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LEA,

OR,

THE BAPTISM IN JORDAN.

A TALE OF THE CHURCH

IN THE

SECOND CENTURY.

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

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CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.	
The "Coming of the Messiah,"	9
CHAPTER II.	
Despondency,	16
CHAPTER III.	
Domestic Trials,	23
CHAPTER IV.	
Historical Retrospect,	29
CHAPTER V.	
Expectation of the Messiah,	38
CHAPTER VI.	
The False Messiah,	43
CHAPTER VII.	
The Outcast,	48
CHAPTER VIII.	
The Wanderer finds a refuge,	54
CHAPTER IX.	
A New Home,	60
CHAPTER X.	
The True Messiah,	66

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XI.

The Predictions of the Prophets, 73

CHAPTER XII.

Study of the Gospels, 80

CHAPTER XIII.

Visitors—State of the Country, 90

CHAPTER XIV.

The Nature of the Presence, 98

CHAPTER XV.

Departure of the Visitors, 104

CHAPTER XVI.

Burning of the Cottage, 108

CHAPTER XVII.

Arrival at Pella.—A Discovery, 113

CHAPTER XVIII.

Thoughts of Baptism.—Divisions in the Church, 118

CHAPTER XIX.

The Baptism in Jordan, 127

CHAPTER XX.

Mournful Anticipations, 132

CHAPTER XXI.

The Love Feast, 142

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XXII.

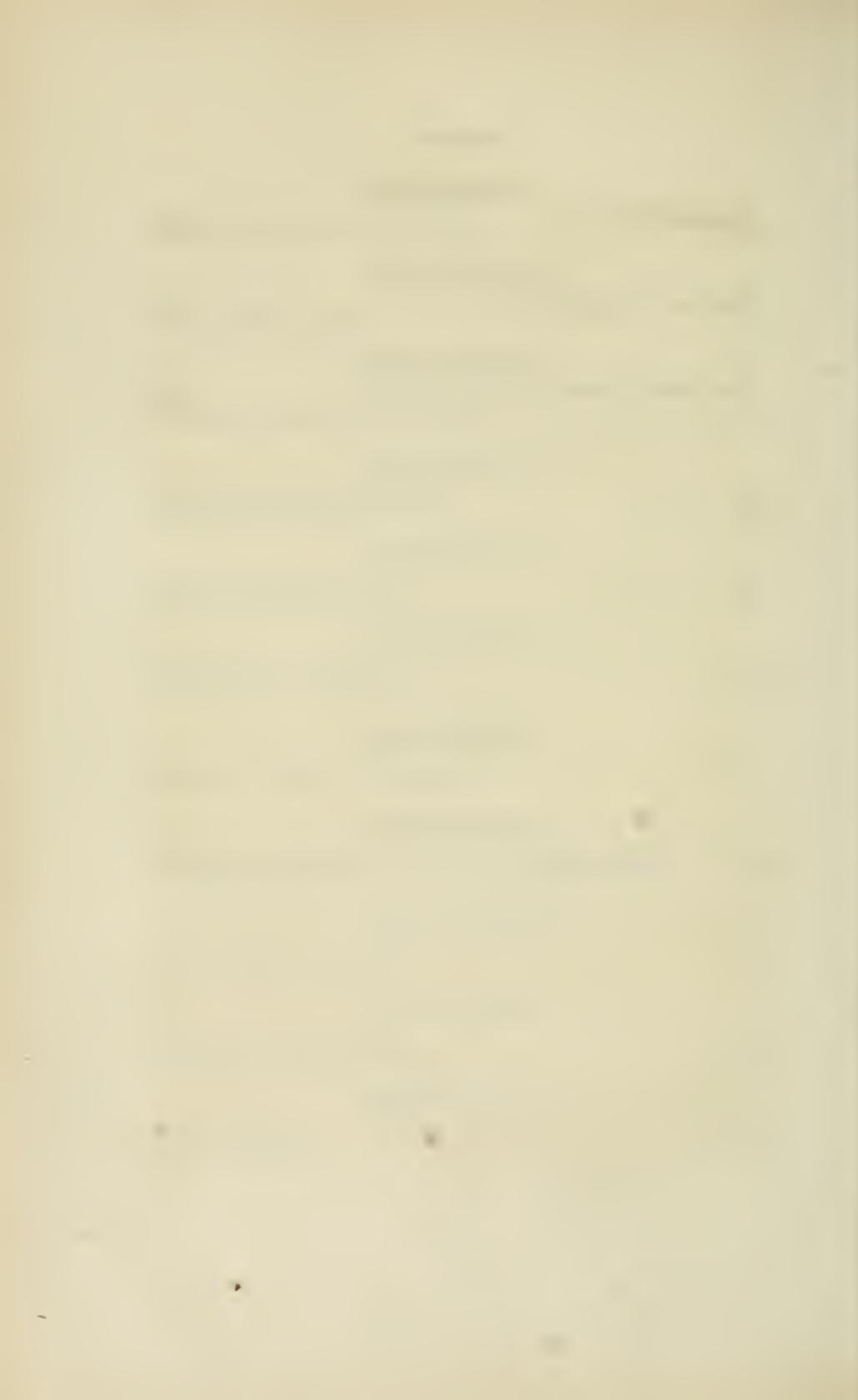
Spiritual Misgiving, 149

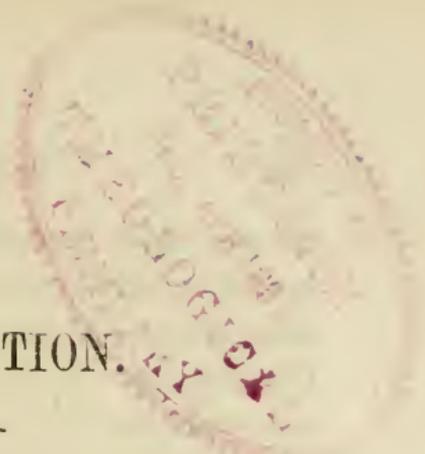
CHAPTER XXIII.

Visit from Euphemus, 156

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Closing Scene, 159





INTRODUCTION.

THE Author of the following Tale is already favorably known to the American public by the translation of his Helon's Pilgrimage. He is one of the most distinguished among the learned clergy of Prussia, and holds several of the highest offices in the royal gift,—being Court Preacher, Professor in the Royal University of Berlin, Ecclesiastical Councillor, &c.

In his present commanding position he exerts a wide, and, without doubt, a highly salutary influence; for the spirit of evangelical piety pervades both his instructions and his preaching. We cannot but regret, however, that his withdrawal from the comparative seclusion of a pastor's life, has of late years necessarily limited his efforts as an author. During the early part of his public life, he devoted himself with great ardor to the investigation of the history of the church, intending to embody the results of his studies in a series of popular Tales illustrating

its successive periods. The object dearest to his heart seems to have been, the revival in the church of the spirit and practices of primitive Christianity. He wished to rekindle among his own brethren that pure religion whose home is in the heart, whose element of life is holy love, while its few and simple but significant ceremonies are efficacious to him only, whose bosom is already the seat of a living faith. The deep spirit of piety which he carried into his favorite studies, glows upon his pages, and we cannot wonder that it awakened an answering fervor in many hearts. The revival of pure religion in the German Church owes much to his writings and active labors; and it is hoped that this little work, so far as it may find its way in its American garb, may exert a kindred influence among ourselves.

It may not be amiss to add, that some few of the Author's expressions are not in harmony with the translator's own views. Of course, however, she has not felt at liberty to expunge or soften any of them, and she is confident that to every pious mind these will be overbalanced by the general tone and spirit of the book.

H. C. C.

LEA:

OR

THE BAPTISM IN JORDAN.

CHAPTER I.

ON the lovely shore of the sea of Gennesareth sat Lea, tending children. She was fifteen years old. One who knew not her highly excitable temperament might have supposed her, at that moment, in an unaccustomed situation ; yet was it a familiar one.

The little ones hung round her, and she laughed and chatted gaily with them. But if, by chance, her eye turned upon her home near by in Tiberias, where she lived in the family of an aged uncle, her father's brother, the liveliest expression of bitter sorrow played in her countenance. Then if a cool breeze came floating with its load of fragrance over the glassy mirror of the Gali-

lean sea, and her enraptured glance swept over the mountains or palm-groves of the sea-valley, it lighted up with a radiance of joy. And again if she gazed along the beach, up to the walls of Capernaum, where, till the death of her parents, she had spent her youth, tears filled her eyes, and it was not to be mistaken that she wept not only over the beautiful past, but also over the bitterness of her present lot in the house of her hard kinsman.

Thus rapidly alternated, in the expression of her countenance, the purest joy with the keenest sorrow.

Now she seemed for some moments lost in the consciousness of her extreme wretchedness. She had risen with the sleeping infant, and stood bending over the clear flood through which one might count every pebble on the bottom, gazing into its depths as if she sought there the lost happiness of her childhood. Fast flowed the tears from her cheeks into the sea.

But a spectacle caught her eye which gave quite a different tone to her feelings.

Some boys of Tiberias came out of the city, and began to play *The Coming of the Messiah*.* That which formed the earnest expectation of

* See Appendix, note A.

manhood and the impatient hope of youth, naturally affected the children also, and became a part of their sports. Their parents' conception of the coming of the Messiah, according to the instructions of the most learned Rabbis, was carried out and represented by them in their childish fashion.

The boys had scarcely reached the shore when one among them, who had wrapt himself in a rough sheepskin and fastened it with a leathern girdle, sprang upon a hillock. He would represent Elijah the Tishbite, who was to appear three days before the Messiah. He put forth all the strength of his childish lungs to make his voice heard from one end of the earth to the other. He began with a lamentation over the waste mountains of Israel, and announced first peace, then prosperity, and finally salvation.

While he was yet shouting with wide-stretched mouth, and his hoarse tones had set Lea and the boys laughing, the Messiah appeared with a great train of followers. He was the grandson of Lea's uncle. He rode upon an old ass, and held a staff in his hand. His followers were mounted upon stilts, for the Rabbi had taught them that in the time of the Messiah men should be two hundred ells high. They cried out that

they were come from Rome, where the Messiah had been concealed in the suburbs among the poor.

As they drew near, the boys who had been listening to Elijah divided into two parties. One of these joined themselves to the men of two hundred ells. The others fled, but soon came back, having twigs hanging from the mouth to represent the teeth of Messiah's enemies, which were to grow two-and-twenty ells long. These godless ones were selected from among the younger and weaker children.

A tumultuous conflict began. The teeth of the foes were broken. Some of the stilts-men, too, tumbled to the ground. A universal shouting and yelling arose, and the struggle might have had a serious termination, had not Lea taken part with the little ones and brought the wanton victors to order. Her nephew, who had enacted the principal character, was angry at Lea's interference, and was disposed to withstand her. He dismounted from his beast, and overwhelmed her with all the words of abuse which he had heard applied to her by his parents and grandparents. But the other boys pacified him, and bade him divide the reward, or they would choose another Messiah.

This quieted him. He placed himself in the midst of his followers, and divided to them the treasures of the world. First he plunged his hand into the sea and brought up from the water a handful of sand, because the sea was to restore all the silver and gold, all the pearls and precious stones, which had ever gone down into its depths. Then he dug into the shore, and threw out some stones, because the earth was to cast up to the light of day all the riches hidden in its bowels. All these he divided among the faithful, who received their several shares with loud and joyful acclamation.

Now he called out as he had heard from the Rabbi at school, "There stands corn, each stalk as high as a palm. Harvest it! There is wheat, each kernel as large as the kidneys of the largest ox. Grind it! There hang grapes, each grape as large as a wine cask. Bear them home on a cart, lay one in a corner of the house, tap, and draw from it! There hang ripe-red peaches, each one bigger than a cauldron. Cut it up! Do you wish for honey? It trickles from the figs! Do you wish for milk? It drops from the goats! Do you wish for clothes? They grow upon the branches of the palm-trees!"

The whole troop rushed tumultuously forward,

each one trying to secure the best share for himself, and each one shouting as if resolved to outdo all the rest.

It was time to think of Jerusalem. They selected the largest of the loose stones which were scattered on the shore, and threw them into a heap. When they had collected enough, they leaped upon the pile, and proclaimed themselves masters of Jerusalem. Then they kindled a multitude of little fires about their city, because they had heard from grown-up people, that around Jerusalem were to be fires which should keep off Nebuchadnezzar, the emperor of Rome, and all other godless foes.

“There’s one thing you’ve forgotten!” cried one of the boys. “I have heard my father, who is a learned Rabbi, say, that the righteous will walk about in fire just as a man walks now in sunshine.” Most of the boys thought they could not go so far as this. But Lea’s nephew was so puffed up with his honors, that he leaped forthwith into the fire which blazed highest. The coals burned his feet, the flames caught his garments and singed his hair. He set up a frightful scream, and the other boys sprang back from him.

Lea laid down the infant on the sand, ran and

threw herself on the boy, and thus smothered the fire. Then dragging him by the arm into the water, she quenched the glimmering sparks.

When she saw him out of danger, and happily uninjured, their relation to each other was at once changed. Lea laughed at him, and exhibited him to the other boys with his singed hair and half-burnt coat, saying, "There, see now your high and mighty Deliverer!"

The boys laughed and made game of him. He burst into tears of passion. "Thou blasphemous wretch!" he screamed out—"thou Goi! thou daughter of Seir and Edom! thou Nazarene! thou art viler than a dog!" And he ran off to complain of Lea to his mother. Lea bantered him as he ran away, and the whole troop of boys followed, mocking him till he reached the house.

CHAPTER II.

LEA had taken up the babe which had been waked by the uproar, and as she tried to quiet it, rambled with the smaller children along the delightful shore.

Foreboding well what awaited her at home, she still lingered by the sea-side, and turning to the north looked across the intervening water towards her dear native town. She began to weep bitterly.

A boat obstructed the view. Just then the fisherman drew up a net full of fishes. "Alas!" cried she, sobbing, "so have I also been taken in a net out of the free, cool sea of my mother's house, and lie gasping for breath upon the shore. Oh, my mother, my mother! couldst thou know how they afflict thy poor child! Mother, dear mother! hear there in thy grave thy wretched orphan child! O, mother! it is a fearful lot to be a forsaken orphan! Didst thou not then know, that for such a child there is no mother's heart upon the whole wide earth! that to no one

can she tell her grief, for she has a mother no more! O how dreadful to live friendless among hard-hearted men!"

She cast her eyes upon the waves, which were suddenly roughened by the wind. It brought to her mind the sixty-ninth psalm, and she sung:

"Save me, O God,
For the waters have come in unto my soul!
I plunged in bottomless mire where there is no footing,
I sunk in deep waters, and the floods overflowed me."

In the midst of her distress she took notice that her sighs interrupted and marred her singing, and she added:

"I am weary with my crying; my throat is dried:
My eyes fail with waiting for my God.
More than the hairs of my head
Are they who groundlessly hate me;
Mighty are they that would destroy me,—
My enemies without a cause."

"Alas!" added she, "all in the house, from the eldest to the youngest, are my enemies—thou excepted, dear child, whom I carry in my arms!" She pressed the little one more closely, and it smiled upon her. "This has still love for me," said she, "because I love it. How gladly would I love them too, would they but let me love

them! And yet they are my nearest kindred.
But,

‘ I am become a stranger to my brethren,
An alien to my mother’s children !’

“ Yet what avails it to weep ?” interrupted she: and she sung on :

“ ‘ When I wept and fasted,
That was made my reproach ;
And when I clothed myself with sackcloth,
I became their by-word.’ ”

“ I will do so no more. They call me tauntingly a Nazarene. I know not these people ; but they may perhaps be better than those who dwell in the palaces of Tiberias. I will give their hot zeal enough to do. No Nazarene could keep them so busy as I will.”

“ O fye !”—thus chided she herself,—“ but this is wicked ! I will rather demean myself according to the Psalm :

‘ But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Jehovah ;
Let it be acceptable to thee, O God,
According to thy great kindness ;
According to thy faithfulness in helping, hear me !
Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink :
Let me be delivered from those that hate me, out of the
deep waters !’ ”

“If I were only on the other side of the sea,” she continued, “there by Gadara, and could I hide myself in one of the caves upon the eastern shore! Many such are there, and one alone has contained four thousand poor wretches, who sought refuge in it. But here I stand. There towers Tiberias, my home of misery! On the graves of the dead, as I have been told, in defiance of the law, that wicked Herod Antipas caused this city to be built, and named it in honor of a Roman Emperor. I feel it,—a curse rests upon the place! One cottage in kindly, beautiful, beloved Capernaum, is a thousand times dearer to me than the palace in which I am here a prisoner!”

She recovered herself and sang :

“Hear me, Jehovah, for kind and gracious art thou;
According to thy great compassion look upon me,
And hide not thy face from thy servant.—”

“See!” mused she upon the strain, “this is a Psalm in which the Messiah speaks, and I apply his words to myself; I little thought when my father thus explained it to me of the Messiah, that a time would ever come when I should apply it to myself. But quite another Messiah is this from him who burnt his coat to-day,” said she smiling.

At this recollection her lively feelings turned lightly to more cheerful fancies. The vapor was ascending from the warm baths below Tiberias. As she looked at it, "Come now, good Lea," said she, "be thou too a warm fountain, full of pleasantness and softness, and let thy praise ascend to Jehovah !

‘As for me, who am sorrowful and afflicted,
Thy help, O God, shall set me in safety.
Then will I praise the name of God in song,
I will magnify Him in songs of praise.
This is more acceptable to Jehovah than oxen
With horns and hoofs.—
Let heaven and earth praise thee,
The seas and all that move therein !’”

With a gay heart she surveyed the Paradise around her. Her singing had in a moment restored to her all her natural serenity. Though it was a necessity of her nature, whatever she felt immediately to express in words ; and though on this account she possessed an uncommon power over language, yet on the other hand the words themselves, the tone, and above all song, exercised an irresistible power over her. The mere act of singing sufficed to restore her to tranquillity of spirit. So it was with much in her life, as she was obliged to play by turns the part of mistress and of servant.

