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B.S.

BIBLE
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS,

ILLUSTRATED,

IN A PLAIN AND FAMILIAR MANNER,

FROM THE

OBSERVATIONS OF TRAVELLERS IN THE EAST.

DESIGNED CHIEFLY

FOR THE YOUNG, AND FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

BY E. MALTBY.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,

**ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.**

1840.



LONDON :
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

P R E F A C E.

THE publication of the fourth part of "Bible Manners, &c.," which completes the volume, has been unavoidably delayed by the death of the Author, while engaged in preparing it for the press ; and in offering it at length to the public, the editor, to whom the charge of finishing it was bequeathed, regrets the disadvantage under which it labours, in having been entrusted to one so much less competent to the task.

As religious sentiments carry double weight when known to be the genuine expression of a sincere heart, it may not be amiss to observe, that the pious feelings which it was the Author's desire to impart to others, were her own consolation and stay, during the trials

of a very varied life, and in the solemn prospect of approaching death. She died in faith, not trusting in "any works of righteousness which she had done," but in a firm and entire reliance on the all-sufficient merits of her Redeemer.

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PART I.

BY E. MALTBY.

LONDON:

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ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
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1839.

TEIGNMOUTH :
PRINTED BY EDWARD CROYDON.

PREFACE.

It is not surprising that in reading so old a book as the Bible, containing the history of people living in a country and climate very different from our own, we should meet with many things, relating both to the country and its inhabitants, which we cannot understand without assistance.

We are indebted for a great deal of information on these subjects, to travellers who have visited the Holy Land, and the countries bordering on it. Their accounts of the present state of manners and customs among the Eastern nations, are particularly interesting, as they serve to explain those of former times; and it is extraordinary to observe, how little they have changed, since the days when Abraham entertained

his heavenly guests, under the tree near his tent, with "Butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed."

These accounts are also valuable to us as proofs of the truth of the Bible ; and we may humbly suppose it to have been ordained by the Almighty for this purpose, that, while the manners and customs of the inhabitants of other parts of the world are constantly changing, those of the East have remained almost unaltered since the earliest times.

But many persons have neither much time for reading, nor the means and opportunity of procuring many books ; and they may therefore be glad to find some of the particulars, which will be most useful in assisting them to understand the Bible, selected from the works of the principal travellers in the East.

It is true that this is not the most important part of the study of the Holy Scriptures, our faith should rest on higher ground, but nothing can be unworthy our attention which relates to the word of God, or serves to make it better understood.

Should this little volume fall under the notice of any of the Authors, from whose works quotations are made, it is hoped that they will pardon the liberty, which has been occasionally taken, of altering their language, in order, by simplifying it, to render the Illustrations perfectly intelligible, to all classes of readers.

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BOOKS.

WE read in Isaiah viii. 1. "Take thee a great roll, and write in it," and in Ezekiel ii. 9. 10. "And when I looked, behold a hand was sent unto me, and, lo, a roll of a book was therein, and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without."

Paper such as we now use, made of linen or cotton rags, and printing, were not invented for more than 2000 years after the time in which Isaiah and Ezekiel lived, and the books mentioned in the Bible were very different from those we are used to see. Instead of being flat and thick, they were a long, narrow strip, usually of parchment, or prepared leather, fastened at both ends to a piece of wood or ivory, round which the book was rolled when not in use, in the same way that we roll silk or ribbon on a wooden block or roller; and for this reason it is called the "roll of a book" or, "a roll."

A traveller* describes seeing some very ancient books of this sort in a monastery in Greece. After quoting the passage from Ezekiel, which has already been mentioned, he says, "In the monastery I observed two very beautiful rolls of this description; they contained the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, and that attributed by the Greeks to St. James, You begin to

* *Rev. J. Hartley.*

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read by unrolling, and you continue to read and to unroll till at last you arrive at the stick to which the roll is fastened. Then you turn the parchment round and continue to read on the other side, rolling it gradually up till you complete the Liturgy." Thus it was written within and without.

In Luke, iv. 17. we read that the "Book of the Prophet Isaiah" was given to our Saviour to read in the Synagogue, and that "He opened the book" it might perhaps have been better translated, he unfolded or unrolled the book, which was no doubt, of the sort just described; some of the Jews still use such rolls in their synagogues; each book of the Bible was on a separate parchment or roll.

The ancient Egyptians sometimes used long strips of linen covered with wax to write on; but the most celebrated thing employed formerly for this purpose, was the Papyrus or "paper reed" mentioned Isaiah xix. 7. from which our word, paper, is taken. This reed or rush grows in great quantities on the banks of the river Nile in Egypt, and is supposed to be the same as the bulrushes used by the mother of Moses, to make the ark or basket in which she laid him "in the flags by the river's brink." (Exod. ii. 3.) The "vessels of bulrushes" mentioned by Isaiah, xviii. 2. were boats made of this reed, and the way in which the ancient Egyptians are said to have made these boats, viz. by weaving the reeds together, and then

daubing them over with slime and pitch, agrees exactly with the description of the manner, in which the ark of bulrushes was prepared to float on the river with Moses.

The papyrus grows to about the height of ten feet, and has a long grassy looking tuft at the end of its stalk, which is slender. The part used for paper was the inner bark; this was peeled off with great care, and divided into narrow strips of the length required for the book; these strips were then laid side by side, with one edge folding a little over the other, till they formed as wide a sheet as was wished for; and then other strips were laid across the first, to strengthen them and keep them together. Some very curious old books made in this way, are still to be seen in Museums or collections of curiosities, but it is difficult to open or unroll them, as they easily break to pieces.

Another material for writing on is mentioned Luke i. 63. When the friends of Zacharias had assembled to circumcise the child, who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, they made signs to his father how he would have him called; and he asked (by signs) for a writing-table, and wrote saying, "his name is John." In some parts of the East we are told that "it is still usual for School-boys to have a small clean board, on which the master writes the Alphabet, or any other lesson he intends his Scholars to read. As soon as one lesson is finished the writing

is washed out, or scraped out, and the board may thus be continually employed for writing new lessons. Not only does this instrument agree in its use with the writing tables mentioned Luke, i. 63. but the Greeks call it by the very same name.”*

The prophet Jeremiah xvii. 13. compares the wicked to a writing in the dust, which is effaced or destroyed in a moment. “O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.” This passage most probably refers to a custom which is still observed in some eastern countries, of using a board covered with sand, for writing such things on, as were soon to be effaced ; or the ground is sometimes sprinkled with fine sand for the same purpose ; which may explain our Saviour’s writing on the ground, as described, John viii. 8.

There appears to have been an ancient custom of carving or graving sentences on the rocks. Job says, xix. 23. “Oh that my words were written ! Oh that they were printed in a book ! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever ! For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

**Hartley.*

Travellers have described some of these writings on the rocks in Arabia, the very country in which it is supposed that Job lived. Speaking of the mountains near Sinai, a traveller* says, "These mountains are called Gebel-el-Mokatteb, that is, the written mountains; for as soon as we quitted the mountain of Faran, we passed along others during a whole hour, which were covered with writings in letters we were not acquainted with, carved in these hard rocks of Marble, to a height which was in some places from ten to twelve feet above the surface of the ground; and though we had among us men who understood the Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Latin, Turkish, German, Bohemian and English languages, there was not one of us who had the slightest knowledge of the letters engraved on these hard rocks, with the greatest labor, in a country where there is nothing to be had to eat or drink; so that it is probable these writings were sculptured in these rocks by the Chaldeans, or some other persons, long before the birth of Christ."

We have here an instance that "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God." Job wished his words to be graven "on the rock," that they might be preserved "for ever." But though the writings on the mountains of Gebel-el-Mokatteb still remain, after hundreds and hundreds of years with their rains and

**Laborde.*

storms have passed over them, they are of no use, they cannot be read even by the learned ; the language to which they belong, like those who spoke it, is passed away. But the word of God "shall not pass away," (Mat. xxiv. 35.) and though written on perishable materials, and exposed to dangers of all sorts, it has been preserved unaltered and uninjured, from generation to generation by his Almighty protection, to be the comfort of his people, when the writings on the rock are no longer understood.

The office of Scribe, or writer, was very important in Ancient times, and is so still in countries in which all books, laws, and royal proclamations are written with the hand ; we find the Scribes constantly mentioned in the Old Testament among the princes and great men of the country. (Jer. xxxvi. 12.) (2 Sam. viii. 17.) Being much employed in writing out the Law of Moses, they were supposed to be well acquainted with it, and were consulted in all difficult cases ; so that by degrees they became doctors or teachers of the Law, or "Lawyers," as they are frequently called in the New Testament, where we find them constantly reproached, together with the Pharisees, for their pride and hypocrisy. Instead of practicing and teaching "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth," they prided themselves on the strictness with which they attended to trifling outward observances of their own invention, or which

they had received from former Jewish teachers; these were sometimes even in opposition to the commandments of God, which they thus made "of none effect" by their traditions. As Christ tells his disciples that, unless their righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven, (Matt. v. 20.) we shall do well to examine what this righteousness was, and we shall find it what we are all very much inclined to fall into; making our religion consist in an attention to outward ordinances, to what we call our religious duties, instead of going to the root of the evil, praying for "a clean heart," a "right spirit," (Ps. li. 10.) and striving after that inward "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14.) How many people think they are sure of going to heaven, because they spend two or three hours in Church on Sunday, read a few pages of their Bible, and sometimes receive the sacrament; but God is not in their thoughts at other times, they do not make his word the rule of their conduct, and they take little or no pains to subdue their bad tempers and evil dispositions. "These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Luke, xi. 42.)

The "pen of the Scribe" (Jer. viii. 8.) was not such a pen as we are accustomed to employ, made of a bird's feather, but a short strong reed, which

is still used in writing the eastern languages ; it is cut into the same shape as our pens, except that the nib is broader and is cut slanting.

The "writer's ink-horn" mentioned Ez. ix. 2. is still worn "at his side," as a mark of his office, by every writer and secretary, among the Turks, Arabs, and Persians. It is a narrow box, long enough to hold the pens, ink, and a pen-knife; and is fastened by a hook to the sash or girdle.

In eastern nations the servants, or rather the slaves, used formerly to be marked on the forehead with the name of their master, which is alluded to in verse 4th. of the same chapter, and in several parts of the Revelations, as vii. 3.—xiv. 9.—ix. 4. The mark was made with ink, and it is still the custom to seal in this way in the east. They make the impression of their name with their seal, generally of cornelian, which they wear on their finger, (the signet referred to Jer. xxii. 24.) it is blackened with ink when they have occasion to seal or stamp with it.

Books are frequently spoken of in the Bible in a figurative sense. The "Book of remembrance" refers to the custom of writing or recording in a book, all remarkable events that were worth remembering. Ahasuerus, king of Persia, had given his consent that all the Jews in his dominions should be put to death, according to the plan devised by his wicked minister Haman, for satisfying his malice

against Mordecai, who was a Jew, as we read in the book of Esther. Before this dreadful slaughter took place, he was one night very restless and not being able to sleep, ordered his attendants "to bring the book of records of the Chronicles," and to read to him in order to make the night seem less tedious. This book bringing to his remembrance that his life had been saved by a Jew named Mordecai, the king enquired whether he had ever been rewarded for the service he had done him ; and in consequence, Mordecai was treated with the highest dignity, as "The Man whom the King delighted to honor." (Est. iii.) This will explain the meaning of the prophet Malachi, in the following passage "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and *a book of remembrance*, was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name." (Mal. iii. 16.) Not that the All-wise God, who knew every thing that each of us would think or do, before the foundation of the world, needs to have our words written down in a book that he may remember them, but he taught His servants the prophets, to use such language as would be best understood by those for whom they wrote ; and blessed indeed is the assurance that, unworthy as the very best of our services must be, even the thoughts and words of "them that fear the Lord" are kept in remembrance by him.

The "Book of Life" refers to another ancient custom. In all large cities a book was kept in which the names of the inhabitants were written; and as soon as any one died, or was turned out of the city, in consequence of his ill conduct, his name was blotted out of the book of life (Rev. iii. 5.) or of the living. It must have been an awful thought for an offender against the laws of his country, that his name was no longer to be found among the living, that he was considered as dead; but inexpressibly more awful will it be for the offender against the laws of God, in that day, when "the dead small and great stand before God, and the books are opened," and "whosoever is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 12. 15.)

It will readily be believed that books were very scarce and expensive in former days, when each was written with the hand, with great labour and trouble, instead of hundreds of copies of a work being printed off at once. The humblest persons among us in the present day, have luxuries and comforts which would have delighted kings and queens formerly; one of our commonest sheets of paper would have been considered a treasure, at a time when all sorts of contrivances were used to supply the want of it; and such little books as are now given to amuse children, would have been worth a large sum of money.

But above all we have reason to be most thank-

ful, that the Book of books the Bible, may now be had for a small sum by every one who desires to read it. Printing was invented about the year 1430, that is, about 408 years ago. At that time the Bible was very little read even by the clergy, who, like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, had made the Word of God of none effect through their traditions, and taught the "commandments of men," the Popes of Rome, in preference to those of God. The common people could not have read it, even if they had been allowed to do so, because it was in a language they did not understand; The Roman Catholic was then the general religion, and the Roman Catholic clergy have always forbidden the people to read the Bible, for fear they should find out how little it agrees with many things they teach. At last a pious and learned man named Luther, applied himself diligently to the study of the Bible, and found the doctrine of the Gospel, Salvation through Christ, so different from the religion then taught, that he became anxious to make known "the truth as it is in Jesus," (Ephes. iv. 21.) that others as well as himself might become "wise unto salvation," (2 Tim. iii. 15.) He did all that he could for this purpose by writing and preaching, at the great risk of his life; for the Pope and the Roman Catholic clergy tried to seize him, that they might put him to death, because he exposed their false doctrine and bad lives. But God gave him courage, like

St. Paul, not to count his life dear unto himself (Acts, xx. 24.) in the great work of preaching the Gospel.

This was what is called the reformation; because the Christian religion which had become altered and corrupted by the Popes of Rome, was then reformed or restored to what it was when the Apostles taught it; and those who professed the reformed religion were called Protestants, because they protested or declared they would no longer submit to be governed in religion by the Pope.

As soon as the Protestant religion was introduced into England, and the value of the Bible was understood, learned men set themselves with great diligence, to the business of translating it into the English language, so that every one might be able to read it; but as books were still too dear for any but the rich to have them, it was ordered that a large Bible should be placed on a desk, to which it was fastened with a chain, in every church, and the churches were kept constantly open, that the people might go in when they pleased. We are told that the delight of the people, at being able to hear or read the scriptures in their own language was so great, that crowds flocked to the churches, and that many very old persons learned to read, that they might not be obliged to depend upon others, for becoming acquainted with the word of God.

When Queen Elizabeth, our first protestant queen,

came to the throne, very great rejoicings were made, and every thing possible was thought of to please her, when she entered London for her coronation. Among other marks of honor, triumphal arches were erected in some of the streets, and as she passed under one of these, a boy, who was meant to represent Truth descending from Heaven, was let down from the arch with a bible in his hand, which he presented to the Queen. We are told that Elizabeth received the book in the most gracious manner, placed it next her bosom, and declared that among all the splendid, expensive presents she had received that day from the city, as a proof of its attachment to her, this present was by far the most precious and acceptable.

Since that time, now nearly three hundred years ago, every one in England has been allowed and encouraged to study the Bible ; and pious men, desirous of being "Labourers together with God," (1 Cor. iii. 9.) in bringing about the time when "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Heb. ii. 14.) have caused it to be translated into every known language, and are constantly sending it by missionaries, into the most distant parts of the world, "To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace." (Luke, i. 79.)

A very excellent writer* says, "We are so accus-
* *Erskine on the Freeness of the Gospel.*

tomed to the sight of a Bible that it ceases to be a miracle to us. It is printed just like other books, and so we are apt to forget that it is not just like other books. But there is nothing in the world like it, or comparable with it. The sun in the firmament is nothing to it,—if it be really what it assumes to be—an actual communication from God to man. Take up your Bible with this idea, and look at it, and wonder at it. It is a treasure of unspeakable value to you, for it contains a special message of love and tender mercy from God to your soul. Do you wish to converse with God? Open it and read. And at the same time, look to him who speaks to you in it, and ask Him to give you an understanding heart, that you may not read in vain; but that the word may be in you, as seed in good ground, bringing forth fruit unto eternal life. The best advice which one friend can give to another is that he should consult God; and the best turn that any book can do to its reader, is to refer him to the Bible.”

The following lines are printed in the beginning of a very old copy of the Bible.

OF THE INCOMPARABLE TREASURE OF
THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

- Isai. xii. 3.—xlix. 10. Here is the Spring where waters flow,
Rev. xxi. 6.—xxii. 1. To quench our heat of sin ;
Rev. ii. 7.—xxii. 2. Here is the Tree where Truth doth grow
Ps. cxix. 160. To lead our lives therein.
- Jer. xxxiii, 15. Here is the judge that stints the strife
Ps. cxix. 143. 144. When men's devices fail.
- John, vi. 35. Here is the bread that feeds the life
That death cannot assail.
- Luke. ii. 10, The tidings of salvation dear
Come to our ears from hence ;
The fortress of our faith is here,
And shield of our defence.
- Ephes. vi. 16.
- Matt. vi. 22. Read not this book in any case,
But with a single eye ;
- Ps. cxix. 27. 73. Read not but first desire God's grace
To understand thereby.
- Jude, xx. Pray still in faith with this respect,
To fructify therein ;
- Ps. cxix. 144. That knowledge may bring this effect,
To mortify thy sin.
- Josh. i. 7. Then happy thou in all thy life,
Ps. i. 1. 2. Whatso to thee befalls ;
Rev. xiv. 13. Yea, doubly happy shalt thou be,
When God by death thee calls.

HOUSE-TOPS.

When we read (Acts x. 9.) that "Peter went up upon the house top to pray," we naturally think of the way in which our houses are built, and it then seems very strange that any one should choose such a place for prayer. But the houses in hot climates are built on a very different plan from ours; they are not nearly so high as those in our large towns, the roofs are quite flat, and are surrounded with a parapet or low wall, intended merely for safety. We find, (Deut. xxii. 8.) among the regulations Moses gave the Jews, by God's command, "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement (or low wall) for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon the house if any man fall from thence."

A traveller* describing Bagdad, a large eastern city, says, "The houses consist of ranges of apartments opening into a court within the building; rooms underground, are occupied during the day for shelter from the heat which is intense, and the open terraces on the flat roofs, are used for the evening meal and for sleeping on at night; these terraces are sometimes divided into separate compartments, each having its own staircase, and forming so many unroofed

**Buckingham.*

A staircase which leads to the roof is made outside the house; and this explains what our Saviour meant, when, after telling his disciples that large armies would come to besiege Jerusalem, and recommending them to make their escape out of the city, as soon as the troubles began, He said, "Then let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house," but go down by the outer staircase and so into the street at once, which would be the quickest way. It also accounts for the friends of the paralytic man being able to carry him to the roof, when they could not get in at the door of the house for the crowd. A clergyman* who was for some time a missionary in the East, makes some very interesting observations relating to this history. He says; "When I lived in Ægina, I used to look up not unfrequently at the roof above my head, and contemplate how easily the whole transaction might take place. The roof was made in the following manner; a layer of reeds of a large species was placed upon the rafters, on these a quantity of heather was strewed; on the heather, earth was deposited, and beaten down into a solid mass. Now what difficulty would there be in removing first the earth, next the heather, and then the reeds; nor would the difficulty be increased, if the earth had a pavement of tiling laid upon it. No inconvenience could result to the persons in the

**Rev. J. Hartley.*

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house, from the removal of the tiles and earth ; for the heather and reeds would stop any thing that might otherwise fall down, and would be removed last of all."

The same clergyman also explains a passage in the prophet Isaiah, describing the state of a city on a sudden alarm. He says, "It is customary in Turkey on every alarm of fire, for all persons instantly to go to the top of the house, in order from that height to discover the direction in which the fire has made its appearance. Very frequently the cry, "Fire!" startles the sleeping inhabitants of a town from their slumbers, and gives a practical illustration of the Scriptural language, Why art thou "wholly gone up to the house-tops." (Isaiah, xxii. 1.)

It is still the custom in the East, as it was formerly, for people to carry on much of the business of their families, on the flat roofs of their houses; such as drying linen and flowers, and preparing figs and raisins, which make a great part of their food; here likewise they meet to talk with their friends in the cool of the evening; and they choose it as a quiet place for prayer.

A traveller* who visited the holy land a few years ago says, that when he went to Joppa, (now called Jaffa,) he was received very kindly by a gentleman, who assured him that his house stood exactly on the same spot as that which was inhabited by Simon the

** Visit to Palestine and Lebanon.*

tanner, when St. Peter was lodging with him; and a piece of an old wall was pointed out to him as part of Simon's house. The traveller says, Before I laid down to sleep, I went out upon the house-top, to enjoy my own thoughts. The night was delicious, the moon and stars shone with a splendor, unknown in our misty climate, and no sound was heard but that of the waters breaking gently over the rocks, which form the little harbor of Jaffa. What a crowd of thoughts passed through my mind! I could scarcely believe the reality of the fact, that I was in that land whose wonderful story affords, year after year, fresh interest to those who love to study the scriptures; that I was in that country which has become sacred to us as the birth-place of our Redeemer, who was both God and man; and that perhaps I then stood on the very spot where the vision appeared to St. Peter, declaring that God no longer made any distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles, and that the Saviour who was the glory of Israel, was also to be a light to lighten the heathen with the knowledge of Gospel truth.

The difference between the state of England at the time of our Saviour's birth, and at the present time came forcibly before him. It was then inhabited by naked, miserable savages, who did not know the one true God, but thought to please the idols they worshipped, by offering them sacrifices of men, women,

and children, whom they burnt alive. It is now the most favoured nation of the earth, blessed with the knowledge of true religion, and honored by being made the instrument of the Almighty to bear the glad tidings of salvation, to the most distant parts of the earth. May we never shew by our lives, that we disregard those high privileges ; nor by our sins, provoke the Almighty to take them from us.

LEPROSY.

We meet with frequent mention in the Bible of the Leprosy, a terrible disease which, happily for us, is now hardly known in this part of the world, though formerly there were many hospitals for it in every country in Europe; and the building which is now St. James's Palace in London, where so many of our kings and queens have lived and held their court, was once a hospital for lepers. In those days people had not found out, how much their health depended on keeping themselves, and every thing about them, clean and fresh, or at any rate they forgot to practice it, as is still the case with some persons.

The leprosy we are told, (Lev. xiii. 2.) began with spots, swellings, and roughness in the skin; these by degrees ate into the flesh and spread over the whole body, till it was in a most miserable and disgusting state, and the hair, as well as the skin, became perfectly white. The disease was so infectious, or easily caught, that as soon as the priest decided that a person was afflicted with it, his clothes were rent or torn according to the law, (as a sign of distress,) his head was uncovered, and he was obliged to leave his family, friends, and every human creature, and live quite by himself, unless he should meet with some

fellow sufferers, as was the case with the lepers mentioned in 2 Kings, vii. 3. and the ten who went to Christ to be healed. (Luke, xvii, 12.) This was not the case with the lower orders of the people only; for in 2 Chron. xxvi. there is an instance of a king of Judah, Uzziah, being afflicted with the leprosy, and it is mentioned that he lived in a "several house," or a house separate from any one else, and that his son governed the kingdom instead of him. This separation from his fellow creatures, did not even end with his life; for we read (verse 23,) that he was buried "in the *field* of burial, which belonged to the kings, for they said, he is a léper;" and therefore he could not be buried in the sepulchres, in which the bodies of the kings were usually placed.

It has been supposed that the Israelites first took the leprosy from the Egyptians, when they were in bondage in Egypt; and this appears very probable, as there is no mention of such a complaint among them before that time, and the Egyptians are known to have suffered from it; however this may be, the leprosy of the Jews was no doubt, one of the inflictions employed by the Almighty for the punishment of sin; and those afflicted with it were considered unclean, in order to represent the pollution or uncleanness of the soul from sin. For this reason, when Uzziah was smitten with leprosy, as a punishment for his presumption in wishing to burn incense in the Temple,

as soon as the priests saw that "he was leprous in the forehead, they thrust him out thence," because nothing unclean could be admitted into so holy a place as the temple.

When the sick person considered himself recovered, he went to shew himself to the priest, as he could not return to his family, until he had received permission from him to do so; and he had then to go through many ceremonies and purifications, (Lev. xiv.) which were meant as types, or representations, of the purifying or cleansing of the soul from sin, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ.

In eastern countries (and among the negroes in the West Indies,) where the weather is very hot, and the lower orders of the people are miserably poor and dirty, they still suffer dreadfully from leprosy; and a gentleman* who was travelling in India, gives an account of a poor creature he saw with this complaint, which recalls the discription of Gehazi, when he was punished for telling a lie, by becoming "a leper as white as snqw." (2 Kings, v.) From this description of the disease, we may judge how God detests lying, since he inflicted so dreadful a punishment on it. The traveller says, "One evening as I was strolling along the sea shore, I saw such an extraordinary object before me, that I could not take my eyes off it. A man was coming towards me, whose only clothing,

* *Caunter.*

(like that of all the lower orders of India,) was a piece of cloth wrapped round the body from the waist downwards. His skin was perfectly white, and it seemed glazed as if seared with a hot iron. His head was uncovered, and his hair, which was of precisely the same color as the skin, hung down in long strips upon his lean and withered shoulders. His eyes except the eyeballs, were of a dull murky red, and he kept them fixed upon the ground, as if it were painful to him to look up, which I found to be the case. He walked slowly and feebly, and he was so frightfully thin, that he seemed to stand before me a living skeleton. He did not at first venture to come within several yards of me ; I moved towards him, but he walked back further from me, beseeching me to give the smallest trifle to a miserable man, to save him from starving to death, as he was an object of universal scorn, and an outcast from his home and friends. He told me not to come near a polluted creature, against whom every ones hand was raised, and for whom no one felt pity. I asked him the reason of his extraordinary appearance ; he told me he had during many years, suffered dreadfully from the leprosy, and though he was now cured, it had left upon him these marks of pollution, which would prevent his ever being allowed to go near his fellow creatures again. The very color of his skin was changed to a sickly corpse-like white, and none could mistake that he had been a leper."

The people of India are still Idolators ; and the contrast between the cruelty of idolatry, and the merciful, benevolent spirit of Christianity, cannot be more forcibly shewn, than by the fact, that those poor diseased creatures for whom Christians build hospitals, are in India burnt alive by their own relations. An English gentleman who was once present at the dreadful scene, gives the following account of it. The relatives of the wretched man had dug a deep pit, and had kindled a large fire at the bottom of it, when the leper, unable to walk, rolled himself over and over, until he fell into the pit. But as soon as he felt the power of the flames, his screams became dreadful, and he made every effort to escape, calling to his relations who stood round to help him. But he called to them in vain, for, instead of giving him the help he asked for, they pushed him back into the fire, where he struggled for a while and perished.

How can we be sufficiently thankful for having been "made to differ" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) by Divine teaching, from those who practise such horrors !

TENTS.

In the beginning of the 18th Chapter of Genesis, we have the description of a way of living, so very different from our own, that it will surprise many persons to find, that a large part of the inhabitants of the same country, in which Abraham lived more than three thousand years ago, are still living in tents, as he did ; that they shew the same sort of hospitality, or kindness, to strangers, and, like the Patriarch of old, have large flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and many camels.

We find from the history of Abraham in the Bible, that the reason of his leading a wandering life, was the command he received from God to leave his own country, and go to another land which he did not know, but which God promised to give to his descendants ; and this was the land of Canaan, of which the Israelites, (Abraham's descendants) took possession when they came out of Egypt. Abraham himself was not allowed to have any possession in this land, not even room to build a house ; but he was to shew his faith, or trust in God's promise, by his obedience, viz. by being content to live in it as a stranger and pilgrim, or wanderer ; not sowing fields or planting vineyards, but moving about from place to place as God commanded, or as he found convenient and necessary.

This was a very great proof of submission to the will of God, for Abraham was most probably a great person in his own country, and had many friends there ; and from the description travellers even now give of Ur of the Chaldees, it must have been a very delightful place to dwell in, besides being Abraham's native place ; the situation is very agreeable, the climate is delightful, and most of the finest sorts of grain, fruit, and flowers, grow there in abundance. But Abraham was content to give up all these things at the command of God, and for this reason, as well as for his faith, he is held up as a pattern to all ages. We are told in the 11th Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that christians should, like Abraham, consider themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, and look for "a better country, that is a Heavenly."

But very few of the inhabitants of the Holy Land in the present day, are either Jews or Christians ; it was conquered about twelve hundred years ago, by a fierce people whose religion is called the Mahomedan ; they believe in one God, but consider our Saviour only as a prophet, and pay the highest respect to a false prophet of their own, a man named Mahomet, who pretended that he was sent by God, to instruct them in religion from a book called the Koran, which is full of lies and silly stories, but written in a way suited to the taste of the people for whom it was intended.

The eastern countries are not thickly inhabited like England; the towns and villages are not near together as they are with us, and all the land is not divided among so many owners, who have a right to prevent any one from trespassing on it. There are but few towns, and these are generally very poor, and at great distances from one another; and the country between them, is chiefly inhabited by wandering tribes of Arabs and Turcomans, who pitch their tents wherever they can find water and grass, for their numerous flocks and herds; and when these are consumed they move to a fresh place.

These Arabs are the descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael, of whom it was foretold, (Gen. xvi. 12,) "He will be a wild man, his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him;" and this is exactly their character at the present day.

They could not endure the restraint of living in houses and cultivating the land; but they, as well as the Turcomans, are bold horsemen, plundering travellers, and living on such food as their flocks and herds afford them. They, however, sometimes shew great hospitality to strangers; and when once they have promised to protect those whom they receive into their tents as friends, they may always be trusted. An English traveller* in Mesopotamia, gives the following description of the manner in which he was

* *Buckingham.*

received in a Turcoman tent, on his way to Orfah, which is supposed to be the "Ur" of the Bible. "This great plain," (over which he was travelling) "was under the direction of the Sheik, (or Lord) who pitched his tent at different periods, near all the villages and wells of his territory in succession. When we alighted at his tent door, our horses were taken from us by his son, a young man well dressed in a scarlet cloth benish, (a sort of waistcoat) and a silk shawl for a turban. The Sheik, his father, was sitting beneath the awning in front of the tent itself, and when we entered, he rose up to receive us, exchanging the salute of welcome, and not seating himself till all his guests were accommodated. The tent occupied a space of about thirty feet square, and was formed by one large awning, supported by twenty-four small poles in four rows of six each, the end of the awning being drawn out by cords fastened to pegs in the ground. Each of the poles giving a pointed form to the part of the awning which it supported, the outside looked like a number of umbrella tops. Half of this square was open in front and at the sides, having two rows of poles clear, and the third row was closed by a reeded partition, behind which was the apartment for the females, surrounded entirely by the same kind of matting."—"The Sheik, whose name was Ramadam, was a fine looking old man of eighty, with a long beard of silvery white. His divan, (a kind of low sofa, on

which the people in the eastern countries sit instead of chairs,) was spread with mats and cushions covered with silk ; his dress and arms were plain, yet of the best qualities of their kind ; before his tent were two fine mares, well saddled and bridled, and every thing about his establishment had an appearance of wealth and comfort. Some of our fellow-travellers seeing us, stopped as they passed, alighted likewise, and took their seats without invitation, all being received with the same welcome salute, until the party amounted to twenty-six in number. While we were talking of the Turcomans who had alarmed us on our way, a meal was preparing within, and soon afterwards, warm cakes baked on the hearth, cream, honey, butter, dried raisins, curds, and wheat boiled in milk were served to the company. Neither the Sheik nor any of his family partook with us, but stood around to wait upon their guests, though among those who sat down to eat, were two Indian fakirs or beggars, a christian pilgrim from Jerusalem, and the slaves and servants of Hadjee Abd-el-Rakhman, all dipping their fingers into the same dish. Coffee was served to us in gilded china cups and silver stands, and the pipes of the Sheik and his son were filled and offered to those who had none. The reception we met with, exactly answered to the picture of the most ancient manners, of which we have any particular account. When the three Angels are said to have appeared to Abraham in the

plains of Mamre, he is represented as sitting at the door of the tent in the heat of the day. "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him, and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away I pray thee from thy servant, let a little water I pray you be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes on the hearth. And he took butter and milk and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, behold, in the tent. And he said I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door which was behind him." The form of Abraham's tent, as thus described, seems to have been exactly like the one in which we sat; for in both there was a shaded open front, in which he could sit in the heat of the day, and yet be seen far off; and the apartment of the females where Sarah was, when he said she was *within* the tent, was

immediately *behind* this, in which she prepared the meal for the guests, and from whence she listened to their prophetic declarations" (or promises.)

The tents of the Arabs of the Desert are made of a dark, coarse kind of cloth, woven by the women from the hair which the camels shed every year. These dark colored tents are alluded to, in several parts of the Bible; the cloth of which they are made is so thick, that it is scarcely possible for the heaviest rain to penetrate it. The plan of fastening the tents to the ground with cords, and pegs, or stakes, explains a beautiful passage in Isaiah. After foretelling what our Saviour would do and suffer for us, the prophet breaks out into a triumphant song of praise, and describes the increase that would take place, in the number of those who form the true, spiritual, church of Christ, by comparing the children or church of Christ to a family living in a tent, as the Jews were accustomed to see people live; and as if the increased number of the family made their tent too small for them, he says, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation, spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes," or pegs (Isai. liv. 2.)

It was with one of the pegs for fastening the tents that Jael killed Sisera, as we read in Judges iv. 21. She took "a nail of the tent," and "smote the nail into his temples."

Every one knows that the Israelites lived in tents, while they were wandering for forty years in the wilderness ; the feast of Tabernacles, or tents, mentioned Lev. xxiii. 34. was instituted to remind their descendants of this circumstance, that they might to the latest times, thank God, for the wonderful manner in which he had delivered their forefathers from slavery in Egypt ; as well as to signify to them that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.

Jerusalem must have looked very beautiful during this feast ; it took place in the finest season of the year, after the vintage and harvest were concluded, and we may hope that a feeling of love and gratitude for the rich gifts of the fruits of the earth, warmed the hearts of the people, as they travelled in large family parties, through their fine fertile country to Jerusalem, where the feast was held ; and that as they instructed their children by the way, according to God's command, (Ex. xiii. 14.) in the reasons for observing this festival, they did not forget to remind them also, that it was "He" who "gave them the rain from heaven, and filled their hearts with food and gladness." (Acts. xiv. 17.) Every one carried with him an offering, however small, from the produce of the land ; and we may fancy with what care pious children, and those who had nothing better to give, would raise a few sweet flowers to present in the temple, as an offering to the merciful God, who looks

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to the heart of the giver, and not to the value of the gift.

Tents were formed of the boughs of trees on the flat roofs of the houses, (which have been already described) and in the streets, and in these the people lived for the first seven days of the feast; they must almost have concealed the houses, so that the magnificent Temple, which stood on a high hill, must have looked as if it rose from a grove or garden.

The following interesting account, of the way in which this feast is still celebrated by the Jews in Algiers, is given by an English traveller;* "At the end of last week was concluded a great festival of the Jews, which is celebrated here with more joyousness than in Europe. It is a feast—so I was told by one of the Rabbins—in commemoration of the passage of their forefathers through the wilderness.

On the flat roofs of their houses they make arbors with boughs of trees, and there, by candle-light, they sup for seven evenings following, on the best food they can afford, dressed out, men, women, and children, in all the silks, brocade and finery they can collect.

From a terrace that commands a glorious view of the country for fifty miles round, I have looked with pleasure for several evenings on the feasting children of Israel. The lights through the green boughs shew every dish that is on their table, and even their dresses and countenances."

* *Campbel.*

We find the word tabernacle, or tent, frequently used in the Psalms to denote a place of worship; as, "Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle," or tent. (Psal. xv. 1.) "We will go into his tabernacle." (Ps. cxxxii. 7.) This arose from the circumstance of a tent being employed, as a sort of moveable Church for the Israelites, while they were in the wilderness. This tent, or tabernacle, and the sacred things belonging to it, were carried by the Levites when they were travelling. (Num. i, 51.) After the temple was built, there was no longer any occasion for a tent for public worship.

The word tabernacle, or tent, is also employed in the new testament, to denote our mortal bodies, which are only poor, uncertain abodes for our immortal souls; though by the care people take to dress them up and ornament them, while they neglect the care of their souls, it would seem as if they thought them the most important of the two.

St. Paul says, (2 Cor. v. 1.) "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" by which he meant to say, I feel perfectly sure, that although this body, which is formed of the dust of the earth, (Gen. ii. 7.) and is fit only to be compared to a tent set up for a short time, shall be restored to the dust from which it was taken; God will raise it up again at the last day, as superior to its present state,

as a fine building is to a poor humble tent; and that it will never die again, but dwell eternally with God and Christ in Heaven.

RECHABITES.

The 35th Chapter of Jeremiah, gives an account of a set of people called Rechabites, who kept to the simple manners and customs of the early patriarchs, long after the Jews, among whom they lived, had grown luxurious and proud; and it is very interesting to find, that the descendants of these people, are at this very time living in the same way as their forefathers did, when Jeremiah wrote his account of them, more than two thousand years ago.

It seems that a man named Jonadab, the son of Rechab, had left a command to his children, and their children after them, never to drink wine, build houses, cultivate fields, nor possess land; but he desired that they would continue to live in tents, and to be satisfied with the most simple food.

It is not known who Rechab was, or at what time he lived, but he is supposed to have been a descendant from Moses' father-in-law Jethro, who is said to have separated himself from the rest of his countrymen, the Midianites, and to have dwelt among the people of Israel. Jonadab was most probably the same person as Jehonadab the son of Rechab, mentioned 2 Kings x. 15. who went to meet Jehu, and accompanied him to the temple of Baal, when he killed

the idolators. This proves him to have been a person zealous for the honor of God, or Jehu would not have asked him to go with him at such a time; and the orders he gave to his children shew, that, like a good father, he was less concerned for their growing rich and great, than for their leading sober, virtuous lives, which he thought more likely to be the case, if they kept to the simple country life they were used to, than if they went to live amidst the luxury and dissipation of large cities, which are so apt to corrupt the morals, and lead to misery at last, though for a time they may seem very delightful.

The Rechabites obeyed their father's commands, and continued to inhabit the country, until the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judea, when they found it would not be safe for them to wander about with their flocks, exposed to the cruel treatment they might meet with from foreign soldiers; and, accordingly, they went into Jerusalem for protection while the war lasted.

Every one who reads the Bible, knows how disobedient the Jews were to God's commands, and that the wars carried on against them were allowed by God, as a punishment for their sins; the prophet Jeremiah, who lived at the time when Nebuchadnezzar was destroying their cities, and laying waste their country, was constantly directed by the Almighty to remind them of their duty; and on one of these

occasions he was told to set the Rechabites before them, as an example of obedience to the commands of their Heavenly Father.

Accordingly, he sent for the Rechabites to a chamber in the temple, where most probably many of the principal men among the Jews were assembled ; and he set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine and cups, and said unto them, "Drink ye wine ;" but not one of them would do it, though we may suppose that many of them were quite young, and would have liked wine, and good things to eat and drink, as well as other people, had they not liked their duty better. They said "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever ; neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any ; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents, that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters ; nor to build houses for us to dwell in, neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed ; but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our Father commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up unto the land, that we said,

Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the Army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the Army of the Syrians, so we dwell at Jerusalem.”

After reproaching the Jews with the contrast between this instance of obedience to an earthly parent, and their own conduct, Jeremiah was commanded to say to the Rechabites, “Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab, the son of Rechab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all he hath commanded you; therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.”

I have already said that this happened more than two thousand years ago; we will now hear about the Rechabites of the present day.

