

THE
ROMANCE OF JEWISH HISTORY

BY
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And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL: III.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1840.

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LONDON:

BLATCH AND LAMPERT, PRINTERS, GROVE PLACE, BROMPTON.

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THE
ROMANCE OF JEWISH HISTORY.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

3653. HYRCANUS was succeeded by his son, Aristobulus, who starved his mother to death, and ordered his brother, Antigonus, to be assassinated. No sooner had he committed these revolting and unnatural crimes, than he was seized with the most agonizing remorse, which occasioned a vomiting of blood. The slave who carried away the vessel, stumbling by accident on the spot where Antigonus was killed, the blood of the brothers mingled on the pavement. A cry of horror rang through the palace, and the king extorting the dreadful cause from his attendants, immediately expired.

3654. Alexander Janneus, the next in succession, ascended the throne. His first act was the death of his brother, who attempted to usurp the crown.

3655. At the feast of Tabernacles, mutiny broke out, but was speedily quelled. Six thousand of the populace were slaughtered.

3668. The people again broke into a rebellion, which lasted six years. At length the rebels obtained assistance

3674. from the King of Syria. Alexander was completely routed, with the loss of nearly all his troops.

3679. The king again found himself at the head of an army of 60,000 men: he routed the insurgents, and marched in triumph to Jerusalem, where he publicly crucified 8000 men, and slew their wives and children in their presence.

3683. Alexandra succeeded her husband; and in conformity to his last advice, entrusted the administration to the Pharisees, who conferred the high priesthood upon her eldest son, Hyrcanus.

3692. Hyrcanus II. succeeded to the crown: but was immediately obliged to contest his title with his brother, Aristobulus. He was defeated in a pitched battle on the plain of Jericho, and compelled to resign the sceptre to his younger brother.

3695. Hyrcanus, by the advice of Antipater, an Idumean of noble birth, who aspired to the crown, obtained an army of 50,000 men from Aretas, king of Arabia, and marched against Aristobulus, who, deserted by the people, fled to Jerusalem, and was finally compelled to shut himself up in the temple, to which Hyrcanus laid siege.

3696. Aristobulus bribed Scaurus, the lieutenant of Pompey, the Roman general, to order Aretas to break up the siege, which he did; and Aristobulus, following in the rear of the Arabian army, defeated them near Papyrion.

3697. The brothers agreed to refer their claims to the decision of Pompey; but the impatience of Aristobulus would not permit him to await the procrastination of the Roman general, and he shut himself up in the fortified city of Alexandrion. Pompey besieged the city, and compelled the prince to fly to Jerusalem, whither he followed him. The party of Hyrcanus

received him with every demonstration of joy; and Aristobulus, deserted by all but the priests, was a second time obliged to take refuge in the temple, which was defended with the utmost courage during a siege of three months; at the end of which time it was taken. Pompey surveyed every part of the sacred edifice. He even penetrated the holy of holies, and was surprised to find it empty, without even a symbol of the Deity to whom it was dedicated. The immense riches he found there he left untouched, nominated Hyrcanus to the high priesthood, limited his dominions to Judea, appointed the tribute, and demolished the walls of the city.

3703. Pompey returned to Rome, taking with him Aristobulus, his two sons and two daughters, whom he had taken prisoners on the capture of the temple. Alexander, the eldest of the princes, effected his escape during the journey.

3705. He rebuilt the walls of Alexandrion, and garrisoned that and two other cities, Meacharpis and Hyrcania.

His uncle and father-in-law, Hyrcanus, summoned the Roman to his assistance. Gabinius, the Lieutenant of Pompey, entered Judea, and defeated Alexander, who shut himself up in Alexandrion, to which Gabinius laid siege, and reduced it to the last extremity. Alexander, through the influence of his mother, who had always espoused the Roman cause, entered into a treaty, in which he received a general amnesty for his insurrection, on condition of surrendering his fortresses.

No sooner was Alexander subdued, than Aristobulus himself and his younger son, having escaped from Rome, again raised the standard of revolt. He re-fortified Alexandrion—he was taken, after being severely wounded, and sent back in chains to Rome; but his son, Antigonus, obtained his liberty through the interest of his mother with Gabinius, who interceded with the Senate on his behalf.

3706. Gabinius, with the celebrated Mark Antony as his

master of the horse, determined on the conquest of Egypt ; but scarcely had he withdrawn his troops from Syria, when Alexander again appeared in arms. He drove the few remaining Romans into a strong position on Mount Gerizim, where he besieged them. On the return of Gabinius, he had the courage to meet him at the head of 80,000 men in the open field, near Mount Tabor ; but was defeated, and obliged to take flight.

3713. Julius Cæsar, who was contesting the supremacy in Rome with Pompey, sent Aristobulus, whom he had released from captivity, in order to create a diversion in Judea in his favor ; but the friends of Pompey poisoned the unfortunate king, and Scipio, a descendant of the celebrated heroes of that name, publicly executed his gallant son, Alexander, at Antioch.

3728. Jerusalem was taken from Antigonus, the youngest son of Aristobulus, by Herod, son of Antipater the Idumean, who had been appointed king by Augustus and Antony, after an obstinate defence of above half a year. Antigonus was sent prisoner to Rome, and there executed, through the interest of Herod, who ascended the Jewish throne.

3729. Herod raised Aristobulus, grandson of the late monarch, and brother to Mariamne, his own wife, to the high priesthood ; but growing jealous of his superior claims to the throne, he caused him to be drowned by his companions, while bathing. This unfortunate young prince was only seventeen when he was murdered, and was the last lineal male descendant of the Asmoneans.

3731. Herod, instigated by a feeling of jealousy, caused his beloved wife, Mariamne, to be beheaded, on a fancied charge of adultery.

3743. The Temple of Jerusalem rebuilt in great splendour by Herod.

3754. Alexander and Aristobulus, the two sons of Mariamne, were executed, on a false accusation of attempting their father's life.

3755. Antipater, Herod's son by Doris, whom he had appointed his successor, was found guilty of conspiring with his uncle Pheroras, to perpetrate the very crime of which he had falsely accused his brothers, namely—poisoning his father.

3756. Antipater, on a false report of his father's death, endeavoured to bribe his gaoler. Herod lived just long enough to order his immediate execution, and remodel his will, when he immediately expired. Archelaus, who succeeded his father Herod, suppressed an insurrection, and set out for Rome to procure the Emperor's recognition of his title. Judea and Samaria were bestowed on him, under the title of Ethnarch. Galilee and Perea were given to his brother Herod Antipas, who had gone before him to Rome, in the hope of supplanting him on the throne.

3757. An imposter, assuming the name of Alexander, the murdered son of Mariamne, was detected, and sentenced to the galleys. His instructor was put to death.

3766. Archelaus was stripped of his dominions, for injustice and cruelty, and banished to Vienne, in Gaul. The countries of Judea and Samaria, which he had governed, became dependent on the prefecture of Syria.

THE GIDEONITE.

CHAPTER I.

Ye powers of aidance, show me such a way
As I am capable of going.

THE PICCOLOMINI.

If you have nothing to object,
We'll take a trifling retrospect.

OLD SONG.

“AN escaped prisoner! a wanderer in the country in which my father was king!—Great God! how inscrutable are thy ways!” Such were the reflections of the young Prince Alexander, son of Aristobulus, and nephew of Hyrcanus, as with aching heart and weary limbs, he flung himself down in the hollow cleft of a rock, and sought repose. The new moon had just risen, and displayed to the eager eyes of the royal fugitive the tendrils of a wild vine, twining round the inequalities of the rock,

their bright rich green forming a not unlovely relief to the dark grey rock. The thick clusters of fruit hanging gracefully down, like curls on the neck of beauty, though not yet quite ripe, made a grateful repast for the tired and hungry prince. He had tasted nothing for many hours previous. Having satisfied the cravings of appetite, he lay down on his rocky bed, with a few dry leaves and a little moss for his pillow, and ruminated on the chances of life. His situation was a perplexing one; but he was young, ardent, and brave, and by far too sanguine to despair. He was surrounded by dangers on every side; but fatigue conquered his powers of thought, and he slept as soundly on that rude couch as if he had reposed on the softest down.

Alexander was yet young, but he was not unused to the changefulness of fortune. True, his father was a king, but his reign had been stormy, from its commencement to its close; and the prince was no stranger to his reverses, for he had shared them. He knew too the frail foundation on which his father grounded his title to the throne, which by right of inheritance belonged to Hyrcanus. But if Hyrcanus was the elder, he was entirely unfit to govern

a brave and warlike nation ; while Aristobulus his brother possessed in an eminent degree the qualities requisite for the government of a military people, such as the Jews were at that time. Alexander grieved to see his beloved country torn by faction, and destroyed as it were by her own children ; but he never for a moment blamed his father, nor considered him as accessory to its destruction. On the contrary, he looked on him as a patriot, suffering bondage for his country's sake ; and he determined to avenge his cause or die.

Any one, who is at all acquainted with Jewish history, is aware of the distractions of Judea which took place on the death of Alexandra. Hyrcanus was the next heir to the crown ; but being of a weak, vacillating disposition, he lay completely at the mercy of the Pharisees, a sect which had been in high favour during the regency of his mother. Alexandra had conciliated them ; but she was a woman of strong and vigorous intellect ; she seemed to be entirely governed by their counsels, while in fact she ruled them. The art of becoming popular lies not so much in giving way, as in seeming to do so, to the opinions of the people. Unlike his mother, Hyrcanus was weak and wavering, and

just the sort of king who is liable to be made the puppet and tool of a faction ; and while he supinely rested in the assurance of ascending the throne, his younger brother, brave, vigorous, and aspiring, was actively employed in winning the favor of the people. He was high in the estimation of the army, regarded by the people as the fittest representative of the Maccabees, and possessing a strong desire to rule. In the early part of Hyrcanus' reign, he drove him from the throne, and took possession of the crown he so coveted. Hyrcanus seemed content to remain in the quiet obscurity to which the imperious Aristobulus and his own inactive disposition had consigned him ; and he would probably have never again emerged from it, had not Antipater (father of the notorious Herod afterwards king) an Idumean of noble birth, whom Aristobulus had the misfortune to offend, and who therefore closely adhered to the fortunes of the elder brother, stirred up the inglorious spirit, and worked upon the easy and yielding nature of his master, by tales of a conspiracy, which he said was formed against his life. It was long ere he could induce Hyrcanus to listen to his invidious charges ; for though he was deficient in the warlike attributes

of the high and noble race he sprang from, he was naturally unsuspecting; and being himself incapable of aught so treacherous as to conspire against his brother's life, he believed Aristobulus equally free from treachery. "We threw our rights in the scale of war," he would say, in reply to Antipater's insinuations; "Aristobulus conquered me fairly. Our conditions were agreed on in the sight of God and man, and ratified in the temple by a fraternal embrace. He has my crown, and governs over my—I should say his—people. I have not wronged him. I have not disturbed him in his government. He is fitter to rule than I; the people and the soldiers have chosen him for their king, and I am content. No, my Antipater; thy zeal for thy master betrays thee into injustice towards thy king. Wherefore should he seek my life?" "The tyrant seeks no reason but his own safety," replied the artful counsellor. "He is not secure, while Hyrcanus lives—for the besotted people are already awakening to a sense of the injustice they have done. They will forsake the usurper, and return to their allegiance. Mark me, prince; it is thine own fault if Aristobulus wears thy crown or wields thy sceptre longer. His army is ripe for revolt. Dost

thou marvel now that he seeks to be rid of one who is like to be so troublesome ?”

Hyrchanus yielded at length ; and at the head of fifty thousand men, whom Aretas, king of Arabia Petra, had been induced to raise in his behalf, he marched to Jerusalem, and defeating Aristobulus, drove him to take refuge in the mount of the temple. As Antipater had predicted, the people had flocked by thousands to the banner of Hyrchanus ; and in his last extremity, the remnant who had still clung to the fallen fortunes of Aristobulus, deserted him. Of all who followed his fortunes in prosperity, the priests alone remained by him in his reverses. With these devoted and gallant men, he retired to and fortified the temple, where they were subjected to a long and harassing siege. It was during this siege that Onias, a holy man, gave utterance to that beautiful prayer that cost him his life, and immortalized his name. It was supposed that once, during a time of great drought, his prayers had procured rain ; and the multitude believing his curses would be equally efficacious, brought him forth, and besought him to curse Aristobulus. For a long while Onias resisted all importunity ; but finding it would be worse than useless to attempt evasion, he devoutly

prayed: "O, Lord God; King of the Universe! —since those that are with us are thy people, and those that are besieged in thy temple are thy priests, I pray that thou wouldst hear the prayers of neither of them against the other." This adjuration, so different from what they had solicited, or expected, inflamed the besiegers so much, that they stoned him to death on the spot.

Soon after this occurrence, Aristobulus received intelligence that Scaurus, one of the lieutenants of Pompey, the Roman general, was quartered at Damascus, with a large detachment of troops. To him he applied for assistance. Hyrcanus adopted the same measure; but Scaurus yielded to the suit of Aristobulus, influenced no doubt by the knowledge that the temple treasure was in his possession. Perhaps the same motive acted on Gabinius, another Roman officer, who, fortunately for Aristobulus, happened then to be in the province; at all events, Aretas received orders to break up the siege, and to retire to his own territory.

On the receipt of this order, which was accompanied, in case of disobedience, by a threat to invade his kingdom, and lay it waste with fire and sword, the king of Arabia with-

drew his forces, and marched from Jerusalem. Burning for revenge, Aristobulus followed with what troops he could collect, gave him battle, and defeated him with great slaughter, at a place called Papyrion. But it would swell these pages to a tedious length to enter into minute detail of the various negociations, sieges, &c., &c., that preceded the capture of the Jewish prince, under the orders of Pompey the Great, who espoused the cause of Hyrcanus, influenced no doubt by the bribes and intrigues of Antipater and his son Herod. Suffice it, that after a three months' siege in the temple, in which he had again taken refuge, he was taken prisoner, and Pompey intended to carry him, with his sons Alexander and Antigonus, and two of the princesses, his daughters, to Rome.

The proud spirit of Alexander chafed at the disgrace of his house, and his heart yearned to the country over which he had hoped to reign at some future period, and from which he was about to be carried away captive; and still more forcibly did it yearn toward his beautiful wife and children—for Alexander was a father. The nature of the prince was too fiery and impatient to allow him to brood long over his misfortunes, without seeking to remedy them. Often did he

ponder over the means of his meditated escape. Many were the schemes that his ever active mind presented; but all were rejected in turn, for all possessed the same objection, namely, a want of feasibility. At length chance (or Providence, which, with the inborn ingratitude of human nature, we are all too ready to call by that more worldly name,) effected for the prisoner what his own ingenuity failed to accomplish. After a day's march, they had arrived at the seaport town from which they were to embark on the following morning, and Alexander ceased to hope. It was midnight; the guard had just been changed, and a deep and solemn silence brooded over the earth; but Alexander vainly endeavoured to woo sleep to his embrace. Feverish and restless, he paced the narrow limits of his prison chamber. His heart swelled with many an indignant throb; and in the deep stillness of the hour, he fancied he could hear its rapid and irregular pulsations. A heavy fall roused him from his melancholy meditations; and hastening to the door, he essayed to open it. It was fastened on the outside. "Fool!" muttered the prince, between his closed teeth; and he bit his nether lip until the blood started. "Fool that I am; am I not

a prisoner? The lion caught in the hunter's toils may chafe and fret, but he is not the less surely deprived of freedom, and his captors enjoy the terrible struggles of the mighty animal to shake off his ignoble bonds. But all his efforts serve no other purpose than to entangle him still farther in the meshes of the treacherous net. I am in the situation of the captive lion, and my efforts at freedom are equally vain and fruitless. Oh! that I had died for thee, my country—my poor, prostrate country! The foot of the Roman has been upon thy soil, his eye has gloated on thy beauties—he has pierced the mystery of thy sanctuary, and profaned thy holiest place: and thou wilt one day be but a province of Rome! * The hawk hovers not over the dovecote with a more longing eye—the vulture scents not his prey from afar with a more voracious appetite—the wolf approaches not the sheepfold with a more murderous design, than the Roman has approached and looked upon thee. Oh, Jerusalem! Jerusalem! lost, devoted city!—thy days are numbered; and this good right arm must wither in a dun-

* When Pompey took the Temple, fancying there were treasures concealed in the Ark, he removed the veil, and entered the Holy of Holies.

geon, and may not be stretched forth to save thee: and this panting soul must waste its strength and energies in weeping for thee, when they might have been exerted to save thee."

A faint moan without attracted the prince's attention. Again he tried the door, and again he turned away with the galling feeling of disappointment, that is so bitter to a young proud spirit. "And yet," he said, "it concerneth me not! Why should I seek to discover what wretch may be now expiring—perhaps a Roman soldier in his dying throes! So much the better! It will be one enemy less for Judea." Yet, in spite of his philosophic resolve to abstain from seeking farther, Alexander's curiosity was painfully excited; and he knew it could only be gratified by forcing the door, before the guard was changed. Again he examined it carefully; nothing but force could open it from within. "There is still one chance for freedom left," sighed the prince. "Could I but open this cursed barrier to my egress—let the result be what it may, I will try;" and he applied his strength to the task. It shook beneath the brawny sinews of the Asmonean. He paused, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and then renewed his efforts. A dead weight

from without, seemingly placed there to baffle his labour, increased the difficulty threefold ; but Alexander was not to be discouraged. Again he pressed his shoulder against it. It groaned and cracked beneath the pressure. The veins started in his brow, and the blood gushed from his nostrils with the mighty effort ; yet still he persevered. At length it yielded, and gave way, and, staggering from the effects of his exertions, and covered with blood and perspiration, he stood once more under the blue canopy of heaven, a free man.

The extraordinary obstruction to his labours lay before him, in the form of a heavy German legionary, stiff and dead. He had fallen down in a fit, and died for want of timely assistance.

Alexander saw there was no time to lose. Promptitude alone could save him. The situation in which he stood was a novel one ; the moments were fraught with fate, and there were none to spare in deliberation—for already the stars were waxing pale before the coming dawn. He stood upon the ramparts of a large stone building, and could distinctly hear the tread of the other sentinels, as they paced along the battlements. Before him lay the blue waters ; the swelling bosom of the waves was dotted with the

vessels destined to convey the Roman general, his army, and royal prisoners to the imperial city.

Alexander was not ignorant of his position ; but fortunately he was as well acquainted with the localities as with the dangers by which he was surrounded. At a short distance along the coast was a singular cavern, the entrance of which he had discovered by chance, and which was so well concealed, that if he could once gain it in safety, there was scarcely a possibility of discovery. But to go unarmed, and unprovided with any necessary, would be madness ; and notwithstanding his impatience he was not willing to hazard recapture, for want of a little prudent forethought. To delay the search for his person as long as possible, was a primary consideration. The only way that presented itself to effect this very necessary delay, was to conceal the dead body of the soldier ; and as that would probably be the last place subjected to suspicion, he dragged the corpse of the sentinel into the chamber he had been placed to guard. He then unfastened the sword and leathern purse secured in the girdle of the poor legionary. It was with a feeling of sickness, nearly allied to loathing, that the prince took possession of these articles,

although they were now so valueless to their former owner, and would be eminently useful to himself. But necessity has no law ; and, however disgusted he felt at the means he was obliged to resort to, in order to regain his freedom, he shrunk not from using them. This done, Alexander paused—for his strength was well nigh exhausted ; but nothing daunted, he seized the wine flask, from which a few hours before he had turned with loathing, and drank a long invigorating draught. Cooled and refreshed, he secured the remainder, together with some dried fruits, in the folds of his dress. Nothing now remained to be done but to fasten the door, and remove other appearances of violence as much as possible.

He then proceeded to examine at what point descent would be most practicable. There was not much time for this precaution—for already the eastern sky was streaked with a faint line of light. A scarf, a love token from his wife, was his only means of descent. This he fastened around the trunk of one of the trees with which the terrace was lined, and securing the other end round his middle, he swung himself off. Deceived by the obscurity, Alexander had miscalculated the distance to the ground, and

the destinies of the Asmonean prince hung suspended by a silken thread, midway between earth and heaven. What was to be done in this extremity? Another might have given himself up for lost, and abandoned himself to his fate. Not so Alexander. He had risked too much, and he determined to escape or die. But now the faint yellow on the horizon had deepened into glowing crimson, and every moment increased the danger of his position and the probability of detection. If he loosed the frail thread, which was already cracking with the straining weight attached to it, inevitable death was the consequence; but death was preferable to recapture. To reascend was the only alternative. The task was a difficult one: but he was young, active, and determined; and it was accomplished. It was but the exertion of a few moments, and he was again on firm ground. Quickly he unwound the shawl of which his turban was composed, and splitting it in twain, fastened it to the end of the scarf which had previously sustained him, and again commenced his descent. This time he reached the ground in safety.

We shall not pause to describe the consternation occasioned by the flight of the prince.

Suffice it that he baffled his pursuers, and reached in safety the spot where we left him sleeping, and to which we shall now return.

This spot was not, as some of my readers might suppose, the cave wherein he had taken refuge on the day of his escape; but merely a reft in a rock, about five hours' journey from Alexandrion, a strong city, built on a rock, on the very confines of Judea, and overlooking the barren and arid sands of Arabia Deserta, the fortifications of which had been nearly destroyed by the Romans, who had besieged it a few months before, during the time it was garrisoned by his father's troops. Thither Alexander intended to hasten, and repairing the walls and fortifications, to defend himself from his enemies, whilst stone walls and faithful hearts stood firm against the attacks of invaders; and in this resolve he was strengthened by the knowledge that his wife and children were at present residing there.

CHAPTER II.

But turn and look ! then wonder, if thou wilt,
That I should hate, should take revenge by guilt,
Upon the hand, whose mischief, or whose mirth,
Sent me thus maimed and monstrous upon earth ;
And on that race, who, though more vile they be
Than mowing apes, are demigods to me !
Here, judge if hell, with all its power to damn,
Can add one curse to the foul thing I am !”

MOORE.

THE morning sun had completed three hours of his journey ere the prince awoke. His head ached no longer. His limbs were invigorated by repose. His spirits arose as the fresh mountain breeze wantoned carelessly over his face. He determined to push on to Alexandrion as soon as he finished his simple repast, which, like that of the preceding evening, consisted of the luscious grape, with the addition of some wild honey, which he had found in the fissures of the rock. “The couch which nature spreads, and the simple diet that requires not the aid of art to render it palatable to the taste, give the glow of

health to the cheek, keep the head cool, and the hand steady for action."

The prince started, as these remarks, uttered in a voice of the most unpleasing and dissonant harshness, fell upon his ear; nor was the disagreeable impression the tones left upon his mind at all lessened by the appearance of the speaker, who now stood before him. He was about three feet seven or eight inches high, with long bony arms and hard sinewy hands. His head was immeasurably disproportionate to his body, and seemed to grow directly from his shoulders, as if disdainful of the intermediate space of a throat. His forehead was low and contracted; his nose long and considerably hooked; his large mouth was frightfully distorted; and his teeth, of dazzling white, resembling more the fangs of a savage beast than the teeth of a human being, were too long and sharp to permit the thin blue lips to close upon them; while, from beneath the bent and lowering brows shone forth a pair of indescribable black eyes. To say that in expression they combined the cautious cunning of the fox, with the bitter malignity of the fiend, would be to convey but a faint idea of the reality. The flash of the meteor, the glare of the firebrand,

might have paled before those eyes ; they had no parallel in nature ; and it were but a fruitless task to seek for that which is not. But those orbs were the mirrors of a heart that for cruelty, craft and hatred to all his species, might have belonged to the arch-fiend himself. It was not, then, with the most complacent feeling or admiring glances, that the young man gazed upon this surpassing specimen of human deformity. Nor did the dress of this singular being at all soften the outline of his figure, which, besides its dwarfish stature, was otherwise deformed by a huge hump, that rising between his shoulders, grew gradually upward, until it became a formidable rival to his large ill-set head. He wore a long flowing robe of black, which descended to the ankle. This robe was fastened round the waist by a crimson girdle. A conical cap of the same material surmounted his coal-black hair, and a pair of goatskin sandals completed his costume. A feeling of terror, he knew not why—for his was not a mind to be easily subdued—crept over Alexander ; and his intelligent features, the true index of his high and noble heart, betrayed the only half acknowledged feeling that chilled it. A terrible smile distorted the features of the dwarf, as he marked the impression his pre-

sence produced on his companion ; but, without pausing for an answer to his first remark, he proceeded. "Thou art bound for Alexandrion. Nay, son of Aristobulus, interrupt me not. I know it is thy destination. Aye, and I know, too, thy purpose in journeying thither. Thou wouldst defend thyself from the power of thine uncle Hyrcanus, and his Roman auxiliaries, and preserve to thyself the freedom thou hast achieved. Thou wouldst redeem thy father, brother, and sister from slavery. Thou wouldst replace Aristobulus on the throne of Judea ; and if that be not possible, thou wouldst reign in his stead. Is it not so ? But there needs no reply : I can read it in the lightning flash of thy dark eye, and the bright flush of thy young cheek. I can read it in the dilation of thy proud nostril, and the haughty curve of thy lip ; but, above all, in the short quick breath, and the heaving of the chest. Thou wouldst do all this : but to do it well, thou wilt need, besides the brave hearts and ready hands of thy partisans, a friend to assist thee in council—not one to lead thy forces to the field, and teach them by glorious example how to live as warriors and die as men ; not one who by his eloquence can stir up even the coward to courage, and render the

brave man doubly brave ; not one who can be equally great in defeat as in victory—for all this thou canst accomplish for thyself—and who so fit to lead an army, to win a kingdom, as he who is to rule it? Who so proper to show men how to grace a victory, or to triumph over a defeat, as he whose all is centered in the deep game of war they are playing? A prince who is desirous of wresting a crown from the brows of another, to place it upon his own, must teach the soldiers who fight for it, and the people who give it, that he fears not to share the danger of gaining it, nor is unable to preserve it when it is gained. But still thou wilt need a friend, who can counsel thee how to act; one who has already seen kingdoms lost and won; one who has traversed three parts of the habitable globe, and made man his study—not the study of an hour, a day, or a week, but of months and years, and read thoroughly their weaknesses, their vices, their crimes, as well as their virtues and greatnesses, (if they possess any),” he added, bitterly; “one who combines the wisdom and experience of years, with the devoted energies and strength of youth; and such an one stands before thee—such an one will I be.”

“Thou !” exclaimed Alexander, in undisguised astonishment, all the high-wrought visions fancy had been weaving for the last few moments, vanishing like the beautiful tracery of frostwork in the sun. “Yes, I, prince, think as lightly as thou wilt. Nor will I deceive thee in one iota. I will not tell thee I will do all I have said for nothing. I will not tell thee I have no interest in the game, and that pure patriotism alone dictates the offer of my services—for he who perils life and limb for the chance (and it is but a mere chance) of being spoken of as a patriot, is in my opinion but little better than the fool who fought with his own shadow for following him. No ; I will not tell thee this, for thou wouldst not believe it. Know, then, that I have a stake as deep as thine—the stake of love ; and when I have counselled and led thee on to victory ; when I have shown thee how to free thy kindred from captivity ; when I have taught thee how to bring thine enemy to thy feet ; when I have graced thy brows with the regal diadem, and placed the sceptre of Judea in thine hand ; then, and not before, will I claim my reward ; and to thee it will seem nought, though to me it is of more real value than the glory and the power of the Roman, or

the boundless treasures of the earth. Promise me, prince, on the word of an Asmonean, that if I realize—and I solemnly aver that I can do so—the vision of glory, wealth, and power I have laid before thee, that the princess Helena shall be mine.” Then laying his long bony hand on that of the shrinking prince, he fixed his keen searching eyes on his face.

Stunned, stupefied, bewildered, as one in the mazes of a troubled dream, Alexander had listened to the words of the strange apparition, seeming to hear the sound, without comprehending its sense; but when he wound up the whole by a declaration of love for his young and beautiful sister Helena, the prince, who was keenly alive to a sense of the ridiculous, when he looked on the grotesque figure of the uncouth being, and thought of him as a suitor for female loveliness, could no longer restrain his mirth, and the rocks around him rung forth to his wild peal of loud and not unmusical laughter. “Thou,” he said, when the first burst of merriment had ceased, “thou place me on the throne of my fathers! Thou marry Helena—the graceful, the admired, the courted Helena! Ha! ha! ha! Why, thou pitiful libel of

man—thou hideous humpbacked, presumptuous dwarf—thou foul lampoon of our species—thou vile ape, how darest thou think of mating with the beautiful? By the living God, I would trample thee under my foot for thy daring, but that I scorn thee for thine insignificance.” “Prince,” and he drew his hand away:—“Prince! the living God has not created the meanest reptile that crawls the earth without an end; and my end,”—he spoke in a deep hoarse whisper, while all the evil passions that can darken the soul seemed concentrated in the demoniac expression of that hideous face, and the glance of fell malignity that absolutely burned in those terrible eyes, curdled the warm blood in the veins of his companion and paled the proud cheek of the noble Asmonean,—“my end is revenge. I offered thee my services, my friendship—for what?—the trifling reward of a woman’s hand. Thou hast rejected my proffered services—rejected them with scorn. Thou hast called me a dwarfed humpback—thou wert right: a lampoon upon thy species—thou wert right: an ape—why in that thou wert right too; but know the power, that set a seal on me, that made me a thing apart from the rest of mankind, a

thing to be mocked at, hated, shunned, despised, that power that cursed me with the form of an ape, gifted me with its cunning malignity. The ape never forgets the person of one who has injured it: nor will I. Thou hast vented thy wrath in scornful words, and mocking laughter. I will show my revenge in deeds—deeds that shall be written in thy blood, and sealed with thy life. Thou hast scoffed at my love. Now, take my hate. Thou hast refused me as a friend, and now I will be thy foe; and for thy threats, I defy thee. I will be to thee what the canker is to the rose, and the blight to the fruit. I will be to thee what the wasting hopelessness of unrequited love is to the young cheek of beauty. I will eat the heart from thy buds of hope; I will be a serpent in thy path, the bane of thine existence. Prince of Judah! son of Aristobulus! beware of Simeon the hump-backed dwarf. Beware of Simeon the Gideonite!" Alexander laughed aloud, and eyeing the dwarf with a look of mingled pity and contempt, spat upon him.

