

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

PART I.

SCENE—*A Shepherd's Tent on a Plain.*

DAVID, *under a spreading tree, plays on his harp and sings.*

GREAT LORD of all things! Pow'r divine!
Breathe on this erring heart of mine
Thy grace serene and pure;
Defend my frail, my erring youth,
And teach me this important truth,
The humble are secure!

Teach me to bless my lowly lot
Confin'd to this paternal cot,
Remote from regal state!
Content to court the cooling glade,
Inhale the breeze, enjoy the shade,
And love my humble fate.

No anxious vigils here I keep,
No dreams of gold distract my sleep,
Nor lead my heart astray!
Nor blasting Envy's tainted gale,
Pollutes the pleasures of the vale,
To vex my harmless day.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SAUL, *King of Israel.*
ABNER, *his General.*
JESSE.
ELIAB,
ABINADAB, } *Sons of JESSE.*
DAVID,
GOLIATH, *the Philistine Giant.*
Philistines, Israelites, &c. &c.
Chorus of Hebrew Women.

The Scene lies in the Camp in the Valley of Elah, and the adjacent Plain.

The Subject is taken from the Seventeenth Chapter of the First Book of Samuel.

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DAVID AND GOLIATH:

Yon tow'r, which rears its head so high,
And bids defiance to the sky,
Invites the hostile winds:
Yon branching oak, extending wide,
Provokes destruction by its pride,
And courts the fall it finds.

Then let me shun th' ambitious deed,
And all the dangerous paths which lead
To honours falsely won:
Lord! in thy sure protection blest,
Submissive will I ever rest,
And may thy will be done!

[*He lays down his harp, and rises.*]

DAVID.

Methinks this shepherd's life were dull and taste-
less

Without the charm of soothing song or harp:
With it, not undelightful is the haunt
Of wood, or lonely grove, or russet plain,
Made vocal by the Muse. With this lov'd harp,
This daily solace of my cares, I sooth'd
The melancholy monarch, when he lay
Smit by the chill and spirit-quenching hand
Of black Despair. God of my fathers, hear me:
Here I devote my harp, my verse, myself,
To thy blest service! gladly to proclaim
Glory to God on high, on earth good-will
To man; to pour my grateful soul before thee:
To sing thy pow'r, thy wisdom, and thy love,
And every gracious attribute: to paint
The charms of heav'n-born virtue! So shall I

A SACRED DRAMA.

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(Though with long interval of worth) aspire
To imitate the work of saints above,
Of Cherub and of Seraphim. My heart,
My talents, all I am, and all I have,
Is thine, O Father! Gracious Lord, accept
The humble dedication! Offer'd gifts
Of slaughter'd bulls and goats sacrificial
Thou hast refus'd; but lo, I come, O Lord!
To do thy will; the living sacrifice
Of an obedient heart I lay before thee:
This humble offering more shall please thee, Lord,
Than horned bullocks, ceremonial rites,
New moons and sabbaths, passovers and fasts!
Yet those I too will keep; but not in lieu
Of holiness substantial, inward worth;
As commutation cheap for pious deeds
And purity of life, but as the types
Of better things; as fair external signs
Of inward holiness and secret truth.

But see, my father, good old Jesse, comes!
To cheer the setting evening of whose life,
Content, a simple shepherd here I dwell,
Though Israel is in arms; and royal Saul,
Encamp'd in yonder field, defies Philistia.

JESSE, DAVID.

JESSE.

Blest be the gracious Pow'r who gave my age
To boast a son like thee! Thou art the staff
Which props my bending years, and makes me bear
The heavy burden of declining age,
With fond complacency. How unlike thy fate,

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O venerable Eli! but two sons,
But only two to gild the dim remains
Of life's departing day, and bless thy age,
And both were curses to thee! Witness, Heav'n,
In all the cruel catalogue of pains
Humanity turns o'er, if there be one
So terrible to human tenderness
As an unnatural child!

DAVID.

Oh! my lov'd father!
Long may'st thou live, in years and honours rich;
To taste and to communicate the joys,
The thousand fond endearing charities
Of tenderness domestic! Nature's best
And loveliest gift, with which she well atones
The niggard boon of fortune.

JESSE.

Oh! my son!
Of all the graces which adorn thy youth,
I, with a father's fondness, must commend
Thy try'd humility. For though the seer
Pour'd on thy chosen head the sacred oil
In sign of future greatness, in sure pledge
Of highest dignity, yet here thou dwell'st
Content with toil, and careless of repose;
And (harder still for an ingenuous mind)
Content to be obscure; content to watch,
With careful eye, thine humble father's flock!
O earthly emblem of celestial things!
So Israel's shepherd watches o'er his fold:
The weak ones in his fostering bosom bears:

And gently leads in his sustaining hand,
The feeble ones with young.

DAVID.

Know'st thou, my father,
Aught from the field? for though so near the camp,
Though war's proud ensigns stream on yonder plain,
And all Philistia's swarming hosts encamp,
Oppos'd to royal Saul, beneath whose banners
My brothers lift the spear,—I have not left
My fleecy charge, by thee committed to me,
To learn the various fortune of the war.

JESSE.

And wisely hast thou done. Thrice happy realm,
Who shall submit one day to his command,
Who can so well obey! Obedience leads
To certain honours. Not the tow'ring wing
Of eagle-plum'd ambition mounts so surely
To fortune's highest summit, as obedience.

[A distant sound of trumpets.]

But why that sudden ardour, O my son?
That trumpet's sound (though so remote its voice,
We hardly catch the echo as it dies)
Has rous'd the mantling crimson in thy cheek,
Kindled the martial spirit in thine eye;
And my young shepherd feels an hero's fire!

DAVID.

Thou hast not told the posture of the war;
And much my beating bosom pants to hear.

JESSE.

Uncertain is the fortune of the field.

I tremble for thy brothers, thus expos'd
To constant peril; nor for them alone
Does the quick feeling agonize my heart.
I feel for all!—I mourn that ling'ring war
Still hangs his banner o'er my native land,
Belov'd Jerusalem! O war! what art thou?
At once the proof and scourge of man's fall'n state!
After the brightest conquest, what appears
Of all thy glories?—For the vanquish'd, chains!
For the proud victor, what!—Alas! to reign
O'er desolated nations! a drear waste,
By one man's crime, by one man's lust of pow'r,
Unpeopled!—Ravag'd fields assume the place
Of smiling harvests, and uncultured plains
Succeed the fertile vineyard; barren waste
Deforms the spot once rich with luscious fig
And the fat olive.—Devastation reigns.
Here, rifed temples are the cavern'd dens
Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds obscene:
There, populous cities blacken in the sun,
And in the gen'ral wreck, proud palaces
Lie undistinguish'd, save by the dun smoke
Of recent conflagration. When the song
Of dear-bought joy, with many a triumph swell'd,
Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his pride,
How is the grateful harmony profan'd
With the sad dissonance of virgins' cries,
Who mourn their brothers slain? of matrons hoar,
Who clasp their wither'd hands, and fondly ask,
With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd sons!
How is the laurel's verdure stained with blood!
And soiled with widows' tears!

