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THE JUDGMENT.

THE
J U D G M E N T,

A VISION.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF PERCY'S MASQUE.



NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES EASTBURN,

Literary Rooms, Broadway.

1821.

7. 129

Southern District of New-York, ss:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twenty-fourth day of April, in the forty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, JAMES EASTBURN, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

“ The Judgment, a Vision. By the Author of Percy’s Masque.”

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GILBERT LIVINGSTON THOMPSON,
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

131

TO

THE HONOURABLE

J O H N T R U M B U L L,

OF CONNECTICUT,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED

AND GRATEFUL FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

Beside its intrinsic difficulties, the subject labours under a disadvantage too obvious to have escaped notice. It has so generally occupied the imaginations of believers in the Scriptures, that most have adopted respecting it their own notions : whoever selects it as a theme, therefore, exposes his work to criticism on account of its theology, as well as its poetry ; and they who think the former objectionable, will not, easily, be pleased with the latter. The object, however, was not to declare opinions ; but simply to present such a view of the last grand spectacle as seemed the most susceptible of poetical embellishment.

New-York, April, 1821.

THE
J U D G M E N T.

I.

THE rites were past of that auspicious day
When white-robed altars wreathed with living green
Adorn the temples ; when unnumbered tongues
Repeat the glorious anthem sung to harps
Of Angels when the star o'er Bethlehem stood ;
When grateful hearts bow low, and deeper joy
Breathes in the Christian than the Angel song
On the great birthday of our Priest and King.
That night, while musing on his wondrous life,
Precepts, and promises to be fulfilled,

A trance-like sleep fell on me, and a dream
Of dreadful character appalled my soul.
Wild was the pageant :—face to face with Kings,
Heroes, and Sages of old note, I stood ;
Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles saw,
And venerable forms, ere round the globe
Shoreless and waste a weltering flood was rolled,
With Angels, compassing the radiant throne
Of Mary's Son, anew descended, crowned
With glory terrible, to judge the world.

II.

Methought I journeyed o'er a boundless plain
Unbroke by vale or hill, on all sides stretched,
Like circling ocean, to the low-brow'd sky ;
Save in the midst a verdant mount whose sides
Flowers of all hues and fragrant breath adorned.
Lightly I trod, as on some joyous quest,
Beneath the azure vault and early sun ;
But while my pleased eyes ranged the circuit green,

New light shone round ; a murmur came, confused,
Like many voices and the rush of wings.
Upward I gazed, and mid the glittering skies,
Begirt by flying myriads, saw a throne
Whose thousand splendours blazed upon the earth
Refulgent as another sun. Through clouds
They came, and vapours coloured by Aurora,
Mingling in swell sublime, voices, and harps,
And sounding wings, and hallelujahs sweet.
Sudden, a Seraph that before them flew,
Pausing upon his wide-unfolded plumes,
Put to his mouth the likeness of a trump,
And toward the four winds four times fiercely breathed.
Rattling along the arch, the mighty peal
To Heaven resounded, Hell returned a groan,
And shuddering Earth a moment reeled, confounded,
From her fixed pathway as the staggering ship,
Stunn'd by some mountain billow, reels. The isles,
With heaving ocean, rocked : the mountains shook
Their ancient coronets : the avalanche
Thundered : silence succeeded through the nations.

Earth never listened to a sound like this.
It struck the general pulse of nature still,
And broke, forever, the dull sleep of death.

III.

Now, o'er the mount the radiant legions hung,
Like plummy travellers from climes remote
On some sequestered isle about to stoop.
Gently its flow'ry head received the throne,
Cherubs and Seraphs, by ten thousands, round
Skirting it far and wide, like a bright sea,
Fair forms and faces, crowns, and coronets,
And glistening wings furled white and numberless.
About their Lord were those Seven glorious Spirits
Who in the Almighty's presence stand : Four held
The golden cords, whose fulgent knops appeared
Clusters of sardonyx and emerald,
That, by four rings, like those upon the ark,
Sustained the throne : One bore the dreadful Books.
The arbiters of life : Another waved

The blazing ensign terrible, of yore,
To rebel Angels in the wars of Heaven :
What seemed a trump the other Spirit grasped,
Of wondrous size, wreathed multiform and strange.
Illustrious stood the Seven, above the rest
Tow'ring, and like a constellation glowing,
What time the sphere-instructed Huntsman, taught
By Atlas, his star-studded belt displays
Aloft, bright-glittering, in the winter sky.

