

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

AN OLD TESTAMENT PASSION PLAY
IN FOUR ACTS

BY

W. H. T. GAIRDNER



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PREFACE

Two courses were open to the author in regard to the biblical passages in the speeches—either to retain the Bible words without change, or to rewrite them, in order to obtain a more complete uniformity of style. In spite of the obvious difficulties involved, the former alternative has been unhesitatingly adopted. The liberties that have been taken with the events as narrated in Genesis are very trifling, and were demanded by obvious dramatic necessities. Joseph's casting of the brethren into ward had to be eliminated (though it must have played a notable part in the bringing home to them of their crime). And the meeting of Jacob and Joseph, of Pharaoh and Jacob, and Jacob's blessing, have all been brought together into the final scene, though in the Bible the three events took place at three different times; and Joseph met his father in Goshen, not at the capital. In Elizabethan English no consistency was observed in the use of *ye* and *you*, and of the third person singular in *-s* and *-eth*. This inconsistency has been followed in the text.

Though this play was written for acting, and with actual representation in mind all the time, it is hoped that it may also serve as a sort of Bible-study on the Genesis narrative, and stimulate anew both the study and the teaching of the deathless tale.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Palestinians.

JACOB, Sheikh of Hebron.
REUBEN, JUDAH, and their brethren, his elder sons.
JOSEPH and BENJAMIN, his younger sons.
LEAH, wife to JACOB.
DINAH, their daughter.
A SHEPHERD. A SERVANT.
ARABS with their SHEIKH.

Egyptians.

PHARAOH, King of Egypt.
POTIPHAR, Commandant of the Pharonic Guard.
ZULEIKA, his wife.
THE CAPTAIN of the King's Prison.
A LIEUTENANT.
THE GRAND HIGH ALMONER } two State
THE GRAND HIGH CUP-BEARER } prisoners.
JOSEPH'S STEWARD.
SCRIBES. INTERPRETERS. HERALDS.
A EUNUCH. A BOY.

In the early scenes JOSEPH is conceived of as a youth of seventeen, and BENJAMIN a little boy of five. In the latter part BENJAMIN is now a youth, and JOSEPH a man in his early prime. This scheme, though not in strict accord with the Bible data, preserves the spirit of those data. Thus it is possible for the same actor to take the parts of JOSEPH throughout, but not of BENJAMIN.

NOTES ON THE COSTUMES

THE BRETHREN.—Long under-dress of pale or striped material, shaped very much like a dressing-gown. Girdles swathed round the waist, of any brilliant colours (e.g., a large silk handkerchief, folded on the cross). The outer garment (the *aubeyyah*) is without a seam, and may be improvised by taking a striped blanket and folding the ends back until they are about 10 inches apart. Then sew the edges along A and B, and hang this loosely on the shoulders. A large handkerchief,

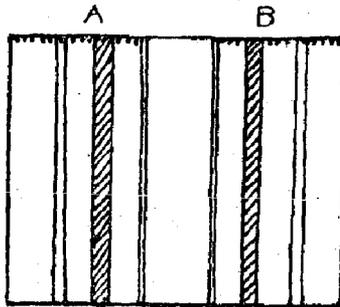


FIG. 1.

or a square of towelling, or a striped duster, will do for the *kefiyyah*, or head-dress, which is worn loosely flowing from the forehead and kept in place by a twist or two of rope. The *kefiyyah* is folded under at one corner; the remaining three corners are one on each shoulder and one down the back. Some may wear it muffled

across the mouth. Knots and tassels hung on to the kefiyyah or rope are always effective. A rough stick in one hand. Feet bare, or large, untidy shoes. Daggers in belt, camel-hair bags, or leathern wallets, a little brass box in one hand, are suitable variations. Swarthy beards.

JACOB.—Stripy waistcoat, girdle as above; loose, baggy trousers, or a skirt to the toes. A high cap, preferably red, with a turban twisted round it. Shoes like the brethren. Fur lining to a long flowing cloth coat, with loose, long sleeves. The "shawl" mentioned is of Paisley shawling or else of white cashmere with a fringe, and is muffled round his neck.

BENJAMIN.—A little round woollen crochet cap, perfectly tight-fitting. Dressing-gown a little below the knees. No aubeyyah. A cross-folded bright girdle. A sleeveless coat of some brilliant colour (*e.g.*, bright yellow), cut rather straight and hanging loosely (not fastened), would be effective, but not necessary.

DINAH AND LEAH.—Flowing, voluminous, shapeless garments, black or dark blue—even a piece of stuff draped over head and shoulders and reaching to the ground. Heads covered with a three-cornered handkerchief bound tightly round. Curls in front of the ears, and large gold earrings. The more jewelry the better—anklets, bangles, beads, nose-rings. The necks not cut low. Under-dress of linen or any peasant material. Long sleeves coming out below the elbow sleeves of the upper jacket, which may be of velvet, any bright colour. Embroidery, if of Eastern character, is good everywhere. Instead of the dark outer garment they may simply wear a white linen veil over the head and shoulders. A girdle may go across folded *over* the jacket. See any

pictures of present-day Syrian peasants. (N.B.—Do not copy the Bethlehem head-dress.)

ARABS.—Like the brethren.

EGYPTIAN DRESSES.—White vest, quite tight-fitting, over rather full white skirt, the fullness all pulled to the front; a wide girdle spread deeply over the hips, and tied low in front, the ends hanging to below the knees (*e.g.*, knitted silk scarves of delicate colours, or a white spangled Assuit scarf). Bare legs and arms. A good deal of jewelry. Egyptian jewelry can be successfully imitated by matching sateen with the colour of real gold. Cut this in the form of a wide round yoke, from neck to shoulder in width, and fastening at the back. Ornament this with parallel rows of paper shapes in bright colours (blues and greens and whites are most effective with the gold colour). Narrow strips side by side, circles, diamond shapes, are suitable—each motif repeated in one row all round the collar. In the same way make bracelets and armlets—worn at wrist and upper arm—2 or 3 inches wide.

EGYPTIAN HEAD-DRESS like the old pictures in the tombs (see Fig. 2). Cut striped material (*e.g.*, blue and



FIG. 2.

yellow) to this shape (Fig. 3): E is the edge which comes across the forehead. Two tapes, A and B, are tied behind the head; C and D are the square flaps

which are pulled round on to front of the shoulders. The ears are not covered. An ornament (scarab-winged sun, etc.) may be put in the front of the forehead in the middle of E.

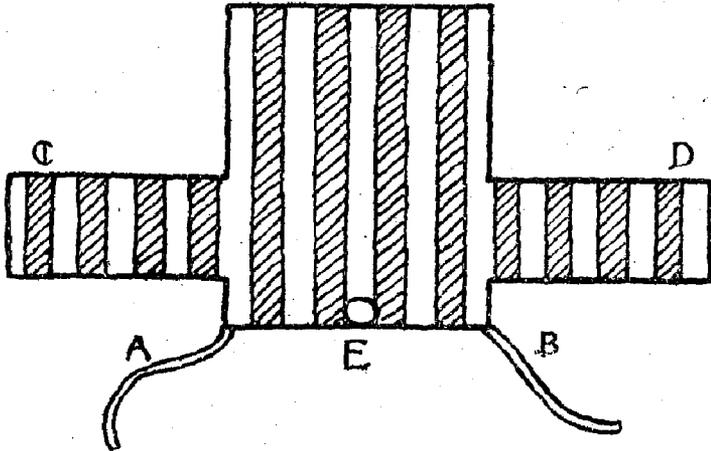


FIG. 3.

JOSEPH.—When he first appears Joseph wears the dressing-gown-like garment of the peasant, with folded striped crosswise girdle. Small cap, like Benjamin's, with closely bound turban around it. The coat of many colours is made in the same way as the aubeyyah worn by the brethren; it might be a sheet or quilt adorned with bright-coloured strips tacked on, running from top to bottom.

The cloak, which is thrown off in the last scene, is a large, loose garment of rich material, completely covering the peasant garment beneath. Or it may be a travelling rug or coloured quilt worn with the bottom edge parallel with the ground, and the two sides overlapping in the front of the body. It is held in place by the hands.

A head-dress similar to that already described is worn

over the peasant turban, and must be arranged so that it can be quickly removed—*e.g.*, an elastic instead of the tapes, fairly loose.

For the scenes in which he is first seen as an Egyptian noble he should have a light Egyptian garment, these scenes taking place in summer-time. He would also wear jewelry.

PHARAOH. — A light-coloured dress as already described, and a rather more splendid edition of the head-dress (*e.g.*, broad gold and white stripes). A coiled cobra with erect head is a royal distinction—



FIG. 4.

could be made in gilt paper or braid wired, worn on the front of the head-dress. Or the royal crown could be imitated in cardboard gilt, but in this case, as it will not be rounded, but flat, care must be taken that the flat side is going to face the audience—*e.g.*, if Pharaoh is staged in profile to the audience, a profile view of the crown can be used; if he faces the audience, a front elevation of the crown is wanted.

Another way would be to imitate the royal crown (see Fig. 4) in brown paper, gilt. A large (peck-size) paper bag is wanted, of tough and thick substance.

If not already made with a square bottom, fold the corners and paste or sew into this shape. From two of the corners make graduated folds, A, which are to be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the head. Make also one or two other graduated tucks at the front (see Figs. 5 and 6). The top of crown is coaxed into a rounded shape by tucking in the two remaining corners, B. When the shape is gilded with gold paint, it is fastened to a piece of material bound firmly round the head, covering the

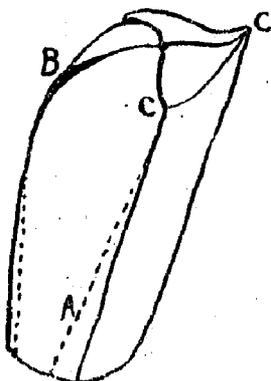


FIG. 5.

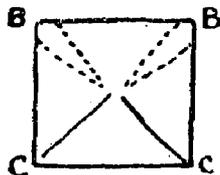


FIG. 6.

hair, at a decided backward angle. Add the cobra with erect head, already described, on the forehead.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE.—Her dress is made with a straight, wide piece of soft, light material of a length to reach from under the arms to just above the ankles (a sheet or light quilt would do—it must not be anything heavy or stiff). This is passed under the arms, pulled tight across the back, and fastened on the chest to form a very large box-pleat, and allowed to flow out freely in front. A paper strip inserted beneath would help to give the distinctive long, straight line. Over the shoulders is

worn a very wide scarf or sash, covering the arms to the elbow, reaching nearly to the waist behind, and gathered in front to the top of the box-pleat with the ornament. This scarf should be of a semi-transparent material. The arms and feet are bare. She should have a wide gold collar and bracelets such as have been described. The hair is worn loose; it ought to be very dark and bushy and about shoulder length. It is confined by a band passing horizontally around the head, and ornamented in front with a nodding lotus, or at the back with an upright ornament.

Very artificial-looking dark brown wigs may be worn by Potiphar's wife or any of the Egyptians or Joseph. These are deeply crimped or arranged in tight curls, and are cut low on the forehead with a sweep round to the nape of the neck, standing out well.

PROPERTIES, ETC.—Ancient Egyptian furniture is of such exquisite form, combining comfort, utility, and beauty, that it would best be represented by English chairs, etc., of the very best type—*e.g.*, Chippendale, etc. In any case use articles of furniture with simple, clean lines, no wriggles or elaborate carving. Tall, straight-legged stools topped with very plump cushions are very characteristic, and important people generally have footstools, but never do these raise the feet so much that the thighs are more than level.

