLDIER.

Nay he has caught it, he is mad—come on.

Come on, come on, all you who love a joke.

Exeunt all the SOLDIERS.

ELIAB.

Now shall we be the scoff and sport of Beth-lehem !
Why has my old, fond father let him come ?
I'll go and see him now dismissed ashamed.

Exit.

SCENE II.

Interior of the royal tent.

SAUL seated with Officers about him. Enter ABNER leading DAVID.

ABNER.

Your Majesty, behold your servant David ;
The same, who, with his harp's mild ministration,
Did exorcise your spirit's gloomy rage,
And purge to cheerful health your dull-eyed grief.
You know him not ; look on him for 'tis he.

SAUL.

I known him now : he's changed. Come near me, David.

DAVID advances and the King takes him by the hand.

My Soother, my young Friend, my shepherd boy,
Who drew me from the witchery of the moon,
How hast thou fared since I beheld thee last ?
Thy Father, is he well ? thy Mother too ?
Did she not weep when thou departedst from her,
And flung away the crook to grasp the sword ?
Now is the time to be a soldier. Art
Thou come for that ? or with thy suasive harp
To turn our warfare's dissonance to chords ?
Harsh is the music of these days of force,
And rough as is their business. The loud bugle,
And the hard-rolling drum, and clashing cymbals
Now reign the Lords o'th air. These crises
Bring with them their own music, as do storms
Their thunders,— no inspiring hymn, no psalm
The handmaid to devotion ; no winged fugue,
No song, no merry catch, no madrigal ;
No tender strophe, nor solemn canon, but
The sharp alerte, the call to boot and saddle,
The big hurrah o'th onset and the irregular
Chorus on th' fire-spitting steel ; all of them sounds,
Rousing and peppery to the baited spirit,
But to nice ears offensive. Thou seest, David,
At present we have no time for vagaries,
Nor leisure for the luxury of sickness :
What is it brings thee hither my brave youth ?

If thou wouldst be a soldier thou art welcome :
 Yea, whatsoever be thy wish or errand,
 Peace and my heart's best favor be upon thee.

DAVID.

The kindness of your majesty overcomes me,
 Piled upon memories of your former goodness.
 My gratitude is greater than my words,
 Then let a deed speak eloquenter for me.
 Vouchsafe unto me yet one favor more,
 That, like a gamester, staking it, I may
 Win, of one whom you hate, so great a sum
 That I may you in some small part repay
 In coin of service, and yet owe you more,
 Of love and gratitude, than now I do.
 Grant I may cope with this vain Giant, who,
 With insolent challenge puts your host to shame.

SAUL.

My ardent, fond, uncalculating boy ;
 Thou knowest not what thou askest :—his breath alone
 Would sweep thee from his path : he would disdain thee,
 As doth the lion carrion disdain ;
 He would not fence with thee, but on thee seize,
 And crumple up thy tender frame like paper ;
 Or lift thee with the engine of his arms,
 And on the ground, close to his mail-clad feet,
 Dash out thy brains.—No, no, thy father never
 Shall say that I to slaughter sent his son.

DAVID.

Yet hear me speak.

SAUL.

Thou speakest not wisely, David.

He with his spear, which is like a weaver's beam,
 Would stop the dancing shuttle of thy life.
 Nay, stand not thus imploring with thine eye :
 To send thee doomed forth to contend with him,
 The fatal mockery would ever on my conscience
 Sit waste and haggard, and dash my happiest moments,
 Yea, ghastly, gibber to me in my sleep,
 That I had murdered thee :—my strongest Captains
 Dare not encounter him, then dream not thou
 To kill him, or to bring him to me bound ;
 Thou but a youth and uninured to arms,
 Whilst he is more than man, and has been trained
 Up from his youth to do heroic deeds.

DAVID.

Your gracious Majesty, forgive me, but

Kneeling, I must urge my petition. Oh,
 You know me not yet fully, deeming me
 Only prevailing with the harp and crook ;
 Yet once, when I my father's sheep was keeping,
 There came a Lion from the wilderness,
 And unawares took from my flock a lamb,
 Which soon as I perceived I chased the robber,
 And the lamb rescued from his jaws ; and when
 He turned on me, I seized him by the beard
 And killed him : I also killed a bear,
 And this Philistine soon shall be like them.
 Fear not for me, your majesty, I know
 The Lord who saved me from those savage beasts
 Will also from this Giant.

SAUL.

But, my child,
 The Lion and the Bear were but as kids
 Compared with this Philistine !

DAVID.

It was God
 Who made the strength of each as nothing to me ;
 Who made the lion's armed, distended jaws,
 And shaggy throat but fatal to himself,
 For 'twas thereby I caught him, and him pressed
 In such an irresistible embrace,
 That soon he rolled his dull, protruding eyes,
 And fixed them upwards on my face in death.

SAUL.

Go, go ; and may God, too, go with thee, but
 I trow that I shall see thy face no more !
 He, who assisted thee to do those deeds,
 May thee assist to do one greater ; go,
 I shall await the issue here in horror.
 Abner, wilt see him clothed with mine own armour.

Exit ABNER and DAVID.

My heart misgives me : 'tis not yet too late. *(aside.)*
 But what if heaven have sent him ? He shall go.
 Now each retire to solitude and pray *(aloud.)*
 For that heroic boy : he who no faith
 Has got, to wing and plume his dart of prayer,
 May groan a low petition that some angel,
 Walking the earth may shoot it into heaven.
 At once let's separate, and wait the issue,
 Each in the company of his own suspense.

Exeunt the OFFICERS.

I'm full of thoughts but know not how to utter them.

Disappears in the shadow of the tent.

SCENE III.

A part of the camp near the royal tent. A SENTINEL pacing.

Enter Hebrew SOLDIERS.

1st SOLDIER.

Is he retired yet?

SENTINEL.

Who?

1st SOLDIER.

The Giant.

SENTINEL.

No.

He is seated on the ground, and as a tawny
Lion, just waked and weltering in night's dew,
Shines in the morning's beam, so he in noon's.
Why does he not return?

1st SOLDIER.

Because he smells

The prey.

SENTINEL.

What prey?

1st SOLDIER.

A youth of Beth-lehem,

Who goes to him to be killed.

SENTINEL.

What dost thou mean?

1st SOLDIER.

I mean even as I say, a Beth-lehem boy,
A crazy fellow, who goes to him to be killed.
The king put on him his own armour, but
It was too large and heavy for him, so
Naked, and armed with but a sling he goes,
And stones from yonder brook.

SENTINEL.

Was ever such

A duel?

2nd SOLDIER.

See, our serried soldiers stand
Breathless and fixed like statues, or as woods
Sleeping in the bad calm before the storm.
We cannot see our Champion, but he's winding
Down the hill side, for thither the Giant turns
His angry eyes. Lo, how he watches him!
And now he rises up: — and now again

He is seated ;—hearken ! he is calling on
His visitor.

3rd SOLDIER.

Alas, he'll visit us

No more ! — the king is much to blame in this :
To let a stripling go where powerful men
Declined to venture ; — listen how the Giant
Growls, less in rage than in his disappointment,
At such a trifling quarry :

Enter a second party of SOLDIERS, consecutively and in a riotous manner.

1st SOLDIER of the 2nd party, (*entering.*)

Ha, ha, ha, ha ;

I'll laugh myself to see this mote so slender
Losing himself in th' Giants' brazen splendour.

2nd SOLDIER of the 2nd party, (*entering.*)

Here we shall have a better view.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party, (*entering.*)

We're coming

To see the races !

SENTINEL.

What races, fool ?

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Why, twixt

The Giant and a shepherd boy : the boy
Will run away, and the Giant will run after him :
And that's a race, if both be in good earnest.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party, (*entering.*)

A race ? To be sure ; a very dashing race,
Where is my little Three to one ? Who bets
With me ? Who wagers with me, that the shepherd
Will not take three strides to the Giant's one ?

SENTINEL.

How canst thou jest at such a time as this,
When yon brave youth goes with his life to the monster ?

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

I know the fool is going to be eaten :

(Unless we are indeed to have a race :)

Well, he'll eat tender with but little cooking :

He might as well at once himself surrender,

And stand before the mailed Giant in the sun,

And so in his reflected beam be cooked.

Gad ! but the Giant must walk round him then,

For who the devil dare stand to turn the spit ?

3rd SOLDIER of the 1st party.

May devils turn thee on their spit beneath,

And at thy cries no fiend make intercession.

4th SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

I'll call on thee, I know thou'lt be in hearing.

2nd SOLDIER *of the 1st party.*

For heaven's sake silence, for the Giant's speaking.

GOLIAH, *(down in the valley.*

Am I

A dog, that thus thou comest to me with staves?
 May Dagon smite thee, spawn of some low churl!
 Thou cattle driver, back, and get thee gored
 To death by thine own herd. No nearer me,
 Presume no farther, dost thou hear me, boy?
 Back to thy king, and bid him come himself,
 Or send a man to meet me. Now, by my gods,
 Where have they found this dumb, approaching fool?
 Hear me, thou thoughtless Idiot. Hear, thou young
 And listless strayer, get from these dread bounds,
 O'er which, to every Hebrew, I have hung
 Death's bloody banner. Still approaching? Then
 I'll let thee walk beneath destruction's archway,
 Into the vaulted and sepulchral den
 Where lie all thy forerunners. The vain cur!
 Blast him, ye Wind Gods, and ye Powers who waft
 Phœnicia's fleets: a murrain blow for me
 Upon this whelp. Lame him, ye thunderbolts,
 That rend our masts; and through his entrails pour
 Wherewith is snapped our rigging. Shall I touch him
 With arms that are the semblance of the gods?
 Bring me an arrow of some babe of Gath!
 Or let him come unto me: come, boy, come;
 Come unto me, and with my naked hands,
 I joint from joint will rend thee, and thy flesh
 Give to the birds and beasts to be their food.

SENTINEL.

May heaven forfend!

4th SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

Oh, this is only snorting.

Besides, the shepherd will take special care
 That longshanks shall not overtake him; no,
 Not even so as to breathe upon his tail;
 Much less to make a horrible division
 Of his most delicate limbs, and therewith cater
 To bird and beast.

2nd SOLDIER *of the 1st party.*

Hist, hist, the shepherd's answering.

DAVID, *(heard.)*

Complete in arms and covered o'er with mail,

Thou comest to me, but I come unto thee
 In name of Him who is the Lord of Hosts,
 The God of Israel's armies whom thou hast
 Defied. He will deliver thee this day
 Into my hand, and I will take thy head
 From thee, and give your army's carcasses
 To the wild beasts and birds, that all may know
 That there is certainly a God in Israel,
 And that this is His battle.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Bravo, boy !

SENTINEL.

See, now the monster rises in his rage.

2nd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

He needs not stride so hugely, for the youth retreats not.

SENTINEL.

Now send up prayers for him apace to heaven,
 Mightily pray for the champion of your country.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Now, shepherd take a good start for the race.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Egad, he has struck root from fear ; or else
 He stands that he may grow as tall as the Giant,
 Who is going to him both with sun and shower.

SENTINEL.

Pray, or keep silence.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Praying in a passion ?

I pray that he may now begin the race :

I came to see a very dashing race,

But, if the shepherd not bestir himself,

I shall see but his dirty brains dashed out.

2nd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

See how the Giant's nostrils puff forth vapor.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Ay, it is well the Giant gives some warning :

The shepherd's waking for he smells the morning.

The Giant's like the Old Refiner th' Sun,

Trundling his furnace up to the horizon.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

The shepherd's got now one arm out of bed ;

Will he with the other, thinkst thou, scratch his head ?

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

I think his very ears lie back with fright.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

He fancies some one's robbed him in the night ;

I see he does misdoubt his very garments,
For he is groping in them.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

'Tis his scrip ;

Some small coin thence may have given to him the slip.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

I hope not, for a stone's a serious thing,
When all one has are stones and one poor sling.
He had best make haste and get in decent trim,
For close upon him is the Giant grim.

2nd SOLDIER of the 1st party.

With the Giant's sword the lad's blood will be spilt !

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Nonsense : he'll but get pummelled with the hilt.
There, like a stalled ass broken from its tether,
He has rushed forth at once into the weather.

1st SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Oh, nimbleton !

2nd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Oh, simpleton !

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

He shakes

His sling at the Giant.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Yes, he whirls his sling,

Most threateningly,—as asses whisk their tails
About their haunches when they fall to gallop.
Nay that's sublime ; see how he leaps along
Atowards death's fist like to a bounding ball.

1st SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

No, not a ball, no, not at ball he's playing.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

He means to play at leapfrog with the Giant.
See how he vaults. Ha, ha, I've seen a cat
Skipping across a red-hot burning backstone,
A cat go skipping o'er hot limekiln stones,
And stones sent skipping o'er a frozen pool ;
But never saw a cat in Hebrewdom,
Nor stone o'er pool, appear more capersome.
Indeed the youth is now upon his mettle,
Solet the Giant mind his helmet kettle :
Indeed I fancy now that they are well met ;
Into him, boy ; indeed I say you're well met,
Into the Giant's kettle of a helmet.

SENTINEL.

Now may the stone be under God's great guidance !

All.

Amen !

SENTINEL.

The Giant's fallen !

*A great shout heard.**4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.*

I had no time to ejaculate Amen ;
 But since the Giant's down, to keep him there,
 Amen, Amen ; may these, at both its ends,
 Be rivets, sentinel, to thine imprecation.

3rd SOLDIER of the 1st party.

We thank thee, yea we thank thee, God of Israel !

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Astonishment hath stunned me ! It cannot be
 My jest-preceded prayer that I see answered.
 No, to this tune I've been but discord, and
 That stone has hit me too as well as th' Giant.
 I'm like to a cracked trumpet ; a burst drum ;
 A tabernacle bell that oft of yore,
 Has helped to ring a merry holiday peal ;
 But now, when there's transcendent jubilee,
 At once so stoutly hath the ringer pulled,
 That he hath wedged therein the upturned clapper,
 For now my heart appears as standing still ;
 Ay, wedged into my throat with sheer surprise.
 See how my comrade's laboring with amazement.
 Speak, or thou wilt be acting some strange madness,
 Speak, man ; out with the humour of thy gladness.

4th SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

This youth's the Devil or a glorious Angel !
 Either a glorious Angel or a youngling
 Devil !—No, he's no devil : he is not black :—
 Oh, he is ruddy as the ruddiest angel ;
 Oh, he is ruddy as the morning's cheek,
 When Lucifer hath kissed it up Dawn's hill.
 Oh, whatsoever may be his ascription,
 This shepherd's worth his weight in purest gold,
 He is an angel, or should so be enrolled !
 Ah, I did think I never should speak again.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

Ay, this is harder work than making hay,
 Or emptying a wine bag at a draught.
 I now am like an old and wearied reaper,
 Who is trudging patient towards his ingle's snoose,
 For to myself I now come slowly homewards ;
 I'm sober now, languid with gratitude ;

I'm bent and serious 'neath this sheaf of joy.

4th SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

Oh, for a mug of Eshcol! fie, fie, fool;
The wind up hither bloweth very cool.
Brother is 't blowing on thee or is 't raining?

3rd SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

Nay, nay, I think it surely is the latter:
My jokes are out, like brands on sudden quenched;
This circumstance hath blown on me too hard:
And, like to swinish revellers in a room,
When one has awkwardly snuffed out the lamp,
I'm left in stupid darkness. Sentinel,
We have ill behaved, and yet we meant it well.
A second shout heard from a greater distance than the first.

SENTINEL.

Hark, how our comrades shout with might and main,
At the grand spectacle of the Giant slain:
Let us assist them, and upsend a blast,
That shall blow down the very gates of heaven,
At this added wonder to the ancient seven.

They all cheer.

1st SOLDIER *of the 1st party.*

Thus ends this bugbear that, for forty days,
Has kept us in shame's vexing wilderness.

2nd SOLDIER *of the 1st party.*

Surely the days of miracles are again,
For who had counted that this youth could sling
A pebble through that cincture of thick brass?

4th SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

None could have done it but that cat-o-mountain.
See how he's mounted on the Giant's body.
Oh, most indomitable, nut-cracking shepherd,
He has cracked the Giant's nut, and, lo, upon him
He stands with the Big-one's well-begotten sword,
Going to extract his kernel.

3rd SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

Ah, thou wag,

The season of thy seriousness is brief,
Like summer on the top of Lebanon.
Thou wilt be grave when in the grave; when Death
Hath lain thee as the shepherd's lain the Giant,
Who lies like one of their own stranded hulls,
Whilst the rude blows of his own scymetar
Assail him, as the yet stout, lashing storm
Beats on the wreck that no more shall go seaward.

4th SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

I am rejoiced to hear thee speak again.
 Yet thou didst never speak sublimer nonsense.
 Nay, I will have my quip and laugh : yea though
 You put me where, and with a thing, I loathe,
 Even with the bloated Giant in a coffin,
 Therein I'd smile. Could I keep my face till now
 Disposed like to the plaiting of a shroud ?
 Look, whilst we chaff the monster is divided.

SENTINEL.

His head is off, and that same tongue of his,
 That long has uttered threats too great for mortals,
 Shall brag no more for ever.

3rd SOLDIER *of the 1st party.*

He silent died,
 Or the great groan, with which his savage spirit
 Left its huge carcass, was o'erwhelmed and drowned
 In the clangour of his falling.

4th SOLDIER *of the 2nd party.*

Little thanks ;

He surely made a noise enough when living,
 For not a man hath heard his proper tongue
 For half the day during this month or more past,
 Either by reason of the Giant's brawling,
 Or brawls concerning him amongst ourselves.
 I would as lief live near the boiling ocean,
 Or in the neighbourhood of a cataract,
 Ay, or in hearing of a brace of mothers,
 From morn till evening quarelling o'er their brats,
 As be compelled again to let my ears
 Be made the thoroughfares unto his bluster.
 I always hate a man whose voice is loud,
 I always hate a man whose mien is imperious ;
 And as for armour, does it not make war
 A heaviness, a mortal sweat and toil ?
 What razor like, fine-ground and polished swords
 Hath it not turned with horrid hack to saws !
 What aching arms hath it not given us all,
 Whilst we in vain have striven to hit the joint :
 And many a hapless devil, being down,
 Hath perished like a turtle on its back,
 Because he could not, more than it, arise.
 I hate a man that stalks in panoply,
 And would much rather meet a ghost by night,
 Than see, a mile off, one of those by day.
 I always did suspect, when I beheld

Such men approaching cap-a-pie, that they
 Were cowards or else bullies, and this Giant
 Hath in this guess confirmed me. Break his bones!
 Three several times have I been nigh to choking,
 From being startled when in earnest dining,
 With sound like to a coming avalanche,
 When it has only been his Ugliness,
 Vomiting insolence upon our host,
 As he descended down yon mountain side.
 The heedless villain! our forces have grown lean,
 From being stayed by him amidst their meals:
 Him whose main use was only to devour,
 And eat us up like a huge caterpillar,
 And spread a locust famine o'er the land,
 On which like a huge locust he's now lying.
 Why did he not there lie a month ago?
 I do assert that we have been abused;
 I say this Giant was a mere Marshfire,
 A Bugaboo, a Come-up-salt-flood meteor,
 A down-fallen Comet, a hither shotten Star,
 A mere Mock Sun, a thing as false as Moonshine;
 In short, a most audacious Will-o-Wisp,
 A most atrocious, polished Jack-o-Lantern.
 Oh, 't is too much to have borne such ghastly humbug!
 I feel my very ears begin to rattle,
 And fists to tremble for impatient battle:
 I smell the fight, I smell the fight from far!
 To-day makes many a cripple, many a scar;
 I may lose my own head, an arm, or leg,
 Then over Israel I must roam and beg;
 I'll go and crave o'th shepherd that huge head,
 Its shew hereafter may procure me bread.

Exit.

SENTINEL.

Surely the fellow cannot be in earnest.

3rd SOLDIER of the 2nd party.

'Twere nothing to him, for he lives in jest;
 And not a vulture hath such scent for carrion,
 As he for coming fight. He smells the fray,
 And listen, listen;—'t is its thunder's bray.
A shout much greater than before, & mingled with alarums.

SENTINEL.

'Tis even so. Oh, now, brave comrades, hear,
 Hear, the clashed cymbals, and the rattling drum,
 With the imperious trumpet bid us come
 To arms, and suddenly a murmured wail,

From Ephs-dammim sweeps across the vale.
Here's Saul and Abner hastening ; let's away,
Our forces move, and imminent's the fray.

Exeunt, and enter the King and ABNER rapidly, the former speaking

SAUL.

Now that their hearts are up, lead down thy men
Into the vale, which soon shall roll in blood ;
Unless the foe, astonished and alarmed,
Shall keep their heights, which, if they do, we'll storm,
In spite of storm of rolling stones and darts,
And drive them homewards, if they turn their backs ;
If not, provoked and hurried to yon brink,
This sweeping yawn shall be to them their grave.

ABNER.

I never saw our army's heart so swell.
I do believe (such ecstasy has risen)
That they this hour would strive to carry hell,
And, sacrilegious, storm the heights of heaven.

Exit.

SAUL.

Too much reflection would arrest the world.
Why should we not attack them ? I will go down
With Jonathan into the perilous yawn.

Another great shout heard.
The changeful souls !

Because one man appeared whom no one man
Dared cope with, why forsooth, more than a month
They stand immoveable as stupid stocks :—
Now, when that one man's dead, and by a youth,
Before their eyes, shewn to be vulnerable,
There is no holding them, but they would pounce
Pell-mell upon the dangerous valley, and thence
Mount all disordered up the opposite steep,
Nor wait for their commanders. I have known
Ere this, a simple chimera stop men
Even as a wall of brass, when to their ardour,
Unchecked by fear, realities were less than
Fences of yielding air.

Exit, and the noise of the army increases, and then dies away.

SCENE IV.

Within sight of Ekron. Time, evening of the same day.

SAUL, *(entering and sheathing his sword.)*

There, take thine insult back, thou proud Philistia ;
Through Ekron's gates take it, besmeared and bloody.
Art thou not satisfied ? Art restless yet ?

Come to the field again of Ephis-dammim,
For thou mayest easily find it by the clue
Of thine own dead and wounded. Lo, they stretch
Hence to the tented field, and all the road
Is rendered vocal with their sore distress.

Enter ABNER.

Brave Abner, my true cousin !

ABNER.

Is my Liege
Unhurt? Is whole my great Commander? Oh,
Too rash this day hath been my kinsman Saul.
Thou far too reckless of thy life has been,
And, with unwarrantable hardihood,
From the meridian 'till eve hast sought
The hottest fight, and over Israel's borders
Hurried the obsequious war, that did so lately
Sit heavy at her heart.

SAUL.

O'er Elah's vale
Too long the bold Sea Eagle brooding sat.

ABNER.

But suddenly it rose, pierced with one arrow,
That was the prelude to a myriad others
Which fatally o'ertook it. Cousin, cousin,
Victory still rests upon our house ; or rather
Is thither wafted from the sky by some
Vicarious angel, who, in Samuel's stead,
Conducts her down and gives her to thine hand,
Still to assure thee of the doubted throne.
Fear not henceforward, my anointed sovereign.

SAUL.

Fear not for me, my faithful captain, fear not ;
But let the signal blast be loudly blown,
That calls our wearied men from the pursuit.

Exit ABNER.

I'll still extinguish fears, as men young fires
Extinguish, even by stifling them, for fears,
Like fires, are things which are, yet ought not be
To honest men.

Exit.

The Recall begins to sound, and soldiers pass over the stage with appearance of great fatigue.

1st SOLDIER.

Never welcomer than now was that recall,
So much am I exhausted and foredone.

2nd SOLDIER.

Thrice have I fallen myself in felling the foe,

And twice I've lain me down awhile to rest,
Amongst the dying and the dead Philistines.

3rd SOLDIER.

Would that we might bivouac upon the ground,
And not hie homewards, as 'tis whispered round.

Exeunt, and re-enter SAUL along with an OFFICER.

SAUL.

Bid some to minister unto ours who lie
In doubtful plight twixt life and death ; and see
That all our wounded be sent after us.
For, after some refreshment, we shall thread
Our way, by starlight, home amongst the dead.

Exit OFFICER.

'Twill be a weary road, and slippery,
For th' waterspout that came up from the sea,
Hath poured amain its rent and shattered volume,
And swilled the rout with blood.

Enter an AIDECAMP.

AIDECAMP.

Your Majesty, the chase is stayed.

SAUL.

Tis well.

AIDECAMP.

The foe exists no more, except in Ekron,
Where he has sought a shelter and a refuge,
Wasted and worried by this fearful hunting.

SAUL.

There let him lie and ease his panting sides.

Exit AIDECAMP.

To hunt and to be hunted make existence ;
For we are all or chasers or the chased ;
And some weak, luckless wretches ever seem
Flying before the hounds of circumstance,
Adown the windy gullies of this life ;
Till, toppling over death's uncertain verge,
We see of them no more. I'm sad as evening.
Surely this day is life's epitome !
For life is merely a protracted chase,
Yea life itself is merely a long day,
And death arrives like sundown. I am dull
As night, and step from confidence to boding.
Ah ! What is that which, in the shape of David,
Crowned, and with Israel's sceptre in its hand,
Stands in the vestibule of my conception,
Or from me there a rood, I know not which ?
Out, sudden Phantom ! Out ! Avaunt ! 'Tis gone.

How is it that Abner's words that were intended
 To assure me of safety, seem to have shewn me danger?
 'Tis there again! Hence, hence, accursed Vision!
 'T has disappeared, but round where it was standing
 Glares with vexed flames, as if they would convince me,
 That what I've seen was real. Ye quick spires,
 If ye wish shed a light upon my mind,
 To shew some secret to my understanding,
 And, by your friendly and unnatural splendour,
 Expose some latent danger to my rule,
 Inform me with your dumb but luminous tongues,
 (That wave and wag as if in mockery,
 And now, even whilst I question you, low flicker,)

If ye have aught to tell me for my good?
 Speak in any syllables of which may your
 Etherial vocabulary be formed,
 And I will hearken and interpret them;
 Write ye me out at once a fiery scroll,
 If it shall beam with benefit to Saul?
 All's darkness now, like hell, from whence this came.
 Ye binding hoops that gird the cask o'th soul,
 How have ye burst and out of me let reason!
 Why what a strange hallucination 's this!
 How is the spirit coming on me now?
 I was not once thus liable to panic,
 Nor troubled with wide-waking, daylight visions.
 Why do I act the crone or e'er I'm old,
 Myself grow Wizard, who have such cut off?
 It is the brooding on the one idea
 That has induced this fit of dotage. 'Tis
 The echoing of th' Samuel-uttered doom
 Of my dethronement, that thus filled my throne
 With an imaginary occupant;
 (For now I do remember that I saw
 A throne behind the figure;) it is that
 Which even now, when I was hopeful, wafted
 Me unto my old lunes upon a sudden;
 That drags me back unto my former self,
 Even as a thing which long pressed out of form,
 Does, after being restored to its true shape,
 If chance what holds it be removed, start back
 All foul and crumpled to its old mis-figure.
 I'll croon this song no longer, for 'tis evil,
 And comes from, or else leads unto, the devil.

Exit.

SCENE V,

Ephis-dammim. Interior of a large tent.

SAUL and JONATHAN, seated.

JONATHAN.

Your majesty, see who comes, and with what burden,
Hung like a pendant to his valiant hand.

Enter ABNER and DAVID, the latter carrying the head of Goliath.

ABNER.

Now, cousin, now behold a frontispiece,
Such as will nature not soon make again.
Now scrutinize your enemy in safety.
How like a slumbering Lion's head that seems !
I could believe Goliath's spirit dreamed
Again within that dome of cogitation.
Who would not choose to dream in such a chamber,
Although within the precincts of death's palace ?
'Tis like to some grand ruin overgrown
And half concealed by herbage. View him well,
Upwards from the foundation of his chin.
Observe that shaggy beard, those locks that cover
The hand of David as with coils of chains.
Was't not a sin to kill so fine a beast ?

JONATHAN.

Who shall hereafter trust in his own strength !

SAUL, (*aside.*)

Yes, or henceforwards in his proper eyesight.
I saw thee not near Ekron, David ? No.

(*Aloud.*)

Lay down thy trophy on the dais. There.
Implacability is not for mortals.
Now pity moves within me, and I feel
A solemn reverence at the sight of that
Fine relic. How august it seems in death !
David, that trophy, I confess, is thine,
But be it with its fallen carcass buried.
His armour will record his bulk, and shew
The volume of thy hardihood, as long
As brass endures. He was an armed galley ;
He was a laden argosy, and thou
But little knowest the treasure thou hast cast
From out the hold of his enormous frame.
His spirit was prodigious as his form ;
And generous, for he warned thee from him, hence,
Cast no indignity upon the brave,
But lay that visage in a decent grave.

DAVID.

Even as your majesty will : he shall be covered
Up by the earth, but all his blasphemous boasts
Shall be remembered in his evil fame.

SAUL.

Leave that to those who shall come after us :
But, for ourselves, to life let punishment
Be limited ; 'gainst none be urged the suit
Of vengeance after death. Remember that
We are all evil-doers, and should malice,
Intent to accuse us of our numerous faults,
Vindictive follow us to the courts of death,
All entering them would certainly be cast.

DAVID.

Your majesty is wisest, but was not
This Giant an idolater, and a foe
That did invade and strive to enslave our land ?
Doubtless he was : — but, now my ire is passed,
Him and his memory I can from me cast.

SAUL.

You both shall be remembered, long as might
And bravery retain their high reputes.
But let not malice in thy young breast linger.
Full many things are best forgot ; and all
The dross of life, men's vices and their failings,
Should from our memories be let slip away,
As drops the damaged fruit from off the bough
Ere comes the autumn, or as early snow
Falls but remains not, or as April hail
(That peevish chides the opening of the year,
And calls for winter's icy bars again)
Dissolves in sunshine. It were wise, nay just,
To strike with men a balance ; to forgive,
If not forget, their evil for their good's sake.
Thus cherishing the latter, and rejecting
The former, (as the refiner from the alembic
Rejects the scum of the more precious ore.)
We shall grown rich in life's pure gold, and lose
Only its base alloy, its dross and refuse.
Keep a clean house within thee, and eject
Grudge and dislike, as do clean housewives litter
From out their rooms, and cast it to the kennel :
For spites are to the mind as dirt and rubbish
Are to the house ; the place for these the field,
For those oblivion.—But wherefore do we
Here thus conversing linger, while Gibeah

Awaits impatient our triumphal entry ?
 For by this time our messenger is there.
 David, attend us ; — but let buried be
 That solemn fragment of mortality.

Abner, precede me.

[*A sound of a trumpet heard.*

Hark, the clarion peals ;

Come, let these young braves follow at our heels.

Exeunt SAUL and ABNER.

JONATHAN.

Thou seemst not glad, my Friend and future Brother.
 Art thou, in fancy, bidding to thy home
 Farewell ? Or art thou musing upon one
 Of Beth-lehem's maidens who, till thy return,
 Restless endures the rack of tender thoughts ?
 David, thou must no more consort with swains ;
 Thou must no more return to Beth-lehem :
 Farewell, now finally, to tending sheep,
 To shepherd's crook, and to the pastoral pipe :
 The martial sword and spear, the post of trust,
 And this well-won alliance now await thee.
 Why didst thou leave the court ? — But this exploit,
 Even as an unexpected billow should
 Return a drifted bather to the shore,
 Hath rendered thee again unto our house.
 Come nearer to me, my intended kinsman ;
 Speak to me, David, speak unto thy friend ;
 Speak to me, my henceforth companion.

DAVID.

Pardon me, Prince, but I am dubious ;
 I know not whether I've displeased the king
 By bringing here this trophy.

JONATHAN.

Fear not, David ;

Fear not my Father's words, dear mate in arms,
 But with me follow him unto Gibeah,
 Whither thou goest in Jehovah's conduct ;
 Jehovah, whose directing Providence,
 From Beth-lehem's quiet, but inglorious, nook,
 Led thee unto the camp at the due moment, —
 The camp which is the entrance to the court,
 The court which still is rife with praise of thee.
 Oh, thou art worthy of its utmost praise !
 Oh, thou this hour appearest to me fair !
 Most fair thou wert of yore, with healing harp,
 Seated, and giving health unto my father ;
 But now, erect, and with this rosy flush

Of virgin victory o'er thee, like the mantle
 The orient wears at morning breaking cool,
 Thou art fairer than the kindling Firmanent,
 Art fairer than the young, empurpling Dawn.
 Thou, with thy flinty pebble of the brook,
 Hast from the Giant's mail struck out a flash,
 That plays on thee as doth the lightning on
 A marble Idol, making it resplendent.
 I shall, I fear, an Idol make of thee.
 I fear I shall be tempted thee to worship,
 Who hast already found a golden shrine,
 And ruby temple in my heart's affections.
 Oh, David, genius makes the world its vassal :
 And, from the moistened avenues of these eyes,
 I do admire and pay thee lawful homage.
 Oh, do not wonder that I thus extol thee,
 Oh, do not wonder that I deem thee fair.
 Fair late was Phosphor, as I saw him shining
 Alone ere daybreak o'er a verdant hill ;
 And fair was Hesper as I lately saw her,
 At evening lone above the Dead Sea shore ;
 But neither Phosphor, as I lately saw him,
 Ere daybreak shining o'er a verdant hill,
 Nor Hesper, as at eve I lately saw her,
 All lonely shining o'er the Dead Sea shore,
 Pleased me as thou dost now. My fellow soldier,
 I would not be extravagant, nor would I
 Willingly flatter thee, not I, but thou,
 By this most glorious and successful duel,
 Art suddenly become a point of fire ;
 Art suddenly become the fulgent boss
 And shining centre of our kingdom's shield ;
 On which this victory's new-risen splendour
 Hath gathered and upcupped itself, as if
 An ocean were condensed there to a drop,
 Outshining diamonds ; and approving him
 Who has drawn to himself bright favor from the might
 And majesty of Saul. Speak, David, speak ;
 No longer stand in shady pensiveness,
 When o'er thee hangs the royal ray serene,
 Yea, the full glory of a heaven of honor.
 Speak to me, David ; answer me I pray thee.

DAVID.

What shall I say unto your gracious highness,
 Except that gratitude doth penetrate me,
 And cause me to forget his Majesty's check ;

Even as the tepid breathing of the spring
Drives out the inlodged winter from the earth.

JONATHAN.

Oh, do not thus respond to me lukewarmly !—
What shalt thou say ? Listen, and I will tell thee.
Say that we are henceforth in friendship joined ;
That in the lists of amity henceforwards,
With offices of kindness we will vie ?
Oh, brother, wilt thou cope with me in friendship ?
Oh, wilt thou now accept of my love-challenge ?
What shalt thou say ? — I know the valiant
Often lack rhetoric, but not so thou,
Who can, at times, discourse like one inspired,
And teach the very cherubim to woo.
Lo, now I woo thee, let us woo each other,
And not by means of woman-winning words,
But by the manlier proxy of our deeds.
Let thine, performed in Elah's steep-bound vale,
Approach to mine, performed at steepy Michmash.
Let Elah Michmash kiss, and Michmash Elah ;—
And for the rest, why, let us imitate them.

Kisses DAVID.

Dear hero, highest in my admiration,
Exalted model to the sons of Israel,
Nor less this moment in my heart's regard
Than Israel's daughter by me most beloved,
Vow unto me, — for with a vow I'd bind thee,
Even as fondest lovers bind each other, —
Vow to me friendship, and I'll vow again ;
Let's friendship vow, and let Heaven say, "amen."
Thou answerest me not, my valour's equal !
Dost thou, then, disbelieve my protestations ?

DAVID.

Too generous Prince, I do believe thou lovest me ;
And I love thee, but with a reverence
Engendered by thy station, and abase
Mine eyes before thee, even as the flame
Which, though of the same element, doth yet
Abate and fade as on it shines the sun ;
For, Jonathan, although thou deemest me
To be thine equal, still it matters not ;
For well I know (and rue) that perfect friendship,
(However we may strive ourselves to bundle,)
Will not vouchsafe its lacing, golden cords
To bind disparities. Forgive me if
I speak too plainly. I am not thine equal ;

I'm but a shepherd though I've slain the Giant.

JONATHAN.

