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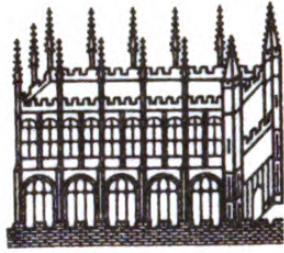
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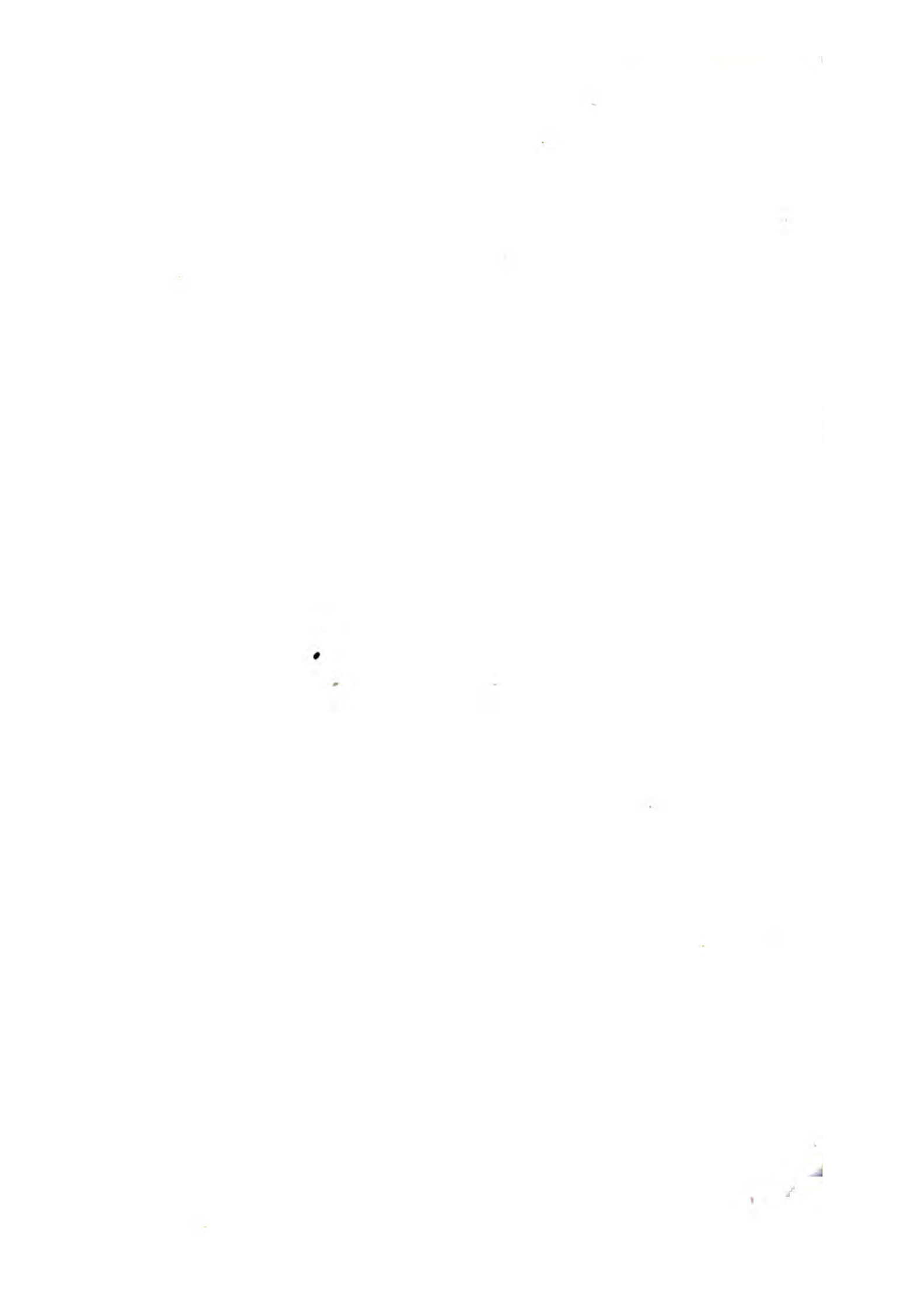
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A DREAM
OF THE
DAY THAT MUST COME.



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A DREAM OF THE DAY THAT
MUST COME.

A DREAM

OF

The Day that must come.

EDITED

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MORNING CLOUDS."

LONDON :

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

It is sometimes a favour—in many cases a kindness—to consent to be the Editor of a book, but in this instance an indulgent author reluctantly permits me to enjoy the office, of which I am proud.

For 16 years I have earnestly requested that this small work might be published; and my request became more urgent as the facts of every added year seemed likely to deprive it, in some few particulars, of its wholly imaginary character.

The MS., however, has undergone little alteration, and no addition has been made since I first saw it in 1843. The brains of Young England would elaborate dreams more rapid, but true philosophy is seldom in a hurry; and even in sleep her movement is cautious, her progress dignified and slow. A real philosopher wrote this dream: a grateful friend says so, and yet it is true.

INTRODUCTION. *

ALTHOUGH much has been written on the subject of dreams, we are very far from having attained any satisfactory explanation of their real character or purpose. It is probable that nearly one-half of our time is occupied in dreams. Our waking existence is made up of a succession of impressions and ideas, which is never intermitted, and which proceeds according to fixed laws, over which we have no more control than over the laws of gravitation. The phenomena resulting from these laws, both in the intellectual and material world, may be variously combined by the agency of the mind, or the hand of man; but those which modify intellectual action continue at all times to follow one invariable course. One thought follows another without intermission; we cannot change the order of previous associations, nor annihilate thoughts once awakened, but we may

* Addressed to those only who have more than a common interest in metaphysical questions.—*Editor's Note.*

retard or accelerate their progress through the mind. By detaining some ideas, and hastily passing over others, we increase or diminish their intensity; we prolong the remembrance of some, and cease to bear in mind the evanescent, as soon as they have fulfilled their office of introducing the one which comes next in the formation of that indissoluble chain of ideas, which *never* ceases from the moment we begin to think to the termination of our consciousness. Now, though, when we are asleep, this chain of ideas continues unbroken as well as when we are awake, our thoughts are not then in the same degree under our restraining and disposing power; the mind is in a manner passive, and follows the strange and bewildering fantasies, which successively take possession of it, and the transitions seem to our awakened memories a mere casual jumble of discordant images. Yet they do not always appear so in our dreams, nor are they altogether so in reality; as one law governs the eccentric course of the comet, and the steady revolution of the planet, so both our dreams and waking thoughts are alike referable to one intellectual law of our nature, and are part and parcel of our spiritual being.

Before we derive any benefit from a knowledge

of this fact, we must have advanced far beyond our present metaphysical systems. It is possible that in process of time the human mind may attain so accurate an acquaintance with the principles of intellectual agency, as to know their precise manner of action even in sleep, and to discover how they may be applied, so as to give more of reality and stability to our dreams, to connect not only the parts of a dream, but also different dreams in one consistent series, and thus to open to us a new sphere of action, in which the soul, no longer limited within that contracted portion of time and space in which day by day the body is constrained to act, may, during the hours of sleep, launch out into new scenes of existence, may re-model the past, or anticipate the future. Thus, the shadowy world of dreams may become a sort of intermediate ground between the rude and obstinate realities of the material world, and the future enjoyment of a spiritual state of existence, not less real.

Wild as this hypothesis may appear at first, I am persuaded that persons of a metaphysical turn of mind will not at once pronounce it to be absurd. Indeed I am much mistaken if many, who have reasoned and experimented on the subject of dreams,

will not confess that they have some obscure intimations from experience that dreams may, to a certain degree, be modified by voluntary agency. I have myself found on many occasions that in the course of a dream I could, with the consciousness that I was dreaming, revive the impressions they impart, in undiminished intensity, and in some degree prolong and retard their course, so that the scenes they presented appeared more circumstantial and probable, and were consequently better remembered when I awoke. Hence I am, by habitual observation, become a great dreamer of dreams, and, if I could find listeners, should be glad to unburden myself of some of the many extraordinary adventures I have been engaged in, and of mysterious anticipations of the future which I have experienced, not from any supernatural agency, but solely from the workings of my own imagination under a somewhat improved method of dreaming. I find however that Epictetus' advice, as quoted by the "Spectator," is not given without cause, "Never tell thy dream, for though thou thyself mayst take a pleasure in telling thy dream, another will take no pleasure in hearing it."

It is true that we Oneirophilites do find this

resistance. However entertaining or instructive a dream may be, there is a certain opposition and impatience manifested at an attempt at recital, which will in time silence the boldest of the sect.

But I have found that this prejudice is not so strong against dreams in print, which do not appear to labour under the same disadvantages; of this fact I could cite many instances. I shall not here try to account for the paradox, nor refer to the many proofs of the favour shewn to these records of singular dreams: I shall even renounce the temptation of quoting the authority of that celebrated dream, "The Pilgrim's Progress," from which myriads of readers have derived instruction and pleasure; and hasten at once to take advantage of this opening, for obtaining an impartial hearing of the details of a dream which, inferior as it may be to Bunyan's in other respects, leads the thoughts to subjects not less important.



A Dream of the Day that must come.

CHAPTER I.

IN the summer of —— I had occasion to go to London to watch the progress of a law-suit of some importance. It was arranged that my wife and children should take the opportunity of making an excursion to town, and that they should precede me by a few days, that they might pay a visit to some friends on the road.

After their departure I had found the time pass rather heavily, and the Sunday especially seemed to me a day unusually long and wearisome. I tried to get over the lingering hours, which succeeded the duties of public worship, by reading such books of a religious character as were at hand, but I could not fix my attention with any satisfaction on any one of them, and retired at an early hour to bed.

I was soon transported to the world of visions and found myself engaged in scenes and actions, which presented themselves before me, as was not unusual in my sleep, in the vivid colours and with much of the connected progress of real events. Their very similitude became more striking by seeming to connect themselves in time and place with my actual condition.

Me thought it was morning, and I rose early as if to fulfil my intention of setting out on my proposed journey. As I walked to the railroad station, which was about a mile from my house, I sighed when I reflected that my children were not with me, as when I last passed that way, delighting me by their innocent gambols, and reconciling me by their little attentions and caresses to the prospect of a temporary absence from my quiet home. I now was melancholy, and a gloomy foreboding of evil seemed to oppress me as the train of carriages hurried me rapidly towards my destination.

As we approached London, but still at the supposed distance of about twenty miles, I could not help observing to my fellow-travellers, how much the face of the country had changed, since I had been that way. Mansions and villas and manufactories

were seen on every side. An intelligent looking man, who sat opposite me, agreed that these indications of national opulence were indeed remarkable, but that if I had not visited London for some time I should be much more surprised with what I should see there : that there the proofs of the rapid progress of national wealth and power were everywhere conspicuous, and so many objects of taste and magnificence in all that related to architectural embellishment, and indeed in all the arts and refinements of social life, that it seemed impossible to carry them to a higher pitch of excellence. “And it would be well” added an elderly gentleman by his side “if the same spirit of improvement had extended to the moral as well as to the physical condition of the people. But what a contrast! As we have advanced in luxury, we have receded in everything belonging to religion and morals. Before the present generation, even in my days, there were many vestiges of ancient virtue. Religion was at least respected ; vice was not openly countenanced—but now”—and he proceeded to give an account of the dreadful state of iniquity into which the metropolis, and indeed the whole country had fallen. As he spoke, my curiosity, which was at first strongly

excited by the discourse, gradually subsided. I seemed to recollect that things were as he described them. I imagined myself to be in an age far in advance of the present era, and yet I was connected with it (such is the delusion of dreams) by the same domestic ties, the same business, and the same sentiments as when I fell asleep.

In the meantime the journey was drawing to a close. London seemed extended miles beyond its present limits, but I neither expressed nor felt more surprise than might seem natural to one who had been absent from it only a few years.

There was however enough of novelty, both in what I saw and in what I heard from my companions, to induce me to put many questions, which they answered with much politeness; and we arrived at the end of our journey without having any pause of conversation, except when some new portico, edifice, or range of buildings of extraordinary magnificence drew off my attention as we hastily passed them.

On taking leave of my fellow-travellers they jointly recommended me to view the city from the ancient cathedral of St. Paul, if I passed that way, as from thence some of the more recent and most

admired improvements of the city might be seen to the greatest advantage. Promising to attend to their advice, and thanking them for the information they had given me, I parted from them, and finding that it was not yet mid-day, I thought there would be time for an interview with my solicitor before I joined my family, who, travelling by a different conveyance, were to arrive at our friend's in the afternoon.

As I proceeded towards Lincoln's Inn my attention was every minute attracted by some new and extraordinary change in the aspect of the town. Lofty ranges of building of varied architecture, some with fine terraces and colonnades, formed wide and extensive streets, which led into the very heart of the city. Of the more conspicuous buildings which stood apart from the rest, some, as I learned by inquiry, were theatres; some, from the crowds resorting to them, seemed taverns; some were for public institutions, and receptacles of works of art. All indeed for some purpose of social luxury, and all gorgeous, but not one apparently for religion. There were indeed a few old churches, but they wore a melancholy and dilapidated appearance, and seemed, from the remarks I heard, as though they belonged to some by-gone superstition.

This corresponded with the observation which had been made on my journey as to the fallen state of religion. The church, as a national institution had, it seemed, been long since set aside by Act of Parliament, and the voluntary principle introduced in order to revive religion. But the measure did not seem to answer; a regard for religious observances, and afterwards for religious doctrines, and then for moral obligations of every kind, had gradually decreased: infidelity was the fashion of the day; religion was laughed at, and barely tolerated.

As I thought bitterly upon the consequences of such a state of things, I reached the chambers of my lawyer, if I may call by that name a suite of splendid apartments which would now have betokened the abode of nobility. However Mr. S., the person whom I looked upon as my friend as well as legal adviser, soon turned my thoughts in a different direction. After welcoming me to town with a great show of politeness, he entered upon business, and led me with much loquacity and many references to papers through the legal intricacies of my cause.

I did not entirely understand him, and much

that he said seemed wide of the purpose ; but one thing I finally understood very well, that, by some means or other, my defence of an action in which the justice of the case was so evident, that it did not seem possible that a verdict could be against me, was now brought into such an unpromising condition, that there was every probability I should lose my cause, and with it the greater part of my property.

Mr. S. however suggested that there was some hope if I would sign a voluminous affidavit or deposition, which he had prepared ; and he placed it in my hands.

After hastily glancing over the contents of the paper, I asked how it was possible that I could swear to a document, which was from first to last a tissue of falsehoods. He smiled at my scruples. "Well," he said, "you must of course act as you think proper, but your adversaries have now the advantage of you by deposing to facts, which only exist in their imagination, and they must be met on their own ground."

"But truth, Mr. S., and integrity?" "Bah!" retorted this hopeful disciple of the new school of law and ethics, "what is the use of truth or integrity in these days? depend upon it, honest dealing

can never be a match for knavery, least of all at this time, when nobody in their senses thinks of making any further pretension to virtue than may serve their private ends—as a cloak to conceal their real purpose, namely, to take advantage of those they deal with.”

“ But is this right ? Does it justify you or me in departing from the path of honour and religion ? ”

“ It is expedient ” rejoined my legal adviser, “ and it is fair, for all act upon the same principle, and all expect it. ”

“ Mr. S., ” I replied, “ until now I took you for an honest man. ”

“ And I suppose you will now change your opinion, ” added he with a shrug, “ nevertheless I have done my duty, or what is much the same thing, have consulted my professional interests, by offering you the best legal advice I have to offer. What then will you do ? ”

“ This paper I will not sign ; as to the rest I will have time to consider what had better be done ; at present I will take my leave : ” and I left him with little ceremony.

Before I had regained the street, I had already determined in my mind, that the business should at

all events be taken out of the hands of so unprincipled an agent, and recollecting another solicitor living in the Temple with whom I had before had business, in which, though acting on the side of my opponent, he had brought about an arrangement satisfactory to both parties, I turned my steps in that direction. He happened not to be in his office, and promising to call again in half-an-hour, I thought I would take the opportunity of following the advice I had received in my journey, and view the wonders which surrounded me from the gallery about the dome of St. Paul's.

As I approached, the cathedral seemed to be diminished in size since I last saw it ; it was black with smoke, and in many places showed marks of decay. However, it now stood in an ample area, and was surrounded by buildings of so much architectural beauty, that as a central object it hardly seemed to correspond with its position. On entering its opened doors, my ears were saluted by the hubbub of voices proceeding from a crowd apparently engaged in money dealings : so at least I concluded from the desks, which were placed against the walls—the assiduous filing of bills and movement of pens, and the commercial phrases which occasionally

reached my ears about premiums, capital, percentage, and discount.

The chapel was, however, still secured from profanation. The gates were closed, but the interior was in a neglected state, the seats covered with dust and mortar, and altogether exhibiting an afflicting proof of the decline of religion.

Having threaded my way through the busy crowd to the winding stairs, and paid as usual a trifling fee to the door-keeper, I ascended the gallery, and was for some time intently engaged in contemplating the interesting scene below me.

There seemed no limits on any side to the countless ranges of houses and palaces which had sprung up beyond the former limits of the metropolis. The sides of the Thames were adorned with magnificent quays, and here and there arose vast structures of stone or of iron work, unlike any buildings I had ever seen, neither could I conjecture for what purposes they were created, probably some operations of art or commerce to me unknown. An hour it may be had passed away as I stood thus engaged, at one time tracing out old reminiscences, at another, admiring some new effect of architectural skill, at another, lost in meditation at the progress of luxury contrasted with the decline of religion.

From one of these reveries I was roused by the loud and deep booming of the large bell of the clock which struck three. It reminded me that I had no further time to spare, and I was beginning to descend the stairs when I hastily returned to discover from whence proceeded a sound as of a trumpet, which in so lonely and elevated a position startled me. I listened and distinctly heard the blast of a trumpet.

A cold shudder came over me, for it seemed to come from the open sky above. I was at first fain to believe that this effect was only owing to some singular reverberation from the dome or towers of the roof immediately below me.

I looked around on every side, but saw no person nor anything which could tranquillize my anxious mind.

