THE

SIEGE OF JERUSALEM,

A POEM.

BY CHARLES PEERS, ESQ.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXIII.
TO

HENRY HALLAM, ESQ.

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

BY

HIS ATTACHED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.
PREFACE.

The publication of the following Poem has been delayed by many concurring circumstances; although it was commenced several years ago, and has been long since completed. The success of a Cambridge exercise upon Christ's Lamentation over Jerusalem, led to a more attentive examination of the event in which the memorable prophecy of our Lord received its accomplishment; and excited the author to attempt its description.

In the mean time the attention of the public has been attracted to the Fall of Jerusalem, by Mr. Millman's beautiful dramatic poem. The subject, however, is so differently treated in the following pages, that the author trusts he
should have escaped any imputation of plagia

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giarism, even if his work had not been previously
written; still more of a hope to rival that ad-
mired production. The coincidence in the
choice of a subject was entirely accidental; and
if any should be discovered in the thoughts or
expressions, it is to be attributed to the ne-
cessity of resorting to the same sources of in-
formation for the principal facts.

Some fictitious circumstances have been in-
troduced, as well for the purpose of relieving
the reader's attention from the unbroken mo-
notony of war, as of exhibiting the customs
and manners of the hostile nations: the most
remarkable incidents, however, far from being
exaggerated, may, perhaps, appear too faithfully
related; though many details of assaults and
engagements are omitted, to avoid prolixity.

The authorities principally consulted, besides
Josephus and Tacitus, are the works of Light-
foot, Calmet, Harmer, and the Universal Hi-
story. In compiling the notes, the writer has availed himself, in some instances, of Mr. Horne's valuable "Introduction to the Scriptures," as containing in a condensed form the substance of more voluminous publications.

Two cantos of an Italian poem, under the title of "Tito, ossia Gerusalemme Distruitta, Poema Epico, inedito, del Conte Daniele Florio, Udinense," fell into the author's hands soon after their publication, in the year 1819: he has been unable to procure the remainder of the work, if it has ever been committed to the press; and equally unsuccessful in his search for a poem, said to be extant, called "Giovanni di Ghiscala," which must, of course, embrace the principal circumstances of the siege.

May, 1823.
ERRATA.

Page 55, line 14, a figure of reference to the note is omitted.

Page 59, line 1, for Sisera, read Sisrah.

Page 111, line 2, a reference to the note is omitted.

Same page, line 16, for and, read with.

Page 139, lines 9 and 10, dele parenthesis.

Page 169, line 18, for commencing, read commencing.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE FIRST.
ARGUMENT.

Introduction of the subject—approach of the Roman army—its composition and order of march—Titus's view of the city—civil war between the factions—their leaders—John of Giscala—Simon—they unite to attack the Roman general, and are repulsed—make a second unsuccessful sally against the Tenth Legion upon the Mount of Olives, and retire into the city.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE FIRST.

The fall of Sion and her triple woe,
Wide-wasting famine, pestilence, and war,
Let loose for havoc on one miserable
Though mighty city, and her guilty chiefs,
The Muse essays; yet with due reverence
Rather than hope to reach a theme so high;
Or in fit strains rehearse th' heroic deeds
Of either army, that in many a field
Of perilous and bloodiest controversy,
Lent a new lustre to the wreaths of Rome,
And a last splendor o'er the city shed.

Yet say what sin so fatal could estrange
A father's heart, and draw his vengeance down
In utmost ruin on the land he loved?
Alas! no sin so deadly or accursed
But all were there, and well might vindicate
Eternal mercy in eternal wrath:
Mercy and truth were none; but in their place,
Rapine and wrong usurp'd the sway of law;
Gaunt avarice, and dire oppression; pride
And worse hypocrisy; pernicious sects
And dark apostasies; th' unbridled lusts
Of Sadoc's followers, with the smooth deceit
Of the false Pharisee, that all alike
Swerved from their fathers' faith, with deep despite
Against their God, and made his house of prayer
A den of usury, oft e'en of blood.
Such were her sins, and oft almighty power
Had spared in pity, or had smote in wrath;
Bruised, though unbroken, she had yet survived
Her visitations, till that innocent blood,
Which the rude multitude invoked to fall
Upon their children, closed the long arrear
Of her transgressions, and confirm'd her doom.
Fix'd from that hour and irrepealable
Stood the sad sentence; else, had God not warr'd
With the besieger, Salem still might tower
Firm as some rock o'er which th' unceasing surge
Beats harmless—else, her adamantine sides
Perchance had baffled Rome and all her hosts,
And mock'd the master of a world in arms.
But fatal feuds and factions had embroil'd
Their priests and princes; while the general mass
In wild dissension or cold apathy
Waited the issue. Part, beguiled by tales
Of old tradition, or, as fancy led,
Perverting truths of sacred prophecy,
Still fondly cherish'd dreams of dawning hope,
Dreams of renown, and empire, to be won
By some great conqueror, who should yet restore
Their fall'n estate, and with resistless arms
Raise them from ruin to subdue the world.
Others of future judgments from the past
Argued, more wisely they; yet found no choice
But choice of misery; the scourge of power,
Though not its safeguard: while their fears presaged
Scarce worse perdition from the Roman foe,
Who now in arms, from every wind of heaven,
Menacing vengeance, to the city speeds.
His bows are bent, e'en from Euphrates east,\(^1\)
From Egypt south, his iron legions come;
Their baffled ensigns must be dyed in blood,\(^2\)
To wash out shame—behold, from all the land,
And its sack'd cities, smokes the flame of war!
The sword is red with slaughter, from the scathe
Of Tarichæa—Gamala is fallen,\(^3\)
And Giscala! The forests quake for fear,
The mountains groan, and every cave and rock,\(^4\)
From its deep echoes, gives the cry of death
Back to the startled air; while, as a flock
Of screaming sea-birds by the tempest driven,
The houseless tenants of the hamlets round
Seek the last hope of Salem's rock-built walls,
With tales of woe, from each sad herald's tongue
Heighten'd to horror. Never, when the Hun
Ravaged Hesperia, nor when Araby
Disgorged her locust armies\(^5\) on the west,
Nor when Mohammed with his fiery hordes
Besieged Byzantium, to subvert the throne
Of the last Cæsar, did their march inspire
Worse consternation—soon enhanced by proof,
When all around, and far as sight could strain,
BOOK I. SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

Shadowing the horizon, rose a haze of sand,
Such as in Libyan desarts oft precedes
Sudden tornadoes, and at once inhumes
Convoys equipp'd for traffic or for war.
On with the host it moved, that dusky pall,
Shadowing their numbers, whilst athwart its womb
Flash'd, ever and anon, the gleam of arms;
Till, at a signal given, their van stood fix'd,
And the subsiding sand and cloudless air
Gave to behold its infinite array.
Glorious, if sight so fatal might inspire
Ought but dismay, show'd that bright vision—bright
As the eye could bear; the Almighty, though incensed
Against his people, mix'd the bitter cup
With all but shame; and, e'en in misery,
Vouchsafed the last sad solace of the brave,
To fall with glory 'neath a noble foe.

First, as less capable of close array,
A various force auxiliar led the van,
Rank'd in loose files for skirmish, or to sweep
Wide o'er the champaign and protect the toil
Of the slow pioneer, sore charged with weight
Of cumbrous implements, wherewith to clear
Thickets or tangling brake, to plane the soil
Unequal, or o'erbridge th' unforded stream.
Next came a band equipp'd and skill'd to set
Martial encampment: train'd in various realms
Midst hostile nations, their sagacious care
Fail'd no precaution of defensive art,
Whate'er the war's stern trials might demand
Of foss or rampart, tower or battlement,
To check the onsets of a furious foe.

With these, anon, a mingled cavalcade,
For draught or burthen, in procession moved,
Laden with martial equipage, whate'er
Beseems superior chiefs of prime degree:
Such pomp and pride as in the vulgar gaze
Give grace to glory. And behold, himself,
The mighty master of the host, begirt
With noblest escort, all the flower of war,
Rein'd his bold courser, that, with managed hoof;
Stamping the sod for courage, seem'd to yield
Haughty obedience: all in panoply
Of dazzling burnish, their undaunted brows
With shadowy plumage waving, every hand
Grasping a lance, as though for onset, filed
Their gorgeous chivalry: less terrible
Was that coeval troop⁶ which at the side
Of Persia's monarchs in their glory warr'd;
Or that firm phalanx by young Ammon led
O'er unbridged rivers, to subdue the realm
Of Porus, and the thrones of utmost Ind.
Such was his escort; but their chief not less
In native majesty, than outward pomp
Of arms or vesture, far excell'd the show
Of all his followers. His heroic port
Seem'd as of Mars victorious; youth, and hope
Presaging conquest, o'er his cheek diffused
The glow of triumph, and illum'd his eye
With beams so bright, that every warrior's heart
Caught th' emanation: bravest of a band
Where all were brave he seem'd, worthy to wield
The wrath and thunders of th' Omnipotent;
A glorious charge for man! else might it seem
Enough for glory to command a troop
Of whom was many a captain fit to guide
Embattled hosts, and, in th' extreme of war,
Uphold the greatness of imperial Rome.

At once a thousand ensigns, to the breeze
Unfurl'd, in dazzling tints of every hue
Stream'd gorgeously, with rare device inwrought
Of quaintest broiding; Phoenician dyes
Fresh from the loom of Tyre, or streamers woven
In Ind or Persia, that, with silken pride,
Shed softer splendour o'er the mailed ranks.
But chief, in burnish'd metal unalloy'd,
Th' imperial eagle seem'd with upward ken
To gaze undazzled on the solar beam.
Fit emblem he of might and majesty,
Lord of the fields of air and all its tribes:
Toward him, with more than martial reverence,
Each legion look'd adoring; him invoked
With fond idolatry: never to yield
That sacred ensign, whatsoe'er assail'd,
Was th' uninscrutable and sacred law
Of every breast that beat in arms for Rome.
Oft, like that sable bird that to the gaze
Of the rude Cimbrian seem'd to poise his wing
For flight to victory, the Eagle-God
Seem'd, as he grasp'd Jove's thunders, to affect
The wrath of Jove; nor did his course belie
That fancied prodigy:—before his track
A land like Eden, deck'd with every charm
Of prodigal and loveliest nature, lay:
Havoc behind—a blasted wilderness—
Blank solitude, and long sterility—
Total destruction irretrievable!

Fast by those fatal banners, to the rear,
In serried order filing, long and deep,
Th' Ausonian legions; all the genuine birth
Of fair Hesperia's realm, the nurse of war.
These, though less gorgeous in attire and arms
Than what begirt their leader, yet appear'd
Scarce less than equal—every martial eye
Flashing such fires as still in many a field,
Ere they encounter'd, turn'd the foe to flight.¹²

Last of the long procession, moved a throng
Of no esteem, servile or mercenary,
Such as, for meaner labours, in the march
Of puissant armies close the train of war.
Such, and so various, show'd th' invading host.
Array more formidable never spread,
Though more in number, o'er th' affrighted east;
Nor, haply, shall again, till that dread hour
When all the north shall loose his banded kings
At dark Megiddo for the last of war.

But not their pomp, their prowess, or renown,
Waked vain presumption in their leader's breast.
He, as his eye explored the city's strength,
Measured those hazards that would put to proof
Their utmost hardihood. Her awful site
Seem'd as a double mount or hill, whose brow,
By subterranean struggles torn apart,
Gave verge and amplitude to fix the base
Of two fair cities; though for eminence
Not equal, yet the least a glorious seat
For kings to build on. The circumference
Of their huge sides, if art had lent no aid,
Almost might mock all effort for assault;
How much the rather, thrice begirt with walls
That seem'd of substance with the living rock,
So vast their thickness, altitude, and strength?
Northward alone, where those colossal heights
Sloped less abrupt and imminent, they seem'd
Not inaccessible to breach or storm;
Yet there with peril; there, to leave no place
For onset, art had lavish'd all its strength;
Gates, ramparts, battlements, and towers, whose height
Evinced his bold ambition who erewhile
Striving for mastery with th' enchafted surge.

At Cæsarea, sunk the massive mole,
Where his moor'd navies rode secure from storm,
In their calm anchorage. If Sion's strength
Thus awed the invader, might he dare presume
Of easier conquest, than when Pompey's powers
Thrice through the moon's increase and waning orb
Held her beleaguer'd?—were her sons less fierce
Than their bold ancestry?—did that hush'd pause,
That sullen silence which betray'd no note
Of preparation, argue doubt or dread,
Divided councils, or desire to yield?
No; a new impulse, as the host approached
So vast and terrible, awoke their hearts
To the near peril, and supplied the void
Of nobler virtue. Two of prime degree
Struggled for power, to that high rivalship
Lifted by deeds of violence and blood;
Strong in their fellows' weakness, who, subdued
By long misrule, and awed by dread of worse,
Bow'd with reluctant homage to the sway
Of giant usurpation, and inclined
To either demagogue, as terror more
Than hope or will engaged them to his part.

The chief was John, surnamed of Giscala;
Last of those rebel cities whose assault
Gave ominous foretaste of a bloodier-siege
To win the capital. With subtle art,
Feigning capitulation, he had foil'd
His generous conqueror, and with midnight march,
Baffling pursuit, at break of morn had reach'd
Th' unguarded Sion; there, where thousands roamed
Ripe for revolt, athirst for blood and spoil,
A master spirit such as his, enured
To darkest treasons, could not fail to catch
The vagrant multitude—their fierce despair
His fittest engine: from ignoble spoil
Beneath ambition, flush'd with brief success,
He made loose inroads o'er the neighbouring plains;
Till now the city's danger raised his hopes
To such presumption, that he sought no less
Than sovereign sway, in vain: by every art
Of steadfast envy and ambitious hate,
A rival chief, bold Simon, foil'd his aim.
Less ripe in years and cunning to disguise
His violent purpose, he, yet capable
Of loftiest enterprize and bold resolve,
Regardless what the means; of blood and spoil,
Public calamity and private woe,
Alike he reck'd not; furious to pursue
His vehement quarrel, but with ease o'erreached
By his deep rival's smooth hypocrisy.
He too had gain'd a bold and bankrupt crew,
Whose desperate fortunes suited well his aim
To rule and riot; but the Temple, kept
By Eleazar, with his zealot band
And Edom's armies, held him still at bay,
As its proud bulwarks and superior site
O'erawed the capital. Thus each fierce chief,
Assailing and assail'd, at once maintained
Defence and onset; yet, howe'er enraged
'Gainst his fell adversary, each perceived
That all was now at hazard:—all he sought,
All he had won, must perish in the wreck
Of Judah's greatness—this one peril past,
They might, at will, resume their controversy.
But most, through fear, behoved the Giscalite
Repel the foe: his guilt had pass'd the pale
Which shuts out pardon—treachery that betrayed
Confiding goodness, more itself incensed
At others' falsehood, as it more disdained
A deed to blot the soldier's noble name.
With such rude compact as the hour required
They seal alliance, and combine their force,
To hurl destruction on th' invading chief.
So, as he ranged beneath the battlements,
All but unguarded, with a slender troop
To ken the city's strength, admiring much
That no similitude or sound of war
Menaced resistance, like the honey bees,
If chance some spoiler hath assailed the hive,
Forth rushed the foe, fierce and innumerable,
Broke through his escort, and inclosed their prince
In iron circle. As some forest boar,
Or brinded pard, when oriental chiefs
Wont with barbaric splendour, horse and hound,
To skirt the champaign, starting from the lair,
Defies their spears and holds the hunt at bay;
Thus, all undaunted stood the prince of Rome
Though sore beset, while all around him flew
A storm of darts; and haply that same hour
Th' invader's hopes had with their leader fallen,
But God who doom'd the city's overthrow,
Reserved the hand that wrought for his revenge
To nobler fortunes. Cæsar's lifted sword
Smote with such ruin, and the faithful few
Who still sustain'd him, dealt such havoc round,
That, spite of rage and shame, the enemy
Slacken'd their onset, whilst th' imperial band
Back to their comrades hew'd out hard retreat—
Retreat more splendid than full victory
O'er equal adversaries—with more joy
The host receive him, as with worse dismay
They marked his danger; yet with mild reproach,
And fond upbraidings, that no care for them
Repressed his daring; none forbade t' expose
A life so dear and sacred to such harm.
Thus all conspired for glory; rout itself
Advancing conquest; for his prowess proved
Not less than wisdom, through the ranks diffused
Supreme reliance on their awful chief.

East of the city rose a hill, renown'd
For its proud altitude and olive groves;
The same where Jesus in an hour of woe
Wept o'er the Temple with prophetic tears.
On this th' imperial captain first advanced
A chosen legion, that which erst beloved
Of the first Caesar (though his favour'd brave
Slept on their couch of glory) still maintain'd
A name unsullied by defeat or taint
Of its prime lustre. Forthwith, as the blaze
Of the white banner, streaming to denote
Th' imperial station, flash'd upon their view,
Each of a weight discumber'd such as now
Would sink the strength of Europe's softer sons,
At once assiduous plied his wonted toil
For long encampment. As they wrought intent,
Sudden the clash of weapons, with a shout
So loud and hideous burst upon their ears,¹⁶
That, though in bloodiest fields long conversant
With battle's perils, every warrior's breast
Beat quick for wonder; yet no pause was given
For thought or judgment—to resume the spear
Toss'd desultory—heard at once and felt,
Like the dread thunder when electric clouds
Mingle in conflict, their impetuous shock
Withered all strength and power; as those who ranked
In serried order, might with ease have check'd
Th' irregular onset, backward fled amain;
While Simon, flush'd with conquest, unopposed,
Through the mid legion urged his furious charge.
Ill-fared thy glory then, unfoiled before,
Proud queen of nations! when that awful voice,
More dreaded erst than death, could nought prevail
To stay thy recreant and palsied host,
Flying in terror from a foe so scorned—
While scarce at last his utmost might and arm
Sustained and saved them. Foremost through the hot
And heady fight he spurr'd his vigorous steed,
Exhorting, threatening: that great presence, joined
With what their late encounter had evinced
Of his rare prowess, wrought upon the foe
More than the shock of armies: yet as fierce,
From earliest day-dawn till th' ascending sun
Touch'd his meridian, burn'd the battle's rage,
As if the hope and glory of the war
Hung on th' event. At length, with slow recoil,
Retiring backward o'er the mountain's brow,
The sons of Judah sped their painful flight
Back to the city walls; nor could the gaze
Of the throng'd ramparts, or inspiring shout
Of those they loved, excite them to provoke
Certain repulse: yet, ever and anon,
Feebly and faint, a casual spear they cast
Backward—the massive and unclosing gate
Received them, sorely spent with blood and toil.
The conqueror pressed no further, satisfied
With such fair issue to a day so rude:
Back to his powers he sped, nor, till his care
Had fenced th' unfinish'd camp with every art
Of stakes and war-mound, trench and palisade,
Partook of counsel, or enjoy'd repose.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE SECOND.
ARGUMENT.

Solemn religious service in the Temple, to commemorate the Passover—interrupted by John of Giscala, who gains possession of the Temple by treachery—civil war renewed—Titus's survey of the city and fortifications—encampment of the Romans—destruction of the suburbs—towers erected by the besiegers, and battering-rams set to shake the wall.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE SECOND.

It was the festival, ordain'd of old
For celebration of that awful hour,
When the destroying angel, to chastise
Perfidious Egypt, as he sped by night,
Smote every house with mourning, but o'erpass'd
The tents of Israel—a feast of joy,
Through every age to her degenerate sons—
While still their priesthood, to allure the throng
Whose annual tribute fed their wasted store,
Preserved such semblance of departed pomp
As their fall'n fortunes licensed. Woe to those
That now, from all the region, to partake
Her faded worship, sought the capital,
Reckless of danger, or with fatal hope
That God might still be gracious, dwelt secure
Despite of warning, till the city gates
Closed on their flight for ever! Had their faith
Thus far betray'd them? Their late conflict, fought
With such long doubtful fortune, now awoke
A bolder confidence to celebrate
Their high solemnities. The livelong night
To the throng'd courts they press'd, to wait th' approach
Of th' early sunbeam. Soon as Lucifer, 1
Son of the morning (like a herald sent
To sound the march of some great conqueror)
Pour'd his pale tremulous lustre o'er the peaks
Of eastmost Abarim, a nascent sound
Of joy and gratulation through the throng
Spread universal. Glorious shows the dawn
Of day's bright planet, e'en in isles remote,
Where, half askance, through the thick vaporous air
He shoots a feeble or discolour'd beam.
But there, where fresh and vigorous from his couch
Beyond the East he springs, to renovate
His wide dominion, heaven's unclouded vault
Reflects his orient lustre with a blaze
More gorgeous, glowing, and insufferable,
Than Europe's northern regions ever knew.  
Well might the Sabian own thee, sacred source  
Of life and joy, great Mithras, oft invoked,  
And fitter than the bright Astarte, queen  
Of the starr'd firmament, by Sidon's sons  
Nightly adored—thine, whose magnetic orb  
Awakes creation to its sweetest smile  
Of new-born splendour, harmony, and bliss!

Now changed the sombreous canopy of night  
Through pale to purple, and the livelier tint  
Of warm carnation, fringed with living gold;  
Till o'er the horizon the resplendent orb  
In one full flood of glory shone revealed.  
Heard'st thou not, far Gilboah—heard'st thou not,  
Envious Gerizim,² when, in unison  
Of twice ten thousand voices, rose the song  
Of joy and jubilee?—"Praise on the harp,  
Cymbal, or whatsoever may please his ear  
Of softer strain symphonious, lute or voice,  
Praise to the great Avenger! to the Highest,  
Hosannah!"—Short their strain, and, after pause  
Of awful silence, with unsandalled feet,
And eyes to heav'n uprais'd, th' arch-pontiff pour'd
His adoration. "Sacred evermore,
Sacred to God, the sabbath of his rest!
Thrice sacred this wherein we celebrate
Our nation's rescue! Father! at that hour
Of their affliction and calamity
Thou didst not leave thy people. Strike again!
Strike yet again for Israel, as of yore,
And deal thy vengeance on the heathen foe!"

So pray'd he; then with prelude, to essay
Their chiming instruments, the minstrel choir,
In strains more artful and chastised, rehearse
Each mighty miracle which, at the call
Of their first prophet, shook th' obdurate king.
Ranged in due ranks before the sacred mound,
By age or sex (for either sex was there,
The flower of Judah) they began their song,
In measured strains symphonious, whose accord,
With bland illusion stealing o'er the sense,
Called up the images of time o'erpast
To present vision, and beguiled the soul
With varying sympathies of joy or woe.
First, of their fathers' travail and sojourn
In bondage, labouring long with thankless toil
To build proud Rameses and Pithom's strength; 3
Haply those loftier and enduring piles
That tower triumphant o'er the wreck of time,
Egypt's long vaunted wonders, though achieved
By Israel's toil, and wet with Israel's tears.
—Changed the sad measure, as required a theme
Of loftier import, when th' Omnipotent
Disdain'd not for his people to put forth
Miraculous power, and measure strength with man.
Of signs they sung and wonders, that appall'd
Audacious Egypt, which her wizard sons,
League'd with the fiends of darkness, strove in vain
To rival:—purest rivers changed to blood—
Murrain and sores contagious—beast with man
Alike afflicted. Where was Pharaoh's pride
When the vexed elements, earth, flood, and air,
Teeming with noisome swarms innumerable,
Assail'd him in his marble halls reclined,
At the rich banquet, or soft couch of love?
Anon, in solemn numbers, to express
A deeper horror, they resumed their chant.
Of noon-day night they sung—profoundest night—
Of darkness palpable—of hail and fire—
Locusts, whose flight obscured the cope of heav’n,
Whose taint, more fatal than the storm, devoured
The wreck of harvest. Bends not yet thy pride,
Stubborn deceiver?—wouldst thou still provoke
Worse visitation?—The decree is past;
Forth, on the wings of darkness, borne unseen,
The high commission’d angel speeds his flight,
Scattering destruction.—Hark! through all the land
Sounds as of wailing, weeping, and despair,
When not a house in Egypt, but bereaved
Of its first-born, re-echo’d to the cry
Of some sad mother.—Soft and dolorous,
From virgin voices, flow’d the note of woe;
Now in low murmurs, with the silver lyre,
Or smooth recorders, swelling on the breeze;
Now in mellifluous cadence, soft as dews
That fall from Hermon hill at eventide,
Sinking to silence: the delighted ear
(So true their unison) might well believe
The blended sweetness, instrument and song,
Were but one voice, that pour’d its plaintive wail
In simple melody, while all who heard
Made moan for Egypt and forgot the foe.
Not sweeter measures sooth'd the frenzied king.
What time the shepherd minstrel swept his harp,
Waking such music as at once becalm'd
Long-rankling wrath, and sooth'd the soul to peace.—
The strife is o'er—the proud oppressor yields—
Exult for Israel!—lo, with all their tribes,
They march triumphant; to what numbers swell'd
From those afflicted brethren who besought
Food for their hunger! now a nation huge,
Thousands of thousands, all complete for war,
And God their captain!—the parted sea
Yields them safe passage. Lift the song of joy!
Swell every instrument! a louder strain!
Behold pursuing Pharaoh and his host,
Horsem an and horse, beneath the refulgent wave,
Pomp, pride, and prowess, all at once engulf'd!
Again the note of triumph, yet again,
From the throng'd multitude ascending, tore
The vaulted firmament, while all the choir
Pour'd the full tide of music to the song
Part, with the trumpet's peal and thrilling horn,
Timbrel or clarion shrill, to beat of drum
Or clanging cymbals, blew the blast of war:
Others, with skilful touch, awoke the chords
Of the string’d dulcimer, and sweeter lyre;
Heroic measures and high poesy,
Whereof no record now: the sons of song,
Their fame unknown, their memory unembalm’d,
Sunk in their city’s universal doom,
Nor left a name behind. Thus they awhile,
With strains that held the soul in ravishment,
Begun their homage; no ungrateful meed
To Him they worshipp’d, had the heart been true.

Sudden a shout of terror spread afar
Through the throng’d courts; the clash of arms was heard,
And tumult wild ensued, and panic flight.
Lo! in the midst, the traitorous Giscalite
Exhorts to havoc: his malignant heart,
While all around stood fix’d in full delight
At the high harmony, inly revolved,
With savage joy, how soon those notes should change
To genuine sorrow; yet appear’d to join
In adoration, watching when his force
Might, with least doubt or hazard, perpetrate
Their dark conspiracy; that signal given,
Casting their mantles, his appointed crew,
Clad all in iron, with unsheathed arms,
Sprung from their ambush, and, with bold assault,
Seiz'd every rampart, battlement, and tower,
Of the strong fortress; while the multitude,
Wondering the cause, nor knowing who the foe,
Stood fix'd in fear, or round their altars clung;
Till the wild rout, their work of slaughter done,
Paused from destroying, while th' usurper's threats,
And dire gesticulation, forth amain
Pursued the crowd, who 'scaped at last with life'.
Thus he, with subtle cruelty, regain'd
The sacred citadel; yet not secure
Of his new conquest. Simon, more enraged
At having slipp'd th' occasion to essay
What his unhesitating bold compeer
Had won by stratagem, again resumed
Fiercest hostility, and kept close siege
Around the temple—either homicide
Muster ing his kindred powers to daily fields
Of doubtful, bloody, unavailing war;
Fatal th' event alike, whoe'er prevail'd.