What her singing had begun was completed by the view of that incomparable sea-valley in which some have fancied that they found the lost Eden,—so beautiful it was! She marked the Jordan, that ancient holy stream, as it issued from the region where the snowy summit of Lebanon and the glaciers of Hermon lift their venerable heads over the landscape, and pursued its way through the basin of the Galilean sea, marking by its golden current its course through the clear crystal waters. “Already has he,” said she, “after gushing from his mountain veins, submitted to a dark and obscure passage beneath the ground; but victoriously has he again risen to the light in the sea of Merom, and now rolls through the midst of the Holy Land, until at Jericho,—but no, I will not utter it! So be it not to me or to my people! But here behind, what a splendor and power in that mountain region descending in terraces from Tabor its head,—the high plain of Eschaelon and the hills of Cana the lower steps! And there before me, on the eastern shore of the sea, the majestic features of the last swells of Anti-Lebanon! What a wonderful, giant-like embrace of the lovely sea and its glassy floods! O happy, that I was born in this valley! Hail, my noble

Capernaum! and ye too on that distant shore, Chorazin, Magdala, Gamala, Dalmanutha, and Gadara, to which my mother early directed my childish gaze; ye on my native side, Bethsaida, Emmaus, and Tarichea; even thee magnificent, but to me unkind Tiberias,—I bid you hail! Hail to ye all! To you, too, dark nut-forests in the gorges of the mountains! To you, ye open palm groves, with your heaven-high roof work, ye vine-clad hills, yielding ten months in the year your ripened clusters! ye fruit-gardens, ye groves of olive, citron and pomegranate trees;—ye murmuring fountains, and ye whispering breezes of the beautiful and cool sea shore! O this is,—yes, it is still the land flowing with milk and honey, the glorious land above all lands! Ah, why did Jehovah command His temple to be built on the barren mountains of Judah, and not here by the sea of Gennesareth!——But I am only a foolish child, and they do well to be somewhat strict with me, since I even find fault in my waywardness with the works and will of Jehovah.”

Having thus spoken, she sung a few more strains from the Psalms respecting the Holy Land, and it was not till the infant became restless that she left the shore and returned home.

CHAPTER 'III.

SHE had not been mistaken as to the treatment she would receive on reaching the house. The mother of the enraged boy met her in the outer court, while mother and son joined in heaping abuse upon the poor maiden. She made no reply. But if she was silent, it was sullenness; if she spoke, it was contradiction.

“Confess now,” cried the woman, “thou art a Nazarene! How is it? It was in Capernaum that your Messiah found the readiest welcome; in his native city, Nazareth, they would have hurled him down from the mountain; but at your houses he was a welcome guest, and was permitted to teach in the schools; so that he called the place his own city, and his oldest disciple left Bethsaida and bought a house in Capernaum. Is it not so? Come, you’ll keep up the character of your city! Speak out now! it’s your best way! You are a Nazarene. Do you think we were deaf, that we could not hear you jeering about Tiberias, where your Jesus could not come,

because Antipas, who put John his forerunner to death, there held his court? And hence you've beat and mocked my poor boy because he represented the Messiah!"

"I did not beat him," said Lea, at last breaking silence. "And as for mocking, he deserved it as a false Messiah, who," added she laughing, "burnt his coat in the fires round Jerusalem."

"Do you hear that? Hear you that!" cried the woman to the servants who were flocking around.

"Aye," said Lea, a little frowardly, "and so may it fare with every pretender who plays the Messiah!"

"Do you hear? oh, horrible!" cried the whole train. The boy struck her, because he was sure of victory: his mother, who had no disposition to listen to Lea's complaints, thinking she could best justify her spoiled child by joining in his abuse of the poor defenceless maiden. She menaced her, moreover, with the return of her father-in-law, who had been on a journey to Jerusalem, and was daily expected back.

Meanwhile she was sent, with the child of three years in charge, to the fountain beneath the palm trees in the central court. She then

went up with the child into one of the fragrant arbors, and tended the flowers. While she was thus engaged, the child called upon her to sing.

“That will I do willingly,” said Lea, “and a beautiful little song too! When you grow up, you will see that this is our way—the way I and my cousins do—and you must do so too.” She began :

“Behold how lovely and pleasant it is
When brethren dwell in union!
It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
Flowing down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard,
That flowed down to the border of his garments:
Like the dew of Hermon, that descends on the moun-
tains of Zion,
For there Jehovah commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore !”

As she pointed the children, while she sung, to the snowy top of Hermon, which could be seen from the roof, she already repented of her bitter jest, and by the time she had finished the psalm, blows, abuse, lies, and suspicions were all forgotten. With a step light as if she trod on air, she returned with the children to the fountain, laid herself down with them upon the turf, and seemed, among the playful children, to be the gayest child of them all.

Suddenly she heard the house door shut with great violence, and soon after an unsteady step ascending through the fore-court. The elder children sprung up, and, as a very infirm old man of eighty years came in sight, shouted, "Grandfather! it is grandfather!" They ran up to him; one seized his hand, the rest clasped his knees, while the youngest stretched out to him its little hands.

Lea was moved to tears by the sight, and she thought to herself that this would, for once, give a cheerful tone to the heart of the sorrowful old man.

But he thrust the little ones aside, as he pushed roughly on, without noting that he had almost crushed the foot of one of his grandsons, or deigning to greet Lea, or his daughter-in-law, who came to meet him. With impatient, though feeble steps, he tottered to the divan in the middle court. It was plain that something unusual must have befallen him. Instead of reclining, as usual, he sat upright, and with both hands held his staff before him firmly set upon the floor. He gazed around with an agitated look. The inmates of the house gathered round him, but he greeted no one. At last his son approached, and he burst forth—

“ Spit at it ! spit at the name of Ælia Capitolina ! Cursed be he who built it, and blessed be he who shall destroy it ! ’Tis not Jerusalem ! O, wo is me, wo is me, that I have seen the abomination !”

“ Tell us, then, my father, what you have seen,” said the son.

“ Horrible things have I seen ! O, that mine eyes had never seen them !” exclaimed the old man.

“ Well, let us hear !”

“ I have been to the city once called the Holy ; it is now called Ælia Capitolina, after its builder, the emperor Ælias Adrianus, may God requite him ! Upon Zion, where once stood the tower of David, have I seen brambles ! Upon Moriah, the place of the daily sacrifice, and of all the other sacrifices, the plowshare was driven through the field ! O, wo is me ! in the city called after Jehovah stood a temple of the Olympian Jupiter ! Wo is me, wo is me, that I have lived to see it ! And at this temple must the children of Israel pay the half shekel, which Jehovah commanded for the place where his honor dwells. Yet more ! yet more !——”

“ I stop my ears !” exclaimed the son.

“ Yea, stop them !” cried the old man ; “ hor-

rible is it to tell, and horrible to hear! I will not tell it."

"Speak! speak on!" cried the rest.

"I will," said the old man; "yet stop your ears while I say it!—Daughter, the son thou bearest thy husband thou may'st not bring for circumcision!"

"How! how is that?" cried all at once, with looks of dismay.

"No!" replied he, with quiet sternness, while he assumed the air of a sovereign, "no, I tell you, for it is forbidden. The Emperor, the builder of Ælia Capitolina, has forbidden it."

"Let him be accursed!" exclaimed one after another.

The old man fell back, exhausted and senseless, on the divan.

CHAPTER IV.

THE old man at length revived, and the evening meal was served.

The blessing of the bread and wine, as also the reciting of the twenty-third Psalm, he now for the first time left to his son. During the meal, the precept of the oral law to regard the table as the altar of the Lord, was, in form at least, strictly observed. Not a word was spoken, but whether through reverence, or fear, or embarrassment, was not certain. Even the mother of the boy, full as she was of her malicious slanders against Lea, did not venture to bring them forward.

All kept silence, until thanks were given at the conclusion of the meal. This act of devotion was not merely an expression of thanks to the Lord our God, for having satisfied those present with food and drink : they called to remembrance, likewise, how He had led their fathers out of Egypt, and had brought them into the good land ; how He had established His cove-

nant with them, and given them the Law ; and how He had promised that He would be their shield for ever. Upon this was grounded the petition that Jehovah would have pity upon Jerusalem ; that He would, even in their days, re-establish the temple and the kingdom of David ; and that He would send Elias, as also the Messiah, to bring an end to their captivity in the Holy Land.

“ Amen ! ” was said aloud by all present at the table. But the old man’s voice was loudest of all, and he added, “ Yes, that may Jehovah in His mercy grant, that so I, the son of bondage and of misery, who in youth saw the destruction of Jerusalem, may in my age behold the up-building thereof ! God be praised ! the seventy years of this captivity are near their end. I am now eighty and one years old ; seventeen was I when the temple was burnt ; there are now wanting, therefore, but six years to complete the reckoning. So soon Ælia Capitolina, the city of the devil, may fall, and Jerusalem, the city of God, be built ! ”

“ Jehovah grant it ! ” said the others.

“ Children, I should be young again, could I live to see that day ! I would crawl to the Mount of Olives, that I might see this Ælia burn

as I have seen the holy city burn. Horrible was that sight!—that shall I never forget so long as I have life! That should ye, too, not forget till Jerusalem is built again; nor, indeed, then; for though we may not, in the new Jerusalem, keep the ninth day of the month Ab, as a day of lamentation for the destruction of Jerusalem, yet must the remembrance of it never pass away.”

“Tell us once more the frightful story,” said the grandson, by way of ingratiating himself with his grandfather.

He would have done it unasked. He adjusted his turban, settled himself upon the divan, and thus began, while the others reclined in a circle around him.

“The building of the temple, begun by Herod the Great, and continued eighty years, till the reign of Herod Agrippa II., was already completed, when Gessius Florus came as Roman procurator into the country. That was an evil man. When he saw that the land was filled with robbers, murderers, sorcerers, false prophets, and Messiahs, he endeavored to stir up sedition among the people, that they might not be able to carry complaints of his oppression to Cæsar. His plan succeeded. He demanded seventeen talents from the sacred treasury, and

this was the spark which kindled into a blaze the long standing and carefully cherished hatred of the Jews against the Romans. Cestius Gallus advanced with his army from Syria, where he was Proconsul. My parents were then residing in Gamala. I had gone up with them to the Passover, and our relatives in Lydda had invited me to spend the summer with them. At the time of the feast of tabernacles, Cestius arrived at Lydda. The inhabitants had gone, one and all, to the feast at Jerusalem. Only fifty men remained still in the city, and on account of sickness I was one of the number. Cestius set the city on fire, and put the inhabitants to death. I escaped only by the special providence of God. I arrived at Jerusalem almost at the same moment with the army. As I entered through the water gate, I heard the trumpet already at the gate of Ephraim. A prodigious multitude had gone up to the feast; and I have seen with my own eyes that we can vanquish Romans. Cestius fled as if driven by the terrors of Jehovah. We seized his machines of war, and Israel was victor.

“But the divisions among the people increased, and all who consulted their own safety fled from the city. My parents took me back with them

to Gamala. Our kindred in Lydda were all slain, some there, and others at Jerusalem. The time was improved in making fortifications. Now came Vespasian. He had already conquered Galilee, when he appeared before Gamala with Herod Agrippa. This effeminate wretch called upon us to surrender; a stone which struck him in the hand was the traitor's answer.

“Gamala lay like a camel upon a high mountain peak, and its only entrance was closed up by a trench. The Romans forced their way in by a breach in the city walls, but nearly the whole of them fell by our hands, and even Vespasian's life was in great danger. But being now threatened with destruction by famine, most of the citizens fled, and I myself effected my escape through an aqueduct. The Romans, having meanwhile undermined a tower, penetrated into the city, and a violent wind carried their missiles into the citadel, which otherwise they could not have reached. They destroyed the city; four thousand men fell by their hands, eight thousand threw themselves down from the walls, and two women were all that escaped with life. My brothers were among the slain, and my father, in attempting to follow me and

my brother, thy father, Lea, perished in the aqueduct.

“I hastened with my brother to the Holy city. Myself a youth of seventeen years, I led the boy of ten by the hand, and after much peril and suffering, we reached the place. Three parties were then raging in the city. Had Israel not been divided against itself, that frightful doom had never burst over Jerusalem. Never did Gentiles contend more fiercely than did the parties of the Zelots, the Idumeans, and the loyal. The temple was profaned, and at length the city of holiness might more properly have been called a resort of robbers, a house of harlots, and a den of murderers. Thus did they riot who styled themselves zealots for the law.

“Vespasian was proclaimed emperor in Cæsarea, and in Alexandria he received the intelligence that he was acknowledged by the whole empire. He hastened to Rome, and committed to his son Titus the conquest of Jerusalem.

“Titus arrived with his army when the city was crowded with pilgrims come to the Passover, and formed his encampment upon the mount of Olives. Fearful omens had announced to us the issue. A portentous light was seen between the altar and the temple. The huge iron gate of

the temple opened of itself at midnight, and blood-red hosts in battle array appeared in the clouds above the city. All this was verified. Titus conquered, after some months' siege, first the new city, then the lower city. While yet the temple and the upper town were beleaguered, the famine rose to a fearful height. Those who had laid up any provision were deprived of it by force. The robbers broke into the houses of the rich, slew old and young, and dashed the children against the wall. Whoever thought of flight was put to death as a traitor. People fell down dead with hunger in the streets; the Zealots plundered their corpses and stripped the last rag of clothing from the bodies of the dying. Many, in despair, threw themselves down from the walls, and immense numbers, having swallowed their gold, went over to the Romans. But the Romans discovered how they had concealed their treasure, and the bodies of two thousand deserters were searched for it in a single night. The number of corpses became at last so great that they could no longer be buried, but were piled up, one upon another, in the empty houses. The horrors of the famine continually increased. Dung, leathern saddles and girdles, old straw, formed the only means of subsistence.

One woman cooked her only child, and when the soldiers, attracted by the smell of food, broke into the house, she boldly confessed the deed and showed them the remaining half of the child. Oh, it is not to be described with words, what we have endured! During this distress, the tower of Antonia fell; then the first, then the inner fore court of the temple. This happened on a Sabbath. A Roman soldier hurled from the northern side a firebrand into the temple. Titus opposed in vain the rush of his soldiers; on our side arose a fearful shriek,—and soon the wonder of the world, the sanctuary of the Lord, stood wrapt in flames. The ground around the altar streamed with blood; the flames raged in the wind, and the Holiest itself was laid in ashes. That was on the ninth day of the month Ab. The lower town was by this time set on fire, and the conflagration reached at length the upper town. In this part of the city the houses were crowded even to the roof with the bodies of those who had perished by famine; and yet there were so many still to be slain that the flames were extinguished in their blood. Everything was burnt down and destroyed, and only three towers remained standing. During the war, ninety-seven thousand men were made captive, and eleven

hundred thousand were killed during the siege and storming of the city. Of the survivors, some perished in gladiatorial combats with wild beasts, others were carried in triumph to Rome, or like me, found refuge in flight.

“All this with my own eyes have I seen, and with my body and my soul endured. Since then, Israel lies trampled in the dust; even the temple of Onias at Leontopolis has not escaped the fury of our nation’s enemies. The abomination of desolation must have an end. But it seems meet that we, old men, who have been witnesses of this fearful calamity, should commit the remembrance of it to you our children, that the wrongs we have endured may ever kindle in us anew the desire of vengeance. Yet even this work of destruction is not more terrible than the profanation which I have seen in Ælia. Let us strew ashes on our heads, and put on sackcloth; let us rend our garments, and pluck out our hair, for the sake of the daughter of Zion! Cursed be he who thirsts not for vengeance.”

The old man betook himself to his Aliya, and each one retired, thoughtful and silent, to his chamber.

CHAPTER V.

FROM this time the old man had frequent and long interviews with his son in the Aliya. The assemblies in the gates of Tiberias became more and more frequented by the men of the city. Upon the by-roads of the country there was great conversation, and often large companies of men came by night from other cities to Tiberias. Guest-friends arrived whom the old man had not seen in his house for years, and often, though meeting here from places widely separated, became immediately acquainted with each other, and held long and secret conferences.

In this scene of confusion, the mother had so much to do that she thought it best to defer her complaint against Lea to a more favorable time. Meanwhile she continued to oppress the poor girl with heavy tasks and unkind treatment, and Lea still afflicted and comforted herself as before.

One day there arrived some men from Sephoris,* the ancient city of Galilee, who were wel-

* See Appendix, note B.

comed with unusual respect and joy. They were more communicative than the former visitors and allowed the whole family to take part in their conversation.

As usual, the old man began the conversation with lamentations respecting Ælia Capitolina, and with the inquiry what would be the consequence of the prohibition to circumcise.

“But have you heard,” said one of the men from Sephoris, “that Adrian is gone from Athens to Rome? We have now space and time to take breath.”

The other suggested that when Gideon was Judge in Israel, and the people were oppressed by the Midianites, they had prepared for themselves dwellings and places of security in the clefts and caves of the mountains. “The good land,” said he, “is not without design a land of caves. Jehovah has thus prepared it for us, that in the time of need we may again become as the children of Anak. Praised be the sons of Anak!”

“But where shall we find weapons?” asked the son of the house.

“We are required,” said the former speaker, “to forge weapons for the Romans. What does not succeed and is rejected by them, we shall make useful to ourselves.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the old man, “that these dim eyes, which have seen so much misery, might behold the Anointed of God, before they are closed in death!”

“Do not the sins of Israel delay his coming?” asked the son.

“Silence, thou fool!” exclaimed the old man, vehemently. “I was at the destruction of Jerusalem. The Zelots, by their abominations and sins, are the real authors of our shame and misery. He who has known these, knows that now Israel is a holy nation, whose sins no longer delay the coming of the Messiah.”

“Have patience!” said one of the visitors. “Since Rabbi Akiba has been President of the Sanhedrim at Jamnia, light and truth have spread abroad in Israel. Who knows—the Messiah may even now be walking unknown among his people; yea, and Elias also!”

“Then beware lest you take a false Messiah for the true one!” interposed the matron with a spiteful glance at Lea. “What think’st thou, Lea, is there not danger of it?”

The poor maiden blushed in the presence of the men.

“She?” cried the old man hastily, “what of her?”

The mother beckoned to her boy. He stepped pertly forward and told the whole story of his game, and the jeers of Lea. He said he had feared to disturb his grandfather in his important business, but now, at his command, he would no longer conceal from him that Lea was a daughter of Seir, and one of the Nazarenes.

The men looked inquiringly at her. The mother confirmed all that her son had said.

“Have I then nourished a snake in my bosom?” cried the old man in a storm of passion. “Answer for thyself, Lea!”

