

JOSEPH:

A Poem

BY

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HAMBURG, ARKANSAS

CLEVELAND, OHIO
THE BURROWS BROTHERS COMPANY
1905

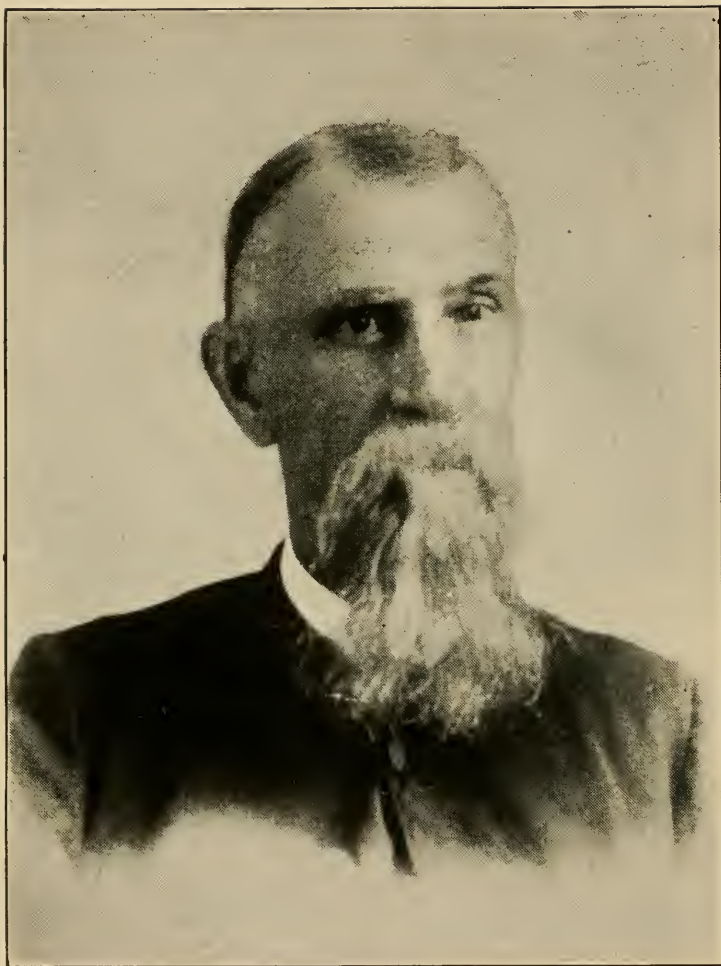
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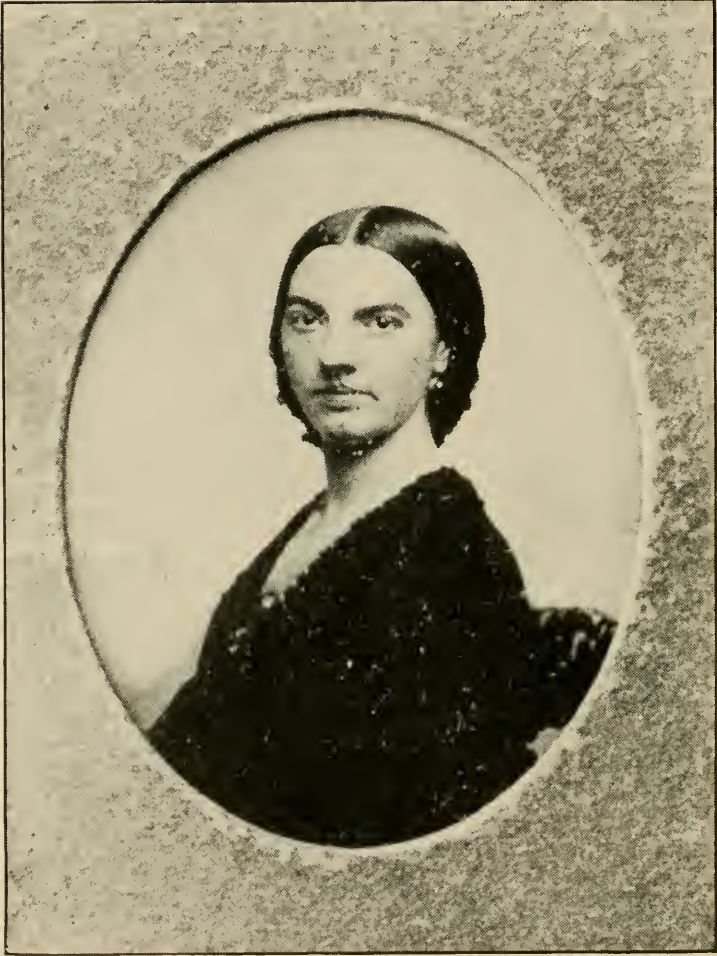
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REV. J. W. MOSELEY, SR.

JOSEPH:

A POEM



MISS M. D. PETER

Some links of fate time never can undo,
What happiness I lost when I lost you.

Dedicated
to
Miss Margaret Dick Peter

FOREWORD

I am greatly indebted to my friend, G. R. Williams, for his kindly criticism and suggestions. Mr. Williams was a student of the Missouri University, and bestowed no little labor on the manuscript of "Joseph."

J. W. MOSELEY, SR.

JOSEPH

CANTO I

THY words and love intent, O sire, I share
To those so dear to you, that love I bear
The stony road from Hebron's peaceful vale
Alone shall see the sorrows that prevail
Within my breast; farewell, ye fields and hills!
And thou blue sky, gay birds, and sparkling rills;
Pomegranates pink, parterres of purple flag,
White flocks and herds that browse the distant crag.

What grief is this, that doth so strange oppress?
Can Elohim forget his lonely child to bless?
Yet when upon the distant blue turn I
The tear-drops come, my bosom heaves a sigh.
Dear native home! Shall I return no more,
No more thy woods and solitudes explore?
Is there some gathering storm too soon to burst,
Some untried sea in chains to be traversed?
Away, away, this heaviness of heart,
God Himself is nigh, fearless shall I depart.
Balmy was the sweet autumnal air,
Cloudless the sky, the day superbly fair,
Swift camels bear him on,—charming the way,
Vast hills their green serrated forms display,
And on the plains embowered amid the vine

The peaceful hamlet sits, and herds recline.
Great caravans bring up the dusty rear,
Bedouin bands appear and disappear.
"What seek ye, boy," said one, "amid these hills?
Dost thou not see the spectre of great ills?"
"My shield and refuge, man, is ever nigh,
No evil harms the children of the sky."
A few more weary miles he silent knew,
Then Shechem burst in beauty on his view.
The verdant mount that crowns the peaceful plains
O'ershades the town, a paradise proclaims.
O city fair, how dear thy walls to me!
Here dwelt my sires and here my brothers be.
Before the shadows cross the lovely vale
Or moon or stars the darkness, too, assail.
"Brave Judah will with welcome warm appear,
Reuben, first-born, my lonesome heart shall cheer.
And weary me to goodly tents repair
Their kid and venison in love to share."
Thus dreamed the lad, to soothe his perturbed mind,
But vain alas! his brothers could not find.
Six days before had struck the common tent,
Far to the north for broader pastures went.
Where Dothan sits concealed, a lovely queen,
'Mid purling brooks and meadows rich and green,
Fit haunt of herds whose beauty all men praise
When pastures rich such ornament conveys.
Leaving the town, once more to seek the plain,
The rocky road once more takes up again.
Dark mists come creeping from the distant sea,
And chilly settle on the widespread lea.
Star after star to cheer the doleful night

Bestud the sky, perhaps to guide aright
 The wandering boy whose heart doth feel anew,
 The grief so potent when he bade adieu
 To native home, this duty to fulfill
 'Mid tears and sobs,—anticipated ill.
 “God of my fathers, be Thou still my guide,
 Thy presence show, whatever ills betide,
 O let Thy Spirit at this tender age
 Instruct and all my powers engage
 To do Thy will, whate'er there be in store
 Of bliss or pain, let me not, Lord, deplore
 My lot; I sail upon Thine unknown sea,
 But every storm I know is sent by Thee.”
 Whilst dreaming thus, behold a friendly light
 Gleams through the darkness of the dismal night.
 His steps he turns and boldly seeks the aid
 Of him ensconced upon this star-lit glade.
 “Ho! ho!” cries Joseph, “be thou friend or foe?
 A lost boy prays thee tell him how to go.”
 “Whom seekest thou? or whither, stranger, art
 thou bent?”
 Said he, who friendly spake from out the tent.
 “My sire, a godly man, doth feed his flock
 In Hebron's vale, and wisely addeth to his stock
 By prudent means; solicitous to know
 The welfare of my brothers urged me go,
 Anxious to learn their heath, how time has sped,
 Who on these pastures new their herds have fed.”
 “Ah,” said the man, “thy father know I well;
 Pray light, my welcome share, and I will tell
 Thee where to find thy brothers. Hear, for they,
 Restless, have skipped these haunts and made their way

To Dothan; come, good friend, at once dismount,
Here's kid and new-made curds to your account;
And glad pass we the time with jest and tale
Till sleep doth o'er thy weariness prevail.
But ere the sun invites the busy day
I'll have thee up and on thy stony way."

CANTO II

BEFORE sweet slumber settled on his eyes
He lifts his soul to Him above the skies
Holding in hand the destinies of men,
And begs him kindly keep safe to the end.
Thanksgiving, too, with love and gratitude
For shelter found in this wild solitude.
Received it as a pledge, whate'er might bring
The world; "My hiding-place shall be his wing."
That peace this earth can neither give nor take
Into his spirit stole, and slumber soft as snowflake
Upon his senses fell, nor moved he ought
Till his good friend him anxious sought,
To feed his camels, and hurriedly prepare
His welcome bread and smoking viands share.
Glad he arose, hailing the new-born day,
And 'ere 'twas light, ready to mount away.
"Be sure," his good friend said, "you keep the road,
That splits the hills where Anakim abode.
Across the sea-pink plains far to the west
Dothan you'll find, with milk and honey blest.
For on the ridge that proves a watershed,

Driving the brooks to Jordan, or instead,
Sending the waddy on to deepen toward the sea
Stretching beyond the ken of you and me,
Your brothers come to view, Mt. Carmel heads
Where bulbuls sing, abundant pasture spreads,
The wild deer browse, or dash at rapid rate
Toward distant wood, with fawn and happy mate."
His camels kneel, he mounts, with thanks his friend
Takes leave of, and kindly doth commend
To God: The day was all his lips could ask.
Broad hills rolled up in front to mask
The splendid meadows stretching as vast field
Of waving grain rich in the yellow yield,
Far beyond, and where brothers ten their tent
Had pitched, and where, alas, their discontent
Broke forth: For as they saw the boy draw near
Conspired to rob him of that life so dear
To him who was the godly sire to all
And for whom each should rather fall
To this accursed earth, pierced with deadly spear
Thrice driven through the heart, than draw a tear
From those dim eyes. The sons of Bilhah cry,
"Ho! men! The dreamer comes, and hateful spy,
Behold the lordly sheaf to whom the moon and sun
Must bow, and we, like bondmen, haste to run
Before his chariot; see his turban shine,
The many-colored coat and look divine.
I can an arrow steel-bearded through him
Send. Say men, shall vengeance now pursue him?
Can cast his carcass in this friendly pit
And swear some evil beast hath done it."
"Nay, sirs! Commit no sin," brave Reuben said,

“Harm not a hair upon his goodly head,
’Twill bring a curse; God sees; remember Cain,
Heaven and earth abhorred the bloody stain.
Such judgment dire, how can ye brothers dare
Such infamy and pain for selves prepare?”
His death the elder brother did deplore,
And fully bent in mind him to restore
To doting sire, and thus paternal grief restrain,
His mother’s and his God’s good will obtain.
And when the fair-browed boy up trusting rode,
Heart full of love, to where the crew abode,
To kindly ask, to tell the news he brought,
To show his happiness in those long sought,
They roughly spake, and him fierce from his beast
Thrust down with cuffs and blows from great to least,
Off rudely stripped his many-colored coat,
Seized the trembling lad by hands and throat
And heartless hurled him down a pitfall near
’Mid peals of laughter, and many a ribald jeer.
“Oh! brothers,” cries the boy, “why thus to treat
The innocent, in love my heart doth beat
For you. Thy father sends to learn thy health,
How fares the herd, and bring to thee the wealth
Of his affection; his words of grace I bear,
In his solicitude thy mother’s share.
Oh, why these cruel blows, me thus to bruise,
His love and mine so grossly to abuse?”

Swift was the fall and rude the awful shock.
Bleeding he lies ’mid thorns and jagged rock,
His soul more hurt, and he the more amazed
That his own blood such savage hands had raised.

“Oh, God,” he cries, “Thee have I sought to serve,
Such signs of hellish hate do not deserve.
Good hast Thou sworn, to those in Thee delight,
To shield from harm, to sow their paths with light.
Could I restrain those visions of the night
Foresee the danger that my dreams invite?
Does listening to Thy word the soul deceive?
Or evils dire make haste when men believe?
I thought the cherubim would watch my way,
Me shield from hurt, the bloody minded slay.
When brothers smite, in anger raise the heel,
The soul burns then if any soul can feel.
Did I not lift last night my grateful heart,
To bless Thee for that kind and loving part
You played; seemed to gather, as hen her brood,
Thy all beneath Thy wing; thus safe sweet slumber
wooded.

But bitter the day, bitter these cuffs and blows,
Bitter the hate these dreadful hours disclose.
I have been taught to look to Thee for aid,
Are pledges vain, and he who trusts betrayed?
My sires on whom Thy light and glory shone
To them didst swear to love and call Thine own.
This promised oath as son I justly claim;
Then, God of truth, dost Thou thy oath disclaim?
O, Infinite, quick from Thy lofty seat,
Some angel send, man’s enmity defeat.
See what portends! a slow expiring breath,
Great further pain and thirst, a hideous death.”

Joseph o’ercome with grief falls in a swoon.
So sorely felt his heart this grievous wound,

For God and brothers both conferred the blow
And struck him blind, and prostrate laid him low.
As he unconscious, bruised and bleeding lay,
An angel came from realms of shining day.
Soft with his wing fanned he the pallid cheek,
Poised thus, 'mid air, his lips began to speak:—
“Arouse, O boy! Jehovah still is nigh,
With listening ear has heard thy rueful cry.
Me hath He sent this grievous wound to heal
His further will and fellowship reveal;
Great strength impart for harder things to bear
To bless and serve, not drive thee to despair.
Your God is Beauty's self, his righteous love
All things transcend on earth in sweep above.
However dark Thy pathway yet may be,
Remember, boy, 'tis God who leadeth thee.
Thy steps shall guide, embrace with loving clasp,
Thy dreams fulfill, much more than what is asked.”
Straightway his bruise and blood were stayed,
The light returned, his woes and griefs allayed.
Ere Michtam took his flight he stooped to kiss
Those ruby lips, a thrill of heavenly bliss
Sent through his soul. “From out this pit thou'lt rise,
Far from thy sire and from thy natal skies
Shalt go; but, boy, 'tis God who leadeth thee,
Thy prop and stay He is, and is to be.”