What better hope for Rome? her hosts the while,
By one great chief controll'd, in one great cause
Combined for glory, flush'd with confidence
From their last fight, burn'd only to attack
Their late assailant. To surmount the sides
Of the steep precipice, whose dangerous brow
O'erhung th' abyss, and, in the teeth o' the foe,
Scale his tower'd ramparts, seem'd an enterprize,
If of no light achievement, yet alone
Worthy the daring: but their chief, more wise,
Restrains their ardour, warns them what beseems
Captain and army; his to win the prize,
Yet count the cost; their's to await his will,
And more to fear their leaders than the foe.

He said, and, after order to complete
Their new encampment, and prepare for fields
Of long hostility, himself resumed
His speculation. From the mountain's brow
A wider prospect o'er the city lay
Full in his view outspread, the noble wrecks
Of old magnificence, with regal pomp
Of later monarchs. What had been their thoughts
Who pour'd, in after ages, from afar,
To rescue Sion from the Paynim yoke,
Had they beheld her bulwarks as they stood
E'en at this hour, or ere the conqueror
Laid them in ruin,—they who at the sight
Of those loved regions where their Saviour bled,
At once to earth their harness'd limbs inclined
In adoration; every war-scarr'd breast
Touch'd with remorse and sorrow; each stern eye
Suffused, for pity, with unwonted tears? 6
No thoughts like these o'erawed the infidel
Who now approach'd—of God or Christ at all
He reck'd not—to subdue a desperate foe
Was his main care, and he must pause awhile
Ere he adventured. Had he erst admired
Her stately elevation, could he choose
But stand transfix'd in wonder, as his eye
Measured its full dimensions, site, and strength?
Beneath his feet a narrow gorge appear'd,
Water'd by Kedron, now a shallow brook,
But oft, by sudden rains, above its banks
Swoln to a torrent deep and dangerous:
Southward the valley stretch'd, but, sweeping soon,
Compass'd the city to her western wall;
Whether by waters worn, or delved by art,
Foss so profound or wide, no citadel
Modern or old, could ever boast. That vale
Was long and fearfully renown'd of yore,
By Hinnom's fair and Tophet's fatal name;
Form'd for delight, but stain'd with guilty deeds
And infant murder, where the idol-god
Gorged them alive in fire: high were its sides,
Abrupt and shaggy; inaccessible
The summit, yet secured with giant towers
Of closest masonry; nor pass was there,
Save where an arch bestrode the yawning chasm,
Such as Helvetian peasants fondly feign
Cast by night spirits, with unearthly toil,
O'er the riv'n mountain. There the Roman chief
Explored no more, as in despair to force
Or breach or entrance: yet what better hope
Before him? on a rock, more eminent
Than the Tarpeian steep, or that bold ridge
Whose inexpugnable and iron strength
Bars the Boeotian from Peloponnese,
The sacred fortress frown'd; its front compact
Of massive blocks, each many a cubit thick,
Proof to his engines as the granite strength
Of northmost Lapland to the polar blast.
Twice fifty fathom from the vale beneath
Was their foundation fix'd, by wondrous art
Buttress or column propped, where the live rock
Sustain'd not;—all within of equal strength,
Like fort or arsenal complete for war:
Cisterns replenish'd with the dew of heav'n,
Or fed from fountains, as tradition told,
Never to ebb or fail; and, yet beyond,
On loftier ground, arose a noble tower,
If tower it might be called, that rather seem'd
A mass of towers in close continuous strength:
And yet beneath an ample city stood,
Left by Agrippa in unfinish'd strength,
Which (were the wall complete) its altitude
Would have defied all onset from a foe. 7
Long were the sum of every pile that fix'd
Caesar's amazement; some of old renown,
Nodding to ruin,—some of later pride,
Built by luxurious monarchs for repose
In oriental sloth, or to allure
Besotted Judah to their heathen rites
Abominable, and monstrous deities.

Of such, the ramparts won, might be his care
Hereafter; now behoved him fix a force
To mask those iron batteries that defied
His vast machinery, and check th' assaults
Of the besieged; nor kenn'd he place more fit
Than his first choice; and soon, the camp complete,
Down the rough mountain side he wheels his course,
Northward, where still the city's aspect show'd
Fresh cause of wonder—those stupendous towers
Rear'd by the Idumean, to record
His lasting friendship, and, with late remorse,
Atone th' injustice of suspecting love. 8
Above the city wall, whose altitude
Show'd more prodigious from the site sublime
Whereon it stood, in rival majesty
They rose refulgent: that Egyptian tower,
Whose blazing beacon, from the mouth of Nile,
Stream'd many a league to sea, though more renown'd,\(^9\)
Scarce match'd their greatness. At th' unclouded hour
Of morn or eve, the warder thence might ken
The utmost bounds of Judah's happier reign,
From far Arabia to the western deep.
Right adverse stood a hill less eminent,
But such where mightiest armies might encamp,
Flanking the ramparts, whose converging sides
Enclosed Mount Goreb, and the sacred scene
Of Christ's last passion;—here the Roman chief
Unfurl'd his standard, and disposed his host.

And now the work of havoc first commenced,
With axe and fire, to clear an ample field
For the dread engines and machinery.
Loud was the crash of woods, whose giant heads,
Beneath their ceaseless and unsparing stroke,
Bow'd prostrate;—spreading oaks and sycamore,
Cedars of Libanus, and mountain pine,
Cypress of mournful green, whose spiry shafts
Rose in mild contrast with umbrageous elms—
The growth of ages, in a day laid low!
Alas for those, that oft, at sultry noon,
Or sweeter fall of eve, were wont, erewhile,
To seek, for refuge from the popular throng,
Garden or grove suburban—to inhale
Th’ untainted breeze—to list the chant of birds
Melodious—or by Siloa’s wood-fringed sides
To roam contemplative—perchance inclined
For lighter pleasures, carol songs of joy,
And hear and breathe th’impassion’d vow of love!
They never more, at sultry noon, or fall
Of evening hour, still sweeter, should enjoy
Garden or grove suburban, or inhale
Th’untainted breeze, or list the chant of birds;
No more, by Siloa’s wood-fringed sides, indulge
Calm contemplation, carol songs of joy,
Or hear or breathe th’ impression’d vow of love!¹⁰
Hang up the harp and weep! thine hour is come—
Daughter of Sion, weep! the enemy
Hath cast his trench around thee; and thy joys,
Thy sports, thy mirth, thy music all are fled!
Oft wilt thou strain thy dim and tearful gaze
Toward the red field, and fondly ask, like her
BOOK II.  SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.  39

Who mourn'd of old for her young Sizerah,  
Wherefore the neighing steed, the well-known step  
Of parent, son, or bridegroom's dearer name,  
Returns not? climb thy rampart and behold  
How, all around, th' innumerable foe  
Prepares the ruin which shall soon o'erwhelm  
Thyself and kindred in one general doom!

Fast speeds the work of armies when they toil  
For fame or vengeance: scarce a few short days,  
And all from Scopus,  
To the sepulchre  
Where Herod, by Bethora's silver lake,  
Lay proudly tomb'd—a fair and fruitful scene—  
A few short days, and all was chang'd around  
To empty desolation; those glad fields,  
Each fair variety of vale and hill,  
Gardens, where Sibmah's vine and Sharon's rose  
Shed fragrance—haunts of God and angel guest—  
Laid bare and levell'd for the march of war!

Sleep'st thou, besotted city, that the foe  
Pursues his ravage, ceaseless, unassail'd?  
Oh! soon awaken'd from that fatal trance,
When, as by magic art, his mounds arose,
Throng'd with thick archers, whose unerring aim
Swept all the parapet; an iron storm,
Javelin, and barbed shaft, and missive spear,
Shower'd without respite; then, in dread array,
The lofty tow'rs and battering engines, huge
As that fam'd horse whose hollow womb enclosed
Armies in ambush, which, at deep of night,
Burst on the slumber of unconquer'd Troy.
Onward, on massive wheels, by dint of strength
Of half the host propell'd, onward they moved,
Pregnant with ruin, and in motion seem'd
Like rocks uprooted; while, at every pause,
As rougher ground impeded, or the toil
Required short respite, earth beneath their weight
Groan'd, and the mass in dread concussion rung.
And now, at distance due, they 'gan to ply
Their mischief. Boast the sons of modern war
That their long-searching alchemy combines
Atoms whose quick combustion to the base
Shakes garrison'd cities? what could all its power
Devise more sure and fatal for assault,
Than those dire engines whose continued shock
Nor strength of masonry, nor gates of brass,
Thrice barr’d, resisted? form’d of massive beams,
Bolted with iron, and of wondrous length:
The curved head, in solid metal cast,
Show’d like the terrors of that horned beast
The gifted seer beheld by Shushan’s stream
Pushing for mastery; 13 aloft in air,
From transverse timbers poised, they hung; at last,
In concert, with Herculean force propell’d,
Full on the wall they smote; then, from recoil
Gathering fresh power, and with fresh efforts driven,
Again, and ever and anon, renew’d
Their shock—in vain—th’ unyielding substance foil’d
Its utmost impact, many a weary day
Toil’d without respite: the besieging host,
As their rough natures prompted, stung the while
With fierce impatience, yet control’d by fear
Of their great leader, and elate with hope
Of war’s last harvest, glory and revenge.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE THIRD.
ARGUMENT.

Truce between the factions in Jerusalem—Debates—the Jews attempt to destroy the Roman engines, but are repulsed, and retreat to the city—a Jewish marriage—fall of one of the Roman towers in the night—breach effected in the outer wall—entrance of the Roman army.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE THIRD.

Meanwhile, within the walls, the robber chiefs
With sullen wonder view'd the foe's assaults,
His dauntless hardihood and patient toil;
Which (as the waters with unceasing flow
Fret firmest granite) could not fail to shake
Their strongest bulwarks: ruin and despair,
Or leagued resistance, must be now their choice;
To check the onsets of victorious Rome,
Unite or perish. Dire necessity
At length prevail'd o'er either, to suspend
The bloody arbitrement of civil war;
Then to convoke a council of the prime
For arms or wisdom, that with equal voice
Might speak their suffrage for the city's weal.
Behold them, soon in moody synod ranged,
Begirt with arms—far other than of yore,
In happier age, when Israel wont to hold
Her awful Sanhedrin—grave men and sage,
Whose hoary heads, and features touch'd with time,
Argued deep counsel, while their lips distill'd
Wisdom divine with noblest eloquence:
More like some outlaw'd troop who couch by night
In treacherous ambush by the forest's edge;
Or, where their waning cresset, through the depth
Of some close cave, half shadows, half illumes
Each ghastly visage, secret orgies hold,
To plan fresh rapine, and discourse of blood.
Such seem'd the rude assemblage; on each brow
Mistrust and ill-disguised hostility;
Loud every voice, and clamorous for debate:
When Simon rose—above all others he,
By deeds of daring, what the boldest voice
Scarce dared to utter, back'd with oratory
That pour'd the genuine vigour of a soul
Disdaining danger and despising life,
O'er his rude followers such ascendant won,
As his deep rival's art could never reach.
This oft with subtle rhetoric might persuade,
Confound, ensnare; that, with no argument
But forceful words, and the quick lightning flash
Which fired his eye, unthinking, unconvinced,
Hurried his hearers; one with measured march
And slow approaches, triumph'd—one by storm—
This warp'd the judgment—that could stir the strings
Of each strong passion to its wildest mood.
John, as his reasons sunk with deeper force
Into the mind, could nerve his auditory
To calm, enduring, steadfast fortitude,
Action or suffering—Simon, had he bade
Follow through fire, or on the hostile camp
Rush singly, none of all his rugged band
Had paused to question, dared to disobey.
He, of his own alike and other's blood
Reckless; deriding caution, as beneath
A soldier's glory: John, affecting thoughts
Of kindlier cast, yet still by true remorse
Uncheck'd, and only valiant in despair.
Thus then, as Simon rose, his motion awed
Th' inferior warriors, and at once imposed
Silence—he threw an eager glance around
As to peruse his audience, then, with eyes
Bent on his rival, furiously broke forth:

"If we stand thus to talk of utmost war—
Since war, and only war, with our joint foe
Could, e'en a' moment, bring me to suspend
The stroke of vengeance— if, to rush at once
With rival fury on the ranks of Rome,
That, more unshackled, and with all our might,
We may resume our mortal controversy,
Till one or both shall perish, be the scope
Of this great meeting,— I forbear awhile;
But if, for some dark purpose— to surprise
The valiant remnant who survived thy sword—
(Smile as thou may'st, false chief!) whate'er thy hope,
Blood or ambition, think not to enjoy
Easy revenge, as o'er the trembling throng
Of priests and women: see us now prepared
For either argument— debate or arms!
Pluck but one weapon, and we deal thee back
Such bloody measure, as shall dearly quit
Thy former treachery; and of this be sure,
To thee I owe nor yield supremacy—
To thee, who may'st again, if Rome prevail,
Fly as from Giscala.—Or grant we rout
Th' invader! what the triumph, thou and thine
Reaping th' advantage?—more secure in peace
To hatch fresh wiles, and ravage worse than war."

Thus, with wild gesture, and impassion'd tones
That breath'd no peace, the vehement orator
Vented the rage that rankled in his heart
At sight of whom he hated; while his foe
Master'd the storm of passion, which well nigh
Shook him past rule: for sore the chastisement
Probed his sear'd conscience, and from Simon's hand
Search'd deeper still: yet, when the hum was hush'd,
He stood collected in his wonted power,
And deep dissimulation; to retrieve
His blasted name, and varnish o'er his guilt,
Blood and ambition, now required the show
Of mild humility: his rugged brow
He soon unbent, and motioning to speak,
With courteous gesture, framed his smooth reply.
"Call'd, as I deem'd, our powers to peaceful cares
And calm debate, for counsel or for war,
I had forborne all mention of the past;
But, thus impeach'd and menaced, shall I shrink
Silent, defenceless, from the stern appeal?
Say, first, that I and mine regain'd by arms,
Call it surprise, what by surprise was won,
Our temple fortress—were we free to yield
The mount of God, the sacred citadel,
The post of danger, to unwarlike priests
And mercenaries? At the worst, what law
Forbade retaliation, e'en revenge,
On that false traitor who seduced my host
At my worst need; the whilst, on either part,
Hemm'd round by foes, I scarce maintain'd the fight?
And this from Simon! who but now put forth
His violent menace to assail us here
Consulting? Hath he spared the innocent blood,
Age, sex, or office?—Fear no ill from me
Henceforth; the debt of justice quit, we vow
Our swords, our service, to the city's weal.
Yet, were our title to command or power
At issue—if I fled from Giscaha,
Which he esteems inglorious, all but he,
My proudest triumph—should that flight annul
All claim to honours, for a chief who stood
Through every hardship of a desperate siege?
Yes, mighty city, birth-place of my fame,
I dare invoke thine ashes! dare attest
The hapless remnant which survived thy fall,
Through what extremes I held the foe at bay;
Baffled his utmost might; and when, at last,
Starved to submission, and denied to find
The death of honour, (sought so oft in vain
On the red breach, as best becomes the brave)
I left them free to make their peace with Rome,
Myself, at every hazard, through the camp
Of the besieger, forcing midnight way;
Resolved to brave all perils, but endure
Roman dominion!—Pardon that I dwell
On old achievements, to approve my right
To public trust; nor think, the while, I seek
Undue pre-eminence: what need we strive
For prime command? why rather not divide
The field of glory?—guard thou thy domain
O'er the great city—space enough for power,
If power invite thee—I, the site I hold,
A barren victory, but dear to me
E'en for the danger; for, full sure I ween,
Th' uncircumcised and ruthless enemy
Will ply his utmost onsets, where he deems
Our Gods keep station; where he hath disposed
His choicest legions; where his arms so late
Made proof with our's, and suffer'd sad reverse."

He ceased, th' arch hypocrite, with wily arts
Glossing past guilt, and covering future hope,
As though his country were his only care,
No thought beyond; and, while he seem'd to yield
Larger dominion, for himself reserved
The strongest hold: the specious overture
Beguiled his foe, and through th' assembly stirr'd
A burst of welcome, as their hearts beat high
For war without, yet hail'd the dawn of peace
Within the city; when a reverend form,
Matthias, rose; of sacerdotal rank
The chief was he; and though his office now
Might hope no homage, nor his years beseeem
This desperate conclave, he essayed to urge,
In simple phrase, his argument for peace:
Wherefore, whilst expectation held them mute,
He thus address'd the rude consistory.

"Let me not seem to counsel as from fear,
If what I thus adventure, thus alone,
Breathes not those loftier and triumphant hopes
Others proclaim: if valour might suffice,
Or God or angel fought upon our side,
Well might we cope, and fearlessly, with Rome.
But thus, alas! I cannot choose, but urge
Timely surrender: for what cause to bode
Victorious issue? When you first assail'd
Th' ill-guarded Caesar, or but now surprised
A single legion, could your shock prevail
In either charge, though vigorous and resolved,
To force his station or impede his march?
Behold, sublime, upon the mountain's brow,
Where their wall'd camp, impregnable to storm,
O'ertops our citadel—on every side
Myriads, impenetrably trench'd—a line
Of steely pikemen, rank'd in close array,
Covering their archery, that, with a storm
Of ceaseless shafts, assail us; while, beyond,
Unnumber'd cavalry, the flower of war,
Scout all the region round, to cut us off
From food or forage. Then, can stone or brass
Resist those ruinous engines, whose assault
Plies without respite?—see them once o'erthrown,
Havoc and slaughter enter at the breach.
Think too, if food should fail, what misery
To the throng'd city!—think you see fulfill'd
Those fearful visions which the seer beheld,
With eyes that gush'd for pity, at the thought 1
Of Sion's anguish; and, of all the train
Who spoke from God, what prophet but foretells
Our city's ruin? Mock not, if I speak
Of one, as King rejected and disdain'd,
Whom yet miraculous and mighty signs
Proclaim'd a Prophet of no mortal cast.
For sure, had any seen him put to proof,
In every trial—torture, bonds, and death—
Heard his last warning words, and seen th' event
Thus far fulfill'd—they could not choose but own
His dread prediction worthy of our care.
His port was more than human, though array'd
In simplest garb; his words above compare
For truth and wisdom; add to these, a life
Unstain’d of passion, unimpeach’d of sin;
His mission vouch’d by matchless miracles.
These orbs beheld the stormy waters hush’d
At his rebuking—saw the fiends of hell
Cast out from souls possess’d—the sick restored
To life and healing; I was of the throng,
When, at his call, the shrouded Lazarus
Awoke from death; and, when himself expired,
I stood beside him, at the tree of shame,
To mark the end: strange darkness overspread
The noonday heav’n—the Temple’s veil was torn,
And the rocks rent; while many yet can tell,
How, all night long, th’ uncoffin’d dead were seen
Roaming the city. Such was He, whose voice,
Twice twenty seasons gone, proclaim’d this woe,
And worse, to come—our people led again
(The few who ’scape) to far captivity—
Our Temple sack’d, our bulwarks in the dust.
That hour, perchance, is near, and this the foe
Ordain’d for vengeance: yield, while yet ye may:
The great and terrible nation, from afar,
Is come against us:—lo! his camp is set—
His trench dug deep,—e'en now our outward wall
Shakes with his battering train: beware the rest!"

He spoke, and John impetuously replied:
"Ill-boding seer, pernicious counsellor!
Were not thy doting years beneath disdain,
Some voice, long since, or hand, had interposed
To strike thee dumb in th' instant; who, alone,
While we stand all agreed for glorious war,
Wouldst mar our resolution! What to thee,
This day's debate?—to thee, whose ministry,
And palsied age, alike forbid to share
The strife of heroes?—be it, that we fail'd
To storm their camp; enough was won to nurse
Fair hope hereafter for our next assault,
There, or in any part thy terror deems
Impregnable.—Of thine ill auguries
Let those who may, interpret; we nor heed
Prophet nor prophecy; denied, disdain'd
Of the whole nation, save a simple few
Of easy faith, he fell without regard,
And so shall end his senseless oracles;
Though such as thou should set them in array,
To spread despair—in vain: our fathers scorn'd
His empty ravings: for ourselves, our swords
Shall best refute them."

Long acclaim and loud
Follow'd, and fierce applause, which show'd how true
Their bosoms echoed to the vehemence
Of the bold orator. They rose at once,
Eager for battle; war, from every voice,
From every targe, in thrilling concert rung.
Nor longer pause ensued than what sufficed
To arm for combat, ere they issued forth,
With sword and firebrand, like the maddening rout
Pour'd by old Mona o'er her dreary coast, 3
So fierce and furious, that the Roman chief
Paused ere he pass'd, half doubting to invade
The moody Druid in his last retreat.
Thus fix'd in silent wonder, which might seem
Akin to terror, the besieging force
Waited their sally. Onward, to th' assault,
Bold Simon rush'd, and, with a flood of fire,
Pour'd such combustion o'er the massive towers,
That soon a sable volumed smoke 'gan ooze
From every vent; at which a shout of joy
Burst from the walls, as if that hour had crown'd
The pride of Judah, and the shame of Rome.
Vain, transitory triumph! once again,
Nor only once, must the besieged endure
That bitterest anguish of the brave, to see
Fair hopes o'erthrown, and glorious victory
Pluck'd from their grasp: for now an iron line,
Darkening the valley, spurr'd in full career
To join the battle; furious was the shock,
As those charged headlong, these, in firm array,
Recoil'd not; many a warrior sunk to earth,
At the first onset; many a generous steed
Pour'd his bold bosom on the gleaming files,
Or fled unmaster'd; yet their dread assault,
Repulsed and still repeated, made no breach
In that firm phalanx, which, from days of yore,
In serried order, deep, impenetrable,
Defied the flower of heathen chivalry.

Long were the argument to sum their names,
Obscure and worthless else, that, in a scene
Of such promiscuous conflict, swell'd the tide
Of slaughter—their's who bled by Simon's sword,
Or where his rival, strung to martial mood,
Made hideous inroad 'mid the files of war.
Doubtful and long the issue of a field
Where hosts, for valour equal, nor unmatch'd
In numbers, strove for all their souls esteem'd
The meed of battle. In the midst, his eye
Through the barr'd vizor gleaming, Titus charged;
And, with a cry that o'er the martial din
Rung loud and terrible, inspired fresh hope
Amid the legion, terror through the foe.
Nor yet by speech alone; no mortal strength
Could long abide the thick and thundering strokes
Of his red falchion, cleaving helm and mail,
Buckler and cuirass, faster and more fierce
Than sight could follow; 'neath his single arm
Twelve of the bravest, gash'd with gaping wounds,
Lay stretch'd in death; which, when their comrades view'd,
Alike their courage, strength, and hope o'erthrown,
They sought sad safety in inglorious flight,
Hurrying their leaders, who in vain essay'd
All that despair or fury could inspire,
To hew their passage to the Roman chief,
And, sword to sword, upon his plumed helm,
Put the big war to issue; but, at length,
Cursing their God and fortune, back retired;
Slow and indignant, with their baffled host.

Woe was the sight of the thick multitude,
Aged and young, that round the portal press'd,
To meet their entrance! various was the cry
Of joy or anguish, as their eager gaze
Perused each feature, scarce distinguishable,
Save to th' unfailing and quick glance of love;
And found or found not, as the barrier closed
The well-known visage!—some, mature of years,
Had closed th' account of glory—some in youth,
From parents torn, or, haply, from the bliss
Of new espousals, on that field had fallen,
In their first arms; and still, though fear foretold
The bitter truth, th' infirm of sex or age,
Clung round the sullen vanquish'd, to entreat
The tale they dreaded: then, assured of the worst,
Sent up such moan to heav'n, as might have moved
A Roman's pity; or, with silent grief
More eloquent, retired to weep apart.

And who is she, so young and beautiful,
That, from yon lattice, with impassion'd gaze,
O'erlooks the warrior's ranks; her sable locks
Thrown all unbraided to the passing wind,
Her dark cheek tinted with the mellowing hue
Of Syrian suns, and flush'd with maiden fear?
Like ivy twining round some stately elm,
Upon her venerable sire she hangs,
The priest Matthias; while his arm affords
The feeble aid it needs, to trembling love.
He comes at last, the warrior whom she sought,
Hazor the chief of th' Idumean powers,
Above the rest, despite of dust and gore,
Pre-eminent; while on his brow appears
Shame of defeat, and anguish, not unmix'd
With loftier feeling, and a soldier's pride,
That, whatsoe'er th' event, his sword had wrought
Heroic service; but the sorrowing mood
Pass'd quick away, as that bright form which fired
His breast for battle, met his eager gaze.
Yet, when the first fond thrill of pleasure pass'd,
Dark thoughts and sad came rushing o'er his soul,
Which thus found way—"Yes, we are met once more—
But can Sapphira greet me in defeat,
Pursued, disgraced? nor spurn a chief who fled
Before the heathen foe—whose flight betray'd
Her God and country?"—"Oh, not thou disgraced—
Say not disgraced—full well we know that foot
Had never fled while any yet remain'd:
But thou alone, against whole hosts, ev'n thou
Hadst striven in vain; and oh! what hope were left
For us or Edom, of her bravest chief
Reft at such need?—had all, like thee, stood true,
The field might yet be our's, and Judah free."

"But let us leave awhile to talk of war,"
The reverend sire replies, "till calmer hours,
For thou hast need of rest—alas! of food;
And what we have shall share; the poor remains
Of happier feasts, now well reserved for thee."
His courteous bidding, and the softer smile
Of young Sapphira, move the warrior more
Than nature's need; with due ablution done,
They sit them down—the maid apart the while,
As sex was wont—while th' aged host invokes
The hand that gave the vine to bless its fruit 4;
And, lightly tasting, proffers to his guest
The mantling cup: but, hunger soon appeased,
A dearer joy succeeds, the social hour
Of kindly converse, e'en in sadness sweet.
Eager they list the terrors of the tale
Told by the warrior guest, and ponder much
On what may next betide: whilst each young heart,
Fresh and untutor'd in the lore of woe,
Still conjures up bright images to view,
Of peace, and joy, and love; which the sad sire
Would fain dispel, not chide: "It may not be,
No season this for dalliance, when grim war
Puts every life in peril; every day
Brings ominous foretaste of calamity.
Enough for each to bear his lot alone,
Nor with a bitterer sorrow dreg the cup
Of what remains to live—for me not much,
Grown grey in grief; yet happy, might I leave
The people ransom'd, and the land in peace—
And thee, my daughter, with the bridegroom bound
In blissful spousals—but it may not be!”

