

saved he must stoop to make the first overtures and to own his injustice by setting his prisoner free from "these foul bonds."

When Io, to whom the seer has unfolded the long tale of the labours which still await her, maddened by the recital has been whirled away from sight by the same storm of frenzy which first brought her on the scene, the passionate defiance of Titan breaks out more wildly than ever. He now breathes mere fury against his all-powerful foe. All thought of final reconciliation has vanished. The only issue now contemplated of the danger which lies in the path of the tyrant is his hideous ruin. "Let him sit secure, confiding in his aery rumblings and brandishing his fiery bolts, . . . by his own deeds he is preparing for himself an adversary who shall find a flame to blind his lightnings, a crash which shall out roar his thunders." Let him revel as he will in the sweets of his brief omnipotence; its date will soon be out, and he shall be cast into much more intolerable, more galling bonds than these to which he has doomed Prometheus; "the curse of his father Cronos wherewith he cursed him, as he fell from his ancient throne, shall be fulfilled to the uttermost."

These high words are heard in heaven. The messenger Hermes is sent to extort by stern threats from Prometheus a full statement of the secret which he vaunts so loudly. This is the third and last "wrestling bout," and it ends as did the others. The indomitable pride of the Titan soars up in its fiercest flare of defiance and hate. Hermes is treated with incisive scorn as the "menial," the "courier," the "lackey" of Zeus; he must endure to hear the taunt "I would not exchange my misery for thy servitude." ("better to rule in hell than serve in heaven"), he is "flouted as though he were a child;" his warnings "vainly vex an ear deaf to his persuasions as a wave." Zeus, himself, is spoken of in words of contempt, loathing and defiance. Prometheus flings his Everlasting No in his face. In two things he puts his trust, the speedy fall of Zeus and his own immortality. "New gods your rule is new; ye think ye dwell in citadels secure from sorrow. Have I not seen two lords hurled from thence? Aye and a third I shall yet live to see, even him that now rules, most ignominiously, most swiftly of them all." Let Zeus do his worst, "fling his curled two-edged bolts, shake the empyrean with thunder and the rack of savage winds and choke the paths of the constellations with his ruffian surge; let him with the ruthless swing of destiny lift my body on high and plunge it into the black depths of Tartarus; yet shall he never slay me." It is the most magnificent defiance in literature; all the material forces of the universe united in one arm are impotent to crush the rebellion of

this unconquerable soul. It laughs at them, annihilates them. Hermes after a solemn denunciation of doom gives up his task. No sooner is he gone than his menaces are realized. "The earth rocks, the muffled roar of the thunder bellows; the quick cross-lightnings flame and flash; the dust is swirled along by whirlwinds; the blasts of all the winds leap forth in civil strife one against the other; the ocean is mingled with the height of heaven." Prometheus' rock is shattered by a thunderbolt, the earth gapes, and amid the ruins he sinks from view into the depths of Tartarus, his last words, heard through all the din and crash, a deep-mouthed protest against the "injustice" of his doom.

But is it "injustice?" The end which the fragments of the Prometheus Unbound enable us to see will show. After many thousands of years Prometheus once more emerges into the light of day. He is now fettered to a rock in Mount Caucasus; visited every third day by the "dusky hound of Zeus," the eagle which, as in Hesiod, gnaws his liver, the seat of his pride. His kinsman, the Titans, blind powers who had erred in ignorance, not so deeply punished therefore as the rebel seer, long ago indeed with Cronos their king, set free by Zeus and reconciled to him, come from their happy islands in the western sea, as the Ocean Nymphs once did, to lighten the anguish of the sufferer by their sympathy and doubtless to open to him a door of hope in that mercy which they had experienced themselves. Prometheus shows a somewhat chastened mood. He who had boasted of that immortality which even Zeus could not take from him, now longs to die and bemoans that he is shut in outer darkness, "far from the glad sway of Jove," as Cicero translates. As Io before, beloved of Zeus and persecuted by the wiles of jealous Here, had been led to the scene of Prometheus' torment, and had learnt from him the remnant of her wanderings, so her descendant Heracles, the well-beloved son of Zeus, he too, the victim of Here's jealousy, reaches him now and receives a full account of the way that still lies before him in his unending labours for the good of man. But Heracles is very different from Io. She was a weak woman, a mere passive sufferer, fretting even to frenzy against a hard fate which seemed to her a wanton cruelty, for great ends of which she knew nothing. Heracles is a man, a man in whom the god is latent, with open eyes and willing heart, bending his neck to the yoke of a sorrow which is to be swallowed up in victory. His presence then will not madden and inflame, but work reconciliation and deliverance. Before him the Titan's bitter pride melts into a new passion which drops into that scarred and wasted heart like cooling dew, into love. He addresses Heracles: "O best-loved son of deep detested sire." His