

CHAPTER V.

MALTA.

KITTO'S mind had, for some time, been steadily under the power of a motive to which it was originally a comparative stranger. The desire of usefulness had supplanted or outgrown the mere love of fame. He craved to be known, in the first instance, and 'get himself a name;' but now his soul was bent on imparting benefit to his fellow-creatures. In a letter to Mr Pearson of the Missionary College, he confesses, '*Fame* was the idol I was taught to bow down to and worship. I hope that in reference to myself it is on the throne no longer, and that I have no other wish on this point than that my light may so shine before men that they may glorify my Father who is in heaven.' Let us listen for a moment to his deeper self-analysis, made at a period of subsequent and leisurely meditation:—

'It has often occurred to me that the stimulant which the desire of fame offers is specially adapted to one's youth, in which it is indeed most entirely in operation, and that it has been providentially given to that period of life to supply the absence of the more sedate stimulants which advancing life introduces. Rightly understood, it is then an incentive to good and a curb to evil, which, in the spring-time, are so much needed, for he who, in his sanguine youth, hopes that the world will hereafter take notice of his course, will not be unsolicitous to keep his garments clean.

'The desire to be honourably known among men—the craving for approbation—the wish to do something which might preserve one's memory from the oblivion of the grave—and the reluctance to hurry on through this short life and disappear along with the infinite multitudes who

"Grow up and perish as the summer fly,
Herds without name—no more remembered:—"

these things savour, seemingly, of that "love of fame" of which so much has been said or sung. I cannot say that this, as a motive to exertion and to perseverance in the course which I had taken, did not find a way to my mind.

'I have confessed that self-advancement eventually became one of the objects which I contemplated as the possible result of my exertions. Very few of my readers will complain of this; but considering the generally sacred character of my pursuits, which, I will venture to say, have been, however tremblingly, directed not less to the glory of God than to the use of man, some will be dis-

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posed to ask, whether self-advancement is a legitimate object of exertion; and whether it was not rather my duty to have been content in the station to which it had pleased God to call me. Now, by “self-advancement,” I mean melioration of the evils of my condition; and no one can object to that without affirming that it was my duty to lie still, to be content and happy, under the unmitigated calamities of the condition to which I had been reduced. I believe that *this* was not required of me. I am persuaded that the state of life to which the Almighty calls every man is that for which he is fitted, and to which he may be able to rise by the just and honourable use of any and every talent which has been confided to him. In *that* station let him be content, and not waste his heart in aiming at things beyond his reach. I have read the Bible ill, if this be not its meaning. Saint Paul enjoins the Christian slaves to be content in their stations; and yet he tells them, that “if they be made free, *to use it rather.*” Was ever any slave in so hard a bondage, bondage so hopeless as that into which deafness brought me? and if I might by exertions not degrading but elevating be free, should I not “use it rather?” Let the answer be found in the contrast between the uselessness of my first condition, and the usefulness of that to which I have now attained.³⁷

It was with the view of taking an active and honourable part in what he reckoned the highest function of redeemed humanity, that Kitto left Islington. He felt that he was going out to Malta to labour in Christ’s cause, for the Master had said to him, ‘Son, go work today in My vineyard,’ and he gladly, and to the best of his ability, obeyed the charge.

The institution at Malta had for its object to supply tracts to the Church missionaries, in Greek, Arabic, Maltese, and Italian. It had three presses, and employed six individuals. Mr Jowett and Mr Schlienz were the principal labourers, accomplished, scholarly, and devoted. Of Mr Jowett Kitto says, ‘He is second to none; or if second to any, only to Mr Groves; and Mr Schlienz works, in another way, far harder than we printers do, for he preaches, and that frequently, twice on Sunday.’ Though there was not a bookseller’s shop in the island, the Romish clergy were their principal opponents, and the circulation of tracts was forbidden by sacerdotal authority. But the works of the missionary press at Malta were largely circulated in other countries. Kitto rejoiced that, in sailing to join such an institution, he was assuming, though in a humble form, the coveted character and position of an evangelist.

