

EXODUS

Lo ! far and wide throughout the earth
we have heard how the laws of Moses, a
wondrous code, proclaim to men reward
of heavenly life for all the blessed after
death, and lasting gain for every living soul.
Let him hear who will !

On him the Lord of hosts, the Righteous
King, showed honour in the wilderness, and
the Eternal Ruler gave him might to work
great wonders. He was beloved of God,
a lord of men, a wise and ready leader of
the host, a bold folk-captain. Affliction
came upon the tribe of Pharaoh, the enemy
of God, when the Lord of victories entrusted
to the bold folk-leader his kinsmen's lives,
and gave the sons of Abraham a dwelling
and an habitation. Great was his reward !
The Lord was gracious unto him and gave
him weapon-might against the terror of his
foes, wherewith he overcame in battle many
a warrior, and the strength of hostile men.

And first the Lord of hosts spake unto him
and told him many wonders, how the Trium
phant Lord in wisdom wrought the world,
and the compass of the earth, and the arching
heavens ; and told His own name, which the
sons of men, wise patriarchs of old, knew not

before, though they knew many things. And the Lord honoured the leader of the host, the foe of Pharaoh, and strengthened him with righteous strength on his departure, when, of old, in punishment that mighty host was drenched with death.

Wailing arose at the fall of their princes ; their hall-joys were hushed and their treasure was scattered. Fiercely at midnight He smote the oppressors, slaying their first born, laying their watchmen low. Wide the destroyer's path, and the way of the fell folk-slayer ! The whole land mourned the dead. The host departed. Loud was the voice of their wailing, little their joy ! Locked were the hands of the laughter-makers ; the multitude had leave to go its way, a wandering folk. The Fiend was robbed and all the hosts of hell. Heaven's might came upon them ; their idols fell. That was a glorious day through all the world when the host went forth ! Many a year the vile Egyptians suffered bondage, because they thought for ever to refuse to Moses' kinsmen, if God would let them, their long

ing for the journey of their heart's desire.

The host was ready. The prince who led them was stalwart and bold. He passed by many a stronghold with his people, leaders and lands of many hostile men, by narrow, lonely paths and unknown ways, until at last they marched, in armour, against the

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Ethiopian realm. Their lands were covered with a cloud, their border-homes upon the mountain-slopes. Past these, with many a hindrance, Moses led his people. And two nights after they escaped their foes God bade the noble prince to make encampment about the town of Etham in the march-lands, with all his force, a mighty army, and tumult of the host.

With anxious hearts they hastened on their northward way ; they knew that southward lay the Ethiop's land, parched hill-slopes and a race burned brown by the heat of the sun. But Holy God shielded that folk against the fiery heat, stretching a covering over the flaming heavens, and over the burning air a holy veil. A cloud wide-stretching severed earth from heaven, and

led the host ; burning and heavenly bright
the fiery flame was quenched. The warriors
marvelled, most joyous of hosts. The
shelter of the day-shield moved across the
heavens ; God in His wisdom had covered
the course of the sun with a sail, though
earth-dwelling men knew not the mast-ropes,
nor might behold the yards, nor understand
the way in which that greatest of tents was
fastened. So He showed honour and glory
upon the faithful !

Then was a third encampment to the
comfort of the folk. The army all beheld
the holy sail, the gleaming marvel of the sky,
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towering above them. And all that folk,
the men of Israel, perceived that there the
Lord of hosts was present to measure out
a camp. Before them moved two columns
in the heavens, fire and cloud, sharing alike
the service of the Holy Spirit, the journey
of brave-hearted men, by day and night.

And in the dawn, as I have heard, the
valiant-hearted blared forth their trumpet-
calls, in peals of thunder. And all the host,
the band of the brave, arose and made them
ready, according as Moses, their glorious

leader, gave bidding to God's people. They beheld their guide go forth before them measuring out the path of life. The sail governed their journey, and after it, with joyful hearts, the seamen trod their path through the great waters.

