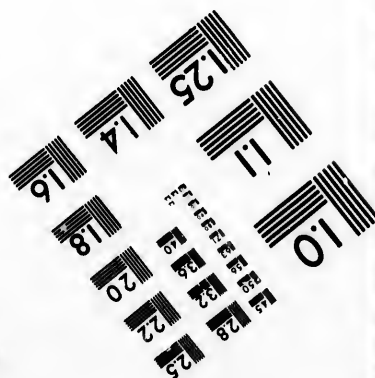
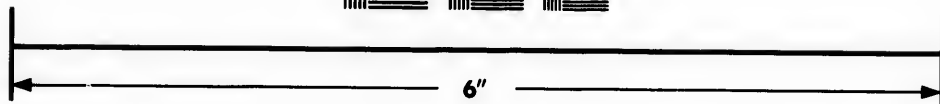
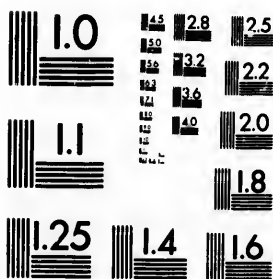


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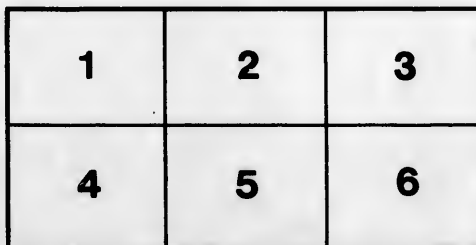
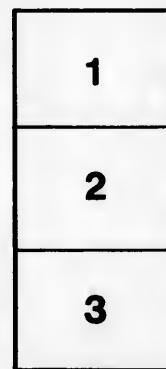
