

# DANIEL.

## PART I.

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DARIUS, *King of Media and Babylon.*

PHARNACES, } *Courtiers, Enemies to DANIEL.*

SORANUS, }

ARASPES, *a young Median Lord, Friend and Convert  
to DANIEL.*

DANIEL.

SCENE—*The City of BABYLON.*

*The Subject is taken from the Sixth Chapter of the Pro-  
phet Daniel.*

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

PHARNACES.

Yes!—I have noted with a jealous eye,  
The pow'r of this new fav'rite. Daniel reigns,  
And not Darius! Daniel guides the springs  
Which move this mighty empire! High he sits,  
Supreme in favour both with prince and people!  
Where is the spirit of our Median lords,  
Tamely to crouch and bend the supple knee  
To this new god! By Mithras, 'tis too much!  
Shall great Arbaces' race to Daniel bow!  
A foreigner, a captive, and a Jew?  
Something must be devis'd, and that right soon,  
To shake his credit.

SORANUS.

Rather hope to shake  
The mountain pine, whose twisting fibres clasp  
The earth, deep-rooted! Rather hope to shake  
The Scythian Taurus from his central base!  
No—Daniel sits too absolute in pow'r.

Too firm in favour, for the keenest shaft  
Of nicely aiming jealousy to reach him.

## PHARNACES.

Rather he sits too high to sit securely.  
Yes! he has reach'd that pinnacle of pow'r,  
Which closely touches on Depression's verge.  
Hast thou then liv'd in courts? Hast thou grown grey  
Beneath the mask a subtle statesman wears  
To hide his secret soul, and dost not know,  
That of all fickle Fortune's transient gifts,  
Favour is most deceitful? 'Tis a beam,  
Which darts uncertain brightness for a moment!  
The faint, precarious, sickly shine of pow'r;  
Giv'n without merit, by caprice withdrawn.  
No trifle is so small as what obtains,  
Save that which loses favour; 'tis a breath,  
Which hangs upon a smile! A look, a word,  
A frown, the air-built tow'r of fortune shakes,  
And down the unsubstantial fabric falls!  
Darius, just and clement as he is,  
If I mistake not, may be wrought upon  
By prudent wiles. By Flatt'ry's pleasant cup,  
Administer'd with caution.

## SORANUS.

But the means?  
For Daniel's life (a foe must grant him that)  
Is so replete with goodness, so adorn'd  
With every virtue, so exactly squar'd  
By Wisdom's nicest rules, 'twill be most hard  
To charge him with the shadow of offence.  
Pure is his fame as Scythia's mountain snows,

When not a breath pollutes them! O Pharnaces,  
I've scann'd the actions of his daily life  
With all the industrious malice of a foe:  
And nothing meets mine eye but deeds of honour!  
In office pure; for equitable acts  
Renown'd: in justice and impartial truth,  
The Grecian Themis is not more severe.

## PHARNACES.

By yon bright sun, thou blazon'st forth his praise  
As if with rapture thou didst read the page  
Where these fair deeds are written!

## SORANUS.

Thou mistak'st,  
I only meant to shew what cause we have  
To hate and fear him. I but meant to paint  
His popular virtues and eclipsing merit.  
Then for devotion, and religious zeal,  
Who so renown'd as Daniel? Of his law  
Observant in th' extreme. Thrice every day,  
With prostrate reverence he adores his God:  
With superstitious awe his face he turns  
Towards his belov'd Jerusalem, as if  
Some local, partial god might there be found  
To hear his supplication. No affair  
Of state, no business so importunate,  
No pleasure so alluring, no employ  
Of such high import, to seduce his zeal  
From this observance due!

## PHARNACES.

There, there he falls!  
Enough, my friend! his piety destroys him.

There, at the very footstool of his God,  
Where he implores protection, there I'll crush him.

SORANUS.

What means Pharnaces ?

PHARNACES.

Ask not what I mean.  
The new idea floating in my brain  
Has yet receiv'd no form. 'Tis yet too soon  
To give it body, circumstance, or breath.  
The seeds of mighty deeds are lab'ring here  
And struggling for a birth ! 'Tis near the hour  
The king is wont to summon us to council :  
Ere that, this big conception of my mind  
I'll shape to form and being. Thou meanwhile,  
Convene our chosen friends ; for I shall need  
The aid of all your counsels, and the weight  
Of grave authority.

SORANUS.

Who shall be trusted ?

PHARNACES.

With our immediate motive none, except  
A chosen band of friends, who most repine  
At Daniel's exaltation. But the scheme  
I meditate must be disclos'd to all  
Who bear high office ; all our Median rulers,  
Princes and captains, presidents and lords ;  
All must assemble. 'Tis a common cause :  
All but the young Araspes ; he inclines  
To Daniel and his God. He sits attent,

With ravish'd ears, to listen to his lore :  
With reverence names Jerusalem, and reads  
The volume of the law. No more he bows  
To hail the golden Ruler of the day,  
But looks for some great Prophet, greater far,  
So they pretend, than Mithras !—From him, there-  
fore,  
Conceal whate'er of injury is devis'd  
'Gainst Daniel. Be it too thy care to-day,  
To keep him from the council.