But his sojourn in Malta was, in Scottish religious phrase, a ‘crook in his lot.’ The voyage to the Mediterranean was, however, of lasting service to him. His deafness had been accompanied by a growing reluctance to speak, and indisposition to use his vocal organs had almost produced inability.

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‘When I first went to the Mediterranean, the companions of my outward voyage were Dr Korck, a German physician, who had lately taken orders in the Anglican Church, and Mr Jadownicky, a converted Polish Jew, lately arrived from America, where he had been completing his Christian education. These well-informed and kind-hearted men, being always with me, soon perceived how the matter really stood; and, after much reasoning with me on the matter, they entered into a conspiracy, in which the captain of the ship joined, not to understand a word I said, otherwise than orally, throughout the voyage. In this they persevered to a marvel; and as I had much to ask, since I had not before been at sea, I made very great progress with my tongue during the six weeks’ voyage, and, by the time we reached our destination, had almost overcome the habit of clutching a pen or pencil, to answer every question that was asked me. From this time I usually expressed myself orally to those whom I knew, in the ordinary intercourse of life; but when my communication required many words, it was usually conveyed in writing. This also I at length dropped, and strangers only were addressed in writing. Finally, I ventured to accost even strangers with the tongue; and it was only when not understood that I resorted to the pen. At first, strangers could rarely understand me without much difficulty; but, under the improvement which practice gave, my voice was so much bettered, that the instances in which it was not readily understood, gradually diminished; and, at the present day, I rarely find even a foreigner to whom my language is not clear.³⁸

The gain to Kitto from this voyage, therefore, was immense; and he felt under no little obligation to his kind and earnest friends, who broke his pernicious habit, and won him back to the use of speech. The voyage was pleasant to him, for he was a stranger to sea-sickness. He felt, indeed, what sometimes terrifies or distresses a landsman, the instability of cabin furniture and dinner equipage from the blowing of smart breezes; and while he had made up his mind to such annoyances, and could smile at them, yet he liked an occasional calm, and rejoiced over ‘the capture of two fine turtles.’ His letters to his friends, Woollcombe, Harvey, Lampen, and Burnard, contain such details as, in his opinion, would be most relished respectively by each of his correspondents.

He states generally, that his mind was no stranger to those emotions which men so often feel on leaving their native shores—that a ‘feeling of desolateness’ had occasionally come over him, but that he felt each evening ‘Whose presence was with him,’ and he hoped that such feelings ‘threw him more upon God.’

His first sensations, off the coast of Portugal, are detailed to Mr Woollcombe, July 10:—

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‘I fetched my bolster from the cabin, and arranged a bed for myself on the tafferel, by laying Mr Jadownicky’s thick cloak along, to lie upon, and then wrapping myself in my own cloak and fur cap, to defend me from the dew. I remember walking about the deck, or sometimes leaning on the gangway, till between twelve and one o’clock, when, feeling sleepy, I retired to my new bed, and lay there, so that I could look the moon in the face till I fell asleep. An accident awoke me about a quarter past two, and then I got up and walked about for nearly an hour, went to bed again, and slept till a few minutes before sunrise, which of course is considerably later here than in England. The sun rose with great splendour from behind the Lusitanian Mountains, but I have seen far more gorgeous risings of the sun than this, from the Hoe, at Plymouth, and from the Catdown. Both the risings and settings of the sun do not seem such slow and majestic affairs as in England; and, indeed, I understand that the farther we advance to the south, the shorter is the morning and evening twilight, and the less time the sun takes in rising and setting. I have just inquired at the captain, and find that, as I suspected, the mountains adjoining the Rock of Lisbon are those of Cintra, of which Lord Byron speaks, in the fourteenth stanza of the first Canto of Childe Harold:—

“Cintra’s mountains greet them on their way.”

And, indeed, it was to us, as to him, a pleasant greeting, after having been, for so many days, out of sight of anything like land.’