Slowly and deliberately Simeon raised his coarse hand, and swinging round his muscular arm, he struck the prince, who was unprepared

for the blow, to the ground, and kneeling on the prostrate body, he clutched the throat with his bony fingers. The veins started with agony: the face of Alexander grew livid; there was a gurgling, like the death rattle in his throat: another moment, and he must have been a corpse. But a sudden thought seemed to have crossed the mind of his assailant—for, loosening his deadly gripe, he arose. "Not yet," he said, as he glared into the face of the scarcely conscious prince; "not yet—thy cup is not full: but this hand shall still be bathed in thy blood, and this heart shall yet slake its burning, and till then undying thirst for revenge in the purple life-stream of thine. Prince, farewell! We shall meet again, not in the silence of morning, amid the wild fastnesses of nature, with only the eternal heavens for our witness; but the eyes of thousands will be upon us. Whenever misfortune overtakes thee, I will be nigh. When thine head is on the block, and the arm of the executioner is raised to strike it off, while mocking crowds exult in thine ignominious death, then will I be there. And the gibe that is bitterest, the laugh that is loudest, and the jest that is most scornful and

galling, shall be the gibe, laugh, and jest, of the dwarf. Farewell, prince; once more I bid thee beware of the Gideonite." Then wrapping his long black robe about him, he turned and departed.

CHAPTER III.

His Ellen clung round him ; his children with smiles
Hailed their father's return to the home of his birth ;
Their innocent prattle his sorrow beguiles,
And the castle resounds with the voices of mirth.

CAPTIVE'S DREAM.

THE scene of our story is changed, and we are about to introduce a new and not unimportant character to the reader. Perched on the very summit of a lofty rock, and surrounded by the dilapidated walls of a fallen city, not the ruin of age, and hoar with antiquity, but a city destroyed within a few months, stood the fortress castle of Alexandrion. The battlements were broken down in many places, and there was an air of desolation in the gloomy grandeur of the half dismantled fortress, that struck a chill to the heart. But there was still some portion of the castle habitable; and the beautifully terraced gardens had escaped the hands of the spoiler, and were still in a high state of cultivation; and

the sweet scent of the perfumed flowers was gently wafted by a pleasant breeze through the half open casement of an apartment opening upon the ground. The lattice was overgrown by jessamine, clematis, and a profusion of other beautiful creepers. The soft air of evening was rendered musical by the hum of a thousand bright and beautiful insects; the winged children of the glorious summer mingling their voices with the mournfully sweet cadences of the nightingale, who had built its home among the dark foliage of a stately cedar, whose leafy luxuriance perfectly concealed the melancholy song-bird from human observation. The sky was cloudlessly blue, save where it was tinged with the many brilliant hues of dying day. It was a lofty chamber, furnished with much costliness and taste. In the centre a small exquisitely carved fountain of alabaster threw up a stream of rose water, which performed the double office of cooling and perfuming the air. A glowing profusion of flowers, tinged with every hue of the rainbow, were arranged in vases of the purest chrysal; and luxurious couches and ottomans of brodered velvet, were ranged around. The occupants of this chamber consisted of a

group of three females, and two young children. Two of the former were engaged at an embroidery frame, and conversing together in suppressed whispers. The other, who was evidently the superior, sat apart. She might have been about twenty-one or two; she was not more, but the bud and promise of spring had ripened into the full maturity of womanhood and beauty. She was negligently attired in a loose robe of white gauze; but the careless folds of her drapery increased rather than diminished the grace of her rounded and somewhat voluptuous figure. A necklace of pearl was twisted round her swan-like throat, and a network of the same costly material confined her long black hair. Her countenance was eminently beautiful, and there was an air of firmness and decision about the well cut mouth, that harmonised with the severe style of her beauty; tall and commanding in height, there was that air of majesty and innate nobility in her manners, which seemed to proclaim the blood of princes in her veins. Such was the princess Alexandra, at the time of which we speak; and though she afterwards became an intrigante at the court of that king whose family and self had caused the death of her noble hus-

band, and the dethronement, mutilation, and death of her father, yet at that time no debasing thought had sullied the purity and dignity of her mind. Those two dear pledges of her love were already fated, as they sported at their mother's feet, and as in fancy she traced out their future career—oh ! how little did she dream that early and unnatural death would destroy them both !

Her cheek was extremely pale—for the rich glow that health gives the complexion was gone. She had been weeping ; and as she put back the dark hair that clustered round the ivory forehead of Mariamne, whose countenance already gave promise of that surpassing loveliness which made her at once the favourite and the victim of Herod, she could no longer restrain her sorrow ; and the choking sensation of grief at last found vent in words. But Alexandra's haughty spirit brooked not that her maidens should witness its outpourings, and she bade them retire. " The prince and princess?" said one of them, in a tone of inquiry. " Leave them ;" and she was alone with her children. Then, then, were the passionate feelings loosened from the icy fetters of pride ; the frame shook, and the chest heaved

with the deep-drawn sobs of long pent-up agony, while she clenched her small white hands, until the blood almost started. It is terrible to witness the breaking forth of the feelings of one who ordinarily restrains them within the bonds of self-control. The young Aristobulus and his sister, children as they were, terrified at the excess of their mother's sorrow, twined their arms round each other, and wept bitterly. "My children," passionately exclaimed Alexandra, as she gazed on her offspring; "my worse than orphaned children, well may ye weep: and yet, poor babes, your tears flow ye know not wherefore—ye know not that your father is a prisoner in a strange land. Oh, Alexander! Alexander! why were we sundered? Why may I not share the bitterness of thy captivity? The gloom and misery of a prison with thee were a thousand times preferable to liberty without thee." "Therefore am I here to share it with thee, my beloved!" And the young matron was clasped in the arms of her husband. No exclamation burst from her lips, no tears rolled down her cheeks; but the fire of those dark eyes seemed melted into liquid light, as her head drooped upon her shoulder, and he pressed the warm kiss of chaste affection on her

brow. It was a bright moment of happiness that meeting, a green spot in the waste; and their children—there was something inexpressibly beautiful in those words, at least to them—for they conveyed whole worlds of passionate love, whose depths were only to be felt, not spoken.

The glorious sun was gone; but the chaste moon threw a pale silvery radiance over the scene. The children had wept themselves to sleep in each other's arms. Happy childhood! what a blessed prerogative is thine. There is no thorn on thy pillow. No stormy passions disturb the tranquillity of thy repose! But thy brief period is not all joy. Oh, no! that is a fiction of the poet: yet though thou art sometimes doomed to weep, thou canst at least weep thyself into forgetfulness. Who can look upon thine innocent slumbers, and not feel that there is yet peace on earth? It was a beautiful thought that of the old Greek poets, to endow love with the form of a blind child; for what is so much calculated to excite the purest and holiest emotions of our nature, as the artless beauty of that tender age?—and when childhood is united with affliction, cold indeed must be the heart that views it without sympathy. And

is not sympathy the parent of love? So felt that young husband and wife, as they sat gazing on the fair forms of their sleeping children, until the moon waned, and day—a day of freshness and glory—dawned upon the world again.

The moments snatched from war, and dedicated to love, were few, for Alexander's life was an eventful one; and, however mistaken were his motives, we cannot but admire the zeal and courage of the young prince, whose life ultimately paid the forfeit for a misdirected, but not vain, ambition. Prompt as he was brave, a short time sufficed for Alexander to repair the damages the walls had sustained; and the cities of Machaerus and Hyrcanus, as well as Alexandrion, were soon in a state of defence, and garrisoned by a considerable force, who flocked at once around the standard of a leader so well calculated to excite the enthusiasm of a brave people. The education of Alexander had been essentially military; but he possessed all the courtly accomplishments requisite to enable him to maintain the dignity of his station in peace or war, and possessed, in an eminent degree, the art of acquiring friends; and what is of yet

greater importance, the still more enviable and difficult art of retaining them. Those who were once admitted to the private confidence of this high-minded, amiable, and persecuted prince, never forsook him. Once his friend, was to be his friend always.

CHAPTER IV.

Have I not suffered things to be forgiven ?
Have I not had my brain seared—my heart riven ?

Feared—shunned—belied—ere youth had lost her force,
He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call,
To pay the injuries of some on all.

BYRON.

SLOWLY Simeon threaded his way through the intricate mountain paths, until he arrived at a secluded and woody dell, whose wild and lonely beauty looked as if it had never till now been profaned by the unwelcome foot of man. He flung himself down upon the soft emerald turf, at the foot of a pine which had been riven by lightning—whose lofty head, towering on high, and seared and leafless branches, contrasting with the vernal green around, gave an air of gloomy grandeur to the scene. “Curses on him—curses on his race; and all who bear the name of man!” said the Gideonite, bitterly. “The earth, sea, and sky, are glad and beautiful, and revel in the consciousness of their beauty.

Man links himself with his brother man, and they rejoice together. Infancy is soothed by the caresses of those who gave it being; manhood is cheered by the gentle smile and tender embrace of the young, the loving, and the beautiful; age is smoothed in its path to the grave by the hand of youth, who thus repays the care bestowed upon it in childhood. The birds build themselves nests, and dwell therein. The beasts flock together in herds; even the hyena, fierce, wild, and untameable as it is, has its mates and younglings to cling to; the meanest insect, the veriest reptile that crawls upon the earth, has something to love, and be loved by in return. And I alone, of all created beings, am selected to be despised, loathed and shunned by my species. Why is this? Is it for wronging my fellows? Is it for sinning against my Maker?—for robbing the widow, or deceiving the fatherless? No, no, no! it is for none of these offences—for it commenced with my birth, and ripened while I was yet an unconscious infant on my mother's bosom. It was not for any fault of mine own. Wherefore was it, then? Because, forsooth, my face was less beautiful, and nature curtailed this poor, stunted, misshapen mass of clay, and made it a mockery of

man. They have treated me as a worm, but I will avenge myself as a snake. They have trampled down every feeling of humanity in my breast—they have shrunk from me as a pestilence, and avoided me as a demon. By Gehinnom, if I have the form, I will show them that I have likewise the heart of a fiend! He, even he, the proud Asmonean prince, might yet have saved me, and would not. I am what the world has made me; and by the God of my fathers, I will pay them back in kind.”

True were the words of the Gideonite. He had, indeed, been a lonely being from his birth. His father had early married his mother—married her for her beauty, for she was portionless, while he was almost boundlessly wealthy. The only fruit of this union was the unfortunate Simeon. A child so unlike its lovely mother, excited no other feeling than disgust in the mind of its father, and Joash wedded another wife. Bitterly did Hannah repine at seeing another occupying her place; and that repining engendered a feeling of detestation towards the unconscious and innocent cause of her husband's estrangement, so that Simeon might be said to have been literally nurtured on the stream of hate. Years passed away, and Joash

became the father of many sons and daughters, all surpassingly lovely, and poor Simeon early learned to know the value of personal attractions. Naturally of a passionate and loving disposition, his heart yearned for some object on which to lavish the kindly feelings of his nature ; but he could find no kindred soul. His father took no pains to conceal his dislike to the little unfortunate. His brothers and sisters would not suffer him to share in their childish sports ; and when he sought to unburthen his full heart to his mother, and would throw himself on her bosom, and weep, she strove not to soothe the poignancy of his grief ; she showed no sympathy with his childish sorrows ; but checking the full tide of confidence in its outpourings, she repelled him with hate. Even the very household slaves mocked at the deformed.

Thus repulsed on every side, the warm current of his affections chilled, and his feelings were thrown back to prey upon themselves. Simeon became a lonely and miserable being. Denied all companionship with his kind, he hated them with a burning intensity, such as only hearts like his can feel. In books he sought that sympathy which even a mother

refused ; and plunged in the thickest recesses of the forest, he gave up his soul to the enchanting love of the poets and fabulists of many lands, whose languages his indefatigable application and constant study enabled him to conquer. Or he would wander among the wild mountain scenery, sometimes absenting himself from home for weeks together. This constant estrangement from all that makes home dear to the heart—this shutting out of all social ties—hardened his heart, and drying up the source of every tender feeling, converted him to the belief that every living thing was leagued against him ; and his dislike, as we have said, grew into hate. Insensibly at first the course of his studies engendered a desire to visit other lands, which at length grew into a passion. As soon as he expressed this desire, his father, who was far from anxious to detain him, furnished him with ample means for travel. Without a single regretful feeling at leaving the home of his birth, he quitted his native city ; and having journeyed through Judea, he hastened to Greece. Sadly he wandered through that beautiful land. Every where he saw the marks of devastation. The foot of the Roman had been there, and Greece was no longer the land of the free.

Sickening, he turned from those scenes of desolation and ruin; and leaving the land of the conquered, repaired to that of the conqueror. He visited Rome. He wandered among the monuments of art. He mixed with her people; and his capacious mind saw at a glance the source of Roman wealth and power. He was in the emporium of civilization; but his spirit was restless; for amid the vast multitudes that thronged the streets of that ever busy city, no heart beat in unison with his own. He saw gay groups of merry children sporting together; and memory reverted to his own unloved and neglected childhood. He spoke to them in the language of love; but every rosy face grew pale at his approach, and with cries of fear, or looks of mute terror, they shrank from the caress of the wretched dwarf.

He returned to his solitary abode, and wept in the bitterness of a seared and blighted heart. Few acquaintance did he make during his sojourn in Rome; but these few were men of power, who perceived the capacities of his mighty mind—a mind that had far outstripped his age—one that, had its energies been properly directed, might have benefitted his kind, and lived yet in the annals of his nation, embalmed, as other

names have been, in the tears of a grateful people. But it had been early warped; and the latent seeds of virtue, that needed but a fostering hand to produce glorious fruit, for want of culture had been choked up by weeds. Friends he had none. Again he resumed his wanderings, and leaving Rome and civilization behind, traversed great part of Germania. Even there, amongst the savages, he was avoided; and when they met him by chance, they fled away, howling forth they had seen an evil spirit. Heartsick and oppressed, Simeon traversed the mighty forests. Once only, when wounded by a poisoned arrow, he sought the hospitality of man; and then, refusing all assistance, the inhabitants hid themselves from him. Cursing the whole human race, he buried himself in an extensive wood, and laid himself down, as he thought to die. More than once his hand had been red with the blood of his fellow creatures, but then it was shed in self-defence. Now he felt as if he could remorselessly exterminate all who bore the hated name of man. At last he succeeded in extracting the arrow, and slowly recovered. He resumed his weary travel. He crossed the beautiful river, since so celebrated as the winding Rhine, and traversing Gallia crossed to

Britain, then but newly appended to the empire of Rome; and having explored that country in every direction, returned to his own. There were no glad anticipations of the delights of home to lighten his way. No hearts had sorrowed at his departure, none would expand and gladden at his return. No arms would open to receive him; no sweet familiar voices would breathe his welcome home. Home—that word usually so fraught with all the dear associations and fond remembrances of childhood, had no charms for him.

He had left the place of his nativity without one pang of grief, and he returned to it without one throb of pleasure. He found his father's house no longer what it had been; his mother was dead; and his beautiful brothers and sisters, one by one, as they had arrived at maturity, had sunk into the grave, and Joash was left to die alone. He had survived all his friends and kindred, all but the outcast offspring of Hannah, who arrived just in time to see him die. It is not to be supposed that such a child grieved for the loss of such a parent.

Simeon rose from his Shiva a solitary being; but he had been that even during the lifetime of his kindred, and he had grown callous to it.

He was now the master of unbounded wealth, unshackled by a single tie. He saw the distractions of his native land, and he lost no time in making himself acquainted with the cause of those distractions. He arrived in Judea just after the capture of Aristobulus; and in travelling to Jerusalem, he saw by chance the princess Helena.

Then, then the seared current of human affections burst forth again, and he loved with all the ardour of his own wild nature. Then, for the first time, he thought of and prized his wealth. He could hasten to the port from whence they were to embark, and ransom her father, brothers, and sisters, and then gratitude might induce Helena to listen to his suit. This plan was no sooner conceived than he hastened to carry it into execution; but despite of his diligence he arrived too late. Alexander had effected his escape; and Aristobulus, Antigonus, and the two princesses, were already far on their way to Rome.

Impatient of delay, he tracked the steps of the fugitive prince, determined to offer him his really valuable services, and thus by serving the brother secure the sister's hand. How that offer was received we have already recorded.

He was indeed what the world had made him ; and he left the young Asmonean with all his preconceived hatred of mankind rendered doubly venomous. “ Helena shall be mine,” he said, “ in spite of her proud brother ! Yes, she shall be mine, my wedded wife, ape as I am ; and he —ha ! ha ! ha !—the axe and the block, the axe and the block,” he slowly repeated, “ shall pay the debt I owe him.”

CHAPTER V.

That eve she sat alone within her bower,
Watching the streamlet as it murmured by ;
'Twas at that soft, that most bewitching hour,
When first pale Luna's beams illumine the sky.

* * * *

And never yet was scene so fair,
But something ill was lurking there.

BERTHA.

IN a secluded bower, formed of the twisted boughs of the scented myrtle, interlaced with clematis, at the close of a balmy summer day, sat the princess Helena. A quantity of beautiful flowers lay on her lap, and from them she was twining a garland, to wreath among the flowing ringlets that gracefully wantoned around her ivory neck and bosom. Helena was at that age when all worldly things are tinged with the fairy colouring of fancy—when the artless gaiety of the girl is so sweetly blended with the graceful timidity of early womanhood. She was lovely ; but hers was the loveliness that passeth descrip-

tion, for it was the beauty of expression, not feature.

The departing orb of day tinged the western sky with many-coloured and gorgeous light ; and the faint south wind, heavy with perfume, made sweet music among the whispering leaves. It was a gentle hour, and gentle indeed was the maiden who sat in that bower. She seemed to pursue her task mechanically, as she warbled forth one of the wild melodies of her country ; and as the rich cadences of her musical voice swelled on the southern wind, the tears rolled unheeded down her cheek. Sorrow had already found its way to that youthful heart. The captivity of her kindred sensibly affected her spirits, and the once gay princess became sad and melancholy. Her song had ceased ; and the half-finished wreath lay on her knee. She was not sleeping, but her spirit was rapt, and her imagination was busy, when the sound of a footfall on the dry leaves that had been shaken off by the wind, startled her from her reverie. She raised her eyes, and beheld the form of a man standing between her and the light of the newly-risen moon. She would have shrieked, but her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, and she sat as if spellbound, so still and motionless was she,

while her eyes remained rivetted upon the object before her. But the harsh voice of Simeon, for he it was, dispelled the charm, when hastily seizing her veil, which lay on the seat beside her, she threw it over her head, and rose to depart; but the Gideonite, divining her purpose, threw himself on his knees before her to prevent it. "Listen to me, lady," he said, imploringly; and Helena, fancying him a supplicant for some exertion of her benevolence, reseated herself, and listened attentively. "Princess," continued the Gideonite, still retaining his prostrate position; "I need not tell thee that thy father's hopes are crushed—for I doubt not thou knowest this; the tale that is fraught with sorrow always finds narrators. Perchance thou knowest, too, that thy brother Alexander has effected his escape." "I do," said the princess, marvelling greatly to what this preface might tend. "It is of him I would speak," resumed the dwarf. "'Tis true he has escaped; but—" "But what?" interrupted Helena, almost breathlessly. "Patience, lady: he has escaped from prison, but at present is wandering through the country, hunted like a beast of prey. His foes are on his track. This can last but a little while, for he is surrounded by snares on every side, and

he cannot escape them. What then will be his fate I leave thee to imagine." Helena clasped her hands in mute agony, and Simeon went on. "Yes; he will fall into their snares. The Romans are a merciless people, and a life of slavery and a death of ignominy will be the inevitable fate of thy gallant brother." "Is there no way to avert such a doom?—no way to save him from a fate so terrible?" demanded the princess, in a tone of unutterable anguish. "Yes, lady!—there is yet one chance left. There is one who would warn him of his danger; one who could,"—he laid a strong emphasis on the last word—"save him from the gulf of destruction that is yawning to receive him. But for a service so valuable he would require a reward." "Name it," said Helena, impatiently; "and though we are not what we have been, the wife and daughter of Aristobulus can still find enough to ransom Alexander, even if they part with their jewels to furnish the sum required;" and she looked at the gorgeous bracelet clasped round her slender wrist, and for the first time in life calculated its value. "Go," she continued, after a brief pause; "bring this being to me, and thou shalt ever have the prayers and gratitude of Helena." "Raise thy veil, lady," replied the dwarf; "the

man who could, who would save thy brother is here before thee." Helena threw aside her veil, and gazed on the hideous form and features of the Gideonite, who had sprung to his feet, and now stood erect before her in all his native deformity. She had seen him but imperfectly before, and now she shuddered, and with difficulty repressed the scream that rose to her lips. Simeon marked the sensation which his ill-favoured presence made on the beautiful girl. He compressed his lips, and clenched his hands forcibly together, to prevent any violent ebullition of ill-timed passion. "And for thy reward?" said Helena, faintly breaking the pause, and anxious to terminate an interview which she felt had already lasted too long, while with an instinctive foreboding of coming evil she dreaded his reply. "Thine hand, princess," he replied. "Keep thy gems—I want them not, save as a love-token;" and he proudly pushed back the bracelet which she had unclasped and extended towards him; and again prostrating himself, he caught the beautiful hand, and pressing it between his own rough palms, he poured forth a torrent of passionate words, expressive of his devoted and ardent love, not one of which the astonished maiden comprehended, save his calling her

“his Helena,” and wildly imploring her to become his bride. “Thy bride?” she exclaimed, almost gasping for breath; “thy bride? It cannot be. Now I comprehend all thy vile scheme. Thou hast been playing upon the feelings of a credulous girl, merely to answer thine own selfish ends. Thou hast wrung my heart to agony, to afford thee a moment’s sport; but thou hast foiled thyself. Begone, lest I be tempted to forget my royal birth and maidenly dignity. A daughter of the house of Asmoneus become thy bride? It is impossible; and I marvel at thy presumption in preferring a suit so insulting to her whose presence thou hast outraged by such words as thou hast spoken.” She endeavoured to pass him, and depart. “Why this sounds well, Helena,” tauntingly exclaimed her companion: “such words become the daughter of a captive; and the flush of anger harmonises with the delicacy of thy complexion. But,” he added, quickly changing his tone, “believe me, Helena, thou hadst better not decide too hastily, lest thou shouldst repent thy decision. Remember it is a brother’s life that is placed in the balance. What,” as the indignant princess haughtily averted her head, “wilt thou not listen?—well, be it so. I will detain thee no longer, for the

air is growing damp and chill. Farewell, lady ; may the hosts of heaven guard thy sinless rest. To-morrow I shall see thee again." Then springing to his feet, he disappeared through the thick belt of trees that fenced her bower.

Trembling with terror and apprehension, and panting from her recent excitement, Helena sped along the garden path, until she reached the house ; then bursting into her mother's presence, she flung herself on her bosom, and gave way to a passionate burst of tears.

"What ails thee, my daughter?" demanded the queen, as she fondly put back the disordered ringlets from the aching brow of the agitated maiden, and looked into her pale face with maternal solicitude.

Helena was too much exhausted to be able to reply. The violence of her emotions had overpowered and unnerved her, and she wept, till, childlike, she wept herself to sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

'Tis hard to bid a mother choose
Between her children, which she will sacrifice
To save the other? Both, both, are very dear; yet one
The choice must fall on.
There's no time for delay. Choose, and quickly,
Which shall't be?

M.S.

LONG before Helena rose from her couch the next morning, her mother was acquainted with the cause of her agitation on the previous evening. Simeon had been closeted with her for nearly two hours. It is needless to repeat all that passed at that interview, or what arguments he used to prevail on the unhappy queen to consent to his union with her daughter. Enough that he had wrought so skilfully on the mother's feelings as to induce her to sacrifice one child for the sake of another. She had placed the happiness of Helena in the scale with Alexander's life, and it weighed as nought in the balance. She knew there would be some difficulties to overcome, some scruples of delicacy

on the part of Helena; but she determined to overrule all objections, and with this resolution sought the princess's chamber. Helena was sleeping; and as the queen gazed upon those expressive features, hushed in the sweet calm of repose, and marked the ever changeful hue of the fair cheek whose rich natural bloom resembled the downy blush of the peach, while the hair of wavy jet, agitated by every breath, now veiled the snowy brow and glowing face in its thick masses, now revealed them in all their graceful loveliness, she sighed to think how soon that beauty would be worthless to its possessor. The thought was a saddening one, and filled her eyes with tears. As she bent over her daughter and pressed her lips to her radiant cheek, her scalding tears fell upon it.

Helena started; the light and healthful slumber of youth was broken, and raising herself on her pillow, she fixed an earnest and enquiring glance upon her mother. "What grieves thee, dear mother?" eagerly questioned the affectionate girl, as she threw her arms around her neck, and kissed away the tears from the pale face of the queen, who, unable longer to control her feelings, sobbed aloud. The princess repeated her question in a tone of alarm. "What grieves thee

my mother? Has aught again occurred to trouble thee? Wilt thou not confide in thine own Helena? O tell me thy sorrows; and if the most filial love, the most devoted and willing obedience can soothe or aid thee, thou shalt have no cause to regret thy confidence." "Thy ready obedience can alone aid me," replied the queen, struggling to regain her composure; "and on that I shall rely for support, Helena." Her voice and manner assumed a deep solemnity, as she added, "It is no trifle thy mother would ask, as a proof of thy love."

The impressive tones and sorrowful looks of the queen awed the princess, and filled her with anxiety, making her heart beat with a quicker throb, and tinging her cheek with a still deeper crimson. She listened in breathless attention as her mother proceeded. "My daughter, thou hast a serious duty to perform, and life or death hangs upon the manner in which thou dischargest it. Farther preface would be useless. Thou knowest thou wert ever my favourite child, and I would not lead thee astray; but thou answerest not—What am I to infer from thy continued silence? Answer me; art thou prepared to yield implicit obedience to my will, and to grant thy mother's ardent prayer?"

Helena whispered an assent. How unlike her usual cheerful tones sounded that hoarse and broken whisper, even to her own ear! She could not account for it; but her blood seemed to have lost its healthful play, and to creep sluggishly through her burning veins, while a weight as of iron lay upon her heart. A brief pause ensued, during which both seemed communing with their own thoughts. The queen was the first to break it. "Thanks, my daughter," she said, as she folded the agitated girl to her bosom. "Thou hast indeed removed the agony that oppressed me, and saved thy brother's life."

Helena's cheek grew livid. "Saved her brother's life?" The truth flashed upon her. She knew it, saw it all. It needed not the hurried narration of her interview with the dwarf, which her mother gave, to confirm her apprehension; yet she listened in mute attention, and no tears dimmed the natural brilliancy of her eyes, no tremor shook her voice as she said, "Now leave me, mother." The mother wept, as she looked upon the face of her child, and marked the deadly paleness of the features so lately flushed with health; but she never for a moment relented, nor wavered in her resolution; and when Helena repeated her desire to be left alone, she

quitted the chamber. Still the princess wept not; the tears seemed frozen in their fount, and a fearful sense of utter desolation oppressed her. She saw the immensity of the sacrifice she was required to make, but she thought not of receding. She knew that her own dream of happiness had faded for ever; but her brother's life would be the forfeit for her non-compliance, and the idea was too terrible to be borne. To hear his widowed wife reproach her, and say, as she pointed to her orphaned children, "But for thee, they had not been fatherless," was a thought she could not endure. And was there no other thought to wring her lacerated heart? Oh yes! but she repressed it in its birth. She would not trust herself to think of the loved, the absent one, to whom she had hoped to be united at no distant period. She would not suffer her imagination to brood too fondly over the past—for to draw comparisons between her former and her present lover was maddening.

Short was the time allowed for preparations. Four days was the utmost delay that could be made; and the only indulgence granted to the unhappy princess, was, that she should not be obliged to see the bridegroom until the morning of the bridal; and, as it was most consonant to

the feelings of all, the wedding was to be strictly private.

Four days! They seemed years to Helena, while passing; but how much change had they wrought in her! She was no longer the blooming happy girl, scarcely yet past the verge of childhood, but a pale heart-broken woman. The bridemaids admired the graceful symmetry of the fair princess, as they arrayed her in her bridal robes; but they failed not to mark the settled melancholy of her brow, as they twined the wreath of white almond-flowers in the braids of her hair; and they said, that never did young maiden look so pale and hopeless, yet so resignedly miserable on the morning of her bridal. Yet did she look very beautiful, but it was a beauty that is not of earth. She stood under the canopy, where the bridegroom appeared arrayed in cloth of gold stiff with the quantity of diamonds that ornamented it; but the splendour of his attire only served to render his deformity more conspicuous. A slight shudder passed through her frame, and her breast heaved convulsively; but it was only for a moment. Recovering her outward composure, she submitted passively to her fate. It was well for her the ritual required no effort of the

voice,* for she felt she was powerless to utter a word. The ceremony was over, the nuptial benediction given, and she was the wife of the Gideonite.

The thought of the object to be attained by her self-sacrifice had sustained her through the trial ; but now that it was over, human nature could endure no more. Uttering a deep groan, she fell heavily on the floor. At that moment a messenger, bearing a sealed packet, forced his way through the crowd of domestics, and placed his missive in the queen's hand. It was sealed with the signet of Alexander. Distracted between her terror for the senseless princess, and her anxiety to make herself acquainted with the situation of her son, she hastily broke the seal, and perused the contents of the packet. " God of heaven," she uttered, faintly, " what have I done?—my child, my child !" and she hurried to the sofa on which she lay. Alexander's letters had explained to her the mode of his escape, and he likewise detailed to her his meeting with the dwarf, and what had passed between them. Alas ! poor Helena ! her sacrifice had been in vain, and now it was too late to retract.

* The Jewish bride expresses her acquiescence to the marriage ceremony by signs only.—See MALAH, chap. i.

How bitterly did her mother repent of the fatal union she had enforced. "Helena, my child!" she shrieked in wild agony, "look up and tell me thou forgivest me!" But she spake to one who could never again return her tender caresses. For her brother's sake, Helena had submitted to become the wife of Simeon. For his sake she had struggled against all the most cherished feelings of her heart, and that proudly sensitive heart had broken in the struggle.

The wild shriek of the mother as she kissed her death-cold brow, told the tale to those around, and the bridal chamber was filled with the sound of wailing. The wretched queen was forcibly carried from the apartment to her own. Her first words, on her return to consciousness, was an order to secure the Gideonite, and place him in safe custody. But on search being made, he was nowhere to be found. Simeon had picked up Alexander's letter, which the queen had dropped in the moment of agitation, and making himself master of its contents, he thought it best to retire, truly conjecturing that he should be the object of the outraged mother's vengeance; and in the confusion that ensued, he found no difficulty in effecting his escape.