SORANUS.

'Tis well thought.

'Tis now about the hour of Daniel's pray'r :  
Araspes too is with him ; and to-day  
They will not sit in council. Haste we then !  
Designs of high importance, once conceiv'd,  
Should be accomplish'd. Genius which discerns,  
And courage which achieves, despise the aid  
Of lingering circumspection. The keen spirit  
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought  
Start into instant action, and at once  
Plans and performs, resolves and executes !

## PART II.

Scene—DANIEL'S House.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

PROCEED, proceed, thrice venerable sage!  
 Enlighten my dark mind with this new ray,  
 This dawning of salvation! Tell me more  
 Of this expected King! this Comforter!  
 This Promise of the nations! this great Hope  
 Of anxious Israel! this unborn Prophet!  
 This Wonderful, this mighty Counsellor!  
 This everlasting Lord! This Prince of Peace!  
 This Balm of Gilead, which shall heal the wounds  
 Of universal nature! this MESSIAH!  
 Redeemer, Saviour, Sufferer, Victim, GOD!

DANIEL.

Enough to animate our faith, we know,  
 But not enough to sooth the curious pride  
 Of vain philosophy! Enough to cheer  
 Our path we see, the rest is hid in clouds;  
 And Heav'n's own shadows rest upon the view!

ARASPES.

Go on, blest sage! I could for ever hear,  
 Untir'd, thy admonition! Tell me how  
 I shall obtain the favour of that God  
 I but begin to know, but fain would serve.

DANIEL.

By deep humility, by faith unfeign'd,  
 By holy deeds, best proof of living faith!  
 O faith,\* thou wonder-working principle,  
 Eternal substance of our present hope,  
 Thou evidence of things invisible!  
 What cannot man sustain, sustain'd by thee!  
 The time would fail, and the bright star of day  
 Would quench his beams in ocean, and resign  
 His empire to the silver queen of night;  
 And she again descend the steep of heav'n,  
 If I should tell what wonders faith achiev'd  
 By Gideon, Barak, and the holy seer,  
 Elkanah's son; the pious Gileadite,  
 Ill-fated Jephthah! He of Zorah too,†  
 In strength unequal'd; and the shepherd king,  
 Who vanquish'd Gath's fell giant! Need I tell  
 Of holy prophets, who, by conquer'ing faith,  
 Wrought deeds incredible to mortal sense;  
 Vanquish'd contending kingdoms, quell'd the rage  
 Of furious pestilence, extinguish'd fire!  
 Victorious faith! others by thee endur'd  
 Exile, disgrace, captivity, and death:  
 Some, uncomplaining, bore (nor be it deem'd  
 The meanest exercise of well-try'd faith)  
 The cruel mocking, and the bitter taunt,  
 Foul obloquy, and undeserv'd reproach;  
 Despising shame, that death to human pride!

ARASPES.

How shall this faith be sought?

\* Hebrews, xi.

† Samson.

DANIEL.

By earnest pray'r

Solicit first the wisdom from above :  
 Wisdom, whose fruits are purity and peace !  
 Wisdom ! that bright intelligence, which sat  
 Supreme, when with his golden compasses\*  
 Th' Eternal plann'd the fabric of the world,  
 Produc'd his fair idea into light,  
 And said that all was good ! Wisdom, blest beam !  
 The brightness of the everlasting light !  
 The spotless mirror of the pow'r of God !  
 The reflex image of th' all-perfect Mind !  
 A stream translucent, flowing from the source  
 Of glory infinite ! a cloudless light !  
 Defilement cannot touch, nor sin pollute  
 Her unstain'd purity ! Not Ophir's gold,  
 Nor Ethiopia's gems can match her price,  
 The ruby of the mine is pale before her !  
 And-like the oil Elisha's bounty bless'd,  
 She is a treasure which doth grow by use,  
 And multiply by spending ! she contains,  
 Within herself, the sum of excellence.  
 If riches are desir'd, wisdom is wealth !  
 If prudence, where shall keen invention find  
 Artificer more cunning ? If renown,  
 In her right hand it comes ! If piety,  
 Are not her labours virtues ? If the lore  
 Which sage experience teaches, lo ! she scans  
 Antiquity's dark truths ; the past she knows,  
 Anticipates the future ; not by arts

\* See Paradise Lost, book vii. line 225. Proverbs, viii. 27.

Forbidden, of Chaldean sorcerer,  
 But from the piercing ken of deep foreknowledge,  
 From her sure science of the human heart  
 She weighs effects with causes, ends with means ;  
 Resolving all into the sovereign will.  
 For earthly blessings moderate be thy prayer,  
 And qualify'd ; for light, for strength, for grace,  
 Unbounded thy petition.

ARASPES.