The good ship Wilberforce, with a ‘gilt effigy’ of the senator at her prow, entered at length the straits of Gibraltar; and as Kitto looked alternately on the African and European land, so close on each other, many trains of meditation passed through his mind. He reached Malta in safety on the 30th of July, entering the harbour of La Valetta in the evening, and disembarking next morning. The accommodation provided for him was not of the best description, for he slept several weeks on the floor, and some time elapsed before he enjoyed the luxury of a chair and a table. At length he got two rooms, a study and within it a bedroom—‘the highest in a high house’—but abounding in windows, which commanded a fine marine prospect. He had also a bookcase, with a good collection on its shelves. But who will wonder at his confession, that of an impatient bridegroom—‘My heart was in England, and my mind continually travelled thither’? He set to work with ardour, and especially occupied himself with Asiatic types; nay, he spontaneously entered, at the same time, upon Arabic studies. The literary departments were filled by the clerical missionaries, and the translators were natives of the countries into whose languages they were

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rendering Christian books and tracts. From half-past seven till half-past four was he occupied every day in the printing office. He liked his work; and he rejoiced in its prospective results. He declares, in his letters, how happy he was that his connection with the Society had been renewed.

‘It is easy,’ he says to Mr Burnard, November 13, ‘to *talk* about missionary service when we are at home, or even when we are preparing at home for personal service in the cause, and yet understand very little of what it really is. In this, as in other things, an ounce of experimental knowledge is worth a pound of speculation or conjecture. . . . Believe me, it is not my wish to magnify any sacrifice I may have been enabled to make; far from it. I only mention this that I might say how “the consolations of Christ” do abound in these situations, notwithstanding the difficulties and sacrifices with which they must be obtained. In my own ease, I feel that my most ordinary employments, even my daily occupations, are, with the blessing of God’s Spirit, calculated to be the means of great usefulness to the Christian cause. This is what few, but those in our situation, can say of their most *ordinary* duties.’

Kitto saw the carnival, with all its puerile follies, which he alleges were on the decline—not more than a fourth part of the people wearing masks, and the maskers being prohibited from tossing sugar balls at the unmasked, or in any way molesting them. ‘Sweetmeats, generally small comfits, were thrown about in great abundance, chiefly by English and Russian officers, who had small bags full, which they frequently replenished at the stalls. These were generally thrown into the coaches, in the faces of the ladies, who commonly returned the compliment with zeal, and often were the first to give it.’

The Committee in London, by one of their minutes, dated March 20th, 1827, on readmitting Kitto to their employment, and sending him to Malta, gave a conditional sanction to his marriage, ‘on the understanding, that, at a future period, should he conduct himself to Mr Jowett’s satisfaction, H. A., to whom he is under matrimonial engagements, may join him at that place, with a view to their marriage.’ But the lady of his heart, whom Kitto had left behind him in England, proved faithless to her engagement. He was disposed to blame the Committee at home for being careless about forwarding his correspondence. ‘I have now,’ he says, ‘been absent from England for something more than eight mouths, and have not, in all that time, had one letter from Miss A.; and therefore I feel assured that several successive letters have been left with the Society, on the understanding that they would be sent out. If the separation, for a short time, between us, to which I was unwillingly induced to assent, was at all necessary, this surely is not also necessary. This surely might have been spared.’ He did not know what to think about her whom he calls his ‘*ladye faire*’—‘she

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whom I had trusted before all earthly beings—she who was dearer to me than all other things my heart ever knew or cherished.’

His suspicions, at the end of these eight weary months, were at last confirmed, by the intelligence that she had deserted him, and had been married to another person. His hopes were in a moment dashed to the ground, and his heart was oppressed with sad and bitter thoughts. He had loved intensely, and was in daily expectation of being married. He was ever picturing the comforts of home, when she should fill it and grace it; but, alas! she had plighted her troth to another. On receiving the tidings, he went at once into his room, shut the door upon him, and did not leave it for more than two days, not even for his meals. During that dark period no one saw him. The servant became alarmed, and told Mr Jowett. Knocking was vain; but a ladder was got, that the servant might, by means of it, see in above the door, and ascertain whether Kitto were dead. On his friends looking into the chamber, he was discovered sitting on his desolate and solitary hearth, with his head bent on his knee. The intelligence grieved him beyond any former affliction which he had been called upon to suffer. ‘My spirit is bowed down indeed.’ ‘I am alone,’ he says to one correspondent, ‘but what else I am I cannot tell.’ ‘I often found myself,’ he says to another friend, ‘engaged in the repetition of two lines, which I must have picked up somewhere at a former period

“No more, no more, oh never more on me
The freshness of the heart shall fall like dew.”