Once more alone in the world, the destroyer of the hapless Helena, with bitter imprecations on him, went forth to plot the destruction of the brother she died to save.

CHAPTER VII.

There was no portent in the sky,
No shadow on the round bright sun;
With music, mirth, and melody,
The long, fair summer days came on.

ALARMED at the rapid increase of his nephew's forces, and his military talents, Hyrcanus called in the Romans to assist him. Woe to the nation that sought their aid! From that hour it was no longer free. From the moment they stepped foot on the soil it was subjected to the magnificent but terrible tyranny of that nation, whose mighty power is unparelled in the history of the world. That nation, so splendid in its sunshine of pride, so contemptible in its downfall. Then the mistress of the world—now the most degraded of nations. O Rome! Rome! how art thou fallen—from the splendid despotism of the Cæsars, to the pitiful tyranny of the Pope; from the proud bravery of the ancient and stern republicans, to the miserable slaves who now dwell among thy ruins!

Gabinus, the Roman general, accepted the

offers of Hyrcanus, and entered Judea at the head of his legionaries. It was the eve of battle, and Alexander was in his tent alone. His lips were compressed, his brow contracted, and that countenance, usually so calmly beautiful, was working with dark and troubled thought. It was not fear that palcd the prince's cheek; but there was much in his situation for anxious thought and bitter reflection. He knew that his foes possessed every advantage. His own army was hastily organized, and their undisciplined zeal was no match for the trained and iron-nerved soldiers of Rome. Besides, he was truly a patriot; and holy as he deemed his cause, he shuddered at the idea of involving his beloved country in the desolation of civil war, and he wept—yes, he wept, and blushed not for his tears—to think of the kindred blood that would be shed on the morrow; of the homes and the hearts that would be made desolate for him; of the mothers who would be left childless, the wives husbandless, and the children fatherless—for what? he dared not ask himself. He thought of his own beautiful wife. He was going to war against her father, his uncle. The reflection was fraught with agony; yet it was now too late to retract. It was a long

miserable night to Alexander—a night of feverish excitement and conflicting feelings. He flung himself on his couch, but slept not. The boiling and effervescent blood could not be stilled to repose; and again he started up, and paced the tent with rapid strides. “Morning will never dawn,” he impatiently exclaimed, as he raised the curtain of his tent, and looked forth into the almost palpable blackness of the night; “how slowly the hours creep along! how interminable seems the night—it will never end.” Nevertheless, it did end, and the dawn came at last, clothed in her robe of light, and giving brilliant promise of a day of splendour. The hours moved not more slowly than ordinarily; but when did fiery and impatient youth calculate the movements of time by any other dial-plate than its own wayward feelings?

The dawn brightened into day, and with the return of light the prince regained his firmness; and his armour-bearer, as he assisted to equip him for battle, saw no trace of the emotion that had been at work, and the wearing excitement in which he had passed the night. His brow was calm and unruffled, and his features glowed with enthusiasm. “It is a glorious day, Reuben,” he said, as he buckled on his corslet;

“ may it be an omen of victory ! Is it not exhilarating to look on this beautiful sunshine ? It seems as if Providence smiled upon us.” “ It does indeed,” replied Reuben, catching a spark of his master’s enthusiasm ; “ and dastardly indeed would he be who doubted success under such a leader.” Alexander smiled. There never was a human heart, however noble, however exalted, that was insensible to the voice of praise.

Proudly beautiful looked that gallant and princely youth, as mounted on his battle steed he harangued his little army. His words were few, but they were energetic and inspiring, and he concluded by shouting forth the war-cry of his family. “ No, no, no ! We will have a new battle cry,” exclaimed the soldiers ; and shouting forth “ For Alexander, freedom, and Judea !” they rushed into the battle.

The conflict was hot and fierce, while it lasted ; but it was soon over. Alexander’s undisciplined troops could not withstand the serried phalanx of their foes, whose compact ranks seemed impenetrable. Not long was the victory doubtful : Alexander was defeated ; his army scattered and flying in the utmost confusion ; and himself, obliged to abandon all hopes of retrieving his

loss, borne along in the crowd of fugitives. Bitterly did he now repent the rashness that had induced him to venture on a pitched battle; and sad indeed were his ruminations, as, still at the head of a small body of men, whom with some difficulty he had reorganised, he retreated in good order from the disastrous field. He rode a little apart from the rest: the deep gloom on his brow, the livid hue of his cheek, and the strong play of the muscles of his finely cut mouth, told of the irritation of his feelings. "All is lost," he said, thinking aloud; "fool, fool, that I was, to venture my all upon the fate of one battle! My rashness is rewarded, and I have nought to hope for. My dream of glory is over." "Not yet, not yet," said a deep hoarse voice beside him; "thy cup is not full." With a haughty and impatient gesture, the prince turned towards the speaker, and his eye rested on the features of the Gideonite. Alexander's heart swelled at the sight, and the form of the ill-fated Helena rose before him; but, as if a spell were upon him, he could not move a limb. "Not yet," repeated the dwarf, returning the prince's look of withering hate and scorn; "thy career will not be ended by the sword on the field of honourable warfare. The

axe and the block will be the reward of Alexander's virtue." "Insolent!" passionately exclaimed the exasperated prince, "at least thou shalt not live to see that hour;" and he endeavoured to seize his bridle, but dexterously eluding his grasp, he turned and departed, and the prince had the mortification to see him galloping along the plain towards the Roman camp. With a muttered curse upon the ill omened and misshapen thing, he put spurs to his horse, and soon overtook the remnant of his host.

CHAPTER VIII.

But quenched to-night that ardour seems,
And pale his cheek, and sunk his brow;
Never before, but in her dreams,
Had she beheld him pale as now.

MOORE.

The city must surrender, there's no hope left;
Disaster and defeat seems the heritage of his race.

ANONYMOUS.

“THOU art sad to-night, Alexander, too sad and desponding. Thou wert not wont to yield thus to sorrow,” said Alexandra, as with her hand clasped in her husband’s, she sat gazing on his pale careworn face. Alexander was indeed changed; and few would have recognised in the languid and altered mien of the prince, the gallant bearing of the haughty warrior who had led his little army against the Romans. Anxiety had begun its work upon his constitution; and the untimely death of his sister, combined with his own defeat, preyed upon his spirits.

“Nay, chide me not, dearest,” he replied,

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fondly returning the warm pressure of her hand, and looking into her beaming eyes with tender sadness ; “ the heat of the room oppresses me.” “ Let us walk forth on the terrace, then,” she said, rising from her seat as she spoke. “ Nay, not in the garden to-night ; the heavy fragrance of the flowers overpowers me.” Alexandra yielded, and they ascended to the battlements. It was a lovely night. The air was soft and balmy, and the illimitable blue of heaven was bright with lustrous stars, though the queen of night was absent. Before them lay the city, dark and silent ; and beyond the walls were the tents of the Roman army, who were then laying siege to the city ; while, far away in the distance, stretched the parched and sandy desert. Behind them, fertilized by the ever-living waters, lay the olive-crowned hills, and beautiful valleys of Judea. How holy is the calm of night !—how soothing it is to stand on the eternal mountains, with a sleeping world around, and gaze upon the deep blue heavens. They err who call midnight the hour for remorse and guilt. Midnight is the hour for all soft and beautiful feelings to hold sway. There is something so gentle and pleasing in the solitude, the breathing silence, that dead indeed to every

kindly sensation must the heart be, that can look upward to the starlit dome above, and not for a brief moment forget the petty cares, the strife, the struggles of day, and revert again, in thought at least, to the glowing romance and poetry of youth: at least to those two who stood on the ramparts together, there was a tranquillizing influence in the hour. Neither of them spoke, as they stood gazing into each other's eyes. The world's ambition, glory, all the thousand feelings that by turns agitate the mind of man, seemed swallowed up in all-absorbing and passionate love. It seemed enough for him to know that he was loved, even as his generous and unselfish nature deserved to be loved. They did not speak—for both felt too full of heart; and they shrank from words as if even the sound of their own voices would awaken them again to the sad realities of their fate.

“Is it not happiness to stand thus?” said Alexander, at length, as he drew the beautiful being who stood beside him closer to his bosom. “O Alexander, if I could die now, were it not for thine and our children's sake, I could die happy. My soul pants to free itself from this load of clay, and soar away in unfettered freedom to the bright world beyond.”

At that moment the words of the Gideonite flashed through his brain : " Thou shalt not die by the sword in open and honourable warfare, but on the block, and by the axe." The animation of the moment passed, and his cheek grew pale as marble. Alexandra felt the arm that encircled her waist tremble violently ; and he, who a moment before had sustained her, now leaned on her for support. The prince blushed for his weakness, but endeavoured in vain to shake it off. The words rung in his ears, like the prediction of truth, and the deformed and hideous dwarf seemed present to his imagination. " Good God ! what means this change ?" enquired Alexandra, in a tone of anxious solitude ; " art thou ill ?" " Nay, nay," he replied ; " it was but a sudden qualm, and is already gone ; but the air is growing chill. Come, let us seek repose." They retraced their steps, Alexandra leading the way. She paused before the door of a chamber, at the farther end of the corridor in which their own stood, and softly opening it, whispered him to enter ; and taking his hand, she led him to the bedside of their sleeping children. The dark curls of the little princess hung carelessly over her polished forehead ; while the full parted lips, revealing their

ivory treasures, and the exquisitely moulded features, presented a perfect model of infantine loveliness. "Sleep on, sweet girl, in the pure slumber of innocence. The time will come when thou wilt recall this hour with regret, and wish thou mightest sleep such sleep again." Nor was the infant Aristobulus less beautiful than his sister. But there was something ethereal in his beauty, such as we combine with the idea of one predestined to an early grave. The mother bent over her first-born, her delicate Mariamne; and the father gazed on his boy, with the proud feelings of one who sees before him the heir to his honours and his name. But, oh! how much of tenderness was in that pride. It was a beautiful thing to see those young parents, themselves still in the bloom of youth, gazing on the offspring of their love—and three out of the four who occupied that chamber, were destined to an early—all of them to a violent death! An hour flew away. The princess had attained her object. Alexander's tranquillity was restored by the sight of his sleeping children; and they sought their own chamber.

It was long since Alexander had slept so calmly, as, with his head pillowed on the breast

of love, he sunk to forgetfulness. With the morrow came the din of war again. The arrows of the beleaguers committed fearful havoc. Nor was this all. Provisions were getting scarce; and the discontent of the garrison, at first only vented in whispers and mutterings, at length broke forth in audible complaints. It was impossible, with these combined evils, that the city could hold out much longer; and Alexander's only alternative was, to make terms as advantageous as possible for himself and followers, while there was yet time, or to continue the siege with the same obstinacy, and be rewarded by seeing the inhabitants of Alexandria at last put to the sword. Of the two ills, he chose the lesser; and dispatched a messenger to his mother, who, having always espoused the Roman's cause, and possessing great influence with Gabinius, succeeded in negotiating a peace. Alexander, and all who had linked themselves to his fortunes, received a general amnesty on condition of his surrendering all the fortresses in his possession.

“My evil genius has been at work again,” said Alexander, bitterly, as with his head depressed on his breast, and his cheek pale with care, he rode by the side of the litter containing

his wife and children. "It has, indeed," said the never-to-be-forgotten voice of his tormentor; and raising his eye, it encountered the fiendish and malignant smile of the Gideonite, who, mounted on a black charger of the Arabian breed, was riding on by his side. "I have thee now, fiend," shouted the prince, striving to clutch his garments; but the dwarf dashed his hand aside, and giving the rein to his spirited steed, bounded past. But amid the trampling of the horse's hoofs, and the demoniac laughter of the rider, Alexander distinctly heard the words, "Beware of Simeon the Gideonite." The princess, who heard the words of her husband, put aside the curtains of her litter, to ascertain their meaning. He sat erect in his saddle, rigid and motionless. The reins hung loose on the arching neck of his gallant steed, and his hands, clenched forcibly together, seemed grasping the empty air. His face was flushed, and his proud lip curled with rage, while his chest heaved as in the throes of mortal agony. He literally gasped for breath, and the perspiration poured like water-drops over his brow. She shrieked aloud for assistance; but recalled by her voice to a sense of what was passing around, he resumed the rein, and riding up to

her side, he kissed her cheek, and whispered consolation in her ear. But Alexandra was not easily satisfied. She had long perceived that some secret grief was preying upon the very vitals of her husband; and anxious on his account, and curious on her own, she sat with her face buried in the folds of her veil, and even the playful caresses of her children failed to arouse her from the reverie that absorbed her during the rest of her journey.

CHAPTER IX.

She rose—she sprung—she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face.

* * * * *

Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt;
So full, that feeling seemed almost unfelt.

* * * * *

Again—again—that form he madly pressed,
Which mutely clasped, imploringly caressed.

BYRON.

It was a dreadful moment ; not the tears,
The lingering, lasting misery of years,
Could match that minute's anguish.

MOORE.

It is not our purpose to enter into a detailed account of the various public events that took place in Judea, during this very eventful period. Every one is or ought to be acquainted with the escape of Aristobulus and his son Antigonus from Rome, their unsuccessful revolt, and the recapture of the former, who was sent back in chains to the imperial city. The latter recovering his freedom on the intercession of his mother. We shall not dwell on the reorganization of the

government by Gabinius, who deprived Hyrcanus of the sovereignty, and left him a very inconsiderable share of power as High Priest, until Julius Cæsar reinstated him with the title of king. Neither shall we dwell on the new revolt of Alexander, his daring courage in again taking the field against the Romans, and his defeat and flight—for it would swell this tale beyond the bounds to which, we must own rather regretfully, we are obliged to limit it. Those who are not acquainted with this portion of Jewish history we would advise to read it as soon as may be. To those who are, the repetition would be needless. Amongst other interesting details we must pass over the poisoning of Aristobulus by the adherents of Pompey, and resume the thread of our narrative by requesting the reader to journey with us to Antioch. It is to a dungeon, gentle reader, we are about to introduce thee, and in requital for thy courtesy in attending us thither, we will inform thee, that the prisoner thou art about to visit is the prince Alexander. He is condemned to a public execution in the market-place of Antioch. This is the sentence of Scipio, the lieutenant of Pompey.

It was a low damp vault, several feet below the surface of the earth, and the river Orontes

rolled sullenly overhead. No glimpse of sunlight ever pierced the dungeon, which was dug several feet under the bed of the river, and the green damp of ages was gathered on the walls and roof. A single iron cresset, suspended from the roof by a rusty chain, lighted the miserable abode. The sole furniture was a rude stone bench fixed against the wall, which was seat, table, and bed, to the wretched occupant. There was not even a truss of straw to protect his limbs from the noisome damp; and the bench was so high, and ceiling so low, that he could not even sit erect.

In that cell, bowed in body, but unbent in spirit, was the noble prince, who, having sought to free his country from the sway of one whose cowardly vacillation was more fatal than the most arbitrary despotism, was condemned to an ignominious death. The axe and the block were to be his reward. How much desolation did the weakness of one man, the only dastard in a race of heroes whose name was still without a stain, occasion! He was unworthy of his noble heritage. How was the descendant of the glorious Maccabees fallen! The first, the last, the only blot on their proud escutcheon—that one man caused the destruction of his race, his own mu-

tilation and death by the hand of his pretended friend, and the final subjugation of his country, with the scattering of her children. Oh! Hyrcanus! Hyrcanus! accursed to Judea was the hour that gave thee to the light!

It was the evening before the execution, and Alexander sat in his cell, surrounded by his wife and children. They had met together for the last time. It would have been an interesting study for the philosopher, to mark how differently the passion of grief wrought upon the sufferers; and yet, for the honour of our species, we doubt if there is one who could have marked the powerful workings of human agony, with sufficient immovability to have calmly estimated the scene.

Ten years had wrought a change in every member of the little group; yet though the prince and princess were bowed down by sorrow and long suffering, youth had not quite departed. He was in the prime of manhood, and she was still very lovely. Alexander's features were calm; but the calmness was evidently produced by a strong effort. The princess was seated by his side, her dress disordered, her long hair dishevelled, her face working with the internal struggles, her dark orbs dim but tearless,

and her lips blanched and colourless. At their mother's knee stood Aristobulus and Mariamne.

They too were changed. They had passed through infancy, and the first, the brightest years of childhood; but they had not yet passed through that happiest epoch of life, and they looked, as they stood there, like two beautiful cherubs, whose sphere is far away from this dark and troubled earth. Yet was there fear in each young face, as they glanced in terrified silence around that drear vault, the dismal abode of misery and death, whose very air was pollution, and carried the seeds of disease through the veins of those who inhaled the dank and poisonous vapour. "Why do we stay here, mother?" asked Aristobulus, breaking the fearful stillness for the first time, and speaking in a lisping and timid voice. "Because," replied Alexandra, in a tone of sepulchral hoarseness, "this is thy father's home—therefore came we hither." "And why is our father here? why does he not come to us? Does he not like our dwelling?" said Mariamne, inquisitively. "I am sure if he once saw it, he would rather, much rather, live in our beautiful home, than ever return to this terrible place again." Alexandra replied not; her heart was too full for speech; and again deep silence pervaded the

cell. "Heardest thou not the sound of coming feet?" said Alexander. "Surely my hour is come;" and his voice sounded awfully clear and distinct through the gloom. It was only the sullen roar of the river above; but Alexandra could no longer repress her emotions, and she flung herself on her husband's bosom, and wept convulsively. "Be comforted, dearest," said the prince, soothingly; "and promise me, when the executioner shall have done his work, and this headless trunk is laid in an unhonoured and nameless grave, far away from the sepulchre of my fathers, promise me—that—that—" The voice of the speaker became inaudible, and the conclusion of the sentence died away unheard. "Ask me not to survive thee, my own love; for this I cannot do, even at thy bidding. We have shared each other's joys and sorrows too long to be sundered now; and if we can no longer live, at least we can die together. Yes," she continued, clasping her hands with passionate energy, "the moment that deprives thee of life shall be the last of mine." "Not so, Alexandra; remember we have children, who will soon be fatherless; thou wouldst not make them doubly orphans." Then straining Mariamne to his bosom, he placed her in her mother's arms, and

caught Aristobulus in his own. "My boy, my boy," he exclaimed, with a powerful but vain effort at composure. The long suppressed tears burst forth, in spite of his endeavour to restrain them. "Why dost thou weep, dear father?" said the child, his own tears flowing from sympathy. "I thought tears were but for children, like me and Mariamne, and I knew not until now, that men ever wept." "Alas! alas! thou wilt soon be fatherless!" said the agonized parent, as he clasped the sobbing prince still closer to his heart. "Oh! do not die, and leave us unprotected and alone in this bleak world," shrieked the unhappy wife, wringing her hands and weeping bitterly.

"This is vain, Alexandra," exclaimed the prince, in a tone of blended tenderness and reproach, as he placed his son on the ground, and drew her closer to him. "Thou knowest that nought can save me. Am I not doomed by those who never relent, who never felt the gentle touch of mercy? No no, I cannot listen to such useless ravings: the sentence of my foes must be fulfilled—I must die."

"If I live to be a man, I will avenge thee, father!" cried Aristobulus, clenching his hands, and stamping his little feet on the floor, while

his beautiful eye flashed with the indignant pride of his race. The young breast heaved and swelled with an emotion too mighty for words, and the infantine form dilated with passion. "God in his mercy protect thee, my son; but I fear me thou wilt never live to manhood." The words of the prince were prophetic.

It is morning; but no daylight has gleamed into the dungeon, no stray sunbeam has smiled through the rayless gloom; but there is the sound of coming feet in the vaulted passage. The hour, nay, the very moment of parting is at hand. The key turns in the lock, and the heavy door swings back, grating on its rusty hinges, and the gaoler and his satellites enter. They came to convey the young, the noble, and brave, from the dungeon to the place of execution.

"Farewell, my beloved," he said, in a voice whose collected calmness belied the fierce struggle at his heart. "My wife, my children, farewell—farewell for ever!" "Oh! not yet, not yet!" she said, as she tore herself from the gaoler's hold, who, with more humanity than his rugged look bespoke him possessed of, quietly and respectfully strove to draw her away. But clinging to her husband's robe, with the strength which is only born of madness or woman's love,

she besought them not to tear them asunder. "Thou art unmanning me, dearest," said the prince, gently but firmly releasing himself. "The Asmonean blood in thy veins should have taught thee more fortitude." "Alexander," she replied, suddenly rising from her crouching posture, and standing before him in her proud beauty, with a firm rigidity of features, which a moment before she seemed incapable of, "Thou art right to remind me of my high birth, and the pure blood that flows in these veins. I will unman thee no more. Yet," and for a moment her voice trembled into tenderness, and then again resumed its measured and unfaltering tone, "it is not kind of thee, on the very threshold of the grave, to chide, and leave thy last remembrance clothed in the words of reproach. One thing more, Alexander—thou seest I am calm now—even my rebellious heart has ceased to throb with quicker pulsation than ordinary. Alexander, hadst thou died in thy bed, a death of lingering decay, whose eye would have watched thee?—whose ear would have strained and listened for thy very breathing, lest it should not catch the last? Mine! Whose hand would have smoothed thy pillow and performed the thousand nameless but dear offices of love?

Mine. Whose bosom would have pillowed thy dying head? Mine, mine. But since thou art not fated to die thus; since thou must go down to the grave with the poetry of youth yet unfaded, and all the energies and deep love of thy noble nature still fresh and warm at thy heart; since thou must leave me a widow, and our—oh! how beautiful, how dear seems that little word which yet connects us together—our children fatherless; since the sun that rises and sees thee yet in the flush and noon of manhood, strength, and beauty, the pride of thy lip unquelled, the light of thine eye unquenched, will set on thy bloody and headless corpse,—let me at least see thee die. The eyes of thousands will be upon thee; at least let there be *one* who will look on thee with the eye of love.” He shook his head mournfully. “For our children’s sakes, it may not be. We must part now, and on earth for ever.” “Be it so. Then now, farewell!” Once more he embraced her, once more he blessed his weeping children, and they turned to depart. “Farewell!” Alexander now turned to the gaoler, who, moved even to tears, stood sobbing apart, his rugged nature melted by that parting scene, while she, the desolate wife and mother, saw with unflinching calmness her fated hus-

band embracing his children for the last time. "Now, sir, lead on—we follow;" and with a steady step and unaltered mien, she passed for ever from her husband's presence.

History has recorded hers and her children's fate.

CHAPTER X.

They never fail who die
In a great cause : the block may soak their gore ;
Their heads may sodden in the sun ; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls ;
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
E lapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom.

BYRON.

With light heart stole he on his evil way,
And light of heart hath vengeance stole on after him.

THE PICCOLOMINI.

THE morning was yet young, but the market-place of Antioch was crowded to an excess that almost prevented respiration. In the centre of the square, the point on which all eyes were bent, stood a raised scaffolding, covered with black ; and on one side was a bier, hung with the same sombre drapery. The iron-clad soldiers of Rome, mute and immovable as statues, were posted around the square to keep off the populace, who seemed meditating some hostile

design. There was tumult and clamour among the crowd, and the mingling of their voices sounded like the threatening mutterings of the coming storm. Suddenly the sound subsided into silence, and breathless stillness succeeded to the clang of voices. In the midst of the cleared space on the steps of the scaffold, stood the victim. His step was firm, his head erect, and the proud eye glanced with a look of fire on the assembled multitude. There was haughty defiance in the curl of the lip, as with a calm voice he addressed the people; and while he spoke, a change came over the expression of the countenance. Hearts of iron melted at his words, and eyes whose fountain of tears seemed long since dried, wept again.

But not long was he allowed the freedom of speech—for his judges had ordained it otherwise, fearful that his words might stir up sedition in the hearts of the fiery and excitable people. Alexander turned to look for his executioner. God of heaven! Do his eyes deceive him? No! it is reality! and he again beheld the humpbacked and dwarfish figure of the Gideonite. The axe gleamed in his hand, and a smile of devilish triumph still more frightfully distorted his horrible mouth. "We have met again, prince;" and his words thrilled

like liquid fire through the burning veins of the Asmonean. "We have met again, and now, now, thy cup is filled even to overflowing. The eyes of gazing thousands are upon us, and the block and the axe are here. I told thee, Alexander, I was like the ape it pleased thee to liken me to in thy mirth; and lo! I have patiently worked out my revenge. But for me, thou hadst not been doomed to this. It was I who told Hyrcanus of thy gathering strength. It was I who bore his message to Gabinius, and urged the mercenary Roman with gold from mine own treasury to hasten on his march. He did. Thou wert defeated. It was I who fomented the discontent of the soldiers at Alexandrion, and obliged thee to make a disgraceful capitulation. It was I who hastened Gabinius back from Syria, and caused thine overthrow at mount Tabor. It was I who poisoned thy father; and it was I—dost thou hear me?" and he fixed his keen unearthly eyes on the pale but sternly calm countenance of the prince, who stood with a look of haughty indifference gazing into the countenance of the speaker, who, after surveying him for a moment in silence, resumed: "It was I who, as a reward for ridding the world of Aristobulus, procured

the condemnation of his son. I, I,"—and the words came hissing through his set teeth, "have been the black drop in thy cup, turning its honey into gall and wormwood. Even as I warned thee I would do, so have I done. And now we are here face to face again. Thou hast not perished in honourable warfare. Thou hast escaped the sword and the arrow, the javelin and the spear, to finish thy career on the block. Thou art here, as I foretold, and I am here to fulfill my threat. My hand will be bathed in thy vital stream ; my hatred washed out in thy blood. What sayest thou now to Simeon, the Gideonite? Hadst thou not cause to beware his revenge?—What sayest thou now to the hump-backed dwarf?" "That I scorn and defy him, now as ever," replied the prince, and he spat in his face.

A glare of such ferocious malignity lighted up the eyes of the dwarf, that even the Roman soldiers shrank aghast as they came forward to bandage the eyes of the prince. "Stand back," said Alexander, in a tone of quiet dignity that ensured obedience. "I will not be pinioned and blindfolded like a common criminal. It shall never be said that Alexander feared to face death like a man." The gallant prince

glanced around him with a flashing eye. His noble form, rich in every manly beauty, and and his calm, noble features, full of the sweet dignity of thought, which not even the approach of death could banish from their expression, seemed yet more beautiful from their contrast to the terrible deformity of his executioner.

“Farewell!”—his voice swelled into a rich deep cadence, that thrilled in its sad solemnity to every heart, and filled every eye with tears. “Farewell, thou soft blue heaven, and thou glorious sun, with thy life-giving radiance. Farewell, thou bright and beautiful earth. Farewell, farewell, my countrymen. Farewell to thee, dear home of my childhood—I shall see thee no more. And thou, oh my lost, doomed country! for whom all my race have died—to whom I gave the energies of my youth, and the strength of my manhood, were it not for thine own sake, I could leave thee without regret—since the sole rewards thou hast for thy patriot sons are a traitor’s name and a traitor’s death. Lost! lost! but still adored land of my sires, farewell! farewell!”

Then dashing the rebel tear from his eyes, he laid his head upon the block. The axe swung heavily round, and a headless trunk rolled upon

the thirsty earth. Gallant, but ill-fated prince! thou art avenged! A cry of mingled pity and indignation rends the air. The dwarf is in the hands of the infuriate multitude. Vain, vain, are his threats and curses; vain his shrieks for mercy. Piecemeal they tear him asunder, and the ravenous wolf and carrion-crow feed on the limbs of the Gideonite!!

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

3728. A LONG period of rapine and oppression, under the Roman governors, ensued after the deposing of Archelaus. Agrippa, son of the unfortunate Aristobulus, and grandson of Mariamne, was kindly received at the court of Caligula, his intimate friend, who conferred on him the vacant tetrarchate of Philip-Iturea, with the title of king. Herod Antipas, at the instigation of his wife, took a journey to Rome, in order to obtain the title of king. Agrippa, aware of his designs, sent a messenger, who arrived before Herod, accusing him of laying up arms in case of a revolt. On this accusation, Herod was deprived of his dominions, which were added to those previously bestowed on Agrippa, and he was banished to Lyons in Gaul. In the same year a horrible massacre was perpetrated by the Greeks on the Jews of Alexandria.

3801. Agrippa hastened to Rome, in order to procure the repeal of an edict, ordering the statue of the emperor to be placed in the temple of Jerusalem, which he obtained in the following manner. He invited Caligula to a sumptuous entertainment. Exhilarated with wine, and pleased with the banquet, the emperor offered to grant any request he might make. Agrippa immediately sought and obtained the revocation of the fatal edict.

During the occurrence of these events, A.M. 3792, two or

phans of Neardea, the chief city of the settlement of the Babylonian Jews, Anilai and Asinai, who had been brought up as weavers, on some ill-usage from their master, fled; and gathering together some discontented characters, built a strong fortress, secured by the marshes, and levied a kind of black mail upon the shepherds. The satrap of Babylon took advantage of the sabbath to endeavour to suppress them. Asinai, who was reposing among his followers, whose arms lay scattered around, suddenly exclaimed, "I hear the trampling of horses; it must be more than a troop of wild ones in their pastures, for I hear likewise the jingling of bridles." The whole band flew to arms, and attacking their assailants, defeated them with great slaughter. Asinai was afterwards appointed by the king of Parthia to the supreme command in Babylon. Anilai married a Parthian woman, who, still adhering to her own religion, caused a feeling of discontent in the Jewish people. Asinai remonstrated with his brother; but the Parthian, fearing some further exercise of his authority, poisoned him, and thus the supreme authority devolved on Anilai. His excesses now became so great, that the Babylonians, unable longer to endure his tyranny, sent to Neardea, to demand his surrender. The Jews in Neardea were unable to comply. At length the Babylonians surprised him in his camp, and slew him and his whole band.

3801. Agrippa, having, on the murder of Caligula, assisted to adjust the disputes between the army and senate of Rome, and place Claudius on the imperial throne, was rewarded with the whole of the dominions of the elder Herod.

3804. Agrippa died; and his son, who bore his name, being considered too young to be entrusted with regal power, Judea again became a Roman province.

Izates, king of Adiabene, and his mother Helena, became proselytes to the Jewish faith.

3808. Young Agrippa was appointed king of Chalcis, with the sovereignty of the temple.

3812. Jonathan, the high priest, was slain in the temple, by assassins, whom Felix, the Roman governor, had employed.

3813. A tumult broke out in Cæsarea, between the Greeks and Jews. The Roman soldiery taking part with the Greeks, they massacred and pillaged the Jews.