Again I raised my eyes. I saw nothing but the blue expanse of an unclouded sky, and yet the sound of a trumpet was then distinctly heard as proceeding from mid-air. At first the tone was low and slightly tremulous, as though the instrument was held by an unsteady hand, or filled by the breath of one unnerved by oppressive feeling; but as it continued it became louder—it no longer gave an uncertain sound; long and wailing blasts of terrific and un-

earthly grandeur succeeded one another without intermission. My soul sank within me ; I said, " it is the trumpet of judgment."

As I lowered my head in reverential awe my eyes were fixed on the scene which passed below. I beheld in a wide and crowded street the upturned faces of the multitude. I could discern even in spite of the distance that they were of a ghastly paleness. There was a confused noise of people rushing from the narrow streets and houses into the more open spaces, but I could trace the progress of the general panic no further at that time. I was totally subdued by terror ; a mist came before my eyes, my teeth chattered, and I reeled against the base of the dome. In a few seconds I recovered sufficiently to attend once more to the appalling summons which seemed thus given to a guilty world. It was now as though a thousand trumpets were pealing together.

The sound rose high above all the clamour below, which indeed it gradually silenced, for now after the pealing sounds had continued altogether it might be about five minutes, and had gradually passed from a mournful expression to that of threatening and anger,—suddenly it ceased and left a silence above and below almost as dreadful.

I looked once more down into the city—all was silent, and for a short space nothing stirred.

The crowds that filled the streets seemed afraid to believe that they were awake and living. Every one remained in the posture into which astonishment and fear had thrown him.

Standing in various attitudes, some prostrate on the ground, some on their knees. But this state of things did not last long; there was a confused movement, a murmuring sound of innumerable voices, then loud shrieks and lamentations; the carriages began to move on, and in the more open streets, to hasten furiously to their several destinations.

The crowds which for a while heaved to and fro, without any obvious impulse, like a field of corn wavering in the wind, now began to collect in groups, and to listen to those who had first the boldness to open their lips upon the subject of their alarm.

I now began to feel a sense of the loneliness of my own isolated position. I knew not what would ensue. I longed to mingle with the crowd—above all I longed to see my family before I should be prevented by the dreadful sequel to this warning,

which my boding mind anticipated. I expected that even before I quitted the place where I stood, some other fearful portent would totally unnerve my agitated frame.

I cast a timid glance upward, but in no quarter of the heavens could my awakened fears detect any fresh cause of alarm. The sun was still shining in undiminished lustre,—no cloud was to be seen. The city looked as beautiful as ever through the hazy brightness of the summer day. The conscience-smitten inhabitants alone afforded any token that something unusual had happened. I descended with a heavy heart, and hastened through masses of people, almost frantic with terror, to my friend's house where I was to meet my family. I found them, and my perturbed spirit became more tranquil, as we prayed and conversed together on such topics of religious consolation as the words of revealed truth afforded.

CHAPTER II.

As I have already intimated, much reflection on the theory of dreams, and the peculiar facility acquired by habit of arresting in a slight degree the rapid succession of my ideas during sleep, has often enabled me to give them more consistency and vivacity, so that I can remember them afterwards in their minute details. It must not, however, be inferred that my dreams are exempt from the defects of an occasional interruption of the regular development of consecutive events. On the other hand, the chain is often broken for awhile, and the intermediate impressions are vague and incoherent; but after this it not unfrequently happens that the directing principle recovers its power. As when the troubled surface of water on which the reflected images of things have been broken and distorted, becomes smooth, objects are again represented in their due proportion and order, so the fluctuating images of my dreams recover after a temporary obscurity their clearness and vivacity.

I may also here notice another phenomenon, which I believe is not uncommon in dreams. On the renewal of distinct vision there seems to pass

through my mind a recollection of facts, occupying a conceived period, it may be days or weeks, which has elapsed since the preceding incidents occurred.

The dream I am relating suffered at this juncture such an interruption. In all probability the agitation of my mind, arising from the strange and terrifying nature of my dream, had nearly awakened me, and it was some minutes before I relapsed into a state of sleep sufficiently profound to throw out images with the requisite distinctness and force.

When at length the return of placid sleep had once more fitted me to become the passive recipient of thick teeming fancies, I found myself travelling in the same manner as before.

I had a companion, not either of my former fellow-travellers. He sat before me a short time in silence, and I felt as one gradually recovering from a fit and trying to connect the present with the past. My companion broke silence by asking me if I was one of those who concluded, from the late extraordinary event, that the day of judgment was at hand? This question supplied the link that was wanting to connect my present position with the past, and I was enabled rapidly to retrace the circumstances of the singular events I have described,

and to supply others which had since happened ; so that I eagerly engaged in conversation with my companion upon the subject ; and in answer to his question avowed my entire belief that this was the beginning of the end—of the end of the world ; and that the dread voice of that trumpet was to warn us to prepare for judgment.

“ You are then, I presume, a believer in Christianity,” was the unexpected reply.

“ I am, and have been. After what has taken place, is it possible that any one can withhold his belief in the Christian revelation ? ”

“ Why,” replied he, in a tone of very liberal concession, “ there is, I confess, something in this phenomenon of very extraordinary character—very extraordinary. I cannot at all satisfy my mind upon the subject ; nor can I admit the explanations which have been attempted by our leading men of science. But yet, having always believed that miracles are impossible, having often satisfied others by demonstration that a belief in them is contrary to our experience, and is incompatible with the right exercise of our reasoning faculties, I cannot at once abandon the principles I have so long maintained. They are shaken I grant, but I must wait for further

light. I think it probable that I may determine in favour of a supernatural interposition, but there seems no necessity even in that case, to associate this fact with the doctrines or divine authority of Christianity.”

I was preparing to advance some of the many proofs of the connexion he questioned, which to my mind precluded all opening for rational doubt, but he politely checked me by intimating that as we differed in opinion upon that point, we had perhaps better turn our discourse to more general topics. Indeed I felt no disposition to engage in this contest ; my mind was too fully occupied with the contemplation of that awful situation in which, in common with the human race, I was then placed, to allow me to enter into the discussion of such metaphysical arguments as my antagonist might have at his command. I contented myself therefore with asking what he thought of the recent intelligence from the north. “As to that matter,” he answered tranquilly, “my present impression is that it is of volcanic origin, and I am now on the way to make such personal observations as may satisfy the world of the justness of this supposition.”

The case seemed hopeless, and I should have

remained silent for the rest of the journey, had not my companion riveted attention by his account of the effects which had been produced on the public mind by a state of things so far out of the course of human experience. What he related of facts, agreed with my own recollections, and I was enabled to form a connected view of what had occurred after the first paroxysm of overpowering terror began to diminish.

It seemed that the period of six days had elapsed since the occurrence: that I had in the mean time joined my family at a short distance from town, which place however I had frequently visited to get the earliest information of the terrible catastrophe, which I felt sure was to succeed this mystery of the ethereal trumpet.

On the day of that event, for a few hours the public mind was so intensely agitated that it seemed very improbable that order or tranquillity could ever be restored. All business was suspended, the shops closed, the people in the streets seemed to have lost their senses, wandering about without apparent object, and ever and anon betraying their state of mind by frantic gestures and ejaculations.

Before evening however there were symptoms of

a subsidence of this over-wrought excitement: the tide of habitual feelings and avocations began to recover its wonted strength. Hunger and thirst, and weariness of body and mind, urged men to seek the accustomed means of satisfying their bodily cravings. Servants resumed their occupations at their master's command. Culinary fires were re-kindled. Dinners both in private and at places of public resort were hastily prepared; and to endeavour to restore order, ministers of state and magistrates began to consult for the public good. In the evening churches were opened. The despised ministers of religion issued forth from their obscurity, and found prostrate around them crowds of penitent and terrified worshippers, calling upon them to deliver to them without delay the conditions of eternal life, that they might learn whether there yet remained for them any hope of salvation. If this sight gave some relief to the compassionate believer, he had but to turn his eyes from the doors of the church to the many ostentatious buildings where the incentives to drunkenness were sold, and his hopes would vanish. Never were these temples of iniquity thronged by such an incessant succession of votaries; never was the excitement of intoxication

so generally sought as a relief from the bitterness of reflection. Many who thus seemed to set the warnings of God at defiance were of the number of those who were most deeply conscience-smitten by the day's events. But they were the slaves of habit, and they sought their usual haunts, and exceeded their usual potations to supply them with a degree of courage that might help them to bear up against the oppressive sense of terror and weakness, or serve to bring on such a degree of stupefaction as might disqualify them for serious reflections. As to places of mere idle amusement, they were utterly deserted, not so much from any religious consideration, but from having lost all attraction; no one thought of them.

As the night advanced, the crowds gradually disappeared, the streets were deserted and silent, and in the morning, when it was found that the sun shone as usual, and that nothing new had occurred in the night to awaken fresh terror, a stranger might have passed through London without imagining that anything more remarkable had taken place than the arrival of some interesting news, the loss of a defeated army, or the destruction, by fire or earthquake, of some important city.

There was, indeed, still a great appearance of anxiety impressed on the countenances of passers-by, and many indications of an excited state of public feeling, but as it was such as might be expected to subside in a few days, the business of life went on with some degree of regularity, and might be expected to resume altogether its usual course if nothing should happen to revive those terrors, which, as they were at the first very sudden and violent, yielded more readily to the reaction of habitual feelings.

As hour succeeded hour hope gathered strength. The lapse of one day was enough to allay very generally the apprehension of an immediate catastrophe. And if things remained as they were for one day, why might they not for a year? why not for many years? and thus a sufficient time be afforded for penitence, for conversion, and a gradual preparation of mind against the tremendous consummation of which so solemn a warning was given. With these thoughts believers in the Christian religion were comforted, and to all the dawn of another day was as grateful as a respite from death to the condemned criminal. On that morning men arose and left their houses at the first break of day,

to reassure themselves by seeing each other's faces, and to carry back tidings to their homes that the sun had risen as usual. Intent upon the same business, strangers spoke to each other as familiar acquaintance. All were anxious to learn what others thought and felt, and especially what were the opinions of those who were most in esteem as men of science and talent.

But in truth these sagacious persons were more perplexed than others. The night was passed by most of them in sleepless anxiety to explain by the operation of natural causes an undeniable fact so much out of the usual course of nature. Their conjectures and speculations, which savoured more of the feverish excitement of their minds than of philosophical penetration, were speedily spread abroad by some newspapers which, in consequence of the importunity of the populace, were issued at a late hour in the morning and eagerly bought up. The columns of these newspapers were filled with details of the singular event which had engrossed public attention. A few writers who had before shewn no favor to religion, at once acknowledged their error, and even resolved to make all the reparation in their power by warning men of the wrath to

come. Others, however, persevered in a peevish resistance of the truth; they eagerly seized and exhibited the crude and impossible theories of scientific men. The favorite hypothesis was built on the possibility of sound being carried from a great distance, perhaps from the moon, and falling on the ears of the inhabitants of this country in the manner experienced.

But why so striking and so peculiar a sound as that of a trumpet? Because there might be a concurrence of natural causes which might produce a sound resembling that of a trumpet, as well as any other uncommon sound.

One observed that the spiramina of volcanoes were for the most part trumpet-shaped, and that as several volcanoes were in full activity at this time, the chances were in favor of this result. It was not improbable that a volume of gas being forced violently through the tubular passage, might produce a sound like that of a trumpet, augmented in proportion as the magnitude of the tube exceeded that of an ordinary trumpet; that the sound was reverberated like the explosion of the electric fluid from the thunder cloud, and was so brought to the ears of the inhabitants of London, and probably of

the greater part of this country. Many such delusive conjectures were started and were eagerly received by the multitude, most anxious to catch at any invention which might tend to allay the terrible apprehensions which haunted them, and before the evening no small progress was made towards the re-establishment of public tranquillity.

But on the next day a rumour was spread abroad which very much checked this complacent feeling. It was to this I alluded when I asked my companion what he thought of the intelligence from the north.

It seemed from the reports of travellers from different quarters, that the mysterious sound had been everywhere heard; but that in the north of Scotland it had been followed by other ominous facts, for towards the evening of the same day a distant bank of very dark clouds was seen approaching the shore.

The intense blackness of this mass was the only circumstance that at first excited any particular attention, for though of great extent it did not rise to any considerable height above the horizon. It advanced slowly, and not after the manner of a storm, but rather like a very dense fog creeping along the surface of the sea, only it had all the

darkness of the most threatening thunder cloud. When this cloud invaded the land, it still bore the same character, advancing as a wall of impenetrable darkness in awful silence. Most men fled before it, but some were overtaken by it unexpectedly, and others, not having attentively observed it, remained in their houses, supposing that it would end in a severe thunder storm and pass away. But it came over them in silence, and it was soon remarked that no one whom it overshadowed escaped to describe what they had encountered, or how far it extended. There appeared no difficulty in outstripping the speed of the cloud, for its progress did not equal that of a person walking at an ordinary pace: but no living thing was seen to emerge from it. It advanced from north to south, extending across the whole breadth of the island.

The unchangeable blackness, and the silent and slow but continual progress of this terrible object, appalled the stoutest heart; even the cattle fled before it, and were seen mingling with the retreating groups. To this circumstance the fugitives were afterwards indebted for their preservation, for as the multitude was hourly increasing, the ordinary supply of provisions must otherwise have soon failed.

As it was, multitudes must have perished, especially when the larger towns and cities were, one after another, enveloped in the darkness, and the consequent cessation of all law and order, exposed the weak and unprepared to numberless dangers ; but of these no estimate could be made, as the darkness covered all its victims.

It was said, that after a few days' experience of the evils of such a dissolution of the social bonds, some sort of order as to the distribution of food and other matters was adopted with the tacit but unanimous consent which the necessity of the case required. But there was no longer any attempt made to enforce the laws of the country. Within a day's journey of this mysterious darkness, which seemed destined to be the shroud of a departed world, law and civil government were powerless, the social compact was broken, every one did that which he chose to do ; yet still every one saw the necessity of submitting to certain regulations, or all must perish.

There seemed an impression on my mind that such circumstances had attended this alarming phenomenon, but how I acquired a knowledge of them I know not. I talked of these things freely with

my companion, who seemed also to have had similar information. It also seemed that in contemplating the approaching evil, I had, either from studying the prophetic writings, or from some other source of information, in common with many others, become strongly impressed with the idea, that all the inhabitants of the earth would be driven on by this mysterious cloud towards that region of the world in which all were to assemble for the last judgment; and I had formed the idea that by a timely flight to Palestine, before the evil day came, my family might escape many bitter sufferings. I consequently began with all speed to collect the means of conveying them thither, and was at this time revisiting my house in furtherance of that object, and especially to bring away a casket of jewels of great value, which had shortly before been bequeathed to my wife, and which I had concealed in a secret drawer unknown to the servants, and not likely to be discovered by any other person.

I had also a strong desire to judge for myself how far the marvellous accounts of this mysterious cloud agreed with fact, and I had written to my house-keeper to apprise her of my intention to be at home that morning, and that she might be in readiness to return with me to London.

Whilst I conversed with my friend on some of these topics and pondered over others in my own mind, we began to meet the advanced portion of the multitude who were retiring before the cloud of darkness. As we proceeded the fugitives rapidly increased in number, passing us in detached groups and companies, as families and neighbours had simultaneously abandoned their homes.

At the distance of about five miles from my house, every road and many of the adjoining fields were filled with men, women, and children, all moving onwards in the same direction, carrying with them such provisions and clothing as they could conveniently bring away from their deserted habitations. We soon found it impossible to proceed; vehicles of all descriptions occupied the roads and the railway on which we were. We stopped amid much clamour and confusion. We were told that the cloud was not above ten or twelve miles before us, and were advised to return without delay.

The appearance of things frightened my companion, and as the carriages were likely to be speedily filled, he thought it most prudent to return with them without quitting his seat. I advised him however to ascend a high bank, which was on the

side of the railroad, from whence a view of the cloud might be obtained, and promised to resign to him my seat on his return : for my purpose of revisiting my home was not shaken by the terrifying, but vague, reports which reached our ears.

My friend eagerly ascended the bank : I observed him clasp his hands as he stood for a few seconds intently looking towards the north. He then hastily descended, pale and trembling, but he tried to conceal his agitation, as I supposed, lest I should take the alarm and refuse to resign my place, for the carriages were now full. This, however, I did without hesitation, and then asked him if he had seen anything to excite much alarm. But before he could answer me further than by slowly shaking his head in a manner which expressed that his answer would be the reverse of a negation—the engineer, who had taken the precaution of stopping in a convenient part of the road, completed his arrangements for returning, the doors were hastily closed, and the heavily-laden train was soon in motion towards London.

I now hastened myself to obtain a view of the object of general terror ; I went up to the rising ground, and observed indeed a dreary bank of cloud

stretching from east to west, its intense blackness forming a strong contrast to the brightness of the rest of the sky.

I thought, however, I had seen before as dark a mass of clouds in the horizon at the approach of a storm, yet this did not seem to bound, but in a strange manner to intersect the face of the country ; and this peculiarity, coupled with the living proofs of its terrific character,—which presented themselves in the crowds moving in one continued stream, as from the face of a victorious enemy,—gave it a stamp of undescribable sublimity.

I did not, however, remain long in contemplation, no time was to be lost in seeking my own home. I had to advance towards the darkness : I perceived that I should not have many hours to spare, though I could not as yet form a judgment of the distance of the cloud or of its rate of motion.

Of the multitude who met me, as I alone advanced towards that direction from which they fled trembling, many looked at me with surprise, and some cautioned me not to proceed. One whom I knew told me he had seen my house about two hours before, that all seemed safe, and that the inmates were preparing to depart.

Before I reached the pleasant lane which turned from the road directly to my door, all had passed me except an occasional straggler pushing forwards to overtake his companions. I entered the house, it was deserted, the doors were left open. My voice, as I called for one or other of my servants, startled me, so dreary a silence pervaded not only the desolate abode, but every place. No flocks or herds were in the pasture, the voice or movement of no bird, nor of any living thing was heard. In my dining room some provisions and wine were set out on the table, and a note was left from my house-keeper to the effect, that my servants had waited for me to the last moment which their courage would allow: that they had left my horse ready saddled in the stable. In other respects they had followed my directions. The note was written about half-an-hour before I arrived. To form a better judgment of the time I had to spare, I hastened to an upper room, which looked towards the north, and commanded a view of six or seven miles of country. The limits even of this space were already shrouded by the darkness, but I could not, in the few minutes I was able to spare for observation, detect any sensible advance of the cloud.