‘. . . I know I can never again confide as I have confided. . . . I have read over what I have written. It is not all good. There is an unhealthy spirit in it. True, my own spirit is diseased, for it has been deeply wounded, and the wound is not yet healed. May Almighty God give me the spirit of health and strength—give me a sound mind—bind up again that which is broken—heal that which is wounded. He can, I doubt not; that He will, I am willing to hope and believe. In outward nature He revives again in the spring that which the winter seems to wither away. Does God take care for plants, for trees, for flowers, and shall He not take care for me? Shall not I revive again also? I will hope that I may, and, believe me, I do endeavour to cast myself and all my cares and troubles upon Him in whom I have never vainly trusted, by whom my confidence and trust have never been betrayed. I trust He will make good to me all these evils; and that they may be made instrumental in drawing me still nearer to our crucified Lord, who can give me *here* comfort, strength, things in my spirit, far better than all I can now lose, than all that can be taken away from me; and who can

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give me hereafter “quiet and enduring chambers” in His Father’s house, where none of the things that now trouble and distract me, can vex me further.’

To his mother he thus unbosoms himself:—

March 7, 1828.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I write this letter to you in very great sorrow of heart. I received news yesterday from the Society, which has given me a blow that it will be very long before I shall recover. It was this—that H—— A—— is married to some person in England! Oh, my mother, you cannot imagine what this has made me suffer! I had expected that she would soon come to me, and hoped that we should be very comfortable and happy together in this place—when all my hopes and happiness in this life were at once destroyed by this intelligence. I hardly know how to believe it. But it was the Secretaries of the Society themselves who wrote to tell it to Mr Jowett, and they would not have written it had they not been quite certain about it. They wrote very kindly, and assured me of their sympathy and prayers, and my friends here have also been very considerate and kind on this occasion to me. But the kindness of man can do little for such a wound as this. I am very unwell, my dear mother, and my spirit is quite broken up. It is a very severe trial to me, and I should quite sink under it, if the Lord were not graciously with me, to support and strengthen me, under the heavy burden I have to bear. I hope it will be sanctified to me, as my other trials have been. I wish you were with me now, that I might talk with you; for I am desolate indeed, and my cup of sorrow is very full. The Lord is with me, however, and puts a little peace into my heart, else I could not live. Indeed, I do not care to live at all. I have had nothing to make me love life. My life has been quite full of disappointment and sorrow, and I shall be very, very glad, when my labours are ended, and I am permitted to go to my home in heaven—to that quiet rest from all these troubles, which the Lord has prepared there for His people.’

His mother replied in a letter which has the genuine maternal stamp upon it. Indignation at the lady’s conduct, and sympathy with her son, struggle alike for utterance. She tells him that God, for some wise purpose, had not designed her for him, and, descending from this altitude, she affectionately advises him to walk a good deal, take plenty of exercise, and converse pleasantly and often with his associates.

In a letter to the lady’s cousin, he sends the following message:—

Malta, March 7, 1828.

‘ . . . Tell her that I have no wish to reproach her. God can bear me witness, that I have desired her happiness above all things; and although she has wounded me so deeply, and made me desolate indeed, I shall rejoice if she prove to be

happy in her new situation. But I doubt whether she will. They who can sport so with the happiness of others, are seldom happy themselves. They may seem to be so for a season, but, in the end, they are not. Their happiness passes away like a dream. Believe me, it is my prayer that hers may be lasting. But mine would not in her situation. I do not think I could rest quietly upon my pillow if I had served her, or any other person, as she has served me. To murder the peace of another is the worst of all murders; and she has murdered mine. I think, however, that I can forgive her, and I pray God to forgive her also.'

