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King David's
Earth-Born Son



KING DAVID'S EARTH-BORN SON

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A BIOGRAPHY OF SOLOMON

BY

ERNST P. H. PFATTEICHER

19

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THIS BOOKLET IS INSCRIBED
TO
THE REV. ANDREW S. FICHTHORN
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMMUNION
PHILADELPHIA

The Storm King's Sway.

Lywarch : "See yonder leaf driven by the wind ; woe for him who has
the like lot ! it is old tho born within the year.

Restless, driven hither, thither,
By the wind's tempestuous sway,
Feeble resignation marking
Thy discordant, waning day—

Born upon yon stately oak-tree
Standing boldly bald and sere,
Yet begetting with each spring-tide
Leaves which pass within the year.

Crumpled leaf I do bewail thee,
Mourn thy sadly solemn lot,
Born a giant race to shelter,
Thou didst fall to die and rot.

Sad the life that learns thy precepts,
By the storm-king's fury rent,
Tossed about life's maze a shadow,
Aged ere the day is spent.

FORE - WORD

The arrangement of this biography is dramatic, its style is epic. As the drama seeks to portray life, its wavelike rise and fall is peculiarly fitted to describe the varied career of so remarkable a man. The epic has ever been the heroic of English verse. A too-close adherence to biblical language and detail has detracted from the epic's majestic tread. Poe is correct in ascribing defects to a form of verse that can not be equally sustained.

The life of Solomon has been chosen after a roll-call of Old Testament characters because it presents more elements that make for success and failure than any other. Ancestry, environment, inherent capabilities, faith and faithlessness contribute to mould and batter an earth-born son of Israel's shepherd king.

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King David's Earth-Born Son

BOOK I.

ADONIJAH'S REBELLION.

“Thou art my son,” King David sang of Christ,
“My heaven-born Son and heir. To Thee belongs
All praise and honor, son and Lord combined.”
Alas, King David had an earth-born son
As well, one who essayed to sit upon
His throne and rule the people of his God.
Grant us to sing the deeds, the love, the zeal,
The worthy aspirations of this son,
And sadly to narrate his overthrow.
Strong in his strength, he proves too weak at times
When courage, faith and right should have prevailed.
Rebellion marks the advent of his reign,
As Adonijah reasons with himself :
“King David’s days are drawing to a close,
The mighty monarch once, a weakling now,
Awaits a strength that will not come again,
A death which tarries long before his door.
I, Adonijah, rightful heir by birth,
Must straight prepare to wear the regal crown.
Come, Joab, lend me chariots and men
And fifty runners added unto these,
In order that the people may become
Accustomed to regard me as their lord.
I need thy service, captain of the host,

And thine, Abiathar—thou art high-priest—
That we may journey to Zoheleth's stone
Near by En-rogel and there sacrifice.”
To which Abiathar, the priest, responds :
“Fat cattle, sheep and oxen we must slay ;
And call the men of Judah and the sons
Of David to enjoy these rites with us.”
“To all things,” Joab answers, “I agree ;
One son, however, we can not invite,
He whom his father chose to follow him,
And whom they say the Lord Himself hath called ;
Zadok, the just, the second priest in rank,
Benaiah, captain of the king's own guard,
And Nathan, who as prophet raised his voice,
Together with some other mighty men
Of state, who clearly indicate their choice,
Must not be asked, for they might else betray
Our secret ere we have proclaimed him king.”
These words lend joy to Adonijah who
Exults to find his friends are friends indeed :
“Thou speakest true, my cousin, as thou art,
Benaiah's name and force we do not need,
Thy mighty valor shall alone suffice ;
The Edomites do tremble at thy name
No more than those shall quake who do refuse
Me liegdom. Thou hast always been upon
The side of right and as thou hast not feared
Thyself to be the executioner
Of David's beautiful but lawless son,
So now thou standest with the rightful heir,

Who must succeed his father ere he die,
 Or treason intervenes and makes us slaves."
 The general bows acknowledgment and says:
 "I thank thee, Adonijah, for the praise
 Which thou bestowest on a loyal man.
 It seems to me, my lord, we can not fail;
 One of the line of Ithamar doth aid
 Us in our task and lend his station's seal.
 The priest who stands within the sacred tent,
 To whom the covenantal ark is shown,
 Is here to sacrifice and to anoint
 Thee king of greater David's greater realm."
 The priest is growing restless as he sighs:
 "The hour draweth nigh, we must away!
 Assemble thou the people, Joab. I
 Must go to choose the sacrificial beasts.
 Meet us, fair prince, near by the well where we
 Shall execute these plans without delay."

* * * *

The prophet Nathan comes to Bathsheba,
 Fear plainly written he can not disguise:
 "Fair Bathsheba, I come with startling news,
 Nay, pardon me, I should not thus begin.
 And call forth fears which make you tremble so;
 Pray heed my message to its very end,
 In order that we may invent a course
 Whereby to thwart rebellion in its germ.
 The people cry 'the son of Haggith reigns,'
 They have assembled to the south of us,
 Where Adonijah has prepared a feast

And where he bade the High-priest sacrifice.
Stern Joab has become conspirator,
They have invoked the aid of many men
Whom they are feasting and so bribe to cry
'Long live the king, hail, Adonijah, hail!'
The sound hath traveled from the board and soon
Shall make our streets reverberate its strains.
We ought act quickly to offset its charm,
To warn our monarch of his pending doom
And place the crown upon the chosen heir."
The mother of the youthful prince is stirred:
"My sovereign lord and husband promised me
That I should be the mother of a king.
When first he bade me leave Uriah's home
And I did shudder at the very thought,
His pleasing words convinced me it was right,
And now the store of my persuasive power
Shall make him feel his duty to my son.
Why has he asked thee, Nathan, to instruct
The lad, why has he been so kind to him,
Why exercise his favors all this time,
And now refuse the plea which I shall make?"
The prophet has a plan which he unfolds:
"Go, Bathsheba, present thyself to him
And urge thy suit in pleading, earnest tones;
Speak kindly to him but be firm withal,
Recall his promise, tell him the report,
Ask him if it is done with his consent,
And whilst thou speakest I shall enter in,
Proclaim the self-same news, confirm thy words.

Shall we surrender to rebellion's sway,
 And lose our lives in an unworthy cause?
 Shall traitors sit upon this sacred throne,
 Or shall we end their rule ere it begin?"

The queen assents and follows his decree :

"Thy words are words of wisdom, man of God,
 I go, and if thou follow me forthwith,
 We shall succeed in this our enterprise."

A reverie comes o'er the prophet now :

"O mighty monarch, how thy strength has fled,
 A shepherd boy who has outgrown his rank,
 Become a valiant king of God's own race,
 A man of war, a man of peace as well,
 Feared by the world, beloved by thine own,
 A poet in the chamber, on the throne
 A statesman, in thy heart a noble man
 Whom, tho' the world has tempted, has not won.
 And now, alas, and now, a child again
 Which others fondle, and which they must guide.
 Is it not pitiful, this latter scene,
 An oak decaying forced to yield its sway!"

* * * *

The king is seated, near him stands a maid,
 Abishag, who in humble manner serves,
 Awaiting his requests and answering them.
 The queen on entering bows before her lord,
 Who can not brook the sight and questions her :
 "Why doth my queen lie prostrate at my feet,
 What burden rests upon her troubled soul,
 Why doth she not approach me as her wont,

With light and blithesome step, with gracious mien,
Why is she sad and pensive? Let her speak."
Whereon the queen in trembling voice replies:
"My lord, didst not thou swear to me of old
That Solomon our son should follow thee
Upon the cherished throne of Israel?"
The king remembers that he made this pledge:
"I have not countermanded this decree.
Why dost thou vex me with such questions now,
Shall I not be your king unto the end?"
The queen feels he is grieved and tries to soothe:
"King David, do not take my words amiss;
Long live, my lord, and yet thou canst not know
Of what has passed. 'Twas this that brought me here.
'King Adonijah reigneth' comes a shout
Which fills my heart with dread and grief at once.
Thou tremblest, king; yes, I did tremble, too,
Yet know that this report is but too true.
Fat cattle, sheep and oxen he hath slain;
In great abundance he hath sacrificed.
Near by En-rogel all this has occurred.
He has invited all thy sons, my lord,
Except thy servant Solomon, my son."
Alarmed, the king gives vent to pent-up fears:
"I cannot grasp the situation quite,
A son enthroned before his father dies,
Without a consultation or decree?"
Yes, Bathsheba has struck the longed-for chord:
"Nor can thy people understand it, lord,
For they have turned their eyes to thee for aid,

They wish to know from thee who shall be king.”
In lamentation David cries aloud:
“Alas, my son, thou second Absalom,
Conspiracy which takes its fated birth
In our own homes is difficult to bear.
If he has acted thus to me, how will
He act to mine when I am dead and gone?”
Continue, Bathsheba, thou must succeed!
“Again thou provest thine unselfish self.
These fears have brought me to thy mercy-seat
To ask thee, spare thy wife and spare thy son.
Let them not fall a prey to traitors’ swords;
If Solomon shall reign, proclaim him king!”
This speech is hardly ended when there comes
A servant, stating Nathan is at hand,
And begs to be admitted to the king.
On being ushered in he deeply bows,
His face is to the ground in servile form.
The king, beside himself, demands to know
The reason why his friend is so much grieved:
“What means this strange behavior in my court?
A moment scarce hath Bathsheba retired,
Who also came with courtesies and bows
Which made me bend beneath the weight of years.
Thy countenance seems bathed in deeper grief
Than thou dost care to speak of. Am I right?”
The prophet summons courage and responds:
“Long live my lord the king, thou David, king
Of all our realm, though others would deny
The truth of these my earnest, heartfelt words.

