

The Project Gutenberg Etext of Gebir, by Walter Savage Landor  
#1 in our series by Walter Savage Landor

Copyright laws are changing all over the world, be sure to check  
the laws for your country before redistributing these files!!!

Please take a look at the important information in this header.  
We encourage you to keep this file on your own disk, keeping an  
electronic path open for the next readers.

Please do not remove this.

This should be the first thing seen when anyone opens the book.  
Do not change or edit it without written permission. The words  
are carefully chosen to provide users with the information they  
need about what they can legally do with the texts.

\*\*Welcome To The World of Free Plain Vanilla Electronic Texts\*\*

\*\*Etexts Readable By Both Humans and By Computers, Since 1971\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*These Etexts Are Prepared By Thousands of Volunteers!\*\*\*\*\*

Information on contacting Project Gutenberg to get Etexts, and  
further information is included below, including for donations.

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a 501(c)(3)  
organization with EIN [Employee Identification Number] 64-6221541

Title: Gebir

Author: Walter Savage Landor

Release Date: May, 2003 [Etext #4007]  
[Yes, we are about one year ahead of schedule]  
[The actual date this file first posted = 10/14/01]

Edition: 10

Language: English

The Project Gutenberg Etext of Gebir, by Walter Savage Landor  
\*\*\*\*\*This file should be named gebir10.txt or gebir10.zip\*\*\*\*\*

Corrected EDITIONS of our etexts get a new NUMBER, gebir11.txt  
VERSIONS based on separate sources get new LETTER, gebir10a.txt

This etext was produced by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk,  
from the 1887 Cassell & Company edition.

Project Gutenberg Etexts are usually created from multiple editions, all of which are in the Public Domain in the United States, unless a copyright notice is included. Therefore, we usually do NOT keep any of these books in compliance with any particular paper edition.

We are now trying to release all our books one year in advance of the official release dates, leaving time for better editing. Please be encouraged to send us error messages even years after the official publication date.

Please note neither this listing nor its contents are final til midnight of the last day of the month of any such announcement. The official release date of all Project Gutenberg Etexts is at Midnight, Central Time, of the last day of the stated month. A preliminary version may often be posted for suggestion, comment and editing by those who wish to do so.

Most people start at our sites at:

<http://gutenberg.net>

<http://promo.net/pg>

Those of you who want to download any Etext before announcement can surf to them as follows, and just download by date; this is also a good way to get them instantly upon announcement, as the indexes our cataloguers produce obviously take a while after an announcement goes out in the Project Gutenberg Newsletter.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext03>

or

<ftp://ftp.ibiblio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext03>

Or /etext02, 01, 00, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 91 or 90

Just search by the first five letters of the filename you want, as it appears in our Newsletters.

Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)

We produce about two million dollars for each hour we work. The time it takes us, a rather conservative estimate, is fifty hours to get any etext selected, entered, proofread, edited, copyright searched and analyzed, the copyright letters written, etc. This projected audience is one hundred million readers. If our value per text is nominally estimated at one dollar then we produce \$2 million dollars per hour this year as we release fifty new Etext files per month, or 500 more Etexts in 2000 for a total of 3000+. If they reach just 1-2% of the world's population then the total should reach over 300 billion Etexts given away by year's end.

The Goal of Project Gutenberg is to Give Away One Trillion Etext Files by December 31, 2001. [10,000 x 100,000,000 = 1 Trillion]

This is ten thousand titles each to one hundred million readers, which is only about 4% of the present number of computer users.

At our revised rates of production, we will reach only one-third of that goal by the end of 2001, or about 4,000 Etexts unless we manage to get some real funding.

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been created to secure a future for Project Gutenberg into the next millennium.

We need your donations more than ever!

As of July 12, 2001 contributions are only being solicited from people in: Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina\*, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

\*In Progress

We have filed in about 45 states now, but these are the only ones that have responded.

As the requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund raising will begin in the additional states. Please feel free to ask to check the status of your state.

In answer to various questions we have received on this:

We are constantly working on finishing the paperwork to legally request donations in all 50 states. If your state is not listed and you would like to know if we have added it since the list you have, just ask.

While we cannot solicit donations from people in states where we are not yet registered, we know of no prohibition against accepting donations from donors in these states who approach us with an offer to donate.

International donations are accepted, but we don't know ANYTHING about how to make them tax-deductible, or even if they CAN be made deductible, and don't have the staff to handle it even if there are ways.

All donations should be made to:

Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation  
PMB 113  
1739 University Ave.  
Oxford, MS 38655-4109

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization with EIN [Employee Identification Number] 64-6221541, and has been approved as a 501(c)(3) organization by the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. As the requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund raising will begin in the additional states.

We need your donations more than ever!

You can get up to date donation information at:

<http://www.gutenberg.net/donation.html>

\*\*\*

If you can't reach Project Gutenberg,  
you can always email directly to:

Michael S. Hart <[hart@pobox.com](mailto:hart@pobox.com)>

[hart@pobox.com](mailto:hart@pobox.com) forwards to [hart@prairienet.org](mailto:hart@prairienet.org) and [archive.org](mailto:archive.org)  
if your mail bounces from [archive.org](mailto:archive.org), I will still see it, if  
it bounces from [prairienet.org](mailto:prairienet.org), better resend later on. . . .

Prof. Hart will answer or forward your message.

We would prefer to send you information by email.

\*\*\*

Example command-line FTP session:

```
ftp ftp.ibiblio.org
login: anonymous
password: your@login
cd pub/docs/books/gutenberg
cd etext90 through etext99 or etext00 through etext02, etc.
dir [to see files]
get or mget [to get files. . .set bin for zip files]
GET GUTINDEX.?? [to get a year's listing of books, e.g., GUTINDEX.99]
GET GUTINDEX.ALL [to get a listing of ALL books]
```

**\*\*The Legal Small Print\*\***

(Three Pages)

**\*\*\*START\*\*THE SMALL PRINT!\*\*FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN ETEXTS\*\*START\*\*\***

Why is this "Small Print!" statement here? You know: lawyers. They tell us you might sue us if there is something wrong with your copy of this etext, even if you got it for free from someone other than us, and even if what's wrong is not our fault. So, among other things, this "Small Print!" statement disclaims most of our liability to you. It also tells you how you may distribute copies of this etext if you want to.

**\*BEFORE!\* YOU USE OR READ THIS ETEXT**

By using or reading any part of this PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm etext, you indicate that you understand, agree to and accept this "Small Print!" statement. If you do not, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for this etext by sending a request within 30 days of receiving it to the person you got it from. If you received this etext on a physical medium (such as a disk), you must return it with your request.

**ABOUT PROJECT GUTENBERG-TM ETEXTS**

This PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm etext, like most PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm etexts, is a "public domain" work distributed by Professor Michael S. Hart through the Project Gutenberg Association (the "Project"). Among other things, this means that no one owns a United States copyright on or for this work, so the Project (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth below, apply if you wish to copy and distribute this etext under the "PROJECT GUTENBERG" trademark.

Please do not use the "PROJECT GUTENBERG" trademark to market any commercial products without permission.

To create these etexts, the Project expends considerable efforts to identify, transcribe and proofread public domain works. Despite these efforts, the Project's etexts and any medium they may be on may contain "Defects". Among other things, Defects may take the form of incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other etext medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

**LIMITED WARRANTY; DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES**

But for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described below, [1] Michael Hart and the Foundation (and any other party you may receive this etext from as a PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm etext) disclaims all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees, and [2] YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE OR

UNDER STRICT LIABILITY, OR FOR BREACH OF WARRANTY OR CONTRACT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES, EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

If you discover a Defect in this etext within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending an explanatory note within that time to the person you received it from. If you received it on a physical medium, you must return it with your note, and such person may choose to alternatively give you a replacement copy. If you received it electronically, such person may choose to alternatively give you a second opportunity to receive it electronically.

THIS ETEXT IS OTHERWISE PROVIDED TO YOU "AS-IS". NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, ARE MADE TO YOU AS TO THE ETEXT OR ANY MEDIUM IT MAY BE ON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

Some states do not allow disclaimers of implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of consequential damages, so the above disclaimers and exclusions may not apply to you, and you may have other legal rights.

#### INDEMNITY

You will indemnify and hold Michael Hart, the Foundation, and its trustees and agents, and any volunteers associated with the production and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm texts harmless, from all liability, cost and expense, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following that you do or cause: [1] distribution of this etext, [2] alteration, modification, or addition to the etext, or [3] any Defect.

