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BEN-HUR

IN

DRAMATIC TABLEAUX AND PANTOMIME

ARRANGED BY THE AUTHOR

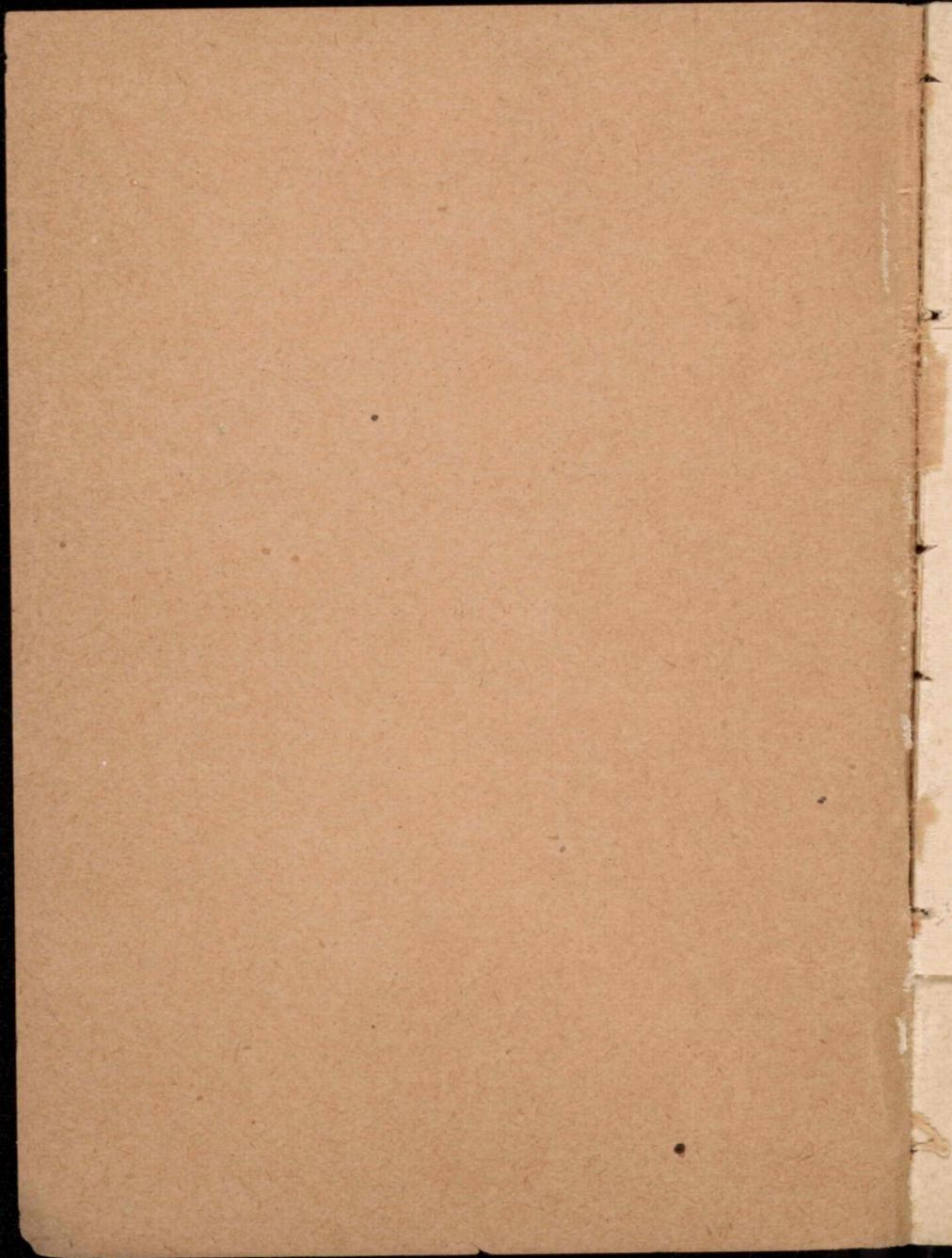
FOR

MESSRS. CLARK & COX

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

1891



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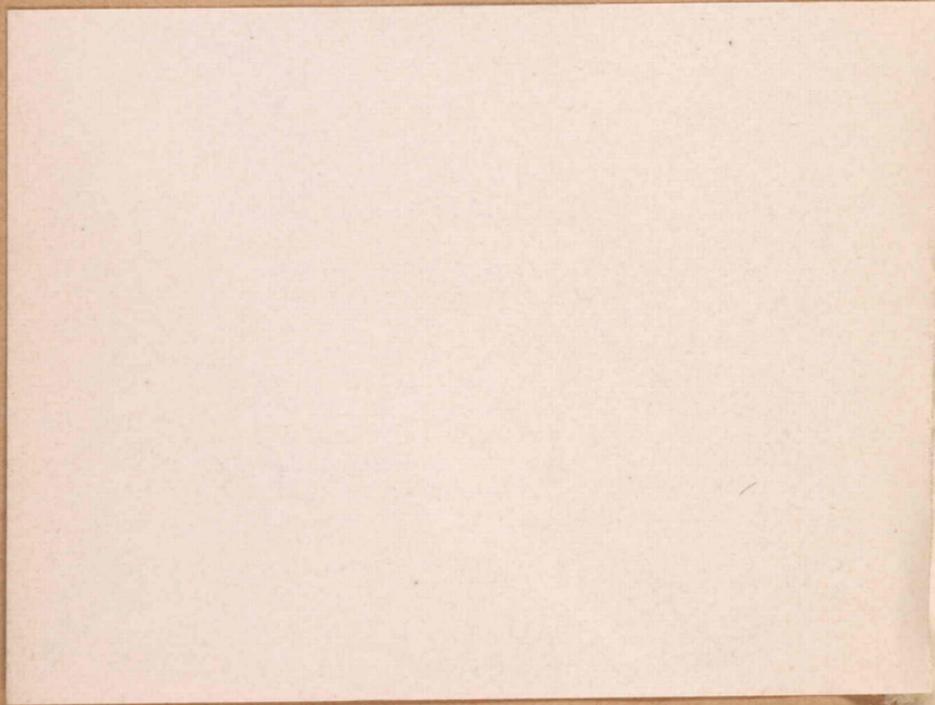
DRAMATIC TABLEAUX AND PANTOMIME

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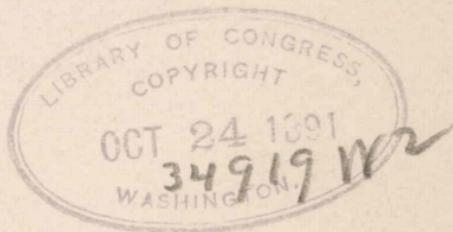


