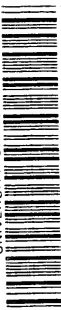


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SALATHIEL.

A STORY OF

THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND

THE FUTURE.

by
[George Croly]

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO HIS GRACE
THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,
KNIGHT OF THE GARTER,
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF
LITERATURE, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

I feel highly honoured by being allowed to present these volumes, as a tribute of personal respect to a nobleman, distinguished by his zeal for literature; and standing in the first rank of the manly, high-principled, and uncompromising friends of his country.

I have the honour to be

Your Grace's very obedient

And humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THERE has appeared from time to time in Europe, during the last thousand years, a mysterious individual, a sojourner in all lands, yet a citizen of none; professing the profoundest secrets of opulence, yet generally living in a state of poverty; astonishing every one by the vigour of his recollections, and the evidence of his close and living intercourse with the eminent characters and events of every age, yet

connected with none—without lineage, or possession, or pursuit on earth—a wanderer and unhappy.

A number of histories have been invented for him; some purely fictitious, others founded on ill-understood records. Germany, the land of mysticism, where men labour to think all facts imaginary, and turn all imaginations into facts, has toiled most in this idle perversion of truth. Yet those narratives have been in general but a few pages, feebly founded on the single, fatal, sentence of his punishment for an indignity offered to the Great Author of the Christian faith.

That exile lives; that most afflicted of the people of affliction, yet walks this earth; bearing the sorrows of eighteen centuries on his brow,—withering in soul with remorse for the guilt of an hour of madness. He has long borne the scoff in silence; he has heard his

princely rank degraded to that of a menial, and heard without a murmur; he has heard his unhappy offence charged to deliberate malice and cruelty, when it was but the misfortune of a zeal blinded and inflamed by the prejudices of his nation; and he has bowed to the calumny as a portion of his punishment. But the time for this forbearance is no more. He feels himself at last wearing away; and feels, with a sensation, like that of returning to the common fates of mankind, a desire to stand clear with his fellow-men. In their presence he will never move again. To their justice, or their mercy, he will never again appeal. The wound of his soul rests, never again to be disclosed; until that day when all things shall be summoned and be known.

In his final retreat he has collected these memorials. He has concealed nothing, he has dissembled nothing; the picture of his hopes

and fears, his weaknesses and his sorrows, is stamped here with sacred sincerity.

Other narratives may be more specious or eloquent; but this narrative has the supreme merit of truth; it is the most true—it is the only true.

SALATHIEL.

CHAPTER I.

“TARRY THOU, TILL I COME.” The words shot through me—I felt them like an arrow in my heart—my brain whirled—my eyes grew dim. The troops, the priests, the populace, the world, passed away from before my senses like phantoms.

But my mind had a horrible clearness. As if the veil that separates the visible and invisible worlds had been rent in sunder, I saw shapes and signs for which mortal language has no

name. The whole expanse of the future spread under my mental gaze in dreadful vision. A preternatural light, a new power of mind seemed to have been poured into my being. I saw at once the full guilt of my crime—the fierce folly—the mad ingratitude—the desperate profanation. I lived over again in frightful distinctness every act and instant of the night of my unspeakable sacrilege. I saw, as if written with a sunbeam, the countless injuries, that in the rage of bigotry I had accumulated upon the victim; the bitter mockeries that I had devised; the cruel tauntings that my lips had taught the rabble; the pitiless malignity that had forbidden them to discover a trace of virtue where all virtue was. The blows of the scourge still sounded in my ears. Every drop of the innocent blood rose up in judgment before me.

Accursed be the night in which I fell before the tempter! Blotted out from time and eternity be the hour in which I took part with the torturers! Every fibre of my frame quivers, every drop of my blood curdles, as I still hear the echo of the anathema that on the night of

woe sprang first from my furious lips, the self-pronounced ruin, the words of desolation, "HIS BLOOD BE UPON US, AND UPON OUR CHILDREN!"

I had headed the multitude: where others shrank, I urged; where others pitied, I reviled, and inflamed; I scoffed at the feeble malice of the priesthood; I scoffed at the tardy cruelty of the Roman; I swept away by menace and by scorn the human reluctance of the few who dreaded to dip their hands in blood. Thinking to do God service, and substituting my passions for my God, I threw firebrands on the hearts of a rash, jealous, and bigoted people. I triumphed!

In a deed which ought to have covered earth with lamentation, which was to make angels weep, which might have shaken the universe into dust, I triumphed! The decree was passed: but my frenzy was not so to be satiated. I loathed the light while the victim lived. Under the penalty of treason to Cæsar, I demanded instant execution of the sentence.—“Not a day of life must be given,” I exclaimed; “not

an hour :—death, on the instant ; death !” My clamour was echoed by the roar of millions.

But, in the moment of my exultation, I was stricken. In the acclamation of the multitude came forth the command. He who had refused an hour of life to the victim, was in terrible retribution condemned to know the misery of life interminable. I heard through all the voices of Jerusalem—I should have heard through all the thunders of heaven the calm, low voice, “ Tarry thou, till I come !”

I felt my fate at once. I sprang away through the shouting hosts, as if the avenging angel waved his sword above my head. Wild songs, furious execrations, the rude uproar of myriads stirred to the heights of popular passion, filled the air : still through all I heard the pursuing sentence, “ Tarry thou, till I come,” and felt it to be the sentence of incurable agony ! I was never to know the shelter of the grave !

Immortality on earth !—The perpetual compulsion of existence in a world made for change ; to feel the weariness of thousands of years bowing down my wretched head ; alienated from all the

hopes, enjoyments, and pursuits of man, to bear the heaviness of that existence, which palls even with all the stimulants of the most vivid career of man; life passionless, exhausted, melancholy, old: I would rather have been blown about on the storms of every region of the universe. I was to be a wild beast, and a wild beast condemned to pace the same eternal cage! A criminal bound to the floor of his dungeon for ever!

Immortality on earth!—I was now in the vigour of life; but must it be always so? Must not pain, feebleness, the loss of mind, the sad decay of all the resources of the human being, be the natural result of time? Might I not sink into the perpetual sick bed, hopeless decrepitude, pain without cure or relaxation, the extremities of famine, of disease, of madness?—yet this was to be borne for ages of ages!

Immortality on earth!—Separation from all that cheers and ennobles life; I was to survive my country; to see the soil dear to my heart violated by the feet of barbarians yet unborn, Her sacred monuments, her trophies, her tombs, a scoff and a spoil; without a resting spot to the

sole of my feet, I was to witness the slave, the man of blood, the savage of the desert, the furious infidel, rioting in my inheritance, digging up the bones of my fathers, trampling on the holy ruins of Jerusalem!

I was to feel the still keener misery of surviving all that I loved; wife, child, friend, even to the last being with whom my heart could imagine a human bond, all that bore a drop of my blood in their veins, were to perish in my sight, and I was to stand on the verge of the perpetual grave, without the power to seek its refuge. If new affections could ever wind their way into my closed-up and frozen bosom, it must be only to fill it with new sorrows; for those I loved must still be torn from me. In the world I must remain, and remain alone!

Immortality on earth!—The grave that closes on the sinner, closes on his sin. His weight of offence is fixed. No new guilt can gather on him there. But I was to know no limit to the weight that was already crushing me. The guilt of life upon life, the surges of an unfathomable ocean of crime were to roll in eternal progress over my head. If the judgment of the

great day was terrible to him who had passed but through the common measure of existence, what must be its terrors to the wretch who was to appear loaded with the accumulated guilt of a thousand lives!

Overwhelmed with despair, I rushed through Jerusalem, with scarcely a consciousness of whither I was going. It was the time of the Passover, when the city was crowded with the multitude come to the great festival of the year. I felt an instinctive horror of the human countenance, and shunned every avenue by which the tribes came in. I at last found myself at the Gate of Zion, that leads southward into the open country. I had then no eyes for that wondrous portal which had exhausted the skill of the most famous Ionian sculptors, the master-work of Herod the Great. But I vainly tried to force my wild way through the crowds that lingered on their march to gaze upon its matchless beauty; portal, alone worthy of the wonders to which it led, like the glory of an evening cloud opening to lead the eye upwards to the stars.

On those days the Roman guard were withdrawn; I ascended the battlements to seek another escape; but the concourse gathered there to look upon the entrance of the tribes, fixed me to the spot. Of all the strange and magnificent sights of Earth, this entrance was the most fitted to swell the national pride of country and religion. The dispersion ordained by Heaven for judgment on the crimes of our idolatrous kings, had, in that wonder-working power by which good is brought out of evil, planted our law in the remotest extremities of the world. Among its proselytes were the mighty of all regions, the military leaders, the sages, the kings; all, at least once in their lives, coming to pay homage to the great central city of the faith; and all coming with the pomp and attendance of their rank. The procession amounted to a number which threw all aftertimes into the shade. Three millions of people have been counted at the Passover. The diversities of the multitude were still more striking. Every race of mankind, in its most marked peculiarities, there passed beneath the eye.

There came the long train of swarthy slaves and menials round the chariot of the Indian prince, clothed in the silks and jewels of the regions beyond the Ganges. Upon them pressed the troop of African lion-hunters half naked, but with their black limbs wreathed with pearl and fragments of unwrought gold. Behind them moved on their camels a patriarchal group, the Arab Sheik, a venerable figure with his white locks flowing from beneath his turban, leading his sons, like our father Abraham, from the wilderness to the Mount of Vision. Then rolled on the glittering chariot of the Assyrian chieftain, a regal show of purple and gems, and convoyed by horsemen covered with armour. The Scythian Jews, wrapped in the furs of wolf and bear, iron men of the north; the noble Greek, the perfection of the human form, with his countenance beaming the genius and beauty of his country; the broad and yellow features of the Chinese rabbins; the fair skins and gigantic forms of the German tribes; strange clusters of men unknown to the limits of Europe or Asia, with their black

locks, complexions of the colour of gold, and slight yet sinewy limbs, marked with figures of suns and stars struck into the flesh; marched crowd on crowd; and in strong contrast with all, the Italian on the charger or in the chariot, urging the living stream to the right and left, with the haughtiness of the acknowledged master of mankind. The representative world was before me.

But all those distinctive marks of country and pursuit, though palpably ineradicable by human means, were deeply overpowered and mingled by the one grand impression of the place and the time. In their presence was the City of Holiness; the Hill of Zion lifted up its palaces; above it ascended, like another city, in a higher region of the air, that TEMPLE to whose majesty the world could show no equal, to which the eyes of the believer were turned from the uttermost parts of the earth, in whose courts Solomon, the king of earthly kings for wisdom, had called down the blessing of the Most High, and it had descended on the altar in fire; in whose sanctuary the Lord, whom

heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, was yet to make his throne, and give glory to his people.

Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! when I think of what I saw thee then, and of what I have since seen thee, the spoiled, the desolate, the utterly put to shame; when I have seen the Roman plough driven through the soil on which stood the Holy of Holies; the Saracen destroying even its ruins; the last, worst devastator, the barbarian of the Caucasus, the ruffian Turk, sitting in grim scorn upon the towers of the city of David; violating the tombs of the prophet and the king; turning up for plunder the soil, every blade of whose grass, every atom of whose dust, was sacred to the broken people of Israel; trampling with savage cruelty, and the deeper torture of infidel insult, my countrymen that lingered among its walls only that they might seek a grave in the ashes of the mighty; I have felt my spirit uproused, and maddened within me. I have made impious wishes. I have longed for the lightning to blast the tyrant. I still start from my bed when I hear the whirlwind, and send

forth fierce prayers that its rage may be poured on the tents of the oppressor. I unconsciously tear away my white locks, and scatter them in bitterness of soul towards the east. In the wildness of the moment, I have imagined every cloud that sailed along the night a minister of the descending vengeance. I have seen it a throne of terrible shapes flying on the wings of the wind, majestic spirits and kings of wrath hurrying through the heavens to pour down sulphurous hail and fire, as upon the cities of the Dead Sea. I have cried out with our prophet, as the vision swept along, "Who is he that cometh from Edom? with dyed garments from Bøzra? he that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength! Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments, like him that treadeth the winepress?" and I have thought that I heard the answer: "I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save! I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; for the day of

vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come!"

Then, when the impulse passed away, and my heart withered within me; my eyes have turned into fountains of tears, and I have wept until morning came, and the sounds of the world called back its recollections, and for the sacred hills and valleys that I had imaged in the darkness, I saw only the roofs of some melancholy city, in which I was a forlorn fugitive; or a wilderness, with but the burning sands and the robber before me; or found myself tossing on the ocean, not more fruitless than my heart, nor more restless than my life, nor more unfathomable than my woe. Yet, to the last will I hope and love. Oh Jerusalem! Jerusalem! even in my mirth, if I forget thee!

But those were the thoughts of aftertimes. On that memorable and dreadful day, I had no perception but of some undefinable fate which was to banish me from mankind. I at length forced my way through the pressure at the gate, turned to none of the kinsmen who called to me as I passed their chariots and horses, overthrew with

desperate and sudden strength all who impeded my progress, and scarcely felt the ground till I had left the city behind, and had climbed up through rocks and ruins the mountain that rose drearily before me, like a barrier shutting out the living world.

CHAPTER II.

TERROR had exhausted me ; and throwing myself on the ground, under the shade of the stunted grove of palm-trees that thinly crowned the summit of the hill, I fell into an almost instant slumber. But it was unrefreshing and disturbed. The events of the day again came before me, strangely mingled with those of my past life, and with others of which I could form no waking remembrance. I saw myself sometimes debased below man ; like the great Assyrian king, driven out to feed upon the herb of the forest, and wander for years exposed to the scorching sun by day, and the dews that sank chilling upon my naked frame

by night. I then seemed filled with supernatural power, and rose on wings till earth was diminished beneath me, and I felt myself fearfully alone. Yet there was one predominant sensation, that all this was for punishment, and that it was to be perpetual. At length, in one of my imaginary flights, I found myself whirled on the wind, like a swimmer down a cataract, in helpless terror into the bosom of a thundercloud. I felt the weight of the rolling vapours round me; I saw the blaze; I was stunned by a roar that shook the firmament.

My eyes suddenly opened, yet my dream appeared only to be realised by my waking. Thick clouds of heavy and heated vapour were rapidly rolling up from the precipices below; and at intervals a sound that I could not distinguish from distant thunder, burst on the wind. But the sun was bright, and the horizon was the dazzling blue of the eastern heaven. As my senses slowly returned, for I felt like a man overpowered with wine, and a sudden rush of blood across my sight made me dread that I was growing blind,

I was enabled to discover where I was. The discovery itself was terror. I had in my distraction fled to the mountain on which no Jew ever looked without shame and sorrow for the crimes of the greatest king into whose nostrils the Almighty ever poured the spirit of life, but on which a Jewish priest, as I was, could not touch without being guilty of defilement. I sat on the Mount of Corruption, so called from its having once witnessed the idolatries of our mighty Solomon, when in his old age he gave way to the persuasions of his heathen wives,—that irreparable crime for which the kingdom was rent, and the strength of Israel scattered. I saw in the hollows of the hill the spaces, still bearing the marks of burning, and barren for ever, on which the temples of Moloch, Chemosh, and Ashtaroth, had lifted their impious magnificence in sight of the House of the living God. The very palm-trees under which I had snatched that wild and bitter sleep, were the remnant of the groves in which the foul rites of the goddesses of Phoenicia and Assyria once filled the air with midnight abo-

mination, with horrid yells of human sacrifice, almost made more fearful by their mingling with the roar of barbarian revel, the wild dissonance of timbrel and horn, the Bacchanalian chorus of the priesthood and people of impurity.

The vapours that rose hot and sickly before me, were the smokes from the fires kindled in the valley of Hinnom, where the refuse of the animals slaughtered for the use of the city, and the other pollutions and remnants of things abominable to the Jew, were daily burned. The sullen and perpetual fires, the deadly fumes, and the aspects of the degraded and excluded beings, chiefly public criminals, who were employed in this hideous task, gave the idea of the place of final evil. Our prophets, in their threats against the national betrayers, against the proud and the self-willed, the polluted with idols, and the polluted with that still darker and more incurable idolatry, the worship of the world, pointed to the valley of Hinnom! The Pharisee, when he denounced the unbelief and luxury of the lordly Sadducee, pointed to the valley of Hinnom! All,—the Pharisee, the

Essene, the Sadducee, in the haughty spirit that forgot the fallen state of Jerusalem, and the crimes that had lowered her;—the hypocrite, the bigot, and the sceptic, alike mad with hopeless revenge, when they saw the Roman cohorts triumphing with their idolatrous ensigns through the paths once trod by the holy, or were driven aside by the torrent of cavalry, and the gilded chariot on which sat some insolent proconsul fresh from Italy, and looking down on the noblest of our people as the beaten slaves of the stranger, —pointed to the valley of Hinnom!

How often, as the days of Jerusalem hurried towards their end, and by some fatality, the violences of the Roman governors became more frequent and intolerable, have I seen the groups of my countrymen, hunted into some by-way of the city by the hoofs of the Roman horse, consuming with that inward wrath which was soon to flame out in such horrors, flinging up their wild hands, as if to upbraid the tardy heavens, gnashing their teeth, and with the strong contortions of the Oriental countenance, the stormy brow and flashing eye, and

lip scarcely audible from the force of its own convulsion, muttering conspiracy. Then, in despair of shaking off that chain which had bound the whole earth, they would appeal to the vengeance of the endless future; and shrouding their heads in their cloaks, stand, like sorcerers summoning up demons, each with his quivering hand stretched out towards the accursed valley, and every tongue groaning 'Gehenna!'

While I lay upon the summit of the mountain, in a state which gave me the deepest impression that I had ever conceived of the parting of soul and body, I was startled by the sound of a trumpet. It was from the temple, which, as the fires below sank with the growing heat of the day, was now visible to me. The trumpet was the signal of the third hour, when the first daily sacrifice was to be offered. It was the week of the class of Abiah, of which I was, and this day's service fell to me. Though I would have given all that I possessed on earth to be allowed to rest upon that spot, polluted as it was, and there moulder away into the dust

and ashes that I had made my bed ; I dared not shrink from the most solemn duty of the priesthood.

I rose, but it was not till after many efforts that I was able to stand ; my limbs had a stony weight and insensibility. I struggled along the summit of the ridge, holding by the stems of the palm-trees. The second trumpet sounded loudly, and was re-echoed by the cliffs. I had now no time for delay, and was about to spring downwards towards a path which wound round the head of the valley and beyond the fires, when my ears were again arrested by the peal that had disturbed me in my sleep, and my glance, which commanded the whole circuit of the hills round Jerusalem, involuntarily looked for the thundercloud. The sky was without a stain ; but the eminences towards the west, on whose lovely slopes of vineyard, rose, and orange grove my eye had so often reposed as on a vast Tyrian carpet tissued with purple and gold, were now hung with gloom ; a huge and sullen cloud seemed to be gathering over the heights, and flashes and gleams of malignant

lustre burst from its bosom. The cloud deepened, and the distant murmur grew louder and more continued.

I hurried to the city gate. To my astonishment, I found the road, that I had left so choked up with the multitude, almost empty. The camels stood tethered in long trains under the trees, with scarcely an owner. The tents were deserted, except by children, and the few old persons necessary for their care. The mules and horses grazed through the fields without a keeper. I saw tents full of the animals and other offerings that the tribes brought up to the great feast, almost at the mercy of any hand that would take them away. Where could the myriads have disappeared, that had covered the land a few hours before to the very verge of the horizon?

The city was still more a subject of astonishment. A panic might have driven away the concourse of strangers, in a time when the violences of the Roman sword had given every Jew but too frequent cause for the most sensitive alarm. But all within the gate was

equally deserted. The streets were utterly stripped of the regular inhabitants. What but a pestilence or a massacre could have thus extinguished the look of life in one of the most active and populous cities of the east? The Roman guards were almost the only beings that I could discover in my passage of the long streets from the foot of the upper city to the mount of the temple.

All this was favourable to my extreme anxiety to escape every eye of my countrymen; yet I cannot tell with what a throbbing of heart, and variety of feverish emotion, I at length reached the threshold of my dwelling. Though young, I was a husband and a father. What might not have happened since the sunset of the evening before? for my evil doings, for which may He, with whom mercy lies at the right hand and judgment at the left, have mercy on me, had fatally occupied the night. I listened at the door, with my heart upon my lips. I dared not open it. My suspense was at length relieved by my wife's voice; she was weeping. I fell on my knees, and thanked Heaven that she was alive.

But my infant! I thought of the sword that smote the first-born in the land of bondage, and felt that Judah, guilty as Egypt, might well dread its punishment. Was it for my first-born that the sobs of its angel mother had arisen in her loneliness? Another pause of bitter suspense—and I heard the laugh of my babe as it awoke in her arms.

The first human sensation that I had felt for so many hours, was almost overpowering; and, without regarding the squalidness of my dress, and the look of famine and fatigue that must have betrayed where I had been, I should have rushed into the chamber. But at that moment the third trumpet sounded. I had now no time for the things of this world. I plunged into the bath, cleansed myself from the pollution of the mountain, hastily girt on me the sacerdotal tunic and girdle; and with the sacred fillet on my burning brow, and the censer in my shaking hand, passed through the cloisters, and took my place before the altar.

CHAPTER III.

OF all the labours of human wealth and power devoted to worship, the temple within whose courts I then stood was the most mighty. In my after years, the years of my unhappy wanderings, far from the graves of my kindred, I have seen all the most famous shrines of the great kingdoms of idolatry. Constrained by cruel circumstance, and the still sterner cruelty of man, I have stood before the altar of the Ephesian Diana, the master-piece of Ionian splendour; I have strayed through the woods of Delphi, and been made a reluctant witness of the superb mysteries of that chief of the oracles of imposture. Dragged in chains, I have been forced

to join the procession round the Minerva of the Acropolis, and almost forgot my chains in wonder at that monument of a genius which ought to have been consecrated only to the true God, by whom it was given. The temple of the Capitoline Jove, the Sancta Sophia of the Rome of Constantine, the still more stupendous and costly fabric in which the third Rome still bows before the fisherman of Galilee; all have been known to my step, that knows all things but rest; but all were dreams and shadows to the grandeur, the dazzling beauty, the almost unearthly glory of that temple which once covered the "Mount of Vision" of the City of the Lord.

At the distance of almost two thousand years, I have its image on my mind's eye with living and painful fulness. I see the court of the Gentiles circling the whole; a fortress of the whitest marble, with its wall rising six hundred feet from the valley; its kingly entrance, worthy of the fame of Solomon; its innumerable and stately dwellings for the priests and officers of the temple, and above them, glittering like a succession of diadems, those alabaster porticoes

and colonnades in which the chiefs and sages of Jerusalem sat teaching the people, or walked, breathing the pure air, and gazing on the grandeur of a landscape which swept the whole amphitheatre of the mountains. I see, rising above this stupendous boundary, the court of the Jewish women separated by its porphyry pillars and richly-sculptured wall; above this, the separated court of the men; still higher, the court of the priests; and highest, the crowning splendour of all, the central TEMPLE, the place of the Sanctuary, and of the Holy of Holies, covered with plates of gold, its roof planted with lofty spear-heads of gold, the most precious marbles and metals every where flashing back the day, till Mount Moriah stood forth to the eye of the stranger approaching Jerusalem, what it had been so often described by its bards and people, a "mountain of snow studded with jewels."

The grandeur of the worship was worthy of this glory of architecture. Four-and-twenty thousand Levites ministered by turns,—a thousand at a time. Four thousand more performed

the lower offices. Four thousand singers and minstrels, with the harp, the trumpet, and all the richest instruments of a land, whose native genius was music, and whose climate and landscape led men instinctively to delight in the charm of sound, chaunted the inspired songs of our warrior king, and filled up the pauses of prayer with harmonies that transported the spirit beyond the cares and passions of a troubled world.

I was standing before the altar of burnt-offering, with the Levite at my side holding the lamb; the cup was in my hand, and I was about to pour the wine on the victim, when I was startled by the sound of hurried feet. In another moment the veil of the porch was abruptly thrown back, and a figure rushed in; it was the high priest, but not in the robes of ceremony which it was customary for him to wear in the seasons of the greater festivals. He was covered with the common vesture of the priesthood, and was evidently anxious to use it for total concealment. His face was buried in the fold of his cloak, and he walked with blind

precipitation towards the subterranean passage which led from the sanctuary to his cloister. But he had scarcely reached it, when a new feeling stopped him ; and he turned towards the altar, where I was standing in mute surprise. The cloak fell from his visage ; it was pale as death ; the habitual sternness of feature which rendered him a terror to the people, had collapsed into feebleness ; while he gazed on the fire, it accidentally blazed up, and I thought I saw the glistening of a tear on a cheek that had never exhibited human emotion before. But no time was left for question, even if reverence had not restrained me. He suddenly grasped the head of the lamb, as was customary for those who offered up an expiation for their own sin ; his lip, ashy white, quivered with broken prayer ; then, snatching the knife from the Levite, he plunged it into the animal's throat, and with his hands covered with blood, and with a groan that echoed despair, again rushed distractedly away !

The victim still burned upon the altar, and I was offering up the incense, when the increasing

sounds abroad told me that the deserted courts were filling once more. But the sounds grew with an extraordinary rapidity; they were soon all but tumultuous. The sanctuary in which I stood was almost wholly lighted by the lamps that burned round the walls, and the fitful blaze of the altar, whose fires were never suffered to be extinguished. But when, at length unable to suppress my alarm at the growing uproar, I went to the porch, I left comparative day behind me; a gloom sicklier than that of tempest, and thicker than that of smoke, overspread the sky. The sun, which I had seen like a fiery buckler hanging over the city, was utterly gone. While I looked, the darkness deepened, and the blackness of night, of night without a star, fell far and wide upon the horizon.

It has been my fate, and a fearful part of my punishment, always to conceive that the calamities of nature and nations were connected with my crime. I have tried to reason away this impression; but it has clung to me like an iron chain; like the shirt of the Centaur, nothing

could tear it away that left the life : I have felt it hanging over my brain with the weight of a thunder-cloud. As I glanced into the gloom, the thought smote me, that it was I who had brought this Egyptian plague, this horrid privation of the first element of life upon my country, perhaps upon the world, perhaps never to be relieved ; for it came condensing depth on depth, till it seemed to have excluded all possibility of the existence of light ; it was like that of our old oppressors, darkness that might be felt, the darkness of an universal grave.

I formed my fierce determination at once ; and resolved to fly from my priesthood, from my kindred, from my country ; to linger out my days, my bitter, banished, blasted days, in some wilderness, where my presence would not be a curse, where but the lion and the tiger should be my fellow dwellers, where the sands could not be made the more barren for my fatal tread, nor the fountains more bitter for my desperate and eternal tears.

The singular presence of mind found in some men in the midst of universal perturbation, one

of the most effective qualities of our nature, and attributed to the highest vigour of heart and understanding, is not always deserving of such proud parentage. It is sometimes the child of mere brute ignorance of danger, sometimes of habitual ferocity,—in my instance it was that of madness; the fierce energy that leads the maniac safe over roofs and battlements. All in the temple was confusion. The priests lay flung at the feet of the altars; or, clinging together in groups of helplessness and dismay, waited speechless for the devastation that was to visit them in this unnatural night. I walked through all, without a fear or a hope under heaven.

Through the solid gloom, and among heaps of men and sacred things cast under my feet, like the spoil and corpses of some stormed camp, I made my way to my dwelling direct and unimpeded, as if I walked in the light of day. I found my wife in deeper terror at my long absence than even at the darkness. She sprang forward to my voice, and, falling on my neck, shed the tears of joy and love. But few words passed between us, for but few were necessary to bid

her with her babe follow me. She would have followed me to the ends of the earth.

Oh Miriam, Miriam, how often have I thought of thee in my long pilgrimage! how often, like that of a spirit descended to minister consolation to the wanderer, have I seen, in my midnight watching, thy countenance of more than woman's beauty! To me thou hast never died. Thy more than man's loftiness of soul, thy generous fidelity of love to a wayward and unhappy heart; thy patient treading with me along the path that I had sowed with the thorn and thistle for thy feet, but which should have been covered with the wealth of princes to be worthy of thy loveliness and thy virtues; all rise in memory and condemnation before the chief of sinners. Age after age have I travelled to thy lonely grave; age after age have I wept and prayed upon the dust that was once perfection. In all the hardness forced upon me by a stern world; in all the hatred of mankind that the insolence of the barbarian and the persecutor has bound round my bosom like a mail of iron, I have preserved one source of feeling sacred; a

solitary fount to feed the little vegetation of a withered heart, the love of thee: perhaps, to be a sign of that regenerate time, when the curse shall be withdrawn; perhaps, to be in mercy, the source from which that more than desert, thy husband's soul, shall be refreshed, and the barrenness flourish with the flowers of the paradise of God!

Throwing off my robe of priesthood, as I then thought, for ever, I went forth, leading my heroic wife in one hand, and bearing my child in the other. I had left behind me sumptuous things, wealth transmitted from a long line of illustrious ancestry. I cared not for them. Wealth a thousand times more precious was within my embrace. Yet when I touched the threshold, the last sensation of divorce from all that I had been came over my mind. My wife felt the trembling of my frame, and, with that gentle firmness which in the hour of trouble often exalts the fortitude of woman above the headlong and inflamed courage of the warrior, she bade me be of good cheer. I felt her lips on my hand at the moment; the

touch gave new energy to my whole being ; and I bounded forward into the ocean of darkness.

Without impediment or error, I made my way over and among the crowds that strewed the court of the Gentiles. I heard many a prayer and many a groan ; but I had now no more to do with man ; and forced my way steadily to the great portal. Thus far, if I had been stricken with utter blindness, I could not have been less guided by the eye. But, on passing into the streets of the lower city, a scattered torch, from time to time, struggling through the darkness, like the lamp in a sepulchre, gave me glimpses of the scene.

The broad avenues were encumbered with the living in the semblance of the dead. All was prostration, or those attitudes into which men are thrown by terror beyond the strength or spirit of man to resist. The cloud that, from my melancholy bed above the valley of Hinnom, I had seen rolling up the hills, was this multitude. A spectacle, whose name shall never pass my lips, had drawn them all by a cruel, a frantic, curiosity out of Jerusalem, and left it the

solitude that had surprised me. Preternatural eclipse and horror fell on them, and their thousands madly rushed back to perish, if perish they must, within the walls of the City of Holiness. Still the multitude came pouring in; their distant trampling had the sound of a cataract; and their outcries of pain, and rage, and terror, were like what I have since heard, but more feebly, sent up from the field of battle.

I struggled on, avoiding the living torrent by the ear, and slowly threading my way wherever I heard the voices least numerous; but my task was one of extreme toil; and but for those, more than all the treasures of the earth to me, whose lives depended on my efforts, I should have willingly lain down, and suffered the multitude to trample me into the grave. How long I thus struggled I know not. But a yell of peculiar and universal terror that burst round me, made me turn my reluctant eyes towards Jerusalem. The cause of this new alarm was seen at once. A large sphere of fire fiercely shot through the heavens, lighting its track down the murky air, and casting a disastrous

and pallid illumination on the myriads of gazers below. It stopped above the city ; and exploded in thunder, flashing over the whole horizon, but covering the temple with a blaze which gave it the aspect of a huge mass of metal glowing in the furnace. Every outline of the architecture, every pillar, every pinnacle, was seen with a livid and terrible distinctness. Again all vanished. I heard the hollow roar of an earthquake ; the ground rose and heaved under our feet. I heard the crash of buildings, the fall of fragments of the hills, and, louder than both, the groan of the multitude. I caught my wife and child closer to my bosom. In the next moment, I felt the ground give way beneath me ; a sulphurous vapour took away my breath, and I was caught up in a whirlwind of dust and ashes !

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN I recovered my senses, all was so much changed round me, that I could scarcely be persuaded that either the past or the present was not a dream. I had no consciousness of any interval between them, more than that of having closed my eyes at one instant, to open them at the next. Yet the curtains of a tent waved round me in a breeze fragrant with the breath of roses and the balsam-tree. Beyond the gardens and meadows, from which those odours sprang, a river shone, like a path of lapis lazuli, in the calm effulgence of the western sun. Tents were pitched, from which I heard the sounds of pastoral instruments; camels were

drinking and grazing along the river-side ; and turbaned men and maidens were ranging over the fields, or sitting on the banks to enjoy the cool of the delicious evening.

While I tried to collect my senses, and discover whether this was more than one of those sports of a wayward fancy, which tantalise the bed of the sick mind, I heard a low hymn ; and listened to the sounds with breathless anxiety. The voice I knew at once—it was Miriam's. But in the disorder of my brain, and the strange circumstances which had filled the late days, in that total feebleness too in which I could not move a limb or utter a word, a persuasion seized me that I was already beyond the final boundary of mortals. All before me was like that paradise from which the crime of our great forefather had driven man into banishment. I remembered the convulsion of the earth in which I had sunk ; and asked myself, could man be wrapped in the flame, and the whirlwind that tore up mountains like the roots of flowers, and yet live ? Still it was pain to me to think that the lovely

and the young should have so soon gone down to the grave—that Miriam should have been cut off from the long enjoyment of life due to her gentle virtue—that a creature, delicate of form, and beautiful as the young vine, should have been torn away from the world by the grasp of a death so sudden and terrible.

In this perplexity I closed my eyes to collect my thoughts; and probably exhibited some strong emotion of countenance: for I was roused by a cry,—“He lives, he lives!” I looked up, Miriam stood before me, clasping her lovely hands with the wildness of joy unspeakable, and shedding tears, that large and lustrous fell down her glowing cheeks, like dew upon the pomegranate. She threw herself upon my pillow, kissed my forehead with lips that breathed new life into me; then pressing my chill hand between hers, knelt down, and with a look worthy of that heaven on which it was fixed, radiant with beauty and holiness and joy, as the face of an angel, offered up her thanksgiving.