A scribe will always sit cross-legged on the ground, writing on a scroll on his lap. He could have a tiny saucer or basin for an inkpot balanced on the right knee.

If anything is attempted in the way of scene-painting, copy the simple, straight-lined shapes to be found in such a document as the Book of the Dead, facsimiles of which are found in libraries. But a plain buff or light warm-

grey background is much pleasanter, and throws up the figures better.

As to the costumes, considerable pleasure may be got out of the delicacy of the Egyptian colourings—turquoise blue, brick red, yellow ochre, reseda green—contrasting with the cruder colours of the *Bedouin*.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

AN OLD TESTAMENT PASSION PLAY

ACT I., SCENE I.

The home at Hebron. JACOB seated alone in a large, low, open Bedouin tent.

JOSEPH (*running in, all ruddy from the field, and throwing himself at his father's knees*). Greetings, a hundred, a thousand, to mine own father! (*Kissing his hands.*)

JACOB (*raising and kissing his face*). God give thee peace, my Joseph, my beloved son, son of my old age! But how is it that thou wearest not the coat I made for thee, the coat of many colours?

JOSEPH. Father, I wished not to make mention of this; but this time when we fared forth with the sheep I refrained from putting it on, because I saw it is a cause of offence to my brethren.

JACOB. How is this?

JOSEPH. They say—and it is foolishness—that that coat reminds them that thou lovest me, and lovest them not.

JACOB. What! are they unkind to thee? But surely it cannot be! But the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher, whom I made to companion thee, how of them?

JOSEPH. Oh, father, forgive me, but they are the worst of all; they were so unkind to-day (*choking down a sob*)! And they do such bad things and bring my

father's name into such dishonour. Oh, I am so unhappy!

JACOB. Nay, I will rebuke them for this to-night! 'Tis true I love them not when they are wicked. But thou art mistaken, Joseph; they are good lads, but rough: I love them well; I will make them good to thee. Nay, do not weep! . . . Where did ye feed the flocks this moon? At Shechem?

JOSEPH. No, round Bethlehem, and from thence to Jebus.

JACOB. I must keep thee at home a moon or two; thou art still too young! We must keep thee at home with little Benjamin, who needs a playmate; you are both the sons of my loved Rachel—and those others are good lads too, good lads, Joseph, but wild and rough, like your uncle Esau at their age—rough and wild he was, and I myself feared him, but a good lad as it appeared afterwards. We will keep thee at home for a while. Be sure they love thee well.

Enter the Ten Brothers.

ALL. Ah, the Dreamer!

ONE. Before us, as usual, with our father!

ANOTHER. Filling his ear, doubtless!

ANOTHER. Where's the fine coat, Dreamer?

ANOTHER. What fine coat or aught else has father ever given us?

ANOTHER. But it was always the same.

JACOB. Sons! sons! is this your respect for your old father—to break in upon him without one word of salutation?

JUDAH. Thy pardon, sir, but we have been vexed beyond endurance by that dreamer (*saluting him by kissing his hand, in which he is followed by the others*).

JACOB. Good lads! good lads!—but you are too

hasty with my poor Joseph. Why cannot you speak peaceably unto him? Remember how young he is, and how strong you are.

JUDAH. That is even what enrages us, sir; we remember how young he is and how much we are his elders and betters, and how shall we not be angry when he tells us what he told us last week—one of his bad, foolish dreams? He said (*mimicking* JOSEPH), Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed; for behold we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo! my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about and made obeisance to my sheaf.

SOME OF THE BRETHREN. Ha! Shalt *thou* indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?

OTHERS. Come, sheaves, bow down, sheaves (*bowing down round* JOSEPH).

JACOB. Gently, gently, good lads! Ye make great that which is naught. Dreams—what are dreams!

THE SONS OF BILHAH AND ZILPAH. But that's not all. Tell our father what thou toldest us this morning, thou mighty dreamer!

JOSEPH (*with dignity*). I was going to do this. Are the dreams mine, that I should command them if they come not to me, or deny them if they come? The God of our father Abraham, the God of our father Isaac, sends them, not I; and God knows their interpretation, not I. (*He turns to his father, while a rapt expression gradually changes his countenance.*) For they never seem to me like ordinary dreams, father! They are so wonderful. This very night I dreamed yet a dream: and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me! This was my strange, beautiful, wonderful dream last night, and I knew not what it meant.

JUDAH. Ah! verily he knew not what it meant: 'tis

always so ! (To JACOB) Can flesh and blood bear such things, my father ?

JACOB (to JOSEPH). Nay, my son—nay, my son, such things are not seemly. What is this dream that thou hast dreamed ? What ! Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth ? Nay, nay, it is not well ; but if thou hast such dreams, tell them to thy old father, or to little Benjamin here ; these good lads understand not such things.

JOSEPH (*as in a dream, repeating his father's words, amazed*). Shall my father and my mother and my brethren indeed come to bow down themselves to me on the earth ?

THE BROTHERS (*furiously*). Out on thee ! Silence, dog ! . . .

JACOB (*with great anger*). Silence, you ! Is there no respect for my grey hairs ? Silence, I say (*striking one of them*) ! Away with you ! Forth from the house ! Away into the field with the flocks. This very day ! No ; the morrow sufficeth, or two days from now ; your mother Leah desireth to see you. I would have you fare to Shechem (*gradually subsiding*) ; there is pasture in the valley there, in the parcel of land which I took out of the hand of the Amorite. Go, good lads, and see you leave poor Joseph alone.

(BENJAMIN comes bounding in and rushes to JOSEPH.)

BENJAMIN. Joseph ! (*He makes one spring for him, and remains hanging round his neck, hugging him close.*)

THE BROTHERS. "Poor Joseph !" (*Aside as they depart*) Let poor Joseph look to himself.

(*Exeunt.* JACOB watches them, until his gaze is gradually diverted to the two boys.)

BENJAMIN. Joseph, it is so sweet to have thee ! There is no one to play with when thou art away, and

Sister Dinah is so cross! Joseph, I say (*speaking softly into his ear*), thy goat has had kids! Oh, come and see them! No, let's play catch, Joseph! Seest this apple? Catch, then! (*They play.*)

JACOB (*considering long, and in silence, his eyes on Joseph*). Dreams, dreams! Is it only at Bethel that men dream true? Keep the saying, Israel, and ponder it in thy heart!

(*He is lost in thought. The boys play yet more merrily as the scene closes in.*)

SCENE II.

The same.

JACOB. Joseph!

Enter JOSEPH and BENJAMIN.

JOSEPH. Here am I, my father.

JACOB. This is the third moon, and no word is come from thy brothers. Do they not feed the flock at Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them.

JOSEPH. Here am I, my father.

JACOB. Go now, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flock; and bring me word again. Fear them not; they be good lads, but something rough and wild, something rough and wild.

JOSEPH. Nay, there is naught to fear. And I will not tarry at Shechem, but bring thee instant word again.

JACOB (*confidentially*). And, Joseph, if thou dreamest on the way—it might be at Bethel or elsewhere—keep it for thine old father, only for him.

JOSEPH. Nay, father, think not of it—that is all past. (*He takes leave of his father.*) Farewell, little Benjamin.

BENJAMIN. Don't go, Joseph; stay and play with Benjamin. Don't go to those men. They are naughty

rough men. They've got rough beards. They're Hittites. I don't like them. They'll do harm to Joseph. Stay, stay with Benjamin! (*He clings to him, crying.*)

JOSEPH (*laughing, but comforting him*). Farewell, Benjamin; take care of my father!

[*Exit. BENJAMIN runs crying to JACOB.*]

SCENE III.

The field of Shechem, a valley.

JOSEPH (*singing*):

*For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone,
Flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing is come.
Oh, hark to the voice of the dove;
The turtle is heard in our land,
And the time of singing is come.*

I am thirsty; let me drink from the water of this well.

Enter a SHEPHERD.

Good greeting, shepherd. What valley is this? And what well is this?

SHEPHERD. Welcome, fair boy; 'tis the vale of Shechem. Yonder is Mount Ebal, and there Gerizim. And the well is the well of Sychar. What seekest thou?

JOSEPH. I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding the flocks. Do not the sons of Jacob, the Sheikh of Hebron, feed their flocks in this valley?

SHEPHERD. Art *thou* the son of the great Sheikh of Hebron, the possessor of this parcel of land, who dug this same well, and drank thereof, he and his sons and his cattle? Welcome to thy father's son! for the valley yet rings with the fame of his battle with the

Amorites, when he wrested it from their hands, he and his ten sons. Thou wast not present on that stricken field ?

JOSEPH. I was too young: I abode with my mother Rachel; I was her only one then, and scarce remember the day. But it is of the ten that I ask.

SHEPHERD. They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. (*Aside*) A merciful deliverance! Tyrants and bullies now as on that bloody day when they slew Hamor and his sons by treachery, and made their father's name stink among us, the inhabitants of the land. But this lad seems verily of a different breed.

JOSEPH (*who has been busy with his shepherd's pipe, mending it, looks merrily across at the shepherd and breaks into one of the songs of the land*):

*Tell me, oh, my friend,
Where they feed their flock,
Where they make it to rest at noon,
Where they feed it among the lilies.*

Dothan, I think thou saidst? And where lieth Dothan?

SHEPHERD (*smiling back, and singing*):

*If thou knowest not, O fairest among striplings,
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.*

Hold north, always north. Once out of the valley, the road slopes gently downwards. A wet green meadow will lie before thee. Skirt it on the north, and the hill of Dothan will be before thine eyes. There will they be grazing in the strath, the high-road for the Arab traffickers who ply from Damascus and Gilead to Araby and the land of Egypt. But the distance is three leagues; it will be too great for thee, my fair boy. And these rough men: have a care for them!

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

JOSEPH. Too great! I am young and strong, and the sun is newly risen. All the morning is before me, and by noon I shall be in the vale of Dothan, if it please my God. And the rough men, as thou callest them, are my father's sons! Farewell, shepherd; I thank thee.

(Singing):

*Come, let us go forth into the field;
Let us lodge in the villages;
Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
Whether its blossom be open,
And the pomegranate be in flower.
Make haste, O my soul!
And be thou like to a roe or a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices.*

(The SHEPHERD looks after him as his voice dies away towards the north.)

SHEPHERD. Make not too much haste, O fairest of youths. If thou art Joseph, it is in my mind that I heard those evil men speaking of thee as though they harboured no fair thing in their hearts. Well, the gods preserve thee! (He sighs, and watches him out of sight.)

SCENE IV.

Wady Dothan. Noontide. Within a low Bedouin tent, pitched under a shady tree, the noonday meal is being prepared. The Brothers are collecting together from various quarters.

A BROTHER. God be thanked that the son of Rachel is not with us this faring! We had enough and too much of his dreams, his tale-telling, and his insolence!

JUDAH (*pointing south*). Be not too sure! What think you that is that I spy yonder approaching from over the hill? (They all look intently.)

ANOTHER BROTHER. Curses on him; it is he!

ANOTHER. Coat and all !

ANOTHER. He has dreamed again !

ANOTHER. Now, by God, 'tis too much !

JUDAH. This must cease. Flesh and blood cannot stand more.

(SIMEON and LEVI have been consulting together.)