Hast thou decreed another shall be king;
Hast thou encircled him with mighty men;
Hast thou absolved thy throne without a word
Of information or advice, my lord?
I have been true to thee, shall I not know
The reasons why the people shout with glee
'Long live king Adonijah, hail, king, hail.'
Fat cattle, sheep and oxen he hath slain;
In great abundance he hath sacrificed;
Near by En-rogel all this has occurred.
He has invited all thy sons, my lord,
Except thy servant Solomon, the wise.
'God save king Adonijah,' they do shout
With great rebellious tumult and good-will.
But me, thy servant, they did not invite,
Nor Zadok, nor Benaiah, nor thy son.
Is this thy wish, my lord, or is it theirs?"
Can Nathan penetrate the depths of hearts
And not discern their crushed and abject state,
Can he remain impassive while the king
Recites a gloomy tale he knows full well?
"Thou knowest, Nathan, of my troubled life.
Didst thou not reason with me once before?
Alas, how strange that people call me great,
That they do envy me my grievous lot!
Have they experienced woes like unto mine,
Have their sons dealt with them as mine with me?
And this it is to be esteemed a king,
Uncertain of the foibles of one's house.
Go, Nathan, go, and let me think upon

A proper course of action to pursue.
O Absalom, my son, how can I bear
To think of thee a traitor who shouldst wear
Thy father's state without, his soul within.
But thou hast died and left me to decide
Between another traitor and a liege."
The man of God withdraws, and David, plunged
Into a reverie, thinks hard and long.
Aroused therefrom he calls a servant who
Is asked to go and bid the queen appear.
Again the queen lies prostrate at his feet,
But he commands her to arise and hear :
"The Lord that hath redeemed my soul from hell
Shall witness what I tell thee and confirm.
The oath which I have sworn shall stand secure ;
Thy son and mine shall reign in David's stead."
The queen bows with her face to earth and goes.
The servant is commanded to arise,
Call Zadok and Benaiah, Nathan, too.
The priest and prophet, captain of the guards,
Assemble and await their king's command.
In no uncertain tones he speaks to them :
"Take Solomon, my son, to Gihon's strand,
Let him be mounted on the royal mule.
Thou, Zadok, priest, and Nathan, prophet thou,
Anoint him king with consecrated oil,
As Saul and I were crowned, so shall he be.
The sacred oil on Zion's mount hath not
Lent sanction to the reign of him proclaimed.
Blow with the trumpet, shout 'God save the king,'

Shout with a will until the echoes ring.
 Then bring him to the city, let him mount
 My throne, for he shall lord it in my stead ;
 Both Israel and Judah shall be his."
 Benaiah, captain of the guards, rejoins :
 "Amen, amen, the Lord God say so, too,
 As he hath been with thee so may he be
 With Solomon and magnify thy throne."

* * * *

At Gihon's pool a joyful host is seen,
 The prince is riding, while about him throng
 His retinue and people of all clans.
 The priest has raised the sacred horn and speaks :
 "With this horn I anoint thee, Solomon,
 To rule o'er all the realm of Israel.
 May God whose priest I am and whose this oil,
 Confirm thy father's dictate and extend
 The borders of thy heart and of thy land."
 The coronation ends in revelrie,
 The people pipe with pipes, they shout with joy,
 'God save the king, King David's earth-born son.'

* * * *

En-rogel is an animated scene
 As Adonijah feasts his followers.
 Abiathar feels they must not delay
 But be about the duties crowding fast :
 "The day is drawing to a close and ere
 It passes we must carry out our plans.
 Up, men, revolt 's the word to win the day.
 Shall we remain in sluggish attitude,

Shall we allow another to ascend
The throne while we do pass the day in mirth?
Unless each girds himself and cries aloud,
Unless we fill the city with our din,
Our cause is lost and we shall be destroyed.”
The ear of Joab trained to hear each sound,
Detects the trumpet's blare at Gihon's pool:
“Wherefore the noise afar? It seems to me
The city is in uproar, whence this blast?
And now a shout, it does sound wondrous strange.
My heart misgives me for methinks it means
Another has been crowned while we did feast.
Behold here cometh Jonathan, a friend,
And yet his speed betrays all is not well.”
To quiet him calm Adonijah says:
“Nay, Joab, do not be so ill at ease,
He cometh as the harbinger of peace.
'Hail, Jonathan, what tidings dost thou bring?
Thou art a valiant man, so be thy news.'”
Whereunto Jonathan replies in gasps:
“Too valiant, lord, as thou shalt straight discern;
The friends of Solomon have been afield.
King David hath proclaimed him as the heir
Who even now doth sit upon the throne.
Zadok, Benaiah, Nathan, and a host
Of Cherethites and Pelethites complete
The train which follows him and shouts for joy.
Already king, the city rings with praise,
And David leads the tumult with assent.”
Affrighted by the speech, the guests arise

And straight disperse midst consternation's sway,
While Adonijah, fleeing, grasps the horns
Of yonder altar as he seeks to place
Himself beneath the gracious care of God.

* * * *

A messenger tells Solomon of what
Has happened, tells him Adonijah's dread:
"My lord, thy brother Adonijah fears
The judgment which shall be pronounced on him.
He hath laid hold upon the altar's horns,
Appealing to the grace of God and thee.
Let Solomon, the king, swear that he will
Not slay his contrite servant with the sword."
The king demands that he be brought to him.
The frightened rebel crouches as he comes,
Not knowing whether doom or grace be his.
In slow and measured tone the king declares:
"Hadst thou been king, my mother's life and mine
Would be in peril, or perchance cut off.
And yet my father's heart must not be grieved
With endless tragedies and bitter deaths.
Conduct thyself a worthy man, do not
Lend ear to insurrection's cry.
Go to thy home. As long as thou art true,
Not one of thy fair hairs shall fall to earth."
The king withdraws, and Adonijah speaks
To Bathsheba, whom he requests to ask
His master for Abishag's hand and love.
"He is thy son and will not say thee nay."
The queen, quite flattered, yields to his request.

Alone he muses thus in subtle strain :
"Perhaps my plan shall carry. Even now
A restlessness among the ranks betrays
The present king can not maintain his throne.
A certain prestige shall be mine if I
Succeed in winning our late monarch's wife.
'Twere folly I should ask the king this boon,
'Tis wisdom to entrust it to her care,
Whose vantage point, as lady of the realm,
Secures her audience and obtains her wish."
While he is musing thus before the throne,
The king soliloquizes to himself:
"And this it is to be a king, pursued
By evil thoughts, by malice and intrigue.
How oft my subjects seem to rise in dreams
Which do not wait for seasons of the night,
But come while I do fear and meditate.
Ah, yes, my reign will be secure when they,
My adversaries, yield their spirits up.
Benaiah shall slay Joab, and so rid
My kingdom of this blood-stained, brutal man.
Abiathar, a better doom is his,
My father's faithful follower, my foe,
In baneful banishment shall bide his time.
The ruined house of Saul in Shimei
Breathes insolence, and threats to rise again;
Hence he, too, must be exiled from my realm.
This ends the list, for Adonijah swore
To be obedient to the rules of state."
The mother of the king appears, and he

In saddened yet in gracious mood receives
His visitor as he doth bow to her.
Then, sitting on his throne, he bids a seat
Be brought for her beside him on the right.
The mother deems his act an omen of
Good will and friendly feeling, hence begins:
"One small request I ask of thee, my son,
And pray thee say not nay to this my plea."
The king, assured that all is well, rejoins:
"Ask on, my mother, I'll not say thee nay."
He did not guess the import of her plea:
"Pray let thy brother win Abishag's hand,
And thus not feel the wounds that fester so;
His plight is pitiful, my plea is small,
A single woman shall prove ointment rare."
Enraged, the king can not conceal his wrath:
"Why dost thou ask Abishag for this man?
Why not demand the kingdom and my throne?
Why not plead for Abiathar, the priest,
Or Joab, or some other foe of mine?
I swear by Him above to take the life
Of this conspirator and hush his clan.
Go, servant, tell Benaiah take a sword
And fall on Adonijah that he die.
(To his mother)

This is my answer!

(To the servant)

This is my decree!

* * * *

BOOK II.

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY.

As one aroused from optimistic dreams,
Delightful for the buoyancy they bring,
The king appears quite early on the mount,
On which the covenantal ark is seen.
A radiant countenance and spotless garb
Betoken pleasure in his morn of life :
“Ye people, hear me while I shall narrate
A dream I dreamed amid the shades of night.
Jehovah came and stood before his liege ;
I saw Him not, but heard His wondrous voice :
‘Ask me what I shall give thee,’ it declared.
Whereon there was a silence as I thought
In reverential manner of the task
Imposed upon my feeble, conscious self.
‘Unto thy servant David thou hast shown
Great mercy, and the boon Thou grantedst to
My father Thou didst grant because he walked
In truth, in righteousness, and strength of heart.
The final prayer he uttered Thou hast heard,
His son Thou hast permitted to ascend
The throne which once was his and now is mine.
O Lord, my God, as thou hast made me king,
And I am but a little child that knows
Not how to go or come, to think or do,
That knows not how to govern Thine elect,

Now grown to such proportions they can not
Be numbered, much less ruled by human will,
Pray give thy servant a discerning heart
To judge Thy people, knowing good from bad ;
For who is able otherwise to rule
So great a people in sincerity.'
This speech was pleasing to the Lord of Hosts,
Who straight replied in heartfelt promises :
'Because thou hast asked this thing and not life,
Nor riches for thyself, nor death for those
Who do oppose thy counsels and thy realms,
Discernment thou shalt have in judgment's sway,
An understanding heart with wisdom fraught,
So that like unto thee there never was
Nor ever shall be any man on earth.
To these gifts I have added those which thou
Didst not because of selfishness demand.
Thou shalt be rich, and honor thou shalt have,
If thou wilt walk within the ways of truth ;
If thou wilt keep my statutes and decrees,
As did thy father David, in his time,
Thy days I'll lengthen, and thy walk attend.'
As he had finished I awoke, and lo,
It was a dream, but such a dream.
It quickened me and sent me forth in joy
To worship at His altar, and to bring
A sacrifice well-pleasing to my Lord.
Fat cattle, sheep and oxen we must slay
And call the men of Judah and the sons
Of David to enjoy these rites with us."

The smoke ascends; the prayer is truly heard;
Burnt offerings rise in incense clouds of peace.
Again the servants meet about the board—
Of Adonijah—No, of Solomon.

The feast prepared, the servants shout in glee:
“Long live king David’s earth-born son, our lord.”
Again, and once again, the cry is heard,
It brings the distant welkin to close range.
Auspiciously, indeed, this reign begins,
As servants rise to execute their vows,
To render homage to their lord, obey
His dictates and extend his father’s sway.

* * * *

Arising from the feast he seeks the gate
Where justice rightly tempered reigns supreme.
How long the line of those who seek redress,
Who place their confidence in him, their king.
One judgment falsely rendered on this day
On which his task begins will bring him low,
But if, perchance, dependent on the pledge
Which re-created him, he wisely speaks,
The line on future days will be less long.
A silent prayer it offered, “Help me, Lord,
In this most trying moment of my life,
May I obey the voice which bids me rule;
Impartial, just may my decisions be.”
The judgment has begun as men portray
The wickedness of others and themselves.
It is not difficult to see the right,
And to chastise the wrong, the flagrant wrong.

Too long the catalogue of glaring sins
Would prove: uncleanness and adultery,
Idolatry, witchcraft and heresies,
Deep-seated envyings by murder sealed,
Base hatred crowned by variance and strife,
While drunkenness and revellings abound;
Wrath, emulation and lasciviousness,
Seditious, fornications and such like.