“Ah! wherefore?—hap what may,” the chief replied,
“We yet may snatch some fleeting hours of joy
E'en from despair; or, at the worst, unite
In such sad vows, as, if thy fears be true,
May leave this fatherless and tender maid
One guardian arm to shield her—and, for thee,
A son's good sword.”—“For me it will not need;
But, if thy love, despite of danger, still
Seeks to a holier tie, fulfil thy vow:
To-morrow thou shalt seal the bridal bond,
And call Sapphira thine; the altar now
Demands my tending; warrior, to thy rest,—
And thou, my daughter, to thy maiden cares.”

He paused, while the young lover briefly breathed
Some rapturous vows, and such warm hopes as youth
Delights to cherish:—“May each gentle star
O'er thy soft eyelids shed the dew of sleep,
And o'er thy bosom, peace!”—In silent joy,
Yet half suppress'd, the maiden gently own'd
Her mutual wish, and pour'd an equal prayer,
Not interdicted now:—"And, oh! for thine
Be the sweet influences of the heavens
Softly dispens'd! nor think this vow the first
Breath'd for thy blessing! Not a day hath call'd
Thy steps to battle, not a night hath pass'd,
But I have pour'd my lonely orisons
With a heart-prayer for thee! but now, farewell!
To-morrow we may meet for bliss or woe:
Ah me! too truly as I fear for woe!"
—So saying, slowly to her chamber she
Departs, and Edom's leader to his tent.

The morrow dawns; the bridal friends are met;
The bridal bond is seal'd; the nuptial dower
Changed, as was wont; while sad Matthias breathes
A father's benison:—"The dew of Heaven
Drop on thy couch, my daughter, for increase!
The God of Isaac and Rebecca bless
Thy wedded love, and give thee to behold
Thy children's children, and the land in peace!"
And, like Rebecca, in her beauty, she
Stands, veil'd the while, in all her costliest trim
Gorgeous deck'd: her arms with bracelets bound,
Her neck with gems in radiant circle set,
Her dark hair garlanded with vernal flowers;
While virgin handmaids, hymning marriage songs,
Lead to the frugal board; and mirth and dance
Banish awhile the memory and the dread
Of deepening danger; till the closing hour,
When, with bright burnish'd lamps, the kindred train
Guide to the chamber, where the joyful spouse
Awaits her, chanting benediction sweet.
Vain all their vows! and doom'd to end in woe!

Now night her softer shadows had diffused
O'er camp and city—sooth'd alike to sleep
On either part, the sons of war reposed
Their weary strength; for the hour of darkness still
Brought its due respite to the lids of care.
The scene was hush, and not a murmur breath'd,
Save when at intervals, on the light breeze,
The regular watch-word sounded, and as oft
The sentinel's deep tone responsive swell'd
Along the ramparts; at that busiest hour
Of fear and fancy, such a crash was heard,
That every warrior started from his rest
As for the battle: forthwith, by the blaze
Of countless torches, which, from hand to hand
Lighted, revived day-splendour, that the camp
(Sparkling like night-seas 'neath the tropic line)
Seem'd all emblazed, their warlike visages
Show'd dark and ghastly; till their general's voice
Composed their wonder: to the scene of dread
He moved majestic; when behold a sight
To stir amazement! that long labour'd tower,
An army's toil to raise, at once o'erthrown
Without assault; while thronging gazers told
Of sights and sounds unearthly, through the gloom
Beheld or heard, erewhile, betokening woe.
Ponder'd their chief amazed; yet more in doubt
Of Judah's stratagems than all the arts
Of hostile spirits, bade repair the wreck,
And keep close watch against a crafty foe.

Alas! it needed not;—her late defeat
Had so appall'd the city, that her hopes
Fell in the instant. They that late aspired
To rout th' entrench'd assailant from his camp,
Would stand no more to guard the battlements.
So now uncheck'd, of all that might impede
Their ceaseless impact, the dread engines shook
The crumbling masonry, and forced a breach
Through which at once victorious Rome rush'd in,
Assured of spoil, and hungering for revenge;
But found instead a sad and silent scene,
Dismantled walls, the waste of ancient war
Or civil mutiny. It was a space
Begirt with ramparts when the city rose
From her first fall, or, as her compass spread,
Gathering fresh greatness; much renown'd of old
For that unseen perdition which surprised
Vaunting Sennacherib, who dared compare
The strength of Israel with the feeble gods
Of heathen worship—fast beside the gates
He camp'd his host at night-fall, and at morn
View'd their bleach'd corpses festering o'er the plain,
Myriads on myriads, stark and stiff in death;
So wide the angel of destruction smote
Their sleeping cavalry; or, as some deem,
The hot simoom from forth the sandy waste  
Of Libyan deserts, breath'd his fiery blast.
Was this the place? and now should Rome usurp
That scene of fatal judgment, and possess
Half the fair city?—to the mount of God
Push her bold station?—must her eagles wave
E'en at the base of that thrice-hallow'd hill,
Unscathed of thunder? and the pestilence
Forget his power to punish, nor again
Blast the blasphemer?—slept eternal wrath
With all its plagues? Alas for Sion now!
Nor God look'd on regardless, nor his plagues
Slept; but, with fatal fury, wrought in league
For the besieger: he, the while, unharmed
Of power miraculous, with anxious care
Strengthen'd his new dominion to repel
Such fresh assaults, as, should the foe revive
In hope or courage, (and the hollow note
Of preparation from the frowning ridge
Of his throng'd battlements betokening war
Argued no less) full soon he deem'd would burst
Upon his host—nor must himself forbear
To press his victory—yet where the choice?
Unnumber'd tow'rs, at equal intervals,
Flank'd the thick wall, which (like th' unbroken strength
Of that broad rampart builded many a league
O'er hills sublime and vallies deep to fence
Unwarlike China from the Tartar foe)
Guarded the original city—by the east
More elevated rose the sacred pile,
With her strong outworks, whence the Giscalite
Menaced his flanks; while Simon's front appear'd
Bristling in arms—yet there the enterprize,
(Though scarce more easy) should his shock prevail,
Would break the strength and sinews of defence
In its main hold; disjoin the adversaries;
Narrow their bounds; and closely circumscribe
Their rock-built citadel, the last resort
For faith and valour. Forthwith, in the midst,
They plant their engines, which the enemy,
Roused from his stupor, view'd with deep despite;
Yet from the past still doubting to provoke
Heavier discomfiture—on either part
Fierce demonstration 'mid the pause of war:
Rome, all elate for conquest—Judah sunk
In deep dejection, but awakening soon
To her first vigour—as some Alpine stream,
Congeal'd and prison'd 'neath the wintry snows
That bar his passage, soon as summer sheds
Its tepid influence, all at once breaks loose,
Loud and more boisterous, from its icy cave,
Bursts every bound, and thunders to the plain.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE FOURTH.
ARGUMENT.

The Jews recover from their despondency and renew their attacks—the Romans gain the second wall, and enter the city, but are compelled to retire—desperate conflict—the Jews retreat to the third wall, and the Romans obtain possession of the second portion of the city—some of the inhabitants permitted to depart—pestilence, its progress and effects.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

Was it a sight to kindle grief and shame
In the besieged, when Rome's victorious host,
And desolating eagles, through the breach
Forced their first entrance?—what but vengeance now,
With unextinguishable and deadly hate
To the destroyer, whose unsparing hand
Dealt utter ruin o'er so fair a part
Of their late towering city and loved home?
What, had their ancestors, hemm'd in by foes,
Built up that wall, so unsurmountable,
To be thus yielded?—where was now their boast,
The solemn, sworn, and covenanted vow,
Rather to struggle to the last of life
Than quit the rampart?—would they thus redeem
The pledge of vengeance? thus assert the hope
Of glorious sovereignty, foretold and fear'd
E'en by the enemy? Woe! utter woe,
To all the nation, should the infidel
Breach the next bulwark! all that heathen rage,
With Roman hate and fury could devise,
For spoil and slaughter, must be then their doom!

Such their sad argument, who fann'd to flame
The slumbering sparks that burn'd in every breast
For martial enterprize, when wall and tower
Went to the ground; yet may the muse forbear
Full many a murderous conflict, where no change
Soften'd the rough and iron frown of war;
No soothing arts, nor polish'd courtesies,
Such as, amid the havoc of the fight,
Gloss o'er the guilt of mutual massacre;
But all unvarying carnage—strife renew'd,
Day after day,—or rather not renew'd,
Where truce was none, or interval; pale night,
That with her peaceful and mysterious calm,
Soothes every ruder passion, could not calm
Their fierce hostility: the moon's cold beam
BOOK IV. SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

Lent its wan light for battle; or, if a cloud
Darken'd the welkin, then, on either part,
Wolfish adventure, treacherous ambuscades,
Surprise, and craft, and secret murders, done
Inglorious, unavailing; blood with blood
Dearly revenged: nor all her discipline,
The pride of Rome, her numbers, or her might,
Seem'd to accelerate the city's fall;
Nor the besieged, that, as in scorn of death,
Rush'd to perdition, could dislodge her hosts
From their new vantage; yet the massive tower,
Where their main engine thunder'd, seem'd to lean
To the last ruin, till its mighty mass,
Batter'd and mined, beneath th' united shock,
Loosed its firm grasp o' the soil; whilst the bold foe,
With regular and well-measured march, advanced
Through the rough breach; and 'now a scene appear'd,
Unlike the last, peopled with multitudes
Unfit for war, unworthy of revenge;
Whilst e'en their city for itself might claim
A hero's homage for the gorgeous wrecks
Of ancient greatness; and his noble heart
Felt their full majesty; the strong controul
Of awful art and splendour, with the fame
Of ancient story heighten'd, but in vain—
As his bold adversary again pour'd forth
On the invader, in a storm of war,
So sudden, fierce, and irresistible,
That none of their most hot and bloodiest fields
But seem'd of light compare; for e'en retreat
Seem'd hopeless here; pent in and press'd, they stood,
On every side: for while stern Simon charged
With his full fury on the van, without
An indistinct and fearful cry resounded,
As if his rival, with their comrades, waged
Close fight beyond; while ever, as they toil'd
Back to regain the breach, through avenues
Of hard retreat, the fierce pursuer press'd
Their painful march below; and high above,
From every roof, with deadly aim pour'd down
Ruin unseen, which buckler could not ward,
Nor arm retaliate; nor, when they reach'd
The perilous pass, could it receive the throng
Of their wedged numbers; and the host, though train'd
To patient discipline, perforce had fall'n,
Thus circumvented, had their chief forgot
His wonted foresight: he, as he survey'd
His doubtful conquest, had array'd a band
Of choicest archery, where either wall
O'erhung the breach, who now a moment caught
Th' unwonted panic; till his voice, in words
Hasty and few, awoke remorse and shame—
"'Twas theirs to check th' assailant, or account
Dear for their fellows' blood, with him and Rome!"
They felt th' appeal, and every sinewy arm
Strain'd the tough yew-string with an aim so true,
None sped in vain; no shaft but pierced the plate
Of some steel'd bosom deep, and drank the gore.
So strange and sudden flew that iron shower
On the pursuer, that his foremost ranks,
With their fierce chieftain, whose pretended spears
Goaded the fugitives, stood check'd at once,
Surprised, and doubting whether to ascend
The crested battlements, and from its top
Hurl down this new assailant, or complete
Easier revenge below: that sudden pause
Gave life and hope to Rome's afflicted powers,
Who but a moment breathing from despair,
Perceived how fatal such precipitous
And shameful flight, where wrecks of ruin spread
Confusedly, and bodies of the slain
Encumber'd all the ground; whilst Cæsar still
Urged his bold argument—"himself would stand,
Last and alone, to cover their retreat."
He scarce had ended, when the adversary
Put him to proof, with renovated rage
Advancing; and a giant combat grew
Within the breach; as Rome, recovering hope,
Once more resolved, whate'er the cost, to guard
Her new dominion; while her enemy,
With equal daring, strove to force them forth,
Prouder thus far to have repell'd a foe
Than barr'd his entrance. As, in deserts parch'd
By the prone sunbeam, where the camel train
Toil slowly onward, nature well nigh spént
With want and suffering—when the wasting cruise
Fails, and th' unfountain'd pathless solitude
Spreads its wide sandy circle deepening round,
A dreary barrier—should the pilgrim's eye,
Ranging th' horizon, o'er its utmost verge
Ken some fair tuft of verdure, date or palm,
At once revived, in vigour as in hope,
They press impatient to the welling lymph;
There drink forgetfulness of every grief,
Past or impending: thus, with fearless joy,
The sons of Judah rush'd upon the front
Of rudest battle, as the goal of war.
Fierce was th' encounter with such frenzy fought.
Each skilful captain, as his followers fail'd
For strength or numbers, still supplied the void
With thronging thousands, who in vain made proof
Of all intrepid valour could inspire
To the last gasp of life—while e'en beyond
Seem'd their dark starting eye-balls still to flash
Living revenge; and features, fix'd in death,
Betray'd what furious passion shook the soul
In its departing. Thrice the blood-red sun
Rose on their close encountering, hand to hand;
Thrice his last radiance sunk upon their war.
At length the chiefs of Judah (who discern'd
Legions still pressing on, resolved for storm,
Whilst their long-wearied powers began to fail)
Ceased from th' assault, resolved to set their last
And utmost efforts for that mightier wall
That still remain'd, and the proud citadel,
Which, as they deem'd, if all beside were lost,
Would set the fury of a siege at scorn.
Welcome, though sad; to their exhausted ranks,
Was that command; short respite from defeat;
Triumph, and pride, and foretaste of revenge,
To Rome's fierce host; nor could their leader now
Forbear such waste as war's dire law allow'd.

Wide spread the flame, and hideous was the wreck
On every side: whate'er the wrathful mood
Of hosts let loose to ravage could achieve
For desolation, on the city fell.
Their toil was all for ruin, to unbuild
The pride of ages past, and, in its place,
Dint deep the line of desolation—proof
More fatal far, and more imperishable,
Than brass or marble, of the might of Rome!
Forth from their blazing dwellings pour'd a crowd,
Mothers and children; happier, as they deem'd,
At the sword's point at once to end their woes,
Than feel the torturing and hot element
Rack every joint and sinew with the pang
Of lingering agony: for who could hope
A chief, late flush'd with conquest, and incensed
By rank rebellion, master of their doom,
Would stay the bolt of vengeance unimplored;
Vouchsafe them pardon, life, and leave them free
To roam at large, as chance or heav'n might lead?
Joy flush'd the wither'd cheek awhile, and tears
Of dumb amazement flow'd from faded eyes;
Banish'd full soon by bitter thoughts, that throng'd
O'er the sick memory—for whither flee?
Where seek a refuge, all the land around
Utterly desolate?—Oh worse than death!—
Terrible choice!—to quit their native land,
Their dear and ancient city—dearer still
In the fond hour of parting and exile!—
To quit those hallow'd altars where alone
Their God and Father (now at last recall'd
With keen, remorseful, bitter retrospect)
Vouchsafed his presence; and go forth to pine
In heathen realms, famish'd and shelterless!—
Yet this, or worse; as the fierce soldier, robb'd
Of vengeance, like a bear bereaved of prey,
Glared on their march, with looks that flash'd reproach
Of Caesar's mercy—yet the tear-swoll'n eye
Would oft revert to Sion—oft the heart
Ejaculate a long and last adieu,
In such fond language, as the tongue in vain
Essay'd to utter; till their infants' wail
Touch'd the quick strings of nature, and revived
A nearer anguish in the parents' breast.
—Sad was their transit o'er th' Egean wave,
Who view'd the ruin that enwrapt thy walls,
Long-leaguer'd Ilion! when the victor Greek
Fired all their city—yet not all forlorn,
Outcast, or hopeless; o'er the deep they bore
Their household deities, with high presage
Of a new empire and a nobler name.
Not so with these sad Sion's fugitives!
No angel sent, as erst, to soothe the sigh
Of the lone mother in the wilderness: 1
Famine and thirst before them—death or bonds—
No nation but a foe—no power but Rome.
Wide and afar their fleshless carcasses
Whiten'd the region with promiscuous heaps,
As part, soon failing, sunk—or part endured
Longer, yet sunk at last; a meagre prey
To Jordan's lions, or the bird that feasts
On slaughter'd men: yet happier thus to 'scape
That last dread consummation of despair
Which soon upon the suffering city fell.

For now a woe, which blotted out all care
Of lighter griefs from tyranny or war,
Fell on the people; whether from the press
Of numbers closely pent, or noxious food,
Whate'er the cause, diseases quickly came,
Bitter and various; blended all at last
In one wide-sweeping plague, which, through the streets,
From house to house with rank infection spread.
Unknown at first its nature, or conceal'd,
But soon past hope to hide; more miserable
As raging most among the miserable
For lack of food, and the free air to cleanse
Their stinted dwellings, and bereaved all aid
Of medicinal art; as art itself
Could find no remedy, when what control'd
One raging symptom, more provoked the rest:
While ev'n the healing ministers, who strove
To stay the ravage, smit with sudden taint,
Found not or anodyne, or balm, to blunt
Their own keen anguish—yet the fatal signs
Show'd not or equal or alike in all,
But strange and various. Sudden as its taint
Possess'd the frame, a keen and caustic heat
Through every pulse, quick shooting from the brain,
Fired every sinew, throb'd in every nerve.
Shiverings anon ensued, convulsive throes,
Heart palpitations, freezing cold and heat
In sad vicissitude: the changeful cheek
With glowing hectic flush'd, or turn'd to tints
Of livid pale; whilst each red eyeball, strain'd
Almost to bursting, darted eloquent proof
Of such keen torment as the laboring tongue
Strove to express, but found no utterance:
These, as if life would cease with every sigh,
Struggled for breath, drawn hardly and with pain:
With frequent, quick, irregular snatches, those.
Nor couch of luxury, nor pallet poor,
(More soothing oft) could lend its aid to sleep:
The livelong hours in agony they lay,
Of morn impatient, then again of dark;
If chance its wonted gloom and lassitude
Might bring that sleep to their desiring eyes
Which day's gay beam denied—yet, but that pain
Lengthen'd each hour to years, not long their doom
To sigh or suffer: to the few whose strength
Struggled thus far, the third sad morn at last
Brought death's dire blessing:—meanwhile raging thirst
Insatiable (as the swoll'n throat refused
Liquidest aliment) afflicted more
Than pinching hunger—might they with one draught
But cool their palate! once in the pure wave
Plunge their hot limbs! despite of bane or death
They reck'd not—woe the while! the wasting pool
No more sufficed, nor else had power to soothe
Their agony!—no angel, as of yore, ³
To stir its lucid surface, and infuse
Miraculous healing!—o'er the marble verge
Fondly they hung, and gazed the drought below,
Courting the breeze which in their heated lungs
Gather'd fresh fires; or, tainted with the breath
Of dying heaps, a loathlier horror flung.
Some, as they roam'd unconscious of the taint
Which sapp'd their vitals, sunk at once in death:
Some, unrepining, silent, and forlorn,
Covering their visage, laid them down to die:
Others, less patient of their pain, forestall'd
The final stroke, and with unlicensed hand
Abridged their anguish—as the soul itself
Seem'd to partake the body's malady,
Frenzied with wild delirium and despair;
Or chill oblivion o'er the senses stole,
And moping melancholy—oft too were seen
Estrangements dire, and fierce antipathies,
Repelling love, that fondly interposed
To soothe their suffering—yet, alas! and oft,
It would not need such madness to repel
Affection's office, where contagious death
Might well extinguish every tender thought
For others' anguish. Bitter e'en at best
The mortal stroke, though soothe'd by every care
Of art medicinal—that last keen pang
That, true to nature, vibrates on the heart,
When on the verge of everlasting doom
The soul hangs hovering!—bitter the despair
Of sad survivors, as they weep around—
To see their sorrows, and to feel its own!
What then to those from whom at utmost need
Friends, kindred, all, affrighted—every hand,
Which should have soothed their pangs, or closed their eyes, 
Fled their lone couch?—no pious tear to wet 
Their cheek—no tender hand to lend relief, 
Chase their cold brows, and wipe the dew of death!

Yet where affection, unappall'd and firm, 
Held to the last, what anguish in the thought 
To the sick sufferer, that its care should reap 
Such bitter recompense! to squander hope, 
Health, safety, life, in unavailing toil, 
And suck contagion from the lip of love! 
Then might be seen all sights of agony: 
Wives disespoused, that round th' unconscious clay 
Of whom they loved, with doting fondness clung; 
Mothers, bereaved of children, in despair 
Beating their bosoms—sounds in every street, 
From every dwelling, of lament and wail, 
Loud, shrill, and terrible, and passing song; 
Or, more intense and eloquent, that grief 
Which spoke not; but, with fix'd, unwater'd eye, 
Gazed the pale dead, as though the fount of tears 
Were spent with weeping, or the heart itself 
Congeal'd to stone. There were who sat with orbs
Bent upon vacancy in idiot stare,
As if the senses of the soul could ken
Visible forms:—there were, like Niobe,
Stiffen'd to marble; the blood's current frozen
Through the heart's misery—sad proof, though rare,
That e'en the anguish of a festering grief
May rival sickness in the work of death.
Yet were there many mourn'd not at the breach
Of tenderest ties, but envied those who 'scape'd
To their last refuge in th' untorturing grave.

Still was it pain to part: no reverence done
To their loved ashes—no sepulchral rites
Of dirge and death wail—requiem none or prayer—
Neglected all, as the wide ravage spread
Beyond all bounds, and death grew of no note:
Parents with children, wives with husbands, borne
On the same bier, to the sad cemetery,
Not of their fathers—where a powerful foe
Debarr'd ev'n the dark chambers of the grave—
But one vast pit, where, in promiscuous heaps,
The chief and lowliest of the nation lay.
Oh! how unlike to those sepulchral rites
Of dirge and death wail, prayer and requiem,
The labouring wain that creak'd beneath the weight
Of its cold burthen; and the fatal call,
Summoning the living to bring forth the dead!
Alas! and oft that call was raised in vain,
Where none could answer; and the scene within
Appall'd the boldest—universal death;
Households and families, all stiff and stark,
Some by sore sickness, some by famine stricken;
Yet fondly still in close embraces lock'd,
And the last kiss of love upon their lips.

Thrice blessed then the womb that never bare,
The breast that ne'er gave suck!—such sorrow smote
The desolate city; whilst encroaching war
Straiten'd their bounds, still threatening worse despair.
When, at the set of one sad evening watch,
Shouts from the foe, with more than wonted pomp
Of preparation, through the people spread
Dread of day dawn. All night along the wall
In arms they stood, as though the last assault
Was now at hand, and this the fated hour
To crown their glory, or decide their doom.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE FIFTH.
ARGUMENT.

Titus, to intimidate the Jews, makes a general display of his army, and dispenses military rewards—enumeration of the auxiliaries—council of the Roman chiefs to deliberate upon the mode of carrying on the siege—a wall built round the city to check the sallies of the Jews, and cut off all hope of escape—Josephus sent to offer terms, is indignantly rejected—debates among the Jewish leaders—murder of the High-Priest Matthias—cessation of sacrifice and worship—the Romans attack the tower Antonia—the Jews dig a mine under a part of the wall, which destroys many of the assailants in its overthrow—the Romans obtain possession of the outer court of the Temple; but, after a long struggle, retire.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

Oh! full of lustre, bright to every eye
But the besieged, arose the orb of day,
When Rome's dread legions, at the signal flown
From the Imperial station, throng'd in arms,
As their great chief resolved to range his powers
In martial muster 'neath the city walls;
If chance such fearful numbers and array
Might shake her courage, and confound her pride.
Glorious th' embattled field reflected round
Their steely splendour: each of humbler rank
In polish'd armour; every chief, to vie
With his compeers in chivalry, complete
In choicest panoply, refulgent mail,
Shields boss'd with gold, and helms with plumed crests
O'ershadow'd; spoils of battle, or bestow'd
For gallant bearing. The proud cavalry,
No less caparison'd for pomp or war,
Trail'd their long housings, champing burnish'd bits;
While every quivering sinew seem'd to beat
Eager of battle, every steed up tore
The sod, impetuous, as the trumpet clang
Swell'd his big heart—the signal breathed, they wheel'd
By troop or cohort, as might best display
Their gorgeous pageant. Ranged beneath their chiefs,
Th' auxiliar squadrons first, with banner'd staves
To guide their march, moved onward—symphonies
Of martial measure pealing clear and loud,
Such as might kindle valour e'en in breasts
Unmoved of glory; how much more of these,
Beating with emulous courage, and exulting,
In every hazard of heroic war?

And first, a thousand horsemen from the realm
Of Vologeses, reconciled to Rome,²
Since the new terrors of a name that awed
The subject earth, from his reluctant grasp
Re deem'd the spoils of Haran's fatal field,
To deck the temple of the avenging Mars;  
And with the warlike pledge secured once more  
His fierce submission, and capricious faith.

Anon a race whose aboriginal names  
Lost in th' Arabian, to the last retain'd  
Unmix'd remembrance of their father's wrongs,  
What time invading Israel had usurped  
Their ancient heritage; whom, had not God,  
Moved at his people's foul idolatries,  
Changed his high purpose, their unsparing swords  
Had quite abolish'd; still through every age  
Survived a remnant, to impede their march  
To full dominion, and controul their pride.

And yet a troop more terrible than these—  
Ishmael's pure lineage; from the first of time  
True to th' angelic word, which prophesied  
His lawless violence—to provoke and wage  
Unceasing war irreconcileable  
With all mankind, and find or make a foe,  
Was his sole policy—that burning cline,  
Unshaded sands, and skies where not a cloud
Breaks the prone sun-beam, through his soul diffused
Congenial fires: while shame and vengeance due
For late defeat—and deeper still, the wrong
Of treacherous murder, dwelt upon his heart.—
It was the month of roses, and the prime
Of the young spring: the noblest of the land
Had met for marriage mirth, and moved along
In bridal progress, with no fear of harm;
When from Judea burst a hostile band,
Spreading dismay and slaughter through their train:
They changed the song of pleasure to lament—
The flowery garland to a cypress wreath—
And roused a foe, whose fierce revenge ne'er fail'd
A more than equal quittance, blood or spoil.

These, and yet more, like vultures to the feast
Of slaughter'd armies lured, or forced to swell
The ranks of Titus, sped from many a realm
Remote or near; from Priam's ancient reign,
Where Ida's woods with frantic orgies rung
To the tower'd Cybele; from the Euxine shores,
Bithynia, and the realm of Mithridate;
Or more to southward where the Carian queen
Raised her proud monument of widow'd love;
   actions that drank Cayster's vocal stream,
Or where Pactolus in Macedonian land
Dear to the Muses, rolls his golden wave.

   Nor haply, among the far auxiliaries,
Lack'd thy rude numbers and barbarian might,
Sea circled Britain! though thy fame, not yet
Brought to the birth, in Time's long teeming womb?
Lay darkly shadow'd; still might thy crude soil
And ample woods supply a generous race,
Such as in naked terror half appall'd
The first great Caesar, and the barks of Rome.