IV.

Then on the mount, amidst these glorious shapes,
Who reverent stood, with looks of sacred awe,
I saw EMMANUEL seated on his throne.
His robe, methought, was whiter than the light ;
Upon his breast the Heavenly Urim glowed
Bright as the sun, and round such lightnings flashed.
No eye could meet the mystic symbol's blaze.
Irradiant the eternal sceptre shone
Which wont to glitter in his Father's hand :

Resplendent in his face the Godhead beamed,
Justice and mercy, majesty and grace,
Divinely mingling. Celestial glories played
Around with beamy lustre ; from his eye
Dominion looked ; upon his brow was stamped
Creative Power. Yet, over all the touch
Of gracious pity dwelt, which, erst, amidst
Dissolving nature's anguish breathed a prayer
For guilty man. Redundant down his neck
His locks rolled graceful, as they waved, of old.
Upon the mournful breeze of Calvary.

V.

His throne of heavenly substance seemed composed,
Whose pearly essence, like the Eastern shell,
Or changeful opal, shed a silvery light.
Clear as the moon it looked through ambient clouds
Of snowy lustre waving round its base,
That, like a zodiac, thick with emblems set,
Flashed wondrous beams, of unknown character,

From many a burning stone of lustre rare,
Stained like the bow whose minglingsplendour streamed
Confusion bright upon the dazzled eye.
Above him hung a canopy whose skirts
The mount o'ershadowed like an evening cloud.
Clouds were his curtains : not like their dim types
Of blue and purple round the tabernacle,
That waving vision of the lonely wild,
By pious Israel wrought with cherubims ;
Veiling the mysteries of old renown,
Table, and altar, ark, and mercy-seat,
Where, 'twixt the shadow of cherubic wings,
In lustre visible Jehovah shone.

VI.

In honour chief, upon the Lord's right hand
His station Michael held : the dreadful sword
That from a starry baldric hung, proclaimed
The Hierarch. Terrible, on his brow
Blazed the Archangel crown, and from his eye

'Thick sparkles flashed. Like regal banners, waved
Back from his giant shoulders his broad vans,
Bedropt with gold, and, turning to the sun,
Shone gorgeous as the multitudinous stars,
Or some illumined city seen by night,
When her wide streets pour noon, and echoing thro'
Her thronging thousands mirth and music ring.

Opposed to him, I saw an Angel stand
In sable vesture, with the Books of Life.
Black was his mantle, and his changeful wings
Glossed like the raven's; thoughtful seemed his mien,
Sedate and calm, and deep upon his brow
Had Meditation set her seal: his eyes
Looked things unearthly, thoughts unutterable,
Or uttered only with an Angel's tongue.
Renowned was he among the Seraphim
For knowledge elevate, and Heavenly lore;
Skilled in the mysteries of the Eternal,
Profoundly skilled in those old records where,
From everlasting ages, live God's deeds;
He knew the hour when yonder shining worlds

That roll around us, into being sprang ;
Their system, laws, connexion ; all he knew
But the dread moment when they cease to be.
None judged like him the ways of God to man,
Or so had pondered ; his excursive thoughts
Had visited the depths of Night and Chaos,
Gathering the treasures of the hoary deep.

VII.

