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B. A. Plumer.

WAR-SONGS AND BALLADS

FROM

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY WILLIAM PLUMER, JR.

Rev<sup>d</sup> Andrew P. Peabody  
with the regards  
of the Author  
=

LYRICA SACRA;

OR,

WAR-SONGS AND BALLADS

FROM

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

---

BY WILLIAM PLUMER, JR.

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“The trees of the Lord are full of sap;  
They are green and full of sap;  
Even in old age they bring forth fruit.”

PSALMS.

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BOSTON:  
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS.

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M DCCC XLVI.

PS 2593  
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IN DISCUSSION

*Arch. Alhincum*

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38783  
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CAMBRIDGE:  
METCALF AND COMPANY,  
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

A. M. P. Feb. 27 1905.  
am 126 Jan 35

LYRICA SACRA.

1837

## P R E F A C E .

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THE books of the Old Testament may be considered either as records of the Jewish dispensation, or as portions of the early Hebrew literature. In the former point of view, we examine them as theologians ; in the latter, as scholars and men of taste. It is only as they contain specimens of Hebrew poetry that they are here regarded.

The reader will perceive, in the poems which follow, that, while I have taken the Scripture text as my subject, I have not aimed either at a translation merely, or a paraphrase of particular passages ; but have introduced, from different parts of Scripture, and sometimes from my own conception of the scenes described, such images, sentiments, and expressions, as seem appropriate to the time and place, and the impression intended to be produced. I have, indeed, in three out of

five of these pieces, taken a particular Hebrew poem, as the *foundation* on which to *build* ; but whether, in the words of St. Paul, I have built with *gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble*, the materials, wherever collected, have been shaped into new forms, and often applied to new uses. Passages of Scripture have been sometimes copied, and sometimes imitated ; they have as often suggested an idea merely, — not always one of similarity, sometimes one even of contrast and opposition. The task in hand was not that of a translator, nor that of an original author ; yet partaking in part, and alternately, of both characters. I have sought to give the whole the tone and coloring of the original Hebrew poetry ; since, if the work have any value, it must be mainly from its presenting an image, more or less correct, of ancient Jewish thought and feeling. We must read Hebrew, says Bishop Lowth, as the Hebrews read it ; we must see with their eyes, and estimate all things by the standard of their judgment. In the spirit of this precept, I have endeavoured to write as a Jew of the period in question may be supposed to have writ-



ten ; and am not therefore to be tried by the higher standard of Christian morality, or the colder code of Occidental criticism. The reader, who is familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, will be at no loss to discover my authority for most of what he will find in these poems, — for all, indeed, which he will think of any value.

If the representations of the Deity here given should be censured as anthropomorphic, I may hope to be excused, if, while keeping clearly within the bounds of Scripture thought and language, I reproduce, in poetry, what Milton, not less in his “Christian Doctrine” than in the “Paradise Lost,” seems to have regarded as sound religious truth. Of God, as he exists in the infinity of his attributes and perfections, we know little ; but the Jehovah of the Jews is represented, in the Scriptures, under the form of a man ; with many of the attributes and affections of human nature. “The Scriptures,” says Professor Stuart, “everywhere employ anthropopathic expressions, and describe the Godhead by applying to it names of attributes, that designate the parts, passions, and conceptions of men.” Theolo-

gians regard this as an accommodation of divine truth to human weakness. But the poet has, in this respect, no occasion "to think above that which is written." So indigenous, indeed, is this growth of humanity, in the domain of the Muses, that the poetical representations of the earliest ages differ in degree only, not in kind, from those of the most sublime of modern bards. The gods of the "Iliad" are, in effect, reproduced in the "Paradise Lost"; freed, indeed, from their grosser imperfections, but still human in form, in affections, and in modes of thought and action. To retain the liveliness of this primitive and Oriental representation, without shocking the colder imaginations of the North, and the matured reason of an enlightened age, is the great problem for the poet, who, in our day, attempts these high places of the sacred Muse.

Another topic, connected with the preceding, is that of the introduction of the supernatural, in modern poetry. Prophecy has been doubted by the critic, as improbable; and miracle has been denied by the philosopher, as impossible; but for the poet to doubt, or to deny, would, in

either case, be to forego some of the chief elements of his art. *Vates*, he is, by his profession, a seer ; and in all ages and among all nations, the supernatural has been his province and his delight. There can be no Strauss among the poets ; no Hume in the school of the prophets. For the Hebrew poet to become a Naturalist, in the theological sense of the word, would be at once to renounce his distinctive character, and to disarm himself of half his power.

With respect to the form of versification here adopted, it seemed to admit, more readily than some others, of the free introduction of Scripture names and phraseology. I have sought, in this way, and by the use, among other means, of old words and the older forms of words, to approach, as near as may be, to the venerable simplicity of the common version. What has been called the *parallelism of poetry*, or *the rhythm of sentiment*, consisting, for the most part, of a repetition, with some variation or addition, in the following verse, of the language, the thought, or the image of the preceding, is a peculiarity so characteristic of Hebrew poetry, that I have endeavoured to preserve something of it in these imitations.

The character of the ancient Hebrews was that of a religious, a warlike, and a pastoral people ; and their poetry, reflecting, as all true poetry must, the character of its authors, is warlike in its spirit, pastoral in its imagery, supernatural in many of its incidents, and religious in its general tone and sentiments. No imitation can be good which does not exhibit, in bold relief, these prominent traits of the national literature.

The Old Testament is full of the richest veins of Oriental poetry. This attempt to work out some of these precious ores is not made without a deep sense of the difficulty and the delicacy of the task. That they should be moulded into new shapes and put to new uses, without loss and without the admixture of baser metal, was perhaps impossible. The greatest of those who have labored in this line have been able, at the best, but to set their "apples of gold in pictures of silver." That in my hands the silver is often tarnished, and *the fine gold become dim*, is but too probable.

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THE LIFE OF JOHN ADAM

The life of John Adam, the first President of the United States, is a story of a man who was born in 1703 in Boston, Massachusetts, and died in 1794 in London, England. He was a member of the Continental Congress and served as the first Vice President of the United States under George Washington. He was also a member of the Federalist Party and served as the first Secretary of the Treasury under Alexander Hamilton. He was a man of many talents, including a diplomat, a statesman, and a writer. He was a man who was dedicated to the cause of the young nation and who played a significant role in the early years of the United States.

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## LYRICA SACRA.

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### THE SONG OF MOSES AND MIRIAM.

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THE Song of Moses and the Children of Israel is contained in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. The preceding chapter relates the events on which it is founded. Dr. Ken- nicott divides the song into four parts. He supposes that Miriam's response, "The horse and his rider," followed each part, as a chorus; and that the last verse, "The Lord shall reign," was sung at the close, as a grand chorus, by the whole people. Bishop Lowth takes nearly the same view of the subject. I have profited by their suggestions so far as to divide the poem between Moses and Miriam, and to introduce and repeat the chorus. These lyrical dialogues are found in several of the Psalms, and are frequent in the writings of the prophets.

---

THE song of deliverance, when safe on the strand  
The rescued of Israel, the chosen race, stand;  
Of Moses and Miriam the song, o'er the host  
Of Pharaoh, whose thousands lie strewn on the coast,

On desert coast stranded, or sunk in the deep,  
While o'er them, high tossing, the waves wildly sweep.

## MOSES.

The Lord is a warrior! Jehovah his name :  
A warrior how mighty let Egypt proclaim !  
His plagues upon Egypt, — the blood-covered stream,  
The sands of the desert, with vermin that teem,  
The locust, the murrain, the reptiles that creep  
In halls of their princes to beds where they sleep, —  
These, Lord! are thy weapons, — the frog and the fly!  
That throng 'mid their dwellings, and humble the high.  
Not less, at thy bidding, they humble the proud,  
Than hailstorm, that falleth 'mid fire from the cloud,  
Than darkness, that turneth to terror the day,  
'Mid groans of the dying, and shrieks of dismay.  
From the first-born of Pharaoh, that sits on the throne,  
To the first-born of captives, in dungeons that moan,  
Their children are smitten : from slave at the mill,  
From king in his palace, their cry riseth still, —  
The cry of loud anguish, their wide borders o'er,  
From Nile to the desert, from mountain to shore.  
E'en Pharaoh relenteth ; yet, hardened of heart,  
Recalls he the mandate that bade us depart ;  
Repenting his purpose, and, armed with the might  
Of Zoan's proud warriors, he hangs on our flight.



Then Miriam, the sister of Aaron, a band  
 Of maidens forth leading, came, timbrel in hand ;  
 With timbrels loud sounding, 'mid louder acclaim,  
 In measured dance moving, the virgin band came.

## MIRIAM.

The Lord is my refuge, the Lord is my song ;  
 My rock of salvation, the Lord maketh strong.

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

The horse and his rider  
 Are whelmed in the sea !  
 Thine, Lord ! is the triumph :  
 All praise be to thee !

## MOSES.

When hosts came against us, Jehovah ! thine ire  
 Like stubble consumed them, like chaff in the fire.  
 The breath of thy nostrils upheaved in a heap  
 The billows, and opened a path through the deep.  
 The waters, as frozen, like tall bulwarks stood  
 Beside us, as onward our path we pursued.  
 As leadeth the shepherd his flocks, so by me  
 Led onward, they followed far down through the sea.

## MIRIAM.

As a steed in the desert, who feareth no fall,  
 Loud neighing, high bounding, escaped from the thrall,  
 Our joyful ranks followed the rod of His might,  
 Earth's secret foundations laid bare to our sight.

The gates of the shadow of death were unclosed,  
Where deep, in dark caverns, earth's monsters reposed.

MOSES.

The foe followed quickly ; and loud was the boast  
Of vengeance, that echoed from Egypt's proud host ;  
The loud voice of Pharaoh, " Quick, seize on yon slaves ;  
The sword is behind them, before them the waves.  
What, enter the Red Sea ? Is such their despair ?  
Then follow them, warriors ! and seize on them there."  
Thus urged by the monarch, and fearful in vain,  
Far down through the waters their hosts drive amain ;  
Far down through the billows, storm-swept as they past,  
Their chariots, their horsemen, their foot followed fast.

MIRIAM.