SIMEON. Come round, all of you; we must have a plan ere he come hither. (*All come round.*) Behold, this master of dreams cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

JUDAH. Well said ! Out on him ! Let us slay him !

ALL. Well said !

Enter REUBEN.

REUBEN. What madness is this ? Shed no blood. Cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him. In the pit his fate will be certain enough—see, it is empty, and there is no water in it—yet his blood will not have been spilt by his father's sons.

SIMEON AND LEVI. As thou wilt. But our plan was best.

(*All look towards the south, and suddenly rush out.*)

REUBEN (*solus*). There spoke well the assassins of Hamor and the Beni Shechem ! Cursed be their wrath, for it was cruel. I love him not, yet I cannot face my father if he died. I must deliver him out of their hand and restore him to his father. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter the others, violently dragging JOSEPH and beating him with shepherd's crook or fist.

THE BROTHERS (*variously*). Dreamer ! . . . Tell-tale ! . . . A curse on thee ! . . . To hell with the mischief-maker ! . . . Death, death to the famous dreamer ! . . .

JOSEPH. Mercy !

SIMEON. Quick, bind him ! for our dinner is spoiling.

JOSEPH. Ah, mercy !

LEVI. Off with his accursed coat—nay, off with it (*wrenching and tearing it*) ! What mercy hadst thou when thou wast setting our father against us ?

JOSEPH. Nay, my brothers (*bursting into tears*).

JUDAH. Heyday, tears from our honoured king ! Down, worship him, all ye eleven stars . . . 'tis a pity only that the sun and moon are absent from this audience. . . . Give him a sceptre, and crown him right royally.

(They stick a bulrush-stalk into his bound hands, twist desert thorns round his turban, and feign to do obeisance.)

JOSEPH. Oh, the Lord forgive you !

JUDAH. Enough of this foolery. I am hungry. In with him ! (*They drag him towards the pit.*)

JOSEPH (*screaming in agony*). No, no ! not there ! Oh, have mercy ! Would you leave your father's son to perish from the wild beasts or thirst ? Reuben, I am afraid ! Benjamin ! Mother !

SIMEON. Down to Hell, then, to your mother, to Rachel !

JOSEPH (*shrieking as they force him down*). My father ! (*There is a heavy fall ; then silence.*)

JUDAH. So ! And now for dinner !

(They sit down ; a tray is brought out from the hut, and they begin to eat under the shade of the tree.)

JUDAH. Lo there (*looking north-east*) !

ALL. What seest thou ?

JUDAH. See yonder caravan of Arabs—from Gilead, I guess, or Damascus ? They have crossed at Beth-Shan and come through Jeneen, making for Egypt, maybe, or Mekka, or the Yemen, bearing spicery and

balm and myrrh. A thought comes to my mind. What profit is it that we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to these Arabs, and let not our hand be on him, for he is our brother, our flesh. These Arabs are sturdy fellows. They pay and ask no questions. Just one more slave; they'll buy him for twenty pieces and sell him for a hundred. Here they come! I know how to speak their Arabic jargon. Agreed?

LEVI (*grumbling*). First Reuben and then thou must improve on our plan. But best it was and surest.

JUDAH. Tush, man! Once safely in Memphis, Zoan, or Mekka, he is lost effectually, and we shall be rid of him for ever. Well, agreed?

ALL. Agreed!

JUDAH. Behold, they pass! I will hail their Sheikh. Ho, there! Hither to us, old man!

Enter the leader of the Arabs.

The peace of Allah be upon you!

THE SHEIKH OF THE ARABS. Allah!—what is he to us? Nearer and more useful are Allât, Manât, and Uzza.

JUDAH. Out on your outlandish gods! Our God is the God of Abraham, our great-grandfather; of Isaac, our grandfather; and of Israel, our father. But 'tis all one. Come, to business! We have a Hebrew slave here; he wants breaking in, and we have no time for that. What wilt thou bid? Hebrew slaves command a round price in the markets of Zoan or Memphis, or your Kaaba over there. Come! what price for a Hebrew slave?

THE SHEIKH. Poor prices, poor prices these days; times are very bad. But let us see him. (*Joseph, still unconscious, is drawn up from the pit.*) He is pale; who knows whether he will live? Ten!

JUDAH. Now, by Allât, Manât, Uzza, and all the other daughters of Allah, old man, play not with us, neither waste thine own breath. Our word is one, "Twenty!"—and none knows better than thou that thy profit is five hundred to the hundred.

THE SHEIKH. It is loss on loss! . . . Well, hoist him up on that pack-camel.

(The money is paid over. Arabs enter and carry Joseph off.)

JOSEPH'S voice. My brothers! Oh, father! *(A long wail)* Ah-h! *(They resume their meal.)*

Enter REUBEN. He goes straight to the pit.

REUBEN. Villains! Where is he? *(Rending his clothes, he goes over to the others.)* The child is not, and I—whither shall I go?

JUDAH. Come, come, Reuben! What is it that our father ever saith of thee? "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. . . ." Who was it that proposed to us the pit? And he was to die of thirst, moreover! We have been the more merciful, for soon shall he be eating and drinking, a lucky slave in Araby the blest, or Egypt, the garden of the Lord. Whence this change of tune?

REUBEN. Nay, I meant not what I said. I . . .

JUDAH. Aha! the same old Reuben. He is afraid . . .

REUBEN. Who says I am afraid? I am afraid of naught.

JUDAH. Thou sayest truth, my brave brother, and now thou mayest prove it. See, thou art in this matter with us, and if thou turnest traitor, we will swear thee down by all our mother's gods and our father's God also, and say, moreover, that thou didst lead us, as befits the eldest son. That likes you not? Well, then, the story is thus: We pass by Shechem on

the return; on the road we find our dear brother's famous coat all torn and soaked with blood; a very evil beast hath devoured him, and Israel's sons and daughters will rise up and comfort him. Is it understood? Bring hither the coat, and the blood of that kid there will do the rest. Agreed?

REUBEN. No! . . . Yes! . . . A curse on you all! Mark my words, no good will come of this.

ALL. Nay, good, if God willeth!

(JUDAH picks up the coat and begins to rend it.)

SCENE V.

Hebron.

JACOB. Joseph hath not returned, nor sent any word. I pray God naught of ill hath befallen him. Oh, fool was I to send him!

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT. Thy sons have even now come; they are kneeling their camels without.

JACOB. My sons! Is Joseph with them?

SERVANT. I know not. I saw him not. . . .

• *Enter suddenly and with agitation the Ten.*

JUDAH. The Lord comfort thee, our father!

JACOB. Joseph! Where is he?

JUDAH. The Lord comfort thee, I say.

JACOB. Thou liest! Jest not with me, thou evil son.

JUDAH. Jest, do I? This have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or not?

JACOB. Ah-h! . . . It is my son's coat! An evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.

(*He rends his robe, tears off his turban, and throwing himself on the ground, heaps dust upon his*

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

head. . . . His sons sit round him. Enter LEAH and the other women; they also sit near him in silence.)

BENJAMIN (*from without*). Oh, Joseph!

(He rushes in, and throws himself, sobbing, at his father's feet.)

JACOB. Joseph! Oh, my son!

REUBEN. Would it had never been, father.

JUDAH. Nay, old man; the Lord comfort thee!

SIMEON. Such is the lot of this world.

LEVI. Why such grief? Hast thou not many sons and daughters?

GAD. All men die.

ASHER. 'Tis the common lot.

DAN. Perchance he would have sinned had he lived, and the Lord would have destroyed him.

NAPHTALI. His mind was sick. He had dreams and fancies. Better death than a crazy son.

ZEBULON. To be resigned to the will of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Israel, is best.

BENJAMIN. I want Joseph. Oh, bring me back my Joseph! Oh, oh!

JACOB. Oh, Joseph, Joseph, Joseph! Oh, my son!

LEAH. And have I not borne you these brave sons?

DINAH. Enough, father—what is, is. 'Twas written as his lot.

JACOB. I have heard many such things. Miserable comforters are ye all. Shall wearisome words have an end? Let me alone, for my days are vanity. When a few years are come I shall go the way whence I shall not return. For I will go down to the grave, to my son, mourning . . . mourning! *(He rocks to and fro, moaning.)*

END OF ACT I,

ACT II., SCENE I.

The capital of Egypt: the house of the Commandant of the Pharaonic Guard.

POTIPHAR. Joseph, there are these papers to look to, letters from tenants concerning rents and repairs, contracts, mortgages. I have scarce read them once; but they must be dealt with presently, and yet my military business scarce alloweth me time to set to such things my name and seal. This moment must I to the palace to see my lord the Pharaoh about the great review, eight days from now. And but for thee, my faithful steward, and thy diligence and honesty, I should not know to whom to turn.

JOSEPH. My master, should I not serve thee thus, when I owe to thee my life itself? For when those Arabians brought me to Egypt, starved and nigh to death from ill-usage and bitter sorrow, was it not thou who didst buy me out of pity, and didst deal with me more as a son than a slave? And now thou hast made me overseer over thy house, and all that thou hast thou hast put into my hand. Nay, my good master, thou dost exceed in thy trust, for I trow thou knowest not aught that is with thee save the bread that thou eatest!

POTIPHAR. And should not I, my son, use thee thus, when I saw, as soon I saw, that thy God is with thee, and that He makes all that thou doest to prosper in thy hand. Verily thou art a prosperous man! Nay, thy God's favour has passed to this house; for it has come to pass that from the time that I made thee overseer in my house, and over all that I had, thy Hebrew God has blessed my Egyptian home for thy sake. His blessing is on all that I have, in the house

and in the field. And so be sure I love thee as a son. Nay, look not so sad! I know that thou thinkest still of thy fond and foolish father, and of thy wicked brethren. But in me thou hast a father, fond and not foolish, and in Zuleika a mother, foolish it may be, yet fond—but by Isis and Hathor all women are foolish! And so farewell; I return not till evening. The Pharaoh waits; I must away. The gods be with thee!

[Kisses him and exit.]

JOSEPH. "A mother, foolish it may be, yet fond."
 . . . Oh, God! how long is this to last? I can tell him nothing: he knows nothing. I am innocent, he is innocent, and yet I must be acting this part all the day long, and day by day. He thinks that these often, sudden tears are for my home; little does he know! And I said to her: "Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath put all that he hath into my hand; there is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How, then, can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Oh, I cannot bear it! All things have an end, and this must have an end. . . . Oh, God of Abraham and Isaac, God of my father, help me (*on his knees, with palms upraised*)! . . . My soul is quieter now. I must do my work.

(Works at the papers for a while; enter a EUNUCH hurriedly.)

EUNUCH. Joseph, my mistress has of a sudden fallen sick unto death. Her breath comes in gasps: her eyes glaze; she calls for thee to take a last message to my lord. Oh, go! I bring a physician. *[Exit.]*

JOSEPH. Strange, strangest answer to my prayer!

(Exit by the door by which the EUNUCH entered. Pause and silence. A shriek of laughter)

within, and a scuffle. JOSEPH re-enters, panting and wild ; his outer garment is gone ; he slams the door to, and bolts it.)

JOSEPH. Tricked ! Liar and adulteress ! Righteous God ! can such things be ? I must to my lord ; and would that I had gone sooner. *[Exit wildly.]*

Re-enter the EUNUCH.

EUNUCH. Ha, ha ! A simple trap for a simpleton ! Now let him see who shall be overseer, he or I. This way, my lord.