Like ocean's billows seemed, ere this, the plain,
Confusedly heaving with a sunless host
From earth's and time's remotest bounds : a roar
Went up before the multitude, whose course
The unfurled banner guided, and the bow,
Zone of the universe, athwart the zenith
Sweeping its arch. In one vast conflux rolled,
Wave following wave, were men of every age,
Nation, and tongue ; all heard the warning blast,
And, led by wondrous impulse, hither came.
Mingled in wild confusion, now, those met

In distant ages born. Gray forms, that lived
When Time himself was young, whose temples shook
The hoary honours of a thousand years,
Stood side by side with Roman Consuls :—here,
Mid Prophets old, and Heaven-inspired Bards,
Were Grecian heroes seen :—there, from a crowd
Of reverend Patriarchs, towered the nodding plumes,
Tiars, and helms, and sparkling diadems
Of Persia's, Egypt's, or Assyria's Kings ;
Clad as when forth the hundred gates of Thebes
On sounding cars her hundred Princes rushed ;
Or, when, at night, from off the terrace top
Of his aerial garden, touched to sooth
The troubled Monarch, came the solemn chime
Of sackbut, psaltery, and harp, adown
The Euphrates, floating in the moonlight wide
O'er sleeping Babylon. For all appeared
As in their days of earthly pride ; the clank
Of steel announced the Warrior, and the robe
Of Tyrian lustre spoke the blood of Kings.
Tho' on the Angels while I gazed, their names

Appeared not, yet amongst the mortal throng
(Capricious power of dreams!) familiar seemed
Each countenance, and every name well known.

VIII.

Nearest the mount of that mixed phalanx first,
Our general Parent stood : not as he looked
Wandering, at eve, amid the shady bowers,
And odorous groves of that delicious garden,
Or flow'ry banks of some soft-rolling stream,
Pausing to list its lulling murmur, hand
In hand with peerless Eve, the rose too sweet,
Fatal to Paradise. Fled from his cheek
The bloom of Eden ; his hyacinthine locks
Were changed to gray ; with years and sorrows bowed
He seemed, but through his ruined form still shone
The majesty of his Creator : round
Upon his sons a grieved and pitying look
He cast, and in his vesture hid his face.
In vain my wistful eyes sought hapless **Eve**.

Why from her lord, in this appalling hour,
Methought, why wanders she, and who sustains

IX.

Close at his side appeared a warlike form
Of port majestic, clad in massive arms,
Cow'ring above whose helm with outspread wings
The Roman eagle flew ; around its brim
Was character'd the name at which Earth's Queen
Bowed from her seven-fold throne and owned her lord.
In his dilated eye amazement stood ;
Terror, surprise, and blank astonishment
Blanched his firm cheek, as when, of old, close hemmed
Within the Capitol, amidst the crowd
Of traitors, fearless else, he caught the gleam
Of Brutus' steel. Daunted, yet on the pomp
Of tow'ring Seraphim, their wings, their crowns,
Their dazzling faces, and upon the Lord
He fixed a steadfast look of anxious note,
Like that Pharsalia's hurtling squadrons drew
When all his glories hung upon the hour.

X.

Near him, for wisdom famous thro' the East,
Abraham rested on his staff; in guise
A Chaldee shepherd, simple in his raiment
As when at Mamre in his tent he sat,
The host of Angels. Snow-white were his locks
And silvery beard that to his girdle rolled.
Fondly his meek eye dwelt upon his Lord,
Like one, that, after long and troubled dreams,
A night of sorrows, dreary, wild, and sad,
Beholds, at last, the dawn of promised joys.

With kindred looks his great Descendant gazed.
Not in the poor array of shepherds he,
Nor in the many-coloured coat, fond gift
Of doting age, and cause of direful hate ;
But, stately as his native palm, his form
Was, like Egyptian Princes, proudly decked
In tissued purple sweeping to the ground.
Plumes from the desert waved above his head,

And down his breast the golden collar hung
Bestowed by Pharaoh when through Egypt word
Went forth to bow the knee as to her King.
Graced thus, his chariot with impetuous wheels
Bore him toward Goshen, where the fainting heart
Of Israel waited for his long lost son,
The son of Rachel. Ah! had she survived
To see him in his glory!—As he rode
His boyhood, and his mother's tent arose,
Linked with a thousand recollections dear,
And Joseph's heart was in the tomb by Ephrath.