“I only said,” replied she timidly, “that a Messiah as this lad played him, cannot be the true one.”

“Thou see’st, dear father,” said the matron, “that she is of Capernaum, where they are favorably inclined to Jesus, because he loved their city.”

“The Nazarenes are the worst enemies of the glory of Israel,” said one of the men of Sephoris. “They are so for this, if for no other reason, that they betray the rights of Israel to the Gentiles. But more than this, they make the hope of Israel a laughing-stock among the Romans, by giving out for the Messiah a man who has been cruci-

fied. And worse than all, pretending to be Jews, they yet eat human flesh in their assemblies.”*

Lea shuddered, and exclaimed with an expression of abhorrence, “I am no Nazarene, but a daughter of Israel!”

This occasioned a laugh in which Lea joined. The woman would again gladly have given the conversation a serious turn against Lea; but the visitors, who had weightier matters in hand, said, “Let her alone!”

* See Appendix, note C.

CHAPTER VI.

“WONDER! O wonder!” the men of Sephoris were heard to cry, some days after this. They came down from the Aliya calling even from the roof to those in the courts and the Armon below, “O wonder! wonder!”

In company with a messenger who had just arrived from Jamnia, they descended into the middle court. Here the whole family had meanwhile assembled; the old man in the midst of them, with trembling knees and mouth wide open, foreboding evil.

“What is it then?” cried one to the men of Sephoris.

“What is it?” they replied. “There stands the messenger! Good news! Glorious news!”

“Praised be Jehovah!” said the old man. “I thought surely some new misfortune had befallen Israel.”

“Well, speak now, what is it?” said the mistress of the house.

“O wonder!” exclaimed the men. “The Messiah is come! here stands the messenger!”

“The Messiah!” they all cried out.

The old man sprang like a youth towards his guests and embraced them, then to the messenger and embraced him, crying, “Now will I cheerfully die, may I with my eyes but behold the Messiah!”

“O wonder! wonder!” cried [all the inmates of the house.

“Sound the trumpets! light up beacons on the mountains!” said the men of Sephoris; “send messengers abroad! Usher in the New Year with the blast of the trumpet, for a New Year begins this day!”

Each one seemed beside himself at the news. They looked at each other and could say no more. The old man began to weep.

“But you do not so much as know where he is! or even his name, or the manner of his coming!” said the messenger.

“Oh, if he is only come!” said the old man. “That is the main point. The rest will take care of itself. Yet say on, where is he?”

“This messenger,” said one of the men, “has hurried hither from Jamnia, where the Messiah has appeared. He has seen him!”

“In Jamnia, where the Sanhedrim is! Then

he has shown himself to the great council of the nation ?” asked the old man.

“That has he. Boldly he entered the Sanhedrim, and turned not aside for him who has the might and the light in Israel !”

“And what said the President of the Sanhedrim ? What said the most worthy Rabbi Akiba ?”

“What should he say ? Into the assembled council the Messiah entered, and placed himself before the President. Then rose up Rabbi Akiba and solemnly proclaimed, ‘This is the king Messiah ! This is the star out of Judah !’”

“The star out of Judah !” echoed the old man.

“Barchocheba,—son of the stars,—for so he styles himself, is the name of the Messiah. And Rabbi Akiba, who knows the law, and is the forerunner of the Messiah, at once perceived that in him the prophecy of Balaam is fulfilled : ‘There shall arise a star out of Judah, and a sceptre come forth from Israel, and shall dash in pieces the princes of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth. Edom shall be a possession, and Seir shall be overthrown by its enemies ; but Israel shall have the victory. Out of Jacob shall come the ruler, and shall destroy that which remains of the cities.’ This Akiba called to re-

membrance, and when he saw the fulfilment, he said, ‘ This is the star out of Judah ! ’ ”

“ Yes, Barchocheba is his name, and he is the promised Messiah, and Rabbi Akiba is his fore-runner, is the prophet Elijah ! ” said the old man.

“ Yes, it is he ! it is the Messiah ! ” cried all.

The old man laid his hand upon his grandson, and blessed him with many tears. The servant men shouted in the courts, and the handmaids were frantic with joy.

The messenger hastened from the house, the men of Sephoris, and the old man, following him. To all whom they met in the streets they proclaimed the joyful message. In a few minutes the gates of Tiberias were thronged with old and young. Over and over, must the messenger relate the entrance into the Sanhedrim. So soon as one caught it from his lips, he ran in haste to impart the tidings to his family and distant friends. Everywhere were seen in the streets men weeping for joy : the aged uttering blessings, youths leaping and shouting, and maidens uniting in song. If a Gentile showed himself, they insulted him. If they saw a Christian, their insolent joy broke out in fearful threatenings. The young men consulted together respecting a march in arms to Jamnia on the following morning, and

only the fear of the Roman government here and there repressed the extravagant outburst of joy.

As once at the feast in Jerusalem, so now in Tiberias, joy reigned among the children of Israel.

CHAPTER VII.

LEA was hurried away with the general enthusiasm. The appearance in the Sanhedrim of one claiming to be the Messiah, filled her with joy, and she became the gayest of the rejoicing household.

Her joy effaced from the mind of her uncle every trace of suspicion that she was a Nazarene. Even her mistress was now convinced ; but it only made her the more sorry that she must give up her plan of revenge : for in the midst of her joy it was a bitter thought that Lea should have part in the salvation of the Messiah.

The old man, who, as the custom was in Israel, still remained master of the family, had commanded a sumptuous meal to be made ready for the evening, that this day of gladness might be duly celebrated. Whilst the matron was busy with Lea in the kitchen of the Armon, she could not refrain from tormenting the poor orphan. She well knew how to drive out with her bitter taunts

all joy from Lea's bosom, and to provoke her resentment anew. Thus irritated, Lea threw out, unconscious to herself how she came to do it, doubts as to the correctness of the messenger's account; and when the matron, glad to have provoked her to irritation, defended his integrity with much warmth, Lea went still farther. This, too, was less from reflection than from a disposition to display her own shrewdness, and to keep up the part, at first forced upon her, of a friend of the Christians. In her opinion, even if the messenger had made a true report, and Barchocheba had actually given himself out for the Messiah, it did not follow that he was so in truth. At any rate, the true Messiah would not come in pomp and splendor, but, as Isaiah predicted, in sickness and sorrow; for he would be the friend of the miserable and the avenger of the oppressed. Her mistress exulted in the new turn Lea's feelings had taken, and hoped that very day to carry her plan into effect.

The festive meal had now been served in the great hall, and a conversation was about to commence with the Levites of the place, who were present as invited guests. But the old man, at the request of his daughter-in-law, gave permission to the whole household, women, children and

servants,—for to them also, as well as to the men, this great feast-day was a day of joy in Israel,—to assemble in the hall and join in the cheerful conversation.

After they had expatiated as usual on the glories of the Messiah's kingdom, a Levite gave an account of the Rabbi Akiba. His whole life appeared now in a new light, since he had represented himself as the subject of divine prediction, and as the returning prophet Elias; and all his actions, and every incident in his history assumed a higher significance. Forty years had he already presided over the Sanhedrim, and not a man of his time, the Messiah excepted, united in himself so much wisdom and knowledge. Since the Great Council first assembled in the hall Gazith, then in the eastern porch, then in Jerusalem; nay, from the time of Ezra, had there been no one as learned in the law as Akiba in Jamnia. His two books for the interpretation of the law, would be to the end of the world a light for the people of Israel. The number of people who of late years continually surrounded him, amounted to four-and-twenty thousand; and among these were found already such men as Aquila the Nazarene, whom he had converted to Judaism, and so thoroughly instructed that he had made a new

translation of the entire Scriptures in the Greek language. The celebrated Tryphon was also his pupil. The whole world is astonished at his learning, and it is said that he can assign the reason for the smallest letter of the law, and that even what was concealed from Moses is known to him. At all this there is so much the more cause to wonder, because he was in his youth a tender of sheep and gave small promise of such high things. But the daughter of his master, a rich citizen of Jerusalem, promised to marry him if he would leave the care of the sheep and devote himself to learning. He agreed to her proposal, and having espoused her privately, entered the sacred school: and thus in him, as in no man before, was fulfilled the prayer at circumcision, that he might enter into marriage and into good works; for *through* marriage he had entered into the best of works, viz. the knowledge of the law.

Exclamations of astonishment burst from all present, and the conversation became general. The Messiah would have been almost forgotten in this Elias, had not the matron of the house displayed a remarkable zeal for his honor, and continually led the conversation back to him. Her eulogiums, which always bordered on the extravagant, stirred up Lea to contradiction, as indeed they were designed to do.

Among the numerous topics of question and remark, the perplexity of the Nazarenes at this time was not forgotten.

“They seem, however, not to be so disheartened as you suppose,” said Lea, “if we may judge by what one of the servants professes to have heard to-day, from some Nazarenes who were talking together in the street.”

“What said they?” asked the old man.

“He says they called Barchocheba an impostor, for that his name is not Bar Chochochab, son of the stars, but Bar Chosab, the son of Chosab,—if not indeed Bar Chasab, a son of lies.”

“Horrible!” cried all, turning furiously upon Lea, “how will you prove that?”

“By his anointing,” answered Lea. “For people think that when Akiba anointed him, a divine flame issued from his mouth, whereas he only had lighted straws between his teeth, and puffed out the flame with his breath.”*

The matron rose up in fury. The old man stormed with rage. A confusion ensued, in which everybody took it for granted that this was Lea’s opinion, and the story an invention of her own.

She defended herself as well as she was able, and cried out again and again that this was not

* See Appendix, note D.

her opinion, but that of the Nazarenes. But no one listened to her.

“Stones! bring stones!” cried the matron, “that we may stone the blasphemer according to the law! Thrust her out, thrust her out! that the curse rest not on us and on the house where she dwells.”

“Drive her forth like Hagar, for she is a mocker like Ishmael!” said the old man.

The grandson busied himself with bringing stones, and himself commenced the chastisement. His mother helped him. The others, too, made threatening gestures, and the poor orphan was obliged to flee. She was glad when she saw the house and the city behind her. Harsh words of abuse pursued her till she reached the mountains.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEA pursued her lonely way among the mountains. She had been obliged without choice to strike into the first path that offered itself as she fled out of the gate of Tiberias. Some few stones had grazed her, and the shouts of her pursuers every moment thickened and grew louder.

Like a hunted roe she sprang over bushes and tombs; like a chamois she climbed the hills and precipices. At last she looked round and thanked God that she saw no one in pursuit of her.

Her first emotion was joy that she was free from Tiberias, her house of Egyptian bondage. She felt that she had been brought out by the mighty hand of Jehovah, as once her fathers were, and she could have raised, like Miriam at the Red Sea, a song of thanksgiving. Purer seemed to her the high mountain air, richer the forest fragrance, more brilliant the reflected light which streamed up to her from the waves of the sea in the valley beneath.

But as she wished herself joy of her new freedom, her eyes fell upon her own person, and she perceived with dismay that she was in her in-door dress without any protection against the night cold. The day declined. The glow of sunset faded into darkness. The roaring of lions, and the screams of night birds echoed through that high, lonely forest tract. Terrified and weeping, Lea fled wildly on from cliff to cliff.

She stopped before a cave by the side of which gushed a little fountain. She entered and found it clean and dry. Her tears ceased to flow. She gathered together some leaves, drank of the fountain, and laid herself down. But she could not sleep, and lay shrinking with terror at every cry of the wild beasts.

Towards midnight it became colder. Her terror continually increased. She wept and sobbed till she could weep no longer. The twenty-seventh Psalm occurred to her, and she sung :

“Jehovah is my light and my salvation,—whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the defence of my life, of whom shall I be
afraid ?

When the wicked came upon me to devour my flesh,
My enemies and they that hate me,—they stumbled and
fell.

Though a host shall rise up against me, my heart shall not
fear.”

She felt almost tranquil, and with a strengthened heart proceeded :

“ For He will hide me in His pavilion in the day of trouble ;
In the secrecy of His tent will he hide me ;
He will set me on high,—upon a rock.”

As she gazed upward with animation at the heavens, thick sown with stars, she began again :

“ Hear my voice, O Jehovah, I cry unto thee ;
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
My heart repeats thy word, ‘ Seek ye my face ;’—
Thy face, Jehovah, do I seek.
Hide not thy face from me,
Put not thy servant away in anger.
Thou hast been my help ; leave me not, nor for-
sake me,
O God of my salvation :
For father and mother have forsaken me,
But Jehovah will take me up.”

At the names of father and mother, her heart dissolved away, her voice faltered and was choked in tears. “ Oh my father !” she cried ; “ my beloved mother ! my dear Capernaum ! Whither now shall I go ! I am thrust out into the wide world ! no way ! no hope !” Again she bethought herself of the psalm :

“ Teach me, O Jehovah, thy way,
And lead me in the path of righteousness, because
of my foes.
For false witnesses have risen up against me,
And they breathe out cruelty.”

A chilly morning wind swept through the trees. As the first glimmer of early dawn streamed into the cavern, Lea arose and went forth, singing the conclusion of the psalm :

“ Had I not believed that I should see the goodness of Jehovah
In the land of the living !
Wait on Jehovah !
Be strong and of a cheerful heart !
Wait on Jehovah !”

She washed herself, and slaked her thirst at the fountain. As she was still not far from Tiberias and feared pursuit, she wound her way yet deeper into the mountains, and sought to appease her hunger with roots and berries which she gathered by the way. The heat became more and more intense and still she wandered on, uncertain whither she went, and with no aim but to shun villages, hamlets, and every trace of human footsteps.

Evening again approached ; the pains of hunger became more and more severe, and anxious

forebodings filled her heart. She saw no cave, she knew not whither she should turn.

Her reflections during the day had often been interrupted by the question, whether she was not herself to blame for her misfortunes. She had tried in many ways to justify herself, but she now exclaimed, "I am the cause of them all! Had I been more humble, more quiet and obedient, my mistress would not have been so bitter towards me. But I was proud and wilful, and thought myself more knowing than other people. Now I suffer the punishment."

She was about to shelter herself in a dense thicket, when she heard within it the growling of wild beasts. As she was exploring another, a serpent darted towards her. She sank on her knees and prayed to God for forgiveness and succor. She lay down under a tree with low branches; thinking she might be safer above, she climbed into it, and spent there the sleepless night.

In the morning, when the beasts of prey had retired to their hiding-places, and the horrible trampling under her feet had ceased, she was in doubt whether to go farther, or to await death where she was. Hunger impelled her forward.

As she wandered on in mute despair, she suddenly found herself in the presence of an aged

woman who was gathering sticks. She was frightened and would have fled, but was so exhausted that she could not move. She stood trembling, with a half-eaten root in her hand.

"Fear not, dear child," said the woman. "Thou must be hungry, I think, thou art so pale."

The old matron looked at her with such a benevolent, motherly expression that Lea answered, "Yes, I am very hungry."

"Here, then, take and eat," said she, offering her bread and dates from her lap.

"If I might eat it!" said Lea, taking the bread. "Art thou a daughter of our father Abraham?"

"I am a daughter of Abraham, of the tribe of Zebulon, a Jewess of the Jews. What I give thee is clean," said the woman.

"Oh, then, take me with thee to thy home!" said Lea, with the confiding, winning manner which was natural to her.

"Come, my daughter," replied she, taking her by the hand. "Shelter and food, such as I myself have, will I give to thee."

CHAPTER IX.

THE little dwelling into which the aged matron—Elizabeth was her name—conducted her guest, had neither fore-court nor middle-court, neither flat roof nor Aliya. But it was the abode of a tranquil and devout spirit, impressing on all around it the image of the purity which reigned within. The cottage with its scanty furniture wore an air of poverty, but at the same time of exquisite neatness and orderly arrangement, which spoke to every kindred heart the pure and domestic feeling of the occupant.

A strange feeling came over Lea as she entered the cottage. The objects which met her eye seemed familiar to her. Not that she had ever seen them in actual life, but it seemed to her that she must have seen them in a dream. She watched her benefactress, as she moved with quiet and thoughtful promptness through her little round of household duties, and felt like one suddenly escaped from all earthly troubles into a

heavenly peace. Elizabeth, majestic in stature, with noble features to which age had imparted a kind of sanctity, seemed to her a Sarah, a Rebecca,—a venerable mother of the patriarchal times.

All danger and suffering were forgotten, yet her natural sportiveness was repressed. For the first time in her life, she was held in check in her joy by a mysterious but salutary power. As she became conscious of this mild restraint, and yet found herself still happy, her heart yielded to its softening influence, and tears started in her eyes.

Elizabeth supposed it was the remembrance of some misfortune which thus affected her, and to divert her feelings led her out of the cottage when she had satisfied her hunger, and bade her take a view of the surrounding country.

The house lay upon a considerable eminence in the neighborhood of Cana. The little town, so far removed that it made a quiet picture to the eye, extended along the declivity of the hill down into the valley. Behind Cana, the majestic Tabor rose from the plain of Esdraelon, towering to the clouds. The hill on which the cottage stood made the projection of the second step in the descent, of which Tabor, with its flat level

summit, formed the first. Still farther down spread a view of the sea of Gennesareth and of the cities upon its eastern shore. Wherever the eye wandered over this gorgeous Alpine landscape, whether to the fruitful plains of Jezreel, Esdraelon, and Sharon, to the lovely valley of the Jordan, to the gorges of the wooded hills, or isolated oases on the declivities of barren mountains—enclosures of hamlets, walled cities, or Aliyahs of single mansions, greeted the sight.

Never had her father-land appeared so beautiful. Her eyes swam in tears; she grasped the hand of Elizabeth, and said, "Oh, how lovely is the place of thy dwelling! Praise to Jehovah who guided me to thee!"

"Thou art welcome, my daughter."

"And I have been brought here out of great affliction," continued Lea, "and surely thou doest a good work in the sight of Jehovah, to take pity on a poor orphan who was near being stoned."

They seated themselves under the palm trees, whose high leafy tops overshadowed the cottage, and Lea, with the artless simplicity of childhood, related her story.

"But why," asked Elizabeth, after she had expressed to Lea her thanks and sympathy, "why would'st thou not receive the new Mes-

siah with the sounding name 'The Son of the Stars?'”

“Indeed, I hardly know myself,” answered Lea. “If I did, I should be happier. I assure thee the very hearing of his name troubles me, because I cannot tell how I have become, in spite of myself, so strangely affected towards him.”