The cloud of His presence came down in our rear,  
On us beaming brightly, to them dark and drear.  
All night, 'mid the billows, our path lay in light,  
Theirs covered with darkness, in doubt and affright ;  
In doubt if to follow, too proud to give o'er,  
They press now behind us, now turn for the shore.  
Their chariot-wheels broken, and loose their array,  
They turn in their terror, and long for the day.  
" The dawn, will it never revisit our eyes ?  
The bright sun to guide us, when, when will he rise ?  
The God of our worship, O, will he not save  
His chosen, his warriors, engulfed in the wave ? "

## MOSES.

Day comes ; and in anger the Lord, from the cloud,  
 Looks forth on their trouble, and scatters the proud.  
 The voice of Jehovah, that rendeth the sky,  
 The voice of his vengeance, is heard from on high ;  
 Is heard 'midst the tempest, as o'er them he past,  
 In earthquake, and thunder, and loud-roaring blast.  
 The Lord in the whirlwind came down, in his wrath,  
 And heaped the wide waters high over their path.

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

The horse and his rider  
 Are whelmed in the sea !  
 Thine, Lord ! is the triumph :  
 All praise be to thee !

## MIRIAM.

In vain on his idols calls Pharaoh to save :  
 He sinks 'mid his magians, like lead in the wave ;  
 Like stones to the bottom they sink in the sea,  
 The pent waves returning, released now and free.  
 The voice of their anguish, the shrieks, wild and drear,  
 Of, Zoan ! thy thousands, shrill loud on mine ear ;  
 Shrill loud as the creaking of forests, whose pride  
 The whirlwind is rending, torn, crashed on each side.

## MOSES.

A silence, more awful, hangs now in the air ;  
 The billows heave wildly, but life is not there.

The sound of their shrieking is lost 'mid the roar  
 Of fierce waves, that hurl them in wrath on the shore.  
 They come, as the locust o'er Egypt's dark strand  
 Came thick, when I called them, to cover the land.  
 The frantic steed answers no more to the rein ;  
 The chariot, unguided, floats wide o'er the main ;  
 With tent and pavilion the billows are strown,  
 With dead bodies tangled, and banners o'erthrown.

## MIRIAM.

The river-god, vaunting o'er Egypt his power,  
 The dragon, that riseth from Nile to devour,  
 The Lord God hath bound him ; the bit and the rein,  
 The hook in his nostril, he turneth again ;  
 The fierce dragon turneth, subdued now and tame, —  
 Sore smitten, returneth the way that he came.

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

The horse and his rider  
 Are whelmed in the sea !  
 Thine, Lord ! is the triumph :  
 All praise be to thee !

## MOSES.

In mercy his people the Lord hath restored ;  
 From bondage redeemed them, from lust and the sword.  
 What God, O Jehovah ! what God is like thee,  
 Who rid'st on the tempest, and rul'st in the sea ?

Thy praise who can utter ? thy thoughts who divine ?  
In signs and in wonders, what arm is like thine ?  
Thy right arm victorious, when danger arose,  
To Israel brought safety, brought death to our foes.

## MIRIAM.

Thy people, Jehovah ! thy ransomed shall go,  
Where'er the cloud leads them, unscathed of the foe.  
The cleft rock its fountains shall yield to our need,  
And food fill the desert, our thousands to feed.  
In deserts unwatered, or deep in the sea,  
In Jordan, O Judah ! thy God is with thee.

## MOSES.

The nations are governed by rulers, that spring  
From earth, in their weakness ; but God is our king.  
Jehovah from Sinai, his dread mountain-throne,  
From Sinai, 'mid thunder, his law shall make known ;  
His covenant with Jacob, — the law that shall sever  
From the heathen his people, — a statute for ever.  
Apart from the nations shall Jacob abide,  
Elect, holy, precious, — Jehovah his guide.

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

Jehovah o'er Jacob,  
While foes rage in vain,  
O'er Israel, his chosen,  
Jehovah shall reign.

## MIRIAM.

The heathen have heard it ; false Canaan, dismayed,  
Shrinks back from our coming ; and Moab, afraid,  
Thy princes, O Edom ! thy dukes, in base fear,  
Crouch low 'mid their mountains, when Israel is near.  
Thy palaces, Sihon ! shall blaze in that hour ;  
And, Bashan ! thy temples fierce flames shall devour.  
Beer-elim is howling, and, Dimon ! thy flood  
Rolls cumbered with carnage, and red with their blood.  
The bow of the mighty is broke in his hand,  
The swift cannot 'scape us, the strong shall not stand.  
Though tall as the cedars, and huge as the oak,  
Thy giant sons, Anak ! shall bow to the yoke.

## MOSES.

Pale Ashtaroth pauses ; the moon, in dismay,  
O'er Ajalon's valley stands still on her way ;  
O'er Gibeon stands, awe-struck, the sun, while in flight  
His worshippers perish, struck down in his sight.  
Their prophets had warned them the battle to shun,  
But, fierce in their folly, on danger they run.  
Slay, utterly slay them ! nor leave to annoy,  
In all thy wide borders, or old man or boy.  
Thine eye shall not spare them, nor pity infest,  
For maid or for mother, thy stern warrior-breast.  
Go ! hew down their altars ; their idols o'erturn ;  
Their groves, sin-polluted, their foul temples, burn.

On tents of the wicked the Lord bids thee shower  
The fire of thy fury, the blast of thy power !

## MIRIAM.

The mount of Jehovah, the land he hath blest,  
His ransomed shall reach it, and in it find rest.  
To Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob he swore  
Their seed should inherit the land evermore.  
With milk and with honey its valleys o'erflow,  
'Mid cornfields and vineyards, where olive-trees grow ;  
The vineyards of Eshcol, that cover the plain,  
Thine olive-groves, Zion ! and, Jezreel ! thy grain.  
The desert rejoices, its blossoms unclose,  
The beauty of Carmel, and, Sharon ! thy rose.  
Beneath his own fig-tree, beneath his own vine,  
With none to molest him, shall Jacob recline.

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

Jehovah o'er Jacob,  
While foes rage in vain,  
O'er Israel, his chosen,  
Jehovah shall reign.

## MOSES.

The Lord is our shepherd, the Lord is our guide,  
The Lord will rich pasture for Jacob provide ;  
His range 'mid the mountains, his food by the stream,  
His shelter, when smiteth the sun's piercing beam.

The weak will he gather with care to the fold,  
 The lambs in his bosom, the tender ewes hold.  
 The sheep of his pasture, the flock of his choice,  
 They know and they follow the good shepherd's voice ;  
 The good shepherd leadeth his flocks, and they go  
 To feed in rich valleys, where soft waters flow.

## MIRIAM.

As a young man, that cheereth the heart of his bride,  
 The virgin he loveth, his chosen, his pride ;  
 So loveth Jehovah his people to-day,  
 His chosen, the daughter of Israel always.

## MOSES.

Like the palm-trees of Elim shall Jacob expand,  
 And wide, 'mid rich pasture, his root fill the land ;  
 His root faileth never, his leaf is not sear,  
 Like Lebanon's cedar, unchanged through the year ;  
 Unchanged, though around it the tempest may rise,  
 Its huge trunk unshaken, its head in the skies.  
 The beasts of the forest beneath it shall rest,  
 The bird, 'mid its branches, brood calm o'er her nest.  
 A star out of Jacob from Judah shall rise,  
 The star of His glory, whose trail fires the skies ;  
 It beams, 'mid the darkness, afar on my sight ;  
 Though distant, I see it, and joy in its light ;  
 The sun of salvation, from Judah that springs,  
 The healing of nations is under his wings.



Thus sang they alternate their song o'er the foe,  
While loud from glad thousands the blended strains flow:

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

The horse and his rider  
Are whelmed in the sea!  
Thine, Lord! is the triumph:  
All praise be to thee!

While valley and desert the burden prolong,  
The Red Sea reëchoes the notes of their song:

## CHORUS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.

Jehovah o'er Jacob,  
While foes rage in vain,  
O'er Israel for ever,  
Jehovah shall reign.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK.

---

THE Song of Deborah and Barak, and the events which it commemorates, are contained in the fourth and fifth chapters of Judges.

---

THE war-song of Deborah, when Jabin in fight  
 Was foiled, and a woman quelled Sisera's might :  
 The war-song of Barak, who covered thy plain,  
 Thy valleys, Esdraelon ! with heaps of the slain.

DEBORAH.

Come, list to me, princes ! kings ! list to my song :  
 The Lord God hath triumphed, the mighty, the strong !  
 As erst from Mount Seir, from Edom HE came,  
 When Sinai flowed molten, in smoke and in flame ;  
 So came he to rescue his chosen to-day ;  
 He came, and before him the foe passed away ;  
 Passed quick from his coming, like vapors, that fly  
 Dispersed down the valley, when winds sweep the sky.

BARAK.

The land lay deserted, its rulers exiled,  
 The highways untravelled, the cities defiled.

No longer in safety our hamlets repose,  
 Hill, valley, plain, desert, infested with foes.  
 Their archers camped daily round fountains where came  
 Of old our fair daughters, thence driven with shame.  
 New gods claimed our worship ; no hand grasped the  
 shield ;  
 War raged in our borders, our spears fled the field.

## DEBORAH.

'T was then that, a mother in Israel, I rose,  
 A judge and a leader, to drive out our foes.  
 O'er elders in Ephraim, o'er chiefs of the land,  
 The Lord to his handmaid had given command.  
 Thy son, Abinoam ! held back from the foe ;  
 If I went not with him, the chief would not go.  
 A woman to lead them ! so be it ; to-day  
 A woman bears, Barak ! thine honors away.

## BARAK.

But, ah ! what heart-searchings, what longings, were ours,  
 For Gad over Jordan, for Judah ! thy powers ;  
 For Dan in his havens, for Asher of rocks,  
 For Reuben 'mid sheepfolds and bleating of flocks.  
 Divided in council, and cold in their love,  
 They came not to aid us, where fiercely we strove.

## DEBORAH.

High praise to you, princes ! ye magistrates grave !  
 Who shrink not from danger 'mid toils of the brave.

The pen of the writer is changed for the sword ;  
 The Levite, turned warrior, strikes bold for the Lord.  
 A host comes from Ephraim, that sweeps the field o'er,  
 And Benjamin's archers gall Amalek sore.  
 Manasseh, from Machir, his governors sent,  
 His chiefs, with their warriors, on battle intent.  
 Stout Issachar's princes, undaunted, are there,  
 On foot in the valley, toil, danger, to share ;  
 With Naphtali's leaders to share in the strife,  
 And Zebulun's spearsmen, as lavish of life.

