

wide; and more nearly corresponds to the Irish use of the same word "boy," or "gorscon," or the French of "garçon." We need only to point out a few passages to show this. The term is applied to Ishmael, when he was about fourteen years old; to Isaac, when he was grown up to be a young man; to Hamor of Shechem, when of marriageable age, and probably no more than twenty years old; to Joseph when he was seventeen; to Gideon's son Jether, when old enough to be ordered to slay two Kings; to Solomon, after he had become King; to the four hundred Amalekites who escaped on camels; to Elisha's servant Gehazi; to the son of the Prophets who anointed Jehu; to the two hundred and thirty-two attendants, of the Princes of the provinces who went out against Benhadad; to the soldiers of the Assyrian King; and in other places too numerous to cite. In all these cases, though differently translated according to the apparent meaning of the sacred writer,—by child, lad, young man, man, servant,—the word is but one in the original, and is the same which is here employed to express "children."

But it will be said those designated here are not only children, but "little children." Even so; but in one of the instances just cited, Solomon calls himself "a little child," when certainly a young man; and we wish to point attention to the fact, which we have never seen noticed, that, although those who came out against the Prophet are called "little children" the "little" is dropped where the forty-two who are slain are mentioned. Even the word for "children" is then changed to another; and although that word is of nearly synonymous use and application with the other, the change with the dropping of the word "little," is probably intended to mark the distinction. Wherever there is a mob of idle young men, there is sure to be a number of mischievous urchins, who shout and bawl, as they do, without knowing much of the matter. Although, there-

fore, there were no doubt little children among this rabble of young Bethelites, there is every reason to suppose that the forty-two of them who were destroyed were the oldest ones, the ring-leaders of the set, and who very well knew what they were about. It is worthy of note here, that the Jews have long considered a father responsible for the sins of his sons while they are under thirteen years of age, after which they become accountable for themselves. There is a ceremony, wherein the father publicly in the congregation transfers to his son, when he attains that age, the responsibility he has hitherto borne for him. This notion is old. We trace it in John ix. 23, where the parents decline to answer for their son, on the ground that he has reached the age of personal responsibility, and can answer for himself. If this idea was as old as the time of Elisha,—and it probably was, though the age may then have been later,—it supplies a fresh argument to show that the *youngest* of those destroyed was not under the age to which personal responsibility was fixed by the Jews themselves, the Bethelites among the rest.

Observe, further, that these youths were not accidentally encountered: they did not happen to be at their sports outside the town when the Prophet passed; but they "came out," of *malice prepense* "to meet" and insult him. Such a purpose against the Prophet must have been the result of their ungodly training in that evil place, and must have had its root in the sneers and sarcasms which they had all their lives heard levelled at the name and acts of Elijah. Him, surrounded as he was with terrors, they would not have dared thus to insult and abuse; but from his comparatively meek and gentle successor, whom they had never hitherto seen in any position of authority, they thought there was nothing to apprehend, and that they could with impunity pour out the blackness of their hearts upon him.