XI.

At hand, a group of Sages marked the scene.
Plato and Socrates together stood,
With him who measured by their shades those piles
Gigantic, mid the desert seen, at eve,
By toiling caravans for Memphis bound,
Peering like specks above the horizon's verge,
Whose huge foundations vanish in the mist

Of earliest time. Transfixed they seemed with wonder,
Awe-struck,—amazement rapt their inmost souls.
Such glance of deep enquiry and suspense
They threw around them, as, in ages past,
Astronomers upon some dark eclipse,
Close counselling amidst the dubious light
If it portended Nature's death, or spoke
A change in Heaven. What thought they, then, of all
Their idle dreams, their proud Philosophy,
When on their wildered souls redemption, Christ,
And the Almighty broke? But, though they erred
When all was dark, they reasoned for the Truth.
They sought in earth, in ocean, and the stars,
Their maker, arguing from his works toward God;
And from his Word had nobly argued too
Had they beheld the Gospel sending forth
Its sun-bright glories o'er the farthest sea,
Lighting the idol mountain tops, and gilding
The banners of salvation there. These men
Ne'er slighted a Redeemer; of his name
They never heard. Perchance their late-found harps

May mix with Angel symphonies, and sound
In strains exalted things to them so new.

XII.

Nearer the mount stood Moses ; in his hand
The rod which blasted with strange plagues the realm
Of Misraim, and from its time-worn channels
Upturned the Arabian sea. Fair was his broad
High front, and forth from his soul-piercing eye
Did Legislation look ; which full he fixed
Upon the blazing panoply, undazzled.
No terrors had the scene for him who, oft,
Upon the thunder-shaken hill top, veiled
With smoke and lightnings, with Jehovah talked,
And from his cloudy hand received the Law.

XIII.

Beyond the Jewish Ruler, banded close,
A company full glorious, I saw

The twelve Apostles stand. O, with what looks
Of ravishment and joy, what rapturous tears,
What hearts of extasy, they gazed again
On their beloved Master! what a tide
Of overwhelming thoughts pressed to their souls
When now, as he so frequent promised, throned,
And circled by the hosts of Heaven, they traced
The well-known lineaments of him who shared
Their wants and sufferings here! Full many a day
Of fasting spent with him, and night of prayer
Rushed on their swelling hearts. Before the rest,
Close to the Angelic spears had Peter urged,
Tears in his eye, love throbbing at his breast,
As if to touch his vesture, or to catch
The murmur of his voice. On him and them
Jesus beamed down benignant looks of love.

XIV.

How diverse from the front sublime of Paul,
Or pale and placid dignity of him

Who in the lonely Isle saw Heaven unveiled,
Was his who in twelve summers won a world !
Not such his countenance nor garb, as when
He foremost breasted the broad Granicus,
Dark-rushing through its steeps from lonely Ida,
His double-tufted plume conspicuous mark
Of every arrow ; cheering his bold steed
Through pikes, and spears, and threatening axes, up
The slippery bank through all their chivalry,
Princes and Satraps linked for Cyrus' throne,
With cuirass pierced, cleft helm, and plumeless head,
To glorious conquest : or, when, panic-struck,
Darius from his plunging chariot sprang,
Away the bow and mantle cast, and fled.
His robe, all splendid from the silk worm's loom,
Floated effeminate, and from his neck
Hung chains of gold, and gems from Eastern mines.
Bedight with many-coloured plumage, flamed
His proud tiara, plumage which had spread
Its glittering dies of scarlet, green, and gold,
To evening suns by Indus' stream : around

Twined careless, glowed the white and purple band,
The imperial sacred badge of Persia's kings.
Thus, his triumphal car in Babylon
Displayed him, drawn by snow-white elephants,
Whose feet crushed odours from the flowery wreaths
Boy-Cupids scattered, while soft music breathed
And incense fumed around. But dire his hue,
Bloated and bacchanal as on the night
When old Persepolis was wrapped in flame :
Fear, over all had flung a livid tinge.
A deeper awe subdued him than amazed
Parmenio and the rest when they beheld
The white-stoled Levites from Jerusalem,
Thrown open as on some high festival,
With hymns and solemn pomp, come down the hill
To meet the incensed King, and wondering saw,
As on the Pontiff's awful form he gazed,
Glistening in purple with his mystic gems,
Jove's vaunted son, at Jaddua's foot, adore.

