

Rattman's Journal.

FREE AS THE WIND, AND AMERICAN TO THE CORE.

BY H. BUCHER SWOOPÉ.

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Parity.

WHAT SHALL BE THE END OF THESE THINGS!

When another life is added
To the heaving turbid mass;
When another breath of being
Stains creation's tarnished glass;
When the first cry, weak and piteous,
Heralds long enduring pain,
And a soul from non-existence
Springs, that never dies again;
When the mother's passionate welcome
Sorrow-like bursts forth in tears,
And the sire's self gratulation
Prophesies of future years—
It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be.

When across the infant features
Trembles the faint dawn of mind;
When the heart looks from the windows
Of the eyes that were so blind;
When the incoherent murmur
Syllable each swaddled thought;
To the fond ear of affection
With a boundless promise fraught,
Kindles great hope for to-morrow
From that dull uncertain ray,
As by glimmering of the twilight
Is foreseen the perfect day—
It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be.

When the boy upon the threshold
Of his all comprising home,
Parts aside the arm maternal
That enfolds him ere he roam;
When the canvas of his vessel
Flutters to the favoring gales,
Years of solitary exile
Hid behind his sunny sails,
When his pulses beat with ardor,
And his sinews stretch for toil;
And a hundred bold enterprises
Lure him to that eastern soil—
It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be.

When the youth beside the maiden
Looks into her affection eyes;
When the heart upon the surface
Shines too happy to be wise;
He by speeches less than gestures
Hints what her hopes expand,
Laying out the way of heaven,
Like enchanted garden ground;
He may falter—so do many;
She must suffer so must all;
Both may yet, world disappointed,
This lost hour of love recall—
It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be.

When the altar of religion
Greets the expectant bride pair;
When the vow that lasts till dying
Vibrates on the sacred air;
When man's laws and protestations
Doubt of after-change defy,
Comforting the frailest spirit
Bound his servitor for aye;
When beneath love's silver moonbeams
Many rocks in slumber sleep,
Undiscovered till possession
Shows the danger of the deep—
It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be.

Whatever is beginning
That is wrought by human skill
Every daring manumission
Of the mind's ambitious will;
Every first impulse of passion,
Gush of love, or twinge of hate,
Every launch upon the ocean,
Wide horizoned by our fate;
Every venture in the chances
Of life's sad, oft desperate, game,
Whatever be our motive,
Whatever be our aim—
It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be.

THE HISTORY OF A LIFE.

Day dawned—Within a curtained room,
Filled to faintness with perfume,
A lady lay at point of doom.
Day closed—A child had seen the light;
But for the lady, fair and bright,
She rested in undreaming night.
Spring rose—The lady's grave was seen;
And near it oftentimes was seen
A gentle boy, with that fatal mein.
Years fled—He wore a manly face,
And struggled in the world's rough race,
And won at last, a lofty place.
And then—he died! Behold, before ye,
Humanity's poor sum and story;
Life—Death—and all that is of glory.

THE ENCHANTED MULE.

At the Feast of Pentecost, King Arthur held open court at the royal city of Camelot; and all the noble ladies, the great barons and knights in his kingdom, were there. On the second day, as they rose from table, they saw far off upon the plain a woman, who appeared to be coming toward the castle, and who was mounted upon a mule without bit or bridle. This awakened their curiosity. The king and queen, everybody, ran to the windows; and each one in the endeavor to solve the mystery, ventured a conjecture. When the mule had arrived at the gate, they saw that she was young and very beautiful. The knights all flew to meet her; they assisted her to dismount, and noticed that her cheeks were wet with tears, and that her countenance was full of sorrow. Having been brought before the king, she saluted him respectfully, and, drying her eyes, prayed him to pardon her for coming to trouble him with her grief; but the bridle of her mule had been stolen from her; and from that day she had wept, and found herself condemned to tears until it was recovered. Only the bravest of knights could retake and restore it to her; and where should she seek such a he-

*The King Arthur of the old French and English romances, is the same monarch who stole three pecks of barley meal to make a bag pudding.

This exploit is equally veritable with all the others attributed to him. He is entirely a creation of the English romances, who called him and his peers into being as companions and counterbalances to Charlemagne and his paladins, the heroes of France.

ro to at the court of so great a king? She then begged King Arthur to allow some of the brave gentlemen who heard her to interest themselves in her sorrow. She assured the knight who consented to become her champion, that he would be conducted to the place of combat by her mule; and for the reward of his bravery, she promised publicly to become his mistress.

