

their flashing eagles, the symbol of the hated Cæsars, compelled the Jews to abandon their murderous violence, and the Roman officer, suspecting Paul to be an Egyptian rebel who had baffled the pursuit of a legion, seized him, and chained him by each hand to a soldier. He then turned to the mob, who were thirsting for his blood, but who now were in a measure satisfied to see him in captivity, and questioned them as to who the man was, and what he had done. The Jewish rabble raised such a confused din, and so pressed and crowded upon the soldiers, that the apostle was actually carried up the staircase to the barracks in consequence of the violent struggle going on below, while deafening shouts arose from the pavement, "Away with him! away with him!"—the same shouts which, about thirty years before, rang in Pilate's ears while sitting before Christ on his judgment seat—I had almost written, "His judgment seat." It was then that Paul, with that overpowering presence of mind which always characterized him, turned to the commandant and said, respectfully, in Greek: "May I speak with thee?" The Roman was startled to find himself addressed in Greek by this man, whom he believed to be an Egyptian vagabond. Paul, with dignity, replied that he was a Jew, and explained his knowledge of Greek by his Cilician birthplace, and respectfully urged that he might be allowed to address the people. Lysias must have felt that this man was no ordinary prisoner; the dignity and magnetism of his presence must have overwhelmed the disciplined soldier. It was the same masterfulness of nature that, some time thereafter, elevated Paul, the manacled prisoner, to be the real captain of the vessel drifting on the lee shore at Malta; the real centurion of the Roman soldiers who guarded him. It was a strange request to make, and it was strangely answered; for Lysias gave his consent; and the same wonderful presence, with a movement of his chained hand, stilled the mighty tumult raging below. His speech, delivered in Hebrew, was patiently listened to until he came to his commission to preach to the Gentiles, which he had, with wonderful sagacity, deferred to the last. The Jewish pride was aroused, and, frantic with bitter indignation, the mob shouted that it was not fit that such a fellow should live, and, filled with madness, threw off their garments. They had, on a previous occasion, thrown off their garments and laid them at the feet of this very man, who then had