

Poetry.

SAMSON.

From far and near is gathered
In one assemblage gay,
With boastful pomp and revelry
To hold high holiday,
Of wealthy, noble, beautiful,
All that Philistia hath
In Ekron, Ashdod, Ascalon,
In Gaza and in Gath.

After the feast, as they who goad
The lion in his cage,
They bring the man of Israel forth
To gloat upon his rage.
But proud he stood, as Lucifer
Upon the Stygian lake,
Or Saturn when his realms were lost :
And to himself he spake.

‘Ye bring me forth to make you sport,
From grinding at the mill :
My strength is shorn, my eyes are out
But yet, ye fear me still.
Ye bring me forth to make you sport
Were I what once I was,
Fine sport it were !—But mine the trust,
Jehovah’s is the cause.
Ye bring me forth to make you sport —
Beware the Avenger’s rod.
Lest, while ye sport with Israel’s Prince
Ye sport with Israel’s God !’

‘The strong man, striving from his
birth,
With love, like chains, is bound,
But finds the hope and love of earth
As vain as I have found :
But, when his life’s one love is o’er,
He finds some noble deed.
To crown his name for evermore
With glory, virtue’s meed ;

And I, though perishing, will seek
Vengeance for Israel’s wrong ;
If love hath made the strong man weak,
‘Twill make the weak man strong’—

My country, Israel, could’st thou give
The life that’s been awry !—
For thee ‘tis now too late to live,
But not too late to die.’

His proud tormentors point and nod
And mock and laugh right well ;
And when he prayed, ‘Jehovah God,
Avenge thy Israel,
And let thy strong right arm be
shown.’

They saw his changing mien,
They saw him clasp the massive stone,
They saw him forward lean ;
And with loud scorn and mirth defied,
And spat upon his brow—
Next instant on their gods they cried :
But where is Dagon now ?
And where are all Philistia’s gods,
Those things of wood and clay ?
Jehovah breaks them like the clods
And wipes their names away.
For, quivering, tottering, far and wide,
Walls, galleries, columns, floors,
Then crashing down from every side,
The mighty structure pours
To earth her vain and miscreant hordes,
Her giant bars and stones,
Her shrieking women, cursing lords,
Her idols and her thrones.

He, radiant with triumphant will,
‘Neath the great fabric fell—
‘Jehovah, Thou art mighty still !
Avenged, O Israel !’

WILLIAM MACKERACHER.