
THE
SPIRITUAL VISION

BY
JOHN McLEOD
CULKEIN, STOER

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Inberness

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JOHN W. STEWART, Esq.

OF

DRUMBEG AND VANCOUVER.

MY DEAR MR STEWART,

In my retirement here I have wandered up and down with the Great Spirits of the Past. I have communed with Hebrew Prophets, with Greek Philosophers, and with Roman Statesmen; and I have learned that I am only a child. And now I feel, after the struggle of life is over, that to be a child of God is the happiest state for me.

This Book, which I dedicate to you, is partly the fruit and offspring of my own spiritual wrestling. I had my night at Peniel, and asked after the Great Name. I now return wearied and humbled, and with folded wing, to lay this olive leaf on God's Altar, and ask for no reward but to be blessed of Him.

And such blessing as I pray for myself, I do for you and your family.

Your sincere friend,

JOHN McLEOD.

CLARKIN-STOER, *September 18, 1911.*

THE SPIRITUAL VISION.

PROLOGUE.

I SING of one who knew what heavy toil

It is to stand alone in single strife
Against a world, omnipotent in guile,
And consecrate to noble ends his life ;

Who suffered as a witness to the Truth

In times of falsehood and of hollow forms,
And bore the banner, steadfast from his youth,
Unshaken by the tempest and the storm ;

Who grieved for evil in a world of sin,—

For man and woman's ruin!—bitter woe!—
And felt the burden of their guilt within

His own great heart, with tears of blood that flow
From eyes which see the cause of misery,
But know how hard it is to fight with destiny!

The vision of his soul flashed through the world,—

He saw the struggle between good and ill—
Evil triumphant, good for ever hurled

Back on herself!—for more of patient will
To suffer!—but agree not to the wrong!

No sooner on his vision smote this sight
Than his deep soul was stirred with purpose strong
To smite with fiery hail the moral blight!

And so he raised a cry, which as the wind

First smote the proudest summit of the land—

King, queen, and priestling—all who then combined
 To trample upon Virtue, hand in hand—
 Those he unseated by the consuming blast
 Of that celestial fire in which his soul was cast!

And this was Victory!—but oh, the end!—
 The mystery of life grew darker yet;
 The world returned to what he found it tend—
 To darkness!—and the light of God nigh set!
 The larger expectations of the MAN,
 Fell withered in the tempest he had raised,
 And mid the wreck of every glorious plan
 He stood alone, forsaken and amazed!
 Is there no God?—the darkest doubt of all!—
 Or if there be, can He be so unjust?
 Behold, like Job, His Majesty, and fall
 In self-abasement in thy native dust!
 The vastness of that vision healed his mind,
 And in its higher sphere the Prophet stood resigned.

In the divine unfolding of that hour
 When man awakes to measure his career
 With the Eternal Majesty and Power,
 How vain the poor results of life appear!
 Nor more nor less than as the tiny heaps
 Of sandy frailness, built in childish play
 Upon the shore, which, as the builder sleeps,
 The all-compelling tide sweeps all away!
 But oh, Eternal Powers that cannot die,
 In you I find my destiny sublime,—
 A sharer in your immortality,
 I am as you, beyond the reach of time—
 With you I blend in glory and in might,
 In tempest or in calm, in darkness or in light!

ACT I.

ELIJAH AT CHERITH.

SCENE I.

The Desert near Horeb at midnight. Satan and his host meet in council.

SATAN.

Princes and Potentates of all this realm!—
 Unto this proud assembly you are called
 To foil the purpose of our ancient Foe
 In the re-conquest of our heritage.

BEELZEBUB.

What need we more of counsel or debate?
 Thou hast already marred his chief design,
 And quite divorced the human and divine.

SATAN.

Hast thou forgot that ancient oracle,
 Which prophesies for man in time to win
 Immortal joys through travail, pain, and DEATH?

BEELZEBUB.

An idle tale! If pain, or endless woe,
 Were sure conditions for redeeming man,
 Why not redeem the primal rebel race?

SATAN.

We are essential, evil, pure, unmixed,
 Lost to the faculty and love of good!

BELIAL.

The *love!* Man only knows the *appetite*
 Which thralls him to the symbols of his fall—
 As witness *Astar* of *Accadia*,
 The Lady of the deep—
 And *Artemus*, and *Ashthoreth*,
 Which have become the idols of his faith!
 His sole divinity is that of SEX.

SATAN.

Perchance that old divinity of sex
 May be redeemed to higher sanctity,
 In virtue of divine maternity.

BEELZEBUB.

How can a thing of mortal clay be made
 An image of the glory we have lost?

SATAN.

That lies beyond my ken, inscrutable;
 But what if God Himself, in very truth,
 Should deign become a MAN, and in that guise
 Confront us with a power invincible?

BELIAL.

How can a beast which in itself unites
 The nature of the serpent and the goat
 Be raised above the level of the brute?

SATAN.

Art thou not raised, and yet thou art below
 The level of the foulest of mankind?
 There is a virtue in the human soul
 Which has affinity with the divine;
 And though it is the vice of servitude,

Yet this HUMILITY can be redeemed
 To sanctity of life and future bliss.
 The greater prophets have discovered it,
 And make it the condition of beatitude :
 While pride, self-will, and scorn are virtues lost !

BELIAL.

More potent still in soul destroying power
 Are female charms and female blandishments.

SATAN.

Then teach them to adore the Ashera,
 Until they find the rage of lust recoil
 In pain incurable, that seeks relief
 In pure malignity and bitter hate.
 And thou, Beelzebub, thyself a prince,
 Make princes thy companions in misrule :
 Allure them with ambition, pride of state,—
 The slippery stepping stones to regal power,
 From which the tyrants stumble into hell.
 Thus far the common rout, while I assail
 The greater seers of the fallen race,
 And turn their claim to be the Sons of God
 To instruments of torture and despair !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Prince of the World, all hail !—
 Thy counsel shall prevail—
 The fruit forbidden, thou hast made it free !
 And emblems of delight
 Will beckon every wight
 To drain the golden stream of life's mad revelry.

SCENE II.

The Vineyard of Naboth at Jezreel. Enter Ahab and Sinadab, the high priest of Baal.

AHAB.

This idol worship profits not the heart.

SINADAB.

Yet they who worship idols worship God,
And serve Him truly under many names.

AHAB.

Man worships but an image of himself,
Which in his vanity he calls a god.
What boots the name by which a god is known,
As Chemosh, Molech, Amon, and the rest,
If he be cruel, vengeful, pitiless,
Or rioting in virgin blood, as when
The savage Jephtha paid his vow in full!

SINADAB.

Not so the man who has the secret flame
Which emanates from God ineffable!
For him the Sun is but the glorious veil
Concealing yet revealing the Divine—
The glory visible of the Invisible!

AHAB.

Doth not this Tisbite know the secret flame,
And work great wonders by its living power?

SINADAB.

A Gileadite! Seek not the Lord in Gilead!
Remember Jephtha and his savage pledge!

[*Enter ELIJAH at a distance.*

AHAB.