#### DISTRIBUTION UNDER "PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm"

You may distribute copies of this etext electronically, or by disk, book or any other medium if you either delete this "Small Print!" and all other references to Project Gutenberg, or:

[1] Only give exact copies of it. Among other things, this requires that you do not remove, alter or modify the etext or this "small print!" statement. You may however, if you wish, distribute this etext in machine readable binary, compressed, mark-up, or proprietary form, including any form resulting from conversion by word processing or hypertext software, but only so long as \*EITHER\*:

[\*] The etext, when displayed, is clearly readable, and does \*not\* contain characters other than those

intended by the author of the work, although tilde (~), asterisk (\*) and underline (\_) characters may be used to convey punctuation intended by the author, and additional characters may be used to indicate hypertext links; OR

[\*] The etext may be readily converted by the reader at no expense into plain ASCII, EBCDIC or equivalent form by the program that displays the etext (as is the case, for instance, with most word processors); OR

[\*] You provide, or agree to also provide on request at no additional cost, fee or expense, a copy of the etext in its original plain ASCII form (or in EBCDIC or other equivalent proprietary form).

[2] Honor the etext refund and replacement provisions of this "Small Print!" statement.

[3] Pay a trademark license fee to the Foundation of 20% of the gross profits you derive calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. If you don't derive profits, no royalty is due. Royalties are payable to "Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation" the 60 days following each date you prepare (or were legally required to prepare) your annual (or equivalent periodic) tax return. Please contact us beforehand to let us know your plans and to work out the details.

#### WHAT IF YOU \*WANT\* TO SEND MONEY EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE TO?

Project Gutenberg is dedicated to increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form.

The Project gratefully accepts contributions of money, time, public domain materials, or royalty free copyright licenses.

Money should be paid to the:

"Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

If you are interested in contributing scanning equipment or software or other items, please contact Michael Hart at:  
hart@pobox.com

[Portions of this header are copyright (C) 2001 by Michael S. Hart and may be reprinted only when these Etexts are free of all fees.]

[Project Gutenberg is a TradeMark and may not be used in any sales of Project Gutenberg Etexts or other materials be they hardware or software or any other related product without express permission.]

\*END THE SMALL PRINT! FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN ETEXTS\*Ver.10/04/01\*END\*

## GEBIR

### INTRODUCTION.

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

Landor began "Gebir" in Latin, then turned it into English, and then vigorously condensed what he had written. The poem was first published at Warwick as a sixpenny pamphlet in the year 1798, when Landor's age was twenty-three. Robert Southey was among the few who bought it, and he first made known its power. In the best sense of the phrase, "Gebir" was written in classical English, not with a search for pompous words of classical origin to give false dignity to style, but with strict endeavour to form terse English lines of apt words well compacted. Many passages appear to have been half thought out in Greek or Latin, some, as that on the sea-shell (on page 19), were first written in Latin, and Landor re-issued "Gebir" with a translation into Latin three or four years after its first appearance.

"Gebir" was written nine years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and at a time when the victories of Napoleon were in



many minds associated with the hopes of man. In the first edition of the poem there were, in the nuptial voyage of Tamar, prophetic visions of the triumph of his race, in march of the French Republic from the Garonne to the Rhine -

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

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

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

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

"Captivity led captive, war o'erthrown,  
They shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend  
Empire that seas alone and skies confine,  
And glory that shall strike the crystal stars."

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

powers that our misunderstandings of the better life bring into play, runs that part of the poem which shows Tamar, his brother, preparing to dwell with the sea nymph, the ideal, far away from all the struggle of mankind.

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

At the close of 1805 Landor's father died, and the young poet became a man of property. In 1808 Southey and Landor first met. Their friendship remained unbroken. When Spain rose to throw off the yoke of Napoleon, Landor's enthusiasm carried him to Corunna, where he paid for the equipment of a thousand volunteers, and joined the Spanish army of the North. After the Convention of Cintra he returned to England. Then he bought a large Welsh estate--Llanthony Priory--paid for it by selling other property, and began costly improvements. But he lived chiefly at Bath, where he married, in 1811, when his age was thirty-six, a girl of twenty. It was then that he began his tragedy of "Count Julian." The patriotic struggle in Spain commended at the same time to Scott, Southey, and Landor the story of Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings, against whom, to avenge wrong done to his daughter, Count Julian called the Moors in to invade his country. In 1810 Southey was working at his poem of "Roderick the Last of the Goths," in fellowship with his friend Landor, who was treating the same subject in his play. Scott's "Roderick" was being printed so nearly at the same time with Landor's play, that Landor wrote to Southey early in 1812 while the proof-sheets were coming to him: "I am surprised that Upham has not sent me Mr. Scott's poem yet. However, I am not sorry. I feel a sort of satisfaction that mine is going to the press first, though there is little danger that we should think on any subject alike, or stumble on any one character in the same track." De Quincey spoke of the hidden torture shown in Landor's play to be ever present in the mind of Count Julian, the betrayer of his country, as greater than the tortures inflicted in old Rome on generals who had committed treason. De Quincey's admiration of this play was more than once expressed. "Mr. Landor," he said, "who always rises with his subject, and dilates like Satan into Teneriffe or Atlas when he sees before him an antagonist worthy of his powers, is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation, the stern self-dependency, and the monumental misery of Count Julian. That sublimity of penitential grief, which cannot accept consolation from man, cannot bear external reproach, cannot condescend to notice insult, cannot so much as SEE the curiosity of bystanders; that awful carelessness of all but the troubled deeps within his own heart, and of God's spirit brooding upon their surface and searching

their abysses; never was so majestically described."

H. M.

#### FIRST BOOK.

I sing the fates of Gebir. He had dwelt  
Among those mountain-caverns which retain  
His labours yet, vast halls and flowing wells,  
Nor have forgotten their old master's name  
Though severed from his people here, incensed  
By meditating on primeval wrongs,  
He blew his battle-horn, at which uprose  
Whole nations; here, ten thousand of most might  
He called aloud, and soon Charoba saw  
His dark helm hover o'er the land of Nile,  
What should the virgin do? should royal knees  
Bend suppliant, or defenceless hands engage  
Men of gigantic force, gigantic arms?  
For 'twas reported that nor sword sufficed,  
Nor shield immense nor coat of massive mail,  
But that upon their towering heads they bore  
Each a huge stone, refulgent as the stars.  
This told she Dalica, then cried aloud:  
"If on your bosom laying down my head  
I sobbed away the sorrows of a child,  
If I have always, and Heaven knows I have,  
Next to a mother's held a nurse's name,  
Succour this one distress, recall those days,  
Love me, though 'twere because you loved me then."

But whether confident in magic rites  
Or touched with sexual pride to stand implored,  
Dalica smiled, then spake: "Away those fears.  
Though stronger than the strongest of his kind,  
He falls--on me devolve that charge; he falls.  
Rather than fly him, stoop thou to allure;  
Nay, journey to his tents: a city stood  
Upon that coast, they say, by Sidad built,  
Whose father Gad built Gadir; on this ground  
Perhaps he sees an ample room for war.  
Persuade him to restore the walls himself  
In honour of his ancestors, persuade -  
But wherefore this advice? young, unespoused,  
Charoba want persuasions! and a queen!"

"O Dalica!" the shuddering maid exclaimed,  
"Could I encounter that fierce, frightful man?  
Could I speak? no, nor sigh!"

"And canst thou reign?"  
Cried Dalica; "yield empire or comply."

Unfixed though seeming fixed, her eyes downcast,  
The wonted buzz and bustle of the court  
From far through sculptured galleries met her ear;  
Then lifting up her head, the evening sun  
Poured a fresh splendour on her burnished throne--  
The fair Charoba, the young queen, complied.

But Gebir when he heard of her approach  
Laid by his orb'd shield, his vizor-helm,  
His buckler and his corset he laid by,  
And bade that none attend him; at his side  
Two faithful dogs that urge the silent course,  
Shaggy, deep-chested, crouched; the crocodile,  
Crying, oft made them raise their flaccid ears  
And push their heads within their master's hand.  
There was a brightening paleness in his face,  
Such as Diana rising o'er the rocks  
Showered on the lonely Latmian; on his brow  
Sorrow there was, yet nought was there severe.  
But when the royal damsel first he saw,  
Faint, hanging on her handmaids, and her knees  
Tottering, as from the motion of the car,  
His eyes looked earnest on her, and those eyes  
Showed, if they had not, that they might have loved,  
For there was pity in them at that hour.  
With gentle speech, and more with gentle looks  
He soothed her; but lest Pity go beyond,  
And crossed Ambition lose her lofty aim,  
Bending, he kissed her garment and retired.  
He went, nor slumbered in the sultry noon  
When viands, couches, generous wines persuade  
And slumber most refreshes, nor at night,  
When heavy dews are laden with disease,  
And blindness waits not there for lingering age.  
Ere morning dawned behind him, he arrived  
At those rich meadows where young Tamar fed  
The royal flocks entrusted to his care.  
"Now," said he to himself, "will I repose  
At least this burthen on a brother's breast."  
His brother stood before him. He, amazed,  
Reared suddenly his head, and thus began:  
"Is it thou, brother! Tamar, is it thou!  
Why, standing on the valley's utmost verge,  
Lookest thou on that dull and dreary shore  
Where many a league Nile blackens all the sand.  
And why that sadness? when I passed our sheep  
The dew-drops were not shaken off the bar;  
Therefore if one be wanting 'tis untold."  
"Yes, one is wanting, nor is that untold."  
Said Tamar; "and this dull and dreary shore  
Is neither dull nor dreary at all hours."  
Whereon the tear stole silent down his cheek,  
Silent, but not by Gebir unobserved:  
Wondering he gazed awhile, and pitying spake:

"Let me approach thee; does the morning light  
Scatter this wan suffusion o'er thy brow,  
This faint blue lustre under both thine eyes?"