Now, O prophet !  
 Explain the secret doubts which rack my mind,  
 And my weak sense confound. Give me some line  
 To sound the depths of Providence ! O say,  
 Why the ungodly prosper ? why their root  
 Shoots deep, and their thick branches flourish fair,  
 Like the green bay tree ? why the righteous man  
 Like tender plants to shivering winds expos'd,  
 Is stripp'd and torn, in naked virtue bare,  
 And nipp'd by cruel Sorrow's biting blast !  
 Explain, O Daniel, these mysterious ways  
 To my faint apprehension ! For as yet  
 I've much to learn. Fair Truth's immortal sun  
 Is sometimes hid in clouds ; not that her light  
 Is in itself defective ; but obscur'd  
 By my weak prejudice, imperfect Faith,  
 And all the thousand causes which obstruct  
 The growth of goodness.

DANIEL.

Follow me, Araspes.  
 Within thou shalt peruse the sacred page,  
 The book of life eternal ! that will shew thee

The END of the ungodly ? thou wilt own  
 How short their longest period ; wilt perceive  
 How black a night succeeds their brightest day !  
 Thy purged eye will see God is not slack,  
 As men count slackness, to fulfil his word.  
 Weigh well this book ; and may the Spirit of grace  
 Who stamp'd the seal of truth on the bless'd page  
 Descend into thy soul, remove thy doubts,  
 Clear the perplex'd, and solve the intricate,  
 Till faith be lost in sight, and hope in joy!

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PART III.

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DARIUS on his Throne — PHARNACES, SORANUS,  
 Princes, Presidents, and Courtiers.

PHARNACES.

HAIL, King Darius! live for ever!

DARIUS.

Welcome!

Welcome, my princes, presidents, and friends!  
 Now tell me, has your wisdom aught devis'd  
 To aid the commonwealth ? In our new empire,  
 Subdued Chaldea, is there aught remains  
 Your prudence can suggest to serve the state,  
 To benefit the subject, to redress  
 And raise the injur'd, to assist th' oppress'd,  
 And humble the oppressor ? If you know,

Speak freely, princes! Why am I a king,  
 Except to poise the awful scale of justice  
 With even hand ; to minister to want ;  
 To bless the nations with a liberal rule,  
 Vicegerent of th' eternal Oromasdes ?

PHARNACES.

So absolute thy wisdom, mighty king,  
 All counsel were superfluous.

DARIUS.

Hold, Pharnaces!

No adulation ; 'tis the death of virtue!  
 Who flatters is of all mankind the lowest,  
 Save he who courts the flattery. Kings are men,  
 As feeble and as frail as those they rule,  
 And born, like them, to die. The Lydian monarch,  
 Unhappy Croesus, lately sat aloft,  
 Almost above mortality ; now see him !  
 Sunk to the vile condition of a slave,  
 He swells the train of Cyrus ! I, like him,  
 To misery am obnoxious. See this throne ;  
 This royal throne the great Nebassar fill'd ;  
 Yet hence his pride expell'd him ! Yonder wall,  
 The dread terrific writing to the eyes  
 Of proud Belshazzar shew'd : sad monuments  
 Of Heaven's tremendous vengeance! and shall I,  
 Unwarn'd by such examples, cherish pride ?  
 Yet to their dire calamities I owe  
 The brightest gem that glistens in my crown,  
 Sage Daniel. If my speech have aught of worth,  
 Or if my life with aught of good be grac'd,  
 To him alone I owe it.

SORANUS (*aside to Pharnaces*).

Now, Pharnaces,  
Will he run o'er, and dwell upon his praise,  
As if we ne'er had heard it; nay, will swell  
The nauseous catalogue with many a virtue  
His own fond fancy coins.

PHARNACES.

O great Darius!  
Let thine unworthy servant's words find grace,  
And meet acceptance in his royal ear,  
Who subjugates the east! Let not the king  
With anger hear my pray'r.

DARIUS.

Pharnaces, speak;  
I know thou lov'st me; I but meant to chide  
Thy flattery, not reprove thee for thy zeal.  
Speak boldly, friends, as man should speak to man.  
Perish the barbarous maxims of the East,  
Which basely would enslave the free-born mind,  
And plunder man of the best gift of Heav'n,  
His liberty of soul.

PHARNACES.

Darius! hear me,  
Thy princes, and the captains of thy bands,  
Thy presidents, the nobles who bear rule  
O'er provinces, and I, thine humble creature,  
Less than the least in merit, but in love,  
In zeal, and duty, equal with the first,  
We have devis'd a measure to confirm  
Thy infant empire, to establish firmly

Thy pow'r and new dominion, and secure  
Thy growing greatness past the pow'r of change.

DARIUS.

I am prepar'd to hear thee. Speak, Pharnaces.

PHARNACES.

The wretched Babylonians long have groan'd  
Beneath the rule of princes, weak or rash.  
The rod of pow'r was sway'd alike amiss,  
By feeble Merodach and fierce Belshazzar.  
One let the slacken'd reins too loosely float  
Upon the people's neck, and lost his pow'r  
By nerveless relaxation. He, who follow'd,  
Held with a tyrant's hand the cruel curb,  
And check'd the groaning nation till it bled;  
On different rocks they met one common ruin,  
Their edicts were irresolute, their laws  
Were feebly plann'd, their counsels ill advis'd;  
Now so relax'd, and now so overstrain'd,  
That the tir'd people, wearied with the weight  
They long have borne, will soon disdain control,  
Tread on all rule, and spurn the hand that guides 'em.