The test has come which shall portray the strength
Of David's earth-born son and Israel's king.
Two women steeped in galling, heinous sin,
Bondwomen of the flesh, not reared to shame,
Two women who have chosen their abode
Beneath the self-same roof for self-same ends,
Alluring men from paths of righteousness,
And urging them to tarry for a while,
Forgetful of the image they portray,
Appear before the king in shameless guise.
Two infants they have brought with them,
The one is dead, the other is alive.
Conflicting rumors shroud the motherhood
Of these two children, neither claims the dead.
The king demands the plaintiffs to rehearse
The circumstances of this two-fold claim,
Whereon one of the women tells the tale:
"My lord, we dwell together in a house
In which a child was born to me one day.
The third day after, in this self-same house,
Another child appeared, this woman's child,

Alone we tarried, none would share our shame,
The night hung heavy and we slept secure.
So soundly did she sleep she overlaid
Her child and snuffed its little life right out.
At midnight she arose and took my son
And laid him in her bosom, while she put
Her dead child in my bosom in his stead.
When I arose quite early I observed
A dead child, not my son which I did bear.”
“Nay,” said the other woman, “ ’tis not so.
This is my son that liveth, yours is dead.”
And womanwise they parleyed till the king
Stopped their conflicting speeches with reproof:
“One saith, ‘This is my son,’ the other, ‘Nay,’
The whole child can not be of both, hence I
Must give you each a half, and so decree.
Come, servant, bring a sword, I shall be fair,
And rend the child in equal halves for you.”
Then spake the woman whose the living child
In sorrow, for she yearned upon her son:
“My lord, slay not this precious living child,
But give it to this woman as it is.”
“Nay,” said the other, “it has been decreed
A half for you, a half for me, ’tis just.”
The king made answer for the test approved
His keen discernment and his telling wit:
“Withhold the sword and give the living child
To her who plead as only mother can,
She is its mother, none can question it.”
The judgment which the king had judged

Resounded through the realm, as Israel
Both feared its king and feared its God in him.

* * * *

Opposing currents magnify the court
Of Solomon now grown to wondrous state.
The first of these is that which God controls,
Who gives him wisdom, understanding fair,
A heart acquiring largeness as the sand
Upon the wide expanse of ocean's strand.
Egypt, sage Egypt and the Orient,
Steeped in a mystic thought of deepest dye,
Are but ephemeral compared with songs
And proverbs, judgments, wisdom's embassy,
Proceeding from this man, the friend of God.
Ethan the Ezrahite and Mahol's sons
Wisest of men Darda, Chalcol, Heman
Can not compare with him of fame supreme.
Three thousand proverbs he indicts all told,
A thousand songs and five he has composed.
The cedar growing on fair Lebanon
Is strongest of the monarchs he describes,
While puny hyssops springing from the wall,
Ignored of man, employed in sacrifice,
Do not escape the vision of the king.
He speaks of beasts, of fowl, of creeping things,
Of fishes and the waters they adorn.
So far his fame has spread from East to West,
The rulers of the nations bring their courts
To learn the oracles of man and God.
They marvel as they find his wisdom's bounds

Far greater than they thought or even dreamed.
Such is King David's son, the friend of God.
Another current rising is unseen,
Unfelt, unknown until it is too late.
The monarchy outgrows its simple state ;
In part 'tis natural that it should be so.
The pomegranate tree in Migron's vale
Beneath which tarried Saul, six hundred men
His retinue, no longer will suffice.
The court of David and his palaces,
To Bathsheba a maze which baffles her
As she proceeds from good Uriah's home,
Becomes insipid as she seeks to wield
Maternal honors which the slaves respect.
Through various wiles, through flattery and skill
The steward is her ally and the court
Is rendered more complex and wonderful,
Than ever it has been. New chariots
Are added first of all for pomp and power,
And forty thousand stalls with steeds for each.
Twelve thousand horsemen must attend the king,
And officers must gather straw and grain
For dromedaries, horses and the mules.
About the king are princes who are priests,
Recorders, scribes, financial agents, chiefs.
Twelve officers provide the pantry's store,
One for each month, for every district, one.
The nation lives as once it lived before
When dancing round the molten calf, beneath
The shadow of Mt. Sinai's righteous peak.

In dance and song, in revelry and mirth
The people spend their time and serve their king.
Queen Bathsheba has learned her son desires
To rear a temple for Jehovah's praise,
Which she doth argue must not be allowed,
For it will prove the overthrow of gods
And of affinities established now.
"High places must exist," she reasons well,
"For they unite us with the Canaanite,
Accepting symbols we accept their faith,
Thus they shall subjugate themselves to us
In outward life, which after all we crave.
What matters it, corruption must exist,
My son must rear high-places to the gods,
To Chemosh, Molech, Ashtoreth and such."
Upon the distant mount the smoke is seen;
The altar groans beneath its heavy load;
The worship festers and the fumes do stink.
The image tells the tale of pandered self,
Of loss of true religion and of lust.
The struggle grows intense, if Bathsheba
Prevails a momentary gain is felt,
But Israel will rue its present state.
Can Solomon withstand his mother's prayers?
Devotion bids him follow her behest.
The dream he dreamed, the father's parting prayer
Arise before him in the silent night
And beckon him to seek and follow light.

* * * *

The harem of the king is full, from north

And south they come, from east and west they come,
Each far surpassing those who've gone before.
As he surveyed his stalls and took delight
In horses from Arabia and the plains,
He takes a passing interest in his wives.
They are but vassals, he their lord and king;
They are but women while he is a man.
Degraded they have been, so let them be.
The deepest feeling kindled is of lust,
He knows no other thought save they are toys,
Mere playthings for a moment of delight.
"The orient demands it, I obey,
When wearied with affairs of state they shall
Resuscitate my spirits, sing or dance,
Shall cozen me and do whate'er I bid."
Thus he looks on a problem which has not
Perplexed him very much. The harem is
Not yet the grievous monster it becomes
In later years, as we shall see it soon.
We can not help but pity thee, the son
Who has not learned a mother's tender love,
Who can not be content to concentrate
His fond affections on a single soul,
Who asks for women as a child for sweets,
Nay rather as a vulture for its prey.

But stop! the tide has turned. The Shulamite
Has crossed his path, a virgin from the bounds
Of northern Palestine, supremely pure
And beautiful, who sees his father's son.

She has not known the name of love before,
When suddenly there glows within her breast
An ardent longing as she meditates :
“Ah, let him kiss me with the kisses of
His mouth, more precious than the best of wine.
The savour of thy ointments lends thy name
Renown, hence virgins love thee, noble king!”
The chorus raises loud its joyful strain :
“Draw us to thee and we will gladly run.”
Whereon the maid replies in modest joy :
“He has already asked me to his home.”
“Ah, happy woman, we rejoice with thee,
Beloved of the loveliest of men.”
The maid assumes a growing confidence
In those who share her joy and speaks of self :
“Ye daughters of Jerusalem, behold
Me tanned as tents of Kedar, comely still
As curtains which adorn the royal tent.
The sun hath made me black, in angry mood
My mother's children exiled me from home.
They made me keeper of the vineyards, but
My vineyard I've not kept with greatest care.
Thou shepherd king, for such thy father was,
Tell me where feedest thou thy flock at morn ;
Where does it rest at noon? I seek thy lair.”
“Return, return, in folly tarry not,
But seek the flocks, perchance you'll find him there.”
Half mockingly, half sadly comes the strain
From lips of those who know the subtle king.
Shall she return and seek her lowly home,

Or shall she trust him who hath bid her come?
 No answer needed now for he is here,
 He who has known affection as a term
 Not as a feeling, which born in the depths
 Of heartfelt sympathy and sacrifice,
 Must banish selfish thoughts and jealous aims
 And mould a greater self for greater ends.
 "Let me compare thee to the royal steeds
 Which draw the chariots of Egypt's lord.
 Thy cheeks are comely, jeweled, and thy neck
 With chains of gold, is wonderfully shaped.
 We shall produce gold borders, silver studs,
 And let thee revel in thy jeweled pride.
 How fair thou art, my love, how very fair,
 Thy eyes are free from guile as those of doves."
 Quite filled with ecstasy a wordless song
 Wells up within her breast which reproduced
 In measured phrase might sound somewhat like this :
 "I am the rose of Sharon and as well
 The lily of the valleys midst the thorns.
 My love among the daughters is most true.
 An apple-tree among wild trees is not
 More gracious than my friend among the sons."

* * * *

King Hiram sends his servants to the son
 Of David, for he hears he has been crowned
 The sole, anointed ruler of the realm.
 King Hiram, lord of Tyre, ever loved
 King David, shepherd, warrior, friend of God.
 King Solomon reciprocates the call

And greets his father's friend in pleading tone:
"Thou knowest how that David could not build
An house unto the name of God his Lord,
For wars about him interfered too much.
The Lord my God hath given me the rest
My father sought, no warfare doth assail.
Hence I desire to build an house unto
The name of God as He Himself foretold
In saying "Him whom I will set upon
Thy throne shall build an house unto my name."
Command thou therefore that they hew me trees,
Fair cedars from the Mount of Lebanon.
My servants shall be with thy servants yoked,
Thy servants shall have hire as thou wilt;
'Thou knowest there is none among our race
Can cope with thy Sidonians in this art."
When Hiram heard the words of Solomon
He greatly praised the God of Israel:
"Twice blessed be the Lord this day for He
Has been with David and his son."
A letter he dispatches to his friend:
"I have considered well the things which thou
Hast asked and gladly sanction thy request.
My servants shall bring timber from the mount
Unto the sea, whence I shall send the logs
In floats unto the place thou shalt appoint,
Where they shall be surrendered to thy care.
Thou shalt provide my servants with their food.
So Hiram gave to Solomon great trees
Of cedar and of fir as he had asked.

