CHAPTER V.

Jesse the King’s favourite, as Lilla had herself slightly intimated to Zillah, had indeed fallen vehemently in love with her. Satiated with the common forms of Jewish beauty, in which the strongly marked national physiognomy of his countrywomen did not allow any very great diversity, his palled fancy was smitten with the novel style of Lilla’s attractions, not less than with the picturesqueness of her garb, the originality of her mind, and the bold heedless vivacity of her manners, which, disregarding the conventional forms of society, set her above all restraint, and
rendered her indifferent to every local and personal consideration. This ignorance and fearlessness betrayed her into many violations of established propriety, perfectly innocent in intention, though sometimes very startling in their effect; but to a jaded debauchee like Jesse, who required to be constantly excited, who was never so happy as when he had something new to wonder or to laugh at, these very eccentricities became a charm, and he had never found any society half so piquant and delightful as that of Lilla. He was amused, the lassitude of his ordinary feelings was suspended; and because he no longer hated the hours for being so heavy, he imagined that he loved Lilla for being so volatile and gay. Lilla's affections being already and unalterably fixed upon the lover from whom her father had been so anxious to separate her, she would have quickly spurned the walls of Jerusalem, and eluded all the watchfulness of her guardians, had she known
where to find the object of her attachment. Neither remonstrance nor entreaty, distance nor difficulty could have deterred the self-willed girl from following the impulses of her heart. For the first time in her life she regretted the want of a settled home, not for herself, but for her lover, that she might have known where to find him. He was a rover, a wanderer upon the face of the earth; his predatory life forbade him to remain long in one quarter, and she had only to hope that he might discover her place of concealment, and contrive to bear her away as his bride, though she was well aware that he could not pass the gates of Jerusalem without placing his life in immediate jeopardy.

Even if her affections had not been thus pre-engaged, Jesse was the last person to have won them. The only character she deemed worthy of a man, was that of a warrior. Valour, impetuosity, a fiery and adventurous spirit, these were the qualities she loved. Jesse, a perfumed
and effeminate courtier, was in every respect the reverse of what she admired; and she would have been indignant at his importunities, but that she considered him rather an object for contemptuous bantering and laughter than for serious anger. Incessant were the taunt and ridicule, innumerable the practical jokes of which her malicious pleasantry rendered him the victim. Mischievous and playful as the wild zebra, she seemed never weary of tormenting him. If he dined at the Sagan’s, not content with exposing him to the guests by unsparing raillery, she put nauseous drugs into his wine, bitter melons upon his plate, and purposely spilt the contents of the dishes upon his costly garments, pretending that it was accidental, and excusing herself by her ignorance of the Hebrew modes of eating. She affected an extravagant admiration of his taste in dress; and when he had decorated himself with more than usual elegance for the sake of accompanying
her in a walk, she would lead him to the valley of Hinnom; and take care that he should return completely bedaubed by the splashings of the carts that conveyed the filth of the city into that general receptacle of all abominations. Once she contrived that he should fall into the Cedron in rescuing her turban, which she had dropped into the water for that express purpose; and manifold were the appointments she made to meet him in remote or noisome places, where he was invariably left to his own solitary meditations; although, by the assistance of the maids, Rachel and Deborah, who began to relish this sort of persecution, she generally managed to get a peep, and enjoy a laugh at him unseen. Lilla carried her malice still farther. By persuading her weak and infatuated admirer that a certain air of piquancy and adventure would be given to his courtship if he came to visit her in disguise, which she assured him was the invariable custom among
the Arabs, he was prevailed upon to black his face with ointment, and present himself as an Ethiopian camel-driver, or an itinerant vender of frankincense and drugs, or as a wandering minstrel, although his voice was ludicrously bad; upon all which occasions she betrayed him into some scrape from his assumed character, and more than once exposed him to the infliction of the cudgel or the bastinado. Coarse and unfeminine as were these pranks, they did not lower her in the estimation of Jesse, who considered them evidences of a brisk frolicksome petulancy, the natural playfulness of a wild Arab girl, and felt his passion accordingly rather stimulated than discouraged by his being made the butt of her exuberant spirits.

Utterly dissimilar as were Zillah and Lilla, an intimacy grew up between the two; for the Arab would take lessons and instructions from Zillah, which she would have disdained to receive from any other; while the latter found in
the society of her wild and vivacious friend an occasional, though only a temporary, remedy for that mental depression under which she found herself gradually sinking. In the excitement incident to her first return, in the delight of re-visit ing Jerusalem, and all its hallowed monuments, she had been unassailed by the attacks of melancholy; but as the novelty of these impressions wore off, her thoughts reverted more frequently to Felix, whom she had left a prisoner at Alexandria; who might, perhaps, at that moment be suffering some heavy and dishonouring punishment for his generous interference in her behalf; and in spite of all her efforts to shake it off, a growing despondency clouded and darkened her mind. Nor could she discover, in whatever direction she turned her eyes, any thing to exhilarate her heart. A deep gloom hung over Jerusalem and its inhabitants, for its prospects were dark, ominous, and fearful. The public sadness extended it-
self into every private family, and there was nothing in the Sagan's to render it an exception to this pervading cheerlessness. Spacious and antique, the house itself, immured as it was within high walls, and surrounded by doisters of black Gopher wood, was calculated to inspire solemn, if not mournful feelings, which the venerable aspect of the furniture, recalling the long succession of departed families, to whose uses it had ministered since the mansion had been first built after the return from the Captivity, did but serve to confirm and aggravate. Massive cabinets, and wardrobes of cedar and sycamore, inlaid with ivory, or mother of pearl and shells from the Red Sea, stood in almost every apartment; and the wooden pannels of the rooms were blackened by the breath of ages, which had nearly obliterated the arabesque paintings wherewith they had once been decorated. This style of ornament, which was seen in every chamber, may possibly have ori-
ginated with the Hebrews, who, imagining themselves forbidden by their law to represent any thing in heaven, earth, or water, and yet wishing to possess some sort of pictorial embellishment, may have hit upon the expedient of these grotesque combinations, thus observing the letter while they eluded the spirit of the prohibition.*

