



GEBIR

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

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INTRODUCTION.

Walter Savage Landor was born on the 30th of January, 1775, and died at the age of eighty-nine in September, 1864. He was the eldest son of a physician at Warwick, and his second name, Savage, was the family name of his mother, who owned two estates in Warwickshire-- Ipsley Court and Tachbrook--and had a reversionary interest in Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire. To this property, worth 80,000 pounds, her eldest son was heir. That eldest son was born a poet, had a generous nature, and an ardent impetuous temper. The temper, with its obstinate claim of independence, was too much for the head master of Rugby, who found in Landor the best writer of Latin verse among his boys, but one ready to fight him over difference of opinion about a Latin quantity. In 1793 Landor went to Trinity College, Oxford. He had been got rid of at Rugby as unmanageable. After two years at Oxford, he was rusticated; thereupon he gave up his chambers, and refused to return. Landor's father, who had been much tried by his unmanageable temper, then allowed him 150 pounds a year to live with as he pleased, away from home. He lived in South Wales--at Swansea, Tenby, or elsewhere--and he sometimes went home to Warwick for short visits. In South Wales he gave himself to full communion with the poets and with Nature, and he fastened with particular enthusiasm upon Milton. Lord Aylmer, who lived near Tenby, was among his friends. Rose Aylmer, whose name he has made through death imperishable, by linking it with a few lines of perfect music, {1} lent Landor "The Progress of Romance," a book published in 1785, by Clara Reeve, in which he found the description of an Arabian tale that suggested to him his poem of "Gebir."

Landor began "Gebir" in Latin, then turned it into English, and then vigorously condensed what he had written. The poem was first published at Warwick as a sixpenny pamphlet in the year 1798, when Landor's age was twenty-three. Robert Southey was among the few who

bought it, and he first made known its power. In the best sense of the phrase, "Gebir" was written in classical English, not with a search for pompous words of classical origin to give false dignity to style, but with strict endeavour to form terse English lines of apt words well compacted. Many passages appear to have been half thought out in Greek or Latin, some, as that on the sea-shell (on page 19), were first written in Latin, and Landor re-issued "Gebir" with a translation into Latin three or four years after its first appearance.

"Gebir" was written nine years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and at a time when the victories of Napoleon were in many minds associated with the hopes of man. In the first edition of the poem there were, in the nuptial voyage of Tamar, prophetic visions of the triumph of his race, in march of the French Republic from the Garonne to the Rhine -

"How grand a prospect opens! Alps o'er Alps
Tower, to survey the triumphs that proceed.
Here, while Garumna dances in the gloom
Of larches, mid her naiads, or reclined
Leans on a broom-clad bank to watch the sports
Of some far-distant chamois silken haired,
The chaste Pyrene, drying up her tears,
Finds, with your children, refuge: yonder, Rhine
Lays his imperial sceptre at your feet."

The hope of the purer spirits in the years of revolution, expressed by Wordsworth's

"War shall cease,
Did ye not hear, that conquest is abjured?"

was in the first design of "Gebir," and in those early years of hope Landor joined to the vision of the future for the sons of Tamar that,

"Captivity led captive, war o'erthrown,
They shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend

Empire that seas alone and skies confine,
And glory that shall strike the crystal stars."

Landor was led by the failure of immediate expectation to revise his poem and omit from the third and the sixth books about one hundred and fifty lines, while adding fifty to heal over the wounds made by excision. As the poem stands, it is a rebuke of tyrannous ambition in the tale of Gebir, prince of Boetic Spain, from whom Gibraltar took its name. Gebir, bound by a vow to his dying father in the name of ancestral feud to invade Egypt, prepares invasion, but yields in Egypt to the touch of love, seeks to rebuild the ruins of the past, and learns what are the fruits of ambition. This he learns in the purgatory of conquerors, where he sees the figures of the Stuarts, of William the Deliverer, and of George the Third, "with eyebrows white and slanting brow," intentionally confused with Louis XVI. to avoid a charge of treason. But the strength of Landor's sympathy with the French Revolution and of his contempt for George III. was more evident in the first form of the poem. Parallel with the quenching in Gebir of the conqueror's ambition, and with the ruin of his life and its new hope by the destroying powers that our misunderstandings of the better life bring into play, runs that part of the poem which shows Tamar, his brother, preparing to dwell with the sea nymph, the ideal, far away from all the struggle of mankind.

Recognition of the great beauty of Landor's "Gebir" came first from Southey in "The Critical Review." Southey found that the poem grew upon him, and became afterwards Landor's lifelong friend. When Shelley was at Oxford in 1811, there were times when he would read nothing but "Gebir." His friend Hogg says that when he went to Shelley's rooms one morning to tell him something of importance, he could not draw his attention away from "Gebir." Hogg impatiently threw the book out of window. It was brought back by a servant, and Shelley immediately fastened upon it again.

At the close of 1805 Landor's father died, and the young poet became a man of property. In 1808 Southey and Landor first met. Their friendship remained unbroken. When Spain rose to throw off the yoke of Napoleon, Landor's enthusiasm carried him to Corunna, where he paid for the equipment of a thousand volunteers, and joined the Spanish army of the North. After the Convention of Cintra he returned to England. Then he bought a large Welsh estate--Llanthony Priory--paid for it by selling other property, and began costly

improvements. But he lived chiefly at Bath, where he married, in 1811, when his age was thirty-six, a girl of twenty. It was then that he began his tragedy of "Count Julian." The patriotic struggle in Spain commended at the same time to Scott, Southey, and Landor the story of Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings, against whom, to avenge wrong done to his daughter, Count Julian called the Moors in to invade his country. In 1810 Southey was working at his poem of "Roderick the Last of the Goths," in fellowship with his friend Landor, who was treating the same subject in his play. Scott's "Roderick" was being printed so nearly at the same time with Landor's play, that Landor wrote to Southey early in 1812 while the proof-sheets were coming to him: "I am surprised that Upham has not sent me Mr. Scott's poem yet. However, I am not sorry. I feel a sort of satisfaction that mine is going to the press first, though there is little danger that we should think on any subject alike, or stumble on any one character in the same track." De Quincey spoke of the hidden torture shown in Landor's play to be ever present in the mind of Count Julian, the betrayer of his country, as greater than the tortures inflicted in old Rome on generals who had committed treason. De Quincey's admiration of this play was more than once expressed. "Mr. Landor," he said, "who always rises with his subject, and dilates like Satan into Teneriffe or Atlas when he sees before him an antagonist worthy of his powers, is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation, the stern self-dependency, and the monumental misery of Count Julian. That sublimity of penitential grief, which cannot accept consolation from man, cannot bear external reproach, cannot condescend to notice insult, cannot so much as SEE the curiosity of bystanders; that awful carelessness of all but the troubled deeps within his own heart, and of God's spirit brooding upon their surface and searching their abysses; never was so majestically described."

H. M.

FIRST BOOK.

I sing the fates of Gebir. He had dwelt
Among those mountain-caverns which retain
His labours yet, vast halls and flowing wells,
Nor have forgotten their old master's name

Though severed from his people here, incensed
By meditating on primeval wrongs,
He blew his battle-horn, at which uprose
Whole nations; here, ten thousand of most might
He called aloud, and soon Charoba saw
His dark helm hover o'er the land of Nile,

What should the virgin do? should royal knees
Bend suppliant, or defenceless hands engage
Men of gigantic force, gigantic arms?

For 'twas reported that nor sword sufficed,
Nor shield immense nor coat of massive mail,
But that upon their towering heads they bore
Each a huge stone, refulgent as the stars.

This told she Dalica, then cried aloud:

"If on your bosom laying down my head

I sobbed away the sorrows of a child,

If I have always, and Heaven knows I have,

Next to a mother's held a nurse's name,

Succour this one distress, recall those days,

Love me, though 'twere because you loved me then."

But whether confident in magic rites
Or touched with sexual pride to stand implored,

Dalica smiled, then spake: "Away those fears.

Though stronger than the strongest of his kind,

He falls--on me devolve that charge; he falls.

Rather than fly him, stoop thou to allure;

Nay, journey to his tents: a city stood

Upon that coast, they say, by Sidad built,

Whose father Gad built Gadir; on this ground

Perhaps he sees an ample room for war.

Persuade him to restore the walls himself

In honour of his ancestors, persuade -

But wherefore this advice? young, unespoused,

Charoba want persuasions! and a queen!"

"O Dalica!" the shuddering maid exclaimed,

"Could I encounter that fierce, frightful man?

Could I speak? no, nor sigh!"

"And canst thou reign?"

Cried Dalica; "yield empire or comply."

Unfixed though seeming fixed, her eyes downcast,

The wonted buzz and bustle of the court

From far through sculptured galleries met her ear;

Then lifting up her head, the evening sun

Poured a fresh splendour on her burnished throne--

The fair Charoba, the young queen, complied.

But Gebir when he heard of her approach
Laid by his orb'd shield, his vizor-helm,
His buckler and his corset he laid by,
And bade that none attend him; at his side
Two faithful dogs that urge the silent course,
Shaggy, deep-chested, crouched; the crocodile,
Crying, oft made them raise their flaccid ears
And push their heads within their master's hand.
There was a brightening paleness in his face,
Such as Diana rising o'er the rocks
Showered on the lonely Latmian; on his brow
Sorrow there was, yet nought was there severe.
But when the royal damsel first he saw,
Faint, hanging on her handmaids, and her knees
Tottering, as from the motion of the car,
His eyes looked earnest on her, and those eyes
Showed, if they had not, that they might have loved,
For there was pity in them at that hour.
With gentle speech, and more with gentle looks
He soothed her; but lest Pity go beyond,
And crossed Ambition lose her lofty aim,
Bending, he kissed her garment and retired.
He went, nor slumbered in the sultry noon
When viands, couches, generous wines persuade
And slumber most refreshes, nor at night,
When heavy dews are laden with disease,
And blindness waits not there for lingering age.
Ere morning dawned behind him, he arrived
At those rich meadows where young Tamar fed
The royal flocks entrusted to his care.
"Now," said he to himself, "will I repose
At least this burthen on a brother's breast."
His brother stood before him. He, amazed,
Reared suddenly his head, and thus began:
"Is it thou, brother! Tamar, is it thou!
Why, standing on the valley's utmost verge,
Lookest thou on that dull and dreary shore
Where many a league Nile blackens all the sand.
And why that sadness? when I passed our sheep
The dew-drops were not shaken off the bar;
Therefore if one be wanting 'tis untold."