To Hiram Solomon gave in return
Of wheat full twenty thousand measures, and
Of oil round twenty for his household needs.
Peace reigned supreme between these noble kings.
A truce they formed amid a joyful throng.
In friendly intercourse they meet and speak
Of problems which confront them in their reign,
Then challenge one another, to unfold
Dark sayings, riddles, vague philosophies.
Fines are imposed on him who can not guess,
Hence they are keen and anxious to succeed.
One asks: "What four small things are shrewd and wise?"
The other answers, "I should say the ants,
For though not strong they labor when they can ;
The conies though a feeble folk yet build
Their houses in the rocks, hence they are wise ;
The locusts have no king, but they go forth
By bands and live and toil in fellowship ;
The spider taketh hold with many hands,
And passes from the hut to palaces."
"Yes, you have guessed the answer, 'Tis my turn :
"What three things are there never satisfied,
Yea, four things that say not 'it is enough'?"
"The grave forever open to receive,
The womb which has not born a single child,
The earth not filled with water though it pours,
The fire that gormandizes when it eats."
Three things there are that do upheave the earth
Four things there be it seems it can not bear?"
"A servant when he reigneth and a fool

When he is filled with meat, a glutton's share,
 An odious woman married in her prime,
 A handmaid that is heir to lady's place."
 "There be three things too wonderful for me,
 A fourth I can not fathom, what are they?"
 "An eagle's way as he doth cut the air,
 A serpent's way upon a jagged rock,
 The way of ships as they do plow the sea,
 And men as they hold intercourse with maids."
 "There be three things that navigate with skill,
 A fourth is comely, rare and to be praised?"
 "A lion which is strongest among beasts,
 A greyhound which is swift as arrow's flight,
 An he-goat, and the fourth you can not guess,
 A king 'gainst whom there is no rising up."
 "What plain effects does force bring in its train?"
 "When milk is churned resultant butter comes,
 The nose if it be wrung produces blood,
 So wrath brought to the surface brings forth strife."
 These are but some of many questions put
 By these two kings, some answered and some not.
 First Solomon is victor in the fray,
 Then Hiram seeking aid finds Abdemon,
 A Tyrian youth whose subtle wit unrolls
 The closely shrouded mysteries proposed.
 Thus Hiram proves the victor in the end.

* * * *

The queen essays to plead with Solomon:
 "My son, why take the Shulamite to wife?
 She is beneath your rank, a keeper of

The vineyards she has been, so let her be.
Let her watch over grapes which yield you wine;
She knows not what the rules of court demand,
Her humble station will embarrass you."

Whereon in panegyric strain he says:

"How beautiful art thou, O Shulamite,
The only daughter in thy father's home;
The daughters of the sons of men rejoice
In thee because thou art most fair and pure.
Fair as the moon, clear as the sun thou art,
And terrible as armies on parade.

Thy tender feet are beautiful in shoes,
Thy grace is seen anew in every limb,
Thy neck a tower of ivory is like,
Thine eyes are like the fishpools in Hesbon,
Thine head upon thee is like Carmel's crown,
Thy hair like purple and thy visage fair.

Thy stature like a palm tree, can I check
My pent-up feelings for so sweet a child?"

"You are quite mad, my son, she's made you mad.

A peasant girl with pleasant face enralls
A man who must be manly and not yield,
Lest she shall rule your heart and bring you low."
The king withdraws unwilling to abide
And listen to his mother's passioned speech.

A tremor seizes Bathsheba as she
Doth feel her power wane, her son's increase.

"Must I, the mother of a king, be made
To feel another shall usurp my place,
One so unlike, who reared to shame will change

The growing glory of our court and thwart
 The plans and purposes which I have wrought?
 Shall she offset high places now in vogue,
 And help the king to execute his plan
 Whereby the Canaanitish gods shall yield
 Their prestige and the God of Israel rule?
 Shall she demand of him a life of trust?
 Devoted to monogamy alone
 And thus deplete the harem growing fast?
 Shall she command and slaves obey her word,
 While I stand by in mute despair and wrath?
 My pride is injured, no, it shall not be!
 But if, that little word will not be checked,
 If he determines to offset my plea,
 He certainly shall rue the evil day,
 While I shall bear the burden; right or wrong
 I must succeed, wherefore I must invoke
 The aid of stewarts, butlers, servants, slaves,
 Of lords and counsellors of state and war,
 Who shall obey my dictates and commands.

* * * *

The Shulamite has donned her wedding dress,—
 More beautiful than ever she appears;
 The ray which purity alone doth lend
 Proceedeth from her, fixing fast the gaze
 Of those who summoned to the marriage feast
 And who have come to taste the food in store,
 Forget their greed and feast their eyes upon
 The maid instead, while she in modest joy
 Is seated by her husband and her lord.

“I am my beloved’s. He is mine :
His love sustains me while my sympathy
Shall aid him in the burden he must bear.”
So earnestly he loves her he avows
That he will lodge with her in villages
To prove he has exalted her estate.
He will arise quite early to go with
Her to the vineyards she has left for him.
If the vine flourish and the grape appear,
If pomegranates bud, these be the things
He will investigate with his true love.
Has ever love been sung more pure than this,
Has ever king decided for the right
More carefully, ’gainst warning, bitter words ;
Has ever maiden more deserved to hold
The place of queen than she whose modest worth
Reflects itself in pure and upright walk?
King David’s earth-born son hath chosen well,
The struggle for supremacy is on.

* * * *

BOOK III.



HIGH TIDE.

On Mount Moriah's sacrificial peak
The temple stands in answer to the pledge
King David took and Solomon assumed.
A year almost this palace of the Lord
Has waited for the opening of its gates,
Delayed because the preparations for
So great a day in Israel's history
Must not be hurried nor one whit abridged.
The autumn Feast of Tabernacles dawns.
Two feasts are merged into a greater feast.
The tabernacle, now to be displaced
By its exalted heir and wondrous peer,
Is brought from Gibeon, where it has been
The highest of high places, by the priests
And Levites, messengers of God of old.
The golden altar, table of shewbread,
The vessels, furniture and all the things
They found they brought unto this greater home.
Another pilgrimage is made by those
Who bring the sacred ark from Zion's Mount.
As David and his host with martial strain
Conveyed it to, so they convey it from
This resting place for forty years of growth.
In Tisri month of vintage-gifts, the priests
Deposit in the holiest their charge.
The king in all his royal state precedes

The great procession on this festal day.
The blood of beasts slain as a sacrifice
Floods streets and by-ways, brings the people peace.
The worshipers assembled from afar
Can not be counted in the outer court,
They raise their paeon and exalt their Lord.
The ark is seen, for four long centuries
The sight is not to be vouchsafed again.
Now guarded by the cherubim, the ark
No longer needs the king's protecting arm
And he is seated in the honored place,
Where he can act as master of the feast.
The altar's steps are crowded with the priests,
The Levites and musicians robed in white.
The trumpeters send forth a mighty blast,
A cloud has overshadowed them within,
The glory of the Lord has filled His house.
Then spake the king: "It is the Lord's desire
That He may dwell in darkness where unseen
He shall direct our weak and erring steps.
This house I have erected to His name,
Here He shall dwell, a settled place it is."
Then, turning to the people, Solomon
Pronounced a blessing on them while they stood:
"We bless Thee, God of Israel, our Lord,
Who spakest unto David and hast said
'I chose no city, but I first chose thee
And gave thee courage to obey My word,
Whereby thou shalt prepare the way for him,
Thy cherished son, to build an house to me.'

The Lord hath done what He hath said of old.
My father's kingdom I inherited
And built an house as He hath prophesied,
Wherein I placed the ark, the covenant
Of God made with our fathers long ago."
Then going up unto the altar, he
Before the congregation spread his hands
Toward Heaven and breathed forth this solemn prayer:
"Lord God of Israel there is no God
Like Thee, in heaven above, on earth beneath,
Who keepest covenant and mercy with
Thy servants that before Thee walk aright.
As Thou hast promised so let it be
And let Thy word be verified, I pray.
The heavens can not contain Thee, shall this house
Which I have builded be as great as they?
Yet have respect unto my prayer, O Lord,
And hearken to my earnest longing cry;
Permit Thine eyes to rest upon this house
By night and day, here let Thy name abide,
Here let Thy people pray, their prayer be heard,
And with forgiveness heal their bruised hearts.
When they be smitten by the enemy,
And knowing why, come here to rue their sins,
Forgiving, lend them victory anew.
If there is drought upon this land because
Of sin and they here make atonement, heed!
If there be famine, pestilence or plague,
Hear, Lord, forgive the hearts that turn to Thee.
Lo, if a stranger seek these gates, not one

Of Israel, protect him by Thy might.
 If captives led by foreign brooks we sing,
 Hear Thou to whom the song is raised and free!
 We are Thy people, hence we pray Thee, hear!"

When he had made an end of praying, he
 Arose, for he had kneeled before the Lord,
 And standing blessed the people Israel:
 "The Lord our God be with us and incline
 Our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways,
 To keep His judgments, His commands obey,
 This be our effort, this grace may He grant."
 A sacrifice is offered to the Lord,
 The smoke of peace ascends as king of earth,
 And King of Heaven commune in bonds of love.
 One hundred twenty thousand sheep are slain,
 Of oxen two and twenty thousand bleed.
 In such magnificence the temple gates
 Are opened for the service of their God.
 The feast is held, twice seven days it takes
 To consecrate this building to the Lord.
 The feast is over and the people turn
 To wend their homeward way while they do praise
 Jehovah and His servant Solomon.

* * * *

The king appears before the queen in pride
 And fond elation o'er the people's praise.
 So suddenly a monarch of renown,
 This feeling overmasters him as he
 Surveys the past and present of his realm.
 A mere idea grown to be a fact,

The temple stands before his well-pleased eyes,
And in its courts the vast array of men
Whom he can order to obey his word.
As he recites the happenings of the day,
And dwells upon each incident with care,
Recalling all the blessings of the Lord,
The queen rejoices for she loves this Lord,
And glories in the fact that Solomon
Has learned to know him better on this day
Of consecration of both house and heart.
As he proceeds, however, with his tale,
A deeply conscious self is straight revealed,—
A different self than she has known before.
A self such as a simple maid unfolds
Whose sire has suddenly acquired wealth,
Proud, overbearing, filled with false conceit.
“No longer you will care for me as you
Have oft declared you do, A mighty king.”
The Shulamite begins her plaintive wail:
“No longer you will be content to love
A maiden whom you have decoyed from fields
And vineyards, from a distant rural home.”
Grieved by these words the humbled king replies:
“As Tirzah, beautiful thou art, my love,
As comely as Jerusalem my home,
As terrible as banners borne by foes;
Turn, turn thine eyes from me, they conquer me.
Thy hair is as a flock of Gilead’s goats,
Thy teeth are as a flock of cleansed sheep;
A pomegranate cut in halves appears

As do thy temples by thy locks concealed.”
“Nay,” saith the Shulamite, “do not expend
Your lavish praises on so mean a maid.
Another surely will usurp my place
And aid as is befitting such a king.”
Repressed a moment he asserts anew
The feeling which arises in his heart.
“Full three-score queens I count as mine to-day,
And four-score concubines, add unto these
The virgins without number in my court;
Yet there is one alone for whom I care,
My dove, my undefiled in thought or deed,
Her mother's greatest gift to David's race;
The daughters saw her and beholding blessed;
The queens and concubines proclaimed her praise.
Their song has reached my ears, 'tis echoed thus :
'Who is this queen that looketh radiant as
The morn and fair as is the moon at night,
As clear as the majestic sun by day,
As terrible as hosts in drawn array?’ ”
The Shulamite sighs to herself as she
Unconsciously recites her misery :
“I went into the garden where I walked
Amid the trees and saw the tender plants ;
I looked upon the vine and saw its growth ;
The pomegranates budding I espied.
I know not whence the feeling came which seized
My soul and made me long to tread the soil
Of my ancestral home and look upon
The chariots and the armies of my land.”

