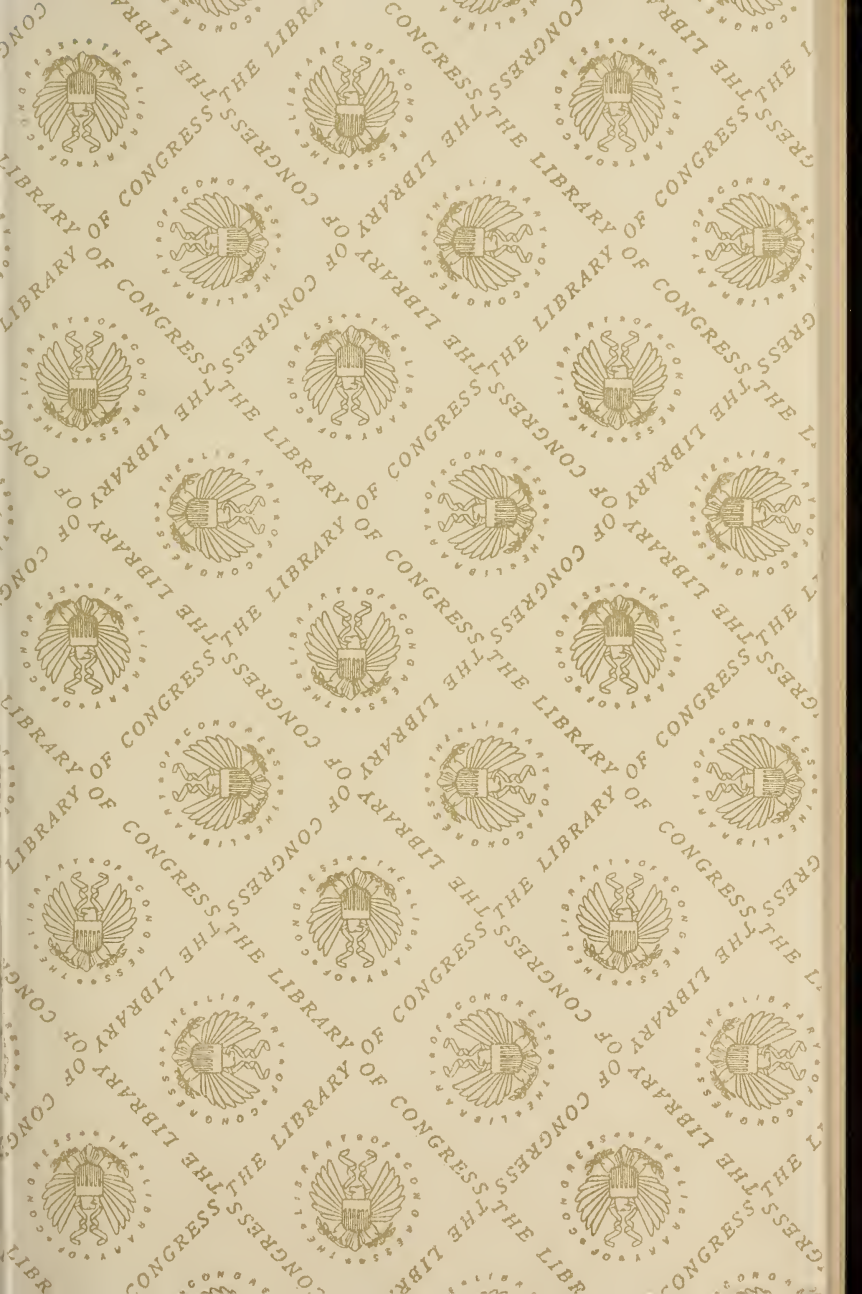


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THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

SKETCHES
OF
JEWISH LIFE
IN THE
FIRST CENTURY

NICODEMUS ; or, Scenes in the Days of Our Lord
GAMALIEL ; or, Scenes in the Times of Saint Paul

BY

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NEW YORK: HUNT & EATON
CINCINNATI: CRANSTON & STOWE

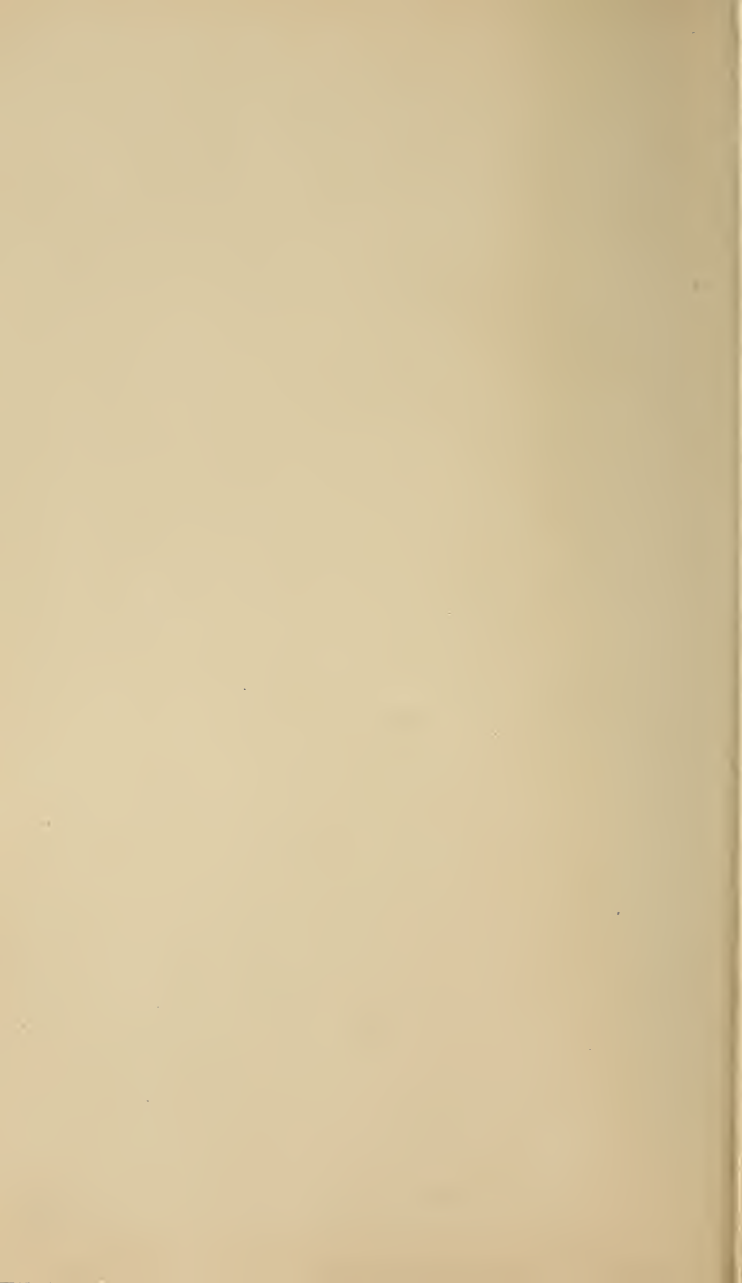
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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE two narratives comprised in this volume are not necessarily connected with one another, but the latter is substantially a sequel to the former, and they therefore properly go together. A few explanations may be allowed concerning each, which will be found in their Introductions.



NICODEMUS;

OR,

SCENES IN THE DAYS OF OUR LORD.



INTRODUCTION.

IN every land and age the aid of romance has been freely invoked in order to add vividness to the reproduction of events far distant in time and space. Why should piety be debarred from the same privilege? I am aware of the prejudice against the employment of fiction in religious literature, and I am frank to confess that the liberty has often been greatly abused. Nevertheless the world's verdict is now more than ever, if I mistake not, that this form of composition has not only a charm but a value, and this for the old as well as for the young. I am not an advocate of novel-reading, especially not of the perusal of the trash with which the modern press so largely teems; but I cannot ignore the fact that the human mind, the sober in common with the gay, most eagerly craves, and most readily digests, the narrative form of information, not simply for present entertainment, but also for permanent instruction; and where the details are lost from the record they must be supplied by the imagination either of the reader or the writer, in order to give completeness and distinctness to the view. The picture may be substantially correct, though the shading be somewhat fanciful, provided the outline be from history and the colors from nature. A sketch, of course, cannot pretend to the minuteness of a photograph, but it may, notwithstanding, convey an accurate idea of the subject. The prevailing vice of fictitious writing is that it aims at startling and extraordinary impression, and too often is regardless of probability or even possibility. Absolute verity is not always attainable, but verisimilitude is. In the present undertaking, fortunately for me, at least, intricacy of plot,

abrupt surprises, absorbing adventures, and all similar contrivances for creating and sustaining intense interest, would have been out of place, because inconsistent both with truthfulness and with good taste. Mine is the less ambitious—I might, perhaps, say the less meretricious—task of setting in a fresh but not altogether novel aspect a well-known character of sacred story, whose position is sufficiently central to afford me an opportunity to weave around him the principal features of the first era of Christianity, and yet is not so amply delineated in actual records as to preclude the introduction of imaginary particulars.

The only authentic facts known concerning Nicodemus are contained in the three passages of the gospel by John, where alone he is mentioned ; but the statements there made respecting him are eminently characteristic and suggestive. There are a few obscure notices in the Talmud of an individual who is supposed to be the same person ; but these give us little if any additional information beyond the fact of his eventual reduction from affluence to extreme destitution. My real hero, however, is a far more illustrious Personage ; but him I have dared merely to depict in side-views and by reflected light. Inspiration has drawn his only perfect portrait. All that I can hope here to accomplish will be to concentrate attention upon the salient features of that delineation, and thus bring them into bolder relief. I may at least illustrate the effect which the principles newly propounded by the great Teacher produced on his hearers, and especially on an honest but pre-occupied inquirer.

NICODEMUS;

OR,

SCENES IN THE DAYS OF OUR LORD.

“**H**AST thou heard last night’s news, Sarah?” said a bright young man as his sister entered the room where he had already finished his simple morning meal.

“Nay, Obed;” she replied, calmly. “What is it?”

“They say,” rejoined he, “that a party of shepherds, encamped in the plain east of the village, had a vision of angels singing overhead, and telling them to search for a child in a manger as the new-born Messiah?”

“Did they find the babe?” inquired she, with interest.

“I believe they did,” he answered, with indifference; and then he added, “But it was in the stable of the khan; and it is not likely that the Messiah will be revealed to such

poor people and under such mean circumstances.”

“I am not so sure of that,” mildly returned the sister; “thou knowest David was once but a simple shepherd-boy, and Jehovah often deigned to show himself to very humble persons; for instance, to Manoah and his wife in the field. Besides, dost thou not remember that Isaiah describes the Messiah as a root out of dry ground?”

“What dost thou know about the interpretation of such difficult passages as that?” scornfully retorted the brother. “All our rabbins agree that we are to take the brilliant prophecies of a conquering king for the true description of Jehovah’s Anointed.”

“True,” replied she; “but we know that the famous royal warrior David was a weak babe at first; and when a lad he was so unpromising in appearance that his father did not think it worth while to call him in with his brothers before Samuel at the selection for anointing.”

“What a convenient way you women have of deciding an argument!” he said, doggedly; “the cases are not at all the same.”

“Perhaps not altogether,” said she; “but now I think I know the family in which this remarkably heralded babe has been born. It must be that young woman’s child whom I saw her aged husband so tenderly bringing upon an ass into town a few days ago; for I remember they could not find accommodation in the khan itself, but had to take lodging in the stable. I was greatly struck at the time with her sweet face and gentle manner.”

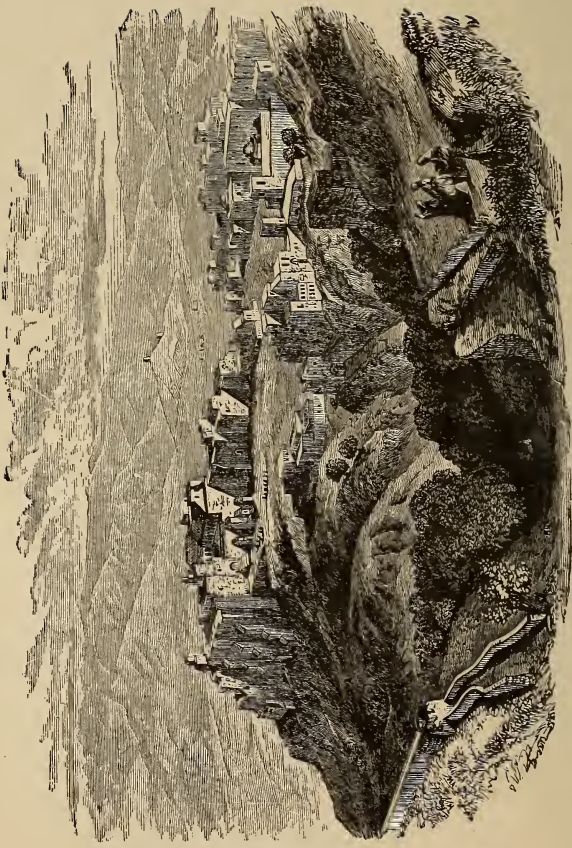
“Girls like thee,” he only deigned to respond, “are always carried away with sympathy for a baby.”

“I think I know a girl,” she archly retorted, “who has independence enough for thee.”

He blushed, but merely said, “I am glad there is one that redeems the weakness of the sex.”

She concluded the conversation by adding, “I took the trouble to inquire about that family, and found that they are of loyal lineage, though now living in Nazareth.”

This little colloquy, which strikes the keynote of the controversy destined to spread from Judea through the world, is supposed to have taken place in Bethlehem at the time of



BETHLEHEM.

the advent of our Lord. The parties are natives of that place, in easy circumstances, the one betrothed to Nicodemus, a rising youth of Jerusalem, the other in love with Rachel, the sister of Joseph, a wealthy resident of Arimathea. The Emperor Augustus, having conceived an affront at some of King Herod's arbitrary proceedings, had resolved to make him feel his subjection; and accordingly ordered that the census, now going on throughout the Roman Empire as a basis of taxation, should be extended to Palestine likewise, which had hitherto enjoyed a nominal independence. In the East, of course, such registrations proceed by pedigree, and Bethlehem was just now crowded with the numerous descendants of the Davidic family, among them Joseph, of necessity, and Mary for the sake of her husband's company and protection. It was late in summer, and the parched and dusty plains adjoining the town were dotted with the black tents of some shepherds who had wandered from their homes in search of the pasture, at that season still to be found in some of the rich glens of the neighborhood. As they lay guarding their flocks in the open

field the starlit air became vocal with a celestial strain :

“ To God be glory given
By angels high in heaven;
On earth be peace proclaimed—
Good-will to man redeemed ! ”

Forty days thereafter a tiny procession might have been seen slowly wending its way from the northern gate of the little city of Bethlehem, passing the well whence David is said to have longed to slake his thirst at the risk of the lives of his braves, thence winding along the brow of the hills terraced with gardens, along the central ridge of the country, past the tomb of Rachel, across the plain of the Rephaim, down into the gorge of Hinnom, up the valley of the Kidron, and ascending to the eastern wall of Jerusalem. The youthful mother is seated upon the docile beast that serves universally for female travel in the Orient, and the venerable father walks beside her, with one hand guiding the animal and supporting his wife as she holds her first-born in her arms, and in the other carrying the birds intended as a sacrifice. A few friends perhaps, attend, and possibly some interested

VALLEY OF THE SHEPHERDS.



spectators follow. They enter the gate Shushan; she dismounts in the outer or Gentiles' court of the temple; and the little family climb the steps, pass through the Beautiful Gate into the women's court, and take their position in the corner room allotted to the purificatory ceremony. A priest is summoned, and the simple rite is performed which acknowledged Jehovah's claim to the male first-fruit of every marriage. A few among the cluster that have gathered about the parents recognize a far higher significance on the present occasion. The aged Simeon takes the precious Babe in his trembling arms and in ominous words pronounces his dying benediction upon both child and mother. The saintly Anna joins in the glad homage with others whom prophecy had taught to expect the Saviour at this time. Two of the by-standers, we fancy, are Nicodemus and Sarah, locked hand in hand, as they gaze with surprised seriousness upon the adoration offered by the two pious pilgrims to the infantile new-comer. The struggling convictions and confused emotions of that hour did not find mature expression till many a day thereafter of "fall

and rising again in Israel." The maternal heart alone instinctively comprehended the scene, albeit in the fond gladness of the moment it scarce felt a premonition of the wound which at length pierced its inmost core. How many an exquisite joy and pang the faithful bosom hides in its urn of memory!