JOSEPH

CANTO III

SO LOST to shame, so sunk in abject sin
Are men by nature, these wretches could begin
The mid-day meal, with heartless jest the gift
Of God to eat, perhaps mocking to lift
Polluted lips to Him who gave the bread,
Whose plenitude had daily crowned their head
In thanks, and thus a holy God defy,
Still bent on wrong, and wish the boy to die.
But Elohim and pledge are near at hand,
Some merchants send, a Midianitish band,
Whose many camels bearing spice and gum
And myrrh to Egypt go whence then should come
Much gold in exchange for these precious wares
From India brought, or Cush delighted spares.
They beholding the dusty caravan
Judah at last betrays; he's still a man,
Though hardly brother, cries: "Why him destroy,
What profit is there should we slay the boy,
God somehow will this wickedness reveal,
His blood forever can we not conceal.
Come, sell the lad, I know those men will buy,
Him bear far hence beneath another sky,
And we our wishes, all our hopes attain,
His dreams dissolve, no hand with blood be stained."
His brothers hear, with ready will consent,
To pit repair as if on mercy bent,

Call to the boy, and say: "Your God hath sent
 Deliverance." So they his body raise
 E'en in his blood, loudly they vent his praise:—
 "The comeliest youth ere brought to Noph or Tyre,
 Brave as a lion with limbs that never tire,
 What wondrous light illuminates his eyes,
 A wit divine his noble soul supplies,
 Interprets dreams and solves prodigious doubts,
 Your lives reveal by stars that ply their routes
 'Mid heavens. Come, merchants, buy or miss a trade
 To rue for life." Derisive laughter breaks
 From chiefs and lookers on, and thus one spake;
 "His hair unkempt, bleeding, and garments torn,
 A youth he seems most wretched and forlorn,
 And gives the lie to all your puff and praise,
 The common want of honesty betrays.
 If he can read the stars, man's fate foresee,
 Ought horoscoped his own, not captive be."
 The light now breaks upon the anxious mind,
 'Tis not from penitence that they are kind,
 To sell him as a slave reveals their aim.
 New burst of grief seizes his broken frame,
 Secretly doth he Jehovah's aid invoke,
 Tearful and pale to Judah thus he spoke:
 "O Thou, my father's pride, canst thou not save?
 Unmoved Thy heart! Thy own blood made a slave!
 A brother's love may spare me from this fate,
 Thy God exalt, thy father's soul elate.
 Wilt thou consent from fear or sordid gains
 To bind these hands, so free from wrong, in chains?
 My body give to those thy God despise,
 Whose tender mercies shock the tender skies?

Canst thou not see that through perpetual years
The master's cruel lash and bitter tears
You make my lot? O, spare thy father's breast
Nor doom remaining days to be oppressed
With woe unspeakable! and thy sweet mother
Reel with the anguish inflicted on a brother."

The rising tide was far too swift and strong
For Judah all alone to right the wrong.
The angry brothers, yelling, sought to drown
The pleader's voice, so make the place resound
With shrieks and howls; then haggle on the price.
Dan thus: "Thirty shekels, men, thirty is my advice."
Simeon cries: "'Tis that and twenty more."
All shout: "Yes, more, or where he was before
We cast him." Some seize the boy, some their sword,
And threaten loud the Midianitish horde.
"Fifteen we give," the wily traders say.
"Never," they yell, and more their swords display.
A chief who seems to be a leader of the band
Comes to the front and waves his jeweled hand.
With lordly look, and every feature bold,
Thus duly sought such passion to control:
"We buy to sell and thus our profit make;
He is a goodly youth; the risk we take;
Death may come before we end the trip,
Or on some grewsome night may give the slip;
Or when we reach the marts of busy trade,
A caravan of such may Noph invade,
And so the price, to our hurt, come down,
Or not at all a purchaser be found.
Now, to be just and fair that both may live

Shekels twenty current money will I give.
Let my friendship for thy sire prevail
Strike friendly hands and so confirm the sale."
Judah aware the boy, unsold, would die,
Against his conscience speaks: "Let you and I
To what the mighty prince hath said agree.
We take the money and by a firm decree
Transfer the slave, and thus secure the right
Their shekels buy, to your and my delight."
The brothers, glad to see the object of their hate
Disgraced and doomed to such ignoble fate,
Shout their approval: "Let him go, the money weigh,
We surely break his dreams of power to-day."

Bound hand and foot the tearful boy they turn
To Awleph; God makes his swathy soul discern
The value of the prize, and bids him deal
Gently with the lad, nor against him steel
His heart; so an easy steed he seeks,
Assists to mount and kindly, strangely speaks.
Security compels him bind his feet
Beneath the patient horse, where housings meet,
His left hand, too, fast to the saddle binds,
His right is free, this to his work assigns.
Shouts and dust, men hurrying to and fro,
Reveal the fact the caravan must go.
The lordly chief, beard long and purely white,
Presents his sword, and thus adieus invite.
Joseph, the slave, now turns his pallid face
To those whose brazen fronts disclose no trace
Of love or grief. They bid the host God-speed
Nor cease to cheer the riders, till the last steed

Descends the hill and strikes the level plain.
Now all are gone, and painful silence reigns.

Reuben, first born, absent that hour, nor gave
Consent to them, had vainly hoped to save
The hapless youth from unjust hate and wrath,
To-morrow start him safe on homeward path.
But when was seen the empty pit, in grief
He rent his clothes, and sought in tears relief.
“The child is not, ah, whither shall I go?
My heart is smit, the floods of grief o’erflow.”
The brothers jeer, with cowardice him taunt,
Their own sagacity and courage vaunt.
“See,” said they, and lift the crimson coat
Dyed in the blood fresh drawn from sheep or goat,
“This we send to Hebron and you shall swear
An evil beast the dreamer would not spare,
With mad intent his dreaming brought to end.
Such be thy words, or cease to be a friend.”
The first-born mourned and for the lost one yearned
And indignation in his bosom burned,
Yet well he knew his own life to be cheap
Unless this hideous lie he, too, should keep,
Become a partner in the deed to break
The old man’s heart, and cruel aid to take
The light away the great Jehovah gave,
His gray hairs bring in sorrow to the grave.
“O cursed lie, thou comest fresh from hell,
Now seize my soul, my innocence dispel.
Deep in this breast begin thy hateful sway,
I ope the door, you come prepared to stay.
No season in the dark, eventful years,

Nor day, nor night, nor laugh nor bitter tears,
Nor clouds, nor rain, nor increment of kine,
Nor birds, nor cloudless sky, nor corn, nor wine,
Shall rid my soul of this infernal blot
That lives to-day, and ne'er to be forgot.
'Twill stride my neck, a mocking, grinning fiend
To smite me when I pray, or when I lean
Upon the soft paternal breast, to thrill
My sin-sick soul with deep remorse, until
This heart shall seem a very den of woes,
Each day and hour some new-born sin disclose."

CANTO IV

THE noble victim graceful sat his steed,
His master follows, and silent both proceed.
The rocky road winds round the mountain spurs
Whose sides and tops are crowned with pines and firs,
Tall cliffs precipitous reveal brown stony front
Of clouds and storms unscathed have borne the brunt
And deep ravines break from the mountain side
Sweep toward the plains, and seek the ocean's tide.
Jackals and whelps from hiding-places spring,
Great staring lions make the jungle ring.
The brilliant pheasant startled from her nest
Shows with her mate, the beauty of her breast,
Scudding along a sea of waving grass
Drop to the earth, and from man's vision pass.

"Mules to the front!" the bearded chieftain cries,
"We leave these shades and seek for brighter skies."

Descending slow the pebble graded slope
The camels halt; mules forward in a lope,
Inspired by whip they easy keep the lead
And caravan spreads wide the verdant mead.
How grand the sight, how sweet the stiffening breeze,
A lake of flowers, and green the distant trees,
Red ducks sit on the deeps of babbling brook
And rush and flag adorn the watered nook.
A village now with fruit-trees laden down
Shines in its beauty, and food and peace abound.
Bright maidens hastening to the crystal spring
Display their forms, and looks of love they fling.
O landscape fair, how lovely is thy smile,
How fair thy views, and only man is vile.

CANTO V

THE sun is sinking in the steel-blue sea,
The shadows deepen where the mountains be.
A captain of the guard salutes the chief,
Bends to the earth and thus declares in brief:
"Six streams break forth from out yon distant wood,
Water and fire, and every feature good."
"The gods propitious," the wily priests respond,
"Blessings to-day and more in time beyond."
The haughty chief turns to the scout and man,
"Remount thy steed, steady, lead on the van,
And reaching thou those streams so fair and bright,
Prepare the host, for there we spend the night.
Slowly I the heavier body lead,
More cautious, overcome the drowsy mead."

Hoofs clatter on the stones, anxious most to stop,
And louder still their long-lashed whips they pop.
The glowing sun has kissed the evening line,
But ere the twinkling stars begin to shine
They hail the goal where weary limbs may rest,
Hunger no more the trembling frame oppress.
Two women veiled dismount from dapple grays,
Trip to the tent where signal flag displays,
A lordly tent high in the center stands,
White as snow, and all the view commands.
The silence broke, happy all dismount,
Some start their fires, the talkative recount
The day's events, of lions seen the way,
Jackals and wolves alert to seize their prey.
The blue smoke curls and floats the evening air,
Some water bring, and some their beds prepare,
Their housing mend, or stretch upon the green
The busy man and not the housewife seen.

The master deigns salute his sad faced slave,
Unloose his thongs, his hands and feet to lave;
"O boy," said he, "lest wrist and ankle swell
Thy limbs be free, all blemish must dispel,
For maimed in hand or foot, or sad of heart
A sale I find in no Egyptian mart."
And thus the boy, a hapless, helpless slave
To haughty master, noble answer gave:
"My father, master, taught me to be true,
To those in life with whom I have to do,
Let fear take wing, thy trust will ne'er betray.
The God I love, to whom I daily pray,
Commands to his good providence submit,

He'll make the checkered web of life to fit.
Thy slave am I, bought, horselike, with money thine,
The purchase own and make the act divine
Nor e'er to seek thy hand to flee, nor slay
My captors; to do thee good, fear and obey,
Daily my duty. Good master, thus believe.
Implicit thus no cause shall have to grieve."

O sweet repose that comes with task intent,
The packs are off, and drivers fierce relent,
Watered horses browse the luscious grass,
White mules are staked and belled the patient ass,
The lazy camel freed from harnessed hump,
Spurning sweet spelt, attacks the prickly clump,
Hard labors of the day, the long-drawn fast
Body and soul prepare for night's repast.
And glad they hear; the welcome call obey,
To join the feast the various cooks display.
Such joy a Syrian sky delights to see,
It deepens too with wit and repartee.
Fresh cakes from flat, deftly some fingers turn
And smoking bulbs in ashes you discern;
Mutton, venison, hungry men dispatch,
A wine-skin now and then up catch.
The busy silence that the camp pervades
The chieftain breaks with health to Moab maids.
Jukes, the muleteer, and would-be clown,
Hindmost to lay his bones and platter down,
High on the packs takes he a lofty stand
Wildly shaking his rough and yellow hand
Thus aloud declaims: "If there's one not full
I give him leave my sacred beard to pull,

For 'tis my mind and 'tis my chieftain's joy
 The appetite of maid and man to cloy.
 Ho, buskins! Ho! please show your tongue and teeth,
 I'll fill thy paunch or die these packs beneath."
 "Hold, Jukes, hold! prithee spare your jokes,"
 A captain bawls and laughter wild provokes.
 "O Impudence! enough of that we've heard,
 Art thou a magi, who venerates thy beard?
 A song, a song, sweet music on this air
 To cheer our hearts, for pleasant dreams prepare."
 "Nay, nay, not song," a martial bevy cries,
 "A story better suits these starlit skies."
 "Story, a tale!" throughout the campus bounds,
 "A story, tale!" from tent and camp resounds.
 "Then story let it be," declares the muleteer,
 And bright-eyed Joseph, men and chiefs would hear.
 Poor slave boy trembles tho' the women cheer,
 The wound reopes, can scarce repress a tear,
 His lips are sealed, his grief too great for tales.
 "My sun is gone, and storm alone prevails."
 Thus to the crowd: "O, men, you must excuse,
 No gift have I such audience to amuse.
 On the true-born call thou to entertain
 Of lofty flight and well the flight sustain,
 Torn from my home, from all a boy holds dear,
 And doomed to ills, my soul averse to cheer,
 How I can thus a story break to thee
 Divert thy mind, or augment thy glee."
 A captain cries, the men and drivers yell,
 "Zounds, man! thy brain is full of tales to tell.
 Sure spiderlike the silky thread will spin,
 Nor sleep for us till midnight birds begin."

Tho' sorely pressed, consents to no reply,
Timorous turns to catch his master's eye,
Who brings relief, says to expectant throng,
"Plays sweetly he, and sings a pleasant song,
Your hearts will throb, your wild black eyes will dance
You'll dream of home, your listening ears entrance."
"A lyre, a lyre," they cry, a lyre they bring,
A lyre it is, the slave consents to sing.
He touched the strings, such music never fell
On Moab ears, nor came such magic spell,
For all was hushed upon the camp or plain
Intent to listen to such rare refrain.
The full round moon her beams of glory flung
Round man and beast, and thus the captive sung:

SONG

'Tis said the richest roses fade,
The myrtle blossoms but to die,
Bright birds take flight when autumn shade
Obscures the brightness of the sky.

To you and me these charms are made
The symbols of man's fleeting joy,
And broken hearts and hopes decayed
Do vindicate this sad employ.

These sunlit hours have brought a pain,
Constraining chiefs, this heart to weep,
'Twill come unbidden to my brain
And drive away my balmy sleep.

In other years ere mother died,
Happy I pass'd swift-footed days,
On golden wings each moment hied
Nor dreamed I then that love decays.

With father's care and brothers kind
Life seemed to me one gaudy maze;
How great the shock at last to find
An elder brother's love decays.

My sea is rough, yet o'er its tide
I steer to make the other shore;
And still the waves would gallant ride
Did they but love me as before.

I dreamed if e'er on earth was found
True hearts that trust would ne'er betray
'Twas theirs; with arms my neck around
They swore, that love should ne'er decay.

But woe to me! the cup I drink,
Good men behold the stars above,
Nor may you ever have to think
A brother's heart can cease to love.

'Tis vain to weep when now too late
Their hearts I know beat not for me
I, sad, submit; it is my fate
To sigh for what no more can be.

The master heard, alarmed, the loud applause
For discontent ran rough thro' every clause,
Would any dare to liberate the lad
Or mock the title which he thought he had?

Brave boy, O he! Thus mourn his luckless fate,
To stir the wrath of those who spell-bound sate
To hear, forsooth, not Joseph's discontent
But truly just and beautiful lament.
Reverting swift to pledges he had made
Suspicion dire the master bravely stayed,
And seeming all at ease a "Love Song" cries.
"Love Song," "Love Song," from man and chief arise
"That better suits the music of his lyre
'Twill melt our hearts, or fill our breasts with fire."
Joseph, assured, the instrument resumes,
To improvise sweet sounds and words presumes;
Forget his chains, again himself he lives
With voice divine Love's Allegory gives:

O Lady fair, wilt thou not hear
How rich the wares I bring,
Scarlet and silks from proud Cashmere
Purple and gold of Spring.

