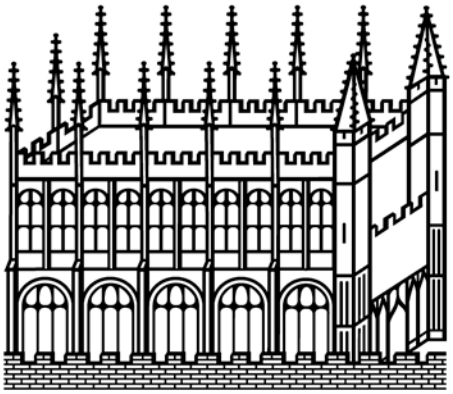

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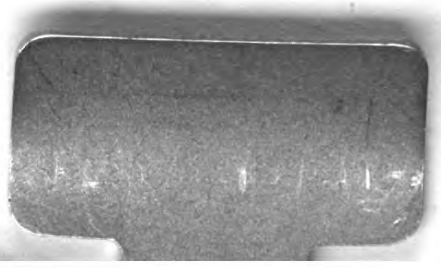

KINGASA:

A

POEM.

IN

SIX BOOKS.

FOUNDED ON

1 KINGS, Ch. xv. Ver. 11 to 14. and 2 CHRON. Ch. xiv.

By T. MAY.

~~HENLEY:~~

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[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

THE FIRST BOOK OF KING ASA.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan diſpleaſed to ſee true religion reſtored among the Jews, convenes his powers to council, and claims their advice. Belial, Moloch, and Beelzebub, give their opinions. Adramelech undertakes to delude Zerah, king of Ethiopia, to invade Judah. Satan approves of Adramelech's propoſal. The latter proceeds, and appears to Zerah, by night, like the prieſt of Iſis. The king awakes, demands his arms, and orders the ſtates of his kingdom to be convened, to whom he relates his nocturnal viſion. An embaſſy is ſent to Jupiter Ammon. The legates return, and relate the anſwer of the oracle. The troops are collected; their leaders and arms are deſcribed. Adramelech returns, and informs the powers of darkneſs of his ſucceſs.

KING ASA.

BOOK I.

A THEME unſung, yet forming in my breaſt,
Celeſtial Muſe! in pleaſing ſtrains ſuggeſt:
Tell how, incens'd, inflam'd with high diſdain,
Proud Satan ſaw the Jews from ſin refrain;
Adore that arm which darkneſs will confound,
Which Rahab ſmote, and gave the dragon's wound.

Oh! thou who ken'ſt the moſt conceal'd diſguiſe!
Whoſe wiſdom plann'd the vaſt unbounded ſkies;

Who

Who bad'ſt the world from non-exiſtence ſpring,
And yon bright ſun with orient ſplendor ſhine,
Thee I invoke! reveal thy wonders here;
While I contemplate various ſcenes of war,
When Gentiles rag'd, and Death and Hell combin'd
To mar the Branch, the hope of all mankind.

Belov'd of God, great Asa fill'd the throne,
Reſtor'd true worſhip, and the groves cut down;
Aſht'roth and Milchom from their ſeats were torn,
Chemoſh and Baa'lim held their plight forlorn.
With wrath inflam'd, revengeful Satan flies,
And in mid air dire conſultations riſe;
Th' infernal peers his vile reſults attend,
Before his throne, deceiv'd with pomp, they bend.
Throng'd was the dark conglomerated hall,
Where pow'rs beneath conſpire good Asa's fall.
Silence, throughout the court, was now proclaim'd,
When, riſing, thus the prince of air exclaim'd:—

Pow'rs!

Pow'rs! dominations! princedoms! virtues! thrones!
Revenge the ſighs and unremitted groans
Of Heathen prieſts, who now rejected lie,
Thrown from their temples and ſupremacy.
Riſe, mighty peers! reſolve fierce Asa's fall;
Aſſert your freedom; break the chains of thrall.
I need not tell, how from her throne he drew
His mother queen, and captive led the crew.
No more our ſhrines nor altars they frequent;
Burnt are our groves, and many a temple rent.
Riſe, deities! immortal gods ariſe!
Reſume your own, and dare invade the ſkies.
Shall then a mortal baffle all our hopes?
And ſons of duſt defeat æthereal troops?
Say, ſhall th' infernal gates for ever cloſe?
That hateful manſion be our laſt repoſe?
Forbid it, fate! reſiſt it, all ye gods;
Offspring of Heav'n! natives of bleſs'd abodes!
Deſcend with ſtrength; in union gladly join;
Let all our guile by godlike counſel ſhine.—
From David's houſe the promis'd Seed will ſpring,
To whom the pow'rs of darkneſs muſt reſign.

Here

Here interpoſe; conſult how beſt we may
His word confound, who Heav'n's bright realm doth ſway;
Extirpate every branch of Judah's band,
Mankind enſlave, and Iſrael's God withſtand.
You know of old, by conqu'ring this new world,
I brought you light, to Hell's grim dungeon hurl'd.
As then this earth was wrapt in devious woe,
We ſhall, no doubt, the ſcenes of Heav'n review.
If fate denies, yet let us ſtill retain
New Heavens on earth, and there in ſplendor reign.
He then, who can evade our late diſmay,
And all the ſeed of hateful David ſlay,
Let him ſtand forth, and from his throne ariſe;
The prime of Heav'n, conſulting, means t' adviſe.

He ceas'd; and, riſing, Belial thus began,
In reaſon's garb; preſumptive was the plan:—
Immortal gods! aſpiring flower of Heav'n!
To whom reſult, above ſubjection's giv'n.
Shall we by night in convocation meet,
The fall of Judah's monarch to debate?

Hear

Hear all ye pow'rs! æthereal kings give ear!
Obſerve and iſſue what your chiefs declare:
We know the race of Adam prone to ſin;
With man polluted, wickedneſs will reign.
Did not the firſt of mortals fall by love,
E're faireſt Eve was out of Eden drove?
This was the triumph; hence our pow'r began;
The woman fell, and love deceiv'd the man;
His paſſions rul'd, eſteem'd the vice we claim,
Licentious luſt and ſin's unlawful flame.
'Tis mine by wiles, which falſe delights inſpire,
Mankind to ſooth, and tempt with warm deſire;
I lead the brilliant dance when opes the ball,
Or find them mirth, when wanton gameſters fall;
My deep ſuggeſtions bid the harlot ſhine;
Grace waits her ſteps, in ſtriking dreſs divine;
For all the power of ſoft prelude is mine.
To muſic's charms the fair reſpondent moves,
While in her perſon play the wanton loves;
Attentive Cupids tend her with their darts;
Deluſive themes advance my ſpecious arts.
Thoſe ſoft enchanting ſcenes before the flood
Diſtracted men, and ſmote the ſons of God;
Seth's righteous offspring knew this fond deſire,
Fell by falſe charms, and cheriſh'd lawleſs fire.

Well pleas'd with guile, with all my ſkill I ſtrove,
And gladly ſtrain'd the ſecret ſnares of love:
Meantime, to ſcreen ſuch fraud and bold deſign,
I chear'd their hearts with mirth and ſparkling wine.
Where harlots play, my feſtival is joy,
Exulting pride, and themes that never cloy.---
O'erwhelming water once the earth did ſweep,
And the whole world was one unfathom'd deep;
All fleſh was drown'd, ſave thoſe whom God deſign'd
Earth to repleniſh, and preſerve their kind.
Reduc'd, awhile thoſe arch temptations ſtay'd,
And the loud din of flagrant vice decay'd;
But ſin inactive could not long remain,
Nor men from thoſe delicious ills refrain:
In peopled towns, and cities left at large,
My ſuffragans procur'd their glorious charge.
When grateful ev'ning draws her ſable ſhade,
And the dun wings of night the day o'erſpread,
I rove the ſtreets, ſelect my jovial train,
Great towns corrupt, or tempt the heedleſs ſwain;
Sing luſtful orgies to extirpate care,
While jocund muſic ſhakes the ambient air:
Thus I trepan the world to dark delight,
And Bacchanalian routs diſpel the night.

Nor

Nor am I more obſcure to Iſrael's ſons,
Since to my empire every vice belongs;
Through all it's num'rous tribes, the world I rove,
Each ſilent valley, and each whiſp'ring grove;
Witneſs the rape, for which proud Gibeah fell,
The Levite's wife or concubine may tell:
Thoſe ills, and more, have ſince offended Heaven,
And men to death and our ſubjection driven.---
He, who in ſtrength the ſons of men ſurpaſs'd,
Son of Manoah, was by love diſtreſs'd;
Fair Delilah deceiv'd that daring breaſt;
Samſon beguil'd, betray'd his ſacred truſt;
A woman foil'd him, whom no force could tame;
With him no warrior durſt contend in fame:
Such is the power of paſſion, ſuch I give
My foes to vanquiſh, and mankind deceive;
You know, I ſmooth'd the female's tongue with guile,
Deck'd her blithe charms, and taught her when to ſmile;
And, when reſiſtleſs ſtrength the beam unloos'd,
My dark deſigning wiles the cauſe diſclos'd:
I on that ſpruce Philiſtian fair, beſtow'd
The arts of love, diſſembling wit, and fraud;

His mind was ſooth'd; ſhe ply'd her charms with eaſe;
Her enervating lap was form'd to pleaſe.
Thus Samſon fell; three grand eſſays ſhe made,
The fourth the champion's ſinful heart betray'd;
With joy I ſprang to hold this foe in chains,
To drudgery doom'd and vile inglorious pains:
Philiſtians mock'd, and worſhip'd Dagon's ſhrine;
He ground in priſon, and their ſport was mine.---
In David's mind, all conqu'ring love had part,
The fatal charm pierc'd his unthinking heart;
His ſins eternal vengeance ſoon drew down,
And Heaven's great King beheld him with a frown;
The waſting peſtilence deſtroy'd his land,
And plagues aroſe to iſſue God's command.---
Ev'n he, who all terreſtrial wiſdom knew,
By love was vanquiſh'd, and to ſin withdrew.
Fierce Moloch's fire in Tophet's valley blaz'd;
A temple hence for Chemos' power I rais'd;
His blitheſome wives beguil'd his ſapient heart,
Vice ſheath'd his wit, and found the weakeſt part;
And, for his crimes, ten tribes of twelve were rent,
The ſtate divided, and its levies ſpent.---
If Asa's death is what the gods require,
His mind inflame with love's bewitching fire,

Preſent

Preſent fit nymphs, the faireſt in the land;
What mortal can the power of love withſtand?
To idols, women may his heart incline,
Corrupt his conſcience, and for woe divine:
Thus ſhall we o'er the wiſe and good prevail,
And vice again extend her ample ſcale;
Why do we then inactive thus debate?
In his ſtern ſoul the ſtrength of luſt create;
So may that God, from whom their peace doth flow,
Incens'd at ſin, riſe their Almighty foe;
The ſeed, perhaps, of Jeſſe then will die,
And God himſelf that race elect deſtroy:
So ſhall we every grand deſign fruſtrate,
And Christ's dominion, e're it's riſe, defeat.---
Thus Belial, with perſuaſive accents, mov'd
Th' inferior ranks, and baſe degen'rate crowd;
With him agreed Chemos and Aſmodai,
Patrons of vice, whom ſinful luſts obey;
While near the throne, the grand conſulting peers,
With malice fraught, contrive deſtructive wars.

Grim Moloch roſe; with deep portent he ſpoke,
And ſtorm'd with rage; his voice the æther ſhook;
Diſguſting pride his ſavage eye poſſeſs'd,
Infernal hatred lab'ring in his breaſt;
Convuls'd, all hell combin'd the fiend addreſs'd:

Hear

Hear, and obey, æthereal denizons!
To whom dominion and high rule belongs!
Shall then a mortal put us gods to flight,
And drive us hence, to everlaſting night?
Is not the ſanguine vale of Tophet mine?
O'er numerous realms I ſtretch my ample reign.
Diſdain, ye gods, the puny ſons of earth;
Duſt is all fleſh, from duſt they took their birth:
Then, have not we dominion through the fall,
And long ſubdu'd this round capacious ball?
'Tis ſaid, from Abram's loins a prince ſhall ſpring,
Who, over all will reign, as God and King;
His regal power ſhall over Hell extend;
To him, as Lord, muſt we obſequious bend?
Grant this the reaſon of our meeting here,
Of our convention, forming laſting war;
Thence long on earth we reign, and millions bow,
While man is deem'd, thro' Christ, our rival foe;
'Tis promis'd, enmity ſhall always dwell,
Unreconcil'd, 'twixt him and powers of Hell.
Thoſe puny ſons of earth, 'tis true, we've hurl'd
From Paradiſe into a ſuff'ring world;
But, will they then, for ever dwell in fear?
Uſe, oh ye gods! th' advantages of war,

Before

Before the Branch, the promis'd hope of man,
Be born of fleſh, God's favour to regain.---
We live to hate, eſſential pow'rs of air!
O'erwhelming clouds and ſtorms our might declare;
Subſervient nature aids our vaſt deſires;
Rain, hail, and tempeſts, and æthereal fires;
Vindictive rage rules earth without controul;
We bid the loud, tremendous thunders roll;
Men dread the ſound; their conſcious hearts retire:
Uzzean Job felt our reſiſtleſs ire,
When I collective drew the flames from high,
And dreadful light'nings flaſh'd along the ſky;
Bright coruſcations o'er the earth did ſweep,
Sing'd the green graſs, and ſtruck the bleating ſheep;
While Job's whole offspring, bent on mirth and play,
To feaſt and muſic gave that joyful day;
Then fell the hail, the ſtorms obſequious blew,
Rent the four corners, and the houſe o'erthrew;
O'erwhelm'd, and preſs'd beneath the pond'rous
weight,
His ſons and daughters mourn'd their hapleſs fate.---
Riſe, deities! from ſloth and counſel riſe,
While yet the time a grateful chance ſupplies;
Inflict your terrors through infernal fire;
Extirpate all with ſtench and lightnings dire.

As

As we were baniſh'd from the courts of Heaven,
And from our thrones to laſting darkneſs driven,
Let us now exerciſe unbounded ſway,
And Abram's line deprive of chearful day.
May Hell's ſtrong gates that race abhor'd incloſe,
And beds of ſolid fire conſole their woes!—
No more he ſaid, then on his throne reclin'd
Thoughts of revenge ſtill lurking in his mind.

Second of Hell, with counſel more humane,
And portly grace, proud Belzebub began;
He, riſing, ſeem'd a monument of ſtate;
On his high brow deliberation ſate;
Stretch'd at full height, the god of Eckron ſtood;
Foe to the juſt, adverſe to all that's good.—
Synod of gods! aſſembled in mid air,
On earth ador'd, ſerv'd by the rights of war,
With what was urg'd at firſt, I could agree,
Or, with fierce Moloch, preach captivity:
I could, I ſay, with Ammon's god combine,
At once to clear the earth of Abram's line;
But he, who uncontroul'd, ſtill reigns above,
Will limit death, and his own greatneſs prove.
Think not with ſtench and deep corroding fire
T' extirpate Abram, and make Jeſs' expire;

Thoſe

Thoſe bold attempts ſtern Michael will withſtand,
And Judah ſave with his celeſtial band;
Or in this fray Messiah will engage,
And us ſubject, the vaſſals of his rage.
We ſcarce preſume, with Belial, to inſpire
That martial ſoul with love's inglorious fire:
Though moſt, perhaps, may to their paſſions yield,
Firm Asa ſtands, and courts the ſanguine field:
Then ſome great prince we muſt incite, to dare
That ſon of arms in the dire ſtrife of war:
By ſleight infernal we may guide the dart,
Some mighty chief pierce penſive Asa's heart,
And by ſuperior numbers cruſh his train,
Diſmay'd to ſee their boaſted monarch ſlain.
Secret or open, firſt we try with guile,
Greatneſs diſſemble, conſcience to defile:
Let then ſome god ſooth his attentive breaſt,
And in his ſoul create inglorious reſt;
Beſet his mind; each inward failing try;
Learn whence proceeds eſteem and heart-felt joy;
The long continuance of a peace ſuggeſt,
Declare the foes of Judah's God ſuppreſs'd.
Through every age, unceaſing, we deviſe
To foil the ſtedfaſt purpoſe of the ſkies,
That he, the promis'd Seed, may never riſe.

Your moſt refined arts and force employ,
The juſt to baffle, and the good deſtroy.
But ſay, what prince, conven'd æthereals, ſay;
Speak whence they are, and what the terms of ſway.
Conſider whom we beſt may dare perſuade
The long bleſs'd land of Judah to invade.

He ceas'd; then fierce Adramelech ſtood forth,
With indignation fir'd, and more than mortal wrath:
To his grim idol, prieſts in Sephervaim
Caus'd infants pure to meet the tort'ring flame;
Extoll'd, he ſoar'd above th' infernal crowd,
When Cain's mad ſoul began the breach of blood;
On earth ador'd, it's gloomy courts he trod,
By envy deem'd a proud, preſumptive god.
Through his temptations man firſt murder'd man,
From him, it's cauſe, all human hatred ſprang;
Diſcord and rage this ſpirit would delight;
His ſoul rejoic'd in ſuch black deeds of night.
Atrocious ſpleen inflam'd his hoſtile breaſt;
Deviſing death, his peers he thus addreſs'd:---
Eſſential gods! whom Heav'n could not reſtrain,
Nor vaſt deep darkneſs long beneath contain;
Hear, dread of hoſts! o'er-ruling pow'rs divine!
Whoſe mighty chiefs by godlike counſels ſhine.

Far

Far in the ſouth, beneath the torrid zone,
Fierce Ethiops dwell, a race to diſcord prone!
Huge is the realm, extended far and wide;
There Zerah reigns, a prodigy of pride!
At his command the ſwarthy millions riſe,
Enough for war, enough to foil the ſkies;
Experienc'd all, inur'd to blaſting heat,
Unmov'd, unchang'd amid the toils of fight.
I will myſelf inflame that monarch's breaſt,
And with the torch of diſcord break his reſt.
Myſelf, I ſay, thoſe ſons of arms will fire,
Brace all their nerves, and dauntleſs ſouls inſpire.
Meantime, fail not, rapt Asa to deceive,
Tempt him the ſpirit of his God to grieve,
While I deſcend on Ethiop's barren coaſt,
To rouſe revenge for adoration loſt.

With him agreed the grand conſulting peers,
And harſh applauſes fill'd the dæmon's ears.
He ſtaid his ſpeech; when, from his ſplendid ſeat,
High arch'd, a cloud-wrought canopy of ſtate,
Hell's monarch roſe, and frown'd with ſtern malignant hate.
Like ſome huge tower the prince of darkneſs ſtood,
His form ſublime, though deſtitute of good;

Some marks of ancient dignity appear;
Cruel his eye, and vaniſh'd all his fear;
Corroding envy gnaw'd his tortur'd breaſt,
Diſdainful pride the haughty fiend poſſeſs'd;
When thus began the author of all ill
With boaſting words th' aëreal vault to fill:---
Our will be fate's decree! like what you are,
Ye counſel death, and never ending war;
Reverſe all good; victorious champions go,
The world ſubject, and make it's monarchs bow.
Æthereal gods! deſcendants of the ſkies!
Doom'd yet once more, in ſpite of Heav'n, to riſe;
Nearer your former kingdom now you dwell:
Who, godlike, burſt the facile gates of Hell?
Myſelf preſum'd confuſion to explore,
At length, through toil, I reach'd the diſtant ſhore:
The void travers'd, I ſcorn'd the realms of night,
And from deep darkneſs led you up to light;
Through all the wild infinitude we paſs'd,
'Till on Heav'n's confines wonder ſtood confeſs'd.—
Oh, known in arms! in doubtful battle try'd,
When thunders roar'd, and lightning's Heav'n ſup-
ply'd;
Who leſs than gods thoſe labours could ſuſtain?
Then firſt we knew th' exceſs of rage and pain;

Hurl'd

Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' æthereal ſkies,
We vanquiſh'd fell, expell'd from ancient joys;
Plung'd in th' burning deep, the ſport and prey
Of tort'ring flames, confounded, ſeraphs lay.
Who firſt diſdain'd that mean captivity?
My valour ſet eſſential virtues free.
Go ſeek the land where burning Ethiops roam,
Rouſe all their chiefs, and haunt their prince's dome!
Riſe, dread of Heav'n! from conſultation riſe;
On earth ſojourn, or croſs th' aërial ſkies;
Preſumptive thoughts and empty themes ſuggeſt,
Blind all mankind, and blaſt their hope in Christ.
'Tis mine, by wiles of ſov'reign force, to vex
Great Asa's ſoul, and all his thoughts perplex;
With intuition deep, 'tis mine, to find
The latent weakneſs of the human mind.---
He paus'd, and bade their vile debates have end;
Before him, as a god, fall'n angels bend.

Meantime Adramelech expands his wings,
And upwards, like a tow'ring phœnix ſprings;
Incumbent on the duſky air, he flies
Midſt upper, nether, and ſurrounding ſkies,
Premeditating death, to Meroë bound;
His well known way the infernal dæmon found.

So

So through the vaſt expanſe a comet flies,
Warm'd by the ſun, and made by heat to riſe;
Behind it draws a train of blazing light;
Mankind ſurpriz'd, behold the diſtant ſight.
Alarming thus, the dæmon held his way
Through zones of light, where adverſe meteors play;
Above the green-ting'd clouds he took his flight
With ſpeed angelic, and conſummate ſpite;
Cyrene's bay aſcends the field of view,
Barcæan tow'rs the mundane ſcene renew.
With pride elate, deep pond'ring in his breaſt
How to prevail, and break fierce Zerah's reſt,
Far to the right, the prince of bloodſhed ſteers,
And Garamant's parch'd deſart diſappears.
Him next the ſcorch'd extenſive waſte receiv'd,
Where, train'd to arms, ferocious Nubians liv'd.
And now, where azure Nile laves Egypt's land,
Rolls from the ſouth and cleaves the ſun-burnt ſtrand,
Adramelech impends; nor reſted there;
His ample pinions ſkim the yielding air.
At length, by night, fair Meroë's Iſle he ſpies;
There ſpeeds the fiend, procumbent down the ſkies;
Swift he deſcends from his aërial height:
So ſtoops, inclin'd, the fierce voracious kite,

With

With ſteady wing, down Heav'n's expanded way,
When firſt he kens his grov'ling poultry prey.---
Thus ſtern Adramelech, with malice fraught,
The ſplendid dome of ſleeping Zerah ſought;
Between the folding valves the dæmon flew,
Then ſtood expos'd to the bold hero's view.
His form was chang'd; like Iſis' prieſt he came,
The ſame in ſtature, and in ſhape the ſame;
Reſplendent fillets bound his guileful head,
And prieſtly veſtments o'er his body ſpread;
His lucid garments ſwept the ſumptuous floor,
While his fell hand the torch of diſcord bore.
Incircling theſe, he caſt a veil of light;
Bright ſhone his face amid the ſhades of night.
Then thus the fiend the tawny prince addreſs'd:---
Sent by the gods, I bring divine beheſts.
The mandates of all Heaven conven'd I bear;
Thy force collect; devote thy arms to war;
Doom'd to ſubdue, from this ſcorch'd region go;
Extend thy empire; cruſh the daring foe.
For thee, the fates ſure victory ordain;
Fix'd their decree, unchang'd the gods remain;
Sent forth to rule; long wiſh'd ſucceſs be thine;
Hear, and obey th' immortal pow'rs divine.

No more he ſaid; with guile intenſe he threw
The ſcorching brand; in Zerah's breaſt it flew;
Wrapp'd in a moment, from the monarch's ſight,
In ſhades obſcure, the dæmon took his flight.
Inflam'd with rage, the boaſt of Afric burns,
Suſpence and fury rend his breaſt by turns;
Th' infernal torch ſet all his ſoul on fire;
Incens'd he roſe---a prince of matchleſs ire!
His boſom heaves; his ſanguine eye-balls roll,
And Hell-bred wrath tranſports his warlike ſoul;
His agitated thoughts no reſt can find;
Remorſeleſs fury racks his daring mind.
As when a fire, rais'd by the founder's toil,
Reverb'rates heat, and makes the metal boil;
Involv'd, repuls'd, the flames conſuming riſe,
The maſs diſſolves, and binding ſulphur flies;
Around the place exhales an horrid glare,
And ſuffocating vapours fill the air.
Thus Zerah's breaſt awhile retains the brand,
From ſleep ſurpriz'd, he gives a dire command.---
Arms! arms! I claim; my ſword and ſhield prepare;
Adorn mine helm, and bend my bow for war!
Appoint your chiefs! my diſtant peers convene!
Haſte! rouze my friends! purſue my grand deſign!

Thus

Thus urg'd th' impetuous king; the guards obey'd,
His mandates iſſu'd, and their pow'r diſplay'd.
Pleas'd at the high command, the ſtates attend,
And martial princes meet through all the land;
The lords, obſequious, on their monarch wait,
And ſplendid prieſts the royal train compleat.
The Gentile council ſat; when, from his throne
Imperial Zerah made his viſion known,
And thus, in ſolemn ſtrains, of war begun:—
Illuſtrious chiefs and rev'rend nobles! hear
What Heav'n reveals; my words the gods declare.
Oh long to arms! to deeds heroic loſt,
Confin'd, unbleſs'd, on Afric's torrid coaſt;
Say, ſhall thoſe realms our great attempts reſtrain?
This ſun-parch'd ſoil compleat our vaſt domain?
Not ſuch your monarch's aim, nor Heav'n's decree;
Revere my will, replete with deſtiny.
Fate gives us diſtant lands; Iſis denies
Thoſe barren tracts, the bound'ry of our joys.
My cauſe impels; faith cheers the previous thought,
As when the god my royal palace ſought;
For, while I ſlept, all outward ſenſe conceal'd,
A viſion bright this glorious charge reveal'd,
And with theſe awful words your king addreſs'd:—
Sent by the gods, I bring divine beheſts;

The mandates of all Heav'n conven'd I bear;
Thy force collect, devote thy arms to war;
Doom'd to ſubdue, from this ſcorch'd region go;
Extend thy empire, cruſh the daring foe;
For thee doth fate ſure victory ordain;
Fix'd their decree, unchang'd the gods remain.
Sent forth to rule, long wiſh'd ſucceſs be thine;
Hear and obey th' immortal pow'rs divine.---
Thus ſpoke the god; my faithful mind obeys,
The word reveres, and ſcarce from action ſtays.
Your utmoſt force I claim; your king commands
His warlike captains to invade new lands.
With ſtrength combin'd ſtand forth in arms, to dare
With me the laſt extremities of war;
But firſt conſult the oracle of fame;
The gods beſeech thoſe deſtin'd realms to name;
A troop ſelect, explore Ammonian Jove,
His words are true; the god reſides above.
Before the ſhrine, with gifts, proſtrated bend.
Lo! by your hands this perfect boon I ſend:
Six golden tripods o'er the mountains bear,
Three vaſes bright the ſacred prieſts may ſhare;
Two ſilver bowls, well wrought, I freely give,
And from my hand four candleſticks receive,

Moſt

Moſt exquiſitely fine, emboſs'd with gold;
Nor ſhall my ſtate its choiceſt gems withhold;
Of ſeaſon'd ſpice, from bleſs'd Arabia's ſhore,
And grateful myrrh, I ſend a copious ſtore.
With theſe, and more, full twenty camels load,
If labour'd gifts can gratify the god.

The monarch ceas'd; th' obedient legates bow,
Preſs to the gate, and on their meſſage go.
Meantime, about the court, long train'd to arms,
The men of Meroë ſhout with dire alarms;
The ſwains breathe rage; through all the vaſt do-
main
Strict diſcipline prepares a martial train.
Part clean the ruſty mail, and rub the ſhield,
Or grind the ſword, and the long jav'lin wield;
Some caſe their helms, or comb their flowing creſts,
While others ſhape the corſlet to their breaſts;
Part form the hoſt to ev'ry ſcene of war,
The files traverſe, and regulate the car;
Thoſe rein the fi'ry ſteeds, or paſs the goal,
For martial feats add fervour to the ſoul.
Here equal worthies ſhew their warlike ſkill,
And ſwarthy champions ſhine in fulgid ſteel;

Contending archers prove their dext'rous might,
And brawny ſlingers whirl the ſtone with ſleight.
Tranſported Zerah the firſt rank commands,
Darts down the lines, and hails his num'rous bands.
The king requires freſh levies from afar,
And through all Ethiopia ſpreads the war.

