

been a rather unwilling witness ; information had to be painfully extracted from him bit by bit. Apparently he had had little to do with Mephibosheth, and was quite content that he should be left to live in obscure retirement across the Jordan. *In the house of Machir* ; a suitable patron for the boy, a man of wealth and position, one of those who, later, provided for David in his flight from Absalom, ch. 17 : 27-29. Perhaps he had taken charge of Mephibosheth ever since the fatal day at Gilboa. *In Lo-debar*. The name means " a place of no pasture ". It was near Mahanaim, where Abner had set up the fragment of a kingdom for Ish-bosheth.

Vs. 5, 6. *David sent, and fetched him* ; losing no time in carrying into practical effect the generous impulse of the heart so loyal to his dead friend. *Fell on his face* ; the customary act of obeisance in the East. Complete prostration, with the forehead touching the ground, is still practiced in the daily prayers of the Moslems to Allah (God). Fear filled the young man's heart as he prostrated himself. Had David hunted him out of concealment in Lo-debar simply to put him to death ? *David said, Mephibosheth* ; his voice, we may well imagine, trembling with grief for the friend of earlier days, and pity for that friend's helpless son now before him.

III. Mephibosheth Provided For, 7-13.

V. 7. *Fear not*. Mephibosheth had nothing to dread. Loyalty to Jonathan and compassion for himself would constrain the king to *show him kindness*. To the general promise was added a specific deed of gift : *I will restore thee all the land of Saul*. Saul's estates at Gibeah (1 Sam. 10 : 26) probably passed into David's hands when he became king of all Israel, but he would give them over entire to Mephibosheth. *Saul thy father* ; put here, as often, in Hebrew, for " grandfather ". *Thou shalt eat bread at my table*. This was an honor shown in the East, usually for distinguished service (1 Kgs. 2 : 7) ; it was therefore the more remarkable in this case, on account of Mephibosheth's physical infirmity (see Light from the East).

Vs. 8-10. *Bowed himself* ; testifying his gratitude with all the humility even an Oriental could look for. *Thy servant . . .*

dead dog. A dog is no friend of man in the East, but an object of aversion and disgust. (See Light from the East.) *Called to Ziba*, etc. The servant who gave David information found his reward. He was put in control of the estates of Gibeah. Instead of handing over the fruits of the land to David, he was thenceforth to pay them to Mephibosheth. *That thy master's son may have food*. Mephibosheth, though himself a guest at the royal table, would require the produce and income to keep up his household.

Vs. 11-13. *So shall thy servant do*. Ziba promised obedience. Saul's estates worked by thirty-five men (see v. 10) ! What a simple life the first king of Israel lived ! *Mephibosheth . . . as one of the king's sons* ; as his father Jonathan had been a very brother to David. How the suspicion and dread of the poor cripple would vanish in the sunlight of the king's generous love ! *Mephibosheth dwell in Jerusalem*. Perhaps David thought it more prudent to keep Mephibosheth near him, rather than put him in a position where he might plot against his benefactor. *Lame on both his feet*. Many a king would have been ashamed to have this awkward cripple about his court, but David saw in his very helplessness a special claim upon his kindness.

Light from the East

DEAD DOG—The dog is an unclean animal still, which no self-respecting Mohammedan will touch, and the term is one of disgust and contempt. An Arab rarely uses the terms " Christian ", or " Jew ", without adding " dog ". The touch of a living dog is hardly less contaminating than a corpse, and Mephibosheth, with true Oriental exaggeration, puts the case as strongly as words could put it. Nothing could be worse than a " dead dog ".

LAME—The accident to Mephibosheth apparently produced a disease of the bones, so that, ever after, his feet required constant dressing. The fact that he was lame and yet was so favored, was a mark of David's affection for Jonathan, for, not only was it the custom for a new monarch to slay all the relatives of his predecessor, but the king was usually surrounded with men of physical beauty, and all cripples and diseased persons