



Pictures from the Life of Jesus.

PICTURE IV.

NAZARETH.—CHRIST'S SERMON IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

A strange place is Nazareth; a little, obscure, secluded village, and yet a sweet and sunny spot, guarded by grand and lofty mountains. You may stand on top of the high hills and look down upon Nazareth; upon the valley, shut in by fifteen mountains; upon the white and gracefully grouped houses; upon the fig-trees, the tall cypresses, and the wide-spreading oaks; upon the light-leaved pomegranates, the rich and beautiful fields, the dense and pleasant grass, the small gardens, hedged in with prickly pear; and as you gaze upon it, old Bible thoughts come back, for you look on the home of the Holy Child Jesus.

It is very much altered since Christ lived here. It is now full of monks and Mahomedans. The high minaret of the Turkish mosque rises up beside the Greek church and the convent of the Latin fathers. But neither monk nor Mahomedan can take away our interest in Nazareth; and yet we are glad to turn away from the Nazareth of 1852 to the Nazareth of the year 30.

A stillness is over the little town. The sun shines brightly upon the flat-roofed houses, brightly on the synagogue, brightly on the fields and on the old grey mountains—brightly on the

people that are leaving their homes and going up to the synagogue; for it is God's holy Sabbath-day.

A blessing on the Sabbath, that comes to weary men and gives them rest; that bids the workman leave his work—the scholar his book—the child his play, and look right up to God. That is itself at once the messenger and the foretaste of the better world. Jews in the old time loved the Sabbath, and we should love the day that reminds us of something better than a world created—even a world redeemed.

So Jewish men, and Jewish women and children too, were going up towards the synagogue; and any one who had been there might have seen that something not common was expected; for many were the questions asked, and many were the answers given, about some wonderful person that would be in the synagogue that day. Jesus was to be there. Jesus, whom all men in that place knew well enough—who had lately been with them, solemn and earnest, but still as one of themselves; but who had, within the last few months, been doing wondrous things, so that his fame had gone through all the regions round about.

A young man tells us how, at a marriage feast in Cana, Jesus had turned water into wine; and better wine, the young man says, than any that the guests before had tasted, and in no