

"Two songs with but one burden twin-like tales,
 Sad tales! but this the sadder of the twain;
 This song, a wail more desolately wild;
 Nor with less ghastly grandeur opening,
 Amid the blaze and blazonry of war."

After the meeting with his daughter Jephthah relates the circumstances connected with his vow. Then he appeals directly to God, and prays to be released from his vow, or that a substitute may be provided.

"He said and stood awaiting for the sign,
 And hears above the hoarse bough-bending wind,
 The hill-wolf howling on the neighbouring height,
 And bittern booming in the pool below."

The cruel answer that he imagines he has received, the priests later confirm, and declare that the vow cannot be broken; hiring shepherds truly that will not protect the lambs of the flock.

In a stormy interview with his wife, Jephthah cries out:

"Not all thy sex's choir of Babel tongues
 Could reach the top of this high-towering grief,
 Whose summit soars athwart the brazen heavens,
 And piercing to Jehovah's sacred seat,
 Pleads with him, pleads, but pleads, alas! in vain."

Then follows the lament of the daughter, who never more,

"May from my lattice see the brooding East
 Bearing the solemn dawn.
 Nor twilight dim,
 Sickening through shadows of mysterious eve,
 Die midst the starry watches of the night."

There are many fine passages in this poem, but though it is in form superior to *Saul*, it cannot compare with that poem in sublimity of thought and in imaginative power. The subject of the one, the results that follow from a man not having the strength of mind to disregard a foolish vow, is local and not inevitable. That of the other, *Saul* beating in vain against the bars of his environment and