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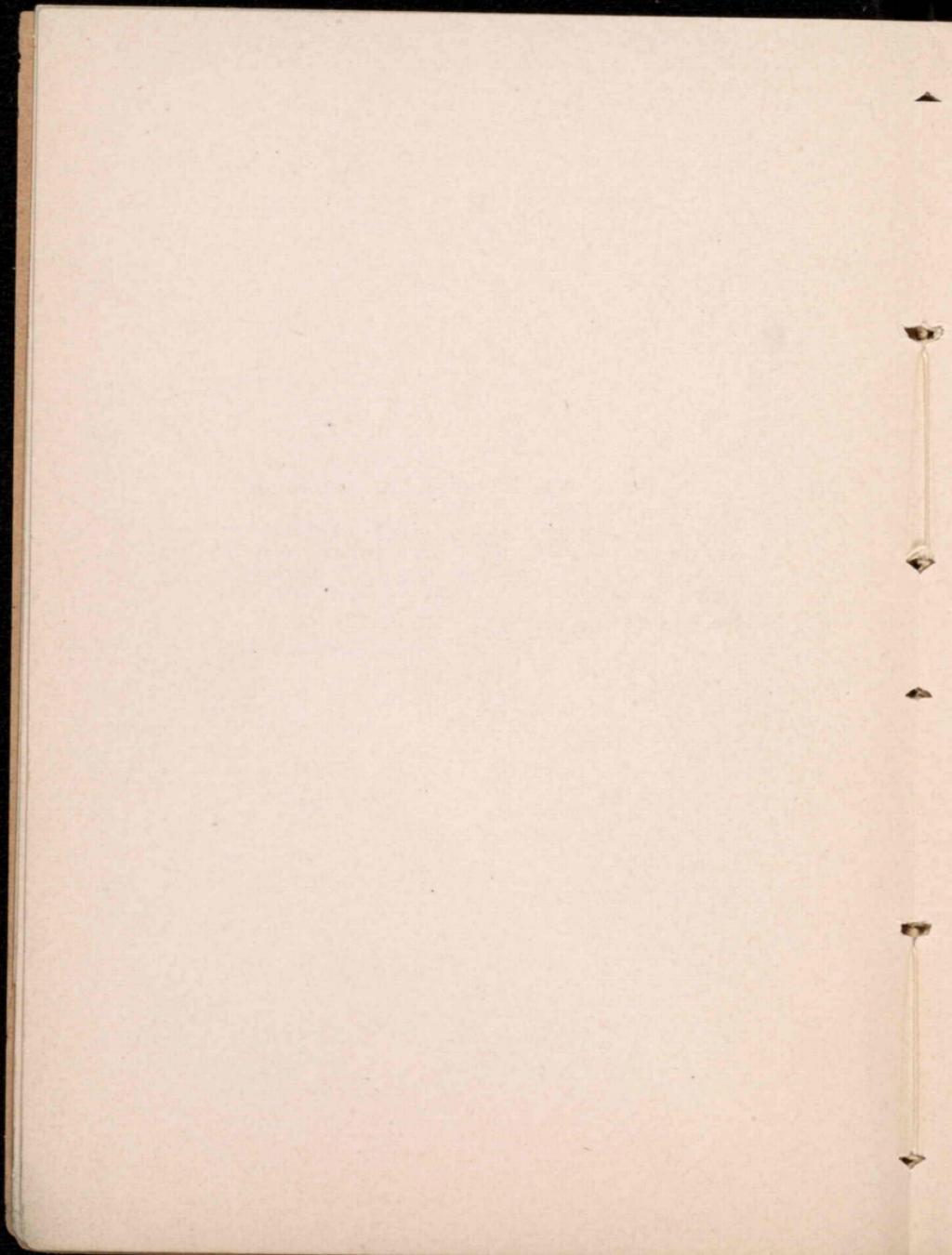
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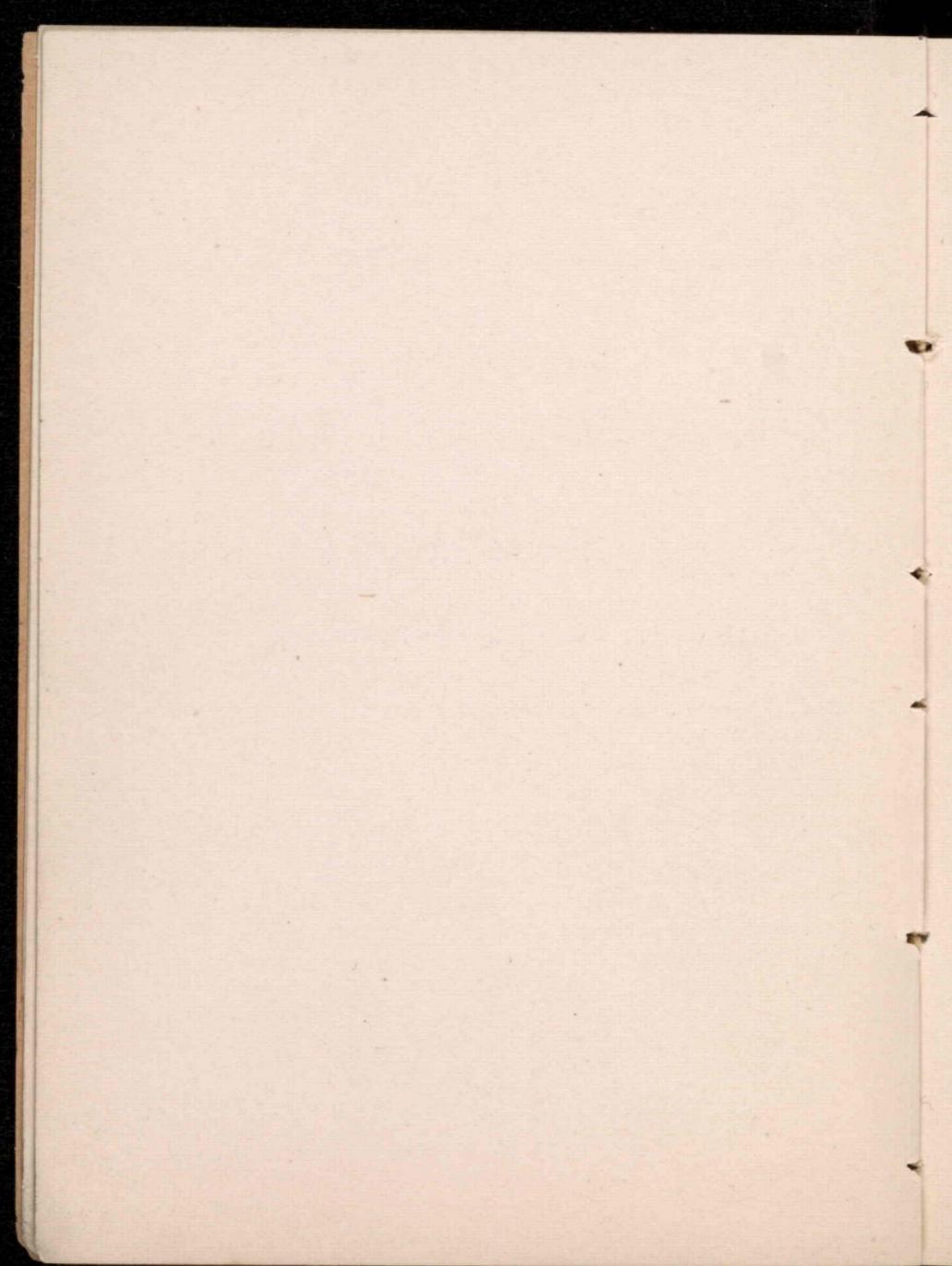
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LEW. WALLACE.



BEN - HUR
IN
DRAMATIC TABLEAUX AND PANTOMIME



BEN-HUR

IN

Dramatic Tableaux and Pantomime

ACT FIRST

PANTOMIME

SCENE I.—Meeting of the Three Wise Men

THE first-comer of the Three Wise Men (the Egyptian) descends from his camel and surveys the desert for signs of his companions. Though he sees them not, he prepares for them. Going to the litter on the camel, he produces from the box or cot a sponge and a small gurglet of water, and washes the eyes, face, and nostrils of the animal. Then, from the same depository, he brings forth a circular cloth, red and white striped, a bundle of rods and a stout cane, which he converts into a centre-pole higher than his head; setting the rods around it, he spreads the cloth over them. From the

litter again he next fetches a square rug, and spreads it on the floor of the tent on the side from the sun. . . . Once more he goes out, and with greater care, sweeps the encircling country. . . . He then hangs a bag of beans to the animal's nose. . . . Again he scans the world of sand. . . . Then he brings out materials for a meal, and having laid them upon the carpet, he opens and spreads three pieces of silk cloth—significant of the number of persons he is looking for. . . . Stepping forth again, lo! in the east a dark speck.

Egyptian (crossing his hands upon his breast, and looking to Heaven). "God only is great!"

The Hindoo arrives. . . . A moment they look at each other, then embrace—that is, each throws his right arm over the other's right shoulder, and the left around the left side, placing his chin first upon the left, then upon the right breast.

Hindoo. "God only is Great!"

The Greek arrives, and they embrace him. . . . The tent is set; the bread ready for breaking; the Three are seated cross-legged upon the carpet facing each other, when they bend their heads forward, cross hands on their breasts, and say grace.

Tableaux and Pantomime

SCENE II.—Joseph and Mary at the Joppa Gate

SCENE III.—The Three Wise Men at the Damascus Gate

The Three are at the Damascus Gate of the Holy City. A crowd of people standing about, looking and listening.

Balthasar (to sentinel, pacing his beat in front of the Gate). "I give you peace." (Sentinel continues walking, and makes no reply.)

Balthasar (to sentinel). "Can you tell us where he is that is born King of the Jews?"

An officer appears, twirling his javelin, and so scatters the crowd.

Officer (to Balthasar). "What want you?"

Balthasar. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

Officer. "Herod?"

Balthasar. "No."

Officer. "There is no other King of the Jews. Go farther. Go to Herod. If there is another King of the Jews, he will find him."

With his javelin the officer makes way through the crowd for the Three, and they go in by the Gate.

SCENE IV.—The Three in the Palace before Herod

Herod sitting on a throne. The Three advance to the edge of a rug, and prostrate themselves, Oriental style. . . . Herod touches a bell. An attendant enters, and places three stools in front of the throne.

King. "Seat yourselves. I had report of the arrival of three men curiously mounted. Are you the men?"

The Egyptian, accepting signs from his companions, salaams profoundly, then answers affirmatively. Herod acknowledges the reply with a wave of the hand.

Herod. "What was the question you put to the officer at the gate?"

Balthasar. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

Herod. "Is there another King of the Jews?"

Balthasar. "There is one newly born."

Herod. "Not to me, not to me! Where is this new King?"

Balthasar. "That, O King, is what we would ask!"

Herod. "Tell me how, separated by land and sea, you all came to hear of him."

Balthasar (solemnly). "There is an Almighty God!"

Tableaux and Pantomime

Herod (rising and startled). "Bring the gifts."

An attendant appears, and kneeling before the guests, presents each of them with a girdle of gold. They acknowledge the honors with prostrations. . . .

Herod (rising and going to them). "Go search diligently for the young child. Peace be with you." . . .

He folds his robe about him, and leaves the chamber. Exit the Three, conducted by the attendant.

SCENE V.—Ben-Hur and Messala in the Garden

Ben-Hur and Messala in the garden of the King's palace in Jerusalem—boys about the same age, and much alike in appearance. Messala, the elder, dressed a la Roman. Ben-Hur wears a Jewish garb.

Messala. "Our farewell took place in this garden. You remember?"

Ben-Hur. "Yes—about five years ago. I wish you were the Messala you went away. He had no poison in his nature; not for the world would he have hurt the feelings of a friend."

Messala (lifting his head haughtily). "Wherein have I hurt you?" (Bursting into sarcastic laughter). "See what it is

Ben-Hur

to be a Jew!" (Draws a circle in the sand.)
"This is your life—no, the circle is too large!" (Draws a smaller one. He then attracts Ben-Hur's attention to it. . . . Ben-Hur rises. . . . Messala attempts to pull him back on the bench.)

Ben-Hur. "You mock me."

He moves away. Messala follows him. They regard each other angrily.

Ben-Hur. "I sought a friend, and find—"

Messala. "A Roman!"

Ben-Hur starts off. Messala overtakes him, and places a hand on his shoulder.

Messala. "This is the way we used to walk when children."

Ben-Hur removes the hand. At the gate Messala offers his hand, which is refused. Exit Ben-Hur.

Messala. "Down Eros, up Mars!"