XV.

Turn, now, where stood the spotless Virgin : sweet
Her azure eye, and fair her golden ringlets ;
But changeful as the hues of infancy
Her face. As on her son, her God, she gazed,
Fixed was her look,—earnest, and breathless ;—now,
Suffused her glowing cheek ;—now, changed to pale ;—
First, round her lip a smile celestial played,
Then, fast, fast rained the tears.—Who can interpret ?—
Perhaps some thought maternal crossed her heart ;
That mused on days long passed, when on her breast
He helpless lay, and of his infant smile ;
Or, on those nights of terror when, from worse
Than wolves, she hasted with her babe to Egypt.

XVI.

Girt by a crowd of Monarchs of whose fame
Scarce a memorial lives, who fought and reigned

While the historic lamp shed glimmering light
Above the rest one regal port aspired,
Crowned like Assyria's princes ; not a crest
O'ertopped him save the giant Seraphim.
His countenance, more piercing than the beam
Of the sun-gazing eagle, earthward bent
Its haught, fierce majesty tempered with awe.
Seven years with brutish herds had quelled his pride.
And taught him there's a mightier King in Heaven.
His powerful arm founded old Babylon,
Whose bulwarks like the eternal mountains heaved
Their adamantine heads, whose brazen gates
Beleaguering nations foiled, and bolts of war,
Unshaken, answered as the pelting hail.
House of the Kingdom ! glorious Babylon !
Earth's marvel, and of unborn time the theme !
Say where thou stood'st :—Or, can the fisherman
Plying his task on the Euphrates, now,
A silent, silver, unpolluted tide,
Point to thy grave, and answer ? From a sash
O'er his broad shoulder hung the ponderous sword

Fatal as sulphurous fires to Nineveh,
That levelled with her waves the walls of Tyrus
Queen of the Sea, to its foundations shook
Jerusalem, and reaped the fields of Egypt.

XVII.

Endless the task to name the multitudes
From every land, from isles remote, in seas
Which no adventurous mariner has sailed :—
From desert-girdled cities, of whose pomp
Some solitary wanderer, by the stars
Conducted o'er the burning wilderness,
Has told a doubted tale ; as Europe's sons
Describing Mexic' and, in fair Peru,
The gorgeous Temple of the Sun, its Priests,
Its Virgin, and its fire forever bright,
Were fblers deemed, and, for belief, met scorn.

XVIII.

Sage faces, grave and firm, with war-worn locks,
Around a venerable Sire I saw,
Whose hoary head, with patriot glory crown'd,
Eclipsed the lustre of the diadem.
On their bold brows appeared that settled soul
Racks cannot shake, nor fiercest thunderbolts
By Tyrants fulmined ; not for gold, nor spoil
Torn from an injured people, not to gloss
Some Monarch's purple with a bloodier die,
Their swords were sheathless : in the sacred cause
Of man's essential, inborn liberties,
Inherent, deathless as his soul, they drew.
They were the Watchmen by an Empire's cradle
Whose youthful sinews show like Rome's ; whose head
Tempestuous rears the ice-encrusted cap
Sparkling with Polar splendours, while her skirts
Catch perfumes from the Isles ; whose trident, yet,
Must awe in either ocean ; whose strong hand

Freedom's immortal banner grasps, and waves
Its spangled glories o'er the envying world.

XIX.