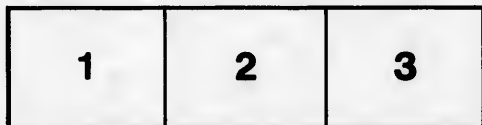
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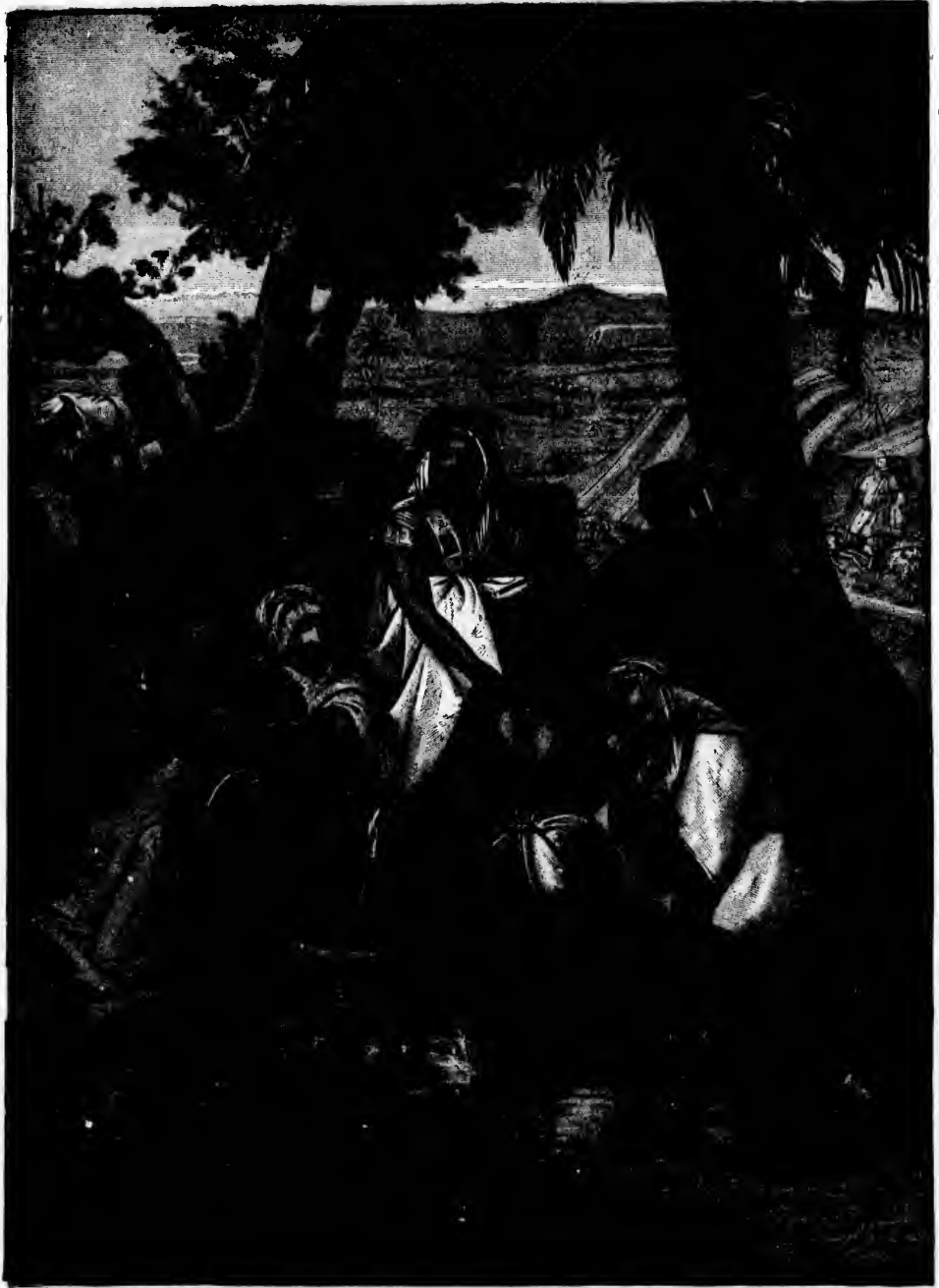
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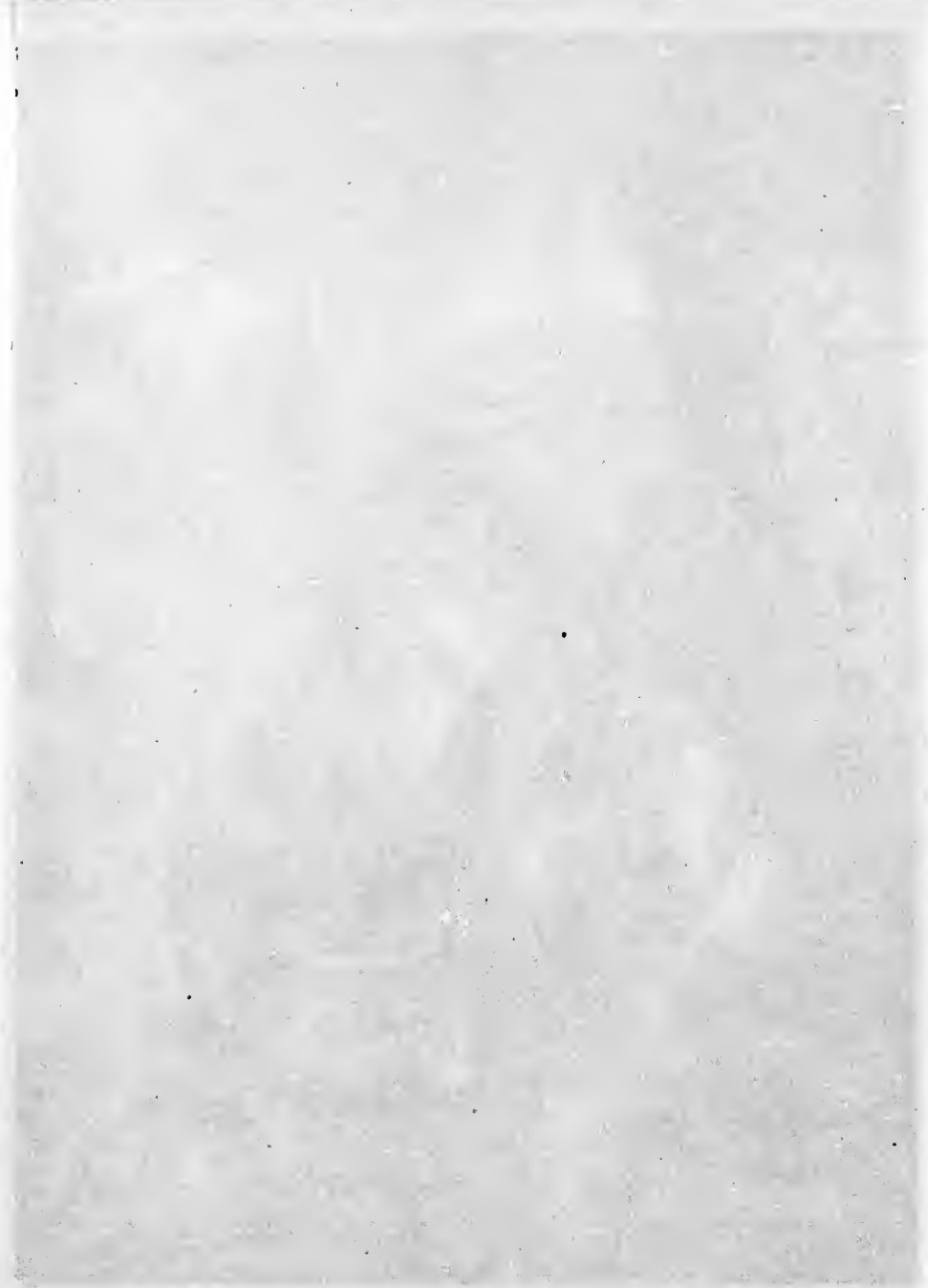


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PREFACE.