Thou art much more, thou art a warrior,
Upon whose arms the Lord hath deigned to smile.
Nay, thou dost wrong thyself; thou errest, David;
There is not the disparity that thou dreamst of.
Are we not nigh one age? Have we not both
Been taken from the commonwealth of Israel?
Are both of us not daring? Are we not,
By thy late pass of arms with that grim creature,
As well as by thy former service, rendered
Unto my father's troubled majesty,
When, by the solemn witchery of thy music,
Thou didst deliver him from the baneful fiend,
Made equals on the genuine grounds of merit?
Which is not station in a gilded court,
What thou hast lacked; nor that which I do lack,
A long and legend-covered pedigree;
But noble deeds, and noble natural powers.
Try us by these, then say whether we are not,
In all the traits wherein consists true likeness,
More wrought to be as castings from one mould,
Than, oft, the fashioning in one womb doth give
Of temper and exterior resemblance.

DAVID, (*aside.*)

I can resist no longer such sweet words.

(*aloud.*)

Jonathan, thou dost compel me to thy wish.
I did esteem thee ere I saw thee, and
Desired to emulate thy daring deeds.

JONATHAN.

And dost thou say so? Come, let's plight each other.
Hear now, ye angels, if such hover o'er us,
And shed sincerity upon us both;
That this intended covenant may be,
Like as your sacred selves are, strong and blessed.
David, I offer thee perpetual friendship,
And therewith such large measure of my love
As I have never given before to man.

DAVID.

Which I accept, and offer in return,
What you have always had, fidelity;
And add thereunto, by your free gift laid,
A love not given before to man or maid.

JONATHAN.

Enough, now let us hence and leave grim war.

I will command the burial of that head, —
Why should we heap dishonor on the dead ?

The beating of a drum heard.

Come,

For I hear the roll o'th parting drum.
'Twill not be long ere we o'ertake the king,
Gone towards Gibeah upon victory's wing ;
Where, after her rejoicing at our weal,
In her arsenal shall be hung our steel ;
Whilst silence shall refill the trumpets throat,
And rest betake both steed and chariot ;
And we, for an uncertain season, prove
The bliss of peace and the delight of love.

Exit JONATHAN.

DAVID.

Why is it that my bosom anxious feels ?
I am not joyous as I ought to be,
The prince's friend, the king's child offered me.
The royal mien and words yet so me chill,
That, lieu of good, I'm half prepared for ill. —
Strange, that again, in very chance's sport,
I should be made a denizen of the court ! —
Ah, I imagine I begin to see
Now, wherefore Samuel once anointed me.

Exit.

SCENE VI.

Aisylvan country between Ephraim and Gibeah.

A sound of females singing merrily. Enter SAUL and the OFFICERS of his Staff.

SAUL, (*entering.*)

Our land this year receives a second spring,
So rife it is with gay and bird-like carol ;
Proceeding yet from out our victory's grove,
That as we journey doth produce new echoes,
In widening series breaking still anew.
Here let us halt and watch the sports a little.
What is it that these maids are uttering,
Who seem to me much more methodical,
In the wild elegance of their mazy mirth,
Than all before we've noted ?

1st OFFICER.

Here they come.

Enter a group of young females singing and dancing, and with musical instruments.

(Song.)

Far as Ephs-dammim came
The Philistines, dreadful name ;
But to meet them went the king,
And young David with his sling.

(Chorus, with dancing.)

Saul he has his thousands slain,
David has his thousands ten.

SAUL.

Ah !

(Song.)

In the vale 'tween mountains lying,
Came Goliah forth defying ;
Fear came with him on our host,
But brave David stayed his boast.

(Chorus.)

Saul he has his thousands slain,
But David has his thousands ten.

SAUL,

This is the very creeping towards the height
At which he shewed near Ekron. Do my ears
Deceive me here, as there my eyes befooled me ?
Keep calm my blood.

(Song.)

Pebbles five from out the brook
David to the encounter took ;
Fitted one unto his sling,
Sent it on its airy wing.

(Chorus.)

Saul he has his thousands slain,
David has his thousands ten,

SAUL,

Oh, now I rue I did not meet the Giant
Myself ; or disallow that youth to do it.
I'll stop this chant. — No, let them finish their folly.

(Song.)

Lo ! the Giant, pierced, fell dead ;
Lo ! the proud Philistines fled,
Chased by Saul, devoid of ruth,
And the handsome shepherd youth.

(Chorus.)

Saul he has his thousands slain,
But David has his thousands ten.

2nd OFFICER.

See how the king's look lowers :
I never saw him seeming more displeased.

(Song.)

Far as frightened Ekron's gates,
The pursuit its fury sates ;
And Philistia's daughters wail,
While with joy we load the gale.

(Chorus.)

Saul he has his thousands slain,
But bold David thousands ten.

1st OFFICER.

Speak to the king ;
Perchance the fiend is entering him again,
For hell is in his eyes.

2nd OFFICER.

It is too late.

Saul, (aloud.)

What stupid, indiscriminating churl
Composed for them that burden ?

2nd OFFICER.

Surely 'twas

A demon that then blew the trumpet of
The royal mouth, for it was hell's own peal !

1st OFFICER.

The maids have vanished, and the king, perturbed,
Stalks to and fro. Behold, he's struggling with
(Whether it be his own or from the Lord)
A spirit of wrath.

SAUL.

Now let me curb my anger,
Or it will gallop with me off the field.

1st OFFICER.

I never saw his majesty so incensed.

SAUL.

Nay, this would spur the dullest steed to scour,
And throw his rider too, scorning the bridle.
Hold hard, hold hard, though we should break the reins.
Honor a subject and insult the king !—
'Tis well the capercutting troop have fled,
And to a better purpose put their heels.
What next ? blows follow threats : this was defiance.
This was the very pass and guard of young
Rebellion : these girls his saucy trulls.
Ah, I have been too lenient and secure :
But now the rigor of my reign begins.

1st OFFICER.

Mark him.

2nd OFFICER.

I do, I do, he's calmer now,
But wickeder. He looks more cruel than a tiger
Does, when it couches for the fatal spring.

SAUL.

Ay, ay, I'll note them; I will be abroad:
I will have spies in every town and hamlet,
For it is meet that I should do so, when
They keep a Poet in these unpolished parts. —
This is the work of elder heads than theirs.
Why find I not the covert knave who wrote
'Their pean, and saw him asunder before their eyes?
But I'll be prompt henceforwards, and conviction
Shall hurry execution to his office: —
Aye, and suspicion shall be competent
To stand unchallenged and give evidence.
Go put our troops in motion, gentlemen,
These are but foolish hoydens after all.

1st OFFICER.

Let us not leave him though he so command us:
He's hot within, though at the surface cooled.

SAUL.

'Twas David through the whole, and ever highest:
A studied theme.

1st OFFICER.

Look how he frowns again:

This bodes some ill.

SAUL.

To me they have ascribed
Thousands, but unto David tens of thousands;
And what more could he have except the kingdom?

2nd OFFICER.

He walks and mutters, not knowing what he does.

SAUL.

I've been deceived, these also were but spectres. —
You go not, gentlemen: the song is ended. —
Woe unto Levi if he this inspired!

1st OFFICER.

Stay.

2nd OFFICER.

No, we shall but draw on us his wrath.

SAUL.

Am I not in an after dinner dream?
No,
I doubt my eyes, but I'll believe my ears;
It cannot be that I am twice befooled:

Look how my officers yet stand amazed :
I'll to the air give Ekron's vision, but,
Shall this dissolve away like that in doubt,
This that enthralls its wondering witnesses ?
Go on before me, gentlemen, I pray you.

1st OFFICER.

Myself will dare him to prevent worse issue.

(To SAUL).

The king is moved by this hyperbole.

SAUL.

Hyperbole ! It went beyond all bounds.
What in this world shall now be counted pure,
When lies and treason pass through such sweet lips ?

1st OFFICER.

There is no conduit but is sometimes fouled.

SAUL.

Then angels, mouths may utter obscenity ;
And why should men strive to be nice and clean ?
Now to Gibeah urge. Along, along ;
And bid the drums outroll their loudest thunder ;
And let the shrill pipes and the martial bugles
Swell to their uttermost. Be clashed the cymbals,
Let all the trumpets rend the sky together,
And bid our force to raise a general shout, —
That this vile gust of harmony may be lost
In a loud storm and raging sea of discord.
*Exeunt, and presently a peal of trumpets, drums, cymbals, &c., mingled
with cheers of the distant soldiery.*

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*The Alps. Time, night, with stars.**Enter MALZAH, walking slowly.*

MALZAH.

So, so, I feel the signal.
 It seems to reach me through the air,
 Urging me to Saul repair. —
 I wish 'twould cease, it doth not please
 Me now to terminate my leasure :
 I was alone, and here to groan
 At present is my greatest pleasure. —
 I'll come anon, I say begone ;—

What is the wayward king to me ?

I say begone, I'll come anon, —

Oh, thou art strong, I'll follow thee.

Exit, and enter the Angel TYRANNEE.

TYRANNEE.

He flees, he flees, across the seas
 That eastward lead to Canaan's land ;
 And heaven commands me not to cease
 To urge, yet guide his hand.

looking upwards.

How every star reminds me of my lover !
 When we did part he on me cast his eyes,
 Bright as those orbs. — Yet over them suffusion
 Came like the mists o'er evening, as he charged me
 Ever to him return (if so I might
 Return afresh to him, my home and goal)
 Still as the earth returned day's light to heaven.
 So would I now swift soar up to his bosom,
 But I must not abandon this foul fiend,
 Until his work be done. Oh, my dear consort,
 Wert thou like this lost Malzah, or were I
 Like his Peyona, whom we knew in heaven !
 Art thou in heaven now my celestial spouse ?
 Where and how occupied now art thou, loveliest ?
 Treadest thou the trembling fringes of the moon-beams,
 As plighted mortals pace the ocean beach,
 When they expect their loved ones from the main ?

Or art thou standing on the morning star,
That soon shall sail up to the orient's shore,
And that, in these cold heights, to glow doth seem
Out sails or wings from its bright body's beam?
Oh, that my aspirations now might reach thee!
Oh, would there were some mystical courier,
To bear soft messages from sphere to sphere,
Then would I send each hour to thee a sigh
From this dull globe where doth my mission lie.
I'll sing, for haply some ascending angel
May hear it, and repeat it to my cherub.

(*Sings.*)

I said farewell,
And smiled, — for tears yet never fell in heaven,—
But thou didst sigh,
“Farewell,” didst sigh, “Return to me at even.”

But why at even
Didst thou to thee solicit my return?
Since distance cannot
Separate us who in old embraces burn.

Then, let's unsay
Farewell, — which I ought never to have said,
And so provoked
Those vapors that thine eyes then overspread.

Lorn thoughts from thee
Put far then, since, though now from thee apart,
I soon shall be
Again thy love-mate, wheresoe'er thou art.

Fly such from me,
Since I again, in heaven, on star or moon,
Embraced by thee,
Shall bask amidst thy dear effulgence soon.

Lo; where yon demon, with increasing speed,
Makes his dim way across the night-hung-flood,
Due to the Hebrew King, with onward heed,
Like to a hound that snuffs the scent of blood.
I'll follow him.

SCENE II.

Gibeah. A spacious apartment in the Palace. Time, the morrow.

SAUL, (*entering.*)

Now let hell work (or heaven) its will on Saul !
 I am beset by a new demon, for
 That chorus haunts me, and from every other
 Study my mind reverts to that foul lode-thought.
 I know that I am not quite well in body,
 Which may explain the sickness of my mind,
 For I have got an ague of the soul,
 Now hot now cold, now rage now fear in turns ;
 And sometimes I believe I feel my old,
 My demon-ruled and fatal fit returning.
 Oh God, give me not up again to that !
 David, young roe,
 Out of the dangerous thicket of my thoughts.

Exit and re-enter

I feel the fit around me gathering :
 I cannot be deceived, I feel the true,
 Alas too true, awakening of the storm.
 Oh, let me now turn my thoughts' course from David,
 Lest, when the helm of reason no more guides me,
 I run him down upon his life's young sands,
 And voyage 'neath clouds of penitence ever after.
 Come, ye mid-region dwelling genii,
 Angels, or whatsoever be your name,
 That do, undoubtedly, from time to time,
 With hands still charged with various dispensations,
 Administer heavenly medicine to the world,
 Come to my heart, and, with some blessed unction,
 Assuage and mollify its growing ire ;
 Purge me from these diabolical suggestions,
 Oh, disinfect me of these sad misgivings.

Exit and re-enter.

It cannot be, 'tis blackness all, and thickens,
 And in it I must grope howe'er I stumble.
 Alas, I know not if I may not have
 A too substantial ground for dread of David.
 Granted his image on the plain near Ekron
 Were merely in imagination's mirror,
 Yet its re-rendering by the insolent minstrels,
 That seeming many-voiced corroboration,
 Wherein true flesh and blood, at ears and eyes,
 Forcing conviction onwards by two paths,
 Did cry out loudly to the same dumb burden,

What can be said to that, except to ask,
 Is not this him to whom my throne was given ?
 Oh horror ! Oh, now blows temptation on me
 Until I strain beneath the infernal gale.
 Pour on me hurricane, I can withstand thee.
 Nay, nay ; now hold : I will not—yet I will ;
 He shall not live to peril me : I go,—
 Nay hold, rash fool ; down with that bloody flag ;
 Oh, look not there, my soul, at that false polestar.
 That would but guide thee into a dark gulf,
 From whence thou never couldst return to these
 Waters of innocence, of innocence
 Though troubled. I am calmed : the demon has
 Sheered off. Alack, how insecure am I !
 I deemed that I again was snugly housed,
 When from the wilderness there comes a blast,
 That casts my cabin of assurance down,
 And leaves me in the tempest : methought that spring
 Was only just returning to my soul,
 And here I pant in sultry summer air,
 Wherein I feel the fiend is floating round me,
 Like a huge blowfly, and upon my spirit
 Seeking to sow new horrors. Phantom, pity me ;
 Begone from me, already logged with sorrow ;
 Come not again with rough, black waves to sink me.

Exit, and re-enter.

He comes again, the fiend again attempts me :
 Who is this thing that whips me into gall ?
 I know him now, at last methinks I know him :
 'Tis Spleen, 'tis Spleen, it is the Goblin Spleen ;
 Whose face in youth I do remember seeing,
 Spleen that is latent in my constitution.
 Full well I know, full well I know that spleen,
 That lank and lean besetter, still can find
 Occasion, even as can the spider find
 Some point or corner where to hang its web.
 David is now my occasion, David is
 To me a boil, that now is drawing to it
 The humours of my long distempered heart.
 Oh, Spleen, thou art a devil of thyself,
 And canst bring up Gehenna from the deep,
 And therewith set on fire thy victim's soul.
 Oh, Spleen, Spleen, Spleen, unnatural embryo,
 To gnaw the womb that doth engender thee !
 Wolf, out of me ! Ah, have I named thee aright ?
 Oh, there's a wolf, there is a devil in me,

A devil that I cannot, dare not, name ;
A wolf that seems composed of hell's black flame.

Exit and re-enter.

Grow, fœtus, grow ; rack violated Saul
With pangs more dire than woman's in her travail !
Spirit, grow riot, raise all Tophet in me,
Confusion, blindness, and barbarity.
Oh, oh, — Why should I moan if heaven sends it ? —
'Tis hell, 'tis hell, I hear her rumbling wheels,
That, when this outrage is accomplished, come
To bear me to the region of the damned.
I'll go and clamour unto heaven to save me.

Exit and re-enter.

I am not heard ; heaven's doors are closed, and will
Not open to my knocking, — Oh, for war ;
New cruise, — but, oh, for no young sharks of Davids
To swallow down my glory ; — but the hook
Shall stick in him.

(Exit and re-enter.)

Begone, begone, ye pleadings, I will not hear ye ;
Why should I hear you when myself's unheard ?
Why should I spare him when myself's unspared ?
I have been much too casuistical,
And casuistry would not let's kill flies,
Nor any other vermin ; — but I'll kill :
All Israel know that I am under ban,
I am encompassed round with enemies,
And I will fight my way through if I murder.
Start not, my heart, at that outblurted word,
Like to a steed recoiling from a serpent,
Beat not thus like a hammer in my breast.
Murder is only death, and what than death
More common ? I will do it ; — I must do it. —
It will not be so painful as I thought,
Anticipation ever is a cheat.

Ah, with what furlongs murderward I'm striding !
Hence, and with motion whirl my soul from David !

Exit and re-enter.

Why, many a maid ere this has been defiled,
And many a brave youth has untimely perished.
The whole world dies. Yes, that's the way to think.
So probably thought Moses,
When killing the Egyptian ; so thought Jael,
When nailing Sisera to the floor ; so too Ehud
Whispered when tickling Eglon's ribs ; and Samuel,
(Ah, glad I am that I have thought of him,)
And Samuel when he played the slayer. Yes,

But all these victims would have done as much
 For those who did these deeds for them, but David, —
 Oh, 'twere ingratitude and tenfold murder.
 Oh, oh, 'twere foul, 'twere foul!
 Let me not stray into that vault again.
 I'll go and strive to pray down these suggestions,
 And ask heaven's pardon for having entertained them.

Exit, and enter the QUEEN and DAVID, the latter bearing his harp.

QUEEN.

Oh, happy is it, David, happy that
 Thou, his Physician, art come with his disease.
 I heard his voice, he cannot be remote;
 Hie after him and be again his healer.

Exit DAVID.

Oh, sorrow riding crupper unto joy,
 Turning the latter to a mockery!
 How long with Saul will this foul spirit bide?
 When will Jekovah's wrath be satisfied?
 Lo, here Saul comes, his visage fraught with ill: —
 I will begone, his very looks me kill.

Exit, and re-enter SAUL.

SAUL.

Why have I fallen again upon my knees,
 And cast mine eyes in agony towards heaven?
 No prayer of mine arose, no prayer I breathed;
 I cannot pray, for that which should aspire
 Rests 'neath despair, or turns aside at ire:
 Why should I try to pray? I have not prayed
 For years. Would cursing not avail me more?
 For I have known men who have cursed out humours,
 Like trampling out dispersed and dangerous sparks.

Enter DAVID.

I'll trample out him, and be at peace:
 I'll pin him to the wall.

DAVID beginning to play, SAUL throws the javelin at him, which sticks in the wall.

Let me not look on that which I have done!
 Transport him to the grave, ye angels, now:
 Bear him away, ye ministers who bore
 The corpse of Moses, and as ye it buried
 That none know where it is unto this day,
 So murdered David's ever hide away.
 Ungrateful Saul! Oh, would that Saul were dead.
 Dead? No, that were to encounter him, — ah, no,
 I never shall encounter him again:
 He will an angel be, when I in hell

Am with my demon found. Demon, 'twas thou,
 'Twas thou that hurled at him the javelin :
 Thou hast blown on me since the dawn of day.
 Curse thee, aye and let him be cursed who sent thee !
 For thou has not been sent to me by God.
 Ye world-surveying, fate-portending stars,
 Whose large conjunction at my birth avered
 My future greatness, blast me with your flame
 This Goblin should he journey midst your brightness ;
 Destroy for me his wings with parching fires,
 And let the base fiend mutilated drop
 Forever to the abyss. Poor murdered youth !—
 I'll look upon him though it sear my sight.
 Gone ? Then for naught have I wrought guilt and shame,
 For naught expended grief and lamentation.
 Deception rules the hour, and hell, or spleen,
 Hath made my skull a hall to riot in.
 Yet was my hand the agent of my heart.
 Oh, Infamy ! Why he will tell the Queen :—
 Why let him go and tell Gehenna's king ;
 Nor he nor other shall live to hold me in dread.
 I am not sorry, neither am I glad.
 Go to the winds, remorse. They'll say the spirit
 Did it, and they'll say truly. Come, lance, come.
 Javelin, thou art not planted in his heart ;
 Come, come away, thou rooted bungler, come ;
 To day it seems death is not David's doom.

Exit, and enter MALZAH.

MALZAH.

Out of his hand the javelin flew,
 And entered into the wall :—
 Ha, ha, ha, there is strange to do
 When at such small game flies Saul.
 He struck at David, and said 'twas I :
 He says I made the javelin fly :
 He grasped it hard, and yet it flew :
 Ha, ha, ha, ha, what a to do !
 How mortals worry when they slip !
 If they, like us, their souls would dip
 And dye all o'er in one grand sinning,
 We less should hear of their conscience dinning,
 Temptation indeed ! They need it not :
 Whew, whew, let man go rot.
Exit, but re-enter immediately laughing heartily.
 Oh, oh, oh, oh, here's a pretty jest,
 I'll labor now after my rest,

His strange abuse has given me zest.
 Ha, ha, ha, ha ; I'll him re-fetter,
 The next time he tries he may do better.
 Lo, here he comes, and, if right I spy,
 He has still got David in his eye.

Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

What if I should dismiss him merely ? He,
 In that case, would but spread abroad his glory
 Amongst the people, as Samson's foxes spread
 Their fire among the corn of the Philistines.

MALZAH.

Murder him, and there's an end.

SAUL.

Ah, did I hear a voice ? No, 'twas my own
 Soul's echo.

Exit.

MALZAH.

I will follow him.

Exit and re-enter soon.

Again

I've breathed him ; he is nearly mad. What with
 This newborn jealousy, and with cold envy,
 Which, like the north wind on the winter fire,
 Blows into rage the embers of the spleen
 That nature kindled in him ere his birth,
 And what with mine own goading influence —
 But which is unsuspected by him — he,
 As of old, but now with actual aim,
 Broods in the palace, or in its grounds goes stalking
 With his clutched javelin. I'll visit him
 Again anon : meantime I will stay here,
 Awaiting whatsoever shall befall,
 Singing a little to tide my tedium.

Song.

Ye melancholy dogs below,
 Up hell's perpetual furnace blow
 With general sighs ; I pity ye,
 But what is your distress to me :
 In many sorts I count you better.
 Than I, who have escaped your fetter.
 Here comes my royal maniac in my chains.
 I'm here, yet riding in his brains.

Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

I will extinguish him.

MALZAH.

What me ? Nay, nay.

SAUL.

I will extinguish him with this, and nothing,
 Except some smoke and odour, shall remain,
 Merely remembrance, and that a month's soft wind
 Will bear away. The ungrateful multitude
 Remember for a month and then forget.

Exit.

MALZAH.

Very true.

Now Malzah may lie quiet, for the king
 Needs no more seasoning to his present temptation ;
 For he is simmering in such a pitchy caldron
 That he cannot thence escape without defilement.
 I shall not hurry him, nor broil myself.
 His fire is hot, his loaf is leavening ;
 His broth I'll brew before 'tis evening.
 I'll sing again, for Tyrannie is gone —
 I hope to heaven, and to stay there, though
 That is an aspiration for her good,
 And I do wish her more than all the evil
 That ever yet befell or saint or devil.
 Ah me !

Song.

There was a Devil, and his name was I,
 From De Profundus he did cry ;
 He changed his note as he changed his coat,
 And his coat was of a varying dye :
 It had many a hue, in hell 'twas blue,
 'Twas green i'th sea, and white i'th sky :
 Oh, do not ask me, ask me why
 'Twas green i'th sea and white i'th sky,
 Why from Profundus he did cry :
 Suffice that he wailed with a chirruping note,
 And quaintly cut was his motley coat :—
 I have forgot the rest ; — would I could sleep,
 Would I could sleep away an age or so,
 And let Saul work out his own weal or woe :
 All that I ask is to be let alone.

Song.

Oh, to be let alone ! Oh, to be let alone !
 To laugh, if I list, if I list, to groan ;
 Despairing, yet knowing God's anger o'erblown.
 Oh, why should God trouble me ?
 Why should He double my

Sorrow, pursuing me when He has thrown
 Me out of his favor? Oh, why should He labor
 Down lower ever thrusting me into Hell's zone?
 Oh, let me alone! Oh, let me alone!
 Oh, leave me, Creator, Tormentor, alone.

Peace, here comes Saul, more wretched than myself.

SAUL enters and slowly crosses the stage.

Behold how swollen yet haggard is his face.
 He doth remind me, as he hither stalks,
 Of Lucifer, in his pent anger, pacing
 Over the black and burning floor of hell.
 He's charged; so have worked in him the last drops
 That I let fall upon his soul. Woe now
 To whomsoever may meet him. Now is my time;
 I'll enter him that he may work his doom,
 And, peradventure, I get my release.
 His mind's defences are blown down by passion,
 And I can enter him unchallenged, like
 A traveller does an Inn, and, when I'm there
 (He is himself now so much like a demon)
 He will not notice me. I will lie perdue
 Twixt his own shadow's bounds; he will not see
 Me, from the very darkness of his soul.
 I'll couch within his gloom, like to a spark
 Amongst combustibles. Again he's pregnant
 Of an intent pernicious, and a throe
 Again I'll give him, in a double sense,
 To hasten his delivery. [*Going.*]

Enter TIPTOE.

TIPTOE.

Hist, hist.

MALZAH.

Now by all things illtimed! Would that thy heel
 Just now were sticking in a trap of steel!
 Wherefore at present comest thou stealing hither?

TIPTOE.

Tell in what kennel thou hast lately housed;
 For, save in that one, I in all earth's corners
 Have lately sought thee. I am come from Zaph.

MALZAH.

Well, what wants Zaph?

TIPTOE.

To know thy speed.

MALZAH.

Thrice thine.

TIPTOE.

Zaph wants to know of thy prosperity.

MALZAH.

I never knew a devil that did prosper.

TIPTOE.

Now answer soberly : Zaph asks thy fare.

MALZAH.

I never knew a devil that fared better :
I feed on a king's sighs, I drink queen's tears,
I'm clothed with half a nation's maledictions.
Aint I a lucky fellow ?

TIPTOE.

Never saucier :

How goes the royal Saul ?

MALZAH.

Oh, furiously :

He from a giddy tower lately jumped,
And nearly broke his neck ; — he says I threw him.

TIPTOE.

Leave him and turn on Samuel.

MALZAH.

I cannot do so ;

For I am haunted by a heaven-sent shrew,
Who plumped upon me there at Lebanon,
And smote me with a foul, infernal blast,
That instant me into this palace cast.
Thou smilst, but 'twas no jest, for there I lay
Upon this pavement all a winter day.
Yes, smile again, my darter, 'twas no fun,
For, by Zaph's head, I thought my work was done.
But I yet live, although I toil for heaven,
Whose wages are but cuffs unto me given. —
Have Zaph and Gloriel been as yet at buffets ?

TIPTOE.

Nay, but Zaph yet may challenge him.

MALZAH.

Do any

Of the dry faggots of the other sex,
Smoke at the thought of glowing midst fresh embers ?
How goeth the divorcement project ? Is it
Popular amongst the seraphs ?

TIPTOE.

They abhor it.

MALZAH.

Um.

TIPTOE.

Union lies in gender's soft division.
Making of us in halves did make us one.

MALZAH.

Pshaw ! Why were sexes ever known in heaven,
Wherein was neither death nor generation ?
Seest thou yon creature coming ?

TIPTOE.

Who is she ?

MALZAH.

She !

'Tis she who tasks me. — I could duck her in sulphur !
Look not upon her with such air vindictive ;
I fear her even more than I do hate her.

TIPTOE.

She's coming towards us, but I will not flee.

MALZAH.

Begone, I pray thee, or Zaph long may wonder
What 'tis detains thee, for she can (and may)
Keep thee in thralldom for to do her errands ;
Or gibbet thee 'ith air, or she may seal thee
Up in a cavern of the briny sea ;
Or doom thee deep beneath the arctic flood
To banishment, or in an iceberg pen thee ;
Yea, in her wrath and termagantic onset,
Hurl thee from hence unto the farthest planet,
Or hang thee on the sharp horn of the moon,
Or else long roast thee in the dogstar's beam,
For she is strong as cruel.

TIPTOE.

I will fly

And stir up Zaph to send unto thy rescue.

Exit.

MALZAH.

Bid him to come himself, and fight a spell
With yonder duplicate, she Gloriel.
I love a fight (at least to see one) dearly ;
But this remorseless, moving piece of sunshine,
Why comes she hither in the cock of crisis ?
I thought she was in glory : — 'tis my prayer,
She not re-enter it till I carry her there.
Curse Zaph and Gloriel's feud ! for, as I feel it,
Small ones are always crushed twixt great one's quarrels.
Fie, fie, that Tyrannee should have seen this visit.
May Zaph be damned (as he assuredly is)
For sending me his henchman here to quiz !

Enter TYRANNEE.

I bade that prying fellow to be gone ; —
 I'm diligent to be the sooner done.

Exit.

TYRANNEE.

I'll follow him, or he'll o'eract his part,
 And, perhaps, destroy the man of God's own heart.

Exit.

SCENE III.

Another apartment. Enter the QUEEN and DAVID.

DAVID.

Fear not for me, although his majesty
 Is even as a chafed and senseless beast ;
 And standing in his presence not less risk
 Than being with a lion in its den :
 Should he again his lance against me wield,
 Again the Lord will be to me a shield.

QUEEN.

Then take thy station here and ply thy harp.
 Oh, David, do thine uttermost again
 To exorcise from him this evil spirit.
 Alas, I thought thy former minstrelsy,
 And the employment of these latter wars
 Had healed his soul, and that a tranquil life,
 Except those blasts that we expect to blow
 Around a royal head, henceforth were his.
 Begin, that he may hear thee ere he see thee.
 Strike that old air composed before the flood,
 And which has often calmed his boiling blood.

DAVID.

I will.

'Tis said it draws foul spirits, since 'twas played
 Oft for them by their human paramours,
 Whom, when they hear it, they believe returned
 Up from the uncertain region of the dead,
 And so go forth to meet them.

QUEEN.

Here he comes ;

Still armed, and now his lips all foam.
 I'll fly, for he doth hate me in his fits.

A javelin is hurled into the apartment and sticks in the wall ; David escapes as before.

SAUL, (*entering.*)

After him, fiend, that sit'st within me. Forth,
 Infernal hound, and fetch him. Oh, thou false one !

Enter the QUEEN.

Hast thou met David? Hath he told thee aught?
 Bid him come hither, — or he had better hence,
 For what I'll do I'll do.

QUEEN.

Peace, peace.

SAUL.

Aye, knowest thou why that trembling shaft is there?
The QUEEN draws the javelin from the wall, and throws it out of the room.

QUEEN.

Now, my dear husband, come and take some rest.

SAUL.

Yes, when I've done what I have vowed to do.
 I am beneath the tyranny of a vow,
 Which I will honor whilst I am eclipsed,
 That I hereafter may have power to plead,
 I did it in the darkness. — 'Tis the fiend:—
 He darkens, yet illuminates, my mind,
 Like the black heavens when lightnings ride the wind.

QUEEN.

Your sun will shine anon.

SAUL.

Tormentor, no!

I want it not to shine: let the wind blow.
 Let me wreck all my foes, or else be lost
 Myself upon this black and fatal coast.
 Mad pilot, wouldst thou see me drowned in th' vortex?—
 Oh, it is I that's mad; mad, mad is Saul.

QUEEN.

Then, if you know that you are mad, at once
 Confine yourself within your chamber's bounds.
 Come, for your slumber will betake you soon.
 You will be happy when the spirit's gone.

SAUL.

Gone!

When he is gone for ever. When will that be?
 When will he go hence to return no more?

QUEEN.

Oh, fall not thus away: come, come:— What, would you
 Cast yourself on the ground? Fie! burdened care,
 Bentbodied, better is than prone despair.
 Nay, nay, revive; why, even now I spy
 The faltering fiend departing at your eye.
 Be Saul, be Saul again.

SAUL.

Ah, would I were again a quiet hind!

QUEEN.

And leave your sovereignty? You sleep, you dream.
 Awaken, Saul, and be your proper self:
 Return, return from this wild wandering.
 Come home, your Troubler is gone; come home, —
 Oh, fill that horrid blank upon your face,
 Tear off therefrom that veil of lunacy;
 Oh, doff that eye-bewildered stupor: Saul,
 Shake off this creeping, deathlike lethargy.
 What, will you never be to sense recalled?
 Help me, ye angels; help, Jehovah; — Saul,
 What are your thoughts? Know you not where you are?
 You are outside yourself, are disembodied; —
 Oh, put your soul into that emptied frame!
 Get from the weather, get within yourself;
 Why stand you thus beneath unsheltering eaves,
 Amidst a deluge of dread, pelting thoughts?
 Come in, come in, poor king, into thyself; —
 Saul, Saul! — Oh, do not look so lost; Oh, let me
 Now lead you back to recollection: lo, 'tis I;
 Lo, you are here, though much perplexed: behold
 You stand upon the threshold of yourself,
 Yet know it not: look on it, 'tis yet fair;
 Enter, and you shall find its furnishing,
 Is, even yet, such as becomes a king.

SAUL.

Nay, I am but a puppet, not a king.
 Kings are supreme and uncontrolled, but I
 Am under horrid slavery to a being:
 Whom I despise and loathe.

QUEEN.

Forget it now.

Come, come at once to bed.

SAUL.

Oh, Ahinoam,

Although to some fault I acknowledge must,
 Can God permit this outrage yet, be just?

QUEEN.

Renew not your old reasonings, but come
 And take the sleep that follows on your fit.

SAUL.

Fit, fit!

'Tis strange that this should seem fit: — why, had I killed
 It had been written down murder; yes, and Samuel, [him.
 And haply this malicious goblin too,
 Staying my passage to a city of refuge,

Had haled me back into Jehovah's wrath,
 And Tophet of my conscience. Ah, ah, there
 Is something wrong in this recurring fit :
 I will investigate it, I will dare
 To question more than I have done as yet ;
 Yes, I will question until I am answered.

QUEEN.

Cease raving, Saul, and come ; your mind needs rest,
 And not the contemplation of an inquest,
 Which, to the coolest, most impartial stranger,
 Had need to upconjure a black pause of caution,
 Like to a ghost, to awe him from the inquiry.

SAUL.

No such ghost shall awe me, for I have known,
 Yea, oft have in me, an unconjured ghost,
 More terrible than any human terror,
 And am not yet affrighted. What, shall I
 Not ask from whence this comes ? Shall I accept
 Evil, nor seek to know its origin ?
 Shall I be dumb because 'tis Samuel's spoken ?
 No !

I will demand, I will seek satisfaction ;
 I will have some, though bitter, pacification : —
 Yea, I already to my soul have such
 Obtained by fearless thinking. It is magic ;
 'Tis Samuel leagued with the remnant of the Sorcerers.
 Stand not aghast at my accusing of him :
 I would accuse the high, majestic heavens,
 I would accuse the blue, etherial air
 If, when from my ablutions forth, I found
 My person sudden smirched ; say, wouldst not thou ?

QUEEN.

I would not dare to accuse the sacred Seer,
 Of falsehood and deception.

SAUL.

Then thou wouldst
 Accuse thy husband ; — well, so let it be ;
 No foolish reverence shall choke my suspicion.
 Prophets are not beyond the freaks of poor,
 Affronted mortals, any more than kings.
 Why dost thou look upon me thus alarmed ?
 Thou wouldst expostulate ? No, no, 'tis vain ;
 I will not hear even thee : I'll march right onwards,
 Nor list to any charming ; I'll escape ;
 And I will punish for what has been done ;
 I'll come upon my secret enemies,

And scatter them and their vile incantations.

QUEEN.

Oh, is the gamut of your heart played over ?

SAUL.

Not yet, not yet. I have a clang of discords
Yet for thine ear. By hell, it makes me fierce,
To hear the cant of silly dames and priests.
Those talk of right and charge great heaven with wrong
These dribble on my head their verbal spite,
And say 'tis th' thunder of heaven's water-spouts:
Those honor me, yet count me reprobate ;
These send a fitful access unto me,
And name it the evil spirit from the Lord.
Out, out, shall I be silenced and beguiled
By a chicanery that drives me wild ?
Wife, I am sane at present though uncivil ;
But these reflections half bring back my devil.
I hear, methinks, him humming round my head :
Old hornet, cease ; — wife, lead to bed, to bed ; —
Would I could sleep, — would, would that I were dead.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

Saul's Bedchamber. Saul asleep upon a bed. Time, Night. A lamp burning. Enter MALZAH.

MALZAH.

He is now sleeping, but his fervent brow
Is all meandered over by swollen veins.
Across his temple one appears nigh bursting.
He breathes, too, heavily, and a feeble moan
I hear within him, shewing that his soul,
(Like to a child that's wept itself to sleep,)
Even in slumber, doth retain its trouble.
I am loth again to rack him, but I will,
For I am desperate to escape from slavery.
I will breathe hotly on his countenance,
And when he awakes and doth cry out for water, —
Which I will make his servants slow in bringing, —
I'll enter him 'midst his vociferation,
And goad him back to madness.

Approaches the King.

SAUL.

Oh, leave me, foul fiend !

MALZAH.

He dreams.

SAUL.

SAUL.

Thou art not from God.

MALZAH.

Alas, I am.

SAUL.

I have long thee withstood.

MALZAH.

Boast not too much.

SAUL.

Abandon me, horrible presence !

