



THE  
LAST DAYS  
OF  
JERUSALEM.  

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S. W. FULLOM.

THE  
LAST DAYS OF JERUSALEM:  
A SONG OF ZION.

BY  
S. W. FULLOM,  
AUTHOR OF "ROME UNDER PIUS IX.," "THE HUMAN MIND,"  
"MYSTERY OF THE SOUL," ETC.

"Sing us one of the Songs of Zion."—Ps. cxxxvii. 3.



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Soft zephyrs came through the adjacent rock,  
Where this, from some past strain, shot out a  
block,

Like open door, hing'd in a tiny cleft,  
Which on the air the mass impendent left,  
For untold ages clinging to the steep,  
Deferring the inevitable leap ;  
While through this opening beam'd the distant  
sky,

Itself so distant, showing Heaven nigh !  
And, hark, a voice ! what do those words de-  
clare ?

Is it a rhapsody, or is it prayer ?

O, Jesus ! Lord ! in Heaven's span,  
Which, like Thy love, enclasps the sphere,  
Thou still remember'st Thou wast Man,  
And can'st recal our sorrows here :

# A SONG OF ZION.

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## THE FIRST CANTICLE OF THIS SONG.

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### CHANT I.

#### JERUSALEM BY NIGHT.

THE Moon beguiling rode the midnight sky  
To charm the world with an illusive day,  
And strain'd her silver beams to this so nigh—  
So nigh gold sunshine in their bright display,  
That but the tint betray'd, her soft, serener light  
Retaining still an impress faint of night ;

So that the scene, from where tall Olive's steep  
Long shadows flung, and round Siloam's stream  
To Calvary, lay all as if asleep,  
And in the midst the city, like a dream  
Rose disconnected, from the valleys still, !  
Which circl'd and divided hill from hill—  
Those battlements, by God in Nature built,  
To baffle every foe but Inward Guilt.

That now Jerusalem the doom fulfils  
Which laid on trespass Conquest's train of ills,  
Antonia, that haughty Roman hold,  
Too plain by dominance and 'trenchment told.  
Cut by a hollow from Moriah's crest,  
Whose falling shades its rounded girth invest,  
The Tower strikes by gloom the roaming eye—  
Pillar of cloud against the cloudless sky,  
Throwing a scowl upon the cloister'd aisle

That avenues the Temple's wondrous pile.  
The holy fane on ridge above arose  
Ethereal, a mirage in repose,  
Its walls refin'd, and all the mass made light,  
By the serene resplendence of the night,  
By pinnacle and column, aisle and arch,  
And by the golden cornice of the porch  
Meetly call'd Beautiful, and which might claim  
To add Sublime to its unchalleng'd name.

The Temple's ramparts, rear'd of mighty blocks,  
Here shadows look, here glimmer into rocks,  
Which melt in flame, or merge in stately gates  
Spreading their bars of gold in shining rays.  
Save where a flight of marble elevates  
The Gate of Brass, which fuses in one blaze  
A mirror of the Moon's whole orb, and sheds  
A second moonlight on the steps it heads.



The walls of the wide city stretch without,  
In triple fold of battlemented strength,  
Strength by tall towers brac'd, and by redoubt,  
Dispers'd, like sentinels, along their length :  
And where the valleys break the circling line  
With gulfs that bands of warning dark define,  
The massive structure rather seems to fade  
Than take the hue of the invading shade.  
Its hidden breast, too, still throws up a Keep,  
To catch the moonbeams—like a lighthouse fair  
Which on the margin of a treacherous deep  
Bids the approaching mariner beware—  
And deeps are spread by precipices there !

Highest of all soar Herod's Towers three,  
Group'd equally to gird, adorn, and key,  
And thus as Architecture's Graces stand,  
By form to charm, by fusion to command.

Their naked marble rears its spotless white  
In all its beauty, in the moon's soft light,  
And such a tremor does the radiance give,  
They seem to move, and almost seem to live.  
So, to the quarry of a tyrant's heart  
Can Nature's instincts her ideals impart,  
And even to Herod inspiration lend  
To tomb a wife, a brother, and a friend.  
Yet Mariamne from her beauty's won  
Memorial more sure than tomb, or tower ;  
These both, to their last massive stone, are gone,  
But there remains the memory of a flower !

A Druid vestibule the Towers stand  
Before the palace, by the palace spann'd,  
Which rears behind its roof of plated gold,  
All round the verge with brazen statues set—  
And its majestic pillars, which uphold,

Each on a capital—its coronet—  
The jutting balustraded parapet.  
The walls are shining jasper, interlac'd  
With polish'd onyx, and a sparkling stone,  
Whose veins are delicate in silver trac'd,  
And vest the palace with a twinkling zone,  
Giving such radiance as Rome's skill'd train  
Throw in a fount of stars o'er her great fane.

A solemn silence through the city reign'd,  
A silence that in its intenseness pain'd,  
And from each narrow way to Zion's bound,  
There came nor stir, nor voice, nor any sound  
To tell of human life, tell Man was near—  
A city cow'd and paralyzed by fear.  
So far from Rome did Nero's rule dispense  
By tools as vile its blasting influence,  
And Gessius Florus here wrought deeds of shame,

Black as the worst that darken Nero's name,  
Here govern'd in as savage vein, and dire,  
As bade Rome be a fiddle's funeral pyre,  
And here, like Nero, took delight to see  
How much he could inflict of misery.

But though the hush—the stillness reach'd  
the ear  
As if the city held her breath in fear,  
It brought through Night to the susceptible  
mind,  
Worn by the day's parch'd heat, a sense refin'd—  
A sense half spiritual of peace  
Which gave from fear—from every fear—release :  
And to a chamber of the palace now  
Through open window wav'd this olive bough—  
A high and stately chamber, frescoed round  
With Dian and the nymphs Actæon found,

Where drooping hangings might, like glades,  
seclude,

Only four crystal lamps their light obtrude,

And, in the round steel mirrors opposite,

Betray the lovely bathers and their fright.

The whole imagin'd train show'd none more fair—

More fair than the two living maidens there :

The ward of Gessius one—ward and niece,

Ethereal and beautiful Lucrece,

The second her freedwoman, who, in years—

Some sixteen Springs—her other self appears.

Lucretia, last of the Gessian race,

From a Greek mother drew her form of grace,

Her father left her lands and store of gold,

And bounteous Nature gave a dower untold

Of golden tresses and of roseate bloom,

No wealth could buy, no poverty could gloom ;

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An air of stateliness, that look'd like pride,  
At times her native gentleness might hide,  
But from her eyes, when their uplifted lash  
Spread them as heavens in their heavenly blue,  
The innate temper of her soul would flash  
In its own brightness and the softest hue,  
Disclosing in this sky such depths of love  
As imag'd to the gaze the sky Above.

Adith, her freedwoman, like a sister bud,  
Deriv'd a kindred bloom from Hebrew blood,  
Her form as high a type of maiden grace,  
Nor less expressive her bright Eastern face,  
And in her amber eyes there shone as fair  
The sunshine's gleam as in Lucretia's hair.  
Her tresses, midnight black, dimm'd not this  
morn,  
They left as clear her beaming forehead's span,

While throwing locks a Naiad might have worn  
To her small waist, as only Beauty can,  
For Beauty's toilet all with her is born :  
'Tis not the curls, 'tis the fus'd charms adorn !

Adith in years, and oft in mood and thought  
Woman and Child intertwinedly inwrought,  
While, 'tween these stages in such happy flight,  
She was all Woman to the passing sight.  
In other lands she reach'd the early prime  
Pertaining to her own too sunny clime,  
Where she, by Nature form'd, design'd by birth,  
To rank among the noble of the Earth,  
Was torn by tumult, and a cruel fate—  
Torn violently from this high estate.  
Slain both her parents in the mad affray,  
Herself—a child—by soldiers borne away,

And sold a captive to a dame of Greece,  
She came to be the playmate of Lucrece,  
And they together grew, in love as years,  
In an endearing harmony of mind,  
The fellowship that at such age appears—  
Appears, and is, as truthful as refin'd,  
And rooted thus—in that deep soil of Youth,  
Bears to life's latest hour this core of truth.

Both to Jerusalem were freshly come ;  
As to a country one, one to a home—  
For home Lucretia found where'er she dwelt,  
But the sweet tie of country barely felt.  
Rome filled the world, and, in this endless span,  
Diffus'd the outspread nation to a clan,  
Which, loosening in distance, left Lucrece  
By blood half Rome's, by birth a child of  
Greece.



But Adith felt the patriotic fire  
Which nationality and race inspire—  
Which nowhere glows, beneath Oppression's  
smart,  
With deeper fervour than in Woman's heart.

“Thou hast, then, learnt—and learnt of  
Hebrew folk,”

Thus, after thoughtful pause, Lucretia spoke,  
“Thy father's brother here is living still?”  
“Yes, near the Market, on that soaring hill,”  
Quoth Adith, as, by mute accord, they both  
Glanc'd out upon the city's first strong growth,  
Which had from ancient time a fastness been,  
And rose up massive in the moonlit scene.  
“He ranks among the Chieftains of our Tribe,  
A Doctor of the Temple and a Scribe,  
Vers'd in the law, and fam'd for his decrees—

A leader of the sect of Pharisees.

Give me to-morrow grace, and I will go

And to his ear in plain recital show,

What Nature's witness in my face will prove,

The claim I have upon his name and love."

"Set forth betimes, and Lactus shall provide

A trusty soldier as thy guard and guide."

"Ah, no! let me, dear mistress, go alone!"

"Through those drear streets—those streets  
which we are told

Are by unbridled violence patroll'd,

Where murder lurks, and every wicked wrong

The weak can suffer from the ruthless strong?"

"Still, I had rather thus the peril dare,

Wrapp'd in a veil my face, my fears in prayer,

For, not to hide the truth, the Roman reign

Is to the Pharisees a hateful chain,

And Roman for my guard, I should not win

From my stern kinsman leave to plead my kin !"  
"And is this so important ?" quoth Lucrece—  
"So necessary to thy bosom's peace ?  
Then, what if he enshrine thee in his home—  
Must thou—thou, too, take up this feud with  
Rome,  
Become as gloomy as a Pharisee,  
And all thy pretty moods forsake—and me !"  
"Thee, never ! never ! while my heart shall beat !"  
And the sweet vow was seal'd with kiss as sweet.

With this embrace they from the window rose,  
To seek on one soft couch their night's repose,  
When Adith saw, from a large building near,  
A throng of men 'tween guarding files appear.  
"Alas !" she said, "it is the Sanhedrim, and  
they  
I heard a mocking soldier laughing say,

Are by false rumours brought to meet to-night  
To trap their youthful escort in a fight,  
So that the Guard, in waiting nigh, may fall  
Upon their ranks, as in a common brawl,  
Provoke a bloody and unequal fray,  
And terrorize the city as they slay.”  
“An idle tale! the soldier mock'd indeed,  
Knowing thy Hebrew ear was ripe to heed—  
And to believe!” As thus Lucretia spoke,  
Loud yells and frantic cries the stillness broke,  
And from a nook an Arab rabble sprung  
The Senate and its guarding files among,  
And club and javelin and flashing spear,  
By both sides brandish'd, meet in mad career.  
'Tis but one shock, when the marauders fly,  
One shock, as of two thunder-clouds on high,  
But through the riven gap new clouds arise,  
The Roman Guard the Hebrew flanks surprise,

And from the window the two maids behold  
Strife fling full-arm'd the bold upon the bold.

“ I saw one helm,” Lucretia said, in tones  
That quivered with the horror in her breast,  
“ One gleaming, white-plum'd helm, 'mid flying  
stones,  
Dash singly in advance of all the rest :  
I see it now !” “ And I !” quoth Adith, low :  
“ It still is in the front, still stops the foe,  
The moonbeams flash as lightning from that  
sword,  
And Angels nerve the soldier of the Lord !”

It seem'd, in truth, as if the Plume of White  
Brought to the combat more than human might,  
Bore its bold wearer harmless through each feat  
His arm achiev'd, to cover the retreat,

Until, at last, alone he keeps the pass—  
Alone confronts the gather'd Roman mass.  
The watching maidens dare not witness be  
Of the assault on this Thermopylæ.  
They turn away: then Adith breathes a cry,  
The hero falls—he falls! O! does he die?

## CHANT II.

### THE DUNGEON AND THE GARDEN.

HE did not die there—he of the White Plume—  
But in the palace vault he lay as dead,  
Stripp'd of his arms and strength, and waiting  
doom :

So weaken'd in sensation that the thread  
Within him left of life was but the breath  
That hangs the atmosphere between and Death.  
His eyes unclos'd, at length, and on the track  
Of memories faint, nis consciousness stole back—

At first, like the rent fragments of a dream,  
Confus'd, distracting, and without a clue,  
But kindling suddenly a darting gleam  
That brought his fate and fortune full in view.  
He sees the Guard—the fight—his stand alone  
As in a torrent's way a blocking-stone,  
Swept in an instant the fierce tide before,  
Borne down—he saw, he felt, he knew no more!

A Troglodytic burrow in the earth,  
The dungeon hid in Night its narrow girth,  
But through the darkness and a standing mist  
Which rose from its rank soil—the only floor,  
He felt how small the space that did exist—  
Felt in his breath, and in his every pore :  
For, as parch'd men in deserts water crave,  
So he for air was thirsting in this grave,  
And heighten'd torture came in Fancy's scope,



Presenting to his mind the mountain slope,  
Resounding in his ear the gentle breeze,  
As it woke music in the gladsome trees,  
Till he, deluded, sprang to reach it where  
He only found the slough spread by despair.

Alas! the moment seem'd too plainly nigh  
When all must fade away—when he must die!  
And now before his eyes a blindness stole,  
As if in Hades' shades to quench his soul.  
But this to him was but the passing cloud  
Thrown up by the dissolving body's dust,  
And in expiring life he clung uncow'd  
To the immortal life he held in trust  
In the last resurrection of the Just.  
A blest remembrance, which re-strung his nerve,  
As if the Soul leapt in it to preserve,  
And with Elijah's virtue in its breath

Swept back the folds, and broke the spell of  
Death.

So did he rally on the very brink  
Of fate—abyss from which he did not shrink,  
But, in the impulse inspiration gave,  
Stood on the verge and vaulted o'er the grave.  
Remain'd death's shadow ; for his peering sight,  
Unblinded now, and by his judgment lit,  
Met it around—met in the speck of Night  
That stood unfathomable in this pit :  
And not the mist that round his body clung  
Nor the stalactite that above him hung  
Nor his own hand outspread his gaze before  
The faintest outline through the darkness bore.

He clos'd his eyes, and open'd once again :  
Was it some phasm of the excited brain—  
A spectral and imagin'd aerolite,

Or did he see, in truth, a spark of light—  
Such light as is by noisome fens exhal'd ?  
And, stranger still, what seem'd a damsel veiled !  
As thus he doubts, the form and the dim ray  
Fleety advanc'd to where he wondering lay.

“Hebrew, take heart! and drink this healing  
wine !”

And to his lip was press'd a crystal cup :  
But, sweeter than the juice of sweetest wine,  
The gladdening voice of Woman rais'd him up.  
He fac'd the maiden, and low bent before,  
“I drink to thee! to thee!” he drain'd the draught,  
Which to his foundering strength such rescue bore  
As the wreck'd sailor finds upon a raft :  
And through his veins and through his frame  
there flew  
The will to dare and gather'd force to do.

Response the shrouded figure made him none,  
Or by a word, or by denotive sign,  
But silent stood, one object bent upon—  
Abrupt then turn'd, abrupt told her design.  
“If morning find thee here, to thee 'twill give  
Death on the Cross! Quick! follow me, and  
live!”

She led him here to where a deeper gloom  
An opening shows, like such as doors a tomb ;  
Her lamp reveals beyond a spiral stair,  
Which is the ladder to the Earth and air.

Steep the ascent, and the ascension slow,  
For one false step would plunge in depths below,  
And slanting roof which round the spiral led,—  
And but with this arose—kept bent the head,  
So that the lamp half-mask'd, lent scarce a ray,  
To show the straining eye the frightful way.

But lithe the guide, her foot and instinct true,  
She more divin'd than saw, more felt than knew,  
And thus the summit reach'd, the outlet found,—  
The dungeon's outlet was a pleasure-ground,  
And wide in front the palace garden spread,  
Flash'd with the silver by the moonlight shed ;  
So from the depths of sorrow, and from pain,  
Time leads us steeply up to joy again,  
Or Faith shows how we shall at last arise  
From the profound of Death in Paradise.

But of the shining rills and bright cascades,  
The marble Naiads, and the Nymphs as white,  
Which here on lawns, here deep in shady glades,  
Drew an illumination from the Night,—  
Of the fantastic dove-cots, which beguile  
To stroll the listless, and the gay to smile,  
The walks and alleys and the wildering maze

Which hid the boundary in a sylvan haze :  
Of these the rescued captive, though he glanc'd  
On the soft picture when surprise enhanc'd,  
Noticetook none: one deep-drawn breathhe gave  
To shake quite off the cerements of the grave—  
To bear to God the thanks of his freed breast—  
Thanks freedom's breath most eloquent express'd,  
And then his gaze at his companion flew,  
As if'twould pierce the veil enshrouding through.  
But in this mantle falling to her knee,  
She met inscrutable his scrutiny,  
And, of the face and form within the screen,  
Only two lovely loopoled eyes were seen.

“ I owe my liberty, my life to thee !  
What can I say ? what tribute equal give ?  
Be this my vow, this thy requital be,  
Henceforth for Israel alone I live !

Thee will I serve by labouring each day  
To wrest our country from the Roman sway ! ”

Thus he accosted : she attentive heard,  
Though restless the while as a timid bird,  
Then she replied—“ Whatever thy design,  
Know, ere thou mov'st, thy country is not mine !  
There is the gate, and thou art free beyond.  
Without or thanks to pay or future bond.  
Yet this I ask—that the first foeman's life  
That at thy mercy stands in any strife,  
Though vultures claim it for the Furies there,  
Thou wilt—thou wilt remember me, and spare ! ”

She was departing, but the Hebrew stay'd—  
“ One, one word more ! ” most earnestly he said.  
“ Thou'st from my sight been hid, and, alien  
thou,

I dare not ask to lift the curtain now :  
For God has curs'd strange beauty to our race  
Since Midian abused its winning grace  
To snare our chiefest. Ever, then, I'll deem  
That I beheld thee in a mystic dream—  
Beheld in thee a being of that mould  
Which in our Talmud we are darkly told  
Oft down from Heaven comes, with gifts unseen,  
As lights the dew on Hermon's pastures green.  
Only disclose—breathe on my soul, thy name,  
That I may feel this Angel to me came."

"My name is seal'd! and if thou'dst think  
of me,  
As of a simple maiden let it be,  
And thou shalt know there is as little harm  
In my poor face as there is power to charm."  
The shrouding veil swept back, and the soft Night



Lucretia show'd in her own beauty's light,  
Which, like a brilliant's pure intrinsic spark,  
Appear'd more chaste amid surrounding dark.  
"And now farewell!"

Like melody the tone  
Her voice left in his ear—but she was gone!

### CHANT III.

#### AMONG THE TOMBS.

A BOULDER hung the gate upon a ridge—  
A ridge the mighty fragment serv'd to screen,  
Until it took the semblance of a bridge  
Above the shaded deep of a ravine,  
Brink of a bluff precipitous descent,  
Where the deliver'd Hebrew came with pain,  
His strength, to its last ebbing, almost spent,  
In the rough way and the continued strain.  
But, fearing chase, he still push'd on, and slow  
Slid down deep furrows to the depth below.

'Twas a secluded and a solemn spot,  
Ledg'd o'er Jehoshaphat's expanding glen—  
So void, it seem'd by Nature's hand forgot,  
If not design'd a charnel-house for men.  
And this, in truth, it long had been, and now  
With bones and graves was strewn, and tombs  
    laid low,  
While the scarp'd mountain which the valley  
    barr'd,  
All o'er its breadth with sepulchres was scarr'd—  
Appalling to the eye, but not to Hope,  
Looking beyond the vision's little scope,  
Aware that all in land and ocean dies,  
From the shed atoms all again to rise,  
Knowing the phoenix World itself expires,  
To spring anew from its volcanic fires,  
And promis'd sure that thus the grave shall be  
The golden gateway of Eternity!