3826. An insurrection broke out in Jerusalem, in consequence of the cruelty of Florus, the Roman governor, and the insults of the Greeks. Agrippa and his sister Berenice, having vainly endeavoured to pacify the people, retired to his own dominions.

The war-party obtained possession of the fortress of Masada. Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, persuaded the officiating priests to reject the imperial offerings to the temple, and to make a regulation that no foreigner should in future be allowed to sacrifice, by this measure renouncing all allegiance to Rome. The insurgents now besieged the towers which were in possession of the Roman garrison. They put Ananias, the high priest, to death. The garrison surrendered on a promise of free egress, but immediately on their laying down their arms, they were all massacred, except their commander. Scenes of rapine, murder, and pillage, enacted by the Romans and Greeks, which it is almost too painful to relate, followed this event. 50,000 Jews were slain in Alexandria alone. At length, on the 8th of November, Cestius Gallus, prefect of Syria, advanced to besiege the city and temple. He was completely routed: his battering train and military engines fell into the hands of the Jews, and the whole kingdom immediately prepared for war. Joseph Ben Matthias, better known as the celebrated Flavius Josephus, one of the priesthood, was invested with the government of Galilee, whither he immediately proceeded. He raised and

disciplined an army, and fortified all the cities in the province. In the meantime, Ananias, the high priest, took the lead in Jerusalem. The city was strengthened, and arms fabricated with the utmost expedition.

3827. Vespasian appeared at Antioch, with an immense army, and joining Agrippa, advanced to Ptolemais. Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, immediately opened its gates to him. Josephus made one strong, but unavailing effort to recover it, and then retreated to Jotapata, a strong mountain fortress.* Vespasian marched through Gadara, and though the citizens opened their gates, and appeared unarmed, the soldiers received orders to put all to the sword, men, women, and children, and the city was given up to pillage. On the 15th of May, he commenced the attack on Jotapata, and succeeded in taking it, after a siege of forty-seven days, the garrison being betrayed by a deserter. The besieged made one of the finest defences recorded in ancient or modern history. Josephus was taken prisoner. Japha, a neighbouring city, was taken by Trajan and Titus; and the Samaritans were almost exterminated during the siege of Jotapata. Jappa, Tiberias, and Tarachea, soon followed. Gamala, Itabyrium, and Gischala, fell, after an obstinate resistance, and the Romans became masters of all Galilee.

* Placidus endeavoured to surprise it; but was repulsed.

THE SIEGE OF JOTAPATA.

CHAPTER I.

But, look! the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.

HAMLET.

The flowers with the dew of the morning are laden,
There is not a cloud in the blue sky above ;
And there, on the mountains, a youth and a maiden
Stood drinking deep draughts from the fountain of love.

UNPUBLISHED POEM.

It was yet early spring, and all nature was clothed in the rich and varied garb of that verdant season, when the earth puts on a smile of gladness, and the streams rejoice in their recovered freedom. The sun was just rising, and dispelling with its radiant beams the mist, which hung like a thin grey veil over the lofty and thickly wooded mountains, on which stood the

strongly fortified, but beautiful city of Jotapata. While the huge mountains were tinged with the gorgeous beams of the glorious luminary, the city still lay wrapt in clouds and silence. How balmy is the cool breeze of morning! how fresh is the breath of the flowers! and how sweet is the busy hum of nature! The voice of God seems speaking to the heart, in the light carol of the birds, who wing their joyous flight as if they would hail the first beams of the sun, and bear the glad tidings of day on their unfettered pinions back to the rejoicing earth. "Beautiful, indeed, are the tents of Jacob; and the dwelling places of Israel, are they not beautiful, my Zarina? Are they not glorious types of the infinite benignity of that Divine Being, who gave us this lovely and fruitful land as an heritage? How could our fathers ever turn aside from the pure worship of their own God, to bow down at the shrine of an idol their own hands had created? And yet such things have been done! They have bowed down and worshipped images. Even the wise Solomon, in his old age, was led away by the counsels of his heathen wives!" "Lovely, indeed," replied Zarina, "are the works of the Creator; until the wild passions of man distort

the fair features of nature, turning that which was given him in trust for the benefit of himself and his race to evil, and rendering it subservient to his own base purposes; perverting all that is loveliest and best, to the worst and vilest uses, making a curse of that which was intended for a blessing. But we will not now speak of these things. Come, Elcazar, let us hasten our return; for I would not that my mother should again find me absent. She has chidden me once, and I would not again incur her anger. Yet I would fain tarry a little longer; for we may never stand upon these hills again. War has raised her banner on high; and who shall say when it shall be furled? Ere to-morrow's sunrise, the scene which is now so calm and still may resound with the trampling of armed men, and those green valleys be dyed crimson by the best blood of her children. Let us then gaze, while we yet may, on the exquisite loveliness of this all glorious scene."

The landscape on which the youth and maiden gazed was one of those grand and gorgeous works of nature, which seem more like the dazzling creation of imaginative fancy, than aught on which reality has set its seal; and which leaves an ineffaceable impression on the

mind of the beholder. Nor did that youth and maiden form the least remarkable features of the landscape.

The young man seemed scarcely yet to have attained the ripened age of twenty years. His features wore that expression of mingled gentleness and dignity, which in all ages, and in all countries, denote the highborn and noble. He was attired in the light picturesque dress of the country. His under garment was of the finest linen, with an embroidered tunic of Tyrian dye; a light mantle of the richest material was thrown carelessly over his shoulders. His feet were sandalled, and the waving ringlets of his glossy black hair were surmounted by a turban—that graceful head-dress of the East. His figure was tall and slight; and his gracefully symmetrical limbs possessed all the lightness and agility of youth, combined with the muscular strength of more mature manhood. His chest was broad and expanded, while his sun-browned countenance was strongly marked with high and chivalrous feeling; and with the curved lips, curling black beard, and dark expressive eyes full of latent fire, overarched by the beautiful brow and the white polished forehead, on which appeared the lines of premature thought, formed

a model of masculine beauty, which contrasted with the fair and delicate girl who leaned on his arm for support, like the lily of the valley sheltering itself under the overhanging branches of the lofty pine; and there, as they stood on those huge rocks that raised their mighty forms until their pinnacles seemed lost in the clouds, that hung darkling o'er them, the freshness and warmth of spring were around them. Night no longer seemed struggling with day for empire over the world, which lay glowing in the ruddy light of the already powerful beams. The city of Jotapata was situated in the wildest and most picturesque part of Galilee. The mountain, at the base of which it was built, rose nearly perpendicularly from deep and almost impassable ravines, with which it was surrounded. Looking down from the walls of the city, the eye could not fathom the depths of those dark and frightful chasms. Like a race of hardy giants, placed there by the protecting arm of Providence, rose a natural rampart of stupendous mountains, clothed with wild forest trees, totally concealing the city from view until the observer arrived close under the walls, and rendering it inaccessible on every side, except the north. The end of the ridge sloped

gradually down to the declivity on which the city stood. Thus strongly fortified by nature and art, and surrounded by the wildest and most rugged scenery, what wonder if the inhabitants, in the pride of their hearts, deemed it impregnable to all assaults from without? Who that gazed upon that fair scene of wood and glade, mountain and valley, and that densely populated city, which was now pouring forth its crowded inhabitants, like a swarm of bees from the hive, to the cares and troubles, toils and pleasures of the day, would deem that the hand of man, guided by the fierce and ungovernable passions of his heart, and by his lust of power, would destroy and lay them waste; and the seemingly impregnable fortress would ere long lie desolate, or only remain as a ruin—a thing of the past, a monument at once of the pride and littleness of man?

While the youth and maiden were yet lingering on the hills, her face flushed with the radiant blood called up by exercise. No; it was the blush of maidenly pride and modesty; and there were tears, too—large, bright drops—glistening upon her long lashes, and dewing her beautiful cheeks, like rain-drops sparkling on a rose. The youth was agitated, too; but

there was joy in every feature. He had told a tale of love—deep, passionate, devoted love—such as warms human heart but once: and though he had received no word in reply to his ardent vows, he knew, by the look of confiding affection, that his words fell on no unwilling ear. When he took her hand in his own, she had not withdrawn it; there was an eloquence in her silence, more expressive than words. The face has a language which cannot be mistaken. Words, words, what are they compared to that silent glance of affection, whose language, though silent and mute, is the language of the soul? Oh! how sweet is that interchange of affection when the feelings are fresh and warm, and the heart is like a pure, unstained stream. Still they lingered. Life has but few such moments of unalloyed happiness. Both seemed unwilling to destroy the spell that hung over them. While they were yet engaged in those all-engrossing thoughts, a scene of stirring import was passing within the walls. But in order to elucidate the scene which was now calling forth the inhabitants of Jotapata, and filling its streets and squares with thronging crowds of men, women, and children, we must enter a little into the history of Judea, at the time of which we are writing.

After the death of Herod, falsely styled the Great, the kingdom became a Roman province, and the inhabitants were compelled to allow the Emperor of Rome to nominate their kings, or governors, as it suited the imperial whim or policy ; Tetrachs, and Ethnarchs, that is, rulers of the provinces, high priests, and judges ; and in short, all officers of the state, whether civil or religious. Sometimes these rulers of the people were just and humane ; but at other times, they ground them with burdensome taxes ; insulted them for their steady adherence to the religion of their forefathers, to which they clung with the tenacity of conviction. Proud and wayward as they were, the Jews always loved their religion better in their adversity than when in the pride of prosperity ; and they resisted all innovations on their pure worship, as an insult to the majesty of their God. Heaping upon them every kind of indignity, the Romans were garnering up fuel, that in the end, kindled a fire which could only be quenched in streams of blood. Amongst other grievances, and in the eyes of the persecuted Jews the most terrible of all, was that fearful massacre of the Jews of Alexandria, on account of their refusing to worship the Emperor Caligula as a God. This determination on the

part of the miserable people, who though trampled on and oppressed, still retained the unbending spirit of their nation, afforded a fresh pretext for those who already possessed too many, for crushing them. It was represented at Rome as a most flagrant act of rebellion against their rulers, and a sign of their unquenchable pride, and the spirit of obstinacy with which they repelled the advances of other nations; they were painted in the blackest colouring, by those who were interested in their ruin, as evil disposed, rebellious and ungovernable. Stimulated by bad reports from abroad, and evil counsellors at home, the weak and wicked Caligula issued a mandate, for a gilded and colossal statue of himself to be placed within the Holy of Holies!—and the temple sacred to the Creator of the universe, the just and terrible One, who had said, “Thou shalt have none other Gods but me,” was to be dedicated to an arrogant mortal, who had been flattered by men even more depraved and wicked than himself into a real or pretended belief of his own divinity. The temple was to be desecrated by a graven image—the image of a tyrant, who was deified under the name of Jupiter the younger; and this dreadful national calamity was only averted by the humanity of P. Petronius, who

was appointed to superintend the casting of the statue, and at the same time to succeed Vitellias as prefect of Syria, and by the kind interference of king Agrippa, the emperor's personal friend.

From this time forward the discontents of the Israelites, and their hatred towards their Roman tyrants, daily increased. The fire kindled with more intensity from its burning inwardly. The death of Caligula deferred the bursting of the gathering storm, and left Judea for a time in comparative tranquillity.

Agrippa was in Rome at the time of the emperor's murder, and succeeded in establishing peace between the army and the senate; which good office secured to him the goodwill and gratitude of the emperor Claudius, who requited his services by investing him with the title of king over Judea and Samaria, which were reunited, with Galilee, Perea, and the provinces beyond the Jordan, into one kingdom.

Not to be diffuse on a subject which may be found in history, after the death of Agrippa, his son, young Herod Agrippa, being only seventeen, was considered too young for the regal dignity, and the kingdom once more became a Roman province. Roman governors were again appointed. The storm which was to crush the

city of David and Solomon gathered in strength and energy during the governments of Cuspius Fadus, Tiberias, Alexander, Ventidius Cumanus, Claudius Felix; and though the rigid but upright government of Porcius Festus caused a short interval of peace, the appointment of Albinus as his successor renewed the bitter feeling of animosity; and it only needed such a man as Gessius Florus, in order to kindle the long smouldering heat into flame. Exactions of every kind were practised, but the first outbreak was caused by the following circumstance. The magistracy of Cæsarea were Greeks by the decree of Nero; it happened that the Jews had a synagogue there, the ground around which belonged to a Greek, who not only refused to sell it, but performed offensive and indecent rites whenever the people were going or coming from prayers; and at last blocked it up with buildings, so as to narrow the paths to the smallest possible limits. Some of the hotheaded youths fell upon the labourers, and dispersing them, destroyed the works. The men of greater wealth, and among the rest, John, a publican, fearful of the consequences of this rash act, collected the sum of eight talents,* and sent to Florus, as a bribe, to stop the buildings. He accepted the bribe, and

* A talent of gold was £5475, English money.

hastened from Cæsarea to Sebaste, in order to give full scope to the riot, as it was his interest to promote the tumult as much as possible in order to conceal his own peculations. An affray took place between the Jews and the Greeks; the Jews were worsted. Taking up the books of their law, they went to Marbata, whence a deputation hastened to Florus, to seek for redress; when modestly referring to the eight talents they had given him, they were thrown by him into prison. The news spread to Jerusalem—the people rose as one man, and the whole city was in a state of tumult, loudly execrating the tyrant's name; and though it was partially quieted by the entreaties of the priests and elders, the truce was hollow and could not last. It was with dogged sullenness that they went forth to meet Florus on his entrance into Jerusalem; but in vain they humiliated themselves; he remembered nothing but the insults offered to his name, and sent a message to order them to disperse. The next morning he sent for the priest and Sanhedrim, and insisted on their giving up those who had dared to insult his name. On their alleging that it was only a few idle youths whom it would be impossible to discover among the population of a large city,

he gave licence to his soldiery. The market-place was pillaged, houses broken open and stripped. The narrow streets were crowded with fugitives, and many who escaped the sword were trampled to death. Bitter were the feelings of revenge excited in the bosoms of the unhappy people, and it was with the greatest difficulty they were pacified by the united entreaties of the priests, king Agrippa, and his sister Berenice.

The insurrection soon broke out afresh. They refused the imperial offering to the temple; they refused to pay the taxes. The revolt under Manahem, his death, the revolt of Eleazar, the advance of Cestius Gallus, his defeat and retreat, followed each other in quick succession; and the province of Judea was in open rebellion against Rome.

The Jews now began to organize their plans, by raising troops, appointing generals and governors of their own. Since the struggle was no longer the war of words, it was sword to sword, the oppressed against the oppressor; a wronged and insulted people endeavouring to throw off the yoke of a foreign power; a small province measuring its strength against the united power of the whole civilized world—

Judea against Rome, it was like matching the strength of a child against the united power of a dozen strong men. The concussion of two such powers was tremendous. Never before nor since, excepting in the time of the Maccabees, had the world witnessed such a desperate struggle for independence.

Among the other officers appointed, Joseph, the son of Matthias, (now more commonly known by the name of Josephus the historian,) was made governor of Galilee. Deep, calculating, subtle, and designing, Josephus possessed more military skill and knowledge than any other of the Jewish leaders of the day. Possessed of a pleasing exterior, and a flow of eloquence, combined with considerable ability and learning, deeply versed in the laws of his country, he gained the esteem and love of an ardent and enthusiastic people. He organized an army in his province, which for regularity and discipline vied with the Romans themselves. But he had other difficulties to contend with; independent of the common foe, he had many private enemies. He, however, overcame them all; but just as he fancied himself secured from all farther dissensions, Sepphoris, the capital of

Galilee, made overtures to the Roman general, Vespasian, who received the deputies with courtesy, and sent them back with a body of 1000 horse, and 6000 foot, to defend them from the attacks of the Jews. This powerful force was placed under the command of Placidus. Josephus made one strong effort to regain the capital, but it proved abortive. The campaign was now fairly begun. The Roman troops overspread the whole country. But the war was yet only a name in Jotapata, one of the strongest fortresses in Galilee; and, with the exception

a few fugitives who had taken refuge within the walls, they had seen nothing of its terrors. The whole population of the province (with the exception of a few unwarlike persons, who were destroyed by the Roman troops) fled from the open country to the protection of the cities and walled towns. Josephus, avoiding all contact in the open country with the well-disciplined forces of the enemy, threw himself into the garrison of Jotapata; and it was the arrival of this general, who was much beloved by the Galileans, that drew forth the inhabitants of the city, who welcomed his coming with acclamations, waving of banners, and strains of martial music. It was a lovely sight, that proud and beautiful

city, with its stately marble palaces, its colonnades, and public baths ; the mingled looks of fear and pleasure, exhibited in the ancient faces of the thronging citizens ; the gleaming of the sunshine on the polished armour of the soldiers of the garrison, who came forward to meet the army, formed a picture of surpassing beauty. That scene, and all its actors, are passed away. The vulture sits brooding in the palaces of princes ; the grass is growing up in its proud halls ; the invader and the invaded have alike been swept down the stream of time ; but their names will never be blotted out from the pages of history. Judea is a land of ruins ; and Rome—what now is Rome—the mightiest among the mighty, the mistress, the conqueror, the queen of the world—the seven-hilled city of the Cæsars ? It is a bye-word among the nations, a scoff, a jest—lower, more degraded than the meanest of the so-called barbarian nations that she trampled on in her hour of pride.

CHAPTER II.

She gazed on high, as if to gain
Fresh courage from above ;
She knew not how to choose between
Her duty and her love.

UNPUBLISHED POEM.

“ THOU mayest go, Terah ; we would be alone. See that none intrude on our presence,” said the lady Sarah to a young Arab slave, who had been amusing her by accompanying herself on a small silver lute, which she now laid aside, and obedient to her mistress’s command, glided noiselessly from the room. The last rays of the setting sun were shining brightly through the half opened casement of the apartment, throwing one part into shade, while the other was illuminated by the golden beams that danced over the marble floor, and gave a bright tinge to the jewelled tresses of Sarah, who, reclining on a crimson velvet couch, seemed lost in that delicious state of dreamy reverie which only the inhabitants of an eastern climate can appre-

ciate. Her features had been very beautiful, and even now were strikingly expressive. They might have been considered handsome, but for the stern determination that characterised the mouth. Her once clear olive complexion had become sallow with long sickness ; but her large black eyes, though their fire was somewhat subdued by years of suffering, were still full of light.

On a pile of cushions at her feet, sat a fair young girl, apparently engaged in perusing a volume that lay open on her knee, but in reality lost in busy and absorbing thoughts. One who had watched closely those expressive features, would have perceived, by the rapid changes that passed over them, that those thoughts were not entirely of a pleasant nature ; though it seemed scarcely possible that one so young and lovely could know aught of sorrow : nor was it such feelings that agitated her. She was dreaming of love, and all the chances that might prevent an union with the object of her affections. Love is a strange compound of human feelings, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows ; yet it is the sweetest portion of existence, when the young heart first becomes susceptible to the tender emotion ; when the tell-

tale blood mantles to the cheek at the mention of one name, and the eyes sparkle and the heart beats with unspeakable pleasure when that one is present. There is something so pure, holy, and unselfish, in the love of youth, that tinges all things with its own beautiful colouring, and invests every object with its own fanciful imaginings.

“Zarina,” said the lady Sarah, at length, arousing herself from her reverie; “Zarina,” and the young girl raised a face of such exquisite sweetness and beauty, that it seemed more like a seraphic than a human countenance. The contour was decidedly Jewish; but the complexion was much fairer than the generality of her countrywomen, and her eyes, instead of being black, like her mother’s—for such was the relationship in which the lady Sarah stood toward her—were of the deepest tinge of blue; but so liquid were they, so varying in their expression, that one might have gazed for years without knowing their real colour. “Zarina, thou didst tarry long this morning upon the hill tops. I waited for thee, and thou camest not. This is not well, sweetest; nor is it seemly that thy father’s daughter—a daughter of the princely house of the Asmoneans, should wan-

der forth at the dawn, ere the sun has kissed the dew from the mountain's brow, or the slaves are astir in thy mother's dwelling, with a youth like Eleazar, even were he thrice thy kinsman. Thy mother is a widow, fairest, and has suffered much and long ; and it were not well that the fair fame of her first-born and best, her choicest earthly treasure, should be sullied by the foul calumnies of slanderous and evil tongues. Thy sire sleeps in the tomb of his fathers, and I feel I am hastening to join him. Fain would I see thee and thy young sister well cared for, ere I pass through the shadowy valley of death. Hitherto, Zarina, thou hast been wild as the untamed gazelle on its native hills, and thy sports have been the wild sports of girlhood. I have suffered thee to give free vent to thy playful spirits, and thy intercourse with Eleazar (Zarina's breath came thicker, and the eloquent blood mounted to her face) has been unrestrained ; but now it must be so no longer. Thou hast higher and sterner duties to perform. Dost thou attend to me, my child ? But I see thou dost, and I thank thee ;" and as she spoke she put back the shining curls of her hair, and printed a long fervent kiss on the burning forehead of her fair child. " Art thou prepared,

gentle one, to forego all former thoughts, feelings, and pastimes?—to leave the young maidens thy companions; to enter at once into the solemn and holy state of wedlock, and take upon thee the dignity and sacred duties of a Jewish matron?” Zarina’s colour went and came rapidly, while her mother was speaking. She had entered her presence with the intention of confiding to her ear the tale of love, which on that morning had been first breathed into her own; but when she comprehended the tendency of her mother’s discourse, she waited in breathless silence for the conclusion, which she doubted not would change hope into delightful certainty. She therefore remained silent, while her mother continued: “It is for this I have spoken to thee,—for I have promised thy hand to Samaes, the Saabite; and though thy beauty is great among the maidens of Galilee, and rich will be thy dower, yet mayest thou consider thyself as peculiarly blest in possessing the love of Samaes. He is wealthy, nobly born, young, and generous, and withal has a presence and bearing that will render him pleasant in thine eyes; and, more than this, he will be a father to thy young sister Ruth, and thou wilt be a mother to her. Wilt thou not? It

will soothe my dying pillow, and rob death of half its bitterness, to know thou hast a protector, who does and will love thee for thine own sake only. Speak. Art thou satisfied with thy mother's provision?" Zarina was incapable of answering. The words of her mother had dispelled at once the bright vision of future happiness that hope had created. The very blood seemed frozen in her veins, and lay like an ice-bolt at her heart. Her brain became dizzy, and a thick film obscured her sight. The blank waste of despair had succeeded to the sunny prospect of hope; and the crushed feelings could find no vent in words. The lady Sarah saw her inability to reply; and satisfied that her hitherto obedient child could not oppose aught so conducive to her own happiness, she waved her hand, and said, "Thou mayest retire to thine own apartments. Compose thyself; and I will receive thine answer to-morrow. It is but natural thou shouldst be too agitated for reply. Go, my beloved child; may peace hover around thy pillow, and the guardian angel of innocence watch over thy repose." Zarina waited no second bidding. While the invalid, exhausted with the unusual effort, sank back upon her couch, once more lost in thought, the maiden

proceeded with a quick and hurried step along the corridors of the palace, till she reached her own chamber. She closed the door, drew the bolt across, and throwing herself on the bed, removed the bodkins that fastened her hair, and releasing it from its confinement, she suffered it to stray over her neck—for even its light weight seemed too much for her burning brow.

It is at all times sad to see the blight of disappointment destroy the cherished but delusive dreams that the heart delights in: but when it falls upon youth and beauty, ere the feelings have been blunted by long contact with the world, it is doubly painful—for the heart is then unschooled to bear the stern decrees of adverse fortune. It grieves us not to see the dry branch, from which winter has robbed both life and beauty, trodden under foot; but when the rose-tree, covered with blossoms and flowers, is destroyed by a storm, we weep to see the leaves so lately expanded become the sport of every idle wind. The maiden closed her eyes, and clasped her hands upon her brow, as if she would shut out thought by the violence of the pressure. But thought is of too subtile a nature to be restrained by mere animal strength; and, despite of her efforts at composure, the tears forced

themselves through the closed lids, and coursed heavily down her white marbly cheeks ; and the sobs she had struggled to repress, now burst forth audibly. How bitter were those tears—how heart-searing were those sobs ! They served but to exhaust, without refreshing, resembling more the violence of a wintry storm than the genial shower of spring ; and hiding her head in the coverlid, she gave free vent to her sorrow.

Zarina loved her mother with even more than the usual devoted affection, which ever has been and still is a distinguished characteristic of our people ; and it was only after hours of painful emotion that the conviction—to her the harrowing conviction—that she loved another better than her beloved mother, forced itself upon her. That one was her cousin, who, if she acceded to her mother's wishes, could never claim a greater portion of her thoughts than might be properly bestowed on any other man. What would be his thoughts, his feelings, should she yield to her mother, and become the wife of Samaes, she dared not trust herself to think. At length she raised her hot and aching head from the couch, and pressing her hands convulsively on her throbbing heart, she strove to stifle the feelings of agony that oppressed her.

The air seemed excessively hot. Advancing to the casement, she threw it open, and admitted a stream of yellow moonlight into the apartment. It was a clear, lovely night, in Eyor, (April.) A delicious silence pervaded the air, only broken by the night-bird's song, and the murmur of the fountains; while the fresh breeze, laden with perfume, cooled the fever that burned in her heated veins. The bright stars—not the frosty planets of our northern hemisphere—but the brilliant orbs that only shine out in that eastern clime, were glittering in their vaulted home, and reflected back in the placid waves of the blue Galilean sea. There is something exceedingly soothing in the feeling with which we look out into the moonlight, when the silence of night hangs over a city—when the hopes, fears, ambition, love, hate, and every other passion that agitated their possessor during the day, is stilled, under the balmy influence of sleep, to know that we are surrounded by human beings, and yet feel as if we were alone in the vast world around us. It was such feelings as these that made her continue at the casement. It soothed her ruffled feelings, and brought higher and holier ones in their stead—for who can look upon the

universal stillness of nature, and not become elevated beyond the common feelings of every day life?—who can turn from the contemplation of all that is bright and beautiful, and not feel wiser and better? As time rolled on, and every moment brought her nearer to that dreaded morrow, she felt that she had a painful task to perform. For the first time in her life, she was going voluntarily to inflict pain upon that loved parent, who was dearer to her than her own life, or, what was more precious still—her love. She would willingly have sacrificed both, to spare her one unnecessary pang; but it was not only her own happiness that was to be compromised—no, that of her cousin, her lover—of him who had taught her awakened heart to confess the power of love. What right had she to trifle with his happiness? What right had she to play with a heart so devoted? If she had not confessed her love, then indeed the case would have been different, and filial affection might have triumphed over it. But it had been confessed. Why did the blood diffuse so deep a crimson over her face? There were no witnesses of that severe mental struggle. She knew not herself, nor did she stay to ask her heart. Yes, she had owned her love to the

object that had excited it; and why should it grieve her mother to know that the heart of her child was bestowed on her kinsman? Was he not worthy of it? Would not Eleazar be as tender a protector to herself, as kind and trusty a guardian to her sister, as this Saabite? Surely he, who had been the playmate of her childhood, the companion of her youth, would be the fittest protector of her maturer years. Thus reasoning herself into tranquillity, and consoling herself with the sweet conviction that her mother could not—nay, as her happiness was that dear mother's only care, would not—refuse to sanction her love, and bless her union with the being with whom that happiness was inseparably connected. As she concluded this silent colloquy with herself, she felt a drowsiness stealing over her senses. Closing the casement, she again sought her couch, and was soon sleeping that tranquil slumber which none but the innocent can enjoy.

CHAPTER III.

Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of death for me.

* * * * *
My father, then, will cease his tyranny.

CONGREVE.

AT length the morrow came, in brightness and beauty. The sky was brilliantly blue, and the air balmy with the breath of flowers. Zarina arose calm and refreshed from her long and sweet repose. While her attendant bound up the luxuriant tresses of her raven hair, and arranged it in many a shining braid, her thoughts reverted to the past night: but those thoughts were no longer tinged with bitterness; and when the handmaid retired, she seated herself by the casement, and drawing her white drapey in graceful folds around her, she patiently awaited the summons to attend her mother.

She was admiring the stillness of the morning, when suddenly the quiet was broken by the sound of the trumpets braying the alarm, and the quick tread of hurrying feet in the

square below. She looked forth, and as far as her eye could reach, she saw naught but one continuous stream of people pouring from every part of the city toward the quarter in which the governor resided. Onward swept the multitude, like a vast avalanche, seeming to gather strength and numbers in its course. But soon the last form disappeared—the last sound of steps died away in the distance, leaving the before silent square more silent and deserted than ever.

Leaving Zarina for awhile, we will follow, or rather precede the crowd, to the dwelling of the governor of Galilee. It was midnight, and the lamps were burning in the palace. In a large apartment which ran through the whole building, the furniture of which consisted of a long low table, surrounded by couches, and piles of cushions, there sat Josephus and his councillors. All looked flushed and agitated; but there was an expression of stern resolve on every brow, as their quick dark eyes glanced alternately from the countenance of the governor to that of a tall swarthy-looking youth, at the foot of the table. He stood with a calm, fixed look, his arms folded across his broad

chest, one foot slightly advanced, his curving lip curled with a look of scorn and defiance.

“There breathed but few on earth, who might defy
The full encounter of that searching eye.”

“And thou sayest that Placidus intends to surprise and destroy us in our fancied security?” said the governor, evidently continuing, and not commencing an examination of the youth. “Even so, my lord,” was the brief reply. “And the army is guided by a deserter from our own ranks?” resumed his interrogator. “Such was my intelligence; and that, too, from an unquestionable source,” replied the youth. “You hear, my brave friends, and brothers in arms, all of ye. Had I none but myself to consult, I would sally from the walls; and, desperate as the chance may appear, the enemy may be repelled by the suddenness of the attack, when all other means would fail. We might at least gain time to strengthen our defences. But I had forgotten ye were summoned here to give, not to receive counsel from me.” He paused and glanced around him, with the keen look of one who is accustomed to read men’s thoughts in their countenances, and to form his judgment

with precision and truth. Josephus had not deceived himself in the idea that none would reject the course he had proposed. "Ye have said wisely, my lord," was the reply of all; "and now it were well that the citizens were made acquainted with their danger." "Nay, that were unwise, indeed; for secrecy in counsel, promptitude in decision, a clear head to plan, and a bold arm to strike, must ever be the soul of such an expedition. The trumpet that plays before us on our march, must give them the first warning. It were folly to waste their strength and nerve with needless alarm. Let them rest while they may; for even if we are now successful, I fear it will not be long ere all their energies and powers of endurance will be put to a terrible test; and it were useless profusion to waste them on trifles, ere that time arrives. Now to our rest. To rest all of ye; and thou, too, brave youth, I doubt not art in need of refreshment and repose." He rose from his seat as he spoke; and beckoning the youth to follow him, he gracefully inclined his head to the rest, and left the apartment.