Bright, too, my pearls thy neck to grace,
Radiant of disk and dye,
Illumine the beauty of thy face,
Fair Lady, list and buy.

The damsel smiles, the wares unfold
Gems and silks you see;
In hand she places current gold
"These treasures fall to me."

The purchase made, would turn away,
Glanced at the handsome face;
"Lady, once more, once more I pray,
Bear I in crimson case

“Than aught you’ve seen a gem more rare
Lustre outshines the sun ;
A deep-sea pearl beyond compare.
Lady, purchase one.

“If worn upon thy snowy breast,
Within thy weary heart
’Twill bring a calm of sweetest rest,
A bliss unknown impart.”

The lady gazed with furtive eye
Upon the merchant prince.
“Where is that gem?” quick her reply,
“Produce and me convince.

“If gold can buy, it shall be mine,
Say, merchant, show thy pearl.
To-day it ceases to be thine,
For such I’d give this world.”

“Too precious, far, for gold to buy
This jewel from above,
’Tis man’s best gift sent from the sky,
Lady, my pearl is love.”

Her eyes are lit with wondrous light,
Her bosom strangely thrilled ;
Her being throbs with new delight,
Her heart with love is filled.

“O this sweet, enchanting spell,
That charms my ravished soul ;
Good merchant prince, the truth you tell,
Love’s better far than gold.”

Men clap their hands, the very horses neigh,
Chiefs, merchants, maids, the weird power obey.
"Ho! ho!" they shout, "the gods must touch his lyre,
His hand imbue, that mortal tongue inspire."
The master starts, eyes flashing with delight,
"A prize! A prize! Great Baal shows to-night."
Leaving his rug, a mock salaam to make,
"A thousand shekels! Nay! I would not take."
"A thousand shekels!" the men exclaim in mirth
"Two thousand, man, the Hebrew boy is worth."

The trumpet sound invites to welcome bed,
Sad captive to his master's tent is led.
"Fetters I will not put upon thy feet.
Go, boy, and in thy dreams thy mother meet."
Soon the camp is hushed and all asleep,
Save one lone heart that lingers yet to weep.
"O God, how sore my earthly lot would be
If in my tears I could not turn to thee.
First-born am I, prophetic birth to rule,
But dark the plan that sends me to this school.
A fettered slave, all friendless and alone,
Is this the road that hastens to a throne?
Great God, how can I penetrate this maze,
Or reconcile Thy justice to Thy ways?
Teach me to see Thy providence is good,
There's light in front, if only understood.
O, may I still in love on Thee rely,
Nor let fair hope within my bosom die."
His soul to rest, the Holy Spirit woos
The weary frame soft sleep at last bedews.

CANTO VI

NAPHTALI lifts the bloody coat to view.
The lordly goat comes not, as wont to do.
Dim eyes sweep o'er the grass and plain and hills
And sorrow deep parental bosom fills.
"Speak, mates! for this day's deed must we account;
Escape the storm that gathers on the mount."
Levi excited and calmer Gad exclaim—
"Send Simeon bold, bearing sad the same
To our great father thus; by chance found we
In deep secluded wood, this blood-stained robe you
see!
Perhaps thy soul by help perhaps divine,
Discerns the hapless owner who if thine?"
"Not so," shouts Dan, "he would discern the lie,
See bloody hands, and you appoint to die.
Far better 'tis to swear, both great and small,
We saw him not, he never came at all."
Judah then spake, tho' not to willing ears—
His kindness to the lad aroused their fears:
"O, men, it seems we go from bad to worse,
This sin too soon will justly bring its curse."
Great Reuben speaks: "With Judah I agree,
Guilty are we all. This all can plainly see,
For he who scoffs at God's most wise design
To him will God some bitter cup assign.
'Twill prove a shield to tell the painful truth



BEBA

And right the wrong, redeem the absent youth.”
A cyclone breaks, the brothers sitting round
Spring to their feet and stamp the angry ground.
Death will they court, but not the deed undo,
Relentless still the victim they pursue.
“Away! away! the wretch to Egypt go,
We’ll brave the storm, the bloody garment show,
Fierce ghouls may troop from wood and murky cave
Dark midnight wake as in their wrath they rave;
To this the sire has brought himself and we
The shock of his own blunder feel and see.
The man who plants, the empty-headed knows,
Reaps at last the seed in kind he sows.
Is the whole world but made less for Rachel’s son?
Whose blood is this that in these fissures run?
No robe for me, your good doth not admire
All fuel waste upon a single fire.”
Thus Levi spake. All heard with close intent,
But two alone seemed on the mischief bent.
The many colored goes, who disagree
Shall too consent, no traitors shall there be.
The sword of Shechem still for vengeance cries,
Emmor weeps and Hamor still *in sorrow* sighs.
“Then list, O men! Hear ye what I propose:
Of this day’s deed none ever dare disclose,
Before this bloody altar come, here kneel,
And swear to God. This crime must all conceal.”
As in a very grievous battle route
Victors beat glad their drums and happy shout,
So Gad perceives that they had won the day,
All opposition quickly melts away.
True, ere rose another bloody sun,

Levi and Gad the doleful march begun.
The long delay had made the old man fear.
"Why bides the boy," and then would start a tear.
"Have robber bands him met upon the road,
Or cruel hands impaled with angry goad?
Perhaps is lost, dying perhaps from thirst,
Or evil beast swift from the jungle burst.
Alas! O God! his brothers in their rage
May do him wrong." Such thoughts his mind engage,
Far down the road as dust and pummice fly
Two horsemen slow invite the father's eye.
Ah, good is God, tidings they come to tell
Perhaps from Shechem and surely all is well.
He shades his eyes. "Levi and Gad I see,
But O, my boy! where can the young man be?"
They reach the tent and at the door dismount.
Good Leah gazes with her soft brown eyes,
Bilhah divines there's evil in disguise.
Yet not a word spake she, a slave dare not,
Master and sons elucidate the plot.
Gad lifts a bundle carelessly he bore,
Unrolls the pack, displays the rents and gore.
"This we by chance have found upon the fields
Perhaps to thee some mystery reveals."
Reuben and Dan were dumb nor dared surmise
Nor trust the witness of their misty eyes.
" 'Twas sent to thee imbued with greater light
Assured, in judging, thou wouldst judge aright."
A single glance declares the awful truth.
"My son's, my son's! some beast hath slain the youth.
Unfold the bloody robe, my sons!" he cried,
"O would to God for thee had father died."

Cruel! Cruel! to send thee from thy home,
Sweet thy consent the wilderness to roam.
O labor 'twas of friendship and of love.
The lions roared, the eagles seized the dove,
Dear loved one, I'll no more thy face behold,
Nor to my heart thy graceful form infold,
The welcome of thine eye no more possess,
Nor words of love no more my ear to bless.
O Rachel, dear, thy death was all too soon,
Thy presence now would prove a lover's boon.
Canst thou, fair one, see from thy lofty seat
The clouds that mock, the storms that heartless beat?
Then fly, O fly! swift cleave the upper air,
Assuage my grief and save me from despair."
Jehovah pity! Help divine prepare,
The old man breaks, 'tis more than man can bear,
Sackcloth upon his loins, his garments rent,
Many days in bitter anguish spent,
Base sons and comely daughters rose
Comfort to bring to pillow's sweet repose.

Fair Leah came, good Jacob's own gazelle,
To sing the songs that once he loved so well,
Girl-like sought by many a winsome art,
His spirit calm, to heal the broken heart.
But O, alas, her goodness proved in vain,
He kindly smiled—began to weep again.

Sweet was the love the thoughtful Dinah shows,
Her filial soul deep felt her father's woes,
And as he leaned upon her loving breast
She kissed the brow that once fair Rachel pressed.

Simon draws near, the old lie on his lip,
And glib his wily words of comfort slip:
"Sire, recall, the race is born to woe,
As from the cradle to the grave we go.
Dispensed no doubt as taught us all along
To make the smitten be both brave and strong.
Hence most becoming to thy birth and age
Such lesson learn and let thy grief assuage."
Then green-eyed Gad, the son of Leah's maid,
With lordly look, his power to help assayed.
"The sweetest flowers that bloom upon the plain
Die first, 'tis said, the baser ones remain.
Beauty itself can never, never die,
May fly away but harbors in the sky.
'Tis easy proved renascent spring returns
These selfsame flowers the watchful eye discerns.
Why let such tears thy well-spent life bedim,
Can not eleven supply the place of him?
Thy flocks and herds, thy slaves and buxom wives
Write on the heavens the well of bliss survives."

The courtly Reuben next, with wonted grace,
Falls on paternal neck with warm embrace,
Touched sore his soul to see these signs of woe
But hid the deed, and did the truth forego.

"O father dear, the world is full of light,
Each cloud two sides and one is always bright,
Jehovah reigns on earth, in upper air;
Delights to hear, delights to answer prayer;
No wound nor blow that smites the human breast,
His love or grace or potency arrest.

Put by this frown, let God Himself persuade,
Return to Him the Infinite for aid.
As rivers deep from ceaseless fountains flow,
As the illimitable no bounds nor measures know,
As day god floods his beams of ceaseless light
So God is love, lives, rules, defends the right.
Hast thou not taught me oft to patient bear
The ills His Providence may make my share?
To His designs submissive bend the knee,
Yea, kiss the rod though it be smiting thee."

"Reuben, the music of thy voice as silver bell,
Thy wit divine in argument excel,
First-born elate from substituted bride,
A mother's glory and once a father's pride,
Motive perchance, fair words, most surely good
But 'tis not strange thy wisdom be withstood.
Beset by sin, by lust and passion led,
Didst make approach and didst defile my bed.
Bilhah, my wife, left thou a moral wreck,
Thyself unfit to fall upon my neck.
The eagle never to his mother sings,
Tho' in her love she bears him on her wings."
Asher and Dan, Judah, the lion's whelp,
In turn present the shams of proffered help,
For 'twas the lie that rankled in their breast,
Destroyed their power to make the old man blest;
Sackcloth and ashes still in grief he wore,
Great Joseph's loss he lives but to deplore.

CANTO VII

JAPHO they seek, swift time brooks no delay,
All is bustle and haste at break of day.
Tents tumble to the ground, drivers prepare the packs
And up they pile on patient donkey backs.
Six two-humped camels kneel to take their load,
Mules wheel to line and horses strike the road.
Brave skirmishers the chiefs conclude throw out
For robbers bands infest this mountain route.
With joy they'd pounce upon so rich a prize,
Courage and steel prevent the rude surprise.
Fair Joseph prances by his master's side,
In friendly chat engages as they ride.
The flowing mane and limbs betray the breed,
And graceful sat the rider on his steed.
The head, we've said, of muleteers was Jukes,
Who swore his noble father was a duke,
The best and noblest of an ancient line,
Altho' his mother was a concubine.
He wore a kilt that struck above his knees,
A linen shirt, a sort of loose chemise,
Round this a belt of camel's hair and wool
To keep the front from bulging out too full.
His buskins were of antelope made tight,
Adorned with many a silver trinket bright.
Think not him fool, tho' man of merry mood,
Brave as a lion, but yet a desert dude.

For in a robber fray or bloody fight,
His sword ripped out always to their delight.
His antics and his Arab jest and jokes
The men amuse and many a laugh provokes,
Oft spake of Joseph and his merry song,
And swears at Gaza did to him belong
A girl his sweetheart and she with harp and lute
Should greet the caravan with grand salute.
"Bravo," cried all, "at Gaza she shall sing,
Around us all her sweet enchantment fling."
Ranges of lofty wooded hills display
Unfolding beauty; on the ever-changing way
Far as the happy eyes in admiration reach
Sweet shaded valleys, orchards of crimson peach,
Or apricot and figs or golden plum
Where birdlings twitter, bees and insect hum.
The heights of Carmel beautiful grow dim,
Sloping foothills portray the graceful rim
Of fruitful Sharon, fit haunt of herds
And flocks, or kine, symbols of milks and curds.
Soft breezes kiss the yellow daffodil,
Sunbeams play mid leaves of fragrant jonquil,
Convolvulus his splendid trumpet blows,
Red pimpernels their beauties too disclose.

The road now doubles an elevated spur,
Winds through the oaks or shows the mountain fir,
On plain once more the yellow crags in sight
Where Japho sits upon her dizzy height,
Men excited grow—the widening views expand,
The boundless sea, the boundless stretch of sand.
Some desert boys had never heard before

The thundering waves that dash upon the shore,
Nor seen huge white-winged ships, nor lofty mast,
High banks of oars, nor flukes to fight the blast,
When tempest mad drives on the stubborn rock
And all go down in one tremendous shock—
Fair maidens trip in silk and gold along
High terraced streets, bright bales of goods belong
To merchants, dwellers on the distant sea,
Rich Jordan traders in snowy wool there be,
They buy or sell, retail or list to news,
Decry the tax, perhaps the king abuse.

Jukes gallops up to say: "The camp is found,
Clear crystal streams burst up and cool the ground,
Soft beds of green Dame Nature kindly spreads,
Grapes and olives shall overhang your heads."

Gay women flock like doves not men to see
Perchance, but silks and wool, balms and spicery.
Or show their pretty selves, red shoes, pink vests,
Dim trousers full and robes not made round breasts
To hide, much more than graceful outline show,
Matching bright eyes, and rosy cheeks that glow.
Jukes in his element, brimful of life,
Sparks a famous belle, swears he wants a wife.
"O fateful fortune, too lucky is thy turn,
Speak thy dower, maid, if that is thy concern,
For I am rich and long, sweet girl, to pay
A lordly sum. Haste! cannot brook delay."
A chief this love affair too rudely nips,
Calls out: "O Jukes, where is that girl who trips
Lightly the streets of Gaza, for us to sing

A song so sweet as make the welkin ring?
A Moabite thou art, an arrant cheat,
Thy dusky face reveals Moab's deceit."
Peals of laughter break from many a mouth,
For well they know this huntsman from the South.
So to their shouts he bows, and to their jeers,
Him most amused, tittering disappears.

Joseph escapes to climb the city's height,
The sea beholds and gazes with delight.
"Bright, glorious expanse! surely God is here,
His power, wisdom, goodness, grace appear.
Did this vast blue thy handiwork prepare,
Its birds and fish, kind objects of thy care?
The rock-ribbed shore on which these breakers roll,
Fierce winds and waves, grim serfs of thy control,
O God, creative deeds belong to Thee,
Wilt thou not hear? Come shelter helpless me.
Thou ridest on the vasty deep in rage,
Then let thy love and grace my soul engage.
Each minnow bright, or monster of the deep,
Omnipotence doth not disdain to keep.
Fearless, happy, they sport the fickle wave,
Exult in life, nor help nor pardon crave.
Amid translucent fields make love and breed,
Fierce battles fight, or dart with rapid speed
Hither and there o'er floors of wondrous dye,
Or bask in beauty like the sunset sky.
Jehovah, see the anguish of my heart,
Forbid these shades, command the clouds depart.
Am I not better than the fish that swims,
Whose laughing eye no melancholy dims,

Or those blue winged fowl riding crested wave,
Knowing no ill; deep grief to none save
Him in image Thine, mother's first born,
Yet hunted, outcast, wretched and forlorn."