The moon a weird and spectral radiance  
flings

On the last resting-place of Israel's kings,  
Deep in the mountain's heart defying Time,  
A mausoleum awful as sublime.  
But vain to grave those characters in rock,  
They serve in later ages but to mock :  
Plain the inscription, but Man's riper lore  
Those infant characters can read no more,  
And heroes lie 'neath all their triumphs, sung  
In words that, with the tale, entomb a tongue.  
Blest Time ! to thus obliterate renown,  
Which gems with nations' tears the despot's  
crown,  
And barely niche in History's small span  
Names that, by havoc, once struck dread in Man !  
O, happy thought ! the savage conqueror's deeds  
The World remembers only while it bleeds,

But empires fall, and races pass away,  
And grateful Man still hoards the Poet's lay !

The fugitive, here pausing for a breath,  
In other temper scann'd this Court of Death,  
And, fired by the excitements of the day,  
Saw ages past by Fancy's dazzling ray,  
Which falls prismatic over distant Time,  
And gives to rapine, Glory's tints sublime.  
So the adepts of science through their glass  
The ray of an illumin'd taper pass,  
When, to the watching and admiring eye,  
A darken'd wall becomes the azure sky !

The Hebrew from his dream was rudely woke,  
A hollow voice through the deep stillness broke,  
And on his ear this direful challenge burst—  
“What seek'st thou from the dead, thou man  
accurst ?”

Here from the shadow came what phantom  
    seem'd,  
A shapeless head, whence hair uncouthly  
    stream'd,  
A form half-naked, lank, and incompact,  
Which, as it mov'd, would serpent-like contract,  
And then jut out a weird unwieldy length,  
In Frenzy's heaving restlessness of strength—  
The ruin of a man, too manifest  
By Evil—if not Evil's Sire—possess'd!

He of the Plume this fated Wanderer saw  
As one who, for his sins, cut from the Law,  
And from the synagogue cast out, had come  
To be a living Monument of Doom,  
And, not by scornful answer to defy,  
Would fain have onward pass'd without reply :  
But the Possess'd before him stretch'd his hand,

Too plain intent to grapple, and withstand.

Quoth he—" I know thee, Azlec of the Plume,  
 Son of the lawyer Ednah, Pharisee,  
 Come, sit thee down, upon this fallen tomb,  
 O, whelp of blood ! sit down, and hear thou me !"  
 Replied thus Azlec—" I'll nor hear, nor stay,  
 Nor longer suffer thee to bar my way.  
 Keep for thy master, Balth, the Sorcerer,  
 Thy soothsaying, and all it would aver !  
 I'll have no part in it !" Laugh like a scream—  
 A grating shriek, with words that did blaspheme,  
 The Wanderer's answer brought—" Whom am I,  
 then ?  
 The thrall of Balth, broke from his magic den ?  
 O ! whelp of blood, declare !" " Thou'rt Ichabod,  
 The Lost Scribe !" " Dolt ! I am that Scourge  
 of God.

Who frenzied Saul, first of Israel's Kings,  
The guilty blight that like a mantle clings  
Round each King after—for by each I stood  
To dwarf the mighty and to shade the good.  
'Twas I who prompted David, mid his sin,  
To plan Uriah's slaughter ; mine to win  
Wise Solomon from the pure faith to rove  
To worship idols, statued in a grove ;  
And when Chaldean envoys came as spies,  
I blinded pious Hezekiah's eyes,  
So that, in vaunting pride, he show'd them o'er  
His palace treasures and the Temple's store.  
And now about the Kingly tombs I prowl,  
To watch the gnawing worm, their charter'd  
ghoul,  
And guard from such as thou !"

As he thus said,

A sudden bound at Azlec's throat he made,



And the young warrior, in all his sinews spent,  
Dropp'd instant down, like a sapp'd battlement.  
When his assailant knelt his breast upon.  
Here came a Voice—" In Jesu's name, begone!"  
Slow rais'd the Lost his shapeless streaming  
head,  
Look'd fearful round, sprang to his feet, and  
fled !

## CHANT IV.

### THE HOME OF THE CHRISTIAN.

AGAIN from stupor Azlec rais'd his eyes  
To gaze around, bewilder'd by surprise,  
So like the imagery of a trance  
Was all he saw, where'er he turned his glance.  
His weary limbs found on fresh straw a bed,  
Dress'd were his wounds, and pillow'd his rack'd  
    head ;  
A mountain cave its sheltering roof spread o'er,  
A stream of sunshine carpeted the floor,

I kneel the Father's throne before,  
Thy Father, Lord ! by Thee made mine—  
I kneel to sue and to adore,  
O, win for me His grace divine !

And, Father ! God ! Almighty Power !  
Whose high command, " Let there be light !"  
Made not the life Thou gav'st the hour  
Man passes in this World of Night,  
Me succour so to bear the yoke  
Of human woes and mortal pains,  
That in my death I may invoke  
Thy Hand to raise where Jesus reigns !

Now plain the truth, it is a Christian prays—  
That sect alike by Jew and Gentile bann'd—  
Condemn'd in the arena's frenzied gaze  
To fight wild beasts, or as a torch to stand,—

Or, when not this, scourg'd, crucified, or flay'd  
With every mark and circumstance of shame,  
So bent the World, so firm its powers array'd,  
The creed to crush and trample out its name.  
And Aztec, strict in Jewish precepts train'd,  
Deem'd this a policy and judgment just :  
His countrymen denounc'd, Mankind arraign'd,  
Could he ignore such obloquy—and trust ?

Time suffered not to muse upon the theme :  
Close on the thought his host drew softly near,  
And tender'd a credential in the gleam  
His glance, more plain than words, express'd to  
cheer.

Unkempt his hair, his beard as roughly fell,  
But lightly round him fifty autumns cling,  
And in his deep-brow'd eye, as in a well,  
Still flow'd enthusiasm, a living spring.

From this bright depth there shot up now, like  
spray,

The smile that from his lips appear'd to break—

But 'twas his look gave the enlivening ray,

The flash, the light, that in the smile spake

The joy he felt to find his guest awake—

Awake and conscious, with the hue of health

Slow to the cheek returning, as by stealth.

He would have grasp'd his hand, as further bond

Of sympathy, did Azlec's look respond :

But the young soldier thought it meet to tell

What might his feelings change and pity quell.

“ A Christian thou, and I a Pharisee,

Can there 'twixt us be any amity ?”

To this his host—“ Look o'er the narrow bound

That prisons sects—on the wide world around,

And everywhere thou'lt see our Father's love

Extended, like His canopy above,

Alike o'er all. Shall we shut up our hearts  
'Gainst the sweet lesson Heaven thus imparts ?  
Or wilt thou not with me hold it is good  
All sects, all men, should live in brotherhood ?"  
Azlec replied—" My sire, a pious Scribe,  
Had doom'd to death a ruler of our tribe,  
Nathaniel—" here his host look'd quick away,  
Nathaniel he—which fain he'd not betray,  
When God had cast his enemy's sick son,  
So helpless cast, his nursing care upon.  
" Thus doom'd him," Azlec said, " for no offence  
But this—in truth, of vital consequence—  
That he forsook the law which Moses gave,  
And told abroad that Christ alone can save.  
As great Elijah slew the rebel rout  
Of Baal's mad worshippers, to stamp out,  
Our Scribes and Priests this heresy would stay  
Which seeks, like them, to take our law away,

And thou wouldst, like Nathaniel, by my sire,  
Be to the Cross condemn'd, or to the fire.

Judge, then, if thou—if thou can'st give to me  
The succour of thy hospitality."

"Most freely give—to thee, or to thy sire,  
Else should I justify his hatred dire,  
For our blest Master, Jesus Christ, has taught  
It is by love that hatred's to be fought,  
And such return as we to trespass deal,  
We must to God for our own faults appeal.  
Then, from thy breast dismiss all doubt, all  
fear,

Thou hast a right to kindly welcome here."

"Fair are thy words, thy deeds attest they're  
true :

If this thy faith, why does the World eschew ?"

Thus Azlec, in a gentler, musing tone,

As if within his mind new thoughts were sown,

Which did already in swift blossom bear  
Sweet Charity, that flower beyond compare.  
"The World eschews, yet does Christ's gospel  
spread,  
Spite of the World, where'er its light is shed,  
And in this wide diffusion gives a sign  
Its light is Heaven's and its source divine."  
"Ye say your Jesus is Messiah come :  
Would the Messiah leave us chain'd to Rome ?  
Is't not for Him our freedom to restore  
And David's kingdom—greater than of yore ?"  
"He shall restore the kingdom, but not now :  
No earthly sceptre could the realm endow—  
The kingdom God for him shall surely rear  
When from the clouds he bursts upon the sphere."

Then went Nathaniel on to speak of God,  
His might, His majesty, so vast, so high,



Gemm'd in the herb that plumes the meanest  
clod,

As much as by the stars on midnight's sky.

Kenn'd nothing he of the Infinitude

Those stars from depths remote light up so pale,

That o'er its breadth the Milky Way has strew'd

Full nineteen million Suns but as a veil,

A veil whence Science now abstracts a ray

To use the stars as mile-posts to survey—

Nor aught of the immensity of Time

Dim measur'd now the same, by that faint light,

Which travels from a distance so sublime,

Millions of years fade in the darting flight :

Nor of the untold ages that have left

Remains, like shadows, in the Earth's shut deeps,

Worlds mark'd by boulders where was once a

cleft

Worn by the torrent in demolish'd steeps—

Creations, older still, in footprints tomb'd,  
All vanish'd, lost, unknown, for ever gloom'd,  
Yet throwing splinters up, just as the skies  
Drop stones mysterious—for mysteries  
In flint—flint chipp'd—from those profound  
    escape,  
And vaguely show a skeleton of shape—  
Shape of a weapon, given how and when?  
Whence comes—who wrought; this dateless  
    work of Men?

Such problems and such themes, too big for  
    grasp,  
Nathaniel's simple lore came not within,  
Yet in his faith did he more truth enclasp—  
More sacred truth than they shall ever win.  
And now he show'd that ne'er again this Earth  
A Paradise shall be, as at its birth,

And could the King divine, Man's Saviour, rule  
A kingdom less serene, less beautiful ?  
No ; 'yond the fallen World His kingdom lay :  
Let them who sought it, first seek Him, the Way,  
And through His Word, and, what to all applies,  
His death and resurrection, claim the prize—  
The glory destin'd, stor'd, reserv'd for them  
In this, the heavenly Jerusalem !

In silence Azlec heard the lofty strain,  
That, not convincing, yet had power to chain,  
And on his spirit shed, like heavenly dew,  
The soothing peace it breath'd, in tones so new ;  
Him bringing to remain Nathaniel's guest,  
To share his meal, and on his bed find rest.

## CHANT V.

### ADITH IN THE MASSACRE.

REACH'D was the hill—the house—the house-  
hold floor,  
And Adith in her uncle's presence stood,  
And told in words, what in her face she bore,  
Her claim to be acknowledg'd of his blood :  
And both her hands he took, and glanc'd her  
through,  
Not doubtingly, and yet with eye of search,  
A look to note if all within were true  
As the inscription on the graceful porch.

Her glowing cheeks this truthfulness attest,  
And bear her, by that title, to his breast.

A man austere he look'd, and strong of will,  
His face deep mark'd with sixty's wintry  
    sear,  
And pinch'd by fasts—a face to awe and chill,  
And niching eyes that never knew a tear.  
And yet beneath his robe, with texts girt  
    round,  
Beneath his deadening panoply of zeal,  
His heart—that depth unfathom'd—could re-  
    bound,  
And Nature's deepest, gentlest instincts feel.  
Unlock'd both deepest, gentlest now ; for he  
Was Azlec's sire, and heard his son was slain,  
And Adith's presence seem'd a stay to be  
In the prostration of this cruel strain.

“To me in darksome hour thou’st come—  
a dove

I sent not out upon the troubl’d wave,  
Yet bring’st thou thence an olive leaf of love—  
A daughter—from that gulf, my kindred’s grave.  
In darksome hour, I say, which hope left none ;  
For yesternight I lost a noble son.

Who ’gainst the Romans by our Senate stood,  
And shielding, fell, his White Plume drench’d in  
blood.

My boy! my boy!” he mournful drooped his  
head—

“My only one! And thou, O! thou art dead!”  
Through soothing tears came Adith’s eager voice,  
“Now, thank our God! O! thank Him, and  
rejoice!

Thyson—if he whose helm bore the White Plume—  
I from my window follow’d through the gloom,

And, though oft sought by Death, he was not  
slain,

But fell a prisoner. More—from this chain,  
As through the palace was this morning told,  
He has escap'd, by flight most strange and bold."  
" Say'st thou he is alive!" wild Ednah cried :  
" Alive and free!" Adith low replied.

Thus rapt, they heard not coming a swift foot,  
Till presently flung wide the chamber door  
A man light arm'd, in Oriental suit,  
Which heavy dints of faithful service bore.  
Life's halest prime fus'd in his face its stamp  
With the bluff dash and freedom of the camp,  
And this an impress to his bearing gave  
Audacious, bold—some would pronounce it brave,  
Though scrutiny might in his small dark eye  
A lurking, knavish subtlety descry.

Such the once-Tetrarch Simon, from that state  
Depos'd, to sway too soon all Israel's fate.

His salutation rose into a shout.

" Good tidings, noble Ednah, from my scout !

Our Azlec has, through some mysterious spell—

By what enchantment wrought there's none to  
tell—

From dungeon kernell'd in the earth burst out,

And is at large. The search for him is keen,

But to this time without result has been !"

Then fell his glance on Adith, who, confus'd,

Recoil'd from it—being to man's gaze unus'd,

And out of reach her veil, she dropp'd her eyes

To borrow from their fringe a kindred guise—

Just as the ostrich slight his head enfombs,

And dreams he hides the grace of all his plumes.

Quick Ednah, too, shrank back in the blank air,

Which cloked his innate nature in his creed :



Yet gave he thanks to Simon, prais'd his care  
In gleaning news, and bearing with such speed—  
“Such news,” he said, “as Wonder girds with  
wings,

For the same tale my niece, this damsel, brings.  
Still seems it strange that Azlec, being free,  
Sought not his home!” Quoth Simon, “Wiser  
he

To find a refuge in some spot remote,  
No watcher near, nor hostile eye to note  
His hunted steps.” These words woke a  
suspense

That Adith rous'd from her shy diffidence.  
“'Twere well,” she murmur'd, “I at once should  
learn

What's bruited at the palace, and return,  
Or, that not safe, a silver token send  
If peril nigh—a gold if at an end.”

But Ednah did demur that she again  
Should through the city's length unguarded go,  
And said he would himself, with servants twain,  
Her escort be, and way untroubl'd show  
Round by the Essene's Gate, where a broad street  
The silver pool of Solomon led by,  
And Ophlas' quarter and its windings meet  
The Temple's cloisters, a secure retreat.  
"Methought I'd to the palace go alone,  
Nor let thee back, but claim thee as my own.  
But Azlec's danger bids me keep away,  
And better, till he's safe, thou there should'st  
stay,

When I will bring thee to my house to be  
To me a daughter!" Stern and cold his voice,  
Yet did the words make Adith's heart rejoice,  
And on his arm she laid a trembling hand,  
The sole response her feelings could command,

Except—what trembl'd too—a loving tear :  
Nor serv'd the time for more, as Simon here  
The speech took up, and thus to Ednah said—  
“ No need of servants—thou and I this maid  
Will through the city bear with less ado—  
Less risk of giving to pursuit a clue,  
And if more blades we want, 'yond Zion's bound,  
More shall my whistle's call bring quickly round.”  
Ednah this bolder plan approv'd, and they  
Straight from the house set forth upon their way.

A way most strange, 'twixt houses tall and  
high,  
Seeming a chasm from the roofing sky,  
So near the storied piles each facing stood,  
Projecting with their rising altitude.  
Massive and old the walls, from David's day—  
And times before, when Jebusites' the sway,

Long ere the city to the hero fell  
To be made here his kingdom's citadel.  
And such 'twas still—in this, its ancient part,  
Retaining the old kingdom's haughty heart,  
Preserving the traditions and the state  
Of the dead Court, 'mongst its dismember'd  
Great,  
The Nobles, Councillors, and letter'd Scribes,  
Who, by consent, still rul'd the subject tribes,  
And here, on Zion's height, were thron'd supreme,  
In the proud glories of a nation's dream.

Ednah and Simon hence heard with surprise  
From neighbouring streets a sudden murmur rise,  
Such as a gale brings souging in its course,  
From hills or distant woods, swept by its force,  
But scarce they look'd around, when came along  
The bursting voice of an unnumber'd throng—

And presently a flying swarm appears—  
Pursued and cloven through by Roman spears,  
Which strike, as they rush on, man, dame, and child,  
Till all the gory way with slain is pil'd.  
Adroitly Simon Adith caught around,  
To bear her on, where safety might be found,  
But she, in every nerve and feeling wrung,  
To Ednah's kindred arm by instinct clung,  
And Simon yielded to the mute appeal,  
And sprang on first, to pioneer with steel,  
Threading the laned labyrinth that surrounds,  
To reach the shelter of the Temple's bounds.  
Thus come they on the road made to unite  
The hill of Zion with Moriah's height.  
But seem'd too late, so block'd the lofty pass,  
A wild, disorder'd, terror-stricken mass!  
All through the city the alarm had spread,  
And thousands to the Sanctuary fled,

Aware Queen Berenice, Rome's ally,  
There now fulfill'd a vow to God on high,  
And hoping, on their prayer, this cruel raid  
Would by her sovereign influence be stay'd.

By Ednah's hand was Adith drawn along  
Wherever Simon pierc'd the heaving throng—  
Borne onward now, now jamm'd, borne on again,  
Now breathless—almost lifeless, in the strain,  
She suddenly look'd round on walls of stone,  
And found herself—she knew not how—alone!

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## CHANT VI.

### IN THE TEMPLE.

DENSE pour'd the crowd into the holy fane,  
By the great porch, which free and doorless  
stood,

Denoting thus no walls might e'er contain  
The house of God—the house whose bounds  
include

The wide, the vast, the whole Infinitude.  
Yet this majestic pile, by Herod rear'd,  
In matchless splendour, on the ancient site—  
And which a work all but divine appear'd,

To God gave an abode He did not slight.  
A hundred cubits was its stately height,  
And full to sixty in its length it ran,  
Though short of this, or forty from the porch,  
A Babylonian curtain broke the span,  
Down dropping from a triple-column'd arch—  
Its web of scarlet, purple, white, and blue—  
Of fire to give and water, earth, and air, the hue,  
And o'er the colours, rang'd so fair, were spread  
The mystic signs of Heaven, in golden thread,  
Which took the semblance of a thread of flame,  
So bright a radiance upon it came  
In front—came from the candlestick of gold,  
Whose seven branches each a flame uphold,  
That Seven Planets here, as in the sky,  
May lamp the hallow'd seat of the Most High.  
As plainly typical, on either hand,  
The Table and the Incense Altar stand :



The Table giving in twelve loaves a sign  
Earth owes its produce to the care Divine,  
Which sends the months in order through the  
year,

Each with the fruits they train Man how to rear :  
And the same sign—the same religious thought—  
Is by the Incense Altar shown and taught,  
There imag'd by sweet herbs, whose fragrance  
\* yields

A tribute back to God from teeming fields.

The chasten'd blaze spread by the golden  
walls,  
Owing its softness to the light subdued,  
The sunset of a summer eve recalls—  
So well the columns by their range seclude,  
And yet leave open, being spac'd apart  
For this effect, with all the artist's art.

Their form a grace, and their gold crown a flower,  
Mirroring the sunset which they half embower  
In lily marble and in golden vine,  
Whose clinging tendrils round the marble twine,  
And grapes of gold in decking clusters hang—  
As the acanthus o'er dead Beauty sprang,  
When her enwreathing and love-haunted grave  
To young Callimachus this pillar gave—  
This pillar and its capital divine,  
An inspiration from the watching Nine.

Before the Curtain and the lamps before—  
Between the Altar and the Table—stand  
Twelve surplic'd priests, who God on high adore,  
While harps resound their praise with burden  
grand :  
And here the Queen, Agrippa's sister, kneels,  
And all the fervour of the anthems feels.

Her hair luxuriant is wound to show  
A spot close shav'd, denotive of her vow,  
Whence, too, her wavy form is muff'd round  
In coarsest sackcloth, reaching to the ground.  
But floating movements give a wreath of grace,  
That mirrors back the garland of her face,  
Where rose and lily and soft violet meet  
In blooming cheek and brow and glances sweet—  
Eyes that at once Vespasian could lure,  
And virtuous Titus make a paramour.  
Pages and eunuchs on her steps attend,  
While men-at-arms a safe protection lend,  
And, in her own eclipse, her state maintain  
By the array and splendour of her train.