"Yes, one is wanting, nor is that untold."
Said Tamar; "and this dull and dreary shore

Is neither dull nor dreary at all hours."
Whereon the tear stole silent down his cheek,
Silent, but not by Gebir unobserved:
Wondering he gazed awhile, and pitying spake:
"Let me approach thee; does the morning light
Scatter this wan suffusion o'er thy brow,
This faint blue lustre under both thine eyes?"
"O brother, is this pity or reproach?"
Cried Tamar; "cruel if it be reproach,
If pity, oh, how vain!"
"Whate'er it be
That grieves thee, I will pity: thou but speak
And I can tell thee, Tamar, pang for pang."
"Gebir! then more than brothers are we now!
Everything, take my hand, will I confess.
I neither feed the flock nor watch the fold;
How can I, lost in love? But, Gebir, why
That anger which has risen to your cheek?
Can other men? could you?--what, no reply!
And still more anger, and still worse concealed!
Are these your promises, your pity this?"
"Tamar, I well may pity what I feel--
Mark me aright--I feel for thee--proceed--
Relate me all."
"Then will I all relate,"
Said the young shepherd, gladdened from his heart.
"'Twas evening, though not sunset, and springtide
Level with these green meadows, seemed still higher.
'Twas pleasant; and I loosened from my neck
The pipe you gave me, and began to play.
Oh, that I ne'er had learnt the tuneful art!
It always brings us enemies or love!
Well, I was playing, when above the waves
Some swimmer's head methought I saw ascend;
I, sitting still, surveyed it, with my pipe
Awkwardly held before my lips half-closed.
Gebir! it was a nymph! a nymph divine!
I cannot wait describing how she came,
How I was sitting, how she first assumed
The sailor; of what happened there remains
Enough to say, and too much to forget.
The sweet deceiver stepped upon this bank
Before I was aware; for with surprise
Moments fly rapid as with love itself.

Stooping to tune afresh the hoarsened reed,
I heard a rustling, and where that arose
My glance first lighted on her nimble feet.
Her feet resembled those long shells explored
By him who to befriend his steed's dim sight
Would blow the pungent powder in the eye.
Her eyes too! O immortal gods! her eyes
Resembled--what could they resemble? what
Ever resemble those! E'en her attire
Was not of wonted woof nor vulgar art:
Her mantle showed the yellow samphire-pod,
Her girdle the dove-coloured wave serene.
'Shepherd,' said she, 'and will you wrestle now
And with the sailor's hardier race engage?'
I was rejoiced to hear it, and contrived
How to keep up contention; could I fail
By pressing not too strongly, yet to press?
'Whether a shepherd, as indeed you seem,
Or whether of the hardier race you boast,
I am not daunted, no; I will engage.
But first,' said she, 'what wager will you lay?'
'A sheep,' I answered; 'add whate'er you will.'
'I cannot,' she replied, 'make that return:
Our hided vessels in their pitchy round
Seldom, unless from rapine, hold a sheep.
But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
In the sun's palace porch, where when unyoked
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave:
Shake one and it awakens, then apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.
And I have others given me by the nymphs,
Of sweeter sound than any pipe you have.
But we, by Neptune, for no pipe contend -
This time a sheep I win, a pipe the next.'
Now came she forward eager to engage,
But first her dress, her bosom then surveyed,
And heaved it, doubting if she could deceive.
Her bosom seemed, enclosed in haze like heaven,
To baffle touch, and rose forth undefined:
Above her knees she drew the robe succinct,
Above her breast, and just below her arms.

'This will preserve my breath when tightly bound,
If struggle and equal strength should so constrain.'
Thus, pulling hard to fasten it, she spake,
And, rushing at me, closed: I thrilled throughout
And seemed to lessen and shrink up with cold.
Again with violent impulse gushed my blood,
And hearing nought external, thus absorbed,
I heard it, rushing through each turbid vein,
Shake my unsteady swimming sight in air.
Yet with unyielding though uncertain arms
I clung around her neck; the vest beneath
Rustled against our slippery limbs entwined:
Often mine springing with eluded force
Started aside, and trembled till replaced:
And when I most succeeded, as I thought,
My bosom and my throat felt so compressed
That life was almost quivering on my lips,
Yet nothing was there painful! these are signs
Of secret arts and not of human might--
What arts I cannot tell--I only know
My eyes grew dizzy, and my strength decayed.
I was indeed o'ercome! with what regret,
And more, with what confusion, when I reached
The fold, and yielding up the sheep, she cried:
'This pays a shepherd to a conquering maid.'
She smiled, and more of pleasure than disdain
Was in her dimpled chin and liberal lip,
And eyes that languished, lengthening, just like love.
She went away; I on the wicker gate
Leant, and could follow with my eyes alone.
The sheep she carried easy as a cloak;
But when I heard its bleating, as I did,
And saw, she hastening on, its hinder feet
Struggle and from her snowy shoulder slip -
One shoulder its poor efforts had unveiled -
Then all my passions mingling fell in tears;
Restless then ran I to the highest ground
To watch her--she was gone--gone down the tide -
And the long moonbeam on the hard wet sand
Lay like a jasper column half-upreared."

"But, Tamar! tell me, will she not return?"

"She will return, yet not before the moon
Again is at the full; she promised this,
Though when she promised I could not reply."

"By all the gods I pity thee! go on -
Fear not my anger, look not on my shame;
For when a lover only hears of love
He finds his folly out, and is ashamed.
Away with watchful nights and lonely days,
Contempt of earth and aspect up to heaven,
Within contemplation, with humility,
A tattered cloak that pride wears when deformed,
Away with all that hides me from myself,
Parts me from others, whispers I am wise--
From our own wisdom less is to be reaped
Than from the barest folly of our friend.
Tamar! thy pastures, large and rich, afford
Flowers to thy bees and herbage to thy sheep,
But, batted on too much, the poorest croft
Of thy poor neighbour yields what thine denies."

They hastened to the camp, and Gebir there
Resolved his native country to forego,
And ordered, from those ruins to the right
They forthwith raise a city: Tamar heard
With wonder, though in passing 'twas half-told,
His brother's love, and sighed upon his own.

SECOND BOOK.

The Gadite men the royal charge obey.
Now fragments weighed up from th' uneven streets
Leave the ground black beneath; again the sun
Shines into what were porches, and on steps
Once warm with frequentation--clients, friends,
All morning, satchelled idlers all mid-day,
Lying half-up and languid though at games.

Some raise the painted pavement, some on wheels
Draw slow its laminous length, some intersperse
Salt waters through the sordid heaps, and seize
The flowers and figures starting fresh to view.
Others rub hard large masses, and essay
To polish into white what they misdeem
The growing green of many trackless years.
Far off at intervals the axe resounds

With regular strong stroke, and nearer home
Dull falls the mallet with long labour fringed.
Here arches are discovered, there huge beams
Resist the hatchet, but in fresher air
Soon drop away: there spreads a marble squared
And smoothened; some high pillar for its base
Chose it, which now lies ruined in the dust.
Clearing the soil at bottom, they espy
A crevice: they, intent on treasure, strive
Strenuous, and groan, to move it: one exclaims,
"I hear the rusty metal grate; it moves!"
Now, overturning it, backward they start,
And stop again, and see a serpent pant,
See his throat thicken, and the crisped scales
Rise ruffled, while upon the middle fold
He keeps his wary head and blinking eye,
Curling more close and crouching ere he strike.
Go mighty men, invade far cities, go -
And be such treasure portions to your heirs.

Six days they laboured: on the seventh day
Returning, all their labours were destroyed.
'Twas not by mortal hand, or from their tents
'Twere visible; for these were now removed
Above, here neither noxious mist ascends
Nor the way wearies ere the work begin.
There Gebir, pierced with sorrow, spake these words:

"Ye men of Gades, armed with brazen shields,
And ye of near Tartessus, where the shore
Stoops to receive the tribute which all owe
To Boetis and his banks for their attire,
Ye too whom Durius bore on level meads,
Inherent in your hearts is bravery:
For earth contains no nation where abounds
The generous horse and not the warlike man.
But neither soldier now nor steed avails:
Nor steed nor soldier can oppose the gods:
Nor is there ought above like Jove himself;
Nor weighs against his purpose, when once fixed,
Aught but, with supplicating knee, the prayers.
Swifter than light are they, and every face,
Though different, glows with beauty; at the throne
Of mercy, when clouds shut it from mankind,
They fall bare-bosomed, and indignant Jove
Drops at the soothing sweetness of their voice

The thunder from his hand; let us arise
On these high places daily, beat our breast,
Prostrate ourselves and deprecate his wrath."

The people bowed their bodies and obeyed:
Nine mornings with white ashes on their heads,
Lamented they their toil each night o'erthrown.
And now the largest orbit of the year,
Leaning o'er black Mocattam's rubied brow,
Proceeded slow, majestic, and serene,
Now seemed not further than the nearest cliff,
And crimson light struck soft the phosphor wave.