SCENE VI.—Street in Jerusalem

Roman Guards marching through a street in Jerusalem. Long and loud flourish of trumpets. Home of the Hurs. Gratus, the Procurator, is struck by the tile. Great commotion. Guards form around Gratus to protect him with their shields. The people assail them with missiles from the house-tops. The Ro-

mans break in the door of the mansion. Ben-Hur's mother and sister haled into the street. Messala, directing the Romans, points out the members of the family. Ben-Hur begs Messala to save his mother and sister.

Ben-Hur. "Help them, O my Messala! Remember our childhood, and help them. I—Judah—pray you."

Messala. "Down Eros, up Mars!"

Ben-Hur. "In the hour of thy vengeance, O Lord, be mine the hand to put it upon him."

The family, including Ben-Hur, are carried forcibly off.

EXPLANATORY

THE falling of the tile was accidental; yet Messala and Gratus affect to believe it intentional, and charge Ben-Hur with attempting to murder Gratus—this that they may confiscate the property of the Hurs. They accordingly secrete the mother and sister of the lad, and sentence him to the galleys for life, the uttermost term of existence there being three years. . . . Ben-Hur is fortunate enough to be serving as rower No. 60 on a galley which is carrying Quintus Arrius eastward in search of pirates. Arrius is a tribune,

Ben-Hur

and, going to take charge of a fleet of galleys, is attracted to Ben-Hur by his athletic appearance and the good report made of him by the sailing-master. Finally he sends for Ben-Hur. The scene is on the deck of the galley.

SCENE VII.—Deck of a Roman Trireme. Arrius and Ben-Hur
in conversation

Arrius. "Dost thou admit thy guilt?"

Ben-Hur (greatly excited). "I swear I am innocent."

Arrius walks the deck reflecting, but stops.

Arrius. "Did you not have a trial?"

Ben-Hur. "No."

Arrius. "No trial—no witnesses?"

Ben-Hur. "They bound me, and dragged me here, where I have been ever since."

Arrius. "Enough! Go back to thy place." (Ben-Hur turns away despairingly.) But stay—if thou wert free, what wouldst thou do?"

Ben-Hur. "Never rest until I found my mother and sister."

Arrius. "Go."

The pirates are overtaken. A great battle ensues. The Tribune's ship is sunk, but he gains the victory.

EXPLANATORY

IN the fight with the pirates, Ben-Hur was so fortunate as to save the life of Arrius. The two went down with the sinking galley, and arose together. Ben-Hur recognized the Tribune, and pulled him on a floating plank. The chief, in gratitude and admiration, formally adopted him as his son and heir, and took him to Rome. The idea of the lost mother and sister pursued Ben-Hur into the halls of Cæsar. The thought that they might be dead drove him to thinking of revenge upon Rome. To that end, he availed himself of the opportunity, and practised every art in the least calculated to accomplish him in arms. He dreamed of first acquiring a perfect knowledge of the military system of the Romans, and then returning to Judæa to set it in practice against them.

The time at last came to put his scheme in execution. As a member of the official family of a consul of the time, he landed in Antioch, the centre of Eastern profligacy and splendor. Passing, by vessel, from the sea into the mouth of the Orontes River, he heard of Simonides, a merchant vastly wealthy, and from the account supposed him to have been his

father's servant for life; if so, the man and all he possessed belonged to him by right of inheritance. He determined to call upon the merchant, and did so; but being put to proof of his own identity, he failed, and, in desperate mood, betook himself to the Grove of Daphne, half resolved to become a priest of Apollo, to whom the Grove, so famous for its beauty, was dedicated. It was during this visit to Simonides he first saw Esther, the daughter of that person.

It appears, however, that Simonides had, in fact, recognized him as the son of his old master, but, before formally admitting his servitude, wished to ascertain the kind of person he was. So he sent Malluch, a confidential agent, to follow and make report of him. Accordingly Malluch joined him in his wanderings through the Grove; first to the racing course, where he discovered Messala practising with his chariot and "four" as a contestant in the forthcoming Games by the city in honor of the Consul; then to the celebrated Fountain of Castalia.

SCENE VIII.—Entrance Gate of the Grove of Daphne

The Dance of the Devadasi or Priestesses of Apollo.

Tableaux and Pantomime

SCENE IX.—The Fountain of Castalia

Ben - Hur, with Malluch, there meets Balthasar, one of the Wise Men, and Iras, his daughter. Balthasar and Iras in a houdah on the kneeling camel. Ben-Hur and Malluch. A crowd of persons. . . . Messala appears in his chariot, and attempts to ride over the Egyptian. The old man struggles to escape, but is prevented by age and decrepitude. Everybody runs to get out of the Roman's way but Ben-Hur, who rushes in, and saves Balthasar and Iras by catching the reins of the "four."

Ben-Hur. "Hold! Back, Messala!"

Messala, descending from his chariot, walks around the camel, and lightly addresses Iras, who makes him no reply."

Iras (to Ben-Hur). "Take this cup, and fill it, I pray. My father is faint and thirsty."

In filling the cup at the fountain, Ben-Hur meets Messala, and the two stand face to face—Ben-Hur defiantly. . . . Messala, without speaking to Ben-Hur, goes to his chariot, casting looks of admiration at Iras, who seems pleased with them. . . . Ben-Hur carries the cup to her, After the father has drunk, she gives it back to Ben-Hur.

Iras. "Keep the cup."
Balthasar (to Ben-Hur). "There is but one true God! His blessing go with thee."

EXPLANATORY

ALMOST simultaneously with his recognition of Messala at the race-course, Ben-Hur heard a proclamation for a driver in behalf of an Arab Sheik, named Ilderim, with the surname of Generous. The Sheik had come up to Antioch with four wine-red horses of the pure blood, designing to enter them in the contest of chariots. The Roman whom he had employed to drive them had not skill to his satisfaction; hence the proclamation. It then occurred to Ben-Hur that by accepting the employment he would have an opportunity to revenge himself on Messala in the most public manner, chariot driving having been one of the accomplishments acquired by him in the palæstra at Rome. Accordingly he seeks the Sheik, who, at his Orchard of Palms, a few miles out of Antioch, is living in a dower, keeping the habits of a Bedouin of the desert.

Tableaux and Pantomime

SCENE XI.—Door of Ilderim's Tent

Ilderim the Generous, standing in the door of his tent, receives Ben-Hur and Malluch. He draws three cups of leben (literally buttermilk) from a large smoke-stained bottle (the skin of a hog) hanging from the pole of the tent, and presents them to his guests on a platter.

Ilderim. "Drink! this is the fear-naught of the tentmen."

They each take a cup, and drink.

Ilderim. "Enter now, in God's name!"

Having entered, Malluch and Ilderim talk privately.

Malluch (to Ben-Hur). "The Sheik will give you trial of his horses. Farewell."

Malluch and Ben-Hur shake hands. Exit Malluch.

Ilderim (stroking his long white beard). "Who art thou?"

Ben-Hur. "Was there never a time in thy life when to answer such a question would have been a crime to thyself?"

Ilderim. "By the splendor of Solomon, yes."

SCENE XII.—Same Interior of Tent

Enter female slaves with lamps and the

evening meal. The lamps they hang on uprights, each with a projecting arm for suspension of the lights. The edibles they dispose on a table, shaped thus , the opening towards the front. The table is barely high enough to permit the three men to cross their legs under it, seated Eastern fashion. Balthasar then appears. Ilderim meets him, and offers his arm. They advance to the table, Balthasar moving slowly and bent with age, and carrying a long staff. Ben-Hur receives him standing. Balthasar recognizes Ben-Hur.

Balthasar. "Art thou not the youth who rescued me at the Fountain?"

Ben-Hur (producing the cup). "I am he."

Balthasar. (Both hands upraised). "The Lord sent thee to us."

Ilderim seats Balthasar at the end of the table and Ben-Hur at the left side; he himself then takes place at the right side. Balthasar is in view full face; the others are in profile.

While they eat, two Arab girls come in and dance a Nautch. Musicians: three with tambourines, two with mandolins.

Tableaux and Pantomime

SCENE XIII.—Iras and Ben-Hur on the Lake at the Orchard of Palms

The boat is at the landing. Negro rower in white. Iras, in the boat, standing, invites Ben-Hur to ride with her. He accepts, and steps into the boat. Boat is pushed out on the lake. Iras sings the "Lament." Ben-Hur kneels at her feet, kisses her hand, and by look and action shows how he is fascinated.

NOTE.—The following description of Nautch dancing girls, their costumes and dance, is taken from the admirable and most interesting work recently published by the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *Our Viceregal Life in India*, I vol., p. 67:

"'A Nautch in the Upper Hall,' says the programme! . . . There were about five musicians, who stood just behind the two girls. . . . These played little stringed instruments of the mandolin order. One of the women was very good-looking, and was heavily clothed from head to foot in velvet and gold, and a great scarf of green and gold; the other wore rather short pink petticoats, but when she did whirl round, one saw that she had on a regular suit of armor, cloth of gold down to the ankles. Nothing could be more proper, and nothing could possibly be more languid and gentle and almost motionless than the dancing, if dancing it can be called. The first performer, without moving from her place, squares her elbows slightly, and with her two hands, palms downward their fingers almost touching at the points, moves them almost imperceptibly, and manages gradually to glide a few steps forward, then to make one turn, to raise her arms and wave them gently for a moment, to glide the few steps back, and to end abruptly. The second does the same, while the first performer, come to life in the background, shows that she is hot, and tries to cool herself much more vigorously than she dances."