We pass over a year or more in the history, and witness far more striking scenes in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. A band of magians, of whom tradition presumes to give the number, name, and nationality, appear as pilgrims in the Jewish capital, inquiring for its newborn King. They have observed some astronomical phenomenon in the far east, which they interpret as betokening such a royal birth. Probably they have descried the rays of prophecy streaming eastward from the days of Balaam, and they hasten, from whatever motive, to enroll themselves as satellites of the new star of empire. The quick ear of the jealous Herod starts at the thought of a rival to the throne, and the whole city trembles with apprehension of some fresh atrocity of suppression. He has already murdered nearly all his relatives on suspicion of trea-

son, and at this moment his two most noble sons are lying in prison awaiting only permission from Rome for their execution. On whom will his blind fury next alight? But he vaguely remembers that this great Unknown, whom the populace are acclaiming through the streets, is the subject of prophecy, and he condescends to seek information through its official expositor, a body which he has often browbeaten before. He summons the Sanhedrim, and demands to know where their Messiah is to appear. They promptly answer that the Scriptures clearly point to Bethlehem as the birthplace of that illustrious Personage. The city breathes more freely as the dogs of vengeance are turned on a different scent. In order not to strike at random Herod at once calls the magians, gives them the clew, and charges them to return with an exact account of the whereabouts of the new heir, pretending that he is as anxious as they to show him proper respect. He will use them as tools to divert the popular expectation and circumvent destiny itself. Guided by a return of the preternatural light, they soon discover the Infant's abode, which the parents had taken

after their return from Nazareth;* and they offer him royal homage in words and gifts. A dream warns them not to return to Herod, and they go home by a different route. A few days' delay suffices to convince the tyrant that he has been balked in his scheme, and with characteristic blood-thirstiness and energy he resolves upon an indiscriminate massacre which shall be sure to include his intended victim. The Slaughter of the Innocents has been made the subject of many a painting by great artists, but none of them can adequately portray the horrors of the original scene. However coolly and deliberately planned, it must have been executed suddenly and violently. Peremptorily, perhaps at the dead hour of midnight, every house was simultaneously invaded. No notice was given, so that none might escape. Not even the silent but foretold passing of the destroying angel over the Egyptian homes presented so tragic a spectacle. What bursting in of private dwellings and inner apartments by the ruthless soldiery! What resistance of frightened servants and shrieks of frantic women and

* Luke says that they went thither direct from Jerusalem.

battles of fierce men! What parrying of murderous blows by the defenseless hands of mothers and by the determined weapons of fathers! What wails of the dying and curses of the living! What snatching of infants by nurses, parents, and assailants! What hurried flights and rapid pursuits! And at last what dumb grief or frenzied sobs over the little mangled corpses! A whole city mourning in wild agony over its rifled darlings! Imagination itself sickens and reels at the attempt to realize the shocking details. No wonder that the Jewish historian of the time has covered the ghastly scene with the pall of silence, while the more faithful sacred chronicler has given but a glimpse of its heart-rending terrors.

Obed and Sarah, let us suppose, were spared this nightmare vision, having opportunely accepted an invitation at the time to visit their friends at Arimathea. Their varied emotions, reviews, and remarks upon the event when it was reported to them next morning will give a good idea of the difference of opinion and feeling then prevalent among the better class of Jews on public and religious topics.

Obed and Rachel thought that the account

which they first received must be greatly exaggerated; and when the full particulars arrived they still looked upon the occurrence as only another of Herod's well-known bursts of spleen against the common people. They did not see, indeed, what other course he could have safely pursued in order to guard his throne and succession effectually from the constant upstart tendency of popular superstition. After all, it was only a few children put out of the way, and they were glad the matter was no worse. At any rate, the affair was now ended, and it was of no use to trouble themselves farther about it. Luckily, none of their immediate relatives had suffered.

Joseph and Sarah, on the contrary, were unable to look so indifferently upon the transaction. To them it was a monstrous barbarity, a selfish piece of high-handed tyranny, an outrage upon every law of God and man. They sighed as they contrasted such brutal scenes with the happy freedom of their forefathers, and they longed more than ever for the coming of the Prince of Peace. Had it been a case of Roman oppression both sides would doubtless have united in denouncing the foreign bond-

age; but as it was the direct act of a native sovereign they could not avail themselves of this convenient method of solving their national troubles. Neither party thought of the one Child on whose account the butchery had been enacted, nor inquired whether he had escaped the dreadful carnage. The heavenly Father's eye alone was upon his dearly beloved, and the earthly parents were warned in time to screen their precious charge from danger.

When the excitement was over the Bethlehemite brother and sister returned to their home and to their usual routine of affairs, leaving Joseph to pursue his public labors of benevolence and Rachel to continue her round of coquetry which had been somewhat checked by her lover's presence. But the desolate hearthstones were still the seats of inconsolable anguish, and, feeling uncomfortable through sympathy for their neighbors' woes, Obed went on a mercantile excursion to the Syrian shore, while Sarah accompanied Nicodemus on a winter trip up the Nile.

As they diverged one day to visit the ancient city of Heliopolis Sarah saw a little group sitting beneath a noble sycamore-fig by the roadside,

and at once recognized the pilgrims of Bethlehem in the now more matronly face which bent over a beautiful boy, while the watchful father still attended near, and some relatives, at whose abode in the vicinity they had found hospitality, gazed in fond satisfaction upon the holy family. After a moment of rapt admiration Sarah could not resist the womanly impulse to speak a kindly word of praise and to imprint a tender kiss upon the innocent lips. Fairer than the sons of men shone that dimpled but already expressive face. A divine light unconsciously passed from those eyes of dove-like softness to the inmost soul of the susceptible beholder, and the artless maiden bore away from that instant's contact with the immaculate Babe the blessing of a "love better than wine." It was the appreciation of the pure and the noble, the apprehension of the heavenly and the godlike; and this remembrance sweetened all her after experience with the perfume of a holy aspiration. Nicodemus himself was not unaffected by the touching interview; but his sympathy was merely human, and it needed a more searching and manly intercourse to reach the closely guarded fountain of his inner life.

Still, the impression of that brief sight remained as a seed slumbering in the soil, and under the power of a stronger ray from the Sun of righteousness in his meridian splendor it was destined to burst its earthly shackles and emerge, though late, into full vegetation. No one ever came within the immediate range of the God-man's personal influence without being either the better or the worse for it; and none can now live under the light and sound of the Gospel to whom it does not prove either a savor of life or of death. The drawings of the Spirit, in whatever form, if encouraged will surely lead the heart to a celestial conformity; but if resisted they will repel it to impenitent obstinacy. What a double mercy it is that mortals have repeated overtures of grace made to them, and are not left to a single offer of salvation!

Again we find a blank, this time of ten years, in the sacred narrative, which we partly fill with secular and domestic incidents. Herod soon after died of a frightful disease which was regarded by all as a special visitation of Providence. The elder of his two surviving sons succeeded for a brief time to his dominions, and they were then partitioned among his re-

maining heirs, his last son receiving Galilee, while Judea reverted as a Roman province under direct military government.

Meanwhile the holy family had returned to their original seat at Nazareth and were apparently absorbed in mechanical industry. Our new acquaintances have prospered in their plans and arrangements and are now settled in their respective homes, Obed and Rachel at Bethlehem, and Nicodemus and Sarah at Jerusalem. Joseph is likewise established in the latter city, with a country villa at Arimathea, where the three families often pass a few months of the year together. The political and religious tides seem to flow quietly, with only a ripple of occasional outbreak or extortion to disturb the public surface or the private margin. The storms are held until the vials of retribution overflow with the great national sin of the Messiah's truculent rejection. The seventy heptads have not yet reached their appropriate terminus.

"I saw a remarkably precocious boy last week," said Nicodemus, as the three households gathered on one of the above-mentioned occasions, after the annual visit to the Passover.



NAZARETH.

“Who and where was he?” inquired they all.

“He came alone and unbidden into the school-room attached to the temple,” replied Nicodemus, “and he seemed to spend his whole time there during the paschal festivities.”

“He must have been a bold youth,” remarked Obed.

“Nay,” rejoined Nicodemus, “he did not seem unduly forward; but he certainly asked the most singular questions, for a child, at least, that I ever heard. The teachers were of course present in full force, and the pupils among whom he ranged himself were very numerous. I had to sit still, for I confess I could not answer his inquiries. They were very much to the point, however. Both Hillel and Shammai, the aged doctors well known for their opposite sentiments to each other, were evidently puzzled by the rejoinders which he made to their solutions of his difficulties. Gamaliel, I thought, was the only rabbi who in any satisfactory degree met the points that he raised. Yet the objections which the youth made were not sophistical nor abstruse, but eminently practical and devout.”

“Pray, who was he?” inquired Sarah.

“I could not learn,” answered her husband, “for no one seemed to be acquainted with him, and he did not speak of himself at all. He constantly quoted the Scriptures, however, with such exactness and pertinence as showed he had been carefully instructed.”

“Quite a prodigy, it would seem,” remarked Rachel. “I dare say he had learned by rote a string of the casuistical knots which many of our learned men are fond of tying in the law and the prophets.”

“Please give us a specimen of his questions or problems,” said Joseph. “They will doubtless be entertaining, and they may prove instructive.”

“For example,” replied Nicodemus, “the class were reciting the One hundred and tenth Psalm, and at the very first verse,

“‘Jehovah said to my Lord,
Sit at my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies thy footstool,’

the lad modestly inquired who was the author of the psalm. ‘David, of course,’ replied the presiding officer, ‘as the very title of the psalm shows.’ The youth then asked again, ‘And

whom does he mean by "my Lord" there?' 'Doubtless the Messiah,' was the reply. Again the boy asked, 'And in the parallel passage of the first [now the second] psalm,

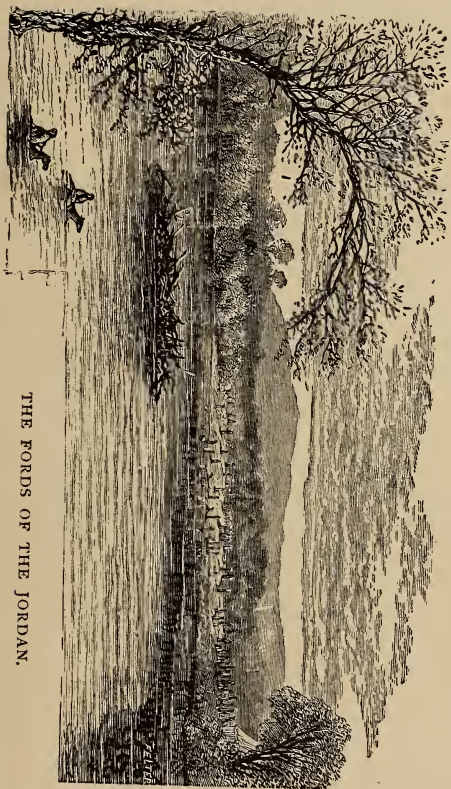
"Jehovah has said to me,
My Son art thou,"

who is the person referred to?' 'No doubt the Messiah there likewise,' was once more the reply. 'But how,' rejoined the lad, could David call him both his son and his Lord?' The inquiry was so fair and so apt that the teachers could not decline to meet it; but it seemed to me that they made miserable work in expounding the sense. Some explained it one way and some another; but the by-standers chuckled at the confusion of the whole bench of doctors. I do earnestly wish," continued Nicodemus, "that a more solid and natural method of interpretation prevailed among our scholars."

"Ah," said Joseph, "the Messiah himself will soon come, and he will explain every thing."

"Amen," responded Sarah, "may he come quickly!"

Once more a gap of eighteen years occurs in our narrative, and the characters and events rapidly mature. Nicodemus is now an acknowledged authority on religious questions, and Joseph a pillar of the State. Obed is a successful man of the world, and their households are among the most respectable in the communities where they dwell. Offices, both imperial and provincial, have changed hands, but have only degenerated in reputation and functions. One of the vilest debauchees hitherto known occupies the throne at Rome, and a coarse venal soldier is his highest representative in Judea. Public and private morals are at a confessedly low ebb every-where, and in Jerusalem they stand in fearful contrast with the Mosaic law. Suddenly a weird reformer emerges from the deserts east of the city and invites all penitents to wash away their sins in the Jordan as a preparation for the immediate coming of the Messiah. The whole air of the man and of his message strikes the popular fancy, and it immediately becomes fashionable for saint and sinner to enroll themselves among his followers. His pilgrim dress and diet, and his thorough earnestness and sincerity, make a



THE FORDS OF THE JORDAN.

profound impression upon the whole vicinity, and soldiers as well as civilians are treated by him with the same impartial strain of exhortation. A woe is impending over the land for its sins, and the Messiah is the only refuge from ruin. Even the Pharisees and synagogue teachers become concerned at the popular commotion, and after cautiously sounding his pretensions they conclude to float with the tide which they cannot stem. As the Baptist does not seem to be ambitious, perhaps they may lead, or at least take advantage of, the religious movement, since he requires such simple terms of membership in what he is pleased to style "the kingdom of heaven." But he sarcastically rejects them as knaves, and it is soon evident that they must fight the new society, although they will proceed gently at first, since it is so strong. At all events the Sanhedrim and the ecclesiastics generally will keep aloof from the popular enthusiasm and watch from a safe distance their opportunity to crush it.

The three related families of whose affairs we have kept a brief record cannot fail to be observant of the signs of the times, but their

comments and prognostications continue to be as discordant as ever. Obed and Rachel declare the Baptist to be an impostor, or at best a mere enthusiast, and they avow their conviction that the rabble whom he congregates will soon dissipate of itself, like many other temporary excitements. "For," say they, "it evidently has no fundamental principle or plan of concerted action, no bond of union or organization. So long as it does not interfere with the government it is harmless enough; but doubtless, like all preceding popular movements, it will soon come into collision with the Roman power, and then its day will be over. We shall have another terrible scene of carnage and execution." Nicodemus, Joseph, and Sarah, however, think that its deep religious fervor, combined with its unobtrusive course, will lead to permanent good; especially as it only aims to be a scaffolding upon which the Messiah is to erect his empire. When he appears doubtless there will be stirring times. They only hope and pray that the means and measures under the administration to be ushered in may be as calm and pacific as those already inaugurated. They see no signs of war,

and are resolved to judge fairly and to act prudently. For the present they will not commit themselves openly to the new enterprise, although they are favorably inclined toward it. The whole nation, in fact, is in suspense, and they need be in no haste to declare themselves decidedly. They are not much affected by the vague reports of the sudden appearance of a singular young man to whom the Baptist seemed to pay unusual deference as he enrolled himself by the prescribed rite among his followers, nor by the rumors that this new-comer is himself gathering disciples, and even professes to be able to work miracles, a thing which his precursor has never attempted. They presume this is but a piece of imitation and improvement.