Then Gebir spake to Tamar in these words:

"Tamar! I am thy elder and thy king,
But am thy brother too, nor ever said,
'Give me thy secret and become my slave:'
But haste thee not away; I will myself
Await the nymph, disguised in thy attire."

Then starting from attention Tamar cried:

"Brother! in sacred truth it cannot be!
My life is yours, my love must be my own:
Oh, surely he who seeks a second love
Never felt one, or 'tis not one I feel."

But Gebir with complacent smile replied:

"Go then, fond Tamar, go in happy hour--
But ere thou partest ponder in thy breast
And well bethink thee, lest thou part deceived,
Will she disclose to thee the mysteries
Of our calamity? and unconstrained?
When even her love thy strength had to disclose.
My heart indeed is full, but witness heaven!
My people, not my passion, fills my heart."

"Then let me kiss thy garment," said the youth,
"And heaven be with thee, and on me thy grace."

Him then the monarch thus once more addressed:

"Be of good courage: hast thou yet forgot
What chaplets languished round thy unburnt hair,
In colour like some tall smooth beech's leaves
Curled by autumnal suns?"

How flattery

Excites a pleasant, soothes a painful shame!

"These," amid stifled blushes Tamar said,
"Were of the flowering raspberry and vine:
But, ah! the seasons will not wait for love;
Seek out some other now."

They parted here:

And Gebir bending through the woodlands culled
The creeping vine and viscous raspberry,
Less green and less compliant than they were;
And twisted in those mossy tufts that grow
On brakes of roses when the roses fade:
And as he passes on, the little hinds
That shake for bristly herds the foodful bough,
Wonder, stand still, gaze, and trip satisfied;
Pleased more if chestnut, out of prickly husk
Shot from the sandal, roll along the glade.

And thus unnoticed went he, and untired
Stepped up the acclivity; and as he stepped,
And as the garlands nodded o'er his brow,
Sudden from under a close alder sprang
Th' expectant nymph, and seized him unaware.
He staggered at the shock; his feet at once
Slipped backward from the withered grass short-grazed;
But striking out one arm, though without aim,
Then grasping with his other, he enclosed
The struggler; she gained not one step's retreat,
Urging with open hands against his throat
Intense, now holding in her breath constrained,
Now pushing with quick impulse and by starts,
Till the dust blackened upon every pore.
Nearer he drew her and yet nearer, clasped
Above the knees midway, and now one arm
Fell, and her other lapsing o'er the neck
Of Gebir swung against his back incurved,
The swoll'n veins glowing deep, and with a groan
On his broad shoulder fell her face reclined.
But ah, she knew not whom that roseate face
Cooled with its breath ambrosial; for she stood
High on the bank, and often swept and broke
His chaplets mingled with her loosened hair.

Whether while Tamar tarried came desire,
And she grown languid loosed the wings of love,
Which she before held proudly at her will,
And nought but Tamar in her soul, and nought
Where Tamar was that seemed or feared deceit,
To fraud she yielded what no force had gained -
Or whether Jove in pity to mankind,
When from his crystal fount the visual orbs
He filled with piercing ether and endured

With somewhat of omnipotence, ordained
That never two fair forms at once torment
The human heart and draw it different ways,
And thus in prowess like a god the chief
Subdued her strength nor softened at her charms--
The nymph divine, the magic mistress, failed.
Recovering, still half resting on the turf,
She looked up wildly, and could now descry
The kingly brow, arched lofty for command.

"Traitor!" said she, undaunted, though amaze
Threw o'er her varying cheek the air of fear,
"Thinkest thou thus that with impunity
Thou hast forsooth deceived me? dar'st thou deem
Those eyes not hateful that have seen me fall?
O heaven! soon may they close on my disgrace.
Merciless man, what! for one sheep estranged
Hast thou thrown into dungeons and of day
Amerced thy shepherd? hast thou, while the iron
Pierced through his tender limbs into his soul,
By threats, by tortures, torn out that offence,
And heard him (oh, could I!) avow his love?
Say, hast thou? cruel, hateful!--ah my fears!
I feel them true! speak, tell me, are they true?"

She blending thus entreaty with reproach
Bent forward, as though falling on her knee
Whence she had hardly risen, and at this pause
Shed from her large dark eyes a shower of tears.

Th' Iberian king her sorrow thus consoled.
"Weep no more, heavenly damsel, weep no more:
Neither by force withheld, or choice estranged
Thy Tamar lives, and only lives for thee.
Happy, thrice happy, you! 'tis me alone
Whom heaven and earth and ocean with one hate
Conspire on, and throughout each path pursue.
Whether in waves beneath or skies above
Thou hast thy habitation, 'tis from heaven,
From heaven alone, such power, such charms, descend.
Then oh! discover whence that ruin comes
Each night upon our city, whence are heard
Those yells of rapture round our fallen walls:
In our affliction can the gods delight,
Or meet oblation for the nymphs are tears?"

He spake, and indignation sank in woe.
Which she perceiving, pride refreshed her heart,

Hope wreathed her mouth with smiles, and she exclaimed:

"Neither the gods afflict you, nor the nymphs.

Return me him who won my heart, return

Him whom my bosom pants for, as the steeds

In the sun's chariot for the western wave,

The gods will prosper thee, and Tamar prove

How nymphs the torments that they cause assuage.

Promise me this! indeed I think thou hast,

But 'tis so pleasing, promise it once more."

"Once more I promise," cried the gladdened king,

"By my right hand and by myself I swear,

And ocean's gods and heaven's gods I adjure,

Thou shalt be Tamar's, Tamar shalt be thine."

Then she, regarding him long fixed, replied:

"I have thy promise, take thou my advice.

Gebir, this land of Egypt is a land

Of incantation, demons rule these waves;

These are against thee, these thy works destroy.

Where thou hast built thy palace, and hast left

The seven pillars to remain in front,

Sacrifice there, and all these rites observe.

Go, but go early, ere the gladsome Hours,

Strew saffron in the path of rising Morn,

Ere the bee buzzing o'er flowers fresh disclosed

Examine where he may the best alight

Nor scatter off the bloom, ere cold-lipped herds

Crop the pale herbage round each other's bed,

Lead seven bulls, well pastured and well formed,

Their neck unblemished and their horns unringed,

And at each pillar sacrifice thou one.

Around each base rub thrice the black'ning blood,

And burn the curling shavings of the hoof;

And of the forehead locks thou also burn:

The yellow galls, with equal care preserved,

Pour at the seventh statue from the north."

He listened, and on her his eyes intent

Perceived her not, and she had disappeared -

So deep he pondered her important words.

And now had morn arisen and he performed

Almost the whole enjoined him: he had reached

The seventh statue, poured the yellow galls,

The forelock from his left he had released

And burnt the curling shavings of the hoof

Moistened with myrrh; when suddenly a flame

Spired from the fragrant smoke, nor sooner spired
Down sank the brazen fabric at his feet.
He started back, gazed, nor could aught but gaze,
And cold dread stiffened up his hair flower-twined;
Then with a long and tacit step, one arm
Behind, and every finger wide outspread,
He looked and tottered on a black abyss.
He thought he sometimes heard a distant voice
Breathe through the cavern's mouth, and further on
Faint murmurs now, now hollow groans reply.
Therefore suspended he his crook above,
Dropped it, and heard it rolling step by step:
He entered, and a mingled sound arose
Like one (when shaken from some temple's roof
By zealous hand, they and their fretted nest)
Of birds that wintering watch in Memnon's tomb,
And tell the halcyons when spring first returns.

THIRD BOOK.

On, for the spirit of that matchless man
Whom Nature led throughout her whole domain,
While he embodied breathed ethereal air!
 Though panting in the play-hour of my youth
I drank of Avon too, a dangerous draught,
That roused within the feverish thirst of song,
Yet never may I trespass o'er the stream
Of jealous Acheron, nor alive descend
The silent and unsearchable abodes
Of Erebus and Night, nor unchastised
Lead up long-absent heroes into day.
When on the pausing theatre of earth
Eve's shadowy curtain falls, can any man
Bring back the far-off intercepted hills,
Grasp the round rock-built turret, or arrest
The glittering spires that pierce the brow of Heaven?
Rather can any with outstripping voice
The parting sun's gigantic strides recall?
 Twice sounded GEBIR! twice th' Iberian king
Thought it the strong vibration of the brain
That struck upon his ear; but now descried
A form, a man, come nearer: as he came

His unshorn hair grown soft in these abodes
Waved back, and scattered thin and hoary light.
Living, men called him Aroar, but no more
In celebration or recording verse
His name is heard, no more by Arnon's side
The well-walled city which he reared remains.
Gebir was now undaunted--for the brave
When they no longer doubt no longer fear--
And would have spoken, but the shade began,
 "Brave son of Hesperus! no mortal hand
Has led thee hither, nor without the gods
Penetrate thy firm feet the vast profound.
Thou knowest not that here thy fathers lie,
The race of Sidad; theirs was loud acclaim
When living, but their pleasure was in war;
Triumphs and hatred followed: I myself
Bore, men imagined, no inglorious part:
The gods thought otherwise, by whose decree
Deprived of life, and more, of death deprived,
I still hear shrieking through the moonless night
Their discontented and deserted shades.
Observe these horrid walls, this rueful waste!
Here some refresh the vigour of the mind
With contemplation and cold penitence:
Nor wonder while thou hearest that the soul
Thus purified hereafter may ascend
Surmounting all obstruction, nor ascribe
The sentence to indulgence; each extreme
Has tortures for ambition; to dissolve
In everlasting languor, to resist
Its impulse, but in vain: to be enclosed
Within a limit, and that limit fire;
Severed from happiness, from eminence,
And flying, but hell bars us, from ourselves.
 Yet rather all these torments most endure
Than solitary pain and sad remorse
And towering thoughts on their own breast o'er-turned
And piercing to the heart: such penitence,
Such contemplation theirs! thy ancestors
Bear up against them, nor will they submit
To conquering Time the asperities of Fate;
Yet could they but revisit earth once more,
How gladly would they poverty embrace,
How labour, even for their deadliest foe!