The explanation of the scene that perplexed me was given in a few words, interrupted only

by tears and sighs of delight. With the burst of the earthquake, the supernatural darkness was cleared away. I was flung under the shelter of one of those caves which abound in the gorges of the mountains round Jerusalem. Miriam, and her infant, were flung by my side, yet unhurt. While I lay insensible in her arms, she, by singular good fortune, found herself surrounded by a troop of our kinsmen, returning from the city, where terror had suffered but few to remain. They placed her and her infant on their camels. Me they would have consigned to the sepulchre of the priests; but Miriam was not to be shaken in her purpose to watch over me until all hope was gone. I was thus carried along; and they were now three days on their journey homewards. The landscape before me was Samaria.

My natural destination would have been the cities of the priests, which lay to the south, bordering upon Hebron. In those thirteen opulent and noble residences allotted to the higher ministry of the temple, they enjoyed all that could be offered by the munificent wis-

dom of the state;—wealth, that raised them above the pressures of life, yet not so great as to extinguish the power of intellectual distinction, or the love of the loftier virtues. — The means of mental cultivation were provided for them, with more than royal liberality. Copies of the sacred books, multiplied in every form, and adorned with the finest skill of the pencil and the sculptor in gold and other precious materials, attested at once the reverence of the nation for its law, and the perfection to which it had brought the decorative arts. The works of strangers, eminent for genius or knowledge, or even for the singularity of their subject, were not less to be found in those stately treasure-houses of mind. There the priest might relax his spirit from the sublimer studies of his country, by the bold and brilliant epic of Greece; the fantastic passion, and figured beauty of the Persian poesy; or the alternate severity and sweetness of the Indian drama:—that startling union of all lovely images of nature, the bloom and fragrance of flowers, the hues of the oriental heaven, and the

perfumes of isles of spice and cinnamon, with the grim and subterranean terrors of a gigantic idolatry. There he might spread the philosophic wing from the glittering creations of Grecian metaphysics, to their dark and early oracles in the East; or, stopping in his central flight, plunge into the profound of Egyptian mystery, where science lies, like the mummy, wrapped in a thousand folds that preserve the form, but preserve it with the living principle gone.

Music, of all pleasures the most intellectual, that glorious painting to the ear, that rich mastery of the gloomier emotions of our nature, was studied by the priesthood with a skill that influenced the habits of the country. How often have my fiercest perturbations sunk at the sounds that once filled the breezes of Judea! How often, when my brain was burning, and the blood ran through my veins like molten brass, have I been softened down to painless tears, by the chorus from our hills, the mellow harmonies of harp and horn, blending with the voices of the youths and maidens of Israel!

How often have I in the night listened, while the chaunt, ascending with a native richness to which the skill of other nations was dissonance, floated upwards like a cloud of incense bearing the aspirations of holiness and gratitude to the throne of Him whom man hath not seen, nor can see!

But those times are sunk deep in the great gulf, that absorbs the happiness and genius of man. I have since traversed my country in its length and breadth; I have marked with my weary feet every valley, and made my restless bed upon every hill from Idumea to Lebanon, and from the Assyrian sands to the waters of the Mediterranean; yet the harp and voice were dead. I heard sounds on the hills; but they were the cries of the villagers flying before some tyrant gatherer of a tyrant's tribute. I heard sounds in the midnight; but they were the howl of the wolf, and the yell of the hyæna, revelling over the naked and dishonoured graves which the Turk had given in his scorn to the people of my fathers.

But the study to which the largest expendi-

ture of wealth and labour was devoted, was, as it ought to be, that of the sacred books of Israel. It only makes me rebellious against the decrees of fate, to think of the incomparable richness and immaculate character of the volumes over which I have so often hung ; and look upon the diminished and degraded exterior in which their wisdom now lies before man. Where are now the cases covered with jewels, the clasps of topaz and diamond ; the golden arks in which the volume of the hope of Israel lay, too precious not to be humiliated by the contact with even the richest treasure of earth ? Where are the tissued curtains, that hid, as in a sanctuary, that mighty roll too sacred to be glanced on by the casual eye ? But the spoiler—the spoiler ! The Arab, the Parthian, the human tiger of the north, that lies crouching for a thousand years in the sheep-fold of Judah ! Is there not a sword ?—Is there not a judgment ?—Terribly will it judge the oppressor.

The home of my kinsmen was in the allotment of Naphtali. The original tribe revolted

in the general schism of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel; and was swept into the Assyrian captivity. But on the restoration by Cyrus, fragments of all the captive tribes returned, and were suffered to resume their lands. Misfortune wrought its moral on them: the chief families pledged their allegiance once more to Judah, and were exemplary in paying homage to the spirit and ordinances of their religion.

We speeded through the hated soil of Samaria. The hand of Heaven is not as the hand of man. Its blow is not given but in justice; and it leaves a deep and fearful trace behind.— Its wrath, like its own tempest, gathers long above the eye; but when it strikes, the scorched and shattered land gives stern evidence that there the fiery ploughshare has been driven. By the Babylonish captivity, the whole strength of the chosen people suffered a shock, from which it never fully rose again. The richest portion of Canaan, its central tract, cutting off the northern from the southern tribes, and lying between its chief river and the sea, was alienated to worse

than strangers—to a mingled race of apostate Jews, Assyrian plunderers, and refugees from Arabia and Syria. For a perpetual brand on the Jewish name, the last infliction of a hostile and impure worship was raised among them; and on Mount Gerizim stood a temple to which Samaria paid its homage, the rival of the temple of Jerusalem.

The rancorous enmity borne by the Samaritans to the subjects of Judah, for ages made all intercourse between Jerusalem and the north difficult. It was often totally interrupted by war—it was dangerous in peace; and the ferocious character of the population, and the bitter antipathy of the government, made it to the Jew a land of robbers.

But among the evils of the Roman conquest, was mingled this good, that it suffered no subordinate tyranny. Its sword cut away at a blow all those minor oppressions which make the misery of provincial life. If the mountain robber invaded the plain, as was his custom of old, the Roman cavalry were instantly on him with the spear, until he took refuge in the

mountains—if he resisted in his native fastnesses, the Legionaries pursued him with torch and sword, stifled him if he remained in his cave, or stabbed him at its mouth.

If quarrels arose between two villages, the cohorts burned both to the ground:—and the execution was done with a promptitude and completeness that less resembled the ordinary operations of war, than the work of superhuman power. The Roman knowledge of our disturbances was instantaneous. Signals established on the hills conveyed intelligence with the speed of light from the remotest corners of the land to their principal stations. Even in our subsequent conspiracies, the first knowledge that they had broken out was often conveyed to their partisans in the next district, by the movement of the Roman troops. Well had they chosen the eagle for their ensign. They rushed with the eagle's rapidity on their victim; and when it was stretched in blood, they left the spot of vengeance, as if they had left it on the wing. Their march had the rapidity of the most hurried retreat, and the

steadiness of the most secure triumph. They left nothing behind, but the marks of their irresistible power.

All the armies of the earth have since passed before me. I have seen the equals of the legions in courage and discipline; and their superiors in those arms by which human life is at the caprice of ambition. But their equals I have never seen in the individual fitness of the soldier for war; in his fleetness, muscular vigour, and expertness in the use of his weapons; in his quick adaptation to all the multiplied purposes of the ancient campaign—from the digging of a trench, or the management of a catapult, to the assault of a citadel; in his iron endurance of the vicissitudes of climate; in the length and regularity of his marches; or in the rapidity, boldness and dexterity of his manœuvre in the field. Yet, it is but a melancholy tribute to the valour of my countrymen, to record the Roman acknowledgment, that of all the nations conquered by Rome, Judea bore the chain with the haughtiest dignity, and most frequently and fiercely contested the supremacy of the sword.

Under that stern supremacy the Samaritan had long shrunk, and Canaan enjoyed an exemption from the harassing cruelty of petty war. We now passed with our long caravan unguarded, and moving at will through fields rich with the luxuriance of an Eastern summer, where our fathers would have scarcely ventured but with an army. I made no resistance to being thus led away to a region so remote from my own. To have returned to the cities of the priests, would have but given me hourly agony.

Even the gates of Jerusalem were to my feelings anathema.—The whole fabric of my mind had undergone a revolution; like a man tossed at the mercy of the tempest, I sought but a shore—and all shores were alike to him who must be an exile for ever!

CHAPTER V.

THE country through which we passed, after leaving the boundaries of Samaria—where, with all its peace, no Jew could tread, but as in a land of strangers—was new to me. My life had been till now spent in study, or in serving the altar; and I had heard, with the usual and unwise indifference of men devoted to books, the praise of the picturesque and stately provinces that still remained to our People. I was now to see for myself; and be compelled, as we advanced, to reproach the idle prejudice that had thus long deprived me, and might for ever deprive so many of my consecrated brethren, of an enjoyment cheering to the human heart, and full

of lofty and hallowed memory to the man of Israel.

As we passed along, less travelling than wandering at pleasure, through regions where every winding of the marble hill, or ascent of the lovely and fruitful valley, showed us some sudden and romantic beauty of landscape, my kinsmen took a natural pride in pointing out the noble features that made Canaan a living history of Providence.

What were even the trophy-covered hills of Greece, or the monumental plains of Italy, to the hills and plains where the memorial told of the miracles, and the presence of the Supreme. "Look to that rock," they would exclaim, "there descended the angel of the Presence! On the summit of that cloudy ridge stood Ezekiel, when he saw the vision of the latter days. Look to yonder cleft in the mountains—there fell the lightning from heaven on the Philistine."

In our travel we reached a valley, a spot of singular beauty and seclusion, blushing with flowers, and sheeted with the olive from its

edge down to a stream that rushed brightly through its bosom. There was no dwelling of man in it; but on a gentler slope of the declivity stood a gigantic terebinth-tree. More than curiosity was attracted by this delicious spot, for the laugh and talking of the caravan had instantly subsided at the sight. All, by a common impulse, dismounted from their horses and camels; and though it was still far from sunset, the tents were pitched, and preparations made for prayer. The spot reminded me of the valley of Hebron, sacred to the Jewish heart as the burial-place of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac;—may they sleep in the bosom of the Lord! The terebinth-tree, under which the greatest of the patriarchs sat and talked with the angels—the fountain—the cave of Macpelah, in which his mortal remnant returned to the earth, to come again in glory, appeared to lie before me.

From the day of my unspeakable crime, I had never joined in prayer with my people. I was still a believer in the faith of Israel. I even clung to it with the nervous violence of one

who, in a shipwreck, feels that his only hope is the plank in his grasp; and that some more powerful hand is tearing even that plank away. But the sight of human beings enjoying the placid consolations of prayer, had from the first moment overwhelmed me with so keen a sense of my misfortune—the pious gentleness of attitude and voice—the calm uplifted hand, and low and solemn aspiration, were so deep a contrast to the involuntary wildness and broken utterings of a heart bound in more than adamantine chains; that I shrank from the rebuke, and howled in solitude.

I went forth into the valley, and was soon lost in its thick vegetation. The sound of the hymn that sank down in mingled sweetness with the murmuring of the evening air through the leaves, and the bubbling of the brook below, alone told me that I was near human beings. I sat upon a fragment of turf, embroidered as never was kingly footstool, and with my hands clasped on my eyes, to remove from me all the images of life, gave way to that visionary and wasteful mood of mind, in which ideas come

and pass in crowds without shape, and leaving no more impression than the drops of a sunshower on the trees. I had remained long in this half-dreaming confusion, and had almost imagined myself transported to some intermediate realm of being, where a part of the infliction was that of being startled by keen flashes of light from this upper world, when I was roused by the voice of Eleazer, the brother of Miriam, at my side.

His manly and generous countenance expressed mingled anxiety and gladness at discovering me. "The whole camp," said he, "have been alarmed at your absence, and have searched, for these three hours, through every part of our day's journey. Miriam's distraction at length urged me to leave her; and it was by her instinct that I took my way down the only path hitherto unsearched, and where, indeed, from fear or reverence of the place, few but myself would have willingly come." He called to an attendant, and sending him up the side of the valley with the tidings, we followed slowly, for I was still feeble. As we emerged

into an opener space, the moon lying on masses of cloud, like a sultana pillowed on couches of silver, showed me, in her strong illumination of the forest, the flashes which had added to the bewildered pain of my reverie. While I talked with natural animation of the splendour of the heavens, and pointed out the lines and figures on the moon's disk, which made it probable that it was, like earth, a place of habitation; he suddenly pressed my hand, and stopping, with his eyes fixed on my face, "How," said he, "does it happen, my friend; my brother, Salathiel?"—I started, as if my name, the name of my illustrious ancestor, direct in descent from the father of the faithful, were an accusation. He proceeded with but a more ardent pressure of my quivering hand—"How is it to be accounted for, that you, with such contemplations, and the knowledge that gives them the dignity of science, can yet be so habitually given over to gloom?—Serious crime I will not believe in you; though the best of us are stained. But your character is pure: I know your nature to be

too lofty for the degenerate indulgence of the passions ; and Miriam's love for you, a love passing that of woman, is, of itself, a seal of virtue. Answer me—Can the wealth, power, or influence of your brother and his house, nay, of his tribe, assist you ?”

I was silent. He paused ; and we walked on awhile, without a sound but that of our tread among the leaves : but his mind was full, and it would have way. “ Salathiel,” said he, “ you do injustice to yourself, to your wife, and to your friends. This gloom that sits eternally on your forehead, must wear away all your uses in society : it bathes your incomparable wife's pillow in tears ; and it disheartens and distresses us all. Answer me as one man of honour and integrity would another. Have you been disappointed in your ambition ? I know your claims.—You have knowledge surpassing that of a multitude of your contemporaries ;—you have talents that ought to be honoured : your character is unimpeached and unimpeachable.—Such things ought to have already lifted you to eminence. Have you found yourself thwarted by the com-

mon trickery of official life? Has some paltry sycophant crept up before you by the oblique path that honour disdains? Or have you felt yourself an excluded and marked man, merely for the display of that manlier vigour, richer genius, and more generous and sincere impulse of heart, which to the conscious inferiority of the rabble of understanding, is gall and wormwood? Or have you taken too deeply into your resentment, the common criminal negligence that besets common minds in power, and makes them carelessly fling away upon incapacity, and guiltily withhold from worth, the rewards which were intrusted to them, as a sacred deposit, for the encouragement of the national ability and virtue?"

I strongly disavowed all conceptions of the kind; and assured him that I felt neither peculiar merits nor peculiar injuries. I had seen too much of what ambition and worldly success were made of, to allow hope to excite, or failure to depress me. "I am even," added I, "so far from being the slave of that most vulgar intemperance of a deranged heart, the diseased

craving for the miserable indulgences of worldly distinction, that would to Heaven I might never again enter the gates of Jerusalem."

He started back in surprise. The confession had been altogether unintended; and I looked up to see the burst of Jewish wrath descending upon me.—I saw none. My kinsman's fine countenance was brightened with a lofty joy. "'Then you have renounced.—But no, it is yet too soon.—At your age, with your prospects, can you have renounced the career offered to you among the rulers of Israel?"

"I have renounced."

"Sincerely, solemnly, upon conviction?"

"From the bottom of my soul; now, and for ever!"

We had reached the open space in front of the terebinth-tree that stood in majesty, extending its stately branches over a space cleared of all other trees, a sovereign of the forest. In silence he led me under the shade to a small tomb, on which the light fell with broken lustre. "This," said he, "is the

tomb of the greatest prophet on whose lips the wisdom of Heaven ever burned. There sleeps Isaiah!—There is silent the voice that for fifty years spoke more than the thoughts of man in the ears of a guilty people.—There are cold the hands that struck the harp of more than mortal sounds to the glory of Him to whom earth and its kingdoms are but as the dust of the balance.—There lies the heart which neither the desert nor the dungeon, nor the teeth of the lion, nor the saw of Manasseh, could tame:—the denouncer of our crimes—the scourge of our apostasy—the prophet of that desolation which was to bow the grandeur of Judah to the grave, as the tree of the mountain in the whirlwind. Saint and martyr, let my life be as thine; and if it be the will of God, let my death be even as thine.”

He threw himself on his knees, and remained in prayer for a time. I knelt with him, but no prayer would issue from my heart. He at length rose, and leading me into the moon-light, said, in a low voice—“Is there not, where the holy sleep, a holiness in the very ground? I waive all the superstitious feelings of the idolater,

worshipping the dust of the creature, for the king alike of all. I pass over the natural human homage for the memory of those who have risen above us by the great qualities of their being. But if there are supernal influences acting upon the mind of man; if the winged spirits that minister before the throne still descend to earth on missions of mercy, I will believe that their loved place is round the grave where sleeps the mortal portion of the holy. In all our journeys to the temple, it has been the custom of our shattered and humiliated tribe to pause beside this tomb, and offer up our homage to that Mightiest of the mighty, who made such men for the lights of Israel !”

He earnestly repeated the question—“ Have you abandoned your office ?”—“ Yes,” was the answer, “ totally ; with full purpose never to resume it. In your mountains I will live with you, and with you I will die.” Memory smote me as I pronounced the word : the refuge of the grave was not for me !

“ Then,” said he, “ you have relieved my spirit of a load : you are now my more than

brother." He clasped me in his arms. "Yes, Salathiel, I know that your high heart must have scorned the prejudices of the Scribe and the Pharisee; you must have seen through and loathed the smiling hypocrisy, the rancorous bigotry, the furious thirst of blood that are hourly sinking us below the lowest of the heathen. Hating the tyranny of the Roman; as I live this hour, I would rather see the city of David inhabited by none but the idolater, or delivered over to the curse of Babylon, and made the couch of the lion and the serpent; than see its courts filled with those impious traitors to the spirit of the law, those cruel extortioners under the mask of self-denial, those malignant revellers in human torture under the name of insulted religion; whose joy is crime, and every hour of whose being but wearies the long-suffering of God, and precipitates the ruin of my country."

He drew from his bosom, and unrolled in the moonlight, a small copy of the Scriptures: "My brother," said he, "have you read the holy prophecies of him by whose grave we

stand?" My only answer was a smile; they were the chief study of the priesthood. "True," said he; "no doubt, you have read the words of the prophet. But Wisdom is known of her children, and of them alone. Read here."

I read the famous Haphtorah. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of the dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him.—He is despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows!" He stopped me, laying his hand on my arm; I felt his strong nerves tremble like an infant's. "Of whom hath the prophet spoken?" uttered he in a voice of intense anxiety. "Of whom? of the Deliverer, that is to restore Judah; him that is to come," was my answer. "Him that *is to come*, still *to come*?" he exclaimed. "God of Heaven, must the veil be for ever on the face of thy Israel! When shall our darkness be light; and the chain of our spirit be broken!" The glow and power of his countenance sank; he

took the roll with a sigh, and replaced it in his robe; then with his hands clasped across his bosom, and his head bowed, he led our silent way up the side of the valley.

CHAPTER VI.

WE soon reached the hill country, and our road passed through what were once the allotments of Issachar, Zebulon, and Asher; but by the Roman division, was now Upper Galilee. My health had been rapidly restored by the exercise and the balmy air. My more incurable disease was prevented by the journey from perhaps totally engrossing my mind. Of all the antagonists to mental depression, travelling is the most vigorous: not the flight from place to place, as if evil was to be outrun; nor the enclosure of the weary of life in some narrow vehicle that adds fever and pestilence to heaviness of heart; but the passing at our ease

through the open air and bright landscape of a new country.

To me the novelty and loveliness of the land were combined with the memory of the most striking events in human record. I had, too, the advantage of a companionship, which would have enlivened travel through the Wilderness—brave and cheerful men, and women on whose minds and forms Nature laid her finest stamp of beauty. The name of Jew is now but another title for humiliation. Who that sees that fallen thing, with his countenance bent to the ground, and his form withered of its comeliness, tottering through the proud streets of Europe in some degrading occupation, and clothed in the robes of the beggared and the despised, could imagine the bold figures, and gallant bearing of the lion-hunters, with whom, in the midst of shouts and songs of careless joy, I spurred my barb up the mountain paths of Galilee!

Yet, fallen as he is, the physiognomy of the Jew retains a share of its original beauty, sufficient to establish the claim of the people to have

been the handsomest race on earth. Individuals of superior comeliness may often be found among the multitudes of mankind. But no nation, nor distinct part of any nation, can rival an equal number of the unhappy exiles of Israel, in the original impress of that hand which made man only a little lower than the angels. To conceive the Jew as he was, we should conceive the stern and watchful contraction of the dark eye expanded; the fierce and ridgy brow lowring no more; the lip no longer gathered in habitual fear or scorn; the cheek no longer sallow with want or pining, and the whole man elevated by the returning consciousness that he has a rank among nations. All his deformities have been the birth of his misfortunes. What beauty can we demand from the dungeon?—what dignity of aspect from the hewers of wood and drawers of water for mankind? Where shall we seek the magnificent form and illumined countenance of the hero, and the sage?—from the heart cankered by the chain, from the plundered, the enslaved, the persecuted of two thousand years?

Of the daughters of my country I have never seen the equals in beauty. Our blood was Arab, softened down by various changes of state and climate, till it was finally brought to perfection in the most genial air, and the most generous soil of the globe. The vivid features of the Arab countenance, no longer attenuated by the desert, assumed, in the plenty of Egypt, that fulness and fine proportion which still belongs to the dwellers by the Nile; but the true change was on our entrance into the promised land. Peace, the possession of property, days spent among the pleasant and healthful occupations of rural life, are in themselves productive of the finer developements of the human form; a form whose natural tendency is to beauty. But our nation had an additional and unshared source of nobleness of aspect; it was free. The state of man in the most unfettered republics of the ancient world was slavery, compared with the magnanimous and secure establishment of the Jewish commonwealth. During the three hundred golden years, from Moses to Samuel,—before, for our sins, we were given over

to the madness of innovation, and the demand of an earthly diadem,—the Jew was free, in the loftiest sense of freedom; free to do all good; restricted only from evil; every man pursuing the unobstructed course pointed out by his genius or his fortune; every man protected by laws inviolable, or whose violation was instantly visited with punishment by the Eternal Sovereign alike of ruler and people.

Freedom! twin-sister of Virtue, thou brightest of all the spirits that descended in the train of Religion from the throne of God; thou that ledest up man again to the early glories of his being; angel, from the circle of whose presence happiness spreads like the sun-light over the darkness of the land; at the waving of whose sceptre, knowledge, and peace, and fortitude, and wisdom, stoop upon the wing; at the voice of whose trumpet the more than grave is broken, and slavery gives up her dead; when shall I see thy coming? When shall I hear thy summons upon the mountains of my country, and rejoice in the regeneration and glory of the sons of Judah?

I have traversed nations; and as I set my

foot upon their boundary, I have said, Freedom is not here! I saw the naked hill, the morass steaming with death, the field covered with weedy fallow, the sickly thicket encumbering the land;—I saw the still more infallible signs, the downcast visage, the form degraded at once by loathsome indolence and desperate poverty; the peasant cheerless and feeble in his field, the wolfish robber, the population of the cities crowded into huts and cells with pestilence for their fellow;—I saw the contumely of man to man, the furious vindictiveness of popular rage, and I pronounced at the moment, This people is not free.

In the republics of heathen antiquity, the helot, the client sold for the extortion of the patron, and the born bondsman lingering out life in thankless toil, at once put to flight all conceptions of freedom. In the midst of altars fuming to liberty, of harangues glowing with the most pompous protestations of scorn for servitude, of crowds inflated with the presumption that they disdained a master, the eye was insulted with the perpetual chain. The

temple of Liberty was built upon the dungeon. Rome came, and unconsciously avenged the insulted name of freedom; the master and the slave were bowed together; the dungeon was made the common dwelling of all.

In the Italian republics of after ages, I saw the vigour that, living in the native soil of empire, has always sprung up on the first call. The time was changed since Italy poured its legions over the world. The volcano was now sleeping; yet the fire still burned within its womb, and threw out in its invisible strength the luxuriant qualities of the land of power. The innate Roman passion for sovereignty was no longer to find its triumphs in the field; it rushed up the paths of a loftier and more solid glory with a speed and strength that left mankind wondering below. The arts, adventure, legislation, literature in all its shapes, of the subtle, the rich and the sublime, were the peaceful triumphs, whose laurels will entwine the Italian brow, when the wreath of the Cæsars is remembered but as a badge of national folly and crime.

But those republics knew freedom only by

the name. All, within a few years from their birth, abandoned its living principles—justice, temperance, and truth. I saw the soldiery of neighbour cities marching to mutual devastation, and I said, Freedom is not here! I saw abject privation mingled with boundless luxury; in the midst of the noblest works of architecture, the hovel; in the pomps of citizens covered with cloth of gold, gazing groups of faces haggard with beggary and sin; I saw the sold tribunal, the inexorable state prison, the established spy, the protected assassin, the secret torture; and I said, Freedom is not here! The pageant filled the streets with more than kingly blazonry, the trumpets flourished, the multitude shouted, the painter covered the walls with immortal emblems, in honour of freedom; I pointed to the dungeon, the rack, and the dagger! Bitterer and deeper sign than all, I pointed to the exile of exiles, the broken man, whom even the broken trample, of all the undone the most undone, my outcast brother in the blood of Abraham!

I am not about to be his defender; I am

not regardless of his tremendous crime; I cannot stand up alone against the voice of universal man, which has cried out that thus it shall be; but I say it from the depths of my soul, and as I hope for rest to my miseries, that I never saw freedom survive in that land which loved to smite the Jew!

I saw one republic more, the mightiest and the last; for the justice of Heaven on the land, the most terrible; for the mercy of Heaven to mankind, the briefest in its devastation. But there all was hypocrisy that was not open horror; the only equal rights were those of the equal robber; the sacred figure of Liberty veiled its face; and the offering on its violated shrine was the spoil of honour, bravery, and virtue.

The daughters of our nation, sharing in the rights of its sons, bore the lofty impression that virtuous freedom always stamps on the human features. But they had the softer graces of their sex in a degree unequalled in the ancient world. While the woman of the East was immured behind bolts and bars, from time imme-

morial a prisoner; and the woman of the West was a toy, a savage, or a slave; our wives and maidens enjoyed the intercourses of society, which their talents were well calculated to cheer and adorn. They were skilled on the harp; their sweet voices were tuned to the richest strains of earth; they were graceful in the dance; the writings of our bards were in their hands; and what nation ever possessed such illustrious founts of thought and virtue?

But there was another and a still higher ground for that peculiar expression which makes their countenance still lighten before me, as something of more than mortal beauty. The earliest consciousness of every Jewish woman was—that she might, in the hand of Providence, be the sacred source of a blessing and a glory that throws all imagination into the shade; that of her might be born a Being, to whom earth and all its kings should bow! the more than man! the more than angel! veiling for a little time his splendours in the form of man, to raise Israel to the sceptre of the world, to raise that world into a renewed paradise, and then to re-

sume his original glory, and be Sovereign, Creator, God—all in all !

This consciousness, however dimmed, was never forgotten; the misfortunes of Judah never breaking the strong link by which we held to the future. The reliance on predictions perpetually renewed, and never more vividly renewed than in the midst of our misfortunes; a reliance commemorated in all the great ceremonies of our nation, in our worship, in our festivals, in every baptism, in every marriage, must have filled a large space in the susceptible mind of woman. What but the mind forms the countenance? and what must have been the moulding of that most magnificent and elevating of all hopes, for centuries, on the most plastic and expressive features in the world !

Sacredly reserved from intermixture with the blood of the stranger, the hope was spread throughout Israel. The line of David was pure, but its connexion had shot widely through the land. It was like the Indian tree taking root through a thousand trees. Every Jewish woman might hope to be the living altar, on

which the Light to lighten the Gentiles was to descend! The humblest might be the blessed among women! the mother of the Messiah!

But all is gone. Ages of wandering, woe, poverty, contumely, and mixture of blood, have done their work of evil. The loveliness may partially remain, but the glory of Judah's daughters is no more.

CHAPTER VII.

WE continued ascending through the defiles of the mountain range of Carmel. The gorges of the hills gave us alternate glimpses of Lower Galilee, and of the great sea which lay bounding the western horizon with azure. The morning breezes from the land, now in the full vegetation of the rapid spring of Palestine, scarcely ceased to fill the heavens with fragrance, when the sea-wind sprang up, and, with the coolness and purity of a gush of fountain waters, renewed the spirit of life in the air, and made the whole caravan forget its fatigue. Our bold hunters spurred down the valleys, and up the hills, with the wildness of superfluous vigour ;

tossed their lances into the air; sang their mountain songs; and shouted the cries of the chase and the battle.

On one eventful day a wolf was started from its covert, and every rein was let loose in a moment; nothing could stop the fearlessness of the riders, or exhaust the fire of the steeds. The caravan, coming on slowly with the women and children, and lengthening out among the passes, was forgotten. I scorned to be left behind, and followed my daring companions at full speed. The wolf led us a long chase; and on the summit of a rock still blazing in the sunlight, like a beacon, while the plain was growing dim, he fought his last fight, and, transfixing with a hundred lances, died the death of a hero.

But the spot which we had reached supplied statelier contemplations: we were on the summit of Mount Tabor: the eye wandered over the whole glory of the Land of Promise. To the south extended the mountains of Samaria, their peaked summits glowing in the sun with the coloured brilliancy of a chain of gems. To the east

lay the lake of Tiberias, a long line of purple. Northward, like a thousand rainbows, ascended, lit by the western flame, the mountains of Gilboa, those memorable hills on which the spear of Saul was broken, and the first curse of our obstinacy was branded upon us in the blood of our first king. Closing the superb circle, ascended step by step the Antilibanus, soaring into the very heavens.

Of all the sights that nature offers to the eye and mind of man, mountains have always stirred my strongest feelings. I have seen the Ocean when it was turned up from the bottom by tempest, and noon was like night with the conflict of the billows and the storm that tore and scattered them in mist and foam across the sky. I have seen the Desert rise around me, and calmly, in the midst of thousands uttering cries of horror and paralysed by fear, have contemplated the sandy pillars coming like the advance of some gigantic city of conflagration flying across the wilderness, every column glowing with intense fire, and every blast death; the sky vaulted with gloom, the earth a furnace.

But with me, the mountain—in tempest or in calm, the throne of the thunder, or with the evening sun painting its dells and declivities in colours dipt in heaven—has been the source of the most absorbing sensations:—there stands magnitude giving the instant impression of a power above man—grandeur that defies decay—antiquity that tells of ages unnumbered—beauty that the touch of time makes only more beautiful—use exhaustless for the service of man—strength imperishable as the globe;—the monument of eternity,—the truest earthly emblem of that everliving, unchangeable, irresistible Majesty, by whom and for whom all things were made!

I was gazing on the Antilibanus, and peopling its distant slopes with figures of other worlds ascending and descending, as in the patriarch's dream, when I was roused by the trampling steed of one of my kinsmen returning with the wolf's head, the trophy of his superior prowess, at his saddle bow. "So," said he, "you disdained to share the last battle of that dog of the Galilees? But we shall show you something

better worth the chase, when we reach home. The first snow that drives the lions down from Lebanon, or the first hot wind that sends the panthers flying before it from Assyria, will have all our villages up in arms ; every man that can draw a bow, or throw a lance, will be on the mountains ; and then we shall give you the honours of a hunter in exchange for your philosophy.” He uttered this with a jovial laugh, and a hand grasping mine with the gripe of a giant. “ Yet,” said he, and a shade passed over his brow, “ I wish we had something better to do ; you must not look down upon Jubal, and the tribe of your brother Eleazar, as mere rovers after wolves and panthers.”

I willingly declared my respect for the intrepidity and dexterity which the mountain life ensured. I applauded its health, activity, and cheerfulness. “ Yet,” interrupted Jubal sternly, “ what can be done while those Romans are everywhere round us ?” He stopped short, reined up his horse with a sudden force, that made the animal spring from the ground, flung his lance high in air, caught it in the fall,

and having thus relieved his indignation, returned to discuss with me the chances of Roman war. "Look at those," said he, pointing to the horsemen who were now bounding across the declivities to rejoin the caravan; "their horses are flame, their bodies are iron, and their souls would be both, if they had a leader."—"Eleazar is brave," I replied. "Brave as his own lance," was the answer; "no warmer heart, wiser head, or firmer arm, moves at this hour within the borders of the land. But he despairs."—"He knows," said I, "the Roman power and the Jewish weakness."

"Both, both, too well!" was the reply. "But he forgets the power that is in the cause of a people fighting for their law, for their rights, in the midst of glorious remembrances, nay in the hope of a help greater than that of the sword. Look at the tract beyond those linden trees."

He pointed to a broken extent of ground, darkly distinguishable from the rest of the plain. "On that ground, to this moment wearing the look of a grave, was drawn up the host

of Sisera ; under that ground is their grave. By this stone," and he struck his lance on a rough pillar defaced by time, " stood Deborah the prophetess, prophesying against the thousands and tens of thousands of the heathen below. On this hill were drawn up the army of Barak, as a drop in the ocean, compared with the infidel multitudes. They were the ancestors of the men whom you now see trooping before you ; the men of Naphtali, with their brothers of Zabulon. On this spot they gathered their might like the storm of Heaven. From this spot they poured down like its whirlwinds and lightnings upon the taunting enemy. God was their leader. They rushed upon the nine hundred scythed chariots, upon the mailed cavalry, upon the countless infantry. Of all, but one escaped from the plain of Jezreel, and that one only to perish in his flight by the degradation of a woman's hand !" He wheeled round his foaming horse, and appealed to me. " Are the Roman legions more numerous than that host of the dead ? Is Israel now less valiant, less wronged, or less indignant ? Shall no prophet arise among

us again? Shall it not be sung again, as it was then sung to the harps of Israel—‘Zabulon and Naphtali were a people that jeopardied their lives unto the death in the high places of the land’?”