"O brother, is this pity or reproach?"

Cried Tamar; "cruel if it be reproach,  
If pity, oh, how vain!"

"Whate'er it be

That grieves thee, I will pity: thou but speak  
And I can tell thee, Tamar, pang for pang."

"Gebir! then more than brothers are we now!

Everything, take my hand, will I confess.

I neither feed the flock nor watch the fold;

How can I, lost in love? But, Gebir, why

That anger which has risen to your cheek?

Can other men? could you?--what, no reply!

And still more anger, and still worse concealed!

Are these your promises, your pity this?"

"Tamar, I well may pity what I feel--

Mark me aright--I feel for thee--proceed--

Relate me all."

"Then will I all relate,"

Said the young shepherd, gladdened from his heart.

"'Twas evening, though not sunset, and springtide  
Level with these green meadows, seemed still higher.

'Twas pleasant; and I loosened from my neck

The pipe you gave me, and began to play.

Oh, that I ne'er had learnt the tuneful art!

It always brings us enemies or love!

Well, I was playing, when above the waves

Some swimmer's head methought I saw ascend;

I, sitting still, surveyed it, with my pipe

Awkwardly held before my lips half-closed.

Gebir! it was a nymph! a nymph divine!

I cannot wait describing how she came,

How I was sitting, how she first assumed

The sailor; of what happened there remains

Enough to say, and too much to forget.

The sweet deceiver stepped upon this bank

Before I was aware; for with surprise

Moments fly rapid as with love itself.

Stooping to tune afresh the hoarsened reed,

I heard a rustling, and where that arose

My glance first lighted on her nimble feet.

Her feet resembled those long shells explored

By him who to befriend his steed's dim sight

Would blow the pungent powder in the eye.

Her eyes too! O immortal gods! her eyes

Resembled--what could they resemble? what

Ever resemble those! E'en her attire

Was not of wonted woof nor vulgar art:

Her mantle showed the yellow samphire-pod,

Her girdle the dove-coloured wave serene.

'Shepherd,' said she, 'and will you wrestle now

And with the sailor's hardier race engage?'  
I was rejoiced to hear it, and contrived  
How to keep up contention; could I fail  
By pressing not too strongly, yet to press?  
'Whether a shepherd, as indeed you seem,  
Or whether of the hardier race you boast,  
I am not daunted, no; I will engage.  
But first,' said she, 'what wager will you lay?'  
'A sheep,' I answered; 'add whate'er you will.'  
'I cannot,' she replied, 'make that return:  
Our hided vessels in their pitchy round  
Seldom, unless from rapine, hold a sheep.  
But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue  
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed  
In the sun's palace porch, where when unyoked  
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave:  
Shake one and it awakens, then apply  
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,  
And it remembers its august abodes,  
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.  
And I have others given me by the nymphs,  
Of sweeter sound than any pipe you have.  
But we, by Neptune, for no pipe contend -  
This time a sheep I win, a pipe the next.'  
Now came she forward eager to engage,  
But first her dress, her bosom then surveyed,  
And heaved it, doubting if she could deceive.  
Her bosom seemed, enclosed in haze like heaven,  
To baffle touch, and rose forth undefined:  
Above her knees she drew the robe succinct,  
Above her breast, and just below her arms.  
'This will preserve my breath when tightly bound,  
If struggle and equal strength should so constrain.'  
Thus, pulling hard to fasten it, she spake,  
And, rushing at me, closed: I thrilled throughout  
And seemed to lessen and shrink up with cold.  
Again with violent impulse gushed my blood,  
And hearing nought external, thus absorbed,  
I heard it, rushing through each turbid vein,  
Shake my unsteady swimming sight in air.  
Yet with unyielding though uncertain arms  
I clung around her neck; the vest beneath  
Rustled against our slippery limbs entwined:  
Often mine springing with eluded force  
Started aside, and trembled till replaced:  
And when I most succeeded, as I thought,  
My bosom and my throat felt so compressed  
That life was almost quivering on my lips,  
Yet nothing was there painful! these are signs  
Of secret arts and not of human might--  
What arts I cannot tell--I only know  
My eyes grew dizzy, and my strength decayed.  
I was indeed o'ercome! with what regret,

And more, with what confusion, when I reached  
The fold, and yielding up the sheep, she cried:  
'This pays a shepherd to a conquering maid.'  
She smiled, and more of pleasure than disdain  
Was in her dimpled chin and liberal lip,  
And eyes that languished, lengthening, just like love.  
She went away; I on the wicker gate  
Leant, and could follow with my eyes alone.  
The sheep she carried easy as a cloak;  
But when I heard its bleating, as I did,  
And saw, she hastening on, its hinder feet  
Struggle and from her snowy shoulder slip -  
One shoulder its poor efforts had unveiled -  
Then all my passions mingling fell in tears;  
Restless then ran I to the highest ground  
To watch her--she was gone--gone down the tide -  
And the long moonbeam on the hard wet sand  
Lay like a jasper column half-upreared."

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

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

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

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

## SECOND BOOK.

The Gadite men the royal charge obey.  
Now fragments weighed up from th' uneven streets

Leave the ground black beneath; again the sun  
Shines into what were porches, and on steps  
Once warm with frequentation--clients, friends,  
All morning, satchelled idlers all mid-day,  
Lying half-up and languid though at games.

Some raise the painted pavement, some on wheels  
Draw slow its laminous length, some intersperse  
Salt waters through the sordid heaps, and seize  
The flowers and figures starting fresh to view.  
Others rub hard large masses, and essay  
To polish into white what they misdeem  
The growing green of many trackless years.  
Far off at intervals the axe resounds  
With regular strong stroke, and nearer home  
Dull falls the mallet with long labour fringed.  
Here arches are discovered, there huge beams  
Resist the hatchet, but in fresher air  
Soon drop away: there spreads a marble squared  
And smoothened; some high pillar for its base  
Chose it, which now lies ruined in the dust.  
Clearing the soil at bottom, they espy  
A crevice: they, intent on treasure, strive  
Strenuous, and groan, to move it: one exclaims,  
"I hear the rusty metal grate; it moves!"  
Now, overturning it, backward they start,  
And stop again, and see a serpent pant,  
See his throat thicken, and the crisped scales  
Rise ruffled, while upon the middle fold  
He keeps his wary head and blinking eye,  
Curling more close and crouching ere he strike.  
Go mighty men, invade far cities, go -  
And be such treasure portions to your heirs.

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

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



Though different, glows with beauty; at the throne  
Of mercy, when clouds shut it from mankind,  
They fall bare-bosomed, and indignant Jove  
Drops at the soothing sweetness of their voice  
The thunder from his hand; let us arise  
On these high places daily, beat our breast,  
Prostrate ourselves and deprecate his wrath."

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

Then Gebir spake to Tamar in these words:

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

Then starting from attention Tamar cried:

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

But Gebir with complacent smile replied:

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

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

Him then the monarch thus once more addressed:

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

How flattery

Excites a pleasant, soothes a painful shame!

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

They parted here:

And Gebir bending through the woodlands culled  
The creeping vine and viscous raspberry,  
Less green and less compliant than they were;  
And twisted in those mossy tufts that grow

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

Whether while Tamar tarried came desire,  
And she grown languid loosed the wings of love,  
Which she before held proudly at her will,  
And nought but Tamar in her soul, and nought  
Where Tamar was that seemed or feared deceit,  
To fraud she yielded what no force had gained -  
Or whether Jove in pity to mankind,  
When from his crystal fount the visual orbs  
He filled with piercing ether and endued  
With somewhat of omnipotence, ordained  
That never two fair forms at once torment  
The human heart and draw it different ways,  
And thus in prowess like a god the chief  
Subdued her strength nor softened at her charms--  
The nymph divine, the magic mistress, failed.  
Recovering, still half resting on the turf,  
She looked up wildly, and could now descry  
The kingly brow, arched lofty for command.