   Last in procession filed her long array,
The birth and bulwark of the Latian soil,
Compatriot all, and far more terrible
Than her auxiliar hosts; as those whose swords
Subdued the various nations to her sway,
Dethroned their dynasties, and won the world.
Scarce scathed of war they seem'd; or if their arms
Show'd its rough brunt, the martial visages
Betrayed no wreck of honor, or of hope.
Fiercely they raged in gesture, and in voice;
And bade the city mark her bleeding sons
Strewn o'er the field; or those, that by the chance
Of battle ta'en, had found a bitterer doom,
Tortured and crucified; as lust of blood
Or fiercer avarice whetted heathen wrath.

At last, his muster o'er, th' invading chief
Dispens'd due gifts and guerdon to the brave;
Armour, and wreaths, and crowns; enhanced with praise,
The sweetest unction to a soldier's breast.
Then, as they roam dispersed, to end their pomps
With martial revelry, himself convokes
A chosen few for counsel, to impart
His new resolve: around in warlike show
They sate attentive; Alexander first
Surnamed Tiberias; from remotest bounds
Of Rome's wide empire, where his legion watch'd
The doubtful Parthian, he revolted erst
Against Vitellius, and proclaim'd the sway
Of great Vespasian; yet a brother chief
Aided his arms, who now, beside him, graced
The martial synod; Cerealis led
His conquering squadrons for the peaceful sire,
And now sustained the glory of the son.
With these were they who left the long repose
Of prostrate Egypt, for a nobler field,
Frigius and Fronto: Lepidus, who pitch'd
His veteran legions on the mountain east;
Where the besieged, with many a desperate charge,
Sallied in vain to storm his watchful camp.
All these, and others of less rank and power,
Tendered their suffrage for the means to quell
Their enemy; each, as his nature urged,
Ruthless or pitiful: some, for mild terms
And peaceful parley; some to brook no plea
Of bootless mercy, but with breach and storm
Entering victorious, to th' extreme of war
Strike deep for terror—some, for reverence
Or admiration of the sacred pile,
To spare its beauty—others to direct
Their mightiest engines 'gainst its massive sides,
As what would most dismay or grieve a foe;
Till Titus thus, with words that reconciled
Their jarring voices, closed the grave debate:
Heroes and chiefs! companions of my toil,  
My trust in council, my best hope in arms,  
Well have you spoke your suffrage; well advised  
For glorious daring; and thus far have fought  
Full nobly: else perchance this rock had foil'd  
Our utmost means of hardihood and power.  
For either Jove hath put forth all his plagues  
To thwart us, or no common deities  
Protect their altars, and abet their war.  
Yet, though th'event seem sure, and victory  
Almost in grasp, such cost of blood should move  
Your leader's care for what may yet be shed;  
Unless by mightier mounds, fit to defy  
Their daily onsets, we may hem them round  
In their last hold, more closely: what is won  
By dint of arms, is much; yet much remains—  
The third of all the city, and the prime  
For strength and greatness; wall'd with battlements  
Of giant height, defended by despair—  
These too (for what will legions such as our's  
Led by such captains not achieve?) shall fall;  
And our all conquering eagle o'er the pride
Of Judah's lion spread her mighty wing.
Yet nobler still the wreath of victory
E'en o'er a barbarous and revolted foe,¹⁸
Though justice strike, when mercy may redeem
The guilt of glory! For myself (the Gods⁹
Bear me true witness!) maugre all the past,
I still would save their city; still forbear
The dire extremity of wasting war;
Still leave that noblest temple of the world
A lasting record to attest our might.
Yet how with men so prodigal of life,
Glorying to die, if e'en in death to shed
One foeman's blood, and wring a tear from Rome?
Thus then, though none need hesitate to stake
The fate of battle on our equal swords,
Judah's to our's—yet who but must confess
This, the most deadly enemy our arms
Have yet encounter'd? never while he held
Th' exterior walls, could our most vigilant watch
Bar all his onsets; how much rather now
Pent up and press'd by our concentrating powers,
Will he not vex us with continual shocks—
Perhaps break through—impede our daily toils,
And scare our sentinels with night alarms?
One labour more, and what might well appal
Hosts less enured to patient fortitude—
What if we build an equal wall around,
Strength to their strength? a barrier to secure
Our camp from harm; and haply with the view
Of its impenetrable and solid pale
Awe them to yield? for sure, despair at last
Will rouse the slumbering vengeance of th' oppress'd.
Against th' oppressor; we, till then, but wait
While our resistless and most sure allies—
Hunger and plague—complete the work of war."

The reasons pleased, though haply not required
To gain their suffrage, ever wont to hold
His words as wisdom, and his dictates truth.
Full soon it rose an huge and wondrous mound,
Such for consistence, altitude, and strength,
As no assault could shake; at distance due
From Judah's darts and engines, yet drawn round
In close unbroken circle, to preclude
All issue forth. Now comes it not at once,
That dread prophetic menace o'er thy soul,
Unhappy city, thus in terms fulfill'd?  
The hedge of stone is set, the trench dug deep,  
And thou art all enclosed on every side.  
Yet one last warning: hark! that trumpet peals.  
The note of parley, and the harbinger  
Of peace or ruin comes—fit herald he  
To offer truce, reserv'd himself of God.  
From war's long perils, to rehearse thy fall;  
A fearful scroll, with lamentations writ.  
Mourning and woe!—he speaks, and, at the sound,  
Soldier and chief impetuous throng the wall,  
Govern their fury, and stand fix'd to hear.

"I come from Cæsar, with his last resolves,  
Glorious and just to both—terms which the brave  
May grant the brave—free pardon for the past,  
Peace and mild sway hereafter—these from Rome:  
From you she asks allegiance, tribute, league—  
Hear for yourselves—your wives and children—hear  
For all the people!—for what hope to strive,  
Singly, with Cæsar, whose resistless sway  
Rules all the nations, from Sarmatian snows  
To the hot desart—from Euphrates east,
To Calpe westward, and th' uttermost sea?
Asia and Europe, with their hundred realms—
The rude barbarian, and th' array of kings—
Ask if the Greek, that in their pride o'erthrew
Persia's gay millions, when th' Ægean groan'd
Beneath their gallies, and huge Athos oped
His rugged sides to give their warriors way,
Could guard his freedom and his fame from Rome.
Ask, if th' untrodden barriers of the world,
Hercynian forests, and Helvetian hills,
Loftier than Libanus—their ample streams
Ister or Rhone, with all their warlike tribes,
German or Gaul, opposed her mighty march?
O'er snows, that seem'd to leave no path for war,
Shrouded in tempest, canopied in cloud,
Her dauntless legions pour'd upon the plain—
Where is the place of Carthage? once almost
More than her equal—monarch of the seas,
And lord of Lybia?—to the dust brought low—
And we, poor remnant of a broken race,
We to resist?—yet grant our walls yet stood
In their first strength?—what wall like what begirt
The barbarous Briton in his rock-bound isle—
A wall of waters, stormy and unknown?
Or were our city fenced like Babylon,
O'er whose broad-built ramparts, side by side,
Chariots and horsemen wheel'd—could they withstand
A resolute conqueror?—might the Persian king
Chain down the river-dragon in his bed,
Dry up the flood, and make the deep a path
For his bold host—and will a Roman chief
Shrink from the hazard of this shatter'd mound?
What hope, then, but in God?—and oh! what hope,
When not a field but warns us that his arm
Fights for our adversary?—think, alas!
How oft hath he ordain'd the heathen foe
To deal his vengeance on the guilty land!
Fought he for Israel, when, in ancient days,
Idolatrous and guilty Babylon
Razed all the city? or avert her doom,
Pompey besieging?—why, when his bold step
Profaned our inmost shrines and sanctuaries,
Why did not earth unclose beneath his feet,
To gorge him quick, or lightning flash from Heaven,
To blast his vision? why, when Cæsar late
Against the mount and citadel of God
Pitch'd his fierce camp, did no miraculous
And sudden judgment strike him to the dust?
Or doth Jehovah still reserve his arm
For the last peril?—what can worse betide
Than what ye suffer—famine, sickness, war?
All these were not, when, in his wrath, he smote
The fierce Assyrian; solid and unbreath'd
Stood the tall bulwarks—signs miraculous
Vouchsafed for hope; now none but for despair.
Lastly, if Rome, in her full tide of power,
Incline to pity, deem it not for dread—
Valour and strength may grant what in the weak
Might seem the boon of doubt, perhaps of fear.
Better e'en thus for Cæsar to preserve
What yet remains—a nation and a name—
Than reign in ruin, which must soon ensue,
Your strongest walls surmounted—e'en the last
All but o'erthrown; hemm'd round in strict blockade;
The rough, remorseless soldier menacing
A final onset: yield, or be undone!

Scarce could their bold impatience brook the close
Of his sad argument, while murmurs, mix'd
With louder menace, through th' assembly rung:
But, all at once, the subtle Giscalite,
With more than wonted violence, broke forth:

"Gracious forsooth his offers, and enforced
With all the arts of Rome—insidious arts
Covering deceit; far better, if sincere,
Couch'd in brief speech from other lips than thine,
Treach'erous apostate; hence then, to thy chief;
And, when he next would tempt us, bid him choose
Some fitter spy—no recreant such as thee!"

Thus fiercely he his short and vehement speech
Ended, as best beseem'd that moment's need,
And the rude auditory, less enured
To calm deliberation; then once more
Convokes a council, to discuss the means
Of present safety; soon again in place
They stand arranged; while he, with wary art,
Labour's his reasons to dispel their fears,
Sustain the weakness of declining hope,
Or rouse the desperate valour of revenge.

"Press'd as we seem with peril—girt without
By a dread foe—menaced with mutiny
Within the ramparts—spite of all I see
Or hear denounced, I cannot think your spirits
Sunk in such abject sort, so utterly
Forlorn and fall'n, as that one voice would speak
For base submission. Much hath been endured,
And yet may be—but better all endured
Than Roman mercy! Think, ye who forebode
Whatever fear can feign from glorious war—
Think rather what your fate, should we submit
To this uncircumcised and deadly foe!
Say first, would the proud conqueror, who esteems
Our just resistance treason, and ourselves
Rebellious, hold his faith? or (as his fame
Is fair for mercy) would his will controul
The ruthless hordes who serve him? Look below
There, from the walls, for proof—there, on the wreck
Of half our city—on our valiant friends
Like felons crucified—look down on these,
And read your answer! this no argument
Can disannul.—But next 'tis urged that God
Conspires against us; wherefore? saved so oft
And palpably of God, why still not hold
Fast to that hope? why, now at once, forego
Those gracious promises, which his inspired
In every age, and heathen oracles
E’en of the foe, confirm? no; the glad hour
Perchance is near, and now—he yet will come,
The mighty conqueror, the lord of war,
The great Messiah, whose resistless arms
Shall build anew the strength of Judah’s throne,
Hurl back the ruin she has wrought, on Rome,
And gather all the nations to our sway!
Such is our hope; and who would part with hope,
When hope agrees with glory, and both with war?
Yet, since th’ apostate asks, why thus delayed
If God will aid our arms? ’Twas ever thus
At the last need—instant, invisible,
Was the night havoc of th’ Assyrian camp;\(^{13}\)
Sudden the slaughter when Benhadad warr’d
Against Samaria and his vassal kings;\(^{14}\)
When the big wall fell prone and crush’d his powers:
More sudden still when e’en a sound of war\(^{15}\)
Troubled the Syrian. Yet if God look’d down
Regardless—seem we so divorced from hope
In our own prowess, nor recall to mind
Achievements more than human wrought of old
By single heroes? his, who rush’d alone
Upon th' entrench'd and banded Philistine? 16
Or his, that with a shepherd's arms, o'erthrew
The mail'd Goliath? deeds perchance that seem
Scarce as of men; yet fields have since been fought
Nothing less glorious than of old renown.
Long shall Damascus rue the brother chiefs, 17
Judas and Jonathan, who burst his bonds;
Drove forth his disciplined and countless hosts,
Like frightened quarry, to the desart south:
Rescued invested cities from their siege:
Fired their wide camp; and, with resistless arms,
Storm'd Azor, Hebron, and the stronger pride
Of tower'd Azotus, where the monster-god
View'd his weak idol trampled in the dust.
Such deeds once done, what need we now distrust
Our wonted prowess? we, who late shook off
The yoke of Cæsar, and with ease o'erpower'd
His garrison'd armies? on the tented field
Thrice in struck battle, hand to hand engaged,
Have we opposed his fiercest; once repell'd
His veteran legions from within the walls.
What if he hath regain'd them? one remains
All unassailable—and should that fail
The temple's strength shall set a siege at scorn.
Such was her last retreat, this lofty foe,
This city, that usurps it o'er the world;
Such was her refuge, when the Gaul possess'd 18
All but the Capitol, and cast his sword
Into the scale for ransom; yet she rose
Proud out of ruin, nobler from defeat;
Then why not Sion? yet if hope were none,
Valour were wisdom, and despair perchance
Our best reliance: think ye see the flames
Fire what remains unruin'd—see your foe
Toss sucking infants on the spear for sport—
Tear shrieking virgins from the sanctuary
For violation!—we, perchance reprieved
To grace the wheels of Rome's triumphal car,
Then to the' altar of the mailed Mars 19
Led off for sacrifice; or to the death
Tortured more slowly, in unequal fight
With beasts of blood, to glut the victor's gaze!
Bethink ye then of this, at least postponed
By brave resistance! Better still to bear
Ills we have felt, and know, than that last shame,
That consummation, which no force of words
Can paint—far less exaggerate—should we yield
Our city and people to the wrath of Rome!"

Mute sat th'assembly, when Matthias rose,
And with mild gesture and persuasive tones
Triumph'd at last o'er every threat, and won
Attention; as there were who half inclined
(School'd by sad discipline) to think of peace.

"Princes and chiefs, upon whose counsel hangs
The fate of Judah, hear me yet again
Advise surrender; for if thus confess'd
E'en in the jaws of ruin, when one hour
May seal our doom—beseems us well to urge
Each solemn argument, deliberating
Not as in passion, nor with popular arts
Colouring the hazard which on either side
Besets our choice—first then, to estimate
Our present ills with what may worse befall—
What can be worse than thus? the triple scourge
That with an equal desolation spreads
Death and despair—plague, famine, and the sword;
The least enough for God's just wrath of yore
Against his people—now at once and all
Destroying—they have given their choicest store
For food, and e'en their last poor mite for drink—\(20\)
And now they faint for hunger in the streets;
And sucking infants cry in vain for thirst.
E'en this might be endured, if yet a hope
Were left for war, or other griefs were none:
But with th' invisible and silent foe,
With withering Pestilence—what arm can cope?
See countless multitudes of every age
Cast for contagion to the blasted air;
Or from the ramparts hurl'd promiscuous down;
Since none so poor to give them burial!
Thus then—your garners empty—every cheek
Blacken'd with famine—while the angry skies
Withhold their waters from the city's thirst,\(21\)
Yet fill the floods for Rome—what must ensue
But the last peace, the solitude of death?
Oh if the nation's glory be your care,
Think it enough for glory, to have stood
Thus long and valiantly 'gainst your great foe!
Better to yield ere the last bulwark fail,
And his victorious armies force the breach,
Storming, or famine starve us into terms—
Terms freely offer'd now, but out of hope
At the last-hour, when all is lost by the weak,
Won by the stronger—here though in extremes
We hold one wall unharmed, which yet will make
Submission virtue; and if Caesar's wrath
Exact some blood, at least by compromise
Ransom the multitude from Rome's revenge,
If they abide such issue—for beware—
What if your people pinch'd with want, become
Your fiercest enemy? will they endure
For ever thus, nor haply raise the hand
Of dire rebellion and bold mutiny?
This then the sum, and sad alternative:
To trust a prince who in the heat of war
Still offers mercy, or resisting still,
Bring down that last of horrors which your chief
Justly anticipates; when all inflamed
With tenfold fury, his unpitying bands
Rush in by force, resistless, uncontrol'd—
When war's stern law forbids not to let loose
The conqueror's fiercest; perishing the while
In this sad interval, with misery
Beyond all pow'r of mortal fortitude
To see or suffer! Hark! the voice of God
Speaks in his thunder!—for a crash, that seem'd
Almost to shake the pillar'd frame of heaven,
Roll'd o'er the zenith, mix'd with lightning fires;
And the big rain-drops following, to reply
In sympathy to the sad speaker's words—
"God of our fathers, yet a little spare
Our crumbling battlements! the voice of the storm
May yet appal where reason cries in vain.
Warriors, receive the warning while ye may,
And make your peace with Cæsar."

As he spoke,
The rest stood hush'd in silence, that betray'd
A reverent sympathy, which Simon soon
Changed to a fiercer mood; to him all turn'd
Inquisitive; nor did his words belie
Their expectation—furious and resolved.

"Thou and thy traitorous counsels are the cause,
Accursed priest, of all our past defeats
And instant danger!—thou our deadliest foe!
Thou, that of daily sights and sounds wouldst make
Portentous signs to quail us!—but of thee
And thy base arts we waste the time to speak—
I hold for war—war without compromise—
War at all hazards, war with all our means,
To the last hour, for glory or revenge!
For what this shameless argument for peace?
Rome, if we supplicate, may show us mercy!
Rome? haughty, obdurate, unrelenting Rome—
Our late oppressor and inveterate foe—
Hating our worship, jealous of our fame—
Maddening with rage at our most just revolt—
Cruel as death, and flush'd with victory,
To spare a city, which, while all the world
Crouch'd to her tyranny, alone opposed
Her mightiest armies, back'd with half the East,
Two moons and more!—what, have we stood thus long,
Squandered our blood, and shed the best of the foe
Only to yield? or will submission quit
The debt of vengeance to our swords bequeath'd
By our fall'n comrades—not in battle fallen,
But basely tortured—whose unsepulchred
And mangled bones lie bleaching to the breeze?
No—by those eyes that seem to crave revenge—
Those features, eloquent in death, that chide
Our cold deliberation—whilst one tower
Or wall still guards us, ne'er will we submit,
Or sue for peace—why rather sit we here
Blockaded, till his dire auxiliary,
Famine, consume us? Wherefore not rush forth,
Break through his hedge of stone, or overleap?
Hew out a path by arms to liberty,
And glut our hunger at the cost of Rome?
Her fires have clear'd a space where we may still,
Once and again, make proof of equal war—
And let th' invader guard his engines well!
We too, perchance, may interrupt his toil,
And, unsuspected, bring his works to shame.
Perish we may; but not without revenge:
Perish we may; but such perdition more
Shall raise our glory, than his poor triumph
O'er a starved city—and our good swords, embued
To the hilt in slaughter, shall retaliate
A dear and equal reckoning, blood for blood!
But what can arms or hardibood avail
Whilst such as thou still thwart us? First on thee
Be our just vengeance; then upon proud Rome,
With an irrevocable and great resolve
For death or victory."—The dire behest
Needed no second bidding, when the word
Went forth for slaughter—dragg'd, despite of age,
Office, and sanctity, to instant death,
The blameless victim 'neath unnumber'd wounds
Sinks unrepining. Hark! one deep-drawn groan,—
Another, and another, and a last—
The last from suffering, and the first from grief.
'Tis past—that voice which might have charm'd despair,
Is dumb—that heart which braved bold tyranny,
Hath ceased to beat—the hand, which ever true
To its high ministry, through all extremes,
Pour'd the pure incense, will be raised no more!
No more of worship now, or sacrifice,
Music or feast—the solemn rites, observed
Through every age since Sion stood, are o'er,
Now and for ever; as the tyrants, flush'd
With sated vengeance and victorious hate,
Mix the last sin of sacrilege with blood:
The sacred chalices and cups of gold
They seize for spoil, and pour the sacred wine,
Still more to madden whom they cannot feed.
Fired with such aliment, the languid zeal
Of hope rekindled; and the thoughtless rout
Clash'd the rough signal on their shields for war:
Contagious valour spread, and each big voice,
Shaking the vaulted roofs, re-echoed—"War!"

And war to the last pitch of fury, task'd
Their bold resolve, as the stern foe advanced
New banks and mounds, where th' Idumean tower
(Surnamed Antonia) flank'd the citadel,
Which, once obtain'd, would leave an entrance free
To that loved sanctuary—now might be seen
Each deep device of shrewd inventive skill
On either part, maintain'd with conflicts dire;
As these still batter'd, those repell'd, with brunt
Of volleying arms and rocky fragments hurl'd
Plumb down, that through the joints of helm and mail
Made fearful havoc; or with ruinous shocks
Shatter'd the engines. To destroy the strength
They could not shake, and by the base uprear,
Was Rome's next hope; for which in solid ranks
Beneath their shields they couch, shield lock'd in shield,
Condense, compact, sustaining and sustain'd,
Close as the panoply of the sea shoals,
And like the shell th' impasive tortoise trails
Impenetrable—martial arts which Greece
Taught the stern conqueror in her wane of war,
Tier above tier ascending to surmount
Garrison'd ramparts, unannoy'd by darts
Hurl'd from above: beneath that brazen cope
Secure they toil'd and steadfast, 'mid the shock
Of clattering arms, and molten metal pour'd
With pitch, and flaming timbers, that aslant
Glanced down or roll'd innocuous. These on earth
Thus wrought—on earth, but not alone on earth
Raged the hot war; her secret womb conceal'd
Mysterious mischief, all inscrutable
To a foe's search; while, reckless of the gulf
Dug deep beneath him, the besieger plied
His vast machinery; and pioneers,
With crow and mattock labouring, breach'd the base;
While the besieged with fainter hope appear'd
To wait their doom—yet secret was their toil,
Delving a passage where the enemy
Push'd his main efforts, then at once enlarged
To a wide excavation propp'd with beams,
Which, suddenly emblazed, would leave the wall
Foundationless, and sink it with the foe
In the dark cave beneath: others within
Raised hasty ramparts, to replace the strength
Of what must fall—though all again recoil'd
On the inventor—down at once engulf'd,
Down sunk the wall with battlement and tower,
Down, and drew after many in the wreck
Assaulting; as when some brave vessel sinks
Where that dread whirlpool by the Norway shore
Opens its fathomless and roaring jaws,
Swallowing the seaman and his hopes—thus whelm'd
In that deep earth-gulf sunk the massive side
Of great Antonia; while the surging smoke
And subterranean fires, from the upper air
Gathering fresh aliment, seem'd to portend
Unearthly peril, terrors worse than war.
Amazed the Romans stood awhile, to see
Their comrades perishing; nor less to find
New walls within; at which their constancy
'Gan fail, and each high heart, inspired so late
With thoughts of triumph, felt how keen the pang
Of hope deferr'd; which soon the chief dispell'd
With palpable argument—the prostrate pile,
A bank of desolation, gave access
To the last main defence. The night-watch set,
Forth for that perilous adventure moved
A band, of hardiest prowess, disciplined
In feats most desperate and forlorn of war;
Whether to couch, like tigers, for the prey,
Or, in disdain of danger, court the worst
Of a foe's fury—unperceived they climb,
Mute every tongue, and every heart compress'd
In silent beating. As when pilgrims climb
Giant Peachukom, where the watery clouds,24
Full fraught with ruin, o'er his awful ridge
Hover suspended, every lip close seal'd,
Lest, haply, th' undulating air disturb'd,
Rend the thin film, and bring the deluge down
Must sweep them sudden to the plain: thus these,
Scarce drawing respiration, upward toil'd,
With beating breasts; nor yet a footfall roused
The wearied guard, who on his station slept,
O'ercharged with heaviness, but waked in death.
That slaughter ended, and the rampart won,
Th' exulting conqueror now no more controll'd
His martial fervour; and a trumpet peal
Burst on the deep tranquillity of air,
Scarce less sonorous than the blast of yore;
Which shook the walls of Jericho to dust.
Alas! and was it strange if sound so dread,
The note and flourish of triumphant war,
Swell’d with the shout of armies—night, thick night
Shrouding their enemy—spread such amaze
’Mid the besieged, that e’en the bravest fled
A post forlorn?—yet soon, and valiantly,
Did their bold swords redeem that short-lived shame
In the best blood of Rome; who now in hope
To storm their citadel, and thus, at once,
Close her long labours, eager, unrestrain’d,
Slaughter’d the fugitives, till all in throng
Burst on the sanctuary; there Simon first
Stood firm, resolved to perish, or preserve
His last asylum; and a struggle grew
Worse than of direct conflict, while the throng
Of adverse numbers hosting (like a mass
Loosen’d from Alp or Pyrenean snows
Gathering accumulation to the vale)
Pour’d on precipitous. It was not war,
Where strife of arms was none; no space to wield
Javelin or sword; body with body wedged, 26
Strength all in vain, and valour impotent,
Horrors unseen, close pressure, life forced out,
Or trampled—voices loud and vehement
In supplication, menace, or command,
Unheeded all—anon, a dismal gleam
From the Temple roof and windows flash'd athwart
The scene of death, only less terrible
Than utter darkness; as a ghastly groupe
Of priests and Levites hasten'd to survey
The dire debate; whose sable-vested forms,
Floating sublime in air, or motionless,
With hands uprear'd to Heav'n, and haggard eyes,
Set to some deep, unutterable curse,
Almost appear'd to chide Omnipotence,
Which hurl'd no thunders down! Pale morn at length
Dispersed the terrors of concealing night,
And gave the chiefs of either host to view
Their equal danger; when the Roman first,
Doubting the issue, or in scorn to stake
His army's glory on a strife so strange,
Bade sound retreat—yet still the pealing trump
Blew long and loud, and oft, or ere the rear
Could stay its onset, or the van retire.
Then was the hour for the besieged to wreak
Gallant revenge—unnumber’d multitudes,
Roused by their Temple’s danger from despair,
Spoiling the slain for arms, increased the tide
That pour’d impetuous to retrieve their shame,
If not reconquer all so lately lost.
In vain—unharm’d, unshaken, unconfused,
Slowly and firm, the steadfast infantry,
With equal step, and faces to the foe,
Retired; nor could the strength of Judah break
The hedge of ported spears, or pierce the pale
Of shields close lock’d, which, or to front, flank, rear,
Offer’d no breach; yet painful was their march,
And sore beset; at length they win their way
Back to the tower; resolved, whate’er the cost,
To yield no further—Judah well content
To have redeem’d his threaten’d sanctuary
From instant loss; and for himself to snatch
A fever’d respite from the last of war.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE SIXTH.
ARGUMENT.

