

JACOB'S VISION.

BY H. V. C.

Weary and faint, beneath a stately palm,
The Patriarch sought repose. From early dawn
His foot had sped, bearing him swiftly on,
To flee a brother's wrath. A mother's love
With ever ready will, had won for him,
Her favoured son, a father's blessing—prized
All other gifts above—but sternly claimed,
And as a birth-right, by the elder born.
Through Nature's wild and beautiful domain,
All the long day he wandered on alone,
Pressing with pilgrim feet the virgin earth,
Whose untill'd soil, rich with perennial green,
And gemmed with flowers, offered a rich repast
Of luscious fruit, while the translucent stream
Gushed brightly forth, yielding its cooling wave
To quench his thirst.

No human eye met his,
No human voice broke sweetly on his ear,
Nor human footstep, crossed his lonely way;
Fair was the scene—but o'er the unpeopled plain
The stillness of primeval nature reigned.
The startled deer lifted his timid eye
And paused to gaze upon the stranger-man,
And the plumed warblers in their airy flight,
Fanned with their glossy wings his saddened brow.
The weary day was closed—the lingering sun
Sunk slowly to his rest, tingling with gold.
The fleecy clouds that tracked his downward path;
Each sound was hushed, save the sweet nightingale,
That from her bower sent forth her plaintive song,
Making the night more sad. The radiant stars
Shone forth, a bright mysterious host, serene
In their lone watchings o'er a slumbering world.
Lowly the patriarch bowed before his God;
With grateful love his evening prayer arose
Pure from the altar of a humble heart;
Then on his eyelids balmy slumber fell,
His couch, the fragrant turf,—his weary head,
Pillowed by mossy stones.

He slept the sleep,
Quiet and calm, of innocence and youth,—
Allen although he was from home and friends,
Fleeing in fear to Haran's fertile plains,
Where Laban fed his flocks. Yet in his exile
God was with him still. His watchful eye beheld,
His arm supported him, while as he slept,
A vision on his ravished senses fell
Of his Almighty father's power and love.
The heavens unrolled in beauty to his gaze,
And from the earth, o'er to their wondrous height,
A ladder upward reached; and as he looked,
Lo he beheld celestial visitants
In glory robed, with mercy-beaming eyes
And smiles of love, ascending and descending,
Franght with kind messages of grace to man.
And from a golden cloud, whose radiant folds
No mortal eye could pierce, came forth a voice
That sweetly solemn fell upon his ear, as thus it spoke:
"I am the Lord thy God; thy father's God
And thine. Behold, the land whereon thou liest,
To thee, and to thy seed henceforth I give it,
Countless shall be their numbers as the sands
Of ocean's shore, or earth's small grains of dust.
Wide, wide around thee from the east to west,
From the cold north to the warm fruitful south,
Shall be thy children's goodly heritage,

In whom, and in thyself, the nations all
Of the broad earth, shall be most richly blessed.
And I, thy God, will ever dwell with thee
To guard, to guide, protect and shield from ill,
Nor leave thee, till my land, in peace hath brought
Thy wandering steps back to this pleasant land,
And thou hast seen all that thine ear hath heard,
By me fulfilled."

Swiftly the vision fled;
But reverence deep, fell on the Patriarch's soul:
The presence of unseen divinity,
Encircled him, and filled with holy dream,
He cried aloud,—“Surely the Lord is here,
To me unknown! His awful temple this,
And here the gate of heaven!”

Soon as the golden sun
Threw his first beams athwart the orient sky,
Waking the lark to tune her matin lay,
And lead, as up she soared, the song of praise;
Jacob arose, and setting high the stone
Whereon his head had rested while he slept,
O'er it he poured a flood of streaming oil,
Deeming, with simple faith, yet undefined,
And dim and shadowy, wanting the blessed light
Of revelation which in after days
Our Saviour brought, that he by outward rite,
Might best invoke the blessing of that God,
Who seeth but the heart.

And then he vowed
This solemn vow—"If God will be with me
In all my wanderings, give me bread to eat,
Raiment to wear, till to my father's house
In peace my steps return, then shalt thou be
My God,—supreme—the one alone adored,
And on this stone now consecrate to thee,
Thy house shall stand, and of the wealth thou giv'st,
A tithe, my hand shall set apart for thee."

Thus like the patriarch on his lonely way,
Seeking the guidance of his heavenly friend,
Should the true Christian pilgrim, passing on
Along life's chequered path, look ever up
In deep and earnest prayer, which lifts the soul
Even like the ladder in the Patriarch's dream
From earth to heaven—upon those visioned steps
Angels descended, bringing blessings down,
And unto us, may they not also come?
Sent by our God some mission to fulfil
Of heavenly love.

Yes, they around us are,
Those angel forms, from the bright spirit-land,
Unseen, yet near,—and felt, their blessed power,
Working within the soul the secret springs
Of good resolve—lending it heavenly strength
In dark temptation's hour, and on the waves
Of sorrow's troubled sea, shedding a light
Which guides the mourner's bark, safely to land.
And could we cast aside the veil—the thin
But darkened veil that dims our mortal sight,
What glorious forms would meet our wondering eyes,
Such we may think, as erst in Eden's bowers,
When man was sinless, walked with him in love.
Death only rends that veil; but to the soul
Which plumes her wing for heaven, while chain'd to earth,
A foretaste oft is given of joys divine,
A glimpse of Him, who loveth to abide
In the pure heart.