BARAK.

“Awake ! awake ! Deborah ! loud utter thy song !  
 Our signal for onset, thy word maketh strong.”

DEBORAH.

“Then on ! and be valiant ! This day shalt thou lead  
 Captivity captive, and Israel be freed !”  
 I spake, — and like whirlwind, that falls from the height  
 Of mountain cloud-covered, so rushed they to fight ;  
 From Tabor down pouring, they rush in their pride  
 On hosts of the heathen, encamped on each side.  
 The sword reeleth, drunken with blood, o'er the plain,  
 The sword of Jehovah, with blood of the slain ;  
 That sword to its scabbard not yet shall return,  
 Not yet 'gainst false Jabin its wrath cease to burn.  
 Though kings in Taanach made strong their array,  
 No glory they gathered, no spoils bore away.

Though proud in their numbers, Megiddo ! thy wave  
Ran red, 'mid their slaughter, with blood of the brave.

## BARAK.

To beasts of the forest, to birds of the air,  
Their bodies we offer, to mangle and tear.  
The eagle, the vulture, stoops fierce on the plain,  
The wolf, the hyena, feeds fat on the slain.  
Their blood to the reaper rich harvests shall yield ;  
The bones of their princes shall bleach on the field.  
The moon in pale splendor, the stars overhead,  
The sun that they worshipped, shall gaze on them dead ;  
Gaze on them, nor succour his worshippers more ;  
Unlike, how unlike ! to the God we adore.  
Thy guardian, O Jacob ! his people who keeps,  
Jehovah, thy helper, nor slumbers, nor sleeps.

## DEBORAH.

The Lord God of Jacob to-day trode the plain,  
The Lord, 'mid loud thunder and clouds dropping rain.  
He came in the tempest, on wings of the wind,  
A bright cloud before him, and darkness behind.  
The earth quaked and trembled, the cloud darted flame,  
As, borne 'mid thick darkness, to battle he came.  
The hill-top he toucheth, it smokes in his wrath ;  
He speaks, and the cedars fall prone on his path.  
The mountains are melted, the streams overflow,  
As, armed for our rescue, they rush on the foe.

## BARAK.

The heat of HIS anger, that melteth the hills,  
 Has swelled to loud torrents the steep mountain-rills.  
 The stars in their courses 'gainst Sisera fought ;  
 The river ran o'er him, in wild eddies caught ;  
 The river of Kishon his ranks swept away,  
 The swift-swelling Kishon fought for us to-day.

## DEBORAH.

Like chaff from the thresher, when winds sweep the floor,  
 They fly, in their terror, bold Barak before.  
 As potter, that treadeth beneath him the clay,  
 So trode he o'er princes and chiefs in the fray ;  
 O'er helm and o'er falchion, o'er gauntlet and spear,  
 O'er war-chiefs, down-trodden, disarmed, in their fear.  
 Their warriors are women, — late boastful and vain, —  
 Like women in travail, who cry in their pain.  
 'Mid braying of trumpets, and snorting of steeds,  
 'Mid chariot-wheels broken, and spears snapt like reeds,  
 Like reeds, when behemoth down-tramples the fen  
 'Mid canebrakes of Jordan, so trode he o'er men.  
 Their horse-hoofs are broken, as plunging they go,  
 Disorder'd, wild driven in flight to and fro ;  
 Dust-covered, with carnage defiled and with sweat,  
 That streams from their bodies, all reeking and wet,  
 Their panting sides heaving, and red with the stain  
 Of warriors, late charging, now pale on the plain.

Like waves, tempest-driven, that brake on the shore,  
So brake they, nor rally their scattered ranks more.

BARAK.

O, curse him, who doeth deceitfully, Lord !  
The work of thy vengeance, thy wrath with the sword ;  
Curse bitterly Meroz, his faith who betrayed,  
In war with the mighty who came not to aid ;  
'Gainst hosts of the mighty who came not to fight,  
For home and for kindred, for God and his right !

DEBORAH.

But blest above women be Jael, the wife  
Of Heber, the Kenite, who ended the strife ;  
Blest she, above women, whose tent on the plain  
False Sisera entered, nor left it again.

BARAK.

With nine hundred chariots of iron, his boast  
Was loud, that his war-steeds should tread down our host ;  
Should sweep o'er us proudly, and trample in dust  
The warriors of Israel, though God was their trust.  
With necks clothed in thunder, and eyes darting flame,  
'Mid shouting of captains, on rushing they came :  
They came, like the whirlwind ; but firm, as the rock,  
Our spears met their onset, and breasted the shock.

DEBORAH.

The Lord was our breastwork ; the Lord turned to fear  
The proud steeds' loud neighing, that mocked at the  
spear.

The Lord, in our peril, when sorest our need,  
With fear smote the driver, with madness the steed.  
With nostril dilated, and wild glaring eye,  
They pause in mid volley ; they pause, turn, and fly ;  
They fly from the glance of his anger, that came,  
'Mid thunder loud pealing, in quick-darted flame.  
The snorting beasts, frantic, urged forward in vain,  
Bound now like the locust, unheeding the rein.  
And where is the warrior, who trusted their speed,  
In chariot who trusted, and strength of the steed ?  
Where he, the proud heathen, so loudly who boasts  
His strength, and defieth Jehovah of hosts ?

## BARAK.

Borne swift down the valley, like leaf on the blast,  
On foot from the battle flies Sisera fast.  
O'er plains of Esdraelon the warrior hath fled,  
On foot 'mid the flying, o'er heaps of the dead.

## DEBORAH.

Who meets him ? 'T is Jael : " My Lord ! do not fear ;  
Turn in to thy servant ; the foe is not here."  
And worn in the battle, with flying forespent,  
Right gladly he turned him to rest in her tent.  
He asked her for water, as weary he sank,  
Nigh fainting, beside her ; she gave, and he drank.  
Rich milk, from the bottle, for water she gave,  
And food, that beseemeth the feast of the brave.



A lordly dish bringing, she served him with care,  
And largely she gave him a dainty king's fare.  
He sleeps, with her mantle spread light o'er his breast,  
While Jael, beside him, stands watching his rest.

BARAK.

The Lord to the sleeper an evil dream sent,  
And shook with vain shadows his rest in the tent.  
He sleeps, but the torrent runs wild through his dream;  
His foes are around him, the shout and the gleam,  
The gleam of bright armour, the war-horse is there,  
The onset, the rally, his flight, his despair!

DEBORAH.

His worn feet are weary, nor farther can wend,  
While o'er him there seemeth a dark form to bend :  
A dark form before him moves silent and slow,  
Nor knoweth the dreamer if friend come or foe.  
He starts, and, convulsive in agony, throws  
A wild look around him, half waked, for his foes ;  
Half waked, — but 't is Jael stands watching him there ;  
And safe deems the warrior his life in her care !

BARAK.

Her right hand the hammer, her left grasps the nail ;  
Nay, pause not, brave Jael ! 't is death shouldst thou fail.  
He writhes, as in anguish : she strikes but one blow ;  
The nail through his temples comes out deep below.

He bows down before her ; he falls from her bed ;  
 E'en there, where he boweth, he falleth down dead.  
 His labors are ended, his warfare is o'er ;  
 He sleeps ; and his slumber no dream breaketh more.

## DEBORAH.

Fond Sisera's mother, meantime, at the gate,  
 Looks out through her lattice : " Ah ! why does he wait ?  
 Why tarry his chariots, as shunning my sight ?  
 Why comes he not quickly, with spoils from the fight ?"  
 Her wise women answer, herself makes reply,  
 " O, doubt not his coming ; the warrior is nigh.  
 The spoil is divided, a damsel to each ;  
 But Sisera's portion far wider shall reach.  
 A prey of mixed colors shall Sisera deck,  
 With needle-work broidered, to bind round the neck ;  
 With needle-work broidered, inwrought on each side,  
 My hero is coming, the chief in his pride !"

## BOTH.

Ha ! ha ! they have perished — our foes in the fight —  
 Like Sisera perished, ignobly in flight.

## DEBORAH.

Ignobly he perished, our proud, vaunting foe,  
 (Thine, Lord ! be the glory) by woman laid low !  
 And still be thy servants like Barak in fight ;  
 Like Jael, who spared not the foe in his flight ;

And clear be the vision, Jehovah! to guide  
In council thine handmaid, in war to preside ;  
Clear, bright, be the vision, O Lord ! as yon sun,  
That smiles on the triumph thy chosen have won ;  
Smiles now on our triumph, though late, in the cloud,  
Veiled thick, 'mid the tempest that scattered the proud.

So sang the bold heroine, beneath her palm-tree,  
The prophetess Deborah, for Israel set free ;  
For Israel, who rested in peace, from that day,  
For forty years rested, beneath her mild sway.

SAUL WITH THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

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THE passages of Scripture, on which this poem is founded, are contained in the fifteenth and twenty-eighth chapters of the first book of Samuel.

---

KING SAUL sought in Endor (the foe hovering near),  
 From dark boding spirits, his fortunes to hear.  
 They came, the Elohim ! as if opening earth,  
 Evoked, from her caverns had given them birth.  
 The weird woman started, the king stood aghast,  
 As dim in the distance, like shadows they passed.  
 They came in the darkness, with low sounds between,  
 Dim seen in the distance, — felt, rather than seen.  
 An old man is with them, an old man is there,  
 With broad mantle covered, and white flowing hair.  
 He speaks : the king boweth, awe-stricken, though brave.

PROPHET.

Why call'st thou, O monarch ! the dead from the grave ?

KING.

And art thou, pale spectre ! the prophet who shed,  
 In Zuph, where thou dwelledst, the oil o'er my head ?

To Saul art thou welcome ; the king seeks again  
Thy guidance, O prophet ! sought never in vain.  
The heathen are round me, their hosts press me sore ;  
And God is departed, nor answers me more.  
Nor Urim, nor prophet, nor dream, answer gave,  
And hence seek I counsel, O seer ! from the grave.  
The valley of vision before thee is cast ;  
Speak, then, for thou knowest the future, as past.