All offered themselves, and contended for the honor of the adventure; but the senechal Quex* spoke first, and it was but right to accept his services. He swore to bring back the mule, if it were at the end of the world. But before he started, he demanded a kiss from the maiden, as an earnest of his recompense—on account, as the merchants say—and stepped forward to take it. She utterly refused; any reward until he returned with the bridle; and promised him then not only what he asked, but greater gerdon beside. Quex was obliged to be contented with her word; and, arming himself, he departed, letting the mule choose his way, as she had advised him.

Quex, although the foster brother of King Arthur, and his standard-bearer and senechal, was a great braggart, a slanderous-tongued fellow, and though always quarrelling was always beaten. He was ever ready to undertake that which, as it proved, he had not the ability to perform; and was more than suspected of being something of a coward. He had hardly entered the forest when troops of half-starved lions, tigers, and leopards rushed, roaring terribly to devour him. Then poor Quex repented sorely of his indiscreet boasting; and would, with all the heart he had left, have renounced all the kisses in the world to be well out of his danger. But when the ferocious animals recognised the mule, they fell down before it to lick its feet, and then turned back into the wood.

At the end of the forest was a valley so dark, so deep, so black, that the bravest man could not venture into it without a shudder. And it was yet far more horrible when the poor senechal had passed into it, and when surrounded by serpents, scorpions, and dragons belching flames, he went on only by the lurid light of these infernal fires. Around him tempests howled, torrents roared with the voice of thunder, and mountains heaved up and down in horrible confusion; and though the air was colder, icier than that of a thousand winters together, the sweat rolled from his body. He passed safely through the dreadful place, in spite of all its perils, the mule being his all-sufficient protector; and having gone forward for some distance, he reached, at last, a river, wide and deep, over which there was no bridge, and on whose dark waters he saw no boat; only from side to side stretched a single bar of iron. Quex, faint-hearted, and forgetful of the safety secured to him in former danger by the animal on which he rode, seeing, as he thought, no means of crossing the river, gave up the adventure and turned back. But, unfortunately, he had to re-pass the valley and the forest. The serpents, lions, and monsters rushed again upon him with a seeming frenzy of delight, and would have devoured him a thousand times, could they have done it without touching the mule.

When the knights and ladies saw him afar off from the castle, they began to laugh. The knights assembled in the court-yard, as if to receive him with great honor: King Arthur came himself, and proposed to conduct him to receive the promised kiss; all, in a word, ladies and gentlemen, ridiculed him without mercy; and the unhappy senechal, not knowing how to answer them, and not daring to raise his eyes, disappeared and hid himself.

The maiden was yet more troubled than he. Abandoning herself to despair, she wept bitterly and tore her hair. The brave knight, Guivain, was touched with her grief. He approached, and with modest confidence offered her the service of his sword, and promised to dry her tears; but, like poor Quex, he would have a kiss in advance. The dangers of the adventure were now known, and the grief of the lovely lady increased tenfold, and beside,

*This Quex, as the reader will gather from what follows, was the but of King Arthur's court. He is almost always made by the romancers the first to attempt an offered adventure, in which he never succeeds, and his failure in which acts as a foil to the brilliant achievement of some more fortunate and deserving and less-behaved knight. He appears in the Boy and Mantle, which will be found in Percy's Reliques, and in which his name is transformed into Kay. There comes to Carlisle a "kind courteous child" who had a mantle which no lady could wear, who, as a wife, had "once done amiss." Queen Guenever first assayed to wear it by virtue of her rank, which, according to the text, was theonly virtue she possessed; for

"When shee had taken the mantle
Shee stood as shee had beene made;
It was from the top to the toe
As sheeres had it spread.

One while it was gule;
another while it was greene," &c.

Consequently the lady, like the mantle, was dreadfully cut up and turned all sorts of colors. Nothing daunted and not waiting for any other trial

"Kay called forth his layde
And made her come neere;
Saias, Madam, and thou be guiltye
I pray thee hold the there.

Forth came his layde
shortlye and anon;
Boidlye to the mantle
then is shee gone.

When shee had tane the mantle
and cast it her about,
Then was shee bare,
Before all the rout.
Then every knight
that was in the kinges court,
Talked, laughed, and showed
full oft at that sport."

Thus it was with Quex; and Quex is not dead yet.

how could she refuse so gallant a knight, whose off-tried bravery inspired such confidence. The kiss was granted, and Gauvain mounted the mule and left the castle.

