

One," but a hungry Esau is not likely to be in a humour for making puns. He is so little versed in the culinary art that he does not at the moment remember the name. Perhaps Jacob, like his father, was somewhat of an epicure, and had made a broth of Egyptian beans, which he had procured as a dainty. Both odor and color were new and highly attractive to one faint with hunger. (James 1:12) The color was probably a chocolate brown. **Called Edom**—i. e. "Red." It is probable that Esau received the surname Edom from his complexion. But that does not forbid its receiving a double emphasis from the present occasion. Lentil soup is an insignificant thing in itself, but this particular bowl of it was "big with the destinies of nations." Jacob's name had a double justification after its first bestowal (ch. 27:36). The descendants of Esau were called Edomites and dwelt in Mt. Seir. **31. Sell me this day**—B. V. margin "first of all." Jacob must have been watching for this chance, and brooding over the prophecy regarding his future (see verse 23). He had not faith enough to let God give him the blessing in his own time and way, but he must needs fend for himself and meanly wring from his brother's distress and moral weakness what he had the sure promise of God for. When you imitate him we reap the same result. We may get the desired good but we get a curse with it. Bitter ingredients are introduced into a cup which, by "trusting God and doing rightly," would have been unmixed sweetness. Patiently bide his will. Promotion will come when we are ripe for it, if it is to come at all, and if it never comes be assured we would have courted only failure and sorrow by aiming at what was not meant for us. **Birthright**—This was three-fold, (1) the right of rule in the family and tribe, (2) the right to a double portion of the inheritance; (Gen. 48: 22; Deut. 21: 17); (3) the right of priesthood in the family. (Ex. 13: 12, 13; 22: 29; Num. 8: 17, 18). In the family of Isaac there were additional honors and privileges, (1) the possession of Canaan, (2) Covenant relations with God; (3) and the progenitorship of the Messiah. Dr. Thompson, in *The Land and the Book*, (vol. on Southern Palestine, p. 254), suggests some plausible reasons by which Jacob may have sought to quiet his conscience. These are answered by Canon Rawlinson in *Isaac and Jacob: Their Lives and Times*, (p. 80). "He did not see the justice of the law of primogeniture." Yet he was anxious to transfer its privileges to himself. "They were twins, and the difference in their ages was not worth speaking of." But any difference at all was sufficient to establish the rights of the elder. "Jacob valued the blessing and Esau despised it." Valuing what another has, gives us no right to it. "Jacob had augmented the estate and Esau had squandered it." A careful steward does not, by his fidelity establish a claim to heirship. "He was carrying out God's purpose." God does not need the help of man's crooked dealing. The end cannot justify the means. Jacob does not stand alone in his meanness. **32. At the point to die**—means either, speaking with exaggeration, "I am dying of hunger," or "My life is so full of danger that I may be killed any day," or "I shall die, and the blessings of the birthright are for others." The first view seems most natural. Esau preferred present gain, present indulgence, present gratification, to future happiness and spiritual blessings. For this he is called a "profane person" Heb. 12: 16. "What an exhibition of human nature! Esau has company in his fall. We are all stricken by his shame. We are conscious that if God had made provision for the flesh we would have listened to him more readily. 'But what will this birthright profit us? We don't see the good it does. Were it something to keep us from disease, to give us long unsated days of pleasure, to bring us the fruits of labor without the weariness of it, to make money for us, where is the man who would not value it—where is the man who would lightly give it up? But because it is only the favor of God that is offered, His endless love, His holiness made ours, this we will imperil or resign for every idle desire, for every lust that bids us serve it a little longer. We let our souls starve, if only our bodies be well tended and cared for." (Dods) **33. Swear to me this day**—B. V. "first of all"—Jacob shows his shrewdness as a business man. He knew Esau too well not to fear he would repent and try to get back the birthright, so he demands that the contract be ratified by an oath. (Gal. 3: 15). "There never was any food, except the forbidden fruit, so dear-bought as this broth of Jacob's." (Bishop Hall). If Esau was "profane," Jacob was miserably crafty and despicably mean." (Hurlbut) **34. Rose up and went his way**—as if nothing had happened. A sad picture of the carnal mind, satisfied with the gratifications of sense and oblivious to the enduring realities which concern the soul. Esau repented afterwards (Heb. 12: 17) but "what is done can't be undone." To give away some things is to lose them forever. Esau made the mistake of a great many. He thought that religion was of no value for the present life.