## PROPHET.

And hath HE departed, Jehovah, from thee,  
And seek'st thou, insensate ! for counsel from me ?  
When God, in just anger, his vengeance made bare,  
Thou, Saul ! in thy folly didst Amalek spare ;  
The life spared of Agag ; and, setting at naught  
His mandate who sent thee, the spoils of war sought.  
What meaneth this bleating of sheep in mine ears,  
This lowing of oxen, this trampling of steers ?

## KING.

We brought them, O prophet ! to lay on His shrine,  
Where dwelleth, in Gilgal, Shekinah divine.

## PROPHET.

The Lord asks not of thee the fat of thy prey,  
But ears that will hearken, and hearts that obey.

## KING.

'T was useless, O prophet ! thy mandate to kill  
The herds, that roved freely o'er valley and hill ;

And hard was thy sentence, inhuman ! to slay  
Man, woman, and infant, and suckling, that day.

PROPHET.

Hard, say'st thou ? to-morrow shall harder fate fall,  
And darker the fortune that waits on thee, Saul !  
Well know'st thou this mantle ; by thee, on that morn,  
When Agag in pieces I hewed, was it torn.  
E'en so as this mantle, thy kingdom is rent ;  
Jehovah hath said it, and will not repent.

KING.

Nay, spare them, O prophet ! my people ! nor bring  
On Israel HIS vengeance, for sins of their king.

PROPHET.

The Lord is not man, that his purpose should fail ;  
Nor son of man, shifting, like cloud in the gale :  
Firm fixed in his purpose, unchanging, the Lord  
Speaks once, and his bidding comes sure as the word.  
The wronged son of Jesse, by thee wronged in vain,  
E'en now is anointed o'er Judah to reign.  
From sheepfolds he cometh, his people to feed,  
From tending of sucklings, his Israel to lead ;  
And skilful in guidance, as faithful in heart,  
From paths of uprightness he will not depart.  
The Lord God hath spoken ; and thou, on yon height,  
Thou, Saul ! and thy warriors, shall fall in the fight.

Thy three sons slain with thee, thy house overthrown,  
The Lord gives to David, his servant, thy throne.  
The weird woman killeth her calf, king ! for thee :  
Eat of it ; to-morrow thy fast is with me.

He spake ; and the shadow passed quick as the sound ;  
The king fell before it, his face to the ground :  
He fell down, sore troubled, struck dumb with dismay ;  
They raised him, and soothed him, and bore him away.  
But terror went with him, forewarned, to the fight,  
By spectre-fears haunted, and shorn of his might.

THE SONG OF THE BOW ;

OR,

THE LAMENT OF DAVID OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.

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THE action in which Saul and Jonathan fell is related in the thirty-first chapter of the first book of Samuel. The twentieth chapter of the same book contains other incidents introduced in this poem. The song itself is in the first chapter of the second book of Samuel.

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How fallen the mighty, on Gilboa's height !  
 Thy beauty, O Israel ! down smitten in fight.  
 In lands of the heathen, in Gath tell it not,  
 Lest foes in their triumph exult o'er our lot ;  
 Lest Askelon's scoffers make light of our chief,  
 Philistia's proud daughters insulting our grief ;  
 While priests of proud Dagon his trophies display,  
 And the fly-god of Ekron buzz loud o'er his prey.

O, Gilboa mountains ! may dews never fall,  
 Nor rain in your valleys, accursed for Saul ;  
 For Saul the anointed, who left on your field,  
 Though lost, not dishonored, his spear-dinted shield.



The archers have hit him, his sons are all slain,  
Nor strength hath the monarch to fly o'er the plain.  
Yet mean foes shrink from him, they shrink from his eye,  
By his own weapon only the monarch can die.

From flesh of the mighty, from blood of the foe,  
Saul's sword turned not empty, nor Jonathan's bow.  
The sword of the monarch drank blood on the plain,  
The bow of the archer waxed fat 'mid the slain.  
Like eagles in swiftness, like lions in strength,  
Through life undivided, death joined them at length;  
Death joined them for ever, low laid in the strife,  
In death bonds united, as loving in life.

How fallen the mighty ! in high places slain !  
Friend, brother, king, leader, loved, honored, in vain.  
Not vainly we honor the brave who depart ;  
Their name liveth ever, their love in our heart.  
Weep, daughters of Israel ! O, weep for the king,  
Who clothed you in scarlet, with bracelet and ring,  
With purple from Zidon, with gems o'er the wave ;  
As boldly he won them, so freely he gave.

And thou, O my brother ! I prized thee above  
E'en woman when fondest, thou true heart of love !

The love, e'en when warmest, of woman is cold  
To thine, proved in danger, true, tender as bold.  
The flight of thine arrow, like lightning that came,  
Missed never its quarry, unerring in aim.  
Yet surer the kindness that came to defend,  
When danger environed the life of thy friend.  
When danger assailed me, his arrow's flight gave  
The signal, O Ezel! beside thy lone cave.  
The son of the quiver its sad message brought,  
Though sad, yet with unction of true healing fraught.

We met ; and, embracing, 'mid tears falling fast,  
Our faith plighted firmly, unmoved to the last,  
That true to each other, whate'er might betide,  
No strife, 'mid life's changes, our loves should divide.  
Rich garments he gave me ; the robe that he wore,  
The girdle that bound him, binds me evermore.  
His weapons he gave me ; the death-dealing bow,  
The sword that in battle turned ne'er from the foe.  
In plight of firm friendship such tokens he gave,  
Weak proofs of warm feeling, yet dear to the brave.  
And gentle that feeling, as soft-falling dew  
On grass of Mount Hermon, soft, gentle as true ;  
Like the oil that, o'er Aaron, ran down from the head,  
O'er beard and o'er vesture, in rich fragrance shed.

So precious the fragrance its odors distil,  
It liveth, that friendship, in death liveth still.

We parted, — I driven, a wave, to and fro ;  
He doomed in the battle to fall by the foe.  
The archer hath fallen, the monarch is slain ;  
Friend, brother, king, leader, on yon bloody plain.  
Untimely they perished, — the weapons of fight, —  
Lost, Gilboa ! broken, made vile on thy height !

ABSALOM.

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THE reader will find the rebellion of Absalom, and the events connected with it, in the second book of Samuel, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth chapters.

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THE sons of King David are wise, valiant, fair ;  
But one is among them, with long, flowing hair,  
The love of the maidens, the pride of the brave,  
In gay scenes the gayest, as grave with the grave.  
'T is Absalom only, well skilled 'in all arts,  
In court, camp, and cottage, who swayeth all hearts.  
The fair by his beauty are won at a glance,  
As loud o'er the wine-cup, as light in the dance.  
The Philistine warriors shrink back from his spear,  
And wise men stand listening his wisdom to hear.  
What though his sheep-shearers his brother hath slain ?  
Base Amnon deserved it ; and David is fain  
To call back from Geshur the loved one again.  
E'en Joab relenteth ; stern Joab hath smiled  
On a war-chief so daring, a gallant so wild !

And now to the people, beside the King's gate,  
He boweth benignant, and asks of their state :  
" Whence com'st thou ? a suitor ? thy cause ? see 't is  
right :  
What, seek'st thou for justice ? 'T is sold day and night.  
Bring bribes, wouldst thou prosper ; the poor man must  
fail,  
When fraud holds the balance, and gifts turn the scale.  
With cares of the harem is David engrossed,  
While priests rule the council, and Joab the host.  
False priests are our judges ; and David, before  
In wisdom unrivalled, is ruler no more.  
The monarch grown careless, unfit for command,  
O, would I were ruler, and judge in the land !  
None then should e'er suffer injustice through me ;  
The poor should find plenty, the bondmen go free."  
Then, smiling complacent, as lowly they bowed,  
He raised them, and kissed them, and thanked them  
aloud.  
Thus Absalom's speeches made friends, day by day,  
And stole from his father their homage away.  
No mean rank he holdeth, no slight power hath won,  
While chariots before him and trained servants run.  
The trumpet he soundeth, in Hebron, at length,  
And calls on all Israel to come in their strength :

“Lo! Absalom ruleth, his ensign is here,  
 And David, forsaken, hath fled in his fear ;  
 Forsaken of God for his sins, hath he fled ;  
 And Absalom reigneth, his son, in his stead.”

The torrent swells wildly, and, swept by its force,  
 The king falls before it, nor stems now its course.  
 His hoar head dust-covered, his royal robe rent,  
 O'er Kishon passed David ; and wept as he went.  
 “How can I thus leave thee, O Zion! in age,  
 The city of David, a prey to their rage!  
 The city of David, where — God still my guide,  
 My children around me — I sat in my pride ;  
 I sat 'mid my people, revered as their chief ;  
 Or knelt by the altar, in joy or in grief.  
 The ark of Jehovah goes with me, e'en now,  
 The ark, where in worship all Israel should bow ;  
 Its guardians, still faithful, are with me ; but, no !  
 Return with it, Zadok ! — if God wills it so,  
 I yet may behold it where always it stood ;  
 If not, let him use me as seemeth him good.”

Then bade he Ittai, the Gittite, depart : —  
 “A stranger in Israel, an exile, thou art,  
 A Philistine warrior, unmixed with our line ;  
 Then why should thy fortunes be darkened by mine ?

Thy valor will win thee, from others, command ;  
Then go ! and be mercy and peace with thy band ! ”  
“ If false friends and kindred thy banner forsake,  
Ittai, the exile, their station will take.  
Thy servant, still faithful in toil and in strife,  
Is with thee, King David ! for death and for life.  
Nor fear thou the trial ; soon, soon will it close,  
With glory to David, with shame on his foes ! ”  
“ Bold Gittite ! ” said David, “ come stand by my side ;  
All true hearts are with us, whate’er may betide ;  
And HE, who guards ever the king of his choice,  
Will yet, in Mount Zion, bid David rejoice ;  
Rejoice, in Mount Zion, as erst ’mid the throng  
I worshipped before him, with trumpet and song ;  
With joy danced before him, and shouted aloud,  
Beloved of Jehovah, though scorned of the proud.  
The proud ones may scorn me, the false ones betray,  
But God is my helper, Jehovah my stay.”

But lo ! where Shimei, the servant of Saul,  
Pours forth, in fierce anger, on David his gall.  
“ Thou bloody man ! ” cries he, “ the Lord on thy head  
Returns, man of Belial ! the blood thou hast shed ;  
The Lord, for thy treason to Saul, hath returned  
The vengeance redoubled thy treachery earned.

