

JAEI AND SISERA.

BY IANTHE.

'Tis burning noon on Kishon's banks,
And Tabor's trees scarce yield a shade
Unto the tall and stalwart ranks
Of Israel's hosts, for war arrayed;
Yet heed they not that scorching heat,
Their tyrant foes they long to meet.

Each close knit brow and clenched hand,
Bears witness of their deadly hate
To those for whom they waiting stand;
Resolved once more to brave their fate:
Nor need they fear—the day is theirs,
The Lord of Battles hears their prayers.

And hark! a deep and sullen sound
That seems like echoing thunder-peals,
Is heard, while trembles now the ground
At roll of iron chariot wheels;
At last the Canaanites appear,
And the loud war cry meets their ear!

Fierce is the fight, no mercy craved
Nor any given on either side,
And every danger now is braved;
That crushed may be the Gentiles' pride:
Those Jewish arms are nerved by Heaven
With strength this day in mercy given.

Now many a helmed head lies low,
So lately there erect with life;
And shield, and spear, and broken bow
Are scattered o'er the scene of strife:
His chariot, Sisera forsakes,
And through the field his flight he takes.

Flung down in haste, are sword and lance,
And all that can his steps detain,
And oft he flings a hurried glance
Back to those heaps of warriors slain,
Cursing his gods, who failed to save
Him from disgrace, them from a grave.

Fearing pursuit, he wanders on
Far from the spot, o'er hill and dale,
And sandy plain, till sunk the sun,
And all his strength begins to fail,
While his tired limbs their task refuse,
Yet dreads he still the vengeful Jews.

A lonely tent beneath a palm,
Seems to invite his weary feet,
The thought of rest to him is balm;
And, coming forth his steps to greet,
Appears a form, well known of yore,
Tho' now so changed recalled no more.

The kindly words of greeting spoke,
His burning thirst is soon relieved,
And covered with an ample cloak,
He feels from shameful death reprieved;
He thought not that stern passions shook
That woman's frame—so calm her look.

Tho' time and grief had marked that face,
That even to him it seemed unknown,
And in its lines he failed to trace
The beauty that once all outshone;
They had not stolen memory's power,
And o'er her heart it ruled that hour.

A vision of her happy youth,
Before her soul is rising fast
Of bygone hours, when on his truth
She fondly fixed her hopes, and cast
All other thoughts away, and he
Loved her, so dreamed she, tenderly.

With quivering lip and flashing eye,
On the tired soldier then she gazed,
As she recalled how, when his eye
Was weary of the charms he praised,
And all her peace for e'er was gone,
He left her wretched and alone!

For vengeance deep she oft had sighed,
But all in vain until to-day,
And as he in his manhood's pride
Lay slumbering there, she strove to pray
That her hand might not fail, when she
Robbed him of life so ruthlessly.

Half trembling lest she might relent,
Or he, awaking, should depart;
She quickly looks around the tent,
Seeking a knife to reach his heart
None meets her eye, but on the ground
Hammer and nails lie strewn around.

Naught else she finds. With purpose fixed,
She firmly grasps each deadly tool;
And hate with pity all unmixed
Keeps her arm strong and forehead cool,
One moment—calm the sleeper's breath,
The next—a hush!—What is it?—Death!

FORGIVENESS.

BY WILLIAM KENNEDY.

Oh, wring the black drop from your heart
Before you kneel in prayer!
You do but mock the Mercy-Seat
If hatred linger there.
How can you ask offended Heaven
To clear your soul's deep debt,
If 'neath your ban lies brother man?—
Forgive, if not forget.

Remember, sons of earth are born
To sorrow and to sin;
That poor and rich to dust return,
A few brief years within.
For guests that crowd round life's strange board,
Joy's cups are thinly set;—
To poison them were fearful shame—
Forgive, if not forget.

In error, or in guiltiness,
If men have wrought thee wrong,
From way of wrath thy steps restrain—
In patience pass along.
Should retribution be thy right,
He will avenge thee yet,
Who mortal ill repayeth still—
Forgive, if not forget.

How pleasant when our orisons
We breathe at eventide,
To feel the heart untenanted
By anger or by pride!
Oh, blessed are the merciful,
Whose hopes on high are set!
Like them, release thy soul in peace—
Forgive, and thou'lt forget.