

immolated at the expiration of that term. But if she were devoted to perpetual virginity, why should she ask for two months to bewail a loss which she might have spent her whole life in bewailing? This heroic maiden thought it no ground for lamentation that she must die in obedience to a vow by which signal vengeance had been taken on the enemies of her country; but to die a virgin, to be cut off in youthful vigour and deprived of the joy of becoming a mother in Israel, this thought awakened the plaintive emotions which craved a short period for their utterance. Then with a magnanimity that excites our admiration she returned to her father that he might accomplish his vow; the bitterness of death was past, the virgin sealed with her own blood the bond which had been given for the glory of her country. Do men laud the heroism of Greek and Roman worthies, who esteemed it an honour to die a voluntary sacrifice for the good of their country? Would they thank the cold critics who should attempt to rob them of these inspiring examples of patriotic devotedness by torturing the language of ancient historians upon their philological rack? And shall this intrepid Hebrew maid be deprived, on light grounds, of her just meed of praise and glory? Shall the readers of the most ancient records in the world be despoiled of such a noble instance of self-sacrifice as this narrative records? Are we not touched with a mingled feeling of admiration and pity at the story of Alcestis yielding her own life to save that of her husband, or at the sad tale of Antigone performing the funeral rites over the dead body of her hapless brother, though certain of suffering a cruel death herself as a reward for this pious act? And shall we not afford full play to the spontaneous gush of feeling with which we greet the maid of Israel, when with an entire oblivion of self she says, "My

father, if thou hast opened thy mouth to the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon?"

Well might the daughters of Israel go, year by year, to lament the daughter of Jephthah for the space of four days. Well might it be made a statute in Israel that the memory of this heroic action should be preserved to animate the zeal and patriotism of succeeding generations.

IV. It only remains to pass in review the reasons urged for setting aside the proof now adduced, and establishing the position that Jephthah's daughter was devoted to perpetual virginity. It is urged that the daughter is not distinctly stated to have suffered any thing except perpetual virginity. That depends upon the interpretation of the vow, for it is distinctly said that her father "did unto her according to the vow which he had vowed." The clause "and she knew no man," is added not as an explanation of the vow, but as an additional circumstance to heighten the interest and sympathy of the reader.

The fact of Jephthah being a Judge in Israel, and consequently acquainted with the law of Moses, so far from being a reason why he did not sacrifice his daughter, has actually been urged by some as a reason why he was bound by the vow he had rashly made. For in the law concerning devoted things recorded in the xxvii. chap. of Leviticus, after permission is given to redeem certain things which had been vowed to the Lord, it is added in the 28th and 29th verses—"Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of *all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most*