Majestic from her knee the Queen arose,  
And scarce her eye uplifted, when a cry  
Burst at her feet, as burst it from the throes

Of some frail life, which in her path did lie,  
And was by her unseen trod down to die.  
A prostrate suppliant meets her startl'd gaze,  
And in a voice unheard some favour prays.  
"Thou, Adith! What is this? Alas! I hear  
The dreadful sounds of tumult, which I know  
In thee, poor wretch! may well awaken fear,  
And bring back memories of early woe!"  
She gently Adith rais'd—"Take courage, child!  
The swarm is on us!" Through the porch there  
came  
A swarm indeed, like locusts from a wild,  
Or like the smoke before a crater's flame,  
A rolling undistinguishable mass,  
Through which no eye—not keenest glance—  
can pass.  
"O Queen! great Queen! the city runs with  
gore—

The Romans hunt us down! save, we implore!  
Save! save!" Troubl'd and pale Bernice's look,  
But she at once a resolution took,  
Imparting to an officer aside,  
Who, claiming silence, through the Temple  
cried—  
"The Queen will seek the Governor, and pray  
That he this lawless violence will stay."  
A grateful murmur from the crowd arose,  
Content to know the Queen would interpose.

Straight turned Bernice to the Woman's  
Court,  
Enjoining Adith to walk in her train,  
A herald went before, and, in support,  
A trumpeter rang out a thrilling strain,  
While by a way no wailing throngs besiege,  
An officer led forth his lady liege.

Then, for a moment in the Temple nave  
There reign'd almost the stillness of the grave—  
But 'twas a moment only—for the ear  
Barely had realis'd the silence drear,  
When one of the twelve priests, the brotherhood  
Who by the Curtain, Table, Altar stood,  
Turn'd with fierce gestures to the crowd dis-  
may'd—  
“ Are ye the flock of the Most High ? ” he said :  
“ His sanctuary this ? and are ye found  
So faithless, craven on its hallow'd ground ?  
What ye so meanly beg, claim with the sword,  
Nor make your trust a Woman, but the Lord !  
The armoury of David—who by might  
Tore this fair city from the Jebusite,  
And not by groans and tears—that nerve of  
power  
Is in the Temple treasur'd to this hour,

And safety and redress to you insures—  
For these your fathers' weapons now are yours !  
Can ye, as men, such fathers' deeds recal,  
And, arm'd as fully, unresisting fall ?  
I'll not believe—I dare not so blaspheme—  
As God's own people so abas'd to deem :  
And by the glory of the past, the fame  
A thousand triumphs shed on Israel's name,  
By this blest house, and Him who in it reigns—  
Last, O, fallen Israel, by your chains—  
I, Eleazar—I your High Priest's son—  
Bid you remember freedom must be won !”

His words impassion'd and his accents shrill  
Rang through the listening crowd the trumpet's  
thrill :  
No more they shrink, no more their foe alarms,  
And with one voice they cry—“To arms! to arms!”

## CHANT VII.

QUEEN BERNICE PLEADS WITH GESSIUS.

LONG Gessius, like a conspirator,  
Who waits an hour auspicious for his crime,  
In secret watch'd and subtly brooded o'er  
The wealth to Zion brought from every clime  
Where merchants from her marts, and from her  
Fair—  
For goldwork fam'd, and silks and linen rare  
And oil and wine—where her sage merchants  
went  
To reap Trade's harvests with unwearied toil ;



And he plann'd deep to lead to some event  
That would a warrant give him to despoil.  
With this he meant the soldiery to sate  
And make his tools, while he, adept in theft,  
His arm stretch'd further, to appropriate  
The richer booty in the Temple left.  
Enough of treasure there, in gold and gem—  
In priceless cups and works of antique art,  
A realm to dower or kingly diadem :  
And he design'd to keep himself but part,  
And part to Nero send—so to buy,  
With a surpassing bribe, immunity.  
What plea invent for outrage so immense?  
What pretext could he frame? Alas, the soul  
Resolv'd on Wrong, as light as the offence  
Weighs the false means which promise it the  
goal,  
And he conceiv'd the horrible design

To goad by slaughter the blind multitude,  
So long enduring and so long supine,  
At last to turn on his dragooning brood,  
As turns the worm itself, on the like spur—  
The spur of tramp'd or endanger'd life,  
And seems the heel of ruthless massacre  
Madly to challenge—mockery of strife!  
Thus, thus were made a crime—a plea defin'd  
To justify the pillage in his mind.  
And for success, needs but to hold in hand  
A force supreme, kept from the public sight  
Until, as from an ambush, on command  
It sprang complete, and crushed by simple  
    might.

Such was the ruffian host let loose to-day—  
Let loose as prelude to the morrow's sack,  
When Cesarea's cohorts, on their way,  
Were come to share and second the attack,

And Zion all—in Temple, mart, and street—  
Would lie prostrated at the conqueror's feet.

But now the Temple, in the people's hands,  
Betwixt the ancient city and the new  
Rears high its ramparts, and both sides com-  
mands,  
Cutting the line of Roman power through,  
So that the troops on helpless Zion thrown—  
The base assassin bands, on sudden find  
Where they for victims look'd, a wall of stone  
And an arm'd populace array'd behind.  
'Tis they—they, the pursuers, who must fly,  
Shut by this fastness from retreat or aid,  
And, haven safe, Antonia's Tower, is nigh,  
Where they take refuge, and the murderous  
raid  
Is—for the hour at least—by panic stay'd.

This while, the Queen, not hearing the re-  
bound—

The fair Bernice and her royal train,  
Preceded by the trumpet's ringing sound,  
Along the cloister echoed, came amain  
To the New City, on Bezetha's hill,  
A maze of marble and of stately stone,  
Of palace, tower, and fountain, lying still  
As a wild solitude, and not less lone ;  
The streets deserted, and the trader's store,  
Where mellow fruits hung round the skins of wine,  
Or goldsmith's work was by rich silks drap'd o'er,  
Or by Tyre's robes or Babel's linen fine,  
Close as a sepulchre, as oft the tomb  
Shuts o'er the Beauty yesterday in bloom.

Bright was the day and bright the cloudless  
sky,

But Fancy darken'd both to Adith's eye,  
Recalling the supreme and dreadful hour  
When Death fell in the night on Egypt's flower—  
Fell on the babe, its mother's tenderest care,  
The peasant's firstborn, and the prince's heir,  
Till left no house, to Egypt's furthest bound,  
Where He had not their lov'd, most lov'd one  
found.

But though, as now, then clos'd each Hebrew  
door,

'Twas then a sign the Angel should pass o'er.

O! would that God would now, for His name's  
sake,

By the same sign a new Passover make,

And to Bernice—to a Jewish Queen,

An Angel's power accord, by aid unseen,

To save from the destroying sword, and stay

The ruthless carnage of this fatal day!

Alas ! her hope—or rather her mute prayer—  
For prayer it was in thought, though left un-  
said—

Fell in her bosom back, when reach'd the square  
Where guards before the palace held parade.  
Forthwith this ruffian band swarm'd jeering round,  
Regardless of the presence of the Queen,  
More brutal some, more insolent, were found  
To mock her—even meet with threatening mien—  
A spirit bred from loosen'd discipline,  
Which bolder growing as it felt more free,  
Was soon to learn that it could stand alone,  
And make each General in his legions see  
An army, not the Empire's, but his own—  
A step to mount, not rail to guard the Throne.

The trumpet's blast call'd to the palace door  
The waiting ushers, who receiv'd the Queen,

Then to the audience-hall walk'd before,  
To lift the curtain that fell low between,  
Until she pass'd, and stood, an advocate,  
Where Gessius was the arbiter of fate.

Still on her changing cheek there was a trace  
Of the emotion, the deep feelings, stirr'd  
Within her heart, and mirror'd on her face,  
By all she just had witness'd and had heard.  
But she met Gessius with a look compos'd,  
Extended to his officers around,  
A look to win, but which, withal, disclos'd  
The majesty enthroned on brows thrice crown'd,  
And not one there who caught that look serene  
But recognis'd the presence of a Queen.

A jovial fat face and ruddy cheek  
Had Gessius Florus, and a pleasant smile,

•  
•

An aspect that did rather trust bespeak  
Than show, by any sign, inherent guile—  
Save dimly in the eye, that all in all,  
Where oft the soul its inmost shade lets fall.  
And Berenice saw one bloodshot glance  
Throw all his nature in his countenance,  
As one fork'd lightning, in its rapid flight,  
Throws up the hidden darkness of the night.  
But he forbore to turn upon a Queen,  
The sister of Agrippa, Nero's friend.  
And courteous and courtly was his mien  
And bland his air, while she, not to offend,  
Sought more to intercede than to defend,  
Urging the soldier's rage, the numbers slain,  
Claiming that he, and not his troops, should  
reign.  
“I pray, entreat thee for Agrippa's sake—  
For mine—” so strove she his stern will to shake—



"This raid to end, and show my nation grace."

"That thou art of this nation—the same race,  
Were plea enough, fair Queen! to claim release  
For its excesses, and from me win peace,"  
Quoth Gessius, "but peace is not its aim,  
But strife—revolt—the gage of sword and flame!  
To end by violence the Roman sway—  
Such is the cause of this unhappy fray!"

"Whate'er the cause, let it no longer rule,  
Nor further blood be shed! Most beautiful  
Is Mercy—ay! and most to Heaven's like,  
Extended by the hand provok'd to strike!"

"Authority would cease and order end,  
Did only mercy pillar and defend,  
That may suffice for Heaven and the Gods,  
The ruler who's but Man must stoop to rods.  
Yet, Queen, believe me, when I swear aloud,  
The soldiers will not harm a flying crowd,

And once the sword has put the outbreak down,  
It shall be 'sheath'd." Here turn'd he with a  
frown,

As through the hall a murmur came along—  
A low deep murmur from the waiting throng,  
And what might such commotion justify—  
A Pharisee—meets his astonish'd eye,  
A Pharisee and a Centurion  
Together by an officer led on.

But not until a troubl'd courtier near  
Their news and errand whispers in his ear,  
He learns his troops, sent forth in pride of power,  
Have safety sought within Antonia's Tower,  
And that the people, on the Temple's steep,  
All the approaches and the passes keep  
Whence Ednah comes—comes to demand a  
peace,

As a condition of the troops' release,

Those bands, expecting death, their hapless state  
Send the Centurion to relate,  
Send to entreat that terms be made, or all—  
Themselves, the garrison, the Tower—must fall !

A little startl'd, Gessius still heard  
The tale of each, without a wrathful word,  
For each, in sooth, brought news that in its hue  
Gave colour to the object in his view,  
And he had only now to temporise  
To win the city as a lawful prize,  
When the two Cohorts on the morrow came  
From Cesarea, to add flame to flame,  
To seize the Temple, and the Tower free,  
And the blind engines of his purpose be.  
Meanwhile, he'd yield—since time must inter-  
vene—  
Not to the people's Envoy, but the Queen,

And 'neath reviling speech and jaunty air,  
Mask all he fear'd and all he meant to dare.

“ Thus see'st thou, Queen, how hopeless 'tis  
to seek

By gracious sway to curb this populace :  
While we of clemency, of mercy, speak,  
They claim dominion, they would us abase—  
Would cover our bright standard with disgrace.  
Wilt thou plead still ?” “ Plead thou, O, Queen,  
no more !”

Here Ednah cried—“ I come not to implore  
But to demand—not to beseech, but treat.  
Why should'st thou sue, since charge there's  
none to meet ?

None, Queen Bernice ! for it cannot be  
A charge 'gainst any, nor can need a plea,

That they gave not their mother, sister, wife,  
Themselves and children, to the murderer's  
knife !

If this indeed a crime, curst be the slave  
Who'd not be steep'd in guilt, and let him crave,  
And be denied, the liberty to live !  
For us, we will not basely cry ' forgive !'  
No ! what to-day we've done, we'd do again—  
Again, I say ! on the same cruel strain,  
But though we ask no grace, end our alarms,  
And I am pledge that we lay down our arms.  
Restrain the soldiers, and restore the law,  
We from our ramparts instantly withdraw !"

Quoth Gessius—" A proper lawyer's cry !  
He wants but law—the want of all his fry,  
That is their panacea and their cure  
For every ill—a remedy most sure.

But it must be a law themselves have made,  
Which they expound, and they at will evade.  
To mete out justice, all to treat alike,  
The poor to shield and guilty rich to strike,  
Is law their souls abhor!" "Give only this,  
And if we murmur, our complaint dismiss.  
I ask no further, seek no better terms—  
When their fit seal, an amnesty, confirms."  
So Ednah spoke, and won to speak the Queen,  
As the conspiring Gessius had foreseen,  
And though by Ednah sway'd, made it appear  
'Twas to the Queen alone he lent his ear—  
To her entreaty and her station high  
Gave the compliance he would else deny:  
The while, in truth, this was an artifice  
To cloke a new design—a dark device,  
Hiding its toils in a dissembling claim  
For reparation to the Roman name.

“ This proof to-morrow when the Cohorts come  
Let them receive of loyalty to Rome,  
That on the road the populace await  
To bring with salutation to the Gate !”  
Spoke Ednah proudly—“ Roman, we obey !”  
And, bending to the Queen, he strode away.

## CHANT VIII.

### THE HEART'S IDOLATRY AND THE SOUL'S.

SOON as Bernice's train stood in the hall,  
Adith, at home, dropp'd from its loose array,  
To seek Lucretia, and her ear enthral  
With the events, the horrors, of the day,  
Which in remembrance, in her haunted mind,  
Surrounded still—a whirl, delirium,  
She could no more evade nor cast behind,  
Than the soft-breasting sand the ocean's foam :  
Yet through it all she saw, as on a strand,  
Azlec, her kinsman, a bright presage stand !



He who so bo'ldly battl'd—whose strange flight  
From the deep dungeon's hold did so enhance  
His matchless prowess in the midnight's fight  
By the next morrow's halo of romance,  
Was of her blood—from the same grandsire  
came,

And she participated in his fame.

True, this thought, too, was darken'd by a  
fear—

So flings a torch a shadow in its rear,  
Azlec might be recaptur'd, and amain  
Brought back to prison—brought there to be  
slain!

Like a frail boat upon a restless sea  
Her woman nature, in its hopes so brave,  
Rose thus with expectation's buoyancy,  
And sank with the subsidence of the wave,  
As fancy falter'd, and her heart misgave.

She heard Lucretia had gone forth alone  
To ramble in the garden—in the glades,  
The sylvan walks as yet to her unknown,  
But luring by their brightness and their shades,  
And she went quickly and close search'd each  
spot

Where stood a bower or was hid a grot  
Or where a cedar arch'd a lonely seat—  
She went in vain, in vain sought the retreat  
Where she had hop'd to tell Lucrece apart  
All the intense emotion of her heart.

Just as she turns disconsolate away,  
A path attracts her in a copse to stray ;  
And she discerns the gate, and, lying near,  
What shows, at least, Lucretia has been here—  
A damsel's scarf, with broidery display'd,  
As damsels oft themselves love to parade !

Lucretia, then, must through the gate have gone  
To walk the precipice's verge upon,  
A prank regarded not by Adith strange—  
For daring was Lucrece, and prone to range.  
Adith, less rash, with timid steps and slow,  
Crept on till she espied Lucrece below,  
Espied—alas!—where the ravine spread wide  
Sitting in discourse by Azlec's side  
The kinsman only seen in midnight's gloom  
But stamp'd on Adith's soul by his White  
Plume.

Not with expectancy of such event  
Lucretia sought the spot ; she thither went  
Conceiving Azlec might be hiding near  
Till peril of pursuit should disappear,  
And 'twas her aim to place some sustenance  
Where, full in view, it might attract his glance.

The solitude, the wild, the fallen tombs,  
The frowning mountain, and the glen's deep  
    glooms,  
The precipices, in their blank profound,  
Reflected by the human graves around,  
As castles by a river's border throw  
Their shadow'd image to the depths below—  
These each in turn impressed her fancy's eye—  
Not these o'ercast her face, nor woke that  
    sigh!

Exploring, she discover'd a steep cleft,  
Whence topp'd down a vanish'd torrent's bed,  
Too like the furrow in the bosom left  
By passion's torrent, when the passion's dead;  
But where, at first, flows a transparent rill,  
A sparkling, beaming, and untroubl'd stream,  
As now Lucretia, with all passions still,

Descends from rock to steep, in love's first dream,  
When steeps a level, rocks a garden seem.

And it so chanc'd that Azlec, on his way  
To reach the city, by Jehoshat's vale,  
Came as she lighted, like a mountain fay—  
The lovely fairy of an Eastern tale,  
Right in the path, and on the instant knew  
Her spiritual face and classic air,  
Which, so refin'd at night, day gave to view  
In lines as delicate, and tints more fair :  
And his admiring eye flash'd out a glance  
That brought a glow, the morning's blushing  
hue,  
Into the rose upon her cheek's expanse,  
And shot a thrilling sense of rapture through,  
As if her heart felt morn's ambrosial dew.  
Yet she perceiv'd, withal, his look was sad,

And overlaid with grave and anxious thought,  
Which in his joy forbade him to be glad,  
And told, though he had come, not she was  
sought.

This paled her cheek's sweet rose, and gave her air  
The stately grace the lily droops to bear—  
As graceful she, and stately droop'd—for such  
Is, in its harmony, all Beauty's touch,  
The flower symbols Woman in its grace,  
As She the flower in her blooming face.

    Their first discourse reveal'd Lucretia's aim—  
“ To bring thee a supply of food I came,  
And I thank Ceres thou'lt thyself receive  
What else I'd been constrain'd with Chance to  
    leave,  
When thou, not knowing of hot search around  
Might'st by the scouring soldiery be found,

Take refuge in those heights, where some deep  
cave

From capture and a cruel fate may save,  
And I each day will lay provision here,  
Till search is o'er, and nought remains to fear."

Such forethought for his safety, and such care  
From Azlec won the thanks which in their air  
More than in words—more than in tone express'd,  
Are to the eye as well as ear address'd ;  
And he recounted how, in truth, a cave  
To him an hospitable shelter gave  
And timely 'tendance, through the later night,  
When he was left by wounds too weak for flight.  
"But now," quoth he, "I can pursue my way  
Where no foe lurks, no traces will betray,  
And by the Temple's cloisters safely reach  
In Zion, my own home."

While thus in speech,  
They on a block of crumbling stone took seat,  
Screen'd by a sycamore from the consuming heat—  
A sycamore that, from its boughs outspread,  
The coolness of a fountain's waters shed,  
“Yet tell me of thy wounds, and what the yoke  
That so weighs down thy brow,” Lucretia spoke,  
“O! is it pain? or grief? or can it be,  
What most it seems, a mournful fantasy,  
Which of the Present has a mirror wrought  
Wherein the Future gives its shape to thought?  
As if the clouds now floating on the air  
Could faintest impress of to-morrow bear!”  
“Less can the Present or the morrow mould  
The Future that my thought would fain unfold!  
Clouds may disperse, a speckless sky appear,  
And yet the Heavens from their depth cloud  
here,—”



He touch'd his breast, "and the eternal goal,—  
The Future I would mirror to my soul,  
Blinds by its very light." "How! blind by light!  
This seems"—she smil'd—"a paradox's flight!"  
"Then, turn thine eyes upon the Sun, and see,  
How, at its source, light shrouds in mystery!  
Thy glance has fallen—fallen as it rose  
To bid the silken lashes o'er it close.  
I sought like this—as on a glance—to mount  
Full light to borrow at its highest fount,  
Like this, into my breast withdrew my gaze—  
My breast, where all is darkness and amaze."  
"What else could be?" Lucretia made reply,  
"Rais'd to the Sun the sacrilegious eye?  
Spreads not the morning ample brilliance round?  
Why look for brighter, could there such be found—  
Found to bewilder, to throw back in gloom,  
In the confounding mystery of doom?"