Re-enter POTIPHAR.

POTIPHAR. What's the matter ? Wherefore hast thou brought me back ? By this I had arrived at the palace. Thou art distraught. Speak, man !

(Shrieks are heard within, and a cry.)

ZULEIKA'S voice. Open the door ! *(The door is violently tried and then burst open by the EUNUCH.)*

Enter ZULEIKA, distraught and mad with rage ; she holds aloft JOSEPH'S garment.

ZULEIKA. Ha ! Seest thou this ? Art thou my husband and a man, or a mummy, a dead thing ? That Hebrew slave, that Joseph *(spitting)*, whom thou broughtest unto us, came in unto me to mock me—to mock me *(shreking)*. And it came to pass as I lifted up my voice and cried, that this trusty man rushed in from the garden beneath, and the Hebrew scum fled from me, leaving his garment with me. . . . Oh, ye gods, ye gods, I faint ! Help me ! *(Eunuchs and maids rush in.)*

POTIPHAR. Bear her out. A leech ! Ho, there *(to the EUNUCH)*, bring the villain hither ! *(Exit EUNUCH.)* Fury and Vengeance ! Mine to crush the head of the viper I have nursed in mine own bosom ! Yet stay—men

I know and one woman I know. Is that woman indeed to be believed, and Joseph to be discredited? And yet, how justify Joseph and refute my own wife's word? Myself publish mine own shame? For my honour's sake, Joseph I must condemn, and Zuleika I must justify! And if doubt assail me, I must lock it in my heart. Oh, cursed fate! misery either way!

*Enter the EUNUCH with JOSEPH. They eye one another :
POTIPHAR scowling, JOSEPH looking into his eyes.*

POTIPHAR. And thou of all men!

JOSEPH. I am innocent.

POTIPHAR. Liar! Bring thy witnesses!

JOSEPH. Witnesses have I none; therefore, if my *word* sufficeth thee not I say naught more. My master, before my God, I am innocent: that is all I have to say.

POTIPHAR. Thy voice is one, and theirs are three: my wife's voice, this man's voice, and—oh, villain—this thy mantle's voice! Oh, it is too gross! Away with him to the King's prison, and let the King judge whether he die or no.

JOSEPH. Ah, God! were the pit and exile and slavery not enough? And now foul shame and prison! How can I bear it? . . . Only if Thou abidest with me; for I have none but Thee in this lonely land.

(He is bound and taken out.)

POTIPHAR *(after a long silence)*. Was that the voice and mien of a guilty man—or his prayer? Well, to the prison with him, to cover my shame. But death? no! I fear too much Osiris and his judgment beyond the setting sun. . . . Oh, ruined home! Oh, lost son! Oh, miserable me!

(He collapses against a pillar of the hall.)

SCENE II.

The King's Prison. The COMMANDANT of the prison and a LIEUTENANT are sitting together.

COMM. Boy! (*Enter a little Negro.*) Go, call Joseph. (*Exit Boy.*) My paragon of prisoners! When did prison see his like? After twenty years in Pharaoh's prison a man gets to know at least one thing—*men!* And from the first I perceived clearly that this was no ordinary youth. I saw, moreover, that he was an innocent man—but that is another story. A word in thine ear! I had half an idea, or more than half, that Sir Potiphar thought so too; for he spoke of him more as a son than a condemned slave, and his consignment of him to my custody smacked rather of a recommendation of him to my care.

LIEUT. Why, then, did he lodge him here?

COMM. The gods, the goddesses, and perchance the Lady Zuleika, know.

LIEUT. A-ha, our Lady Zuleika! Well, well, I think I understand! Poor Sir Potiphar! poor Joseph!

COMM. Poor Joseph truly—ay, poor lad! And yet in all these years he has gone about with that sweet quietness of his, concealing in his heart its grievous wound. I remember that from the first day in this horrible place he seemed to be considering only how he might help and cheer those who were more wretched than himself; and, in thus doing, he was (though he knew it not) making mine own task more easy in governing this place. He hath a god, too—brought from his Hebrew country—and by the gods, were I a Hebrew, he would be my god too, for our gods are as naught in comparison with him. It must be he who hath shown such kindness unto Joseph and given him such favour in the sight of me, his gaoler.

LIEUT. Why, truly, he is less thy prisoner than thine overseer among the prisoners! In very sooth thou hast ended by committing into Joseph's hand all the prisoners that are in the prison, and whatsoever they do there, Joseph is the doer of it, so that thou, though keeper, lookest not to anything that is under thy hand. Thine office is become a sinecure, Captain.

COMM. Because, as I believe and do maintain, his god is with him, and that which he does his god maketh it to prosper. Knowest thou not that thus it was also when he was with my lord Potiphar? My lord told me that when . . .

Enter JOSEPH.

JOSEPH (*saluting*). What wouldst thou, sir?

COMM. 'Tis Pharaoh's birthday to-day, my son, and he has sent for those two high officers of his who have languished so long in this place. Go, send them to me—but separately.

JOSEPH. I knew it.

COMM. How sayest thou? What knewest thou?

JOSEPH. Nay, ask them. But my heart bleeds for the Grand High Almoner. I go to fortify his soul, and so send him to thee. [*Exit.*

LIEUT. What strange thing is this?

COMM. By the life of Pharaoh, there is none like my Joseph! Should I know what is in his heart?

Re-enter JOSEPH, *with the* GRAND HIGH ALMONER.

JOSEPH. Farewell, then; my God be with thee! Be strong and play the man!

GRAND HIGH ALMONER. And farewell, O light of my soul! And if there be mind or memory beyond the West, whither I go, it will be thy beloved name that shall be in my mind, and in my memory thy beloved

face. Nay, go, ere I forget that I am a man! (*Kissing him; then, turning to the COMMANDANT, while JOSEPH goes out, grave*) I am ready. Bid them come.

COMM. Ready for *what*, madman? Bid *whom* come?

ALMONER. Death. Pharaoh's executioners.

COMM. Who told thee of this? I myself had it in cipher but an hour ago.

ALMONER. Joseph. And he who warned me of death taught me also how to meet it. I fear no longer. I have no regrets. The crimes which I *did*, and for which I was never punished, I have repented of. The crime which I did *not*, for it must I nevertheless die! But the enemy who accused me falsely I have forgiven. All this I owe to Joseph. Why should I tarry? Send me beyond the sunset of yonder desert. I meet Osiris there—or might it not be Joseph's God?

COMM. By Osiris, thou art mad; thou . . .

ALMONER (*raising his hand*). Hear a dying man. After the wrath of our lord the Pharaoh with me and with the Grand High Cupbearer, when he threw us into this prison, thou didst charge this Joseph with us, and we continued a season in ward. And we dreamed a dream both of us, each man his dream, in one night. And Joseph came in unto us in the morning and saw us, and behold we were sad. And he asked us: Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? And we said: We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And Joseph said to us: Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it me, I pray you. And the Cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him: In my dream, behold a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded and its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes

and pressed them into the cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said: This is the interpretation thereof: the three branches are three days; within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head and restore thee to thine office, and thou shalt give the cup into his hand after the former manner when thou wast his cupbearer.

COMM. (*amazed and excited*). When was this? Lie not, or thou art a dead man.

ALMONER. I *am* a dead man, and dead men lie not. To-day is the third day.

COMM. 'Tis passing strange! . . . And thou?

ALMONER. When I saw that the interpretation was good, I, poor fool, said merrily unto Joseph: I also was in my dream, and behold three baskets of white bread were on my head; and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And then Joseph answered very sadly: This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days; within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thy body upon a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee. And now, what room is there for talk? Is there chattering in the halls of the dead? Behold, I know that my executioners are without. Take me away; but see that thou compass the salvation of that innocent man. For he is his God's friend; and I witness that there is no God but He, and that Joseph is the friend of God. I have said.

COMM. (*to LIEUTENANT*). Pharaoh's officers are without. Surrender him, and send me Joseph and the Grand High Cupbearer. (*Exeunt LIEUTENANT and the GRAND HIGH ALMONER.*) The wonders of that world which we have never seen are breaking in on this

world which we see! . . . (*He sits buried in thought. Enter JOSEPH with the GRAND HIGH CUPBEARER.*) I perceive that I have no need to be thy messenger of good tidings. Thou art already dressed in thy festal array. Well, deserve thy good fortune! Thy friends will be here to escort thee presently.

CUPBEARER. The blessings of the gods on my lord. The blessings of the gods on him who is himself a god, the lord Pharaoh, and the blessings of all the gods upon this good, this worthy, this excellent youth, whom, upon my soul, I love for his services to me, and there's my hand on't. Rich shall be his reward. My lord, my tale is of the strangest. I was in my dream, and . . .

COMM. Keep it to thyself, man. I know it already. And let deeds speak thy gratitude, not words.

CUPBEARER. Mend thy manners, thou, else, when I am restored . . .

JOSEPH. Nay, what cause is there for gratitude, when I did naught. Did I bring this good fortune? Yet, have me in remembrance when it shall be well with thee; and show kindness, I pray thee, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house into the pleasant light of the sun, and to dear freedom. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews (*suppressing a sob*), and in Egypt also have I done nothing that they should put me into this dungeon. (*He strives to say more, but cannot. He stretches out his hands towards the CUPBEARER.*)

CUPBEARER. By the life of Pharaoh, this shalt thou have, and more than this will I do for thee; for in faith our lord loves me well. (*To COMMANDANT*) How now! How long keepest thou me in this dog's hole?

COMM. Thou art free; and thy friends from the court are come for thee.

Enter several COURTIERs.

1ST COURTIER. Hail, blessed of Pharaoh !

2ND COURTIER. Welcome, noble lord, back to thine old friends and thine old glory.

3RD COURTIER. By the life of Pharaoh, thy glory shall be the more increased, for Pharaoh's face is marvellously turned to thee. Behold in us thy devoted servants !

CUPBEARER. Nay ! speakest thou truth ? By the gods, this is brave news ! Ha ! vengeance on those who brought me to this place ! Come glory, fortune, happiness ! Let me not stay one moment longer in this vile place ! Come ! Farewell, Captain ; and do diligence to keep a civil tongue in thy head, or it will be the worse for thee. *(He makes to go, surrounded by his friends and talking and gesticulating with them.)*

JOSEPH *(near the door)*. Farewell, my lord ; and have me in remembrance when it shall be well with thee . . .

1ST COURTIER. Who is this low fellow ? Give way, sirrah !

CUPBEARER. Nay, he is a good fellow for a Hebrew—a strange fellow, but a good lad in his way. Remind me to speak for him to my lord when I have leisure, though I loathe to think of aught that shall remind me of this hell. *[Exeunt, passing JOSEPH without speech.]*

JOSEPH *(gazing after him)*. He will surely not forget the "three days" ! One day, two days, three days, and then I shall be free !

COMM. *(watching him)*. One year, two years, three years ! and if that moth hath any memory at all, write me down ignorant of mankind. And now he is my enemy, and it will be bootless for me to remind him ! *(He looks at JOSEPH, who has not moved)* Alas, poor youth !

SCENE III.

After two years. The Prison. The COMMANDANT and JOSEPH (standing before him).

COMM. Hast thou been the rounds, Joseph ?