The same dangers through which poor Quex passed, again presented themselves; Gauvain only laughed at them. The serpents and the lions came out to fall upon him; he drew his sword and gave them battle. But there was no need; the monsters, kneeling again before the mule, went quietly away. At last he arrived at the river, saw the bar of iron stretching from side to side, and knowing that there was no other means of passing the dreadful waters, and that his way lay across them, he commended himself to God, and tried the perilous

bridge. It was so narrow that the mule could hardly set half its foot upon it. The moment that Gauvain began the passage, the black waters broke into foaming waves, which heaved and roared all around him, as if to sweep him away, and swallow him up; but he was immovable, and arrived safely upon the opposite bank. There he found a strong castle, before which stood a row of four hundred iron stakes, each of which, with one exception, bore upon its point a bloody head; this one, yet bare, seemed to be waiting for its horrible decoration. The fortress, surrounded by deep moats, which were filled by a foaming torrent, turned round as if upon a pivot, like a gigantic mill-stone. It had, besides, no drawbridge, and seemed to deny to Gauvain any opportunity to display his valor. He, nevertheless, determined to wait, hoping that the castle, in one of its revolutions, would offer him some sort of entrance; and determined, at all events, to perish on the spot, if it did not; rather than to return with disgrace. And finally, a door did open; he spurred his mule, which at one bound cleared the enormous moat, and he found himself within the walls of the castle.

Here every thing seemed to indicate a recent desolation. The courts and passages were empty, no one looked from the gaping windows, and on all sides was solitude and a death-like silence. A dwarf finally came out and looked closely at the knight. Gauvain asked him who was his lord or lady; where they might be found, and what they expected him to do. The dwarf disappeared without an answer. The knight went on his way through the vast and fearful solitude of the castle, and soon saw a giant, hideous to look upon, come from a cavern; his hair bristling as if with rage and armed with a huge battle-axe. Gauvain waited quietly to discover the giant's intention, when the latter, instead of attacking, or even berating him, applauded his courage, but pitied him for undertaking an adventure, the issue of which could not but be fatal, and from which the terrible iron palisade outside the castle should have deterred him. Nevertheless, he offered him food, treated him well, and showed him the chamber where he was to sleep. But before going out, he ordered the hero to strike off his head, saying that he should come in the morning to do the same thing for his guest in turn. Gauvain immediately drew his sword, struck, and the giant's head rolled at his feet. What was his surprise at seeing the monster pick it up, put it upon his shoulders, and stalk off! Nevertheless, as he knew that he should need all his wits and all his strength on the morrow, he went to bed and slept tranquilly, undisturbed by fear of coming danger. At break of day the giant came with the axe to fulfill his promise. He awoke the knight, and according to the conditions stated to him on the day before, ordered him to present his head. Gauvain, sure that nothing could be gained by refusal, hesitated, instantly bent his neck. It was but a trial of his courage. The giant, instead of striking off Gauvain's head, praised and embraced him. The knight asked whether he should go to find the bridle, and what he must do to obtain it.

"You will know before the day is over," was the answer, "but summon all your courage; you never needed it more."

At mid-day, Gauvain presented himself at the place of combat, and found there an enormous lion, foaming, gnawing his chain, and tearing up the earth with his claws. At the sight of his adversary, the savage beast broke into a fearful roar, bristling his enormous mane; his chain fell from him and he threw himself upon Gauvain, whose coat of mail he tore open at the first bound. They fought long and furiously, but the lion was killed. Another, yet larger and more savage, was let loose; but he perished like the first. Gauvain, seeing no other enemy appear, demanded the bridle; but the giant, without answering, led him to his chamber. There he made him eat to recover his strength, and soon afterward led him before another opponent.

This was a formidable knight; the same who had set up the iron pales outside the castle, and with his own hands had placed upon them the heads of the four hundred vanquished champions. A horse and a strong lance were given to each; they rode away to take distance for their career, and hurled themselves against each other. At the first shock, their lances flew into splinters, and their saddle-girths burst. Both sprang up to renew the fight on foot. Their arms rang under their formidable blows, their shields flashed fire, and for two whole hours the victory was doubtful. But Gauvain redoubled his energy, and let fall upon the head of his adversary such a terrible blow, that, cleaving his helmet to the visor, it

brought him reeling to the ground. This was the end of him; for he must have expected instant death if he had not confessed himself vanquished, and already the attendants began to unlace his helmet. But he surrendered his sword, and asked for life. From this moment all opposition was over. The victor had a right to the bridle; it could not be refused. There remained only the hope of enticing him to give it up willingly; and this was the manner in which they trusted to succeed.