DAVID.

Thrice mournful truth!
Yet when our country's sacred rights are menac'd;
Her firm foundations shaken to the base;
When all we love, and all that we revere,
Our hearths and altars, children, parents, wives,
Our liberties and laws, the Throne they guard,
Are scorn'd and trampled on—then, then, my father!
'Tis then Religion's voice, then God himself
Commands us to defend his injur'd name,
And think the victory cheaply bought with life.
'Twere then inglorious weakness, mean self-love,
To lie inactive, when the stirring voice
Of the shrill trumpet wakes the patriot youth,
And, with heroic valour, bids them dare
The foul idolatrous bands, e'en to the death.

JESSE.

God and thy country claim the life they gave;
No other cause can sanctify resentment.

DAVID.

Sure virtuous friendship is a noble cause!
Oh were the princely Jonathan in danger,
How would I die, well pleas'd, in his defence!
When, 'twas long since, then but a stripling boy,
I made short sojourn in his father's palace,
(At first to sooth his troubled mind with song,
His armour-bearer next,) I well remember
The gracious bounties of the gallant prince.
How would he sit, attentive to my strain,
While to my harp I sung the harmless joys

Which crown a shepherd's life! How would he cry,
 Bless'd youth! far happier in thy native worth,
 Far richer in the talent Heav'n has lent thee,
 Than if a crown hung o'er thy anxious brow.
 The jealous monarch mark'd our growing friendship;
 And as my favour grew with those about him,
 His royal bounty lessen'd, till at length,
 For Bethl'hem's safer shades I left the court.
 Nor would these alter'd features now be known,
 Grown into manly strength; nor this chang'd form,
 Enlarg'd with age, and clad in russet weed.

JESSE.

I have employment for thee, my lov'd son!
 Will please thy active spirit. Go, my boy!
 Hasten to the field of war, to yonder camp,
 Where, in the vale of Elah, mighty Saul
 Commands the hosts of Israel. Greet thy brothers!
 Observe their deeds, note their demeanour well,
 And mark if on their actions Wisdom waits.
 Dear to them too (for well the waste of war
 Will make it needful) such plain healthful viands
 As furnish out our frugal shepherd's meal.
 And to the valiant captain of their host
 Present such rural gifts as suit our fortune:
 Heap'd on the board within my tent thou'lt find
 them.

DAVID.

With joy I'll bear thy presents to my brothers;
 And to the valiant captain of their host
 The rural gifts thy gratitude assigns him.

Delightful task! for I shall view the camp!
 What transport to behold the tented field,
 The pointed spear, the blaze of shields and arms,
 And all the proud accoutrements of war!
 But, oh! far dearer transport would it yield me,
 Could this right arm alone avenge the cause
 Of injur'd Israel! could my single death
 Preserve the guiltless thousands doom'd to bleed!

JESSE.

Let not thy youth be dazzled, O my son!
 With deeds of bold emprise, as valour only
 Were virtue, and the gentle arts of peace,
 Of truth and justice, were not worth thy care.
 When thou shalt view the splendours of the war,
 The gay caparison, the burnish'd shield,
 The plume-crown'd helmet, and the glitt'ring spear,
 Scorn not the humble virtues of the shade,
 Nor think that Heav'n views only with applause,
 The active merit and the busy toil
 Of heroes, statesmen, and the bustling sons
 Of public care. These have their just reward,
 In wealth, in honours, and the well-earn'd fame,
 Their high achievements bring. 'Tis in this view
 That virtue is her proper recompense:
 Wealth, as its natural consequence, will flow
 From industry: toil with success is crown'd:
 From splendid actions high renown will spring:
 Such is the usual course of human things.
 For Wisdom infinite permits, that thus
 Effects to causes be proportionate,
 And natural ends by natural means achiev'd.

But in the future estimate which Heav'n
 Will make of things terrestrial, know, my son,
 That no inferior blessing is reserv'd
 For the mild passive virtues: meek Content,
 Heroic Self-denial, nobler far
 Than all th' achievements noisy fame reports,
 When her shrill trump proclaims the proud success
 Which desolates the nations. But, on earth,
 These are not always prosperous—mark the cause:
 Eternal Justice keeps them for the bliss
 Of final recompense, for the dread day
 Of gen'ral retribution. Oh my son!
 The ostentatious virtues, which still press
 For notice and for praise; the brilliant deeds,
 Which live but in the eye of observation;
 These have their meed at once. But there's a joy,
 To the fond votaries of fame unknown,
 To hear the still small voice of Conscience speak
 Its whisp'ring plaudit to the silent soul.
 Heav'n notes the sigh afflicted Goodness heaves;
 Hears the low plaint by human ear unheard,
 And from the cheek of patient Sorrow wipes
 The tear, by mortal eye unseen or scorn'd.

DAVID.

As Hermon's dews their grateful freshness shed,
 And cheer the herbage, and the flowers renew;
 So do thy words a quick'ning balm infuse,
 And grateful sink in my delighted soul.

JESSE.

Go then, my child! and may the gracious God
 Who bless'd our fathers, bless my much-lov'd son!

DAVID.

Farewell, my father!—and of this be sure,
 That not one precept from thy honour'd lips
 Shall fall by me unnotic'd, not one grace,
 One venerable virtue which adorns
 Thy daily life, but I, with watchful care
 And due observance, will in mine transplant it.
 [Exit DAVID.]

JESSE.