Its proximity had, however, greatly aggravated the terror of its appearance, both in regard to elevation and density. The darkness towards the earth was of the colour of indigo, but above, and especially towards the edge of the cloud, there was a slight redness which came and went as if partially penetrated by the ruddy gleams of a distant conflagration.

After a hurried observation, I attended sedulously to the business I came to despatch. The casket of jewellery was secured; some papers which were formerly considered by me as of the last importance, were next set aside for removal, though I felt convinced they could hardly now be of any use. A few articles which my wife had particularly desired to have were deposited with the rest of the things in a bag, and returning to the dining room, I hastily began to partake of the refreshments provided, for I was exhausted and had much fatigue before me.

Whilst thus occupied, I had not taken the precaution to notice the progress of time by my watch; my hasty meal was not yet finished, when I observed that the light of the room was already somewhat obscured and rapidly diminishing. I looked forth: the cloud was covering with a thick darkness every

object within a mile of the house, and all the intermediate space was wrapt in a gloomy twilight, increasing in obscurity towards the nucleus of the cloud.

I rushed to the stable, having previously satisfied myself that the horse was in readiness. The animal was now pawing the ground and expressing in every gesture impatience to be gone. I mounted and galloped on until I perceived myself beyond the outskirts of the darkness. I had then just reached a slight eminence, and thinking it a favourable opportunity of taking a last survey of the portent which followed me, I turned my horse's head, and after some moments it seemed as though my sight could by intent observation penetrate a little within the mass, and methought at first a long and narrow film of vapour seemed moving within the darkness, distinguished only by a slight difference of shade.

It came nearer to the exterior edge, and then was again nearly lost in the darkness. The motion seemed to have the character of life, and was like the writhing of some enormous serpent or reptile. I shuddered even at the mere imagination.

Again the serpent-like form was more clearly traceable, and a head with expanded jaws for an

instant caught my eye. There was only an outline of an object, of an uniform colour, no feature distinctly marked, and only distinguished from the dark ground on which it was projected by a leaden shade of somewhat darker hue : but the expression of that dim outline was hideous beyond my powers to describe. I could not look upon it again. My horse, impatient at delay, turned as my hold of the bridle relaxed through terror, and sprang away furiously galloping without intermission for some miles, and I had no further desire to check him : nor did I turn again till I had joined the rear of the fugitives, who were still moving onwards, as I had left them three hours before.

As I well knew the country, I was able, without much loss of time, to push forward by unfrequented ways, and though everywhere some portion of the advancing wave of fugitives was observable, yet it was in the high roads chiefly that danger was to be apprehended from the lawless character, and the confusion of the throng.

After riding about thirty miles, as it drew towards evening I entered a village considerably in advance of the crowd. I stopped at an inn, intending to renew my journey after I had procured for my horse

a little provender and rest. I did not observe so much appearance of confusion as I expected, but was informed that the whole population intended to leave in the morning. I remarked that before the morning the cloud would be upon them ; but they replied, “ Not so : for it does not advance by night.” “ Observe,” said they, “ the many groups of travellers within view on the distant hills, they are already encamped and preparing their evening’s repast, and will then rest till the morning.” I had not heard this before, and I thanked God in my heart, that when His judgments were thus abroad in the earth, He had not forgotten to be merciful.

The cloud seemed now shrunk to a low bank of dark vapour, against which the numerous fires on verge of the horizon were distinctly visible. The rest of the heavens was clear and the moon and stars shone brightly. I gazed wistfully on the strange scene, and anticipated with dread the speedy fate of the devoted city, and thought of the trials to which my own family, in conjunction with so many millions of sufferers must be exposed, when the darkness should envelope the capital, as it probably would in a few more days.

I awoke early, and lost no time in preparing for

my journey : but to my great vexation, an earlier riser had found and appropriated my horse, though I thought I had taken every needful precaution against this misadventure. I knew it would be useless labour to complain, or attempt to procure another, and at once proceeded on foot, with my bundle in my hand, hoping that on the road I might be able to get some conveyance.

CHAPTER III.

I do not recollect what followed in my dream, until I seemed to arrive at my friend's house. I entered weary and dispirited, and found my wife in affliction from my protracted absence ; but from the past our attention was soon turned to the future. What were my plans ? Had anything occurred to lighten or to increase the gloomy forebodings I entertained at my departure ? " No," I replied, " we have indeed

no abiding city here. I shudder to think of the horrors which are approaching. Let us instantly depart."

"To morrow" she said "we can go. A ship has been secretly engaged by some families who are of your opinion as to the indications of Providence. We are included in the number of the passengers by the kind exertions of Mr. Cosmos."

"And will he not accompany us?" "I fear not. You see in what comfort and luxury he lives : he is reluctant to leave them. Mrs. Cosmos conjures him with tears to wait a few days, and persuades him that we are terrified without cause."

"But he knows not what I have seen. He does not yet know the full extent of his danger. Whilst I go and endeavour to convince him of the truth, do you prepare for our departure this night."

"Well" she replied, with her accustomed meekness, "I will do so : but you are exhausted with fatigue." "It matters not. It is to escape from far greater suffering, that I urge you. Where are the children?" "They shall be ready at any time." She would have made some further observations or enquiries, but seeing my anxiety not to lose a moment of time, she repressed them, and I

went to my friend's apartment. Our friends were imbued with a deep sense of the importance of religion, but Mr. Cosmos had been prosperous in the world, and was so long accustomed to think himself secure in his possessions and comforts, that he could not imagine any such reverse of fortune would happen to him as I foreboded.

"Surely," said his weeping wife, "we shall not be deprived of all the advantages of wealth? We can at any time purchase a vessel, if that be needful: we shall, at all events, be better off than the generality."

They seemed to consider me an enthusiast,—that my reports and my fears were exaggerated. At length by dint of mere importunity, I succeeded in obtaining the promise, that, if in the morning there was no prospect of deliverance from the impending dangers, as the cloud was already within twenty miles of the city, they would accompany us on our voyage. I reluctantly assented to this needless delay, for the sake of my friends, and proceeded to secure, as I thought, the certainty of our being received on board in the morning, and of the ship's then sailing without further hindrance.

After this I found myself, as I dreamed, going to and fro by the side of many ships. Crowds were

endeavouring to get on board, careless as to whatever southern port they were bound. To my enquiries for the *Desperate*, bound to Malta, I could get no answer: every man seemed entirely absorbed in his own affairs. I endeavoured, in the confusion which surrounded me, to catch any casual word that might aid me in my search. At length I heard the name of the captain uttered by a sailor, who was talking to a person apparently inquiring for a vessel. I pushed eagerly forward, and thrusting gold into the man's hand, conjured him to tell me where I could find Captain Konenoch, of the *Desperate*, bound to Malta. "She sailed in the night." "What! in spite of her engagements!" "Ah," said the rough sailor, "what are all engagements now? The ship was taken possession of in the night by the retinue of six foreign ministers, who brought an order from government, and compelled the ship to sail without delay. I was one of the crew, but was dismissed, as there was not room enough for all who came on board." "And is there no other chance of a passage to the Mediterranean?" I eagerly asked. "I should think not. In less than an hour every deck will be crowded, and as many as can get clear will be under way."

I felt the disappointment bitterly, and sought my family, who were waiting for me in a carriage a little apart from the bustle of the quay. I told my wife, with a tremulous voice, the calamity that had befallen us, and that we must now decide, whether it would be better to return, or take example from others, and get on board the first vessel that was not already overcrowded. We were still deliberating on this point, when a new disaster sprung up. A large mob of reckless vagabonds, who always appear in strength when the laws of society are relaxed, were approaching with discordant yells, and seemed bent on mischief. I perceived there was danger, and hastily desired my family to take refuge in a shop on the opposite side of the street, the master of which beckoned us to come over. We had however hardly reached the door, when a dense crowd swept rapidly by, and my youngest boy, about six years of age, was hurried along with them. Then followed a long and fruitless search for the poor child. The cherished plan of a flight by sea was, for a time, abandoned.

After the weeping mother and our two other children had proceeded homewards by my directions—for I saw that a state of anarchy was fast approach-

ing, and that there would not be much longer any security in the streets—I resumed my search for the lost child. I found him at length: he seemed asleep, leaning against a door. He was dead, and I bore him away in my trembling arms.

A day seemed to pass away in unavailing and listless grief: what passed without I know not. I sat by the body of my poor boy, brooding in silent sorrow over my loss. But my wife, who bore this affliction with far greater fortitude, at length succeeded in convincing me that it was a merciful dispensation of Providence to take the child from evil to come, from impending dangers and trials too severe for his tender years.

The truth and reasonableness of her suggestions were obvious, and I wondered that I should have wasted so much time in vain regrets. I wrapped the body in a cloak, and carried it to an adjoining church, if possible to get it buried, or at least to be permitted to leave it within the sanctuary. The church was then closed, but a few persons who were about the door told me that in two hours it would be opened, and that some extraordinary appeal would then be made to the servants of God to save themselves from the danger which was now so near

at hand. I resolved to return at the time appointed that the remains of my son might not be entirely deprived of Christian rites of sepulture. I left the body in a secluded spot behind a tomb, and to occupy the intervening time, I walked to the north side of the city, to learn the progress of events. At the corners of the streets, and on the roofs of the houses, groups of spectators were directing their looks to the quarter from which danger was apprehended.

I ascended a magnificent flight of marble steps which led to a lofty terrace, sumptuously adorned with fountains and statues, and vases of rare workmanship, containing plants and flowers of bright colours and singular fragrance. On one side was an extensive range of superb buildings of a florid style of architecture, indicating by sculptured ornaments that the place was devoted to some extensive scheme of public amusement and luxury.

But now, to judge by what was passing on the terrace, or by the scene overlooked from the height, it might have been thought a burial ground, filled with decorated tombs, which gleamed forth in a livid and deathlike twilight; and they who stood by or moved slowly along the promenade were not as idle

saunterers seeking amusement, but as mourners, pale and haggard with extreme affliction, seeking for their dead. The terrace looked towards the north-west, so that the cloud was seen from it, at no great distance from the suburbs of the city. Being so near, it rose high in the atmosphere, and as the sun sank behind it two hours before the time of sunset, a premature twilight was brought on, for no rays could penetrate the mass of blackness, though for a time there was a sullen redness settled on the edge of the cloud, which, being reflected through the hazy atmosphere, added to the gloomy and mysterious character of the scene. The effect was heightened by the numerous fires which were burning in the streets and squares between the terrace and the cloud ; for there was no longer room for the population in the houses, and many of the fugitives lived in the open spaces of the city, as travellers about to decamp.

It was supposed that through the largest thoroughfare there had, that day, passed nearly a million of people towards the south, provisions having been supplied by the strenuous exertions of the government and citizens, to all who were willing to proceed without adding by their longer stay to the dangers by which the inhabitants of the city were surrounded.

As I walked slowly along the terrace I overheard relations of many extraordinary scenes which the by-standers had witnessed. A body of scientific men had still the hardihood to maintain that the dark vapour was the product of a very singular combination of natural phenomena.

An enormous wreath of volcanic smoke, replete with fine and light ashes was said to be the cause of the darkness. In the daytime it advanced, because the particles were intermixed with vapour, and being rarefied were thus carried forward by a light breeze in the upper strata of the atmosphere; but at night, the cloud being more dense, it diminished in altitude, and was not moved by the breeze. So convinced were some of the truth of their hypothesis, that they offered to form a party which should enter the cloud, and make such observations as would settle the point. The speaker had witnessed this rash attempt. As no horses would move in the direction of the cloud, the experiment was tried on the northern railroad: one carriage was filled with the philosophical party, and others followed which were to be detached when they came nearer the cloud. The leading carriage, after being separated from the rest, was to proceed alone at a

slow rate. But after a short time, from some unknown causes the speed was accelerated, the men at the engine seemed to have lost all command over the machinery, the whole party were hurried forward and in a few instants lost in the darkness, from which, of course, none returned.

A balloon had also ascended with three or four bold adventurers above the height of the cloud, and these descended safe. They reported that the darkness seemed to spread many miles, and beyond it there appeared smoke of a dark ruddy colour which extended as far as the eye could reach. They could discover nothing further.

After much discourse of this nature I descended from the terrace, as I thought it would be time to return to the church where I had left the body of my child. A great crowd was now about the door, and the minister was pointed out to me as he was about to enter. He was tall, and striking in his appearance: his features strongly marked, but softened by an expression of great mildness and benevolence. When I accosted him he listened with a compassionate attention. He accompanied me to the spot where I had laid the child. "As to burial," he said, "it matters not. The resurrection

of the dead is at hand." "But, sir," I answered, "I serve God, and I would not seem to be careless of that dust which He so honours. I would preserve even that form from the power of the destroying angel, who approaches in yonder cloud."

"It is right, my brother. When our service is over, bring him into the church and lay him near the altar. Perhaps the enemy will not be permitted to defile the temples of the Most High. You may not then have an opportunity of seeing me, I will therefore pray over him."

He then repeated with a calm solemnity some sentences from the burial service, and bade me farewell, but learning that it was my wish to be present at the evening service, he took me into the church with him by a private door, and directed me to a small gallery not fully occupied, where I could see and hear all that passed. This I considered fortunate, as the rest of the church was thronged, and many were excluded for want of room.

As we were waiting a few minutes before the commencement of the service, I made enquiries of one respecting the minister. I found that he was curate of the church; that he had never been remarkable for his talents or zeal, though he always

had discharged his duties with meekness and fidelity : but that since God's judgments were abroad, he had assumed a higher tone : that he had called upon those who had authority in the Church and State (they had long since been separated) to make a more open demonstration of religion. That he had received large assurances of concurrence and promises of support ; however, nothing was done. " But let us hear," concluded my neighbour in a whisper, " what will be the purport and the effect of this his last appeal."

The evening service was read with tranquil devotion, without extempore additions, and as he read there was a holy silence and calm in that sacred spot, when all without was tumult and danger. A discourse followed, but of a different character. He introduced it by the text from the last chapter of the Revelations : " He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Coming at once to the point, he said that these words must now be applied to the world, which was already smitten with destruction ; that he feared it was no longer of use to endeavour to convert men,

but that there was still hope for the faithful and righteous who, by studying the revealed will of God, should seek to find out how in the present emergency they might best please Him, and make His glory manifest in the eye of the world, by such demonstrations of the excellence of religion as the occasion called forth. He then, with the most convincing and touching eloquence, explained his design, and confirmed his arguments by reference to Scripture; and at length, when the hearts of all were touched with one sublime and overpowering impression of the urgency of the case, the congregation rose with one accord, and cried aloud that he should lead them forth in the name of God, and that they would one and all follow him, and obey his directions, for they believed God spake to them by him.

As soon as he had reverently bowed his head, in token of his assent, he descended from the pulpit amidst loud acclamations, and directed some one to detach the covering of the communion table, and to affix it to a pole, that it might serve for their banner. Now the front of this covering was of rich embroidery, deeply fringed, and with the ordinary emblem of the Holy Trinity and a large cross in the

centre. It was converted into a suitable banner, and as it was borne through the church the enthusiasm of the congregation knew no bounds. These expressions of zeal might indeed have justly been deemed fanaticism and only fit to be repressed in ordinary times, but now they did not seem to go at all beyond what the occasion demanded.

By the direction of their leader, the slightest intimation of whose wish was eagerly caught and immediately obeyed, the women were directed to return to their homes, and be ready at break of day to meet at an appointed place with their families. The men formed themselves in ranks, and thus proceeded through the principal streets of the whole city, calling upon the faithful to join them, and to separate themselves without delay from the children of Satan. To the eager enquiries of the multitude after the object of the procession, answers were returned which made it appear to many a sudden outbreak of infatuated superstition, but to others the message came as the signal of that deliverance of which they had begun to despair.

After this (as I subsequently heard), a plan for regulating their future movements was arranged by their leader, with a degree of judgment and autho-

city which acted upon the multitude like an oracle from heaven. I left the procession early to seek my family and friends, and to persuade them to leave all and follow this new leader. I found my proposal received with coldness. I was thought to have caught the prevailing enthusiasm, which would soon terminate in utter disappointment. Their own arrangements were already made.

There were two carriages to be in readiness at the first dawn of day for our united families, and another with some servants and provisions. Attention even had been paid to little comforts and luxuries, as though we had been starting on a party of pleasure. None of us that night retired to rest, for our agitated minds would not, we were certain, suffer us to sleep.

As the hour of our departure approached we became impatient, fearing lest some accident should interfere with our plans. Besides there were, independently of the dreaded cloud, some indications of an approaching storm. The carriages were to be in waiting in a field at the back of the premises to avoid observation.

At length all was ready; we walked silently to the appointed place. The carriage into which my

friends entered moved off slowly; the moon had sunk, and it was still dark, so that I did not at first observe that my wife was not in the carriage, but only the two children. Her absence, however, was soon perceived, and I immediately returned to the house, and called for her, but heard no answer. I then concluded that she had by mistake got into the first carriage, and might soon be overtaken. It was, however, some time before we did overtake them; she was not there. This was, indeed, a mournful disaster to us all; to me it was like a sentence of death. I persuaded our friends to proceed, whilst I returned to the house; promising that if successful in my search we would overtake them, if not, they would probably see me no more. The day breaking, they saw the necessity of continuing their course. I dared not take the carriage back, lest it should be seized by some of the lawless rabble who were already numerous in the bye-road we had selected. My friends reluctantly consented to the arrangement, and, after directing the driver of the carriage provided for us to an outbuilding where it might be secured from observation, I ran back, calling aloud, in a frantic voice, the name of my wife.

As I went, I remarked that a breeze had sprung up, and I looked to see if the sky still portended a change. The dreaded cloud remained as it was the evening before, unmoved ; but overhead another cloud of a very threatening appearance, such as I have heard described as ushering in a tropical storm, was, I now observed, fast descending, and spreading with astonishing rapidity, its blackness more and more widening across the canopy of heaven, and it began to flicker continually with unsteady electrical flashes. I foresaw that no ordinary storm was approaching, and I ran with all my speed till I reached the house. By that time the light of returning day had disappeared ; a furious wind began to blow, and the thunder increased in loudness. The lightning also seemed to run along the ground, mingling with the hail, as of old.