If Zillah found little to cheer her in wandering through these venerable but gloomy rooms, the solitude of her own chamber was still less calculated to dissipate the sorrows which clung about her heart, unfitting her for society, or for enjoyment of any sort. Here would she sit for hours, recalling the mysterious visits of Esau,

* Chateaubriand observed arabesque ornaments still remaining sculptured over the entrance to some ancient tombs in the vicinity of Jerusalem, as well as upon the coffins themselves; but is disposed to attribute them to the Greek chisel, and terms them "raised hieroglyphics."
the violence and wildness of his conduct in their last encounter, the inexplicable influence of the necklace, which, having twice operated as a talisman for her preservation, was now apparently no more than any other trinket; and, above all, dwelling with fond lingering recollection upon every word, every passage of her intercourse with Felix. Delightful as it was to her heart, this retrospect was invariably followed by tears of self-reproach, when she reflected that the love which she was thus unable to tear from her bosom was bestowed upon one, who, if not still a Pagan, had never formally professed his conversion to the Hebrew faith; upon one, moreover, who, even if he were an accepted proselyte of the Covenant, was now enrolled among the enemies of her country. From her confidence in the prophetical powers of Nabal, she would gladly have again had speech of him, that she might question him as to the doom of Jerusalem, as to her own fate, as to the mystic power
of the amulet she wore about her neck: but though Nabal, as she was informed, still occasionally "revisited the glimpses of the moon," haunting the caverns and the tombs in the valley, he came and went like a cloud; no one could "tell of his whereabout," no one had discovered his abiding-place; he seemed to rise up out of the earth like a phantom, and to vanish when and where it listed him. She was obliged, therefore, to nourish her thoughts, her anxieties, her secret love, and the perpetual self-accusation it engendered, in her own bosom; a state of mind which quickly manifested its effects in waning health, and a deep though resigned melancholy.

In front of the Sagan's mansion was a large apartment, called the council-room, used, like our chapter houses, for convocations of the clergy. Latterly, while the rotunda of the Sanhedrim in the Temple was under repair, their meetings had been held in this room, upon
which occasion a circular tabernacle, or stall of cedar-wood, had been fitted up for the Nasi, or Prince of the Sanhedrim. There was something in the gloom of this chamber, and the solemn purposes to which it was applied, so consonant to the present state of Zillah’s mind, that she often strolled thither to indulge her lonely meditations. One evening, while her thoughts were wandering to the prison of the citadel at Alexandria, she unconsciously placed herself in the little tabernacle we have mentioned, from the form of which, as well as from the obscurity of the apartment, she was herself skreened from observation, while she could look through the open door of the apartment, which was upon the ground floor, into the front court. Here she had not long remained, plunged in reveries, when her attention was caught by an itinerant mender of leathern bottles, who having received from the servants several to repair, was seated with the implements of his trade
near the door, apparently very busy at work, although singing at the same time the song of Judith and Holofernes. Zillah thought that the voice was familiar to her, but, as his broad Galilean dialect served in some degree to disguise it, she bestowed no farther attention upon the circumstance, until she observed that he gazed up at all the windows of the house with a marked attention, and, changing his strain, began to sing in some foreign language with which she was unacquainted.

At this moment Lilla came running into the council-room in search of her friend, and had no sooner caught the sound of the Arabic ballad, for such it was, than, bounding up to the meanly-clad minstrel, she threw herself into his arms, exclaiming, "Jareb! my beloved Jareb! have I then found you again? O happy, happy hour! Are you come to deliver me from this hateful imprisonment—to bear me
away to the wilderness? Quick, let us be gone! let us fly instantly!"

"Hush! hush!" exclaimed the figure, in whom, as he turned round, Zillah instantly recognized the features of Esau, or of Jareb as he now called himself—Do you forget, wild girl, that I am here in the lion's mouth;—that, if I am discovered in Jerusalem, a hundred daggers will be aimed at my throat—that I shall become a corpse the very moment I am recognized?"

"Good heaven! how could I be so forgetful? Why did I pronounce your name? Rash, rash Jareb! you should not have ventured hither. I beseech, I implore you by Alelat and Alelatta, not to stay a moment longer—come, let us fly together!"

"No, Lilla, I must now fly alone; I wished first to see you, to tell you how to act, and where to remain; but I cannot have speech
with you here; the servants are perpetually passing—we shall be observed."