“In spite of thyself?” asked Elizabeth.

“In Tiberias,” replied Lea, “they would have it that I was a Nazarene, because I came from Capernaum. At first I looked upon it as a jest. But when they told me so many horrible things of these people, and still persisted in numbering me among them, I grew angry, and, without really meaning to do anything wicked, I sought to punish their folly by acting as if I were truly a Nazarene.”

“But was that right?” said Elizabeth, with a searching, but kindly glance.

“No, it was not; it was not right. I acknowledge my fault. But I could not help it; especially when that ‘Son of the Stars’ was announced to us. At first I did certainly rejoice at it from the heart; but my mistress pressed me with such bitter taunts, that I at last retorted upon her what I heard was said of Barchocheba by the Nazarenes.”

“But art thou not sorry, now that Jehovah has so punished thy revengeful spirit?”

“Indeed, I could not but weep much on account of it, during the two nights which I spent among the wild beasts. But pray tell me *thy* opinion—is it not contrary to the express predictions of our prophets, that the Messiah should make his appearance in pomp and splendor? When, for instance, I heard read in the synagogue the section from Isaiah, respecting the servant of God through whose stripes we are healed, and who hath borne our sorrows, I asked the Rabbi to whom this related. He said, to the Messiah. From that time, I could never conceive of the Messiah, except as suffering and enduring; and I have the more delight in this idea, because my oppressors, who lived in happiness and luxury, were continually speaking of his state and majesty. It seemed to me that the unfortunate and miserable must also have a Messiah, and this is the true one, for he is to suffer in order to fulfil what is written of him.”

Lea had not ventured to look up while uttering these words. She now raised her eyes, and was awe-struck by the appearance of her aged companion. Her countenance, animated by the deep emotion of her soul, and lighted by the glow of sunset, beamed with an expression more

than human. There was a joy, a love, in her soft glance, such as Lea had never seen before.

“What aileth thee?” at length asked Lea. “Art thou, too, one of the afflicted?”

“I am a Nazarene!” said Elizabeth; “and so art thou, though thou knowest it not.”

Lea drew back with a shudder. “No, indeed, thou mistakest me,” said she; “I have an unconquerable loathing of human flesh. No, I am no Nazarene, nor ever can be. And oh, Elizabeth, is it possible that thou art one? From the very depths of my heart I hate this sect.”

Elizabeth laughed as she reached out her hand to her, and Lea joined in the laugh in spite of herself.

“Give thyself no uneasiness, dear child. Thou wilt soon understand this better. But of this I can now assure thee: I have never eaten human flesh, and I know no believer in our Lord Jesus Christ who has ever eaten it. What thou hast told me is only a pitiful calumny upon our holy Supper. But of this we will speak again; only, for the present, hold fast to thy Messiah of the miserable, and to the suffering servant of God. Child, that word has won thee my heart!”

She now rose up, and both went into the cottage.

CHAPTER X.

A DELIGHTFUL relation was quickly established between Elizabeth and Lea. Elizabeth watched over the maiden with maternal love, and she repaid it by those ready and affectionate services which could not but be acceptable to her aged friend.

The benignant seriousness of Elizabeth threw a gentle restraint round the exuberant gaiety of Lea, so that it did not burst its bounds to her subsequent sorrow; while her own inward youthfulness of spirit was charmed forth, as it were, into her outward demeanor by the childlike gladness of the girl.

Day by day Elizabeth felt herself more strongly drawn towards Lea, and Lea attached herself more fondly to Elizabeth.

Of the Nazarenes nothing further was said, till accident, one morning, made them the subject of conversation. Lea was accustomed to rise an hour earlier than Elizabeth, in order to

gather for her in the neighboring forest a choice nosegay of fragrant flowers, and to bring her fresh gathered dates and grapes from the little enclosure, and warm milk from the stall. As she now came into the cottage with this early repast, she found Elizabeth already engaged in her morning devotions.

She paused reverently in the doorway, and silently joined in the prayer. When it was finished, she greeted her aged friend with the repast. Elizabeth accepted it with thanks, and both seated themselves on the threshold of the cottage in the beams of the early morning sun.

“But tell me sincerely now,” said Lea, with her frank simplicity of manner, “thou surely art not a Nazarene?”

“Why not?” returned Elizabeth.

“Why the Nazarenes are deniers of God, are heathens; and thou art so pious, and prayest to God every morning after the manner of our people.”

“Thou may'st remember, dear Lea,” replied Elizabeth, “that I told thee on the evening of thy arrival that I was a daughter of Abraham, of the tribe of Zebulun. Since, then, I am of the stock of Israel, I keep the law which was given through Moses to Israel, although I am a

Nazarene. Indeed, for the very reason that I believe in the Messiah as already come, am I the more bound to fulfil that law by which he has distinguished our nation above all believing Gentiles."

"O that is good!" cried Lea, "that you keep the law! Of that, too, I had heard the contrary."

"Of much more, dear inexperienced child, thou wilt hear the contrary. Do but inquire diligently. I rejoice that thou art so open and sincere. Such Jehovah will prosper."

Lea leaned fondly on Elizabeth's arm, as she said in a winning tone, "Since thou art so kind, I will take courage to ask thee a question which I have never ventured before."

"Speak on," said Elizabeth.

"Wilt thou not chide me then for an inquisitive girl?"

"Nay; speak, my daughter."

"How happened it," asked Lea eagerly, yet in a subdued tone, "that thou art a Nazarene?"

"I am pleased with thy question," said Elizabeth, "and thou dost well to make the inquiry. For one can neither rightly know, nor truly love, another of whom he knows not how he came to be a believer in the Lord Jesus. True, the par-

ticulars of every case are not necessary ; for the most part, a general knowledge will suffice ; but mine thou shalt fully understand.”

“ That is a strange custom of you Nazarenes,” said Lea. “ But I interrupt thee ; let me hear what thou hast so kindly promised.”

“ We will sit then without, that we may overlook the town,” said Elizabeth.

She took Lea tenderly by the hand, and when they had seated themselves on a bank of turf in the deep shade of a terebinth, she thus began :

“ Observe there the smiling village of Cana extending down the hill into the valley. There commences properly the story of my life, and indeed, wonderful as it may seem to thee, before my life began. In Cana my grandfather and grandmother were a young bridal pair when our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, commenced his ministry. He had been baptized by his forerunner, Elias, who is called John, at the Jordan in the wilderness of Bethabara, and came with a few disciples—he had not yet many—into Galilee. My grandparents were just then celebrating their marriage festival, and his mother, Mary of Nazareth (do you see the walls on that high hill north from Tabor ? that is Nazareth) was also there. Few then knew who he was. As their wine

failed towards the close of the festival—for Jesus and his disciples had meantime arrived,—he gave commandment that they should fill the stone jars with water. This done, he bids them draw out, and behold it is wine! All Galilee was in astonishment at this miracle; but his disciples and the young wedded pair believed on him. This wedded pair, in whose house the Son of God performed his first miracle, were, with pride I say it, my grandparents. Ah, my grandmother! who in her old age was brought hither to her daughter, a thousand times over has she told us on this very spot, of that noble festival; how the Lord blessed the bridal pair; how kindly, yet how dignified was his demeanor; how the astonished guests suddenly became serious, and how the Lord instructed them. ‘That cannot their children, nor their children’s children forget,’ said my sainted grandmother. . . . ‘My little Elizabeth,’ added she, ‘must not forget it; for as often as the Lord came to Cana, in his journeys through Galilee, he made his abode with us, and so long as our blood flows in human veins, we must love him with a peculiar affection.’ I have done so; and as I from my childhood have loved him and believed on him, so he who now sits in the heavens on the right hand of the Father, has

ever been peculiarly gracious to me. He has bestowed upon me the three choicest blessings, viz. to be assured of the forgiveness of sins through faith; to bear the cross as an evidence of his love; and to rejoice daily in the hope of being received to his presence and of sharing his eternal glory when this poor life upon the earth is finished. 'Tis true, I have often been disobedient to him, and he has been obliged daily to forgive my sins anew; but my faith has never wavered, and through much suffering and affliction has been sustained by his grace. Of this I could say much, my dear daughter. To love him, and to suffer for him, those two precious privileges of the children of God on earth, have never been denied me. While my dear parents were yet living, he bestowed upon me a beloved husband, who was also a disciple of the Lord, and who, during the years of our long union, helped me much by his example, his instructions, and his prayers on my behalf. Two dear children were given to us, a son and a daughter, who also early sought and found the Lord. These have all gone before me into the eternal joy; I, the least worthy of them all, must stay behind a while longer. But I know that my time too is approaching. I may not be impatient, but how joyful will it be

when the Master calls me. Then shall I find again grandparents, parents, children and husband with the Lord, and then shall I behold him whom my soul loveth, face to face. Our children had already been some years dead, and my husband and I lived on in this cottage in peace and mutual love, seeking not for riches or vain show, but for our eternal inheritance. It was the greatest joy left us in our age, to sit together on this turf and look across to the house of miracle in Cana, while we talked together of our Lord. He, too, has now been dead a whole year, and I am solitary and alone. An orphan, a widow, childless and old—all these am I at once, my daughter! But that word has often escaped me since we have been together. My daughter! be thou a daughter to me, and I will love thee as a mother. Thou too, like me, hast no one left thee in this world. The Lord has brought us together; let us abide together, united in love and sorrow!"

"My mother, my dear, dear mother!" cried Lea weeping, and sunk upon her bosom.

The mother wept too, exclaiming as she clasped her in her arms, "My dear daughter!"

Long lay the blooming child on the bosom of the tender mother.

CHAPTER XI.

WILDLY raged the tumult in the land. The Jews had taken up arms the more boldly, as the Romans at first thought lightly of their movements. Out of all the neighboring regions were collected those who took part with them, either from patriotism or the hope of plunder. Ælia Capitolina had been taken by the insurgents, and Tinius Rufus, the governor, was compelled to take refuge in flight. The Emperor had thereupon sent thither Julius Severus, the commander of his forces in Britain, and whilst the party inclined to the Roman interest were awaiting him, the Jews, with Barchocheba at their head, prepared for a fierce resistance. Barchocheba proceeded with such fury, that no Christian was secure of his life, and was compelled either to deny the Christian faith, or to take up arms against the Romans.

In the midst of this tumult of war, the mother and daughter enjoyed undisturbed their home of

peace and love upon the mountain side. The cottage, while it looked out far and wide from its lofty position on the open hill side, seemed itself to have caught no human eye in these unquiet times. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear him, and delivereth them," said Elizabeth. "Of this we have hourly experience."

"Oh, my dear mother," said Lea, "were my eyes but opened as were Elisha's servant's at Samaria, assuredly I should see that far more are the heavenly powers who are for thee, than the earthly who are against thee."

"Yet it is sad,—the infatuation of the people," said Elizabeth, "that they should not see that a man who comes with fire and sword cannot be the true Messiah. Often when I look down into the valleys and upon the road that leads along the sea, from Damascus to Ælia Capitolina, and watch the eager crowds hurrying to the scene of war, I am reminded of the prophetic warning of the Lord: 'If they shall say unto you, lo! here is the Messiah, or there,—believe it not; for many false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall do great signs and wonders, Lo, I have told you before. Therefore, if they say unto you, behold he is in the desert, go not forth; behold he is

in the chamber, believe it not; for as the lightning shineth from the east even to the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For where a carcass is, there will the eagles gather together.'”

“This indeed seems,” said Lea, “the fulfilment of the prediction. Could I but certainly know from the Scriptures that Jesus is the true Messiah! But yet the predictions of the prophets must be fulfilled in him, and I know not one of which this is true.”

“If thou wilt listen to me, I will tell thee a few of the many, so far as I, an unlearned woman, am acquainted with them. If thou could'st but hear a Bishop or an Elder discourse upon it, thou would'st be astonished to see how the whole Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus. As for me, weak woman as I am, I have only laid up so much as serves for an assurance to myself.”

“O, do but tell me even that!” said Lea, entreatingly.

“Willingly, dear child. First of all is it fulfilled in him, that he is a son of David. Thou know'st that the prophets always so designated him, and we have the genuine register of his ancestry which shows that he is of the race of David, not only by his mother Mary, but also by

his foster father Joseph. I have a book which contains it, and I will show it to thee. Let me remind thee, moreover, that in our last prophet, Malachi, the mouth of prophecy closes with the declaration that Elias shall come before the Lord, who shall appear in his temple, and shall prepare his way. And so soon as its voice is heard again, the birth of the forerunner is announced to his father Zacharias, as he burnt incense in the temple, by the angel of the Lord who appeared to him on the right hand of the altar of incense. Isaiah prophesied that his mother should be a virgin, and Mary was so. Bethlehem Ephratah was pointed out by Micah as the place from which, though it were small among the thousands of Judah, He should come who should be Lord in Israel, and whose goings forth were from the beginning, even from everlasting; and in Bethlehem was he born. Out of Egypt hath Jehovah called his son, said Hosea; and Jesus fled with his parents to Egypt to escape the massacre, ordered by Herod, of the children at Bethlehem, and returned after some years to the abode of his parents in Galilee.

“There were to come runners from Midian and Ephraim, as announced by Isaiah, and from Sebah the multitudes of the Gentiles, bringing gold and

frankincense, and proclaiming the praise of Jehovah; and accordingly, soon after his birth, came the wise men from the East. In like manner is that prophecy of which thou hast spoken fulfilled. He was the servant of the Lord, who was wounded for our transgressions, and was smitten for our sins; upon whom was laid the penalty, that we might have peace. Thirty pieces of silver were they to weigh out,—and for this sum the traitor Judas sold him to the high council. In the Psalms it was foretold that they should part his raiment among them, and cast lots for his seamless mantle;—and thus the soldiers did beneath the cross. Moreover it was declared by the dying Jacob in prophetic vision, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a ruler from his feet, till the Deliverer should come, to whom the people should gather themselves;—and now the sceptre is departed, the ruler fails, and consequently the Deliverer must have come. The temple, too, to which the Lord should come, according to Malachi's prediction, is no more; consequently he must have appeared. It may also be known to thee, that in Daniel mention is made of seventy weeks of years, after which the iniquity was to be sealed up, atonement made for transgression, everlast-

ing righteousness brought in, the vision and prophecy sealed up, and the Most Holy anointed ;— and these seventy weeks of years end exactly at the time of Jesus. What think'st thou, my good child ? Has there ever appeared one in whom so many predictions have had their literal fulfilment ? And is it not clear to thee, that in these events of his life, the prophecies and their fulfilment mutually explain and verify each other ?”

“ It swims before my sight !” said Lea ; “ surely this is the Messiah,—or no one !”

“ And, as I said before, I am but a poor, unlettered woman. But the little I am able to impart to thee shows how pitiful in comparison is Rabbi Akiba's forced application to Barchocheba of a single, indefinite prophecy, and the attempt of both to make out with falsehood and deceit the appearance of a miracle.”

“ O say no more of them, I entreat thee,” said Lea. “ We shall yet live to see them come to a fearful end.”

“ But the most wonderful of all is this, that at the death of Jesus, the veil of the temple was rent, and the Most Holy exposed to view ; and some tens of years after, the offerings ceased. For all the offerings were merely types and shadows of him, and since he has by one offering fulfilled

them all, he has by the same perfected for ever those that are sanctified. He is the morning and the evening sacrifice, the paschal Lamb, the sin and the thank-offering, the offering of expiation,—all in one; and therefore, after him, all offerings of necessity cease, and the meat and the drink-offerings receive, in the sacrament of the Supper, a new consecration and a higher significance.”

“Oh, it is too much!” exclaimed Lea! “I cannot grasp it. Each particular is beyond my comprehension. Aid me, and pray for me, that, by little and little, I may apprehend what now, in its overwhelming vastness, floats before my soul.”

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER this conversation a great change was visibly passing upon the spirit of Lea. A thoughtfulness, such as Elizabeth had not before remarked in her, appeared in her whole demeanor. Hours together she wandered in the neighboring thickets, or sat on the turf beneath the terebinth, or stood lost in thought over her flowers.

Elizabeth left her undisturbed to her own reflections. She made not one inquiry as to the effect of what she had said, and only prayed to the Lord that he would send down his Holy Spirit on this her beloved child. But when, at times, Lea ran up to her, as she often did, in great haste, to inquire respecting this or that fulfilment or prediction, she then gave her a full and cheerful answer.

Lea's talkativeness had forsaken her; and they often sat at their morning and evening meal without uttering a word. Thus it was one morning when, after the usual prayer in the Jewish

manner, they had partaken of their breakfast on their favorite turf beneath the terebinth. Already had they sat half an hour in silence, side by side. The mother was looking down towards Cana, and Lea, half turned from her, gazed towards the region of Capernaum.

“Whither lookest thou?” asked the mother.

“Towards Capernaum,—His city and mine!” said Lea with a pleasant smile.

“I am looking towards Cana,” returned the mother,—“but thy look and mine are one!”

“Thinkest thou so?” exclaimed Lea, with mingled surprise and tenderness.

“It is not the houses and the landscape that we see; we see HIM!” said the mother.

“Yes, I believe it,” replied Lea, wondering at herself. “I shall yet become, in earnest, what I have so long been in jest,—a disciple of Jesus!”

The mother embraced her daughter, while she read in her eyes the conflicting emotions of her full soul.

“Still, there is little as yet that I clearly understand,” said Lea. “There are yet many things for thee to explain to me.”

Elizabeth went into the cottage and came back with a scroll, which she handled as carefully as if it were a casket of jewels. “Here is a sacred

book," said she: "the Gospel of the holy Apostle Matthew.* It is written in the Hebrew tongue. Read it, and thou wilt need no more my explanations. In this book thou wilt find everything thou seekest. I may no longer withhold it from thee, since thou thyself believest that thou mayst become a disciple of our Lord. But, my dear daughter, it is a sacred thing. Wash thy hands before thou takest it. It is my treasure."

"But I cannot read," said Lea. "Where is the maiden in Israel, who, like a Rabbi, learns to read?"

"Thou art right, dear daughter. I look upon thee already as a sister in the Lord. In the churches of the saints, parents labor to secure for their children, above every other inheritance, the ability to read the word of life. I was allowed no rest in childhood till I could read the gospel of Matthew. I must teach thee to do so in time. But, for the present, I will read it to thee."