Among the numerous travellers who have lately visited the Holy Land and the neighbouring countries, is the celebrated Joseph Wolff; he was by birth a Jew, but was converted to Christianity when quite young, and feeling deeply the blessing of salvation, through Christ, he is very anxious to persuade the Jews, his “brethren according to the flesh,” as St. Paul calls them, (Rom. ix. 3.) that Jesus Christ was the Messiah promised by God and foretold by the prophets. For this purpose he goes into all countries where Jews are to be met with, and explains the Bible

to such as will listen to him. Being well acquainted with the Scriptures, he knew the promise that was made to the Rechabites, and frequently asked about them when he was travelling in the Holy Land ; at last he met with one of them, and this is the account he gives of it.

“On my arrival at Jalooha, I saw Jews wandering about among the Arabs, and believing them to be Rechabites on account of their wandering about in the desert, I asked them the question, they answered No, but here is one who comes from the deserts of Mecca.

I saw a man standing before me, with the wild look and dress of an Arab, holding his horse's bridle in his hand. I shewed him the Bible, both in Hebrew and Arabic, he read both languages, and was rejoiced to see the Bible : he was not acquainted with the New Testament,

After having proclaimed to him the tidings of salvation, and made him a present of the Hebrew and Arabic Bibles and Testaments, I asked him, Whose descendant are you ? Mousa, (this was his name,) said with a loud voice, Come, and I will shew you ; he then opened the Bible at the 35th Chapter of Jeremiah, and began to read from the 5th to the 11th verse.

I asked, where do you live ?

Referring to Genesis. x. 27. he replied, at Hadoram, now called Samar by the Arabs, at Usal, now called

Sanaa by the Arabs, and (Gen. x. 30.) at Mesha, now called Mecca, in the deserts around those places. We drink no wine, and plant no vineyard, and sow no seed, and live in tents as Jonadab our Father commanded us ; Hobab, (the son of Jethro) was our Father too ; come to us, you will still find Sixty Thousand in number, and you see thus the prophecy has been fulfilled, "Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."

Saying this, Mousa mounted his horse and galloped off, leaving me more convinced than ever of the truth of the Scriptures."

What a lesson of obedience may not we of the present day, as well as the Jews of old, learn from the example of the Rechabites !

If we needed any proof that God will keep his promise to a thousand generations, we have it here, both as respects punishment and reward. The Jews were disobedient, and the threatening of God has been fulfilled, that they should be scattered as strangers and exiles over the whole world ; and the saying of the Psalmist, (Ps. cvii. 34.) "A fruitful land maketh he barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein," is exactly suited to the present state of Judea, which was once a rich fertile country, but is now a barren waste.

In the Rechabites on the other hand, we see that

the rewards promised by God are equally sure ; and that as He visits "the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him," so, He shews "mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments ;" for, the Rechabites who had neither arms nor strong towns to protect them, have been preserved in the midst of wars and desolations, which have destroyed whole nations.

Another lesson we may learn from the history of this people is, that the good instructions of a pious man, may prove a blessing to his descendants, for hundreds of generations.

The Rechabites are the descendants of the Midianites, who all sprung from Midian, one of Abraham's sons by his wife Keturah ; we may therefore suppose, judging by the good conduct of this family, that in their instance, the pious admonitions, and good example of their great ancestor Abraham, had been handed down through Hobab and Rechab, generation after generation ; for we read, (Gen. xviii. 19.) that the Almighty said of Abraham, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.

THE HORN.

We often meet with the word Horn in the Bible, used in a way which is difficult to be understood. David says, (Ps. xcii. 9.) "My horn shall be exalted." "Lift not up your horn on high," (Ps. lxxv. 5.) These expressions most probably refer to a custom of which we have the following account from Bruce, who travelled a great deal in Abyssinia, a country of Africa, near Egypt. "There is something remarkable in the head-dress of the governors of provinces in Abyssinia. A large broad band is bound upon their foreheads, and tied behind the head ; In the middle of this is a horn, or piece of silver gilt about four inches long in the shape of our common candle extinguishers ; this is called kirn or horn, and is only worn in reviews or parade after victory. This I imagine, like all their customs, is taken from the Jews, and there seem to be several allusions to the same practice in Scripture, where mention is made of exalting or lifting up the horn." Another traveller* describes seeing the same thing in the Holy Land. "Nothing particular happened during our return to Zahle, except that we passed some women on horseback wearing the Tantor, that extraordinary ornament of the head worn

* *Visit to Palestine and Lebanon.*

by the Druse females. It is a horn of silver, or of copper, silvered over, according to the wealth of the wearer, a foot and half, or two feet in length, springing from the top of the forehead, like the horn of an unicorn, and adorned with raised figures of stars, animals and a variety of patterns. Over this hangs a drapery of white muslin, by means of which the wearer can conceal her face at pleasure, (according to the custom of those countries.) This horn is fixed upon a cushion fastened on the head in such a clumsy, troublesome way, that it is sometimes not taken off for a month together."

"In another part of the country this ornament is made in a different shape, like two large wine funnels joined together. This is put on so as to stand out straight, over the left ear, and upon it the drapery of the veil is arranged."

This ornament is described in the following way by another writer.* "One of the most extraordinary parts of the attire of these females is a silver horn, sometimes studded with jewels, worn on their heads in various positions, distinguishing their condition. A married woman has it fastened on the right side of her head, a widow on the left, and a single woman is pointed out by its being placed on the very crown. Over this silver horn the long veil is thrown, with which they so completely conceal their faces, as rarely to leave more than one eye visible.

**Mc' Michael.*

It would be difficult for any one wearing such a heavy thing on the head, not to hold it in a stiff way, which would give a proud, consequential appearance, and therefore induced David after he had said "Set not up your horn on high," to add, "And speak not with a stiff neck." "

All those who read the Bible with attention must know that it was the custom of the sacred writers, frequently to employ what is called *figurative* language, that is, to express one thing by another which is in some way like it ; and as a horn is a very strong thing, it is often used as a mode of signifying strength. "He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the *horn* of Israel," (Lam. ii. 3.) means the power or strength of Israel. Powerful Kingdoms are described under the image of horns, both by the prophet Daniel, vii. 7. and in Revelations, xiii, 1 and 11. And in the same sense, when the false prophets were persuading Ahab and Jehoshaphat, to go and attack Ramoth Gilead, one of them "made him horns of iron," to express that the strength of Ahab's army, should make his enemies fly before him, as people do before a powerful, enraged, horned beast.

In the same sense also the word Horn is employed in a spiritual reference to our Saviour, who is called "The Horn of our Salvation;" (Luke i. 69.) that is, in Christ is all our spiritual strength, He is powerful and mighty to save all those who trust in him.

PRESENTS.

We find constant mention in the Bible of the presents which people carried with them, when they went to visit their superiors, or wished to bespeak their kindness and protection.

When Jacob was returning to his native country, after the long absence, and all the sufferings which had been the consequence of his deceit and falsehood, he heard that his brother Esau was coming to meet him; and feeling in his conscience, how little he deserved to be kindly treated by his brother, who had at that time become a powerful man, he "Took of that which came to his hand, a present for Esau his brother, two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams; thirty milch camels with their colts; forty kine, (or cows) and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals." (Gen. xxxii. 14.) But Esau, like a generous affectionate brother, refused to take the present, and forgave all the injuries he had received from Jacob.

It would appear as if Jacob's ill conduct as a brother in the early part of his life, was visited on him in his old age, in the distress he suffered from the ill-behaviour of his own sons to each other, or rather, to Joseph; and when, in spite of all his endeavours

to avoid parting with another darling son, he found that he must let Benjamin go down to Egypt to buy corn, with his brothers, he, like a tender father, considered what he could do to soften the heart, and bespeak the favor of the man, who had "spoken roughly" (Gen. xlii. 7.) to his other sons; so he made up a present of all the best produce of the land; (xliii. 11.) "A little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds," to send with them. This present may seem trifling to us, but it was not so in reality; the Balm of Gilead was of great price all the world over, and a small quantity of it was considered a valuable gift; the land in which Jacob lived was famous for its honey, and being formerly the only sweetener in use, like our sugar, it was then much more valuable than it is now; the nuts were most probably such as we call pistachios, and the pistachios of Syria are the finest in the world.

In the early part of David's life, when he was wandering about in the wilderness of Paran, to escape Saul's fury, we read that he received very rude treatment from a churlish man named Nabal, (1 Sam. xxv. 11.) and that he was going to punish him for his incivility, but Abigail, Nabal's wife, heard what had happened, and without loss of time, went to meet him with a very handsome present, as a proof of her respect, and to appease his anger. She took "Two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five

sheep ready dressed and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses." (1 Sam. xxv. 18.) It is a curious fact, that at the present day, in the same country where this gift was carried to David, when an Arab chief wishes to shew particular respect or kindness to a stranger, he sends him a sheep or lamb dressed whole.

When any one went to consult a prophet, he used to carry a present with him, as we find from the circumstance of Saul being perplexed, for want of something to give Samuel, when he wished to consult him, about the best means of recovering his father's lost asses. The first thing he thought of offering was provisions, which makes it appear probable, that the prophets were partly supported, by such gifts from the people; but as the provisions he took with him from home, were exhausted during his long wandering in search of the asses, he gave Samuel some money, which his servant chanced to have with him; (1 Sam. ix. 1—8.) not, as some people may imagine, as a price of divination, or fortune telling, but as the usual mark of respect.

When Naaman the Syrian was cured of his leprosy, in consequence of following Elisha's directions, we find that, "He returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him; and he said, Behold now I know there is no God

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in all the earth, but in Israel; now therefore I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant," (2 Kings, v. 15.) by which he meant a present, and it must have been prepared, before he set out from home. But Elisha did not take it, thinking, probably, that he acted more for the honor of God, and the credit of his profession, by declining to take any thing from an Idolater, on such an occasion.

We read also of the presents made to kings; when the Queen of Sheba went to visit Solomon, she went "to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold and precious stones." (1 Kings, x. 1.) Ehud took a gift to Eglon, king of Moab, which appears to have been very considerable, as it was carried by several men and took some time to offer. (Judges, iii. 18.) Probably at that time, as in the present day, much skill and art were employed, in arranging the various articles of which a present was composed, so as to make them appear as important and numerous as possible.

An old traveller* in the East, who has given much valuable information on the customs of the countries he visited, says, "I did not visit any Bashaw, or great person, without this previous respect, (preparing a present,) as it is accounted uncivil in those countries, to make such a visit without an offering in hand. All such persons expect it, as a tribute due

* *Maundrell.*

to their character, thinking themselves affronted, and even defrauded, when this compliment is omitted. Even in familiar visits among inferior people, you seldom observe them coming, without bringing some flower, or orange, or other token of respect to the person visited. The Turks, in this respect, keep up the ancient custom hinted at 1 Samuel ix. 7."

When travellers are preparing to visit the eastern part of the world, being aware of this custom, they always take care to provide themselves, with a stock of such things, as they think likely to be most acceptable to the great men, whose favour and assistance will be necessary to them, in passing through their states. An English officer* was sent by our government, a few years ago, with a present of some fine horses to a powerful native chief in India; and he mentions the various things, which he gave to the princes, through whose countries he passed, or received from them, in the course of his journey. On one of these occasions he says, "I sent the presents I had brought for his Highness; they consisted of various articles of European Manufacture; a gun, a brace of pistols, a gold watch, two telescopes, a clock, some English shawls and cloths, with two pair of elegant cut glass candlesticks and shades; some books in the Persian language, and a map of the world."

One of these princes, who could not go himself to

**Lieut. Burne.*

meet the English officer, sent some of his most esteemed attendants a distance of eighty miles, to welcome his arrival in the country, and to shew his respect for the British government. Lieut. Burne says, "They brought an abundant supply of sheep, flour, fruit, rice, spices, sugar, butter, tobacco, opium, &c. &c., on which our people feasted; the sheep were killed and cooked, the rice and butter were made into savory dishes, and I believe all parties thanked the prince as heartily as we did."

These accounts of the custom of giving presents to persons of superior rank, explain a passage in the prophet Malachi, (i. 8.) where he complains of the disrespect shewn by the Jews, to the King of heaven and earth, by offering for sacrifice in his Temple, such injured or inferior animals, as they would not have ventured to offer, as a mark of respect, to an earthly ruler. "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and the sick is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of Hosts." We cannot in the present day offend God literally as these Jews did; but how many persons give all their years of youth and strength to the world, and offer to God, only the sacrifice of old age and decrepitude, of "the blind, the lame, and the sick:" or if any one dared to offer a petition to an earthly governor, in the careless indifferent tone of voice, and the lounging

disrespectful attitude, in which a great many people, offer the sacrifice of prayer to the King of kings, is it likely that he would "be pleased with them, or accept their persons"?

This custom also explains the meaning of presents being given to our Saviour, by the wise men of the East. While the Jews, among whom Christ was born, paid but little attention to Him, those strangers, led by the wonderful star which appeared in the East, came from a distance to seek Him, "that was born King of the Jews," (Matt. ii. 2.) bringing with them a present of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, the most valuable productions of Arabia, from which country they are supposed to have come, agreeably to the prophecy contained in the 72 Psalm, "The Kings of Arabia and Saba (or Sabea, an adjoining district,) shall bring gifts." And again, "Unto him shall be given of the gold of Arabia." At the time of Christ's advent there was a general expectation, even among many of the heathen, that some extraordinary person would appear on earth; but the wise men had, most probably, become acquainted with the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, from the Jews of the ten tribes, who had been dispersed all over the Eastern countries, after the taking of their capital by Shalmanezzer; and if we may venture to intrude so far into the Divine counsels, we may suppose, that this dispersion was made the means of

preparing those nations, to receive the knowledge of the One true God, and of Jesus Christ. The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, are supposed to have been presented to Christ in his three-fold character of Prophet, Priest, and King ; but I think I cannot better please my readers, than by giving a practical application of their meaning, contained in an old inscription, under a rude sculpture, representing the adoration of the Magi, or wise men.

For gold, present a perfect heart;
For myrrh, repentant tears ;
For frankincense, pour from thy breast
A fume of humble prayers.

SALUTATIONS.

Among the customs which vary much in different countries, is that of the manner in which persons salute, and address, or speak to, one another, when they meet and part. In the East, where men shew their feelings by their actions, much more than they do in England, instead of only shaking hands in our fashion, it would appear much more natural, for a father to fall on his son's neck and kiss him, when they met after a long separation, as is described in the beautiful parable of the prodigal son; (Luke xv. 20.) and that brothers should express their affection in the same way. (Gen. xxxiii. 4.) A traveller* says on this subject, "I have not before mentioned the affectionate manners of the Bedouin Arabs towards each other. They always kiss on meeting, and by no means with the coldness of ceremony or respect. I observed two or three young men in the Desert, who kissed Abdul-Kerim whenever they met him for the first time during the day, and then sat down with much respect by his side." Another traveller† describes a very interesting scene of eastern manners which he witnessed, at the return of the chief of a wandering tribe to his family and people, after an absence of some length.

**Major Skinner.*

†*Lieut. Burne.*

“On winding through the valley, we had an opportunity of witnessing an interesting sight, in the welcoming of a chief, who had accompanied us from Koochan. We had known him only as a wild Toorkman, but here he was a noble, and, what is greater, a patriarch. For miles before reaching the camp, the Toorkmans crowded upon us to bid him welcome; all of them were upon horseback, men, women and children, and several of them cried as they kissed his hand. At length in a shady part of the valley, a party, which appeared more respectable than the rest, had dismounted and drawn up. This was the family of the chief; he leaped upon the ground, with the enthusiasm of a youth, rushed forward, and kissed in succession four boys, who were his sons; they mounted their horses and joined the cavalcade. There were no bells to ring the peals of joy, which this day pervaded these Toorkmans, nor were they required to give more certain indications of their delight. The clan had gathered from every quarter, and as they took up their position in the rear, they gave to us, who were indifferent spectators, the cordial salutation of friends. The women said, “You are welcome,” and crossed their hands on their bosoms as we passed them, in token of sincerity; I never witnessed a scene of more universal joy. A horseman more delighted than the rest, appeared with his horse sinking under a load of bread, which he distributed in cakes to every one he met, with this remark,

“Take this, it is good in the sight of God; take it, you are a guest and a stranger.” It was impossible to look on such scenes with an eye of indifference.”

For people to “bow themselves down to the ground,” before a superior, is still a usual mark of respect in the East. When the chief minister of the sultan appears before him, he kneels three times on his right knee, and touches the ground with his right hand, which he then lays on his lips and forehead, to express that he humbles himself to the dust in his master’s presence; and he does the same before he retires. In Persia this sort of submission is carried still further; persons presented at court kneel on both knees, and bend forward till the forehead touches the ground. It is related of a king of Persia, that he used to make a captive king kneel down by his horse, that he might tread on his back as an assistance in mounting; a custom of this description is referred to in Isaiah, (li. 23.)

To kiss the hem of the garment, and the hands and feet, is still a customary sign of respect, as it was in the time of our Saviour, who pointed out to Simon, that the poor repentant sinner he was looking on with contempt, had shewn more reverence for her Saviour than the self-righteous Pharisee. (Luke vii. 45.) Judas Iscariot appointed the usual form of salutation from a disciple to his master, as a sign by which the soldiers were to know him whom they were to “hold fast.” (Matt. xxvi. 48.)

Travellers in the East frequently mention having been addressed, (or spoken to,) by persons whom they met accidentally in the road, with the same kindly sort of expressions, as passed between Boaz and his reapers. "The Lord be with you;" "The Lord bless thee;" (Ruth ii. 4.) and, "my brother," (2 Sam. xx. 9.) is a title very often given, in speaking to those who are not at all related. But the most common form when persons meet and part is to say, "Peace be with you," "Peace I leave with you;" and this explains a passage in the New Testament, (John xiv. 27.) "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you." By referring to the chapter from which these words are taken, we shall find, that our Saviour when he spoke them, was giving his last instructions to his disciples, and encouraging them with the promise, of the assistance they should receive from the Holy Spirit, in keeping his commandments, and remembering all he had taught them, when He should no longer be with them. He knew that the time for his being betrayed and put to death, was now near at hand; and as he sat with his disciples, after eating their last supper together, He employed himself to the last for their good, by teaching them,—not how to prosper in this world,—but, how to gain admission to the heavenly mansions, where He was going to prepare a place for them. Then, as if He were now taking leave of those, whom he

condescended to call his friends, He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" and lest his disciples should suppose he meant as little by these words, as is usually meant by a common expression, He adds, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you." As if he had said, I do not employ these words as a mere worldly civility, or as the expression of an ineffectual wish for your happiness, which is all that the most affectionate of your earthly friends can mean by them; I bestow upon you a sincere and efficacious blessing; (the greatest blessing any one can possess in this world, and without which the greatest worldly advantages cannot confer happiness;) my peace is the blessed conviction of the pardon of sin, of reconciliation with God, of support under all the trials and troubles of this life, and of eternal happiness in the life to come. This is, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding," and this peace, by God's grace, we may all enjoy.

SHOES.

Many readers of the Bible, are probably puzzled to discover the meaning of the command which God gave to Moses, when he drew near to examine the burning bush, (Exod. iii. 5.) "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground;" and there is a verse in Ecclesiastes, which must seem equally difficult to be understood, (Eccle. v. 1.) "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God." Both of these passages refer to the same custom, which was, for people to take off their shoes, before they entered any place which had been made holy, by being consecrated to the service of God; as if they meant by this act to express, that they desired to lay aside the defilement and pollutions they had contracted in the world, before they ventured into the more immediate presence of a God of infinite purity.

The shoes worn in ancient times were not like ours; they did not cover the sides of the feet, but were merely a sole of leather, fastened on by leathern straps, which accounts for the first offer of kindness when people arrived after a journey, being that of washing their feet; for as they did not wear stockings, all the dust and dirt must have rested on their feet, and made

them very uncomfortable. We meet with many instances of this in the Bible, as, when the angels appeared to Abraham ; (Gen. xviii. 4.) and our Saviour reproached Simon for not having given him, "water for his feet," (Luke vii. 44.) when he entered his house, because this was failing in a usual act of kindness, besides being a deficiency in the respect which was always shewn to strangers and superiors. This custom yet remains in the East among the Arabs, where the master of the family presents himself to welcome a stranger, and to wash his feet.

The Jews in the Eastern countries, still observe the custom of taking off their shoes, when they are going into their Synagogues ; and it is said that some Jews when they visit the Holy Land, or return to it after an absence, shew their reverence for the land, where the Almighty worked so many miracles for their forefathers, by taking off their shoes, and wiping all the dust and dirt from them, that they may not pollute the soil which they consider sacred.

We are told that the Christians in a part of Africa called Abyssinia, never enter their Churches without taking off their shoes. The Mahomedans, who have been already spoken of, (see page 31) are very particular in shewing this mark of respect to their places of worship, which are called Mosques, and they would punish any one severely, who dared to go into one of them, without taking off the slippers which they

wear instead of shoes. It is almost impossible for a Christian to get permission to go into these Mosques, and but few travellers venture to do so, even when dressed like the inhabitants of the country; but a lady* who visited Turkey lately tells us, that this favor was granted to a party with whom she went. As they did not like the idea of walking about without any shoes, they carried clean slippers with them, and these they put on at the entrance; but the keepers of the Mosque who went with them, "detected the unhandsome intrusion" of one traveller, with his boots on; an insult so great, that no Mahomedan can tolerate it, and they were busily employed in obliging him to take them off; at the same time calling him names which he would not have been pleased with, if he had understood the language in which they were said.

Though we do not think it necessary, like the Christians in Abyssinia, to shew our respect for our churches, or rather for the Almighty Being to whose service they are consecrated, by taking off our shoes before we enter them, we should do well to attend to the injunction, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God," in its spiritual meaning; and instead of hurrying into church, with all our worldly affairs and amusements in our thoughts, and perhaps on our lips, to the last moment, we should "keep our

* *Miss Pardoe.*

foot" for a moment, on the threshold of "the house of God," consider into whose presence we are going, and offer up a silent prayer for grace, "to hear meekly the word of God, to receive it with pure affections, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit." Then we shall not be in danger of "giving the sacrifice of fools," (that of the lips only, while the heart and the thoughts are otherwise engaged,) "For they consider not that they do evil."

SLAVES.

Scarcely anything is more dreadful to an Englishman or an Englishwoman, than the idea of slavery; and that human beings, men, women, and children, should be bought and sold as brute beasts. Yet we find that this dreadful traffic had begun as early as the time of Joseph, and we may suppose that it was not new even then, as the merchants do not appear to have made any difficulty about buying him, and soon found him a master in Egypt.

In the present day, as in Joseph's time, slaves are an article of trade in the East, and parties of Merchants travel together across the great deserts into Egypt, with their camels laden with them. A traveller* who was at Cairo, one of the principal cities of Egypt, a few years ago, says it is interesting to see a cafila of slaves arrive from Dongola after a journey of two months through burning deserts. The long train of camels fills a whole street as they proceed slowly and singly, each animal fastened to its follower by a long cord, towards the spacious market place where numerous small rooms are appointed for the strangers. The stern and worn looks of the Arab masters, shew the trouble and care it has cost them to bring their

* *Carne.*

charge so far in safety; walking by the side of their camels, they eye their burdens with a searching calculating look, as if reckoning how much their value was lessened, by all the sufferings they had endured from the scorching winds and thirst. And the wearied slaves, whose features look sunk and wasted with their terrible journey, gazing curiously around, seem glad to have arrived at last at their place of rest, though many a weary land lies between this and their own home. As soon as the arrival of the slave merchants is known, purchasers flock to the market where the slaves are exposed for sale and bargained for like cattle; and no attention is paid to the distress of the poor creatures, when parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters are separated for ever.

We read in the history of Joseph's life, (Gen. xlvii. 19.) that during the famine in Egypt the people became so dreadfully distressed for corn, which was their principal article of food, that after selling their cattle their land and all their other property, they at last sold themselves to Joseph, on condition that he would keep them from starving. Perhaps it will hardly be believed, that the lower orders of the people in some Eastern countries, are so dreadfully oppressed by their rulers, and so miserably poor, that a father or a mother have been known to beg a stranger to buy their child for a slave, rather than see it die of want. A french gentleman* gives the following instance of such

**M. Otter.*

a circumstance happening to himself. "The Kurds," he says, "residing in the places through which we passed, brought milk, butter, cheese, fowls and sometimes lambs to the caravan. One day a man came to offer me some fowls for sale; he was accompanied by his daughter, a girl of twelve or thirteen years old, who had nothing on but a linen shift. I asked the father, who wore only a pair of linen drawers, why he did not clothe his daughter better; "Alas!" he replied, "the calamities of war and our extreme poverty, will not allow us to think of dress. At this moment I am required to pay three tomans, (about fifty shillings,) and I do not know how to raise so much money. My cattle, furniture, and all my other goods have been seized by the collectors, and I have nothing left but two ewes, whose milk supports me and this poor girl. I would gladly sell her to any one who would give me the sum demanded of me, even if he were a stranger, for she could not be worse off than she is likely to be here, especially if she should have the misfortune to lose me, as she certainly will, unless I can find means to pay." I felt great compassion for the poor people, but could not relieve their distress; I bought the fowls and milk for which I gave them four times their value."

Among the Jews all persons who had been convicted of committing a crime, which was punished by a fine, if unable to pay the fine, were sold to

raise the money ; and the same was the case with those who could not pay their debts ; their creditors had the right to sell them in order to procure the sum owed to them. (Matt. xviii. 25.—2 Kings, iv. 2.)

In ancient times, slaves used to be employed to do all the work, which is now done in most countries by hired servants ; but in the East the old practice is still followed, and wealthy persons have sometimes two or three hundred slaves belonging to them ; many of these are now, as they were formerly, prisoners taken in war ; and many others are poor unprotected villagers, who have been seized in the dead of the night, or while at work in their fields, and carried off to be sold as slaves by a set of men-stealers, who make this their business. This wicked practice is so old that there is an express law against it Exod. 21. 16. and St. Paul mentions it among a dreadful list of sins ; (1 Tim. i. 10.) the misery it causes may be judged of by the account a traveller* gives, of meeting with some of the unfortunate beings, who had been torn from their homes and friends in this cruel way. "In the middle of our march through the desert, we met seven unfortunate Persians, who had been captured by the Toorkmans, and were now on their road to Bokhara, where they would be sold. Five of them were chained together and trod their way through the deep sand There was a general shout of compassion

**Lieut. Burne.*

as the caravan passed these miserable beings ; and the sympathy did not fail to affect the poor creatures themselves ; they cried, and gave a longing look, as the last camel of the caravan passed to their dear native country. The camel on which I rode happened to be one of the last, and I stayed to hear their sad tale. They had been seized a few weeks before while employed in cultivating their fields. They were weary and thirsty, and I gave them all I could—a single melon ; a civility, little as it was, which was received with gratitude.” How thankful ought we to be for living in a part of the world where such miseries are not known !

We find in Leviticus a great many merciful laws for the protection of slaves among the Jews ; but their condition among the heathen nations, at the time that the Apostles spread the glad tidings of Christianity among them, was dreadful indeed, and it makes the heart sick to hear of their sufferings. Their inhuman masters used to make them fight with one another, or with wild beasts, in public theatres, till hundreds were killed, and as every master might treat his slaves as he pleased, these poor creatures were exposed to the most cruel punishments, and to death, for the slightest offence. Thankful indeed must they have been to hear of the blessed religion, which told them that there is a God in whose sight all men are equal, whether they are “bond or free” and

while they were smarting under the tyranny of their proud earthly masters, what a relief must they have felt it, to take upon themselves the easy yoke and light burden of the meek and lowly Jesus, by which alone they could find rest for their weary souls in this world, and hope for happiness and perfect freedom in a world to come. And we accordingly find that there were many slaves among the early converts to Christianity ; for those persons who are called *servants*, in our English translation of the epistles, or letters, of the Apostles to the Christians at Rome, Corinth &c. were really slaves. One of St. Paul's letters, (that to Philemon,) was written to request a master to forgive a slave who had run away from him, and had become a Christian in consequence of attending St. Paul's preaching at Rome ; his master might have punished him with death for running away, and he was naturally afraid of returning to him, but St. Paul and all the Apostles taught, that the severity or cruelty of masters, was not any reason that the slave or servant should not do his duty, in the situation in which it had pleased God to place him ; (1 Peter ii. 18.) and that his change of religion did not make any change in his worldly condition, (1 Cor. vii. 21.) as some appear to have thought.

We find the expressions bondage or slavery, and freedom, frequently employed in the New Testament in a figurative and spiritual sense. When Christ said

to the Jews that the truth would make them free, (John viii. 33.) they were indignant, and replied that they had never been in bondage (or slavery) to any man; and no doubt many Englishmen would be equally indignant and say the same thing, though they really are slaves, and that to the most cruel of masters, who will not allow even death to set them free from his power. "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin," or the devil, (John viii. 34.) The drunkard, the liar, the adulterer, the passionate man, the worldly minded, if they have wished to regain their liberty by turning from sin, all know how hard it is to struggle against the master, who is unwilling to part with them.

But a slave in his miserable condition, had sometimes the happiness of meeting with a charitable, benevolent person, who would redeem him, or set him at liberty, by paying the price required for him; and his gratitude would of course be increased by the greatness of his misery, and of the price that was paid. Now this is exactly the point of view in which the Scriptures place our obligations to Jesus Christ. (1 Peter i. 18. 19) He is our great Redeemer, and the price He has paid for our redemption was greater than it could have entered human reason to imagine; that the Eternal son of God should leave the bliss of heaven, take our nature upon him, pass a life of suffering, and end it by a most dreadful death,—and this not for humble, grateful creatures, thankfully

listening to every instruction He gave ; but He had to endure the “contradiction of sinners against himself,” (Heb. xii. 3.) and wept at finding that those for whom he was doing so much, were insensible of their bondage, and could not be persuaded to “see the things which belonged to their peace.” (Luke xix. 42.) We should think it extraordinary folly if the poor slave whose redemption had been purchased, either refused to be free, or chose rather to struggle on, trying to free himself; but such is exactly the case with all who neglect to profit by the offers of salvation through Christ ; either they choose to continue the slaves of sin, or they think they have power to set themselves free from the tyranny of the world, the flesh and the devil ; the price of their redemption has been paid, but they refuse to accept it, and to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 21.) “If the son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John, viii. 36.)

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BEES AND FLIES.

Among the many figurative expressions employed by the Prophet Isaiah, which are difficult to be understood, because they are taken from customs different from our own, is the following. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the river of Egypt, and for the bee that is in Assyria." (Isai. vii. 18.) (Isai. v. 26.)

The expression, "to hiss, or whistle, for the fly and the bee," is explained by the following description of the manner in which bees are managed, in Lithuania and Russia; both which countries are famous for their honey. "The master of the hives with a blast of his whistle, can call all the bees of the village after him; leading them by this means, sometimes into one field of flowers, sometimes into another, thus taking them in their turns, on purpose to give the flowers time to recruit their stock of sweets, and thereby afford the bees a fresh repast. With another blast of his whistle, he leads them back to their hives, when either the appearance of rain, or the approach of night, give notice that it is time to return home."*

Some of the early Christian writers refer to this practice, as common in the East in their time; the Prophet

* *Nature displayed.*

Isaiah employs it, to describe the armies that should come, at God's command, from Egypt and Assyria, in swarms like bees or flies for number, and over-run the whole land of Judea." "And they shall come and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes." The circumstance of bees swarming and depositing their honey in the rocks, is also alluded to Psalm lxxxi. 16. "With honey *out of the rock* would I have satisfied thee."

* A traveller in Arabia says, "Honey may be considered as forming one of the principal articles of food with all classes of people; the bees live in the *hollows of the rocks*, and feed on the wild aromatic plants.

"The fly that is in the uttermost part of the river of Egypt," is described by the celebrated traveller Bruce, in the account of his travels to find the source of the Nile, "the river of Egypt."

After describing the heavy rains, which fall in Abyssinia for six months in the year, he says, "These rains which are themselves one of the marvels of nature, produce another almost as extraordinary; for as soon as the fat black earth of the mountains of Abyssinia becomes saturated, or soaked with water, immense swarms of flies burst into life; and, with the rains, assist in driving almost every living creature from them. This insect, although it is scarcely larger than a common bee, becomes formidable from its immense numbers; and the buzzing

* *Welsted.*

sound of its arrival is no sooner heard, than the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain till they actually die from fear, pain, and fatigue. The Camel, whose patience has become a proverb, under every other affliction, gets ungovernable from the violent stings of these flies; his body becomes covered with lumps which break and putrify, and the wretched creature dies. Even the rhinoceros and elephant, whose hides have been considered too thick to be pierced by a musket ball, are severely tormented by these clouds of insects; but they try to avoid their attacks, by rolling themselves in the mud and mire, which, when dried in the sun form too thick a covering for their enemies to pierce. All the inhabitants of this part of Africa, are obliged every year to quit the country of black earth, and, driving their cattle before them, to seek a refuge in the cheerless sands of the desert; and so many human beings and huge animals, thus flying before an army of such little flies, certainly forms a very remarkable and wonderful feature, in the great picture of nature."

We may very reasonably suppose, that the swarms of flies which formed one of the plagues of Egypt, were of the sort here described. Dr. Harris, in his natural history of the Bible observes, that the Egyptians paid a superstitious worship to several kinds of flies and insects, and that nothing could be more evident, than the judgment brought upon them in this plague; they were

punished by the very things they revered. And this is constantly our case too. Those things which we make our idols, by setting on them the affections that are due to God only, and by seeking our happiness from them, become our greatest plagues. How often has the darling child, who has withdrawn its parents affections and thoughts from God, become the cause of their ruin and misery! And the same is the case with riches, honors, and pleasures; when made the principal objects in life, they deprive their possessors of peace and happiness here, and the punishment they carry with them, still worse than the plagues of Egypt, extends beyond this world.

An excellent old writer, observing on the danger of what appear trifling faults, says, "Beelzebub or the god of flies, is the devil's name; he rules by these little things, by trifles and vanity, by idle and useless words, by the intercourses of a vain conversation."*

What a sublime idea must it give us of the power of God, to find that conquering kings and generals with their vast armies which appear to us so important and irresistible, are in his sight but as swarms of insects, which can be summoned to do their appointed task, and dismissed again at a slight signal from Him! "All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." (Isai. xl. 17.) Yet, "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,

* *Jeremy Taylor, Sermon 9th.*

whose name is Holy," hath said, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isai. lvii. 15.)

WATER.

Those who live in a country like our own, where the climate is cool, where a great deal of rain falls, and there are many rivers and streams, can hardly understand the full value of water, or the misery caused by its failure.

Many instances are given in the Bible, of the sufferings of the Israelites from want of water, in their passage through the wilderness; and after they were settled in the promised land, it pleased God on various occasions, to withhold the usual supplies of rain, as a mark of his displeasure, and a means of humbling a disobedient people, according to the threat denounced against them by Moses. “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee.—Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.” (Deut. xxviii. xv. xxiii, and xxiv.) One of the most dreadful of these inflictions, was in the reign of Ahab King of Israel, when the poor widow of Zarephath shared her last morsel with Elijah; believing, though of an idolatrous nation, the promise of God

given by the Prophet; "thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste nor the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." (1 Kings xvii. 14.)

The 14th Chapter of Jeremiah, opens with a very touching description, of the misery suffered by persons even of the highest rank, during such visitations." "Judah mourneth and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up, and their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapt for there was no rain on the earth, the ploughmen were ashamed, they covered their heads."

We are strongly reminded of these words of the Prophet, by the following description a lady* has given, of the distress she herself witnessed in Turkey during a time of drought. "I shall not easily forget the constant succession of busy human beings, who, from day break to dusk, crowded the mouth of a well, not a hundred paces from our house. Every cistern in the lower quarter of the village had become exhausted, but this solitary well, supplied by a mountain stream, still held out; and it was only by a necessity for lengthening the cords to which the bucket was fastened, that any difference in the quantity of water it contained, could be perceived. Children

* *Miss Pardoe.*

of ten or twelve years old, were no longer able, as usual, to perform this part of the family labor ; nor could they have done it even if their strength had been sufficient ; for, as the demand for water increased, the battle was truly to the strongest, at the village well. Men who met and spoke to one another kindly as they approached it, strove and struggled for who should have the first turn, until at length they parted in anger, and frequently with blows ; while the owners of the neighbouring cottages, who had been used to consider this well as belonging to themselves alone, murmured in vain at this intrusion on their property, and were obliged to strive and struggle like the strangers."

The Cholera was at this time raging in Constantinople, and the same writer says, there can be no doubt that the pestilence spread farther and faster than it might otherwise have done, from the extreme scarcity, or it might almost be said total want, of water in the Capital. The poorer classes, who were unable to buy this necessary of life at a very high price, being obliged to make use of the water from dirty stagnant pools for preparing their food, and to go altogether without the refreshing drink, which they were accustomed to take in large quantities. Men watched the heavens in vain ; the sun set in a blaze of gold and purple, the sun rise was beautiful, the noon day sky was blue and bright, not a cloud was to be seen, and no rain fell. Women crowded about the fountains, in the anxious hope that each moment the

exhausted stream might burst forth afresh; children wept, and asked in vain for their accustomed draught: the marble basins of the city remained empty.

We are told that it is a favorite act of charity among the Turks, to provide a supply of water for those who may need it. Every little stream found in the neighbourhood of Constantinople is carefully received into a marble basin, with a cup to use it. In the city there are several colleges, inhabited by a set of men called Dervishes, who profess to lead very holy lives, and each of these colleges has a window fronting the street, along which stands a range of gilt metal cups, filled with pure water for the passengers; and when any of them is used, a Dervish stands inside to fill it again.*

In the countries in which the Patriarchs and their descendants the Jews lived, water is very scarce. The Jordan is the only river of any size in Judea, and there are not many small rivers or brooks. The seasons of rain are only in the Spring and Autumn; the one called the former or first rain, the other the latter rain. (Deut. xi. 14.) In Judea the beginning of November is the time of the first rain; and the latter rain usually begins to fall about the middle of April. Rain, and thunder storms, are scarcely known except at these times, which accounts for the storm of rain and thunder mentioned 1 Sam. xii. 17. being considered a miraculous event; it occurred during the wheat harvest, and this was at

* *Walsh.*

the end of June, or beginning of July. "Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a King."

As the heat of the climate, and the dryness of the soil, render water particularly necessary in Eastern countries, a well or a spring is still considered, as it was formerly, a very valuable possession. When Caleb had given his daughter Achsah to Othniel for a wife, as a reward for taking the City of Kirjath Sepher, we read that as she came to him, she moved him to ask of her father a field: "and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her what wouldest thou? Who answered give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water; and he gave her the upper and the nether springs." (Jos. xv. xviii. xix.)

The Israelites on their way to the promised land, having arrived at Kadesh on the borders of Edom, sent to request permission to pass through the country; and the messengers were desired by Moses to say, "We will not pass through the fields or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells," and in a second message he said, "If I and my cattle drink of thy water then I will pay for it; but Edom refused to give Israel passage through his bor-

der." (Num xx.) It is curious to find exactly the same circumstance happening a few years ago, to a party of English travellers, who wished to pass through the same country. One of these gentlemen says, "We sent a messenger to Abou Zeitun (the prince or chief man of the country) with a proposal that if they would allow us to pass, we would not touch their water; but he returned for answer, that we should neither pass through their lands, nor drink of their water."*

In the history of the Patriarchs, we read constantly of the young women having the care of the flocks and herds, and going in the evening to water them at the well, and precisely the same custom is described at the present day, among the Arabs who inhabit those countries, particularly among the Arabs of Sinai. With them it is an established custom, that the care of the flocks should be the exclusive business, of the unmarried girls of the camp; they perform this duty by turns, setting out in parties of three or four together before sunrise, and returning late in the evening.† A traveller‡ in this part of Arabia says, "After passing over some projecting rocks, we descended to the coast. Some wells protected by a scanty shade, here offer to the thirsty sailor and traveller a brackish kind of water, wholly unfit for use; even to the Arabs it was disagreeable, our camels alone satisfied their thirst

* *Mc. Michael.* † *Burckhardt.* ‡ *Laborde*

with it. Whilst we were taking in a supply of water necessary for our journey, a young Arab girl, followed by a herd of goats, came to water her animals. I desired my guides to serve her first, as I wished on this scripture territory, to see its ancient manners renewed, with reference to this kind of civility."