I looked with involuntary wonder at the change wrought in him by those proud recollections. The rude and jovial hunter was no more; the Jewish warrior stood before me filled with the double impulse of generous scorn of the oppression, and of high dependence on the fates of his nation. His countenance was ennobled, his form seemed to dilate, his voice grew sonorous as a trumpet. A sudden burst of the declining sun broke upon his figure, and threw a sheet of splendour across the scarlet turban, the glittering tunic, the spear-point lifted in the strenuous hand, the richly-caparisoned frons and sanguine nostril of his impatient charger. A Gentile would have worshipped him as the tutelary genius of war. I saw in him but the man that our history and our law were ordained, beyond all others, to have made;—the native strength of character raised into heroism by

the conviction of a guiding and protecting Providence.

The conversation was not forgotten on either side; and it bore fruit, fearful fruit, in time.

We had reached on our return a commanding point, from which we looked into the depths already filling with twilight, and through whose blue vapours the caravan toiled slowly along, like a wearied fleet in some billowy sea. Suddenly a tumult was perceived below; cries of confusion and terror rose; and the whole caravan was seen scattering in all directions through the passes. For the first moment we thought that it had been attacked by the mountain-robbers. We grasped our lances, and galloped down the side of the hill to charge them; when we were stopped at once by a woman's scream from the ridge which we had just left. It struck through my heart—the voice was Miriam's. To my unspeakable horror, I saw her dromedary, mad with fear and pouring blood, rush along the edge of the precipice. I saw the figure clinging to his neck. The light forsook my eyes; and but for the grasp of Jubal, I must

have fallen to the ground.—His voice aroused me. When I looked round again, the shouts had died, the troop had disappeared—it seemed all a dream !

But, again, the shouts came doubling upon the wind ; and far as the eye could pierce through the dusk, I saw the white robe of Miriam flying along like a vapour. I threw the reins on my horse's neck—I roused him with my voice—I rushed with the fearlessness of despair through the hills—I overtook the troop—I outstripped them :—still the vision flew before me. At length it sank.—The dromedary had plunged down the precipice ; a depth of hideous darkness.—A torrent roared below. I struck in the spur, to follow.—My horse wheeled round on the edge : while I strove to force him to the leap, my kinsmen came up, with Eleazer at their head.—Bold as they were, they all recoiled from the frightful depth. Even in that wild moment, I had time to feel that this was but the beginning of my inflictions, and that I was to wreck the ruin of all that belonged to me. In consciousness unspeakable, I sprang from my

startled steed; and before a hand could check me, I plunged in.—A cry of astonishment and horror rang in my ears as I fell.—The roar of waters was then around me.—I struggled with the torrent; gasped; and heard no more.

This desperate effort saved the life of Miriam. We were found apparently dead, clasped in each other's arms, at some distance down the stream. The plunge had broke the band by which she was fixed on the saddle. She floated, and we were thrown together by the eddy. After long effort, we were restored. But the lamentations of my matchless wife were restrained beside my couch, only to burst forth when she was alone.—We had lost our infant.

The chase of the wolves in the mountain, had driven them across the march of the caravan. One of those savages sprang upon the flank of the dromedary. The animal, in the agony of its wounds, burst away: its proverbial fleetness baffled pursuit; and it was almost fortunate that it at length bounded over the precipice; as, in the mountain country, its precious burden must have perished by the lion or

by famine. Miriam held her babe with the strong grasp of a mother; but in the torrent that grasp was dissolved. All our search was in vain. My wife wept:—but I had in her rescued my chief treasure of earth; and was consoled by the same deep feeling which pronounced that I might have been punished by the loss of all.

CHAPTER VIII.

LET me hasten through some years.—The sun-shine of life was gone ; in all my desire to conform to the habits of my new career, I found myself incapable of contentment. But the times, that had long resembled the stagnation of a lake, were beginning to be shaken. Rome herself, the prey of conspiracy, gradually held her foreign sceptre with a feebler hand. Gaul and Germany were covered with gathering clouds ; and their flashes were answered from the Asiatic hills.—With the relaxation of the paramount authority, the chain of subordinate oppression, as always happens, was made tighter. As the master was enfeebled, the menials were

less in awe; and Judea rapidly felt what must be the evils of a military government without the strictness of military discipline.

I protest against being charged with ambition. But I had a painful sense of the guilt of suffering even such powers as I might possess, to waste away, without use to some part of mankind. I was weary of the utter unproductiveness of the animal enjoyments, in which I saw the multitude round me content to linger into old age. I longed for an opportunity of contributing my mite to the solid possessions by which posterity is wiser, happier, or purer, than the generation before them:—some trivial tribute to that mighty stream of time which ought to go on, continually bringing richer fertility as it flowed. I was not grieved at the change which I saw overshadowing the gorgeous empire of Rome.

My unspeakable crime may have thrown a deeper tinge on those contemplations. But by a singular fatality, and perhaps for the increase of my punishment, I was left for long periods in each year to the common impressions of life.—

The wisdom, which even my great misfortune might have forced upon me, was withheld; and the being who, in the conviction of his mysterious destiny, must have looked upon earth and its pursuits, as man looks upon the labours and the life of flies,—as the atoms in the sunshine—as measureless emptiness and trifling,—was given over to be disturbed by the impulses of generations on whose dust he was to sit, and see other generations rise round him, themselves to sink alike into dust, while he still sat an image of endurance and warning imperishable.

But there was a season in each year when those recollections returned with overwhelming vividness. If all other knowledge of the approach of the passover could have escaped me, there were signs, fearful signs, that warned me of that hour of my woe. A periodic dread of the sight of man, a sudden, gloomy sense of my utter separation from the interests of the transitory beings round me, wild dreams, days of immoveable abstraction, yet filled with the breathing picture of all that I had done on the day of my guilt in Jerusalem, rose before me

with such intense reality, that I lived through the scene. The successive progress of my crime—the swift and stinging consciousness of condemnation—the flash of fearful knowledge, that showed me futurity;—all—all were felt with the keenness of a being from whom his fleshly nature had been stripped away, and the soul bared to every visitation of pain.—I stood like a disembodied spirit in suffering.

Yet I could not be restrained from following my tribe on their annual progress to the Holy City.—To see from afar the towers of the temple, was with me like a craving for life:—but I never dared to set my foot within its gates. On some pretence or other, and sometimes through real powerlessness, arising from the conflict of my heart, I lingered behind, yet within the distance from which the city could be seen.—There among the precipices I wandered through the day, listening to the various uproar of the mighty multitude, or wistfully catching some echo of the hymns in the temple—sounds that stole from my eye many a tear—till darkness fell, the city slumbered,

and the blast of the Roman trumpets, as they divided the night, reminded me of the fallen glories of my country.

In one of those wanderings, I had followed the course of the Kedron, which, from a brook under the walls of Jerusalem, swells to a river on its descent to the Dead Sea.—The blood of the sacrifices from the conduits of the altars curdled on its surface, and stained the sands purple.—It looked like a wounded vein from the mighty heart above. I still strayed on, wrapt in sad forebodings of the hour when its stains might be of more than sacrifice; until I found myself on the edge of the lake. Who has ever seen that black expanse without a shudder?—There were the ingulphed cities. Around it life was extinct—no animal bounded—no bird hovered.—The distant rushing of the River Jordan, as it forced its current through the heavy waters, or the sigh of the wind through the reeds, alone broke the silence of this mighty grave. Of the melancholy objects of nature, none is more depressing than a large expanse of stagnant waters. No gloom of forest, no

wildness of mountain, is so overpowering, as this dreary, unrelieved flatness:—the marshy border—the sickly vegetation of the shore—the leaden colour which even the sky above it wears, tinged by its sepulchral atmosphere. But the waters before me were not left to the dreams of a saddened fancy:—they were a sepulchre.—Myriads of human beings lay beneath them, entombed in sulphurous beds.—The wrath of Heaven had been there.

The day of destruction seemed to pass again before my eyes, as I lay gazing on those sullen depths. I saw them once more a plain covered with richness; cities glittering in the morning sun; multitudes pouring out from their gates to sports and festivals: the land exulting with life and luxuriance.—Then a cloud gathered above.—I heard the voice of the thunder;—it was answered by the earthquake.—Fire burst from the skies;—it was answered by a thousand founts of fire spouting from the plain.—The distant hills blazed, and threw volcanic showers over the cities.—Round them was a tide of burning bitumen.—The earthquake heaved

again.—All sank into the gulf.—I heard the roar of the distant waters.—They rushed into the bed of fire ; the doom was done : the Cities of the plain were gone down to the blackness of darkness for ever.

I was idly watching the bursts of suffocating vapour that shoot up at intervals from the rising masses of bitumen, when I was startled by a wild laugh and wilder figure beside me. I sprang on my feet, and prepared for defence with my poniard : the figure waved his hand in sign to sheathe the unnecessary weapon ; and said, in a tone strange and melancholy, “ You are in my power ; but I do not come to injure you. I have been contemplating your countenance for some time :—I have seen your features deeply disturbed—your wringing hands—your convulsed form :—are you even as I am ?”

The voice was singularly mild : yet I never heard a sound that so keenly pierced my brain. The speaker was of the tallest stature of man—every sinew and muscle exhibiting gigantic strength ; yet, with the symmetry of a Greek statue. But his countenance was the true

wonder—it was of the finest mould of manly beauty: the contour was Greek, but the hue was Syrian:—yet the dark tinge of country gave way at times to a more than corpse-like paleness. I had full leisure for the view; for he stood gazing on me without a word; and I remained fixed on my defence. “At length,” he said, “put up that poniard! You could no more hurt me, than you could resist me:—look here!” He wrenched a huge mass of rock from the ground, and whirled it far into the lake, as if it had been a pebble. I gazed with speechless astonishment. “Yes;” pursued the figure,—they throw me into their prisons—they lash me—they stretch me on the rack—they burn my flesh.” As he spoke, he flung aside his robe, and showed his broad breast covered with scars. “Short-sighted fools! little they know him who suffers, or him who commands. If it were not my will to endure, I could crush my tormentors as I crush an insect. They chain me too,” said he with a laugh of scorn.—He drew out the arm which had been hitherto wrapped in his robe.—

It was loaded with links of iron of prodigious thickness. He grasped one of them in his hand, twisted it off with scarcely an effort, and flung it up a sightless distance in the air. "Such are bars and bolts to me! When my time is come to suffer, I submit to be tortured! When my time is past, I tear away their fetters, burst their dungeons, and walk forth trampling their armed men."

I sheathed the dagger. "Does this strength amaze you?" said the being: "look to yonder dust;" and he pointed to a cloud of sand that came flying along the shore. "I could outstrip that whirlwind;—I could plunge unhurt into the depths of that sea;—I could ascend that mountain swifter than the eagle;—I could ride that thunder-cloud."

As he threw himself back, gazing upon the sky—with his grand form buoyant with vigour, and his arm exalted—he looked like one to whom height or depth could offer no obstacle. His mantle flew out along the blast like the unfurling of a mighty wing. There was something in his look and voice that gave irre-

sistible conviction to his wild words.—Conscious mastery was in all about him. I should not have felt surprise to see him spring up into the elements.

My mind grew inflamed with his presence.—My blood burned with sensations, for which language has no name:—a thirst of power—a scorn of earth—a proud and fiery longing for the command of the hidden mysteries of nature.—I felt, as the great ancestor of mankind might have felt, when the voice of the tempter told him, “Ye shall be even as gods.”

“Give me your power,” I exclaimed; “the world to me is worthless: with man all my ties are broken: let me live in the desert, and be even as you are: give me your power.”—“My power!” he repeated, with a ghastly laugh that rang to the skies, and was echoed round the wilderness by what seemed voices innumerable, until it died away in a distant groan. “Look on this forehead!”—he threw back the corner of his mantle. A furrow was drawn round his brow, covered with gore, and gaping like a

fresh wound. "Here," howled he, "sat the diadem.—I was Epiphanes."

"You, Antiochus! the tyrant—the persecutor—the spoiler—the accursed of Israel!" I bounded backwards in sudden horror.

I saw before me one of those spirits of the evil dead, who are allowed from time to time to re-appear on earth in the body, whether of the dead or the living. For some cause that none could unfold, Judea had been, within the last few years, haunted by them more than for centuries. Strange rites dangerously borrowed from the idolaters were resorted to for our relief from this new terror: the pulling of the mandrake at the eclipse of the moon—incantations—midnight offerings—the root Bararas, that was said to flash flame, and kill the animal that drew it from the ground. Our Sadducees and sceptics, wise in their own conceit, declared that possession was but a human disease, a wilder insanity. But, with the rage and misery of madness, there were tremendous distinctions that raised it beyond all the ravages of the hurt mind, or the afflicted frame:—the

look, the language, the horror of the possessed, were above man. They defied human restraint; they lived in wildernesses where the very insects died; the fiery sun of the East, the inclemency of the fiercest winter, had no power to break down their strength.—But they had stronger signs;—they spoke of things to which the wisdom of the wisest was folly—they told of the remotest future with the force of prophecy—they gave glimpses of a knowledge brought from realms of being inaccessible to living man—last and loftiest sign, they did homage to HIS coming, whom a cloud of darkness, the guilty and impenetrable darkness of the heart, had veiled from my unhappy nation.—But their worship was terror—they believed and trembled.

“Power—” said the possessed, and his large and unmoving eyes seemed lighting up with fire from within—“Power you shall have, and hate it; wealth you shall have, and hate it; life you shall have, and hate it: yet you shall know the depths of the condition of man.—You shall be the worm among a nation of worms—you

shall be steeped in poverty to the lips—you shall undergo the bitterness of death, until—.” His brow suddenly writhed, he gnashed his teeth, and convulsively sprang from the ground, as if an arrow had shot through him.

The current of his thoughts was changed. Things above man were not to be uttered to the ear unopened by the grave. “Come,” said he, “son of misfortune, emblem of the nation, that living shall die, and dying shall live; that trampled by all, shall trample upon all; that bleeding from a thousand wounds, shall be unhurt; that beggared, shall wield the wealth of nations; that without a name, shall sway the councils of kings; that without a city, shall inhabit in all kingdoms; that scattered like the dust, shall be bound together like the rock; that perishing by the sword, by the chain, by famine, by fire, shall be imperishable, unnumbered, glorious as the stars of heaven.”

Overwhelmed with sensations, rushing in a flood through my heart, I had cast myself upon the ground: the flashing of the fiery eye before

me consumed my blood; and fainting, I lay with my face upon the sand. But his words were deeply heard; with every sound of his searching voice they struck into my soul. He grasped me; and I was lifted up like an infant in his grasp. "Come," said he, "and see what is reserved for you and for your people."

He darted forward with a speed that took away my breath—he ran—he bounded—he flew. "Now, behold!" he uttered in an accent as composed as if he had not moved a limb. I looked, and found myself on one of the hills close to the great southern gate of Jerusalem. Years had passed since I ventured so nigh. But I now gazed on the city of pomp and beauty, with an involuntary wonder that I could have ever deserted a scene so lovely and so loved.

It was the twilight of a summer evening. Tower and wall lay bathed in a sea of purple; the Temple rose from its centre like an island of light; the host of Heaven came riding up the blue fields above; the sounds

of day died in harmony.—All was the sweetness, calmness, and splendour of a vision painted in the clouds.

“There,” said the possessed, “I was master, conqueror, avenger :—yet I was but the instrument to punish your furious dissensions—your guilty abandonment of the law of your leader—your more than Gentile apostacy from the worship of him, who is to be worshipped with more than the blood of bulls and goats. A power hidden from my idolatrous eyes went before me, and broke down the courage of your people. I marched through your gates on the neck of the godless warrior ; I plundered the wealth of your rich men, made worldly by their wealth ; I slew your priesthood, already the betrayers of their altar ; I overthrew your places of worship, already defiled ; I covered the ruins with the blood of swine ; I raised idols in the sanctuary ; I bore away the golden vessels of the temple, and gave them to the insult of the Syrian ; I slew your males, I made captives of your women ; I abolished your sacrifices, and pronounced in my hour of blasphemy, that within the walls of

Jerusalem the flame should never again be kindled to the Supreme. The deed was mine, but the cause was the iniquity of your people."

The history of devastation roused in me those feelings native to the Jew, by which I had been taught to look with abhorrence on the devastator. "Let me be gone," I exclaimed, struggling from his grasp. "Strange and terrible being, let me hear no more this outrage to God and man. I am guilty, too guilty, in having listened to you for a moment." He laid his hand upon my brow, and I felt my strength dissolve at the touch. "Go," said he, "but be first a witness of the future. A fiercer destroyer than Epiphanes shall come, to punish a darker crime than ever stained your forefathers. A destruction shall come, to which the past was the sport of children. Tower and wall, citadel and temple, shall be dust. The sword shall do its work—the chain shall do its work—the flame shall do its work. Bad spirits shall rejoice; good spirits shall weep: Israel shall be clothed in sackcloth and ashes for a time impenetrable

by a created eye.—The world shall exult, trample, scorn, and slay.—Blindness, madness, misery, shall be the portion of the people. Now, behold !”

He stood, with his arm stretched out towards the temple. All before me was tranquillity itself; night had suddenly fallen deeper than usual; the stars had been wrapped in clouds that yet gathered without a wind; a faint tinge of light from the summit of Mount Moriah, the gleam of the never-extinguished altar of the Daily Sacrifice, alone marked the central court of the temple. I turned from the almost death-like stilness of the scene, with a look of involuntary disbelief, to the face of my fearful guide: even in the deep darkness every feature of it was strangely visible.

A low murmur from the city caught my ear: it rapidly grew loud, various, wild: it was soon intermixed with the clash of arms. Trumpets now rang: I recognised the charging shout of the Romans; I heard the tumultuous and mingled roar of my countrymen in return.

The darkness was converted into light; torches blazed along the battlements and turrets: the Tower of Antonia, the Roman citadel, with its massy bulwarks and immense altitude, rose from a tossing expanse of flame below like a colossal funeral-pile; I could see on its summit the agitation and alarm, the rapid signals, the hasty snatching up of spear and shield, of the garrison, which that night's vengeance was to offer up victims on the pile. The roar of battle rose, it deepened into cries of agony, it swelled again into furious exultation——

I thought of my countrymen butchered by some new caprice of power; of my kinsmen, perhaps at that instant involved in the massacre; of the city, every stone and beam of which was dear to my embittered heart, given up to the vengeance of the idolater. The prediction of its ruin was in my ears; and I longed to perish with my tribe. I panted with every shout that burst from the battle; every new sheet of flame that rolled upwards from the burning

houses fevered me; I longed to rush with the speed of the whirlwind. But the terrible hand was upon my forehead, and I was feeble as a broken reed. "Behold," said the possessed, "those are but the beginnings of evil." I felt a sudden return of my strength; I looked up—he was gone!

CHAPTER VIII.

I PLUNGED into the valley; and found it filled with fugitives incapable from terror of giving me any account of the uproar. Women and children, hastily thrown on the mules and camels, continued to pour through the country. The road wound through the intervals of the hills, and though sometimes approaching near enough to the walls to be illuminated by the blaze of the torches and beacons, yet, from its general darkness and intricacy, left me to make my way by the sounds of the conflict. But I was quickly within reach of ample evidence of what was doing in that night of havoc. The bend of the road, from which the first view of the Grand portico was seen, had been

the rallying point to the multitude driven out by the unexpected charge of the garrison. The tide of fight had thence ebbed and flowed, and I found the spot covered with the dead and dying. In my haste I stumbled, and fell over one of the wounded; he groaned, and prayed me for a cup of water to cool the thirst that parched him. I knew the voice of Jairus, one of the boldest of our mountaineers, and bore him to the hill-side, that he might not be trampled by the crowd. He faintly thanked me, and said, "If you be a man of Israel, fly to Eleazar. Take this spear:—another moment may be too late." I seized the spear, and sprang forward.

The multitude had repelled the Romans, and forced them up the broad central street of the city. But a reinforcement from the Tower of Antonia joined the troops, and were driving back the victors with ruinous disorder. I heard the war-cries of the tribes as they called to the rescue and the charge. "Onward, Judah;" "Ho, for Zabulon;" "Glory to Naph-tali." I thought of the times of Jewish triumph, and saw before me the warriors of the Maccabees:

Nerved with new sensations, the strong instincts which make the war-horse paw the ground at the trumpet, and make men rush headlong upon death; heightened by the stinging recollections of our days of freedom; I forced my path through the multitude that tossed and whirled like the eddies of the ocean. I found my kinsmen in front, battling desperately against the long spears of a Roman column, that solid as iron, and favoured by the higher ground, was pressing down all before it. The resistance was heroic, but unavailing; and when I burst forward, I found at my side nothing but faces black with despair, or covered with wounds. In front was a wall of shields and helmets, glaring in the light of the conflagration that was now rapidly spreading on all sides. The air was scorching, the smoke rolling against us in huge volumes; blindness, burning, and loss of blood, were consuming the multitude. But what is in the strength of the soldier, or the bravery of discipline, to daunt the desperate energy and regardless valour of men fighting for their country—and, above all men, of the

Israelite, fighting in sight of the profaned Temple? The native frame, exercised by the habits of our temperate and agricultural life, was one of surpassing muscular strength; and man for man thrown naked into the field, we could have torn the Roman garrison into fragments for the fowls of the air. But their arms, and the help which they received from the nature of the ground, were too strong for the assault of men fighting with no shield but their cloaks, and no arms but a pilgrim's staff, or some weapon caught up from a dead enemy.

Yet to me there came a wild impression, that this night was to make or unmake me; an undefined feeling, that in the shedding of my blood in sight of the Temple, there might be some palliative, some washing away, of my crime. I sprang forward between the combatants, and defied the boldest of the legionaries; the battle paused for an instant, and my name was shouted in exultation by the voices of my tribe. A shower of arrows from the battlements was poured upon me. I felt myself wounded, but the feeling only roused me to bolder daring.

Tearing off my gory mantle, I lifted it on the point of my javelin, and with the poniard in my right hand, aloud devoted the Romans to ruin in the name of the Temple.

The enemy, in their native superstition, shrank from a being who looked the messenger of angry Heaven. The naked figure, the blood streaming from my wounds, the wild and mystic sound of my words, reminded them of the diviners that had often shook their souls in their own land. I burst into the circle of spears, waving my standard, and calling on my nation to follow. I smote to the right and left. The entrance that I had made in the iron bulwark was instantly filled by the multitude. All discipline gave way. The weight of the Roman armour was ruinous to men grappled hand to hand by the light and sinewy agility of the Jew. We rushed on, trampling down cuirass and buckler, till we drove the enemy like sheep before us to the first gate of the Tower of Antonia. Arrows, lances, stones, in showers from the battlements, could not stop the triumphant valour of the people.

We rushed on to assault the gate. Sabinus, the tribune of the legion, rallied the remnant of the fugitives, and under cover of the battlements, made a last attempt to change the fortunes of the night. Exhausted as I was, bruised and bleeding, my feet and hands lacerated with the burning ruins, my tongue cleaving to my mouth with deadly thirst, I rushed upon him. He had been cruelly known to the Jews, a tyrant, and plunderer, for the many years of his command. No trophy of the battle could have been so cheering to them as his head. But he had the bravery of his country; and it was now augmented by rage. The despair of being able to clear himself before imperial jealousy for that night's disasters, must have made life worthless to him. He bounded on the drawbridge at my cry. Our meeting was brief: my poniard broke on his cuirass: his falchion descended with a blow that would have cloven a head-piece of steel. I sprang aside, and caught it on the shaft of my javelin standard, which it cut right in two. I returned the blow with the fragment. The iron pierced his throat: he flung up his

hands, staggered back, and dropped dead. The roar of Israel rent the heavens.

Scarcely more alive than the trunk at my feet, I fell back among the throng. But whatever may be the envy of courts, no injustice is done in the field. The successful leader is sure of his reward from the gallant spirits that he has conducted to victory. I was hailed with shouts of congratulation—I was lifted on the shoulders of the multitude; the men of Naphtali proudly claimed me for their own; and when I clasped the hand of my brave friend Jubal, whom I found in the foremost rank, covered with dust and blood, he exclaimed, “Remember Barak; remember Mount Tabor.”

But I looked round in vain for one whom I had parted with but a few days before, and without whom I scarcely dared return to Miriam. Her noble brother was not to be seen; had he fallen? Jubal understood my countenance, and mournfully pointed to the citadel, which rose above us, frowning down on our impotent rage. “Eleazar is a prisoner?” I interrogated. “There can be no hope for him

from the hypocritical clemency of those barbarians of Italy," was the answer; "It was with him that the insurrection began. He had gone up to lay his offering on the altar:—some new Roman insolence commanded that our people should offer a sacrifice to the image of the emperor, to the polluted, blood-thirsty tyrant of Rome and mankind. Eleazar shrank from this act of horror. The tribune, even that dog of Rome, whose tongue you have silenced—so may perish all the enemies of the Holy City!—commanded that our chieftain should be scourged at the altar. The cords were round his arms; the spearmen were at his back; they marched him through the streets, calling on all the Jews to look upon the punishment that was equally reserved for all. Our indignation burst forth in groans and prayers. I hastily gathered the males of our tribe:—we snatched up what arms we could, and were rushing to his rescue when we saw him sweeping the guard before him. He had broken his bands by a desperate effort. We fell upon the pursuers, and put them to the sword. Blood was now drawn,

and we knew the vengeance of the Romans. To break up and scatter through the country, would have been only to give our throats to the cavalry. Eleazar determined to anticipate the attack. Messengers were sent round to the leaders of the tribes, and the seizure of the Roman fortress was resolved on. We gathered at night-fall, and drove in the outposts. But the garrison were prepared. We were beaten down by a storm of darts and javelins, and must have been undone but for your appearing. In the first onset, Eleazar, while cheering us to the charge, was struck by a stone from an engine. I saw him fall among a circle of the enemy; and hastened to his rescue. But when I reached the spot, he was gone, and my last sight of him was at yonder gate, as he was borne in, waving his hand—his last farewell to Naphtali.”

Deep silence followed his broken accents; he hung his head on his hand, and the tears glistened through his fingers. The circle of brave men round us wrapped their heads in their mantles. I could not contain the bitter-

ness of my soul. Years had cemented my friendship for the virtuous and generous-hearted brother of my beloved. He had borne with my waywardness :—he had done all that man could do to soften my heart, to enlighten my darkness, to awake me to a wisdom surpassing rubies. I lifted up my voice and wept.

The brazen blast of a trumpet from the battlements suddenly raised all our eyes. Troops moved slowly along the walls of the fortress ; they ascended the central tower. Their ranks opened, and in the midst was seen by the torchlight a man of Israel. They had brought him to that place of exposure, in the double cruelty of encreasing his torture and ours by death in the presence of the people. An universal groan burst from below. He felt it, and meekly pointed with his hand to Heaven, where no tortures shall disturb the peace of the departed. The startling sound of the trumpet stung the ear again ;—it was the signal for execution. I saw the archer advance, to take aim at him. He drew the shaft. Almost unconsciously, I seized a sling from the hands of one of our tribe.

I whirled it. The archer dropped dead, with the arrow still on his bow.

To those who had not seen the cause, the effect was almost a miracle. The air pealed with acclamation; a thousand slings instantly swept the escort from the battlements; the walls were left naked;—ladders were raised,—ropes were slung,—axes were brandished; the activity of our hunters and mountaineers availed itself of every crevice and projection of the walls; they climbed on each other's shoulders; they leaped from point to point, where the antelope could have scarcely found footing; they ran over narrow and fenced walls and curtains, where, in open daylight, and with his senses awake to the danger, no man could have moved. Torches without number showered upon all that was combustible. At length, the central magazine took fire.

We now fought no longer in darkness; the flames rolled sheet on sheet above our heads, throwing light over the whole horizon. We were soon in no want of soldiers; the tribes poured in at the sight of the conflagration; and no valour could resist their enthusiasm. Some cried out,

that they saw beings mightier than man descending to fight the battle of the favoured nation:—some, that the day of Joshua had returned, and that a light of more than earthly lustre was visible in the burning! But the battle was no longer doubtful. The Romans, reduced in number by the struggle in the streets, exhausted by the last attack, and aware, from the destruction of their magazines, that their most successful resistance must be ended by famine, called out for terms. I had but one answer—“The life of Eleazar.” The drawbridge fell, and he appeared;—the next moment he was in my arms!

The garrison marched out. I restrained the violence of their conquerors, irritated by the memory of years of insult. Not a hair of a Roman head was touched. They were led down to the valley of Kedron; were disarmed, and thence sent without delay under a safeguard to their countrymen in Idumea. In one night the Holy City was cleared of every foot of the idolater.

CHAPTER IX.

BUT while the people were in a state of the wildest triumph, the joy of their leaders was tempered by many formidable reflections. The power of the enemy was still unshaken: the surprise of a single garrison, though a distinguished evidence of what might be done by native valour, was trivial on the scale of a war that must be conducted against the whole power of the mistress of the civilised world. The policy of Rome was known: she never gave up a conquest while it could be retained by the most lavish and persevering expenditure of her strength. Her treasury would be stripped of every talent, and Italy left without a soldier,

before she would surrender the most fruitless spot, an acre of sand, or a point of rock, in Judea.

I went forth, but not among the leaders, nor among the people; I turned away equally from the council and the triumph. A deeper feeling urged me to wander round those courts where my spirit so often turned in my exile. The battle had reached even there, and the pollution of blood was on the consecrated ground. The Roman soldiers had, in their advance, driven the people to take refuge in the cloisters of the temple; and the dead lying thickly among the columns, showed how fierce even that brief and partial struggle had been. With a torch in my hand I trod through those heaps of what once was man, to have one parting look at the scene where I had passed so many happy and innocent hours. I stood before the porch of my cloister, almost listening for the sound of the familiar voices within. The long interval of time was compressed into an instant.

I awoke from the reverie, with a smile at

the idleness of human fancy, and struck upon the door.—There was no answer; but the bolts, loosened by time, gave way, and I was again the master of my mansion.—It was uninhabited since my flight; why, I could not conceive.—But, as I passed from room to room, I found them all as if they had been left but the hour before. The embroidery, which Miriam wrought with a skill distinguished even among the daughters of the temple, was still fixed in its frame before the silken couch; there lay the harp that relieved her hours of graceful toil. The tissued sandals were waiting for the delicate feet.—The veil, the vermilion mantle that designated her rank, the tabret, the armlets and necklaces of precious stones, still hung upon the sofas, untouched of the spoiler.

There was but one evidence of time among them—but that bore its bitter moral. It was the dust, that hung heavy upon the curtains of precious needlework, and dimmed the glitter of the gems, and chilled the richness of the Tyrian purple;—decay, that teacher without a tongue, the lonely emblem of what the bustle of man-

kind must come to at last; the dull memorial of the proud, the beautiful, the brave! All was the silence of the tomb! With the torch in my hand, throwing its red reflection on the walls and rich remembrances round me, I sat, like the mummy of an Egyptian king in the sepulchre,—in the midst of the things that I had loved, yet divorced from them by an irresistible law for ever!

I impatiently broke forth into the open air.—The stars were waning; a gray streak of dawn was whitening the summit of the Mount of Olives. As I passed by Herod's palace, and lifted my eyes in wonder at the unusual sight of a group of Jews keeping watch, where, but the day before, the Roman governor lorded it, and none but the Roman soldier durst stand; I saw Jubal hurrying out, and making signs to me through the crowd from the esplanade above. I was instantly recognised, and all made way for my ascent up those gorgeous and almost countless steps of porphyry, that formed one of the wonders of Jerusalem.

“We have been in alarm about you,” said he,

hastily, "but, come to the council; we have wasted half the night in perplexing ourselves. Some are timid, and call out for submission on any terms; some are rash, and would plunge us unprepared into the Roman camps. There are obviously many who, without regard for the hope of freedom, or the holiness of our cause, look upon the crisis only as a means of personal aggrandisement. And lastly, we are not without our traitors, who confound all opinions, and who are making work for Roman gold and iron. Your voice is entitled to weight.—Speak at once, and speak your mind; your tribe will support it with their lives."

The council was held in the amphitheatre of the palace.—The heads of families and principal men of the people had crowded into it, until the council, instead of the privacy of a few chieftains, assumed the look of a great popular assembly. Thirty thousand had forced themselves into the seats; every bosom responding to every accent of the orator, a mighty instrument vibrating through all its strings to the master's hand. Accustomed as I

was, by the festivals of our nation, to the sight of great bodies of men swayed by a common impulse, I stopped in astonishment at the entrance of the colossal circle. Three-fourths of it were almost totally dark, giving a shadowy intimation of human beings but by the light of a few scattered torches, or the rising dawn that rounded the extreme height with a ring of pale and moon-like rays. But in the centre of the arena a fire blazed bright, and showed the leaders of the deliberation seated in the splendid chairs once assigned for the Roman governors and legionary tribunes. Eleazar filled the temporary throne.