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To steal the light of Heaven from its pyre,  
Is, like Prometheus, to steal its fire,  
And on the flight audacious may entail  
A fate as terrible." This Pagan tale  
Erstwhile the Pharisee had scorn'd, but now  
It only shaded deeper his grave brow,  
For his own creed began to be a yoke—  
And, more, 'twas Beauty—'twas Lucretia spoke.  
"Thou sayest wisely—morning's beams are best  
For human sight, and well may bound its quest.  
So my late host, a Christian, bade me lift  
Upward my eyes, and there to gaze intent,  
Not on the Sun, but on the Day, its gift,  
Which he made image thus his sentiment—  
That what Day's to the Sun, the very same  
To God is Jesus Christ, who from Him came ;  
A revelation luminous to be  
For all the Earth, and all humanity :

And what Day to the World—life, Heaven's sky—  
Such to mankind this Dayspring from on high.  
Now Jesus Christ, though I was always taught  
To hold his precepts and himself at nought,  
Did, as I've come to know, such things unfold  
As only by a Prophet could be told,  
A Prophet—if no more—inspired to claim  
Trust in his word, reverence for his aim,  
And he, in face of death, aloud made known  
Our Zion in this age should be o'erthrown.  
'Tis this—not wholly it—but this in chief,  
That clouds my soul, and steepes in moody grief."  
"Away these phantoms, and away these themes,  
Graspless as air, illusory as dreams,  
And which a nightmare on the spirit weigh—  
A nightmare that oppresses through the day!  
This Jesus is long dead, and why should'st thou  
Dig up his unfulfill'd predictions now,

When thou no more their several parts can'st know  
As he deliver'd, than the melted snow  
Upon the distant mountain's top recal  
While Summer's burning rays there blinding fall!  
Leave, then, such visions, nor to-day despond  
For what may come to-morrow—or beyond.  
The sea flows round, and how can we explore  
Before we reach, before we sight the shore?  
Enjoy what we possess—the passing hour!  
Alas! 'tis all the Gods leave in our power!"

Here she held up a bunch of purple grapes—  
Bunch'd as the heart their own perfection shapes—  
And bade him part in twain, as she the while  
In her ripe, ruddy lips did part a smile,  
And what seem'd fruit again more brightly hued,  
Those lips themselves, with bloom of youth im-  
bued.

And Azlec felt the spell of the sweet charm,  
And gave no heed to the resisting qualm  
Traditions and his iron creed begot—  
Creed for the moment, 'neath those eyes, forgot.  
Till she recall'd by casting down some wine—  
“ Libation this to Ceres the divine !  
Now we may eat.” “ He may not, shall not eat.”  
And they look'd up Nathaniel's glance to meet,  
A glance which Azlec as a glacier felt,  
But which Lucretia's gaze caus'd half to melt,  
As if she brought up Pity, with a tear,  
To mollify a judgment too severe.  
Yet stern he spoke, and deeper than his look  
Pierc'd the sharp words of his pronounc'd rebuke.  
“ Thus Adam was by Eve beguil'd—with fruit,  
And did the fount of human life pollute :  
And wilt thou take from Woman's hand the gift  
She with a rite idolatrous doth lift

To thy consenting lips—ah! to thy soul?  
For this it is the Serpent would cajole,  
'And prompts this damsel, as he prompted Eve,  
To use her charms to lure and to deceive."

Such words to Azlec too austere-ly blam'd,  
Himself condemn'd unheard, Lucrece defam'd,  
For he'd design'd to show the Pagan maid,  
What horror to his soul her rites convey'd,  
And she, he knew, free from a second thought,  
But paid the worship her religion taught.  
Withal, he was reminded, by that deed,  
Of the enthralling precepts of his creed,  
Which he saw frowning rise, and intervene  
A gulf, Lucretia and himself between;  
Yet in this misery, and this despair  
He made her still his first, his only care.  
"Ere thou condemn'st," he to the Christian said,

“Learn if there be offence in this fair maid !  
Late told'st thou me that blest were they who went  
To visit in the prison, or who gave,  
When nothing they had more, a kind intent  
And but a cup of water to Want's crave,  
To me came she in prison and there brought,  
When I was sick and wounded, healing wine,  
Then led me forth, and now again has sought  
To warn of peril, and to countermine—  
Such is the scope, the whole of her design.  
The Lord forgive her the libation pour'd  
To a false idol, and for thee—O, teach  
How He—He only, is to be ador'd,  
He whom thou sayest Gentiles now may reach  
Through Him thou worshippest and Christians  
preach.

To her—to her—set round in Pagan night,  
Show in the void profound the distant light.

This task befits—nay, it belongs to thee.  
I am a soldier and a Pharisee,  
And, by a solemn vow, have stak'd my life  
Upon the hazards of a hopeless strife,  
Which now calls hence—calls where I cannot tell,  
Nor care, in truth—since her I bid farewell !”

Ere answer could be made, he strode away,  
Nor cast a glance behind ! for one such look,  
Lucretia meeting, had compell'd to stay ;  
And even as he went his purpose shook,  
And claim'd all the devotion of his soul  
To balance it anew, and keep it whole.

As the adieu heard in a funeral knell  
Upon Lucretia's ear broke his farewell ;  
And she sat motionless, although her gaze  
His fading figure follow'd in amaze,



As mourners watch their Lost sink in the gloom  
That walls and floors the separating tomb.  
At that dread moment Faith lifts up her voice,  
And bids the heart in its deep grief rejoice :  
For when there waiting men a Saviour see—  
Death has no sting, the grave no victory.  
And so Nathaniel to Lucretia now  
Unfolded, mid the silence of her woe—  
Down in the pit where her despairing soul  
Saw from each thought a deeper blackness roll,  
The consolation, the assuring hope,  
That gives the strength to stand, the power to cope,  
In pit the darkest, in the way most drear,  
In heaviest, murkiest atmosphere ;  
A guiding light, a safety-lamp. divine,  
To bring from the recesses of the mine  
Straight to the shaft, which shows bright Heaven  
above

In the wide span of the Redeemer's love.

At first, no heed of his discourse she took ;  
It reach'd her like the murmur of a brook :  
A soothing sound, just audible—a tone  
That made the solitude appear more lone.  
But through this haze it gradually stole  
More sensibly on her awakening soul.  
Until the brook—the murmur barely heard—  
Brought living water in each flowing word  
And, though not then to take effect, this left  
A memory, a vestige in a cleft—  
An aspiration for the true and pure,  
Which could not but develop and mature.

“To-morrow meet me here again,” she said,  
“When I'll more heed and thou shalt more per-  
suade.”

She waved her hand and turn'd to the  
ravine,  
Where, hid by crags, she climb'd the steep un-  
seen.

## CHANT IX.

### THE BATTLE WITH THE COHORTS.

THRONG'D on the morrow, through Psephinus'  
gate,  
Beneath its massive tower, a multitude  
To meet the Cohorts, and, with shouts elate,  
The salutation give of brotherhood ;  
And, though no face was lit with Welcome's  
smile,  
The salutation of the heart, most sought  
To throw into their look, for a brief while,  
The lightness that conceals the gloomy thought.

Thin was the mask, and, 'neath it lay a thread  
That soundless bore the thought from breast to  
breast,

As, by the cable in the ocean's bed,  
Soundless from sphere to sphere thought is ex-  
press'd.

All ranks were there, but chiefly Labour's train,  
The mason and the smith, the carpenter  
And the scorch'd husbandman, each in the stain  
Of honest toil, the stain that leaves no slur ;  
Surrounding now a lordly loiterer,  
Now long-rob'd Scribes, or the gay Sadducee  
Who from a night's carouse was wending home,  
When he broke from his way, in drunken glee,  
To hail and mock the coming bands of Rome,  
Some Priests were there—the Priests who raise  
their eye

To powers on Earth, not to the Power on high

And for their temple use the first resort  
Where homage may be tender'd to a Court.  
And there were scatter'd round some alien  
    groups,  
Greeks, Arabs, and poor slaves, dark Ethiopes.  
But vain the gaze in Woman's face would seek  
The weakness that's a tower to the weak,  
And it struck many with a secret fear  
That Order's presage, Woman, was not here!

    And 'twas a spectacle to lure her glance,  
And to attract from household and from bower—  
The proud array and picturesque advance  
Of this parade of military power,  
From the long rocky heights defiling down,  
A host of men mov'd with the step of one!  
Of infantry the foremost Cohort told  
Eleven hundred swords and five—all tried

And hardy men, together here enroll'd  
As the select of Cohorts nine beside :  
Nor less the prime its complement of horse,  
Which two and fifty and a hundred counts,  
The wings to cover, or to poise their force,  
When danger—its appointed post—confronts.  
The second Cohort takes a range less wide—  
But fifty and five hundred foot appear  
Which in five centuries their ranks divide,  
Till horsemen sixty-six bring up the rear.  
Safe from attacks, the siege-train rides between,  
And the sure-footed mule bears staves and  
    planks,  
To build the camp, or mend the bruis'd machine,  
Or raise entrenchments round outnumber'd ranks.  
The troops move six abreast, the files six deep,  
And man from man three measur'd feet is pac'd,  
That he may freely march, and ready keep

The arms and three days' ration round him  
    brac'd—

A strain severe, but vigorously fac'd.

    Lit by the sun while yet it was afar,  
The host pour'd down the pass a stream of fire,  
The wave, the surging cataract of war,  
In flashing spear and lance and pilum dire,  
And spade, borne here to tear, not till the land,  
And sheafs, which, lieu of corn, sharp arrows  
    band,  
And all the panoply of mail—the helm,  
Cuirass and greaves, and the brass-studded shield,  
Strong to protect, and light to overwhelm  
In the swift movements of the bloody field,  
To which the Legion's Eagle, in advance,  
From midst the spears, her eyrie, seems to  
    glance.



The Valley of the Cheesemongers—the span  
'Twi't Zion's and Moriah's steeps—they pass,  
And here the city's waiting throng began,  
And flank'd the roadway with a living mass,—  
An avenue, which now resounds along  
The people's salutation, like a song.  
No answer came—no echo back, and fell  
At once to silence the harmonious swell,  
Till boding murmurs rose, as if there flew  
A sudden blast down the 'live avenue,  
That through the human trees reverberates  
In one long strain up to the city gates.  
Alas! this blast caught up the Cohort wave,  
And like a surf upon the people flung.  
Though how it happ'd, whose hand a blow first  
gave,  
Never by chronicler was told, nor tongue,  
Nor by bemoaning poet has been sung.

'Tis but to say the flood of naked blades  
Ingulf'd all near, ingulf'd in blood it shed,  
While, like the foam dash'd where the sea invades,  
The pilum's deadly shower struck far ahead ;  
And from the foremost swept a toll of dead,  
Or drove upon the horse, which o'er the slain,  
Rode fierce and pitiless, to slay again.  
Meantime, the flying thron'g the gateway block  
That none can pass, none move, none see or hear,  
And dreader sight the heaving of this rock  
Than even the dreadful carnage in the rear—  
For brother brother chokes and tramples here!  
Just like a cauldron's rage this fight with death—  
Just like a cauldron's steam hung the jamm'd  
breath  
The while behind a frightful pressure drove  
Continuous, still gathering in force,  
Until, at last, in the gorg'd way was clove

*THE LAST DAYS OF JERUSALEM.* 111

Right in its panting midst, a headlong course,  
And reeling men shot through—shot through to  
meet

The Palace Guard, most cruel of Rome's bands,  
By Gessius sent in haste to bar retreat,  
And, while the city terror-stricken stands,  
Swift with the Cohorts seize Moriah's steep,  
And on the Temple like a whirlwind sweep.

Soon knew all Zion of this deadly raid,  
Seen from her walls, in sooth—whence the black  
tale,

By Panic's wing and Horror's tongue convey'd,  
Reach'd every door, and every cheek made pale.  
Then to each household fiery zealots came  
From Eleazar, bidding high and low  
If still they'd live, still save their race a name,  
And break Rome's thralldom, now to strike the blow.

The check to Gessius on the day before  
Gave patriots themselves a flag of hope,  
The trophy they from the drawn issue tore,  
And planted, as it were, upon a slope,  
Which seemed a way to lead the valiant on,  
To where, by daring, freedom might be won,  
And so all join'd in the resounding cry—  
This day should see them free, or see them die.

A company rough-arm'd, with sword and sling,  
But bearing hearts that each an army bring,  
At once is form'd to reach the crowded gate  
And rescue the survivors from their fate :  
Whence now it haps a barrier arrests  
The charging Guard—a barrier of breasts,  
Unyielding as a battlement of stone,  
Before the flying remnant deftly thrown.  
Here as they stand, they peal a shout on high,

And twenty thousand men rise at the cry,  
Defiling swiftly from each street and bound,  
Swarming the lanes, thronging the housetops  
    . round,  
And the balk'd Guard behold, with stunn'd surprise,  
A host that seems descended from the skies.  
But at this instant, in a pause intense—  
A daring rush or panic in suspense—  
The Cohorts come to nerve the wavering force,  
And make the rush more sure with charging horse,  
The Hebrews undismay'd the onset dare,  
And stones and darts hurl deadly through the air,  
Hurl with an aim that sends them as one blow  
Full at the breast of the advancing foe.  
Saddles are emptied, madden'd horses fly,  
And trample on the fallen as they die,  
But the embattl'd line keeps on its march,  
Driving the Hebrews tow'rds the Cloisters' arch,

Where they, secure in flank, have mass'd their  
power,

To bar the passage to Antonia's Tower.

The battle's fury and its surging roar

Thus chiefly on the pillar'd cloister bore,

Which it made ring with the loud clash of arms,

The crash of stones, and trumpet's shrill alarms.

Here Aztec fought, and Zion's bravest press'd

Each hand to hand the foe, and breast to breast,

And now the Romans', now the Jews' attack

A step has won, to be won instant back,

'Till all are wading in the blood they've shed,

And demons seem to fight round heaps of dead.

Above the raging fray the evening threw

Her first faint shadows on the drooping sky,

When a stol'd priest a brazen trumpet blew

Sonorous, from the Temple's angle nigh,

Nam'd Pastophoria, to notify  
To every ear, and in the public view,  
As from old time had weekly there been done,  
The holy Sabbath was this hour begun.

Alas! the day which finish'd Nature's plan  
By crowning it with God's own image, Man,  
Man here, beneath God's eye, elects to scar  
With the defacing sacrilege of war :  
And vain the trumpet calls to rest and pray,  
He heeds but that which louder calls to slay,  
And which peals now above the battle's din,  
To urge him on to perish, or to win.

But as a storm roars loudest, and its rain  
Pours fiercest down, just ere it clears away,  
So from this moment did the battle wane  
And spread a slackness through its spent array,  
Then each side stood quiescent, though at bay ;

As oft the thunder-clouds wall round the sky  
After the storm itself has driven by.  
While thus the Hebrews in expectance wait  
What may give victory, what may be fate.  
News comes that Gessius and his boasted might,  
Broken and panic-struck, have taken flight :  
And leave in Zion but Antonia's Tower  
To guard and represent the Roman power.

Round this lone post excited throngs soon press  
With that supreme artillery, Success,  
Which through stone walls, through strongest  
keeps, can reach  
The hearts within, and there the fortress breach,  
Breach with despondency and breach with fear,  
As on the first assault it now did here,  
Bringing the chief of the beleagur'd band  
To ask of Eleazar his right hand,



And, as he grasp'd, to beg by this he'd swear  
Each life within the fort now his to spare—  
Which Eleazar, on his hand and oath  
In full subscrib'd, as priest and captain both.

Foul perfidy and execrable crime,  
That brand like Cain's brand, to the end of Time,  
For how he broke the pact, and what befell  
Record and song to every age shall tell—  
Tell how the plight to spare, the pledge to save,  
Which under bond of hand and oath he gave,  
Soon as the garrison march'd forth and stood  
Mid his array, he tramp'd in their blood.

“ I will not spare,” he rais'd his voice to say,  
“ I will not spare one Roman life to-day.”  
And loud the zealots round applaud the speech  
Too much their own for any to impeach :

There is but one—'tis Azlec—to protest  
By the true sympathies in Honour's breast,  
And urge the infamy, the lasting shame,  
Such treachery will bring on Israel's name.  
“ And this remember, that our sires, of yore,  
Gave Gibeon the peace they rashly swore,  
Though to their own confusion this was done,  
And though the compact by a fraud was won.”  
Quoth Eleazar—“ Thus our land has been  
Curst from that hour by a foe within,  
But Samuel a higher counsel knew  
And Agag wrench'd from Saul's weak hands and  
slew,  
So I devote these captives of my sword—  
These first-fruits of our triumph, to the Lord.”

No more could Azlec reason ; for the crowd  
His voice suppress'd in acclamations loud,

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As round the captives on each side they close  
A gulping wave of lances and of foes.  
Before this tide, unflinching as a rock,  
Without a cry the Romans meet the shock,  
And, calling on the gods to note their doom,  
Sink down together in a hecatomb.

## CHANT X.

### LUCRETIA AND THE SORCERER.

SOON the defeated Romans draw their might  
Together, from the territories round,  
And Legions and Auxiliaries unite  
To march in force on Zion, and surround.  
By Cestius Gallus was this army led,  
The President of Syria—a man  
Us'd to step wary in another's tread,  
But now by Fortune push'd into the van,  
And through weak fears made daring, and in-  
trigue,

With Gessius knit in arms, and closest league.

The massive host deploy'd on the high plain  
Which Scopas, springing tow'rds fair Olivet,  
But falling short, laps mid the hilly chain—  
Laps as the glacis of this parapet  
Behind the moating glens of Salem set.

Here Rome's troops halt—the Legions—not  
the swarm,  
The troops irregular, sent by allies,  
Agrippa, Antiochus, and that man of storm,  
Sohemus, who, in knightly guise,  
Himself his soldiers heads. These far behind  
Through the steep passes and the gorges, wind,  
In rough encampments, or are left to range  
Deserted hamlets and the mountain side  
In Oriental freedom, prone to change,

And hard to rein as the wild steeds they ride.  
So all the rocks they dot with colours bright  
Of many tints, and flash with the steel'd breast  
And the gay streamer's glare—the gaudy blight  
Which kernels War in show, the eye to wrest  
From its black heart to its seducing vest.

A Legion—the fam'd Twelfth—holds in the  
rear

The ancient cities and historic soil,  
And through the barrier erected there  
Not deffest foe can break to slay or spoil.  
The Mount of Olives forms its guarded front—  
The Mount which was humanity's first font—  
Olives which gave the Olive Leaf of God,  
Now through their alleys by invaders trod,  
Loosing red War and spreading vengeful spears,  
Where Jesus warn'd and shed prophetic tears.

A villa on the central summit stood,  
Haunt of Rome's Governors in summer time,  
Amid the hills and the embowering wood,  
Yielding the air of a more bracing clime :  
And here Lucrece and Adith find a home,  
While Gessius to the camp on Scopas clings,  
Until proud Zion, taught the power of Rome,  
Give him again the palace of her Kings.

Three days expir'd before Lucrece came forth  
And pac'd alone the terrace, when the Sun  
Far in the West had sunk, and from the North,  
Atween the steeps where Jordan's wavelets run,  
The plain of Jericho wafts up a breeze,  
A rustling music in the olive trees,  
And bringing odours from Gethsemane,  
Ledg'd on the rock, an oasis in stone,  
Where Sharon's rose and Lebanon's grand tree

And Hebron's vine, still leave the cypress lone—  
As He, the Just, there in his anguish stood,  
When dropp'd his throbbing frame the sweat of  
blood.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat beneath  
And Kedron's glen, long curst by Baal's crew,  
The vale of Hinnom met, the vale of Death,  
Where fathers their own babes to Moloch threw,  
And which behind Mount Zion circling round  
Here with Jehoshaphat the city bound.  
In this trench'd camp—these vales, these depths  
between,  
Jerusalem a tower of empire rose  
And precipice her wall, moated by ravine,  
Flung from her hills defiance at her foes.

Long on those heights Lucretia rests her glance  
To which they bare the city's deepest nook,



The streets appearing in the wall'd expanse  
Like lines upon the page of a spread book ;  
And with a sigh, as from some tender tale,  
The Roman maiden slowly turn'd away,  
Dropping a look on Aceldama's dale,  
Where fell Iscariot—tale to strike dismay !  
And lifting, in unconscious gaze, her eye  
On the far prospect at the terrace end—  
From Bethany, perch'd on a hillock nigh,  
And through the vistas Judah's hills extend  
To the Dead Sea, whose green still waters lay,  
Like a bright meadow, 'neath the setting day.  
This while she saw, through vistas in her mind,  
A prospect with as far, as fair a bound,  
Rocks, too, bestrew'd and frowning steeps con-  
fin'd  
The wild approach, as in the prospect round,  
And what Hope colour'd as a distant lea,

Might prove, when it was reach'd, a like Dead  
Sea—

Like in the blank a blighted love would spread  
Through all her life, in every presage fled.