A well is still often the scene of the same sort of ready kindness which Rebecca shewed to Eliezer, when "she hasted and let down her pitcher upon her hand; and gave him drink; and when she had done giving him drink, she said I will draw water for the camels also, until they have done drinking." (Gen. xxiv. 18.) An English traveller* describing a journey through Mesopotamia, says, "We continued across this plain for nearly three hours, seeing several large wells in the way, but no dwellings. The wells contained excellent water, of which we drank as we passed, from the pitchers of some women of the neighbourhood."

In the song of Deborah celebrating the destruction of Sisera and his army, we find mentioned, among other evils from which the Israelites were delivered by that event, "the noise of Archers (that is, the attacks of armed men) in the places of drawing water." (Judg. v. 11.) The wells are in the present day, a favorite place of resort, for robbers in the East; and when travellers have reason to fear, that any of them are lurking about the deserts, through which they are

* *Buckingham.*

passing, they approach the wells, “ the places of drawing water,” with particular caution and alarm. A beautiful little rill of water in Barbary, is called in the language of the country, “ Drink and away,” from the danger of meeting with robbers or murderers near it.

Jacob’s well, on which our Saviour sat to rest, when he talked with the woman of Samaria, is still known and described by the same name.

In hot dry climates, it is not enough for the husbandman to sow his seed, and leave it to the chance of the rains ; in the cultivated parts of Arabia, every garden or field has its well, from which the water is drawn up by asses, cows, or camels, in large leathern buckets, to keep the field regularly watered. To lessen this labor, in the neighbourhood of a river or large stream, trenches are dug, to convey the water from the river, in various directions through the fields; and the banks of these trenches, or “ rivers of water,” as they are called, in our translation of the Bible, are planted with fruit trees, which are in this way kept green and flourishing, when every thing at a distance from the water, is parched and dried up with the heat. There are many allusions to this custom in the Bible. David compares the righteous man to “ A tree that is planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit, in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither.” (Ps. i. 3.) “ Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 7. 8.) What a beautiful image is here employed, to represent the perfect calm and composure enjoyed, by those who trust in God, even under circumstances which fill others with alarm, and make them incapable of attending to the duties of life. The Prophet Isaiah also employs the same image, to describe the unfailing serenity of a virtuous mind. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring whose waters fail not. (Isai. lviii. 11.)

As some kinds of grain, particularly rice, require to be sown in very moist ground, or even in water, the trenches are so constructed that the water can be made to overflow the banks, and cover the field, at the season when the seed is sown; and this is the practice alluded to, Eccles. xi. 1. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." As the husbandman with a liberal hand, casts the grain which is to produce bread, upon the watered field prepared for it, not doubting that his labor will be repaid, though not till "after many days;" so should we be ready "to do good and to distribute;" trusting fully to God's promise, that our "labor of love" shall have its reward. The same

explanation applies equally to the passage, "Blessed, are ye that sow beside all waters." (Isai. xxxii. 20.) Not limiting our charity, or kindness, to any particular set of people, but remembering that all, of whatever country or religion, are equally the children of our heavenly Father, and therefore entitled to be considered and treated by us as brethren.

When Moses described the land of Canaan, to the Israelites, (Deut. xi. 10.) he told them, that it was "not as the land of Egypt, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot." As scarcely any rain falls during the whole year in Egypt, much labor is required in watering the ground, and the machine here spoken of for that purpose, as being worked with the foot, was perhaps the same as that now used in China; a tread mill, by which buckets of water are raised, and either poured on the land, or into a large trough.

Another plan for conveying water from the rivers, or springs, to places where it was wanted, was by large troughs of stone or brick work, which were sometimes many miles in length; when they had to cross a valley or a plain, they were raised on arches like a bridge; and in other places they were carried along the steep sides of mountains, where it is difficult to understand how the workmen who made them could find a safe footing, much more how they could carry up the heavy materials of

which they are formed. Such a water course is meant by the "Conduit of the upper pool." (2 Kings xviii. 17.) An aqueduct is the name by which we should now call it.

As every drop of water that can be procured, is valuable in a hot and dry climate, there were contrivances made among the rocky mountains of Arabia and Judea, for catching the rain; these were cisterns hewn out of the rock, many of which are still described as perfect, and very useful to the Arabs, others are in a ruinous state.

A traveller* in the part of Arabia near Sinai, says, "in the midst of these hollows, among the mountains, rises a rock, which has been excavated, or hollowed out, and serves as a cistern. Gutters ingeniously cut in the neighbouring heights, convey the waters into the cisterns thus constructed, and the Arabs of the Desert who pass that way, usually find them well supplied the whole year round. The same contrivance is described by Buckingham." We came to a large cistern, constructed to receive rain water. It was of a circular (or round) shape, hewn out of the rock to a depth of twenty feet below the surface, and was descended to by a flight of steps, hewn down also to that depth; the whole was stuccoed over on the inside, and it was both a useful and a well executed work, there was a place for

* *Laborde.*

prayer near." There is an allusion to these cisterns Jer. ii. 13. where the folly of the Jews, in forsaking the true God to serve senseless idols, which were incapable of doing them any good, is compared to that of a man who should choose to hew himself out a cistern to catch rain water, and that a bad cistern which suffered the water to escape, when he had always at hand a never failing spring of fresh water. "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Are not we guilty of the same folly as the Jews, when we seek for happiness or for comfort, from the world and its vain idols, and forsake that God who alone can bestow them upon us? Most truly shall we find in the time of need, that they are but broken cisterns to which we have trusted.

It may surprise many English people to find "the dew of Heaven," ("Genesis, xxvii. 28.") and the "drops that water the earth," spoken of by the sacred writers, as among God's best gifts, and employed as emblems of spiritual blessings; but the night dews afford a very important refreshment to the country in hot climates; they are often so abundant, particularly in summer, that the earth is soaked with them, as if violent rain had fallen. Irwin, in his account of a voyage up the Red sea, when on

the Arabian shores, says, "difficult as we find it to keep ourselves cool in the day time, it is no easy matter to defend our bodies from the damps of the night, when the wind is loaded with the heaviest dews that ever fell; we lie exposed to the whole weight of the dews, and the cloaks in which we wrap ourselves, are as wet in the morning as if they had been dipped into the sea."

We all know how important rain is to produce "fruitful seasons," yet the delight caused by "the sound of rain," ("1 Kings, xviii. 41.) after a long period of burning heat, can only be fully felt by those, who have witnessed the effects of an eastern summer. * An interesting writer observes on this subject, "the very affecting images of Scripture, which compare the shortness of human life to the rapid decay of grass and flowers, are scarcely understood in this country. But let any one visit the beautiful plain of Scio, or any other part of the East, in the month of May, and return to it towards the end of June, and he will perceive, the force and beauty of these allusions. In May an appearance of fresh verdure and rich luxuriance every where delights the sight, but a month or six weeks later, how changed is the entire scenery. The beauty is gone, the grass is withered, the flower is faded; a brown desert has taken place of a delicious garden." To

* *Rev. J. Hartley*

the inhabitants of such a country the expression of the Psalmist, "Thou sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance, and refreshedst it when it was weary," (Ps. lxxviii. 9.) would convey a most delightful idea of relief and refreshment in time of trouble; and often has God's inheritance, the Church of Christ; in later times had reason to say the same thing; when, weary and faint with the struggle it has had to maintain, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, some unexpected relief has been sent from above, like the cooling drops of rain which refresh the parched country.

The change produced in the heart of man by the preaching of the Gospel, is beautifully compared by Isaiah (xxxv,) to the effect of waters breaking forth in a desert; so that what was before a barren, unprofitable waste, becomes a blooming garden. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Where true, vital religion prevails, all the cold, hard, selfish feelings are subdued, and the heart of the real Christian is filled with love and charity to his fellow creatures, which, like a fertilizing stream in the midst of a desert, will make its presence known by the blessings it spreads around, wherever its influence extends.

As water is the most important of all things, in a

hot climate, for preserving the health and comfort of the body, it is employed by the sacred writers, as an image or emblem of God's Holy Spirit, by which alone the health of the soul can be preserved.

“ For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing, upon thine offspring.” (Isai. xlv. 3.)

One of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament in which water is mentioned in a figurative sense is Isai. lv. 1. “ Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat, yea come, buy wine, and milk, without money, and without price.” It is the custom in the East for people to undertake pilgrimages, or journeys, sometimes of great length and through burning deserts, to visit any spot which they consider particularly sacred ; and as they are sure to arrive weary and thirsty, we are told that a number of water carriers are always in readiness, to sell “ a cup of cold water,” to those who are so much in want of it ; and that sometimes a charitable man will employ them, to give it at his expense, to the most needy of the pilgrims. Such a scene is most probably alluded to in the passage just quoted. We read Deut. xvi. 16. that the Jews were commanded by the Law of Moses, to appear before the

Lord, three times every year, at the principal feasts; and, as many of them had to travel from a considerable distance to Jerusalem, we may fancy them, as soon as they reached the top of the high hill on which the Temple stood, hastening to relieve their thirst, from the supplies provided by the water sellers. But the venerable Prophet, standing in the court of the Temple, eager to turn the thoughts of the crowd to their more important spiritual wants, exclaims as they press forward; Ho! every one that thirsteth after salvation, come ye to Christ, the fountain of living waters. You need not here have any thing to offer of your own, but a sense of your wants and your unworthiness; come, the poorest and humblest among you, buy the richest spiritual gifts of God, "buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." Christ repeated this gracious invitation, and applied these words to himself and to the Gospel blessings, when, "in the last day, that great day of the feast, he stood and cried saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John vii. 37.) And at the conclusion of the Holy Scriptures, we find the offers of salvation repeated in the same words; "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

The use of Water in baptism in reference to its purifying nature, by which is represented the

mystical washing* of the soul from sin, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, is too well understood to need explanation. As baptism was first instituted among the inhabitants of a hot climate, where there was not the same risk of hurting the health from standing, or being plunged in water, as there is with us, we find that baptism was first administered by immersion, or plunging; but since the water is only employed as a sign, it cannot be of any importance as to the quantity of it which is used.

Another, and perhaps the most remarkable, passage, in which water is mentioned in a figurative sense in the Holy Scriptures, is in the 22d of Revelations. There the greatest of all blessings—even eternal life, which has its source in God and Christ is represented by “a river of water proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Free from all sin and defilement, from all falsehood and deceit, it is “pure,” and “clear as crystal.” Its course is not disturbed by rocks and shoals, by cares and sorrows; but it will flow on for ever, calmly and tranquilly, in the midst of uninterrupted peace, and health, of soul and body; for “on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruits every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

* See *Baptismal Office*.

BOTTLES.

We find *bottles* frequently mentioned in the Bible, in a way which shows that they could not have been like the glass bottles we use.

In the description of the way in which the messengers from the Gibeonites disguised themselves, when they wished to make Joshua suppose they had come from a great distance, and induce him to make a treaty with them, instead of destroying them among the other people of the land, it is said, they "took wine bottles, old, rent, and bound up." (Josh. ix. 4.)

Before the invention of glass, bottles made of skin were used by many nations; they are still the sort most commonly used in the East; and some of the wines made in Spain, are always put into bottles made of skin in preference to any other. Bruce describes in the following manner, the way in which the Arabs make a large kind of bottle called Girba; he says, "a Girba is an ox's skin squared, and the edges sewed together very skilfully, with a double seam, which does not let the water out, much like an english cricket ball. An opening is left at the top of the girba, in the same manner as the bung hole of a cask. Around this the skin is gathered to

the size of a large handful, which, when the girba is full of water, is tied round with whip cord. These girbas generally hold about sixty gallons each, and two of them are the load of a camel. They are then besmeared on the outside with grease, as well to hinder the water from oozing through, as to prevent its being evaporated (or dried up) by the heat of the sun, which in fact happened to us twice, so as to put us in the greatest danger of perishing by thirst." Smaller bottles for common purposes are made of the skins of goats; when the skin is properly dressed, the places where the legs were, is strongly sewed up, and the opening for the neck of the animal, serves as the neck of the bottle. Such bottles might easily become "old and rent," (or torn,) and require to be "bound up," at the end of a long journey.

In the book of Job xxxii. 19. Elihu describing his great difficulty in restraining himself from speaking in answer to Job's three friends, compares himself to a bottle ready to burst, from the fermentation of the wine which has no vent. This might easily be the case with a leathern bottle; for though leather will bear to be stretched to a certain degree, it will burst or tear at last, if it is stretched too much; so that it would be necessary to leave the bottle open, while the new wine was in a state of fermentation. Dr. Walsh, in his account of an excursion among

the Greek Islands says, "While lying off Tenedos, (one of these islands) a boat came along-side with wine. It was contained in goat skins sewed up, and for the first time I saw this eastern scripture custom. One of the skins had burst from the fermentation of the new wine, so that we found that the consequence of putting "new wine into old bottles," was as common now as formerly."

All travellers in the East provide themselves with skins filled with water, before they set off on journies across the deserts, or through countries where water is scarce. A few goat skins to hold milk or water, form part of the furniture of every Arab tent; and a small skin of milk, is kept expressly for the refreshment of strangers and travellers, as it was in the days when Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, "opened a bottle of milk," and gave some to Sisera to drink. (Judg. iv. 19.)

The tents of the Arabs are seldom pitched very close to the wells; and the women are often much distressed, with carrying the long water skins on their backs, which is their business every evening, for the supply of their families, when asses are not to be procured for this purpose.*

The City of Bagdad is supplied with drinking water from the river Tigris; "it is brought to the houses in goat skins."†

* *Burckhardt.*

† *Buckingham.*

Skins are also used as churns in the following manner; the milk is first put into a goat's skin, without being scalded, and a small space is left in this for air and motion; the skin is then hung to a peg in the side of the wall, or to a sort of shears made by three poles, in the open court, it is then pushed to and fro until its motion in the skin has been enough to churn it, when the watery part is thrown off, and the thick part stirred by the hand, till it becomes as thick as is required. Customs have changed so little in the East since the earliest times, that we may naturally suppose this was the way in which the butter, that made part of the refreshment Abraham offered to the Angels, was made.

David says Ps. cxix. 83. "I am become like a bottle in the smoke." From what follows it seems that at the time he wrote this Psalm, he was suffering from the persecutions of his enemies, and his meaning in the comparison is, that as a leathern bottle would become shrivelled, and wrinkled, and shrunk in the heat of smoke or fire, in the same way his body was wasted, and his appearance changed by sorrow and trouble, which had dried up the natural moisture of his body, so that his skin was shrivelled, and he had lost both his color and strength. But in the midst of his distress, the Psalmist seeks for comfort, where alone it could be found. "Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, when wilt thou com-

fort me?" And neither troubles nor bodily infirmities make him forget his duty to God. "Yet do I not forget thy statutes."

In another passage (Ps. lvi. 8.) David says; "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." This probably refers to a custom, which is known to have prevailed in later times among the Romans, of putting tears into small urns or bottles, made of earth or glass, of different shapes and colors; and these were placed on tombs or sepulchres as a memorial of the grief and affliction of the surviving friends. It is the custom in Persia at the present day, in meetings on sorrowful occasions, for a priest to go round to each person at the height of his grief, with a piece of cotton in his hand, with which he carefully collects the falling tears, and then squeezes them into a bottle, preserving them with the greatest care. Some Persians have an absurd belief that a few of these tears will prove a remedy in sickness, when all other medicines fail, and it is for this purpose they collect them.* This, however, was certainly not David's meaning in wishing his tears to be collected; for after saying, "Put Thou my tears into thy bottle," he adds, "Are not these things noted in thy book!" All my griefs and all my sorrows are known to Thee O Lord! let my tears, I beseech Thee, be continually before Thee, to excite thy tender compassion towards me, and to plead with Thee to grant me the relief I stand in need of.

* *Morier.*

SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS.

One of the principal employments of the Patriarchs in the earliest times, as well as of the Jews in later days, was the care of sheep, which formed a very important part of their property; and some of the persons mentioned in the Bible, as most distinguished by the favor of God, and by being admitted to immediate revelation from Heaven, followed the humble duties of a shepherd.

Moses who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," (Acts vii. 22.) did not disdain to keep the flock of his father-in-law Jethro; and we read (Exod. iii. 1.) that he was employed in this way, when the Angel of God appeared to him in the burning bush, and commanded him to go to Pharaoh, and to desire him to let the Israelites leave Egypt. To human wisdom, it would have seemed more probable, that such a request would have been granted, if Moses had made it, when he was living in high favor at court, as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter; but the great "Shepherd of Israel," who led his "people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron," (Ps. lxxvii. 20.) made his own power known, by the weakness of the instruments he employed; and Moses was, probably, withdrawn from

the bustle of the world, to the quiet, retired life of a shepherd, that he might be acquiring or strengthening the pious and meek disposition, which fitted him for governing "a faithless and stubborn generation." (Ps. lxxviii. 9.)

In after times, when the Jews were settled in their own land, and were in danger of being conquered by the Philistines, whom they had allowed to remain in the land, contrary to the commands of God, "He chose David his servant, and took him away from the sheep-folds," (Ps. lxxviii. 71.) to be the deliverer of Israel. A simple shepherd lad, not trusting to his "own sword" or his "own bow," but looking to God for strength, was enabled to conquer the giant Goliath, who had so long defied Saul and his whole army. We read (1 Sam. xvii. 40.) that when David went to meet Goliath, "he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into a shepherd's bag; and his sling was in his hand." It is interesting to find, that the same weapon is still used by the Arabs who now inhabit the Holy Land; where, we are told, "the shepherds who tend (or take care of) flocks at a distance from the camp, are armed with short lances, and also with slings, which they use very dexterously in throwing stones as large as a man's fist.*"

* *Burckhardt.*

It was to "shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night," (Luke ii. 8.) that angels were sent, to announce the glad tidings of the birth of Christ; and to these humble men while still on earth, was granted the glorious privilege of hearing the songs of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

Immediate revelation from Heaven has long ceased, but God still speaks to our hearts by his Holy Spirit; and from these examples we may learn, that the state in which He best loves to find his servants, is not one of idle, useless contemplation, but in the active, contented discharge of the duties of their station, however humble it may be.

Many of the comparisons, and much of the figurative language of the Bible, are taken from the nature of sheep, and the business of a shepherd.

A lamb without spot or blemish, being the most perfect emblem of innocence, was appointed under the law as a sacrifice, to typify or represent beforehand, the sacrifice of the death of Christ, the spotless victim who offered himself up as a sin-offering for the whole human race, and is therefore called, "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) The uncomplaining meekness and patience of our Saviour, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered

he threatened not," (1 Peter ii. 23.) are compared by the Prophet Isaiah to the gentleness of sheep, which when injured do not attempt to defend themselves. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isai. liii. 7.)

The constant inclination of sinful man to wander from the path of duty, is described by the restless, wandering disposition of sheep. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." (Isai. liii. 6.) And in the confession of sins at the beginning of our church service, we say with our lips, though it is to be feared not always with our hearts, "We have erred (or wandered) and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep." †

David who was well acquainted with the constant watchfulness, and attention to the welfare of his flock, which is required in a shepherd, took delight in considering his Almighty Protector as his shepherd, under whose care he felt confident that all his wants would be supplied." The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack (or want) nothing;" (Ps. xxiii. 1.) and as he knew that a shepherd would not take his flock through rough, difficult, or dangerous places, unless it were to lead them to the "green pastures," and "beside the waters of com-

fort," so he felt convinced, (and in this we should all strive to imitate him) that the cares, and sorrows, and difficulties, through which it may please God that we should pass in this life, are mercifully designed, to bring us to the blessed regions of Heavenly happiness.

The tenderness and care with which Christ receives and encourages, the humblest and weakest of his followers, are beautifully compared by Isaiah to those of a shepherd, for the young and weak of his flock. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isai. xl. 11.) Our Saviour himself encouraged his disciples to trust in his protection, by tenderly calling them his "little flock." "Fear not little flock, it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke xii. 32.)

Every reader of the Bible must be well acquainted with the beautiful parable of the lost sheep, in which the long-suffering mercy and patience of the Redeemer, in seeking to reclaim the wandering sinner, are compared to the anxious, unwearied diligence of a shepherd, in trying to find the sheep which has gone astray. "And when he has found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke xv. 4. 5.)

There are also many passages in Scripture, in which faithful or negligent ministers of God's Word, and rulers of the people, are compared to good or bad shepherds; the whole of the 34th chapter of Ezekiel is a remarkable instance of this kind.

In John x. 1. our Saviour describing false teachers says, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." The sheepfolds here referred to, were, most probably, like those described in the following words. "We saw boys driving the flocks into stone enclosures, for their greater safety during the night. I had at first taken these enclosures for the remains of old buildings, but on examination, I found they were only sheepfolds, made of loose stones, with a door of entrance, and the enclosing walls were just high enough to prevent the animals getting out."*

The same traveller says, that he observed some shepherds in the road, who uttered a rough sound, when the sheep came to them one after the other. (John x. 3.)

We are so much accustomed to see the shepherd walking *after* his sheep to drive them, that the description, "He goeth *before* them, and the sheep follow him," (v. 4.) seems rather strange to us. But this is the case in many countries; the shepherd

* *Buckingham.*

walks first, and the sheep follow him, while the dogs walk sometimes on one side sometimes on the other, and occasionally after the sheep, to see that all are safe and in their proper places.

We are indebted to Mr. Hartley for the following remarks on this subject. "I have met with a Scripture illustration which interests me. Having had my attention directed last night to the words (John x. 3.) "The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name," &c. I asked my man if it were usual in Greece to give names to the sheep. He told me that it was, and that the sheep obeyed the shepherd when he called them by their names. This morning I had the opportunity of trying the truth of this remark. Passing by a flock of sheep, I asked the shepherd the same question which I had put to my servant, and he gave me the same answer. I then told him to call one of his sheep, he did so, and it instantly left its pasturage and its companions, and ran up to the hand of the shepherd, with signs of pleasure and a ready obedience, which I had never before observed in any animal. It is also true of the sheep in this country, "A stranger will they not follow but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers."

The shepherd told me that many of his sheep are still *wild*, that they had not learned their names, but that by teaching they would all learn them.

The others which knew their names he called *tame*. How natural an application to the state of the human race does this description of the sheep admit of! The Good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep, but many of them are still wild; they know not his voice. Others have learned to obey his call and to follow him; and we rejoice to think, that even to those not yet in his fold, the words are applicable; "Them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

SEPULCHRES, &c.

Since the time when "sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," (Rom. v. 12.) it has been the sad office of the living to "bury their dead out of their sight;" and different plans for doing this, have been adopted in different countries.

The earliest account we meet with on this subject in the Bible, is the history of the purchase Abraham made from the sons of Heth, of the field and cave of Machpelah, as a burying place for Sarah his wife; (Gen. xxiii. 17.) and this became the burying place of each of the Patriarchs, as in his turn "he was gathered to his fathers."

In the rocky, mountainous country of Judea, where there are many natural caverns, and others can easily be hollowed out, this appears to have been the usual plan for disposing of dead bodies; and these sepulchral caverns are described by travellers in the Holy Land as very numerous.

The Turks, who have possession of Judea, pay very great respect to the burial places of the Patriarchs; and as they treat the Jews with the greatest contempt, they will not allow one of them to go near the tomb of Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob,

(Gen. xxxv. 19.) which is a spot they hold in particular veneration.*

A traveller† who has written an account of a visit to the Holy Land, after describing many other places in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, says, "The next remarkable spot we visited was the sepulchre usually known as the Tombs of the Kings."

Going out of Jerusalem by the Damascus gate, the party rode among olive trees and through cultivated enclosures for about three quarters of a mile, when they reached a number of sepulchres hewn in the rocks around, containing one, two, or three chambers each. The entrances to most of them were of a square or oblong shape. On arriving at the Tombs of the Kings, about a quarter of a mile further on, the travellers descended through a passage cut in the rock, into an open square, having the appearance of a quarry, (or place from which marble, stone, &c. are taken,) one side of which was quite smooth and perpendicular, and in this side a door-way is cut, about ten yards in length and four in depth. Over the door-way there are the remains of beautifully sculptured festoons of fruit and flowers. On the left hand is the entrance of the sepulchral chambers, so filled with rubbish that the only means of getting through it, is by lying down and creeping like a lizard; and in this way the travellers were

* *Carne.* † *Visit to Palestine and Lebanon.*

conducted into a square chamber having three doorways on different sides, leading to other chambers, being in all six or seven in number, cut with the greatest exactness. In the walls, which were perfectly smooth, niches of different sizes and shapes were hollowed out to receive dead bodies, and places had been sunk in the floor, of about the size of a coffin, for the same purpose; broken pieces of sculptured ornaments lay scattered about. It is not known what kings were buried in these sepulchres.

The same writer gives an account of another excursion from Jerusalem, to visit the sepulchres that bear the names of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and Zacharias. That of Absalom is described as the most conspicuous; the lower part of it is square, and it stands quite separate from the rock out of which it is hewn; on each of its sides are three small pillars and other ornaments; and above this lower part, rises a square piece of masonry; the whole being crowned with a high dome which ends in a point. There is an entrance to a sepulchre in the rock immediately behind this tomb, but it is blocked up with stones and rubbish. The next in order is the Tomb of Jehoshaphat, which is altogether hollowed out of the rock; its entrance is ornamented with pillars and carved work, but is so high in the rock that it is necessary to clamber up to get at it. The last is the Tomb of Zacharias; this is almost exactly like that of

Absalom, the only difference being in the ornaments. Though the solid part of these sepulchres is in a very old style of building, which the Israelites probably learnt when they were in Egypt, as it is like some of the remains of the heavy Egyptian buildings, of which we have engravings, yet the ornaments and pillars are in a style which was not known in Judea, for many ages after the time of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and Zacharias; and this had made some persons doubt whether these are really their sepulchres. But this circumstance, the writer observes, makes these tombs particularly interesting, as it may explain the latter part of the 23d chapter of St. Matthew. Our Saviour, there upbraiding the Pharisees with being guided by the same persecuting, unbelieving spirit which had induced their fathers to shed the blood of the Prophets, though they pretended to have a great respect for the memory of those holy persons, uses the words, "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish (or ornament) the sepulchres of the righteous;" and then declares, "Upon you shall come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias the Son of Barathias," as if the tomb of the latter had been in our Saviour's mind at the time, and the ornamental pillars and carved work, which had been lately added, weré the garnishing alluded to.

This description of the chambers cut out in the rock to receive dead bodies, explains the expression in Pro. vii. 27. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death ;” but the death here spoken of refers to one more terrible than the death of the body—the eternal destruction of the soul, caused by listening to the seductions of a depraved woman ; the end of “the pleasures of sin,” which are but “for a season,” (Heb. xi. 25.) and that a very short one.

The custom of placing dead bodies in niches round the sides of large sepulchral caves or vaults, is alluded to in several passages in the Bible ; as in Ezekiel xxxii. 23. “Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave ;” and the expression at verse 27. “Which are gone down to hell (or the grave) with their weapons of war ; and they have laid their swords under their heads,” refers to an ancient custom still observed in the same country. Sir J. Chardin says, “In Mingrelia they all sleep with their swords under their heads, and their other weapons by their sides ; and they bury them in the same manner, their arms being placed in the same position.” There is also a very beautiful passage in Isaiah (chap. xiv.) of the same description. The fall of Babylon is there foretold, and after describing the pride which made its kings say, “I will ascend above the heights of the

clouds; I will be like the most High," the Prophet immediately adds—what must be the end of all human boasting—"Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

It was most probably one of these niches, in the cave of Machpelah, that Jacob meant, when he made Joseph swear, "In the grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me." (Gen. 50. 5.) For we read in the same chapter that "his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah."

All persons of wealth and importance among the Jews used to have sepulchres belonging to themselves or their families; and it was only those of the lowest order, who were buried in a place of public burial; it was therefore a great indignity to a prophet, to "cast his dead body into the graves of the common people." (Jer. xxvi. 23.)

The tombs in which the demoniacs had their dwelling, mentioned Matt. viii. 28. and Mark v. 3. were most probably such sepulchral tombs or caverns as have been described, which often afford shelter to travellers and wandering Arabs, and would be a very convenient retreat for desperate characters. In some parts of the East, people are reduced by misery and poverty to seek for refuge in such places, and in the ruins of buildings which were once splendid tombs,

A traveller* gives the following account of some of the sepulchral caverns in Egypt which are inhabited in this way.

“The Libyan mountain on the north-west side of Thebes contains the tombs; they perforate (or pierce) the mountain from top to bottom; the lowest are the most highly finished; these are inhabited by the Arabs, about three hundred of whom miserably exist in these sepulchres of pride. I attended an old inhabitant of a tomb for several days; he had a bad fever, of which his son had died a few days before my arrival. I had the good fortune to cure this old man, and his gratitude was unbounded; I was in the habit of sitting with him daily, on my return from my researches in the tombs. His dwelling was in the most spacious chamber of a superb sepulchre, the walls were covered with ancient paintings, the roof was supported by four magnificent pillars, and the lamp which feebly lighted this gloomy chamber, was made of the cover of an alabaster vase. Various ancient utensils furnished his cupboard, and the screen which separated the women’s alcove from the common chamber, was formed principally of the linen cloth torn from the mummies.”

During the war which the Greeks carried on to free themselves from the power of the Turks, whole families were at times obliged to seek shelter in places

* *Madden.*

of the same sort; and many persons were even found starved to death in them.

It is said of the Prophet Samuel, that he was buried "in his house at Ramah," (1 Sam. xxv. 1.) and Joab "was buried in his own house in the wilderness." (1 Kings ii. 34.) These passages Mr. Jowett thinks may be explained by a custom which still prevails in some parts of Palestine, and which he describes in the following manner. "While walking out one evening with the son of my host, to see a garden belonging to his father, he pointed out to me, near it, a small, solid, stone building, which appeared to be a house; very solemnly, adding—"the Sepulchre of our family." It had neither door nor window. He then directed my attention to a considerable number of buildings of the same sort, at a distance; which, to the eye are exactly like houses; but which are, in fact, family mansions for the dead. They have a most melancholy appearance, which made him shudder while he explained their use."

Among other remarkable tombs in the East, are those of Mordecai and Esther at Hamadan, formerly called Ecbatana, in Persia. Great reverence is shewn for these tombs by the Jews of the surrounding country; the keys of the building are kept by their chief priest, and pilgrimages are made to them. The following translation of the hebrew inscriptions on

the tombs, is given by a traveller* who visited them.

Hebrew Inscription on a marble slab in the Sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai.

“Mordecai, beloved and honored by a king, was great and good. His garments were those of a Sovereign. Ahasuerus covered him with his rich dress, and also placed a golden chain around his neck. The city of Susa rejoiced at his honors, and his high fortune became the glory of the Jews.”

Inscription around the Sarcophagus of Mordecai.

“It is said by David, preserve me, O God! I am now in thy presence—I have cried at the gate of Heaven, that thou art my God; and what goodness I have received came from thee, O Lord!”

“Those whose bodies are now beneath in this earth, when animated by thy mercy were great; and whatever happiness was bestowed upon them in this world, came from thee, O God! “Their grief and sufferings were many, at the first; but they became happy, because they always called upon thy holy name in their miseries. Thou liftedst me up, and I became powerful. Thine enemies sought to destroy me in the early times of my life; but the shadow of thy hand was upon me, and covered me, as a tent, from their wicked purposes!—MORDECAI.

* *Sir Robert Kerr Porter.*

Inscription around the Sarcophagus of Esther the Queen.

“I praise thee, O God, that thou hast created me! I know that my sins merit punishment, yet I hope for mercy at thy hands; for whenever I call upon thee, thou art with me; thy holy presence secures me from all evil.

“My heart is at ease, and my fear of thee increases. My life became through thy goodness at the last full of peace.

“O God! do not shut out my soul from thy divine presence. Those whom thou lovest never feel the torments of hell. Lead me, O merciful Father, to the life of life, that I may be filled with the Heavenly fruits of Paradise!—ESTHER.”

We read (Gen. 1. 2.) that “Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father, and the physicians embalmed Israel.” This was the usual custom with the Egyptians, and they were so skilful in embalming, that dead bodies, (called mummies) are known to have been preserved in this manner for two or three thousand years; and many of them have been brought to this country, and are to be seen in collections of curiosities. The first process was to take out the brains and the bowels, filling up their places with spices and drugs; the whole body was anointed for thirty days with oil of cedar, myrrh, cinnamon, &c. by which means it was preserved entire without so much as losing the hair, and

without any signs of putrefaction. It was then put into salt of nitre for forty days, and last of all was wrapped in linen swaddling-bands dipped in myrrh, and rubbed with a certain gum which the Egyptians used instead of glue. The body was then restored to the relations, who placed it in a coffin, on the lid of which a likeness of the deceased was painted, together with other embellishments suited to his rank, and was kept either in some repository in their houses, or in such a tomb as has been described.

Most likely Joseph complied with the custom of Egypt in this instance, because it might have been considered a want of respect to his father, had he not caused him to be embalmed; besides which, he might fear that he should otherwise endanger the health of the "very great company," who followed Jacob's remains more than two hundred miles to their resting place; but except Jacob and Joseph, who also died in Egypt, we do not meet with any account in the Bible, of embalming in the Egyptian manner, though spices were used in burying, as we read 2 Chro. xvi. 14. where it is said of Asa, "And they buried him in his own sepulchre, which he had made for himself, in the city of David; and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices, prepared by the apothecary's art,"

The practice of embalming is referred to in the following Proverb. "A good name is better than precious ointment." This was the ointment used in embalming to preserve dead bodies from corruption; but a good name preserves a man's memory and makes it grateful to posterity, which is a far greater benefit than that of a precious ointment, which serves only to keep a dead body from putrefaction.*

It is the custom in the East, for a corpse to be carried to the grave on an open board or bier. A traveller † says, "The Greeks make almost as much toilet for a funeral as for a wedding. When the deceased is young and pretty, she is decked out in her gayest apparel, and not unfrequently has her eyebrows stained, and a quantity of paint spread upon her cheeks, to cheat death for a few short hours of his lividness; she is tricked out in jewels; and this mockery is made still more revolting, by the fact that she is then paraded through the streets, followed by her female relations, who shriek, weep, and bewail themselves. At the grave side all the finery is stripped from the corpse; the friends carry it away, and the poor remains, that were only a few instants before so lavishly adorned, are placed in the earth, of which they are so soon to form a part."

* *Tillotson.*

† *Miss Pardoe.*

Another writer* observes, "The Greeks carry their dead to their burial in their best clothes, without covering, on an open bier, and the corpse resembles a man lying on a couch. (or bed.) I seldom went out, that I did not meet one so carried through the streets of Pera, attended by one or two priests, holding lighted candles. I joined one procession. When arrived at the grave, the body was taken out, stripped, and no covering left but the shirt, cap, and stockings. It was then placed in the pit, with its hands crossed on its breast."

It was no doubt on a bier of this kind, that the young man at Nain was being carried to his grave, when He who himself wept at the loss of a friend, had compassion on the tears of a widowed mother deprived of her only son, and restored him to life. When Jesus "came and touched the bier, they that bare him stood still, and he said, young man I say unto thee arise; and he that was dead sat up and began to speak." (Luke vii, 14. 15.)

It is not usual in the East to bury in coffins. The grave is lined with broad flat stones, and another is placed over the top before the earth is thrown on it, forming a sort of vault in which the corpse is laid, wrapped in a winding sheet.† This custom answers exactly to the description of the place and manner, in which Lazarus was buried. "The grave

* *Dr. Walsh.* † *Russell's History of Aleppo.*

was a cave, and a stone lay upon it;" (John xi. 38.) and Lazarus was not enclosed in a coffin, but only "bound hand and foot with grave clothes." In the history of Ananias, who was struck dead in the very act of lying, "not unto men but unto God," (Acts v. 4.) we read that "the young men came in, wound him up, (most probably in his own clothes) and carried him out, and buried him" immediately, without waiting for any preparation of a coffin; and the same with his wife Saphira, when she, "not knowing what was done, came in," and repeating the wicked lie her husband had told, met with the same dreadful punishment. "The young men came in, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband." It is not surprising, that "great fear came upon all the church, (that is, all the Christians) and upon as many as heard these things;" for, within the short space of three hours, two persons in the enjoyment of life and activity, had sinned, been struck dead in the midst of their sin, and had been laid in the grave, never more to be seen by the friends and companions from whom they had so lately parted; an awful warning to future ages!

Shocking and disgusting as the custom of dressing out dead bodies may appear to us, who are not used to such sights, we often see what is little better, or rather what is in some respects worse—when those whose age or infirmities, have brought them to the

brink of the grave, are still as fond of shewy dress, and as anxious to deck out their poor weak bodies, in all sorts of finery, as they were when youth and health, made folly and vanity more excusable.

It is still the custom in many parts of the East to employ professional, or hired, mourners to howl for the dead. These persons also go at stated times to the grave, where they call the deceased by all the affectionate names they can think of, asking him why he was so cruel as to leave his friends, and pouring forth such "lamentation and mourning and woe," that it is scarcely possible to believe their grief is not sincere.

This custom is referred to in many parts of the Bible. In Jeremiah ix. 17. we read, "Thus saith the Lord; consider ye, and call for the mourning women that they may come, and send for the cunning (or skilful) women that they may come."

In some places while the preparations for the funeral are being made, the minstrels and pipers still play mournful tunes, and the people make lamentations with their voices, as they did at the time when Christ raised the Ruler's daughter. (Matt. ix. 23.) It was, most probably, to this custom our Saviour referred Matt. xi. 16. where he compares the perverse spirit of the Jews, who found fault equally with John the Baptist, for shunning society, and with himself for joining in it, to the way-wardness

of children playing together, who were equally dissatisfied with their companions, whether they played a gay tune for them to dance to, or imitated the sad music used at funerals. "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not wept."

At the moment of a man's death, all the women who are in the room give notice by violent shrieks, which are repeated by all the females in the house, so as frequently to be heard at a great distance;* (Eze. xxiv. 17.) and "the mourners go about the streets" (Eccles. xii. 5.) with the same signs of sorrow, tearing their hair and beating their breasts on their way to the grave. It was "nigh to the gate of the city," that Christ met the widow's son being "carried out;" (Luke vii.) and it is still the custom in almost all parts of the East, to have the burial grounds outside the walls of the towns.

We read that the Jews were forbidden to disfigure themselves in honor of the dead, by shaving their heads or beards, or by making any wounds in their flesh, as was the practice of the idolatrous nations around them, (Lev. xxi. 5.) and is still in part practiced by the Arabs in the present day. A traveller † describing his visit to an Arab camp says, "We observed many of the old women and not few of the young too, with their cheeks scratched and

* *Russell's History of Aleppo.* † *Mc Michael.*

their faces covered with blood, and were informed that they had mourned the day before for the death of a female belonging to the family of the Sheik." How different are such frantic expressions of sorrow, from the resigned, submissive grief of a christian, who, though authorised by his Saviour's example to weep for the loss of a friend, is yet taught not to mourn as those without hope (1 Thess. iv. 13.) of a blessed and eternal re-union in heaven, with the dear friends from whom he is parted on earth.