The chief man of the land of Ephraim was haranguing the assembly as I entered. "Go to war with Rome!" pronounced he; "you might as well go to war with the ocean, for her power is as wide; you might as well fight the storm, for her vengeance is as rapid; you might as well call up the armies of Judea against the pestilence, for her sword is as sweeping, as sudden, and as sure. Who but madmen would go to war without allies? and where are yours to

be looked for? Rome is the mistress of all nations. Would you make a war of fortresses? Rome has in her possession all your walled towns. Every tower from Dan to Beersheba has a Roman banner on its battlements. Would you meet her in the plain? Where are your horsemen? The Roman cavalry would be upon you before you could draw your swords; and would trample your boldest into the sand. Would you make the campaign in the mountains? Where are your magazines? The Roman generals would disdain to waste a drop of blood upon you; they would only have to block up the passes, and leave famine to do the rest. Harvest is not come; and if it were, you dare not descend to the plains to gather it. You are told to rely upon the strength of the country—Have the fiery sands of the desert, or the marshes of Germany, or the snows of Scythia, or the stormy waters of Britain, defended them? Does Egypt, within your sight, give you no example? A land of inexhaustible fertility, crowded with seven millions and a half of men passionately devoted to their coun-

try, opulent, brave, and sustained by the countless millions of Africa, with a country defended on both flanks by the wilderness, in the rear inaccessible to the Roman, exposing the narrowest and most defensible front of any nation on earth: yet Egypt, in spite of the Lybian valour, and the Greek genius, is garrisoned at this hour by a single Roman legion! The Roman bird, grasping the thunder in its talons, and touching with one wing the sunrise and with the other the sunset, throws its shadow over the world. Shall we call it to stoop upon us? Must we spread for it the new banquet of the blood of Israel?"

How different is the power of the orator upon men sitting in the common, peaceful circumstances of public assemblage, from its tyranny over minds anxious about their own fates! All that I had ever seen of public excitement was stone and ice, to the burning interest that hung upon every word of the speaker. The name of Onias was famous in Judea, but I now saw him for the first time. His had been a life of am-

bition, compassed often by desperate means, and woe be to the man who stood between him and power. By the dagger, and by subserviency to the Roman procurators, he had risen to the highest rank below the throne. In the distractions of a time which broke off the regular succession of the sons of Aaron, Onias had even been high-priest; but Eleazar, heading the popular indignation, had expelled him from the temple, after one month of troubled supremacy. I could read his history in the haughty figure, and daring, yet wily, visage, that stood in their bold relief before the flame.

But, to the assemblage, his declamation had infinite power; they listened as to the words of life and death; they had come, not to delight their ears with the periods of the orator, but to hear what they must do to escape that inexorable fury, which might within a few days or hours be let loose upon every individual head. All was alternately the deepest silence, and the most tumultuous agitation. At his strong appeals, they writhed their athletic forms, they gnashed their teeth, they tore their hair; some

crouched to the ground with their faces buried in their hands, as if shutting out the coming horrors; some started upright, brandishing their rude weapons, and tossing their naked limbs in gestures of defiance; some sat bending down, and throwing back their long locks, that not a syllable might escape; others knelt, with their quivering hands clasped, and their pallid countenances turned up in agony of prayer.

Many had been wounded, and their foreheads and limbs hastily bound up were still stained with gore. Turbans and robes rent and discoloured with dust and burning were on every side, and the whole immense multitude bore the look of men who had but just struggled out of some great calamity, to find themselves on the verge of one still more irremediable.

The orator found that his impression was made; and he hastened to the close. For this he reserved the sting. "If it be the desire of those who seek the downfall of Judah, that we should go to war; let it be the first wisdom of those who seek its safety, to disappoint, to defy, and to denounce them." The words were fol-

lowed by a visible agitation among the hearers. "Let an embassy be instantly sent to the proconsul," said he, "lamenting the excesses of the night, and offering hostages for peace." The silence grew breathless; the orator wrapped in his robe, and bending his head like a tiger crouching, waited for the work of the passions; then suddenly starting up, and fixing his stormy gaze full on Eleazar, thundered out, "And at the head of those hostages, be sent the incendiary who caused this night's havoc, and sent in chains!"

The words were received with fierce applause by the assemblage; and crowds rushed into the arena, to enforce them by the seizure of Eleazar. I glanced at him; his life hung by a hair, but not a feature of his noble countenance was disturbed; I sprang upon the pavement at the foot of the throne; every moment was precious; the multitude were raging with the fury of wild beasts. My voice was at length heard; the name of Salathiel had become powerful, and the tumult partially subsided. My words were few, but they came from the heart. I asked

them, was it to be thought of, that men should deliver up men of their own nation, of their purest blood, the last scions of the mightiest families of Israel, into the hands of the idolater! and for what crime? For an act which every true Israelite would glory to have done; for rescuing the altar of the living God from pollution. I bade them beware of dipping their hands in righteous blood for the gratification of a revenge, that had for twenty years poisoned the breast of a hoary traitor to his priesthood and his country.

“ We were threatened with the irresistible power of Rome. Were we to forget that Rome was at that moment torn with internal miseries, her provinces in revolt, her senate decimated, her citizens turned into a mass of jailors and prisoners; and, darkest sign of degradation, that Nero was upon her throne?”

“ Whom,” said I, “ have we conquered this night? a Roman army. Where have we conquered them? in the midst of their walls and machines. By whom was the conquest

achieved? By the unarmed, undisciplined, unguided men of Israel. The shepherd and the tiller of the ground with but the staff and sling smote the cuirassed Roman, as the son of Jesse smote the Philistine!"

The native bravery of the people lived again, and they shouted, in the language of the temple, "Glory to the King of Israel! Glory to the God of David!"

Onias saw the tide turning, and started from his seat to address the assembly; but he was overpowered with outcries of anger. Furious at the loss of his fame and his revenge, he rushed through the arena towards the spot where I stood. Jubal, ever gallant and watchful, bounded from my side, and seized the traitor's hand in the act of unsheathing a dagger; he wrested the weapon from him, and, at a sign from me, was ready to have plunged it in his heart. Eleazar's sonorous voice was then first heard. "Let no violence be done upon that slave of his passions. No Jewish blood must stain our holy cause. Return, Onias, to your

tribe, and give the rest of your days to repentance." Jubal cast the baffled homicide from his grasp far into the crowd.

The universal echo was war. "Ruin to the idolater. War for the temple."—"War," I exclaimed, "is wisdom, honour, security. Let us bow our necks again, and we shall be rewarded by the axe. The Romans never forgive, until the brave man who resists, is either a slave or a corpse; the work of this night has put us beyond pardon; and our only hope is in arms, the appeal to that sovereign justice before which nothing is strong but virtue, truth, and patriotism. War is inevitable."

My words, few as they were, rekindled the chilled ardour of the national heart. They were followed by shouts for instant battle. "War against the world, liberty to Israel." Some voices began a hymn; the habits of the people prepared them for this powerful mode of expressing their sympathies. The whole assembly spontaneously stood up, and joined in the hymn. The magnificent invocation of David, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered,"

ascended in solemn harmonies on the wings of the morning. It was heard over the awaking city, and answered ; the chaunt of glory spread to the encampments on the surrounding hills ; and in every pause, we heard the responses rolling on the air in rich thunder.

CHAPTER X.

THE result of our deliberation was, that Israel should be summoned to make a last grand effort ; that Jerusalem should be left with a strong garrison as the centre of the armies ; and that every chieftain should set forth to stir up the energies of his people.

Eleazar and his kinsmen were instantly upon the road to the mountains ; and all was haste, and that mixture of anxiety and animation which makes all other life tasteless and colourless to the warrior. With what new vividness did not the coming conflict invest the varied and romantic country, through which we had already journeyed so often ! The hill, the mar-

ble ravine, the superb sweep of forest, that we once looked on but with the vague indulgence of a picturesque eye, now filled us with the vision of camps and battles. Hunters of the lion, we had felt something of this interest in tracing the ground where we were to combat the kingly savage. But what were the triumphs of the chase, to the mighty chances of that struggle in which a kingdom was to be the field, and the Roman glory the victim !

Man is belligerent by nature, and the thought of war summons up sensations and even faculties within him, that in the common course of life would have been no more discoverable than the bottom of the sea; the moral earthquake must come to strip the bosom to our gaze. Even Eleazar's calm and grave wisdom felt the spirit of the time, and he reasoned on the probabilities of the struggle, with the lofty ardour of a king preparing to win a new throne. Jubal's sanguine temper was irrestrainable; he was the war-horse in the sight of the banners; his bronzed cheek glowed with hope and exultation; he saw in every cloud of dust a Roman

squadron ; and grasped his lance and wheeled his foaming charger, with the eager joy of a soldier longing to assuage his thirst for battle.

The weight on my melancholy mind was beyond the power of chance or time to remove ; but a new strength was in the crisis. The world to me was covered with clouds eternal, but it was now brightened by a wild and keen lustre ; I saw my way by the lightning. An irresistible conviction still told me that the last day of Israel was approaching, and that no sacrifice of valour or virtue could avert the ruin. In the midst of the loudest exhilaration of the fearless hearts round me, the picture of the coming ruin would grow upon my eyes. I saw my generous friends perish one by one ; my household desolate ; every name that I ever loved past away. When I bent my eyes round the horizon luxuriating in the golden sun-shine of the east, I saw but a huge altar, covered with the fatal offerings of its slaughtered people.

And this was seen, not with the misty uncertainty of a mind prone to dreams of evil ; but with a clearness of foresight, a distinct and

defined reality, that left no room for conjecture. Yet, and here was the bitterest part of my meditation, what was all this ruin to me? What were those men and women, and households and lands, but as the leaves on the wind, to me! I might strive in the last extremities of their struggle. I might undergo the agonies of death with them a thousand times; and I inwardly pledged myself never to desert their cause, lovely and generous as it was, while through pain or sorrow I could cling to it; but this, however protracted, must have an end. I must see the final hour of them all; and more unhappy, more destitute, more undone than all, I must be deprived of the consolation of making my tomb with the righteous, and laying my weary heart in the slumbers of their grave!

Yet I experienced, strangely mingled with the deepest despondency of the future, more than the keenest fervour of the impulse which was now burning around me. With me it was not kingly care, nor the animal ardency of the soldier. It was the high, disturbing stimulation of something like the infusion of a new

principle of existence. I felt as if I had become the vehicle of a descended spirit. A ceaseless current of thought ran through my brain. Old knowledge, that I had utterly forgotten, revived in me with spontaneous freshness. Casual impressions and long past years arose, with their stamps and marks as clear, as if a hoard of medals had been suddenly brought to light, and thrown before me. I ran over in my recollection persons and names with even painful accuracy. The feeble claims and conceptions of those for whom I once felt habitual deference, were now seen by me in their nakedness. All that was habitual was done away; I saw intuitively the vanity and giddiness, the inconsequential reasoning, the heavy and bewildering prejudice, that made up what in other days I had called the wisdom of the wise.

As I threw out in the most unpremeditated language the ideas that were glowing and struggling for escape, I found that the impression of some extraordinary excitement in me was universal. Accustomed to be heard with the attention due to my rank, I now saw the ears and eyes of my fellow-travellers turned on me

with an evident and deferential surprise. When I talked of the hopes of the country, of the resources of the enemy, of the kingdoms that would be ready to make common cause with us against the galling tyranny of Nero, of the glory of fighting for our altars, and of the imperishable honours of those whose blood earned peace for their children; they listened as to something more than man. "Was I the prophet, delegated at last to lead Judea to her glory?"

At those discourses, bursting from my lip with unconscious fire, the old men would vow the remnant of their days to the field; the young would sweep over the country performing the evolutions of the Roman cavalry, then return brandishing their weapons, and demanding to be let loose on the first cohort that crossed the horizon.

With me every pulse was war. The interest which this new direction of our minds gave to all things, grew perpetually more intense. We spurred to the barren heath; it had now no deformity, for upon it we saw the spot from which battle might be offered to an army advancing through the valley below. The marsh

that spread its yellow stagnation over the plain, might be worth a province for the protection of our camp. The thicket, the broken bank of the mountain torrent, the bluff promontory, the rock, the sand, every repellent feature of the landscape, was invested with the value of a thing of life and death, a portion of the great stake in the game that was so soon to be played for restoration or ruin.

Those are the delights of soldiership, the indescribable and brilliant colourings which the sense of danger, the desire of fame, and the hope of triumph, throw over life and nature. Yet if war was ever to be forgiven for its cause, to be justified by the high remembrances and desperate injuries of a people, or to be encouraged by the physical strength of a country, it was the final war of Israel. In all my wanderings I have seen no kingdom, for defence, equal to Judea. It had in the highest degree the three grand essentials, compactness of territory, density of population, and strength of frontier. If I were at this hour to be sent forth to select from the earth a kingdom, I should say, even extinguishing the

recollections of my being, and the love which I bear to the very weeds of my country ; for beauty, for climate, for natural wealth, and for invincible security, give me Judea.

The Land of Promise had been chosen by the Supreme Wisdom for the inheritance of a people destined to be unconquerable while they continued pure. It was surrounded on all sides but one by mountains and deserts ; and that one was defended by the sea, which at the same time opened to it the intercourse with the richest countries of the west. On the north, rendered hazardous by the vast population of Asia Minor, it was protected by the double range of the Libanus and Antilibanus, a region of forests and defiles, at all seasons nearly impassable to the ancient chariots and cavalry ; and, during winter, barred up with torrents and snows.

The whole frontier to the east and south was a wall of mountain rising from a desert ; a durable barrier over which no enemy exhausted by the privations of an Asiatic march, could force their way against a brave army waiting fresh within its own confines. But even if the Syrian wastes of sand, and the fiery soil of Arabia, left the in-

vaders strength to master the mountain defences, the whole interior was full of the finest positions for defence that ever caught the soldier's eye.

All the mountains sent branches through the champaign. As we spurred up the sides of Carmel, we saw an horizon covered with hills like clouds. Every city was built on an eminence, and capable of being instantly converted into a fortress. But while an army kept the field, the larger operations of strategy would have found matchless support in the course of the Jordan, the second defence of Judea; a line passing through the whole central country from north to south, with the lake of Tiberias and the lake Asphaltites at either extreme, at once defending and supplying the movements in front, flank, and rear.

The territory thus defensible had an additional and superior strength in the character and habits of its population. In a space of two hundred miles long by a hundred broad, its inhabitants once amounted to nearly six millions, tillers of the ground, bold tribes, invigorated by their

life of industry, and connected with each other by the most intimate and frequent intercourse under the divine command. By the law of Moses,—may he rest in glory!—every man from twenty to sixty was liable to be called on for the general defence; and the customary armament of the tribes was appointed at six hundred thousand men!

The munitions of war were in abundance. All the varieties of troops known in the ancient armies were to be found in Judea in the highest discipline, from the spearsman to the archer and the slinger, from the heavy-armed soldier of the fortress to the ranger of the desert and the mountain. Cavalry were prohibited; for the purpose of the Jewish armament was defence. The spirit of the Jewish code was peace. By the prohibition of cavalry, no conquests could be made on the bordering kingdoms of interminable plains. The command that the males of the tribes should go up thrice in the year to the great festivals of Jerusalem, was equally opposed to encroachments on the neighbouring states. It was not till Israel abandoned the purity of the

original Covenant with Heaven, that the evils of ambition or tyranny were felt within her borders.

Her whole polity was under a divine sanction; and her whole preservation was distinguished by the perpetual agency of miracle, for the obvious purpose of compelling the people to know the God of their fathers. But the physical strength of such a people in such a territory was incalculable. Severity of climate will not ultimately repel an invader, for that severity scatters and exhausts the population. Difficulties of country have been perpetually overpassed by a daring invader in the attack of a feeble or negligent people. To what nation were their snows, their marshes, or their sands, a barrier against the great armies of the ancient or the modern world? The Alps and the Pyrenees have been passed, as often as they have been attempted. But no empire can conquer a nation of six millions of men determined to resist; no army that could be thrown across the frontier, would find the means of penetrating through a compact population, of which every man was a

soldier, and every man was fighting for his own.

The Jew was, by his law, a free proprietor of the soil. He was no serf, no broken vassal. He inherited his portion of the land by an irrevocable title. Debt, misfortune, or time, could not extinguish his right. Capable of being alienated from him for a few years, the land returned at the Jubilee. He was then once more a possessor, the master of competence, and restored to his rank amongst his fellow men. This bond, the most benevolent and the strongest that ever bound man to a country, was the bond of the Covenant. If Israel had held the institutions of her Lawgiver inviolate, she would have seen the Assyrian, the Egyptian, and the Roman, with all their multitudes, only food for the vulture. But we were a rebellious people; we sullied the purity of the Mosaic ordinances; we abandoned the sublime ceremonial of the divine worship for the profligate rites of paganism; we rejected the Lord of the Theocracy for the pomps of an earthly king. The mighty

protection that had been to us as eagles' wings and as a wall of fire, was withdrawn. Our first punishment was by our own hand ; the union of Israel was a band of flax in the flame. The tribes revolted. Then was the time for the hostile idolater to do his work. We were overwhelmed by enemies in alliance with our own blood. The banners of the sons of Jacob were seen waving beside the banners of the worshippers of Ashtaroth and Apis. An opening was made into the bosom of the land for all invasion ; the barriers of the mountain and the desert were in vain ; the proverbial bravery of the Jew only rendered his chain more severe ; and the policy that, of old, united the highest wisdom with the purest truth and the most benevolent mercy, was at once the scoff and problem of the pagan world.

But opulence, salubrity, and variousness of production, belonged to the site of the land of Israel. It lay central between the richest regions of the world. It was the natural road of the traffic of India with the west ; that traffic which raised Tyre and Sidon from rocks and

shallows on a fragment of the shore of Judea into magnificent cities; and which was yet to raise into political power and unrivalled wealth, the rocks and shallows of the remotest shore of the Mediterranean.

Our mountain ranges tempered the hot winds from the wilderness. The sea cooled the summer heats with the living breeze, and tempered the chill of winter. Our fields teemed with perpetual fruits and flowers.

The extent of the land though narrow, contrasted with that of the surrounding kingdoms, was yet not to be measured by the lineal boundaries; a country intersected every where with chains of hills capable of cultivation to the summit, alike multiplies its surface, and varies its climate. We had at the foot of the hill the products of the torrid zone; on its side those of the temperate; on its summit the robust vegetation of the north. The ascending circles of the orange-grove, the vineyard, and the forest, covered it with perpetual beauty.

This scene of matchless productiveness is fair and fertile no more. For ages before my

eyes opened on the land of my fathers, the national misfortunes had impaired its original loveliness. The schism of the tribes, the ravages of successive invaders, and still more the continued presence of the idolater and the alien in the heart of the land, turned large portions of it into desert. The final fall almost destroyed the traces of its fruitfulness. What can be demanded from the soil lorded over by the tyranny of the Moslem, stripped of its population, and given up to the mendicant, the monk, and the robber?

But more than human evil smote my unhappy country. The curse pronounced by our great prophet three thousand years ago, has been deeply fulfilled.—“The stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, when he beholdeth the plagues of the land, and the sicknesses that the Lord hath laid upon it, the land brimstone and salt and burning, even all nations shall say—‘Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?’ Then men shall say—‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers!’”

The soil has been blasted. Sterility has struck into its heart. Whole provinces are covered with sands and ashes. It has the look of an exhausted volcano!

Yet, what might have been the progress of this people! The glory of Israel is no fine vision of the fancy. The same prophetic word which has given terrible demonstration of its reality in our ruin, declares the hope once held forth to our obedience. Judea was to have borne the first rank among nations; it was to have been an object of universal wonder and honour; to have been unconquerable; to have enjoyed unwearied fertility; to have been protected from the casualties of the elements; to have been free from disease; the life of its people continuing to the furthest limit of our nature. A blessing was to be upon the labours, the possessions, and the persons, of the tribes; All Israel, a holy nation, in the highest sense of the word—a sovereign race, to which the world should pay a willing and happy homage.

What must have been the operation of this illustrious instance of the preservative power of Heaven, on the darkened empires; of

the scriptural lights perpetually beaming from Judea; of the living, palpable happiness of obedience to the Supreme; of the perpetual security of the land in the divine protection; of the internal peace, health, plenteousness, and freedom! Man is weak and passionate, but no blindness could have hid from his contemplations this proof of the human value of virtue.

We must add to this the direct influence of a governing people, placed in its rank for the express purpose of a guide to nations. Combining the sacred impulses, knowledge, and devotedness, of a priesthood, with the actual power and dignity of kings; by its own constitution as safe from all encroachment, as prohibited from all aggression; informed by the immediate wisdom, and sustained in its generous and hallowed enterprise by the uncovered arm of Omnipotence; Judea might have changed the earth into a paradise, and raised universal man to the highest happiness, knowledge, and dignity of his human nature.

CHAPTER XI.

WE reached the hills of Naphtali at the close of one of the most delicious days of summer. All nature was clothed with its robe of genial beauty; the olives on the higher grounds had put forth their first green, and with every slight gust that swept across them, heaved like sheets of emerald; the birds sang in a thousand notes from every bush; the sheep and camels lay in the meadows visibly enjoying the cool air; the shepherds sat gathered together on the side of some gentle eminence, talking, or listening to the songs of the maidens that came in long lines to the fountains below. The heavens gave prospect of a glorious day, in the

colours shown only to the Oriental eye ; hues so brilliant, that many a traveller stops on the verge of the valleys, arrested, in his haste homeward, by the glow and pomp above. All was the loveliness and joy of pastoral life, in the only country where I ever found it realised.

The mind is to be medicined by natural loveliness, and mine was cheered. To return to our home is at all times a delight ; but the new conjuncture, the high hopes of the future, and the consciousness that a career of the most distinguished honours might be opening before my steps, made this return more vivid than all the past ; and when we reached the foot of the long ascent from which my dwelling was visible, I felt an impatience beyond restraint, and spurred up the hill alone. How fine the ear becomes, when it is quickened by the heart ! As the broken mountain road, now made more difficult by the darkness of the wild pines and cedars that crowned the summit, compelled me to slacken my pace ; I thought that I could distinguish the household voices, the barking of my hounds, and the laugh of the retainers and

peasantry, that during the summer crowded my doors.

I pictured the dearer group, that had so often welcomed me. The early and cruel loss of my son had not been repaired. I was not destined to be the father of a race ; but, two daughters were given to me, and, in the absence of all ambition, they were more than a recompense. Salome, the elder, was now approaching to womanhood ; she had the dark eyes and animated beauty of her mother ; the foot of the antelope was not lighter ; and her wreathed smile, her intellectual sportiveness, her laugh of innocence, and buoyancy of soul, forbade sorrow in her sight. Oh, what I afterwards saw that face of living joy ! What floods of sorrow bathed those cheeks, that shamed the Persian rose !

The younger was scarcely more than a child ; her mind and her form were yet equally in the bud : but she had an eye of the deepest azure, a living star ; and even in her playfulness there was an elevation, a lofty and fervent spirit, that made me often forget her years. She was mistress of music almost by nature ; and the cadences

and rich modulations that poured from her harp, under fingers slight and feeble, as if the stalks of flowers had been flung across the strings, were like secrets of harmony treasured for her touch alone. Our prophets, the true masters of the sublime, were her rapturous study. Their truths might be veiled, but their genius blazed broad upon her sensitive soul.

I imaged my children hastening through the portal, twined hand in hand with their noble mother, still in the prime of matron beauty, and still grown dearer to my heart, to give me welcome. The light thickened, and the intricacy of the forest impeded me. At length, wearied by the delay, I sprang from my horse, left him to make his way as he could, and urged my path through a thicket which crept round the skirts of the forest, and which alone obstructed the view of the spot that contained all that earth held precious to me. As I struggled onward, listening with sharpened anxiety for every sound of home, I caught a sound like that of a wild beast rustling close at my side. The thicket was utterly dark. My eyes were useless.

I drew my scimitar, and plunged it straight before me. The blow was instantly followed by a shriek. Friend or enemy, silence was now impossible, and I demanded who was nigh. I was answered but by groans; my next step was on a body. Shocked and startled, I yet lifted it in my arms, and bore the dying man to an open space where the moonlight glimmered. To my unspeakable horror, he was one of my most favoured attendants, whom I had left in the principal charge of my household. I had slain him: I tore up my mantle to stanch his deadly wound; but he fiercely repelled my hand. In an undefined dread of some evil to my family I commanded him to speak, if but one word, and tell me that all was safe. He buried his face in the ground. In the whirlwind of my thoughts I flung him from me, that I might go forward, and know the good or evil; but he clung round my feet, and exerted his last breath to implore me not to leave him to die alone. "You have killed me," said he, in broken accents: "but it was not your hand, but the hand of the Avenger. I was corrupted by gold. You have

terrible enemies among the leaders of Jerusalem: a desperate deed has been done." My suspense amounted to agony: I made another effort to cast off the trammels of the assassin; but he still implored. "Evil things were whispered against you. I was told that you had been convicted of a horrible crime." The sound shot through my senses: he must have felt the trembling of my frame; for he, for the first time, looked upon my face. "My eyes are gone," groaned he, and fell back. I dared not meet the glance even of his clouding eyes. "They said that you were condemned to an unspeakable punishment; and that the man who swept the world of you and yours, did God service. In my hour of sin the tempter met me; and this day from sunrise have I lurked on your road, to strike my benefactor and my lord. In the dark I lost my way in the thicket; but vengeance found me."—"My family, my wife, my children, are they safe?" I exclaimed. He quivered, relaxed his hold, and uttering, "Forgive," two or three times, with nervous agony, expired.

A single bound from this spot of death placed me on a point of rock, from which I had often gazed on my little world in the valley. The moon was now bright, and the view unobstructed. I looked down.—Were my eyes dim? There was no habitation beneath me: the grove, the garden, were there, sleeping in the moonlight; but all that had the semblance of life was gone! I rushed down, and found myself among ruins and ashes still hot. I called aloud—in terror and distraction I yelled to the night; but no voice answered me. My foot struck upon something in the grass; it was a sword, black with recent blood. There had been burning, plunder, slaughter here, in this treasure-house of my heart; desolation had been busy in the centre of what was to me life, more than life. I raved; I flew through the fields; I rushed back to convince myself that I was not labouring under some frightful dream. What I endured that night, I never endured again; that conflict of fear, astonishment, love, and misery, could be contained but once even in my bosom: in all others it must have been death. In the mo-

ment of reviving hope, I had been smitten. While my spirit was ascending on the wings of justified ambition and sacred love of country, I had been dashed down to earth, a desolate and desperate man.

What I did thenceforth, or how I passed through that night, I know not ; but I was found in the morning with my robe fantastically thrown over me like a royal mantle, and a fragment of half-burnt wood for a sceptre in my hand, performing the part of a monarch, giving orders for the rebuilding of my palace, and marshalling the movements of an army of shrubs and weeds. I was led away with the lofty reluctance of a captive sovereign to the household of Eleazar.

The wrath and grief of my kinsmen were without bounds. Every defile of the mountains was searched—every straggler seized : messengers were despatched across the frontier with offers of ransom to the chiefs of the desert, in case my family should have escaped the sword. Threats of severe retaliation were used by the Roman governor of the province ; all was in vain.

The only glimpse of intelligence was from a shepherd, who two nights before had seen a troop, which he supposed to be Arabs, ride swiftly by the gates of Kuriathim, our nearest city; but this intelligence only added to the misfortune. The habits of those robbers were proverbially savage: they attacked by the torch and the sword; they slaughtered the men without mercy, the females they generally sold into a returnless captivity. To leave no trace of their route, they slaughtered the captives whom they could not carry through their hurried marches. To leave no trace of what they had done, they burned the place of massacre.—But this ruin was from other and more malignant hands.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT I might have suffered in the agony of a bereaved husband and father, was spared me. My visitation was of another kind; dreadful, yet, perhaps, not so pre-eminently wretched, nor so deeply striking at the roots of life. My brain had received an overwhelming blow. Imagination was to be my tyrant; and every occurrence of life, every aspect of human being, every variety of nature, day and night, sunshine and storm, made a portion of its fearful empire. What is insanity, but a more vivid and terrible dream? It has the dream-like tumult of events, the rapidity of transit, the quick invention, the utter disregard of place

and time. The difference lies in the sterner intensity. The madman is awake; and the open eye administers a horrid reality to the fantastic vision. The vigour of the senses gives a living and resistless strength to the vagueness of the fancy; it compels together the fleeting mists of the mind, and embodies and inspirits them into shapes of deadly power.

I was mad, but all my madness was not painful. Books, my old delight, still lulled my mind. I revolved some favourite volume; then fancy waved her wand, and built upon its contents a world of adventure. Every language appeared to open its treasures to me. I roved through all lands—I saw all the eminent for rank or genius—I drank of the fountains of poetry—I addressed listening senates, and heard the air echo their applause. Wit, beauty, talent, laid their inestimable tributes at my feet. I was exalted to the highest triumphs of mind; and then came my fate;—in the midst of my glory came a cloud, and I was miserable!

This bitter sense of defeat was a characteristic

of my visions. Be the cup ever so sweet, it was dashed by a poison-drop at bottom.

I imaged myself the great King of Babylon. From the superb architecture of those palaces, in which Nebuchadnezzar forgot that he was but man, I issued my mandates to a hundred monarchs. I saw the satraps of the East bow their jewelled necks before my throne. I rode at the head of countless armies, Lord of Asia, and future Conqueror of all the realms that saw the sun. In the swelling of my haughty soul I exclaimed, like him, "Is not this the Great Babylon that I have built?" and, like him, in the very uttering of the words, I was cast out, humbled to the grass of the field, hideous, brutal, and wretched——

——I was Belshazzar.—I sat in the halls of glory. I heard the harps of minstrels, the voice of singing men and singing women. The banquet was before me; I was surrounded by the trophies of irresistible conquest. Beauty, flattery, splendour, the delight of the senses, the keener feast of vanity, the rich anticipation of triumph measureless and endless, made me all

but a god.—I put the profaned cup of the temple to my lips.—Thunder pealed: the serene sky, the only canopy worthy of my banquet and my throne, was sheeted over with lightning. I swallowed the wine—it was poison and fire in my veins. The gigantic hand came forth, and wrote upon the wall ——

The moon, the ancient mistress of the diseased mind, strongly exerted her spells on mine. I loved her light; but it was only when it mingled softly with the shadows of the forest and the landscape. I welcomed her return from darkness, as the coming of some guardian genius to shed at once beauty and healing on its path. Darkness was to me a source of terror; daylight overwhelmed me: but the gentle splendour of the crescent had a dewy and refreshing influence on my faculties. I exposed my feverish forehead to her beams, as if to bathe it in celestial balm. I felt in her gradual increase, an increase of the power to soothe and console. This indulgence grew into a kind of visionary passion. I saw in the crescent, as it sailed up the æther, a galley crowded with forms of sur-

passing loveliness, faces that bent down and smiled upon me, and hands that showered treasures to be collected by mine alone. But excess even of this light always disturbed me. From the full splendour of the moon, there was no escape; the rays smote upon me with merciless infliction: I fled to the woods as a hunted deer; a thousand shafts of light penetrated the shade.—I hid myself in the depths of my chamber; flames of lambent silver, curling and darting in forms innumerable, shot round my couch.—Upon the inequalities of the ground, or the waves of the fountain and the river, serpents of the most inimitable lustre, yet of the most deadly poison, coiled and sprang after me with a rapidity that mocked human feet.—If I dared to glance upwards, I beheld a menacing visage distending to an immeasurable magnitude, and ready to pour down wrath; or an orb with its mountains and oceans swinging loose through the heaven, and rolling down upon my solitary brow.

But those were my hours of comparative happiness. I had visions of intense suffering and terror flights through regions of space,

that left earth and the sun incalculable millions of miles behind ; flights ceaseless, hopeless—still hurrying onward with more than winged speed through worlds of worlds, and still enduring ; the heart sickening and withering with a consciousness of being swept beyond the bounds of living things, and of being doomed to this for ever!

Those trials changed into every shape of desperation.