EXPLANATORY

MALLUCH, having left Ben-Hur with Ilderim at the dower in the Orchard of Palms, returned to Simonides, and made

Ben-Hur

report concerning Ben-Hur. The merchant, being satisfied, sent for Ben-Hur, and in his house under the great bridge acknowledged him to be his master. He also then and there presented Ben-Hur an account of his management of the remains, come to his hands, of the estate of the late Prince, Ben-Hur's father. By that return it is shown that Ben-Hur is the richest private person in the world. Ben-Hur was amazed, and offered the whole of the vast fortune to Simonides, except the amount he received from his father, upon condition that he should use the money in helping him discover his mother and sister. Simonides declined the offer without declining the condition. He then showed him another account in which he included himself and Esther, his daughter, as his (Ben-Hur's) servants.

PANTOMIME

SCENE XIV.—Interior of Simonides's House

SIMONIDES is in his chair, his nether person covered with a black silk robe. Esther is at his left, her right hand upon his shoulder. Sheik Ilderim stands apart, but in easy hearing.

Simonides. "Son of Hur, take thou the peace of the Lord from me and mine."

Ben-Hur. "As son to father, I return it to you."

Simonides (to Esther). "A seat for the master, daughter."

Esther takes up a stool and advances with it to Ben-Hur. She hesitates, looks timidly at him, and then back to her father. The latter directs her to proceed. Ben-Hur goes to her, takes the stool, and seats himself at the feet of Simonides.

Simonides. "Esther, bring me the paper."

Esther goes to a table, brings Simonides a roll of papyrus, and remains standing by the left arm of his chair.

Simonides. "I have here a statement exhibiting the property which is thine as thy father's son, together with a showing of our relations."

Simonides draws out the first leaf, reads it, and then delivers it to Ben-Hur.

Simonides. "Thou hast six hundred and seventy-three talents, all thine, making thee, O son of Hur, the richest subject in the world."

Ben-Hur rises and receives the sheet, struggling with emotion.

Ben-Hur. "I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast not abandoned me. Next I thank thee, O Simonides." (To Sheik Ilderim.) "Serve me now as a witness,

and " (to Esther) "thou, Esther, good angel of this good man, hear me also." (He then rolls the sheet, and offers it back to Simonides.) "The things this paper takes into account—ships, houses, goods, camels, horses, money, the least as well as the greatest—give I back to thee, O Simonides—upon one condition. The money which was my father's thou shalt return to me; then thou shalt join me in search of my mother and sister, holding all thine subject to the expense of discovery, even as I will hold mine."

Simonides rejects the paper, but offers Ben-Hur his hand; then he takes the second sheet of papyrus.

Simonides. "Thou hast not all the account; read this."

He presents the second sheet of papyrus to Ben-Hur, who reads it.

Ben-Hur (allowing the sheet to roll together). "O Simonides, and thou, fair Esther—fear not." (To Sheik Ilderim.) "Witness for me again, O Sheik, that in the moment these were declared my servants, I declared them free; and what I declare, I will put in writing."

Simonides (smiling and shaking his head). "Thou canst not make us free in law. I am thy servant forever. In my ear the marks of the awl yet abide."

Tableaux and Pantomime

(He touches the ear to show it.) "Only let me be thy steward."

Ben-Hur. "Did my father that?"

He walks the floor greatly moved.

Simonides. "I will be thy servant forever. Only make me what I have been, thy steward."

Ben-Hur. "Count thyself such."

Simonides. "And now is the understanding perfect?"

Ben-Hur. "It is with me."

Simonides. "And thou, daughter of Rachel, speak!"

All eyes turn to Esther. She stands a moment abashed; then she goes to Ben-Hur.

Esther. "I am not better than my mother was."

Ben-Hur (taking her hand, and leading her back to her father). "Thou art a good child. Have thy will."

Simonides replaces her arm upon his neck.

PANTOMIME

EXPLANATORY

BEN-HUR, out at the dowar of Sheik Ilderim, has trained the four Arabs to his

Ben-Hur

satisfaction, and it is now the night before the Games. The Sheik's people, and his tents and cattle—all his movables, in fact, except the racing property—are on the road to the Desert. He and Ben-Hur and the "four" are quartered in the city. The business of the hour within the walls is wagering, especially upon the outcome of the chariot race. The streets are thronged with all classes and nationalities intermixed. The Syrian, the Jew, the Roman, and the Greek go about decorated with the "colors" of their respective favorites, and hail each other freely with offers. Over the arm of the river, in the palace on the island, the fast young Romans, come up with the Consul, are holding a loud symposium. Their bets are made; their tablets filled with memoranda. They are drinking and gaming. On the streets, Ben-Hur is the most popular; in the saloon, the haughty youths cannot find "takers"—nobody will bet against Messala.

SCENE XV.—Saloon in the Palace on the Island

An interior brilliantly lighted. Table in the centre; divans along the walls. Young fellows in Roman attire; some playing dice, some drinking; groups here

and there talking, and showing their tablets, supposed to be full of betting memoranda; others stretched upon the divans asleep, or drunk, or resting. Much vapping, rattle of dice, and clashing of cups. Messala conspicuously the centre of a party of admirers. . . . An outcry and rush towards an entrance. The dice-players quit their games; the sleepers awake; everybody produces a tablet. Enter Sanballat, in Jewish attire, turban and robe, all spotlessly white. He goes to the table, and takes seat.

Sanballat. "Romans—most noble Romans—I salute you."

Messala makes way to Sanballat.

Sanballat. "You see my color; let us to the matter. Odds first, amounts next. What will you give me?—Haste."

Commotion—flourish of tablets—a confusion of offers.

Messala. "Five let it be."

Sanballat. "Give me six."

Messala. "Six be it. The difference between a Roman and a Jew."

Great laughter. Sanballat writes in his tablet, gives it to Messala, who reads. . . . Silence. Messala stares at the memorandum, but recovers.

Messala. "Thou Jew! Where hast thou twenty talents?"

Sanballat draws a paper from his girdle, and Messala reads it.

Drusus. "Fifty talents! Who but Cæsar has fifty talents?"

The crowd yell with anger, and shake their fists at Sanballat, who keeps his seat, smiling. Messala waves his hand, and quiets his friends. Thereupon he and Sanballat exchange tablets. Sanballat rises, bows, with a mocking smile, and goes out.

The great wager is made.

END OF ACT FIRST

SCENE.—The Chariot Race

THE divine last touch in perfecting the beautiful is animation. These latter days, so tame in pastime and dull in sports, have scarcely anything to compare to the spectacle offered by the six contestants of the chariot race. Let us try to fancy it. First, look down upon the arena, and see it glistening in its frame of dull gray granite walls; then, in its perfect field, see the chariots, light of wheel, very graceful, and ornate as paint and burnishing can make them—Messala's rich with ivory and gold; see the

drivers, erect and statuesque, undisturbed by the motion of the cars, their limbs naked, and fresh and ruddy with the healthful polish of the baths—in their right hands goads, suggestive of torture dreadful to the thought; in their left hands, held in careful separation, and high that they may not interfere with the view of the steeds, the reins passing taut from the fore ends of the carriage-poles; see the fours, chosen for beauty as well as speed; see them in magnificent action, their masters not more conscious of the situation and all that is asked and hoped for them—their heads tossing, nostrils in play, now distent, now contracted, limbs too dainty for the sand which they touch but to spurn; limbs slender, yet with impact crushing as hammers; every muscle of the rounded bodies instinct with glorious life, swelling, diminishing, justifying the world in taking from them its ultimate measure of force; finally, along with chariots, drivers, horses, see the accompanying shadows fly.

The competitors started each on the shortest line for the position next the wall.

The four neared the ropes together. Then the trumpeter by the editor's side

blew a signal vigorously. The judges dropped the rope, and not an instant too soon, for the hoof of one of Messala's horses struck it as it fell. Nothing daunted, the Roman shook out his long lash, loosed the reins, leaned forward, and, with a triumphant shout, took the wall.

"Jove with us! Jove with us!" yelled all the Roman faction in a frenzy of delight.

As Messala turned in, the bronze lion's head at the end of his axle caught the fore-leg of the Athenian's right hand trace-mate, flinging the brute over against its yoke-fellow. Both staggered, struggled, and lost their head-way. The thousands held their breath with horror.

Sanballat looked for Ben-Hur, and turned to Drusus and his coterie.

"A hundred sestertii on the Jew!" he cried.

"Taken!" answered Drusus.

"Another hundred on the Jew!"

Nobody appeared to hear him.

When the dash for position began, Ben-Hur was on the extreme left of the six. For a moment, like the others, he was half blinded by the light in the arena, yet he managed to catch sight of his antagonists and divine their purpose. At

Messala, who was more than an antagonist to him, he gave one searching look. The air of passionless hauteur, characteristic of fine patrician face, was there as of old, and so was the Italian beauty, which the helmet rather increased; but more—it may have been a jealous fancy, or the effect of the brassy shadow in which the features were at the moment cast, still the Israelite thought he saw the soul of the man as through a glass darkly, cruel, cunning, desperate; not so excited as determined—a soul in a tension of watchfulness and fierce resolve.

In a time not longer than was required to turn to his four again, Ben-Hur felt his own resolution harden to a like temper. At whatever cost, at all hazards, he would humble this enemy. Prize, friends, wagers, honor—everything that can be thought of as a possible interest in the race was lost in the one deliberate purpose. Regard for life even should not hold him back.

When not half way across the arena, he saw that Messala's rush would, if there was no collision, and the rope fell, give him the wall; that the rope would fall, he ceased as soon to doubt.

The rope fell, and all the fours but his sprang into the course under urgency of

voice and lash. He drew head to the right, and, with all the speed of the Arabs, darted across the trails of his opponents, the angle of movement being such as to lose the least time and gain the greatest possible advance. So, while the spectators were shivering at the Athenian's mishap, and the Sidonian, Byzantine, and Corinthian were striving, with such skill as they possessed, to avoid involvement in the ruin, Ben-Hur swept around and took the course neck and neck with Mes-sala, though on the outside. The marvellous skill shown in making the change thus from the extreme left across to the right without appreciable loss, did not fail the sharp eyes upon the benches; the Circus seemed to rock and rock again with prolonged applause.