When David was mourning for the death of Abner, it is said that, "All the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day;" (2 Sam. iii. 35.) this and "the cup of consolation for their father or their mother," mentioned Jer. xvi. 7. are supposed to refer to a custom still observed by some Eastern Christians, of sending provisions to those who are mourning the death of a relation, from the idea that they are rendered unable to attend to their own wants by their grief. The writer of the book of Tobit refers to this custom, when, among other good exhortations to his Son, he directs him to "pour out his bread on the burial of the just." (Tobit iv. 17.)

The accounts which have now been given, of the customs observed in Eastern countries in disposing of the dead, derive their greatest interest, from serving to explain the circumstances related by the evangelists, as attending on that wonderful act of

Divine love and condescension, by which death was deprived of its sting, and the grave of its victory; (1 Cor. xv. 55.) so that it may be said to the Christian in the words of an excellent poet,*

— follow Christ and all is paid;

His death your life insures.

Think on the grave where He was laid,

And calm descend to yours.

It was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah liii. 9. that Christ should "make his grave with the rich;" yet when he was hanging on the cross between two thieves, how little probable would it appear that He, who while He was alive had "not where to lay his head," (Matt. viii. 20.) should have any other burial than that of a common criminal. But God, in whose hand are the hearts of men, can bring about his designs by means that would seem the least probable, to poor weak-sighted mortals; and He gave courage to Joseph a rich man, who was already a disciple of Christ, but "secretly for fear of the Jews," (John xix. 38.) to go "boldly to Pilate and crave the body of Jesus," that he might lay it in his own new tomb, at a time when all the other disciples were afraid of owning, that they knew any thing of their Master, though they had, but a few hours before, confidently

* *Cowper.*

promised that they would never deny him. (Matt. xxvi. 35.)

Joseph was assisted in his pious undertaking by Nicodemus, who, we are told, took with him "a mixture of myrrh and aloes about an hundred pound weight;" and this is a very important circumstance, for had it been possible that Christ still retained the least breath of life, after his side had been pierced with a spear, the strong smell of such a quantity of myrrh and spices, shut up in a small place, must have suffocated him.

David foretold that God would not suffer his Holy One to see corruption; (Ps. xvi. 10.) and we may remark how many means were employed to prevent the slightest suspicion of it. Not only was Christ raised the third day, but a large quantity of spices was buried with him, and He was laid in "a new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid," (John xix. 41.) cut in the living rock, where neither damp, nor any thing that assists corruption could make its way.

As the sepulchre was not made of brick, or stones and mortar, but was a mass of solid rock, it could not be suspected that the disciples, or any other persons, had made their way into it, and carried off the body of Jesus by some underground passage, while the guards slept; and they could not get in by the door-way, as Joseph had filled it up with a

large stone, which had no doubt been prepared for this purpose, as it fitted the door-way so exactly, that the seal put on it by the Jews, joined it to the rest of the sepulchre. (Matt. xxvii. 66.)

The disciples did not yet understand what the rising from the dead, of which their Master had so often spoken to them, meant; and when they saw the tomb closed with the stone, they gave up all their hopes, "that it was He who should have redeemed Israel." (Luke xxiv. 21.) But the stone, which seemed to shut their beloved Master from their sight till the general resurrection, soon served as a seat for the Angel, who told the holy women that the Son of God was risen from the dead. And thus was the prophecy fulfilled. "He shall swallow up death in victory." (Isai. xxv. 8.)

The Holy Sepulchre is still shewn to strangers at Jerusalem. A handsome church was built over it many ages ago, and this is visited every year by thousands of pilgrims, who go to offer up their prayers on this sacred spot, at the different festivals, particularly during Passion week, from the mistaken idea that they will be more acceptable to the Almighty if offered there, than in any other place. Many of these poor people have travelled from great distances, through all sorts of dangers and difficulties; but the disgraceful scenes they witness, must make all pious persons wish they had staid at home.

The Turks, who are masters of Jerusalem, make every one pay a small sum for going into the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the men whose business it is to collect this tax, sit smoking and drinking coffee inside the church, and behave with the greatest insolence to the poor pilgrims.

The Christians at Jerusalem are not Protestants, but Roman Catholics, Greeks, and Armenians, who observe the most superstitious practices in their worship, and feel such hatred and rivalry towards one another, that while service is being performed for those of one persuasion, the others seem bent on making a disturbance, talking, walking about, yelling, screaming, and making every possible noise; while the Turkish soldiers, trying to keep order, make so much use of their whips that they are heard all over the church. And all these disorders take place on the very spot where He was laid, who came to bring, "Peace on earth." A writer who describes being present at such a scene says, "My first feeling was that of indignant anger, which quickly changed into deep humiliation, at this painful sight of the degradation of my fellow creatures; and of humble gratitude to God, that I was born in a land where the light of true religion is shed abroad. But for his mercy we might have been like those wretched beings upon whom I gazed. "Lord how long?" was the question continually recurring to my mind.

How long shall it be before this wilderness shall blossom like the rose, beneath the unobscured beams of the Sun of Righteousness? Surely the curse of the Almighty does visibly rest upon Jerusalem; it is accursed alike in Christian, Jew, and Gentile.”*

* *Visit to Palestine and Lebanon.*

HOSPITALITY.

Some notice has been already taken, (see Tents) of the great resemblance between the manners of the Arabs in the present day, and those of the Patriarchs in former times, with respect to the hospitality they shew in receiving and entertaining strangers.

We are farther told that, "wealth alone does not give a Bedouin Arab any importance among his people. A poor man, if he be hospitable and liberal according to his means, sharing whatever he gets with his poor relations, and spending his last penny, if necessary, to honor his guest or relieve those who are in need, is held in much higher honor and respect among his tribe, than the wealthiest man among them, if he receives a guest with coldness, or lets his friends be in want. The richest chief lives like the meanest of his Arabs; they both eat every day of the same dishes, and never partake of any luxuries, except on the arrival of a stranger, when the host's tent is open to all his friends."*

This account may remind us of a passage in the Book of Job, in which he says, when trying to convince his "miserable comforters" that they were unjust in considering his sufferings a punishment for

* *Burckhardt.*

his sins, "If I have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof"—"The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller." (Job. xxxi. 17. 32.) meaning, that he had always been ready to shew the hospitality to the poor and to strangers, which was considered then, as it is now in those countries, a very important virtue.

The descriptions we meet with of the way in which some of the great Arab princes live, strikingly illustrate the manners of early times, when "Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and three score measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowls." (1 Kings iv. 22. 23.)

"On occasion of a marriage in the family of Saoud, (one of these princes) on the first day of the wedding entertainments, the bride's father treated all the guests, consisting of all the men of the town and a number of strangers, with the meat of forty camels and five hundred sheep. On the second day Saoud himself provided for his guests, one hundred she-camels, and eight hundred sheep. On the third day another of the brothers entertained the company. The number of persons belonging to his own household whom he fed daily, amounted to between four and five hundred. Saoud had 2000 horses and mares."

Another of the Arab princes has every year from his province, two hundred camel loads of corn, two hundred of dates, (a kind of fruit much used for food in the East) and money to the amount of about 300 pounds sterling; with this money he buys meat, butter and coffee, and the whole is expended in the entertainment of from two to three hundred strangers of all descriptions, who are received and fed every day in his public rooms.”*

The following interesting anecdote, will shew to what an extent the Arabs carry their ideas of hospitality. “Djerba a powerful chief now living in Mesopotamia, was many years ago encamped in the Eastern Desert, at a time when Arabia suffered most severely from dearth and famine. His own cattle, and that of most of his Arabs, had already perished from want of food, as no rain had fallen for a considerable time; at last there remained of all the cattle only two camels, which belonged to him. Under these circumstances, two respectable strangers alighted at his tent, and it was necessary to set a supper before them. No provisions of any kind were left in his own tent, and not a morsel could be procured from the tents of any of his Arabs; dry roots, and such shrubs as were to be found in the Desert, had for several days served as food to these people, and it was impossible to find a goat or a lamb for the

* *Burckhardt.*

strangers' entertainment. Djerba could not bear the thought of letting his guests pass the night without supper, or that they should go to sleep hungry. He therefore ordered that one of his two camels should be killed. To this his wife objected, saying that the children were too weak to follow the camp the next morning on foot, and that the camels were absolutely necessary for the removal of his own family, and some of his neighbour's children. "We are hungry it is true," said one of the guests, "but we own you are in the right; and we trust to the mercy of God for finding a supply of food somewhere to-morrow; yet," added he, "shall we be the cause that Djerba's enemies shall reproach him, for allowing a guest to be hungry in his tent?" This well meant remark distressed the noble minded chief; he went quietly out of the tent, laid hold of his mare, the only treasure he possessed besides his two camels, and throwing her on the ground, was engaged in tying her feet that he might kill her for his guests' supper, when he heard the noise of camels at a distance; he stopped, and soon had the pleasure of seeing two camels arrive loaded with rice, which had been sent him as a present from a more fortunate part of the country." Burckhardt, who relates this anecdote, had lived for some years among the Arabs, and had no doubt of its truth.

In the Eastern countries, where men's passions are very violent, and the laws little attended to, quarrels seldom end without bloodshed, and are handed down from father to son; but the fiercest enemies may rely with perfect safety on one another's hospitality, as affording a stronger pledge, or assurance, that they shall not receive any injury, than an oath could give. The relation of host and guest is held sacred, and always mentioned with reverence. A friendship which arises from former acquaintance, from having lived together in the same house, and especially from having shared one another's meals, is expressed by "having eaten bread and salt together." When there is a quarrel between any of the fiercer Arabs, they will not sit to eat at the same table with their enemy, as that would be considered a mark of their being reconciled.* For this reason David mentions it as a particular proof of baseness in the friend who deserted and injured him, that he was, "mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, *which did eat of my bread.*" (Ps. xli. 9.) It is supposed to be in reference to the same custom, as well as to the purifying nature of salt, that the expressions, "A covenant of salt," (Num. xviii. 19.) and, "The salt of the covenant of God," (Lev. ii. 13.) are used to signify a covenant or agreement which is not to be broken. (2 Chron. xiii. 5.)

* *Walsh.*

The following is one of the many instances mentioned by English travellers, of the kindness with which the Arabs have supplied their wants. Dr. Madden, to whom the circumstance occurred, was at the time, travelling in Egypt, and was much in want of provisions, not having been able to buy any in the villages through which he passed. "One evening," he says, "I was begging to buy a little milk; an old Arab observing that I had been refused, took my companion by the hand and said, Follow me; whatever I have, you shall have the half of it. He gave us about a gallon of milk, and a score of douro loaves. I offered him five or six piastres in return, (about three shillings) a sum, in Upper Egypt, equal to ten times as much in England, and he who knows the misery of the Arabs, can best understand the hospitable feeling, which could lead to the refusal of so large a sum. The old man stroked his white beard, "No, no," said he, "I do not want your money; why should I take any for a mouthful of bread, does it not all come from God?"

It is not only the Arabs of the Desert who shew this hospitality, but the Turks living in the towns and villages practise it equally; and this gives strangers the opportunity of noticing many illustrations of ancient manners. Buckingham relates that on arriving at a village in Mesopotamia, he found all the people assembled to partake of a feast in

honor of a wedding, and was invited to join the party. "It was at the close of afternoon prayers, that the company began to seat themselves on the ground, on each side of a long cloth spread out as a table. When the master of the feast came, I was seated, as the stranger guest, immediately beside him, and after grace had been said, I dipped my fingers into the same dish, and had the choicest bits placed before me by his own hands, as a mark of my being considered a friend, or favorite; for this is the highest honor that can be shewn any one at an Eastern feast."

The writer of this account observes, that this custom illustrates very forcibly the great baseness of Judas' treachery, for he went out and betrayed his Divine Master, directly after he had received the greatest mark of affection and honor from Him, at the feast of which they were partaking together; "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." (Matt. xxvi. 23.) When he had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas." (John xiii. 26.)

Knives, and forks are not used at meals in the East, the cookery is very different from ours, consisting chiefly of meat much stewed, or boiled in rice, which is easily pulled to pieces with the fingers, and every one helps himself by dipping his fingers into the dish. In the houses of wealthy persons, the servants, or slaves carry round a basin,

a jug of water, and a towel to each of the guests, both before and after the meal, to wash their hands; this is not done by dipping the hands into the water, but by pouring it on them; which circumstance explains the passage in 2 Kings iii. 11. "Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah;" meaning, that the former waited on Elijah as his servant or attendant.

In some places we are told that "it is still the custom to carry an embroidered towel to wipe the mouth and hands, hanging from the sash or girdle."* This may explain what is said of the manner in which our Saviour prepared to wash the disciples' feet; (John xiii. 4.) He laid aside his loose upper garment and bound the rest tight round him, as was customary for those who waited on others, making use most probably of such a towel, hanging from his girdle, as has been described. Instead of sitting on high chairs like ours, the inhabitants of the East all sit either on a carpet on the floor, or on cushions placed round the room; and the dishes for dinner are set down on the floor, in the tray in which they were brought into the room; seats of the same description were used in Judea in our Saviour's time; a sort of sofa, on which a person might be said to lie, as he leant forward close to any one to whom he wished to speak privately, "He then lying on

* *Buckingham.*

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Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord who is it?" (John xiii. 25.)

In the following description of a custom still observed by the Jews at their meals, we have another very interesting illustration of an act performed by our Saviour on "the night on which he was betrayed."

"Whenever I dined with Amslah (a Jew of Alexandria,) I observed he took a goblet of wine in his right hand before he sat down, and blessed it; he also took a cake of bread, broke it, asked a blessing on it, and divided it among his family; this was the grace; and he informed me the custom was observed by the ancient Hebrews, and that no Jew would sit down to eat, without taking bread and wine, and blessing both.*"

In this custom we see the origin of the form observed in the Sacrament of the Lord's supper. In the account of its institution as given by St. Luke we read, that "when the hour was come" for celebrating the Passover, Christ "sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him." "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new Testament in my blood which is shed for you." (Luke xxii. 14. 19 20.)

* *Madden.*

It was not any new or difficult thing, such as could be performed only a few times in a person's life, which our Lord appointed to his disciples as a remembrance of his "exceeding great love" in dying for them; but the act by which they were daily accustomed to return thanks to God, for the food which nourished their bodies, was to become to them a memorial of the infinitely more important nourishment for their souls, the "living bread which came down from Heaven," (John vi. 41.) the body which Christ gave to be broken, and the blood to be shed on the cross, "that whoso believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John iii. 15.) We accordingly find that the Apostles went about from house to house breaking bread, and that they did it with joy and singleness of heart. (Acts ii. 46.) Their hearts must indeed have been filled with joy at every remembrance of their Divine Master, who, "having loved his own, loved them to the end," (John xiii. 1.) and with the prospect of the dreadful sufferings He was so soon to undergo before him, employed the last moments He passed with his disciples, in comforting them, and in promising them, that though in his bodily presence He should no longer be with them, yet, by his Holy Spirit He would guide, direct, and support them under all the trials and difficulties they would meet with, and that He would be their Advocate with the Father

for the acceptance of their prayers. With such feelings towards their Heavenly Benefactor, it would not be grudgingly or as of necessity that they would comply with his last request. If they felt weak for the great work they had to do, this Sacrament would remind them of the All powerful Friend who had promised to be with them always, "even to the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) If they felt sad, it would remind them that He had said, "Let not your hearts be troubled." (John xiv. 1.) "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.) If they felt the assaults of temptation, it would bring to their remembrance that He had said "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" (Luke xxii. 32.) and when sinking in death it would recall to them, that He had gone to prepare a place for them in his Father's mansions of Heavenly happiness, that where He is there they might be also. (John xiv. 2. 3.) Did we but love our Saviour as we ought, we should all feel equal joy at this remembrance of His love for us, we should not then make trifling excuses for not attending it; we need not then try to force our minds into a state of preparation for receiving it; the love and gratitude which would make us most carefully and anxiously avoid whatever can displease Him, and study in all

things to obey Him, are the true preparation of mind for celebrating Christ's death on earth, and for becoming partakers of his Resurrection in Heaven.

That great error of the Roman Catholics—the idolatry of the Mass, has arisen from giving a literal, instead of a figurative and spiritual meaning, to the words of our Saviour in the institution of this Sacrament. Not considering that Christ equally said, "I am the door," (John x. 7.) and, "I am the vine," (John xv. 1.) they believe that when He said of the bread, "This is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood," He meant that the bread and wine really became his body and blood; though they would find it difficult to explain, how He could take his own body, which was seated at the table, into his own hands, and give it to his disciples to eat. This change of a piece of bread into the body of Christ, the Catholics believe to be repeated every time a priest says the prayer of consecration over it; and as this forms part of their regular church service, which is being performed in many thousands of places at the same time, Christ must, according to them, have many thousand bodies constantly on earth, though the Bible tells us that "Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," (Col. iii. 1.) and that "the heavens must receive Him until the restitution of all things," (Acts iii. 21.) that is till the last judgment.

This is called by the Catholics the *sacrifice* of the Mass, because they believe that the sacrifice of the death of Christ takes place again, every time this service is repeated, though we are expressly told in the Bible, that Christ "needeth not daily as those high priests, (under the law,) to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's, for this he did *once* when He offered up himself." (Heb. vii. 27.) "For Christ hath *once* suffered for sins." (1 Peter iii. 18.)

And this corruptible piece of bread, liable when eaten to undergo the same changes as our other food, which they believe a sinful man can at his own pleasure change into the incorruptible body of Christ, (Ps. xvi. 10.) they call God, and worship as such, kneeling before it, praying to it, and carrying it about in great state in their religious processions. The cup they withhold from the people altogether, in opposition to our Saviour's own command, "Drink ye *all* of it;" (Matt. xxvi. 27.) and by saying that the wine was changed into blood, they say that Christ, who "came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it," (Matt. v. 17.) commanded his disciples to do what was contrary to the law; for we read Lev. iii. 17. "It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood." And it was the express command of the Apostles to their heathen converts,

that they should "abstain from blood," (Acts xv. 29.) which is still drunk at some of the idol feasts in India, and other heathen countries. These perversions of the words used in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, were not thought of, for more than 800 years after the death of Christ, when a monk, named Paschase Radbert, tried to introduce them. His error was very strongly attacked and condemned, by all the pious and learned men in the church till the year 1215, when the Pope, Innocent 3rd, decreed that it should be received as the truth; but many large bodies of the Christians long refused to comply with this decree; the Churches of the valleys of Piedmont have always steadily rejected it; and have undergone the most dreadful persecutions and sufferings, rather than change "the truth of God into a lie." (Rom. i. 25.)

It has pleased God once to deliver our country from the darkness and superstition of popery; if we wish to avoid falling into it again, we must take our religion—not from the words of fallible man, but from His Word who is "the Truth;" (John xiv. 6.) we shall then see in the bread and wine used in this Sacrament, a symbol, or sign, of the body and blood of Christ, and shall "feed on Him in our heart," not in our mouth—"by faith, with thanksgiving."

It is so contrary to our habits to have our houses open to strangers, that it may appear to some per-

sons difficult to understand how Mary Magdalene, and other attendants on Christ's preaching, were able to follow Him into the houses where he was dining. This circumstance is explained by Miss Pardoe's account of Eastern hospitality; and she describes scenes which also remind us of our Saviour's directions, "When thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind;" and of the parable of the man who made a great supper. (Luke xiv. 13. and 14.) She says, "I must not pass over the simple and beautiful hospitality of the Turks, who give a kind welcome to every countryman, whether rich or poor who wishes to share their meals. On every occasion of rejoicing the houses of the wealthy are open to all; the sofa is the only place set apart for the superior guests, the poor share in all the enjoyments of the festival; the coffee and other refreshments are served to them, if not with the same ceremony, at least with the same welcome as to the prouder visitors; they listen to the music and join in the gaiety. On one occasion when I was present, the room was crowded, mothers were there with their infants at their breast, whose entire clothing was not worth more than a few pence, and whose sun burnt arms and naked feet shewed that they were used to hard labor."

In former days as at the present time in Eastern countries, there were not such Inns as we are used

to see in England. The "lodging place for way-faring men," spoken of by Jeremiah, ix. 2. was most probably like the khans or caravanserais described by modern travellers. These are merely a piece of ground enclosed by four walls, with a gate at one side, and a set of small rooms round the other sides; there is usually a fountain or well in the centre. The rooms are totally without furniture, so that the traveller must carry with him whatever necessaries or comforts he wants on his journey, as well as food for himself and his beasts, as we find Joseph's brethren did, (Gen. xlii. 27.) for as no one lives in the khan, no provisions can be procured in it; the gates are always open to admit strangers, unless closed by those who inhabit it for the time, for their greater safety. The horses and camels frequently have no better resting place than the open court, and this is often described as being knee deep in mud in wet weather. The inns in large towns are of the same description, only larger and better built than those in remote places, and kept in tolerable order; they have stabling for the cattle, and store houses for merchandize, and there are usually cook's shops near them from which provisions can be bought. It was in such a place as this, that He who "created the heavens and the earth," (Gen. i. 1.) condescended to be born into this world; and it was not even in the best part of such a place; for we read (Luke ii. 7.)

that there was no room in the inn for Mary and the infant Saviour, and she therefore laid him in the manger or stone trough, in which the fodder for cattle is put in the East; and this was in a rough sort of stable, hollowed out in a rock which is still shewn to strangers, forming part of a church that was built over it many centuries ago.

As there is so little accommodation in the Inns for a stay of any length, travellers in the East who wish to remain many days in a town, always depend on being received into the house of one of the inhabitants, as the disciples did, when they were sent forth to preach the Gospel, and were told, Into whatsoever house ye enter remain, eating and drinking such things as they give." (Luke x. 5. 7.)

Though the doctrines they were going to preach, were such as would make many persons unwilling to give them the usual hospitality, they were to trust to the assurance of their Divine Master, that as "the laborer is worthy of his hire," He whose laborers they were would take care that their wants should be supplied. What cause must many persons have had to rejoice in the exercise of hospitality, which brought them acquainted with Saints and Apostles, and even procured for them the blessed privilege, of hearing the glad tidings of Salvation from the lips of Christ himself, when they received

Him into their house, who had "not where to lay his head." (Matt. viii. 20.)

There are many passages in the epistles or letters of the Apostles to their converts, in which the virtue of hospitality is recommended; as, (Rom. xii. 13.) "Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality." (Tit. i. 8.) A lover of hospitality, a lover of good men." (1 Pet. iv. 9.) "Use hospitality one to another without grudging, &c." These passages are not meant to recommend expensive, or riotous entertainments, but a readiness to shew kindness by sharing what we have with those who want it. We have now Inns to which travellers can go, and, to the great disgrace of a Christian country, it would not be safe to shew the same hospitality in it, by receiving strangers into our houses, as is practised among Turks and Mahommedans; but we all have plenty of opportunities of shewing kindness and liberality to our fellow creatures; and though we cannot now "entertain Angels unawares," (Heb. xiii. 2.) or supply the wants of our Saviour, yet, He has told us, "Inasmuch as ye do it to the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40.)

MILLS.

Frequent reference is made in the Bible to the mills formerly used in the East, and to the employment of "grinding at the mill," neither of which appear to have undergone any change since the time when Moses made the dreadful declaration to Pharoah, "Thus saith the Lord,—all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die; from the first-born of Pharoah that sitteth on the throne, unto the first-born of the maid servant that is *behind the mill.*" (Exod. xi. 5.)

The following description is given by a traveller* of the mills now used by the Eastern women. "In the different employments of the females, that of grinding, or rather bruising the corn by stones, deserves attention. The mills are precisely similar to the querns I have seen in the Highlands of Scotland, particularly at Icolinkill in the Hebrides. These may be briefly described to consist of two circular (or round) pieces of granite, (a particularly hard sort of stone) about twenty inches in diameter, in the lower part of which is a wooden peg rounded at the top, and on this the upper stone is nicely balanced, so as to touch the lower one by means of a piece of

* *Rae Wilson.*

wood fixed in a large hole in the upper piece, but which does not fill the hole, room for feeding the mill being left on each side. It is so nicely balanced, that although there may be some friction from the stones touching one another, yet a very gentle push will make it turn round several times, when it has no corn in it. The corn being dried or parched, and sometimes burned, two women sit down on the ground, having the mill between them. One feeds it while the other turns it round, singing sometimes during the operation." There is an allusion to this way of grinding corn, and to its being the business of the women, in Isai. xlvii. 2. where the fallen state of Babylon is foretold under the image of a "tender and delicate" woman of high rank, who is obliged by her misfortunes to leave the "throne" or raised seat, to which she was accustomed, and to sit on the ground and perform the humble office of grinding at the mill. "Come down and sit in the dust; O Virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. *Take the millstones and grind meal.*"

This custom is also alluded to by our Saviour. (Matt. xxiv. 41.) After giving an awful description of the sudden coming of the "Son of man" to judge the World, and of the state of carelessness and indifference as to their spiritual concerns in which the

generality of mankind will then be found, employed as eagerly with their worldly interests and amusements as if they were to last for ever, He proceeds to point out that God, who sees the heart, will at that moment know who are His people, though in outward appearance there may not be any thing to distinguish them from others. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." The employments and the outward circumstances of two persons may be as exactly alike as those of two women grinding at the mill, while in the thoughts of their hearts there is a great difference. In the one there may be a humbling conviction of sin, an earnest desire for holiness, and a firm trust in the promises of God through Christ, while the other may be perfectly indifferent to religion, or have, "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." (Heb. iii. 12.) The usual business of life may be performed by the one as a matter of course or a task, but to the other, the commonest actions may be sanctified by the motives and principles which regulate them. As an old poet* has expressed it,

All may of Thee partake,
Nothing can be so mean;
Which with this tincture—for Thy sake,
Will not grow bright and clean,

* *Herbert.*

A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine.
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

Another lesson we may learn from this passage is not to be hasty in judging of others, nor to conclude that they must be like those among whom circumstances have placed them. Even in the midst of sinful Sodom there was one righteous man; and at the time when the Prophet Elijah supposed, that he was the only servant of the true God left in an idolatrous nation, there were seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal." (1 Kings xix. 18.) Our concern is with our own hearts; and inexpressibly blessed shall we be, if at the awful moment when impenitent sinners will "be left" to endure the consequences of their guilt, we are among those who are "taken" for Christ's sake to Heavenly happiness.

Among other merciful laws given to the Jews, was one by which they were forbidden "to take the millstone to pledge;" because it was to take "a man's life," or what was necessary in preparing food for the daily support of his life." (Deut. xxiv. 6.)

For the same reason the expression, to "take away the sound of the millstones," (Jer. xxv. 10.) means either to cause a scarcity of food, or to leave a land without inhabitants. In an Eastern town or village, the first sounds heard in the morning, are usually

“the sound of the millstones,” and the songs of the woman at their work; and nothing could give a more melancholy idea of the change which had taken place in a once flourishing, thickly inhabited country, than to say that these sounds were no longer heard in it;—that the inhabitants were either gone, or had become too poor to procure even the commonest necessaries of life.

Millstones such as have been described, which can be moved from place to place, would furnish a very formidable means of defence; and we read (Judg. ix. 53.) that when Abimelech was fighting against the people of Thebez, a woman “cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech’s head, and all to break his scull.”

It was, probably, to such a millstone Christ referred when He said, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him to have a millstone hanged about his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the seas.” (Matt. xviii. 6.) The expression to “offend,” as it is here used, is explained by commentators to mean, to “cause any one to offend;” the severest suffering, the greatest punishment a man can undergo in this world, or even death itself, are trifling evils to what awaits him, who, by ridicule, threats, or by any other means, causes a sincere, humble believer to offend by renouncing his faith in Christ.

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WEDDINGS.

THE forms observed in arranging marriages, and in celebrating weddings in the East, are still, as they were formerly, very different from those of our own country.

We read in the history of Jacob's life, that after he had passed a month with Laban, and had given him his services without receiving any pay for them, Laban said, "Because thou art my brother, (or relation) shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me what shall thy wages be?" (Gen. xxix. 15.) And Jacob, who had become attached to Rachel, Laban's daughter, said, "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter."

Travellers tell us that agreements of this sort are not at all uncommon in the same country at the present day. When a man applies to the parents, or nearest relations of a young woman for their consent to his marrying her, he is expected to say what presents he can make to them, as well as to his wife; these depend, of course, on the man's wealth and station in life; but they usually consist of wearing apparel and ornaments. When, however, the man is, like Jacob, too poor to have anything else to give, he engages to give the father his services for a certain time.

It seems scarcely possible to us that any one should be cheated as Jacob was by Laban, when he gave him his eldest daughter Leah for a wife instead of Rachel, whom he intended to marry ; but Mr. Hartley mentions having met with an instance of a similar deception. He says, "The Armenian brides are veiled during the marriage ceremony ; and hence deceptions have occurred in regard to the person chosen for a wife. I am informed that on one occasion, a young Armenian at Smyrna asked in marriage a younger daughter, whom he admired. The parents of the young woman consented to the request, and all the necessary arrangements were made. When the time for solemnizing the marriage came, the elder daughter, who was not so beautiful, was conducted by the parents to the altar, and the young man was unconsciously married to her (as her long thick veil completely hid both her figure and face). 'And it came to pass that in the morning, behold, it was the elder daughter;' and the manner in which the parents justified themselves, was precisely that of Laban : 'It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.' It is really the rule among the Armenians, that neither a younger son, nor daughter, can be married before their elder brother or sister. It was in conversation with an Armenian of Smyrna, that this fact was related to me. I naturally exclaimed, 'Why, that is just the deception which was practised upon Jacob.' 'What deception ?' he exclaimed.

As the Old Testament is not yet translated into any language which the Armenians understand, he did not know the story. Upon giving him the history of Jacob's marriage, as it is related Gen. xxix., he at once said that it was in no respect an improbable circumstance." *

We meet with many allusions in the Old Testament to the ornaments worn by Eastern brides, particularly in a passage in Ezekiel, in which the Prophet says, "I put a jewel on thy forehead, and a beautiful crown upon thy head." Miss Pardoe † describes seeing both these ornaments at an Armenian wedding. Speaking of the bride, she says, "Between her eyebrows was affixed an ornament composed of small diamonds forming the word 'Bride,' in the Armenian language. The nuptial crowns were made of flowers, ribands, and gold thread; they are about a foot in height, and shaped like a bee hive: when they are removed from the heads of the young couple, they are carefully folded up in a handkerchief of coloured gauze, and carried away to be hung up in the chapel of the bridegroom's house, where they remain until the death of either of the parties, when the deceased is crowned for the second and last time."

Such a custom might well make the most thoughtless in the hour of rejoicing remember that, "In the midst of life we are in death;" ‡ and teach them to offer up

* *Hartley's Christian Researches.* † *City of the Sultan.*

‡ *Burial Service.*

the prayer, " Lord, grant that this thought may make us careful how we live."

The 45th Psalm, though referring in its spiritual sense to the marriage of Christ with his spouse the Church, is supposed to have been written on occasion of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and its exact agreement with our accounts of modern eastern manners, affords additional proof of the entire confidence we may place in the Bible. In verse 9th we read, " All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia;" and we are told that Turkish ladies are so fond of these scents, as to have them burning in all their apartments. The " vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colours," (ver. 10.) and the " raiment of needlework," (ver. 15.) agree exactly with the descriptions given by travellers of the very beautiful embroidery worn by Turkish females of high rank.

Marriage entertainments were considered by the Jews as particularly important meetings; and we find that our Saviour honoured one of them with his presence, and that his first miracle was performed at " a marriage in Cana of Galilee," (John ii. 1.) where, towards the end of the feast, He changed the water into wine. We cannot for a moment suppose that our Saviour meant by this action to encourage an immoderate use of wine; but it seems probable that the persons for whom the miracle was performed, were in the same humble rank in life as Mary and the disciples; and that as the

wedding feasts lasted many days, during which time the house was open to all who liked to enter it, they had not been able to provide sufficient refreshments for their guests. We may learn from Christ's example on this occasion, to show a kind attention, not only to the wants, but also to the innocent enjoyments of our fellow-creatures; and that the Christian religion, while it forbids "drunkenness and revellings," (Gal. v. 21.) and "excess of wine," (1 Pet. iv. 3.) does not require us to give up all friendly and social meetings with those about us.

Many of the parables in the New Testament refer to the customs observed by the Jews at weddings. When our Lord wished to reprove the pride and self-importance of the Pharisees, which are so hateful in his sight, and so contrary to the spirit of the Christian religion, by which we are taught that "in lowliness of mind, each should esteem other better than themselves," (Phil. ii. 3.) He spoke a parable to them, saying, "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have worship (or be looked upon with respect) in the presence of those that sit at meat with thee." (Luke xiv. 7—10.) On many other occasions, we

find the Pharisees reproved for loving "the uppermost rooms at feasts."

Another very remarkable parable taken from wedding customs, is that of the "ten virgins;" in which an awful warning is given, not only to the thoughtless world in general, but even to sincere, earnest Christians, of the great danger of falling into carelessness and negligence in those things which concern their eternal peace, and of being surprised by death when least prepared for it. We are indebted to Mr. Hartley for illustrations of both these parables. "I was once present," he observes, "at the solemnization of matrimony amongst the Armenians; and some recollections of it may serve to throw light on several passages of Scripture. The various entertainments given on these occasions last for three days; and during the last night the marriage is celebrated. I was taken to the house of the bride, where I found a great many people assembled. The company was dispersed through various rooms, reminding me of the directions of our Saviour, in regard to the choice of the lowermost rooms at feasts. On the ground floor, I observed that the people assembled were of the lower order, whilst in the upper rooms were those of higher rank.

"The large number of young females who were present, naturally reminded me of the wise and foolish virgins in our Saviour's parable: these being friends of

the bride, 'the virgins her companions,' (Ps. xlv. 14.) had come to meet the bridegroom.

"It is usual for the bridegroom to come at midnight, (to fetch the bride,) so that literally at midnight the cry is made, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him.' (Matt. xxv. 6.) But on this occasion, 'the bridegroom tarried;' it was two o'clock before he came."

Another writer,* in a journal (or daily account) of his stay in one of the towns in the Holy Land, describes being present at a wedding which took place while he was there. "There are to be three marriages in the town to-day. They are to be performed in the evening; but, throughout the day, there has been a continual firing of musquets in token of rejoicing; and, in the court-yard and on the roof of the house of one of the parties, I can see from my window a constant throng of guests, who occasionally set up a joyous cry; yet this is not a rich family. An almost ruinous hospitality is sometimes kept up on these occasions. In the evening I attended one of the marriages. Three priests assisted in performing it. A multitude of men and boys set off with lights in their hands, an hour after sun-set, from the house of the bridegroom (leaving the bridegroom in his father's house) to that of the bride. After waiting nearly half an hour, the bride came out, attended by her female friends, and the procession began; the men going

* *Rev. William Jowett's Missionary Researches.*

first, and after them the women with the bride in their front. On coming near the church they stopped, while the bridegroom went first into the church, with his father and companions, (in number certainly more than thirty; see Judges xiv. 10, 11.) to be ready to receive his bride. After this the bride and her party entered by the door belonging to the women. Both then stood together in the middle of the church, before a lighted desk, the bride being covered (with her veil). The whole being ended, 'the friend of the bridegroom' (John iii. 29.) standing behind him, lifted him up in his hands like a child, shouting at the same time for joy. This joke, however, as well as the tumult, was a mark that the parties were of the lower rank." On the same day in the following week the writer observes, "I have in view two of the houses where, last Sunday, marriages took place. The court-yards and the tops of the houses are again crowded with guests. This continued feasting illustrates Judges xiv. 12, where 'the seven days of the feast' in honor of Samson's marriage are mentioned."

The "wedding garment" in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, (Matt. xxii. 11.) refers to a custom which was very general in ancient times, and has not altogether ceased in eastern countries. When an entertainment was given, each guest, as he entered the house, put on a white robe, which was provided for such occasions by the master of the house.

As wedding feasts were considered particularly im-

portant, any one who had chosen to appear at such an entertainment in his own soiled dress, instead of putting on the "wedding garment" provided for him as one of the guests, would have shown such disrespect for his entertainer, that he might well have been turned out of the house, and left to lament his folly in the dark street; or, as it is expressed in the parable, "Cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

In like manner, the great King who has prepared the heavenly marriage feast of the Lamb, the spiritual union of Christians with Christ their head, has also provided a wedding garment for his guests. Giving up all attempts at self-justification, laying aside their own "righteousnesses," which are but "as filthy rags," (Isai. lxiv. 6.) they must appear before him in the spotless robe of the righteousness of Christ. It is provided for as many as will come; the number of guests was not limited; we are not told that it had been eternally decreed that some should be admitted and others rejected; they had but to "ask," and they were sure to "receive" the white robe. The man who had not on the "wedding garment," was not reproached with the polluted state of his own garment; for the King well knew what was the condition of the poor outcast creatures, who were brought in from the highways and hedges, from the streets and lanes of the city. (Luke xiv. 21.) But "he was speechless" when the simple question was

asked him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" He could not say that he did not know what was necessary to make him fit to appear at the marriage feast, or that he could not obtain it; and he dared not to say, that he considered himself fit for it as he was. And what will be the excuse of the man who has trusted to his own merits for salvation, when he finds himself in the presence of the pure and holy God, "who chargeth even his angels with folly," (Job iv. 18.) in whose sight "the stars are not pure," (Job xxv. 5.) and the same question is asked of him? He too will be speechless, and will regret when too late, that "going about to establish his own righteousness, he has not submitted himself to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.)

RENOUNCING MARRIAGE CLAIMS,

AND

DIVORCE.

AMONG the numerous customs of former days, still observed by the Bedouin Arabs, are the following, which afford a striking illustration of some passages in the book of Ruth.

If a young man leaves a widow, his brother generally offers to marry her; custom does not oblige him or her to make this match, neither can he prevent her marrying another man; it seldom happens, however, that she refuses, for by such a match the family property is kept together. A man has an exclusive right to the hand of his cousin; he is not obliged to marry her, but she cannot without his consent marry another person.

If a man permits his cousin to marry another man, or if a husband divorces his runaway wife, he usually says, "She was my slipper, I have cast her off*."

This agrees exactly with the account of what took place before Boaz could marry Ruth. She could not have any relations of her own among the Israelites, as she was a Moabitess, from a distant place; but as the widow of Elimelech's son, she was considered as form-

* *Burckhardt's notes on the Arabs.*

ing part of his family, and his relations became hers. Among these was "a kinsman," (which, like cousin, means almost any degree of connexion), nearer than Boaz; (iii. 12.) and he had therefore to inquire, whether this kinsman was willing to give up his claim to Ruth, and to her late husband's property. (iv. 3.)

As the family of Elimelech had fallen into great distress, they had been obliged to sell their land; but by the law of Moses, any person who had bought land under such circumstances, was obliged to sell it again to any of the family, whenever they could afford to redeem it, or buy it again. (Lev. xxv. 25.) Ruth's relation could not do this without injuring his own property; he therefore gave up to Boaz his claim to her, and to all that belonged to her, and he then confirmed the renunciation as a modern Arab would; he "drew off his shoe," or slipper, "and gave it to his neighbour;" (iv. 7.) as much as to say, "As I give up this shoe, so do I give up this woman and her rights into the hands of another."

The same custom is also observed by the Jews in their legal form of divorce. A slipper made in a particular manner, and kept for this purpose, is put on by the husband, who puts it off before proper witnesses, declaring at the same time, that he puts away his wife. A "bill of divorcement," (Mark x. 4.) is also given by the husband*.

* *Ceremonies of the Jews, by Hyam Isaacs.*

DRESS.

THE dress worn by the inhabitants of hot climates is so different from our own, that it is often difficult to understand the allusions made to it in the Bible.

Instead of the thick tight clothing which we are accustomed to see on men, those in the East wear loose flowing robes, of cloth, silk, cotton, or muslin, and both men and women wear large loose trowsers, fastened about the ancles. Stockings are not used even by the wealthy, and it has been already mentioned (see "Shoes") that they wear usually small slippers instead of shoes.

