

see, not I! The mercy of the Feast for Hanan! Surely ye will not take Barabbas hence and leave me here?"

No heed was paid to these clamourings, and the officer merely repeated his command.

"Come forth, Barabbas!"

Growing more broadly awake, Barabbas stumbled up on his feet and made an effort to obey, but his heavy chains prevented his advance. Perceiving this, the officer gave order to his men, and in a few minutes the impeding fetters were struck off, and the prisoner was immediately surrounded by the guard.

"Barabbas! Barabbas!" shrieked Hanan within.

Barabbas paused, looking vaguely at the soldiers who pressed him in their midst. Then he turned his eyes upon their commander.

"If I go to my death," he said faintly, "I pray thee give yonder man food. He hath starved and thirsted all day and night,—and he was once my friend."

The officer surveyed him somewhat curiously.

"Is that thy last request, Barabbas?" he inquired. "It is *Passover*, and we will grant thee anything in reason!"

He laughed, and his men joined in the laughter. But Barabbas only stared straight ahead, his eyes looking like those of a hunted animal brought to bay.

"Do thus much for charity," he muttered feebly; "I have also starved and thirsted, but Hanan is weaker than I."

Again the officer glanced at him, but this time deigned no answer. Wheeling abruptly round he uttered the word of command, placed himself at the head of his men, and the whole troop, with Barabbas in their centre closely guarded, strode onward and upward out of the dark dungeon precincts to the higher floors of the building. And as they tramped through the stone passages, they extinguished the torches they carried, for the night was past and the morning had come.