And now, racing together side by side, a narrow interval between them, the two neared the second goal.

The pedestal of the three pillars there, viewed from the west, was a stone wall in the form of a half-circle, around which the course and opposite balcony were bent in exact parallelism. Making this turn was considered in all respects the most telling test of a charioteer; it was, in fact, the very feat in which Orestes failed. As an involuntary admission of

interest on the part of the spectators, a hush fell over all the Circus; so that for the first time in the race the rattle and clang of the cars plunging after the tugging steeds were distinctly heard. Then, it would seem, Messala observed Ben-Hur, and recognized him, and at once the audacity of the man flamed out in an astonishing manner.

"Down Eros, up Mars!" he shouted, whirling his lash with practised hand. "Down Eros, up Mars!" he repeated, and caught the well-doing Arabs a cut the like of which they had never known.

The blow was seen in every quarter, and the amazement was universal. The silence deepened; up on the benches behind the Consul the boldest held his breath, waiting for the outcome. Only a moment thus; then, involuntarily, down from the balcony, as thunder falls, burst the indignant cry of the people.

The four sprang forward affrighted. No hand had ever been laid upon them except in love; they had been nurtured ever so tenderly; and as they grew, their confidence in man became a lesson to men beautiful to see. What should such dainty natures do under such indignity but leap as from death?

Forward they sprang as with one im-

pulse, and forward leaped the car. Past question every experience is serviceable to us. Where got Ben-Hur the large hand and mighty grip which helped him now so well? Where but from the oar with which so long he fought the sea? And what was this spring of the floor under his feet to the dizzy eccentric lurch with which in the old time the trembling ship yielded to the beat of staggering billows, drunk with their power? So he kept his place, and gave the four free rein, and called to them in soothing voice, trying merely to guide them round the dangerous turn; and before the fever of the people began to abate, he had back the mastery. Nor that only; on approaching the first goal, he was again side by side with Messala, bearing with him the sympathy and admiration of every one not a Roman. So clearly was the feeling shown, so vigorous its manifestation, that Messala, with all his boldness, felt it unsafe to trifle further.

As the cars whirled round the goal a man climbed on the entablature at the west end of the division wall, and took down one of the conical wooden balls. A dolphin on the east entablature was taken down at the same time.

In like manner, the second ball and second dolphin disappeared.

And then the third ball and third dolphin.

Three rounds concluded; still Messala held the inside position; still Ben-Hur moved with him side by side; still the other competitors followed as before.

In the fifth round the Sidonian succeeded in getting a place outside Ben-Hur, but lost it directly.

The sixth round was entered upon without change of relative position.

Gradually the speed had been quickened—gradually the blood of the competitors warmed with the work.

The interest which from the beginning had centred chiefly in the struggle between the Roman and the Jew, with an intense and general sympathy for the latter, was fast changing to anxiety on his account. On all the benches the spectators bent forward motionless, except as their faces turned following the contestants. Ilderim quitted combing his beard, and Esther forgot her fears.

“A hundred sestertii on the Jew!” cried Sanballat to the Romans under the Consul’s awning.

There was no reply.

“A talent—or five talents; choose ye!”

"I will take thy sestertii," answered a Roman youth.

"Do not so," interposed a friend.

"Why?"

"Messala hath reached his utmost speed. See him lean over his chariot-rim, the reins loose as flying ribbons. Look then at the Jew."

The first one looked.

"By Hercules! The dog throws all his weight on the bits. I see, I see! If the gods help not our friend, he will be run away with by the Israelite. No, not yet. Look! Jove with us, Jove with us!"

The cry, swelled by every Latin tongue, shook the velaria over the Consul's head.

If it were true that Messala had attained his utmost speed, the effort was with effect; slowly but certainly he was beginning to forge ahead. His horses were running with their heads low down; from the balcony their bodies appeared actually to skim the earth; their nostrils showed blood-red in expansion; their eyes seemed straining in their sockets. Certainly the good steeds were doing their best! How long could they keep the pace? It was but the commencement of the sixth round. On they dashed. As they neared the second goal Ben-Hur turned in behind the Roman's car.

Thus to the first goal, and around it. Messala, fearful of losing his place, hugged the stony wall with perilous clasp; a foot to the left, and he had been dashed to pieces; yet, when the turn was finished, no man, looking at the wheel-tracks of the two cars, could have said, here went Messala, there the Jew. They left but one trace behind them.

One ball and one dolphin remained on the entablatures; and all the people drew a long breath, for the beginning of the end was at hand.

"Ben-Hur! Ben-Hur!" they shouted, and the blent voices of the many rolled overwhelmingly against the consular stand.

From the benches above him as he passed the favor descended in fierce injunctions.

"Speed thee, Jew!"

"Take the wall now!"

"On! loose the Arabs! Give them rein and scourge!"

"Let him not have the turn on thee again. Now or never!"

Over the balustrade they stooped low, stretching their hands imploringly to him.

Either he could not hear or could not do better; for half-way round the course,

and he was still following ; at the second goal even, still no change !

And now, to make the turn, Messala began to draw in his left-hand steeds, an act which necessarily slackened their speed. His spirit was high ; more than one altar was richer of his vows ; the Roman genius was still president. On the three pillars only six hundred feet away were fame, increase of fortune, promotions, and a triumph ineffably sweetened by hate, all in store for him ! That moment Malluch, in the gallery, saw Ben-Hur lean forward over his Arabs, and give them the reins. Out flew the many-folded lash in his hand ; over the backs of the startled steeds it writhed and hissed, and hissed and writhed again and again ; and though it fell not, there were both sting and menace in its quick report ; as the man passed thus from quiet to resistless action, his face suffused, his eyes gleaming, along the reins he seemed to flash his will ; and instantly, not one, but the four as one, answered with a leap that landed them alongside the Roman's car. Messala, on the perilous edge of the goal, heard, but dared not look to see what the awakening portended. From the people he received no sign. Above the noises of the race there was but one

voice, and that was Ben-Hur's. In the old Aramaic, as the Sheik himself, he called to the Arabs.

"On, Atair! On, Rigel! What, Antares, dost thou linger now? Good horse—oho, Aldebaran! I hear them singing in the tents. I hear the children singing and the women—singing of the stars, of Atair, Antares, Rigel, Aldebaran, victory!—and the song will never end. Well done! Home to-morrow, under the black tent—home! On, Antares! The tribe is waiting for us, and the master is waiting! 'Tis done! 'tis done! Ha, ha! We have overthrown the proud. The hand that smote us is in the dust. Ours the glory! Ha, ha!—steady! The work is done—soho! Rest!"

At the moment chosen for the dash, Messala was moving in a circle round the goal. To pass him, Ben-Hur had to cross the track, and good strategy required the movement to be in a forward direction; that is, on a like circle limited to the least possible increase. The thousands on the benches understood it all; they saw the signal given—the magnificent response; the four close outside Messala's outer wheel; Ben-Hur's inner wheel behind the other's car—all this they saw. Then they heard a crash loud enough to

send a thrill through the Circus, and, quicker than thought, out over the course a spray of shining white and yellow flinders flew. Down on its right side toppled the bed of the Roman's chariot. There was a rebound as of the axle hitting the hard earth; another and another; then the car went to pieces; and Messala, entangled in the reins, pitched forward headlong.

To increase the horror of the sight by making death certain, the Sidonian, who had the wall next behind, could not stop or turn out. Into the wreck full speed he drove; then over the Roman, and into the latter's four, all mad with fear. Presently, out of the turmoil, the fighting of horses, the resound of blows, the murky cloud of dust and sand, he crawled, in time to see the Corinthian and Byzantine go on down the course after Ben-Hur, who had not been an instant delayed.

The people arose and leaped upon the benches and shouted and screamed. Those who looked that way caught glimpses of Messala, now under the trampling of the fours, now under the abandoned cars. He was still; they thought him dead; but far the greater number followed Ben-Hur in his career. They had not seen the cunning touch

Tableaux and Pantomime

of the reins by which, turning a little to the left, he caught Messala's wheel with the iron-shod point of his axle, and crushed it; but they had seen the transformation of the man, and themselves felt the heat and glow of his spirit, the heroic resolution, the maddening energy of action with which, by look, word, and gesture, he so suddenly inspired his Arabs. And such running! It was rather the long leaping of lions in harness; but for the lumbering chariot, it seemed the four were flying. When the Byzantine and Corinthian were half-way down the course, Ben-Hur turned the first goal.

And the race was won.

TABLEAUX—THE CHARIOT RACE

Ben Hur

ACT SECOND

PANTOMIME

EXPLANATORY

THE race is over. At midnight of the day of its occurrence, a messenger, purporting to be from Iras, came with an invitation to Ben-Hur to visit her in the Palace of Idernee, represented as taken by Balthasar. Ben-Hur accepted the invitation.

SCENE I.—A Splendid Atrium in a Roman Palace

Broad folding doors open as of themselves. Enter Ben-Hur. He walks about examining the objects in view, statuary, vases, and furniture. Three times he makes the round. He leans against a pillar while studying the general effects. He grows tired—yawns—pauses in his walks to listen—the pauses become more frequent. He is getting impatient. . . .

FOOT-NOTE.—The Chariot Race is inserted that it may be read where a good reader is obtainable—this in lieu of other explanation.