The council was over. The members retired to their own quarters, not to spend the remnant of the night in slumber, but to pass it in prayer

and preparation for the morrow, the all-important morrow. It was the sound, in the morning, of trumpets and kettledrums animating the soldiers, that led the affrighted citizens to the dwelling of their governor, where they loudly demanded admittance; but they demanded in vain. Already a body of armed men, headed by Joseph in person, were moving toward the northern gate of the town, where it was anticipated the attack would commence, that being the least defensible portion of the walls, and consequently more open to assault.

The sortie was made. The brave Israelites defeated the forces of Placidus; and were greeted, on their return within the walls, by enthusiastic shouts of applause from the grateful and excited populace, who, with the enthusiasm of the times, looked on this temporary success as an omen of the victorious result of their glorious struggle for liberty. Little time, however, was left for preparation or rejoicing. Stung to the quick by the defeat of Placidus by a body of ill-armed soldiers, Vespasian resumed his march; and by the following morning, the Roman army had pitched their camp on a hill directly facing the north front of the city. It was on the 28th day of Eyor, (about the 15th of May,) in the year

of the world 3827, that the army of Vespasian encamped opposite Jotapata; and this may properly be called the opening of the campaign which was to end in the overthrow of the Jewish state. The taking of Gadara could not be so termed, for the citizens had not even closed their gates. In that case, the soldiers had received orders to put all to the sword; and fatally were those inhuman commands obeyed—men, women, and children, were mercilessly slain; the houses were given up to pillage; and the unresisting city was left as a monument of the stern Roman commander's unsparing vengeance. In their blood had he washed out the stain the eagle of Rome had received in the fate of Cestius Gallus. Little mercy, therefore, could be expected from the imperial army towards those who ventured to oppose them in their triumphant march through the rebellious country. It was a new thing for them to experience defeat; and they had fancied the revolted province would return to its allegiance immediately on the sight of that banner which waved triumphantly over the fairest countries of the then known world, from the proudest city in sunny Greece, the mother of liberty, to the humblest village in the wilds of Germany, or among the still almost

unknown forest-lands of Britain, which was deemed the extremity of the world.

The inhabitants of Jotapata had little to expect, except from their own resources; and even the most peaceably inclined of the inhabitants,—and there were some of them who even then would have made concessions, and purchased peace on the most abject terms,—were obliged to arm themselves in their own defence, and that of their wives, their children, their homes, their country, and their God. They had relied, or at least partially so, on the strength of the mighty mountains, and the black, impenetrable forest, with which their city was girded round, for security; but they saw those forests fall beneath the unsparing axes of the Roman pioneers, and those mighty mountains, that for ages had towered to the sky with their lofty heads, bowed down, and laid low in the dust,—low as their own proud nation were doomed soon to lie. Alas! the desolation of these their natural guardians was but typical of their own utter prostration. The scattering of those giant trees was emblematical of their own dispersion. But surely the hand that cast down can raise up; he who scattered can gather together again. He can, he can; and who shall dare to doubt,

that he, the most High, will redeem his promise, by delivering from their present bondage his own peculiar and chosen people—those on whom he has put a mark and a sign,—the nation whom he has set apart from all others,—and gather them again together in their own land. But to my tale.

In the space of five days, the fair city lay open to the invaders. The hill on which they encamped was about a mile from the city.

Although the soldiers were too weary with their long march, to be capable of battle on the day of their arrival, Vespasian allowed no time for idleness, but set the workmen about erecting a triple wall of circumvallation, for which the woods they had levelled afforded sufficient materials.

We left Zarina seated at the open casement. We must now return to her. We left her indulging in hope—hope, the brightest, the most beautiful; alas, that we must add, and the most delusive of human feelings—we had well nigh said weaknesses; but why should we call it so, for is not hope to the heart what sunshine is to the flowers? Without its influence, existence would be a blank, with half its loveliest sentiments unawakened; and the bud would never reach to maturity, would never expand into the

glorious and many-tinted flower. She indulged in the fond hope that her mother would yield to her entreaties, and sanction her union with her young and noble kinsman, Eleazar. Dream on, dream on, whilst thou mayest, young visionary! for when the spell is once broken for thee, it will be broken for ever. How shall the tree survive the withering of the root?—how shall the fountain continue its course, when its source is dry?

We must here pause, in order to give some slight history of the principal actors in our drama. The lady Sarah traced her ancestry, on her mother's side, in a direct line from the Asmonean family; and on her father's from Saul, the first king of Israel. She had wedded, at the age of fourteen, into one of the noblest families in Galilee. Naturally of a proud and active disposition, her pride had been fostered into hauteur and wilfulness by overindulgence; for her father had not married in his youth, and when in his age he wedded the young and beautiful daughter of an early friend, he had devoted himself entirely to her happiness, and that of her two daughters, the only offspring of their union. He had succeeded in partially spoiling the dispositions of both; but when Sarah wed-

ded, the activity of her temperament would not permit her to vegetate in calm domestic life. She entreated her husband to spend a few years at the court of Rome. Malthusar could refuse nothing to his young fair wife. He acceded to her request, and they passed many years in the imperial city, where her youngest child, Ruth, and indeed many other children, were born, but all save her had died in their infancy. It was only the mortal illness of her noble husband that had induced her to return to her own land with her two children. Malthusar only went back to the fair province of Galilee in time to be laid in the sepulchre of his fathers, leaving his young wife a widow, with two children, the eldest only seven years old, and the other still a babe in its nurse's arms. The first year, she had strictly confined herself to her own dwelling, and gave herself up to uncontrollable sorrow; but at the expiration of that time, her naturally energetic soul threw off the depression that had enervated her spirit, and destroyed her health; and though her constitution was shattered and broken beyond recovery, the thought of her children roused her from the sinful indulgence of her lethargic grief and in-

activity, and she determined to devote the remnant of a life, which she knew she had curtailed, unto them. Though many suitors had sought the hand of the young and wealthy widow, she steadily refused them all. Malthusar had wedded no other wife; he had devoted his whole life to her, and none other should occupy his place, none other should have her hand; for her heart was buried in his grave, and all that was left her of human affection, was centred in his children. It was at this time that a new duty devolved on her. Her sister, as well as herself, had married young: her lot had been less fortunate. Her husband, a young merchant of Joppa, had embarked the whole of his property in a mercantile adventure. The vessels he had freighted were wrecked, and all that he possessed was lost. He saw himself, his wife, and child, reduced to beggary. They were obliged to remove from their former splendid dwelling; and in a humble cottage, in the midst of penury and discomfort, he strove to forget what he had once been. But the deprivation was too much for him; overwhelmed with his calamities, he sunk into the grave. Rachel would not have survived the loss of her beloved husband, but

for the sake of her boy ; and she felt, as she pressed him to her widowed heart, that she had a double duty to perform. For his sake she bore patiently with her sorrows. Deserted by her summer friends, that had flocked around her in prosperity, and not knowing where to seek her sister, her only surviving relative, she still struggled on. But when she heard of her sister's return to her own land—and that was not till many months after her overwrought frame gave way, worn down by years of sickness and poverty—she yielded to death, as a deliverer from a world of which she had grown weary ; and giving her orphan child all she had—a blessing, she left him to the care of his aunt. With a heart already deeply tried by suffering, the young Eleazar was removed from his own lowly and desolate home, to the palace dwelling of his wealthy and noble aunt. Eleazar had been nursed in sorrow, and early inured to want ; but the love of a fond and tender mother, whose exertions and anxieties had been all for him, was entirely and devotedly his own, and it recompensed him for the want of that sweet companionship in which childhood delights. When she was taken from him he wept,

because he could not die too, and go down to the grave with her. In his childish imagination, he pictured his aunt as harsh and unkind, the very reverse of his own lovely and gentle mother. How different did he find her ! The novelty of his new home, and new ties, soon blunted the edge of his grief ; and he learned to look on his kind and indulgent aunt as a second mother, and to love his fair young cousin as a sister. They were educated together ; they had the same instructors ; they shared the same meals ; and together they roamed through the green vales, and among the sunny hills of their beautiful land. They grew together like twin buds ; and as their characters were gradually developed, their feelings, their hopes, their thoughts, were for and of each other ; and their unrestrained intercourse, which so few of the youth of eastern nations enjoy, ripened their childish affection into love. Though fast advancing to maturity, to Sarah they still seemed like children, and the declining state of her health rendered her usually keen perceptions more dull than their wont ; besides, she deemed their love but fraternal ; and the flame, which might have been quenched had it been

checked in its birth, had strengthened beyond the power of aught human to destroy. How chilling, then, must it have been to the heart of Zarina, revelling, as it was, in the delight of a feeling long nurtured in her secret soul, but never till that morning confessed, even to herself, when her mother announced to her the contract she had made with Samaes. It may easily be supposed with what trembling she received the summons to attend her parent. She was about to lay bare to another the most cherished feelings of her heart, the most delicate secret of a young girl's life. She paused not to think; but hastily throwing her veil over her head, she clung to the arm of the slave for support, and descended into the family apartment, in which her mother awaited her. It was the room in which the family usually took their meals. A painful blush crimsoned her cheek, as the thought that Eleazar might be there flitted for a moment across her mind. It was a needless fear. The room was only occupied by her mother and sister.

"Go, Ruth, go," said her mother, disengaging her hand from that of the sweet young child, who was playing beside her, and whose

singularly beautiful countenance gave promise of a womanhood of surpassing loveliness. "May I not tarry a little while with my sister?" she asked; "why dost thou tremble so, dear Zarina?—thou art very pale. Come, come with me into the garden—let us chase the bright insects together, and twine a wreath of flowers for my hair. It is long since thou hast gathered flowers for me; they are all so beautiful to-day, they seem to invite us to gather them. Come, come with me now." She spoke eagerly, for she spoke from her heart; and taking her sister's hand in both her own, she strove to draw her towards the casement, which opened on a sloping terrace that led down into a garden, now fragrant with the perfume of flowers, and adorned with all the beauties of art and nature which the exquisite taste of its fair mistress could suggest. The birds in the aviary made the perfumed air vocal with their delicious music. "Not now, Ruth," replied Zarina, mournfully. "Go with Terah, pretty one, and she will twine garlands for thine hair, and sing gay songs to amuse thee. Go, for thou mayest not tarry longer here." With a sad look, Ruth resigned her sister's hand, and suffered Terah to lead her forth into the garden.

“And now, Zarina, that we are alone ; now what may thine answer to Samaes be ? Turn not away thine head, dearest. But it needs not words to assure me of thy willing assent to his, to my proposal. Come hither, my gentle child, and receive thy mother’s blessing, for thy prompt obedience to her will. Thy nuptials may not be long delayed, for troubles and war have come upon our rebellious people ; and who shall say when the sword may be sheathed, or the dove find the olive branch of peace ? Thou hast neither father nor brother ; but thy young cousin Eleazar will be both unto thee, for he loves thee with an affection which surpasses even a brother’s love ; and I shall yet live to see thee wedded.” But observing her daughter’s reserve, she said, “Why comest thou not to receive thy mother’s proffered blessing ?” “Because I deserve it not,” she replied, struggling with emotions that nearly forbade utterance ; “because thy daughter is undeserving of thy blessing, and cannot accept that of which she knows herself unworthy. Forgive me, O my mother ; but I cannot wed Samaes, even were he a monarch’s son, and could lay the world’s diadem at my feet ; and even if my refusal were to doom

me to life-long misery. Mother, thou hast spoken of my kinsman as a father or a brother ; but those are cold words, and oh ! I feel that language would exhaust itself, and still leave untold, the burning, absorbing passion I feel for him. When I came to thee yestereven, mother, I came to lay bare my heart before thee. But when thou spokest to me of another, my confidence was gone, and I could not tell thee ; but I fear not to tell thee now, that we have interchanged our troth, and I may not wed the Saabite, even were I never to wed another.” “ And none other shalt thou wed,” said her mother, rising from her couch, while her brow grew dark with rage, her proud eye flashing fire, and her lip curling with an expression of ineffable scorn. “ O mother ! visit me not with thy wrath, for it is more than my strength can bear. Perhaps I have erred in yielding up my heart to the keeping of another without thy knowledge ; yet I cannot recant the sweet error, all sinful though it be ; nor can I give my hand to Samaes, for that would be worse than error—it would be criminal, knowing as I do that my affections are irrecoverably gone ; but—” “ Make no reservations. Go on, go on, that I may hear how far

thine insolence will carry thee. Perhaps thou mayest have maiden modesty sufficient to throw thyself on thy cousin's protection, and wed without thy mother's consent. God of my fathers! that a child of mine—the child in whom I have garnered up the richest treasures of affection—should live to repay me with disobedience!—that a Jewish maiden should yield up her heart, and exchange her troth, without even consulting her mother!” “Mother, mother,” shrieked Zarina, throwing herself at her feet, “Oh hear me, hear me, I implore thee. I have not willingly offended thee; and though I cannot recall the heart I have given, I will not give him my hand, I will never, never—” wed him, she would have said; but her mother interrupted her by exclaiming, “That thou shalt not, while I have life to prevent thee. This day shall he quit my dwelling; and thou—leave go thy hold, ere I curse thee. Well hast thou said, that thou wert undeserving of my blessing.” As she spoke, she disengaged herself from Zarina's hold, and fixing her flashing eyes for a moment on the form of her prostrate child, she passed majestically from the room. Zarina raised her streaming eyes, glistening through their tears,

like blue violets bathed in morning dew, and gazed on the retreating form of her angry parent: then, uttering a long, piercing shriek, she fell forward with stunning violence, and lay senseless on the marble floor.

CHAPTER IV.

HE spoke—his words were cold—
But his smile was unaltered.
I knew how much he felt,
For his deep-toned voice faltered.
He called me by my name,
As the bride of another.
Oh, thou hast been the cause
Of this anguish, my mother.

T. H. BAYLEY.

THY mother too doth shun me,
For she knew I loved her child.

LOST ROSABEL.

HOURS flew away, and night had brought silence and repose to the earth. Even the music of the birds was hushed into silence. The moon had not yet risen, and there was nought to relieve the deep intense blue of the heavens, save where one solitary star in the far east shed down its pale, golden light, over the sleeping world below. When Zarina recovered from her long swoon, she found herself alone, stretched upon the couch. At first she could distinguish nothing, comprehend nothing, save

that her temples were throbbing painfully, and that her head ached intensely. There was not a sound to be heard, except the murmurs of a small fountain, that sent up its waters in a mimic cascade, and fell back with a sweet bubbling sound into the marble basin that formed its reservoir; or the sighs of the night breeze, that came in through the open casement, and blew aside the dark hair that hung in long loose ringlets over her feverish forehead. By degrees, as reason recovered its sway, the remembrance of the morning rose vividly before her. The words of her mother rung in her ears, making the warm blood curdle in her veins, and filling her heart with undefined fear. The bitter feeling of blighted hope filled her beautiful eyes with tears of anguish. She sighed deeply as the sad thoughts crossed her mind, and the sigh was echoed back with even more of sadness than her own had conveyed. She started at the sound, and her before colourless cheeks became flushed with the brightest crimson. She strove to speak, but the effort failed; for though her lips moved, no sound escaped them. Sick with terror, that she almost blushed even to confess to herself, she sunk back again upon her couch with an over-

powering sense of agony. For awhile she listened in breathless silence ; she hoped, yet dreaded to hear that sound repeated—she listened in vain. The monotonous murmurs of the fountain alone met her ear ; suspense became intolerable—she had partially raised herself on her arm, with the intention of summoning a slave, but she paused, for at that moment the tones of a lute came mingling with the breeze. Who could it be at that hour ? Perhaps it was the Arab Terah, playing to amuse her mother—but no ; though Terah played with skill and sweetness, there was a deep melting pathos in the strain she now heard, that convinced her it could not be the slave. Besides, her mother's apartments were too far off for the sound of music in them to reach her so distinctly ; and Terah was always too close an attendant on her mother, to be near her ; she felt convinced the music she now listened to was in the room, or on the terrace immediately beneath the window. For a moment the musician struck the chords with a careless hand ; then paused, as if lost in thought ; and then again swept the strings, and played a low melancholy prelude. Then came a voice on the night breeze, mingling its rich melody with the sad and wailing tones of the instrument.

As she listened, she heard the voice of the singer, first in low indistinct murmurs, as if trying its strength; and then it came louder and more distinctly on her ear, when she heard the words of the following song—

Our young day-dream has faded,
Like the meteor glare of night;
And sorrow's wing hath shaded
Thy blue eyes' living light.
Alas ! how soon grief alters
The beauty of the brow;
And the voice of music falters,
That never failed till now !

Thy mother's hand hath broken
The spell that bound my heart :
Thy mother's voice hath spoken
The doom that bids us part.
And yet full many a kindness
She lavished once on me ;
And I dare not, in love's blindness,
Disobey the stern decree.

Again the hand was thrown carelessly over the chords of the instrument, and then all was silent as before. But the voice had found an echo in the heart of its beautiful audistress—for it was the voice of Eleazar. He had seen her mother, and he knew all the misery that had fallen on them. Her stern parent had bid-den him forth from her dwelling, even in the

hour in which she had crushed all his sweet dreams of happiness, and trampled on the hopes that had formed the delight of existence. But he was near her still, and there was yet time to console him with the sweet assurance of her unchangeable love, that neither threats nor entreaties should induce her to wed another. She rose from the couch, and advanced to the casement; yet it was with much difficulty she articulated his name. It needed no second invitation to bring him to her side. For some minutes they stood gazing in silence on each other; but at length the youth broke the painful stillness. He took her hand in his own, and said, in a tone so low that it went not beyond the ear for which it was intended, "This is happiness I dreamed not of—for we must meet no more as we have met; and this one short moment perhaps is the last we may ever pass together." "Alas! I know it too well," said the maiden, sadly, as she turned away her beautiful face, to avoid the young man's ardent gaze—for his dark eyes were fixed on her features, as if he would engrave every line in his heart, in this, probably their last interview. Beautiful indeed did she look, as the light of the newly-risen moon streamed in through the open casement, reveal-

ing her sylph-like figure, her graceful head averted, and her perfectly faultless countenance, half veiled by the luxuriant hair, whose sable hue formed a strong contrast to her white throat. As Eleazar looked on her almost ærial loveliness, it seemed so natural that he, who had grown up from youth to manhood by her side, should love her, that he could not comprehend the blindness that could see their daily intercourse with each other, and not know that they loved. He knew not that those who are in the habit of mixing freely with us, who spend hour after hour, day after day, and year after year, with us, are the last to discover our real character, qualities, or inclinations. It is the passing acquaintance, the casual visitor, who is most frequently the first to discover the existence of genius or love.

“My mother, then, has told thee all?” said Zarina, suddenly starting from a momentary reverie; “and thou knowest we must be nought unto each other, more than thou and Ruth are?” “O repeat not the dreadful tale,” interrupted her companion; “alas! it is too much. I know that thou art betrothed to another—for thus much thy mother told me, and thou—thou—Zarina—” He hesitated and paused; again he continued,

more rapidly ; “ thou can’st give but one answer ; and thou wilt wed Samaes, and I—” Here he paused again, as if he feared to give utterance to his feelings. She felt the hand that held her own tremble violently, while a few burning tears fell upon her neck. “ And thou,” she said, in a voice, which despite of her efforts at composure, betrayed her inward struggle,—“ Thou art more unkind, more ungenerous, than I could have believed thee to be. Had another told me thou hadst breathed such words, I should have deemed him thine enemy—one who maligned thee, because he loved thee not. I tell thee, I will never be a bride, unless thou art my bridegroom. It may be unmaidenly to tell thee so, and perhaps thou wilt despise me. I have told my mother, that I will never wed Samaes ; for even the loss of that dear mother’s love, much as I prize it, shall never induce me to break the faith I have plighted to thee. Have I not vowed to thee, even under the blue vault that is shining over us now ?” and as she spoke, she fixed her eyes upon him, while their soft blue, usually so tender and loving, flashed with light, and her whole face was illumined with the radiant glow of pure unselfish love ; yet there was something reproachful in her tone. “ Thou hast

doubted; but follow me." She stepped out upon the terrace, and clasping her hands passionately together, raised her beaming eyes, blue as the depths of the heaven on which she gazed; "Hear me, Eleazar; here under this wondrous canopy, studded with myriads of stars that gem its azure depths, I am willing to renew the troth I have before plighted to thee; but mark me, though I will wed none other, I will never be thy wife if the union be unsanctioned by my mother's blessing; and I doubt not, when this quarrel with our Roman masters be ended—" "And that will never be, Zarina," he said, interrupting her, "until every city, town, and village in Judea, be levelled with the ground. It will never be, until the temple,—nay, start not—till the temple is a ruin, and our conquerors ride over the necks of our prostrate countrymen. It will never be, till there is not a foot of land we can call our own. It will never be;—" he spoke with vehemence—"for the time for pacific measures is gone past: and unless we consent to crawl forth on our knees; nay, scarcely even then, will our taskmasters forgive our glorious though futile effort to attain our freedom. Not unless we yield tamely to a worse bondage than our forefathers endured in Egypt; and I swear by the God who redeemed those forefathers from

slavery, I would be the last to counsel such a measure, the very thought of which brings shame and degradation; for while I speak the spirit of my mighty ancestors, the glorious Maccabees, seems to animate my words. Have we not borne with them long enough? Have we not submitted to their galling taunts and grinding exactions? And yet we forbore, until forbearance became criminal. Our old men have been murdered in cold blood; our young maidens have been seized upon in their mid-day walks, torn from the bosom of their families, torn from the homes of their youth, and sold into slavery. Did they not seek to place a graven image in the temple? nay, even within the Holy of Holies? Did not Gessius Florus see the peaceful citizens of Jerusalem butchered in their own market-place? Did they not refuse us redress, and mock at our ambassadors? And if thou requirest further proof, look at Gadara. Our countrymen offered no resistance; they did no wrong; but they were not spared. And thou speakest of peace—peace with Rome! As soon mayest thou look for mercy from the hyena to its prey. The vulture hath spread its wings, and opened its ravenous beak; and it will know no rest, till it is sated with blood. I would not seek to appease those haughty Romans, even were the city

in flames ; and thou, all lovely as thou art, I would sooner watch thy dying throbs, than thou shouldest live and be exposed to the mercy of the Romans." He ceased, and looked anxiously in the pale face of the maiden, who had stood silent during this passionate harangue, with her arms folded meekly on her breast, the thick masses of black hair thrown back from her pallid face, which looked in the moonlight white as the marble pillar against which she leaned for support, every feature working with the varied emotions his words had awakened—for well she knew that the picture was but too true. When he had concluded, she still stood, as if the echo of his words yet lingered on her ear. "I am very ill," she said at last, in a feeble tone. She took the arm the youth proffered for assistance, and returned to the apartment. But ere they reached the couch, he felt her lean yet more heavily upon him; her head drooped, and she would have fallen, but he raised her in his arms, and laying her gently on the couch, bathed her temples with the clear water of the fountain, till she recovered. Then pressing his burning lips upon her hand, he prepared to leave her. "Farewell, farewell; perhaps for ever," said Zarina, sorrowfully; "for it were now almost

sinful to meet again. For worlds, I would not that my mother knew of this—for although I cannot obey her, I would not willingly inflict another wound on her feelings. Now, Eleazar, leave me.” “Adieu, dearest Zarina; God bless thee, for the sweet assurance of thy love; and though my hitherto kind kinswoman has forbidden my approach to her dwelling; although I am an outcast from the roof that sheltered my happy childhood, and an alien from the heart that has cherished me with maternal tenderness: yet will I be near, to protect and guard over thee in the hour of danger. That, at least, will be no crime.” He bent down, and printed a fond kiss on either cheek; then passing through the open window, disappeared, leaving her to the sad companionship of her own gloomy thoughts.

CHAPTER V.

The city resounds with the horrible din,
Of the Roman without, and the famine within.

UNPUBLISHED POEM.

Bring from the east, bring from the west,
Flowers for the hair, gems for the vest ;
Bring the rich silks that are shining with gold,
Wrought in rich broidery on every fold.

Bring ye the perfumes that breathe on the rose,
Such as the summer of Egypt bestows ;
Bring the white pearls from the depths of the sea,
They are fair like the neck where their lustre will be.

Such are the offerings that now will be brought,
But can they bring peace to the turmoil of thought ?
Can they one moment of quiet bestow,
To the human heart, feverish and beating below.

MISS LONDON.

I wore my bridal robes,
But I rivalled their whiteness ;
Bright gems were in my hair,
How I hated their brightness.

WE MET.

As the days passed on, the besiegers and
beseiged were busily employed in works of
offence and defence. While the troops of

Vespasian pursued their works with the steady coolness for which they were celebrated, the Jews, driven to desperation, left no means untried, in order to destroy the embankment which their foes were raising around the walls ; and they hurled down stones and other missiles upon the penthouse which covered the Roman workmen. Annoyed and irritated by these demonstrations of continued resistance, Vespasian ordered the military engines to clear the walls. The Jews were far from yielding to despair. On the contrary, their courage rose with the occasion, and though driven from the walls above—for they dare not expose their persons to the huge stones hurled by the balistas, or the balls of fire and hissing javelins that fell in showers around them—they began to fight from below. Used to desultory warfare, they stole out in small bands, and destroyed the breastworks.

Such a state of things could not last long ; and it was with feelings of desperation the garrison saw the embankment completed. It seemed as if another city had sprung up beside their own, and that they were to struggle hand to hand with their stern and deadly opponents.

The mind of the governor seemed nothing daunted. He was prepared to meet every

exigency. He gave orders for the walls to be raised, and when the workmen he selected for the occasion represented the perfect impracticability of so doing, he ordered tall stakes to be driven into the ground, and covered with hides of oxen newly slain. Under this protection the men worked with security night and day. They toiled till the work was completed. They raised the wall full twenty cubits higher. On this they built several towers, and completed the work with a strong battlement. With dismay the Romans, who had already deemed the city their own, saw this new proof of skill and ingenuity in the besieged, who again sallied out in small parties, destroyed the hostile works, and carried off every thing they could lay hands on. Maddened by rage at these unexpected results, Vespasian determined to change the siege into a blockade, and as he could not take the city by assault, to reduce it by famine.

Now indeed came the terrors of war; for though the garrison were well provided with every necessary, such as wheat, &c., every thing except salt, the want of water began to be terribly felt. There were no springs within the city, and the inhabitants were obliged to content themselves with rain water. Even that

was only to be obtained in small quantities, for it seldom rains in the east during the summer months. Orders were given to serve the water out to the people in measures, and rich and poor were alike forced to submit. To increase the calamity, the Roman soldiers swept the miserable Israelites down from the walls as they passed along with their pitchers for their daily supply. This scanty doling out of the chief support of existence was truly dispiriting. Josephus saw the dreadful havoc want of water and the unerring precision with which their foes took aim was making among the men, and determined not to be outmanœuvred; he made some of them steep their clothes in water, and hang them from the walls to dry. The Romans, convinced that men who could so wantonly waste the precious fluid could be in no want of it, and wearied out by the tedious inactivity of blockade, returned once more to the assault.

It was in a large airy room, closely curtained to exclude the rays of the burning sun, although the lattices were open to admit the air, that, propped up by pillows, her wan countenance still more wan and sallow than when first introduced to the reader, her lips parched with fever, and her hands thin almost to transparency, re-

clined the attenuated figure of Sarah. At the foot of the bed, on a seat of sandal-wood, sat the slave Terah, watching the feverish and broken slumber of her mistress. On a small table beside her stood a silver censer, richly embossed, in which were burning the odoriferous woods of Araby, poor Terah's sunny land. An embroidery frame was in her hand, but her thoughts were evidently far away. She was thinking of her distant home—the smiling stream, beside whose banks she had so often knelt in childhood, with her young companions, twining wreaths of wild-flowers to decorate the shining tresses of her raven hair—of the groves of spice, where she used to sit in the noontide, listening to the songs of the birds, or her own voice, scarcely less sweet or merry than theirs, as she poured forth the exuberance of her glad spirit in song. Sunshine and song are sweet accompaniments of each other. Who could be sad or unhappy when the beauty and fulness of summer are around them? Then she had been happy; for she was free as the wild bird, whose wings bore him through the blue fields of air. And what was she now? A slave—a favourite slave, indeed—but though her chain was of flowers, and she scarcely felt its weight,

it was still a chain. There is something inexpressibly painful in the memories of the past, when the heart should be yet young in sorrow ; when hope and imagination should wave their pinions with their first freshness, yet untainted by care. The young should look to the future for happiness, and not dwell on the past, as if pleasure were dead for them. The tears fell unheeded on the pale face of the young slave, giving a subdued lustre to her large, full, black eyes, as they trembled beneath the long silken lashes. She longed to be out in the fresh air, among the flowers ; for to them she could pour forth her sorrows as to long familiar friends ; and the tears she shed upon them seemed to form between them a link of sympathy. There was no human being who could enter into and sympathise with her feelings ; and she felt that if deprived of that source of consolation, even of its own fulness, her heart would burst. She loved Sarah, her mistress, it is true, for she had been kind to her ; but it was the love of the slave for the mistress. Ah ! the love of one free heart is worth that of a thousand slaves.