A sense of great oppression holds the maid ;
She gathers all her energy into
A sudden flight and a remorseful sob.
The women raise their voices as they call :
"Return, return, O Shulamite, return,
Return that we may look upon thy face."
She heeds their call and comes with measured step :
"What will ye see in me, the Shulamite?"
The chorus answering sings her wondrous praise :
"How beautiful thy feet appear, O queen,
In slippers which are delicately wrought,
How matronly thy tread, how firm and true,
No master sculpture can at all compare
With thy most stately and most perfect form ;
Such eyes and ears, so beautiful a mouth,
A forehead broad, complacent without sign
Of any struggle or a wish gainsaid.
A perfect symmetry reveals itself
In shoulders, breasts, and hips, in every line,—
A master workman must have been employed
To shape so true a pattern of our race.
Hail, fairest thou of women, hail, all hail."
In truth, the tide is running very high,
King David's earth-born son has heard the voice
Which bade him rear a temple and adore
The Lord of Israel. Again this voice
Bade him select a queen who should be true
And help him overcome each sign of wrong,
Help him to lead a noble life and rule
His people and his passions with great care.

Are these thy attestations true, O king,
 Wilt thou remain thy father's loyal son,
 Jehovah's servant and thy true wife's spouse?
 A lofty reign is thine, thou hast subdued
 Thine enemies, subdue thyself as well!

* * * *

A passion seizes Solomon to rear
 More buildings as an emblem of his might.
 His mother is the power behind the throne,
 Who feels her son has lost his prestige with
 The people, and the Lord she claims obtains
 A homage which belongs to Solomon.
 What can she do to subjugate this Lord
 And incidentally resume the place
 Accorded to the mother of the king?
 For thirteen years the toilsome work proceeds;
 The chisel's tooth bites into marble blocks,
 The skilful hand behind it deftly shapes
 The morsel which remains to grace the house
 Of David's earth-born son and render it
 More brilliant than the gorgeous home
 Of Him whom Israel would serve alone.
 On Ophel he erects his palaces.
 Among them we discern, as first our eye
 Surveys the situation, a great pile—
 The house of Lebanon's primeval grove.—
 One hundred cubits long and fifty broad,
 And thirty cubits high from base to crown.
 'Tis aptly termed for its great second floor
 Rests firmly on a base of cedar trees.

Thrice fifteen trees in rows support these halls ;
The ceiling is inlaid with cedar blocks ;
The windows are arranged in equal rows,
Three ranks illumine it, light against light.
The doors and posts are square, the windows too,
Light against light, three ranks are measured off.
Two hundred shields of beaten gold adorn
This structure, and three hundred bucklers of
The same material grace this forest home.
He made a porch of pillars for this house,
'Twas fifty cubits long and thirty wide.
Near it he made a porch wherein the throne
Was placed, the palace porch, the Judgment Hall,
Where Israel offended, might obtain
Redress from all its wrongs from David's son.
With cedar wood this hall was covered quite,
From one side to the other of the floor.
The red and scented sandal wood is used
To build a staircase for the king, concealed
From public gaze, on which he may ascend
When going to the temple to adore.
The water from the springs and reservoirs
Upon the summit of the Mount assists
The royal gardner in his enterprise
As he prepares a beauteous landscape for
The palaces and for the people's eye.
The southern slopes reveal a wondrous sight
Which he, the king, doth picture in his song :
"I made stupendous works, and reared me homes,
I planted vineyards, gardens, orchards and

I planted trees in them of various fruits.
I made me pools of water wherewith I
Might water wood that bringeth forth the trees.”
In summer he repaired to cooler spots
Where snows of Lebanon and sheltered walks
Beneath the cedars lured the tired king.
'Tis here he rears a residential tower
Which looketh to Damascus and the plains;
Baal-Hermon's vineyard renders him its due.
For such a king there must be strong defence,
Hence he builds Millo to defend himself
And all his people from the hostile bolts.
No longer can the native tribes presume
To be victorious over Israel.
A chain of forts protects the growing state;
Store cities for provisions he doth rear
And other cities for his cavalry,
Still others to extend commercial sway,
Erected on paved roads to every town.
Fair Tadmor in the wilderness becomes
A haven from the inroads of the tribes
And an Emporium for the East and West.
In midst of an oasis it portrays
A beautiful and restful town of trade;
From far and near the camels quench their thirst
At these perennial springs and underneath
The palm the camel drivers take their ease—
A splendid city as its ruins prove;
A thousand years it flourished and waxed strong.
King Solomon, thy cup is running o'er,

It seems thou art thy father's son no more.

* * * *

The Koran says the hoopoe told the king
Of a sagacious queen whose home was in
The south, her throne of gold and silver and
Of many precious jewels made. Alas,
This queen with all her realm adores the sun!
The king in tender mood sends her a plea,
He asks her to bow down before the Lord.
Her people counsel her to go and call
Upon a monarch of such great renown,
For he has shown an interest in their land.
Perhaps his fame is greater than is meet,
Perhaps he cannot answer her demands.
In going she doth arm herself full well
With questions which imply superior skill.
The wise men of her court have counselled how
She may address and foil the haughty king.
Jerusalem she visits with a train
Of camels bearing worthy gifts for him,
Gold, spices, precious stones, in countless store.
And when she came to Solomon she told
Him all that was within her troubled heart.
She asked him, too, to answer her behests.
To try this subtle king she first brought forth
Some girls and boys dressed in the self-same way
And bade him separate them if he could.
He ordered water to be brought for all,
Whereon he asked them all to cleanse their hands.
The boys from habit put their hands right in,

The girls stopped long enough to turn their sleeves.
Again the queen essays to thwart the king.
A wreath she held in either hand as she
Asked him to tell her which was real and which
Was artificial, and so cunningly
Had art produced a counterfeit that no
One had been able heretofore to choose
Between the two; perplexed the king appeared.
His reputation was at stake, it seemed
A woman was about to snatch this prize.
A moment only he delayed, when he
Commanded, with a naturalist's keen sense,
That they should open wide the windows and
Allow some bees that hovered round about
To enter, when of course his doubt was gone,
For they alighted only on the one.
When she had asked him to her heart's desire,
And he had answered every question put,
He showed to her his palace and its groves.
She saw him seated on the lion-throne
Of gold and ivory in cedarn hall,
Where he dispensed to all their sovereign rights.
She sat with him at board and drank with him
From goblets of pure gold, and ate with him
From precious lavers delicately wrought.
When she had seen his wisdom and the house
He built, the meat upon his table and
The servants at his beck, the ministers
Who waited on him in their wondrous robes,
The bearers of his cup and the ascent

By which he went unto the house of God,
There was no spirit more within the queen.
"The tidings that were told to me of thee
Formed but the basis of this true report.
I did not dare believe the words they said,
Until I came and with mine eyes did see.
Behold, the half was not revealed to me;
Thy acts and thy great wisdom stand supreme.
How very happy must thy servants be,
Who, standing constantly before thee, hear
Thy words of wisdom and behold thy deeds.
The Lord thy God be blessed because He has
Observed thee and has taken great delight
In thee, to set thee on thy father's throne.
The Lord loved Israel, hence made thee king,
In justice both to rule and to obey."
An hundred twenty talents of fine gold
She gave the king; of spices a great store;
And precious stones such as delight him much.
King Solomon gave unto her as well
Whatever she desired and asked of him.
Of all his royal bounty he bequeathed
Her very much. So she returned again
Unto her people as she came, with gifts
Of wondrous value and proclaimed the name
Of Solomon and of the Lord of Lords.

* * * *

Off to the west there moves a caravan,
It comes from Egypt by a route far more
Direct than that which Israel pursued

When broken down by bondage it desired
A better home than Egypt could afford.
The train draws nearer; the discerning eye
Observes the chariots and horses which
The king's ambassadors have bought for him.
This king indeed a kingly merchant is.
His stables must be furnished constantly
With best of steeds in numbers which astound,—
Four thousand and two hundred horses for
His fourteen hundred warlike chariots.
Six hundred shekels for a chariot,
An hundred fifty for a horse was paid
As profit to the men who closed the sale.
Two routes were chosen for this growing trade,—
From Coele-Syria the one led to
The Hittite city Carchemish upon
Euphrates banks and thence to Haran and
The Tigris, thence to Nineveh, from there
To Babylon and to the Persian Gulf.
The other route led them thru Mecca and
Thru Midian to Egypt's northern bounds.
And yet the Psalmist sings a greater song
Of them that go down to the sea in ships,
That buffet wind and wave in their desire
To traffic in the rich Egyptian stores.
These caravans and vessels bring but one
Report, they sing one song in Egyptland,
As they do laud and magnify their king.
To Amenophis court vague rumors drift
Of Israel, a new-born, lordly race,

Of Solomon, a king beyond compare :
"Far fairer than the sons of men he is,
His lips are full of grace and blessings crowd
Each other fast in his most active life.
The smoky pillars in the distance seem
But exhalations of fine frankincense
And myrrh, choice perfumes of a regal type.
About his bed at night when all is still,
Full three-score valiant men are on their guard,
And every man must keep his sword unsheathed.
This king, e'en in his sleep, surpasses far
The wonted lustre of the highest courts.
His bed, a chariot of cedar wood,
Whose pillars are of silver wrought with care,
'The bottom is with richest gold inlaid,
And purple draperies offset the whole.
His arrows shall go forth and not return,
His throne and sceptre shall remain alway."
The king of Egypt visits Solomon ;
They form a compact and the truce is sealed
In blood, for from henceforth they shall be one.
The daughter of this Pharoah becomes
The wife and counsellor of Israel's king.
Queen Bathsheba rejoices, she has won ;
The crown of David will no longer sit
Upon the head of Solomon, for he
Must have a crown which shall declare his might.
A jewelled crown she places on his head
Upon the day on which the wedding feast
Begins amid the people's forced acclaim.