Loud was the tumult of the host. Each evening rose a heavenly beacon, a second wondrous marvel after the setting of the sun, a pillar of flame shining in splendour over the hosts of men. Bright were its shining beams above the warriors ; their bucklers gleamed, the shadows vanished away. No secret place could hide the deep night-shadows. Heaven's candle burned. Needs must this new night warden watch above the host, lest in the stormy weather grey heath and desert-terror should overcome their souls with sudden fear. Streaming locks of fire had their guide, and shining

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beams, menacing the host with flame and terror, and threatening destruction to that people in the waste, except they swiftly hearkened unto Moses. Armour gleamed, and bucklers glistened as the warriors took their steadfast way. And over the troops

and high above the host stood the banner,
moving as they moved, even unto the strong
hold of the sea at the land's end. And there
they pitched a camp and rested, for they
were weary. Stewards brought the warriors
food and strengthened them. And when
the trumpet sang they stretched themselves
upon the hills, shipmen within their tents.
That was the fourth encampment and pause
of the shield-men by the Red Sea.

There dread tidings of inland pursuit came
unto the army. A great fear fell upon them,
and dread of the host. So the exiles abode
the coming of the fierce pursuers, who long
had crushed those homeless men and wrought
them injury and woe. They heeded not the
covenant which the ancient king had given 1
aforetime, who became the people's heir
and had their treasure, and greatly throve.
All this the Egyptian race forgot when their
wrath was stirred by a quarrel. They
wrought great wrong to Moses' kinsmen,
broke the covenant, and slew them. Their
hearts were filled with faithlessness and
rage, the mighty passions of men. They

1 Grein :
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would fain requite the gift of life with evil,
that the people of Moses might pay for that
day's work in blood, if Mighty God would
prosper their destructive journey.

Then the hearts of the earls were hopeless
within them as they beheld the shining
bands, the hosts of Pharaoh, marching from
out the south, uplifting a forest of lances,
with banners waving above them, a great
host treading the border-paths. Their spears
were in array, shields gleamed and trumpets
sang ; the battle line rolled on. Over dead
bodies circling screamed the birds of battle,
dewy-feathered, greedy for war, dark carrion-
lovers. In hope of food, the wolves, remorse
less beasts of slaughter, sang a grim evening-
song ; dogging the march of the foe, they
abode the coming of death ; the march
warders howled in the midnight. The doomed
soul fled ; the host was compassed about.

Now and again the proud thanes of the
host measured the mile-paths on their steeds.
The prince of men rode forth before the
troops, the war-king raised the standard ;
the battle-warden bound on helm and chin-
guard (banners gleamed) in expectation of
war, shook his armour, and bade his warlike
host, his firm-ranked cohorts, go boldly into
battle. The foe beheld with hostile eyes
the coming of the landsmen. About him
fearless fighters moved ; grey wolves of war
went forward to the onslaught thirsting for

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battle, loyal of heart. He chose the flower of his people for that service, two thousand far-famed heroes of high birth, kings and kinsmen. And each led out his men, and all the warriors that he well could muster in the appointed time. The young men were gathered together, the kings in their pomp. Frequently sounding, the well-known voice of the horn signalled the host where the war-troop of heroes should bear their arms. So the dark horde was marshalled ; throng after throng, in thousands, hasted thither, a countless host. They were resolved, in vengeance for their brothers, to slay the tribes of Israel with the sword, at the break of day.

Then a sound of wailing arose in the camp, an evening-song of woe. A great fear was upon them ; the nets of death encompassed them about. The fatal tidings flew abroad ; tumult arose. The foe were resolute, a horde in armour gleaming, until the mighty angel who upheld that host scattered the proud and hateful multitude, so that no more might one behold another's face ; but their journey was divided.

All that long night the fugitives had respite,
though foes beset them upon either hand, on
the one side that great host, on the other
side the sea. They had no way of escape
nor any hope of their inheritance, but halted
on the hills in shining armour with fore-
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boding of ill. And all the band of kinsmen
watched and waited for the coming of the
greater host until the dawn, when Moses
bade the earls with brazen trumpets muster
the folk, bade warriors rise and don their
coats of mail, bear shining arms, take thought
on valour, and summon the multitude with
signal-beacons unto the sandy shore of the
sea.

The leaders bold obeyed the battle-signal ;
the host made ready. The seamen heard
the trumpet-summons, and struck their tents
upon the hills. The army was astir. They
numbered off twelve companies of valiant
men to form the van of battle against their
foes' grim wrath. The host was in an uproar.
From every noble tribe among that people
were chosen fifty cohorts, under shield, the
flower of the folk. And every cohort of that
famous army was of a thousand warriors,

far-famed wielders of the spear.

