

in a literal manner—and has therefore suggested an interpretation which appears to me wholly inadmissible. When I lived in Ægina I used to look up, not unfrequently, at the roof above my head, and contemplate the facility with which the whole transaction might take place—The roof was constructed in this manner—A layer of reeds, of a large species, was placed upon the rafters. On these a quantity of heather was strewed. Upon the heather, earth was deposited, and beaten down into a compact mass. Now, what difficulty would there be, in removing, first the earth, then the heather, next 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 house, from the removal of the tiles and earth—for the heather and reeds would intercept anything that might otherwise fall down and would be removed last of all.

“It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and be cast into the sea.” (Luke xvii. 2.)

To one who connects this passage with the idea of large millstones employed in our country, there must appear something unnatural in the allusion. To attach such a millstone to the neck would be to terminate life by another mode of death than by casting into the sea: There is here an evident reference to the millstones employed in the East, which are called hand-mills. These consists of an upper and nether millstone, playing into each other, and not more than a foot in diameter. They are turned round by two persons; one sitting on one side, and the other on the other; two women grinding at the mill. The corn, being thus ground between the stones, escapes, in the form of flour, through a hole in the lower millstone. In order to sink a person in the sea, nothing could be more suitable than to attach a millstone of this kind to his neck. The Greeks who were besieged in Achaia had provided several hundred of these handmills.

“The pitcher broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.” (Eccles. xii. 6.)

May there not be an allusion here to the method of procuring water for irrigating gardens which is usual at Smyrna, and in many

other places? A large wheel is fixed over the mouth of a well, in a vertical position. A number of pitchers are attached to the wheel, in such a manner, that, by means of its revolution, which is effected by a horse, they are continually descending and filling, and ascending and discharging themselves.

They crowned are as the locusts and thy captives as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are. (Nahum iii. 17.)

Nothing could be more accurate than this description of the grasshoppers. I observed this appearance on a journey from Constantinople to Smyrna by land. Early in the morning the locusts were seen congregated in the bushes, by the road-side, in a close mass; which it would be difficult to express in better words than ‘camping in the hedges.’ They appeared to be assembled with all the precision of military tactics. But ‘when the sun arose, they fled away, and their place was not known where they were.’

And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom (or, rather, at the custom-house.) (Matt. ix. 9.)

Any persons may see this ancient custom exemplified to this day, at the gate of Smyrna. The miragee or collector of customs, sits there, in the house allotted him; and receives the money which is due from various persons and commodities, entering into the city. The exactions and rude behaviour of these men are just in character with the conduct of the publicans mentioned in the New Testament. I was myself, the very day before I left Turkey, grossly insulted by a man of this class, because he chose to suppose that the mule on which I was riding was liable to pay duty. A terrible fracas took place—in which some Franks, who came to my assistance, tore the animal away from him by main force. Had I not been sailing from Smyrna the next morning, I might have felt it my duty to summon the man before the Pasha, who would have bastinadoed him sufficiently. When men are guilty of such conduct as this, we wonder that they were detested in ancient times, as were the publicans; and, in modern times, as are the miragees.