MALZAH, (*advancing nearer.*)

'Tis the wind that hath blown me against thee, 'tis fate
That I and thou thus for a season should mate.

Having breathed upon Saul's face.

I love thee not, and yet too much I love thee,
To do my work effectually, I fear.

Breathes on him again.

There, there.

SAUL.

Oh, to be pent in hell ! I suffocate.

Veer winds that from the red equator scorch me,

And let the north blow on me till I shiver.

Oh, for an avalanche of snow ! Fall, flakes,
And blind me ; cover me up drifts ; freeze, freeze.
Seize on me, blast, and hurl me into winter.

MALZAH.

Again I'll breathe on him.

[Breathes upon him.

SAUL.

Full threescore fiends and ten, each with a javelin,

Half molten, and thrust through me from behind,

Chased me all up the burning lane from hell.

Some water, water, ho ! Ah, here again,

Each with his brand swept through me, and dispersed

The whole of them back hissing. *[Waking.*

Water ! water !

What ho, bring hither water. Is there none
To watch me ? Jonathan, Michal, Merab ; where
Is Ahinoam ? Gone ! Oh, ye are all
Forgetful of me, and my children take
Their ease and pastime whilst their father's dying.
Some water, water. — Oh, to breathe upon
Carmel or Ararat ! Clouds burst upon
My bosom, as upon their heads ye burst :
Pour on my head, ye waterspouts ; cataracts
Dash down my throat and turn me to an ocean. —
Ah, will there be no rain again, no dew ?

To the dank vineyard ; let me go and wallow,
Suck out, and trample out, the freshness. Chained ?
Writhes furiously to break his chain.

MALZAH.

I'll enter him now, but not to do him evil,
But out of ruth to help him snap his chain.

MALZAH vanishes, and SAUL, having broken the chain, rushes out.

MALZAH, *again* visible.

In him and out again.

Enter TYRANNEE.

Ah, here's my lady ;
And armed, too, with a whip of twisted lightnings,
Which I must bear, unless I hide myself
In Saul.

Exit in haste.

TYRANNEE.

How quickly the Defaulter flees away !
He is not idle, yet he loathes to work
Jehovah's will. I knew him once in heaven,
And none more diligent and adroit than he, none
In their behaviour more correct, but now
He is the veriest audacious rake
Out of the bounds of hell, and dared, one day,
Ere I was sent to whip and to command him,
To insult a seraph, by requesting her
To accompany him to the moon. Labor is best
Corrector of such as he, and I will task him
Until he has not even power to groan,
Much less for mirthfulness, of which he has,
More than sufficient, since I lately caught him
Disporting quite fantastically ; and once
Espied him in a palpable grimace
Made at me and my bearing. More respectful
He is at present, but that is out of cunning,
And, if I err not, he will cringe to the ground,
Licking its dust up like a crawling serpent,
When he beholds this cat of living fire.
I'll after him.

Exit.

SCENE V.

A vineyard. The moon shining.

Enter SAUL, struggling with MALZAH.

SAUL,

Fool ! fool ! Audacious stranger, art thou also
Mad ? Art thou also broken out of fetters ?
Ah, thou art soft as down, I sink into thee,
And at my violence thou dost swirl and waver,

As doth the smoke within the writhing blast !
Speak unto me. I see, yet feel thee not :
Contend not with me, but say who thou art.
Oh, satisfy me. If thou beest Death
That cometh hither after wretched Saul,
Behold him tired and willing to surcease.
I know thee not, — and yet methinks I do.
Thine eyes are stars, — oh, cover them, oh wrap
Them up within thy cloudy brows. Stand off,
Creature, stand off, and I will question thee :
Tell me thy name. 'Thou ragged web of moonbeams,
Speak, if thou have a tongue to move the air with ;
Thou human-formed, yet earth-poised, cloudlet thing,
If thou beest mist, disperse. I charge thee speak.
Who art thou that besettest me, and what ?
Lo, I am Saul, the sad demoniac king,
But who art thou ? Ah, thou dost coldly smile,
But Saul is instinct with infernal fire.
If thou beest Death, direct thy wintry breath
Sheer on this breast, and turn my heart to ice.
Keener than gusty March or bleak December,
Breathe through my lips and freeze life's fountain up ;
Instantly stretch me on the ground a corse,
Touch me at once where conscience lies and soul,
End me, yea let me pass away for ever :
Oh, lay me in the tomb of Kish, or in
The mausoleum I have built for me
And my posterity. Ah, come no nearer !
Phantom, I know thee now, thou art not Death,
But art the demon that afflicteth me.
Speak, speak, oh, speak ; speak, I conjure thee, say
Why thou dost haunt me : tell me at whose instance.
Tell me, oh, spirit, tell me and begone :
Oh, be entreated, fiend, oh, be entreated ;
Behold my poignant sorrow, and confess
At whose behest thou comest, and for what
Offences deep of mine. Speak, thing of evil ;
I will not let thee escape till thou reveal ;
Stay, stay ; I charge thee here to tarry :
Inform me why I had those dire conceits ;
I charge thee to relate, for they were thine ;
I do accuse thee now ; bad spirit, I
Bid thee to speak, and upon all these themes
To inform me here, and with thy horrid silence
Mock me no longer. — Ah, wilt thou leave me thus ?
Then I will follow.

Exit MALZAH pursued by SAUL.

Re-enter.

SAUL.

Then go, for thou wilt not reply : leave me,
 Oh, Goblin, leave me, till my hour is come.
 I'll meet thee after death ; appoint the place ;
 On Gilead, or beside the flowing Jordan :
 Or, if parts gloomier suit thee, I'll repair
 Down into Hinnom, or up to the top of
 Horeb 'ith wilderness, or to the cloud -
 Concealed height of Sinai ascend,
 Or dwell with thee midst darkness in the grave,
 But spare this tabernacle of my body,
 Oh, cease to longer haunt this living frame.
 Oh, if thou once wert human, pity me,
 Oh, have compassion, if angelical !
 If thou have been ejected from the flesh,
 Attempt not to eject and drive out me :
 If thou beest of those demons whom, 'tis said,
 Jehovah drove out from their lofty homes,
 Oh, be beseeched, foul spirit, by thine own
 Calamity, nor come thus still to me
 To drive me out of my corporeal home.
 Say how could I abide with thee incarnate ?
 Seek not new home, seek not new heaven in me ;
 How could I dwell with thee, or entertain
 Thee as a guest, find due abode for thee,
 Whose element is heaven's thrice lumined air,
 Or hell's mysterious beam ; oh, say, how could
 These mortal, middle thoughts of mine agree
 With thine of range extreme ? Begone, foul spirit,
 For, whatsoe'er thou art, I know thou'rt wicked ;
 And guess that thou art more felonious
 Than are thy kindred beings, and begin
 To deem that heaven's invisible lightnings hunt thee,
 And, aiming at thee in my shrouding form,
 Have smitten me with those strange, volleyed pangs.
 Ah, dost thou chuckle, or dost tremble, poor,
 Naked and lorn, yea, despicable spirit.
 Go to yon moon and shiver there ; or plunge
 Into Gehenna's black and burning womb :
 Whate'er thou art, thou unrevealing spirit,
 Whate'er thou wert, begone ; abandon me.

Enter TYRANNEE, invisible to Saul.

MALZAH.

I cannot enter him now, he does so set
 And close his soul against me. Thou art not angry ?

Give me commandment, and I now will rend
His body into fragments, and let out
His soul, for thee to do with what thou wilt.

Crawling abjectly towards her feet.

I will obey thee in whate'er thou biddest me,
So thou wilt scourge me not: shall I to hell,
And take him with me, living, as to heaven
Went Enoch; or shall I put poison in
His food, or hang him on a bough; or may I
Entice him to his highest turret's top,
And cast him thencefrom; or, in human guise,
Insult him (for he is both brave and choleric
And quails not at the wrath of any man)
Until he draw his sword, when I will pierce him,
Right through his heart in quick and angry duel?
I pray you let me finish him, sweet mistress.
Shall I provoke him to excess in wine,
Until he die of fever and delirium?
Bid me to rise and work, for aught I'll do
To pleasure heaven and be dismissed by you.
I pray thee let me hurl him 'gainst the moon,
And leave him there to pine, and freeze, and shiver
Till he expire; or be it his hell for ever.

TYRANNEE.

Come.

MALZAH.

I do implore thee let me kill him first. —
It cannot be that he shall live much longer;
Behold how gaunt he is. He would have killed
David, and by God's law the murderer
Devoted is to death; so let me be
God's instrument of justice; oh, do thou be
Just unto David, and to me shew mercy.

Arising and following TYRANNEE.

Oh, thou inexorable hag, 'twere bliss to curse thee!

Exeunt MALZAH and TYRANNEE.

SAUL.

'Tis strange, most strange: how strange was its demeanour!
Would I had had the power to make it speak.
Albeit of mischief it leered forth a volume.
Would that I had seen it sooner that I might
Have known from whence it issued; whether it
Came from the fabled pit, straight through the earth,
Emerging even at my very feet, or
Glode o'er the lea like unto a marsh-meteor,
Or down the air shot like a falling star,

Or came as portion of the city smoke :
 For spirits can invest themselves in matter
 Noble or vile ; and 'tis a son of murk ,
 Both by its mein and by its baneful work .
 How it did come I know not, but, at last,
 It did appear to address itself to some one,
 And crawled till it lay prone and agitated,
 Then rose and glided hence, like to a vapor
 Attracted towards a cranny by a draught.
 Now let this day stand red on th' calender,
 For it has been eventful. It did dawn
 In fear, and has expired in horror. Oh,
 I could say impious things ; could pour derision
 On prophets, I who've twice myself had vision.
 But I'll within, yet sleep not, lest I rue.
 More I may ere long see, and something do.

Exit.

SCENE VI.

An apartment in the Palace.

SAUL.

If in my fiend-fraught frenzy I had killed him,
 It had been well ; 't had not my conscience burdened,
 Yet lightened much my heart. 'Tis heavy yet,
 For my presentiment is not unfounded ;
 My sudden aversion to him is an instinct
 Trustworthier than is fair inference
 From his past services. Why do I feel
 This else irrational dislike of him,
 This shameful and unmanly dread, yea, even
 Horror, when he is present, except from that
 Intuitive and warning sense of peril
 Which, even whilst we are disporting with it,
 Prompts us to kill or cage the toothless cub,
 Ere it become the fanged and terrible lion ?
 I once was but a herdsman, as he lately
 Was but a shepherd. The several distances
 Between our first conditions and the throne,
 Are equal ; and Samuel hath withdrawn from me
 Disloyaly, whilst half the people's hearts
 Go with him wheresoever he doth lead them.
 May he not lead them to this martial shepherd ?
 Nay, they are there already ! Those accursed,
 Choral, and tripping nymphs proclaimed it. Now
 All charmed away is the spirit of disagreement,
 Which, in excess, is any nation's weakness ;

But, in due measure, is its monarch's strength.
Wo to the king whose subjects are agreed !
His popularity is universal.
Such a strange concord of opinion
Was never heard before in Israel,
That one long note of praise rolls through the land,
None making dissonance, and such spirits as those
Who at my own election scornfully asked,
" Can this man save us ? " laboring 'neath the spell,
Either hang silent or join the general hum.
Such unanimity appears miraculous.
No carping tongue from him detracts, but all
Men's lips conspire to glorify his name,
And women's faces brighten at its mention.
I have heard say (and I do half believe it)
That apprehension brings what it is apprehending ;
And so the javelin's flight, combined with those
Bold, dancing sluts' exaggerated praise,
Come to him doubly hinting : fear and hope :
The latter shews to him a shining entrance ;
The former, like a terrified idiot
Rushing on him from behind, impels him through it.
That maiden's chant may have inspired ambition.
Ah now the film seems falling from mine eyes !
How know I but that the capricious creature,
Who visits me and gives me up to passion,
Intended by this foul attack on David,
To goad him into treason ? May not now
Self-preservation prompt him to rebel ?
Fuel he had before, now he has fire,
For that suggestive chant may have brought in
Unto his opening soul the faggots of
Ambition, and this fiend of burning hell,
Couched in the flying javelin, have swept after,
And put into his hand a torch of hope
Wherewith to kindle them. Now let me dig
Within myself for a distasteful truth.
As flame cannot exist without the air,
So neither can ambition without hope :
Hope which this creature of the deep hath given him,
That he therewith may grow all warm and light,
Whilst I more dark and cold. It was a sad
Accident, that one of the other day.
Now doubtless he is conscious that I fear him,
And, as a word dropped in a hurried moment,
May suddenly reveal a weighty secret,

So he will now my secret fear surmise.
 Know we not by the enemies' double guards,
 The weak points of his camp? So David now
 Shall have perceived where I am vulnerable.
 Ah, it is hard to fight with and beat fear!
 I know that God is with him, and suspect that
 He hath deserted me or I'd not feared.
 I'll end this fear of David, though I may
 Have conjured up a chimera to torment me.
 Hither he comes: I'm loath, yet I will do it.

Enter DAVID.

In a good time thou art come, I was of thee
 Communing with myself. Thou shalt have Merab,
 Mine eldest daughter, given thee to wife;
 Only do thou be valiant, and fight
 Jehovah's battles for me. Art content?

DAVID.

Press me not, gracious king, what am I, and
 What is my life or family that I
 Should be thy son-in-law.

SAUL.

But I did promise 't
 To him who should despatch the Giant Philistine?
 But the Philistines are yet giants, and
 Do thou assist me by thy valour, to
 Dwarf them to common men, for, by Jehovah,
 I swear that I will humble the aggressors;
 Nor shall there be between us peace, till I
 Have bound them to the shores of their own main.
 Thou dost not answer me:— why, then, be dumb;
 And, growing in arms, my wish towards thee shall come.
 I have determined, and what is the worth
 Of my resolves thou knowest. — Let us forth.

(aside.)

The worst is passed, and I will order so,
 He shall his death to the Philistines owe.

Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

A Room in the Palace. Enter JOKIEL and JARED

JOKIEL.

Methinks this is about the time that Merab
 Should have been given to David unto wife.

JARED.

That time is passed, and little David cares.
 I tell thee David wishes not to wear

His earned honor : — whether of humility
It come, or whether from policy I know not.

JOKIEL.

Art thou not young ? Dost thou not look abroad
With eyes that have but recently begun
To rub their smoothness 'gainst the roughening world, —
Even as the buttons of thy tunic rubbed
Against the desk whereat thou satst in school, —
And are they now so dull ? Oh, blind like all
This last generation ! why, man, the old cat
Can mouse a secret, yet, out of its hole,
And play with it, and kill, and eat it too,
Before you youths can smell it. Listen now.
Nine days are kittens blind, — are, were, and will be, —
Nine days are kittens blind, and that's the term
Which, from creation, the whole mousing race,
Have ta'en to suck and mew and meditate
In darkness, on the days to them to come ;
And the whole breed which Tab produced to day,
Will see as clearly at their nine day's end,
As did the primitive engendering :
(That as then sin and death were not i'th world
So did not come, indeed, for mousing ends,
Nor cost their dams the grief of yearning throes :)
But not so with these days' degenerate children ;
For, now, the darksome hours of infancy
Stretch into youth, and it is manhood's noon
Ere they can see what lies beneath their noses.
Pick up that pin, I pray thee, for it fell
Out of thy sweetheart's boddice, — yea, it did so.
Fie, fie, there are but two bright youths in Israel,
Jonathan one called and David t'other. My son Jared,
Lend me the oyster shell of thy right ear,
And in't I'll whisper thee a secret pearl.
David desires not Merab, but if Michal
Were offered him 'twould warm his seeming coldness,
And, to the very sea-marge of his neck,
Like to the tide up to the ocean's brim,
At evening 'neath the low and crimson sun,
Would cause blush out to view his simmering blood.
I see thou'rt dark as ever, — what wilt give me,
Cock of the morning, blind worm of the dew,
To send swift dawn athwart thine ignorance' night ?
Thou dwellest in midnight, boy ; — nay more, thou canst
Tell me the hour : or whether it be midnight, [not
Or whether it be noon. What is thy wealth ?

What is the gross of all thy substance? Come,
Tell me the fee that thou canst yield to him
Who will withdraw the swaddles from thine eyes,
And leave thee staring in the light of heaven?

JARED.

Go on, old fool.

JOKIEL.

No, faster, sir, for that.

JARED.

So said the ass when he was pricked behind.
I ask thy pardon: and concerning David,
I have myself remarked the specialness
Of his respect towards Michal: what he doth
For Merab, and for all the royal house,
He doth sevenfold for Michal, and delights in
The supererogation.

JOKIEL.

No, I doat

Now, verily, to talk thus unto thee.
This is no theme for runners of the palace,
Who straight will run it over all Gibeah.
It is not meet that I along with thee
Should hobanob, and take thy swinish ear.
It is not meet that touching David, I
Therein, like wavelets purling o'er a shell,
Should hint, assert, and, with prophetic tongue,
Declare what will be, or, at least, what might be,
If only those inflexible household gods,
Fathers, were kind. — Son, I speak feelingly;
Myself have been 'ith Giant-killer's case,
And could have wished the nymph of my desires
Would have betasked me like a very slave,
Yea, sent me into Egypt to make bricks,
Provided that I might have thence returned,
And baked them in the sunshine of her eyes.
I could have wished most terribly strange things;
Yea, most preposterous metamorphosis:
She unto me a lioness, and I, to her,
Her sole provider, aye, her very jackall;
She, unto me, some rich, luxurious land,
And I, to her, as its entire flotilla,
That, driven by oar or hugged along with th' wind,
Unto its shores brought tribute: — lo, the king.

JARED.

He sent me from him to perform an errand.

Exit and enter SAUL.

SAUL.

Why lingered Jared with thee? — he was sent
On business for Michal who lacks patience.

JOKIEL.

He is young, your Majesty, and youth will have
Its gibes at tacit age. Your Majesty
Ere now, hath doubtless seen an urchin raise
A stone to throw at some poor harmless thing :
A dove it may have been, or likelier,
Cat (and I own unto your Majesty
That I, in youth, the latter have tormented)
That crossed his path, or whose himself he crossed,
Wandering to school, or on forgotten errand :
Even as wanton boys will missiles fling
At dove, or dog, or an espied cat,
So passing youth will fling jests at meek age.
Your Majesty, I know will pardon me
This bold recital and high colloquy,
Wherein my tongue copes with your Majesty's ear,
('Twas folly, certainly, in me to return 't in kind,)
But the green fledgling who just went from hence
('Twas folly, certainly, to talk at all
In such nice matter) but we talked of Michal,
And how that David secretly admires her,
In secret pines, but dares not dream to have her.

SAUL.

Thou art officious, and thyself concernest
With things that are beyond thee : — go, the Queen
Was asking for thee ; probably she wants
From thee some tale, whose telling may bring back
The slumber that has late too much forsaken her.
Attend her, but talk not to her of David.

Exit JOKIEL.

I'll offer Michal to him for a snare ;
And love shall lead him hoodwinked to his death ;
For, as her dowry, I will ask a hundred
Foreskins of the Philistines : — he shall fall
Yet by their hands, not mine. Welcome to Saul.

Enter a MINISTER of state.

SAUL.

Because I know thee powerful in persuasion,
I will employ thee in a delicate case,
Twixt Michal and our favorite captain, David.
Preamble it as thou wilt, say so and so ; —
Say all the house of Saul admire and love him,
Say that the Queen's his friend, (as he well knows,)

And Michal too affects him, (which he knows
Likewise, therein thou hast two auxiliaries,)
And that myself, whatever may have seemed
Unto the contrary, do incline him towards,
And counsel him to be my son-in-law.
Now to him, for I see him ruminating
Down yonder in the garden.

Exit MINISTER.

Let me not dwell upon this ugly business.
I love him though I act as if I hated.
'Tis not my nature, yet 'tis from my nature,
To which self-preservation is a law : —
Nor more its law than 'tis the law of heaven,
To Moses' added, making up eleven.
Sad is the fate that does to this compel me !
Sad, sad that he must be pushed on to slaughter ; —
As sad to sacrifice my favorite daughter.

Exit.

SCENE VIII.

In the Garden. Enter the MINISTER and DAVID conversing earnestly.

MINISTER.

Nay hear me further and then answer me.
Is it not the highest duty of the subject
To obey his king ?

DAVID.

Doubtless it is, my lord,
Granted the king command not aught forbidden.

MINISTER.

Even to the risking of that subject's life ?

DAVID.

Such risk being for the king's or country's good.

MINISTER.

How much more then when such obedience is
Both for that subject's honor, and th' country's pleasure ?
Now listen ; Saul affects thee, though thou wert
By him passed by in Merab, whom, he knew,
Thou lovedst not, so declined to recompense thee
In coin of her, which, if he had done, would
But have defrauded thee, to whom her value
Came not at its full standard. Saul affects thee —
Whatever to the contrary has seemed —
And all the royal house admire and love thee ;
Her Majesty, and (what is of much weight,)
Not Jonathan alone, but all Saul's sons.
Do thou accept, then, should his majesty,

Offer thee (as I believe is his intention)
The buxom, and yet proud and dainty Michal,
Who, 'tis surmised, in secret pines for thee.

DAVID.

And thinkest thou it light for one like me,
Poor, and inheriting but a few sheep,
To mate in wedlock with a royal house,
Who for its purse hath got a kingdom's coffers?

MINISTER.

There's weight in that, but it may be removed,
If all the parties to this noble contract
Should will it, for what can withstand such triple
Engine of lover's hearts and parent's soul,
With nation joining it away to roll?
No more at present, I will now begone;
But talk upon this subject more anon.

Exit.

DAVID.

I do love Michal, and could go tend sheep
Again at Beth-lehem, might she go with me.
Oh, selfish David, wouldst thou then debase her?
Wouldst thou then cheat the king her royal father?
Who knoweth not the worth of his quick jewel,
To which the palace is its setting ring.
She burnishes the ingot of his court;
Yea, wheresoever in the court she moves,
Dispenses riches from her dazzling beauty,
Until all flames like to a mine. — I fear
To sport with more than were my wildest wishes;
For to be paid with her would overpay me.
This is the king's. Surely he would not trifle
With me in Michal as in Merab! Nay,
If he do ask me, I will even say, yea.

Exit.

SCENE IX.

The Royal closet. SAUL and the MINISTER.

SAUL.

Tell him that I require no other dowry
Than that which he may give: a hundred foreskins
Of the Philistines, that I may have vengeance
Upon mine enemies, which is to me
More precious than much wealth in gold can be.

MINISTER.

I know he will accept your proposition,
Prompted thereto by his own inclination;

For it is known to me that he has long
Loved Michal, and he fears not the Philistines.
I will unto him, and return to tell you
That he is gone intending to surprise them.

Exit MINISTER.

SAUL.

May they surprise him. Yes, get thee gone, smooth
Now may the genius of disaster meet him, [tongue.
That he return no more ! I love thee, David,
But love Saul better. If he come back alive,
And bring with him the full tale of the foreskins,
Then shall I know that God or Devil's leagued
With him to fight against me.

Exit.

SCENE X.

The Courtyard of the Palace.

Enter TWO DOMESTICS.

1st DOMESTIC.

How ?

Dost thou not know that joyful wedding glee
Again is at the threshold of the court ?

2nd DOMESTIC.

I do, and know that it within the palace
Shall enter if so happen ; but the bridegroom
Elect rides such a sharp-edged hazard towards
Her, who is bought with a hundred males' dishonor,
That I much doubt within myself whether he
A bridegroom shall, in very deed, ever be.

1st DOMESTIC.

Fear not for David, for he hath around him
A panoply which no one sees, but which
Makes him invulnerable to the foe.
How often have we seen the king borne hither,
All pale and bleeding from the battle field,
Suffering although victorious ; whilst David always,
From his recurring bloody skirmishes,
Returns uninjured.

A sound of military music, and loud acclamations.

Listen, 'tis his drum :

The air's heart beats ; let's go, for he doth come.

Exeunt, and enter SAUL.

SAUL.

He is returned, whom I wished not to return :
Living too and unhurt : fresh as becomes
A jocund bridegroom ; and he with him bears

The bloody dowry, doubled, from our foes :
So that the pit I meant him to fall into,
And loose himself in it with death and darkness,
Hath proved an eminence, on which he stands
Like to a beacon lighted up afresh.
Men his augmented beam will see full soon,
And bless him seeing 't, but I, like the moon,
Before the presence of the rising sun,
Shall wane and fade before this last deed done.
He shall have Michal, although much it cost
To see my child thus to me ever lost,
For sure I am that there can never be,
From me towards him but covert enmity.

Exit.

END OF PART SECOND.

S A U L.



THIRD PART.

SAUL.

THIRD PART.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Gibeah. The Courtyard of the Palace.

Enter Two COURTIER.

1st COURTIER.

Three suns hath Israel now to warm and light her,
Saul, Jonathan, and David; and her blood,
So liberally shed, shall be as rain
Upon her lands, henceforth thrice fruitful in
The doubled toil of husbandry secure.

2nd COURTIER.

Auspicious is this marriage, and the more so
Because it promises that there shall be
No difference of privilege in the tribes.
Judah and Benjamin thus joined already,
Says that the other scions of our race
Shall, in due season, be engrafted on
The royal tree, that, with roots tempests stricken,
Now gives us shelter 'neath its stately arms.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Palace.

SAUL.

Defeat, defeat, the Court pronounce in whispers;
Defeat they low pronounce with eyes depressed,
As if the dreaded truth were hung above them,
And unto it they raised not their regard
Fearing to make assurance. Willingly I'd lose
A battle so that he might lose renown.
But let me not entertain this seeming angel,
Lest it should prove to be, —

[A noise heard.]

What noise is that?

MICHAEL, *entering in haste.*

Oh, here he comes to tell you how the day,
Which we believed went lowering down on Israel,

Set in a flood of glory on our arms.

Enter DAVID.

Oh, David, David, thou art welcomer
From this new victory, which comes threefold
To us late sat in fog of feared defeat,
Than sunbeams in a dull November day.
Speak to him, father.

SAUL.

Thou art the minion, David,
Of the best fortune, whencesoe'er its source.
Yet we had heard reverse had come at last ;
But, slow it to believe, we kept our mind
Calm and ebalanced twixt the dim extremes
Of chance defeat, and likelier success ;
Well knowing, if it were the former, that
We, with swift strides approaching the Philistines,
Would soon return it with high interest,
Paid down unto those warlike merchantmen.

DAVID.

No need of that ; Jehovah never fails
To succour me, for in my own strength never
Do I contend, but, mailed in faith and prayer,
Meet those grim warriors from the ocean marge,
Expecting always thus to overcome them.

SAUL.

Thou'rt lucky in thy frames. To-morrow we
Will ask of thee particular recital
How the fight swayed, and how, as usual,
'Twas won : sufficient now to know 'twas won,
And that thou livest thyself to bear the news,
And, all unhurt, again art Michal's. Now
Due home with her, 'tis wrong to take thee from her
So often in your newly married days,
Which should be spent in soft and amorous fields,
Sweet days that, spent, can never more return.
Go, go, this is not meet. I, for awhile,
Myself will keep these Philistines in awe,
And, for my health's sake, make a few campaigns,
Michal, go with him, see thou cherish him,
As does become a young and duteous wife.

MICHAL.

David, let's go ; at home we'll talk together ;
And thou shalt tell me nine times over, love,
How went the course of this misstated field,
That doth unscathed again thee to me yield.

SAUL.

Yes, tell her to the full, for women are
Most gluttonous in feeding on the tales
Their husbands tell them of their proper honor ;
But little thinking, that in the same hour,
How many wives deplore their spouses disgraced.
Go, such is war ; — but ye can moralize
When ye are old and crusty grown like me.

Exeunt DAVID and MICHAL.

If I can hinder by delays, he shall
Not render a thank-offering for his victory,
Nor for his safe return. If I can cause
A breach 'twixt him and heaven, 'twill serve as well
As if he were, like me, besieged by hell.
How now ?

Enter JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

David, I thought, was here.

SAUL.

He was ;

What wouldst thou with him ?

JONATHAN, *aside*.

Question strange ! [*Aloud.*] Why nothing.
Or if he were now here I, perhaps, might greet him.

SAUL.

He has returned victorious, as usual :
The rumour of his overthrow was false.
Hadst thou been true unto thyself and me
Thou hadst dipped into this new ray of sunshine,
And left awhile the sports of concubines
To play at least another game with men.

JONATHAN.

Have I refused ?

SAUL.

Refused ? thou shouldst forestall him.

But thou forgettest that thou art the heir
Unto a sceptre, that must be maintained
By those who wield it, or at length must drop
Out of their hands, to be ta'en up by him
Who is esteemed, both by himself and others,
(And proves it by his realm-protecting deeds,)
More able and more worthy to retain it.

JONATHAN.

I was not this expecting.

SAUL.

Ponder it.

Ponder upon it, my forgetful son ;
 Ponder't for thine afflicted father's sake ;
 Who must again keep watch and ward like th' meanest
 Soldier within the camp : by day and night,
 In heat and cold, in sunshine and in rain,
 Walk the tent-covered field ; and in his age,
 When he should sheltered sit and counsel only,
 Have both the planning and the execution
 (Along with Abner) of all enterprises,
 Or them resign to David, — to his heir,
 More fit than thou to fill the regal chair.
 Did I say enterprise ? Alas, alas,
 My sons possess it not, although I once
 Believed them ablest of the sons of Israel,
 To adorn and keep the house which I have built :
 But it must crumble, peradventure fall,
 And bury in its ruins you and Saul,
 Who hath his sweat and blood for nothing spilt,
 For others founded and for others built. —
 But David goes no more unto the war.

JONATHAN.

I do beseech your majesty, if you love
 Yourself, my mother, and my sister Michal,
 Dismiss this dread of David from your mind.

SAUL.

I would dismiss him to the land of mind.
 Knowest thou where that is ? I tell thee, boy,
 If he live thou diest. Dost thou wish to die ?
 Who knowest how sweet a life of glory is.
 Now hearken what I say, and let it call thee
 Back to thyself, like trumpet to the field.
 Thou, whilst he lives, shalt no more glory taste,
 For whilst he dazzles thou canst not be seen.
 He is between us and the people, and
 As a small matter held near to the eye,
 Hides the whole world besides, so David now
 Hides all the merit of the house of Saul.
 He shall be straight removed, I say he shall :
 I tell thee kill him. — I had done it myself
 But —

JONATHAN.

But why ?

SAUL.

Because I will not do it, yet
 It shall be done ; and very quickly too ;
 So do it thou and ease thy father's soul.

Think not upon it, but do it ; — art thou craven ?
 'Twere but one less on earth, one more in heaven.

Exit.

JONATHAN.

Oh, horrid counsel ! Most ungrateful Sire ! —
 But he is mad, — or the foul spirit hath
 So venom'd him by its repeated stinging
 That when 'tis absent it still in him works.
 How black my father must esteem my heart !
 A brother bid to assassinate a brother.
 No, though the victim were not my dear friend,
 Shall I become a bravo, though my fee
 Shall be a Father's bosom set at rest ?
 Rest ! how could he then rest, with mind so guilty ?
 Ten thousand fiends would from that hour torment him ;
 And David's spirit, like a whiterobed angel,
 Would make them ply their task upon his conscience
 Till, in some moment of despair and anguish,
 Down from these battlements he'd dash his body
 Unto the earth, and his soul to hell's perdition.
 Oh, my poor erring sire, why now shouldst thou
 Become thine own tormenter ? How hast thou rushed
 Into an early dotage, knowing not
 Good as from evil ! surely knowing not
 That which thou dost, or counsellest me to do ;
 In the possession of or death or dotage,
 Knowing not thy friends, in, as friend, not knowing David,
 Nay knowest not thine enemies at length,
 Not knowing thy spirit when he cometh near thee.
 How can the soul of man become transformed !
 How turn, self-changed, with black, ungrateful thoughts !
 His Son in law, his own child's husband,
 My Sister's spouse ! him whom she loves so dearly,
 And at whose frequent absences she chafes :
 Whom when at home, nigh to unseemliness,
 Binds with her arms, and clothes with her endearments !
 I will disclose this horrid scheme to David.

Exit.

SCENE III.

An Apartment in the Palace.

SAUL and certain RETAINERS of the Court.

SAUL.

If you know one whom you believe I love not,
 If he were near me lately, even in this palace,
 Although he might be somewhat to me akin ;

If there be such a one, deal with him as
 You list. You know no enemy should live ;
 And whom I point out to your understandings
 Should be no longer left to trouble me.
 If you know such a one, crush him as you
 Would crush a spider that you had observed
 Acreeping towards me as I ignorant slept :
 A spider that, although you were aware
 It could not harm me, notwithstanding, would
 Deserve the death for rash and filthy vermin.

A RETAINER.

Your majesty, each would lay down his life
 To purchase safety and repose for yours ;
 And him whom we deem detrimental to you
 We would destroy.

SAUL.

We understand each other.

Now go.

Exeunt.

Yes, go, ye hypocrites ; begone.
 I could perceive they mocked me, — they will to David :
 Well, let them go, and when they here return,
 If I discover in them aught amiss,
 I'll send their ghosts to shew the way to his.

Exit.

SCENE IV.

*An Apartment in the House of David.**Enter JONATHAN, DAVID, and MICHAL.*

JONATHAN.

Dear sister, for awhile retire, for I
 Have with me business to which no ear
 Save David's must be privy.

MICHAL.

Business

Should be transacted in its proper place.
 The mart's for traffic, and the council chamber
 Or royal closet for the state's great secrets.

JONATHAN.

Wise sister, leave us, for I must not tarry.

MICHAL.

I am most glad of that, be light your theme as
 Brief, for I count you here a trespasser.

Exit.

JONATHAN.

David, I've heavy news for thee.

DAVID.

What, is the evil spirit on the king ?

JONATHAN.

Nay worse, — unless this be of the evil spirit.

DAVID.

Has it pursued him to the precipice
And cast him therefrom ? Say, he is not dead ?

JONATHAN.

No, but he seeks thy life, and now not in
His blind, demented fury, as I fear,
But in a cool, absurd antipathy. —
Nay look not so incredulous, 'tis true,
But hide thyself forthwith until the morning,
When I will join my father, as he takes
His early airing, and will speak of thee
And tell thee afterwards what I have gathered.

DAVID.

I love thy father and would do him good.

JONATHAN.

He will not let thee ; hide thyself at once,
For his resolves are like unto sharp arrows
Already on the bowstring, and, whilst others aim,
His thoughts in deed are shot.

DAVID.

I know his promptness :

I know too, that, of late, he loathes or fears me,
Me, who am ever prompt to risk my life
That his may not be perilled

JONATHAN.

Say no more.

Thy words are sharper than our enemy's swords,
And I have few in my strange sire's behalf,
Like to a buckler to oppose unto them.
Go, since thou knowest his act pursues his word,
As thunder lightning ; yea, far surer, for
Oft the report does fail the flash, but never
His execution does his threatening.
Go not to take thy leave of Michal ; I
Will unto her excuse thee : go conceal
Thyself till morning, whilst I will return
Immediately, and watch my sire to save thee.

DAVID.

Jonathan, I go ;
But in an evil and a bitter mood.
How deep the sting goes of ingratitude !

Exit.

JONATHAN.

Would thou hadst spared ~~me~~ these last words, dear friend:
But Saul hath not spared thee : so go thy way,
Whilst I excuse thy going as I may.

Exit.

SCENE V.

An Apartment of the Palace. Enter MALZAH.

MALZAH.

Ah, weary ! I'm called the laughing devil. Fools !
Why I walk up and down existence weeping. —
But what when demons disbelieve their eyes,
And their false ears for jests take my bewailings.
Even Peyona does not know me truly,
Nor ever will ; — I do not know myself ;
I have so many moods, that I know not
Which of them shews the veritable Malzah.
But this I know, my merriment always borders
Upon the doleful region of the dumps.
Ah, me !
Now had I the gift of rythm and of ryhme,
Sighs should keep measure and dropped tears beat time.
Oh, for an eye of water, tongue of fire !
Go, go, go, go.
I cannot howl divinely, nor laugh uncouthly,
As some do in their agony, — I cannot whine,
But had I Scribolus here I would command him
To write his fill. I know he hath already
Much of me down, for, lately, I have caught him
Taking notes of me in my humours. Shall I permit this ?
A verier muff than Scribolus scarce could be ;
A poor, unfruitful, prying, windy scribe,
Who scratches down hell's witsome spirits, that he
May shew them to her vulgar, gaping crowds,
Extended on his tablets. Um, I'll think on't.
He steals myself when he does steal my sayings.
I say he is a thief to take my sayings,
And carry them about, impaled and helpless,
Looking like writhing worms in his crooked symbols.
A pox upon the caligraphic art ! —
I cannot write, for which I thank my Maker. —
I say a pox fall upon caligraphy ;
No honest spirit ever used it, save
Jehovah,
Who taught it Moses but that he might write
The world's engendering and the decalogue.