"Here, then, here, dear Jareb—ah! have I again pronounced your name? let us enter the council-room—there is no one in it—we can here converse in safety.

As they entered the chamber and closed the door, Zillah doubted whether she ought to remain; but when she reflected that any new surprise or outcry from the impetuous Lilla might lead to the discovery, and perhaps the death of Jareb, who was manifestly her lover, she thought it would be better, for the sake of the parties themselves, that she should become an involuntary auditor of their colloquy. Indeed there was no time for her to retreat, even had she wished it, without being seen and recognized, an occurrence which would be equally painful to herself, and to the self-styled Esau.

"Why cannot we fly now, this very in-
stant?" said the impatient Lilla, as soon as she had closed the door.

"Because I am Jareb the Revenger: because I have sworn by Corban and by the Temple to have my revenge upon Antigonus, and never to rest or know joy till I have seen him hurled from the throne that he has usurped. That hour is now rapidly approaching; and when his doom is sealed, then, then dearest Lilla, will I hasten to claim the hand of my affianced wife."

"God speed the day! But how did you discover that they had concealed me here?"

"I have not time to tell you now: suffice it that I have at last tracked you hither, after my long and painful search. I feared that you might be attempting to escape from Jerusalem, perhaps to wander forth by yourself, and be exposed to all the perils of warfare, for the whole country will be quickly up in arms. It is the purport of my visit, to warn you against..."
any such desperate measure. Jerusalem will shortly be besieged by Herod and a Roman army, but they have numerous confederates within the walls, by whose assistance they expect that the city will be surrendered at the first summons; and even should it prove otherwise, you can be no where better bestowed than in this house, which is strong enough to protect its inmates against popular tumult, while, from its sheltered situation, it has little to apprehend from the assaults of the besiegers. Here you will be safe, and at the proper hour I shall know where to find, and to release you."

"Here then will I await your coming, as patiently as I may; but tarry not now, dearest Jareb! See how I tremble, lest you should be discovered! It is enough that I understand your intention. I will tear myself away from you, while we are yet safe—Farewell! farewell! lose not a moment, if you love me, in flying
from this death-fraught city.” They exchanged a hasty embrace, pronounced a mutual blessing, Lilla opened the door, tripped rapidly across the front court, and returned into the house, by the side gate, under the cloisters.

Ere her lover had time to quit the apartment, Salome, entering from the house, was walking rapidly across it, when she caught a glimpse of the intruder. “How now! saucy fellow!” she angrily exclaimed; “what make you here? Is our council-chamber to be made the haunt of tramping bottle-menders? Be-gone quickly, or I will call—El—Elohim! what do I see? It is, it is, my own, my long-absent, my beloved Ephraim!”—and running up to him, she kissed and embraced him with every appearance of deep tenderness. “Rash, adventurous, desperate man!” she continued; “what brings you to Jerusalem, where, if you had a hundred lives, you could scarcely expect to save one of them? Am I not plotting for
you night and day, not only to glut your vengeance upon the degraded Antigonus, but to secure your aggrandisement, your glory, so that the names of Salome and Ephraim may for ever be renowned in the annals of Jerusalem? If you love me, leave all to me, and expose not your life to such frightful peril as this. Hist! hist! I hear footsteps approaching. If we are seen conversing, you are a dead man. Fly! dearest Ephraim! fly!"

Waving her hand repeatedly, as if it were to bid him farewell, and to urge him away, Salome stole back on tiptoe into the house; the supposititious bottle-mender, gathering up his implements, walked leisurely across the court-yard, and passed out into the street; when Zillah, seeing the coast clear, quitted the tabernacle in which she had accidentally ensconced herself, and retreated to her own chamber, utterly bewildered and amazed at what she had seen and heard.
CHAPTER VI.

In this unexpected occurrence Zillah found abundant materials for speculation and conjecture, although her perplexed thoughts were still unable to develope the mystery that attached itself to Esau. One fact at least was revealed by the colloquy of which she had been an involuntary auditress—he was the lover of Lilla, whom he had addressed as his affianced wife; but as to the nature of his connection with Salome, who seemed to be as tenderly attached to him as Lilla; as to the undivulged crime which rendered his presence in Jerusalem a deadly and desperate peril, or his reasons for assum-
ing such a variety of names, for Salome had called him her beloved Ephraim; upon all these points she was as much in the dark as ever. She recalled the clandestine interview of which she had been a witness before her departure from Jerusalem, when he had stolen covertly from Salome’s chamber; she compared his early confession that he had been concerned in deeds of violence and blood, with his assumption of the name of Jareb the Revenger, and his recent avowal, that he preferred the gratification of his vengeance even to that of his love; and though she felt little surprise that so wild a girl as Lilla should attach herself to one who appeared to be little better than a proscribed bandit and a vindictive outlaw, it did appear to her most marvellous that he should have been enabled to excite so paramount an interest in the bosom of the cold and supercilious Salome. From the frank and open-hearted Lilla she might have probably obtained explanations had
she chosen to ask them, but this she could not do without betraying that she had been present at the interview of the lovers, a confession from which delicacy withheld her. Even had not the same motives for silence applied to her imperious step-mother, she knew her too well to imagine that she would submit to interrogatories of any sort: so that all Zillah's secret surmises only recoiled upon her own unsatisfied mind, and she was obliged finally to resign herself to the hope that time would ultimately clear up the mysteries by which she was at present surrounded.

