

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For *The Weekly Visitor*.

LIBERTY!

Magic word! for which nations fight and bleed,
Touch-stone of convulsions—harbinger of the
freed;

For which men leave their homes, their fortunes
and their all,
Their life's blood to offer and race to disenthral.

'Neath bird'ning chains a slave hath cried,
"Apply thy stripes to my bruised side,
I'll suffer thy wrath and content I'll be,
But give! Oh, give me! sweet liberty."

What our fathers' prospective vision beheld,
Our age has brought forth to the joy of the world;
Soon may all nations and people be free,
And bear the bright standard of true liberty.

While ages roll down Time's weary way,
And nations learn to own the Saviour's way,
Their anthems to the heavens still shall be
"All honour to the age that gave us liberty!"

MARCEA.

Reflections and Researches.

NUMBER I.

For *The Weekly Visitor*.JERUSALEM AND BABYLON:
THEIR ASPECT AND CAPTURE.

How magnificent and at the same time
how formidable was Jerusalem in her most
prosperous and complete state!

Situated upon the summit of three hills
the elevations added greatly to her charms.
Upon the least elevated of these were
clusters of neat, comfortable houses, team-
ing with inhabitants—the lower class of
citizens—those who found happiness in
poverty. Upon Mount Zion were more
noble edifices. There was the beautiful
citadel with its proud dome, its massive
pillars, its beautiful porches, and its mag-
nificent pinnacles. There, also, was the
royal palace with its long terraces, its
lofty porticoes, its sparkling fountains, and
its gilded furnishings—all befitting that
richest of all monarchs, the wisest of all
men. There, also, were the mansions of
the upper class of citizens, each approach-
ing, as near as funds allow, to the royal
palace in costliness and beauty. But upon
turning to Mount Moriah, the most
honored of the three, admiration is turned
to amazement; for upon its summit
towering far into the horizon—its golden
walls, its costly columns of brass and gold,
and its glittering spires—all shining from
the effulgence of the noon-day sun, and
gleaming a reflection of the glory and
splendor of that monarch of the day—
stands the most majestic, magnificent, and
stupendous of all structures—the Temple
of the Most High, showing forth in its
dazzling brightness, the glory, the majesty,

and the goodness of Him who dwelt therein.
The poet has given it justice thus—

"It stands before us

A mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles:
The very sun, as if he worshipped there,
Lingers upon the gilded cedar roofs,
And down the long and branching porticoes,
On every flowery sculptured capital,
Gilds the homage of his parting beams."

Situated as it was upon three hills, at the
foot of whose steep descent ran deep val-
leys which precluded possibility of attack
on all except the north side; and encircled
round about by a triple wall, thick, mas-
sive, and high, which, in its turn, was
fortified by numerous strong towers,—
well could the besieger, as he gazed on the
natural and artificial strength, and bold-
ness, magnificence, and beauty, exclaim:

"How boldly doth it front us—how majestically,
Like a luxurious vineyard, the hill side
is hung with marble fabrics like o'er line,
Terrace o'er terrace, nearer still and nearer
To the blue heavens. There bright and
sumptuous palace,

With cool and verdant gardens, interspersed
These towers of war that frown in many strength;
While over all hangs the rich and purple ore,
As conscious of its being her last farewell
Of light and glory to this faded city."

While thus so strong and so powerful, and
while still so beautiful and bright, her fate
was predicted thus: "Therefore, thus
saith the Lord of Hosts, Because ye have
not heard my words behold I will send
and take all the families of the north,
saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the
King of Babylon, my servant, and will
bring them against the land, and against
the inhabitants thereof, and against all
those nations round about, and will utterly
destroy them, and make them an astonish-
ment and an hissing and perpetual deo-
lation. Moreover, I will take from them
the voice of mirth, and the voice of glad-
ness, and the voice of the bridegroom, and
the sound of mill-stones, and the light of
the candle; and this whole land shall be a
desolation and an astonishment; and those
nations shall serve the King of Babylon
seventy years." This was declared unto
them when still powerful, and while they
were still continuing their sins, and at the
same time was the destruction of the op-
pressor, Babylon, predicted. The prophecy
quoted was fulfilled. The palaces were
plundered, the temple spoiled, and all but
a few of the poorest inhabitants carried
off to Babylon.

While in bondage how often would they
lament their inattention to the words of
the prophet—their non-compliance with
the commandments of the Lord as sent
through his servants the prophets. How
oft would they revert to days still further
gone, and reflect upon the words of other
servants of God who had spoken to them-
selves and to their fathers foretelling their
fate. And then how cheerfully would

the thought come—that a day of deliver-
ance was appointed, and that the Babylo-
nian dynasty would be hurled into
oblivion. That these things would come
to pass they were all perfectly sure.
Since the fulfilment of their part of the
prophecies they had firm faith in the rest.
But only those endowed with faith, such
as is inspired by God, could now believe
the city of the Chaldeans in any danger
of being taken, for at that time it was the
largest and the strongest, as well as the
most magnificent city known. Babylon
was fifty miles around the walls, which
were seventy-five feet thick, and a hundred
feet high, with one hundred brazen gates.
It could well boast of impregnability. If
ever faith was misplaced in walls built by
hands it was by these Babylonians. For
within this enclosure there could be no
famine felt—the ground encircled by this
massive wall being not all covered with
buildings there was abundance of space
left for cultivation, enough, indeed, to
supply the inhabitants with food. Nor
could there ever be scarcity of water, for
the ever flowing, the mighty Euphrates,
incessantly poured its waters through the
centre of the city. In the city were
numerous magnificent palaces (some for
the king, and others for his nobles), those
superb edifices rising story above story
toward the blue sky—with their flat roofs
covered with verdure, where plants,
shrubs, and trees in luxuriance grew, the
ever-famous, world-renowned hanging
gardens,—with their bold balconies, their
open porches, their spacious courts, and
large apartments, adorned, enriched, and
embellished by the magnificence, the
wealth, and the treasure of many neigh-
boring nations once mighty but now
humbled to the dust. Rows and streets
of these vast and elegant structures, vieing
with each other in size, in architecture,
beauty, and in costliness, are to be found
in various parts of the city; while in
others are seen multitudes of buildings of
humbler sort.

While the city was in the fullness of its
glory, while the citizens were still puffed
up with pride, while they thought them-
selves potent to grapple with any other
nation, while conquests were being made,
and booty continually came streaming in,
while the haughty masters looked down
in disdain at their Hebrew slaves, then
was the message of their fate sent, then
did the oppressed speak out the oppres-
sor's doom. The promise of their deliver-
ance, at a certain future time, now im-
plicitly believed in, was the captive's only
consolation, and while thinking of that, all
the various descriptions of the desolation,
and other denunciations of Babylon, by
various prophets, would come forcibly in