He's gone! and still my aching eyes pursue,
 And strain their orbs still longer to behold him.
 Oh! who can tell when I may next embrace him!
 Who can declare the counsels of the Lord!
 Or when the moment pre-ordain'd by Heav'n
 To fill his great designs, may come! This son,
 This blessing of my age, is set apart
 For high exploits; the chosen instrument
 Of all-disposing Heav'n for mighty deeds.
 Still I recal the day, and to my mind
 The scene is ever present, when the Seer,
 Illustrious Samuel, to the humble shades
 Of Bethlehem came, pretending sacrifice,
 To screen his errand from the jealous king.
 He sanctify'd us first, me and my sons;
 For sanctity increas'd should still precede
 Increase of dignity. When he declar'd
 He came, commission'd from on high, to find,
 Among the sons of Jesse, Israel's king,
 Astonishment entranc'd my wond'ring soul!
 Yet was it not a wild tumultuous bliss;
 Such rash delight as promis'd honours yield

To light vain minds : no, 'twas a doubtful joy,
 Chastis'd by tim'rous virtue, lest a gift
 So splendid and so dang'rous might destroy
 Him it was meant to raise. My eldest born,
 Eliab, tall of stature, I presented ;
 But God, who judges not by outward form,
 But tries the heart, forbade the holy prophet
 To choose my eldest born. For Saul, he said,
 Gave proof, that fair proportion, and the grace
 Of limb or feature, ill repaid the want
 Of virtue. All my other sons alike
 By Samuel were rejected ; till, at last,
 On my young boy, on David's chosen head,
 The prophet pour'd the consecrated oil.
 Yet ne'er did pride elate him, ne'er did scorn
 For his rejected elders swell his heart.
 Not in such gentle charity to him
 His haughtier brothers live : but all he pardons.
 To meditation and to humble toil,
 To pray'r and praise devoted, here he dwells.
 Oh, may the graces which adorn retreat,
 One day delight a court ! record his name
 With saints and prophets, dignify his race ;
 And may the sacred songs his leisure frames,
 Instruct mankind, and sanctify a world !

PART II.

SCENE—The Camp.

ELIAB, ABINADAB, ABNER, ISRAELITES.

ELIAB.

STILL is th' event of this long war uncertain ;
 Still do the adverse hosts on either side,
 Protract, with ling'ring caution, an encounter,
 Which must to one be fatal.

ABINADAB.

This descent,
 Thus to the very confines of our land,
 Proclaims the sanguine hope that fires the foe.
 In Ephes-dammin boldly they encamp :
 Th' uncircumcis'd Philistines pitch their tents
 On Judah's hallow'd earth.

ELIAB.

Full forty days
 Has the insulting giant, proud Goliath,
 The champion of Philistia, fiercely challeng'd
 Some Israelitish foe. But who so vain
 To dare such force unequal ? who so bent
 On sure destruction, to accept his terms,
 And rush on death, beneath the giant force
 Of his enormous bulk ?

ABINADAB.

'Tis near the time
 When in th' adjacent valley which divides
 Th' opposing armies, he is wont to make
 His daily challenge.

ELIAB.

Much I marvel, brother,
 No greetings from our father reach our ears.
 With ease and plenty blest, he little recks
 The daily hardships which his sons endure.
 But see ! behold his darling boy approaches !

ABINADAB.

How, David here ! whence this unlook'd-for guest !

ELIAB.

A spy upon our actions : sent, no doubt,
 To scan our deeds, with beardless gravity
 Affecting wisdom : to observe each word,
 To magnify the venial faults of youth,
 And construe harmless mirth to foul offence.

Enter DAVID.

DAVID.

All hail, my dearest brothers !

ELIAB.

Means thy greeting
 True love, or arrogant scorn ?

DAVID.

Oh, most true love !
 Sweet as the precious ointment which bedew'd

The sacred head of Aaron, and descended
 Upon his hallow'd vest ; so sweet, my brothers,
 Is fond fraternal amity ; such love
 As my touch'd bosom feels at your approach.

ELIAB.

Still that fine glozing speech, those holy saws,
 And all that trick of study'd sanctity,
 Of smooth-turn'd periods and trim eloquence,
 Which charms thy doating father ? But confess,
 What dost thou here ? Is it to sooth thy pride,
 And gratify thy vain desire to roam
 In quest of pleasures unallow'd ? or com'st thou
 A willing spy, to note thy brothers' deeds ?
 Where hast thou left those few poor straggling sheep ?
 More suited to thy ignorance and years
 The care of those, than here to wander idly :—
 Why cam'st thou hither ?

DAVID.

Is there not a cause ?
 Why that displeasure kindling in thine eye ?
 My angry brother : why those taunts unkind ?
 Not idly bent on sport ; not to delight
 Mine eye with all this gay parade of war ;
 To gratify a roving appetite,
 Or fondly to indulge a curious ear
 With any tale of rumour, am I come ;
 But to approve myself a loving brother,
 I bring the blessing of your aged sire,
 With gifts of such plain eates and rural viands
 As suit his frugal fortune. Tell me now,
 Where the bold captain of your host encamps ?

ELIAE.

Wherefore inquire? what boots it thee to know?
Behold him there: great Abner fam'd in arms.

DAVID.

I bring thee, mighty Abner, from my father,
(A simple shepherd swain in yonder vale,)
Such humble gifts as shepherd swains bestow.

ABNER.

Thanks, gentle youth! with pleasure I receive
The grateful offering. Why does thy quick eye
Thus wander with unsatisfy'd delight?

DAVID.

New as I am to all the trade of war,
Each sound has novelty; each thing I see
Attracts attention; every noise I hear
Awakes confus'd emotions; indistinct,
Yet full of charming tumult, sweet distraction.
'Tis all delightful hurry! Oh! the joy
Of young ideas painted on the mind,
In the warm glowing colours fancy spreads
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely! Ah! what warlike sound
Salutes my ravish'd ear? [Sound of trumpet.

ABNER.

'Tis the Philistine,
Proclaiming by his herald, through the ranks,
His near approach. Each morning he repeats
His challenge to our bands.

DAVID.

Ha! what Philistine?—
Who is he?

ELIAB.

Wherefore ask; for thy raw youth
And rustic ignorance, 't were fitter learn
Some rural art! some secret to prevent
Contagion in thy flocks; some better means
To save thy fleece immaculate. These mean arts
Of soft inglorious peace far better suit
Thy low obscurity, than thus to seek
High things pertaining to exploits of arms.

DAVID.

Urg'd as I am, I will not answer thee,
Who conquers his own spirit, O my brother!
He is the only conqueror.—Again
That shout mysterious! Pray you (to Abner), tell me
who
This proud Philistine is, who sends defiance
To Israel's hardy chieftains?

ABNER.

Stranger youth,
So lovely and so mild is thy demeanour,
So gentle and so patient; such the air
Of candour and of courage which adorns
Thy blooming features, thou hast won my love
And I will tell thee.

DAVID.

Mighty Abner, thanks!

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ABNER.