The dwarf presented himself, and saluting the victorious knight respectfully, invited him on the part of his mistress, to sup with her. She received him, adorned with all the attractions which art can add to beauty, and sitting upon a sumptuous coach,* whose silver pillars sustained a pavilion decorated with embroidery and precious stones. The lady placed him at her side, and during the supper used the same plate with him. After some flattering reproaches of the bravery which had succeeded in depriving her of all means of resistance, she confessed to him that she was the sister of the maiden with the mule, and that she herself had taken the bridle. "But," she said, "if you will renounce your rights as victor, if you will remain with me, and devote to my service that invincible arm whose prowess I have just proved, this castle, and thirty-nine others yet more magnificent, shall be yours, with all their wealth; and she who begs you to accept them will feel honored by becoming herself the prize of the victor."

Gauvain was nothing moved by these seductive offers. He persisted in exacting the bridle which he had undertaken to obtain; and when he had received it, he departed on his mule amid the joyful shouts of a crowd of people, who, to his great surprise, crowded around him. These were the inhabitants of the castle, who confined till now in their apartments by tyranny of their mistress, could not leave them without being instantly devoured by her lions, and who, freed at last, came to kiss the hand of their liberator.

Upon his return to Camelot, the knight was received by the maiden with those transports of joy and gratitude which were due to such a service. She embraced him a hundred times, and confessed that a hero who had done so much for her, deserved far more than such a trifling recompense. But she prepared instantly for her departure. In vain did King Arthur and the queen beg her to stay until the festival was over; nothing could retain her. She took leave of all, mounted her mule, and disappeared.

*It will be remarked that the lady receives Gauvain upon a coach, and placing him by her side, sups with him, sharing his plate. This custom, a relic of the manners in Rome, and which is alluded to in one of the most solemn and interesting passages in the New Testament, is frequently named in the older romances.

WASHINGTON'S TENTS.—The following account, with which the venerable George Washington Park Curtis furnishes the Washington Intelligencer, of the two tents of General Washington, will interest our readers. We learn it is the property of Mr. Curtis, in whose possession, at Arlington house, these venerated relics have been for half a century, to bequeath them to the nation, to be preserved among the military archives at the seat of government.—There were two tents, or rather *marqueses*, attached to the baggage of the commander-in-Chief during the revolutionary war. The larger, can dine about forty persons, formed the banquet hall for the grand banquet given by Washington to the officers of the three armies immediately after the surrender of Yorktown, when the victor made the feast, and the vanquished were his guests. The smaller or the sleeping tent has a history of touching peculiar interest attached to it, as related by Colonel John Nicholas, of Virginia, an officer of the Life Guard. He said, that although the headquarters were generally in a house, yet we always pitched the smaller tent in the yard, or immediately adjacent to the quarters, and to this tent the chief was in the constant habit of retiring to write his dispatches. His orders to the officer of the guard were: Let me not be disturbed; when I have completed my dispatches I will come out myself. Let the expressions be mounted and in waiting. Often would a courier arrive, "bloody with spurring" and shouting, dispatches from General— to the commander-in-Chief. Often the travel-soiled courier would have time to breathe a little after a desperate ride, till, parting the doorfolts of the tent, would appear the man of mighty labors, the dispatches ready sealed in his hand. From within these venerable canvass walls emanated the momentous dispatches that guided the destinies of our country in the most awful periods of the struggle for independence. The tents were originally made in Philadelphia, in August, 1775, under the direction of Captain Moulder, of the revolution. They were first pitched on the heights of Cambridge, in 1775, and are now preserved in the portmanteaus in which they were carried during the whole of the war for independence.

A SINGULAR FORGIVENESS.—Sir Walter Scott, in his article in the Quarterly Review, on the Colloids papers mentioned a characteristic instance of an old Highland warrior's mode of pardon.—"You must forgive even your bitterest enemy, Kennair, now," said the confessor to him, as he lay gasping on his death-bed. "Well, if I must, I must," replied the chieftain; "but my curse be on you Donald," turning towards his son, "if you forgive him."