The blood of thy victims calls now not in vain ;  
 Uriah the Hittite, by thee basely slain,  
 And Nabal of Maon — ah ! short was his life —  
 The chief was so churlish, so lovely his wife !  
 Thy lust, thy ambition, thy frauds, are laid bare ;  
 Thy fair-seeming worship, loud hymn, and false prayer.  
 Go ! base son of Jesse ! feed flocks on the plain,  
 O'er hinds of the valley and sheep-boys go reign !”  
 So cursed he King David, and stones at him cast,  
 And dust from Bahurim, as slowly they passed.  
 Out spake Abishai, — “ King ! give but the word,  
 Yon dead dog shall perish, that curseth my lord.”  
 But David said mildly — as softened by woe, —  
 “ Nay, heed not his cursing, this Benjamite foe.  
 It is not the railing of foes that I feel,  
 But friends, whose unkindness wounds worse than their  
                   steel.

The friends whom I trusted, who ate of my bread,  
 And knelt where I worshipped, my presence have fled.  
 Ahithophel, honored, revered as my guide,  
 The chief of my council, e'en he quits my side.  
 What wonder that others are maddened to strife,  
 Since e'en my son seeketh his own father's life !  
 The Lord will requite it, this outrage to-day,  
 And turn, if we sin not, his anger away.



The Lord is my fortress, my buckler, my bow,  
My horn of salvation, — what fear I the foe ?

“ To David the desert, the cavern, the shore,  
The steep mountain passes, are known as of yore.  
Well know I the valleys that rang to my strain,  
A shepherd-boy tending his flocks on the plain.  
Ah ! happy the stripling ! — with harp and with crook,  
In chase through the forest, at rest by the brook,  
Beloved of the maidens, the pride of the glen,  
More happy than ruling, as since, over men.  
And later, when, flying from danger, I trod  
Through desert-paths fearless, my trust was in God ;  
The God of my fathers, who guarded my path  
When Saul came against me, grown stern in his wrath.  
The Dead Sea’s lone valleys their dark shelter gave, —  
Engedi ! thy caverns, Adullam ! thy cave.  
The Lord was my refuge ; and twice in the strife,  
When Saul lay before me, twice spared I his life.  
His spear, as he slumbered, I took, and the skirt  
Cut sheer from his garment, yet left him unhurt !  
The anointed of Israel I spared, and the Lord  
Not now will his servant give o’er to the sword.

“ Again forced to wander, yet know I to reign,  
Nor time his sage lessons hath taught me in vain.

This right hand its cunning, this head holds its skill,  
And folly, though frantic, must stoop and lie still.  
The many are fickle, their leaders untrue ;  
But wisdom can win them, and valor subdue.  
One only is with them whose counsels I fear,  
One wise man, and valiant, if rash men would hear.  
Ahithophel's counsel, O Lord ! may it seem,  
In eyes of the faithless, a vain babblers' dream !  
Shrewd Hushai, sent by me, is there to betray  
The false ones to ruin, with ease led astray."

Meantime, in Mount Zion, Ahithophel gave  
To Absalom counsel deep, artful, and brave.  
"That all men may know thee thy father's fixed foe,  
Go, enter his harem ; strike there thy first blow.  
Abhorred of thy father, thy friends may rely  
Henceforth on thy purpose, to reign or to die.  
That done, send forth quickly, — nay, send me to-night,  
With all our choice warriors, our tried men of might.  
Thy father, deserted, lurks now on yon plain,  
And, be our march sudden, to-night is he ta'en.  
To-night we surprise him, weak-handed, alone ;  
And, David once taken, safe, prince ! is thy throne.  
Give time, he will rally, well know'st thou his skill,  
And brave men will join him from valley and hill."

“Nay, brave men are with him,” said Hushai, “to-night,

Elkanah, and Shammah, and Ittai's might ;  
Benaiah, Elhanan to flight will not turn,  
Nor bold Jashobeam, nor Ezer the stern.  
Though light as the roebuck, and swift for the prey,  
Ne'er turn they, in battle, from danger away.  
Thy brood, Zeruah ! fell tigers, are there ;  
And he, the old lion, lies grim in his lair !  
The bear, of her whelps robbed, chafed never like these,  
Nor eagle rushed surer on lambkin to seize.  
All Israel well knoweth thy father of old,  
A mighty man is he, and wary as bold.  
Surprise him ? Thou canst not ; the king in some glen,  
By oak or by fountain, rests far from his men.  
Who knows not his hidings, — how Saul, on his track  
Oft lighting, yet baffled, dishonored, came back.  
Our purpose thus failing, the foe will deride  
Our fruitless adventure, and crowds quit our side.  
From Dan to Beersheba, the tribes are with thee ;  
Then call them, in numbers like sands by the sea.  
The tribes, at thy bidding, will come in their might,  
Their young monarch leading his hosts to the fight ;  
So strong, should some city the fugitive gain,  
With ropes to the river we 'll drag it amain ;

With ropes to the river, nor leave one to tell  
Who fought for the tyrant, or with him who fell.  
Like dew at the dawning, thy foes, on that day,  
Will melt from thy presence, young hero ! away."

Such counsel gave Hushai ; if fraudulent and hollow,  
Yet fair seemed the purpose, and easy to follow.  
Ahithophel's wisdom bore sway with the grave,  
Like Urim and Thummim, the answers he gave.  
But Absalom slighted his warnings, and turned  
To young men for guidance, and wiser men spurned.  
"What heed I their clamor, though warriors may rail,  
Or old men, grown childish, wax wroth when they fail.  
'T is live and be happy ! we reign but to prove,  
'Midst warm hearts that love us, the pleasures of love."  
Ay, Absalom loveth ; his youth, in the flame  
Of passion, burns madly, regardless of fame ;  
Of duty regardless, and deaf to the call  
Of danger, that warns him to break from the thrall.

In Zion, unguarded, when treason first rose,  
Left David his harem, a prey to his foes.  
The pride of the harem, young Zilpah, is there,  
The fairest of maidens, and gentle as fair ;  
To David affianced, but left, when the might  
Of faction unbridled put David to flight.

In vales of Belhazor, the virgin had won,  
Unknown of the father, the heart of the son.  
As mountain-goat graceful, and light as the hind,  
That bounds through the valleys more fleet than the wind,  
'Mid sheepfolds, at shearings, the glance of her eyes  
Had won the gay rover, unweeting her prize.  
And, ravished with beauty, would Absalom then  
Have cropped, in its blooming, that bud of the glen.  
But beauty is garnered for kings in their pride :  
The shepherd-king seeketh 'mid sheepcots a bride ;  
And Zilpah, unrivalled in form as in face,  
Is culled, as beseemeth, the monarch to grace.  
And hence, in the harem of David, again  
The prince meeteth Zilpah, loved now not in vain.  
What wonder he seeketh the maid sought before ?  
What marvel the maiden the prince should adore ?  
On whom should the tender rest save on the bold ?  
Whose arms but the valiant's the lovely enfold ?  
And far might ye wander, nor meet yet a pair  
Such manly grace blending with sweetness so rare.

Like rose-bud of Sharon is David's young queen ;  
Like roe on the mountains is Absalom seen.  
As gazelle, 'mid lilies, that feeds in the grove,  
So feedeth, unsated, the prince on her love ;

He feedeth unsated on charms of the fair,  
Love-fettered, unconscious that danger is there.  
Of danger unconscious, doth Zilpah retain  
The young prince, enamoured, nay, proud of his chain.  
And, gentle as lofty, well knows he to grace,  
With love's soft endearments, the pride of his place.  
How gaily he sporteth ! how light is the play  
Of banded words mingled with love's lively lay !  
The lay of her beauty ; while Zilpah, to hide  
The flush of fond pleasure, the throb of her pride,  
With rich-jewelled fingers, so slender and fair,  
Is busy 'mid ringlets of Absalom's hair.  
Trained by her, those ringlets in wanton wreaths wave,  
To crown with wild beauty the brows of the brave.

Yet brighter her beauty, whose dark tresses twine,  
Like grapes, in rich clusters, 'mid boughs of the vine.  
Half hid in dark tresses, and whiter than snow,  
Her bosom heaves fondly, in passion's warm glow,  
The snow-flake of Carmel less pure than the white  
Of Zilpah's soft bosom, — less dazzling the sight.  
Her eyes, like the turtle's, where love hath its birth,  
Now languish in fondness, now sparkle in mirth.  
The long, silken lashes, that soften their fire,  
Shade gently, yet quench not, the flames of desire.

O, gaze not so fondly, rash prince ! on those eyes,  
Lest wisdom, lest valor, lest fame thou despise.  
The world, with its glories, fades dim on thy sight,  
Eclipsed 'mid the splendors of Zilpah to-night ;  
To-night, when thy folly, fond lover ! delayed  
The blow, that, struck quickly, thy fortunes had made.

Like threads of rich scarlet her lips ; and between,  
Like sheep from the washing, her white teeth are seen ;  
And warm are her kisses as wine, when the cup  
Is spiced for the banquet, that monarchs may sup ;  
As wine, that so softly the senses can steep,  
Its flavor the dreamer tastes e'en in his sleep !  
Her lip, like the honey, its sweetness distils ;  
And soft is her sighing, as spring on the hills ;  
As spring, when the spices flow forth on the air,  
The myrrh, dropping odors, the rose, blooming fair.  
With myrrh and frankincense, and fragrant with wine,  
'Mid groves of acacia, the lovers recline ;  
Through groves of acacia and myrtle they rove,  
'Mid murmur of fountains, and birds singing love.  
The valiant are round them, the sword on each thigh,  
The valiant of Israel, should danger be nigh.  
For safety, for splendor, the gallant, the gay,  
The lovely, the youthful, throng thick their array.

In grove, hall, and banquet still leads he the throng ;  
 And loud is their laughter, and merry their song !

Thus rapt in soft pleasure, though war-chiefs may  
 chide,

Or sage leaders warn him, they chafe but his pride.

“ Who prates here of danger ? The coward may fly :

Or say, is it treason ? The traitor shall die.

What though, in the distance, their warriors may boast

Their valor, yet shun they in battle our host.

Then talk not of danger ; nor mix with the flow

Of pleasure, my Zilpah ! one thought of the foe.

Naught heed I dark bodings ; so thou but prove true,

I care not for conquest, nor glory pursue.