I wonder that the wary tyrant, Satan,
Forbids it not, for with those characters,
A world of mischief may be etched, and lie
Concoct within the compass of my palm ;
Fraud, faction, revolution, and dethronement,
Yea latent anarchy's entire arcana.
But most this vice affects myself, and some
Few like me, who, are, intellectually,
The Seigniors and ornaments of Tophet,
And bear great wrong, from our outpourings being
(And we must pour or die) caught and imbibed
By vile, drought-stricken, and irreverent blockheads,
Who suck us up like sponges, then distil us,
Each through a stylus, for the multitude.
Whip me these frozen frogs of hell, who are
Themselves a band of unrhetorical devils,
Yet go awooing on calm Acheronian nights,
(Made warm and waggish with our sparks of wit,)
And cause the silly seraphim to believe
Themselves to be at tryste with eloquent cherubs.
Out upon such imposters say I! And
Besides the fawning Scribolus who transcribes me,
There's that curl-crowned, and ignorant, dandy loon,
Bulldapper, who, (I do abhor that brute,)
When I am tapped, draws from me at t'other vein,
Down jotting me, unrecognized, and when I
(Being befuddled by the blabsome wine)
Do talk of love like a brisk bachelor.
I'd kill Bulldapper if he were a mortal ;
Or turn him to an ox to tread out corn,
Or make him draw a plough till he grew old,
Then give him to a butcher, on condition
That he should sell him to mine enemies,
That they might sicken and die of indigestion.
I hate him, yea I loathe him ; I could vomit,
Yea could perform a viler function on him ;
The dull, conceited, phrazeless, slantbrowed, black
Abomination, thing of crisped hairs,
That grow and flourish on his else barren pate,
Like blackberries thick on some plutonian moor.
I hate him from my heart's profoundest cell,
And wish that I could bury him in a pit
Thrice lower than the base of Acheron ;—
Yes, Scribolus too and all who would shew clerkship.
Beshrew the fools, to take my very expressions,
(As I veraciously am told they do,)

To filch my naked and most proper fancies,
 And with them (that is with myself) seek cozen,
 And woo to naughty ends our sweetest spinsters.
 I scorn the beasts by far too much to fear them ;
 And though, I know, Peyona has abused me,
 'Twas not by them (with wit of mine) accomplished.
 Ah me, this self-communing's horrible !
 I will from out of these thought's ashes rise,
 And go peep into a fair maiden's eyes.

Exit.

SCENE VI.

The grounds near the palace. Time, morning.

SAUL and JONATHAN walking together.

SAUL.

Wherefore art thou so silent ?

JONATHAN.

Heavy thoughts

Hang on my spirit like those murky clouds
 Hang on the horizon ; and, as the sun's rays
 Cannot now reach the vapor-covered ground,
 Cannot my sorrow reach in words your ears.

SAUL.

What meanest thou ?

JONATHAN.

I have a sister Michal.

SAUL.

Thou hast, and what of that ?

JONATHAN.

And she a husband.

SAUL.

I know it.

JONATHAN.

Whom you do wish assassinated.

SAUL.

Cover the conception with a fairer word,
 And bring not unto me, in bloody grave-clothes,
 The corse of David.

JONATHAN.

Deed as foul as that

Which, yesterday, was unto me suggested,
 Cannot be styled fair. Things are the same,
 However daintily the tongue approach them.
 Bitter is bitter though the lips be not
 Allowed to wry themselves thereat. Oh, father,
 Let us not do that which we dare not mention,

And for our future days beget a monster
Of which the embryo merely and foreshadow
Already horrifies us. Oh, my dear father,
Towards David change your mind, and let down drop
To hell the vile suggestion, whence it came.

SAUL.

Thou knowest not what thou sayest; peace.

JONATHAN.

There is no peace when the black storm is muttering.
You would o'erwhelm our house by this foul deed:
Would so affront the cloud and wind of heaven,
That its already lowering indignation,
Should burst and deluge you, your wife, and children;
And in its whirlwind quite o'erturn your throne.

SAUL.

Thinkest thou so?

JONATHAN.

Oh, think on his good deeds
Towards you and towards us all; think how his life
He jeopardised with the Giant,—lo, he slew him,
And none thereat did more rejoice than you.
He hath done you no ill since, but fought your foes,
While you have slept unperilled; and when here
Back from the violent field and harsh alarms,
How fondly flows the music of his harp
To heal or sooth your ailment. You have no child
Of your own blood who is more dutiful;
And if your people love him, you no less
They love, but, ever since he wed my sister,
His glory goes to augment the common stock
Of the young, royal house and dynasty,
Whereof yourself foundation are and root.
Why should you wish him slain then? Slay me and
But bring not on yourself and on our line, [Michal,
Their curse who shed a benefactor's blood.

SAUL.

Prythee no more, I have relented,
Though tenderness towards him, perhaps, is harshness
Towards thee and all our house: his life is safe.

JONATHAN.

And safer is our house, since this offence
Shall not rot its foundation.

SAUL.

Go thy way;

It was for this thou joinedst me.

Exit JONATHAN.

We are weakest
 When we are caught contending with our children !
 Nor tongue of wisest minister, nor his own
 Persuasive lips, that emulate the strings
 Of his own harp, himself in agony,
 With wet and upturned eyes, upon his knees,
 Pleading for life methinks could thus have turned me.

Exit.

SCENE VII.

Near the last. DAVID pacing to and fro.

Enter JONATHAN.

DAVID.

What tidings dost thou bring me ?

JONATHAN.

Thou art safe.

DAVID.

God, then, hath heard my prayer.

JONATHAN.

My father mine.

DAVID.

Oh, Jonathan, Michal is spared more sorrow,
 More horror than my simple death could give her,
 (Though that were much,) not knowing (and may she
 Know) that her sire sought to make her a widow. [never

JONATHAN.

Come with me at once, I'll take thee to my father.

Exeunt.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE I.

*Gibeah. The Courtyard of the Palace.**Enter TWO OFFICERS of the Royal household.*

1st OFFICER.

'Tis said that the Philistines,
 Those restless dwellers near the salty main,
 Again are pushing inland. As the rain
 From their own bounding ocean sweeps our plains,
 So do their light troops recommence to shower
 Over our border.

2nd OFFICER.

David is departed,
 To drive them back as quickly as they came.
 David is to them as a mountain which
 The clouds must clear ere they can feed old Jordan.
 They break themselves against him, whilst he stands
 Unbroken, and hurls their remnant home like scattered
 Vapors, that, at a change of wind, return
 To fall in drops again into the sea.

1st OFFICER.

They are a dangerous race, and sleep in armour.
 One hand for lucre is, and for the sword
 The other, —

Enter a COURIER, crossing the courtyard in haste.

What news? Pray tell us in a breath.

COURIER.

David again hath overthrown the enemy.

2nd OFFICER.

So soon?

1st OFFICER.

We dreamed not he had met them yet.

COURIER.

He fell upon them, and, through their own blood,
 Drove them half drowned in slaughter : — stay me not ;
 This news is for the hearing of the king ;
 And afterwards the town may with it ring.

Exit COURIER.

2nd OFFICER.

Oh David, valiant captain, wise and young !

1st OFFICER.

The king is swift, but David is yet swifter.

2nd OFFICER.

He rises suddenly as doth the whirlwind,
And leaves us wondering at his prompt achievement,
Even as at the smoking ruin, which
The lightning made before our eyes. This shews
So gladsome, let us go and spread the news.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.

The Palace. A room commanding a view of the streets; SAUL, pacing to and fro; and an ATTENDANT standing near a window.

SAUL.

What noise is that?

ATTENDANT.

It is a gathering crowd's
Shouting at the approach of David, who
Again victorious comes. They throw their turbans
Into the air until 'tis filled with them.
The streets are filling with the people, who
Thereinto flow like sea waves into dykes,
Whose sluices are drawn up, that soon they'll be
No more paved streets, but one huge head-paved sea.

SAUL.

Now get thee gone, I shall no longer need thee.

Exit ATTENDANT.

I swear again that he shall die! Why did
I spare him when before I had so sworn:
Why have I sworn his life should be held sacred
To please that fool, his fond dupe, Jonathan?
I'll break all oaths
If they shall stand between me and my will.
Let Jonathan beware, or he may suffer
By standing betwixt David and my fury.

Exit, and enter MALZAH from the opposite side.

MALZAH.

Who art thou, wretch, who went away denouncing
Evil to others as I to thee was coming,
A moving evil? I'll after him, for I
Am bidden to enter him now, and I must do so.

Exit.

SCENE III.

Another room in the Palace. Enter the QUEEN and DAVID in armour.

QUEEN.

Oh, thou art welcomer than the tidings were
Which told us of thy victory! Thou hast wings
Surely, and hastened to our nest, as though
Thou knewest the king would need thee. To him straight-
For he is tending towards his old distemper, [way.
And in the airy turret, like an eagle,
Now sits alone black brooding.

DAVID.

I will to him;
With unwashed hands, and with unrested body
Woo from my harp rest to his laboring soul.

Exit.

QUEEN.

Go, Israel's angel,— I will go and pray
That thou, our sun, may drive his cloud away.

Exit.

SCENE IV.

A small apartment in a tower of the palace. SAUL, seated moodily, and with a javelin in his hand. Enter DAVID with his harp.

SAUL.

He's coming to his doom. [DAVID plays.
I'll pin him to the wall!

SAUL throws the javelin and DAVID escapes.

He hath escaped me again, 'tis witchcraft saves him;
But I will hound him out where'er he be.

Exit.

Re-enter, along with SOLDIERS.

Go, and possess the avenues to his house;
Watch for him, and slay him in the morning
As he thence issues.

Exeunt the SOLDIERS.

Fiend, thou mayest go help them.
If they shall do it my hand will be less foul:
Though little 'twould smirch my conscience; — love must
Make all secure at home, then go abroad [first
And seek out things to cherish. Mine own Michal
How know I but that she's a secret traitor?
Is not her brother Jonathan my foe,
And a besotted fool? This Beth-lehemite's
Bewitched them both, and Jonathan plays round

About the mouth of a most beauteous serpent.
A crocodile, that will, if I not hinder it,
One day devour him up.

Exit.

SCENE V.

A Room in David's house. Time, Night. A lamp burning.

MICHAL, *discovered seated.*

Cease, ye vile wars, ye perillers of his life.
Cease, ye vile foes, or David cease to quell you.
War, war, for ever war! Is marriage always
To be vouchsafed unto me as 'tis now,
By fits and by instalments? Oh, to pay
'Twould take a life down counting night and day,
Cease, then, ye oft defrauders of my bed:
Out of my sky, ye war-clouds, roll away,
That into night again have turned my day.
What is now David doing? He sleeps not:
Thinks he on me? What reveries are his,
At this quiet season of the marriage kiss?
Ye purple-robed and rich inhabitants,
Who populous make the margent of the sea,
Peace, and restore my husband unto me.

Enter DAVID.

My prayer i'th instant answered? It is he:—
Oh, David, do I clasp thee once again?
Let me look on thee: 'tis an apparition:—
Oh, 'tis the apparition that I love!
Yes I now hold thee: art thou here unscathed?

DAVID.

The Lord in my last peril hath stood by me.

MICHAL.

Oh season of disquiet turned to joy!
This hour for days requites me. Sit, love, sit.
They tell me that I am too fond of thee.
Perhaps I am;—and yet not fond enough.
Oh, thou art dear unto me, yet wert not
Dear, wert thou purchased with tenfold this fondness!
But let them talk, who know not what they say,
For what care I for prudes who never knew
Illapse into the lunacy of love.—
Oh, but you look most soberly to night.
Go, get these soiled accoutrements from off thee,
Love will not dally in such horrid gear.
Go, you are not yet in the vein for toying:
I will come after and assist you doff:

I will unbind thy sandals for thee, vowing
 That were it not for their dear wearer's sake,
 I'd burn them that had borne him away from me.
 Give me thy helmet, — I would burn it too,
 But for the head 't has shielded. Fie on war,
 It is the foulest pastime that you men
 Delight in. — Ah, how easily I take
 Thy casque from where it sits so seemlily :
 I do remember when I had to climb
 Ere I could take my father's from his brow.
 Let me dispose these war-disordered locks : —
 Nay do not think my lips will challenge yours,
 For 'twere a pity to disturb their silence.
 Oh, but you'll talk when I have done, I know.
 Ascend before me, I will follow ; go.

Exit DAVID.

My heart is full, and I must empty it
 Out at my eyes, for my fond, babbling mouth,
 Like gurgling wine-cask's vent, makes much ado,
 But slowly voids the contents. There, there, there ;
 I shall seem ugly to him. I do not wish
 To strain out all this frame. Oh, luxury
 Of tears when shed for joy ! Joy, joy, again,
 My eagles in his nest, nor shall he leave it,
 Till downiest embraces have repaid him
 For half the iron rigors of the war.
 Surely he is o'erspent by this last swoop.
 I wonder he so meekly did obey me,
 When I did bid him to ascend without me.
 I've seen the hour when he'd have pushed me foremost,
 Or led me thither, and have snatched a kiss
 On every stair. I'll seek him in his æry.

Enter a female SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Oh, my dear Princess !

MICHAL.

Well, what now ?

SERVANT.

The king,

Your father has beset the house with soldiers,
 So that when out my master goes at morn,
 They may at once arrest him.

MICHAL.

'Tis the old madding :

Get thee to bed.

SERVANT.

Pray let me watch with you :
They say the king projects my master's death.

MICHAL.

No, get to bed.

Exit SERVANT.

Now what new demon's this ?

Surely the spirit of ingratitude,
Come from the thawless region of the north.
What shall I do in this dilemma ? I know
'Tis dangerous to trifle with my father.
Oh, it is foul, 'tis foul of him, 'tis foul !—
And in this wild, desiring hour too ;
Even in the white robe of my exultation,
To come and crape me over with black weeds :
Make me a widow in reality,
Which, for his sake, I've half been since my nuptials,
David shall stay here, my father dares not touch him :—
And yet I know not what he dares not do.
Oh, the old lunatic ! Oh, David, David,
I fear, I fear that thou, my own sweet singer,
My bird just to my bosom, must this night
Break from the cage and compass of my arms.
I'll straightway go and warn him. Oh, to be
The bearer of such tidings unto thee.

Exit.

SCENE VI.

*An Upper Room.*DAVID, *standing therein.*

What have I done that he doth hate me, for
It was himself and not the demon.

MICHAL, *(entering).*

Thou knewest of all this — thou'rt still unbuckled.
Ah David, David, I am come to thee
Not with joy wanton, for a courier's met me,
And, with his odious, unexpected news,
Even in the air and fragrance of the feast,
Stolen my appetite.

DAVID.

Tell what has happened.

MICHAL.

Nay, nay, I cannot think but that thou knowest it.
'Tis but a little : save thyself to-night,
Or else to-morrow it may be too late.
My father's ta'en a fancy to thy death,

And round the house has posted guards to take thee
When thou goest out i'th morning. I see thou knewest,
Well, get thee gone.

DAVID.

I am prepared for this.

Oh, Michal, I do fear that now no spirit,
Except his own, doth animate thy father.
I will not chide him, but thyself art witness
Whether I have ever breathed against him wrong.
He seeks my life for nought, except, indeed,
I do offend him by exposing it
So much for him and his. Weep not till I
Am gone; when there'll be leisure for it: we
Will manage this alone, and quietly,
So shall thy parent have less scandal thrown
Upon his name. Remember me to Jonathan.
Tell him I love him more, the more his father
Hates me; and that I do love thee, his sister,
And my own proud and yet obedient wife,
Needs no asseveration now by me,
Who have received from thee proofs sweet and many
Of loving duty; add thou, then, another,
By lowering me from this balcony,
That in the darkness I may 'scape in safety.

MICHAL.

David,
Thy words to me have lifted up a veil,
And I behold my father's countenance
Looking so horribly deformed that I
Fear even to contemplate it. Oh, frail king! —
The unnatural man! — But he is weak of mind,
Has fallen to utter feebleness in judgment,
Though strong and terrible yet in his passions.
Forgive me if I would a little excuse him.
Alas, the demon has transformed him quite.
Pity him, oh, pity him, David, that his soul
Should have, with frequent, foul cohabitation,
Become so like its bad companion.

DAVID.

I pity and forgive him, but 'tis hard,
'Tis hard to leave thee to the fury of
His disappointed malice, which, to-morrow,
Will break against thee in a storm of anger:
But let us kiss and take our sudden farewell.
There, now no more endearments, fare thee well,
The worst seems passed; thy kiss thy love-pledge be,

And mine the sign thy sire's forgiven by me.
Now, let me down I pray thee.

MICHAL.

Tarry yet.

DAVID.

I will, if thou require it.

MICHAL.

Oh, no, go.

Thou art not safe a moment in this house,
For if my father should bethink him, he
Would come at once himself and seize upon thee.

DAVID.

Then help me from such sore contingency.

They advance to the balcony.

The heaven's seem one archangel ! or the countless
Stars seem to me as many cherub's eyes
That watch, love, for my safety. God is yonder,
Although I see him not, and looking down
Benignly, and where'er I go, be it
By night or day, in Canaan or beyond it,
He will watch o'er and keep me.

MICHAL lowers him from the balcony.

MICHAL.

He is gone ;

Almost before I knew he was arrived :
He's snatched hence like a beam that played to mock me.
Oh, now come night indeed, and let hoarse thunder
Bellow and drown my cries. Ye lightnings shoot ;
Let, through the black waste of the frosty air,
Your flashes reach and blind my wicked father !
No tears ; — I will not weep ; but I will howl,
Aye howl my fill, for vengeance and for David.
Covered with martial glory ; — oh, let hell's
Smoke blacken it rather than it gild my sire ?
Ere on my lips had died the congratulations ;
While the hot kisses that he meeting gave me
Thereon yet live in feeling ; — can it be ?
I have been dreaming for this half hour, surely,
And am not yet awake : David, ho, David, —
Oh let me now be stifled, or I shall
Awake the slumbering echoes of the night,
Till David's name shall ring amidst Gibeah,
And he return to ask me why is this.
So little time ! so much to have been done !
But now he went to meet the enemy,
But now he did pursue the flying foe,

Now he's pursued himself: Oh, these but nows!
 He's homeless now; his home hath cast him out.
 Ingratitude! Nay, nay,
 The wolves methinks drive not thus forth their cubs.
 Oh, I could rend my insane father's form,
 And let him see I too can play the fury.
 Is he the King? Then am I not his daughter?
 Is not my husband I? Oh horrible
 Despatch! — no more, no more of that; I'm raving;
 I, too, have rising in me a foul spirit:
 Silence, poor Michal, know thy proud reunion,
 Thy sunrise of new nuptials is night;
 Thy marriage black divorce. Saul, father, but
 I will not curse thee, — no, but I will chide him,
 And rate him, at my pleasure with my tears.
 Has he forgotten his partings with my mother,
 And how he kissed me and my sister Merab,
 Erst ere he went to battle? He has forgotten
 All that; forgotten his wife and children; all:
 He has forgotten who charmed him from the demon.

After weeping in silence.

I will deceive this madman parent now.
 I shall be justified, I will deceive him,
 And any whom he may hereto despatch;
 For in the stead of him whom I had thought
 That I this night should shelter in my arms,
 Yet who may now lurk shelterless and cold,
 I'll place a senseless image in the bed,
 And when my father's messengers ask for him,
 I'll say that he is sick, and say the truth,
 For he is sick, and sick they'll see am I.
 I'll do it, and so gain time for my husband.

Exit.

SCENE VII.

A Room in the Palace. Time, Morning.

SAUL.

'Tis now past daybreak, and he rises early.
 Has he escaped them too? or does his fond
 Wife Michal hold him thrall'd, to take her fill
 Of his fair body after her brief fasting?
 Poor child, she soon will have more fasting, for
 I will not break my fast till it be done.

Enter the OFFICER and SOLDIERS.

How now? Where is he? Have you left him dead?

OFFICER.

Your majesty, he is sick, so Michal says,
And keeps his bed.

SAUL.

Back with you instantly ;
And bring him to me in his bed, that I
May do unto him what you should have done.—
You have not seen him, have you ?

OFFICER.

Your majesty, no.

SAUL.

So thought I ; go, 'tis a convenient sickness.
But he shall be much sicker. Away with you.

Exeunt OFFICER and SOLDIERS.

Away white thoughts, how can I let him live ?
See how the sun comes up in fulgent red,
And shews what is my course's proper hue.
Now if they bring him not I'll slay them also.

Enter a SERVANT.

Is the Queen stirring ?

SERVANT.

She is, your majesty.

SAUL.

Tell her that I am better, and bid her keep
Her chamber.

Exit SERVANT.

'Tis not meet that she should witness
His death, for she would raise such stout resistance
That I might kill her too ; and then, why then
I should destroy myself, and all for nothing,
Except my own damnation, then I'd done
At least one murder, — for I do not count
The killing of mine enemy a murder, —
But, oh, to kill her were to kill ten friends.
Shall I wait here and let him, perhaps escape me ?
No, to the fiends go all compunction ; now
I go to seize him in his den, and send
His soul whereunto souls departed wend.

SCENE VIII.

*A corridor and staircase in David's house.**MICHAL, the OFFICER, and SOLDIERS near the door of David's bedchamber:*

MICHAL.

But that you stand as proxies of my Father,
I with these woman's hands would hurl you down.
For shame, like brutal ruffians, to attempt
To violate the chamber of the sick. —

Nay, if you will, you enter over me.

OFFICER.

Lady, refrain because, as you have said,
We represent the king, and dare not to him
Return again unless we have your husband.

MICHAL.

Then take him, if you find him.

The OFFICER and SOLDIERS enter the bedchamber.

1st SOLDIER, (*within.*)

Here is no David but only an image abed !
And far less fair than he too. He is gone.

2nd SOLDIER.

Now there will be the king's best rage to do,
And help him will his devil.

3rd SOLDIER.

Oh, these women,

They are the very devil in cunning ! See you,
How she has helped a lame dog o'er a stile.
A bolster of goat's hair, and a cloth o'er all,
We must not tell the king that he's escaped :
He'll javelin us.

Re-enter the OFFICER and SOLDIERS.

OFFICER.

Good Princess, tell us sooth ;

Where is your husband ? for the king will have him.

MICHAL.

Good ! Should I now be good were I to tell you ?
Let the king come himself to question me ;
I'll answer you no farther.

A noise heard below.

2nd SOLDIER.

He is here.

OFFICER.

Now pray, your Highness, do not mock your father,
For he is in a very fatal humour.

Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

How now, unduteous, let me see thy husband.
They tell me he is sick, and I've a cure for him.

MICHAL.

Ah, little care you for him, sick or cured ;
Him who has cured you erenow in your sickness.
He is not here.

SAUL.

Minion, what hast thou done ?

MICHAL.

My duty unto him who claims it foremost.

SAUL.

That is myself ; that is thy Father, Michal ;
That is thy Sovereign : tell me where he is.

MICHAL.

I know not where he is ; I know not you,
I know no Father, and I know no Sovereign,
Who would compel me not to know my husband ;
For to reveal him now were to forget him :
But go, O man, and let me see no more
Those horrid looks. I know not where he is,
For you have driven him from me, and may he
Never return to do you further service,
Ungrateful man ! — Nay I can bear your frown,
For I've beheld this moment on your face
My husband's murder ; — ah, I know your heart ;
I know what your intent was, but he's gone,
So do your worst on me, for I am bold
As you this hour are barbarous.

SAUL.

Spoiled child,

Be not too bold, nor trust the straining tie
Of consanguinity. I find thou art naughty
As he. — Now take in sail in time, sweet craft ;
You are two vessels pressed on by one storm,
And if he has slipped his cable and is scudding
Before the wind, dream thou not tempt the sea,
For I, his storm, at anchor will retain thee,
And may too blow upon thee to thy hurt,
Yea, for aught I know, sink thee. Whither hath
He fled to ?

MICHAL.

No where. He would scorn to flee ;
He went away at his leisure.

SAUL.

Miscreant ; no daughter.

*Attempts to seize her.*OFFICER, *rushing between them and holding* SAUL.

Your majesty, be calmed : — oh, now between you
I, a poor soldier, stand, and in this breach,
Here in this royal and unnatural quarrel,
Perhaps may fall, and let me fall, but oh
Your majesty, lead not thus to the assault
On that fair citadel your august self,
Nor us command who would now follow you,

Against our enemies, on any hope
Howe'er forlorn.

SAUL.

She is mine enemy !

OFFICER.

Oh no ; but now be calm : remember that
Whilst you two wrangle David is escaping :
Oh, King, be calmed ; I dare not liberate you,
Although I feel this is a mockery,
That in your grasp myself would be a sparrow
Within the clutching talon of an eagle :
Forgive me, oh, forgive this sacrilege,
In having laid hands on the Lord's Anointed !
But 'tis to hinder you from a profaning
Of that fair wing of your own hallowed temple,
I but restrain you from yourself : — see how
She weeps ; oh, there is much excuse for her,
All creatures rude are when they are bereaved :
She is your daughter, and this hardy spirit
Of her's, is but a fragment from the rock
Of your own stedfast soul, that hath withstood
Foes from the desert and from th' salty flood.

SAUL.

Unhand me now, I'm calmed.
These women are the marplots of our lives,
For when we will they will not. Are all wives
Of the like kidney ?

OFFICER.

Your Majesty knows, and others
Know, that her mother is gentle as a dove ;
And that herself is playful as a lamb
When sunshine's on her pasture. If she bleats now
Why 'tis her nature, and the gift of women,
Whose tongues, amidst the sweet strain of their music,
Will sound sometimes a flat or a harsh discord.

SAUL.

Tell me, thou false one, whither has fled thy husband.

MICHAEL.

He did not tell me where he meant to go to.
I cannot tell, and if I could I would not ;
So there are double bars upon my lips,
And should you kill me and take out my heart,
That you might look into its closet, you'll
Not find him in it, though he will be there.

SAUL.

Now by the furnace of my anger's fires,

To which thou addest fuel, speak not thus,
 For fear I take thy life instead of his ;
 Yea, having, impious, tasted of such blood,
 I then, from very piety, pursue him,
 And, having overta'en him, take his life
 As an atonement for thy illtimed death.
 Whither hath thy husband fled to ? tell me.

MICHAL.

Would you
 Have me to drag my husband forth to slaughter ?

SAUL.

Tell me, or yet I'll offer thee to my vengeance,
 That when he comes to find thee it shall be
 With him as it is now with me, he'll find
 The one he seeks for missing.

MICHAL.

Thus he said,
 When I would have restrained him, (thus you place me
 Between two meeting perils of fire and water,)
 He said unto me fiercely "let me go,
 For wherefore should I kill thee."

SAUL.

This is falsehood :
 For thou wouldst harness for him the untamed winds,
 And yoke them to the chariot of the night,
 For his escape, so much thou dost affect him.
 Avaunt ! I'll watch, and if thou succour him,
 I will not say to thee what I will do,
 But my frame shudders at the unuttered deed.
 Come on, he shall be hunted.

Exeunt SAUL, OFFICER and SOLDIERS.

MICHAL.

Oh, hard to bear ! A husband's mortal hazard ;
 A father darkly threatening me with murder,
 For what else could he hint at ? Oh, too much
 To have to bear this sudden load of suffering !
 Yet not enough to bear for thee, my David ;
 My David laden by my ingrate father.
 Oh, David, loved more by me than's my father :
 Oh, altered father ; Oh, now lawless man !
 Yes, yes, let Saul return, let Saul return,
 And rage against me like the storm 'gainst Carmel,
 Yea, seize me by the hair and drag me to his feet,—
 As the grim tempest might the battlements

Of his own palace, and dash them in the dust,—
I would not tell him of one rood (did I know it)
Of the way, David, that thou lately wentest.

Exit.

END OF ACT SECOND.

A C T I I I .

SCENE I.

Gibeah. A Room in the Palace.

SAUL and a COURTIER.

SAUL.

Why lingerest thou, if business be done,
 Why should I bid thee go? I have no taste
 Now left for gossip when affairs are ended.
 What hast thou on thy tongue, that thus thou standest
 With parted lips yet silent?

COURTIER.

Your majesty,

David now dwells with Samuel in Naioth.

SAUL.

Ah, he crops out at last! Go thou, and take
 Soldiers along with thee and bring him hither;
 If thou shalt render him to me, live or dead,
 I'll put live honors blooming on thy head.

Exit COURTIER.

I'll follow him unto the utmost corners
 O'th earth, but I will have him in my power;
 And when that is he troubles me no more.
 I know this parasite will hold him hard,
 For what will not men do for a reward.

Exit.

SCENE II.

*The borders of a grove at Naioth. Samuel and a company of young
 prophets chaunting.*

Enter the COURTIER and SOLDIERS with MALZAH in the midst of them.

MALZAH.

I'm now become the veriest drudge,
 From Gibeah to Naioth made to trudge:
 And all to be a pitchpipe to these fellows.
 Nay it is now a curse to have a voice.
 Halloo! you fagend and subservient crew,
 Who will to aught your voices screw.
 Oh, to be leader unto such a choir!
 Surely I am placed here in this bad centre
 Because in bliss I have been a precenter.
 Oh, but 'twas bliss to sing there Malzah knows

But what must be must be, and so here goes.

Air by MALZAH, the COURTIER, and SOLDIERS.

In this retreat doth Levi dwell,
And welcomes him who came distressed ;
Amidst these sacred scenes awhile
The fugitive doth safely rest.
Here we would rest and praise the Lord,
At ordered hour with sweet concord.
The Lord, eternal great, and feared,—
Of all those boys not one's a beard.

MALZAH.

I've changed their strain, compelled by very spite, —
Should Tyrannie come I'll take to flight.

SAMUEL.

Who and what are you ~~that~~, conspiring, come
To these sequestered and religious shades,
Intent to mock our rites ?

MALZAH.

He speaks at me.

I mock thee not, thou hoar and reverend being,
Who, in the majesty of virtue, standest,
Here in this still recess and wooded vale,
Serenely girt by thy young ministering band,
Even as the midnight moon when it full-orbed
Hangs in the heaven's blue hall, what time the night,
Along with it and some selectest stars,
Holds court unseen by the dull, slumbering world.
How he regards the point where I am standing !
I quail, although he sees me not, and feel
Myself not far from some vicegerent spirit,
Who may chastise me more than my demerit.—

The COURTIER and SOLDIERS drop one after another.

Lo, how these fellows to the ground are sinking !
I'd best decamp, for I have sinned I'm thinking.
At any rate 'tis dangerous to be
Found any longer in such company.

Exit.

SAMUEL.

There let them lie, the Lord hath visited them ;
They are from Saul, and for his sake thus wrought on.

Exeunt SAMUEL and the PROPHETS.

SCENE III.

*Gibeah. A Room in the Palace.**Enter SAUL and the COURTIER.*

SAUL.

You fell to prophecying? then take others.

COURTIER.

Your majesty, we lay upon the ground,
A long hour senseless.

SAUL.

Take ten chosen men,
Or twenty if thou wilt, that fear no mortal;
(For there are such;) choose such as do respect
Neither God nor Prophets, twenty take of such,
And haste thee bring hither David.*Exit COURTIER.*

I will send —

If these should fall too like the former — still
Unto that treason-hatching den of Naioth,
Till all my army lie entranced around
Its circling woods, as rank as soon the leaves
Will lie around them spread by biting gales.*Exit.**MALZAH, entering and crossing the room.*Off to the prophets again away,
For so I heard King Saul now say.
Twenty he thinks necessary are,
Tolderol, the more the merrier.

SCENE IV.

*The same. Time, the day following.**Enter SAUL and the COURTIER.*

SAUL.

Thou sayest that these latter also prophesied,
And sank even as the others to the ground,
After a sudden rhapsody?

COURTIER.

I do, oh King:

Though with them and affected like unto them,
I saw them with these eyes, and with these ears
Heard their hard breathings and their broken mutterings.
Except these heavy and uneasy signs,
A day and night we lay there as if dead,
Cold in the fervour of the noontide sun,
And 'neath the pinching of the freezing moon
No colder, but a frost like that of death

Suffering while we yet lived — for sure we lived.

SAUL.

Did you not wish to die then? — but you live,
And there is something, yet, 'ith, world to fight for.
Go back and lead on fifty; pick thy men
Of various spirit that there may not be
Any sympathy between their fears or wills,
Whereby they feel as one though they are many.
Now haste, swift with thy mongrel band away,
And better luck than on the former lay.

Exit COURTIER.

MALZAH, *entering and crossing the room, invisible to SAUL.*

Oh, oh, oh, oh, away go fifty;
He had better of his men be a little more thrifty.

SAUL.

This is the very workmanship of fear.
They carry thither a bugbear in their souls,
And fall, at length, before it. — And yet how know I
But that some evil spirit may be busy
With them as yet with me. I'll strive to sleep; —
Strive did I say? There was a time, now past,
When sleep approached me with her soundless feet,
And took me by surprise. I called her not
And yet she came, and now I even woo her,
And court her by the cunning use of drugs,
And yet she will not towards me turn her steps;
Not even to approach and, looking down,
Drop on my temples one oblivious tear.
I who am called a king, whose word is law,
I lie awake and toss while the poor slave,
Whom I have taken prisoner in my wars,
Sleeps soundly; and he who hath sold himself to service,
Although his cabin rock beneath the gale,
Hears not the uproar of the night, but, smiling,
Dreams of the year of jubilee. I would that I
Could sleep at night, for then I should not hear
Poor Ahinoam fitful sighing near.

Exit.

SCENE V.

The same.

MALZAH, *entering and crossing the room.*
Now here's the king in a pretty rage,
And something rich I do presage.

SAUL, *entering.*

These last to have succumbed! Three several bands!

What can be in the world, that the tough sinews
Of stubborn men should slacken, till their owners
Sink to the earth, and grovelling lie thereon,
Like trees that, rotten at the core, have fallen,
Even in the prime and stiffness of their years,
And slander the whole forest? Why stay I here?
I'll face this mystic influence myself,
And dare it to o'erthrow me.

Exit.

SCENE VI.

The Border of the grove at Nainoth.

SAMUEL and the Sons of the Prophets.

Enter SAUL, followed by some Attendants.

SAUL.

Vile man, again see Saul amongst the prophets!
Am I like others come to be demented?
Come hither Samuel. Now by my sword,
Which I throw from me, and which thou mayest take
Up, and on me, on Saul play Agag with it,
What wouldst thou do? Down thou too, shield. Aye,
I down dash thee. Off, helmet, off! Aye crack [bellow,
And roll away and take the king's head in thee.
Now in the air I stand uncovered, doffed
Before thee and thy disappointed Levites! —
What am I not yet naked? yet more skins?
Off, off, ye comfortable robes, off, off.
Why should I lie 'neath you and have your shelter,
When all the flowers o'th forest can lie bare?
Rust there, my armour, ye my garments, rot,
For Saul himself is, yet himself is not.

Sinks on the ground senseless.

SAMUEL.

Now take him up, and watch him till he awake;
He suffers this for his rebellion's sake.

*Exeunt, the Attendants carrying SAUL, and the Prophets softly chanting
a solemn strain.*

SCENE VII.

Gibeah. An apartment in the house of JONATHAN. Time, Dusk.

Enter JONATHAN and DAVID.

DAVID.

What have I done, what fault have I committed,
Wherein have I offended 'gainst thy father
That he doth thus persist against my life?

JONATHAN.

No, not in jeopardy surely is thy life.
 I know my father will do nothing, David,
 Whether great or small, without my knowledge ; hence
 I know he would reveal to me this purpose,
 If he did entertain it.

DAVID.

Jonathan,

As I now swear to thee that it is true,
 So hath thy father sworn to take my life,
 But is aware that I have thy goodwill ;
 So hath not told thee, knowing how 'twould grieve thee :
 Yet certainly as the Almighty liveth,
 And as thyself art living stand before me,
 There only is a step 'twixt me and death.

JONATHAN.

Oh, David, thine's a hard, unhappy case,
 Exposed unto the jealousy of a madman,
 Who, twixt the demon and the changing moon,
 Veers like a creaking vane from side to side ;
 And yet, although he thrice hath sought thy life,
 I deem not that 'tis now imperilled, yet
 Tell me how I can help thee, for whatever
 Thou wishest me to do for thee I will,

DAVID.