Ha!—who be he, so ill caparisoned,
Who eyes us like a lion on the watch?
I know him by his visage and his garb—
His hairy mantle and his fierce aspect!
What brow! what eye!—a tempest wreathed in fire!

SINADAB.

What wizard wight of magic spells art thou?
Perchance of Endor, kinsman of that witch,
Who by her charms destroyed the son of Kish!

ELIJAH.

Thou art destroyed by fouler sorcery:
The Witch of Zidon hath bewitched thy heart,
And made thee what thou art—a spirit lost!

SINADAB.

Go to!—Wouldst thou blaspheme God and the Queen?

ELIJAH.

To thee, O son of Omri, am I sent
To warn thee of the downward course you take;
Therefore, repent, O King! Restore the rites
Which God ordained to make for righteousness;
So may the foul disgrace of thine apostate reign
Be purged: the blood of slaughtered saints avenged,
And God be glorified in Israël.

AHAB (*bewildered.*)

If rival gods be as their rival priests,
We are but playthings of their sportive moods!
Here come some others of the priestly tribe,
The curse of Israel as of the world at large!

CHORUS (*Prophets of the Caves.*)

O man misled by that most fatal charm—
The fascination of a woman's eye!
Art thou indeed the King of Israël,
Struck by the thunder of the Gileadite!

AHAB (*dazed by the sight.*)

Are these the shadows of the prophets slain?—
More potent in their disembodied guise
Than legions of them clothed in flesh and blood!

SINADAB.

These are the weavers of false creeds—
The workers of sedition and misrule!

AHAB.

They are the followers of the Gileadite,
As vultures follow in the lion's wake!

CHORUS.

Alas, that kings should ever be opposed
To that alone which justifies their claim!
Unseal his eyes, O Thou all-seeing One,
That he may see Thy Glory, and return
From Error's devious path and mortal end
Unto the Refuge and the Rock of Israel.

ELIJAH.

If thou repent and turn again to Him
 Whose Oracle in Zion thou hast spurned,
 He will be merciful, and will atone
 The blood of saints in wanton orgies shed.

AHAB.

What fealty to Zion do I owe ?
 Is not the blessing on Mount Gerezim ?

ELIJAH.

Upon the Mount, but not upon the shrine
 Of Baal or of Ashtoreth—
 The shame and foul disgrace of Israel.

AHAB.

Am I not sovereign lord of all this realm,
 And hold Jerusalem in vassalage,
 And shall I now renounce the faith of Irsael
 For that of Judah, lately carried off
 With all the oracles of David's shrine
 As trophies of the Pharaoh's victory ?
 In Egypt therefore seek your captive gods,
 For Zion is no longer their abode !

CHORUS.

Alas, my country ! once the sacred home
 Of patriot fathers and of pious sons,—
 What evil scourge at length usurps thy throne,

And lights thy holy places with strange fires !
 Return, O Lord ; how long shall error triumph,
 And Gentile queens exalt iniquity !

SINADAB.

We know the wiles of all this rebel crew,
 This offspring of the Hebrew policy—
 To make Jerusalem another Babylon,
 The seat of a despotic Hierarch,
 Who, in the name of some Divinity,
 Would claim the sovereignty of all the world !

AHAB.

The priestly craft of Judah may succeed
 To hide its treachery beneath the cloak
 Of hollow piety and zeal for God ;
 But Israel shall never bend the knee
 To any Hierach of David's line !
 Therefore begone ! lest sterner justice speaks ;
 One blast upon this horn will seal your fate !

ELIJAH.

Since faith in thee is dead, and spirit blind,
 Thy grosser sense shall have the grosser proof :
 There shall be no more rain or tender dew
 To nurse the ground ; and thou shalt sow in vain,
 Till thou hast learned the truth, by thee denied—
 That kingly power from piety divorced
 Is as the scourge of God to plague the world !

[Exit Elijah ; the Chorus following.]

CHORUS.

Ah, for the man whose heavy doom is sealed
 The path to happiness lies not in good !
 Vain are the things, and so they perish,
 That cannot profit or deliver.
 But God is merciful, and will redeem
 The sinner that returns !
 Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteous path !
 Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims
 Shine forth ! Turn us again,
 And cause Thy face to shine,
 And we shall be saved.

[*Exeunt.*]

SINADAB.

This man, my lord, is not of common mould :
 The vision of the Seer 's in that eye !
 He has been taught the way of spirit life,—
 Has climbed the Mount of Vision, and beheld
 The secret and the glory of the Most High !

AHAB.

He is a prophet, but of evil chief,
 And chief among the rebel Gileadites,
 Who plot against us and our sovereignty
 In favour of the King of Syria.

SINADAB.

And yet, my lord, the killing of the man
 Oft makes the spirit in him more alive,
 When it incarnates in his followers.

AHAB.

Then let him live, but live to serve the State,
 As others of his tribe are wont to do,
 When flattered and advanced in offices.
 "There shall be no more rain!" Dost thou believe
 That nest of hornets, breeding civil broil
 In Gilead, must be destroyed! No rain!—
 Can he control the stars, compel the clouds?

SINADAB.

The holy gods alone can dominate
 The heralds of the sky which character
 The scroll of destiny in mystic signs,
 Well read by Magi of Chaldean lore,
 Who can *foresee* but not *control* events.

AHAB.

Star gazers, sorcerers, wizards, and the rest—
 We have a warrant to destroy them all!

SINADAB.

Here comes the minstrels of our noble Queen
 To herald us to her high festival.

THE QUEEN'S MINSTRELS.

Hail, ethereal shapes of beauty,
 Visions of the bright and fair,—
 Virgin daughters of Astarte
 Of the flowing golden hair!

Let the hermit seek a pathway
 'Tween extremes of good and ill ;
 Wiser men enjoy the rapture
 Of the life of pleasure still.

Hence, away with sullen sorrow,
 Drown it in a cup of wine ;
 Care may wait upon the morrow
 While this golden hour is mine. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The Temple of Astarte. Enter King, Queen, priests, and nobles of Jezreel. Priestesses and damsels follow. High festival. An altar with the image of the goddess, by the side of which the Chief Vestal stands.

CHIEF VESTAL.

Queen of the silver bow !—
 Thy glorious form illumes with holy light
 The world adoring thee, as I am now,
 In wonder and delight.

Thy round and ample waist
 Beneath the snowy billows of thy bosom
 Is girdled with a zone of amethyst
 Afflame in fadeless blossom.

And thou art ever near
 To comfort me as mother doth her child ;
 I feel thy bosom press me, and I hear
 Thy voice so sweet and mild.

Thou art thyself alone,
 Supreme among the angel host above,
 To whom thou givest strength, as round thy throne
 They ever quiring move.

PRIESTS' RESPONSE.

Behold, the virgin goddess knows
 The vows recorded at her shrine,
 And in the flame, love lighted, shews
 Herself all glorious and divine.
 Behold, she bends with looks benign,
 To list the tale of many woes—
 Where love forlorn doth ever pine
 For higher life and its repose.

VESTAL SONG.

Hark, the mother voice is calling
 Through the azure vault of night,
 And its silver tones come thrilling
 On swift glancing chords of light.