Past midnight still, Jukes blows his brassy horn,
Drivers spring up, surprised so soon 'tis morn;
Old camels groan, wild snorts the restive mule,
The rips brand Jukes unmitigated fool.
"Behold the sky, Orion scarce can see
Six sleeping hours before the daylight be."
The women giggle, all broken rest deplore.
What's that to Jukes, he only laughs the more.
Ere chieftains cease to growl or men to swear,
Spreads he his couch and says his little prayer,
To Beltus and the dogstar bids good night
Then shuts his eye and cares are lost to sight.
Joseph oppressed in vain seeks balmy sleep,
The silent blue invites his heart to weep.
Sweet Pleiades hang o'er his natal hills,
Bright Arcturus his nightly round fulfills.
From Hebron's happy vale, further daily goes
'Mid strangers cold, exasperated woes,
And as he dreams a furtive figure steals
In the moonlight, and reveals
A veiled beauty, softly to his side repairs,
For on her ruby lips a message bears:
"O boy! think not for evil I'm so bold,
I, to thy chief for money too, am sold.
My father's stern decree compels us part
All heedless of the anguish of my heart.
By visions of the night do I foresee

Thy future glory, tho' a slave you be.
For 'tis His plan through tears and many sighs
To proud pre-eminence to have thee rise.
To rule the templed land with iron rod,
A mortal man to stand instead of God.
Our paths shall cross again, O mystic boy!
I beg thee then thy noble will employ;
Me bring relief, sweet liberty restore,
That happiness and home be mine once more.
Have thou no fears, tho' weary you may plod
Thy path, thy best and watchful friend is God.
He'll guide and guard thee in thy devious ways,
With honor clothe, fill heart and tongue with praise."

The furtive elf removes her glossy veil;
Wondrous beauty doth his heart and eyes assail,
And lo! perceives a princess of the line
Melchizedek, a priestess, too, divine.
Ere he can speak she vanishes from sight,
And mists conceal this vision of the night.

The caravan sweeps through the brazen gate,
Merchants rejoice and Jukes is all elate:
"Farewell, thou queen, thy olive yards and fields,
Thy bright-eyed girls, the view thy wealth reveals."
The shambling camel takes the dusty road,
Gay horses follow, the mule forgets his load.
Stretches of sand crimson as Japho dyes
Estops the sea, pleases the wondering eyes,
Tall cliffs present their everlasting heads,
From clefted sides the dashing water sheds,
And snow-white vapors glitter in the light,

Filling the soul with wonder and delight.
Ah, presto, change! bright Gaza comes in view,
And that means joy for Jukes and spearmen too.
"O stronghold on the sea's great sandy way,
Where Egypt buys what Orient's display,
A hundred feet above thy grassy plains
Thy towers stand, and sweep thy proud domains.
Gay city filled with women and delights,
What men of war shall storm thy giddy heights?
Far down into the womb of bloody time
The vision sees the wrecks that must be thine."

At last the trumpet blows, prepare to halt,
The men respond, from tired saddles vault,
Some their food provide, and some for wonted night,
Some seek old friends and others view the sights.
Jukes finds his girl, to tell the news they bring
The pledges made, to have her dance and sing.

"O Imnah dear, thou must my fears dispel—
Surpass thy lovely self, my own gazelle;
Of thee have boasted to the caravan;
In my extolment this glib tongue outran
Itself; on golden wings you rise and soar,
The boy eclipse and I shall ask no more."

Blue was the sky and bright the stars above,
Gaza thy God hath writ in gold His love.
The deep blue sea, thy plains of wondrous hue,
Thy hills, doth from concealment into view
Bring Him. But from the Infinite you turn
To stocks and stones—in hateful passions burn,

In thy unrighteousness the truth hold^d down,
Vile creature with Creator great confound.
For things invisible of Him are seen
Clearly from the mighty visible e'en
His ever-during power painted in the skies
Which pigmy man perceives but to despise.
Jukes mounts the packs and from an acme cries:
"Attention, men, all faces, heads, and eyes,
Nothing in the campus must offend,
A royal treat in store for lords and men.
Twelve maids the fairest Gaza great may sport,
With sweethearts come, modest in soul, to^r court
Your praise; as in the dance they graceful wind
Of oath am quit, and so relieve my mind.
O here's a feast, in Gaza seldom seen.
This bliss, ye braves shall ne'er forget I ween."
The men all ears labors forsake and games.
Fair maids in view, each wonder-struck, exclaims:
"Gaza indeed presents to-night her best,
And he who takes and she who gives is blest."
The Syrian sweetheart leads in song and dance,
All eyes transfixed behold as if entranced,
Voluptuous form and face of mold divine
Her wealth of gold and brilliant gems outshine.
Anklets adorn the tinkling feet of grace,
The swelling calf in beauty's outline trace.
Bright rubies shine upon the silken sash,
And from their breast the light of jewels flash,
What tell-tale eyes and lips so rosy red
Rich turbans press each dainty little head.
Yet 'tis the weird motion of the weird dance
That charms them most and most their joys enhance,

Chieftains enthused order a skin of wine,
The damsels treat, nor do the men decline.
Jukes shapes all things for what all things were made,
Sweet Imnah's song this heart and thoughts pervade.
And when he sees the happy time arrives
The jeweled harp into her hands contrives,
Seizes the lute and whispers to each maid,
"The chorus join and thus my Imnah aid.
I will add sweetness to the mellow sound
And make these merchants stamp the yellow ground."
Softly and sweet enchanting music fell,
A maiden's grief the Punic maidens tell.

MARDUKE

All day long, Marduke, I've watched
The road far down the plain,
To see thy plume and jet-black steed;
Alas! have watched in vain.

You promised when the cuckoos mate,
That I should be your bride;
The birds have come and gone.—I wait
No lover by my side.

Marduke, I'm left alone to pine,
To hear the wild winds shriek;
O would some power thy heart incline,
Thy lovelorn one to seek.

You ne'er have felt the pang, my brave,
Of unrequited love;
Or else thy soul would seek to save
Thy sorely wounded dove.

You say Haleetah's father's rich,
With flocks and herds untold;
But, Marduke, list, a priestess speaks,
Canst not buy love with gold.

They tell me, too, she's wondrous fair
In feature, form and face;
But love like mine will make repair
For wealth and every grace.

'Tis true I have no flock nor herd,
Jewels nor diadem;
But, O, affection deep conferred
Is better far than them.

Think not because my tears will start
The glory shall be thine;
You've broken one poor woman's heart;
Marduke, that heart is mine.

You'll find at last—perhaps too late
Thy Zillah speaks the truth;
And will avenge some cruel fate,
The sweetheart of thy youth.

Come back! dry up these tears, my brave:
My heart still pants for thee;
Come back, and I will be thy slave—
The slave of love to thee.

My cheeks are like two roses red,
But both and more are thine;
The kisses of my lips, Marduke,
Are sweeter far than wine.

Thy presence dissipates my gloom—
How bright the sky would be;
My fruits are ripe; my roses bloom;
I gather all for thee.

Mandrakes with fragrance fill the air;
Sweet spring inspires the dove;
O! hear, Marduke, a maiden's prayer,
This is the time for love.

Come back, my prince, if love lives yet,
My life was made for thee;
And I'll forgive and I'll forget
The wrong you've done to me.

CANTO VIII

“TEN days, then Noph, the mistress of the Nile,
Whose splendors dazzle, and whose sins beguile;
Proud home of kings, satraps and potentates;
Of temples vast, broad streets and lofty gates;
Arched roofs o'erspread her tassellated halls,
And painted marble gleams on painted walls.
The East brings trade and trade from upper Nile.
From Araby the blest, and whence the surges pile,
All build her wealth, the pyramid and tomb,
Extend her borders and make the desert bloom.
And here, O boy, it is that we must part,
Tho' strange impressed my once impassive heart.
I have a friend in Noph, mighty before the king,
Rich and great, thee to him will surely bring.

If so the gods decree, man moves to buy
Thy fortune's made, let Clotho cast the die."
Thus Joseph's master spake, crossing the line
That Egypt from the desert doth define.
Memphis, magnificent, thy mansions blaze
With gems and gold; here Art her skill displays;
Thine armies great with pomp and pride of war
Spread peaceful plains, the peace of states do mar,
Red carnage make upon the battle-field,
The wounded groan, the dead sleep on their shield.
Thy huts beside the lofty fretted domes
Reveal thy poor, the wretchedness of homes,
Grim scanty want thy wealth will not appease,
Breeds discontent, or direful breeds disease.
To slay the dwellers in their splendid pride,
Who mock at God, his workmanship deride.

Showy bazaars engross the busy street
Where haughty lords and humble vassals meet,
The slave market sits a vast uncovered court,
Porticos adorn and pillars strong support.
Within the veil, within the chambers deep,
The helpless victims, masters safely keep.
Some come to see, the trader comes to buy
Salesmen all smiles with ready wish comply.
The men arrayed appear in best estate,
Some black, some brown, some cold and some sedate,
Maidens and men are wisely kept aloof,
Tho' both enclosed 'neath same artistic roof.
Fair maids the trade forbids to wear the veil,
Beauty and health insure more ready sale.
A group of girls, bright girls from upper Nile,

A merry circle make, and erst awhile
Dark lovely eyes and lovely bosoms turn
Toward six gay captains, whose interest they discern.
Eyes almond shaped and noses aquiline,
Thin rosy lips and cheeks to rose incline,
Rich suits of hair and raven softly fell
In tresses long where bulbs of beauty swell.
Pensive, not pale, yet melancholy seem,
The daylight comes to break their happy dream.

Charming was the day, sweet buds upon the trees,
The odors of the lotus rich perfume the breeze.
The sky, and air, and birds to promenade
Invite, gay women, slaves, marshal bands parade
The street, and Mrs. Potiphar and Awleph's friend
Toward the slave market their footsteps bend.
For anxious the couple the Hebrew boy to see
And buy, if not too late, such great celebrity.
They stood among the crowd, good Awleph's praises
heard,
And both in mind to buy concurred;
He, because the boy was prudent, wise,
She, from the beauty of his face and eyes.
And when he touched his harp the fatal dart
Swift sped, and reached, tho' husband nigh, her heart.
"Yes, buy," without a blush exclaimed she;
Nor dreamed nor cared what yet the end would be.
"No," answers Awleph, "the boy forsooth is thine.
Friendship, not silver, sire, is my design.
The gift with joy let me present to-day
Why friend from friend interrogate his pay."
The chief and prince of Egypt lowly bows

Such courtesy that age polite allows.

“But if thou make the boy a gift, pray hear
I’ll give thee money whate’er his worth appear.

Take it, man, and let the gift be mine.

Propound the price.”

“O prince of Egypt, harken thou to me,

Two thousand shekels what’s that twixt me and thee

Take thou the slave, he’ll prove to thee a prize,

Be head to thee, and heart and hand and eyes.”

So to his wife he trader-like, “’Tis high,

Too high.” With queenly grace quoth she, “Then I,

My lord, from out the dower father gave,

Will supplement thy will and buy the slave.”

Good Awleph smiles and Potiphar smiles too

And Joseph felt his mistress now he knew.

Down the great street in beauty’s blaze they trod,

Awleph concerned with gold, Joseph with God.

’Twas a palace broad built with matchless art,

Pleasures to bring and try perhaps one’s heart.

Perhaps ’twas meaningly and time alone could tell

Where dwelt the good or where the evil dwelled.

Gay gardens grace the lofty palace dome,

And decorated doors shut in the lovely home.

Circles and walks cross and intercross the ground

Variegated pinks, plots and spaces crowned.

Palms and storax lift their fragrant heads,

The tulip blooms, the rose its perfume sheds.

White-necked swans adorn an artificial lake,

Buff snipes and ducks—and e’en the wily snake

Scuds the crystal wave, but quick to disappear.

Finds as before, he is not welcome here.

Joseph beholds these splendors in a maze,
Turns to tent life and to his boyhood days.

The garments of the slave are laid aside,
Suits not fair Beba's eye, nor master's pride.
Finest linen Memphis merchants sell,
Adorns the boy; in graceful fashion fell
A robe of softest wool in filigree,
For handsome men and handsome robes agree.
So Beba thought—explains thus to her lord,
And happy he, calls it the just reward
Of lovely smiles and constant courtesy,
"Which day by day she kindly shows to me."

Happy Beba now, when dress and jewels shine,
A sweetheart in disguise to walk or ride or dine,
And off to send him with right to claim
Herself and all, this second best the dame
Allows to kindle and support a flame
In spite of her the other love consumes,
And both to woe if not to death foredooms.
The ample halls with many servants filled
Each to go, or come, or do as mistress willed.
Beba to Joseph gave a place near her
To swing her fan, to watch, perhaps confer
Polite assistance rendered with much grace
And showed the beauty of his Hebrew face.
The boy was not too greatly moved by what
His lovely mistress did, and so forgot
To do his duty or to do it well,
For God by His good spirit did compel
Him day by day for strength to seek His face
Amid the risks and joys of the place.

Prosperity o'ertook the house and made
The master see great wisdom did pervade
His every act, and that some hand divine
His head and heart to proper things incline.
The good man of the house was daily out,
Sometimes at court, sometimes the Nile about,
Or the guardhouse, where his soldiers sleep,
Or the big red block where anxious women weep
To see the heads of those that once were dear
Pale in death, eyes glazed, voice hushed and ne'er
Again to cheer their home with look or smile
Or dandle on the knee the prattling child.

The sun-lit sky witnessed his royal barge
Floating 'mid lotus, Beba his entourage,
And bright Egyptian girls watching in glee,
The crocodile sleeping 'mid flags, or see
The shoe-bill heron and pelican seize their prey—
Startled slow lift their wings and fly away,
On the broad and cultivated spread
Coasting to the water's brink, peasants led
A flock of goats and kine the new-sown grain
To press into the soil, and thus maintain
Her reputation, even now not lost,
Abundance such the world cannot exhaust.

As they drink in the beauty of the scene
Beneath the silken canopy Ulvene,
A princess of the house, a song proposed—
And music sweet another joy disclosed.
Beba delighted soft to Joseph turns,
By furtive glance, his mistress' wish discerns,
Takes up his harp and so prepares to sing

Beba to please and bliss to all to bring.
Sweet are the sounds that o'er the waters glide
By sunlight, or when evening stars betide,
Ravishing the soul, cares and griefs restrain,
Bringing a bliss that ne'er comes back again.
Because fair Joseph was esteemed so wise
Was granted privilege to improvise.
Beba never seemed so beautiful, so gay,
Always at home, but doubly so to-day.
The barge from stem to stern, to mainsky sail
Glittered in white and perfumes sweet assail.
Bright-eyed girls, alive in rich array
Their graceful forms and ruby lips display.
Upon the lofty deck he pressed the strings,
All hear entranced and thus the captive sings:

No one to kiss me to-morrow,
No one to meet on the way,
No one to banish my sorrow,
Darling, you leave me to-day.

By the brook I'll wander alone,
Dream o'er my fond words to thee,
Ah! list to the doves as they moan,
Their song will be sweeter to me.

Forlorn I'll be on the morrow,
My love far sailing the sea;
Wilt thou not drop in my sorrow,
A tear when thinking of me?

Though brighter and blue be the skies,
Purer the lilies that bloom;
Yet the clouds that bear thee my sighs
Witness the depth of my gloom.

Thy bosom, dear, pities I know
This grief you see in my face;
Then kiss me and swear when you go,
My hope time shall not efface.

