

whose deep gorge presented an easy descent to the sea shore,—the pillar of cloud thus indicating that “by that way” their next stage was to be accomplished.

Down that profound ravine they looked wistfully, leaders and people, and enquired of each other how the passage was to be effected. No ship, nor any conveyance known to man was visible, far as the eye could scan the flood. The wild fowl were there, quietly brooding upon its surface. The evening breeze marked it with soft ripples. The sun darting its last rays down that chasm, smiled upon it as it lay broad and deep, a barrier to their progress. The heart of Israel sunk at the prospect. Yet, quietly and without murmuring they pitched their tents at Pi-hahiroth and waited what God would do for them.

By this time Pharaoh had overcome his fear and resolved to be revenged for his losses. “He pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his army, and overtook them encamped by the sea beside Pi-hahiroth before Baal-Zephon.” Undismayed by the amazing signs and wonders that God had wrought for the Israelites, stung with shame and resentment for the loss of his slaves, and the disgrace attached to his reign, he resolved yet again to bare his rebellious arm against Jehovah, and risking all to recover what he had lost or perish in the attempt.

Through one whole night and day the Israelitish camp had lain patiently at the entrance of that valley, the look of wonder on each face, the whispered enquiry on each tongue, and the Pillar had stood between them and the sea, immovable as the solid hills that overshadowed it. But now a cry was heard on the outskirts of the camp towards the west, a fearful cry caught and echoed by every voice, until the deep gorge thundered it back in countless reverberations. It said, “Wo, wo to Israel! Pharaoh is at hand!” Then the vast multitude was shaken as some great flood

upheaved by volcanic fires. Men ran wildly to and fro. Children were trodden in the aimless rush. Women screamed and flew with disheveled hair from tent to tent. The boldest, the most faithful, could scarce restrain their terror at the alarm, while some who had been accounted leaders in Israel came to Moses, standing before his tent, and clamored, “Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt with us thus to carry us forth out of Egypt?”

Calm and unmoved, his heart taking a firmness of tone from the very Pillar that stood before him, the man of God listened to that despairing demand. Looking upwards towards the heavens that glared in all the severity of that bright clime, he answered them: “Fear ye not: stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day!” Brave words. Hopeful pledge. They fell upon the hearts of the assembly like dew upon the burned buds of summer. Passed from mouth to mouth through the great army, the tumult ceased, the waves subsided. And lo, the leader opening again his lips pronounced this prophecy: “The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more again forever.”

And while he yet spake to them and before the prognostic was fully comprehended by his hearers, the Pillar began to move. Trembling at first upon its base, it rose from the ground, leaving the base of the valley all unobstructed, and the view of the shining waters complete, ascended for a distance towards the empyrean, as though about to be withdrawn from human gaze, then passing entirely over the hosts of Jacob, fell heavily a murky cloud between them and the Egyptians. The vanguard of the army at once halted in their swift march, and so the work of pursuit was for the moment stayed.

Then Moses, retiring from the presence of the people, addressed himself to God. And the Divine voice,