Around while gazing thus, far in the sky
Appeared what looked, at first, a moving star ;
But onward, wheeling through the clouds it came,
With brightening splendour and increasing size,
Till within ken a fiery chariot rushed,
By flaming horses drawn, whose heads shot forth
A twisted horn-like beam. O'er its fierce wheels
Two shining forms alighted on the mount,
Of mortal birth, but deathless rapt to Heaven.
Adown their breasts their loose beards floated, white
As mist by moonbeams silvered ; fair they seemed,
And bright as Angels ; fellowship with Heaven
Their mortal grossness so had purified.
Lucent their mantles ; other than the Scer
By Jordan caught ; and in the Prophet's face
A mystic lustre, like the Urim's, gleamed.

XX.

Now for the dread tribunal all prepared,
Before the throne the Angel with the Books
Ascending kneeled, and crossing on his breast
His sable pinions there the volumes spread.
A second summons echoed from the trump,
Thrice sounded, when the mighty work began.
Waved onward by a Seraph's wand, the sea
Of palpitating bosoms toward the mount
In silence rolled. No sooner had the first
Pale tremblers its mysterious circle touched
Than instantaneous, swift as fancy's flash,
As lightning darting from the summer cloud,
Its past existence rose before the soul,
With all its deeds, with all its secret store
Of embryo works, and dark imaginings.
Amidst the chaos, thoughts as numberless
As whirling leaves when autumn strips the woods,
Light and disjointed as the Sybil's, thoughts

Scattered upon the waste of long dim years,
Passed in a moment through the quickened soul.
Not with the glozing eye of earth beheld ;
They saw as with the glance of Deity.
Conscience, stern arbiter in every breast,
Decided. Self acquitted or condemned,
Through two broad glittering avenues of spears
They crossed the Angelic squadrons, right, or left
The Judgment-seat ; by power supernal led
To their allotted stations on the plain.
As onward, onward, numberless, they came,
And touched, appalled, the verge of Destiny,
The Heavenly Spirits inly sympathized :—
When youthful saints, or martyrs scarred and white,
With streaming faces, hands ecstatic clasped,
Sprang to the right, celestial beaming smiles
A ravishing beauty to their radiance gave ;
But downcast looks of pity chilled the left.
What clenched hands, and frenzied steps were there !
Yet, on my shuddering soul the stifled groan
Wrung from some proud Blasphemer as he rushed,

Constrained by conscience, down the path of death
Knells horrible.—On all the hurrying throng
The unerring pen stamped, as they passed, their fate.
Thus, in a day, amazing thought ! were judged
The millions since from the Almighty's hand,
Launched on her course, earth rolled rejoicing. Whose
The doom to penal fires, and whose to joy,
From man's presumption mists and darkness veil.
So passed the day ; divided stood the world,
An awful line of separation drawn,
And from his labours the Messiah ceased.

XXI.

By this, the sun his westering car drove low ;
Round his broad wheel full many a lucid cloud
Floated, like happy isles, in seas of gold :
Along the horizon castled shapes were piled,
Turrets and towers whose fronts embattled gleamed
With yellow light : smit by the slanting ray,
A ruddy beam the canopy reflected ;

With deeper light the ruby blushed ; and thick
Upon the Seraphs' wings the glowing spots
Seemed drops of fire. Uncoiling from its staff
With fainter wave, the gorgeous ensign hung,
Or, swelling with the swelling breeze, by fits,
Cast off upon the dewy air huge flakes
Of golden lustre. Over all the hill,
The Heavenly legions, the assembled world,
Evening her crimson tint forever drew.

XXII.

But while at gaze, in solemn silence, Men,
And Angels stood, and many a quaking heart
With expectation throbbed ; about the throne
And glittering hill top slowly wreathed the clouds.
Erewhile like curtains for adornment hung,
Involving Shiloh and the Seraphim
Beneath a snowy tent. The bands around,
Eying the gonfalon that through the smoke
Towered into air, resembled hosts who watch

The King's pavilion where, ere battle hour,
A council sits. What their consult might be,
Those seven dread Spirits and their Lord, I mused,
I marvelled. Was it grace, and peace?—or death?
Was it of Man?—Did pity for the Lost
His gentle nature wring who knew, who felt
How frail is this poor tenement of clay?—
Arose there from the misty tabernacle
A cry like that upon Gethsemane?—
What passed in Jesus' bosom none may know,
But close the cloudy dome invested him;
And, weary with conjecture, round I gazed
Where in the purple west, no more to dawn,
Faded the glories of the dying day.
Mild twinkling through a crimson-skirted cloud
The solitary star of Evening shone.
While gazing wistful on that peerless light
Thereafter to be seen no more, (as, oft

* For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. HEB. 4. 15.

