

doing. *Establish his word* (Rev. Ver.), etc.; the prophecy of Ahijah (see Connecting Links). The issue would prove that God was able to accomplish His purpose.

III. Revolt, 16.

V. 16. *All Israel*; the ten Northern tribes. *What portion have we in David?* "What have we do to with David's breed, Rehoboam, or David's tribe, Judah?" The high-spirited Northerners refused to be ruled by a man of Judah. *To your tents, O Israel*; a call to secede: "Back to your homes and prepare for war!" *See to thine own house, David*; as if to say: "Hands off! Rule in Judah, but only in Judah."

Rehoboam, however, made two attempts to recover his lost authority; but in the first Adoram, his captain, was slain, and in the second he was restrained by a prophetic word. Thus the Northern kingdom was established under Jeroboam as king. Vs. 17-24.

Light from the East

TAXES IN THE DAYS OF THE KINGDOM—The men of the desert know nothing of taxation. It is true that the outlay of a sheikh is large; he has to spend freely for entertainment and for the support of the poor. But he does not reimburse himself by imposts on his clansmen; he does it by war and

pillage. If he lives near the edge of the desert he levies a regular blackmail on the settlers who cultivate the soil. When he makes a raid he gets the lion's share of the spoil.

It was very much the same in Israel's early days in Palestine. The judges levied no taxes nor did Saul. Saul had no capital and no special court to keep up. He had no officials to pay and the men who fought with him had their own living or lived from the spoil. Saul himself lived on his family estate at Gibeah.

These conditions were altered under David and especially under Solomon. David laid tribute on conquered peoples and much is made of the voluntary offerings of his subjects. And the census of 2 Samuel, ch. 24, had very probably in view the imposition of taxes and the call to military service. And we know that Solomon divided the kingdom expressly for these purposes. From each district so much produce and so much personal service were exacted. He taxed the traders, too, that crossed his borders. We can well believe that at his death men objected to his taxes partly because they were burdensome, but partly also because they were an innovation, a departure from the old custom.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

The number 28 marks a spot in a valley between 30 and 40 miles north of Jerusalem; it is the place where the people of the Southern kingdom assembled to confirm Rehoboam in the royal succession. The direction of the two short lines diverging from 28 shows that we are to look eastward. Standing at the indicated point and facing east, we find spread out before us the valley town where the historic convention was held. We look from a hillside elevation high enough to give us a comprehen-



sive view of Shechem as it is to-day,—compactly built of stone, houses with one or two stories, the tall, slender minaret of some mosque here and there rising far above the general level of the roofs. All about the outskirts we see orchards, groves and gardens. No house that we find here now can have been standing at the time of that convention. There was of course no such thing as a minaret twenty-nine hundred years ago, and the Shechem houses in which the delegates lodged had not so many