A pause had been—a struggle in her breast,  
Ere she was won—ere she resolv'd to leave  
The strict straight path which is so manifest  
When no craft sways, no crooked aims deceive,  
For she had from Nathaniel's brief discourse  
Drawn, as it were, the christening drops of Faith—  
That inward grace, which follows with Remorse,  
Like an oppressive shadow—like a Wraith,  
The least divergence from the one true line  
Groov'd in the conscience by the Hand Divine,  
But there remain'd the training of her youth,  
In Youth's warm heart—the tale of heathen rites,  
Which sanction'd licence and sapp'd nature's truth

With the corrupting passions it excites.  
And to this influence she lent her ear  
Till it prevail'd, all scruples bearing down,  
As heedless bathers trust the waves they fear,  
And feel their power only as they drown.  
Azlec must come again, and tell his love,  
Could she by any spell or any 'lurement move,  
And, were this guilt, she'd but this once offend,  
All arts abjuring in the blissful end.

She summon'd to her aid a shrewd adept—  
Balth, the Sorcerer—who undertook  
To fascinate her lover while he slept,  
Did she attend to meet his waking look—  
The glance that from his bounding heart would  
    leap  
To seek the maiden who had charm'd his sleep :  
And Balth found Azlec—found forlorn and sad,

In Zion's midst, and to the villa brought.  
Elate in spirit—joyous, and yet mad  
In the distraction love and magic wrought,  
By potions so confus'd, and jugglery,  
That what he knew, he fancied could not be ;  
A haze enchanted giving to his view  
Truth as a dream, deluding dreams as true.  
And now Lucretia waits, in haze as deep,  
To hear when he has burst from his charm'd sleep,  
When at her feet, on his first glance, he'll fall—  
Her lord, her lover, her eternal thrall.

A slow resounding step announc'd anon  
The Sorcerer—a man not old, yet grey,  
With beard descending his broad breast upon,  
And locks thrown to the winds, like his array,  
A robe of white, edg'd with Chaldaic words,  
Which in its cast, and all its tone, accords,

Save where a girdle at the waist confines,  
Encircling with the Zodiac's twelve signs,  
And horn and hood, in symbols o'er his head,  
A deeper mystery around him shed.

Quoth he—"The time has come—a moment  
more,  
And Azlec from his trance will wake—will rise.  
Be thou at hand, lest any go before,  
And fix the gaze of his adoring eyes."

A deeper tint flew to Lucretia's cheek—  
A blush upon its rose, and only there,  
As if that flower burst its bud to seek  
Relief from thorn within, in Heaven's air,  
And all the depth of its rich bloom laid bare,  
"Enough! thy work is done!" She turn'd to  
go,

When Balth again—" 'Tis needful thou should'st  
know

Adith, thy freedwoman, to him is kin—"

Lucretia's sudden glance betray'd surprise,

" And she may meet, may love him, wish to win,

And claim the right that on the altar ties

With marriage bonds, as cords the sacrifice.—

The right to be her nearest kinsman's bride,

Which by his rigid sect is ne'er denied.

But he holds now the thought, the happy thought,

By my enchantments and illusions wrought,

That he has Adith seen and known in thee—

Still, still to him this dreamy Adith be :

As her receive his vows—his love, and wed—

Or count thy love as from this moment dead."

"I will not count it dead while it is true  
And when to truth, to life I'll bid adieu,

For though my love is great, my maiden name  
Not even love shall tempt to slur with shame.  
And shame it were on Azlec thus to palm  
Myself as Adith, and as Adith charm.  
Nay, she shall have what thou'dst reserve for me—  
Azlec's first waking glance shall Adith's be—  
Be hers thy spells, to blend them with her own,  
And mine the spell of memory alone :  
Then whom he really loves his words shall prove,  
And each shall know what power hers to move."

"Thy chance is best," quoth Balth, as she  
departs,  
"There is no charm to match an honest heart's."

So the Enchanter, as Lucretia, spoke,  
From the true impulse Nature's instincts woke,  
For Balth, despite his craft, stor'd in his breast  
The human sympathies his art repress'd,

Without the power to stifle, or prevent  
From tempering his worst experiment,  
Which, like the alchemists' devices crude,  
Thus led him oft to unintended good.



## CHANT XI.

### ADITH'S TOILET.

LUCRETIA had observ'd on Adith's brow—  
Sky erst so clear—a mournful drooping cloud,  
But search'd not whence it came, nor once till now  
Divin'd it did an innate grief enshroud,  
Thinking her country's woes might overcast  
The roughest nature and the sternest mould,  
While she, so gentle, would endure the blast  
In patient meekness, with the strain untold.  
But Balth's disclosure, that strange tale of kin  
And of a charter'd right to Azlec's hand,

Conceal'd by Adith, with art feminine,  
Tore from Lucretia's eyes the blinding band,  
And with a rival's insight, she saw now  
The doubts of love in Adith's clouded brow.  
But if Lucretia was by passion sway'd  
The passion a high impetus obey'd,  
And she rose safe on Virtue's wings above  
The circling hatreds which beleaguer love,  
As aeronauts, when hostile hosts surround,  
Soar through the purer air to clear the bound.  
So she sought Adith with a smiling face,  
And told her little plot in an embrace,  
Told a near kinsman Azlec had come there  
To seek her, and their common blood declare,  
And she must robe herself in state, and meet  
As one the noblest might be proud to greet.  
"This necklace take, these bracelets, chains of gold,  
Thine arms to clasp, thy lily throat to fold,

That as my sister thou by him be seen—  
And sister be, whatever come between.”

These last fond words, in tone of sadness  
said,

Which doubt of the event and end betray'd,  
Drew Adith from the whirl of the amaze,  
The news of Azlec rais'd, and all the craze  
Which jealousy and its suggestions rash  
Upon her darted, like a blinding flash,  
And though a dreg remain'd, a vague distrust—  
For Love can make the kindest hearts unjust—  
'Twas hidden, with her blushing burning face,  
In the affection of a new embrace.  
So she was to the proffer'd toilet won—  
The pomp so priz'd beneath the Eastern Sun,  
Which woos to glitter, by its kindling glow,  
Even savage Himalaya's peaks of snow,

Much more, what does itself such glow impart—  
That glad and sparkling thing—a young maid's  
heart !

And Adith flutter'd, in her silver zone,  
As a young Queen when first she sits a throne,  
Nor would a queenly crown have shed the light  
A wreath of pearls gemm'd o'er her hair of night :  
A purple vestment gave, while veiling, grace  
The eye might in her glimpsing bosom trace,  
And in her wavy form and in each limb,  
Display'd in guise as dazzling—and as dim !

Lucretia gaz'd upon this vision fair  
Until she waver'd, and half fear'd to dare  
The ordeal of challenge in her mind—  
But soon she cast this craven thought behind !  
Should Adith, or should any maid contest  
With her in love, from her a lover wrest—

Could Azlec any to herself prefer,  
Let now the die be cast, nor she deter.  
In this high mood she leads to Azlec's room,  
Which Adith enters, in her gayest bloom,  
Lucrece, as fair, a moment seems to quail,  
Then follows close—but shrouded in a veil !

## CHANT XII.

### THE MEETING WITH AZLEC.

WHEN Azlec from his potion'd sleep awoke,  
His glance search'd round to know where he  
    might be,  
And through the surge of dreams a flicker broke  
On memory, as on belated boat at sea  
The distant light that marks the hidden shore—  
A flicker of the prayer the Wizard bore  
From Adith, as he said, to him at home,  
That he to her at Olivet would come.  
Aught else he knew not, save the journey there ;  
For still he met, he breath'd enchanted air !

Had he with Adith sat—Adith, golden-tress'd,  
And talk'd and sung the happy strains of love,  
The strains that are the music of the breast,  
Exalted all Earth's jars—Earth's tones above ?  
And did he, resting on a bank of green,  
Beneath a stately cedar's arching shade,  
Relate how gentle Ruth went forth to glean  
And met rich Boaz, and the ambuscade  
Naomi plann'd, when with a courage sweet,  
Ruth went by night and lay at Boaz' feet ?  
And smil'd they—he and Adith—at the scene,  
When Boaz call'd into the public gate  
The next of kin, with blushing Ruth between,  
And ask'd if he assum'd his right to mate,  
And he refus'd the right, and turn'd aside,  
A shoe receiving—lieu of a fair bride ?  
And did he—Azlec—fir'd by Adith's eyes,  
Eyes so divine, to his endearing rais'd,

Say softly she was Earth's supremest prize,  
Ever new charms unfolding as he gaz'd,  
Yet he resign'd, renounc'd his right of kin,  
Her hand by love, and love alone, to win?  
'Twas strange he doubted, seeing as through haze  
What seem'd so clear, and yet left in a maze.—  
For Adith here drew o'er her face a veil,  
And on himself there fell a sleep profound.  
Ah! had he slept before—dreamt all this tale,  
And did the dream still spread its mazes round?  
Resolv'd to know, he sprang upon his feet,  
And plung'd his head and hands in water clear,  
Which stood, with toilet ware and perfumes sweet,  
And brazen mirror, on white marble near,  
And then, refresh'd, he turn'd some way to find  
To Adith's presence, were she truly nigh,  
That he might end this fever of his mind,  
And, done his errand, back to Zion hie.



This instant voices caught his ear, and straight  
The flowing curtain rises from the door,  
And Adith enters, with a step elate,—  
Adith herself, advanc'd Lucrece before,  
In all the likeness to his race she bore.  
And she glides brightly forward, full of love,  
Confiding, trusting, with a winning air,  
And nestles on his breast, as might a dove,  
That knew 'twas welcome and expected there.  
"Ah, Azlec!—kinsman—cousin—seek'st thou me!  
O! this is nobly done, and yet I fear  
Involv'd such peril—peril brav'd by thee,  
I'd grieve thou camest—only thou art here!"  
Soft fell this speech on Azlec, like the ray  
The Sun through foliage casts on shadow'd grass,  
For such a shadow on his soul there lay  
From Adith's self—Adith who came, alas!  
Not in the semblance he had hop'd and dream'd,

Though in a form and face that well beseem'd,  
So did not cloud—but threw the passing shade,  
Wherein this sunbeam to and fro now sway'd.  
For as he stood, disconsolate and lone,  
Her speech and voice brought sympathy's sweet  
    tone,  
Which ne'er by Beauty has been used in vain  
To comfort sorrow or to lighten pain.

“And thou art Adith!” pensively he spoke  
As from enchantment's chain at last he broke.  
“Adith long-lost, to be more gladly found,  
With all a maiden's charms and graces crown'd,  
Invoking in our hearts the kindred blood  
To own in thee a bright similitude.  
Strange how my fancy trick'd me to invent  
Thou in appearance wast so different!”  
“Thought thou of this?” said Adith, with a smile,

“ Now tell me how thy fancy did beguile !  
What semblance gave it me, what hue mine eyes,  
My face, my figure, what delusive guise !”  
Quoth Azlec—“ Never did our house inshrine  
A daughter to compare in face with thine—  
In figure or in mien, which blend in thee,  
A shap’d and spiritual symmetry  
In every movement, every look, to rise,  
Unconscious how it lights and beautifies.”  
“ Nay, thou dost flatter, and, in truth, so well  
Thou hold’st me captive when I should rebel :  
Not of myself, be what I may, I’d hear  
Let the imagin’d Adith here appear.  
Ah ! paint, pourtray this maiden, I beseech,  
In all the glowing colours of thy speech.”  
“ Nor speech nor colour can the sunshine paint,  
Though they may give the tint in semblance faint  
And like the sunshine of a morn in May

Is her gold hair—how then can I pourtray?"  
"How like to mine her eyes? and what their hue?"  
"Thine eyes are amber, hers a heavenly blue,  
Unlike in colour, but like thine in truth,  
And in the dreamy innocence of youth.  
But wherefore seek, in feeble tints, to bind,  
What I must call a phantom of my mind?  
Thou art the real Adith, and thou here,  
The Adith of my thoughts must disappear."  
A sigh fell from him at the words—a sigh  
That did to Adith all the void supply,  
And, in the phantom pictur'd to her eyes,  
She saw a rival—saw Lucretia rise:  
Lucretia, 'neath her veil's close skreen,  
Indeed seen plain by both, and yet unseen.  
But Azlec's glance now rested more upon—  
"What friend is this?" he ask'd in doubting tone.  
And Adith could not answer: for her heart

Felt at the moment all a rival's smart.  
Whence spoke Lucretia—"Me her sister call!"  
But now that name, so sweet erewhile, did gall.  
"Rather call my mistress," quick Adith said;  
Then added low—"but who a sister made."  
Azlec an instant in rapt silence stood,  
Lucretia scanning with a gaze subdued  
As if she still, though veil'd, some memory  
'woke—

"Much, lady, much we owe to thee, who broke  
Our Adith's bonds, and did by love retain  
When thou hadst pow'r to rivet by a chain.  
Great thanks I pay! yet less than are thy due,  
Because they lack the joy which should imbue,  
The joy which, by the thanker's self possess'd,  
Thanks bears into the benefactor's breast,  
And from such kin as thou to Judah's foe,  
I feel a kindness almost as a blow.—

Only thy sweetness conjures from this mood  
Into a glow of fervent gratitude,  
Which prompts me now to beg the further grace  
That thou wilt, ere we part, unveil thy face,  
And thus imprint thine image on my mind,  
Not leave, lieu of thyself, a blank behind."  
"Methinks my face itself a blank will be,"  
Lucretia said, "a worse than blank to thee,  
Who dost my kindred with such hate assail."  
And she, with mournful air, threw back her veil.  
"Ah! not thy face," cried Aztec, "but my breast  
My soul, my life, all by thy face possess'd—  
By this sweet memory, this dream of thee,  
Shall, in thine absence, blank, void, nothing be!  
O, cruel fate! most cruel chance! to raise  
A bar so fix'd where love devoted sways,  
And tear me as by limb from limb apart  
In vain attempt to pluck thee from my heart."

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He clasp'd Lucretia round, drew to his breast,  
A kiss impassion'd on her lips impress'd,  
Then bade farewell to Adith, trembling by,  
And fled the room, ere either could reply.

## CHANT XIII.

### THE ROMAN CAMP.

BRIGHT on the Roman camp the sun glanc'd

back

From the illuminated western sky,

And all the tents shone like a bivouac

Above the lowering glens uplifted high,

And to the plain's far bound, and to each side,

Flash'd out bold Scopas in its treble name—

The name of "Prospect" in its outlook wide,

Of "Watch-Tower"—"Fortress" in its flag of

flame.



The camp itself, on nearer view, arose  
In other semblance than to distant gaze ;  
Four walls of earth its spacious square enclose—  
Walls timber strengthens and stockade inlays.  
Four towers, too—each at a corner rear'd,  
And four embattl'd gates, on each side one,  
As posts and guarded thoroughfares appear'd,  
Scanning the country round, far as the Sun,  
Which here, lieu of a bivouac's loose lines,  
The boundaries of a citadel defines.

Within, a city rises to the view—  
A canvas city and in miniature,  
But perfect in its plan, being travers'd through  
By labell'd streets, which unity secure  
And common outlet, on the central way.  
The Via Principalis this—nam'd fitly so,  
Because it leads from midst of the array—

From the camp's heart, whence all pulsations  
flow,

And all the life and power circulates,

To the four points commanded by the gates.

Just where the four ways meet, stood, like their  
keys,

The Prætor's tent and Tribune's, and, between,

The tent of standards and of deities,

Mars, Pan, and Hercules, of savage mien,

And, morn and evening, at these shrines were said

The Soldiers' vows—vows paid, as said, in words,

Or kneeling files before the Eagle pray'd,

The gods neglecting for the King of Birds.

Through the east gate a troop of horsemen pour

With prisoners—Balth, a mule upon,

And Azlec, stripp'd of weapons, and one more,

In figure man, but man in skeleton,

Without the robe of light that soul throws o'er—  
So Ichabod, the Possess'd, his nature bore !

The gate brought to the drill-ground, where  
the hour

Permitted now the troops to exercise,  
And Azlec saw how Rome built up her power  
By warlike practice and a training wise—  
Training in arms, endurance, enterprise !  
One company contends in feats of strength,  
A race another holds, and others leap,  
Or throw a gauntlet a prodigious length  
To brace the sinews—while, against the steep,  
The archers and the slingers vie in aim,  
Salute the victor, and shout forth his name.  
Most marvell'd he to see the young recruits  
The Pyrrhic War Dance tread, their thousand feet  
All keeping time to the soft tones of flutes,

In movement varying from slow to fleet,  
To blend the march, the charge, and the retreat.  
Rais'd now the naked swords, now pois'd the  
spears,  
Wav'd round, drawn back, and lifted up again,  
A waltz of arms, a course of charioteers,  
Sway'd by one motion, guided by one rein,  
And throwing in one drill a whole campaign.

Scarce time had Azlec for this glance aside—  
Glance through his escort darted, like a ray  
That through a crevice shoots, as it doth glide—  
Than he was brought upon the Central Way,  
Where the cross-streets all the camp display :  
And matrons here are seen and busy maids,  
The butcher serves, the armourer's anvil rings,  
The farrier and barber ply their trades,  
And the freed soldier at his tent-door sings—

Singslays that, mid this outspread might of Rome,  
Recal his native woods and distant home.

Like this lone man—like many more beside,  
Before his tent sat Gessius, alert  
To note around whatever might betide  
To interest, concern him, or divert,  
When the strange troop—the troop who held in  
charge

Azlec, the Sorcerer, and the Man possess'd,  
Now mute and tame, from the parade emerge  
And he demands their news. They tell at large  
How they had found the prisoners—the three,  
Breaking the lines, and what the Sorcerer's plea,  
Which he, in truth, did boldly here repeat,  
As if he'd done no wrong, nor wrong would meet.

“ A poor Astrologer, I come from far  
Led by the magnet of my ruling star,

To yon fam'd city, fam'd from days of old,  
Ere Time its centuries and ages told,  
Or History, or her unbodied mate,  
Tradition, brings a memory or date,  
But now, by astral signs, shown to impend  
Upon some swift and memorable end.  
This may befall, or it may glance aside,  
As seems a comet on the sun to glide,  
And, while the world is overwhelm'd with fears,  
Darts round its head of fire, and disappears!"  
Quoth Gessius—"By Hercules! this turn  
The comet's head of fire shall strike, and burn:  
And if thou would'st not from a Cross behold  
The city's blaze, some better tale unfold!  
But first thy minions speak." And he glanc'd now  
At Azlec, greeting thus—"What sayest thou?"  
So fierce the rage that swell'd in Azlec's breast  
Not Ichabod—but he—seem'd the Possess'd,

And he conceiv'd such speech as would have  
brought

On all the three the instant death he sought,  
But ere he spoke he caught Balth's pleading eye,  
He saw the hapless Lost One crouching nigh,  
He felt their claims, and felt he must not dare,  
Since 'twas with him, not Gessius, to spare,  
Spare in the risk defiance would increase,  
While prudence might deliver and release.  
Hence guardedly he spoke—"I say as he,  
I wait the pending end, whate'er it be,  
Of this old city of Jerusalem,  
The cradle city of the sons of Shem.  
Seek'st thou to know if we'd aught more in  
hand,  
When we fell prisoners to this picket band,  
Ask not of me, but let the Sage declare—  
He best can tell our aim who took us there."

"Ho! ho!" cried Gessius, "I smell a Sage in thee,  
Who 'dst throw on him the blame, thyself to  
free.

But here's another Wise One, from his look,  
Which is as still and muddy as a book."  
And he cried to the Lost—"Speak out, my man!  
Say where geese quack'd before the world began!"  
But jibe and jeer fell soundless on that Soul,  
Which sense discarded when its sense was whole—  
When frenzy did not pour its lurid blaze  
To terrify or mock, mislead, and craze.  
"He hears thee not, my lord, nor heeds," Balth  
cried,

"Yet well to him thy simile's applied,  
For book he is, book Sybilline, whose page  
Is open'd rarely only to presage,  
But which my art will here illuminate  
To show thee aught thou'dst know of coming fate."



Quoth Gessius—"A bargain! Let me see  
This prodigy, and all of you are free!  
Enough of Jewry! I would now glance home,  
And learn if any cloud impend o'er Rome."

Balth answer'd not, but, as he glided back,  
Some fagots caught from an adjacent stack  
And on the ground in crescent form dispos'd,  
Which all the three—himself and friends—  
inclos'd.

Stern knit the brows of Azlec, and the Lost  
His shapeless head in sudden movement toss'd,  
Till Balth, confronting with commanding air,  
Held fast his eyes, in a mesmeric stare,  
Thrice pass'd a wand in mystic figures round,  
As if with chains invisible he bound,  
Then call'd the Soothsayer from his living tomb  
To speak, like waken'd Samuel, for Doom.

