

"We had flattered ourselves that the quiet of our city was restored—the frightened earth had become calm—the darkness that satan's agency produced had disappeared—all things had resumed their former condition, and here a new source of commotion has been found out. The seal of the tomb is broken and the body is gone. What shall we say? what can we do?"

"When did this happen? Strange occurrence, truly!"

"It took place this morning. While the moonbeams slept upon the sepulchre the body was removed. It is said that distant music was heard, fair forms seen, and singular appearances beheld. It must have been stolen!"

"Stolen! who would have had courage to attempt it? Not, surely, that traitor who denied Christ to the maid, nor those other timid, shrinking disciples! Who were they that removed it?"

"Those deceptions disciples. They only feigned fear while Christ lived, that, when dead, they might, unsuspected, accomplish their design."

"But, hold! what band is that? Is not that the Roman guard? They can give us a true statement of this mysterious matter."

"I have already furnished you with their narration. While they slept the theft was committed."

"Will their story be credited?"

"Oh, yes, certainly. Verily it is a good one. And besides we'll make it better."

"How, pray you?"

"We will sharpen the sword of persecution. We will open more dungeons and rivet more chains. We will add fuel to the fires of vengeance. Zeal for our country, our country's religion, and our country's God shall bear us off triumphantly. The law shall live forever."

"May it be so."

"Time will show that we are right. Its revelations will evince that 'He was stolen.'"

The conversation closed. As the last speaker turned to enter into the temple he repeated, "Time will show that we are right. Who can destroy our foundations? We have a religion hallowed by antiquity. It has flourished in the past, and, in despite of all opposition, it will triumph for ever."

#### CHAPTER IV.

Who can describe the joy of the infant church when her Lord rose from the dead? Then "was the sound of rejoicing heard in the tabernacles of the righteous." Then did she lay aside the garb of mourning and array herself in the garments of praise." As the flower, bruised and beaten down by the force of the storm, will, when the tempest is over, raise its head and smile for joy, so did the church exult when the scheme of her foes was defeated.

Away from the world: in her own private chamber, Mariamme shared in the joy of the friends of the Redeemer. Again did her solicitous mother find her at and urge upon her an immediate renouncement of her principles.

"It is not yet, my daughter, too late. Your father may yet be reconciled. Though highly incensed by the late occurrence his love may be gained."

"Expect me not, dear mother, to change. Is your mountain of Olivet strong in its foundations? Has the lightning played around its summit without injury and the storms beat upon its base without harm? So it is with me. Behold in it my emblem."

"We must, then, part. Thy father has declared that he will sever the cords that bind us together. No more wilt thou be my daughter, and no more will I be thy mother."

"Say not so. Though I should be harshly torn from thy bosom, and no longer rest in thine embrace, I will keep alive the flame of love that now burns so warmly within. I will watch it as the vestal virgins the fire of the altar. Far from thee, my mother, I'll think of thee. Morning's first breath and evening's latest sigh shall wait to heaven my prayer for thee. I shall still be true—wilt thou be mine?"

"Ever, child!"

"We part then in hope, though in tears. Henceforward I am homeless—fatherless; but not without thee."

Why should I mourn? Oh thou who here below hadst not where to lay thy head—more destitute than the birds of the air, and poorer than the foxes of earth, be my support while in thy footsteps I tread."

The mother had hardly left the room when the father entered. If the reader has ever seen an individual under the influence of anger, with darkened brow and fiery eye, he will be able to form some idea of the appearance of the Rabbi at that time. His daughter rose to meet him, but he commanded her, in a hoarse tone, to keep from him.

"Leave me quickly," said he, "and let me see thee no more."

The blow was now struck. The silence of subdued grief, for a time, placed its signet upon her lips and she said not a word.

Sunlight had faded from the west, and the misty veil of twilight was gently beginning to unroll itself over hill and dale when Mariamme left her home. Where should she go? She felt like Abraham when, by the divine command of God, he forsook his native land to go "he knew not whither." Guided by an invisible hand, she directed her course towards Mount Olivet. As she wound the mountain the hum of the city died away, and full on the breeze came from a distance the sounds of rejoicing. She listened again and again; she drank in the rich melody of the music. Whose voices could they be? Who could be there, wakening the echoes of the mountain and sending forth, to listening trees and repeating rocks, the tributes of praise? Had angels come again to earth to sing of the resurrection of Him whose birth they declared? With a quick step she hurried to the spot, where she found a band of disciples worshipping the God in whom they believed. Why should she feel restrained? She approached them and begged permission to unite in their devotions.

The termination of the religious exercises was followed by an invitation for Mariamme to remain with them. With peculiar weight that invitation was pressed, when she narrated the circumstances which had introduced her among them. "Thou shalt now," said they, "be one of us. We have all things in common. We are but one family—actuated by one principle and pursuing one end. 'Come thou with us and we will do thee good.' Thou shalt share in our means and participate in our enjoyment."