Thrice, and no more, he sounds, his daily rule!
This man of war, this champion of Philistia,
Is of the sons of Anak's giant-race;
Goliath is his name. His fearful stature,
Unparallel'd in Israel, measures more
Than twice three cubits. On his tow'ring head
A helm of burnish'd brass the giant wears,
So pond'rous, it would crush the stoutest man
In all our hosts. A coat of mailed armour
Guards his capacious trunk; compar'd with which,
The amplest oak, that spreads his rugged arms
In Bashan's groves, were small. About his neck
A shining corslet hangs. On his vast thigh
The plated cuirass, firmly jointed, stands.
But who shall tell the wonders of his spear,
And hope to gain belief? Of massive iron
Its temper'd frame; not less than the broad beam
To which the busy weaver hangs his loom:
Not to be wielded by a mortal hand,
Save by his own. An armour-bearer walks
Before this mighty champion, in his hand
Bearing the giant's shield. Thrice ev'ry morn
His herald sounds the trumpet of defiance!
Offering at once to end the long-drawn war
In single combat, 'gainst that hardy foe
Who dares encounter him.

DAVID.

Say, mighty Abner,
What are the haughty terms of his defiance?

ABNER.

Proudly he stalks around th' extremest bounds
Of Elah's vale. His herald sounds the note
Of offer'd battle. Then the furious giant,
With such a voice as from the troubled sky
In vollied thunder breaks, thus sends his challenge;
"Why do you set your battle in array,
Ye men of Israel? Wherefore waste the lives
Of needless thousands? Why protract a war
Which may at once be ended? Are not you
Servants to Saul, your king? and am not I,
With triumph let me speak it, a Philistine?
Choose out a man from all your armed hosts,
Of courage most approv'd, and I will meet him;
His single arm to mine. Th' event of this
Shall fix the fate of Israel and Philistia.
If victory favour him, then will we live
Your tributary slaves; but if my arm
Be crown'd with conquest, you shall then live ours.
Give me a man, if your effeminate bands
A man can boast. Your armies I defy!"

DAVID.

What shall be done to him who shall subdue
This vile idolater?

ABNER.

He shall receive
Such ample bounties, such profuse rewards,
As might inflame the old, or warm the coward,
Were not the odds so desperate.

DAVID.

Say, what are they?

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ABNER.

The royal Saul has promis'd that bold hero
Who should encounter and subdue Goliath,
All dignity and favour; that his house
Shall be set free from tribute, and ennobled
With the first honours Israel has to give.
And for the gallant conqueror himself,
No less a recompense than the fair princess,
Our monarch's peerless daughter.

DAVID.

Beauteous Michal!

It is indeed a boon which kings might strive for.
And has none answer'd yet this bold defiance?
What! all this goodly host of Israelites!
God's own peculiar people! all afraid
To assert God's injur'd honour and their own?
Where is the king, who in his early youth
Wrought deeds of fame? Where princely Jonathan?
Not so the gallant youth Philistia fear'd
At Bozez and at Seneh;* when the earth
Shook from her deep foundations, to behold
The wondrous carnage of his single hand
On the uncircumcis'd. When he exclaim'd
With glorious confidence—"Shall numbers awe me!
God will protect his own: with him to save,
It boots not, friends, by many or by few."
This was an hero. Why does he delay
To meet this boaster?—For thy courtesy,
Thrice noble Abner, I am bound to thank thee.

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

Would'st thou complete thy generous offices?
I dare not ask it.

ABNER.

Speak thy wishes freely:
My soul inclines to serve thee.

DAVID.

Then, O Abner,
Conduct me to the king! There is a cause
Will justify this boldness!

ELIAB.

Braggard, hold!

ABNER.

I take thee at thy word; and will, with speed,
Conduct thee to my royal master's presence,
In yonder tent the anxious monarch waits
Th' event of this day's challenge.

DAVID.

Noble Abner,

Accept my thanks. Now to thy private ear,
If so thy grace permit, I will unfold
My secret soul, and ease my lab'ring breast,
Which pants with high designs, and beats for glory.

PART III.

Scene—SAUL'S Tent.

SAUL.

WHY was I made a king? what I have gain'd
In envy'd greatness and uneasy pow'r,
I've lost in peace of mind, in virtue lost!
Why did deceitful transports fire my soul,
When Samuel plac'd upon my youthful brow
The crown of Israel? I had known content,
Nay happiness, if happiness unmixt
To mortal man were known, had I still liv'd
Among the humble tents of Benjamin.
A shepherd's occupation was my joy,
And every guiltless day was crown'd with peace.
But now, a sullen cloud for ever hangs
O'er the faint sunshine of my brightest hours,
Dark'ning the golden promise of the morn.
I ne'er shall taste the dear domestic joys
My meanest subjects know. True, I have sons,
Whose virtues would have charm'd a private man,
And drawn down blessings on their humble sire.
I love their virtues too; but 'tis a love
Which jealousy has poison'd. Jonathan
Is all a father's fondness could conceive
Of amiable and good—of that no more!
He is too popular; the people doat

Upon th' ingenious graces of his youth.
Curs'd popularity! which makes a father
Detest the merit of a son he loves.
How did their fond idolatry, perforce,
Rescue his sentenc'd life, when doom'd by lot
To perish at Beth-aven,* for the breach
Of strict injunction, that of all my bands,
Not one that day should taste of food and live!
My subjects clamour at this tedious war,
Yet of my num'rous armed chiefs, not one
Has courage to engage this man of Gath.
Oh for a champion bold enough to face
This giant-boaster, whose repeated threats
Strike through my inmost soul! There was a time—
Of that no more!—I am not what I was.
Should valiant Jonathan accept the challenge,
'Twould but increase his influence, raise his fame,
And make the crown sit loosely on my brow,
Ill could my wounded spirit brook the voice
Of harsh comparison 'twixt sire and son.

SAUL, ABNER.

ABNER.

What meditation holds thee thus engag'd,
O king! and keeps thine active spirit bound:
When busy war far other cares demands
Than ruminating thought and pale despair?

SAUL.

Abner, draw near. My weary soul sinks down
Beneath the heavy pressure of misfortune.

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

Oh for that spirit which inflam'd my breast
With sudden fervour, when among the seers
And holy sages my prophetic voice
Was heard attentive, and th' astonish'd throng,
Wond'ring, exclaim'd,—"Is Saul among the prophets?"

Where's that bold arm which quell'd the Amalekite,
And nobly spar'd fierce Agag and his flocks?
'Tis past! the light of Israel now is quenched:
Shorn of his beams, my sun of glory sets!
Rise Moab, Edom, angry Ammon rise!
Come Gaza, Ashdod come! let Ekron boast,
And Askelon rejoice, for Saul is—nothing!

ABNER.

I bring thee news, O king!

SAUL.

My valiant uncle!