Hark, the mother call of welcome
 To the weary and oppressed—
 Come, ye children of affliction,
 Lay your burden on my breast—
 Here the tree of life is blooming,
 And the fruit thereof is blest!

PRIESTS' SONG.

Haste, ye virgins of Astarte,
 Bring libations to her grove;

Sound the timbrel and the viol,
 Spurn the code of self-denial
 In the ravishment of love.

CHIEF VESTAL.

Star of the sea,
 Fountain and spring of light,
 I pray to thee
 To visit me—

Look down from heaven's height.
 Rejoice, ye maidens, in your heavenly queen,
 Who turns the barren into fruitful soil,
 And weaves the garment of each earthly scene
 With loving labour and unconscious toil.

PRIESTS.

Behold, how she with orient pearls adorn
 Each blade of grass until it smile again ;
 Her look subdues the rudest face of things
 Unto the semblance of celestial joys.

My heart in the light of her look,
 As the eye in the light of the Sun,
 Lives only to know itself blest—

Sees all in the glory of one!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The same Temple of Astarte. Belial and Beelzebub stand near the altar of the goddess.

BELIAL.

What strange illusions doth the world present
To young and unsophisticated minds!—
Ideal, metaphysical, divine!
Yon'd particle of caverned rock, the MOON, *
Lifeless and cheerless as the dead sea shore,
Becomes a goddess in this virgin flame!
And that sulphureous mass of fire, the SUN,—†
The very picture of our drear abode
Of *inward* horror, darkness, and dismay—
Is unto them a god of glorious life.

BEELZEBUB.

The apotheosis of the times to come
Shall be as baneful as the present cult!

BELIAL.

'Tis excellent to be a politician—
To simulate, dissimulate, and like
A prophet-priest, to be sophistical!
A weaver of deceits, thou shalt prevail!

* Astarte. † Baal.

BEELZEBUB.

But one I know whose spirit baffles us—
 The fiery Gileadite—as erst old Job!
 Yet though we cannot bend him to our course,
 We can defeat the purpose of his toil,
 And plague the world with Hebrew perfidy!

They sing.

On this wanton air careering,
 Haste we to the halls of mirth,
 Where the sons of pleasure, rearing
 Altars to the Joy of Earth,
 Quaff the wine cup to Adonis
 And the goddess who alone is
 Fount of pleasure at its birth. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

The Brook Cherith.—A cave near the dried-up bed of the brook. Elijah stands by it in meditation. Early dawn.

ELIJAH.

Erewhile I heard His voice—
 Elijah, get thee hence,
 At Cherith hide thyself;
 Its waters shalt thou drink,
 And couriers of the air shall food provide!
 But lo, the brook no more supplies
 Its cooling draught;
 Nor do the friendly birds

At evening or at morning tide
 Remember if Elijah lives or no!
 The land is cursed! and now returns the curse
 Upon myself!—while Ahab and his host
 Escape the burden, but enjoy the SHAME!

[*Enter Satan in the guise of an angel.*]

VOICE (*of Satan.*)

Yet he and Jezebel shall die like dogs,
 Whilst thou, unscathed, shall wear a royal crown!

ELIJAH.

A crown!—a royal crown?—

VOICE.

A royal crown!—
 The crown of Ahab and of Jezebel!
 It is thy nature to be great and masterful;
 And therefore to this end I visit thee—
 To give thee sovereign and unbounded power!
 Thou hast the means,—command the fiery hail,
 The dread avenging minister of God,
 And proud Jezreel in ashes shall *repent!*

ELIJAH.

It were a victory too dearly bought
 That would deprive me of all power for good.

SATAN.

And yet thou wouldst be great—king, priest and all.
 Thy patriotic zeal is not the farce

Played by the vulgar demagogue for gain ;
 That kindling eye of thine is fit to rule,
 If thou wouldst take the world for what it is—
 A den of thieves, a nursery of vice !

ELIJAH.

Methinks this Voice ere now assailed mine ears,
 And made acquaintance with my solitude,
 In which I recognise a purpose high,
 And bear affliction as for some good end.

SATAN.

Command my power to compass thy design,
 And thou shalt wear the purple and the crown.

ELIJAH.

Think not that I am ignorant of SIN—
 Or of the wiles that lead the world astray.

SATAN.

Of sin ? The high and mighty know it not :
 It is the child of weakness and despair,
 And only thrives in misery and want !
 The happy know it not ; for happiness
 Is power supreme to act, and freely live !
 Were it not better to be spirit free,
 In virtue of unbounded sovereignty,
 Than live thus mewed in weakness and in want,
 Despised, rejected, hunted unto death ?

ELIJAH.

In that much vaunted freedom from restraint—
 The baneful lure of all unstable spirits—
 There lies the lowest servitude,
 Which holds thee bound to a variety

Of evil thought and evil deed,
 In one eternal circle void of light,
 And in which envy, scorn, like scorpion whips
 Lash thee!—unto thyself a slave!

SATAN.

'Tis misery, not happiness, that speaketh thus!
 Make then thy choice—of David's royal crown,
 Or of the crown of thorns thou wearest now!
 Behold this chalice!—brimming nectar wine,
 Drawn from the fount essential, pure and bright!—
 Mark how it flashes ruby in the cup,
 Instinct with life, and cool as frosty Ararat;
 This drink, since Cherith fails to slake thy thirst,
 And in the visitation of its power
 Thou art become a King of Israël!

ELIJAH

(Takes the cup and dashes it to the ground, whence the liquid starts into a lurid flame in which the tempter vanishes.)

Thy mercies, like thyself, have mortal ends—
 The earth itself rejects the chalice's bane!

[Spirits are heard in the flame.]

1ST SPIRIT.

Prince of the World, all hail!—
 Let not the Light prevail,
 But with thy shadow cover up the day!

2ND SPIRIT.

Outstretch thy raven wing,
 And blast each living thing,
 That grass may cease to grow and rills to play.

ALL.

Let Cherith cease to lave his bed—
And ravens croak their curses on the prophet's head!

ELIJAH.

O Light and Strength of Israel!—
To Thee I turn my face at every step,
So I may stumble not, or fall away!
In this profound and awful solitude
Where man is furthest, make Thyself most near,
For solitude it is where Thou art not!
Help me to bear the burden of this flesh,
That I with vision purged
May see Thee only as my sole delight.
Father Supreme, thy love is my retreat;
Beneath Thy wing I shelter from all ill.

*(A glory surrounds the Prophet as the sun rises
on the mountains of Gilead, and a song of
Angels is heard. Elijah becomes trans-
figured in the light.)*

ANGELS.

The Heavens open on thy raptured gaze,
And airs of Paradise refresh thy brow!

ELIJAH.

Hail, glorious Light of all my seeing, hail!—
Thou sovereign Beam dispensing life and joy!

ANGEL.

The Angels of Comfort return,
Celestial glories appear,
To strengthen and solace in turn
The heart of the Saint and the Seer.

ELIJAH.

New-lighted Wonder ! in whose glorious face
 The world becomes transfigured and amazed !—
 Tell me thy name, that I may live in thee,—
 In blessedness of spirit, body-free !

