

both. To the inquiry, is it peace, Jehu? Jehu thundered out this astounding reply: "What, peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many." This completely opened Joram's eyes and with the exclamation of treason on his lips he turned to flee. But Jehu drew a bow with his full strength and shot him through the heart. Abaziah was wounded and died at Megiddo. The artful Jezebel appeared at a window studiously arrayed for effect, and with great presence of mind accosted Jehu in a way that might have shaken a man of weaker nerves. But his only reply was,—throw her down! In an instant this wicked woman lay a blood-stained corpse on the ground, and was trodden under foot by the horses. When they returned to bury her they found the prediction literally fulfilled—her body was devoured by the dogs!

Jehu executed his commission with more zeal than judgment. Of course he utterly exterminated the seed of Abab and Jezebel, together with all their ministers, guilty associates, and priests of Baal. But in all this he was prompted more by a spirit of self interest and State policy than a desire to punish idolators and restore the Theocracy. He subverted the grosser idolatries, but spared and still patronised the baneful system of Jeroboam,—the root of all their troubles. Hence God denounced Israel by Hosea with a special reference to the defects and abuses of Jehu's policy: "I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

The destruction of the Midianites by the simple stratagem of Gideon—another memorable event—took place in the valley of Jezreel. They had just made their annual marauding visit. Having crossed the Jordan at the upper fords, they came up the valley of Jezreel as grasshoppers for multitude. In answer to the cry of his repenting people it was God's design to make a clean end of that old and inveterate enemy; and the present was chosen as the fittest time when they were crowded together in one mass.—Gideon, an excellent character, collected a large army, designing to attack the Midianites in obedience to the Divine instruction. But their destruction must be the work of God and not the achievement of man. This large army must therefore be greatly reduced. This was accomplished by subjecting it to two successive tests till only three hundred remained. First at the well of Herod, so called because there the people *hared*, *i. e.*, trembled—Judges vii. 3—were "afraid" at the great host of Midian. And again, by the lapping of water at the brook or stream. Lest Gideon should be utterly dispirited by this excessive and unexpected reduction, the Lord directed him to go down to the host and he would hear words that would strengthen his hands. He and his servant crossed mount Gilboa—for the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel were on the *north* side of Gideon—and heard the report of the dream and the interpretation. This was enough. Gideon instantly proceeds to put his little band in order. And, by means of a stratagem unequalled in the art of warfare, approached the host at the dead of the night, threw them into confusion, and it is emphatically said, that "the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host. Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more."