

and every step would bring them nearer to the holy city. If we had looked upon them, we should have thought of the beautiful old psalm, "They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appearing before God."

What a beautiful place was Jerusalem; its streets of palaces, its flat roofed houses, its waving palms, its noble streets, the mighty hills that shut it in on every side, its walks of state, its high-raised arches, its fountains, its porticoes, and, above all, the temple blazing in the sunshine like a house of gold. and when at the high and solemn feasts, the people from all parts gathered within its walls—when many colored robes were mingled in the streets like party coloured sand, what a glorious sight it must have been; so was it when the family from Nazareth arrived—so was it when Jesus looked upon the city of palaces—the wonder of the world!

Jerusalem had ten gates, and three lofty walls, and measured, all round, nearly four miles. Travellers tell us of the dreary and barren rocks which form the neighbouring heights; but those naked rocks were in the old time covered with mould, and presented a very beautiful scene, the green grass starred with sweet and fragrant flowers.

Groups of travellers drew near from every part, through the thick groves of the mountain side, and amidst the fair gardens, the clustering vines and fig-trees. Many a weary man might stop to rest by the brook Kidron, in the valley of Jehoshaphat; and many a group might gather on the Mount of Olives. Amid these scenes, with which his future life in the world was to be so much connected, the Saviour arrived, and not one of those who came to that Passover feast could utter more earnestly than He, "I was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem; for glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."

The feast is over, the lamb has been slain, the door-posts have been sprinkled, the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs have been eaten, and the people are quitting the city and going back to their own homes. Joseph and Mary return,—they are on their way to Nazareth; but Jesus, where is he? Does not the mother's heart yearn for her child? Is not Mary watchful over him, about whom such wonderful things have been uttered? She fancies that he is with some of their kinsfolk or acquaintance; no doubt he has joined some other party, but will soon return. The red sun cast its bright light upon the scene; the red sun sinks, and the evening time comes on; the last streak of day dies away, the pale moon and shining stars are in the deep blue sky, and Jesus has not yet returned.

Then Mary sought her child; there were doubts, misgivings, fears in her heart, as she pressed the question on each one she knew, had they seen Jesus? No; it was always the same; they had seen him in Jerusalem, but not since the feast had ended. Then was sorrow and bitterness for Mary; already it seemed that the words of old Simeon were coming true, and that a sword was piercing through her soul; oh, that Jesus should have escaped the cruelty of Herod, to be at last snatched from her in the spring time of his life.

Look again into Jerusalem streets; all seems still and quiet, but those two figures, why are they wandering there? They are Mary and Joseph seeking Jesus. For three whole days you watch them in their anxious search; presently they turn towards the temple; in all its beauty it rises up before them; they leave the busy market and the busy streets, and enter sorrowful its solemn courts. They thought not of its glory, its cedar wood, and plates of solid gold, the beautiful carvings, the cherubim, palm-trees, and flowers; the brazen sea, the brazen oxen, the altar of burnt offerings; the priests, and Le