" I see great Nero ! lo ! he turns, he flies !  
The raging guards pursue ! he dies ! he dies !"

Amazement fell upon the Romans near,  
So bold a prophecy thus plain to hear,  
And Gessius from the spell in panic broke,  
As its whole import struck his mind, and woke.  
" Seize them and bind and to the torture bear,  
And all this heinous plot force to declare."

But now the crescent, by the fagots trac'd,  
Which in its belt the prisoners embrac'd,  
In flames sulphurous as by magic broke,  
And threw around a suffocating smoke,  
Smoke borne in clouds, and driving swift away  
Gessius and the soldiers in dismay,  
And when the darken'd air had partly clear'd,  
Balth, Azlec, and the Lost had disappear'd.

## CHANT XIV.

### THE FIVE DAYS' FIGHT.

AT last, the camp pour'd forth its force, and  
hurl'd  
Against the city of the Lord of Hosts—  
Against His House, the legions of the World :  
For such the muster Rome's armada boasts—  
And in the vices, as the races here,  
The World embattl'd did, in truth, appear.

Five days, from morn till evening, launch'd  
the fight

A cannonade of men against the walls,  
While from the ramparts, and each crested height  
A musketry of stones and arrows falls,  
And men reach down with lance and spear to  
strike

The Romans mining 'neath their upborne shields,  
Advanc'd in shape and fashion tortoise-like,  
Close where the Ram its swifter battery wields.  
Dead thicken round, and wounded helpless lie,  
Or are trod down, and wounded yet again,  
Some moan, some rave, and some for water cry,  
To cool the burning tongue of bleeding pain.  
Alas! none hears! for everywhere peals o'er  
The battle's rolling, thrilling, deafening roar.

The miners push their sap ; yet 'tis not they  
Whom needs the leagur'd city most to fear :  
Within her walls a faction would betray—

The miners to be wary of are here !  
To sight contemptible, strong in the dark,  
They find the spot where littleness is might,  
To fire the magazine claims but a spark,  
'Tis only to provide for timely flight  
This first essential, with its bond of fate,  
Sleek Ananias and his crew forgot,  
And, caught in parley at the Essene's Gate,  
Perish'd in the explosion of their plot :  
A thousand warriors to the ramparts brought,  
And threw them on the Romans, as they fought.

Hotter and fiercer the assault became,  
And forc'd each hour some post, some outwork  
won,  
Though what they yield the Hebrews yield to  
flame,  
Which barricades with fire the pathway on,

Thus a volcano seems Bezetha's height,  
With smoke enshrouding Heaven, dark'ning  
Earth,  
Save where the Temple breaks upon the sight,  
A sanctuary above the battle's girth—  
A sanctuary and a refuge tower,  
To cheer and rally in the darkest hour.

The rough and fearful ladder of a breach  
Slopes to the inner wall, and Night alone  
Preserves the city, now of easy reach,  
Did not the darkness block as sure as stone,  
And valiant men behind with sinews plant  
Another wall of living adamant.  
For the besiegers with the day retire,  
And 'tis expected they'll by stealth come back,  
When midnight's ghostliness adds awe more dire—  
Adds horror more, to the unseen attack :

So Azlec, and a troop of men-at-arms,  
Wait in the breach to meet the first alarms.

Silent they stand, scanning the dreary night,  
Without a star, till Azlec, from the wall,  
Saw in the depths of the far Infinite  
One star, like Lucifer, from Heaven fall,  
Then through his mind there rush'd the startling  
thought—

Was this a sign on the celestial dome ?  
The stars 'gainst Sisera in their courses fought :  
'Gainst Sisera ! then wherefore not 'gainst Rome?  
To Eleazar, who stood by, he told  
His hopeful presage and the priest concurr'd :  
They must go forth—go warily yet bold,  
The Lord gave to their swords this Gentile herd.  
All round the sign's made known, all round it  
cheers :

'Tis Heaven's call for faithful volunteers,  
For men of the heroic, godly stamp,  
To lead a sortie 'gainst the Roman camp:  
This Azlęç heads, first to surprise the foe,  
'Tis Eleazar's to strike home the blow.

The column forms, and sallies from the  
Gate,  
Noiseless and speechless, and with bated breath,  
For it may be the Romans lie in wait  
To tempt the hasty foot to rush on death—  
As the torpedo 'neath a placid wave  
Lays for the cruiser a dismembering grave.  
Still as a standing pool the Night, and round  
Its shadows all as motionless and still,  
Marking atween the heights the Camp's dark  
bound,  
As 'twere a linking dam from hill to hill—



A dam against the gather'd tide of War  
Arrested for an instant by the bar.  
Azlec in front proceeds in the deep shade,  
To climb with caution up the glen's steep  
slope,  
For he is bent, if there an ambushade,  
He'll be himself alone the Forlorn Hope,  
As was of old the Gaul, whose single arm,  
But for a noise, had won the Capitol,  
And Azlec breathless creeps, not to alarm  
The sleeping sentries or alert patrol.  
Anon the watchfire o'er the earthworks gleams,  
Like a huge eye, observing every side ;  
He bounds to where its glance most ruddy  
streams,  
Then to his troop below in triumph cried—  
"The Camp's deserted! Who is for the Lord,  
Pursue with me the scatter'd Roman horde!"

Succours came timely for this enterprise,  
With leaders fit—Manasseh, the priest's son,  
And Simon, burning to attract men's eyes,  
And Jesus the Peraite, and John,  
With Flavius Josephus, whose great name  
Stands proudest, brightest on that roll of Fame.

Fast though the gorges of the hills they pour,  
Along the slopes and on the highest steeps,  
While far below the Roman files explore  
Their doubtful way, through glens and mist-  
wrapp'd deeps.

Here on their flanks the fierce tornado sweeps,  
As from the gods—a tempest from on high,  
A storm of javelins and bolts of rock,  
Hurl'd down from the unseen and starless sky,  
With lightning's force and thunder's crashing  
shock,

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Confusion seizes, Panic adds its fright,  
And Slaughter hounds behind the headlong  
flight.

## CHANT XV.

### THE PRODIGY AT THE SACRIFICE.

SOON Ednah heard the happy tidings rung  
Through all the city, by loud Rumour's tongue,  
Of the deliverance the Lord had wrought  
At Azlec's hand, where man nor strove nor fought,  
But only some vague terror of the Night,  
As when Sennacherib's proud host took flight,  
Though still to Azlec—to his guidance true,  
The triumph and the victory were due,

And early morn brought men of high degree,

Rulers and learned Scribes, to Ednah's door,  
To compliment the noble Pharisee  
When he came forth Jehovah to adore  
In the high Sanctuary, where, they knew,  
He went each morn to pay this holy due.  
To-day they will attend him to the fane,  
For there now all the city makes resort,  
And there the victors, trooping back amain  
From the pursuit, will, in the Altar-Court,  
At the great Altar, hail the sacrifice  
Laid on that threshold-step of Paradise.

A joyous concourse flocks betimes the  
streets,  
Hung through with streamers and with verdant  
boughs,  
And everywhere the eye, the spirit, meets  
Something both eye and spirit to arouse,

While from the distance peals the stirring  
blast

Of trumpets, pitch'd in triumph's proudest key,  
Telling the victors come—the victors mass'd—  
Mass'd with applauding thousands of the free.  
The thrilling sounds are borne to Ednah's ear,  
As from the Rulers he receives salute ;  
The people gather round, and bless and cheer  
And link his name with Azlec's high repute,  
And his wan face lights with paternal pride,  
That feeling last and strongest to abide.

Vigil and fast and public cares have worn  
Both in his look and on his heart deep seams,  
His air, so haughty once, now droops forlorn,  
And o'er his robe of righteous show there beams  
A soften'd glance, that from the show redeems,  
Giving, as 'twere, the spiritual tone

Decay sheds o'er the Gothic abbey's stone,  
Which in its prime rear'd only arch and wall,  
But images Religion in its fall.

This while the shouts, like heralds, ran before  
The crowd, advancing with the victor band,  
Which to the Temple comes, its columns four  
All with proud banners spread and sword in  
hand :

A laurell'd team drags on the dazzling spoil  
And wounded men, on a triumphal car,  
Ah ! why does not Humanity recoil  
Before the blood-stain'd harvest-home of War !

Soon as the head of the array presents  
Its glittering front, a glory on the steep,  
A sacred train parades the battlements  
That round the Temple's holy precincts sweep,

And, thence descending, moves, with solemn  
strain,

To welcome at the entry to the fane.

The old High Priest walks in the front alone,  
In form erect, a monarch in his mien,  
And rob'd in state that would adorn a throne,—  
State fitted to approach the Throne Unseen.  
Azure his garment, made without a seam,  
And threaded in alternate circles round  
With gold pomegranates, for the lightning's  
gleam,  
And bells of gold, to yield the thunder's sound.  
The Temple's Veil upon his breast was hued,  
Gold, purple, scarlet, blue, and spotless white,  
And where his ephod on his shoulders stood  
Two glowing gems—both ruddy sardonite—  
The names of the Twelve Tribes enframe in light.



Each tribe, besides, spreads on a precious stone  
Its name, as on a signet, down his vest,  
In sarda, topaz, and green emerald shown—  
Carbuncle, jasper, and the sapphire's crest,  
In agate, amethyst, and ligurite,  
The onyx, beryl, and pure chrysolite.  
Another name, which mystic letters thread,  
Hallow'd the crown o'er his white mitre plac'd,  
That crown of gold, above white linen spread,  
The awful name of God inscrib'd and grac'd.

Behind troop priests, in simple white attir'd,  
Who chant the praises of the Lord, and time  
The flowing anthem with the tones inspir'd  
Of minstrels' harps and the loud timbrel's chime.  
In gold-edg'd garments, tinted like the sky,  
The minstrels file beside the damsel throng,  
Who in their midst the timbrels clash on high,

A choir of Graces, and themselves a song,  
Song to man's eye and soul, not ear, address'd  
Of Him who gave this partner to his breast.

With trumpet peal the victor columns greet  
This sacred train as in the gate they meet,  
And follow to the inner court—a space  
Where all th' attending thousands find a place,  
And, for the moment fir'd by one accord,  
Together throng the altar of the Lord.

Thrice o'er the height of man the altar rose,  
Its length and breadth still grander span dis-  
close,  
Extending each for seventy feet the square,  
Which is not built, but is a rock laid bare,  
A virgin rock, no iron tool hath dress'd—  
The Altar of the Lord is Nature's breast.

The Offering—a milk-white heifer—stands  
Between two Priests, who hold by knotted bands  
His horn'd and massive head, bent sullen down  
Beneath his garlands, as beneath a crown.  
The crowd is by a sudden movement stirr'd—  
A man springs forth, and far his voice is heard,  
“O, men of Judah ! in this hour supreme  
Think ye the blood of bullocks can redeem ?  
And can the holiest devoutest priests  
The Lord of Hosts propitiate with beasts ?  
But One redeems, for us there pleads but One ;  
God is propitiated by His Son,  
His Son, His Lamb—the Lamb of God, I say,  
The same your Priests spurr'd Pilate on to slay,  
And then in Him that ransom paid for all  
To trembling Adam promis'd at the Fall.  
O ! own this Lamb, make Him your sacrifice,  
And win your Kingdom in his Paradise !”

Amazement yielded, through the court's wide  
range,

A breathless audience to this preacher strange  
And doctrine novel, till there rose a cry  
To drag him forth, and stone or crucify.  
Then Ednah to him spoke—"Is't thou, who here  
Thus darest in the Temple's courts appear  
The altar to blaspheme? At once begone—  
Or thou wilt never see to-morrow's sun."  
Already arms were rais'd, when Azlec said—  
"Who touches him my sword shall strike down  
dead!"

"How so?" quoth Ednah. "None shall take his life,  
But wherefore thou engage for him in strife?  
Know'st thou this is that false Nathaniel, whom  
I as a Judge condemn'd, and gave to doom?"  
"Nathaniel!" Azlec cried, and made a bound,  
But no Nathaniel now was to be found;

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For friends, to shield from hurt, before him  
press'd,

And drew into' their midst, as to their breast.

“ I knew him not, but told I was thy son,  
And he still shelter'd, cherish'd, as his own,  
When my frail life—the life he'd sav'd—were spent  
But for this timely care, this nourishment.”

Thus Azlec to his sire, whose head droop'd low,  
As if to him the tale came as a blow.

But now all eyes on the High Priest were bent,  
As he barefooted up the altar went,  
Where the white heifer, by his keepers brought,  
Was round the altar's horns in lassos caught.  
Uncover'd every head, the harps alone  
The stillness break, and break but in a tone  
So low, it seems a music in the air,  
The hymn of a bewailing spirit there.

The Pontiff bends to take the votive life  
When, lo ! a prodigy arrests the knife,  
The prostrate heifer started from his ham  
And dropp'd from out his side a living lamb.

A murmur rose of wonder, then of awe,  
As every eye this sign portentous saw.

THE  
SECOND CANTICLE OF THIS SONG.

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CHANT I.

THE ORACLE.

ROME rose in fury to retrieve her sway,  
And sent as chief Vespasian the Wise—  
Sent to subdue and spoil—to tear away  
The nation's heart, and all a people prize.  
And Palestina arm'd, from end to end,  
To meet this foe, so fierce and mad to rend :  
So fierce to loose upon her fire and sword—  
So mad thus to defy and brave the Lord.

Aztec with troops from threaten'd Zion went  
To castled Jotapata, to defend  
What was the capital's first battlement—  
The breakwater thrown in advance, to lend  
The haven shelter where rough seas contend :  
For Zion might invading hosts deride  
While Jotap's wall of rock withstood the tide.

To Ednah now his house felt lone, and he  
Had fain from his long solitude been free—  
Fain shaken off the bondage of his creed,  
So broken by Nathaniel's loving deed,  
Which show'd how barren his own alms, and all  
The fasts and forms that held his soul in thrall :  
Self-righteousness, with its false weight of gold,  
Loading the scale which Pity's hand must hold,  
And failing in its richest gift to reach  
The charity a Christian's faith could teach.



Just as to Genoa's great son was hurl'd  
By a faint flash upon the sea at night,  
The sign of a near shore—of a New World,  
There came to Ednah this stray gleam of light,  
Ah! would he, like the mariner, perceive  
What it implied, what mirror'd—and believe?

One thing he felt the need of—a hand near  
To give the tender ministries that cheer—  
That cheer and comfort in the saddest hour  
By sympathy's assuaging, soothing power;  
And he for this sought Adith, and sought where,  
At Cesarea, he had death to dare—  
So did he covet, in this hour of gloom,  
The love and trust that in a daughter bloom.

The time, the crisis, and the struggle round  
From every soil claim'd trust, and widely found;

For in the triumphs won, and in renown  
From ancient days by records handed down—  
The tale of Jasher's deeds and David's might—  
The Hebrews felt commission'd for the fight.  
And more! with those same records old therecame  
An older oracle, which did proclaim  
That Judah, as this passing age unfurl'd,  
Would give a King—a Ruler to the World—  
And hearts attun'd by the prophetic lyre  
To feel, with warlike nerve, religious fire,  
Saw in this prophecy the battle line  
Marshall'd and order'd by a Power divine.  
Brief told, at first, to tribes uncouth and rude,  
A train of seers the presage had renew'd,  
Each adding tones to the exalted strain,  
As thunder echoes through a mountain chain,  
Till all was utter'd Heaven would reveal  
In the last cadence of the solemn peal.

The whole wide East the oracle receiv'd,  
The Sibyll'd Romans knew it, and believed,  
And everywhere—in every land—there grew  
A vague expectance: vague, because men  
knew

That oracles not all their drift convey,  
Nor mean precisely what they seem to say.  
Hence when Vespasian, from Judah's soil  
Borne by the Legions to the Seven Hills,  
The fell'd world seizes as a soldier's spoil,  
He to the Gentile the event fulfils—  
End too much 'neath the prelude, and the Jew  
Spurns it and scorns, preserving still his hope  
Deriv'd from Prophets, holy men and true,  
Who gave it as the nation's horoscope,  
Which words inspir'd—inspir'd by Heaven—  
unfold,  
And mean in the event all they've foretold.

Error and truth ! for Ruler not of Earth,  
So clearly promis'd, is already come—  
Has found in Judah's bounds a lowly birth,  
And found, alas ! a cruel martyrdom,  
By Jews inflicted, though on high decreed  
At his own instance, in his love for man,  
That by a crown of thorns a King indeed  
Might in his realm both Earth and Heaven  
span,  
And from scenes fairest to the foulest clod  
Lift up man's soul to Paradise and God.

The Jews awaited for themselves alone  
A Chief—a Warrior—heir to David's throne,  
Not bringing peace, but girded by the Lord  
To thrall the world, and rule with fire and sword ;  
And, in this mood, they fight against defeat,  
Still each disaster with fresh courage meet.

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Nor yield their phantom hope, when nought  
remains

But Zion's tower'd steeps and circling plains ;

For there, at the last moment, it may be

The coming King will give them victory.

## CHANT II.

### AZLEC RETURNS TO JERUSALEM.

THREE Chieftains seized on Zion—men of  
mark

In war, but of repute and counsel dark ;  
Three tyrannies, each with its own domain,  
And its own faction, and its special chain :  
The bond of zeal or licence or wild dreams  
Of Victory, as this divinest beams,  
While 'twixt themselves they wag'd incessant  
strife,  
And fed their fury with their country's life.

The Sanctuary Eleazar held,  
He and the zealots, who from John rebell'd—  
The brigand John—then hurl'd to courts below,  
To meet in Simon a more restless foe,  
Attacking from the city—from the streets,  
And every housetop which his rampart meets,  
For all the city bends to Simon's sway,  
And all her valour glows in his array.

Strong Jotapa subdued, by Titus storm'd,  
Its chief, Josephus, captive made, and spar'd,  
To all the conqueror's demands conform'd,  
And now for Cæsar and for Rome declar'd :  
So Azlec, taking flight, to Zion turn'd,  
With daring Simon to consort, and still  
Rome's hated yoke resist—the yoke he spurn'd,  
And could escape on Zion's holy hill,  
Where, in the city's fall—if this must be—  
He'd die disconsolate—die crush'd—but free.

But sadness smote his heart as to his sight  
The goal so lov'd rose in the morning light,—  
The sanctuary in its golden glow,  
Its stately front, and columns white as snow,—  
The towers, monuments, and ancient trees,  
Which bower'd in their shades such memories,  
The walls and ramparts which the whole inlock  
As one great fastness in a belt of rock,  
For far upon the plain he could behold  
The city, like a raging maniac,  
Tearing her own self. The Temple thunders roll'd  
Down on its courts, the courts threw thunders  
back,  
And hordes below the courts without attack!  
Ah! what a way was this to meet the foe  
Advancing in such strength to overthrow!

Through gates unguarded Aztec journey'd on



To grass-grown streets, where, as he went, his eyes  
Many a familiar building glanc'd upon,  
Or paus'd to scan, and mourn'd to recognise,  
So were they gutted, and by fire so charr'd !  
Anon the way by a stript corse was barr'd,—  
A corse with gaping wounds and fresh-hued gore,  
Which two foul vultures drowsily stoop'd o'er,  
And, not till Azlec rais'd a threatening cry,  
Hung on their heavy wings till he pass'd by.  
A greater horror the next street displays,  
When Murder in his sight its victim slays,  
And two vile ruffians do the ruthless deed,  
And rob and fly before he can impede.  
A Woman then—a Woman !—so has strife  
Dried up the sweetest springs of human life—  
Darts from a nook, and rips away the vest  
From the dead man's yet warm and streaming  
breast.

And now 'tis in rebuke that Azlec cries,  
But from her prey this vulture will not rise.  
What cry, indeed, the wretched soul can scare,  
When lost to shame and frenzied by despair !

Was this the Zion of his dreams ? the place  
He clung to with such deep, such fervent love—  
Home of his youth and cradle of his race,  
Once blest by God, in thunders from above ?  
Here had he learnt the law, the Sabbath kept—  
The peaceful Sabbath in the Temple's aisles,  
Seen these deserted streets by traffic swept,  
By splendours brighten'd, and by Woman's  
smiles.

Alas ! now men—a troop—in Woman's guise  
Came dancing on, with bacchanalian cries,—  
With painted cheek, tir'd hair, and jewell'd limb—  
They block the road, and brandish knives at him,

And he was fain to snatch his sword and smite  
The foremost sore to make the gang take flight.