At length he goes to the door by which he came in ; tries the lock ; it resists ; he wrenches it with all his might ; it remains unshaken. He becomes alarmed, and goes hastily to other doors, and tries them—always with the same result. He knocks at them loudly, and listens—no response. He calls aloud—no answer. He takes seat at the upper end of the chamber. He hears a footstep, and rising hastily, he goes to a pillar, and leans against it. . . . Two men appear ; one stout ; both of them in fighting tunics of the arena. They saunter idly around, but gradually approach Ben-Hur, who recognizes Thord, winner of the boxing match of the day before. Ben-Hur undoes his sash, bares his head, puts off his Jewish gown, and appears in a tunic not unlike those of the two men ; he then folds his arms, leans against the pillar and waits. . . . The men presently see Ben-Hur, talk to each other briefly, and advance to him.

Ben-Hur (stepping from the pillar).

“Whom seek you? Stand, and answer.”

Thord. “Who are you?”

Ben-Hur. “A Roman.”

Thord lays his head back, and laughs.

Then the two move nearer to Ben-Hur.

Ben-Hur. “Hold! A word.”

They stop again. . . . Conversation between Ben-Hur and Thord.

Ben-Hur. "Let this man" (pointing to Thord's companion) "fight me singly."

A few words from Thord to his companion; the latter assents. Thord, in high humor and laughing, pushes out a couch, and stretches himself upon it.

Thord. "Now begin."

Ben-Hur advances upon his antagonist. Both take position for combat, and then fight. Ben-Hur kills his man, who falls, and lies full length upon the floor.

Thord arises to a sitting posture astonished; then he laughs.

Thord. "You are not a Jew."

Ben-Hur explains. Thord examines him carefully, laughs, and gives him his hand, satisfied of his identity. . . . More conversation, during which Ben-Hur repeatedly points to his prostrate antagonist. They reach a conclusion. Ben-Hur exchanges tunics with the dead man, and wraps the body in his own robe; Thord standing by, laughing. . . . They then go out.

EXPLANATORY

WHEN Ben-Hur ascertained that Si-

monides knew nothing of the whereabouts of his mother and sister he was terribly disappointed, and listened to Simonides's suggestion that he should devote himself to vengeance. In this he was strengthened by Balthasar, who affirmed that the Messiah must shortly appear. For a time he was troubled by a difference of opinion between Balthasar and Simonides touching the Kingdom the Messiah was to set up: the former declared it would be a Spiritual Kingdom, the latter that it would be purely political. At length he accepted Simonides's argument, and resolved to set about preparing for the advent of the New King, who would, of course, require an army to support him. But still unable to abandon his mother and sister, he first betook himself to Jerusalem. He would see Amrah, and talk with her; she, he thought, must know something of them. He entered the city after night. Naturally his heart drew him to the deserted palace of his fathers. . . . That same day discovery had been made of his mother and sister. Gratus had cast them into an underground cell of the Tower of Antonia. Knowing the cell to be leprous, he expected them to die of the disease; and the better to prevent their re-

Ben-Hur

appearance, he walled the dungeon in, leaving one small hole in a partition wall through which to pass them food and drink. A convict, blind and tongueless, was selected to communicate with them through the wall. But found at last, the women, now hopelessly leprous, were set free at night in the city—the same night, as it happened, that Ben-Hur returned. So he and they were seeking the old house at the same time; and there they met.

SCENE 2.—Desolate Home of the Hurs. The Gate on the South Side. Bright Moonlight

Ben-Hur appears and stops before the gate, which has a wicket or small door in it. He moves stealthily to the broad stone step before the gate, looking up from time to time. He stops to consider; then concludes to knock—Amrah may be in, and hear. Picking up a stone, he mounts the step, and knocks three times. Echo answers. Observing the sign—“This is the property of the Emperor”—he indignantly tears the board from its fastening, and flings it in the street. He takes seat upon the step next, and prays that the coming of the New King may be hastened. Overcome by heat, travel,

Tableaux and Pantomime

and wear of spirit, he slowly falls asleep, lying upon the stone. . . . Two women appear, approaching timidly, pausing to listen and look about. They are the mother and sister. Both in the white garments received at the Tower upon their dismissal. Their hair is white, and they are marked horribly with disease.

Mother. "This is it."

Tirzah catches the mother's hand, and leans heavily upon her, sobbing.

Mother. "Let us go on. To-morrow they will put us out of the gate to return no more."

Tirzah sinks down.

Tirzah. "I forgot. We are lepers; we have no home; we belong to the dead."

The mother raises her tenderly.

Mother. "Let us to the gate."

Close to the wall they glide on, like two ghosts.

Mother. "Hist! Some one is lying on the step. Let us go round him."

They cross to the other side of the street till in front of the gate. There they stop.

Mother. "Stay here. I will try the gate."

She recrosses the street noiselessly, and puts her hand on the wicket. That moment the man stirs and sighs, and in

turning shifts the handkerchief on his head, giving his face to be seen in the moonlight. She looks down on the face, stoops closer, and rising, clasps her hands, and looks appealingly to Heaven. Then she runs back to Tirzah.

Mother. "As the Lord liveth, the man is my son—thy brother!"

Tirzah. "Judah!"

Mother (catching Tirzah's hand eagerly). "Come, let us look at him together—once more—then help thou thy servants, Lord!"

Hand in hand they cross the street, ghostly quick, ghostly still. When their shadows fall on him, they stop. One of his hands is lying out on the step, palm up. Tirzah falls on her knees to kiss it.

Mother (drawing her back and whispering). "Not for thy life! Unclean, unclean!"

The mother struggles with her feelings. She must touch him. Kneeling down, she creeps to his feet, and kisses the soles of his sandals again and again. Ben-Hur stirs, and tosses his hand and mutters, "Mother! Amrah!" and falls asleep again. Tirzah stares wistfully—the mother hides her face in the dust. Then she beckons to Tirzah, and they rise, look once more, and hand in hand cross to

the other side of the street, and there kneel, gazing at him. . . . Amrah appears with a basket on her arm. At sight of Ben-Hur on the step, she pauses, uncertain what to do; directly she walks on round him, and opens the wicket, and then one of the valves of the door, and puts the basket through. In the act of going in, she stops to look at the sleeper's face. She is startled—rubs her eyes—bends down closer to him—clasps her hands—gazes round wildly—stoops and raises the hand, and kisses it fondly. . . . Ben-Hur awakes.

Ben-Hur. "Amrah! Oh, Amrah! Is it thou?"

Amrah falls upon his neck, weeping for joy. He puts her arms away, and kisses her.

Ben-Hur. "Where are they, Amrah?"

Tirzah starts to go to them.

Mother (catching her). "Not for life! Unclean, unclean!"

Ben-Hur rises.

Ben-Hur. "Let us go in."

The mother and sister see them go, and then nestle together in the dust. Presently they arise and disappear, Tirzah leaning upon her mother.

EXPLANATORY

AMRAH, now that Ben-Hur has come home, went to market over at the Fish Gate. While looking for some honey, she overheard a man tell how he had held a torch when the Hurs were found down in the Tower of Antonia. She dared not tell Ben-Hur. He would hunt for them in every tomb in the city of lepers over in the Hill of Evil Council. Then he, too, would catch the awful disease that afflicted them. She knew the denizens of that city were in the habit of mornings to descend from their abodes, and take water from the well En-Rogel. She would go to the well, and look for them. At day-break she filled a basket, selected a water-jar, and set out on her venture.

SCENE III.—The Well En-Rogel

Amrah comes in, with a basket and water-jar, and seats herself near the well. Folding her hands upon her lap, she waits, watching the tombs hollowed from the rocks on a hill in front of her. . . . A man enters next, and fastens a rope to a bucket. He offers to draw water for her. She declines. Other women come to the

well, and have their jars filled. Amrah keeps watch on the hill. . . . Soon two lepers are observed by her drawing timidly nigh. They act unused to the situation, and move slowly and painfully, one half-leading, half-supporting the other. The well keeper motions them back, and picks up stones to drive them away. They stop, bewildered and afraid. . . . Amrah moves out to meet them, taking her basket and jar. Those by the well laugh and jeer at her. She continues going on. When a few feet from them, she stops, and gazes at them horrified.

Amrah. "These are old women. I never saw them before."

She turns away.

Mother. "Amrah!"

Amrah (dropping the jar, and looking back at them tremblingly). "Who are you?"

Mother. "We are they you are seeking."

Amrah sinks upon her knees, and begins moving towards them, her hands outstretched.

Mother. "Stay—come not nearer. Unclean, unclean!"

Amrah falls upon her face, sobbing loudly.

Amrah. "Where is Tirzah?"

Tirzah. "Here I am."

Amrah (putting back her hair then fallen over her face, and uncovering the basket). "See, here are bread and meat."

She offers to spread a napkin on the ground.

Mother. "No, no! Those yonder may stone you. Leave the basket with me. Take the jar and fill it. We will carry them up to the tomb with us."

Amrah returns to the well, has the jar filled, hurries back, and would have delivered it to them.

Mother. "Unclean—beware!"

Amrah places the jar by the basket, and stands off a little way. After conversation in pantomime, the mother takes up the jar and the basket, and disappears, followed by Tirzah. Amrah goes back to the stone, and sits, sobbing, and looking after them.

EXPLANATORY

SIMONIDES and Esther and Balthasar and Iras, in Jerusalem, are domiciled in the palace of the Hurs, which has been perfectly restored by Malluch. Ben-Hur made his legions ready for assemblage in Galilee; after which he took to following the wonderful Nazarene about, amazed

at his miracles. Occasionally he came up to the city, drawn thither chiefly by the attractions of Iras. . . . In one of his visits he told his guests of the wonders he had seen the Nazarene do; among other things, he told them of his healing lepers, and this Amrah happened to hear. The faithful servant thought she saw a way for the restoration of her mistress and Tirzah, and hurried to tell them of it. She succeeded in inducing them to go out and meet the Nazarene coming to Jerusalem from Bethany on Palm Sunday.