But now inform'd at large, their queſtion known,
The Meroan legates leave the crowded town;
Bear full inſtructions, to their king return,
Speak for the ſhrine, and recent altars burn:
At court receiv'd, their anſwer they relate,
And thus their prince addreſs'd, enthron'd in ſtate:---
Moſt pow'rful king! great lord of Afric's coaſt!
Thy empire's glory, and thy country's boaſt!
Majeſtic Zerah, hear! at thy command,
On great beheſts, we left our native land;
Our choſen train the ſpacious wild explor'd,
Vaſt mountains climb'd, e're we the god implor'd:
Refreſh'd from toil, we reach'd great Ammon's ſhrine,
Thy gifts beſtow'd, and ſerv'd the pow'r divine;
On earth proſtrate, with ſuppliant hearts we pray'd,
The fane approach'd, and crav'd ſuperior aid.---

Reſolve

Reſolve our doubts, prophetic god! declare
With whom on earth ſhall we engage in war?
Oh! let not words abſtruſe thy will conceal;
To Meroë's prince thy deep deſigns reveal.
Some gueſt from high our royal palace trod,
And ſternly bade us ſeek ſome new abode.
Where ſhall we go? divine æthereal ſay;
But ſpeak the word, obſequious realms obey.

Scarce paus'd our voice, the ſtately temple ſhook,
Recoil'd the ground, when thus the Numen ſpoke:---
Hear, progeny of Ham's illuſtrious race!
The prime of Afric, and your country's grace!
'Tis true, the gods promote this ſacred war;
By ſpecious art procure allies from far.
All Heav'n propitious will aſſiſt your king,
And grant his pray'rs, with honours more divine.
Seek then the land where Jordan's azure ſtreams
Bound the rich ſoil, exempt from ſcorching beams;
There conqueſt waits the zeal which ſhall deſtroy
The race of David, and each Hebrew's joy.---

This was the legate's tale; and thus the king,
Predominant, purſu'd his grand deſign:---

You

You know the gods decree; thoſe anſwers given,
By ſpecial mandates of all-ruling Heav'n.
The oracle preſents what fate ordains,
And to perform with all my troops remains:
Be ready for the war, this day deſign'd;
Your enſigns offer to the coiling wind:
I will my hoſt (exempted none) prepare;
All, all is rage, and the hoarſe din of war.

Here ceas'd th' imperial king; his nobles heard,
And ev'ry great commanding prince rever'd;
From man to man the martial ſpirit flows;
In prieſts and peaſants fierce preſumption grows.---
As when a fire, in ſome cloſe ſtreet confin'd,
Spreads far and wide, impell'd by riſing wind,
Borne high in air, the dreadful ſparkles fly,
And curling flames aſcend the vaulted ſky;
The conflagration holds its rapid way,
'Till ſome broad ſpace its waſting fury ſtay:
So did infernal wrath fill ev'ry breaſt,
Shrill trumpets ſound, and vengeance all profeſs'd.
To arms! to arms! became the general cry;
Spurn ſoft indulgence, ev'ry want ſupply.
With claſhing ſhields the echoing lanes reſound,
While drafts of arms adorn the furrow'd ground.

Swift

Swift embaſſies to neighb'ring courts they ſend,
And aſk the prince of Lubim aid to lend.

Now riſe, oh muſe! in grateful numbers ſing
Who firſt, who laſt ſupported Meroë's king;
From whence they came, and whither held their courſe,
What troops they brought, and what their native force;
What daring chiefs confirm'd their martial bands,
With hope preſumptuous, and with ſtern commands.

Firſt o'er the crowd, and fir'd with vengeful hate,
Imperial Zerah, cloth'd in robes of ſtate,
Led on his chiefs, deceiv'd with vain conceit,
With ire inflam'd, and lawleſs in debate.
Rais'd by the king, *ſix hundred thouſand* came,
In arms renown'd, and candidates for fame;
Skill'd when to mount or quit the ſounding car,
Wheel round, and challenge ev'ry chance of war.
Part, arm'd with bows, the flying dart direct,
Part launch the ſpear, and num'rous deaths inflict.
Far o'er the reſt minacious Zerah ſhines,
Tranſcends in pomp amid his martial lines;
In might ſupreme, a banded hoſt he ſhows,
With ſpears, and ſhields, and ſtrong protended bows.

Like

Like ſome huge pile the monarch ſtrides along;
The mountains echo'd when his armour rung.
With abject eyes, amaz'd, the crowd behold,
When o'er the plains his rapid chariot roll'd.
Pleas'd with their king, of vaſt gigantic ſize,
While ſtorms of fury varniſh both his eyes,
The blacks approach, with worſhip and ſurprize.
With proſtrate awe, th' obſequious troops adore;
His deeds proclaim, and celebrate his pow'r.
Infernal pride his haughty mien adorn'd,
His breaſt expanded, and his boſom warm'd;
Determin'd ſtrife commix'd with high diſdain
Glar'd in his face, and died the ſwarthy grain.

Then fam'd in arms, and next renown'd in war,
Condronides directs his ſounding car;
Prince of the Lubims, terrible and ſtrong!
A man, in ſtature like Alcmæna's ſon.
Three hundred chariots roll along the plain,
And arm'd battalions dignify his train.
Lo! twenty myriads march in files behind,
Their various ſignals ſtreaming in the wind.
With troops ſuſtain'd from Lubim's ſultry ſhore,
Superior aid the ruthleſs champion bore;

Fierce,

Fierce, proud, and cruel, moves the Lubim king,
With ſtrength immenſe, th' elaſtic bow to ſtring.

Next him in arms, important Sheba roſe,
For wiſdom fam'd, and dreadful to his foes;
Leſs fierce than him, who rul'd the vaſt domain,
And o'er all Ethiopia ſtretch'd his reign.
Arm'd, on each ſide an hundred thouſand came,
From where the Nile expands its rapid ſtream;
The bended bow and feather'd ſhafts they bore,
Which grac'd their ſhoulders and proclaim'd their pow'r.
Far o'er the crowd undaunted Sheba ſhone,
With port majeſtic, like old Peleus' ſon;
He well knew how the pond'rous lance to wield,
And bear aloft his deep ſix-folded ſhield.
With wrath inflam'd, he rolls around his eyes,
While o'er the plains his rampant courſer flies;
The hoſt beheld with wonder and ſurprize.
Train'd were his troops, his legions briſk and tall;
But Sheba moves, and far tranſcends them all;
Like in the thick-ſet wood, when o'er the reſt,
Some tow'ring elm extends its ample creſt,
Pride of the grove, its varying beauties riſe,
Sublimely fair, approaching tow'rds the ſkies:

Such Sheba was, whoſe martial train ſucceeds,
With arms ſupply'd, and proud exulting ſteeds.
Foot crowd on foot, the muſt'ring cohorts throng;
Far as th' eye could ſee, their radiance ſhone;
Refulgent chariots wait the royal will,
Traverſe the plains, or the low vallies fill.
So, num'rous drop the leaves when Auſter blows,
And the wide waſting ſtorm a foreſt bows;
Torn from high trees, the lanes with fruit abound,
A yellow foliage clothes the marſhy ground.

While Afric's champions thus with fury burn,
Their troops collect, and ſocial pleaſure ſpurn,
With ſecret joy Adramelech beheld,
Inflam'd their ſouls, and fierce contention ſwell'd.
Returning, thus the furious fiend began,
With fell revenge and laſting ſpleen to man:---
Hear, all ye gods, from bliſsful regions flung,
Expell'd from Heav'n, and Heav'n's eternal throne!
If fate forbids, or adverſe chance denies
Ethereal ſpirits to gain their native ſkies,
Yet on this earth we'll reaſſert our pow'r,
As gods prevail, while men our ſhrines adore.
Freedom we deem accountable to none;
Live to ourſelves, and reign on earth alone.

Behold

Behold what pow'rs, what num'rous hoſts combine!
To prove our cauſe, three mighty nations join.
E're long ſhall Judah mourn diſconſolate,
The kingdom fail, and worſhip find debate;
What then remains but conqueſt to our friends?
Ye gods! deſtroy, when tott'ring Zion bends.
Soon wrapp'd in flames, Jeruſalem ſhall fall,
And barbarous Ethiops mount her well-built wall.

Thus ſpoke the fiend, th' infernal peers rejoice,
His worth proclaim, and dignify their choice.

ÆTATIS 15.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE

SECOND BOOK

OF

KING ASA.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet Azariah is divinely commiſſioned to inform ASA *of the invaſion of the Ethiopians. The princes and people are terrified:* ASA, *to encourage them, rehearſes the manifold mercies of* GOD *to his people, and commands them to prepare for war. He takes leave of his wife. The forces of Judah and their leaders are aſſembled. An herald ſent from Mareſhah informs the king of the arrival of the Ethiopians before that city.* ASA *promiſes ſpeedy aſſiſtance. The herald departs; and the Hebrew army proceed on their march to meet the Ethiopians.*

KING ASA.

BOOK II.

WHILE thus in Afric Satan rais'd up foes,
And fir'd th' Heathen, Iſrael to oppoſe,
The LORD, who will not Jacob's ſeed forſake,
Nor with the righteous his ſure compact break;
From whoſe all-ſearching eye men nought conceal,
Did to his ſeer th' impending ſtorm reveal.---
Go, ſaid JEHOVAH, my great meſſage bear;
Exhort the king, and my command declare.
Form'd by the word, the ſon of Oded fled;
'Twas GOD impos'd; the ſacred ſeer obey'd.
Deep pond'ring in his mind the weighty cauſe,
Before the throne the faithful prophet bows;
The princes wait, and ruling peers enquire,
The people crowd to hear the bending ſire.

When thus from high the meek-ey'd ſeer began:—
From Heav'n I ſpeak, inſpir'd by more than man.
Hear, Asa hear; the power divine obey;
Gird up thy loins; put trembling far away.
Know! from the ſouth an hoſtile race prepare
Deſtruction dire, and unreſiſted war.
Raiſe all thy force, thy kingdom to defend,
Fight for thy God; firm to religion ſtand.
Diſtruſt not Heav'n; in aid divine confide;
Go forth; Jehovah will for thee provide.

The prophet ſaid; then from the court withdrew;
Peace fill'd his breaſt, and ſplendour left his view.
This heard the Jews with diffidence and fear;
The prieſts and people ſink beneath deſpair:
The rumour'd war they dread from every coaſt;
Their anxious minds prepond'rate Zerah's hoſt.
Juſtly diſpleas'd, the king beheld their plight,
Their raſh diſtruſt of Heav'n, and vain conceit.
Majeſtick Asa then his peers addreſs'd;
Their ſouls to raiſe, God's mercies he rehears'd.

Attend ye princes! all ye nobles hear!
Shall Abram's ſeed of God's ſure aid deſpair?

Will

Will he in danger his belov'd forſake?
Or with this people his own promiſe break?
He will aſſiſt; unmov'd do I confide;
God will, no doubt, for Judah's ſons provide.
Fear to incenſe; oh! tremble to oppoſe
The God of gods, to whom my ſpirit bows.
Tho' all mankind to arms ſhould bend their courſe,
On death reſolv'd, combin'd with ſanguine force,
Yet he who curbs the ſtorm, triumphant King!
Will juſtice aid, and on the righteous ſhine.
His word, when Iſrael dwelt in Egypt's land,
When by proud Pharaoh worſhip was reſtrain'd,
Rebuk'd the tyrant; Iſrael ſerv'd him then,
And his ſtrong arm preſerv'd from envious men.
He ſav'd his people, whelm'd beneath the weight
Of dire oppreſſion and opprobrious hate:
To mean employ condemn'd, to want and toil,
Hard ſervitude and labour made them vile.
Such was their ſtate, till Judah's God aroſe,
His own to reſcue, and deſtroy their foes.
On high beheſts, Moſes, their guide he ſent;
Submiſſive Moſes to proud Pharaoh went;
Demanded freedom of th' Egyptian king,
The plagues denounc'd Jehovah's wrath would bring.

But

But harden'd Pharaoh was to juſtice blind,
Oppreſſion rul'd his dark obdurate mind,
And his fell ſoul ſad Iſrael's fall deſign'd.
The monarch God had warn'd; but his hard heart
Would not ſubmit that Iſrael might depart.
God will be worſhip'd.---Aaron rais'd his rod,
And Egypt's ponds and rivers turn'd to blood.
The fiſh lay gaſping on the fetid ſand,
And wrath divine through every province reign'd:
But Pharaoh, grown perverſe, the tribes detain'd;
The ſeed of promiſe kept in Egypt's land.
Then Moſes, miſſion'd from on high, by God,
Bade Aaron lift his wonder-giving rod.
The prieſt obey'd; offenſive frogs aſcend
From pools and ſtreams, and taint the neighb'ring ſtrand;
Palace nor halls from thoſe dire gueſts were free,
They fill the ſtreets, and haunt each high degree;
Nor ended here; that vengeance was divine
Which harraſs'd Pharoah, foe to Abram's line.
God bade the duſt transform to noxious lice;
On man and beaſt the vermin puniſh'd vice;
Nor king nor chief could ſhun the loathſome ill:
Pride ſtood abaſh'd when God reveal'd his will.

But

But ſtill obdurate, Pharoah durſt withhold
Our father's rights, and ſcorn'd the plagues foretold.
Meantime, incens'd, God ſent a ſwarm of flies;
Such numbers roſe, that Egypt knew ſurpriſe.
The blighted earth now ceas'd it's fruit to bear,
And all was dread, diſmay, and deep deſpair:
Ev'n Pharoah felt remorſe; but ſin return'd,
And held his heart, which would not be reform'd;
Jehovah's mighty pow'r rebuk'd his mind:
On vice intent, and to experience blind,
He harden'd fell.---God blaſted every field;
The Lord Almighty his great name reveal'd.
On horſes, camels, kine, and bleating ſheep,
The murrain falls; the ſtouteſt heart muſt weep.
Not ſo in Goſhen's land; th' Almighty ſav'd
Our father's cattle, and the food they crav'd.
Again the Lord perform'd with wond'rous ſkill,
And blains and boils, a dire diſaſter fell;
But harden'd, and more proud, Pharoah denies
The rites of worſhip and of ſacrifice.
Still he refus'd before I am to bow,
Before the Lord, and let his people go.
Great Amram's ſon pronounc'd the will of God,
And in his name ſtretch'd forth his potent rod.

Divine

Divine Jehovah bade the hail deſcend,
Loud thunders roar, and all th' expanſion rend!
The livid lightning roll'd along the ground,
And awful tempeſts ſhook the vaſt profound.
Beneath his wrath, men, herds, and cattle die,
The trees were blaſted, and the fountains dry.
Obdurate ſtill, the impious king remain'd,
And Jacob's ſeed in ſervitude detain'd.
Then God bade Moſes o'er all Egypt's land,
Waſh'd by the Nile, ſtretch forth his pow'rful hand.
The ſeer obey'd; the Lord Jehovah roſe
A bleak eaſt wind, till the ſun's rays diſcloſe
Returning morn; when lo! through all the coaſt,
From orient ſhores, deſcends a numerous hoſt:
Devouring locuſts form a dreadful ſcene,
Invade the fields, and 'notamize the green.
Beyond apparent view their tribes abound,
And arid proſpects clothe the barren ground.
In ſhoaling heaps they march along the plains;
O'er many a ſtate vaſt deſolation reigns,
Yet unreduc'd Egyptian pride remains.
God, who preſides o'er all, the ſource of might!
Three days withheld the wiſh'd return of light;
Palpable darkneſs drew it's ſable ſhade,
And, horrible to ſenſe! the land o'erſpread.

Aghaſt

Aghaſt they ſtand; wrapp'd in profound diſmay
Ev'n Pharoah fear'd, who knew refulgent day,
Bright and ſerene, in favour'd Goſhen ſhone;
That Iſrael dwelt beneath a cloudleſs ſun.

Then moſt vindictive, wrath ſupreme was pour'd
On Egypt's land, for Egypt's guilty lord.
Dreadful by night, the miſſion'd angel ſlew
Each heir and firſt-born of that wicked crew:
Jacob was ſpar'd; ſo God ordain'd of old,
Whoſe mighty arm his people will uphold.
From Pharoah's hand Jehovah ſet them free,
Iſrael departs from Egypt's tyranny.
The Lord by fire, by night, directs the way,
And moving clouds conduct their hoſt by day.

Safe through the deep, and deſerts parch'd he led,
In barren heaths the Lord prepar'd them bread.
If he ariſe, what man can dare withſtand
His word omnific, his divine command?
Like worms ſhall fleſh beneath his vengeance fall,
His own right hand will ſave our ſtate from thrall.
God is a rock of refuge, great and ſure!
A ſtrong defence, and unconfin'd in pow'r.

'Gainſt

'Gainſt him, in vain the ſons of darkneſs ſtrive;
The juſt are ſafe; ſecure the righteous live.
When God commands, the ſurging billows riſe,
And baleful light'nings rend the vaulted ſkies;
Born on the wind, triumphant once he rode,
Shook the wide world, and men confeſs'd him God.
His glorious preſence bade the main divide,
When Iſrael paſs'd ſecure between the tide.
Back ran the waves, while Pharoah's hoſt purſu'd,
And Egypt's pride to great Jehovah bow'd.
Their rampant ſteeds and chariots ſunk a prey,
Abſorb'd, and ſcatter'd 'midſt the briny ſea.
This from the ſhore defended Iſrael ſaw;
To the rough ſurge Omniscience gave a law.—
I will not ceaſe; my grateful heart ſhall praiſe
The Lord triumphant, dreadful through the ſeas;
He threw the rider head-long from his height;
O'erwhelming waves depriv'd an hoſt of light.
The Lord with grace ſupports my wav'ring ſoul,
My guide is ſure; for God directs the whole;
He rules the world, Elohim is his name,
Unchang'd, through all eternity the ſame;
Supremely great! that prime directing cauſe
Which gave to graceful nature various laws.

He

He metes the whole creation with a ſpan,
And fix'd this point a deſtin'd place for man.
A lucid drop, in his capacious hand
He rolls the ocean, and ſuſtains the land!
In golden ſcales the pond'rous mountains weighs,
And in the balance all creation lays!—
Th' Egyptian hoſt combin'd, the Lord o'erthrew;
Their charioteers his matchleſs veng'ance knew;
Like ſtones they ſunk; the parted waters cloſe;
Loſt in the deep, confounded, chariots roſe.
God's own right hand, in that unrivall'd hour,
Was rais'd on high, and ſplendid, arm'd with pow'r.
Incens'd at ſin, his rattling whirlwinds blew,
A tempeſt wing'd! in vain our foes purſue.
Chain'd by his word, the floods collected ſtood;
To one fix'd point th' obſequious waters flow'd;
Our foes reſtrain'd, amid the Red Sea ride:
At God's command, return'd the flowing tide.
Egyptians ſaid, Our arms ſhall fate defy;
Drawn be the ſword; our hand ſhall ſoon deſtroy.—
Like lead, they fell beneath the yielding deep;
The Lord to death our vaunting foes will ſweep.—
Who rivals him? eſſential ſubſtance pure!
Great ſpring of life! whom Abram's race adore.

None

None 'mongſt the gods with him can man compare,
Bright o'er the bright! terrific Lord in war!
Fearful in praiſe! prevailing word of might!
His lifted arm will all his foes requite.---
In mercy God his choſen prieſts doth lead;
Suſtain'd by faith, he ſtrengthen'd them that fled.
His glorious deeds the neigbouring ſtates ſhall hear,
And diſtant iſles thoſe awful judgments fear.
God will the dukes of Edom yet amaze;
His ſacred word all Moab's pride ſhall raze.--
The Canaanite muſt bow beneath thine ire,
Prevailing dread make all the world admire.---
Vile in his ſight, the wrath of kings ſhall fail;
God ſaves the nations when his gifts prevail.
Through Providence, our ſeed on earth ſhall grow;
In Iſrael's tents truth magnifies the law.
The Lord ſhall reign;---the horſe and Pharoah fell,
The ſea return'd, and wonders prov'd his will.

---Preſerv'd from harm, and from the threat'ning foe,
Great Amram's ſon, inſpir'd, preſcrib'd the law.
The devious waſte, the barren land of Shur,
Fed by his hand, our wand'ring tribes explore;
Three days they march'd; no water greets the eye;
Parch'd was the ſoil, and all the heath was dry.

At

At length they reach'd rough Marah's bitter ſtreams,
Fatigu'd with heat, and ſcorch'd by fervid beams:
Wide pools they ſaw, but dar'd not drink their fill;
Diſtruſt began to blind their froward will.
Averſe to faith, they blame him ſent by God,
Rebuk'd their guide, and wiſh'd their late abode.
Then to the Lord afflicted Moſes cried,
Who ſoon a means to quench their thirſt ſupply'd;
Paſs'd Elim's bounds: the wilderneſs of Sin
Their hoſt receiv'd, led by the pow'r divine.
Here ſight of dearth forlorn begat deſpair:
'Gainſt Amram's ſon, incens'd the tribes appear;
But God, in mercy, ſent them quails for food,
Sweet manna too the barren ground bedew'd.
This heavenly gift the wandering tribes ſuſtain'd
Till nations fled, and Iſrael reach'd the land.
On Horeb's Mount, commiſſion'd by his God,
Ordain'd to rule, juſt Moſes rais'd his rod.
When ſunk the ſign, th' Amalekites prevail,
But when upheld, their num'rous armies fail,
Until the ſun had meaſur'd half his round,
And day reclin'd beneath the convex ground.
Then truſt in God; for he who reigns on high
In adverſe battle will our wants ſupply:

Refrain from idols; ceaſe from Aaron's ſin;
Deſtroy the groves, but make no boaſt therein;
Serve me your king; the Lord our God is true;
What Moſes ſaid, is free for us to do.

As yet in Sinai's deſert wilds they ſtay'd,
Arrang'd the camp, and martial pomp diſplay'd;
At length Canaan's hills appear'd in ſight,
And Kadeſh-barnea did their toils requite.---
Go, then ſaid Moſes, dauntleſs dare explore
The realms of promiſe, yon predeſtin'd ſhore!
Steer to the ſouth, the land of Baſhan know,
How ſtrong their forts, and what the daring foe;
Fruitful, or rich in cultivated ſoil;
Cloſe or champaign, fit to reward our toil.---
Falſe were the ſpies, ſave two, who truth declare;
Kind are their fields, and wholeſome is the air.
Fear ſeiz'd our tribes, dejection fill'd each breaſt,
The people ſhrunk, and ſorrow was confeſs'd.
Diſpenſing wrath, the Lord commiſſion'd death,
And plagues depriv'd the ten falſe ſpies of breath.
Neither ſhall you, ſaid he who lives on high,
Behold my reſt, but 'midſt rough wilds ſhall die.
Nun's valiant heir, and great Zephunnah's ſon,
By me preſerv'd, ſhall reach the land alone.---

A warning

A warning this! behold th' offenders ſlain,
For GOD himſelf will o'er his people reign;
All who rebel ſhall feel the wrath of Heav'n,
And when they ſeem ſecure, from reſt be driv'n.
GOD's grace remains to ſave the faithful now,
That ſource divine, whence all our bleſſings flow.

Full forty years, in devious mazes loſt,
Our fathers wander'd round a barren coaſt;
E're they Canaan's fruitful realm poſſeſs'd,
The promis'd land, our deſtin'd place of reſt!
Forget not ye, when Korah's friends were ſlain,
And op'ning earth receiv'd the boaſting train.
Sihon and Og the LORD our GOD ſubdu'd,
Depreſs'd their fame, and Baſhan's worthies bow'd.
In vain did Balak bribe old Beor's ſon;
GOD made the foe ſpeak truths, unmeant, his own:
By him inſpir'd, though Balaam hate profeſs'd,
Inclin'd to curſe, our anceſtors he bleſs'd;
Blue Jordan's ſtreams became a mighty flood;
Roll'd up in heaps, the waves divided ſtood.
From death preſerv'd, the tribes in order paſs'd;
The ſtream reclin'd, as mov'd the banded hoſt.
By various works the LORD was magnify'd,
And now his pow'r, confeſs'd, is ASA's guide.

When Jericho's proud ſtate ſubjected fell,
Th' Almighty's arm did all their ſtrength repel:
Thence, without human art, was ſeen to fall
Flat on the ground her long-projected wall.
Next Ai ſunk, diſtinguiſh'd for her pride;
And juſtice rul'd when impious Achan died.
To Gilgal's mount Nun's valiant offspring goes,
Gibeon to aid, and fight th' unconquer'd foes.
The Lord himſelf put Canaan's hoſt to flight,
And rattling hail depriv'd their troops of might.
Reſiſtleſs Joſhua bade the ſun to ſtand,
And the bright moon to wait his bold command.
Refrain thy courſe, ſtand ſtill, deſcending ſun!
And thou, O moon! reſt thou in Ajalon.---
Libnah, Makkedah, warlike Joſhua took;
Lachiſh and Gezer's fury, Iſrael broke;
Eglon and Hebron, yield their wonted ſway;
All human ſtrength in vain oppos'd their way.
Jabin, ſupported by a numerous hoſt,
Fled Iſrael's arms, and his whole kingdom loſt.
'Twas God, through all, preſerv'd juſt Abram's ſeed,
Cruſh'd ev'ry foe, and bade our aims ſucceed.
Refrain from ſin, repent, nor more provoke
Him, by whoſe might all adverſe bonds are broke.

Prone

Prone to tranſgreſs, the Lord our fathers left,
Confirm'd by Jonathan and Danite theft;
Grown old in ſin, our ſires deſpis'd his law;
When they were vile, Jehovah brought them low;
The Lord, in mercy yet retain'd his care;
Himſelf preſerv'd his people through the war.
Mark how Abinoam's ſon, by him upheld,
Foil'd Jabim's hoſt, and made their proweſs yield:
The elements ſupreme aſſiſtance lend;
The ſtars could fight, and ſtorms of hail deſcend;
A whirlwind roſe; kind nature daſh'd their pride;
On Kiſhon's banks their conquer'd bands divide.
Like baleful lightning o'er his timid foes
Fierce Barak rode; none dar'd his might oppoſe.
Like tim'rous ſheep the troops of Siſera fled;
Strew'd was the ground with boaſted champions dead.---
By Gideon's hand 'twas God ſet Iſrael free,
Pleas'd to defend, and wrought our liberty.
Poor Jepthah's ſtrength the Lord vouchſaf'd to raiſe,
Who of proud Ammon gain'd a victor's praiſe.
At Samuel's pray'r the deep-mouth'd thunder roar'd,
And wrath divine was o'er Philiſtia pour'd.

Beyond what thought can frame, or tongue expreſs,
Above the world, Jehovah reigns in peace;
Thick clouds involv'd, his awful throne ſurround,
Such pow'r diſplay'd is in Omniscience found!
Wide waſting fire of old deſtroy'd our foes,
Shook the vaſt world, and taught mankind his laws;
The mountains ſmok'd, the rocks diſſolv'd with heat,
And univerſal nature own'd him great.
His glorious deeds th' exalted Heav'ns proclaim,
And ſtellar virtues praiſe his matchleſs name.---
The advocates for ſin will God deſtroy;
Who worſhip ſtones muſt give their minds the lie.
Th' Almighty fear, Jehovah's pow'r adore,
Whoſe peace from high will reſt on Judah's ſhore:
His grace preſides; enthron'd beyond all gods,
Extoll'd in Heav'n's eternal bleſs'd abodes.
From ev'ry harm doth Providence defend;
Love him, ye righteous; on his word depend,
Who knit the nerves of Jeſſe's ſtrenuous ſon,
When wing'd with death the conquering ſtone he
ſlung.
Prone, to the ground ſuperb Goliath fell,
And diſtant groves return'd the giant's yell.

When

When in the Lord my father could confide,
Omnipotence for Judah did provide.
Fierce Nebat's ſon, who vaunting rais'd his ſhield,
Was forc'd the palm of victory to yield:
Flung from his height, the Lord abas'd his pride,
And of his men full half a million died.
Shall then th' uncircumcis'd, preſuming, dare
To waſte our lands with endleſs ſtrife and war?
Shall vengeance ſleep while all our cities burn,
And we ſupinely dream, or unavailing mourn,
A prey to Gentiles, and of men the ſcorn?
No; riſe to fight; 'tis Heav'n commands them woe:
May we divine protection always know!
Exert your ſtrength, undaunted take the field;
Myſelf will lead, and God will be our ſhield.