— I was driven out to sea in a bark that let in every wave. I struggled to reach the land— I tore my sinews with toil—I saw the hills, the trees, the shore, sink in slow, yet sure succession—I felt in the hands of an invisible power, bent on my undoing. The storm subsided, the sun shone, the ocean was without a surge. Still I struggled ; with the strength of despair I toiled to regain the land—to retard the viewless force that was perpetually urging me further from existence. I began to suffer thirst and hunger. They grew to pain, to torture, to madness. I felt as if molten lead were poured down my throat. I put my arm to my mouth, and shuddering, quenched my thirst

in my own veins. It returned instantly with a more fiery sting. There was nothing in the elements to give me hope—to draw off thought from my own fate—to deaden the venomous sensibilities that quivered through every fibre. The wind slept—the sky was cloudless—the sea smooth as glass: not a distant sail—not a wandering bird—not a springing fish—not even a floating weed, broke the terrible monotony. The sun did not pass down the horizon. All above me was unvaried, motionless sky—all around, unvaried, motionless ocean. I alone moved—still urged further from the chance of life; still undergoing new accessions of agony that made the past trivial. I tasted the water beside me: it added fire to fire. I convulsively darted out my withered hands, as if they could have drawn down the rain, or grasped the dew. I withered piecemeal, yet with a continuing consciousness in every fragment of my frame!—

—I wandered at midnight through a country of mountains. Worn out with fatigue, I lay down upon a rock. I found it heave under

me. I heard a thunder-peal. A sudden blaze kindled the sky. Bewildered and stunned, I started on my feet. The mountains were on flame; a hundred mouths poured down torrents of liquid fire; they came shooting in sulphurous cataracts down the chasms. The forests burned before them like a garment—the rocks melted—the rivers flew up in sheets of vapour—the valleys were basins of glowing ore—the clouds of smoke and ashes gathered over my head in a solid vault of gloom, wildly enlightened by the flashes of the conflagration below—the land was a cavern of fire. In terror inconceivable, I ran, I bounded, I plunged down declivities, I swam rivers: still, the fiery torrents hunted my steps, as if they had been commissioned against me alone. I felt them gathering speed on me; when I bounded, the spot from which I sprang was on flame before I alighted on the ground. I climbed a promontory with an effort that exhausted my last nerve. The fatal lava swept round its foot; and, in another instant, must encircle me. I ran along the edge of a precipice that made

the brain turn ; the fire chased me from pinnacle to pinnacle. I clung to the weeds and trunks of trees on its sides, and, in fear of being dashed to pieces, tremblingly let myself down the wall of perpendicular rock. Breathless and dying at the bottom of the descent, I glanced upwards ; the flame of the thicket on the brow showed me my pursuer. I saw the rapid swelling of the molten tide. In another moment, it plunged through the air in a white column. The valley was instantly an expanse of conflagration—every spot was inundated with the blaze. I flew, with scorching feet—with every sinew of my frame parched and dried of its substance—with my eyes blinded, and my lungs burned up by the suffocating fumes that rushed before, around, and above. At length my limit was reached. The land afforded no further room for flight. I stood on the verge of the ocean. Death was inevitable. I had but the choice. Before me spread the world of waters, sad, dim, fathomless, interminable ; behind me, the world of flame. By a last desperate effort, I plunged into the ocean. The indefatigable lava

rolled on, mass on mass, like armies rushing to the assault. The billows shrank before the first fiery shock, sheets of vapour rolled up; still the eruption rolled on, and the returning billows fought against it. The conflict shook the land; the mountain shore crumbled down; the sands melted and burned vitreous; the atmosphere discharged scalding torrents; the winds, shaken from their balance, raged with the violence of more than tempest. Thunder roared in peals that shook the earth, the ocean, and the heavens. In the midst of all I lived, tossed like a grain of sand in the whirlwind. '

Strange and harassing as those trials of my mind were, they had yet contained some appeals to individual energy, some excitement of personal powers, that produced a kind of cheering self-applause. I was Prometheus on his rock, chained and remediless, yet still resisting and unconquered. But the true misery was when I was passive.

——— I strayed through an Egyptian city. Buildings numberless, of the most regal design, rose round me; the walls were covered with

sculptures of extraordinary richness—noble statues lined the public ways—wealth in the wildest profusion was visible wherever the foot trod. Endless ranges of porphyry and alabaster columns glittered in the noon. Superb ascents of marble steps mounted before me, to heights that strained the eye. Arch over arch, studded with the lustre of precious stones, climbed until they lay like rainbows upon the sky. Colossal towers circled with successive colonnades of dazzling brightness ascended—airy citadels, looking down upon earth, and coloured with the infinite dyes and lustres of the clouds. But all was silence in this scene of pomp. There was no tread of human being heard within the circuit of a city fit for more than man. The utter extinction of all that gives the idea of life was startling; there was not the note of a passing bird, not the chirp of a grasshopper. I instinctively shrank from the sight of things lovely in themselves, yet which froze my mind by their image of the tomb. But to escape was impossible; there was an impression of powerlessness upon me, for whose melan-

choly I can find no words. My feet were chainless, but never fetter clung with such a retarding weight, as that invisible bond by which I was fixed to the spot. Ages on ages seemed to have heavily sunk away, and still I stood, bound by the same manacle, standing on the same spot, looking on the same objects. To this I would have preferred the fiercest extremes of suffering. The passion for change is the most incapable of being extinguished or eluded, of all that dwell within the heart of man.

But the change at length came. The sun decayed. Twilight fell, shade on shade, on tower and column; until total darkness shrouded the scene of glory. Yet, as if a new faculty of sight were given to me, the thickest darkness did not blunt the eye. I still saw all things—the minutest figures of the architecture, the finest carving of the airy castles, whose height was, even in the sun-shine, almost too remote for vision. Suddenly, there echoed the murmur of many voices, the trooping of many feet; the colossal gates opened, and a

procession of forms innumerable entered ; they were of every period of life, of every pursuit, of every rank, of every country. All the various emblems of station, all the weapons and implements of mankind, all costumes, rich, and strange, civilised and savage ; all the attributes and adjuncts of the occupations of society moved in that mighty train. The monarch, sceptred and crowned, passed on his throne ; the soldier reining his charger ; the philosopher gazing on his volume ; the priest bearing the instruments of sacrifice. It was the triumph of a power ruling all mankind ; but ruling them when the world has passed away—DEATH !

While I gazed in breathless awe, I found myself involved in the procession. Resistance was vain : I was conscious that I might as well have struggled against the tides of the ocean, or thought to stop the revolution of the globe. We advanced through the place of darkness by millions of millions, yet without crowding the majestic avenue, or reaching its close. I rapidly recognised a multitude of faces, which I had known from the models and

memorials of the past ages. But the power that marshalled them had no regard to time. The pale, fixed Asiatic countenance of Ninus moved beside the glowing cheek and flashing eye of Alexander. The patriarch followed the Cæsar. The thousand years were as one day, the one day as a thousand years.

The whole stately train suddenly melted upon the eye, and I was alone, in tenfold darkness,—entombed. I lay in the sepulchre, but with the full vividness of life, and with a perfect knowledge that there it was my doom to lie for ever. A miraculous foresight gifted me with the fearful privilege of looking into the most remote futurity. Ages on ages unfolded themselves, with all their wonders, to tantalise me. I saw worlds awake from chaos, and return to it in flood and flame. I saw systems swept away like the sand. The universe withered with years, and rolled up like the parchment scroll. I saw new regions of space, glowing with a new creation; the angelic hierarchies rising through new energies, new triumphs, new orders of existence; developments of power and

magnificence, of sublime mercy and essential glory, too high for the conception of mortal faculties. Yet I was still to be entombed! No ray of light, no sound, no trace of external being, no sympathy of flesh or spirit, of earth or heaven, was to reach me. The four narrow walls, the winding-sheet, the worm, were my world.

I seemed to lie thus for periods beyond all counting; powerless to move a limb; the sleepless, conscious, vivid victim of misery unspeakable,—the bondsman of the sepulchre!—

In those wanderings, I experienced not even the slightest recollection of the cause which so sternly besieged my brain. Wife, children, country, were a blank. Imagination, that strangest and most imperious of our faculties, whose soarings from earth to heaven may be among the indications of power beyond the grave, disdains to linger on the realities of our being. It delights in the commanding, the bold, the superb. In my instance it had the wildness of disease; but who has ever felt its workings, even in the dream of health,

without wonder at its passion for the richer and more highly relieved remembrances ; its singular skill in throwing together the brilliant portions of life and nature, to the total disregard of the level ; its subtlety in the seizure of the circumstances of pain, its pointings and sharpenings ; its fabrication of adventure, at once of the most regular consecutiveness, and the wildest originality ; and all characterised by the same spontaneous swiftness of change, and illimitable command over space and time, a power of instant flight from continent to continent, and from world to world ;—the transit that would actually fill up years and ages, the work of a moment !—the actual moment expanding into years and ages !

What are those but the infant attributes of the disembodied spirit !—the imperfect developments of a state of being to which time and space are nothing ;—when man, shaking off the covering of the grave, shall be clothed with the might of angels !—the splendid denizen of Infinitude and Eternity !

CHAPTER XIII.

AT length the past returned to my mind. Dim recollections, shadows that alternately advanced and eluded me, sketches of forms and events, like pictures unfinished by the pencil, lay before me colourless and undefined. But day by day the outlines grew more complete, the figures assumed a body: they lived—they moved—they uttered voices; and while to other eyes I was a solitary and hopeless fugitive from human converse, to my own I was surrounded with a circle of all that I loved: yet, with a continued sense of privation, a mysterious feeling of something imperfect in the indulgence, that dashed my cup with bitterness.

With the increase of my strength, I became a wanderer to great distances among the mountains. No persuasion of my kinsmen could restrain me from those excursions. The mildness of a climate in which the population sleep in the open air, and the abundance of fruits, met the two chief difficulties of traveling. I felt an irresistible impulse to penetrate the mountain ranges, that rose in chains of purple and azure before me. With the artifice of the diseased mind, I made my few preparations in secret; and with but scrip and staff, marched forth to tread hill and valley, city and desert, to the last limit of the globe.

Through what diversities of scene, or impediments of road I long passed, no memory rests upon me. The same instinct which guides the bird, led me to the fruit-tree and the stream, taught me where to shelter for the night, and gave me sagacity for the avoidance of the habitual dangers of a route seldom tried but by the wolf and the robber. But my frame, gradually invigorated by exercise, bore me through; and I scaled the chain of Libanus with an unwearied foot.

There I reached the skirts of a region where the snow scarcely melts even in the burning summer of Syria. The falling of the leaf, and the furious blasts that burst through the ravines, told me that I had spent months in my pilgrimage, and that I must brave winter on its throne. Still I persevered. I felt a new excitement in the new difficulty of the season; I longed to try my power of endurance against the storm, to wrestle with the whirlwind, to baffle the torrent. The very sight of the snow, as it began to sheet the sides of the lower hills, gave me a vague idea of a brighter realm of existence; it united the pinnacles with the clouds; the noble promontories and forest-covered eminences no longer rose in stern contrast with the sky; they were dipt in celestial blue; they wore the silvery and sparkling lustre of the morning skies; they blushed in the effulgence of the sunset, with as rich a crimson as the cloud that crowned them.

But all was not fantastic vision. From the summit of one of those hills, I saw what was then worth a pilgrimage through half

the world to see, the cedar grove of Lebanon. After a day of unusual fatigue and perplexity, I had found my path blocked up by a perpendicular pile of rock. To all but myself, the difficulty might have been impracticable; but my habits had given me the spring and muscle of a panther; I bounded against the marble, and after long effort, by the help of the weeds, and scattered roots of the wild vines, climbed my perilous way to the summit. An endless range of Syria lay beneath; the sea and the wilderness gleamed on my left and right; and a rich succession of dells, crowded with the date, the olive, and the grape, in their autumnal dyes, spread out before me, as far as the eye could reach in a land whose air is pure as crystal.

A sound of trumpets and wild harmonies arose, and I discovered, at an almost viewless depth below, a concourse of people moving through the hollows of the mountains. The tendency of man to man is irresistible; and that unexpected sight, where but the wild beast and the eagle were to have been my

companions, gave me the first sensation of pleasure that I had long experienced. Bounding from rock to rock with a hazardous rapidity which arrested the crowd in astonishment and alarm, I joined them just in time to see the shafts and slings laid down, which they had prepared for my coming, in the uncertainty whether I were a wolf or a mountain robber.

They formed one of the many caravans that annually gathered from the shores of the Mediterranean to worship at Lebanon. The homage to sacred groves had been transmitted from the earliest antiquity, and was universal in the realms of paganism. To the Jew, worship on the hill and under the tree was prohibited; but the forest that Solomon had chosen, the trees of which the first Temple was built, the foliage which shaded the first planters of the earth, must to the descendant of Abraham be full of reverent interest. The ground was scriptural; the fiery string of the prophet Ezekiel had been struck to its praise; the noblest raptures of our poets celebrated the glory of Lebanon; the names of the surrounding landscape re-

called lofty and lovely memories ; the vale of EDEN led to the mountain of the Cedars !

To my fellow-travellers traditions tinged by the fervid colouring of the oriental fancy, heightened the native power of the spot. On the summits of the trees were said to descend at appointed times those ministering spirits whose purpose is to rectify the crimes of man. There stooped on the wing the bearers of the sword against the heads of evil monarchs ; there brooded the angel of the tempest ; there the invisible ruler of the pestilence blew with his breath, and nations sickened ; there in night and in the interval of storms was heard the trumpet that, before kings dreamed of quarrel, announced the collision of guilty empires for their mutual ruin.

The violation of the grove was supposed to be visited with the most inexorable calamity ; the hand that cut down a tree for any ordinary use, withered from the body ; all misfortunes fell upon the man ; his wealth dissolved away, his cattle perished, his children died in their prime : if life was suffered to linger in himself, it was only to perpetuate the warning of the punishment. But

there were gentler distinctions mingled with those stern attributes. Above the hill was the pagan entrance to the skies. Once in the year the celestial gate rolled back on its golden hinges with sounds surpassing mortal music; the heavens dropped balm; the prayer offered on that night reached at once the supreme throne; the tear was treasured in the volume of light; and the worshipper who died before the envious coming of the morn, ascended to a felicity, earned by others only through the tardy trial of the grave. The river which ran round the mountain's foot, bore its share of virtue; its water, unpolluted by the decay of autumn, or the turbidness of winter, showed the preservative power of a superior being: it was entitled the Holy Stream; and sealed vessels of it were sent even to India and Italy, presents of health and sanctity to kings, and worthy of kings.

As we entered the last defile, the minstrels and singers of the caravan commenced a pæan. Altars fumed from various points of the chasm above; and the Syfian priests were seen in their

robes performing the empty rites of idolatry. I turned away from this perversion of human reason, and pressed forward through the lingering multitude, until the forest rose in its majesty before me.

My step was checked in solemn admiration. I saw the earliest produce of the earth—the patriarchs of the vegetable world. The first generation of the reviving globe had sat beneath these green and lovely arches; the final generation was to sit beneath them. No roof so noble ever rose above the heads of monarchs, though it were covered with gold and diamonds.

The forest had been greatly impaired in its extent and beauty by the sacrilegious hand of war. The perpetual conflicts of the Syrian and Egyptian dynasties laid the axe to it with remorseless violation. It once spread over the whole range of the mountains; its diminished strength now, like the relics of a mighty army, made its stand among the central fortresses of its native region; and there majestically bade defiance to the further assault of

steel and fire. The forms of the trees seemed made for duration; the trunks were of prodigious thickness, smooth and round as pillars of marble; some rising to a great height, and throwing out a vast level roof of foliage; some dividing into a cluster of trunks, and with their various heights of branch and leaf, making a succession of verdurous caves; some propagating themselves by circles of young cedars, risen where the fruit had dropped upon the ground: the whole bore the aspect of a colossal temple of nature—the shafted column, the deep arch, the solid buttresses branching off into the richest caprices of oriental architecture, the solemn roof high above, pale, yet painted by the strong sunlight through the leaves with transparent and tessellated dyes rich as the colours of the Indian mine.

In the momentary feeling of awe and wonder, I could comprehend why paganism loved to worship under the shade of forests; and why the poets of paganism filled that shade with the attributes and presence of deities. The airy whisperings, the loneliness, the rich twi-

light, were the very food of mystery. Even the forms that towered before the eye; those ancient trees, the survivors of the general law of mortality, gigantic, hoary, covered with their weedy robes, bowing their aged heads in the blast, and uttering strange sounds and groanings in the struggle, gave to the high-wrought superstition of the soul the images of things unearthly; the oracle and the God! Or was this impression but the obscure revival of one of those lovely truths that shone upon the days of Paradise, when man drew knowledge from its fount in Nature; and all but his own passions was disclosed to the first-born of creation.

The caravan encamped in the bottom of the valley, and the grove was soon crowded with worshippers, in whose homage I could take no share. Fires were lighted on the large stones, which had for ages served the purpose of altars; and the names of the Syrian idols were shouted and sung in the fierce exultation of a worship but slightly purified from its original barbarism. As the night fell, I withdrew to the entrance of the defile, and

gave a last glance at Lebanon. In the grove filled with fires, and echoing with wild music and dances of riot, I saw the emblem of my fallen country: the holiness, old as the oldest memory of nations, profaned; yet the existence preserved, and still to be preserved: Israel once throned upon its mountains, now diminished of its beauty; to be yet more diminished; but to live, when all else perished; to be restored, and to cover its native hills again with glory. I buried my face in my robe, and throwing myself down by the skirt of one of the tents, gave way to meditations sweet and bitter. They passed into my sleep, and I was once more in the bosom of my family.

I heard my name pronounced; I listened; the name of my wife followed. I looked to the sky, to the forest, to convince me that this was no mockery of the diseased mind. I was fully awake. I lifted up the corner of the tent. Savage figures were sitting over their cups, inflamed into quarrel; and in the midst of high words and execrations I heard their story. They were robbers from Mount Ama-

nus; come, equally, to purify their hands by offering sacrifice at Lebanon, and to recompense themselves for their lost time by robbing on the way home. The quarrel had arisen from the proposal of one of them to extend their expedition into Judea, a proposal which he sustained by mentioning the success of his previous enterprises. My name was again sent from mouth to mouth, and I found that it was inscribed on some jewel which formed a part of his plunder. The thought struck me that this might afford a clue. I burst into the tent, and demanded my wife and children. The ruffians started as if they were in the presence of a spectre. "Where," I repeated, "are my family? I am Salathiel!" "Safe enough," said the foremost. "Are they alive?" I cried; "lead me where they are, and you shall have what ransom you desire." The ruffian laughed. "Why, as for ransom, all the money has been made by them, that is likely to be made for some time; unless the Greek that bought them repents of his bargain." The speech was received with loud laughter. I grew furious.

“ Villains, you have murdered them. Tell me the whole, show me where they lie; or I will deliver you up to the chief of the caravan as robbers and murderers.” They were appalled; with a single stride I was at the throat of the leading ruffian, and seized the jewel: it was my bridal present to Miriam! My hand trembled, my eyes grew dim at the glance. In the next moment I found myself pinioned, a gag forced into my mouth, a cloak flung over me; and was left to listen to the discussion, whether I was to be stabbed on the spot, left to die of famine, or have my tongue cut out, and, thus unfitted for telling secrets, be turned to gain, and sold for a slave.

But my preservation was not distant. The quarrel of the banditti increased with their wine; blows were given; the solitary lamp was thrown down in the conflict; it caught some combustible matter; the tent was in a blaze. By a violent exertion I loosened the cords from my arms, and in the confusion fled unseen. The fire spread; and my last glance

at the valley showed the encampment turned into a sea of fire.

Alone, in pain, and exhausted with deadly fatigue, I yet had but one thought, that of seeking my family through the world. I wandered on, through the vast range of wild country that guards Syria on the side of the desert. I was parched by the burning noon, I was frozen by the keen winds of night, I hungered and thirsted; yet the determination was strong as death, and I persevered. I at length reached the foot of Mount Amanus, traversed the chain, saw from it the interminable plains of Asia Minor, the desert of Aleppo, the shores of Tripoli; and was then left only to choose in which I should again commence my hopeless pilgrimage.

There is something in great distress of mind, that throws a strange protection round the sufferer. I passed the Roman guards unquestioned—the robber left me without inquiring whether I was worth his dagger.—The wolves, driven down by famine, and devouring all else that had life, neglected the banquet

that I might have supplied.—Yet I shrank from none of the evils, but marched on through garrison, cave, and forest. But one evening the sky was loaded with a tempest that drove even me to seek for shelter. I found it in one of the promontories that so often scare the mariner's eye on the iron-bound shore of Cilicia.

Fatigue soon threw me into a heavy slumber. But the weight of the tempest towards midnight roused me, and from the mouth of the cave I gazed on the lightnings, that, red with resistless rage, disclosed at every explosion immense tracts of sea rolling in foaming ridges before the gale. In the intervals of the gusts I heard, to my surprise, the murmur of many voices, apparently in prayer, close beside me. But all my interest was suddenly fixed on the sea, by the sight of a large war-galley running before the wind. She had neither sail nor oar. Her masts were gone by the board; and but for the crowd of people on her deck, whose distracted attitudes I could clearly see by the flashes, she looked a floating tomb.

To summon whatever assistance might be at hand, I cried aloud; to warn the galley of the hazards of the shore, I gathered the brushwood at the mouth of the cavern, and set it on fire. A shout from the crew told me that my signal was understood; and I rushed down the bed of a stream that fretted its way through the precipice. Before I reached the shore, I saw various fires blazing above, and many figures hurrying down on a purpose like my own. We had not arrived too soon. The galley, after desperate efforts to keep the sea, had run for an inlet of the rocks, and was embayed; surge on surge, each higher than the one before, rolled over the ill-fated vessel, and each swept some portion of her crew into the deep. We rushed into the waves, and had succeeded in drawing many to shore; when a broader burst, the concentrated force of the tempest, thundered on the galley; she was broken into splinters. Stunned and half suffocated with the surge, I grasped, in the mere instinct of self-preservation, at whatever was nearest; and through infinite hazard reached the shore with a body

in my arms. Need I tell the keen succession of terror, anxiety, hope, and joy, when I found that this being whom I saw lifeless, and at length breathing, moving, pronouncing my name, falling on my neck, was Miriam !

My daughters, too, were rescued. The nearness of the shore saved the crew, who, until they saw the beacon on the rocks, had given themselves up to despair. The chance of help led them to steer close in land, and I was congratulated as the general preserver. Miriam's story was brief. Our dwelling had been surrounded by a troop of robbers. The household were surprised in their sleep. Resistance was vain, the rest was plunder and captivity. The robbers, fearful of pursuit, took the road to the mountains at full speed. My wife and daughters were treated with unusual care, lest their beauty should be injured, and thus their value in the slave-market of Tripoli impaired. As the robber told me, they had been purchased by a Greek merchant of Cyprus, and by him conveyed to his island, to be sold to some more

opulent master. There they were redeemed by an act of equal generosity and valour, and were returning to Judea when the storm overtook them.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN the first tumult of our spirits was past, I had leisure to see what changes the interval had made in faces so loved. Miriam's betrayed the hours of distress and pain that she must have passed; but her noble style of beauty, the emanation of a noble mind, was as conspicuous as ever. I even thought, when her large eye fell on me from time to time, that it shone with a loftier intelligence, as if misfortune had raised its vision above the things of our trivial world. My daughters' forms had matured; but Salome, the elder, wore a portion of her mother's look; her laughing glance still beamed, yet she was often lost in

meditation; and the rapid changes of her cheek, from the deepest crimson to the paleness of snow, alarmed me with menaces of early decay. Esther too had undergone her revolution. But it was of the brightest texture. The seas, the skies, the mountains of Greece, filled her glowing spirit with images of new life. She had listened with boundless delight to the traditions of that most brilliant of all people; the works of the pencil and the chisel had met her eye in a profuseness and perfection that she had never contemplated before; her harp echoed to names of romantic valour and proud patriotism; and as I gazed on her in those hours, when, in the feeling that she was unobserved, she gave way to the rich impulses of her soul, I thought alternately of the prophetess and of the muse.

The shipwreck converted the solitary shore into a little village; the sailors collected the fragments of the vessel and formed them into huts; the caves that ran along the level of the sands, supplied habitations of themselves; and by the assistance of those dwellers on the pre-

cápice who had so unexpectedly started to light, the first difficulties of a wild coast were sufficiently combated. The bustling activity of the Greek mariners, and the adroitness with which they availed themselves of all contrivances for passing the heavy hour, their sleights of hand, sports, and dances, their recitations of popular poems, and their boat songs, kept the spot in continual animation. This was my first opportunity of contact with the actual people, and I acknowledged their right to have been distinguished among the most showy disturbers of mankind. The evil of the character too was displayed without much trouble of disguise. They habitually gamed, till they had no better stake than the fragments of their own clothing ; but they would game for a shell, for a stone that they picked up on the sands, for any thing. They quarrelled with as perfect facility as they gamed : the knife was out quick as lightning ; but to do them justice, their wrath was as brief. The combatants embraced at a word, danced, kissed, and wept ; then drank, gamed, quarrelled, and were sworn brothers

again. But this was Greece in its lowest rank. Constantius, the commander of the galley, was a specimen of the land which produced a Plato and a Pericles. When I first saw him led by Miriam, as the generous champion who had restored her and her children to happiness, I saw virtue and manliness of the highest order in his features. He was still in his prime, but a scar across his forehead, and the severities of martial life, gave early seriousness to his countenance. But his conversation had the full spirit of the spring-time of life. It was incomparably rich, various, and animated; altogether free from professional pedantry, it had the interest that belongs to professional feelings. Military adventure, striking traits of warlike intelligence, the composition of the fleets and armies of the various states that fought under the wing of the Roman eagle, with their old valour invigorated by their new discipline, were topics on which his fire was exhaustless. On those I listened to him with the strong sympathy of one to whom war must henceforth be the grand pursuit; war for national freedom,

war purified of its evil by the most illustrious cause that ever summoned the sword.

But Constantius had conversation for us all. His intercourse with the ruling lands of the earth, gave him a copious store of recollections, picturesque, superb, and strange. Esther combated and questioned the traveller. Salome listened to the warrior—listened, and loved. He had higher topics, of which I was yet to hear. In the inhabitants of the precipice he found a little colony of his countrymen, fugitive Christians, driven out by persecution to make their home in the wilderness of nature. The long range of caverns which perforated the rock, gave them a roof. The fertility of the soil, and the occasional visit of a bark sent by their concealed friends, supplied the necessaries and some of the conveniences of life, and there they awaited the close of that ferocious tyranny which at length roused the world against Nero ; or awaited the close of all suffering in the grave.

A succession of storms rendered travelling impossible, and detained us among those hermits for some days. I found them intelligent, and

in general, men of the higher ranks of knowledge and condition. Some were of celebrated families, and had left behind them opulence and authority. A few were peasants. But misfortune, and, still more, principle extinguished all that was abrupt in the inequality of ranks, without leaving license in its stead. Jew as I was, and steadily bound to the customs of my country, I yet did honour to the patience, the humility, and the devotedness of those exiled men. I even once attended their worship on the first day of the week; assured that the abomination of idols was not to be found there, and that I should hear nothing insulting to the name of Israel.

The ceremonial was simple. Those who had witnessed the heaven-commanded magnificence of the Temple, might smile at the bareness of the walls of rock, figured only with the wild herbage; or those who had borne to see the extravagant and complicated rites of paganism, might scorn the few and obvious forms of the homage. But there was the spirit of strong prayer—the breathing of the heart—the un-

answerable sincerity. Every violence of the mere animal frame was unknown. I saw no pagan convulsion—no fierceness of outcry and gesture—not even the vehement solemnity of the Jew. All was calm; tears stole down, but they stole in silence; knees were bowed, but there was no prostration; prayers fervent and lofty were poured forth, but it was in accents uttered less from the lip than from the soul, appeals of hallowed confidence to a Being that was sure to hear, the voice of children to a Father and a God, who, wherever two or three were gathered together, was in the midst of them.

At length the storms cleared away, and the sky wore the native azure of the climate. A messenger despatched to Cyprus, returned with a vessel for the embarkation of the Greeks. Camels and mules were procured from the neighbouring country for our journey, and the morning was fixed, on which we were to separate. Yet with so much reason for joy, few resolutions could have been received with less favour. Constantius almost shunned society, or shared in it with a silence and depression

that made his philosophy more than questionable. Miriam was engaged in long conferences with Salome, from which they both came sad. Esther was thus my chief companion, and she talked of the shore, the sea, and even of the tempests, with heightened interest. The Greeks, sailor and soldier alike, loved too well the romantic ease and careless adventure of the place, to look with complacency on the little vessel in which they were to be borne once more into the land of restraint. The fugitive colony were not the slowest in their regrets. They had been deeply prepared for human vicissitude, and had humbled themselves to all things; yet, such is the strong and natural connexion of man with man, they lamented the solitude to which they must again be left, like the commencement of a new exile.

There are few things more singular than the blindness which, in matters of the highest importance to ourselves, often hides the truth that is plain as noon to all other eyes. The cause which deprived Constantius of his eloquence, and Salome of her animation, was obvious to

every one but me. Nor was the mystery yet to be disclosed to my tardy knowledge.

I had strayed through the cliffs, as was my custom after the heat of the day, and was taking a last look at the sea from one of the thickets on the edge of the precipice. The sands far below me were covered with preparation for the voyage, which, like our journey, was to commence with the rising sun. The little vessel lay, a glittering toy, at anchor, with her thread-like streamers playing in the breeze. The sailors were fishing, preparing their evening meal, heaving water and provisions down the rocks, or enjoying themselves over flagons of Syrian wine round their fires; all was the activity of a sea-port; but, from the height on which I lay, all was but the activity of a mole-hill. "And is it of such materials," mused I, "that ambition is made? is it to command, to be gazed on, to be shouted after by such mites and atoms as those, that life is exhausted in watching and weariness; that our true enjoyments are sacrificed; that the present and the future are equally cast from us; that

the hand is dipped in blood, and the earth desolated? What must Alexander's triumph have looked, to one who saw it from the towers of Babylon? a triumph of emmets!" I smiled at the moral of three hundred feet of precipice.

A step in the thicket put philosophy to flight. My wife stood before me; and never saw I even her beauty more beautiful. The exertion of the ascent had coloured her cheek; the breeze had scattered her raven locks across a forehead of the purest white; her lip wore the smiles so long absent; and there was altogether an air of hope and joy in her countenance, that made me instinctively ask, of what good news she was the bearer. Without a word she sat down beside me, and pressed my hand between hers; she fixed her eyes on mine, tried to speak, and failing, fell on my neck, and burst into tears. Alarmed at her sobs, and the wild beating of her heart, I was about to rise for assistance, when she detained me, and the smile returned; she bared her forehead to the breeze, and recovering, disburthened her soul.

“How many billows,” said she, gazing on the sea, “will roll between that little bark and this shore to-morrow! There is always something melancholy in parting. Yet, if that vessel could feel, with what delight would she not wing her way to Cyprus, lovely Cyprus?”

I was surprised! “Miriam! this from you? Can you regret the place of paganism—the land of your captivity?”

“No,” was the answer, with a look of lofty truth; “I abhorred the guilty profanations of the pagan; and who can love the dungeon? Even were Cyprus a paradise, I should have felt unhappy in the separation from my country and from you. Yet those alone who have seen the matchless loveliness of the island—the perpetual animation of life in a climate, and in the midst of scenes made for happiness—can know the sacrifice that must be made by its people in leaving it, and leaving it perhaps for ever.”

“The crew of that galley are not to be tried by long exile. In two days, at furthest, they will anchor in their own harbours.”

“And how deeply must the sacrifice be,

enhanced by the abandonment of rank, wealth, professional honours!—and this is the sacrifice on which I have been sent to consult my husband.”

I was totally at a loss to conceive of whom she spoke.

“ Our friend—our deliverer from captivity or death—the generous being, who, through infinite hazards, restored your wife and children to happiness and home—”

“ Constantius! impossible.—At the very age of ambition, with his talents, his knowledge of life, his prospects of the highest distinction?—”

“ Constantius will never return to Cyprus in that galley—will never draw sword for Rome again—will never quit the land given by Heaven to our fathers; if such be the will of Salathiel.”

“ Strange.—But his motives? he is superior to the fickleness that abandons an honourable course of life through the pure love of novelty: or is he weary of the absurdities of paganism?”

“ Thoroughly weary—more than weary; he has abjured them for ever and ever.”

“ You rejoice me. But it was to be expected from his manly mind. You have brought an illustrious convert, my beloved ; and if your captivity has done this, it was the will of Heaven. Constantius shall be led with distinction to the temple, and be one of ourselves. Judea may yet require such men. Our holy religion may exult in such conquests from the darkness of the idolatrous world.”

The voice of the hermits at their evening prayer now arose, and held us in a silence, which neither seemed inclined to break. Many thoughts pressed on my mind ; the addition to our circle of a man whom I honoured and esteemed ; the accession of a practised soldier to our cause ; the near approach of the hour of conflict ; the precarious fate of those I loved, in the great convulsion which was to rend away the Roman yoke, or leave Judea a tomb. I accidentally looked up, and saw that Miriam had been as abstracted as myself. But war and policy were not in the contemplations of the beaming countenance ; nor their words on the lips that quivered and crimsoned before me.

Her eyes were fixed on the sky, and she was in evident prayer, which I desired not to disturb. She at length caught my glance, and blushed like one detected; but quickly recovering—said, in a tone never to be forgotten, “ My husband! my lord! my love! would that I dared open my whole spirit to you! would that you could read for yourself the truths written in my heart!”

“ Miriam!”

“ This is no reproach. But I know your strength of opinion,—your passion for all that concerns the glory of Israel;—your right, the right of talents and character to the foremost rank among the priesthood; and those things repel me.”

“ Speak out at once. We can have no concealments, Miriam; candour, candour in all things.”

“ You have heard the prayers of those exiles: you acknowledge their acquirements and understandings; they have sacrificed much, every thing—friends, country, the world. Can such men have been imposed on? can they have imposed on themselves? Is it possible that

their sacrifices could have been made for a fiction ?”

“ The question is difficult. We are strangely the slaves of habit and impulse. Men every day abandon the most obvious good for the most palpable follies. Enthusiasm is a minor madness.”

“ But are those exiles enthusiasts? They are grave men, experienced in life; their language is totally pure from extravagance; they reason with singular clearness; they live with the most striking command over the habits of their original condition. Greeks, you see no haste of temper, no violence of language among them. Once idolaters, they shrink from the thought of idols. Now fugitive and persecuted, they pray for their persecutors; sharing the lair of wild beasts, and driven out from all that they knew and loved, they utter no complaint—they even rejoice in their calamity, and offer up praises to the mercy that shut the gates of earth upon their steps, only to open the gates of heaven.”

“ I am no persecutor, Miriam. Nay, I ho-

nour the self-denial, as I doubt not the sincerity of those men. But if they have thrown off a portion of their early blindness, why not desire the full illumination? Why linger half way between falsehood and truth? It is not, as you know, our custom to solicit proselytes. But such men might be not unworthy of the hope of Israel."

"It is to the hope of Israel that they have come, that they cling, that they look up for a recompense; a glorious recompense for their sufferings."

"Let them then join us at sunrise, and come to our holy city."

"Salathiel, the time is declared, when men shall worship not in that mountain alone, but through all lands; when the yoke of our law shall be lightened, and the weary shall have rest; when the altar shall pass away, as the illustrious victim has passed; and the wisdom of Heaven shall be the possession of all mankind."