I hastily entered the open doors, as much in need of shelter for the body, as of comfort to my distracted mind. A figure sprang forward through the gloom—it was my wife. For a short time, in my delight, I forgot our awful situation ; again the pealing thunder, the flashes of lightning, the crackling of fire, reminded me of flight. But at this moment the storm seemed at its height. It would

have been madness to venture forth; and as the instruments of divine agency seemed in this instance to be following the natural course of phenomena in great hurricanes, we thought we might hope to escape by taking advantage of one of the usual intermissions of violence which characterise them.

In the meantime we went to an upper room which overlooked the city, my wife clinging to my arm that no fresh calamity might separate us. The scene which presented itself reconciled us to this delay, though it excited stronger alarm. Overhead the dark ragged clouds, rent as it were in fragments by conflicting winds, and the streaming lightning that burst from them incessantly in vivid coruscations, were whirling about in wild confusion. The streets were deserted except by a few wretched people who wandered about distracted by terror, and some, in their bewilderment, rushing towards the parts where danger was most imminent; for the bolts of fire which were flying in every direction had not failed in their errand. The work of destruction was in rapid progress; fires were breaking out in every quarter. The curtain of impenetrable darkness which formed the boundary of the view on one side, added to the horrors of the scene, as volumes of

white smoke were succeeded by towering flames. The loftiest turrets and domes and pillars standing out brightly in the surrounding glare, seemed to wait in sullen grandeur their coming destiny.

A report as of the discharge of the loudest artillery shook violently the house in which we were, and struck another, the chimnies and part of the walls of which fell with a dreadful crash, and a dense smoke issuing from the shattered windows and rifted walls, convinced us that the flames would speedily burst forth, and that we could no longer remain in our present situation. We, therefore, hastily descended, and sallied out, commending ourselves devoutly to the protection of Him who directed and controlled the fury of the elements. The large fragments of splintered ice which lay on the ground crackled and slipped from our unsteady feet. The wind drove us to and fro; the lightning which seemed to pass under us along the pavement made us at first almost despair of safety; but as we struggled on, suddenly the almost deafening noise of the wind and thunder ceased, and there was a transient calm.

The silence was now only broken by the rustle of the flames, the occasional crash of falling build-

ings, and the cries of the distressed. The favourable moment was not lost ; we pressed forward with all the speed we could, and in ten minutes we had reached our carriage, which was more than a mile in advance. It had been sheltered from the storm within the building behind which we had left it.

When we arrived panting and almost sinking with exhaustion, the storm had again returned in its fury, but we perceived that we were beyond the limits of its fiercest action. The wind was strong, the lightning vivid and frequent, the thunder loud, but there were none of the appalling horrors of the scene we had quitted ; the violence of the tempest seemed indeed limited to the doomed city. The light of day now penetrated the dark masses of clouds as it might on a stormy morning. Our children were safe, though in agonies of terror. And now the servant who had been left in charge of the carriage, thought that we might venture to proceed, and we were willing enough to try the experiment. At first the horses were frightened, and we ran no small risk of being overturned, but by and by they struggled through the storm more resolutely, and in half-an-hour we felt with gratitude that we were out of immediate danger.

As we thus journeyed on more tranquilly, my wife accounted for her absence ; she had not rightly understood where the carriages were to be waiting, and had been seeking us in the darkness about the premises ; at that time there was a great tumult in the public road, she did not hear me call, and being much alarmed supposes she must have fainted, for she rested on a garden seat, when the trembling and feebleness of her limbs disabled her from proceeding. We did not, however, dwell much upon the cause of the misadventure, for our hearts were too full of thankfulness for our escape.

As we emerged into the open sunshine it seemed as though there were no more troubles to encounter ; such is the elastic energy of the human mind, and so readily do we accommodate ourselves to the pressure of evil, which, at a distance, could not have been contemplated without horror.

What was our situation ? Behind us was that fearful cloud forbidding all retreat, and threatening the inconsiderate loiterer with destruction ; before us was a prospect hardly less formidable. To the dread of supernatural dangers, was added that of famine and injury, from the concentration of millions of human beings, hemmed in as they shortly

must be by the impassable cloud and the sea. The vast multitudes which surrounded us, and had left, probably for ever, their comfortable homes, were without abodes, many without food even for the passing day, and no one knew when or where he should next be able to take his rest.

We were borne along as drops in this ungovernable ocean ; one part only of our destination seemed revealed to us—that the end of all things was at hand. What intervening trials there might remain, or what strange and awful scenes we might in that interval pass through, was still hidden from us. But in spite of all this, our minds lightened by the recent escape, so far from being overwhelmed by these reflections, were tranquil, and could even find an interest in observing surrounding objects, and in making trifling arrangements to add to our comfort.

Of comfort or repose, however, we found but little that day ; so many claims were made on our compassion by the hungry and weary—so many alarms from the threats of the violent—so many tedious delays from the throng of carriages, that before evening we envied those on foot, who could pass unmolested along the road or the adjoining fields, which before mid-day, formed a broad and

unobstructed passage for innumerable travellers. We did not feel satisfied with ourselves for the pains we had taken to be separated from the common lot of our fellow creatures ; and at length I said to my companions, “ We have done wrong in not joining the band of the faithful, let us retrieve our error in time ; we have thus far followed our own devices, and let us now place ourselves at once under the guidance of Providence, and join the faithful in their humiliation, that we may partake of the triumph which I am confident will await them.”

We all seemed animated with the same feelings ; even the children were pleased with the proposal. It was now drawing on towards evening, and many were already preparing for their evening repast. We drew the carriage to the road side ; the horses were led away by the servant to an adjoining pasture. We took our supper, and with a short but fervent prayer we sought the repose which we so much needed.

I had thrown myself on the ground, wrapped in my cloak, and as I looked with half-closed eyes on the starry heavens, a sweet oblivion of all care was beginning to steal over me, when suddenly I was awakened by a sensation of falling. I sat up, but

supposing it was an effect of disturbed sleep, which I had often experienced, I was again composing myself, when I distinctly felt the earth moving under me. I perceived it was an earthquake. My family leaped from the carriage and betook themselves to prayer; I joined them, and thought that our last hour was come. Another and more violent shock succeeded, and we were cast to the ground; we looked up, and expected to see the stars falling from heaven, but they shone as bright and calm as ever, and that spectacle consoled us.

In the meantime all around was terror and confusion; wild shrieks and cries of alarm arose from every hill and valley. The dark forms of terrified multitudes were moving about in every direction. It was a long and terrible hour which elapsed before the returning shocks of the earthquake ceased, and another before the noise and tumult of the multitude had subsided. At length we felt once more the overpowering want of rest, and slept soundly; for thus I must suppose the interval was occupied until I renewed my dream.

CHAPTER IV.

ONCE more, still dreaming, I seemed to awake from a long and profound sleep, and at first could not arrest the progress of the vague and transient imaginings which flitted confusedly across my mind.

I tried in vain to get rid of a feeling of weakness like that which oppresses the mind on recovering from a swoon, before surrounding objects are discerned, or any distinct idea suggested by the help of which the mind is enabled to seize on some link of the broken chain of consciousness, and connect the present with the past. On recovering from my dreamy consciousness, I found that I was lying on a mattress under a very small tent, or rather a coarse and rude awning of canvas, supported by an oar, the lower extremities being stretched obliquely and fastened by a few pegs driven into the sand:—for my bed was apparently laid on the bare and ribbed sand of the ocean.

I pulled aside an unfastened corner of the covering which was flapping idly in the breeze, and looked forth: another and similar tent was within a yard of that which I occupied. I could reach the lowest part of the canvas, and raised it with a presentiment that

my family was reposing there. It was so: they were in a deep sleep, and I hastily closed the awning lest I should disturb them. On turning my head towards the open end of the narrow passage, which separated the tents, the abrupt and dark edge of a distant cloud caught my eye. In an instant the incidents which I have related rushed into my mind, and gradually assumed that order and distinctness, which enabled me to judge that my present situation was in some way connected with them. The same awful apprehensions of an approaching termination of all earthly things, again took possession of my mind, and I now hastily arose to know where I was, and what had taken place while I slept.

On stepping forth from my miserable resting-place, a new scene presented itself. I was on the sea-shore, around me on all sides were innumerable tents, erected in a rude fashion and of various dimensions; amongst these multitudes were passing to and fro, as if intent upon some important business. In the distance I could here and there—as Intervening objects permitted—catch a glimpse of the sea, but at so great a distance, that I could hardly recognize it as a body of water, through the gloomy twilight which enveloped the whole scene. On

turning to look in the opposite direction, I remarked at no great distance a line of white cliffs, which in their general outline, had some resemblance to the sea-coast about Dover, only that their precipitous sides were broken down in immense ruins, and the summit was jagged as if riven by an earthquake. But this circumstance did not so much interest me, as the aspect of the sky to which I quickly directed my anxious looks; impressed with a strong presentiment that I should there discover the tokens of the fearful destiny which threatened me and all mankind

I had thought it was the break of day, for all objects were enveloped in partial gloom; but to my dismay, the sun was high in the clear heavens and of the colour of blood, casting a dim and portentous light more like that of a great solar eclipse than of twilight. There was no appearance of fog or mist, and objects cast a purple shadow, as if seen in the sunshine through a coloured glass. In a black line of cloud which stretched itself partly across the sea to the south-west, I recognized the former object of dread, but my returning terror was however somewhat allayed by observing that it seemed, from its greatly diminished altitude, to be at a far greater distance than I had hitherto seen it.

In order to obtain a more distinct view of the scene before me, I now ascended with some difficulty a pile of enormous fragments of chalk, and could take into my view more objects than when on the level sand. On one side I beheld the ruins of a town, which had manifestly been recently shaken down by a tremendous earthquake. Not a building was left entire. The walls of some were still standing, but so shattered and dangerous that the whole place seemed to be deserted. On the far extending sands the spectacle was still more strange, for it was not the population of a town, but rather of an extensive country, that seemed gathered together on their broad level. The multitudes were not standing idle as men rendered desperate by some great calamity, but were busily moving about, for what purpose I could not as yet conjecture: only it seemed that for the most part they were engaged in going to or from a particular point on the line of the sea, which might be four or five miles distant. And then I could indistinctly see through the hazy atmosphere and above the dark mass of the vast multitude, the tall masts of many ships rising like a wintry forest above the crowd.

Whilst I was busy conjecturing what this might

mean, my eye rested on the face of one of the many, who were passing hastily by at the foot of the eminence on which I stood. I had seen the person before, but could not recollect where. He had a telescope in his hand, and as he looked up, as if purposing to ascend, in order to take a view of the scene, I recognized in him the elder of my fellow-travellers in the railway carriage which brought me from my quiet home. We soon fell into conversation on the surprising events which had taken place since we last parted, and after some discourse I eagerly asked for an explanation of the scene before me, intimating that from my recent arrival on the coast I had not yet had an opportunity of obtaining information on the subject. He replied, "The assemblage you see before you is but a small portion of the whole remaining population of England which have fled to the sea-coast from that terrific cloud which still threatens us, though it has not advanced for the last three days. It is hoped that thus time may be afforded for crossing the channel."

"And this place," I said, looking round, "ought to be the vicinity of Dover, there is the site of the castle and the town, and other local features which are well known to me ; but what changes are these ?

Surely yon broad and winding river, for such it seems, is not the channel that separates us from France?"

"It is the same," said my companion, "but in one night an earthquake which destroyed the town, and threw down the solid barrier of our rocky cliffs, lifted up the bed of the sea above the height of the returning tide, leaving only a narrow strait between us and the shores of France. And now, one absorbing idea occupies the minds of all men—how they may escape thither. For no reasonable man can suppose that this partial relief from the terrors of our recent flight will last many days. Already, as you see, there is spreading over the scene an insidious and portentous gloom, which, if it gradually increase, as it has done hitherto, will shortly turn to darkness. But beyond the sea, it is confidently reported, that there is undiminished daylight and sunshine. There is a band of Christian pilgrims of whom I hope you are one, or soon will be. They seek their rest in the distant plains of Palestine, where they hope to meet a Saviour, who will deliver them from all further care and danger: but as for the multitude, they flatter themselves that if they can but cross the sea they shall be safe. They are infatuated enough to believe that *this* country

only is doomed to destruction. It would weary you to hear by what ingenious arguments this expectation is supported : it will be more interesting to you to be informed of the present position of our affairs.” “ Most certainly, and I would thank you to relate briefly what has happened, for judging from the throng of ships about yonder point, where the crowd is most dense, and seems actually advanced beyond the limits of the sands, I should have imagined that by this time thousands might have been transferred to the opposite coast.”

“ Already,” he said, “ many thousands have crossed and many thousands more might have done so, had they not been repelled by the unreasonable animosity of our continental neighbours, who became alarmed lest this sudden immigration should create a famine, so that after two days the further landing of the fugitives was forbidden, and even opposed by force of arms.” “ But surely,” I said, “ their threats or hostility could not avail against the determination of men urged on by such a dreadful necessity ?”

After a few ineffectual attempts at negotiation, in which all that we required was a passage across a small portion of France, an armament was hastily despatched. All that were of the military profession

eagerly volunteered their services: arms were supplied them from the citadel, the ruins of which you now see on the distant eminence. There was no want of ships, for they had come hither from many different ports and had been detained in the channel by contrary winds, and other causes. The vessels were hastily equipped and manned, but the sea was calm and the ships moved slowly, being towed by boats to their destination. It was evening when they arrived. The enemy was prepared in array against them: an ineffectual attempt was made to land, and night soon followed—a dark and tempestuous night. An universal panic seized them, and they returned. They pretended, but it might be only to excuse their sudden fear, that strange apparitions were seen in the air and on the waves forbidding them to proceed. So they accounted for their speedy return, and their report acquired some strength from what occurred the next day; for in the morning they again ventured forth, but before they had reached the mid-channel, they were met with tidings that not a man was to be found on all the French coast, to which they were proceeding. And so it proved. The shore, the town, every place was deserted. The cattle were grazing in the fields,

but not one living man was found to relate by what means this unaccountable flight had taken place. Many bodies of the dead were found; but they were of the old and feeble who probably could not escape with the rest.

Another remarkable circumstance had occurred: the westerly wind had in the meantime driven back numberless vessels, which had been endeavouring to get to sea to the southward and westward. Many were adrift, having been deserted by their crews, who effected a landing on the continent.

I here interrupted the narrative by observing that I could now sufficiently account for the crowd of shipping which had so much attracted my notice; but why were so many collected together and apparently lying idle when they might be carrying over the multitude?

Before answering me he put his telescope into my hand, and asked me what more I could discover by its aid?

A singular spectacle presented itself: there seemed a solid mass of shipping covered by a dense cloud of people, stretching far out to sea. I asked the meaning of this. They were forming an enormous bridge over the intervening strait. It had

been suggested by the leader of the pilgrims, and declared to be practicable by a council of men of science. It was indeed under all circumstances the only chance that was left for the escape of the multitude. With loud acclamations and willing hands, ships and boats were collected as materials from every quarter: every man was anxious to contribute all the aid that his skill or strength could afford.

“It is expected that it will be this day completed,” he continued: “of the whole body of pilgrims, not one will avail himself of this advantage, until all their countrymen have passed over. They will be employed in maintaining the requisite order, and making known to all, the regulations which may secure a safe transit: and all, I am sure, subdued as they now are by terror or penitence, will attend to their directions with gratitude. But come—we who are pilgrims must not stand idle. See the crowds are already streaming more densely towards that point. Hark!” A loud and prolonged shout, which was caught up by the more distant of the multitude, now reached our ears: it announced the completion of the work. We arose, and I hastened first to our tents. My family was there;

My wife had kindled a fire and prepared a frugal meal ; she seemed expecting me and went on quietly with her occupation, but with frequent and fearful glances around. We hastily took our meal : our tents were folded up ; many offers of assistance were made by brother pilgrims, who seemed to recognise us. We took up our station on the outskirts of the crowd, and learned in what manner we could in our place help to preserve that order which seemed essential to the success of so stupendous an enterprize.

Many long and weary hours passed away, in which nothing seemed to appear before my eyes, but a crowd passing slowly and incessantly forward in one direction. Night and day succeeded one another : still the same monotonous scene flitted before my eyes : the same repetitions of order were given, how danger was to be avoided. My family rested in the tent at a short distance from us.

The third morning came, if that could be called dawn which was only like darkness visible, if that could be called the rising sun, which came up once more to cast a deep blood-red hue, and shed a dim and terrific twilight over the dreary waste of sand. For the multitude had passed : the pilgrims, com-

paratively a small body, still remained ; I listened to the loud sound of their voices which were united in a solemn hymn of praise. My family had gone on : the tents had disappeared : the sacred banner was seen in advance. The brethren followed, not in a confused mass, but in companies and ranks, well arranged, and as if instinct with one spirit. As I stood apart towards the rear of the body I was inspired with a sudden desire to be the last who should leave the ill-fated shore ; and while the rest of our company passed in silence, I turned to take a last farewell look of my native land. The white and broken masses of the distant cliffs were still gleaming through the lurid atmosphere with a pale and ghastly aspect. The sea, as it slightly heaved and subsided in broad and slow undulations, seemed itself expiring.

Thoughts of the past,—of the living,—of populous cities,—of smiling landscapes,—of my own peaceful home, came over me, and I wept. At length a dull hollow noise, as of the rising sea, came from a distance ; a long wave, only distinguishable by a thread of foam, broke gently at my feet. I was aroused from my reverie, and saw that I was alone. The bridge of ships, which had been so rapidly

constructed by the energies of men urged on by terror, seemed a safe passage when covered by passing crowds, but now it appeared incredible that any could have trusted to it. I could not think without shuddering that I had, perhaps, seven miles to pass over from ship to ship. I hastened on, however, with all the speed I could; I found that the obstacles which might have impeded the progress of the passengers had been, with immense labour, removed, and the chasms between cable-bound ships had been as ingeniously covered with planks. But as might be supposed, much injury had been done; planks had been broken and slipt from their places, and, in many parts, the work had the appearance of an enormous wreck.