It little now avails them to have raised
Beyond the Syrian regions, and beyond
Phoenicia, trophies, tributes, colonies:
Follow thou me--mark what it all avails."

Him Gebir followed, and a roar confused
Rose from a river rolling in its bed,
Not rapid, that would rouse the wretched souls,
Nor calmly, that might lull then to repose;
But with dull weary lapses it upheaved
Billows of bale, heard low, yet heard afar.
For when hell's iron portals let out night,
Often men start and shiver at the sound,
And lie so silent on the restless couch
They hear their own hearts beat. Now Gebir breathed
Another air, another sky beheld.

Twilight broods here, lulled by no nightingale
Nor wakened by the shrill lark dewy-winged,
But glowing with one sullen sunless heat.
Beneath his foot nor sprouted flower nor herb
Nor chirped a grasshopper. Above his head
Phlegethon formed a fiery firmament:
Part were sulphurous clouds involving, part
Shining like solid ribs of molten brass;
For the fierce element which else aspires
Higher and higher and lessens to the sky,
Below, earth's adamantine arch rebuffed.

Gebir, though now such languor held his limbs,
Scarce aught admired he, yet he this admired;
And thus addressed him then the conscious guide.
"Beyond that river lie the happy fields;
From them fly gentle breezes, which when drawn
Against yon crescent convex, but unite
Stronger with what they could not overcome.
Thus they that scatter freshness through the groves
And meadows of the fortunate, and fill
With liquid light the marble bowl of earth,
And give her blooming health and spritely force,
Their fire no more diluted, nor its darts
Blunted by passing through thick myrtle bowers,
Neither from odours rising half dissolved,
Point forward Phlegethon's eternal flame;
And this horizon is the spacious bow
Whence each ray reaches to the world above."

The hero pausing, Gebir then besought

What region held his ancestors, what clouds,
What waters, or what gods, from his embrace.
Aroar then sudden, as though roused, renewed.
"Come thou, if ardour urges thee and force
Suffices--mark me, Gebir, I unfold
No fable to allure thee--on! behold
Thy ancestors!" and lo! with horrid gasp
The panting flame above his head recoiled,
And thunder through his heart and life blood throbbled.
Such sound could human organs once conceive,
Cold, speechless, palsied, not the soothing voice
Of friendship or almost of Deity
Could raise the wretched mortal from the dust;
Beyond man's home condition they! with eyes
Intent, and voice desponding, and unheard
By Aroar, though he tarried at his side.
"They know me not," cried Gebir, "O my sires,
Ye know me not! they answer not, nor hear.
How distant are they still! what sad extent
Of desolation must we overcome!
Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white, and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there engine-hung;
He too among my ancestors?"

"O King!
Iberia bore him, but the breed accursed
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east."
"He was a warrior then, nor feared the gods?"
"Gebir, he feared the Demons, not the Gods;
Though them indeed his daily face adored,
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squandered as stones to exercise a sling!
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice -
Oh, madness of mankind! addressed, adored!
O Gebir! what are men, or where are gods!
Behold the giant next him, how his feet
Plunge floundering mid the marshes yellow-flowered,
His restless head just reaching to the rocks,
His bosom tossing with black weeds besmeared,
How writhes he twixt the continent and isle!
What tyrant with more insolence e'er claimed
Dominion? when from the heart of Usury
Rose more intense the pale-flamed thirst for gold?"

And called forsooth DELIVERER! False or fools
Who praised the dull-eared miscreant, or who hoped
To soothe your folly and disgrace with praise!

Hearst thou not the harp's gay simpering air
And merriment afar? then come, advance;
And now behold him! mark the wretch accursed
Who sold his people to a rival king--
Self-yoked they stood two ages unredeemed."

"Oh, horror! what pale visage rises there?
Speak, Aroar! me perhaps mine eyes deceive,
Inured not, yet methinks they there descry
Such crimson haze as sometimes drowns the moon.
What is yon awful sight? why thus appears
That space between the purple and the crown?"

"I will relate their stories when we reach
Our confines," said the guide; "for thou, O king,
Differing in both from all thy countrymen,
Seest not their stories and hast seen their fates.
But while we tarry, lo again the flame
Riseth, and murmuring hoarse, points straighter, haste!
'Tis urgent, we must hence."

"Then, oh, adieu!"
Cried Gebir, and groaned loud, at last a tear
Burst from his eyes turned back, and he exclaimed,
"Am I deluded? O ye powers of hell,
Suffer me--Oh, my fathers!--am I torn--"
He spake, and would have spoken more, but flames
Enwrapped him round and round intense; he turned,
And stood held breathless in a ghost's embrace.
"Gebir, my son, desert me not! I heard
Thy calling voice, nor fate withheld me more:
One moment yet remains; enough to know
Soon will my torments, soon will thine, expire.
Oh, that I e'er exacted such a vow!
When dipping in the victim's blood thy hand,
First thou withdrew'st it, looking in my face
Wondering; but when the priest my will explained,
Then swearest thou, repeating what he said,
How against Egypt thou wouldst raise that hand
And bruise the seed first risen from our line.
Therefore in death what pangs have I endured!
Racked on the fiery centre of the sun,
Twelve years I saw the ruined world roll round.
Shudder not--I have borne it--I deserved

My wretched fate--be better thine--farewell."

"Oh, stay, my father! stay one moment more.

Let me return thee that embrace--'tis past--

Aroar! how could I quit it unreturned!

And now the gulf divides us, and the waves

Of sulphur bellow through the blue abyss.

And is he gone for ever! and I come

In vain?" Then sternly said the guide, "In vain!

Sayst thou? what wouldst thou more? alas, O prince,

None come for pastime here! but is it nought

To turn thy feet from evil? is it nought

Of pleasure to that shade if they are turned?

For this thou camest hither: he who dares

To penetrate this darkness, nor regards

The dangers of the way, shall reascend

In glory, nor the gates of hell retard

His steps, nor demon's nor man's art prevail.

Once in each hundred years, and only once,

Whether by some rotation of the world,

Or whether willed so by some power above,

This flaming arch starts back, each realm descries

Its opposite, and Bliss from her repose

Freshens and feels her own security."

"Security!" cried out the Gadite king,

"And feel they not compassion?"

"Child of Earth,"

Calmly said Aroar at his guest's surprise,

"Some so disfigured by habitual crimes,

Others are so exalted, so refined,

So permeated by heaven, no trace remains

Graven on earth: here Justice is supreme;

Compassion can be but where passions are.

Here are discovered those who tortured Law

To silence or to speech, as pleased themselves:

Here also those who boasted of their zeal

And loved their country for the spoils it gave.

Hundreds, whose glitt'ring merchandise the lyre

Dazzled vain wretches drunk with flattery,

And wafted them in softest airs to Heav'n,

Doomed to be still deceived, here still attune

The wonted strings and fondly woo applause:

Their wish half granted, they retain their own,

But madden at the mockery of the shades.

Upon the river's other side there grow

Deep olive groves; there other ghosts abide,
Blest indeed they, but not supremely blest.
We cannot see beyond, we cannot see
Aught but our opposite, and here are fates
How opposite to ours! here some observed
Religious rites, some hospitality:
Strangers, who from the good old men retired,
Closed the gate gently, lest from generous use
Shutting and opening of its own accord,
It shake unsettled slumbers off their couch:
Some stopped revenge athirst for slaughter, some
Sowed the slow olive for a race unborn.
These had no wishes, therefore none are crowned;
But theirs are tufted banks, theirs umbrage, theirs
Enough of sunshine to enjoy the shade,
And breeze enough to lull them to repose."

Then Gebir cried: "Illustrious host, proceed.
Bring me among the wonders of a realm
Admired by all, but like a tale admired.
We take our children from their cradled sleep,
And on their fancy from our own impress
Ethereal forms and adulating fates:
But ere departing for such scenes ourselves
We seize their hands, we hang upon their neck,
Our beds cling heavy round us with our tears,
Agony strives with agony--just gods!
Wherefore should wretched mortals thus believe,
Or wherefore should they hesitate to die?"

Thus while he questioned, all his strength dissolved
Within him, thunder shook his troubled brain,
He started, and the cavern's mouth surveyed
Near, and beyond his people; he arose,
And bent toward them his bewildered way.

FOURTH BOOK.

The king's lone road, his visit, his return,
Were not unknown to Dalica, nor long
The wondrous tale from royal ears delayed.
When the young queen had heard who taught the rites
Her mind was shaken, and what first she asked
Was, whether the sea-maids were very fair,

And was it true that even gods were moved
By female charms beneath the waves profound,
And joined to them in marriage, and had sons--
Who knows but Gebir sprang then from the gods!
He that could pity, he that could obey,
Flattered both female youth and princely pride,
The same ascending from amid the shades
Showed Power in frightful attitude: the queen
Marks the surpassing prodigy, and strives
To shake off terror in her crowded court,
And wonders why she trembles, nor suspects
How Fear and Love assume each other's form,
By birth and secret compact how allied.
Vainly (to conscious virgins I appeal),
Vainly with crouching tigers, prowling wolves,
Rocks, precipices, waves, storms, thunderbolts,
All his immense inheritance, would Fear
The simplest heart, should Love refuse, assail:
Consent--the maiden's pillowed ear imbibes
Constancy, honour, truth, fidelity,
Beauty and ardent lips and longing arms;
Then fades in glimmering distance half the scene,
Then her heart quails and flutters and would fly--
'Tis her beloved! not to her! ye Powers!
What doubting maid exacts the vow? behold
Above the myrtles his protesting hand!
Such ebbs of doubt and swells of jealousy
Toss the fond bosom in its hour of sleep
And float around the eyelids and sink through.
Lo! mirror of delight in cloudless days,
Lo! thy reflection: 'twas when I exclaimed,
With kisses hurried as if each foresaw
Their end, and reckoned on our broken bonds,
And could at such a price such loss endure:
"Oh, what to faithful lovers met at morn,
What half so pleasant as imparted fears!"
Looking recumbent how love's column rose
Marmoreal, trophied round with golden hair,
How in the valley of one lip unseen
He slumbered, one his unstrung low impressed.
Sweet wilderness of soul-entangling charms!
Led back by memory, and each blissful maze
Retracing, me with magic power detain
Those dimpled cheeks, those temples violet-tinged,

Those lips of nectar and those eyes of heaven!