AZRIEL (*Angel of light.*)

Not here on earth, but in the realms of bliss,
 Thou shalt obtain the guerdon of thy toil,
 In the fruition of essential joys !

ELIJAH.

Tell me, since thou art in that realm of bliss,
 Why here on earth the righteous fare so ill,
 While Vice triumphant shews a joyous front ?

AZRIEL.

To make the blest fruition more enjoyed,
 Eternal Wisdom in its wondrous depth
 Ordained that Virtue should depend on toil,
 That he who perseveres unto the end
 May see her beauty growing day by day,
 Until at last he sees no other joy,
 Nor feels within his heart another void.
 Therefore return, with increase of God's love,
 And with the burden love alone can bear,
 To comfort the afflicted in misrule—
 The widowed mother and the orphaned child,
 And to restore the lost to life in God ;
 And I who am the way of life indeed,
 Will give thee strength to bear the heavy yoke.

ELIJAH.

In this I recognise thy purpose great,
And bear affliction as for some good end !

ANGELS' CHORUS.

Hail, Prophet of the Invisible, all hail !
Thy coming sheds a glory on the world ;
The shadows flee, the powers of darkness quail,
And their foul idols from their thrones are hurled.
Thou art the herald of that brighter Star
The faithless prophet* saw as in a trance,
Straining unwilling eyes to see afar
The kingdom thou art chosen to advance.
Companioned with the Spirit of thy Peer,
In beatific vision thou shalt see
The Star of Jacob in His might appear
Transfigured on the Mount of Galilee !

END OF ACT I.

* Balaam.

ACT II.

ELIJAH AT CARMEL.

SCENE I.

The Plain of Jezreel. Enter Widows and Elders of Israel as Chorus.

WIDOWS.*

Ring out, ye spheres, ring out my mournful tale,
 And oh, ye groves, your solemn music lend
 To my great grief, in plaintive, sorrowing wail,
 For he is dead!—my husband and my friend!

And oh, thou love, the sunshine of my youth,
 Now lend thy strength to every note of woe!—
 While I in sorrow learn the bitter truth—
 The lonely hours this widow'd heart must know!

O Love!—O Sorrow!—wherefore are ye twain
 The rival heirs of my bereavèd breast!
 Where in successive anarchy ye reign,
 Each strengthening each in anguish and unrest!

The tones of bliss which I was wont to hear,
 And hear with rapture from his blessèd lips,
 Are silent now!—where shall I find his peer?
 To me the world is shrouded in eclipse!

* Luke iv. 25.

For dark are all the scenes where he is not,
 And tame are all the sounds without his voice ;
 Pale grief is now my silent, bitter lot,
 Tho' the vain world should say—rejoice, rejoice !

But he is gone to purer light above,
 And so I hold it sin thus to complain ;
 With me he left his great undying love,
 And nothing but the holier thoughts remain.

These will I cherish till the bridal song
 Of the Eternal Kingdom shall unite
 My soul with his, amidst the glorious throng,
 Fast by the Throne of Majesty and Light !

ELDERS.

Alas, what wail of misery I hear,
 Redoubled by the vales and hills around,
 As if the soul of Grief had found
 A tongue in every rock to utter—*Woe!*

Ah, God, what sacrifice can cleanse the land,
 And suffer mercy to bestow
 A look of pity on this widow'd band,
 And make her living stream again to flow !

Lo, where she stands beside the hated bier
 Of her belovèd, dying timelessly !—
 She pays her tribute now—a silent tear !—
 The gift of misery !

Ah, God, what sacrifice can make us clean,
 And ope the gate of mercy to the poor,
 White famine sits at every door,
 And death within!

But who is he that wears the lion mien,
 As if from peril he would not recoil?
 It is Elijah!—as may well be seen
 By the clear stamp of genius and mental toil!
 Art thou indeed the prophet and the seer?

ELIJAH.

Go tell the King—Behold Elijah's here!

CHORUS.

O thou in whom all better habits thrive
 In fortune's adverse toil and bitter blast!—
 The tempest of affliction cannot rive
 That heart of thine, in valour rooted fast!
 But what avails its virtue with a State
 Whose laws are backed by force and subtlety?
 Virtue and valour match not in debate
 With shameless vice of lust and luxury!
 Therefore begone, and fly the fatal field
 Where thousands of thy brethren found a grave;
 No need that thou another life shouldst yield
 For men whom sacrifices cannot save!

ELIJAH.

The strength of sin prevails when the faint heart
 Fears more the evil than it loves the good.
 Go! tell the King, Behold Elijah's here!

CHORUS.

No need to summon him, for here he comes,
 And bears no welcome on the royal brow!
 Defend, O God, the right!—defend the right!

AHAB.

Art thou the man that troubleth Israel?

ELIJAH.

Not I, O King, but thou and Jezebel,
 In that ye have forsaken righteousness
 And gone a-whoring after Ashtoreth!

AHAB.

Go to! The god of Israel is light,
 And by the light I swear to have thy death!

CHORUS.

The God of Israel is light indeed,
 To kindle spirits and to open eyes;
 But what avails the truth of any creed
 If we obey the spirit that denies.

AHAB.

Who gave a Tishbite this authority—
 To be the censor of the reign of kings?

CHORUS.

Who taught Elijah heavenly things
 When we were all in error lost?
 Who taught him pilotage when kings
 Were tempest tossed?
 'Twas sorrow forged within his soul
 The thoughts that strike like polished shafts,
 And purged his heart of sin and dole
 With bitter draughts!
 Sad nurse of pure and lofty thought!—
 Stern priestess of the mysteries!—
 Thou hast the gates of knowledge wrought,
 And hold'st the keys!
 With God he wrestled and prevailed
 In watches of the silent night;
 When all the world its pleasure hailed,
 He hailed the Light!

AHAB.

Art thou so boastful in comparisons
 As over-peer the wisest of our kings?—
 The son of David, who in Zion taught
 The worship of our goddess, Ashtoreth!

ELIJAH.

A precedent for sin is easy found,
 As well upon the throne as in the hut!
 The son of David did as thou hast said,
 And therefore was his kingdom rent in twain—
 A prey to civil broil and base usurpers,
 As witness Omri's house and Jezebel!

AHAB.

Dost thou blaspheme God and the King?

ELIJAH.

Thou shalt bear witness to that fatal lie,
 In Naboth's case, the martyr of Jezreel.
 Away!—Confront me now with all thy gods,
 And thou shalt see the Angel of the Lord
 Which fired the sacrifice of Gideon
 Return again that secret to unfold,
 And manifest in fiery utterance
 That God alone doth reign in Heaven and Earth.

CHORUS.

'Tis well, 'tis well,
 O prophet bold,
 That sacred fire of old
 Will doubt and dispute quell.

AHAB.

'Tis well! I will confront my faith with thine,
 Unto the proof of fire, on yonder mount.

CHORUS.

Hail, trumpet tongued, almighty thunderer,
 Thine be the fire of God, the fire to blast
 The foes of ancient Truth, and sunder her
 From the foul lie in which she has been cast
 In ages of despair and darkness vast.

In thee the prophet and the patriot meet
 In one divinely gifted MAN,
 For ever forward in the van
 To tread the path of fear with conquering feet.