Her depression of spirits, and her self-reproaches upon account of Felix, whose memory still clung to her heart, remained unabated; while to add to her vexations, she was tormented by the importunities of the hateful Tubal, sometimes fawning, sometimes darkly threatening, always equally detestable in her eyes, and yet not to be repelled by scornful re-
jection, or by the most earnest entreaties that he
would cease a persecution not less painful than
useless. Upon this subject, Salome began to
renew her angry reproaches, taxing her with a
perverse and unfilial obstinacy in thus refusing
a suitor who had now attained such power in
the state, that he held the fate of her whole fa-
mily in his hand. Under such complicated an-
noyances, aggravated by her declining health,
Zillah passed a cheerless and melancholy exist-
ence; but as time rolled on, a mightier, a more
intense, an all-absorbing interest soon swallowed
up the petty considerations of individual vexa-
tion and family feud. Private pursuits and
projects, however passionately they might have
been followed, were merged in the overwhelming
consideration of that approaching crisis in the
public fate which might speedily put at hazard
the fortune, fame, and life of every dweller in
Jerusalem. From all quarters at once came
up the rumour of the approaching war, swelling
and growing louder and louder, until at last the voices of the multitudes thronging into the city for protection, became as the roar of a newly burst torrent, telling of the greater and more destructive inundation that is to follow it. As usual in such cases, Herod's force was magnified by fear or disaffection, while the more staunch adherents of Antigonus endeavoured to reduce it as much below its just level; but the fact that he had a Roman army with him could be denied by none, nor did any one attempt to exaggerate or to undervalue its strength. These were felt by all to be secondary considerations, for when Rome, imperial Rome committed herself to a war, however remote and insignificant in its origin, the question of her ultimate invincibility, of which she was determined to impress the conviction upon the whole world, was at stake; and upon that issue it was well known that she would desperately place the last talent in her treasury, the last cohort in her service.
Armies might be defeated, annihilated as that of Crassus had lately been by the Parthians; but Rome remained unsubdued, and larger armies, or more successful commanders, avenging the disgraces of their predecessors, eventually crushed every enemy. Fate had apparently decreed, that Rome should be the mistress of the world, and to oppose her triumphant progress seemed to partake of the awfulness, almost of the impiety of entering the lists with the irresistible Power of destiny.

Even had they felt this conviction in their hearts, the fierce and fearless Jews, whose patriotic spirit was not less indomitable than that of the Romans, would never have shrunk from the contest, had the whole embattled world come up against them. They had no occasion, however, to borrow courage from despair. Though all the Pagans of the earth might be delivered over as slaves to these idolaters of Rome, the Hebrews, God's chosen people, the depositaries of
his law, and the sole preservers of the true worship, would never be subjected to such an indignity. The Lord of Hosts would defend his own Holy City, would become the guardian of the hallowed Temple in which he had once visibly resided; and what could human armies, what could even the invincible legions of Rome, accomplish against Omnipotence? Had not an angel from Heaven smitten one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib’s army, filling the Valley of Tophet with dead bodies, and delivering Jerusalem in a single night from the mighty host of her besiegers? These and numerous other instances of divine interference in behalf of the chosen people were now eagerly recalled; past mercies inspired them with a confidence in future protection; and the superiority of the Romans in numbers, resources and military science, however formidable it might be, could not discourage a valorous nation, not only animated by the combined fervour of patriotism
and religion, but possessing the paramount and inappreciable advantage of having the Holy City for their camp, and God for their champion.

Confidence, therefore, and even a greater degree of unanimity were inspired by the very extremity of the danger. Had Herod invested the place with none but his own adherents, it is possible that his numerous confederates within the walls, not feeling their national pride injured by surrendering the city to their own countrymen, might have given it up at once. Indeed, a plot for this purpose, in which Salome was concerned, had been for some time carried on; but Herod’s alliance with the common enemy, the idolatrous and universally hated Romans, had so inflamed the mass of the people, that they would have torn in pieces any one who should have whispered a thought of surrender. Give up the Holy City to Pagans! It was not only to degrade and enslave themselves, but
to forswear their religion, to abandon their God; and with such an alternative before him, who would not rather die gloriously in defending Jerusalem, than live in bonds, disgrace, and misery, to witness her subjection?