An hour had passed away, when Terah's solitary musings were broken by the sound of a of a light foot-fall on the stair. A low tap was

heard at the door. The slave replied in a low subdued tone, "Come in—she sleeps." The door was cautiously unclosed, and Zarina entered the sick chamber of her mother. She, too, was changed. It seemed as if the mildew of blighted hope, like the canker on the rose, had banished the warm bright hue of health from lip and cheek, for her face was pale—very pale. Her slight graceful figure had lost much of the roundness and beauty of its outline; and you might almost trace the rich blood in its windings through the clear blue veins in the white forehead, over which her hair was folded in soft and wavy lines. She wore no ornaments in her simple white dress; not a jewel on her person, excepting a rich emerald clasp, that fastened the girdle with which her loose drapery was confined at the waist; and even slight as the ornament was, it would have been laid aside but that it had once been Eleazar's—his mother's dying gift to him, the only remnant she had rescued from the wreck of her former state. It had been preserved, because it was the first gift of her husband. With her dying hand she had given it to her child, as a memento of his father and herself. She bade him never part with it, until he found a being worthy of his

love. He had treasured up the dying gift of his mother next his heart, and her dying words in his memory. He had given it to her on the morning when they had first interchanged their troth; for she was good and beautiful as his own beloved parent. He had given it, as they stood on the mountain-top, and heard and felt there was a God in all that was around them. It was the day from which she might date the commencement of her sorrows. Poor girl, she had known but little of happiness since then. She had been excluded from the sight of her sweet young sister, whose gentle and loving disposition made her the favourite of all who knew her; denied even an interview with her beloved mother; and when she entreated permission to attend on her sick couch, as she had been wont to do in days gone by, her prayers and tears were answered with bitter scorn and reviling. Once, and once only had she been summoned to attend her mother; and then the joy she felt was crushed, and hope blighted; for the summons was attended by an order to attire herself in her richest robes, to deck her hair with gems and flowers, and appear as became a Jewish maiden on the day of her betrothal. For this purpose she had received a tiara and

zone of glittering gems, and a necklace of orient pearls, that had been placed around her mother's neck by an imperial hand, during her residence at the court of Rome, with the gallant remark that a neck so beautiful well became the purest and loveliest gems that the world produced. In vain she wept—in vain she remonstrated: her mother sternly commanded her to appear, and the bridegroom impatiently awaited her coming. "And this," thought Zarina, as she passively allowed her handmaidens to adorn her person, "this, then, is the consummation of my day-dream of happiness!" They twined sparkling jewels, and the fragrant blossoms of the jessamine—those delicate bride-like flowers—among the rich tresses of jetty hair. They arrayed her in a robe of the purest white; but her face was whiter than her robe. They placed the richly embroidered veil upon the head of the pale, fair girl, who resembled a victim more than a bride. She allowed them to conduct her to her mother's presence, but inwardly resolved never to break her plighted troth; and, with a fortitude she knew not she possessed, she steadily adhered to her resolution. "I will not speak a sentence," she murmured to herself, as she entered the apartment in which the cere-

mony was to take place. It was a long, lofty apartment. The floor and pillars that supported the roof were of red marble, beautifully veined with green and blue. It was decked out for the occasion, in a style of almost regal magnificence. The hangings were of crimson and gold. The door-posts, cornices, and pillars, were wreathed with festoons of the most fragrant flowers. It seemed as if spring had been despoiled of its richest treasures, to form those beautiful bouquets that were ranged in vases of wrought gold and silver, the gorgeous splendour of which was relieved by their being placed on stands of white marble. At the upper end, on a rich divan, sat her mother, arrayed in a gorgeous dress of cloth of gold, her proud brow encircled by a tiara of rubies, the zone around her waist of pure gold, and fastened with a large ruby brooch. At her side sat Ruth, forming the most complete contrast to her proudly beautiful mother. Her little child-like form, arrayed in a simple white dress ; her sweet face, dimpled with smiles ; and her large loving eyes, laughing out in the mirth of her glad young spirit ; her long black hair, hanging in natural ringlets down her back, just parted on the polished brow, which was encircled

by a garland of white roses, and sprigs of jessamine. Before them was a table of cedar wood, inlaid with gold, on which lay the contract of betrothal, ready for the signature of the intended bride and bridegroom. Seated on couches of crimson silk around the table, were Samaes, the priest who was to perform the rites, the scribe who had drawn out the contract, and all the Jewish domestics of the household, placed according to the offices which they held.

It needed but a moment to make Zarina aware of the reality of the scene we have just described. Leaning upon her handmaidens for support, she advanced up the room. The bridegroom and her mother rose to receive her. A single glance sufficed to convince her her Saabite lover was very handsome; but the haughty expression of the mouth, the restless flashing of his black eyes, the manly though stern beauty of his countenance, and the air of decision that characterized the whole, made her soul sink within her. Her mother laid her hand upon her head as she passed, and blessed her fervently. All the preliminaries had been settled previous to her arrival, and, after a short pause, the priest commenced during a dead silence from all around.

But when he came to that portion of the ceremony, where, taking the hem of his garment he presented it to the maiden, and asked the question, if she thought she loved Samaes well enough to perform toward him the duties of a wife, she answered not. "Speak!" exclaimed her mother, in a voice of terrible wrath. "Answer, O my child," said the priest, a meek old man, whose silver hair and beard, broad brow, and gentle smile, gave an air of benevolence to his venerable countenance, "the question I have asked of thee;" and he repeated it in a voice which, always soft and musical, sounded doubly so after the harsh and angry tones of her mother. Then it was that she repented her of her self-imposed silence, and after a moment's thought, she answered modestly, but in a calm firm tone, the single monosyllable "No." A cry of surprise rang through the lofty apartment. Such an answer to such a question was unparalleled. For a moment all was doubt and confusion; but her mother understood it well, and rising from her seat, with an air of calm dignity, and with a look of measureless rage, she placed her clasped hands upon the head where a few moments before she had placed them to call down a blessing, and invoked the most deadly curses that anger

and excited feelings could suggest. Zarina clasped her hands together, and wept in agony of spirit ; but she attempted not to deprecate her mother's wrath by words. "She is mad, surely. God has visited her with an exceeding great affliction," said the aged priest. "She is indeed so," repeated the domestics, in subdued whispers to each other ; "or surely she, who was always so good and gentle, would not refuse to obey the parent she has always looked upon with reverence and love."

The disappointed Samaes, who stood with arms crossed, in the same attitude in which he had stood before the council of Josephus, was the only one of the circle who joined not in these exclamations. "She is not mad," exclaimed the wrathful mother. "Disobedient, base, degenerate as she is, she is not mad ; and as surely as she has refused to obey me, so surely shall it be visited on the head of the ungrateful boy who instigated her to do so." "If reason has not deserted thee," said the priest, again turning toward the wretched girl, "kneel to thy mother, and seek her forgiveness—for thou hast sinned greatly, and submission to thy justly offended parent is thine only means of appeasing the wrath of a terrible but all-merciful God."

“Alas, I cannot comply with her wishes, without breaking the solemn vows I have vowed unto another. Yet, oh! my mother,” she said, suddenly rising and throwing her arms round her neck, with the wild energy of despair; “yet, O my mother, in what have I offended, that thou shouldst curse me? Have I not always been a dutiful and affectionate child unto thee, obeying thy slightest behest? How I have,—how I still love thee—and thou, who wert always so kind, so fond, until now—” “Off, off! there is contamination in thy touch. Go, disobedient and rebellious as thou art; go to thine own chamber, and dare not quit it again. Dare not to hold commune with him. Go!” and she stamped with rage as she released herself from her passionate embrace.

Zarina sank upon the ground, clasped her knees, and raised her uncovered face—for her veil had fallen off—with a look of unutterable agony—it might have melted the most obdurate heart; yet her mother shook her off, and with a voice rendered almost inarticulate from excess of passion, bade her quit the apartment. She could not raise herself from her prostrate position; and Ruth, who had stood like the angel of purity weeping for the sins of human nature,

flew forward to assist her. It was a group for a sculptor, that mother and children, all beautiful, exquisitely beautiful; and yet how different their shades of character—the proud and haughty mother, the personification of pride and scorn; the kneeling figure of Zarina, with her faultless features convulsed with agony, her eyes swimming with tears; Ruth, bending over her sister, her fairy figure and sweet young face the very ideal of innocent loveliness and sorrow. “Away, Ruth! touch her not, I command thee; she is unworthy of thy love.” Ruth shrank back to her seat. The domestics did not attempt to raise the sufferer—for their stern mistress forbade, and none dared to disobey. Her own immediate attendant,—a young Hebrew girl, who had been left a destitute orphan, and whom Zarina had obtained her mother’s consent to take as her own handmaid—had wept until she was incapable of affording her the assistance required.

Samaes, who had stood apart during this strange scene more like a spectator than a principal, now advanced towards the weeping girl, and raising her in his arms with the same ease with which he would have lifted an infant, he

supported, or rather carried her to the door, where her handmaidens received her now senseless form, and bore her to her own chamber. Then turning, the youth strode towards the table, and taking the contract with an untrembling hand, though with quivering lips and contracted brow—contracted as in pain, not anger—he tore it into minute pieces, and flinging it from him quitted the house, without uttering a word.

From that day the unfortunate Zarina had been refused all intercourse with the members of her family; and her mother would even have deprived her of the attendance of the faithful Naomi, had not the poor attendant besought her on her knees, not to separate her from her beloved mistress. Yet Zarina hoped that her mother would soon relent toward her; but when Naomi told her that her mother was ill, and would not permit her to soothe down her sick couch, but preferred the attendance of her Arab slave, she settled down into gloomy despondence, accusing herself as the cause of her mother's illness and probable death. Nights of feverish unrest succeeded days of misery and despair. The loss of her delightful rambles, and of the pure fresh air, restricted as she was to the boundary

of her own chamber, proved as fatal to her health as mental anxiety did to her spirits. At length, unable longer to bear the separation from all she loved, she determined to seek her mother's presence without asking her permission, and beseech her, by the memory of that dear father, for whose sake she had passed her young years in widowhood, to banish her no longer from the sunshine of her smiles.

She had now been many days confined to one room ; and it was with a feeling of inexpressible delight she felt the cool wind of heaven blowing in through the open casements of the corridors she was obliged to traverse ere she could reach her mother's chamber. It was like passing from the very essence of light, warmth and beauty, into the damp darkness of a dungeon, for such appeared that darkened chamber of sickness. "Go, Terah ; I will take thy place, and watch my mother's slumber. Thou must be weary of sitting here so long alone. Go into the gardens, and enjoy an hour in the bright sunshine." Terah rose, and gladly laying aside her embroidery, and resigning her seat to her young mistress, she silently quitted the apartment, and bounded into the garden, with some

such delight as we may imagine a long-caged bird to enjoy, when it again tries its pinions in the green woodlands.

With a heart lightened of half its sorrows, Zarina took her seat, and beguiled the tedious hours by plying the busy needle at 'Terah's embroidery. It was almost night when the sleeper awoke from her long repose, and raising herself, exclaimed, in a querulous voice, "'Terah, 'Terah!—what, art thou sleeping again? Arouse thee, arouse thee, I say!" Zarina dared not trust her voice to reply. "Lay aside thy frame," continued her mother, without waiting for an answer; "lay aside the needle, and take up thy lute; for the silence weighs heavy on my spirits, and my soul pants to hear thy sweet voice, even as the wayworn traveller thirsts for the running brook."

Zarina arose, and with noiseless steps, possessed herself of the slave's lute. Sweeping the strings of the little instrument, she reseated herself, and in a voice, the richness and depth of whose melody was only subdued to suit the stillness of the sick room, she poured forth the following pathetic strain.—

Song.

“ Oh ! for the harp of David now !
 Oh ! for the glorious sword of Saul !
 That we might grapple with the foe,
 Or with the foe, like Sampson, fall ;
 And in one general ruin, see
 Our foemen crushed, as well as we.

“ Oh ! for the high and palmy days
 When Solomon ruled o'er the state ;
 And every man beneath the shade
 Of his own vine and fig-tree sate ;
 Or knelt in worship at the shrine
 That, Israel's God, was wholly thine.

“ Oh ! that this woman's arm could wield
 A sword, to guard its country's right !
 Gladly, upon the battle field,
 I'd brave the perils of the fight.
 Dying I'd wreath my brow with fame,
 But never never, never live to shame.

“ Oh ! that one victim would suffice
 To set my bleeding country free ;
 Gladly I'd be the sacrifice,
 And die, my native land, for thee ;
 Decking my head with flowers, to meet
 A doom, by freedom rendered sweet.

“ It may not be !—it may not be !
 The sacred covenant is broke ;
 Thou proud and stiff-necked race, by thee
 The eternal voice of God hath spoke ;
 And Israel's sons, a scattered race,
 Shall find no certain dwelling-place.”

The strain was done, and a death-like pause ensued. Zarina was mute, in the hope that the invalid, just awakened from a refreshing slumber, with every feeling softened by its influence, added to the sweet but mournful music, would recognize the voice of her child, and disarmed of every evil feeling toward her, would, in the heavenly spirit of forgiveness, take that repentant child once more to her arms. It was a bitter disappointment to her excited feelings, when, after a moment's silent expectation, she fancied the music had lulled her to sleep; or, under the delusion of a sick fancy, she might believe it was the accustomed voice of the Arab. She again drew her hand across the strings, and though the notes were rendered low and tremulous by her emotion, they were still clear and distinct, as she accompanied the strain with her voice.

“ Was it well, O my mother, to crush every feeling
Of tenderness, just budding forth into flower?
Oh! thou knowest not the agonized pang of concealing
A passion whose strength would all others o'erpower.

“ Was it well to oppose, to each hope that I cherished,
The stern, the impassable barrier of pride?
Alas! all the hopes of my girlhood are perished;—
Oh, would in that hour thy daughter had died!

“ Yet not for myself do I mourn thy unkindness ;
But he whom thou’st cherished and loved from his birth ;
Thou hast driven him forth in a moment of anger,
An alien at once to thy heart and thy hearth.”

The emotion she felt was changed into one of almost stifling agony, when, after another momentary pause, the silence was broken by the voice so loved, that till within the space of a few short days, had never addressed a sentence to her unaccompanied by some endearing epithet. Now, although it was calm and collected, it breathed with concentrated passion. “ And thou hast dared to disobey me ? ” she said. “ This is well ; but perhaps thou thinkest the best way of fulfilling the command to honour and obey thy parents, is to wring the heart of thy sole surviving one ? Hast thou not done enough already ? Hast thou not reduced me to this ? Or art thou come to rejoice in the suffering thou hast caused, and to say, in the exultation of thine heart, ‘ This, this is my work ! ’ ” Zarina answered not, but throwing herself on her knees by the bedside, and clasping her hands imploringly together, she wept aloud. “ Aye ! weep,” said her mother, incoherently ; “ weep for me, my gentle one ; for am I not cursed with a disobedient child ? But thou, poor slave, thou lovest me—

thou hast never, never been unkind to thy mistress, and thou art desolate and forlorn as I; but when I die, as I soon shall—for I feel that which none ever felt and lived—so, so,” and she endeavoured to collect her scattered thoughts; “when I die, thou shalt be free, and thou shalt have gold, aye, gold enough to carry thee to thine own land. Bend forward, that I may bless thee. There,” she said, when she had concluded her benediction, “there, now sing to me again; but not such songs as Zarina sung, ungrateful, unrepenting as she is. And he who taught her to be undutiful—may the curses of a blighted and broken heart, blighted and broken by them, rest upon them both! Let her not come to me again. Guard the door well, Terah, that she may not again come in the way of my just anger, and disturb my last moments.” She sank back upon the pillow, exhausted by the vehemence of her feelings. The silence of the grave again pervaded the apartment. Though Zarina answered not the words, they sunk to her heart. Her mother’s strong intellect had been warped by long sickness, and the storm-gusts of passion, that had lately swept across her mind, had left fearful traces of their destructive power.

She had blessed and cursed her child with the same breath ; and that unhappy child had knelt beside her, and she knew her not. “ O God !” ejaculated the wretched girl, “ this is horrible—and I am the unhappy cause !”

CHAPTER VI.

MOMENTS there are, and this was one,
Snatched like a minute's gleam of sun
Amid the black simoom's eclipse ;
Or like those verdant spots, that bloom
Around the burning crater's lips,
Sweetening the very edge of doom.
The past, the future—all that Fate
Can bring of dark or desolate
Around such hours—but make them cast
Intenser radiance while they last.

MOORE.

He died—as heroes are born to die,
In the warm flush of victory.

SONG.

It was a bright clear moonlight night. The streets of the city were silent—not a leaf was stirring ; the air was heavy, and oppressively hot ; not a sound was heard, save the measured tread of the sentinels as they paced along the walls at regular distances. The position of the moon, which by this time was at its noon,

told that it was deep midnight, when the figure of a man slowly emerged from one of the narrow streets into the principal square of the city. His tall figure, closely enveloped in a dark mantle, threw a long black shadow on the pavement, as he glided along. He seemed not to notice the splendid dwellings around him, in the midst of their terraced gardens, with their flat roofs covered with smiling flowers and flowering shrubs, where the wealthy citizens were in the habit of enjoying the cool breeze of evening, and indulging in the luxury of silence after the bustle and heat of the day. He appeared to be wholly unconscious that there was another human being in the world beside himself, so deeply was he absorbed in his own thoughts, as he almost mechanically took his way toward a stately palace, the white marble columns of which rose in bright relief against the soft moonlight. By the time he reached it, however, he seemed perfectly roused from his reverie—for he skirted round the building with cautious steps, and avoiding the principal entrance, reached the garden gate. Here he paused for a moment, and looked carefully around him, apparently to ascertain that none

were near. He seemed satisfied with his survey—for he raised a small silver bugle, (such as were used by hunters,) to his lips, and blew three times a low peculiar note, pausing between, and prolonging each note to the utmost of his power. The third time it was answered by a light quick step approaching rapidly, and in a moment more the gate was opened by a young female, closely enveloped in the folds of her veil. “Follow me,” uttered in a low soft tone, were the only words spoken, as, after entering the gateway, the stranger assisted his companion to secure the fastening, and then, obedient to her command, followed the noiseless footsteps of his silent guide, till they reached a small arbour or summer-house, the entrance of which was covered with the graceful treillage of the wild vine and other creeping plants, while around grew orange and rose trees, the fragrance of whose beautiful blossoms loaded the hot and sultry air with overpowering perfume. “Stay,” said his conductress, in the same low tone of caution; “stay here till I return:” and putting aside the thickly matted tendrils of the luxuriant creepers, which formed a sort of natural curtain before the entrance, she bade him enter,

and then left him. With a sad look he gazed around him: the furniture of the beautiful little bower (which formed no inapt representation of the favorite dwelling of meek-eyed peace,) consisted of a sort of rustic bench, which ran around three sides of the building, and was covered with soft matting. The floor was also covered with the same material. In the middle stood a table of carved cedar-wood, of exquisite workmanship. On it lay a small golden lute, round which had been twined a wreath of wild flowers; but they were withered and dried, and they had evidently been there many days. Close by the lute lay two richly emblazoned scrolls, containing the psalms of King David, and the songs of King Solomon, of blessed memory. Beside them was placed an embroidery frame, but the silks were tangled and the colors faded. The rest of the table was covered by scrolls written in the Latin language—for during her long residence at the court of Rome, the lady Sarah had learned the language, and became enamoured of the works of some of their finest historians and poets. She had carried away copies of them to her own land, and she had delighted in teaching Zarina and her cousin to peruse them; so that

their young minds were early imbued with the romance and poetry of that sunny land, recollections of which floated through the mind of the fair girl, like the dreamy remembrance of some delicious, but only half-remembered vision. "They are here, all here, as when last we sat together," sighed the youth, as he gazed sadly round him; "but the fountains that were wont to make the air musical with their never ceasing murmurs, are hushed and dried up, even as the spring of our own warm hopes." The train of his reflections was broken by the rapid approach of coming feet. Naomi had been Eleazar's guide to the little bower where he had passed so many happy hours with his beloved—it was there they had pursued their studies together, and believed, as they read over the burning love tales of the Latin poets, that life was one unfading path of flowers. Alas! too soon had they awakened from the beautiful ideal to the stern reality. After leaving him there, the slave flew quickly to her young mistress, and roused her from the deep sleep that weighed down her heavy eyelids, after a long and weary watch by the bedside of her mother, whose chamber she had seldom quitted since the eventful night recorded

in the last chapter—for the poor invalid, with few intervals, had remained unconscious ever since. Zarina had ministered with untiring assiduity to all the whims and caprices which are the never-failing attendants of a sick couch, even with the most patient sufferers. The want of water, so generally felt throughout the devoted city, was peculiarly so in this unhappy dwelling; and often had the unfortunate girl deprived herself of her own scanty portion, to cool the parched lips of her unconscious parent. She had resigned her seat at length to the watchful Terah, who, after an hour's anxious persuasion, had prevailed on her young mistress to retire, and endeavour to obtain repose: but ere she retired, she visited Ruth's chamber, and impressing a warm kiss on the fair cheek of the sleeping child, she breathed a fervent prayer for her happiness, and hastened to her own room, where, without removing her clothes, she flung herself on the couch, and soon sunk into the deep but unrefreshing slumber from which Naomi aroused her.

“Is my mother worse?” exclaimed the alarmed girl, starting; “why didst thou not awaken me before? Oh! would I had not left her!” “Hush, dear mistress, hush—it is only

thine own Naomi. O do not look thus frightened, or I shall repent of my temerity."

Zarina, now fully awake, calmed herself, and said, in a subdued tone, "If my mother is not worse, why hast thou awakened me?" "There is one who would see thee;" and she hesitated, "and whom thou wouldest wish to see." "Midnight is an unseemly hour for a visit, Naomi." "Nay, nay, fair lady; he cannot come at any other time." "He?—then it is a man, and I will not see him," was the firm reply. "Surely there can be no harm in this," replied the girl; "thou wert not wont to refuse an interview to thy mother's sister's son. Besides, I shall be with thee, *if* thou wishest it; and consider, in times so dangerous, thou mayest never be able to redeem the precious moments wasted in the scruples of an overstrained modesty. Forgive me if I am too bold; but though reduced in fortune—" and here her voice trembled with emotion; but she conquered it, and proceeded—"I too am an Hebrew maiden, and know what is becoming thine high estate. But this is no time for idle ceremony, and I must speak even at the risk of thy displeasure." She did not, however, incur the anger she seemed to dread. On the contrary, Zarina yielded to her reasoning, and

throwing a thick mantle around her, to protect her delicate frame from the night-dews, and leaning on the arm of her young attendant, she descended into the garden ; and it was their approach that roused the young man from his reverie.

With a trembling hand, the maiden put back the fragrant curtain of leaves from the entrance of her summer bower, and the next instant the two cousins stood in each other's presence. For a moment they stood gazing in silence on each other, as if doubtful of their identity ; for both were sadly altered since last they met. The melancholy, that seemed natural to the countenance of the youth, had settled into an expression of deep gloom ; and his handsome features were worn with privation and fatigue. She, too, was altered, from the day on which she had ventured into her mother's presence. Her figure had lost the rich roundness of its proportions, and her beautiful face was emaciated and wan, from long and weary watching in the confined and unwholesome atmosphere of a sick room.

For a moment, as I have said, they stood gazing in silence on each other ; but in the next,

they were startled by the sound of a quick movement among the trees. The blood mantled to the brows of both, and Eleazar half drew his sword, as he listened attentively. There was no cause to fear ; for it was only Naomi, who, young as she was, with the true tact of a woman's heart, perceived that her presence was no longer required, and, in fact, that her mistress seemed to have forgotten that such a being as herself was in existence ; she had therefore retired as quickly as possible. Nevertheless her exit was not effected with the silence she had hoped. One glance around sufficed to reassure the mind of Zarina, and she felt grateful for the delicate attention of Naomi. She was the first to break the painful silence : “ Why hast thou summoned me hither, Eleazar, at an hour so unseemly ? ” “ Zarina,” replied the youth, “ I could not longer bear a separation so terrible. How long, how miserably long, the hours have seemed, since we parted, and what scenes of horror and carnage have I witnessed ! O God ! I have gazed upon men, young and noble as myself, the playmates of my childhood, the companions of my youth—yes, I have seen them standing by my side, and conversed with

them ; I have turned from them for a moment, and when I looked again, they were struck down by javelins or darts; and those who, a moment before, were numbered with the living, lay ghastly and disfigured corpses at my feet. I have seen—but it would harrow thy very soul even to hear of half the horrors these eyes have witnessed.” “ Yet,” she said, “ would I fain hear the details of the siege, and if there is no hope left for this miserable city.” “ Listen, then,” said the youth, as he drew her towards him, and they seated themselves upon the bench, while the clear moonlight shone in through the crevices of the twisted boughs that formed the roof of the bower, making a beautiful and natural mosaic work on the floor, and throwing into shade the forms of the lovers, who had retired into the remotest corner. They sat together, one of his arms twined round her waist, the other still closely enveloped in the folds of his mantle ; while hers were passed through the sable ringlets of her hair, like snow flakes on a raven’s wing, and were busy disarranging them from their position on her ivory forehead. Her dark blue eyes were fixed upon his face, as if she would read his thoughts ere they shaped them-

selves into words. But, not to tire the reader with the somewhat prolix account of the young warrior, which was often interrupted by exclamations of horror and surprise from his fair auditress, we shall now endeavour to give as succinct an account as possible of the stirring events of the last few days. We have said, in a former chapter, that the Romans had abandoned their intention of starving out the brave defenders of the city, and once more had recourse to the more congenial measures of active siege,—the very point to which the besieged wished to prive them, preferring death by the sword to the more lingering, but not less destructive torments of famine. It is not to be supposed that the Jews, naturally fiery and courageous, goaded on as they were by the remembrance of their past grievances, the bitter unredressed wrongs, and by the terrible conviction that, even if they threw down their arms and opened their gates, there was no hope of mercy for them; and, if for a moment such an idea entered their minds, the fate of Gadara came like a warning voice of Providence, to counteract the unpatriotic design; it is not to be supposed, I say, that they were inactive, with such powerful incentives to exer-

tion. Amongst the many fruitful schemes which the never-failing mind of the governor suggested, the following is not the least worthy of record. Every usual source of communication, by which intelligence might be obtained from without, was of course cut off, by the strict guard the Romans had placed on every avenue leading to the beleaguered city. There was one narrow and rugged path, however, which they had either overlooked, or neglected to secure, perhaps on account of the improbability of any one attempting to descend by a pathway seemingly fraught with certain destruction. But Josephus was not one to allow the slightest fortuitous advantage to escape his observation. By this narrow and dangerous pathway, which was formed by the dry bed of a torrent, and led into the valley from the south, the emissaries of the Jewish leader, disguised in the skins of animals, stole from the city, creeping along on all-fours, bearing letters from, and with all things of small bulk necessary for the comfort of the soldiers, returning to the garrison. This plan succeeded for some time, to the perfect satisfaction of those within the walls; but at length it was discovered, and effectually closed by the enemy. It was at this perilous juncture

of affairs, that Josephus formed the desperate and cowardly design of deserting the city; yes, cowardly—for what truly brave or patriotic man would desert his post in the hour of danger? For this purpose he summoned a secret council; and at the same board, surrounded by the same men whom not many days before he had summoned to mature plans for the defence of the city, he now proposed to abandon it in its utmost need, and in the hour of its greatest peril.

The youth who, at the last meeting of this secret conclave, had stood before them as the messenger of evil tidings, now sat on the right hand of the governor, but little altered in appearance since the last meeting, save that a still unhealed javelin wound, that had laid his brow bare, gave a yet fiercer and more determined expression to his dark, but handsome countenance. Yet those who were skilled in the study of the human face would have perceived there was something more gentle and subdued in the glance of his brilliant eyes. Indeed from the hour the Saabite had gazed on the enchanting features of her he had sought as a bride, in their unveiled loveliness raised imploringly to those of her mother—from the moment he had raised her in his arms, and felt

her warm breath on his cheek, until it seemed entering into his very heart, till he resigned her fainting form to the care of her attendants, something of his mother's softness had stolen into his soul, and subdued each sterner feeling there. He felt, as he destroyed the useless papers that were to have been a covenant between them, that he had destroyed the germ of hope within his own heart for ever; that there was not one fertile spot in the barren waste of his blighted affections, on which one blossom of beauty could ever bloom again. Yet he blamed her not, whose surpassing loveliness had opened and seared in the same moment the hitherto sealed fount of his softer feelings; he blamed her not—those very feelings she had herself awakened taught him at once that her heart could never be his. Convinced that, beautiful as was the casket, without that priceless gem to him it would be wholly worthless, with an unshrinking hand he had torn the contract, with a steady step he had left the house. He had not hurried along the streets; for fiery and impatient of control as he was, Samaes was not of disposition to let men pry into the history of his secret feelings. He was not a man to betray, by the disorder of his gait, that his spirit had received

an incurable wound. His pride could not brook the pity of the vulgar. He would have scorned, and deemed himself unworthy the name of a Hebrew patriot, had he been unable to conquer, or at least to conceal the weaknesses of his nature. For these reasons, which none but a nature sensitive as his own could have suggested, he pursued his way towards his own home with his usual gait, neither moving with a slower or quicker step. When he reached his dwelling, he retired at once to the privacy of his chamber; and not until he had drawn bolts and bars, so as to secure himself from all fear of interruption, did he consider himself alone, and free to give vent to his pent-up feelings. Then they burst forth more wildly terrible for their long suppression. Folding his arms on the table before him, and leaning his face upon them, he wept—aye, the strong, proud warrior, the wild hunter of the hills, the noble patriot, to whose ear the hoarse voice of war was sweet as the tinkling of a woman's lute, wept like a chidden child on its mother's bosom, and his broad chest heaved with the deep sobs of uncontrollable emotion.

The shades of evening gathered darkly over the horizon, and still found Samaes weeping; but the violence of his emotion had exhausted

itself. Like the rivulet that in winter overleaps its boundaries, sweeping along all that opposes its course, in spring again becomes a calm stream, and fertilizes where it before destroyed, were the feelings that had that day convulsed his frame. He had ceased to sob, but the tears came plenteously, and brought with them the precious balm of relief. It moves us not to see a woman weeping, for tears seem natural to her sex ; but when men weep, there is something terrible in their tears, for no light sorrow will cause men to shed the drops that they deem degrading to their sterner natures. At length he rose from his seat, and arousing himself, unclosed the door, and ascended to the garden on the flat roof ; and seating himself by the side of a small cistern of red marble, filled with clear water, beside which grew a young citron tree, he laid aside his turban, and suffered the cool night breeze to wanton freely through the dark curls of his hair, while he bathed his throbbing and fevered brow with the cool liquid. From that night, if any thought of Zarina still lingered in his heart, it was buried in its most secret recesses—for after that one wild burst of uncontrollable weeping, he never again gave way to tears. He was the foremost in every dangerous sally. He was the bravest

among the brave; and his daring courage in battle was only equalled by his prudence and wisdom at the council board. Probably it was these qualities, united with the valuable information he had laid before him in his first interview, that had secured to him the admiration and friendship of the commandant, and procured for him an invitation to this secret midnight council. But if Josephus reckoned on him as a ready coadjutor in any plan he might propose, he was mistaken. Samaes was a true patriot, in the fullest sense of that beautiful word. It was his voice only that was raised against the plan of desertion laid before them by the governor. It was his calm reasoning alone that attempted to confute the specious arguments he adduced in order to prove the feasibility—nay, the propriety of so doing, since the only means for saving the otherwise devoted city from complete destruction—for Josephus was too politic to let any one perceive that in the proposed attempt to leave it he at all consulted his own safety or convenience—was by their escaping, if possible, as he doubted not that it was, and raising an army for its relief. “Perhaps,” he said, “when they know we have left it, they may raise the siege.”