The master of the horse, Princess Amnu,
Bevies of girls applaud with glove and shoe,
Indeed the princess from her bosom took,
A flower most rare deigning pleased to look
Graciously confers the lovely bagatelle
Upon the stranger. Princely Beba fell
Into a pensive mood, and felt as ne'er before,
Feared indeed a deeper something, something more
Than admiration for the face and skill
Of him her money bought, her slave, and still
No more; and yet from that eventful day
A new-born power had come her heart to sway,
An intense exquisite and inner life
Whose roots deep struck the being of the wife.
When husband and royal guests return
Great lamps in hall and painted parlors burn.
She the solitude of the gay garden seeks,
Hid among pomegranates, olives, and the peaks
Of oleanders, pink, soliloquizes:
"I dare not trust my ears, that song hath brought
Too clearly, sadly, what before I've thought.
For well knows he to-morrow, or three days at most,
I leave with Potiphar for the Gaza coast,
With Phicol, her chief captain, some affair
Of state and war to weigh whose issue share.
Oh, boy, can it be true my absence makes sad
Thy loving heart? Bide thy time and I'll make glad

Swift-footed hours on my return, and press
You may thy rosy lips if in distress
To my white hand. This be but the prelude
Of what may come in my more merry mood,
Iris, thy form we in the fane adore
This passion, this secret bliss, ne'er felt before—
It must be love, and may no future pang disclose
The thorn amid such dangerous sweetness grows.
Sweetheart, the clouds that bear me thy sighs
Shall gladden my heart and brighten my skies,
And though I may sail far over the sea
At midnight and dawn will be thinking of thee.

CANTO IX

JOSEPH loved his mistress, but only as a slave,
Not a fibre of his heart to other love he gave.
Her handsome face and most voluptuous form
Had in its loveliness for him no charm.
To do his master's will, meekly to do hers
Sole object of his life. This done prefers
His own seclusion, in secret to commune
With God that he by grace become immune
To things corrupt warring against the soul,
Lusts uncurbed, idolatries untold.
O, Egypt, great as thou hast been in wars,
Wealth, pyramidal art, and battle scars,
Or laws, or diplomatic craft of state,
Science, commerce, territory great,
Yet sins infernal have writ a deeper shame
Upon thy brow than brands the name

Of race, or tongue, inscribed upon the page
Of time, whose wrecks and bloody deeds attain our age.

Potiphar, the prince and captain of his master's guard,
Perceived in Joseph no duty to be hard;
Strangely wise was he to plan and wiser to dispose.
God the great was with him, his discretion did disclose.
So wholly was the business of the palace in his hands,
The burden of the Captain was to issue his commands.
Scarce knew he what he had, but the food there was to
eat,

In his heart for once he felt a happiness complete.
Ere he and Beba took their voyage o'er the sea
He determined Joseph should his master's steward be,
So designates a day, and to make the matter great,
With music and with dancing the honor celebrate.
Winsome, courtly ladies, and magnates are invited,
Gardens made to glow and the halls superbly lighted.
Flowers deck the tables, in colors rich and rare,
The odors of the lotus and vineyards fill the air,
Proud officers in scarlet, the wealth of Memphis show,
Maids and matrons gleaming trip gaily to and fro.
When the feasting and the dancing had reached a
happy end,

Potiphar announces that the nobles would attend
With Beba and the ladies to the crowning of the boy,
For he wished to make him ruler of all in his employ.
The painted halls were beaming with softest rosy flame
Whilst the cushions and the carpets the happy guests
became.

Seated on a throne was the general of the day,
Selected by the captain this honor to convey.

The blushing boy is ordered in his presence take his
stand,

And receive the golden badges from the noble prince's
hand.

The chain is on his neck, fair fingers wear the seal,
And the honor both the mistress and the minion made
to feel.

Great Potiphar arises, his gladness to confess:

"Friends and ladies of the court, to you my heart ad-
dress,

I thank you for your presence and the honor you have
brought

To celebrate the crowning of the Hebrew I have bought.

Have traded much in women, in horses and in men,

In luckiness of venture this all others far transcend.

He is comely in his person, moves to and fro with grace,

Gentle, thoughtful, truthful, and never out of place.

Jehovah must be with him to prosper all his plans,

For the wisdom that he showeth is something more than
man's.

Before I made the purchase, I was daily going down

The palace in disorder, and my Beba wore a frown.

Now sunshine's in the garden, and sunshine in my soul,

And I trace it to the angel the Hebrew brothers sold."

Grandeess and the nobility extol the captain's speech,

The music and the dancing and the acme that they
reach.

The women are delighted and Beba full of smiles

For her husband and for Joseph and the beauty in the
aisles.

When they attain the wine room with its odors and its
light,

To magnify the pleasures of the fast-receding night,
A princess in her jewels to Béba dear proposes
A song be sung by Joseph before the banquet closes.
Béba is delighted, for he never seemed so grand,
So lovely in his person, so worthy to command.
She panted for the music, panted to be stirred
By the sweetness of a rapture the others never heard.
Her viol own she orders, its rubies and its gold,
For the singer's fingers, and for something never told.
The magnates felt the spell, the courtly ladies mute,
For melting was the music and the magic of his lute.

SONG

These friends draw near since you depart,
Obedient to the King's behest,
To drop a tear, and from the heart
The sympathies of love express.

Fair mistress, there shall be no sigh
So sad and true forsooth as mine,
No pearl drop that may dim the eye,
Of sorrow be more certain sign.

When all alone upon the sea
Soft breezes fan thy pensive face,
I beg thee then to think of me,
And on the waves mine image trace.

Or when ashore you seek the shell
In color painted by the sea,
If thy fond heart but listen well,
'Twill hear a lovely song to thee.

For I've a power the sea god gave,
And love awakes the magic spell,
Far down beneath the starlit wave
To make my home mid conch and shell.

And when along the sea-beat shore,
My mistress all alone may stroll,
A mystic music I can pour
From out the shell into her soul.

Come thou at dawn or dewy eve,
To bathe, perhaps to think of me,
Then from my tinted shell I'll weave
The sweetest of my songs for thee.

Potiphar, tho' engaged with a runner from the king,
Caught now and then a fragment that made his mettle
ring.

It ruffled up his spirit and he turned to Beba's eyes,
To find a confirmation of his wonder and surprise.
She was gazing in a rapture on the author of the song,
Was lost to all around her as their plaudits they pro-
long.

There was something in her manner, something in her
face,

That made a revelation, and found a hiding place
In a bosom steady, true as the needle to the pole,
For to Beba he had given every fibre of his soul.
From nature and from choice he hesitates to think
Amid this seeming grandeur he's standing on the brink
Of ruin to his happiness, banishment from home,
Fugitive and vagabond in wretchedness to roam.

When the guests were all departed to his darling Beba
turns,
For still she was his darling for whom his bosom yearns,
And he kissed her as was wonted upon her rosy lips,
She smiling and cajoling to her own seclusion trips,
He goeth to his chamber to slumber if he can,
Haunted by the vision, "She loves another man."

CANTO X

JOSEPH now the ruler of this household very great,
The work of reformation o'er his master's vast
estate
With potency begins; first the slaves are interviewed,
Trusty ones commended, the obstinate subdued.
The workers in the harvest and the tenders of the vine,
The watchers of the fruit and the makers of the wine,
With those that press the oil from the olive and the
palm,
The beaters of the barley and the bearers of the balm,
The shepherds of the sheep and the packers of the wool,
The milkers of the herd and the keeper of the bull,
He summons to his presence and quickly understands
How their business is accomplished and whether the
commands
Of his master are obeyed and his wisdom carried out,
Their labors made to prosper in all they are about.
He orders then the gardener to exhibit his designs,
The avenues and plottings and the contours of his lines,
The gaily borders beautifies and the splendor of the
squares,

The wide expanded circles and the patterns in parterres,
Grow artistic in new beauty, feel the power of his hand,
And the servant of the master grows the wonder of the
land.

His sleep is sweet and peaceful, Jehovah seems to smile,
Maturing in the favor of the princess all the while;
Rich ladies of the court, and the damsels of the Nile
Him condescend to visit, his loneliness beguile,
So the matrons twitter, and we'll let the twitter be,
Altho' the royal master is far beyond the sea.

One evening all alone 'mid the perfume of the rose,
The breathing of exotics, he seeks that sweet repose
His labors had secured, to dream perhaps of home,
'Mid the splendors of the vision, he let his spirit roam:
"Is Jehovah surely here in this bright Egyptian sky,
Doth the gleaming of the palace and the temples win
his eye,

The teeming of the city, the destiny of man,
My master and myself all included in the plan,
Are the zodiacal wonders, the people of the lands,
Creations of His power, to stay if He commands,
Or to vanish like the vapors—forever disappear,
Mystery, misfortune be attendants on us here?"

The sounding of the bugle, the entrance of a slave
Awakes him from his dreaming, and intimation gave
A priest from Heliopolis, city of the sun,
Comes to do him honor, and the ruler thus begun—
"Convey that he is welcome and happy shall I be,
Have him share the pleasures of my master's courtesy,
The comforts of the palace and the table I extend
To the prophet of the temple, to my father and my
friend."

The man of veneration, in linen pure and white,
Is shown into the drawing-room, to Joseph's great delight.

Taking seat of honor, 'mid the purple and the gold,
Fills the house with wonder by the story that he told:
"Thy God, O man and prince, I know. Truly am I
sent,

A message from His mouth with good and evil blent.
God is One, amid Creation stands alone,
No equal or co-equal will He own.
A Spirit lofty, glorious and divine,
Duration infinite—no limits Him confine.
He was before the stars, before the nascent mist
The substance of subsistence in Him they all exist.
God is great, past mortal to conceive,
His height our province makes, to love and to believe
In Him is life, almighty and alone,
Into man's nostrils life's fickle breath hath blown.
In Him is law, in Him all canons play,
Obedience is safe, this message I convey.
Great exaltation bringeth danger in the tide,
Be watchful, be masterful, thy steady feet may slide.
When hearing, watch, for telltales fill the air,
Watch when you see, the gates of sin are there.
Or when you sing and feel the warm desire,
Your soul is tinder, a spark begins the fire.
Thy master watch, both he and thou shall grieve,
Thy mistress, too. She has her web to weave.
O destiny, what latent storms conceal a merry song,
What chains are forged, when plaudits they prolong!
Your feet shall wear the fetters, hands grow stiff in
chains,

Yea, speeds the day of darkness, the night of woful pains."

The weird prophet vanished, tho' shut the brazen door,
And they wondered as they trembled, the man was
seen no more.

Joseph felt the vision, seeks the solace of the skies
Then to the great Jehovah, the God of Truth, he cries:

"O Thou who dwellest 'mid empyrean heights,
Father of the helpless, Father of lights,
Oppressed and dazed, seized with mortal fear
Doth aught of mine in deed or song appear
To ope in heart the bent of wrong desire,
With love forbid the kindling soul inspire?
To fix affection toward unworthy end
And rob the breast where it should constant tend?
Father of spirits, the penitent humbly cries
His eyes unseal, and grant him new supplies;
'Mid danger's snares wherein he's called to stand,
Make him the bravest, purest of the land.
Day by day Thyself supreme impart,
Possession take of body, mind and heart.
Mortal, O God, I am as mortal feel,
The ruffling of the waves that o'er me steal,
Quick senses roused implanted by Thy hand,
To seek the bliss so easy to command."



JUKES' WIFE---A SYRIAN GIRL, OR GAZA GIRL

CANTO XI

BEBA, sated with her pleasures, longeth for her friend,
Counting days and moments, wondering when
shall end

The business of her husband, that starts her on the sea,
For Egypt, happy Egypt, where heart and treasure be.

“O land of lotus, precious gaudy trees,
Men and women happy, because thy prospects please,
Amid thy showy flowers, beneath thy cloudless sky,
Fain would I ever stay; on swift wings fly
To reach thy enchantment, thy wonders to behold,
Thy avenues of pleasure, thy palaces of gold.
But Egypt, not thy splendors, nor the lofty pile
Of pyramidal grandeur upon the lovely Nile,
Not thy costly luxuries, thy wealth and power buy,
Nor emptiness of absence that makes my bosom sigh.
Oh, not for earth’s bright glitter do I daily pine,
Ah, it is a secret something that makes my heart de-
cline,

A something in my soul has come, and coming it has won
The opulence of passion, love’s epoch has begun.
’Tis a pity I’m a woman, if he give not back in kind,
The jewels he has rifled, I never more shall find
The bliss to be expected, beneath the belted zone,
That pyramid of pleasure that I can call my own.”

A ship lies in the harbor
High bank of fifty oar

Captain, crew impatient
To reach another shore.
Waiting for the envoy
His protocol to bear:
Great Phichol, Gaza's captain,
Has agreed to share
With Egypt in the struggle
Against the fighting kings.
Send back the gage of battle
The Hittite proudly flings.
Fair Beba too has letters
To send to friends at home,
And perhaps to Joseph
Of seashell and of foam.
Surges make upon the shore
Whilst she upon the sand,
Waiteth for the love song
To meet her on the strand.
Her budget showeth many seals
And one her signet bears,
Too sacred for the vulgar touch,
A prince this honor shares.
The contents were peculiar,
Almost ashamed to say,
Nor dare I to apologize
For 'twas my Beba's way.
You must not be offended
If the secret I reveal,
But love affairs and letters
You never can conceal.

A missal trimmed with gold,
The perfume lingered yet;
The deep emotion it awaked
One never can forget.

A free translation Muses offer
Or else you'd never know it,
For Beba was a beauty
And, also, too, a poet.

TO JOSEPH

I appreciate the pleasure
These landscapes bring to view,
But my heart is ever dreaming
Of Egypt and of you.

Indeed, you must not chide us,
To have this said to thee;
Tho' the deep blue sea divide us
Thine image daily see.

Would the absence of thy mistress,
Add fuel to the flame,
Intensify that longing
It is my right to claim?

Remember how I cherish, too,
The bliss beneath the vine,
When you told to me the story,
That made the captive mine.

I'll ever bless the power
That brought you here to me,
Tho' you have turned the tables
And I the captive be.

So now, fair boy, pray make amends
For what you have so easy lost,
The sky is clear, have thou no fear
Nor reckon still the cost.

Be no more dull, nor distant be,
Let me no more complain;
Thine eyes look love, and sweet thy smile,
When I come back again.

For I consent to grant to thee,
Whatever wish you ask;
To give and take the livelong day
Shall be my wonted task.

Ah! woman-like I all resign,
And this I truly write;
No limit to demands confine
Thy seeking my delight.

O nothing, nothing in this world
From thee would I withhold,
For I have found that priceless pearl
Whose worth cannot be told.

Explore you may my king uncrowned,
The depth of all my seas;
Whatever rapture there be found
That rapture quickly seize.

Enjoy the bliss, and I'm content,
The bliss, O boy, is thine,
And all my sweetheart may present
Is more than doubly mine.

The day is set, I count the hours,
 'Til out upon the sea,
When Egypt's sunny clime and flowers,
 With joy shall welcome me.

Make thou the palace like a rose
 In bud, to burst in bloom;
And every hall and frieze disclose
 Some beauty and perfume.