The mother selected a spot on the summit of the hill, where stood a few palm trees. Hither they repaired every morning and evening, and Elizabeth read to Lea the Gospel, explaining the predictions, the fulfilment of which it recorded, and pointing out to her the places where this or that incident had occurred.

* See Appendix, note E.

Those were hours never to be forgotten!—Elizabeth's joy every day increased in the beloved child of her adoption, and she often felt as if the freshness and happiness of her youth had returned to her aged bosom. Lea hailed with eagerness the return of the hour, and hung upon the lips of her mother. Again and again would she exclaim: "How happy to have been born in this most blessed of all lands!"

"Yes, truly;" said her mother one day,—“the most blessed! No region of earth has been counted worthy of such high honor as these mountains of Galilee, that sea of Gennesareth, those lofty plains in the land of Zebulun. Here walked the Son of God in the days of his humanity. Here opened to him the hearts of the first believers, and here was formed that leaven of the kingdom of Heaven by which all nations of the earth are to be leavened. Upon this mountain he stood and preached; in yonder village he slept; upon these waves he walked; the odors we inhale, he breathed; and here his participation blessed the common air and sustenance of man. In this land was he infant, child, youth and teacher. Assuredly it is for this reason that God has dressed this mountain landscape in such glorious beauty, and has decked with every at-

tractive charm these woods and fountains, these heights and valleys,—because here was to live his only begotten Son.”

“Blessed be ye, mountains of Galilee, ye hills and vales!” exclaimed Lea. “Here may Jehovah command His blessing and life for evermore!”

They lingered long on the interesting register of births in the beginning of the Gospel, wandering together in spirit through the successive ages of their nation, and tracing with delight the long list of worthies from Abraham to Zerubbabel. They could not possibly get farther in the first reading; and Lea, with the veneration of her people for genealogical records, no longer had a doubt that Jesus was the son of David through Joseph, his foster-father. “There is also another register,” remarked Elizabeth, “which traces the descent to Mary.”

At the mention of Joseph’s dream in the story of the infant Jesus, Lea’s eye was fixed upon the mountain on which Nazareth lay; but at the words,—“He shall be called a Nazarene,”—it was turned with an expression of quiet pleasure upon her mother:

“Thou too bearest that name,” said she.

“Indeed,” replied Elizabeth, “I am better pleased with the name of Nazarene, scornfully

given as here in Judea, than with that of Christians which the disciples have received at Antioch; for if we adopt either name, the more humble is the better one."

"And reminds us of our dear fatherland," added Lea.

"I confess," said Elizabeth, "that this highly honored spot of our fatherland has shown itself little worthy of the distinction, and the same is true of Sephoris which lies behind that mountain, just by the sea, whose inhabitants even to this day make little account of the fact that the parents of Mary, Joachim and Anna, dwelt with them. But our Lord has himself taught us that a prophet is not regarded in his own country."

On another evening they read the account of John the Baptist, and the story of Christ's temptation. The Gospel then led them out to Judea, back into their beloved Galilean land. Lea's heart throbbed to hear it named as the free state where the Holy One of God ever took refuge, when in Judea, under the Romans, the Pharisees sought to entrap him. But her countenance glowed with joy when the words were read: "Jesus forsook the city of Nazareth, and came and dwelt in Capernaum which lies upon the sea-shore, on the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali!" Here

Elizabeth paused and cast a glance at her companion. Lea could not speak for joy. She then read the following verse where this is said to have been already foretold by Isaiah : “ The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles ; the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.” Here she paused again and said, “ Thus you see that our beloved Galilee was a subject of ancient prophecy, as the scene of the Messiah’s preaching ; and it is our high privilege to behold this light in the very land of prophecy.” Then both, unable to read or to hear more, sunk upon their knees, overpowered with joy and gratitude, and praised the Lord.

At the next reading they again found themselves in the midst of the region which spread itself before their eyes. It often seemed to them as if they still saw the Saviour, in bodily form, moving from place to place on these mountains and by yonder sea, and gathering his disciples. At another time Elizabeth pointed to a highway which led from Damascus to Jerusalem, along by Tabor and through Tiberias, saying, “ That is the well-known Way of the Sea, and that oblong eminence in the midst of the plain, be-

tween Tiberias and Tabor, is the mountain where the Lord uttered the sermon which I am now going to read to you."

Now the story brought them back to Capernaum, where Jesus healed the centurion's servant, a man afflicted with palsy, and the mother-in-law of Peter who had removed thither from Bethsaida; where also he called Matthew, raised the daughter of Jairus, and sent out the Apostles: now to the sea of Gennesareth where he stilled the tempest, where he consecrated Peter as a fisher of men, and where he walked upon the water: now to the wilderness of Bethsaida where he fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, or to the wilderness in the region of the ten cities where he fed four thousand with seven loaves: now to Cæsarea Philippi where Peter made the noble confession that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God: and as each event was narrated they turned their eyes to the scene of its occurrence. Seldom indeed has the Gospel of Matthew been read as these two read it, sitting on that sublime mountain height and looking down upon the very scenes of its events.

Still it was not their greatest joy to contemplate the Messiah in their own native region. The predictions of the Prophet, whose literal

fulfilment was everywhere shown, filled Lea's soul with devout astonishment. "How is it possible," cried she, "that our nation, to whom the prophecies are familiar, can yet shut their eyes to the fulfilment of them? How is it possible that they can reject Jesus, and attach themselves to a Barchocheba? How is it possible that they can pervert so precious narratives? Indeed I can hardly say which seems the more astonishing, the blindness of our people, or the force of truth, now that I learn from this book how those things actually happened, which hitherto I have heard only in distorted and disgusting fables. Truly the veil of Moses hangs before their hearts."

"That is not strange," replied her mother; "for all the grace and truth, the kindness and compassion, the condescension and humility shown in the life of our Lord, and especially in his sufferings and death, of which we could never hear from the lips of those who witnessed them without tears, leaves them unmoved. Their worldly heart is hardened, and as they look no farther than themselves and their temporal good, they have neither thought nor feeling for what is divine. One who already loves in Him the friend of children, of the poor and of sinners,—he is

prepared to receive from the Prophets still more light respecting the Messiah of the miserable.”

“Praised be Jehovah!” said Lea, “Jesus is the servant of the Lord; is He who is sent to preach to the afflicted, to bind up the broken in heart, to proclaim freedom to the captives and deliverance to them that are bound, to preach a gracious year of the Lord, and a day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn!”

“We feel it!” they both exclaimed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THUS more than a year passed away. Julius Severus had arrived from Britain, and had again at the head of his legions sustained his military renown. All around them raged the conflict of war; but it was wonderful how safely they dwelt in their poverty. Now and then indeed the general disquietude affected them also, yet only from a distance.

In hours of joyful faith they adored the goodness of their Lord which thus shielded them, and such hours were not few. But then came also anxious hours, and then the thought of two weak women living alone in the cottage, without the protection of man, would often shake their trust. This, however, was not of long continuance. They soon called to mind that God's protection is better than man's, and when an anxious night was over, and the cheerful sunlight rose up once more over the sea of Gennesareth; or several quiet days went by undisturbed as they were wont; they

reproached themselves with their cowardice, prayed to the Lord for forgiveness, and for a while felt more than ever comforted.

One evening, when the herdsmen had related to them various frightful rumors, were their poor hearts abandoned to themselves, and, in consequence, had to suffer much anxiety and fear. With terror they saw the night close in. Their last look upon the Way of the Sea had showed them great agitation along the road. They gave themselves up to evil forebodings, and admonition and encouragement were of no avail.

Late in the evening, when it was now dark, they heard the steps of men coming along up the mountain. They trembled and prayed. The men talking loudly, came nearer and nearer to the hut. The women put out their light, and kept perfectly still. At length there was a knocking at the door. A shudder ran over them at every stroke. All was still. Again the knocking was heard, and yet again Lea and Elizabeth sunk upon their knees, and besought God for succor and deliverance. Elizabeth then rose; and as the knocking was repeated yet the fourth time, she went to the door, and cried, "Who is there?"

"Elizabeth, dear mother and sister," answered a familiar voice; "wilt thou not open to us?"

As she still hesitated, the voice continued, "Know'st thou not the brother from Flavia Neapolis, the guest-friend of thy house?"

With shame Elizabeth unbarred the door, while Lea relighted the lamp, and the brother from Neapolis entered, conducting another disciple of the Lord.

"Welcome to us heartily," said Elizabeth; "and pardon us weak women, that even a brother's voice has terrified us. Ever since we heard your steps coming up the mountain, we have been in great trial of our faith, and—let us at once confess it—we have not stood the test. O, it is but a poor weak heart—the human heart! A thousand proofs of the daily renewed goodness of the Lord cannot, in the hour of temptation, strengthen and sustain it, if, in its folly, it looks to itself and not to the Lord. But praised be his goodness, He gives the trial such an issue that we are able to endure it."

"We will praise the Lord with thee," said Euphemus; "but we too much reproach ourselves before Him and thee, that we came so late at night to put thee in fear. But so, alas! must it be with fugitives."

"Fugitives!" asked Elizabeth.

"Yes, if you will. Such disorder prevails

through the land—and since the capture of Bilter it seems likely to rage still more fiercely—that I have made the proposal to this brother to flee with me to Antioch till the storm is past. To him the church in that place will prove, I think, more than a mere earthly haven.”

“Be that as it may, I greet you in our cottage as angels of God. Now that I have recovered myself, I tremble almost as much with joy at beholding once more brethren and disciples of the Lord, as I did before with fear. It is long since I have been obliged to forego all visible fellowship with the saints; but how precious to me is communion with the members of the Lord’s body! But first refresh yourselves.”

Lea had then to bring water for washing their feet, and bread, milk, and fruit, the best that the cottage furnished.

When the guests had satisfied themselves, Elizabeth inquired after the state of things in the country.

Euphemus related the arrival of Julius Severus; how, like an experienced general, in order to spare his already exhausted troops, he had commenced his military operations on a small scale, routing detached bodies of troops one after another, and reducing the smaller cities by hunger,

until at length he had made himself master of Ælia Capitolina. Tinius Rufus, meanwhile, finding himself placed in security by the victorious chief, was proceeding with his accustomed cruelty. In all places the disciples of the Lord found themselves between two enemies, the adherents of the false Messiah and the cruel Romans. They were treated by both as adversaries, which had already occasioned many apostasies. Barchocheba had at length thrown himself into the fortress of Bilter; Julius Severus laid siege to it, and having subdued it by famine, after a long resistance, had made a horrible massacre of the inhabitants. On the day of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and in later times by Titus—the ninth day of the month Ab—on that same day had Bilter also fallen. The insurgents had at last been undeceived, and had themselves put to death Barchocheba, their false Messiah. As for the Rabbi Akiba, the Romans had flayed him alive with iron combs, and burnt up his pupils along with their books. The children, whom, a short time previous, the Romans had demanded, and threatened to slay them with their knives, were made the cruel sport of the soldiery—three hundred children's heads were dashed upon one stone. In all, not less than

eleven hundred thousand Jews had perished. *Ælia Capitolina* was now levelled with the ground, nearly fifty strongholds destroyed, and over nine hundred towns and villages laid in ashes. Imagination can conceive nothing more terrible than what had actually happened. All Judea was a dreary waste. No place could promise safety, and flight furnished the last means of securing life and liberty.

Elizabeth and Lea had not imagined so fearful a result of this frantic undertaking. Elizabeth lamented over the sad fate of her people, to whom such great promises had been given; but Lea soon recovered herself, and rejoiced over the speedy downfall of the pretended Messiah.

The attention of Euphemus's companion was thus directed to her, and he asked, "Who is the maiden, thy daughter, Elizabeth?"

Elizabeth briefly related to him her story; and when he heard that she was a daughter of Abraham, and from the city of Capernaum, he said:

"O, then, she is one of us."

"Who art thou, then, dear brother?" inquired Elizabeth.

"I am of the tribe of Levi. Rabbi Akiba was my instructor in the law and the traditions; and if you are acquainted with the famous Tryphon,

I must inform you that he was my most intimate friend. But as I sought for light, it rose upon me; I believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah. And although I have long since forsaken Rabbi Akiba, I must yet thank him for this—that he has instructed me in the important knowledge of the law. On this point, however, as well as on another, intimately connected with it, we shall not, perhaps, as fully agree, as in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah.”

“Thou see'st, dear sister,” said Euphemus, “that here, in this Galilean cottage, are met together, in three persons, the representatives of the three different opinions* respecting the law which still prevail in the churches of the saints. Our brother here cannot forget that he has been a Levite, and is anxious that we poor Gentiles, when we become Christians, should also become Jews, if no more than proselytes of the gate. Thou, worthy Elizabeth, avaiest thyself of the Apostles' permission, that Jews by birth, although they have become believers, may continue to observe the law. But it becomes me, as a Gentile convert, and a pupil of Justin,† to be simply a Christian, acknowledging no obligation to the ceremonial law of Moses.”

* See Appendix, note F. † See Appendix, note G.

All smiled, and Elizabeth inquired, "Who is this Justin?"

"You must certainly have seen him when you were with us in Sichem," said Euphemus. "You have only forgotten it. He was the brother who went about in the mantle of a pagan philosopher. For having previously worn it, as the pupil of human wisdom, he now continued to wear it, as a means of obtaining a readier entrance for the proclamation of the Gospel. A remarkable man, indeed, is Justin. He had made trial of all the schools of philosophy, and at last devoted himself to that of Plato; when, as he was walking thoughtfully by the sea, there appeared to him an ancient man, probably of celestial nature, who directed him to Christ. He too has now fled from the war, and has gone to Athens. He has long been meditating a work in defence of the Gospel, against all pagan philosophers and powers. Him and his philosopher's mantle must I think that I know the Lord. But we are weary. Direct us to our couches."

CHAPTER XIV.

NOTHING produces so entire a change of character in man, as the consciousness of the presence of the Divine.¹

This was seen in Lea. Her hasty, forward manner, with something to say on every occasion, had disappeared. Her voluble tongue seemed fettered by a higher power. The kindly, artless, and obliging temper remained; but the often wearisome restlessness, instability, and heedlessness, were seen no longer. Once she could not have listened to a conversation, so interesting to her, without putting in remarks of her own. But now it had become as hard a task for her not to be silent as formerly not to speak. She felt as if moving constantly under the open eye of Christ; his spirit breathed upon her from the meek and reverential demeanor of Elizabeth, and the deeper her inward happiness became, the more repressed was the outward expression of her feelings. She confessed to herself that she was now, for the first time, conscious of the Di-

vine presence, and that formerly, even when she had prayed to Jehovah, she had always conceived of Him as afar off.

As she awoke on the following morning with these thoughts, the question arose in her mind, she knew not how, whether she should call what she experienced in her heart Jehovah's presence, or the presence of Christ. She felt that the answer to this inquiry was still necessary to the clear understanding of what she thus experienced, and therefore longed to question her mother on the subject; but she restrained herself on reflecting that Elizabeth might regard it as an attempt, not very becoming in a maiden, to rival the critical sagacity displayed by their guests on the preceding evening.

Her mother remarked a struggle in Lea's feelings, and gave her opportunity to disclose the cause of her uneasiness.

Lea ventured to do so at last, and Elizabeth proposed to ask the opinion of their visitors, who better understood such points. She reluctantly consented, and after breakfast Elizabeth asked the men for their decision.

"It admits of no doubt," exclaimed the Levite hastily, "that it is the presence of Jehovah. There is but one God. 'Hear, O Israel, thou shalt have

no other gods but me.' That is the first commandment."

"But wherever Jehovah is named in the Old Testament, it is always the Son of God who is meant," replied Euphemus, with earnest decision.

"The Messiah is only man," said the Levite, "and as such he is called by eminence the Son of God."

Elizabeth shuddered,—Euphemus shook his head.

"I should like to see your denial proved," said the Levite.

"That will be no hard task,"* returned Euphemus. "When Moses, describing the destruction of Sodom, says, 'Then rained Jehovah fire and brimstone from Jehovah;' or when in the Psalms David says, 'Jehovah said to my Lord:' is it not then the Messiah who is spoken of? Does not Micah say that his goings forth are from of old, from everlasting, that he is therefore eternal? Does not the greatest of the prophets ask, 'Who shall declare His generation?' Is it not He that in the proverbs of Solomon is spoken of as essential, primeval wisdom? Whom are we to regard as the eternal Word, if not the Son of God who appeared in the Messiah? You hold with us

* See Appendix, note H.

that Jesus is the Messiah. Have you never heard that he said of himself, 'I and the Father are one,' that the Jews thereupon accused him of making himself equal with God, and that he died because he admitted the truth of the accusation?"

The Levite grew visibly uneasy, and tried to cut short the discussion. "All those passages," said he, "were explained to us differently by Akiba. But here is not the place to investigate the subject. When Jerusalem is rebuilt, Christ will return and establish his thousand years' reign* upon the earth, and then he will instruct us on this point."

Euphemus seemed to follow his digression, and entering upon the new topic, he said, "But you must certainly know, and will pardon a Gentile Christian for reminding you of it in his own favor, that all Israel shall then first be saved, when the fullness of the Gentiles is gathered in."

"That is your standing theme, which you repeat after Paul, the renegade from the law," said the Levite, forcing a smile; "but where, then, are all the great promises which have been given to Israel?"

"We Christians are the true Israel," returned Euphemus, "and, as my teacher, Justin, said

* See Appendix, note I.

once, on a similar occasion, 'you have need of our circumcision, but we have no need of yours.' ”

“ But God himself gave us the law, and solemnly established it.”

“ On that point let me say this to you: God, on Mount Sinai, gave, on the third day, the ten commandments, then the civil laws, and lastly, the ceremonial laws. These last, it is perfectly clear, are all of a typical nature, and must end when that comes which they prefigure. The second ceased with the Jewish state; but the first remains binding upon all men. The Apostles decided thus in the assembly at Jerusalem; and this decision, made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the example by which we should learn, in everything, to separate the divine and human, and to follow that only which the word of God expressly requires of us. What sayest thou to this, Elizabeth?”

“ Since thou askest me I am bound to give thee a frank answer,” replied she. “ And it is this—that Lea and I cannot conceive how you men can trouble yourselves with such hair-splitting distinctions, which are the offspring of your own reason. As for us, it is more in love and faith that we hold Christ to be our God; we call him Jehovah, pray to him, and love him. This is to us, as to Mary, the one thing needful.”

