

peal of thunder, breaketh the cedars; and before the flame of His lightning the whole land is scorched from the south-eastern dwelling of the shepherds (the home of Amos, in Tekoah), to the far north-western, "where the purple outline of Carmel rose in the distance, and where all the verdure and flowery loveliness is dried as before the sirocco."

It is eminently fitting, since we regard Amos as the earliest of prophetic writers, that the startling grandeur of the most powerful burden ever written, should be compared to the roar of a lion from Jerusalem. This highly metaphorical language indicated that the approaching judgments would be as terrific to those imperilled, as the roar of a ravenous lion to the lone pilgrim of the desert. Issuing from Jerusalem, too—Jerusalem, or Salem—peace, mercy; this feature intensifies the force. Honey is changed to vinegar; mercy turned to anger; the lamb transformed into a lion. It is retributive fate, calamitous, inevitable doom! Positively, there shall be no escape. To the fugitives it must be as uttered by Job: "There is no darkness or shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves;" or as Amos himself puts the same sentence, "Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, or the bottom of the sea, though they dig into hell, or climb up to heaven, thence shall mine hand take them." The comprehensive indictment is a striking instance of the cumulative nature of sin. At first like the letting out of water, but it increases step by step in volume and intensity. The nations had become bold in the defiance of God's law; they had filled the goblet to the brim, and it ran over; and the time had come when it should be filled no longer with "the wine of their fornications," but with "the wine of the wrath of God."—*Farrar*. The peoples exposed to these denunciations are thus named:—Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab, the tribe of Judah, the head and heart of the kingdom of Judah; and Israel, the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Indeed it is to Israel principally, almost exclusively, that Amos addressed his message, for his spirit was deeply stirred as he saw the northern kingdom given up to idolatry and corruption. He alludes but incidentally to Judah, Zion, Beersheba.