ROYAL TREASURY; OR, JEWELS OF THE BIBLE, contains all the captivating features which give immortal interest to the Scripture narrative. It is rich in vivid descriptions, gems of inspired thought, scenes that thrill the heart, and records of strange adventure and romance which have more power to entrance than the creations of fiction.

The narrative begins with the new earth and heavens, and portrays the sublime work of creation, over which "the morning stars sang together." The expulsion of our first parents from the floral bowers of Eden; the first murder which stained with blood the virgin world; the mighty deluge that rolled its dark waters over mountain summits, and engulfed in awful destruction the inhabitants of the earth; the lonely ark of Noah, riding upon the billows of the "vasty deep;" and the sudden overthrow of the visionary tower of Babel—these, with other momentous events, form the first part of this very attractive volume.

Then follow the great transactions recorded in the history of the Hebrews, such as Abraham offering his son; Isaac meeting the fair maid Rebecca; Jacob reconciled to his brother Esau; the thrilling story of Joseph at the court of Pharaoh; and the finding by the Egyptian princess of the babe in the rushes, that was destined to become one of the most majestic heroes of the Old Testament.

The wanderings of Israel in the wilderness are depicted—the woes that fell upon plague-stricken Egypt; the miraculous passage of the Red Sea; the triumphant song of Miriam and the Jewish maidens; the awful scenes surrounding cloud-capped Sinai; and the death of Moses on Nebo, when, according to Jewish legend, the winds wailed, and the earth cried, "We have lost the Holy One!"

The period of Joshua and the judges is treated in the same masterly manner. Portrayed in vivid colors, the reader sees the falling walls of Jericho; brave Gideon, with his wonderful fleece and dauntless little army; valiant Jephthah fulfilling his rash vow; mighty Samson, rending the lion's jaws, carrying the massive gates of Gaza, and heaving from their sockets the gigantic pillars of the Philistine temple.

The fascinating story of Ruth, gleaning in the fields of Boaz and becoming the ancestress of David and his greater Son, is told in all its simple beauty and pathos.

Towering up in rugged proportions, that strange man Saul comes into view, and then David, the ruddy shepherd boy, appears with the sling that carries swift death to boastful Goliath. Exchanging the shepherd's staff for the kingly sceptre, the dazzling glory of the Hebrew nation bursts upon us, and the line of illustrious kings commences.

Very thrilling are the events during the reigns of David and Solomon, including the rebellion of Absalom and the grief of his heart-broken father; the building of that most famous of all edifices, the Temple at Jerusalem; and the visit of the beautiful Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon.

Then, with the swiftness of the whirlwind, the prophet Elijah appears. The reader

beholds one of the most striking figures in history. He follows this mysterious prophet to the brook Cherith and the poor widow's home at Sarepta; sees his triumphant defeat of Baal's prophets on Carmel, and then the chariot of flame which bears him through the cloven heaven beyond mortal sight. He beholds the sweet face of the little Jewish captive in Syria, and sees her haughty master, Naaman, at the door of Elisha, and rising from the waters of Jordan, healed of his leprosy.

He finally comes to the charming story of Queen Esther, her patriotic devotion and overthrow of Haman's fiendish plot. The no less interesting story of Job follows, his sudden afflictions, his sympathizing friends, and their renowned discussions on the problems of human life.

All the prominent features of the Psalms and Proverbs are fully described. The helpful sayings of the wise man are mingled with the songs of the sweet singer of Israel.

We have next the spirited account of the captivity; the grandeur of ancient Babylon, and the startling dreams and fiery handwriting which terrified her kings; the brave, invincible Daniel, himself more than a kingdom, whom neither lion's den nor fiery furnace could appall; and at length the capture of the proud city by the army of Cyrus. The magnificence of ancient Nineveh is described, together with the visit of that strange prophet, Jonah, and also the modern excavations which have given a resurrection to the buried city.

The valorous exploits of Judas Maccabeus, that patriotic hero who achieved the independence of the Hebrew nation, are told in glowing language.

But the reader has not yet reached the climax; he is yet to stand upon the loftiest summit. Coming to the Life of Christ, which is complete in all its peerless beauty, he beholds the Child Wonderful in Bethlehem's manger; the white-robed chorus singing peace and goodwill; the adoring shepherds and Persian sages, and all the graphic and illustrious scenes connected with the baptism of Christ; His temptation in the wilderness; the calling of the Galilean fishermen; the parables, which, like windows, let in celestial light; and the stupendous miracles which healed the sick, hushed the wild tempest, and even rent the tomb! His myriad deeds of compassion; His sweet words of love; His calm majesty in persecution and suffering; His radiant glory of transfiguration; His agony in the garden and death upon the cross, when even mute nature felt the pang and was moved to sympathy—all this, and vastly more which cannot here be stated, is fully depicted.