That was a warlike band. The leaders of the army welcomed not among that number the weak, who yet because of youth could not defend them under board and byrnie against a wily foe, who never yet had known the baleful thrust, the bitter wound, the insolent play of the spear over the edge of the linden shield. Nor might the aged, grey-haired warriors be of service in the battle if their strength had failed them. But according to their strength they joined

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the fray, even according as their valour would endure with honour among men, and their strength suffice to undergo the spear-strife. 1 The army of these sturdy men was mustered, and ready to advance. Their banner rose on high, a gleaming column, and all abode there nigh unto the sea until their guiding beacon pierced the clouds, and shone upon their linden shields.

Then a herald rose before the warriors, a valiant leader, and, lifting up his shield, he bade the captains of the host make silence, that all the multitude might hear the words

of their brave lord. The shepherd of the kingdom fain would speak with holy voice unto his legions. The leader of the host in words of worth addressed them :

" Be not afraid though Pharaoh leadeth hither this mighty host of sword-men, a multitude of earls. Upon them all this day Almighty God will give requital by my hand, that they may live no longer to vex the tribes of Israel with woe. Ye shall not dread doomed armies and dead men. Their fleeting life hath run unto the end. The knowledge of God hath vanished from your hearts. I give you better counsel, to serve the God of glory, and pray the Lord of life for victory and grace and safety, wherever ye may journey . He is the Eternal God of Abraham, Creation's Lord, magnanimous and mighty,

1 Grein : gegan mihte.

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who with His strong hand guardeth all this host."

Then the lord of men spake with a loud voice before the multitude and said : " Look now, dearest of people, with your eyes and behold a marvel ! In my right hand grasping this

green rod I smote the ocean depths. The waves rise up ; the waters form a rampart-wall. The sea is thrust aside. The ways are dry : grey army-roads, ancient foundations (never have I heard in all the world that men before set foot thereon), shining plains, imprisoned deep sea-bottoms over which of old the great waves foamed. The south wind, breath of the ocean, hath driven them back. The sea is cleft asunder ; the ebbing waters spewed up sand. Well I know Al mighty God hath showed you mercy, ye bronze-clad earls. Most haste is best now, that ye may escape the clutch of foes since God hath reared a rampart of the red sea-streams. These walls are fairly builded to the roof of heaven, a wondrous wave-road."

And after these words the multitude arose, the host of the valiant. The sea lay tranquil. Upon the sand the legions raised their standards and shining linden shields. And over against the Israelites the wall of water stood firm and upright for the space of one whole day. Of one mind was that company of earls. The wall of water l shielded them with

1 Grein : ySa weall.

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sure defence. In no wise did they scorn their holy leader's counsels as the time for deeds drew near, when the words of their well-loved lord were ended, and the voice of his eloquence was still.

The fourth tribe led the way, a throng of warriors, marching through the sea upon the green sea-bottom. The tribe of Judah trod that unknown road alone, before their kinsmen, and God Almighty gave them great reward for that day's work, granting them glory of triumphant deeds, that they might have dominion over kingdoms and sway their kinsmen. As they descended on the ocean-bottom that mighty tribe had lifted up their standard mid the spear-host, high above their shields their battle ensign, a golden lion, bravest of beasts. Not long would they endure oppression by the lord of any people while they might live and lift their spears to battle. In the van were strife and stubborn hand-play, warriors valiant in the weapon - struggle, fearless fighters, bloody wounds and clash of helmets, onrush of a battle-host, as Judah's sons advanced.

Behind that army proudly marched the seamen, sons of Reuben ; the vikings bore their bucklers over the salt sea-marsh, a multitude of men, a mighty legion, advancing unafraid. For his sin's sake Reuben yielded his dominion and marched behind his kins

men. From him his brother took his right
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as first-born in the tribe, his eminence and
wealth. Yet was he ready.

And after them with thronging bands the
sons of Simeon marched, the third division.
Banners waved above the marching warriors ;
with flashing spears the battle troop pressed
on. Over the ocean's bosom l dawn arose,
God's beacon, radiant morning. The multi
tude went forth, the host advanced, one
mail-clad band behind another. And one
man only led this mighty folk, tribe after
tribe, upon their march beneath the pillar
of cloud, whereby he won renown. And each
observed the right of nations and the rank
of earls, as Moses gave them bidding.

One father had they all, one of the patri
archs, a well-loved leader, wise of heart and
dear unto his kinsmen, who held the land-
right and begat a line of valiant men, the
tribe of Israel, a holy race, God's own peculiar
people. So ancient writers tell us in their
wisdom, who best have known the lineage of
men, their kinship and descent.