The rich kneel down before her and implore
Her favor as they bring her wondrous gifts.
The poet brings his tribute which declares
She shall not rue her choice in leaving home,
But shall rejoice as mother of a king—
Base falsehood of a carping mind and pen.
The tide is running high, the waters seethe
And fume, while round about the masses wait
To look upon the wreckage of the strand.
An exiled people groaning loud and long
Beneath the lash of Egypt's sordid king,
Whose voice is heard in heaven, is led forth
To serve Jehovah in the wilderness ;
And there the masterhand of Moses is
To weld a nation midst confusion's reign,
A people joined by bonds of love and trust,
A people passing thru the self-same fire,
And showing strong allegiance to one God.
A shout is raised, a song of praise is sung
As on the borders of the promised land
A mighty host prepares to enter in.
The ensign is established, God is King.
The people glory in His sovereignty
As exercised by Judges and by Saul
Before the evil spirit came on him,
As clearly seen in David's childlike faith,
And as portrayed by David's son and heir,
Who reared a temple to the Lord supreme.
From bondage into freedom was the course
Which God prescribed as He from Egypt's sway

Released His chosen people, but alas
A son of David turns to seek the gods
And flesh-pots of a former master's land.
The bondage which was thine sometime ago,
Implied hand-service such as slaves afford,
Whose bodies are controlled by masters whims.
The bondage now imposed by Solomon
Implies soul-service such as heathen tribes
Not conscious of the sense of right and wrong,
Are asked to render to their stocks and stones.
Queen Bathsheba, rejoice, thy race is run,
Thy subtleties have proved the overthrow
Of Israel, and thou hast had revenge.
If Solomon gainsays thy word, increase
Thy wiles and let him know thy cruel might.
The path is strewn with roses, all the lights,
The gorgeous splendor of the feast, the gold
And silver, precious stones and costly dress
Are the accouterments of Solomon,
Not David's heaven-born, but earth-born son.

* * * *

BOOK IV.

RECEDING WATERS.

The feast is over. As the lights grow dim
The sun reveals the board of yesterday
No longer bright and beautiful but waste,
Resultant of the ravages of man.
A few years pass; again we view the hall
And palace of the king therein to find
A desolation, not because there are
No people in its precincts, but because
The king has lost his sense of shame and fear.
His heart so true before, "not perfect" now,
Has spurned Jehovah's pleading, earnest voice.
The simple life which once was Israel's
No longer will suffice for him who goes
To Egypt for his chariots and steeds,
His articles of luxury and ease,
And who in spite of protestations seeks
A wife in the ertswile oppressor's home.
The law wherewith Jehovah bound His race
While it was under Moses' zealous care,
No longer seems to be in force, for it
Doth clearly tell the king what he must do:
"He shall not multiply unto himself
Fair horses which shall take his heart from me;
He shall not cause the people to return
To Egypt to secure such steeds for him.
For I the Lord have said and now repeat:

Henceforth ye shall not tread on Egypt's soil.
He shall not multiply unto himself
Wives who shall turn his heart away from me.
He shall not multiply unto himself
Gold, silver, or the means of intercourse.
Man's disobedience proved his overthrow
Before, the second fault more heinous still
Cries out against the chosen of the Lord.
Strange women may be seen about the court,
Among them Moabites and Amorites
And Edomites and sad beyond compare
Zidonians and Hittites, exiled tribes.
The number is unparalleled as we
Count seven hundred wives of Solomon,—
Three hundred concubines complete the list.
His heart content on serving God alone
Sometime ago, becomes a heart of lust,
Devoted to his wives and concubines,
Whom he doth serve in abject slavery,
Forgetful of the image which is his.
The undermining process has begun,
An intellect, the pride of Israel,
Becomes a servile, frenzied mass of sin—
Directing-energy until it rots.
Adultery, thou term of shame and death,
Thy fang lies deeply buried in the heart
Of David's earth-born son; it poisons him
And he transmits the sin to those about
His royal court, to people of his land,
To nations far and wide, to high and low.

Base eunuchs swarm about him unrestrained,
Mere puppets they obey his carnal will,
Arrange his harem with the greatest care
And speed the low desires of the king.
The character of Solomon has changed,
No longer strong in judgment he becomes
A tool to execute his counselors' will.
Intoxicated by the life he leads,
He leaves the judgment hall to satisfy
His carnal longings and to view his wives.
An apathy arises which destroys
All self-respect, which makes him care for nought.
In de-volution's arms the victim rests,
Lulled by a morbid sense of calm repose,
As powers wane and waning change the man
Into a dog, a swine, a monstrous beast
Which wallows in the mire of bestial joy.
Thus falling from his high estate into
A bondage worse than Israel endured
When first the vassal of a western lord,
It seems he cannot rise; entreaties fail.
The waters are receding, as the tide
No longer high, exerts an outward force
And drags the weakened monarch in its wake.
Swim hard, O King, 'twill but accelerate
Thy end and draw thee to thy waiting grave.
Yes, I can see thee struggling from the shore.
Thou wilt not yield until thou hast essayed
To carry forth thy wondrous works of art.

* * * *

Is this the Shulamite, the charming wife
Of Solomon? How changèd she appears.
Her step is not elastic as it was,
Her head is not erect as it should be,
Her eyes seem swollen from a recent flood,
The furrows in her forehead's field disclose
Upheavals wrought by sadness and despair.
An agonized expression she presents
When bowing in submission to her lord,
Whom she desires to reclaim from sin
And help him lead a better, nobler life.
"My lord, attend unto the voice of one
Who preaches chastity by living chaste.
Regard discretion ere it be too late;
Strange women drop their words as honey-combs,
Their tongues are smoother than the softest oil.
Alas, their end and thine as well, O King,
Will be as bitter as the wormwood's taste;
Their end as sharp as any two-edged sword;
Their feet go down to death, their steps to hell.
Remove thy way far from them, O my Lord,
Do not come nigh unto their brilliant halls.
Do not let strangers dominate thy life
And drag thy wealth and thee into the mire.
The moment will arrive when it shall be
Too late for reasoning, as flesh and soul
Shall be consumed in everlasting woe."
Poor Shulamite, thy words do not convince
A slave to passion, tho they do annoy.
He can not look upon his downcast queen;

He dare not look upon her for the sight
Of purity no longer is vouchsafed.
In humble manner she withdraws as he
Asks Bathsheba to counsel what to do.
He can not hear her, see her, feel her near,
For she, the Shulamite, appears to be
A spectre present both by day and night,
The one restraining voice that checks his life.
Queen Bathsheba exults, her turn has come.
"There is one thing to do, one thing alone,
Acknowledge thou hast been mistaken and
Allow her to return unto her home.
Thus free the court of this vain, selfish maid,
Who feels she has been slighted, hence comes here
To make thy life a burden and to speak
To thee, a king, as if thou wert a rogue."
A moment only he is steeped in thot,
Such thot as such a weakling can assume,
When, fear and anguish traced upon his face,
He answers and commands in faltering tone:
"'Tis better so. I loved her, mother, but
My love grows cold as I review her pride.
O Shulamite, we must not meet again,
Perchance you can rewine me from a life
Which I do crave as drunkards crave their drink.
Come, servant, heed and follow this behest.
Let her who was my queen, the Shulamite,
Be clothed in garments of her former self,
Let her be stripped of every vestige of
The high estate to which I wedded her,

Give her the crook wherewith the shepherdess
May gently lead her sheep and lambs again.
Send her from court and bid her stay away.”
The servant goes to carry out his task ;
The king calls other servants, whom he bids
To bring him wine that he may straightway drown
The pangs that rise within his troubled breast ;
Still others call the wanton dancing girls,
And others bid musicians lend their skill.
The music has begun, the girls appear,
The goblet of the king is filled with wine.
It will not down, the music will not soothe,
The girls do not attract him with their songs.
He must arise and pace the floor at will.
He wanders to the lattice and beholds
Without the castle-wall a shepherdess,
More beautiful than ever she appears ;
A tinge of resignation in this pure
And lovely maid exalts her humble lot.
She hears the music, sadly turns about,
To look once more upon a home she loved,
When suddenly the eyes of Solomon
And of his queen of by-gone days exchange
A glance which augurs more than pen can tell.
A sigh of love she utters, he of loss,
For even now he feels her solid worth.
The die is cast! musicians do not stop!
Dance all ye maidens, do not cease so soon ;
Come, bring me wine, more wine, I crave for wine.
A storm is coming, listen to the wind

As it howls round the lattice in its rage.
 We need not care, our larder is well-filled,
 Our every want is satisfied with speed.
 "That glance it will not leave me,—and the storm!"

* * * *

The feudal lords can straight command a host
 Of servile subjects to obey their will.
 These massive continental ruins speak
 Of ages during which bond-service reigned.
 A man was not a man unless a lord;
 In deepest degradation he assumed
 The role of slave and fed his master's whim.
 Taskmasters drove him onward when oppressed;
 The lash of ignorance or tyranny
 Swung round his bruised head and battered frame.
 The needs of such a slave were very few,
 The master's power over him was great;
 Hence rose these citadels as monuments
 Of man's oppression of his fellow-man.
 Another source of revenue there was
 Employed by lords to swell their great estates;
 Taxation just and unjust was imposed
 On vassals, foreigners and passers-by.

Observe the court of Solomon, and you
 Will see the prototype of feudal days.
 The burden borne in Egypt is a straw
 Compared with unjust service placed upon
 The weary shoulders of a tired race.

New cities rise in splendor on the scene ;
New palaces become his pampered homes ;
New fortresses lift up their haughty heads ;
New roads are fashioned for this regal realm.
Alas, the nation has outgrown its rank.
"What shall I do?" the gluttoned monarch sighs,
"New glories I desire and demand.
Can I place greater imposts on this race?
Can I, a lord, command and it be done?
Queen Bathsheba, what shall I do to sate
My growing hunger for infinitude?"
This serpent in the garden of the Lord
Creeps coyly to advise and gain redress :
"The Helots have been driven to excess,
They can no longer heed the captain's goad.
Make Helots of the nations as is meet,
Compel the Amorites, the Perizzites,
The Jebusites, the Hittites and the rest
To bow down in the dust and lend you aid.
Send forth Adoniram thruout the land
To make a levy for these growing needs.
They hate him. Yes, 'tis true. Yet he knows well
How, where, and when he may secure large funds.
Your soldiers cry for food and armament ;
Your body-guard must be arrayed in gold,
In finery more dazzling than the sun.
If you have ceded land to Hiram, give
Him more, these distant towns do not avail."
Advice born in a soul so deeply steeped
In avarice, corrupts a tainted soul

Still more and hurls it onward to its doom.
 A frenzied passion seizes him as he
 Demands his people to make sacrifice
 Not to his father's God, but David's son.
 Tithe upon tithe is added; in dismay
 The people's voice cries out and will not cease.
 "A chastisement with whips," the elders say,
 "Has been inflicted on old age and youth."
 The fires of revolt are burning low;
 An added insult causes them to flare.
 Dost thou think, tyrant, that thou art secure
 In every act because thy people must
 Obey thy word, and dance as thou dost play?
 Taxation may become a greater load
 Than they on whom it falls can bear or will.