I looked at her in astonishment. "Miriam,

this from you ! from a daughter of the blood of Aaron ! from the wife of a servant of the Temple ! have you become a Christian ?”

“ I have done nothing in presumption. I have prayed to the Source of light that he would enlighten my understanding ; I have night and day examined the law and the prophets. Bear with my weakness, Salathiel, if it be proved weakness. But if it be wisdom, knowledge, and truth, I implore you by our love, by the higher interests of your own soul, to follow my example.”

It was impossible to answer harshly to a remonstrance expressed with the overflowing fondness of the heart : I could only remind her of the unchangeable promises made to Judaism.

“ But it is of those promises I speak,” urged she ; “ we have seen the day that our father Abraham longed to see ; that mighty Being, the Lord of eternity, the express image of the glory of the Invisible, the hope of the patriarch, the promise of the prophet, has come.”

“ Yet Israel is divided and enslaved, torn by

capricious tyranny, and hurrying to the common convulsions and common ruin of doomed nations. Is this the triumphant kingdom of prophecy?"

"I have doubted like you; but I have been at length convinced out of the mouths of the prophets themselves. Have they not declared that Israel should suffer before it triumphed, and suffer too for a period that strikes the mind with terror? that the King of Israel should be excluded from his kingdom, — nay, take upon him the form of a servant, — nay, die, and die by a death of pain and shame, the death of a slave and criminal?"

"It is so written. But it is beyond our power to reconcile."

"Pray then for the power, and it will be given to you. Ask for the spirit of holy intelligence, and it will enlighten you. Pride is the crime of our nation. Humility, the righteous resolution to follow truth, and leave prejudice to its fate, would take the film from the eye of our people. — Salathiel, my lord, the being trea-

sured in my heart. Read the Scriptures. I have prayed for you.—Read——”

“But how can the promise of the kingdom be resisted? it fills the whole volume of prophecy. It is the theme first, last, and without end, of all the inspired masters of Israel. What splendour and reality of history was ever more vivid and real than the glorious promises of Isaiah?”

“But what force and minuteness of picturing ever excelled Isaiah’s description of the lowliness, the obscurity, the rejection, the agonies, and the death of the Messiah? Why shall we suppose that the one description is true and the other false? Has not the same inspiration given both? Why shall we conceive that the Messiah and his kingdom must appear together? We see the time of his first coming defined to a year by our great prophet Daniel. But where do we see the time of the triumphant kingdom defined? Why may it not follow at a distance of ages? We know that we shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and in our flesh shall see God. Why shall not the triumph be reserved for that day of glory? Are

our people now fit to be a nation of kings? Or are the best of us, in our present imperfection, in the mortal feebleness of our nature, fit to share in a triumph in which angels are to minister? fit dwellers of a city from which error and evil are to be excluded; in which there is to be no tear, no human suffering, no remembered bitterness; 'a city whose builder and maker is God;' within whose walls live holiness, power, sublime intelligence, and imperishable virtue; on whose throne sits in light the Omnipotent!"

Sensations to which I dared not give utterance oppressed me: my crime, my fate, rose up before the mental eye. I had no answer to this admirable woman. Her pure and fervid zeal, her love, and holiness of heart, touched every chord in mine. But the veil was dark upon my mind. Let no man blame the stubbornness of the Jew, till he has weighed the influence of feelings born with a people, strengthened by their history, reinforced by miracle, and authenticated by the words of inspiration. That Judaism was purity itself to the worship

and morals of the pagan world; that it was the continued object of a particular Providence; that it alone possessed the revelations of God; were facts that defied doubt. And that those high distinctions should be made void, and the slavish and profligate mind of paganism be admitted into our privileges; still more, that it should be admitted, to the exclusion of the chosen line, seemed to me a conclusion that no reasoning could substantiate, a fantastic and airy fiction, to which no reasoning could be applied.

The moon ascended in calm glory; and her orb, slightly tinged by the many-coloured clouds that lay upon the horizon, threw a faint silver upon the precipice. The sounds below were hushed; the moving figures, the vessel, the sea, the cliffs, were totally veiled in purple mist. We could not have been more alone if we were seated on a cloud; and the beauty, the exalted gesture, and the glowing wisdom of the being before me, were like those that we conceive of spirits delegated to lead the disembodied mind upwards from world to world.

A sea-bird, winging its way above our heads, broke the reverie: I reminded my teacher that it grew late, and our absence might produce anxiety.

“Salathiel,” said she, with mingled fervour and softness,—“you know I love you; never was heart more fondly bound to another than mine is to you. I am grateful for your permission to receive Constantius into our tribe. But one obligation, infinitely dearer, you can confer on me,—read this scroll.” She drew from her bosom a letter, written to his church by one of the Christian leaders in Asia. “I desire not to offend your convictions, nor to hasten you into a rash adoption of those of others. But in this scroll you will find philosophy without its pride, and knowledge without its guile; you will find more, the disclosure of those mysteries which have so long perplexed our people: read; and may He who can bring wisdom out of the lips of babes, and make the wisdom of the wise foolishness, shed his light upon the generous heart of my husband!”

At another time, I might have started in

horror from this avowal of her faith. But the scene, the circumstances, an unaccountable internal impression—a voice of the soul, prohibited me. I took her trembling hand, and, without a word, led her down to our dwelling.

CHAPTER XV.

No tidings sooner make themselves known, than those of the heart. We found our daughters waiting anxiously at the entrance of the cave, which had been fitted up for our temporary shelter. Before a word could be exchanged, a glance from Miriam told the success of her mission; and sorrow was turned into delight. Esther danced round me, and was eloquent in her gratitude. Salome shed silent tears; and when I attempted to wipe them away, fell fainting into my arms. We spent a part of the night in the open air: the last wine and fruits of our store were brought out: the Cypriot exiles came down

from their rocks: the crew of the galley, already on board, danced, sang, and drank to the success of the voyage; and it was not till the moon, our only lamp, was about to be extinguished in the waters, that we thought of closing our final night on the Syrian shore.

We travelled along the coast as far as Beytus; then turning to the eastward, crossed the Libanus, and the mountain country that branches into Upper Galilee. Our coming had been long announced; and we found Eleazar, Jubal, and our chief kinsmen, waiting at one of the passes to lead us home in triumph. The joy of our tribe was honest, if it was tumultuous; and many a shout disturbed the solitude as we moved along.

My impatience increased, when we reached the well-known hills that sheltered what was once my home. Yet I remembered too keenly the shock of seeing its desolation, not to dread the first sight of the spot; and rode away from the group at full speed, that my nervousness might have time to subside before their arrival. But at the foot of the last ascent I drew the

rein. Every tree, every bush, almost every stone, had been familiar to me in my wanderings; and were now painful memorials of the long malady of my mind.

Eleazar, who watched me during the latter part of the journey with something of a consciousness of my thoughts, put spurs to his horse, and found me standing, pale and palpitating. "Come," said he, "we must not alarm Miriam by thinking too much of the past; let us try if the top of the hill will not give us a better prospect than the bottom."

I shrank from the attempt. "No!" said I, "the horror that the prospect once gave me must not be renewed. Let us change the route, no matter how far round; the sight of that ruin would distract me to the last hour of my life."

He only smiled in reply; and catching my bridle, galloped forward. A few seconds placed us on the summit of the hill. Could I believe my eyes! All below was as if rapine never had been there. The gardens, the cattle, the dwelling, lay a fairy picture under the eye.

“ This is miracle !” I exclaimed. “ No ; or it is but the miracle of a little activity, and a great deal of good-will,” was the answer.

“ Your kinsmen did this at the time when you were slumbering with the wolf and bear in the Libanus : Nature did her part in covering your fields and gardens ; and those sheep and cattle are a tribute of gratitude from your brother, for the preservation of his life.”

Our troop now ascended the height. The land lay beneath them in the richness of summer. They were ardent in their expressions of surprise and pleasure. We rushed down the defile, and I was once more master of a home.

Public events had rapidly ripened in my absence. Popular wrath was stimulated by increased exaction. Law was more palpably perverted into insolence and injury. Order was giving way on all sides. The Roman garrisons, neglected and ill paid, were adopting the desperate habits of the populace ; and in the general scorn of religion and right, the country was becoming a horde of robbers. The ulti-

mate causes of this singular degeneracy might be remote, and set in action by a vengeance above man; but the immediate were plain to every eye.

The general principles of Rome, in the government of her conquests, were manly and wise. When the soldier had done his work; and it was done vigorously, yet with but little violence beyond that which was essential for complete subjugation; the sword slept as an instrument of evil, and awoke only as an instrument of justice.

The Roman supremacy extinguished the innumerable and harassing mischiefs of minor hostility. If neighbour kingdoms quarrelled, a legion marched across the border, and brought the belligerents to sudden reason; dismissed the armies to their hearths and altars, and sent the angry chiefs to reconcile their claims in an Italian dungeon. If a disputed succession threatened to embroil the general peace, the proconsul ordered the royal competitors to embark for Rome, and there settle the right before the senate.

The barbaric invasions, which had periodically ravaged the Eastern empires, even in their day of power, were repelled with a terrible vigour. The legions left the desert covered with the tribe, for the food of the vulture; and showed to Europe the haughty leaders of the Tartar, Gothic, and Arab myriads, in fetters, dragging wains, digging in mines, or sweeping the highways.

If peace could be an equivalent for freedom, the equivalent was never so amply secured. The world within this iron boundary flourished: the activity and talent of man were urged to the highest pitch: the conquered countries were turned from wastes and forests into fertility: ports were dug upon naked shores; cities swelled from villages; population spread over the soil once pestilential and breeding only the poisonous weed and the serpent. The sea was covered with trade; the pirate and the marauder were unheard of, or hunted down. Commercial enterprise shot its lines and communications over the map of the earth; and regions were then familiar, which even the activity of the

revived ages of Europe has scarcely made known.

Those were the wonders of great power steadily directed to a great purpose. General coercion was the simple principle; and the only talisman of a Roman Emperor was the chain, but where it was casually commuted for the sword: yet the universality of the compression atoned for half its evil. The natural impulse of man is to improvement; he requires only security from rapine. The Roman supremacy raised round him an impregnable wall. It was the true government for an era when the habits of reason had not penetrated the general human mind. Its chief evil was in its restraint of those nobler and loftier aspirations of genius and the heart, which from time to time raise the general scale of mankind. Nothing is more observable than the decay of original literature, of the finer architecture, and of philosophical invention, under the empire. Even military genius, the natural product of a system that lived but on military fame, disappeared: the brilliant diversity of warlike talent, that shone on the very

verge of the succession of the Cæsars, sank, like falling stars, to rise no more. No captain was again to display the splendid conceptions of Pompey's boundless campaigns; the lavish heroism and inexhaustible resource of Antony; or the mixture of undaunted personal enterprise and profound tactic, the statesman-like thought, irrestrainable ambition, and high-minded forgiveness, that made Cæsar the very emblem of Rome. But the Imperial power had the operation of one of those great laws of nature, which through partial evil sustain the earth—a gravitating principle, which, if it checked the ascent of some gifted beings beyond the dull level of life, yet kept the infinite multitude of men and things from flying loose beyond all utility and all control.

Yet it was only for a time. The empire was but the ripening of the republic, a richer more luxuriant, and more transitory object for the eye of the world; and the storm was already gathering that was to shake it to the ground. The corruptions of the palace first opened the Imperial ruin. They soon extended through

every department of the state. If the habitual fears of the tyrant, in the midst of a headlong populace who had so often aided and exulted in the slaughter of his predecessors, could scarcely restrain him in Rome; what must be the excesses of his minions, where no fear was felt! where complaint was stifled by the dagger! and where the government was bought by bribes, to be replaced only by licensed and encouraged rapine!

The East was the chief victim. The vast northern and western provinces of the empire pressed too closely on Rome; were too poor, and were too warlike, to be the favourite objects of Italian rapacity. There a new tax raised an insurrection; the proconsular demand of a loan was answered by a flight, which stripped the land; or by the march of some unheard-of tribe, pouring down from the desert to avenge their countrymen. The character too of the people influenced the choice of their governors. Brave and experienced soldiers, not empty and vicious courtiers, must command the armies that were thus liable to be hourly in battle, and

on whose discipline depended the slumbers of every pillow in Italy. Stern as is the life of camps, it has its virtues; and men are taught consideration for the feelings, rights, and resentments of man, by a teacher that makes its voice heard through the tumult of battle and the pride of victory. But all was reversed in Asia, remote, rich, habituated to despotism, divided in language, religion and blood; with nothing of that fierce, yet generous, clanship, which made the Gaul of the Belgian marshes listen to the trumpet of the Gaul of Narbonne, and the German of the Vistula burn with the wrongs of the German of the Rhine.

Under Nero, Judea was devoured by Roman rapine. She had not even the sad consolation of owing her evils to the rapine of those nobler beasts of prey in human shape that were to be found in the other provinces—she was devoured by locusts. The polluted palace supplied her governors: a slave lifted into office by a fellow-slave; a pampered profligate exhausted by the expenses of the capital; a condemned and notorious extortioner, with no other spot to hide his head; were the gifts of Nero to my

country. Pilate, Felix, Festus, Albinus, Florus, each more profligate and cruel as our catastrophe approached, tore the very bowels of the land. Of the last two, it was said that Albinus should have been grateful to Florus for proving that he was not the basest of mankind, by the evidence that a baser existed; that he had a respect for virtue, by his condescending to commit those robberies in private, which his successor committed in public; and that he had human feeling, by his abstaining from blood where he could gain nothing by murder: while Florus disdained alike concealment and cause, and slaughtered for the public pleasure of the sword.

A number of partial insurrections, easily suppressed, displayed the wrath of the people, and indulged the cruelty of the procurator. They indulged also his avarice. Defeat was followed by confiscation; and Florus even boasted that he desired nothing more prosperous than an insurrection in every village of Judea. He was about to be gratified, before he had prepared himself for this luxury.


A menial in my house was detected with

letters from an agent of the Roman governor. They required details of my habits and resources, which satisfied me that I was become an object of vengeance. From the time of my return, I had seen with bitterness of soul the insults of my country. I had summoned my friends to ascertain what might be our means of resistance, and found them as willing and devoted as became men: but our resources for more than the first burst of popular wrath, the seizure of some petty Roman garrison, or the capture of a convoy, were nothing. The jealousies of the chief men of the tribes, the terror of Rome, the positions of the Roman troops cutting off military communication between the north and south of Judea, made the attempt hopeless; and it was abandoned for the time. Even those letters which marked me for a victim made no change in the determination, that if I could not escape danger by individual means, no public blood should be laid to my charge.

For a few months all was tranquil: the habits of rural life were calculated to keep de-

pressing thoughts at a distance. My wife and daughters returned to their graceful pursuits, with the added pleasure of novelty, after so long a cessation. I hunted through the hills with Constantius; or, traversing the country which might yet be the scene of events, availed myself of the knowledge of a master of the whole science of Roman war. At home, the works of the great poets of the west, with whom our guest had made us familiar, varied the hours; but I found a still more stirring and congenial interest in the histories of Greek valour, and in the study of the mighty minds that made and unmade empires. With the touching and picturesque narrative of Herodotus in my hand, I pantingly followed the adventures of the most brilliant of nations. I fought the battle with them against the Persian; I saw them gathered in little startled groups on the hills, flying in their little galleys from island to island, the land deserted, the sea covered with fugitives, the Persian fleets, loaded with Asiatic pomp, darkening the waters like a thunder-cloud; and in a moment

all changed. The millions of Asia scattered, like dust before the wind—Greece lifted to the height of martial glory, and commencing a career of triumph still more illustrious, that triumph of the mind, in which, through the remotest vicissitudes of earth, she was to have no conqueror. With Arrian I pursued the campaigns of that extraordinary man, whose valour, vanity, and fortune, make him one of the landmarks of human nature. In Alexander, I delighted in tracing the native form of the Greek through the embroidered robes of royalty and triumph. In his romantic intrepidity and deliberate science; his alternations of profound thought and fantastic folly; the passion for praise, and the contempt for its offerers; the rash temper, and the noble magnanimity; the love for the fine arts, and the thirst for that perpetual war before which they fly; the martial and philosophic scorn of privation, and the feeble lapses into self-indulgence; the generous forecast, which peopled deserts and founded cities, and the giddy and fatal neglect which left his diadem to be fought



for, and his family to be the prey of rival rebellions; I saw him the man of the republic, the Athenian of the day of popular splendour and folly, with only the difference of the sceptre.

To me, those studies were like a new door opened into the boundless palace of human nature. I felt that sense of novelty, vigour, and fresh life, that the frame feels in breathing the morning air over the landscape of a new country. It was a voyage upon an unknown sea, where every headland, and dell, and tree fringing the waters, administers to the delight of curiosity. In this there was nothing of the common pedantry of worn-out studies. My knowledge of life had hitherto been limited by my original destination. A Jew and a priest, there was but one solemn avenue, through which I was to see the glimpses of the external world. The vista was now opened and deepened beyond all limit: visions of conquest, of honour among nations, of praise to the last posterity, clustered round my head. There were times when in this exultation my doom was forgotten. The momentary oblivion may have

been permitted ; merely to blunt the edge of incurable misfortune. Incessant suffering would have made a double miracle essential to my existence. I was permitted at intervals to recruit the strength, that was to be tried till the end of time.

I was one day immersed in Polybius, with my master in soldiership at my side, guiding me by his living comment through the wonders of the Punic campaigns ; when Eleazar entered, with a look that implied his coming on a matter of importance. Constantius rose to withdraw. "No," said my brother, "the subject of my mission is one that should not be concealed from the preserver of our kindred. It may be one of happiness to us all. Salome is arrived at the age, and more than the age, when the daughters of Israel marry. She must give way to our general wish, and play the matron at last." He turned with a smile to Constantius, and asked his assent to the opinion : he received no answer. The young Greek had plunged more deeply than ever into the passage of the Alps.

“And who is the suitor?” I inquired.

“One worthy of her and you. A generous, bold, warm-hearted kinsman, in the spring of life, sufficiently opulent, for he will probably be my heir, prepared to honour you, and I believe long and deeply attached to her.”

“Jubal! There is not a man in our tribe to whom I would so gladly give her. Let my friend Jubal come. Congratulate me, Constantius; you shall now at last see festivity in our land, in scorn of the Roman. You have seen us in flight and captivity; you shall now be witness of some of the happiness that was in Judah before we knew the flapping of an Italian banner; and if fortune smile, shall be, when Rome is like Babylon.”

Constantius suddenly rose from his volumes, and thrusting them within the folds of his tunic, was leaving the apartment. “No,” said I, “you must remain; Miriam and Salome shall be sent for, and in your presence the contract signed.”

For the first time, I perceived the excessive pallidness of his countenance; and asked,

whether I had not trespassed too much on his patience with my studies?

His only reply was—"Is there no liberty of choice in the marriages of Israel? Will you decide without consulting her whom this contract is to render happy or miserable while she lives?" He rushed from the room.

Miriam came—but alone. Her daughter had wandered out into one of our many gardens. She received Eleazar with sisterly fondness; but her features wore the air of constraint. She heard the mission; but, "she had no opinion to give in the absence of Salome.—She knew too well the happiness of having chosen for herself, to wish to force the consent of her child.—Let Salome be consulted."

The flourish of music, and the trampling of horses, broke up our reluctant conference. Jubal was already come, with a crowd of his friends. We hastened to receive him at the porch; and he bounded into the court on his richly caparisoned barb, at the head of a troop in festal habiliments.

The man of Israel loved pomp of dress, and

handsome steeds. The group before me might have made a body-guard for a Persian king. Jubal had long looked on my daughter with the admiration due to her singular beauty; it was the custom to wed within our tribe: he was the favourite and the heir of her uncle; she had never absolutely banished him from her presence; and in the buoyancy of natural spirits, the boldness of a temperament born for a soldier, and perhaps in the allowable consciousness of a showy form, he had admitted none of the perplexities of a trembling lover. Salome was at length announced, and the proposed husband was left to plead his own cause.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE received the friends of our intended son with the accustomed hospitality ; but to me the tumult of many voices, and even the sight of a crowd, however happy, still excited the old disturbances of a shaken system.

I left my guests to the care of Eleazar ; and galloped into the fields to gather composure from the air of fruits and flowers. A homeward glance showed me, to my surprise, the whole troop mounted ; and in another moment at speed across the hills. I hastened back. Miriam met me. My kinsman had openly disclaimed my alliance.

Indignant and disappointed, I prepared to

follow, and demand the cause of this insult. As I passed under a vine that shadowed one of the pavilions, my daughter's voice arrested me. She was talking with Constantius, and in tears. Scorning mere curiosity, I yet was anxious for sincere explanation. I felt that if Salome had a wish which she feared to divulge to her father, this was my only hope of obtaining the knowledge. The voices were feeble, and I could for a while catch but a broken sentence.

“ I owed it to him,” said she, “ not to deceive his partiality. He offered all that it could have done a Jewish maiden honour to receive ;—his heart, hand, and fortune.”

“ And you rejected them all ?” said Constantius. “ Have you no regrets for the lover—no fears of the father ?”

“ For Jubal I had too high an esteem, to give him a promise which I could not keep. I knew his generous nature. I told him at once, that there was an invincible obstacle !”

“ I should like incomparably to know, what that obstacle could be ?” said Constantius.

The natural playfulness of this sweet and light-hearted girl had already superseded the tear; and she replied—"That a philosopher ought to know all things without questioning."

"But there is much in the world that defies philosophy, my fair Salome; and of all its problems, the most perplexing is the mind of woman!—of young, lovely, dangerous woman!"

"Now, Constantius, you abandon the philosopher, and talk the language of the poet."

"Yet without the poet's imagination. No; I need picture no beauty from the clouds—no nymph from the fountains—no loveliness that haunts the trees, and breathes more than mortal melody on the ear. Salome! my muse is before me."

"You are a Greek," said she, after a slight interval; "and the Greeks are privileged to talk, and to deceive."

"Salome! I am a Greek no longer. What I shall yet be, may depend upon the fairest artist that ever fashioned the human mind. But mine are not the words of inexperience. I am

on this day five-and-twenty years old. My life has led me into all that is various in the intercourse of earth. I have seen woman in her beauty, in her talent, in her art, in her accomplishment, from the cottage to the throne ; but I never felt her real power."

" Which am I to believe—the possible or the impossible? A soldier! a noble! a Greek! and of all Greeks, one of Cyprus! not the breaker of a thousand hearts, the worshipper at a thousand altars, the offerer of your eloquence at every shrine where your own lovely countrywomen stood on the pedestal!—I too have seen the world."

" Heaven forbid, that you may ever see it, but what it would be made by such as you ;—a place of gentleness and harmony—a place of fondness and innocence—a paradise!"

" Now, you are further from the philosopher than ever ; but I must listen no more : the sun is taking its leave of us, and blushing its last through the vines for all the fine romance that it has heard from Constantius. Farewell, philosophy."

“ Then farewell philosophy,” said Constantius ; and caught her hand, as she was lightly moving from the pavilion. He led her towards the casement. “ Then farewell philosophy, my sweet ; and welcome truth, virtue, and nature. I loved you in your captivity ; I loved you in your freedom ; on the sea, on the shore, in the desert, in your home, I loved you. In life I will love you, in death we shall not be divided. This is not the language of mere admiration, the rapture of a fancy dazzled by the bright eyes of my Salome. It is the language of reason, of sacred truth, of honour bound by higher than human bonds ; of fondness, that even the tomb will render only more ardent and sublime. Here, in the sight of Heaven, I pledge an immortal to an immortal.”

Astonishment and grief alone prevented my exclaiming aloud against this attempt to master the affections of my child. The marriage of the Israelite with the stranger was prohibited by our law ; and still more severely prohibited by the later customs and ordinances of our teachers. But marriage with a fugitive, a

deceiver, a son of the idolater, whose proselytism had never been avowed, and whose skill in the ways of the world might be at this hour undermining the peace or the faith of my whole family; the idea was tenfold profanation! I checked myself only to have complete evidence.

“But,” said my daughter, in a voice mingled with many a sigh, “if this should become known to my father, and known it must be—how can we hope for his consent? Now, Constantius, you will have to learn what it is to deal with our nation. We have prejudices, lofty, though blind—indissoluble, though fantastic——; my father’s consent is beyond all hope.”

“He is honourable—he has human feeling—he loves you.”

“Fondly, I believe; and I must not thus return his love: no, though my happiness were to be the forfeit, I must not pain his heart by the disobedience of his child.”

“But Salome, my sweet Salome; are obstinacy and prejudice to be obeyed, against the

understanding and the heart? I should be the last man on earth to counsel disobedience; I venerate the tie of parent and child. But can a father counsel his child to a crime; and would it not be one to give your faith to this Jubal, if you could not love him?"

"I have decided that already. Never will I wed Jubal."

"Yet, what is it that you would disobey? a cruel and fantastic scruple of your teachers, the perverters of your law. Must we sacrifice reason to prejudice—truth to caprice—the law of nature and of Heaven to the forgeries and follies of the Scribes? Mine you are, and mine you shall be, my wife by a law more sacred, more powerful, and more pure. The time of bondage is past. A new law, a new hope, have come to break the chains of the Jew, and enlighten the darkness of the Gentile. You have heard that law; your generous heart and unclouded understanding have received it; and now, by that common hope, my beloved, we are one: though seas and mountains should separate us—though the malice of

fortune, though the tyranny of man, should forbid our union; still, in flight, in the dungeon, in the last hour of a troubled existence, we are one. Now, Salome, I will go; but go to seek your father.”

My indignation rose to its height. I had heard my child taught to rebel; and yet could check my wrath. I had heard myself pronounced the slave of prejudice; and yet kept down my burning passion. But the open declaration that our holy law was to be abolished—nay, to my child was a law no more—let loose the whole storm of my soul. I rushed from my concealment; Salome uttered a scream, and sank senseless upon the ground. Constantius raised her up, and bore her to a vase, from which he sprinkled water upon her forehead. “Leave her,” I exclaimed; “better for her to remain in that insensibility, better be dead, than an apostate. Villain, be gone; it is only in scorn, that a father’s vengeance suffers you to live. Fly from this house, from this country, before justice compels me to deliver you up to punishment. Go, traitor, and let me never see you

more." I tore the fainting girl from his arms. He made no resistance—no reply. Salome recovered with a gush of tears, and feebly pronounced his name. "I am with you still, my love," he pronounced in an unaltered tone. She looked up, and, as if she had then first seen me, sprang forward with a cry of terror: "Go," said I, "go to your chamber, weak girl, and on your knees atone for your disobedience—for (do I live to say it?) your abandonment of the faith of your fathers. But no, it is impossible; you cannot have been so guilty: this Greek—this foreign bringer-in of fables—this smooth intruder on the peace of families, cannot have so triumphed over your understanding."

"I have been rash, Sir," said Constantius loftily; "I may have been unwise too in my language; but I have been no deceiver. Not for the wealth of kings—not even for the more precious treasure of the heart I love—would Constantius sully his lips with a falsehood."

"Begone," cried I; "I am insulted by your

presence: the sight of the ungrateful sickens me. Go, and pervert others—hypocrite; or rather, take my contemptuous forgiveness, and repent, in sackcloth and ashes, the basest crime of the basest mind. Come, daughter, and leave the baffled idolater to think of his crime." I was leading her away—she struggled; and I cast her from me. Constantius, with his cheek burning and his eye flashing, approached her. My taunts had at length roused him.

"Now, Salome," said he, haughtily glancing on me, "injured as I am, I disclaim all idle deference for an authority used only to give pain. You are my betrothed; you shall be my bride. Let us go forth, and try our chance together through the world."

She was silent, and wept only more violently. But, with one hand covering her face, she repelled him with the other.

"Then you will be the wife of Jubal?" said he.

"Never!" she firmly pronounced. "So help me Heaven, never!"

"Retire, girl," I exclaimed; "and weep

tears of blood for your rebellion. Go, stranger — ingrate — seducer — and never darken my threshold more. Aye, now I see the cause of my brave kinsman's departure. He was circumvented. A wilier tongue was here before him. He disdained to reveal the daughter's folly to the insulted father. But this shall not avail either of you. He shall return."

Salome cast up an imploring glance, and sank upon her knees before me. Constantius advanced to her; but I bounded between them—my dagger was drawn. "Touch her, and you die."

He smiled scornfully, and turning back the blade, raised her.

"Give that wretched child up to me this moment," I exclaimed in fury; "or may the bitterness of a father's curse be on her head!" He staggered back; then stooping his lips upon her forehead, gave her to me, and strode from the pavilion.

I flew to the house of Eleazar. I found him anxious and agitated. Calm as his usual manner was, the late transaction had left its traces

on his manner and his countenance. Jubal was in the apartment; which he traversed backwards and forwards in high indignation. He made no return to my salute, but by stopping short, and gazing full on me with a look of mingled anger and surprise.

“Jubal,” said I, “kinsman, we must be friends:” I held out my hand, which he took with no fervent pressure. “I am here only to explain this idle offence.”

“It requires no explanation,” interrupted Jubal, sternly. “I, and I alone, am to blame; if there be any one to blame in the matter. The offer may have been precipitate, or unwelcome, or unpardonable, from one still dependent, still without rank in the tribes: it may have been fit that I should be haughtily rejected by the family of the descendant of Aaron; but,” said he, pressing his strong hand upon his throat, as if to keep down a burst of passion, “the subject is at an end; now and for ever at an end.” He recommenced his striding through the chamber.

“Let us hear all, my friend,” said I: “I

know that Salome thinks highly of your spirit, and your heart. Was there any palliation offered? Did she disclose any secret reason for a conduct so opposite to her natural gentleness, to her natural regard for you; and which she must feel so offensive to me? But, insult from my family, impossible!"

"Hear, then. I had not alighted from my horse, when I saw displeasure written in the face of every female in your household. From the very handmaids up to their mistress, they had, with the instinct of woman, discovered my object; and, with the usual deliberation of the sex, had made up their minds without hearing a syllable. Your wife received me, it is true, with the grace and courteousness that belong to her above women; but she was visibly cold. Esther absolutely shrank from me, and scorned to return a word. Salome fled. As for the attendants, they frowned and muttered upon me in all directions, with the most candid wrath possible. In short, I could not have fared worse, had I been a Roman, come to

take possession ; or an Arab, riding up to rifle every soul in the house."

" Ominous enough!" said Eleazar, with his grave smile. " The opinions of the sex are irresistible. With half my knowledge of them, Jubal, you would have turned your horse's head homewards at once ; and given up your hopes of a bride, at least till the next day, or the next hour, or whatever may be the usual time for the sex's change of mind. Cheer up, kinsman ; we will caparison ourselves in another dress, let time do its work, ride over to Salathiel's mansion to-morrow, and find a smile for every frown of to-day."

" But you saw Salome!" said I. " I am impatient to hear how she could have ventured to offend. Could she dare to refuse my brother's request without a reason?"

" No ; her conduct was altogether without disguise. She first tried to laugh me out of my purpose, then argued, then wept ; and, finally told me that our alliance was impossible."

" Rash girl ; but she has been led into this

folly by others : yet the chief folly was my own. Aye ; my eyes were dim, where a mole would have seen. In my feeble negligence, in my contemptuous disregard for the common prudence of mankind, I suffered an alien, a subtle, showy, plausible villain to remain under my roof, till he has, by what arts I know not, wiled away the duty and the understanding—nay, I tremble to pronounce the word, the religion of my child.” I smote my breast in sorrow and humiliation.

Jubal burst from the apartment, and returned with his lance in a hand quivering with wrath. “ Now, all is cleared,” cried he ; “ the true cause was the magic, the cunning superstition, of that idolater. I know the arts of paganism to bewitch the senses of woman ; the incantations, the perfumes, the midnight fires, and images, and songs. But let him come within the throw of this javelin, and then try whether all his magic can shield him.”

Eleazar grasped his robe, as he was again rushing out. “ Stop, madman. Is it with hands dipped in blood, that you are to solicit the heart

of Salome? Give me that horrid weapon; and you, Salathiel, curb your wild spirit, and listen to a brother, who can have no interest but in the happiness of both and all. If Salome, whom I loved an infant on the knee, and love to this moment, the most ingenuous and happy-hearted being on earth, has been betrayed into a fondness for this stranger; how have we the right to force her inclinations? But I know the depth of understanding that lies under her playfulness; can she have been deceived, and least of all by those idle arts? Impossible!—If she have sacrificed her obedience to the noble form and high accomplishments of the Greek, we can only lament her exposure to a captivation made to subdue the heart of woman since the world began.”

“Jubal,” interrupted I, “give me that manly and honest hand: Eleazar’s wisdom is too calm to understand a father or a lover. You shall return with me: you shall be my son; Salathiel has no other. This foolish girl will be sorry for her follies, and rejoice to receive you. The Greek is driven from my house.

And let me see who there will henceforth disobey." The lover's face brightened with joy.

"Well, make your experiment," said Eleazar, rising. "So end all councils of war, in more confusion than they began. But, if I had a wife and daughters——"

"Of course, you would manage them to perfection. So say all who have never had either."

Eleazar's cheek coloured slightly; but with his recovering smile of benevolence, he followed us to the porch, and wished us success in our expedition.