An English nobleman, describing the dress of the Arabs whom he hired to accompany him in a voyage up the Nile says, "they wore a long white robe fastened with a girdle, a blue cloak, and sandals of fish skin, such as we see in Scripture pictures, fastened at the ancles with clasps. Each carried a small kneading-trough or bowl, and a leathern bottle for water*."

When the men are preparing for any active employment, they either lay aside the loose outer robe, or else prevent its being in their way, by fastening it round the waist with a belt or girdle. There are frequent allusions to this custom in the Scriptures, as Luke xii. 37, where it is said of a person who is going to wait on another,

* *Lord Lindsay's Letters on the East.*

“He shall gird himself.” When our Saviour, shortly before his ascension to heaven, was telling Peter what should happen to him he said, “When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst,” (John xxi. 18.) as if girding himself were a preparation for walking. Many other instances of the same kind might be given, in which “girding” is spoken of in a literal sense, as 1 Kings xviii. 46, where it is said of Elijah, that he “*girded up his loins*, and ran before Ahab to Jezreel.” This expression is also often employed figuratively, as Luke xii. 35, where the vigilance of servants waiting for the arrival of their master, with “their loins girded about,” is held forth by Christ, as an example of the constant state of watchfulness and preparation of mind, against the coming of their Lord to judgment, which becomes Christians.

A belt or girdle fastened round the waist or loins, adds much to the strength of the wearer, and therefore formed part of the armour worn formerly by soldiers; which explains the expressions, “Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle;” (Psal. xviii. 39.) “The Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He hath girded himself;” (Psal. xciii. 1.) as if putting on the girdle were putting on strength. And as the soldier, or one running a race, would formerly have girded his armour or his clothes tight about him, that he might strengthen himself as much as possible, and get rid of every hindrance, so St. Peter exhorts those who are en-

gaged in the Christian race or warfare, to "gird up the loins of their mind." (1 Peter i. 13.)

What the spiritual girdle of the Christian is, we may learn from other passages of Scripture. It is said of Christ, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and truth the girdle of His reins;" (Isai. xi. 5.) and since it becomes the Christian to be arrayed like the "captain of his salvation," (Heb. ii. 10.) he too must have "his loins girt about with truth." (Ephes. vi. 14.) A true, faithful earnestness in the cause in which he is engaged, can alone give the Christian strength to maintain the warfare with his spiritual enemies. Without this, his other good qualities, however promising in appearance, will want firmness and consistency, and, like ungirded garments, will be ready to fall off, or to be laid aside as incumbrances, in the time of temptation and difficulty. David tells us to whom we must apply for this girdle, when he says, "It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect." (Psal. xviii. 32.)

As the girdle is usually loosened or taken off, when the wearer is going to rest from his labour or exertions, the Prophet Isaiah, when describing the great strength and activity of the Chaldeans who should overrun Judea, says of them, "Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed;" (Isai. v. 27.) meaning, that they should never seem to need rest themselves, nor allow it to their enemies the Jews.

In the account given by St. Matthew of John the Baptist we read, that "he had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins." (Matt. iii. 4.) A traveller * in the East says, "The Toorkmuns crowded among us during the day, and brought tunics of camel cloth for sale, which were readily purchased ;" and we are told, that these rough garments, made of camel's hair, as well as the leathern girdle, are worn in the present day by the Dervishes, or holy men, in the East. It is supposed that the sackcloth worn by the prophets of old, (Isai. xx. 2.) and put on by all classes of people at times of fasting and humiliation, was the same sort of garment. The material of which it is made is so coarse, that it is used for tent covers, sacks, and other rough purposes.

Buckingham mentions †, that "a coat of many colours, with the reversed pyramid on the back and shoulders," is still worn in Mesopotamia. Perhaps it may still be occasionally bestowed by a fond parent on a darling child, as it was by Jacob on Joseph, (Gen. xxxvii. 3.) and may prove, like most such ill-judged ways of showing affection, the cause of vanity and jealousy.

We read, John xix. 23, that part of our Saviour's dress was "a coat without seam, woven from the top throughout;" and this we are told is still worn in the East. A traveller in the Holy Land says, "one part of the dress of the Arabs, and which is so highly prized,

* *Lieut. Burns.*

† *Travels in Mesopotamia.*

is a cloak of camel's hair, woven throughout, gaudily decorated, with holes for the arms, and without seam*." An excellent old writer †, in a discourse on the universal holiness to which Christians should endeavour to attain, observes, "Whereas the righteousness of the Pharisees was but the pursuance of some one grace, a piece of the robe of righteousness; the righteousness evangelical must be like Christ's seamless coat, all of a piece from the top to the bottom; it must invest the whole soul, it must be an universal righteousness."

Most Englishmen who visit the East, change their usual style of dress for that worn by the natives of the country, as it is best suited to the heat of the climate, and prevents their attracting a degree of attention that would be very troublesome to them. An English officer who followed this plan says, "Since I have seen so much of the Oriental dress, and have worn it myself, I can more fully understand the force of the expressions that so frequently occur in Scripture, drawn from the nature of the habits worn in the East. No person changes his position without first shaking his raiment; and no man can quit the ground from which he has risen until he has, in the words of Jeremiah, v. 13, 'Shook his lap,' and thrown out the impurities he could not but have collected, from his manner of sitting down. As the slippers are always left at the outer door, it is very common to strike them two or three

* *Rae Wilson's Travels in Palestine.* † *Jeremy Taylor.*

times on the pavement before putting in the feet, and thus 'shake off the dust*.' (Matt. x. 14.) Another visiter to the East observes on the same subject, "The use of the Oriental dress, which I now wear, brings to my mind various Scriptural illustrations, of which I will only mention two. The figure in Isaiah lii. 10, "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm,' is most lively; for the loose sleeve of the Arab shirt, as well as that of the outer garment, leaves the arms so completely free, that, in an instant, the left hand passing up the right arm, makes it bare; and this is done when a person—a soldier for example, about to strike with the sword, intends to give his arm full play. The expression represents Jehovah as suddenly prepared to inflict some tremendous, yet righteous judgment, so effectual, 'that all the ends of the world shall see the salvation of God.' The other passage is the second verse of the same chapter, where the sense of the last expression is, to an Oriental, extremely natural, 'Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit down, O Jerusalem.' It is no uncommon thing to see an individual, or a group of persons, even when very well dressed, sitting, with their feet drawn under them, upon the bare earth, passing whole hours in idle conversation. Europeans would require a chair, but the natives here prefer the ground. In the heat of summer and autumn, it is pleasant to them to while away their time in this manner, under the shade of a tree. Richly

* *Major Skinner's Overland Journey to India.*

adorned females, as well as men, may often be seen thus amusing themselves. As may naturally be expected, with whatever care they may, at first sitting down, choose their place, yet the flowing dress by degrees gathers up the dust; as this occurs, they, from time to time, arise, adjust themselves, shake off the dust, and then sit down again. The captive daughter of Zion, therefore, brought down to the dust of suffering and oppression, is commanded to arise and shake herself from that dust; and, then, with grace, and dignity, and composure, and security, to 'sit down;' to take, as it were, again, her seat and her rank amid the company of the nations of the earth, which had before afflicted her, and trampled her to the earth*."

The exhortation, "Rend your heart, and not your garment," (Joel ii. 13.) may, perhaps, perplex some persons who are not acquainted with Eastern ways of expressing sorrow, one of which is by tearing or rending the clothes. This custom, like that of tearing the face, began, no doubt, with sincere mourners, who gave a vent to the violence of their feelings in this way; but by degrees it would become only a matter of form for those who did not really feel sorrow, on occasions which called for it, to imitate all the signs of grief in others; and we are told by a writer †, well acquainted with the manners of the modern Persians, that when they wish

* *Rev. W. Jowett's Missionary Researches.* † *Morier.*

to appear very much afflicted, without really being so, they contrive to pull open one of the seams of their garments, and thus make it appear as if they were tearing their clothes in the violence of their sorrow. It appears that "rending the garments," had become equally a matter of form with the Jews of old; and therefore when the prophet calls on them to mourn for their sins, he tells them that mere outward signs of grief are of no avail with the Almighty; that what He requires is deep, inward sorrow,—the rending of the heart, not of the garment. In the present day, the Jews, when mourning the loss of a relation, cut long slits in their clothes, which they usually contrive to do in such a manner as not to injure the dress.

A quantity of valuable clothing still forms an important part of the property of kings and rulers in the East, as it did in the days of Isaiah, who, describing the state of confusion into which the kingdom of Judah should fall, as a punishment for the sins of the king and people, foretold that the people should at last be glad to choose for their ruler any one who had sufficient wealth to support the station. "When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler." (Isai. iii. 6.) It is told of two Turkish rulers in the present day, that one of them possessed forty-six gowns, valued some at seventy and eighty, others at as much as one hundred and thirty

pounds sterling ; and that the other inherited from his father seventy gowns *. Princes of higher rank have much larger possessions of the same sort ; and they are rendered necessary by the Eastern custom of giving one of the king's dresses to any one who is considered worthy of receiving a high mark of royal favour and protection, as we find was the case in the days of Mordecai †." An instance of this sort, among the Arabs of Syria, is mentioned by a traveller, ‡ who met the Hasnadar, or treasurer of the prince of the Druses, carrying a present of two pelisses to a young Sheik and his uncle, who had placed themselves under his protection. On their arrival, " the Hasnadar of the Emeer was received with great respect by the chief, who was sitting with his nephew, about thirteen years old, surrounded by the chief men of his tribe. When the Hasnadar invested (or clothed) the sheik and his nephew with the pelisses, which were of red silk, lined with sable, the chief kissed the robe, crying out, ' I am the slave of the Emeer ;' and all the attendants eagerly advanced to endeavour also to kiss the hem of the garment."

We read in the history of Joseph, (Gen. xli. 42.) and of Daniel, (Dan. v. 29.) that when they were appointed to the high offices they held in Egypt and Persia, splendid clothing was given them as a mark of their new dignity. A learned Jew, named Benjamin of

* *Hartley's Christian Researches.* † *Esther* vi. 8.

‡ *M' Michael's Journey to Constantinople.*

Tudela, who died about 1170 years after Christ, wrote an account of a visit he paid to his brethren in the East, some of whom still lived in splendour, and in high favour with the caliph of Bagdad; and it is curious to find the same custom observed at that time. Describing the state in which the different Jews lived, he says, "The principal officer of all was Daniel, the son of Hhasdai, who was called the conductor of the Captivity, and preserved a book of his genealogy in direct descent from Daniel. His authority being derived from the caliph himself, was great in all the assembly of the Israelites; and a decree was made, that to show respect to this conductor of the captivity, every one should rise in his presence to salute him, in default of which a hundred strokes of the bastinado were to be given. The way of his receiving authority from the caliph was by the laying on of hands, on the day of which ceremony he rode in the second chariot of the realm, with all the ornaments belonging to it, wearing robes of silk, with Phrygian embroidery, a noble tiara on his head, encircled with a white veil, and round this veil a rich chain of gold; so that he appeared in as high splendour as the prophet Daniel himself, at the court of the great Belshazzar." The poor despised Jews have long ceased to be treated with any such distinctions in the East; and when they are wealthy enough to afford rich clothing, they do not dare to let it be seen beyond the walls of their own houses.

Putting on splendid clothing still forms part of the ceremony observed on admitting any one to a high office in the Eastern countries. When the patriarch of the Greek Church at Constantinople dies, his successor is named by the sultan, and on the day appointed for investing him with his new dignity, some of the sultan's officers are sent to him with a white horse on which he is mounted, and a splendidly embroidered robe is then thrown over his shoulders. In this way he is conducted to the principal church, and as he walks up it to the altar, his robe is frequently torn from his back, by the number of hands that seize it, in order that it may be kissed, as a mark of respect*.

Till within a few years, no ambassadors or other foreigners, visiting Constantinople, could be admitted into the sultan's presence until they had been "fed and clothed" by him. A magnificent dinner was prepared for the ambassador, and his principal officers; and when this entertainment was finished, the ambassador was presented with a sable-skin pelisse, or loose dress; his principal officers received pelisses of ermine, and the other attendants had dresses given them of different value, according to their rank. The present sultan has given up this custom.

A fine flowing beard is still as much valued in the East, as it was when David's ambassadors to Hanum, the king of the Ammonites, tarried at Jericho until their beards grew again, after the uncivil treatment they had

* *Walsh's Constantinople.*

met with, because they were "greatly ashamed." (2 Sam. x. 5.) An instance is related of an Arab who had been severely wounded in the jaw, preferring to run the risk of losing his life, rather than allow part of his beard to be cut off, that the wound might be properly examined. Those Christians at Aleppo, who have visited the Holy Land, allow their beards to grow as an honourable distinction; and the clergy do not shave the beard*. An English traveller, describing the change he found it necessary to make in his dress and appearance before he entered the Holy Land, says, "I tarried here till my beard grew, which has been well represented, especially in the East, as the dignity and pride of man. The hand is almost constantly employed in smoothing the beard, and keeping it in order, and it is often perfumed as sacred. Thus, too, we read of the oil which ran down from Aaron's beard to the skirts of his garments †." We read that Nehemiah, on his return to Jerusalem after the Captivity, was so indignant at the misconduct of some of the Jews, that he "smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair." (Neh. xiii. 25.) To have the beard plucked off is one of the punishments among the Turks and Persians in the present day; and instances often occur of a great man inflicting it himself, but not with the same good reason for his indignation as Nehemiah had.

Frequent mention is made in the Bible of scarlet and

* *Russell's History of Aleppo.*

† *Rae Wilson's Travels in Palestine.*

purple, as favourite colours for dress, and they are equally so in the East at the present day. Mr. Hartley, from whose researches so many extracts have been made, gives the following interesting information on this subject. "The sacred writer of the Acts of the Apostles informs us, that Lydia was a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, (Acts xvi. 14.) and the discovery of an inscription here, (at Thyatira) which makes mention of dyers, has been considered important in connection with this passage. I know not if other travellers have remarked, that even at the present time Thyatira is famous for dyeing."

When Abimelech, on restoring Sarah to her husband Abraham, said, "Behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other," (Gen. xx. 16.) it is supposed that he meant to reprove her for not wearing a veil, as has always been the custom with almost all the Eastern females; but it is a singular circumstance mentioned by Buckingham, that the Turcoman women in the part of Mesopotamia from which Abraham came, are still exceptions to this general custom, and, like Sarah, still go unveiled; they are also described like her, "fair to look upon." He says, speaking of the Turcomans, "Their women, who are in general fair, ruddy, and handsome, neither disfigure themselves (like the Arab women) with blue stains, nor veil themselves." And on another occasion, "Such of the women as we saw here were really handsome; all

of them were unveiled, and displayed blooming complexions and agreeable features. As an additional charm they were remarkably clean and well dressed, with white or red trousers, white upper garments, wreaths of gold coin across their foreheads, and their long black hair hanging in tresses on their shoulders *."

We read, Gen. xxiv. 65, that when Rebekah at the close of her long journey with Abraham's steward, "lifted up her eyes" and saw Isaac walking in the fields, she inquired who he was; and finding he was her intended husband, she alighted from the camel on which she was riding, and "took a veil and covered herself." This is exactly what a Turkish woman would do at the present day, when she was going to be presented to her husband; she would consider herself degraded, if she were to be seen by any man, except her husband, without her veil. It appears most probable that this is the impropriety alluded to by St. Paul in the words, "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth (preaches in public) with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head, for that is even all one as if she were shaven." (1 Cor. xi. 5.) By laying aside her veil to pray aloud, or to speak in public, she would show herself as much lost to all sense of propriety and modesty, as those unhappy women whose bad conduct was made public, by the fact of their heads being shaven; this being a punishment adopted in many countries for a dissolute life.

* *Travels in Mesopotamia.*

The veils worn by the Eastern women are not a small piece of some thin, transparent material, like those we are used to see, hanging loosely over the face ; they vary in fashion and materials in different places, and according to the wealth of the wearer ; but those of the women in the Holy Land, are usually a piece of white cotton, which is wrapped round the head and over the lower part of the face, leaving only the eyes uncovered, and completely concealing the other features. The veils worn by brides are large enough to cover the whole person, and are frequently of bright coloured silks.

The ornaments given by the steward to Rebekah, might serve as a description of those belonging to a woman of the same country in the present day. A traveller, commenting on this passage, (Gen. xxiv. 22.) observes, "The women wear rings and bracelets of as great weight as this throughout all Asia, and even much heavier. They are rather manacles than bracelets ; some are as wide as the finger. The women wear several of them, one above another, in such a manner as sometimes to have the arm covered with them, from the wrist to the elbow. Poor people wear many of glass or horn ; they hardly ever take them off,—they are their riches." The ear-ring which was "put upon her face," should, probably, have been rather called the nose-ring, and was the same ornament mentioned Isai. iii. 21, and referred to Prov. xi. 22. Most travellers describe seeing this strange ornament on the women in Persia and

Arabia ; the left nostril is bored low down to receive the ring, which is of gold, sometimes adorned with precious stones, and so long as to reach to the chin ; others wear a smaller ornament resembling a button, stuck in the left nostril. We may be inclined to laugh at the Eastern women for having a hole made in their nose to pass a ring through, but we must consider whether those are much wiser who have their ears pierced for the same purpose.

In the list of female ornaments mentioned Isai. iii. 18, are, "the tinkling ornaments about their feet." A traveller* observes in reference to this passage, "The arms and legs of some of the (Arab) women, were ornamented with large rings made of glass, which tinkle as they walk, and these are sold at Jerusalem." The "glasses" of the Jewish women are also mentioned in this passage as well as Exod. xxxviii. 8. They should rather be called mirrors than "looking-glasses," as glass was not used for such purposes till very long after this time ; very highly polished plates of metal were employed in ancient times for reflecting the face ; those of the Jewish women, it seems, were of brass, and they appear to have formed part of their dress or ornaments, as they carried them with them when they "assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." The Moorish women in Barbary, we are told, are so fond of their ornaments, and particularly of their looking-glasses,

* *Rae Wilson.*

which they hang upon their breasts, that they will not lay them aside, even when after the drudgery of the day, they are obliged to go two or three miles with a pitcher or a goat's skin to fetch water. The Turkish ladies are equally fond of their looking-glasses, which are made light and small to hold in the hand, and are often set in precious stones; a fashionable lady of Constantinople has one of these constantly in her hand, or by her side.*

A modern Turkish lady at her toilette, particularly if she were of high rank, would follow the same plan for improving her beauty as Jezebel did, more than two thousand years ago. The words, "She painted her face," (2 Kings ix. 30.) are more exactly translated in the margin of our Bibles, by "She put her eyes in painting," and refer, no doubt, to the Eastern custom of painting the edges of the eyelids with a dark coloured dye, prepared for that purpose. So does vanity go on, from generation to generation! showing itself in different ways in different countries, but still it is vanity, still it is folly. For we all know that the time will come, when it will be with us as with Jezebel; and that of the bodies we are now so fond of adorning, not even "the skull and the feet and the palms of the hands" will remain.

The Eastern women appear to have been always very fond of showy dress, and the following account proves

* *Miss Pardoe's City of the Sultan.*

that they are not altered in this respect. “ Whatever other fashions may have changed in the East—and yet we may believe that very few have varied—there is one still unaltered, the sight of which carries us back to the earliest times of which we read in the Bible ; I mean the fashion of splendid dresses. I had a full specimen of it this evening, in the lady of the house. She brought out from her wardrobe at least ten heavy outer garments, coats of many colours, embroidered and spangled with gold and silver flowers. I was weary at her showing them, with which she seemed surprised. There are some of them as old as the date of her marriage, others still older. They are only worn on great festivals, as Christmas, Easter, &c. when she sits in state to receive her friends. It is whimsical, however, to see how her splendid dresses are contrasted with her humble daily employments ; for, in the usual duties of the house, she is to be found sweeping out the kitchen, boiling the pot, &c. ; and she eats her meals when her husband and his friends have finished, sitting on the ground with her children and servants at the parlour door ; and such, generally, is the condition of females in Eastern countries. She wears a great number of braids which hang down all the length of her back, and to the end of these are fastened gold coins called sequins ; which, together with those she wears on her head, may be worth from five to ten pounds sterling. The advice of St. Peter is quite forgotten in this land ; ‘ The ornament of

a meek and quiet spirit,' appears to be very little known; but 'the adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel,' is most studiously retained*." These things are at the present time the great business and study of Eastern women, whose rank and fortune place them above bodily labour; being almost entirely uneducated, and not having their minds directed to any hopes or thoughts beyond this world, they pass the greater part of their time in arranging their dress, and dozing on their soft cushions. Thankful indeed ought Christian women to feel, that even the poorest and humblest among them have been taught better things. If they have indeed "learned Christ," (Ephes. iv. 20.) they will consider the body a more important subject of care, with respect to the deeds done in it, by which its final doom will be decided at the day of judgment, than as concerns the raiment, in which it is clothed for a few years on earth. (Matt. vi. 25.)

Spiritually-minded persons will find subjects for serious reflection suggested to them by the commonest objects, even by their dress. Thus the Psalmist compares the perishable nature of the human body, to that of its clothing. "Thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment;" (Ps. xxxix. 12.) and in the constant decay and change which our dress undergoes, he sees an emblem of the changeable-

* *Jowett's Missionary Researches.*

ness of all created things,—of the heavens themselves. “They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed;” and his thoughts immediately turning to the only Being, “with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning,” he adds, “But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” (Ps. cii. 26, 27.)

There are very frequent allusions to clothing in the Scriptures in a figurative sense. The dress suited to joyful occasions, is employed to describe joyful feelings, as, “To give garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness;” (Isai. lxi. 3.) and good or bad dispositions, which clothe or invest the soul, are represented under the image of clothing for the body. Thus, saints or righteous persons, are said to be “clothed with righteousness;” (Ps. cxxxii. 9.) of a profane person it is said that, “he clothes himself with cursing as with his garment;” (Ps. cix. 18.) sin is spoken of as “the garment spotted by the flesh;” (Jude 23.) and the purity of the holy angels, and of those who are admitted to the heavenly Jerusalem, is represented by their being clothed in pure and white linen. (Rev. xv. 6; and xix. 8.) The same sort of language is even applied to the Almighty Being, who is so far above our comprehension, that the only way in which we can attempt to understand his attributes, is by comparing them with objects familiar to our minds. Thus, in reference to the dress set apart for kings, God’s sovereignty over the universe

is described by the words, "Thou art clothed with honour and majesty;" and, in the next verse, the unapproachable perfections of the Almighty, are compared to a robe of dazzling splendour and brightness; "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." (Ps. civ. 1, 2.)

There is yet another sense in which clothing is referred to by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 53, where the resurrection of the body, and its re-union with its companion the soul, for an eternity of happiness or misery, is expressed by *putting on* immortality. It would be well if we kept this expression in our minds, when we put on our clothes every morning; offering up at the same time a prayer, that the thoughts of that awful time, when we shall be awakened from the sleep of death, to "put on immortality," may influence our conduct through the day. In this way our dress, which is to so many "an occasion of falling," as it ministers to vanity and folly, might become an indirect means of promoting our eternal welfare.

NUMBERING.

WE read in the history of David's life, after an account of the victories he gained over his enemies, and of the number and might of his valiant men, that "he said to Joab the captain of the host, (or army,) go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people." (2 Sam. xxiv. 2.)

It appears as if David had been at this time so much elated with prosperity, that he forgot what he had formerly felt and expressed, "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host," (Ps. xxxiii. 26.) and that he took pride and pleasure in knowing the number and strength of his subjects, as if it were to them he owed his success. Though Joab was a bad man, he saw that what David wished him to do was wrong, and very properly tried to persuade him to give up his intention. But it was of no use; "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel," probably for their disregard of religion, and their pride and luxury in a time of peace; and to punish them, He allowed David to be tempted by Satan to gratify his vanity, and to yield to the temptation; for this appears to be the meaning of the expressions, "He moved David," (2 Sam. xxiv. 1.) and, "Satan provoked David to number Israel." (1 Chron. xxi. 1.) Besides

the improper feeling which led to this act, David was guilty of breaking one of God's commandments, and of allowing the people to do so. For it was expressly commanded by the law of Moses, "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, then shall they give each man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord," as an acknowledgment that it was to Him they owed their lives and all they possessed, "that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them." (Exod. xxx. 12.) It seems that the people had failed to do this, and we all know the history of the dreadful plague that broke out among them, and carried off seventy thousand men in a few hours; so that the king, who lately felt such pride in the strength of his army, would soon have been left without a man to protect him, had not the Lord "repented him of the evil," on David's humbly confessing his sin, "And said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough; stay now thine hand." God's judgments are in mercy, not "in anger;" (Jer. x. 24.) as soon as the sinner is brought to repentance, His "strange work," (Isai. xxviii. 21.) is done.

It is very interesting to find, that the punishment of David's pride and vanity in numbering his people, has been handed down as a warning against the same faults among the Bedouin Arabs, to the present day. We are told, "for the same reason that a Bedouin never counts the tents of his tribe, nor the exact number of his sheep, nor a military chief the exact number of his men, nor a

governor the number of inhabitants of his town, a merchant never attempts to find out the exact sum of money his property is worth. All he desires is, to be able to form a tolerably correct idea of its amount. This arises from a belief that counting is a boastful display of wealth, which heaven will quickly punish by lessening it*." We shall profit still farther by David's example, if, when it pleases God to give success to our industry, or otherwise to add to our wealth, we remember that it is to Him we owe the health and strength which enable us to work for ourselves, or the friends whose kindness adds to our comforts; and we shall do well to follow his advice, "If riches increase, set not your heart on them;" (Ps. lxii. 10.) for, "in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment," they will but add to our terror and misery, if they have made us neglect the "true riches," the "one thing needful."

* *Burckhardt's Notes on the Arabs.*

HUSBANDRY.

Nothing can give a more complete idea of a fertile, productive country, than the descriptions we read in the Bible of the land of Canaan.

When Jacob, just before his death, prophesied what should befall his sons "in the last days," he said of Judah, "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes;" (Gen. xlix. 11.) meaning, that the choicest productions of the earth, should be in such abundance in the part of the Holy Land that would be allotted to the tribe of Judah, that vines might be almost said to be as common there, as thorn bushes are in other places, and wine as abundant as water. Even before the Israelites had arrived in the promised land, we find that the tribes of Reuben and Gad, which had "a very great multitude of cattle," (Num. xxxii. 1.) were so delighted with the rich pasturage of Gilead and Bashan, on the east bank of the river Jordan, that they said to Moses, "If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan;" and we find the "fat bulls of Bashan" (Ps. xxii. 12.) became so celebrated, that they were used as a proverb, to describe any one who had grown proud and mis-

chievous, from too great prosperity, and too good living. Travellers describe this pasturage as being equally excellent in the present day; but instead of the busy, active scene the land of Gilead must have presented in former times, when the men of Reuben and of Gad built there "cities for their little ones, and folds for their sheep," a few wandering Arabs are its only inhabitants, and but few traces are to be found of the cities, that were once so numerous and so full of inhabitants.

A great many passages must occur to every reader of the Holy Scriptures, in which the land of Canaan was described to the Israelites as, "A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and figtrees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive, and honey, a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack (or want) anything in it;" (Deut. viii. 8.) "A land flowing with milk and honey," favoured above all other lands for the richness of its soil, and the excellence of its productions; and such it must have been, to support the immense number of people who inhabited it in peace and comfort, in the happy days when they still worshipped the one true God; when "every man dwelt safely under his vine and his fig-tree," (1 Kings iv. 25) or was the owner of a little estate on which he lived in abundance and security. The promise to the tribe of Judah was then fulfilled; for, "the lot of its inheritance" included the fertile valley of Eshcol, where the spies gathered the bunch of grapes, that was so large

as to be carried on a pole between two men, (Num. xiii. 23.) a brook or torrent of the same name, along the banks of which was most excellent pasturage for cattle, the valley of Hebron, and the productive country about Jerusalem. David was very probably looking out on this rich scene of the blessings of God, when the beautiful idea occurred to him which is expressed Ps. lxxv. 13, "The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." His own heart was so full of joy and gratitude, that he delighted in fancying that every thing around him shared in the same feelings.

It is not in the Bible only that accounts are to be met with of the beauty and fertility of the Holy Land; many of the ancient heathen writers also describe it as a thickly inhabited country, producing all the best fruits of the earth in abundance. But what a change has now taken place in this once highly favoured land! "The curse has, indeed, fallen on the land of Judah," exclaims a traveller. "I never, except in the very desert, saw such dreariness as during these two days, (passed among the hills in Judea). We thirsted for water, but found none: once we came to a reservoir of rain water, but it was absolutely undrinkable. We have drunk water that stunk so, that we could not keep it in the tent with us*." Yet, even in the present miserable state of the Holy Land, when the labourer is fre-

* *Lord Lindsey's Letters on the East.*

quently seen holding the plough in one hand, and a gun or spear in the other, to protect himself, and the seed he is sowing, from robbers; and when oppressive governors scarcely leave him enough of the produce of his labour, to support a wretched life, literally fulfilling the prophecy, "They shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof," (Zeph. i. 13.) even under these unfavourable circumstances, the fertility of the soil is described by travellers as showing itself in the rich return which is made for very poor cultivation. In some choice spots more attention is paid to the cultivation of the land, particularly in the valley of Hebron; and here, a traveller observes, there is an abundance of grapes, vines, and olives, as in the days when the spies entered it; "And I can only wonder," he adds, "that to a hardy people, like the Israelites, after a long journey in the desert, the rich produce of Hebron did not appear so delightful, as to overcome all their fears of the men of Anak, who inhabited the land*."

Mr. Jowett, in his interesting researches into the present state of the Eastern nations, says, "As the general result of my remarks on Palestine, in respect of its natural state, I cannot but own that a very melancholy impression is made on the feelings by seeing so much land left uncultivated, and so few people scattered over the face of the country. Yet there is no fair reason for saying that this land is naturally unproductive. Its

* *Stephens's Journal.*

present barren state, while it is to be looked on as, in the strictest sense, showing that it is under the curse of God, is nevertheless such as may be generally traced to natural causes. A righteous God, fulfilling what He threatened long beforehand, has “turned a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein :” but it has been by means of this very wickedness—the increasing wickedness of the inhabitants—that this awful change has been brought about. If good government, good faith, and good morals were to flourish in this land for fifty years, it would literally become again a land flowing with milk and honey. The proper fruits of the mountains, honey and wax, would be collected by the industrious bee, from myriads of fragrant plants; the plains, the valleys, and the upland slopes would yield corn for man, and pasturage to innumerable flocks and herds. Such a great and delightful change might well gladden, not only every child of Israel, but the heart of every Christian*.”

Travellers, and those who have lived long in the East, are much struck with the great number of explanations of passages in the Scriptures, which they are constantly meeting with, in the various employments of husbandry in those countries. “There is scarcely a passage in the Bible, which might not be illustrated by modern customs,” observes a gentleman who has resided some years in India.

* *Jowett's Missionary Researches.*

The plough in Judea, as of old, is usually drawn by oxen, and held by one person who drives them. In this he makes use of a goad six or eight feet in length, which is sharp at one end for driving cattle, and has a kind of spade at the other end, for keeping the plough-share free from mud or weeds, so that he is saved the incumbrance of having two instruments to carry. We may suppose that Elisha was using one of these long goads, when Elijah "found him plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him;" (1 Kings xix. 19.) and there can be little doubt that this was the formidable weapon employed by Shamgar, the son of Anath, when "he slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad." (Judg. iii. 31.)

While so many tracts of country, in which the cheerful voice of the ploughman was formerly heard, as he "ploughed in hope" of an abundant return for his toils, are now barren wastes, other spots on which towns and palaces once stood, where all was life, and bustle, and activity, are now trodden only by the weary feet of an oppressed ploughman and his oxen.

It was foretold by both Jeremiah (xxvi. 18.) and Micah, (iii. 12.) at a time when Jerusalem was a large, flourishing city, to all appearance as little likely to become a ploughed field as London now is, "Zion shall for your sakes be ploughed as a field;" and most exactly has this prophecy been fulfilled. A visiter to Jerusalem describes that while he was standing gazing on its ruins,

“the husbandman was busily employed with his plough about the hill of Zion*.”

Samaria was threatened with the same fate: “I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard;” (Micah i. 6.) and this has been as literally accomplished. The same writer, describing his visit to it, says, “the ruins of the palace of Herod stand on a flat piece of land at the very top of the hill, overlooking every part of the surrounding country; and such were the great beauty and softness of the scene, even in the present wild state of the country, that the city seemed smiling in the midst of her desolation. All around was a beautiful valley, watered by running streams, and covered by a rich carpet of grass, sprinkled with wild flowers of every colour; and beyond, stretched like an open book before me, was a boundary of fruitful mountains, the vine and the olive rising in terraces to their very summit.” There, day after day, the haughty Herod had sat in his royal palace; and looking out upon all these beauties, his heart had become hardened with prosperity. Here, among these still towering columns, the proud king had “made a supper to his lords, and high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;”—here “the daughter of Herodias,” Herod’s brother’s wife, danced before him; “and he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom.” And while the dance and the feast went

* *Stephens’s Journal.*

on, the head of John the Baptist “was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel; and she brought it to her mother.” Herod is gone, and Herodias is gone, and the lords, and high captains, and chief estates of Galilee are gone; but the ruins of the palace in which they feasted are still here; and oh! what a lesson on the vanity of worldly greatness. A labourer was turning his plough among the ruins: I was sitting on a broken column under a fig-tree by its side, and I asked him what were the ruins that I saw, while his oxen were quietly cropping the grass that grew among the remains of the marble floor. He told me that they were the ruins of the palace of a king—he believed of the Christians; and while pilgrims from every part of the world turn aside from their path, to show their respect for John the Baptist, by visiting the prison in which he was beheaded, the Arab who was driving his plough among the columns of his palace, did not know the name of the haughty Herod*.

These things are “written for our learning,” and “whoso is wise will ponder them.” The same God who brought these fearful judgments on guilty nations in former days, still reigns over the world, to execute judgment and justice on the ungodly. If we wish, then, really to be friends to our country, and would dread the idea that our cities should one day become desolate heaps, and that the plough should pass over the ruins

* *Stephens's Journal.*

of our palaces, we must take warning by the nations of old. Instead of talking a great deal about reforming the state, we should set about the more profitable, but less agreeable task, of reforming ourselves. The most pious man is the best friend to his country; for the Word of the all-wise God tells us, "By the blessing of the upright the city (or country) is exalted; but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked." (Prov. xi. 11.)

The expression, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," (Acts ix. 5.) refers to an Eastern custom in managing the oxen employed in agriculture, or the cultivation of the land. When the animals, from being unused to the yoke, or from a vicious nature, are likely to be troublesome and to kick, a board, full of sharp spikes, is fastened behind them, in such a way as to receive all their kicks; so that the harder they kick and struggle against their master's will, the more they hurt themselves, without doing any other damage. And so it is with all who struggle against the will of God,—they do but "kick against the pricks." St. Paul might persecute the Church of Christ, but it was founded on a rock, and all the powers of hell could not prevail against it, much less a weak mortal, who only increased his own sin and danger by every fresh attack on it; but he "obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. i. 13.) With ourselves it is exactly the same; by our struggles against the will of the Almighty, when it pleases Him to afflict us with want, sickness, or

any other distresses, we only increase our sufferings, and should do much better to profit by the advice contained in the old verse ;

The sooner thyself thou submittest to God,

The sooner He ceaseth to scourge with his rod.

It has been already mentioned, (Part II, page 84) that the "former rain" falls in Judea about the month of November ; as soon as this has ceased, the business of ploughing and sowing the seed begins ; and the young corn shows itself about ten or twelve days after the seed has been cast into the ground. In Egypt, we are told, the barley-harvest takes place as early as the month of March ; "and this," Mr. Jowett observes, "may explain the passage Jer. viii. 20. As the harvest is before the summer, it is put first in the description ;— 'The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' "

The same writer mentions having seen crops in Egypt which reminded him, from their abundance, of the "seven plenteous years" foretold by Joseph, when "the earth brought forth by handfuls." (Gen. xli. 47.) "I plucked up at random," he says, "a few stalks out of the thick corn-fields. We counted the number of stalks which sprouted from single grains of seed ; carefully pulling to pieces each root, in order to see that it was but one plant. The first had seven stalks, the next three, the next nine, then eighteen, then fourteen ; each stalk would bear an ear."

“Wheat and barley,” we are told, “do not generally grow half as high in Syria as in Britain; and they are therefore, like other grain, not reaped with the sickle, but plucked up with the root by the hand; in other parts of the country, where the corn grows higher, the sickle is used. The reapers go to the field very early in the morning, and return home soon in the afternoon; they carry provisions with them, and leathern bottles, or bottle-gourds, filled with water. They are followed by their own children, or by others who glean with much success; for a great quantity of corn is scattered in their reaping, and in their manner of carrying it*.” This account of the customs of reapers in the East, agrees exactly with the description contained in the beautiful history of Ruth, “when she came and gleaned in the field of Boaz after the reapers.” (Ruth ii. 3.) “And Boaz said unto Ruth, Hearest thou not my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them,—and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn. And at meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers; and he reached her parched corn; and she did eat, and was sufficed, (or satisfied) and left.” Parched corn is still a part of the food of the Arabs.

* *Russell's Natural History of Aleppo.*

“One of our Arabs,” says a traveller, “having plucked some ears of corn, parched them for us, by putting them in the fire, and then, when they were roasted, rubbed out the grain in his hands*.”

We find frequent mention in the Bible of the threshing-floor. It was on a threshing-floor that Gideon spread out the fleece of wool, by which he was to prove to his countrymen, whether God had indeed chosen him to deliver them from their enemies. “And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.” (Judg. vi. 36, 37.) It was in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, that “David built an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; so the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.” (2 Sam. xxiv. 25.) Both these accounts show that the threshing-floors in the East were then, as now, not in a barn, but in the open air. They are made in a corner of a field, or on the nearest high ground, by beating down the mud, which is left to dry in the sun. There the corn is laid in a heap, and the grain is separated from the husk, by being trampled on by oxen. In some places they have also a sledge, fixed upon two or three rollers, around

* *M' Michael's Journey to Constantinople.*

which are several rings of iron with notched edges, like those of a saw, so sharp as to cut the straw; this machine, which is drawn by oxen, mules, or asses, is easily driven by a man seated on the sledge, and as it passes round and round, over the corn spread out on the threshing-floor, the grain is by degrees trodden out, while the straw is chopped by the iron rings.* This was most probably the machine alluded to by Isaiah xli. 15. "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing-instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." Though God's people are in their own strength but as a "worm," yet, having his promise, "I will help thee," they need not fear; their most powerful enemies shall not be able to prevail against them.

This machine is also referred to, Isai. xxviii. 28, "Bread-corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the *wheel of his cart*, nor bruise it with his horsemen;" and Prov. xx. 26, "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth *the wheel* over them."

The circumstance of cattle being employed to tread out the corn is alluded to in many passages in the Bible; as Hosea x. 11, "Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn;" and the command, "thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," (Deut. xxv. 4.) is still attended to in the East;

* *Russell's Natural History of Aleppo.*

for we are told, that the cattle are left unmuzzled at the heap, where they feast themselves at their own pleasure. St. Paul asks, "Doth God take care for oxen" particularly? or was not this command given, to teach us to act with kindness and liberality towards all who are employed for us; taking care that they shall receive a full return for their labour.

When the corn is trodden out, it is separated from the chaff by throwing it into the air with wooden shovels; a custom to which there are also frequent allusions in the Scriptures, when God's judgments are denounced against the wicked, who are compared to "the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor." (Hosea xiii. 3.) "The terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away." (Isai. xxix. 5.)

