

could have been brought. Even Julius is too far away to satisfy the requirements, of the story.

28. The damsel gave it to her mother.—Horrible as this appears to us, it conforms to a custom of these times. Jerome refers to this incident, and says that Herodias treated it with savage indignity.

29. Took up his corpse "Tradition tells us that Herodias ordered the headless trunk to be flung out over the battlements for dogs and vultures to devour." (Arrar.) Matthew tells us that when the disciples had sorrowfully laid away their dead master, they came and told Jesus, and that he, when he heard of it, sought the solitude of the desert.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

I. John was only about thirty years of age when he was beheaded. His career had been a notable one. Within a short ministry he had won for himself the highest honor ever pronounced upon a prophet. Jesus said of him, "Among those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." As if to set forth his greatness, his death is in the midst, and at the hands of those who, morally, were his greatest contrast. **The humble herald** of the Messiah proves himself a **faithful witness for righteousness**, not only in the desert and at the Jordan, but even in the corrupt court of the profligate Herod. He had not feared to tell the wicked tetrarch of his evil life, and especially denounced his **unlawful marriage** with his brother's wife. Herod's coarser nature did not feel the sting of these rebukes so much as did Herodias, who was insulted in a manner never to be forgiven. Hers was a heart that knew no shame or remorse. While respecting the sacred character of John, and making some feeble attempts at reformation, Herod was, nevertheless, driven by Herodias to the **unjust imprisonment** of his faithful admonisher, but his own inclination and the fear of consequences restrained him from acting as her tool in the accomplishment of her murderous designs. The prison was perhaps the safest place for John, if the assassins of Herodias were abroad. Still Herod **stifled conscience**, while the **patient prisoner** meekly awaited God's will, and sought comfort from Jesus.

II. Now came the opportune moment for Herodias. She knew the customs of the feast and the road to the heart of the licentious king. Carefully schooling her daughter to play her part, she won, through her dancing, the **rash promise** which gave her all her revengeful heart was thirsting for. Herod might writhen but in vain. A false sense of honor was guarantee enough for Herodias. She had asked more than he promised to give, but not in the estimation of values held by the revellers. John's head counted for little to them. They, too, would gladly hear no more of his unpleasant speeches. So Herod must not reject the damsel's boon.

III. In the dark, damp dungeon of Machaerus a **cruel murder** is committed—beyond the midnight stars a **triumphant martyr** is crowned. Fiends laugh with Herodias when she mocks at that noble head and tosses the corpse over the battlements to the hyenas and the buzzards; but angels weep with the sorrowing band who reverently bury the loved form and go and tell Jesus.

After drawing out facts and noting obvious lessons along the line of this summary, briefly sketch the contrast suggested:

THE CONTRAST.

H—An Unlawful Marriage.

E—An Unjust Imprisonment.

R—A Stifled Conscience.

O—A Rash Promise.

D—A Cruel Murder.

J—Humble Herald of Jesus.

O—Faithful Witness for righteousness.

H—Patient Prisoner.

N—Triumphant Martyr.

ROYALTY ON EARTH

ROYALTY IN HEAVEN