In dreams strange images will mix,) sad thoughts
Passed o'er my soul. Sorrowing, I cried, Farewell,
Pale, beauteous Planet, that displayest so soft
Amid yon glowing streak thy transient beam,
A long, a last farewell! Seasons have changed,
Ages, and empires rolled, like smoke, away,
But thou, unaltered, beamest as silver fair
As on thy birthnight! Bright and watchful eyes,
From palaces and bowers, have hailed thy gem
With secret transport! Natal star of love,
And souls that love the shadowy hour of fancy,
How much I owe thee, how I bless thy ray!
How oft thy rising o'er the hamlet green,
Signal of rest, and social converse sweet,
Beneath some patriarchal tree, has cheered
The peasant's heart, and drawn his benison!
Pride of the West! beneath thy placid light
The tender tale shall never more be told,
Man's soul shall never wake to joy again:
Thou set'st forever,—lovely Orb, farewell!

XXIII.

Low warblings, now, and solitary harps
Were heard among the Angels, touched and tuned
As to an evening hymn, precluding soft
To Cherub voices ; louder as they swelled
Deep strings struck in, and hoarser instruments,
Mixed with clear silver sounds, till concord rose
Full as the harmony of winds to heaven ;
Yet sweet as nature's springtide melodies
To some worn Pilgrim first with glistening eyes
Greeting his native valley, whence the sounds
Of rural gladness, herds, and bleating flocks,
The chirp of birds, blithe voices, lowing kine,
The dash of waters, reed, or rustic pipe,
Blent with the dulcet distance-mellowed bell,
Come, like the echo of his early joys.
In every pause, from spirits in mid air,
Responsive still were golden viols heard,
And Heavenly symphonies stole faintly down.

XXIV.

Calm, deep, and silent was the tide of joy
That rolled o'er all the Bless'd ; visions of bliss,
Rapture too mighty swelled their hearts to bursting :
Prelude to Heaven it seemed, and in their sight
Celestial glories swam. How fared, alas !
That other Band ? Sweet to their troubled minds
The solemn scene ; ah ! doubly sweet the breeze
Refreshing, and the purple light to eyes
But newly oped from that benumbing sleep
Whose dark and drear abode no cheering dream
No bright-hued vision ever enters, souls
For ages pent, perhaps, in some dim world
Where guilty spectres stalk the twilight gloom.
For, like the spirit's last seraphic smile,
The Earth, anticipating now her tomb,
To rise, perhaps, as Heaven magnificent,
Appeared Hesperian : gales of gentlest wing
Came fragrance-laden, and such odours shed

As Yemen never knew, nor those blest Isles
In Indian seas where the voluptuous breeze
The peaceful Native breathes, at eventide,
From nutmeg groves and bowers of cinnamon.
How solemn on their ears the choral note
Swelled of the Angel hymn! so late escaped
The cold embraces of the grave, whose damp
Silence no voice or stringed instrument
Has ever broke! Yet with the murmuring breeze
Full sadly chimed the music and the song,
For with them came the memory of joys
Forever past, the stinging thought of what
They once had been, and of their future lot.
To their grieved view the passages of Earth
Delightful rise, their tender ligaments
So dear, they heeded not an after state
Though by a fearful Judgment ushered in.
A Bridegroom fond, who lavished all his heart
On his Beloved, forgetful of the Man
Of many sorrows who, for him, resigned
His meek and spotless spirit on the cross.