Plenteous meats and fowls prepare
 Rare fish, fresh from the Nile;
Nor kids nor lambs thy love shall spare,
 With wine your lord beguile.

The swans must be upon the lake
 Adorned my own gazelle,
The gardener new trellis make
 For vines I love so well.

Have my black shining steed like silk,
 I long to take a ride;
To gallop o'er the hard-beat road,
 The ruler by my side.

Through terebinths and palms to race,
 Then shelter 'mid deep shades,
Where sunbeams never show their face,
 And love alone invades.

Let naught thy vigilance elude,
 The full moon in the sky,
The business here shall then conclude
 And to my home we hie.

A secret I've discovered, boy,
Out in this western world,
Walking upon the street one day,
I met a Gaza girl.

She stopped and gazed and deeply bowed,
Yea, fell upon her knee;
And in her beauty softly said:
"Lady, please pardon me.

"Are you the mighty captain's wife,
Sent by great Egypt's king,
To end this hateful, bloody strife,
The haughty Cushites spring?

"And if, fair lady, this be true
Is Memphis great your home?"
" 'Tis true I am the captain's wife,
From Memphis I have come."

"Then do you know? Why should I ask?
Your city's broad and long.
But once it was my pleasing task
To sing for him a song.

"My sweetheart brave, would have me try
The Hebrew boy excel;
We sang and danced beneath the sky
The caravan said well.

"Joseph his name and wondrous fair,
Should you to him be led,
Tell him my soul is in despair
Jukes, his friend, is dead.

“The cruel robbers did attack
The convoy on its way,
And my brave lion lost his life,
In that most bloody fray.”

O, she was beautiful to see,
The tears stood in her eyes;
My heart was touched, and boy, for thee
I let my pity rise.

I am not jealous, but O how fair,
'Tis strange her eyes are blue,
Though black as ebony her hair,
Her heart, I know, is true.

At last fair Beba's on the deep blue sea,
The sky is bright, the wind is right, and she
As blithe as any bird that skims the waves,
The sea defies, the heartless billow braves,
Upon the lofty poop by day, by night
Sweeps she the main, hoping to catch the sight
Of that great land where first young eyes behold
Her natal skies; and as the years unfold
Felt throbbing impulses of woman's heart,
In life's deeper things began to play her part.
Beauty was her snare, provoked ambition
Opulence to win, exalted station,
That dainty feet in gilded palaces may tread,
Drink pleasure's stream by hidden sources fed.
Alas! there was a power then unknown
She must confront, in battle stand alone.
Love came, and softly as the dews distil
Took the matron captive at his will.

So when the weary days and sea were o'er,
Her wanton eyes beheld her native shore.
How sweet, how grand, the widening line of blue,
And thus she spake: "Adieu, ye waves, adieu,
Here end thy storms, that all so rudely blow
The sacred river, see, winds deep and slow,
Pours out its wealth unrecognized by thee.
Thou heartless monster, thou insatiate sea,
Egypt is but our mighty river's child,
Bless we the gods that gave to us the Nile,
Thee I adore, my gratitude extend,
The glory of my king, my country's friend.
Deep on the plain, far on the eastern bank
Sais looms up, and on the northern flank
A splendid temple gleams to goddess Nit
Devoted; lofty walls encircle it,
Statues and statuettes of brilliant stone
Adorn huge gateways; one obelisk alone
Stands midway front, his praise to celebrate
Who, tho' a king lived, died a celibate.
Year by year vast crowds to Sais came
To kindle and to satisfy a flame.
Maids and matrons, rich and humble poor,
In gay attire sweep through the temple door,
Join in the songs, the perfumed incense burn,
Show their beauty, and young and old in turn
Catch at the shadows softly as they fly
From lip and cheek, and from the tell-tale eye,
For Nit presides, and kindly doth invite
Fair youth to see, by day, mostly by night,
Enticing pleasures lovely daughters bring
To offer on her altars, and round them fling

Light zephyrs ne'er designed to hide their charms,
Nor keep them from a lover's ardent arms.
Aloft upon the deck fair Beba see,
O'er the broad river and verdant fields that be.
Strains wistful eyes to catch her distant No,
Monarch of time where many mansions glow.
Reaching the goal, the watchmen leave the shrouds,
Merchants, buyers board the ship in crowds,
Dull idlers sit to watch the bustling sight,
Friend meets friend, and absence long requite;
Joseph behold, and retinue of slaves
The mistress yearns, the master lordly waves,
Too much he feels perhaps too much he sees.
His voice betrays that heart is ill at ease.
Down the gangway leans she upon his arm,
Why that blush, this trembling and alarm?
Speaks that noble face to a guilty soul?
Emotions wake, sought vainly to control,
Are fair professions vain, her words deceit,
Her love a sham, her friendship all a cheat?
Away! Away! 'tis but a hellish dream,
She's all and more, yea, purer than she seem.
With studied calm she courtesy requires,
Conceals the joy the ruler slave inspires,
Accepts his hand, and both the chariot mount,
As on they speed joy bids him to recount
The palace news, the court, the city news,
And soon forgets the splendor of the views.
Doubly pleased to be at home at last,
Delighted most her pleasure holds him fast,
Whom she commands, whom 'tis her joy to see,
Perfect her plans to have him dearer be.

Potiphar anxious, in chariot of his own
Hastens to lay before the august throne
His labors, glad to declare that Gaza signs
The treaty, checkmates with us the proud designs
Of hateful Calneh, agrees beat back her host
Invading the Delta or the Gaza coast.
Joy in the palace spreads to the street,
The bugles blow, the temple gongs they beat.
“Hail, Potiphar the Great!” the merchants cry,
“Hail, mighty prince!” the multitude reply.
More honor still, the grateful king proclaims,
A banquet to his name, where courtly dames
In silks and filigree, with men shall vie
To shout his praise, exalt him to the sky.
The great man slow in sorrow homeward turns,
Thought in his bosom like a furnace burns.
What bliss can wealth or honor bring to me,
If she, my all, a traitor prove to be?
What depths I reach, what infamy is hers.
And innocence must bear, what guilt confers.
She sleeps alone, and cannot be disturbed;
This message sends: “O let thy wants be curbed.
When time shall heal this sickness of the sea,
In loving plight I’ll grant myself to thee.
But now ’tis rest and slumber that I need,
I’ve served thee well, I beg thee then take heed.”
If this were true, delighted I would pause.
Ah! ’tis not this, but some far deeper cause.

CANTO XII

THE lights are brilliant and the primrose sweet,
Where once more Beba many friends may greet,
Or one if more congenial to the art
Of suiting pleasure to a wanton heart,
For queen she reigns in her secluded halls
And guests or slaves respond as mistress calls,
And lamps burn low, rich painted doorways close,
Eyes to elude or more of self disclose.
“I’ll tell him all, why should I still delay,
Show him my deeps, his loving pity pray.
The day we came, how bright his features grew,
When he his mistress saw, and trembled as he drew
My cape about my shoulders, left purpose bare,
That he might see the beauty I would share.
For I am smit, deep smit, that he must know,
My blue veins the burning passions show.
Come, boy, my lord doth tarry for the night,
The business of the king will hold till broad daylight.
Come sit thou on this soft embroidered seat,
Thy lips were made some other two to meet.
Turn up thine eyes, behold my glowing face,
I wonder if my secret you can trace?
Lay thy soft hand upon my throbbing breast,
It is man’s touch that makes a woman blest.”
This is the little speech that I shall make
He bidding me the evening meal partake.

Unless love's dread—only a woman knows—
Forbid my lips heart phantoms to disclose.
Speaking thus, light trips to touch a welcome bell
Preceding shades and yet the shades dispel.
The turban'd ruler came, grand in his airs,
Obsequious bows, the dainty meal prepares.
"These flowers are rare perfume divinely sweet
Fruits and dishes rich, come, noble lady, eat.
As you the happy hour prolong,
Thy pleasure deepen with my harp and song."

"Thou art superb to-night, thy music hear
Shall I, with heart awake and patient ear
For when I sailed upon the roaring sea
Thy melting words were doubly dear to me.
"My master knows thou art a courtly wit,
Thy constant thought with flashing beauty lit
In parables discourse, and he who reads
The wings of fancy mounts as he proceeds.
These smoking viands, trust I, please thee well,
Rose of the Delta, sweet pansy of this dell.
It becometh me thine fickle humor please,
Exalt thy pleasures, thy virtuous wants appease."
"O, adept in fair Memphis' courtly art,
Where mind and lip prone play a double part,
The gods should teach, nor thou be dull to learn
Where tinder smokes, 'tis there the fires burn."
"Princess of Min, mantle of spotless white,
Life is a dream, the best's always the right."

"Who made thee, boy, so very wondrous wise,
Think ye by birth that I the good despise?
Then I thee would magnify no more,

No more provoke the good that I adore.
Come, a protocol of peace we sign,
The world was never made man's bliss confine.
A wish I ask, see how thy looks confuse,
Is that too much? Come buckle on my shoes.
A prince from Thebes deigns an interview,
Time more than past, but for these tilts with you
My lord must wait; dismiss the maids, I pray,
Why should they linger in this provoking way?
Do thou the service, canst not understand?
Or hesitate obey my just command?
A lovely fit! embroidered stiff with gold,
Be firm, O boy, must everything be told?
Ah, yes, restrain young prying eyes
Nor be too crude in this new enterprise.
Audience I've had of one who lost his head
Because a lady to requite (she said)
A friend, the favor granted, I grant you
To put on two small feet a pretty shoe.
For thee I know, immaculate thou art,
Nor in thy dreams would play a double part.
Survey them from the ankle to the heel,
All else, O slave, my modest robes conceal."

CANTO XIII

POTIPHAR the prince, as was a prince's right,
Surprises his fair Beba and dampens her delight.
Wonders greatly how the ruler his leisure time employs
If lacing shoes or compliments were all his soughted
joys.

Beba blushing angrily beginneth to extenuate
To use the weapon nature gave does not a moment hesitate:

“I cannot tell why I have been so very, very slow,
Methinks it is my privilege, a husband ought to know.
Behold thou the bravery that every woman wears,
The time for the emplacement each gaudy trinket shares,
The crescent and the anklets, the sashes and the shawls,
The pendants and the mufflers, the turbans and the
cauls,

The perfume boxes, bracelets and jewels for the nose,
The amulets and satchels, and the dainty furbelows,
The mantles and the wimples, the earrings and the
chains,

Bonnets and the bodices, the flounces and the trains:
I'll bet a hundred talents, for I know that I would
win it,

No woman in the world can dress in half a minute,
Nor husband on the River would think a woman can,
Unless it be my husband, who thinks himself a man.”
Poor Potiphar was worried, and showed it in his face,
And turned to make his answer, with majesty and
grace:

He had waited by the hour with a hundred little whys
Sent to hold the master whilst her presence she denies.
“It may have been your wimples, or it may have been
your rings,

It may have been, no telling, some other covert things
Like the lacing of your sandals or the hooking of your
gown

That kept me in suspense, and this Theban of renown.
Is Joseph maid of honor that the others you dismiss,

He alone be useful in a toilet for the miss
Or mistress if you please; but why prefer a male
Whilst maidens by the dozen are made of no avail?"
Beba fell into a passion, but did no storming then,
Signified her readiness with husband to descend.
In presence of the Theban was blithe as any bird,
So gracious toward her husband, the visitor inferred
It was a charming couple, happiest on the Nile,
And when the husband heard it, he heard with a smile.

The Hebrew felt his master knew—
Alas, had seen too much;
And as he thought his sorrows grew,
Am I the guilty wretch?

I see the snare. Can I escape
The temptress in her power?
Must I resist or yield at last,
Make shipwreck of the hour?

Daily I pray, "Abate these winds,
Save Thou the fragile bark,"
But fiercer still each day begins,
And fiercer still the dark.

O God, I wish—I can not fly,
That I had angel wings;
I'd swiftly seek my natal sky,
The pleasure virtue brings.

I see the goal, to which I run
Tho' death stand at the end,
I am resolved to show there's one
To be my master's friend.

Let come what may, her love or wrath,
Swear I to never yield,
Too well I know the aftermath,
Jehovah is my shield.

O God, the woman Thou hast made,
Is gateway to the dead;
She kisses him she has betrayed
And mocks the marriage bed.

Truth is murdered on her lips,
Her life and breath deceit;
To trysting places gaily trips
For stolen waters sweet.

At eve will don her spotless white,
With perfume scent the air,
And under cover of the night
Steal forth his love to share.

Not love, but lust, the rightful name,
And tempts the watchful moon,
Who blushes thus to see her shame,
And scorns the fetid boon.

I hate the thought, I hate the sin,
I am resolved to die;
Sooner than such a course begin—
O Lord, thy grace supply.

Foresee the hour, foresee the doom,
The coming judgment day,
When vengeance shall this realm consume,
And wrath divine display.

With mind made up, with heart to brave
The ills that might betide, the slave
Thus to his am'rous mistress writes
And thus his humble prayer indites:
"O, lady fair, I am forsooth thy slave,
To do thy will, or any danger brave,
But, lady, list! thou art most wondrous fair,
Should I consent today to yield a hair,
To-morrow would but make me wish for more,
Seek fields enchanted wider to explore,
Thus lost to self and doubly lost to thee
Might go too far, o'erstep the bounds there be
'Twixt what is right and what to wrong is due,
In troth, fair mistress, what is owed to you.
Such pleasure has an end in woe and pain,
Delusion dire searing the heart and brain,
Excepting this—thy slave and humble friend
O let me, then, thine every wish attend.

BEBA TO JOSEPH

Hereditary prince thou art,
Great Egypt's noblest friend,
Ordained to play some wondrous part
In dangers that portend.

You see I have a priestess' eye
But yet a woman's soul,
The charms confess, the guilt deny,
Has passed beyond control.

O what it is I cannot tell—
Indeed I do not care;

Thou art the sun that doth dispel
The clouds that dim the air.

Thou art, yes we are both adrift
Upon the open sea,
If reason fails to make thee wise
To both will shipwreck be.

Do you not know who will be heir
When death knocks at the gate,
Or who will then the honors wear
Of this rich, broad estate?

The monarch's favorite has no fawn,
Such hope to him's denied;
No matter how the years begone,
I'll see none by my side.

Add his estate to my estate,
'Twill make thee rich indeed;
Happy I'll be to see thee great—
For this persistent plead.

A rose amid her verdant leaves
Upon a pink would stare
And say: "O rival, who believes
Thy hues with mine compare;

"Or with the odors I dispel
Durst humble you compete?"
The charming pink deep felt the words
And blushed, but looked more sweet.

A butterfly came flitting by
And settled on the rose;
He flings his long proboscis out
His gaudy wings disclose.

“Oh messenger of wondrous eyes,
Decide,” said Rose, “and tell
Doth pink or I deserve the prize,
Of beauty and of smell.”

The judge looks wise, and shows the spots
That on his body shine;
Then smiles on pink but kisses rose,
“I think you both divine.”

A bird flew down upon the ground
Gay feathers lovely red;
“Ah now,” said Rose, “we’ll have the truth
From this most princely head.”

And as he seeks a strand of hair
To weave into his nest,
She cries again, “Can pink compare
With me so richly blest?”

The bird looks up to see whence comes
This question and ado,
And then he sings, “I’ll not decide,”
And swift away he flew.