Thus went he on, in graver, sterner mood,  
To find his Zion such a solitude,—  
To find her realise the darkest doom  
Pronounc'd in Jeremiah's wrathful gloom,  
Remembering then, with ever-growing fears,  
The fate foreseen for her in Jesu's tears—  
Jesu, that Mystery, who in this sign,—  
This tender pity, seem'd to him divine.

Straight on these thoughts, he saw a figure  
weird  
Which to the eye embodied all he fear'd—  
An apparition stalking down the street  
His form uncouth swath'd in a winding-sheet,  
And uttering, in dismal shriek, this cry—

“ A Voice—a Voice from the four winds on high,  
From the North and South and West and East,  
Against Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Priest,  
The bridegrooms and the brides, the high, the low,  
A Voice—a Voice of bitter, bitter woe !”

Solemn and slow the Evil Prophet strode,  
Nor mark'd how Azlec watch'd him down the road,  
Azlec himself falls into thought so deep,  
He looks not at the fight upon the steep,  
Though arrows cross his way, and sometimes fly  
As if his breast were in the archer's eye,  
And shouts and yells, in all their discord, bare  
A common vouchment of dread slaughter there,  
Anon he nears his father's house—the door  
Stands open—open—as in days of yore :  
But wherefore now, in days when murder reigns,  
And every house a fort's strict guard maintains ?

A piercing scream—a Woman's—answers why :  
His sword is in his hand, he seems to fly,  
And, guided by affection's instinct keen,  
He makes one bound into the dreadful scene.  
Two ruffians Adith grasp, and on the floor  
Lies a gash'd corse—his father's, bath'd in gore :  
But not his fortune to avenge the deed  
The murderers are wing'd with cowards' speed,  
They dart away, before he can arrest,  
And Adith, flung behind, swoons on his breast.

### CHANT III.

#### THE STOLEN BRIDAL.

THEY buried Ednah in the sepulchre  
His fathers lay in, 'neath a juniper,  
Which, 'mid the desert of the mountain's slope,  
Stood like a green embowerment of Hope  
Sprung from the dead below—they buried him  
Bewailing, in the morning's twilight dim,  
And Azlec at the tomb said "Go in peace!"  
In full assurance of the soul's release,  
Then, 'gainst the cavern roll'd the closing block,  
The door none but Archangel shall unlock,

And the last duty to his father's shade,—  
The lov'd though lifeless corse, by love was paid.

Not till the days of mourning pass'd did he  
Seek Adith—seek designedly—to hear  
All she'd to tell of how she came to be  
At Zion found—tale told with many a tear,  
And listen'd to by him—O ! with a heart  
That in its heavings seem'd as if 'twould part.  
For the recital in sad words disclos'd  
Lucrece, his love—his life's whole joy—was dead,  
Dead to escape a hateful match impos'd  
By Gessius, with threats of fate more dread.  
She stole one morning to the tranquil stream  
Laving the garden's end—a spot where oft  
She'd sat upon the turfy bank to dream  
Of loving fancies and emotions soft :  
And there they found her purple scarf cast down,

Twirl'd in a circle round a hyacinth—  
The hyacinth, which on its lily crown  
Gems the word *AI*—woe!—and woe's nepenthe  
She'd sought, it seem'd, beneath the river's wave,  
In an oblivious and secret grave.  
But there was a fond fable told, and vain—  
And yet 'twas pretty, Adith said, and sigh'd—  
How Venus, hearing one so fair complain—  
Venus, the idol, to the plaint replied,  
And, to deliver from Man's evil power,  
Transform'd her to that hyacinth, sweet flower!

So Adith did rehearse, and Azlec heard  
As if he were entranc'd, just as a bird  
Lies with its wings extended on the air,  
Nor falls nor floats, but seems suspended there,—  
For so his senses hung on Adith's breath,  
Suspended by this tale of wrong and death.



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Low, then, he spoke, though words without a  
thread

Which gave a sound, but left the thought unsaid:  
And in this maze he went away to brood  
Upon his misery in solitude.

Adith in fancy follow'd, and her heart  
Grasp'd all his anguish in its own keen smart,  
Which, in that depth, as in a cavern dim,  
Well'd up a flow of sympathy for him.  
She mourn'd his love, she mourn'd Lucretia, too,  
For now no more a rival's pangs she knew!

Consoling Time more varied feelings 'woke,  
To lighten by their touch her sorrow's yoke,  
But still each day her chiefest thought was how  
To chase the settl'd cloud from Azlec's brow,  
Not by intrusive speech, nor by the look  
So hard for shrinking suffering to brook,

But by the tender sympathies that rule  
In silence ministries as beautiful ;  
And if he heard her voice 'twas heard to charm  
With the sweet comfort of a holy Psalm.

Thus came to him one eve, in murmurs low,  
Bemoaning David's prayer — "O, Lord God!

thou—

Thou art of mercy and compassion full,  
Long-suffering, in measure wonderful,  
In goodness plenteous as the harvest's store,  
In truth as the great deep—without a shore !  
O! turn Thee, then! O, turn to me, to me!  
Be merciful, and strength give us from Thee—  
Strength to thy servant and thy handmaid's son,  
In token of some good for us Thou'st done!"

Spoke Azlec here—"The Lord, who is so just,  
Regard thy piety, reward thy trust,

And thou accept from me a duty dear,  
Prescrib'd by customs that we both revere.  
Though not a lover, it is love that sues,  
Love, bound to thee, no power but Death shall  
    loose,  
And I—" she waited not to hear the rest,  
But dropp'd her glowing face upon his breast.

Thus plighted they their troth—not by speech,  
But more by feelings language cannot reach,  
Which form a telegraphy in the heart,  
And flash unspoken all this would impart.  
By ancient usage, Adith now must seek  
Seclusion with young maidens for a week :  
Such a retreat was found, by Azlec's care,  
And horsemen, led by him, convoy'd her there—  
Convoy'd through streets she tremblingly survey'd  
Even mid the lances of the cavalcade.

So drear the outlook that her very love  
Press'd on her bosom like a frighten'd dove,  
Cow'd by the gloom and the forebodings sad  
Of ills to come, forbidding to be glad.  
With much ado a caravan they pass'd,  
A drooping jaded train from Galilee,  
All fugitives—the leaves before the blast,  
The cliff swept down by the invading sea :  
And Adith, 'neath her veil and maiden's hood,  
Beholds the matron and her little brood,  
The shrinking damsels and the men-at-arms,  
Whose look, more than their dread array, alarms,  
The laden camels on their resting-knees,  
The panier'd ass, and pillion'd, and a group  
Of Arab Sheiks, who find the desert's ease—  
The desert's freedom, where tall houses coop,  
Because they see exalted overhead  
The clear blue tent the sky and air have spread.

In turn, the damsels at the fountain drink—  
Ah! why so suddenly does Adith shrink,  
When one of the fair train lifts up her veil  
To take what draught her little cup can bale?  
It is—it is Lucretia meets her eye!  
And Adith hardly can repress a cry,  
But the same impulse springs a deeper mine,  
And she rides on—without a word or sign!

Nor tells she Azlec, when from him she parts!  
Why should she thrust Lucretia 'tween their  
          hearts?

He thinks her dead, and has perforce resign'd  
The love that in the grave no more could bind!  
And could a bride renounce her state before  
The maiden troop who meet her at the door,  
Who strew her way with flowers, hail with song  
Her coming there, and round in triumph throng?

Too much to claim ! too great a sacrifice,  
If love besides—love sway the balance nice.  
Yet Adith could not still the voice that bade  
The truth be told, the sacrifice be made !  
In vain they sought her spirit to beguile  
With festive games—they won from her no smile,  
Or but a smile that wanted innate light—  
The blooming rosebud kernelling a blight.  
Sad as her mood, her wavering resolve  
Be what it might would misery involve,  
The same were her discovery conceal'd,  
Or by herself in Azlec's ear reveal'd.  
She stood as 'twere upon a lofty tower,  
Whence she must leap or fall ; and in this hour  
Of doubt—of panic—looking from the brink,  
She could not leap, and left herself to sink.  
Thus, hardly with the power to decide,  
She gives her hand to Azlec as his bride.

## CHANT IV.

### THE SORTIE ON TITUS.

ONCE more the hosts of Rome their proud array  
On Zion's plain in endless line extend,  
Deploying from the hills, which, far away,  
Through gorges deep, and passes none defend,  
Pour down the welded mass like rolling clouds—  
For so the tread of countless feet enshrouds,  
And all the martial pomp and ranks robust  
Are hid from sight—an ambuscade in dust,  
Till, ranging wide, the flash of gleaming spears  
Like breaking sunshine through the clouds  
appears.

So through the mists of ages beams the name  
Of him who led—who rul'd—that mighty power,  
Who, with the Victor's, earn'd the nobler fame  
That forms the Benefactor's gracious dower,  
And 'neath the dome of Time, that phantom  
pile

Dimly advancing from a range unknown,  
Has won a statue, in the hallow'd aisle  
Where monuments consist of deeds alone—  
Of deeds inscrib'd by History's stern pen,  
Which there hails Titus Emperor of Men.

His royal mien more than the regal hue  
A purple scarf across his breastplate threw,  
Proclaims him Cæsar, as, amid his train,  
A prancing charger bore him o'er the plain—  
Bore as aware, by instinct of its own,  
By innate sense, its saddle was a throne.



The city riveted the hero's gaze,  
As a memorial of ancient days,  
The seat of a strange people—of a race  
Who claim'd to stand alone in Heaven's grace,  
Whose ways were singular, laws writ in stone,  
Who had no God but one—a God Unknown !  
And, leaving to Nicanor to lead on,  
He let his glance the Temple rest upon,  
Not more attracted by its blaze of gold  
Than by the sanctities that so enfold :  
Which he, exalted over every law,  
Felt to impress, and strike with mystic awe.

Thus paid to sentiment his first survey,  
From his brief musing Titus rode away,  
Attended by the only Legion nigh,  
To scan the city with a General's eye.  
He marks the glens, observes the triple wall,

The gates, the turrets, and the towers tall,  
The heights precipitous on which they stand,  
Which all the level plain in front command,  
Sees, high above, the Temple's bastions swell,  
And crown the city with a citadel !  
Save guards upon the wall, no soul was seen,  
No gazers on the housetops, none to note  
The dread advance of war, in showy sheen,  
False as the sunshine on a stagnant moat :  
Hence Titus nearer drew, more confident,  
When lo ! flew wide the gate of Woman's Tower :  
Archers and slingers mann'd the battlement,  
And from beneath pour'd forth all Simon's power—  
Foot on the plain to fight, and horse to scour !  
One column Simon's self, one Aztec led,  
Dividing as they reach the broken ground,  
Where banks and hedges, outworks Peace has  
spread,

Give promise they may Titus hem around—  
Titus whose capture would decide the fray,  
And end for ever Rome's detested sway.

Cæsar was quick to note the tangling net,  
But, ere he turn'd, the charge of Azlec met,  
A rush of spears, beneath a cloud of darts,  
That shook his ranks, but not his soldiers' hearts,  
And at the Hebrew line his veterans fly,  
As if Mars nerv'd their arm, when he was nigh.  
Vain Titus bids retire : they're borne away  
By the hot blood that death alone can stay,  
That fires with valour, but with fury blinds,  
And where most need of unity, unbinds.  
'Tis here that Simon bursts upon their flanks,  
And spreads confusion through their loosen'd  
ranks,  
While Azlec cleaves his way through axe and  
lance,

To cut off Titus ere he can advance.

Nicanor saw the Legion meet the shock,  
Its serried files saw totter and unlock,  
And from the rising camp he hasten'd back  
To rescue Cæsar, and with him attack.  
But Eleazar and the brigand John  
Now from the Temple's knights sweep down as  
    one,  
As one their columns dash upon the plain,  
And meet Nicanor and hurl back again.  
Swiftly the Romans rally—swiftly hew  
A pathway on, a pathway corpses strew,  
When once again the Hebrews block the way,  
And so the battle rages through the day.  
Then the Tenth Legion, by Nicanor led,  
Strikes out for Titus o'er the heaps of dead,  
Half-way the King of Rome the rescue meets,

And, with the day, the Roman host retreats.

The Hebrews wearied seek not to pursue,  
But, like their foe, from the red plain withdrew,  
And, while the battle's passions dominate,  
Reach in dense masses the wide city-gate.  
Ah ! not without the foe most to alarm,  
He was their brother, was their own right arm,  
He march'd beside, he held each fastness nigh,  
And now—now in their midst—he rais'd his cry,  
Ten thousand swords upon ten thousand leapt,  
Through every street a running conflict swept,  
And from God's Temple came, in horrid flight,  
A shower of flames, which all the precincts light,  
Alas ! far worse ! by fatal currents borne,  
They reach the city's ample store of corn ;  
Her stores, her food, her sustenance entire,  
Are in an instant wrapp'd in quenchless fire.

## CHANT V.

### THE FAMINE AND BLOCKADE.

THE famine came at once—came like a blight  
That gives no warning—as a tropic night  
With darkness treads on day, no eve between ;  
For thus one moment was abundance seen,  
The next arose a dearth—as black a dearth  
As ever fell on the unhappy Earth.

Misery hath steps, which stride to new  
degrees,  
New deeps off depth, advancing like the sea's,

Until they plunge in an abyss profound  
Where monsters harbour, and gulf'd Alps surround.

Just so the famine bore the Many on  
Until Humanity seem'd lost and gone—  
Gone from the heart, to every scruple lost,  
In Want's last pit a preying monster tost.  
The dearest kin no longer could endear,  
The voice most lov'd no more could soothe or  
cheer,

No sentiment surviv'd, no tie could chain,  
Nor was there any pity to restrain.  
But as the Gulf Stream o'er the Ocean throws  
A drift of verdure which no wave o'erflows,  
And living shells the grassy atoms ride  
Safe through the storms of the unfathom'd tide,  
So Zion still for hearts and homes found room,  
Where Nature flash'd a starlight through the gloom.

Enduring men—enduring ! O ! how much !  
Fresh vigour caught from Woman's kindling  
touch,  
And women, when their anguish most oppress'd,  
Found a support on Man's unflinching breast,  
Found sometimes a defender from despair  
In the heroic spirit fortress'd there.

Strife added to the horror of the hour—  
The strife within, of the divided hosts,  
And from without, where all the Roman power  
Assail'd incessantly the wearied posts,  
Encourag'd by the street-fights, and the thought  
That Rome had partisans 'mongst them who  
fought.

And this, in sooth, came soon to pass ; for hope  
In the faint soul grew daily less and less,  
And men caught at surrender, as a rope



To lift them from the gulf of wretchedness.  
But Simon, who the city held in thrall  
Between the ramparts and the Temple wall,  
These seiz'd and slew, the mask he'd worn so  
    long  
Now throwing his dup'd followers among,  
And they beheld, where they had plac'd all trust,  
A Herod rise, to trample in the dust.

Yet Hunger would seek food, despite of him—  
And from the gates stalk'd forth, as day grew dim,  
In companies of women and old men  
To gather herbage in the nearest glen.  
The Romans from their lines this sortie strange  
Beheld with wonder, and its fearless range,  
That heeded not their warning to go back  
Nor even shrank at menace of attack.  
Columns of shadows through the twilight spread,

The hapless foragers no dangers dread,  
For Desperation leads, and Death behind  
Points to the food the quickest hand may find.  
This won, they vanish, as if Gnomes arose,  
And sank again to their mid-Earth repose.

But their appearance day by day, at eve,  
To snatch for gnawing Want this small reprieve  
Betray'd to Titus what a famine reign'd,—  
Betray'd the pangs the city's swarms sustain'd,  
And he saw here, behind the ramparts high,  
A lodgment made by a supreme ally,  
Who swifter than his own great host without,  
Would from within storm tower and redoubt.  
Then he drew close his lines, and closer bound  
By an embankment thrown the city round,  
That cut off every hope of outer aid,  
And summon'd to surrender by blockade.

Not that the Hebrews, in their state forlorn,  
Look'd on despairing, or sat down to mourn,  
Without an effort to defeat the plan,  
Which show'd too plain its object and its span,  
For oft they dash'd at the encircling mound,  
Though 'twas but as a missile to rebound.  
Thus they draw Titus on to use in ire  
The swifter armament of sword and fire,  
As briskly they with fire and sword reply  
While through the air huge stones and arrows fly,  
In deadly clash, by arm and engine sent  
From bank and steep and bristling battlement.  
But oft the bravest on the crowded wall  
By hand more potent than a Roman's fall,  
And as they wing the shaft that strikes the foe,  
They sink themselves in hunger's cruel throe,  
They hear the vulture flapping overhead—  
War gives its last adieu, and they drop dead.

What offal and what garbage brought in gold  
Their own full weight, in public market sold,  
And how the noblest ate as delicate—  
'Twere shame to speak, revolting to relate.  
But there were out of sight such things devour'd  
As made these sumptuous, and men cower'd  
To think, at sudden moments, what their need  
Gave as a dainty to their craving greed.

Horrors and crimes that would have smote with  
fear

In other days, no longer such appear,  
For like the ravages in worlds extinct  
By a dread Struggle for Existence link'd,  
They came to look a sequence : and, as then  
Species stamp'd out species, so now men  
Trode down the weaker in the crushing throng—  
Trode down by right inherent of the strong.  
Alas ! it was a Woman, whom this strife

Brought to the last bourne in the rush for life—  
Who, horrible to tell, from her dried breast  
Pluck'd her own babe, as he in trust caress'd,  
And, like a ghoul devour'd, his fount of food  
Reviving in her bosom with his blood !

Thiswhile, the Romans push'd their columns on,  
And the first wall in deadly grapple won :  
The Hebrews to the Upper City fly,  
And to the Cloisters and the Tower nigh,  
Where Simon treats with John, and they unite  
In solemn compact to maintain the fight.

## CHANT VI.

### ADITH'S VAMPIRE.

SADLY liv'd Adith in this troublous time,  
Prey to a thousand terrors, and the thought—  
Most dire of all—that she had by a crime  
A wrathful judgment on her nuptials brought,  
And, like Raguel's daughter, was pursued  
By the dark shadow of a love beshrew'd.  
For now that Azlec was her own—at least  
In name her own, as she was his in soul,  
And inly bound to him by God's High Priest—  
Bound as the magnet to the sovereign pole,

She felt she had been false to love, and base  
To steal, as 'twere, into Lucretia's place.  
Vain the defence that 'twas not hers to speak ;  
'Twas she alleg'd Lucrece was dead—she knew,  
She saw how Azlec lov'd the beauteous Greek,  
And if herself had borne a love as true  
Herself had been forgot, to tell in haste  
Lucretia liv'd, and might at once be trac'd.  
But now she felt, now she could realise,  
That, for his sake, she'd even give up him,  
And make her life one endless sacrifice,  
Renounce herself, his cup of joy to brim,  
Rending love's dearest, truest tie apart,  
To press a happy rival to his heart.

Such thoughts flash'd through the tissue of  
her mind,  
Like a soft tint shot on a silk refin'd,

That by a change of light is brought in view  
When there before had seem'd one only hue.  
Most times, the horrors of the siege—the strain  
Of its anxieties, of want and pain,  
And fears for Azlec, absent in the fight  
Or watching on the ramparts through the night,  
Absorb'd her powers and all faculties,  
Till misery ingulf'd her in its leas.  
But through the breadth of the pervading gloom,  
The light of Azlec's presence shot this bloom—  
This tender gleam from a too tender breast,  
By wifely love and that alone possess'd.

The ceaseless wear of the corroding blight  
The siege each day spread round, and shed each  
    night,  
New terrors conjur'd, in her solitude,  
That even to Azlec's shelt'ring arms pursued,



And still Raguel's daughter was the theme—  
The prompting thought, of the enthralling dream,  
For Adith now came firmly to believe  
'Twas not Lucrece she saw the fountain leave,  
But her revengeful ghost—a vampire—who  
From the lone stream the poor drown'd body drew  
And in this form there met her to alarm,  
And since in secret daily wrought to harm,  
Just as the evil spirit, out of view,  
Each bridegroom of Raguel's daughter slew.

Yet Adith, with this shadow on her life—  
The horror of a mystery and strife  
That every moment wound in darker wile,  
Still ever welcom'd Azlec with a smile,  
And hid upon his breast her pallid face  
Ere he could, through the smile, her anguish  
trace.

She knew—her woman instinct taught her soon  
How the worn soldier felt and lov'd the boon—  
She knew, and joy'd to know, it made his home  
A refuge to him from the city's gloom,  
And she had rather in the strain have died,  
Than he should be this one faint ray denied.