"Traitor!" said she, undaunted, though amaze  
Threw o'er her varying cheek the air of fear,  
"Thinkest thou thus that with impunity  
Thou hast forsooth deceived me? dar'st thou deem  
Those eyes not hateful that have seen me fall?"

O heaven! soon may they close on my disgrace.  
Merciless man, what! for one sheep estranged  
Hast thou thrown into dungeons and of day  
Amerced thy shepherd? hast thou, while the iron  
Pierced through his tender limbs into his soul,  
By threats, by tortures, torn out that offence,  
And heard him (oh, could I!) avow his love?  
Say, hast thou? cruel, hateful!--ah my fears!  
I feel them true! speak, tell me, are they true?"

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

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

He spake, and indignation sank in woe.  
Which she perceiving, pride refreshed her heart,  
Hope wreathed her mouth with smiles, and she exclaimed:  
"Neither the gods afflict you, nor the nymphs.  
Return me him who won my heart, return  
Him whom my bosom pants for, as the steeds  
In the sun's chariot for the western wave,  
The gods will prosper thee, and Tamar prove  
How nymphs the torments that they cause assuage.  
Promise me this! indeed I think thou hast,  
But 'tis so pleasing, promise it once more."

"Once more I promise," cried the gladdened king,  
"By my right hand and by myself I swear,  
And ocean's gods and heaven's gods I adjure,  
Thou shalt be Tamar's, Tamar shalt be thine."

Then she, regarding him long fixed, replied:  
"I have thy promise, take thou my advice.  
Gebir, this land of Egypt is a land  
Of incantation, demons rule these waves;  
These are against thee, these thy works destroy.  
Where thou hast built thy palace, and hast left  
The seven pillars to remain in front,  
Sacrifice there, and all these rites observe.  
Go, but go early, ere the gladsome Hours,  
Strew saffron in the path of rising Morn,

Ere the bee buzzing o'er flowers fresh disclosed  
Examine where he may the best alight  
Nor scatter off the bloom, ere cold-lipped herds  
Crop the pale herbage round each other's bed,  
Lead seven bulls, well pastured and well formed,  
Their neck unblemished and their horns unringed,  
And at each pillar sacrifice thou one.  
Around each base rub thrice the black'ning blood,  
And burn the curling shavings of the hoof;  
And of the forehead locks thou also burn:  
The yellow galls, with equal care preserved,  
Pour at the seventh statue from the north."

He listened, and on her his eyes intent  
Perceived her not, and she had disappeared -  
So deep he pondered her important words.

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

### THIRD BOOK.

On, for the spirit of that matchless man  
Whom Nature led throughout her whole domain,  
While he embodied breathed ethereal air!

Though panting in the play-hour of my youth  
I drank of Avon too, a dangerous draught,  
That roused within the feverish thirst of song,  
Yet never may I trespass o'er the stream  
Of jealous Acheron, nor alive descend  
The silent and unsearchable abodes  
Of Erebus and Night, nor unchastised

Lead up long-absent heroes into day.  
When on the pausing theatre of earth  
Eve's shadowy curtain falls, can any man  
Bring back the far-off intercepted hills,  
Grasp the round rock-built turret, or arrest  
The glittering spires that pierce the brow of Heaven?  
Rather can any with outstripping voice  
The parting sun's gigantic strides recall?

Twice sounded GEBIR! twice th' Iberian king  
Thought it the strong vibration of the brain  
That struck upon his ear; but now descried  
A form, a man, come nearer: as he came  
His unshorn hair grown soft in these abodes  
Waved back, and scattered thin and hoary light.  
Living, men called him Aroar, but no more  
In celebration or recording verse  
His name is heard, no more by Arnon's side  
The well-walled city which he reared remains.  
Gebir was now undaunted--for the brave  
When they no longer doubt no longer fear--  
And would have spoken, but the shade began,

"Brave son of Hesperus! no mortal hand  
Has led thee hither, nor without the gods  
Penetrate thy firm feet the vast profound.  
Thou knowest not that here thy fathers lie,  
The race of Sidad; theirs was loud acclaim  
When living, but their pleasure was in war;  
Triumphs and hatred followed: I myself  
Bore, men imagined, no inglorious part:  
The gods thought otherwise, by whose decree  
Deprived of life, and more, of death deprived,  
I still hear shrieking through the moonless night  
Their discontented and deserted shades.  
Observe these horrid walls, this rueful waste!  
Here some refresh the vigour of the mind  
With contemplation and cold penitence:  
Nor wonder while thou hearest that the soul  
Thus purified hereafter may ascend  
Surmounting all obstruction, nor ascribe  
The sentence to indulgence; each extreme  
Has tortures for ambition; to dissolve  
In everlasting languor, to resist  
Its impulse, but in vain: to be enclosed  
Within a limit, and that limit fire;  
Severed from happiness, from eminence,  
And flying, but hell bars us, from ourselves.

Yet rather all these torments most endure  
Than solitary pain and sad remorse  
And towering thoughts on their own breast o'er-turned  
And piercing to the heart: such penitence,  
Such contemplation theirs! thy ancestors  
Bear up against them, nor will they submit  
To conquering Time the asperities of Fate;

Yet could they but revisit earth once more,  
How gladly would they poverty embrace,  
How labour, even for their deadliest foe!  
It little now avails them to have raised  
Beyond the Syrian regions, and beyond  
Phoenicia, trophies, tributes, colonies:  
Follow thou me--mark what it all avails."

Him Gebir followed, and a roar confused  
Rose from a river rolling in its bed,  
Not rapid, that would rouse the wretched souls,  
Nor calmly, that might lull then to repose;  
But with dull weary lapses it upheaved  
Billows of bale, heard low, yet heard afar.  
For when hell's iron portals let out night,  
Often men start and shiver at the sound,  
And lie so silent on the restless couch  
They hear their own hearts beat. Now Gebir breathed  
Another air, another sky beheld.  
Twilight broods here, lulled by no nightingale  
Nor wakened by the shrill lark dewy-winged,  
But glowing with one sullen sunless heat.  
Beneath his foot nor sprouted flower nor herb  
Nor chirped a grasshopper. Above his head  
Phlegethon formed a fiery firmament:  
Part were sulphurous clouds involving, part  
Shining like solid ribs of molten brass;  
For the fierce element which else aspires  
Higher and higher and lessens to the sky,  
Below, earth's adamant arch rebuffed.

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

The hero pausing, Gebir then besought  
What region held his ancestors, what clouds,  
What waters, or what gods, from his embrace.  
Aroar then sudden, as though roused, renewed.

"Come thou, if ardour urges thee and force  
Suffices--mark me, Gebir, I unfold  
No fable to allure thee--on! behold

Thy ancestors!" and lo! with horrid gasp  
The panting flame above his head recoiled,  
And thunder through his heart and life blood throbbled.  
Such sound could human organs once conceive,  
Cold, speechless, palsied, not the soothing voice  
Of friendship or almost of Deity  
Could raise the wretched mortal from the dust;  
Beyond man's home condition they! with eyes  
Intent, and voice desponding, and unheard  
By Aroar, though he tarried at his side.  
"They know me not," cried Gebir, "O my sires,  
Ye know me not! they answer not, nor hear.  
How distant are they still! what sad extent  
Of desolation must we overcome!  
Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch  
Is that with eyebrows white, and slanting brow?  
Listen! him yonder who bound down supine,  
Shrinks yelling from that sword there engine-hung;  
He too among my ancestors?"

"O King!

Iberia bore him, but the breed accursed  
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east."

"He was a warrior then, nor feared the gods?"

"Gebir, he feared the Demons, not the Gods;  
Though them indeed his daily face adored,  
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives  
Squandered as stones to exercise a sling!  
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice -  
Oh, madness of mankind! addressed, adored!  
O Gebir! what are men, or where are gods!  
Behold the giant next him, how his feet  
Plunge floundering mid the marshes yellow-flowered,  
His restless head just reaching to the rocks,  
His bosom tossing with black weeds besmeared,  
How writhes he twixt the continent and isle!  
What tyrant with more insolence e'er claimed  
Dominion? when from the heart of Usury  
Rose more intense the pale-flamed thirst for gold?  
And called forsooth DELIVERER! False or fools  
Who praised the dull-eared miscreant, or who hoped  
To soothe your folly and disgrace with praise!