Prodigies which announced the destruction of Jerusalem—a night assault—enumeration of some of the Romans who fell—their funeral obsequies—Hazor, the leader of the Idumeans, killed—his forces abandon the city, and are permitted to retire.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

Advanced th' invader on thy guilty walls,
Revolted Judah, like the felon tread
Of the night murderer to surprise his prey?
Doom'd as thou wert, lost city, to the depth
Of penal suffering, did thy fall belie
Th' Almighty word, his purpose, or his power?
No—though stern justice could not choose but strike,
Mercy still show'd such ominous signs of woe,
As might have moved the sternest heart to melt
With meek contrition, and remorseful tears;
Warn'd every foot to seek to darkest caves,
Mountain, or desart, from the wrath to come.
For of no fiction now is need to sing—
Of hell-born spirits warring round the wall—

x 2
Of magic spells—the dear idolatry
Of nations wakening from their Gothic trance,
When the sweet minstrel struck th' Ausonian lyre
To hallow'd chivalry and feats of arms—
Nor if a Muse yet linger'd 'mid the bowers
Of green Sorrento 1 or the Tuscan vale,
Should I invoke her aid; but rather call
Those that in elder age, beside the marge
Of streams once vocal to prophetic bards,
Breathed inspiration—for the city of God,
E'en in her shame and ruin, claims the meed
Of genuine verse; nor needs fond fancy's art
To exalt th' authentic record of her fall.
What should the fall of Paynim realm or chief
Move the wide universe to mourn with man? 2
Alike the mighty and the mean go down,
Unheralded of nature's prodigies,
To the dark valley of the shadow of death;
And though the crash of rooted empires sound
With louder horror, th' ever-circling spheres
Still keep their course, in harmony and peace.
For thee alone, lost Sion, earth and heaven
Swerved from their wonted order, to exalt
Thy rising greatness, and foretell thy fall.

Yet were no portents of thy proudest age
So strange and terrible, as those dread sights,
And sounds unearthly, which at last confirm’d
The dread prediction of thy martyr’d lord.
Rumours of wars, and war with all its woes,
Appall’d the nations; from the imperial strife
Of rival chiefs, whose fierce ambition ranged
The world in battle; to those humbler feuds
That shook Damascus, Ascalon, and Tyre.

The stedfast earth gave signs of wrath or pain,
As one in travail—such convulsion spread
E’en from proud Rome and her sev’n-seated hills,
Athwart th’ Ægean and its marble isles,
To the far East; when, by the base upheaved,
Laodicea, with redoubled shock,
And great Colosse fell—while most the bounds
Of fair Judea with unwonted throes
Shook as in palsy; every element
In fiercest war conflictling, flood with fire.
E’en that dread Famine, which with withering taint
Shrank every sinew, blacken’d every cheek,
Came not alone, though last—long years of stint
O’er many a blissful clime, Hesperian fields,
And vales of Greece, with blighting footsteps sped.
But most Judea, and her bordering realm,
(Pride of the East erewhile) ’gan feel the curse
Of lasting barrenness—her hapless sons,
E’en in the pomp and prodigality
Of Nature’s bountiful and flowery lap,
Hungering for bread—while wasting pestilence
Dealt equal havoc through th’ affrighted earth.

Seven years complete, in th’ unsubstantial air,
Infinite hosts, by harness’d chieftains led,
Beleaguering cities huge, appear’d, or mix’d
In martial combat; whose resplendent arms
Shed livelier radiance o’er the vault of night
Than brightest coruscations that illume
The North’s long darkness; whilst the crash above,
Of rattling cars, and fiery-footed steeds,
With shouts of battle, through Heav’n’s concave rung.
Month after month, unwaning, and unmoved,
Meteors and comets blazed—of paler ray,
Two, as portending pestilence and want—
A third, of bright and bloody hue, for war.
Unwonted tempests shook the reeling walls
To their foundations, as if Heav’n forbade
All help from human arm: witness that night,
When th’ Idumean pitch’d his camp, to save
Or spoil the city: thick and thunderous clouds
Peal’d fearfully, and sheeted lightning-fires,
Fit to consume the marble ramparts, flash’d;
Save that the streaming flood-gates of the sky
Quell’d their hot ravage: but, more fatal yet
That after night, when strange celestial fire
Burst through thick darkness on the sanctuary,
And o’er th’ high altar play’d; while priests, who watch’d
Their waning embers, mark’d the massive gate,
Wrought all of brass, close barr’d, and bolted deep,
Moved by no mortal effort, ope at once,
Slowly and wide—anon a sound ensued,
Fearful and strange as ear hath ever heard;
Such, haply, as appall’d the Philistine, 7
When their thick foliage, as the Most High
Moved o'er the woods, with conscious terror shook,
Untouch'd o' the breeze—a sound, if such might be,
Of spirits many, in motion; with a voice
Like that soft strain, which, at the whirlwind's close,
Flow'd, as in music, on the prophet's ear,
Awful, yet sweet—sublime, yet dolorous—
A voice in grief and pity more than wrath,
"Let us depart!"—at which their crisped hair
Stood all erect for dread, and the big pulse
Ceased beating—as when Daniel's followers quaked
At the great vision, to his gifted eye
Alone revealed—or he of Teman felt
Th' immortal presence, whose dim shadow'd form
Thrill'd every nerve with fearful ecstasy.

Was this thy last departing, this the hour,
Guardian divine? And didst thou thus forsake
Thy chosen dwelling-place? And was that voice
The last farewell of a fond father's love?
Or given to manifest, by surer proof,
Thine own sad sentence; like the fatal scroll
Which shook Belshazzar, when proud Babylon
Fell to the Mede?—Yet sure that majesty,
At whose descending the deep-seated hills,
Horeb or Sinai, rock'd, could scarce desert
Its favour'd sanctuary, and with no signs
Of voice or vision, palpable to sense,
Mark its last love. No—haply once again
Those eyes that wept before on earth, might drop
Celestial tears; while th' humbler hierarchies
Sigh'd forth such sympathies as angels may,
Forbid to aid, but not forbid to mourn.
Oh, if the mind could view those awful forms
That o'er the fate of man, for weal or woe,
Their gracious guardianship and vigils keep;
Then might the bard relate, how, all in robes
Of brightest temper, adamant or gold,
Shapes more than human, stood in silent grief,
Watching the fall of Sion's guilty towers:
Then might his ear imbibe the solemn sounds
Of angel's pity, stealing o'er the sense
With sweeter sadness than th' Eolian strings
Stirr'd by the breeze; or rills, whose softest flow
Murmurs melodious o'er their mossy bed.
For they had trod that hallow'd mountain oft,
On high commission bent; and oft had borne
Behests of graciousness: nor was that spot,
Of all the earth, unhonour'd, unendear'd,
Where their great master deign'd erewhile to dwell;
Where he had taught and suffer'd—where themselves
Whilom, in happier age, had minister'd:
They, too, must now depart those blissful scenes,
And shades not joyless to the sons of heav'n;
No more must list sweet anthems, breath'd to strings
Of ravishing instruments; or scent the gale
Of incense pure from golden censers flung!
Time had been once, and long, when He who fills
Infinite space had not disdain'd to tread
The sacred courts; and from the radiant veil
That shrouds his brighter essence, spoke his will
To guide the people at their hour of need.
Farewell to Sion—now forlorn and reft
Of all her hope, of all her glory shorn!—
Farewell th' insufferable and living cloud!
The voice and oracles of God, farewell!
Farewell the silver trump, the banner'd host,
The lion standard! all her ancient pride,
High triumph, and victorious war, farewell!
No fight henceforth but fatal; dire defeat,
Field after field—sore sorrows thickening still,
As danger's limits narrow'd daily round.

It was the ninth of night—the solemn hour
When Rome might best presume her enemy
Reckless of danger, or subdued by toil:
That most congenial hour for enterprize;
When Titus led the flower of all his host
For a new onset on the city wall.
Antonia won, and the main fortress, (late
So nearly storm'd) one effort might retrieve,
More than retrieve, what all th' embodied strength
Of the besieged had wrested from their grasp.

It fell not now as when they found the foe
Deep drench'd in slumber, and the sudden sword
Slaughter'd them sleeping; whether, as they moved
Th' invader's stifled foot-beat caught his ear,
Or e'en the night-breeze, floating through the folds
Of the loose tunic, and thick feather'd helm,
Betray'd th' inaudible march; the city guard
Summon'd his comrades, that at intervals
Snatch'd such brief respite as despair itself
Perforce must steal; but light as theirs whose lids
Had lost acquaintance with untroubled sleep;
Warriors enured to throw their mailed limbs
As chance might guide beneath the cope of heav’n;
The shield their pillow, their uneasy couch
The flinty pavement: up at once in arms
They stood, and shouted signal of assault;
And still their temple’s danger could revive
Their wonted energies—nerve every arm,
And rally thousands to avert its doom.

Yet not that awful war-cry, nor the din
Of thronging multitudes, a moment sunk
The heart of Titus, or his firm array.
Onward it moved, that dusky column deep;
Onward it moved with hastier march—nor now
Hush’d respiration, or suppress’d the sound
Of their quick trampling; but to th’ hostile shout
Hurl’d back, in equal tone, barbaric shouts,
And equal scathe; though darkness covered deeds
Of great achievement, and bereaved the fame
Of many a chief, who, at this bloody hour,
Fill’d up the measure of renown in death:
Yet still with dire disparity, and loss
To suffering Sion, as her multitudes
Flock'd without concert, deaf to all command;
Such hideous sounds, and loud, appall'd the ear;
Rome in strict order ranged, shield lock'd in shield,
Changing the well-known watchword, and secure
In stedfast discipline: till break of morn
Gave to behold the terrors of a field
Flooded with slaughter—brave of either part,
And all degrees, scatter'd promiscuously.
Part slain in th' instant; part with festering wounds
Pierced, yet beseeching succour to assuage
Their anguish, as the shrewd night cold search'd deep.
Part with worse suffering gash'd, and mortally,
Yet conscious, and in silent agony
Waiting relief from death; and though for pride
Struggling with torment, and suppressing moan;
Their secret bosoms not unwrung the while
With refluent nature, and lamenting thoughts,
Less for the unknown terrors of the tomb
Than for life's charmed cup—now from their lips
Dash'd—and bright hope, with her enchanting dream,
Glory and love, as youth delights to feign,
Blasted for ever! E'en the veteran's heart
Less uncomposed, as life had less to mourn,
Yet fondly thoughtful of some green retreat
Which might have crown'd his toils—some little field
And tranquil cot, war's well-earn'd recompense;
Where his high heart, expanding at the view
Of Roman majesty, might boast with pride
His arm had aided to uprear its growth.

Such was the close of all thy past exploits,
Time-worn Lucilius; twenty summers proved
In war's stern service: this rough trial o'er,
Thou shouldst have left the field to vigorous youth,
And hung thy batter'd arms on high, to fire
A growing race to rival thy renown.
Now, like some vessel from far distant seas,
Fast by the port engulf'd. There, too, long known
In eastern fields, Sempronius dared oppose
His failing strength and sword to his who smote
Strongest of Judah; with a long embrace
His matron spouse clung round him ere he sped,
Himself unshaken; yet, with mild rebuke,
Chiding th' untimely tear that might have moved
A heart less firm, and damp'd a soldier's fire:
Now half repenting that the farewell word
Had breath'd reproach, as Hazor's vigorous arm
Smote him to dust. Nor could his youthful prime
Preserve Metellus, when the same dread sword
Pierced his bright cuirass; from a mother's roof
Th' imperial mandate call'd him to the camp:
She, while her hand around his beardless cheeks
Clasp'd the steel casque, and bound the bossy targe
Upon his wrist, with all a mother's pride
Gazed on her champion, and, with natural tears,
Sent forth; yet wiped them soon, to see his port,
How fair in armour; while her hope foretold
How nobly, 'mid the banner'd files, his march
Would grace the triumph of victorious Rome.
Alas! how sorely must that heart, instead,
Ache at the pageant, and those eyes brim o'er
With bitter tears, to miss her soldier there!

Sad and more tender was that last adieu,
Wherewith Neæra o'er the blooming youth
Of Decius hung; in early love betroth'd,
The sacred cause, and Caesar's mighty name,
Roused him to war: but soon conflicting thoughts
Assail'd his heart, while her entwining arms
Held him, imploring not to dare beyond
His needful service, and unfinish'd strength.
He, while his eyes a hero's tear let fall,
Long on her bosom hung, till the shrill trump
Alarum'd; then, with desperate energy,
Burst from her grasp—yet still her eye pursued
His faint retiring figure o'er the plain;
Still gazed one plumed casque, or strove to gaze,
'Till the dim legion vanish'd from her view.
Now, as he lay long languishing in death,
How rush'd her fond entreaty on his soul!
What grief, to think that he should ne'er again
Fold that soft breast, and meet that kiss no more!
She, wretched mourner, left to fear his heart
False or forgetful; oft, with deeper woe,
Image the truth, and weep a widow's moan!
"Oh, what barbarian hand hath reaved thy life!
How hast thou fall'n, in battle, or the breach?
Regions and seas between us! while thy corse
Unurn'd, unhonour'd lies, and I afar!
Yet e'en that dread assurance were relief
To these sad doubts." Alas, how frail the dream
With which his fondness cheats the child of pain!
Ill dost thou bode, sad mourner, yet wilt prove
How light the pang, when but a spark of hope
Shoots through the gloom, to that last agony,
The depth and bitterness of certain woe!

Whose is that strength, heap'd round with dead, that vouch
His late demeanor? Haughty Martian, tell
Why on the mortal ruin of thy brow
A sterner sorrow sits? With noble wounds
Scarr'd thus, and mangled, was it shame to fall
By the best arm of Judah?—And that huge corse,
Cleft through the skull, stout Fronto, is it thine,
Whom no soft feeling of departed love,
Or broken kindred ties, could e'er have moved
To think death terrible? What cloud o'ercasts
The smile of pride that might have warm'd thy cheek,
Falling victorious on the bed of war,
Thy long ambition? Seem'd it shame to die
By Hazor's sword, who smote thee on the verge
Of perilous climbing? Peace to thy proud shade!
Caesar shall mourn thee; and the host recount
With what rude execution on its foe
That hand incurred a hero's closing doom.

Lo! at his side a form of giant bone,
And unchanged fierceness on the cheek of death,
Shows grim and ghastly; raised through every rank
To lead a legion, gallant Frigius now
Hath his last honours—that true temper'd helm
Which never fail'd before, hath fail'd at last;
When with one foot upon the topmost cope,
One on the ladder fix'd, he hung, sore press'd
By hopeless numbers; till the Giscalite
Dealt such a stroke as pierced his brazen helm,
And, with his followers, hurl'd him headlong down,
A deadly fall.—Thus murderous was that field,
The last of doubtful issue; fought and led
By the prime chiefs and champions of the war.
Such was their conflict; till the prince of Rome,
Though nothing fearful for the great result,
Mourn'd o'er the cost; since the bold enemy
Never, as now evinced his fix'd resolve,
To yield no entrance while one life remain'd;
And valour, though unshaken, strove at odds
With desperation. Meanwhile, of his host
Many lay gasping, and in pain; some fallen
Dear to his friendship; and the busy fight
Allow'd no respite to relieve their pain,
Succour the living, or remove the dead:
Wherefore he bade suspend th' assault awhile,
And set their swords alone to check the foe,
Should he in turn assail. But Judah's chiefs,
Like men late flown with wine, inebriate
With blood and battle, sinking all at once
To nerveless lassitude, or awed by proof
Of Roman prowess fresh upon their shields,
Tempted defeat no more:—their heady rage
Altered to looks of dark and sullen mood,
Passive despair—with somewhat that partook
Of long forgotten pleasure, to perceive
A touch of sadness in their enemy:
For these, now free to mark their comrades' doom,
Found a new feeling o'er their iron souls
Steal imperceptible; as oft their search
Discern'd some well-known feature, some pale form,
Associate once in hazard as in fame,
Beseeching pity; whom their hurried step,
As they removed him, from benumbing pain
Woke to new torment—each upon his shield
(A soldier's litter) to the camp convey'd,
Found such relief as healing art could lend;
Or such kind sympathy, and farewell cheer,
As sooth'd the soul's departure; with discourse
Of after worlds, where every martial ghost
Should share due recompense; and oft enjoy
Th' heroic games his courage loved on earth,
Of pain impassive, and of death secure.

Yet scarce that blissful and immortal dream
Shed such sweet unction o'er the dying breast
As Caesar's presence; every thought forgot
Of long night-watching, through the camp he moved,
From tent to tent, and with unwearied care
Sought out the wounded; whilst his youthful form,
For pomp imperial cloathed with gracious smiles,
Pity and kindness, seem'd scarce less divine;
Than when, o'er all his host pre-eminent,
He moved to battle—at that well-known voice
Pain for a moment ceased; upon those looks
The last fine ligament of vision hung;
A transient gleam illumèd the fading eye,
And joy's short hectic flush'd the cheek of death.

But soon a sadder, solemn office calls,
To pay due reverence to the mighty dead;
Reverence and rites which stir the sympathy
Of gazing hosts, scarce less than the bright meed
Of crown or laurel for the living brave.
Some, of superior sort, upon a bier
Of lances cross'd, with martial drapery
And banners, lay, in solemn state composed;
Less gorgeously, yet with due obsequies,
Each humbler hero, as besee'm'd a guest
Meet for the gods—first the blood-sprinkled wounds
Cleans'd with pure water, and embathed with sweets
Of various fragrance, they compose the corse
In martial port recumbent; all attired
With choicest vesture, and refulgent arms;
Till herald signals through the camp proclaim
The closing pomp: and soon the march begins
In sad procession; each of nobler birth
With trophied spoils adorn'd, and crowns before,
Won by desert; the long victorious sword,
Helmet and lance, and buckler boss'd with gold.
Then each proud steed in sable trappings led,
No more exulting at the thrilling trump,
Which as it peal'd afar, his vigorous youth
Grazing the valley, oft would leave to feed,
Burning for battle—see his crest how fall'n,
And quench'd his fire! Almost he seems to mourn,
Conscious and sad, for that caressing lord,
Who never more upon the fronted foe
Will urge his speed; anon a sadder sight
Draws every eye—th' heroic forms strew'd o'er
With leaf and flower—low on their bier they lie,
By sorrowing comrades borne to their last bed;
Behind, the minstrel train, to trump and flute,
Chant the slow death dirge, and rehearse their deeds;
While ever and anon the swelling horn
Breathes one deep, mournful note—a dreary sound,
Such as the genius of stern war might use—
If war's stern voice might mourn—the legion last;
Tribunes, centurions, all in due degree,
Close the long progress, with th' untitled brave.
BOOK VI.  SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

Their requiem ended, on the funeral pyre
They place them reverent; built of stateliest pines,
Like a proud altar, rise its lofty sides,
Set round with cypress—emblem of despair,
As whose fair growth once harm'd of the rude axe
Revives no more—and thrice around the pile,
With spears reversed, and ensigns trail'd in dust,
In slow and measured cadences they move;
Thrice, to the trumpet, strike their tinkling shields
In unison, and toss their spears to crown
The solemn death-pile: then in pensive pause
Stand hush'd and thoughtful, while some faithful hand
(Friendship's or kindred's farewell office) lights
The noble heap;—the crackling element
Mounts toward heav'n, as of congenial flame
With the pure spirit, and leaves the grosser part
A heap of mouldering ashes unconsumed.

Such solemn rites fulfill'd, and honours done,
Each in due measure, to the dead, their chief
Appoints heroic games, and martial feast,
To crown the parting pomp; yet while their hearts,
Still fresh from pity, might retain th' impress
Of warlike exhortation, thus in tones
Of softer mood, ends the sad obsequies:

"Shades of th' illustrious and valiant dead,
Glory and pride of Rome, receive our last,
Our dearest homage; paid with pious drops
Which steal no lustre from the soldier's eye!
And if we mourn thus near the close, bereaved
Your long-tried valour and victorious arms;
Bereaved your gallant presence in the day
Of noble triumph, pardon! nor esteem
That grief unworthy, which pursues your course
To happier regions, where, amid the brave
Of every age, ye rest in glory; crown'd
With deathless palms, and banquet with the gods!
Not for yourselves we grieve—the stroke of fate
Exalts the soul to nobler fellowship,
Scipios' and Cæsars'; all th' immortal names,
The choice and master spirits of the world,
There, amid fields of never fading green,
And blissful bowers, ye roam; while the balm air
Breathes such soft gales as scent the ocean isles
At night-fall; redolent of many a flower,
Whose sweetness palls not, nor its colours fade.
Thus dwell ye in your glory and your rest—
Thus, in unchanging youth—of earthly cares
Regardless—save for whom ye loved on earth.
Honour and fame to those of milder mood
Who seek to wisdom, and the lore divine
Of peaceful arts, and fair philosophy!
But these, more prodigal, have squander'd all,
Rest, pleasure, life itself, in perilous war,
For the high cause and majesty of Rome:
Therefore their souls possess a glorious part
In after worlds; and leave a name below
To be inscribed in brass and marble—read
With admiration pour'd from every tongue,
And with true tears from every patriot's eye!
But now enough is mourn'd; nor let our grief
Unnerve our courage—to the dead, farewell!
Their ghosts would chide to see us waste in woe
Hours meet for war.—Yet think, when yet once more
Ye mount the breach—think only of the slain;
Their dauntless daring, and their deathless praise—
To match their glory, or avenge their fall!
Thus, turning tears to triumph, Titus closed
His parting tribute to th’ illustrious dead.
None such for thee and thine, whate’er their deeds,
Sad city; rest of many a valiant life
Upon the front of war pour’d prodigal;
For them nor funeral rites, nor obsequies,
Pomp, pity, reverence! none (as erst was wont)
To lay them decent on the bier, composed
By kindred care, and borne by kindred hands
For due interment in their fathers’ graves,
Perfumed with Eastern odours, nard and myrrh;
While breathing instruments and voices sweet
Blended in death dirge—these, alas! must couch
On the cold sod unhonour’d, unembalm’d;
No hand to aid them and no eye to weep!

But one is fall’n of Judah’s champions—one
The chief and pride of th’ Idumean host—
Hazor, whose valour had thus long sustain’d
The desperate conflict with more equal hope;
Whose death must now accelerate the doom
Of fated Sion. Low on earth he sinks,
Mortally stricken—yet his valiant bands
Throng with such resolution round, to save
Their honour'd leader, that the hosts of Rome
Assail no further—from the gory ground
Upon his shield they lift him; each alike
Struggling with pious reverence to partake
The precious load. Oh, what a lovely plant
Hath war's rude scythe mow'd down! How fair he shows!
How great in ruin!—as the plumed casque,
Unclasped for breathing, leaves them free to float,
Those locks, from which the blighting frost of death
Hath stole no beauty, twining o'er his brow,
Play negligent to the breeze—the martial head
Bent, as in languishment of sleep or swoon.
Slowly they bear him to his simple couch,
Watching each faint pulsation, that scarce stirs
His steely corslet; then to kindred hands
Consign him for the last composing care
Which pain and death demand—alas! that care
Must end in vain—not e'en the soothing hand
Of youthful beauty, dearest to his heart,
More than a moment stays the parting sigh;
Back from its source the refluent current rolls
With brief revulsion—those dim orbs that seem'd
For ever seal'd to the bright day, unclose—
At which a gratulating whisper spread
Through all his followers; till Sapphira's look
Glanced round such eloquent and mild reproof,
That each untutor'd bosom felt th' appeal,
And, as in reverence of her streaming tears,
Stole one by one away, to leave free scope
To that full flood and ecstasy of grief,
Which none but kindred eyes should violate.

O'er his wan form the widow'd mourner bends,
Beating her delicate breast: "Oh! stay thy flight,
Pure spirit—one short moment—one kind word—
One fond farewell! one look as thou wert wont!
One sign of sad remembrance and regret
To leave me thus!"—Alas! it needed not
Such dear entreaty, to revive the pang
Of parting anguish; but the bubbling blood
Choked the faint accent and the fond adieu:
E'en that short struggle drain'd his last of strength,
And the pale lip quiver'd in vain—those eyes
Have lost their vision—the relaxing hand
Unlocks its grasp; and passion's bitter tear
Wets but a breathless corse insensible—
Catch its last breath, a hero's soul is fled!

And thou, so late betroth'd to his young love,
Now most bereaved and wretched, must bestrew¹⁵
Thine head with ashes; from thy tender foot
Pluck off th' embroider'd sandal; from thy loins
Their softer raiment, for the sackcloth garb!
Grief's livery now must be thy bridal trim;
A dirge thy marriage song—thy nuptial guests
A troop of mourners!—Others to the dust
Sink undistinguish'd; but a chief so brave,
A name so dear to Judah, must not lack
The wonted obsequies: behold, they come,
The burial guests, to do such reverence
As e'en th' ignoble dead, erewhile, might claim.
In sable garb they come, and on the ground
Bend lowly; there, in solemn silence, sit
Round the dark chamber, and the house of woe,
With downcast eyes, and undissembled drops
Of bitter tears; while, from above, with strains
Of mournful melody—soft flutes attuned
To wailing voices—chant the farewell hymn—
“Mourn for the mourners! mourn not for the dead—
The dead is at his rest, and we in tears;
Yet, 'twas but now we trimm'd thy marriage lamp;
It was but now we rais'd the marriage song;
And now we light thee to thy narrow bed,
And pour the death-wail o'er a bridegroom's bier—
Mourn for the mourners!”—ever and anon,
From morn to eve, and daily, thus, they ply
The sad, monotonous burthen of their strain.
And soon his noble reliques are embalm'd
With gums of precious and preserving power;
And his lamenting kindred watch around,
Keeping strict guard, till night-fall, o'er the mean
And scanty pittance famine yet can yield.
The funeral bread is served, and the last cup
Of consolation circles sadly round;
And all is ended, save the closing pomp.
But where the tomb? must the unhallow'd pit
Receive such ashes!—no, a nobler grave
Awaits them; purchased at a dearer price
Than gold can barter—by Sapphira's tears.
With such fond subtlety as love can teach;
Or of some pitying angel, watch'd and led,
She hath explored her path to th' hostile camp;
And, 'neath the canopy of darkness, sought
Th' imperial chief, with looks that might have moved
Hearts of more stubborn stuff to gentleness;
Craving one only boon, a husband's grave.

"Oh, if a warrior can revere his foe,
If thou hast felt soft pity, or for thee
Some Roman heart hath own'd a holier fire—
Preserve the ashes of the mighty dead
From that abyss, where, loathlier than the worm,
Plague taints the air; and cruel guards, no less,
Repel the mourners from the dust they love.
Thus, should thine arms prevail, and I endure
A captive's doom, I yet may turn, in thought,
To the green valley of Jehosaphat; 18
Grateful, to know, that he to whom my youth
Was dedicate, and my soul's being bound,
Sleeps in a sacred sepulchre, at peace!"

"The boon, fair daughter, were it more, were thine,"
The chief replied; "but say, since, as I deem,
A fiercer enemy than Rome, within,
Shuts every avenue, what hope to pass
The city barriers, for thy funeral train?
For thee, the guardian gods must sure have led
Thy faithful footsteps, to have pass'd unharmed
Through every peril; haply, less observed
Alone—but such sad convoy, ne'er can 'scape
Th' all-searching vigilance of tyrannous power."

"That care be theirs, great prince—they ask no boon
But Rome's forbearance, and th' imperial word.
Faithful thus far, while plunder might requite
His fierce alliance, th' Idumean powers
Have braved the brunt and fury of the fight;
But now, their leader slain—no hope of spoil
From a starved city, where disease and want
Thin their pale squadrons—'tis resolved, they quit
Our crumbling walls, inter the mighty dead
With honour due; and trust thy clemency
For free departing to their mountain home."