A magi in the garden strayed
With wondrous wisdom fraught;
The pink and rose he both surveyed,
And both rare pleasure brought.

“O rose,” said he, “the sun did paint
Thy petals with his hues,
But what hear I in thy complaint,
Why thou the pink abuse?”

“It is not beauty nor perfume
That makes you both divine,
It is a power God has given
To reproduce thy kind.

“This far transcends the matchless worth
Of angel, mount, or sea;
They live or die without a birth,
But this God gives to thee.

“Thy beauty fades, thy stem shall die,
Thy redolence be gone;
Thy seeds alone new life supply,
And reproduce their own.

“No beauty see in that brown shell,
No odor scents the air;
And yet it doth a wonder tell
For life itself is there.”

CANTO XIV

JOSEPH

LADY, thou art the fairest flower,
Gracing the endless Nile;
Gentle has been thy use of power,
Shown to the homeless child.

My weary hours thou dost beguile,
Sad thoughts of home allay;
Thy words are soft, and sweet thy smile,
The debt I long to pay.

O mistress, I can ne'er forget
The friendship shown to me;
The healing balm, the mignonette,
Since first I fell to thee.

But, prithee, think how deep the wrong
To him you've sworn to love;
To Him who doth thy life prolong,
The mighty one above.

Behold upon my neck this chain,
I all his treasures keep,
There's naught but thee his hand retains,
And you this limit leap.

O, mistress, let me be thy slave,
For nothing more I ask;
Honor the man Jehovah gave,
This be thy sweetest task.

BEBA

Come, slave, bring wine, the feast prepare,
Close, too, the inner door,
No lip, I swear, these viands share,
No eye my thoughts explore,

Save thee, the only king I own,
Thou magi from the West;

My bosom is thy welcome throne,
O make my bosom blest.

The rose upon these lips is thine,
These bulbs so purely white;
Take, drink love's cup of precious wine,
And drink, I pray, to-night.

Be not so coy, nor distant seem,
'Tis I that am the slave;
Thou art the king in this sweet dream,
The king Jehovah gave.

JOSEPH

Jehovah, mistress loves the pure,
But what you ask is sin;
A woman's soul would He allure
To nobler things within.

Your better priests and prophets tell
A wife should guard her ways;
Nor let her fiery lust repel
The grace my God displays.

Should I thy brow with kisses press,
Love's rosy nectar steal,
Or here alone thy form caress,
And melted see thee yield,

Soon would Jehovah angry grow,
Ah! send some curse on me;
Would blight my hopes, my bliss forego,
Some vengeance send on thee.

BEBA

Your God is wild to judge a harm
In appetite like this;
Ours do not, the temples swarm
With crowds who seek such bliss.

Not only Nit, but Iris too,
Is patron of the art,
Young virgins and good wives construe
The right to play their part.

In Gaza I myself have seen
A thousand women mad,
As in the groves or on the green
Men only made them glad.

JOSEPH

Alas! my mistress, 'tis too true,
The very gods you serve
But stir desire, teach you to do
Such sin without reserve.

Far better things I bring to thee,
Seek thou a spotless name,
Avoid the wickedness you see,
Despise its bliss and shame.

Thy husband's honor, too, is thine,
How blush to have it known
That I had won and held as mine
What is for him alone.

Oh, let your heart be stirred
To weep, to rather die—
So sacred is the gift conferred
In holy matrimony.

BEBA

O boy! how strangely well you preach;
Bring me a cup of wine,
Thy cruel words I'll not impeach
But yet you shall be mine.

Prepare my silky, thorny bed,
And since you still refuse,
Pray let the purple poppies shed
Their sweet somnolent dew.

To-morrow thy great master sails
Upon the Nile for Thebes;
Then on the back of Beauty black,
We gallop o'er the glebes.

I like to have the good man gone,
His absence never miss,
For then at eve, or early dawn,
May snatch from thee a kiss.

So good night, dear, sweet be thy dreams,
O Joseph, think of me;
If I'm not what thine honor deems,
My heart is true to thee.

Go seek thy couch, go there to sleep,
Without a pang of care;

Thy coldness leaveth me to weep
In darkness and despair.

What happiness for me, pray tell,
You say my gods are vain;
When you refuse this storm to quell,
Doth any bliss remain?

I swear I find in thee the sum
Of all my poor heart needs;
A god to me you have become
Whence life itself proceeds.

O, pity my unhappy state,
It is no fault of mine;
Forgot by God, abused by fate,
For love and light I pine.

Why should I not hold love the best,
The only end of life?
To know, to find, is to be blest
Altho' I be a wife.

I never, never loved before,
Ne'er dreamed such happy heights,
Such fields for woman to explore,
Such springs of rare delights.

JOSEPH

Sadly my couch I weary seek,
My heart's a dismal sea.
The winds are wild, the thunders speak,
No rest to-night for me.

I pity her, she doth not know
The truth that's in my God;
The lovely Spirit doth not blow
Upon the pathway trod.

The pleasures of the flesh are all
The world and time employ,
To quench the longing of a soul,
That knows no higher joy.

My heavenly heights can not attain,
For God hath shut her eye;
Deliverance from sin and pain
He sends not from the sky.

O God, I pray Thee to forgive,
If gently I should deal,
With her whose lot it is to live,
Where Thou Thyself conceal.

By day, by night, their sense and sight,
Their hateful gods inflame;
Old hoary-headed priests invite
To infamy and shame.

From long dull eyes Thy wisdom hid,
No loving smile from Thee,
How can they know what is forbid
Or what thy will may be.

More light, more light, more light, I cry,
Thou Maker of the sun;
Grace to resist, or grace to die,
Rather than be undone.

CANTO XV

THE trumpet blares, and wide the thunders fell,
That spake the mighty captain's leave;
Soldiers respond from forts on distant dell,
The court, not Beba, came to grieve.

Fair forms and dim eyes grace the rising flood,
Wave to the honored chief heartfelt adieus:
High officers of state, princes of blood,
Some lovers, too, from the servile crews,

Send back the courtesy off the mainstays
And as sincerely wish the watchful gods
To fill the interval of absent days
With blessings multitudinous.

Prince Potiphar bestrode the ship of state,
Two tenders followed gaily on behind,
Soldiers filled one glistening in gold and brass
Servants the other, good things and ruby wine

That make life bearable on any craft.
Gay flags fluttered in the sunlit breeze;
From flying jib to spanker boom abaft,
And all except the sailors sought their ease.

Potiphar stood amid a group of Beys
With jeweled swords, and helmets bright and
plumed;

Grandeers ordained for these eventful days
Of business and of pleasure, 'tis presumed.

For scarred commandos spoke of men and wars,
The young bloods of the joys they had in view,
For Thebes could please her nobles, soldiers, tars,
With any bliss that wealth and men pursue.

Potiphar turns and leans upon the taffrail,
Gazes sadly on the fast receding
City. A friend touches his coat of mail,
And whispers: "No! not with all my pleading

That breaks the bud, a moon doth wax and wane
Since she consented a wifely part to play.
'My health is frail,' her pretty lips complain
So I consent to let the woman stay."

The satrap smiled and left his lord to muse
Upon the frailty of earthly things.
To soothe the wound turns to the lovely views
The ever-changing landscape hourly brings.

"I wish in vain the beauty of these plains
These flowers, and too the lofty date,
The lowing herds, and fields of yellow grain
That sweetly constant alternate,

"Could take this arrow from my aching breast,
My happiness restore;
And bring my weary soul in peace to rest,
As in the days of yore.

“Woe worth the day! tho’ fitted and designed
These glorious things I see,
To purify, to beautify the mind
To her they fail such power to be.

“I am so bound by dark and cruel fate,
My happiness so held in hand,
Mine honor, too, rescue can not await—
She drives my vessel on the strand.”

The satrap once more obsequious came
And sinister again he smiles;
“My lord, this gloom comports not with thy fame;
Suffer not the jade thee longer to beguile.

“A thousand eyes are flashing on thee now,
And bosoms swell to have thee sit beside.
Then cast this shadow from thy manly brow
And joyful, woo a purer, better bride.

“Degrade the wretch and make him feel thy wrath,
That dare your domicile invade;
The woman scorn as serpent in thy path,
For Horus call and let the gods upbraid.”

The bugles sound, the vessels land at Koor,
The prefect great of Oryx Nome receive;
King’s object of this governmental tour
To gather tax, thus kingly wants relieve.

Bond slaves and soldiers brave augment the train,
With pomp and pride good Potiphar to meet.
Drums and cymbals wake the distant plain,
And Oryx glad the mighty envoy greets.

Beneath a canopy athwart the ship,
The beardless prefect of the Nome abides;
On a dais the hero of the yearly trip
With wonted grace and dignity presides.

O Chief! of true welcome is the giver
Great Oryx Nome; lofty is my estate,
Guide to the king, we sailed up the river,
Beat four foreign armies from the eastern gate.

Sailed up the river, son and mighty prince
Seal bearer and commander; high I stand
In Oryx Nome; black giant tribes convince
Of battle skill, I shook, I took the land.

Much tribute brought; reached to heaven my praise,
His majesty arose and went in peace
Because I fought in Kush; he shouts and slays
His deadly enemies, his fears surcease.

Years have been mine as ruler of this Nome,
The monarch's business ties up my hand.
He set o'er the herdsmen of the bulls,
Three thousand choicest of the land.

No daughter of a poor man have I wronged,
No widow, nor orphan child oppressed;
Nor took from man what right to him belonged
The farmer and the herdsmen both have blessed.

No pauper feels the pang of hunger here;
When famine came the prince himself arose—
I plowed the fields, I saved the sheep to shear,
The people lived, and this the record shows.

And when the rises of the river came

Producing barley brown, and yellow wheat,
Did not exact what was my right to claim,
But debts unpaid I cancelled all complete.

Great chief, we hail thy coming with delight,
The business through, thou shalt attend a feast,
A hundred maidens bring with faces bright.
Swift speed the day, and let thy joys increase.

But now to business; let the scribes attend
And let the satrap keep a watchful eye,
The king is father to us all, and friend,
No right nor tax will Oryx Nome deny.

A hundred thousand sheep and goats we bill,
Two hundred thousand skins of dried pressed
dates;
Of wheat and barley, the measure more than fill
A hundred tuns of wine and no rebates.

Of gold see thou! two hundred leather sacks,
Silver sixteen times more the tablet shows
Of mines and lands, yea, fish and fruits we tax,
Thus love and honor to the king disclose.

A thousand camels, five hundred more that milk,
Five thousand ox, as many cows and calves,
Five hundred linen bolts, two hundred silk,
Eight hundred horse that work between the shafts.

Potiphar applauds and plaudits reach the dome,
“Hinna, haw! haw!” the crowd and crews exclaim;
“Rich, great and good the prefect of the Nome,
Long may he live and brighter grow his fame.”

The feast is o'er; the morning star is seen,
And Potiphar slow treads the snowy deck.
Prince and nobles graced the brilliant scene
And flashing eyes vied with the jeweled neck.

Furtive glances turned upon the royal friend,
Ambitious mothers sought to win the prize,
All female charms would barter to that end,
A place at court was Eden in their eyes.

But what all this to him who felt the pain
Of unrequited love and heart betrayed?
What this power, and what this endless gain?
If such a monster on his vitals preyed?

And as he gazed upon the deep blue sky,
Thinking how bitter are the turns of life,
The wily satrap came with evil eye,
For well he knew, was thinking of his wife.

"I saw her take a flower which he gave
And press it warmly to her pulsing heart.
Altho' he bowed as the obsequious slave,
Yet she was loth to let the slave depart.

"Called him aside, some menial service do,
Prattled gaily, showed a woman's charms,
Orders her footstool, he ties her pretty shoe,
Her smiles most sweet when nearest in his arms."

The satrap sought his couch—had shot his bow,
"Power and place do not exempt from pain,"
Chuckles he, "of woman's wiles the more he'll know
When to his palace he returns again."

CANTO XVI

THE atmosphere is dry and strangely clear,
Short and frequent the dull green river turns,
Never a cloud, rarely white mists appear,
Broad plains and pyramids the crew discerns.

Boats from Upper Nile daily they behold,
Black sailors man the oars or furl the sail,
Merchants rich in purple and in gold,
From Araby, or where the western shades prevail.

On the low banks a group of men and maids;
The first a chief in gaily bright attire;
Leads an ibex, then wives, black hair and braids,
Bare arms and necks, and robes that men admire,

Faces of the old Shemitic type and size,
That round the verdant hills of Hebron sing,
Their tax of Kohl, that paint fair women's eyes
Joyful with boomerang and spear they bring.

To-morrow, slow to-morrow! then the end,
And splendid Thebes comes bursting into view,
Mistress to whom the wealth of ages tend,
What doom shall prince and palaces pursue.

Shall thy vast crowds and mighty minions die?
Thy pride and power, thy commerce disappear?
Shall goblins haunt thy streets and dismal cry
Jackals, because no child of man is near?

Where in the years shall be thy hundred gates
The souls of men throbbing with hope to-day,
What judgment threats, what silent doom awaits,
To wreck thy temples, some wrath divine display?

Diospolis surveys thy walls in vain,
Thy million men with Javelin and sword,
Thy chariots, thy battle horse with bit and rein,
That rush thy gates to meet the envious horde.

Thy fair women flitting as butterflies,
Princes rolling in wealth, lascivious ease,
Thy shaven priests and burning sacrifice
Shall not avail, nor vengeful Hor appease.

CANTO XVII

THE day was lovely, Beba bright,
The steeds stood at the gate,
Rich flashed the housings in the light,
Spirits of both elate.

On Joseph's cheek the Hebrew tinge
Every movement grace;
His scarlet robe and silken fringe
Set off the handsome face.

Beba mounts with queenly art,
Displays what men most prize,
Reveals the passion of her heart
Through soft and lovelit eyes.

“Follow the banks of sleepy Nile
Deep in the mango groves,
Merry speed we many a mile,
The woods were made for loves.

“So sweet the solitude of shade,
The perfume of the lime and date,
Where happy birds alone invade,
To seek their food and mate.

“I love the melodies they trill
As they their bliss reveal,
And Joseph’s touch may start the thrill,
I wait and long to feel.”

Away sped two for many a mile
O’er field and grassy plain,
Now ’mid the dates, then on the Nile,
Back to the hills again.

A thousand silky goats were seen,
A thousand sheep as snow;
To feed or fight upon the green,
The buck salute the doe.

Flocks of toucans bend the trees,
Brilliant in blue and red,
Deftly broad bills the mangoes seize,
Throw back their gaudy heads.

“See thou that bird, how bright his vest,
How tender to his mate;
Love burneth in that happy breast,
I wish it were my fate.

“Granteth all that she may ask
Seemeth for her to live,
And she fair miss doth loving bask
In sunshine that he gives.

“O wayward boy a lesson learn,
From nature’s lovely book,
And let thy mistress love discern,
In this secluded nook.

“O landscape fair, beautiful sky,
Balmy this sylvan shade,
Flowers and birds and amorous I
Seek Joseph to persuade.

“Come, sit thee down upon the grass,
The steeds may feed at will,
And as the happy moments pass,
We’ll take of love our fill.

“There is no watchful eye to see,
The recess is too deep,
Do what you please, O boy, with me,
Into my heart may peep.

