

prince, was in the habit of sending whole bands of Syrian marauders to invade and lay waste this pleasant land. One of these hostile parties was headed by an able and experienced commander, one who had earned for himself a name and a place among the warriors of his country, and could claim the yet higher title of a deliverer of Syria. Thus rich in honor, high in rank, abounding in wealth, possessing at once the friendship and respect of his sovereign—what lacked he yet? Naaman was a leper!—Striving to forget in the excitement and hurry of conquest his secret grief, he proceeded on his destructive mission, a rod (though he knew it not) in the hand of God, to chasten his people. Returned from his expedition, he presented to his wife a little maid, brought away captive out of the land of Israel, and she waited upon Naaman's wife. Thus was fulfilled the prediction, "Your sons and your daughters shall be carried captives and shall serve another nation and another people." Bitterly must the little maid have mourned being thus severed from her home, her country, and all she loved. Perhaps her tender parents wept in bitterness of spirit, and, like Jacob of old, would not be comforted, because their child was not. Yet childhood soon forgets its sorrows and easily accommodates itself to change. The young Israelite had fallen into no cruel or unkind hands, she began to feel an interest in the concerns of her new home, and soon discovered that amidst all the gorgeous display of the Syrian noble, there was a sorrow at the root, a secret misery, that turned all the means of happiness into gall—Naaman was a leper.

In the land of her captivity the little maid did not forget the God of Israel, or the instructions of her childhood. She had heard of many of the wonders wrought by the Prophets and particularly by Elisha; how he had multiplied the oil, how he cured the sick, and recently had raised from the dead the beloved son of the Shunamite. She reasoned thus—If Elisha can do such miracles, could he not heal my master of his leprosy? One day she said to her mistress, Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy. Hitherto no means had been left untried that influence could command or wealth pro-

cure, but all was unavailing. Yet unwilling to give up hope, the slightest hint that promises relief is eagerly received. The remark of the Israelitish captive is immediately repeated to Naaman, who deems it worth serious consideration. Doubtless he had heard of many of the deeds of the prophet, whose fame must have penetrated to the neighboring countries. Naaman consults with his royal master, who at once takes the matter into his own hands, making a personal request to the king of Israel, and enforcing it with large and valuable presents. But Ben-hadad was mistaken. It was not to the king but to the prophet of Israel that the request ought to have been made. The king of Israel could see only in this strange demand a pretext upon which a quarrel might be raised, for undoubtedly he could not answer the demand and cure the leper. He is, however, relieved from his perplexity by a message from Elisha, desiring him to send the patient to him. The message was delivered to Naaman—possibly the haughty nobleman did not relish being thus handed over to an obscure prophet, while anticipating all the pomp of a royal reception; but the grievous disease which affected him pressed too heavily, to allow the first difficulty to overcome his resolution. Naaman turned from the palace, and with his horses and his chariots stood at the door of Elisha's house. Anxious expectation was depicted on the countenance of Naaman as he prepared to enter the presence of the far-famed prophet. But no!—He is not even invited to alight; again he receives a message, and a message that sounds strangely in his ears, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean."—The deliverer of Syria, the conqueror of Israel, was not used to be so treated—accustomed to the most implicit submission, and the most undeviating respect. He takes the message, so simple in its import and so unceremonious in its delivery, as an insult. He had at least counted upon the attendance of the prophet; had pictured to himself the holy man with due solemnity—after invoking the aid of the Most High—passing his hand over the diseased parts, and curing the leprosy. All these visions are in a moment dissipated. The pro-