As I struggled on, my hopes were sustained and my exertions animated by observing some increase of light; but then I also perceived that the bridge began to rock with the heaving of the sea, that the chasms I had to leap over widened,—the work of incipient destruction was more apparent. I redoubled my efforts; I ran along the level decks, that I might employ more care and time, in passing the precarious passage which insecurely joined them. I thus passed the central parts of the bridge, which

were most injured by the fluctuations of the sea. I at length even began to hear the encouraging shouts of some who were compassionately watching my progress from the shore. But the wind and the sea had in the meantime risen so as to make my escape appear impossible. The loud crashing of timber behind me, convinced me that the line was broken; and on looking back, I saw large portions of the unwieldy bridge drifting away. Before me, too, the mass was breaking from the shore. I called aloud for help; I saw the narrow platform by which I was to reach the next ship loosening; I hesitated a moment, and looked wistfully to the land; a boat was approaching, I thought if I could but reach the next ship, I should be safe. I rushed over the planks; they sank with me, and I fell into the now foaming waves. With the sudden shock I awoke.

CHAPTER V.

So sudden a transition, from the vivid emotions excited by the startling incidents of my dream, to the sense of security suggested by the ticking of the clock in the corner of my chamber, and the tranquil stars twinkling through my window, at first bewildered me greatly. The visionary senses were so strongly impressed, that they counterbalanced for awhile that peculiar consciousness of reality, which characterizes our waking perceptions, and it was only by an effort that I could divest myself of the notion, that the series of more powerful impressions was the reality, and that my present state was a dream of former days. As soon however as my mind had resumed its discriminating power, and my astonishment at the strangeness of my late dream had somewhat subsided, I began to regret that it had been thus abruptly terminated: I felt curious to know what might be the issue of those preparations, which in my dream had appeared so all-important.

But why not have imagined them at once without the assistance of sleep? My inventions in either case would have been a mere creation of fancy. And

yet how differently did I estimate the effects! The waking combinations of fancy would have seemed an idle reverie compared with the vivid interest of the dream. I did not, however, suffer myself to dwell upon any such speculations at that time: my experience in the art of renewing dreams had taught me that all I could do now was to keep my mind free from all extraneous thoughts, that the links of the chain already severed might not be irrecoverably separated by the interposition of a different train of ideas.

My eyes were heavy with sleep, but my limbs were feverish, and little inclined to repose. I tried to quiet myself, and kept my thoughts fixed on the latest scenes of my dream. The rocking and creaking of the dismantled ships—the slow heaving of the booming sea—the shadowless and lurid sunlight—the solitary tramp of my unsteady feet over an endless flooring of narrow planks and disjointed platforms. I slept, but not profoundly as before. I dreamed, but not of a continued and connected series of events, springing as it were from one another, and accompanied by congruous incidents: my sleep was disturbed, as if by repeated attacks of nightmare, whenever I began to dream something

would startle me for an instant ; again I slept, and a fresh sequence of impressions would be again interrupted by some sudden discord of feeling. I was glad, however, to observe in the short waking intervals, that these snatches of dreams began to have more of a definite relation to the events already described. I was generally journeying on foot ; sometimes alone, seeking for lost companions—sometimes with a multitude, my wife and children by my side. Sometimes we seemed to converse with cheerfulness and hope, but more frequently we were encountering some of the perils of a long journey in a strange land, from want of food and water, and from conflicts with hostile armies. Sometimes we were climbing over the snowy ridges of mountains—passing along the edges of dangerous precipices—crossing rivers—suffering alternations of cold and heat, calm and tempest.

These vicissitudes would severally occupy my mind for a short space ; then when the danger was very pressing, I would by an effort throw off the shackles of sleep, and as quickly return to a state of disturbed somnolency ; till gradually each incident seemed to connect itself with my former dream. I could now discover that there was always the same

banner of the cross carried before us ; that the same spirit animated us as when first we agreed to follow that sacred standard : that the journeyings from day to day seemed to be conducted with that order, and generally with that successful progress, under immeasurable difficulties and dangers, which could only have been insured, so far as human power was concerned, by consummate ability in the leader, and by the entire unanimity and zeal of the followers. Nor was the probable issue of these adventures unconnected with the former details of my dream. Great changes were evidently taking place in the earth itself : dreadful meteors nightly traversed the heavens : subterraneous thunderings and earthquakes were frequent : whole regions were desolated, and our course was impeded by volcanic eruptions.

The dark cloud no longer followed us, the sky was sometimes fair and azure, sometimes overcast with clouds. The sun however never shone out in its usual lustre, but was of a pale and sickly hue, and its light as we proceeded day after day became, by imperceptible degrees, fainter and fainter, as if it would ere long be extinguished. Its heat was obviously diminishing, but this occasioned us no great inconvenience, as we travelled towards the south,

and as the internal temperature of the earth was as gradually increasing.

These recollections seemed to pass through my mind, as I ruminated one day on our journey. My wife and one of my children were at my side, alas! the other, who was more delicate, had sunk under the fatigues and privations of the march. I gazed wistfully on my wife, as she looked towards some distant mountains we had to cross. Her face was darkened and wrinkled by continued fatigue and exposure to the air: her legs and feet were bare and disfigured by scratches and wounds received in the rugged march: her attire was mean and scanty, and her hair dishevelled, but there was a firmness and elasticity in her step which seemed to show that her strength and spirit were unsubdued.

It seemed to me that in the course of a long wandering, her society had been my greatest earthly support and consolation; her spirits were equable, her temper cheerful, placid, and affectionate. As to her religious sentiments, like those of other women who had the courage to engage in this pilgrimage, every thought and action was directed by a fervent piety, without ostentation, and almost without effort.

It seemed on that occasion as though I could deliberately reflect on these things : on no other did I endeavour to connect the present with the past or future. But this lucid interval, if I may so call it, was of short duration, it was again succeeded by desultory and incongruous visions of singular adventures, perils, and disasters, without beginning or end or connection. In a word, I began in the moments of waking consciousness, which interrupted my restless slumbers, to despair of making anything more of my dream ; when all at once I sank into complete repose, and every thought and object were once more presented in the colouring and consistency of reality : and they were not of a nature to be forgotten.

I was sitting alone in a desolate plain. I seemed to have just revived from a long swoon brought on by excessive fatigue and thirst. My lips and throat were parched, my strength was exhausted, I could not rise or move : but my thoughts were active and connected. It seemed that all these detached glimpses of scenes and adventures were parts of one long and melancholy tale of a wandering in company with the pilgrim host to the Holy Land. In what part of the world I now was I knew not, but

believed that it was not far from the proposed limits of the journey: that, a few hours before, my tender wife had given me her last kiss,—that our leader had pronounced over me with a tremulous voice his last benediction.

They had supposed me to be at the point of death, for indeed our sufferings had been for the last part of our journey of the severest kind. We had been without food or water for three days. My remaining child, who had passed through all previous dangers of our journey, sank under this last trial. I was dispirited and lost something of that religious hope and resignation which had hitherto animated me in common with my faithful companions: and when my spirit failed, my bodily strength left me also.

I was aware that it was not want of charity which caused me to be thus abandoned, but a belief that I was already dead: and that in all probability life could only be supported by them a few hours longer.

On reviving from insensibility, I had looked around as well as my dimness of sight would permit; but when I recollected the features of the dreary plain over which we were passing when I fell, I closed my eyes again to shut out the horrors

which seemed to surround me. The earth was dry and scored with deep crevices, from which a light vapour ascended : all vegetation was withered. The sky was cloudless, but of a dark indigo colour. That which seemed to be the sun, was of an ashy paleness, and its apparent magnitude much diminished. These sights filled me with dismay, but did not affect me so much as being left behind after such painful efforts for so many months, and within a few days', perhaps a few hours' march of our destination. I took, therefore, as I supposed, my last farewell look of the fading world, and closed my eyes for death : but ere long a slight pressure on my shoulder caused me once more to re-open them. A majestic figure in human form stood before me, gazing on me with a countenance of ineffable beauty, in which curiosity seemed blended with benignity and compassion. I made an effort to speak, but my tongue was parched and stiffened : with difficulty I raised my hand towards my mouth and muttered in almost inarticulate accents " water ! "

The angel, for I already perceived it was an angel, seemed to understand me, and stooping, loosened my pilgrim's cruse from my side, took it, and springing from the earth with expanded wings, flew

with the speed of an arrow towards the distant mountains. As he clove the liquid air, I marked how rapidly his form diminished to that of an eagle—a small bird—a mere speck—and disappeared.

I was again alone, the current of life seemed again to ebb; again, the heavy lids closed on my glazing eyes. After a period of unconsciousness the touch of his hand revived me. He held the cruse to my mouth and I drank eagerly: I felt as though the refreshing draught had been brought from the waters of life: the blood returned to its wonted channels; the wretchedness of extreme exhaustion no longer oppressed me; I could move and speak freely. I bowed my head low before him with many expressions of reverence and gratitude. Smiling, he interrupted me by enquiring how I was thus left at a distance from all the human race. He spoke in my own language, with a pure and simple intonation, in words, few, and of measured dignity. In answer, I gave a brief account of my anxious desire to appear with a band of Christian brethren before the judgment-seat of Christ:—that with this view I had gladly encountered the perils of a long pilgrimage, and regretted in the last hour to be thus defeated in my hopes.

“ And is it this alone,” he asked, “ which attaches you to a perishing world ? ” “ Ah, no,” I said, “ I confess that I mourn at parting with those dear companions of my toils. Our hearts were knit together as the heart of one man. The beloved partner of all my joys and sorrows, where is she ? How will she——” my voice failed me, and I wept. But he answered not. As soon as my feelings would permit, I added, “ But if thou canst, O bright and immortal spirit, lead me to my friends, let me once more hear the voice of human friendship and love before I stand at the judgment-seat, lest my distracted thoughts be unfitted for my awful condition, and add to the weight of those sins which already expose me to the wrath of my Judge.”

He was still silent, and I did not dare to raise my eyes, lest I should meet his ardent gaze, divested of that benignity which had invited me to speak. He turned from me towards the sun, which was drawing near the meridian. Whilst he seemed estimating its altitude in the heavens, or deliberating, I could not, in spite of my excited feelings, forbear wondering at the strangeness of the scene. The arid wilderness was bounded before me by a dark smoke : beyond it and above it there rose the sharp

ridges of a lofty mountain. A slight elevation on which we were, enabled me to see a considerable distance over the plain, which appeared to have been, a few months since, covered with vegetation, but had now an aspect of utter sterility, rendered more hideous by the dried up channel of a stream of some magnitude. The trees were leafless: from the chasms of the hardened soil, here and there suddenly shot up columns of thick smoke; and subterraneous explosions, as of distant cannon, were the only sounds that broke the silence which reigned over these desolate regions. The only living form besides myself was the mysterious and beautiful figure which stood before me.

As the angel turned I remarked that wings of the purest white were folded compactly behind him, detracting nothing from the symmetrical beauty of his manly form. A light garment, dazzlingly white, hung gracefully over one shoulder, and passing under the wings was girded about his loins: his arms and legs were bare; his head uncovered.

I had hardly time to make these observations before he again turned towards me, and said in a tone and manner which expressed more than his words a strong sentiment of compassionate interest,

“ My brother, it is not for me to pass a judgment on the vanity of worldly affections at this time : my office is rather to give effect to those feelings of goodwill towards you, which are part of my spiritual nature, and I am here to succour you, and if you will have it so, to conduct you to the summit of yonder mountain—the extreme limit of my watch. You may from thence descend into the plain on the other side, where you may meet your friends and terminate your wanderings. Or, if you had rather rest here, death will be to you only as a short slumber : before the shadow of that tall and branchless pine shall have passed from you to where I now stand, you will wake again and rise with the dead. Why then should you encounter fresh perils and toils ? Why vex yourself more with earthly passions ?

“ Ah ! then,” I somewhat hastily interposed, “ is not love an immortal passion ? Shall we not love in heaven ? ”

“ I may not now,” he answered, “ unfold the mysteries of your future state : but come—I will lead you from hence, for I know the desire of your heart. Only be prepared : your courage will be put to the proof.”

“I fear nothing,” I replied, “under your holy guidance and care.” “Rise then, speedily,” said the angel, as he again looked towards the sun, “the time is short.”

I arose with alacrity, and felt as a traveller inured to toil, who sets out on his last day's journey homeward and is impatient of delay. As we passed on, he occasionally made inquiries as to the supposed time that my companions left me—the direction they took, and by what tokens they might be known. I told him, that judging by the height of the sun, it might be four hours.

“The sun,” he said, “will no longer serve as a measure of time; the earth has swerved from its course. Tell me by what tokens I may know your friends?”

“They followed a banner, on which was the figure of the cross, the emblem of their fidelity and hopes.”

Then the angel gave me tidings of a great company, which met him in the wilderness, dragging along, with desperate efforts, their feeble bodies, exhausted by famine, and, from time to time, straining their hollow and haggard eyes to discern a worn banner, which was carried before them, and

seeming to derive a momentary relief when they caught a glimpse of the cross figured thereon, as it waved unsteadily in the air. Wondering at this spectacle, the angel, being unseen, mingled with the company for a short space, in which, by superior intelligence, he could discover something of what was passing in their minds, and, from slight indications could judge of their sentiments and virtues. And he bore testimony to the continued fervour of their faith, their charity, their hope; and would have consoled me by suggesting the glorious prospects of that blessed company, of which he perceived I was a member.

“It is even so,” I replied, “but unworthy of their society, and of their brotherly love. From them it is true I first learned the power of genuine religion. I have not profited by it as I ought; it is my want of faith that has left me here. O that I may see them yet again!”

The angel rebuked my impatience, for I spoke with vehemence; and keeping silence he led me on towards the base of the mountain.

But now I saw that betwixt us and the mountain there was a dismal valley, from which the smoke and the noise issued that I had observed from a distance;

and we stood on the brink of a dark and steep descent. Then the angel turned and looked steadfastly at my countenance; and he saw that though I was pale, my heart was firm. And he said "let us guard against sudden fear, which may come upon you; for we are in the borders of the dominion of Satan:" with that he touched my eyelids, and they felt heavy, as if pressed down by a weight and I could not raise them again. Then he took me by the hand and led me on carefully, as we descended into the valley; and I was glad that my eyelids were closed, so that I could not see; for there came through them a redness like as of fire, and I felt its suffocating heat, but could not discern any objects, nor conjecture what monstrous beings caused the tumult I heard around me. At one time loud cries and lamentations were heard, intermingled with most jarring and unearthly voices, like the joy and revelry of demons: then we seemed to pass near an immense lake, as it were of boiling lava, or melted lead, surging and dashing its heavy billows against the base of the rocks over which we walked. And in certain parts there was no noise of waves, but a moving of the fiery liquid, as if huge monsters were wallowing and disporting themselves therein.

I heard also the hissing as of serpents and a fearful roaring ; and at other times we passed through stony places, and boisterous winds were blowing, with showers of ponderous hailstones.

With these, other most strange and terrific sounds were mixed in wild disorder, filling the soul with a sense of unintelligible horror, increased by the utter incapacity of the mind to compare the passing impressions with those it had ever before experienced.

I felt no bodily weakness, but my mind was at last entirely subdued and I began to utter abrupt exclamations of fear and anxiety, when my guide once more stopped. I was aware that we had been ascending the mountain for some time, but my hopes of getting beyond the limits of darkness had been so often frustrated by some new and unexpected terror, that I began to fear that my guide might have allured me, under the form of an angel of light, to retain me in these dismal regions. I rejoiced, therefore, and was thankful in my heart when he again touched my eyes, and the light of day, dim as it was, once more fell on them. The darkness was behind us : the smoke was heaving in vast billows, like a stormy sea of intense blackness. As we proceeded we gradually rose far above it : my guide

still held my hand and almost dragged me up the rugged steep with still increasing speed.

At length we reached the highest ridge, and here he immediately, but with gentleness, loosed my hand. He gazed once more on the sun with an anxious and pensive look ; and then directed me to descend by a chasm he pointed out, leading to a beaten path, by which I might, without further difficulty, reach the distant plain. And he added " but before that you will hear a trumpet sound ; the summons of the dead to judgment ;" and as he said this, a slight paleness came over his face. I trembled at this notice and asked eagerly what I should then do. " Only prostrate yourself in holy reverence for a time," he answered, " and then proceed on your journey. The judgment of the living will follow, but not yet."

He said this, and disappeared, for I saw him no more. I looked back, but beyond the valley I could discern nothing through the smoke and flame which arose continually from the region I had just quitted. I then turned to see what I might on the other side, in the way by which I was going : but in that direction nothing met my eye but the rugged summits of barren rocks, as they usually appear on

the tops of mountains, some near, some rising above a light misty vapour which enveloped all other objects. Over this side of the mountain, however, a more cheerful light was spreading. Whence it proceeded I could not discover, for the sun's rays fell on the mountain side we had passed; but *there* was only the twilight of a gloomy evening; whilst on the other and away from the sun, rested the white and diffused light of a hazy dawn.

I stood wondering at what I saw, instead of obeying at once the directions of the angel, when the sound of a trumpet came up from the mist below me. Remembering the words of the angel, I instantly fell prostrate; I could not indeed stand, nor, from the fearful agitation it caused in me, could I describe whence it came or whither it went. The sound ceased, and when I had recovered in some degree, I sat up and looked around fearfully to discern what effects might follow, expecting to witness something more marvellous than I had yet seen. But there was nothing which at first attracted my notice beyond the increasing redness of the billowy smoke, which arose as from a vast furnace.

Afterwards I remarked that round the place where I stood, and above the smoke, small clouds

were gathering, which, whilst they continued in the quarter towards which the sun was now descending, were dark and gloomy, but as they drew nearer in the line of the mountains, they came into a sort of dawning light, as if a new sun were rising, and some which had passed the mountains were illumined by faint gleams of a sunny light. Then I thought within myself, "surely these clouds are bringing the souls of the dead to the judgment seat;" but I could not by reason of their distance perceive whether there were any forms of spirits borne along in those gorgeous landscapes, which resembled the piled clouds I had seen floating along the horizon many a summer evening. They seemed to move slowly, perhaps in consequence of their being so far off. Nor did it at first appear that they were urged on by any wind, for not a breath of air was stirring. But in this I was mistaken; for gradually there drew near a rushing sound as of wind, and the distant columns of smoke which before rose up straightly in the air, were seen to bend their lofty heads, and were driven towards the mountains.

I now saw that in the current of this approaching breeze, the clouds I had observed were carried to

their destination: and as the rushing sound grew louder, nearer clouds were seen passing over the mountain towards the spot where I rested. Many as they passed over the black abyss seemed attracted by it, and the inky waves rose higher as if to envelope them; and the white clouds seemed sometimes driven about intermixed with the darkness, and struggling with its waves as a vessel in a storm. One of these had especially attracted my notice: its form was not unlike the hull of a large ship. It did not rise from the darkness, as many others were observed to do, but sank in it after many apparent efforts to escape: and as it disappeared I thought I heard above the loud roaring of the wind (for I was not very distant), a cry as from the crew of a sinking vessel.