We found the household tranquillised again. Miriam received me with one of those radiant smiles, that are a husband's best welcome home. She had succeeded in calming the minds of her daughters, and, a much more difficult task, in suppressing the wrath of the numerous female domestics, who had, as usual, constructed out of the graces of the Greek and the beauty of Salome, a little romance of their own. In the whole course of my life, I never met a female, from the flat-nosed and ebony-coloured

monster of the tropics, to the snow-white and sublime divinity of a Greek isle, without a touch of romance ; repulsiveness could not conceal it, age could not extinguish it, vicissitude could not change it. I have found it in all times and places ; like a spring of fresh waters starting up even from the flint ; cheering the cheerless, softening the insensible, renovating the withered ; a secret whisper in the ear of every woman alive, that, to the last, passion might flutter its rosy pinions round her brow.

The strong prejudices of our nation gave way before female fondness for love adventure ; rebellion was but hushed ; and I was warned by many a look, of the unwelcome suitor whom I brought among them. But, from Salome there was no remonstrance. I should have listened to none. The consciousness of my own want of judgment in suffering a man so calculated to attract the eye of innocent youth, to become an inmate in my house ; the vexation which I felt at the dismissal of my brother's heir ; and, last and keenest pang, the inroad made in the faith of a daughter of

Israel, combined to exasperate me beyond the bounds of patience. I loved my child with the strongest affection of a heart rocked by all the tides of passion : but I could bear to look upon the pale beauty of her face, and hear her deep sighs—nay, in the wrath of the hour, could have seen her borne to the grave—rather than permit the command to be disputed, by which she was to wed in our tribe.

To shorten a period of which I felt the full bitterness, the marriage was hurried on. Never was the ceremony anticipated with less joy : we were all unhappy. Eleazar remonstrated, but in vain. Jubal retracted, but I compelled him to adhere to his proposal. Miriam was closeted perpetually with the betrothed ; and of the whole household Esther alone walked or talked with me, and it was then only to burst out into descriptions of her sister's misery, or to pursue me through the endless mazes of argument on the hardship of being forced to be happy.

The marriage preparations proceeded. The piece of silver was given, the contracts were

signed. The presents of both families were made. The portion was agreed upon. It was not customary to require the appearance of the bride until the celebration itself; and Salome was invisible during those days of activity, in which, however, I took the chief interest, for nothing could be further from zeal than the conduct of the other agents, Jubal alone excepted. He had recovered the easily-recovered confidence of youth, and perhaps prided himself on the triumph over a rival so formidable. Two or three petitions for an interview came to me from my daughter. But I knew their purport, and steadily determined not to hazard the temptation of her tears.

The day came, and with it the guests; our dwelling was full of banqueting. The evening came, when the ceremony was to be performed, and the bride led home to her husband's house in the usual triumph. One of our customs was, that a procession of the bridegroom's younger friends, male and female, should be formed outside the house to wait for the coming forth of the married pair. The

ceremony was borrowed by other nations ; but, in our bright climate and cloudless nights, the profusion of lamps and torches, the burning perfumes, glittering dresses, and fantastic joy of the dancing and singing crowd, had unequalled liveliness and beauty. I remained at my casement, gazing on the brilliant escort, that, as it gathered and arranged itself along the gardens, looked like a flight of glow-worms. But no marriage summons came. I grew impatient. My only answer was the sight of Jubal rushing from the house, and an outcry among the women. Salome was not to be found. She had been left by herself for a few hours, as was the custom, to arrange her thoughts for a ceremony which we considered religious in the highest degree. On the bridegroom's arrival, she disappeared.

The blow struck me deep. Had I driven her into the arms of the Greek by my severity? Had I driven her out of her senses? or out of life? Conjecture on conjecture stung me. I reprobated my own cruelty, refused consola-

tion, and spent the night in alternate self-upbraidings and prayers for my unhappy child.

Search was indefatigably made. The jealousy of Jubal, the manly anxiety of Eleazar, the hurt feelings of our tribe, insulted by the possibility that their chieftain's heir should have been scorned, and that the triumph should be to an alien, were embarked in the pursuit. But search was hopeless: and after days and nights of weariness, I returned to my home, there to be met by sorrowing faces, and to feel that every tear was forced by my own obstinacy. I shrank into solitude. I exclaimed that the vengeance, the more than vengeance of the dreadful day of Jerusalem, had struck its heaviest blow on me, in the loss of my child!

CHAPTER XVII.

I WAS in one of those fits of abstraction, revolving the misery in which my beloved daughter might be, even in that moment, if indeed she were in existence; when the door of my chamber opened softly, and one of my domestics appeared, making a signal of silence. This was he whom I had detected in correspondence with the Roman agent, and forgiven through the entreaties of Miriam. The man had since shown remarkable interest in the recovery of my daughter, and thus completely reinstated himself. He knelt before me; and, with more humility than I desired, implored

my pardon for having again held intercourse with the Roman.

“It was my zeal,” said he, “to gain intelligence; for I knew that nothing passed in the provinces a secret from him. This letter is his answer, and perhaps I shall be forgiven for the sake of what it contains.” I read it with trembling avidity. It was mysterious; described two fugitives who had made their escape to Cæsarea; and intimated that, as they were about to fly into Asia Minor, the pursuit must be immediate, and conducted with the utmost secrecy.

I was instantly on horseback. Dreading to disturb my family by false hopes, I ordered out my hounds, ranged the hills in sight of my dwelling, and then turning off, struck in the spur, and, attended only by the domestic, went full speed to Cæsarea. From the summit of Mount Carmel, I looked down upon the city and the broad Mediterranean. But my eyes then felt no delight in the grandeur of art or nature. The pompous structures on which Herod the Great had expended a treasure be-

yond count, and which the residence of the governor made the Roman capital of Judea, were to me but so many dens and dungeons, in which my child might be hid. The sea showed me only the path by which she might have been borne away, or the grave in which her wanderings were to close.

By extraordinary speed, I reached the gates just as the trumpet was sounding for their close. My attendant went forth to obtain information; and I was left pacing my chamber in feverish suspense. I did not suffer it long. The door opened, and a group of soldiers ordered me to follow them. Resistance was useless. They led me to the palace. There I was delivered from guard to guard, through a long succession of apartments, until we reached the door of a banqueting-room. The festivity within was high; and if I could have then sympathised with singing and laughter, I might have had full indulgence during the immeasurable hour that I lingered out, a broken wretch, exhausted by desperate effort, sick at heart, and of course not unanxious for the result of an

interview with the Roman procurator ; a man whose name was equivalent to vice, extortion, and love of blood, throughout Judea.

At length the feast was at an end. I was summoned, and for the first time saw Gessius Florus, a little bloated figure, with a countenance that to the casual observer was the model of gross good-nature, a twinkling eye, and a lip on the perpetual laugh. His bald forehead wore a wreath of flowers, and his tunic and the couch on which he lay breathed perfume. The table before him was a long vista of sculptured cups, and golden vases and candelabra. "I am sorry to have detained you so long," said he, "but this was the emperor's birth-day, and, as good subjects, we have kept it accordingly."

During this speech, he was engaged in contemplating the wine-bubbles as they sparkled above the brim of a large amethystine goblet. A pale and delicate Italian boy, sumptuously dressed, the only one of the guests who remained, perceiving that I was fatigued, filled a cup, and presented it. "Right, Septimius,"

said the debauchee, "make the Jew drink the Emperor's health." The youth bowed gracefully before me, and again offered the cup, but the time was not for indulgence, and I laid it on the table. "Here's long life and glory to Nero Claudius Cæsar, our pious, merciful, and invincible emperor," cried Florus; and only when he had drunk to the bottom of the goblet, found leisure to look upon his prisoner. He either felt or affected surprise, and turning to his young companion, said, "By Hercules, boy, what grand fellows those Jews make! The helmet is nothing to the turban, after all. What magnificence of beard! no Italian chin has the vigour to grow any thing so superb; then, the neck, like the bull of Milo; and those blazing eyes! If I had but a legion of such spearsmen"——

I grew impatient, and said, "I stand here, procurator, in your bonds—I demand why?—I have business that requires my instant attention; and I desire to be gone."

"Now, have I treated you so inhospitably," said he, laughing, "that you expect I shall

finish by shutting my doors upon you at this time of night?" He glanced upon his tablets, and read my name. "Aye," said he, "and after I have been so long wishing for the honour of your company. Jew, take your wine, and sit down upon that couch, and tell me what brought you to Cæsarea."

I told him briefly the circumstances. He roared with laughter, desired me to repeat them, and swore that "by all the gods it was the very best piece of pleasantry he had heard since he set foot in Judea." I stood up in irrepressible indignation. "What!" said he, "will you go without hearing my story in return?" He filled his goblet again to the brim, buried his purple visage in a vase of roses, and having inhaled the fragrance, and chosen an easy posture, said, coldly, "Jew, you have told me a most excellent story; and it is only fair that I should tell you one in return; not half so amusing, I admit, but to the full as true. Jew, you are a traitor!"

I started back.—"Jew," said he, "you must in common civility hear me out. The truth is,

that your visit has been so often anticipated and so long delayed, that I cannot bear to part with you yet;—you are an apostate; you encourage those Christian dogs. Why does the man stare?—you are in communication with rebels; and I might have had the honour of meeting you in the field, if you had not been in my hands in Cæsarea.”

He pronounced those words of death in the most tranquil tone; not a muscle moved: the cup which he held brimful in his hand never overflowed.

“Jew,” said he, “now be honest, and so far set an example to your nation. Where is the money that has been gathered for this rebellion? You are too sagacious a soldier to think of going to war without the main spring of the machine.”

I scorned to deny the intended insurrection; but “money I had collected none.”

“Then,” said he, “you are now compelling me to what I do not like. Ho! guard!” A soldier presented himself. “Desire that the rack shall be got ready.” The man retired.

“ You see, Jew, this is all your own doing. Give up the money, and I give up the rack. And the surrender of the coin is asked, merely in compassion to yourselves, for without it you cannot rebel, and the more you rebel, the more you will be beaten.”

“ Beware, Gessius Florus,” I exclaimed, “ beware. I am your prisoner, entrapped, as I now see, by a villain, or by the greater villain who corrupted him. You may rack me if you will; you may insult my feelings; tear my flesh; take my life: but for this there will be retribution. Through Upper Galilee, from Tiberias to the top of Libanus, this act of blood will ring, and be answered by blood. I have kinsmen many; countrymen, myriads. A single wrench of my sinews may lift a hundred thousand arms against your city, and leave of yourself nothing but the remembrance of your crimes.”

He bounded from his couch: the native fiend flashed out in his countenance: I waited his attack, with my hand on the poniard within my sash. My look probably deterred him; for he

flung himself back again, and bursting into a loud laugh, exclaimed; "Bravely spoken. Septimius, we must send the Jew to Rome to teach our orators. Aye, I know Upper Galilee too well, not to know that rebellion is more easily raised there than the taxes. And it was for that reason, that I invited you to come to Cæsarea. In the midst of your tribe capture would have cost half a legion; here a single jailor will do the business. Ho! guard!" he called aloud. I heard the screwing of the rack in the next room, and unsheathed the poniard. The blade glittered in his eyes. Septimius came between us, and tried to turn the procurator's purpose.

"Let your guard come," cried I, "and, by the sacredness of the Temple, one of us dies. I will not live to be tortured, or you shall not live to see it."

If the door had opened, I was prepared to dart upon him.

"Well," said he, after a whispered expostulation from Septimius, "you must go and

settle the matter with the Emperor. The fact is, that I am too tender-hearted to govern such a nation of dagger-bearers. So, to Nero! If we cannot send the Emperor money, we will at least send him men." He laughed vehemently at the conception; ordered the singing and dancing slaves to return; called for wine, and plunged again into his favourite cup. Septimius rose, and led me into another chamber. I remonstrated against the injustice of my seizure. He lamented it, but said that the orders from Rome were strict, and that I was denounced by some of the chiefs in Jerusalem as the head of the late insurrection, and the projector of a new one. The procurator, he added, had been for some time anxious to get me into his power without raising a disturbance among my tribe; the treachery of my domestic had been employed to effect this; and "now," concluded he, "my best wish for you—a wish prompted by motives of which you can form no conjecture, is, that you may be sent to Rome. Every day that sees you in Cæsarea sees you

in the utmost peril. At the first rumour of insurrection your life will be the sacrifice."

"But my family! What will be their feelings! Can I not at least acquaint them with my destination?"

"It is impossible. And now, to let you into a state secret, the Emperor had ordered that you should be sent to Rome. Florus menaced, only to extort money. He now knows you better, and would gladly enlist you in the Roman cause. This I know to be hopeless. But I dread his caprice, and shall rejoice to see the sails hoisted that are to carry you to Rome. Farewell: your family shall have due intelligence." He was at the door of the chamber, but suddenly returned, and pressing my hand, said again, "Farewell, and remember that neither all Romans, nor even all Greeks, may be alike!" He then with a graceful obeisance left the room.

Fatigue hung with a leaden weight upon my eyelids. I tried vain expedients to keep myself from slumber in this perilous vicinage.

The huge silver chandelier, that threw a blaze over the fretted roof, began to twinkle before me; the busts and statues gradually mingled, and I was once more in the land of visions. Home was before my eyes. I was suddenly tossed upon the ocean. I stood before Nero, and was addressing him with a formal harangue, when the whole tissue was broken up, by a sullen voice commanding me to rise. A soldier, sword in hand, was by the couch: he pointed to the door, where an armed party were in attendance, and informed me that I was ordered for immediate embarkation.

It was scarcely past midnight; the stars were still in their glory; the pharos threw a long line of flame on the waters; the city sounds were hushed; and silent as a procession to the grave, we moved down to where the tall vessel lay rocking with the breeze. At her side a Nubian slave put a note into my hand; it was from the young Roman, requesting my acceptance of wine and fruits from the palace, and wishing me a prosperous result to my voyage. The

sails were hoisted; the stately mole, that even in the night looked a mount of marble, was cleared; the libation was poured to the Tritons for our speedy passage, and the blazing pharos was rapidly seen but as a twinkling star.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR trireme flew before the wind. By day-break, the coast was but a pale line along the waters; but Carmel still towered proudly eminent, and with its top alternately clouded and glittering in the sun, might have been taken for a gigantic beacon, throwing up alternate smoke and flame. With what eyes did I continue to look, until the mighty hill too sank in the waters! But thought still lingered on the shore. I saw, with a keenness more than of the eye, the family circle; through many an hour of gazing on the waters, I was all but standing in the midst of those walls which I might never more see; listening to the uncom-

plaining sighs of Miriam, the impassioned remonstrances of my sole remaining child, and busied in the still harder task of finding out some defence against the self-accusation that laid the charge of rashness and cruelty heavy upon my soul. But the scene round me was the very reverse of moody meditation. The captain was a thorough Italian trierarch, ostentatious, gay, given to superstition, and occasionally a little of a freethinker. His ship was to him child, wife, and world; and at every manœuvre he claimed from us such tribute as a father might for the virtues of his favourite offspring: perpetual luck was in every thing that she did: she knew every headland from Cyprus to Ostia: a pilot was a mere supernumerary: she could run the whole course without the helm; if she pleased. She beat the Liburnian for speed; the Cypriot, for comfort; the Sicilian, for safety; and every other vessel on the seas for every other quality. "All he asked was, to live in her, while he lived at all; and to go down in her, when the Fates were at last to cut his thread, as they did those of all captains whether on sea or land."

The panegyric of the good ship *Ganymede* was in some degree merited ; she carried us on boldly. For a sea in which the winds are constant when they come, but in which the calms are as constant as the winds, nothing could have been more adapted than the ancient galley. The sail or oar never failed. If the gale arose, the ship shot along, like the eagle that bore the Trojan boy ; light, strong, with its white sails full of the breeze, and cleaving the surge with the rapidity of an arrow. If the wind fell, we floated in a pavilion, screened from the sun, refreshed with perfumes burning on poop, prow, and masts, surrounded with gilding, and the carvings and paintings of the Greek artists, drinking delicious wines, listening to song and story, and in all this enjoyment, gliding insensibly along on a lake of absolute sapphire, encircled and varied by the most picturesque and lovely islands in the world.

The *Ganymede* had been under especial orders from Rome for my transmission ; but the captain felt too much respect for the procurator not to trespass on the letter of the law, so far as

to fill up the vacancies of his hold with merchandise; in which Florus drove a steady contraband trade. Having done so much to gratify the governor's distinguishing propensity, he next provided for his own; and loaded his gallant vessel mercilessly with passengers, as much prohibited as his merchandise. While we were still in sight of land, I walked a lonely deck; but when the salutary fear of the galleys on the station was past, every corner of the Ganymede let loose a living cargo.

For the Jewish chieftain going from Florus on a mission to the Emperor, as the captain conceived me and my purpose to be, a separate portion of the deck was kept sacred. But I mingled from time to time with the crowd, and thus contrived to preserve at once my respect and my popularity. Never was there a more miscellaneous collection. We transported into Europe a Chaldee sorcerer, an Indian gymnosophist, an Arab teacher of astrology, a magian from Persepolis, and a Platonist from Alexandria. Such were our contributions to Oriental science. We had, besides, a dealer in sleight

of hand from Damascus; an Egyptian with tame monkeys and a model of a pyramid; a Syrian serpent-teacher; an Idumean maker of amulets against storm and calm, thirst and hunger, and every other disturbance and distress of life; an Armenian discoverer of the stone by which gold mines were to be discovered; a Byzantine inventor of the true Oriental pearls; a dealer from the Caspian in gums superseding all that Arabia ever wept; an Epicurean philosopher, who professed indolence, and, to do him justice, was a striking example of his doctrine; and a Stoic, who having gone his rounds of the Roman garrisons as a teacher of dancing, a curer of wines, and a flute-player, had now risen into the easier vocation of a philosopher. Of course, among those professors, the discoverer of gold was the most moneyless; the maker of amulets against misfortune the most miserable; and the Stoic the most impatient. The Epicurean alone adhered to the spirit of his profession.

But the unstable elements round us were a severe trial for any human philosophy but that

of a thorough Optimist. Wind and water, the two most imperious of things, were our masters ; and a calm, a breeze, or even a billow, often tried our reasoners too roughly for the honour of tempers so saturated with wisdom. On those occasions the Platonist defended the antiquity of Egypt with double pertinacity ; the Chaldee derided its novelty by the addition of a hundred thousand years to his chronology of Babylon ; the Indian with increased scorn, wrinkling his brown visage, told them that both Babylon and Egypt were baubles of yesterday, compared with the million years of India. The dagger would have silenced many a discussion on the Chief good, the origin of benevolence, and the beauty of virtue, but for the voice of the captain, which, like thunder, cleared the air. He, I will allow, was the truest philosopher of us all. The Tri-rarch was an unconscious Optimist ; nothing could touch him with shape of misfortune ; for, to him it had no existence. If the storm rose, “ we should get the more rapidly into port ;” if the calm came to fix us scorching on the face of ocean, “ nothing could be safer.” If our provi-

sions fell short, "abstemiousness now and then was worth a generation of doctors." If the sun burned above us with the fire of a ball of red-hot iron, "it was the test of fair weather;" if the sky was a mass of vapour, "we escaped being roasted alive."

His maxims on higher subjects were equally consoling. "If man had to struggle through life, struggle was the nursing-mother of greatness. If he were opulent, he had gained the end without the trouble.—If man had disease, he learned patience and fortitude, essentials for sailor, soldier, and philosopher alike. If he enjoyed health, who could doubt the blessing?—If he lived long, he had time for enjoyment; if he died early, he escaped the chances of the tables' turning." The Optimist applied his principle to me, by gravely informing me that, "though it depended on the Emperor's state of digestion, whether I should or should not carry back my head from his presence, yet, if I lived, I should see the games of the Circus, and if I did not, I should in all probability care but little about the matter."

Nothing in the variety of later Europe gives me à parallel to the distinctions of rank and profession, style of subsistence, and physiognomy, of the ancient world. Human nature was classed in every kingdom, province, and city, almost as rigidly as the different races of mankind. The divisions of the slave, the freedman, the citizen, the artist, the priest, the man of literature, the man of public life, were marked with a ploughshare, whose furrows were never filled up but by the rarest chance. Life had the curious mixture of costume, the palpable diversity of purpose, and the vivid intricacy of a drama.

Our voyage was rapid ; but even a lingering transit would have been cheered by the animation of the innumerable objects of beauty and renown, which rise on every side in the passage through a Grecian sea. The islands were then untouched by the spoiler ; the opulence of Rome had been added to Attic taste ; and temples, theatres, and palaces, starting from groves, or studding the sides of stately hills, and reflected in the mirror of bays, smooth and bright as

polished steel, held the eye a continual captive. On the sea, flights of vessels, steering in all directions, glittering with the emblems of their nations, the coloured pennants, the painted prows, the gilded images of the protecting idols, covered the horizon with life.

We had reached the southern Cape of Greece, and were, with a boldness unusual to ancient navigation, stretching across in a starless night, for the coast of Italy, when we caught a sound of distant music, that recalled the poetic dreams of nymphs and tritons. The sound swelled and sank on the wind, as if it came from the depths of the ocean, or the bosom of the clouds. As we parted from the land, it swelled richer, until it filled the midnight with pompous harmony. To sleep was profanation, and we all gathered on the deck, exhausting nature and art in conjectures of the cause.

The harmony approached and receded at intervals, grew in volume and richness, then stole away in wild murmurs, or died, to revive with still more luxuriant sweetness. Night passed away in delight and conjecture. Morn-

ing alone brought the solution. Full in the blaze of sunrise steered the imperial fleet, returning in triumph from the Olympic games, with the Emperor on board. We had unconsciously approached it during the darkness. The whole scene wore the aspect of a vision summoned by the hand of an enchanter. The sea was covered with the fleet in order of battle. Some of the galleys were of vast size, and all were gleaming with gold and decorations; silken sails, garlands on the masts, trophies hung over the sides, and embroidered streamers of every shape and hue, met the morning light. We passed the wing of the fleet, close enough to see the sacrificial fires on the poop of the imperial quinquereme. A crowd in purple and military habits were standing round a throne, above which proudly waved the scarlet flag of command. A figure advanced, all foreheads were bowed, acclamations rent the air; the trumpets of the fleet flourished, and the lofty and luxuriant harmonies, that had charmed us in the night, again swelled upon the wind, and followed us long after the whole float-

ing splendour had dissolved into the distant blue.

At length, the headlands of the noble bay of Tarentum rose above the horizon. While we were running with the speed of a lapwing, the captain, to our surprise, shortened sail. I soon discovered that no philosophy was perfect; that even the Optimist thought that daylight might be worse than useless, and that a blot had been left in creation in the shape of a custom-house officer.

Night fell at last; the moon, to which our captain had taken a sudden aversion, was as cloudy as he could desire; and we rushed in between the glimmering watch-towers on the Japygian and Lacinian promontories. The glow of light along the waters soon pointed out where the luxurious citizens of Tarentum were enjoying the banquet in their barges and villas. Next came the hum of the great city, whose popular boast was, like that of later times, that it had more holidays than days in the year.

But the Trierarch's often-painted delight at finding himself free to rove among the indul-

gences of his favourite shore, had lost its poignancy; and with a firmness which set the Stoic in a rage, the Epicurean in a state of rebellion, and the whole tribe of our sages in a temper of mere mortal remonstrance; he resisted alike the remonstrance and the allurements; and sullenly cast anchor in the centre of the bay. It was not until song and feast had died, and all was hushed, that he stole with the slightest possible noise to the back of the mole, and sending us below, disburthened his conscience and the good ship Ganymede.

I had no time to give to the glories of Tarentum. Nero's approach hurried my departure. The centurion who had me in charge trembled at the idea of delay; and we rode through the midst of three hundred thousand sleepers in streets of marble and ranks of trophies, as silently and swiftly as if we had been the ghosts of their ancestors. When the day broke we found ourselves among the Lucanian hills, then no desert, but living with population, and bright with the memorials of Italian opulence and taste. From the inn where we halted

to change horses, the Tarentine gulf spread broad and bold before the eye.

The city of luxury and of power, once the ruler of southern Italy, and mistress of the seas ; that sent out armies and fleets worthy to contest the supremacy with Pyrrhus and the Carthaginian ; was, from this spot, sunk, like all the works of man, into littleness. But the gulf, like all the works of nature, grew in grandeur. Its circular shore edged with thirteen cities, the deep azure of its smooth waters, inlaid with the flashes of sunrise, and traversed by fleets, diminished to toys ; reminded me of one of the magnificent Roman shields, with its centre of sanguine steel, the silver incrustation of the rim, and the storied sculpture.

We passed at full speed through the Lucanian and Samnian provinces, fine sweeps of cultivated country, interspersed with the hunting grounds of the great patricians ; forests that had not felt the axe for centuries, and hills sheeted with the wild vine and rose. But on reaching the border of Latium I was already in Rome ; I travelled a day's journey among

streets, and in the midst of a crowded and hurrying population. The whole was one huge suburb, with occasional glimpses of a central mount, crowned with glittering and gilded structures. "There!" said the centurion, with somewhat of religious reverence, "Behold the eternal Capitol!"—I entered Rome at night, passing through an endless number of narrow and intricate streets, where hovels, the very abode of want, were mingled with palaces blazing with lights and echoing with festivity. The centurion's house was at length reached. He showed me to an apartment, and left me, saying, "that I must prepare to be brought before the Emperor immediately on his arrival."

I am now, thought I, in the heart of the heart of the world; in the midst of that place of power, from which the destiny of nations issues; in the great treasure-house to which men come from the ends of the earth for knowledge, for justice, for wealth, honour, thrones! and what am I?—a solitary slave!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE genius of the Italian has, from the beginning, been the same—bustling, sight-loving, fond of every thing in the shape of indulgence, yet fondest of indulgence where the eye could be gratified. He was a sensualist, but of all sensualists the most susceptible of elegance. His Greek blood, his fine climate, and the perpetual displays of the noblest works of art, brought by conquest, contributed to this temperament ; but the foundation was in that genius, which has made his country the second cradle of the arts to Europe. I never saw a little peasant-celebration, a dance, a sacrifice of a few flowers, that did not contain

the spirit of poetic beauty. Rome was all shows. Its innumerable public events were thrown into the shape of pageantry. Its worship, elections, the departure and return of governors and consuls, every operation of public life, was modelled into a pomp; and in the boundless extent of the empire, those operations were crowding on each other every day. The multitude, that can still be set in motion by a wooden saint, was then summoned by the stirring and powerful ceremonial of empire, the actual sovereignty of the globe. What must have been the strong excitement, the perpetual concourse, the living and various activity of a city from which emanated the stream of power through the world, to return to it loaded with all that the opulence, skill, and glory of the world could give!

Triumphs, to whose grandeur and singularity the pomps of later days are but the attempts of paupers and children; sacrifices and rites, on which the very existence of the state was to depend; the levy and march of armies, which were to carry fate to the remotest corners of

the earth ; the pageants of the kings of the east and west, coming to solicit diadems, or to deprecate the irresistible arms of Rome ; vast theatres ; public games, that tasked the whole fertility of Italian talent, and the most prodigal lavishness of imperial luxury ; were the movers that among the three millions of Rome made life a hurricane.

I saw it in its full and joyous commotion ; I saw it in its desperate agony ; I saw it in its frivolous revival ; and I shall see it in an hour, wilder, weaker, and more terrible than all.

By an influence of which I was then ignorant, I was permitted to be present at some of those displays, under the charge of the centurion. No man could be better fitted for a state jailor. Civility sat on his lips, but caution the most profound sat beside her. He professed to have the deepest dependence on my honour, yet he never let me beyond his eye. But I had no desire to escape. The crisis must come ; and I was as well inclined to meet it then, as to have it hanging over me.

Intelligence in a few days arrived from

Brundisium of the emperor's landing, and of his intention to remain at Antium, on the road to Rome, until his triumphal entry should be prepared. My fate now hung in the scale. I was ordered to attend the imperial presence. At the vestibule of the Antian palace my careful centurion deposited me in the hands of a senator. As I followed him through the halls, a young female richly attired, and of the most beautiful face and form, crossed us, light and graceful as a dancing nymph. The senator bowed profoundly. She beckoned to him, and they exchanged a few words. I was probably the subject; for her countenance, sparkling with the animation of youth and loveliness, grew pale at once: she clasped both her hands upon her eyes, and rushed into an inner chamber. She knew Nero well; and dearly she was yet to pay for her knowledge. The senator, to my inquiring glance, answered in a whisper, "The Empress Poppæa."

A few steps onward, and I stood in the presence of the most formidable being on earth. Yet, whatever might have been the natural

agitation of the time, I could scarcely restrain a smile at the first sight of Nero. I saw a pale, under-sized, light-haired young man sitting before a table with a lyre on it, a few copies of verses and drawings, and a parrot's cage, to whose inmate he was teaching Greek with great assiduity. But for the regal furniture of the cabinet, I should have supposed myself led by mistake into an interview with some struggling poet. He shot round one quick glance, on the opening of the door, and then proceeded to give lessons to his bird. I had leisure to gaze on the tyrant and parricide.

Physiognomy is a true science. The man of profound thought, the man of active ability, and above all, the man of genius has his character stamped on his countenance by nature; the man of violent passions and the voluptuary have it stamped by habit. But the science has its limits: it has no stamp for mere cruelty. The features of the human monster before me were mild, and almost handsome: a heavy eye and a figure tending to fulness, gave the impression of a quiet mind; and but for an occasional rest-

lessness of brow, and a brief glance from under it, in which the leaden eye darted suspicion, I should have pronounced Nero one of the most indolently tranquil of mankind.

He remanded the parrot to its perch, took up his lyre, and throwing a not-unskilful hand over the strings, in the intervals of the performance languidly addressed a broken sentence to me. “ You have come, I understand, from Judea;—they tell me that you have been, or are to be a general of the insurrection;—you must be put to death;—your countrymen give us a great deal of trouble, and I always regret to be troubled with them.—But, to send you back would only be encouragement to them, and to keep you here among strangers would only be cruelty to you.—I am charged with cruelty;—you see the charge is not true.—I am lampooned every day; I know the scribblers, but they must lampoon or starve. I leave them to do both.—Have you brought any news from Judea?—They have not had a true prince there since the first Herod; and he was quite a Greek, a cut-throat and a man of taste. He

understood the arts.—I sent for you, to see what sort of animal a Jewish rebel was.—Your dress is handsome, but too light for our winters.—You cannot die before sun-set, as till then I am engaged with my music-master.—We all must die when our time comes.—Farewell—till sun-set may Jupiter protect you !”

I retired to execution ! and, before the door closed, heard this accomplished disposer of life and death preluding upon his lyre with increased energy. I was conducted to a turret until the period in which the Emperor’s engagements with his music-master should leave him at leisure to see me die. Yet there was kindness even under the roof of Nero, and a liberal hand had covered the table in my cell. The hours passed heavily along, but they passed ; and I was watching the last rays of my last sun, when I perceived a cloud rise in the direction of Rome. It grew broader, deeper, darker as I gazed ; its centre was suddenly tinged with red ; the tinge spread ; the whole mass of cloud became crimson ; the sun went down, and another sun seemed to have risen in his stead. I heard the clattering of

horses' feet in the court-yards below ; trumpets sounded ; there was confusion in the palace ; the troops hurried under arms ; and I saw a squadron of cavalry set off at full speed.

As I was gazing on the spectacle before me, which perpetually became more menacing, the door of my cell slowly opened, and a masked figure stood upon the threshold. I had made up my mind ; and demanding if he was the executioner, told him " that I was ready." The figure paused, listened to the sounds below, and after looking for a while on the troops in the court-yard, signified by signs that I had a chance of saving my life. The love of existence rushed back upon me. I eagerly inquired what was to be done. He drew from under his cloak the dress of a Roman slave, which I put on, and noiselessly followed his steps through a long succession of small and strangely intricate passages. We found no difficulty from guards or domestics. The whole palace was in a state of extraordinary confusion. Every human being was packing up something or other : rich vases, myrrhine-cups, table-services, were lying in

heaps on the floors ; books, costly dresses, instruments of music, all the appendages of luxury were flung loose in every direction, from the sudden breaking up of the court. I might have plundered the value of a province with impunity. Still we wound our hurried way. In passing along one of the corridors, the voice of complaining struck the ear ; my mysterious guide hesitated ; I glanced through the slab of crystal that showed the chamber within. It was the one in which I had seen the Emperor, but his place was now filled by the form of youth and beauty that had crossed me on my arrival. She was weeping bitterly, and reading with strong but sorrowful indignation a long list of names, probably one of those rolls in which Nero registered his intended victims, and which in the confusion of departure he had left open. A second glance saw her tear the paper into a thousand fragments, and scatter them in the fountain that gushed upon the floor.

I left this lovely and unhappy creature, this dove in the vulture's talons, with almost a pang. A few steps more brought us into the open air ;

but among bowers that covered our path with darkness. At the extremity of the gardens, my guide struck with his dagger upon a door; it was opened; we found horses outside; he sprang on one; I sprang on its fellow; and palace, guards, and death were left far behind.

He galloped so furiously, that I found it impossible to speak; and it was not till we had reached an eminence a few miles from Rome, where we breathed our horses, that I could ask to whom I had been indebted for my escape. But I could not extract a word from him. He made signs of silence, and pointed with wild anxiety to the scene that spread below. It was of a grandeur and terror indescribable. Rome was an ocean of flame.

Height and depth were covered with red surges, that rolled before the blast like an endless tide. The billows burst up the sides of the hills, which they turned into instant volcanoes, exploding volumes of smoke and fire; then plunged into the depths in a hundred glowing cataracts, then climbed and consumed again. The distant sound of the city in her convulsion went to the soul. The air was filled with the steady roar of

the advancing flame, the crash of falling houses, and the hideous outcry of the myriads flying through the streets, or surrounded and perishing in the conflagration.

