

find his victim, until it was apparently impossible to discover him by any ordinary means, he came to the most cruel and wicked resolution that ever entered into the heart of man to conceive, and one which it seems scarcely possible that he could have found agents so cruel as to execute. He sent out soldiers—hard-hearted and merciless men,—and murdered all the children in the town of Bethlehem and in the country round about it, who were two years old or under; thinking that by taking so wide a range he could not fail to destroy the infant he so much feared.

In these days, my dear children, and in this country, where all are under the protection of mild and equal laws, we can scarcely realise such a dreadful state of things. But we may imagine in some degree what we should suffer, were those we love and cherish most tenderly to meet with so dreadful a fate. We all know how bitterly we should be grieved to see their blood shed before our eyes by the hands of inhuman murderers, and to see rude soldiers coming forcibly into our homes to destroy the little ones who are the objects of our greatest care and affection. The mothers and sisters of Bethlehem were no less attached and affectionate than those of the present day, and it is not surprising that throughout the land the voice of lamentation and weeping and great mourning should be heard. Turn to the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah, Charles, and read the fifteenth verse.

*Charles.*—"Thus saith the Lord—a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children; refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not."