There was not one voice save that of the

Saabite, opposed to the seemingly sage plan of their chief. But he strongly objected to it. "My lord," he said, in the deep peculiar voice that proceeds from calm conviction, "this should not be. I am young—perhaps you may think too young to give advice to those who have grown grey in the service of their country ; but if I live, I will emulate the example you have set me." His face lighted up with enthusiasm as he spoke : "and I repeat, this should not be ; no arguments, no reasoning, can convince either me, or any right thinking man. I mean not to impugn your wisdom or rectitude, but I cannot be convinced that this is right. I for one will never desert the city, until it is free ; or there is not one stone left standing on the other. I will fight for it—I would die for it. I love my native city of Saab. I have loved it ever and always ;" some passing emotion seemed to choke his utterance—perchance it was a thought of her he loved ; but if it was, the sigh was choked in its birth. He continued : "I love this fair city even better than the spot of my nativity ; and, disguise it as we will from others, we shall never be able to blind ourselves to the baseness of the act, nor those whom we forsake. Long as the annals of history shall last, all men will look upon it as a

foul desertion of the cause to which we have sworn ourselves."

There was that in the tone and look of the speaker, that carried conviction to the hearts of all. But when Josephus spoke again, his subtle arguments, if they could not shake the truth of Samaes' reasoning, at least went far towards annulling its effects on the minds of those who heard him; and they unanimously coincided in his view of the case.

"Then I have nothing farther to do here," said the young patriot, as he rose from his seat, and prepared to depart. "Surely thou wilt not leave us, ere thou hast tasted of the hospitality of my house?—nor wilt thou betray the object of our secret council—for that would neither be wise nor well." "My lord," replied the youth, sternly, and his eyes flashed with a mingled expression of indignation and scorn, "my lord, I will reply to the latter part of thy questioning first. I am not a man to pry into and then betray other men's secrets. I came here as an invited guest, or I should not have intruded on the privacy of thyself and thy noble coadjutors. I came, I say, as an invited guest, and free, as I supposed, to give my advice and express my sentiments on the questions propounded in my

presence. Thou spakest of that which no Hebrew, no patriot, should have spoken of or listened to, and I have freely advanced my opinions on the subject. They neither affected thee nor thy counsellors as I could have wished. Thou hast decided on measures that my soul abhors, my reason repudiates, and my judgment condemns. I would not hear more on a subject that to me is so painful; yes, it is humiliating to me, to think that I have even listened to such propositions. Therefore will I depart; and as for tasting the hospitality of thine house, I will not break bread and eat salt* with one who has dared even to dream, far less to speak, in doubt of the honour of Samaes the Saabite. Farewell, my lord; farewell to all. I trust in God thou wilt think better of this." As he concluded, he bowed low and departed. After the departure of the Saabite, the plans of the governor, which he had already matured in his own mind, were quickly explained. The hour for abandoning the city was decided on. The banquet was served; and two hours after Samaes had taken his leave, the members of the council separated.

* Among the Jews, as among all other Eastern nations, the custom of eating salt, even to this day, is considered as a pledge of amity.

Secret, however, as their proceedings were, long before the time appointed for their departure the news was spread abroad, and the whole population, astounded by the intelligence, poured forth in one continuous stream toward the residence of the governor. There was the grey-headed old man, hurrying along by the side of youth fresh in health and luxuriating in their strength. There might be seen the young maiden, her veil forgotten, and her dark hair streaming on the wind; the strong man, in the prime and pride of manhood; the mother, with her unweaned babe on her breast, and leading others by the hand; the betrothed bride, and the wife of a day—all hurrying along together, in the greatest disorder, making the air ring with their demands for the governor to come forth.—They were soon gratified by his appearance on the balcony. No sooner did the people perceive him than they besought him with loud cries and lamentations not to desert them in their utmost need. For a time nothing was to be heard but the mingled voices of the multitude.

When Josephus waved his hand, the vast crowd, like the undulating waves of the mighty ocean subsiding into a calm, became silent.

When he spoke, on whose words their fate appeared to depend, a stillness, as of death, seemed to have fallen upon them all. It would be needless to recapitulate all the arguments he made use of in order to convince the people it was solely for their good that he sought to leave the city; and that, cooped up as he was, within the walls, he could afford them no assistance; whereas, if he could once make good his retreat, he would soon be able to bring an army to their relief.

They heard him quietly to the end; but after a few moments' silence on his part told them he had concluded his harangue, one loud shout, in which every voice joined, rent the sky, and he plainly distinguished the cry of "O, do not forsake us!" The words smote on his ear like a death-blow to his hope; and, after a little longer parleying, fearing if he did not consent to remain they would detain him by force, he resolved to make a virtue of necessity, and yield as gracefully as the circumstances would permit. Perhaps it was the promptings of a nature which, none will deny, was originally noble, and whose principal fault was an inordinate love of life, that inflamed Josephus. He was a good general—one of the best of the time. He loved, and would.

have saved his country, had it been in his power; but when he found that to be impracticable, he abandoned himself to the circumstances of the times, and sacrificed his popularity, and the esteem and confidence of his countrymen, in order to preserve his life. Whatever his failings might have been, he still possessed some of the finest feelings that ennoble the nature of man. Whatever were his motives, he now abandoned his designs, and told the grateful people, who shouted with joy to hear his words, that he would stand by them to the last, and that *their* welfare had ever been *his* sole consideration.

Breathing blessings upon his name, with joy on their faces, and thanksgiving in their hearts, the multitude separated, and returned to their homes. Some of the bravest, however, gathered round their general, who said he would go forth—they would fight valiantly, and if they did not save the city, they could at least die for their country, and leave a glorious example to posterity. Many suddenly rushed forth from the walls, and driving in the Roman guard, carried their inroads even into the camp. They tore up the hides with which the works had been defended, and for many nights and days they kept up a continued alarm, without wearying. The

Roman general, finding himself, as it were, besieged in turn, since the embankment was now close to the walls, ordered the battering-ram to be advanced. The heavy ram was slowly brought forward, covered with a penthouse of wattles and hides to protect it and the men who were to work it, the catapults and other engines cleared the battlements of the gallant defenders, who lay crouching below, not knowing what was about to happen. At the first blow, the walls shook, as with an earthquake, and astounded the people with the terrible noise—for at that time the battering-ram was little known to the Jews. As it went on battering, shock after shock, the wall began to totter and crumble; when the governor, who never for a moment lost his presence of mind, ordered some sacks of straw to be slung over the walls, on which the blows fell harmless. The Romans were now astonished in turn; but the artifice was soon discovered, and they cut down the sacks by means of scythes fixed to long poles. The engine then played on without interruption.

The Jews divided themselves into three parties, and sallying forth, with all the lighted combustibles they could seize in their hands, they set fire to the Roman works. The conflagration

spread with the greatest rapidity, and one hour sufficed to destroy the work of many days.

The youth paused, and looking steadily in the eloquent face of his listener, drew a long breath. "Is this all? Why pausest thou?" asked the maiden, sadly. "Thank God, it is no worse." "Perhaps thou wouldst not wish to hear what I have yet to tell," replied Eleazar. "Nay, I would know all, all, that has happened—for nothing now could wring my heart, save the fall of the city, or thy death." "Well, then," he continued, "I would speak of death,—the death of him who was to have been thy husband—who was my rival." "He was a generous rival," interrupted Zarina, mournfully; "one whom, though I could not love, I admired and esteemed; and whom I shall always regret." "I too regret him, Zarina," he continued, "and regard him with an admiration which all felt, and all who ever heard of his noble action will feel. He was standing unarmed upon the walls. I was close beside him. I never saw a nobler youth. He seemed to eye all with a look of careless indifference, when suddenly he bent down, and taking up a mighty stone, rose again, and looking toward the spot where the ram was battering, and raising his arm, he whirled it round for a moment, in order to give greater

force to the fall, and then hurled the stone from him with a steady and deliberate aim. It struck off the head of the ram; and ere any one was aware of his purpose, or could interfere to prevent him, he leaped from the walls, and taking possession of his prize, was bearing it back to the city. The darts, javelins, and arrows of the enemy, were all turned against him. Five arrows had taken effect, and the blood trickled fast from his wounds; yet still he pressed onward, and regained the walls boldly. He stood up, and displayed his trophy in the sight of admiring and applauding thousands. Even his foes admired—how could they do otherwise?—an action so bold and unparalleled. Then, still convulsively clinging to it, he sunk down and expired. Were I to live for ages, I should never forget his look of mingled triumph, agony, and gratified feelings, as he murmured forth, with his dying breath, ‘My country, I die for thee.’” “O God!” said the maiden, shudderingly, “O God! this is too horrible.”

At that moment the branches were again put aside, and Naomi stood before them. “The moon is set,” she said, and the grey dawn is rapidly brightening into day.” “It is time that we should part, then,” said the youth, withdraw-

ing his arm from its resting-place. "Go, Naomi, go; withdraw the bolts from the gate, and I will join thee presently."

Naomi left them, and they were again alone. "And now, Zarina," said Eleazar, "it is time for me to depart; but may I not see thee again? There is no barrier between us now; and surely thou wilt not refuse me this boon—for if we are victorious, and conquer our oppressors, thou mayest yet be mine." "Eleazar," replied the maiden, in a faltering tone, "thou mayest visit me again; and yet I am far from sure that I am right in permitting it. But go now—O do not, do not tarry another moment." Eleazar looked the thanks he could not find words to express: and depositing on the table the skin of water he had concealed under his mantle, lest Zarina should refuse to accept the present, however welcome, knowing, as she could not fail to do, that he had deprived himself of it for her sake, pressed a warm kiss on the ruby lips of the blushing girl, as if to seal the promise she had given him, drew his mantle closely around him, and departed.

With a slow step, and a sad heart, Zarina retraced her way to the house, where all was hushed in deep silence. Gaining her own

chamber, she besought the Almighty to protect her through the day. Then disrobing, she laid her aching head on the pillow, exhausted with many conflicting feelings. Overweared nature gave way, and she was soon wandering in the delicious mazes of the "music land of dreams."

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH is a fearful thing to look upon, even in its gentlest seeming; but when it comes in the shape of madness, it is terrible indeed.

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

Oh! no—'twas grief, 'twas madness did it all.

• • • •
Who, though they know the strife is vain,
Who, though they know the riven chain
Snaps but to enter in the heart
Of him who rends its links apart;
Yet dare the issue, blest to be
Even for one bleeding moment free,
And die in pangs of liberty?

MOORE.

IT was dark night when Zarina awoke. The sun had set, and the moon had not yet arisen. She raised herself on her couch, and clasping her hands on her forehead, strove to collect her wandering thoughts; but all was chaos and confusion. She could remember nothing distinctly. She was weak and ill; from many causes—she

had not tasted food for hours, and the ceaseless exertion had unstrung her nerves, and shattered her health. She was still in this state of half-consciousness, when the door was thrown open, and some one entered, bearing a lighted taper. Zarina covered her dazzled eyes, to shield them from the light, as she said, in a low tone, "I am glad thou art here, Naomi—for I am far from well. Come hither, and assist me to rise. When I have broken my fast I will resume my watch by my mother's side ; come, haste, Naomi." She was answered by the intruder's placing her light on the table, and throwing her arms around her neck. It was the sweet voice of her sister that addressed her. "Arise, arise, oh my sister!" said Ruth, weeping bitterly as she spake. "I left Naomi in my mother's chamber, while I came hither to arouse thee." "Why art thou weeping, Ruth?" asked her sister, anxiously. "Is our mother then so ill, that thou shouldst fear to leave her alone with Terah?" "She is worse, much worse," replied the sobbing child, while her hot tears fell fast upon her sister's brow ; "and oh ! she has said such horrible things—it has made my blood freeze, and my very heart grow sick to hear her ! She is

mad—I am sure she is mad, or my kind and gentle mother could never have given utterance to such awful words.”

Zarina rose, and with the assistance of Ruth, succeeded in attiring herself. After swallowing a draught of milk in order to sustain her failing strength, she descended into her mother's apartment. As the sisters approached the door, a wild unearthly cry from within struck upon their ears. For a moment they paused, almost paralyzed with terror; but the next, they unclosed the door, and stood within the threshold, gazing in silent agony on the awful scene that presented itself to their view. All the female Jewish domestics, with two or three of the most intimate female friends of the family, were congregated together around the bed, solemnly repeating the viddas;* for the skilful physician who had attended the sufferer during her long and painful illness, had bidden Terah to summon the women, as her mistress was dying. The two daughters were only in time to witness the last painful struggle between life and death. That

* Prayers appointed to be repeated in the chamber of the dying, either by males or females, as the case may be.

dying scream had issued from their mother's lips. No wonder they shrank shudderingly back—for it was indeed a ghastly sight, to look upon that large gloomy chamber, with its heavy hangings faintly illumined by the flickering light of the half-shaded and untrimmed lamp; the figures of the women, all in the attitudes of devotion, while in low wailing tones, they said, or rather chaunted, the sublime and beautiful prayers appropriated to the occasion; while on the bed, around which they stood, foaming with rage and the impotent strength of madness, lay, or rather sat (for she had raised herself thus far, despite the efforts of the women to withhold her) the dying woman, shouting, cursing, shrieking, and laughing by turns. Oh! that wild unearthly laughter! It was even more appalling to the awe-stricken and startled females than her ravings, soul-harrowing as they were. At length she ceased, and sinking back upon her pillow, faintly articulated the name of Terah.

With streaming eyes the poor slave came forward, and kneeling by the bedside, bent her ear to catch the words of her dying mistress. "Ruth!" she said, in a low hoarse whisper, "bring Ruth hither." Terah obeyed instantly,

by beckoning her forward with her hand, and the two sisters approached the bedside together. "Art thou here, Ruth? Speak, if thou art, that I may hear thy voice—for my eyes fail, and I cannot see thee." "I am here, mother," said Ruth, repressing with a mighty effort the emotion that well nigh choked her. "Then put thine arms about my neck, my blessed child, that I may kiss and bless thee ere I die." Ruth threw her white arms around her mother's neck. "God bless thee, my darling! God bless and preserve thee from evil, my own sweet child!" But her voice faltered with agitation and weakness, and she could not proceed. "And me, mother?" said Zarina, hoarsely. "Mother, hast thou no blessing for thine other child?" The sound of her voice seemed to put to flight the last remains of her shattered reason. Turning towards her, she shouted, "I have no other child! Blessing for thee?—off, reptile, off! I have nought for thee, but hate—deep, deadly, enduring hate." "Oh! mother, mother, as thou hopest to meet with mercy at the dread tribunal of thy God, where thou must soon, too soon, appear, forgive and bless thy child." "By that God to whom thou hast appealed," shrieked the dying maniac, with

that method which so often gives the semblance of reason to the most horrible madness, "by that God to whom thou hast appealed, I will never do aught but curse,—curse,—curse thee—" "Go, dear mistress—this is no place for thee," said Naomi, coming forward; "nor thee, either," turning to the pale and horror-stricken Ruth; and with the assistance of Terah, and some of the other women, she strove to drag them away. They succeeded in removing the younger sister; but Zarina clung to the bed with the strength and energy of despair, beseeching her mother, in terms that might have melted a heart of marble, to forgive her, and remove the weight of her curse. "Never, never!" she replied, with the strange perversity of her malady; and the more wildly her wretched child besought a blessing, the more obstinately did she persist in cursing her. "A mother's curse be on thee!" The last words came gurgling out with the death-rattle; and while the hands, withered and attenuated by long sickness, which she had clasped on the devoted head of Zarina, relaxed in their hold, she sank back upon her pillow a corpse!—yes, she was dead, and had died unforgiving. "God receive her soul,"

said the women, reverently, and in the whispered accents of awe ; and they again strove to remove Zarina from the chamber of death. This time they met with no opposition ; indeed she was incapable of offering any ; her limbs were nearly as stiff and rigid as that of the corpse. Her lips and face were of a livid hue, and her eyes seemed starting from their sockets ; while every vein in her throat and brow stood forth with startling distinctness. " Is she dead, too ? " shrieked Ruth, bursting from her own room ; and following the domestics who bore the inanimate form of her sister to her chamber, and throwing herself on the bed beside her, she wept bitterly for many hours, until, wearied and exhausted, the sobs became fainter and fainter. They died away into a low moan, and at last ceased entirely. She had wept herself to sleep.

Heavily the night wore away to the weary watchers in the house of mourning. And yet the morning sun dawned as brightly as if there was no sorrow in that dwelling, no bloodshed in that fated city. It was the first day of the Pentecost, when the people were wont to go up to the holy city, and worship in the temple of their God. Who heeded it now ? The door-

posts were wreathed with no flowers; there were no glad songs of rejoicing to be heard—for what *should* they rejoice?—for their coming desolation! Great God, how inscrutable are thy ways! Who shall dare to question thy decrees? Who shall say, to-morrow shall be to me a day of gladness? That day was the anniversary of Zarina's birth. It had been a day always set apart for festivity, always looked forward to with pleasure by every member of the family, and by none more so than the lady Sarah. A month, a little month ago, and she had been planning pleasures to consecrate that day. It came; and where was she? In her shroud! They dared not bury her, according to custom, before the sun went down, for it was a holy day; but when the festival (if such a mockery of festivity deserve the name) was over, they laid her in the grave. The customary rites on the death of a parent, were not performed; for Zarina still lay in a state of torpor, unconscious of all that was passing around her; and Ruth was too young to rend her robes, or keep the Shiva. *

* First week of mourning, when visits of condolence are received. Children, under the age of thirteen, are considered too young to partake in this or any other religious ceremony.

We return once more to the painful details of the siege. We have said that Samaes died in the very moment of his gallant achievement. Two others, Netiras and Philip of Rama, broke through the ranks of the tenth legion, and slew all who opposed them. Josephus, and a large body of his trained men, followed the heroic example, and all the engines and breast-work of the fifth and tenth legions were destroyed. Others followed; the first rank of the assailants heaping the earth over what was destroyed. Still, toward the evening, the Romans again set up the battering ram, and began battering the walls in the same place as before. While Vespasian was himself directing the assault, he was wounded in the heel by a javelin from the walls; slightly, indeed, for the javelin was spent. But the greatest alarm spread through the army, and many gave up the attack, that they might crowd around the general, who was bleeding and leaning on his son for support.

Suppressing the pain of the wound, Vespasian soon relieved their fears; and the whole army, with a loud shout, rushed to the walls that they might revenge the hurt of their commander. The Jews fell in great numbers; for although the missiles fell around them like hail, they

would not abandon the walls, but continually showered down immense stones and fiery combustibles on the wattle which protected those who worked the battering ram. They fought at the utmost disadvantage, for their own fires made the walls as light as day, and the enemy were thus enabled to take steady aim; while the black engines lay in shadow in the distance, and they could not distinguish when the bolts were about to be discharged. The catapults and scorpions, raging more and more fiercely, swept the walls; and the stones from the other engines shattered the pinnacles and corners of the turrets, which kept falling with a fearful crash. The stones passed through dense masses of men, reaching even to the rearmost. It was a night of unexampled confusion. The clattering of the bolts, the shouts of the Roman army, the heavy fall of the huge stones, and the thundering shocks of the ram, were mingled with the groans of the dying men, the frantic shrieks of women, and the shrill screams of children. The whole space about the walls was deluged in blood, and men could mount up on the dead bodies of their slaughtered friends. Many fell, and many more were wounded; but till the morning-

watch, the wall stood against the shocks it received, and then at length yielded. Still those who were well provided with defensive armour, laboured hard to form new buttresses and bulwarks wherever a breach was threatened, before the machines by which the enemy were to mount could be advanced.

Many were the deeds of desperate valour performed, and conspicuous in the most dangerous situations, might be seen the form of Eleazar. Wherever the fight raged thickest, there was he, animating those around him by his own noble example.

Morning was breaking in the east, when Vespasian called off his troops, and allowed them a short time for refreshment and repose. But before the sun had reached the third hour, they were again at work. In order to repel the besieged from the breach, he made the bravest of his horsemen dismount, and dividing them into three parties, they were completely cased in steel, and armed with long spikes, that they might be ready to charge as soon as the machines were fixed for mounting. Behind these were stationed the flower of his army, and the rest of the horse were stationed on the mountains that encircled the town, so that none might

escape. Behind the foot were the archers, the slingers and engineers, and another party with scaling ladders, to be applied to such parts of the walls as were yet unimpaired, in order to distract the attention of the defenders from the breach. During this disposition of the enemy's forces, the besieged were not idle spectators. The governor, who was second to none of that age, not even excepting Vespasian, in generalship, now seemed devoted, heart and soul, to the cause confided to his charge. Every hope of escape was past, and he shrunk not from the task assigned him; but with that prudence and skill that marked the whole of his military career, he disposed of his scanty forces in the most advantageous manner. The old, the infirm, the fatigued and wounded, were selected to man the walls, where Vespasian had planted his decoy ladders. The bravest he chose to man the breach; six, of whom himself was one, and Eleazar another, whose bravery had recommended him to notice, occupied the post of honour and danger in front. He then addressed them in a few words, enjoining them not to be alarmed by the shout of the legionaries. He bade them kneel down, and covering their heads with bucklers, retreat a little, until the bowmen had exhausted their

quivers ; and when the Romans had fixed their machines, then, as if they were all animated by one soul, to leap down upon them, and combat hand to hand with their assailants. He bade them remember that they fought not now for safety—for of that there was no longer any hope—but for a brave revenge, and as an example to their unhappy countrymen. Finally—and his eyes flashed out as he spoke, and his whole form seemed to dilate with the importance of the subject on which he dwelt—finally, they were to set before their minds their toil-worn fathers, their aged mothers, their young children—nay, even their sucking babes—massacred ; while their wives and their young maidens would be defiled, carried away captives, and sold for slaves. “ Let us,” he said, “ anticipate a just revenge for these inevitable calamities. Now to thy tents, O Israel ! ” The words were answered back by a low but deep-breathed vow of revenge.

While this scene was passing around the chief, the idle multitude, with the women and children, saw the city still surrounded by triple lines—for the Romans did not withdraw any part of their guards for the approaching conflict ; the appalling force standing with their drawn

swords before the breach ; the whole mountain gleaming with the lances of the cavalry ; and the Arabian archers, with their bows strung and arrows already levelled ; they were seized with an universal panic. One shrill agonizing shriek rang through the city, as if the horrors of the capture were already begun. Josephus, lest they should dispirit the men, ordered the women to be locked in the houses, and threatened with exemplary punishment if they raised any disturbance ; and then took his post in the breach.

The sun shone out brilliantly ; the deep blue cloudless skies seemed smiling upon the scene in all the richness of their summer beauty. Nature was sleeping in the stillness of early morning. The legionaries stood like iron statues on the mountain-side. The woods were yet glittering with the sparkling dews, while the Hebrews stood calm and silent ; but theirs was the calmness of despair.

It was a splendid panoramic view. Suddenly the quiet of the scene was broken. At once the trumpets of the legions sounded, and the whole Roman host set up one terrific shout. At the same moment the air was darkened by flights of arrows. The Jews closed their ears to the

noise, and, shrouded under their bucklers, avoided the arrows. As soon as the mounting engines were fixed, they leaped down upon them, before the Romans had mounted, fighting with those who fixed them, hand to hand, with the most resolute courage. At length the Romans, who could continually pour new troops upon them, while the besieged had none to supply their place when weary, formed a solid phalanx, and moving on as one man, drove back the brave Galileans, and were already within the breach. Still Josephus had another expedient. He had ordered a vast quantity of boiling oil to be prepared, and at a given signal this was thrown down, vessels and all, and they burst upon the ascending phalanx. A wild shriek—oh! how different from their late exultant shout—rang through the air. The ranks were broken, and the men rolled down, writhing with agony. The hot fluid trickled through the crevices of their armour; there was no time to tear off their breastplates and bucklers, ere it had penetrated. It was horrible to look upon those bold brave men, writhing with anguish, or plunging headlong from the bridges in intolerable agony. If they attempted to turn and fly, they were pierced in their backs, the only part of their bodies un-

covered by defensive armour. Yet the steady courage of the Romans was not to be thus repelled. They pitied their suffering companions, but that very pity inflamed their courage. Pressing forward, they sternly rebuked them for standing in their way, and impeding braver men in the performance of their duty. "Now," said Josephus, as he saw the fresh troops ascending, "remember it is freedom or Roman bondage—fethers, forged by vengeance and rivetted with blood. We cannot longer fight hand to hand—that is an impossibility. Therefore we are compelled to use stratagem. If they do take the city, as take it they must, they shall march over the dead bodies of her defenders. They have already dragged down one of our bravest with them ;"—and he spoke truly—for one of the writhing wretches who had already planted his foot within the breach when the vessels containing the oil which had done so much mischief to the besiegers were thrown over, had caught in the agony of the moment, on the arm of Eleazar, who stood in the very mouth of the breach ; thrown off his guard for one minute, one fatal minute, he lost his equipoise, and fell. In vain the young Israelite strove to regain his footing. Though the centurion who had drag-

ged him down could not repress a cry of agony, he never for a moment released his hold on his captive ; but encircling him with both of his own mailclad arms, he succeeded in pinioning the youth to his side as securely as if they were bonds of iron ; and it was not till he resigned him to the charge of a party of his own legionaries, and saw him fettered and borne to the camp, surrounded by a strong guard, that he seemed even to think of his own sufferings.

But to return to Josephus. When he had concluded his harangue, he bade them bring the preparation he had ordered to be in readiness. This preparation was made of fennygreek, a kind of herb, which had been boiled down to a consistency ; and they poured it down upon the planks on which the enemy were mounting, rendering them so slippery that it was impossible either to advance or retreat. Some of them fell upon their faces, and were trampled down by those who followed ; others rolled down upon the embankment, and the Jews struck at them as they lay ; or the close combat being interrupted, discharged their javelins and heaped darts and stones upon them.

Evening was now rapidly closing in, and the Roman general recalled his weary and worsted

men, with considerable loss in killed and wounded; and the Jotapatans thus found time to remove their wounded, amounting to three hundred, and to bury their dead, six in number.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Twas come : his hour of martyrdom,
In Iran's sacred cause, is come.

MOORE.

I am a Greek, and how should I fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?

BYRON.

It was night—a dark moonless night; and masses of heavy clouds lay rolled together in ominous blackness. There was silence in the city of the beleaguered. There was silence in camp of the beleaguerer. Animate and inanimate nature seemed alike hushed in repose. Yet were there many watchful eyes that night. The guards were set, and the weary Romans retired to their tents, worn out with the fatigue and dispiriting defeat of the day. Yet there were sounds of festivity in one part of the camp at least. It was in a tent as much distinguished from the rest by its magnificence as its superiority in size; and the banner of the Flavian family, richly wrought and emblazoned, floating

beside the imperial eagle, told, if any such corroboration were necessary, that it was the general's. The sound of music came from within the pavilion, which was blazing with light. If the exterior gave a promise of splendour, the interior fully redeemed it. The hangings were of crimson cloth, richly embroidered with gold. A carpet, from the finest looms of Persia, so thick that the foot that pressed it seemed sinking into its rich depth, covered the floor. In a large recess stood a colossal marble statue of Mars; the eagle of Rome hovered over his head, on which he had dropped a laurel wreath. At the base lay Atlas, on the neck of whom one foot was planted, and the other rested on that of Neptune, signifying that Rome swayed both earth and ocean. Round the sides were ranged luxurious couches; while at the head, on a sort of throne or chair of state, sat Vespasian. On his right hand was his son Titus; and around the table, which was of cedar wood, elaborately carved and inlaid with ivory, sat about twenty of his principal officers. They had laid aside their heavy armour, and arrayed themselves in festal robes. The costly viands had been removed; and goblets of crystal, sparkling with rosy wine,

replaced them. The tent was brilliantly illuminated with many shining lamps; and on the table stood two large candlesticks, one of wrought gold, the other of chased silver. In a gallery at one side, curtained with crimson, to correspond with the hangings, sat a band of musicians, playing at intervals the most ravishing melodies. "Drinking is but dull pastime," said Vespasian, after a long pause, as with an impatient gesture he pushed the goblet from him; "and methinks, in times like these, we might occupy the hours otherwise than in idle revels." "In truth, my lord and father, thou art right," replied Titus; "though music is well enough when it precedes us to, or cheers us in the battle, or in the gay assemblage, where the noble matrons and peerless maidens of imperial Rome welcome us back as victors with the glad song of rejoicing." "The noble Titus speaks wisely," said Clodius, a young companion of Titus, whose patrician birth, combined with a highly cultivated mind and great military talent, had already raised him to a rank in the army far exceeding his most sanguine expectations, and secured for him what he valued still more—the friendship and affection of Titus; "could we not beguile the tedious hours of night by examining the young Jew, whom the

brave centurion, Paulinus, captured to-day; and perhaps we may elicit some valuable information." "By Hercules! the young man speaks the words of wisdom, and puts his superiors to shame," exclaimed a grey-headed officer, whose seat, on the left of Vespasian, bespoke him of considerable rank. "Thou art right," said Vespasian; "dismiss the musicians and slaves, and let him be brought hither. Go, Etius," turning to his own personal attendant, who stood in waiting behind his master; "go, and bid Marcus bring the young Jewish prisoner hither." He was instantly obeyed. The musicians and slaves retired, and in a few moments the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, the curtain of the tent was raised, and Etius entered. "Marcus waits thy command without, general," said the freedman. "Bid him enter."