DARIUS.

But say what remedy?

PHARNACES.

That too, O king!  
Thy servants have provided. Hitherto  
They bear the yoke submissive. But to fix  
Thy pow'r and their obedience, to reduce  
All hearts to thy dominion, yet avoid

Those deeds of cruelty thy nature starts at,  
 Thou should'st begin by some imperial act,  
 Of absolute dominion, yet unstain'd  
 By aught of barbarous. For know, O king!  
 Wholesome severity, if wisely fram'd  
 With sober discipline, procures more reverence  
 Than all the lenient counsels and weak measures  
 Of frail irresolution.

DARIUS.

Now proceed

To thy request.

PHARNACES.

Not I, but all request it.

Be thy imperial edict issued straight,  
 And let a firm decree be this day pass'd,  
 Irrevocable, as our Median laws.  
 Ordain that for the space of thirty days  
 No subject in thy realm shall aught request  
 Of God or man, except of thee, O king!

DARIUS.

Wherefore this strange decree?

PHARNACES.

'Twill fix the crown

With lasting safety on thy royal brow,  
 And, by a bloodless means, preserve th' obedience  
 Of this new empire. Think how much 'twill raise  
 Thy high renown! 'Twill make thy name rever'd,  
 And popular beyond example. What!  
 To be as Heav'n, dispensing good and ill  
 For thirty days! With thine own ears to hear

Thy people's wants, with thine own liberal hands  
 To bless thy suppliant subjects! O Darius!  
 Thou'lt seem as bounteous as a giving god!  
 And reign in every heart in Babylon  
 As well as Media! what a glorious state  
 To be the sov'reign arbiter of good!  
 The first efficient cause of happiness!  
 To scatter mercies with a plenteous hand;  
 And to be blest thyself in blessing others!

DARIUS.

Is this the general wish?

[Princes and Courtiers kneel.]

CHIEF PRESIDENT.

Of one, of all.

Behold thy princes, presidents, and lords,  
 Thy counsellors, and captains! See, O king!

[Presenting the Edict.]

Behold the instrument our zeal has drawn;  
 The edict is prepar'd. We only wait  
 The confirmation of thy gracious word,  
 And thy imperial signet.

DARIUS.

Say, Pharnaces,

What penalty awaits the man who dares  
 Transgress our mandate?

PHARNACES.

Instant death, O king!

This statute says, "Should any subject dare  
 "Petition, for the space of thirty days,  
 "Of God or man, except of thee, O king!



" He shall be thrown into yon dreadful den  
" Of hungry lions !"

DARIUS.

Hold ! Methinks a deed  
Of such importance should be wisely weigh'd.

PHARNACES.

We have revolv'd it, mighty king ! with care,  
With closest scrutiny. On us devolve  
Whatever blame occurs !

DARIUS.

I'm satisfied.  
Then to your wisdom I commit me, princes.  
Behold the royal signet : see, 'tis done.

PHARNACES (*aside*).

There Daniel fell ! That signet seal'd his doom.

DARIUS (*after a pause*).

Let me reflect—Sure I have been too rash !  
Why such intemperate haste ? but you are wise ;  
And would not counsel this severe decree  
But for the wisest purpose. Yet methinks,  
I might have weigh'd, and in my mind revolv'd—  
This statute, ere, the royal signet stamp'd,  
It had been past repeal. Sage Daniel too !  
My counsellor, my guide, my well-try'd friend,  
He should have been consulted ; he whose wisdom  
I still have found oracular.

PHARNACES.

Mighty king !  
'Tis as it should be. The decree is past

Irrevocable, as the steadfast law  
Of Mede and Persian, which can never change.  
Those who observe it live, as is most meet,  
High in thy grace :—who violate it, die.

## PART IV.

Scene—DANIEL'S House.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

OH, holy Daniel ! prophet, father, friend,  
I come, the wretched messenger of ill !  
Thy foes complot thy death. For what can mean  
This new made law, extorted from the king  
Almost by force ? What can it mean, O Daniel,  
But to involve thee in the toils they spread  
To snare thy precious life ?

DANIEL.

How ! was the king  
Consenting to this edict ?

ARASPES.

They surpris'd  
His easy nature ; took him when his heart  
Was softened by their blandishments. They wore  
The mask of public virtue to deceive him  
Beneath the specious name of general good,

DANIEL :

They wrought him to their purposes : no time  
 Allow'd him to deliberate. One short hour,  
 Another moment, and his soul had gain'd  
 Her natural tone of virtue.

DANIEL.

That great Pow'r,  
 Who suffers evil only to produce  
 Some unseen good, permits that this should be :  
 And, He permitting, I, well pleas'd, resign.  
 Retire, my friend : this is my second hour  
 Of daily prayer. Anon we'll meet again.  
 Here, in the open face of that bright sun  
 Thy fathers worshipp'd, will I offer up,  
 As is my rule, petition to our God,  
 For thee, for me, for Solyma, for all !