The men smiled, and pronounced them happy in their faith.

Lea, however, was much gratified with having been present at the conversation. Her heart had been already won for Christ; and therefore it was enough for her understanding that Euphemus, to whom she had felt herself, from the very first, the more strongly drawn, had gained the victory. Now, it seemed to her, the light had reached her understanding also.

CHAPTER XV.

THE day flowed by in gentle blessing to the inmates of the little cottage. The air of peace which breathed in this spot shed its mild influence likewise over their visitors, accustomed to live amidst the strife of words and arms. "Here," they exclaimed again and again, "here, if anywhere on earth, is the abode of God with man!"

It grieved them that they were able to remain this day only, and that with the morning light they must again be on their way. Euphemus, with his sprightly Grecian temperament, was chiefly attracted to Lea; while the Levite found most satisfaction in the conversation of Elizabeth. Most of the day was spent, either on the threshold of the cottage, on the turf beneath the terebinth, or on the peak of the mountain, under the palms, in full prospect of that beautiful and hallowed landscape. Here they could discern soldiers, fugitives, and troops of travellers, hurrying along the Way of the Sea; and the more unquiet it

seemed abroad, the more deeply did their hearts rejoice in the still and holy repose of this citadel of peace. Accordingly, no one ventured to renew the dispute upon points of faith. In this atmosphere of peace and love every word of strife died upon the tongue. The whole day they spoke only of Christ, the friend of sinners and of the poor; they recalled this or that imperishable word which he had uttered in one or another of the places which lay in their sight, and each one had something to relate of what he had himself experienced of the truth and grace of his Lord.

“Oh, if it is always thus in the intercourse of the Nazarenes,” cried Lea, “would that I might become one of their number! Such a life and such communion is indeed a heaven upon earth!”

The visitors proposed to Elizabeth to forsake the mountain, in this disturbed and perilous time, and to flee with them to Antioch, which was free from war.

Elizabeth declared that she could not forsake the turf of her sainted husband, the graves of her kindred, and the sight of the house of miracle in Cana.

“But to make amends for that,” said Euphemus, “you will there become acquainted with

the city where Peter, your apostle of circumcision, chiefly resided."

"Take it not ill, dear brother," replied Elizabeth, "thou knowest how earnestly I strive to honor the decision of the Apostles: I love the Gentile Christians as my brethren. But yet the neglect of the law on the part of those who form the majority of the church in Antioch, would prove a stumbling-block to me. Leave us here! the Lord, who has hitherto protected us, the guardian of Israel, of the true Israel, sleeps not, nor slumbers."

The brethren urged their proposal no farther. Early on the following morning they commended to the Lord this peaceful cottage, prayed with their kind hostesses, and set out in the direction of the Way of the Sea.

The Greek turned as he reached the threshold, and said to Lea, "Our road leads through Tiberias. Hast thou any message for that city?"

"Carry to my enemies the salutation of peace," answered Lea. "Say to them, that the Lord hath done all things well. And as they are now, doubtless, involved in the ruin of Barchocheba's followers, entreat them to flee for refuge with their poor Lea, to the Messiah of the miserable,

who has said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' ”

Elizabeth extended her hand to the brethren, and said, “Disciples of the Lord never see each other for the last time! Farewell! Pray for us! We shall pray for you!”

They parted. Tears were in the eyes of all. Elizabeth and Lea looked after the travellers till they could no longer distinguish them, as they proceeded along the Way of the Sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONCE more alone, the accustomed quiet of their life returned. Lea rose first every morning to prepare breakfast for her mother; then they read, in their favorite retreat, the gospel of Matthew, went through their household duties, sung a Psalm, and gazed at the descending sun from the threshold of the cottage.

During the visit of the brethren, Lea's convictions had attained greater certainty and assurance; and as these increased, the loveliness of her disposition developed itself in proportion, and a moral steadfastness gained the ascendancy over the apparent volatility of her nature.

In another point of view, Elizabeth also had gained in firmness. She could not forget how her unbelief had been rebuked on that evening when her fearful heart received as foes those whom the Lord had sent to strengthen her. That, she resolved, should never happen to her again. She exerted all her energy to remain calm and

unmoved, and—so weak is ever the human heart, and in danger, whithersoever it turns, of departing from the Lord—she even forgot to pray for protection. When she applied to her Saviour, in regard to all her other wants, this hardly once came into her mind; and if she noticed the omission, she rejoiced at her forgetfulness, and erroneously took it for a proof of her strong faith.

One morning they were both awaked by a violent knocking at the door of the cottage. Lea shrunk with terror at the sound. Elizabeth too was alarmed for a moment, but she soon recovered her courage, threw her garments hastily ar und her, and opened the door.

But they were no brothers whom she now saw. Before her stood a troop of frantic Jews, who, having been robbed themselves, now resorted to robbery under cover of the general confusion. They had pitched hoops, burning torches, swords, and axes in their hands, and poured out torrents of abuse, threats, and imprecations.

“Ha! thou old Nazarene jade!” they cried, “think you, that you enemies of Israel, you friends of the Romans, you authors of all trouble in Israel, shall alone escape in the universal misery? Out now, with all which you possess!”

Several rushed into the cottage, threw out all

the moveables, and furiously demanded of the half-stupified females their hidden treasure.

Lea clung speechless to her mother, who declared, that the cottage, and what had now been brought out, constituted the whole of her poor possessions.

“ Well, then,” cried the frantic wretches, “ let the dwelling of the cursed Nazarene go up in smoke! It shall fare no better with that than with the palaces in Bilter, Jamnia, and Tiberias.”

At once lighted pitch hoops were hurled upon the roof of reeds. In an instant the clear flame flared up, and the fierce glow spread through the whole tenement, and seized upon the neighboring palms; the wild howl of the robbers mingling with the crackling of the flames.

Elizabeth’s soul was overwhelmed. It seemed to her that this wild uproar only called to her in mockery, “ Where is now thy God?” Scarcely conscious, she sunk upon her knees, exclaiming, “ Lord Jesus, my Saviour!” Lea sunk beside her on the ground, and called with her upon Christ.

When the fierce robbers saw them kneeling, and heard them invoke the name of Jesus, they grew still more frantic. “ Strike her dead! Send the blasphemer to hell!” they cried on all sides.

A wretch, with distorted features, sprang forward, and, with all his force, swung high the pole which lay upon his arm, in order to bring it down upon his victim. Lea perceived it, and starting up, bowed herself over her kneeling mother, and covered her with her body. The blow fell upon Lea ; she sunk senseless to the ground.

At this instant Roman war cries were heard, and the place was suddenly filled with Roman soldiers. A centurion was at their head. After a short resistance the robbers betook themselves to flight.

By the side of the unconscious Lea knelt Elizabeth, and seemed no longer to perceive what was going on around her. The smoke from the ruins of the cottage enveloped them. Around them flew cinders from the burning palm trees. The clanking of swords, the cry of the soldiery, sounded through the air. But she was unaffected by it all. Her glance seemed to pierce the clouds. Her countenance beamed with a celestial peace, and, at intervals, she breathed confidently the name of Jesus !

The robbers had fled : a part of the soldiers pursued them. Just as Lea was coming to herself the centurion approached Elizabeth with deep respect. He had heard the name of Jesus,

and his martial mien softened into an expression of gentleness and sympathy. He commanded the soldiers to lay Lea down upon the turf, and led Elizabeth to her.

“Be not afraid!” said he to them both. “I also am a disciple of the Lord. Whither shall I conduct you, for here you can remain no longer?”

Elizabeth could not, on the instant, resolve what to do.

“I will have you conducted to Pella then, to the church, to the place of refuge which the Lord himself has appointed.”

“Yes, to Pella, in the name of the Lord!” said Elizabeth.

The centurion gave orders to some Christian soldiers belonging to his band, who conducted them over Bethsean into the country beyond Jordan, till at length they reached Pella in Gilead.

CHAPTER XVII.

WITH difficulty they at last reached the church of the saints in Pella.

Lea had received no outward injury. The first day, in the indescribable agitation of her mind, she had felt nothing of the consequences of the blow. But when she had seated herself in the boat at Tarichea, and was proceeding down the Jordan to Bethsean, the fever of her blood abated, she became more conscious of her real state, and could not conceal from herself that she had received some internal injury. She refrained, for her mother's sake, from mentioning it to her conductors. It had been a sore trial to Elizabeth to forsake the hill where her cottage had stood, the turf seat from which could be seen the house of miracle in Cana, and Lea could not add another sorrow by the communication of her own misfortune. She exerted all her energy to perform the journey on foot with the others through the hills of Bashan. Her mind was refreshed by

the enchanting views from the heights, by the sight of the rich forest shades, by recollections from the history of her people—by prayer. Thus striving with uneasiness and exhaustion, she dragged herself along as far as Ophrah.

It was late in the evening when they arrived. The moment she stepped into the caravansera she fell upon a couch, and her heart foreboded that she should not soon leave it. A thousand times, in the night, she thought of the story of Gideon, and of the Lord's commission, "Go in this thy strength, I have sent thee." She was ready to go, like the warlike champion, who threw down the altars of Baal and smote the Midianites; she too felt in herself a strength, but it was not of the body. In the morning she attempted to rise, but could not. She was laid upon a litter, and carried by the soldiers through the mountains of Bashan and Gilead to Pella. It was fortunate that the soldiers were brethren, themselves longing to meet the church, and performing with joy this service for their future sister.

The soldiers sang psalms over the sick maiden, and Elizabeth followed praying behind the litter. In this manner they entered Pella.

A crowd of brethren and sisters were awaiting

them at the gate. The soldiers had sent forward the intelligence of their arrival, and that of Elizabeth, who was known in Pella. The litter was set down in the gate. Elizabeth was received by the women and the soldiers by the men, with the kiss of peace. That public gate was as the entrance to a father's house. The citizens seemed like kinsmen. They lamented over the sick young stranger, and pressed forward with offers of assistance. The name of Christ, repeated from mouth to mouth, was like a word of magic, which opened the heart and united the spirit of the whole assembly.

Several aged women were soon to be remarked around the sick maiden, who were called deaconesses. They were all above sixty years old; and, as Lea afterwards learned, were widows, who had been but once married, had brought up children, and had, in all respects, demeaned themselves in a blameless manner. With the blessing of such a life, and the experience of such an old age, they were deemed worthy to receive, through the laying on of hands, an office in which they were to serve Christ in the person of their sick, poor, and inexperienced sisters.

Lea and Elizabeth were received into the house of one of the deaconesses, who was a rich and honorable widow.

“Thanks be to the Lord!” said the deaconess, as Lea lay quietly on the couch in the Armon, while Elizabeth sat beside her. “He has given you to us. The other deaconesses desired, as much as myself, the privilege of ministering to you, but the Lord has himself decided it by lot. No strife, therefore, has arisen among them, and I have the assurance that you are sent to me by the Lord.”

“May he also grant us his grace, that we may show thee, by our demeanor, that he has sent us to thee,” said Elizabeth. “His finger has been plainly manifest in conducting us hither.”

The deaconess seated herself beside them, and Elizabeth related the story of her false security, and how the Lord, whose protection she had neglected to seek in this time of danger, had suffered her to fall into the hands of her enemies; and how Lea, forgetful of her own life, had thought only of saving her mother, and had thereby suffered so great misfortune.

“Welcome then to me, as a martyr of love,” said the deaconess, “if thou art not yet deemed worthy to be a martyr of the faith. I salute thee as my sister!”

“Oh, put me not so to the blush!” cried Lea. “That is the highest of all earthly names of

honor. By that precious name Euphemus addressed my second mother. But I am not yet worthy of this high distinction. Pray for me, that the Lord may yet, before I die, count me worthy of baptism."

"Is she not then thy daughter?" said the deaconess to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth briefly related her story. When she mentioned Lea's parents, and Capernaum as her birth-place, the deaconess changed color, and seemed to be greatly agitated. To the surprise of her guests she then sunk upon her knees and prayed. With tears of joy she arose, and embracing Lea, said, "I am thine aunt, whom, fifty years ago, thy cruel uncle drove from the house of thy grandfather, as he has now driven thee. Oh, that we should meet here, and be united under the banner of the cross!"

Both wept in inexpressible happiness, and praised the Lord, in whose church the lost are found again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LEA was nursed with the most tender love.

The aunt lavished on her only relative the whole store of domestic affections so long locked up in her own heart, and repaid to the afflicted child all the tenderness which she had owed her from her birth. Even in the bosom of the church she had felt the deprivation of kindred ; and since the loss of her own children it had been her daily prayer, that some one at least of her numerous family might be turned to the Lord, and thus restored to herself.

On the other hand, the mother sought to requite her daughter's heroic sacrifice. Often did she burst into tears at the thought, that for her sin the dear child must thus suffer in her tender years ; and scarcely could she take comfort in the suggestion of the deaconess, that, in this respect, the church imitates the blessed Saviour himself—one suffering joyfully the punishment due to the fault of another.

Thus tended, Lea recovered apace ; and her amendment would have been still more rapid, had not the terrors of that day of violence so affected even her physical frame, that she could seldom pass a night without frightful and distracting dreams.

The aged matrons watched every night in the sick chamber, and often when they saw uneasiness come over her, they would fall on their knees beside her couch and pray for her. If she then awaked, in the first transport of joy that it was only a dream which had so terrified her, she called those watching friends her guardian angels. Once, when she had again fallen asleep, Elizabeth said, " She is perhaps right in a certain sense ; for the angels too have indeed their charge as watchers around us ; and when we, tormented with care and anxiety, are affrighted and weep, and shriek out like children, they gently hush us, and breathe into our hearts their own feeling of security and confidence."

" Oh, how often," replied her friend, " may they smile at our childish fears, which too are but dreams, and press our hand as we do the dear child's."

" Could we but compose ourselves as easily as Lea does, when she sees that she has only dreamed !" added Elizabeth.

Another frightful vision meanwhile had arisen before Lea's fancy. She thought her mother again in danger, and shrieked, "O spare my mother, ye madmen! Know ye not that when I was a forsaken orphan she took me to herself? Slay me, but let my mother live!"

This was too much for Elizabeth. The child's affection only brought to her view her own sins, and, sobbing, she hastened to another apartment to confide her sorrows to her Saviour, to sigh out the pang too tender and too deep for words, and to entreat his help.

The help came. It came to Elizabeth, for she learnt by experience that the more tender is the conscience in intercourse with Him who is righteousness itself, the more deeply will the consolation of forgiveness sink into the heart; and that in this intercourse, love is a plant which attains its growth only through the dew of tears. It came to Lea; for with each day her body increased in strength, and her spirit grew more joyful in hope and faith, so that in a few weeks she was already moving cheerfully about the house.

The deaconesses exercised also a spiritual watch over the female part of the church, for they were nurses not only of the body, but also

of the soul. Only now and then came an elder of the church, more to rejoice in the success of this work of love than to satisfy himself whether all was properly conducted.

How near to the heart of the pious deaconess lay the eternal welfare of Lea. How did she entreat the Lord that He would bless her with wisdom for the guidance of her charge! How did she thank him for every new indication that Lea was becoming more confirmed in her faith and hope!

At length she said to her :

“Of baptism thou hast said nothing for a long time, dear child! Thou believest in Jesus the Messiah. What hinders thee from desiring the holy ordinance?”

“Ah, I am not yet worthy,” answered Lea, the tears starting into her eyes.

“Our bishop,” replied the deaconess, “is accustomed to say, that he who holds himself worthy of baptism is unworthy of it; but that conscious unworthiness is a proof of fitness for it.”

“That,” returned Lea, “I cannot comprehend.”

“But why then do you consider yourself unworthy of baptism?”

“I have not fulfilled the law, and the law condemns me,” said Lea, in deep humiliation.

“What law?” inquired the deaconess.

“Oh, the whole law have I transgressed. We can no longer upon Moriah bring the offering for our sins, and we are not permitted to bring it elsewhere. It has indeed been said to me that the prayers—which were once offered in the temple—now in our dispersion and captivity supply the place of offerings; but this seems to me only an unsatisfying evasion.”

“Dear child,” replied the deaconess, “the sacrifice and indeed the whole law were given by God to Israel only on account of the hardness of their hearts. They were but designed to point our fathers to Him, who by one offering hath for ever perfected all who are sanctified. It was long since said by Samuel to Saul, that obedience is better than sacrifice; surely then faith, the fountain of obedience, is better. Nathan sung that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.”

“I recollect now to have heard something similar to this from Euphemus, a pious brother who once visited us in our cottage. He said, however, that the ten commandments are still binding, and these I have not kept.”

“Be it so; through the law was to come the

knowledge of sin, and if thou art become acquainted with thy sin by the law, and desirest forgiveness, then hasten to Him who for thee hath fulfilled the law and borne its punishment; and then with other strength begin anew the course of obedience. In baptism shall this strength be given thee.”

Lea now ventured to desire baptism.

Meantime the spirit of peace which reigned in the house of the deaconess, was banished from the church at Pella. The two women often came home in deep affliction from the assembly, lamenting that they had been rather distracted than edified. Every new report which was brought to Pella from Ælia Capitolina, or from the country, was a fresh spark of dissension which inflamed the parties in the church against each other.

The matter stood thus. The Lord had given commandment to his disciples, that when they saw the threatened judgment about to burst upon Jerusalem they should flee to the mountains. They had accordingly, on the approach of Vespasian, fled to Pella among the mountains of Gilead. On the appearance of the false Messiah, this counsel was again and yet more vividly brought to mind; and the church at Ælia had removed

thither. This church consisted in part of Gentile Christians, but the majority were converted Jews; and these two parties were agitated by the usual dissensions respecting the observance of the law.

The city had at length been rebuilt by command of the emperor Adrian, but the Jews were in the strictest manner forbidden to enter it. Only on one day in the year, the day of its overthrow, they were allowed to visit the city for a sum of money, to lament the folly of their rebellion. In other respects, also, he had treated this blinded people with unexampled rigor. In the market-place beneath the terebinth of Abraham, at Hebron, and in that of Gaza, he had caused the captive Jews to be sold for paltry sums, and those who found no purchasers he sent to Egypt. And for a still more bitter mortification to them and to the Christians in all future time, he had ordered that a temple of Adonis should be erected at Bethlehem, and of the Capitoline Jupiter on Mount Moriah; that on Golgotha an altar should be built to Jupiter and Venus, and that the figure of a swine should be set up over the gate of Ælia which led to Bethlehem.