A few months subsequently, however, on the occasion of the paschal ceremonies at Jerusalem, an incident occurred which aroused general attention. A stranger, accompanied only by half a dozen followers, entered the outer court of the temple, and summarily expelled all the hucksters and money-brokers from its precincts, claiming, in enigmatical language, to have some sort of jurisdiction over

the premises. And then he supported this high-handed procedure by several undoubted miracles publicly wrought by him during the day. This rendered him exceedingly popular, notwithstanding his mysterious movements. Nicodemus resolved to ascertain for himself something definite about the new Teacher's origin and purposes; and in this determination he was warmly seconded by Sarah, but as earnestly opposed by the other members of his family. He therefore thought it prudent to seek a private interview with the remarkable stranger; and, having ascertained his lodgings, he visited him in the evening, when all parties were at leisure, and when he was in no danger of being observed by his jealous colleagues of the Sanhedrim. We will give his own account of the conversation as related to his wife on his return :

“ I began,” said Nicodemus, “ by addressing him courteously with the title of Rabbi, and assuring him that his miracles had convinced me of his divine mission. But he stopped me short, as I was about to make some inquiries concerning himself and his principles, by telling me that the members of his fraternity must

be 'born over again.'* I was puzzled to know the exact meaning of this phrase, especially its application to a well-established religious character like myself; and I frankly expressed my difficulty. He explained that he did not mean a physical, but a spiritual regeneration, and that water baptism is but its symbol. Of course I am familiar with this process of proselyte initiation, but I could not perceive its pertinence or necessity under the present circumstances, as we are all native Jews. He rather sharply reproved me for my dullness of comprehension as a professed public teacher, adding that if I were unwilling to accept this his first and simplest lesson I could hardly expect to be inducted into his deeper mysteries. Nevertheless he proceeded to deliver a most extraordinary lecture, apparently concerning himself and his errand, under the twofold title of 'the Son of man' and 'the Son of

*I need here only remark that however much more than this may have been, and doubtless was, included in our Lord's significant *ἀνωθεν*, "again" (literally, *from above*), yet the reply of Nicodemus, and the explanation of Jesus, both make it clear that the idea of a *re-birth* was the predominant, if not the sole, one which Nicodemus received from it. With this, or involved in it, to a Jewish mind, of course would be the ceremonial relations which such a change must involve.

God.' I gathered these thoughts as the substance of his doctrine: That men are in danger of eternal ruin as a consequence of their sins; that the love of God has provided a rescue from this fate; and that faith in the present Teacher himself is the one condition of this salvation."

"Is not that all plain enough?" said Sarah, whose less sophisticated understanding and more chastened spirit drank in the truth with a delighted yearning. "It seems to me," she continued, "that if we can secure Jehovah's favor on these simple terms we can afford to accept the character of him who makes them known without questioning its mystery. I am sure they are far more reasonable than the tedious round of services required by the priests, and especially the endless quibbles raised by the lawyers about their due performance."

Nicodemus did not answer. Professional pride and long prejudice could not at once relinquish their hold, but he forebore to disturb the rest which Sarah's child-like heart found on the bosom of the divine compassion. She had long and deeply felt the weary burden of her sins—soul-guilt, which the sacrifices could not reach, which the Levitical law did not even

name, and which the decalogue only implied without pointing out a remedy; and she now saw in the simple trust in the forgiving mercy of Jehovah, as she understood the new Teacher to expound it, an avenue of deliverance, clear, full, and instant. She gladly entered this way of wisdom, and at once it proved to her a "path of peace."

As time moved on the excitement at Jerusalem about the new Teacher subsided. It was only said that he had taken the Baptist's place on the Jordan, the latter having removed his operations to a point higher up the river, and subsequently being imprisoned by the King of Galilee for some act of rudeness on his part. Reports, it is true, occasionally reached Judea concerning the wide-spread activity of the new Teacher in the northern part of the country, especially his travels and discourses and miracles on the Lake of Gennesaret; but our friends at the Jewish capital were too much engrossed in their own affairs to give much heed to these distant matters.

Obed's visit to Tyre many years ago had led to the formation of mercantile connections there which had meanwhile become so ex-



JAFFA (THE ANCIENT JOPPA).

tended as to warrant the establishment of a warehouse at the new port of Cesarea. The import duties were thus transferred to the jurisdiction of the procurator of Judea, and trouble had now arisen there from the extortion of the Roman officials appointed by the corrupt Pilate. Similar irregularities were likewise practiced at the old port of Joppa, within the same procuratorship, and the merchants of both places deputed Obed to visit Rome and lay their grievances before the imperial tribunal. He had, accordingly, taken passage the preceding autumn in a coasting vessel to Alexandria, and there been transhipped into a larger merchantman bound with a cargo of wheat for Rome. But the vessel had been delayed by stopping at intermediate ports, and on setting out from Crete was caught in one of the Levanters frequent during the winter months on the Mediterranean, driven into the Syrtis Major on the African coast, and there wrecked. It was supposed that all on board had perished, except a few who had floated ashore on a fragment of the ship; and as Obed was not among these his family, after waiting in anxious suspense for

tidings from him after his departure, were now plunged into inconsolable grief, when at length the facts reached them by land-post from Numidia. Rachel was seized with paroxysms of delirium, and the kind-hearted Joseph, as being the nearest of kin, was now charged with the double burden of her rising family and of his brother-in-law's extensive business. Measures were taken to settle the estate, but here again the corrupt officials made increased delay and expense.

The home of Nicodemus also was visited with affliction, but of a somewhat different character. The Egyptian friends whose hospitality he had enjoyed long before when passing up the Nile had now, after many invitations, repaid the visit during the summer months, when Egypt is unhealthful and unpleasant from the inundation of the river. But Jerusalem they found scarcely more salubrious at that season, and when autumn arrived they were so infected with the Syrian fever that they were unable to return home. The ample mansion of Joseph, conveniently and pleasantly located between the metropolis and the sea-shore, was therefore thrown open

as a hospital for the invalids of both families, and many were the tender reunions experienced under its roof during the winter that ensued. Sarah, although herself deeply affected by the loss of her brother, vibrated like an angel of comfort between the three domestic establishments; and many a gentle word of spiritual cheer did she pour into the ear of the distracted Rachel, as well as minister to the sick from Egypt, unconsciously suggested by the evening's interview of her husband with the unknown Teacher.

When the Passover festivities again recurred the several families were measurably composed in their separate homes, and Nicodemus once more had the joy of his wife's exclusive company at Jerusalem. She hoped that the Galilean would again revisit the city, and that some further opportunity would be afforded of learning his views on many points which she had often revolved in her mind, but of which the reserve of Oriental females forbade her seeking a public solution. She had, therefore, to depend upon her husband for information, and he could only report what he casually gathered in the street or learned from his fel-

lows of the hierarchy who were more on the alert than himself in watching heretics. One day he told her that the Teacher, whose name he learned was Jesus, had instantly cured a case of palsy of thirty-eight years' continuance, at the pool near the sheep-gate, although it was the Sabbath-day; and a few days later he ascertained that he had publicly defended the propriety of this act on grounds of such authority in himself as to provoke the murderous fury of the Pharisees. The Teacher, therefore, had probably left the place. They afterward heard of his increasingly renewed labors in Galilee; but for a year and a half he was lost to their immediate knowledge.

Meantime Obed suddenly returned one day to his enraptured family. He had a long story to tell of his adventures. He was one of a little party of passengers who had secretly lowered the skiff from the lee-side of the ship during the gale, and, after being tossed about and almost famished for days, had partly drifted and partly rowed to the nearest coast of Sicily, where they were kindly entertained by the natives and forwarded to Syracuse. There he made himself sufficiently known to Jewish

merchants to obtain means of returning home. He would have prosecuted his embassy to Rome, but, having lost his documents, he would have appeared unaccredited before the emperor. He found his own mercantile affairs in a very confused state ; for, although Joseph was competent, judicious, and faithful, he had been proceeding upon the plan of winding up the business ; and the procurator, who had somehow got wind of Obed's errand to Rome, managed to throw every legal impediment in his way. Obed found it necessary to retreat to Tyre, out of Pilate's jurisdiction, with the wrecks of his property. There he felt safe, for Herod was out of humor with the Roman procurator, and would not care to molest a private citizen in order to gratify him. Rachel and the children, of course, accompanied him, and thus one of the family ties of Sarah was impaired by distance. This only served to make her cherish still more warmly in her bosom the germ of the glad tidings which the Galilean Teacher had implanted in her heart through her husband's report. Ah, how many since have found the whole Gospel epitomized in that single verse, "For God so loved the

world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life !”

The succeeding Passover, as already intimated, was not attended by Jesus of Nazareth—such was the designation by which the new Teacher was now familiarly known throughout the country. He came, however, to the Feast of Tabernacles, but not at its beginning, lest he should unnecessarily expose himself to the hostility of the hierarchy. His appearance was the signal for the renewal of a double controversy, of which he was the center. The populace were divided in their opinion, the majority appealing to his miracles as proof of his philanthropy and Messiahship, and others decrying him as an impostor. These latter were evidently emissaries of the Pharisaic party, who were, nevertheless, amazed at the skill in teaching of one so little trained as he in the schools. Jesus publicly defended himself from their various aspersions till the Sanhedrim, exasperated to find that he was still gaining ground with the people, ordered his arrest. But the officers sent for that purpose were themselves disarmed by his elo-

quence, and a novel scene took place on their return empty-handed. "You are cowards and traitors!" shouted some of the council. "Is it possible," said the Pharisaic members, "that any one, except the cursed, ignorant rabble, has faith in him?" Nicodemus himself, nettled and alarmed at the insinuation, ventured to remark that the accused had a legal right to be heard before being condemned. But he was silenced with the retort, "So thou hast turned advocate for a Galilean prophet!" The meeting broke up in disorder, and Jesus continued his debate in the temple until his opponents at last took up stones to meet his arguments.

"What did he say for himself?" eagerly asked Sarah, as her husband recounted these incidents in the evening.

Nicodemus replied:

"He calmly answered their vituperations by asserting his divine origin and character, and he challenged them to test his claims by Scripture and by fact."

"Could any thing be more fair than that?" returned she. "But what didst thou understand him to mean by his divinity?"

✓ “It was evidently not merely official, but personal,” rejoined her husband; “yet I could not exactly make it out.”

A few days afterward Nicodemus told his wife that Jesus had publicly cured a man born blind, and that the hierarchy had excommunicated the poor fellow for boldly defending his Benefactor.

“Did any thing further transpire concerning the Teacher’s own nature?” inquired she; for she felt that on this central point was pivoted his whole work and doctrine.

“Nothing,” replied her husband, “except that, in a beautiful allegory of a sheep-fold, he re-affirmed that God was his Father.”

About three months later Nicodemus was better able to satisfy his wife’s curiosity by reporting that the hierarchy had pointedly questioned Jesus as to his Messiahship while he was teaching in Solomon’s Portico at the Festival of Dedication, and that he had explicitly avowed his unity and equality with God.

“How did that strike thee?” asked she.

“His enemies tried to stone him for blasphemy,” returned Nicodemus, “but he escaped and has evaded their efforts to arrest him by

retreating to the scene of his former operations on the Jordan. The man is a riddle to me still," he continued; "and I must await the issue of his career before I decide as to his character."

Sarah did not press her husband to resolve his intellectual doubts, but her woman's heart reposed in serene confidence upon the Teacher's truthfulness, and half-divined the secret of his double selfhood. There were other female disciples of Jesus whose perplexities were far less than those of the favored twelve; and there was one whose maternal love was an antidote for all tormenting fear. From the moment of the annunciation she had learned that there may be a blending of the divine and the human which the very subject of it may not attempt to analyze; and believers since have ever felt a union which they cannot see. Incarnation is a mystery in the creature; how much more in the Creator! But duplexity is not in itself a contradiction, although the elements be variant as mind from matter or as both from God. The infinite may involve, without absorbing, the finite, as it has evolved it without eliminating aught from itself. The

philosopher, no less than the Christian, must accept many facts and formulas which he does not fully comprehend.

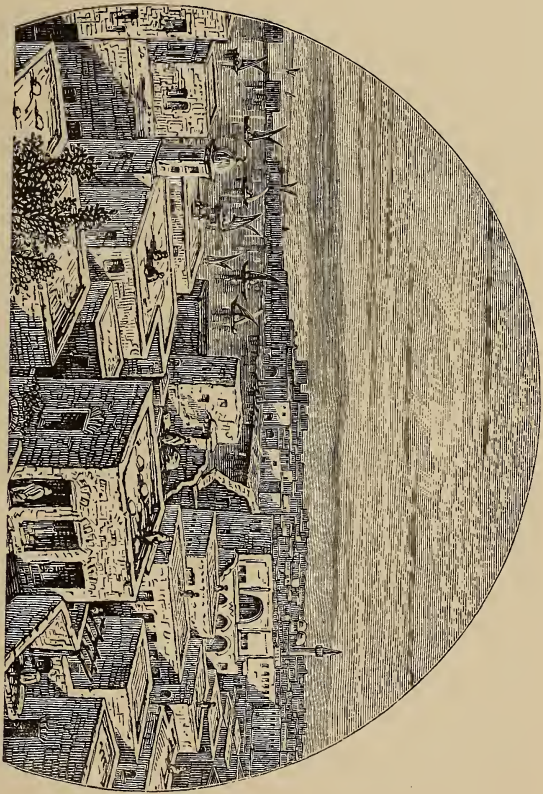
It is now high time that we return to the fortunes of the family whom we left upon the borders of Israel. Obed's affairs had not prospered as he anticipated since his removal to Tyre. The native merchants were rather jealous of him as a comparative foreigner and competitor, and as the trade of the place was itself much more limited than in former times there was little opportunity for a new-comer to secure it. In the dullness of business he had leisure for other pursuits, to which he had not given close attention hitherto, but which his subdued experience of late inclined him to investigate. He became especially interested in the affairs of his neighbors of Galilee, at first through the exchange of commodities, the native products of corn and oil being exported from Tyre, and the price returned in manufactures and articles of luxury brought from all parts of the world. Gradually he learned to listen with attention to the reports of the marvelous deeds of the new Teacher from Nazareth, and insensibly his worldly

mind began to sympathize with the brilliant prospects of temporal power and personal preferment which the many merely outward partisans of the now famous Personage saw in his future. Obed himself was not so sordid as to wish to follow Jesus merely for the few loaves and fishes which he at present distributed, nor merely for the relief from bodily ailments which he so freely extended; but he fancied that he discovered in the growing popularity, and still more in the remarkable supernatural endowments, of the young Nazarene the prestige and the power which, if rightly employed, might aggrandize all his retainers. These hopes, however, were suddenly dashed by the act of the Teacher himself, who on one occasion abruptly quitted a company on the lake that were intent on proclaiming him king; and when they still pursued him to the synagogue of Capernaum he delivered to them a severe lecture on the folly of earthly ambition, which effectually convinced them that they had mistaken their man. Still, Obed's interest had been drawn to Jesus, and his early prejudices arising from the obscure origin of the prophet had been overcome; he

was now satisfied that the new Teacher was neither insignificant nor uninfluential, and his mind was open to conviction as to his ultimate aim and destiny. Rachel, too, in the facility with which an affectionate wife falls into her kind husband's way of thinking, began to have respect for Jesus, and could no longer shut her eyes nor close her heart against the obvious beneficence of his pre-eminent character. Neither of them had yet seen him nor felt that subtle power which all confessed emanated from his person, through every act and word and look. A little incident presently occurred in their immediate neighborhood which brought them into close contact with his life and teaching and gave a clear insight into his spirit and character.