My intention was so absorbed in contemplating this portion of the wild and almost indescribable scene which was now before me, that I did not observe that one of these clouds was driving rapidly towards the rock where I was seated. I now saw that it was in vain for me to avoid it. Besides, an awful expectation of being an eye-witness of some new and unheard of spectacle rivetted me to the spot. I could only fall on my knees. The cloud enveloped

me. My eyes were at first closed as I prayed for succour. I heard human voices around me gibbering in strange accents. I ventured to cast a fearful glance into the vapour, which enclosed me like a dense fog, and I beheld the shadowy and ghastly forms of the dead as they came from their graves. The air I breathed seemed a mass of organic atoms gradually coalescing, so as to renew the living forms of those whose spirits had been called from the long repose of death. Of some, the bony fabric was as yet unfinished; on others, the flesh covered the bones, but the frame looked shrunk and meagre, as if in the last stage of famine.

In others the features might be discerned, apparently with all the individual characters which distinguished them when overtaken by death. Sometimes the vision of some fair countenance with streaming hair and lustreless eye, would flit by in the shadowy crowd which drove unceasingly forward, but in general the forms were squalid, ghastly, and horrible to behold. They seemed by some observable uniformity of structure and feature to be of an Asiatic race, swarthy and large of limb; but I had not time to speculate upon such matters. Sooner than I could write this brief account, the dreadful vision had passed.

CHAPTER VI.

I WAS again alone, amidst the bare rocks, which with a sharp and rugged outline bounded my vision. I rose trembling, and with many self-reproaches at the neglect I had paid to the directions of the angel, and many misgivings of heart for the results, I began to descend the mountain on the opposite side from that on which I had come up.

For a short time my progress was retarded by the violence of the wind, as well as by the inaccessible rocks which obstructed every opening with their massive fragments, or with a fence of storm-shattered pinnacles. I then began to find recent traces of other passengers, becoming more and more distinct as they united in the same path from different openings in the rocks above; and this path led me to a beaten way on the broad and unequal flanks of an extensive mountain range. By this time the wind, which on the summit was exceedingly boisterous and cold, had abated, and the air was temperate and of a delightful freshness. The light was that of the early dawn of a summer's day; and indeed as often as intervening objects, and the windings of the mountain path permitted, my eyes

were directed to a part of the heavens where the light was more concentrated, in the expectation that the sun would appear in that quarter before long; but afterwards I discovered my error; for in turning a projecting angle of the precipitous rocks, and having behind me the light part of the sky, I caught a magnificent view of the distant ocean beyond; and apparently among the clouds, on one of the subjacent ranges of hills I remarked a lonely city, but about it was no token of inhabitants.

Beyond these, and on the verge of the watery horizon, there appeared the pale orb of the sun, not casting a golden lustre over the earth and sea, but pale as the moon and powerless: and the dim shadows of objects were turned towards the west; the light from the opposite side of the heavens, though feeble, being of more power than the rays of the sun, which seemed to linger on the edge of the horizon, as if conscious it were about to set for the last time.

I watched it with a throbbing heart until it disappeared, and seemed to be for ever extinguished in the waters. No additional gloom was cast over the face of nature by this change: indeed I remarked that instead of the usual indication of approaching

night, the mysterious light from the east, rather increased as I descended.

After this, I had for some time an almost smooth road to follow, on an easy declivity, and my wild and fluctuating thoughts had opportunity to settle themselves, and to take some determinate order. I was able to reflect on what I had seen and heard in the long course of my pilgrimage, and to dwell with intense interest on the more recent change of my situation. Before this day I had seen many wonderful things in the course of my wanderings, many quite out of the ordinary course of nature; but with the exception of the first startling summons of the heavenly trumpet, which led to them, and the shadowy serpent form in the dark cloud, which might have been a transient vapour moulded into shape by my excited imagination, I had myself witnessed nothing but what might be deemed compatible with the terrible, though natural, phenomena attending some great planetary catastrophe.

There had come to my ears many strange accounts of supernatural agency, which, however, I could not trace to any authentic source. But I had this day seen an angel—had been an eyewitness of facts unquestionably supernatural, and a fearful

curiosity now impelled me on with eager desire to know what unearthly scenes and objects would next burst upon my bewildered senses, and what would be the end.

Could it be, after all, that the day of judgment was *not* at hand? When that thought arose, as it sometimes would, in spite of all my efforts to suppress it, my perturbation increased, not so much from any serious doubt that the end of all things *was* at hand, but because I had not faith enough to repel at once the intrusion of unholy conjectures.

I would then endeavour to find relief in prayer, from which in every danger and affliction I had derived unfailing comfort: but now the words of penitence or praise fell coldly and formally from my lips without any inward glow of devotion.

It seemed as though the time for prayer was past; that when I called upon the Most High there was none to answer. Then, to drive from my mind the intolerable dread of evil, I would turn my thoughts to a less painful uncertainty. Should I again see alive my poor wife, my faithful friends? should I again see that faded banner, that holy cross which had so often cheered my aching sight in the perils of our march? Again, and again, my

spell-bound spirit seemed to flutter round the same circle of melancholy thoughts and exhausting passions.

The hours passed on unheeded as, with a mind thus absorbed, I followed the circuitous windings of the descending road. I know not how far I had proceeded on my journey, when I was aroused from my reverie by a strange murmuring sound, which rose and fell as wafted by the wind, that swept over the barren ridges in short and fitful gusts.

Was I approaching the sea which broke with low and sullen roar upon the pebbled coast? or was it a distant cataract, or an under current of wind moaning through the forest pines?

I stood to listen and observe from whence the sound could come. There was nothing to see but the precipices above and below, yet the sound which reached my ears could not now be mistaken. It was not the wind through the waving branches of an unseen forest, nor the distant roaring of the sea, nor rush of falling water, though it resembled all three: it was evidently the mingled voices of a vast multitude, at so great a distance that no single cry or sound was distinguishable, but which, uniting like the drops of water that compose a vast cataract,

combined in producing a ceaseless monotonous roar. Then I said, and in my agitation I spake aloud, "it is beneath this canopy that all who live on the earth will be found assembled to meet their Judge. The hour is come!" I was surprised to find that my voice had attracted the notice of a man who was seated by the side of the road at a little distance before me. He hailed me. By his dress and his voice I recognized him as a fellow-countryman. As I approached him, I thought I had some remembrance of his features, but it was not until after some mutual explanations, that I recollected he was one of the thousands who followed our company, chiefly because they believed that they should upon the whole fare better and be more secure with us than elsewhere.

The mixed multitude that went up with us were generally led on partly by religious and partly by worldly motives, but this person whom I now saw by the way, had no religion; and whilst others spoke sometimes doubtfully, sometimes hopefully, sometimes penitently, he was constant in avowing his disbelief. I must, however, do him the justice to say that his manner was not offensively dogmatical or blasphemous. In the course of our long

march I had on one or two occasions conversed and argued with him. But at last finding, as many others did, that I could render him no spiritual benefit, I rather avoided him ; for the tone of his conversation was very jarring to me who felt the necessity of continually cherishing religious sentiments, but was not supported in the effort by any natural warmth of temper in respect of spiritual things.

As I have before observed, meteoric phenomena of a very extraordinary kind frequently fell under our observation, but they did not during the course of our long march assume a *supernatural* character. Sometimes they happened at such critical junctures, that by every believer the hand of Providence was recognised, either in our preservation from the destruction with which we were threatened, or by clearing our line of march of enemies who were arrayed against us ; but upon these occasions our philosophical pilgrims, of whom this man was one, would reason thus—“ Doubtless we are on the eve of some great natural catastrophe. The equilibrium of the elements is lost ;—the earth is wandering from its orbit ; for neither the sun nor the planets occupy their wonted place in the heavens. The

central fires of the earth are no longer confined in the abyss: they are gaining strength, and the probable result will be a general conflagration of the solid mass, and of course the human race, with all living things upon the earth, will perish. That formidable comet which swept across the firmament and lighted our nightly camp as we traversed France and Germany has apparently caused this alarming aberration. It is nevertheless possible that the equilibrium of gravitation may, by some fortunate combination of circumstances, be restored before it is too late."

These suggestions had their effect upon some unstable minds, and still more upon those who had not been trained up in religious sentiments; and there were many such who followed us, though they regarded our exhortations or prayers only as the natural result of superstitious feeling, which great catastrophes commonly awaken.

The presence of the philosopher who now stood before me, brought these things to my mind; and I especially remembered the answer he made to the question I put to him formerly, as we beguiled a tedious march in discourse upon these subjects. I asked, amongst other things, "why then do you

accompany us ?” His reply was, “because whilst all the rest of the world seem to have lost their senses, you act with perfect unanimity, under the conduct of a leader of extraordinary capacity : and your affairs are conducted with so much prudence and courage, that I am persuaded if safety is not with you it is to be found nowhere.”

“But it is the inspiration of a religious faith which enables us to meet the difficulties of our situation in the manner you so much approve.”

“That fervent sentiment of religion,” he answered, “is doubtless, under the present circumstances, very advantageous to you, and even we who do not partake of it, know all its value.”

“Why do you not partake of it ?” “How can I, having no belief in Christianity ? And how can I believe that which, in my apprehension, is contrary to the principles of right reason ?”

And upon this we went through the usual arguments for and against revelation, as indeed we had done before : and at the end of two or three hours we came to the point whence we started,—neither of us moved by the arguments of the other.

The only approach to any concession on his part, was in the avowal of a philosophical belief, that

there were deep-laid instincts in the nature of man, as well as in that of any other living creature ;— that on great occasions these hidden principles will be called into action, and affect simultaneously large masses of the human race ; as is the case with many inferior creatures, and is evidenced in the migration of birds and fishes, and in many other well-known habits of animal life. “ A secret instinct of this nature,” he continued, “ has, I believe, prompted this large body of fellow-travellers to draw towards the central regions of the earth. In following it you have acted for the best, as the tribes of migratory birds act for the best when they follow a like instinct in their seasons : and I go with you, not because I regard your belief or reasoning upon the subject, but because I have myself some faith in the indications I have witnessed of a prevailing instinctive sentiment.”

With this sort of sophistry he, as well as many others, had accounted for the reasonableness of their own conduct in accompanying us. I utterly despaired of the man, and prayed for him in secret, but I sought his company no more. And now a singular chance had again thrown him in my way. I made no doubt by this time, he as well as others

had seen enough of divine agency to make them repent of their incredulity. I longed and yet dreaded to say, "are you not *now* a Christian?"

As I paused, he resumed the conversation, which had as yet proceeded no further than a few expressions of recognition, by saying, "Doubtless you are as much surprised to see me sitting here, as I am to find that you are the last man of the myriads which have this day descended the mountain. If you will take my advice you will not go down to the plain, but sit here with me, and wait the event."

"You are then come up from the plain?" I asked in a tremulous voice: for I feared to hear the final confirmation of my suspicions that all mankind was there assembled for the last judgment. "I have," he said, "for the sight which I beheld there was not agreeable. That sound which comes up to our ears like the hoarse murmur of the distant tide, is the voice of a countless multitude, which entirely covers an immense plain or desert concealed from our view by these clouds which lie at our feet. I have been one of them; but I could not endure the noise and confusion which surrounded me; the cries of lamentation and horror;—the frantic gestures of the thousands who were seeking for their

friends;—of thousands who had met with those they had lost;—of thousands wandering to and fro without apparent motive;—altogether, the tumult overwhelmed me. With many others I returned to the quiet of these mountains, and would at all hazards have passed them again, but I was driven back when I had reached that turn of the path, by which you may see a solitary pine.”

“Who, or what prevented you from proceeding further?” I asked. “Two men of dark and ferocious aspect met me, and with gestures not to be misunderstood, motioned me to return. I spoke to them, but they answered not. I did not like their appearance I can tell you.”

“Are you sure they were beings of our race?” “Of our race! what else could they be?” he sharply replied. “Perhaps spirits,” I suggested. “Why should I suppose them spirits? No; they were mere brawny savages, and with no shadowy attributes I assure you. They seemed to me murderers, so I reluctantly descended; but finding they did not follow me, I sate me down to think what I had best do.” “You had better,” I said, “return with me to the plain: there it is manifest we are all—*all* the living to assemble, before we meet the

eternal Judge. Did we not forewarn you of this ?” I added, in a low voice.

“Oh ! do not be afraid,” he said, “of speaking out plainly. I see nothing in all this to frighten me out of my senses, or to make me abandon my views concerning this momentous crisis in the destinies of the human race, or of the physical changes which are taking place on the terrestrial globe.”

“But then,” I asked, “What means this vast assemblage you have seen ; the cries you heard ; the frantic actions you witnessed ?” “All that could flee from danger,” he replied, “have naturally been driven to one point, as the beasts of the field meet in a central locality, when surrounded by the flames of a burning forest, or by the shouts of the hunters. And now they are terrified and driven out of their senses by the sight of each other ; and, instead of separating and proceeding onwards, they waste their time and energies in loud cries and lamentation. And certainly it is frightful to think of some hundreds of millions, it may be, of wretched fugitives, collected together without food or shelter. I do not like to be a spectator of the tragedy ; at least I will wait here until the hubbub has a little

subsided." I raised my hands with an ejaculation of deep regret, as I heard these words, and strove to say something more to convince him of his folly. I would also have asked him after my friends, but I could not speak. I felt as though his presence was dangerous, and turned away abruptly as from an infected person.

Just then I descried two wild-looking beings approaching by the path I had descended: as they were dimly seen they had the appearance of half-naked savages: they might not be what I suspected—evil spirits,—but their appearance increased my anxiety to hasten from the place. Whilst I looked at them my companion, who did not see them, was fortifying himself in his stoicism by repeating aloud the words of Horace.—

“Justum, et tenacem propositi virum
 Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
 Non vultus instantis tyranni
 Mente quatit solida, neque Auster
 Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
 Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus :
 Si fractus illabatur orbis,
 Impavidum ferient ruinæ.”

Hor. Carm., Lib. 3, Ode 3.

I pointed to the forms which were approaching, and

moved forward with a quick pace. I soon heard him shouting after me; but I ran to avoid him and escaped under cover of the thick mist or cloud which now limited my view to the distance of a few paces.

As I went on, the still distant noise of the multitude, borne forwards by sullen gusts of wind, fell louder and louder on my listening ear. And now on the many bye-paths which intersected the broad beaten track I followed, were to be seen occasionally the dim forms of those who were hastening away from the plain, as if to hide themselves. I had hoped when I emerged from below the stratum of vapour to have met with no obstacle to prevent me from seeing the multitude: but I then found myself on the border of a thick wood, and could only obtain a partial view of a distant plain beyond the mountain. And the plain was darkened as it were by a vast army of locusts or ants, for such at that distance appeared the dense multitude which occupied every part: but so imperfect was the view I caught through the interposing obstacles, that I only became more eager to satisfy my curiosity, and impatiently pursued my way.

The forest was dark and gloomy, though the

trees were for the most part leafless and dead, smitten as it seemed by a hot and blasting wind. There were many wretched looking men and women wandering about, who seemed intent upon concealing themselves in the thickets and glens : none but myself was hastening towards the plain.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER, it may be, an hour's march, I came again into the open air, and I sate down upon the side of a gentle declivity which bordered upon the plain, and stedfastly gazed upon the scene before me. The skirts of the vast assemblage were within a furlong of my resting place. The shrieks, ejaculations, and gestures of those I could more distinctly hear and see, indicated the vivid emotions which agitated the multitude, and in some degree justified the horror expressed by my fellow-traveller, whom I had just quitted. As soon as my perturbed state

of mind allowed me to direct my attention to the different parts of the scene before me, I looked wistfully in every quarter for the well-known standard of my fellow-pilgrims : but it was nowhere to be seen. I tried to discover them by other tokens—by their order of encampment—their dress—and other such signs as in our long expedition had become familiar to me : but it was in vain. In some places clouds of dust interrupted my view. In the distance, only the heads of the multitude were seen, and all minor details of dress were undistinguishable ; besides, that which appeared a level plain at a greater height, might now be seen to have many inequalities, and the more elevated parts, which were densely crowded, intercepted the view of thousands that were immediately beyond.

In the course of my observations I remarked, that amongst so great a multitude there were no beasts of burden, no camels or horses, nor yet cattle intermixed. Neither were there any tents, or any fires, or signs of preparing food. It then struck me for the first time, that though it must have taken me many hours to have crossed the range of mountains, I was neither weary, nor hungry, nor thirsty. I also called to mind that the sun had for a long

time been set, but no darkness had succeeded. From the fleecy cloud which canopied the plain a uniform and pleasing light was diffused, not equal to the full light of day, but rendering all objects distinctly visible.

A short time sufficed to make these observations ; and I arose to set about a more diligent search for my lost companions. I directed my steps towards the east in consequence of having observed that in that quarter the light was most intense. There was no difficulty in penetrating the crowd for one who moved slowly and took advantage of the space which separated the various groups. One half of those I passed seemed by their anxious looks to be intent upon the same errand as myself : some called aloud for those they sought, but their voices hardly filled a circle of a dozen yards, being drowned in the surrounding clamour of intermingling voices.

A great number were scattered on the ground asleep. As I passed on no one took the slightest notice of me ;—no one turned his head aside to hear or to answer me.

Every one seemed to be under the influence of some absorbing emotion—of fear, hope, sorrow or astonishment, which, acting with intense energy,

made him insensible to every thing else, and manifested itself without controul or disguise in the countenance and gestures. And it was remarkable to what an extent the influence of passion seemed infectious, and acted upon detached portions of the whole mass. At one place, despair or grief would predominate over an extensive group who sat on the ground in gloomy silence, or wildly hurried to and fro with frantic gestures and blasphemous revilings. In another place, bitter reproaches, scoffings and threats were exchanged by numerous bands, animated against each other by an unaccountable impulse of rage and hatred. A religious fervour seemed, however, to be the most prevalent feeling. Large bodies of pagan worshippers called upon their gods with loud and incessant repetitions of the same words. Mahometans, and Jews, and Christians were here and there congregated more closely as if in prayer. Around these various groups there was an ever-moving body wandering over the field in search of some friends, or to learn what opinions were formed as to the result of this extraordinary gathering of nations, and what hopes still remained of escape from the dreadful but uncertain dangers of their position.