We do not know all the reasons which induced the lady to withdraw her pledge to Kitto. We find in his Islington Journal, in an incidental record of his most secret thoughts, the following complaint:—

'Went to Hannah before coming to the Institution. I do not really know what to think about her. That she loves me I have very great reason to believe; yet, on this supposition, and knowing that she is *not* naturally volatile, I have felt much at a loss to account for a degree of inattention to me when at her house, which has very frequently distressed my feelings much, very much indeed. The most trivial and unimportant circumstance has the power of diverting her attention from me, even though I should be speaking of something which may seem to me peculiarly interesting; and I have seen her chatting and laughing, for a long time occasionally, without seeming to be in the least conscious that such a being as John Kitto was present. I am very foolish to mind such things, yet I cannot help minding them—lovers are very foolish beings. . . . That she is faultless, I am not obliged, by the most ardent affection, to believe. . . . If she do not experience that warmth for me which I do for her, that surely cannot be imputed to her as a *fault*—it is my *misfortune*.'

We should be inclined to lay no great stress on this lover's lamentation, for Kitto was very sensitive in society; and, from his deafness and isolation, was apt to think himself slighted. He never ascribes to her any alteration of affection, but says, some years afterwards, that her conduct 'admitted of much extenuation, owing to the awkward predicament in which the Society had placed them both.' We have learned, on good authority, that Kitto's letters from Malta were studiously kept back from the lady; that she was taught to believe that he had forgotten her; that it was under the pressure of maternal authority that the match was broken off; and that the instability of his connection with the Society was a topic principally insisted on. What Kitto calls the 'deep repentance' of the lady's death-bed, was the result of her coming too late to a knowledge of these painful circumstances.

The result was, that a severe illness overtook him. His heart had been crushed, and his health now failed. In fact, he was fast sinking into that morbid

state which had oppressed his early years. He felt as if he had been cut off from the world, and as if some curse had fallen upon him. He had suffered much already for sins not his own—had been the inmate of a workhouse, had lost one of his senses, had been twice misjudged, as he thought, by his Committee—and ‘all these things were against him.’ Was he never to enjoy the sunshine? Was a sudden eclipse forever cruelly to interpose? Providence had been mysterious in its actings towards him, and was man, in addition, continually to thwart him? His spirit sank under such reflections, and sickness preyed upon him. ‘I became dangerously ill,’ he tells Mr Frere, ‘and we all thought that my cares and my afflictions, my miscalculations and my errors, would now at last be terminated. It pleased God, nevertheless, that I should be again restored.’³⁹ Such was his lassitude, even when recovering, that he had no heart for his duties; nay, his physical strength was not equal to the task. A peculiar weakness of his ankles, which he had felt ever since his fall, and more than once described and lamented, disabled him from standing at a case ten hours a day. He began to perceive that he was not giving satisfaction to his superiors. He had rashly bound himself to relinquish literary pursuits. But his own explanation seems to have been—that literary pursuits and literary relaxation were different things—that he might safely indulge the latter without devoting himself, heart and soul, to the former. Though, therefore, he spent his hours of leisure in reading and meditation, he did not think that he had broken his pledge. The Committee, however, judged that the way in which he passed his evenings, did not leave him sufficient time for exercise and sleep; and that, in consequence, he must come to his employment under them, with a jaded mind and an exhausted frame. Mr Jowett, when about to leave Malta for England, had told him so; and Mr Bickersteth, the Secretary, sent him a lecture on the ‘Sacrifice of self-will and self-gratification.’ The Committee gave it as their opinion that his ‘habits of mind were likely to disqualify him for that steady and persevering discharge of his duties, which they considered as indispensably requisite.’ ‘It is clear,’ writes the unflinching Secretary, ‘that the Society cannot continue in its service those who will not devote themselves to their engagements.’ Kitto had been under espionage in Malta, for his previous breach with the Society had been only partially healed. He was, in fact, on trial, though he was not aware of it, and, perhaps, no one put him on his guard. He accordingly thought himself unjustly used, and affirmed that he had kept his pledge,—that his general hour of retiring to rest was eleven o’clock, and that if he remained out of bed longer at any time, it was because painful feelings would have scared sleep away, had he lain down to woo it. He adds with some degree both of tartness and truth—‘If I had employed an equal portion of my evenings, lolling on the sofa and smoking my pipe, it seems all