One of the favorite domestics in Obed's family was a poor widow, who, being a native, and therefore a Gentile, occupied a little apartment in an adjoining building with her insane daughter, and earned support for them both by giving what time she could spare from the invalid to the care of the linen and bedding of the merchant's household. The maniac child was an object of pity to all the neighbors, for

in her paroxysms, which were often of a peculiarly nervous character, she would sometimes endanger her own life and the safety of the house itself by her strange freaks, not only tearing her clothing and hair, but even casting herself into the water or the fire if she got an opportunity. Her contortions and shrieks were fearful, and in her spasms she personated a foul demon, with which she fancied she was possessed; nor was the notion wholly one of Oriental superstition, for she acted as if really under some such spell. The afflicted mother had tried every remedy known to Gentile or Jewish practice—medicine, exorcism, and what not; but all in vain. The disease, if such it could be called, only increased with the growth of the child, and the mother herself was almost distracted about it. One day she heard that the great Galilean Teacher, whose fame for miracle-working had reached every corner and hamlet and individual of that whole region, was in the vicinity; and in her desperation, heathen, and unacquainted with him as she was, she begged permission of Rachel to test his skill and power in the case. She learned in the city that he was the guest at a villa near



MODERN TYRE.

the so-called tomb of Hiram, on the brow of the hill overlooking the ruins of old Tyre, and, running the whole way, she reaches the outer line of the multitude who pressed to hear him in spite of his efforts at privacy. With all her remaining breath she cried, "O, sir, thou descendant of David, the friend of Hiram, help a poor Gentile, and cure my demoniac daughter!" But he still continued his teaching, apparently not hearing or not noticing her. She repeated her request still more loudly, notwithstanding the reproof of the by-standers for her vociferation, until the Teacher's attendants begged him to bid her begone as an intruder and disturber. He merely said, "My errand personally is with Israelites alone;" but his tone was gentle, though the words were severe; and the forlorn woman, gathering courage from her woe, crowded through the throng and cast herself at his feet with the entreaty, "O, sir, do help me!"

He looked upon her, and there was compassion in his eye, albeit again his reply was discouraging: "Gentile dogs may not eat the children's food."

But she would not be repelled; she knew

he could restore her daughter, and she felt that he was not altogether unwilling. With the ingenuity of want and the ingenuousness of humility, she pleaded, "True, sir, I deserve nothing: but dogs may catch the crumbs beneath the children's table."

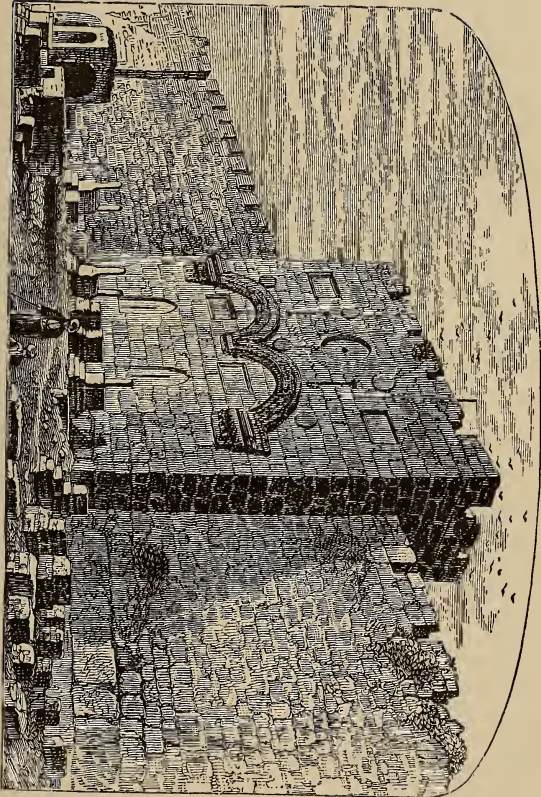
He had tested, and he now rewarded, her importunate earnestness. "Great is thy faith, stranger that thou art; be it to thee accordingly," was his gracious reply; and it carried to her consciousness the assurance of its own verification. She hastened home and found her daughter well. Jesus soon departed from the neighborhood, and not long after he finally quitted Galilee.

His exile from Jerusalem was barely long enough to allow the heat of controversy to slacken; he was recalled by an incident which revived it with redoubled fury. His abode during his annual visits to the Jewish metropolis had been with a humble family at Bethany, just across the Mount of Olives, consisting of two unmarried sisters, the elder named Martha and the younger Mary, who kept house for their brother Lazarus. As Jesus was teaching near the Jordan he received an

urgent message to come immediately to Bethany, for Lazarus was suddenly taken very ill. He did not go, however, till two days afterward, although aware that his friend had died meanwhile, his design being to effect a still greater miracle than his cure. Accordingly, he assuaged the grief of the sisters by raising their brother to life after he had lain several days in the grave. The hierarchy were so provoked by the popularity produced by the resurrection of Lazarus that they were anxious to kill him also; and Jesus deemed it prudent again to withdraw from the vicinity. He returned, however, in order to celebrate the coming Passover, and once more took up his abode with his friends at Bethany. Nicodemus and Joseph were likewise at the festival, and what may be regarded as an impartial account of the events of the week following may be found in the letters which Sarah wrote on the spot to her sister-in-law at Tyre.

“JERUSALEM, 11th *Nisan*.

“MY DEAR RACHEL: Our city is likely soon to be the scene of some decisive public collision between the Galilean Teacher and



GOLDEN GATE, JERUSALEM.

the Pharisaical authorities here. This morning he came into the temple, attended by his twelve special disciples, and accompanied by a crowd of villagers and towns-people, who shouted as the procession passed down the slope of Olivet and across the Kidron, hailing him as the coming King of David's line. It is true they were altogether common sort of folks, and largely children; but their enthusiasm was unbounded. It dreadfully annoyed the hierarchy, who tried to stop their applause, but in vain. He was seated on their coats thrown over the back of an ass, with her foal by her side, and palm-branches had been strown along the road as in a triumphal procession. I confess, as I looked out of the east balcony window of our house on Ophel, it was a pretty and rather imposing sight. The Teacher himself, however, looked sad, and I thought I saw tears in his eyes. O, it was a sweet, melancholy face, full of manly dignity and womanly tenderness. Somehow it strangely reminded me of the Babe of Bethlehem many years ago. It looked the very image of that gentle pensive mother's; the same blond complexion, so unusual in our coun-

trymen; and the hair parted in the same way in the middle of the forehead, and hanging in ringlets over the shoulders. My husband says that as soon as Jesus came inside the Gentiles' court he turned out all the traffickers, as he did three years ago, and that he spent the day in the temple teaching and working various cures, returning at night to his friends' cottage at Bethany. They think the world of him, and made him quite a supper a few evenings since. I do not wonder, for it certainly was a most remarkable thing, his raising the brother from the dead. The whole city is full of the report, and the Pharisees are more exasperated than ever. O, dear, I hope they will not harm him, he is so kind and noble! But I think he is abundantly able to take care of himself, even without the aid of the common people, who are devoted to him. He is remarkably self-possessed and judicious, although decided enough in rebuking sin, and stern especially toward the crafty Pharisees. And then, he must have infinite resources in his miraculous gifts, although I believe he has been never known to use them for his own benefit. As my husband says, he is cer-

tainly a unique person. If such a thing were possible that Jehovah should come down in human form, as he did when the angels visited Abraham, I should think he must seem just such a being. Didst thou ever think about that singular prediction in Isaiah, where the Messiah is called *God with us*? I have of late been reading the Scriptures more carefully than ever before, especially with a view to solving the mystery about this new Teacher. He seems to me to fulfill the promises and descriptions more perfectly than any one else I can think of, although in a way somewhat different from what I have been educated to expect. I know thou art looking for a temporal ruler and an earthly conqueror; but, dear sister, I have begun to suspect that his kingdom may be purely spiritual, and his realm his followers' hearts. This may be only a woman's notion, and my husband is ready to laugh me out of it; but I cannot think that we as a nation or as individuals would gain any thing by getting into a war with the Romans or with our neighbors, as this popular idea of the Messiah implies. What I want most of all is rest from sin and peace of mind;

and these I get more in the repose of this Galilean's blessed look and his soothing words, so far as I have had them repeated to me, than in any thing else.

“I shall watch the progress of matters here very closely, and keep thee informed of all I can learn. I hope thou wilt be interested likewise, and that even my brother will not be unconcerned. Thine, affectionately,

“SARAH.”

“13th Nisan.

“Yesterday was quiet here in Jerusalem. Jesus of Nazareth visited the city and taught in the temple as before; but there was no popular demonstration, and therefore no special opposition by his enemies. It is said only that on his way early to the city, not having had any breakfast, he went a little out of the direct path from Bethany, expecting to get some early figs on a tree of unusual forwardness for the season, but found it had expended its strength in leaves only. Those who passed by it since find that it has entirely withered to the very roots. I presume this is one of his miracle lessons, but what it means I cannot

divine, unless to teach that profession is worthless without practice. Perhaps it is a sly thrust at the Pharisees, who boast loudly of piety, but have very little genuine fruit.

“To-day the Teacher was very busy in the temple lecturing and curing, especially in the women’s court, where I had myself the curiosity to observe him. I cannot tell thee how delighted I was. There was a poor widow who dropped a few trifling coins into the contribution-box, and he beautifully said that she had given proportionately more than all the ostentatious wealthy ones. Some Gentiles called him into the outer court for an interview, and as I was near that side I heard him say some very ominous things about a grain of wheat decaying in the ground before it can bear fruit, and about his being lifted up from the earth. He seems to be very despondent about himself, and I am afraid that mischief is brewing against him. I noticed that the Pharisees caviled at his remarks in a very coarse way. But he paid all parties back with interest when they flocked about him to puzzle him with their hard points. First, the Herodians came to him with the standing dispute about paying tribute to

the Romans; but he merely pointed to the emperor's effigy on the coin in proof of acknowledged jurisdiction. Next, the Sadducees put to him a supposed case of a woman's levirate marriage with seven brothers successively, and asked him whose wife she would be in the next world. But he simply told them that there would be no such earthly relation there at all, and then deepened their confusion by citing the title of Jehovah as still the God of the patriarchs, who must therefore be in some sense yet living. Lastly, the Pharisees plied him with the famous problem of the most important commandment, and he referred them to the familiar passage of our phylacteries, 'Thou shalt love Jehovah with all thy heart,' as comprehending every divine duty. It is wonderful how easily he met all their sophistries and untied their cunning knots. He has a most astonishing grasp and insight of the Scriptures, for he added as the great fellow-commandment, covering the second table of the law, as the other did the first, that striking prescription, so little heeded by us Jews, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?' All parties were obliged to confess how admirably he

had cleared up every point propounded to him. But, best of all, he finally turned the tables upon all his opponents by putting to them the identical question which thou rememberest my husband years ago told us he heard asked by the precocious lad in the temple school-room, about David's Son and Lord. Can he be the same person with that child? Strange that he should thus repeatedly recur in our recollections! I could have sat and listened all day to such lovely and instructive parables and teachings as he uttered; but he suddenly left with his disciples, and when I reached home I saw them sitting in earnest conversation on the opposite side of Olivet. O, how I envy those women who seem to be his companions together with the twelve! I fancied I saw in the calm and thoughtful but still beautiful face of the oldest a resemblance to his own features. Can it be his mother? Is it the wan relic of the once bright girl of Bethlehem? What scenes of heart experience she must meanwhile have gone through!

“Dear sister, thou canst not know how deeply I am interested in that little circle, and especially in Him who is its center. I think

by day and by night of his teachings, his mysterious character, his perils. I feel as if my future—I may almost say my eternal prospects—are hinged upon his fate. If such goodness, such purity, such philanthropy, come to grief or end in naught, what is there worth living for? What can be depended upon as valuable and permanent?

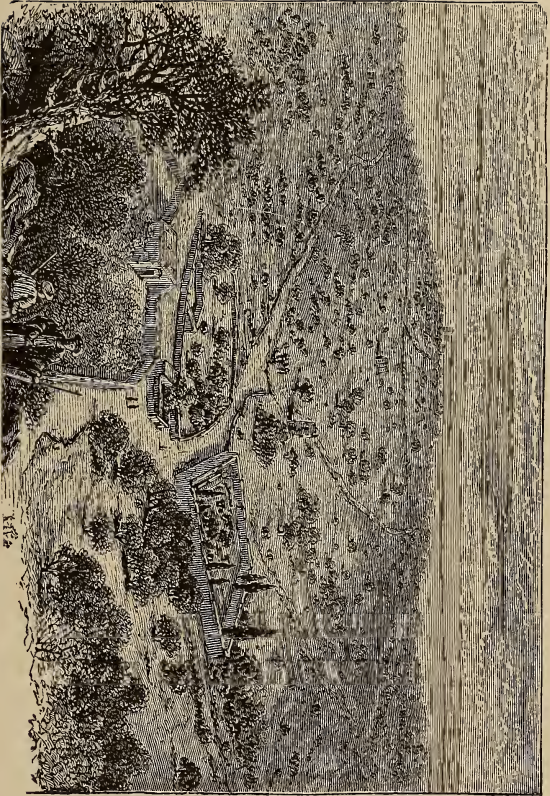
SARAH."

"16th Nisan.

"Yesterday was a day of horrors. I was too much occupied and shocked to be able to write; and even to-day I am overwhelmed with grief and amazement. I can hardly compose my mind to tell thee what has happened; but I will endeavor to calm myself sufficiently to give thee some account of it. The great Teacher has been put to death by his enemies! That terrible fact blots out all my hopes, and makes this Passover seem a funeral season to me. Let me relate, as well as I can, how it occurred.

"Day before yesterday, it seems, the chief priests secretly bargained with one of his twelve disciples to betray him into their hands on the first safe opportunity, when the populace

should be out of the way, who would have rescued him had the attempt to seize him been made in public. The traitor knew that his Master was in the habit of stopping for private prayer in an olive orchard on the way from Jerusalem to Bethany, and he concerted that the officials should meet him there at the close of the paschal supper. It was late at night when he arrived there, but they were on hand, and at a preconcerted signal they seized, bound, and carried him off. He made not the slightest resistance, but merely stipulated for the safety of his disciples. For convenience he was conveyed first to Annas, the ex-high-priest, whose authority he refused to recognize; and then, at early light, he was brought before Caiaphas, the president of the Sanhedrim, who immediately assembled that body and arraigned him as a prisoner before them. The forms of trial were observed, but every principle of justice was outraged. Finally, they brought in two venal fellows who swore that he had threatened to destroy the temple; but their testimony did not agree in the details, and so proved nothing. Determined to convict him of some capital crime at all haz-



GETHESEMANE.