ARASPES.

Oh, stay ! what mean'st thou ?—sure thou hast not  
 heard

The edict of the king ? I thought, but now,  
 Thou knew'st its purport. It expressly says,  
 That no petition henceforth shall be made,  
 For thirty days, save only to the king ;  
 Nor prayer nor intercession shall be heard  
 Of any god or man, but of Darius.

DANIEL.

And think'st thou then my reverence for the king,  
 Good as he is, shall tempt me to renounce  
 My sworn allegiance to the King of kings ?  
 Hast thou commanded legions ? strove in battle,  
 Defy'd the face of danger, mock'd at death

In all its frightful forms, and tremblest now ?  
 Come, learn of me ; I'll teach thee to be bold,  
 Though sword I never drew ! Fear not, Araspes,  
 The feeble vengeance of a mortal man,  
 Whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein  
 Is he to be accounted of ? but fear  
 The awaken'd vengeance of the living Lord ;  
 He who can plunge the everlasting soul  
 In infinite perdition !

ARASPES.

Then, O Daniel !  
 If thou persist to disobey the edict,  
 Retire and hide thee from the prying eyes  
 Of busy malice !

DANIEL.

He who is asham'd  
 To vindicate the honour of his God,  
 Of him the living Lord shall be asham'd  
 When He shall judge the tribes !

ARASPES.

Yet, Oh remember,  
 Oft have I heard thee say, the secret heart  
 Is fair Devotion's Temple ; there the saint,  
 E'en on that living altar, lights the flame  
 Of purest sacrifice, which burns unseen,  
 Not unaccepted.—I remember too,  
 When Syrian Naaman,\* by Elisha's hand,  
 Was cleans'd from foul pollution, and his mind,  
 Enlighten'd by the miracle, confess'd

\* 2 Kings, v.

The Almighty God of Jacob ; that he deem'd it  
No flagrant violation of his faith  
To bend at Rimmon's shrine ; nor did the seer  
Forbid the right external,

DANIEL.

Know, Araspes,  
Heav'n deigns to suit our trials to our strength.  
A recent convert, feeble in his faith,  
Naaman, perhaps, had sunk beneath the weight  
Of so severe a duty. Gracious Heav'n  
Forbears to bruise the reed, or quench the flax  
When feeble and expiring. But shall I,  
Shall Daniel, shall the servant of the Lord,  
A veteran in his cause—long train'd to know  
And do his will—long exercis'd in woe,  
Bred in captivity, and born to suffer ;  
Shall I from known, from certain duty shrink  
To shun a threaten'd danger ? O Araspes !  
Shall I, advanc'd in age, in zeal decline ?  
Grow careless as I reach my journey's end !  
And slacken in my pace, the goal in view ?  
Perish discretion when it interferes  
With duty ! Perish the false policy  
Of human wit, which would commute our safety  
With God's eternal honour ! Shall His law  
Be set at nought, that I may live at ease ?  
How would the heathen triumph, should I fall  
Thro' coward fear ! How would God's enemies  
Insultingly blaspheme !

ARASPES.

Yet think a moment.

DANIEL.

No !—

Where evil may be *done*, 'tis right to ponder ;  
Where only *suffer'd*, know, the *shortest* pause  
Is much too long. Had great Darius paus'd,  
This ill had been prevented. . . But for me,  
Araspes, to deliberate is to sin.

ARASPES.

Think of thy pow'r, thy favour with Darius :  
Think of thy life's importance to the tribes  
Scaree yet return'd in safety. Live ! Oh live !  
To serve the cause of God !

DANIEL.

God will himself  
Sustain his righteous cause. He knows to raise  
Fit instruments to serve him. Know, Araspes,  
He does not need our crimes to help his cause,  
Nor does his equitable law permit  
A sinful act, from the preposterous plea  
That good may follow it. For me, my friend,  
The spacious earth holds not a bait to tempt me.  
What would it profit me, if I should gain  
Imperial Ecbatan, th' extended land  
Of fruitful Media, nay the world's wide empire,  
If mine eternal soul must be the price ?  
Farewell, my friend ! time presses. I have stol'n  
Some moments from my duty, to confirm  
And strengthen thy young faith ! Let us fulfil  
What Heav'n enjoins — and leave to Heav'n th'  
event !

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## PART IV.

Scene—The Palace.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

PHARNACES.

'Tis done—success has crown'd our scheme, Soranus;  
And Daniel falls into the deep laid toils  
Our prudence spread.

SORANUS.

That he should fall so soon,  
Astonishes e'en me! What! not a day!  
What! not a single moment to defer  
His rash devotions? Madly thus to rush  
On certain peril, quite transcends belief?  
When happen'd it, Pharnaces?

PHARNACES.