"With rebel Judah is our only war,"
Titus replied, "and with her guilty chiefs,
Not with the dead, or with a noble foe;
Daughter, far less with thee—thy dead shall find
Due reverence; and thyself a safe retreat,
Life, liberty, and peace, in Cæsar's power."

"No—I must back to Sion, and partake
Whate'er her doom:—my sire's dear ashes claim
Half of my tears in their unhonoured grave
Within the walls; and three true brothers lie
In the same pit, slain in the self same hour—19
And I must weep in silence and apart,
As Sion's daughters wont in widowhood.
The suffering city best beseems my grief;
Life were no boon for me, and freedom less:
So let me hence, and bear the tidings back,
That Edom's broken hosts shall pass unharm'd,
And their young leader find a quiet grave."

Her prayer is heard—the sad procession moves
In solemn pomp; while its brave escort frown
Such stern defiance, as the city chiefs
Dare not provoke.—Oh, what was then their thought,
Forlorn and reft of this their sole ally;
What was their thought, when the disparted files
Open for Edom—they the while pent in
As in a dungeon barr'd, a den of death,
A living-charnel? Yet might Edom move
Some spark of pity, as his ruin'd band
March'd in the silent majesty of woe,
For their loved leader; reckless of their own. 20

They bare him to the stately sepulchre,
Which still, alone of Sion's wonders, mocks
Barbarian havoc; chambered in the rock,
With quaint device, and fair proportions wrought;
The graves where mighty kings and conquerors
Lay long embalm'd: the parting prayer is pour'd;
The parting benison—the marble vault
Receives its tenant; and th' oblivious stone
Seals its dark jaws for ever o'er the dust
Of Edom's champion, and Saphira's lord.

Her hero slain, alas, what shall betide
His new espoused? her, who had wash'd his wounds,
Staunch'd every tear, to leave her sight undimm'd
For fond perusal of his fading cheek?
Could the true heart, thus canker'd to its core,
Still hold unbroken?—that inward grief,
Which oft unseen in beauty's feeble form,
Mines its fair youth, had stuck the seeds of death
Deep in her bosom; yet a little space,
And many a gentle maid must bend beneath
Exile and bonds. Sapphira weeps no more—
The gyving iron of captivity
Will not corrode those tender limbs—nor stripes
Tear the soft texture of her skin—nor lust
Pollute her bridal purity:—she fades
Like a young rose-bud with its kindred flower;
The heart that bled is broken—and the frail
And delicate form that shrined it, share its peace.

The rites were scarcely closed, when all at once
The gate re-opened; and a multitude,
With squalid garb, sunk eyes, and visages
That show'd such traces as long misery
Could stamp on human mould, burst forth—a sight
To soften adamant—scarce capable
Of flight they seem'd, but nerv'd by strong despair
For one last effort: on the ground they cast
Their feeble limbs, while many rose no more,
Fainting to death. Abash'd the Roman stood,
Half moved; yet doubting if 'twere shame to own
The throb of pity; but their leader's eye
Glistening with awful tears—that mighty heart
Which knew no softness in the brunt of war,
Now wrung and melting, waked those sympathies
Which Heav'n implants, and fields of blood and death
Slowly efface: it needed not his voice
To check revenge; those iron bosoms felt
Compunctious pangs, and touches long forgot
Since youth's soft hour; soon from their lowly plight
They raised and fed them—yet such bounty oft
Avail'd not, as the sufferer's hunger gorged
Beyond his power to bear—satiety
Fatal as famine—miserable doom,
To die from plenty who had pined for dearth!

SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.
ARGUMENT.

Stratagem of the Jews to crush the Romans by destroying the building, of which they had gained possession, connecting Antonia with the temple—an opening thus effected to the temple itself—the Jews retire to the holy house—the Romans batter it—sally of the besieged—night—state of the city and its inhabitants.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

THREE moons had waned since Titus first encamp'd,
And chief and army alike impatient, burn'd
To close their hazardous and high emprize.
Daily and ceaseless, hand to hand, they strove;
While the dread engines all complete, and fraught
With various mischief, vomited such scathe,
As, were the wall less firm than adamant,
It needs must fail; whilst the superior tower,
Bristling with spears and lances, hourly seem'd
Threatening a last and uttermost assault;
Which the besieged by every stratagem
Strove to impede, whate'er the last result.

There was a pass by which the garrison
That kept Antonia, wont, while Rome held sway,
To change their guard; the roof reposed on beams
Of massive bulk, which the confederate chiefs
With desperate resolution, for one hour
Of passing vengeance, covered thick with food
For conflagration—such combustible
And dangerous matter, as perforce must spread
The flaming element—then fired the pile,
Which, as the conquering ranks press'd reckless on,
Brought the huge ponderous roof in ruin down
On all beneath; while wall and rampart, torn
By such convulsion, follow'd in the wreck,
Opening a breach to the wide courts within.
Large was the chasm, and hideous; yet disclosed
One universal glorious blaze beyond,
Of brightest splendours and sublimity;
All the Idumean's mighty hand had reared,
In full unruined majesty sublime.
Not such as still the wandering stranger views
At Elephantina, or by the foam
Of far Syene, and the sacred isle
Philoe, or Ombos huge, or Tentyra;
Masses of giant bulk yet various, throng'd
Disorderly, a chaos of proud art;
But all disposed for harmony and grace,
All bright, and beautiful, and unimpaired.

An ample space it seem'd, on every side
With stately walls, and triple columns deck'd,
Of boldest altitude: each shaft entire
From marble quarries hewn, worthy to stand
Alone, a glorious pillar to record
Exploits of arms on some long foughten field.

The fretted roof o'erhung a cloister, meet
For meditation or discoursing—fair
As that of Athens, where the Stoic taught
His cold philosophy; or those once graced
By Egypt's sages near the mouth of Nile.²
Nor had their site by meaner steps been trod,
Though of less fame amid the nations round;
Teachers of truth and wisdom from the fount
Of inspiration; and comméring oft
With spirits that surround th' eternal throne.³

Prophets forewarning nations of their doom;
Whose skilful hands explored the living lyre
In every measure; from the tenderest mood
Of elegiac plaint, to harmony
As far beyond the chief of Pagan song,
As their high theme transcends sublunar things.
Within were courts, by marble walls disjoin'd,
And lofty ranges (which unhallowed feet
Might never pass) from the fair sanctuary;
Which eminent above the rest, appear'd
A miracle of art; so richly wrought,
That, as the flashing day-beam from afar
Smote on its marble sides and pinnacles,
It seem'd a rock of crystal chased in gold, 4
Or diamond quarry, to the stranger's view
Sparkling: nor did the nearer view belie
Remote magnificence; the roof o'erlaid
With burnish'd silver, and the gates with gold.
The mighty conqueror gazed, and once again
Felt the bright wonders steal upon his heart;
Till the bold aspect of a desperate foe
Changed each relenting passion, to the mood
Of sterner resolution: for a band
Of arm'd battalions, to maintain the breach
Stood fierce and fearless; these must first be forced,
Whate'er the cost: yet could no effort shake
Their beetling rampart; and to climb, were odds
Of dangerous hazard. In the midst a gate
Oped to the fortress, wrought of knotted oak
Plated with gold; on this th' assailant pour'd
A flood of fire, that with intensest heat
Fused the bright covering, loosen'd every seam
Of the thick ribs, and of their solid strength
Made easy prey; that the bold legions forced
Resistless entrance, and the foe retired
E'en to the sanctuary; so Rome pursued
Her work of havoc.—What was then your grief,
Ye mighty dead, who reared yon marble walls,
Or yours who fought to guard them—if ye view'd
The desolation of that fatal day?
Groan'd not your sorrowing ghosts, and from the depth
Of their dark cemeteries, strove to grasp
Weapons of war—weeping for agony,
When the destroyer, by the plinth, uptore
Rock rooted columns—when the sculptured roof
Sunk—the bright pavement undistinguishable
Beneath the wrecks of greatness in the dust?—
Yes, well may fancy feign, in such an hour
Of woe to Judah, many a warlike form
Consign'd in harness to its mortal bed,
Shook off its iron sleep; set free awhile
From its dark prison-house; roaming the streets
With tears of grief, and gestures of revenge.

Behold them now, in all their altitude
Or depth profound, those massive buttresses,
Where the primeval architect first fix'd
His huge foundations; which unharmed by rage
Of foreign spoilers, yet upheld the strength
Of th' after temple; with the natural rock
Built in, or bound with iron cremps, their strength
Form'd one compact, unbroken mass—a wall
Which, if the eye look'd down, its aching orb
Scarce could fathom—upward, scarce ascend;
The marble range above them, show'd the pride
Of finer art; with every grace adorn'd,
Frieze, cornice, architrave, and capital,
Sculptured with foliage of the binding vine
In light festoons, and clusters dropped in gold;
While chief and army stood alike amazed,
A pile so lofty, guarded with such strength,
Rampart and garrison, had e'er been won.
Yet this achieved, no conquest now remain'd
Save the last sanctuary, which alone
Might brave their utmost; for the powers within
Seem'd to have set their courage to abide
Utter destruction, or reserved their swords
For that last conflict; yet when Rome advanced
That huge and ruining engine, which no strength
Could long withstand—there in one desperate
And closing sally, Simon stood resolved
To save the pile, or perish.—Mighty God!
What was the shock and tempest of the fight,
When their long hoarded fury burst amain
From every gate! Scarce the wild hurricane,
Borne o'er the broad Pacific to assail
The Cordilleras, more impetuous beats
Their giant sides, from Darien to the Cape
Of Terra Fuego, than bold Judah burst
Upon the legions—nor did Rome, less firm
Than that huge barrier, set his shock at scorn.
Javelin and lance, with all that might preclude
The tug of war, rejected or disdain'd,
They pluck their falchions, and with frantic yell
On that close-wedged and iron infantry,
Which stood unmoved to meet them, in a mass
Made their dread onset; irresistible
Of any power but Rome—and now such strife
Grew, as must grow, where foes inflamed to the height
Of martial fury, hope against despair,
Encounter’d—where the sword’s length scarce disjoin’d
Each adverse ridge conflicting, helm to helm,
Buckler to buckler—fearful was the dim
Of clashing arms, and strokes like hail, that smote
Their steely-harness; casque, and buckler riven
Or shattered—voices, loud and numberless,
Above the trumpet peal, the battle crash,
Exhorting deeds of valour and revenge.

But chief where Simon strove the conflict raged
In its worst terror; his uplifted hand
Wielded an iron mace, whose ponderous fall
Nor bossy target, helm, nor habergeon,
Resisted, but in splinters shatter’d flew.
One arm alone might foil him, could that arm
Have reach’d his crest; but Titus strove in vain
To join his fiercest foe—so thickly wedged
The warriors stood; so deafened with the din,
No ear could hear his voice.—So Simon raged
Unconquer'd, if not conquering, for the foe
Where'er he pierced their serried order, closed
Quick o'er the interval; whilst others still,
Where the van thinn'd, as in desire to die,
Press'd forward.—All the day thus bravely fought,
On the same ground where first the battle join'd,
Rooted to earth they strove; and every corse
Covered the spot in death, where late it stood
In conflict—e'en till ebon darkness spread
Her deepest mantle o'er the scene—at length
Comrade from foe no more distinguishable,
As by consent was paused; Rome to her arms
Standing, or couch'd with fix'd unslumbering eye
On the chill pavement; Judah ranged in line
Before his temple—part retired within,
Watching the earliest sunbeam to renew
The desperate controversy. Alas, the sun
In his sad setting, fatally foretold
That never more should the bright day go down
On that proud pile; so dark the veil which pall'd
His fiery essence; while the mass of clouds
That gathered round him, shew'd like the red hue
Of flaming cities, or a sea of blood.  
Shrowded the moon; and though in mid career  
Diffused no splendor o'er the cope of night:  
Wan every star, or quench'd; as if his orb  
Partook that general sympathetic pain  
Which through th' expanse of nature, seem'd to show  
Congenial suffering for the city of God.  
Thick night at last her mantle spread—  
Not now such night, as what with softest hue,  
Pale not profound, o'er nature throws a veil  
Scarce less pellucid than the silvery tints  
Of morning brightness; nor the scene around  
Such as was once, with grove and garden gay,  
Embowering shades and verdure, to the marge  
Of crystal streamlets, sparkling 'neath the moon,  
Fann'd with soft airs, and fresh with mountain showers—  
Had e'en a star broke forth, its orb had shown  
A wide-spread wilderness—one dreary plain,  
Where nought that breathes, might find a blade of green  
To brouze for food—a stony, steril waste,  
Begirt afar with rocky hills, alike  
Blasted and bare; where the lone bird that loves  
Silence and solitude, might well have fixed
BOOK VII. SIEGE OF JERUSALEM. 177

Her fearful nest—each winding rivulet
Lovely no more—its current mark'd with reeds,
Sole growth of barrenness—where savage beasts
And fiercer man, should ever after couch
In murderous ambush—cold, as if for curse
Of the pure climate, blew the northern blast.
Yet was that night (though no portentous signs
The throes of nature, and the groans of heaven,
Had giv'n a deeper horror to the gloom)
Such as was none, nor e'er hath been surpass'd
Since time took birth, for agony or fear:
Instant affliction huge, and dread of worse
With morn—each host a nation's hope so close
Confronted; on whose swords suspended hung
Not glory alone, or loss to be retrieved
By after hardihood, but war's last stake—
Danger still heighten'd by disparity
Of strength and numbers; all with utter dark
O'ercanopied; save when some meteor flash
Shot transient, and disclosed a scene to view
Of various woe, the living and the dead
Promiscuous—each grim feature set in pain
Or passion—all the while terrific sounds,
More audible, as the loud fight no more
Deadened their echoes—shrieks and dying groans,
Wailing and blasphemy—all cries but prayer.
Such was the scene of fight without—nor less
Within the last unviolated wall,
The consummation of calamity.
Aged and young, to shun the savage grasp
Of lust and rapine, clinging round the base
Of reeking altars; every varied sight
Matchless for misery, to mark the eve
Of a worse morrow than had e'er befallen
Army or nation, from a conquering foe,
In the long annals of disastrous war.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.
ARGUMENT.

Destruction of the temple.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

Scarce his first faint refraction, ere the sun
Tinted th' horizon, through the sombrous gloom
Of labouring morn, athwart the field of fight,
Gave to discern th' adverse emblazonry;
When either army, grasping sword or spear,
Stood throng'd for battle—yet behold a sight
Sudden and strange—a dreary interval,
As if one thought had seized their souls, to pause
On this side fate; whilst either van admired
That fronted line whose prowess had impress'd
Such trench'd and rude memorial in its ranks,
So few hours gone; and might again so soon
Outdo that havoc, in a bloodier fight.
It was the hush of war,—the fearful pause,
When every bosom, strain'd to the utmost pitch
Of martial passion, throbb'd; though not for dread—
Titus, still pondering o'er the sacred pile;
E'en his fierce legions, in their wildest mood
Half moved to reverence, as celestial awe
Controul'd their fury: but the fatal doom,
With iron pen engraved on the dark scroll
Of wrath prophetic, none could now reverse.
That day of woe, when cruel Babylon
Destroy'd th' original city, and consumed
Her hallow'd temple, now again had risen
On its last ruin: firm and fierce, yet fix'd
In dumb amaze, the hostile warriors stood:
When lo, a fiery torch at random cast,
Spread such quick ravage, as nor care nor zeal
Could now extinguish. Yet above the rest
Th' imperial captain, touch'd with deep remorse
To see the dread dominion of the gods
Brought to destruction, to the sanctuary
Press'd irresistible—there first he view'd
A sum of wonders, which his eye, long since
School'd to the pomp and majesty of Rome,
Could scarce admire unawed; a work it seem'd
In every part divine; for altitude,
Grace, order, symmetry, alike complete.
The fairest, stateliest fanes of heathen fame
Excell'd not this: the boast of Ephesus
Nor old Dodona's shrine; nor thine, once queen
Of the wide desart, in thy marble pride,
Mighty Palmyra; nor the beauteous wrecks
That crown Ilyssus and Minerva's hill;
Nor what proud Rome herself, though all unharm'd
Of time or war, might boast—no, nor the toils
Of later architects in their full pomp,
Pride of the Moor, or Lusitanian kings—
It was the pile which Pompey long before
View'd with such reverence, as subdued his soul,
In the full tide and rage of victory,
To leave inviolate; for that high hand
Which built for glory, th' Idumean lord,
Twice twenty years and more, with ceaseless toil,
From its fall'n archetype, had wrought anew
The proud proportions, and enlarged the site.

The sides were cedar—all the giant growth
Of Libanus—o’erlaid with gold, emboss’d
With rarest sculpture; and the pavement wrought
Of purest marble; from the roof, alike
Fretted with gold, rich tapestry wrought in looms
Of Persia, hung, to veil the sanctuary,
Broidered in various colours to express
Mysterious meaning: yet that awful guard
Check’d not the prince of Rome, who dared explore
The silent secrets of the shrine within;
And found its wonders still surpassing all
Fancy had feign’d; refulgent still with gold,
To such perfection wrought, the artifice
Surpass’d the rare materials.—Cherubim,
Of grace celestial, spread their ample wings,
And stately palm between—all overlaid
With precious gems, that shed a living ray
Through that religious shade—no more illumed
With brighter splendors and celestial fire.
These, and much more, burst on th’ imperial gaze;
But fast and fierce the hungry element
’Gan spread its ravage; while the thrilling shrieks
Of those who fled, or still with perilous hope
Disdaining flight, in vain essayed to check
The fiery ruin, bade avert his steps
From sight and sounds so sad and pitiful.
War seem'd the while on either part to cease,
As nations stood forgetful or absorbed
In awful contemplation or despair.
First through the windows flash'd the raging flame,
As the close rafters fed its rapid course
Circuitous; till the high pile seem'd wrapt
In full combustion—meanwhile shocks resounded
Of falling planks and beams—anon a crash,
Loud as of loudest thunder, or the burst
Of near artillery, when the wide roof
Sunk instantaneous, covering all the mass
Beneath its ample cope—yet then a smoke
At every vent oozed forth, like the hot breath
Of Solfaterra, mined by elements
Of chemic war; still thickening to a cloud
Vast and voluminous, as what o'erspread
Cumæ or Tænarus, the jaws of Hell.
But when th' unprison'd and victorious fire
Mastered its bounds, as with fresh aliment
Renew'd, a bright unsullied column rose
Upward to Heav'n, and lighted all the land:
Yet with such fierce and blasting influence
That none might dare approach, or fell at once
Death scorch'd; and those, alas! not few, who fell
Thus miserably, all escape cut off
By a triumphant and remorseless foe.
Oh sight of woe, where multitudes perplex'd
By choice of dangers sought retreat in vain;
Or in their temple's conflagration deem'd
Better to perish than survive its fall;
So with blind fury on the sacred flame
Rush'd raving, proud upon that funeral pile
To end their agony!—upon the plain
Of their late conflict, gash'd with festering wounds,
Many all helpless, impotent to trail
Their limbs, endured, perforce, the bitter sight:
Yet, spite of suffering, as the tide of life
Ebb'd gradually, and the increasing fire
Through brazen harness with intenser heat
Rack'd every joint, sigh'd out their souls in moan
For their loved altars; or with frantic curse,
Raging 'gainst Heav'n and man, murmur'd such things
As should be howl'd at midnight—far from haunts
Of living foot—and still they grasp'd the sword
With strong convulsion, as in act of fight;
And still they raved of battle, and great revenge
On the destroyer; till the quivering lip
Stopp'd, and th' unsinew'd arm lay stiff in death.

All day the mighty conflagration spread
High and afar, unquench'd, unconquerable;
And yet another change of eve and morn
Dragg'd their slow course, ere all was brought to dust;
Yet all at last—the massive marble wall,
Proud porticoes and pillars, that might seem
To mock the ravage of devouring fire,
O'erwhelm'd, defaced, destroy'd, beneath the shock
Of crumbling battlements, which from above
Toppled to earth; their gorgeous capitals
Preciously carved, and fluted shafts, all fall'n
In equal ruin undistinguishable;
Crushing infatuate numbers, whom despair
Held firmly fix'd to that loved spot, or hope
Could still beguile: for, e'en in this extreme,
False seers and wizard prophets still proclaim'd
Divine deliverance, and a boundless reign
Of peace and glory to the city of God.
Lured by such arts, a miserable crowd
Of every age, beneath the smouldering porch
And flaming cloisters, press'd, there to await
The advent of their mighty conqueror;
Till the thick spreading ruin wrapt them round,
Vainly, at last, invoking aid from man
With prayer or curses; till the stifling smoke
Choak'd respiration, and the dying scream,
Less loud and less, in awful silence sunk.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE NINTH.
ARGUMENT.

Progress of the famine within the remaining part of the city—final assault—death of Simon—sack of the place—fate of the captives—conflagration—retrospect and reflections on the past history and present state of Judea—allusion to the prophecies of its restoration—conclusion.
SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

BOOK THE NINTH.

Woe was the scene within what yet remain'd
Of Rome's dread power unsack'd!—gaunt pestilence
Raging uncheck'd, and hunger at the height:
Figures that rather seem'd, as if the grave
Bursting its cearments, had disgorg'd the dead,
Than living shapes, slowly along the streets
Trail'd their exhausted limbs, to strive for food
With howling dogs, that, pinch'd with equal want,
Forgot all reverence of commanding man.
Not that Perusine dearness, of terrible
And long renown, where Caesar held his foe
Two years in siege; nor where the Punic chief
Warr'd round Saguntum, or the Syrian host
Begirt Samaria, might with this compare.
Oh misery beyond all power to paint!
Their's was a city—here a people all
Blockaded, closely pent, and perishing
For very hunger; while a ruffian crew
Fiercer than evening wolves, that from the root
Of Alp or Apennine, pour down for prey,
Roam'd, unrepress'd, for spoil; whose hot desires
Gold could not bribe, nor poverty elude.
To hide his pittance from their felon search,
To keep close watch, and listen for the tread
Of ruthless violence, while wife or child
Snatch'd their poor morsel—then in turn devour
(As if 'twere guilt) his scant and secret meal,
Was each man cunning; till that dire extreme
Which in the pinch and agony of want,
Masters all natural feeling—then ensued
Envious reproaches, and domestic jar,
Recriminations wild, and jealousies;
Each varied form, and all degrees of guilt
And misery—all social sympathies,
Reverence of sex, or weakness, utterly
Extinguish'd—parents from their children's grasp
Tearing the stinted morsel, steep'd in brine
Of bitter tears—they that fed delicately
Erewhile on choicest viands, and the wine
Of rich Sarepta, searching now for food
Loathsome to sense or thought—and worse than thus,
Man on his fellow darting sidelong looks,
That half betray'd unseemly cravings dire
For the last sickening aliment of life.

Oh then befel what e'en the robber crew
Survey'd appall'd; when in their daily roam,
Unwonted scents, from a fair mansion, stung
Their eager sense—yet were such scents from food
Loathly and horrible, as ever yet 2
Hath sated hunger—there, o'erpower'd with pains
Of gnawing famine, in her misery,
A starving mother o'er her child had hung;
And thus, as if despair could reconcile
Mercy with murder, pour'd her frantic moan:
"Oh wretched fruit of a most wretched womb,
Preserved thus far for suffering worse than death!
How long shall I behold thee wasting thus.
With this keen hunger? hear thy feeble moan,
And not relieve thee? Better now at once
To end thy torment, and appease my own!
This breast, which fed thee, can no longer feed;
And we must die together—thou, or both!
Die then, to save the life that gave thee thine!
Die for a curse, through every age invoked
On this bad city, and the ruthless band,
Who wrought a mother to a deed like this?—

Scarce had that monstrous meal a moment slaked
Her fatal cravings, ere the soul awoke,
As from a frenzied or oblivious dream,
To the full consciousness and agony
Of irretrievable and hopeless guilt.

"Hath Heaven no thunderbolt, or Hell no fires,
That I stand thus alive and unengulf'd?
What, I that bare thee—I that gave thee suck,
Watch'd and wept o'er thee, months of misery,
Loved thee in death beyond all other love—
Myself to slay thee for an hour of life,
And leave my name a proverb and a scorn,
Mary of Judah, who devoured her babe—
The mother cannibal?—Open, oh earth,
Open, and sink me in thy deepest caves!
Cover me quick where light may never dwell—
Hide me from God and man!—No, rather come,
Ye cruel spoilers, who delight in deeds
Most dark and horrible; behold your work!"—
They come, distracted mourner, at thy call;
The robber bands rush in, and fiercely claim
The scented food—at which her ecstasy
Took a new tone; as with a look that gleam’d
Malignant triumph, and mysterious calm,
She led them where the mangled infant lay.
Not that envenomed asp, whose cureless wound
Shoots instant death through every throbbing vein—
Not Hell itself, had Hell at once disclosed
Its deepest horrors, could have more congeal’d
Their vital motion.—Like the Florentine
Gazing his children, when their prison closed
Never to open more, the mother stood
In settled misery—the painter’s art,
From their entrenchment, and pale ashy hue,
Might have combined each circumstance to form
A groupe of horror.—She, as in disdain,
Her stony and hollow speculation fix’d;
Then with the yelling laughter of despair
Touching the verge of frenzy, thus derides
Their dumb amazement.—"Doubt ye to partake
The food ye ask'd? Behold a mother's feast—
These hands have seethed it, and these lips devour'd!"—

Her speech and gesture call'd their senses home
From their short exile—when th' uncurdling blood
Resumed its course, and the relaxing nerves
Gave power of motion, to escape a scene
So strange and terrible, that at the view
Gaunt appetite to very loathing changed,
Was their first impulse.—Soon the tidings spread
Beyond the city to the Roman chief;
Who, in the instant, summon'd all his host,
And with the sacred horror that assail'd
His own high heart, thus closed the bloody tale.

"Oh sin to nature! guilt beyond compare!
Sin which the grim and famish'd lioness
Would in her wildest hour of ravin shun!
Sin most accursed, beyond all other guilt
Of this bad city! by each sacred right
Of outraged nature—all the charities
Which, e'en to bestial herds, much more to man,
Endear their offspring—deeply shall they quit
This horrible deed to our most just revenge;
Each Roman matron claims it of our swords,
To vindicate a mother's awful name,
And with the city blot the record out!—
Yet hold"—for such wild fury rose at once,
It more required his mandate to control
The general impulse, than provoke its rage.
"This night we fix for onset—put to proof
Your utmost prowess—to your tents the while—
Refresh their strength who need, or use the hours
For warlike preparation—not till dark
Covers the march, we license your assault:
Then, to the trumpet, pour upon the breach:
Mars be at once our watch-word and our hope.
We give the city freely to your spoil!"

They scarce could wait its close, such sudden zeal
His speech awaken'd; joy from every eye
Flash'd, and assured presage of victory.
Then to their tents return'd, they sought to cheat
The solemn interval and chasm of time,
Which yawn'd between this hour, and that of fate.
Part to their idol deities bow'd down
In martial adoration; unappall'd,
Yet not forgetful that the gods might aid
Or mar their onset; for religious awe,
Not uncongenial to true valour, burns
In the same bosom oft with kindred warmth,
And each exalting either—more meanwhile
Blaspheming Judah's gods, and of their own
Reckless; or scorning thoughts of heavenly aid,
Fill'd up the pause with games of rougher sort,
Partaking much the mimic show of war.