SCENE II.

*Top of Carmel. The Prophet stands alone near a
 broken down altar.*

ELIJAH.

Dumb monument of ancient piety!—
 Here stood the altar of the living God,
 And here His prophet stood, fire sanctified;
 But now the Baal worship of Jezreel,
 And the licentious rites of Ashtoreth,
 Usurp the holy places, and corrupt
 The springs of virtue and the wells of life.

*(A spirit in the shape of a Raven perches on a
 rock near by.)*

RAVEN.

In this hubbub of religion,
 What is false, or what is true?—
 Priests arrayed against each other!—
 Nothing strange, and nothing new!—
 Nothing new!
 Rogues they are, 'tween me and you!

This is god, says one good prophet ;
 Nay, *this* is he, another cries !
 And what *this* one deems most sacred,
 The *other* mocks, denies, defies !—
 Bless my eyes,
 Ye are *croakers*, in disguise !

Tell us, for we have no college,
 Why you differ, men of God ?
 Why not learn a universal
 Dogma, like our croak and nod,—
 Croak and nod !—
 Wisely o'er a mystic pod !

ELIJAH.

O bird accursed ! since Noah sent thee forth—
 Thou, in the craving of thy filthy maw,
 Didst from thy proper mission turn aside
 To feed on garbage and on carrion
 By some death-ridden and infected shore.

RAVEN.

Croak !—it was not thus at Cherith,
 When we ravens brought thee food ;
 There it was not spurned as carrion,
 But esteemed surpassing good—
 Surpassing good,
 As the fare of prophet should !

Still deserted, friend Elijah,
 Still neglected and apart?—
 World defying, life despairing,
 With the vulture at thine heart!—
 At thine heart—
 Common guerdon of thine art!

[*Exit.*]

ELIJAH.

Be near me in the conflict of this hour,
 When Satan and his host would have me doubt
 Myself and Thee, Thou, my Eternal Life!
 (*He prostrates himself upon the altar stones.*)
 (*A Dove perches where the Raven sat.*)

DOVE.

The Lord our God
 Is high and holy,
 In heaven and earth
 He reigneth solely;
 Supreme in power
 And majesty—
 Inhabiting
 Eternity—
 He still abides
 With contrite men
 Who die to sin
 To live again;
 But now He comes
 In fire and rain

To purge the sin,
 To cleanse the stain !
 O cover us,
 Celestial Flame,
 And hide the sin,
 And hide the shame ! [*Flies away.*]

*Ahab, Priests of Baal, Musicians, Elders and Nobles
 of Israel approach the summit of Carmel.*

CHORUS (ELDERS).

On and on throughout the ages,
 Ever learning, never knowing,
Man but fills historic pages
 With his errors ever growing ;
 Wearied, baffled, still contending,
 He is worn with toil and grief
 In ascending
 Altar stairs of vain belief.

ELIJAH.

How long 'tween two opinions do ye halt ?
 Let us build two altars : one for me,
 And one for those four hundred priests of Baal ;
 Then let the God who hears and answers prayer
 Bear witness to Himself in fire and rain
 That He is God the Lord, and none beside.

CHORUS.

'Tis well, 'tis well,
 O Prophet bold !—
 That sacred Fire of old
 Will all the dispute quell !

ELIJAH.

Call therefore on your god, ye priests of Baal,
And call aloud, lest he be not awake !

PRIESTS OF BAAL.

O Thou* in whom the world beholds
Itself, and knows itself divine,
By thee the life of nature moulds
Its forms of infinite design :
O Baal, hear !
Thou god invincible in fight,
For whom a thousand victims die,
Descend with fiery arrows bright
Upon our sacrificial pyre
With our dearest blood bedight,—
Awaiting thy consuming fire—
O Baal, hear !

ELIJAH.

They cry aloud, but Baal heareth not ;
They shed their blood, but Baal reckoneth not ;
He is asleep, and silent as the moon !

CHORUS (ELDERS).

Eyes they have, but do not see ;
Ears they have, but do not hear ;
But who's the Dread Supremacy,
Unknown, though ever near ?

ELIJAH.

Stand by His Altar, ye who know him not,
And learn the presence of the EVER NEAR !

* The Syrian Sun god, *Invincible*.

He prays.

O Thou Eternal One, sole in Thyself,
 And of Thyself sole understood,—
 Let it be known this day that Thou art He
 Whose power and will are one and absolute ;
 That they who know Thee not may see, believe,
 And in believing turn to Thee again !
 Arise, O Lord, and make Thy glory manifest !

*(While the Prophet prays, a flame surrounds the
 Altar, consuming the sacrifice.)*

CHORUS (ELDERS).

O my tumultuous heart, break forth in song—
 The Lord is God !
 Let earth to heaven the great refrain prolong—
 The Lord is God !

AHAB.

Thou only Prophet of the living God,
 Shew me the living stream that quenches thirst,
 And leaves no haunting shadow to torment
 The soul that drains it to satiety !

ELIJAH.

That LOVE which shews itself as clear in right
 As the deceit of *appetite* in wrong !

AHAB.

Then teach me so to love what thou hast loved
 That I may have possession in thy life.

ELIJAH.

To love the Lord with all thy heart and soul !

AHAB.

I know the grief, but not the joy of love.

ELIJAH.

And therefore art thou lost to love divine,
 Since by worse ills thou sought'st thy grief to cure.
 Repent! destroy thine idols and those priests
 Who lead thee into foul idolatry;
 So shalt thou purge thy soul and save thy crown.

AHAB.

Then let the clarion and the trumpet sound
 The triumph of Elijah, and the knell
 Of the four hundred prophets of the Baal!

PRIESTS OF BAAL.

Alas, we are undone!—

The haunting shadow hovers nigh;
 Farewell thou glorious Sun,

By thee we lived, in thee we die!

Ah, cruel fate!—

To be for ever banished from thy beams,

To wed corruption and with worms to mate,
 To sleep with horror, and of hell to dream!

AHAB.

How can I slay these men, and love the Lord?

ELIJAH.

Ah, thou art falling into questionings
 Inspired by evil spirits of the deep!
 'Tis by such art the Devil oft prevails,
 And damns the spirit which he most informs!

CHORUS (ELDERS).

Eternal Justice stands
 Between the endless jar of right and wrong,
 And with impartial hands
 Deals for the merits which to man belong.
 She winnows with her fan
 The harvest of his sowing,
 And on the treasures of the heartless man
 She turns the purging blast, for ever blowing.
 Ah, woe to them who work iniquity
 And feel no holy awe,
 And reverence for the majesty
 And might of ancient Law!—
 To them the grave is but the gate of hell,
 Where dreams of diverse horrors ever wake;
 Open, ye gates, and let the priests of Bel
 Pass to the torments of the fiery lake!

ELIJAH.

But now arise, and haste thee to Jezreel;
 For lo, the heavens are darkening and the sound
 Of yonder shoreland warns thee to make haste.

[Exeunt, Chorus singing.]

CHORUS.