Charoba, though indeed she never drank
The liquid pearl, or twined the nodding crown,
Or when she wanted cool and calm repose
Dreamed of the crawling asp and grated tomb,
Was wretched up to royalty: the jibe
Struck her, most piercing where love pierced before,
From those whose freedom centres in their tongue,
Handmaidens, pages, courtiers, priests, buffoons.
Congratulations here, there prophecies,
Here children, not repining at neglect
While tumult sweeps them ample room for play,
Everywhere questions answered ere begun,
Everywhere crowds, for everywhere alarm.
Thus winter gone, nor spring (though near) arrived,
Urged slanting onward by the bickering breeze
That issues from beneath Aurora's car,
Shudder the sombrous waves; at every beam
More vivid, more by every breath impelled,
Higher and higher up the fretted rocks
Their turbulent refulgence they display.
Madness, which like the spiral element
The more it seizes on the fiercer burns,
Hurried them blindly forward, and involved
In flame the senses and in gloom the soul.

Determined to protect the country's gods
And asking their protection, they adjure
Each other to stand forward, and insist
With zeal, and trample under foot the slow;
And disregardful of the Sympathies
Divine, those Sympathies whose delicate hand
Touching the very eyeball of the heart,
Awakens it, not wounds it nor inflames,
Blind wretches! they with desperate embrace
Hang on the pillar till the temple fall.
Oft the grave judge alarms religious wealth
And rouses anger under gentle words.
Woe to the wiser few who dare to cry
"People! these men are not your enemies,
Inquire their errand, and resist when wronged."
Together childhood, priesthood, womanhood,
The scribes and elders of the land, exclaim,
"Seek they not hidden treasure in the tombs?
Raising the ruins, levelling the dust,

Who can declare whose ashes they disturb!
Build they not fairer cities than our own,
Extravagant enormous apertures
For light, and portals larger, open courts
Where all ascending all are unconfined,
And wider streets in purer air than ours?
Temples quite plain with equal architraves
They build, nor bearing gods like ours embossed.
Oh, profanation! Oh, our ancestors!"

 Though all the vulgar hate a foreign face,
It more offends weak eyes and homely age,
Dalica most, who thus her aim pursued.
"My promise, O Charoba, I perform.
Proclaim to gods and men a festival
Throughout the land, and bid the strangers eat;
Their anger thus we haply may disarm."

 "O Dalica," the grateful queen replied,
"Nurse of my childhood, soother of my cares,
Preventer of my wishes, of my thoughts,
Oh, pardon youth, oh, pardon royalty!
If hastily to Dalica I sued,
Fear might impel me, never could distrust.
Go then, for wisdom guides thee, take my name,
Issue what most imports and best beseems,
And sovereignty shall sanction the decree."

 And now Charoba was alone, her heart
Grew lighter; she sat down, and she arose,
She felt voluptuous tenderness, but felt
That tenderness for Dalica; she praised
Her kind attention, warm solicitude,
Her wisdom--for what wisdom pleased like hers!
She was delighted; should she not behold
Gebir? she blushed; but she had words to speak,
She formed them and re-formed them, with regret
That there was somewhat lost with every change;
She could replace them--what would that avail?--
Moved from their order they have lost their charm.
While thus she strewed her way with softest words,
Others grew up before her, but appeared
A plenteous rather than perplexing choice:
She rubbed her palms with pleasure, heaved a sigh,
Grew calm again, and thus her thoughts revolved--

 "But he descended to the tombs! the thought
Thrills me, I must avow it, with affright.

And wherefore? shows he not the more beloved
Of heaven? or how ascends he back to day?
Then has he wronged me? could he want a cause
Who has an army and was bred to reign?
And yet no reasons against rights he urged,
He threatened not, proclaimed not; I approached,
He hastened on; I spake, he listened; wept,
He pitied me; he loved me, he obeyed;
He was a conqueror, still am I a queen."

She thus indulged fond fancies, when the sound
Of timbrels and of cymbals struck her ear,
And horns and howlings of wild jubilee.
She feared, and listened to confirm her fears;
One breath sufficed, and shook her refluent soul.
Smiting, with simulated smile constrained,
Her beautiful bosom, "Oh, perfidious man!
Oh, cruel foe!" she twice and thrice exclaimed,
"Oh, my companions equal-aged! my throne,
My people! Oh, how wretched to presage
This day, how tenfold wretched to endure!"

She ceased, and instantly the palace rang
With gratulation roaring into rage--
'Twas her own people. "Health to Gebir! health
To our compatriot subjects! to our queen!
Health and unfaded youth ten thousand years!"
Then went the victims forward crowned with flowers,
Crowned were tame crocodiles, and boys white-robed
Guided their creaking crests across the stream.
In gilded barges went the female train,
And hearing others ripple near, undrew
The veil of sea-green awning: if they found
Whom they desired, how pleasant was the breeze!
If not, the frightful water forced a sigh.
Sweet airs of music ruled the rowing palms,
Now rose they glistening and aslant reclined,
Now they descended, and with one consent
Plunging, seemed swift each other to pursue,
And now to tremble wearied o'er the wave.
Beyond and in the suburbs might be seen
Crowds of all ages: here in triumph passed
Not without pomp, though raised with rude device,
The monarch and Charoba; there a throng
Shone out in sunny whiteness o'er the reeds.
Nor could luxuriant youth, or lapsing age

Propped by the corner of the nearest street,
With aching eyes and tottering knees intent,
Loose leathery neck and worm-like lip outstretched,
Fix long the ken upon one form, so swift
Through the gay vestures fluttering on the bank,
And through the bright-eyed waters dancing round,
Wove they their wanton wiles and disappeared.

Meantime, with pomp august and solemn, borne
On four white camels tinkling plates of gold,
Heralds before and Ethiop slaves behind,
Each with the signs of office in his hand,
Each on his brow the sacred stamp of years,
The four ambassadors of peace proceed.
Rich carpets bear they, corn and generous wine,
The Syrian olive's cheerful gift they bear,
With stubborn goats that eye the mountain tops
Askance and riot with reluctant horn,
And steeds and stately camels in their train.
The king, who sat before his tent, descried
The dust rise reddened from the setting sun.
Through all the plains below the Gadite men
Were resting from their labour; some surveyed
The spacious site ere yet obstructed--walls
Already, soon will roofs have interposed;
Some ate their frugal viands on the steps
Contented; some, remembering home, prefer
The cot's bare rafters o'er the gilded dome,
And sing, for often sighs, too, end in song:
"In smiling meads how sweet the brook's repose,
To the rough ocean and red restless sands!
Where are the woodland voices that increased
Along the unseen path on festal days,
When lay the dry and outcast arbutus
On the fane step, and the first privet-flowers
Threw their white light upon the vernal shrine?"
Some heedless trip along with hasty step
Whistling, and fix too soon on their abodes:
Haply and one among them with his spear
Measures the lintel, if so great its height
As will receive him with his helm unlowered.

But silence went throughout, e'en thoughts were hushed,
When to full view of navy and of camp
Now first expanded the bare-headed train.
Majestic, unpresuming, unappalled,

Onward they marched, and neither to the right
Nor to the left, though there the city stood,
Turned they their sober eyes; and now they reached
Within a few steep paces of ascent
The lone pavilion of the Iberian king.
He saw them, he awaited them, he rose,
He hailed them, "Peace be with you:" they replied,
"King of the western world, be with you peace."

FIFTH BOOK.

Once a fair city, courted then by king,
Mistress of nations, thronged by palaces,
Raising her head o'er destiny, her face
Glowing with pleasure and with palms refreshed,
Now pointed at by Wisdom or by Wealth,
Bereft of beauty, bare of ornaments,
Stood in the wilderness of woe, Masar.
Ere far advancing, all appeared a plain;
Traucherous and fearful mountains, far advanced.
Her glory so gone down, at human step
The fierce hyena frightened from the walls
Bristled his rising back, his teeth unsheathed,
Drew the long growl and with slow foot retired.
Yet were remaining some of ancient race,
And ancient arts were now their sole delight:
With Time's first sickle they had marked the hour
When at their incantation would the Moon
Start back, and shuddering shed blue blasted light.
The rifted rays they gathered, and immersed
In potent portion of that wondrous wave,
Which, hearing rescued Israel, stood erect,
And led her armies through his crystal gates.
Hither (none shared her way, her counsel none)
Hied the Masarian Dalica: 'twas night,
And the still breeze fell languid on the waste.
She, tired with journey long and ardent thoughts
Stopped; and before the city she descried
A female form emerge above the sands.
Intent she fixed her eyes, and on herself
Relying, with fresh vigour bent her way;
Nor disappeared the woman, but exclaimed,

One hand retaining tight her folded vest,
"Stranger, who loathest life, there lies Masar.
Begone, nor tarry longer, or ere morn
The cormorant in his solitary haunt
Of insulated rock or sounding cove
Stands on thy bleached bones and screams for prey.
My lips can scatter them a hundred leagues,
So shrivelled in one breath as all the sands
We tread on could not in as many years.
Wretched who die nor raise their sepulchre!
Therefore begone."