In the verse following the passage already quoted from Isaiah, in which the "threshing instrument" is described, we read, "Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." In Jer. iv. 11, we find, "A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse; even a full wind from those places shall come unto me." The long-suffering patience of the Almighty had in vain endeavoured to lead his people to repentance; and now the time for it was over;—their iniquities were full. His judgments were no longer "to fan, nor to cleanse," but to sweep them away altogether.

When the grain is perfectly winnowed and separated from the chaff, it is put into sacks, and carried to the granaries; which are large underground grottoes, with one round opening at the top; and this being close shut when the store-house is full, is covered over with earth, in such a manner as to remain completely hidden from an enemy. We find this custom referred to, Jer. xli. 8: "But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not; for we have treasures in the field; of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey." Jer. xvii. 3. "O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil." It might be to this sort of "hid treasures" that Job alluded, when he said that "the bitter in soul long for death, and dig for it as for hid treasures." (Job iii. 20, 21.)

And now the harvest being ended, the floor thoroughly purged, and the wheat gathered into the garner; nothing remains to be done but to dispose of the useless, unprofitable chaff; and this, as of old, is gathered into heaps and burned, an awful emblem of the fate reserved for "the ungodly and the sinner," at the last day.

We are indebted to Mr. Jowett* for the following Scripture illustrations, which he noticed on the banks of the Nile. "We observed," he says, "the people making holes in the sandy soil on the side of the river. Into these holes they put a small quantity of pigeon's dung and feathers, with the seed of melons or cucum-

* *Christian Researches.*

bers. The value of this manure is alluded to, 2 Kings vi. 25, where the high price paid for it is mentioned as one of the distresses during the famine in Samaria. The produce of this labour I had an opportunity of seeing in due season, that is, the following June; large fields of ripe melons and cucumbers then ornamented the sides of the river. They grew in such abundance that the sailors freely helped themselves. Some guard, however, is placed upon them. Occasionally, but at long and dreary distances from each other, we observed little huts, made of reeds, just large enough to hold one man, being, in fact, little more than a fence against a north wind. In these I have sometimes observed a poor old man, perhaps lame, feebly guarding the property. It exactly illustrates Isai. i. 8. 'And the daughter of Zion is left—as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.' The abundance of these most necessary vegetables brings to mind the murmurs of the Israelites: (Numb. xi. 5, 6.) 'We remember the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick; but now our soul is dried away.'"

It may seem strange to those who are used to consider cucumbers as a vegetable to be used very sparingly, that whole fields should be planted with them; but in the East we are told that they are eaten in much larger quantities. "When we took leave of the party, (of Turkish ladies) and prepared to continue our stroll," says Miss Pardoe, "the elder lady gave us four large

cucumbers, a vegetable highly relished by the inhabitants of the East, and eaten by them in the same manner as fruit." She also mentions being much amused on one occasion, at seeing the holsters to the saddles of some of the Turkish soldiers filled with cucumbers, instead of pistols.

It is not only in Egypt that "keepers of the field" (Jer. iv. 17.) are still employed to guard the ripe fruit. In Syria, in all the orchards a small square watch-house is built for the accommodation of the watchmen in the fruit season; or instead of these, they sometimes make bowers, intended only to last the season, of wood, and thatch them with rushes or branches.* It was, very probably, such a hut or cottage, made of weak materials, and easily removed, that was intended by Isaiah, (xxiv. 20.) where, describing the greatness of God's power, and the terror of his judgments, he says, "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed *like a cottage.*"

We find constant reference, both in the Old and New Testament, to the various employments of husbandry in a figurative sense; and we have our Saviour's example for drawing religious instruction from these, and the other common affairs of life.

When we see the ploughman at his work, preparing the earth to receive the seed, it will remind us to "break up *the fallow ground*" (Jer. iv. 3.) of our hearts. Not

* *Russell's Natural History of Aleppo.*

leaving them like barren, unprofitable, waste land, which produces only thorns and briars; but labouring earnestly with prayer, for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to root out of them every evil temper and disposition, that they may be prepared like good ground for receiving the "Word," and bring forth abundantly the fruits of holiness.

The change of the small insignificant seed, after it has lain some time in the earth, to a fine field of waving corn, a beautiful flower, or a stately tree, may convince us of God's power to raise our poor, corruptible bodies from the grave, that they may be like to Christ's glorified body; and the sight of the reapers, and the shouts of the harvest-home, may lead us to think of "the harvest of the earth," (Rev. xiv. 15.) when the reapers, who are the angels, (Matt. xiii. 39.) will separate the good from the bad, and conduct the redeemed of Christ with hymns of praise to the kingdom of their Father, where they will shine forth as the sun.

Among many other laws given to the Jews relating to husbandry, was that of the Sabbaths. By this law they were not only to keep every seventh day holy, but every seventh year was to be "a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord," (Lev. xxv. 4.) in which they were neither to sow the land, nor prune the vineyard, nor gather in any of the fruits of the earth which sprung up of themselves. And when seven times seven years were ended, the year which followed, namely

the fiftieth year, was set apart as a sabbath of particular observances. He whose promise cannot fail, assured His people that they should not suffer from their obedience to His commands, by being in want of any of the fruits of the earth, which should be in such abundance every sixth year, as to supply them until the harvest of the eighth year was gathered in. But if they did not observe this law of the sabbaths, they were threatened with all the evils from which they suffered during the Babylonish Captivity, when the land enjoyed a rest of seventy years, and from which they have been suffering for the last 1800 years. Though we are delivered from the extreme rigour of the ceremonial law of the Jews, it seems impossible to suppose that the observance of the Sabbath, which was so strongly enforced on them, can be a matter of little, or no importance to us. We are equally concerned in celebrating the blessings of creation, and have been delivered from a worse bondage than that of Egypt. But few people, however, are disposed to argue against observing the Sabbath at all; the more frequent question is *how* it shall be observed. Now we may gain some help in deciding this difficulty, by considering what our Saviour said of the Sabbath. "The Sabbath was made for man;" not for the Jews only, but for man or mankind in general. As all that God made "was good," (Gen. i. 31.) we may be sure that the Sabbath was made for man's

good, and it remains for us to decide what this is. We have a mortal body, and an immortal soul, which will be happy or miserable through eternity, accordingly as we profit by our time and opportunities here, for becoming acquainted with the great truths of religion, and for attaining to that newness of life, and those holy dispositions, without which we could not enjoy the happiness of heaven, even if we could be admitted into it. As most of us are occupied during the greater part of the week in attending to our bodily wants, and our worldly affairs, will it be most for our good to pass our sabbaths in idle amusements and improper pleasures, which will not give happiness even for a few days here, or to spend them in such a manner as will promote our eternal advantage? If some great earthly inheritance, in a distant country, were offered to all who were found fit and prepared for it, by having become acquainted with the laws of the country, and acquired the habits and dispositions of its inhabitants, how gladly should we employ not only one day in the week, but the whole week in studying them! We should not, in this case, argue like children, whether we *must* do this, and *must not* do that, as if some one else were to be benefited by it; but we should understand that our own interest was concerned. We are careful enough about acquiring the "things temporal" which "are seen," (2 Cor. iv. 18.) but so little real faith have we in the promises of God,

that because "the things eternal" are "not seen," we think one day in seven too much to spend in becoming fit to be partakers of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. i. 4.)

VINEYARDS.

THERE is something particularly pleasing in the culture of the vine, which makes it an object of almost affectionate interest. From the first shooting forth of the soft, tender bud, and the unfolding of the graceful tendrils, as they seek a prop to which they may cling for the support of the helpless plant, till the time when the beautifully shaped leaves form a shade from the heat of the mid-day sun, and the rich clusters of ripened grapes summon to a joyful vintage, and give promise of "wine to make glad the heart of man," the toils of the vineyard are light, and the objects it presents are beautiful. And when the vintage is over, and the glories of the vine are past, the bright and varied tints of its withering leaves give it a new charm, even in its decline; like the aged Christian, whose days of active usefulness are at an end, but whose countenance beams bright to the last with faith and love.

It was, most probably, this feeling, which caused the writers of the Old Testament, so constantly to employ a vineyard, as an emblem of the people who were God's peculiar care. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room for it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the

shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." (Ps. lxxx.) This Psalm is supposed to have been written after the Babylonians had destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem; and after describing what had been the flourishing, happy state of the Holy Land, when it was full of inhabitants, who lived in peace and safety, from the Mediterranean sea to the river Euphrates, the Psalmist goes on to compare its then miserable state, to that of a vineyard which has been laid waste. "Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it." Mr. Hartley gives the following illustration of this passage: "My friend, Mr. Leeves, was going in the dusk of the evening from Constantinople to a neighbouring village. Passing a vineyard, he observed an animal of a large size rushing out from among the vines, crossing the road, and running away as fast as he could. The Greek servant, who was riding first, exclaimed, 'A wild boar! a wild boar!'—and it proved to be a wild boar, that was making the greatest haste to get back from the vineyard to the woods. 'What has the wild boar to do in the vineyards?' inquired Mr. Leeves. 'Oh!' said the Greek servant, 'it is the custom of the wild boars to go into the vineyards, and to devour the grapes: and it is astonishing what havoc a wild boar is able to make in a

single night. What with eating, and what with trampling under foot, he will destroy an immense quantity of grapes.' Few persons, probably, have had an equally good opportunity of observing how exactly this passage of Scripture agrees with the habits of the wild boar; but every one who has visited the countries where grapes are grown in the fields in large quantities, for the purpose of making wine, will be well acquainted with the custom referred to in the 12th verse: 'All they which pass by do pluck her.' It is considered allowable in passing through a vineyard to gather a few of the grapes. With what sad truth does this description of a desolate vineyard, apply to the Jews in the present time! Still is the vine of Israel broken down, ravaged; 'cut down, burnt with fire.' (ver. 16.) The ferocity with which their Turkish masters torment and oppress the Jews, may be compared, with melancholy truth, to the savage tearing of the boar, and the devouring of the wild beast. May those who interest themselves in the conversion and salvation of this ancient people, repeat with fervour the Psalmist's petition: 'Return, we beseech Thee, O Lord of Hosts! look down from heaven; and behold, and visit this vine.' " *

Another enemy of the vines mentioned in the Bible is the fox: "The foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." (Cant. ii. 15.) Dr. Walsh, after describing the beauty of the country about Smyrna, says, "This seemed

* *Hartley's Christian Researches.*

but a short time ago to have been highly cultivated, and we saw everywhere the remains of vines, figs, and other fruit trees ; but the branches were torn down, the enclosures broken through and trampled. They had belonged to the unfortunate Greeks, who had fled or were killed ; and the wild boar and the fox had taken possession of them.” * There is also a kind of dog in Portugal, which prowls around the vineyards in hopes of getting at the grapes, of which they are so passionately fond, that sticks are fastened to their collars, to prevent their getting through the hedges into the vineyards ; and at the season when the grapes begin to ripen, great numbers of these dogs are seized by the owners of the vineyards, and shipped off to Lisbon, where they are a great nuisance to the inhabitants. †

Another very beautiful passage of the Holy Scriptures, in which the people of Israel are compared to a vineyard, is the beginning of the 5th of Isaiah : “ Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill ; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein.” This description of the care bestowed on a vineyard in former times, agrees exactly with the accounts of the way in which those in the Holy

* *Walsh's Constantinople.*

† *Portugal and Galicia, by Lord C.*

Land are managed at the present time. "We started again at noon," says a traveller, "following the ancient road (to Bethlehem) along the hill-side, and between corn-fields, olive-groves, and vineyards, each with its watch tower, the stones carefully gathered out, and fenced in with a stone wall."* The Prophet then goes on to relate, how all the care of the owner of the vineyard had been wasted: "He looked (or expected) that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." A kind of wild vine, we are told, grows near the highways and hedges of Judea, which has a small grape that is black when ripe; † there is also a sort of nightshade, common in the East, called by the Arabs, wolf's grapes, which grows much in the vineyards, and does them great injury. How great, then, must have been the disappointment of the owner of the vineyard, when instead of the abundant crop of excellent fruit he expected to gather from the "noble vine, wholly a right seed," (Jer. ii. 21.) which he had planted, he found only useless, and perhaps poisonous, weeds, bearing wild grapes. Well might he call on the Jews to "judge between *him* and *his* vineyard," whether he could have done more for it; and they could not but own, that as all further attempts to improve it were useless, the only thing that remained to be done, was to "take away the hedge thereof," and "lay it waste." Having been led

* *Lord Lindsay's Letters.*

† *Travels in the East, by Rae Wilson.*

to pass this sentence on the ungrateful vineyard, how must they have been stung to the heart, when the whole was applied to themselves; and the Prophet, still speaking in the name of God, declared, "The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant: He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." Their consciences must have told them, that every thing possible had been done for their instruction, and for their encouragement; but instead of "bringing forth the fruits of righteousness," they provoked the anger of the Almighty by their covetousness, intemperance, oppression, and injustice. It is as easy for us to see the sinfulness of the Jews, as it was for them to agree in the justice of the sentence passed on the unprofitable vineyard; but if we stop here, this beautiful parable will have been written in vain for us. It should lead us to recollect all the spiritual benefits God has bestowed on each of us, and to consider whether we have turned them to the good account we ought; earnestly praying the Great Owner of the vineyard, so to assist our humble endeavours to serve and obey him, that we may not at last be found to have brought forth only wild grapes.

We find a bath mentioned as a measure for wine. Isai. v. 10: "Ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath." It seems very probable that the Jews first employed this measure when they were in Egypt, as a large

jar of earthenware made there is still called hamam or bath.*

The description of the stone walls to the vineyards, may remind us of the history of Balaam, who was met by the Angel of the Lord "in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side." (Numb. xxii. 24.)

"A very fruitful *hill*," being the situation chosen for a favourite vineyard in the Holy Land, in the time of Isaiah, quite agrees with the traces of former industry in that country. Even where the hills are so steep, that it appears as if it would be almost impossible to cultivate them, there are the remains of terraces, or broad steps, up to their very summits, on which the vines were planted. When there are not any trees to which the vines can cling for support, they grow up poles, like our hops; or they are sometimes trained over a wooden frame, when they form a complete screen from the sun; and it was, probably, in reference to this custom, that a man was said to sit "*under his vine*."

A very important part of the management of vines, is the purging or pruning them, to which our Saviour alludes, John xv. 1, 2, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." If we had really faith in the Word of God,

* *Browne's Travels in Egypt and Syria.*

we should learn, from this passage, like St. Paul, to "glory in tribulations," whenever it may please God to bring them upon us; and rather consider them as privileges, than murmur and repine at them, since they prove that the All-wise Husbandman thinks us worthy of "purging, that *we* may bring forth more fruit," instead of giving us up to the dangers of uninterrupted prosperity, or cutting us off by death, without any further attempt to improve us. Our utter inability to "work out our own salvation," by any merits or power of our own, independent of the atonement of Christ, and the help of His Holy Spirit, is also enforced in this passage. It is as possible for a branch to bear fruit separated from the vine, as it is for us to "have *our* fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," (Rom. vi. 22.) by our own strength, separated from Christ.

The useless, or "abominable branch," (Isai. xiv. 19.) is still "cast into the fire for fuel;" (Ezek. xv. 4.) it is unfit for any other purpose.

One of the most remarkable circumstances mentioned in the Bible relating to vineyards, is the history of Naboth's vineyard. Some persons may be inclined to think that Naboth was churlish, or wanting in duty and respect to the king for refusing to part with his vineyard on any terms; but it must be remembered, that there was an express law forbidding the Jews to part with the inheritance they had received from their fathers; by which means the tribes were kept quite

distinct, and there could be no doubt about the descent of the Messiah, in his human nature, from the line of David, agreeably to the prophecies. As Naboth was declared by the false witnesses to have been guilty of blasphemy and treason, he was punished with death, (Lev. xxiv. 14.) and his property was forfeited to the king. A gentleman who has been for some years a judge in a remote part of India, observes, "I have often thought that I never fully felt the story of Naboth's vineyard, till I was placed among people, whose manners are much the same as those of the Jews, at the time that crime was committed. It seemed difficult to believe, that any one could be guilty of so fearful a crime as Jezebel's, for so small an object; or at any rate, we should suppose that it would happen but seldom: but those who live in a country where evil passions are neither restrained by civilization, nor changed by religion, will find it really very different. If I say that I have known the crime committed frequently, I do not think that I exaggerate. Once, at least, I have known it successful; and one need only sit in an Eastern court of justice, to see how true a description the Scriptures give of Eastern manners."

The first account we have of wine, is also an account of drunkenness, and its sad consequences. "Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken." (Gen. ix. 20, 21.) Many learned men suppose that

Noah was the first person who made wine, and that he was not aware of its strength; or that he was at this time so old as not to be able to bear it. However this may be, it has been well observed that the example of Noah, who had escaped the pollutions of the old world, and was now overcome in a time of security and peace, calls perpetually upon "him that thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall." Through the immoderate use of wine, a man who had been a preacher and pattern of righteousness to a guilty world, became an object of contempt and derision to his own son; and that son was punished for his undutiful disrespect, by a curse from which his descendants are still suffering. From that time to this, most truly might the same answer be returned to the question, "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? They that tarry long at the wine." (Prov. xxiii. 30.)

But though the immoderate use of wine, or any other strong liquors, is to be carefully avoided, we cannot suppose that any of the gifts of God were meant to be rejected and shunned by us as snares, or that they are otherwise than good, when properly used. St. Paul recommends Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." (1 Tim. v. 23.) In this, as in every thing which relates to our conduct through life, good and evil, "blessing and cursing" (Deut. xxx. 19.) are set before us, and it depends upon ourselves which we will

choose. Reason and conscience are given us for this purpose, and if we will attend to them, we shall "use the world," and the innocent comforts it offers us, "as not abusing" them; and they will even become profitable to our eternal good, by leading us to increased feelings of love and gratitude towards the Giver of all our blessings and enjoyments. Some persons, however, from small means, or natural constitution, may find it safer and more prudent to abstain altogether, than to run any risk of being tempted to excess; and they will act quite rightly in doing so. We have a high example each way in the Scriptures. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, drank "neither wine nor strong drink;" (Luke i. 15.) but the most perfect character, "the Son of man, came eating and drinking" (Matt. ii. 19.) with moderation.

The vinegar into which Boaz told Ruth she might dip her morsel together with his people, (Ruth ii. 14.) and that offered by the Roman soldiers to our Saviour at his crucifixion, are supposed to have been a thin, light kind of wine, such as is now much used in Spain and Italy in harvest-time.

"The wine-press," or "wine-fat," the place in which the juice is squeezed out of the grapes to make wine, is still sometimes to be met with in the vineyards as in former days; but the grapes are more frequently pressed out at home*. The vintage, or grape-harvest, requires

* *Hartley's Christian Researches.*

to be carried on quickly. The bunches of grapes when gathered are spread on the ground, and left in the sun and air for twelve or fifteen days; they are then put into a large vat, and men of sufficient weight and strength tread them with their naked feet. While employed in this way they often stand for hours together up to the knees in juice, with which both their persons and dress are much stained; and usually lighten their employment by singing together, a custom referred to by Jeremiah xxv. 30. "The Lord shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes." The liquor is then left to ferment, and after a few days is put into skins or barrels.

We find the act of treading the wine-press, frequently used in the Bible as a terrible image of the power of the Almighty in trampling and subduing his enemies. A remarkable instance of the kind occurs in the beginning of the 63rd of Isaiah. In this passage the "Captain of our salvation," (Heb. ii. 10.) who "spoiled principalities and powers," (Col. ii. 15.) is supposed to be seen coming as a great conqueror, from the land of Edom, the enemy of God's chosen people the Jews, with his garments stained with blood. Some person, who is much struck with the power and majesty of his appearance, is supposed to ask, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" The answer is, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." A second question is asked:—

“ Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?” To this inquiry the reply is, “ I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me ; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled on my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help ; and I wondered that there was none to uphold ; therefore mine own arm brought salvation to me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”

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CITIES.

SOME of the circumstances mentioned in the Bible with reference to cities, may be difficult to be understood by many readers who have never left our own country, where we are happily so free from any danger of a sudden attack from an enemy, and so far removed from the horrors of war, that we need not protect our cities with high walls and deep ditches. In former times, indeed, when England, Scotland, and Wales, were divided into a number of small kingdoms, constantly at war with one another, it was necessary to surround many of the towns with walls, of which the remains may still be seen in some places; and a street in the old part of London for this reason is to this day called London Wall. But our country is now "at unity (or peace) in itself" under one Sovereign; and our ships have justly been called our "wooden walls," as they protect us from foreign enemies. We may well say, as David did after reckoning up a long list of worldly advantages, "Happy are the people that are in such a case;" but let us also remember, like him, that there is a still higher happiness in knowing and serving the merciful Giver of all good, "Yea, *blessed* are the people who have the Lord for their God." (Psalm cxliv. 15.)

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Most other nations, however, are very differently situated, and in those Eastern countries of which we read in the Holy Scriptures, each large city has a separate governor, who is always on the watch to take advantage of the weakness of his neighbours; and truth is so little regarded or attended to, that the greatest professions of peace, and promises of friendship, are often made by those persons who are at that very moment planning a man's destruction.

Besides this, the number of Arabs who are constantly going about in search of plunder, is so great, in many parts of the East, that even the towns would not be safe unless they were well protected against them. Travellers tell of a Christian convent in Palestine which has been so often attacked, that the monks who live in it have now, for their greater safety, bricked up the gate through which the robbers made their way; and every thing or person going in or out, is drawn up, or let down, in a basket from a window. People living in such a country have still need of "cities walled up to heaven," or surrounded with high walls; as the spies sent by Moses described those of the promised land, when it was divided among a number of different nations, the Hittites, Hivites, &c. And the Jews after them required "fenced (or fortified) cities," "with walls and towers, gates, and bars," (2 Chron. xiv. 7.) to defend them from the descendants of those nations whom their forefathers had allowed to remain in the

land, contrary to God's command; and who became, as he had threatened, "pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides," (Num. xxxiii. 55.) constant occasions of distress and alarm, to punish them for their disobedience.

A traveller observes that the situations for building cities all through Palestine are clearly pointed out by the rocky and hilly nature of the country; and as this does not allow them room for adding fresh buildings, and spreading out, like the cities of Europe, we may well suppose that such of them as still remain have scarcely changed, since the time when the large armies went forth from them, under their different kings, to fight against Israel. "It is no wonder," he continues, "that travellers and commentators who study the Bible, should find it difficult to imagine, how such great numbers of people could live in so small a country as the Holy Land; but the manners and habits of the Eastern nations are probably little changed since the earliest times; and now in every hut, and every poor village, more people are crowded together than would fill a long street of a city, if the inhabitants lived as we do. In every town, in each of the large houses, there are enough people to make a small parish."

The walls of fortified towns are made broad enough for many persons to walk on them abreast; they have flights of steps leading up to them, and being often planted with rows of trees, are a favourite walk for the

inhabitants in time of peace. When a city is attacked by an enemy, the soldiers who are to defend it are placed along the walls; as we read was the case (2 Kings xviii. 26) when Rab-shakeh was preparing to attack Jerusalem, and first tried to alarm the people by boasting to them of his master's great power and conquests; for the Jewish princes begged he would not talk in the Jews' language "in the ears, or hearing, of the soldiers on the wall," for fear they should be so much frightened by his vaunting as to give up defending the city.

We also sometimes read of houses on the walls of towns. Major Skinner says that the house in Damascus from which St. Paul escaped, when he was let down in a basket from a window in the wall, is still shown. "The circumstance," he observes, "that houses still stand on the walls, with windows towards the country, and hanging directly over the ditch, is singular in a fortified city of the present day, as it is likely to make it much easier for an enemy to get into it. This at any rate," he adds, "shows how little Damascus has altered since the earliest times*." We read likewise that when Joshua sent two men to spy out "the land, even Jericho," and they were in danger of being taken and put to death by the king of Jericho, Rahab, with whom they lodged, "let them down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town wall." (Josh. ii. 15.) Though born in a heathen land, and a woman

* *Skinner's Overland Journey.*

who had led a bad life, she was so struck by the wonders wrought by the Lord, that she acknowledged Him to be the only God, the Maker of all things; and expressing her firm belief that He would perform his promise of giving the land of her people to the Israelites, begged them to spare her life and that of her family, when the Lord brought his word to pass. This was a wonderful example of faith in a poor sinful heathen; and she was rewarded for it by being received into the number of God's peculiar people, and allowed to marry into the tribe of Judah. (Matt. i. 5.)

We read that when David heard of the death of Absalom he went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept there. (2 Sam. xviii. 33.) A chamber over the gate of an old ruined fort was for some years the only place in Calcutta, our largest city in India, where Divine service on Sundays was publicly performed.

It will readily be supposed that it is necessary to keep a careful watch at the gates of cities, that no dangerous persons may go in at them; and accordingly we read of watchmen being placed on the wall, or in high towers over the gates, where they could see every one who was coming, even at a great distance, and give timely notice in case it should prove to be an enemy; as was done by "the watchman who stood on the tower of Jezreel," when he "spied the company of Jehu as he came." (2 Kings ix. 17.)

It is in allusion to this custom that David says,

“ Unless the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh,” or keeps awake, “ but in vain.” (Ps. cxxvii. 1.) It is our duty to use all the innocent means God has put into our power for securing our safety; but, at the same time, we should recollect, with the Psalmist, that it is to the Almighty we are to look for giving them success. In this manner did the good King Hezekiah act when the powerful King of Assyria “ came and encamped against the fenced cities of Judah, and thought to win them for himself.” Hezekiah did not sit down idly, trusting that God would help him, without taking the trouble to help himself, but “ he took counsel with his princes, and strengthened himself, and built up the wall that was broken, and raised up the towers, and made darts and shields in abundance;” and then, when he had done all in his power to protect his kingdom, he and the prophet Isaiah “ prayed and cried to heaven,” to prosper his endeavours and give them that blessing, without which all the towers and walls would have been set up in vain. (2 Chron. xxxii.)

The prophets and teachers are often described in the Bible as watchmen, set to watch over the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church or people of God. “ I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem.” (Isai. lxii. 6.) “ Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken.” (Jer. vi. 17.)

Mention is frequently made in Scripture of kings and great men sitting in the gates of cities. Mr.

Jowett* relates the same thing of an Egyptian prince at the present day. "The Bey," he says, "with his court, which was rather numerous and splendid, was sitting at the entering in of the gate, near to which there were many rooms for transacting business." In some cities a small tax or custom is paid on all food, or goods that are carried into them for sale; and the persons whose business it is to collect it, have a room for the purpose near the gate. Mr. Hartley observes, that he never went into Smyrna without being reminded by this circumstance of the calling of Matthew; who being a publican or tax-gatherer, was sitting at the receipt of custom, that is, the place where the tax was received, when Christ passed by, "and said unto him, Follow me." (Matt. ix. 9.) †

Englishmen who have been used to go in and out of towns at every hour of the day or night, find it very troublesome when they travel abroad, to be obliged to consider whether they can reach the towns they are going to before the gates are shut for the night. If, unfortunately, they are too late, and arriving tired and hungry at the end of a long day's journey find the gates closed, they must either be content to pitch their tents outside the walls, or must go through a great deal of bargaining before it is settled how much they are to pay "the keeper of the gates," for letting them in. It is in reference to this custom that it is said of the heavenly

* *Christian Researches.*

† *Hartley's Greece.*

Jerusalem, "Thy gates shall be open continually" to receive all who really desire to enter; "they shall not be shut day nor night." (Isai. lx. 11.) When sin is at an end, these defences against our fellow-creatures will not be wanted; for "then violence shall be heard no more in the land, nor wasting and destruction within its borders." If we were not used from our earliest years to see bolts and bars to our doors, how shocked we should be at the necessity of taking such precautions against our neighbours! Any one who is inclined to doubt the fallen nature of man, may see a proof of it in every key he turns.

Watchmen are also employed in many eastern countries to give notice of the time, which they do by striking the stones with iron-pointed poles. But we are told that it may be known almost as well by the regular crowing of the cocks. A traveller says that when he was at Smyrna he could tell the hour by these time-keepers, just as well as by a watch. The first general chorus begins between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, the second between one and two o'clock. This explains the words of Christ to Peter, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." The Jews still reckon the time as they used to do, by watches and hours. They reckon the day from sunrise to sunset, that is, from six to six, and divide it into twelve hours. The night they reckon from sunset to sunrise, and divide it also into twelve parts; these are divided again

into four watches. The first watch is from sunset to the third hour; the second, or middle watch, from the third to the sixth; the third, or cock-crowing, from the sixth to the ninth; and the fourth, or morning watch, from the ninth to sunrise*.

The shortness of time, in comparison with the eternity of the Almighty, is mentioned by the Psalmist in these words, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, seeing it is past as a watch in the night;" the hours spent in sleep seeming always the shortest. And frequent allusion is made in other parts of the Bible to these watches. "If he shall come in the second watch or the third watch." (Luke xii. 38.) "If the master cometh at cock-crowing." (Mark xiii. 35.) "In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them." (Mark vi. 48.) "Saul came in the morning watch." (1 Sam. xi. 11.) "Watchman! what of the night?" or, What watch is it of the night? (Isai. xxi. 11.)

David, describing his enemies, the wicked transgressors who were secretly trying to put him to death, says, "They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city." (Ps. xxxix. 6.) These expressions are explained by the following accounts of the dogs in eastern cities. "A person landing at Smyrna at the water side in the evening," writes Mr. Jowett †, "is accosted by the furious barking of a

* *Hyam Isaacs.* † *Jowett's Christian Researches.*

multitude of dogs. They are in great numbers in the streets, they do not belong to any one, and no one feeds them. In Constantinople, however, they are fed by a public officer, whose business it is to attend to them. These Turkish dogs in the day-time appear very dull from the heat, and as if they had not spirits to join in the bustle of mankind; but at night they are ready with their noise at every little stir. They are considered very useful as keeping the streets cleaner than they would otherwise be."

The people of the East are generally very dirty in their habits, and instead of having proper places for putting away the refuse and offal from their kitchens, until it can be cleared, they throw it all into the streets; where it is left putrifying, until the dogs eat it up. In Mekha, a chief town of Arabia, a traveller tells us*, "rubbish and filth covered all the streets, and nobody appeared disposed to remove them. The skirts of the town were crowded with the dead carcasses of camels, the smell of which rendered the air, even in the midst of the town, offensive, and helped to cause many diseases." In fact, it is by the activity of the dogs alone, in quickly devouring these heaps of corruption, that the cities are kept even tolerably healthy. Nor are the putrifying remains of animals the only food of these dogs; shocking as it appears to Europeans, the dead bodies of men also, sometimes, become their prey. In

* *Burckhardt's Travels in Arabia.*

Turkey, when a minister or great man is suspected of treason, he is often strangled without trial by order of the sultan or king, and his body cast out into the street to be devoured, no one daring to bury it. "Him that dieth of Ahab in the city, dogs shall eat," was the curse pronounced on Ahab for the murder of Naboth; (1 Kings xxi.) and a dreadful curse indeed it must have appeared to an Israelite, as an honourable burial in the tomb of their fathers was what they all anxiously desired. After a revolution in Constantinople, four thousand dead bodies lay mouldering in the streets, torn and mangled by the dogs*.

Another writer† says, when describing the eastern dogs, "It is a remarkable thing that during the day they are perfectly quiet, and neither snarl nor bark is heard from any of them; yet when night comes they begin a hideous yell, which continues till sunrise." The same author also observes, "that dogs when taken to warm countries lose many of their good qualities, in a few years cease to bark, but make a dismal howl, and are inclined to sleep." And thus they become unfit for watchdogs over the flocks, or guards to the houses; circumstances alluded to by Isaiah (lvi. 10), "His watchmen are dumb dogs, loving to slumber." The dirty, greedy habits of these animals have also caused unclean

* *In 1808, when the Janissaries re-established their power, and murdered the prime minister.*

† *Rae Wilson's Travels.*

men of depraved lives to be compared to them in God's word, "Without are dogs, sorcerers, fornicators," &c. &c. (Rev. xxii. 15.) "Dogs have come about me." (Ps. xxii.)

It appears to have been the custom formerly to have fields, or else folds, for the sheep and cattle inside the walls of cities. David says, "that our sheep may bring forth thousands in our streets." And in the account of Nineveh, it is said, "wherein is much cattle." (Jonah iv. 11.) Major Keppel, describing the city of Bussorah, remarks, "It is surrounded by a wall eight miles in circuit, and the greatest part of this space is laid out in plantations of date-trees and gardens*."

The eastern cities are described as looking very dull, from the small number of windows to the street: and these are still covered with a frame-work of lattice, as in the days of Sisera†. "Sisera's mother cried through the lattice." (Judg. v. 28.) The houses are generally built round a square court to which most of the windows look.

We are indebted to Mr. Jowett‡ for the following interesting explanation of a circumstance mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, in which the eastern style of building houses is alluded to. "The house in which I am at present," says this gentleman, "gives what seems to me a correct idea of the scene of Eutyclus' falling

* *Keppel's Journey from India.* † *Ibid.*

‡ *Jowett's Christian Researches.*

from the upper loft, while Paul was preaching. On entering the door, we find the first floor entirely used as a store ; it is filled with large barrels of oil, from the olive-trees in the country around. On going up the stairs we find the second floor to consist of a humble set of rooms, not very high, which are occupied by the family to whom the house belongs for their daily use. It is on the highest story of all that they go to most expense in furniture* ; and here my kind host gave me a lodging. Here, too, when the professors of the college waited on me to pay their respects, they were received in ceremony, and sat at the window of the best room. This room 'or guest-chamber' is both higher and larger than those below ; it has two projecting windows, and the whole floor extends so much in front, beyond the lower part of the building, that the projecting windows hang in a manner over the street. To such an upper room, quiet, large, and convenient, St. Paul was invited to preach his parting discourse. A raised and wide seat with cushions runs round the windows ; and I have remarked that when the company is large, they place sometimes another set of cushions on this raised seat, behind the company who sit in front of it, so that a second row of people, with their feet upon the lower cushions are sitting behind, higher than the front row. Eutychus thus sitting would be on a level

* "*When thou art bidden to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room.*" (Luke xiv. 8.)

with the open window, and being overcome with sleep he would easily fall from the third loft into the street, and be almost certain, from such a height, to lose his life. It is mentioned that there were many lights in the upper chamber. The very great plenty of oil in this neighbourhood would enable them to afford many lamps; the heat of these and so much company would cause the drowsiness of Eutyclus at that late hour, and likewise occasion the windows to be open."

The houses in the towns of the Holy Land are described as being now very poor buildings, of the colour of clay, like the meanest cottages in England; and built of materials which last a very short time; namely, bricks not baked and made hard in the fire, but merely dried in the sun. During wet weather, the slough which runs off them makes the streets almost impassable. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the walls of such houses are also liable to crack and crumble from the heat of the sun in summer, which causes a very disagreeable dust, especially when it is windy. Rain followed by heat and wind is most dangerous to such buildings, as the wet soaking in, the materials become loosened, and being then suddenly dried by the sun, they peel off in large flakes, and crumble to dust*. It was probably to walls like these that Ezekiel alluded, when he compared the teachers of false doctrine, who flatter their hearers into believing themselves religious

* See *Rae Wilson's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 119.

enough when they are far from it, to bricklayers who built a slight wall*, and daubed it with untempered mortar. (Ezek. xiii.) The owner of a new house so built, might fancy he had a safe snug home about him ; but, when a day of tempest came, he would find himself grievously disappointed, as he saw it cracking in every direction. And thus too we shall find our confidence give way when the great and terrible day of judgment comes, if we have built our hopes of salvation on wrong grounds. If we flattered ourselves that we were sure of heaven, because we were no worse, but rather better, than our neighbours in general ; or because we have done our best, as people often say ; or because we have been hard-working and sober ; in short, if our trust has been grounded on anything but the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and such gratitude for it as has caused us earnestly to try and keep his commandments, we shall then discover, when too late, that we have been "crying peace to our souls when there was no peace." (Ezek. xiii.)

A whole town, built of the bad material we have just described, has been sometimes washed away in a very wet season.

In exhorting the Israelites to take heed and remember the laws of God, Moses used the expressions, "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt

* *Marginal reading.*

write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates" of thy cities. (Deut. vi. 8, 9.) The real meaning of these words was, that the commands of the Lord should be so impressed on the memories of his chosen people, as to regulate all their behaviour; that, in their "down-sitting and up-rising," their conduct at home, their business or pleasures abroad, they should ever have the wish to approve themselves to Him, and avoid everything displeasing in his sight. Instead, however, of this spiritual meaning, the Jews in later times have imagined that the words are to be followed to the letter. They, therefore, write on pieces of parchment, the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, and rolling them up in small hollow pipes of lead, which have two holes bored in them to receive the nails, they nail them on the posts of their doors.

Few*, however, as well as mean, are now the houses of the Jews in the Holy Land; and of many of their cities, once so handsome, and filled with happy inhabitants, nothing remains but a heap of ruins. Within forty years of our Saviour's death, Judea, according to his prophecy, (Luke xxi.) was entirely conquered by the Romans, all their walled towns were destroyed, a million and half of its inhabitants slain, and a hundred thousand carried away as slaves. Again, sixty years after this time, the remaining Jews having rebelled

** Forty years ago, scarcely more than two thousand Jews were to be found in the Holy Land.*

against the Romans, large armies were sent to subdue them, fifty cities were thrown down to the ground, half a million of people killed by the sword, besides those who perished from pestilence and famine; and the country was rendered so desolate, that the wild beasts multiplied fast, and troops of wolves and hyenas took possession of the deserted fields*. Since this period, nothing but misery has been the lot of the few Jews still bold enough to dwell in their native land. The Turks, who are now masters of the country, cruelly oppress them; they and the Christians occupy the best houses, and the largest part of all the towns and villages, leaving only narrow streets and wretched huts to the poor Jewish families; while, to kill a Jew, is thought of little consequence.

The city of Jerusalem, of which we read so much in the Scriptures, the Romans totally destroyed, "rooting it up," as a Jew himself described†, "to its very foundations; and the city since built nearly on the same spot, though it looks pretty well at a distance, is said by travellers to be in reality dirty and forlorn; its chief ornament is a Mahomedan temple, placed on the hill where the temple of God once stood, and built, it is thought, with materials taken from the ruins of that

* *Newton on the Prophecies.*

† *Eleazar. See Milman's History of the Jews, vol. iii. chap. i.*

“holy and beautiful house*.” The number of Jews living there is very small, compared with the Turks and Christians inhabiting it; but many of those who dwell in foreign countries, when they feel death or old age approaching, endeavour to reach it in time to yield up their last breath, on the spot so sacred in their history.

The ancient Jerusalem must have been a very beautiful city; “beautiful for situation, the joy of the earth,” as the Psalmist and all others who have written on the subject describe it. (Ps. xlviii. 2.)

It stood on several hills, with deep valleys between them; but handsome bridges thrown from hill to hill joined the hills together, and enabled the inhabitants to pass from one to another, without going down to the valley. On Mount Moriah †, and towering above the whole city, rose the temple, built of large blocks of white stone; its gates sheeted with gold, and its roof stuck over with golden spikes, to prevent the birds from dirtying it, so that when the sun shone upon it, it is said to have looked from a distance, “like a mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles.” A wide court of white marble, enclosed by a wall, ran round the temple; and in the wall were ten lofty gateways, each richly adorned with gold and silver; but one, which was called

* *Dr. Clarke's Travels in Russia, &c. &c.*

† *Milman's History of the Jews, vol. iii. chap. i.*

the Beautiful gate, (and is mentioned Acts iv.) exceeded the rest in splendour ; it was eighty-seven feet in height, the doors were seventy feet, made of beautifully wrought brass, covered with gold, and pillars twenty-one feet round, supported it. Outside this court was another likewise of marble, and called the outer-court, or court of the Gentiles, where the Gentiles, who had learnt to know the true God, used to worship ; for they were not permitted to enter the gate just described, or to approach nearer the temple. Here the pious Cornelius, the devout Ethiopian, treasurer to Queen Candace, and Paul's Grecian friend and fellow-labourer Titus, no doubt often bent the knee in true prayer to the God of Israel, while his own peculiar people dishonoured his name by turning his holy courts into " a den of thieves."