Here Asa paus'd, nor more the monarch ſaid;
His words commanding, Judah's chiefs obey'd.
With loud applauſe the domes high vaulted ring,
And ſhouts of raptur'd peers extol their king.
Thus falling waters, ruſhing from the mill,
Th' attentive ear with an hoarſe cadence fill:
The ſwift deſcending current loudly roars,
Foams o'er its banks, and laves the ſandy ſhores.

Far down the refluent ſtream the noiſe decays;
Juſt ſo the tumult leſſens by degrees;
Time ſlacks the voice of univerſal praiſe.---
Bold to their arduous taſk the Jews repair,
Their helms refit, and rub their ſhields for war;
New arms they forge; the claſhing anvils ſound;
The ſcene was chang'd, and armour gleam'd around.

But now the royal city's grief began;
From fair to fair the ſoft infection ran:
Through ev'ry crowded ſquare, about the throne,
From ſtreet to ſtreet, o'er all the peopled town,
Bewailing damſels ſtrole; but chief in tears,
The mournful queen her ſad dejection bears;
Round, pearly drops ſtream'd pendent from her eyes;
The firſt in grief, great Shilhi's daughter cries,
Shall then no prayers prevail? Oh, hapleſs charms!
Why runs king Asa with thoſe dire alarms?
May not a weeping princeſs change his rage?
Let tears, my huſband, thy ſtern wrath aſſuage.
Why ſhould I give thee to the ſanguine fray?
Can no perſuaſions thy raſh purpoſe ſtay?
Avoid the fight, the long-conteſted field;
To peace, at female interceſſion, yield.

Go

Go not obdurate; with thy wife remain;
Be mov'd by all this prevalence of pain.
Let prince Benhail, or brave Meſhullam, bear
The toils of fight, and various ſtorms of war;
Inſtal ſome peer thy captain delegate,
His royal maſter's bus'neſs to compleat.
Stay, much-lov'd Asa! from thoſe ſcenes of blood;
Cheer thou thy queen, and yet obey thy God.
Why ſhould the king himſelf to danger run?
Sure, wiſdom bids thee ev'ry peril ſhun.
Conſummate counſel ſhould thy mind employ;
At court reclin'd, 'tis thine to give us joy.
Awhile from war, illuſtrious David ſtaid,
Nor leſs therefore did Iſrael's arms ſucceed.
Say, can'ſt thou leave thy wife and child alone,
Thy faithful conſort, and thy only ſon,
Expos'd to all the treacheries of ſtate,
Deluſive idols, and thy mother's hate?
What will not ſhe, to vent her malice, do,
Since from their fanes the prieſts of Baal we drew?
Heed this, oh king! with kind attention hear,
What more; preſaging viſions may declare;
For, while laſt night I ſlept, dire dreams aroſe,
Portending grief and melancholy woes.

Thy

Thy ſafety claims my moſt diſtinguiſh'd cares;
Thy well-known courage rais'd my ſilent fears,
Leſt by ſome ſad miſhap my prince ſhould fall:
Oh, ſpare thyſelf! thy people! ſave us all!---
Thus ſaid the beauteous queen, and, bath'd in tears,
Addreſs'd her plaints to unrelenting ears.
On a wrought couch Azubah trembling lies,
While her heart ſigh'd for language to adviſe:
A ſmiling babe reclined in her arms,
And every mournful aſpect aids her charms.
The king's affection plac'd her by his ſide,
His mind reprov'd, but manly ceas'd to chide.
Her charms he felt, yet truth did not depart;
Nor grief, nor love could change his feeling heart;
Unmov'd, yet tried, his juſt deſign remains
Inflexible; the prince his charge ſuſtains:
The force of moving eloquence he bore,
And poignant anguiſh of that painful hour.

At length the king the tide of ſorrow broke,
And thus, in healing ſtrains, his queen beſpoke:
Attend, fair conſort! let my ſubjects hear
What I, unchang'd, in grateful love declare.
In vain you ſtrive my purpoſe to delay:
The wars of God are mine; for ſure, to day,

Not

Not without hope I go. Faith calls me forth,
The ties of honour, and heroic worth.
Sent by my God, I haſte; the word was given;
Your king will lead; then peace belongs to Heav'n.
Can I, a worm, forego the promis'd fame?
Muſt future ages load my head with ſhame?
What are thoſe pleaſures which engage mankind?
For me hath Heav'n far nobler gifts deſign'd.
Do cares depreſs my much-lov'd ſpouſe to fear?
God knows th' event of this ill-boding war.
Deluſive idols ne'er my heart ſhall move;
All human dreams have not their riſe above.
Will God for Zion ſure deſtruction call,
Or us permit beneath the ſword to fall?
My faith is ſtedfaſt; all his laws are ſure;
His love primæval gives my heart this power.
He lifts my ſenſes far above deſpair,
And wafts beyond them all unſeemly fear.
No more I dread what mortal men can do,
What baneful portents human thoughts may ſhew.
Sure, not unknown to me are Satan's lies,
His latent fraud and opportune diſguiſe;
Temptations ſtrong have juſt beſet my mind,
Suggeſtions dark, and meant to make me blind:

But

But, if the ſon of Oded came by God,
My ſoul was warn'd, and chear'd with laſting good.
My labours then are great; deſigns oppos'd,
And woeful dreams my ſlumber circumfus'd.---
One while my wife preſented beauty's charms,
And brought her ſmiling infant to my arms;
The fair delights of peace the princeſs told,
And mov'd my mind with ſchemes I judg'd too bold.
Not ſo content from God, who keeps my crown;
I wiſh my thoughts devoted to the throne.
My wants are great, my ſins prevent my reſt,
And thought would fain awake it's foul diſtruſt;
To theſe awhile my paſſions alſo yield;
Without his grace I quit the doubtful field.
In deep diſtreſs to Iſrael's God I pray'd,
Jehovah heard, and ſent me heavenly aid;
His mercy ſaves; grace warms my humble ſoul,
Diſpels it's doubt, and reigns beyond controul.

So having ſaid, he kiſs'd his lovely boy,
His heir apparent, and his conſort's joy.
Bleſſing his ſon, he doth his heart prepare,
And thus to God prefer'd this ardent prayer.---
Eſſence divine! earth's univerſal Lord!
By angels worſhip'd, and by men ador'd!

Thee

Thee I invoke, ſupernal cauſe of life!
Protect my ſon, and guard my virtuous wife.
With thy prevenient grace and power defend;
To thee, in faith, my offspring I commend;
Grant him the mind to walk with thee upright,
And make thy ſacred truth his chief delight.
When age ſhall make me tremble o'er the grave,
And death ſhall call me, my ſucceſſor ſave.
King may he reign, and laſting peace reſtore,
While adverſe nations dread his growing pow'r;
Make him the guardian of all Iſrael's laws,
The bold defender of his country's cauſe.
Keep us, O Lord! from vain idolatry;
From every ſin and weakneſs ſet us free.
Bleſs all, I pray; my mournful conſort cheer,
While I go diſtant through the lines of war;
Aſſert my ſon's deliverance and my own,
And in thy mercy ſave th' invaded crown.---
So pray'd the king; and then his ſoul reſign'd;
Deep contemplations held his ſtable mind.
Awhile he gaz'd on fair Azubah's charms,
Then gave his blooming offspring to her arms;
Cloſe to her breaſt the lovely infant lay,
Intent on childiſh ſmiles and harmleſs play;

This

This Asa ſaw, and thus addreſs'd his fair:---
Thee love beſeems, and ſoft officious care,
While I in arms acquire the formoſt name,
The firſt in danger, as the firſt in fame.

Here paus'd the prince, and thus the queen rejoin'd:
If then no ſighs can move thy ſtedfaſt mind,
Yet, deign great king! for once thy wife to hear,
And pleas'd, attend this laſt officious pray'r.
One ſad advice my ſorrows would ſuggeſt:
When the vaſt weight of fight o'erwhelms thy breaſt,
Undaunted, if thy ſoul deſires the war,
Fan not intemp'rate rage, nor tempt the ranks too far.
So ſaid the queen; then with an heaving ſigh
She ſlow retires, and oft reverts her eye.
The child Jehoſaphat employs her tongue;
In ſome cloſe manſion hid, with him alone,
To the deaf walls ſhe pours her ceaſeleſs moan.

While thus the queen devotes her mind to woe,
And floods of tears in cryſtal torrents flow,
The troops prepare, the ſquadrons flock to arms,
And all the city trembles with alarms;
The grand deſcriptive ſignals ſtream on high;
The trumpet echoes round the vaulted ſky.

With

With ample ſtrides, when glowing honour calls,
Approaches Asa from the palace walls,
Auguſt in majeſty! the hero's face
Celeſtial beauty blends with martial grace
In manhood's recent bloom, of life the prime;
Wide ſpread his ſhoulders, and his port ſublime.
Array'd in mail, th' exulting monarch ſtands,
By prieſts environ'd, and by Hebrew bands.
The force of art, in all the pomp of war,
Warm'd the cold breaſt, and ſtruck the penſive fair:
Eclips'd by glory, feebler beauty flies,
Like the pale moon, amid th' æthereal ſkies.
When all the ſparkling luſtre of the night,
Diſſolves its radiance in ſuperior light,
The morning ſun with orient ſplendour ſhines,
Gilds the fair hills, and warms the fruitful vines;
Through air ſerene, he darts his genial rays,
While nature feels the kind refective blaze:
So god-like Asa chears th' obſequious train,
And far tranſcends the worthies of the plain.

Now through the crowded ſtreets, each to his poſt,
The king directs the captains of his hoſt:
Bewailing matrons previous line the way,
And penſive damſels rue the fighting day,

The

The hour that calls the blooming youth to war,
Nor yet a father's rev'rend age would ſpare.
The lanes reſound with children's plaintive cries,
And laſting clamours ſhake the ambient ſkies.
Through Salem's gates bold Asa's armies range,
To ſad remorſe and frequent pity ſtrange.
In him, deſpair no lurking wiſh could find,
No deprecations change his ſteadfaſt mind;
Superior light his ardent ſoul had felt,
And bleſs'd thereby, he knew no place for guilt.

The troops now reach'd the city's ſouthmoſt bound,
And all the arms of Zion beam'd around;
But ſobbing females ſmite their penſive breaſts,
And thus to God the train their pray'rs addreſs'd:---
O thou, whoſe thunder rends the clouded air!
In deep diſtreſs thy abject people ſpare:
Diſpenſe thine aid; thy ſuppliant ſervants ſave;
From danger guard the ſapient and the brave.---
So pray'd the fair, while, with extended hands,
Thoſe ſhort petitions riſe from all the bands:
Mark, Lord, our plight---our harmleſs babes defend---
Preſerve Mount Zion---ſpare our native land,

The

The ſoldiers ſaid, and left the mournful town,
Paſs'd many a field and wood, in peaceful times
well known.
The gilded tow'rs of Zion ſunk from ſight,
The ſacred temple loſt its wond'rous height;
The proſpect changes; diſtant ſuccours join,
And war unveils its long ſuſpended ſcene.

Say, muſe, what troops great ASA led to fight,
What ſtrength united dar'd aſſert his right;
How great their force; the wonders of their way;
From whence they came, and where they held their
ſway.---
From Hieroſollyma, and places round,
Thrice fifty thouſand roſe at trumpet's ſound;
Theſe ardent legions, brigades tall and ſtrong,
The flow'r of war, in ſquare battalions throng;
They bore the ſhield, or toſs'd the beaming lance,
And ſcorn'd the cumbrous chariot's ſlow advance.
Inur'd to toil, and bred amidſt alarms,
Thoſe martial ſoldiers ſhine in poliſh'd arms;
Expert to cloſe in fight, or pitch the field,
And bear thick battle on the ſounding ſhield.
In ſplendour dreſs'd the monarch nods his cone,
Anointed ASA king of Judah ſhone.

Not leſs refulgent than when war repels
The tribe mellif'rous from their crowded cells,
When murm'ring bees refuſe their arduous toils,
And near the hive foment offenſive broils,
The gayly colour'd queen, ſupreme in ſize
And gaudy cincture, claims the bees ſurprize:
Thus graceful o'er his troops great Asa ſtood,
New to the field, yet free from Heathen blood.---
From Hebron city twice ſix thouſand came,
Renown'd in war, and candidates for fame;
Them bold Nebanah led; ſhort darts they bore,
And axes ſharpen'd, which they pois'd before.---
Next in the liſt, and rais'd above his train,
Lohadid treads the much-frequented plain;
With him, from Beer-ſheba and precincts near,
Two myriad Hebrews march, well train'd to war.---
Benhail, vice-gen'ral, calls his hoſt to arms,
While every ſenſe of worth his boſom warms;
Intent on fame, for martial deeds renown'd,
In counſel wiſe, in action moſt profound.
This daring champion brought on either ſide,
Twice fifteen thouſand, which the weſt ſupply'd.—
From Lachiſh ſent, a myriad Jews attend,
And Betheſmaveth form'd th' experienc'd band.---

Strong

Strong Keilah, fir'd with rage and loyal zeal,
Arm'd full three legions for the public weal;
With them in charge illuſtrious Cuſhaim came,
Warm'd with the love of liberty and fame.
Hail hapleſs youth! I dole thy daring mind,
By zeal impell'd, but to the future blind.---
Libnah and Ether's valiant ſquadrons join'd,
A martial band, eight Chiliads thence combin'd.
Their utmoſt force the chiefs of Judah bring,
Drawn to one place, obedient to their king.
Through all the realm extends a gen'rous flame;
In every town their warlike enſigns ſtream.---
Nor from the field were northern cohorts ſtaid,
Rais'd here and there, they brought a num'rous aid;
Four thouſand ſcore, well train'd, their captains led,
From early youth midſt arms and danger bred.
As birds of paſſage, when the winter's near,
Forſake our ſhores, and croſs the ocean ſteer;
Or o'er mount Atlas ſearch the ſouthmoſt iſles,
Where Phæbus glows, and ſcorch'd Caffraria ſmiles;
Fearful of froſt, in different bands they fly,
In various figures ſkim along the ſky:
Thus to their rendezvous the Jews retreat,
Their armies form, and ſquare battalions meet.---

The tribe of Benjamin a part ſupply,
Reſolv'd to conquer, or like heroes die.
From ſtately Gibeah great Meſhullam roſe
With fifty thouſand, ready for their foes:
Part arm'd with ſlings direct the whiſtling ſtone;
And part with ſpears and ſhields in armour ſhone.—
Avim and Parah join'd with Ophrah's band,
Devote four legions to the grand command.—
Gibeon and Ramah gather ſtrength from far,
And training ſend three myriads more to war.
Them Shobek heads, and Paroſh brave and bold,
Renown'd for might, and in the liſts enroll'd.---
All Kirjah's troops in graceful ranks proceed,
Whence thrice five thouſand help the king with ſpeed.
Fair Rekem's plains their men alert diſcloſe,
And various chiefs to toilſome war expoſe.
From diſtant towns an eager hoſt they drew,
To Asa's camp three times four thouſand flew.—
Nor did Erpeel and Zelah's glory ſtay,
From thence two myriads held their deſtin'd way.—
Arm'd with bent bows the Elephites ruſh'd forth,
By levies choſe, to prove their martial worth.---
Them Baruch join'd, whoſe daring mind reveals
His glorious charge, by numbers at his heels:

Ophni

Ophni and Gaba's corps with him deſcend,
Thoſe brilliant worthies tow'rds Mareſhah tend;
Twice twenty thouſand ceas'd their lands to till,
Led on by Baruch's apt tranſcendant ſkill.---
Cephirah and Zeralah take the field,
Long train'd to arms, and dext'rous with the ſhield.
Rais'd in thoſe days, and join'd by neighb'ring horſe,
Thrice threeſcore hundred boaſt ſuperior force.—
Inur'd to toil, liſted in Keniz' vale,
And precincts round, an hoſt devote their zeal;
Five times five thouſand bold Tirſhatah led,
To martial ſcenes, and deeds heroic bred.

While thus from far the Hebrew powers convene,
In danger dauntleſs, and through faith ſerene;
At Azmon's gates anointed Asa ſtay'd,
With all his troops, and waving ſigns diſplay'd.
The gifted hoſt awaits their king's command,
A vaſt, experienc'd, formidable band.
Charg'd with great ſpeed an herald paſs'd the throng,
Sublime Penuel, Miſhma's valiant ſon.
Then, to the king ſurrounded by his peers,
The trembling herald thus confeſs'd his fears:---
Before Mareſhah's walls, the ſouthmoſt bound,
The guard and bulwark of the country round;

Th' uncircumcis'd their ſavage forms diſplay,
And ſcenes of horror ſpread profound diſmay.
Great is their might; a multitude combin'd,
With various legends ſtreaming in the wind.
Make haſte, O king! with pow'r and wrath come down,
Oppoſe thy ſtrength, and ſave our frontier town.
In aid of Mareſh', with thy troops appear,
With force puiſſant wage deſtructive war.
Faint are our chiefs; diſtreſs'd in many a field,
In vain they fight, and, unrepriev'd, muſt yield.
Ah! ſtay not,---ſtay not---Judah's faithful boaſt!
Save thou our walls, or rich Mareſhah's loſt.
Except, great king! thy arms be there confeſs'd,
And royal ſtrength our adverſe foes reſiſt,
'Tis vain for Mareſh' in her forts to truſt.
I ſaw their tents extended far and wide;
Their iron cars, minacious Zerah's pride.
Thoſe eyes to-day beheld a ſwarthy band,
With fire and ſword lay waſte my native land;
Their vaſt defended camp amaz'd our hoſt;
Such matchleſs numbers give our hope for loſt.

He ſaid no more; the king expreſs'd his wrath,
With firmneſs anſwer'd, and reprov'd their ſloth.

How

How long will you Omnipotence diſtruſt?
When did our God forſake the wiſe and juſt?
Few though ye are, Jehovah can defend;
Our foes ſhall faint at his ſupreme command.
Be well aſſur'd I will not aid withhold,
Raiſe thoſe that ſink, and animate the bold:
Soon will I come; Jehovah is my guide,
My brandiſh'd faulchion ſhall abaſe all pride.
Go, and be ſtrong; with patient firmneſs wait;
Secure the towers, and guard each mural gate;
Inform your leaders, royal Asa's near,
And with him comes the Lord, the God of war.
Behave like men; 'tis for the truth we fight,
And great Jehovah will defend our right.
Haſte thou to Mareſh'; Zerah's threats defy,
For num'rous armies ſhall your wants ſupply.
My troops to form, I yet awhile muſt ſtay,
Their files to traverſe, and their arms ſurvey.
Doubt not my ſpeed; to me conſign your care;
With this vaſt hoſt we try th' event of war.
Perform the charge we give; I aſk no more;
Your ſtrict obedience vindicates my pow'r.
Ere thrice the ſun ſhall riſe with orient light,
Expect my troops, and wait the promis'd fight,
Our hoſt victorious, and the blacks in flight.

Beneath my ſword I judge their prince ſhall bleed,
If God be with me, and my arms ſucceed.

The monarch ſaid; the chief without delay,
Onward proceeds, and learns the ſafeſt way.
The Hebrew camp the herald leaves behind;
The anſwer giv'n prepar'd his ſpeech deſign'd.

And now the king his ruling peers addreſs'd,
While gen'rous ardour warm'd each martial breaſt.
We go, to ſave Mareſhah's tow'rs from fire;
Thus God commands, and this our tribes require,
Be ſtrong, be bold, for battle well prepare,
Exert your might in every poſt of war;
Myſelf, your king, an equal chance will ſtand,
The firſt in fight, as firſt to give command.
'Tis not for me to reſt in pomp at home,
While preſs'd by foes my faithful armies form.
Not long ſurpriz'd, my ſoul ſhall ſcorn to fear
The boldeſt chiefs that ever pois'd the ſpear.
Shrink not in fight; move forward all ye bands,
Your monarch leads, and the Most High commands.
Methinks I feel Jehovah's pow'r deſcend,
To brace my nerves, and your attempts befriend.

Unfurl

Unfurl your ſtandards; take the neareſt way;
Determin'd move, drawn forth in juſt array.
Slow be our march; in order tread the plain,
And ſtrictly keep the poſts your chiefs ordain.
Be ſure, all circumſpection now we need;
Pray as you walk; with ſtedfaſt faith proceed.
Thus ſhall the foes, in ambuſh deep conceal'd,
If ſuch they form, depart the covert field.
Their ſtrange deſigns abortive then may prove,
And God Almighty ſhield our cauſe above.
So may the bonds by men preſcrib'd, be broke,
And Judah freed from every Heathen yoke:
Thus charm'd with truth, imperial Asa ſpoke.

At once the regal ſtandard wide diſplay'd;
Its ſtreaming beauties form'd an ample ſhade;
Sonorous trumpets opening far and near,
Like peals of thunder through the clouded air,
Spread o'er the camp the dire alarm of of war.
As diſtant hills the doubling echoes blend,
The martial clangour rings around the land;
The ſoldiers ſhout; in deep'ning ranks they ſtand.
Conſpicuous ſignals waving in the wind,
And ſilver breathing flutes tranſport the warrior's mind.

Swift to their different poſts the captains ſteer;
Some lead the van, and ſome collect the rear.
Intent to pleaſe, depending on his God,
In his high car refulgent Asa rode.

From Azmon's height the matchleſs train withdrew,
Whoſe ſoaring hills ſoon leſſen'd to their view.
The mighty corps broke thro' th' adjacent mounds;
Far o'er the plains the marching hoſt abounds,
Thick as the ſands on ſcorch'd Arabia's ſhore,
When ſtorms impend, and circling whirlwinds roar,
Mount the thin air in clouds of driving duſt,
High wafted o'er th' inhoſpitable coaſt;
Or lodg'd in drifts, form an uncertain ſtrand
Along the coaſt, and cover half the land:
So num'rous were the Jews; ſo ſeem'd from far,
Acroſs the realm, the dire deſcending war.

But now, indulgent eve extends her wings,
And gloomy night ſucceeds the ſtate of things;
The camp inclos'd great Asa with his peers,
And grateful ſlumber intermits their cares.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Ætatis 16.

THE

THIRD BOOK

OF

KING ASA.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE herald convenes the chiefs of Mareſhah: reports the king's anſwer. The garriſon doubt of holding out till the arrival of the Hebrew army. Abinadab, the governor of the town, encourages them, and puts his troops in order. In the morning Zerah aſſaults the town. After three attacks, the king of Ethiopia, armed with two torches, ſets fire to part of the town. Night puts an end to the conflict. The Ethiopians retreat. ASA's *troops appear from the neighbouring hills. Satan appears to Zerah in the character of the prince of Sheba, and makes known the arrival of the Hebrew army.*

KING ASA.

BOOK III.

MEANTIME the herald, pent in Mareſh' walls,
To nightly council ev'ry leader calls:
Throng'd was the hall by captains fierce and ſtrong,
When thus with faithful words the chief begun:—
I reach'd the camp of our much honour'd king;
His peers around him form'd a martial ring.
With ſpeed impell'd, the mournful tale I told,
How ſunk the brave, and what depreſs'd the bold.
Unmov'd with fear the monarch grac'd his throne
Magnanimous, with valour yet unknown.
'Twas Heav'n upheld, when, with expreſſive wrath,
Imperial ASA thus reprov'd our ſloth:---
How long will you OMNIPOTENCE diſtruſt?
When did our GOD forſake the wiſe and juſt?

Few

Few though ye are, JEHOVAH can defend;
Our foes ſhall faint at his ſupreme command.
Be well aſſur'd I will not aid withhold,
Raiſe thoſe that ſink, and animate the bold:
Soon will I come; JEHOVAH is my guide;
My faulchion brandiſh'd, ſhall abaſe all pride.
Go, and be ſtrong; with patient firmneſs wait;
Secure the town, and guard each mural gate;
Inform your leaders royal ASA's near,
And with him comes the LORD, the GOD of war.
Behave like men; 'tis for the truth we fight,
And great JEHOVAH will defend our right.
Haſte thou to Mareſh'; Zerah's threats defy,
For num'rous armies ſhall your wants ſupply.
My troops to form I yet awhile muſt ſtay,
Their files to traverſe, and their arms ſurvey.
Doubt not my ſpeed; to me conſign your care;
With this vaſt hoſt we try th' event of war.
Perform the charge we give; I aſk no more;
Your ſtrict obedience vindicates my pow'r.
Ere thrice the ſun ſhall riſe with orient light,
Expect my troops, and wait the promis'd fight,
Our hoſt victorious, and the blacks in flight.
Beneath my ſword I truſt their prince ſhall bleed,
If GOD be with me, and my arms ſucceed.

Thus

Thus ſpoke the king.—Penuel then reclin'd,
And conſcious peace compos'd his warlike mind.
He ſilent ſat; 'twixt hope and fear they ſtrive,
In doubt to ſtand till Asa's troops arrive.
The devaſtation made by Zerah's hoſt,
And ſcenes of horror gathering round the coaſt,
Depreſs'd their minds; the people felt deſpair,
And dread the direful ravages of war.
Then from his ſplendid ſeat, obſerving, roſe
Abinadab, the ſcourge of Mareſh' foes;
To him the king the chief command had giv'n,
Lov'd by mankind, and favour'd much by Heav'n.
With aſpect grave their ſilence firſt he broke,
Suſpenſe awaits; when thus the hero ſpoke:—
Shall deep concern your martial ſouls depreſs?
Can hope be loſt, ev'n in profound diſtreſs?
In counſel once, ye oft were wont to ſpeak,
But now, alas! the ſlaves of fear, you ſhake.
Riſe, O ye princes! matchleſs captains riſe!
Belov'd of God! in friendſhip with the ſkies!
Call'd by the Lord to be a nation pure,
His praiſe to ſing, and only him adore.
Ah me! how oft have we forſook that rock,
That ſtrength ſupreme, which no man may provoke.

Forſake

Forſake not him; with all your hearts rely
On that Omnipotence which reigns on high.
Here fix your minds; if we are found ſincere,
The Lord Jehovah will remove deſpair.
In vain from far the ſons of earth combine
To ſhake our faith; we ſtand by pow'r divine.
In God's pure name, unmov'd I dare the fight;
In arms we meet at the return of light.
Each muniment with valiant ſoldiers line,
Secure the walls, and let our conduct ſhine.
While grateful darkneſs holds its ſilent reign,
And Zerah's bands are ſcatter'd o'er the plain,
Bright arms and various inſtruments of war,
By art procur'd, with double proof prepare.
Doubt not but when the morning ſun ſhall riſe,
With light diſplay'd amid the eaſtern ſkies,
Stern in refulgent arms yon prince will lead,
And o'er the realm his numerous armies ſpread.
When thoſe deſign'd, attempt the walls to ſcale,
Let none be ſlothful; all your foes aſſail.
If death's our lot, like heroes nobly die;
Stand firm for truth; in martial proweſs vie;
Your king, your country, every thing that's dear,
Demand your conduct through the toils of war.

From

From council haſte, to glorious action fly.—
This ſaid, he roſe, preventing all reply.
Diſmay, pale comrade, left the dauntleſs hoſt,
Fled every fear, and mean obſcure diſtruſt.
So when the low-hung clouds convolv'd are deep,
If chance ſoft winds the yielding æther ſweep,
They part, they ſcatter, vaniſh by degrees,
As zephyrs blow, and nod the folding trees.

From tow'r to tow'r the leading gen'ral flies,
Confirms the weak, the active mind employs.
Some bear the engines to th' appointed place;
Theſe mount the walls, and thoſe the bulwarks grace.
Juſt ſo the gard'ner plants the riſing grove,
As ſuits his purpoſe, or his friends approve:
Thus great Abinadab diſpos'd his band,
Who form'd their line by his ſupreme command.

Now in the eaſt the glorious lamp of day
Roſe from the deep, and bade the light diſplay;
When o'er the plains in brazen arms appear
Proud Zerah's hoſt, impatient ſons of war.
Then thus Abinadab his friends addreſs'd:—
Superior ardour glows within my breaſt:

Stand to your arms; advancing I deſcry
Aſcending duſt obſcure the vaulted ſky.
Fierce Zerah comes, and with him brings along
The prime of Afric, terrible and ſtrong;
Yet weak to us, whoſe minds the Lord will ſtay;
Th' eternal ſelf-exiſting cauſe of day!
In him I truſt, to his great name I bow,
And patient wait yon threat'ning warlike foe.