Noah, the great prince, sailed over un

known waters, deepest of floods that ever
came on earth, and his three sons with him.
Within his heart he cherished holy faith.
Wherefore he steered across the ocean-
streams the richest treasure whereof I ever
heard. To save the life of all the tribes of
earth the wise sea-prince had numbered

1 Grein : begong.

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out a lasting remnant, a first generation,
male and female, of every living kind that
brought forth offspring, more 'various than
men now know. And likewise in the bosom
of their ship they bore the seed of every
growing thing that men enjoy beneath the
heavens.

Now Abraham's father, as the wise men
tell us, was ninth from Noah in lineage and
descent. This is the Abraham the God of
angels named with a name, and gave the holy
tribes into his keeping, far and near, and
made him mighty over nations. He lived
in exile. Thereafter, at the Holy One's
behest, he took the lad, most dear of all to
him, and they two, son and father, climbed
together a high land unto the hill of Sion.

And there, so men have heard, they found
a covenant and holy pledge, and saw God's
glory. And there, in after years, the son of
David, the great king, the wisest of all
earthly princes, according to the teaching
of the prophets, built a temple unto God,
a holy fane, the holiest and highest and most
famous among men, the greatest and most
splendid of all temples the sons of men have
built upon the earth.

Abraham took Isaac, his son, and went to
the place appointed, and kindled the altar
flame. The first of murderers was not more
doomed. As a bequest to men he would
have sacrificed his well-loved son with fire
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and flame, his only heir on earth, the best of
children, the lasting hope and comfort of his
life, for which he long had waited. The far-
famed man laid hand upon the lad and drew
his ancient sword (loud rang the blade),
and showed he held his son's life not more
dear than to obey the King of heaven. Up
rose the earl. He would have slain his son,
and put the lad to death with blood-red
blade, if God had not withheld him. The
Glorious Father would not take his son in
holy sacrifice, but laid His hand upon him.

And out of heaven a restraining Voice, a
Voice of glory, spake, and said to him :

" Abraham ! Put not the lad, thy son, to
death, nor slay him with the sword ! The
Lord of all hath proven thee, and truth is
known, that thou hast kept the covenant
with God, a faithful compact. And that
shall be to thee an everlasting peace through
all the days of thy life for ever. Doth the
son of man require a greater pledge ? Heaven
and earth may not cover the words of His
glory, which are ampler and greater than the
regions of earth may include, the orb of the
world, and the heavens above, the ocean
depths and the murmuring air. The King
of angels and Wielder of fates, Lord of hosts,
Dispenser of victory, sweareth an oath by
His life, that men on earth with all their
wisdom shall never know the number of thy
tribe and kinsmen, shield-bearing men, to

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tell it truly, except someone shall grow so
wise of heart that he alone may number all
the stones on earth and stars in heaven, sand
of the sea-dunes, and salt waves of the sea.
But thy tribe, the best of peoples, free-born
of their fathers, shall dwell in the land of

Canaan between the two seas even unto the nations of Egypt." . . .

Then all that folk was smitten with terror ;
fear of the flood fell on their wretched hearts.
The great sea threatened death. The sloping
hills were soaked with blood ; the sea spewed
gore. In the deep was uproar, the waves
were filled with weapons ; a death-mist rose.
The Egyptians turned and fled away in fear,
perceiving their peril. They were shaken
with horror and fain to reach their homes.
Their boasting was humbled. The dreadful
rushing sea swept over them. Nor did any
of that army come ever again to their homes,
but Fate cut off retreat and locked them in
the sea.

Where before lay open roads the ocean
raged. The host was overwhelmed. The
seas flowed forth ; an uproar rose to heaven,
a moan of mighty legions. There rose a great
cry of the doomed, and over them the air
grew dark. Blood dyed the deep. The
walls of water were shattered ; the greatest
of sea-deaths lashed the heavens. Brave
princes died in throngs. At the sea's end
hope of return had vanished away. War-

437-466 H

shields flashed. The wall of water, the mighty sea-stream, rushed over the heroes. The multitude was fettered fast in death, deprived of escape, cunningly bound. The ocean-sands awaited the doom ordained when the flowing billows, the ice-cold, wandering sea with its salt waves, a naked messenger of ill, a hostile warrior smiting down its foes, should come again to seek its ancient bed.