The sky with sea is blent,
 The clouds with thunder rent
 Echo the clamour of the bellowing shore;
 The billows swelling high
 Rise to salute the sky,
 And join their loud voices to the general roar.
 Rejoice, thou barren Earth, and bloom again,
 As thou wert wont ere sin had marred thy face,

Ere Tyranny enthroned began to reign,
 And Famine lean, and bloody War,
 Were yoked together in her car,
 To mock at God and curse the human race.

ELIJAH.

Repent! for godly Sorrow is the nurse of joy,
 And Grief is oft the guide to heavenly light!
 Repent! Restore the worship of the Lord,
 Which Zion knew ere yet her glory fled!
 The rain returns, and once again returns
 The Grace of God to renovate thine heart.

CHORUS.

O God and Father of our spirit,
 May we grow wiser in Thy sight,
 Ascending nearer to Thy Light,
 Until Thy kingdom we inherit!

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

ELIJAH AT HOREB.

SCENE I.

A Cave near the top of Horeb, in which the Prophet sits in despondency. Time—near daybreak in the morning.

ELIJAH.

Ah, what am I? A fire that burns, but leadeth not!
 Then who can shew Thy people that they err?
 Had not the son of Beor light, yet stood
 On Pisgah's airy top to curse a race
 Ordained by Thee to be a people blessed?
 Had he not light who made the golden calf,
 And hailed it as the god of Israel?
 Had not the crownèd son of David light,
 Who measured Wisdom by the fear of God,
 Yet dallied with the goddess Ashtoreth?
 And who can shew that I may not relapse
 Into the snare of custom, and be found
 Among the rabble priests of use and wont?
 Have I a clearer vision, stronger faith,
 Than other prophets had who toiled and failed?
 Have I more light than they?

VOICE.

More light than they!

ELIJAH.

Father Supreme!—do Thou illumine my soul—
Come to mine aid, or close mine eyes in peace;
For I am weak, and weary of my life,
Since in the fight defeated and pursued,
I am not better than my fathers were.

VOICE.

There is a Power Supreme, but not for good!

ELIJAH.

Say on, and do thy will; God is not here.*

SATAN.

Thou hast mistook thy power and measured it
With me, the mighty ruler of this world,
Whose government thou canst not understand
Since thou art mortal, and canst only see
A fragment of its infinite design.
The evil thou affectest to abhor
Is but the shadow and the foil of Good.
There is a unity of force which holds
This universe of mine in joint action.

ELIJAH.

Say on, and do thy will: God is not here!

SATAN.

With all thy faith, self-sacrifice, and zeal,
Say, what hast thou effected in this life?
Another failure added to the list!
Then write it here, where Moses wrote his Law,
And die as he did of a broken heart—

* 1 Kings xix. 11. &c.

Deserted and alone, unburied, lost !
 What cares the world for such a noisy trump
 As thou art blowing in unwilling ears ?
 Its pleasures are too sweet to be foregone
 For visionary trifles of the brain,—
 More frequently the fumes of self-regard
 Than the inspirings of a healthy mind.

ELIJAH.

Say on, and say—What wouldst thou have me do ?

SATAN.

Return to Ahab ; bend thy pride to him ;
 And from this lower round thou shalt ascend
 To sit among the nobles of Jezreel.
 'Tis only failure that makes life a curse,—
 Degree and honour are the seals of virtue.

ELIJAH.

Degree and honour are but accidents,
 Or baits to lure us from our better self.
 The pleasures of the world are sweet, forsooth !
 So was the apple, but the serpent sting
 Soon made its pleasure mortal. Yea, say on !

SATAN.

The pleasures of the flesh I grant are vulgar,
 And have no charm for such a soul as thine ;
 But glory, fame, renown are attributes
 Of spirits tempered in celestial fire.
 The noblest heroes of the Hebrew race
 Were not content to hide the head in caves,
 Or waste their days in fighting heathen gods ;
 They drew the sword to vindicate their cause,
 And formed alliances with crownèd heads.

ELIJAH.

O doubly false is thy pernicious tongue,
 Which ever tricks in specious eloquence
 The deep damnation of thy fell intent !
 It is thine art to be sophistical—
 To trim a lie in fair seductive phrase,
 And make confusion in the soul of man
 By tempting him to sin for love of virtue !
 If it may gratify thy hate to know,
 Then hear the last that I shall answer thee—
 I am as great a sinner as thou art,
 But I am saved !—and thou for ever damned !

*(Here the mountain shakes, and Satan disappears
 in a terrible whirlwind.)*

ELIJAH.

If thou beest he who claimed a sovereignty
 That night at Cherith when I vanquished thee,
 Let all thine elements cry havoc now !
 Scatter the hills, set fire to heaven and earth,
 Dash rocks to pieces, smite the mountains flat,
 Pluck up the world, freighted with human woe,
 And if thou canst—for thou art sovereign power !—
 Hurl it reeking into the nether deep !
 Where is thy thunder, Devil, and thy fire ?
 Thine has the greater torment ; but in me
 There burns a flame that could annihilate
 The most rebellious spirit of the deep.
 A ruler thou !—a sovereign potentate !—
 Yet canst not paralyse the feeblest knee
 That bends in humble prayer to the Most High !

*(The awful storm of wind and the shaking of the
 mountain increase.)*

VOICE OF THE TEMPEST.

The tempest breaks the rocks, the fragments fly
 In lurid meteors through the mirky sky ;
 Wild gusts of wind upon each other leap,
 And toss the fiery foam from deep to deep.

ELIJAH (*at the mouth of the cave*).

O living Wonder!—Thou that shalt endure
 Unchangeable amid all change of worlds,
 Be near me in the darkness of this hour,
 When I am tossed upon an empty void,
 Sundered from Thee, my Refuge and my Joy!

VOICE OF THE TEMPEST.

The shattered mountains vomit fire and flame,
 And Sinai trembles to her utmost frame ;
 Strange fiery orbs start from their spheres on high,
 And red destruction sweeps along the sky ;
 The primal elements let loose again,—
 Chaos returns—and Satan rules amain!

ELIJAH.

How like the storm that raged within my breast—
 Loud, terrible—conflicting, mutinous!
 O God, my Refuge, and my Joy for ever,
 If in the wondrous depths of Thy design
 Thou hast afflicted me for some good end,
 Still lead me when the purpose of my life
 Is dark, and from my reach of thought cut off.
 Truly I am as feeble in Thy sight
 As frailest thing that shelters in the rock
 Or hides itself in covert from the storm.

(*The storm dies away as day breaks, and angels
 minister to him.*)

1ST ANGEL.

Through the gleaming realms of azure
 Voices whisper, echoes fly,
 Rising, falling, flowing softly
 In celestial harmony.

2ND ANGEL.

The angels of comfort return
 On glad and on passionate wing,
 And on the mild zephyrs of dawn
 Ambrosial fragrance they fling.
 With plumage unruffled by storm,
 Around thee rejoicing they sing ;
 Through the earthquake, the wind, and the fire,
 Celestial music they bring.

3RD ANGEL.

Rise in triumph, faithful hearted,
 Thou hast won the victory ;
 Thou shalt wear its crowning glory
 With the Christ on Calvary.

(Azriel descends as from the rising sun.)