“You’ll find that every fiber’s thine,
The wealth we women own,
Of love, or hope, all I resign
To thee, my king, alone.”

JOSEPH

“Thy vest in beauty like that bird,
Thy cheeks with roses vie,
And he who gazes must be stirred
In soul as deep as I.

“Thy voice to me is always sweet,
Nor this do I deserve,
At eve or morn you kindly greet
Him you have bought to serve.

“You do not make me feel my chain,
So cushioned 'tis with grace,
I have, alas, forgot the pain,
Of loved ones you replace.

“But, mistress, you must not forget
That he who made the sun,
Ordaining him to rise and set,
His daily course to run,

“Ordains that you and I, the beast,
Be happy every day,
On His abundance constant feast
Yet man his law obey.

“He sits above the sun and reigns
A blest and mighty King;
No creature of His hand disdains
Eternal life to bring.

“He seeks thy good, my master's good,
The happiness of all,
Alas! by man misunderstood
His love turned into gall.

“Now He commands that you be pure
In word, in thought and deed,
That I be pure, from lust secure,
Nor thou his wife mislead.

“Behold those birds, each has a mate,
Together build their nest,
They sing all day and merry prate,
Contented, happy, blest.

“But when a vile intruder seeks
To win the wife away,
A battle fierce with those long beaks
Begins—a bloody fray.

“Both cannot live, then one must die,
Though long the combat be,
Beneath that erstwhile peaceful sky
One dead at last you see.

“O, lady fair, my mistress too,
Be like that lily white,
Be pure like that and to him true,
There dwells a wife’s delight.

“Delusions strong thy vitals seize,
And darkness fills thy soul,
Should I consent, your wants appease,
You lose all self-control,

“I’d quickly reach the depths of sin,
More shameless grow each day;
Grim ruin would in both begin,
All happiness decay.

“O, mistress, let thy slave insist
That you repent and pray,
For strength such wantonness resist,
Nor virtue’s vows betray.

"The God I worship will forgive,
These wrong desires slay.
You will be happy, I shall live
To love thee and obey."

BEBA

"'Twould kill me, boy, if we must part,
I am to thee so bound,
'Twill blast my life, will break my heart,
Ah! prove a fatal wound.

"This world would surely come to be
A waste of burning sand;
Where flowers die, and springs are dry.
And ghouls stalk through the land.

"If you refuse I may not brook
Thy words so plain and bold,
Although my lord his signet took
To mark the place you hold.

"It may be, boy, this outraged breast
Will lose the love it owns;
Hate enters in with love suppressed
'Mid tears and sighs and groans.

"Come, let us mount, the sun is low,
And bids the virtuous home;
Tho' you are safe, I am, I know
However late we roam.

"Coming to view the palace lights
'Twill make me still more sad,

For thou alone these dismal nights
Can make my poor heart glad.

“Let my repast most simple be,
A curd, a glass of wine,
And round my bed the drapery
In silken folds confine.

“For all things I would shut without
My very self escape
This woful loss, this utter rout
In hideous things I shape.

“The stars may course the peaceful skies,
The gentle dews descend,
But sleep avoid these wanton eyes
Until the dismal end.

“O, boy, what wretchedness you bring
To this confiding breast;
I sought to make thee more than king,
That both be doubly blest.

“I am so rich and thou so poor,
I in my palace sleep—
You my happiness hold in store
To give, or cruel keep.

“Upon thy telltale smile I hang,
I live in thy soft eyes;
A frown sends to my heart a pang,
A look brings sobs and sighs.”

CANTO XVIII

TO BEBA 'twas a dreary night,
Her pillows lost their charm,
White perfumed sheets and softened light
Could not assuage the storm.

She rolled and tossed from side to side,
She sighed, she cursed and wept,
Deep felt the stings of passion, pride,
But yet she never slept.

"No woman's lot to feel as I
Such anguish in their hearts,
All that's sweet beneath my sky
At one fell swoop departs.

"I've proffered what we hold most dear,
What modesty forbids;
I've cooed and sighed and dropped my tear
From out these painted lids.

"The titbits of my body, soul,
My purse and heartstrings too,
To keep as his to have to hold,
And more was there to do.

"I've shown him what we seek to hide,
Unveiled before his eye,
I've made him linger by my side
To know my blood ran high.

“He could not but perceive my soul
Was lost in blinding love;
My words and looks did true unfold,
The anguish of the dove.

“The crisis comes, can bear no more,
He shall not tell me nay.
He shall be mine and me adore,
O haste the coming day.

“Love’s desperation brings relief,
’Tis life or death to me;
These painted walls, this burning grief
The end begun shall see.

“To-morrow when he knocks to ask,
‘Lady, what be thy wish?
The sun god enters on his task,
Name thou the lordly dish,’

“I’ll spring from out these linen sheets
To show my heart’s design;
And as my bosom warmly meets
And these white arms entwine

“That form so wildly dear to me,
I’ll hold him fast and plead
With tears, and in my shame if be,
Compel the amorous deed.

“O Iris, help in my distress,
This wayward heart pray win,
Subdue his will, grant me success,
It cannot be a sin.

“My wretched thinkers thou convey,
Existence is a curse,
I'll hail with joy the dawn of day,
That brings the best or worst.

“Speed slow-footed light, paint up the east,
I'll press again my pillow,
To dream I see the dappled yeast
That crests the angry billow.

“Did ere such storm in woman's breast,
So fiercely, wildly rage?
These cursed thoughts that rob of rest
The Hebrew might assuage.

“One by one the stars are leaving,
Leaving the moonless sky,
Morning watch 'mid night relieving,
They, too, are glad, and I.

“Hark! hear his footsteps in the hall;
See how this heart doth beat!
At last he comes to knock and call,
And me, his mistress, meet.

“I'll ope the door my bed to show,
Its linen pure and white,
Will clasp his hand and make him know,
To share it my delight.

“Denial boy shall not accept,
This is a morning joy,
Transcending all in larder kept
By art in his employ.

“For once these winsome arms of mine
Shall make my bosom blest,
About his neck shall fondly twine,
And he to yield be pressed.

“I’ll hold him fast, he shall not flee,
His purple robe unclasp,
I’ll have those eyes look full on me,
And drop the wifely mask.

“My beauties all shall he behold,
In splendor shall they shine,
Until entranced shall be his soul,
As I entranced in mine.”

So ’twas, she lost all modesty,
And from her bed she flung,
Her simple self in love’s fury,
And on his neck she hung.

In woman’s sweetest tongue pleads she,
“You must with mistress lie,
Perfumed, my bed waited for thee,
There is no watchful eye.

“Thy master is in Thebes, you know,
And seeks his own delight,
O, darling, you must not forego
The pleasure now in sight.”

“O, mistress, shame,” good Joseph cries,
“The demon in thy veins
Doth heart inflame, doth blind thine eyes
Thy modesty restrain.

"I tell thee now, as oft before,
I hate, despise this lust;
I will not grant what you implore,
Will not betray my trust."

He fled, leaving his robe in hand
Of her who vainly sought,
By wanton force, madly to command
Consent, to do her wanton thought.

CANTO XIX

SHE pulls her hair, and beats her wanton breast,
She stamps and raves, as if by hell possessed,
Curses her day, the very gods she cursed.
Peal on peal from raging bosom burst
On him, resisting strong her mad intent,
Loud vengeance calls and shrieks till nature spent
Falls in a swoon, upon her perfumed bed,
And true to life she imitates the dead.
Foams at the mouth, tossed her unconscious head.
The broken-hearted boy doth well discern
Such hellish love to hate would quickly turn,
And loss of power, of confidence and place,
Yea, cruel death him stareth in the face.
Anaku, butler of the bread and wine,
This long delay and slight could not divine.
With deferential air sad Joseph seeks,
Thus his surprise and worry humbly speaks:
"O mighty man and ruler of us all,
Why tarry ye, your pretty mistress call?"

High rides the sun, broad shoots the golden ray,
My smoking viands linger on the tray!
Her bedroom seek, and learn from her own lip,
Why thus suffer the jocund day to slip?"

"See thou thyself," the ruler did reply,
"Why she refuses with custom to comply.
So slow to break her fast, so long to sleep,
Is it all well? or doth she stay to weep?"

Anaku stares, yet hastens to obey,
Slowly to her chamber makes his way.
Gently draws near, to find the door ajar
And knocks and knocks again, no signs there are
Of recognition, but sobs and sighs he hears.
Wondering greatly, within he peers,
Amazed to see her deadly paled,
As if some frightful griffon had assailed.
When she at last by dint of effort knew
'Twas not her Joseph, only Anaku,
Seizes the garment left in hand, and holds
The pattern up to view, and thus unfolds
The mystery: "Whose robe be this?" she cries,
"Doth smite thy heart and wider ope thine eyes?
'Tis the coat of him made master of this hall
Who sought by magic art me so enthrall
As to yield consent to stain my spotless bed.
Take him in place of Potiphar's sweet stead.
But Anaku, as lusty I did cry
For help from you and from the very sky.
The Hebrew fled, and this left in my hand.
Now vengeance double on his head demand.
The master comes from Thebes to-day
This colored coat shall I put in his way,

In evidence complete of shame to bring,
He sought (O, the handsome but hateful thing!)
Upon a princess of the house of Zu,
Pure and spotless as a drop of dew."
Ere slanting sunbeams kissed the sleepy Nile,
The husband came, stiffly and cold to smile,
Indifferent asks the news, tells of his trip,
Of bright-eyed women seen, the noble ship,
How rich the spoils in gold and kind he brought,
Two handsome slave girls white for self had bought.
Uneasy seems, furtively glances round,
Looks up to her, and then again looks down,
Wonders aloud why Joseph is not seen,
Nor comes to welcome with his courtly mien.
Beba, pale and trembling, leaves her lofty chair,
And to a gaudy alcove doth repair,
Displays the robe, a gift the master knew
Its ample folds spreads deftly to his view.
"Behold," she cries, "is this thy worthy slave's?
He sought my virtue and your anger braves.
While sleeping sweetly on my stainless bed
Knocks at my door—as if we had been wed;
Cunning, serpent-like, within he glides;
The damask loosens, back to its place it slides
Exposing the beauty of my unhid charms,
Bending low, me clasps with amorous arms,
Pressing in honeyed words consent to yield,
Thy sacred right, which, too, the gods had sealed.
With horror struck my wailing voice I raise,
'Hold wretch, nor dare such dire dispraise.
Avaunt, thou monster! nor pollute my bed.'
And seizing him, alarmed in fright he fled,

Leaving this evidence in my virtuous hand
For you to see; his punishment command."
The censor is amazed, yea, doubts his ears,
Hope fills his heart, and then come back his fears.
"O what deceit, or am I twice deceived,
Twice wronged by her and twice myself aggrieved.
But O, ye gods, I wish her tale were true,
My pangs would cease, my sky again be blue,
To my fond bosom take her pure once more,
Love and rejoice, new fields of bliss explore."
Then in a lion's rage for Joseph sent,
On one poor head he all his fury spent;
"Ingrate and wretch! foul blot upon thy race,
Brand in thy soul the stigma of disgrace.
I held thee as a son, not as a slave,
The highest honors of my house I gave,
Gave thee my heart as never master did,
Yea, nought save her did I thy touch forbid.
And vile the breast such confidence betray,
Fell miscreant accursed, away, away!
In prison writhe to meet thy righteous doom,
For death shall haste thee to the shades of gloom."
Joseph well knew to him was no appeal,
His master's will his hopeless fate could seal,
Yet looking his mistress bravely in the eye,
Supremely calm, the prisoner did reply:
"Not guilty, master; before my God declare
My innocence; will on thine altar swear
Did protest to her twice and thrice again
Me not to tempt, nor seek thine honor stain,
Would bear an endless pain or rather die,
Than party become to such base infamy."

“Away, thou liar! See thy coat, away!
Seize him, guards! Quick my command obey.
Deep in the prison let the wretch be thrust
Bind him with chains, his bed be dungeon, dust.”

CANTO XX

THE bolts fly back, the hateful hinges turn.
More of his God and providence to learn.
“Good, Elohim, again 'tis past belief
Thy hand should smite with such prodigious grief,
I sought to do thy will, myself keep pure,
By faith resisting, did her attacks endure,
Yea, daily prayed Thee change her lustful mind,
Thy power show her wanton thoughts confine.
Show virtue be such loveliness of face,
She won complete rare virtue would embrace;
But, O my God, the dream and hope were vain,
My cup is full, my tears distill like rain.
Unhappy boy! From all that's dear exiled,
No mother's kiss, no tender father's smile.
Thou azure sky! Where happy once I trod,
'Mid sweet blue hills, broad green and painted sod,
My father's herds, the song of early bird,
In dreams the angels and their music heard,
Shall no more see;
Nor ever thus my childhood home behold
No more be glad, nor to my breast enfold
My gray-haired sire; nor in his listening ears
My woes complain, that he 'mid sympathetic tears

To my unhappy heart might bring relief
Or save me from this black and mystic grief."

All through the dreary night he sobs and moans,
Wonders if God doth hear his dismal groans,
What slip is this from ease and lofty power
To chains and wretchedness in one short hour?
Alas, good God! is he the sport of Fate,
Blind to the best, to justice obdurate?
Eternal sitting on a callous throne
Heartless to woe, to cries and tears a stone?

'Tis midnight past, still doth the boy lament
Then God swift Abdul, his mighty angel, sent,
Shows His contempt for Eygpt's brazen door,
For watchful guards, e'en gods that they adore.
In splendor bright and majesty divine
On the weeping captive did Abdul shine.
Dissipates the prisoner's dismal gloom,
His form and face and very soul illumines,
Breathes a sweet fragrance on the fetid air.
The boy revives and puts to flight despair,
Gazes with rapture, lists in love to hear,
Proves Jehovah heard, comes his heart to cheer.
"O child of God," the heavenly words begin,
"Thy valor saw before that dreadful sin.
I bring a crown to deck thy brow, O son,
The victory own, thy royal faith hath won.
To show though bound with weighty brazen chain
The glory that thy virtue doth attain,
For when at last, through weary, weary years,
Thou be prepared and vengeance disappears

These iron doors God too shall open wide,
Clothe thee with power, adorn with purple pride.
Through avenue of bulls where crowds there be
Herald shall cry, 'Bow ye the knee, bow ye the knee,
The lordliest prince that kings and nobles greet
In glory sweeps along this royal street.'
Ruler I make thee, rule with paternal rod,
Honor thy king, much more exalt thy God.
Nobles and priest shall grateful tribute bring,
Thy praise through everlasting ages ring.
As to thy mistress, O victorious boy!
Jehovah in His wisdom doth His grace employ,
Blot out her guilt, her heathen mind illumine,
Prepares her for the end and final doom.
In one short moon thy mistress is no more,
The angels take her to the other shore,
In light to see the pure and holy God
Provoke no more the fierce, vindictive rod.
Blind thing no mother had as thou in youth,
To breathe God's name and fill the soul with truth.
Thus in His mercy doth her sin forgive
And for His servant's sake permits her live."
With this, the angel spreads his snowy wings,
Shakes his ambrosial locks, sweet perfume flings,
More beauty shows, smiles, then takes his flight,
The prisoner leaves, filled with strange delight.