Fame, fortune, I scorn them, so love but remain,

Thy sheep-crook my sceptre, thine arms my domain !

Wake, love ! from thy languor, my fair ! come away ;

The south wind blows softly, the flowers open gay.

Come, love ! to the gardens, where tender vines shoot,

Where buds the pomegranate, the fig beareth fruit.

The long rains are over, the winter is past,

And spring spreads his banner above us at last ;

Nay, love is the banner above us unrolled,

And pleasure, my Zilpah ! flows forth from each fold.”



An army with banners less fatal had been,  
Weak prince ! to thy fortunes, than David's young queen.  
Not Hushai's shrewd counsel serves David, the while,  
Like Zilpah, who governs the prince with a smile ;  
The smile of the lovely, her frown or her tear,  
Turns wisdom to folly, and valor to fear.  
Love, music, and feasting their hours steal away,  
Whilst numbers fall from them to David each day.  
The storm-cloud is breaking o'er David that passed ;  
And wisdom, though slowly, wins surely at last.  
Ahithophel saw it, and, stung with disdain  
At wise counsels slighted, and life staked in vain,  
The sage to his dwelling went down in despair,  
His house set in order, and slew himself there.

Meantime, spears are brandished in many a hand,  
And sharp swords, unsheathing, gleam wide o'er the  
land ;  
Ay, sharp swords must carve out their path through the  
field,  
And stout spears ring smartly on helmet and shield.  
From helm and habergeon, from coats of mail, glance  
The sunbeams, reflected from spear-point and lance.  
The hosts are assembled ; the king in his might ;  
The prince, Zilpah aiding, is arming for fight.

He armeth 'mid thousands, who throng to his side,  
 For glory, for vengeance, for power, or for pride ;  
 For prince, or for country, for freedom, for sway,  
 For spoil 'mid the fallen, for blood in the fray.  
 "Go, warrior!" cries Zilpah ; "thy glory, more dear  
 To me e'en than love, hath o'er mastered my fear.  
 Love arms thee for battle, love weaveth, e'en now,  
 Her wreath for the victor, her crown for thy brow !  
 Then go ! but should Joab my hero subdue,  
 Death parts not the loving ; thy Zilpah is true.  
 True love faileth never, though fortune may frown ;  
 Fierce floods cannot quench it, nor dark billows drown.  
 O, ne'er could I linger, my warrior away ;  
 One death then unite us, — one triumph, to-day !"

"Nay, doubt not the triumph ; I go, love ! to sweep  
 From earth the grim phantom, that troubles thy sleep.  
 No more, e'en in slumber, the shadow shall gleam  
 Of Joab before thee, to darken thy dream."

Then on to the battle ; the war-cry is given ;  
 'T is "God and King David ! and woe to the craven !"   
 From Absalom's squadrons, as loudly, doth ring,  
 "For Freedom, our birthright ! and live our young king !"   
 "Their old king will meet them !" cries David ; but "No !"   
 Each true bosom answers, "The king shall not go ;

Though thousands are scattered in flight on the plain,  
 We heed not their slaughter, so thou but remain?  
 Look, then, from the ramparts, O king! on the fight,  
 And succour, if need be, thy friends in their flight."

Then forth from the city, with loud buzz and hum,  
 Like bees, in their swarming, unnumbered they come;  
 Like wild bees, from caverns round Carmel's proud  
 height,

They swarm in their fury, and rush to the fight,  
 The king to the leaders cries,—"Gently, I pray,  
 For my sake, deal gently, nor Absalom slay;  
 For my sake, chiefs! spare him, if met in the strife,  
 The young man deluded, O, spare ye his life!"  
 He speaks, but his caution is uttered in vain,  
 Where hot hosts are hastening to join on the plain.  
 'Mid trumpets, loud braying, their louder shout rose  
 For "God and King David, and death to his foes!"  
 The voice of the leader, stout Joab, along  
 Their ranks, soundeth cheerly,—“Be valiant! be strong!  
 The Lord, our God, goeth before us to fight,  
 Jehovah, that shieldeth in battle the right.  
 The Lord will not prosper the false ones, who bring  
 The son 'gainst his father, — his father and king.  
 The forefront of battle becometh the brave;  
 'T is valor that saveth, when flight cannot save;

Yet fearful, faint-hearted, if one man be here  
Who quails, when the trumpet rings loud in his ear,  
We ask not his aid ; let the weak one depart ;  
If cold, or unfaithful, or fearful of heart,  
We would not charge with him, whose fears might infest,  
With coward relentings, his comrade's bold breast !  
But brave men love danger, and just men wax strong  
At sight of the faithless, with sense of the wrong.  
Then play your parts boldly, like men, in the fray,  
For Judah, for David, for Joab, to-day !”

In valor unrivalled, as skilful to guide,  
'Mid tumult of battle, the swift-turning tide,  
Where raged the war fiercest, hath Joab made good,  
'Gainst Amasa's onset, his hold in the wood.  
Confiding in numbers, on rushing they came ;  
He meets them, as meeteth the water the flame :  
As water, down falling, that quenches the fire,  
He falls, and their bravest before him expire.  
Outnumbered, yet turneth not Joab to flight ;  
Surrounded, yet fearless, and calm in his might !  
What careth the lion, when rending his prey,  
For shepherds, whose shoutings would scare him away ?  
His growl is but fiercer, his gorging more deep ;  
Nor heedeth the lion the bleat of the sheep.

The lion is monarch of beasts from his den ;  
So ruleth in battle stern Joab o'er men.  
They move, at his bidding, they shrink from his blow,  
As prompt to the rescue, as fierce on the foe.  
Ten youth, of the bravest, on Joab still wait,  
For service, for safety, for pride, and for state.  
Where'er his ranks waver, the warrior is seen  
To cheer with loud rally ; and, rushing between,  
To bear back, disordered, his foes, and again  
Turn onset to slaughter and flight o'er the plain.

Chief-Captain is Joab ; and, next him in sway,  
Ittai, the Gittite, is chief in the fray ;  
Ittai, the exile, in death or in life,  
To David still faithful, is first in the strife.  
As husbandman cradles the fast-falling grain,  
So reaps he the harvest of death on the plain.  
Firm faith, like the pillar of fire, that of old  
Our fathers led onward, guides ever the bold ;  
Guides still the true-hearted ; nor faileth to yield,  
In darkness, in danger, its light o'er the field.  
What though he no portion in Jacob may claim,  
Not less in our annals abideth his name ;  
Not less, 'mid the mighty, in front of the fight,  
Ittai, the Gittite, guards David his right.

To prompt Abishai doth David confide,  
As third in the battle, his warriors to guide.  
The prompt Abishai the foe's deep array  
Has pierced, and like stubble their ranks swept away ;  
Like stubble in harvest, when fires o'er the land  
Spread wide, and in ruins the blackened heaths stand.  
The terror of Moab, Benaiah, is here,  
Thy sword, Eleazar ! and Adino's spear.  
As hammer that breaketh the rock at each blow,  
So brake they in fragments the face of the foe ;  
The brazen-faced battle is broke, by their might,  
Habergeon, spear, helmet, sword, splintered in fight.  
Like lightning the flash of their armor, the roar  
Of adverse ranks mingles like waves on the shore.  
The mighty are mingled, like waves on each side ;  
And red with their slaughter the valleys are dyed.  
Thine ancient oaks, Ephraim ! are watered to-day  
With blood of the valiant, that fall in the fray.  
Like mast, when the forest is shaken amain,  
Or leaves in the autumn, they cover the plain.  
Like strong bulls of Bashan, they rush in their wrath,  
Where death-blows are falling, like hail, on their path ;  
Like hail in the tempest, when God from the cloud,  
'Mid lightnings far flashing, his voice utters loud ;  
'Mid hailstones incessant his arrows are cast ;  
Earth trembles, and ocean heaves high in the blast.

As erst, in the revel, e'en so, in the fray,  
Is Absalom foremost in leading, to-day.  
The king's son is foremost, seen, followed of all,  
And many the warriors around him that fall.  
Well knows he that conquest, or death at their hand,  
Becomes the bold rebel, who strikes for command.  
In manly arts nurtured, he shrinks not from pain,  
Nor turns he from danger, so glory he gain,  
"If pleasure delight us, not less our delight  
Is skill in bold leading, and valor in fight.  
Then where is the babbler, that tainted our name,  
As a harem-prince, heedless of duty and fame?  
If bolder thy bearing, in face of the foe,  
Come, boaster! and lead us where brave men should go!"  
So saying, he darted, like hawk on his way,  
Or eagle, that stoopeth, broad-winged, on his prey;  
Like eagle, down-darting on doves, that in vain  
Fly from him, so sweeps he in pride o'er the plain.

For beauty is no one, in Israel, like him,  
So noble in aspect, so manly in limb.  
The chief among thousands no rival finds there,  
As Lebanon lofty, than Carmel more fair.  
The gold of his corselet, the brass of his shield,  
The gems on his girdle, flash light o'er the field.

In armor resplendent, he towers in the fight,  
As proud of his beauty, as strong in his might.  
But chiefly he prides him, and great is his care,  
To nourish, luxuriant, his long, flowing hair.  
Long, glossy, redundant, his golden locks wave,  
Where'er the fight maddens, the guide of the brave ;  
Like spread banner streaming afar in the fray,  
'Mid chiefs that press round him, to guard or to slay.  
The brunt of the battle on Absalom bent,  
Around him spears shiver, and banners are rent ;  
Spears shiver ; and banners, rent, dabbled with gore,  
Are pressed by the warriors they waved o'er before.

Long toiled he, undaunted, where war-chiefs lie slain,  
'Mid meaner, that cumber with carnage the plain.  
But vain is his valor ; his bravest must yield,  
Cleft down in fierce combat, or swept from the field.  
O'erwearied, outnumbered, no longer he strives ;  
But swift through the forest his panting mule drives.  
The royal mule rode he ; the mule that, in pride,  
Bore David oft victor, did Absalom ride.  
'T was then that the branches caught hold of his hair ;  
The scared beast passed onward ; and he, in the air,  
Hangs tangled, and netted, and bound in the oak,  
Thrust in 'mid thick branches, and stunned by the stroke.



Its huge arms outspreading have seized on the chief,  
And vain, 'mid his struggles, his cries for relief.