The hour at last was come, the solemn hour,
When e'en the sons of sorrow seek such rest
As wearied nature craves—alas, not here
In the sad city! sleep's oblivious balm
Soothed not a lid in Sion; but instead
Shrieks of affright, of anguish, and despair,
Mingled their dissonant tones in one wild swell,
That rent the stillness of the midnight gloom,
And bore a blended horror up to Heaven.
Widows and mothers, each as if her grief
Surpass'd all other, seem'd to strive with cries
Of clamorous passion, to proclaim aloud
Her desolation—some, like Bacchanals,
Frenzied and furious through the city ran:
Others in deep and silent sorrow fix'd;
Watchful, and wondering what the long night hours
In their dark course might bring.—Well may they watch,
Watch, and bewail—for now the last is near,
Is even now, sad city! thou must fall,
Utterly fall! that shout proclaims the advance
Of Rome's fierce host; that war-blast knells thy doom!
No heart but felt it, and with sudden dread
Shudder'd involuntary—hark, they move,
In massive column form'd; with equal step
Beating true cadence, to th' inspiring note
Of brazen metal; trusting through the breach
To force resistless way: but Simon's heart
Shook off its torpor soon, and briefly thus:
Rallied the spirits of his palsied host:

"Quails then that courage, which so oft hath stood
In real conflict, at a sound?—To the breach
Quick—to the rampart—haply, while I speak,
Surmounted!—to the breach, ere all be lost!"

It but required to hear that chiding voice
To break their spell—shame, fury, hate, despair,
Nerved their stern spirits yet again to abide
The doom of battle, and in one last shock
Conquer or perish. Like a living wall
All night they stood, wedged in the jaws of the breach;
All night endured; nor knew, till break of dawn
Gave to behold how deep the enemy
Had gored their ranks—yet not a foot had fled;
Loathing of life—unshaken, fix’d, resolve
Not to survive their temple’s overthrow,
Their nation’s bondage, and exalt the pomp
Of Roman triumph, with their ignominy—
And strongest in the heart’s expiring throb,
Unsated vengeance—to retaliate
Some share of woe, and sell at dearest cost
The last poor dregs of life—gave birth to deeds
Not brave alone, but what evinced the height
Of resolution, or profound despair.
Yet were they few, and much their strength reduced
By want and watching—numberless the foe,  
Elate in spirit, in vigour unimpair'd.  
Dire was the conflict, more than might be thought  
From such unequal odds; while Simon strove,  
Still dealing cause of long lament around  
To many a Roman matron, by his sword  
Unchilded*—Titus, whose impatient eye  
Discern'd where thicker heaps of slain betray'd  
His sword's night havoc, to complete the emprize  
By one brave effort, toward his enemy  
Press'd on, but first in hostile mood thus spake:

"At last I reach thee; and this sword, so long  
Wielded reluctant 'gainst less guilty foes,  
Finds one fit sacrifice!—Dread bolted Jove,  
Revengeing Nemesis, and all the gods,  
Judah, and Rome alike, demand thy blood:  
Yield thee, or die!" At which, his adversary,  
Unawed and furious to the last of life.

* ——"though in the city he  
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one."

Coriolanus, Act V. l. 68.
"Nor with vain threats to paralyse the hand
Thou canst not conquer, or appal this heart,
Presume, proud chief!—nor deem, if now we meet
Unmatch'd before, that Simon shunn'd thine arm:
Though all thy gods, whom thou mayst well invoke,
Should aid thy sword—for thy bold summons, thus
This stroke requites it."—To rehearse each turn
Of their encounter—how the bossy shields
Flash'd lightning sparks as either falchion fell,
Brandish'd with force none else could have sustain'd,
Were to compare the shock of meeting seas,
Fretted by tempests, at the narrow mouth
Of some close haven; each with awful force
Rolling resistless onward, till a mass
Of equal bulk and volume breaks its power,
While others still successive heave in vain—
Such was their conflict, till th' imperial host,
Burning for conquest, and their chiefs, enraged
To see a sword so stain'd with villainies,
At mortal issue with the hope of Rome,
Rush'd round at once; and though their youthful prince,
Secure of victory, in vain essay'd
To check their fury, with redoubled shocks
Assail'd bold Simon, till he sunk perforce,
Beat down to dust; yet as some tower much riven
By hostile engines, whose cemented sides
Lean o'er the base, still grappling with the soil,
Ere the last fall; the unconquer'd warrior long,
On bended knee upstay'd, maintain'd the port
Of fiercest hardihood; on every side
Receiving and retorting countless wounds;
Till the dim swimming eye-ball roll'd in vain
To fix a foe; and the relaxing arm
Fail'd of its purpose. With a groan that heaved
His steely corslet, and the breast beneath
Almost to bursting, that great form at last
Fell full extended in a flood of gore:
His brow so bent, and ghastly features still
Fix'd in such fierceness, none might well perceive
If yet th' indignant spirit had forsook\textsuperscript{5}
Its shatter'd mansion—but that overthrow
Foreclosed all controversy: he, their chief
Puissantest captain, fall'n—he, that alone
Had propp'd their courage—nothing now remain'd
To the besieged, but terror and despair:
O'erthrown and trampled, to the dust they fell;
While o'er their mangled limbs and carcasses,
Still quivering warm beneath, as by a bridge,
Fresh numbers pour'd; and many o'er the wall
With ladders clomb, where none could now oppose;
Others, disgorged from the superior tower,
With long pontoons bridging the interval,
Rush'd imminent.—One only hold remain'd,
A place of ancient strength when David fill'd
The regal throne; in after times rebuilt
As for a keep or citadel, to guard
That nether hill where first the Jebusite
Founded the city—thither fled a few
To breathe from fear, and might awhile have foil'd
The headlong invader, had their courage stood:
But huge defeat had utterly abased
Their martial pride; and left them, heart and strength,
Nerveless, desponding, impotent, forlorn,
Save of concealment; for the rock beneath
Cover'd deep vaults and secret passages
Winding circuitous—there, in the womb
Of night and silence couch'd, awhile they foil'd
The conqueror's search; who o'er the giant walls
Ascended slow, presuming to assail
A banded garrison; but found instead
No show of battle—nought but solitude;
Ramparts unmann'd, and naked battlements;
All silent, empty and abandon'd all.

Such was the last sad issue; lighter far
Than e'en proud Rome might dare anticipate
From proof of peril past; when not a field
Had been achieved, or rampart had been won,
But by resistless valour, and with loss
Of his best legions.—As when oft at close
Of summer-storms, while the thick volumed clouds
Seem still to labour with combustible
And mighty mischief, thunderbolt and fire;
That the lone traveller, as they float away
Serene and harmless, lingers, as in dread
Of some new horror; thus the Roman stood
Doubting his conquest; till the pealing trump
And lifted eagle burst upon his sense:
At which a shout of gratulation broke
From all the host; anon with louder swell
Re-echoed, as their godlike chief advanced.
He, his bright visage beaming with such joy
As warriors feel, the martial greeting took:
Yet on his cheek nor pride nor triumph sate,
Presumption none, or sense of high desert;
But that calm fortitude, which, in the hour
Of sternest trial, steels the charmed breast
To the soft poison of ambitious thoughts,
Glory and power. At once they hail his name
Imperial, prince of Rome, the lord of war,
Sovereign, and conqueror! He to high Heaven
Bends reverent, and adores the deities,
Whoe'er amid the hazards of the siege
Sustain'd their hopes, and gave to gain such strength
Of wall and tower, as human arm alone
Could scarce have won: so all was now possess'd,
And the victorious host let loose to slake
Their ruthless appetites.—Oh miserable
Beyond all other cities! one short night
Since her afflictions seem'd so many and huge
As nought could heighten—now the memory
Of what was then, seem'd but a dream of woe
To these new horrors; this extremity
And bitter consummation; every street
With carnage strewn'd, and choked with heaps of slain:
Lust, avarice, vengeance, all at once indulged
To the full fury of barbarian foes;
Vengeance for friends and comrades, by the sword
In open fight, or ambuscado fallen—
Vengeance for past revolts, for Roman pride
Baffled so long; and hate that grows not less
From guilty consciousness of power misused
In the oppressor, than the sufferer’s woes.
All this must be their portion who survived
Their threefold anguish; massacre and death,
In shrewdest cunning of inventive skill
To prolong torment, edged with cruel scorn
Of their strange worship and long vaunted gods,
Who at such need look’d down, and would not save.
Such was their portion; till the conqueror’s wrath,
Wearied with toil, not sated with revenge,
Paused from the work of blood: yet then was seen
A new affliction, scarce less pitiable,
When all that lived, from every secret haunt
Dragg’d forth, and bound for public sale, appear’d;
Such as no fortress, starved by long blockade,
Hath e’er disgorged: arranged in troops they stood,
Waiting their doom; while callous avarice
Scann'd every woe-worn shape, to set the cost
Of strength or beauty; such as yet remain'd
From the long wreck of famine and despair.

Such was their doom, who scaped the triple scourge,
Which in three moons of desolation brought
Myriads on myriads to the insatiate grave.
Borne off afar, to drain the bitter cup
Of long captivity, 'neath unknown skies,
Scarce clothed, and fed but to prolong the term
Of menial toil, and in their heaviness
Sing the glad songs of Sion!—Part cut off
From cheerful day—all the sweet influences
Of hour or season, opening morn and eve,
Or genial spring-breeze—'neath the hot mine entomb'd,
To delve for gold, midst hourly perils dire
Of blast and deluge—all the angry earth
Brings forth for terror in her secret womb,
Their doleful dungeon; happy in that death
Would soonest end them! Part for savage sport
Borne off in bonds to fight with beasts of blood;
Or, with compatriot courage match'd, delight
The cruel conqueror. Some of nobler port,
To grace the imperial triumph, dragg'd in chains,
While every street stood thick with multitudes
Greeting their hero; every casement rung
Glory and honour to the brave of Rome,
Vengeance and scorn to her revolted foe!
Yet spite of sickness, massacre, and bonds,
Enough remain'd for everlasting proof
Of Heaven's high purpose, to preserve their name
Among the nations: still amid the wreck
Of twice ten ages pass'd in ignominy,
The seal of wrath upon their visage set,
Outcast of God, and oft oppress'd by man,
They roam dispersed to every wind of Heav'n;
A living record of prophetic truth.

Last, and long sought in vain, the robber chief
That erst on Giscala, on Sion now
Had brought destruction, barr'd of all escape,
Forth from the temple's bare and blasted site,
As with unearthly seeming, stood to view;
And, basely suppliant, craved his felon life.
Ruin was in his visage; misery
In every lineament; the pinch of thirst
And famine; nights unslept, and days of care
In ghastliest furrows trench’d: almost he seem’d
Like Sylla’s rival mid the Punic waste,
(All but in greatness) and perchance inspired
Scarce less amaze; yet fierce remembrance soon
Follow’d, and joy to have seized their capital foe.
Forthwith they lead him to the imperial tent,
Fit prize for Cæsar; but that mighty heart
Conquest complete, esteem’d it now no pride
To mock the sorrows of a suffering foe:
Gave the base boon he craved, yet with a doom
Of deeper anguish than the worst of death.
Well were thy country’s wrongs revenged in thine,
Ruthless oppressor; from that hour condemn’d
To chains and darkness, with no hope to cheer.
The torturing solitude—no thought but woe;
The curse of Judah, and the scorn of Rome!

Thus far of vengeance on the nation wrought;
It now remain’d to seal prophetic doom,
And on the last of the city, execute
Unfinish’d judgment. Ceaseless was the crash,
And long the work of ruin, to unbuild
Fabrics so many and fair, by ancient kings
And hierarchia, or foreign conquerors rear'd;
Palace and temple, hippodrome and tower,
As each held sway, for worship or delight:
All, all alike, from these to the low roof
Of the humble artisan, brought down to dust—
No sack so fatal in the page of time,
Save when the skies rain'd hot combustion down
Upon Gomorrah, and the guilty plain.
Thrice the dim sun-beam, of his wonted rays
Shorn, and obscure, athwart the lurid air
Imparted doubtful morn; yet, had his orb
Shone as was wont, that ray could scare have pierced
The thickening smoke, which, like a canopy,
In solid volume, o'er the hemisphere
A noon-day gloom diffused. Yet, at her hour,
Night brought no darkness; th' universal hill
Like one wide sheet of molten metal blazed,
Vaulted with flakes; as though the azure air
Were all inflamed, and Hell usurp'd o'er Heaven.
Such show'd the conflagration; till in place
Of a fair city, throng'd with multitudes,
No wreck remain'd, but cinderous heaps instead,
And burning marle, and stony fragments toss'd
Confusedly; such waste and emptiness.
As what surrounds volcanic hills afar,
Whose fiery inundation hath o'erwhelm'd
The region round, and strew'd a calcined mass,
To kill the germ of after fruitfulness.

Such was thy fall, proud city, once a queen
Among the nations, on thy mountain throne.
Such was thy fall; depicted in the page
Of faithful story, and in marble wrought;
Which nor the havoc of barbarian hands,
Nor more destroying time, hath yet effaced.
Still, and scarce harm'd, amid the mouldering waste
Of Roman greatness, shows the trophied arch
With the sad record of thy ruin graven;
The martial pageant, and the sacred spoils,
Conqueror and captive, in their pride and woe.
Such was thy fall! and thus the enemy
Proclaim'd his triumph o'er thy misery.
Yet did such vengeance not suffice his ire?
Could flames and fury not enough destroy
Each hallow'd vestige, but the plough must trench
Thy blasted surface to obliterate
E'en the sad site—as if the soil itself
Partook the sin of thy revolt from Rome?
Yes, mighty city! though thy very name
Hath shared the desolation, and thy place
Shows as a beacon of eternal wrath;
Time was, and long ere thy swoll'n conqueror
Had trench'd a sod of earth, or set a stone
Upon the Palatine, when thou didst rise
Among the noblest of the Pagan world.
For them what wonder, if from elder age,
Monarchs and mighty masters of mankind,
Tasking the toil of millions to their will,
And free to fix, for empire—by the marge
Of fair and fertilizing streams, that pour
Plenty and pleasure, rear'd the stately strength
Of Memphis, Antioch, or Nineveh,
Or Babylon and her ambitious tower?
Or say, what wonder, if beside the bounds
Of sands and seas, magnificent cities rose,
Marts for the wealth of kingdoms far disjoin'd?—
Whence Alexandria flourish'd o'er the deep,
And she that rival'd Rome; or Tadmor's pride,
Fed with the wealth of Ind.—These their fair site
In the open champaign chose, and spread around
Uncheck'd by nature; like the eagle, thou
Didst set thy nest i' the rock; nor did the bounds
Of its scant summit limit thy domain.
To smooth the irregular and beetling hill,
Fill the deep chasm, or bridge the dark abyss,
Was thy sublime ambition, and thy boast
In the atchieving: more unhappy now
Than all thy rivals—they, though in their graves,
Yet lie in glory; some fair fragment still
(Erect or fall'n) enduring, to proclaim
Its mighty founder; while the eloquent Muse
Twines her immortal wreath to grace their fate,
And lend a charm to ruin—nought of thine
Remains for sympathy—thy walls are none;
Silent thy bards, and lute, and lyre unstrung.
Thy children roam afar; and few the feet
That seek thy desolation—yet for those
Whose hearts can kindle mid the trophied plains
Of Marathon, or famed Thermopylae,
How much the rather would they own that pang
A patriot feels, while musing o'er the scene
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Of thine unrivall'd deeds, and utter fall?
Oh, nurse of heroes! cradle of the brave!
Warlike, and wise, the flower and prime of men—
Champions and chiefs, that oft with single strength
Rush'd on embattled armies, and prevail'd; 10
Or from the unsated lion pluck'd the prey! 11
Toil'd they, and bled, for this? only for this
That thou should'st lie so low—thou, whose young strength
O'erthrew the power of many a stablish'd throne,
Routing confederate kings—the Amorite,
And him that couch'd upon his iron bed, 12
Nine cubits measure—storm'd the Jebusite
On his wall'd hill; and smote the towering bulk
Of Anak, and the giant Philistine?
Nor treacherous Amalek could 'scape thy sword
In his close ambush; nor his iron car
Save mighty Moab from thy fierce pursuit.
Thy voice could stay the planets in their path, 13
And make the ever onward foot of Time 14
Move retrograde—the Erythrean deep
Shrunk, as thy prophet waved his hallow'd wand,
And the dark flood roll'd backward at his call: 15
Glory, and wealth, and power, were then thy lot.
Thy stately ships to Tarsus, and the isles,
Traffick'd afar; from every clime to bring
Its precious merchandize—the world thy mart,
Princes the merchants. 16—Not the sumptuous lords
Of Babylon in sweeter bowers reposed,
And statelier palaces, than where thy kings,
Upon their ivory thrones, for judgment sat;
Or banqueted in halls, hung round with shields 17
Of beaten gold; while harp and viol woke
Soul stirring harmony—what then the pride
Of that great Temple, where the almighty word
Set every measure, every grace prescribed?
When with such rites as far excell'd the pomp
Of old Eleusis, or the Thunderer's shrine,
A nation all assembled, raised the shout
Of joyous welcome to the Lord of Hosts—
And at their cry his flaming spirit pour'd
Its emanation; shrouded in a veil
Of softer splendour, for the gaze of man?

Such, and so highly favour'd was thy state.
Thou wert a bride for hymeneals deck'd 18
With choicest ornaments, and God the spouse.
But thou didst play the wanton, and incline
By the way side to every stranger's love. 19
No idol god of all the nations round,
Moloch, or Chemos, or the host of heaven,
But in the covert of thy guilty groves
Received unhallow'd sacrifice, or vows
Of secret prayer; as each apostate bow'd
In the lone chambers of his imagery. 20
The souls of martyr'd prophets from the ground
Cried loud against thee; but above the rest,
That most immaculate and blameless blood
Shed for thy ransom—therefore art thou thus—
A solitary thing—a barren rock,
Worse than unbuilded—where Mohammed's shrines
Pollute the soil by God's own footsteps press'd;
Where foreign tyrants reign in spoil and blood,
And even Pity pays her mite to weep!

CONCLUSION.

Is the bright vision fled? utterly fled
As what had never been—fled evermore—
Gone like a meteor flash through summer skies?
What, not a stone to tell thy greatness? None,
Save the last emptiest triumph of the proud,
The stately tomb? Oh, if thy place could speak!
If thy pale Genius, such as bards have feign'd, 21
Lifting her awful presence from the wreck
Of ancient realms, could pour her moan aloud;
How would her tuneful voice ascend to Heaven!
How plaintive from her naked hill forlorn
Break the dumb grief of ages!—"Look on me,
On me, all you that pass!—Behold, and say
If any sorrow be as mine, or shame
Like what I suffer!—I, that as a queen
Mid throned monarchs sat, now tributary
To basest tyranny.—I, that rejoiced
A blessed mother once, now all bereaved!
Hath God forgotten? Shall his heritage
Lie thus for ever in the spoiler's power?
The land that erst with milk and honey flow'd,
Whose stones were iron, and her mountains brass, 22
Still groan untill'd?"—No—let the heathen mock
Thy desolation, they, their glory shorn,
Shall never wake again to brighter hopes,
Or new dominion: thou, thy days fulfill'd,
Lion of God! shall rouse thee from thy trance,
Fresh as a giant from the wine; array'd
In nobler majesty, than from no fall.
Then shall Judea, from the waste which now
Encrusts its bosom, fair as earth new form'd
From Night and Chaos, smile in all her pomp
Of golden grain, and vintage, herb, and fruit,
Rich as of yore—the lily whiten'd vale,
And Sharon's rose, which, like sweet Paestum's pride,
Twice in her season blossom'd, flower anew:
The healing balm, so long thy choicest gift,
To its own soil restored, unharmed of change,
Flourish in deathless verdure; every breeze
Perfumed with incense, odours, and delight.

Rest then, sad city! rest in hope the while,
That He who smote thee thus, will heal thy wound:
He, at whose voice the bones of armies slain
Join'd from their scattering o'er the vale of death,
And stood complete in life and limb for war—
He, who from seas unfathom'd, or the depths
Of earth's dark chambers, at his word can wake
The dead of all past ages to their doom;
The same will lead thy wandering remnant home
From every region of their wide exile;
Rebuild thy throne on the everlasting rock; 27
And o'er a new and nobler temple shed
Imperishable glory, light, and peace!
NOTES.
NOTES.

BOOK I.

Note 1, page 6.

*His bows are bent e'en from Euphrates east.*

In allusion to the force brought by Tiberias Alexander from the eastern boundary of the Roman empire.

Note 2, page 6.

*Their baffled ensigns must be dyed in blood.*

Two legions marched from Egypt under Frigius and Fronto: they had been engaged, not long before, in an unsuccessful attack upon the city, when Cestius Gallus was compelled to retreat.

Note 3, page 6.

*Of Tarichæa; Gamala is fallen,*

*And Giscala.*

Cities of Judea, besieged and taken by Titus in his march to Jerusalem.
NOTES.

Note 4, page 6.

And every cave and rock.

The whole country abounds with caverns. At Anathoth was a remarkable echo, which Bishop Lowth supposes to be alluded to by the prophet Isaiah, Ch. 10. v. 30.

Note 5, page 6.

Disgorged her locust armies.

The locusts, described in the Apocalypse, Ch. 9. v. 3. have been supposed, by some commentators, to presage the Saracen armies who invaded Africa and Spain.

Note 6, page 9.

That coeval troop.

Part of the Persian guard was composed of horsemen born on the same day with their sovereign, and particularly attached to his person.

Note 7, page 10.

Shed softer splendour.

The banners of the auxiliaries are here alluded to.

Note 8, page 10.

—— him invoked

With fond idolatry.

"The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was
NOTES.

the object of their fondest devotion. Tacitus calls the Roman eagles Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and, with the other deities, received the religious worship of the troops."—Gibbon's Decline and Fall, Vol. I. p. 16.

Nota 9, page 10.

Was the uninfringable and sacred law.

To abandon the ensigns was sometimes deemed even a capital crime.

Nota 10, page 10.

Oft like that sable bird.

The raven, the sacred standard of the Danes.

Nota 11, page 11.

A land like Eden.

Joel, Ch. 2. v. 3.

Nota 12, page 11.

Flashing such fires.

It is stated of some nation, in Gibbon's History, (though the author cannot turn to the passage), that they confessed themselves unable to withstand the fierce looks and fire-darting eyes of the Romans.

Nota 13, page 12.

When all the North shall loose his banded kings.

Ezekiel, Ch. 38. v. 15. Revelations, Ch. 16. v. 16.
Note 14, page 13.

Striving for mastery with the enchafed surge.

Herod, who built the second Temple, constructed a magnificent mole at Caesarea Philippi.

Note 15, page 15.

His zealot band.

"The Jewish nation was by this time divided into two opposite parties; the one, foreseeing that the war must end in the total ruin of the country, were for putting an end to it by a speedy submission to the Romans: the other, which was the spawn of the Gaulonitish incendiary, and breathed nothing but war, confusion, and cruelty, opposed all peaceable measures with an invincible obstinacy. This party, which was by far the more numerous and powerful, consisted of men of the vilest and most abandoned character that ever history could parallel. They were proud, ambitious, cruel, rapacious; and committed the most horrid crimes under pretence of religion. They covered, however, their hellish brutality with the specious title of zeal for the glory of God, afffirming that it was offering the greatest dishonour to him to submit to any earthly potentate, much more to Romans and heathens; that this was their only motive to take up arms, and to bind themselves under the strictest obligations not to lay them down till they had either totally extirpated all foreign authority, or perished in the attempt. This obliged the contrary party to rise up likewise in arms in their own defence against these hell-hounds, from whom, however, they suffered unspeakably more than they ever did from the
NOTES.


They are called by Josephus "Ζηλωταί."

Note 16, page 19.

——with a shout
So loud and hideous.

The onset of the Jews was very violent, and accompanied with a loud shout. Exod. 32. v. 17. 1 Sam. Ch. 17. v. 20. This practice continued in the age of the Maccabees. 1 Mac. Ch. 3. v. 54.

BOOK II.

Note 1, page 24.

Soon as Lucifer.

Isaiah, Cha. 14. v. 12.

Note 2, page 25.

Envious Gerizim.

A mountain of Samaria, upon which a temple was erected (to rival that of Jerusalem), and religious rites performed. The reciprocal animosity of the Jews and Samaritans is well known.
NOTES.

Note 3, page 27.
*Rameses and Pithom’s strength.*

Exodus, Ch. 1. v. 11.

Note 4, page 29.
*Not sweeter measures sooth’d the frenzied king.*

Sam. Book I. Ch. 16. v. 23.

Note 5, page 32.
*No light achievement.*

“Romani ad oppugnandum versi; neque enim dignum videbatur famem hostium opperiri; poscebantque pericula, pars virtute, multi ferociâ, et cupidine præmiorum.”—Tacitus, Hist. 5. 11.

Note 6, page 33.
*Suffused, for pity, with unwonted tears.*

“Altà contrizion successse, mista,
Di timoroso e riverente affetto;
Osano appena d’innalzar’ la vista
Ver la città di Christo albergo eletto,
Dove morì.”

Gerusalemme Liberata, Canto III. st. 5.

Note 7, page 35.
*And fed from fountains.*

“Fons perennis aque, cavati sub terrâ montes, et piscinæ cisternæque, servandis imbribus.”—Tac. Hist. 5. 12.
Note 7, page 35.

Would have defied all onset from a foe.

"The third wall was commenced by Agrippa to defend the new part of the town; but he did not finish it, from apprehension of incurring the displeasure of the emperor Claudius. His intention was to have erected it with stones twenty cubits in length (about thirty-five feet), by ten cubits (about seventeen feet and a half) in breadth, so that no iron tools or engines could make any impression on them."—Horne's Introduction, Vol. III. p. 21.

Note 8, page 36.

Atoning the injustice of suspecting love.

The towers of Hippicus and Phaseles, erected by Herod the Great, were dedicated to the memory of a friend, and to his brother; a third, called Mariamne, to that of his wife; whose death, occasioned by his unjust jealousy, forms the most interesting subject in Massinger's fine tragedy, "The Duke of Milan."

Note 9, page 37.

That blazing beacon.

The Pharos at Alexandria; one of the wonders of the world.

Note 10, page 38.

Or hear or breathe the impassion'd vow of love.

Repetition of this sort is sanctioned by the authority of
Milton, Shakespear, and particularly the prophetic writers in the Old Testament, who introduce it with great frequency and effect.

"Sweet is the breath of morn," &c.

Par. Lost, B. IV. line 639, et seq.

"If ever you have look'd on better days," &c.

As You like it, Act II. scene 5.

Another instance occurs likewise in Tickell's beautiful Epistle to the Earl of Warwick, upon the death of Addison. Line 89, &c.