To prevent foreign enemies from climbing up the height on which the temple stood, the rock was scraped till it was steep and smooth, and then faced with huge blocks of stone, some of which were seventy feet square, in such a manner as to make it look like a gigantic wall. " Seest thou these great buildings ?" said our Lord, as some spake to Him of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts ; " there shall not be left one stone upon another." On another hill stood the castle, into which St. Paul was carried by the Roman general, to prevent his being torn in pieces by the mob. It was so large, as to be more like a small town than a single building, and had a tower at each corner,

of eighty feet and upwards in height. Here dwelt the soldiers who guarded the city.

The palaces of the kings and queens, and of the high-priest, adorned a third hill, Mount Sion. Some of these palaces were built of white marble in blocks of thirty-five feet long, and all were splendid and costly beyond any thing we now see; the chambers countless, furnished with the greatest richness, and all the vessels of gold; while beautiful gardens, with shady groves, and refreshing fountains, ornamented the middle of the different squares round which they were built. Into one of these stately dwellings, raised by his creatures to gratify their pride and luxury, our blessed Lord was led as a criminal to the presence of Herod, and there was mocked and set at nought by the king and his soldiers.

A high wall, seventeen feet broad, and defended by lofty towers three hundred and eighty feet apart, ran round the whole city, which was four miles in girth; and the lower part of the hills on which it stood, were clothed with vines and olive-trees; while in the valleys beneath, the flocks grazed, or the husbandman reared his grain. In the distance mountains arose, encircling and seeming to protect the sacred spot from the approach of any foreign enemy.

“Walk about Sion, and go round about her,” says the Psalmist, “tell the towers thereof; mark well her bulwarks (or walls); consider her palaces, that ye may tell them that come after.” “The mountains stand

about Jerusalem, even so standeth the Lord round about his people," to defend them. (Ps. xlviii.)

How different is the Jerusalem of the present day! The everlasting hills, the work of God, remain, but of all the beautiful and costly labours of man, nothing is left; and we should not know that they had ever existed, but for a few short accounts of them preserved in ancient writings * "to tell them that come after."

"Like many other cities of the East," Mr. Jowett writes †, "the distant view of Jerusalem is beautiful, but this distant view is all; on entering the gates, shabbiness, filth, and misery almost greater than I had ever seen before, soon told the tale of its degradation. 'How has the fine gold become dim!' I exclaimed, (Lam. i. 1.) Thus I went onward through the streets, pitying every thing, and every body that I saw."

Nor is the country around less altered. Instead of the "little valleys standing so thick with corn," that they seemed ready to laugh and sing with happiness, "a wild, rugged desert is seen; no herds grazing, no forests clothing the hills, nothing but one wild scene of melancholy waste ‡; while yet the natural goodness of the soil, the traces of former fields, the ruins of their

* *In those of Josephus, a Jewish writer, and in the works of Tacitus, Pliny, and Strabo, &c. &c., who were heathens. See Newton on Prophecy.*

† *Christian Researches.*

‡ *Joliffe's Letters from Palestine.*

walls, and of the cisterns for watering them, prove that it might be, and was once, a fruitful land ; and the old heathen writers agree with the Jewish in describing it as being so in their days.

The other cities of Israel and Judah, which we read of in the Bible, have mostly shared the fate of ancient Jerusalem. Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin are heaps of ruins. The remains of a splendid city, the streets of which evidently had a double row of pillars on each side, and were covered with pavement, still nearly entire, and marked with chariot-wheels, have been discovered by travellers ; but no one can decide exactly what city it could have been. The ruins of Jericho cover a square mile*.

Sarepta and other large towns near it are mere rubbish, in the midst of which broken pillars, and pieces of carved stone, are found ; and many others are said to be equally desolate †.

“ Good God ! ” exclaimed a French traveller ‡, who cared nothing for religion, and did not even believe the Bible, “ For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed ? Why are so many cities destroyed ? What has become of all the people, and all the abundance which was once here ? ” The wisdom of man can give no satisfactory answer to the question of the unbeliever ; but the Christian, with the Holy Scrip-
* *Buckingham's Travels.* † *Irby and Mangles' Travels.*

‡ *Volney's Travels, quoted by Keith.*

tures in his hand, can from them read him the true reply. "Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord their God, because they transgressed his laws and changed his ordinances, therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, the defenced city is desolate, the habitation is forsaken, and few men are left*." (Deut. xxix. 20 ; Isaiah xxvii. 10, &c. &c.)

But the mind of the true believer will not rest only on the fulfilment of these awful prophecies : he will remember that our Saviour went on from describing the ruin of Jerusalem, which has taken place, to speak of a more terrible destruction yet to come,—that of the world itself, when the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up ; and in the history of the children of Israel he will gather a warning to himself. For who will be found the wise man, and the man of understanding in that day, "when all those things which we see, shall be dissolved." He whose heart was entirely set on earthly things, "to gather and heap up" money or pleasures ? he who despised God's word, and broke his Sabbath and his laws ? or he who remembering that "the time is short" when the concerns of this world can either please or grieve us, set his affections on things above, and, like the "holy men of old, sought a city which hath foundations," that cannot be moved, "whose Maker and Builder is God ?" The conscience of every man, whatever his life may be, will answer aright

* *Keith on the Prophecies.*

to the inquiry. Oh! may we then be wise, may we consider these things while time is yet allowed us to obtain the freedom* of that "city, whose Maker and Builder is God," the heavenly Jerusalem; in which our blessed Master is preparing everlasting mansions for all those who turn to him in repentance, faith, and newness of life.

* *Phil.* iii. 50. "*Our conversation,*" or **CITIZENSHIP,** *is in heaven.*"

WARLIKE GAMES.

It is mentioned in 2 Sam. chap. ii. that soon after the death of Saul, the followers of his son Ishbosheth, headed by Abner, met those of David, under Joab; and the two bands sat down at a little distance apart on the opposite sides of a pool, or reservoir of water.

David, by God's command, was already crowned king; but Abner, disregarding this, and the prophecies also of Samuel which had so long pointed him out as the person intended by the Lord to succeed Saul, had set up Ishbosheth as the new sovereign of Israel. No battle, however, had yet taken place between the two parties; for even in the worst times of their history, the Israelites seem to have considered wars among themselves as most disgracefully unnatural: "we be brethren," was a feeling which always put some check on their wrath. But though the rival bands had not actually come to blows, mutual anger was brooding in their hearts, and when this is the case an open quarrel is not far off. While they were in this temper of mind, and sitting jealously watching one another, Abner proposed to Joab that some of the young men on each side should arise and play. "And Joab said, Let them arise. Then there arose and went over twelve men of Benjamin

which pertained to Ishbosheth, and twelve of the servants of David." But instead of the harmless game, the pastime ended in a bloody battle; for the passions of the young men rising as they drew near, and their anger bursting all restraint, they seized each his man by the head, or probably the beard,—the greatest affront that can be offered a man of the east,—and drawing their swords, began a combat in earnest, which ended in the death of the whole twenty-four.

When their friends on both sides saw the turn the affray was taking, they rushed in to support their falling champions, and a general fight was the consequence. This, most likely, was what Abner expected when he proposed the play. As he was a man so destitute of religion as to oppose the known will of God, it is not probable that he cared much for the sin of shedding his countrymen's blood; but seeing that Joab and David's followers were more scrupulous, he devised this means of enticing them into a battle. If such was the case he was served as all deserve to be, who for their own ends bring war and confusion into their country; for he was completely beaten, and obliged to ask for mercy. "Then Abner called to Joab and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou not that it shall be bitterness in the end? How long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken" to propose the play, "surely then in the

morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother." (2 Sam. ii. 26, 27.)

The rough games of the east, such as those alluded to in the passage we have quoted, are described by most persons who have visited that part of the world, and are said to end oftentimes in the same way, namely, in bloodshed. "Early this morning," says an English traveller*, "we set out to visit the ruins of the Tower of Babel, accompanied by twenty horsemen, well armed and mounted, ten of whom were furnished us by the governor of the place. A just idea may be formed of the state of the country, by our being obliged to have such a guard to go a distance of six miles, though we had nothing with us worth stealing. When we arrived in the Desert, our guard galloped before us, and amused themselves with throwing the blunt jereed. This instrument is a sort of lance or javelin, made of any heavy wood, about a yard long, and thick as a mopstick. One horseman, galloping forward, with loud shouts challenged his comrades, and the challenge was soon accepted: then two more started forward in the same manner; and so on, to the whole party. It is surprising to see their quickness and skill in this game. The play consists in one party pursuing the other, who fly before them, and try to avoid being struck by the javelin. If the person pursued is struck, he is obliged to pick it up; but if it misses, the one who threw it must get it back

* *Major Keppel's Journey from India.*

himself, and take his turn in flying away and being pursued. Our guard was amusing itself in this manner, when suddenly a large body of Arab horsemen, armed with swords and long spears, rushed forth from behind some huts, and began shouting with all their might. Both parties halted for a minute; a herald, or messenger, from each met half-way; and after a short conversation, gave a shout, which was re-echoed on both sides. All were again in motion: the two companies struck their shovel-stirrups into their horses' side, rode at each other with equal speed, and, shouting again, began a sham fight. Nothing could have afforded a finer subject for a picture than the group of wild men before us, huddled together in the greatest seeming confusion, with drawn swords and couched lances. This was only a sport, but it not unfrequently happens that two rival tribes meet, and use in earnest the skill they have gained in this favourite exercise."

The same game is also played on foot, and another something like it, in which an iron bar is used instead of the jereed, and flung by the players at a mark, and not at each other; so that it is less dangerous an amusement. Racing and wrestling are likewise among the sports still in favour in the East; and one of the Sultans of Turkey is noted in history for his excellence in the first.

In every large town of Persia and Turkomania is a sort of theatre called a House of Strength, where these different games are played.

“ We went this morning, on hearing the drum beat,” a traveller observes*, “ to see the exercises at the House of Strength. The place for fighting was a deep circle in the middle, round which the seats for the lookers-on were arranged. About twenty men were soon assembled, stripped to the skin except a girdle round the waist. At the sound of a drum and guitar, these men began to exercise themselves with large clubs held across the shoulders, moving in a slow dance ; they next began to jump, and then stooped to the ground, springing up suddenly again on their legs ; after which was violent dancing, jumping, and other trials of strength : last of all, they wrestled with each other. All these feats were performed to the sound of music, played quick or slow, as suited the movements of the combatants, and between each wrestling-match a piece of poetry was repeated to spirit-up their courage.”

In this description, we seem to have a full explanation of a part of the thirty-second chapter of Exodus, wherein we read, that Moses, on coming down from the Mount with the tables of the Ten Commandments, instead of finding his countrymen in the serious frame of mind becoming a people waiting for a message from their God, heard the sounds of music and dancing, and beheld them in the midst of an idolatrous feast. In his absence they had set up a golden calf, in imitation of the Egyptians, as an image of the Lord ; and after eating and

* *Buckingham's Travels in Media, &c.*

drinking the sacrifices offered to it, they had risen up to play for the rest of the day, stripping themselves of their armour and clothes to follow their favourite warlike sports. Thus, as Moses reproached them (Ex. xxxii. 25), if an enemy had fallen suddenly upon them, all their strongest men would have been found naked, and unprotected against such an attack. Nor were they destitute of their armour only. A more powerful protection had been cast off, when they turned away from the living God to idols; for how could they hope that He would go forth with their hosts to battle, when they had rejected Him? In like manner all those amongst us who live without God in the world, putting away all thoughts of Him, to give themselves up to earthly things; entering on the busy day, and laying themselves down in the darkness of the night, without a prayer for his protection, leave their frail bodies exposed to every accident, and their souls naked and open to every temptation with which their spiritual enemy, Satan, is watching to attack them.

The Greeks of old time were particularly fond of trials of strength like those we have been describing, and in St. Paul's Epistles to the people of that nation we find frequent spiritual allusions to them. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places;" that is, against Satan and his devices. (Eph. vi. 12.)

“ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all ? ” (1 Cor. ix. 24) and many others of a similar kind. How ought it to affect our hearts with a deep sense of God's goodness, that in his desire to save the souls of men, his Spirit has condescended to use even their amusements, as a means of giving religious instruction !

Men, who were anxious to gain the prize in those games, took the greatest pains in training themselves for them. Finding that strong liquors injured their strength, for weeks before a public contest they avoided drinking them, and eat but sparingly even of the plainest food. Besides this, they underwent a long and painful course of bodily exercise, to make their limbs supple and active. “ He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things,” says the apostle, alluding to this custom. And what was the reward they gained in return for so much pains'-taking ? The prize bestowed on the conqueror was a crown of olive-leaves, and the praises of his countrymen ; a crown that in a few days faded away, and praise as little lasting.

M. Castellan,* a French writer, mentions that, on certain holidays in Turkey, all the young men training for the service of the Sultan, show off their skill in these various mock combats before him ; and so eagerly do they fight in the hope of gaining his favour, that some are often killed by the close of the day. “ Surely,” argues the Apostle, “ if men will give themselves so

* *Letters on the Morea and Constantinople.*

much trouble and put such a restraint on their appetites for such worthless things, Christians, to whom the approbation of their God, and an incorruptible crown of glory that never fades, are offered, ought not to tire and faint in their duty when called on to mortify their evil desires, and encounter some difficulties in working out their eternal salvation (1 Cor. ix. 25). But it is a sad truth, that we are more inclined to exert ourselves in any other employment than in this most important one. To compass an amusement, to gain credit for cleverness in some little art or accomplishment, we take time, and give ourselves a degree of trouble, which we think it hard to bestow when it is required for the things of eternity.

Another amusement of former days, and one of so barbarous a kind as forcibly to show the depravity of human nature, is noticed by St. Paul, when he speaks (1 Cor. xv.) of having fought with beasts at Ephesus: and (2 Tim. iv. 17) "that he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Thousands of people, and even women and children, used to assemble to see their fellow-creatures tortured by being forced to fight with savage animals. Prisoners taken in war, persons convicted even of small crimes, and others, such as St. Paul, accused of none but that of worshipping Christ, were carried to a sort of theatre similar to the Houses of Strength lately described, only larger and handsomer, where lions, tigers, and the fiercest creatures were let

loose on the poor wretches, who were only allowed a short sword, sometimes not even that, to defend themselves. Many thousand Christians perished in this manner within fifty years of our Lord's crucifixion; for seldom did any of the combatants escape alive from the dreadful fight.

The spread of our blessed religion has softened our feelings, causing such horrors to cease wherever it prevails; and we should be half inclined to doubt if the heathen themselves could have been guilty of such barbarity, were we not reminded of the natural cruelty of man, by seeing, to the disgrace of our country, crowds of people, calling themselves Christians, flock to places of execution to behold the dying agonies of a fellow-sinner, suffering for his crimes on the gibbet.

The first disciples of our Saviour, persecuted alike by Jew and Gentile, used to be led by their heathen enemies before the altars of their false gods, and given their choice of worshipping them, or being exposed to the wild beasts. This probably had been the case with St. Paul, and he could not have given a stronger proof of his own belief in the truths he taught, than by the choice he made. For what man would have preferred the risk of such a dreadful death, instead of speaking a few untrue words, if he had not felt sure of a resurrection to eternal life for the good, to eternal condemnation for the wicked? Would he not rather have said, "Let us eat and drink; let us do all we please, good or bad, and

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enjoy ourselves while we can, for to-morrow we may die, and there will be an end of us?" "If* after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." (1 Cor. xv.)

There are still some remains of this shocking sport in the East, though not followed in so barbarous a way as formerly, since the men who engage in the fight do it of their own accord. An English gentleman, who was invited by an Eastern prince to be present at a combat of the kind, describes it as very terrible †. "On the day appointed," he says, "we went to the palace, and after a handsome dinner, we were taken to a gallery that overlooked a large court, full one hundred yards square. The scene was of an awful character. A man entered the court, clothed only in short trousers, his body shining with oil, rubbed over it to make his limbs supple, and holding in his right hand a heavy blade, like the coulter of a plough, about two feet long, and three inches wide. At a sign from him, the bars of a great cage were thrown open, and a large tiger bounded forward with a growl. On seeing his enemy, however, the poor beast showed no wish to fight, but ran back to his cage; and it was only by worrying and enraging him, that he could be persuaded to begin an attack, which he did at

* "If, to speak after the manner of men," is the marginal reading.

† *Caunter's Oriental Annual.*

last by making a bound forward, crouching like a cat, and then springing again with a sharp growl. The man, fully prepared for this, leapt actively on one side, and swinging round his heavy knife, brought it with immense force on the animal's hind leg, just above the joint, so as to break it. The tiger now excited to a pitch of reckless rage, rushed forward upon its enemy who was quietly waiting for it; and as soon as the savage animal was within his reach, he dashed down the blade upon its skull with a force that nothing could resist, and laying it open from ear to ear, the vanquished foe fell dead at his feet."

The gentleman whose account we quote, speaks of this, and the fights between different wild beasts that followed, as very painful scenes; and his heart so sickened at seeing the gashes and wounds of the poor creatures, and the fury with which they were made to fall on each other, that he rejoiced when the combats were over, and the more innocent amusement of seeing some jugglers show off their clever tricks was ordered by the prince.

No true child of our Heavenly Father, who is merciful (Luke vi. 36), could allow himself to take pleasure in such a sight; for though these ferocious animals must be got rid of, and we have permission to destroy them from God, who said, (Gen. ix. 2) "The fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast, &c. &c. Into your hand are they delivered;" yet we have no right

to torment them for our sport. The tiger mentioned above gave a remarkable proof of the fulfilment of the first part of this promise ; as long as the man continued to advance with his eyes fixed on him he gradually drew back in alarm, and it was only when his enemy retreated, and no longer looked stedfastly at him, that the animal ventured to begin the combat.

The dominion thus given us over the brutes, makes it doubly cowardly and cruel when we abuse our power ; and we shall without doubt be called to account for any ill use we make of it, when we appear before their Creator and ours. “The righteous man regardeth the life of his beast,” says the word of God ; and the same word, not one tittle of which can fail, also solemnly warns us “that he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.”

POTS AND POTSHERDS.

IN the 30th of Isaiah, 14th verse, we meet with these words, "And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces : he shall not spare ; so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it, a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit."

In the first part of the chapter, the prophet has been reproving his countrymen for their different crimes, their lies and oppression, their covetousness and fraud ; and that which led to all the rest, their forsaking God to put their trust in man. These sins were bad enough, yet they did not make the worst part of their character ; men, if they acknowledge themselves sinners may repent, "and when a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive ;" but that which made the Jews of this time perfectly hopeless was, that they had no wish to learn better ; on the contrary, they were obstinately resolved to go on in their own way, let it end as it might. "They said to the seers, See not ; and to the Prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things ; speak unto us smooth things ; prophecy deceits." Verse 10. Do not rouse our consciences ; we have succeeded in lulling them to sleep and will not have them awoke. Cease then to trouble us with all this talk about God and our duty ; we care

nothing and will listen to nothing respecting them ;
“ Get you out of the way, cause the Holy One of Israel
to cease from before us.” Verse 11.

Such being the hardened state of the Jews, even their merciful and long suffering God was led to give them up, and declare his intention of destroying their nation. This sentence was pronounced in the figurative words we have quoted, and their reference to an eastern custom is thus explained by a gentleman who has spent many years in India*. “ You must often have seen accounts of the potter’s wheel,” he observes in a letter to a friend, “ and the pots or chatties of earth used in these countries are mentioned in most works on the east ; but a verse in the first lesson of to-day, (fourth Sunday in Advent) struck me as particularly descriptive. These chatties being very brittle and in constant use, sherds or broken pieces of them are scattered about almost every house and work-room. You seldom pass through a village early of a morning, or about the cooking time in the evening, without seeing a woman or little girl carrying some fire she has borrowed from a neighbour’s hearth in a potsherd. If I was to call for fire now, say to light a pipe, the servant would go to the cook-room, and bring me a piece of charcoal from the hearth, in a broken fragment of one of these pots, unless he found the shell of a cocoa-nut instead ; and if I told him to give some water to my

* *F. N. M. of the Madras Civil Service.*

dog, he would in all probability look for a large sherd, and in that would carry it to the animal.

“ Making the pot hot with thorns,” adds the same gentleman, “ is done by every traveller in this part of the world ; especially in the more open country, where thorny shrubs take the place of our jungles or thickets.” (Ps. lviii. 9.)

The above account of the use made by eastern people, even of little pieces of their broken pottery, shows us that nothing could have given the Jews a more striking idea of the entire destruction coming upon their nation than the likening it to an earthen pot, dashed down and scattered about in fragments so small, that the most needy person could not find a piece fit to employ for any purpose. We ourselves see the fulfilment of this prophecy ; for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah have long since been destroyed, and the Jews are scattered about over our own and all lands ; so that travellers, into whatever part of the world they may go, speak of meeting with people of that nation. Yet no where have they king or ruler, or government of their own ; nor even any independent province or town entirely to themselves ; but they are “ sifted,” as the Bible expresses it, among the various people of the earth, and thus will remain until the time when Israel “ shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourning for him as for an only son,” shall be again received into God’s favour, and once more take its place among the other nations of the world. (Zech. xii. 10. Isaiah lx.)

TRAVELLING.

ONE of the particulars in which the customs of the Israelites and Jews differed greatly from our own was in their manner of travelling.

When we undertake a journey of any length we generally make it in a coach, or some other kind of carriage; but among the Jews of old, and the eastern nations at the present time, wheeled carriages both were and are little known or used; camels, horses, mules, and asses, being the usual means employed by them in moving from one place to another.

The Egyptians, who were the first people to learn the art of working in wood and iron, seem very early to have had chariots; but until the end of the book of Judges (xviii. 21), we do not find any mention of the Israelites possessing so much as a cart; and when Joseph sent waggons to fetch his father and the familie of his brothers to share his glory in Egypt, their wives and little ones were as much astonished, probably, at seeing these new conveyances in which they were to ride, as at hearing that the relation whom they had so long supposed dead was still alive.

When the Israelites left Egypt and prepared to take possession of Canaan, they were commanded by God to destroy the chariots, and hough, or hamstring the horses of the sinful inhabitants of the Promised Land;

for it was not the intention of the Almighty that his own peculiar people should be a nation given up to pomp, luxury, and conquest, but a sober, simple people, content with the abundance of every thing really needful afforded them by their fruitful country, and satisfied with the bounds the Lord had set them, without wishing to encroach on the territory of their neighbours.

During the time of Joshua and the Judges, they seem to have obeyed God's will in this respect, and the simple distinction of riding on white asses*, (Judges v. 10.) a particularly fine breed of that animal, appears to have been the greatest mark of dignity assumed by their great men.

But after a while the changeable and worldly-minded Israelites grew tired and ashamed of the plain customs of their forefathers. Because the nations about them had kings, splendid courts, and a great deal of show, they, forgetting that the Lord of lords was their Sovereign, wished to have the same; so "God gave them a king in his wrath," and they had soon the gratification of seeing handsome palaces, large armies, and abundance of chariots in their land.

Solomon in his latter days had forty thousand stalls for horses, (1 Kings iv. 26.) in place of the humble mule on which, in his good father's days, he rode to be

* *At Bagdad a handsome breed of white asses still exists, and is much prized by the inhabitants of that city. See Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia, p. 392.*

crowned (1 Kings i. 33); and the princes who succeeded him vied with him in state and expense. But how dearly did the people pay for the gratification of their vanity! Heavy taxes were raised to meet these extravagances (1 Kings xii. 4); the kings they had desired not only imitated their neighbours in pomp, but in idolatry too, and "wickedness came in like a flood." We no longer read the pleasant words, "then had the land rest forty years," (Judges v. 31) or eighty years, as in former days when the high God condescended to reign over them. Constant wars, crimes, and punishments make up the chief part of the history from this period, until it closes with the mournful account of the total ruin of the country.

How often do we ourselves see the same sin as that of the Israelites bring about the same punishment! To the vainglorious wish of rivalling their neighbours in dress and show, and of seeming richer than they really are, more people, both high and low, probably owe the ruin of their worldly prospects, and the loss of their immortal souls, than to any other cause whatever. For too many still "put their trust in chariots and in horses," and other worldly distinctions, as in king David's days, if not for success in war, at least to gain them respect and glory; but let us rather, like that pious king, "remember the name of the Lord," and "seek the honour that cometh from God," which rich and poor can equally obtain.

The chariots we read of in the Bible were not at all like the carriages we now call by that name. They were made more upon the plan of our smallest carts, being uncovered at top, and having but two wheels. The body was hung low and the corners rounded off in front ; but, though drawn usually by a pair of horses, they could only hold two or three people ; the driver stood instead of sitting to drive. It was not, however, until the latter days of the Jews that these vehicles were used for journeys, (1 Kings xviii. 44.) and then only occasionally by the kings and nobles ; the greater part of the people still kept to their former ways of travelling.

The first journey we read of in any book, in which the way of travelling is particularly mentioned, is that of Abraham's steward when he went to Mesopotamia, to seek a wife for Isaac. The Canaanites, afterwards destroyed for their wickedness, were already so bad a people, that Abraham would not expose his son to the risk of having his principles corrupted, by letting him marry among them. Preferring, therefore, for him a damsel of his own kindred, who still kept up a remembrance of the true God, (Gen. xxxii. 53.) he trusted his faithful servant with the important business of choosing, and bringing back such a young woman as he should approve. " And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed ; for all the goods of his master were in his hand." (Gen. xxiv. 10.) And considering the nature of the country he

was to pass over, the steward could not have chosen a better conveyance. Again, on Jacob's return home after his long sojourn with his uncle Laban, we find him mounting his wives and little ones on camels; and repeated mention is made of these animals in the Bible as beasts of burden: see 1 Sam. xxx. 17. "And there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men which rode upon camels and fled." And Isaiah, xxx. 6. "They will carry their treasures on the bunches of camels," &c. &c.

Nor is the camel less in favour in the East than he was three thousand years ago, for on the dry burning sands of those parts, and where water is scarce, he is invaluable. His soft spongy feet are particularly well suited for walking over a loose soil; and most of my readers are no doubt aware, that the Almighty has given this creature the means of taking into his stomach at once, a supply of water enough to last several days. This store he keeps laid up in a sort of pouch, or bag within his outer stomach; and, whenever he feels thirsty, he throws up sufficient into his mouth to cool and refresh it. In this way he will go on without needing fresh water for fourteen or sixteen days; and, for food, is content with the driest thistle or barest thorn, which, to save time, he eats while advancing on his journey*.

An English officer, on his way lately from India, describes meeting very much such family parties as that

* *Wood's Zoography, article Camel.*

of Jacob, (Gen. xxxii. and xxxiii.) mounted on their camels, and travelling along the same line of country as the Patriarch. "When I was returning from Tadmor to Damascus," he says, "I met on the same day two strong encampments, moving slowly over the plain in search of water and pasturage. Their order of march was as follows:—a party of five or six horsemen went about four miles before the tribe as a reconnoitering detachment, to see that the road was safe; next came some armed horsemen and camel riders, at a hundred paces from each other, extending along the whole front; then followed the she-camels with their young ones, grazing during their march, on the wild herbage; behind walked other camels, loaded with the tents and provisions; and last, were the women and children mounted on camels, having saddles made in the shape of a cradle, with curtains to screen them from the heat of the sun. Some of the men rode here and there amidst the whole body, but most of them were in front of the line*."

The general height of the camel is about six feet six inches to the top of the bunch, and he will carry a weight of a thousand pounds; but being so tall, it is not easy to load him while standing, and he is therefore early taught to kneel to receive his burden. "His pace is very disagreeable at the outset to people unused to it, but it soon becomes easy and pleasant. A European feels particularly awkward upon first mounting one of

* *Major Skinner's Overland Journey.*

these animals, as the beast rises very briskly from his knees on his hind legs, and throws the rider first forward, then backward ; and it is not till the fourth motion, when the camel is quite upright, that the rider finds himself properly balanced." A French writer * says, " It was entertaining to see us mount our beasts ; none of us had been able to resist the first shake ; and each had to laugh at the other. I had been afraid of the swinging pace of the camel," continues this writer, " and the awkward prancing of the dromedary (the one-humped camel) had made me fear that I should be thrown over his head ; but I was soon undeceived : on being once fixed in the saddle, we had only to give way to the motion of the animal, and speedily found that it was impossible to be more pleasantly mounted for a long journey. The camel very rarely trips, never stumbles where the ground is dry, and his trot is easier, while, at the same time, by training, it becomes as swift as that of the most active horse."

Not long ago a camel for a wager was made to go one hundred and fifteen miles in eleven hours, having twice to be ferried over the Nile ; and couriers are able sometimes to travel eighteen days on the same animal †. No wonder then, that Queen Esther, when she wished

* *Denon.*

† *The letters sent between England and India by land, were lately, and probably are still carried across the desert by dromedaries.*

to save her countrymen from Haman's malice, sent messengers on dromedaries as well as on other beasts, to tell them that they had the king's permission to defend themselves. Eighty thousand camels are said to be employed every year in different parts of the East, in carrying Mahomedans to worship at the tomb of their false prophet Mahomet! What reason does this give every true Christian to pray with earnestness for the coming of the kingdom of God, when all the Gentiles shall be converted, and gather themselves together unto Christ: then, these useful creatures, Isaiah tells us, instead of being employed in honouring an impostor, whose coming was "with lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness," shall be used to the service of the true God. "The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee; the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they of Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." (lx. 5, 6.)

Sometimes it happens that a party of travellers are reduced to such distress by thirst in crossing the deserts, if they miss the few wells to be found there, that they are obliged to kill one or more of their camels for the purpose of taking the water in their stomachs. Bruce, in his travels, about sixty years ago, describes such a circumstance happening to himself. "Every way we turned," says he, "death stared us in the face. Find-

ing, therefore, that our exhausted camels would not rise, we killed two of them, and took as much flesh from them as would make up for the want of bread, and from the stomach of each camel got about four gallons of water ; this water never putrifies or turns unwholesome while within the animals, and has neither taste nor smell."

But, in the wildernesses, is an enemy more feared by travellers even than thirst. The Arabians or Arabs, who are descended from Ishmael, Abraham's son, by the slave Hagar, still bear the same character as that by which the Lord describes Ishmael himself. "Their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them." (Gen. xvi. 12.) Instead of supporting themselves by tilling the ground, and honest industry, they and other wild tribes in these parts live by robbery ; and, to insure greater success in their plundering excursions, form themselves into large bands : then on horses, swift as the winds, and trained on purpose, they suddenly fall on the unhappy wayfarer, seize his beasts and baggage, and stripping him to the skin, to see if any money is concealed about him, leave him naked to perish unless some compassionate persons coming up before he is actually dead, take pity on him, and furnish him the means of continuing his journey. In order to guard against these disasters, a traveller seldom ventures alone through the wilds, but he waits till a number of people are collected, who are wishing to make the same

journey, and may join company and protect one another on the road. These travelling parties are called caravans, and sometimes consist of a great number and variety of people; nobles with their train of servants; whole families, husband, wife, and children, with their goods and furniture; poor pilgrims, with a staff and wallet only; and rich merchants carrying their treasures packed on the bunches of camels, (Isaiah xxx. 6,) to sell in other countries. It was by such a party of merchants, going to sell their spices and other merchandise in Egypt, that Joseph was bought for a slave from his cruel brothers. They are also often alluded to in other parts of Scripture, as the travelling companies of Dedan and Sheba. See Isaiah xxi. 13.

An English traveller gives a very lively account of the bustle caused by the starting of a caravan which he joined, to travel across Mesopotamia, the native land of Abraham*. “Every individual of the company was seen stirring with the earliest dawn, and as this was the first morning of our departure, a considerable bustle prevailed among the servants and camel drivers, and an equal anxiety among the merchants and owners of property to see it safely laden, and take care that nothing remained behind. At sunrise we were all in motion to the number perhaps of four hundred camels, which was thought rather a small caravan. The asses, horses, and mules that accompanied it, might amount to another

* *Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia.*

hundred, and the whole number of persons, including men, women, and children, were at least three hundred*.

The principal person in this party was a very wealthy and worthy merchant, who was returning from a journey of many hundred miles, after visiting the tomb of Mahomet, in Arabia ; and the description of his arrival at home, at the end of his long travels, is so interesting, and will remind those who have studied their Bible well, of so many customs mentioned in it, that we feel sure of giving pleasure in transcribing it. "In the evening," says the writer quoted above, "the caravan which I accompanied from Aleppo, made its entrance into Moussul ; and so great was the consideration enjoyed here by Abdel Rakhman," the merchant, "that a crowd of his friends and dependents went out beyond the walls of the city to greet his arrival, and bring him into his own house amid their shouts of welcome. I joined the party, and, on reaching the house, we were all received with great respect, by the servants and slaves in waiting ; but the merchant and his nephew were almost worshipped by them, having their knees embraced, and the hems of their garments kissed by the crowds who pressed round them, as they entered the court of their dwelling.

* *The custom of travelling in such large numbers explains the circumstance of Joseph and Mary having made a day's journey without discovering that our Saviour was not in the company. Luke ii. 44.*

“The house itself, which was quite new, was esteemed to be inferior to none in the city except the palace of the governor; and, indeed, its fitting up within was as costly as that of almost any private abode I had seen in the East. This house had been begun by the merchant just before his setting out on his pilgrimage; and, during the two years he was away on his journey, it had been completed by his confidential slave, or steward of his household. While the host and his nephew went to receive the welcome of the females of the family,” women in this country being kept shut up in a wing of the house set apart for them, and never allowed to see men who are not relations; “the strangers were shown over the dwelling, and every thing was found in the most perfect order for the lord’s reception. The merchant and his nephew soon returned to us, dressed in garments of white, perfectly new, and prepared, during their absence, to clothe them on their return. A sumptuous feast was now ready to close the scene; and while the master of the house was seated on one carpet, surrounded by all the strangers who journeyed with him, the nephew, on another carpet, entertained all those of the town who came to greet them both on their safe return.”

It is impossible to read this account without thinking of our Lord’s beautiful parables, describing himself as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, first allotting to every man his work, and setting one whom He con-

sidered a faithful and wise servant to rule over the others, and give them their meat in his absence. (Mark xiii. 34; Matthew xxiv. 45.) Blessed will be the Christians who are found as well prepared for the coming of their Lord from heaven, as the worthy eastern merchant found his faithful steward and servants! The white raiment prepared for the travellers on their return home, forcibly recalls to mind those white robes of righteousness and salvation mentioned, Rev. vi. 11, in which the Christian pilgrim is to be clad on arriving at his everlasting home, after his anxious journey along the narrow way of faith and obedience in this troubled world.

Another traveller, who visited Arabia, the land of Job and of Moses' father-in-law, describes seeing the entrance of a very splendid caravan into Mecca, one of the chief cities of that country *. "Early in the morning," he writes, "the Syrian caravan passed in procession through the town, accompanied by all its soldiers, and consisting of four or five thousand persons, and fifteen thousand camels. Most of the pilgrims were mounted on a sort of palanquin placed upon the camel. The great people, and the governor of Damascus himself, rode in a kind of litter or box carried by two camels, one before, and the other behind, making a very convenient conveyance, except that it is always necessary to have a ladder, by means of which one may mount, or descend from it. The camels' heads were ornamented

* *Burckhardt's Travels in Arabia.*

with feathers, tassels, and bells ;” (see Judges viii. 21.) “but their heads bent to the ground, showed how much they were fatigued by their journey. While these passed, the streets were lined by people who greeted the caravan with loud shouts. The military music of the governor of Damascus, a dozen of fine horses richly harnessed, led in front of his camels, and the handsome litters, in which his wives rode, particularly attracted notice.”

Both these caravans of which we have spoken, reached their journey's end in safety, but sometimes all precautions taken to guard against danger prove vain. Of this we have an instance in the adventures of a party, amongst whom were two missionaries going to preach the gospel to the heathen in Persia*.

The outset of the missionaries' journey was very prosperous ; “having provided themselves with two camels and a variety of necessary articles, they left Aleppo with a caravan of 1500 camels. The company was made up of merchants and traders of various nations, and the property they carried was of great value.”

The missionaries were clothed in the Eastern dress, loose robes and turbans, and had a spare camel to carry their skins of water, bedding, bag of meal, and as many books as the animal could bear. The caravan always set off at sunrise, and travelled till noon, when they stopped to rest during the heat of the day.

* *Carne's Lives of the Missionaries. Family Library.*

This halt took place, if it was possible, in some valley, whose rocks gave the travellers shelter from the scorching sun. A circumstance which recalls Isaiah's comparison of the refreshment, the knowledge of the Saviour gives the soul burthened with sin and care, to the comfort of the traveller, on finding "the shadow of a great rock" to repose under "in a weary land." (Isaiah xxxii. 2.)

Unluckily, however, the road of the missionaries soon divided from that of this company, and at Bagdad, near where Babylon stood, they joined another caravan which did not prove so fortunate. "The road they were to take was said to be infested by robbers; many travellers and merchants had lately been plundered, and they set out in fear. They went forward, however, a good way without any thing to alarm them, and were beginning to think that danger was at an end, till they came to a place where was a long, steep hill, and narrow valley to pass over; it was a suspicious looking spot, just fitted for an attack; and sure enough a band of Curdes, who had waited many days for the caravan, was lying beneath, but so hidden by rocks that no one could be seen.

Suddenly a hideous cry was heard, the Curdes sprang from their hiding-place, and in a few moments were in the midst of the company. The most frightful panic took place; many of the merchants fled over the hills, after firing a few shots; some sat still on their camels,

tearing their beards with rage and sorrow, yet unwilling to quit their rich bales of silks : of these many were slain.

Before Hocker the missionary was aware of his danger, he was pierced in the back with a spear, and while he turned round to look, he received another wound in the side, and falling from his camel, rolled down the hill. One of the Curdes followed him, and before he had time to rise, aimed a stroke at his face, and he received a pretty severe wound in the chin, though he did not lose it, as many of the caravan did their ears. He rose at last, and crawled from the spot ; the Curdes had taken away all his money, and stript him of his clothes except his shirt : he saw the remnant of the caravan departing, and ran forward to overtake it as fast as weakness allowed. From the place where they were plundered to the nearest habitation was fifteen miles ; every one felt he must reach it, or die : no one could offer to help his fellow ; they were like men in a shipwreck, each struggling for life, for the camels had all been taken by the Curdes, who turned the unhappy men on the desert to shift as they could.

Yet Hocker did not lose his courage or strength of mind ; he tied up his wounds as well as he could with some pieces of his shirt, and feebly pressed on over the burning sand, while the fierce heat of the sun beat on his bare head, and naked body. Some hours passed away that seemed like ages ; many who had been pros-

perous merchants, were reduced to poverty, but they thought little of their lost wealth; water was the cry that burst from every lip, and their eyes wandered wildly over the desert in search of it; but no well was to be seen. Towards evening they succeeded in getting to a village, and on reaching it, Hocker beheld the other missionary coming towards him; he had escaped un-wounded, but was stript of every thing. Two Persians of rank in the caravan were kind enough to spare them a few articles of clothing, and led them to a house where bread and grapes were set before them. But here they could only rest for a day or two, as their company was too large to find food in so small a village; and having bought a few camels, and got back others which had escaped from the robbers into the wilderness, they again set forth. New troubles, however, awaited them; the journey was tiresome, and before a week had passed, they were attacked by another band of robbers, who stripped them of the little the Curdes had left them." The sufferings of the two missionaries, they write to their friends, were too great to be described, yet they were not induced to give up their pious undertaking. Like St. Paul, "they counted not their lives dear to them," so that they might succeed in time in bringing some of these fierce barbarians to learn "the gentleness of Christ;" and the more cruelty and wickedness they met with, the greater motive did they feel for preaching the Gospel of peace and love. How does their courage

shame our cowardice, who too often leave the souls of irreligious friends and relations to perish, rather than summon resolution merely to warn them to flee from the wrath to come!