What can avail thy news? A soul oppress'd
Refuses still to hear the charmer's voice,
Howe'er enticingly he charms. What news
Can sooth my sickly soul, while Gath's fell giant
Repeats each morning to my frighten'd hosts
His daring challenge, none accepting it?

ABNER.

It is accepted.

SAUL.

Ha! by whom? how, when?

What prince, what gen'ral, what illustrious hero,
What veteran chief, what warrior of renown
Will dare to meet the haughty foe's defiance?
Speak, my brave gen'ral! noble Abner, speak!

ABNER.

No prince, no warrior, no illustrious chief,
No veteran hero dares accept the challenge;
But what will move thy wonder, mighty king,
One train'd to peaceful deeds, and new to arms,
A simple shepherd swain!

SAUL.

Oh mockery!

No more of this slight tale, it suits but ill
Thy bearded gravity: or rather tell it
To credulous age, or weak believing women:
They love whate'er is marvellous, and doat
On deeds prodigious and incredible,
Which sober sense rejects. I laugh to think
Of thy extravagance. A shepherd's boy,
Encounter him whom nations dread to meet!

ABNER.

Is valour, then, peculiar to high birth?
If Heaven had so decreed, know, scornful king,
That Saul the Benjamite had never reign'd.
No: glory darts her soul-pervading ray
On thrones and cottages, regardless still
Of all the artificial, nice distinctions
Vain human customs make.

SAUL.

Where is this youth?

ABNER.

Without thy tent he waits. Such humble sweetness,

Fir'd with the secret conscience of desert;

Such manly bearing, temper'd with such softness,
And so adorn'd with every outward charm
Of graceful form and feature, saw I never.

SAUL.

Bring me the youth.

ABNER.

He waits thy royal pleasure.

[Exit ABNER.]

SAUL.

What must I think? Abner himself is brave,
And skill'd in human kind: nor does he judge
So lightly, to be caught with specious words
And fraud's smooth artifice, were there not marks
Of worth intrinsic. But behold, he comes,
The youth too with him! Justly did he praise
The candour which adorns his open brow.

Re-enter ABNER and DAVID.

DAVID.

Hail, mighty king!

ABNER.

Behold thy proffer'd champion!

SAUL.

Art thou the youth, whose high heroic zeal
Aspires to meet the giant son of Anak?

DAVID.

If so the king permit.

SAUL.

Impossible!

Why, what experience has thy youth of arms?
Where, stripling, didst thou learn the trade of war?

Beneath what hoary veteran hast thou serv'd?
What feats hast thou achiev'd, what daring deeds?
What well rang'd phalanx, say, what charging hosts,
What hard campaigns, what sieges hast thou seen!
Hast thou e'er scal'd the city's rampir'd wall,
Or hur'd the missile dart, or learn'd to poise
The warrior's deathful spear? The use of targe,
Of helm, and buckler, is to thee unknown.

DAVID.

Arms I have seldom seen. I little know
Of war's proud discipline. The trumpet's clang,
The shock of charging hosts, the rampir'd wall,
Th' embattl'd phalanx, and the warrior's spear,
The use of targe and helm to me is new.
My zeal for God, my patriot love of Israel,
My rev'rence for my king,—behold my claims!

SAUL.

But, gentle youth, thou hast no fame in arms.
Renown, with her shrill clarion, never bore
Thy honour'd name to many a land remote;
From the fair regions where Euphrates laves
Assyria's borders, to the distant Nile.

DAVID.

True, mighty king! I am indeed alike
Unblest by Fortune and to Fame unknown;
A lowly shepherd swain of Judah's tribe:
But greatness ever springs from low beginnings.
That very Nile thou mention'st, whose broad stream
Bears fruitfulness and health through many a clime,

From an unknown, penurious, scanty source
Took its first rise. The forest oak, which shades
Thy sultry troops in many a toilsome march,
Once an unheeded acorn lay. O king!
Who ne'er begins can never aught achieve
Of glorious. Thou thyself wast once unknown,
Till fair occasion brought thy worth to light.
Far higher views inspire my youthful heart
Than human praise; I seek to vindicate
Th' insulted honour of the God I serve.

ABNER.

'Tis nobly said.

SAUL.

I love thy spirit, youth:
But dare not trust thy inexperienced arm
Against a giant's might. The sight of blood,
Though brave thou feel'st when peril is not nigh,
Will pale thy ardent cheek.

DAVID.

Not so, O king!

This youthful arm has been imbru'd in blood,
Though yet no blood of man has ever stain'd it.
Thy servant's occupation is a shepherd.
With jealous care I watch'd my father's flock:
A brindled lion and a furious bear
Forth from the thicket rush'd upon the fold,
Seized a young lamb, and tore their bleating spoil.
Urg'd by compassion for my helpless charge,
I felt a new-born vigour nerve my arm;
And, eager, on the foaming monsters rush'd.

The famish'd lion by his grisly beard,
Enrag'd, I caught, and smote him to the ground.
The panting monster, struggling in my gripe,
Shook terribly his bristling mane, and lash'd
His own gaunt, gory sides; fiercely he ground
His gnashing teeth, and roll'd his starting eyes,
Bloodshot with agony; then with a groan
That wak'd the echoes of the mountain, died.
Nor did his grim associate 'scape my arm.
Thy servant slew the lion and the bear;
I kill'd them both, and bore their shaggy spoils
In triumph home: and shall I fear to meet
Th' uncircumcis'd Philistine! No: that God
Who sav'd me from the bear's destructive fang,
And hungry lion's jaw, will not he save me
From this idolater?

SAUL.

He will, he will!
Go, noble youth! be valiant and be blest!
The God thou serv'st will shield thee in the fight,
And nerve thy arm with more than mortal strength.

ABNER.

So the bold Nazarite * a lion slew:
An earnest of his victories o'er Philistia!

SAUL.

Go, Abner; see the youth be well equip'd
With shield and spear. Be it thy care to grace him
With all the fit accoutrements of war.

* Samson. See Judges, xiv.

The choicest mail from my rich armory take,
And gird upon his thigh my own try'd sword,
Of noblest temper'd steel.

ABNER.

I shall obey.

DAVID.

Pardon, O king! the coat of plaited mail
These limbs have never known; it would not shield,
'T would but encumber one who never felt
The weight of armour.

SAUL.

Take thy wish, my son!
Thy sword then, and the God of Jacob guard thee!

PART IV.

Scene—Another Part of the Camp.

DAVID (kneeling.)

ETERNAL Justice! in whose awful scale
Th' event of battle hangs! Eternal Truth!
Whose beam illumines all! Eternal Mercy!
If, by thy attributes I may, unblam'd,
Address thee; Lord of Glory! hear me now:
Oh teach these hands to war, these arms to fight!
Thou ever present help in time of need!

