

Away, old man, so sad and terrible :—  
 Away, Ahimelech, I slew thee not !—  
 Nor these,—nor these, thy sons, a ghastly train.  
 Nay, fix not here your dull, accusing eyes.  
 Your stiff tongues move not, your white lips are dumb ;  
 You give no word unto the ambient air ;  
 You see no figure of surrounding things ;  
 But are as stony, carven effigies . . . .  
 Out, vipers, scorpions, and ye writhing dragons !  
 Hydras, wag not your heads at me, nor roll  
 At me your fiery eyes . . . .

Presently Saul regains his mind, and his thoughts turn into a more quiet field.

It is the morning of the final battle with the Philistines. Saul is discovered at the Hebrew camp in the valley of Jezreel. He is suffering the uttermost torments of human remorse.

Oh, hell, upbraid me not, (he cries)  
 Nor, loathing, spit upon me thy fierce scorn,  
 When, like a triple-offspring murderer,  
 I enter thee. O hell, I come, I come :  
 I feel the dreadful drawing of my doom.  
 O monstrous doom ! O transformation dread !  
 How am I changed !—How am I turned, at last,  
 Into a monster at itself aghast !  
 Oh, wretched children, oh, more wretched sire !—  
 Oh, that I might this moment here expire !

. . . . .  
 All have gone from me now except despair ;  
 And my last, lingering relics of affection,—  
 And now let them be gone. Oh, break, sad heart !  
 Not those who soon shall die with me, but those  
 I leave behind shall shake my manhood most,—  
 My orphaned daughters, and my youngest born,  
 Poor crippled Mephibosheth.  
 For the rest, we are pressing unto one dark goal.

Now we reach the final scene, upon the battle-field of Gilboa. Saul's three sons lie slain, and the king enters mortally wounded and sinks upon the ground.

Now let me die, for I indeed was slain  
 With my three sons. Where are ye, sons ? Oh, let me  
 Find ye, that I may perish with you ; dying.  
 Cover you with my form, as doth the fowl  
 Her chickens ! O, Phillistia, Phillistia,  
 Thou now art compensated,— . . . .  
 Gush faster, blood,  
 And gallop with my soul towards Hades swift,  
 That yawns obscure.