SCENE IV.—The Road-side between Bethany and Jerusalem
east of Mount Olivet

The multitude with palm branches are ascending the mountain escorting the Nazarene. Their singing is still heard in the distance. . . . A woman in white remains by the road-side in a prayerful attitude; another lies behind her on the ground, and beyond the second one is a third kneeling, her face buried in her hands. They are the lepers and Amrah. . . . The mother, nearest the road, runs to the second woman, partly raises her, and folds her in her arms.

Mother. "Look up! He is indeed the Messiah! We are saved—saved!"

Ben-Hur

While they remain thus, Ben-Hur, sitting upon a rock, recognizes Amrah. He runs to her, passing by the mother and sister.

Ben-Hur. "Amrah, what do you here?"

Amrah (falling upon her knees before him). "O, master, master! Thy God and mine, how good He is!"

Amrah points to the mother and sister. Ben-Hur turns, and gazes at them—becomes rooted in his tracks, dumb and awe-struck.

Amrah. "Speak to them, O master, speak to them."

Ben-Hur runs to them with outstretched arms. The three embrace with demonstrations of joy; after which they all fall on their knees. Amrah comes up, and joins them. The mother and sister uncover their faces and heads. Every trace of the scourge is gone. Ben-Hur throws his cloak over Tirzah. Exit, talking and happy.

SCENE V.—On the Roof of the Restored Palace of the Hurs

Simonides is seated and resting easily in his arm-chair. . . . Esther appears, and pauses to examine a despatch she is bringing to her father. She recognizes the

seal of Ben-Hur. . . . She delivers the package to Simonides. He examines the seal, opens the package, and gives her the roll enclosed.

Simonides. "Read."

Esther. "It is from our master."

Simonides. "You love him?"

Esther. "Yes."

His chin drops upon his breast, and he shows himself troubled.

Esther (kissing him). "I am my mother's child."

Simonides. "Read now."

Esther opens the roll and reads it; then, much agitated, she returns it to him. . . . Servant appears with wine and water, and she helps her father to them. . . . Iras comes in, never more beautiful, her countenance suffused with pleasure. Esther shrinks closer to the arm of the chair. Iras salutes Simonides and Esther, and speaks to them. Conversation between Simonides and Iras. Iras shows her contempt for him. He drinks. . . . Iras takes Esther by the arm, and leads her off to the parapet, speaking as she goes.

Iras (at the parapet, and toying with her bracelet). "You have not been to Rome?"

Esther. "No."

Iras (laughing). "Oh, my pretty simpleton!"

Esther is confused, and makes as if to return to her father.

Iras (laughing). "The King is coming."

Esther stops, and looks at her with surprise.

Iras. "The Nazarene will be here tomorrow, and Ben-Hur to-night."

Esther is greatly discomposed.

Iras. "See, here is his promise."

While speaking, she takes a roll of paper from her girdle. Next moment she looks over the parapet.

Iras. "'Tis he—Ben-Hur himself!"

Esther (angrily). "Dost thou love him so much—or Rome better?"

Iras draws back a step; then bends her head haughtily.

Iras. "What is he to thee?"

Esther tries to answer, but turns pale and trembles. Iras laughs, turns away, and looks back over her shoulder as she goes.

Esther puts her hands over her face, and bursts into tears. Presently she returns to her father's chair; then a servant comes, and rolls the chair off.

EXPLANATORY

IRAS and Ben-Hur have had their parting. She has exposed her love of Messala, and, with threats, demanded return of the six talents won by Ben-Hur on the chariot race; she has derided Christ, and taunted Ben-Hur with the failure of the New King to proclaim himself. Ben-Hur, giving her a message of defiance to Messala, has led her from the room. Thence, in bitterness and shame that he has been so weak and deluded, he ascends to the Summer House. It is night. Full moonlight.

SCENE VI.—In the Summer House on the Roof

Esther having gone into the Summer House falls asleep in her father's chair. . . . Ben-Hur appears on the roof; goes and looks over the parapet; then walks slowly and as if absorbed in reflection into the Summer House. Approaching the chair, he discovers Esther, is pleasantly surprised, stands a moment, and directly puts his arm upon the back of the chair, and looks at her tenderly, musing the while.

Ben-Hur. "Fair Esther, dutiful child, daughter of Judah!"

Ben-Hur

He lifts a lock of her hair, kisses it, and silently retires. _____

EXPLANATORY

THE first Palm Sunday has come and gone. Christ, in front of the Gate Beautiful in the Temple, has turned his back upon the political Kingdom. Arrested and condemned to the Cross as a felon, he has been led to the Place of Skulls, followed by the millions at the time in the city drawn from all parts of the world to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. Ben-Hur, Balthasar, Simonides, and Esther have gone out with the rest, witnesses of the greatest and most terrible event since the world was given over to light. _____

SCENE VII.—The Shadow of the Cross

I. Ben-Hur, Simonides, and Esther, and Balthasar in the foreground to the left in attitudes of fear, wonder, and devotion, gazing at objects behind the wings at the right of the stage. Back of them, the High-Priest in his robes, members of the Sanhedrim, and Rabbis, the Roman Centurion, and some soldiers; and beyond this latter group a multitude of people to farthest distance—all gazing

raptly at the objects which hold Ben-Hur and his party. In front of Ben-Hur there is a jar, and a sponge on a stick. Suddenly Ben-Hur, overcome by emotion, runs to the jar, dips the sponge into it, and disappears behind the wing. The soldiers hasten to intercept him, but are too late. He returns, walking slowly, his face buried in his hands, and rejoins his party.

2. The light, which is that of ordinary day, begins to get dim, and fainter, and finally goes out, leaving everything enveloped in darkness. Cries come up out of the darkness near and far, and soon turn into shouts and yells of fear. In the last glimmers of the light, the High-Priest and his following, and the soldiers, are seen in panic, shrieking and running away, being tossed about and thrown down, as by an earthquake.

3. With the return of quiet, light reappears; gradually growing, it is seen that the multitude is gone; Simonides, Ben-Hur, and Esther alone remain—Esther in the protection of Ben-Hur. Balthasar is lying face down, dead. The party stand gazing up in fear at the objects of awful interest behind the wings. . . . The light increases—and brightens—now burns in more than sun-like brill-

Ben-Hur

iancy, revealing in distant extension across the ground from right to left, the shadows of three crosses upreared, each with a victim upon it. . . . Another wave of darkness, and when the light is slowly restored, the scene is gone.

EXPLANATORY

TWO years after the crucifixion. Ben-Hur's trials are over. With Esther, his wife, Tirzah, and Simonides, he has returned to Italy, and taken up residence in the beautiful Villa by Misenum.

SCENE VII.—Chamber in the Villa by Misenum

Esther sitting, attired as a Jewish matron. Amrah in attendance. Tirzah and two children at play upon a lion's skin on the floor. Esther watches the children carefully, and with endearing looks. . . . A servant appears.

Servant. "A woman to speak with the mistress."

Esther. "Let her come in."

Iras enters in bedraggled garments. Esther rises, is agitated and afraid, and draws back.

Esther. "You are—"

Tableaux and Pantomime

Iras. "I was the daughter of Balthasar."

The two gaze at each other. Iras points to the children.

Iras. "They are thine?"

Esther (looking at them, and smiling).

"Yes. Will you not speak to them?"

Iras draws nearer to Esther, who shrinks away.

Iras. "Be not afraid."

After a message left for Ben-Hur, Iras turns to depart. Esther follows her.

Esther. "Stay, and see my husband. We are Christians."

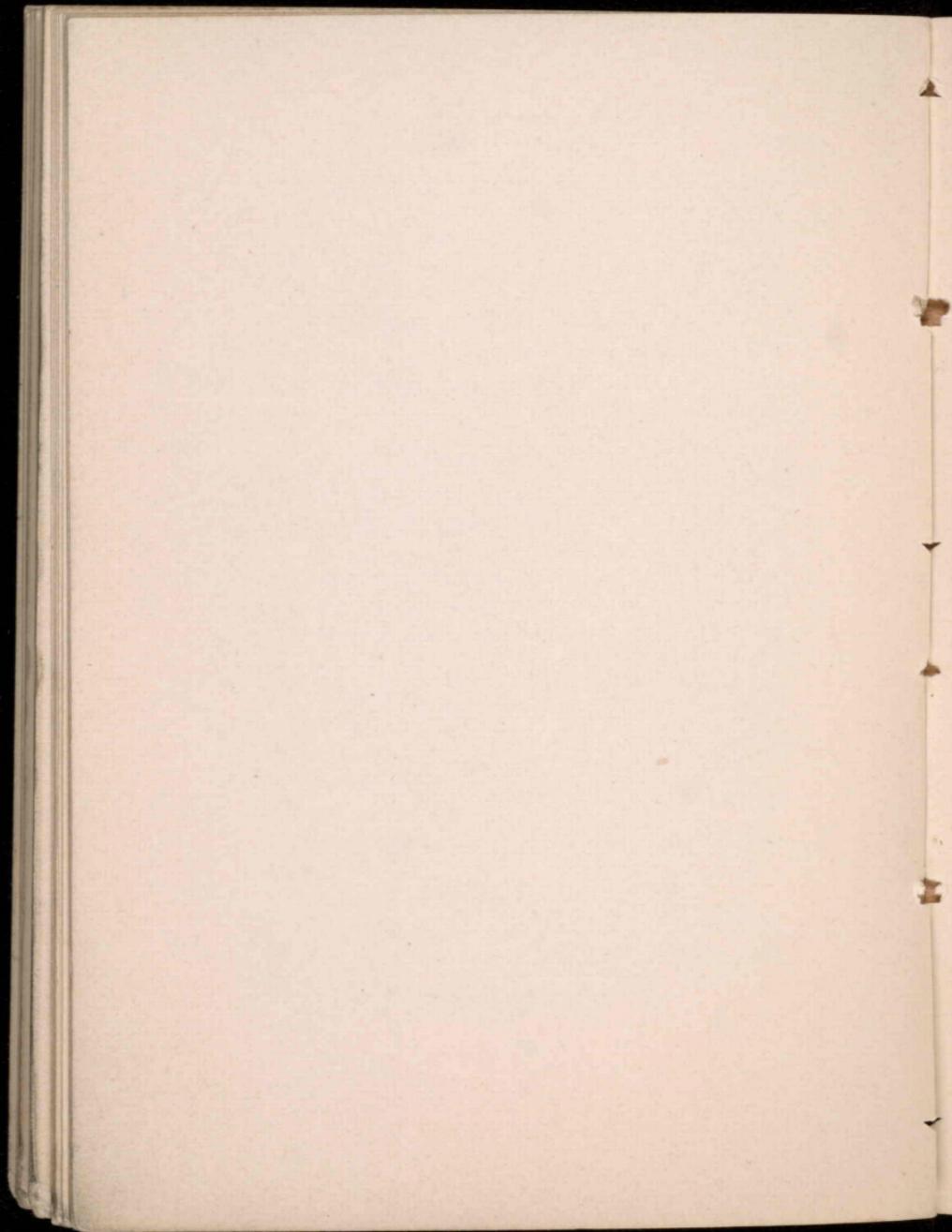
Iras declines. Her countenance softens. She looks at the children. She smiles, goes to the rug, kneels, and kisses the children. Rising slowly, she looks at them while moving to the door. Before Esther can reach her she passes out.