The curtain was again raised, and Marcus entered, followed by a dozen legionaries, in the midst of whom was Eleazar. His hands were pinioned together, but his head was erect, and his bearing bold, while he glanced around him with a look of proud defiance. "What means this?" said Vespasian, angrily, and his brow grew dark as he spoke; "what means this array of armed men? Couldst thou not bring

one fettered and unarmed prisoner through our own camp to thy general's tent, unattended by armed legionaries enough to guard a royal captive? Go, sir; it argues well for thy bravery, and shall be rewarded at a proper season. Go, sir; and thou, Etius, wait without. And now, Jew," he said, turning toward the prisoner, who thus deprived of his guard, stood alone in the middle of the tent, with every eye fixed upon him, some in scorn, some in pity, and some in admiration of his bold front and dauntless bearing. Among the latter were Titus, Clodius, and the old officer before mentioned. "Advance, prisoner; we would confer with thee. Dost thou know why thou wert summoned hither?" "I am no diviner, Roman," replied the youth, in the purest Latin, while a slight smile curled his handsome lip. The language in which he spoke somewhat surprised his hearers; it was a rare accomplishment among the Jewish youth, for hating the nation they despised the language. "Then I will tell thee, boy," said his interrogator. "Thou art not too young to bear arms, it would seem, since thou wert taken sword in hand. Therefore thou canst not be ignorant of the causes of this most foul rebellion, and that though in justice we might demand obedience

at the sword's point, yet we have offered mercy in the emperor's name, the name of imperial and all-powerful Rome, the mistress of the world; but, despite of mercy or justice, thy unbending and besotted people have dared to resist. If thou hast the reason which thy noble countenance bespeaks thee possessed of, thou wilt at once perceive that war with Rome is both useless and unwise; for when the eagle once wets its beak, it will not be satisfied till the land is drenched in blood. Though thou wert taken in arms, yet, provided thou wilt afford us such intelligence as shall leave yon mutinous city to our just chastisement, we will not only guarantee thy full pardon for all thy former disloyalty to thy lawful sovereign, but thou shalt receive honour and reward." A few moments' pause ensued, when he resumed, "We have said. What is thy reply?"

"Roman!" answered the youth, proudly, "I am thy prisoner; but I will speak as a free man, or I will remain silent." "Speak as thou wilt," said Vespasian; "for on thine own words depend a life of freedom and honour, or a death of agony and shame." "Then listen to me, Roman. Thou hast presumed rightly in deeming me aware of the causes of Judea's glorious

struggle for freedom. Listen, and I will recount them. We were a free people; there was peace in our vallies, there was fruitfulness on our hills. We sat beneath the shadow of our own fig-trees, in our own land; we went forth to hunt on the hills; we went up to worship in our temple; and none said, 'Wherefore doest thou these things? Then came the Romans in the guise of friends, but with the intentions of enemies. They came like a herd of famished wolves. They ate of the fatness of our land; they drained our treasure houses; they called themselves our masters, and taxed our people. Fools that we were, we submitted. They strove to defile our temple, even the Holy of Holies. Yet thou speakest of their justice and mercy. Our elders went to Rome—how were they received? With reviling. Was this justice? When the Israelites sought protection from the Greeks, and laid their complaints before the Roman governor, he threw them into prison. Was that mercy? When he made his soldiers ride over the people at Jerusalem, and slay them in their own market-place, which call ye that—mercy or justice? And yet ye marvel that we drew the sword. O God! I could weep at the bare name of such outrages as have been put

upon us ; and now (after refusing to listen to our claims for justice) we seek to redress our own wrongs, ye stigmatize us as rebellious. By the God of my fathers, ye are worse than I deemed ye. And then, forsooth, I must bow the knee, and ask pardon of those who have alone offended ; and only by treachery to my bleeding country can I hope for mercy from thy king—for Israel should have no king, but Israel's God. Ye have said that my life or death is in my own hands ; but ye have painted both falsely. If I live, it will be in shame and ignominy, deservedly branded with the name of traitor. If I die, it will be as a patriot, and I shall at least have the pleasure of earning my country's blessing, instead of her curse. Thy promises cannot tempt me ; thy threats cannot appal me. Roman, I can die for my country, but I cannot betray her." "Then die thou shalt," shouted Vespasian, "a death more horrible than fancy has ever shadowed forth in her darkest mood." Titus looked at the gallant Hebrew, and his heart bled for him. "Father," he said, with a deprecating look and tone, "spare the youth yet a little while, if it be only till dawn. He may yet repent of his temerity, and afford thee the intelligence thou requirest." What might

have been his reply, it is impossible to say—for Eleazar left him no time for words; but raising his dark eyes to the face of the speaker, and clasping his fettered hands, he exclaimed, “Thanks, noble Roman; thanks for thy kindness towards a stranger, not an enemy—for I cannot consider thee as such. My words have been the words of truth, and what is spoken may not be unsaid. Yet if thou wilt witness the execution of thy father’s will, thou shalt see how a Jewish patriot can die.” “What ho! Etius!” shouted Vespasian; “let this Jew be borne hence. We will test his boasted fortitude. See that he be put to the torture. Let his vile body be burned with searing irons, and then bring him hither again. Etius seized the unresisting youth, and dragged him from the tent. The commands of the general were obeyed to the full; and when the horrible sentence was accomplished, he was reconducted to his presence. In vain did Vespasian now question him; in vain did even Titus address him. He maintained a silence as unbroken as he had done during the infliction of the torture. “Take away the hardy fool,” cried the indignant Roman; “and, as he prefers a death of torture to a life of freedom, let him be crucified. His foul bones shall be left to

rot in the sun, while his flesh becomes food for the vulture.”

No voice was now raised to save him—for even Titus dared not brave his father’s terrible wrath. His commands were obeyed. They nailed him to the cross; but though his shrinking flesh quivered with agony, his tongue was mute. He uttered no cry. The Asmoneans’ blood was in his veins, and he did not disgrace the memory of his ancestors. While the name of Titus is recorded in the page of history, and even children are taught to lisp his name with admiration, that of Eleazar is forgotten by all but his own people—such is the unfaithfulness of history—such the caprice of fame.

CHAPTER IX.

Our walls,
Though thinly mann'd, may still hold out
Against their present force, or aught, save treachery.
BYRON'S SARDANAPALUS.

And Zelica was left within the ring
Of those wide walls the only living thing,
The only wretched one still cursed with breath
In all that frightful wilderness of death.
MOORE'S VEILED PROPHECY.

When true hearts be withered,
And fond ones are flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

MOORE.

MEANWHILE orders were given to raise the embankment around the devoted city, and that fifty towers should be built upon it, girded with iron to preserve them from fire, while the weight should make them more firm and secure. In these were placed the javelin men, the slingers and archers, with the lighter engines for the discharge of missiles. This was a fatal measure

to the Jews. The darts and arrows came pouring down from above, so that they were unable to avoid them ; nor could they revenge themselves on their invisible foes, for their arrows would not reach the height of the towers, and the solid iron could not be set on fire. All they could do was to abandon the walls, and when any party approached, make a rapid and desperate sally to beat them off. Thus their loss was considerable, while that of the Romans was very slight. Still, however, they kept up a manful resistance, and constantly repelled the enemy from their walls.

But now the fall of Japha and the massacre of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim occurred, and afforded a mournful omen of their coming fate to the inhabitants of the city. The end of Jotapata drew near ; it was tottering to its fall. For forty-seven days the gallant inhabitants had resisted the discipline and courage of the whole Roman army under their most skilful general. They had confronted bravery with bravery, stratagem with stratagem. They were now worn down with watching and fatigue, wounds and thirst. Their ranks were dreadfully thinned, the best and the bravest were gone, and the overwearyed survivors had to fight all day, and

watch all night. Their suffering was aggravated by the fearful want of water. Exposed as they were to the fiery midsummer heat of a burning eastern sun, their wounds unwashed, their thirst unquenched, the want of water was scarcely endurable. Mothers saw their sucklings perishing on their breasts, for the want of the sustenance nature had ordained for their support; and their young daughters, with their ruby lips grown pale, and their beauty wasted. The daughter looked in the face of her mother, and saw the struggle between maternal solicitude and the fearful selfishness engendered by her own terrible privations. The wife looked at her husband, the young girl at her betrothed, the father on his son, and the sister on her brother who had been nurtured at the same breast, and knew them not. Men turned away from each other when they met, fearful of reading their own fate on the countenances of each other. In this dreadful extremity were they, when a deserter found his way to Vespasian's camp, and gave intelligence of the enfeebled condition of the garrison, urging him to make an attack at the early dawn, when the sentinels were likely to be found sleeping on their post. Vespasian received this treacherous communication with suspicion—

for nothing had been more striking throughout the siege, than the constancy of the Jews to their cause. He remembered too what tortures Eleazar had unflinchingly endured, and he doubted still. The story however bore marks of probability; and thinking no stratagem could materially injure his powerful army, he prepared for the assault.

Heavily rose the memorable morning of the fourteenth day of Tamas, (July,) in the year of the world 3827. A thick morning mist hung over the city; it rained at intervals, as if the very heavens wept at the approaching desolation of that fair citadel, and the destruction of the chosen people. Titus was the first to mount the wall, with Domitius Sabinus, and a few soldiers of the fifteenth legion. They killed the sentinels, and stole quietly down into the city. Sextus Cerealis and Placidus followed, with their troops. This movement was effected so noiselessly, that it seemed more like a band of robbers entering a dwelling-house by night, than a body of valiant soldiers entering an enemy's garrison.

Day was fast advancing; the citadel was full of Roman soldiers; yet the besieged, in the

heavy sleep of fatigue, had not discovered it, and even those who awoke saw nothing through the dim and blinding mist. By this time the whole army were within their gates, and they were only awakened to a sense of their danger by the commencement of the slaughter.

“Awake! oh, awake!—the Romans are within the city, slaughtering all who appear. Up, up, if thou valuest the life thy God, has given thee! Up, or you will be murdered in your bed! Oh! would that I were away in my own sunny land! Why, why was I singled out from all others, and carried away as a slave from the spice groves of my beautiful Araby?” Such were the exclamations that assailed the ear of Ruth, as she was aroused from her repose by a rude shake of the shoulder, when raising her head from the pillow, she gazed on the group of terrified women who surrounded her bed. “Terah, Naomi, Bela, Rebecca,” exclaimed the wondering and bewildered child, as she turned from one to the other. “Speak some of ye, and tell me what is the meaning of this?” “The Romans are within the gates,” reiterated Terah, in a voice rendered tremulous by terror, “slaying all, and sparing none, men and boys, women

and children. Therefore we would have thee arise instantly; put on thy garments, and let us fly." "And my sister," said Ruth, anxiously, "what will become of my poor, poor sister?" "This is no time to think of others," answered the young Arabian, with the true selfishness of terror. "Thy sister is incapable of judging for herself, and we must not be burthened by one who cannot even help us with her advice. We must fly now; there are no males in the house to assist us, and our time is too short to waste in idle controversy. Thou must arise at once, and leave thy sister to her fate." "That will I never," said Ruth, resolutely, as she arrayed herself in a loose white robe. "I will go to her, and endeavour to arouse her from her overwhelming sorrow; and if I cannot succeed in saving her, I will—" "Nay," interrupted Terah in a tone of authority, "this is no time for useless ceremony; we are equals in danger, and all else must be forgotten, at least for the present: therefore I tell thee, thou must leave thy sister, or if thou wilt not, thou must share her fate—for by my father's gods I will stay here no longer; there has been but too much time wasted already. What, for the whim of a child, are we to wait

like sheep tied to a stake, till the butchering Romans come to slaughter us? Stay all of ye, if ye will; but I for one, will not." "Go then," said Ruth, proudly; "Go then, slave; and if thou thinkest there is safety elsewhere, seek it. I ask thee not, I want thee not to stay for me. Go, any—all go, if thou deemest there is protection yet to be found; for me, I will not abandon my sister." Without waiting for a reply, she sought Zarina's chamber. She found her in the kind of lethargy that had fallen on her since her mother's death; she lay there in her beauty, her fair brow clouded by sorrow, her bright eyes gleaming with a brilliancy almost unnatural, her hair hanging in thick unbraided masses around the marble brow and white cheek—that cheek so sunken and roseless—those lips so parched and colourless, contrasted with the large blue eyes, whose restless fire was scarcely softened by the sleepy lids with their long silky fringes, presented a picture of woe, more harrowing than the most frantic outburst of violent grief. She had spoken to none since that fatal night. Her mother's curse was upon her, and its shadow seemed to have darkened her spirit, and quenched the light of her reason for ever. She

had never shed a tear ; yet it was evident, by the convulsive working of her features, that she suffered much ; and now as Ruth approached her, she did indeed seem incapable of bearing the fatigues of flight. She gave no look of recognition, betrayed no sign of consciousness.

“Zarina, dear Zarina,” she said, as she came near, and raised one of the thin white hands that lay listlessly on the coverlet, “look up. It is Ruth, thine own Ruth. Dost thou not know me? Only say one word unto me, one little word, that I may know thou hast not ceased to love me. O God, O God! I shall become powerless as she, if she does not answer me. I am very, very young ; yet I should not shrink from death, for I have never committed wrong. Eleven winters have not passed over my head, and I am already weary of life ; yet to be murdered by the rude soldiery of the Roman tyrants—to have my corse kicked aside by some careless foot, perhaps made the butt of some savage jest—or to be sold for a slave, made the object of traffic, while some proud Roman dame examines me with curious eye, and laughs at the fate of the noble and high-born Jewess—I could not bear it. I a slave! I, who have been born

and reared in the soft lap of indulgence and affection! I a slave!—it is too dreadful to think of.” “Who speaks of slavery here?” said Zarina, faintly. “Who speaks of slavery here?” Ruth uttered a wild scream of joy, and throwing her arms around her sister’s neck, she wept upon her bosom. How many mingled feelings caused those tears to flow! yet, had they been analysed, happiness would have been found predominant. “O Ruth!” she continued, “I have dreamed such such fearful dreams;—but it is past now.” She paused, and drew her hand across her brow, as if to collect her wandering thoughts. “I dreamed—but no, thy looks assure me it is all truth, all stern reality—is it not so?” Ruth sobbed violently, but made no reply, save by pressing her arms still more tightly round her neck. The action was enough—the long sealed-up fount of her tears was opened, and the sisters wept in each other’s arms. Oh what blessed soul-reviving drops were they! But they lasted not long; and looking up, she exclaimed, “Thou spakest of slavery and death but now, Ruth; what meant those words?—to whom did they refer?” “They mean that the Romans are within the gates; that the city is

given up to pillage ; and they are slaughtering all. Turn where'er thou wilt, there is nought but bloodshed and destruction. Zarina, there is no safety for us but in flight." "Flight, my sweet sister !—and whither wouldst thou fly ? there is no safety for us, save in death. But where is Eleazar ? He promised to be near, to protect and guard over us in the hour of danger. Hast thou not seen him since our mother's death ?" "No," said the child, "I have not seen him since—" "I know to what thou wouldst allude ; but spare me, spare me now, and assist me to rise." Ruth obeyed : Zarina was soon attired, and now bade the women barricade the doors and casements, and carry all the missiles they could find to the roof. "Quick, quick," she said ; "we must ultimately yield : but we will remember we are Asmoneans, and will sell our lives dearly. We will teach these proud Romans that even Jewish women and children can fight for their freedom, and die for their country. We will remember, as we hurl down our missiles on their heads, that every Roman slain to-day makes one enemy less to Judea." Her voice was calm and firm, and her eyes flashed with the fiery courage and enthusiasm of

her race, though her lips quivered with suppressed emotion. Ruth hastened to obey her, though she feared the women were already flown; but she found them all where she had left them, and communicated Zarina's orders. They looked upon the recovery of their beloved mistress as little less than a miracle, and with Terah at their head, were soon actively employed in performing the task she had assigned them. The doors and windows were secured, and every kind of missile conveyed to the roof, where they found the sisters awaiting their coming. The sounds of conflict raging in the city became louder and louder. As it approached more near, the shrieks of the dying Israelites were mingled with the hoarse cries of exultation from the savage Romans, who seemed to gloat over the reeking bodies of their slaughtered foes. Stern and inexorable as they always were, their appetite for blood seemed increased ten-fold.

If a momentary gleam of mercy crossed their minds, they remembered what they had suffered during the siege; they remembered their repulse from the breach; they remembered the obstinate resistance of the besieged, their daring

courage, and noble conduct, which they called rebellion ; and they unsparingly struck down all they met. Some were slain by the sword, some—and these were not few—were trodden down in the uneven ways and narrow lanes ; and some were murdered in their beds, while they slept. Streets and squares, lanes and alleys, were choked up with corpses ; it was almost literally a city of the dead.

Zarina looked down from the parapet, and saw the carnage in the square beneath. She would have shrunk back from scenes so horrible ; but her eyes were rivetted by a sight that might have appalled a bolder heart than hers, enfeebled as it was by sickness and sorrow.

Immediately beneath, on the pavement knelt an old man, his venerable countenance scarred with many wounds, some of them not yet cicatrised. His thin silver hair streamed in the morning wind, and his lips moved, as in supplication, to a party of legionaries, who, commanded by a centurion, stood before him. She could not hear his words, but she saw by his gestures that he was imploring mercy. Yet it did not seem that he sought forbearance for himself, but for two lovely youths, apparently

not more than thirteen years of age, who knelt beside him. The soldiers seemed inclined to grant his prayers, until the centurion, whose savage countenance and gory hands bespoke his blood-thirsty disposition, stood forward, and in a voice whose harsh tones reached even her ears, exclaimed, "They must die! What, comrades, are ye so satisfied with the conduct of these accursed Jews, that ye are to be subdued by the womanish tears of this canting old rebel? I tell ye, they shall die; aye, if they had a thousand lives, they should lose them all." "Marcus is right," exclaimed many voices together; and the momentary feeling of mercy gave way beneath the awakened fury of their savage nature. "Yes, they shall die," continued Marcus, who to the hatred of the Jews, which was so general a feeling among his countrymen, added a private store of his own, generated by the public and stern rebuke of the general, on account of the guard with which he had surrounded Eleazar. "Will it not be sweet music, old man, to hear the dying groans of these goodly youths? By Mars, it would be a pleasant sight to see those dainty limbs torn asunder by wild horses; but since that may not

be, we will try if there be no other means of death worthy these noble Israelites." As he spoke, the murderous wretch approached; but, whatever his intentions might have been, they were frustrated—for the two noble boys, who had only been induced to kneel by the entreaties of their aged grandsire, now, as if actuated by the same spirit, plunged their daggers into their own hearts, and died without a groan.

With a yell of rage and disappointment, Marcus sprang forward upon the old man; but a dozen swords had been sheathed in his heart, and his blood mingled in the crimson streams that welled up from the hearts of his grandchildren. Shuddering, Zarina turned away from the scene of this terrible tragedy, when the doors were assailed, and loud demands for admittance reached her ears. "Now," she said, "come forward, all of ye, and a thousand shekels* of gold for her who slays yon centurion. The next moment the shouts of the invaders were answered by a quick discharge of the missiles from above "Curses on them all! Will they never be satisfied?" shouted Marcus, who had thrice nar-

* A gold shekel was one pound sixteen and sixpence, sterling.

rowly escaped from stones hurled by the hand of Terah. "We will have a bloody revenge for this," he continued, as he wiped the blood and perspiration from his swarthy brow; "and this dwelling will afford us ample spoils, if the inside but answer to its outward appearance." Again he and his legionaries assailed the doors, while the women kept up an incessant discharge of stones, and whatever else they could lay hands on, until there was nothing left to hurl down. Then they descended, fully determined not to fall alive into the hands of the soldiery, whose already excited passions they had inflamed by the wounds inflicted upon some of them. They were yet partaking of some slight refreshment, when their alarm was turned into a new channel. The whole dwelling was suddenly filled by a dense volume of smoke. "They have set fire to the palace!" shrieked Naomi, creeping close to her mistress; "we shall all be burned alive. 'Twere better to throw ourselves upon the mercy of the Romans, than thus to perish in the flames." "Silence, Naomi," said Zarina, sternly; "we have just witnessed a specimen of Roman mercy. I tell thee, we had better die ten thousand deaths than be taken alive. I could have

forgiven Terah such an expression ; but thou, a Jewish maiden, and not prefer death to dishonour ? Shame, shame ! we are not obliged to die by flame while steel is so near at hand." Thus saying, she drew a dagger from her girdle, and said, " Were it not better to perish among the burning embers of our homes, than to be left on the highway as food for the raven or the jackall ? But go ; there has been too much precious time wasted already. Go all of ye down to my garden bower, and I will follow ye presently. Go, Ruth ; go, my sweet sister ;" and straining her fondly to her heart, she covered her forehead with passionate kisses ; and then releasing her from her embrace, she suffered her to depart, with Terah, Naomi, and the other women.

Zarina was aroused from the moment's reverie into which she had fallen, by a wild cry that rung through the whole building. She rushed to the door, and threw it open. The apartment was instantly filled with smoke, and the flames came bursting up from every part of the dwelling. The shrill cry of distress issued from a long gallery of cedar wood, that led into the garden. At the farther end of it she thought she perceived the slight childlike figure of Ruth, her

thin white garments enveloped in flame. She was not—she could not be mistaken. It was Ruth's voice that called upon her name in the wild agony of despair. She would have flown to her, but her trembling limbs refused to perform their wonted office. She tried to call to her, that she might know she was not unheard, but her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth ; her eyes seemed starting from their sockets ; and while she yet gazed, her unhappy sister sunk down. A wild, unearthly scream from many voices came upon her ear ; and she was the only living thing in that desolate home.

The marble floor on which she stood, glowed like a furnace, and scorched her feet. Wherever she turned, the flames were around, above, below. She was girt with flame. The whole palace was one sheet of living fire. A giddiness came over her brain—her heart grew sick—a film, as of death, gathered over her straining eyes ; and she would have sunk on the heated floor, when an arm was twined around her slender waist. A sweet, though unfamiliar voice, whispered in her ear : “ Courage, maiden!—there is yet time for escape.” She was lifted in the arms of the speaker, and borne along the blazing passages. She felt, with a sort of vague consciousness, that she

had escaped from the burning dwelling. She heard a sound, as if the world was at an end. The roof fell in with a fearful crash. One long red spire of flame shot up to heaven, and the home of her fathers was a heap of ashes. She was borne rapidly along. The cold, chill air, blew over her heated brow. Then came a blank. Her overstrung nerves gave way beneath the accumulation of sorrow; and she lay an inanimate weight in the arms of her preserver.

There were shrieks of dying agony borne upon the wind, but she heard them not. There were corpses, thick as snow-flakes on the ground, but she saw them not; and it was not till she was beyond the gates of the reeking city, that she unclosed her eyes, and then it was but for a moment. Yet that moment was sufficient to add a fearful weight to her load of anguish—for it served to reveal to her the stiffened corse of Eleazar nailed to the cross where he had died. A cold shuddering passed rapidly through her heart, and convulsed her frame, as she recognised the well known features of her beloved; and her senses again forsook her.

Drearly wore away that fearful day of carnage. Evening—a calm summer evening, was stealing on, and the sun that had been veiled beneath a

cloud the whole day, now burst forth with radiant splendour, and gilded that bloody scene. At length Zarina unclosed her aching eyes, and gazed around her with a look of wonder. She was reclining on a couch in a tent. How came she there? Too soon the dreadful reality forced itself back on her memory; and, clasping her hands across those burning orbs, she passionately invoked death to release her. "Thou art faint and weary, fair maiden," said the same gentle voice that addressed her in the morning. "Wilt thou not partake of some slight refreshment?" And as he spoke, he gracefully presented her some dried fruits and milk. "I want nothing now," she replied, in a tone of bitter agony, "but death." "Death?" repeated Titus—for it was he who had rescued her. "Death! aye, death," she replied. "Oh! but by Venus, thou art very lovely, and too young yet to talk of the grim king of terrors. Why should'st thou wish for death, when life is all so fair and glowing?" "Why live, Roman," said the maiden, "live! for whom? Not for parents, relatives, or friends, for I have none; thou hast slain them all. My sister, even my young, innocent sister, was buried in the ruins of our burning dwelling; and I saw the corpse of my beloved nailed to a

cross, and whitening in the sun. My God! my God! that such things should come to pass! But he foresaw it all. He told me all thy goodness, all thy mercy; and yet thou biddest me live, perhaps to sell the loveliness thou speakest of into slavery." The last words came more and more faintly.

Titus raised the beautiful head that had fallen on the arm of the couch. Her eyes were closed, her cheeks ghastly pale. The chiselled features were still exquisitely lovely, but the spirit that had animated them had passed away for ever; and the arm of the young Roman supported the head of a corse. My tale is done.

They who would know the fate of Josephus, and those who escaped the first day's dreadful slaughter, must seek it in the pages of history.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

3827. JOHN, the governor of Gischala, made his escape to Jerusalem. Three factions now divided the holy city, which had been in a state of civil war during the stirring events in Galilee. Eleazar, and a sect called the Zealots, had possession of the temple; John of Gischala kept the upper, and Simon Ben Gioras the lower city.

In the mean time Nero died; and Vespasian succeeding to the empire, left his son Titus to finish the conquest of Judea, by the capture of Jerusalem.

Thus for two years had the march of the conqueror been stayed; but Jerusalem profited naught by the delay; it was still distracted by civil wars and factious broils, when it should have united all its energies against the common foe. One after another, the great men of the city were murdered by the three ruffians who still kept possession of their respective retreats in the city. The houses of the opulent were pillaged, themselves slain, and their wives and daughters violated, and then subjected to the same fate. It seemed as if the Almighty

had abandoned Zion, and delivered her over as a prey to demons.

The streets of the city ran with the blood of her murdered children. The sacred Temple was profaned by the savage shouts of fighting warriors, and the dying groans of wounded victims. The marble pavement was strown with corpses. Even the sanctuary of the Almighty One was invaded; and the arms of savage men, reeking with the gore of their own brethren, rested on the walls and gates of the Holy of Holies.

The sacrifices were still made; but frequently the pious worshippers were struck by arrows or stones, and the altar was polluted with their dead bodies. The granaries, which would have maintained the city in plenty for years, were wantonly fired by Simon, to prevent their falling into the hands of John.

3829. At length, on the 14th day of April, during the feast of Passover, Titus advanced, and laid siege to the city. Famine and intestine war were doing their dreadful work within the walls. Houses were broken open, and pillaged for food, by the soldiery, and the inmates put to the sword. Thousands of human beings lay rotting in the sun, for want of burial; and the loathsome effluvia engendered by the putrid bodies generated terrible diseases among the living.

Still the desperate Jews defended their last stronghold inch by inch. Horrible, most horrible, are the details of that dread siege. Every natural tie seemed broken. Mothers slew their children, to relieve their own gnawing hunger. Brothers tore the last morsel from their weaker brethren: and the glory had indeed departed from the city of David; while those who deserted, were mercilessly slain by the unrelenting Romans. At length, on the 9th of Av, a day for ever memorable in the Jewish calendar, the Temple was taken and burnt. The gold ran in streams from the doors and pin-

nacles. Victor and vanquished perished together in the dread conflagration. The Jews were massacred without mercy, and human blood and molten gold mingled together. One after another the splendid buildings fell in; the raging element enveloped the sacred structure; and the red flames lit up the adjacent country for miles around. The walls resounded with the screams of the dying, and shrieks of anguish rent the air. No part escaped the fury of the ferocious soldiery. The treasures were totally destroyed, and nothing remained but a small part of the outer cloister, in which 6000 unarmed and defenceless people, men, women and children, had taken refuge.

Five days afterwards, the priests who had escaped, surrendered, and were immediately executed by the order of Titus.

Still the upper city held out. John and Simon, who defended it, demanded free egress for their wives and children, on condition of their evacuating the city, and departing into the wilderness. Their terms were refused, and Titus vowed the unsparing extirpation of the whole people. Infuriated, and rendered desperate by this refusal, they took possession of the palace, slew 8400 who had taken refuge there, beat back the Romans, and plundered all the treasure.

3830. On the 7th of September, Titus made himself master of the upper city. The Romans spread through the streets, slaying and burning as they went. In some places, the flames were actually quenched by streams of blood, and night alone put an end to the carnage.

When Titus entered the city, he clearly perceived it was the hand of God which had made him master of such fortresses, almost without a struggle. He ordered the city to be razed, except the three towers and part of the western wall of the Temple, which stand to this day. Yet Simon and John

baffled all pursuit, till John and his brethren, reduced by famine, came forth and surrendered. His life was spared; but he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and finally sent to Italy.

Toward the end of October, after Titus had left the city, as some of the Roman soldiers were reposing among the ruins of the Temple, a man, clad in white raiment, with an upper robe of purple, seemed to arise from the earth in silent dignity.

At first they viewed him with looks of awe; but at length they ventured to approach, and demand his name. "Simon Ben Gioras," he answered; "call hither your general." Terentius Rufus was summoned, and to him the cruel, but brave, defender of Jerusalem surrendered himself. News of his surrender were sent to Titus, who ordered him to be set apart to grace the imperial triumph.

Thus fell the ancient and holy city of Jerusalem, which, had it been defended by a people free from intestine discord, and relying on the protection of the Almighty Ruler, would have been impregnable; but the decree of Jehovah had gone forth, and Zion was to be no more among the cities of the earth. Other cities have risen on its ruins; but the curse of Providence has fallen on them all, as if the God of Israel had pronounced an inalienable malediction on the city he had chosen and sanctified.

Herodion immediately opened its gate. Machaerus capitulated after a short siege; and Masada, the only fortress which still held out, was besieged by Flavius Silva.

3831. Eleazar, the commander of Masada, after a noble defence, proposed that rather than submit, they should die by each other's hands. The proposal was agreed to by the garrison, who first slew their wives and children, and then willingly submitted to death. The last man made a careful

search to see that none other was living; and then taking a lighted brand, set fire to the palace, and immediately stabbed himself through the heart. Two women and five children, who had crept into a cavern, were all that escaped; nine hundred and sixty perished. Next morning, when the Romans entered the city, not a human being appeared, and the vestiges of fire astonished them. Awe-struck by the desolate appearance of the place, they shouted aloud, to startle the people from their hiding places; and the trembling women and children came forth. The Romans would not believe their tale, until they had partially extinguished the flames, and made their way into the palace. Even the stern hearts of the rude soldiery were touched, when they beheld this unexampled spectacle of generous self-devotion to the cause of liberty.

Thus passed away the kingdom of David; and although the Jews afterwards appeared in two distinct communities, under the rabbins of Tiberias, and the Rosh Goloth, or prince of the captivity, they have never yet regained their place among the scale of nations.

“How doth the city sit solitary *that was* full of people!—*how* is she become as a widow! She *that was* great among the nations *and* princes, among the provinces, how is she become tributary!”

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH, Chap. i., v. 1.

“And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

“That then the LORD thy GOD will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee

from all the nations whither the LORD thy GOD hath scattered thee.

“If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy GOD gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee.”

DEUTERONOMY, Chap. xxx., verses 1, 2, 3.

THE END.

LONDON:

BLATCH AND LAMPERT, PRINTERS, GROVE PLACE, BROMPTON.



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