

The First Fall of Jesus

The street of which we have just spoken, after turning a little to the left, became rather steep, as also wider, a subterranean aqueduct proceeding from Mount Sion passed under it, and in its vicinity was a hollow which was often filled with water and mud after rain, and a large stone was placed in its centre to enable persons to pass over more easily. When Jesus reached this spot, his strength was perfectly exhausted; he was quite unable to move; and as the archers dragged and pushed him without showing the slightest compassion, he fell quite down against this stone, and the cross fell by his side. The cruel executioners were obliged to stop, they abused and struck him unmercifully, but the whole procession came to a standstill, which caused a degree of confusion. Vainly did he hold out his hand for someone to assist him to rise: 'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'all will soon be over;' and he prayed for his enemies. Lift him up,' said the Pharisees, 'otherwise he will die in our hands.' There were many women and children following the procession; the former wept, and the latter were frightened. Jesus, however, received support from above, and raised his head; but these cruel men, far from endeavouring to alleviate his sufferings, put the crown of thorns again on his head before they pulled him out of the mud, and no sooner was he once more on his feet than they replaced the cross on his back. The crown of thorns which encircled his head increased his pain inexpressibly, and obliged him to bend on one side to give room for the cross, which lay heavily on his shoulders.