JOSEPH. Yes, sir. All's well. The prisoners are working well, and their spirit is good. The officer in the fourth cell is very sick; I pray thee have for him remedies and a physician. I watched at his bed half last night. The man in the twentieth cell is mad, but I spake comfortably to him and quieted him. He hath need of movement and diversion, master, or I fear for him. Are there further commands ? for it is the eighth hour, and I have appointed to render a last service to that poor condemned wretch who must perish at the ninth. I write for him a scroll to his wife at Thebes.

COMM. Go, my son, and thy god be with thee ! Go ! . . . He hears me not ! Joseph ! Why gazest thou out of yon door ?

JOSEPH (*slowly*). It is Pharaoh's birthday !

COMM. And what then ?

JOSEPH. Master, thou forgettest; but how shall I forget ? I remember this day two years ago, as I have remembered it every long, long day since then. Oh, the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick ! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as my God willeth ! And I mean not that I desire to leave thee, my kind Captain.

[Exit suddenly, overcome.]

COMM. Poor, poor Joseph ! His feet they hurt in the stocks; but the iron hath entered into his soul, and that is the more grievous. Yet from him is there never one complaint. Day by day he goes about doing good, working his daily work, and ministering to all here. Even against that villain, the Grand High Cupbearer,

no single word. Ah, ungrateful dog! Well did I fathom thee. Yet beshrew my rough, hasty tongue! for now it hath been impossible for me to intercede with him for Joseph. Verily, I hardly kept mine own place, so incensed was he against me. Ye gods, here he comes! I am lost!

Enter the GRAND HIGH CUPBEARER.

CUPBEARER. Thy pardon, worthy Captain—oh, thy pardon! It is two years too late, and yet not too late. Oh, delay not two minutes now! Send for Joseph! For the King hath sent to loose him—ay, the ruler of the people, to let him go free.

COMM. Now the gods be praised! (*He goes to the door and calls.*)

CUPBEARER. The same room, the same man! Oh, graceless—oh, ingrate (*smiting his breast*)!

Re-enter JOSEPH.

CUPBEARER. My sin, my great sin! I do remember my fault this day (*throwing himself at JOSEPH'S feet*)! Forgive thy slave! Destroy me not with our lord the King!

JOSEPH. Rise, my lord. What meanest thou? Have pity, and destroy me not with suspense—it will kill me! . . . What would Pharaoh? Oh, say!

CUPBEARER. Thou art free. (*JOSEPH reels.*)

COMM. Nay, my son! Softly, softly! Sit here! Joy never killed a man, nor never will!

JOSEPH. My God, God of my fathers! I knew that Thou hadst not left me. Blessed, blessed be Thy Name! Tell me of it, my friend.

CUPBEARER. Thy friend! Not thine enemy? Doth thy marvellous kindness extend even to this? Oh, I am thy slave for ever! I was but a shallow fool.

But now ! Listen, my lord Joseph : for so by Amen-Ra shalt thou be. This morning, as I and the other lords of the bedchamber waited on Pharaoh, we saw that his spirit was troubled and his face overcast. And we asked him for the cause of this, but he answered us naught save, Send me hither all the sacred scribes of Egypt and all the wise men thereof. And when we brought them, Pharaoh spake, saying: I have dreamed a dream this night ; see ye and interpret to me my dream. And by Amen-Ra, not one of those scribes from Thebes, from Siût, from Memphis or Zoan, could interpret him his dream, but were silent, amazed. Ah ! and then in that silence my soul smote me within me, and it was like a dagger-thrust through my heart. And I said: I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants and put me in ward, me and the Grand High Almoner ; and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he ; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of the dream. And there was a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the Captain of the Guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was. Me Pharaoh restored to my office, and him he hanged. And I this day see *myself* worthy of this, unworthy of that. Thus I spake, and Pharaoh stayed not, but sent me hastily to bring thee forth. Now, therefore, change thy raiment, and come forth to Pharaoh.

JOSEPH. It is not in *me* : God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

COMM. There will be woe in the cells, lamentation through all the prison this night. Yea, and in my own heart is woe. For I know I shall see thee here no more. Bring forth my best robe for Joseph, you there ! I go with thee. Haste we, haste ! *[Exeunt hastily.]*

SCENE IV.

PHARAOH'S *Palace.* PHARAOH *brooding and impatient, surrounded by courtiers.*

PHARAOH. They tarry too long; I breathe not till they come. Where is the Commandant of my Royal Guard?

POTIPHAR. Mighty Pharaoh, I am here (*kneeling and reverently kissing his foot*).

PHARAOH. See thou clear him according to that which thou hast expounded to me last night privately. Amends thou canst not make. But, if only he interpret to me the dream, the amends and more be on me! The dream! My soul is troubled.

Enter the GRAND HIGH CUPBEARER.

CUPBEARER (*with a like obeisance*). Great King, he cometh.

Enter the COMMANDANT of the prison with JOSEPH. They prostrate themselves before PHARAOH, but without kissing his foot.

PHARAOH. Come hither, thou Hebrew; and if thou canst satisfy me thou shalt be more to me than all Egyptians. I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. But I have heard say of thee that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it.

JOSEPH. It is not in *me*. God shall give Pharaoh a message of peace.

PHARAOH. Hah, modest and godly! What say you, my lords? Is not this better than those swaggering priests? A good omen! Listen, then. In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river; and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favoured; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and

very ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness; and the lean and ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good. And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the sirocco, sprung up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. And I told this unto the magicians, but there was none that could declare it to me. But thou, fair Hebrew, what sayest *thou*?—oh, what sayest thou?

JOSEPH (*after a pause, during which he has stood quite still, with eyes slightly raised, very slowly*). The dream of Pharaoh is one. God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the hot wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: what God is about to do He showeth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint

officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine that shall surely be.

(Great emotion of all.)

PHARAOH. Now the gods be praised! My spirit within me witnesseth that thy God hath led thee aright. My lords, this man said in his modesty and in his innocence, Let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise and set him over the land of Egypt. What say ye? Can we find such an one as *this*, a man in whom the spirit of God is? *(To JOSEPH)* Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so "discreet and wise" as *thou*! THOU shalt be over my house, and according to THY word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. *(Taking off his ring)* See, I have set thee over the land of Egypt! My Lord High Chamberlain, invest him, and you, my lords, do obeisance to the Grand Vizier whom the holy gods themselves have sent. And call him no more Joseph. Call him Zaphnath-paaneah, "God said, He liveth:" for verily Joseph both liveth and giveth life again to-day!

(As JOSEPH is invested with a chain of gems, the heralds cry, "Bow the knee, bow the knee to the lord Zaphnath-paaneah!") The entire court falls each man on his knee, with outstretched hands towards JOSEPH.)

ALL. Hail, lord Zaphnath-paaneah!

(JOSEPH perceives the COMMANDANT of the prison and POTIPHAR.)

JOSEPH (*raising them*). My father! kneelest *thou*? Oh, rise! My friend, *thou* to me? Rise! (*He stands, holding each by a hand.*)

POTIPHAR. My lord, my son, how canst thou forgive me? She has told me all—all! Before her death last night she told me all.

JOSEPH. *Now* my cup is full! One more drop would overflow it—and yet I crave for that drop. My father! My brethren! Benjamin!

PHARAOH. See, he salutes *me* his father, and you his brethren, his people. My royal hail to the lord Zaphnath-paaneah.

ALL (*shouting*). Hail, lord Zaphnath! Let the lord Zaphnath live for ever!

END OF ACT II

ACT III., SCENE I.

The home at Hebron. A family council is in progress. All are present, seated cross-legged on the floor. A silence.

JACOB. Finally, what?

JUDAH. Thou hast heard. Our granaries are empty. And we have eaten our seed-corn: not that it would have bootèd us sowing it, with the heavens like brass these two years.

JACOB. We die then; and I go to Rachel and to Joseph.

JUDAH. Croak not, old man! If thy day has been long since over, ours has never come; and not so willingly fare *we* to thy land of shades in loathèd Sheol.

REUBEN. 'Tis true; no luck have we had, and we would live, if only to spite our luck.

JACOB. And what luck deserved ye—Reuben, befouler of his father's honour; Judah, fornicator; Simeon and Levi, assassins? Ye all, who, when your brother Joseph . . .

ALL (*loudly and furiously*). No more of that, old man!

JUDAH (*violently*). Hath it not been agreed among us that that name be not mentioned together with ours? Peace, we say, old man.

JACOB. A bad son was I, and bad sons ye have been to me. God is just! . . . Meantime we die of famine. What, ye lovers of life! Must it be *I* to bethink me of new ways to ward off death? Well, for Benjamin's sake, not yours, I am willing to live. Why do you look one upon another? Behold, I have heard from some Ishmaelites that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down thither and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die.

(*The Brethren look at each other. "Ishmaelites," "Egypt," are muttered.*)

JACOB. Why look ye one upon the other, I say? Get you gone! (*They rise.*) Nay, come hither, Benjamin!

BENJAMIN. I long to see Egypt, my father; let me go!

JACOB. Never!

JUDAH. What ails thee, old man? Let the boy go: he diverts us. And though thou lovest him, and us not, that no longer troubles us.

(*JACOB makes no reply, but his face changes. With a sudden fury he regards them, and violently motions them to the door. The Ten go out, smiling sourly and shrugging their shoulders.*)

BENJAMIN. And wherefore not, my father?

JACOB (*gradually relaxing, but without changing the direction of his face, slowly*). Lest peradventure mischief befall thee, my son.

SCENE II.

The GRAND VIZIER'S office in PHARAOH'S Palace.

JOSEPH seated reading a scroll. Two SECRETARIES are sitting on the ground to right and left.

JOSEPH. Is that the whole tale of the corn sold or doled from the granaries of Upper Egypt last month?

1ST SECRETARY. It is, my lord.

JOSEPH. 'Tis well. How is it that the outgoings from the Lower Egypt granaries show this increase? (*Pointing to the scroll*).

2ND SECRETARY. Owing to the notable increase of families from Libya and from Canaan who came seeking bread, Excellency.

JOSEPH. What! famine there too?

2ND SECRETARY. Even as here, my lord—nay, worse.

JOSEPH. This must be looked into. The lord Pharaoh appointed me to save Egypt, not to feed these lands of our enemies. For enemies they are. Who would trust a Libyan, an Amorite, a Canaanite—aye, or a Hebrew? (*Sighing*). I must watch those who come from thence. Usher them in to-day, tribe by tribe. Let the first be brought and stand ready the while I con this report to my lord. Have the interpreters ready. (*He continues reading. The Ten are brought in.*)

HERALD. Bow the knee to Lord Zaphnath-paaneah!

(*They prostrate. But JOSEPH at that moment has looked up and recognized them. He starts up rigid, his hand to his heart. The SECRETARIES are writing.*)

JOSEPH. Ah-h! It is they! Air, air! I faint!

SECRETARY. My lord, my lord, art thou sick?

JOSEPH (*faintly*). 'Tis nothing. Open yon door: I have not moved these four hours. Bring those men nearer while I walk a space to and fro. (*He walks slowly apart.*) Oh, guide me aright! Discover myself! Thou knowest my heart yearneth thereto. But of what spirit are they?—that is the question. If of the old spirit I should but have in them old haters, and new flatterers, liars, and hypocrites. And I desire their hearts. Must I break those hearts first? Make them to taste injustice and cruelty that they may read therein their own? Oh, teach me Thy sternness, that wrath whose beginning is pity and whose end salvation! . . . Wisdom!—make me wise! . . . My God! . . . (*He pauses and is silent, leaning his brow against a pillar.*)

1ST SECRETARY (*approaching him deferentially*). The gods grant my lord feels better! The men are ready placed and the Hebrew interpreter is here. Thou wilt use him?