would have been well—no blame would have been imputed to me.’ It was allowed, that when in the office, he was faithful to his work as a compositor, but it was surmised that his studies out of it must unfit him, to some extent, for its manual labours. The Committee and he were both in error. He had made too large a promise, and they were too exacting and dictatorial as to his performance of it. An expression of sympathy would have done more to accomplish their end, than the stern declaration of authority. He might have been led to more exercise and earlier hours, but he could not be forced to them. Kindness might have moved him, but rigour only confirmed him. He was not to be concussed into what he deemed a species of helotry. The Committee were resolved to keep him to his place, for he had already offended, and a second misdemeanour could not be tolerated. They would not put up with insubordination on the part of such a servant, and the unconscious Kitto was, therefore, warned, rebuked, and virtually dismissed. We cannot blame the Society so deeply as some have done, though, certainly, according to their own premises, if they acted toward the misguided lad in equity, they showed him but small lenience. If he was ‘out of the way,’ they exhibited but slender ‘compassion’ for the invalid at once fevered in body and bruised in heart.

Kitto’s residence of eighteen months in Malta was nearly lost time to him, and it was the most miserable portion of his maturer life. He had been disappointed where he had ‘garnered up his heart.’ He had tried to please his employers, and had failed. His views in life were darkened. He had hoped to rise to a position of honour on the missionary staff, but he had been sharply severed from it. And what, then, should he do? What would his former patrons say of him now? Would they not disown him, and reckon their confidence in him misplaced? In what ‘line of things’ could he promise himself success? No wonder his spirit preyed upon itself, for even Mr Groves did not, in this instance, justify him. In this forlorn and unhappy condition, and with the horizon lowering all around him, Kitto embarked for England, on the 12th of January 1829,⁴⁰ in the *Maria*, Captain Tregarthen. The ship was first detained for a while in port, and was also long on her voyage. When she was off the Lizard, Kitto composed a letter for Mr Harvey, which might be sent to Plymouth in some fishing-boat. His object was to assure his Plymouth friends of his safety. He was the only cabin passenger, and the voyage had improved his health. He is thankful that his detention in Malta enabled him to get a resolution of the Society, in which they promise to ‘make it their business to assist me in the best way of doing well for myself. . . . God make me very thankful and grateful to Himself first.’ On the voyage out, Kitto had been in raptures as he gazed upon the mountains of Granada, and he thought that the eyes of another coming after him would

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admire them too. But, on his return, the magnificent scenery made no impression on him, for 'his heart was too hard and cold to care two pins for all the snowy mountains in the universe.'

Before Kitto set sail, he had proposed to Mr Frere to write at length a history of the island.⁴¹ Concerning another literary composition, relating to missions and Scripture, we find among his papers the following prayer:—

'ON COMMENCING MY BOOK.

'Almighty God! without Whom nothing is good, nothing is holy, without Whom all my best designs are vain, I pray Thee bless this undertaking to Thine own glory and the blessing of many. To me, also, may it be sanctified. Grant that I be not led astray by the poor lust of literary honour and distinction. Fill my heart with Thyself, and out of the fulness of my heart may I be enabled to speak to others in the book which now, with this promise, and by Thy grace, I purpose to write and to send forth into the world.'