Let thy broad mercy, as a shield, defend,
And let thine everlasting arms support me!
Strong in thy strength, in thy protection safe,
Then, though the heathen rage, I shall not fear.
Jehovah, be my buckler! Mighty Lord!
Thou who hast deign'd by humble instruments
To manifest the wonders of thy might,
Be present with me now! 'Tis thine own cause!
Thy wisdom sees events, thy goodness plans
Schemes baffling our conceptions—and 'tis still
Omnipotence which executes the deed
Of high design, though by a feeble arm!
I feel a secret impulse drive me on;
And my soul springs impatient for the fight!
'Tis not the heated spirits, or warm blood
Of sanguine youth with which my bosom burns;
And, though I thirst to meet th' insulting foe,
And pant for glory, 'tis not, witness Heav'n!
'Tis not the sinful lust of fading fame,
The perishable praise of mortal man;
His praise I covet, whose applause is Life.

DAVID, ELIAB, ISRAELITES.

ELIAB.

What do I hear? thou truant! thou hast dar'd,
E'en to the awful presence of the king,
Bear thy presumption!

DAVID.

He who fears the Lord
Shall boldly stand before the face of kings,
And shall not be asham'd.

ELIAB.

But what wild dream
Has urg'd thee to this deed of desperate rashness?
Thou mean'st, so I have learnt, to meet Goliath,
His single arm to thine.

DAVID.

'Tis what I purpose,
E'en on this spot. Each moment I expect
His wish'd approach.

ELIAB.

Go home; return, for shame!
Nor madly draw destruction on thy head.
Thy doating father, when thy shepherd's coat,
Drench'd in thy blood, is brought him, will lament,
And rend his furrow'd cheek, and silver hair,
As if some mighty loss had touch'd his age:
And mourn e'en as the partial patriarch mourn'd,
When Joseph's bloody garment he receiv'd
From his less dear, nor less deserving sons.
But whence that glittering ornament which hangs
Useless upon thy thigh?

DAVID.

'Tis the king's gift.
But thou art right; it suits not me, my brother!
Nor sword I mean to use, nor spear to poise,
Lest men should say I put my trust in arms,
Not in the Lord of Hosts.

ELIAB.

Then thou indeed
Art bent to seek thy death?

DAVID.

And what is death?
Is it so terrible to die, my brother?
Or grant it terrible, is it for that
The less inevitable? If, indeed,
We could by stratagem elude the blow,
When some high duty calls us forth to die,
And thus for ever shun it, and escape
The universal lot,—then fond self-love,
Then cautious prudence, boldly might produce
Their fine-spun arguments, their learn'd harangues,
Their cobweb arts, their phrase sophistical,
Their subtle doubts, and all the specious trick
Of selfish cunning lab'ring for its end.
But since, howe'er protracted, death will come,
Why fondly study, with ingenious pains,
To put it off?—To breathe a little longer
Is to defer our fate, but not to shun it.
Small gain! which Wisdom with indiff'rent eye
Beholds. Why wish to drink the bitter dregs
Of life's exhausted chalice, whose last runnings,
E'en at the best, are vapid? Why not die
(If Heav'n so will) in manhood's op'ning bloom,
When all the flush of life is gay about us;
When sprightly youth, with many a new-born joy,
Solicits every sense? So may we then
Present a sacrifice, unmeet indeed,
(Ah, how unmeet!) but less unworthy far,
Than the world's leavings; than a worn-out heart
By vice enfeebled, and by vain desires
Sunk and exhausted!

ELIAB.

Hark! I hear a sound
Of multitudes approaching!

DAVID.

'Tis the giant!
I see him not, but hear his measur'd pace.

ELIAB.

Look, where his pond'rous shield is borne before him!

DAVID.

Like a broad moon its ample disk protends.
But soft!—what unknown prodigy appears?
A moving mountain cas'd in polish'd brass!

ELIAB (*getting behind DAVID*).

How's this? thou dost not tremble. Thy firm
joints

Betray no fear; thy accents are not broken;
Thy cheek retains its red; thine eye its lustre;
He comes more near! Dost thou not fear him now!

DAVID.

No.
The vast colossal statue nor inspires
Respect nor fear. Mere magnitude of form,
Without proportion'd intellect and valour
Strikes not my soul with reverence or with awe,

ELIAB.

Near and more near he comes! I hold it rash
To stay so near him, and expose a life
Which may hereafter serve the state. Farewell!

[Exit

[GOLIATH advances, clad in complete Armour. One bearing his Shield precedes him. The opposing Armies are seen at a Distance, drawn up on each Side of the Valley. GOLIATH begins to speak before he comes on. DAVID stands in the same place with an air of indifference.]

GOLIATH.

Where is the mighty man of war, who dares
Accept the challenge of Philistia's chief?
What victor king, what gen'ral drench'd in blood
Claims this high privilege? What are his rights?
What proud credentials does the boaster bring
To prove his claim? What cities laid in ashes?
What ruin'd provinces? What slaughter'd realms?
What heads of heroes, and what hearts of kings,
In battle kill'd, or at his altars slain,
Has he to boast? Is his bright armory
Thick set with spears and swords, and coats of mail
Of vanquish'd nations, by his single arm
Subdued? Where is the mortal man so bold,
So much a wretch, so out of love with life,
To dare the weight of this uplifted spear,
Which never fell innocuous? Yet I swear,
I grudge the glory to his parting soul
To fall by this right hand. 'Twill sweeten death,
To know he had the honour to contend
With the dread son of Anak. Latest time
From blank oblivion shall retrieve his name,
Who dar'd to perish in unequal fight
With Gath's triumphant champion. Come, advance

Philistia's gods to Israel's. Sound, my herald—
Sound for the battle straight.

[*Herald sounds the Trumpet.*]

DAVID.

Behold thy foe!

GOLIATH.

I see him not.

DAVID.

Behold him here!

GOLIATH.

Say, where?

Direct my sight. I do not war with boys.

DAVID.

I stand prepar'd : thy single arm to mine.

GOLIATH.

Why this is mockery, minion ! it may chance
To cost thee dear. Sport not with things above thee !
But tell me who of all this num'rous host
Expects his death from me ? Which is the man
Whom Israel sends to meet my bold defiance ?

DAVID.

The election of my sov'reign falls on me.

GOLIATH.

On thee ! On thee ! By Dagon, 'tis too much,
Thou curled minion ! thou a nation's champion ?
'Twould move my mirth at any other time ;
But trifling's out of tune. Begone, light boy !
And tempt me not too far.