If ever a people might imagine themselves to be identified with the cause of Heaven; to be, in fact, the instruments and the troops of the Deity himself, when they were fighting against the rest of the world, it was the Jews. Unnumbered portents, prodigies, miracles, and deliverances, had so stamped and burnt in this impression upon their souls, that their inflammable natures were quickly kindled into an enthusiasm which gave a superhuman energy to their efforts and their valour. Sometimes, indeed, it degenerated into a fierce fanatical fervour, manifesting itself in acts of violence and cruelty; but at others it became exalted into a sublime religious phrensy, lifting them almost above humanity, and enabling them to perform
achievements apparently so impossible to be accomplished, that they might well be excused in attributing them to divine interference. With a people so zealous, belief was performance, and they often secured a victory by their mere confidence of obtaining it. Of both these characteristic states of excitement, Jerusalem, in its present circumstances, afforded numerous examples. The lower orders, whose blind zeal only pushed them to instant outrage, providing themselves with a Maccabean banner, paraded tumultuously through the city, making its streets and courts resound with emphatical outcries of "The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!" and having first pulled down the Praetorium, the former residence of the Roman Governor, swearing with curses and loud cries that the Holy City should never again submit to such an indignity, they proceeded to the abodes of Herod's supposed adherents, several of whom they massacred, after having plundered and de-
molished their dwellings. Scarcely a day passed without excesses of this nature, or some desperate collision between the different factions and sects into which the population was divided; but notwithstanding this disturbed state of the City, maidens and matrons of all ranks, girt with sackcloth beneath their breasts, and their dishevelled hair scattered upon their shoulders, ventured forth to the holy places, to the tombs of the prophets, to the Maccabee columns upon Mount Sion, but, above all, to the Temple; where, throwing themselves upon the ground, they wept, and beat their bosoms, and appealed to Heaven with all the eloquence and energy of passion, imploring that the idolaters who came up against the Holy City, the beauty of God's ornament set in majesty, might be smitten and confounded, so that joy might not be taken from Jacob, nor the holy pipe and harp cease within the walls of Solyma. Old men, clad in sackcloth, and strewing the dust upon their heads, prostrated themselves in
every direction; the courts of the Temple were thickly covered with suppliants, some clasping the altar or the columns of the building as if they were beloved objects about to be shortly torn from their embraces; others upturning their venerable faces and stretching their hands towards the sky, while their grizzled beards waved in the wind, as with groans, tears, and cries, they besought God to vindicate the honour of his own Temple, to assert the supremacy of his chosen people, to stretch forth his red right hand, and to smite the idolaters of Rome, even as he had scattered the accursed host of the Assyrian monarch.

Several enthusiasts, wrought up by the excitement of the moment into a persuasion that they were inspired with the spirit of prophecy, seized a harp, and exclaiming, "Thus saith the Lord," roamed through the city, pouring forth rhapsodical denunciations of woe, or assurances of triumph. The Seers, the wizards,
and the monthly prognosticators were abroad and busy; nor were there wanting manifold divine presages of victory, if faith were to be given to the assurances of these men, and of numerous others, whose senses, however, it is not impossible, may have been deluded by the fervour and fermentation of their minds. More than once in the deep silence of night had they heard a trumpet sending forth a dread blast from the innermost sanctuary of the Temple. The terrible figure on the spectral horse which had assaulted Heliodorus when he would have plundered the sacred Treasury, had again been seen, the steed curveting over the marble floor with noiseless feet, and his ghostly rider brandishing a spear, while his harness of gold flashed radiance on the walls, as he passed silently along. In the evening skies too, as in the olden times when Antiochus was coming up to take and destroy Jewry, troops of horsemen were seen in array, encountering and running one against
another, with shaking of shields and multitude of pikes, and drawing of swords, and casting of darts, and glittering of golden ornaments, and harness of all sorts. And some beheld an angel of the Lord hovering over Jerusalem upon wings of purple and silver, playing on a harp; and midnight sounds came up out of the earth, the tramping of hosts and horses, the shrill scream of clarions, the shouts of victory, and the groans of the wounded.

But however great might be the confidence of the Hebrews in the assurances of divine succour, they did not neglect any species of warlike preparation which might justify success without it. Arms and bucklers were hung upon the tops of the towers and castles, and upon the front of the Temple, as if to fling a conspicuous defiance to the enemy. The fortifications were repaired and strictly guarded: the young men and citizens were enrolled and exercised, and incorporated with the remains
of the regular army. Helmets and cuirasses gleamed in every street, and amid the prostrate supplicants who were in all quarters addressing their passionate prayers to Heaven, were to be seen fiery young warriors or stern veterans, sharpening their swords, pointing their javelins and spears, arranging their slings, furbishing their armour, or preparing their bows and arrows; while ever and anon the splendid body guard of Antigonus, the only horsemen in the place, paraded the streets, the bells jingling at the ears of their chargers, the great banner of the Asmonæans floating above their heads, a procession of priests before them blowing the silver trumpets, the foot soldiers who followed clashing their arms upon their bucklers, while the troops and the whole people made the air resound with exulting shouts of "Micamoca Baelim Jehovah!" the war-cry of the Maccabees.

