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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

LECTURE,

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"I the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem."—ECCLES. i. 12.

THERE is no season of the year so exquisite as the first full burst of Summer: when east winds lose their venom, and the firmament its April fickleness; when the trees have uncrested their foliage, and under them the turf is tender; when, before going to sleep, the blackbird wakes the nightingale, and night itself is only a softer day; when the dog-star has not withered a single flower, nor the mower's scythe touched one; but all is youth and freshness, novelty and hope—as if our very earth had become a bud, of which only another Eden could be the blossom—as if with all her green canvas spread, our island were an argosie floating over seas of balm to some bright Sabbath haven on the shores of immortality.

With the Hebrew commonwealth, it was the month of June. Over all the Holy Land there rested a blissful serenity—the calm which follows when successful war is crowned with conquest—a calm which was only stirred by the proud joy of possession, and then hallowed and intensified again by the sense of Jehovah's favor. And amidst this calm the monarch was enshrined, at once its source and its symbol. In the morning he held his levee in his splendid Basilica—a pillared hall a hundred cubits long.* As he

sate aloft on his lion-guarded throne, he received petitions and heard appeals, and astonished his subjects by astute decisions and weighty apophthegms, till every case was disposed of, and the toils of kingcraft ended. Meanwhile, his chariot was waiting in the square; and, with disdainful hoofs, the light coursers pawed the pavement, impatient for their master; whilst, drawn up on either side, purple squadrons held the ground, and their champing chargers tossed from their flowing manes a dust of gold. And now, a stir in the crowd—the straining of necks and the jingle of horse-gear announces the acme of expectation; and, preceded by the tall panoply of the commander-in-chief, and followed by a dazzling retinue, there emerges from the palace, and there ascends the chariot, a noble form, arrayed in white and in silver, and crowned with a golden coronet; and the welkin rings, "God save the King;" for this is Solomon in all his glory. And, as through the Bethlehem gate, and adown the level causeway, the bickering chariot speeds, the vines on either side of the valley give a good smell, and it is a noble sight to look back to yon marble fane and princely mansions which rear their snowy cliffs over the capital's new ramparts. It is a noble sight, this rural comfort and that civic opulence—for they evince the abundance of peace and the abundance of righteousness. And when through orchards and corn-fields, the progress ends, the shouting concourse of the capital is exchanged for the delights of an elysian hermitage. After visiting his far-come favorites—the "apes and the peacocks,"—the bright birds and curious quadrupeds which share his retirement; after

* See 1 Kings vii. Josephus' *Antiquities*, Bk. viii. chaps 5-7; and Fergusson's "*Palaces of Nineveh Restored*," (1851,) pp. 225-232.