Blessed with the kind society of new friends Mariamme was happy—daily ripening for heaven, and advancing constantly in holiness. She felt herself to be a pilgrim in a strange land, emphatically a wanderer exiled from friends and home.

#### CHAPTER V.

"Let me see my daughter before I die. Let her be soon brought that I may speak to her ere my voice is hushed. Hasten, for I am dying." So said the aged Rabbi.

His wish was quickly obeyed. Mariamme was found and conveyed to his bedside. What a tender meeting was that! Not the meeting of a friend with his friend; but the meeting of a penitent father with his returning daughter! "Oh, come, my injured one," said the Rabbi, "come from thy banishment to this bosom. Forgive me—forgive me—"

He could say no more, but fainted away. In a few moments he partially recovered, looked upon those around him, breathed a low farewell, turned upon his side, and died.

There was hope in his death. He had seen the error of his ways and repented. Upon his dying bed, he declared his conviction that Jesus was the Son of God, and often was heard to say, "I believe that he died for our sins and rose again, according to the Scriptures."

Mariamme was now restored to the arms of her mother. From the furnace of affliction she came forth bright and beautiful—her brow unblanched, and her fortitude undestroyed. None ever questioned the sincerity of her piety, for she had given the strongest evidence that her religion was not merely a theory of the mind, but an indwelling principle of the heart. In the practice of all those virtues which bring their own recompense she passed the residue of her life. Her spirit was that of Christ—her sphere one of benevolence, and her aim, the advancement of the glory of God and the happiness of the human family.

After having had the satisfaction of witnessing the decided triumphs of grace—after having seen the time-sanctioned throne of Judaism crumble, and the territory of idolatry successfully invaded, she departed from the world cloudless in her prospects and strong in her faith. Her belief, living, was her belief, dying. Her mortal relics sleep in the sepulchre of her fathers while her spirit, purified from sin ascended to that clime "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

#### HINDOO IMPOSITION.

Among the lower orders of natives, it is no uncommon thing to find men who can counterfeit so skillfully the semblance of death as to deceive even a medical man, until the hand is applied either to the heart or pulse: these men are frequently at very great pains to acquire this faculty, and practise it for many purposes. It serves sometimes as a means of concealment, but more frequently it is made available for the purpose of imposition.

The imitator of death is laid upon a *charpâti*, or light native bed, and being painted as if covered with wounds and bruises, he is carried, in a state of nudity, to the house of an European magistrate or other civil functionary. Here a pitiable story is related of his having been murdered in some remote village, and with bitter tears and lamentations, the magistrate is entreated to send officers to make official investigation of the case, and if possible to bring the perpetrators to an expiation of the outrage. In the meantime, the friends of the unfortunate murdered man, having excited the compassionate interest of the Englishman, or of some of the inmates of his house, solicit a gratuity for defraying the expenses of the funeral, for which they have no means; and if the trick be new to the beholders, an ample shower of donations will most likely be afforded to the poor bereaved creatures. The moment their object is secured, the sorrowing family withdraw, carrying with them the corpse of their deceased relative, who, as soon as he is out of sight of the house where the imposition has been practised, returns to the mortal world, and again condescends to make use of his limbs, taking care to appropriate an adequate share of the bounty which his ingenuity has purchased. Having then cleansed himself from his stains and artificial wounds, the whole party disperse, to avoid apprehension when the fraud is detected.

I was once staying at the house of a civilian, when one of his servants came in and reported that a murdered man had been brought to the door by a party of his friends in the manner related above: he intimated at the same time that, from the appearance of the strangers, he was suspicious of their statement, and believed the dead man to be a counterfeit. We went out and found a spectral looking corpse, with two or three wounds upon the chest, and with many marks of violence about other parts of the person.

The bed upon which the body lay extended was placed upon the ground, and all around it squatted the relatives and friends who owned it, howling, screaming, and groaning, with a touching emphasis, which would have excited the sympathy of the most obdurate. My friend approached to examine the body, but was assailed with thousand importunities not to pollute the corpse before the rites of sepulture had been performed. He, therefore, refrained from touching the body with his hand; but remarking to the people that wood could not defile it, he stuck the sharp end of his billiard cue, which he had in his hand, into the side of the supposed corpse; this evidently disconcerted the surrounding throng; but as the body showed no signs of animation, or any fear of incurring repetition of the test just inflicted, we began to think the suspicion of the *Chupprassi* had been unfounded: the blow was repeated with increased force, and until the sharp point of the cue penetrated the flesh, between the ribs. A very slight quiver of the muscles, and an almost imperceptible movement of the head, discovered the cheat, and my friend then told the people that they had better take the body to the hospital, for that life was not extinct. 'Wa! wa!' said they, 'why the man has been dead since cock-crow, how, therefore, can he be alive?'