

"Form yourselves into attacking parties" or "Put the battering engines in place." *Against the city*; to destroy it.

II. Jehovah's Promise, 13, 14.

V. 13. *Behold . . . a prophet.* At every important juncture in the history recorded in Kings, a prophet appears, sometimes to give counsel, usually only to predict the issue. *Unto Ahab*; who, in this dark hour, would welcome help and guidance even from one of those whom he had permitted Jezebel to persecute (see ch. 18 : 4). *Thus saith the Lord*; whose representative and spokesman the prophet is. *This great multitude*; of Benhadad's army, numbering more than 130,000 (see vs. 25, 29, 30). *I will deliver it.* Even so great a host is helpless before Jehovah. *Into thine hand*; into thy power. *Know that I am the Lord.* Jehovah's power to reveal the future testified to His supremacy.

V. 14. *By whom?* Ahab seeks guidance about the strategy which is to win success. *By the young men*; the squires or attendants of chieftains, who were in training for military leadership; they had little experience, but plenty of courage and dash. *Princes of the provinces*; leaders from the various districts of Israel. *Order the battle*; make the attack. *Thou, Ahab* was to take the offensive,—a wise plan, even humanly speaking.

III. Benhadad's Defeat, 15-21.

Vs. 15, 16. *Mustered* (Rev. Ver.) . . . *young men . . . two hundred and thirty-two*; to lead the van. The smallness of the number indicates the modest size of Ahab's kingdom, as does also the *seven thousand* forming the main body of the army. This, however, was likely not Israel's whole army, but rather the number which had found refuge in Samaria when the Syrians swooped down on the land. *At noon*; a favorable hour for a sally, when, in that hot Eastern land, the besiegers would be resting. *Drinking himself drunk*; as if to mark his utter contempt of the foe.

Vs. 17, 18. *Ben-hadad sent out . . . they told him.* The king received tidings from the pickets of his army on duty. *Men . . . out of*

Samaria; the 232 of v. 15. *Take them alive.* Wine had so taken away Benhadad's wits, that, instead of drawing up his soldiers in battle array, he sent them to capture alive the tiny band of Israelitish youths.

Vs. 19-21. *The army . . . followed them.* The 7,000 (v. 15) hastened to take advantage of the confusion in the Syrian ranks. The meaning becomes clearer if vs. 20, 21 are transposed. *The king . . . went out*; Ahab leading his army. *Smote the horses and chariots.* The Greek Old Testament reads "captured" instead of "smote." *Slew every one his man.* Perhaps the meaning is that "each repeatedly killed his man." *Syrians fled . . . Israel pursued.* The defeat became a complete rout. *Ben-hadad . . . escaped on an horse*; on a chariot horse, not being able to secure a riding horse.

Light from the East

WINE—Wine was made in Palestine from the juice of the grape. The Arabs might make wine out of dates but Biblical wine was grape wine. The only other plant noticed as yielding wine was the pomegranate, Song of Solomon 8 : 2. The gathering of the grapes took place in September and was a time of great rejoicing. The season was recognized and perpetuated in the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles). The grapes were gathered in baskets and carried to the wine-press, a series of troughs cut in the rock. Then the grapes were crushed by "treading." Those who trod the grapes encouraged one another with shouts and cries, Isa. 16 : 9, 10; Jer. 25 : 30; 48 : 33. Their feet and garments were dyed red with the juice, Gen. 49 : 11; Isa. 63 : 2, 3. The juice ran from the broad, shallow vat through an aperture or channel to a smaller, deeper hole from which it was taken to be stored in vessels. Some of it was used in an unfermented state, but most of it was ripened by fermentation. If it were to be kept for some time a certain amount of lees was added to give it body, Isa. 25 : 6. It was therefore necessary to "refine" or strain it before use.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

We will stand at the point of the heavy V numbered 34 on our map, and face southward. The ground which that V's long arms include

between them is spread out before us. We look from a low hill over slopes covered by olive trees, with delicate bouquets of silvery-