

Absalom's flight to Geshur where he remained three years. Though he was then allowed to return, it was two years longer before the king would receive him into favor.

I. Absalom the Flatterer, 1-6.

V. 1. *After this*; that is, after receiving the kiss of restoration from his father, Ch. 14:33. He enters now on a shameful course of plotting to obtain the kingdom. *Absalom*. For the name of the mother of this third and favorite son of David, see 2 Sam. 3:3. He was handsome, vain, ambitious and unprincipled. His life was a tragedy with much of dishonor and nothing of dignity. *A chariot and horses* (Rev. Ver.). Absalom set up a state carriage and royal equipage in imitation of foreign kings, an innovation in Jerusalem. *Fifty men to run before him*; to impress the people with his magnificence.

V. 2. *Absalom rose up early*. The words describe, not merely a single act, but a custom. Absalom wished to appear a diligent public reformer. In the hot countries of the East public business is transacted in the early morning. *Beside the way of the gate*; the city gate, the place of public business, or perhaps the palace gate. *A suit which should come to the king for judgment*. (Rev. Ver.). Minor matters were settled by local judges, but suits of higher importance were adjudged by the king in person. (Compare Ex. 18:22; Deut. 17:8,9.) *Absalom called unto him, and said*. He manifested a particular personal interest in each litigant's case by enquiring into all the details. *Of one of the tribes of Israel*. By thus finding out the locality to which each person belonged, he was able to scatter widely the seeds of rebellion.

Vs. 3, 4. *See, thy matters are good and right*. Thus Absalom treacherously sought to secure good-will for himself, and create prejudice against David, should he give a contrary judgment. *No man deputed of the king to hear thee*. The insinuation is, that David was neglectful of the people's interests and that no one was so fit to discharge the neglected duty as Absalom himself. *Oh that I were made judge in the land*. Who would be so likely to give decisions satisfactory to

those addressed as Absalom himself?

Vs. 5, 6. *To do him obeisance*; pay homage to him as a superior. *Put forth his hand, and took him and kissed him*. He waived the homage due to the king's son, and treated the one prostrate before him as an equal and friend. This is a most vivid picture of an artful schemer at work. "We are reminded," says Professor Blaikie, "of Charles II. taking the Covenant to please the Scots, and get their help towards obtaining the crown." *So Absalom stole the hearts*. He was a thief, stealing the affections of the people from his father and winning them for himself.

II. Absalom the Hypocrite, 7-9.

Vs. 7, 8. *After forty years*. Probably the true reading is "four years" as in the margin of Rev. Ver., and the time is to be reckoned from the date of his restoration to his father's favor, ch. 14. *Go and pay my vow*. He adopted the guise of religion, as likely to weigh more with his father and throw him off his guard. *In Hebron*; his birthplace, and therefore appropriate for such a service. There, too, David had been declared king, and by reason of association, it would be all the more suitable for the inauguration of rebellion. *While I abode at Geshur*. It was now six years at least (see ch. 13:38; 14:21, 28; 15:7, as explained above); a suspiciously long time for an unfulfilled vow. *Then I will serve the Lord*; I will "do a service," offer a sacrifice or perform some special act of worship.

V. 9. *Go in peace*; ill-placed trust. *Went to Hebron*. At his birthplace he would be likely first to find active sympathizers, and being on the way to Geshur, retreat thither would be all the more easy in case of failure.

III. Absalom the Rebel, 10-12.

V. 10. *But Absalom sent spies*; to ascertain how each section was affected toward him, and to prepare his friends for action. *The sound of the trumpet*; the signal for revolt and the gathering of his supporters. A succession of trumpeters was likely arranged, so that he could be proclaimed by "a telegraph of sound," on the same day all over the country.

Vs. 11, 12. *Two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called*; probably men of dis-