No hostile arm smites him ; for all are aware  
How David had charged them the young man to spare.  
They pass him, pursuing, till Joab his plight  
Is told, where, unwearied, he toils in the fight.  
“ And left you the rebel alive in the tree ?  
Why brought you not rather his head here to me ?  
A girdle, rich-studded, with jewels o'erlaid,  
And silver, ten shekels, thy service had paid.  
But hence ! nor delay me ; 't were folly, as rare  
As thine, should he 'scape me, thus caught in the snare.”

So saying, he bounded, like pard, on his way,  
Or tiger, that springeth ungorge on his prey ;  
Swift-footed as valiant, unmatched in the race,  
Like roebuck, that leaveth behind him the chase ;  
That leaveth the hounds and the hunter behind,  
Borne swift as the tempest, on wings of the wind.  
Swift-winged as the tempest, the fleet-footed flies,  
Its speed in his motion, its flash in his eyes !  
The host shrank before him, as onward he came,  
Like red levin, falling 'mid loud crash and flame !

“Spare, spare me, O Joab ! I shrink not through fear ;  
But life, to the daring and youthful, is dear.  
The cup of life’s pleasures not yet have I drained,  
Not yet borne its burdens, its honors attained ;  
Its pleasures, how tempting ! its honors are high ;  
Its duties, — neglected, — not yet would I die.  
An exile, thy kindness restored me before ;  
In kindness, O, send me to Geshur once more.  
A king’s son, my ransom let Joab but name,  
And David will pay it, whate’er be thy claim.”  
“Bold rebel ! be manly, nor waste so thy breath ;  
The prize sought was empire, the forfeit is death.  
Then pay it, nor murmur ; thy father, as free,  
Hadst thou been the victor, had paid it to thee ! ”  
Nor paused he ; but aiming, unerring, his dart,  
Sprang high as he thrust it, driven home to the heart.

Then blew he the trumpet ; for, “ Absalom slain,  
No more may ye follow the foe o’er the plain ;  
Spare Israel, that fleeth ; nor seek now to shed  
The blood of thy brother, the arch-traitor dead.”  
Then deep in the forest the body they laid,  
And heaped the stones o’er him, beneath the oak shade.  
Himself, in Valshaveh, ambitious of fame,  
Years past, had a pillar upreared to his name.

E'en yet, on the column, that name may ye trace,  
And still is the valley called ABSALOM'S PLACE.  
"No son have I," said he, "my honors to keep ;  
This pillar shall guard them, and point where I sleep."  
Ah ! blind to the future ! the rash one, as well,  
Sleeps now, in the forest, e'en there where he fell ;  
As well in the forest his lone couch is made,  
As kings', in caves chambered, in royal robes laid ;  
The kings of the nations, in splendor that lie,  
Each chief in his chamber, his slaves sleeping by ;  
Embalmed with rich spices and unguents, that give  
To death the grim semblance of features that live.

What though no vain splendors, no long train is here,  
No hollow hearts, governed by hope or by fear ;  
Yet one, 'mid the silence, — his Zilpah, — shall shed,  
While others deny him, her tears o'er his head ;  
Shall weep ere the dawning, and watch, when the sun  
Sinks low on her sorrow, his long circuit run ;  
Shall watch, with fond feeling, his grave, night and day,  
To scare the hyena and wolf from their prey ;  
Till clods of the valley are sweet on his breast,  
And spring-birds sing gaily their loves o'er his rest ;  
Sing gaily, as erst in, Belhazor ! thy grove,  
The prince sang to Zilpah the lay of his love, —

The lay of his love, ere the maiden had known  
The hopes of ambition, the cares of a throne !

Meantime, in the city, the king, on the height,  
Looks forth from the ramparts, and follows the fight.  
Well skilled in its changes, his eye follows far,  
Where charging hosts mingle, the fortunes of war ;  
Roused now by the shouting, in triumph elate,  
Now sad, as he ponders on Absalom's fate.  
But lo ! in the distance, a scout runneth fast ;  
'T is Cushi that cometh, with tidings, at last.  
" Good tidings ! " cries Cushi ; " the sun, that arose  
So bright o'er our banners, sets dark on thy foes."  
" But Absalom, Cushi ! where is he ? O, where  
The young man deluded ? Who is it would dare  
To shred but one ringlet, when I bade him spare ?  
To all men, but chiefly to Joab, I gave  
Strict charge and entreaty the young prince to save."  
" To Joab ! " cries Cushi, " to Joab ! whose spear  
Thy foe spareth never, through ruth, or through fear !  
No kinder wish for thee can Cushi avow  
Than this, that thy foes be as Absalom now."

He spake, and stood silent ; the king knew his fate,  
And wept, as his chamber he sought in the gate.

"O Absalom!" cries he, "my son! O my son!  
 Would God I had died, ere the rash deed was done;  
 Would God that thy father for thee could have died,  
 My loved one! my lost one! my darling! my pride!"  
 And still from the chamber, as loud wailings run,  
 The burden is ever, — "My son! O my son!"  
 The voices of women come mixed with the sound,  
 Their rent robes dust-covered, their seat on the ground;  
 In sackcloth and ashes, and rending their hair,  
 Their gashed limbs they mangle, their bosoms they bare;  
 While loud in his anguish, or silent in tears,  
 'Mid wailing of mourners, the monarch appears;  
 Impatient now driven, a wave, to and fro;  
 Prone now on the pavement, convulsive in woe.

The tidings spread quickly, — "The king weepeth sore,  
 For Absalom weepeth, and will not give o'er."  
 The shouts of loud triumph are turned to dismay,  
 As each to his dwelling steals silent away;  
 Each steals to his dwelling, as men from the fight  
 Slink silent, defeated, ashamed, out of sight.  
 Not so with stern Joab; in anger he came,  
 That hard heart of slaughter no sorrow could tame.  
 Through crowds of awed mourners the rude chieftain  
     broke,  
 And fierce was his gesture, as loudly he spoke.

“Ho! rouse thee, King David! thy servant hath slain  
The fratricide rebel, on yon bloody plain.  
The gangrene, that festered the state, found its cure,  
O king! on this weapon, sharp, sudden, and sure.  
Ho! rouse thee, King David! what! cover thy head,  
'Midst women and eunuchs, to weep o'er the dead!  
O, shame on thee, monarch! thou rather, to-day,  
Hadst seen in the battle our hosts swept away;  
The arch-rebel coming, thine own life to take;  
And we, thy friends, slaughtered, who fought for thy  
sake.

Now, as the Lord liveth, King David! I swear,  
If shrinking thus meanly thou yield'st to despair,  
All true hearts shall leave thee, this night, to thy fate,  
And then may'st thou envy e'en Absalom's state.”  
So spake he, and brandished, as late in the strife,  
The spear that reeked hotly with Absalom's life.  
“Come forth to thy people! nor shame, with weak moan,  
The warriors whose valor, e'en now, saved thy throne.  
Come quickly; nor leave them in doubt if to fling,  
With scorn, from the kingdom, their weak-hearted  
king!”

The monarch, in anger, roused e'en 'mid his grief,  
Eyed sadly, yet sternly, the blood-covered chief.  
“My servant! say, rather, the tyrant, who braves  
King, priest, prince, and elder, and rules o'er us slaves.

Anointed king was I, o'er Israel to reign,  
Anointed, but Joab that choice maketh vain.  
In vain 'gainst his mandate is David's decree ;  
Thy son is too hard, Zeruiah ! for me.  
The Lord God requite him this death of my son,  
His many foul murders, the power he has won,  
His pride, his ambition, remorseless as high, —  
A bloody death shall he, the bloody man, die.  
But me, what avails it to mourn o'er the slain ?  
Thy son, O Maachah ! returns not again.  
The path, he has travelled, he will not retrace ;  
'T is we that must follow the child to his place.  
These eyes, that oft wept him, shall weep him no more,  
Since tears could not stay him, nor fasting restore."

So saying, he shook off the dust from his head,  
Anointed and clothed him, drank wine, and ate bread ;  
Then coming forth cheerful, while friends round him  
wait,  
He bowed to their greeting, and sat in the gate.  
His people came round him glad homage to pay ;  
He soothed them, and blessed them, and sent them away.  
The heart of all Israel was bowed to his power,  
And David, unquestioned, reigned king from that hour.  
But time speedeth ever ; the hours will not bide  
For kings in their sorrow, or chiefs in their pride ;

And David no longer is followed, or feared ;  
Saint, warrior, bard, prophet, loved, honored, revered,  
The sage king is gathered, at length, to his rest,  
Where wrongs cannot reach him, nor treasons molest.

Meantime, to the altar for safety, in vain,  
An old man betakes him, e'en there to be slain.  
'T is Joab ; for David his dying charge gave,  
That hoar head in blood to bring down to the grave.  
" Well know'st thou what Joab did to me ; the pride,  
The scorn of his bearing, when Absalom died ;  
The scorn of his bearing, the pride of the chief,  
That galled with rude insult, and menaced my grief.  
Requite thou his baseness. The blood of war, shed  
In peace by him falsely, return on his head ;  
His murder of Abner, lamented in vain ;  
His wild shout of triumph o'er Amasa slain ;  
Slain both 'midst the tender of friendship, that darts,  
With smiles of endearment, the sword to their hearts.  
Yet further, bethink thee, who now claims the throne,  
Thy brother, thine elder ; nor stands he alone ;  
The high-priest is with him ; and Israel, intent  
On change, of his favor to thee may repent.  
Unsafe were thy sitting, my son ! should the might  
Of Joab join with them, against thee, in fight.



Prevent it: — nor spare thou Shimei, who came,  
 When sorest my sorrow, his king to defame ;  
 With bitter reviling he came, and he cast  
 Dust at me, and stones from the hill, as I passed.  
 Repay him ; thy wisdom will teach thee the way  
 On heads of the wicked their sins to repay.  
 Their blood be upon them ! on thee be the peace  
 Of God, when the wicked from troubling shall cease.”