In the prospect of leaving Malta, he composed a farewell in verse. Though not certainly of a high order, it was written with some care; and it is rather quaintly topographical and minutely antiquarian in its allusions. Place after place is saluted, and its ancient history glanced at. Copious notes in prose illustrate the poem and conclude the paper. It opens thus:—

Dear isle, farewell! I had not thought
To find so soon my bark afloat—
So soon to have again to spell
That short but painful word, farewell!
Less had I thought, with much regret,
To speak that word to thee. . .
Farewell, then, Malta; yet, once more,
Why linger my feet on thy shore?
To thee, a few months since, I came
With heart in love, and hopes in flame,
Trusting to find in thee a rest,
In others blessing being blest.
But now I leave thee. Soon England
I tread upon thy smoother strand;
Yet, sooth to say, I little care;
For what have I to bless me there?
The hopes, which once around me flourished,
Have faded all away and perished. . .
So, then, can I be anxious whether
I dwell in this clime or another?

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No; regions all alike we call
When misery we find in all.
England to greet I shall not grieve,
Nor Malta do I gladly leave.’

On his arrival in London, Kitto met with Mr Groves, who was about to embark on his mission to the East. His faith had not been shaken in his former apprentice, and he proposed that the cast-off printer should accompany him. Before coming to a decision, the forlorn adventurer went down to Plymouth, and there he resolved not to go out with his benefactor. He said ‘No’ most firmly to the very proposal which moulded his subsequent life, and raised him to his ultimate position of usefulness and honour. But a mysterious Providence brought him suddenly to another decision, and he then hastened to be gone. Meanwhile his sojourn in Plymouth was far from being comfortable. Many who had helped him in former days, refused further assistance, and taunted him with his repeated breaches with the Missionary Committee, as a proof that he was proud and intractable. Conscious of his integrity, and disdaining to volunteer such a minute and lengthened explanation as might be construed into an apology, or interpreted as a confession, he seems sometimes to have wrapped himself in dignified reserve, and thus offended another class of his friends. The case did appear suspicious; and many seem to have thought that their high opinion of his talents had been unwarranted, as being the dictate of sympathy rather than of judgment, that they had erred also in their estimate of his character, that his promotion had turned his head, and that a self-willed obstinacy, or a hasty temper, was evidently the fatal bar to his advancement. Now that he was again flung upon them, they resolved that he should be left to his unaided resources; for if he were determined to throw away such auspicious opportunities as he had already enjoyed, they concluded that their money, influence, and advice, would be grievously misspent.

Kitto, in a letter to Mr Harvey, as far back as 1823, mentions an unknown gentleman who had made him a present of ‘Butler’s Analogy,’ and warned him that, when he ceased to be a novelty, then would come the great test of his abilities. Kitto mused, and acquiesced so far—‘When novelty has ceased, and curiosity has evaporated, and after I have had my hopes raised by the transient attention shown me, I shall be neglected, laid upon the shelf, and forgotten.’ Was he now doomed to realize his own prophecy? In his moments of melancholy, he looked upon himself as one ‘marked out for pain, trouble, and bitterness, to whom expectation is delusive, and all hope vain.’ He seemed, in short, to embody the poet’s description:

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'I am all alone, and the visions that play
Round life's young days have passed away,
And the songs are hushed that gladness sings.
And the hopes that I cherished have made them wings,
And the light of my heart is dimmed and gone,
And I sit in sorrow, and all alone.'

He was galled excessively by this procedure on the part of so many of his friends; and the following paragraph is, perhaps, the only instance in his whole correspondence of something like a querulous and ungrateful spirit. It was in the worst of testy moods that he wrote it, and the fact of his being so misjudged and frowned upon is his apology. It occurs in a letter to Mr Lampen:—

Plymouth, April 6, 1829.

'... I lament to have perceived that those gentlemen of Plymouth, to whom I most naturally look at this juncture, are less willing than I had hoped and expected, to afford me the advantage of their powerful influence, in obtaining for myself a future provision. I certainly did not expect much assistance of any sort; but whilst my expectations were not of a pecuniary nature, I thought there might be a readiness to exert so cheap a thing as *influence* on my behalf. It appears that I have been mistaken in this, as in many other things. I regret to have seen, that the friends to whom I am so much indebted for the kind intentions on which they have at former periods acted towards me, seem now to be apprehensive lest I should again become burdensome to them. *They* know best whether I have been so or not. If I have, I am sorry for it; but it will be borne in mind, that so far as I may have been so, it was not I who threw this burden on them, but *they* who voluntarily, unsought of by me, and with kindness which can never be forgotten, took it on themselves. They did so, perhaps mistakenly, perhaps on hasty impressions. I do not know. It is not for me to judge. But I had been happier, perhaps, if they had not done so; and now I cannot again be happy, as I have been, or as I might have been.'

