

Aided by the skill of his allies, King Solomon had then proceeded to strengthen and beautify his kingdom. He built up the cities which Hiram had restored to him, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. He built Tadmor in the wilderness, that wonderful city, whose ruins at the present day command the unbounded admiration of the learned. Throughout all the land of his dominion, the axe and chisel kept pace with the ambition of the magnificent king. Fleets of ships were constructed at Ezion Geber, and, manned jointly by the mariners of Tyre and Israel, were sent upon long cruises for the purposes of traffic; every three years, once came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory and asses, and peacocks. And so, twenty years passed away. The Operative Grand Master had been thirteen years in his grave; King Solomon himself was forty years old; Hiram, King of Tyre, was, "by reason of strength, four score years, yet, was his strength but labor and sorrow," and his end was near at hand. Time, the great builder, was also the great destroyer.

It was known to King Solomon that the decease of his ally and ancient friend was momentarily expected. The adieux had, months before, been exchanged between the two friends. A single request had been made by the Royal Brother Solomon; a single request had been made by the Royal Brother Hiram. "I ask that you make a royal edict that no human sacrifices shall be made at your interment."

"I ask that you come to me when spirit and flesh shall fail, and accompany my remains to their last resting place."

It was at night, a little before day, that the message came to Solomon upon Zion, "the King of Tyre is dead." This news had been flashed from hill to hill by preconcerted signals, beginning at the mountain range in the rear of Tyre,—taken up by the watchers on Scala Tyrorum,—taken up by the watchers upon Carmel,—upon the highest peak of Ephraim,—upon Ebal, Gerizim, Rimmon, Mizpeh, Olivet,—to the expectant king. Within the hour, the king was prepared to set out, and, as the first rays of the morning sun glanced over the mountain ranges of Moab, the royal procession set out. Relays of horses awaited them at Bethel, at Gilgal, at Shechim, at Engannim, at Shunem, and at all points upon the route, for "Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen whom he bestowed in the chariot cities and with the King at Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles, xiv., 25). Would the reader inform himself more thoroughly of the grandeur of King Solomon's procession, he will find ample details under this head in the Jewish historian, Josephus.

The distance, as traveled, was about one hundred and twenty miles. The road, everywhere graded and paved with blocks of the imperishable basalt, were covered as he came, with costly cloths, palm leaves, flower wreaths,—whatever the taste or the ability of the people afforded; and, at such points as could be reached in time by the intelligence of the King's approach, bowers shaded the highway, and songs and popular greetings welcomed the great monarch as he passed. On the evening of the second day, the procession, consisted of a thousand of the picked troopers of the Royal Guard, and one hundred chariots filled with the gaudes of Solomon's court, encamped about the magnificent fountains (now entitled Ras-el-Ain), then in the suburbs of the opulent city of Tyre, but now several miles from the walls. Here they were met and welcomed by the Phœnician court. In accordance with the jealous usage of that period, the heir-apparent of the throne was placed as hos-