Amongst these a great number seemed to have but one intense feeling of selfishness, thrusting aside, striking and trampling upon the feeble who happened to be in their way, and paying no regard to any person or accident, which did not seem immediately to concern them.

On the other hand, there were many incidents which excited more agreeable feelings: acts of kindness and generous sympathy with the more wretched of the sufferers, protecting them from the aggressions and insolence of the strong; for it was physical strength alone that conferred power: and as to all distinctions derived from rank or wealth, they had utterly ceased,—nobody thought about them.

Similarity of raiment was a means of bringing together those of the same countries or tribes, but with many exceptions; for the generality were half naked, and the garments commonly worn were either ragged and soiled, or had been taken from the deserted habitations of other people in lieu of worse apparel, so that it was difficult to find out friends or countrymen in this promiscuous crowd. Sometimes, however, notwithstanding these difficulties, I witnessed with pleasure the reunion of friends and families, and tribes: and also the formation of

gradually increasing associations of those who by long habits of self-restraint and courtesy amongst the more educated and civilized portions of society, were able to assume some appearance of fortitude and self-possession, and to converse with one another calmly and consistently.

These observations were made as I passed slowly through the multitudes, and sought in every direction for my companions—but in vain. The knowledge of what was passing around those who were stationary seemed to be limited to the area of a few hundred yards: and they who wandered about seemed too intent upon some specific object to notice others, or to listen to enquirers, who either spoke in a strange language, or detained them by what seemed to them unimportant questions.

Days appeared to pass away in the weariness of incessant search for a lost object, and of continually deferred expectation of some great event. It is true there was now neither sun, nor moon, nor star to indicate the progress of time; but I met with one who had kept account of the passing hours, and who shewed me that the hands of his watch proceeded in their regular course. It seemed to me a strange fact that a little instrument, from the

hands perhaps of a common artificer, after passing uninjured through many vicissitudes, should thus serve as a measure of time, when the divinely wrought and magnificent mechanism of the heavens had ceased to perform its functions. The owner of the watch had noticed the revolutions of time: six days had elapsed; and I was one of the few who still wandered about, as on the first, in search of friends. I did not feel the want of food, but my mind often needed repose, and at uncertain intervals I laid down to sleep, or sat down and meditated long and deeply on the past; and prayed, but rather with the view of keeping alive devout feelings, than with the hope that prayer was any longer available.

During this time no remarkable incident or change had occurred in the phenomena of external nature, except that over the distant mountains the columns of smoke which continually arose, gradually became more united and extensive until they burst forth in bright flames, and threatened a general conflagration of all the mountain range. The lofty rocks flamed like burning torches and fell down with hideous ruin, or melted away like wax. Torrents of lava flowed down and threatened to

cover the plain ; but in the wooded valley through which I had passed the streams were lost, either turned aside from the plain or engulfed in some abyss. When this scene had lasted for two days, it ceased to attract much notice, though flames continued to ascend from every part of the mountainous chasms.

In the six days which had now passed by, a remarkable change had taken place in the demeanour of the multitude. The more stormy passions seemed to have exhausted their energies : the evil-minded lay down in sullen silence ; they had no longer any motive for violence or action. In the better disposed, a general tendency to indulge in calm and silent reverie was observable. Men spoke to each other coherently, and with more direct reference to their position : discussions on the tendency of the present crisis were calmly maintained. The exhortations of the more gifted of the multitude were listened to with complacency, and sometimes with a lively interest. Friends and kindred encouraged one another with words of hope and affection.

But my wanderings ceased not. I was at length accosted by one of our pilgrim company : he was in search of me. A report had reached my friends that I was alive and had been seen, and certain

brethren were despatched in various directions to find me. They who remained of the company had taken up an isolated position in advance of the multitude, and were encamped within the precincts of the misty cloud, which hung like a curtain on the borders of the plain. Few were inclined to follow them thither on account of a kind of phosphoric light diffused throughout the cloud, and which gave it, at a little distance, the appearance of the denser parts of an aurora borealis.

My anxious inquiries after my wife, and many a beloved friend whose pious and intelligent conversation had often cheered me in my pilgrimage, were answered to my satisfaction. Only, since my wife had heard that I was living, she had been much disturbed by anxiety to see me once more. My informant directed me where I should find our company, and urged me to join them as soon as possible, whilst he went first to an appointed place of meeting, to apprise the friends who searched elsewhere of his having found me.

I proceeded in the direction he pointed out, as fast as I could thread my way through the crowd. But, as is not unfrequent in dreams, the more eagerly I pressed forward, the more impediments I

found in the way. Larger and more frequent groups were formed, and appeared to be listening to, or discussing some new reports. When I turned aside from these I had to pass with much caution over the numberless bodies of those who had lost for a season all sense of their critical situation in sleep, and were perhaps restored by imagination to the tranquil scenes of former days. All at once I perceived an unusual stir and agitation in the throng nearest to me; I tried vainly to look over the heads of the crowd to discover what was the cause of this sudden commotion. I observed, however, at no great distance, a ruined tower or fort, about which many had climbed; one projecting part had been left unoccupied as the stonework was loose and unsafe: on this I raised myself with some difficulty, and now I could see why multitudes hurried towards that quarter from which the light had emanated. The light had now disappeared; in its place was a murky fog; and as I looked there issued from it a banner and a company following, marching in ranks, and they were singing a hymn in the sweetest concord. They were two or three furlongs distant, but the low solemn strain prevailed over the noise of trampling feet; for the people

who were near did not speak or cry out, being desirous to hear it.

At that sound I wept;—for I remembered its effect upon my rapt spirit in the toilsome march and at evensong, when it fell upon my ear like the music of heaven. As soon as mine eyes, dimmed with unceasing tears, could distinguish surrounding objects, I looked once more ere I sprung down to join the blessed throng: but I saw the attempt was hopeless. An impenetrable crowd had collected betwixt me and my friends, who had now halted and were formed in a circle, within which there stood one who seemed earnestly to exhort them—and in him I recognized their faithful leader. I felt an almost uncontrollable desire to force my passage at all risks through the intervening crowd, that I might hear his words, but seeing the folly of the attempt, I determined to watch for the least opening that any after movement might afford. I heard not the voice of my beloved leader, but his animated and eloquent action spoke a language which I could well interpret; and as I leaned forward that I might lose nothing of the inspiration of the scene, with the involuntary sympathy which affects us on occasions of great excitement, I

stretched forth my hands, I forgot my insecure position, and the loose stones gave way under my feet.

I fell unhurt, and was disposed to turn this accident to account, by making my way as quickly as possible along the interior edge of the living wall which intercepted me until I should find an opening: but as I went on the darkness of night succeeded to twilight gloom; and this soon after became total and almost palpable darkness, compared with which the obscurity of night might be called day. Through that pitchy blackness not even the light from the unextinguished conflagration of the mountains could penetrate. Overcome with terror, I followed close in the rear of an unseen multitude who were rushing blindly forwards. Their wild cries and the tramp of their feet enabled me to follow at a safe distance; but soon, as might be expected, their flight was stopped by the inevitable confusion and disasters it occasioned. Judging by the loud shrieks and reproaches I heard, the foremost of the retreating crowd fell over those who were in their way, and were trampled upon in their turn by those who followed. After this, every one perceived the necessity of remaining wherever he happened to be, and there was a general cry that none should move

from his place. But now horrors succeeded horrors without a pause.

A distant shout indicated the approach of some new calamity: it was soon apparent. The earth which had for some time been heated in an alarming degree, possibly upheaved by the lava which had forced its way into subterraneous cavities, cracked and opened in many places. So I judged from hearing the cries of danger rising in quick succession from every side, and observing intersecting lines of fire shooting in every direction; the ground separated like a large body of ice, violently broken by the upheaving tide. I stood myself on the edge of a fissure a fathom in width, from which flames and smoke began to issue: but the flames seemed to be quenched as with water by the ponderous atmosphere which involved us,—I say ponderous, for I was soon after sensible that the atmosphere was indeed greatly condensed, so that the body was in a manner pressed upwards, as if borne on the surface of water, and I could feel that I was rapidly rising from the earth, as from the bottom of some deep water. This filled my mind with fresh amazement; and the more so as all around me was again darkness and silence. And in that dreary pause, a loud trumpet was heard to sound.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE intensity of my agitation at this crisis of my dream, had, I believe, well-nigh awakened me. I ceased to have any idea or consciousness of where or indeed what I was,—whether in the body or in the spirit. All that I felt was a rushing sound in my ears like the breaking in of waters, and a struggle to rise as though I were drowning.

When the powers of reflection began to resume their sway, the first thought suggested was, that I might possibly be in a dream—but even so, I vehemently desired to see the end: and moreover, by a curious play of imagination, the trouble of my mind was allayed by this reflection. For I thought if it be indeed a dream, then as a spectator I can contemplate more calmly the scenes which may follow, and which I so greatly desire to see. Soothed by some such half-waking thought, my agitation, which otherwise would probably have been excited to a degree incompatible with a state of sleep, subsided, and my dream returned.

Yet there was suspicion blended with my imaginations; so slight, indeed, that it did not abate my curiosity, or detract from their vivid and truth-like

semblance, but sufficient to moderate that anxious personal interest, which the entire sense of reality must have produced.

My first impression, as my dream returned, was, that I was at rest. The density of the liquid medium which had buoyed me upwards, was still augmenting, and it seemed as though I was immersed in snow, or treading a bed of down: and this too gradually seemed to consolidate, till my feet again pressed upon a firm surface. I had closed my eyes, for the effect of the darkness was painful to the sight: but I was now glad to find that I might open them once more to the light of day, or rather of the dawn of day, as heretofore.

All around me were congregated as before—all the people of the earth. There was no voice or cry to be heard amongst them. The mountains and every vestige of the earth had disappeared, only we stood upon a solid surface resembling granite fresh from the quarry, unmixed with earth or dust. Overhead was the open sky, serene, but darkling, as though not yet lit up by the morning sun. Towards the horizon on one side were beautiful clouds, curiously disposed, so as to suggest pictures of varied landscapes, with large plains and mountains and forests,

and tinted with orient colours, as though they had already caught the first rays of solar light, before it had reached the earth. But on the opposite side, the clouds which bounded the vast area, gradually lost that beauty of form and colour which I have described. They became dark and terrible, and seemed to resemble towering rocks and precipices of the blackest marble.

I was still in that extreme part of the assembled host, where I stood when the darkness overtook me. But this position seemed now near the centre of the wide amphitheatre which the clouds encompassed. Of this amphitheatre one quarter was covered by the living multitude. On either side I could imperfectly see another multitude of a more shadowy appearance, like a boundless ocean of heads, apparently stretching out to the verge of the horizon. Before, and in the distance, the granite plain was unoccupied; the nearer parts I could not see: for there was raised on the central ground of the plain, and not far removed from the place where I stood, an elevation or platform, with ascending steps of black marble, symmetrically hewn and polished.

I could not tell its extent, but it might be some furlongs in diameter, and at intervals there were

placed carved thrones, and between them short pillars like altars, alternately a pillar and a throne, —but no one sate on the thrones.

Having taken a hasty survey of these things, I was preparing to look for my friends, that I might join them as soon as I dared venture to break that seeming spell which had bound the human race in motionless silence; when my attention was called to the quarter before me, which was behind the platform. Successive peals of thunder were heard, at first distant and faint, but afterwards nearer and of a fearful loudness: and after the thunder a line of light smoke appeared. And it came over the ridge as if a vast army were approaching, covered by the smoke of their artillery. Yet that which followed seemed more like the rising water of a mighty sea, which had surmounted the ridge, and was advancing and descending in one continuous wave towards the plain: and it was as if a bright sunshine gilded the foam of the wave; but there was no sun or palpable source of a reflected light. Other like waves succeeded in silent order, and as they came near their bright edges sparkled as if full of stars or gems—and they came nearer, and the stars appeared as the many coloured bubbles within

the shadow of a rainbow, when a spring shower falls on a lake ; continually vanishing and continually renewed. And still they came nearer, and then I saw that these were the glorious wings of innumerable angels, who came on rank after rank in silent order, beautiful to behold. When I began to discern their forms, I heard also the rushing of their wings, like to a mighty wind sweeping down the side of the mountains. And the angels spread out their ranks in the form of a crescent on either side, being divided in the midst by a black cloud or smoke, which at first appeared of little magnitude, but as it approached it seemed to enlarge, so as to cover the seventh part of the host of angels ; and from behind it shot forth rays of the most dazzling light, on which the eye could not dwell : but the source of that light was screened from view, by the dark cloud through which no rays passed.

I saw the forms of mighty angels flying continually to and fro between the cloud and every part of the host. The cloud settled upon the central elevation, and the light which shone from within it became brighter and brighter, and overcame the darkness of the cloud ; and it was of a clear amber colour ; but the substance of the cloud remained to

veil the glory of that which was within it, so that no man could see through the middle of the cloud ; but through the outward parts were dimly seen an innumerable company of angels.

Then I knew that within was the throne of the Eternal, and that He was come to judgment. And on the thrones which were above the steps sat glorious archangels, looking every way over the plain ; and scrolls were opened before them. After this there fell on my ear a light sound of unearthly harmony. At first indeed it seemed like the swellings of an Æolian harp rising and falling in prolonged and unequal tones. This was beautiful ; but it was only the prelude to a strain of more exquisite and measured melody. No pen could describe, no mortal voice or instrument imitate, that transporting strain. I could hear no words, but the music seemed to speak by signs more expressive and more clearly understood ; and I knew that the meaning of the words they sung was—"Alleluja, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

My spirit was wrapt in ecstasy, especially when the voices of thousands of angels, exquisitely har-

monised and subdued, united in the last sublime chorus.

I was some time before I recovered from the stupor of admiration into which I was cast; and when I looked up I saw that a numerous train of angels were issuing forth from each side of the judgment seat. They were not winged, but an air of supernatural majesty denoted their celestial strength. They issued forth from different sides, those which came from the right hand side of the throne having in their hands rolls, as of parchment; and as they passed, the archangels raised their colossal arms, and directed each to his appointed place. So they proceeded across the plain in various directions, dividing the multitude as they went, and proclaiming to all that Jesus Christ was come to judgment.

Now it appeared that every angel knew those whose names were written in a roll or book which he had in his hand: and they knew where to find those to whom they were severally sent, and they separated them from the rest of the host. Such as were of the same nation, or tribe, or family, or place of abode, were brought to be tried in one place. Tribunals were formed by the angels, according to

their rolls : to each tribunal two angels ; and they cleared a space around which those who were to be tried stood ; and the angels sate down in the midst on the stones that were scattered about.

It soon appeared that one was a good angel and the other evil : the one sought out what was good in the life of every man, and the other laid to his charge the evil he had done. Every man was tried by these before he appeared at the judgment seat ; and those which the angel of mercy claimed were sent in the custody of other angels to the right, but the wicked were conveyed to the left of the throne.

And now, methought I perceived why all were detained seven days in the valley of judgment. It was that all might have time to find those who were most fit to be witnesses of the justice of their sentence,—their families, their neighbours, their countrymen,—they who spoke the same language, who were influenced by the same customs, who adopted the same rules of conduct, who professed the same religious creed.

The trial of each person was regulated by the circumstances of his outward condition and relations in life, by his faith, by his moral principles and

actions, by the fitness of his sentiments and habits for heaven or hell.

As there was no longer any reckoning of time, or any definite perception of its progress, every man's case was fully heard and righteously determined; so that none had to complain of an imperfect or partial trial. They who were condemned, were condemned out of their own mouths, and went away acknowledging the just judgment of God. And besides all this, the angels of judgment seemed to know perfectly the particulars of every man's life, and put at once those questions on which the eternal destinies of that man depended: and in answering, all falsehood and evasion were at once felt to be utterly vain: thus there were none of those obstacles and inconveniences which protract the proceedings of human tribunals, and the whole time of this awful inquisition might be said to be as one day.

There had been throughout all my visionary adventures a secret principle of incredulity, which, as I have since thought, caused me in my sleep to put expressions of unbelief into the mouths of others. The same sentiment may have disposed me, in spite of the most remarkable signs of divine interference, to listen too complacently to the opinions

of those who would persuade me that the true interpretation of what I witnessed might be derived from the powers of nature, called into action under unprecedented circumstances. But in the main a better instinct brought me back to the dominion of faith, and I gladly availed myself of the consolation and support which religion had to offer. And now, as I obviously drew near the crisis in which this web of mystery was to be unravelled, it might be supposed that I should have held fast by that principle on which so much depended; and yet I was turned aside by an unhappy suspicion that such miraculous incidents wanted the perfect impress of reality. I said to myself, "is it not a dream?" and with that thought there sprung up in my mind a vain desire of seeing and hearing all that could be learned of the first judgment. And because the pressure of the crowd before me rendered any present attempt to reach my friends hopeless, I determined to indulge my curiosity for a time by wandering about, to observe as much as I could of what was passing around, and again resigned myself to the illusions which my fancy created.

Whenever I came to a circle of spectators who were of my own nation or whose language was familiar to

me, I joined them, and listened with profound attention to the heart-searching inquiries of the angel, who never failed to elicit the truth which favored the accused, and to the unsparing rigour with which the accusing angel exposed the fatal errors of the culprit. I will not stop to describe what revelations of unsuspected crimes,—what unrecorded woes,—what conflicts of good and evil passions in the inmost recesses of the human heart, were now for the first time brought to light. At one time I exulted in the triumph of virtuous resolves over the weakness of treacherous affections within, and the assaults of calamity and injustice from without; at another my heart sickened at the contemplation of the meanness, the hypocrisy, the pride, the selfishness, the envy and malice of the human heart, as it was now laid open to all eyes. I wondered how *any* could escape the wrath to come. But many did escape: yea, many of all creeds and doctrines. I shall not attempt to convey any idea of the speculations I indulged in to account for the unexpected acquittal of some, and condemnation of others, on whom the world, and perhaps the religious part of it, would have passed a contrary sentence.

In all cases it was made manifest that a righteous

judgment was given. But *how* the higher principles of divine justice were brought down to the level of man's understanding, by a suitable course of evidence, I could not comprehend, much less describe. And I pass over, not without reluctance, many facts and inferences which might seem the most important and interesting part of my dream, lest I should unintentionally countenance erroneous and dangerous opinions, by a partial and imperfect representation of those sacred mysteries which cannot be fully explored by the human mind.

