

It is growing dark.

At such a sunset I have been with Saul—
But saw it not. I only saw his eyes
And the wild beauty of his roaming locks,
And—Oh! there never was a man like Saul!
Strong arm, and gentle heart and tender ways
To win a woman's very soul, were his.
Then he would take my hand and look on me,
And whisper "Rizpah" Ah! those days are gone!
Why should I weep? was I not loved by Saul?
And Saul was king of all the Land of God.

"God save the king!" But hush! what noise was that?
Oh heaven! to think a mother's eyes should look
On such a sight! Away! vile carrion beast!
These are the sons of Saul,—poor Rizpah's sons,
O my dead darlings! O my only joy!
O sweet twin treasure of my lonely life,
Since that most mournful day upon Gilboa,
Torn from me thus!

I have no tears to shed.
O God! my heart is broken! Let me die!

Gilboa! David wrote a song on it,
And had it put in *Jasher*. "Weep for Saul,"
Armoni used to sing it to his harp.
Poor blackened lips!

I wonder if they dream,
My pretty children.
Come, Mephibosheth,
Here is your father say; "God save the King!"
The Gibeonites! Ah! that was long ago.
Why should they die for what they never did?
No; David never would consent to that!

Whose son is he, this youth? Dost know him, Abner?
Ha, Ha! they shout again. "God save the King."

Was I asleep? I came not here to sleep,
O poor old eyes, sorrow has made you weak,
My sons! No, naught has touched them O, how cold!
Cold, cold! O stars of God, have pity on me,
Poor lonely woman! O my sons, Saul's sons!
Kind stars, watch with me; let no evil beast
Rend that dear flesh. O God of Israel,
Pardon my sins! My heart is broken!

This is, in my humble judgment, the best among his
shorter poems—such exquisite torture and suffering it is
not easy to paint with a delicacy here shown, and still
maintain the tremendous power of the subject.

I. F. A. W.

ELEMENTS.

The first riddle we encounter in chemistry is, "What are the elements?" Of the attempts hitherto made to define or explain an element none seem to satisfy the human intellect. The text book tells us that an element is a body "which we are unable to split up." Such a definition is doubly unsatisfactory; it is provisional and may cease to-morrow to be applicable in any given case. This definition and all like it, takes it stand, not on any attribute of things to be defined, but on the limitations of human power: they are confessions of our intellectual impotence. Faraday once said to discoverer of an "element," "To discover a new element is a very fine thing, but if you could decompose an element, and tell us what it is made of, that would be a discovery, indeed, worth making." And this was no new speculation of Faraday's for he once before remarked: "For a time the desire was to add to the metals, now we wish to diminish their number." To decompose the metals to change them from one to another, and to realize the once absurd notion of transmutation are the problems now given to the chemist for solution. Mr. Norman Lockyer, has shown on good evidence, that in the heavenly bodies of the highest temperature a large number of our reputed elements are dissociated or rather have never been formed. If we adopt the assumption that the elements are absolutely and primordially distinct—that they existed as we now find them, prior to the origin of the stars, constituting the primal fire-mist—we are little, if any, the wiser. We look at their number and distinctive properties, and we ask are all these accidental or determinate? In other words might there as well have been 7, or 700, or 7000 distinct elements as the 70 (in round numbers) which we now commonly recognize? The number of the elements does not, indeed, commend itself to our reason from any extraneous consideration. Might their properties have conceivably differed from those which we actually observe? Are they formed by chance or do they constitute together a definite whole in which each has a proper part to play and from which none could be excluded without having a recognisable deficiency. Could not these elements have been evolved from some few antecedent forms of matter— or possible from only one such—just as it is now that all the innumerable variations of plants and animals have been developed from earlier forms of organic life. Evolution is above all things not fortuitous; the variation and development which we observe in the universe, run along certain fixed lines which have been preconceived and foreordained. To the careless eye design and evolution seem antagonistic; the more careful enquirer sees that evolution, steadily proceeding along an ascending scale of excellence, is the strongest argument in favour of a preconceived plan. Now as these facts in the distribution of organic forms are generally considered to rank among the weightiest