The reader will find a peculiar charm in the resplendent history of the Apostles—the labors, sufferings and sublime sacrifices of those noble men, "of whom the world was not worthy." He is dazzled by the bright light that falls upon majestic Paul, and traces the brilliant career of this great Apostle to the Gentiles. He keeps company with the Apostle in his missionary journeys; hears his midnight song in the dungeon at Philippi; his burning words as he faces Roman governors; the clanking of his chains as he stands before King Agrippa, and his grand speech on Mars' Hill, that masterpiece of sacred eloquence.

The teachings of the apostles are followed by the vision of John in Revelation, with its majestic imagery and beautiful descriptions of the heavenly Jerusalem. No Raphael nor Angelo ever gave the world such paintings in colors as are here given in inspired words. Then comes one of the most interesting and attractive parts of the volume, consisting of Biographies of the Great Men of the Bible and Captivating Bible Stories for the Young.

The work embraces the most interesting of all subjects, forms in itself a library of choicest information, and an exhaustless source of entertainment, such as was never attempted in any other book.

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MODERN JERUSALEM.

I.—THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER.

- 1 *Calvary's Castle.*
- 2 *Latin Convent.*
- 3 *Church of Holy Sepulchre.*
- 4 *Greek Convent.*
- 5 *Coptic Convent.*
- 6 *Ruins of St. John's Hospital.*
- 7 *Greek Church. St. John's.*
- 8 *Residence of the Christian Bishop*
- 9 *Church of the Greek Schismatics.*
- 10 *Tower of Hippicus. David's Tower.*
- 11 *Supposed Site of the Tower of Phasaelus*
- 12 *The Prussian Consulate.*

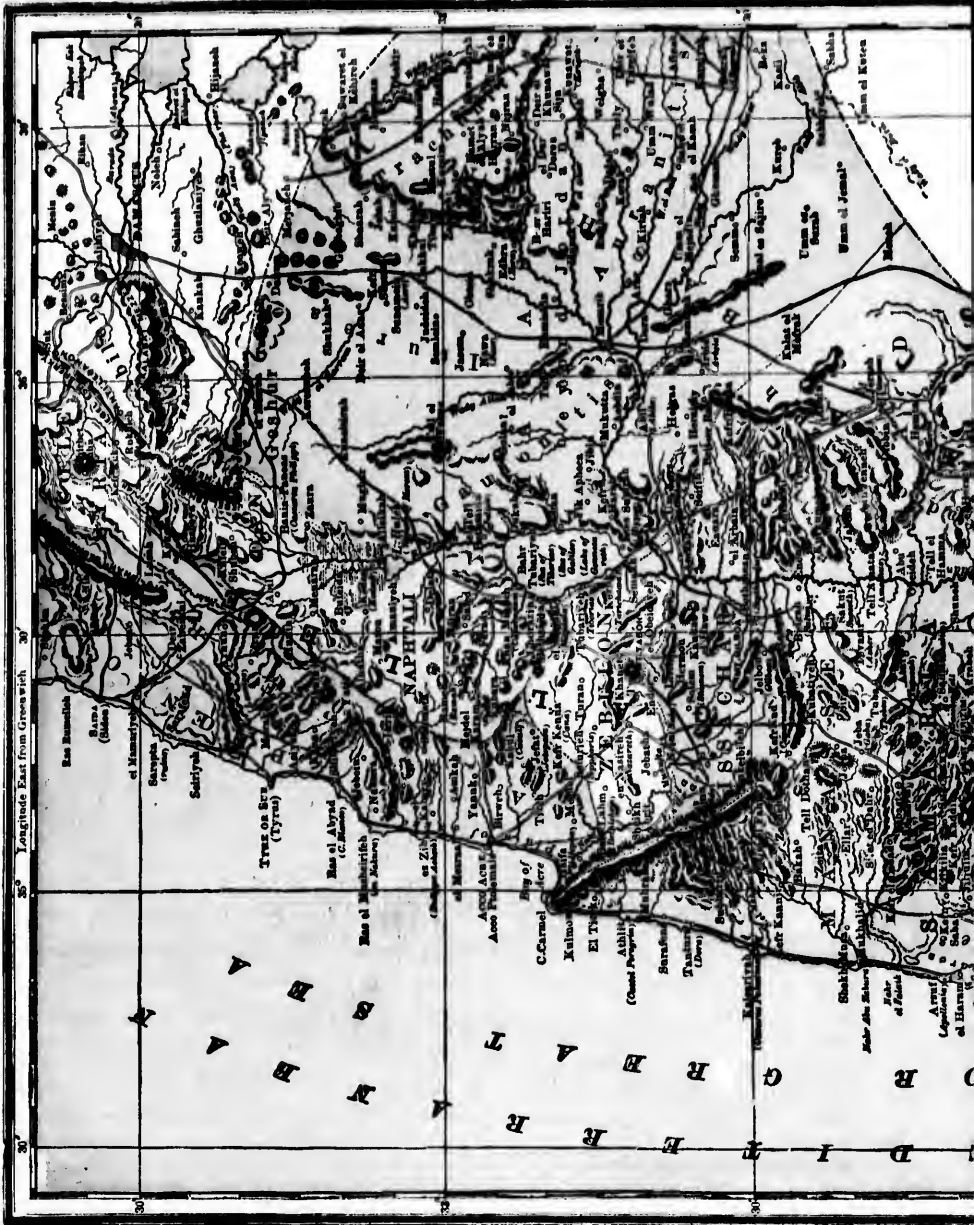
- 13 *Modern Evangelical Church.*
- 14 *Hospital and Syrian Convent.*

