

Shall I go? Yes. And shall my sons too? No!  
 I will not send my children to their death!  
 I will recall them, — oh, but to what end  
 Shall I recall them, has not Samuel said,  
 To day they march with me unto the dead?  
 Oh, thither march then, sons; — oh, sons, forgive me,  
 Who utter towards you such unnatural words!  
 Oh, hell, — oh earth, oh air, forget, forget them;  
 Or, if you cannot do it, still believe  
 Heaven spake, not I! Oh, hell, upbraid me not,  
 Nor, loathing, spit upon me thy fierce scorn,  
 When, like a triple-offspring-murderer,  
 I enter thee. I come, I come;  
 I feel the dreadful drawing of my doom.  
 Horror! well may I at myself take fright,  
 When heaven with hell does thus its cause unite  
 To crush me, and to turn me, at the last,  
 Into a monster at itself aghast!  
 Oh, wretched children, oh, more wretched sire! —  
 Oh, that I might this moment here expire.

ABNER, (*aside.*)

What can this strange commotion in him mean?

SAUL, (*aside.*)

What shall I do? see there how Abner stands  
 With wondering visage and with slackening hands.  
 I must speak to him. Abner, fare thee well,  
 Farewell, dear Abner, understand me aright,  
 Do thou farewell, coz, in the coming fight. —  
 No further colloquy at the present, go,  
 And let thy answer fall upon the foe.

ABNER, (*aside.*)

I must obey him, yet am loth to do it.  
 I'll be obedient, and may I not rue it,  
 For never since I knew him have I seen  
 Him wearing such a strange, distracted mien.

*Exit.*

SAUL.

How silently he went, how sad! Why let it be,  
 'Twere best that we thus parted; yet I had  
 Thought to have parted otherwise with him,  
 Still let us part so. I am now alone,  
 All have gone from me now except despair,  
 And my last, lingering relics of affection,  
 And now let them go too. Alas, not yet,  
 Since I have still some work for them to do:  
 For 'tis not those who shall die with me, but