On the instant  
Scarce is the deed accomplish'd. As he made  
His ostentatious prayer, e'en in the face  
Of the bright God of day, all Babylon  
Beheld the insult offer'd to Darius.  
For, as in bold defiance of the law,  
His windows were not clos'd. Our chosen bands,  
Whom we had plac'd to note him, straight rush'd in,  
And seiz'd him in the warmth of his blind zeal,

Ere half his pray'r was finish'd. Young Araspes,  
With all the wild extravagance of grief,  
Prays, weeps, and threatens. Daniel silent stands;  
With patient resignation, and prepares  
To follow them.—But see, the king approaches!

SORANUS.

How's this? deep sorrow sits upon his brow?  
And stern resentment fires his angry eye.

Enter DARIUS.

DARIUS.

O deep-laid stratagem! O artful wile!  
To take me unprepar'd, to wound my heart,  
E'en where it feels most tenderly, in friendship!  
To stab my fame! to hold me up a mark  
To future ages, for the perjurd prince,  
Who slew the friend he lov'd! O Daniel, Daniel,  
Who now shall trust Darius? not a slave  
In my wide empire, from the Indian main  
To the cold Caspian, but is more at ease  
Than I, his monarch! Yes! I've done a deed  
Will blot my honour with eternal stain!  
Pharnaces! O thou hoary sycophant!  
Thou wily politician! thou hast snar'd  
Thy unsuspecting master!

PHARNACES.

Great Darius,  
Let not resentment blind thy royal eyes.  
In what am I to blame? Who could suspect

This obstinate resistance to the law  
Who could foresee that Daniel would perforce  
Oppose the king's decree ?

DARIUS.

Thou, thou foresaw'st it!  
Thou knew'st his righteous soul would ne'er endure  
So long an interval of prayer. But I,  
Deluded king! 'twas I should have foreseen  
His stedfast piety. I should have thought  
Your earnest warmth had some more secret source,  
Something that touch'd you nearer than your love,  
Your well-feign'd zeal for me—I should have known,  
When selfish politicians, hackney'd long  
In fraud and artifice, affect a glow  
Of patriot fervor, or fond loyalty,  
Which scorns all show of interest, that's the mo-  
ment

To watch their crooked projects.—Well thou know'st  
How dear I held him; how I priz'd his truth!  
Did I not choose him from a subject world,  
Unbless'd by fortune, and by birth ungrac'd,  
A captive and a Jew? Did I not love him!  
Was he not rich in independent worth?  
And great in native goodness! That undid him!  
There, there he fell! If he had been less great,  
He had been safe. Thou could'st not bear his bright-  
ness;

The lustre of his virtues quite obscur'd,  
And dimm'd thy fainter merit. Rash old man!  
Go, and devise some means to set me free

From this dread load of guilt! Go, set at work  
Thy plotting genius to redeem the life  
Of venerable Daniel!

PHARNACES.

'Tis too late.

He has offended 'gainst the new decree;  
Has dar'd to make petition to his God,  
Although the dreadful sentence of the act  
Full well he knew. And by th' establish'd law  
Of Media, by that law irrevocable  
Which he has dar'd to violate, he dies!

DARIUS.

Impiety! presumption! monstrous law!  
Irrevocable? Is there aught on earth  
Deserves that name? Th' eternal laws alone  
Of Oromasdes are unchangeable!  
All human projects are so faintly fram'd,  
So feebly plann'd, so liable to change,  
So mix'd with error in their very form,  
That mutable and mortal are the same.  
But where is Daniel? Wherefore comes he not  
To load me with reproaches? to upbraid me  
With all the wrongs my barbarous haste has done him!  
Where is he?

PHARNACES.

He prepares to meet his fate.  
This hour he dies, for so the act decrees.

DARIUS.

Suspend the bloody sentence. Bring him hither.  
Or rather let me seek him, and implore  
His dying pardon, and his parting prayer.

## PART VI.

Scene—DANIEL's House.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

STILL let me follow thee; still let me hear  
The voice of Wisdom, ere the silver cord  
By Death's cold hand be loosen'd.

DANIEL.

Now I'm ready!  
No grief; no woman's weakness, good Araspes!  
Thou should'st rejoice my pilgrimage is o'er,  
And the blest haven of repose in view.

ARASPES.

And must I lose thee, Daniel? Must thou die?

DANIEL.

And what is death, my friend, that I should fear it?  
To die! why 'tis to triumph: 'tis to join  
The great assembly of the good and just;  
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints!  
Oh! 'tis to join the band of holy men,  
Made perfect by their sufferings! 'Tis to meet  
My great progenitors! 'Tis to behold  
Th' illustrious patriarchs; they with whom the Lord  
Deign'd hold familiar converse! 'tis to see

Bless'd Noah and his children, once a world!  
'Tis to behold, oh! rapture to conceive!  
Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost, below!  
Bold Azariah, and the band of brothers,  
Who sought, in bloom of youth, the scorching flames!  
Nor shall we see heroic men alone,  
Champions who fought the fight of faith on earth;  
But heav'nly conquerors, angelic hosts,  
Michael and his bright legions, who subdu'd  
The foes of truth! To join their blest employ  
Of love and praise! to the high melodies  
Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,  
According to the golden harps of saints!  
To join in blest Hosannahs to their King!  
Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,  
Alone were Heav'n, though saint or seraph none  
Should meet our sight, and only God were there!  
This is to die! Who would not die for this?  
Who would not die, that he might live for ever?