Thus the punishment had fallen not only upon the Jews but also upon the Jewish Christians.

The dissatisfaction of the latter was roused still more when the Gentile brethren resolved on returning to Ælia, and planting on that holy though desecrated spot a church of the Lord, which should consist only of Gentile believers. At the same time that this dangerous division was manifesting itself, the differing parties among the Jewish Christians themselves were assuming a hostile attitude towards each other. All abhorred the name of Christians which the disciples had received in Antioch, and looked upon it as the common name of all Gentile believers. But a part obstinately insisted that the Gentile converts should submit to the law; and as they moreover insisted that Jesus was only a man, they were obliged to withdraw themselves, and received the name of Ebionites. The rest, who adhered to the decision of the Apostles, retained the name of Nazarenes, and separated themselves from their Gentile brethren only in one respect, viz. that they shunned all intercourse with the Gentiles, which was prohibited by the law.

By these divisions was the church of the Lord rent, particularly in Pella, Cochaba, and the Syrian city Berrhea; for in these places the Jewish converts were predominant. In other churches where Gentile Christians were most nu-

merous, the converted Jews accommodated themselves to the majority, and followed the example of Peter in Cæsarea.

In Pella the Bishop Ariston, in company with all who had the fullest understanding of the nature of the Gospel, strove hard to preserve the peace of the church. But their efforts were unavailing. Early in the following year the Gentile believers, one and all, removed to Ælia Capitolina; and it was not till after a succession of fifteen bishops from the circumcision, that they elected the first from among the Gentiles in the person of Mark. The remaining brethren looked with sorrow on their departure. The division extended through all the relations of life, until at length the love of unity and of peace must confine itself within the bounds of single churches.

CHAPTER XIX.

As the time of Easter drew near, peace and also some degree of union returned to the church in Pella. The deaconess and her female friends had shared in the pain occasioned by the dissensions in the church, but had participated in them no farther. In domestic retirement had Lea prepared for baptism, faithfully availing herself of the instructions of the elders and deaconesses.

On account of her illness she was offered baptism in the house. She felt herself strong enough, however, to undertake a pilgrimage to the Jordan* with the other candidates for baptism, and with deep desire did she long to receive the washing of regeneration in those waves where John had baptized the Lord himself.

Several weeks previous, she, together with the others who desired the holy ordinance, had been exhorted to give herself to prayer, and also, so far as her bodily health permitted, to fasting, as

* See Appendix, note K.

a means of securing that serenity of soul which fits it for devotion. The Nazarenes still retained the Jewish fasts; but the whole church also recognized the dependence of the spiritual frame upon the state of the body: and observing that on momentous occasions in life, the wants of the body are silent, they inferred that in preparing for such occasions the body should be placed in such a condition, that at least its claims might not disturb and distract the soul. The church manifested the liveliest sympathy with the candidates, and each member felt himself so closely bound to the whole body, that the entire church united with them in fasting and prayer.

In Easter week began the pilgrimage to the Jordan.* The august procession consisted of the elders and deacons, accompanied by a large portion of the church. Slowly and solemnly they wound their way over the mountains and through the valleys of Gilead, at intervals singing psalms and hymns. Lea had to be carried rather than led by Elizabeth and the deaconess;—but a hope unspeakable inspired her soul and bore up even the feeble energies of her body.

“Thus have I imagined the journeyings of our fathers to the feasts at Jerusalem,” said she; “but then they celebrated only the promise of that

* See Appendix, note L.

which in its holy fulfilment now blesses us. There was then, therefore, as was meet, more of external pomp; now there is more of inward glory.”

Early on the following morning* they repaired to the shore of the Jordan. The assembly prayed with the candidates. They made the confession of their faith in the triune God, and repeated the Lord's prayer; then followed the holy ordinance.

The deaconesses had dressed the female candidates in suitable apparel. In white garments they went down into the stream. The Bishops dipped them under, and baptized them “in the name of the universal Father and Lord, and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.”

After this, which was called the Enlightening, the deacons conducted the males and the deaconesses the females into a house, where they changed their clothing.

When they had returned to the assembly a prayer closed the solemnity, and the procession set out on its return to Pella. Lea did not appear languid, though she was greatly affected. The deaconess had supplied the place of godmother,† and on the way called her with joyful pride

* See Appendix, note M.

† See Appendix, note N.

her sister. Elizabeth, too, addressed her in the same manner. But Lea could not hear the endearing name without tears. She looked upon herself as one new born indeed, and yet it seemed as if this title was still too high and too significant for her.

The procession on arriving at Pella went immediately to the place of assembly. They were received with rejoicings, congratulations, and songs by the church. All kneeled down. A devout prayer was offered for the baptized, for the brethren and sisters of the church, for all churches in all places; and God was entreated to illuminate his young disciples with the light of his Gospel; that He would strengthen them to lead righteous lives and to obey the divine commandments, that so they might attain unto eternal life. At the conclusion of the prayer they greeted one another with the kiss of peace.

Bread was then brought to the Bishop, and a goblet containing water and wine. He took it and praised and glorified the universal Father through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and with many words thanked Him for the gifts which He had bestowed on them. When he had ended the prayer and the thanksgiving, the whole church said, Amen! The

deacons then served each person present with a portion of the bread, and of the wine mingled with water, and carried it to the dwellings of such as were absent. But not as common bread, and not as common drink, was it received by the members of the church; for they were taught "that this food, for which thanks had been given in Jesus' own words, and which is converted into nourishment of flesh and blood, is the flesh and blood of the man Christ Jesus!"

After the holy supper, Lea returned home in company with her friends. Her soul was melted in joy and thankfulness. She embraced her mother and aunt, and long lay speechless in their arms. She passed the night chiefly in praying and singing; though struggling with bodily weakness, the triumph of her soul yet bore her far above all outward infirmities up to the throne of her Lord.

CHAPTER XX.

As Lea next morning entered the apartment of Elizabeth and her aunt, they were both struck by the unusual expression of her countenance and manner. In every tone of her voice there was a depth, a feeling, which surprised them, and her whole demeanor had a tenderness and warmth, such as they had never observed in her before. The native transparency and gladness of her temper had not disappeared, but they had received from that new depth and intensity of affection a charm almost celestial. It seemed as if her nature had attained its perfect development, and therefore made, like every harmoniously formed character, an impression of majesty.

The matrons knew not at first how to understand it; but it soon occurred to them that such is often the regenerating and transforming power of baptism even upon the outward appearance, although they had never before witnessed a change so striking. Doubtless it was the influ-

ence of baptism. They erred in this, however, that they supposed it to be purely an inward one which was now manifesting itself outwardly. There was indeed an inward influence, but connected with it was another, an external one, quite distinct in its nature.

Lea's soul, both before and at the reception of the holy ordinance, had been in a state of unusual elevation, and she felt that to her it was no mere empty symbol. She perceived in herself a new spiritual life, full of assurance and of the undoubting experience of divine grace in her heart. Her spirit in its most earnest longings had never imagined, that the assured, the overwhelming feeling of sin forgiven, of purity in the sight of God, and of the divine complacency towards us, could be so unutterably blissful or could produce such an entire change of the whole being. "Yes, surely it is being born again," said she to herself, "for it is a return to the innocence of childhood, to unfading purity before the throne of divine justice. The infant has an innocence before man, but it is only an *image* of that purity before God which the baptized receives through faith in Christ." It was emotions like these which had produced the wonderful change observed in her.

But there was, moreover, an external cause

which increased the effect of this inward state. Her improvement in health had been only a temporary result of intense desire, and nothing but the enthusiasm of her heart could have concealed from her that the exertions of the journey exceeded her strength. The triune immersion of the whole body in the Jordan, at the hour of sunrise, had completed the ruin of her health. During the journey back, in the assembly, and through the first part of the night, the ever increasing blissfulness of her heart had lifted her above its effects. But towards morning, she had suffered a violent hemorrhage, which at last opened her eyes to her situation.

Filled with the reflections which her new-born spirit and her shattered body naturally awakened, she had sought her aged friends. Although they ascribed this visible change in Lea solely to her baptism, yet the immediate expression of their surprise was restrained by that natural awe which such an aspect ever inspires.

“Seat thyself by us, dear sister and daughter,” said Elizabeth. “We, thy aunt and I, have been contending who should now claim thee properly as daughter. I have formally adopted thee as my child, and thou hast allowed me a mother’s rights. Thy aunt, on the other hand,

pleads the right of blood, and adds thereto the new chain of godmother, as thy spiritual parent. At last we have adjusted it thus, that since God in Christ has adopted thee for His child, we are bound now to honor thee as our sister."

With a pleasant smile Lea answered, "Let me remain, I entreat you, your own dear daughter, and shame me not with that too honorable name of sister!"

"Yes, that shalt thou indeed remain, my own dear daughter," said her aunt, embracing her.

"Now for the first time do I feel what sweetness there is in the name of daughter," said Lea, with an unwonted expression;—"now first, when through the grace of my Lord I bear it in a four-fold sense. The dear parents who in Capernaum, the chosen city of my Saviour, nursed and blessed me, called me their beloved daughter. Next thou, dear Mother Elizabeth, as thy adopted daughter hast loved the forsaken orphan with the love which the Lord giveth. And now my venerable aunt has become my godmother, and calls me her spiritual daughter. But this is the crown—that through the holy washing I am become a daughter of my heavenly Father!"

"Yes, that is the crown," said Elizabeth.

"That too alone is abiding," pursued Lea in

deep emotion, "and abides for evermore! Dear mother Elizabeth, dear mother and aunt, death has deprived you of your own little ones. The Lord took them to Himself, into His everlasting home, and ye can no more address them as your children. And now, this your new child, who should have filled their place, this your adopted and spiritual daughter, will also soon die. Over them ye wept, for ye were tender mothers;—but weep not over me, but be glad and rejoice with me!"

She spoke with such confidence, and with such a tender melancholy joy, that the aged pair ventured not to contradict her. They both rose, and embraced her with silent tears.

Like an angel lay the maiden with her pale, radiant, majestic aspect, in the arms of the weeping mothers.

"Oh, my daughter, what aileth thee? Whence know'st thou this?" at length asked Elizabeth.

"Ask me not, beloved mother," answered Lea. "I know it! It has been this night made certain to me."

"Wilt thou so soon forsake us?" sighed the aunt. "O could'st thou but first bury us aged ones, and then lay thyself beside us, thou precious child!"

“ Oh, chide me not !” said Lea. “ The will of the Lord be done ! Cheerfully would I remain to close your eyes, if that were His will. So must ye too cheerfully dismiss me, and close my eyes, since it is His will. For ye know that when we belonged merely to the natural Israel, a ripe old age only was estimated a blessing ;, but now that we belong to the spiritual Israel, early death is a blessing also. Is it not true, beloved mothers, that all are blessings which the Lord sends ?”

“ Yes, all are blessings even though they cause the poor heart to ache,” they both replied.

“ That has the baptizer John explained to us, as the Bishop told us, I must decrease, He must increase, were his words. These must go together. The Lord increases in us only when we decrease. The decrease is painful to nature ; the increase is healthful to the spirit, for it becomes everlasting joy and happiness.”

The aged pair were speechless.

“ Oh, it does indeed grieve me to the heart,” continued Lea, “ that I must go, when I remember that I must leave you behind.”

“ Ah, my poor, desolate, widowed old age !” cried Elizabeth, with many tears. “ I had reposed so many hopes in thee, sweet child !”

“ Alas !” sighed the aunt, “ none of my

kindred remains to close my eyes, and strangers will lay me in the grave !”

“ I entreat you,” said Lea tenderly, “ make it not so hard for me to fulfil the Lord’s will ! Ah, I love you dearly, unspeakably ;—no one but my Saviour do I love more ! How hast thou like a mother loved me, since I was received, a poor outcast orphan, into thy peaceful cottage, O mother Elizabeth ! And thou, my spiritual mother, how did our common blood witness for each other, when sick, and again an outcast, I came to Pella ! Dear, dear mother, how hard for nature it is to part ! This is the true bitterness of death !”

The voices of all were choked in tears.

“ Still, death to ourselves is life in Him who is our head. In that let us comfort one another. Come, dear mother, comfort your afflicted daughter with the comfort wherewith so often the Lord hath comforted you !”

The aged mother embraced the wondrous child.

“ On the Sabbath,” continued Lea, “ we saw the Lord’s opened grave. That shall be my Nebo, for from it will I look over into the blissful Canaan. Is it not true that to him for whom Christ’s grace is not sufficient, whose heart it comforts not in sorrow, to whom it is not an

overflowing supply for every loss—to him it is unknown? Now let us sing Mary's hymn of thanksgiving, which you lately taught me." She began—

“ My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit exults in God my Saviour !”

But she sung only a few words. A pang seized her in the breast, and she only repeated the remainder. With the second line she was again obliged to pause. She was silent a moment, and then said, “ This is no self-satisfied joy, but a grateful, happy endurance of His will !” She went on :

“ For He hath looked on the low estate of His handmaid ;
Behold ! henceforth all generations shall call me blessed ;
For He hath done great things for me,
He that is mighty and whose name is holy.
And His mercy endures for ever
Towards them that fear Him.”

Again she paused for breath, and then continued, “ See, this is the light which rose to me over my past life, in baptism, as it arose to Mary in that mysterious hour. Have not ye, too, learned by experience that the Lord does something great for us, when it makes all other things,

even the least, great also ? Yet remember, dear heart," said she, with childish simplicity, to herself, "it is one thing to look at ourselves, to whom He has done great things, and quite another to look at him who has done great things for us."

Soon she resumed again :

“ He hath showed strength with His arm,
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their
heart.
He hath cast down the mighty from their seats,
And exalted the lowly.
The hungry He hath filled with good things,
And sent the rich empty away.”

“ See,” said she, “ this is the fervor which that overwhelming joy produces. It is the fervor of humility, of self-decrease, while the Lord increases in us ; of the conviction of our sinfulness and vanity, when in baptism eternal life is bestowed upon us. Of a truth,” and with these words her voice grew stronger, “ he who in Jordan has received eternal life, may willingly lay down on Nebo his earthly life. In that we are happier than Moses.”

After a few moments' rest, she repeated the conclusion of this noble song of praise :

“ He hath helped Israel His servant,
And hath remembered His mercy ;
According to His word unto our fathers,
To Abraham and his seed for ever. Amen !”

“ And this is the assurance which the baptismal joy spreads over the future. Still a few weeks do I linger with you ; sick, yet joyful ; poor, yet rich ; suffering, but yet beloved. Yea, the Lord will sustain his handmaid. Then shall I hear his call ! Then comes the momentary pang from which the worm shrinks ; but in all that awaits me, both before and in that bitter hour, I know that my Saviour remembers mercy. Hallelujah ! He hath said it to Abraham and to our fathers, and at last through David’s eternal Son ! And He performs His word ! Hallelujah !”

Her strength failed her. Recovering herself, she added, “ Beloved mothers, this is my baptismal joy, my joy of discipleship, my joy in Christ. And ye are witnesses that it gives light, and fullness of love, and confident expectation. Rejoice with me !”

Exhausted, she lay silent for a long time, while the weeping mothers gazed at her in speechless admiration.

CHAPTER XXI.

ONLY once more was Lea able to be present in the public assembly of the church. It was on the evening of the holy Easter, the festival of the resurrection, where, by the grave of the risen Prince of Life, she desired to ascend her Nebo. On this evening, after the solemnities of divine worship, a love-feast was held, during which the consecrated Paschal lamb was eaten. The festival was celebrated along with the Jews, according to the custom of the East.

In the morning, the deaconess directed the attention of her young friend to the striking difference between the natural and spiritual Israel, in regard to festivals. "How did they once throng to Jerusalem while the Temple was yet standing!" said she. "Three great feasts, and how many new moons and other sacred days! The church of the Lord has but one feast.* That, each one celebrates daily by himself, and the

* See Appendix, note O.

assembled church from week to week on the Sabbath. Is it not true, Lea, he who celebrates the feast of the Lord's resurrection, and of his own, needs no other feast, or at most only days of remembrance and thanksgiving?"

At evening the church were all assembled. A psalm was sung. The story of the resurrection was read from the Gospel of Matthew, the Bishop explained it, and then offered prayer. Then followed the love-feast with the Pascal Lamb and the Lord's Supper.

"In the church the whole life is to be sanctified," said the deaconess to Lea, as they were entering the banqueting hall to partake of the love-feast; "therefore, even the enjoyment of food is brought into the circle of religious services. The Apostles willingly brought this custom with them from the temple of our fathers, and their sacrificial feasts, into the church of the Lord. You remember that, by eating, Adam and Eve lost eternal life; therefore, do we, in the Lord's Supper, regain eternal life through the participation of the body and blood of Christ. But there is, moreover, the spiritual life; and these feasts of fellowship are designed to promote that love which is the element of spiritual life."

While she was thus speaking, the deacons and a part of the deaconesses bore along the food which the more prosperous members of the church had placed as an offering upon the table in the prayer-room, and which the Bishop had blessed. The poorer members had brought nothing, or very little, but they shared equally with the rest. The rich brought much and yet enjoyed no more. They were brothers and sisters of the common household of God, who here sat down together at their Father's table.

The present love-feast was distinguished by the Paschal Lamb, which constituted the principal dish.* It was pleasant to recall the times of their fathers, and it was, moreover, commanded in the law that at the Passover a lamb should be eaten: and although they knew that the true Paschal Lamb had long since come, they still cherished the advent feeling of that later time, when in full possession of the promised blessing, the church heightened its joy by a glance backward upon the days of hope and prophecy. It is true that with many it nurtured a superstitious trust in the law, and therefore at a subsequent period this custom was discontinued. But by the enlightened members of the church it was regarded

* See Appendix, note P.

only as an edifying and permitted charm of the feast.

The meal commenced with a prayer, in which all joined.* They ate as much as hunger craved. They drank as much as was becoming for sober people. In all their conversation they kept in mind that God heard them. The enjoyment of food taught them that no pleasure is to be desired without his blessing; and from the hour they learned, that even the night is to be hallowed by the remembrance of His presence.

