

CHAPTER X.

BETHLEHEM.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morn'g,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid!
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid!

BISHOP HEBER

I FELT little inclination to linger at Jerusalem after I had explored the prescribed localities, and such as I had selected for myself. It was now midsummer; and the sun, reflected from the white walls and marble pavement, seemed to surround me with a fiery glow. The very zephyrs were so languid from the heat, that they refused any longer to wander through the streets, narrow as these were made, in order to stimulate their energies: the scorched leaves had no quiver; the living city was more silent under the oppression of that sunshine than at midnight; and the whole world seemed to be gradually growing red-hot. I felt escape was absolutely necessary, and prepared to avail myself of an invitation from our bishop to Bethlehem, where he had been staying for some time.

My last hour at Jerusalem was passed in a negotiation with Abdallah, a Sheikh of Bedouin, to escort me to the Dead Sea: he assured me that the way was very dangerous, and that not less than a dozen horsemen and twice that number of dismounted men could confer any chance of safety. As he sat upon my divan, perfectly free from embarrassment as from presuming, he looked so like a gentleman that I was almost tempted to believe him. It is true, that his chin had never known a razor, or his foot a boot; that his dress consisted of a sheet, with some cunningly-devised holes and folds to give it the appearance of a Ro-