Hostile to Rome as I was, I could not restrain the exclamation: "There goes the fruit of conquest, the glory of ages, the purchase of the blood of millions! Was vanity made for man?" My guide continued looking forward with intense earnestness, as if he were perplexed by what avenue to enter the burning city. I demanded who he was, and whither he would lead me. He returned no answer. A long spire of flame that shot up from a hitherto untouched quarter engrossed all his senses. He struck in the spur, and making a wild gesture to me to follow, darted down the hill. I pursued; we found the Appian choked with waggons, baggage of every kind, and terrified crowds hurrying into the open country. To force a way through them was impossible. All was clamour, violent struggle, and helpless death. Men and women of the highest rank were on foot, trampled by the rabble, that had then lost all respect of conditions. One dense

mass of miserable life, irresistible from its weight, crushed by the narrow streets, and scorched by the flames over their heads, rolled through the gates, like an endless stream of black lava.

We turned back, and attempted an entrance through the gardens of some of the villas that skirted the city wall near the Palatine. All were deserted, and after some dangerous leaps over the burning ruins, we found ourselves in the streets. The fire had originally broken out upon the Palatine, and hot smokes that wrapped and half blinded us, hung thick as night upon the wrecks of pavilions and palaces; but the dexterity and knowledge of my inexplicable guide carried us on. It was in vain that I insisted upon knowing the purpose of this terrible traverse. He pressed his hand on his heart in re-assurance of his fidelity, and still spurred on.

We now passed under the shade of an immense range of lofty buildings, whose gloomy and solid strength seemed to bid defiance to chance and time. A sudden yell appalled me.—A ring

of fire swept round its summit ; burning cordage, sheets of canvas, and a shower of all things combustible, flew into the air above our heads. An uproar followed, unlike all that I had ever heard, a hideous mixture of howls, shrieks, and groans. The flames rolled down the narrow street before us, and made the passage next to impossible. While we hesitated, a huge fragment of the building heaved, as if in an earthquake, and fortunately for us fell inwards. The whole scene of terror was then open. The great amphitheatre of Statilius Taurus had caught fire ; the stage with its inflammable furniture was intensely blazing below. The flames were wheeling up, circle above circle, through the seventy thousand seats that rose from the ground to the roof. I stood in unspeakable awe and wonder on the side of this colossal cavern, this mighty temple of the city of fire. At length a descending blast cleared away the smoke that covered the arena. The cause of those horrid cries was now visible. The wild beasts kept for the games had broke from their dens. Maddened by affright and pain, lions,

tigers, panthers, wolves, whole herds of the monsters of India and Africa were enclosed in an impassable barrier of fire. They bounded, they fought, they screamed, they tore; they ran howling round and round the circle; they made desperate leaps upwards through the blaze; they were flung back, and fell only to fasten their fangs in each other, and with their parching jaws bathed in blood, die raging.

I looked anxiously to see whether any human being was involved in this fearful catastrophe. To my great relief, I could see none. The keepers and attendants had obviously escaped. As I expressed my gladness, I was startled by a loud cry from my guide, the first sound that I had heard him utter. He pointed to the opposite side of the amphitheatre. There indeed sat an object of melancholy interest: a man who had either been unable to escape, or had determined to die. Escape was now impossible.—He sat in desperate calmness on his funeral pile. He was a gigantic Ethiopian slave, entirely naked. He had chosen his place as if in mockery on the imperial throne; the fire

was above him and around him ; and under this tremendous canopy he gazed, without the movement of a muscle, on the combat of the wild beasts below ; a solitary sovereign with the whole tremendous game played for himself, and inaccessible to the power of man.

I was forced away from this absorbing spectacle ; and we once more threaded the long and intricate streets of Rome. As we approached the end of one of those bewildering passages, scarcely wide enough for us to ride abreast, I was startled by the sudden illumination of the sky immediately above ; and rendered cautious by the experience of our hazards, called to my companion to return. He pointed behind me, and showed the fire bursting out in the houses by which we had just galloped. I followed on. A crowd that poured from the adjoining streets cut off our retreat. Hundreds rapidly mounted on the houses in front, in the hope by throwing them down to check the conflagration. The obstacle once removed, we saw the source of the light—spectacle of horror ! The great prison of Rome was on fire. Never

can I forget the sights and sounds—the dismay—the hopeless agony—the fury and frenzy that then overwhelmed the heart. The jailors had been forced to fly before they could loose the fetters, or open the cells of the prisoners. We saw those gaunt and wo-begone wretches crowding to their casements, and imploring impossible help; clinging to the heated bars; toiling with their impotent grasp to tear out the massive stones; some wringing their hands; some calling on the terrified spectators by every name of humanity to save them; some venting their despair in execrations and blasphemies that made the blood run cold; others, after many a wild effort to break loose, dashing their heads against the walls, or stabbing themselves. The people gave them outcry for outcry; but the flame forbade approach. Before I could extricate myself from the multitude, a whirl of fiery ashes shot upwards from the falling roof; the walls rent into a thousand fragments; and the huge prison, with all its miserable inmates, was a heap of red embers.

Exhausted as I was by this restless fatigue,

and yet more by the melancholy sights that surrounded every step, no fatigue seemed to be felt by the singular being that governed my movements: He sprang through the burning ruins—he plunged into the sulphurous smoke—he never lost the direction that he had first taken; and though baffled and forced to turn back a hundred times, he again rushed on his track with the directness of an arrow. For me to make my way back to the gates, would be even more difficult than to push forward. My ultimate safety might be in following, and I followed. To stand still, and to move, were equally perilous. The streets, even with the improvements of Augustus, were still scarcely wider than the breadth of the little Italian carts that crowded them. They were crooked, long, and obstructed by every impediment of a city built in haste, after the burning by the Gauls, and with no other plan than the caprice of its hurried tenantry. The houses were of immense height, chiefly wood, many roofed with thatch, and all covered or cemented with pitch. The true surprise is, that it had

not been burned once a year from the time of its building.

The memory of Nero, that hereditary concentration of vice, of whose ancestor's yellow beard the Roman orator said, "No wonder that his beard was brass, when his mouth was iron and his heart lead," the parricide and the poisoner, may yet be fairly exonerated of an act, which might have been the deed of a drunken mendicant in any of the fifty thousand hovels of this gigantic aggregate of every thing that could turn to flame.

We passed along through all the horrid varieties of misery, guilt, and riot, that could find their place in a great public calamity: groups gazing in woe on the wreck of their fortunes, rushing off to the winds in vapour and fire; groups plundering in the midst of the flame; groups of rioters, escaped felons, and murderers, exulting in the public ruin, and dancing and drinking with Bacchanalian uproar: gangs of robbers trampling down and stabbing the fugitives to strip them of their last means: revenge, avarice, despair, profligacy, let loose

naked ; undisguised demons, to swell the wretchedness of this tremendous infliction upon a guilty and blood-covered empire.

Still we spurred on, but our jaded horses at length sank under us ; and leaving them to find their way into the fields, we struggled forward on foot. The air had hitherto been calm, but now gusts began to rise, thunder growled, and the signs of tempest thickened on. We gained an untouched quarter of the city, and had explored our weary passage up to the gates of a large patrician palace, when we were startled by a broad sheet of flame rushing through the sky. The storm was come in its rage. The range of public magazines of wood, cordage, tar, and oil, in the valley between the Coelian and Palatine hills, had at length been involved in the conflagration. All that we had seen before was darkness to the fierce splendour of this burning. The tempest tore off the roofs, and swept them like floating islands of fire through the sky. The most distant quarters on which they fell were instantly wrapped in flame. One broad mass whirling from an immense

height, broke upon the palace before us. A cry of terror was heard within ; the gates were flung open, and a crowd of domestics and persons of both sexes, attired for a banquet, poured out into the streets. The palace was wrapt in flame. My guide then for the first time lost his self-possession. He staggered towards me with the appearance of a man who had received a spear-head in his bosom. I caught him before he fell ; but his head sank, his knees bent under him, and his white lips quivered with unintelligible sounds, I could distinguish only the words —“ gone, gone for ever !”

The flame had already seized upon the principal floors of the palace ; and the volumes of smoke that poured through every window and entrance, rendered the attempt to save those still within a work of extreme hazard. But ladders were rapidly placed, ropes were flung, and the activity of the attendants and retainers was boldly exerted, till all were presumed to have been saved, and the building was left to burn.

My overwhelmed guide was lying on the

ground, when a sudden scream was heard, and a figure, in the robes and with the rosy crown of the banquet, strange contrast to her fearful situation, was seen flying from window to window in the upper part of the mansion. It was supposed that she had fainted in the first terror, and been forgotten. The height, the fierceness of the flame which now completely mastered resistance, the volumes of smoke that suffocated every man who approached, made the chance of saving this unfortunate being utterly desperate in the opinion of the multitude.

My spirit shuddered at the horrors of this desertion. I looked round at my companion; he was kneeling, in helpless agony, with his hands lifted up to heaven. Another scream, wilder than ever, pierced my senses. I seized an axe from one of the domestics, caught a ladder from another, and in a paroxysm of hope, fear, and pity, scaled the burning wall. A shout from below followed me. I entered at the first window that I could reach. All before me was cloud. I rushed on, struggled, stumbled

over furniture and fragments of all kinds, fell, rose again, found myself trampling upon precious things, plate and crystal, and still, axe in hand, forced my way. I at length reached the banqueting-room. The figure had vanished. A strange superstition of childhood, a thought that I might have been lured by some Spirit of evil into this place of ruin, suddenly came over me. I stopped to gather my faculties. I leaned against one of the pillars; it was hot; the floor shook and crackled under my tread, the walls heaved, the flame hissed below, and over head roared the whirlwind, and burst the thunder-peal.

My brain was fevered. The immense golden lamps still burning; the long tables disordered, yet glittering with the costly ornaments of patrician luxury; the scattered Tyrian couches; the scarlet canopy that covered the whole range of the tables, and gave the hall the aspect of an imperial pavilion, partially torn down in the confusion of the flight, all assumed to me a horrid and bewildered splendour. The smokes were already rising through the crevices of the

floor; the smell of flame was on my robes; a huge volume of yellow vapour slowly wreathed and arched round the chair at the head of the banquet. I could have imaged a fearful lord of the feast under that cloudy veil! Every thing round me was marked with preternatural fear, magnificence, and ruin.

A low groan broke my reverie. I heard the voice of one in despair. I heard the broken words, "Oh, bitter fruit of disobedience!—Oh, my mother, shall I never see your face again?—For one crime I am doomed.—Eternal mercy, let my crime be washed away—let my spirit ascend pure.—Farewell, mother, sister, father, husband!" With the last word I heard a fall, as if the spirit had left the body.

I sprang towards the sound: I met but the solid wall. "Horrible illusion," I cried—"am I mad, or the victim of the powers of darkness?" I tore away the hangings—a door was before me. I burst it through with a blow of the axe, and saw stretched on the floor, and insensible—Salome!

I caught my child in my arms; I bathed her

forehead with my tears ; I besought her to look up, to give some sign of life, to hear the full forgiveness of my breaking heart. She looked not, answered not, breathed not. To make a last effort for her life, I carried her into the banquet-room. But the fire had forced its way there ; the wind bursting in, had carried the flame through the long galleries ; and flashes and spires of lurid light already darting through the doors, gave fearful evidence that the last stone of the palace must soon go down.

I bore my unhappy daughter towards the window ; but the height was deadly, no gesture could be seen through the piles of smoke, the help of man was in vain. To my increased misery, the current of air revived Salome, at the instant when I hoped that by insensibility she would escape the final pang. She breathed, stood, and, opening her eyes, fixed on me the vacant stare of one scarcely aroused from sleep. Still clasped in my arms, she gazed again ; but my wild face covered with dust, my half-burnt hair, the axe gleaming in my hand, terrified her ;

she uttered a scream, and darted away from me headlong into the centre of the burning.

I rushed after her, calling on her name. A column of fire shot up between us; I felt the floor sink; all was then suffocation—I struggled, and fell.—

CHAPTER XX.

I AWOKE with a sensation of pain in every limb. A female voice was singing a faint song near me. But the past was like a dream. I involuntarily looked down for the gulf on which I had trod—I looked upward for the burning rafters. I saw nothing but an earthen floor, and a low roof hung with dried grapes and herbs. I uttered a cry. The singer approached me. But there was nothing in her aspect to nurture a diseased imagination; she was an old and emaciated creature, who yet benevolently rejoiced in my restoration. She in turn called her husband, a venerable Jew, whose first act was to offer thanksgiving to the

God of Israel for the safety of a chief of his nation.

But to my inquiries for the fate of my child, he could give no answer; he had discovered me among the ruins of the palace of the Æmiliï, to which he with many of his countrymen had been attracted with the object of collecting whatever remnants of furniture might be left by the flames. I had fallen by the edge of a fountain which extinguished the fire in its vicinage, and was found breathing. During three days I had lain insensible. The Jew now went out, and brought back with him some of the elders of our people, who, after the decree of the Emperor Claudius, remained in Rome, though in increased privacy. I was carried to their house of assemblage, concealed among groves and vineyards beyond the gates; and attended to with a care which might cure all things but the wounds of the mind. On the great object of my solicitude, the fate of my Salome, I could obtain no relief. I wandered over the site of the palace, it was now a mass of ashes and charcoal; its ruins had been probed

by hundreds; but search for even a trace of what would have been to me dearer than a mountain of gold, was in vain.

The conflagration continued six days; and every day of the number gave birth to some monstrous report of its origin. Of the fourteen districts of Rome, but four remained. Thousands had lost their lives, tens of thousands were utterly undone. The whole empire shook under the blow. Then came the still deeper horror.

Fear makes the individual feeble, but it makes the multitude ferocious. An universal cry arose for revenge. Great public misfortunes give the opportunity that the passions of men and sects love; and the fiercest sacrifices of selfishness are justified under the name of retribution.

But the full storm burst on the Christians, then too new to have fortified themselves in the national prejudices, if they would have suffered the alliance; too poor to reckon any powerful protectors; and too uncompromising to palliate their scorn of the whole public

system of morals, philosophy, and religion. The emperor, the priesthood, and the populace, conspired against them, and they were ordered to the slaughter. I too had my stimulants to hatred. Where was I? in exile, in desperate hazard;—I had been torn from home, robbed of my child, made miserable by the fear of apostacy in my house; and by whom was this comprehensive evil done? The name of Christian was gall to me. I heard of the popular vengeance, and called it justice; I saw the distant fires in which the Christians were consuming, and calculated how many each night of those horrors would abstract from the guilty number. Man becomes cruel by the sight of cruelty; and when thousands and hundreds of thousands were shouting for vengeance, when every face looked fury, and every tongue was wild with some new accusation, when the great, the little, the philosopher, the ignorant, raised up one roar of reprobation against the Christians, was the solitary man of mercy to be looked for in one bleeding from head to foot with wrongs irreparable?

During one of those dreadful nights I was gazing from the house-top on the fire forcing its way through the remaining quarters; the melancholy gleams through the country, showing the extent of the flight; and in the midst of the blackened and dreary wastes of Rome, the spots of livid flame, where the Christians were perishing at the pile; when I was summoned to a consultation below. One of our people had returned with an imperial edict proclaiming pardon of all offences to the discoverer of Christians. I would not have purchased my life by the life of a dog. But my safety was important to the Jewish cause, and I was pressed on every side by arguments on the wisdom, nay, the public duty of accepting freedom on any terms. And what was to be the price? the life of criminals long obnoxious to the laws, and now stained beyond mercy. I loathed delay; I loathed Rome; I was wild to return to the great cause of my country, which never could have a fairer hope than now. An emissary was sent out; money soon effected the discovery of a Christian assemblage: I ap-

peared before the prætor with my documents, and brought back in my hand the imperial pardon, given with the greater good-will, as the assemblage chanced to comprehend the chiefs of the heresy. They were seized, ordered forthwith to the pile, and I was ordered to be present at this completion of my national service. The executions were in the gardens of the imperial palace, which had been thrown open by Nero, for the double purpose of popularity, and of indulging himself with the display of death at the slightest personal inconvenience. The crowd was prodigious, and to gratify the greatest possible number at once, those murders were carried on in different parts of the gardens. In the vineyard, a certain portion were to be crucified; in the orangery, another portion were to be burnt; in the pleasure-ground, another were to be torn by lions and tigers; gladiators were to be let loose; and when the dusk came on, the whole of the space was to be lighted by human torches, Christians wrapped in folds of linen covered with pitch and bitumen, and thus burning

down from the head to the ground. I was horror-struck ; but escape was impossible ; and I must go through the whole hideous round. With my flesh quivering, my ears ringing, my eyes dim, I was forced to see miserable beings, men, nay women, nay infants, sewed up in skins of beasts, hunted and torn to pieces by dogs ; old men, whose hoary hairs might have demanded reverence of savages, scourged, racked, and nailed to the trees to die ; lovely young females, creatures of guileless hearts and innocent beauty, flung on flaming scaffolds. And this was the work of man, civilised man, in the highest civilisation of the arts, the manners, and the learning of the ancient world.

But the grand display was prepared for the time, when those Christians, who had been denounced on my discovery, were to be executed ; an exhibition at which the Emperor himself testified his intention to be present. The great Circus was no more ; but a temporary amphitheatre of the turf had been erected, in which the usual games were exhibited during the early part of the day. At the hour of my

arrival, the low bank circling this immense inclosure, was filled with the first names of Rome, knights, patricians, senators, military tribunes, consuls; the Emperor alone was wanting to complete the representative majesty of the empire. I was to form a part of the ceremony, and the guard who had me in charge cleared the way to a conspicuous place, where my national dress fixed every eye on me. Several Christians had perished before my arrival. Their remains lay on the ground, and in their midst stood the man who was to be the next victim. By what influence I know not, but never did I see a human being that made on me so deep an impression. I have him before me at this instant. I see the figure, low, yet with an air of nobleness; stooped a little with venerable age; but the countenance, full of life, and marked with all the traits of intellectual power, the nose strongly aquiline, the bold lip, the large and rapid eye; the whole man conveying the idea of an extraordinary permanence of early vigour, under the weight of years. Even the hair was thick and black,

with scarcely a touch of silver. If the place and time were Athens, and the æra of Demosthenes, I should have said that Demosthenes stood before me. The vivid countenance and manner; the flashing rapidity with which he seized a new idea, and compressed it to his purpose; the impetuous argument that, throwing off the formality of logic, smote with the strength of a new fact, were Demosthenaic. Even a certain infirmity of utterance, and an occasional slight difficulty of words, added to the likeness; but there was a hallowed glance, and a solemn, yet tender reach of thought, interposed among those intense appeals, that asserted the sacred superiority of the subject and the man.

He was already speaking when I reached the Circus; and I can give but an outline of his language.

He pointed to the headless bodies round him.

“For what have these my brethren died? Answer me, priests of Rome; what temple did they force—what altar overthrow—what insults offer to the slightest of your public celebrations?”

Judges of Rome, what offence did they commit against the public peace? Consuls, where were they found in rebellion against the Roman majesty? People! patricians! who among your thousands can charge one of these holy dead with extortion, impurity, or violence; can charge them with any thing, but the patience that bore wrong without a murmur, and the charity that answered tortures only by prayers?"

He then touched upon the nature of his faith.

“ Do I stand here demanding to be believed for opinions? No; but for facts. I have seen the sick made whole, the lame walk, the blind receive their sight, by the mere name of Him whom you crucified. I have seen men once ignorant of all languages but their own, speaking with the language of every nation under heaven—the still greater wonder, of the timid defying all fear—the unlearned instantly made wise in the mysteries of things divine and human—putting to shame the learned—aweing the proud—enlightening the darkened; alike in the courts of kings, before the furious people, and in

the dungeon, armed with an irrepressible spirit of knowledge, reason and truth, that confounded their adversaries. I have seen the still greater wonder, of the renewed heart; the impure, suddenly abjuring vice; the covetous, the cruel, the faithless, the godless, gloriously changed into the holy, the gentle, the faithful, the worshipper of the true God in spirit and in truth; the conquest of the passions which defied your philosophers, your tribunals, your rewards, your terrors, achieved in the one mighty name. Those are facts, things which I have seen; and who that had seen them could doubt that the finger of the eternal God was there? I dared not refuse my belief to the divine mission of the being by whom, and even in memory of whom, things baffling the proudest human means were wrought before my eyes. Thus irresistibly compelled by facts to believe that Christ was sent by God; I was with equal force compelled to believe in the doctrines declared by this glorious Messenger of the Father alike of quick and dead. And thus I stand before you this

day, at the close of a long life of labour and hazard, a Christian.”

This appeal to the understanding, divested as it was of all ornament and oratorical display, was listened to by the immense multitude with the most unbroken interest. It was delivered with the strong simplicity of conviction. He then spoke of the Founder of his faith.

“ Men may be mad for opinions. But who can be mad for facts? The coming of Christ was prophesied a thousand years before !”

“ From the beginning of his ministry he lived wholly before the eyes of mankind. His life corresponds with the prophecies in a multitude of circumstances which must have been totally beyond human power. The virgin mother, the village in which he was born, the lowliness of his cradle, the worship paid to him there, the hazard of his life—all were predicted. Could the infant have shaped the accomplishment of these predictions?—The death that he should die, the hands by which it was to be inflicted, even the draught that he should

drink, and the raiment that he should be clothed in, and the sepulchre in which he should be laid, were predicted. Could the man have shaped their accomplishment?—The time of his resting in the tomb; his resurrection; his ascent to heaven; the sending of the Holy Spirit after he was gone; all were predicted; all were beyond human collusion, human power, or human thought, and all were accomplished!”

“Those things were universally known to the nation most competent to detect collusion. Did Christ come to Rome, where every new religion finds adherents, and where all pretensions might be advanced without fear; where a deceiver might have quoted prophecies that never existed, and vaunted of wonders done where there was no eye to detect them? No! his life was spent in Judea, perhaps for the express purpose of adding to his mercy and long-suffering, the most unanswerable proofs of his divine mission. He made his appeal to the Scriptures, in a country where they were in the hands of the people. His miracles were wrought

before the eyes of a priesthood that watched him step by step ; his doctrines were spoken, not to a careless and mingled multitude, holding a thousand varieties of opinion, but to an exclusive race, subtle in their inquiries, eager in their zeal, and proud of their peculiar possession of divine knowledge.”—

“ Yet against his life, his miracles, or his doctrine, what charge could they bring ? None. There is not a single stigma on the purity of his conduct ; the power of his wonder-working control over man and nature ; the holiness, wisdom, and grandeur, of his views of Providence ; the truth, charity, and meekness, of his counsels to man. Their single source of hatred was the pride of worldly hearts that expected a king, where they were to have found a teacher. Their single charge against him was his prophecy, that there should be an end to their Temple and their state within the life of man. They crucified him ; he died in prayer, that his murderers might be forgiven ; and his prayer was mightily answered. He had scarcely risen to his eternal throne, when thousands believed,

and were forgiven. To him be the glory, for ever and ever !”

“ Compare him with your legislators. He gives the spirit of all law in a single sentence — ‘ Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.’ Compare him with your priesthood. He gives a single significant rite, capable of being extended to every land and every age, and in them all speaking to the heart : he gives a single prayer, containing the substance of all that man can rationally implore of Heaven. Compare him with your moralists. He lays the foundation of virtue in love to God. Compare him with your sages. He leads a life of privation without a murmur : he dies a death of shame, desertion, and agony ; and his last breath is sublime mercy ! Compare him with your conquerors. Without the shedding of a drop of blood, he has already conquered hosts that would have resisted all the swords of earth, hosts of stubborn passions, cherished vices, guilty perversions of the powers and faculties of man. Look on these glorious dead, whom I shall join before the set of yonder sun. Yes,

martyrs of God! ye were his conquests; and ye too are more than conquerors, through him that loved us, and gave himself for us. But a triumph shall come, magnificent and terrible, when all eyes shall behold him; and the tribes of the earth, even they who pierced him, shall mourn."

"Then rejoice, ye dead! For ye shall rise. Ye shall be clothed with glory; ye shall be as the angels, bright and powerful, immortal, intellectual kings! 'For though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.'"—

The sky was cloudless; the sun was in the west, but shining in his broadest beams; the whole space before me was flooded with his light; when, as I gazed upon the martyr, I saw a gleam issue from his upturned face; it increased to brightness, to strong radiance, to an intense lustre, that made the sunlight utterly pale. All was astonishment in the amphitheatre, but all was awe. The old man seemed unconscious of the wonder that invested him. He continued with his open

hands lifted up, and his eyes fixed on Heaven. The glory spread over his form ; and he stood before us robed in an effulgence, which shot from him like a living fount of splendour round the colossal circle. Yet the blaze, though it looked the very essence of light, was strangely translucent ; we could see with undazzled eyes every feature ; and whether it was the working of my overwhelmed mind, or a true change, the countenance appeared to have passed at once from age to youth. A lofty joy, a look of supernal grandeur, a magnificent, yet ethereal beauty, had transformed the features of the old man into the likeness of the winged sons of Immortality !

He spoke ; and the first sound of his voice thrilled through every bosom, and made every man start from his seat.

“ Men and brethren.—It is the desire of God that all should be saved—Jew and Gentile alike ; for with him there is no respect of persons. He is the Father of all ! Christianity is not a philosophic dream ; nor the opinion of a sect struggling to gain power among con-

tending sects ; but a divine command—the summons of the God of gods, that you should accept the mercy offered to you through the sacrifice of the Eternal Son!—the opening of the gates of an eternal world ! It is not a summons to the practice of barren virtue, but a declaration of real reward, mightier than the imagination of man can conceive. It raises the spirit of man, forgiven for the sake of Christ, into the imperishable possession of an actual power, to which the ambition of earth is a vapour ; it invests the redeemed with all that can delight the eye, or rejoice the heart, or elevate the understanding. Would you be kings—would you be glorious as the stars of Heaven—would you possess mighty faculties of happiness, supremacy, and knowledge ? Ask for forgiveness of your evil, in the name of Christ ; and whether you live or die, those things shall be yours. What is easier than the price ?—what more transcendent than the reward ? Who shall tell the limit of the risen Spirit ? Over what worlds, or worlds of worlds, he may be sovereign ! What resistless strength—what

more than regal majesty—what celestial beauty may be in his frame!—What expansion of intellect—what everflowing tides of new sensation—what shapes of glory and loveliness—what radiant stores of thought, and mysteries of exhaustless knowledge, may be treasured for him! What endless ascent through new ranks of being, each as much more glorious than the last, as the risen Spirit is above man!—For what can be the bound to the exaltation of the fellow-heirs with Christ, for whom the Eternal stooped to suffer upon the cross, and for whom he rose again to his throne, their leader in trial, their leader in triumph! Omnipotence for their protector, their friend, their father! He who gave to us his own Son, will he not with him give us all things!”

“ King of kings! if through a long life I have laboured in thy cause, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often,

in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness ; thine alone be the praise, thine the glory, who hast brought me through them all with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Now, Lord ! thou who shalt change my vile body into the likeness of thy glorious body, be with thy servant in this last hour ! Lord, receive my spirit ; that where thou art, even I may be with thee !”

He was silent : the splendour gradually passed away from his form. He knelt upon the sand, bowing down his neck to receive the blow.

But to lift a hand against such a being, seemed an act of profanation. The axe-bearer dared not approach. The spectators sat hushed in involuntary homage. Not a word, not a gesture, broke the silence of veneration. At length a flourish of distant horns and trumpets was heard. Cavalry galloped forward, announcing the emperor ; and Nero, habited as a triumphant charioteer, drove his gilded car into the arena. The Christian had risen ; and, with his hands clasped on his breast, was

awaiting death. Nero cast the headsman an execration at his tardiness ; the axe swept round ; and when I glanced again, the old man lay beside his brethren !

This man I had sacrificed. My heart smote me : I would have fled the place of blood, but more of my victims were to be slain ; and I must be the shrinking witness of all.

The Emperor's arrival commenced the grand display. He took his place under the curtains of the royal pavilion. The dead were removed ; perfumes were scattered through the air ; rose-water was sprinkled from silver tubes upon the exhausted multitude ; music resounded ; incense burned ; and, in the midst of those preparations of luxury, the terrors of the lion combat began.

A portal of the arena opened, and the combatant, with a mantle thrown over his face and figure, was led in, surrounded by soldiery. The lion roared, and ramped against the bars of its den at the sight. The guard put a sword and buckler into the hands of the Christian, and he was left alone. He drew the mantle

from his face, and bent a slow and firm look round the amphitheatre. His fine countenance and lofty bearing raised an universal sound of admiration. He might have stood for an Apollo encountering the Python. His eye at last turned on mine. Could I believe my senses! Constantius was before me!

All my rancour vanished. An hour past I could have struck the betrayer to the heart; I could have called on the severest vengeance of man and heaven to smite the destroyer of my child. But, to see him hopelessly doomed; the man whom I had honoured for his noble qualities, whom I had even loved, whose crime was at worst but the crime of giving way to the strongest temptation that can bewilder the heart of man; to see this noble creature flung to the savage beast, dying in tortures, torn piecemeal before my eyes, and this misery wrought by me,—I would have obtestated earth and heaven to save him. But my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth. My limbs refused to stir. I would have thrown myself at the feet of Nero; but I sat like a man of stone, pale, paralysed—

the beating of my pulses stopt—my eyes alone alive.

The gate of the den was thrown back, and the lion rushed in with a roar, and a bound that bore him half across the arena. I saw the sword glitter in the air: when it waved again, it was covered with blood. A howl told that the blow had been driven home. The lion, one of the largest from Numidia, and made furious by thirst and hunger, an animal of prodigious power, couched for an instant as if to make sure of his prey, crept a few paces onward, and sprang at the victim's throat. He was met by a second wound, but his impulse was irresistible; and Constantius was flung upon the ground. A cry of natural horror rang round the amphitheatre. The struggle was now for instant life or death. They rolled over each other; the lion reared on its hind feet, and, with gnashing teeth and distended talons, plunged on the man; again they rose together. Anxiety was now at its wildest height. The sword swung round the champion's head in bloody circles. They fell again, covered with gore and

dust. The hand of Constantius had grasped the lion's mane, and the furious bounds of the monster could not loose the hold ; but his strength was evidently giving way : he still struck terrible blows, but each was weaker than the one before ; till collecting his whole force for a last effort, he darted one mighty blow into the lion's throat, and sank. The savage yelled, and spouting out blood, fled howling round the arena. But the hand still grasped the mane ; and his conqueror was dragged whirling through the dust at his heels. A universal outcry now arose to save him, if he were not already dead. But the lion, though bleeding from every vein, was still too terrible ; and all shrank from the hazard. At length the grasp gave way ; and the body lay motionless upon the ground.

What happened for some moments after, I know not. There was a struggle at the portal ; a female forced her way through the guards, rushed in alone, and flung herself upon the victim. The sight of a new prey roused the lion : he tore the ground with his talons ; he lashed his streaming sides with his tail ; he lifted

up his mane, and bared his fangs. But his approach was no longer with a bound; he dreaded the sword, and came snuffing the blood on the sand, and stealing round the body in circuits still diminishing.

The confusion in the vast assemblage was now extreme. Voices innumerable called for aid. Women screamed and fainted; men burst out into indignant clamours at this prolonged cruelty. Even the hard hearts of the populace, accustomed as they were to the sacrifice of life, were roused to honest curses. The guards grasped their arms, and waited but for a sign from the emperor. But Nero gave no sign.

I looked upon the woman's face. It was Salome! I sprang upon my feet. I called on her name; I implored her by every feeling of nature to fly from that place of death, to come to my arms, to think of the agonies of all that loved her.

She had raised the head of Constantius on her knee, and was wiping the pale visage with her hair. At the sound of my voice she looked up, and calmly casting back the locks from her

forehead, fixed her gaze upon me. She still knelt; one hand supported the head, with the other she pointed to it, as her only answer. I again adjured her. There was the silence of death among the thousands round me. A fire flashed into her eye—her cheek burned. She waved her hand with an air of superb sorrow.

“I am come to die,” she uttered, in a lofty tone. “This bleeding body was my husband. I have no father. The world contains to me but this clay in my arms.—Yet,” and she kissed the ashy lips before her, “yet, my Constantius, it was to save that father, that your generous heart defied the peril of this hour. It was to redeem him from the hand of evil, that you abandoned our quiet home!—yes, cruel father, here lies the noble being that threw open your dungeon, that led you safe through conflagration, that to the last moment of his liberty only thought how he might preserve and protect you.” Tears at length fell in floods from her eyes. “But,” said she, in a tone of wild power, “he was betrayed; and may the power whose thunders avenge the cause of his people

pour down just retribution upon the head that dared ——.”

I heard my own condemnation about to be pronounced by the lips of my child. Wound up to the last degree of suffering, I tore my hair, leaped on the bars before me, and plunged into the arena by her side. The height stunned me; I tottered forward a few paces, and fell. The lion gave a roar, and sprang upon me. I lay helpless under him.—I felt his fiery breath—I saw his lurid eye glaring—I heard the gnashing of his white fangs above me ——

An exulting shout arose.—I saw him reel as if struck:—gore filled his jaws.—Another mighty blow was driven to his heart.—He sprang high in the air with a howl.—He dropped; he was dead. The amphitheatre thundered with acclamation.

With Salome clinging to my bosom, Constantius raised me from the ground. The roar of the lion had roused him from his swoon, and two blows saved me. The falchion was broken in the heart of the monster. The whole multitude stood up, supplicating for our lives in the

name of filial piety and heroism. Nero, devil as he was, dared not resist the strength of the popular feeling. He waved a signal to the guards; the portal was opened; and my children sustaining my feeble steps, and showered with garlands and ornaments from innumerable hands, slowly led me from the arena.

END OF VOL. I.

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