In dazzling armour furious Zerah blaz'd
Far o'er his peers; his might the nations prais'd:
Six fiery ſteeds drew his gilt car along;
Huge the ſtern chief, and like Alcides ſtrong;
His limbs gigantic plated ſcales infold;
His pond'rous mail was ſtiff with ductile gold.
An ample ſhield defends his martial breaſt;
Down his broad back deſcends his waving creſt;
His helmet bright reflects the ſolar ray,
Gleams o'er the field, and ſhines with borrow'd day.
A pond'rous ſpear imperial Zerah took,
Like ſome tall reed the lofty jav'lin ſhook.
With pride elate he views the diſtant walls,
And thus, inflam'd, to ev'ry leader calls:—

Come,

Come, conqu'ring princes! ſpeed the ſanguine fray;
The gods will help; Mareſhah burns this day.
Yon tott'ring ſpires no human force can ſave;
The ſoldiers die; thro' blood and death be brave.
Prepare your engines; ſpoil yon ſtately town;
Commence th' attack, for Mareſh' is your own.

This ſaid, tranſported with preſumptuous heat,
With troops ſelect, he ſtrove to ſtorm the gate
In vain; the ſtern Abinadab withſtood,
By Heav'n upheld, and dipp'd his ſpear in blood.
The Jews ſucceed; repuls'd their foes retire;
Fierce Zerah raves, and trembling frowns with ire.
O'er-aw'd by ſome ſuperior pow'r, he turns,
Rob'd of his hope; his ſoul indignant ſpurns.
Thus when a tiger rends the tender lamb,
Arm'd with huge clubs, the ſwains defend his dam;
The flock protect, or ſave the kine from death;
Their blows repeat; the tiger pants for breath.
With glaring eyes, compell'd, at length he tires;
Growls when he turns, and from the fold retires.
So from the gate ſtern Zerah's guards withdrew;
The hoſt rejoin'd, but kept the town in view.
The furious king each guarded fort explores,
Here caſts his eye, and there directs his pow'rs.

Around the walls his eager horſemen fly,
Search ev'ry nook, and ev'ry gap deſcry.
Thus round the fold, while thoughtleſs lambkins ſleep,
The wolf rapacious ſeeks to kill the ſheep;
Each weaker place, intent on blood, he tries;
Marks well its height, and leaps with earneſt eyes.
Repuls'd, with anxious rage the beaſt returns;
Plies all his might, and, rack'd with hunger, burns.
Not with leſs diſappointment Zerah views
The dire attack, and thus aſſaults the Jews.
North of the town the guards but thinly ſtand,
There Ethiops preſs; a ſtedfaſt deſp'rate band.
Full fifty thouſand Afric's monarch choſe;
Here tends the hoſt, and there exclaim the foes.
From far the Hebrews ſaw the gath'ring ſtorm;
Along the wall the deep'ning cohorts form.
With numbers more, tranſcending thoſe above,
Towards the north proud Zerah's ſquadrons move.
Now wheeling to the right, the wings invade,
Here ſpeeds their force, and wond'rous ſtrength diſplay'd:
Diſpos'd in ſquares, the hoſtile archers ſtand,
And clouds of arrows prove the king's command.
Some engines point; while theſe attempt to ſcale
The recent breach, and thoſe in fight aſſail.

With

With clamorous noiſe the Lubim chiefs draw nigh;
With ſhouts, with pray'rs reſounds the ambient ſky.
This known, Abinadab, unmov'd with fear,
To whoſe good conduct Mareſh' truſts her care,
For ſtrength renown'd, a troop of warriors choſe
The ſchemes of hoſtile nations to oppoſe.
Far o'er the reſt his matchleſs courage ſhines;
Preſerves the town, and ſaves Mareſhah's lines.
When his huge ſpear with aim unerring flies,
Some captain falls, or ſome great warrior dies:
His glorious deeds the martial Jews admire;
God bleſs'd their arms, and made their foes retire.
O'er Zerah's hoſt pale languid fears he ſhed,
Depreſs'd the bold, or ſtruck the valiant dead.
In vain they ſtorm; the pow'r of Heav'n withſtands,
Averts their darts, and diſconcerts their plans.
By fierce Abinadab in conteſt ſlain;
Great captains lie extended on the plain.
Proud Zerah's ſelf, gall'd by his force, withdrew,
Recoil'd a ſpace, yet bade the fight renew.
With grief the king beheld his chieftains die;
Incens'd he ſaw the fatal jav'lins fly,
At bold Abinadab a ſpear he threw;
That prince reclin'd; the dart innoxious flew.

His guards preſs'd on, their monarch to defend,
Sav'd from that arm which elſe had brought his end.
In cubic phalanx wedg'd, the blacks advance,
And full in front ſtern Zerah pois'd his lance.

A grand aſſault upon the town was made;
In union firm the num'rous troops invade.
Then had not Heav'n upheld the Hebrew hoſt,
Their walls ſupported, Mareſh' had been loſt;
The blacks impetuous had poſſeſs'd the town,
And every Jew in glitt'ring arms o'erthrown:
But Heav'n's great King their cubic phalanx broke,
By fav'ring that well-tim'd deciſive ſtroke,
When bold Abinadab in ambuſh lay,
Much to the northward of the covert way.

Repuls'd with loſs, imperial Zerah roar'd;
In fight annoy'd, yet ſcorn'd the Hebrew ſword.
With wrath inflam'd, inflate with ſtubborn pride,
He Heav'n blaſphem'd, and If'rael's hoſt defy'd.
The torch infernal rous'd extreme deſire,
Revengeful fiends preſumptuous thoughts inſpire.
Rage prompts his feet to vaſt gigantic ſtrides,
Supremely grand, each loit'ring prince he chides;

Reclaims

Reclaims his men, and fires the ſinking crowd,
With lungs like braſs, the king harangu'd aloud:—
Princes and potentates! ſcorch'd Afric's boaſt!
Your monarch's glory! now to valour loſt.
Return, for ſhame! renew the doubtful war;
Lo! Zerah lives, and breathes this vital air.
In vain we ſtrive the lofty walls to ſcale;
Arm'd from above the feeble Jews prevail,
But ſhall not long: your batt'ring engines bring,
Break down the walls to ſerve your mighty king.
Reſolv'd am I to wrap yon town in fire,
O'erwhelm their bands, and ſee their prince expire.
Shall then Mareſhah thus retard our might?
And ſink our fame in everlaſting night?
Not ſuch the ardour of a warlike ſoul;
'Tis ours the ſubject nations to controul.

Arm'd in an inſtant, dreadful chiefs appear
With maſſy iron bars, dire inſtruments of war.
The ſoldiers ſhouts the doubling echoes blend;
Drawn up with art, in graceful ranks they ſtand.
Supreme in ſtrength impetuous Zerah ſhone
Oe'r all the field; to brutal ravage prone.
With pride of heart he hails his men from far;
While brazen trumpets rouze the ling'ring war.

To arms the gloomy legions thick return,
And with freſh ardour all the ſquadrons burn.
Againſt the walls the blacks their might oppoſe;
From high the Jews o'erwhelm their active foes.
Fierce to the gate the Ethiopians preſs,
Elate with hope, and ardent for ſucceſs.
Huge ſtones incumbent, from the bulwarks fall,
And ſlay the raſh before Mareſhah's wall.
Proud Zerah foams to ſee his captains die;
Hurl'd from the tow'rs wide-waſting fragments fly.
Thus when dark clouds malignant bring the ſtorm,
Break nature's peace, and ſtately towns deform,
Aſtoniſh'd, from ſome hill the ſwains behold;
Impending horror makes their blood run cold.
They trembling mark the ſtrange diſorder'd ſky;
The raging winds and coming ſtorm they fly.
Obſcur'd with gloom the ſun withdraws his ray;
Diſtreſs prevails, and night excludes the day.
Rough Boreas riſing, ſhakes the ſolid ſhores,
Throws back the ſea, and in deep caverns roars.
The ratt'ling hail with ſpeed impetuous borne,
Lays proſtrate many a field of rip'ning corn.
Prone on the ground, rent by the tempeſt, lie
Aſpiring elms which rais'd their heads on high.

Here

Here limbs, here boughs, beſtrew the ſhatter'd ground,
And by the roots torn up, ev'n ſturdy oaks are found.
With terror ſeiz'd, the lab'rer views from far,
The dire effects of elemental war.
So Afric's troops o'erwhelm'd, by ſtones depreſs'd,
Stretch'd o'er the plains, the ſanguine ground careſs'd.
With gnaſhing diſappointment Zerah views
His ſoldiers fall beneath the conqu'ring Jews.
Their poſt to gain the bands behind ſucceed;
By maſſy ruins cruſh'd, the preſſing ſquadrons bleed,
And heroes ſink beneath th' enormous weight;
Unmov'd with fear, bold Ethiops meet their fate.

By rage impell'd, once more they ſhake the wall;
On their broad orbs the pond'rous fragments fall.
Held o'er their heads their ſhields a teſtude form,
From death to ſave, and break the' impending ſtorm.
Rank within rank, cloſe wedg'd in firm array,
Could prove their pow'r, and warlike force diſplay.

With inborn ardour furious Zerah burns,
The combat urging, every troop he turns;

Recalls

Recalls from flight, and bids his millions ſtand;
Condens'd they form at his auſtere command.
Thus o'er the plain the bearded corn appears,
When harveſt comes, and Ceres ſhoots in ears,
With joy the farmer marks his ripen'd crop,
Scans the rich field, and ſeems rejoic'd with hope.
Not leſs elate, ſcorch'd Afric's king ſurveys
Heroic deeds, where glitt'ring bucklers blaze.
With ardour freſh, the prince remounts his car,
Tranſcends in pomp, and leads the hoſt to war.
Thus 'midſt the ſtarry vault ſhines threat'ning Mars,
Known by his ſanguine ray and martial airs.
With haughty ſtrides forth ſtepp'd before the crowd
The ſwarthy monarch, and exclaim'd aloud,
Secure behind their walls ſhall Hebrews dare
The fell deſtruction of this mingled war?
Draw forth your bands; then try the force of arms;
You, or the Meroans train'd amidſt alarms.
To toil, when young, our infants we inure;
Expos'd to heat, extended on the floor,
No food they claim but what they firſt o'ercome;
With conqueſt pleas'd, they bring the victims home.
In pathleſs woods we ſeek the tuſky boar,
Or haunt the dens where rampant lions roar.

Such

Such are our lives, inur'd to blaſting heat,
Unmov'd, unchang'd amid the toils of fight.
When we but turn, wiſh'd conqueſt crowns our arms,
Thro' rocks we break, and ſhake with dire alarms
Regions immenſe, extended as our own;
Secure we live beneath the torrid zone.
Yield to my wiſh; in vain your chiefs withſtand
The flow'r of Afric, my victorious band.
If not, expect juſt vengeance on your heads,
Impending death Mareſhah's town o'erſpreads.
'Twas Heaven pronounc'd the land of Judah mine;
Faith bids me ſtrive, and all the pow'rs divine.
What god can ſhield you? who contend with fate?
Your deſtiny ſhall cloſe this dire debate.
Reſiſt not Heaven; the world aſſents to me;
You know my fix'd, unchangeable decree.

This ſaid, he ſtood contending at the gate;
Abinadab ſuſtain'd th' unwieldy weight.
With high diſdain the guard of Mareſh' burn'd,
When thus incens'd, the dreadful chief return'd:
Then muſt we yield to idols, ſtocks and ſtones?
Your lifeleſs gods, and ſenſeleſs, breathleſs drones.
With indignation warm'd, I tell thee no;
While life remains, my heart ſhall never bow.

Deception

Deception fond! do Ethiops rule by fate?
The Lord Moſt High can all your ſchemes defeat.
Shall God's elect ſuch vaunting heathens fear?
May wiſdom raiſe our minds above deſpair!
Tho' numberleſs thy hoſtile armies ſwarm,
Your beſt we dare, and wait the gathering ſtorm.
Learn, learn to boaſt amidſt thy ſlaves, not here;
Thou, nor thy threats, can faithful Hebrews ſcare.
Long train'd to arms your warlike thouſands bleed,
Thy captains fall, and more to death ſucceed.
Tempt not that God, who, when his anger burns,
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hoſts o'erturns;
Lord of the world, unbounded and alone,
The God we worſhip fills his ſplendid throne;
He ſcorns the fragile prop of human truſt,
" And kings and heroes mingles with the duſt."
By him we ſtand; then learn the Jews to fear;
Turn from this gate, or die a victim there.

He ſilent ſtood; the chief no more replies;
Triumphant fire came flaſhing from his eyes.
The boaſting monarch ſtruck with dire ſurpriſe,
The riſing wrath of Mareſh' champion flies:
So from the tiger ſhrinks the timid ſwain;
The beaſt purſues, and drives him o'er the plain;

Fear

Fear adds ſwift wings; he nimbly runs, he flies;
At length ſome cot a ſhelt'ring roof ſupplies;
With hope the ſwain the neighb'ring houſe ſurveys,
There ſafe inclos'd, joy ſprings and dread decays.
Thus, 'midſt th' advancing ranks, the king thro' fear,
Indecent mix'd, and join'd the moving rear.
With loud blaſphemous ſhouts the blacks drew nigh;
A grove of ſpears at once aſcend on high.
Firm on the walls the Jews undaunted ſtand,
A ſtout, embodied, formidable band;
Extended o'er the plains, encumber'd far,
The pow'rs of Afric brave the ſhock of war;
From their drawn bows unnumber'd arrows fly,
And countleſs jav'lins ſing along the ſky.
The Jews unmov'd their brutal rage ſuſtain;
No Hebrew flung his pointed lance in vain,
To ſtern Abinadab battalions yield;
Each threat'ning ſtorm the matchleſs prince repell'd.
Beneath his force the heathen cohorts die;
When turns the chief, gall'd Ethiopians ſigh.
Not more diſmay'd, the fleecy flock behold
The wolf rapacious in the peaceful fold;
Precipitant, the bleating lambkins fly;
The beaſt purſues, and glories to deſtroy.

The

The ſheep are torn; the wolf inſatiate kills,
And with deep moan each trench with carnage fills.
Thus bold Abinadab ſpread death around,
More foes ſucceed, and ſtill maintain their ground.

When dreadful Zerah rais'd his brazen ſhield,
And ſhone conſpicuous o'er the ſanguine field,
His preſence ſet their glowing hearts on fire,
Rekindled wrath, and bade their hopes aſpire.
They ſaw him drive, arm'd with a blazing brand,
And o'er their heads ſhake his deſtructive hand.
Rais'd on his ſtrong and deep-reſounding car,
The king directs the ſavage ling'ring war.
Before him march'd a ſquadron arm'd with fire,
And vow'd revenge and devaſtation dire;
Elate with hope, fierce Zerah rides along;
His guards attending, thus the king begun:—
How long ſhall Hebrew ſtates, reſolv'd and free,
Withſtand that conqueſt which the gods decree?
Impell'd by heaven, with all-deſtroying brands
Your monarch leads, and Zerah's ſelf commands.
To fire and ſword yon hoſtile town I doom,
Remorſeleſs rage and flames ſhall it conſume:
Stop every paſſage; ſtorm each mural gate;
Unpitied let them bear their abject fate;

With

With watchful eyes ſurvey each bulwark o'er,
While different bands a fiery deluge pour.
This ſaid, between the ranks the monarch rode
Supremely horrid, like ſome fighting god.
His blazing torch gleam'd dreadful to behold,
While the ſpok'd wheels of his gilt chariot roll'd.
The diſmal ſtorm the Jews beheld from far;
Unmov'd, unchang'd, they feel the threat'ning war;
Combin'd in front, they range the Hebrew pow'r,
With pond'rous ſtones defend each ſtanding tow'r.

Meantime with wrath the furious blacks drew near,
And glowing brands divide the limpid air;
Dreadful they mount, they cleave th' aereal ſkies;
Clouds ſeem to burn, and various terrors riſe;
They hiſſing ſmite, and quench where'er they fall,
Elſe univerſal rage had fell'd the wall.
Thrice round his torch malignant Zerah whirl'd,
Then o'er the battlements his tremors hurl'd;
They catch'd, they burnt, the flames conſuming riſe,
And clouds of ſmoke obſcur'd the dark'ning ſkies,
Swift ſtor'd with water, numerous Hebrews run;
Prieſts urge the work, and few the danger ſhun.
So calm the wind, the tops of trees ſcarce nod,
The air was damp, and nature wrought for God.

The

The blacks alert, ſtill ply their waving fires;
At length conſtrain'd, Abinadab retires.
He penſive ſtood; then moves from tow'r to tow'r;
The foes ruſh on, and ſtrive to foil his pow'r.
With ſteady pace the yielding prince gave way;
And Hebrew troops awhile ſuſpend the fray.
On every ſide more thick the torches fall;
Aſcending fires inveſt Mareſhah's wall.

Meantime the night her ample wings diſplay'd,
And caſt o'er nature's works an awful ſhade.
Under her cloudy covert war retir'd;
And weary chiefs the gift of ſleep requir'd.
His peers in view, imperial Zerah ſpoke,
And thus their deep demur preventing broke:—
This day, my friends, the force of arms we try'd,
In deep'ning ranks you fought with martial pride.
Three bold attacks my troops undaunted made,
The fourth had conquer'd, and the Jews diſmay'd,
But ſacred night o'er earth her veil has ſpread.
Revere the goddeſs; now you need repoſe,
Till purple morn the coming day diſcloſe;
Then, when returning light the field diſplays,
And the ſun warms us with his orient rays,

Attend

Attend my mandates; all my words revere;
Let every prince for greater ſcenes prepare.
Shall this vaſt hoſt be by one town delay'd?
By every man my will muſt be obey'd.
To Sheba firſt the plunder I reſign;
All Mareſh' riches and her ſtores are thine.
Thy gifts I honour, ſince thy deeds declare
Thee vers'd in ev'ry ſtratagem of war.
Excite my troops to ſecond our deſires;
Force the beſieg'd, and wave their conqu'ring fires.
Should part be baffled, wiſdom muſt prevail,
And want and famine turn the doubtful ſcale.
The Jews are preſs'd; ſtorm every barrier gate,
Seclude proviſions, and command their fate,
Attack by day, and keep ſtrict watch by night.
While I with Lubim's prince inveſt the land,
Fire all their towns, and ſlay who dare withſtand.
This be to-morrow's taſk; but now we feaſt,
Receive refection, and immediate reſt;
Meantime let guards their ſeveral poſts maintain,
Watch thro' the night, and traverſe all the plain;
For this thrice twenty thouſand I ordain;
Change them three times, the bands in charge relieve;
Each troop ſhall arm, and reſpite each receive.

So will'd the king; his train the feaſt prepare,
While to their poſts the guards in turn repair.
And now beneath the regal tent they ſpread
High-ſeaſon'd dainties, and refective bread.
Obedient peers the grand pavilion fill,
And mighty chiefs await their monarch's will.
Their hunger ſheath'd, the ſparkling bowls go round,
While jocund muſic gives a grateful ſound.

But more intent Mareſhah's guards appear;
Oppreſs'd with wounds, and long fatigu'd in war,
Their ſtated troops the lofty walls aſcend,
Patrole the ramparts, and in arms attend.
With vigilance and care the brigades form,
Deſcry, approach, and move at each alarm.
Thus in the deſert waſte remote from men,
Surrounding dogs protect the folded pen;
When danger threats, they guard the peaceful ſheep,
Careleſs of harm, and lambkins while they ſleep.
The wakeful maſtiffs rouſe at every breeze,
The ruſtling thickſet, bruſh, and waving trees.
Juſt ſo in armour ſtood the warlike Jews;
And all the forms of lenient ſleep refuſe.

Now

Now horned Cynthia ſhone with borrow'd light,
And lucid planets deck'd the ſilent night;
The diſtant ſpheres to the blue zenith riſe;
A ſcene of glory breaks from all the ſkies;
When Asa's troops on adverſe hills appear,
And poliſh'd helms illume the devious air.
Mareſhah's guards beheld the joyful ſight;
No more they felt their wounds receiv'd in fight;
The long wiſh'd ſuccours waft their cares away,
And every ſoldier bleſs'd the coming day.
As when far ſpent with ſcalding heat and pain,
The weary trav'ller treads the duſty plain,
Bright o'er his head, with an unclouded blaze,
The ſun refulgent darts his fervid rays:
Acroſs the road the heat ſolſtitial gleams,
Th' itinerant faints, and rues the ſcorching beams.
With hope rejoic'd, a verdant grove he ſees,
And pleas'd beholds a walk between the trees;
Beneath a rock the dripping ſtreams diſtil,
And on the plain ſoon form a murm'ring rill;
A cool receſs, where ſportive zephyrs play,
And gentle breezes fan the ſcorching day.
As grows the ſcene before the trav'ller's eye,
So ſlow the bleſſings which compleat his joy.

The cryſtal ſpring his fainting ſtrength repairs,
His wants ſupply'd, reduce his anxious cares.
The Hebrews thus were pleas'd, ſo they revive;
And ſome on death's dark verge conſent to live.
Great Asa's mighty hoſt affects the Jews,
Like gen rous ſpirits to the ſtagnate bruiſe,
Or healing balſam to the deep-ſtruck wound,
In folding ligaments involv'd and bound.
After their march the troops ſome reſpite crave;
A meet refection ſerves the ſtout and brave;
Elſe had proud Zerah felt th' impending ſtorm,
And ſeen juſt Asa's blade his ranks deform:
But night forbad; in ſleep profound they lay,
Strech'd in their tents they wait the dawn of day.

Now awful midnight gave the camp to reſt,
And pleaſing ſlumber calm'd each anxious breaſt;
When, lo! with graceful mien, an airy ſhade,
Significant of war, in arms diſplay'd,
To Zerah's tent portentous ſhot along,
In form like Sheba, martial, wiſe and ſtrong;
That warrior's helm the mimic ghoſt aſſumes,
O'erlaid with gold, and black with waving plumes.
Down his brown neck the curling treſſes hung;
His warlike mien the king's attention won.

A ſparkling

A ſparkling corſlet flam'd before his breaſt,
And fulgid braſs his ſtrenuous body dreſs'd;
O'er theſe a variegated veſture flow'd,
That ſwept the ground, and ruſtled as he trod.
Before him blaz'd his vaſt refulgent ſhield,
The plated orb his ſinewy arm upheld.
In his right hand a pointed jav'lin ſhin'd;
When Satan thus made known his fraud'ful mind:—
Can Zerah ſleep? ſhall ſlumber ſeal thine eyes?
Awake, O king! and with my mandates riſe;
Recal thy laſt commands; march not from hence,
Nor quit this glorious cauſe, tranſcendent prince!
The gods diſpenſe but one conteſted day;
Ethereal pow'rs attend the doubtful fray;
For ſoon ſhall conqueſt recompenſe thy toils,
And give thee all Mareſhah's ſhining ſpoils;
Unbounded wealth thy labours ſhall reward,
Since Heav'n and we thy bold attempts regard.
Now all the hoſt of Judah treads the field;
Their monarch leads, but ſoon the palm ſhall yield.
Thy fame, thy glory, now becomes compleat;
The Jews ſhall die, and Asa meet his fate.
The more they ſtrive, the greater glory thine;
To late poſterity thy deeds ſhall ſhine.

The gods will ſkreen thee from ſuperior might,
And o'er the nations vindicate thy right;
True as the viſion I will then deſcend,
And in the worſt extremities befriend.
Riſe then to fight, of Heav'nly aid ſecure;
This be your aim, the gods require no more:
But firſt to council every peer convene,
Adviſe how beſt to cloſe this varied ſcene;
How moſt in war we Judah may diſtreſs,
And to our friends bring conqueſt, joy, and peace.
Thus ſpoke the fiend; then thro' the ſhades of night
The dire illuſion vaniſh'd from his ſight.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Ætatis 16.

THE

FOURTH BOOK

OF

KING ASA.

THE ARGUMENT.

Zerah awakes the prince of the Lubims, Sheba, and the reſt of his captains, to whom he diſcloſes his viſion, and demands their advice. The prince of Lubim and Sheba ſpeak their ſentiments. The plan of Sheba is adopted. The king preſents that hero with his father's ſpear. The morning being come, Aſa ariſes: his armour, ſhield, &c. are deſcribed: his army takes the field. An herald is ſent to Abinadab with the king's commands. The powers of darkneſs are aſſembled.

KING ASA.

BOOK IV.

NOW from his downy bed fierce Zerah roſe,
And anxious from his rich pavilion goes.
Not diſtant far the herald Miſraim lay;
Him to inform, the monarch held his way.
In great concerns Miſraim bore a part,
And knew the ſecrets of the royal heart.
Within the tent deluded Zerah ſtood,
And thro' ſurrounding darkneſs call'd aloud.
The herald heard; and rouſing at the word,
Roſe from his couch, obedient to his lord;
Then thus the king, waving his hand, decreed:—
Convene the nobles; through the camp proceed;
Bid peers to audience with all haſte repair;
To them celeſtial mandates we declare:

But

But while the leaders of the hoſt collect,
I to the Lubim prince my courſe direct,
And where bold Sheba ſpends his time in toil,
For arms renown'd, and ſchemes which kingdoms ſpoil.
The monarch ſaid.—The herald trips along;
Between the tents he hears a ſnoring throng.
Zerah himſelf was ſeeking Lubim's poſt
Amid the camp, extending down the coaſt;
Stretch'd on the earth with all his guards around,
Oppreſs'd with ſleep, Condronides he found;
Juſt by, refulgent through the gloom of night,
A grove of lances met the monarch's ſight.
At every tent was fix'd a beaming ſpear,
The wood was preſs'd in earth, the ſteel in air.
To Lubim, then, imperious Zerah ſpoke,
And thus abrupt, the ſolemn ſilence broke:—
Sleeps Lubim's prince, remote from anxious care,
While foes increaſe, and bring their levies near?
Awake, O monarch! from thy ſlumbers riſe;
Thou firſt of heroes, ope' thy warlike eyes.
'Tis Zerah calls; no phantom of the night
Diſturbs thy reſt, or ſheds a glimm'ring light;
'Tis Zerah's ſelf demands thy welcome aid;
No airy ſpectre, and no flitting ſhade.

Such

Such words awoke; the prince of Lubim hears,
Obſerves in haſte, and to his charge repairs.
In his right hand two glitt'ring darts he ſhook,
Lodg'd on the left, his pond'rous orb he took,
While o'er his ſhoulders hung the warrior's pride,
His veſtment grim, a lion's ſallow hide.

And now the kings approach'd bold Sheba's tent,
That prince they found on martial ſchemes intent;
Solicitous of fame, his ſlumbers fled;
Mareſhah's fall employ'd his ſapient head.
The depth of thought his eager mind explores;
Now here, now there, he ſtrives with all his powr's.
A plan to ſtorm the town the prince deſign'd;
Then ſtrong blockades and caution held his mind.
As when beneath the fair horizon, ſpread
With algid nitre, and aſphaltos fed,
In cloſe attrition the blue light'nings form,
And wav'ring flaſhes break from ev'ry ſtorm,
The fervid ſhaft with inſtant force expires,
The ſky flames thick with momentary fires:
Juſt ſo, thought preſſing thought, ſucceſſive roſe
In Sheba's breaſt, preventing calm repoſe.
Such were his toils, when now, perceiv'd at hand,
Before his tent the king and Lubim ſtand.

Smote

Smote with ſurprize the prince beheld their plight;
But knew them not thro' the dark gloom of night.
Then apt in knowledge, Sheba thus began:—
Say whence you are, of Heav'n, or mortal man?
Or why with thoſe intruſions come you here?
Stand off at diſtance, and your charge declare.

So ſpake the prince, and thus the king rejoin'd:—
Well pleas'd, my friend, I mark thy watchful mind.
Not without Heav'n's command to thee we came,
And thus traverſe the camp thy aid to claim;
I crave advice, illuſtrious ſon of fame.
No flitting ſhade diſturbs thy calm repoſe,
Nor wand'ring party of nocturnal foes;
'Tis Zerah calls; the Lubim prince is here;
The Ethiopian monarch, and thy bold compeer.

Then Zerah paus'd; and Sheba ſoon reply'd:—
Hail, firſt of men! thy martial country's pride!
Forgive my great offence, and now declare,
Why from their tents two kings are wand'ring here?
What ſecret ills have call'd your greatneſs thence?
What recent dangers form'd this new ſuſpence?
Say, have the Jews their muniments forſook?
Deceiv'd the guards, and thro' our ramparts broke?