Oft she in fancy, harrow'd by events,  
Follow'd his steps to the dread battlements,  
To the advancing breach, the shatter'd Gate,  
Where battering thunders knock'd and ruthless  
Fate,  
And she lived in an agony of fear  
Till he returned and bade the smile appear.

One day he came not to the hour—the sound  
Of unremitted battle rung around,  
The cry of victory and of despair,

The crash of rocks, the trumpet's call to dare.  
A call that to herself seem'd now address'd  
Bidding her forth upon a dreadful quest,  
She knew not where, but she must Aztec reach,  
Had she to seek him in the raging breach.  
Deadly her fear as rushing through the streets,  
The sights, as well as sounds, of War she meets,  
The wounded dropping in their flight—fresh  
bands

Advancing swiftly where the strain demands,  
And danger from the whizzing darts, that stray  
Far o'er the limits of the circling fray.  
Anon, one surer and more fatal flew,  
The cruel arrow struck her, and pierc'd through.  
And she fell backward, fell upon the ground  
As from an arch she saw Lucretia bound.  
Then felt her raise in tenderest embrace,  
And her sunk head on pillowing bosom place,

No ghost—no vampire—but a sister dear,  
Her last dark moments come to soothe and  
cheer.

Ah! how to cheer and how to soothe, when  
Death

Already clos'd her eyes and stay'd her breath,  
When deeper than that pillowing bosom's deeps  
Her reeling head dropp'd down o'er steeps and  
steeps,

And vain her failing senses, in the fall,  
Sought memories as failing to recal.

At last—at the last bourne of sense—she heard  
A voice that through the faint perception stirr'd,  
And from that gulf she made, as 'twere, a spring  
One glance at Azlec's mourning face to fling—  
One lingering glance, such as became a wife  
Who bade adieu in him to Earth and life.

The watchers knew not when the spirit fled :  
'Twas the hush'd breath alone told she was  
dead.

## CHANT VII.

### THE LAST SUPPER.

A WEEK had pass'd, and the declining day  
Brought with its calm a lull in the affray  
That round the city rag'd, when, from a lane,  
Azlec into a courtyard strode amain,  
And knock'd at a lone door. Response was slow,  
Until his voice assur'd he was no foe,  
Whereat Nathaniel at the door appear'd.  
Quoth Azlec—"All has happen'd as I fear'd :  
Before to-morrow rise, God's holy fane  
Alone in Zion will to us remain,

I come to lead you there, while yet the hour  
Leaves clear the way, and gives to me the power."  
"Lucrece and Balth shall go; I here am stay'd  
By dying Ichabod," Nathaniel said.  
"Thou must not stay, nor he, if we can move."  
To this, Nathaniel—"Let himself now prove  
What move to him remains Death will begin,  
Though 'tis not Death will end." To room within  
He with these mournful words the warrior led,  
And they Lucretia found by the sick bed,  
Where Ichabod had late in fever tost,  
But now lay tranquil, and no more the Lost,  
The spark in his dim eye being Reason's ray,  
And Faith's the light his features gaunt display.  
There Balth, too—Balth, the once Sorcerer, stood,  
Stripp'd of the Zodiac's signs his robe and hood,  
And he in look more venerable made  
By honest purpose, than by all Art's aid.

Meekly Lucrece accepted Azlec's hand :

" He spoke of thee," she said in accents bland,

Then turn'd her head to hide a falling tear.

" Good Ichabod ! behold'st thou whom is here ?"

" Son of my friend," the slow and faint reply.

" O, Azlec ! tell thy father how I die,

Now hearing music sweet, and now a hymn

That wakes my memory, where it is most dim,

And says—' Lord, lo ! I come ! I come to Thee,

As in the Volume it is writ of me,

A sacrifice thou'st not desir'd I give—'

O, Azlec in that hymn I die—to live !"

Not the first Brutus, idiot deem'd till then,

Astonish'd more surrounding throngs of men,

By eloquence no other tongue could reach,

Than Ichabod did Azlec by this speech.

" Thou art content to die, then ?" Azlec spoke.

" Content and glad, since 'tis by God my yoke



Is lifted off, just as content I'd be  
To bear this on, were His will not to free.  
A due I tender him—a debt of love,  
Before He leads me to His rest above !  
Now, Lord my Father ! Lord my Saviour, come !  
The Lost One's found—take me, O ! take me  
home !”

Through all the room his pleading voice was  
heard,  
Though hardly to a whisper rose each word,  
And though his accents fell, as 't were by drops,  
As failing breath with frequent pauses stops :  
So does the sun, behind a passing cloud,  
Shed a dim ray in glimpses through its shroud  
A silence follow'd, when spoke Balth, “ In peace  
Depart, my brother : near is thy release,—  
And may our end on Earth be like to thine !”  
Nathaniel here produc'd a cup of wine,

And broke a scrap of bread, and dealt it round :  
“ It is our last,” he said, in tones profound,  
“ And we will give it to the Lord, who sent,  
And our last supper make His Sacrament.”  
First to the dying man he lifted up  
The scanty morsel and the hallow'd cup,  
Then pass'd the wine to each, as he declar'd  
The blessedness and mystery they shared,  
The while on Azlec, who with them partook,  
He bent a gracious and paternal look.  
They paus'd a space : then round the sick man  
    drew,  
To breathe a prayer, and bid a mute adieu.  
But the blank form which there so cumbrous lay,  
Made no response—the Soul had pass'd away.

Familiar they with Death, and every hour  
Show'd them some horror, which curtail'd its power,

Taking from sensibility its sense  
By making life a danger or suspense,  
Yet now they all lamented, and Lucrece  
No tears from this affliction could release,  
So had poor Ichabod, that hapless one,  
His way into her pitying bosom won !

Anon Nathaniel took her hand, and gave  
To Azlec—"Fitly to a simple grave  
We'll bear our Lost—myself and Balth, his friend,  
Whom he would most desire thus to attend :  
Go ye and wait for us at Simon's Tower :  
We'll seek you there, and join, within the hour."

This in a sweet persuasive voice he said,  
And they at once departed as he bade.

## CHANT VIII.

SIGNS IN HEAVEN AND ON THE EARTH.

IN silence Azlec led Lucretia on,  
His mind enwrapt in solemn thoughts, and none  
The speech suggesting that consoles and cheers,—  
That might her heart relieve and dry her tears.  
While fresh his grief for Adith, in the scene  
• With hapless Ichabod, he'd sadden'd been,  
Doom circl'd round his dearest—for God's fane,  
Behind hemm'd ramparts, lent but refuge vain,  
Since all the prowess in this citadel  
Not long the Roman forces could repel :

He saw his country falling, and this fall  
Must be, he deem'd, the end to her of all—  
Of creed, of hope, of presage held assur'd,  
All he, in that Last Supper, had abjur'd,  
Whence did it seem that, with her sacred laws,  
He'd Judah's self renounc'd, and her lost cause,  
Forsaking when she claim'd from every son  
Her last breach'd battlement to die upon.  
But as they pass into the ruin'd street,  
Where men-at-arms and fugitives they meet,  
And prowling bands, he draws Lucretia close  
And half casts off the thoughts that so engross.  
The gliding Moon with crescent thus half rings  
The brief eclipse the Earth's dark shadow  
flings,  
Then, from this gleam, drifts gradually through  
Till all her silver disc bursts into view :  
And Aztec, once he spoke, in his discourse

Won so his old communicative force,  
That by his words serene, as dangers start,  
And by his air, he gave Lucretia heart,  
And from his iron nerve reflected light  
That cover'd o'er his bosom's inner night.

In this companionship they reach the Tower  
From Simon nam'd and centre of his power.  
Here soldiers came and went, and orderlies,  
Who loiter'd round, assum'd to be at ease,  
Attending the behests of the stern Chief,  
Or waiting for dispatch or for relief.  
They all saluted Azlec, as he took  
Lucretia past to an adjacent nook,  
Where parapet of stone and battlement  
A shelter from the Roman missiles lent,  
And they might in security abide  
Nathaniel's coming, and discourse aside.

But no time this for speech : the lowering sky  
Rent sudden open to the startl'd eye—  
A cloud roll'd up, as if a curtain rose  
The scene of a stage drama to disclose,  
And in the space enfram'd a city stood,  
Stood in Jerusalem's similitude,  
With tower and wall and batter'd rampart round,  
And, plain as these, the circling Roman mound.  
The Temple glitter'd on a crowning height,  
The Cloisters shot aloft their columns light,  
The cedars flung their boughs, the fountains  
    play'd,  
The palace was in blacken'd ruins laid,  
And street and lane and labyrinth all here  
As in Jerusalem itself appear.

From the whole city and whole Roman power,  
From house and camp and wall and soaring tower,

Amazement broke—broke in one mingl'd sound  
That seem'd nor shout nor cry, but their rebound—  
So were a million voices in their tone  
Subdued and deaden'd when they spoke as one.  
But not a breath did through the silence rise  
As soldiers swarm'd the city of the skies  
And its investing bank, and there began  
To wage a stubborn battle, man to man,  
From rampart and from battlement to fling  
The crushing rock and missiles from the sling,  
And arrows dart, and shining standards wave,  
To nerve the timid and to cheer the brave.  
But the besieg'd on the encompass'd wall  
In vain contend, in vain heroic fall,  
Or in new columns meet each fresh attack,  
In every onset they are driven back,  
A breach affords a slope to climb upon,  
The columns storm—the imag'd city's won!



O ! was this real ? did the spellbound eye  
Behold in truth this conflict in the sky ?  
Or did warp'd fancy the illusion raise,  
And give to only one beholder's gaze ?  
Each of the million watchers with this thought  
The faces near him for assurance sought,  
And met the same astounded, awe-struck look—  
The self-same impress his own features took.  
Too plain the scene, and none could truly doubt,  
Though now a cloud roll'd down and blotted out :  
And, as the ruthless sack began to rage,  
The curtain fell upon the awful stage.

The growing dusk fast deepen'd into Night,  
Yet still all gaz'd on high, chain'd by that  
sight,  
Which, scarce believing when they saw, they now  
Expect to rise again, again to cower,

Haply with terrors new, in direr form,  
Girt round by lightnings and enthron'd in storm.  
In such suspense the mariner surveys  
The reef that his environ'd ship imbays :  
The squall has dropp'd, no more the billows roll,  
O ! will his bark drift clear of the sunk shoal ?  
Or brings yon threatening cloud a fiercer gust  
To cut her off, and on the breakers thrust ?  
While thus forlorn he waits, a nearer doom  
Seems in a quicksand on his course to loom :  
And threat'ning cloud and breakers are forgot  
In fears by fate so imminent begot.  
Just thus did waiting Zion now espy  
A blazing Comet burst upon the sky :  
In shape a sword, sword o'er the city hung,  
A portent too significant is flung  
And memories of all before expire  
In view of this presentiment in fire !

“What signs! what prodigies!” a voice here  
cried—

And Azlec found Nathaniel by his side :

“Who can upon them look, and fail to feel

What they imply—nay, most distinct reveal ?

The signs in Heaven these, our Lord foretold,

Distress on Earth we witness, and behold

The trench cast Zion round—yon circling mass :

All he declar'd would surely come to pass.

So the judg'd city from her seat of pride

Is hurl'd to Doom, and Jesus glorified !”

Quoth Balth—“These are great mysteries, and  
raise

The soul to worship and the lips to praise,

Still they alarm, and a wild fear awake

'Tis not Jerusalem alone at stake,

For if yon comet on the Sun descend,

One conflagration will all Nature end !”

This speech Lucrece in consternation heard,  
And her whole frame with its vibration stirr'd,  
As by a reckless touch a jar is sent  
Through all the chords of a fine instrument :  
Needs a skill'd hand then deftly to sweep o'er  
Anew to tone, and harmony restore.  
And thus now Azlec spoke—" Be not afraid."  
And on Lucretia's arm his hand he laid,  
As if with it, in truth, he would impart  
A bracing concord to her shaken heart.  
" We die, dear maid, but once, and there can be  
No death more dread than we around may see  
In every form of horror and of woe  
By Man inflicted ! I had rather throw  
Myself, like David, in the hands of God,  
Who, even in wrath, bears but a Father's rod—  
Far rather than in man's. His will be done  
Though it may be to dart upon the Sun

That fearful Comet fraught with portent dire  
Still trust—and He'll bear through the World on  
fire !”

“Thou sayest well, my son !” Nathaniel spoke.

“His arm in His own courts we will invoke.

Do thou to the Lord's Altar lead the way :

'Tis there we may most meetly, most devoutly  
pray !”

Straight where a watchful sentry stood, they  
went

In Azlec's guidance from the battlement,

And, passing Simon's guarded Tower round,

A gate admitted in the Temple's bound,

Whence they to the most hallow'd court repair,

And meekly at the Altar claim God's care.

Darkness has fallen, though so young the  
Night,

The Comet blazes, but it does not light,  
And they can barely in dim outline trace  
The sacred precinct where their ark of grace—  
The Altar—adds the silence of the tomb  
To shadow deeper the surrounding gloom,  
But thus a while, when lo, the Altar's beam  
On sudden shows a spark, a ray, a gleam,  
Which flashes in a breath a flooding shine  
O'er all its length: the radiance divine  
More than the fearful Comet doth appal,  
And the beholders on their faces fall!  
They dared not breathe, their very hearts seem  
still,  
Fain they'd the mountains call and rocks to kill!  
Greater and direr strain they've to support,  
A thousand voices echo through the Court,  
"LET US MOVE HENCE!" these in low cadence  
say:

The light upon the Altar fades away :  
Not six strong men can stir the Gate of Brass,  
It open flies for the Unseen to pass :  
And now, no more bound by a building's girth,  
The Temple of the Lord's the whole wide  
Earth !

## CHANT IX.

### DESTRUCTION OF ZION.

IN the deep night the Hebrew soldiers fall  
In silence back from the dismantl'd wall  
And from the city, to the Temple height,  
Where in one host the factions three unite,  
And court and rampart throng. The morning  
    here,  
As it breaks sullenly, through vapours drear,  
Finds Azlec in their midst, come bent to share  
Such enterprise as the most bold may dare.  
Already have the Romans gather'd round :



Their spears rise like a forest from the ground :  
And Azlec, who each man of station knows,  
Sees all the chivalry of Zion's foes.  
In this array the second in command,  
Tiberius Alexander, heads a band,  
Who bear his blazon'd standard, and convey  
His 'hests to Captains eager to obey :  
Sextus Cerealis and Larcus lead  
One the fifth Legion, one that shield in need  
The tenth, cover'd with renown, and in rear  
Titus Frigius and the fifteenth appear.  
Two Legions 'neath Eternius combine,  
Procurators and Tribunes swell the line,  
And Marcus Julianus strikes the sight  
By his resplendent arms and charger white.

Azlec still gaz'd, when suddenly he felt  
A hand behind him grasp his shoulder belt,

And, turning, saw Nathaniel, whom he drew  
By his address the thronging soldiers through.  
Nathaniel then—"Forego thy rash intent !  
The Church at Tabor has a brother sent  
To lead us hence—lead by a way he knows  
To outlet 'yond where Roman lines enclose,  
And where swift horses wait, to bear us on  
To safety. Saidst not thou God's will be done ?  
Then can'st thou war against the doom pronounced  
On this hemm'd Temple, by such signs announc'd ?  
O ! come away and sheathe thy useless sword—  
Useless and curst if drawn against the Lord !"  
This speech stirr'd deeply Azlec, who well knew  
The words were fate—that all it said was true :  
And felt the fervour of the warning giv'n—  
That to resist was to wage war on Heav'n.  
Lost in the maze such drear reflections cast,  
He's startl'd by a trumpet's ringing blast,

Which from Antonia's high summit calls  
Simon to parley, on the Temple walls—  
Parley with Titus on the Tower there  
Titus—himself a tower in his air—  
The Golden Eagle of his army nigh,  
Its outspread wings swift at his nod to fly,  
And bear that mighty power at its back  
To breach the holy fane, and storm, and sack—  
And both hosts stand in breathless awe to hear  
What now falls from his voice, in accents clear.

“ Chief of the Hebrews, ere I strike the blow  
That must the Temple of thy God lay low,  
I summon thee and all ranged in this siege,  
To spare yourselves and Rome this sacrilege.  
Twice by your countryman, Josephus, here,—  
A man known as a patriot sincere  
And virtuous, but one, withal, discreet,

I've urg'd ye to submit and call'd to treat :  
But you have madly spurn'd each overture,  
As if your triumph in the end were sure.  
Now is the end at hand : the hour has come  
When ye to me must yield, or yield to Doom.  
And I no more by envoy's mouth appeal,  
I'm here myself to offer peace, and seal.  
The gods be witness—gods of every race  
I ever have revered them, and their grace  
By homage sought ; and for your God Unknown  
A reverence I feel as for my own.  
O! force me not his Temple to profane  
With deeds of blood—blood shed by you in vain.  
Throw down your arms, and I my right hand  
give  
In solemn pledge to all that all shall live—  
That all shall find me clement when not brav'd,  
And this unrival'd Temple shall be sav'd !”

Here from the Hebrew host deep murmurs  
broke

That stern defiance and fierce hatred spoke :  
So in Peru, when beams the sun around,  
A rising earthquake's detonations sound.  
Then cried a fiery zealot that from Heav'n  
A voice to him had an assurance giv'n  
That at the last, in danger's worst extreme,  
The Lord would by a miracle redeem—  
From Gentiles save His holy house, and them,  
And crown their faith with David's diadem  
And then did Simon thus to Cæsar's speech  
An answer give :—" These walls thou'st yet to  
breach,  
And we have trusty swords—swords thou dost  
know  
The battle's call ne'er found behind our foe,  
And deem'st thou soldiers harden'd in such strife

Can meanly set a value on mere life ?  
Dismiss the thought! We would feel shame to live  
Did life not liberty and country give !  
If thou'dst avoid the guilt of laying low  
This sacred pile, let us in freedom go,  
Arms in our hands, into the wilderness,  
As did our sires from Egypt ! Nothing less  
Will we accept, but rather here will die !"  
From all the Hebrew ranks there rose a cry  
Adoptive of his words : such an Amen  
Souls may give once, but cannot say again !  
Yet did the speech not Simon's purpose show,  
For he design'd, as Aztec came to know,  
Soon as the Temple's ramparts were attack'd,  
To leave the holy fabric to be sack'd,  
And 'neath its deep foundations, in the rock  
Safe in hewn galleries escape the shock—  
Safe wait, where food was amply stor'd, the day

When he could on the height resume his sway.

“This scheme of his my guidance leaves to  
thee,”

Said Azlec to Nathaniel, “I am free.”

Yet they both paus'd, as Titus spoke again

To Simon and the host, in lofty strain—

“Renounce your mad resolve, and bravely yield

While yet surrender will from ruin shield ;

To loose you from my bounds—loose an arm'd  
force,

Would this rebellion throw back to its source,

Begin again the scenes of deadly strife,

The waste of blood and sacrifice of life.

Your Temple's fall no guilt on me will bring,

To you the guilt, the shame, the crime will  
cling :

And I undaunted to your God appeal

To hold me blameless !” Here, as if to seal

His words with deeds—and show how big with  
fate—

A Roman climb'd unnoted a lone gate,  
Whence he adroitly flung a flaming torch  
Through a gold window on the Temple porch.  
The cry of fire set both hosts in array,  
While smoke and flame half hid the dread  
affray,

And shouts and yells and a resounding wail  
From the far mountains brought, and every vale  
Dismay'd and deafen'd, blending with the clash  
Of ringing arms, and falling ramparts' crash.  
Stones fly in clouds, and arrows, mid the din,  
The pilum darts and cruel javelin,  
And zealots bitumen all blazing throw  
In flakes of fire and brimstone on the foe.  
Hardly could Aztec keep from the affray ;  
But firm Nathaniel now, and bore away ;



And presently the waiting guide they found :  
They reach a gloomy vault beneath the ground,  
But which to Azlec might a palace grace,  
For it—it gives Lucrece to his embrace !

“Ere we the Temple leave,” Nathaniel said,  
“My son, I do espouse thee to this maid.  
As the Lord’s priest I knit her to thy breast,  
That she, at last, may find a home and rest.  
Now let us forward, and, though dark the way,  
Our Master yet shall bring to a bright day.”

No brightness reigns where they emerge in  
light  
Deep in a dell crags screen almost from sight,  
And a huge cedar locks. Their steeds wait nigh,  
But they nor mount nor claim, lingering to eye  
Their Zion burning on her lofty steep—  
Lingering till all the pile’s one black heap,

And nought survives War's last disrupting shock,  
But God's foundation—the Eternal Rock !

THE END.