K12

ards, the high-priest now put Jesus himself on his own oath as to his claims to the Messiahship, and then made use of his forced answer to convict him of blasphemy. My husband learned all these particulars from one of his colleagues afterward, for thou mayest be sure he was not in their plans and was not even notified of the meeting. The difficulty now was how to get the prisoner executed. The hierarchy dared not undertake it themselves, for fear of the people no less than of the Roman authorities, especially on so great a feast day, when the city was crowded with visitors, and a disturbance would be likely to take place. They at last resolved to get Pilate himself to take the responsibility, knowing that he cared very little for the life of a private citizen. Accordingly, as soon as the procurator had opened his tribunal they led Jesus thither and asked him to confirm their own sentence. Suspecting the ruse, he demanded to know what offense the prisoner had committed, and they began vehemently to charge him with various crimes, especially of claiming to be the King of the Jews. 'A strange-looking person to make such a claim,' said Pilate;

and so he took the prisoner aside, supposing him to be some harmless enthusiast. A few words of conversation satisfied him that Jesus cherished at least no political aspirations, and he told the accusers that he would merely order a few lashes to be given the prisoner by way of warning. The soldiers accordingly took the liberty of treating Jesus with all sorts of personal indignity, suggested by the malice of the hierarchal minions, who had previously done whatever they dared in the same way in the high-priest's court. His persecutors, however, were not satisfied with this, but clamored for his blood; and when Pilate proposed to release him, as is customary for the procurator to do with some one Jewish criminal on the paschal holiday, they asked for the liberation of the notorious outlaw Jesus Barabbas, and the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. 'I cannot legally put him to death,' remonstrated Pilate, 'unless you specify some more heinous crime than you have yet showed him to have committed.' 'O,' shouted they, 'he is an arrant insurrectionist from Galilee!' 'Aha!' said he, catching at the last word, 'then he belongs to Herod's jurisdic-

tion.' So he immediately dispatched him to that prince, who chanced at the time to be on a visit to the city, glad both to get rid of the case himself and at the same time to do his royal neighbor a courtesy. But Jesus declined to answer any of Herod's curious questions, and so, being able to make nothing out of him, the prince sent him back again to Pilate, scornfully decked out with the mock ensigns of royalty. 'See, there comes your King!' said Pilate to the Jews, as the soldiers led him in. 'No!' cried the artful prosecutors, eating their own words of the few days before, 'the emperor is our only sovereign.' Just then the procurator's wife, Claudia Procula, who had overheard the uproar from her bedroom window, sent him word by no means to condemn the innocent prisoner. I have often talked with her about him, dear sister, and I know that she thinks as I do in the matter. The hierarchy, on the other hand, had now mustered in full force, and they vociferated, 'If thou let this seditious culprit go we will see that the emperor hears of thy negligence.' The fickle and corrupt governor hesitated. He was convinced of the prisoner's innocence, and

would have saved him if he could safely and conveniently have done so ; but this last suggestion prevailed, and reluctantly he gave his assent to the demands of the priesthood, feebly protesting by formally washing his hands, as if that could free his conscience from the responsibility.

“ It was now near the middle of the forenoon, and the execution of the terrible sentence after the barbarous Roman fashion took place immediately and in public. A rough cross was hastily constructed and brought to the spot, and the prisoner was compelled to walk with it on his shoulder to the place of execution. A motley crowd gathered along the street. The priests gloated over their victim with evident triumph ; but the populace looked on with helpless sympathy. None of his immediate disciples were present, except one who supported the trembling mother by the side of the doomed. Numbers of Jewish women fell into the mournful procession, and I could not myself resist the desire to mingle my tears with theirs as soon as I learned what was going on. How different the Teacher looked from his appearance when he first entered the city this



VIA DOLOROSA, JERUSALEM.

week! His face was haggard with last night's sleeplessness and his recent scourging. His pale brow was stained with bloody wounds. His garments were disheveled and soiled with dust. But the same majesty still hung about his person, and composure reigned in his mien. The look of placid sorrow was only deepened by his fallen circumstances, and his words were tender and thoughtful of others: 'Weep not for me, daughters of Jerusalem, but for yourselves and your children.' Surely our country must some day expiate this deed with fearful retribution. I saw him faint under the fatigue and degradation, and my husband carried me senseless away. I could not bear to inquire about the frightful details which I know must have ensued. I only awoke myself to consciousness about noon and found the whole city wrapped in the darkness of an eclipse. Was it Nature herself hiding her face from the scene of guilt and woe? I was told that the veil of the temple was torn and that shocks of an earthquake were felt. The hard Roman centurion who superintended the execution confessed that the dying agonies must be those of the Son of God.

“Toward evening my husband went out with thy kind brother to look after the fate of the poor sufferer. He found Jesus hanging limp upon the cross, and the ruthless soldier on guard thrust a spear into the corpse’s side to see if life were quite extinct. The two robbers who were crucified on either side had been dispatched by breaking their legs in order to put them out of their misery before the Sabbath eve began. Pilate gave permission for the removal of the bodies, and that of the great Teacher was laid, after a hasty embalmment, in thy brother’s new vault close by. All was quiet around. The crowd of spectators had departed, and only the female friends of the Nazarene remained to watch their dead.

“O, sister, what are we to think of all this? My head swims and my heart sinks with confusion. I am struck dumb with disappointment and dismay. I feel as I did when I lost my own darling boy years ago and dared not look up to heaven lest I should murmur in mistake. Yet I must still confide in God as good and just and wise, and I cannot believe the Galilean Teacher an impostor. I now see the reason of his sad presentiment, and I am



THE ENTOMBMENT OF CHRIST. (FROM A PAINTING BY TITIAN.)

sure that he foresaw some retrieval from the present catastrophe. Yet I cannot imagine what it will be. His friends are heart-broken and his enemies jubilant. All speak of him, however, with bated breath. A hush, as of some terrible calamity, rests on this bright Sabbath day, and every one seems to tread on tip-toe, not so much in expectation as in the dread of breaking the repose of the grave. Early this morning soldiers were stationed to watch the sepulcher; for it seems the hierarchy themselves are not yet quite sure of success. Are they afraid even of the dead body of their victim? For myself, whatever may come about, I am resolved to cherish his past teachings, for my inmost heart assures me of their truth; and I will hold his memory dear as that of a martyr, however unsuccessful. Alas! that the tallest tree should feel the lightning's greatest shock, and the fairest of earth's blossoms so quickly wither beneath the scorching breath of envious malignity!

SARAH."

Such we may picture as the aspect of affairs at this crisis to a loving woman's mind. How momentous it was in the world's history no

man at the time could possibly understand. Angels, who gazed with breathless interest upon the apparent consummation of the plot, were not themselves able to conjecture what would be its real issue. The mystery of redemption was a secret in the divine counsels, to be revealed in due course of time. The woman's Seed had received the predicted wound in his human part; but that heel was yet to be uplifted and crush the serpent's head with a fatal blow.

The first circumstance that roused Sarah from the consternation and almost stupor into which the tragedy of Calvary had thrown her was the news of the sudden disappearance, on the following morning, of the body of the Galilean Teacher from the tomb where it had been deposited. The Roman sentinels had circulated the report that his disciples had secretly conveyed it away while they slept at their post. But every body at once asked, "How, then, could they know this if they were themselves asleep at the time?" Pilate evidently did not believe the story, or he would have punished them for their remissness in duty. Besides, why should the disciples steal

the body, and what would they do with it? How could they get it when it was so closely guarded? But it was certainly gone; nobody could doubt that. Gradually the truth began to gain ground, whispered privately at first, but soon confirmed by many circumstances, especially his own predictions to that effect, that he had spontaneously left the tomb. The inner circle, of which Sarah was now recognized as a quasi-member, plainly declared this after a few days, and several of the disciples affirmed that they had seen, touched, and conversed with their Master alive on various occasions. He suddenly and mysteriously came and vanished, showing a semi-angelic nature; but he looked and walked and, eventually, ate just like his veritable self. He was seen in various parts of the country, but had no fixed place or visible mode of subsistence. A company of more than five hundred of his friends met him by appointment on a mountain in Galilee; and, finally, after more than a month of this desultory sojourn on earth, he took his departure by ascending bodily into the sky in the plain sight of his disciples, from the eastern slope of Olivet.

All this was carefully ascertained by Sarah and verified by the statements of numbers of his followers who had no object in deceiving her or in deluding themselves. The facts were strange, but unquestionable. His friends had mostly abandoned all their personal expectations and were barely keeping up a slight show of association together by these casual incidents; but a few of them, including his apostles, the Galilean women, and other special votaries, like Sarah, clung closely to each other, especially after his ascension, impelled by a particular promise that he had given them of a peculiar divine endowment which they should soon experience collectively. In fact, they held meetings for conference and prayer for about ten days almost continuously, the number of persons being altogether more than one hundred, assembled usually in the same upper room where the Master had celebrated his last Passover, and which belonged to one favorable to the cause. Nicodemus and Joseph likewise attended occasionally, for they were generally regarded as adherents of the Nazarene; and so great soon became their attachment that Sarah invited her brother and his wife, who had of

late become more deeply interested than ever in the fortunes of the Galilean prophet through her representations, to spend the approaching Pentecost in Jerusalem.

That day, celebrated as the anniversary of the giving of the law on Sinai, the believers in Jesus felt was likely to be signalized by an event equally memorable to them. They were all therefore duly assembled and engaged in prayer and praise. Suddenly a loud noise, as of a strong wind, was heard throughout the apartment; tongues like flame shot upward from the head of each person; and their exercises were turned into ecstatic ejaculations and rejoicings. The sound of their voices, though in varied languages which many who uttered them had never before known, was nevertheless in concert; and the strange scene soon attracted even passers-by, who gazed and listened with astonishment. The city was full of foreigners from every section of the Roman world, but all who crowded into the room recognized in the shouts and exhortations his own mother-tongue. A few of the spectators deemed the apparent confusion the effect of intoxication, so excited were the speakers and so inco-

herent or unmeaning their language to those who could not understand it; but the majority were compelled to own in it the power of God.

The event produced a tremendous sensation, leading multitudes who had hitherto been indifferent or even opposed to the Nazarene to embrace his doctrines and enroll themselves among his followers. Nor was the influence less striking upon the believers themselves. It roused their courage, animated their zeal, and gave them fervor both in spirit and in utterance. Their worldliness fell off, their listlessness disappeared, and spiritual views gave new impulse and steadiness to their aims and actions. It was the unction of the Holy Spirit which now warmed their service with filial love and consecration. The miraculous endowments which attended this inner experience were but the external symbols of a manifestation that was designed to characterize a new dispensation. Peter, the foreman of the apostolic panel, at once fired with a boldness in striking contrast with his late defection, made a stirring address to the auditors, charging home upon the priests the murder of his Master and urging

all to repentance and faith in the Nazarene. This was the baptism from on high predicted by the prophets of old, re-affirmed by John, and promised by Jesus as a seal of the organization of the true members of the kingdom of heaven. It became thenceforth their universal privilege and their badge for all time ; but the miraculous accompaniments were, after this initial bestowment, to be conferred only by the apostles' hands, and therefore were confined to their own age. Greatly misapprehended, even by professed interpreters of Scripture, it was, nevertheless, when properly viewed in its relations and design, a beautiful exemplification of the new life and liberty of the Gospel. What a pity that Christians should ever come to be inexperienced in its blessedness ! How lamentable that any should be skeptical of its reality, importance, or permanence !

In that hour Nicodemus for the first time truly understood his first lesson from the Master's lips. Like many of the present day he, with his relatives, had been lying at the pool of regeneration, waiting for a revival impulse to bear them into its cleansing and renewing

water. With Sarah, as with the more intimate acquaintances of the Teacher, the change was less obvious, but none the less profound. It absorbed her whole nature, penetrated to her inmost soul, and made her heart a perfect shrine of the indwelling Jehovah. Jesus was thenceforth her one Lord. The mystery of his divinity was fully and forever solved for her. Even Obed and Rachel were constrained to yield their remaining doubts and cast in their lot with the new converts, who before the close of the day numbered three thousand.

The infant Church enjoyed after this a short halcyon season of rest from outward opposition. The fury of the hierarchy had been measurably appeased by the death of Jesus, and his followers seemed yet too feeble to attract special public consideration. Rapidly they gained in numbers, however, and in popular favor, and the picture of their communal mode of life is charming for its simplicity and harmony. Among the converts our friends soon became conspicuous for their whole-heartedness. Being of the wealthier class, they cheerfully contributed their worldly means to-

ward the support of the many poorer members, most of whom were mere sojourners at Jerusalem far away from their usual resources, while others were reduced to destitution by the abandonment of their Jewish relatives. The miraculous cure of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate raised, indeed, a ripple of priestly persecution against them, which was swelled into quite a wave by the bold preaching of the apostles after their second release from prison; but the mild counsel of Gamaliel averted the storm for the present, and it was not till about a year subsequently to the crucifixion that a fresh and resolute champion of Pharisaism arose in the person of Saul of Tarsus, who, beginning with the official arrest and execution of the protomartyr Stephen, carried wholesale desolation into the homes of the Christians throughout the land. His hostile career was suddenly stopped by the vision on the plain of Damascus, and he became a flaming advocate of the faith which he had before despised and assailed. During the lull which followed, and prior to his assumption of public labor as an apostle, occurred a series of incidents in Palestine in connection with which it will be con-

venient to terminate this account of Nicodemus and his kindred.

The signal fate of Ananias and Sapphira induced still more of the Christian community to relinquish the whole of their property for the benefit of their less favored brethren, and our friends, among the rest, determined to follow the general example. The financial affairs of Obed had not for years been in a very flourishing condition, and he, therefore, had comparatively little to contribute to the common stock. The wealth of Nicodemus, however, was considerable, and that of Joseph still more so; but it was all gladly consecrated to the new cause, and from that time they mostly lost their influence as Jews, among whom, not less than in Gentile and modern society, money is too often the passport to favor and the synonym of worth. They had long since ceased to be treated or regarded as members of the Sanhedrim, or to be invited to any public councils of the country or city in which the Pharisaic and the Sadducaic factions had made common cause against the new sect of the Nazarenes. The children of the three families, however, were now all comfortably settled

in life, and no provision was required to meet the simple wants of our three friends and their wives beyond what the social arrangements of the Christian community afforded. Their time was exclusively and delightfully spent in ministering to the necessities of the poor members, who had now become quite an eleemosynary institution, especially the home for the widows, where Sarah and Rachel found congenial occupation. The organization of the twelve deacons did not supersede this pious task, especially as the outbreak of enmity in connection with the death of Stephen scattered the officers of the young Church and left more for less conspicuous members to do. Therefore, while Philip was preaching in Samaria and elsewhere, and Peter at Joppa and Cesarea, and Barnabas at Antioch, the hands of these aged saints were equally busy in tending the fragments of the flock at Jerusalem. Contributions, indeed, began to flow into the mother-Church from the daughter outgrowth, especially during the famine predicted by Agabus, and the same benevolent practice was kept up when the Gospel, much later, had spread to the cities of Europe. How much of the suc-

cess of the Church in every age is due to such lay labors, which, like Aaron and Hur, stay up the arms of the captain of the Lord's work!

Meantime Judea had reverted from Roman procuratorship to the Herodian family, and was ruled by a grandson, surnamed Agrippa, in connection with the northern provinces, which had remained as his patrimony. Having established his head-quarters at Jerusalem he was anxious to conciliate the priestly class predominant there, and thus readily lent himself to the persecution of the Christians. The apostles naturally became prominent marks for the royal fury, and of the three remaining at his capital James, the son of Zebedee, was soon singled out for the sword on account of his fiery zeal. The other James, being of a milder disposition, long continued as the resident bishop there. Impetuous Peter did not escape attention. He was arrested by order of Agrippa, and only awaited the coming holiday as another victim to gratify the blood-thirsty hierarchy. But prayer arose in his behalf from every Christian circle, and late on Passover eve one of these continued at the house of John Mark's mother within the city walls. Sud-

denly knocking was heard at the street door, and Rhoda, the maid, ran through the alley to listen, apprehensive of still further emissaries from the king. She was so astonished to hear Peter's voice outside that she ran back, forgetting even to unbar the door. He was soon admitted, however, and in few words related the manner of his release. A flaming angel had loosened his manacles and opened the prison door unperceived by the sentry on guard and unknown even to the two soldiers sleeping at the other ends of the chains upon his wrists. The outer prison-gate was in like manner passed, and then the great iron gate of the inner city wall, which opened of itself. He traversed the street and found his way to the well-known abode of his friends. Before morning he was safely out of the reach of his enemies. Agrippa could only punish the soldiers for their failure to produce their prisoner, but he was so vexed at the disappointment that he removed his head-quarters to Cesarea. Shortly afterward a deputation from Phenicia waited upon him to patch up a quarrel which he had got into about his jurisdiction there, and he gave them a splendid reception. They

applauded the oration which he made them from the throne as a piece of divine eloquence, and from that instant the same disgusting disease which had carried off his grandfather attacked him, and he soon died in frightful torments. Retribution overtook him speedily for his cruelty and impiety.