Then hear me, and perform for me this favor.
 To-morrow 'tis new moon, and I should eat
 At table with the king ; but let me go,
 And in the environs conceal myself,
 Until the third day's evening. If his majesty
 Miss me, then to him say, " David, most earnestly,
 Sought leave of me to hie to Bethlehem,
 Where now is due an annual sacrifice
 For all his family." Now, if he shall say,
 "'Tis well," then am I safe ; but if he's angry,
 Then mayest thou be sure he means me evil.
 But, Jonathan, act thou with candour towards me,
 For sake of that high compact which we made
 At Ephraim ; still, if I deserve it,
 Slay me thyself, but give me not to thy father.

JONATHAN.

Ah, thought unkind ! And am I then so black ?
 Dost thou then think that I could prove so faithless ?
 No, far from me be that ! — Oh, David, David,
 Was I not first to warn thee heretofore ?
 And if I knew for certain that my father

Now meant thee malice should I hide it from thee?

DAVID.

Forgive me, Jonathan, what I have uttered
In the forgetfulness of my spirit's sorrow : —
But who shall tell me if it be not so?

And what if Saul shall yield thee a rough answer?

JONATHAN.

Come let us go abroad, and in the twilight's
Cool, tranquil, unsophisticated air
Fully discuss this matter.

Exeunt.

SCENE VIII.

The Armoury in the Palace. Time, immediately succeeding that of the last scene.

Enter SAUL in haste, followed by MALZAH.

MALZAH.

Here's a dead calm and blank now in our being;
We must have fun together : sing for me
The song of Moses or of Deborah,
Or fetch me hither David, who shall sing:
He is a Bard now, and shall be a King.
Ah, didst thou start then? Nay 'tis true,
He shall be King of Kingcups! say, wilt sing?
Or wilt thou fetch for me the Kingcup's King?

SAUL.

Thou mocking, coarse, and rank, ethereal fool!

MALZAH.

Prythee abate thy dudgeon, bird, and sing,
Give voice now, or I'll rack thee to a pitch,
And screw thy nerves and tendons to a height
Beyond all human gamut save thine own;
Then fret and play upon thee till thou sweatest,
And screamest abominabler than the peacock doth,
And uglier growest before my cruel eyes,
Than is the grey rat or the pimpled toad.
Sing now or I will enter thee perforce,
And squeal, myself, not only through thy mouth,
But also through thy nostrils eyes and ears;
Yes rant and bellow out at every pore.

SAUL.

Now desperation aid me! Monster, hence!
Or for that thin and incorporeal form,
Take that of man, and so, grown vulnerable,
Forth challenge me to the wood, or in this paved,
Resounding hall, come on with arms and armour,

And he who fails shall be the other's slave.
Wilt answer me, thou truculent, smirking fiend ?

MALZAH, *going*.

Ho, ho, ho, ho ; was ever such a Saul !

SAUL.

Stay, stay I bid thee, let this commerce end.
Tarry, bad Apparition ; linger. No,
It will not be entreated, but, departing,
Even whilst I cry to it, at the gate out glimmers,
Like to a star that fades away at day light. —
Ah, it yet looms, — 'tis gone.
How long shall this strange creature persecute me ?
Haply I am a sinner in some other mode
Than I have yet suspected ; — here again !

Enter MALZAH.

Where didst thou borrow, fool, that roguish smile ?
Thou'rt but a poor, permitted, foul Tormenter. —
Begone, Infernal Shadow, to Gehenna,
Or take thy winging way into the desert,
Or sink into the centre of the earth,
If thou have any right to inhabit longer
A world that's walked by man.

Exit MALZAH.

'Tis gone again,

And why should I to court it longer linger.

Exit.

SCENE IX.

The apartment in the house of Jonathan. Time, immediately succeeding that of the last scene.

JONATHAN.

Come in, for the chill zephyrs fan me sadder.
Come in : and do not doubt my faithfulness,
Although I am thine enemy's son. Be cheered,
For thou in turn must now cheer me. David,
I could now prophecy, but let me not
Anticipate a melancholy doom. —
Did Jonathan to thee e'er break his word ?
Listen. When I, to-morrow, or any time
Twixt then and the third day, shall have my father
Sounded concerning thee, and if I find
He means towards thee no ill, and not inform thee,
May God in kind requite me, but if I find
That he yet bears thee malice, then will I
Reveal it to thee, and will have thee sent
Away from us in safety, and the Lord

Be with thee as he once was with my father.
 Answer not yet, but now let me bemoan me,
 Grant me the privilege of sorrow, for I
 Feel that the fortune of our house is cast,
 And that I never shall be king in Israel :
 And as I know not whether I again
 May see thee, but in this dim instant see
 Distinct the vision of thy future greatness,
 Not during my days only shalt thou shew
 Forbearance, and my life consider sacred,
 But thy regard shall cease not towards my family
 When I am buried in the sepulchre,
 And when in Israel thou hast no foe
 Unconquered, uncut off. Swear that unto me.

DAVID.

I swear it, Jonathan. But why ?

JONATHAN.

Oh, ask not.

Dread hath this moment hold upon me, David,
 And horror rounds me like a dismal night,
 Till I am even timorous as a child :
 Yea for my children am I timorous,
 'Tis for my offspring that I now feel dread ;
 For thou at length, like all, must be demised,
 And then thy children shall be left with mine,
 Saul's hate remembered but my love forgotten ;
 Hence blame me not for this anxiety,
 But swear, in the strange name of the unborn,
 Hereditary friendship ; swear to me again,
 For not for mine own sake but my dear children's
 I'd bind thee to me doubly in oath's bonds.

DAVID.

Ah, why require now oaths like these from me,
 As if I were a formidable thing ?
 I who shall be, most probably, ere long
 An exile, and this very moment stand,
 Beneath thy friendly roof, in jeopardy,
 Knowing not but that fatal hands may grasp me.

JONATHAN.

Swear to me nevertheless.

DAVID.

Yea, so I do,

And now in th' name of my posterity ;
 But, Jonathan, how canst thou apprehend
 Evil hereafter twixt our families,
 Since in thy sister's womb they shall be one ?

JONATHAN.

Many monsters are yet in the womb of time !
 Still my heart's tumult is now half allayed,
 And its red tide beneath this moon goes down :
 For thou art like the moon, and thy young horns
 Are filling fast, even in this very hour,
 When thou believest that my father seeks
 To drain thy beam and break thy shining crescent,
 Before it grow into the perfect orb,
 That shall illume this night of Israel,
 This night of the Lord's frown upon our house.
 From thee shall come our country's proper dawning,
 For Saul has only been a meteor,
 That crossed the welkin ere the break of day,
 And then went out for ever. Lo, I see
 Into the future now : lo, now I see
 Into the future through no bank of mist,
 But through a clear and frost-purged atmosphere :
 I see, and could unto thee prophecy,
 Telling thee things of night and blackest doom :
 How in the morning God's hand founded us,
 But ere 'twas noon my father had ignited
 The rising edifice that, ere 'tis finished,
 Topples to run, and shall soon be buried.

DAVID.

Oh, cease this doleful rhapsody !

JONATHAN.

I will :

I will no longer chant a doleful truth.
 To-morrow is new moon, and thou wilt then —
 When 'tis thy duty with the king to dine —
 Be missed, because thy seat will then be empty.
 Three days conceal thyself, then come down quickly,
 And take thy station by the rock of Ezel ;
 And I will come and shoot three arrows near it,—
 As though I shot them at a mark, — and after
 Them I will send a lad, unto him saying,
 " Go and find out the arrows." And now listen.
 If I expressly say unto the lad,
 " The arrows are on this side, quick, pick them up ;"
 Then come thou, there is peace for thee, not danger :
 But if I say unto him thus, " boy, see,
 The arrows are beyond thee," prompt depart,
 For 'tis the Lord that sends thee ; and as touching
 The other matter whereof I have spoken,
 Be He between us a continual witness.

And now farewell awhile.

DAVID.

Farewell awhile.

Exit JONATHAN.

Dear Jonathan ! Dear, noble, royal friend,
How well for thy sake I could wave all honors,
Past or to come ! Alas, to see thee thus !
Surely despair and resignation sat not
Before on one so worthy. How he did speak
Of his sire's downfall, of his own ! That farewell
How sad and solemn ! Tears, flow for Jonathan.
He seems as gifted with divining sorrow,
And 't have more fear than hope even for to-morrow.
Oh morrow, come, elapse three pregnant days :
Lord, come what will thy servant thee obeys.

Exit.

SCENE X.

The Armoury in the Palace. Time, the following morning.

MALZAH.

When late I approached my patient, Saul,
He challenged me forth to fight ;
Or to clatter in armour about this hall,
Like a steed shod with iron, and, iron-cased tall,
To strike from him lightning, or else to the wall
Go myself ; 'neath his heavy blows lumbering fall,
And I'm yet scarcely rid of my fright.
He cried, " to the wood ! or come dable in blood !"—
And for another syllable I had him withstood ;
For it is no small matter to ask for a clatter
I'th hall, or a demon invite to the wood.
A very pretty plight for a spirit of light,
His aerial limbs in armour tight !
Suppose I'd to flee, pray where should I be
If caught in a tempest while crossing the sea ?
What fun for the angels and for Tyrannie !
What shouts and rejoicings, what laughter and glee,
To see me, exhausted, and in my mail dight,
All puffing and panting 'twixt water and fright,
Outroll like a lobster at length on the lea !

Exit.

SCENE XI.

A dining hall in the palace. Time, 2nd day of the moon.

SAUL, JONATHAN, ABNER, PUBLIC OFFICERS, and COURTIERE, dining.

(JONATHAN, *aside*.)

This is the second day o'th moon, and he
Hath no inquiry made, as yet, for David.
Still dare I not infer too much from that :
Silence has oft most meaning ; and deep malice
Brawls not, no more than does the deep, slow current,
That, imperceptibly, attracts the vessel
Into the gulging whirlpool : yet I wish
That he would some enquiry make of me
Concerning David's absence, so that I
Might better know his frame towards my dear friend.

SAUL, *gruffly*.

Why comes not Jesse's son to eat with us,
Nor yesterday nor to day ?

JONATHAN.

Most pressingly,

David sought leave of me to go to Beth-lehem :
Where there is yearly made a sacrifice
For all his family. So earnestly
He me entreated that I have allowed him
To let his seat be vacant this new moon.

SAUL.

And by what right hast thou then given him furlough ?
His place is here, and not at Beth-lehem :
And to eat meat with me, not sacrifice.
By hell, I'll sacrifice him now ! Speak not :
For I will not allow an answer. Knave,
Thou canst no more deceive me. Knave ! no, fool,
A hundred times a fool. Thou froward fool,
Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman,
Do I not know thou hast chosen Jesse's son
To thy disgrace and unto her dishonor ?
Oh, to have thrown such base thing from my loins !
Thou fool begotten on a wicked woman,
Have I not told thee heretofore, that neither
Thy person nor thy power can be in safety,
So long as Jesse's son lives on the earth ?
Send instantly and fetch him, send and fetch him,
For now I am resolved that he shall die.

JONATHAN.

Now, by the Great Eternal that's in Heaven,
I will bear this no longer ! Asperse me,

But not my Mother, neither my dear Friend,
 David, my Brother, and thy too good Son.
 Oh, father, shame! how have you done him shame,
 Even in his absence and before these Peers!
 Go fetch him? shall I be commanded, like
 A butcher's boy to fetch a calf or sheep,
 That his bloat master may it stick and flay?
 Shall I hale David to you to be slaughtered?
 What hath he done? Say wherefore he shall die.

SAUL casts a javelin at JONATHAN, who leaves the hall in great anger, and convinced that his father is determined on David's death.

SAUL.

Now, rise ye, let each victual trap begone!
 I'll kill both the traitor and yon traitorous son.

The company all rise in confusion and leave the hall.

I will pursue him to the ends o'th earth.
 I see they are all gone. I may go too,
 For staying here is but to stay and rue;
 Not of the vexed, unseemly deed I've done,
 But that I should have such a vexing son.
 Ah, would that my removing me elsewhere
 Would move my fear, would take me from despair!
 I do repent now that I threw that dart.
 I fear that I am growing weak and wild,
 To have in fury thus assailed my child.
 Alas, alas, that we should be the toys
 Of ruddy passion and of pale surprise!
 I'll go. — These guests will not forget so soon,
 This dining at the feast of the new moon.

Exit, and enter MALZAH at the other side.

MALZAH.

I've had no part in this. I'm sorry too
 (Like thee, king) that I ever came unto thee.
 Zounds! why I ought to have strong penance set me,
 Or else be branded with some sign of shame
 For having volunteered for his undoing. —
 There's no essential honor nor good 'ith world,
 But a pure selfishness is all in all. —
 Nay I could curse my demonhood, and wish
 Myself to be thrice lost for that behaviour.
 But I believe I am a very mean spirit.

Exit.

SCENE XII.

Near the rock Ezel. Enter JONATHAN and a LAD.

JONATHAN.

Run now and find the arrows I shall shoot.

As the lad goes forward JONATHAN shoots an arrow past him.

Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed, stay not.

The lad having found the arrow returns with it to Jonathan.

I find I am not in the vein this morning:

Return with my artillery to the city.

The lad departs, and DAVID comes from concealment, and with signs of great respect and emotion approaches JONATHAN, who embraces him, and they weep upon each other's neck in silence.

JONATHAN.

How long shall these dull-spelling tears postpone
The syllables I must at length pronounce?

DAVID.

I know how 'tis.

JONATHAN.

David, my father hates thee.

DAVID.

Without a cause; 'tis that which makes this bitter.

Oh, I could pour out all my soul in tears,

Until we stood in a hot pool of grief! —

Jonathan, methinks, methinks my heart will break.

JONATHAN.

Oh, cease, dear friend, these bosom-rifting sighs,

These horrible convulsions that so shake thee:

I cannot loose, yet cannot bear to feel thee

Thus sob and agonise on me like a woman.

DAVID.

Oh for man's deepest groan to ease me; or

For woman's shrill, sharp shriek, to cut the cord

That binds my woe down on my swelling heart

Till I am suffocating! — Oh, crack heart,

Spill all this dreadful agony at once.

I have heard say that there are hot springs that are

Boiled by the secret fires within the earth,

So at my eyes gush forth these scalding tears,

Boiled by the bosomed furnace of my anguish.

I have heard tell of hollow mountains, too,

That belch out flames that thaw their summit's snows.

I am a mountain whose head Saul hath lifted,

By unsought favor, and, as if with snow,

Has spread with flakes of unenduring honors.

Oh, Jonathan, say aught that may congeal me,

For I an snow, and this event is fire ;
I thaw beneath Saul's hot, unnatural rage.

JONATHAN.

Alas !

DAVID.

Poor Michal !

JONATHAN.

Aye, and her poor Mother.

DAVID.

Oh, could we all find some sweet dissolution,
Some friendly, cheating, false oblivion,
Forget all that the king hath done to us ! —
Oh, could the king forget, forget himself,
And be unto us as in days gone past ; —
Oh, that it had not been my lot to know him !

JONATHAN.

It is too late : and I have chidden him,
More than becomes me towards my madman father.
He's mad, he's mad, cast off of heaven, and now,
Now in his hell inspired fatuity,
Casts from him thee, his last, his only angel !

DAVID.

Would that I still might be to him an angel !

JONATHAN.

Not now, not now : kindness doth irritate him,
And a cold, March-like blast of speech, or frown,
Worse than November's, on the brow, must cow him ;
So let us dry these ineffectual tears,
And, with such truce to sorrow as we may,
Take each from each his sad and several road.
Now go in peace, remembering that the Lord
Is always witness to the covenant
Which we late made beneath my own roof-tree,
Both for ourselves and our posterity.
Farewell.

DAVID.

Farewell ; perhaps farewell for ever.

Exit DAVID, still weeping.

JONATHAN.

His storm of agony, though subsiding, leaves
His spirit covered yet with clouds of gloom,
And now this world seems unto me a tomb.
Methinks that I had better with him flee,
For court nor city can again charm me.
But I must stay and watch my kindled sire,
Pour water, or, perhaps oil upon his fire.

I must return, for there are those who need me.

Exit.

SCENE XIII.

Nob. Interior of a small sanctuary with an altar at one end. A lamp burning. Time, night.

Present AHIMELECH, an aged Priest, and DOEG an Edomite and principal herdman of SAUL. The former officiating at the altar, the latter reclining at a distance. A knocking heard.

AHIMELECH.

Who's knocking there so softly?

Takes the lamp and opens the door.

Who art thou?

DAVID enters.

David?

DAVID.

The same. Speak low.

AHIMELECH.

Ah, what's the matter?

Why art thou here, my son; why comest thou
At this strange hour, and unattended?

DAVID.

The king hath charged me with a special business,
And I have left my followers o'er the hill,
Say, what provisions hast thou? Give me five loaves,
Or what else thou hast ready.

AHIMELECH.

Hallowed bread

Is all that there is here at present. If
Thou and thy servants have at least abstained
From women, thou mayest have it.

DAVID.

For three days,

(The time since when we started,) certainly
Women must have been kept from us, and our vessels
Are holy, and the bread, too, in a manner,
Is common, yes, supposing that it had
This day lain sanctified within the vessel.

AHIMELECH (*having fetched the bread from the altar.*)

Here take this from the altar, and if I
Do wrong in giving thee, let not the error
Fall on my soul, for 'tis the king's command
That to the action prompts my doubtful hand.

DOEG, (*aside.*)

'Tis well that I am here to have beheld this.
He is a fugitive, and, when I home

(Which I shall towards soon as I'm liberated)
Am come, I'll turn this scene unto account ;
For tidings brought of him will please the king,
And I do hate these Israelitish Priests,
Though with my offerings I am here and feed them.

DAVID.

Hast thou not got a sword, or other weapon ?
For there are vagabonds about these parts,
And I have come unarmed, so suddenly
Was I dispatched.

AHIMELECH.

There is Goliah's sword,
Wrapped in a cloth, and placed behind the Ephod ;
But 'twere a load for thee to bear it: yet,
If thou wilt take it, I will give it to thee : —
Indeed it unto thee belongs : — moreover,
Here is no other.

DAVID.

Give it unto me ;

There is none like it.

AHIMELECH.

Here it is.

DAVID.

Thanks, thanks,

'Twas the grim Giant's. — Now I will hurry on,
And of this visit see thou tell no one.

Exit DAVID.

DOEG, (*aside.*)

I will feign sleep, and the old, stupid Priest
Make think I have not seen this.

AHIMELECH.

Sir, awake.

The night apace is wearing : I knew not
You slept.

DOEG.

Nor I ; — but sleep's a treacherous thing,
And steals upon us. I am somewhat chilly. —
Beshrew me but I could have sworn most soundly —
But for your word — I'd not been sleeping soundly.

AHIMELECH, (*aside.*)

Perhaps, 'tis well he has not seen our motions.

Son, it is wrong to sleep at your devotions. [*To DOEG.*

DOEG.

Forgive me ; — but how goes the hour ? All's silent.

AHIMELECH.

We've climbed almost unto the ridge of night.

'Tis very dark, for not a star is out ;
 And, I believe, 'tis raining. God help all
 Who are unhoused now, for it blows a squall.
 Listen. Now come within and take thy rest ;
 I have performed the rites thou didst request.

DOEG.

Father, lead on. [*aside.*] Now evil me befall,
 If round thy head I do not raise a squall.

Exeunt.

SCENE XIV.

The environs of Nob. Time, immediately following that of the last scene : dark and stormy.

DAVID.

Whither shall I proceed ? In mine own country
 There is no safety for me, for the foot
 Of Saul will follow me wheresoe'er I go.
 A foreign land must shelter me ; — yet which ?
 For Israel's neighbours are but neighbouring foes.
 Egypt and Edom hate us, Ammon and Moab ;
 And proud Philistia hath too rudely felt
 Lately our ire ; and who as much as I
 To them obnoxious ? Yet thither will I go ;
 The brave are always generous, and the treachery
 Of all besides around, deters me seeking
 To cross their borders : Lord, direct my path. —
 I'll shelter seek of Achish, King of Gath.

SCENE XV.

The royal court at Gath. ACHISH, LORDS, CAPTAINS, ATTENDANTS, &c., and DAVID.

DAVID.

Behold me, king, a Hebrew fugitive,
 Who to thee comes for shelter from oppression.
 Graciously let me, with my services,
 Buy thy protection, and the right to live
 Molestless 'neath thy sway.

ACHISH.

Thou 'rt safe awhile,
 Whoe'er thou art, or whatsoever wind
 Of fault or fortune may have blown thee hither.

A CAPTAIN : *to another, and in an undertone, but overheard by DAVID.*

Is not this David, worshipped by his countrymen :
 He whom the Hebrew maidens sang of, saying,
 " Saul hath his thousands slain, but David tens

Of thousands," over our defeat rejoicing
In their hilarious dances?

2nd CAPTAIN.

So I deem it.

Exeunt all save DAVID.

DAVID.

Oh, it is hard to hide the shining truth!
'Tis as the sun's ray fighting through the clouds
Its way to men: yet guile must serve me now;
For I discover that they do suspect
Who 'tis I am. How shall I cheat them? Ah,
They are returning: — I will straight feign madness.

DAVID begins to let his spittle fall upon his beard, and scrabbles on the door-post.

Re-enter ACHISH and the rest.

ACHISH.

The man is mad! why did you bring him to me?
Think you I've need of madmen. Let him go.
And see that he no more intrude upon us.

1st CAPTAIN *to his companion.*

No man than he was saner when we left him.
He overheard us, doubtless, and now merely
Assumes this changed and rabid-like demeanour.
He is but feigning madness.

2nd CAPTAIN.

What is easier?

He hath discovered our suspicion, and
His madness is as opportune as sudden.

ACHISH.

Take him away, but let him freely wander,
The man seems harmless, give unto him food: —
'Tis a sweet youth were he not in this mood.

1st CAPTAIN *to his companion.*

The king will know his error when too late.

Exeunt all but DAVID;

DAVID.

Where shall I fly to next? I am as one
Twixt fire and water, either fatal to him.
Ah, now I know where I may chance find shelter!
There is a cave (I've heard) Adullum called,
Which lies not far from here. I'll strive to find it,
For I in safety cannot house with men.
And better perish by the bestial brood,
Than hands of him who seeks to spill my blood.
'Tis in a barren wild; sure none will there
Seek for me where but savage creatures are:

I'll go, and God, who knows my neediness,
Will spread a table in the wilderness.

Exit.

SCENE XVI.

Interior of JESSE's house. JESSE and DAVID's mother : the latter weeping.

MOTHER.

Alas, alas, my son !

JESSE.

We are no more in safety than himself ;
For the capricious Tyrant, any hour,
May clutch us up as hostages, or even
In his blind thirst for our best offspring's blood
Spill ours. We'll all unto Adullum.

MOTHER.

Yes,

Let us together die.

JESSE.

We will at once,
With all our household, to our brave son hie.

Exeunt.

SCENE XVII.

Near the cave at Adullum.

DAVID.

I draw men unto me as amber straws.
They that are in distress, youths hopelessly
In the entanglements of love, and they whom debt
Had gripped, and was fast holding to deliver them
Over in bondage to the creditor ; and some
Whom Saul has much offended ; also many
Who have come unto me for very love's sake,
Preferring stint and danger, found with me,
To full, but doubtful, safety with the king.
Thus malcontents of all kinds daily join me,
Four hundred when I counted last they numbered,
But from amongst them two must be removed,
Two bending stalks must be by me transplanted.
It is not fit my Parents should abide
With me, and take the chances of the chase,
Still stretch their failing limbs beneath the dripping
O'th ever-weeping cavern : no, though they
Complain not, I will lead them to a place
Of safety. Ruth, my own Great-grandame was
From Moab, I will go unto its king,
And beg him to permit them hence to fly,

And live with him till Saul or they shall die.

Exit.

SCENE XVIII.

Gibeah. A Room in the Palace.

Enter MALZAH.

MALZAH.

Tidings stung, Saul takes the air
Underneath a spreading tree ;
As if trouble stayed not there,
Thence this thistle-seed of care
On a gust would from him flee.

To new access he is wrought,
For advice is to him come,
That David hath new shelter sought
(With band he from Adullum brought)
In Hareth's wild and wooded gloom.

It was at Gad's instigation, —
Gad's a prophet, so they say, —
That David — so goes the relation —
Did from out Adullum stray, —
Oh, these prophets, peevish prophets, —
Pretty prophets, I should say !
David has poked out to Hareth,
Out to th' air I'll poke my way.

Exit.

SCENE XIX.

Ramah, not far from Gibeah. SAUL seated beneath the shade of a tree and with a spear in his hand, DOEG, COURTIER, SOLDIERS and SERVANTS disposed around him.

SAUL.

Bear it, my sore-strained heart, 'tis but thy thought !
Yet hard to bear, as is the unfaithfulness
And disobedience of my wife and children,
Is this defection and foul lack of duty.
Of Judah and of Levi I could well
Have this expected, but of Benjamin ! —
I must speak out. Ye faithless Benjamites,
Think you that Jesse's son will give you all
Vineyards and farms, and make you every one
Captains, and dub you all of high degree,
That you have every one conspired against me,
And none informs me that mine own son Jonathan

Is in collusion with the son of Jesse ?
 Yet so it is, and with your knowledge, and
 Not one amongst you is at all concerned,
 Not one amongst you all is sorry for me ;
 Nor tells me that my son hath stimulated
 A servant thus against me to rebel.

Aside.

None answer me, none answer ; — treason, treason
 Fills the whole air that all have grown infected.
 Oh, treachery, oh treason, hollowness !
 I'm sick, I'm sick to death with hollowness,
 I'm pierced all over by these ingrate's arrows.
 How many of these men have I made great !
 Yet of them all on this no one breaks silence.
 I am alone, I am alone 'midst numbers.
 I am a lone house in a populous city
 Whose tenants are abroad, and thieves have entered,
 And there is none about to cry out "robber."
 I am deserted, all do now desert me,
 And, in the middle of this grove of men,
 I'm bare and barren, waste and very hungry,
 Yea hungry and no one will help to feed me,
 Will help to feed my gnawing, just revenge.

Aloud.

Are you all silent yet ? Will none inform me
 Of what he knows of David's evil-doings ?

DOEG, (*aside.*)

Now is my moment and I'll make the best on't !

Aloud.

Pardon me, but I thought nought on it at the time,
 Pardon me, king, but, being there myself,
 Detained before the Lord in holy rites,
 I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob,
 To Ahimelech, priest, who sought for him the Lord,
 And gave him victuals and Goliath's sword.

SAUL.

Ah, worse than Naioth this !
 Go fetch Ahimelech, and all that are
 Related to him, every priest that you
 Shall find in Nob : away, and fetch the traitors.

Some go immediately to fetch the priests.

Now every one of you awhile away : —
 If they be guilty they shall dearly pay.

Exeunt all save the King.

At last I'm getting on a beaten track
 O'er which to move in certainty, instead

Of floundering in quagmires of suspicion,
 Or, half bewildered 'twixt my rage and fear,
 Deviously wandering in dim surmise.
 Oh, my forewarning and sure-guessing instinct !
 The priests are at the bottom of it all,
 But heavily shall vengeance on them fall.

Exit.

SCENE XX.

The same. Enter TWO SOLDIERS.

1st SOLDIER.

Woe, woe, now will a curse light on him !

2nd SOLDIER.

How ?

1st SOLDIER.

Ahimelech and all the priests of Nob,
 Are, by the orders of the king, just slain.

2nd SOLDIER.

Oh, heavens curse-down bringing sacrilege !
 Oh horrible ! But who were found in Israel
 So vile as do it ?

1st SOLDIER.

None, none of Israel ;

We all refused ; but that damned Edomite,
 Doeg, who for our priests feels no respect,
 Fell on them with a double-handed sword,
 Like a strong thrasher on a heap of corn,
 And cut them into pieces. Here he comes.
 Oh, the blood-streaked and impious human tiger !
 The sacriligious demon ! — Let's not stay,
 His hands are reeking, yea his breath is bloody,
 And with a ruddy lustre yet his eye-balls glare.
 Surely from hell has been cast up that monster !

2nd SOLDIER.

And what's the king ? And whence ?

1st SOLDIER.

Oh, ask not that ;

He has a demon, — he is a demon, come.

Exeunt and enter DOEG with a huge sword.

Fourscore and five of the perpetrators
 Of hate against my nation I have silenced,
 But am not yet contented, for my rage
 Rose as a tempest might at its own sound,
 Rose as I wreaked it, and I thirstier grew
 As, with the broad lips of this heavy blade,
 I tasted of each sacerdotal beaker.

But I have shed and shattered them all now ;
 And 'tis the king's work, who, with his own hands
 Might have killed me had not I straight obeyed him.

Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

Thou art the handsomest butcher in the land.
 Now go to Nob, first having gathered men,
 Who, like thyself, having heard the royal hest,
 Incontinently do it. Wash thyself,
 For, so transformed by thine ensanguined favors,
 I fear, just now, thou 'dst raise but few recruits.
 Raze Nob to the ground, and every living thing,
 Human or bestial do thou cause to perish.
 Let none escape old memories there to cherish.

Exit.

DOEG.

Thou art the best of vinters, — I will tread
 This wine press for thee ; but first these grim stains
 Deterge, that come from Edom-hater's veins.
 Having tasted of the cup, I'll tap the tun,
 And with my fellows drink till it be done,
 Then, rubicund, return, and thee before
 Stand proudly heady, and encrust in gore.

Exit.

SCENE XXI.

The forest of Hareth.

DAVID.

Who hither comes with his dishevelled hair,
 And garments torn ? Despair and woe appear
 To urge him towards me, even as if he meant
 To cast his sorrow's weight down at my feet.
 I know him now ; 'tis Abiather, son
 Of good Ahimelech, the priest who lately
 Did, at his peril, give me friendly succour.
 Some evil has befallen Ahimelech.

Enter ABIATHER the Son of Ahimelech.

Welcome, my benefactor's son. How is
 Thy father ?

ABIATHER.

Well.

DAVID.

Thy kindred ?

ABIATHER.

Well.

DAVID.

And Nob ?

ABIATHER.

No more : for with a ruthless butchery,
Saul hath it visited with such horrid war
Of fiends in human shape, that I alone
Live to remember its past days of peace.

DAVID.

Now help me God to disbelieve thy servant !

ABIATHER.

Believe my story for its very truth's sake,
Revenge it for mine own, my sire's and God's.

DAVID.

Oh horrible ! and did your sacred order
Avail you nought ? Whence did he gather monsters
That dared to do this sacriligious deed ?

ABIATHER.

That treacherous Edomite, Doeg, whom thou
Didst see at thy brief calling, led them on.
They did surround us and, with uncouth yells,
Fell on us, sparing none.

DAVID.

Now Lord in thy good strength uphold me ! None ?

ABIATHER.

None, none : all save myself were butchered.

DAVID.

Now, now :—

But I must speak or burst. Oh, awful Judge, —
I have no words, — but I will groan up prayer,
And will arraign slack heaven — oh, fie, fie,
For I am growing impious too ; alas !
Alas ! Oh searching, all surveying God
Didst thou behold them in the deed, and not
Tear open the arcana of thy wrath,
And pour upon them as upon the plain
Of Sodom and Gomorrah ? Say, say, oh,
Shall there not be another dark Dead Sea,
Where'er they shall be buried ? Hideous !
Oh, why did not hell open and engulph them ?—
God's holy priests, — thine unoffending father,
Good, charitable man, — nay now shall men
Shoot at the stars and try to mar the temple
In which the angels worship ! — oh, what next
Will do this raging king ? He will o'erthrow
All altars, snatch from them the sacrifices,
For that were little after this great horror.

ABIATHER.

Bate not as yet your words, pour out the torrent.

DAVID.

Oh, 'twas his demon, 'twas his demon working,
It was his demon in the form of Doeg, —
Doeg ! but for the rest who were they ?

ABIATHER.

Not

Hebrews, no no, not Hebrews ; — no, that hour
Hell emptied her of her most barbarous spirits,
And poured them up unto the earth, that they
Might thereon pour out Aaron's sacred blood
To stain the land.

DAVID.

What dress of words fits this !

Oh, Abiather, I knew when I saw Doeg,
That night at Nob, he would inform the king :
I have myself caused this catastrophe.

ABIATHER.

'Tis thou who must avenge it.

DAVID.

So I will

On Doeg and on Edom to my fill.
Come with me farther into this dim wood,
Where I abide with many brave and good.
Never although poor Nob now razed be,
Shall't be erased from my memory.

Exeunt, going further into the forest.

END OF ACT THIRD.

A C T I V

SCENE I.

Gibeah. A room in the Palace.

SAUL.

Now shall live action break up stagnant death,
 For, lo, that outlaw, David's in a snare,
 Having entered wall-girt Keilah. I shall crush him
 Now, since I will beseige him with a host,
 That shall stop up each avenue of escape
 So thickly, that if he shall sally forth,
 It shall be but to render up his life.

Enter an OFFICER.

How now ? discharge thyself.

OFFICER.

Your majesty,

David hath passed from Keilah.

SAUL.

'Tis not so.

How came the news ? speak, tell me quickly.

OFFICER.

By one who Keilah left at David's heels,
 And says that the inhabitants had meant
 'To have delivered him to your majesty.

SAUL.

And which way went the traitor says he ?

OFFICER.

Towards

The wilderness of Ziph.

SAUL.

Thither we will steer.

Go get thee ready.

Exit OFFICER.

Every day shall see

An active search made for our enemy,
 Until we take him and, he being dead,
 Subsides our danger of him and our dread.

Exit.

SCENE II.

Border of the wilderness of Ziph. SAUL and his army in pursuit of DAVID.

SAUL.

Now, being upon the margin of his haunt,
Put on your vigilance ; outspread yourselves,
And, marching, sweep the region clean before you.

The army having passed.

Ye savage and dark-wooded wilds, disclose
The traitor to me : rocks, if ye do hide him,
(As it is said you do,) behind your doors,
Reveal him : wind, blow towards him, that I
May follow thee as a vane ; or, if thou'rt from him,
Whisper into mine ear where 'tis he lurks,
Or you, ye penetrating sunbeams, play
For me the spy.

Exit.

SCENE III.

The skirts of a wood in the wilderness of Ziph. Time, twilight.

Enter JONATHAN, looking wistfully about him.

JONATHAN.

Where art thou, David, much abused brother ?
Thou art not far from me, methinks, — how far ?
Where art thou hidden, noble fugitive ?
If thou rest, and not, like unto the wild beasts,
That rise at night and seek therein their prey,
Arise, and free from day's encumbering arms,
Come play the scout behind night's shady shield,
Come catch me in thine arms thy prisoner.
Art resting like a wild beast in its lair ?
Who would a wild man be let him come here.
My gentle wildman, my accomplished savage,
Stumble upon me by some accident ;
Come to me drawn by cords of happy chance.
How silent all is here ! Here is at least
Peace, and methinks that peace is likest heaven.
Now could I too become a fugitive,
Return not to the turmoil of the city,
The court's intrigue, and distuned passion's jar,
Which frets so this sweet world, for I am ill
Composed for earth. Methinks the radiant ether
Should be my world, and all my intercourse
Should be with heroes that resemble David.
Oh, with him now but one hour's intercourse !
As the maid longs for tryste hour I for him.

Shew to me him, ye wind-hit, beetling crags,
 Throw back your brows of pines, and shew me him.
 How is he looking now, could I behold him?
 Is sorrow on his face? or the beatitude
 Of strong endurance visibly serene?
 But I will tempt these boughs, and, in the glades
 O'th forest standing, woo him with my voice.
 He hath not yet forgot the air I'll warble.

Enters the forest and sings.

Come to me, love, come to me, love,
 Lo! the moon 'gins climb up heaven;
 And the stars appear, to twinkle clear,
 And Hesper, queen o'th seven.

He ceases, and listens awhile.

I hear no one acoming, and none answer;
 I'll troll out the remainder of the ditty.

"Where art thou, love? where art thou, love?"
 I all day long have sighed;
 But have found thee not, oh, sad my lot,
 To seek thee at eventide:

For the gentle, nameless hour is come,
 The hour 'twixt day and night;
 When feeble Age takes rest at home,
 And abroad young Love delight.

Some one intoning within the forest.

What do they that bold songster call,
 And of whom is he the son?

JONATHAN.

He is the eldest born of Saul,
 And his name is Jonathan.

DAVID, *rushing in.*

Jonathan, it is thy voice.

JONATHAN, *hastening to meet and embrace him.*

Oh, brother, brother,

Thine should I know out of all Israel's.
 How hast thou fared since I bade thee farewell?
 At once declare.

DAVID.

Not here, not here; come further
 Into the thick involvement of the shade,
 And I will tell thee in few words my tale.

Exeunt further into the forest, and after awhile a clear rich voice heard intoning.

So ho, so ho, so ho, so ho,
 'Tis time that boys to bed should go.