Amid rumoured portents from heaven and
earth, amid scenes and spectacles such as we have been describing, appealing with equal force to the piety and the patriotism of a Hebrew, at once melting the heart and kindling the soul, who could resist the contagious excitement of the Holy City; who could avoid being transported with religious rapture? Not Zillah! Sedate and placid as she ever appeared, there was a pious enthusiasm in the recesses of her bosom, which, like the latent heat of the atmosphere only required external pressure to elicit it. In the present collision the spark was kindled, and it soon flamed up with a steady blaze, as if it had found an appropriate altar. Perhaps her heart, already bruised by sorrow, was the better fitted to breathe forth this odour of sanctity, as the crushed flower throws up a quicker incense to the sky. Whatever might have given the impulse, she abandoned herself to the fervour of her excitement with the greater vehemency, because it withdrew her
from the contemplation of her own sorrows, by devoting her whole soul to the cause of her God and of her country. This enthusiasm soon became her only solace and delight; every day added to its solemn exaltation, for she cherished it by associations that could not fail to heighten its intensity. Visiting the tombs of the prophets, she would pass hours within their gloomy vaults, inflaming the growing fervency of her mind by solitary meditations upon the past glories and the present peril of Jerusalem, or in recalling the numerous interpositions of God, whereby she had been rescued from her threatened doom. Sometimes she would wander to the cavern of Jeremiah to ponder upon his prophecies and his denunciations; or seating herself upon the grave of Isaiah, in the shade of the ruinous tower of Siloam, she would remain plunged in holy reveries, until she almost imagined that the vision revealed to the buried prophet beneath her was about to be offered to her own
eyes, and she would look up to the sky, half expecting to see the flying Seraph that came to touch his lips with a live coal from the altar. The holy raptures and devout abstraction of the day influenced her dreams at night, which presenting celestial apparitions to confirm the secret suggestions of her over-excited mind, again operated upon her waking thoughts; until by the mutual re-action of spiritual enthusiasm, producing phantasms of sleep, which were accepted as revelations from heaven, Zillah began to believe that she was to be raised up as an instrument for the deliverance of Jerusalem. Other females had been chosen to this high and holy office. Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel, had enabled Barak to destroy the great host of the Canaanites. Huldah, another prophetess, had been consulted by King Josiah; Esther had been appointed to preserve the Jews from a general massacre; and although her own gentler feelings would
never allow her to rival the exploits of such stern-hearted women as Jael and Judith, she could not forget that in the month Cisleu an annual feast was celebrated in honour of another and a later Judith, the patriotic sister of Judas Maccabeus, who had been chosen to punish the impious Nicanor, after he had stretched out his right hand against the Temple of the Lord, and vowed its destruction. How she was to be made ministrant to the great purpose of serving the cause of Jerusalem, and vindicating the honour of God and the true religion, she knew not; this she believed would be revealed to her, and whether the divine afflatus was to descend once more and imbue her with the lost gift of prophecy, or she was merely to encourage the troops by singing to them divine songs and hymns of battle, she held herself ready for the performance of her glorious task, and felt elevated, enraptured by the high and solemn hope of performing it.
The Sagan was not displeased at beholding this enthusiasm in his child; he knew it to be genuine, he believed that it might be made conducive to the interest of the Holy City, and he observed with satisfaction that her health improved, and her melancholy disappeared as she devoted herself to this heavenly call, for such she fully considered it. He encouraged her, therefore, to take her Psaltery and sing sacred Pæans to the troops at their morning and evening muster, which she did with such holy fervour, with such appearance of immediate inspiration, that the soldiers, believing her to be commissioned by the Lord for some signal purpose, became animated with zealous courage at the sound of her voice, and would sometimes call for her with loud cries, if she happened not to have arrived when they were about to begin their martial exercises.

In this office she had soon a coadjutor in the person of Micah, a young and singularly hand-
some Galilæan Levite, who though he was little better than a peasant, had been smitten with a sudden enthusiasm upon learning the danger of Jerusalem, and seizing his harp, had hastened to throw himself within its walls, in the firm resolution of not surviving its capture by the Pagans, should it be doomed to that calamity. The fire of patriotic religion seemed to be burning in his very bones; he struck his harp with a poetic phrenzy, and the most maddening war songs burst extemporaneously from his lips, as if his whole soul were a blaze of inspiration. The soldiers were not less delighted with him than with Zillah. His fair and somewhat reddish hair and beard, his light hazel eyes sparkling with pious fervour, his animated looks, his melodious voice, his harp, his impassioned songs, imparted an almost seraphic character to his figure. From his personal comeliness and his pastoral life, the troops compared him to David, who was tending sheep.
when Samuel sent for him to be anointed king.
"Micah was holding the plough," cried some,
"when he learned that Jerusalem was in peril,
even as Saul was driving oxen when he heard
of the danger of Jabesh-Gilead."—"The lark
springs from amid the corn," said others, "but
no bird soars so near to heaven, and none sings
so sweetly." The names of Zillah and Micah
were forever united in the mouths of the sol-
diery, and the joint influence of their pious
fervour, and of their melodious voices alternately
chanting war songs and hymns, inflamed their
courage almost to phrensy.