AZRIEL.

What dost thou here, Elijah? Speak,
 But gaze not on this blaze of Majesty,
 For it would smite thy vision with amaze,
 And dispossess thy spirit of itself.

ELIJAH.

Oh! what am I, O Lord, a mortal man,
 That I should hear Thy voice in tones so mild
 As to transcend all fullness of delight!
 I have been jealous for the Lord of Hosts,

Because that Israel have forsaken Thee,
 Thrown down Thine altars,
 And slain Thy prophets with the sword ;
 And I am here alone—
 And they seek my life to take it away.

AZRIEL.

The Strength of Israel is ever near :
 Weak in thyself, in Him thou art most strong.
 'Tis not in scenes of triumph over crowds,
 Such as made Ahab tremble on the mount,
 Thy life is measured and thy labour shewn,
 But in the hearts of some seven thousand saints
 Now left in Israel, whom thou hast taught
 That God dwelleth with the pure in heart.

ELIJAH.

Oh, prime enlightener, if thou hast deigned
 To sanctify my labour to mankind—

AZRIEL.

Yet not redeemed are they, as thou wouldst have,
 By manifest supernal agency
 As might amaze but not compel belief ;
 But by the silent teaching of the truth
 That makes for meekness and humility.

ELIJAH.

Do not the crowned heads of Israel stand
 Between the people and the truth of God ?

AZRIEL.

Nay, not so much as those in humbler sphere,
 Who in their blindness know not what they want.
 If power and will were equally combined,

The nobler virtues might be found in *kings*;
 But inasmuch as there is fear of change,
 They yield in error to the common cry
 Which ever is for that which lasteth not.
 But since thou art most favoured among men,
 Say, what wouldst thou to better man's estate,
 And thou shalt have a vision of the end.

ELIJAH.

Thou only knowest the far reaching end
 And ultimate design of each event,
 While I can only see the instant means,
 Which to unwisdom may appear the best.

AZRIEL.

Yet, name a man among the Gileadites
 Whose virtue marks him for King Ahab's crown.

ELIJAH.

Jehu, the son of Nimshi, bears the mark.

AZRIEL.

And who is worthy of the Syrian crown?

ELIJAH.

Unless the sudden change from mean estate
 Should mar the faith and promises of youth,
 Let Hazael be King of Syria.

AZRIEL.

'Tis well: these two shall be anointed kings;
 But mark the end! The star of sovereignty
 Will shed its own malignant influence
 Athwart the lives of those usurping it,



Until the crimes they once abhorred in thought
 Shall be their most familiar acts in power.
 The veil of Time is rent!—what dost thou see?

ELIJAH (*has a vision of the Future*).

Oh, cover me, and hide it from my sight!—
 It is enough to make the mountain groan,
 And flinty rocks dissolve in bitter tears.
 And yet, beyond the agony and woe,
 The tumult, and the carnage, and the blood,
 The rising glory of a perfect Sun
 Subdues the horror of the darker gloom;
 For in the healing virtues of that beam
 I see the growth of life regenerate—
 The ripening fruit of love and industry
 In cities, temples, palaces, and thrones,
 Beneath the standard of—THE PRINCE OF PEACE!

AZRIEL.

Look northward towards Zion, and beyond,
 Far as the vision is vouchsafed to thee,
 And mark what God has done for man's chief good.

ELIJAH.

In Zion's vales I see a thousand homes
 From which ascend as from a group of stars
 The radiant glory of a pious life;
 And still beyond these vales, high on a hill,
 I see the semblance of a royal youth—
 Nailed to a cross!—whose fourfold arms illumine
 The heights, and depths, and latitudes of space!
 And from His brow, pierced with a crown of thorns,
 Light emanates, incredible how fair!—



While drops of blood, outstarting from His wounds,
 Burst into roses on the frowning thorn !
 And some there fall into the wondrous flood
 Of living flame around, and thence return
 In showers of rubies, pure beyond all speech—

AZRIEL.

Each potent to redeem a spirit lost,
 And be a ransom for a fallen world.
 Behold the MAN!—the first and last of Kings !
 In Him concentrate every human woe,
 Which He returns in that amazing Light
 Of perfect virtue—perfect love and faith,
 Which all beholding Him will imitate
 And grow in likeness to the thing they love,
 Until the sons of Adam be restored
 To higher dignities than they have lost.
 Behold the Man!—in Him thou hast been found.
 Therefore return to labour and to toil,
 And in thy sense of failure or defeat,
 Let it suffice to cheer thee on the way
 That Love and Justice sit at God's right hand,
 And in the semblance of this perfect MAN.

*(Azriel disappears, and angelic voices are heard
 in the distance.)*

1ST ANGEL.

Child of light, it is thy mission
 To reveal the truth thou knowest,
 And to kindle holy vision
 In the world to which thou goest—
 As the prophet of the ages,
 Throned above their chosen sages.

2ND ANGEL.

Sow, and thou shalt reap thy sowing
 Seven thousand fold times seven ;
 Plant, and thou shalt see it growing
 From thy calm abode in Heaven,—
 Thou art sent, and He who sends thee
 Knows the season, and attends thee.

CHORUS.

When the direful Archangel of Death
 With his terrors swept over thy head,
 Thy faith was rooted in Love,
 Though lowly and rude was thy bed ;
 When the blast of his terrible wing
 Smote the mountain of Horeb amain,
 The death-dealing shaft of the Foe
 Smote the heart of the Prophet in vain !
 The horror of darkness around,
 And the sound of the trumpet on high,
 The rock-splitting tempest and flame,
 And the earthquake loud thundering bye,
 Have left thee exalted in Faith
 In the Name thou hast borne in the strife--
 A Name to be mentioned with fear
 And with love, as the life of thy life !
 The fairest and sweetest of flowers
 Companions the rude frowning thorn,
 And the warbler of tenderest note
 To the night he bewaileth the morn :
 And the heart in which love built his nest,
 His eyrie the tempest to scorn,
 Is rocked in the breath of the blast,
 And in the high tempest forlorn.

Alone thou hast conquered the foe,
 Alone thou hast suffered the cost,
 Alone thou hast trusted in God
 When His face in the darkness was lost ;
 One spirit like thine will atone
 In its strength for its love for mankind,
 When altars and victims will fail
 To heal the deep wound of the mind !

SCENE II.

*A hall in the Palace of Samaria. Priests of Astarte—
 Tamal Ishtol, Beth—carousing.*

ISHTOL.

No doubt Elijah is a man of God.

TAMAL.

And so was Naboth, but he had blasphemed.

ISHTOL.

But Naboth was a fool not to exchange.

BETH.

These Hebrew prophets are a stubborn race ;
 Death frights them not, nor does the desert wild,
 Nor does the frown of kings subdue their pride.

TAMAL.

The Queen has genius to rebuke the proud,
 And will destroy these prophets, root and branch.

ISHTOL.

What say you to a song, ye men of Belial ?

TAMAL.

A song, a song!—the fair Zidonian maid!—
The Star of Zidon rules our destiny!

My love is like the Eastern star,
Bright herald angel of the morn,
Although her glances beam afar,
My heart from her can ne'er be torn.