* * * *

Unique in all the history of the world
 Stands Israel, the people of the Lord,
 Jehovah's lonely child yet not alone,
 Proud of a heritage and of a name
 Surpassing other nations of the globe
 As heaven separates itself from earth,
 Or God from gods, the ruler from mere stone.
 "A chosen people Israel shall be
 To me, the living God of heaven and earth.
 I am the Lord thy God which brought thee forth
 From out the exiled home in Egyptland.
 No other gods before me thou shalt have;
 No graven image thou shalt make for thee;
 No likeness of the things above, beneath,

Nor of the life in waters under all.
Thou shalt not bow thyself nor serve such gods,
For I, thy God, am jealous of my sway."
In early youth the prophet taught the king
These precepts and in manhood's early day
King David's earth-born son repeated them—
Repeated them because he loved this Lord,
Repeated them because he meant to do
What they enjoined, to serve Jehovah, God.
Th' Egyptian princess did not care to hear
His recitation of a foreign creed.
King Hiram's daughter found no great delight
In decalogues, Mosaic books of law.
Shall they adapt themselves to him, or shall
His family altar fall a prey to them?
The question is not easy, yet he feels
A compromise is needed in this plight.
"Broad-minded I must be and act," he claims,
"What hinders me from serving God and these
My wives from serving whom they choose to serve?
Why should I force them to accept my faith?
Why should my subjects tell me what to do?
When first great Pharaoh's daughter came to me
I built a house wherein she might reside,
In order not to desecrate the home
Of father David, king of Israel.
I said the place is holy for the ark
Of God hath been conveyed to it from far.
Ha, Ha, such simple thots, a simple fool
I was to place such barriers round about.

But I have learnt a thing or two since then,
A thousand instruments have soothed my mind,
Fair chants to all the idols I have heard
And find them very much akin to psalms.
I have determined what I ought to do:
On yonder heights the gods shall be appeased,
An altar for each god, no favors shown,
While Israel within the temple-courts
Doth worship God, let incense mark the hills."
To Ashtoreth, Sidonian deity,
Queen Aphrodite's baser, unchaste self,
The first of these foul altars is decreed,
For she is queen of gods and heaven's choice,
Baal's consort, he the sun and she the moon.
Chemosh, subduer, Moabitish god,
Is also honored on these mounts of fame.
His stern and warlike mien betrays in him
One unaccustomed to a life of ease.
The wanton bloody rites portend but shame,
A deeper shame when practiced by a race
Which wandering, wanders from, not to its God.
A sanguinary cult on Milcolm's mount
Portrays a hateful, lustful form and creed,
Abomination of the Ammonites,
Fair children sacrificed to fire's rule,
A custom borrowed from the Canaanites.
Before Jerusalem these altars stand.
The Mount of Olives, "hill of scandals" now,
Sends forth its fumes which winds do blow e'en to
The temple-courts and straight pollute the air.

Come, King Josiah, tarry not so long;
 Destroy the shrines which Solomon has reared.
 Base traitor of his people and their God!
 Can woes be like the woes which he
 Hath brought upon a wounded, downcast race
 Which cries for manna and receives a stone,
 For pity and must take a horrid curse,
 For oil of gladness and obtains foul blood!
 Ah, gape ye jaws of Milcolm, show the vast,
 Dread furnace which is but the way to hell.
 Idolatry, thou further monstrous sin,
 Thy venomed fang is buried in a king
 And nourishes supremely his desire.

* * * *

The way is long and dreary from the court
 To yonder mountain-heights to which the queen
 Of yesterday, a shepherdess to-day,
 Has turned her faltering footsteps as she seeks
 The regions where no mortal eye shall see
 Her state of anguish and of solitude,
 The regions where she may commune with God,
 Pour out her heart to Him, invoke His aid.
 Night weaves a mantle over all the earth,
 Hushed resignation marks weak nature's mood.
 A glen protects the woman as she rests,
 Rest after turmoil, harbinger of peace.
 The dew has bathed her ere the morn arrives,
 Her streaming locks are decked in moisture's garb.
 List to the words which come from sleeping lips:
 "Tho I do sleep my heart is wide-awake,

For there has been a knocking at its gate ;
And when I bade the stranger enter in
I heard the voice of him who banished me—
Ecstatic sound, 'My love, my undefiled'."
I quickly rose to open wide the door.
Alas, it was a dream, nought but a dream.
He had withdrawn and he had gone.
I sought him, but I could not find my love ;
I called him, but the echo died away.
I went into the city near at hand.
The watchman found me, smote and wounded me,
The keepers of the walls removed my veil.
Ye daughters of Jerusalem, lend ear,
Go, seek my king and bring him back to me ;
I can not live without him, I must die."
The chorus of the daughters to appease
The threnody thrust from a throbbing heart,
Essay to comfort her with soothing sounds :
"Why pine for thy beloved, noble child,
Is he more than another who betrays
Thy love and thrusts thee on a cruel world?
Friend, thou art fair, the fairest of our sex.
Hence why lament and mar thy beauty's field?"
Whereon the queen of by-gone days replies :
"My love is white and ruddy, chiefest man
Among ten thousand lords, his head as gold,
His locks are massive and of raven black,
His eyes as eyes of doves on river's strand
Bathed in a stream of milk and fitly set.
As towers of perfume his cheeks emit

A savor which his lips do supplément.
Ask me not to describe so fair a friend
Who altogether lovely is my spouse."
A passion so intense may not be soothed
Save by the music of the voice it craves.
Cease, cease, ye women, words do not avail.
Depart and grant the bitter-sweets of thot
To roam the gardens and the palaces
Where blossoming, a wondrous rose did grow
Which waxed in fragrance and in beauty till
A cruel storm plucked all its petals off.
At home at last the Shulamite arrives.
Her feet are bleeding from the stones they trod,
Her breasts are wounded by the briar's spear,
Her tresses tangled by the wild wind's rage,
Her cheeks alternately display a flush
Of modest shame, a palor as of death.
And this it is to love with all one's soul.
One sad and final lamentation swells
And surges, offspring of a bleeding heart:
"Do not forget thy dying queen, O King,
Upon thy life this seal must be engraved,
For love is strong as death and stronger than
The powers which connive against its sway.
As cruel as the grave is jealousy
Which robs a noble lover of his love;
But coals of love are coals of fire, the flames
Of which can not be quenched by water's might.
Love is not measured as we measure fields,
It is not weighed upon the trader's scales,

It is not bound by time nor foiled by fate,
It is a something that can bleed and die,
And bless while dying him for whom it bleeds.
I have no waiting-woman to attend
Me any longer, hence I can not send
A last farewell to thee, beloved king.
My prayer, however, shall ascend on high:
'God of our fathers, deign to save the soul
Of Solomon, my king, forgive Thou him
As I forgive him freely all the wrong
Whereby he brought on me this bitter end.'"

BOOK V

THE STRAND'S WRECKAGE.

Jerusalem, thou city fair and high
But yesterday, to-day a froulsome dank,
Mounts Zion and Moriah, far above
Thy putrid life, no longer solace thee.
A seething, swarming mass of human souls
Infest thy gates; the races from without
Pollute thy life and bring thee to the ground.
See yonder band of women, strangely clad,
Parade the market-place with shameless pomp,
And as they march along, they sing this song:
"Come, ye who seek an evening of repose,
Come in the twilight and the black of night,
Come to the homes which freely welcome you.
Why waste your leisure moments on the streets,
When perfumes, beauty, music reign within."
Will these base melodies enthrall young men;
Have they not moral rectitude enough
To banish thots of such an evil dye?
I waited for the evening; as it came
I sat behind the window of my house,
And looking thru the casement saw a youth
Void of all understanding pass the door
Of one of these enchantresses, who rushed
Upon him, caught him, kissed him and declared:
"At last I've found thee whom my soul has sought.
Come, I have paid my vows and bring thee peace."

There comes along the street a lonely priest,
Who sees not, heeds not, thinking it unfit
To interpose a warning and proclaim
The precepts of his God to weakened youth.
Alas, Jerusalem, thy star has set ;
A waning light reveals a grievous lot
Is thine. Another priest has come and gone,
When just as she has prompted him, the youth,
To heed her invitation, there appears
Jerusalem's High-priest, lone servant of
Jehovah, who adjures the boy and says :
"Can one go on hot coals and not be burned?
The ox to slaughter led, the fool to stocks,
Present no sadder sight than youth ensnared
By coated words concealing viper's fangs.
Let not thine heart decline unto her ways,
For she doth wound thee and then cast thee off.
Yea, many strong men she hath slain ere this ;
Her house leads to the tomb and on to hell."
"Why then," replies the youth, "do kings subscribe
To her dominion, why do they set us
Examples which we dare not imitate?
The court teems with corruption, why not go
And bear your message to the tottering king?"
"Alas, fair boy, I am debarred from court,
My voice no longer pleasing to the king
Is hushed, it feebly pleads with other men
To yield no self-surrender to a vice
That dims the holy city neath a cloud
So dark we can not see the sacred mount."
"Nay," saith the youth, "preach not to me in words

Unfit for kings, do not their lives reflect
 Themselves in subjects who obey their plea?
 Go to the court, thou servant of thy Lord,
 If it will heed thy message, so shall I,
 Until it does, farewell, I enter in."
 The door is closed, the youth has disappeared
 And left the sad High-priest to reason thus:
 "Jerusalem, the city of our God,
 Is now the brothel of an upstart race
 Of evil-doers who defy the law,
 The prophets and the altars of Jahveh,
 Obey the dread example of a faithless king,
 And bring destruction on the chosen race.
 My task is ended, I have failed, I see
 The clouds grow darker, and the lightnings flash,
 I hear the thunders of a God enraged,
 Repentant of the choice which He has made;
 They seem to echo forth: Revenge is Mine."

