

echoes of metallic music as they defiled across the stony street and passed down a steep flight of steps leading to a subterranean passage which directly communicated with the tribunal of justice or Hall of Judgment. This passage was a long vaulted way, winding in and out through devious twists and turnings, and was faintly lit up by oil lamps placed in sconces at regular distances, the flickering luminance thus given only making the native darkness of the place more palpable. Gloom and imprisonment were as strongly suggested here as in the dungeons left behind,—and Barabbas, his heart sickening anew with vain dread, shrank and shivered, stumbling giddily once or twice as he strove to keep pace with the steady march of his escort. Hope died within him; the flashing idea of liberty that had stirred him to such a sudden rapture of anticipation, now fled like a dream. He was being taken to his death; of that he felt sure. What mercy could he expect at the hands of the judge by whom he knew he must be tried and condemned? For was not Pontius Pilate governor of Judæa? and had not he, Barabbas, slain, in a moment of unthinking fury, one of Pilate's friends? That accursed Pharisee! His sleek manner,—his self-righteous smile,—his white hand with the glittering blazon of a priceless jewel on the forefinger, and all the trifling details of costume and deportment that went to make up the insolent and aggressive personality of the man,—these things Barabbas remembered with a thrill of loathing. He could almost see him as he saw him then, before with one fierce stab he had struck him to the earth, dead, and bleeding horribly in the brilliant moonlight, his wide open eyes glaring to the last in dumb and dreadful hate upon his murderer. And a life must always be given for a life; Barabbas admitted the stern justice of this law. It was only what he knew to be the ordained manner of death for such criminals as he, that caused his nerves to wince with fear and agony. If, like the Pharisee, he could be struck out of existence in a moment, why, that were naught,—but to be stretched on beams of wood there to blister for long hours in the pitiless sun,—to feel every sinew strained to cracking, and every drop of blood turning first to fire and then to ice,—this was enough to make the strongest man shudder; and Barabbas, weakened by long fasting and want of air, trembled so violently at times that he could scarcely drag his limbs along. His head swam and his eyes smarted; there were dull noises in his ears