But Dalica unawed

(Though in her withered but still firm right-hand
Held up with imprecations hoarse and deep
Glimmered her brazen sickle, and enclosed
Within its figured curve the fading moon)
Spake thus aloud. "By yon bright orb of Heaven,
In that most sacred moment when her beam
Guided first thither by the forked shaft,
Strikes through the crevice of Arishtah's tower--"

"Sayst thou?" astonished cried the sorceress,
"Woman of outer darkness, fiend of death,
From what inhuman cave, what dire abyss,
Hast thou invisible that spell o'erheard?
What potent hand hath touched thy quickened corse,
What song dissolved thy cerements, who unclosed
Those faded eyes and filled them from the stars?
But if with inextinguished light of life
Thou breathest, soul and body unamerced,
Then whence that invocation? who hath dared
Those hallowed words, divulging, to profane?"

Dalica cried, "To heaven, not earth, addressed,
Prayers for protection cannot be profane."

Here the pale sorceress turned her face aside
Wildly, and muttered to herself amazed;
"I dread her who, alone at such an hour,
Can speak so strangely, who can thus combine
The words of reason with our gifted rites,
Yet will I speak once more.--If thou hast seen
The city of Charoba, hast thou marked
The steps of Dalica?"

"What then?"

"The tongue
Of Dalica has then our rites divulged."

"Whose rites?"

"Her sister's, mother's, and her own."

"Never."

"How sayst thou never? one would think,
Presumptuous, thou wert Dalica."

"I am,
Woman, and who art thou?"

With close embrace,
Clung the Masarian round her neck, and cried:
"Art thou then not my sister? ah, I fear
The golden lamps and jewels of a court
Deprive thine eyes of strength and purity.
O Dalica, mine watch the waning moon,
For ever patient in our mother's art,
And rest on Heaven suspended, where the founts
Of Wisdom rise, where sound the wings of Power;
Studies intense of strong and stern delight!
And thou too, Dalica, so many years
Weaned from the bosom of thy native land,
Returnest back and seekest true repose.
Oh, what more pleasant than the short-breathed sigh
When laying down your burden at the gate,
And dizzy with long wandering, you embrace
The cool and quiet of a homespun bed."

"Alas," said Dalica, "though all commend
This choice, and many meet with no control,
Yet none pursue it! Age by Care oppressed
Feels for the couch, and drops into the grave.
The tranquil scene lies further still from Youth:
Frenzied Ambition and desponding Love
Consume Youth's fairest flowers; compared with Youth
Age has a something something like repose.
Myrthyr, I seek not here a boundary
Like the horizon, which, as you advance,
Keeping its form and colour, yet recedes;
But mind my errand, and my suit perform.

Twelve years ago Charoba first could speak:
If her indulgent father asked her name,
She would indulge him too, and would reply
'What? why, Charoba!' raised with sweet surprise,
And proud to shine a teacher in her turn.
Show her the graven sceptre; what its use?
'Twas to beat dogs with, and to gather flies.
She thought the crown a plaything to amuse

Herself, and not the people, for she thought
Who mimic infant words might infant toys:
But while she watched grave elders look with awe
On such a bauble, she withheld her breath;
She was afraid her parents should suspect
They had caught childhood from her in a kiss;
She blushed for shame, and feared--for she believed.
Yet was not courage wanting in the child.
No; I have often seen her with both hands
Shake a dry crocodile of equal height,
And listen to the shells within the scales,
And fancy there was life, and yet apply
The jagged jaws wide open to her ear.
Past are three summers since she first beheld
The ocean; all around the child await
Some exclamation of amazement here:
She coldly said, her long-lashed eyes abased,
 'Is this the mighty ocean? is this all!'
That wondrous soul Charoba once possessed,
Capacious then as earth or heaven could hold,
Soul discontented with capacity,
Is gone, I fear, for ever. Need I say
She was enchanted by the wicked spells
Of Gebir, whom with lust of power inflamed
The western winds have landed on our coast?
I since have watched her in each lone retreat,
Have heard her sigh and soften out the name,
Then would she change it for Egyptian sounds
More sweet, and seem to taste them on her lips,
Then loathe them--Gebir, Gebir still returned.
Who would repine, of reason not bereft!
For soon the sunny stream of youth runs down,
And not a gadfly streaks the lake beyond.
Lone in the gardens, on her gathered vest
How gently would her languid arm recline!
How often have I seen her kiss a flower,
And on cool mosses press her glowing cheek!
Nor was the stranger free from pangs himself.
Whether by spell imperfect, or while brewed
The swelling herbs infected him with foam,
Oft have the shepherds met him wandering
Through unfrequented paths, oft overheard
Deep groans, oft started from soliloquies
Which they believe assuredly were meant

For spirits who attended him unseen.
But when from his illuded eyes retired
That figure Fancy fondly chose to raise,
He clasped the vacant air and stood and gazed;
Then owning it was folly, strange to tell,
Burst into peals of laughter at his woes.
Next, when his passion had subsided, went
Where from a cistern, green and ruined, oozed
A little rill, soon lost; there gathered he
Violets, and harebells of a sister bloom,
Twining complacently their tender stems
With plants of kindest pliability.
These for a garland woven, for a crown
He platted pithy rushes, and ere dusk
The grass was whitened with their roots nipped off.
These threw he, finished, in the little rill
And stood surveying them with steady smile:
But such a smile as that of Gebir bids
To Comfort a defiance, to Despair
A welcome, at whatever hour she please.
Had I observed him I had pitied him;
I have observed Charoba, I have asked
If she loved Gebir.

'Love him!' she exclaimed
With such a start of terror, such a flush
Of anger, 'I love Gebir? I in love?'
And looked so piteous, so impatient looked--
And burst, before I answered, into tears.
Then saw I, plainly saw I, 'twas not love;
For such her natural temper, what she likes
She speaks it out, or rather she commands.
And could Charoba say with greater ease
Bring me a water-melon from the Nile,
Than, if she loved him, 'Bring me him I love.'
Therefore the death of Gebir is resolved."

"Resolved indeed," cried Myrthyr, nought surprised,
"Precious my arts! I could without remorse
Kill, though I hold thee dearer than the day,
E'en thee thyself, to exercise my arts.
Look yonder! mark yon pomp of funeral!
Is this from fortune or from favouring stars?
Dalica, look thou yonder, what a train!
What weeping! Oh, what luxury! Come, haste,
Gather me quickly up these herbs I dropped,

And then away--hush! I must unobserved
From those two maiden sisters pull the spleen:
Dissemblers! how invidious they surround
The virgin's tomb, where all but virgins weep."
"Nay, hear me first," cried Dalica; "'tis hard
To perish to attend a foreign king."
"Perish! and may not then mine eye alone
Draw out the venom drop, and yet remain
Enough? the portion cannot be perceived."
Away she hastened with it to her home,
And, sprinkling thrice flesh sulphur o'er the hearth,
Took up a spindle with malignant smile,
And pointed to a woof, nor spake a word;
'Twas a dark purple, and its dye was dread.
Plunged in a lonely house, to her unknown,
Now Dalica first trembled: o'er the roof
Wandered her haggard eyes--'twas some relief.
The massy stones, though hewn most roughly, showed
The hand of man had once at least been there:
But from this object sinking back amazed,
Her bosom lost all consciousness, and shook
As if suspended in unbounded space.
Her thus entranced the sister's voice recalled.
"Behold it here dyed once again! 'tis done."
Dalica stepped, and felt beneath her feet
The slippery floor, with mouldered dust bestrewn;
But Myrthyr seized with bare bold-sinewed arm
The grey cerastes, writhing from her grasp,
And twisted off his horn, nor feared to squeeze
The viscous poison from his glowing gums.
Nor wanted there the root of stunted shrub
Which he lays ragged, hanging o'er the sands,
And whence the weapons of his wrath are death:
Nor the blue urchin that with clammy fin
Holds down the tossing vessel for the tides.
Together these her scient hand combined,
And more she added, dared I mention more.
Which done, with words most potent, thrice she dipped
The reeking garb; thrice waved it through the air:
She ceased; and suddenly the creeping wool
Shrunk up with crisped dryness in her hands.
"Take this," she cried, "and Gebir is no more."

SIXTH BOOK.

Now to Aurora borne by dappled steeds,
The sacred gate of orient pearl and gold,
Smitten with Lucifer's light silver wand,
Expanded slow to strains of harmony:
The waves beneath in purpling rows, like doves
Glancing with wanton coyness tow'rd their queen,
Heaved softly; thus the damsel's bosom heaves
When from her sleeping lover's downy cheek,
To which so warily her own she brings
Each moment nearer, she perceives the warmth
Of coming kisses fanned by playful dreams.
Ocean and earth and heaven was jubilee.
For 'twas the morning pointed out by Fate
When an immortal maid and mortal man
Should share each other's nature knit in bliss.