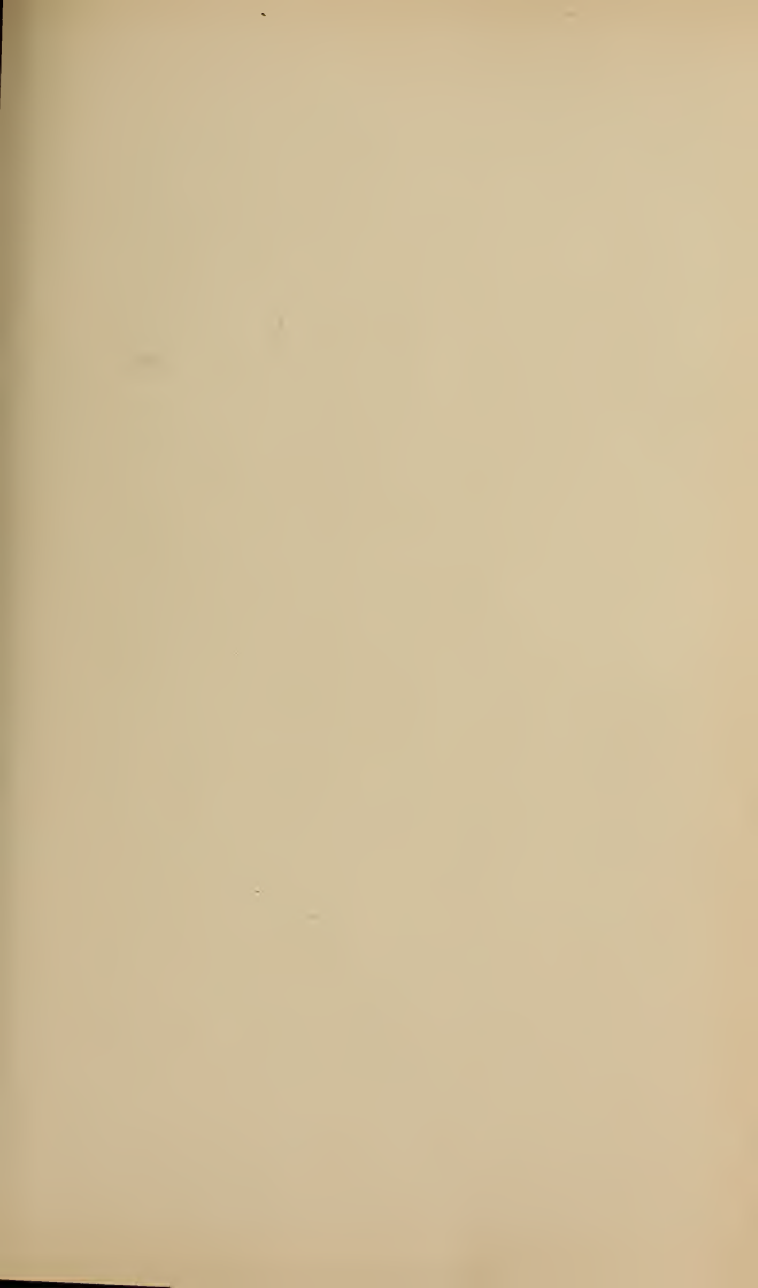
The end approaches. With the good it is always blessed. Sarah lay quietly on her couch, her hand in the faithful clasp of her husband, her eyes turned upward and her lips gently parted in silent prayer.

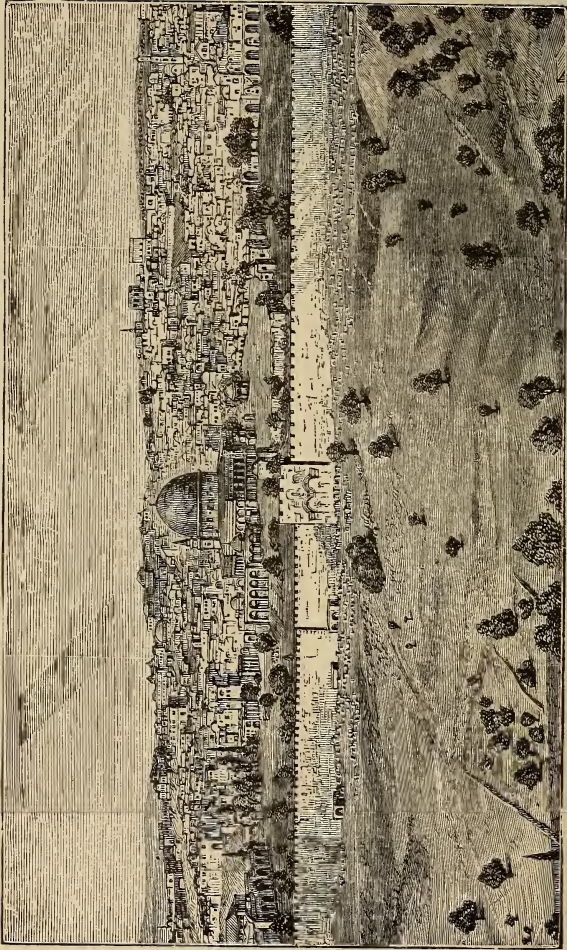
“Dost thou remember,” she faintly said, “the saintly look of the aged Anna as we stood with hands interlocked long years ago gazing upon the presentation in the temple of the Babe of Bethlehem?”

“Aye, well I recall it,” he answered softly, “and the devout words of the venerable Simeon, too, as he hailed the passport of release from earth.”

A glow of heavenly joy passed over her pale features; she murmured, “Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly!” Her head fell back; her fingers relaxed. She was gone to the better land to behold the King in his beauty. Nico-

demus tarried yet a few years this side the river; but his heart was already where his treasure had long since been stored, and he only looked for the summons to cross likewise. Without a misgiving or a regret he stepped calmly at last down into the waves; they parted at his touch, and, with words of holy triumph, he passed to the heavenly inheritance. Obed and Rachel too, in due time, came to the brink of the same stream, which all must cross, but where only the pious can discern the stepping-stones planted by earlier pilgrims in its bed. That little river, once hallowed by the consecration of the Son of God and mingled with the current of sacred history, has borne many on to the bitter waters of the sea of death; and it has bathed thousands from many lands in its sweet but turbid waves. Thanks to divine revelation, we think of it not merely as a Lethean draught of oblivion from this world's sorrows, but as a torrent rolling with the water of life from the mount of God, its banks lined with immortal verdure and dispensing gladness evermore.





JERUSALEM.

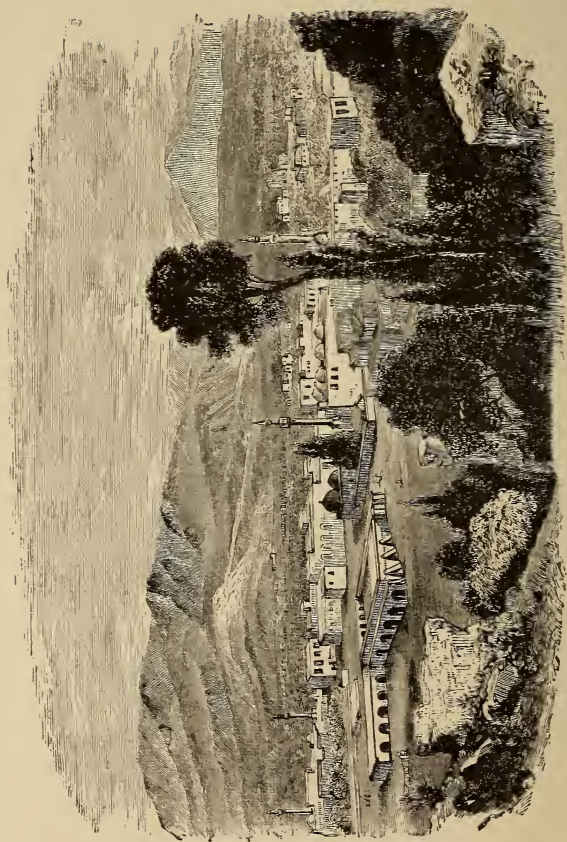
GAMALIEL;

OR,

SCENES IN THE DAYS OF SAINT PAUL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE principal facts in the life of the apostle to the Gentiles are too well known to need recital in detail. In this sketch I shall, therefore, presume upon a general familiarity with them, and only refer to them briefly and incidentally. My chief purpose is to bring out Paul's character and career as a whole, if possible, with something like the vividness of reality. In order to this it will be necessary to supply some gaps in the record of his early history, and I will resort to imaginary incidents and particulars in doing so, being careful, however, to interweave in these whatever intimations, direct or indirect, exist on the subject in the sacred narrative, and to make them agreeable to the tenor of tradition likewise. I trust that these liberties will be pardoned for the sake of the design, especially as I have not trenched upon the marvelous or extravagant. Respecting Gamaliel too little is authentically known to make his life the real theme, and I have therefore introduced him only in occasional connection with the better-understood figure who is central in the story. The positive evidence that Paul was not a bachelor turns upon a single word of his own. He says before Agrippa, referring, doubtless, to the martyrdom of Stephen, that he gave his *vote* (A. V., "voice") against the Christians. This must have been in the Sanhedrim, and none but *fathers* seem to have been eligible to membership in that body. As a further consideration we may observe that the apostle's apt and frequent reference to the relations and duties of married life, in his epistles, plainly bespeak a personal experience. His allusions to his own solitary condition do not necessarily imply a state of celibacy, but only that he had no family at the time.



TARSUS.

GAMALIEL;

OR,

SCENES IN THE DAYS OF SAINT PAUL.

IT was a quiet summer afternoon in Tarsus. The intense heat of the cloudless sun in that semitropical region had driven the natives within the covert of the houses, and all classes except the lowest peasants and laborers were waiting for the evening to enjoy their principal meal and the recreation following. The Roman soldiers almost nodded on their guard, and the city seemed lulled into repose. In one of the plain but respectable mansions of the Jewish quarter the father was plying his trade as a tent-maker, and his boy of ten years was assisting him in the lighter portions of the work. The position of the town rendered this a profitable employment, for the goats of Cilicia were famous for their long and thick coat of strong hair, which was the universal

material for tent canvas; and the caravans which transported the merchandise from the shore of Asia Minor to the interior of the East had necessarily to pass through the Cilician gates, a notch in the Amanus range at the north-eastern angle of the Mediterranean, not very far from Tarsus. The son was a bright fellow, and had mingled, to an unusual degree for one of pure Hebrew blood, with Gentile associations. He had attended the city school, had learned the stirring history of the past, especially the Greek reminiscences of the place, and had visited the neighboring spots where Alexander's great victories over the Persian hosts had been achieved. His father had received the honor of Roman citizenship for some public service, and he encouraged his son in these literary pursuits, which included the perusal of the Hellenic poets. But most of all the boy delighted in rabbinic studies, and spent much of his leisure in the peculiar lore of his nation. He had never yet seen Jerusalem, and he longed for the prescribed age to arrive when he should visit the capital of his forefathers and there be inducted into the full privileges of the Jewish Church. It

had been promised that if he were diligent in his preparatory lessons he might spend several years in completing his theological course under the direction of one of the famous teachers there ; and he was fired with the ambition of becoming himself one day a rabbi of equal renown.

“Father,” asked he, in the midst of their manual employment, “may I not begin my studies at Jerusalem when I am twelve years old? I have pretty much finished all I can learn here to advantage.”

“Yes, Saul,” replied the indulgent father; “if thou art a good boy, and gettest on well here, and completest thy knowledge of our trade sufficiently, I think thy mother will consent to thy staying over when we go up to thy first Passover there.”

It was soon settled accordingly, and the little fellow’s fingers plied the large sailor’s needle the more deftly and nimbly for the encouraging thought.

No sooner had the sun set behind the tall hills which skirt the city on the north-west than the cool but short twilight began, and the whole mass of the citizens sauntered forth

and clustered in family groups to enjoy the hour in refreshments and gossip. The school-fellows reunited for play, and quoits and ball for the more gentle, with running and wrestling for the more active, were rife on all sides, amid boisterous shouts and merry whistling.

“Come on, Saul,” said a cheery Greek lad. “Jew as thou art we want thee to make up our number at the game.”

And our young friend soon proved that he was as adept at sport as he was ready at work or study.

He was rather small for his age, but remarkably quick and energetic; and he more than made up by tact and agility what he lacked in weight and strength. His hearty spirit and generous temper made him quite a favorite, even with his Gentile acquaintances; and he had a happy faculty of availing himself of exigencies, which wore off the edge of a certain bluntness and persistency about him. All spoke well of his sturdy integrity and strict morality, however much they attributed these traits to Jewish superstition and hereditary punctilio. The lines of religious and social distinction were not drawn so closely in his

native city as in more aristocratic localities of the Roman Empire, and especially in Palestine; and prejudices on both sides were less strong and pervading. Despite his parental training, therefore, he grew up with a degree of liberality rare in a Hebrew youth; yet his intense national pride showed itself whenever his faith or traditions were made the object of criticism or the butt of ridicule. He had already had many a battle, not only of words, but of blows, too, with boys older and bigger than himself, on these points; and they had come to respect his courage as well as his skill in these encounters. He was evidently capable of taking care pretty well of himself, and his parents felt the less anxiety on this account in trusting him so far from home and so long as the above plan contemplated. They had relatives at Jerusalem, with whom he might remain while there.

The interval passed quickly, and one spring morning the father and the mother, accompanied by Saul and a couple of Hebrew servants, started on asses for the long-expected journey to the ancestral metropolis.

The route was familiar to the parents from

their frequent visits to the annual festivals, but most of it was new to the boy, and he kept up a constant chatter about its beauties.

After crossing the terminal spur of the Taurus ridge the road lay through the gorges of Upper Syria, and the party, swelled by their compatriots bound on the same errand, halted in the charming vale of Antioch, where a large accession joined their number. Thence they pursued their leisurely way through the rich valley of Cœle-Syria, and so on through Galilee and Samaria, receiving the ready hospitality of the people, and often finding acquaintances as they passed along. At length the holy city appeared in the distance, and emotions of sacred joy thrilled the breast of the neophyte, who was there to be publicly initiated into the commonwealth of Israel. The ceremonies were simple, as are all the extra-Levitical ordinances of Judaism, but they are none the less on that account impressive to the thoughtful and pious mind.

Saul was delighted beyond measure with the romantic manner in which the family partook of the paschal meal in their novel situation as sojourners. He spent every leisure

moment of the whole week in rambling over the localities of the city, familiar to him already by name and association from Scripture, from tradition and from domestic description. He was just in that stage of development, half boy and half man—for he now felt himself above childish toys and puny amusements—to enjoy to the full the splendid ritual of the temple and the magnificent sights of the Jewish capital, then in its glory, and yet not to be annoyed by care about himself or anxiety for the future. All seemed bright and lovely.

The lad and his parents were not slow in finding their way to the various schools of the city, as his education was the main thing now to be attended to. After a careful consultation they decided to put him in charge of Gamaliel, who was specially recommended to them by their most judicious friends, and whose reputation was steadily rising amid the conflict and rivalry of the chief rabbis.