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

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

"I will relate their stories when we reach

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

"Then, oh, adieu!"

Cried Gebir, and groaned loud, at last a tear  
Burst from his eyes turned back, and he exclaimed,  
"Am I deluded? O ye powers of hell,  
Suffer me--Oh, my fathers!--am I torn--"  
He spake, and would have spoken more, but flames  
Enwrapped him round and round intense; he turned,  
And stood held breathless in a ghost's embrace.  
"Gebir, my son, desert me not! I heard  
Thy calling voice, nor fate withheld me more:  
One moment yet remains; enough to know  
Soon will my torments, soon will thine, expire.  
Oh, that I e'er exacted such a vow!

When dipping in the victim's blood thy hand,  
First thou withdrew'st it, looking in my face  
Wondering; but when the priest my will explained,  
Then swearest thou, repeating what he said,  
How against Egypt thou wouldst raise that hand  
And bruise the seed first risen from our line.  
Therefore in death what pangs have I endured!  
Racked on the fiery centre of the sun,  
Twelve years I saw the ruined world roll round.  
Shudder not--I have borne it--I deserved  
My wretched fate--be better thine--farewell."

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

Let me return thee that embrace--'tis past--  
Aroar! how could I quit it unreturned!  
And now the gulf divides us, and the waves  
Of sulphur bellow through the blue abyss.  
And is he gone for ever! and I come  
In vain?" Then sternly said the guide, "In vain!  
Sayst thou? what wouldst thou more? alas, O prince,  
None come for pastime here! but is it nought  
To turn thy feet from evil? is it nought  
Of pleasure to that shade if they are turned?  
For this thou camest hither: he who dares  
To penetrate this darkness, nor regards  
The dangers of the way, shall reascend  
In glory, nor the gates of hell retard  
His steps, nor demon's nor man's art prevail.  
Once in each hundred years, and only once,  
Whether by some rotation of the world,  
Or whether willed so by some power above,  
This flaming arch starts back, each realm descries  
Its opposite, and Bliss from her repose  
Freshens and feels her own security."

"Security!" cried out the Gadite king,



"And feel they not compassion?"

"Child of Earth,"

Calmly said Aroar at his guest's surprise,  
"Some so disfigured by habitual crimes,  
Others are so exalted, so refined,  
So permeated by heaven, no trace remains  
Graven on earth: here Justice is supreme;  
Compassion can be but where passions are.  
Here are discovered those who tortured Law  
To silence or to speech, as pleased themselves:  
Here also those who boasted of their zeal  
And loved their country for the spoils it gave.  
Hundreds, whose glitt'ring merchandise the lyre  
Dazzled vain wretches drunk with flattery,  
And wafted them in softest airs to Heav'n,  
Doomed to be still deceived, here still attune  
The wonted strings and fondly woo applause:  
Their wish half granted, they retain their own,  
But madden at the mockery of the shades.  
Upon the river's other side there grow  
Deep olive groves; there other ghosts abide,  
Blest indeed they, but not supremely blest.  
We cannot see beyond, we cannot see  
Aught but our opposite, and here are fates  
How opposite to ours! here some observed  
Religious rites, some hospitality:  
Strangers, who from the good old men retired,  
Closed the gate gently, lest from generous use  
Shutting and opening of its own accord,  
It shake unsettled slumbers off their couch:  
Some stopped revenge athirst for slaughter, some  
Sowed the slow olive for a race unborn.  
These had no wishes, therefore none are crowned;  
But theirs are tufted banks, theirs umbrage, theirs  
Enough of sunshine to enjoy the shade,  
And breeze enough to lull them to repose."

Then Gebir cried: "Illustrious host, proceed.

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

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

#### FOURTH BOOK.

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

Retracing, me with magic power detain  
Those dimpled cheeks, those temples violet-tinged,  
Those lips of nectar and those eyes of heaven!  
Charoba, though indeed she never drank  
The liquid pearl, or twined the nodding crown,  
Or when she wanted cool and calm repose  
Dreamed of the crawling asp and grated tomb,  
Was wretched up to royalty: the jibe  
Struck her, most piercing where love pierced before,  
From those whose freedom centres in their tongue,  
Handmaidens, pages, courtiers, priests, buffoons.  
Congratulations here, there prophecies,  
Here children, not repining at neglect  
While tumult sweeps them ample room for play,  
Everywhere questions answered ere begun,  
Everywhere crowds, for everywhere alarm.  
Thus winter gone, nor spring (though near) arrived,  
Urged slanting onward by the bickering breeze  
That issues from beneath Aurora's car,  
Shudder the sombrous waves; at every beam  
More vivid, more by every breath impelled,  
Higher and higher up the fretted rocks  
Their turbulent refulgence they display.  
Madness, which like the spiral element  
The more it seizes on the fiercer burns,  
Hurried them blindly forward, and involved  
In flame the senses and in gloom the soul.  
Determined to protect the country's gods  
And asking their protection, they adjure  
Each other to stand forward, and insist  
With zeal, and trample under foot the slow;  
And disregardful of the Sympathies  
Divine, those Sympathies whose delicate hand  
Touching the very eyeball of the heart,  
Awakens it, not wounds it nor inflames,  
Blind wretches! they with desperate embrace  
Hang on the pillar till the temple fall.  
Oft the grave judge alarms religious wealth  
And rouses anger under gentle words.  
Woe to the wiser few who dare to cry  
"People! these men are not your enemies,  
Inquire their errand, and resist when wronged."  
Together childhood, priesthood, womanhood,  
The scribes and elders of the land, exclaim,  
"Seek they not hidden treasure in the tombs?  
Raising the ruins, levelling the dust,  
Who can declare whose ashes they disturb!  
Build they not fairer cities than our own,  
Extravagant enormous apertures  
For light, and portals larger, open courts  
Where all ascending all are unconfined,  
And wider streets in purer air than ours?  
Temples quite plain with equal architraves

They build, nor bearing gods like ours embossed.

Oh, profanation! Oh, our ancestors!"

Though all the vulgar hate a foreign face,  
It more offends weak eyes and homely age,  
Dalica most, who thus her aim pursued.

"My promise, O Charoba, I perform.

Proclaim to gods and men a festival

Throughout the land, and bid the strangers eat;  
Their anger thus we haply may disarm."

"O Dalica," the grateful queen replied,

"Nurse of my childhood, soother of my cares,  
Preventer of my wishes, of my thoughts,  
Oh, pardon youth, oh, pardon royalty!

If hastily to Dalica I sued,

Fear might impel me, never could distrust.

Go then, for wisdom guides thee, take my name,

Issue what most imports and best beseems,

And sovereignty shall sanction the decree."

And now Charoba was alone, her heart

Grew lighter; she sat down, and she arose,

She felt voluptuous tenderness, but felt

That tenderness for Dalica; she praised

Her kind attention, warm solicitude,

Her wisdom--for what wisdom pleased like hers!

She was delighted; should she not behold

Gebir? she blushed; but she had words to speak,

She formed them and re-formed them, with regret

That there was somewhat lost with every change;

She could replace them--what would that avail?--

Moved from their order they have lost their charm.

While thus she strewed her way with softest words,

Others grew up before her, but appeared

A plenteous rather than perplexing choice:

She rubbed her palms with pleasure, heaved a sigh,

Grew calm again, and thus her thoughts revolved--

"But he descended to the tombs! the thought

Thrills me, I must avow it, with affright.

And wherefore? shows he not the more beloved

Of heaven? or how ascends he back to day?

Then has he wronged me? could he want a cause

Who has an army and was bred to reign?

And yet no reasons against rights he urged,

He threatened not, proclaimed not; I approached,

He hastened on; I spake, he listened; wept,

He pitied me; he loved me, he obeyed;

He was a conqueror, still am I a queen."

She thus indulged fond fancies, when the sound

Of timbrels and of cymbals struck her ear,

And horns and howlings of wild jubilee.

She feared, and listened to confirm her fears;

One breath sufficed, and shook her refluent soul.

Smiling, with simulated smile constrained,

Her beauteous bosom, "Oh, perfidious man!

Oh, cruel foe!" she twice and thrice exclaimed,  
"Oh, my companions equal-aged! my throne,  
My people! Oh, how wretched to presage  
This day, how tenfold wretched to endure!"

