

daughter—my Francesca—his voice dropped like that of a lover when he names his mistress, and his eyes grew humid as he gazed upon her—‘I take my daughter—my Francesca—to the Land of our Fathers. She shall see the ruins where her ancestor the Prince of the Captivity ruled for a thousand years, and she shall see the cities and mountains where another ancestor, a greater Prince, reigned for his allotted time and wrote his Psalms for all time. Then we will stay awhile—my Francesca with me—in the Desert. After a time she—my Francesca—will return to you; but as for me I will return no more to the vast collections of bricks called the towns of Europe. I have been presumptuous. I thought it was given to me alone among men suddenly to change the mind of the world and to make them ready for the Reign of Peace. I must win my way back to humility by meditation and by silence. You shall have my daughter—my Francesca—back, but for me I shall return no more.’

‘Francesca!’ Harold took her hand. ‘Francesca, my Rose of Sharon!’

‘Patience, Harold. Oh! dear friend’—she laid her other hand on Emanuel’s shoulder—‘suffer me to be with my father—my own father—a little longer. Oh! you cannot tell what a happiness it is to hear his voice, only to serve him and to obey him! A little longer, Harold! Then, if it please my Lord, and if his handmaiden still finds favour in his eyes—’