Or

Or have the gods with viſions bleſs'd thy ſoul,
The gods who rule mankind without controul?
Have awful dreams the will of Heav'n reveal'd?
Or is there aught to crown our bliſs conceal'd?
Why ſtrays the king? are not his heralds near!
What ails Miſraim, who us'd thy charge to bear
To every prince, thro' all the files of war.

Here Sheba ceas'd; and thus the monarch ſaid:
The gods excel, and let them be obey'd.
Juſt now inſtruction was by Iſis ſent;
Clear to my view a god approach'd my tent:
He bade me all my warlike chiefs convene;
To them I haſte, to them diſcloſe the ſcene.
But think not Miſraim ſlow, becauſe not here;
He hails the hoſt, and rouſes every peer.
On ſure alarms he ſpeeds; while I with you
The force of theſe nocturnal themes purſue.

Stern Zerah ſtay'd; and, ruſhing from his tent,
Important Sheba with the monarch went.
A leopard's ſpotted hide the prince aſſumes,
And his wrought helmet black with waving plumes;
A pointed jav'lin grac'd his better hand;
The ſumptuous ſhield his ſinewy left ſuſtain'd.

Thus

Thus Sheba dreſs'd; the chiefs hard by they wake;
Then to the royal tent the winding paſſage take.
North of the throne the bands of Meroë lie,
Expos'd to ambuſh, and Mareſhah nigh.
Stretch'd tow'rds the weſt, extending down the coaſt
Slept Sheba's troops, a vaſt, puiſſant hoſt!
Far in the eaſt Lubimian legions lay;
In ſleep profound they paſs'd the night away.
Theſe, when the battle joins, wheel tow'rds the right,
While Zerah's ſquadrons in the centre fight.

To council now the king convenes his peers,
While darkneſs reign'd, or ſhone the twinkling ſtars.
When Zerah's tent was throng'd with chiefs of worth,
The thoughtful monarch from his throne ſtood forth;
Reclining on his ſpear the hero ſtands,
And thus beſpake the lords of Ethiop's bands:—
Juſt now, in ſplendour cloth'd, a viſion plain
By night approach'd; and in a martial ſtrain,
In form like Sheba's prince, the god began:—
Can Zerah ſleep? ſhall ſlumber ſeal thine eyes?
Awake, O king! and with my mandates riſe;
Recal thy laſt commands; march not from hence,
Nor quit this glorious cauſe, tranſcendent prince!

The

The gods diſpenſe but one conteſted day;
Ethereal pow'rs attend the doubtful fray;
For ſoon ſhall conqueſt recompenſe thy toils,
And give thee all Mareſhah's ſhining ſpoils;
Unbounded wealth thy labours ſhall reward,
Since Heav'n and we thy bold attempts regard.
Now all the hoſt of Judah treads the field,
Their monarch leads, but ſoon the palm ſhall yield.
Thy fame, thy glory then becomes compleat;
The Jews ſhall die, and Asa meet his fate.
The more they ſtrive, the greater glory thine;
To late poſterity thy deeds ſhall ſhine.
The gods will ſkreen thee from ſuperior might,
And o'er the nations vindicate thy right;
True as the viſion I will then deſcend,
And in the worſt extremities befriend.
Riſe then to fight, of heavenly aid ſecure;
This be your aim, the gods require no more:
But firſt to council every peer convene,
Adviſe how beſt to cloſe this varied ſcene;
How moſt in war we Judah may diſtreſs,
And to our friends bring conqueſt, joy, and peace.—
As parting beams, then thro' the ſhades of night,
The pleaſing viſion vaniſh'd from my ſight:

But

But ſay, ye warriors, when the ſun ſhall riſe,
And grateful morn illuminates the ſkies,
How ſhall we act with this huge hoſt in arms?
Or ſhall a part ſuſtain yon rude alarms?
Give your opinions, for your thoughts are wiſe;
Reſolve, ye chiefs! your monarch well adviſe.

Then his high throne miſguided Zerah ſought,
And plann'd the dreadful battle yet unfought.
With frowning aſpect Lubim's leader roſe;
A ſwarthy giant, ſtern, with wrinkled brows:
He thoughtful ſtood; the wond'ring peers beheld,
And wiſh'd to know his valour in the field.
Mute was each tongue, withdrawn was ev'ry plan;
Suſpenſe awaits; when thus the king began:—
Illuſtrious champions! whom the nations fear;
Heroes, conven'd! aſſembled princes! hear.
In wand'ring mazes are your leaders loſt,
Retir'd to think for this prodigious hoſt;
Doubtful how ſoon to make the Hebrews yield,
And vanquiſh foes in caſtles long conceal'd,
Leſt ſome relief from Asa ſave the town,
And Judah's monarch there reſume his throne.
This thought implies our int'reſt in the ſame,
To bar their union, and Mareſhah's fame.

Let

Let half our hoſt proceed in deep array,
When firſt the ſun ſhall glow with riſing day;
Let part oppoſe the ſtrength of Asa's band;
The reſt in arms before Mareſhah ſtand.
So muſt the town and all its lofty tow'rs,
At will ſubmit to Ethiopian pow'rs.
Our friends effective then may force the gate,
And wrap in flames yon pinnacles of ſtate.
The riſing ſmoke when Asa's troops behold,
Will ſcare the weak, while terrors ſeize the bold,
Then let our bands the grand attack renew,
Range o'er the plains, and kill each trembling Jew.
While thoſe triumphant from the town ſhall pour,
And ſpread a tide of ſlaughter round the ſhore.
Environ'd thus, the diſtant Jews ſhall yield,
And threat'ning Asa die upon the field.
Here muſt great Zerah's numerous perils end,
And we, ſuperior, rule the conquer'd land.

Thus ſpake the king, whom Lubim's hoſt obey'd,
With Zerah join'd in dreadful pow'r diſplay'd.
Penſive they ſat; in conſultation deep
The lords remain, while plebean ſoldiers ſleep.
At length fam'd Sheba's prince the throne addreſs'd,
The ſoul of counſel, and of ſtrength poſſeſs'd.

Majeſtic roſe the hero, ſheath'd in arms,
And martial ardour all his boſom warms.
Deſcended from that queen, who, years before,
The long laborious march from Sheba bore,
To hear the king renown'd for wiſdom far,
Great Solomon, prophetic David's heir!
She heard with tranſport, and return'd in peace.
Not ſo her grandſon, foe to David's race;
A thunderbolt of war, and miniſter of fate,
He promis'd ruin to the Hebrew ſtate.

Give ear, ye princes! the ſtern chief rejoin'd,
Regard the dictates of a martial mind.
On fame intent I left my native land,
And for brave Zerah rais'd a mighty band;
Expert in all the ſtratagems of war,
Skill'd when to leave, and when to mount the car.
My troops I led from Sheba's ſultry ſhore,
And one with you a train of ſorrows bore:
Permit me then to ſpeak; though Zerah reign,
Thou firſt of mortals! hear a warrior's plan.
Go on, victorious, ſince the gods decree
The palm of conqueſt and proſperity.
It well becomes the great to bear diſtreſs,
And leave to Heav'n misfortune or ſucceſs.

Let

Let no diviſion in our hoſt be made,
In union firm be all our might diſplay'd.
We hear the Jews in numbers crowd the field,
A force puiſſant, yet untaught to yield.
Think not with part to chaſe ſuch armies hence;
Strong are their men, and dauntleſs is the prince;
Their ancient worth the kingdoms round proclaim,
Their's Solomon, a prodigy of fame!
And Jeſſe's ſon, in arms a mighty name!
If ſuch the foes with whom we now contend,
Wiſdom itſelf ſhould ev'ry thought commend.
Our bold exertions may the gods ſucceed!
Courage and deep contrivance now we need.
Let godlike Zerah lead his native bands;
And Meroë's nobles ſecond his commands;
While I and Lubim our beheſts extend,
In ſecret moving tow'rds the riſing land,
Let Ethiop's armies bear the brunt of fight,
The Shebans weſtward, Lubim on the right:
In yon deep vale my counſel ſpeeds your might.
'Tis our's, conceal'd, to act by force and fraud;
So Afric's king our meaſures muſt applaud.
Attend, great prince! yon hollow ſtreights beware;
To miſs thoſe rocks be Zerah's proper care.

Left, pent in lanes, our troops engage confin'd,
And paſs the day without the fact deſign'd.
But while our monarch all his might employs,
Suſtains the foe, or Judah's hoſt deſtroys,
Myſelf and Lubim march behind the hills,
Climb pendent cliffs, and ford the mountain rills,
To flank the Jews a two-fold ambuſh pours;
A dire diſaſter! which no ſcout explores.
Be this the ſign:—When light divides the ſkies,
And the warm ſun ſhall to the zenith riſe,
We give th' attack; from coverts we deſcend,
And freſh to war oppoſe great Asa's band:
The gods aſſiſting then will raze the town,
And Mareſh' fall, by wrath divine o'erthrown:
All Heav'n combin'd will in the fray engage,
Diſpenſing death and more than human rage.

Here ſtaid the prince; his counſel all applaud;
And Sheba's leader men pronounce a god.
Fierce Zerah claſp'd the hero to his breaſt,
And thus th' impetuous homicide addreſs'd:—
What thanks can I to worth like thine impart?
Whoſe deeds may juſtly claim a warrior's part:
Go take the helm which my great grandſire wore,
And that huge ſpear my godlike father bore.

Now

Now Sheba's prince thoſe ancient arms ſhall grace;
Defence in war, and ornaments in peace.
Go, dread of Hebrews! ſcourge of ev'ry foe!
With martial rage and boundleſs fury glow:
Great in the field, and mighty to adviſe;
Bleſs'd with ſuch peers, I dare to conqueſt riſe.
Such matchleſs prudence, that deliberate mind
Diſdain'd in Afric's realms to dwell confin'd.
With daring thoughts, be thine immortal fame!
Thy glorious deeds our heroes ſhall proclaim.
Great was thy ſire, whoſe valour Sheba tells;
His famous acts the godlike ſon excels.—
Elate with joy, the boaſt of Afric ſpoke,
And ſoon the martial conſultation broke:
Diſſolv'd from counſel all to feaſt repair,
And take refreſhment for the coming war.

Now ſmiling morn roſe from her azure bed,
And o'er the ſkies a red ſuffuſion ſpread;
Bright Phœbus riſing, chas'd the night away,
And all the bluſhing orient flam'd with day;
When from great Asa's eyes ſweet ſlumber flew;
Firſt o'er his limbs a ſlender veſt he drew:
Then his reſplendent mail the hero lac'd,
And threads of gold the plaited cuiſhes grac'd:

His glitt'ring ſandals lighten'd when he trod,
And forth he moves, majeſtic as a god:
His dreadful helmet loads the monarch's head,
And nodding horſe-hair round its cone was ſpread:
The radiant baldric o'er his ſhoulder tied,
Suſtain'd the ſword that ſparkled at his ſide:
His ſpear enormous next the monarch takes,
The lofty jav'lin like an oſier ſhakes:
When his huge orb the dauntleſs hero rais'd,
The field around with Sol's reflection blaz'd:
The chief important, ſeem'd to poize the ſun,
Or balance ſyſtems, as he ſtepp'd along.
Ethereal flames appear'd to flaſh before,
And round the camp a fiery deluge pour.
Thus the ſmooth ſtream reflects Phœbean rays,
And recent ſuns in recent mirrors blaze.
Another world employs the trav'ller's eye,
And in the ſtream he ſees a limpid ſky;
The waves appear intolerably bright,
And paſſing waters dazzle human ſight.
Thus ſhone the boſs; but round the edge were wrought
Figures diverſe, expreſſible of thought.
Here impious Pharoah Abra'm's race purſues,
And ratt'ling cars ſurround the flying Jews.

Great

Great Moſes lifts aloft his potent rod,
The ſeas divide; the mighty work of God!
And o'er the heads of Egypt's legions roll'd;
This the ingenious artiſt form'd in gold.—
The brazen ſerpent in the deſert rais'd,
High on a croſs the wreathing emblem blaz'd:
The ſick around the ſkilful genius wrought,
And prov'd with art th' wond'rous ſuccours ſought.
Reſtor'd we ſee thoſe who the ſnake behold,
And ſeem to ſkip amid the burniſh'd gold.—
Here prieſts, in order, parted Jordan croſs'd;
Behind proceeds the Iſraelitiſh hoſt.—
Next proſtrate on the ground, made ſtrong of old,
Proud Jericho's defeat the buckler told;
With ſounding trumpets Hebrew prieſts went round;
The people ſhout, and caſtles meet the ground.
Pluck'd from their tow'ring height the temples fall,
And univerſal ruin bows the wall.—
There in the midſt of Heav'n the ſun ſtood ſtill,
Nor mov'd the moon acroſs Ajalon's vale.
Good Joſhua fought and ſpread the ſlaughter round,
Mow'd legions down, and ſtain'd with blood the ground.—
Wrought in another part great Barak ſhines,
Dreadful in war againſt proud Jabin's lines:

In his high car juſt vengeance leads him on,
O'er helmed heads he ruſhes through the throng.
Like tim'rous ſheep the bands of Cana'n fly;
The ſtrong purſu'd, (for Iſrael's God was nigh.)
This with ſuperior art the Hebrew forms,
And paints the clouds a magazine of ſtorms.
Asa himſelf with joy the work ſurveys,
And emulates immortal Barak's praiſe.—
In view fair wrought, Herculean Samſon ſtands,
With matchleſs force the gates of Gaza rends,
And heaves the poſts; the ſhield records his might;
Upon his ſhoulders hung th' unwieldy weight.
The double doors, Philiſtia's brittle truſt,
Begat diſmay beyond an armed hoſt.—
Engrav'd in braſs, the artiſt would retain
Great Samſon's ſtrength, ſuperior on the plain:
Without the ſword he kills; a bone deſtroys
Paleſtia's hoſt, and his ſtrong arm ſupplies:
The forceful bow and ſerry'd ſhields were vain,
Their ranks were broken, and their champions ſlain.
Preſumptuous chiefs array'd in plaited mail,
And gaſping giants their hard fate bewail.
The brazen helmet and the quiv'ring ſpear,
The harden'd corſlet but encreaſe their fear:

Thoſe

Thoſe uſeleſs arms in flight they caſt away,
Their former trophies ſoon became his prey.—
Mark there, emboſs'd with art, correctly wrought,
Improv'd by practice, which experience taught,
The ſhrine of Dagon, borne on columns wide,
The idol temple, heathen Gaza's pride.
Behold the floor with lords and nobles fill'd;
Upon the roof th' admiring croud beheld,
While Samſon prov'd his Naz'rite manual ſleight,
His ruling ſtrength, and moſt amazing might.
Bent on their own ſad fall, him they revile;
Manoah's ſon was mock'd in ev'ry toil.
God chang'd the ſcene; the ſtrange event behold
To life pourtray'd, and work'd in poliſh'd gold;
The temple falls, and lords on lords are roll'd.
Groans ſeem to heave, in mix'd confuſion dire;
Paleſtia's rulers die by Samſon's ire:
The fractur'd beams and ſculptur'd arches fall;
One mighty deſolation ruins all.—
Lo! met for fight unequal knights appear;
Goliah's bulk, and Jeſſe's ſon were there.
This on the margin of the ſhield was wrought;
In ſplendid pomp intrepid David fought.
Prone on the ground, ſupine, to birds a prey,
An headleſs trunk, the ſavage giant lay.—

Here

Here crown'd with conqueſt great Abijah ſhone,
His foes were proſtrate as his car roll'd on:
The plains were ſteep'd with Iſraelitiſh gore;
And ſwords and helmets ſpread the valley o'er.
Here arms, there legs, and breathleſs corps were found,
A ſcene of deſolation painted round.

This grac'd his ſhield, when Asa trod the plain;
Supremely dreadful to the muſt'ring train!
His helm conſpicuous glitter'd through the war,
And ſhone terrific, like the Sirian ſtar,
When from the heavens deſcend diſeaſes dire,
And plagues inflict their all-conſuming fire.
The waving horſe-hair dances in the wind,
Or down his back diſhevell'd ſtreams behind.
When fir'd with wrath he nods his plumy creſt,
Deſpair and terrors pain each hoſtile breaſt.
Then thus the king with ardent words begun,
To great Azanel, Tipſah's only ſon:—
Go, herald, go; the brazen trumpet ſound;
Blow from on high, and make the hills reſound.
Wake all my captains; let the legions hear;
Command the chiefs their armour to prepare:

Haſte,

Haſte, call my chariot; brace my royal car;
Put on the wheels, and bear me through the war.
This day, this glorious day, the foes ſhall fall,
And vaunting Zerah die near Mareſh' wall:
With mangled limbs the ſanguine plains be ſtrew'd,
And miles around be drench'd with hoſtile blood.
Thus ſaid the king; the martial trump he blows;
The ſoldiers heard, and diſtant captains roſe.

Now pointed ſpears gleam dreadful in the ſky,
War, horrid war! ſalutes the ranging eye:
Unnumber'd lances beam acroſs the field;
The ſquadrons move, and troops diſdain to yield.
Hoarſe on their ſhields they beat the din of war,
And join the mingling tumult from afar.
Majeſtically tall, great Asa ſhines,
Divides the crowd, and forms his martial lines.
The thronging armies, full, in ranks proceed;
Earth groans beneath them as the thouſands tread.
The ſhadowy legions cover all the fields;
Nought ſtrikes the eye, but helmets, ſpears and ſhields.
Thus when rough Boreas brings the driving ſnow,
A glimmering luſtre clothes the ground below;

His

His face the peaſant turns, but no where ſees
Fine verdant meadows and green folding trees;
Snow ſwells the deep, the flakes unparted lie,
They join, they thicken, as in rifts they fly.
Thus flock the Jews, and their great king ſurround,
Commanding valour from the riſing ground.
Now white with creſted helms the plains appear,
No ſpot is void amidſt the riſing war.
Firm down the hills the legions hold their way,
A deep'ning phalanx, perfect in array.
As o'er the level ſurface of the deep,
When winds tempeſtuous ocean ceaſe to ſweep,
Smooth as a lake appears the placid main,
A calm, tranſparent, navigable plain;
The tide moves gently tow'rds the winding ſhore,
Its ſurges fall, and echo feigns to roar;
Scarce move the waves; the peaceful waters flow
In fair ſucceſſion, ſpherical and ſlow.
With graceful order thus, a gath'ring ſtorm!
The valiant Jews intent their cohorts form.
Thus down the ſteep, or up the mountain's height,
The marching hoſt moves tow'rds the doubtful fight;
Man follows man, the troops in files proceed,
No dire diſorder ſtays their careful ſpeed.

Then

Then ſaid the king to Tipſah's ſacred heir,
Go, herald, go; my royal mandates bear.
Bid ſtern Abinadab protect the town,
His bands reſtrain, and guard the works alone;
Tho' ardent for the fight his troops may glow,
And with impatience wait our common foe,
Your king forbids; let him the walls defend,
And line the tow'rs with an experienc'd band.
Myſelf before Mareſhah's gates will fight,
And Hebrew legions dare fierce Zerah's might.
Tell him, I fear, leſt while we both engage,
Our force combin'd, and with united rage
Spread fell deſtruction thro' the hoſtile throng,
And break their ranks, ſuch meaſures may be wrong.
A part ſelect may wheel towards the town,
Force the defenceleſs gates, and Mareſh' be o'er-
thrown.
With fix'd attention mark the foes deſigns;
Guard ev'ry paſs, and regulate his lines;
Traverſe their ſchemes; all hoſtile might withſtand;
'Tis beſt within to keep his generous band.

Thus Judah's monarch ſpake; the herald flies,
Proceeds with haſte, and every member plies;

Behind

Behind he leaves the hoſt in firm array,
And to the town purſues his well-known way.
The lofty ſpires and palaces of ſtate
The herald paſs'd, and turn'd towards the gate;
Sublime in air the lofty turrets riſe,
The armed fortreſs ſeem'd to reach the ſkies;
Sol's orient beams the tops of houſes gild,
And pleaſing ſhadows move upon the field.
Grand was the proſpect as the chief drew near,
Where ſtood the guards already form'd with care.
Juſt then the bold Abinadab conven'd
The prime of Mareſh' and the ſoldier band;
In conſultation deep the princes ſate,
And divers orders grac'd the full debate.
Admitted near, the herald firſt began;
A ſolemn ſilence huſh'd each warrior's plan:—
Sent by the king, his royal words I bear,
And thou Abinadab thoſe mandates hear.
Thy lord commands thee to protect the town,
Thy bands reſtrain, and guard the works alone;
Tho' ardent for the fight thy troops may glow,
And with impatience wait our common foe,
The king forbids; do you the walls defend,
And line the tow'rs with an experienc'd band;

Before

Before your gates the king himſelf will fight,
And Hebrew legions dare fierce Zerah's might.
He fears, leſt while you both in arms engage,
Your force combin'd, and with united rage
Spread fell deſtruction thro' the hoſtile throng,
And break their ranks, ſuch meaſures may be wrong,
A part ſelect may wheel towards the town,
Force the defenceleſs gates, and Mareſh' be o'er-
thrown.
With fix'd attention mark the foes deſigns,
Guard every paſs, and regulate thy lines;
Traverſe their ſchemes; all hoſtile might withſtand;
'Tis beſt within to keep thy generous band.

The herald thus amidſt th' aſſembly cry'd,
And ſoon the fierce Abinadab reply'd:
The monarch's juſt commands I will obey,
And in the town from diſtant ſlaughter ſtay;
My long-try'd legions ſhall as guards remain;
Arm'd on the walls we will the blacks ſuſtain.
Inur'd to toil, behold them take their poſt,
And dare the rage of vaunting Zerah's hoſt,
Who by this arm in many a rank were gor'd,
When numerous captains fell around their lord.

The

The king himſelf could ſcarce my lance avoid,
Well aim'd it flew; but Zerah leap'd aſide:
In ruſh'd his guards, and ſav'd their king from death,
Or then had fail'd imperious Zerah's breath.
But now, perhaps, I may thy charge delay,
Or thou too long from matchleſs ASA ſtay.
Depart in peace; may God through danger ſave,
And keep from death the ſapient and the brave!—
Conſtrain'd, with haſte return'd his bold compeer,
I could, O friend! with joy thy actions hear:
Among the foremoſt, glory is your aim,
Which gives our conduct to the voice of fame.
Whole days with thee in converſe I could ſpend,
And hope in time when this dark ſtorm ſhall end,
Then to relate what deeds have been atchiev'd
Since Afric's hoſt within our land arriv'd,
With what attention could I hear thee tell
Thy great exploits on fam'd Mareſhah's wall!
I long to hear; but ASA order'd ſpeed;
By his command my feet from hence recede.
Now I conceive the ſhadowy wings draw near,
And Judah's armies round your walls appear.
Farewel, O prince! the monarch I attend,
To bear his orders to each armed band.

Dear

Dear friend adieu; may Heav'n diſpenſe a dread,
Avert our woes, and ſtretch fierce Zerah dead!
With faith unſhaken put thy truſt in God.
I came to cheer thy mind with future good;
But now the time to manly action calls;
War, horrid war! approaches Mareſh' walls.
Thus ſaid the herald; here Azanel ceas'd,
Then left the town, and ſhook his plumy creſt.
Now to the king the legate found his way;
Met Asa's hoſt, and waits the ſanguine fray.

But while the martial bands of Judah join,
And valiant chiefs in arms refulgent ſhine,
With racking envy ſtung, and tort'ring pain,
Indignant Satan ſaw the muſt'ring train.
Four fleet-wing'd cherubs his commiſſion bear,
And ſound alarm through all the ambient air,
Like thunders heard remote; the fiends they call,
From eaſt and weſt, from north and ſouth, from all
Their ſmoking altars on the terrene ball.
The grand beheſt infernal peers attend,
And from the doleful ſhades of death aſcend:
From black Gehenna's lake deep drench'd with blood,
Where impious Moloch's fiery image ſtood;

From Arnon's ſtream, and Sibma clad with vines,
Wild Abarim and Horonaim's ſhrines;
Where Aſcalon and Gaza's bulwarks ſtand,
The fiends ariſe at Lucifer's command.
Eckron and Gath their odious gods reſign,
And proud Damaſcus bids her idols join;
Where fair Sidonian virgins haunt the grove,
And chant Adonis' and Cythereas's love;
Where gorgeous Tyrians in rich purple dreſs'd,
And flowing garments, court the genial feaſt;
From thence the gods of luxury repair,
And quit thoſe manſions for the fields of air.
They whom the bold Aſſyrian pow'rs adore
On the fair confines of Arabia's ſhore,
Through all the wide delightful region fam'd,
With incenſe worſhipp'd, and with honour nam'd.—
Swift from Chaldean Babylon they came,
And left their altars near the ambient ſtream,
Where green Euphrates laves the fruitful ſoil,
And forms the pleaſing Babylonian iſle;
There fields delicious breathe a ſweet perfume,
And ſpicy groves diſpenſe a grateful gloom;
Extenſive proſpects ſtrike the ranging eye,
While laviſh nature wafts her wonders by.

What

What theſe avail? What all the joys of earth?
A land ſpontaneous pouring bleſſings forth.
High walls with brazen gates, and lakes ſerene,
And penſile gardens form'd a matchleſs ſcene.
Here ſtrange magicians did the court controul,
And baniſh virtue from the thoughtful ſoul;
For there, by baleful herbs and mutt'ring charms
The dire ſoothſayer knew the fate of arms;
And fables ſay, they rul'd the lab'ring moon,
Or from her ſphere night's radiant empreſs flung;
Infernal fiends their ſpells prevaling heard,
And when they ſpoke, in human forms appear'd.
Thus by permiſſion ſin could then delude
The abject world, but Heav'n preſerv'd the good.

On Tigris' verdant banks, by Ninus fram'd,
A city roſe, and Nineveh 'twas nam'd;
Plac'd in a fruitful ſoil, and far rever'd,
For arms renown'd, and by the nations fear'd.
To groſs idolatry their minds were prone,
They worſhipp'd dæmons, deities unknown!—
All quit their ſhrines, and leave the ſubject land,
To action call'd by Lucifer's command,

Who choſe at Suſa, worſhipp'd, to abide,
Memnonian Suſa! Perſia's glitt'ring pride!
Waſh'd by meand'ring Eule's rapid tide;
From Median rocks deſcends the rolling ſtream,
Till in the op'ning gulf declines its name:
Thence, and from Media evil angels fly,
With them the Bactrian idols haſte on high.—
They who on Oxus' frozen banks beheld
The martial Sogdians crowd th' embattled field.
From Arian mountains and bright Indus' ſtream,
The dire abandon'd pow'rs of darkneſs came.
They whom the num'rous Indian ſtates adore,
From where the op'ning ſeas of Perſia roar,
To narrow ſtreights on Taprobane's rich ſhore.—
Beyond the Ganges and the Indian bound,
Rivers unnam'd, and ſurging gulphs profound;
Where peaceful Seres in their ſilken looms,
Ambroſial groves, and wide capacious domes,
Far from the din of hoſtile tumult reſt,
With yellow fields, and plenteous harveſts bleſs'd.

Fanatic Egypt from her inmates freed,
Saw brighter ſuns, and happier hours ſucceed.
A laviſh plenty fructifies the ſoil,
As Hell's grim hoſt forſakes the fabling Nile,

Where

Where ſhrewd magicians cull their herbs in vain,
Mix blood with blood, and hail Abaddon's train:
The crocodile, the worſt deſtroyer then
Laid waſte the fields, and ſpoil'd the ſons of men,
Where hollow rocks the daſhing wave retain,
And ſpacious caves confine the bluſt'ring main,
As on the margin of the briny deep
A ceaſeleſs watch the ſteel-clad monſters keep,
And gorg'd with prey, for recent carnage weep.
Beyond the Tropic, where in ſummer days
The ſun on mortals darts direct his rays,
From Libyan ſands and warm Cyrene's plains,
And where fell Ammon o'er the deſert reigns,
Rouz'd at th' amazing call the fiends combine,
Whoſe ſcented altars ſmoke beyond the line,
Beyond the ſource of Nile's prolific ſtream,
From Europe hid, and unexplor'd by fame.