Has marked among the Blessed Bands, arrayed
Celestial in a spring of beauty doomed
No more to fade, the charmer of his soul,
Her cheek soft blooming like the dawn in Heaven.
He recollects the days when on his smile
She lived ; when, gently leaning on his breast,
Tears of intense affection dimmed her eyes,
Of dove-like lustre.—Thoughtless, now, of him
And earthly joys, eternity and Heaven
Engross her soul.—What more accursed pang
Can Hell inflict ? With her, in realms of light,
In never-dying bliss, he might have rolled
Eternity away ; but now, forever,
Torn from his Bride new-found, with cruel Fiends,
Or Men like Fiends, must waste and weep. Now, now,
He mourns with burning bitter drops his days
Mispent, probation lost, and Heaven despised.
Such thoughts from many a bursting heart drew forth
Groans, lamentations, and despairing shrieks
That on the silent air came from afar.

XXV.

As, when from some proud capital that crowns
Imperial Ganges, the reviving breeze
Sweeps the dank mist, or hoary river fog
Impervious mantled o'er her highest towers,
Bright on the eye rush Brahma's temples capped
With spiry tops, gay-trelliced minarets,
Pagods of gold, and mosques with burnished domes,
Gilded, and glistening in the morning sun,
So from the hill the cloudy curtains rolled,
And, in the lingering lustre of the eve,
Again the Saviour and his Seraphs shone.
Emitted sudden in his rising, flashed
Intenser light, as toward the right hand host
Mild turning with a look ineffable,
The invitation he proclaimed in accents
Which on their ravished ears poured thrilling like
The silver sound of many trumpets heard
Afar in sweetest jubilee ; then, swift

Stretching his dreadful sceptre to the left
That shot forth horrid lightnings, in a voice
Clothed but in half its terrors, yet to them
Seemed like the crush of Heaven, pronounced the doom.
The sentence uttered, as with life instinct,
The throne uprose majestically slow ;
Each Angel spread his wings ; in one dread swell
Of triumph mingling as they mounted, trumpets,
And harps, and golden lyres, and timbrels sweet,
And many a strange and deep-toned instrument
Of Heavenly minstrelsy unknown on Earth,
And Angels' voices, and the loud acclaim
Of all the ransomed, like a thunder-shout.
Far through the skies melodious echoes rolled,
And faint hosannahs distant climes returned.

XXVI.

Down from the less'ning multitude came faint
And fainter still the trumpet's dying peal,

All else in distance lost, when to receive
Their new inhabitants the heavens unfolded.
Up gazing, then, with streaming eyes, a glimpse
The Wicked caught of Paradise where streaks
Of splendour, golden gleamings, radiance shone.
Like the deep glories of declining day
When, washed by evening showers, the huge-orb'd sun
Breaks instantaneous o'er the illumined world.
Seen far within, fair forms moved graceful by,
Slow turning to the light their snowy wings.
A deep-drawn agonizing groan escaped
The hapless Outcasts, when upon the Lord
The glowing portals closed. Undone, they stood
Wistfully gazing on the cold gray heaven,
As if to catch, alas! a hope not there.
But shades began to gather, night approached
Murky and low'ring : round with horror rolled
On one another their despairing eyes
That glared with anguish : starless, hopeless gloom
Fell on their souls never to know an end.
Though in the far horizon lingered yet

A lurid gleam, black clouds were mustering there ;
Red flashes, followed by low muttering sounds,
Announced the fiery tempest doomed to hurl
The fragments of the Earth again to Chaos.
Wild gusts swept by upon whose hollow wing
Unearthly voices, yells, and ghastly peals
Of demon laughter came. Infernal shapes
Flitted along the sulphurous wreaths, or plunged
Their dark impure abyss, as sea-fowl dive
Their watery element.—O'erwhelmed with sights
And sounds of horror, I awoke ; and found
For gathering storms, and signs of coming woe,
The midnight moon gleaming upon my bed
Serene and peaceful : Gladly I surveyed her
Walking in brightness through the stars of heaven,
And blessed the respite ere the day of doom.

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