JOSEPH. Of a surety. It were not well for those Canaanites to hear their tongue from the Grand Vizier of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

(*He remounts the daïs, and rearranges his Egyptian headdress more closely about his head. In the following he directs the enquiry, appearing to address the INTERPRETER in a low, harsh tone.* He sometimes directs a SECRETARY to write down an answer; always he observes them narrowly.*)

INTERPRETER (*with startling loudness*). Now, Hebrew dogs, who are ye, and whence come ye? Silence! Not all at once! Who is your elder? (*REUBEN stands forth.*)

* Or Joseph and the Interpreter may interchange the sense of the various speeches in some foreign language which is fairly well known to the audience.

REUBEN. I am the eldest, my lord. My lord, we came by the way of Migdol and Pelusium, and . . .

INTERPRETER (*shouting at him*). Stand down! Thou art a fool! Did not my lord ask *who* ye are, and *whence*, not *how*, ye came? Appoint one of you who is a man, not a fool. (JUDAH is thrust forward by the others.)

JUDAH. We be ten brethren, Hebrews. We came from Hebron, which is Mamre, in the land of Canaan, my lord, three days' journey from the river of Egypt.

INTERPRETER. For what purpose?

JUDAH. To buy bread are thy servants come, sir.

INTERPRETER (*angrily*). Address my lord, not me! . . . The men from that part are spies, assassins, and thieves, a danger to our eastern coasts. Ye are spies! Your evil appears in your countenances. To see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

JUDAH. Nay, my lord; but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons: we are true men; thy servants are no spies.

INTERPRETER (*fiercely*). What! Contradict my lord, who knoweth all hearts? When he says To see the nakedness of the land ye are come it is so!

JUDAH (*increasingly subdued*). We thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. (JOSEPH slowly counts them over.)

INTERPRETER. Ye be *ten* only, not twelve!

JUDAH. Behold, one is with his father, and . . .

(JOSEPH suddenly holds up his hand here to check him; he causes a scribe to make an entry when the INTERPRETER has given him the sense of the answer, and then speaks to the INTERPRETER still more harshly.)

INTERPRETER (*echoing his tone*). AND THE OTHER? (*The countenances of all fall.*) Speak, dog, son of the dog!

JUDAH (*faltering*). The other . . . 'is not !

(*A very long silence : JOSEPH seems to transfix the party with a long, piercing look. Finally he directs the scribe again, and then speaks to the INTERPRETER as if giving sentence.*)

INTERPRETER. My lord says that this it is that he spake unto you saying, Ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved. By the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go forth hence except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be bound, that your words be proved whether there be truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, ye are spies !

(*The discomfiture of the Brethren is manifest.*)

THE BRETHREN (*to each other*). Miserable fortune ! To ask that one thing ! The old fool will never let him go. He loves him more than all of us together.

INTERPRETER (*violently*). What ! Confounded already in your first lie ? I ween the youngest brother " is not " !—like the other !

JUDAH (*desperately*). He shall be brought, most noble Vizier ; by the God of our fathers and the gods of Egypt and all its holy goddesses, he shall be brought ! But we are starving ! Both father and brother die if we return not. (*To the INTERPRETER*) Oh, sir, for the love of God, constrain my lord to change his terms and take a hostage from us, and let the rest return with the corn, and bring Benjamin.

(*The INTERPRETER confers ; the Ten watch with tense suspense.*)

INTERPRETER. My lord says, This do and live ; for he fears God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the prison-house where ye all, *all* deserve to lie ! (*Silence.*) But go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses, and bring back your youngest brother

unto him: so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not . . . DIE.

(They turn to each other in anguish. The Interpreter has gone out, and JOSEPH has risen as though to terminate the scene, while two guards come forward, seize SIMEON at random, and bind him roughly before their eyes.)

THE TEN *(aside)*. Woe unto us! So bound we him!

JUDAH *(with a terrible gesture)*. We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear! Therefore is this distress come upon us.

REUBEN. Spake I not unto you saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore, also, behold, his blood is required of us.

(JOSEPH suddenly breaks down: with an audible but stifled sob he hurries out at the door behind the dais.)

1ST SECRETARY *(to 2ND)*. My lord is verily ill to-day. Hie after him! The gods spare us his dear life!

(Exit 2ND SECRETARY. The binding of SIMEON continues. Re-enter 2ND SECRETARY, with JOSEPH leaning on him.)

1ST SECRETARY. The gods be praised, thou art restored, my lord! 'Twas the heat of this endless sirocco.

(JOSEPH motions to both to go out. SIMEON is marched away amid farewell signs, full of emotion. The others are led out by the HERALD with gestures of dismay. JOSEPH is left alone. He rises and follows their retreat with his eyes.)

JOSEPH. The medicine is bitter, but it already works. Thy sword, O my God, is sharp, and it went home even unto the joints of the conscience. But it is not

enough. They spoke evilly of my father. They are still diseased *there*. And how know I that Benjamin is not a second Joseph in their hands—why else came he not hither with them? Ho, there! (*Enter SECRETARY.*) Fill the sacks of these men with corn and give them provision for the way; and see that thou restore every man's money into his sack—but secretly (*exit SECRETARY*)—that their hearts may fail them yet more, and that they may tremble and say, "What is this that God has done to us?" Oh, patience, Joseph! Be patient! Tarry thou the Lord's leisure, and He shall bring it to pass.

(He again gazes through the open door, shading his eyes, then, with a passionate gesture of farewell and love, disappears through the door behind the dais.)

SCENE III.

Hebron. JACOB. *Enter* BENJAMIN.

BENJAMIN. They are come and are even now here; and they bring corn, and we live!

JACOB. Praise, O Israel, thy God. (*Enter Brethren; they silently salute their father, one by one.*) But where is Simeon?

JUDAH (*after a silence.*) Hear, my father! God hath been against us, and it was a tangled skein from the first to the last. The man, the lord of the land, spake roughly with us from the first word, for he took us for spies of the country, like the villains of Beersheba and the South land. And we said unto him, We be true men, we are no spies, we be twelve brethren, sons of one father: one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the land, said unto us, Hereby shall I know

that ye are true men: leave one of your brethren with me (JACOB *makes a gesture*), and take corn for the famine of your houses and go your way, and bring your youngest brother unto me (JACOB *makes a vehement gesture*); then shall I know ye are no spies, but that ye are true men; so will I deliver you your brother—listen, oh, listen, my dear father!—and ye shall traffic in the land.

JACOB. Out on you! Evil sons! what is this new ill ye bring on me, your father?

JUDAH (*subdued*). Ay, curse us! Thou art right. We have naught to answer. But—send us back according to our tryst.

JACOB. Me ye have bereaved of my children, Joseph is not—was it an evil beast or evil beasts who tore him? Now Simeon is not. And ye, ye will now take Benjamin away? All these things are against me. It shall not be. My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he only is left. If mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. (*He buries his head in his shawl and rocks himself.*)

JUDAH. He loves Benjamin, and he is right. He fears and hates us, and he is right. What can we do to persuade this poor old man. Oh misery! Well, to work. Bring in the sacks. (*The sacks are brought in.*)

REUBEN. Another marvel! Mine is like Issachar's which we opened at Beersheba to give our asses provender! My money is in the mouth of the sack!

THE OTHERS. And mine—and mine!

(JACOB *takes notice.*)

JUDAH. It is beyond me. I surrender. The hand of our God is heavy upon us, behind and before. Never have we prospered since that day: yet we cared not till now.

(*All sit down. Silence.*)

JACOB. That corn will not last till next harvest, however we spare it. Ye must go again.

REUBEN. He gave us short measure wittingly, that we might be compelled to return thither.

JUDAH (*reasoning very quietly*). The man did solemnly protest unto us saying, *Ye shall not see my face unless your brother be with you.*

JACOB. Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me to tell the man that ye had yet a brother ?

JUDAH (*with heightened tone, yet respectfully*). The man asked narrowly concerning ourselves, and concerning our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive ? Have ye another brother ? And we told him according to the tenor of those words. Should we have lied to him, when his eyes were reading our souls, and we doubted not that he is a magician and knows all hidden things ? We could not lie. Moreover, could we in any wise know that he would say, Bring your brother down ? Judge thou, oh, our father.

(JACOB is still rocking to and fro.)

REUBEN (*violently*). Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into *my* hand, and *I* will bring him to thee again. Trust Reuben !

JACOB (*bitterly*). Shall I trust water and think it will bear me up ? Unstable as water, and fool to boot ! Would thy two sons' death be aught than two more woes for Israel's heart ? Shall we slay *them*, and *thou* still see the sun ? Verily, well lovest thou thy life. Trust Reuben !

JUDAH. Thou sayest God's own truth, my father. Benjamin is all to thee, and I am nothing. Send, therefore, the lad with *me* : *I* will be surety for him ; of my hand shalt thou require him, and if I bring him not again and set him before thee, then let *ME* bear the blame for ever. I have said.

(*He pulls his shawl over his face. BENJAMIN crosses over and places his hand in his.*)

JACOB. Oh, Judah, why spakest thou not always thus? (*He perceives BENJAMIN.*) Well, so be it. If it be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present—a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds; and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man; and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

JUDAH. Arise, let us go! It is full moon to-night. We depart this very evening. Salute we our father.

(*They salute him one by one, and leave him sitting alone upon the ground.*)

SCENE IV.

JOSEPH'S House: the Hall. JOSEPH and his STEWARD.

STEWARD. I have done as thou biddest, my lord. They are ten, and the youngest of them is young and well-favoured. They call him Benjamin.

JOSEPH. Divert them from their present course towards my audience-room at the Palace, and bring them in hither to my house. And stay and make ready, for they shall dine with me at noon. Speed! [*Exit.*]

STEWARD (*calling through the door*). Ho, ye! Come hither.

(*The Brethren appear at the door.*)

JUDAH (*to the others, agitated, aside*). So it begins again! Fear gnaws my bowels. He is about to accuse

us of stealing the money. (*Hurriedly to the steward before he speaks*) Oh, my lord, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

STEWARD (*smiling*). Peace be to you: fear not; your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks! I had your money.

(*Exit STEWARD. JUDAH reels.*)

JUDAH. "Peace!" "Our God!" (*He struggles with his emotion.*) Oh, my heart had stopped! The relief is too great.

THE OTHERS (*in a low voice*). It is the turn of the tide.

Re-enter STEWARD with SIMEON.

JUDAH. More mercies! Oh, our brother!

(*SIMEON runs to them, and there are greetings of unfeigned warmth. At the end SIMEON retains BENJAMIN in his arms. During this JOSEPH has stood in the inner doorway, watching unobserved. They bow themselves to the earth.*)

JOSEPH (*speaking to STEWARD*). The Interpreter!
(*The STEWARD goes and fetches the INTERPRETER, and JOSEPH speaks to him.*)

INTERPRETER (*in JOSEPH'S tone*). Rise, men; his Excellency greets you.

ALL (*loud*). Greetings on his Excellency: hundred thousand greetings on him; the Lord keep him and his children, and people his house! (*JOSEPH smiles.*)

INTERPRETER. His Excellency says he knows a little

Canaanitish, and will speak a few words to you himself in your own tongue.