II.—THE ARMENIAN QUARTER.

- 15 *Armenian Convent, with the Church of St. James.*
- The only building in Jerusalem which presents any appearance of comfort.*
- 16 *Nunnery of St. George.*
- 17 *Barracks.*

III.—THE JEWS' QUARTER

- The most wretched in the city*
- 18 *Synagogue of the Sheperdin*



Longitude East from Greenwich

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A NEW MAP OF OR THE PALESTINE HOLY LAND



EXPLANATION

Arab—Plain	Arab—Mountain	Arab—Creek
Arab—River	Arab—Fountain	Arab—Lake
Arab—Well	Arab—Village	Arab—City
Arab—Fort	Arab—Pass	Arab—Road
Arab—Tomb	Arab—Temple	Arab—Synagogue
Arab—Mosque	Arab—Church	Arab—Monastery
Arab—Barracks	Arab—Fortress	Arab—Castle
Arab—Walled City	Arab—Unwalled City	Arab—Village
Arab—Fort	Arab—Pass	Arab—Road
Arab—Tomb	Arab—Temple	Arab—Synagogue
Arab—Mosque	Arab—Church	Arab—Monastery
Arab—Barracks	Arab—Fortress	Arab—Castle
Arab—Walled City	Arab—Unwalled City	Arab—Village

Under Turkish rule, Palestine is comprised in the Sanjak of Jerusalem, and the Sanjaks of Haifa, Sidon, and Tyre. The Sanjak of Jerusalem is divided into the following districts: Jerusalem, Hebron, Beersheva, Gaza, and Gaza. The Sanjak of Haifa is divided into the following districts: Haifa, Sidon, Tyre, and Beirut. The Sanjak of Sidon is divided into the following districts: Sidon, Tyre, and Beirut. The Sanjak of Tyre is divided into the following districts: Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut. The Sanjak of Beirut is divided into the following districts: Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, and Haifa.

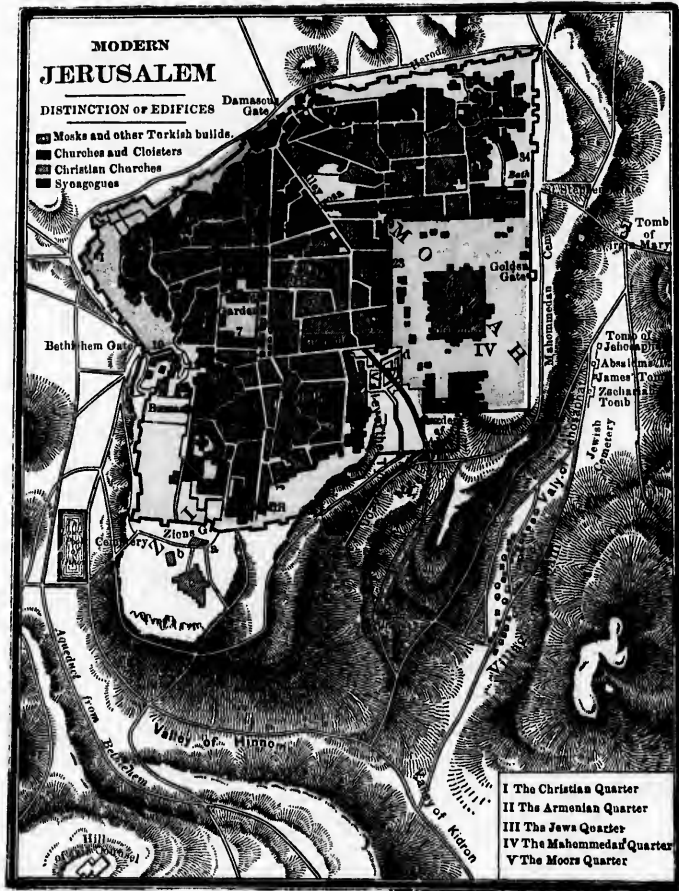
Boundaries of the present Kingdom of Syria are shown in dotted lines. Boundaries of the present Kingdom of Egypt are shown in dashed lines. Boundaries of the present Kingdom of Jordan are shown in dash-dot lines. Boundaries of the present Kingdom of Iraq are shown in solid lines.