She ceased, and instantly the palace rang  
With gratulation roaring into rage--  
'Twas her own people. "Health to Gebir! health  
To our compatriot subjects! to our queen!  
Health and unfaded youth ten thousand years!"  
Then went the victims forward crowned with flowers,  
Crowned were tame crocodiles, and boys white-robed  
Guided their creaking crests across the stream.  
In gilded barges went the female train,  
And hearing others ripple near, undrew  
The veil of sea-green awning: if they found  
Whom they desired, how pleasant was the breeze!  
If not, the frightful water forced a sigh.  
Sweet airs of music ruled the rowing palms,  
Now rose they glistening and aslant reclined,  
Now they descended, and with one consent  
Plunging, seemed swift each other to pursue,  
And now to tremble wearied o'er the wave.  
Beyond and in the suburbs might be seen  
Crowds of all ages: here in triumph passed  
Not without pomp, though raised with rude device,  
The monarch and Charoba; there a throng  
Shone out in sunny whiteness o'er the reeds.  
Nor could luxuriant youth, or lapsing age  
Propped by the corner of the nearest street,  
With aching eyes and tottering knees intent,  
Loose leathery neck and worm-like lip outstretched,  
Fix long the ken upon one form, so swift  
Through the gay vestures fluttering on the bank,  
And through the bright-eyed waters dancing round,  
Wove they their wanton wiles and disappeared.

Meantime, with pomp august and solemn, borne  
On four white camels tinkling plates of gold,  
Heralds before and Ethiop slaves behind,  
Each with the signs of office in his hand,  
Each on his brow the sacred stamp of years,  
The four ambassadors of peace proceed.  
Rich carpets bear they, corn and generous wine,  
The Syrian olive's cheerful gift they bear,  
With stubborn goats that eye the mountain tops  
Askance and riot with reluctant horn,  
And steeds and stately camels in their train.  
The king, who sat before his tent, descried  
The dust rise reddened from the setting sun.  
Through all the plains below the Gadite men  
Were resting from their labour; some surveyed  
The spacious site ere yet obstructed--walls  
Already, soon will roofs have interposed;  
Some ate their frugal viands on the steps

Contented; some, remembering home, prefer  
The cot's bare rafters o'er the gilded dome,  
And sing, for often sighs, too, end in song:  
"In smiling meads how sweet the brook's repose,  
To the rough ocean and red restless sands!  
Where are the woodland voices that increased  
Along the unseen path on festal days,  
When lay the dry and outcast arbutus  
On the fane step, and the first privet-flowers  
Threw their white light upon the vernal shrine?"  
Some heedless trip along with hasty step  
Whistling, and fix too soon on their abodes:  
Haply and one among them with his spear  
Measures the lintel, if so great its height  
As will receive him with his helm unlowered.  
But silence went throughout, e'en thoughts were hushed,  
When to full view of navy and of camp  
Now first expanded the bare-headed train.  
Majestic, unpresuming, unappalled,  
Onward they marched, and neither to the right  
Nor to the left, though there the city stood,  
Turned they their sober eyes; and now they reached  
Within a few steep paces of ascent  
The lone pavilion of the Iberian king.  
He saw them, he awaited them, he rose,  
He hailed them, "Peace be with you:" they replied,  
"King of the western world, be with you peace."

#### FIFTH BOOK.

Once a fair city, courted then by king,  
Mistress of nations, thronged by palaces,  
Raising her head o'er destiny, her face  
Glowing with pleasure and with palms refreshed,  
Now pointed at by Wisdom or by Wealth,  
Bereft of beauty, bare of ornaments,  
Stood in the wilderness of woe, Masar.  
Ere far advancing, all appeared a plain;  
Traacherous and fearful mountains, far advanced.  
Her glory so gone down, at human step  
The fierce hyena frightened from the walls  
Bristled his rising back, his teeth unsheathed,  
Drew the long growl and with slow foot retired.  
Yet were remaining some of ancient race,  
And ancient arts were now their sole delight:  
With Time's first sickle they had marked the hour  
When at their incantation would the Moon  
Start back, and shuddering shed blue blasted light.  
The rifted rays they gathered, and immersed  
In potent portion of that wondrous wave,  
Which, hearing rescued Israel, stood erect,

And led her armies through his crystal gates.  
Hither (none shared her way, her counsel none)  
Hied the Masarian Dalica: 'twas night,  
And the still breeze fell languid on the waste.  
She, tired with journey long and ardent thoughts  
Stopped; and before the city she descried  
A female form emerge above the sands.  
Intent she fixed her eyes, and on herself  
Relying, with fresh vigour bent her way;  
Nor disappeared the woman, but exclaimed,  
One hand retaining tight her folded vest,  
"Stranger, who loathest life, there lies Masar.  
Begone, nor tarry longer, or ere morn  
The cormorant in his solitary haunt  
Of insulated rock or sounding cove  
Stands on thy bleached bones and screams for prey.  
My lips can scatter them a hundred leagues,  
So shrivelled in one breath as all the sands  
We tread on could not in as many years.  
Wretched who die nor raise their sepulchre!  
Therefore begone."

But Dalica unawed  
(Though in her withered but still firm right-hand  
Held up with imprecations hoarse and deep  
Glimmered her brazen sickle, and enclosed  
Within its figured curve the fading moon)  
Spake thus aloud. "By yon bright orb of Heaven,  
In that most sacred moment when her beam  
Guided first thither by the forked shaft,  
Strikes through the crevice of Arishtah's tower--"  
"Sayst thou?" astonished cried the sorceress,  
"Woman of outer darkness, fiend of death,  
From what inhuman cave, what dire abyss,  
Hast thou invisible that spell o'erheard?  
What potent hand hath touched thy quickened corse,  
What song dissolved thy cerements, who unclosed  
Those faded eyes and filled them from the stars?  
But if with inextinguished light of life  
Thou breathest, soul and body unamerced,  
Then whence that invocation? who hath dared  
Those hallowed words, divulging, to profane?"

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

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

"What then?"

"The tongue

Of Dalica has then our rites divulged."

"Whose rites?"

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

"Never."

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

"I am,

Woman, and who art thou?"

With close embrace,

Clung the Masarian round her neck, and cried:

"Art thou then not my sister? ah, I fear

The golden lamps and jewels of a court

Deprive thine eyes of strength and purity.

O Dalica, mine watch the waning moon,

For ever patient in our mother's art,

And rest on Heaven suspended, where the founts

Of Wisdom rise, where sound the wings of Power;

Studies intense of strong and stern delight!

And thou too, Dalica, so many years

Weaned from the bosom of thy native land,

Returnest back and seekest true repose.

Oh, what more pleasant than the short-breathed sigh

When laying down your burden at the gate,

And dizzy with long wandering, you embrace

The cool and quiet of a homespun bed."

"Alas," said Dalica, "though all commend

This choice, and many meet with no control,

Yet none pursue it! Age by Care oppressed

Feels for the couch, and drops into the grave.

The tranquil scene lies further still from Youth:

Frenzied Ambition and desponding Love

Consume Youth's fairest flowers; compared with Youth

Age has a something something like repose.

Myrthyr, I seek not here a boundary

Like the horizon, which, as you advance,

Keeping its form and colour, yet recedes;

But mind my errand, and my suit perform.

Twelve years ago Charoba first could speak:

If her indulgent father asked her name,

She would indulge him too, and would reply

'What? why, Charoba!' raised with sweet surprise,

And proud to shine a teacher in her turn.

Show her the graven sceptre; what its use?

'Twas to beat dogs with, and to gather flies.

She thought the crown a plaything to amuse

Herself, and not the people, for she thought

Who mimic infant words might infant toys:

But while she watched grave elders look with awe

On such a bauble, she withheld her breath;

She was afraid her parents should suspect

They had caught childhood from her in a kiss;

She blushed for shame, and feared--for she believed.

Yet was not courage wanting in the child.



No; I have often seen her with both hands  
Shake a dry crocodile of equal height,  
And listen to the shells within the scales,  
And fancy there was life, and yet apply  
The jagged jaws wide open to her ear.  
Past are three summers since she first beheld  
The ocean; all around the child await  
Some exclamation of amazement here:  
She coldly said, her long-lashed eyes abased,  
    'Is this the mighty ocean? is this all!'  
That wondrous soul Charoba once possessed,  
Capacious then as earth or heaven could hold,  
Soul discontented with capacity,  
Is gone, I fear, for ever. Need I say  
She was enchanted by the wicked spells  
Of Gebir, whom with lust of power inflamed  
The western winds have landed on our coast?  
I since have watched her in each lone retreat,  
Have heard her sigh and soften out the name,  
Then would she change it for Egyptian sounds  
More sweet, and seem to taste them on her lips,  
Then loathe them--Gebir, Gebir still returned.  
Who would repine, of reason not bereft!  
For soon the sunny stream of youth runs down,  
And not a gadfly streaks the lake beyond.  
Lone in the gardens, on her gathered vest  
How gently would her languid arm recline!  
How often have I seen her kiss a flower,  
And on cool mosses press her glowing cheek!  
Nor was the stranger free from pangs himself.  
Whether by spell imperfect, or while brewed  
The swelling herbs infected him with foam,  
Oft have the shepherds met him wandering  
Through unfrequented paths, oft overheard  
Deep groans, oft started from soliloquies  
Which they believe assuredly were meant  
For spirits who attended him unseen.  
But when from his illuded eyes retired  
That figure Fancy fondly chose to raise,  
He clasped the vacant air and stood and gazed;  
Then owning it was folly, strange to tell,  
Burst into peals of laughter at his woes.  
Next, when his passion had subsided, went  
Where from a cistern, green and ruined, oozed  
A little rill, soon lost; there gathered he  
Violets, and harebells of a sister bloom,  
Twining complacently their tender stems  
With plants of kindest pliability.  
These for a garland woven, for a crown  
He platted pithy rushes, and ere dusk  
The grass was whitened with their roots nipped off.  
These threw he, finished, in the little rill  
And stood surveying them with steady smile:

But such a smile as that of Gebir bids  
To Comfort a defiance, to Despair  
A welcome, at whatever hour she please.  
Had I observed him I had pitied him;  
I have observed Charoba, I have asked  
If she loved Gebir.