JOSEPH (*in halting, foreign style*). Is your father well—the old man—of whom ye spake? (*Rapidly*) Is he yet alive?

JUDAH. Thy servant our father, my lord, is well; he is yet alive, and saluteth my lord. (*All make obeisance.*)

JOSEPH (*aside, as they are bowed*). My brother! Oh, my mother's son! (*As they rise, coming nearer BENJAMIN*) Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake unto me?

(*BENJAMIN steps slightly forward and makes a graceful obeisance.*)

BENJAMIN. I am Benjamin, my lord.

JOSEPH (*in a choked voice*). God be gracious unto thee, my son! . . . Ah-h!

(*He bursts suddenly and violently into tears, which he chokes with his mantle, and exit hastily.*)

INTERPRETER. My lord toils overmuch. In saving you and us and all men he loseth his own life. Thrice and four times of late hath he been thus. Sit ye down, for ye dine here this day, and it is now high noon. Nay, it is naught. He will return anon. Yonder he will dine apart, as is the custom.

THE BROTHERS (*as they sit*). 'Tis a flowing tide! Will wonders never cease?

(*The men sit down in order of age, in a half-circle on the ground. JOSEPH returns, and takes his seat at a table apart.*)

JOSEPH. Set on bread.

(*The brothers are supplied one by one from JOSEPH'S table. BENJAMIN'S portion is heaped up marvellously. JOSEPH bows; they all return the salutation, and the meal begins.*)

JUDAH (*smiling down the line*). Long live Benjamin !
Well done, the " little brother " !

ANOTHER. 'Tis Benjamin's day !

ANOTHER. Think of our father's joy: 'twill rejoice his
soul gloriously.

ANOTHER. Verily this favour of my lord crowns this
day of mercies and of wonders.

(JOSEPH *pledges them: they shout back. After
pledging them, he sends over to BENJAMIN to
pledge him separately. The others merrily
clap their hands and laugh.*)

BROTHERS (*looking down to BENJAMIN again and
pledging him*). To " little Benjamin."

REUBEN. God bless him ! Our luck has turned with
him. Let my birthright be his, for aught I care !
Prosperity be his !

JUDAH. Through the influence of the right noble
Zaphnath-paaneah, Grand Vizier of Mizraim ! To him
and to little Benjamin !

STEWARD. My lord riseth from table. Up, sirs !

(*All rise, and JOSEPH, after a gesture of farewell,
goes out.*)

ALL. Hail to the most noble Zaphnath ! The bless-
ings of God on the saviour of the world !

STEWARD. I will conduct you to your quarters for
the night. The corn and the asses will be ready as
soon as the morning is light. This way, sirs.

JUDAH. Our God be praised ! Aye, He *is* now our
God as well as our fathers'. To-morrow, back to
Hebron, our father, and a new life ! Agreed, brothers ?

ALL. Agreed ! [Exeunt joyously.]

Re-enter JOSEPH.

JOSEPH. Oh, my heart, my breaking heart ! Oh, it
yearned upon my brother; the fountain of tears was

opened, else could I have not borne it. Why, then, not discover thyself, Joseph? Their consciences have smitten them for me: they have tasted suspicion and injustice; they have seen one of their number injuriously bound and threatened; their hearts are softened to the old man their father; and, blessed be God, envy is not in them towards my brother, neither for his father's favour nor for mine. What remaineth, then? This: I have seen them in the hour of their brother's honour; but how will it be in an hour of his *dishonour*? They persecuted me innocent; how will they deal with him guilty! Ha! 'tis the test, the last test! and I know in God that they will pass it. I must put them to it, though my heart-strings crack. And then, come blessed hour of reconciliation, and peace! Ho, there!

Re-enter STEWARD.

STEWARD. All has been done: The men are lodged and will forth at dawn.

JOSEPH. Look thee, ask no questions. Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth *of the youngest*—takest thou me?—and his money.

STEWARD. My lord?

JOSEPH. Thou starest. Ask not, doubt not; all shall be clear. Give admittance to no soul; I will not see Pharaoh himself to-day. Come to me again at dawn. But this day and night I watch in prayer to my God—the one God, steward, who made heaven and earth and all that is in them; and maketh all things—aye, woe itself—to work together for good to them who love Him.

[*Exit.* The STEWARD gazes *questioningly* after him.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV., SCENE I.

Outside the city. The caravan is halting.

REUBEN. It seems like a dream.

JUDAH. Aye, *too* like a dream. Too sweet to last. My soul is not light as last night. The cloud rests on it once more. There was something too strange about it all. Aye, a dream, as thou sayst; and who knoweth into what we shall awake?

BENJAMIN. Look back: who is that riding so furiously from Zoan?

(The Brothers watch in silence, hand to eyes.)

JUDAH. He is riding to overtake us. See, he waves us back! All is not well. Oh, my foreboding heart! Fools were we to think it was aught but a dream! Now for the dreary awakening.

The STEWARD enters furiously.

STEWARD. Knaves, villains, ingrates! Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for my lord's good?

ALL. God forbid!

STEWARD. Silence, ye liars! The cup! my lord's cup! He had rather lose his right hand than that silver cup: is it not that in which he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing. Come, disgorge! the game is up!

JUDAH. Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these? God forbid that thy servants should do such a thing! Behold, the money that we found in our sacks' mouths, did we not bring it again unto thee out of Canaan? How, then, should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found let him die (*loudly*; *then lower*) and *then* let us also be my lord's slaves and never see Canaan more!

STEWARD. Nay; but he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and ye shall be blameless.

JUDAH. Come, open up all! smartly now!

(The search begins from REUBEN downwards. As BENJAMIN is approached and reached the anxiety deepens. The STEWARD plunges his arm into BENJAMIN'S sack last of all.)

STEWARD. Ha! Something here! What is this?— I have it! Oh, villain!

(Drawing out the cup and flinging his arm on high. A howl of horror rises from all. They beat their heads and breasts and tear their smocks. BENJAMIN kneels by his sack, rigid, staring. The STEWARD seizes him.)

STEWARD. This way, young master. Be off, you others! You are clear, according to my word. But never let Mizraim see you more.

JUDAH. What! leave my brother at this hour? Never I! What say ye others?

STEWARD. He is a thief: he denies it not. Look, he is amazed!

JUDAH. Thief or no thief, he goes back with me to my father, or I go back never more! Oh, Benjamin! what, what is this?

ALL. What Judah says, we say.

JUDAH. As we sowed we reap. God is most just. Blessed be the name of the Lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

JOSEPH'S house. JOSEPH *in state*. The INTERPRETER and others are about him. Enter the STEWARD with the Ten, and BENJAMIN bound. They fall on their faces to the ground.

JOSEPH *(through the INTERPRETER, in a terrible voice)*. What deed is this that ye have done? Oh, fools as

well as knaves! Wist ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? I know you and your life that is past, even as a scroll when it is spread out and read.

JUDAH. What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? Our iniquity, our iniquity! it hath pursued us through the years, and lo this day it hath found us out. God hath discovered the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's bondmen, both we and he also in whose hand the cup is found.

INTERPRETER (*instructed by JOSEPH, coldly*). God forbid that I should do so: the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, get you up in peace to your father.

JUDAH (*coming forward some steps, after several attempts to start, with the intensity of despair, as though making a final effort*). Oh, my lord, let thy servant speak a word, I pray thee, into my lord's own ear in my own tongue, for I know that thou understandest our Canaanitish speech. Let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me that I may set my eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up to thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said,

We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since; and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us, seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, LET THY SERVANT ABIDE INSTEAD OF THE LAD, A BONDMAN TO MY LORD: and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me, lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father?

(JUDAH'S tone has risen with the unconscious eloquence of desperate earnestness, and the last words, as he surrenders himself, ring through the hall.)

JOSEPH (*starting up*). It is enough! The wheel has come full circle. Let every man go forth: let the doors be shut. *[Exeunt all except the Brothers.]*

JOSEPH (*with a loud cry*). I AM JOSEPH! (*All recoil, rigid and panting.*) I am Joseph, your own brother Joseph! Does my father yet live? (*He bursts into loud and uncontrollable sobbing.*) Judah, Reuben, brothers! come near to me, I pray you. (*They slowly advance; he calms himself and comes towards them with*

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

outstretched arms.) I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt! (JUDAH *smites his head.*) Nay, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you—to preserve life, to save you with a great salvation. So, then, it was not you that sent me, but God (*pleading and coming nearer and laying his hand timidly on JUDAH'S averted figure*). And God hath made me a father unto Pharaoh and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. And behold your eyes see—and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see (*looking at him with infinite tenderness*)—that it is my mouth that speaketh to you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all ye have seen, and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. Benjamin! my “little Benjamin,” rememberest not thou thy Joseph? Oh, come to this bosom, and to my heart's heart!

BENJAMIN. Joseph!

(They fall on each other's neck with tears.)

JOSEPH. My brothers! Each, each, my dear, dear brother! (*He embraces each, calling on him by name. They receive his kiss passively.*)

Re-enter STEWARD, and others.

STEWARD. Thy news is out, dearest lord: it could not be hid; all Pharaoh's servants heard thy weeping. Our lord Pharaoh is full of joy. Nay, there is joy in the heart of every one of us this day that thy brethren have come, and that thy day of joy and gladness hath dawned at last.

Enter POTIPHAR.

POTIPHAR. My more than son! Then these are my sons also! Pharaoh sends me with his royal gratulation. *Enter the CAPTAIN OF THE PRISON and the CUPBEARER.*

CAPTAIN. Oh, thou who rememberedst me and for-

gatsst not, shall I not remember thee in thy day of mirth?

CUPBEARER. And I, who forgat and remembered not, die with joy this day in *thy* joy.

JUDAH. Forgive us—Joseph (*faltering*)!—that we cannot speak. We are afraid that the dream will break again. We would depart. Thou forgivest, but we forgive not ourselves. Nay, thy heart is noble! But for us it is not so easy. Perchance the peace may come when our father is gathered together with us. We broke with him when we broke with thee. Thou and he together may perchance reconcile us to our own selves, and to God, against whom we sinned. *Then* might we all be one. We would away. Our hearts are broken, and yet too full for speech. Farewell!

JOSEPH. Farewell, Judah—farewell, dear, dear brethren all. The steward shall lade waggons with presents for Benjamin, for my father, and for yourselves. In these waggons bring ye your father down, and your little ones, and your wives. Also regard not your stuff, for the good of the land of Egypt is yours! Farewell! And look you—no single word about the past, who was to blame, who not to blame. It would but cause you to fall out by the way. The past is dead, and we all have risen from its grave to a new life. Farewell! I live not till ye come with my father. Leave me, lords; I go to the palace to join the good King's joy to mine. Prevent me to the King, I pray you; for I have first an offering of thanksgiving to render to my God, who is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords.

(The lords go out by one door; the STEWARD leads the Brothers out by another. JOSEPH watches them, and disappears with a speechless gesture of praise and thankfulness by the door to the inner part of the house.)

SCENE III.

Hebron. JACOB seated alone upon a low divan, as in the previous Hebron scene.

JACOB (*meditating slowly to himself*). When will they come? Or will they come at all?

Here day by day I sit and commune with mine own heart, and night by night my spirit makes diligent search: I consider the days of old, all the days of the years of my life. . . . Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in their pilgrimage.

