

Close by thy side; I am so happy here,  
Where I can read thy fond and smiling eyes,  
And hear thy song of love. Send me not hence  
To dwell in that proud palace, whose high towers  
Rise like tall giants 'gainst the dark blue sky.  
When thou dost take me to our palace roof  
At twilight's hour, I look at them with fear,  
And fancy oft I hear my brothers' cries,  
And my fair sisters, who as Billu says,  
On one dread night were murdered in their sleep,  
All by my wicked grandam, who must be  
As terrible as Endor's wrinkled witch.

JEHOSHEDA.

Yet that proud palace, which thou drest so much  
Is a fair dwelling—and hath fountains bright  
To cool its marble courts, and garden glades,  
Where flowers of every clime their perfume shed,  
And stately trees, from the tall cedar  
To the lowliest shrub earth's bosom bears,  
Spring graceful forth.

There dwelt thy father,  
There thy mother died, in her sweet youth,  
A flower of beauty blighted in its bloom.  
There perished all thy kindred, by her hand,  
Whose presence now pollutes those regal halls.  
But soon, the vengeance justly due her crimes,  
Shall drive her forth, to meet a righteous doom,  
And thou whose heritage this kingdom is,  
Shall enter in, to sit where David sat,  
And with his line, safety and peace restore  
To every palace home, and cottage hearth  
Throughout the land.

JEHOASH, (*thoughtfully*).

Wilt thou go with me,  
To that other home, where I must dwell,  
When I a king shall be?

JEHOSHEDA.

Aye, my sweet boy—  
And all whom thou dost love—all the fond hearts,  
That cluster now around thy daily path,  
Shall there be with thee, shedding o'er thy life  
Affection's balm, and filling thy young soul  
With noble thoughts, and such resolves as make  
Kings great and good, and those they govern  
blest.

JEHOASH, (*with animation*).

Well, thou shalt see, when I am tall and strong,  
And well can bear the weight of spear and shield,  
How brave I'll be. I'll rein my war-steed  
With a touch, as light as that, which holds  
My pretty mule in check. And chariots too,  
I'll have—and gardens, beautiful as those  
Planted in Etham by King Solomon,  
Where thou hast told me, grew such wondrous  
plants,  
And cedars lofty as the temple roof.

JEHOSHEDA.

Yes, all that filled the soul with sweet delight,  
Or to the grosser senses ministered joy,  
This mighty monarch gathered round his throne;  
Yet when life's fitful dream drew to a close,  
What said he then? That "all was vanity!"  
And to the spirit, formed for higher things,  
Vexation sore, and weariness of heart.  
Fear God! my child; walk in his holy ways;  
Fulfil his will, preserve his worship pure,  
Guard thy own soul from sin, and rule thy people  
With a righteous rod. This is true wisdom;  
And the noblest aim of a good king.  
Be this then, thine, and tongues unnumbered  
Shall speak forth thy praise, in tones as sweet  
As Solomon's is sung. Come forth with me;  
Low sinks the sun, the garden walks are cool,  
And thou shalt hear, amid their pleasant shades,  
The counsels of my love.

(*She leads him out.*)

SCENE—*The court of the queen's palace, filled with armed soldiery. Athaliah descends from a balcony, and appears suddenly before them, her countenance pale with rage and terror, as she vehemently addresses them.*

ATHALIAH.

Said I not so? The city's in revolt!  
The traitor-priest Jehoida, hath unlocked  
The temple's armory, and taken thence,  
Stores of equipments for his rebel crew,  
And with his armed myrmidons, each gate  
He now defends. Hark, to those deafening shouts!  
Gods! how the tumult swells! If ye be men,  
Soldiers, whose duty 'tis to guard your queen,  
Her word obey. Rush on where she shall lead,  
Heed not their spears, but mark how at my frown  
Their serried ranks shall quick as thought divide,  
For my free passage through. This traitor vile,  
This base, seditious leader, shall be seized,  
He, who would stir the people to rebel,  
That he may gain thereby his own foul ends.

JMLAH (*enters the court abruptly, pale and disordered.*)

Madam, thy crown is lost! thy sceptre gone!  
And thou, no more a queen, must bend to fate.  
Hear how they shout aloud "God save our king!"  
Again they cry "Long may Jehoash reign!"  
Thy fears were just—one of that royal line  
Thou deemed extinct, escaped thy wrathful sword,  
And by Jehosheda till now concealed,  
Lives to demand the goodly heritage  
By thee usurped. Thronged is the temple—  
And each avenue, and crowded street,  
Shews but a living sea of faces, raised  
In thankfulness to heaven—faces of joy.