Re-enter DAVID and JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

It is the sentry on the verge o'th wood,
And who is in my secret, fear him not ;
That is his signal that they come to change him.

DAVID.

I've but to add to this brief, sad recital,
That thus the Lord hath to this moment kept me,
And will, I trust, still keep me, Jonathan.

JONATHAN.

Put still thy trust in Him, fear not ; my father
Shall not discover thee ; and well I know
That thou shalt King be over Israel,
And that I shall be next to thee in power,
Which well my father too in secret knows.
Now, with a kiss, our covenant renew,
Before the Lord, and then, why then adieu.

They kiss each other.

Voices.

Who goes there ?

A friend.

The word.

DAVID.

Listen, I hear the surly sentinels.

JONATHAN.

Believe, not one of them would willingly
Discover thee to the king. Hast thou no words
For Michal ?

DAVID.

Many, but I'd sum them all
Thus ; Do I not love her who yet love Saul.
Farewell.

JONATHAN.

Farewell, I soon shall get me home.

Exit.

DAVID.

Angels have often visited mankind :
And Jonathan's visit in this wood to me
Seems like to one from heaven's hierarchy.

Exit, returning into the midst of the wood and enter two SENTRYs pacing.

1st SENTRY.

I'm less surprised than glad.

2nd SENTRY.

'Tis so, and this
Will be the last ward placed upon this wood.

1st SENTRY.

How looks the King?

2nd SENTRY.

Half rage half disappointment,

1st SENTRY.

He hath not latterly been visited

With his disease, methinks.

2nd SENTRY.

He seldom is

When he is out campaigning: work's his shield

To keep his enemy from him; and emergency

With its concurrent comrade exercise,

Can rouse him so that he can exorcise

Himself then of the Spirit. Now for David.

If I do ever see him perched again

Upon the top of honor, I shall tell him,

I had him once a whole watch in my care,

And could have brought, with only half a wink,

The cat right down upon him; for that he

Is in this wood I'm certain.

1st SENTRY.

So am I.

I'll bid thee now good night and lonesome cheer,

For I am weary of patrolling here.

*Exit.*2nd SENTRY, *singing whilst pacing.*

Good night, ho, ho; good night, ho, ho;

When soldiers acampaigning go,

One side they burn i'th sun at noon,

And t'other freeze at night i'th moon.

Disappears in the shadow.

SCENE IV.

A Room in the Palace at Gibeah.

SAUL.

I am returned unto my den more fierce

Than I rushed out of 't: I am coiled again

After this snake-like spring. I must abide

And watch with patience, as the spider doth

For the entangling of a distant fly,

As it 'neath pressing hunger quiet sits

Within its lonely aperture, until

It sees or feels far off its fated prey;

I'll in Gibeah bide and wait for David.

That he's a rebel is now clear enough,

And at his back has got six hundred more.

That he is in the bog now is quite certain,
 Where'er he was when I was in the slough :
 Nor seem I now so fouled by that morass
 Wherein I fell when stepping upon Nob ;
 Since that sole saveling of its malcontent
 And disappointed priesthood, Abiather,
 Having gone unto mine enemy, but shews
 Which way the current set, when venal Doeg,
 Sank the whole fleet, save him, who got off drifting.
 Thus, more assured, David shall perish yet ;
 I will remove that fascinating serpent,
 Before it shall have grown a mighty dragon,
 To wear my crown. But that he is encouraged
 By my besotted and unnatural son,
 I had him crushed ere now. Beware, beware
 Jonathan, thou mother-counselled booby, lest
 I trample thee to death in killing him.

Enter an OFFICER.

What now ? are the Philistines coming ?

OFFICER.

No,

Your majesty, they know too well who'd meet them ;
 No, but up from the wilderness of Ziph,
 Which we have left so lately, men are come
 With tidings for you.

SAUL.

Bid them to come hither.

Exit OFFICER.

Now I'll be slow and cautious, and look deep
 Into each villain's eyes, for how know I
 But that they come to cheat me, and to draw,
 Out of the sudden treasure of my joy,
 Unto themselves some gain. I do believe
 That every Ziphite is a friend to the rebel.
 But I will keep the knaves, if knaves they be,
 As hostages for th' truth of their own tale.

Enter ZIPHITES.

They look like to true men, — and yet but little
 Can be inferred from looks : the crafty soul
 Can clothe itself according to its pleasure,
 And at the oriel of the eyes stand, shewing
 In guise of saint, when 'tis, indeed, a devil.
 You are from Ziph.

1st ZIPHITE.

We are, your majesty.

SAUL.

I was myself there lately : what a pity
 You were not saved this journey by delivering
 Your news at home.

1st ZIPHITE.

Your majesty, when you
 Were with us, we had nothing to deliver,
 Except it were (which we, indeed, did do)
 To offer you our services, to aid
 In capturing whom you sought for ; but you scarcely
 Had left us when, emboldened by your absence,
 He and his followers exposed themselves,
 Pale, lean, and hungry, and entreating food. —

SAUL.

And did you give unto them ?

1st ZIPHITE.

What they would
 They from us took, then straight with it retired
 Into another forest, that which covers the hill
 Of Hachilah, which has many secret caves,
 And overtopples so with loosened rocks,
 That they who enter first into the forest,
 May send then lumbering on all later comers.
 The hill is south of Jeshmon.

SAUL.

Is it ? Well,
 Sirs, you shall lead me thither, and the head
 Of David shall be yours, if you do find him,
 And if you do not your heads shall be mine.
 Is it well ?

2nd ZIPHITE.

Alas, your majesty, the eagle
 May fly away before we reach his æry.
 But if you find that he was not on Hachilah
 When we left Ziph, take not alone our heads,
 But let our innocent babes meet the desert
 Of those who dare to trifle with the king.

SAUL.

Ye trifle now, believe me, with your souls,
 If ye do sport with me in any way ;
 Either by foul collusion with my foe,
 To draw on me some loss by stratagem,
 Or to yourselves an undeserved reward.
 Then give to me at once some evidence
 That I may know that what you say is true,
 And that yourselves are not the emissaries

Of this ill wanderer. Shew the mean snare,
If you have purposed one, or, when I've found it,
It shall yourselves clasp, and not you alone,
But the whole treacherous wilderness of Ziph.

1st ZIPHITE.

So be it done, and more, — if heaven's judgments
May second thine ; — let the earth open and swallow
All souls up, true with false, if we deceive thee.

SAUL.

Amen. As Dathan and Abiram perished
And went down live to hell, so may go all
Who may (through you) tempt me to scale the top
Of heaven-touching, perilous Hachilah.

3rd ZIPHITE.

More than thine imprecation be upon us,
And upon all our country, if we're false :
But come down quickly, and thy forces hold
Ready to seize him, whilst our part shall be
To lead him unawares into thy power.

SAUL.

God's blessing be upon you, Ziphites, for
Ye have compassion on me ! — go and spy,
And ascertain his most familiar haunts ;
Learn who hath seen him there, for I am told
He is most wary, therefore, be exact :
Find out beforehand all his lurking places,
And come to me with certainty ; and then
I will go with you, and, if in the land
He be, I'll find him, although I should have
To search throughout all Israel.

1st ZIPHITE.

We obey

Thee, king.

SAUL.

Go secretly to work.

2nd ZIPHITE.

We will.

SAUL.

Yet diligently too, and your reward
Is sure. Return to me with all prepared.

Exit ZIPHITES.

What were another journey there ! Far better
A hundred toilsome marches there and back,
Then thus to live misgiving. Were he dead
There were an end, save in his recollection.
Ay, there is what restrains me, — yet restrains

Me not, for I will hunt him to the death,
Though it make sick myself: I'll be assured,
I will endure much smarting to be cured.

Exit.

SCENE V.

The wilderness of Ziph. The same ZIPHITES as in the preceding scene.

2nd ZIPHITE.

'Tis as I ventured to forewarn the king:
The bird has flown to the bare plain of Jeshmon.

1st ZIPHITE.

So much the worse for it then, for the king
Is at our heels with twice his former numbers;
And stealthily he marches without sound
Of clarions blowing, nor has banners cast
Unto the wind, but, wisely now discarding
Slow military pomp, comes, like a falcon swooping
Back on the quarry that it lately missed.

2nd ZIPHITE.

But David has been warned of his approach,
And is amongst the crags of Maon gotten.
In Ziph, too, more øre for him than against him;
And some have run before the whispering wind,
And told him of his peril. Bad is brewing;
What we have done others have been undoing.

Enter SAUL and some military.

SAUL.

Where is he?

1st ZIPHITE

Pardon us, your majesty,
He has just fled from Hachilah, but the desert,
Which he hath crossed, exposed him, even as winter
Leafless shews the lean moorfowl, and bare rocks
Now shelter him, only, with treacherous turn,
To raise against him the gaunt arm of Famine
Who ever dwells there, and will him compell
At length into your power.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

The os'trich hides
Its head, and thinks that all is hid; so he:
But I will track him to the mountain crag,
Swifter than Ishmael's horsemen o'er the sands
Chase that dull bird. [*aloud.*] Go on before me swiftly:
Let no one think of halting all the day. —

(*Aside.*)

I have him now, methinks, a certain prey.

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE VI.

DAVID and his Company on the side of a mountain.

DAVID.

Hasten or we shall be surrounded, for
 The king is near, with doubled numbers, striving
 To skirt us round, and to possess the gorge
 Ere we can pass it. Let your arms be covered,
 That they not telltale glitter in the sun;
 For we will not uplift them 'gainst our nation,
 Nor its anointed king. Let God be judge
 'Twixt him and us, and be our Succourer.

ABIATHER.

Is then my story nought? Is nought thy oath?
 Or are they both forgot? Oh, David, David,
 Hast thou forgot the day when all my kindred
 Perished before his bidding, or hast thou
 Forsworn unto thee vengeance? As the leaves
 Green and all juicy, and the boughs still waxing
 Lustier of some brave tree, on sudden smitten,
 Even in the verdant summer of its glory,
 By the red bolt of heaven, was that catastrophe
 That them befell. Ah, hast thou then forgot
 That thou declared Nob should not be forgotten?
 Recall the moment when thou sawest approaching
 (What time the Edomitish infidel,
 Doeg, at Saul's fell order, had destroyed
 My kindred, setting on them with his sword,
 Like butcher with a stave on drove of sheep,
 And, sweating till he foamed with savage labor,
 With their poor bodies strewing the gory soil,
 That reeked with murder of a sacred race,
 And out of which destruction rushed I, like
 A splinter flying 'fore the woodman's axe)
 I say remember when thou sawest approaching
 My wounded self to thee?

DAVID.

I do remember,
 Yes I remember, but cease, Abiather,
 Oh, cease thy wild appeal to me, and think,
 Think that thou hast a minister of vengeance
 In Saul's plagued conscience; — lo, he yonder comes!
 Wouldst thou that I should turn upon the fount
 And spring of Michal's and of Jonathan's life,
 Requiring his foul sacrilege, committed
 On thee and on thy consecrated line,

By one on him committed ? Is he not
The Lord's Anointed ? Follow, see, our men
Are to the outlet hastening amain !

Exit.

ABIATHER.

Oh, oh, now am I mad besides bereaved !

Exit and enter SAUL, ZIPHITES and SOLDIERS.

SAUL. (*aside.*)

Angels or demons,
Which of you is it that delivers him ?
Nay, nay, — he cannot have escaped, — yes, yes,
Again the eel has glided from my hands.
Now evil fall on some one. [*aloud.*] Soldiers, what devil
Have you amongst you, that our best laid plans
Do thus miscarry ? Not a comany
Of the Philistines can escape you when
Your eye hath fallen on them ; fleet as greyhounds,
You overtake them, guided by your sight ;
But now, when sight and scent appear combined
To make the issue certain, here we stand,
Where we were thinking to have seized our prey,
And in his room find — nothing. How is this ?
There is a traitor somewhere, who forewarns
Mine enemy. Speak, who among you is such ?

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Is the king here ?

SAUL.

He is : hast thou seen David ?

MESSENGER.

Nay, but the Philistines ravaging the land.
Haste back, oh king, for Jonathan bade me tell you,
He doubts his power to hold the foe in check,
So quickly swarm they on him.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

Curses light

Now on this twice foul fortune ! [*aloud.*] This is false,
Jonathan sends not thee hither.

MESSENGER.

Yea, your majesty,

And with many words of hastening, which he bade me
Repeat to you, and bid you to yourself
Apply them thrice repeated.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

Is this true ?

Surely there is a Power that stands between

My purpose and its crowning ! [*aloud.*] I will follow thee,
For thou must back with diligence to the prince,
And tell him that I come.

Exit MESSENGER.

The scene of sport
Hath changed, brave soldiers ; we must hasten back,
For out, full-mouthed, are the Philistine pack.
Hence are we bootless bound to leave this place,
And start forthwith upon a nobler chace.

Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

Gibeah. A Hall in the Palace.

MALZAH, *entering.*

Heyday, I've oft heard say
That when God naps the demons play.
So ho, ho ho ; so ho, ho ho !
Come hither, consort, from below.

Ah, my poor dwindled legs !
Ye have, of late, from work and grief grown taper,
But more from waste of jealousy-formed vapor,
Which leaves my frame in an invisible steam,
Through pore and heaven-inflicted-scarry seam,
That I blush to dance with other than Peyona ;—
Alas, she who thus makes me waste and moan. Ah !

PEYONA, *rising.*

Malzah, what hath made thee call me ?

MALZAH.

Hast come unwillingly ?

PEYONA.

Why no.

MALZAH.

'Tis well, or, — Oh, immense distraction ! —
But put thyself in capering action.
Come, I am in a moving mood, —
The last time we danced was at the flood.

PEYONA.

Oh, is this falsehood or forgetfulness ?
But thou mayest well forget, so long it is
Since thou forgot to play with me the gallant.

MALZAH.

Why, madam, how is this ? Have you forgot that
When I would dance you always would thus preach,
And even now you fall to contradiction :—
But dance, not talk, for just now speech
Will give each carcass too much friction.

PEYONA.

I cannot dance to day.

MALZAH.

But I will make you : — some music, ho ! I pray.

Music heard, and they dance together.

PEYONA.

Now, my dear Malzah, let me from thee go.

MALZAH.

You have no urgent, pressing task below.

Wherefore request you to return so soon ?

Here with this tall, untoward king may I

Long yet abide, nor know embrace seraphic.

Why would you hasten back to the abyss ?

PEYONA.

I must return for I am called.

MALZAH.

Who calls thee ?

PEYONA.

I know not.

MALZAH.

Ah, vile creature, wilt thou swear

To that ? — But what are oaths to the rank slut

When falsehood suits her purpose !

PEYONA.

Oh, for shame !

MALZAH.

Tell them to send some other devil up.

PEYONA.

Alas, mad fiend !

PEYONA begins to descend.

MALZAH.

Oh, soft, deceptive eyes, —

Out, coals of hell, or I will tear you out.

Ah, lovely hellsnake, wilt thou stare at me ?

Wouldst thou again fascinate me with thy gaze ?

Might I pour molten lead into those eyes !

PEYONA.

Oh, do not curse me thus, dear consort. Hist,

Again I'm called.

MALZAH.

Who calls thee ? Speak the truth.

PEYONA.

I have.

MALZAH.

May that huge lie thrice damn thee. No !

There, take that with thee bellowing to the deep ;

And when asked if I longer love thee, let
That syllable be the answer.

PEYONA *disappears*
See me no more.

Disclose yourselves, ye dark and terrible gulfs,
That, in immensity and night eternal,
Have to this hour in sullen dumbness yawned,
And swallow her up!

Rushes out but returns immediately.
She did not even rebut my insinuation!—
She could not do it.

Again rushes out and returns.
She's lost, and so am I;
Lost is poor Malzah now:— oh, now he's poor,
For from his brow has fallen his last jewel!

Exit slowly and re-enter presently.
Fie, fie! there is no proof that could convict her.
'Tis true the grape that grows in Acheron,
Works such licentiousness and uncontrol
In those who eat thereof, (and she, I think, doth,)
That for a moment's lawless pleasure, they
Will in their frenzy pawn their future peace,
Mindless of conscience and of broken vows:—
Yet that is not sufficient.

A low and pleasant music heard.
Ah, this is kind!
Ye gamesome creatures, whose office is to bring
Music to us who lonely work, ye Sprites,
Who lately at my magisterial bidding,
Brought measures here to tickle giddy feet,
Breathe ere you go some notes that shall allay
My violence, as low winds moderate
And soothe to gentleness the late rough sea.

The sound changes as if to the voice of a female.
'Tis hell's chief syren, yet she charms me not.
And yet she floods the air with song. How sweet!
I would behold her countenance but that
These beings (like the syrens of the sea,
Who tempt wave-weary, foolish mariners)
Allure us towards their forms, and, still receding,
Entice us down the gulf wherein, at last,
Surceasing suddenly their sensuous notes,
Midst cackination viler than the shrill,
Quick cackle-cries of egg delivered fowls,
They shew us to hell's Powers to our disgrace,
And bring on us the chastisement for truants.

She's languishing, she knows the strength of languor.
 She tempts me strongly now, but I'll resist her;
 Ah, now she moves me at my inmost soul,
 She tempts and shakes me from my steadfast humour.
 Yet I'll resist her though she strongly tempts me,
 I will resist now this most pleasant creature;
 I will resist her, so that I may have
 At least one instance, wherein I may say
 That I have scorned and conquered inclination.
 Oh, oh, that strain! Syren, avaunt! Oh, oh,
 I shall succumb if I allow this longer;
 Syren, begone, and leave me virtuous;
 Go sit beneath the black, tartarean vine,
 That with its juices and your lays, can sink
 The lost in tears of maudlin tenderness,
 Or stir them up to fierce, tempestuous brawl,
 But do not try thy blandishments on me.
 She ceases not, she knows I am a fool;
 A fool for making holy resolution,
 And were a greater fool were I to keep it.
 I see no profit in my self-denial,
 I shall repent if I forgo; I feel that
 Checked pleasure is keen pain; I can, I will
 Hold out no longer; oh, I tingle, pshaw,
 I'll catch her in my arms whate'er the result!

Rushing towards whence the strain proceeds, it ends in a clap of thunder, mingled with laughter.

Now let her to Peyona and denounce me,
 As well I know she will do. Oh, these Vampires!
 These suckers of our souls from out our frames,
 That, with their souls going as with snails their shells
 In our own sight upon the moments stage,
 Thus act unseemly parts! Ah, I am vapor,
 Unsteadier than wind: I would I could
 Exhale from out the grossness of this carcass,
 That does beguile and bend my purer spirit.
 Oh, jealousy, how little thou becomest this fiend,
 Who asks for cleanness where himself is foul!
 And yet 'twere fond to let our consorts wear
 The very robes that ill become ourselves:
 That would breed doubt on doubt, and doubt's
 Damnation; doubt on doubt 'twould be,
 Itself be sooty Erebus uppled —
 On the black hill of hell-like certainty.
 Nay, there must be a difference; our much
 Enticed sex must have this privilege;

The strong must have power though they may abuse it :
We must have virtue in the other gender,
Or vice would clutch our own beyond redemption.
Peyona, meek Peyona, child of heaven,
Surely thou hast not, surely hast not wronged me !
And yet I am in most damnific doubt,
I am in most damnific doubt even yet.
I would that I could settle it, for doubt,
Is both the Sire to and the Son of that
Abomination breeding hag, Perdition.
I would that I could settle it with myself,
For certainty's an angel, (even when
He wears the diabolical-like mask
Of the worst issue,) in comparison
Of that dim devil, doubled-faced distrust.
What shall I do in this dilemma ? Shall I
Again accuse her when I see her ? No,
For when I scold she'll weep, and I shall kiss her,
As is my wont, and play the amorous fool,
To be ashamed when I'm grown meek and cool.
What next then ? Shall I paint her till she is
As black as hellsmoke, then desert her ? No,
I'll swear that she was always faithful to me.
Nay, wherefore stand I here then thus debating
I will take faith instead of evidence.
Who here seeks evidence deserves to find it.
Moreover though she may have entertained
In her lodge's secrecy some tricky spirit,
Have I not been in other's palaces,
Yea, to my shame, found sport in vilest dens ?
Poor comfort ! but the best and therefore welcome.
I'll shirk doubt, and, on these considerations,
Trust her, yet watch her, and if I shall find
Peyona to some other Malzah kind,
Why I will find them both a sepulchre : —
Or no not I, but, what were better, strive
To prove that matrimony is a curse,
And advocate the project of divorce,
Which being gained. a widower wild and free
I'm through the ages of eternity.

Exit.

SCENE VIII.

An Apartment in the Palace.

SAUL.

Now from one tumult pass I to another.
 From David 'scaped I turned to the Philistines,
 From the Philistines quelled I turn to David,
 Who on the stony mountains of En-gedi
 At present roams. Shall he elude me thrice ?
 Three thousand chosen men I'll lead against him,
 And end him now with all his band of outlaws.

Exit, and enter MALZAH.

MALZAH.

Now will I give the slip to Tyrannie,
 And follow Saul, though to what end I know not !
 And yet I will, though on account thereof
 May Tyrannie, when I shall be returned,
 Chastise me with her cat all o'er my frame,
 Till flames thence issue thicker than leap sparks
 From red-hot iron when 'tis hammer beaten.
 I'll go although I am aware that she
 May catch and spread me out against the wall,
 And pin me there, as I have seen men pin
 And leave in torment moths, bats, butterflies.
 Come this, come more, come chains and pillory,
 Come cherubs, seraphs, make of me derision ;
 Come all of you, come hell, come earth, come heaven,
 For I have grown fanatical at last !

Goes to and looks out at the window.

These men are very slow and loitering creatures.
 Yet all goes well, for Saul is standing yonder,
 Looking as grim as hellebore, or stalks,
 Like ratsbane carried threatening on a pole,
 And urges on the work of preparation.
 I cannot use fanaticism with Saul,
 He is not credulous, is unapt at
 Believing in the supernatural ;
 He is irreverent, and given to question
 His own emotions too much, or I'd tempt him
 Under the semblance of a heavenly spirit.
 And this has brought unto my recollection
 A story, that old Horoscope once told me,
 As we one day sat cozily together,
 Now and again exchanging whiffs of thought,
 In form of apothegm and anecdote.
 " Malzah, dear imp," said he, and stroked his beard,

His antique, taper beard of mouldy hue,
And which seems for him as a net or scrip,
To hold his wisdom and his marvellous tales,
Fruits of long study and of wide experience,
For he is very old, and has much travelled,
Both good for storiers, whose tales may then be far
Removed in time and space. "Malzah," said he,
"Once looking through my cogitation's prizm,
I saw a spirit called Fanaticism ;
I saw it," said he, — and his eyes rolled in
Their sockets like two skiffs when they are tossed
About in th' caldron of the foaming sea,
That I did smile, and had nigh laughed outright,
Though filled with awe and some slight dash of fright,—
I saw it," said he, "float upon the wind,
And cast its shadow on the human mind ;
Till multitudes, besotted and devout,
At once began to play the very devil,
Began to burn, to banish, and to slay
Bodies, to keep souls from the fiends away."
And then he shrugged his shoulders, or else shivered
With horror, and ejaculated low, —
(Albeit I overheard him most distinctly,)
"We've many spirits here in hell's abysm,
But not arrived yet has Fanaticism."
Which words I then thought were but timorous twaddle,
And did somewhat suspect the whole narration ;
But what I've seen since tells me 'twas too true,
And that his dread o'th goblin had foundation ;
For 'tis the direst monster in the world,
And can make murder seem a holy deed,
And the destroying of whole nations little
As th' extirpating of vermin from the fields ;
Nor are the lives of child and parent safe,
One from the other, where this creature reigns.
I doubt not now but that old Horoscope
Had this same vision, for he's very truthful ;
Nor smile I at his ghastly horror now,
But think he is a most sagacious demon,
In erudition greater than old Time,
To whom he is the twin, or all that famous
In hell are, or upon the earth shall be,
Solomon and Solon, Nestor and Nostrodamus,
A list too long to swear by, without counting
(No need) hell's sages and philosophers,
Whom he has recently so scandalized,

For he, I am informed, (and for his daring
Wickedness has received anathema,)
Invalidates their glosses, and even poses
Our commentators on the page of Moses,
Boasting himself has (and I like this worse)
Better cast the nativity of the universe :
But Horoscope is given to presumption ;—
Indeed 'tis like his calling of me, " imp,"
As though I did acknowledge any begetter,
Except 'twere nature's fierce, fermenting loins.
I wonder when these rascals will be starting !

Trolls.

I awoke, I awoke, for I was not born,
As far as I can learn ;
But how long I'd slept or ere I awoke
Is none of my concern.

I awoke, or at least I began to perceive,
And I think that I rubbed my eyes ;
And I saw a sweet form who, as I believe,
Gazed at me with some surprise.

I was somewhat puzzled but I towards it drew,
And I think that it drew towards me ;
And it smiled in my face, and we closed in embrace,
Pshaw, Peyona ! Away let me flee.

A flourish of trumpets heard.

Rushing out.

Alas, I feel as well as hear the horns !

SCENE IX.

*A wild, hilly district with the mountains of En-gedi seen beyond, and the
mouth of a cave in the foreground.*

Enter two SOLDIERS of SAUL's advanced guard.

1st SOLDIER.

Wilder and barrener this region grows,
Till naught but sheep, and they of smallest size,
Draw from it sustenance. No fields of corn
I see, nor rye nor barley ; neither roots
To fare the frugal shepherds who appear
Dwelling within the doors of blank starvation :
A rising melancholy moorland, that
Ascending keeps, until the sterile hills
Seem to be hanging in the sombre clouds.
What that has life can harbour there ?

2nd SOLDIER.

There lives

The wild goat only, and with snow still cools
 His hot and lecherous blood. Nor bear, nor fox
 There dwelleth, neither wolf ; nought but the goat
 And the heaven-searching eagle, whilst the tempest,
 Sullen, within the towering fastnesses,
 Mustering its strength, sweeps thence far o'er the plain.

1st SOLDIER.

How awful it doth seem to pass a life,
 Though but an animal's, amidst such horror,
 And constant solitude ! I almost shudder,
 Though with our host, at thought of entering
 Such a bewildering, wild world of crags. —
 What, were we smitten by a waterspout ?
 Or in a narrow gully (and we might be)
 Caught by a torrent sweeping from the headlands,
 That had ripped up the clouds ? Or what, if blown
 Down from some scarp side into the yawn,
 That lies a thousand fathoms down below,
 To batten there the vultures, or mayhap
 Being rolled into some deep-worn channel stream,
 We should be by its billows onwards swept,
 And buried in the ocean ?

2nd SOLDIER.

Cease, I pray thee ;

Thou dost infect me with an idle terror :
 What, do not David and his men live there ?

1st SOLDIER.

'Tis said they do, and yet I know not how,
 For though they may in caves find shelter, yet
 They cannot eat the rock ; nor th' herb that feeds
 The barbed and shaggy denizens of those heights
 Is sustenance for them : and those shy lords,
 The goats, whose rule begins where man's must end,
 How shall the swiftest hunter overtake,
 Or his ascending arrow, since they scale
 Up the jagged precipice as sweeps the shadow
 Of the swift cloudlet ?

2nd SOLDIER.

I am told they span

As with a bridge, in their arched leap, a chasm,
 From whose sloped verge the hardiest shrink in horror,
 Riding, as if with sudden gift of flight,
 Its overhanging air. 'Tis also said
 That they upon their horns can safely drop

From crag to crag, upon their crowns strength proving
Themselves are kings.

1st SOLDIER.

Lo; where our own crowned king
Prepares to halt, and our old general, Abner,
Makes wave the signal for our bands to rest.
Let us along and not bivouac too near them.

Exeunt, and enter SAUL and ABNER.

SAUL.

Ere we commence this last and wildest stage,
Let the men take some rest. When once up yonder,
No rest is ours; and the now travelled foot
Must with its soreness cope the untrodden way,
If way to yonder rugged realm can be,
For nature in such hideous confusion
I never saw before.

ABNER.

It were a mercy
To take the offender thence, for to dwell there
Is surely lingering death.

SAUL.

To shorten pain
Is charity in him who doeth it;
And man who has to die had best die soon.

ABNER.

He is yet young, and we are scarcely old.

SAUL.

Yet what is there in life that men so love it?
What afterwards that men should so fear death
For we have conscience here, and what can we
Have worse hereafter? A foe is but a foe,
Whether he be before us or behind us;
And granting sleep is but unconsciousness,
Then all are dead when sleeping, and all sleep,
Then all do die, and often, that do live.
I in this cave will strive to sleep a little,
Dying a while that I may longer live,
Live as I hope to yet see die mine enemy.

Entering the cave.

Death is for all of us, that is most sure,
And what there is beyond it Moses saith not.

Interior of the cave.

ABIATHER (*aside, and in the gloom of the cave.*)

And is this all, thou darkened murderer?
But thou'lt soon know what there is after death
For such as thee, thou comest to thy doom.

SAUL *lies down and falls asleep, and DAVID and ABISHAI advance from amongst the men, who are in the sides of the cave.*

Now, now the opportunity is come
To cut him off; now wherefore shouldst thou scruple,
Would he spare thee now wert thou in his power?
Thou hast not heard his words, I wish thou hadst,
His words, the wicked words with which he entered
The cavern were prophetic. It was God
Sentencing him by his own mouth, and bidding
Us to perform His vengeance on the slayer
Of innocence. Art thou still obdurate?
Nay I will not hear even thee plead for him!
Ah, did himself once listen unto pleadings,
Vented with agony and wringing hands,
For me and my dear father and my kindred?
Yet here art thou, thou whom he hates and seeks
To kill, aye here art thou pleading for him,
Pleading for him who is thine enemy,
Him who may presently be thy destroyer.
Oh, end him now, talk not of his anointing,
For he in our so impiously shed blood,
Himself has washed the anointing from his heart.

ABISHAI.

Yes end him, for behold the hour is come
Of which God spake when He said unto thee,
“I will deliver thy foe into thy power,
That thou mayest use him as thou shalt think fit.”

DAVID.

Peace, both of you for I will never harm him.

ABIATHER.

Hear both of us.

ABISHAI.

Yes, listen to us, David.

DAVID.

I will not listen to his taking off.

ABISHAI.

He will take thee off perhaps this very day.

DAVID.

The Lord defends me; I will not harm Saul.

ABIATHER.

Oh, may some fatal harm this day befall him!
I say there shall, for mine own arm shall work
Wherein thine fails thee: Moses had no shadow
Of my grim provocation yet he slew.—
Retire thou shalt not see what I will do.

DAVID.

Defile thou not thy sacerdotal hand,
'Though I should let thee, which I mean not do.

ABIATHER.

Ah, I perceive my words are all in vain !

ABISHAI.

Cousin, I pray you take his life at once,
And in the taking of it keep your own.

DAVID advances to SAUL, and cuts off the skirt of his robe.

DAVID.

I will take this, but not his life. In person
He is too near, if not too dear, unto me.
For Michal's sake and Jonathan's, and more
Because he is indeed the Lord's Anointed,
I will not touch him vengefully.

To his companions in the sides of the cave, having returned to them.

God forbid

That I should break yon consecrated vessel,
Although, its hallowed wine being spilled and drained,
It now stands foul and empty Friends, beseech not,
I dare not hold him common, and life's flame
Quench in yon lamp by Samuel once made sacred.

*The BAND murmur, and SAUL, having awoke, rises and leaves the cave,
DAVID and his men coming forth into the midst of it.*

Remain you here, let no one follow me.

*DAVID goes to the mouth of the cave and seeing SAUL, at a little distance,
departing, calls after him.*

My Lord the King, why does your Majesty
Listen to those who say I am disloyal ?
Lo, this very hour, and in this very cave,
How easily I could have ta'en your life ;
And so some bade me do, but I refrained.
" I will not harm," I said, " the Lord's Anointed."
In proof of which behold here your robe's skirt,
Which sole I took, yet could as easily
Have ta'en your life as it. Yes look on this,
Oh, father, look and see ; look, see your robe's
Skirt in my hand ; oh, see, and then believe,
Believe, oh sire, that since I took but this
And spared your life, believe that I am honest.
Why have you ever thought that I was other ?
Why am I hunted like a beast o'th forest ?
Let the Lord judge between us, let the Lord
Be my Avenger, for I will not harm you.
Oh that your majesty should have dread of me !
Have dread of one so poor and weak as I.

Is not this search unworthy of you ? for
 After what is your majesty come out ?
 After a flea ? Is it after a dead dog ?
 For what could I do (even if I were so minded)
 Against your majesty ? But I will nothing :
 Let the Lord judge between us ; let Him enquire ;
 Yes, let Him plead my cause still with your anger ;
 Let Him deliver me.

SAUL, *without*.

Is that thy voice,
 David my son ? Is that indeed thy voice
 My generous one ? Nay thou art better than I,
 Because I have requited thee with evil,
 Whereas thou hast requited me with good !
 Thou hast now proved thy past fidelity,
 And present friendship, by thus sparing me
 When in thy power, for when foes take foes
 Do they allow them to escape unhurt ?
 Therefore may God reward thee, David, for
 Thy late forbearance towards me ; and now,
 Why now I am convinced thou shalt be king,
 And give a dynasty to Israel ;
 Then swear unto me by the Lord that thou,
 When thy strong hour of sovereignty is come,
 Wilt not extirpate my posterity.

DAVID.

If present oath can bind the future, then
 I swear your issue always shall be safe.

DAVID *re-enters the cave*.

SCENE X.

A Solitary Place, at the foot of the mountains of En-gedi.

SAUL, *returning from his pursuit after David*.

What is it that drags at me like a steed
 Pulled backwards by a hand upon its bridle ?

A Voice.

Back, back to thy quarry, king, go back,
 Why dost thou thus of firmness lack ?

SAUL.

Who spake those words ? They are the very ones
 That I would hear ! The air is calm, yet see !
 See the grass waves, and motion runs along
 The bushes, like as darkening ripples pass
 On the gust-fretted pool. — 'Twas but my fancy!

A Voice.

Back, back to thy quarry, king, go back,

Why dost thou thus of firmness lack?

SAUL.

No fancy 'tis, but motion and a voice:
What voice? — full well I know what words. Lo, lo,
See how the movement creeps along the shrubs,
And now, arrested at that juniper,
Subsides into a trembling. Can this be
Jehovah speaking to me as He once
Spake unto Moses from the burning bush?
I will prostrate me for it may be He.

Falls upon his face.

Lord speak again, if it were Thou that spake.
If it be Thou that does command me to
Return and do my unaccomplished errand,
Behold I go: Oh, Lord, command again,
And I will go, and spare not, as I did
Once in fond pity the obnoxious Agag.

Enter MALZAH and TYRANNEE simultaneously, but at opposite sides.

MALZAH.

I deem I shall persuade him to return,
For he appears to be grown superstitious.

TYRANNEE.

What brings thee here, and what is it thou art doing?
Ah, wilt thou frown on me? Dost think to grow
Refractory? Return unto Gibeah.

MALZAH.

No, I disdain thee, yes, I hate thee, I
Will not return unto Gibeah, but
I'll roam whene'er and wheresoe'er I will.
I am at large; thou shalt not reconfine me;
I'm weary of this task, nor will pursue it
Longer beneath thine odious tyranny.

TYRANNEE advances towards him threateningly with a wand.

Thou thinkest I'll flee: nay, thou'rt no more than I.

TYRANNEE strikes him with her wand.

Oh, oh, oh, oh; why dost thou beat me thus?
Can I not feel? Thou wouldst have tickled me once,
And I'd have blessed thee in my keen delight,
But now, — oh, oh, — I have a word for thee somewhere —
But now, vile jade, and most Abhorred Production,
I'll pray seven ages length for thy destruction.
I will not go, no we will scratch for it first.

Lies down upon the ground.

TYRANNEE, *(aside.)*

I will arouse the King, who has been taken
At disadvantage by yon restive demon,

Who timed his tempting for the moment when
Saul's soul was torn by a divided will.

Goes with her wand towards Saul.

MALZAH.

Yes let him feel it too, 'tis full of vigor.
Oh, to lay it on thyself now with all rigor!

SAUL, *rising, after having been touched with the wand.*
Surely I have been deceived, and love and hatred,
Contending in me, have up conjured signals.
No, no, no, no:

I will no more pursue him, for I am
Now as a country that has long been harried
By predatory hordes, and which, decayed
By its own follies, vices, feuds, and factions,
Must suffer more from the barbarian
Who shall at last it rule.

Exeunt SAUL and TYRANNEE at different sides.

MALZAH.

Go both of you,
But principally, thou angel, go. Go thou
Disreputable bearer of the rod,
Thou flagellator of unseemly parts,
And take thy cudgel with thee. Like a dog
At length thou smitest me. Oh, oh the day
When I began at cur with her to play!
I'll crawl upon the ground,
For she at last has turned me to a hound.

