

of the multitudes who fell victims to his sanguinary, suspicious, and guilty terrors. His brother Pheroras and his son Archelaus barely and narrowly escaped execution by his orders. Neither the blooming youth of the prince Aristobulus, nor the white hairs of the king Hircanus, had protected them from his fawning and treacherous fury. Deaths by strangulation, deaths by burning, deaths by being cleft asunder, deaths by secret assassination, confessions forced by unutterable torture, acts of insolent and inhuman lust, mark the annals of a reign which was so cruel that, in the energetic language of the Jewish ambassadors to the Emperor Augustus, "the survivors during his lifetime were even more miserable than the sufferers." And as in the case of Henry VIII, every dark and brutal instinct of his character seemed to acquire fresh intensity, as his life drew towards its close. Haunted by the spectres of his murdered wife and murdered sons, agitated by the conflicting furies of remorse and blood, the pitiless monster, as Josephus calls him, was seized in his last days by a black and bitter ferocity, which broke out against all with whom he came in contact. There is no conceivable difficulty in supposing that such a man—a savage barbarian with a thin veneer of corrupt and superficial civilisation—would have acted in the exact manner which St. Matthew describes; and the belief in the fact receives independent confirmation from various sources."—*Farrar*.

III. HOME IN NAZARETH. 20. They are dead—"It must have been very shortly after the murder of the Innocents that Herod died. Only five days before his death he had made a frantic attempt at suicide, and had ordered the execution of his eldest son Antipater. His death bed, which once more reminds us of Henry VIII, was accompanied by circumstances of peculiar horror, and it has been noticed that the loathsome disease of which he died is hardly mentioned in history, except in the case of men who have been rendered infamous by an atrocity of persecuting zeal. On his bed of intolerable anguish, in that splendid and luxurious palace which he had built for himself under the palms of Jericho, swollen with disease and scorched by thirst—ulcerated externally and glowing inwardly with a soft glow fire—surrounded by plotting sons and plundering slaves, detesting all and detested by all—longing for death as a release from his tortures, yet dreading it as the beginning of worse terrors—stung by remorse, yet still unshaken with murder—a horror to all around him, yet in his guilty conscience a worse terror to himself—devoured by the premature corruption of an anticipated grave—eaten of worms though visibly smitten by the finger of God's wrath, after seventy years of successful villainy—the wretched old man, whom men had called the Great, lay in savage frenzy awaiting his last hours. As he knew that none would shed one tear for *him* he determined that they should shed many for *themselves*, and issued orders that under pain of death, the principal

families in the kingdom and the chiefs of the tribes should come to Jericho. They came, and then, shutting them in the hippodrome, he secretly commanded his sister Salome that at the moment of his death they should all be massacred. And so, choking as it were with blood, devising massacres in its very delirium, the soul of Herod passed forth into the night."—*Farrar*.

Herod was the prime instigator but his minions were as hostile to Christ as he. They would fall from power at his death. In the light of the previous reference to Egypt, we might here compare Ex. 14: 30.

22. The kingdom of Herod was, at his death, divided between his sons. Philip received the country beyond Jordan and the Dead Sea; Antipas, Galilee and Perea; and Archelaus, Samaria, Judea and Idumea. (Point out these on the map.) Philip and Antipas received the title of "tetrarch," or "ruler of a fourth part." The term was first used in connection with the sub-division of Thessaly into four provinces, but it had become a mere title. Archelaus was at first hailed by the army as "king" and would be popularly styled so until it became known that Augustus had refused to confirm it. The rank of "ethnarch," or "ruler of a nation," was bestowed upon him, to be afterwards exchanged for that of "king" should he merit it, which he never did. He inherited all the cruelty of his father and Joseph's fears were by no means groundless. Nazareth—Matthew gives no hint of the previous residence of Joseph in Nazareth. Either he was not aware of it, which is unlikely, or else he wished to concentrate attention upon Bethlehem as the starting point of Gospel history. Point out the route of the holy family. Nazareth was under the government of the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist. He was crafty and licentious rather than cruel. What does Christ call him? (Luke 13: 32.)

23. Nazarene (Ch. 26: 71). "Jesus of Nazareth" was his common designation. It was the name written over his cross. "Nazareth" is derived from a Hebrew word meaning "a branch" or "young shoot." This word is used in reference to the Messiah in Isa. 11: 1. Compare also Isa. 14: 2; Jer. 23: 5; 33: 15; Zech. 3: 8. Every time he was spoken of his name would suggest one of the prophetic designations of the Messiah. Others think that as Nazareth was held in little esteem (John 1: 47), so the prophecies of the lowly condition of the Messiah find their fulfillment in his being called Jesus of Nazareth. Others, again, say that, as the Nazarites were consecrated to God, so Christ was devoted to a holy life and the prophecies which point him out in this character find a fulfillment in his name Jesus of Nazareth. But "Nazarite" and "Nazarene" are not the same word, and Christ did not follow an ascetic life such as was laid upon the Nazarites. The second view seems to reflect more severely than is warranted upon the character of the people of Nazareth.