Among the firſt who left their gilded ſhrines,
And crowded temples, fraught with dire deſigns,
The numerous gods of Aſia-Minor came,
Whoſe marble altars raiſe to Heav'n their flame.
The ſpot where Tarſus deck'd the winding coaſt,
And from Pamphylia roſe th' infernal hoſt;

Where ridgy Taurus jarring ſtates divides,
And pours a river from its craggy ſides.

Drawn from the ſedge of Lycaonia's lake
And frontier hills, their courſe th' infernals take;
Where ſmiling Zanthus fructifies the ſhore,
And ſeas compreſs'd, 'twixt Rhodes and Lycia roar;
Where ſlow Meander traverſes the plains,
And in its labyrinth imbibes the rains;
Where Mycalè's recorded mountains ſtand,
And a huge barrier form acroſs the land.

Nor leſs obſequious mount the ghaſtly fiends,
Whoſe odious empire from th' Euxine extends
To where Caicus waſhes Phrygia's ſands;
Worſhipp'd on fam'd Scamander's flow'ry bank,
And by the ſwains who rapid Simois drank.
Beyond the ſnowy top of Ida's height,
Thro' yielding air grim angels ſpeed their flight,
Where bright Æſepus rolls along the plain,
And Practius' river amplifies the main.

They who provoke the ſons of Thrace to arms,
To diſcord prone, and bred amidſt alarms,

Where

Where gelid Hemus its bare mountain roſe,
From whence the blue Œagrian Hebrus flows.
On high beheſts infernal lords forſake
Their haunted groves near cold Aſtrudis' lake.
They who on broad Theſſalia's riſing ſhore,
Heard the renown'd and hoarſe Egean roar;
Where Titareſius from Olympian rocks
Its ſource derives, and waters Tempe's flocks;
Where ſilver Peneus glides along the field,
And neighb'ring meads a rich profuſion yield.

Emathian ſtates and rough Epirus rude
Emit the dark deſigning foes of good.
Some cloud the mind, and various themes ſuggeſt,
Prone to deceive, or fan the wrathful breaſt;
While others rouze the heart-diſtracting ſtorm,
Blaſt ev'ry joy, and anxious ſorrows form.
With groundleſs fears they fright the timid ſoul,
Bid jealous thoughts in human boſoms roll;
Breathe looſe deſires, and wake the mind to ſin,
Promote deſpair, and tempeſt all within.—
On high Parnaſſus ſtood the Delphian ſhrine,
The world around profeſs'd the work divine:
Far in the deep receſs from men conceal'd,
In myſtic verſe, Abaddon's crew reveal'd

Ambiguous truths, or fram'd preſumptive lies,
Kings to delude, and nations to ſurprize.
They who in thoſe myſterious fanes reſide,
And o'er predicting fallacy preſide,
To David's ſeed a rooted hatred bore,
And dreaded moſt Messiah's Heav'nly pow'r;
When he to ranſom ſinful men ſhall riſe,
On earth commune, and bow the bending ſkies;
Then muſt their fraud and baſe deception end:
This to prevent, the ſervile fiends attend,
Leave all their ſhrines, and air's vaſt ſteep aſcend.
O'er land and ſeas the pealing clangor rolls,
And rouz'd th' infernal lords beyond the poles;
The Pandemonian ſummons then they bear
Through ev'ry region of the atmoſphere.—
Thus all the pow'rs of death and darkneſs meet,
The plan of man's ſalvation to defeat.

THE END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

Ætatis 17.

THE

FIFTH BOOK

OF

KING ASA.

THE ARGUMENT.

Zerah's army takes the field: Satan beholds their number with joy, and orders his agents to encourage and ſtrengthen the Ethiopians. ASA, *ſeeing his enemies ſo numerous, prays for divine aſſiſtance. The two armies meet. The king of Judah kills many of his enemies. At length,* ASA, *ſurrounded by multitudes of the Ethiopians, is obliged to retire. Benhail takes the command of the army during the king's abſence. Satan ſpreads a gloomy cloud of darkneſs and terror over the valley of Zephatah. The armies engage with various ſucceſs.* ASA *returns. Zerah avoids him. The Lubims and Shebans pour down from the hills, flank the Jews, and involve them in great diſtreſs.*

KING ASA.

BOOK V.

PROUD Zerah's hoſt in conſummate array,
All clad in armour hail the riſing day:
Spread far and wide, the heathen force extends
For many a mile, and trampled o'er the lands.
Rais'd like a god, tranſported Zerah ſhines,
Fir'd with revenge, and fraught with grand deſigns.
Conceal'd by Meroë's troops the Shebans wheel,
In ſecret moving round Zephatah's vale.
Not leſs impatient, Lubims trac'd their plan,
Behind the covert of th' extended van;
Thro' dreary ſhades and winding paths they go,
Mount rugged cliffs, or climb the mountains brow
By tracts obſcure, found to deceive the foe;

Till

Till ſafe arriv'd, the lofty ſummit gain'd,
They wait the ſignal and the king's command.
With latent force an ambuſh they prepare,
And ev'ry honour of the conflict ſhare;
While Zerah's legions fill'd the plains around,
Poſſeſs'd the hills, and trod the level ground.
As when in Egypt vermin plagu'd the land,
Sent from on high at God's ſupreme command,
No leaves nor vegetation then were ſeen,
Spoil'd were the fruits, anotamiz'd the green:
When clouds of locuſts hover'd in the air,
Devour'd the corn, and made the mountains bare.—
This Satan ſaw; in folded clouds involv'd,
The fiend ſuperb the grim conclave diſſolv'd;
With odious pomp the prince of Hell began,
Death to procure, and laſting woe to man:—
Behold, ye gods! eſſential race of heav'n!
And mighty lords! to us the world is giv'n.
Freedom we claim, freedom in juſtice ours;
Whom none can foil; refulgent glorious pow'rs!
To rule and govern, to our being belongs,
To ſpirits of heav'n, æthereal laſting thrones!
Deſcend to conquer, with reſentment riſe,
O'erwhelm the juſt, the darlings of the ſkies:

Then

Then all our fears depart.—Did I ſay fear?
Gods cannot die, nor mean ſubjection bear.
You ſee how Zerah's legions take the field,
A firm battalion; can ſuch warriors yield?
This day ſhall Asa feel the torturing ſword,
And plagues infernal be o'er Judah pour'd;
Wrapp'd in confuſion, Zion's praiſe ſhall fall,
And daring Ethiops mount her well-built wall.
Thus may we the deſign of Heav'n fruſtrate,
And man's ſalvation in effect defeat.
We ſhall, ye gods! avert the prophecy,
And David's words enraptur'd, falſify.
Fate be for us; with mortal men we ſtrive,
Reptiles of duſt! on earth deſign'd to live.
By various modes condenſe the troubled air,
Or change the regions of the atmoſphere.
By ſecret art crude nature we controul,
Derange the mind, or terrify the ſoul.
Ye gods aſſiſt, when tott'ring Zion bends!
The pride of Salem in one moment ends:
With ſpeed deſcend; direct fierce Zerah's dart,
And deep, deep lodge it in fell Asa's heart.
The dragon ſpake; th' apoſtate lords obey,
And o'er the field of conflict ſtretch'd their ſway.

Swoln

Swoln was each heathen breaſt with raſh diſdain,
When fiends infernal ſcan'd the fighting plain.
With horrid ſhouts, and hoarſe tumultuous cries,
The jarring nations rend the diſtant ſkies;
With wrath impatient, Zerah's van drew near,
Inflam'd with malice, and eſtrang'd from fear:
Preſumptive rage tranſports their daring king,
Elate with pride his harſh reſentments ſpring.
Rais'd on his ſtrong and deep-reſounding car,
The furious monarch thus provok'd the war:—
Princes of Afric! heroes in the field!
To victory born, by heav'nly pow'rs upheld,
Take courage now; the gods from high deſcend,
Breathe recent vigour, and their proweſs lend.
You reign with me; the Jews can never ſtand;
So fate decrees, and conqueſt needs command.
Methinks I feel ſuperior ſtrength divine
To brace my nerves, and make my conduct ſhine;
Methinks ſome wonder ſtrengthens every limb,
And bids my troops to laſting ſplendour climb.
Now let the wings to right and left diſplay,
Unfold the van, and Iſrael's hope betray.
I mean to try what Asa's troops will dare,
The might they boaſt, their rumour'd ſkill in war.—

Thus

Thus Zerah ſtorm'd; the martial peers attend;
Acroſs the ſpacious vale the wings extend.
With human art infernal pow'rs combine;
While bent on death the ſhadowy ſquadrons join.

Unmov'd, great Asa mark'd the riſing war;
Travers'd their ſchemes, and hail'd his friends from far.
" Stern in the flank, or graceful in the van,
" In terrors clad, exults the godlike man."
Each troop exhorts, the diſtant rear ſurveys:
Fires theſe, and thoſe attach'd to royal praiſe.
Now in the right the monarch gives command,
Then forms the left, and bids the legions ſtand.
Around, his eyes the thoughtful champion throws,
Explores the field, and ſees his numerous foes.
Smote with ſuſpenſe the pious hero ſtands,
To Heav'n a ſuppliant, points his folded hands.
Implores that Being who reigns above controul;
The ſelf-exiſting cauſe, and guardian of the whole!
With thee, O Lord! can numbers ought avail?
By grace upheld, though feeble, we aſſail.
With pow'r, Most High, Almighty God, deſcend,
Save thine from harm, and Judah's hoſt defend;
On thee, alone, thy people will depend!

Oh,

Oh, may thy mercy condeſcend to ſpare!
In thy pure name this multitude we dare.
Oh, let not man againſt thee, Lord, prevail!
Thou art our God; without thy help we fail.

When Asa pray'd, Omniscience heard the pray'r,
A peal of thunder ſhook the ambient air;
He felt the ſign; then mounts his brazen car,
And burſts impetuous on the ſcenes of war;
Borne on ſublime, inflam'd with high diſdain,
His ſounding chariot bears him o'er the plain.
Like light'ning, flaſh'd his broad revengeful ſword,
And round the field incumbent ſlaughter pour'd.

Lo! front to front the dreadful armies ſtand,
In fair array moves each experienced band.
Rais'd o'er the crowd the tow'ring kings appear,
The boaſt of Afric, and Abijah's heir.
Now ſtorming rage and horrid diſcord roſe,
And barb'rous ſhouts the din of fight diſcloſe;
Deep-ſounding chariots ſhake the trembling ground,
Diſturb repoſe, and roll deſtruction round;
Confuſion, death and horror change the fields,
And brandiſh'd ſwords recoil from adverſe ſhields;
No more the vales or fruitful plains delight,
There's no retreat but one promiſcuous fight.

Dire

Dire grew the tumult; far enforc'd the ſound
Of iron chariots rolling o'er the ground.
Thus when two clouds in Heav'n's unmeaſur'd way
Meet near the Baltic, or the Caſpian ſea,
With rain replete, and awful thunder fraught,
On men beneath untimely night is brought.
A ſolemn gloom! the dark expanſion rends,
While light and ſhade convulſing nature blends,
Curl'd are the waves, turn'd up the whelming deep,
The billows foam, and ſtorms the ocean ſweep;
Confus'd the air: So through Zephatah's vale
Diſtreſſing groans and painful ſhrieks prevail.
Here Zerah raves; there godlike Asa fires,
And all his troops with matchleſs wrath inſpires.
Fierce o'er the ſcene of blood each monarch ſtands,
Begirt with heroes and ſurrounding bands.
With ire tranſported, vengeful Asa glows,
And pours, like lightning, on his numerous foes.
Who firſt, who laſt, deſcriptive muſe declare,
A victim fell to thund'ring Asa's ſpear.
What mighty men, the dupes of raſh diſdain,
Could dare abide that terror of the plain?

Firſt dauntleſs Cerox, then Tathbujah died;
The Hebrew jav'lin foil'd each captain's pride;

Cerox the great, for wiſdom far renown'd;
And ſtern Tathbujah with green laurels crown'd.
Three times ten thouſand did thoſe chiefs command,
To form the van, and make a deſp'rate ſtand:
No more they live; reclin'd in crimſon gore,
A prey to death, the heroes breathe no more.—
Then on Madai the conqu'ring Hebrew fled,
And ſtruck the boaſting Hypagenon dead.—
Low in the duſt the bold Creombros lies,
Transfix'd he fell, and darkneſs clos'd his eyes,
Conſpicuous once the valiant champion ſhone,
And dar'd in arms Abijah's warlike ſon.—
Swift at his foe the king diſcharg'd his ſpear,
And ſmote the ſtern Leocridon with fear;
Back he recoil'd; the jav'lin held its way,
And the tall chief depriv'd of chearful day.
He, vers'd in pomp, at Zerah's table fed
On royal dainties, and refective bread:
Reſerv'd to grace the courtly feaſt no more,
The mighty champion rolls in duſt and gore.—
Reſolv'd as fate, impetuous Asa turns,
His heaving breaſt with wrath indignant burns,
The ranks laid bare, he broke the front array,
And through the vanguard cut his fatal way.

With

With firm deſigns, inſatiate, forc'd on blood,
The plains with men the dreadful monarch ſtrew'd:
So, midſt the flock, the lion uncontroul'd,
Spreads wide deſtruction through the fenceleſs fold.
Diſmay'd, confus'd, the ſheep and ſhepherds fly,
Fall unreveng'd, and unavailing die.
A ſanguine torrent foams along the rills,
And blood and ſlaughter ev'ry corner fills.
Thus, devaſtation Asa pours around;
His ſpear enormous gluts the thirſty ground.
Beneath his ſword the flow'r of Afric die;
A pile of death obſtructs the monarch's eye.—
Fir'd with revenge Tontiffridas drew near,
And at the king diſcharg'd his maſſy ſpear;
Harmleſs and vague the pond'rous weapon flew,
The Hebrew orb ſuſtain'd the hoſtile blow.
Blunt from the boſs the jav'lin did rebound,
Its point revers'd, and tore the ſanguine ground;
Then favour'd Asa's well-aim'd vengeance fled,
And through the Ethiopian's buckler ſped;
Nor plates nor folds its rapid courſe could ſtay,
The ſteel reſiſtleſs held its deſtin'd way;
The deep-ſtruck dart the heathen's midrif tore,
His ribs transpierc'd, and drank the vital gore:

With ſecret anguiſh Ethiop's lords beheld
Their gloomy champion breathleſs on the field.

Proud Satan mark'd where bath'd and ſtain'd with blood
Imperial Asa ſheath'd in armour ſtood.
Malignant then, the furious dæmon flew,
Where raging Zerah Iſrael's captains ſlew.
In Miſraim's ſhape the fiend the king addreſs'd,
And breath'd freſh ardour in his dauntleſs breaſt:—
What profits here thy wide-deſtroying ſword?
While there by foes thy frontier ranks are gor'd:
Lo! like a torrent, Asa drives along,
Fear bows the weak, and terror ſhrouds the ſtrong.
Haſte, fire thy troops, renown'd Tathbujah dies;
Involv'd in duſt the ſtern Creombros lies.
See where Leocridon and Cerox fell;
Wide burſting rage and horror thought repel.
Riſe then, O Zerah! in thy perſon fight;
Be ſure the gods will vindicate their right.
Thy laſting glory claims my conſtant care;
Lo! Asa vaunts, no friendly Hebrew near.
Torn from his guards amidſt an hoſtile throng,
Falls by thine arm Abijah's hateful ſon.

Haſte

Haſte, meet thy foe, e're ſome bold chief advance,
And ſnatch that honour from thy fated lance.—
Thus Satan ſpoke in Miſraim's form and voice,
And rous'd revenge, which Zerah courts by choice.
Chariots and charioteers await their lord,
And legions move at his deſpotic word.
Thouſands of heroes throng around their king,
Fierce to his aid a train of warriors ſpring:
This pleas'd the prince, when thus inflam'd with pride,
With joy tranſported, Afric's monarch cried:—
Your utmoſt force undaunted chiefs I claim,
At once to blaſt and end the Hebrew name.
Sent by the gods, Miſraim now began,
Inform'd my ſoul, and dignify'd my plan.
Heaven bade me riſe, and Asa rout of courſe,
And ſave our bands, o'erwhelm'd by Hebrew force.
There—there he raves: environ'd by his foes,
The daring prince with boundleſs fury glows.
Fate breathes ſucceſs, and bids your king not fear,
For gods propitious will direct my ſpear.
I long to ſtrike the king of Judah dead,
And free the world from that o'erwhelming dread.

'Tis Heaven commands,—my mind ſome god inſpires,
And all this hoſt the promis'd boon requires.
Come on ye chiefs, for Judah ſeems our own,
And we ourſelf aſcend the Hebrew throne;
This day we conquer; this ſhall be the laſt;
We now determine; all retreat is paſt.
The gods vouchſafe to grant but this day o'er,
And we ſhall rule the land from ſhore to ſhore.—
Th' impatient king his ſwarming bands addreſs'd,
And rais'd freſh hope in every warlike breaſt.
The monarch bids; his ſounding chariot flies
Where ſlaughter'd heaps around great Asa riſe:
From far the Hebrew marks the gathering ſtorm,
His diſtant foes a convocation form;
At bay, Judea's righteous Monarch ſtands,
By hoſts environ'd, and by hoſtile bands;
Confiding moſt in Heaven's eternal fire,
The pious champion braves infernal ire;
With holy faith the king ſurveys the ſkies,
And, in the pure receſs of his own heart, he cries,
Almighty God! thou guardian of the juſt,
In thee alone do I repoſe my truſt;
Effulgence bright! eſſential God of pow'r!
Preſerve thy people in this needful hour.

'Twas

'Twas thou, O Lord! ſupported Jeſſe's ſon;
Thro' perils ſav'd, and gave him Iſrael's throne;
Let not I pray, th' uncircumcis'd prevail,
By wond'rous deeds thy ſacred name reveal.

A gloomy train! the banded foes advance,
And ſtern in front, fierce Zerah ſhook his lance.
Meantime proud Satan propagates deſpair,
And prov'd the righteous with diſtreſſing fear.
Perplexing thoughts the crafty dæmon choſe;
By every means he magnified their woes;
Inwardly preſs'd by dark ſatanic wiles,
Temptations ſtrange, and unremitted toils,
In various conflict now the king contends,
With Satan here, and there with adverſe bands.
In vain with art their pond'rous jav'lins fly,
And barbed arrows cloud the azure ſky;
The gleaming ſteel the Hebrew orb ſuſtains,
Or ſhot beſide, falls uſeleſs on the plains:
In vain they combat, crouding champions burn,
Great Asa's proweſs raſhly to o'erturn.
In one grand line, the heroes join from far,
While Judah's monarch boldly braves the war;
Long time the king maintain'd his dang'rous poſt,
Wounds Ethiop's peers, and foils a mailed hoſt;

At length fatigu'd, engag'd with recent foes,
His ſhield deep bor'd, his armour try'd with blows:
The prince with ſcorn indignant, ſlow retires
To give command, as Heaven his ſoul inſpires;
Ev'n in retreat he dignify'd the deed,
And ſlew his foes with caution and with ſpeed.
Thus on the margin of the Belgian Rhine,
When men and dogs purſue the brawny ſwine,
Oft his rough temper ſpurns continued flight,
And boils with rage to dare th' unequal fight:
If chance ſome hound more hardy than the reſt,
A yelping cur, aſſault the rampant beaſt,
With fatal wrath back turns the griſly boar,
And his huge tuſks the bold adventurer gore:
So thund'ring Asa meaſures back the land,
From fight recedes, and joins his native band;
Perplex'd with toil and preſs'd with brazen arms,
The King awhile forſakes the dire alarms;
Sav'd by his guards, and welcom'd by his friends,
From off the files of war the hero ſtands.---
Meanwhile proud Satan with malicious ire
Fills Zerah's breaſt with every harſh deſire,
Vents all his ſpite on Judah's trembling hoſt,
And fires his vaſſals like himſelf to boaſt.

The

The Ethiopian king attention here demands;
His peers around, he wrings his reeking hands;
Infernal influence bade him hail the crowd,
And on the minds of Hebrews brought a cloud;
Obedient ran the blacks, an hideous throng!
Condens'd in form, to laſting malice prone,
Fierce on the Jews the grim battalions pour,
And Judah's tribe ſuſtains th' invading pow'r:
Juſt ſo the waves, when bluſt'ring Auſter roars,
In ſurging columns waſh Trinacrian ſhores;
Waves above waves in wat'ry mountains riſe,
And foaming billows laſh the clouded ſkies;
The wind impels; the deeps confus'd obey;
Loud from the beach rebounds the boiſt'rous ſea.
The ſhores ſuperior, each attack ſuſtain,
And the fix'd iſland breaks the roaring main.
Stern Ethiops ſhout, impetuous Zerah ſtorms,
Proud Satan fires, and Hell deſtruction forms.—
Prince of the Hebrew van, great Benhail blaz'd,
Vicegerent captain, o'er the legions rais'd.
Guide of the cohorts, which the weſt ſupply'd;
On his ſuperior ſkill the Jews rely'd;
Arch'd o'er his brows reſplendent glories riſe,
And glowing greatneſs ſparkled in his eyes.

Dreadful

Dreadful in arms, conſpicuous on his car,
The matchleſs prince explor'd the deeds of war.—
The foremoſt line imperious Zerah dares,
Urg'd on his guards, and fought among his peers;
A furious paſs the Gentile hero made,
Leap'd from his ſeat, and brandiſh'd his wide blade;
In Mamluch's breaſt his murd'ring faulchion thruſt,
And laid the Hebrew captain in the duſt.
Two thouſand men from towns remote he led,
His band diſpers'd and wander'd round the mead.
In ruſh'd the blacks; they fill'd the vacant ſpace,
Maintain'd the breach, and taunt the Jews diſgrace.
Then to their aid reſiſtleſs Benhail fled,
Supreme in arms, and Meroe's worthies bled.
The fight extends; both armies glow with rage;
In doubtful conflict various corps engage.
From adverſe ranks projected lances ſped,
Each arrow wing'd increas'd the num'rous dead.
Triumphant prince, vindictive Benhail roſe,
With might endu'd, the heathens to oppoſe,
Far beaming light his brazen buckler ſhone,
And ſolemn terrors crown'd his tott'ring cone:
In arduous toil engag'd, diſpenſing fear,
The dreadful champion rais'd his fatal ſpear;

Clad

Clad in refulgent arms the warrior ſtood,
The breach reſtor'd, and ſhed a tide of blood.
He mark'd where huge Calmunnah rul'd the war,
And o'er the plains impell'd his rapid car;
Deſtructive, fierce, his lance diſtain'd with gore,
With hoſtile might confounds the Hebrew pow'r.
A giant vaſt! with matchleſs bulk endow'd;
O'er recent carnage proud Calmunnah rode.
Him from afar, undaunted Benhail ſaw,
Mark'd where he rag'd, terrific, without law,
None but himſelf his pond'rous lance could wield,
And bear aloft his deep ſix-folded ſhield.
Not Zerah's might this rampant lord could throw,
Uſe his broad ſword, and bend his tough yew bow.
Such was Calmunnah, ſuch his boundleſs ire;
Himſelf could make full fifty men retire.

With indignation fir'd, great Benhail came,
By glorious deeds to gain immortal fame;
Exclaiming loud, his genuine worth appears,
Demands reſpect, and rallies Judah's peers:—
Oh, laſting ſhame! ſay, ſoldiers in diſgrace,
Shall God's elect fear Ethiop's vaunting race?
Be ſtrong, ye chiefs! be bold.—The hero ſaid,
And Judah's legions from diſperſing ſtaid.

Calmunnah

Calmunnah heard, and, fill'd with high diſdain,
Leap'd from his car, and ſhook the yielding plain;
Swoll'n with ambition, danger was his pride,
While ſtorms of anger raiſe their partial tide.---
Whoe'er thou art, by whom commiſſion'd here;
Know Zerah rules, and Iſrael's leaders fear;
Before my lance have hoſtile captains fell,
And kings and heroes crowd the ſhades of Hell.
Be prince or chief, the ground ſhall drink thy gore,
And birds diſperſe thy bones about the ſhore.

Calmunnah thus: the ſtern Benhail replies,
Exert thy beſt; let all thy fury riſe.
Go, ſon of arms, fright thoſe whom giants ſcare,
Thee will I mark, and hang thy trophies there;
By Heaven upheld, I ſcorn thy hapleſs might,
And while we parle, addreſs myſelf to fight.
Great kings may boaſt, and thou may'ſt hope our fall;
But thus ſubdu'd, we will not yield to thrall.---
He ſpoke no more: the giant, fill'd with rage,
Frown'd with contempt, and haſten'd to engage.
They both advance, conſtrain'd by recent ire:
Bent on revenge, impelled by fierce deſire,

Benhail

Benhail alights, and gives his ſquire the reins,
Rings his try'd arms, and ſhook the neighb'ring plains.
Troops fled amaz'd; the ſhiv'ring blacks retreat,
And think thoſe bleſs'd, who ſhun th' impending fate.
Wedg'd up in front, reſolv'd, Calmunnah ſtood,
Diſtain'd with gore, like garments dipp'd in blood;
Scorn ſtrains his voice, and anger goads his mind,
While his ſell ſoul the doom of realms deſign'd.
Hither the eyes of diſtant worthies turn,
The tow'ring chiefs with ruthleſs fury burn.
Firſt, huge Calmunnah's thund'ring jav'lin fled,
Benhail reclin'd, it miſs'd the warrior's head;
Impetuous, fleet, the weapon held its way,
And ſnatch'd the bold Meremoth's ſoul from day.
Prone ſunk the ſquire, and dropp'd the Hebrew reins,
Preſs'd native earth, and dy'd the crimſon plains.
Fix'd in his breaſt remain'd the quiv'ring ſpear,
And ſmote the Hieroſolym chiefs with fear.
With vengeful eyes the ſubject prince beheld
His charioteer, now breathleſs on the field;
Rage, with full ſwing, his fatal jav'lin threw,
The dart whizz'd on, and o'er Calmunnah flew,

Great

Great Benhail's jav'lin roſe ſublime in air,
At length on Zamblah lights th' impetuous ſpear.
Swift on his head the Hebrew preſent fell,
And ſplit in twain the Ethiopian's ſkull.
Long dwelt this prince in Meroe's regal town,
Belov'd at court, and for his valour known:
To him the king, when all the legions join'd,
The charge of ſixty thouſand men conſign'd.
With ſtreaming eyes his friends beheld him dead,
And on the ground diſpers'd his ſhatter'd head.
Then great Benhail his ſhining faulchion drew,
And all collected on Calmunnah flew;
That prince enrag'd, before him held his ſhield,
While his broad ſword ſpread terror round the field.
Well form'd by uſe, he meditates a blow,
And hopes the conqueſt of his Hebrew foe;
In cruel fight the panting heroes ſtrive,
Their ſwords rebound, the combatants ſurvive.
Thus when two bulls, fir'd with deſpotic rage,
In earneſt fight, with doubtful ſtrength engage;
They drive, they ſweat, they tear the verdant ground,
Force head to head, and aim one fatal wound;
A while on each propitious fortune ſmiles,
And the bulls roar with unremitted toils.

This

This aims a blow, obſervant that defends,
Their horns confin'd, the dire concuſſion ends.
The gazing herd await the rueful fight;
And long ſuſpends the ſcale of undetermin'd might.
So great Benhail, and Afric's daring peer,
In arms contend, and prove their ſkill in war;
As conqueſt varies, each their death preſage;
An equal match, they glow with equal rage.
The coat of mail ſuperb Calmunnah wore,
Securely cloth'd his reſtiff body o'er;
Up-born ſublime, his buckler flam'd before.
The folds to pierce, in vain great Benhail tries;
At length a gap the ſkilful chief deſcries.
Between the wreaths, where his ſtrong armour join'd,
His neck ſecured, or bound the plates behind,
There aim'd the Jew; his might impell'd the blade,
Eſcap'd the ſhield, and a wide paſſage made
Betwixt the braſs: the gather'd folds gave way;
Great Benhail ſtrives, and clos'd the deſp'rate fray,
Deep in Calmunnah's throat he plung'd his ſword,
And one vaſt entrance thro' his wind-pipe bor'd.
Prone falls the chief; the groves return the ſound,
As his huge carcaſe preſs'd the ſanguine ground;

The

The ſoil beneath confeſs'd th' incumbent weight,
And hills and vales his painful throes repeat.
Stupenduous! thus inclines the mountain oak,
Its ſolid texture rends, and groans at every ſtroke;
O'erwhelmed ſinks the tough unſhrowded tree,
And low on earth reſigns its dignity.
With ſecret joy men contemplate its ſize,
And few preſume to ſcan the weighty prize;
With ſuch amaze the Hebrew bands beheld
The reſtiff Ethiopian load the field;
Sad horror ſeiz'd on every warlike mind,
When huge Calmunnah's breath diſſolv'd in wind;
Inanimate, the boaſted champion lies,
And ſleep eternal clos'd the monſter's eyes.
Swift on his breaſt victorious Benhail leaps,
And of his arms the Gentile hero ſtrips;
Claim'd his broad ſhield, and roll'd his pond'rous ſpear,
The head he ſever'd, and ſuſpends in air,
His brazen car and fire-producing ſteeds,
The ſpoils remain of Benhail's matchleſs deeds.
Hoſts dread the glance of that tremenduous eye,
And heaps on heaps in dire confuſion fly;
O'er troops half dead the Hebrew chariot rolls,
And rampant courſers daſh out heroes' ſouls.