It was soon to be put to the test. Day after
day did fugitives and scouts announce the
continued though slow advance of the enemy,
and from sunrise to dusk were eager and anxi-
ous crowds collected on the walls of the city,
on the terraces and galleries of the Temple, on
Mount Sion and every elevated point, strain-
ing their eyes to catch the first glimpse of their
appearance. A cloud of dust upon the summit of a distant hill, streaked with flashes of light as spear or cuirass caught the partial sunbeams, at length announced the long expected host, at sight of which the priests, as had been preconcerted, blew a solemn broken quivering alarum upon the trumpets, when many of the timid or disaffected Jews rent their clothes, and made great lamentations, and cast ashes upon their heads and fell down flat upon their faces, and cried aloud towards heaven. Others, however, moved to sudden rage by the spirit-stirring blasts of the trumpets and the view of the hostile force, clashed their arms upon their bucklers, and ran wildly about the city with loud menaces and execrations, vowing vengeance and extermination against the idolatrous assailants of God’s holy sanctuary, while they snatched up handfuls of sand, and scattered them in the air, to intimate that they would reduce all their enemies to dust. But the mass
of the people seemed to be transfixed to the places they occupied, watching with an intense interest the advance of the host. It wound down the remote hill, now continuously gleaming and now shrouded in dust, like a distant waterfall occasionally hidden by its own spray and mist; but all was too indistinct to ascertain of what the living stream was composed. By the great length of time, however, consumed in the descent, it was inferred that the invading host was numerous and mighty, and many were the conjectures and guesses of the people as to its probable amount.

At last the whole armament disappeared in the intervening valley, the dust subsided, not an enemy was to be seen in any direction, it might have been imagined that the Holy City was reposing in perfect peace and security. The suspense that followed became gradually wound up to a pitch almost too exquisite for endurance. In their combined impatience and
anxiety the people expected the enemy to appear almost immediately upon the second ridge of hills, forgetting that it required a considerable time to cross the wide valley and again mount the heights. "They have encamped," cried some who were tired of waiting for their appearance; "they are afraid to come up against the bulwark of the heavenly King."—"The Lord has smitten them," cried others, "even as he did the mighty host of Pharaoh, and the terrible array of Sennacherib. The earth hath swallowed them up, as it did the companies of Korah, Dathan and Abiram."

This overweening delusion was not of long continuance. From the summit of the second hill a dust began to ascend, reddened by the rays of the sun, till it looked like the smoke of a great fire, and presently successive squadrons, now plainly to be recognized as cavalry, formed upon the height. In the centre of each mass might be distinguished the ensign, floating from
a tall staff; their polished brass corselets and helmets invested each phalanx with a yellow lurid light; individual horsemen could be perceived in front of the main body, and some of the Jews even pretended that they could hear the sound of their trumpets, borne faintly and at intervals upon the wind. After a short delay this advanced guard again began to descend, when other troops, both horse and foot, interspersed with elephants and camels, and various beasts of burthen, appeared upon the crown of the hill, and followed them in slow uninterrupted order into the valley, until the whole array became a second time invisible.

From the direction they were taking, it was manifest that their next appearance would be in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives,—a position not precluded by the weapons of ancient warfare, although it was at so moderate a distance from the city, that the whole array might be distinctly defined, and almost numbered from
the walls. From their knowledge of this circumstance, the impatience of the people was of course increased, so that all the galleries of the Temple, each platform of the wall, every battlement of Ophel, and all the loftier buildings on the eastern side of Jerusalem, were alive with thick clustering crowds, all bending their eyes towards the opposite heights.

After a delay which, from the anxiety of the spectators, seemed to be ten times greater than it really was, the heads of the Roman columns, both horse and foot, at length exhibited themselves upon the crest of the long eminence, marching steadily forwards in close order. In their appearance there was little of the splendour and glory that had been anticipated; for in their long previous march, and their progress through the last sandy valley, their armour and crimson garments, and the golden eagles hovering over every cohort, had become dim with dust; but there was something terrible, even to
awfulness, in the compact array of these stern and soiled warriors, marching forward in silence, and in such admirable order, that the whole mass seemed to be informed by one single mind, and to constitute a moving rampart of iron and brass. They betrayed not the smallest emotion at the sight of Jerusalem; though the inhabitants of the city, as they gazed at them from the walls, beheld, with an astonishment, which many of them expressed aloud, the prodigious weight that every Roman soldier was obliged to carry, his arms, armour, and accoutrements being of the most ponderous description, and much more numerous than those of the Hebrews; while all were laden, over and above, with provisions for several days. The command to halt was given by the trumpet; two or three trifling evolutions were performed by the same signal, which seemed to answer all the purposes of the human voice; and the squadrons
then stood immovable, extended upon the height like a solid metallic wall.

Far different was the approach of Herod's forces, with the Syrian and other auxiliaries who had charge of the baggage and battering train of the whole armament. Wild and fierce bands of every hue, from the Ethiopian, whose black skin was rendered more conspicuous by his white turban and garments, to the fair-haired barbarian of the North,—some half-armed, others in coats of mail, or cased in scales and plate, with plumes tossing in the wind,—pressed forward in glittering but disorderly pomp, flapping their banners to and fro, brandishing their arms, filling the air with wild music and the clash of cymbals, leaping and stamping upon the earth with savage exultation at finding themselves so close to Jerusalem, and making the welkin ring with barbaric shouts and cries. Next came enormous elephants, heaving them-
selves slowly up out of the valley, and looking, as they gained the ridge, like dark clouds rising from the sea. Some drew ponderous vehicles laden with catapults and battering-rams, and stupendous engines of all sorts; while others had turrets on their back, filled with armed men. To these succeeded an almost imminable procession of camels and dromedaries, mules and oxen, wagons and artillery, as if the four quarters of the earth had been put in requisition to furnish men, animals, and ammunition for the assault of the Holy City.