END OF ACT SECOND

TRANSFORMATION

IRAS'S STORY OF THE NILE

- SCENE 1.—Iras relating the story
" 2.—The Nile—Sphinx—Pyramids
" 3.—Opening of the Lotus Flower
" 4.—The Temples of Egypt
" 5.—The Priestesses of Isis and Osiris



PS 3134

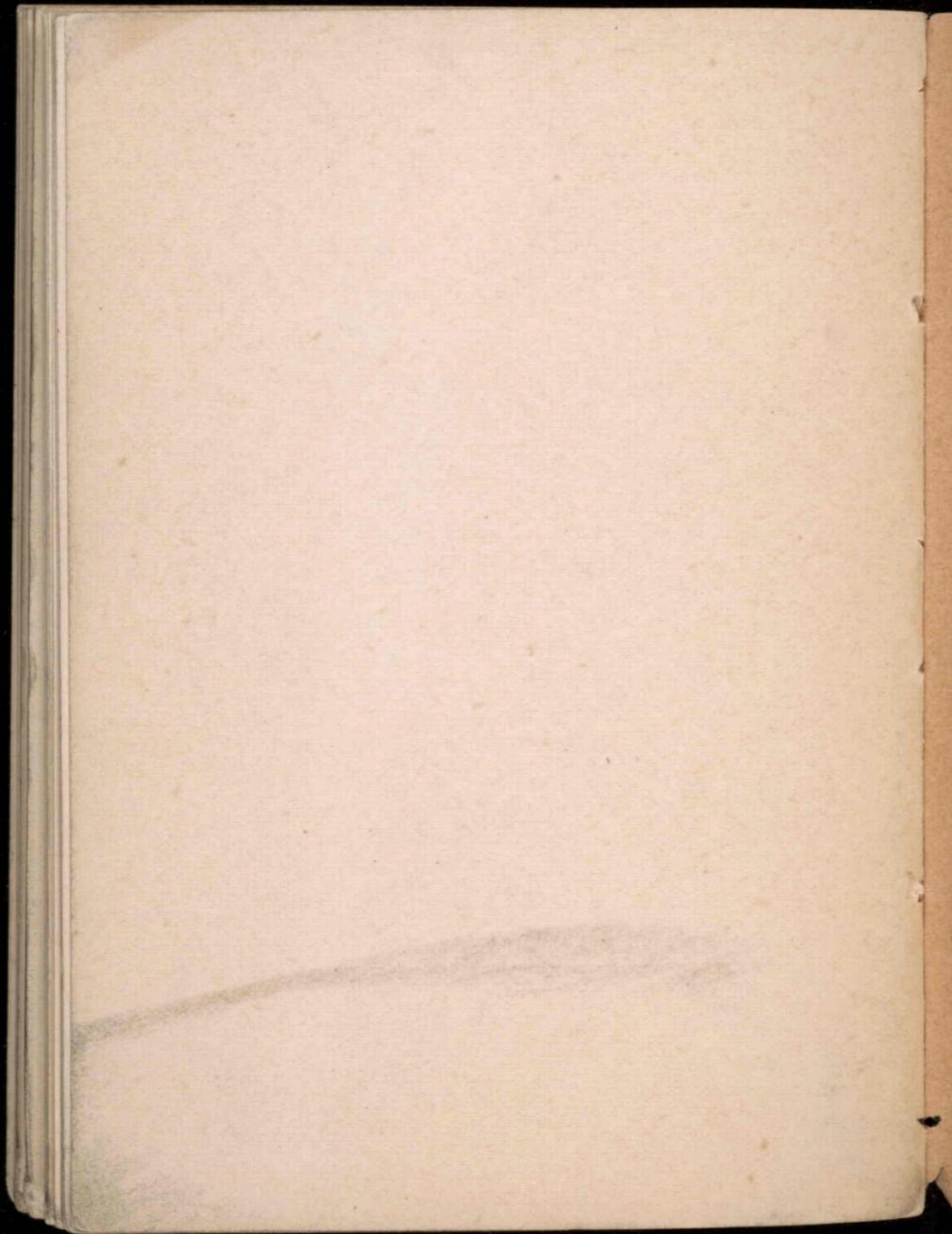
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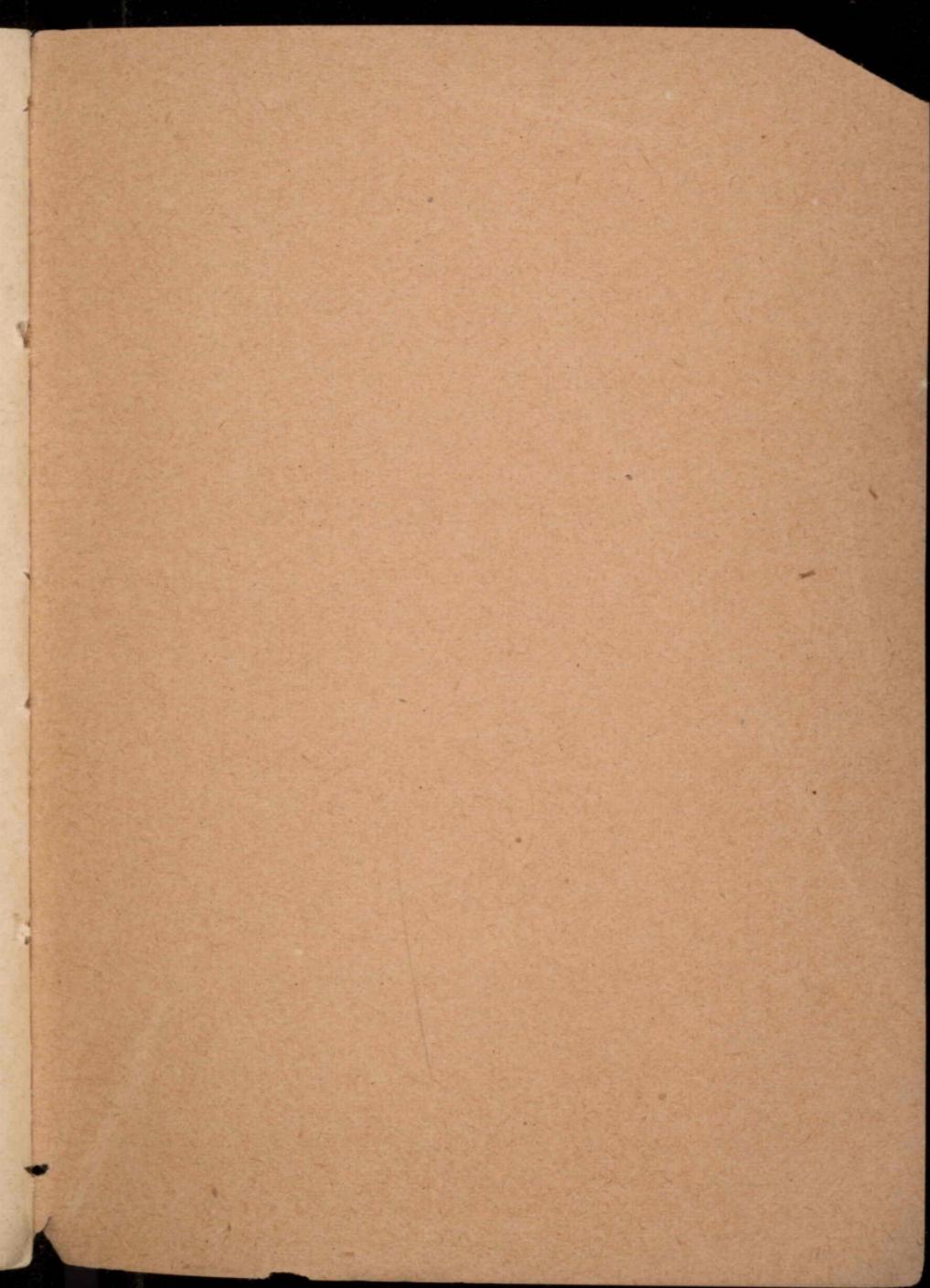
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