Although comparatively young he was a teacher of singular sobriety and moderation. He had studied the Scriptures until he had penetrated far beyond his fellows into their intent and scope, and he discovered depths of

spiritual meaning and application in the prescriptions of the law and the pictures of the prophets which were hidden to the common eye of the formal and technical expounder. He was a thorough Jew, strict in his interpretation and legalism; but he sought a middle path in doctrine between the extreme bigotry of the Pharisees and the lax rationalism of the Sadducees, and in practice between the rash nationalism of the zealots and the complaisant worldliness of the Herodians. He insisted upon principles rather than details, and he instilled into his pupils a love of broad and far-reaching views instead of temporary and personal expedience.

The young Saul soon became a favorite with him from the youth's ingenuousness and application, and the latter speedily conceived the most profound enthusiasm for his teacher. The impressions thus made were formative of his character, and their effects appeared to his dying day.

The allotted period of instruction passed rapidly, and at the request of both teacher and pupil it was prolonged considerably, so that at its close Saul was pronounced by Gamaliel

to be one of the most proficient scholars for his age whom he had ever seen.

The condition of Judea at this time was peculiarly favorable for quiet study. Roman jurisdiction was fully established, and the comparatively peaceful reigns of both Augustus and Tiberius rendered the provinces as secure as the more central portions of the empire. The proconsuls and procurators, who had the joint or alternate charge of Syria, including Jerusalem, had not yet reached that pitch of petty tyranny which finally drove the Jewish nation into rebellion; and the remnants of native sovereignty, in the persons of some members of the Herodian family, who still held sway in Galilee and the adjoining districts, gave a semblance of independence, which went far to reconcile the people to the foreign yoke. It was not the policy of Rome to disturb the native customs and privileges of her subjects, when these did not interfere with allegiance in essential matters; and the Jews were therefore left to enjoy their peculiar faith and to carry on their hereditary, and especially their religious, pursuits unmolested. The pagan authorities cared nothing for the casuistic trifles

about which the rabbinic doctors disputed, and they were only too glad to have the hierarchal heads of the populace divided and diverted from more serious questions by these abstrusities. The temporary excitement which had been felt at the Jewish capital from the visit of the magi had long since passed away with the death of Herod himself, and so slight an incident as the recent appearance for a few days of a remarkable boy from Nazareth in the temple-school had left no permanent impression even on the minds of the rabbis, who were then present, including Gamaliel himself.

Saul pursued his biblical and talmudical studies, if we may so style them at this date, unaffected by any outward influence, and only felt regret when the time at last came that he must quit these congenial and leisurely engagements for the more earnest and secular occupations of his home. He was now a young man as Easterns reckon age; of fine though delicate personal appearance, polished and high-minded, eager to distinguish himself in whatever line duty might call or opportunity open. His parents received him back with

joyful pride. For the present it was judged best that he should occupy himself with the commercial part of his father's trade, which had grown to a lucrative business, and required considerable journeys to the neighboring marts for the disposal of his fabrics. These would give the young man at once a sight of the common world and practical tact in dealing with men. Meanwhile he could continue his course of reading during the intervals of travel. It was naturally thought that thus by the time that he should arrive at thirty years—the conventional age for the *début* of a Jewish public man—he would be well fitted to return to Jerusalem and there assume some office or position due to his talents and acquirements.

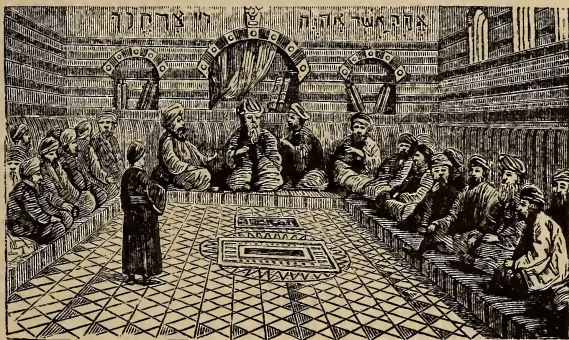
The ten years of this interval were accordingly filled with mercantile details mixed with some literary matters, but they were also marked by adventures of a more private and romantic sort, the outcome of which affected in a peculiar manner Saul's whole adult career. In one of his business visits to the sea-coast cities of the archipelago he made the acquaintance of a Jewish family, among whose members

was a daughter of great personal attractions. The usual order of things followed, and, in accordance with the Oriental custom of early marriage, the parents of both parties were easily inclined to a match which promised so well. The young couple were united, and for a twelvemonth lived most happily together. But Providence had harder fields for Saul than those of domestic bliss. A first-born for a few days gladdened his eyes, and then both mother and babe were laid together in an untimely grave. Saul's ardent and tender nature was so deeply stunned by the double blow that he was unable for a long time to give attention to his ordinary affairs, and when he at length recovered from his melancholy it was with deepened, but different, resolves for future usefulness. He had from his earliest years pondered much and often upon his interior religious state, and the teachings of Gamaliel had probably given a penetration and sobriety to these reflections unusual with a young man, especially a Jew of regular ecclesiastical standing and irreproachable morality. But he now experienced a solemnity and introspection which no rabbinism could impart. The Holy

Spirit was undoubtedly at work upon his mind and heart, operating in its first stages through his naturally sensitive conscience; so true is it that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But this is only the first lesson in the school of righteousness. The *love* of the Lord, as the Old Testament plainly teaches, is its highest attainment. At present, like the young man in the gospels, Saul felt that he lacked something essential yet. In the pungency and thoroughness of his heart-searchings during this season of bereavement and gloom he discovered that, despite his outward conformity to the law of God, his heart had many rebellions and repinings which were far from compatible with the spiritual reach and profound import of that code. His experience was a sad, but luminous, commentary upon the decalogue. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in him all manner of desire;" he "saw another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members." He found himself "carnal, sold under sin;" and inwardly cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this

death?" His very conscientiousness only added to the intensity of his mental conflict. In despair of any other mode of relief, he now determined to renounce the world of pleasure, which had so bitterly disappointed him, and to consecrate himself to the cause of religion with redoubled fervor and exclusiveness. He thus hoped to satisfy his convictions of duty and calm the tumult in his soul. His was but the common mistake of asceticism as a remedy for moral dyspepsia. The prescribed age of his public majority had arrived, and, with the full consent of his parents, who hoped in this way to arouse him to activity again, he took leave of Tarsus and presented himself at Jerusalem as a candidate for ecclesiastical labor and renown. He was not of the Aaronic or Levitical lineage, and therefore could be of no use in the temple services; but his education and experience pointed him out as likely to be available for the instruction of youth and other religious work. Events had recently occurred at the Jewish capital during his long absence which called for his aid, and he was speedily elected a member of the Sanhedrim and intrusted with various commissions of an ecclesiastical char-

acter. His neophyte partisanship was especially enlisted against the new sect of the Nazarenes, whose leader, he learned, had been ignominiously executed as a political incendiary a few months before, but which had lately sprung up with renewed persistency under the prestige of certain miraculous powers with which his followers claimed to be endowed.



SANHEDRIM.

He determined that he would achieve distinction in rooting out this compound of insurrectionism and heresy, and he hoped that in this task he should find rest for his troubled conscience. He would work out his salvation, and he fancied he saw his vocation in this disinterested labor. He was not the first nor the

last to seek relief from the convictions of inward sin in acts of external devotion. Surely it was doing God service to suppress this vile imposture. He would even stifle the natural emotions of pity and steel himself to any deed of rigor necessary to accomplish the meritorious purpose. Humanity were a fit sacrifice to divinity. Ah, Saul! as little dost thou know of what spirit thou really art as the apostles whom thou now persecutest did when they would call down lightning from heaven upon schismatics. Elijah might do this to ward off a military force, but he was himself instructed that Deity dwelt not in such consuming fire. Gamaliel was unfortunately absent at the time of our young bigot's arrival in Jerusalem, and the milder counsel which he had recently given with regard to the treatment of the leaders of the new movement had been forgotten in the blind fury of ecclesiastical zeal. A perverted conscience is the worst of all advisers, and there is scarcely any crime that has not been committed under pretense of saving the Church from danger.

An opportunity was soon afforded Saul to exhibit his enthusiasm. The martyrdom of Stephen brings him prominently into public

view as first voting for the condemnation of the prisoner before the bar of the Sanhedrim and then rushing out with the mob and encouraging them in the execution of the sentence. Like a tiger maddened with the first taste of blood he followed up this fleshing of his maiden sword with a wholesale determination of slaughter. After exhausting the list of known abettors of the new faction in Jerusalem and its vicinity he hies on a similar errand to the largest city near the route to his own home, not dreaming that he is pursuing a course for which in the end he will never be able to forgive himself. But God has mercy upon many who act ignorantly through unbelief, else none would find repentance ; and the same love that prayed upon the cross for its murderers arrested him in his headlong career. The conversion of any one is a miracle of grace, and that of Saul on the plain of Damascus was only more striking in its outward circumstances. Strong natures require forceful treatment, and minds constituted like his demand direct evidence. He yielded to the first clear presentation of the Saviour, and his surrender was as complete as it was sudden. The

crisis was sharp but decisive, and the translation from the kingdom of darkness to that of God's dear Son was equally rapid and permanent. We can, therefore, well understand how, after the long-continued cry of legal despair, "Who shall deliver me?" he should immediately exclaim, upon the healing touch of Ananias, with such abruptness, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He had found peace in believing on the crucified Nazarene. Henceforth there was no doubt about his mission; he was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus to the Gentile world, and for this all his previous training had been providential.

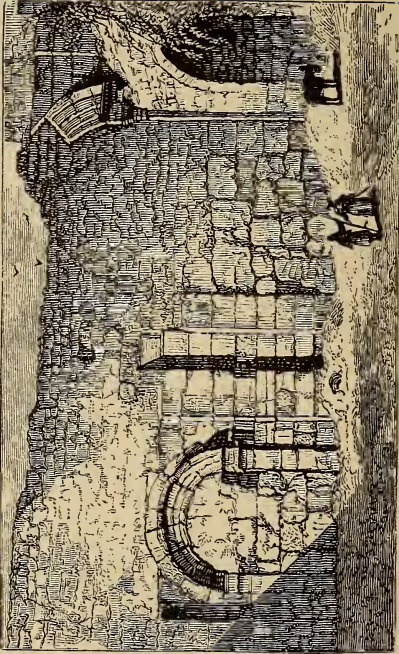
Saul lost no time in beginning his work; he was already in a Gentile city, and with the ardor of a young convert he proclaimed to all the joy of his salvation. The Christians whom he had come to destroy were now his delight, and the Jewish synagogues, to which he bore letters of introduction for a very different purpose, were his field of preaching. Talented and educated, enthusiastic and divinely called though he was, yet he soon found a special drill needful for his high commission. The other apostles had enjoyed for three years the



DAMASCUS.

benefit of their Master's personal instructions, and it was proper that he who was destined to be not a whit behind any of them should have a similar season of direct revelation, which should include the facts as well as the doctrines of the Gospel. He would thus be prepared to promulgate the truth on no second-hand authority, and, although born out of due time, be placed by miraculous communication on a level with the original eye-witnesses. Accordingly, in the silent wilds of Sinai, where Moses had tended his sheep and whither Elijah had retired for closer communion with Jehovah, Saul spent his novitiate, pondering, like these representatives of the law and the prophets, the deep problems of God's dealings with his people, and drawing inspiration from the pure air of heaven and the unsophisticated scenes of nature. There, where the decalogue had been given, he thrice held alone his Pentecost as its anniversary in a fresh baptism of light and power from on high as a champion of the dispensation of the Spirit. Gamaliel's tuition was merged in the lessons of the great Teacher to that solitary disciple. He came forth at length, with no parchments of earth; to write his cre-

dentials with the divine finger, not on tables of stone, but on human hearts. He returned direct to Damascus and recommenced preaching so earnestly and powerfully as to excite the hostility of the Jews, who induced the Arab sheik then temporarily occupying the city to take measures for his apprehension. The gates were watched and the town searched to discover him; but his Christian friends secreted him in a house adjoining the city wall, and by night he was lowered in a basket from a balcony window that projected outside. He repaired to Jerusalem, where Peter and James the Less were the only apostles resident at the time; and after Barnabas, who had learned the facts of his conversion, had dissipated the suspicions of the Christian society regarding him, he fearlessly proclaimed his newly found faith, especially to the foreign Jews. He still continued his worship at the temple, however, and on one occasion while there he fell into an ecstasy which quite overcame his physical powers. In his raptured swoon he seemed to be transported to heaven, and experienced a vision of ineffable delight, the glorified Jesus again appearing to him and renewing his mission to the Gentiles.



EAST GATE OF DAMASCUS.

His freshly fired zeal provoked his countrymen to such violent opposition that his friends were again compelled to convey him away for safety. He took passage from Cesarea for Tarsus; but even there enmity awaited him. His relatives refused to receive him, calling him an apostate from Judaism, and heaped the most dreadful curses on his head. He had incurred the loss of all things temporal, but he counted it clear gain for the sake of his Lord. It left him all the more free for his sacred work. His trade remained as a means of subsistence, and he cheerfully, nay, joyfully, betook himself to preaching gratuitously as the business of his future life. Single-handed, he immediately entered upon a series of evangelistic toils in his native region, which for the next ten years exposed him to the most severe privations and the most fearful dangers. The elements of nature and the malice and treachery of men combined in vain to stop his progress and damp his ardor. It is in this interval that we must place his own formidable catalogue of disasters, hardships, and persecutions, deducting only those which we know occurred elsewhere. He was "in labors more abundant, in

stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times he received forty stripes save one. Thrice was he beaten with rods; thrice he suffered shipwreck, a night and a day he was in the deep." We might work up quite a tale of adventure from these and the associated items had we space. But none of these trials and sufferings daunted him for a moment; they only served to attach him more closely to the cause he had espoused and to inure him to still more self-sacrificing exertions in its behalf. He was assured that the divine Master whom he served would carry him triumphantly through to the end and enable him to plant the cross in still more distant lands.

We now approach the main portion of the apostle's public career, where we have a consecutive narrative by an intelligent companion to guide us, and we have, therefore, only to interject the information supplied by his own writings. Our special plan, nevertheless, would not be so well subserved by a continuation of his history directly and in full, which may be found in every professed text-book on his life, as by a side-view through some of his co-

laborers and spiritual children, one of the most important of whom we will introduce for this purpose as soon as he appears upon the stage of action.

By sporadic labors such as we have just reviewed Christianity had now become planted in many of the prominent points along the Syrian coast, but with the exception of Cæsarea and Samaria it had been confined to the Jewish population. At Antioch, however, which was a noted center of intercourse, some of the converts from the extreme limits, such as Cyrene and Cyprus, began to preach the Gospel among the natives, or Gentiles, likewise, and with such success as to attract the attention of the mother-Church at Jerusalem to their unofficial proceedings. Barnabas was accordingly dispatched to supervise these operations, and he was so much gratified with their genuineness that he sent for his friend Saul from Tarsus to aid him in carrying them forward, and for a year they labored together in the revival there most harmoniously and efficiently. The infant society thus formed at Antioch was soon able to repay their obligations by a pecuniary contribution to their

brethren in Judea, who were especially impoverished by a dearth at this time ; and Barnabas and Saul, now publicly recognized as colleagues of the apostles, were the delegates to convey it to Jerusalem. Not long after their return they were formally consecrated as missionaries at a solemn church meeting, and started on their first tour. It was naturally directed first to the large island of Cyprus adjacent, of which Barnabas was a native, and thence to the main-land of Asia Minor, opposite. We pass over the incidents on the way, and find them striking boldly up into the interior, Saul taking the lead from his natural energy, and being henceforth known as Paul, a Roman name which he had probably borne from boyhood among his Gentile acquaintances. The missionaries at first availed themselves of the synagogue privileges to preach to the Jewish congregations, but they soon aroused opposition, which compelled them to betake themselves to Gentile auditors, and finally chased them with murderous fury from town to town.