Is this the end, then? And wherefore not? Where is the promise of my God, the God of my fathers? Here dwell I in tents, together with the heirs of the same promise, in this land which He promised that He would give it me for a possession—and to my seed after me! And He hath given me no inheritance in it—no, not so much as to set my foot upon, saving only the portion which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

“And my seed!” My goodly seed! In *this* seed shall all the nations of the earth indeed be blest? Blest! in Reuben! Judah! . . . Benjamin?—but the birthright is not his. Ah me!

And now, moreover, they are all gone, all gone, and Jacob here sits alone. Where are the promises, the sure mercies of El-Bethel?

Bethel! . . . Peniel!

What are these words? Where is he whose name should no more be Jacob, but Israel was he called? For (*with rising tones*) as a prince I had power with God, yea, I wrestled with the Angel and prevailed. I wept

and made supplication to Him; I found Him in Bethel, and there He spake unto me. . . . Therefore, O God of Bethel, Israel turns to thee again, and yet again, and in faith waits on his God continually. He that sware by Himself, shall He not perform His promises every one?

Yet, O my God, how long? 'Tis weary waiting and watching here.

DINAH *enters*.

DINAH. My father, my father! 'Tis they! I have seen their troop of asses from the hill-brow, winding up the mule-path!

JACOB. Go, number them; haste! (*Exit DINAH.*) They would not come without him! They could not come without him! (*He presses both hands to his heart.*)

Re-enter DINAH.

DINAH. Eleven, father! All's well! Eleven!

JACOB. Simeon too, then! And Benjamin safe!—oh, Dinah! my heart had stopped.

Re-enter the Eleven joyously. BENJAMIN rushes to his father, who overwhelms him with caresses.

JUDAH. Glad tidings, our father, our dearest father! Good tidings of great joy!

JACOB. The tidings are before mine eyes. Ye are eleven. It is enough.

JUDAH. Nay! say TWELVE!

JACOB. What meanest thou?

JUDAH. The Twelfth lives, lives!—lives, my father!

JACOB. Is this a time for riddles? What mean ye? Whom mean ye?

JUDAH (*to BENJAMIN*). Tell him.

BENJAMIN (*softly*). JOSEPH!

JACOB. Ah, that name! the beloved name! I have

not heard it from thee these ten years. Aye (*faintly*), he went out from Hebron here, but he never came back to little Benjamin any more.

JUDAH. Oh, make him understand !

BENJAMIN. Father, listen to me, listen ! We have seen him. I have seen him with my eyes.

JACOB (*more faintly*). Joseph was the son of the one I loved !

JUDAH (*to the others*). Support him ; his heart fainteth !
(*They hold him up in their arms, the rest bending round and over him.*)

REUBEN. Our father Israel ! it is true. We beseech thee, try to bear it. Dost thou understand my speech ? We have seen him in Egypt. He is great there. Wilt thou not believe my word ? He is governor over all the land of Egypt !

JACOB (*faintly*). Ye mock, ye mock !

JUDAH. We mock not, O our father. Evil sons have we been to thee ; but that is past—all, all past. With our eyes have we seen him, and we have spoken with him face to face, and behold it was Joseph himself. He was taken to Egypt by Ishmaelites, and there he hath become great, the greatest in the land after the Pharaoh. And he hath sent to thee by us—oh, listen !—to come to him, to leave this place, and come with our mother and sister, with us, our wives and little ones : to come, and to regard not our stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt, he saith, is ours. Dost thou not hear me ?

JACOB. Joseph ! He was Rachel's son—seest thou, Reuben ? Ah, Rachel ! 'Twas her I loved. And I won her—but I had to serve other seven years for her ! . . . Laban ! (*he chuckles*)—he was a crafty knave, mine uncle Laban ! Then she died of little Benjamin here—Benoni she called him, poor woman !—died by

me in the way, when yet there was but a little distance to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath—Bethlehem they call it now, I have heard. And then Joseph went away, and I have been very lonely, sons, very lonely, since then.

BENJAMIN. Father, father! Dost thou not hear our voice? He *lives*, and thou shalt soon see his face.

JACOB. I remember I made him a coat of many colours. Ah! (*He buries his face, shuddering*). And it came back to me, torn and bloody. But no Joseph! A wild beast, they said, had torn him in pieces.

JUDAH (*throwing himself at his feet*). WE were the wild beasts, oh our father! Forgive us—oh, forgive, forgive us! Canst thou forgive me—canst thou, canst thou? Say thou canst! if only for that he is *alive*! For we slew him not. We lied to thee. We delivered him to those Ishmaelites, and they sold him alive in Egypt. In the name of the Merciful One, forgive us: pardon our iniquity, or we die! (*He remains, clasping his father's feet.*)

REUBEN. The pains of hell get hold upon me! Pardon us!

THE OTHERS. Woe to us! Would that it had never been! Forgiveness, oh our father!

JACOB. Is Joseph alive, then? But ye acknowledge that ye lie to me. Why deal ye thus with your old father, sons? Joseph, Joseph, art thou alive? No, no, no! It cannot be!

JUDAH. He hears us not. Oh, misery! He will die, and we shall die in our sin.

BENJAMIN. Father, it is so. He is great, he hath sent to see thee. Lo, there without! what seest thou?

(*He gently turns his father's head towards the open side of the tent. A gleam of interest returns to JACOB's eyes; he raises himself.*)

JACOB. Carriages ! Whence came these ? Never saw I the like of these before.

BENJAMIN. Is it not this that we say to thee, father ? Sand-chariots and wagons from Egypt, sent by Joseph, thy Joseph ! Said we not that he hath sent to bring thee down, and us all, to live with him in Egypt's goodly land ? No more hunger, no more sorrow there ; and thine own Joseph shall wipe the tears from these eyes (*kissing them*).

REUBEN. He revives !

JACOB. It is enough. Arise, Israel, and strengthen thy hands in God. Joseph, my son, is alive. I will go and see him before I die.

JUDAH (*half raising himself*). Forgive us ! Thy forgiveness ! Thou hast not yet forgiven us, O our father !

JACOB. What are these words ? Hast thou not heard, Judah ? Benjamin says he is alive and in Egypt. What ! seest thou not the goodly chariots that thy brother hath sent for me, for the women, and for the little ones ? Haste we to meet him ere I die. Help me to rise, my sons, and bring me my staff, that I may now go to him.

(BENJAMIN goes to fetch the staff, and he and Reuben tenderly raise their father, who goes slowly towards the side-opening of the tent, leaning on his staff, his left arm round REUBEN'S shoulders. During all this—

JUDAH (*rising*). He hears not, he understands not. Not here, not now, oh my brothers ! When he and Joseph have kissed, it may be that God will give us our father's forgiveness, and reconcile us to our father and our brother, to our God—aye, and to our own selves also. Then, and there ! But here, and now, no

peace for our souls! Oh, haste, then, from this place, lest we die in the anguish of our pain.

(Women and children have entered from the other side-opening, and they, with JUDAH and the others, follow the slowly retreating figure of JACOB.)

JACOB (*freeing his arm from REUBEN and stretching forth both his hands*). Joseph! I come!

(He totters forth, followed by them all. The tent is left deserted.)

SCENE IV.

An audience-chamber in PHARAOH'S Palace. To the right a dais and a throne. Steps lead down from the throne to the front, and also to a door at the back of the dais.

PHARAOH (*on the throne, with JOSEPH at his right hand*). They will be here instantly. The last courier hath reported them past the outer pylon. My lord Zaphnath, I leave thee. I know what is in thy heart. And it is meet that there stand no man with thee when this long-scattered family is knitted once more into one. I will look in upon you later. Come, my lords.

JOSEPH (*looking towards the door*). My heart acknowledgeth thy royal kindness. My liege, thy pardon! I have neither eyes, nor ears, nor tongue at this hour.

(Exit PHARAOH with his train. JOSEPH, after an obeisance, runs down the steps and looks yearningly again towards the outer door. . . . The door opens and JACOB totters in, supported by JUDAH and BENJAMIN; the others follow with DINAH.)

JACOB (*with a loud cry*). Joseph! My son!

JOSEPH. Father ! my father (*falling on his neck*) !
 (*The voices of both and of all the Brethren are drowned, while they "weep a good while."*)

JACOB (*holding JOSEPH away from him*). Let my old eyes see him. Is it Joseph, Joseph of my heart, my Joseph ? Oh, apple of my eye ! Oh, my life ! Oh, son of my heart ! Surely it is a dream ! Oh, is this thy face, thine eyes, thy cheeks ? Is this Joseph ?

JOSEPH. Is it my father, my own, my dear, dear father ? Ah, these long, long years ! these long, weary, weary years ! And now I have thee between my hands for ever—aye, for all the days.

JACOB. Till death us do part, and I go to thy mother. Now bear witness, sons, here do I bless my son. (*JOSEPH kneels on one knee ; JACOB's gaze becomes entranced ; he rises higher with prophetic ecstasy.*) What shall I say of this Joseph ? Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him ; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob ; even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee ; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee, with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. I have spoken, and it shall come to pass. I have blessed—yea, and he shall be blessed. (*The tide of inspiration ebbs ; he raises and embraces his son.*) It is enough. Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art still alive !

HERALDS (*without*). Way for the great Pharaoh, way for his Majesty the Pharaoh !

Enter PHARAOH alone ; he beckons to JOSEPH to resume his place at his right hand.

HERALDS. Bow the knee to the mighty Pharaoh.

(All prostrate themselves to the left of the scene.

PHARAOH, *leaning on JOSEPH'S shoulder, prevents him from kneeling.*)

PHARAOH. Then these are they, my lord ? The gods be thanked ! Bring thy father presently into the palace, that he may bless me also. *(Raising his voice)* Nay, bend the knee unto Prince Joseph ; for it is he who hath saved the lives of every man present here !

(He goes forth quietly. JOSEPH, having attended him, turns back to his place, meditative. He raises his eyes and starts as he beholds them all prostrate before him. As he speaks they raise their bodies, while remaining kneeling in the Eastern fashion.)

JOSEPH *(in an awed whisper)*. Oh, thou great God, my dream ! *(He raises his hands and gazes up.)*

THE BROTHERS. His dream ! True as himself.

JACOB. True as God is true. Praise be to Him *(raising his arms on high and looking upwards)* ! the God of all truth.

JOSEPH *(as before)*. Great, great is the truth of God . . . the forgiveness of God . . . the Peace of God !

(As he utters these words he lowers his gaze ; his arms gently descend till they are stretched over and towards the kneeling group, as though in benediction. All the Brothers except JUDAH cross their arms on their breasts and gently bow their heads.)*

* Benjamin is with Dinah, somewhat apart. He does not share this action with the rest of the Brethren.

JUDAH (*in a whisper*). The forgiveness of God ! The Peace of God !

(*He buries his face in his hands, and his frame shakes with silent sobs.*)

JOSEPH, *with hands still outstretched towards his brothers, comes slowly across to the group, his face full of ineffable tenderness. He kneels on one knee at his father's left hand, having slipped off his robe and headdress, and appearing in the garb in which he was carried off. JUDAH is kneeling at his father's right hand. JOSEPH gently pulls away his brother's hands from before his face, and raises his head between his own hands. The eyes of the two meet. . . . JOSEPH lets his lips rest on the other's forehead. JUDAH's eyes close and his hands are now crossed upon his breast.*

JACOB, *who all this time is in the same posture, with eyes heavenward, slowly lowers his outstretched, trembling hands until they rest upon the heads of JUDAH and of JOSEPH. Thus they remain as the scene very slowly and silently closes in.*