Note 11, page 39.

Who mourn'd of old for her young Siserah.

Judges, Ch. 5. v. 28.

Note 12, page 39.

And all from Scopos.

A spot perhaps nearly a mile (seven stadia) from the walls, and so called because it presented the first view of the city and temple.—Josephus, Lib. VI. Cap. 3.

Note 13, page 41.

Show'd like the terrors of that horned beast,
The gifted seer beheld by Shushan's stream
Pushing for mastery.

The ram described in Daniel's vision. Ch. 8. v. 3.
BOOK III.

Note 1, page 54.

With eyes that gush'd for pity.
Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ch. 1. v. 16.

Note 2, page 56.

The great and terrible nation from afar
Is come against us.
Joel, Ch. 2. v. 2. St. Luke, Ch. 19. v. 43.

Note 3, page 57.

Pour'd by old Mona o'er her dreary coast.

"The islanders were drawn up with the women running up and down among them, dressed like Furies; their hair hanging loose, firebrands in their hands, and surrounded by the Druids, who, with hands lifted up to heaven, poured out dreadful imprecations. This horrible sight so intimidated the Romans, that they stood still exposed to the darts of the enemy."—Rapin's Hist. of England, Vol. I. p. 48. 8vo edit.

Note 4, page 63.

Invocation

The hand that gave the vine to bless its fruit.

NOTES.

Note 5, page 65.

_The bridal bond is seal'd._

In the account of the customs here detailed, the author has followed the writers of the Universal History, Vol. I. part 2. page 679, 680, &c. fol. edit.

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BOOK IV.

Note 1, page 84.

—— _to soothe the sigh_  
_D of the lone mother in the wilderness._

Genesis, Ch. 21. v. 17.

Note 2, page 86.

—— _sudden as its taint_  
_Possess'd the frame._

The following account of the plague is derived from the various descriptions of Thucydides and Ovid among the ancients, and those of Boccacio and De Foe among later writers. The Greek historian is probably the only who can be relied upon as an authority. The details given in the preface to the Decamerone are perhaps as fictitious as those in the Metamorphosis, or in the vivid and appalling narrative of the English "Eye Witness."
NOTES.

Note 3, page 87.

No angel as of yore
To stir its lucid surface.

St. John, Ch. 5. v. 4.

BOOK V.

Note 1, page 95.

—— at the signal flown
From the imperial station.

A white flag.

Note 2, page 96.

—— from the realm
Of Vologeses.

The Parthians had been reduced to subjection in the reign of Augustus, who built a temple to Mars the Avenger, for the reception of the Roman trophies which had been lost at the battle of Charre, or Haran, in Mesopotamia; where Crassus, one of the triumviri, sustained a memorable defeat.

Note 3, page 97.

—— whose aboriginal names
Lost in th' Arabian.

Universal History.
Note 4, page 97.

True to the angelic word which prophesied
His lawless violence.

Genesis, Ch. 16. v. 12.

The Arabians are frequently mentioned by Josephus as forming a part of the besieging army: John, the chief of the Idumeans, is stated to have been killed by an archer of that nation.—Lib. VI. Cap. 7.

Note 5, page 98.

—— the wrong
Of treacherous murder.

This story is related in the Universal History.

Note 6, page 98.

—— sped from many a realm.

"Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials who had not yet deserved the honourable distinction of Romans. Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state. All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom much inferior to the legions themselves."—Gibbon, Ch. 1. p. 24.

"The far greater part retained those arms to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more particularly adapted them."

Julianus, the Bithynian, is mentioned by Josephus as
having particularly distinguished himself. Lib. VII. Cap. 3. Also Sabinus, a Syrian: the natives of other regions of Asia Minor are occasionally noticed.

Note 7, page 99.

——— in Time's long-teeming womb.

"In sinu famæ ac recessu posita" is the expression applied by Tacitus to Great Britain.

Notes 8 and 9, page 103.

E'en o'er a barbarous and revolted foe.

The sentiments here expressed may, perhaps, be considered as out of place in the speech of a Roman general: but from the peculiar mildness and humanity ascribed by the historians to Titus, during his short reign, the author thought himself justified in giving such a tone to his language.

Note 10, page 105.

The hedge of stone is set.

Lamentations, Ch. 3. v. 7, and 9.

Note 11, page 105.

A fearful scroll.

Ezekiel, Ch. 2. v. 10.

Note 12, page 107.

Chain down the river dragon in his bed.

This expression is more than once applied by the sacred
writers in a figurative sense. Ezekiel, Ch. 29. v. 3. It alludes in this place to the siege of Babylon, when Cyrus "laid the bed of the Euphrates dry, and led his army into the city by the empty channel of the river."—Lowth on Isaiah, Ch. 44. v. 27.

Note 13, page 111, line 2.

E'en of the foe confirm.


Note 13, page 111.

The night havoc of the Assyrian camp.

2 Kings, Ch. 19. v. 35.

Note 14, page 111.

When Benhadad warr'd
Against Samaria, with his vassal kings.

1 Kings, Ch. 20. v. 30.

Note 15, page 111.

When e'en a sound of war
Troubled the Syrian.

2 Kings, Ch. 7. v. 6.
NOTES.

Note 16, page 112.

Upon the entrench'd and banded Philistine.

1 Sam. Ch. 14. v. 13.

—— o'erthrew

The mail'd Goliath.

1 Sam. Ch. 17. v. 49.

Note 17, page 112.

Long shall Damascus rue the brother chiefs.

The Maccabees; Judas, Jonathan, and Simon. Damascus is here used for the kingdom, of which it was the capital.

Note 18, page 113.

When the Gaul possess'd
All but the capital.

When Brennus, the general of the Gauls, burnt the city of Rome.

Note 19, page 113.

Then to the altar of the mailed Mars
Led off for sacrifice.

"The general, when he began to turn his chariot from the Forum to the Capitol, ordered the captive kings and leaders of the enemy to be led to prison, and there to be put to death; but not always. Liv. 14. 41, 42. When he reached the Capitol, he used to wait till he heard that his orders were executed."—Roman Antiquities.
NOTES.

Ἡν γαρ τῷ παλαιόν πάτριον περιμένειν, μέχρις ἀν τὸν τῷ σφάτηγῇ τῶν πολεμίων διακατόν απαγογεῖλη τις.—Josephus de Bello Judaico, Lib. VII. Cap. 24.—See also Gibbon, Vol. II. p. 48.

Note 20, page 115.

And e'en their last poor might for drink.

Lamentations, Ch. 5. v. 4.

Note 21, page 115.

Withhold their water from the city's thirst,
Yet fill the floods for Rome.

Τίνω μεν γαρ καὶ πηγαι πλεονέκτηται βέβαιον αἱ ἔρανθεῖσαι πρῶτην ὡμίν. πρὸ γὰρ γῆν τῆς δουλείας, τὴν τε Σιλωαμ ἐπιληπτούσαν ἵνα καὶ τὰς περὶ τῆς ἀσεμνότητος, ὡς τε πρὸς αἵματα ὑμεῖσι διὸ ὕδωρ.—Josephus, Lib. VI. Cap. 11.

Note 22, page 122.

And like the shell th' impassive tortoise trails
Impenetrable.

The Romans had adopted the Grecian mode of attacking cities by the Ἑλληνικὸν σπαρτλωτῶν, Testudo militaris; described in Potter's Antiquities, Vol. II. p. 94.

Note 23, page 122.

These on earth
Thus wrought.

"The besiegers sometimes drove a mine into the heart of the city. Hist. de Bell. Gall. 8. 41. 43. The besieged used
countermines to destroy the works of the enemy: they withdrew the earth from the mount, or destroyed the works by fires below, which sometimes occasioned dreadful conflicts under ground."—Adams's Roman Antiquities.

Note 24, page 124.

Giant Peachukom.

A mountain in Bootan. The circumstance is mentioned in Turner's Journey to Thibet.

Note 25, page 125.

Scarce less sonorous than the blast of yore.

Joshua, Ch. 6. v. 20.

Note 26, page 126.

Body with body wedged.

This struggle is described by Josephus.

BOOK VI.

Note 1, page 132.

Of green Sorrento.

The birth-place of Tasso.
Note 2, page 132.

Move the wide universe to mourn with man?

In allusion to the prodigies described by Virgil, as having occurred at the death of Julius Caesar.

"Tempore quanquam illo."

Georg. I. v. 469.

Note 3, page 133.

——— to those humbler feuds.

From the death of our Lord till the destruction of Jerusalem, the whole interval might be appealed to, in illustration of the prophecy. The western parts of the empire were rent by the contentions of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The other wars here alluded to are mentioned by Josephus.

Note 4, page 133.

Laodicea, with redoubled shock.

Great earthquakes are recorded to have taken place in Rome in the reigns of the emperors Claudius and Nero: also another in Campania. That by which Laodicea was overthrown is mentioned by Tacitus. Ann. 14. 27.

Note 5, page 134.

Long years of stint.

The famines and pestilences predicted by our Lord (St. Luke, Ch. 21. v. 11.) are related by the several historians of the time as having actually occurred. In the Acts of the Apostles (Ch. 11. v. 28.) a great dearth is particularly mentioned as
NOTES.

having spread throughout the world in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Note 6, page 134.

*Shed livelier radiance o'er the vault of night.*

All the celestial prodigies here introduced are to be found in Josephus, B. VII. Ch.,31. Some also in Tacitus, Ann. Lib. V. Ch. 13.

Note 7, page 135.

*Suck, haply, as appall'd the Philistine.*

2 Sam. Ch. 5. v. 24.

Note 8, page 136.

*Like that soft strain, which, at the whirlwind's close.*

1 Kings, Ch. 19. v. 12.

Note 9, page 136.

*Let us depart.*

The author observes that Mr. Millman has adopted the same expression in his Fall of Jerusalem. Indeed the language of Tacitus is so precise, that it was scarcely possible to avoid the coincidence. "Audita major humanâ vox excedere Deos; simul ingens motus excedentium."—Ann. Lib. V. Ch. 13.

Note 10, page 136.

*As when Daniel's followers quaked.*

Dan. Ch. 10. v. 7.
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NOTES.

Note 11, page 136.

Or he of Teman felt

Th' immortal presence.

Job, Ch. 4. v. 15.

Note 12, page 142.

Fast by the port engulf'd. There, too, long known

In eastern fields, Sempronius—

The persons here enumerated are not particularly mentioned by Josephus as having fallen in the siege. They are introduced in conformity to the established custom of describing the actions or fate of particular warriors; and with slight sketches of imaginary history, for the sake of diversifying the manner of treating such parts of the subject; the author being unwilling to fatigue the reader with more precise details, in which it would be nearly impossible to present any semblance of novelty.

Note 13, page 148.

As Cæsar's presence.

The appellation of Cæsar could not, perhaps, yet be applied with strict propriety to Titus: he is called, however, indiscriminately by either name in the history of the war.

Note 14, page 153.

Thus, in unchanging youth—of earthly cares

Regardless.

Omnis enim per se Divum natura necesse est

Immortali ævo, summâ cum, pace fruatur.

Lucretius.
NOTES.

Note 15, page 157.

—— must bestrew
Thine head with ashes.

The account of the customs observed on these occasions is derived from Harmer, and other writers upon the Oriental nations; but particularly from the Universal History.

Note 16, page 158.

"Mourn for the mourners! mourn not for the dead—
The dead is at his rest, and we in tears."

These two lines are almost literally taken from the hymn of lamentation sung at the funerals of the Jews, as given in a note of the Universal History, Vol. I. part 2. p. 696. fol. edit.

Note 17, page 158.

—— and the last cup
Of consolation.
Jeremiah, Ch. 16. v. 7.

Note 18, page 159.

To the green valley of Jehosaphat.
A favourite burial-place.

Note 19, page 161.

—— and three true brothers lie
In the same pit, slain in the self same hour.
Josephus, Lib. VI. Cap. 15.
Note 20, page 162.

Moved in the silent majesty of woe,
For their loved leader.

Josephus particularly mentions John, the chief of the Idumeans, as having been killed by an Arabian archer, and much lamented for his valour and wisdom. Lib. VI. Ch. 7. Another eastern name is substituted for this person, in order to distinguish him from John of Giscala.

BOOK VII.

Note 1, page 168.

—and the sacred isle.

See Denon, and other Egyptian travellers.

Note 2, page 169.

—once graced

By Egypt's sages near the mouth of Nile.

Ptolemy Soter established an academy or college at Alexandria. Ptolemy Philadelphus founded a magnificent library there.

Note 3, page 169.

—commércing oft.

And looks commércing with the skies.

Milton, Il Penseroso, l. 39.
NOTES.

Note 4, page 170.

It seem'd a rock of crystal chased in gold.

Upon reference to Josephus, Lib. VI. Ch. 13. the author finds the appearance of the building compared to snow: the line was written from an indistinct, and, as it appears, a mistaken recollection of the original passage.

Note 5, page 173.

—— and with frantic yell.

So described by Josephus. See, also, note 16, page 227, ante.

BOOK VIII.

Note 1, page 182.

With iron pen engraved on the dark scroll
Of wrath prophetic.


Note 2, page 183.

—— the boast of Ephesus,
Nor old Dodona's shrine.

The account here given of the Temple, as well as of the city, and buildings, in other places, may appear extravagant and overcharged; but they are all fully borne out by the state-
ment of Josephus. "Some years before the birth of our Saviour, the repairing, or rather rebuilding of this second temple, which had become decayed in the lapse of five centuries, was undertaken by Herod the Great; who for nine years employed 13,000 workmen upon it, and spared no expense to render it equal, if not superior, in magnitude, splendor, and beauty, to any thing among mankind. But though Herod accomplished his original design in the time above specified, yet the Jews continued to ornament and enlarge it, expending the sacred treasure in annexing additional buildings to it; so that they might with great propriety assert that their temple had been forty and six years in building."—Horne's Introduction, Vol. III. page 242.

Note 3, page 183.

*Pride of the Moor, or Lusitanian kings.*

In allusion to the Alhambra at Grenada, and the magnificent church of the monastery at Batalha in Portugal.

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**BOOK IX.**

Note 1, page 191.

—— where Caesar held his foe

*Two years in siege.*

In allusion to the *Perusina famine*, or famine of Perusia, a city of Etruria. Lucan, Book I. 41.
NOTES.

Note 2, page 193.

Loathly and horrible, as ever yet
Hath sated hunger.

A similar horror occurred during the siege of Samaria.
2 Kings, Ch. 6. v. 29.

Note 3, page 195.

—— at which her ecstasy
Took a new tone.

This expression is used in various senses:

"Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy."—Macbeth.

Sometimes for madness
"Blasted with ecstasy."—Hamlet.

Note 4, page 195.

Like the Florentine.

Dante, L’Inferno, Canto III. st. 16.

Note 5, page 203.

If yet th’ indignant spirit had forsook
Its shatter’d mansion.

The fate of Simon, as above described, is not consistent with historical fact; but the author has thought himself entitled to put a period to his life in a manner more suitable to the desperate ferocity of his character: he is described by Josephus as a bold, undissembling villain; John of Giscala, as a smooth, subtle deceiver: but neither of them destitute of that sort of
talent which was calculated to obtain ascendancy over a faction.

Note 6, page 212.

—— shows the trophied arch.

The arch of Titus, erected in honour of his conquest, is one of the most entire specimens of Roman antiquity.

Note 7, page 212.

—— but the plough must trench

Thy blasted surface.

"After the final destruction of the Temple by the arms of Titus and Adrian, a ploughshare was drawn over the consecrated ground as a sign of perpetual interdiction."—Gibbon, Vol. IV. p. 100.

Note 8, page 214.

To smooth the irregular and beetling hill.

Josephus, Lib. VI. Cap. 6.

Note 9, page 214.

—— they, though in their graves

Yet lie in glory.

Isaiah, Ch. 14. v. 18 and 19.

Note 10, page 215.

Rush'd on embattled armies, and prevail'd.

1 Sam. Ch. 14. v. 13.
NOTES.

Note 11, page 215.

Or from the unsated lion pluck'd the prey!
1 Sam. Ch. 17, v. 34.

Note 12, page 215.

And him that couch'd upon his iron bed,
Nine cubits measure.
Deuteronomy, Ch. 3. v. 11.

Note 13, page 215.

Thy voice could stay the planets in their path.
Joshua, Ch. 10. v. 12.

Note 14, page 215.

And make the ever onward foot of Time
Move retrograde.
2 Kings, Ch. 20. v. 11.

Note 15, page 215.

And the dark flood roll'd backward at his call.
Exodus, Ch. 14. v. 21 and 27.

Note 16, page 216.

Not the sumptuous lords
Of Babylon.

In allusion to the hanging gardens of Babylon, which were ranked among the wonders of the world.
NOTES.

Note 17, page 216.
— hung round with shields
Of beaten gold.
1 Kings, Ch. 10. v. 17.

Note 18, page 216.
Thou wert a bride for hymeneals deck'd.
This mystical connexion is very frequently described in Scripture: Solomon's Song is full of allusions to it.

Note 19, page 217.
By the way side to every stranger's love.
This figure is very common in the works of the prophetical writers. Jerem. Ch. 3. v. 6. Ezek. Ch. 16. v. 5. Nahum, Ch. 3. v. 4.

Note 20, page 217.
In the lone chambers of his imagery.
Ezek. Ch. 8. v. 12.

Note 21, page 218.
If thy pale Genius.
Isaiah, Ch. 29. v. 4.

Note 22, page 218.
Whose stones were iron, and her mountains brass.
Deuteronomy, Ch. 8. v. 9.
NOTES.  

Note 23, page 219.

*Lion of God.*

According to the marginal interpretation of the name Ariel, Isaiah, Ch. 39. v. 1.

Note 24, page 219.

—— which, like sweet Pæstum's pride.

The rose of Sharon is said to have rivalled that of Pæstum, alluded to by Virgil (Georg. 4. l. 110.) in this respect. Isaiah, (Ch. 35. v. 2.) predicts its revivescence.

Note 25, page 219.

*The healing balm, so long thy choicest gift.*

Dr. Prideaux discusses at some length the question, whether the balsam tree was originally indigenous to the soil of Gilead, or of Arabia: he inclines to the latter opinion; admitting, however, that if the noun in the Hebrew text (Genesis, Ch. 37. v. 25. and Ch. 43. v. 11.) signifies the balsam of Mecca, it would prove the plant to have flourished in Gilead long before it was imported (according to Josephus, de Antiq. Jud. Lib. 8. cap. 2.) by the queen of Sheba in her visit to King Solomon: as it was made an object of traffic between Joseph's brethren and the Ishmaelites, and is enumerated among the presents sent by the Patriarch to his son in Egypt. The learned writer also refers to Pliny (Lib. 12. c. 25.) as having stated that these balsam trees were to be found in no country but Judea: they now grow only in Arabia, and, perhaps, in Egypt.—Prideaux's Connexion, Vol. II. p. 235.
Note 26, page 219.

—— the bones of armies slain
Join’d from their scattering.
Ezek. Ch. 37.

Note 27, page 220.

Rebuild thy throne on the everlasting rock.

The restoration of the City and Temple is foretold, with great distinctness and precision, by the inspired writers, particularly Ezekiel and St. John.
LINES
UPON
THE INTERMENT
OF
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

All things that we ordained festival,
Change from their office to black funeral.

SHAKESPEARE.
ADVERTISEMENT.

The following lines were printed anonymously, soon after the melancholy event to which they refer; and having been favourably received at the time, are now republished.
LINES,
&c.

Proud were the pomps, since first yon castle Keep
Rear'd its firm rampart frowning on the steep,
Which graced the mighty pile; when Glory spread
Her living laurels o'er the conqueror's head:
When garter'd chiefs, 'neath beauty's beaming eye,
Held their high games of martial chivalry:
Or, with dark weeds, and silent sorrow, trod
These marble aisles to grandeur's last abode!
—Yet, could the Genius of the sacred scene
Tell her proud tale; or lift the veil between
The mournful honours of thine elder day
Paid to the dust of princes pass'd away;—
Say, stately WINDSOR, since thine Edward's hand
His Gothic walls with bold ambition plann'd;
Say, could thy tow'rs a sadder splendour show,
To speak the tribute of a nation's woe?
Could England's tear with purer incense rise,
To grace her noblest monarch's obsequies,
Than on this night, within the gorgeous pile,
For her loved Charlotte, dews the moonlight aisle? 1

The muffled war-drum beats—the deep-toned bell
Peals its slow note for beauty's early knell.
Hark!—the soft requiem, and the solemn tones
Of prayer and praise—the priest's deep orisons!
Are they for Her, for whom—so few short hours
Gone like a dream—we strew'd the festal flow'rs?
For whom consenting stars their lustre shed,
Lighting affection to the bridal bed?
When in high halls, with blazing cressets light,
The wise in council, and the brave in fight,
Witness'd the vow of honour and of faith,
Thus early cancell'd by the stroke of death?
When thundering cannon, as its echoes roll'd,
To night's roused ear the tale of promise told;
And every street with nuptial emblems hung,
O'er the dark hours a noonday radiance flung?
THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

Yes, they are Hers—the heir of England's throne,
A husband's bliss, a nation's hopes, are gone!
Yes, they are Hers—the death-dirge pealing far,
The echoing anthem, and the funeral car;
The plumed canopy, the sable pall
Covering that narrow cell, which covers all
Of what, but now, was pleasure, beauty, birth—
All that propitious Heaven could lend on earth!
These once were thine, sweet sufferer—thine to prove
The mutual rapture of requited love.
Not for cold policy or custom led
A joyless victim to a stranger's bed;
Thine was the bliss to humbler bosoms known,
That cheers alike the cottage and the throne:
In one fond breast to find a kindred heat,
And burn in union till the dying beat;
To find the visions of creative youth
Less fair than love, less brilliant than the truth!

Yet, oh! what heart but, as thy pangs drew nigh,
Hung o'er thy couch with trembling sympathy?
Almost forgot the subject's distant name,
And in its prayer preferr'd a kindred claim?
Hail'd thee in hope—that throws a deeper gloom
O'er thy wan lilies and untimely tomb—
Monarch, and mother of a line to wield
Their country's quarrel in the tented field;
Or war's red wreath, with nobler pride, to scorn,
And rule in peace o'er ages yet unborn?
Such were our promis'd joys—bright as the hue
Of spring's first smile; and oh! as transient too!
Alas, what heart could dread the doom to see,
Which spares the million, thus reserved for thee?
Or deem that art but once would fail to save—
That Hymen's torch had burn'd but for the grave?

Fair fragrant blossoms of connubial bliss,
Hope, virtue, greatness—are ye come to this?
Cold is that breast whose generous impulse burn'd
With youth's warm transport—with the wretched mourn'd:
That heart which, faithful to its first fond sigh,
Beat for its lord in nature's agony.
Cold is that hand, whose quivering clasp supplied
The silent eloquence which speech denied:
Closed are those eyes, that, till the film o'erspread
Their glazing orbs, on him their last light shed!
The bier is stay'd—the solemn rites are done—
"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," are gone.
The opening blossom, and the expanded flow'r,
Mother and infant, wither'd in an hour!

And who is He, in anguish all his own,
Like moving marble—man in form alone?
Whose haggard brow, wan cheek, and faded eye,
Proclaim the soul's unutter'd misery;
That cureless wretchedness of hope in wreck,
The struggle of a heart that will not break—
When sense, and thought, and passion, seem to lie
In wild distraction lost, or lethargy—
Oh for a tear to give his sorrows vent,
That else may burst their strong imprisonment!
Like a wild whirlwind, with resistless sway,
Sweep life or reason in the shock away!
Weep, if thou canst—nor let the stoic sneer,
To see the warrior melt with woman's tear!
A heart, unmoved where battle's terrors fly,
May own the softness of humanity;
"Caesars have wept"—the monarch and the slave
Give the same groan to nature o'er the grave!
Is there whose heart hath bled in silent woe
O'er the pale wreck of all it loved below—
Watch'd the last tint from its fair mansion fly—
Passion's last languish warm the dying eye—
Mark'd the last smile on youth's bright features play,
As the lone spirit sped its dreary way—
Felt the fond grasp that death but stronger bound,
And gather'd grief from ev'ry object round—
Gazed on the form which late enshrined a heart
His own had press'd,—for ever now to part—
Felt ev'ry stroke that closed the mortal chest
Fix the keen iron deeper in his breast—
Sought the chill vault to breathe a last adieu,
In sighs more dear than rapture ever drew?
Is there in youth, thus early doom'd to prove
The desolation of dissever'd love—
Plunged, and at once, from transport to despair,
That knows no anodyne but Heaven and pray'r?
He, only he, can image half the pain
That racks a mourning husband—heart and brain.

But thou, fair Spirit! from thy travail free,
Farewell: with her who early fell like thee,
Enjoy thy blissful immortality!
THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

With fair AMELIA slumber side by side:
Each patient sufferer in her season tried!
Blest be thy tomb with all the grave can know,
To soothe the sorrows thou hast left below!
Amid the chambers of the mighty dead,
High-born and holy, rests thy quiet shade;
Edward's and Henry's to the dust gone down,
To wear a brighter and unfading crown!

O'er thy cold marble proudly float on high
The banner'd scrolls of England's chivalry;
And, morn and eve, the vaulted roofs repeat
Celestial music, o'er thy still retreat.
Long shall each anthem, as its echoes fall,
This night's sad homage to our hearts recall;
And Fancy cherish, with fond thoughts, that shed
A softer balm of sadness o'er the dead,
Those ardent virtues, which, with opening ray,
Gave the bright promise of ELIZA's day—
That gentle patience, which, despite of pain,
Sustained thee still triumphant, though in vain—
When, with that sharpest pang of grief opprest
Which knows no echo but a mother's breast,
'Reft of the blessed birth, whose welcome cry
Blots out the record of past agony,
Thy patient spirit unrepining bow'd
In resignation to "the Will of God!"3

Oh, long shall Claremont, in her silent bowers,
Mourn the kind hand that nursed her fading flowers—
Long shall her poor rehearse, with streaming eyes,
Thy converse mild, and secret charities—
Long shall thy name survive to Britain dear—
Green in her memory—water'd by her tear!

Stranger! who com'st to give a parting sigh
For her, whose ashes now in glory lie:
As from some happier pomp, or festal day,
Go not, unthinking, unimproved away!
Art thou of lofty birth?—th' unconscious dead
Above the proudest rear'd her princely head!
Are youth, and health, and happiness bestow'd?
These o'er her cup in ample measure flow'd.
And thy short date, like hers, perchance may move
The sigh of sadness, sympathy, and love!
NOTES.

Note 1, page 256.

—the moonlight aisle.

This epithet alludes to the brilliancy of the moon on the evening of the ceremony, which gave beautiful effect to such parts of the chapel as were imperfectly lighted.

Note 2, page 259.

Cæsars have wept.

"Heroes and demigods have had their sorrows—
Cæsars have wept."—The Revenge.

Note 3, page 262.

In resignation to the "Will of God."

In allusion to the last words which the Princess is said to have articulated.

THE END.
LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, whitefriars.