As to circumstantial details, which do not bear upon doctrines, the imagination, whether sleeping or waking, may, I conceive, take a wider range, and the pen of the writer may record and amplify that which his dream or his waking speculations have suggested, provided their import be not stretched beyond their original and intrinsic authority.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS, as I before described, led on by a sort of fascination from one tribunal to another, observing everywhere the same form of judicial inquisition. What passed on one of these occasions I will relate, as it is connected with the preceding narrative. I met once more with the unbeliever whom I so abruptly quitted on the mountain side. He had been listening to the trial of one who had professed himself a freethinker. Whether the person was condemned or not I cannot say, but my acquaintance seemed pondering on what he had heard, and was paying no attention to the trial that succeeded, by which the fate of a poor, trembling, uneducated believer was to be determined. This case had no interest for our philosopher: his countenance was more pale and serious than when I had looked upon it before, and I felt a hope that by this time he *must* have abandoned his obstinate prejudices; and with that impression I waited to hear what he had to say: but, to my surprise, he began in his usual strain.

“These things are indeed extraordinary—how can they be accounted for?” “Is there any

possible way but one?" I replied, "It is the judgment day. Veiled by that light cloud is the Majesty of heaven. The Saviour has come, as he promised, in the clouds of heaven. His glorious angels are with him: we have heard their Allelujas. His ministering spirits are everywhere amongst us in the act of judgment. We ourselves have been taken up in the clouds of heaven."

"My friend," he calmly answered, "stay a little, we do not see with the same eyes. I look upon a cloud, and a bright light rising in yon quarter of the heavens above the intervening crowds; a gorgeous display of clouds in light and shade,—inverted rainbows brightly reflected in many bands of colours, and attended with remarkable, and I may say, unaccountable appearances—but what then! I have often seen an approach to such a configuration of the heavens in the brilliant sunset of a southern sky, even in former days of elementary tranquillity. I was once, too, on a snowy plain in Norway, and was enveloped in the crackling coruscations of a brilliant aurora borealis. I could not have conceived that such a sublime meteoric display was possible; it was extraordinary, and so is this." I turned about, wondering at his tame description

of the scene before him, and it was true that, removed as we now were from the position where I first stood, and having to look over the heads of those who intercepted the view, I did not distinctly see the forms of the angels.

“But the celestial music?” “I have heard no music or harmony,” he replied.

I could only entreat him to satisfy himself by taking a nearer position, and added, “how have we been transferred hither from the perishing world below?”

“It is possible,” he said, “that we are still on the earth. The plain has been lifted up under our feet by subterraneous fire: an elevation of a few hundred yards has changed the scene. This firm ground and serene atmosphere begin to give hope that all may not yet be over. I grant you it is wonderful—wonderful beyond anything on record: but in great catastrophes of nature, how can we fail to be in the midst of wonders? Our preservation is all but miraculous,—with a thousand chances against us, one has prevailed in our favour.”

“And what then mean these tribunals at such a time?” “I do not know,” he replied. “It may be a great social organization, created by the

marvellous position in which we are placed. Have we not seen when following the standard of that able and politic guide who led us safely through the ruins of a perishing world, what may be done by wise and energetic measures to restore the fabric of social union. I have myself of late seen so little of what has been going on in this great multitude, that I know nothing of what resources so talented a man may have at his command.

“He may, for ought I know, have the sagacity to see that the regeneration of the physical world is not hopeless: and he may propose building up some new system of religion and social policy on the ruins of the ancient systems”—but here he suddenly stopped; for his name was now pronounced in a clear voice by the angel, and he abruptly left me and entered the circle, as it were by an involuntary impulse; his countenance betraying the emotion which he endeavoured to suppress. I listened to what followed with extreme anxiety. I need not dwell upon the details, or the result. The course which the examination took soon convinced me that there was no hope for the unhappy man.

The secrets of his heart, the sinfulness of his life, were disclosed: he had been brought up a Christian;

he had renounced religion and rejected its evidence from pretended motives, and principles unworthy of a philosopher or man of sense. He rejected evidence which he would not examine; and he would not seek for truth where alone it was to be found, because his apostacy was a desire to obviate or to extinguish the reproaches of conscience, that he might live tranquilly an evil life. He succeeded in this, but he now saw his destructive errors. As he turned to follow the evil spirit who waited for him, he spake to the people, saying with some firmness, "My friends, I am justly condemned, and go to my doom in submission to the sentence of a righteous Judge." I felt that these words were addressed to my ears, and I went away in gloomy sadness.

After this, I know not by what strange infatuation I roamed on through the plain to its distant limits. I had a vague notion that as so many were to be judged, there was leisure for this folly; and that I should return when the crowd was diminished, and be admitted at the same tribunal as my friends and countrymen. In the meantime the way by which I had passed (not without difficulty, by reason of the obstructing crowds) had become comparatively open.

Many of the tribunals had broken up, and all the proceedings seemed unexpectedly drawing to a close. I had purposed advancing to the very limits of the plain, because from thence I thought I could ascertain whether it were connected with the earth, as suggested by the unhappy philosopher, and had moved some distance alone in that direction; but now I abandoned that idea. I returned hastily, and began to wish that my own trial which I had before so much feared, would now take place. I even prayed of some who still sate in judgment that they would determine my fate, but my name was not found in their rolls; and at length one told me where I might find my proper tribunal. I hastened to this quarter with what speed I could. The meeting was dispersed. On the right and left of the space before the throne, countless multitudes stood in dense muster.

I passed along the intermediate space: they who remained there were separating in order to take their places on one side or the other: I was left among the ministering angels, who were now returning with their rolls, in which every man's sentence was recorded. They surveyed me with some apparent surprise. I would have retreated,

but was ashamed to be seen standing alone before the assembled multitudes who were drawn in long array on either side.

As I reflected with bitterness on my folly, I saw the form of the Man of Sorrows. He advanced and turning to the right hand, said, with a voice which thrilled every ear and heart, "Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Then there came forth a triumphant shout of joy, from those that stood on the right hand; and loud and bitter lamentations from the left: and the angels on the right responded with loud and triumphant strains of harmony. But on the left savage figures emerged from the dark caverns of the mountainous clouds, or leaped down in wild confusion from their summit, and summoning their weeping victims, drove them with curses and blows and savage tortures up towards the edge of the mountain. Flames of fire and smoke came up from behind the ridge: and there appeared the shadowy form of a great serpent or dragon, lifting itself up out of the flames: and on his head was the semblance of a crown. The host of evil spirits shouted at the view of their king; but the condemned fled back in horror from the

monstrous form, and from the gulf which was prepared for them; whilst the cruel spirits mocked them, and dragged them over jagged rocks, and pierced their flesh with javelins and hooks. Then were they thrust headlong over the dark precipice, and disappeared. All this I did not observe at once, for I looked first on one side and then on the other, as some fresh subject attracted my observation.

On the right side vast multitudes went up the steps which led to the regions of the blessed: and as they came in presence of the throne they cast themselves down: and the Judge, and the angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, welcomed them, and they departed.

I observed that those who ascended the steps were for the most part in wretched apparel; but as soon as they went from the presence of God, their bodies became radiant with health and beauty, and their wretched apparel fell from them, and they were clothed as the angels.

After a while I saw my long-sought companions; an angel bore a tattered banner before them until they came to the steps and it was left there. And when they ascended after the pale and wasted form of their faithful leader, the song of triumph and

the acclaim of angels became louder; and I saw the arms of the Saviour extended towards them. He spake, but I heard not His words for the acclamations. As they went up I strove to discover those with whom I had chiefly held converse on our march: I could not at first distinguish them by reason of the meanness of their attire, and their squalid appearance. But after they had passed the throne, I knew them, for they resumed the appearance they bore before affliction had wasted them: only their forms and features were more beautiful, and their raiment white and glistening.

I looked wistfully for my lost wife—and at last I saw her. It grieved me to mark her feeble step, her hollow eyes, her withered and sallow cheeks; her hair neglected and dishevelled, her raiment torn. I pressed forward as far as I was able to obtain one look of recognition; but she knelt down meekly before the throne, and when she arose all traces of misery had disappeared: her countenance was beaming with ecstasy; her hair waving in rich clusters; her garb of dazzling whiteness. She *had* heard me call her name, for she turned and smiled, and waved her hand, and seemed to expect that I was about to follow her, before she passed on.

When my aching eyes could no longer discern her, I sat down and wept for some time ; and when again I looked up, every living being had vanished.

There was not on all that vast plain one creature besides myself. The myriads of angels and the thrones of glory were no more seen, but a lustre still proceeded from the mount which sufficed to throw a moderate light to the most distant borders of the plain. And when I saw that I was alone a trembling came over me, and a great dread : beholding the unchanging scene of silent desolation, my blood ceased to flow, and my heart to beat ; and I felt as if I also had become as marble. I could not stir from my place, nor raise my hand, nor close my eyes, but kept them unceasingly fixed on the stony desert around me : the unbroken silence and desolation seemed more terrible than death.

It might be months, it might be years that passed, for time seemed an eternal prolongation of one dreary present, unbroken by thoughts of any past or any future. At length, however, I felt a warmth as of the first genial ray of spring after an ice-bound winter. My blood began to circulate, my heart throbbed within me, my limbs moved. I arose, and would have ascended the steps, for there was no

one to forbid : still my courage failed, and I walked round the base of that holy mount, to see if there were any near to warn or instruct me. I found no one, nor any token whereby I could know what it became me to do.

Then I slowly ascended the awful steps. On the top was a level pavement of many coloured marbles, and in the midst was an altar. A clear and steady flame burned upon the altar and lightened the plain, but it was not fierce or dazzling—I fell prostrate on the pavement, for I knew that I was in the immediate presence of the Eternal.

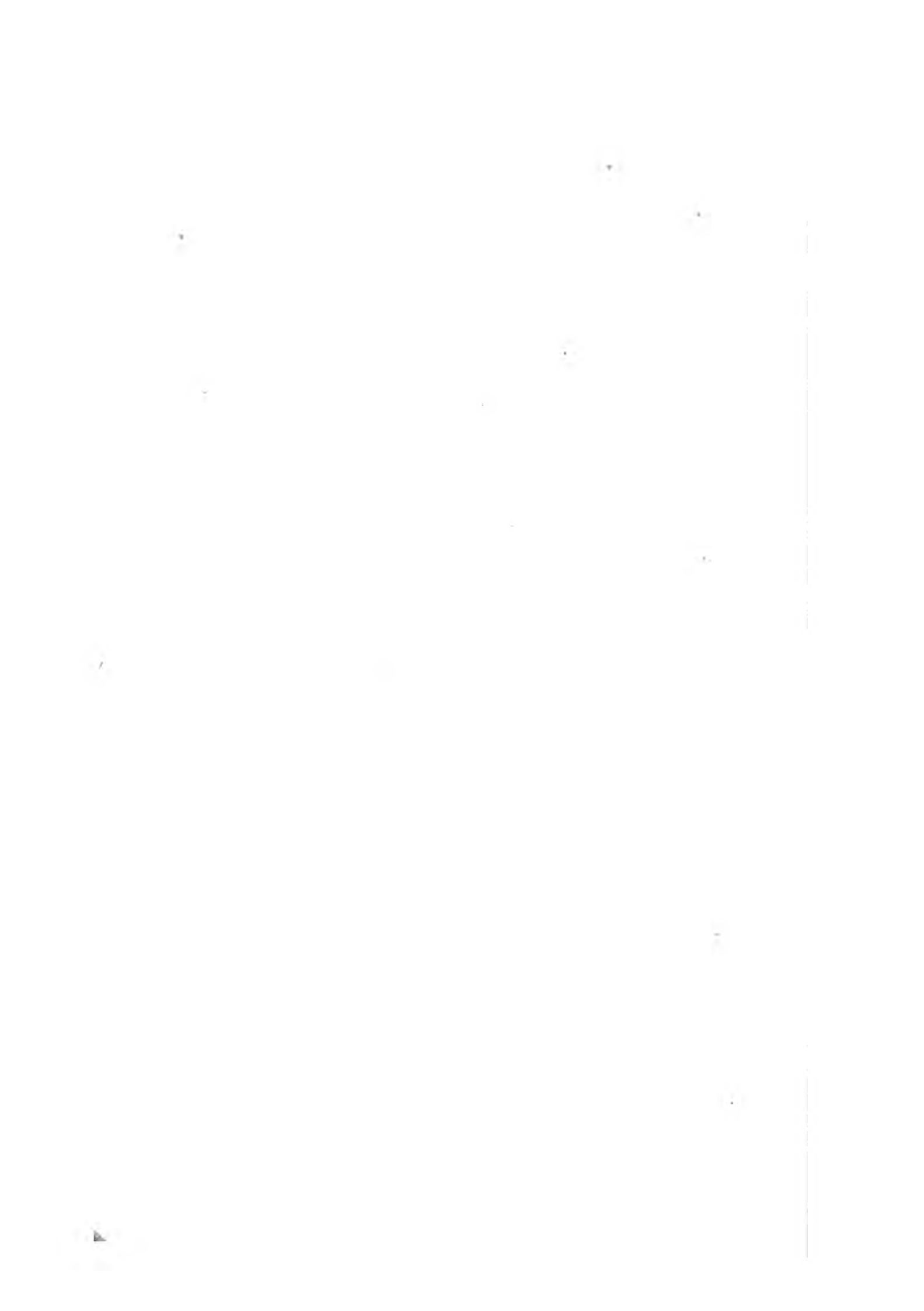
I waited, in great dread, to know if there would be voice or sign : and a voice did come forth from the altar, saying, “ Who art thou ? ” And I answered, “ A mortal, whom the angels of the Most High have not judged.” And the voice spake yet again, and said, “ What wouldest thou ? ” Then I cried out, “ Oh that I may have place for repentance, and afterwards be judged by Thee in mercy, as were my fellow-men ! ” And the voice answered, “ Thou shalt have place for repentance, and shalt be judged hereafter. Arise, depart.”

Hearing these words I would have arisen, but *could* not move. I struggled vehemently to lift

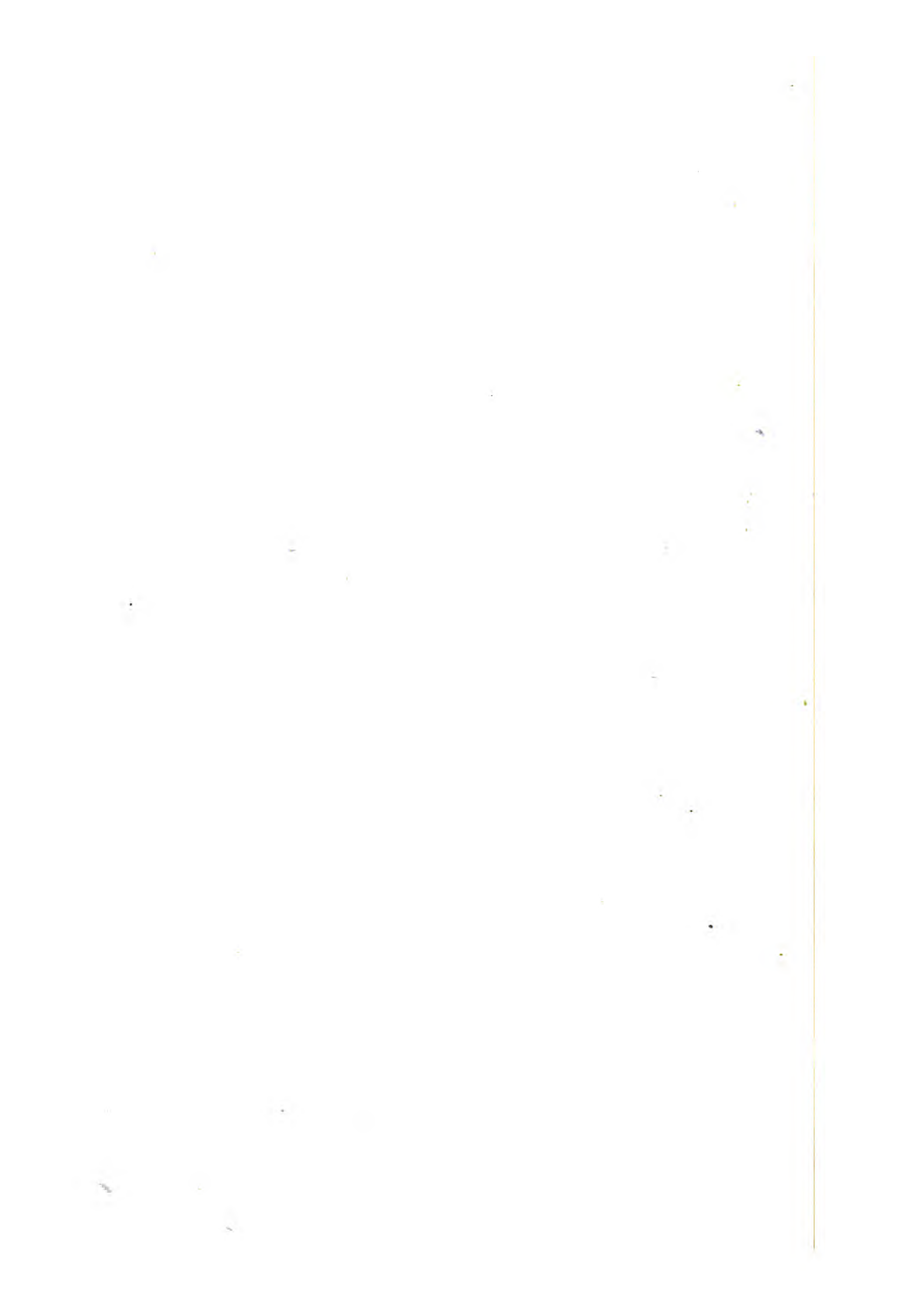
myself up, lest I should seem to disobey the dread voice which commanded me; and in that agony I awoke.

I awoke, and the ruddy light of a summer's morning came cheerfully in at my window; and I perceived that it *was* a dream. I awoke, and trembled with affright, as I looked back into those gloomy chambers of imagery, through which my lonely spirit had been straying: and I said, "the shadows of my dream are passed away—but the substance is to come. I shall one day see greater things than these." Yes—that word which still vibrates on my ear is true. I shall "be judged hereafter."

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