DARIUS, DANIEL, ARASPES.

DARIUS.

Where is he? where is Daniel? Let me see him!  
Let me embrace that venerable form,  
Which I have doom'd to glut the greedy maw  
Of furious lions!

DANIEL.

King Darius, hail!

DARIUS.

Oh, injur'd Daniel! e'en I see thee thus,

Thus uncomplaining? can I bear to hear  
That when the ruffian ministers of death  
Stopp'd thy unfinish'd prayer, thy pious lips  
Had just invok'd a blessing on Darius,  
On him who sought thy life? Thy murderers dropt  
Tears of strange pity. Look not on me thus  
With mild benignity! Oh! I could bear  
The voice of keen reproach, or the strong flash  
Of fierce resentment; but I cannot stand  
That touching silence, nor that patient eye  
Of meek respect.

DANIEL.

Thou art my master still,

DARIUS.

I am thy murderer! I have sign'd thy death!

DANIEL.

I know thy bent of soul is honourable:  
Thou hast been gracious still! Were it not so,  
I would have met the appointment of high Heav'n  
With humble acquiescence; but to know  
Thy will concurr'd not with thy servant's fate,  
Adds joy to resignation.

DARIUS.

Here I swear,

By him who sits enthron'd in yon bright sun,  
Thy blood shall be aton'd! On these thy foes  
Thou shalt have ample vengeance.

DANIEL.

Hold, O king!

Vengeance is mine, th' eternal Lord has said:

Myself will recompense, with even hand,  
The sinner for the sin. The wrath of man  
Works not the righteousness of God.

DARIUS.

I had hoped,

We should have trod this busy stage together  
A little longer, then have sunk to rest  
In honourable age! Who now shall guide  
My shatter'd bark in safety: Who shall now  
Direct me? Oh, unhappy state of kings!  
'Tis well the robe of majesty is gay,  
Or who would put it on? A crown! What is it?  
It is to bear the miseries of a people!  
To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,  
And sink beneath a load of splendid care!  
To have your best success ascrib'd to Fortune,  
And Fortune's failures all ascrib'd to you!  
It is to sit upon a joyless height,  
To every blast of changing fate expos'd!  
Too high for hope; too great for happiness!  
For friendship too much fear'd! To all the joys  
Of social freedom, and th' endearing charm  
Of liberal interchange of soul unknown;  
Fate meant me an exception to the rest,  
And, tho' a monarch, bless'd me with a friend;  
And I—have murder'd him!

DANIEL.

My hour approaches.

Hate not my memory, king: protect Araspes:  
Encourage Cyrus in the holy work  
Of building ruin'd Solyma. Farewell!

DARIUS.

With most religious strictness I'll fulfil  
Thy last request. Araspes shall be next  
My throne and heart. Farewell! *[They embrace.*

Hear, future kings,

Ye unborn rulers of the nations, hear!  
Learn from my crime, from my misfortunes learn,  
Never to trust to weak or wicked hands,  
That delegated power which Oromasdes  
Invests in monarchs for the public good.

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PART VII.

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*Scene—The Court of the Palace.—The Sun rising.*

DARIUS, ARASPES.

DARIUS.

Oh, good Araspes! what a night of horror!  
To me the dawning day brings no return  
Of cheerfulness or peace! No balmy sleep  
Has seal'd these eyes, no nourishment has past  
These loathing lips, since Daniel's fate was sign'd!  
Hear what my fruitless penitence resolves—  
The thirty days my rashness had decreed  
The edict's force should last, I will devote  
To mourning and repentance, fasting, pray'r,  
And all due rites of grief. For thirty days  
No pleasant sound of dulcimer or harp,

Sackbut or flute, or psaltery, shall charm  
My ear, now dead to every note of joy!

ARASPES.

My grief can know no period!

DARIUS.

See that den!

There Daniel met the furious lions' rage!  
There were the patient martyr's mangled limbs  
Torn piecemeal! Never hide thy tears, Araspes!  
'Tis virtuous sorrow, unallay'd, like mine,  
By guilt and fell remorse! Let us approach:  
Who knows but that dread Power to whom he pray'd  
So often and so fervently, has heard him!

*[He goes to the mouth of the den.*

O Daniel! servant of the living God!  
He whom thou hast serv'd so long, and lov'd so well,  
From the devouring lion's famish'd jaw,  
Can He deliver thee?

DANIEL *(from the bottom of the den).*

He can—He has!

DARIUS.

Methought I heard him speak!

ARASPES.

Oh! wondrous force

Of strong imagination! were thy voice  
Loud as the trumpet's blast, it could not wake him  
From that eternal sleep!



DANIEL :

DANIEL (*in the den*).

Hail! king Darius!

The God I serve has shut the lions' mouth,  
To vindicate my innocence.

DARIUS.

He speaks!

He lives!

ARASPES.

'Tis no illusion! 'tis the sound  
Of his known voice.