As the things of religion oftentimes appear foolishness to the worldly-minded, it is probable that among the traders who accompanied them, many looked upon the missionaries as fools for undergoing such perils for no earthly profit; yet while the despised Christians were laying up treasure in heaven at every step of their journey, and earning "an eternal recompense of reward," the merchants were encountering equal dangers in labouring for "the meat that perisheth," in adding to those riches which so soon "made to themselves wings," and fled away over the desert, leaving their owners nothing of their toils but disappointment and sorrow.

*"Man like a shadow vainly walks,
By fruitless cares opprest,
He heaps up wealth, and cannot tell
By whom t'will be possessed."* Ps. xxxix. 6.

The merciful Creator, who has provided the camel for man's use in the low plains of the East, in the hilly and mountainous parts of the country to which the nature of this animal is not suited, has furnished him with another valuable assistant in the ass.

The ass of Asia, spirited, high in stature, and swift of foot, is both a noble and a beautiful animal, differing

greatly from the ill-used, half-starved donkey of our country, whom wanton boys and barbarous men take a savage pleasure in tormenting. Surely in the great day of account, when even our idle words will be called over, (Matt. xii. 36,) acts of cruelty to the harmless animals will not pass unnoticed by our righteous Judge !

There are in the Bible several beautiful descriptions of the wild ass, particularly in the book of Job, in whose country, Arabia, they abounded. "Who hath sent out the wild ass free? Who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren lands his dwelling. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the drivers. The range of the mountain is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing." (Job xxxix.)

Modern travellers describe the habits of this animal in its natural state, as remaining exactly the same to the present time. They assemble in herds, sometimes of hundreds, or, in Tartary, even of thousands: and while the chief part are grazing, a few act as sentinels to give notice of danger to the rest. So vigilant and shy is their nature, that an unusual sight or sound suffices to alarm these sentinels, who communicate their fears to their companions by a particular kind of cry, and the whole herd instantly scour off at a pace which it is impossible to follow. The huntsmen, therefore, instead of giving them chase openly, have recourse to cunning, and lie in wait to shoot or capture them by "the springs

in the valleys which run among the hills, whereat the wild asses quench their thirst," of an evening. And as the ass is very fond of salt, if there are brackish or salt springs in the country, the hunters choose them for their station, certain that the animals they are in search of will give the preference to the salt water over the fresh. The Arabians take them in snares for the sake of their flesh, which, though hot and unsavoury when first killed, becomes very good meat if not eaten for a day or two after it is boiled*. The Romans were very fond of it, and the Jews were in the habit of eating it, as we find from 2 Kings vi. 25. where it is related, that during a famine in Samaria, an ass's head sold for forty pieces of silver.

The South Americans have another way of hunting the ass. "A large number of persons assemble on foot and on horseback, and when arrived within sight of a herd they form a circle, surround it, and endeavour to drive the animals into a valley, where they then ride at them at full speed with nooses to throw over their necks. These creatures, finding themselves enclosed, make very furious efforts to escape, and if only one succeeds in forcing his way out, the rest follow with impetuosity that cannot be resisted. However, when noosed, the hunters throw them down, secure them with fetters, and thus leave them till the chase is over; then, in order to bring them away, they pair them with tame ones, but

* *Wood's Zoography.*

this is not easily performed; for they are so remarkably fierce, that they often hurt the persons who undertake to manage them. It is this superior breed that the inhabitants of Quito use, in their passage across the mountains. They have all the swiftness of horses, are very spirited, and when attacked defend themselves with their teeth with such activity, that without slackening their pace they often maim their pursuers; but the most remarkable thing in these animals is, that after carrying their first load, they lose much of their swiftness, and their dangerous ferocity leaves them. We were also assured that they will not permit a horse to live among them: if one happens to stray into the place where they feed, they all fall upon him, and bite and kick him till they leave him dead on the spot*."

It is the violent resistance shown by the ass in its native state, to any restraint; its wildness and love of ranging at large, free and unfettered, that has caused the writers in the Bible so often to liken man to it. "Man," says Job, "is born like the wild ass's colt." And again in Jeremiah, "Thou art a wild ass used to the wilderness." Children, till softened by education, heedless and wild, rebel against control, and struggle hard for the indulgence of their own wills; and, unhappily, too many remain children in this respect till their dying day: for man, unhumiliated by a sense of his sinfulness, destitute of religion, and unbroken by adversity, "hates

* *Ulloa's Voyage, and Wood's Zoography.*

instruction and kicks at reproof," as the word of God forcibly expresses it, despising all laws, whether of God or man, which would curb the gratification of his desires. And how often does a youth and manhood thus spent, lead to an end like that of the perverse, sinful king of Judah, "who was buried with the burial of an ass," cast forth out of the graves of his fathers; (Jeremiah xxii. 19.) a shameful death on the scaffold, or by an act of suicide, being the frequent close of a life of reckless self-will.

Of the ass of the East, when tamed and trained, a writer* observes, "all travellers have extolled these beautiful animals; their tread is firm, their step light, and their paces quick, active, and easy; in short, they are very pleasant to ride. Some of them are very tall, and these are most valued, sometimes selling for a higher price than horses. In Egypt the merchants and the most wealthy people ride them; and carriages being almost unknown there, ladies of the highest rank use them." (2 Kings iv. 22.) I once chanced to meet all the wives of a Bey, or Governor, taking an airing; the ladies were mounted on the finest asses. The chiefs of the Nubian caravan travel on these animals, which after sixty days' journey do not appear tired on their arrival in Egypt. No doubt, the better treatment the ass meets with in the East is one cause of its superiority; they are rubbed down and washed regularly, so that

* *Sonnini's Travels in Egypt.*

their coat is smooth and glossy ; and their food is the same as that of the horses, barley, chopped straw, and beans. “ If,” continues this writer, “ without diverting our attention from the horse, we also condescended to bestow some on the ass, we should doubtless be great gainers,” since it is more hardy than the horse, and less difficult about the quality and quantity of its food. “ In the streets of Cairo they are kept ready saddled, and serve the purpose of hackney-coaches in that great city,” the capital of Egypt, “ in which Christians, till lately, were forbidden to use horses, and were only allowed asses to ride on.” The different character of this animal in its native countries is shown in one of Solomon’s proverbs (xxvi. 3.) “ A whip,” says he, “ for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for a fool’s back.” We should just reverse this, and employ the bridle for the horse, and the whip for the ass.

It is, however, in mountainous countries that the ass is most useful, owing to his nimbleness in climbing heights, and his sureness of foot in descending the steepest and most stony roads. This animal and the mule seldom make a false step, and even where the path lies sheer down a precipice, by sliding where it is most steep, and carefully stepping from stone to stone where rocky and uneven, they will carry both goods and passengers in safety over ways where neither horse nor camel could keep its legs. A late traveller* tells us.

* *Burckhardt’s Travels in Arabia.*

that when the camel caravan reaches the foot of a steep mountain in Arabia, the camels are unloaded, and their burdens are put on to asses, of which two hundred are kept for the purpose at that spot; and by them the merchandise is forwarded over the mountain. This traveller in describing an excursion he made into the hill-country of Arabia, observes, "I hired two asses," one for himself, the other for his baggage, "which is the usual mode of conveyance in this country:" and in the course of his journey he says, "I met three soldiers, each like myself mounted on an ass." It was in this same land that Moses, on receiving God's command to go to the assistance of his oppressed countrymen, "took his wife and his sons, and set them on an ass, and he returned into the land of Egypt." Probably two panniers were slung across the animal, in one of which rode Zipporah, while the children were seated in the other; such being the present mode of travelling for women and children, among many of the eastern nations*.

The wonderful sagacity of this animal in picking out its way, and the persevering patience with which it endeavours to overcome difficulties, makes the conduct of Balaam, and such as imitate him, doubly cruel, in urging it on by beating when its own instinct makes it refuse to go forward. On very steep roads we are told the only safety to the rider is in giving himself up entirely to the care of his ass, without attempting to guide

* *Keppel's Journey from India.*

it; and the clever creature, when it comes to the edge of a precipice which is particularly dangerous to descend, will stop, look well at the path for a few minutes as if considering how it can best get down it, and then, drawing its hind feet under it as if about to lie down, it slides to the bottom with the greatest swiftness, while all that the rider has to do is to keep himself fast in the saddle, and take care not to pull the rein, which might upset the ass, and cause the death of both*.

As Canaan, and particularly Judah, was a mountainous country, we find that saddling the ass or mule was the usual preparation with the Israelites for a journey within their own land, while the horse and camel were employed in travelling in the neighbouring countries which were more flat and level. When the Jews improved in knowledge, however, they learnt the art of road-making from the Romans who were very skilful in it; and then among the great people, the use of the horse took the place of that of the ass, which by our Saviour's time had ceased to be employed by the upper classes; so that it was a sign of humility in him, and a proof of his contempt for what we poor vain mortals call grandeur, that he rode into Jerusalem on "an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

The travellers in the East, whose works we have quoted in this article, and indeed all Europeans who have visited those parts, agree in describing the state of

* *Wood's Zoography.*

morals there as profligate and cruel to a degree that makes the blood run cold : but amid much fearful vice, they mention some praiseworthy customs observed in travelling, in respect of which Christians would do well to take example from their heathen brethren. One of these is the respect paid to prayer. Like David (Psalm lv. 17) at morn, evening, and noon-tide, they pray. How much it were to be wished that they also prayed to David's God ! And they allow nothing to interfere with their attention to this duty. Mr. Burckhardt relates of a company he had joined—"The caravan had stopped behind for a quarter of an hour to allow the travellers time to say their evening prayers ; a daily practice among them of which I was not then aware."

An Englishman journeying in Mesopotamia observes on an occasion when danger was feared, "the day-break prayers were said by all the members of the caravan" he accompanied "with more than usual heartiness." And he speaks of a halt being regularly made in the middle of the day, for the noon-tide prayers to be performed*.

While the poor heathen are thus earnest in asking the protection and blessing of a god of their own devising, what multitudes of people, calling themselves Christians, and fancying themselves very superior to the Pagans, let day after day pass without once bowing the knee to the Lord, whose power made, and whose bounty main-

* *Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia.*

tains them. Or, if they sometimes remember their prayers when at home, do they never make a journey, or a press of business an excuse for omitting them when abroad? Let us take heed that at the day of judgment, the heathen do not rise up and condemn us for our neglect of duties, which they themselves carefully performed to the best of their knowledge.

Another good practice in the East, is the charity shown by the rich to the poorer travellers in the caravan. "It is the custom with most of those who can afford it, to dress an ample supper at night, that enough may remain for the poor in the company. From the tent of one wealthy man of Mesopotamia there were not less than twenty such pilgrims who were regularly fed *."

The hospitality shown even by the poorest villagers to travellers passing through their country, is also very pleasing. In Arabia it is considered quite a disgrace for a farmer, however poor, to sell his milk, instead of giving it freely to the passer-by who may ask a drink of it. "In the morning," says Mr. Burckhardt, "some women appeared in sight with a few starved herds of sheep and goats, which were searching for the scanty herbage. No rain had fallen in the plain, and every shrub was withered, I went out with several other people of the caravan, to meet the women and ask them for some milk; my companions had taken money with them to buy it, and I had filled my pockets with bis-

* *Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia.*

cuits for the same purpose. They refused to take the money, saying they were not accustomed to sell milk, but when I made them a present of the biscuits they filled my bowl in return."

In Mesopotamia, the native country of Abraham, another writer relates, that "as the caravan passed through a village, most of the passengers halted without alighting, when all who wished it were served by all the villagers with bowls of lebben, or curdled milk. As far as I could perceive, this was an act of pure hospitality, for which no payment was asked or offered, though if frequently repeated it must become a heavy expense to those who exercise it." And again, "We reached a small village in time for noon-day prayers. The inhabitants were all peasants, living by the produce of their flocks and fields. We were received by one of the elders, who furnished our horses with food, and set before us some curdled milk, the most refreshing drink to be found in that country, and always a welcome one in the summer of such a hot climate." "Pursuing our journey," writes Major Keppel *, "we were addressed by some Illiauts, who, pointing to their tents among the mountains, invited us to breakfast with them. Mr. Hamilton and myself, relying on their well-known character for keeping good faith with those who trust to their honour, ventured to go with them, taking with us only two servants. We were shown into a large tent, a carpet was spread for us on a raised platform about three feet

* *Keppel's Journey from India.*

high, and we were desired to seat ourselves in the manner most convenient*. A breakfast of warm milk, eggs, and bread was placed before us, and the whole camp turned out to see the foreigners at their meal, which to amuse them we ate in the English fashion." On another occasion Major Keppel mentions that his friend Mr. Hamilton passed through several encampments of Arabs, from whom he experienced all the hospitality for which they are celebrated. He slept the first night in one of their tents; a sheep was brought to the door and milked for him by the daughter of his host; a carpet was spread, and he was regaled with pipes, coffee, milk, and butter, and a sheep roasted whole." The next night Mr. Hamilton reached another encampment, and met with similar kind treatment.

This custom of entertaining strangers, who after they have been hospitably welcomed for a night, and received into the family party, next day take their leave and are seen no more, explains Jeremiah's pathetic pleading with the Almighty. (Jeremiah xiv. 8.) "Why art thou to us as a wayfaring man that tarrieth for a night?" Why instead of abiding with thy people, and blessing them with thy constant presence, dost Thou now depart from us, like a stranger passing through the land, who lodges there only for a night, and then continuing his journey, disappears for ever?

The hospitality shown by the richer people to travel-

** The people of the country sit cross-legged on the floor, which is a very awkward position to Europeans.*

lers is liberal in proportion to their wealth. "Our camels were unladen at the khan," a kind of inn, "but the numerous friends of my Eastern fellow-traveller would not allow us to remain here," writes Mr. Buckingham. "The invitations we received were so many and pressing, that at first it was thought necessary to refuse all for fear of offending by giving one the preference above another. One day was spent in receiving visits from the most respectable inhabitants of the town, and in the evening we had to attend a supper party formed for us. We assembled in number about thirty, and were received in a handsome room with a gilded ceiling, carpeted seats, furnished with silk cushions, and other marks of the owner's wealth. Among our party from the caravan were the two Indian fakirs, or beggars*. These men, clad in a bundle of rags swarming with vermin, were seated among the rest on the sofa, and served with exactly the same attention.

"Our supper was served on a large metal tray, handsomely ornamented, and containing forty dishes, stewed meat, rice, fruit, &c. &c.; and our drink was iced-milk, curdled milk, sherbet, and the iced juice of pomegranates mixed with rose-water, so that no one could regret the absence of wine. Our evening pipes and coffee were taken to the terrace on the top of the house, which

* See page 147. *Men who make religion a pretence for living idle lives, and subsisting on charity, instead of working for their bread. They consider dirtiness a merit.*

being very lofty, gave us a view of great extent and beauty."

The circumstance of there being no furnished inns in the East, gives double value to any kindness shown to the houseless stranger; and such hospitality being so common, and considered such a sacred duty, in some measure excuses the anger of David, when Naboth refused it to him; though nothing could excuse his threat of revenging himself; as he himself acknowledged, when the mild word spoken in season by Nabal's wife recalled him in time to his usual piety and gentleness.

The khans, or inns of Asia, are merely empty buildings, as we observed before *, and offer no conveniences beyond that of shelter; travellers are therefore obliged to carry their bedding and provisions about with them, and we read † that one merchant and his family alone required ten camels for the conveyance of their baggage on a journey; while for the service of a princess, wife of Mahommed Ali, governor of Egypt, when she travelled to Arabia, the prodigious number of five hundred camels was necessary. "Her tent was in fact an encampment consisting of a dozen tents of different sizes, inhabited by her women; the whole enclosed by a wall of linen cloth of great extent." This curtain of linen, and the beautiful embroidery in various colours with which it was ornamented, recalls the description given of the

* *See Hospitality.* † *Burckhardt's Travels in Arabia.*

Tabernacle, and of the hangings which enclosed it and the court before it*. (Ex. xxxvi. 8.)

In the books of the prophets, we find very frequent allusion made to the grand style in which Eastern princes in their days were accustomed to travel. As provisions were often scarce, and the roads bad and few, whenever a king was upon a journey, or marching at the head of his army, it was usual to send messengers on before to secure sufficient food for his train, and to examine the state of the roads. If these were found indifferent, the messengers immediately set labourers to mend them by cutting them down where they were too steep, raising them if they sank suddenly into a deep valley, and by removing every rough stone, prevent any danger of the king's horse stumbling with him. Thus the journey was made as little fatiguing, and as pleasant as possible to the great man: and to such an absurd height did some of these monarchs carry their notions of their own importance, that one of the kings of Persia, mentioned, Daniel viii. 20, is said to have warned a high mountain which lay in his way to Greece, not to presume to offer any hindrance to his progress, or he would root it up entirely, and cast it into the sea †.

* *Burckhardt's Travels in Arabia.*

† *This king was one of those arrogant boasters, whom the Lord bringeth low. The large army with which he intended to conquer Greece, was totally defeated by the Grecians, and he returned with disgrace to Persia.*

“Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way,” says the prophet Isaiah, referring to this custom, and applying it figuratively, “take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people; cast up the high way; gather out the stones.” Isa. lvii. 14—lxii. 10.

But a still more remarkable passage has no doubt already occurred to most of my readers, that wherein the preparations for the coming of our Lord and Saviour are described by the same prophet. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.” The desponding and humble, compared to the lowly valleys, were to be raised up, and comforted by the tidings, that “One, mighty to save,” was coming, who would bear their sins, and obtain the pardon of their offences: the proud-hearted, likened to the lofty mountains, were to be humbled and taught to value the coming Saviour, by having their own sinfulness laid open to them; the crooked, deceitful devices of the human mind were to be changed to straight-forward honesty, and godly sincerity; and every rough temper was to be smoothed down by the spirit of brotherly love and charity.

The princes of the East in later times have continued to observe all the same ceremony and pomp in their journeyings, as that for which their predecessors were

noted ; and it is related, that when a celebrated caliph, or prince, and his wife made a pilgrimage barefoot to the tomb of the pretended prophet Mahomet, not only was the way made smooth for them, but rich carpets were laid down the whole length of the road, though it extended many hundred miles. The grand Mogul of India, when he travelled, was always preceded by a large body of troops, who removed every difficulty in the road, prepared pleasant resting places, and levied such large contributions in provisions and money on all the towns and villages round, for his splendid train of attendants, that a famine and pestilence among the unfortunate inhabitants was the usual consequence of one of the royal journeys.

The most splendid journey, however, of any sovereign in modern days, was that of the Empress Catherine of Russia, who aspired to the title of the Empress of the East, and travelled from Petersburgh all through her large dominions, to the provinces she had acquired from the Turks, with the intention of being crowned there by this title. She was escorted by an army, and pioneers went before, whose business it was to render the road as even and delightful as it could be made ; at the end of each day's progress, she found temporary palaces built for her reception, furnished with every luxury : kings and princes were in her train ; troops of well-dressed peasants came forth from pretty villages to strew her path with flowers ; and all the country looked

as if neither sorrow nor want was to be found in it. But this happy appearance of things was a deception : the peasantry who are slaves to their landlords, half-starved, ill-clothed, and lodged, were dressed up, and their houses smartly painted to make a good show for the occasion ; those governors of provinces who had ruled tyrannically, took care to imprison all persons who might have carried complaints to their sovereign, and while the empress fancied she was travelling through a happy land, and carrying pleasure wherever she passed, the groans of the plundered and oppressed country people were silently ascending to heaven.

Though the Holy Spirit, in order to suit our understanding, has condescended to describe the coming of our Lord by the terms usually employed in speaking of the journeyings of monarchs in the East, yet, in how different a spirit did the King of kings appear among his people, from that in which these earthly princes visited their dominions. Whilst they too often, by exaction and oppression, by levying heavy taxes, seizing the goods of their subjects, and punishing those who presumed to murmur, turned the fruitful land into a barren wilderness, He came to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to comfort all that mourn ! It is no doubt true, that there have been exceptions to this sad picture of Eastern tyranny, and some despotic kings have been models of virtue and

charity ; but such is the hurtful effect of unlimited power on the human heart, that, after reading the history of these countries, where the sovereign's will is the only law, a warm feeling of gratitude to God must arise in every pious Englishman's breast, for having given him his birth in a land, where the Christian religion and an excellent government, afford security both to his person and property, as long as he himself obeys the laws.

Serious minded people in all ages have taken pleasure in drawing instruction from the common events of life, and the comparison of life to a journey has been made by the thoughtful, from the days of Jacob down to the present time. "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage," says the aged patriarch ; and David takes up the same strain, "I am a stranger in the earth."

We are all on a journey, for "here we have no abiding city : " we are travelling fast to another country : some carefully picking their way along the narrow path of faith and holiness to a better, "that is, an heavenly ;" some, and, alas ! the greater number, hurrying carelessly along the broad and easy road which leads to a land of "darkness and thick darkness," of torment, anguish, and self-reproach.

Whilst we are still pilgrims here below, we think a great deal of the comforts or inconveniences we encounter on our road, and meet perhaps with respect or neglect from our fellow-travellers, according to th

handsome or poor appearance we make. But, when we reach our journey's end, all these things will be forgotten. We shall not be asked by our Judge in what fashion we travelled, whether we rode in our carriage and four, and put up at the best hotels, or whether we trudged our weary way with our staff in our hand, thankful to lie down at night on a morsel of straw in a barn : the only question that will then be put to us will be, "How did you behave yourself on your road? Did you walk with God? In faith in his promises, in love for his mercies through Christ Jesus? Did you "walk honestly, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying," but in temperance and chastity, as respects yourself, in brotherly kindness and charity towards your fellow pilgrims? God grant that our hearts may then be able to send us an answer of peace to these awful inquiries; and to ensure such a blessed end to "all our wanderings round this world of care," we cannot do better than follow the excellent advice of a pious writer *. "Think," he observes, "when you lie down, think when you rise up, think when you walk, and think when you rest, I am but a traveller here. Amid the cares of life, remember that these are but the cares of a journey; amid its pleasures, these are but the pleasures of an inn. This world is not my world, for I am but a traveller here."

* *Pike's Guide to Young Disciples.*

BUTTER AND HONEY.

“AMONG the Arabs,” says Mr. Burckhardt, “a common breakfast is a mixture of butter and honey poured over crumbs of bread as they come hot from the oven. They never eat pastry without honey.” The same writer also mentions, “that it is a usual practice among all ranks of people in Arabia, to drink every morning, before their coffee, a cup-full of melted butter. They consider it a powerful tonic, or strengthener of the stomach; and are so much accustomed to it even from their *earliest* youth, that they would feel great inconvenience in leaving off the habit*.”

The Israelites seem to have had the same customs. “Butter and honey shall he eat,” said the prophet Isaiah (vii. 15,) speaking of the Son of the Virgin, Emmanuel, or God with us, “That he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.” To learn to know good and evil is an expression used in the Bible, seemingly, to describe a child growing up towards manhood, or to years of discretion, as we should say. The words of the prophet therefore probably mean the same as those of St. Luke, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,” in strength of body, and vigor of mind.

* *Travels in Arabia.*

SYNAGOGUES.

It is not known when the Jews first began to meet together in synagogues as places of public worship. The only passage in which they are mentioned in the Old Testament is in the Bible version of the 74th psalm, where the psalmist, describing the destruction that Nebuchadnezzar's army had caused, says, "They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land." But many learned men think, that the word which is here translated "synagogue," does not mean such a place as is now called by that name. The chief place where the Israelites assembled for public worship after the building of the Temple, was the open court of the Temple before the altar; and those who lived too far from Jerusalem to be able to go there at all times, built courts like that in which they prayed at the Temple, there to offer up the sacrifice of prayer and praise. It was in one of these places that our Saviour passed the night, when it is said by St. Luke, "he continued all night in prayer," or a place of prayer, "to God." (Luke vi. 12.) While so many millions of thoughtless human creatures were sleeping as quietly with their sins unconfessed and unrepented, as if there were no possibility that their souls might that very night be required of them, and others were "devising mischief on their

beds," the only Being on earth who had no need to seek pardon for himself, passed the night in prayer for a guilty world. These "places of prayer" were often made by the sides of the rivers; and this custom is supposed to be referred to, Acts xvi. 13, where we read that St. Paul and his "companions on the Sabbath went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made." The remains of such buildings are still observed by travellers.

The word *synagogue* means a meeting or assembly of people, and it appears from the New Testament to have been the custom of the Jews in our Saviour's time to assemble in them regularly for religious worship on the Sabbath; for we find that Christ "went as was his wont (or custom) into the synagogue on the Sabbath day," (Luke iv. 16,) therefore setting us an example "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together," (Heb. x. 25,) for Divine worship.

At the present time, wherever there are ten males above thirteen, the age at which they are confirmed, the Jews establish a *synagogue*. The buildings employed for this purpose in the Holy Land, where the Jews are treated with the greatest severity and contempt, are described as very miserable places, sometimes little better than a cellar; but this does not prevent their being held in great respect. "We went down into the synagogue," says Mr. Jowett*, "with

* *Christian Researches.*

our host's son, and many of the company. They obliged us to take off more of our dress than I had ever been deprived of before, both my outer and inner shoes ; and my ferwi, a warm dress, lined with fur."

Scarcely any change has taken place in the regulations or services of the synagogues since the time of our Lord and his disciples ; so that if a person could see what was going on in them in all parts of the world on the same occasion, he would find it exactly the same. They have still their rulers to govern them and their Rabbis to teach in them, and the following account, by a converted Jew *, of the way in which they still teach, will show how truly the Jews might be struck with the difference of Christ's preaching, " The chief Rabbi's time is employed for nearly six hours every day in the synagogue. Having taken his station, the Jews surround his desk, most standing, to hear the Rabbi's discourse ; and for nearly three hours without ceasing, he explains to them the rules they are to observe about ' the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables,' (Mark, vii. 4.) or any thing else that is used in preparing food. Here, I hope my readers will strictly and attentively observe, for their own edification, that our blessed Saviour, during his sojourning on earth, never made use of one word in vain, when He adopted these expressions, ' Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For

* *Narrative, &c. by H. J. Marks.*

laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups ; and many other such things ye do.' (Mark vii. 7, 8.) I have myself heard many clergymen preach most excellent sermons on this text ; but, none but a Jew, or those who have had it more fully explained to them by a Jew, can fully understand its meaning. The Jews are extremely particular on this point ; more so, perhaps, than on any other."

Before a Jew, if above thirteen years old, begins to pray either publicly in the synagogue, or privately at home, he must put on the phylacteries. The most irreligious Jew would not be without them at home or abroad ; and if a Jew, being on a journey, should forget them, which is a very rare circumstance, or chance to let them fall, he must in either case fast a whole day for his sin of negligence.

The phylacteries are cases of a particular size and shape, made of parchment, and covered over with a fine skin, of which the hair is outside. Within these cases are placed slips of fine vellum, on which the following passages from the Bible are written, Deut. vi. 4—9 ; Deut. xi. 13—23 ; Exod. xiii. 1—10 ; Exod. xiii. 11—16. The phylactery for the arm is put on the first. It is placed on the part of the left arm opposite the heart ; a short prayer is then said, and as soon as this is ended, the phylactery is fastened by means of a leathern strap, which runs through part of the case like a noose, so that

it cannot slip. The phylactery for the head is then placed on the part of the forehead, where the hair begins to grow, exactly between the eyes; and, after a short prayer, it is fastened in the same way as the other. The Jewish superstition of wearing phylacteries took its rise from the words, Deut. vi. 8, "thou shalt bind them (the commandments of God) for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes;" by which was meant, that the commandments of God should be as constantly in their thoughts as those things which they held in their hands, or which were always in their sight; not that they should be worn as a sort of charm, like those used by the heathen, to preserve them from evils, diseases, or dangers; for this is the meaning of the word phylactery.

Every male Jew is also required to wear in public worship, a long scarf, with fringes at the four corners, which is thrown over the head like a veil; and a smaller one having also fringes at the corners, is worn round the neck under the waistcoat in private worship. These are considered as memorials of the law, probably because Moses "put a vail on his face," (Exod. xxxiv. 33,) while he gave the Israelites, "in commandment, all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai;" they are devoutly pressed to the lips during prayer.

Our blessed Lord referred to these customs, when he said of the Pharisees, "they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,"

(Matt. xxiii. 5,) and he called them "blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel;" for, however sinful the life of a Jew may be, the Rabbis, or Jewish clergy, hold him blameless, if he observe some of the outward ceremonies of his religion, of which they consider the wearing of phylacteries the most important. But, "what avails it," as an old writer * has observed, "that the law of God is in their fringes, while the Devil is in their hearts?" The same question might be asked of every one of ourselves. To what purpose is it to observe merely the outward forms of religion, which will avail us as little as the phylacteries and fringes of the Jews, if we make all our religion consist in attending to them, and suffer the Devil, the world, and the flesh to reign in our hearts.

On the sabbaths, feasts, and fasts, a portion of the Pentateuch, or five Books of Moses, is read in the synagogue. Every Jew who has a seat in it, is in his turn called, or invited, by the ruler of the synagogue, to come up to the reading of the Law †. This was the custom in our Saviour's time; for we find that when Christ went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, He "stood up for to read." (Luke iv. 16.) The whole of the Pentateuch is written on skins of parchment made into a roll, (see Books, Part I.) and covered with a beautiful mantle, ornamented with bells, in remem-

* *Bishop Hall's Meditations.*

† *Hyam Isaac's Ceremonies of the Jews.*

brance of the robes of the High Priest. In some synagogues there are several of these rolls, and they are often very valuable, either from their splendid ornaments, from their great age, or from both circumstances. They are kept in a closet called the Holy Ark, at the eastern end of the synagogue, and the whole is shut in by a rich curtain. There is much ceremony in taking the Book of the Law out of the Ark, as well as in returning it. Drawing the curtain aside—opening the doors—taking out the book—carrying it to the reading desk—unrolling it, &c.—While the Book of the Law is being carried from the Ark to the reading desk, every one tries to get near enough to kiss the hem of the mantle, which is considered a great privilege.

St. Paul probably alluded to the custom of wearing a veil during the reading of the law when he said, "Even unto this day when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart;" (2 Cor. iii. 15.) and the instructions of the same apostle to the men among his Corinthian converts, not to cover their heads while they prayed or preached, seems to have been caused by some attempt made to introduce this custom into the worship of the Gentile believers. (1 Cor. ii. 4.) The Jews through their carnal-mindedness were unable to understand that the ceremonies of the law were "but the shadow of good things to come," which things were veiled under its different observances. But this veil, as St. Paul expresses it, "was done away in Christ." When the dying Saviour

on the cross exclaimed, "It is finished!" every type and figure of the law given by Moses being fulfilled, that law was at an end; and the merciful method of man's redemption was fully revealed, or unveiled.

The veil of the temple which concealed the Holy of Holies, meant to represent the abode of the Holy God, was then rent in twain, to signify that God was now shown to his creatures in all the perfections of the Godhead, in the beautiful union of Justice and Mercy, whereby he is both just, and yet the justifier of the sinner that believeth on him; to whom through the blood of Jesus an entrance was henceforth opened into the Heaven of Heavens.

The service of the synagogue is in Hebrew, which only the learned Jews understand, though all are taught to repeat their prayers in it, parrot-like; in this respect, as well as in many other parts of their worship, they resemble the Romanists. The usual posture of the Jews, both in their public and private prayers is sitting. During one prayer they turn eastward towards the place where their temple used to stand, and beating twice on their breast exclaim, "We have sinned! we have greatly sinned!" Twice a year only a sermon is preached, at the time of the Passover, and at the beginning of the year; but being in Hebrew it is of little use to most of the people.

One of the most solemn of the many days observed by the Jews in the course of the year, is the day of atonement. On the previous evening they assemble in

the synagogues dressed in white garments, made for the occasion, and which garments are finally used as their grave clothes. It is commonly believed that at this time God sits to judge them for the past year, and to determine all that is to befall them during the next; which gives a solemn feeling to every one present. No food is eaten on this and the following day, nor a drop of water drunk till the first star appears; and the service on both days often lasts till ten o'clock at night. After the ceremonies are all ended, a ram's horn is blown to give notice that the people may return home, and they leave the synagogue in the belief that all their sins towards God are done away. At the same time, however, that we mention their error in thinking it possible for men to atone for their own sins, which can only be purged away in the blood of the Lamb, it is but justice to the Jews to observe, that they do not consider their sins committed against each other can be forgiven, till they have made restitution in cases of theft, or repaired them to the best of their power in other cases, and asked pardon of those whom they have injured. If the injured person refuses forgiveness, they must beg three friends to go with them, and try to soften his heart; twice more must this visit be repeated if he continue unrelenting; after which the blame rests with him should any unfriendly feeling remain between them. This custom strikingly reminds us of our Saviour's words, "If thy brother trespass against thee tell him his fault between him and thee alone," &c. &c. (Matt.

xviii. 15.) And it is much to be regretted that Christians so little follow this kind command of their meek Master; for how many a quarrel would be avoided, or soon made up, if, instead of complaining to others of any offences we receive, we frankly and good humouredly asked an explanation of the person who we thought had injured us! Nine times out of ten we should find that the supposed injury was a mistake, and that no offence had been intended.

The Jews in our Saviour's time, we find by many passages in the Gospels, considered only those of their own nation as their neighbours; and to the present day they continue in the same opinion. The praiseworthy custom we have described above, is not followed towards Christians, whom they do not look upon as brethren: but it must be confessed that Christians have themselves given some excuse for so uncharitable a feeling, by the unkind conduct they have too often been guilty of towards the Jews.

In the 7th chapter of Matthew we are told that "the people were astonished at our Lord's doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." An extract from the service of the synagogue will make this passage more clear, as it shows that instead of speaking to the people in God's name, and with the authority of his Word, as every true minister of the Lord should do, the instructors of the Jews appeal to the witness of men for the truth of what they say; and by employing many of the precious moments of public

worship in the most foolish questions, well deserve the name he gave them, of "blind leaders of the blind."

In Sabbath Eve Service.

"With what species of wick may the lamps be lighted, and with what may they not be lighted? Nahum the Mede says they may be lighted with boiled tallow, but the sages say they may not be lighted therewith. Rabbi Ishmael says they may not be lighted with the dregs of boiled pitch, because of the honour due unto the sabbath; but the sages allow of all oils. Rabbi Tarphon saith they may not be lighted but with oil of olives only." And so on for a page or two.

We may well imagine that people, used to hear such trifling, silly precepts gravely taught in their religious meetings, must have been deeply impressed, when one preached to them on "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," and addressed himself to their hearts and consciences.

The washing before meals, mentioned Mark vii., is also still observed by the Jews, not for cleanliness, but as a fancied act of religion. When they rise in the morning, before prayer and putting on the phylacteries, and before each meal, they rinse their faces three times with pure water, which they likewise pour over their hands, saying this prayer, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and commanded us to cleanse our hands." The more strict are very particular in washing all plates, glasses, &c. &c. which people of

a different religion have touched, before they will use them. Now there is not perhaps much harm in these observances themselves, but the evil of such "will worship," as St. Paul calls it, (that is, worship of our own inventing, not of God's ordaining) is that it draws off men's minds from the really important parts of religion, love to God and our fellow-creatures. A man whose time is much taken up with these little outward ceremonies, will be very apt to think that more is not required of him, and that this outward cleansing will serve instead of the cleansing of the heart : as too many of us are ready to fancy that if we carry our *bodies* to church, bow reverently at the name of Jesus, and repeat the prayers after the minister, we have done our whole duty, though perhaps our thoughts have been employed all the time in things as little proper for consideration in God's house, as the Jewish question, with what wicks the lamps are to be lighted.

The Passover is kept by the Jews with great solemnity, but no paschal lamb is now slain, which is very remarkable, for they observe every other part of the feast as their forefathers did. It seems a sort of confession without their knowing it that, "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us," once for all. They meet in the synagogue before sunrise on the day of the Passover, and in the evening when they return home, the master of each house sits down to table with his servants and children ; or, among the more devout Jews he stands in the way ordered in Exodus, with his loins

girt and his staff in his hand, just as if he were setting out on the journey from Egypt to Canaan. Before him three plates are placed, containing a piece of roast meat, passover cakes, horse-radish, and other bitter herbs. The master dips the herbs in vinegar, and gives a small piece to each person; they then lay hold of the dish containing the cakes and herbs, saying, "Lo! this is the bread of affliction which our ancestors eat in the land of Egypt," &c.; and the youngest child present being taught to ask "Why is this night distinguished from all other nights?" they go on to repeat the history of their forefathers' slavery in Egypt, and their deliverance by the mighty acts of God. (Exod. xii.) Supper being ended, two large cups are filled with wine. One of them is taken by the master, a blessing is spoken, and a prayer offered for the speedy coming of the Messiah, after which the cup is passed to all around*. The other cup, called Elijah's cup, is then set at the head of the table, the door is opened, and there is a solemn pause, as if some one was expected to come in. It is at this moment that the Jews expect the arrival of Elijah to announce the coming of the Messiah. "Well do I remember," says a Jew, now become a Christian†, "the interest with which, when a boy, I looked towards the door, hoping that Elijah would really enter; for not-

* "He took the cup and said, *Take this and divide it among yourselves.*"—"Likewise also the cup after supper."

—*Luke xxii.*

† *Herschell's Brief Sketch, &c.*

withstanding repeated disappointments, his coming is still firmly expected." Of Elijah's cup no one drinks, it is considered sacred. The ceremony ends with a hymn; after which the master of the house exclaims, "To-day we are here, may we be next year at Jerusalem!"

Though the Jews have now been banished from their own country, and wanderers in other lands near eighteen hundred years, they still love it with the fondest affection. To visit Canaan, or the Holy Land, as it is now called, or to procure a little of its earth to be buried with them, are among their earnest wishes.

At the time of year when Jerusalem was taken, and the temple burnt, they put off all their ornaments, dress in mourning, just as they do after the death of a near relation, and assembling in the synagogues, sit upon the ground, reading the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and weeping bitterly. For three weeks their mourning continues, with frequent fasting, while they bewail the ruin of their nation, and sorrow, that the God of Abraham has departed from them. On the sabbath after this fast is finished, the 40th chapter of Isaiah is read in the synagogue, "and it is interesting," says the Jewish gentleman we have before quoted *, "to observe the change in the countenances of the devout Jews as they listen to this precious portion of Scripture. They look as if the prophet Isaiah were even then present, speaking comfort to them. Oh! may the Lord," he adds, "speedily re-

* *Mr. Herschell.*

move the veil from their eyes, that they may behold in Jesus of Nazareth, their comfort and their joy !”

Every true Christian will add a hearty “Amen, so be it !” to this prayer of our new “brother in Christ ;” and however humble our station in life, we may each assist to bring about this happy change ; for we are told by the same writer, that the two great objections made by the Jews to the Christian religion, are the bad lives of many who call themselves Christians, and the rude and unkind behaviour they often meet with from the professed followers of the meek and merciful Redeemer. Let, then, the light of the gospel shine so brightly in us, in all patience, honesty, humility, and brotherly kindness, that those of a different religion may be won to love ours when they see it produce such good fruit ; and let us carefully keep our lips from any of the insulting words, which are too commonly used in speaking of, or to the Jews.

When we consider that our blessed Lord himself condescended to be born of a Jewish virgin, and that most of the prophets and apostles were of their nation, we ought to look upon them with friendly interest “for the fathers’ sake ;” and by charitable deeds and words try “if by any means we might save some of them,” and induce them to consider the things which belong unto their peace,” while yet it is called to-day, and salvation is offered alike to penitent Jew or Gentile.

THE END,

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