But

But now ſatanic pow'rs their force impart,
To daunt the mind and torpify the heart;
Infernal influence Afric's hoſt upheld,
And ſpread a diſmal gloom around the field;
Elſe Benhail's might had made the ſtrong to fall,
And ſlain the bold before Mareſhah's wall.—
When great Messiah opes the gates of Heav'n,
Headlong, rebuk'd, proud Satan ſhall be driv'n;
Hell then muſt fear, and all its pride ſhall bow,
What God will reign the ſubject world ſhall know.
Beelzebub, and every fiend, muſt fall,
And evil angels quit the terrene ball;
Preſerv'd from rage, and all malignant ire,
The righteous ſoul to goodneſs ſhall retire.
Tho' for a time the Hebrew king denies
His will to ſway, till Heav'n ſhall bid him riſe,
When ſent of God, that inſtant Zerah dies.—
And now Benhail a ſolemn pauſe receives,
As lour the clouds, his prudent ſpirit grieves.
Oh! what is man? the martial champion cries,
A child of duſt! behold what ſcenes ariſe!
Bright for a while our fading glories ſhine,
And men confeſs the hand of God divine.
Stay, ſays his word; the dreadful fight forego,
And but endeavour to repel the foe.

'Tis when the Almighty wills, his ſervants riſe,
Then ſanguine heaps ſalute the warrior's eyes;
Alone as man, juſt vengeance I defer,
For human prudence may extremes prefer.
I am content a while from rage to ſtay,
God rules the world with unremitted ſway.
King, ſage, or prieſt, true wiſdom is the rule,
Superior greatneſs ſoars above controul;
Beyond us mortals, Heav'n ordains the way,
And, call'd of God, his people muſt obey.—
Thus, 'midſt his wrath, conſiderate Benhail ſaw
A time for worſhip, and a mean for law.
Not Satan's ſchemes can make the prince deſpair;
His faith ſupports above the gulph of fear;
Prudence and valour ſhine in him confeſs'd,
And thoughts intrepid warm his grateful breaſt:
No ſcenes of blood, nor ſable ſhades of night,
Could change his ſoul from due regard to right;
'Tis only Heav'n can make his hand decline;
What form'd his practice, men admit divine.
At length reſolv'd, rais'd by celeſtial light,
He led the van, and kenn'd th' impending fight!
Firm in his place, with fortitude of ſoul,
A central peer, his mind reſents controul.

No

Nor ghaſtly ſhapes, nor forms gigantic ſcare
That prince of arms, eſtranged to every fear.—
Like a pent torrent Ethiop's legions throng
In columns deep, and man drove man along.
There, chiefly there, where conquering Benhail rag'd,
And Afric's bands with human ſtrength engag'd,
Foul dæmons rav'd; the Lubims move in light,
And in broad day ſome part of Judah fight;
Check'd by the ſhade, th' intrepid chief no more
Could waſte their ranks, and on the Meroans pour.
This Zerah ſaw, and plac'd his bowmen there,
And brought his archers from the diſtant rear.
Stretch'd out in length, all orders form'd the line,
And troops on troops beyond the tempeſt join.—
In deep'ning ſquares, and made by God more ſtrong,
The martial Jews abide the barb'rous throng;
With ſpears protended, and with ſerry'd ſhields,
The weſtern legions tread thoſe dang'rous fields.
Now the firſt rank of Judah's daring foes
Their ſinews ſtrain, and bend their tough yew bows.
Seven thouſand darts at once obſcur'd the ſky,
Which, ſtopp'd by Hebrews, full twelve hundred die.

This Benhail ſaw, and calling aid from far,
The ſlain replac'd, he rectify'd the war.
Scarce fill'd the breach; when the next tire began,
Sprung from behind, and blaz'd amid the van;
Then roſe in air a myriad arrows more,
And dy'd the ſand upon that plaintive ſhore.
Now dropp'd the ſhield, their bucklers beam'd in vain,
Or uſeleſs roll'd, disfigur'd o'er the plain.
Then great Benhail ſix bands of archers choſe
To ſtem the torrent of invading foes,
And heal the breach that Ethiop's ſkill imparts;
Drawn to the barb, he bids diſmiſs their darts.
The prince commands; his ardent troops obey,
To ſave the baffled line, explore the way;
Amidſt the gloom their ſharpen'd arrows fled,
And ſtretch'd the foremoſt Ethiopians dead:
Diſmay'd and maim'd, the ranks behind retire;
For Afric's legions felt reſiſtleſs ire.
When flew their death, the heathens ſcarce beheld,
Till whole arrangements load the ſanguine field.
Diſgrace remov'd, the Jews no longer fear,
They range in form, and face the diſmal war;
Like Heav'n's Aurora in the northern ſkies,
Offenſive meteors jarring hoſts ſurpriſe.

But

But righteous ſouls amaz'd, depend on God,
Still own him ſov'reign, and his grace applaud;
Good Benhail's faith prefigur'd what ſhould come;
He knew the Lord above th' impervious gloom:
Yet Ethiops fought beyond the gath'ring ſtorm,
And in a wedge with martial ardour form.
The ſcene increas'd, impending horrors riſe,
And wrath infernal ſeem'd to rend the ſkies.
Deep-folded clouds eclips'd the ſolar ray,
And round the zenith glades ſulphureous play;
A torpid languor bound the ſtagnate air,
And tranſient gleams divide the hemiſphere.
Some Jews retire, o'erpower'd by numerous foes,
And ſtrange diſmay in certain ſquadrons roſe.
Intrepid Benhail, ſingly bleſs'd with hope,
On all occaſions animates his troop;
By dæmons ſkreen'd, his daring courage vain,
The furious blacks on every ſide ſuſtain.
Incumbent ſhade obſcur'd the hero's way,
When thus the chief laments the waning day:—
O Lord, ſhall death and pow'rs demoniac reign?
Shall heathen kings their odious cauſe maintain?
I crave thine aid; or if thy word ordains
The Jews to fall, and dye their native plains,

Yet hear, oh hear, thou moſt tremenduous
God!
Who in the Heavens haſt fix'd thy bleſs'd abode;
If nor our pray'rs nor ſupplications move
Thy permanence divine, eternal God of love!
Yet give, oh give the bleſs'd return of light,
Nor ſink our hope in this unuſual night;
If death demands, and thou ſuch toils decree,
Let our afflictions bear the face of day;
We aſk no more.---The faithful champion cried,
Heav'n cheer'd his mind, and thunder'd on his
ſide.
Th' eternal ſign his ſtedfaſt ſoul receiv'd,
Confeſs'd the pow'r, nor more in private griev'd.
Reſolv'd as free, intrepid Benhail ſtands,
'Mid hideous foes and fierce barbarian bands;
Each deſp'rate ſtorm the Hebrew captain dares,
And the dark ſhout of Afric's legions hears;
At him their darts and feather'd weapons fly,
While evil agents all their malice ply.
But fix'd, ſedate, unterrify'd with fear,
Religious Benhail roſe above deſpair.
The blacks advance; their preſſing cohorts throng,
Exact in files, and made by numbers ſtrong.

Where

Where Benhail fights, a mortal conflict grows,
Spears claſh on ſpears, and bows incline to bows;
Thick flew their jav'lins round the warrior's head,
While fleet-wing'd darts o'ercaſt th' enſanguin'd mead.
In vain they fly; the pious hero ſtands,
And breaks th' aſſault, or ſhields his native bands.
Thus in the deep, ſome huge unſhaken rock
Repels the wind, and ocean's whelming ſhock;
Sublime the waves and ſurging billows riſe,
And ſtorms deſcend, collected from the ſkies.
Not all the ſea when bluſt'ring Auſter roars,
And opes a recent magazine of ſtores,
Can move the cliff; the forceful tide is broke,
The water foams, the mountain bears the ſtroke.
So godlike Benhail ſtands the brunt of all;
Beneath his feet the darts innoxious fall.---
Nor could the Jews the furious blacks ſuſtain,
Where tow'ring Zerah ſcours the ſanguine plain,
In terrors cloth'd, and fraught with fell deſigns,
The king of Afric burſt the Hebrew lines,
Alarm'd the rear, and laid their legions low,
Drove thro' their ranks, and ſeem'd the prince of woe.

Some by the ſlinger's art impreſs the ſand,
Or die unaided in their native land;
Part by the ſpear, or brandiſh'd faulchion fall,
And one vaſt tide of ruin threatens all;
Confuſion reigns, diſorder ſtrews the fields,
Here ſwords are left, and there forſaken ſhields,
Where once confeſs'd the martial art was found,
And ranks of a[illegible]t ſoldiers trod the ground,
In perfect order mo[illegible] form'd entire,
With courage ſtedfaſt, and undaunted fire,
Extreme diſmay and ſtrange diſtraction reigns,
A ghaſtly ſcene inveſts the reeking plains;
As when impatient ſwains reſume their toil,
And claim ſome ancient wood, reward, or ſpoil,
With ſpeed they lay the ample foreſt low,
And lofty tops of tow'ring cedars bow.
Where pleaſure once and rural beauties ſhone,
Delightful ſhades! a green receſs at noon!
The axe deſtroys, deform'd the trees appear,
And ſongs of birds no more enchant the ear,
Laborious peaſants laſting work ſuſtain,
Cleave ſtubborn oaks, and make the woods a plain.
So fiery Zerah led deſtruction on,
Here ſwept the bold, there proſtrate laid the ſtrong;

The

The cries of wounded men aſcend in air,
And ſcenes of horror maſk the face of war.
The Jews diſtreſs'd, their broken cohorts fly
The various forms of deſolation nigh,
Remorſeleſs hate and dark infernal ire
String Zerah's nerves, and make his heart aſpire.
Swoll'n with diſdain, he holds his deſtin'd courſe,
And dire revengeful malice guides his force.
In pomp ſublime, his brazen chariot bears
The furious chief o'er helms and glitt'ring ſpears.
Clouds, diſmal clouds, each Hebrew mind obſcure,
Their ſenſes wander, faith gives place to fear,
And many a warrior's breaſt imbibes deſpair.
Imperious Zerah pours the ſlaughter round,
And loads with mangled corps th' enſanguin'd ground,
With pow'r reſiſtleſs, as when whirlwinds blow
From ſome ſteep rock, or craggy mountain's brow,
In wanton ſport, and circling eddies toſt,
Inferior themes in riſing winds are loſt.

While thus tranſported Zerah proves his might,
Gloomy as death, and black as devious night,
The herald's heart addreſs'd Abijah's ſon,
With anxious thoughts Azanel thus begun:—

Why

Why, monarch, here doth Iſrael's glory ſtay,
To glean the ſpoils of unreſiſted ſway?
Since fate forbids, what conqueſt can we gain?
Can Judah's princes force this endleſs train?
This mighty taſk to wonders muſt belong;
For know we combat with the brave and ſtrong.
Roll round thine eyes, ſurvey th' embattled plains,
What univerſal dread! what horror reigns!
See where, oppreſs'd, yon trembling Hebrews die,
There, unreſiſted, Zerah's guards deſtroy.---
Great is their boaſt, their furious monarch taunts,
Blaſphemes the Lord, and utters painful vaunts.
If God be with thee, riſe without delay,
But ſpeak the word, thy ardent troops obey,
Where Zerah raves confin'd, we block his way.
Scarce thro' the dark, diſtracted, duſky air,
I ken the rage of this terrific war.
Behold our bands, behold their adverſe flight,
To death compell'd, no more they view the light,
Their faith deſcends to one eternal night.
What ſhall I ſay? what will my prince adviſe?
The Lord alone can ſilence my ſurpriſe.---
Azanel paus'd; the righteous king return'd,
While all his ſoul to mix in combat burn'd:

With

With ſecret joy I fan each warm deſire,
Thy glorious deeds my preſent wants require.
Suſpend thoſe fears; in me there's no delay;
I claim the fight, and long to force my way
Thro' yon grim ſquadrons, wedg'd in firm array.
Towards Benhail direct my rampant ſteeds,
I feel the war, and danger proves our deeds.
'Tis not in words or ſpeeches we contend,
But arms and God muſt ſave this ſuff'ring land.
Be ſtrong; ye peers, unterrify'd behold,
Impending woe commands us to be bold.---
What means yon gloom? Why ſpreads yon duſky ſhade?
Have death and night their horrid ſkreen diſplay'd?
Is Hell broke looſe? hath Satan torn the ſky?
God is our refuge, and his pow'r is nigh.
If Satan rage, if Beelzebub defies,
The Lord Most High can ſave me from ſurprize.
To prove our faith, Jehovah gives them pow'r;
By his permiſſion threat'ning tempeſts lour.
Lean on his word; can ſacred virtue fail?
By him ſuſtain'd, my feebler troops prevail.
In mercy, God this darkneſs may diſpel,
And air's black tyrant be reduc'd to Hell.

My

My faith is ſtrong, my judgment ſcorns to fear,
But ceaſe, the glorious conflict is my care.

The king no more; his rattling chariot flies,
Each generous ſteed with winged ſwiftneſs vies;
Behind proceeds a long refulgent train,
In armour bright, the mirror of the plain.
Their poliſhed ſteel thro' all the valley ſhone,
And tribes of heroes guard Abijah's ſon:
So when black clouds and night obſcure the day,
Till winds ariſe, and chaſe the clouds away,
Light ſeems abſorb'd; then Cynthia's glories riſe,
And ſtars unnumber'd grace the azure ſkies.
What ſcene ſo brilliant! beauty cheers the ſight,
Where Luna ſhines conſpicuous thro' the night:
Fair in her train refulgent planets roll,
And dart their radiant luſtre round the pole.
The various moons of Jove attend his orb,
And in his ſervice a pure light afford,
While ſome ſpectator thro' his tube ſurveys
The riſing greatneſs of their argent rays
With ſecret pleaſure and profound amaze.
So ſhone from far the grand tranſcendent train,
And arms and chariots brighten'd all the plain;

Thus

Thus fill'd with joy the yeilding Jews beheld
Their glittering jav'lins gleam acroſs the field;
No more they fly, their ardent ſpirits dare,
The various ſufferings and diſtreſs of war;
Each ſoldier graſps his ſpear, or lifts the ſhield,
Reſolv'd to conquer; no mans wills to yeild;
Imperial Asa claims a warrior's place,
In terrors clad and formidable grace;
Superior glory crown'd his regal head,
And ſteadfaſt courage all his conduct ſway'd;
With inſtant help he vindicates his bands,
Abuſe reforms, and iſſues wiſe commands.---
Then, ſeen at diſtance, thro' the duſky air
He Zerah kens, diſpenſing abject fear;
Thither with ſpeed the Hebrew monarch tends,
O'er growing heaps his dreadful car aſcends;
From far incens'd, and fill'd with high diſdain,
He ſaw his bands in flight, unable to ſuſtain
A multitude of foes; the king exclaim'd,
While all his ſoul with in-born ardour flam'd,
Where will ye fly? Is Judah's glory loſt?
Your ſtrength too weak to ſave your native coaſt;
No more doth honour claim the doubtful fight,
Retrieve diſgrace, and turn your feet from flight.

Return,

Return, I ſay; ſucceſs attends the brave;
From cruel death your wives and children ſave.
If nor your prince nor kindred this obtains,
But ſtill unmov'd your diſregard remains,
Die unreveng'd—unpity'd be your fall,
In foreign bonds for ever mourn your thrall.---
Thus loud and ſtern, the god-like hero cried,
Rous'd by his voice, whole legions crowd his ſide.
This troubled Zerah; rack'd with ſpite he ſtands,
Demanding aid from all his num'rous bands.
Th' obedient peers increaſe his golden train,
While troops on troops impair the duſty plain.
With mutual rage the rival kings contend,
Nor this can gain, nor that can long defend.
Now horſe to horſe and man to man they fight,
And thouſands bleed, a ſad heart-rending ſight!
Shields clung to ſhields, with helmet helmet clos'd,
Darts meet on darts, and lance to lance oppos'd.
Dire was the conflict; for on either ſide
The valiant fell, and many an hero died.
As o'er their prey rapacious wolves engage,
Man murders man, and wounds and ſlaughter rage.
Diſtreſs'd with ſhadows, Asa roll'd his eyes,
Not far remote, the Gentile king he ſpies;

His

His bulk ſurvey'd, contemn'd his martial ire,
And ſaw incens'd his Hebrew bands retire.
Before th' advancing line the monarch came
With ample ſtrides, his viſage all on flame.
His lance in haſte impetuous Asa threw,
The lance awry with erring fury flew.
A ſtrong illuſion held the warrior's mind,
An unſubſtantial form, and fleet as wind.
That inſtant Zerah mounted his high car,
And left behind the long ſuſpended war.---
This from the clouds indignant Satan ſaw,
And ſtretch'd the gloom to his extended law.
Such deep'ning ſhades, by various changes giv'n,
Were interſpers'd to foil th' elect of Heav'n;
But other woes, far worſe repulſe impends,
Nor ſoon diſlodg'd are Ethiopian bands.
O'er all the field diſtreſs and death prevail,
And diſmal ſcenes include Zephatah's vale;
To Afric partial, recent troubles riſe,
A ſharp probation! Judah felt ſurpriſe;
O'er all the hoſt a ſhadowy concave rolls,
Their ſtrength to baffle, and o'erwhelm their ſouls.
Now reach'd the ſun his full meridian height,
Involv'd in clouds, and wrapp'd in weeds of night;
When from the mountain tops the Lubims pour,
And ſpread a purple tide around the ſhore.

Fierce

Fierce from the woods the crafty blacks deſcend,
And ſling a rattling tempeſt o'er the land.
So falls Nigara down incumbent hills,
A ſheet of froth the neighb'ring valley fills;
From diſtant lakes the foaming waters roar,
Divide the rocks, and plow the nether ſhore.
Like aqueous ſteams by Parian ſtone repell'd,
The Lubims muſter'd on th' adjacent field.
With rapid ſpeed the Sheban corps attend,
A grim, reſiſtleſs, tall, experienc'd band.
Extended o'er the plains the Lubims fight,
And Sheba ſhouts, diſpenſing endleſs night;
They charge impetuous on the Hebrew rear,
And flank the wings with unſuſpected war.
Compact and firm, the brazen centre ſhook,
Thro' well ſupported files the heathens broke,
Nor could the Jews withſtand the gathering rage,
And with the blended forms of death engage.
Gor'd were their ranks, their valiant champions ſlain,
And blood and horror amplify'd their pain;
A ſcourge for ſin, to cleanſe the nation's ſtain;
Yet undiſplay'd, relenting grace preſerves,
And for conſpicuous vengeance Afric's pride reſerves.

THE END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

ÆTATIS 17.

THE SIXTH BOOK OF KING ASA.

THE ARGUMENT.

The ALMIGHTY *ſeeing the diſtreſs of the Jews, predicts the excellency of the goſpel diſpenſation, and commands the* MESSIAH *to interpoſe for the aſſiſtance of his people: he deſcends. Satan, in a preſumptuous ſpeech, arrogantly aſſumes the government of the world; and pretends to have prevented man's ſalvation. The* MESSIAH *ſuddenly appears. The powers of darkneſs fly into the abyſs. The* LORD *ſmites the Ethiopians, ſo that they are put to flight before* ASA *and before Judah.* ASA *purſues his enemies; makes a great ſlaughter of them; kills Sheba and the prince of the Lubims; and laſtly, Zerah himſelf.*

KING ASA.

BOOK VI.

MEANWHILE, above this earth and circling ſtars,
Each wond'rous ſyſtem of revolving ſpheres,
Th' ALMIGHTY FATHER, wrapp'd in glory, ſate,
And ſaw malignant ſpirits in debate;
The pow'rs contending on the ſanguine field,
From his pavilion the MOST HIGH beheld.
With rapture warm, his wiſdom ſaints proclaim,
And in ſymphonious numbers laud his name;
There glowing ſeraphs without end rejoice,
And angels join in one harmonious voice,
Celeſtial anthems warbling round the throne;—
With grace divine primæval goodneſs ſhone;

Conſummate brightneſs grew beyond compare,
And all the courts of Heav'n his wonders ſhare:
Eſſential light, unſpotted, bleſs'd the day,
Where no diſſenting maculations ſtay.
Supreme in mercy, the Most High began,
And thus the cauſe of ſubſtance drew the plan:
Effulgence! Lord of all things! truth divine!
My ſon, Messiah! filial love be thine;
Man's ſureſt hope, his great Redeemer reigns;
Be thou the cleanſer of infernal ſtains;
Check the apparent force of Satan's rage,
Preſuming evil;—uncontroul'd, engage;
Preſerve my people, ſtay their adverſe flight,
And interpoſe with arms of matchleſs might.
Yon horrid gloom and glaring ſtreams ſurvey,
Diſperſe thoſe curtains from refulgent day.
Reign thou where Satan, 'midſt the foremoſt lines,
Veil'd in a cloud, with horrid envy ſhines;
His miniſters, a vile contemptuous train!
With Hebrew blood dilute Zephatah's plain.
Reveal my vengeance where the Lubims glow,
Diſtreſs the Shebans, drown their hoſt in woe.
Proud beyond law preſume the powers of hell
Againſt eternal goodneſs to rebel.

Abad-

Abaddon's crew contemn our juſt decree,
Menace the world with laſting miſery.
Shall then the ſaints, the few that worſhip right,
Be loſt, be baffled, or ſubdu'd in fight?
Muſt Iſrael's glory, prov'd in Asa, fall?
And dark infernal malice force the ſoul?
Are men no more? Will then no ſaviour riſe?
No ſure protector vindicate the ſkies?
Admit, my Son, the race of Adam loſt,
Man's dereliction muſt thy offering coſt:
Lord of the world, thou art its Saviour ſent,
The one Redeemer which my love hath meant.
O'er all below, exceſs and pride prevails,
Relentleſs evil every good curtails;
The Prince of Air and his falſe ſlaves combine
To waſte the earth, and break Messiah's line.
The time ſhall come, ſuch is my fix'd decree,
When thou the world from ignorance ſhalt free;
To ſpread my light, deception be diſpell'd,
And grace divine to every ſoul reveal'd.
My ſpirit ſhall reign; eternal goodneſs flows
To all mankind, which no exception knows.
Thoſe who have long in abject darkneſs ſate,
And mourn'd in wilds, diſtreſs'd, diſconſolate,

To them the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall riſe;
Their hearts inflam'd, ſhall offer ſacrifice.
Thro' thee, O Son, my parable is love;
Men, tho' finite, ſhall tread the courts above;
Waſh'd from their ſins, baptis'd with heav'nly fire,
Thy ſure protection ſhall mankind inſpire.
Renew'd from Zion tribute ſhall aſcend,
Dark prodigies and idol prieſts have end.
No more ſhall men at Delphi's ſhrine enquire,
Nor paſs their offspring thro' grim Moloch's fire;
Their prieſts ſhall not divine, nor kings procure
Such evil means to gain deſpotic power.
External forms, all preference I deny;
No laws ſhould force the conſcience to comply.
Fiends will perſuade, and Satan ſurely tempt,
But all the faithful are from force exempt.
No miracle ſhall wild exceſs defend;
Each living ſoul ſhall on my grace depend;
Impatient warriors ceaſe to crowd the plain,
Nor ſtrenuous heroes lead a martial train.
To dreſs the plough the faulchion then ſhall burn,
And uſeleſs ſpears to pruning hooks transform.
Zion ſhall ſmile; her ſuff'rings take the wing;—
In the wild waſte refreſhing ſtreams ſhall ſpring;

Like

Like Paradiſe her ſolitude ſhall grow,
Her barren fields with verdant herbage glow.
Where grief and lamentations oft were found,
Succeeding joy and melodies abound;
The blind ſhall ſee, the deaf ſhall hear a ſong,
The lame ſhall walk, the dumb addreſs th' admiring throng.
Then will I cleanſe and wipe their ſins away,
And round the humble ſuppliant ſpread the day.
From Jeſſe's root, a ſacred rod ſhall blow,
A glorious branch, grafted on Judah, grow.
Wiſdom and knowledge, join'd with holy fear,
And quick diſcernment, make the world revere.—
Thou wilt not judge like man, with outward eyes,
Thy ſoul ſhall ken the moſt conceal'd diſguiſe;
Unbiaſs'd by report, with truth reprove,
And judge the poor in equity and love.
The wolf then with the bleating lamb ſhall dwell,
And drink ſecure, at the deſcending rill;
The ſpotted leopard with the kid ſhall graze,
And mount the cliff in thoſe auſpicious days;
The calf and the young lion, join'd in play,
The child ſhall lead; a ſtranger to diſmay!
The horned cow be peaceful with the bear,
And ſavage beaſts forget their former war;

The lion ſtraw with the huge ox devour,
And all be peace in that unrivall'd hour;
The ſucking babe on aſps receſſes play,
His hand on cockatrice's dwellings lay.
None then ſhall harm, nor monſters dare deſtroy;
O'er all my holy mountain ſhall be joy;
To thoſe on earth ſalvation is gone forth,
Rewards deſcend for men of ſpecial worth.
In Christ the word, God, merciful and juſt,
The diſtant iſles ſhall gladly put their truſt.
Behold the Heavens, extended far and wide,
And earth beneath, inglorious in her pride;
Th' expanſe and ſtarry vault as ſmoke ſhall fly,
The world wax old, and all its glories die;
But my ſalvation ever ſhall remain,
And righteouſneſs its equal cauſe maintain.
Vengeance is mine; the vile ſhall read their doom,
And moths and worms the boaſt of man conſume.
E'er time ſhall end, the goſpel I decree
Shall clothe the earth, as waters ſpread the ſea.
Awake, O ſpirit! O arm of ſtrength awake!
Art thou not he who made the dragon quake?
For the redeem'd the ſongs of Zion wait,
Their hearts rejoice, and ſorrow leaves their ſtate.

The

The good man's hope the great ſhall ne'er ſurpaſs,
For human praiſe is like the wither'd graſs.
Ariſe, deſcend, the hour of grace is come,
Diſpel from Judah yon impervious gloom,
Before ſurrounding ſhades inveſt the earth,
And darkneſs groſs obſcure thy ſacred birth.
My ſpirit ſhall rule; thy name a light ſhall riſe,
Which kings ſhall bleſs, and worſhip with ſurpriſe;
Kingdoms ſhall ſeek thy all prevailing day,
And barbarous nations court th' æthereal ray;
Thy ſaints from far in mercy ſhall abide,
And Zion's maids be cheriſh'd at thy ſide;
Thy fame ſhall ſpread, the cauſe of truth expand,
Till kings believe, and do thy juſt command.
To thee the powers of Midian ſhall be join'd,
And diſtant Sheba know th' eternal mind;
They from their ſun-parch'd ſoil ſhall incenſe bring,
And univerſal praiſe laud Sion's King.
The fleecy flocks which Kedar's mountains range,
And rams which graze Nebaioth's verdant plains,
Shall miniſter to thee; their flame aſcend,
And all their off'rings my acceptance find.
The ſea-bred iſles in deep ſuſpence ſhall wait,
And Tarſhiſh' lofty ſhips thy power relate;

From

From far to bleſs mankind, tranſport their gold,
In ſhining heaps of yellow riches roll'd.
Such is my will; the ſtore of Heaven be thine,
In Lebanon, the fir-tree and the pine;
The box ſhall beautify my choſen place,
And boundleſs glory fill th' abode of grace.
Before thy feet the proſtrate world ſhall fall,
And Zion claim the laſting praiſe of all:
Be thou her God; reduce the dreams of fate,
And oracles make void beyond debate.
Thee I pronounce of kings the ruling word,
The guide of men, their Saviour, and their Lord.
To thee the knees of Gentile kings ſhall bow,
And Judah's ſons the ſame Redeemer know.
For braſs I'll bring unmeaſur'd heaps of gold,
Where iron grew, fair ſilver coins be told;
Their wood ſhall be as braſs, with pearls emboſs'd,
And precious ſtones adorn the ſea-waſh'd coaſt.
Fair peace on earth ſhall thrive, wrath rage no more,
Nor waſting wars diſturb that peaceful ſhore.
Salvation on their walls ſecure ſhall reſt,
Praiſe rap thy gates, and warm the grateful breaſt;
The ſun no more, in Zion, radiate light,
Nor the full moon adorn the ſilent night;

Thy

Thy ſun ſhall not go down, thy moon decline,
But one eternal day confeſs'd be thine.
Offence remov'd, let every man be wiſe,
And truth ſincere approach the yielding ſkies;
The ſmall expand, the little ones ſhall grow,
And all be peace and righteouſneſs below.
But mark the war the powers of darkneſs wage;—
With Satan's pomp and all his hoſt engage:
Proclaim, O Son! ſuch meaſures I withſtand;
For ever bleſs'd thy kingdom ſhall extend.
Since I am God, the vain ſhall rage no more;
Yon fiends expell'd, my peace on earth is ſure;
On rocks transfix'd, or in thy whirlwinds hurl'd,
Thoſe powers ſhall ceaſe to harm the terrene world:
In vain they rant; aſcend my fervid car;
Go turn the juſt eventual ſcales of war;
In terrors cloth'd, born on each tempeſt ride,
Confound our foes, and blaſt inſulting pride.