Chorus—Then fill your cups with glowing wine,
And pledge my love who lives afar;
Though other maids may be divine,
I love but her or near or far.

Oh, she is fairer than the star
That now adorns the brow of night;
And in her charms my heart enthralled
Is rapt in wonder and delight.

Her cheek is glowing in the tide
Of passion's own celestial hue;
And love is radiant in her eye
As sunlight in the morning dew.

I yield in rapture to the charms
Of vestal fires that ever play
Upon the roses of her lips,
As in the East the break of day!

Ah, gentle maiden, list my lays,
And smile upon me from afar,
Until the light of other days
Shall shine upon me as a star.

Enter Herald.

HERALD.

The Queen commands your presence at her high
festival. [*Exit.*

PRIESTS (*following*).

While my blood this body warms,
I will revel in her charms ;
Rosy lips and loving arms
Will make a priest divine, boys! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*The Temple of Baal and Ashtoreth. Enter Priests,
Vestals, and Minstrels; Ahab, Jezebel, King of
Judah, Nobles of Jezreel, &c.*

VESTAL SONG.

Star of the Sea,
Lead me aright,
Thou art to me
Love and delight ;
Trusting in thee,
Angel of light,
I fear not life's stormy ocean.
Come in the twilight charm,
Come when the heart is warm,—
Come when my spirit is rapt in devotion.
Heaven is around me then
When thy smile thrills again
Through the sweet pulses of life and of motion.
Queen of the healing art,
Come to my yearning heart,—
Come like a summer calm over the ocean.

AHAB.

Friends, counsellors, and nobles of Jezreel,
 We have proclaimed this solemn festival
 In honour of our brother, King of Zion,
 Who is allied with us against our foes
 Alike in Syria or in Gilead.
 There still remains the arch-conspirator—
 A proud, rebellious prophet, who denies
 Our faith and sovereignty—our rights divine!

JEZEBEL.

This prophet hath blasphemed God and the King,
 And therefore by the Law he ought to die.

[*Enter Messengers.*]

How now? Found ye that man of Gilead?

MESSENGER.

Most gracious Majesty, for ever live!—
 For forty days we have been on his trail,
 But failed to track the lion to his lair.
 Of all the friendly Arabs we enquired,
 Some saw him here, some there, as if there were
 Not one Elijah, but a host of them.

ZINADAB.

He is in session with the heavenly host,
 And knows the seasons when to come and go!

MESSENGER.

'Tis said he hides at Ramoth Gilead,
 And stirs rebellion and proclaims a King!

KING OF JUDAH (*aside*).

Our secret plot is known! We are betrayed!

AHAB.

A King! What King?

MESSENGER.

The captain of their host—

QUEEN.

Jehu, the son of Nimshi, is the man!—
 A bloody man, in league with Syria!
 Why stand we here? Let not a Gileadite
 Escape the arm of justice and revenge!
 Could I but wield a sword, full many a head
 Would drop into the bowels of the earth
 That now encumber it with treachery!

AHAB.

Most noble Queen, my royal Jezebel,
 Thou hast the genius to rebuke the proud,
 Or gild with roseate hues dark sorrow's cloud!
 No more shall I with flesh and blood consult
 But with the voice that speaks from sceptred thrones,
 And with the argument of blood and iron!

JEZEBEL.

'Tis said, my lord, that wine and woman's lips
 Have lustier relish tasted after blood!—
 And this I vow on your return in triumph.

AHAB.

What says our brother Judah to this hazard?
 Will he unite his mighty arm with mine
 To strike destruction in that den of thieves,
 That home of rebels, Ramoth Gilead?

JUDAH.

Let us consult the prophets at the gate.

AHAB.

The prophets? Nay, these prophets are in league
With all the enemies of Israel.

And yet, to please my lord, we shall enquire,
And mark how they may champion our cause.

*(With trumpets and martial music they are led to
the gate of Samaria.)*

VESTAL SONG.

Oh, praise our virgin queen,
Ye vestals of Jezreel,
As in her light serene
Her voiceless spells ye feel.
She fructifies the earth
With gracious dews distilling,
And smiles on every birth
Of life in beauty thrilling.
She spins the thread of life
From age to age enduring,
Composing all the strife
In bonds of love alluring.

SCENE IV.

*An open space before the gate of Samaria—the Kings of
Israel and Judah enthroned in state; Nobles, Elders,
Priests, &c.*

AHAB.

Call hither all the prophets you can find,
Whether of Judah or of Israël;

And chief of Baal, the Invincible,
Whose ancient oracle on Gerisim
Confirms our claim on Ramoth Gilead.

[*Enter Prophets as Chorus.*]

CHORUS.

Hail, royal son of Omri, conqueror King!—
Behold these emblems* of thy might!—

* Horns of iron.

With these thou shalt prevail,
And push the Syrians;
With these thou shalt prevail,
And rescue Ramoth Gilead
From Jehu's grasp—
From the false tyrant's grasp!
And Jehu shall be hurled
From tower and battlement
As food for vultures and of hungry dogs!—
Go up! thy horn is high exalted and prevails!

AHAB.

Both heaven and earth now champion our cause.
By this we both shall win eternal fame,
And pluck the laurel from the Syrian brow.

KING OF JUDAH.

Is there not here a prophet of the LORD,
Of whom we may enquire?

AHAB.

A prophet?—Yea,
A prophet of disaster to my House!

KING OF JUDAH.

Let not the King say so.

AHAB.

Then call him here !

JEZEBEL.

The prophet fostered by the Gileadite ?
Let him be slain, or die in gyves of shame !

AHAB.

Then let him speak and seal his mortal doom !

[*Enter Micaiah.*

What says Micaiah, prophet of the Lord !—
Shall we go up to Ramoth Gilead
To smite the Syrians, or shall we now forbear ?
I charge you, speak the truth !

MICAHIAH.

“ Go up and prosper ! for thou shalt prevail ! ”—
The lying spirit that hath spoken thus
Will lead thee blindly to thine utter ruin !
For as in Aphek thou didst spare a king
Whom God appointed to destruction,
So shalt thou reap of disobedience
And be destroyed of Syria in turn.
For now I see in vision clear
The mighty host of Israel
Wide scattered o’er the hills
Like sheep without a shepherd,
Pursued and worried by the Syrian dogs,
While King and Queen are mangled by their fangs !

AHAB.

Have I not said he is mine enemy ?
Take him away ! and fetter him in gyves
Till I return victorious in peace.

For Ahab shall go up and challenge all the ill
 That gods and prophets can accumulate !
 For Ahab in his three score years and ten,
 Or more or less, no matter which, 'tis one—
 Shall cram the womb of Time with deeds so terrible
 That he shall live again and speak in them
 For ever fresh and young, for ever King !
 Hail, monumental records of my destiny,
 Strike heaven in the face, until the gods
 Shall trumpet their applause and answer back,
 “ Behold a man become like one of us ! ”

JEZEBEL.

Farewell, my noble lord, till you return,
 And in the blood-dyed garments of our victory !

[*Exeunt.*

*(Flourish of trumpets, horns, and the rattle of
 armour, as preludes of battle.)*