The blue air was defiled with blood. The roaring ocean menaced the march of the sea men with terror of death, till the Just God swept the warriors away by Moses' hand. The flood foamed, hunting them afar, bearing them off in its deadly embrace. The doomed men died. The sea fell on the land ; the skies were shaken. The watery ramparts crumbled, the great waves broke, the towering walls of water melted away, when the Mighty Lord of heaven with holy hand smote the warriors and that haughty race. They could not check the onrush of the sea, nor the fury of the ocean-flood, but it destroyed the multitude in shrieking terror. The raging ocean rose on high ; its waters passed over them. A madness of fear was upon them ; death-wounds bled. The high walls, fashioned by the hand of God, fell in upon the marching army.

With ancient sword the foamy-bosomed ocean smote down the watery wall, the un-

protecting ramparts, and at the blow of

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death the great host fell asleep, a sinful throng.
Fast shut in they lost their lives, an army
pale with terror of the flood, when the brown
waste of waters, the raging waves, broke
over them. The flower of Egypt perished
when the host of Pharaoh, a mighty multi-
tude, was drowned. The foe of God dis-
covered as he sank that the Lord of the
ocean-floods was mightier than he, and,
terrible in wrath, with deadly power would
end the battle. The Egyptians won a bitter
recompense for that day's work. Never came
any survivor of all that countless host unto
his home again to tell of his journey or re-
hearse to the wives of heroes, throughout the
cities, the grievous tidings, the death of their
treasure-war dens ; but a mighty sea- death
came upon them all and swallowed their
legions, and slew x their heralds, and humbled
their boasting. For they had striven against
God!

Then on the shore of the sea Moses, the
noble-hearted, preached to the Israelites, in
holy words, eternal wisdom and enduring
counsels. They name it the day's work !

And still men find in Scripture every law
which God, in words of truth, gave Moses on
that journey . If life's interpreter, the radiant
soul within the breast, will unlock with the
keys of the spirit this lasting good, that which
is dark shall be made clear, and counsel shall

1 Grein : spilde.

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go forth. It hath the words of wisdom in its
keeping, earnestly teaching the heart, that we
may not lack the fellowship of God, or mercy
of our Lord. He giveth us, as learned writers
say, the better and more lasting joys of
heaven.

This earthly joy is fleeting, cursed with sin,
apportioned unto exiles, a little time of
wretched waiting. Homeless we tarry at this
inn with sorrow, mourning in spirit, mind
ful of the house of pain beneath the earth
wherein are fire and the worm, the pit of
every evil ever open. So now arch-sinners
win old age or early death ; then cometh the
Day of Judgment, the greatest of all glories
in the world, a day of wrath upon the deeds
of men. The Lord Himself, in the assembly,
shall judge the multitude. Then shall He
lead the souls of the righteous, blessed spirits,

to heaven above, wherein are light and life and joy of bliss. In blessedness that host shall praise the Lord of hosts, the King of glory, for ever and for ever.

So spake the mildest of men, in a loud voice, mindful of counsel, and made great in strength. In silence the host awaited his fixed will, perceiving the wonder, the hero's words of goodly wisdom. And he spake unto the throng and said :

" Mighty is this multitude and great our Leader, a strong Support who governeth our march. He hath given the tribes of Canaan

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into our hands, their cities and treasure, and wide-stretching realms. If ye will keep His holy precepts, the Lord of angels will fulfil the promise which He sware to our fore fathers, in days of old that ye shall vanquish every foe and hold in victory the banquet halls of heroes between the two seas. Great shall be your fortune ! "

And at these words the host was glad. The trumpets sang their song of triumph, and banners tossed to strains of joyous

music. The folk had reached the land.
The pillar of glory had led the host, the holy
legions, under God's sheltering hand. They
rejoiced that their lives were saved from the
clutch of the foe, though boldly had those
warriors ventured under the roof of the
waves. They beheld the walls upstanding.
All the seas seemed bloody unto them
through which they bore their armour.
They rejoiced with a song of battle that
they were safe. The army-legions lifted up
their voice and praised the Lord for that
great work. The mighty host in chorus,
man and maiden, sang psalms and battle
anthems, with reverent voices chanting all
these wonders.

Then could be seen on the shore of the
sea African maidens adorned with gold.
They raised their hands in thanks for their
deliverance ; they were blithe beholding
their safety ; they took heed of the spoils ;
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their bonds were broken. On the sea-shore
they dealt out the booty among the standards,
ancient treasure and raiment and shields.
They divided the gold and the woven cloth,
the treasure of Joseph, the riches of men.
But their foes, the greatest of armies, lay

still in that place of death.

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