The conversation of the assembly was wholly on religious subjects. The Bishop spoke of the last supper of the Lord with his disciples in the upper chamber, compared it with the first after his resurrection in Emmaus, and closed with the remark, that as Christ had died for us, we must also die with him, in order to be partakers with him in the eternal glory of his kingdom.

The conversation then naturally turned upon the persecutions which the church had to endure from Jews and Gentiles, and how blessed it is for the Christian to seal his faith with his blood. An Elder related the glorious death of Stephen, who was counted worthy to lead the noble army of martyrs. A revered brother spoke

* See Appendix, note Q.

of James, whom Herod Agrippa put to death. The Apostles Peter and Jude were commemorated, also James, Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem. Ignatius, too, was remembered, whom when a child, the Lord had taken in his arms and blessed. But none were heard with such attention as those, now grey-headed patriarchs, who had enjoyed the instructions of the Lord's personal disciples—the Apostolic Fathers as they were called, because they had been the immediate disciples of the Apostles. Yet it was worthy of note that the name of Paul was carefully avoided; and if they were obliged to mention him, it was with an expression of displeasure, as an apostate from the law. The martyrs, too, among the Gentile Christians, were not remembered; and when the teachers from the circumcision were praised, no notice was taken of Justin and other distinguished men who had once been pagans. On the other hand, they passed lightly over the case of Cerinthus. In short, to one versed in such matters, the conversation betrayed in the most striking manner a want of fellowship with the Gentile Christians. But it seemed to be conducted on a concerted plan, so artfully carried out that the inexperienced, like Lea, never once suspected it.

When at length, towards the end of the love-feast, water had been brought in for washing the hands, the Bishop called upon each one present to sing a hymn. He himself took the lead. This custom had for its object the general edification, and was also intended to honor the priestly prerogative of the whole church, giving each individual opportunity to teach and exhort. It was also to serve as a public test that each had kept within the bounds of moderation at the feast. One sung a psalm from the Holy Scriptures ; another a hymn of his own composition. Some sung with so much animation and feeling as to affect the whole assembly. It was a church of brethren, where each one was permitted to impart his own experience to the rest, and to speak out all his heart.

The assembly rose up and partook of the Lord's Supper, as a solemn conclusion of the festival. The deacons were directed by the Bishop, not only to carry bread and wine to the houses of such as were sick, but also, as this was the Easter festival, to send bread by special messengers to the churches at Cochaba and Berrhea, as a token of fellowship. A prayer closed the whole solemnity, and each returned home to imitate in the domestic circle this humility and holy circum-

spection, to honor the poor as brothers, and to be mindful at all times of the presence of the Lord; for, as a contemporary has expressed it, "it was less a banquet which they had attended, than a rich means of religious culture."

The females kept silent in the assembly. As for Lea, she could not have uttered a word; for the present had receded from her view, and her spirit was absorbed in anticipations of the future and endless blessings of salvation.

CHAPTER XXII.

THIS was the first and the last time that Lea was present at the meeting of the church after her baptism. Her disease so increased in violence that she could no longer leave the house, nor, after a short time, the divan. Still she was not willing to lie down. A spiritual power seemed to attract her upwards, and she sat up continually, her arms supported by pillows.

It was animating to look upon her. Ever the same remained the triumphant calmness, the winning sweetness, the sublime instructiveness of her demeanor. On this account, too, she was seldom alone, her apartment seeming like a place of meeting for the church, when she could no longer attend its public assemblies. The exhibition of a faith which triumphs visibly alike over earthly suffering and earthly joy, has an attractive charm. Each one feels that he needs, or shall need it, for himself. Old and young surrounded her, and heard her testimony to the

power of the gospel. The young women and the matrons of the church sat beside her weeping, and even grey-headed patriarchs were astonished at the high measure of grace and knowledge which were vouchsafed to her.

Her external appearance was much changed by her sickness. Her arms and hands wasted away, her form became strangely emaciated, and nothing remained of her former beauty except the long, waving, silken hair, and the black, soul-speaking eye. Occasionally an elder visited her and prayed with her. Then as she lay on the divan in her long white robe, her feeble arms supported on pillows, and her drooping hands piously folded as of one already dead; a corpse-like paleness on her countenance shaded by her dark luxuriant tresses, while yet her eye kindled with enthusiasm and spiritual energy as it gazed towards the heaven whither her heart already hastened,—and now and then a tear stole down her face, and a faint bloom tinged her cheek;—that was a sight which spoke more powerful lessons to the heart than her most persuasive exhortations.

The house of the deaconess was beginning to be thronged with visitors even from distant churches, attracted thither by this edifying ex-

ample of the power of faith, when suddenly this more than earthly animation forsook the heart of Lea. She was now to learn by experience that even spiritual joy is made subject to change, that we may not confound it with that which is eternal.

All at once Lea found herself again agitated in that conflict between law and faith which she had supposed was already decided. But this conflict connects itself so intimately with our inmost nature, that it is ever reappearing anew, each time under a more refined and subtle form.

Her bodily suffering had become on some days almost insupportable. She had easily borne the lighter pains, and the universal love, sympathy and admiration had so accustomed her to agreeable emotions, that she had no strength to endure these heavier sufferings. Several days were passed in mute discontent, and as the heavenly radiance which had encircled her head vanished from the eyes of others, she felt too an inward dissatisfaction, which vented itself occasionally in brief but strong expressions.

The elder to whom was committed the care of her spiritual state, chanced at one of these moments to be standing by her couch. He turned in silence from her, and addressing those pre-

sent said, "We ought not to wonder at such a change, for the Lord often deals thus, that we may not be tempted to deify a poor sinful mortal. He alone is great and good! To him be all the glory!" added he with devout reverence.

Lea was as if crushed at these words, which made her conscious of her deep humiliation. Quickly recovering herself, however, she humbly inquired—"And what hast thou to say to me, Father?"

"The Apostle James," replied he, "has written, 'Is any among you afflicted, let him pray; is any joyful, let him sing psalms.' The last thou hast faithfully performed. Now is the time to practise the former."

Lea prayed. Still she grew continually more restless and unhappy. Elizabeth and the deaconess were greatly afflicted, and besought her to tell them the cause of her unhappiness.

"I lie under the law and its curse," said she. And she was right. True, it was clear to her that the sacrificial law had ceased with Christ, and the civil law with the destruction of Jerusalem. On this point the decision of the Apostles had long since set her mind at rest. But these Apostles, and the whole church taught that the moral law still remained in force. Lea examined

herself, and was convinced that she had not kept it perfectly, and that even since her baptism she had fallen into many sins. She imagined that when one receives in baptism the forgiveness of sin, his heart becomes thenceforth a clear, pure foundation, on which to erect with the divine assistance a blameless structure of new obedience and Christian virtue. This could she not find in herself. In the sunshine of joy and admiration she had been inwardly proud, in the hour of trial impatient. She felt this and was inconsolable.

The aged friends knew not how to help her. The elder, a man of much experience but of few words, counselled her to separate the divine and human. Lea did not understand him. There remained for her in her sufferings nothing but prayer.

One day when she chanced to be alone she caught up the roll of the Gospel of Matthew, which always lay beside her. Her eye fell upon the conclusion of our Lord's sermon on the mount, where speaking of the Pharisees he says that the tree must be known by its fruit.

At the first moment she was confounded. It seemed as if the Saviour's words were meant to confirm the decision of her own conscience. "Oh, my wretched works!" she cried in deep humili-

ation. She turned away from the roll and looked out into the court. A noble grape vine caught her attention; and on the very same branch she observed, along with a few ripe grapes, many still unripe, and some corrupted and worthless.

A gleam of heavenly light darted through Lea's soul, and she could not refrain from crying aloud—"Now do I understand the image—and again I have peace! Works," thus she reasoned with herself, "are only the fruit. To be sure, a tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire; and certainly one cannot gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. Still, works are only the fruit and not the tree. The fruit does not make the tree good, but the tree the fruit, although the former is known by the latter. Yonder living branch on the most vigorous grape vine in the whole garden, has indeed already ripe grapes, but still more which are unripe and can only be matured with time, and even some which are corrupt and worth nothing. But it is still a living branch; it remains in the vine and brings forth much fruit. I was indeed a foolish child again, to think of setting my works beside the righteousness of Christ, of mingling the temporal with the eternal, the im-

perfect with the perfect, the human with the divine.”

As Elizabeth entered the apartment, Lea saluted her with all the animation which her feeble strength permitted, in the exulting strains of the psalms.

The good mother wept for joy. Lea had now regained all her wonted serenity, sweetness, and animation, and retained them till her death. The last bitter struggle between law and faith, between the earthly and the heavenly, had been surmounted. Daily the darkness diminished; daily increased the life of her spirit. The number of visitors increased again, although Lea desired more and more to be left in solitary stillness with her Lord, or at most, with only the presence of a mother.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ONE day the elder was again praying beside her couch. She lay reclining on the divan, her face towards the door. Visitors were standing round.

The door opened, and Euphemus entered.

Lea remained in the attitude of devotion, her eye directed upwards. She saw not Euphemus. But as he gazed on her, in her long, white, shroud-like garments, with that aspect of life in death,—the eyes so full of lustre, the pale features wasted and changed by suffering, yet beaming with an expression of heavenly softness and elevation, he was struck to the heart. He faltered and caught by the door for support. One glance had dashed to the ground all his hopes. His countenance betrayed the bitter conflict passing in his bosom. He sunk upon his knees, bowed his face to the earth and bathed it with his tears.

The elder closed his prayer, and Lea, with the

emphasis of her full heart, repeated the Amen. The tone aroused Euphemus, and he rose and stood up with manly composure.

Lea beckoned him to her. Summoning all his fortitude he approached her. "Is it thus that I must see thee again, Lea?" said he, with deep emotion.

"The offering of my life is brought to the altar, brother Euphemus," replied she.

"Yes, the offering is indeed brought, beloved Lea, now my holy sister in the Lord!"

* * * * *

After the first greetings were exchanged, and he had had time to recover himself, he was urged by Elizabeth to relate what had befallen him since their parting at her cottage.

Seating himself in front of the divan, he replied briefly :

"After we had left you, we pursued our way in safety to Antioch. Our friend the Levite everywhere involved himself in altercations; he has at length gone to Berrhea and joined himself to the Ebionites. To me this sojourn in the Apostles' city would have been much more happy, had I not been disturbed by anxiety for your safety. But when I heard of the evil which had befallen you, I could remain no longer. I ar-

ranged my affairs and hastened to your little cottage. The sight of its blackened ruins filled me with agonizing apprehensions ; but I learned that you had taken refuge here, and quickly as my feet could bear me, I hastened hither. How did I rejoice at the assurance of your safety ! How vanished hills and valleys under my feet as I thought of meeting you again ! How did I thank God for the opportunity of performing for you a service of love,—might I be permitted to rebuild your cottage ! But alas !”——

“Nay, dear brother,” interrupted Lea. “For me, indeed, thou shalt build no dwelling, for the Lord will take me into his everlasting dwelling. Already do I hear his call. But for this let me bless thee—that thou wilt build again for my beloved mother the peaceful cottage in sight of Cana. Then think of me, and rejoice in the hope of eternal life !”

Euphemus knelt before Lea. She laid her feeble hands upon his head and blessed him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EACH of Lea's few remaining days upon the earth was to her and to her friends a festive day, a foretaste of eternal life.

One Sabbath* evening she seemed unusually strong and cheerful. Only Elizabeth, the aunt, and Euphemus were with her; the other members of the church being engaged in preparing for the approaching Sunday. Her heart, melted by the sweet consciousness of her Saviour's mercy, seemed to overflow with tenderness towards those beloved friends. Many times she pressed Euphemus' hand, and embraced her aged mothers, who stood by her side, trembling with anguish, yet full of consolation.

"All love," said she, "is born of sorrow, and then is it full of pure joy! That has it received from Golgotha, the offering-place of earthly love, the birth-place of our own eternal love. Therefore let us not mourn but hope!"

* The Jewish Sabbath.

At another time she said, "Here below life is but a dying; the earth is a great burial-place, and all that man contrives and enjoys is only food for the grave. Thanks be to God—upon this burial-place stands the cross, the tree of life!"

After a pause she resumed, "How is everything changed and transformed through our Lord Jesus Christ! Once, death was to me the wages of sin. But since life in Him has been bestowed on me as the gift of God, death is to me the welcome release from all suffering, the entrance into His heavenly rest!"

At this instant the glow of the setting sun fell upon her countenance. It beamed like that of an angel.

"She is glorified!" cried Elizabeth. "She is gone!"

"Not yet, beloved mother! I must first thank thee for all the goodness which thou hast shown to the desolate orphan, and for all thy guidance to Christ my Lord. My mother art thou—the deliverer of my soul!"

Elizabeth took her hand and bathed it with tears.

"Thou wilt take care of her," said she to Eu-

phemus. "I will thank thee for it when thou too comest home!"

He assented with deep emotion.

"Do thou also, dear aunt, receive my heartfelt thanks. And greet my uncle in Tiberias; tell him how I entreat his forgiveness for all my faults towards him, and how I pray to the Lord for him."

Elizabeth took her other hand and wept upon it.

"Nay, weep not," said Lea. "To-morrow, you know, is the Lord's day, and ye see by the sunset that it will be a beautiful day. Now grant me, I pray you, one more request,—sing me the thirty-fourth Psalm."

Lea laid herself back. She gazed around her, then fixed her eyes as if in prayer upon the gorgeous sunset clouds, whose full splendor was now poured upon her white robe and pallid features.

The others composed themselves and sung :

"I will bless Jehovah at all times,
Let His praise be ever on my lips!
My soul exulteth in Jehovah,
The afflicted shall hear it and rejoice.
Magnify Jehovah with me,
Let us exalt His name together.
I sought Jehovah, and he heard me

And delivered me from all my fears.
They look to Him and are lightened,
And their faces blush not with shame.
This afflicted one cried, and Jehovah heard,
And rescued him from all his troubles.
Jehovah's angel encampeth about those who fear
Him, and delivereth them.
Taste and see that Jehovah is good!
Happy is he who trusteth in Him!"

The glow of sunset was fading away. The aged mother looked on the beloved sufferer. There she lay, her hands still folded—but they were lifeless. The face was directed upward, the dark eye still gazed into the crimson clouds, but it was fixed!

Thus this afflicted one cried, and Jehovah heard and rescued her from all her troubles.

In mild peace reposed the beautiful remains.

NOTES.

CHAPTER I.

THE appearance of the false Messiah, and the consequent final dispersion of the Jews, occurred A. D. 132–136. The foregoing Tale conducts us through this period, and is intended to exhibit the relation of Judaism to Christianity, only hinted at in Helon's Pilgrimage, which belongs to the 109th year before the birth of our Lord. The chronology of the learned Bassuage (Annal. Politico—Eccles. tom. II.) has been followed.

Note A.—p. 10.

And played the Coming of the Messiah.—The absurd and childish conceptions, into which the Jewish teachers of this time had transformed the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, is clearly shown by the fact that they occur only in the sports of children. Eisenmenger, in his *Judenthum Entdecktes*, has with great pains collected these scattered characteristics. Some of them occur even in the writings of Rabbi Akiba (Part II. pp. 765); and as this countenances the supposition that the others also were then recognized, the author has adopted many of them in the representation given in the text. A com-

plete exhibition of them would only have wearied the reader.

CHAPTER V. B.—p. 38.

Sephoris.—Tradition makes Sephoris the dwelling-place of the parents of Mary, the mother of Jesus, according to the *Protevangelium Jacobi*.

C.—p. 41.

Eat human flesh.—A crime with which Christians were commonly charged in the first centuries of the Church.

CHAPTER VII. D.—p. 52.

A divine flame, &c.—Thus Jerome (*Apol. III. adv. Ruf. c. 9*) explains the pretended miracle; Eusebius (*Hist. IV. 6.*) also hints at it.

CHAPTER XII. E.—p. 82.

The Gospel of Matthew.—In Elizabeth we have an adherent of the sect of Nazarenes. We learn from Epiphanius that they had the Gospel of Matthew in the Hebrew language.

CHAPTER XIII. F.—p. 96.

Three different opinions.—Euphemus is a Gentile Christian. The Jewish Christians were divided into those who, like Elizabeth, regarded the continued observance of the law only as permitted (*Acts, c. 15*); and those who, like the Levite, looked upon it as a duty. The latter formed at a somewhat later period the sect of Ebionites, and held moreover that Christ was only a man. Euseb. *Hist. III. c. 27*. Orig. *c. Cels. 3*.

G.—p. 96.

Justin.—See *Dial. c. Tryph.*—He wrote his first Defence of Christianity, A. D. 140.

CHAPTER XIV. H.—p. 100.

That will be no hard task.—The proof passages for the divinity of Christ are taken from Justin, *Dial. c. Triph.*

I.—p. 101.

His thousand years reign.—This expectation was very common among Christians, and especially among Jewish Christians, at that time.—Justin, *Dial. c. Tryph.*

CHAPTER XIX. K.—p. 127.

The Pilgrimage to the Jordan.—According to Jerome *de Nominibus Hebraicis*, under *Bethabara*, the Christians of his time still desired to receive their baptism in the Jordan. Even Constantine had cherished this wish.—*Euseb. Vita Const.* 62.

L.—p. 128.

Easter-week.—The usual season for Baptism in ancient times was at Easter and Whitsuntide.

M.—p. 129.

Early on the following morning they repaired to the shore of the Jordan.—The description of the Baptism, as well as of the Eucharist, is according to the account given by Justin, *Apologia* I.

N.—p. 129.

The Deaconess had supplied the place of Godmother.—This relation seems to have existed at this time, although it is first mentioned by Tertullian *de Baptismo* [near the close of the second century].—*Suiceri Thesaurus ad voc. Anadochos.*

CHAPTER XXI. O.—p.142.

The church of the Lord has but one feast.—It is probable that but one feast, that of Easter, was celebrated at this time; there is at least no clear intimation of the feast at Whitsuntide.

P.—p. 144.

The Paschal Lamb which constituted the principal dish—Schroch's Church History, III. 83. This custom continued to be observed at a still later period.—Bingham, Origines, vol. VI. 262; Augusti *Teste der alten Christen*, II. 12.

Q.—p. 145.

The meal commenced with a prayer.—The account of the love-feast is given, often word for word, according to the description of Tertullian, *adv. gentes*, c. 39.