DARIUS.

Where are my servants? Haste.

Fly, swift as lightning, free him from the den;  
Release him, bring him hither! Break the seal  
Which keeps him from me! See, Araspes, look!  
See the charm'd lions!—mark their mild demeanour:  
Araspes, mark!—they have no power to hurt him!  
See how they hang their heads, and smooth their  
fierceness,  
At his mild aspect.

ARASPES.

Who that sees this sight,  
Who that in after-times shall hear this told,  
Can doubt if Daniel's God be God indeed?

DARIUS.

None, none, Araspes!

ARASPES.

Ah, he comes, he comes!

Enter DANIEL, followed by multitudes.

DANIEL.

Hail, great Darius!

DARIUS.

Dost thou live indeed;

And live unhurt?

ARASPES.

Oh, miracle of joy!

DARIUS.

I scarce can trust my eyes! how didst thou 'scape?

DANIEL.

That bright and glorious Being who vouchsaf'd  
Presence divine, when the three martyr'd brothers  
Essay'd the cauldron's flame, supported me!  
E'en in the furious lions' dreadful den,  
The prisoner of hope, even there I turn'd  
To the strong hold, the bulwark of my strength,  
Ready to hear, and mighty to redeem!

DARIUS (*to ARASPES*).

Where is Pharnaces? Take the hoary traitor!  
Take too Soranus, and the chief abettors  
Of this dire edict; let not one escape.  
The punishment their deep-laid hate devis'd  
For holy Daniel, on their heads shall fall  
With tenfold vengeance. To the lions' den  
I doom his vile accusers! All their wives,  
Their children too, shall share one common fate!  
Take care that none escape.—Go, good Araspes.

[ARASPES goes out.]

DANIEL :

DANIEL.

Not so, Darius !  
 O spare the guiltless ! spare the guilty too !  
 Where sin is not, to punish were unjust ;  
 And where sin is, O king, there fell remorse  
 Supplies the place of punishment !

DARIUS.

No more !  
 My word is past ! Not one request, save this,  
 Shalt thou e'er make in vain. Approach, my friends ;  
 Araspes has already spread the tale,  
 And see what crowds advance !

PEOPLE.

Long live Darius !  
 Long live great Daniel, too, the people's friend !

DARIUS.

Draw near, my subjects. See this holy man !  
 Death had no power to harm him. Yon fell band  
 Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,  
 Forgot their nature, and grew tame before him.  
 The mighty God protects his servants thus !  
 The righteous thus he rescues from the snare !  
 While fraud's artificer himself shall fall !  
 In the deep gulf his wily arts devise  
 To snare the innocent.

A COURTIER.

To the same den  
 Araspes bears Pharnaces and his friends ;

Fall'n is their insolence ! With prayers and tears  
 And all the meanness of high-crested pride,  
 When adverse fortune frowns, they beg for life.  
 Araspes will not hear. " You heard not me,"  
 He cries, " when I for Daniel's life implor'd ;  
 " His God protected him ! see now if yours  
 " Will listen to your cries !"

DARIUS.

Now hear,  
 People and nations, languages, and realms,  
 O'er whom I rule ! Peace be within your walls !  
 That I may banish from the minds of men  
 The rash decree gone out ; hear me resolve  
 To counteract its force by one more just.  
 In ev'ry kingdom of my wide-stretch'd realm,  
 From fair Chaldea to th' extremest bound  
 Of northern Media, be my edict sent  
 And this my statute known. My heralds, haste,  
 And spread my royal mandate through the land,  
 That all my subjects bow the ready knee  
 To Daniel's God—for HE alone is LORD.  
 Let all adore, and tremble at his name,  
 Who sits in glory unapproachable  
 Above the heav'ns—above the heav'n of heav'ns !  
 His power is everlasting : and HIS throne,  
 Founded in equity and truth, shall last  
 Beyond the bounded reign of time and space.  
 Through wide eternity ! With HIS right arm,  
 He saves, and who opposes ? HE defends,  
 And who shall injure ? In the perilous den  
 He rescu'd Daniel from the lions' mouth !

DANIEL :

His common deeds are wonders; all HIS works  
One ever-during chain of miracles!

*Enter ARASPES.*

ARASPES.

All hail, O king! Darius, live for ever!  
May all thy foes be as Pharnaces is!

DARIUS.

Araspes, speak!

ARASPES.

Oh, let me spare the tale,  
'Tis full of horror! Dreadful was the sight!  
The hungry lions, greedy for their prey,  
Devour'd the wretched princes ere they reach'd  
The bottom of the den.

DARIUS.

Now, now confess,  
'Twas some superior hand restrain'd their rage,  
And tam'd their furious appetites.

PEOPLE.

'Tis true.

The God of Daniel is a mighty God :—  
He saves and He destroys.

ARASPES.

O friend! O Daniel!  
No wavering doubts can ever more disturb  
My settled faith.

DANIEL.

To God be all the glory!

## REFLECTIONS

OF

## KING HEZEKIAH,

## In his Sickness.

— "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die."

*Isaiah, xxxviii.*