

king ere he received a deputation from ten tribes of Israel, with Jeroboam at their head, praying for a diminution of the taxes from which they had been for some time suffering. The new king, following the advice of the companions of his pleasure rather than that of his father's counsellors, haughtily replied: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke I will add to your yoke; my father hath chastised you with whips but I will chastise you with scorpions." This reply gave the people a plausible pretext for declaring their independence; and they at once gave their watchword, "To your tents O Israel." Rehoboam, very naturally, determined on reducing his subjects to obedience. For this purpose every man in the two tribes who still remained faithful to him, who was capable of bearing arms, was enrolled: "A hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men which were warriors." They disbanded, however, without striking a single blow. One Shemaiah, a prophet, told Rehoboam that it was the will of God that the ten tribes should have a king of their own, and forbade him fighting against them. From that time the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were known as the kingdom of Judah, and the remaining ten tribes as the kingdom of Israel. It is probable that the population of the two kingdoms was more nearly equal than would be supposed from the number of tribes which belonged respectively to each. Idolatry was at once established in the kingdom of