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

"Resolved indeed," cried Myrthyr, nought surprised,  
"Precious my arts! I could without remorse  
Kill, though I hold thee dearer than the day,  
E'en thee thyself, to exercise my arts.  
Look yonder! mark yon pomp of funeral!  
Is this from fortune or from favouring stars?  
Dalica, look thou yonder, what a train!  
What weeping! Oh, what luxury! Come, haste,  
Gather me quickly up these herbs I dropped,  
And then away--hush! I must unobserved  
From those two maiden sisters pull the spleen:  
Dissemblers! how invidious they surround  
The virgin's tomb, where all but virgins weep."

"Nay, hear me first," cried Dalica; "'tis hard  
To perish to attend a foreign king."

"Perish! and may not then mine eye alone  
Draw out the venom drop, and yet remain  
Enough? the portion cannot be perceived."

Away she hastened with it to her home,  
And, sprinkling thrice flesh sulphur o'er the hearth,  
Took up a spindle with malignant smile,  
And pointed to a woof, nor spake a word;  
'Twas a dark purple, and its dye was dread.

Plunged in a lonely house, to her unknown,  
Now Dalica first trembled: o'er the roof  
Wandered her haggard eyes--'twas some relief.  
The massy stones, though hewn most roughly, showed  
The hand of man had once at least been there:  
But from this object sinking back amazed,  
Her bosom lost all consciousness, and shook  
As if suspended in unbounded space.  
Her thus entranced the sister's voice recalled.  
"Behold it here dyed once again! 'tis done."  
Dalica stepped, and felt beneath her feet  
The slippery floor, with mouldered dust bestrewn;

But Myrthyr seized with bare bold-sinewed arm  
The grey cerastes, writhing from her grasp,  
And twisted off his horn, nor feared to squeeze  
The viscous poison from his glowing gums.  
Nor wanted there the root of stunted shrub  
Which he lays ragged, hanging o'er the sands,  
And whence the weapons of his wrath are death:  
Nor the blue urchin that with clammy fin  
Holds down the tossing vessel for the tides.

Together these her scient hand combined,  
And more she added, dared I mention more.  
Which done, with words most potent, thrice she dipped  
The reeking garb; thrice waved it through the air:  
She ceased; and suddenly the creeping wool  
Shrunk up with crisped dryness in her hands.  
"Take this," she cried, "and Gebir is no more."

#### SIXTH BOOK.

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

The brave Iberians far the beach o'erspread  
Ere dawn with distant awe; none hear the mew,  
None mark the curlew flapping o'er the field;  
Silence held all, and fond expectancy.  
Now suddenly the conch above the sea  
Sounds, and goes sounding through the woods profound.  
They, where they hear the echo, turn their eyes,  
But nothing see they, save a purple mist  
Roll from the distant mountain down the shore:  
It rolls, it sails, it settles, it dissolves--  
Now shines the nymph to human eye revealed,  
And leads her Tamar timorous o'er the waves.  
Immortals crowding round congratulate  
The shepherd; he shrinks back, of breath bereft:  
His vesture clinging closely round his limbs  
Unfelt, while they the whole fair form admire,  
He fears that he has lost it, then he fears

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

Darken and widen: yes, proud-hearted man!

The sea-bird rises as the billows rise;

Nor otherwise when mountain floods descend

Smiles the unsullied lotus glossy-haired.

Thou, claiming all things, leanest on thy claim

Till overwhelmed through incompliciency.

Tamar, some silent tempest gathers round!"

"Round whom?" retorted Tamar; "thou describe  
The danger, I will dare it."

"Who will dare  
What is unseen?"

"The man that is unblessed."

"But wherefore thou? It threatens not thyself,  
Nor me, but Gebir and the Gadite host."

"The more I know, the more a wretch am I."  
Groaned deep the troubled youth, "still thou proceed."

"Oh, seek not destined evils to divine,  
Found out at last too soon! cease here the search,

'Tis vain, 'tis impious, 'tis no gift of mine:

I will impart far better, will impart

What makes, when winter comes, the sun to rest

So soon on ocean's bed his paler brow,

And night to tarry so at spring's return.

And I will tell sometimes the fate of men

Who loosed from drooping neck the restless arm

Adventurous, ere long nights had satisfied

The sweet and honest avarice of love;

How whirlpools have absorbed them, storms o'erwhelmed,

And how amid their struggles and their prayers

The big wave blackened o'er the mouths supine:

Then, when my Tamar trembles at the tale,

Kissing his lips half open with surprise,

Glance from the gloomy story, and with glee

Light on the fairer fables of the gods.

Thus we may sport at leisure where we go  
Where, loved by Neptune and the Naiad, loved  
By pensive Dryad pale, and Oread

The spritely nymph whom constant Zephyr woos,

Rhine rolls his beryl-coloured wave; than Rhine

What river from the mountains ever came

More stately! most the simple crown adorns

Of rushes and of willows intertwined

With here and there a flower: his lofty brow

Shaded with vines and mistletoe and oak

He rears, and mystic bards his fame resound.

Or gliding opposite, th' Illyrian gulf

Will harbour us from ill." While thus she spake,

She touched his eyelashes with libant lip,

And breathed ambrosial odours, o'er his cheek

Celestial warmth suffusing: grief dispersed,

And strength and pleasure beamed upon his brow.

Then pointed she before him: first arose

To his astonished and delighted view

The sacred isle that shrines the queen of love.  
It stood so near him, so acute each sense,  
That not the symphony of lutes alone,  
Or coo serene or billing strife of doves,  
But murmurs, whispers, nay the very sighs  
Which he himself had uttered once, he heard.  
Next, but long after and far off, appear  
The cloud-like cliffs and thousand towers of Crete,  
And further to the right, the Cyclades:  
Phoebus had raised and fixed them, to surround  
His native Delos and aerial fane.  
He saw the land of Pelops, host of gods,  
Saw the steep ridge where Corinth after stood  
Beckoning the serious with the smiling arts  
Into the sunbright bay; unborn the maid  
That to assure the bent-up hand unskilled  
Looked oft, but oftener fearing who might wake.  
He heard the voice of rivers; he descried  
Pindan Peneus and the slender nymphs  
That tread his banks but fear the thundering tide;  
These, and Amphrysos and Apidanus  
And poplar-crowned Spercheus, and reclined  
On restless rocks Enipeus, where the winds  
Scattered above the weeds his hoary hair.  
Then, with Pirene and with Panope,  
Evenus, troubled from paternal tears,  
And last was Achelous, king of isles.  
Zacynthus here, above rose Ithaca,  
Like a blue bubble floating in the bay.  
Far onward to the left a glimmering light  
Glanced out oblique, nor vanished; he inquired  
Whence that arose, his consort thus replied -  
"Behold the vast Eridanus! ere long  
We may again behold him and rejoice.  
Of noble rivers none with mightier force  
Rolls his unwearied torrent to the main."  
And now Sicilian Etna rose to view:  
Darkness with light more horrid she confounds,  
Baffles the breath and dims the sight of day.  
Tamar grew giddy with astonishment  
And, looking up, held fast the bridal vest;  
He heard the roar above him, heard the roar  
Beneath, and felt it too, as he beheld,  
Hurl, from earth's base, rocks, mountains, to the skies.  
Meanwhile the nymph had fixed her eyes beyond,  
As seeing somewhat, not intent on aught.  
He, more amazed than ever, then exclaimed,  
"Is there another flaming isle? or this  
Illusion, thus passed over unobserved?"  
"Look yonder," cried the nymph, without reply,  
"Look yonder!" Tamar looked, and saw afar  
Where the waves whitened on the desert shore.  
When from amid grey ocean first he caught

The heights of Calpe, saddened he exclaimed,  
"Rock of Iberia! fixed by Jove and hung  
With all his thunder-hearing clouds, I hail  
Thy ridges rough and cheerless! what though Spring  
Nor kiss thy brow nor cool it with a flower,  
Yet will I hail thee, hail thy flinty couch,  
Where Valour and where Virtue have reposed."

