

And then, at last, comes the change. She forgets self, and sees the larger meaning of her death:

Were it not great to die for Israel,—  
To free a father from a flood of woe?

Having cast the die, she turns to her maidens and takes leave of them:

Now is the burden of it all "No more,"  
No more shall, wandering, we go gather flowers,  
Nor tune our voices by the river's brink,  
Nor in the grotto-fountain cool our limbs.

The priests enter, and she begs for a short respite.

Spare me some little moments more of life . . . .  
Hark! how the wood awakes, and starts to sing  
A solemn anthem, and remotely hums  
The mellow tumbling of the waterfall.  
All beats with life, all yet is youthful, and  
Rejoicing in the trust of coming days. . . . .

Then, as she makes ready to go with the priests, she says:

Brief are the pangs of death; the bliss enduring  
Of having bought my country her repose,  
My sire some peace, and left him undishonoured.

Jephthah, in his agony, urges the priests to search the law, if there be not some way of escape from the sacrifice.

They reply:

Nothing, once dedicate to Heaven, returns;  
Nought, so to Heaven devoted, is withdrawn,  
However costly, or however dear:—

Jephthah's daughter takes leave of her father, and urges him to comfort her mother.

Farewell, farewell,  
To both, to all . . . .

And then the gates of the future are unlocked, and she sees herself shrined in the hearts of youth and maiden,—

Recording how, inviolable, stood  
The bounds of Israel, by my blood secured.  
Nor more shall they thus celebrate myself  
Than laud my sire: who, in his day of might,  
Swore, not in vain, unto the Lord, who gave  
Him victory, although he took his child:—  
Took her, but gave him, in her stead, his country.  
With a renowned, imperishable name.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is great art in the development of the daughter's feelings from her first natural terror of death to the hallowed resignation with which she finally prepares for it, still casting a sad, submissive glance on the fair world she quits . . . . There is a sense, too, of noble pride in her sacrifice: she gives herself for her country no less than for her father. . . . There is no need after our quotations, to say that the character of Jephthah's daughter displays both imagination and feeling."—*Athenaeum* (London).