Longitude East from Washington, 135°

30°

35°



19 Synagogue of the Portuguese Jews.
 20 Mosque.

IV.—THE MOHAMMEDAN QUARTER.

21 Khan and Bazaar.
 22 Mineral Bath.
 23 Convent and Schools.
 24 Institute for Bilud Dervish.
 25 Hospital of St. Helena.
 26 Reputed site of the House of the Rich Man.
 27 Reputed site of the House of St. Varonica.
 28 Residence of the Turkish Pasha.
 29 Arch of the "Ecce Homo"

30 Place of the "Scala Sancta," the Holy Staircase.
 31 Pilate's House.
 32 Place of Flagellation.
 33 Ruins of a Church. House of Simon the Pharisee.
 34 Church of St. Anna.
 35 House of Herod. Dervish's Mosque.

V.—THE MOORS' QUARTER.

a Armenian Convent. House of Cataphas
 b American Burial Ground.
 c David's Tomb.
 d Place of Walling of the Jews.
Just within Zion's Gate are wretched abodes of leprosy



ROYAL TREASURY

OR,

JEWELS OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW EARTH AND HEAVENS.



A GRAPHIC description of the work of creation is given in the first part of Genesis. When the new world rises to our view it is without the wonderful forms of life and beauty which we now see everywhere around us. By successive stages the great work was finished. The expansive oceans were separated from the wide and fertile plains; mountains lifted their heads in lofty grandeur toward the sky; rippling rivulets and majestic rivers flowed through deep valleys; lovely landscapes, framed in hills and painted with floral beauties, smiled in the soft sunlight; and tender verdure carpeted the new-born world.

At length, when the earth was arrayed in all its vegetable glories, and when the land, the air and the sea were filled with living creatures, God made man also "in His own likeness" and "after His own image"—man,

perfect in beauty and glorious in intellect—to inherit this rich possession, to bear rule over all its inferior creatures, and eventually to render all its elements subservient to his use.

The infancy of human life needed some care from the Divine Creator. The first man, to whom was given the name of Adam, was therefore not placed upon the cold mountains, nor amidst melancholy deserts, but in a garden watered by four perennial streams. By a garden is understood, in the East, a large plantation of fruit-bearing and pleasant trees, among which are interspersed the flowering shrubs and beds of flowers; and the whole watered by reservoirs and running streams.

The concise narrative in Genesis gives us little information respecting the feelings by which the new man was influenced; but from the result we may be sure that he longed for the intercourse of a congenial mind, of an equal being, and without this felt desolate, even in Paradise. The gracious Creator, who had allowed His new creature to feel this want, probably that he might the more highly prize its gratification, then declared that "it was not good for man to be alone," and gave to him

the first of women, Eve, as a helpmate for him. We may conceive the joy, the fulness of heart, with which the first of men thenceforth walked hand in hand through Eden with the first of women, in perfect purity and innocence.

Man's Fatal Fall.

Perfectly happy, alone in the earth, without the provocatives to or even the means of vice, what was there to give to the new pair a consciousness of moral responsibility and a sense of obedience to a bountiful Creator? This had not been overlooked. There was one tree of the garden, distinguished as "the tree of knowledge," whose fruit they were forbidden to touch under grievous penalties, although of all else that grew in that spacious garden they might partake freely. This was established as the test of obedience; and if the abounding evil which has grown up in the peopled world disposes the mind to think lightly of such a test, it will be well to recollect that, as Adam and Eve were then circumstanced, disobedience to some necessarily arbitrary restriction of this nature was the highest crime which it was in their power to commit. The crimes against men which human laws deem worthy of death they could not commit, seeing that they were alone in the world; and there could be no crime against God but through the infraction of some such positive command as this.

What might have been the lot of the first human pair had they continued firm in their obedience is impossible to say, and perhaps useless to speculate. They fell, and by that fall

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

Tempted by the flattering lies of the old serpent, under whom Satan is supposed to have been represented, the woman took of the forbidden fruit, and prevailed upon her husband to share her sin. Hitherto they had been upright, knowing neither good nor evil, for good is only a relative quality, and only recognizable in the comparison with existing evil. But now their eyes were at once "opened to know both good and evil"—to know good lost, and evil won. The innocence which be-

fore had covered them as a robe was gone, and "they saw that they were naked." Before this, in their innocence of soul, "they were naked and not ashamed;" but now the same fact became to them a matter of shame and confusion of face. Their first impulse was to seek wherewith to cover them; and they twisted fig-leaves together, "and made themselves aprons," for that purpose. The same impulse of conscious guilt led them to hide themselves among the trees, where "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." That voice they had never before heard without gladness; but now it was the voice of their Judge.