The brave Iberians far the beach o'erspread
Ere dawn with distant awe; none hear the mew,
None mark the curlew flapping o'er the field;
Silence held all, and fond expectancy.
Now suddenly the conch above the sea
Sounds, and goes sounding through the woods profound.
They, where they hear the echo, turn their eyes,
But nothing see they, save a purple mist
Roll from the distant mountain down the shore:
It rolls, it sails, it settles, it dissolves--
Now shines the nymph to human eye revealed,
And leads her Tamar timorous o'er the waves.
Immortals crowding round congratulate
The shepherd; he shrinks back, of breath bereft:
His vesture clinging closely round his limbs
Unfelt, while they the whole fair form admire,
He fears that he has lost it, then he fears
The wave has moved it, most to look he fears.
Scarce the sweet-flowing music he imbibes,
Or sees the peopled ocean; scarce he sees
Spio with sparkling eyes, and Beroe
Demure, and young lone, less renowned,
Not less divine, mild-natured; Beauty formed
Her face, her heart Fidelity; for gods
Designed, a mortal too lone loved.
These were the nymphs elected for the hour

Of Hesperus and Hymen; these had strewn
The bridal bed, these tuned afresh the shells,
Wiping the green that hoarsened them within:
These wove the chaplets, and at night resolved
To drive the dolphins from the wreathed door.
Gebir surveyed the concourse from the tents,
The Egyptian men around him; 'twas observed
By those below how wistfully he looked,
From what attention with what earnestness
Now to his city, now to theirs, he waved
His hand, and held it, while they spake, outspread.
They tarried with him, and they shared the feast.
They stooped with trembling hand from heavy jars
The wines of Gades gurgling in the bowl;
Nor bent they homeward till the moon appeared
To hang midway betwixt the earth and skies.
'Twas then that leaning o'er the boy beloved,
In Ocean's grot where Ocean was unheard,
"Tamar!" the nymph said gently, "come awake!
Enough to love, enough to sleep, is given,
Haste we away." This Tamar deemed deceit,
Spoken so fondly, and he kissed her lips,
Nor blushed he then, for he was then unseen.
But she arising bade the youth arise.
"What cause to fly?" said Tamar; she replied,
"Ask none for flight, and feign none for delay."
 "Oh, am I then deceived! or am I cast
From dreams of pleasure to eternal sleep,
And, when I cease to shudder, cease to be!"
She held the downcast bridegroom to her breast,
Looked in his face and charmed away his fears.
She said not "Wherefore leave I then embraced
You a poor shepherd, or at most a man,
Myself a nymph, that now I should deceive?"
She said not--Tamar did, and was ashamed.
Him overcome her serious voice bespake.
"Grief favours all who bear the gift of tears!
Mild at first sight he meets his votaries
And casts no shadow as he comes along:
But after his embrace the marble chills
The pausing foot, the closing door sounds loud,
The fiend in triumph strikes the roof, then falls
The eye uplifted from his lurid shade.
Tamar, depress thyself, and miseries

Darken and widen: yes, proud-hearted man!
The sea-bird rises as the billows rise;
Nor otherwise when mountain floods descend
Smiles the unsullied lotus glossy-haired.
Thou, claiming all things, leanest on thy claim
Till overwhelmed through incompiancy.
Tamar, some silent tempest gathers round!"
 "Round whom?" retorted Tamar; "thou describe
The danger, I will dare it."
 "Who will dare
What is unseen?"
 "The man that is unblessed."
 "But wherefore thou? It threatens not thyself,
Nor me, but Gebir and the Gadite host."
 "The more I know, the more a wretch am I."
Groaned deep the troubled youth, "still thou proceed."
 "Oh, seek not destined evils to divine,
Found out at last too soon! cease here the search,
'Tis vain, 'tis impious, 'tis no gift of mine:
I will impart far better, will impart
What makes, when winter comes, the sun to rest
So soon on ocean's bed his paler brow,
And night to tarry so at spring's return.
And I will tell sometimes the fate of men
Who loosed from drooping neck the restless arm
Adventurous, ere long nights had satisfied
The sweet and honest avarice of love;
How whirlpools have absorbed them, storms o'erwhelmed,
And how amid their struggles and their prayers
The big wave blackened o'er the mouths supine:
Then, when my Tamar trembles at the tale,
Kissing his lips half open with surprise,
Glance from the gloomy story, and with glee
Light on the fairer fables of the gods.
 Thus we may sport at leisure where we go
Where, loved by Neptune and the Naiad, loved
By pensive Dryad pale, and Oread
The spritely nymph whom constant Zephyr woos,
Rhine rolls his beryl-coloured wave; than Rhine
What river from the mountains ever came
More stately! most the simple crown adorns
Of rushes and of willows intertwined
With here and there a flower: his lofty brow
Shaded with vines and mistletoe and oak

He rears, and mystic bards his fame resound.
Or gliding opposite, th' Illyrian gulf
Will harbour us from ill." While thus she spake,
She touched his eyelashes with libant lip,
And breathed ambrosial odours, o'er his cheek
Celestial warmth suffusing: grief dispersed,
And strength and pleasure beamed upon his brow.
Then pointed she before him: first arose
To his astonished and delighted view
The sacred isle that shrines the queen of love.
It stood so near him, so acute each sense,
That not the symphony of lutes alone,
Or coo serene or billing strife of doves,
But murmurs, whispers, nay the very sighs
Which he himself had uttered once, he heard.
Next, but long after and far off, appear
The cloud-like cliffs and thousand towers of Crete,
And further to the right, the Cyclades:
Phoebus had raised and fixed them, to surround
His native Delos and aerial fane.
He saw the land of Pelops, host of gods,
Saw the steep ridge where Corinth after stood
Beckoning the serious with the smiling arts
Into the sunbright bay; unborn the maid
That to assure the bent-up hand unskilled
Looked oft, but oftener fearing who might wake.
He heard the voice of rivers; he descried
Pindan Peneus and the slender nymphs
That tread his banks but fear the thundering tide;
These, and Amphrysos and Apidanus
And poplar-crowned Spercheus, and reclined
On restless rocks Enipeus, where the winds
Scattered above the weeds his hoary hair.
Then, with Pirene and with Panope,
Evenus, troubled from paternal tears,
And last was Achelous, king of isles.
Zacynthus here, above rose Ithaca,
Like a blue bubble floating in the bay.
Far onward to the left a glimmering light
Glanced out oblique, nor vanished; he inquired
Whence that arose, his consort thus replied -
"Behold the vast Eridanus! ere long
We may again behold him and rejoice.
Of noble rivers none with mightier force

Rolls his unwearied torrent to the main."
And now Sicilian Etna rose to view:
Darkness with light more horrid she confounds,
Baffles the breath and dims the sight of day.
Tamar grew giddy with astonishment
And, looking up, held fast the bridal vest;
He heard the roar above him, heard the roar
Beneath, and felt it too, as he beheld,
Hurl, from earth's base, rocks, mountains, to the skies.

Meanwhile the nymph had fixed her eyes beyond,
As seeing somewhat, not intent on aught.
He, more amazed than ever, then exclaimed,
"Is there another flaming isle? or this
Illusion, thus passed over unobserved?"

"Look yonder," cried the nymph, without reply,
"Look yonder!" Tamar looked, and saw afar
Where the waves whitened on the desert shore.
When from amid grey ocean first he caught
The heights of Calpe, saddened he exclaimed,
"Rock of Iberia! fixed by Jove and hung
With all his thunder-hearing clouds, I hail
Thy ridges rough and cheerless! what though Spring
Nor kiss thy brow nor cool it with a flower,
Yet will I hail thee, hail thy flinty couch,
Where Valour and where Virtue have reposed."

The nymph said, sweetly smiling, "Fickle man
Would not be happy could he not regret!
And I confess how, looking back, a thought
Has touched and tuned or rather thrilled my heart,
Too soft for sorrow and too strong for joy:
Fond foolish maid, 'twas with mine own accord
It soothed me, shook me, melted, drowned, in tears.
But weep not thou; what cause hast thou to weep?
Wouldst thou thy country? wouldst those caves abhorred,
Dungeons and portals that exclude the day?
Gebir, though generous, just, humane, inhaled
Rank venom from these mansions. Rest, O king
In Egypt thou! nor, Tamar! pant for sway.
With horrid chorus, Pain, Diseases, Death,
Stamp on the slippery pavement of the proud,
And ring their sounding emptiness through earth.
Possess the ocean, me, thyself, and peace."

And now the chariot of the Sun descends,
The waves rush hurried from his foaming steeds,

Smoke issues from their nostrils at the gate,
Which when they enter, with huge golden bar
Atlas and Calpe close across the sea.

SEVENTH BOOK.

What mortal first by adverse fate assailed,
Trampled by tyranny or scoffed by scorn,
Stung by remorse or wrung by poverty,
Bade with fond sigh his native laud farewell?
Wretched! but tenfold wretched who resolved
Against the waves to plunge th' expatriate keel
Deep with the richest harvest of his land!

Driven with that weak blast which Winter leaves
Closing his palace gates on Caucasus,
Oft hath a berry risen forth a shade;
From the same parent plant another lies
Deaf to the daily call of weary hind;
Zephyrs pass by and laugh at his distress.
By every lake's and every river's side
The nymphs and Naiads teach Equality;
In voices gently querulous they ask,
"Who would with aching head and toiling arms
Bear the full pitcher to the stream far off?
Who would, of power intent on high emprise,
Deem less the praise to fill the vacant gulf
Then raise Charybdis upon Etna's brow?"
Amid her darkest caverns most retired,
Nature calls forth her filial elements
To close around and cruel that monster VOID:
Fire, springing fierce from his resplendent throne,
And Water, dashing the devoted wretch
Woundless and whole with iron-coloured mace,
Or whirling headlong in his war-belt's fold.
Mark well the lesson, man! and spare thy kind.
Go, from their midnight darkness wake the woods,
Woo the lone forest in her last retreat:
Many still bend their beauteous heads unblest
And sigh aloud for elemental man.
Through palaces and porches evil eyes
Light upon e'en the wretched, who have fled
The house of bondage or the house of birth;

Suspicious, murmurs, treacheries, taunts, retorts,
Attend the brighter banners that invade;
And the first horn of hunter, pale with want,
Sounds to the chase, the second to the war.