DAVID.

I do defy thee,

Thou foul idolater ! Hast thou not scorn'd
The armies of the living God I serve ?
By me he will avenge upon thy head
Thy nation's sins and thine. Arm'd with his name,
Unshrinking, I dare meet the stoutest foe
That ever bath'd his hostile spear in blood.

GOLIATH (*ironically*).

Indeed ! 'tis wondrous well. Now, by my gods,
The stripling plays the orator ! Vain boy !
Keep close to that same bloodless war of words,
And thou shalt still be safe. Tongue-valiant war-
rior !

Where is thy sylvan crook, with garlands hung
Of idle field-flowers ? Where thy wanton harp ?
Thou dainty-finger'd hero ! Better strike
Its notes lascivious, or the lulling lute
Touch softly, than provoke the trumpet's rage.
I will not stain the honour of my spear
With thy inglorious blood. Shall that fair cheek
Be scarr'd with wounds unseemly ? Rather go
And hold fond dalliance with the Syrian maids ;
To wanton measures dance, and let them braid
The bright luxuriance of thy golden hair ;
They for their lost Adonis may mistake
Thy dainty form.

DAVID.

Peace, thou unhallow'd railer !
Oh, tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound
Reach Askelon, how once your slaughter'd lords

By mighty Samson* found one common grave,
When his broad shoulders the firm pillars heav'd,
And to its base the tott'ring fabric shook.

GOLIATH.

Insulting boy! perhaps thou hast not heard
The infamy of that inglorious day,
When your weak hosts at Eben-ezer † pitch'd
Their quick-abandon'd tents? Then, when your ark,
Your talisman, your charm, your boasted pledge
Of safety and success, was tamely lost:
And yet not tamely, since by me 'twas won.
When with this good right arm I thinn'd your ranks,
And bravely crush'd, beneath a single blow,
The chosen guardians of this vaunted shrine,
Hophni and Phineas; ‡ The fam'd ark itself
I bore to Ashdod.

DAVID.

I remember too,

Since thou provok'st the unwelcome truth, how all
Your blushing priests beheld their idol's shame;
When prostrate Dagon fell before the ark,
And your frail god was shiver'd. Then Philistia,
Idolatrous Philistia, flew for succour
To Israel's help, and all her smitten nobles
Confess'd the Lord was God; and the blest ark,
Gladly, with reverential awe restor'd.

* Judges, xvi.

† 1 Samuel, v.

‡ Commentators say, that the Chaldee Paraphrase makes
Goliath boast that he had killed Hophni and Phineas, and
taken the ark prisoner.

GOLIATH.

By Ashdod's fane thou ly'st. Now will I meet
thee,

Thou insect warrior, since thou dar'st me thus!
Already I behold thy mangled limbs,
Dissever'd each from each, ere long to feed
The fierce blood-sucking vulture. Mark we well,
Around my spear I'll twist thy shining locks,
And toss in air thy head, all gash'd with wounds,
Thy lip yet quiv'ring with the dire convulsion
Of recent death!—Art thou not terrified?

DAVID.

No:

True courage is not mov'd by breath of words,
While the rash bravery of boiling blood,
Impetuous, knows no settled principle.
A feverish tide, it has its ebbs and flows,
As spirits rise or fall, as wine inflames,
Or circumstances change: but inborn courage,
The gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith,
Holds its firm empire in the constant soul;
And like the stedfast pole-star, never once
From the same fixt and faithful point declines.

GOLIATH.

The curses of Philistia's gods be on thee!
This fine-drawn speech is meant to lengthen out
That little life thy words pretend to scorn.

DAVID.

Ha! say'st thou so? Come on then. Mark us well!

Thou com'st to me with sword, and spear, and shield:
In the dread name of Israel's God I come;
The living Lord of Hosts, whom thou defy'st!
Yet though no shield I bring, no arms except
These five smooth stones I gather'd from the brook,
With such a simple sling as shepherds use—
Yet all expos'd, defenceless as I am,
The God I serve shall give thee up a prey
To my victorious arm. This day I mean
To make th' uncircumcised tribes confess
There is a God in Israel. I will give thee,
Spite of thy vaunted strength and giant bulk,
To glut the carrion kites. Nor thee alone!
The mangled carcases of your thick hosts
Shall spread the plains of Elah, till Philistia,
Through all her trembling tents and flying bands,
Shall own that Judah's God is God indeed!
—I dare thee to the trial.

GOLIATH.

Follow me—

In this good spear I trust.

DAVID.

I trust in Heav'n

The God of battle stimulates my arm,
And fires my soul with ardour not its own.

PART V.

Scene—The Tent of SAUL.

SAUL (rising from his Couch).

Oh! that I knew the black and midnight arts
Of wizard sorcery! that I could call
The slumb'ring spirit from the shades of hell!
Or, like Chaldean sages, could foreknow
Th' event of things unacted! I might then
Anticipate my fortune. How I'm fall'n!
The sport of vain chimeras, the weak slave
Of Fear and Fancy; coveting to know
The arts obscene, which foul diviners use.
Thick blood and moping melancholy lead
To baleful Superstition—that fell fiend,
Whose with'ring charms blast the fair bloom of virtue.
Why did my wounded pride with scorn reject
The wholesome truths which holy Samuel told me?
Why drive him from my presence?—he might now
Raise my sunk soul, and my benighted mind
Enlighten with religion's cheering ray.
He dar'd to menace me with loss of empire;
And I, for that bold honesty, dismiss'd him.
“Another shall possess thy throne,” he cried:
“A stranger!” This unwelcome prophecy

Has lin'd my crown, and strew'd my couch with thorns.
 Each ray of op'ning merit I discern
 In friend or foe, distracts my troubled soul,
 Lest he should prove my rival. But this morn,
 E'en my young champion, lovely as he look'd
 In blooming valour, struck me to the soul
 With Jealousy's barb'd dart. O Jealousy,
 Thou ugliest fiend of hell! thy deadly venom
 Preys on my vitals, turns the healthful hue
 Of my fresh cheek to haggard sallowness,
 And drinks my spirit up.

[*A flourish of Trumpets, shouting, &c.*

What sounds are those?

The combat is decided! Hark! again,
 Those shouts proclaim it! Now, O God of Jacob,
 If yet thou hast not quite withdrawn from Saul
 Thy light and favour, prosper me this once!
 But Abner comes! I dread to hear his tale!
 Fair Hope, with smiling face but ling'ring foot,
 Has long deceiv'd me.

ABNER.

King of Israel, hail!

Now thou art King indeed. The youth has conquer'd:
 Goliath's dead!

SAUL.