After a mystical judgment on the beguiling serpent, and after pronouncing the pangs of childbirth as the doom of the woman, He turned to Adam and said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." This sentence involved expulsion from Eden: and subjected the guilty pair to the physical conditions which brought death upon them, and upon all who sprang from them. Yet this sentence, extorted from the Divine justice, was accompanied by mitigating intimations; and promises, not perhaps intended to be then clearly understood, were held out of some mighty deliverance from the penalties of sin through one born of woman.

The geographical position of Eden is purely conjectural; different writers have placed it in various positions, and nothing can now be known with certainty concerning its locality. It has been placed by some on the Lower Euphrates, near the junction of that river with the Tigris and the Gulf of Persia. By others it has been described as situated in Media, Armenia, or the North of Mesopotamia, all mountain tracts of extreme beauty and fertility. It has also been imagined that

the ancient site of Eden is now covered by | utmost importance to the whole human race.
 Lake Arissa. All this, however, is simply | Milton, in his immortal epic, indulges his



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF PARADISE.—Genesis iii. 23.

speculative, while the events which therein | vivid and powerful imagination in depicting
 occurred were of vast magnitude and of the | the unalloyed happiness, unsullied purity, and

chaste love of our first parents; they freely conversed with angels and the Lord of angels; they knew neither hatred nor fear, until, in an unhappy hour, they, under strong temptation, broke through a restriction placed upon them, and were expelled from their Paradise to lives of labor and sorrow. This statement agrees in the main outline with the narrative given in Genesis, and is to be traced with more or less likeness in many of the traditions of ancient civilized nations and even those of modern savages.

Whither, after their expulsion, the unhappy couple directed their steps, is entirely unknown: there is no evidence to throw any light upon the matter. How long they wandered before they resolved on some settled habitation is equally uncertain; but we learn that two sons were born to Adam; Cain, the eldest-born, sharing his father's labor, and tilling the ground in the sweat of his face, while Abel, the younger, devoted himself to tending the flocks. It is a beautiful Arcadian picture, although the brighter glories of Paradise are withdrawn.

How simple the habits and mode of life in those early days! Eden was lost, and the world was hard and rough. Man was doomed to bend to his work like the ox to the yoke. The brow on which the image of God was stamped would be wet with sweat. Paradise blasted, and the new home cursed with thorns! It was taught thus early that if the world would do us any good, we must go out and master it.

And the beneficent effects of the law of labor are seen in changing the face of the earth, and transforming it into a second Paradise. We have sunlight and rain such as fell upon the Eden of old, and still the blossoms with rainbow colors and lovely perfumes decorate the fields, and harvest fruits bear eloquent testimony to the bounty of nature. Man shows his nobler qualities in conquering the earth, and making it yield him riches of unmeasured value.

"I have gotten a man from the Lord," were the words of Eve on the birth of

the first child that was born into the world. He was called Cain, which is the Hebrew word for "gotten." What a wonder to Adam and Eve must have been the first child! They had never been children themselves; they had never seen a child; but here was their own image, helpless, guileless, innocent.

Cain and Abel.

Cain was not old when another child was born. The wonder had now ceased. The second child was nothing compared with the first. He was not the man from the Lord, not the promised seed, so he was called Abel, or "vanity." The effects of this partiality of the parents, grounded on this misunderstanding, were soon manifest. Cain was proud, fierce, selfish; Abel, on the other hand, was humble and gentle, and is known as the "righteous" Abel. They grew up together. Other children doubtless were born, but Cain and Abel were natural companions. They had the world before them for enterprise and invention. The thoughts most natural to men would be the first to rise in their minds, and we might have imagined their circumstances to have made and kept them innocent and happy. But the blight of sin had fallen and its taint was in the heart of man.

Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. The curse had come. The ground needed tillage. This was Adam's occupation, and naturally his elder son was taught to follow the same. In some respects the curse was converted into a blessing. Work was needed for the exercise of the body and a check on the disposition to evil. It is good for man to be occupied. Abel, the gentle brother, kept sheep. This was the next employment after tilling the ground. It is remarkable that their occupations should have been distinct. We might have expected both to have done the same things by turns or as circumstances required. But it may have been that Adam gave them their work, prescribing to the elder and stronger the laborious duty of tilling the ground; while Abel, the younger and physically weaker, tended

the flocks. Each had his calling and knew his labor would not be fruitless.