* * * *

Again conspiracy exerts its sway;
 The poisoned barb which entered David's court,
 And made him long for death before it came,
 Is thrust into the breast of Solomon.
 The son of Nebat, Jeroboam called,
 An Ephrathite, whose birth-place was close by
 The site where bronze was moulded to adorn
 The temple, scene of beauty and of grace,
 He lifted up his hand against the king.
 The deed is more revolting, for this man
 Is son of one who is a widow now—

Altho she never was a wife before.
The cause of this revolt is clearly traced:
The king built Millo and repaired the walls
Of David's city where the tooth of storm
Had bitten off huge morsels in its greed.
The king observed this young man, for he saw
In him a heart of valor and a will
Of steel, forged in the fire of industry.
He made him ruler over Joseph's house,
Commanding him to bear the burden well.
The young man left Jerusalem to do
As he was told when out upon the field
He met the Shilonite Ahijah and,
Alone, the prophet straight unfolds his plan.
The garment of the prophet which is new
Must serve to illustrate his mission's end.
Ahijah rent the garment into twelve
Unequal pieces, one for every tribe.
"Take ten of these," the prophet then commands.
"Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel:
'Out of the hand of fallen Solomon
These ten I take and give them unto thee;
Two only he shall keep, for David's sake
The one, the other, for Jerusalem.
My grief is very rending for the gods
Obtain a homage which belongs to Me.
My servant has not walked within my ways,
He trampled all my judgments under foot.
Alas, that he should be King David's son.
I can not take the kingdom from his hand,

His father's memory intercedes for him.
But let him die, his son will never rule
An undivided kingdom as the father did.
Let David's son retain Judea's soil;
While thou shalt lord it over Israel.
One pledge alone I ask, that you shall yield
Obedience to my just decrees and walk
In righteousness, as was king David's wont.
The seed of David shall arise to find
A stronger master than it found in him.
Not always thus will I afflict this seed,
But shall awaken as the years roll on
A greater son to David who shall free
His people from a burden and a snare
Imposed upon them by an earth-born son.
As he king Solomon has laid thee low,
A saviour shall appear and raise thee up.'"
King Solomon is troubled; he can not
Look on the features of a stronger man;
Where-e'er he turns a vision haunts his gaze,
A countenance of one who must succeed
And wrest the kingdom from a tottering hand.
"Kill Jeroboam," he decrees. But, no,—
There is no need to execute his word,
The servant has departed in the night.
A guardian angel came and summoned him,
Led him to Egypt, bade him stay awhile
Until this tyrant shall lay down his life.
The land wherein a Moses has been reared,
Wherein the envied brother Joseph reigned,

Wherein the people learned to ask for God,
The land of curses and of blessings, too,
The land wherein the Saviour shall be hid,
Calls "Jeroboam come and learn the art
Of warfare whereby you shall gain the strife.
King Solomon, who long ago did deign
To seek a queen in Egypt's royal house
And later on bought horses, chariots,
And spices without number in our realm,
Has lost all sense of shame and so defiles
The land which helped him gain his mastery.
Come, Jeroboam, learn how thou shalt reign,
How thou shalt vindicate a nation's name
And smear the streets with the ungrateful blood
Of Solomon, King David's beastly son."

* * * *

Behold the man! King David's earth-born son,
A human wreck, a skeleton at best,
Whose purple robe betrays it has been made
For other shoulders than it graces now,
Whose crown, a crown of gold, rests heavily
Upon a shrunken, ill-supported head.
This king pursues his weary journey to
The temple-mount, ascends and stands between
Two pillars, for he can not stand alone.
He leans upon his staff and offers prayer,
Or, rather, seeks a long-forgotten art.
He can not pray, words will not come from out
A heart that has grown hard on vice alone.
The people seeing, pity him, for they

Remember how in days that are no more
The crown sat lightly on his wondrous head,
The robe lent dignity unto his form,
And how forgetful of both crown and robe
He worshipped God in singleness of heart.
They think of father David as they mourn
The days that were, the halcyon days of yore.
The nervous monarch not allowed to pray
Cries out in great despair and agony:
"What profit hath a man of all his task?
One generation passing but makes room
For one that cometh, while the earth abides.
All rivers run into the sea and yet
It is not full; unto the place from whence
The rivers come, they turn unto the same.
I once was king and gave my heart to seek
The paths of wisdom, twined and intertwined.
That which is crooked now was one time straight,
Defects appear which can not be defined.
I found no solace in chaste wisdom's sway;
Hence bade my heart be mirthful and enjoy
The pleasures of a heartless, frenzied world.
Again I found no rest and turned to build
Great works and houses, vineyards, shaded pools;
I got me servants from abroad and reared
Them in my house; secured the choicest breeds
Of cattle; added silver, gold, unto
A treasury already filled with gems.
I got me singers from the provinces
And instruments wherewith to aid their songs.

Whatever I desired I obtained ;
My heart was sated with the pride of life ;
A bubble, it expanded ; until, now,
Its walls so far distended snap and snarl,—
Fore-tellers of a doom awaiting me,
When they shall burst and all my boasted pomp
Lie shattered in the trough of vanity.
The time for birth has passed, for death has come ;
The time for planting yields to plucking's reign ;
The time to break supplants the time to build ;
The time to weep enforces laughter's doom ;
The time to speak is hushed by silence hand ;
The time for love is ended, hatred lives ;
The time for peace is over, war is on.
Gape, gape, ye spectres, I'm your prisoner.

A Monologue.

I've done it !
All my greater self lies buried ;
My inferior self prevails.
But yesterday the wrong could have been righted
Which ever hence assails.

I suffer !

Nay, I perish, untold anguish
Gnaws ; nay, drives me to despair.
But yesterday a man, to-day a weakling
In evil's fatal snare.

I rue it!

How this sense of shame oppresses;
 How these spectres stand and stare;
 Their glance is one of sadness, disappointment,
 In one for whom they care.

I'll do it!

Wreckage may be re-constructed;
 Thus it yields a smaller hull,
 And yet a smaller self of better timber,
 Created for a lull.

A ghastly look, a lurch, and all is o'er;
 The staff has snapped asunder as a reed,
 A hollow reed on which a worm has fed,
 And finding nought of nourishment proceeds
 To dig its way to freedom and to light.
 The worm creeps o'er the shining temple-floor,

Affrighted by the crash which it has heard.
 The priests, amazed, rush in to see their king
 A prostrate form; and near him a lone worm.
 The High-priest summons courage as he cries:—
 "Oh, vanity of vanities, a king
 Whose outward station pleased a fickle race,
 Whose wealth was so amazing it would be
 Beyond my power to describe its bounds,
 Whose beauty in his prime pleased womankind,
 Whose wisdom was a by-word of the streets,
 Whose heart was true to God as he assumed
 The mastery of David's throne and home;

This king is but a mass of gruesome flesh ;
 And near him crawls the emblematic worm
 Which sought his staff as other worms attacked
 His wayward heart and fed on wholesome food.
 Perhaps a later king shall also die
 As victim to the loathsome creature's greed,—
 Perhaps, no, not perhaps, I know 'tis true,
 A greater king arising from the dead,
 A son of David—shall essay to crush
 The worms and serpents of an earth-born race ;
 'Tis vanity of vanities till then."

* * * *

The trumpets wake the resurrection morn ;
 The angels busily glide to and fro,
 As they are ordered to command the dead
 To leave their sepulchres and hasten to
 The judgment-seat of David's greater Son,
 Where they must hear the verdict, the "well-done,
 Thou good and faithful servant, enter in,"
 Or the most sad and terrible command :
 "Depart from me, ye sinful souls, depart."
 The patriarchs have risen from the dead ;
 The judges stand before a greater Judge ;
 The prophets see the Lamb they have fore-told ;
 The ranks have been established, right and left
 The good and bad appear to enter on
 The bliss or punishment they merited.
 Again the trumpets sound, the angels call :
 "Come forth, ye luke-warm spirits, meet your Lord,
 Tell him why ye have halted ; tell him why

The good and evil ever fought within
Your troubled breasts; nay, He can read your hearts,
He knows why ye have acted thus; why were
Ye not in conduct either hot or cold,
Why did ye force Him to pursue this course,
Whereby your bitter banishment is sealed?
Come forth, again we say, come forth, receive
The verdict of the righteous judge and king.
The graves are opened; one by one they rise—
These weak apostles of a former age.

From yonder grave there slowly creeps a form
With anguish clearly written on its brow—
A form we've seen before. It is a king
Now subject to a greater Lord; a king
To whom it seems quite strange to be aroused
In such a manner from his troubled sleep.
As he arises from his grave there rings
A shout of recognition from the right,
Its echoes rend the columns to the left.
He looks first one way, then another, then
Observes the wondrous golden throne, whereon
Is seated in most tranquil mode a King.
His friends upon the right hand beckon him:
"My son," king David cries in heart-felt tones,
"I've waited for you long and patiently.
Come join me in this brighter realm of day.
We kings of Israel shall laud this King
Of earth and heaven, people great and small."
But no, the eye of Solomon is not

To rest upon his father, nor his ear
Attend unto a voice which pleases him.
Beside his father stands the Shulamite,
Most beautiful in heaven's snow-white garb,
With but a faint memento here and there,
A scar which indicates a wound obtained
While roaming as a banished queen from court.
"I knew it, yes, I knew that I must see
My king again and live with him alway.
Come, love, and let me bring you to our King.
I've prayed for you, I've sighed for you, I wept,
I've waited for you, now my prayer is heard."
He listens to these soulful words of love.
While songs of lust address his other ear,
For from the left there comes a harmony,
Or dissonance, of luring cries and sobs;
He turns his head and there beholds the queen,
False Bathsheba, as she essays to call:
"My son, heed not thy father's tempting speech,
He cares not for thee; heed my words alone.
Come, join our ranks and pass thy time in sport,
In wanton revelry, in frolic and in drink.
We'll sing a merrier song than David sings,
We'll please thee more than yonder Shulamite.
They sing to glorify a Lamb once slain,
They speak of naught but holiness and peace.
We sing of pleasure and supplant our song
With sacred rites which Satan has decreed."
Another messenger from self-same realm
Confronts him as he looks upon the wife

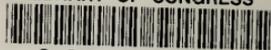
He brought from Egypt and from Pharoah's court :
"King Lucifer has steeds enough for two,
His stables are commodious and rich,
His steeds are fire-shod, his chariot-wheels
Are forged in furnaces of greatest heat.
Come, come and let us race thruout his realm,
We care not where we land or whence the course,
Let us re-live the days we spent on earth."
These are the solos, then there comes a burst
Of plaintive wails and sounds,—the chorus, which
Composed of many maidens, chants this strain :
"We are your wives, king Solomon, behold
Us, as we stand and sing, a thousand strong.
You lured us and we followed your behests,
Lent ear unto your words and cozened you.
Now 'tis your turn, O King, to cozen us,
To bide eternity within our home.
Come, mighty monarch, be our paramour."
Amazed, the king knows not which way to turn.
First to the right, then to the left he looks.
On one side David and the Shulamite,
And on the other Bathsheba and all
The women of the harem ; he decides,
If it be possible, to spend some time
With both ; this will be pleasing to his whim.
He stands before the Judgment-seat of Christ
A picture of remorse and yet a slave
To passions which he can not subjugate.

“O Lord, have mercy on Thy wayward child;
Bid us prepare unto the day when we
Shall stand before Thee and await Thy word;
Make us be certain what Thou hast in store;
Command us not, we pray Thee, to the left,
But bid us as Thy children to the right.”

Our tale is ended, David's earth-born son
Has met his greater brother—CHRIST OUR LORD.

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