Thus, from on high, the great command was giv'n,
Then univerſal ſilence reign'd in Heav'n;
A ſolemn pauſe! from his eternal throne
Obedient roſe the everlaſting Son.

Three

Three bright æthereal ſhafts his hand compreſs'd,
In panoply divine the Godhead dreſs'd!
Messiah mounts his dazzling orb of light,
Involv'd in glory, and array'd with might;
Beneath his feet the forked lightning pours,
Awful and loud the gathering thunder roars!
The empyrean ſhook; the car ſpontaneous roll'd
O'er ſparkling gems, and radiant ſtars of gold.
Ineffably ſublime, the Lord proceeds;
Inſtinct with ſpirit, his chariot chants his deeds;
In lucid robes attending thouſands ſhone,
And choirs cherubic ſtrains immortal ſung;
Symphonious numbers warm'd the glowing ſcene,
And ſongs of triumph made his ſaints ſerene:
Celeſtial beauties glance from every wing,
While raptur'd hoſts the grand proceſſion join;
Angels, archangels, round the chariot throng,
As o'er th' æthereal plains the viſion ſwept along;
Regions immenſe, and nameleſs wonders paſs'd;
The burniſh'd gates of Heav'n reveal their truſt;
Thoſe ſtedfaſt doors of adamantine ſtone,
With bars cerulean, like vaſt columns hewn!
Adorn'd with orient pearls, the portals ſhine
Indiſſolubly firm, a work divine!

As

As Christ approach'd, the folding valves diſplay,
And rocks of agate to his ſpeed gave way;
The chariot fled, the gates ſpontaneous clos'd,
And to the void the King of Life expos'd.
Wrought by divine command, thick clouds ariſe,
And awful tempeſts bear him down the ſkies;
'Twixt circling ſtars the power effulgent ſails;
On wings of wind attend the fervid wheels.
By central ſuns, and ſyſtems bright and gay,
The Godhead holds his pure unmeaſur'd way;
On meteors born, deep circumfus'd in gold,
Swift down the ſteep of Heav'n the chariot roll'd.
At once from far this terrene globe appears,
'Midſt orbs of light, enclos'd with radiant ſpheres,
Sublime in air th' æthereal manſion ſtood,
And trembling earth confeſs'd th' approaching God.

Juſt then, exulting, o'er Zephatah's vale,
Infernal fiends and hideous forms prevail;
In dire convention met the pow'rs of air
Diſpenſing death, ſad harbinger of war;
Swoll'n with contempt, the prince of darkneſs roſe,
And thus with taunts revil'd the lab'ring Jews:---
Fair ſons of light! eſſential mighty gods!
Offspring of Heav'n! natives of bleſs'd abodes!

The

The long-wiſh'd hour is come; revolves the day
For ſin to rule, and Hell its pow'r diſplay.
Hail, ſweet revenge! the men of Salem die,
Their ſtrong battalions feel mortality;
Their fall is ſure; Judeah ſcarcely ſtands;
A ſumptuous prey to ſtrange barbarian bands!
O'erwhelm'd, and ſcattered round the well-fought field,
All Iſrael bleeds, and Zion's glories yield.
Survey your proof, that bleſs'd, that pleaſing ſight;
The race of promiſe leave the gathering fight,
Or yield ſubmiſſive to infernal might.
Behold, with Zerah, various nations join'd,
The blacks in front, the Lubims cloſe behind;
Mark where Benhail, by our device reſtrain'd,
By Heav'n forſook, ſcarce keeps his choſen band.
Lo! Asa flies, neglects his battered ſhield,
His darts innoxious fing around the field;
Fatigu'd in fight, and prov'd by various wiles,
He covets reſpite from increaſing toils.
No help he finds; his wav'ring thoughts are vain;
His heart ſhall bleed, and his vex'd ſoul complain.
This day in arms, great Zerah, fierce and ſtrong,
Bright as a meteor, guides th' embattled throng;

Black

Black fate attends; my miniſters are there,
And ſhed around diſmay, and dark deſpair.
Stern through the breaking ſtorm mine arm prevails,
Sure conqueſt follows where the king aſſails.
Exult, ye pow'rs! the world is now your own;
Mankind we rule, in air muſt be our throne:
At our command, the ſtorm conflicting grows,
The loud wind travails, and the foreſt bows;
The low hung vapours our high word fulfil,
And blazing fires perform my deſtin'd will.
If the ſweet ſcented grove, or murm'ring ſtreams,
Can ſheath our pain, or quench thoſe conſtant flames,
The dire extreme of guilt! this day we urge
Eternal vengeance from Messiah's ſcourge.
Where'er we fly, lo! Hell fierce burns within,
And laſting torments prove the force of ſin.
No joy we know, but what revenge prepares,
And wracking envy's deep corroding cares.
Still be it ſo—ſince we can govern man,
And blaſt with hate, what God in love began;
Since to our realms this beauteous ſpot pertains,
Theſe moſſy fountains, and thoſe teeming plains.
To us, as gods, odoriferous incenſe burns,
And mortals rev'rence your cœleſtial forms;

High

High to our names extenſive temples riſe,
Th' undoubted lords of thoſe inferior ſkies.
At will we ſkim the buxom fields of air,
Traverſe the globe, and fix our worſhip here.
'Tis mine to give th' unerring laws of fate,
Adviſe mankind, and ſave each ſinking ſtate.
Delphos is mine, great Ammon's prieſts are ours;
Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers.
No more, ſublime, eſſential ſpirits! fear
Messiah's reign, nor David's promis'd heir.
Prediction is refell'd; did we believe?
Yes;—ſure to foil the laws that Heav'n would give.

The dragon ſpoke: their ſanguine forms approve;
But mark the ſharp vindiction from above.
Bright o'er their heads, Messiah's glory ſtood,
And boundleſs terrors prov'd the power of God;
O'erwhelm'd they ſaw, curl'd as the yielding deep,
Fiends roll'd on fiends, from out of darkneſs leap,
Hurl'd headlong, flaming from their nitrous ſtate;
In vain the gulph of chaos ſkreen'd their flight.
Thrice thro' the air the bolts of vengeance flew;
Amazement held the frighted realms below;

Thrice

Thrice Heav'n's afflicting thunder ſhook the ground,
And thrice the deep return'd the repercuſſive ſound.
No dæmon could ſuſtain Almighty ire;
O'er flaming hills reclin'd th' æthereal fire.
From far conflicting mortals felt the ſhock,
The mountains tremble, and the rivers rock;
The clouds condens'd, confeſs'd ſuperior might,
Groſs darkneſs fled, and all the ſhades of night.
The ſtrong meridian ſun reviv'd the plain,
Refreſh'd the vales, and warm'd the foaming main.
Once more the fields to lovely proſpects riſe,
And placid nature works without diſguiſe;
The vivid landſcapes grew ſerenely bright,
And all the ſparkling zenith blaz'd with light.
The blacks ſurpris'd, their murd'ring legions ſtay;
God ſmote the nations with profound diſmay.—
And now his work perform'd, Abaddon quell'd,
The Gentiles put to flight, the faithful Jews upheld,
Messiah reaſcends the pathleſs ſky,
Reſumes his throne, and reigns for man on high.

To Benhail's poſt retir'd Abijah's ſon,
And thus in rapt'rous ſtrains the king begun:—
Fear God, my friend; redreſs compleats our joy;
Heav'n aids our arms, and Providence is nigh.

OMNIPOTENCE regards his people's right,
Diſpels the darkneſs to renew the fight;
Far hence the late incumbent ſtorms are driv'n,
That ſtrange offenſive gloom diſpers'd by Heav'n;
Fair day returns; revive the ling'ring war:
My mind exults, and feels its former pray'r.
We ſaw from high the fervid lightning pour,
And heard the ſolemn awful thunder roar;
A ſure preſage to MAJESTY divine!
Temptations vaniſh, and our hearts refine.
Serene and ſtrong my mental functions grow;
With all the fire of raptur'd chiefs I glow.
Rejoice with awe; this ſignal day is ours;
OMNISCIENCE rules, and foils barbarian pow'rs;
Confeſs'd in love, we own the ſaving hand;
O'er all, JEHOVAH reigns in Iſrael's land.
Lo! aid divine preſerves my drooping hoſt,
And drives the nations far from Judah's coaſt.
Thro' many a rank increaſing terror reigns,
The blood congeal'd, flows languid thro' their veins;
In vain their chiefs conjure the flying bands
With hope preſumptuous, and with ſtern commands.
O'er yon proud hoſt ALMIGHTY vengeance rolls,
Their ſtrength he withers, and unmans their ſouls.

Struck

Struck with diſmay, now Zerah's troops ſhall yield,
And ſlaughter'd myriads preſs the loaded field.
This ſword, high brandiſh'd, ſhall lay waſte the war,
And groans of wounded heroes ſound from far.
Haſte, Benhail haſte; exert thy well prov'd might;
Combin'd in arms, with zeal renew'd for fight,
Undaunted riſe, the force of toil divide;
Suſtain thy part, and combat by my ſide.

The monarch ſaid, and inſtant, with a bound,
Leap'd from his car, and ſhook the lab'ring ground.
The blacks retreat, aſtoniſh'd nations fled,
While ſparkling glories beam around his head,
And lambent lightnings round his temples play;
His armour ſheds intolerable day;
His ardent eye-balls dart heroic fire,
And in his boſom glows reſiſtleſs ire.
Bright as the ſun his buckler flam'd before,
His red right hand a direful jav'lin bore.
Even mailed champions fly the reeking dart,
And dread the death that vengeance muſt impart.
His pond'rous faulchion glitter'd by his ſide,
In many an hero's panting boſom try'd.
Thus arm'd, the dreadful monarch ſhot along,
Round all the field the moving radiance ſhone.

As when a blazing meteor from the ſkies
Alarms the nations and excites ſurpriſe,
Acroſs the ſpace of Heav'n the wonder glares
With light ſuperior to the brilliant ſtars,
Preſerv'd, unhurt, exulting in his might,
The Hebrew champion vindicates his right.
An hoſt attends; the favour'd Jews admire,
While, panic ſtruck, the trembling blacks retire.
Upheld by God, the prime election roſe,
And vengeful rally'd on their conq'ring foes;
Fierce on their ſhields they ring the din of war,
And join the mingling tumult from afar.
In arms refulgent, Iſrael ſtrives again,
Their radiant cohorts tread the duſty plain;
Heroic ardour flam'd in ev'ry breaſt,
And dauntleſs courage was their manly truſt;
Wide, and more wide, the martial ferment grows,
The warm infuſion no fix'd bound'ry knows.
Thus long compreſs'd, and damp with wat'ry fumes,
The flame nor mounts, nor the pil'd wood conſumes;
The red coals die, from liberty confin'd,
While flags the air, and ſinks the bluſt'ring wind.

At

At length refreſhing zephyrs kindly blow,
And gentle breezes ſkim the vales below;
The dry wood burns, the crackling flames aſcend,
And ſparkles bright with conſtellations blend.

Meanwhile, reſiſtleſs thro' the ſhudd'ring train,
Revengeful Asa ſcours th' enſanguin'd plain:
Death mark'd his ſteps; he ſtay'd for no debate,
O'erwhelm'd the bold, and made the foe retreat.
Brandiſh'd aloft, deſcends the ſlaught'ring ſword,
And many an adverſe ſquare battalion gor'd.
Tho' Judah's king dealt certain fate around,
Some deſp'rate blacks maintain'd the riſing ground.
Great Asa ſtorm'd; endu'd with ſtrength divine,
The godlike monarch broke the foremoſt line.
Thus thro' the thicket burſts a furious boar,
With ſlaughter ſtain'd, imbru'd in canine gore;
Affrighted horſemen fly his vengeful ire,
And many hounds diſmay'd, aloof retire;
Some bark at diſtance, while the boldeſt yield
To his dire ravage thro' th' extenſive field:
So warriors died; reſiſting legions fall,
Their iron bulwark and their brazen wall:
Imperial Asa drove the crowd along,
A vain, inglorious, diſſipated throng!

While thus terrific great Abijah's heir,
Suſtain'd by God, ſmote Zerah's hoſt with fear,
Condronides beheld his waſting ſword,
But thought it vain to meet Judeah's lord.
As round the vale his eyes the Lubim threw,
Confuſion, death, and vengeance, roſe in view.
In queſt of Sheba's prince, diſmay'd he rides
Thro' broken ranks, and many a ſquadron chides.
At length, in arms the prince deſir'd he found,
Intent on fate, and in command profound:
Alive, unhurt, th' aſtoniſh'd hero ſtood,
His armour ſtain'd, reveal'd the man of blood.
Abrupt, in haſte, th' impatient chief began,
To Sheba's lord the king propos'd his plan:---
Illuſtrious prince! great ſon of Afric! ſay
What end awaits this dire tumultuous fray?
In vain we ſtrive; our proweſs is withſtood;
The world in arms muſt bow to Iſrael's God.
Alone, no more, this dreadful fight I dare;
Let ſome brave chief my toilſome labour ſhare.
Riſe, martial prince! let all our force be join'd,
My ſword with thine in order be combin'd.
Aſcend my chariot; Sheba, guide the reins,
Drive through the war, and ſcour the diſtant plains;

For

For well thou know'ſt to curb the fiery ſteed:
'Tis thine to act with caution and with ſpeed.
Be ſure, my friend, this laſt extreme demands
Might far ſuperior to our numerous bands;
No reſt, no reſpite may impoſe delay,
My legions tremble, and abhor the day.
Impetuous ASA ſhakes the van and rear,
O'erpow'rs an hoſt, and makes a nation fear.
May Zerah live! may Iſis guide my dart!
And we prevail, as gods may ſtrength impart!

Thus ſpoke the king; the prince in haſte reply'd,
Unconquer'd chief! thy country's dauntleſs pride!
Well have I weigh'd the plan, thoſe mandates giv'n,
By which we move, and wait the will of Heav'n.
What man alone can ASA dare withſtand?
Whoſe boundleſs rage has waſted half the land.
'Tis thine the beaming lance with force to throw,
Or with the faulchion diſconcert the foe.
The winged ſhaft no leſs records thy might,
Sprung from the bow, drawn by thy manual ſleight.
We grant this fatal day exceeds our wit,
The ſword may ſave when the laſt lance is hit.
But why this long delay? the fight I claim,
Reſolv'd to purchaſe life, or laſting fame.

I long to meet yon fierce confounding Jew,
And cruſh his malice to the ſhades below.

Here ceas'd the prince, and mounts the chariot's height,
The groaning axles bend beneath their weight;
A king and prince! the well ply'd laſh reſounds,
O'er arms and death the rattling chariot bounds:
With furious ſpeed th' important chiefs advance,
Each pois'd the ſhield, and graſp'd a pond'rous lance.
With ſtrength endu'd, great Asa ken'd from far
The gath'ring tumult and diſtreſs of war.
The tawny lion, thus, when dogs and men
Oppoſe his rage to drive him from the pen,
Round the wide field reverts his glaring eyes,
And ſcorns the danger when new troubles riſe;
In his broad breaſt impatient fury boils,
And royal courage wafts him o'er his toils:
He ſhakes his curling mane, his tail rolls round,
His ſides are laſh'd, he roars and ſtrikes the ground.

Now met for fight the tow'ring chiefs appear;
Two furious blacks and great Abijah's heir.
Firſt Lubim's prince the conflict ſtern began,
Launch'd from his arm the whiſtling jav'lin ſang

With

With force tempeſtuous; Asa's plume it tore,
And high in air the waving honour bore.
His reeking lance the monarch pois'd on high,
His aim was ſure, then bade the vengeance fly;
It bor'd his ſhield; the point reſiſtleſs glides
'Twixt Lubim's lips, and his white teeth divides:
Then pointing upwards cleft his jaws in twain,
And reach'd the ſeat of ſenſe, the curious brain.
Earth met the king, his ſounding armour rung,
And, glad to ſeize it, dreadful Asa ſprung;
But ruthleſs Sheba ſhields his ſlaughter'd friend,
Half hid, and breathleſs, on the yielding ſand.
So the fond tigreſs ſkreens her whelps from harms,
Saves her young tigers from ſevere alarms.
Whene'er the king aſſails, the prince withſtands,
His charge protects, and calls his ſwarthy bands.
A rugged ſtone the royal Hebrew heaves,
And preſſing forward the ſtern Sheban braves;
The rifted rock the monarch bore on high,
Then ſwift at Sheba bade the ruin fly.
Right on his breaſt deſcends the pointed ſtone,
Ras'd the tough ſkin, and crack'd the ſolid bone.
He reels, he falls, ſalutes the yielding plain,
And groans, the ſad companion of the ſlain!

Thus,

Thus, when from high the kindling bolt deſcends,
And finds reſiſtance e'er the turret rends,
The ſhaft deſtructive ſtrikes the tott'ring walls,
The bulwark trembles, and the manſion falls.
A ſhatter'd ruin! deſolate and low,
Scarce can mankind the ſmoking relicts know.

The Shebans fled, a general rout enſues,
The Hebrew hoſt, a ſhadowy length! purſues.
Three chariot ſcyth'd battalions arm'd, from far,
Then with prodigious havock plow'd the war;
They, like a torrent, ſwept the level plain,
O'erwhelm'd the mighty, and deform'd the ſlain.
When thus victorious Asa hail'd the band,
Harſh, ſtern, and loud, proceeds a dire command.
Ye men of Salem hear: th' Almighty deigns to aid
Our righteous cauſe, and guides this fatal blade;
By hope impell'd, exert your utmoſt might,
Revenge your loſs, and vindicate our right;
Ceaſe from the ſpoil, forego the deſtin'd prey,
While vengeance rages, and you meet the fray.
To death I doom their flight, no reſt I give,
While Zerah breathes, and warlike Ethiops live.
The monarch frowning ceas'd; his guards attend;
A ſtern, impatient, formidable band!

The

The conqu'ring Jews on Ethiopians fall,
And death in ev'ry form purſues them all;
Great Asa thunders thro' the pallid train,
O'erturns the bold, and thouſands ſmites with pain
And univerſal ruin.—So when ocean rends
The yielding dyke, and o'er the beach aſcends,
As roll the waves, the nodding woods are torn,
And down the flood a heap promiſcuous borne;
The foaming tide reſiſtleſs roars along
O'er rugged rocks, and looſe disjointed ſtone;
Black craggy fragments, with a ruſhing ſound,
And herds and flocks pervade the deep profound.
Thus devaſtation rag'd, and mighty woe;
New toils increas'd the hapleſs ills in view.
Wide waſting vengeance ſpread the direful fight,
Heart-piercing groans, keen death, and wild affright.
Meantime, proud Zerah mark'd the rueful war,
Thro' the dire wrath of ſtern Abijah's heir;
Th' unwelcome ſcene his eyes incens'd beheld,
His chieftains heartleſs, and his proweſs quell'd:
Abaſh'd, with fear complain'd his mighty ſoul,
While thro' his mind theſe cogitations roll:—
Say, whence this change? why flies my num'rous hoſt?
And why their ſtrength and wonted courage loſt?

This

This day I ſaw th' impetuous Lubims pour
From diſtant hills, and ſhook this hoſtile ſhore;
Superior Shebans flank'd our deſp'rate foes,
And Ethiopians fell'd th' oppoſing Jews.
By us inclos'd, they left their uſeleſs arms,
And waſting fury rag'd with dire alarms;
Scarce ſav'd with life, their king my lance purſu'd,
By fate ordain'd to ſhed his royal blood.
Not without hope theſe mighty numbers came,
Conqueſt was promis'd, and immortal fame.
Will Heav'n withdraw thoſe honours we have try'd?
Their gifts reverſe, and vilify our pride?
Or is ſome god incens'd, no victim ſlain?
Is there an off'ring loſt to Iſis' ſhrine?
For us the gods reſerv'd this fertile land;
Thoſe realms are Zerah's, by divine command.
This promis'd kingdom, conquer'd, is our own,
Gain then, ye Meroans, this conteſted crown;
Fate gave you arms, a god inflam'd my breaſt,
And Ammon deſtin'd this our place of reſt.
Not of myſelf I came; a god impell'd,
Celeſtial viſions Heav'ns commands reveal'd.
In dreams confeſs'd, the gods pronounce their will,
My mind their mandates would by war fulfil.

A train

A train of woes and various toils are paſt,
The land ſeem'd conquer'd; ſhall they reign at laſt?
My troops exulting, drain'd the promis'd ſtate,
And ſaw the joys of all directing fate;
But now apparent ills my bands await.
The well arm'd Jews reverſe the god's decree,
Combat with Heav'n, and change ev'n deſtiny.
My troops are ſcatter'd round the well-fought field,
And Afric's ſons to ruthleſs Hebrews yield.
What elſe remains? I fear my Lubim ſlain,
And Sheba breathleſs loads the furrow'd plain;
My braveſt chiefs beneath their vengeance fall,
Such direful fury ſaves Mareſhah's wall.
With ſtrength immenſe, and huge two-handed ſway,
Their monarch's ſword directs the deſp'rate fray.
Choice dictates flight, my mind perſuades to fly;
But conſcious honour bids me nobly die.
In deep ſuſpence I ſtand, 'twixt hope and fear,
And ſcarce my ſoul abſtains from black deſpair;
But yet I find an awful glimm'ring light,
An hope of conqueſt, and a thirſt for fight.
Heav'n yet may help; the gods can now defend,
And ſtretch fierce Asa breathleſs on the ſand.

What

What tho' he did exult? ſure he may feel
The keen vibration of all conqu'ring ſteel;
Ere night her duſky wings expand, I truſt
To lay that Hebrew champion in the duſt.
Prediction warms my breaſt; Iſis decreed
That by our arm that dauntleſs prince ſhould bleed.
My troops are numerous yet; my lords abound;
Reſolv'd I ſtand, alert, without a wound.
Inglorious ſhould I fly, or ſound retreat,
'Twould ſave my bands, and ſtay their death and fate.
Nay—rather let the hoſt approve my might,
And fan once more the dying flames of fight.
The long diſputed point our arms may gain,
And, crown'd with laurels, Jordan's ſtream obtain;
It beſt befits my ſtate your ſouls to raiſe,
And claim, by matchleſs deeds, immortal praiſe.
Hail, glorious thought! my ſcheme attention draws,
Muſt death await my injur'd country's cauſe?
If no kind god avert the hapleſs doom,
And fate conſign me to the ſilent tomb,
Contented I obey.—The monarch ſaid,
And chiefs and heroes haſtened to his aid.

Th'

Th' obſequious peers command their hoſtile train,
And troops refulgent mark the tepid plain.
His guards aſſiſt; the Jews perceive a ſtorm,
A feint to rally, and the ranks reform;
Rais'd on his rattling car, fierce Zerah rode
In pomp high born; a vaſt incumbent load!
From far the monarch's fulgid armour ſhone,
And tranſient glories grac'd his nodding cone;
As when bright fires acroſs the meadows rove,
Or lambent ſport beſide a neighb'ring grove,
The ſwain purſues and courts an unctuous light,
A ſudden flaſh illumines the dark night.
Awhile the meteor ſome ſad wanderer chears,
Expiring, flames, and, ſtruggling, diſappears.
So Zerah led his hoſt; thus pleas'd they view
Their deſp'rate king the languid fight renew.
Array'd in ſteel, the prince exclaim'd aloud,
His guards excited, animate the crowd.
Smote by great Asa's ſpear, Miſraim bleeds,
And o'er the dead a ghaſtly ſcene ſucceeds.
With ſwift reſentment Zerah then drew near,
Nor longer ſhunn'd great Asa's fatal ſpear;
Stern from his rattling car the monarch ſprung,
And thus approach'd Abijah's dauntleſs ſon:—

Prince

Prince, lo! we meet! at length let war ſuſpend,
Thy claim reject, and quit this ſuff'ring land;
Withdraw yon troops, preſerve the hoſt from fate,
Leave thoſe waſte fields, and ſave a martial ſtate.
Learn then, at Heav'n's reveal'd command I come,
The meſſenger of death! attend thy doom,
And every god's decree.—Thus ſpake the foe,
Then aim'd from far the meditated blow:
Thro' five thick plates the maſſy jav'lin held,
But ſtopp'd and loiter'd, by the ſixth repell'd.
Great Asa ſaw his brazen buckler bor'd,
When thus, in ſecret, he addreſs'd the Lord:—
O! thou ſupreme and univerſal God!
Look down with mercy from thy bleſs'd abode:
Help, Lord, my arms; in this dire conflict aid,
Let Zerah's perſon bend before my blade.
Deep in his daring boſom lodge my ſpear,
O! thou efficient cauſe of power and fear!—
So pray'd the king, and rais'd his arm on high,
The lance purſu'd its Heav'n directed way,
Nor plates, nor folds, the fatal point could ſtay.
So launch'd from far, impends the whiſtling ſtone,
With might reſiſtleſs from an engine thrown;
If chance ſome grove or broad expanded oak,
Amid its leaves receive the direful ſtroke,

The

The branches fall, a ſhatter'd ruin ſpeeds,
As in its arch the curving maſs proceeds;
With rending force the rapid ſtone deſcends,
Reſiſtance ſcorns, and to the centre tends.
Thus, thro' the ſhield the ſteel wide gaſh'd a wound,
And bow'd the Gentile monarch to the ground;
His heaving breaſt receiv'd the pointed dart,
Deep drove, and rooted, in his fibred heart.
Proſtrate he lay; thick darkneſs clos'd his eyes
In laſting night; fierce Zerah bleeds and dies.
Then Asa, fir'd with ſtern heroic joy,
Ador'd the Lord, and found his preſence nigh.

Jeruſalem rejoice, the hero ſaid,
Behold th' Almighty pow'r of God diſplay'd!
With grateful hearts proclaim Jehovah's praiſe;
He cuts the thread of life, or grants a length of days.
Why did the Gentiles rage? Why bled the brave?
Did conqu'ring Hebrews fair Mareſhah ſave?
O'erwhelm'd in fight, preſuming Ethiops fall;
Lo! Zerah's death ſecures our ſtate from thrall.
The nations fly; God wafts the ſtorm away,
And gives to Judah this auſpicious day.

To Gerar's utmoſt bounds your foes purſue;
Waſte all their cities, and their forts ſubdue;
For hoſtile groans let no bold Hebrew ſtay;
Death be his lot, who ſhuns this flying fray.—

So ſaid, o'er ſhields and helmed heads he rode,
O'er hills of ſlain, and thro' a ſtream of blood.
Reſiſtleſs in purſuit, from ſhore to ſhore,
Six fiery ſteeds the king victorious bore.
Aloft, triumphant, in his dreadful car,
He clear'd the field, and clos'd the mighty war;
As when an angel by divine command
Pours devaſtation round a ſinful land.

Ætatis 18.

FINIS.