Such counsel gave David ; and now, at the gate,  
 The avenger calls Joab, nor longer will wait.  
 “Come forth !” said Benaiah. The warrior’s reply  
 Is, — “Come to me, rather ; e’en here will I die ;  
 E’en here by the altar ; lo, Lord ! on thy shrine,  
 With meaner blood mingled, here offer I mine,  
 An old man’s last service. The sword, in the fray,  
 For me had no terrors, nor hath it to-day.  
 ’T was sport oft in battle to wield it, beset  
 By foes of King David, nor shun I it yet.  
 But speak ye of Abner and Amasa slain,  
 And deem that their slaughter on me bringeth stain ?  
 The one slew my brother ; and both, with bold hand,  
 Would wrench from wronged Joab his right of com-  
 mand ;  
 Ay, right ; ’t was not favor. ‘Chief-Captain is he,  
 Who winneth,’ said David, ‘proud Jebus for me ;

The foremost, who mounteth yon rampart, may boast, !  
 Henceforth, in our kingdom, command o'er the host.'  
 He spake ; and my daring won for me that power ;  
 I won it, and wore it as mine, from that hour.  
 If David his sceptre by right held divine,  
 Not less the chief's truncheon, so purchased, was mine.  
 Then woe to their rashness, who sought, from that day,  
 To rend from the lion his share of the prey !  
 What matter how guarded ? by frown or by smile,  
 By sword in the battle, in council by guile ?  
 Indifferent the weapon, so Joab o'erthrow,  
 By strength or by cunning, or both joined, his foe !

" But why talk of leading, as erst, in the field ?  
 Age tames e'en the mighty ; to age, then, I yield.  
 The old king is parted ; and Joab would fain,  
 Since new lords rule o'er us, join David again.  
 To Sheol if David calls Joab, for aid  
 'Gainst hosts of the mighty, be David obeyed.  
 The kings of the heathen, that, erst in the fight  
 Fled from us, will know us, and yield to our might.  
 Then come ! thine old leader, Benaiah ! is here,  
 Though old and deserted, a stranger to fear."  
 Nor shrank he ; but, hard by the dark altar-stone,  
 Fell fearless, nor uttered entreaty or groan.

Thus perished stern Joab ; through life uncontrolled,  
Unsparring, remorseless, deceitful as bold.  
Yet served he King David, long years, served him well,  
And gray-headed warriors shed tears when he fell ;  
Shed tears, while they numbered his mighty deeds done,  
The kings that he conquered, the spoils that he won.  
Then down to the desert, his home, by the shore  
Of Siddim's salt valley, the body they bore.  
The Dead Sea reëchoed the wail of the brave,  
And poured, in hoarse murmur, its dirge round his  
grave.

Untillable, barren, the spot that he chose,  
In life for lone refuge, in death for repose.  
No gay bird there wingeth his flight in the air,  
No fish in the waters, no beast harbours there.  
The waves bear no burden of life evermore,  
No bark on the billows, no tent by the shore ;  
But fumes of bitumen and naphtha exhale,  
Uppurging from fountains whose streams never fail.  
With salt and with sulphur impregnate, the soil  
No harvest e'er yieldeth, to skill or to toil ;  
To man yields no harvest, no fruit, 'mid the waste,  
Save the Dead Sea's false apples, that mock still the  
taste.

The sins of Gomorrah lie whelmed on that plain,  
The dark sins of Sodom, beneath the salt main !  
The Dead Sea retaineth no stain of that strife,  
As calm, in stern silence, as fatal to life ;  
And well by its waters the warrior may sleep,  
Whose wrath was as deadly and dark as the deep ;  
Deep, deadly his wrath, as the fires that, of yore,  
Rained ruin on Sodom, by Siddim's lone shore.

## NOTES.

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### *The river of Kishon.* p. 16.

It is supposed that the defeat of Sisera was occasioned, in part, by a storm, which arose during the action; and that his army was swept away by the sudden overflow of the Kishon, a mountain stream, on whose banks the battle was fought. If so, it was not for the poet to relate an incident of this kind in the cold language of the annalist. Not so does Homer describe the overflow of the Scamander; nor does the Hebrew prophetess so relate that "they fought from heaven."

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### *But blest above women be Jael.* p. 17.

The killing of Sisera by Jael, while asleep in her tent, is related in the book of Judges, without any mark of either censure or approbation. From Deborah, the same impartiality, or indifference, was not to be expected. She pronounces Jael blessed, for an act on which the reader is very likely to utter his malediction. Her tone of feeling is, of course, preserved in this poem.

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### *His war-steeds.* p. 17.

The Jews, whose kings were forbidden "to multiply horses to themselves," seem to have regarded the war-steed with almost as much terror as the Mexicans did, when they first saw him under Cortes, and gave to their conqueror, so mount

ed, the name of Gatzopin, the man-beast. Hebrew poetry, from Job to Zechariah, abounds in the most animated descriptions of the war-horse, as an object of mingled terror and admiration.

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THE SONG OF THE BOW. p. 26.

The title of *Kasheth*, or the *Bow*, given by the Jews to the lament over Saul and Jonathan, is indicated in 2 Samuel i. 18, though our translators give the passage a different version. It may have been so called from the fact that Saul was "sore wounded of the archers." Nor could David have forgotten the bow of Jonathan, which gave the signal for the meeting of the two friends at "the stone Ezel."

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*The fly-god of Ekron.* p. 26.

The Hebrew word for Beelzebub means, "The lord of flies." That he was the god of Ekron appears from 2 Kings, i. 2.

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*Go, enter his harem.* p. 36.

The wives of conquered princes were the property of the conqueror; and in possessing them he appeared to have acquired a right to the kingdom. Clarke's Commentary, II. 251. He refers in this connection to Herodotus, who informs us, Lib. III., c. 68, that Smerdis, having seized upon the Persian throne, after the death of Cambyses, espoused all the wives of his predecessor.

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*With ropes to the river we 'll drag it amain.* p. 37.

This, which is copied from the text, is one of the many Oriental hyperboles with which the Old Testament abounds. Another, not much unlike it, is that wherein the king of Syria, besieging Ahab in Samaria, "sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria

shall suffice, for handfuls, for all the people that follow me!"  
1 Kings xx. 10.

---

*Like Urim and Thummim.* p. 38.

The answer by Urim and Thummim was an oracular response, given by the high-priest, clothed with the breastplate, on which were the stones of the twelve tribes. It was regarded as the immediate answer of Jehovah to the prayers of his people.

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*Like roe on the mountains.* p. 39.

The roe of the common version (Canticles ii. 9, &c.) is the gazelle of Noyes and other translators.

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*Yet fearful, faint-hearted, if one man be here.* p. 46.

Those who may think this borrowed from Shakspeare, Henry V., Act 4, Scene 3, are referred to Deuteronomy xx. 1-8, for the Jewish law on this subject. The offer which it contains, of a general furlough on the eve of every battle, might, in some cases, have been not a little inconvenient. At other times, it would have served as a fresh incentive to more vigorous exertion.

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*Absalom's Place.* p. 53.

Robinson supposes (Biblical Researches, I. 519-522), that the tomb now shown as "the pillar, in the king's dale, which Absalom reared up for himself," must have been built as late as the time of the Herods, or perhaps of Adrian. "The Grecian doorway and Corinthian cornice," noticed by Lamar-tine, as forming a part of the monument, were, of course, unknown in Judea in the days of David.

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*Would wrench from wronged Joab his right of command.* p. 59.

1 Chronicles xi. 4-6. I have endeavoured to blend, with the just abhorrence which the darker deeds of this stern war-

rior inspire, some portion of that sympathy with his rugged virtues, without which he could not be fairly estimated, or even understood. Along with that audacious mixture of fraud and violence, by which Joab was distinguished, "the captain of the hosts of Israel" possessed qualities which have won, in all ages, the applause of nations, — fidelity to his master, skill and courage in the field, decision of character, and a capacity for command, which no emergence found unequal to its demands. These, more than the nobler virtues of benevolence and humanity, and the humbler charities of life, have, at all times, been admired by the wise, and submitted to by the mass of mankind.

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*The lion.* p. 60.

Some critic, curious in small matters, has been at the pains to count the number of times that the lion makes his appearance in the Iliad; and has found it to exceed fifty, in seventeen out of the twenty-four books. The lion is not less a favorite with the Hebrew bards. Cruden refers, in his Concordance, to more than a hundred passages of Scripture in which the lion is introduced, most of them in the poets.

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*Untillable, barren, the spot that he chose.* p. 61.

Though Robinson does not confirm all the marvels of the early travellers, respecting the Dead Sea, or, as it is called in Scripture, the Salt Sea, the scene along its shores is, even by his account, sufficiently dreary. Its waters are most intensely and intolerably salt and bitter. No sign of life, animal or vegetable, appears within the waters. Sulphur and bitumen float on the surface, and are found on the shores. These, with its mountain of salt, its warm fountains and sulphur springs, its lumps of nitre and pumice-stones, all testify to the volcanic nature of the region around the Dead Sea. *Biblical Researches*, II. 313–326.



THE following poem, first published in the Christian Examiner for May, 1845, was written before the other poems; and is here offered by way of comparison with the one in the text on the same subject. It differs from the other pieces in this volume in not being in the same measure, and in being a translation (though neither close nor exact) of the song of David, without additions from other parts of Scripture.

THE LAMENT OF DAVID OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.

How are the mighty fallen ! thy boast,  
Thy beauty, Israel ! fallen in fight ;  
The king, the warrior, 'mid their host,  
Gilboa ! slain upon thy height.

Tell not in Gath our loss, our shame  
In streets of Aschelon ; lest they,  
The daughters of our foes, proclaim  
Their triumph, and our sore dismay.

Gilboa ! ne'er upon thy field  
May dews descend ; nor showers again  
Thy fruits revive ; since there his shield  
Th' anointed lost, the brave was slain.

Their bow of strength, their sword of might,  
Turned never from the strife away ;  
With fat of foes, in many a fight,  
That sword, that bow, had gorged its prey.

More swift than eagles sweeping by,  
Than lions stronger in their pride,  
Their lives were loving, and they lie  
In death united, side by side.

Daughters of Israel ! weep for Saul,  
For Saul, who made your pride his care ;

With purple clothed, and scarlet pall,  
And wreathed with gems and gold your hair.

Ah ! pleasant hast thou been to me,  
My friend ! my brother ! loved in vain,  
Untimely lost ; this breast, for thee,  
Bleeds now, as thine on yonder plain.

Gentle as brave, to me thy heart  
Was soft as woman's ; woman ne'er  
Showed love like thine, devoid of art,  
From envy free, from doubt, from fear.

How fallen the mighty ! sire and son  
In death down cloven, kingly pride,  
And manly beauty, hearts that won  
All swords to combat by their side.

THE END.



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