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

And now the chariot of the Sun descends,  
The waves rush hurried from his foaming steeds,  
Smoke issues from their nostrils at the gate,  
Which when they enter, with huge golden bar  
Atlas and Calpe close across the sea.

#### SEVENTH BOOK.

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

Driven with that weak blast which Winter leaves  
Closing his palace gates on Caucasus,  
Oft hath a berry risen forth a shade;  
From the same parent plant another lies  
Deaf to the daily call of weary hind;  
Zephyrs pass by and laugh at his distress.  
By every lake's and every river's side  
The nymphs and Naiads teach Equality;  
In voices gently querulous they ask,  
"Who would with aching head and toiling arms  
Bear the full pitcher to the stream far off?  
Who would, of power intent on high emprise,

Deem less the praise to fill the vacant gulf  
Then raise Charybdis upon Etna's brow?"  
Amid her darkest caverns most retired,  
Nature calls forth her filial elements  
To close around and cruel that monster VOID:  
Fire, springing fierce from his resplendent throne,  
And Water, dashing the devoted wretch  
Woundless and whole with iron-coloured mace,  
Or whirling headlong in his war-belt's fold.  
Mark well the lesson, man! and spare thy kind.  
Go, from their midnight darkness wake the woods,  
Woo the lone forest in her last retreat:  
Many still bend their beauteous heads unblest  
And sigh aloud for elemental man.  
Through palaces and porches evil eyes  
Light upon e'en the wretched, who have fled  
The house of bondage or the house of birth;  
Suspensions, murmurs, treacheries, taunts, retorts,  
Attend the brighter banners that invade;  
And the first horn of hunter, pale with want,  
Sounds to the chase, the second to the war.  
The long awaited day at last arrived,  
When, linked together by the seven-armed Nile,  
Egypt with proud Iberia should unite.  
Here the Tartesian, there the Gadite tents  
Rang with impatient pleasure: here engaged  
Woody Nebrissa's quiver-bearing crew,  
Contending warm with amicable skill;  
While they of Durius raced along the beach  
And scattered mud and jeers on all behind.  
The strength of Baetis too removed the helm  
And stripped the corslet off, and staunched the foot  
Against the mossy maple, while they tore  
Their quivering lances from the hissing wound.  
Others push forth the prows of their compeers,  
And the wave, parted by the pouncing beak,  
Swells up the sides, and closes far astern:  
The silent oars now dip their level wings,  
And weary with strong stroke the whitening wave.  
Others, afraid of tardiness, return:  
Now, entering the still harbour, every surge  
Runs with a louder murmur up their keel,  
And the slack cordage rattles round the mast.  
Sleepless with pleasure and expiring fears  
Had Gebir risen ere the break of dawn,  
And o'er the plains appointed for the feast  
Hurried with ardent step: the swains admired  
What so transversely could have swept the dew;  
For never long one path had Gebir trod,  
Nor long, unheeding man, one pace preserved.  
Not thus Charoba: she despaired the day:  
The day was present; true; yet she despaired.  
In the too tender and once tortured heart



Doubts gather strength from habit, like disease;  
Fears, like the needle verging to the pole,  
Tremble and tremble into certainty.  
How often, when her maids with merry voice  
Called her, and told the sleepless queen 'twas morn,  
How often would she feign some fresh delay,  
And tell them (though they saw) that she arose.  
Next to her chamber, closed by cedar doors  
A bath of purest marble, purest wave,  
On its fair surface bore its pavement high:  
Arabian gold encased the crystal roof,  
With fluttering boys adorned and girls unrobed:  
These, when you touch the quiet water, start  
From their aerial sunny arch, and pant  
Entangled mid each other's flowery wreaths,  
And each pursuing is in turn pursued.  
Here came at last, as ever wont at morn,  
Charoba: long she lingered at the brink,  
Often she sighed, and, naked as she was,  
Sat down, and leaning on the couch's edge,  
On the soft inward pillow of her arm  
Rested her burning cheek: she moved her eyes;  
She blushed; and blushing plunged into the wave.

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

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

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

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

When thunder overhangs the fountain's head,  
Losing its wonted freshness every stream  
Grows turbid, grows with sickly warmth suffused:  
Thus were the brave Iberians when they saw  
The king of nations from his throne descend.  
Scarcely, with pace uneven, knees unnerved,  
Reached he the waters: in his troubled ear  
They sounded murmuring drearily; they rose  
Wild, in strange colours, to his parching eyes;  
They seemed to rush around him, seemed to lift  
From the receding earth his helpless feet.

He fell--Charoba shrieked aloud--she ran--  
Frantic with fears and fondness, mazed with woe,  
Nothing but Gebir dying she beheld.  
The turban that betrayed its golden charge  
Within, the veil that down her shoulders hung,  
All fallen at her feet! the furthest wave  
Creeping with silent progress up the sand,  
Glided through all, and raised their hollow folds.  
In vain they bore him to the sea, in vain  
Rubbed they his temples with the briny warmth:  
He struggled from them, strong with agony,  
He rose half up, he fell again, he cried  
"Charoba! O Charoba!" She embraced  
His neck, and raising on her knee one arm,  
Sighed when it moved not, when it fell she shrieked,  
And clasping loud both hands above her head,  
She called on Gebir, called on earth, on heaven.

"Who will believe me? what shall I protest?  
How innocent, thus wretched! God of gods,  
Strike me--who most offend thee most defy--  
Charoba most offends thee--strike me, hurl  
From this accursed land, this faithless throne.  
O Dalica! see here the royal feast!  
See here the gorgeous robe! you little thought  
How have the demons dyed that robe with death.  
Where are ye, dear fond parents! when ye heard  
My feet in childhood pat the palace-floor,  
Ye started forth and kissed away surprise:  
Will ye now meet me! how, and where, and when?  
And must I fill your bosom with my tears,  
And, what I never have done, with your own!  
Why have the gods thus punished me? what harm  
Have ever I done them? have I profaned  
Their temples, asked too little, or too much?  
Proud if they granted, grieved if they withheld?  
O mother! stand between your child and them!  
Appease them, soothe them, soften their revenge,  
Melt them to pity with maternal tears--  
Alas, but if you cannot! they themselves  
Will then want pity rather than your child.  
O Gebir! best of monarchs, best of men,  
What realm hath ever thy firm even hand  
Or lost by feebleness or held by force!  
Behold thy cares and perils how repaid!  
Behold the festive day, the nuptial hour!"

Thus raved Charoba: horror, grief, amaze,  
Pervaded all the host; all eyes were fixed;  
All stricken motionless and mute: the feast  
Was like the feast of Cepheus, when the sword  
Of Phineus, white with wonder, shook restrained,  
And the hilt rattled in his marble hand.  
She heard not, saw not, every sense was gone;  
One passion banished all; dominion, praise,

The world itself was nothing. Senseless man!  
What would thy fancy figure now from worlds?  
There is no world to those that grieve and love.  
She hung upon his bosom, pressed his lips,  
Breathed, and would feign it his that she resorbed;  
She chafed the feathery softness of his veins,  
That swelled out black, like tendrils round their vase  
After libation: lo! he moves! he groans!  
He seems to struggle from the grasp of death.  
Charoba shrieked and fell away, her hand  
Still clasping his, a sudden blush o'erspread  
Her pallid humid cheek, and disappeared.  
'Twas not the blush of shame--what shame has woe? -  
'Twas not the genuine ray of hope, it flashed  
With shuddering glimmer through unscattered clouds,  
It flashed from passions rapidly opposed.

Never so eager, when the world was waves,  
Stood the less daughter of the ark, and tried  
(Innocent this temptation!) to recall  
With folded vest and casting arm the dove;  
Never so fearful, when amid the vines  
Rattled the hail, and when the light of heaven  
Closed, since the wreck of Nature, first eclipsed,  
As she was eager for his life's return,  
As she was fearful how his groans might end.  
They ended: cold and languid calm succeeds;  
His eyes have lost their lustre, but his voice  
Is not unheard, though short: he spake these words:

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

Footnote:

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

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

End of the Project Gutenberg eText Gebir

and sighs

I consecrate to thee."

End of the Project Gutenberg eText Gebir