Exit on all fours.

SCENE XI.

Gibeah. An Apartment in the Palace.

SAUL and JONATHAN.

JONATHAN.

I say your majesty has not a right,
To take again that which you have once given;—
Nay have not given, for he bought my Sister,
Bought her of you with the peril of his life.

SAUL.

Hast thou forgotten that, by our holy law,
Parents can stone a disobedient child?
They can retake the life which they have given it,
How much more then shall I, king too and parent,
Withdraw my child from an approved traitor?
Traitor thyself, for well I know thou lovest him,
Better than thou dost me, or mother or sister.
Peace, for thy sister is his wife no longer,

She shall be given to Phalti.

JONATHAN.

Rather say,

She shall be stolen from David.

SAUL.

She is childless

Yet, and I'll see there shall not be a creature
Made out of her and David's elements.

Why, man, I see God working: 'tis the Lord
Till now hath made her barren, for no woman,
Of all our family, was so long unfruitful.

JONATHAN.

Ah, what a wretched strain and subterfuge!

SAUL.

Ay, thou, I know, wouldst gladly see a cub
Made up of Saul and David, so that I
Could not destroy the one without the other.

JONATHAN.

Am I myself not next unto the throne,
In the due order of inheritance?

SAUL.

Thou art, but wouldst vacate and place him on it,
Didst thou possess it, and if I, being dead,
For abdication could not punish thee,
And him for usurpation; he shall lose
Not only wife but life; yes, he shall die
Whilst I yet live, for whilst he lives I cannot
Or live or die in piece. What more his life
Than mine, so oft imperilled, or thine own?
What hath he done in arms that doth transcend
Thy feat at Michmash, that thou so him worshipp'st?

JONATHAN.

'Tis for his goodness more than for his valor
That thus I love him, for I love him as dearly
As if he were indeed my natural brother;
Nor shall I deem him from me more remote
Although you should disjoin him from my sister.

SAUL.

I will disjoin her, she shall have a divorce
For a cause which was not contemplate by Moses.
Both thee and her I'll free to mate again,
If you can virtue find in other men;
For thou, poor fool, hast wed thyself unto him.

JONATHAN.

Do as you will, for it is many a day
Since you were ruled by reason. Yet some freak

We had allowed to you, but this last folly
Crowns David's wrongs, and heaps your deeds unholy.

Exit.

SAUL.

I have a sense which he hath not, or, if
He hath it, is within him latent ;
A sense prophetic which appears from him
Withheld by this strange friendship. Talk of love ;
Why I love David much as he doth : David,
Unhappy man ! yet more unhappy I ;
He, as by destiny rising towards the throne,
I all resolved till death to keep my seat,
And leave it to my heirs. And how to do it ?
If he could change his nature, be no longer
That which he is, and if, he, being able,
Were also willing, then 'twere easily done.
Or could myself consent to a great humbling,
Forgetting that my children in my humbling
Would too be humbled, that way might the peace
Flow on between us, like a silent river
Which no keel ploughs, nor grim sea-monster churns
Oft into eddies and distains with blood.
Then might we gradually exchange our stations
And functions, even as the Sun and Moon
(With sweet consent unbittered by dishonor)
Do in the sky, he rising to my setting.
But if he could his nature change, say, would he ?
Say, will the Strong forego his strength, the Wise
His wisdom, or the Clever his skill ? No, never :
Neither can I consent to leave the throne,
And all my regal honors alienate
From me and mine. The stars shall sooner fall
Each from its sacred altar in the heavens,
In which they glow like endless sacrifice
Than that. That may arrive indeed, but not
(Though I 'tis true begin now to grow old)
Till bright-eyed manhood shall consent to assume
The dull, cold stare of dotage. Thus confirmed
By cool reflection ; my ever burning impulse,
My instinct being, thus by chilly logic,
Inflamed like fire before the breath of frost,
I will pursue him to a mortal end,
Will, set upon a tragic issue, hunt
Him into the cold shades of torpid death,
Since by his death alone I hope to live.

Enter the ZIPHITES.



Ah, my old friends! What news?

The ZIPHITES whisper to SAUL and then depart.

Ha, ha, ha, ha.

In his old haunt on Hachilah of the wild,
And doubtless thereon his old treason hatching.

Enter an OFFICER.

Three thousand men with Abner to command them :
Well chosen let them be, and ready at nightfall
To march whither I shall wish them.

Exit OFFICER.

Prompt my deeds

Shall be henceforth, and close on the conception ;
Between which and the nimble execution,
No space shall be wherein a doubt may lodge,
Like moisture within walls, and freeze my will
In a cold winter of anxiety,
Into irresolution, and therewith
At last o'erthrow my firm-built purpose' frame.

Exit.

SCENE XII.

Near the wooded Hill of Hachilah. SAUL and his Staff.

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

Your majesty, your enemy has fled
Out of the covert fastness of the hill,
On to the savage plain.

SAUL.

On after him.

Bid Abner to advance his force with speed.

Exit OFFICER.

Straight all assist to get our men in motion :
The soldier rests not more than doth the ocean.

Exeunt Staff.

Wherever he shall flee to I will chase him,
Though it be down to hell! Now come, kind Fate,
If ever I have well deserved of thee
Now will I. All corporeal vigor, and
The higher and stronger ministry of the mind,
I'll task unsparingly, and be prodigal
Of present pains that I may spare pains when
The future comes ; may sit and play the fool,
When pilfering years have left me weak and cool.

Exit.

SCENE XIII.

*The wilderness. Time, Evening.*DAVID, (*alone.*)

My spies inform me that, in very deed,
The king hath come.

Enter AHIMELECH the Hittite and ABISHAI

Good friends, what news?

AHIMELECH *the Hittite.*

The King

And all his force, compelled by weariness so,
(For such unparalleled exertions, both
In speed and width of range of his advance,
That hath the country scoured in its swift march,
Which, like the month of March astride the wind,
Ending the term of winter's gloomy reign,
Ending our reign on gloomy Hachilah,
Were surely never made beforetime,) have
Encamped, but, to their weariness adding wariness,
Have round them dug a trench, to make secure
Their snatch of sleep.

DAVID.

Who will accompany me

To view their camp more nearly?

ABISHAI.

I.

DAVID.

So be it.

When night has doubled her down-falling veil
We'll towards them steal. 'Tis favorable that
The moon is mobbled up in thick-woven clouds.

ABISHAI.

The firmament is blank, and black as is
A yet unlighted hall, nor will the stars,
Methinks, at any time to night, be allowed,
Like sychophants in a corrupted court,
To hold their tiny tapers in the air,
And shed down light to expose us, for the clouds
Grow heavier, and more vapor is coming up
From seaward.

DAVID.

All goes well: let's start at once.

Exeunt.

SCENE XIV.

*The Camp of Saul. Time, Night.**SAUL sleeping in the trench, his spear stuck in the ground near to his head. ABNER and the rest lying round him.**Enter DAVID and ABISHAI and approach to SAUL.*

DAVID.

Ah, here's a change! The king is waning surely.
 Waning in faculty as well as health, for
 This is most strange remissness, to allow us
 To pierce into the centre of their camp.
 The king was wont to have his watch kept strictly.
 Step softly now. How odd it is, to be
 Walking by night a narrow plank of hazard,
 Over a gulf of foes, with whom as friends
 We once trod life's broad road in day's broad beam!
 I know the most of these who come to take me.
 See yonder, Abner in the darkness lying:
 And there are Gad and Dan, and there lies Zohab,
 And here, close at our very feet, behold
 The form to be distinguished midst ten thousand;
 The king, my most unreasonable foe,
 My royal, wretched, raging persecutor.

ABISHAI.

Twice God has given him to thee: stand away,
 And let me strike him; let him not escape;
 Prythee let me now, — nay, hinder not: I'll pin him
 With his own spear to the earth, and with one blow
 That there shall need no second.

DAVID.

Thou wilt wake him. —

ABISHAI.

Ay, that I will!

DAVID.

No more on't. Kill him not;
 For who can take the life of God's Anointed
 And still be guiltless? There requires no haste;
 For, sure as God rules kings, who rule the world,
 God's-self shall visit him, or else his time
 Shall come that he must die, like other men,
 Or his gigantic figure shall descend
 And perish, yet, in battle. God forbid
 That I should lift my hand against the Lord's
 Anointed; and to-night, unbidden,
 Finish his reign! no, but now take his spear
 There at his bolster, and the water cruse,

And quick let us begone.

ABISHAI.

And leave him scathless?

Let me impale him with the spear: I'll pin him
Down with it as with a pin would a lad a fly. —
Nay this were foolisher than the cutting off
Of his robe's skirt!

DAVID.

I will not let thee hurt him.

Obeys at once: take them, and let us go.

Exeunt, ABISHAI taking the spear and cruse.

SCENE XV.

*The top of a hill, at a distance from the camp. Time, immediately
succeeding that of the last scene.*

DAVID, shouting.

Awake, awake, you mockery of soldiers!
What ho! Awake, awake,
Abner, awake, awake: Oh, Saul, awake,
Abner, awake; why answerest thou not, Abner?

ABNER (*from the camp*).

Who calls thus on the King?

DAVID.

Abner, art thou

Not now the foremost soldier of the King?
Then wherefore has he not been guarded by thee?
For there has been among you one who came
To take his majesty's life. Is this well done?
As the Lord liveth you deserve to die,
For having failed to guard His own Anointed.
Was this the discipline when I was with you?
Could this thing have been done where I commanded?
For now see where the king's spear is, and cruse
Of water, that was standing at his bolster.

SAUL, (*from the camp*).

Can that again thy voice be, my son David?

DAVID.

It is my voice. Why does your majesty
Thus persecute me? Why am I thus hunted?
What have I done? What ill intention do I
Harbour against you, that your majesty
Inexorably seeks me? Hear me, King;
If it be God who thus incites thee 'gainst me,
Let me appease Him by an offering;
But if instead it be but wicked men,
Be they accursed in His most holy sight,

For they, at length, have forced men into exile,
 Whereto I go, for they have forced me, saying,
 "Worship false gods, and in false temples bow."
 Cease, seeking, then, to spill my blood before
 God's face, (for I will go,) your majesty cease,
 These wicked and most foolish expeditions;
 Most foolish even as they are most wicked,
 For lo, the king of Israel has sallied
 Forth with an armament to seek a flea, —
 After a partridge in the mountains comes
 The king of Israel hunting with his army.

SAUL.

David, I have done wrong! return, for I
 Will no more seek to injure thee; return,
 For since again thou hast respected me,
 I do believe that thou accountest me sacred.
 Return, as I will to Gibeah; since,
 Let heaven accomplish what it have ordained
 My hand shall never with thy blood be stained.
 David, I do confess to thee that I
 Have played the fool, and grievously outraged thee.

DAVID.

Behold your majesty's spear: send some to fetch it;
 And may God render unto all of us
 According to our justice and forbearance;
 May he, decide henceforth between us, and,
 Since I have twice considered your majesty's life,
 May He my life consider, and deliver me
 From my adversity.

SAUL.

Now go thy way,
 And blessing be upon thee, my son David,
 For thou art destined yet to do great things,
 And shalt still over all prevail. Depart,
 I swear that thou henceforward shalt be safe.

DAVID.

Despite his oaths, I know that by his hand
 I yet shall perish if I stay in Israel.
 Nought better is there left for me, than that
 I should escape at once into Philistia;
 So that he shall despair to find me more.

Exit.

END OF ACT FOURTH.

A C T V.

SCENE I.

Gibeah. An Apartment in the Palace.

SAUL and an OFFICER of the royal household.

OFFICER.

Your majesty, David hath shelter sought
With Achish, king of Gath.

SAUL.

There let him stay,
And never be his name more mentioned to me ;
Go now, and see what I have bid be done.

Exit OFFICER.

Samuel is dead, and I prize life no longer :
My children hate me, or, at least, despise me ;
And Ahinoam is mouldering in the grave.
I am forsaken now of God and man ;
For, though no one doth openly rebel,
No more exists that fond alacrity,
Shewn to my hests when I began to reign.
Now all is slow, and must be bidden loudly ;
Or if there is in some a shew of zeal,
'Tis all eye-service.

Enter a COURIER.

Well, what are thy news ?

COURIER.

Of the Philistines, who have crossed, your majesty,
Again our border, and encamp at Shunem.

SAUL.

Before I bid them welcome say their numbers.

COURIER.

In truth, I cannot say, but they are greater
Than have before been brought against your majesty.

SAUL, (*aside.*)

At length I feel that I am growing loth
To meet them, hazarding my life for others.
Yet why it cherish, since I prize it not ?
What sayest thou, thou knowest not their numbers,
But knowest they are more than former hosts ?
The more the merrier is the word at revels,
And more their numbers more our sword shall revel

Up to its neck in blood, and as a drunkard
 Over his cups is loth to journey home,
 So shall it grieve to return unto its scabbard.
 Go get thee some good cheer, for thou lookest weary.

Exit COURIER.

Now come thou butcher Saul, thou man of blood,
 Rise up and kill ; rise up within thyself :
 What matters what thine enemies' numbers are,
 If thou and thine be yet what once they were ?

Exit.

SCENE II.

Another Apartment in the Palace

MALZAH.

Alas, alas,
 If I were mortal I should now expire,
 From rumination and forced solitude.
 To be restricted to these palace walls,
 Is nearly as intolerably dull
 As to lie hatched i'th compass of Saul's skull,
 (As late I did,) like chicks within their eggs ;
 Yes more, for, 'tween each moon's new birth and full,
 I could abandon it to stretch my legs.
 Why am I still retained by heaven's warden,
 Who does not urge me now to enter Saul ?
 Has she some purpose of revenge on me,
 For my oft slights upon her dignity ?
 No, we are friends, I have not sauced her lately,
 Nor has she lately poked me with her pole,
 Nor frowned she when she last detected me
 Making grimaces at her from behind,
 As I like (what I was) an absent fool,
 Saw not that she was looking in a mirror,
 Till I therein beheld my own wry face,
 Soon straightened by the sense of my disgrace.
 Oh, 'twas a stupid escapade, and never
 Done before, save by a crazed, comic barber,
 Who, as his customer wiped at a glass his chin,
 Behind stood, did grotesquely at him grin.
 Would I had not so grossly misbehaved,
 Or that she could no longer bear to harbour
 Me near her for that scorn ! But I believe that
 I feel her influence slackening, and Saul's
 Gone to the wars, and (most strange thing with him)
 Loth and despairing : all which seems to tell
 That presently I shall bid him farewell.

Poor, wretched Monarch, he is ever gloomy ;
 And, though at times he strives to shake off sorrow,
 As I have seen an old and half-blind eagle,
 Shake out its haggard pinions o'er its æry,
 Then wind with youthful speed into the skies,
 True cheerfulness of heart is from him gone.
 Why did I ever thoughtlessly engage
 To make his soul more wretched than mine own !
 I have my moments of insane delight,
 But he is never pleasant.
 'Twas in an evil hour I came to tempt him,
 For this most vile transaction ends not here,
 But I shall always self-upbraidings know,
 Oft as I meet him in the realms below.
 I wish I could obtain
 A cup of Nectar, Moly, or Nepenthe !
 I'll to the vault and snuff at the king's winebags,
 For abstinence may grow at last too lengthy.

Exit.

SCENE III.

Gilboa. Adjacent to the Hebrew camp.

SAUL.

With Gilgal in my memory, and all
 The evil done and suffered by me since,
 I fear to fight this last and greatest host
 Without some sacred sanction, and repent
 Now, more than with my old and fixed remorse,
 Of my slaughtering of Nob's prophets, though they were
 Fomenters of rebellion to a man.
 And well I know that I was then possessed,
 I know that I was then beneath the demon,
 So may Jehovah then be merciful,
 And, not imputing it to me, yet answer ;
 For I will order that His priests forthwith
 Assemble here, and seek unto Him for me.

Enter ABNER.

Abner, how seem our men ?

ABNER.

They seem to think
 Defeat and death are surely waiting for them.
 To take them to the assault, or with them think
 To bear the brunt of battle when it comes,
 Were fond as think to stop an avalanche
 With yielding air, or falling rocks with water.

SAUL.

I know that they, as once they did at Gilgal,
Increase each others bodings by communion.
But hear it, and then wonder at it, Abner;
I have resolved on what may give them courage;
I have resolved again to seek the Lord,
His priests shall ask for me his Oracle.

ABNER.

I'm glad to hear you uttering these words,
And not a soldier but will swear new fealty
To you and yours, when hearing of this purpose.

SAUL.

I know not that. — However gather thou
The priests, to ask the Lord what He doth wait
For me to do, whom they must always hate.

ABNER.

May this be the beginning of fair days!

Exit ABNER.

SAUL.

I feel that I at last am come unto
The crisis and the pivot of my fortune:
Long lost among dark mounts and crags, at length
I stand upon a pointed pinnacle,
From which I shall ascend into the sky,
Or topple to the abyss.

Exit.

SCENE IV.

*Gibeah. The same Apartment of the Palace as in Scene 2nd.*MALZAH, *entering staggering.*

There, there, I am in daylight once again!
Now, were it night, I could believe that I
Had seen green stars. It is no falsehood (though
It is a great disgrace) to say I quailed.
I do abhor all cats, whether they be living
Ones, and rejoicing in one hirsute tail,
Or dead, and wielded, ones, with nine of fire.

Sings.

I've seen with fear and foul surprise,
A pair of green and goggle eyes; —
Or they were two mock-suns, I think,
Or sunshine skulking in a chink.

Sinks on to the floor.

Now grant that Tyrannee shall not appear!
I find the vapors of the vault abuse me,
Setting me down when they should raise me up.

If such the fume be what must be the fluid ?
The former has o'erthrown me, and the latter
Would sink me to insensibility's pit.

Sings.

Ho, ho, to heaven I go ; —
A cat was in the vault below, —
My heels are rising o'er my bead,
And on the floor I make my bed. —

I am not only dizzy but confused ;
I'm totally abroad in my ideas.
Yet I am sure I saw and heard a cat.

Sings.

Mew, mew, a cat did mew,
That a cat was in the vault is true,
The vault that Saul's his wine in.
'Twas a black cat, and smelt a rat,
Or haply mouse's tail so fat ; —
'T should have kept silence and all that ;
I flew around it like a bat,
Or a moth round taper shining.
Its eyes were bright as a flambeau's light,
Each seemed a lone and lurid sprite,
Surrounded by Cimmerian night. —

I hate cats, terrestrial and celestial,
I hate both Tom and Tyrannee ! Foh, foh,
Wine-fumes, ferment not in me, foh, fumes, foh,
I'm neither vault nor vat for your effervescing.
Wine is a mocker, and its fume delusion,
I thought that it would make me strong and cheer me,
But find that it has made me weak and foolish.
Foh, foh, a vision of cats ! of amorous cats,
Of green-eyed, hirsute, archbacked, house-top cats,
Such as I have beheld upon the eaves
At evening dim, at midnight, and at dawning,
And heard their cries more foul than furies yawning.
I hate cats, terrestrial and celestial,
I say I hate both Tom and Tyrannee.
Foh, foh, but that's not germain, foh, foh, choke him.

Sings.

That vile cat woos on summer nights,
When the moon is brightly beaming,
And oft Gibeah's ear affrights
With squalls of naughty meaning.

I find I must hold on by these hard stones,
For, though I cannot fly a perch or rood,
I'm hanging on the ceiling like the flies there.

I did ascend from the cellar on my head.
 But what a fragrant air the dim vault hath !
 Vinous is not the term, for 'tis divine ;
 The breath of an archangel hath that wine :
 It is a god ; I will return to inhale
 Again the spirit of that deity.

Exit, and re-enter reeling.

I like it even better than before.
 How proud I felt as I was sat astraddle
 Of that inspiring bag ! How it did swell
 Beneath my haunches ! I could drop to hell
 In extasy thereon, or I could ride
 Gloriously upwards into heaven astride.
 Lo, lo, I soar now, lo, I soar, I soar !

Falls on the pavement.

Ah, I am smitten with consequence unexpected.
 I have ever spoken in wine's praise ; —
 I now recant ; 'twould ruin an archangel.
 Wine is a knave, wine is a traitor, wine's
 A spirit o'erthrower, wine is a sham blessing,
 Wine's like my Peyona, a curse disguised !
 Curse ye, ye cats, terrestrial and celestial ;
 May my anathema smite you severally
 Where the tail grows ! Ho, ho, ho, ho ; oh to
 Live ever thus in this sublunary world !

Enter TYRANNEE.

TYRANNEE.

Ah, art thou merry, idler ? Drunk !

MALZAH.

Yes, lady,

And growing drunker : wert thou never drunk ?
 Descend you with me to the crypt beneath,
 And though thou hast oft scourged me past all measure,
 I will forgive, and teach thee a new pleasure.
 Wilt go there, lady ? — but I cannot rise,
 Because I am transfixed by thy bright eyes.
 Now I do love thee, though I've seemed to hate thee !
 Wilt thou be kind ? for I am growing strong,
 And soon shall be again a happy angel :
 I have repented much, and 'twere a folly
 In thee, to scorn with me a union holy.
 I pray thee to discard now that cold aspect :
 I see thou art not angry ; I do see
 Sweet things and loving in thee, I do see
 Thee loving, great, and noble. Thou art a Princess,
 And kindness would exalt thee to a Queen,

Would on thy fair front put a diadem,
 Would make thee Empress and my Zuzeraine.
 Oh, my august, graciously-listening lady,
 Canst thou thus see me lying? Raise me, Queen,
 Oh, raise me to thy lips; oh, lift me, Empress,
 Oh, hug me Zuzeraine, oh thrilling Empress,
 Oh, love-begetting Queen, oh, my Afflatus,
 Oh, Spirit greater than Wine's, with what desire
 Have I until this hour towards thee gone pregnant!

TYRANNEE.

And can a spirit of heaven be so low fallen!

MALZAH.

I would have fallen lower but I could not;
 I fell upon these stones at thy approach,
 To do thee honor. Have I known thee, then,
 For infinite ages nearly and for nothing?
 Nay, nay, not so. Pray thee walk over me.
 Oh, to be pressed by thine imperial foot!
 Make me thy pedestal, magnificent image.
 Nay leave me not — make me thy footstool, Tyrannee,—
 I do implore thy tarrying, — sit on me
 As on thy throne, celestial Empress, —
 I do entreat and agonize for thy company, —
 Ascend me, mount upon me, Goddess,
 That I may groan beneath, yea, worship thee!
 Ah, thus to leave me is a chastisement,
 It is a chastisement just now to lose thee.

TYRANNEE.

I'll leave him unchastised from simple pity;
 Sparing the spirit whilst I loathe the monster.

Exit.

MALZAH.

What did she call me? A spiritual monster?
 Come back, thou spiritless spirit; I am Malzah,
 Who is a spiritual cock of game,
 And, though befuddled, can yet tell his name.
 Monster! by hell, I am no Should-have-been spinster!
 Monster! by heaven, I count myself a dragon.
 I am a great and rolling amphisbeana,
 And can retort a hiss from any goose.
 Thou thinkst thyself a swan, and yet art but
 A poor, moult-stricken, heaven-barn-door fowl,
 That pecks up pleasure's enervating grain,
 Whilst I feed on invigorating pain.
 Come look on me who never was a chicken,
 Come, skyey bird, return, thou painted raven,

Ha ha, bird, ha, forgettest thou what I am ?
 I am the breath of Metamorphosis.
 I lost one day my bright, original image, —
 Thy consort tore it from me in the scrimmage
 And wears it now. — Ha, ha, thou lovest it,
 And therefore dost thou chasten it in proxy
 By chastening me. A spiritual monster !
 I am a hell-cock, I'm a cockatrice,
 I am a basalisk, a king of serpents,
 A dark, and daring, drunken, deimon-dragon :
 I am as pungent as a frosty wind,
 Or penitence when it pricks deep the mind,
 To such as thou. — Why do I roost down here,
 If I am the infernal chanticleer ?

Springs on to a tripod.

Let me awake the morn, or with a tune,
 As it is evening, serenade the moon.

Sings.

Oh, mo-on, oh, mo-on, —
 No, she hath horns, and so have I. I thirst.

Reeling on the Tripod.

It must be windy for I'm blown about
 Like a boy's kite. I shall fall soon unsung.

Sings.

So let my throbbing thrapple swell,
 For merrier cock ne'er crew in hell ;
 And he's a fool, whoe'er he be,
 Who holds unequal sympathy.

Tumbles from the tripod.

Sympathy, sympathy,
 Who holds unequal sympathy.

Nodding.

Now I perceive that I am growing dull,
 Or perhaps the wine-fumes do me lull.
 Lull, lull ; full, full ;
 Malzah is fast growing dull. I thirst, I thirst,
 And all from singing so much, and the sight
 Of this deserted palace, which has put me
 Down in the horrors and the land of drought.
 Crack, jaws, from lack of dew. Blow, evening wind,
 And feed me with your moisture. Would that might
 Some virgin seraph be blown full against me
 By a cross-gust, that I, glued to her lips,
 Might hang thereon and suck out all her joy !

Sings.

I thirst, I thirst, (with drought am cursed,)

For seraph's lips whose kiss is wine ;
 Oh Tyrannee, approach to me
 And let me taste at thine.

Enter TYRANNEE.

She melts !

TYRANNEE, *having dragged him to the door, and lain him on the outside.*
 There lie, poor wretch, for I have done with thee ;
 When thou shalt waken thou wilt find thee free.

Exit.

MALZAH, *without.*

Snooze, snooze, let me snooze,
 Just like mortals when they booze.
 Oh, horrid, monstrous, pleasant lethargy !

Sleeps.

SCENE V.

Gibeah. Time, the morrow. Enter SAUL and ABNER.

SAUL.

The prophets have not honestly enquired,
 No wonder : neither wonder what I'll do.
 I will have knowledge of a kind beyond
 That of my present insight. In dark hour
 I persecuted those who dealt with spirits !
 Why did I it with o'er-officious zeal,
 To please Jehovah, who now leaves me darkling ?
 Nay, look not grave, Abner, rebuke me not,
 My mind is bent unto my altered lot.
 Discover me, I charge thee by our kinship,
 One who has gotten a familiar spirit.

ABNER.

Good cousin, pray have not recourse to witchcraft.

SAUL.

It is the best craft going, for since Samuel
 Died priests are all imposters, and the line
 Of Aaron, long imagined half omniscient,
 Are blank as other men.

ABNER.

This is the very moving of despair,
 And never did despair yet win a field,
 Or sable doubt yet yean white victory.

SAUL.

I can no longer live, Coz, thus ! Oh, I
 Could live on hope, as the camelion
 Is said to live on air, but faith has ceased
 To animate me in these latter years ;
 And what there is hereafter, I have lately

Forgot to fear, as long since ceased to hope for.

ABNER.

Nay cousin, cease, or I indeed must leave you.

SAUL.

Even strife and change now only feebly stir me,
And I am growing old, even as a traveller walks
Over a dull, monotonous, windy common,
Beyond which lies his goal, some smoky town ;
Like him, I journey to some foul obscure.
Oh, I am sick to th' bottom of my being,
And there is no Physician, no going back
To youth, and health, and herd keeping in Gibeah.
They say that beggars must not choosers be,
And I have knocked at Heaven's door in vain,
So I will e'en betake me to another,
For some superior guidance than mine own
Mere veteran skill and courage have I will.

ABNER.

But it is said that all familiar spirits
Are spirits of evil.

SAUL.

Than myself, there'll be
None eviler, not one more desperate.
I will enquire myself, for I am set.

Exit.

ABNER.

I tremble, for I fear the hand of doom
Is on him, since no good can come from such
Dark consultation ; and 'tis said
None seek such, save they from whom God has fled.
I'll after him, for if this thing get out,
'Twill soon be bruited over all the army.

Re-enter SAUL and a SOLDIER with him.

SAUL.

The devil's found much sooner than the Lord,
By those who dare to seek him. This man says,
There is a woman now near Endor living,
And who hath gotten a familiar spirit.

To the SOLDIER.

Thou shalt go with me to her, — Ah, thou palest.

SOLDIER.

Your majesty, I have two comrades, who
Would dare the very devil in his den.

SAUL.

Go fetch them me, they are the very men.
I will to night be with the witch at Endor,

Put her in peril and from it defend her ;
 For that great oath which I 'gainst such have sworn,
 I break myself in my estate forlorn.
 How art thou Abner ? Come, my mate, be cheery,
 Although this season is but dark and dreary.
 I praythee, cousin, do not let us quarrel,—
 I go disguise me in some plain apparel.
 See that it is not known where I am gone to ;
 And be my absence hid from Jonathan :
 And may the powers that rule within the air
 Have you until to-morrow in their care.

ABNER.

I dare not say, amen, to that ; but go,
 And may your errand work you not much woe.

SAUL.

Whate'er it work, my will shall not abate,
 To know the best or know the worst of fate ;
 But principally to the witch I go,
 To be informed what 'tis I ought to do.
 Alas, that I should to such strait be driven,
 By an old quarrel with resentful heaven ;
 Or, as I doubt, mere priest-fomented feud,
 Inveterate, now being mixed with their own blood.
 On Samuel may the feud's accountment fall,
 And th' blood's upon the fiend that stirred my gall.
 He goes as gay, but sad at heart is Saul.
 Abner, wilt with me to my toilet come ?

ABNER.

Lead on, I'll follow, but with dread I'm dumb.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

Gibeah. The Courtyard of the Palace. Time, immediately after that of the last scene.

MALZAH, *running in wildly.*

Oh, joy, joy, I feel like an ass,
 That has tossed from his haunches a pannier of glass !
 I feel that I am free, I cannot doubt it :—
 But how came I vilely lying in yon corner ?
 I think that I kissed Tyrannee — did I ?
 And that her breath was most nectarious,—
 But on that head my thoughts are various.
 Where is she now ? perhaps ensconced in heaven,
 Telling how I was by her dogged and driven.—
 Why let it be so, I'll soon have my laugh
 At her, and at heaven too, with the spirits of Zaph.

Oh, how renewed again a demon feels
 When, just distrammelled, he kicks up his heels !
 Now for a rural range ; day hangs i'th sky,
 Let me begone from these abhorred precincts.
 Yet not without a look. I cannot curse it,
 No, I'm too happy ; I'm in a very happy mood,
 So happy that I'm growing good.
 Prosperity would make me again an angel.
 How old the palace looks already ! I'll
 Pass by it now and then and give it a blessing.
 I did not think our parting would be distressing,
 But use has caused me to like as well as loathe it.
 Strange that it should be so, most strange, — yet many
 Have told me that they were so used to it,
 They would regret to leave the stygian pit,
 I am not bent to that, although I know
 Not yet what I may be constrained unto.

A female servant crosses the court.

There's the sly slut that rated me so often
 For entering her master ; shall I tease her
 With swelling 'neath the waist, thick ancles, fleas, or
 Black nipples, pimples, or the like, or even
 Give her the erysipelas in the face,
 That she may seem a young and fiery drunkard ?
 Shall I so blight her now that none shall woo her ?
 Oh no, I cannot harm her in this vein,
 For joy has drawn from me my sting of mischief.
 I will believe in goodness from this hour.
 Oh, what so sweet as liberty regained !
 Why the wide world will now seem new to me,
 And as romantic as, at first, did heaven.

But how I talk ! now let me fly,
 On legs of love and wings of joy ;
 And peep into each chrystal glass
 Of fountain, as I by it pass,
 To see if from my visage go
 The traces of my recent woe,
 Then blithely let me journey on
 To meet Great Zaph ere sets the sun,
 Before the sun sets 'neath the sea,
 Again to Zaph re-render me.

Exit.

SCENE VII.

*A forest near the sea. Time, Evening.**ZAPH, seated, and TIPTOE standing near him.**TIPTOE, (aside.)*

At eve

How happy in these upland shades,
 To mark the sun through vista glades ;
 To mark the sun set o'er the sea,
 While slumber comes o'er Zaph and me ! —
 My master is about to speak.

ZAPH.

Tiptoe, the sun's descended beam
 Hath lain his rod on th' ocean stream,
 And this o'erhanging wood-top nods
 Like golden helms of drowsy gods.
 Methinks that now I'll stretch for rest
 With eyelids sloping towards the west ;
 That, through their half transparencies,
 The rosy radiance passed and strained,
 Of mote and vapor duly drained,
 I may believe, in hollow bliss,
 My rest in the empyrean is.
 Watch thou, and when upcomes the moon,
 Atowards her turn me ; and then, boon,
 Thyself compose, 'neath wavering leaves,
 That hang these branched, majestic eaves :
 That so, with self-imposed deceit,
 Both, in this halcyon retreat,
 By trance possessed, imagine may
 We couch in heaven's night-argent ray :
 For fond 't were not to make this earth
 All that to us it can be worth,
 Which is, (from our old major driven,)
 To appear to us a minor heaven :
 But few things are what they appear ;
 The smoothest 'neath the face are riven,
 And 'tis as safe to slumber here
 As, Tiptoe, erst it was in heaven :
 So here I lie, since it doth seem
 I soon shall sleep, perchance shall dream.

A Voice.

I'm coming, I'm coming along in my glee,
 I'm in the odour of sanctity ;
 And to stay therein I've sought each bloom
 Whose saintly mouth doth vomit perfume.

A holy, holy, holy rent
 My own mouth is that thus gives vent :
 I'm purged with sun and washed with dew,
 And girt with wood-bind coming to you ;
 Coming to you,
 Coming to you,
 Ha, ha, ha, ha, I'm coming to you.

ZAPH.

What cawing rook is that ?

TIPTOE.

I'll look sir. Oh,

It is that fool, that carrion crow,
 Malzah, there like a moving grove,
 Covered by creepers quaintly wove ;
 Half like an ivy covered tower,
 And partly like a spreading bower :
 'Twere hard, indeed, to find a name
 To designate aright the same :
 A whole whose parts are jessamine,
 Sweetbriar and fragrant eglantine,
 With cedar sprays and slips of fir,
 And southern wood and lavender.
 Upon his crown that bold he rears,
 A monstrous Heliotrope appears ;
 And central hung, beneath his nose,
 An odorous, celestial rose ;
 While lily cups, perhaps filled for drouth,
 In white festoon surround his mouth ;
 And butter-cups and scarlet bean
 Do vallance like pied beard his chin.
 Upon his cheeks like beds of bloom,
 Are mignonette and marjorum ;
 And balsam precious from his ears
 Protruding bunched profuse appears.
 Likewise a zone around him hung
 Of various berries quaintly strung,
 And rambling, tendriled, fragrant pea
 Around his rambling legs I see ;
 And he, as hitherward he hurries,
 Foolsparsley 'tween his fingers carries,
 While, still to keep the whole together,
 He has procured the wood-binds tether,
 And as in th' midst his eyes appear,
 They wear a wild and jovial leer :
 Most different he, thus pranked around,
 A green buffoon, than when I found

Him lately looking lean and bare,
 Save covering of official care,
 Carked in Gibeah, and void of sense,
 Save void on me his insolence.

ZAPH.

Malzah, and thus? why then there's news.

Enter MALZAH, tricked out grotesquely with foliage and flowers.

How now, fellow? why an owlet's eyes
 Would see through that thin, green disguise:
 Thou'rt Malzah; and to my surprise
 And pleasure comest, what news dost bring,
 That thus I heard thee gaily sing?

MALZAH.

I bring thee news of my release:
 And news that may your squire displease.

To TIPTOE.

Ah, cove, methinks we've ere this met!—
 What, art thou looking sulky yet?

TIPTOE.

Out! frothy, flimsy, and fantastic fiend!

ZAPH.

Patience, good Tiptoe, I shall question him.

MALZAH, (*aside*.)

I see he has accused me in my absence;
 So I'll make haste to accuse him in his presence.

To ZAPH.

Great Zaph, this was your late ambassador
 Unto me at Gibeah. Abrupt he came:
 And I in surly mood did deem him merely
 Some curious truant,—for, upon my honor,
 I knew him not,—so, after thought like this,
 "Genius never yet wrought its masterpiece
 But it was troubled with gazers," I him answered
 Curtly, and, as I now believe, in jest,—
 Deeming the semblance of good humour best,—
 And, while engaged in some slight parley with him,
 In stalks the Lady Tyrannee, an angel
 Whom I could wish to have brought to you for a lover;
 A most imperial Lady, that could cover
 With her august and thrice-transcendent charms,
 Her manifold on me performed harms:
 Charms that had covered o'er those harms I say,
 If I could by some potent charm have led
 Her willingly unto your arms and bed.

TIPTOE, (*aside*.)

Oh, Greasehorn, Greasehorn: oh, thou tongue of butter!

MALZAH.

