

hills were groves of oaks and mulberry trees, festooned with clusters of luscious grapes,—beneath whose festooned shade lovers might walk, or sages read, or poets dream. Higher up were mastic trees and palms, and prickly pears; while still higher the soft moss—"nature's carpet"—spread its pleasant green, decked with rosemary and cypripedium and hyacinth. Birds of brilliant plumage and pealing note made merry music unto the rustle of leaves and the flow of streamlets and the lowing of cattle. On the north the scene is bounded by a half zone of hills; while to the south towers the mount of Tabor—a pyramid of verdure crowned with olive, and in the distance you may catch a glimpse of the Jordan and the Lake of Gennezareth.

It was not without reason that Moses described it as—"a good land, a land of brooks, of fountains of water and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; thou shalt not lack anything in it."

Within the city the buzz of trade and the crowding of passengers, bespoke a flourishing people; a little to the right of the principal gate was the chief mart of trade, and the place where justice was administered. It was an open square, bounded on one side by the public highway, on another by the canopy of the law-giver; and on the two remaining by booths, in which were exposed for sale jewels from Gada, spices from Araby, provisions from the country, and fabrics from the town. In the centre was a tall marble column hung round with stone tablets, on which were inscribed passages from the laws and the sacred writings; at some distance, were two smaller ones, mournfully decked with lists of criminals, lepers, and proscribed persons; they were called "tablets of blood." Two fountains cast up their waters—"cool as the dew of Hermon"—on either side.

The square was now crowded. Merchants from many countries, all wearing their distinctive long cloak, were busy in the arrangements of their traffic. Peasants in their blue shirts, leaving the brawny arm and thigh unencumbered, stood waiting employment. Children went about selling oranges and dates. Ragged beggars from their wicker enclosures solicited alms. A ballad-singer from Esta, standing on a kind of moveable pulpit, chaunted some rude or ancient rhyme. Scribes were busily writing contracts for the merchants. The persons accused, and their friends, were standing with dishevelled hair, down-cast looks, and soiled garments (as the manner was) waiting for judgement; above all was raised an elevated platform, on which sat the reverend elder, whose turn it was to act the part of judge. He was clothed in a robe of white satin,—

lined with blue, and ornamented with little gold bells and pomegranates, and he was protected from the sun by a canopy of velvet. On his right hand was a notary to write the sentence of acquittal, and on his left, another to record that of conviction and punishments.

It was a busy scene, full of hurry and activity,—pregnant with men's hopes, and fears, and joys—and bustling with their occupations.

But on a sudden every thing stopped! The sentence was left unsaid—the bargain unconcluded; for a death-chaunt—a wail so wild and thrilling and many-voiced, that few had before heard the like of it—rang upon the ears of all—as if to remind them, that "in the midst of life death cometh"—that trade and business are but poor play-things—that life itself is a frail bubble floating down time's rapid stream, liable to burst at every undulation of its current! In accordance with a custom, as ancient as it is beautiful, all business was hushed, and merchant and peasant, judge and accused, knelt to the earth.

Soon there appeared at the gate "the banner of the sepulchre"—a large tattered black flag usually borne before funerals. Next came a large couch, covered with white, and borne on men's shoulders. It was surrounded by twelve beautiful boys with waving censers. On it reposed the body of the dead,—the *dead* did I say?—who that looked on that fair young form, lying so lightly and so life-like, could think it clay! Yet so it was. It was that of a youth scarcely twenty. He was just bursting into life, with all the freshness and hope of its spring-time, before sorrow had blighted, or sin degraded. "And he was the only son of his mother, who was a widow," the supplier of her wants, the staff of her age, the joy of her home. But death ruths not. He tore him rudely away, and his *mother* was following him to his last, long resting place. Who could paint her grief? As the intensity of a mother's love can be told only by those who have felt it, so they alone can estimate the depth and wildness of her sorrow. Her head was covered, according to oriental custom; and she neither sighed, nor wept, nor moaned; in that age, as in all, the course of deep grief is as noiseless. Not a tear assuaged her's. Around her were her female friends. Their heads were covered too, and they beat their breasts, and cried aloud with all the violence of eastern lamentation; while their long hair floated wildly on their naked shoulders. Next came young men, putting dust on their heads, and covering themselves with blood to evince their grief. After them walked the chaunters, the constant attendants of funerals in the East. Singing sweetly and sadly to their lutes portions of Hebrew songs, a vast crowd, of old and young, from the