Oh speak thy tale again,
 Lest my fond ears deceive me!

ABNER.

Thy young champion
 Has slain the giant.

SAUL.

Then God is gracious still,
 In spite of my offences! But, good Abner!
 How was it! Tell me all. Where is my champion?
 Quick let me press him to my grateful heart,
 And pay him a king's thanks. And yet, who knows,
 This forward friend may prove an active foe!
 No more of that. Tell me the whole, brave Abner!
 And paint the glorious acts of my young hero!

ABNER.

Full in the centre of the camp they stood!
 Th' opposing armies rang'd on either side
 In proud array. The haughty giant stalk'd,
 Stately across the valley. Next, the youth
 With modest confidence advanc'd. Nor pomp,
 Nor gay parade, nor martial ornament,
 His graceful form adorn'd. Goliath straight,
 With solemn state, began the busy work
 Of dreadful preparation. In one place
 His closely jointed mail an op'ning left
 For air, and only one: the watchful youth
 Mark'd that the beaver of his helm was up.
 Meanwhile the giant such a blow devis'd
 As would have crush'd him. This the youth perceiv'd,
 And from his well-directed sling quick hurl'd,
 With dextrous aim, a stone, which sunk, deep
 lodg'd,
 In the capacious forehead of the foe.
 Then, with a cry, as loud and terrible
 As Libyan lions roaring for their young.

Quite stunn'd, the furious giant stagger'd, reel'd,
 And fell: the mighty mass of man fell prone.
 With its own weight his shatter'd bulk was bruise'd.
 His clatt'ring arms rung dreadful through the field,
 And the firm basis of the solid earth
 Shook. Chok'd with blood and dust he curst his gods,
 And died blaspheming! Straight the victor youth
 Drew from its sheath the giant's pond'rous sword,
 And from th' enormous trunk the gory head
 Furious in death he sever'd. The grim visage
 Look'd threat'ning still, and still frown'd horribly.

SAUL.

O glorious deed! O valiant conqueror!

ABNER.

The youth so calm appear'd, so nobly firm,
 So cool, yet so intrepid, that these eyes
 Ne'er saw such temp'rate valour so chastis'd
 By modesty.

SAUL.

Thou dwell'st upon his praise
 With needless circumstance. 'Twas nobly done;
 But others too have fought!

ABNER.

None, none, so bravely.

SAUL.

What follow'd next?

ABNER.

The shouting Israelites
 On the Philistines rush'd, and still pursued

Their routed remnants. In dismay, their bands
 Disorder'd fly, while shouts of loud acclaim
 Pursue their brave deliverer. Lo, he comes!
 Bearing the giant's head and shining sword,
 His well-earn'd trophies.

SAUL, ABNER, DAVID.

[*DAVID bearing GOLIATH'S Head and Sword. He kneels, and lays both at SAUL'S Feet.*]

SAUL.

Welcome to my heart,
 My glorious champion! My deliverer, welcome!
 How shall I speak the swelling gratitude
 Of my full heart! or give thee the high praise
 Thy gallant deeds deserve!

DAVID.

O mighty king!
 Sweet is the breath of praise when giv'n by those
 Whose own high merit claims the praise they give.
 But let not this one prosperous event
 By Heaven directed, be ascrib'd to me;
 I might have fought with equal skill and courage,
 And not have gain'd this conquest; then had shame,
 Harsh obloquy, and foul disgrace, befall'n me:
 But prosp'rous fortune gains the praise of valour.

SAUL.

I like not this. In every thing superior
 He soars above me (*Aside*)—Modest youth, thou'rt
 right;
 And fortune, as thou say'st, deserves the praise
 We give to human valour.

DAVID.

Rather say
The God of Hosts deserves it.

SAUL.

Tell me, youth,
What is thy name, and what thy father's house?

DAVID.

My name is David; Jesse is my sire:
An humble Bethle'mite of Judah's tribe.

SAUL.

David, the son of Jesse! sure that name
Has been familiar to me. Nay, thy voice,
Thy form, and features, I remember too,
Though faint and indistinctly.

ABNER.

In this hero
Behold thy sweet musician; he whose harp
Expell'd the melancholy fiend, whose pow'r
Enslav'd thy spirit.

SAUL.

This the modest youth
Whom, for his skill and virtues, I prefer'd
To bear my armour?

DAVID.

I am he, O king!

SAUL.

Why this concealment? tell me, valiant David,
Why didst thou hide thy birth and name till now?

DAVID.

O king! I would not aught from favour claim,
Or on remember'd services presume;
But on the strength of my own actions stand,
Ungrac'd and unsupported.

ABNER.

Well he merits
The honours which await him. Why, O king,
Dost thou delay to bless his doubting heart
With his well earn'd rewards? Thy lovely daughter,
By right of conquest his!

SAUL (to DAVID).

True: thou hast won her.
She shall be thine. Yes, a king's word is past.

DAVID.

O boundless blessing! What! shall she be mine,
For whom contending monarchs might renounce
Their slighted crowns?
[SOUNDS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS HEARD AT A DISTANCE.
SHOUTING AND SINGING. A GRAND PROCESSION. CHORUS
OF HEBREW WOMEN.]

SAUL.

How's this? what sounds of joy
Salute my ears? What means this needless pomp?
This merry sound of tabret and of harp?
What mean these idle instruments of triumph?
These women, who in fair procession move,
Making sweet melody?

ABNER.

To pay due honour
To David are they come.

SAUL (aside).

A rival's praise
Is discord to my ear? They might have spar'd
This idle pageantry; it wounds my soul!
[Martial Symphony: after which, Chorus of
Women singing.]

Prepare! your festal rights prepare!
Let your triumphs rend the air!
Idol gods shall reign no more:
We the living Lord adore!

Let heathen hosts on human helps repose,
Since Israel's God has routed Israel's foes.

Let remotest nations know
Proud Goliath's overthrow.
Fall'n, Philistia, is thy trust,
Dagon mingles with the dust!

Who fears the Lord of glory, need not fear
The brazen armour or the lifted spear.

See, the routed squadrons fly!
Hark! their clamours rend the sky!
Blood and carnage stain the field!
See, the vanquish'd nations yield!
Dismay and terror fill the frighten'd land,
While conqu'ring David routs the trembling band.

Lo! upon the tented field
Royal Saul has thousands kill'd!
Lo! upon th' ensanguin'd plain
David has ten thousands slain!
Let mighty Saul his vanquish'd thousands tell,
While tenfold triumphs David's victories swell.

BELSHAZZAR.

A Sacred Drama.

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the
Morning. How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst
weaken the nations!
Isaiah.