The great central plateau of Asia Minor was occupied by heathen tribes, some of them

natives, as in Phrygia, others immigrants from distant quarters, as in Galatia, but all of them tinctured with Greek habits and superstitions, especially Lycaonia, a wild region, where mythical tales of appearances of the gods in human form were rife. At Lystra, a small town of this last-named district, there was living a family which strikingly illustrates the mixed state of society. The father was a pagan, but the mother had been carefully trained in the Mosaic precepts by the pious grandmother, and a son, of delicate constitution and gentle susceptibilities, had shared these female instructions, but was not a member of the Jewish Church. One day in the autumn the youth heard loud huzzahs in the street, and, running to the town gate, he found a large procession headed by the priest of Jupiter, who was leading oxen garlanded for victims to the temple, and escorting two strangers, whom the crowd were evidently honoring. One was a venerable man of noble appearance, whom they had mistaken for Jupiter himself, and the other was younger, of slight form and voluble manner, whom they were addressing as Mercury, the messenger of their gods. The

two, however, were protesting in foreign accent against the whole proceeding, which the crowd in the barbarous idiom of the country had great difficulty in making intelligible to them. Presently he saw a number of persons coming from a different direction, whom he easily recognized as Jews, and a violent altercation ensued between the three parties. Inquiring of a by-stander what was the matter, he learned that the two strangers had just cured a confirmed cripple instantly. In a few minutes he saw the new-comers seize them, and, with the aid of some of the populace, began to throw stones at them, especially at the younger of the two, who was soon knocked senseless, and then dragged out of the town for dead. The young man followed with excited interest and joined the little circle that had gathered about the apparently lifeless body as the crowd dispersed. The wounded and bleeding stranger, however, suddenly arose, seemingly well, and walked away. Young Timothy's sympathies for the persecuted Paul now deepened into reverence, and he invited him to his own home. The visit was that of an angel to the household, and

when the apostle departed the next day a spiritual friendship had been formed between the two which ever after led them to think and speak of each other as father and son. On the return of the missionaries a few days later the youth's name was enrolled among the members of the Christian brotherhood. They departed by the same route homeward, and he remained a pillar in that little Church.

About the same time the next year Paul revisited the region in company with Silas, who bore the canons of the first council at Jerusalem, and the Christian societies of the neighborhood were fully organized. Timothy, young as he was, received an appointment as the apostle's assistant, and was formally ordained as such by the hands of his senior fellow-members, having first submitted to the rite of circumcision out of respect to the prejudices of the Jews. We will allow him to tell a portion of the sequel in a supposed letter to his friends at home :

“After leaving you we three traveled together northward and westward through Galatia and Phrygia, establishing Christian communities in the former province especially. I

was enabled to be a great comfort to Paul, who was for a time seriously indisposed. Our desire was to pursue our way to the important Greek cities on the coast of the Ægean, but on reaching Mysia we were prevented by an impulse which we felt to be divine from turning either to the left or the right, and so pushed on directly to the north-western shore, where Troy anciently stood. Here Paul had a vision in a dream, which explained these singular leadings of Providence; a man seemed to him to stand on the opposite side of the sea and beckon for help. We inferred that we were to preach the Gospel in Europe, and accordingly took passage direct for Macedonia, accompanied by the physician Luke, who had now joined our party. Landing at Neapolis, we proceeded to Philippi, the principal city adjacent, which you will remember from the days of the triumvirs as possessing Roman privileges. As usual, we first sought out the Jewish brethren, whom we found in a prayer-chapel near the river, and a pious lady soon opened her purple-dyeing factory for our accommodation as a preaching-place. But a crazy slave-girl used to meet us on our way to

the room, and one day Paul cured her in the name of his Master. Her owners, who were making a fortune out of her insane ravings as Pythonic oracles, were greatly incensed, and, seizing Paul and Silas as the principal parties, charged them before the magistrates with being incendiary innovators. A crowd soon gathered, at whose suggestion the prisoners were summarily beaten and then thrust into the inner dungeon and their feet fastened in the stocks. But a midnight earthquake set them free and brought the jailer to his knees for divine mercy. He was converted with all his family; and the officers who had illegally beaten the prisoners were glad to treat them civilly. The Gospel has triumphed. Paul and Silas joyfully continued their journey through Macedonia, leaving Luke and me to follow leisurely and gather up the fruits of their preaching. I joined them at Thessalonica, where they had great success for three weeks, until the Jews raised an uproar, and our host had to go bail for our good behavior. At Berea similar scenes were enacted, and Paul concluded to sail away alone for Athens. Silas remained to care for the new converts,



ATHENS RESTORED.

while I went back to Thessalonica to care for those there. We all joined Paul here in Corinth, where he had already made the acquaintance of a devout Jew and his wife recently from Rome. Paul preached first in the synagogue and afterward in a private house adjoining, where many persons have been converted, including some of influence, both Jews and Gentiles. I send this by the bearer of an epistle to the Church at Thessalonica, as I am unable to leave yet."

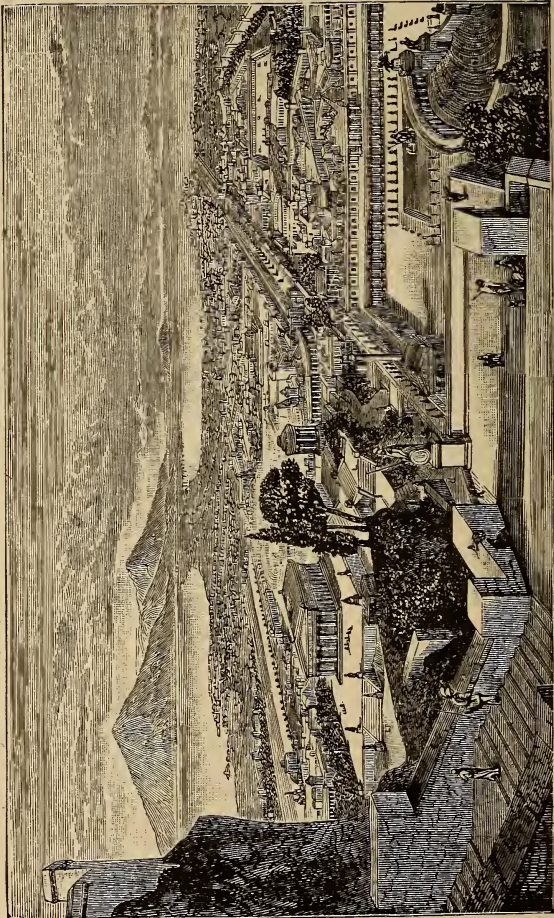
At a subsequent date we may presume Timothy to have written home from the same place to the following effect :

"The Jews have made a disturbance here also, but the Roman proconsul had too much good sense to notice them, and he even allowed the populace to beat the newly appointed synagogue-ruler publicly in revenge. A large society has now been gathered, although its elements are rather incongruous, and some of the Gentile members are not so well indoctrinated as could be wished. We are shortly to sail for Ephesus with our Roman friends, the Jew and Jewess, and I expect to return home thence, while Paul goes on to Jerusalem to attend the

Pentecost festival. I send this by the bearer of a second epistle to the Church at Thessalonica."

A short stay at Antioch sufficed the unwearied Paul, and he then started on his longest and last recorded tour. The newly planted churches in the interior of Asia Minor were again his first care, and thence he took Timothy along with him to complete the programme which had been so remarkably prevented on his preceding journey. Ephesus, as the chief city of the proconsular or Greek coast, was naturally his principal point, and he found the work there singularly prepared for his hand by one of the most notable, but through his own modesty least noted, of the early Christian evangelists. Apollos was an eloquent and probably learned pupil of the Jewish school at Alexandria, and had embraced the preliminary doctrines of the Baptist, but knew no more of the Gospel. His fervent zeal, however, led him to preach earnestly as far as he knew, and he had gathered a dozen disciples in Ephesus before the arrival of the Roman Jew and Jewess who had accompanied Paul from Corinth. These two

soon perceived his lack of acquaintance with the deeper things of the Gospel, and with characteristic candor he readily embraced the full truth from their plain but experienced lips, as they had themselves received it direct from Paul. Apollos himself went on to Corinth, and there re-enforced the work already begun by the missionaries, leaving his own field at Ephesus to be cultivated by his humble teachers there. The coming of Paul with apostolical gifts was the signal for a powerful revival, which for three years required the incessant labors of the apostle and his assistants, a letter being sent back during this time to the churches of Galatia, which showed symptoms of apostatizing to Judaism under the influence of false teachers who had followed in Paul's wake. The uproar raised at the Pan-Ionic festival of Diana compelled him at length to sail across into Macedonia, whither Timothy had already preceded him, on the way to Corinth. The Church in this latter place, notwithstanding, and, indeed, to some extent because of the visit of Apollos, had during Paul's absence fallen into serious disputes and even immoralities, and Titus was



CORINTH RESTORED.

dispatched from Ephesus as the bearer of an apostolic letter in reply to one just now received touching these and kindred points. Paul's language was deservedly severe, but his tender heart misgave him for the result, and he had no peace until Titus, on his return, met him on his arrival in Macedonia with the tidings of its good effect, and he poured out his fatherly soul in a second letter, which reveals at the same time his playful simplicity. Timothy meanwhile had also rejoined him, and the whole party proceeded leisurely, visiting the various churches on their route and remaining three months in Corinth. The letter to the Romans, a masterpiece of theology too often misinterpreted, is due to this interval, and discloses the far-reaching plans of the apostle as to his future labors. Jewish plots prevented his sailing direct from Corinth for Syria, and he returned by way of Macedonia with Timothy, and his other associates, including Luke, who rejoined them at Philippi, apparently having been detailed on special errands in the long interim. At Troas, Miletus, Tyre, and Cesarea touching incidents occurred on the way, all ominous of catastrophe awaiting Paul at Jerusalem ; but

he went steadily on, carrying with him the purse made up by the Gentile churches for the poor saints at the metropolis of Judaism. The romantic rather than tragic adventures which there and in consequence befell him need not here be recited. Had he not taken the pusillanimous advice of his friends he would not have exposed himself to arrest in the temple; but his shrewdness in asserting his rights as a Roman citizen saved him from scourging, and finally gave him a free passage to the capital which he had long wished to visit. The same ready wit appears in his setting the Sanhedrim by the ears when attempting to try him, and in defeating the conspiracy for his assassination. The perfidy of man and the fury of the elements were baffled, the greed of Felix and the tyranny of Nero were eluded, and the Gospel was planted in the center of the world, and even in their perial household, by the solitary preaching of an obscure prisoner from a foreign and despised land. The letters which he there subscribed with a chained hand are an invaluable legacy to the Church, and also display many fine touches of the apostle's life and character. We pass over the exciting inci-

dents of his apprehension and detention and the interesting particulars of his shipwreck, which are told by Luke with the graphic power of a skillful eye-witness. Paul survived to carry out substantially the scheme of travel which he had many years before marked out. Let us gather together the scattered intimations of his last labors and accompany him to the final scene.

It is evident that as soon as his case was reached on the imperial docket on his first imprisonment he was speedily released. The writ of commitment was frivolous on its face, and no prosecutors appeared. Nearly all his companions had been dismissed. Luke seems to have gone first, probably on some errand to the churches of Macedonia, and to have returned after a considerable interval. The fruit of his journey may have been the substantial gift in replenishment of Paul's straitened means, sent from Philippi through Epaphroditus, and acknowledged in a letter carried back by the latter after he had recovered from a severe attack of the Roman fever. Tychicus had meanwhile been commissioned to carry to the Ephesians a circular epistle, to be exchanged

at Laodicea with one of kindred contents, addressed to the Church at Colossæ. Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon in the latter place, having been converted under Paul's preaching in Rome, was sent back, perhaps in charge of Tychicus, to his master with an apologetic letter. Timothy had early joined his beloved teacher, and had been detained for a long time, probably as a witness; but finally seems to have been discharged as not needed for that purpose, and to have been sent to Jerusalem as the bearer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which Luke most likely employed his leisure hours in composing under the direction and authority of the apostle. Mark, too, by some means found his way to Rome, and perhaps went back with Timothy to Asia Minor by way of Jerusalem. Aristarchus, and possibly some others, remained with Paul to the last. The apostle's route, when at length set at liberty, is largely conjectural. Tradition affirms that he fulfilled his purpose of visiting Spain (some say, even Britain), and if so he probably went on from Rome, as was most convenient, and as he had long before expressed his desire to do. In his letters last cited above, however,

he indicates an immediate intention of retracing his way to Jerusalem, and thence to the churches of Asia Minor. We only know that at some time he returned to Macedonia by way of Ephesus, leaving Timothy in charge of the latter place, and that he visited Crete, probably during this trip, planting churches there, which he left in charge of Titus. Having spent the following winter at Nicopolis in Macedonia, he was there joined by Titus, Zenas, and Apollos. Tychicus had meantime rejoined him, and had perhaps been sent to Crete in order to relieve Titus prior to the apostle's letter to the latter there. The last notices of Paul's travels show that he probably went on to Corinth once more, and returned by way of Troas and Miletus. He was seized during the great Neronian persecution as a prominent member of the proscribed Christian sect, probably soon after reaching Ephesus. His treatment this time at Rome was rigorous, his trial speedy, and his first hearing ominous of condemnation. Many of his friends forsook him, such as Demas, who had stood by him in his former imprisonment. Others had necessarily gone to various fields of labor, as Crescens to Galatia, and

Titus to Dalmatia. Timothy was again left in charge of Ephesus, and Tychicus was dispatched to him with the request to hasten to the imprisoned apostle with Mark. Luke only was Paul's companion, and his lonely cell was cold and damp with the approach of winter. Onesiphorus of Ephesus had cheered him with substantial comforts in his dungeon, as he had often done at home. If the place of the apostle's incarceration were, as tradition reports, the old Mamertine Prison, his physical condition must have been doleful in the extreme. It is a double pit or cistern, one below the other, dark and accessible only by a narrow man-hole at the top, through which food and drink were let down to the inmate, if, indeed, like Jugurtha, he were not left to perish by starvation. A chain bound him to the naked stone wall; and thus we may imagine the aged Paul writing by a wretched lamp or torch on the hard floor his last letter to the beloved Timothy. He had need, indeed, of portmanteau and parchments to beguile the tedious hours!

But he was neither sad nor complaining in his dungeon. The light of the other world dawned brightly upon his soul, and the crown of mar-

tyrdom was just above his head. His words of triumph thrill us like the shout of a successful runner or a victor on the battle-field: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my race!" For years he had lived with a desire to depart, and now his highest hopes are about to be gratified. Not in brief vision only, but in perpetual verity, will he be with his glorified Lord. His spirit kindles with intrepid joy at the prospect of the descending ax; he is "ready to be offered." From the spots where his severed head shall roll living springs will gush to commemorate him to distant times and peoples. The heart of the believer is ever young; it is immortal. The life-drops may be spilled upon the earth, but they shall quicken again in a harvest of beauty and blessedness. Sublime old man! thy pen is a scepter and thy stone bed a throne. Thou art superior by divine strength to all human contingencies; for well art thou persuaded that all things are thine. A momentary pang shall soon introduce thee to an eternity of joy.

THE END.

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