NEVER MARRY FOR A FORTUNE. We overheard a poor unfortunate get the following sockdolager the other day from his better half: "You good-for-nothing fellow," said she, "what would you have been if I had not married you? Whose was the baking liver, whose the pig trough, whose the frying pan, and the iron hooped bucket, but mine when you married me?"

The antipathy of the Scotch people to written sermons is well known. At Kircubright, at an "inauguration," an old woman on the pulpit stair asked one of her companions if the new minister was a reader. And how can he read, woman, was the reply "the man's blin". To which the first made answer, "I'm glad to hear 'I wish they were a blin'."

"Shon," said a Dutchman, "you may say what you please 'bout pad neighbors; I had to 'nour neighbors as never was—Mins pigs and mine hens come home mit dere ear split and totter day two of dem come home missing!"

Lorenzo Dow once said of a grasping avaricious old farmer, that if he had the whole world enclosed in a single field, he would not be content without a patch of ground on the outside for potatoes.

A wife cannot make home comfortable, who "dears" and "my loves" and "pets" her husband, and don't sew the buttons on his shirts, or the tapes on his drawers.

Men were furnished with two eyes and two ears, in order that they might see and hear twice as much as they said.

BURIAL OF THE YOUNG.—[The following touching description, which for graphic power, simplicity and pathos, is hardly equalled in the English language, describes the interment of a young and beautiful child, whose sweetness of disposition and purity of character are calculated to interest deeply the heart of every reader.]

Along the crowded path they bore her now; pure as the newly-fallen snow that covered it; whose day on earth had been as fleeting. Under that porch where she had sat when Heaven in its mercy brought her to the peaceful spot, she passed again, and the old church received her in its quiet shade. They carried her to one old nook, where she had many a time sat musing, and laid their burden softly on the pavement. The light streamed on it through the colored window—a window where the boughs of trees were ever rustling in the summer, and where the birds sang sweetly all day long. With every breath of air that stirred among those branches in the sunshine, some trembling, changing light, would fall upon her grave. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Many a young hand dropped in its little wreath, many a stifled sob was heard. Some—and there were not a few—knelt down. All were sincere and truthful in their sorrow.

The service done, the mourners stood apart, and the villagers closed around to look into the grave before the pavement stone should be replaced. One called to mind how he had seen her sitting on that very spot, and how her book had fallen on her lap, as she was gazing with a pensive face upon the sky. Another told how he had wondered much that one so delicate as she, should be so bold; how she had never feared to enter the church alone at night, but had loved to linger there when all was quiet; and even to climb the tower stair, with no more light than that of the moon rays stealing through the loop-hole in the thick old wall. A whisper went about among the oldest there, that she had seen and talked with angels; and when they called to mind how she had looked, and spoken, and her early death, some thought it might be so, indeed.

Thus, coming to the grave, in little knots, and glancing down, and giving place to others, and falling off in whispering groups of three or four, the church was cleared in time of all but the sexton and the mourning friends. They saw the vault covered and the stone fixed down. Then, when the dusk of evening had come on, and not a sound disturbed the sacred stillness of the place—when the bright moon poured in her light on the tomb and monument, on pillar, wall and arch, and most of all (it seemed to them) upon her quiet grave—in that calm time, when all outward things and inward thoughts teem with assurance of immortality, and worldly hopes and fears are hushed in the dust before them—then, with tranquil and submissive hearts they turned away, and left the child with God. Oh! it is hard to take to heart the lessons that such deaths will teach; but let no man reject it, for it is one that all must learn, and is a mighty, universal truth.—When death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world, and bless it. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes. In the destroyer's steps, there spring up bright creations that defy his power, and his dark path becomes a way of light to Heaven.—*Dickens.*

DEVOTION.—Devotion is nothing else but apprehensions, and right affections toward God. All practices therefore, that heighten and improve our true apprehensions of God—all ways of life that tend to nourish, raise, and fix our affections upon Him, are to be reckoned so many helps and means to fill us with devotion.

Never marry for a fortune. We overheard a poor unfortunate get the following sockdolager the other day from his better half: "You good-for-nothing fellow," said she, "what would you have been if I had not married you? Whose was the baking liver, whose the pig trough, whose the frying pan, and the iron hooped bucket, but mine when you married me?"

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Sabbath Reading.

AN ANGEL IN THE WAY.