From the multitudes that covered the towers and ramparts of Jerusalem, there went up, indeed, a fierce shout, a mighty roar, in answer to the cries of defiance that proceeded from Herod's motley armament; but the heart of many a stout Hebrew sank within him when he contemplated the silent, stern, close columns of the Romans, bristling with iron and brass, and consisting of warriors whose souls were
known to be cased in armour still more stubborn and adamantine than that which enveloped their bodies. Notwithstanding the present exaltation of her mind, Zillah, who had beheld the whole spectacle from one of the Temple galleries, sickened at the thought of the frightful contest that must ensue between a power like that of Rome, and a people so fierce and desperate as the Jews, when assaulted in the Holy City, and fighting for the Temple of the Lord. The evening was now approaching, and she went to seek her father, that she might relate to him what she had seen. "I want not to hear of their array," said the Sagan; "we depend not upon an arm of flesh for our defence; why, therefore, should we be intimidated by the multitude of the host that is come up against us? The same watchful and beneficent Power which, when the heavy snows are sent from heaven, draws up the boughs of the cedar into a cone, that they may not snap with
the weight, will, in like manner, so raise up and fortify our hearts, in this our time of peril, that they shall not break with the burthen imposed upon them. Hands uplifted in prayer are better than hands armed with javelins, for the dispersion of our enemies. Let us to the chapel." He accompanied Zillah to a private oratory in the house, where he put up fervent supplications for the deliverance of Jerusalem; at the conclusion of which he exclaimed, "Now do I feel easier and more assured in my heart. Cheer me still farther, my child, with your pleasant voice. Take your psaltery, and chant to me some song that may recall the deliverance of our people, when it has been in still more imminent jeopardy than now."

"Shall it be the song of the Israelites delivered from the Egyptians?" enquired Zillah.

"Even that, my child. You have composed
it from our traditions; rather than from Holy Writ; but it is applicable to our present peril, when the Roman host is scarcely less formidable than that of Pharaoh. May its destruction be as signal! Amen!"

Zillah repeated the Amen, took her psaltery, and immediately began to sing.—

I.

The shuddering Sea heard the voice of its God,

Convulsed and aghast in its innermost deep,
And where Moses outstretch'd his miraculous rod,

It parted—its waves with precipitous sweep,
Upheaving and rolling, and climbing on high,
Till the sun-startled sands of the bottom were dry.

II.

Far, far are those billowy ramparts descried;

Their foam-crested summits still quiver with fear;
And as sunlight illumines each crystalline side,

The menacing monsters of ocean appear,—
From those watery walls, with vain gnashing of teeth
They glare on the host as it passes beneath.
III.

The Behemoth opens his cavernous jaw,
His red nostrils smoke, he is rearing to leap;
The scaly Leviathan lifts up his paw,
While his fire-flashing eyeballs emblazon the deep;
And the bristling Sea-dragon, in impotent wrath,
With his tail churns the shivering sea into froth.

iv.

With eyes half-averted, and hearts beating high,
In silence the Israelites quicken their pace;
And mark where beneath them confusedly lie
The bones of an antediluvian race,
And fragments of wrecks, which in darkness had slept
Since o'er them the Flood's whelming hurricane swept!

v.

Every danger is past—on the opposite coast,
Uninjured, the God-guided multitude stands;
And lo! where the shouting Egyptian host
Down rushes in fierce and dark-clustering bands:
Their arms on their loud-ringling bucklers they dash
To the trumpet's hoarse bray and the cymbal's loud clash.
VI.
See! Pharaoh starts up in his chariot of gold;
His crown and his faulchion flash bright in the sun;
He urges a quicker pursuit, and behold!
The midst of that perilous passage is won:
But lo! the Lord looks through the pillar of cloud;
Astounded—aghast stands the paralysed crowd!

VII.
Moses stretches his hand,—'tis the signal of doom;
Restored is the might of each watery mound;
In thundering masses down, down do they boom,
And a mountainous chaos of foam boils around:
The war-horses snort, and leap madly on high,
While bursts from the host one dread agonized cry.

VIII.
The Dragon, Leviathan, Behemoth dash
Amidst them with rampant and ravenous joy;
The bones of the captains and horsemen they crash,
And league with the waters to whelm and destroy,
Till the judgment's fulfilled, and the havoc is done,
And the victims have perished, yea every one,
And the death-glutted monsters and waves sink to sleep.
And a silence sepulchral hangs over the deep!
CHORUS.

Hark! hark! to the timbrel’s sound!
'Tis Miriam, the prophetess!—High she flings
Her arms, and with rapturous triumph sings
The hymn of rejoicing victory!
While the Hebrew maidens round and round,
Wildly exulting, dance and bound;
And the host sends the choral strain on high,
Till the echoes ring from the vaulted sky.
Hallelu-Jah!—Hallelu-Jah!
Jehovah Tsebaitoth! Hallelu-Jah!

The Sagan had listened to the sacred chaunt, swaying backwards and forwards, as was his wont, with a complacent delight; but, at its conclusion, he started from his chair with sudden animation, and, throwing up his hands and eyes to Heaven, shouted out the final chorus in a loud and vehement voice, as if appealing to the God of Hosts that he might miraculously destroy the Romans even as he had annihilated the great host of the Egyptians.