The long awaited day at last arrived,
When, linked together by the seven-armed Nile,
Egypt with proud Iberia should unite.
Here the Tartesian, there the Gadite tents
Rang with impatient pleasure: here engaged
Woody Nebrissa's quiver-bearing crew,
Contending warm with amicable skill;
While they of Durius raced along the beach
And scattered mud and jeers on all behind.
The strength of Baetis too removed the helm
And stripped the corslet off, and stanch'd the foot
Against the mossy maple, while they tore
Their quivering lances from the hissing wound.
Others push forth the prows of their compeers,
And the wave, parted by the pouncing beak,
Swells up the sides, and closes far astern:
The silent oars now dip their level wings,
And weary with strong stroke the whitening wave.
Others, afraid of tardiness, return:
Now, entering the still harbour, every surge
Runs with a louder murmur up their keel,
And the slack cordage rattles round the mast.
Sleepless with pleasure and expiring fears
Had Gebir risen ere the break of dawn,
And o'er the plains appointed for the feast
Hurried with ardent step: the swains admired
What so transversely could have swept the dew;
For never long one path had Gebir trod,
Nor long, unheeding man, one pace preserved.
Not thus Charoba: she despaired the day:
The day was present; true; yet she despaired.
In the too tender and once tortured heart
Doubts gather strength from habit, like disease;
Fears, like the needle verging to the pole,
Tremble and tremble into certainty.
How often, when her maids with merry voice
Called her, and told the sleepless queen 'twas morn,
How often would she feign some fresh delay,
And tell them (though they saw) that she arose.
Next to her chamber, closed by cedar doors

A bath of purest marble, purest wave,
On its fair surface bore its pavement high:
Arabian gold enchased the crystal roof,
With fluttering boys adorned and girls unrobed:
These, when you touch the quiet water, start
From their aerial sunny arch, and pant
Entangled mid each other's flowery wreaths,
And each pursuing is in turn pursued.
Here came at last, as ever wont at morn,
Charoba: long she lingered at the brink,
Often she sighed, and, naked as she was,
Sat down, and leaning on the couch's edge,
On the soft inward pillow of her arm
Rested her burning cheek: she moved her eyes;
She blushed; and blushing plunged into the wave.

Now brazen chariots thunder through each street,
And neighing steeds paw proudly from delay.
While o'er the palace breathes the dulcimer,
Lute, and aspiring harp, and lispng reed;
Loud rush the trumpets bursting through the throng
And urge the high-shouldered vulgar; now are heard
Curses and quarrels and constricted blows,
Threats and defiance and suburban war.
Hark! the reiterated clangour sounds!
Now murmurs, like the sea or like the storm,
Or like the flames on forests, move and mount
From rank to rank, and loud and louder roll,
Till all the people is one vast applause.
Yes, 'tis herself, Charoba--now the strife
To see again a form so often seen!
Feel they some partial pang, some secret void,
Some doubt of feasting those fond eyes again?
Panting imbibe they that refreshing sight
To reproduce in hour of bitterness?
She goes, the king awaits her from the camp:
Him she descried, and trembled ere he reached
Her car, but shuddered paler at his voice.
So the pale silver at the festive board
Grows paler filled afresh and dewed with wine;
So seems the tenderest herbage of the spring
To whiten, bending from a balmy gale.
The beauteous queen alighting he received,
And sighed to loose her from his arms; she hung
A little longer on them through her fears:

Her maidens followed her, and one that watched,
One that had called her in the morn, observed
How virgin passion with unfueled flame
Burns into whiteness, while the blushing cheek
Imagination heats and Shame imbues.

Between both nations drawn in ranks they pass:
The priests, with linen ephods, linen robes,
Attend their steps, some follow, some precede,
Where clothed with purple intertwined with gold
Two lofty thrones commanded land and main.
Behind and near them numerous were the tents
As freckled clouds o'erfloat our vernal skies,
Numerous as wander in warm moonlight nights,
Along Meander's or Cayster's marsh,
Swans pliant-necked and village storks revered.
Throughout each nation moved the hum confused,
Like that from myriad wings o'er Scythian cups
Of frothy milk, concreted soon with blood.
Throughout the fields the savoury smoke ascends,
And boughs and branches shade the hides unbroached.
Some roll the flowery turf into a seat,
And others press the helmet--now resounds
The signal--queen and monarch mount the thrones.
The brazen clarion hoarsens: many leagues
Above them, many to the south, the heron
Rising with hurried croak and throat outstretched,
Ploughs up the silvering surface of her plain.

Tottering with age's zeal and mischief's haste
Now was discovered Dalica; she reached
The throne, she leant against the pedestal,
And now ascending stood before the king.
Prayers for his health and safety she preferred,
And o'er his head and o'er his feet she threw
Myrrh, nard, and cassia, from three golden urns;
His robe of native woof she next removed,
And round his shoulders drew the garb accursed,
And bowed her head and parted: soon the queen
Saw the blood mantle in his manly cheeks,
And feared, and faltering sought her lost replies,
And blessed the silence that she wished were broke.
Alas! unconscious maiden! night shall close,
And love and sovereignty and life dissolve,
And Egypt be one desert drenched in blood.

When thunder overhangs the fountain's head,

Losing its wonted freshness every stream
Grows turbid, grows with sickly warmth suffused:
Thus were the brave Iberians when they saw
The king of nations from his throne descend.
Scarcely, with pace uneven, knees unnerved,
Reached he the waters: in his troubled ear
They sounded murmuring drearily; they rose
Wild, in strange colours, to his parching eyes;
They seemed to rush around him, seemed to lift
From the receding earth his helpless feet.
He fell--Charoba shrieked aloud--she ran--
Frantic with fears and fondness, mazed with woe,
Nothing but Gebir dying she beheld.
The turban that betrayed its golden charge
Within, the veil that down her shoulders hung,
All fallen at her feet! the furthest wave
Creeping with silent progress up the sand,
Glided through all, and raised their hollow folds.
In vain they bore him to the sea, in vain
Rubbed they his temples with the briny warmth:
He struggled from them, strong with agony,
He rose half up, he fell again, he cried
"Charoba! O Charoba!" She embraced
His neck, and raising on her knee one arm,
Sighed when it moved not, when it fell she shrieked,
And clasping loud both hands above her head,
She called on Gebir, called on earth, on heaven.
"Who will believe me? what shall I protest?
How innocent, thus wretched! God of gods,
Strike me--who most offend thee most defy--
Charoba most offends thee--strike me, hurl
From this accursed land, this faithless throne.
O Dalica! see here the royal feast!
See here the gorgeous robe! you little thought
How have the demons dyed that robe with death.
Where are ye, dear fond parents! when ye heard
My feet in childhood pat the palace-floor,
Ye started forth and kissed away surprise:
Will ye now meet me! how, and where, and when?
And must I fill your bosom with my tears,
And, what I never have done, with your own!
Why have the gods thus punished me? what harm
Have ever I done them? have I profaned
Their temples, asked too little, or too much?

Proud if they granted, grieved if they withheld?
O mother! stand between your child and them!
Appease them, soothe them, soften their revenge,
Melt them to pity with maternal tears--
Alas, but if you cannot! they themselves
Will then want pity rather than your child.
O Gebir! best of monarchs, best of men,
What realm hath ever thy firm even hand
Or lost by feebleness or held by force!
Behold thy cares and perils how repaid!
Behold the festive day, the nuptial hour!"

Thus raved Charoba: horror, grief, amaze,
Pervaded all the host; all eyes were fixed;
All stricken motionless and mute: the feast
Was like the feast of Cepheus, when the sword
Of Phineus, white with wonder, shook restrained,
And the hilt rattled in his marble hand.
She heard not, saw not, every sense was gone;
One passion banished all; dominion, praise,
The world itself was nothing. Senseless man!
What would thy fancy figure now from worlds?
There is no world to those that grieve and love.
She hung upon his bosom, pressed his lips,
Breathed, and would feign it his that she resorbed;
She chafed the feathery softness of his veins,
That swelled out black, like tendrils round their vase
After libation: lo! he moves! he groans!
He seems to struggle from the grasp of death.
Charoba shrieked and fell away, her hand
Still clasping his, a sudden blush o'erspread
Her pallid humid cheek, and disappeared.
'Twas not the blush of shame--what shame has woe? -
'Twas not the genuine ray of hope, it flashed
With shuddering glimmer through unscattered clouds,
It flashed from passions rapidly opposed.

Never so eager, when the world was waves,
Stood the less daughter of the ark, and tried
(Innocent this temptation!) to recall
With folded vest and casting arm the dove;
Never so fearful, when amid the vines
Rattled the hail, and when the light of heaven
Closed, since the wreck of Nature, first eclipsed,
As she was eager for his life's return,
As she was fearful how his groans might end.

They ended: cold and languid calm succeeds;
His eyes have lost their lustre, but his voice
Is not unheard, though short: he spake these words:

"And weepest thou, Charoba! shedding tears
More precious than the jewels that surround
The neck of kings entombed! then weep, fair queen,
At once thy pity and my pangs assuage.
Ah! what is grandeur, glory--they are past!
When nothing else, not life itself, remains,
Still the fond mourner may be called our own.
Should I complain of Fortune? how she errs,
Scattering her bounty upon barren ground,
Slow to allay the lingering thirst of toil?
Fortune, 'tis true, may err, may hesitate,
Death follows close nor hesitates nor errs.
I feel the stroke! I die!" He would extend
His dying arm; it fell upon his breast:
Cold sweat and shivering ran o'er every limb,
His eyes grew stiff, he struggled and expired.

Footnote:

{1} "Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

"Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee."

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