

## TALE XLV.

OF THE GOOD, WHO ALONE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM  
OF HEAVEN.

THERE was a wise and rich king who possessed a beloved, but not a loving wife. She had three illegitimate sons, who proved ungrateful and rebellious to their reputed parent.\* In due time she brought forth another son, whose legitimacy was undisputed; and after arriving at a good old age, he died, and was buried in the royal sepulchre of his fathers. But the death of the old king caused great strife amongst his surviving sons, about the right of succession. All of them advanced a claim, and none would relinquish it to the other; the three first presuming upon their priority in birth, and the last upon his legitimacy. In this strait, they agreed to refer the absolute decision of their cause to a certain honourable knight of the late king. When this person, therefore, heard their difference, he said, "Follow my advice, and it will greatly benefit you. Draw from its sepulchre the body of the deceased monarch; prepare, each of you, a bow and single shaft, and whosoever transfixes the heart of his father shall obtain the kingdom." The counsel was approved, the body was taken from its repository and bound to a tree. The arrow of the first son wounded the king's right hand—on which, as if the contest were determined, they proclaimed him heir to the throne. But the second arrow went nearer, and entered the mouth; so that he, too, considered himself the undoubted lord of the kingdom. However, the third perforated the heart itself, and consequently imagined that his claim was fully decided, and his succession sure. It now came to the turn of the fourth and last son to shoot? but he broke forth into a lamentable cry, and with eyes swimming in tears, said, "Oh! my poor father; have I then lived to see you the victim of an impious contest—

\* It is stated in the first book of Herodotus that the Persians considered a rebellious son undoubtedly illegitimate. This is another strong proof of the oriental structure of these stories. See Tales IX. and XXVI.

thine own offspring lacerate thy unconscious clay?—Far, oh! far be it from me to strike thy venerated form, whether living or dead.” No sooner had he uttered these words, than the nobles of the realm, together with the whole people, unanimously elected him to the throne; and depriving the three barbarous wretches of their rank and wealth, expelled them for ever from the kingdom.\*

## APPLICATION.

My beloved, that wise and rich king is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who joined Himself to our flesh, as to a beloved wife. But going after other gods, it forgot the love due to Him in return, and brought forth by an illicit connection, three sons, viz. Pagans, Jews, and Heretics. The first wounded the right hand—that is, the doctrine of Christ by persecutions. The second, the mouth—when they gave Christ vinegar and gall to drink; and the third wounded, and continue to wound, the heart—while they strive, by every sophistical objection, to deceive the faithful. The fourth son is any good Christian.

## T A L E X L V I.

## OF MORTAL SINS.

JULIUS relates that in the month of May a certain man entered a grove, in which stood seven beautiful trees in leaf. The leaves so much attracted him, that he collected more than he had strength to carry. On this, three men came to his assistance, who led away both the man and the load beneath which he laboured. As he went out he fell into a deep pit, and the extreme weight upon his shoulders sank him to the very bottom. The same author

\* This tale, containing an appeal to natural affection, in all probability takes its rise from the judgment of Solomon. But whether or not, the analogy is sufficiently striking to betray its Eastern derivation.