

under the weight of his wheat bags. Stone-masons also were busy, for the building trade had spurts of activity; and the rich merchant desired both a winter house and a summer house. Temples, not a few of them, had to be built for Baal; and this, again, must have helped to enliven the building trade.

The workers in ivory and gold and silver also were actively engaged in decorating the interiors of the palaces and temples, in carving the ivory couches, and in furnishing the drinking-vessels for the tables of the rich. The aesthetic tastes of the people also, who appear to have been very musical, must have called into being a class of musical instrument-makers and professional musicians. These latter discoursed sweet music while their masters reclined upon their couches and drank wine from their golden cups. Professional gardeners, also, were there, for the rich Samaritans had their pleasant vineyards crowning the slopes on which the city was built, and creeping along the valley in the neighborhood. The richer classes of Samaria lived in a state of great luxury. They dwelt in their beautiful houses decorated with works of art; they indulged in costly banquets, where the wine-cup flowed freely, while they listened to the music of viol and harp. The women, especially, were noted for their luxury. They had lost their native womanliness; they could only be called "Kine of Bashan," lolling upon their couches and calling upon their husbands to give them wine to drink.

At the same time there was unrest socially. The laws of Deuteronomy treating of the social and commercial life were wholly disregarded. One would almost fancy that the people of Israel knew nothing about these. The rich lent the poor money at exorbitant rates of interest, and took every unfair means of depriving the poor debtor of his house, his land, his personal freedom. They defrauded the widow, and bereft her of her patrimony, driving her forth from her lands. They added insult to injury; they bought the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, at so little value did they reckon human flesh and blood, not to mention the immortal