

strong as they had been, were now in ruins; how could Jerusalem and Judah be so sure of escaping destruction?

## II. Self-Indulgence, 3-6.

Vs. 3, 4. *Put far away the evil day.* It is customary for men to fancy the retribution postponed which their sins are drawing near. *Seat of violence;* the seat of unjust judges who turn justice into violence by manipulating the law courts to their own advantage. *Beds of ivory;* couches inlaid with ivory brought from distant lands. The use of couches indicates not only the luxury and self-indulgence of the times, but also the adoption of foreign customs and manners. *Stretch themselves* ("sprawl") *upon their couches;* the splendidly draped divans used for reclining at the table. *Eat . lambs . and . calves;* feed themselves on the choicest of foods. They must have the daintiest and most elegant food.

Vs. 5, 6. *That chant to the sound of the viol;* literally, "who bawl to the sound of the harp." The prophet here becomes derisive of the quality of the singing which they employ at their feasts. *Like David.* They think that they are veritable Davids in the making of songs—a reference to their conceit. *Drink wine in bowls.* See *Light from the East.* *Anoint themselves with the chief ointments.* The Eastern people use ointments in the most lavish fashion—and these people see that they have the choicest of these perfumed oils. *Not grieved for . Joseph.* The whole nation of Israel is here named from its great ancestor. These careless rich care not a whit for the social distresses and injustices of the land for whose well-being and happiness they, as the heads of the nation (v. 1), are morally responsible.

## III. Doom, 7, 8.

V. 7. *Therefore.* Sins, whether of the nation or a class or a party or an individual, bring their inevitable penalty. *With the first.* Note the prophet's irony. These people who are the *first* of the land, the *first* in wealth, the *first* in luxury, who eat the *first* of the dainties, and anoint themselves with the *first* of perfumes, and who think themselves the *first* in culture, will be the *first* to go into captivity. *Go captive.* The enemy implied is the Assyrian power. *Re-*

*velry . . shall pass away* (Rev. Ver.); "the riot of the revelers shall depart," we might translate, and the whole land shall be left desolate

V. 8. *Sworn by himself;* the highest possible oath and, therefore, one not to be revoked. *Excellency of Jacob;* "the glory of Jacob"—that in which Jacob boasted, namely, wealth and splendor. All this God and His prophet hated, not for its own sake, but because it was built on the oppression of the poor and had cost the rich the loss of their character. *Hate his palaces;* not because they were beautiful, but because of the wickedness practised in them. *Will I deliver up the city;* the loss of political liberty—the final doom upon a people that were notorious for luxury, intemperance and lack of social sympathy. For the fulfilment of this prophecy, see 2 Kgs. 25 : 1-15.

## Light from the East

**IVORY**—Was brought from Ethiopia into Egypt and some of it entered Palestine, while later Solomon imported it direct from India. The Egyptians were fond of inlaying a dark wood with a lighter one or with ivory. A pattern was cut deep in the wood, and the white material was carefully carved into the required shape and glued in. No doubt the "beds" here were couches of ebony inlaid with ivory. Tables, stands, picture-frames inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl are still common among well-to-do people in Syria and Palestine.

**BOWLS**—Were large, wide goblets, called sometimes basons, and used in the sanctuary for handling the blood of the sacrifices. They are here the drinking cups which were held in the hand and not the larger vessel in which the wine was mixed, and as they held about half a gallon their size indicates the extent of the debauchery so common at that time. These drunkards toasted one another like the heathen around them, and challenged each other to new feats of drinking.

**VIOL**—Usually translated psaltery, was a stringed instrument resembling a guitar or a lute. The old English viol was a guitar with six strings, played with a bow instead of the fingers, and it was entirely displaced by the violin in the reign of Charles II.