[This very choice effusion originally appeared in Fraser's Magazine of last January. It is one of those very pure classical productions which now and then, and without any great intervening interval, appear in that able and distinguished periodical. The author of it is manifestly a man of extraordinary talent. The lesson it imparts would, if generally adopted, impose on the world a system of morals which would tend to its advantage, its happiness and its glory.]

Fair the downward path is spread,
Love and Light thy coming greet,
Fruit is blessing o'er thy host,
Flowers are growing 'neath thy feet.
Mirth and sin, with tossing hands,
Wave the on, a willing prey;
Yet an instant pause—there stands
An angel in the way.

Heed the heavenly warning—know
Fairest flowers thy feet may trip;
Fruit, that like the sunset glow,
Turns to ashes on the lip.
Though the joys be wild and free,
Even mortal eye can see
An angel in the way.

Wilt thou drown in worldly pleasure?
Wilt thou have, like him of old,
Length of days and store of pleasure,
Wisdom, glory power and gold?
Life and limb shall sickle waste,
Wilt thou grind the night and day,
Still to win thee, God has planted
An angel in the way.

Trusting all on things that perish,
Shall a hopeless faith be thine?
Earthly idol wilt thou cherish?
Bow before an earthly shrine?
Meet rebuke to mortal love
Yearning for a child of heaven,
Death shall cross thy path and prove
An angel in the way.

When the prophet thought to sin,
Tempted by his heathen guide;
When a prince's grace to win,
Prophet lips would fain have lied,
Even the brute the man controlled,
Found a human voice to say,
"Master, smite me not—behold
An angel in the way."

So, when vice to lure her slave,
Woods him down the shining track,
Spirit hands are stretched to save,
Spirit voices warn him back,
Heart of man to evil prone,
Chafe not at thy sin's delay;
Bow thee humbly down and own
An angel in the way.

STORY OF RABBI AKIBA.—Compelled by violent persecution, to quit his native land, Rabbi Akiba wandered over barren wastes and dreary deserts. His whole equipage consisted of a lamp, which he used to light at night, in order to study the law; a cock, which served him instead of a watch, to announce to him his rising dawn; and an ass, on which he rode.

The sun was gradually sinking behind the horizon, night was fast approaching, and the poor wanderer knew not where to shelter his head, or where to rest his weary limbs. Fatigued, and almost exhausted, he came at last near a village. He was glad to find it inhabited, thinking, where human beings dwelt, there dwelt, also, humanity and compassion.

But he was mistaken. He asked for a night's lodging. He was refused. Not one of the inhospitable inhabitants would accommodate him. He was, therefore, obliged to seek shelter in a neighboring wood. "It is hard, very hard," said he, "not to find a hospitable roof to protect me against the inclemency of the weather; but God is just, and whatever he does is for the best."

He seated himself beneath a tree, lighted his lamp, and began to read the law. He had scarcely read a chapter, when a violent storm extinguished the light. "What!" exclaimed he, "must I not be permitted even to pursue my favourite study! But God is just, and whatever he does is for the best." He stretched himself on the earth, willing, if possible, to have a few hours sleep. He had hardly closed his eyes, when a fierce wolf came and killed the cock. "What new misfortune is this!" ejaculated the astonished Akiba.—"My vigilant companion is gone! Who, then, will henceforth awaken me to the study of the law? But God is just; he knows what is good for us poor mortals."

Scarcely had he finished the sentence, when a terrible lion came and devoured the ass.—"What is to be done now?" exclaimed the lonely wanderer. "My lamp and my cock are gone—my poor ass, too, is gone—all are gone! But, praised be the Lord, whatever he does is for the best."

He passed a sleepless night, and, early in the morning, went to the village to see whether he could procure a horse, or any other beast of burden, to enable him to pursue his journey. But what was his surprise, not to find a single individual alive!

It appears that a band of robbers had entered the village during the night, killed its inhabitants, and plundered their houses. As soon as Akiba had sufficiently recovered from the amazement, into which this wonderful occurrence had thrown him, he lifted up his voice, and exclaimed, "Thou great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now I know, by experience, that poor mortal men are short-sighted and blind; often considering as evils, what was intended for their preservation. But thou, alone, are just, and kind, and merciful."

Had not the hard-hearted people driven me, by their inhospitality, from the village, I should assuredly have shared their fate. Had not the wind extinguished my lamp, the robbers would have been drawn to the spot, and have murdered me. I perceive, also, that it was thy mercy which deprived me of my companions, that they might not, by their noise, give notice to the banditti where I was. Praise thee, then, be thy name forever and forever!"