

A DREAM

A few evenings since, I laid myself down for my night's repose. It has been a custom with me, for years past, to peruse a portion of the scriptures before I close my eyes in the slumbers of night. I did so in the present instance. By chance, I fell upon the spot where inspiration has recorded the dying agonies of the God of Nature. Thoughts of these, and the scenes which followed his giving up the ghost, pursued me as I slept.

There is certainly something mysterious and incomprehensible in the manner in which the wild vagaries of the imagination often arrange themselves; but the solution of this belongs to the physiologist rather than the reckless "dreamer."

It seemed that I was some Pharisee, returning from the scene of death. I had assisted in driving the sharpest nails through the palms of Him who hung on the cross, a spectacle of the bitterest woe that mortality ever felt. I could hear the groan that ran through his soul, as the rough iron grated on the bones when I drove it through. I retired a few steps from the place of execution, and turned around to look at my bitterest enemy. The Nazarene was not yet dead: the life lingered in the mantle of clay, as if it shuddered to walk alone through the valley of death. I thought I could see the cold damp settle on the brow of the dying, now standing in large drops on his. I could see each muscle quiver: — The eye, that began to lose its lustre in the hollow stare of the corpse. I could hear the low gurgle in his throat. — A moment, — and the chain of existence was broken, and a link dropped into eternity.

I turned away, and wandered listlessly on, till I came to the centre of Jerusalem. At a short distance rose the lofty turrets of the Temple; its golden roof reflected rays as bright as the source from which they emanated. A feeling of conscious pride stole over me, as I looked over the broad fields and lofty mountains which surrounded this pride of the eastern world. On my right rose Mount Olivet, covered with shrubbery and vineyards; beyond that, and bounding the skirts of mortal vision, appeared mountains piled on mountains; on the left were the lovely plains of Judea; and I thought it was a bright picture of human existence, as I saw the little brook of Cedron speeding its way through the meadows, to the distant lake. I could hear the gay song of the beauteous maiden, as she gleaned in the distant harvest-field; and, mingling with

the echoes of the mountain, was heard the shrill whistle of the shepherd's pipe, as he called the wandering lamb to its fold. A perfect loveliness had thrown itself over animated nature.

But, "a change soon came o'er the spirit of my dream;" I felt a sudden coldness creeping over me. I instinctively turned toward the sun, and saw a hand slowly drawing a mantle cape over it. I looked for stars; but each one had ceased to twinkle; for the same hand had enveloped them in the badge of mourning. The silver light of the moon did not dawn on the sluggish waves of the Dead Sea, as they sang the hoarse requiem of the cities of the plain; but she hid her face as if shuddering to look on what was doing on the earth. I heard a muttered groan, as the spirit of darkness spread his pinions over an astonished world.

Unutterable despair now seized me. I could feel the flood of life slowly rolling back to its fountain, as the fearful thought stole over me, that the day of retribution had come. Suddenly, I stood before the temple. The veil, which had hid its secrets from unhallowed gaze, was now rent. I looked for a moment: the priest was standing by the altar, offering up the expiatory sacrifice. The fire, which was to kindle up the mangled limbs of the victim, gleamed for a moment, on the distant walls, and then 'twas lost in utter darkness. He turned around, to rekindle it from the living fire of the candlestick; but that, too, was gone. — 'Twas still as the sepulchre.

I turned, and rushed into the street. The street was vacant. No sound broke the stillness, except the yell of the wild dog, who revelled on the half-burnt corpse in the Valley of Hinnom. I saw a light stream from a distant window, and made my way toward it. I looked in at the open door. A widow was preparing the last morsel she could glean, for the dying babe. She had kindled a little fire; and I saw with what utter hopelessness of heart she beheld the flame sink away, like her own dying hopes.

Darkness covered the universe. Nature mourned, for its parent had died. The earth had enrobed herself in the habiliments of sorrow, and the heavens were clothed in the sables of mourning. I now roamed in restlessness, and heeded not whither I went. At once there appeared a light in the east. A column of light shot athwart the gloom, like the light-shot gleams on the darkness of the mid-night of the pit, and illuminated the sober murkiness that surrounded me. There was an opening

in the vast arch of heaven's broad expanse. With wondering eyes, I turned towards it.

Far into the wilderness of space, and at a distance that can only be meted by a "line running parallel with eternity," but still awfully plain and distinct, appeared the same person whom I had clothed with the mock purple of royalty. He was now garmented in the robe of the King of kings. He sat on his throne; but 'twas not one of whiteness. There was mourning in heaven; for, as each angel knelt before him, I saw that the wreath of immortal amaranth which was wont to circle his brow, was changed for one of cypress.

I turned to see whither I had wandered. I had come to the burial ground of the monarch of Israel. I gazed with trembling, as I saw the clods which covered the mouldering bones of some tyrant begin to move. I looked at where the last monarch had been laid, in all the splendour and pageantry of death, and the sculptured monument began to tremble. Soon it was overturned, and from it issued the tenant of the grave. 'Twas a hideous, unearthly form, such as Dante, in his wildest flights of terrified fancy, ne'er conjured up. I could not move, for terror had tied up volition. It approached me. I saw the grave-worm twining among the matted locks which in part covered the rotten skull. The bones creaked on each other as they moved on the hinges, for its flesh was gone. I listened to their horrid music, as this parody on poor mortality stalked along. He came up to me; and, as he passed, he breathed the cold damps of the lonely, narrow house directly in my face. The chasm in the heavens closed; and, with a convulsive shudder, I awoke.

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