He still wished to justify the measure of kindness which he had received, and which he frankly acknowledges in the previous sentences; and as the Society had not only given him a quarter's salary, but voted him £30 to enable him to find some remunerative situation, he resolved to set up a stationer's shop or circulating library, at Moricetown, in the vicinity of Plymouth. 'The gentlemen of Plymouth,' he says somewhat caustically, 'have studiously proved to me that I am fit for nothing—for no regular employment, for none of the common businesses of life; and, indeed, I do not myself know what regular employment

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In a letter to Mr Harvey from Baghdad, Sept. 25, 1831, he explains this period,—‘I returned from Malta with a desire not to leave England again. But I left Plymouth in great bitterness of feeling, which, combined with some heart-rending scenes of death and sorrow I had to pass through at Islington, rendered odious to me the only two places in England in which I had any interest.’ In the short space of three days Kitto prepared himself to go, renouncing without scruple a good situation, but gratified at the field of prospective usefulness which was so suddenly presented to him.

As we have already recorded, the workhouse boy had, nine years before, said in his Journal, ‘I have even thought of plans to enable me to visit Asia and the ground consecrated by the steps of the Saviour. Even *now*, notwithstanding my deafness, it would not be impracticable, if some kind gentleman, on his travels, would permit me to be his (though not expert) faithful servant. After all, I fear it is a vain scheme, never to be realised.’ And yet it was realised, and that far beyond expectation, for he went out in the immediate character of tutor to the two little boys of Mr Groves. The mission of Mr Groves was certainly peculiar in its origin and complexion, and as strange was his selection of a deaf and self-taught tutor for his children. But such an appointment proved, that whatever others thought of Kitto, Mr Groves had not lost faith in him; neither in the reality of his talent, nor the genuineness of his piety; neither in his honesty of purpose, nor in his sincere desire to give the utmost satisfaction to those above him, by his conscientious discharge of duty. Nor was he so ill qualified for the responsible situation as one might imagine. He was now in his twenty-fifth year, and his acquirements, the result of such continuous labours and vigils, were highly creditable to him. True, indeed, as he confesses, he had to learn some branches, in order to teach. But he instructed his pupils in Hebrew, Scripture, theology, history, geography, writing, arithmetic, and English composition, and surmounted, by devices of his own, the disability of his deafness. Again had he risen—lately a printer, now an educator—another step upward and onward to his destiny. Thus the cloud was lifting, though he knew it not; and the next four years of his life, spent in travel and eastern residence, originated those Biblical works which have immortalized his name. ‘Darkness’ was made ‘light before him,’ though he but dimly perceived its dawn; and ‘crooked things straight,’ though, from his angle of observation, he could scarcely measure the change. His journal of travel to Baghdad is very full, but much of it presents no topics of biographical interest or of characteristic detail; and we shall, therefore, make use only of such sections as either afford a glimpse into his inner life, or present some striking observation or amusing incident, or show how his mind was fascinated by oriental scenery and manners, and thus prepared to

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illustrate Holy Scripture.

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FOOTNOTES

37 Lost Senses—Deafness, pp 84, 87. .

38 Lost Senses—Deafness, pp. 20, 21.

39 Letter to the Right Hon. J. U. Frere. Malta, Dec. 4, 1828.

40 In the Missionary Register for January 1829, it is simply stated, that ‘Mr Kitto’s health has suffered much; and on this, and on some other accounts, he is about to retire from the Society’s service.’ In the printed Report for 1828-29, it is mentioned, quite as vaguely, that ‘Mr Kitto, on account of his want of health, and other circumstances, has relinquished his connection with the Society.’

41 Letter to Mr Frere, just before leaving Malta, in which he signifies his wish to lay his case before the king—his early misfortunes and his literary desires.