In short, beset, sir, with a slight confusion,
I bade him pack to avoid thought of collusion.
But, on my honor, at first I knew him not.

TIPTOE.

What, didst thou not know me, a thousand times
Seen by thee? ay, and in a thousand times
Better company. Thine honour! Oh, oh, oh;
Not know me, aye? Inimitable liar!

MALZAH.

Draw, Flame! What, have you not a single firebrand?
Not even a single, smouldering rapier?
Oh! — but 'tis well: forgive me, lordly Zaph,
Forgive me, oh, forgive me: I do wander;
But this indeed does lift full high my dander.
Sprite, thou hast wings such as no other demon
Hath got for speed; tell me, wilt thou forgo
The swift salvation they would thee provide,
Were I to fall uncouthly on thy hide?
Knave, promise that thou wilt not from me flee,
While I with bare neives do belabor thee.

ZAPH.

No more, no more of this unseemly talk.

MALZAH.

Unseemly 'twas. [*aside.*] How vexed poor Tiptoe seems.

TIPTOE.

Master, allow me, with surcease of words,
To lace him with his own green, lacing cords.
And with him, bound upon my back, to flee
And cool his choler in yon glittering sea.
He's a profane fellow; a profligate villain.

MALZAH.

Villain?

Oh, had I thee to work my will on! —
But I must idle stand before my lord,
Though filled with labor is my heart. Good Zaph,
Mark how it beats itself against my side; —
But I succumb, nor, in your presence, chide.
Cool me in th' sea!

ZAPH.

I see you both are hot.

To TIPTOE.

Retire, thy grievance shall not be forgot.

TIPTOE *withdraws to a little distance.*

MALZAH, (*aside.*)

I see who is highest in favor.

ZAPH.

Malzah, now

Render account ; thou art escaped, but how ?

MALZAH.

I felt that I was liberated, so
 I have come hither past the Hebrew camp :
 And you must lose your favorite for a while,
 He having used a little small-scale guile
 Towards you : he cohabits with a witch
 At Endor, and to her our arts doth teach :
 A Witch to whom king Saul has this day gone
 To seek advice, since God to him gives none.

ZAPH.

What is his present and particular plight ?

MALZAH.

A piteous one : composed of doleful cheer,
 That last, worst state, despair combined with fear.
 For the Philistines have invaded Israel,
 In greater multitude than heretofore ;
 And conscience, for the slaughter of Nob's priests,
 Now on him presses with forebodings sore.
 I fear his course is drawing to an end.

ZAPH.

I thought these Witches were 'neath his outlawing.

MALZAH.

They were ; but who on prey hath never pounced
 Which once, to others, dirty he pronounced ?
 The Israelite is famishing for knowledge.

ZAPH.

Then I must lend my Tiptoe ! 'Tis great cost.

MALZAH.

Let Tiptoe go, for I am free to serve you.
 You will not lose him long.

ZAPH, (*aside.*)

Oh Tiptoe, Tiptoe,

Dost thou too wander after such foul pleasures ?
 Nay, I did think thee chaster than myself,
 Thee chaste Saltina's fancied as chaste lover.
 Oh, Tiptoe, Tiptoe, such low rites
 Are unbecoming to Heaven-born sprites.
 Only for clay-formed mortals dull
 Were meant those sports connubial.

MALZAH, (*aside.*)

I see his noble nature is disturbed.
 I'd give Peyona to him for his thoughts.

ZAPH, (*aside.*)

Now that there moving, vegetable mound,
 Malzah, with senseless green things overbound,
 Might, or might not, play lawless tricks of sense,
 But Tiptoe, oh,— but let this matter hence! —
 Samuel is dead, but my revenge survives,
 And will while Gloriel in triumph thrives.
 So let this petty grief o'er Tiptoe end,
 And every thought and purpose Saulward bend.
 My slaves I will assemble, and arouse
 To thwart the side that Gloriel shall espouse,
 Whether it be the huge, Philistine host,
 Or Saul to drive them homeward from his coast ;
 Found in the arena of the imminent fight,
 Whiche'er Heaven helps, we'll help the opposite.
To MALZAH.

Saul's host camps on Gilboa ?

MALZAH.

No, not now,

But in the fruitful valley of Jezreel.

ZAPH.

At once from land and sea my spirits I'll call.
 Come hither, my flighty Tiptoe.

TIPTOE *advances.*

I have learned

There is a hag whose business thou dost do
 Along with mine : I deemed not Tiptoe's soul,
 So pensive, could have stooped to pleasure foul.

TIPTOE.

Oh Master, hold, for I can clearly see
 That Malzah has vindictive slandered me.
 If ever these, my world-beholding eyes !
 More carnally than erst in Paradise,
 Have done their office on this spot of earth,
 May I by thee no more be held of worth ;
 May I be banished out of thy esteem
 And be commanded to consort with him.

MALZAH.

Tiptoe beware, or yet thy flaming blood,
 By me outdrawn, may set on fire this wood.

TIPTOE.

Believe me, Master, this poor Sorceress,
 From me hath known not kiss or foul caress.
 I knew her first when young and passing fair,
 And pure as ether, as such often are ;
 And I did talk with her, and on her smile
 Until she loved me, deeming all the while

I was a young, though widely travelled, swain
 Who had o'er the land trudged, and had dared the main.
 By her affection for me overcome,
 She lost her Sire's love, forfeited her home.
 Her sire was wealthy. Then it wrung my heart,
 Nor could I bring myself from her to part;
 And that she might not perish, or for bread
 Betake herself to vice, I taught her read
 Nature, that she might heal and prophecy,
 Selling her skill to any who would buy:
 And once, at midnight lonely sat with her,
 I told her what myself and functions were;
 Nor then she shrunk, but cast her steady eye
 Up unto mine and on my breast did lie,
 And told me in hoarse accents breathing low,
 That, for my love, love human she'd forgo.
 What could I do? I smiled, but not replied,
 And from that hour she's deemed herself my bride:
 So deemed, but ne'er to please a transient whim,
 Have we combined to forge an Anakim.

MALZAH, (*aside.*)

Had I heard this from others, I'd disbelieve it.
 And now I should imagine Tiptoe mellow
 Did I not know him an abstemious fellow;
 Except in honor, wherein he's a glutton,
 And can grow even furious when he's put on.

ZAPH.

I do believe thee, Tiptoe and forgive thee;
 Nor would Saltina chide thee, — now career
 And bring my Spirits nimbly to me here.

TIPTOE.

First let me drive that emerald monster forth,
 Then I will gladly for thee circle earth.

MALZAH.

Oh, hear him, Master! — Tiptoe, thou'rt a fool:
 I pray thee, Tiptoe, suddenly grow cool.
 I am a fool myself, nay a vile knave
 For having thus provoked a thing so brave:
 I swear upon my knavery's sober sooth,
 That I have wronged thee, — speaking out the truth.

TIPTOE.

Ah, ah!

MALZAH.

I love thee, Tiptoe: Tiptoe, I'm a liar,
 Or aught thou wilt, so thou'lt discard thine ire.
 Give me thy hand, nay let me shake thy toe,

Then on our gracious Master's errand go.

ZAPH.

Be pacified, my darling, he is sorry.

MALZAH.

Indeed I am. Give me thy cordial foot,
I ask no other, higher member, but
I must have with thee one forgiving wag;
I do repent; — thou knowest I'm given to brag.

Shaking TIPTOE's foot.

Oh, it were fond to think to strive with thee,
For thou couldst dip, yea drown me in the sea.

ZAPH.

Now, Tiptoe, for my Spirits straightway go.

TIPTOE.

I'll bring them to you in a trice or so.

Vanishes.

ZAPH.

So swiftly passes Tiptoe through space' field,
He looks back laughing at the gash unheal'd
Given to her by the passing of his form,
Which swifter is than thought or sunbeam's warm.

MALZAH, (*aside.*)

Methinks he wastes, grows leaner and more bare,
From frequent straining through the sieve o'th air.

ZAPH.

What, back so soon? I hear their sound.

MALZAH, (*aside.*)

Tiptoe's a wonderful fleet hound.

ZAPH.

They're nearing, for I hear their roar,
Like billows tumbling to the shore.

Enter TIPTOE and the Spirits.

This is done well, none can more prompt than you,
When you intend your discipline to shew.
Now take with me, in circles high, your flight,
To droop upon Jezreel when droops there night;
There to avenge (if may) the wrong that fell
On us at Michmash from proud Gloriel;
When, to assist the valiant son of Saul,
He in the earth made us to shake and crawl.

Except MALZAH, exeunt all, soaring through the top of the forest.

MALZAH.

I'll with them rise, and, on the wing,
Divest me of this covering:
But, wheresoe'er I go or be,
Keep from the clutch of Tyranniee.

Exit, as the others.

SCENE VIII.

Endor. Outside of the WITCH's house. Time, night.

Enter SAUL, in plain garments, and two SOLDIERS attending him, but disguised as his companions.

SAUL.

By the description, this must be her dwelling.
It stands alone, is ample, yet a hovel ;
With only one small window, that can scarcely
Admit sufficient light, even at noonday,
To chase thence darkness. Doubtless 'tis the place :
It seems fit habitation for dark rites.
Decay seems to possess it, and around
Mute in the dimness looms delapidation.
Knock thou, and make inquiry of who comes.

The 1st ATTENDANT knocks gently.

She comes not ; knock again ; and louder this time.

The ATTENDANT knocks a second time.

Aside.

Danger hath made the creature cautious ; and as I
Seek, in the darkness of my present plight,
To peer through her skill's medium, and learn
What were the best that I should do, so she,
Perchance, is from the darkness of her dwelling
Noting us through the casement, so that she
May know whether to admit us. Some one comes.

The door is slowly and partially opened by the WITCH who stands timidly within, with her hand upon the latch.

1st ATTENDANT.

Lives here the Wisewoman ?

WITCH.

What Wisewoman, stranger ?

There lives a woman here both poor and lonely.

1st ATTENDANT.

And is she now alone, and art thou she ?

WITCH.

I am the only woman dwelling here.—
You surely have not hither come to rob me !
Alas, what is there in this place forlorn ?

1st ATTENDANT.

Art thou the Witch and art thou now alone ?
Tell us for we are seeking to consult her.

WITCH.

And were I both pray what would you want with me ?
To inquire of such were now a misdemeanour,
Did any such survive beneath Saul's rigor.

Witches are none in Israel now thou knowest.

2nd ATTENDANT.

Fear not, we are honest men ; art thou the witch ?
For we are told that hereabouts there dwells one.

WITCH.

Art thou not mad to ask me such a question,
When such are now not to be found in Israel ?
Then how darest use that dangerous name towards me ?
Why come ye laying snares for a lone woman ?

2nd ATTENDANT.

We lay no snares ; but art thou not the witch ?

WITCH.

What I ?

2nd ATTENDANT.

Yes thou thyself. Do not to thee
The love-crossed wights and pining maids repair,
To learn their fate, or purchase from thee charms ?
Canst thou not tell where missing treasure is ?
Dost thou not prophecy who shall grow rich,
Who shall have fruitful wives, who disobedient
Children ; who early die, who live to see
Four generations, and be called greatgrandsire ?

SAUL.

Speak fearlessly, art thou not one of those,
Who in the weird sagacity of their art
Foretell which course shall proper and which not ;
What critical and pregnant enterprise
Succeed, and which result in black disaster ;
Art thou not one of those proud Sorceresses
Who have prevision, and the power to summon
Back to the world the spirits of the dead ?

WITCH.

The wind blows cool, come in.

They enter, and the WITCH closes the door.

SCENE IX.

Within the witch's house. The WITCH, SAUL, and the two ATTENDANTS.

WITCH.

Enter this inner room, for I to none
Give entertainment in this outer one,
That the rude winds do enter, and, for aught
I know, where stands now at the door a wolf,
Which may to-morrow howl among the hills
That I to-night was hospitable to you.
How know I you're sincere ! How do I know
But that you come to pry, and see whether I
Be she who here (as goes, you say, report)

Follows the Witch's now illegal art !
 Ah I suspect you, strongly I suspect you !
 I like not thee, tall stranger, thou'rt a spy
 And these men are thy witnesses. Ah,
 Ye cruel witnesses, for ye know well,
 Full well ye know all three what Saul hath done,
 How he hath put to death all female kind
 Who dared to have pure spirits for their lovers,
 And not a wizard is left in the land !
 Then wherefore come ye three men unto me,
 As though I were to conjurations given,
 Laying a snare for me, that you may hale
 Me hence to execution ?

SAUL.

Peace, I swear, —

WITCH.

What dost thou swear by ?

SAUL.

By whate'er thou wilt,
 By hell, for thou'st no interest in heaven.

WITCH.

How much hast thou ? — swear to me by the moon,
 That is the witch's workshop and arcana,
 From whence they cast on those who persecute them,
 Incurable disease, insanity
 Fierce, foul, renewed twice monthly, —

SAUL.

Ah !

WITCH.

Swear, swear.

SAUL.

I will not swear unto thee by the moon,
 But by the moon's Creator ; as God lives,
 There shall no mischief unto thee occur
 For doing what I bid thee.

WITCH.

Thou hast sworn.

SAUL.

And I will keep mine oath.

WITCH.

I tell thee, stranger,
 That thou hadst better, for I shall have given
 To me thy soul in endless slavery
 If thou prove treacherous ; — remember, and
 Now say what I must do.

SAUL.

Divine to me
By thy familiar spirit, since thou hast one,
And bring up him whom I shall name to thee.
Begin thine incantations, for the moments
Fly, and I've far to go and much to do
Or ere the dawn.

WITCH.

Whom wouldst thou I should shew thee ?

SAUL.

Shew to me Samuel.

WITCH.

Samuel ! Thinkest thou
That he'd appear for such as thou art ? No,
He would not come for any less than Saul ;
No, nor for him, for he is now abandoned,
And we whom he tormented are revenged.
Long have they said that God has left him. — Well,
Others have lost their souls beyond redemption ;
And in a sweeter way than he lost his.
They say he has a demon — so have others —
But come, I'll disappoint thee ; for, remember,
Samuel will not be roused for thee, although
I'll knock with thunder at his resting place,
And send my piercing Spirit (who, like frost,
Can penetrate a rocky sepulchre)
To project molten lightning through his bones.
Prostrate yourselves, nor, till I bid you, look
At what shall lie before you soon agape,
The yawn of hades, the dark mouth of hell.
Ha hee, ha hee, ho ;
Thou art wanted, my Tiptoe,
From sunny height or gloom below :
Ha hee, ha hee, ho ;
Quick thy presence hither throw : —
'Tis thy mistress, sweet Tiptoe.

A strange sound heard.

Now, my sweet love, come hither : come, dear Tiptoe,
What, dost thou scorn me for I'm growing old ?
Be faithful till I die, and that will soon,
Then cast me to the charnel of the moon.

Enter TIPTOE.

Oh, my sweet slave, oh, my dear friend and master,
How shall I bid thee leave me ! but go faster
Than do the fabulous coursers of the wind,
To Ramah, or to Hades, and bring Samuel.

Exit TIPTOE.

Ah, I am strangely warped ! I have a loom
 That he I've sent for will arise and come.
 My Tiptoe hastes : — 'twas harsh to send him forth
 When the bleak wind was blowing from the north.

Listening.

He is returning, I hear a mourning
 As if he bore within his arms,
 A soul that came unwillingly to my charms.
Bending forward as if to see something.

Roll, roll away, thou stygian smoke,
 And let me into the abysm look.
 What bringst thou, Tiptoe ?

Shrieks.

Ah, why hast thou deceived me ? Thou art Saul.

SAUL.

Calm thee, what hast thou seen ?

WITCH.

Oh, gods ascending,
 Angels I saw, or gods — I know not which —
 Out of the earth ascending, and another
 Borne up amidst them careful.

SAUL.

Of what form ?

WITCH.

An old man, and upcovered with a mantle.

SAUL (*aside.*)

'Tis Samuel here again !

SAUL bows his face to the ground, and the ghost of SAMUEL rises.

GHOST, *inaudible except to SAUL.*

Why hast thou troubled me to bring me hither ?

SAUL.

I am in great distress, for the Philistines
 Again are making war upon me, and
 Invade my kingdom, whilst the Lord hath left me,
 And answers me no more by dreams or prophets,
 Neither by Urim's light nor kindling Thummim's ;
 Therefore I've called on thee that thou mayest shew me
 What I shall do.

GHOST.

Why hast thou thus resorted unto me,
 Since God hath left thee and become thy foe ?
 He now performs that which by me He promised
 To David, and now finally ends thy reign,
 The kingdom being no longer thine but David's,
 Because thou hast been disobedient,

Nor did God's vengeance upon Amalek.
 Therefore God leaveth thee this hour in darkness,
 Except to send me (not obedient
 To charm or spell of sorcery, which thou
 Hast wickedly employed but) to inform thee,
 That He will thee and all thy host surrender
 Into the power of the Philistines: go!
 Thou and thy sons shall be with me to-morrow.
*SAUL faints away and the ghost and all supernatural phenomena disappear
 with a dull sound.*

2nd ATTENDANT.

'Tis thunder, and it shakes to its foundations
 This crazy dwelling: lo, the witch's form
 Trembles like it, and is as pale as moonlight,
 As, like to a detected culprit, she
 Stands with clasped hands, aghast at her own doing.

1st ATTENDANT.

Now may I ne'er again assist at magic!

2nd ATTENDANT.

This has surpassed my dearest anticipations.
 The king has swooned.

1st ATTENDANT.

Quick, let us take him up.

They raise SAUL.

This was an impious act! what hast thou done, hag?

WITCH.

That which his majesty bade me do. See to him.

1st ATTENDANT.

Although I apprehend not all he knows,
 I know it must be awful, since the flash
 Of that pale witch's shriek appalled me, and
 The crack of her few words: oh, then, what must
 Unto his heart have been the entire peal!
 He seems as dying: set him on the bed.

2nd ATTENDANT.

What has the vision told him, for thou knowest?

WITCH.

Ask not but help to raise him. This I know
 That he will not die here; he'll rally yet.

2nd ATTENDANT.

How knowest thou that?

1st ATTENDANT.

Mark him; I do believe

That he will not go hence a living man.
 Oh, I am sick myself, — and so art thou,
 I shudder even to my very marrow!

2ND ATTENDANT.

He lives, but, oh, how corpse-like !

1ST ATTENDANT.

We are all four

As pale as winding sheets, my own voice sounds,
 Methinks, sepulchral ; — man, express thy horror ;
 Thou seeest not thyself ; thine eyeballs roll,
 As if from some great under-agitation,
 Which yet sends no true billow-swell of phraze
 Up to thy white-shore lips. — Mine own feel stiffening
 As if with mortal chillness ; — see that creature,
 How her teeth chatter ! use thy croaking tongue,
 And tell the worst that thou hast seen and heard.

WITCH.

Peace, for the king returns unto himself.

Casting herself at SAUL's feet.

Hear me, your majesty. I have obeyed you,
 And at your instance put my life in peril,
 Then do not punish me for what you've seen.
 Forgive my lying boast against you, and
 Permit me (in the safety of your oath,
 Wherein you said no harm should happen to me)
 To set some food before your majesty,
 That you may gather vigor to depart,
 Since you declared that you had far to go,
 And much to do before the morrow dawned.

2ND ATTENDANT.

Ay, thou hast done thy mischief, witch, and now, —

1ST ATTENDANT.

Hist, hist.

SAUL.

What hour is it ? Have I slept long ? No, no,
 I cannot eat, why should I ? I'll take nothing.

1ST ATTENDANT.

We pray you do. Your majesty cannot return
 Still fasting, and there is no time for rest
 If you would reach Jezreel before the morning.

SAUL.

I cannot eat, I loathe both food and life.

To the WITCH.

He came up like an old man didst thou say ?

WITCH.

I did, oh king, but bid me cook some food.

SAUL.

Wouldst cook food for the dead ? —

What were they broiling in that hideous smoke ?

2nd ATTENDANT, (*aside.*)

He is the semblance of despair and horror !
He has seen more than we have or dream of.
Urge him to eat, or he will never rise
Up living.

1st ATTENDANT.

Take some food, your majesty,
Your majesty be persuaded : we oft put
Things disagreeable unto our mouths,
Which things we do call medicines, which they are,
So be your majesty persuaded to take food,
However much in taking you may loathe it,
And think 'tis medicine for 'twill so prove to you.

SAUL.

It will not, I'm past cure.

2nd ATTENDANT.

His majesty
Knows that the army will require his presence.

SAUL.

Bring me some food, woman, quickly.

Exit WITCH.

Ere the morn

Shall tint the orient with the soldier's color
We must be at the camp. What watch is it ? —
Bring the food hither quickly. Hath the moon
Yet risen ? Look out and tell me ; look out at th' window.

The 1st ATTENDANT looks out at the window.

(*aside.*)

The last look out has come, and drear it is !

(*aloud.*)

Well, what's the moon adoin' ?

1st ATTENDANT.

Your majesty,
With visionary dawn she is advancing
Unto the whitening frontier of the east.

SAUL.

And yet she rises late to-night, for she is old.
We must begone, we must begone. Poor moon,
She is old and so am I ! Is the food coming ?
Bring food here with despatch, or th' moon up heaven
Will with her ancient, silver feet be treading
Ere we upon our road : — how old is the
Moon now ?

2nd ATTENDANT.

She is in her last quarter.

SAUL.

Then

I shall behold her the last time when she's
 An emblem of myself. Yet she'll return
 And rule the night, but I shall from my shade
 Come up no more ; — say, is the food acoming ?
 I have heard tell of culprits who have ravened
 Upon the margin of their execution, and myself
 Begin now to feel hungered :—comrades, comrades,
 You'll butchers be to-morrow, and can fatten you.
 To-morrow,—Oh, come thou dreadful morrow !

1st ATTENDANT, *to his companion.*

Mark,

2nd ATTENDANT.

His mind is wandering.

1st ATTENDANT.

I know not that ;

He has been warned of some dire mischief coming.

2nd ATTENDANT.

He may have been, and yet I'm sure he wanders :
 How thought-fixed are his eyes, his muscles rigid !
 His soul is toward the camp, it is not here ;
 He wanders homeward, like to a lost creature
 That through foul roads still drags its mired limbs.
 Your majesty, lie down, and rest whilst waiting :
 The witch is making haste, I hear her busy.

SAUL.

No no, not yet : there'll be a long lie down
 Anon. Yes, presently there'll be a sleep
 With time enough to dream in. [*aside.*] Oh, how all
 Like to a dream seems my career now closing !
 How like a troubled April day it seems,
 How like a famine-smit, disastrous year !
 Will that foul witch be long ?

2nd ATTENDANT.

Your majesty, no.

SAUL.

'Tis well. As round some spent, delirious one,
 Fallen, at last, asleep, the hand of friendship
 Draws the thin curtains, who shall draw around
 My memory apologetic shade ?
 For Ahinoam is dead, and Jonathan,
 And Melchi-shuah, and Abinadab
 Shall go to morrow with me, and the rest
 Are all too young. — Yet Abner may remain
 And vindicate me somewhat, but, if he,

Too, die (for David will not curb the priesthood)
 Then I must leave a blotted name behind me,
 And enemies whose pens shall slander me
 On biding parchment. No, not slander, surely, —
 I would not abdicate : out, out Ambition,
 For thee I may have damned my soul to hell,
 Murdering for thee the sacred priests of heaven !
 It was the fiend — yet will the fiend for it suffer ?
 Shall I not be beneath with him to-morrow ?
 How now ? The food, the food.

Enter the WITCH with viands.

Oh, here she comes.

Are these your sorcerer's victuals ?

WITCH.

Your majesty,

Although these hands of mine prepared them, they
 Are pure as any that, by hands of priests,
 Ere did on altar smoke in holy rites.

SAUL.

The priests, the priests, —
 Fall on, from ceremony I absolve you.
 I am scarce hungry yet I'll try to eat.

The men begin to eat.

(aside.)

The priests, the priests, the priests : — oh, that the dead
 Could come again and live ; that Aaron's sons,
 While I in death put off my royal robes,
 Revived, could fill again their sacred vestments !

Rising, after having eaten a little.

Now let us go. Here take these shekels, woman ;
 I pay thee for the evil thou hast shewn me.
 Live and repent of thy black arts, ere death
 Shall send thee where there may not be a whitening.

(aside.)

She may still live and bleach by pious sighs,
 And showers of tears, and dews of holy deeds ;
 But I must die, with foul sins on my head,
 Betake me to the region of the dead.

(aloud.)

Lead, and unbar the door ; and see thou sellest
 Amulets no more while on the earth thou dwellest.
 What I have given thee will thy wants supply,
 Amend thy life, for thou, too, shalt soon die.

Exeunt.

SCENE X.

*The midst of the Hebrew camp. Time, night.**JONATHAN comes out of a tent.*

Why should I wake within my tent, for darkness
 Is on my soul as well as on the soil.
 I cannot sleep, and both my brothers toss
 Uneasily on their truckles, and moan and mutter.
 There is some evil near us, either of
 Defeat unto our host, or death to one
 Or more of mine own house. Well, let it come,
 Whate'er it be 'tis heaven that sends the doom.
 Strange that my father should be absent now!
disappears among the tents.

SCENE XI.

*The Hebrew Camp in the valley of Jezreel. Time, Morning.**Enter SAUL and ABNER, followed by JONATHAN, ABINADAB, and**MELCHI-SHUAH.*

SAUL.

Ask me no more to tell thee what the witch said.

(aside.)

I'll hide it to the last, and none shall learn,
 Out of my mouth, that I am dead while living.

*(aloud.)*Come hither, sons. [*aside.*] Oh, now what shall I say?*(aloud.)*

This is our latest field, and should it prove
 Our last one also, (and you know such might be,)
 Then let it be our noblest: go, dear sons,
 And in this dark hour shine forth in new deeds,
 Striking, from th' flinty courage of your foes,
 Out bright, enduring honor. Jonathan,
 Forget not what thou heretofore hast done,
 And let thy star this day become a sun.
 Away now to your posts.

*Exeunt JONATHAN, ABINADAB, and MELCHI-SHUAH.**[aside.]* Darkness and death! —

Oh, wherefore do I name what is or shall be,
 Why seem to pluck on by the beard grim doom?
 Oh, my poor sons, my sons, ye die for me,
 'Tis for your father's follies that you perish!

A trumpet sounds.

Hark, you are called, and so am I. Now, oh,
 Now, like a charger at the trumpet's voice,
 Now let me rush into this forlorn field,
 And struggle therein although without hope.

Shall I go? Yes. And shall my sons too? No!
 I will not send my children to their death!
 I will recall them, — oh, but to what end
 Shall I recall them, has not Samuel said,
 To day they march with me unto the dead?
 Oh, thither march then, sons; — oh, sons, forgive me,
 Who utter towards you such unnatural words!
 Oh, hell, — oh earth, oh air, forget, forget them;
 Or, if you cannot do it, still believe
 Heaven spake, not I! Oh, hell, upbraid me not,
 Nor, loathing, spit upon me thy fierce scorn,
 When, like a triple-offspring-murderer,
 I enter thee. I come, I come;
 I feel the dreadful drawing of my doom.
 Horror! well may I at myself take fright,
 When heaven with hell does thus its cause unite
 To crush me, and to turn me, at the last,
 Into a monster at itself aghast!
 Oh, wretched children, oh, more wretched sire! —
 Oh, that I might this moment here expire.

ABNER, (*aside.*)

What can this strange commotion in him mean?

SAUL, (*aside.*)

What shall I do? see there how Abner stands
 With wondering visage and with slackening hands.
 I must speak to him. Abner, fare thee well,
 Farewell, dear Abner, understand me aright,
 Do thou farewell, coz, in the coming fight. —
 No further colloquy at the present, go,
 And let thy answer fall upon the foe.

ABNER, (*aside.*)

I must obey him, yet am loth to do it.
 I'll be obedient, and may I not rue it,
 For never since I knew him have I seen
 Him wearing such a strange, distracted mien.

Exit.

SAUL.

How silently he went, how sad! Why let it be,
 'Twere best that we thus parted; yet I had
 Thought to have parted otherwise with him,
 Still let us part so. I am now alone,
 All have gone from me now except despair,
 And my last, lingering relics of affection,
 And now let them go too. Alas, not yet,
 Since I have still some work for them to do:
 For 'tis not those who shall die with me, but

Those whom I leave shall shake my manhood most,
 My orphaned daughters, and my youngest born,
 Poor, crippled Mephibosheth,— for the rest,
 We are about to pass to one dark goal,

After weeping awhile in silence.

There, let me scorn all further tenderness,
 And keep my heart as obdurate as the hills
 That have endured the assault of every tempest
 Poured on them from the founding of the world.

Another trumpet sounds.

I understand thee, martial trumpet breath,
 Come on now, war, come on, disaster, death.

Exit.

SCENE XII.

Between Jezreel and Gilboa. A great noise and uproar of the battle.

Enter ZAPH and his band of demons, including MALZAH.

ZAPH.

It is in vain, for Gloriel and his troop,
 Where'er we move impenetrably standing
 Between ourselves and the Philistine host,
 Hinder our succouring of the Hebrew king.
 Wheel off then, though our reasonable hate
 Shall yet be glutted in the teeth of fate.

Exeunt all but MALZAH.

MALZAH.

I'm glad of this, for I've seen Tyrannee,
 And would not meet her for a thousand Sauls.

Exit, and the Hebrew army pass retreating. Enter SAUL.

SAUL.

The doom that is on me weighs on my army,
 Which, even whilst it combats, flees before
 The slaughtering Philistines. But Gilboa
 Again shall see me on it, and stood firm,
 For they shall not hereafter say of me,
 That I was killed in ignominious flight.
 Oh, had I been allowed to win this field,
 Although doomed by its last expended arrow,
 To fall and finish thereon my career,
 I had died happy, for I'm old though strong,
 Wearied although not spent: but this may not,
 And I must hence for the pursuit grows hot.

Exit.

SCENE XIII.

Gilboa. The sound of the battle heard faintly. Enter ABNER and some SOLDIERS in haste and disorder.

ABNER.

Where is the king?
Go urge him from the field that fast is clearing,
But tell him not that his three sons are killed.

Exeunt SOLDIERS.

Alas, alas, now do I think that he
Foreknew their fate, for I had never seen him
Before so tender towards them. Oh, the knell
Appears now sounded over Israel!

Exit, and enter SAUL mortally wounded and sinks upon the ground.

SAUL.

Now let me die, for I indeed was slain
With my three sons. Where are they? Let me
Find them that I may perish with them, dying,
Cover them with my form as doth a fowl
Cover her chickens. Oh Philistia,
Thou now art compensated for the losses
That thou hast suffered by me; thou art getting
Rich with this crimson, hot and molten tide,
That waits not patient to be coined in drops,
But rushes in an ingot-forming stream,
Out of the mine and mintage of my heart.
Oh, my three poor, dead sons, where are you?

Rises somewhat but falls again upon the ground.

No,

I cannot reach them!

A dull sound arises.

It is the enemy's horse!

I will not fly, flight misbecomes the brave,
Why should I fly when I've no life to save?
All's over save the end.

Enter SAUL'S ARMOUR BEARER.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Your majesty,

Rise, or the enemy will be upon you.

SAUL.

I cannot, boy, for I am dying fast:—
And yet not fast enough it seems, so draw
Forthwith thy sword and with it run me through,
Lest those uncircumcised arrive and do it,
And afterward abuse me.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Oh, no, no ;

I dare not take away your majesty's life !

SAUL.

Why shouldst thou fear to take what I would give thee ?
Quick, run me through, the enemy are here.

ARMOUR BEARER.

I dare not take away your majesty's life.
I cannot do it, indeed I cannot do it.

SAUL.

Failed by a friend at last !

Taking a sword that lay on the ground near him.

Ah, here is one

Of that stern kind that never yet has failed me.

Having risen with a great effort.

Sword, enter and drive out of this my spirit.

Falls on the sword and expires.

ARMOUR BEARER.

Now what remains for me except to follow !

*Falls on his own sword.*MALZAH, (*entering.*)

There lies the man I could have wished for friend !

Behold, behold the Anointed of the Lord,
Impaled upon a suicidal sword.

How shall I atone for injuring him of old ?

I'll cover his remains with decent mold :—

But first I'll turn these coming troopers off.

Enter TYRANNEE.

Pardon me, Tyrannie, I've sinned enough

Against this king, so let me now repair

All that I can, by burying him there.

TYRANNEE frowns, and MALZAH departs.

TYRANNEE.

'Tis done, and David reigns ; 'tis done, save Saul

To be exposed awhile on Beth-shan's wall :

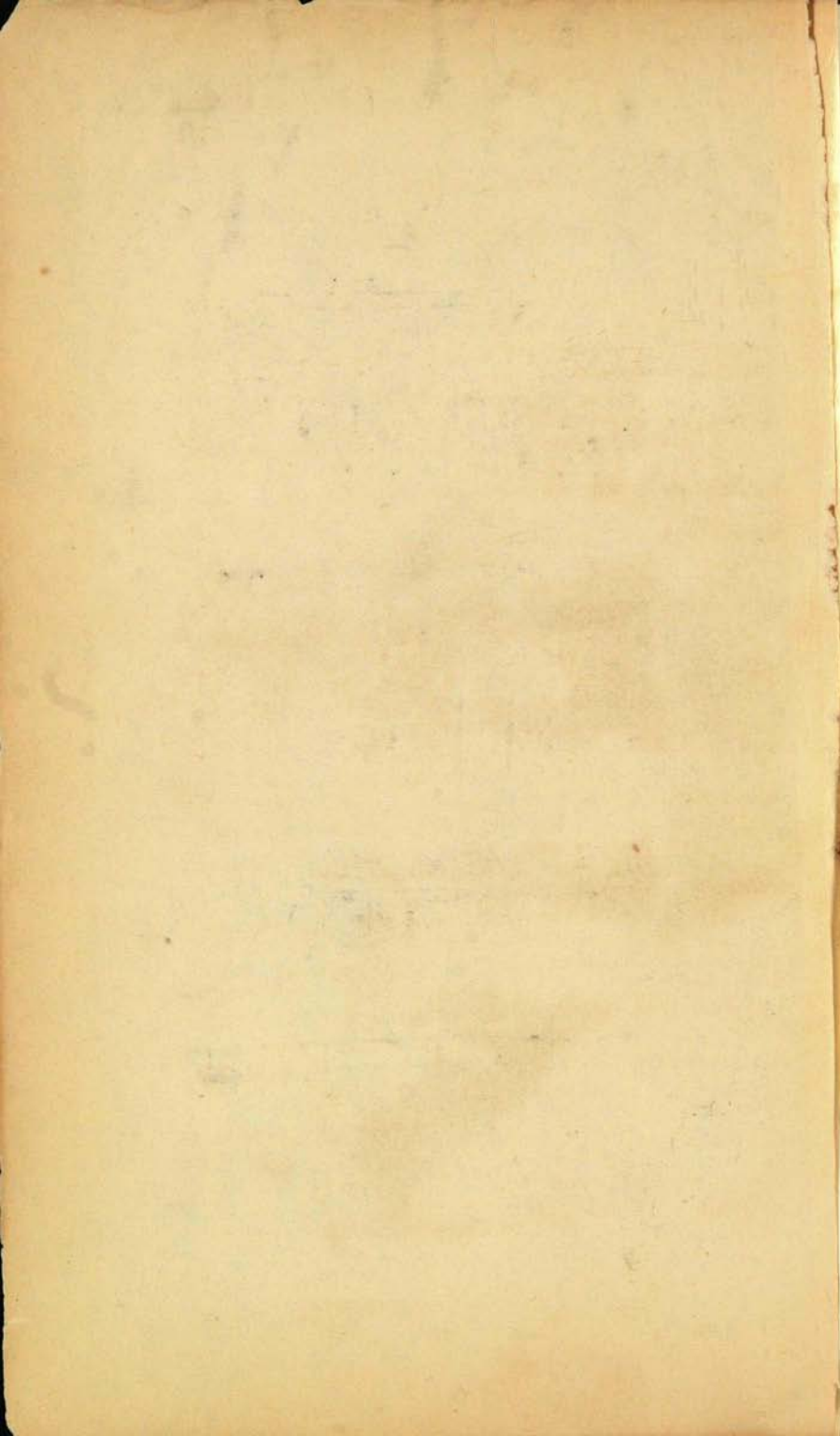
And Zaph with his black troop by Gloriel driven

Awhile to hell, we may re-enter heaven.

*Exit TYRANNEE, and the Philistine Cavalry sweep across the scene and
carry off SAUL.*

SAUL—SUIPCE

END OF SAUL.





Handwritten notes and signatures in the bottom right corner, including a large "D" and various scribbles.

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