

importance, which a thousand years later escaped not the notice of Titus¹ in conducting the siege of Jerusalem, was selected as a garrison city—in fact, “as the permanent advanced post toward the pass of En-gedi.” In the beginning of the eighth century B.C. it gave birth to the prophet Amos, whose early years were spent in tending cattle and gathering sycamore fruit, but who in later life predicted the downfall of Samaria and the northern kingdom. After the exile, its inhabitants bore an honourable part in repairing the wall of Jerusalem, though its nobles incurred the reproach that “they put not their necks to the work of their Lord.” Close by, in the wilderness of Tekoa, extending from the city eastward towards the pass of En-gedi, was the scene of that celebrated victory—a victory without a blow—which in the beginning of the ninth century B.C. Jehoshaphat obtained over the allied forces of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Seirites.

1. According to *the chronicler's account*, Jehoshaphat had not long returned from his foolhardy and wholly unjustifiable campaign at Ramoth-gilead—out of which, moreover, he had escaped only with the skin of his teeth—and had barely completed certain wise and prudent religious and political reforms in his own kingdom, when he was startled from his ease by an alarming rumour. The safety of his empire, which had hitherto been undisturbed by foreign invasion, and which, in consequence of recent improvements, not to speak of the garrisons he had earlier strengthened, seemed secure beyond the possibility of overthrow, was at last threatened by a formidable foe. A vast multitude of Moabites, Ammonites, and Seirites—whose territories stretched, on the east of Jordan and the Dead Sea, from the Jabbok or the Arnon on the north, to Mount Seir, in the neighbourhood of Petra, on the south—had either crossed the lake on floats,² or, what was more probable, had rounded its southern extremity, and were encamped among the woods at Hazezon-tamar, or “The Felling of the Palm-trees,” in the vicinity of En-gedi, or “The

¹ Josephus, *Life*, 75.

² Josephus, *Antiquities*, ix. 1, 2.