There was still but one household. The two sons were the prominent members. On them mainly, so far as man could see, depended the future of the world. Their interests were one; their great object, therefore, should have been mutual help. Never were two brothers placed in circumstances which more required their co-operation, or which seemed more likely to make them love each other. But they were true types of two classes of men, and their history is the foreshadowing of the history of the human race. There has been an increasing opposition between those represented by Cain and those represented by Abel. The seed of the evil-doers has had the victory, and the just have suffered; but the triumph of the righteous is yet to come.

Cain made religion the ground of his quarrel with his brother. Both offered sacrifices. Cain brought the fruit of the ground; Abel the firstlings of his flock. Each seems to have offered suitably according to the increase which God had given him; but there was a difference somewhere. It may have been that Cain only offered the fruit—not the first or best, while Abel offered the best he had. It may have been that Cain's offering had no reference to sin; while Abel's spoke of suffering, and so of guilt. God said to Cain, "If thou doest not well, sin"—or, as the Hebrew may be translated, *a sin-offering*—"lieth at thy door." From this some have concluded that Cain had no consciousness of sin, and so refused the sin-offering. But this is an inference of the Rabbis and theologians, and supposes that Cain knew some special command of God concerning sacrifice. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives a reason which seems sufficient. He makes the difference to be in faith. "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." The sacrifice itself was more excellent; but what made it really valuable was the disposition of the offerer. In his offering there was piety, sincerity, and self-sacrifice.

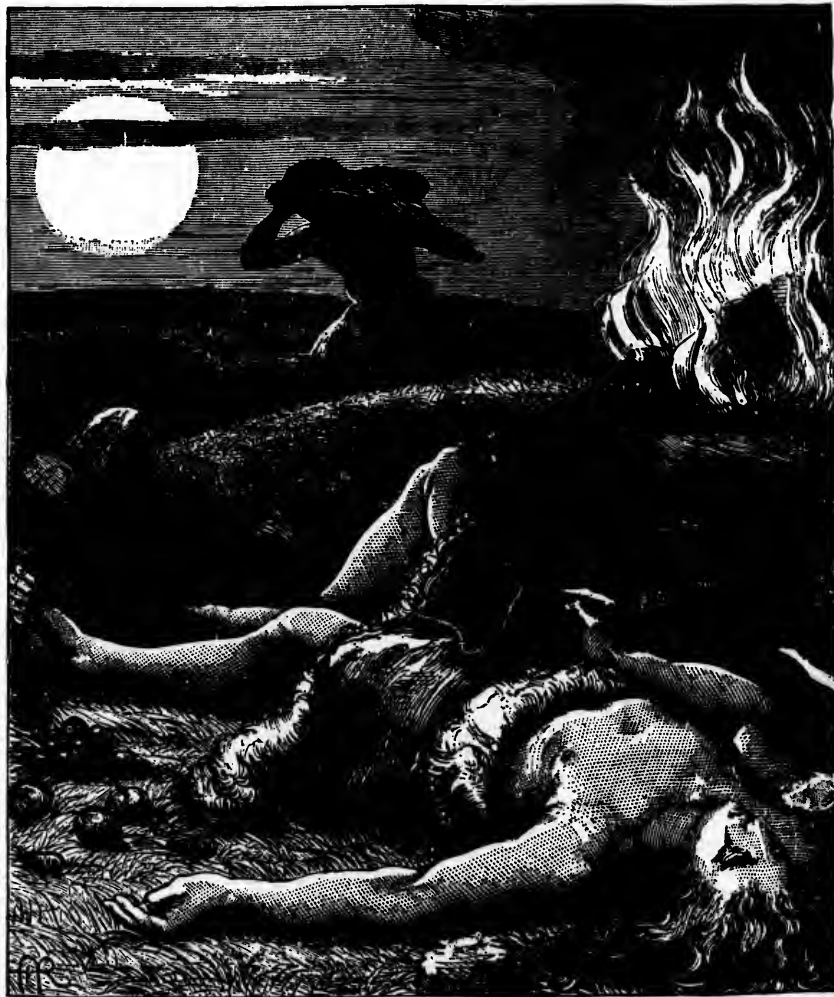
So the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but to the offering of Cain He had not respect. Then the character of Cain was manifested. Instead of inquiring into the cause of the non-acceptance of his offering, he was very wroth. The cause was in himself, but he made it the occasion of hatred towards his brother. Perhaps there was in Cain something of self-righteous pride. He may have been told that he was the promised seed, and, being the firstborn, had all the blessings of God by natural inheritance. And now he sees his brother's offering accepted because of his righteousness, and his own rejected for reasons which he dare not look into: his countenance fell; his wrath threatened to flow out in vengeance on his brother. This was unreasonable; but reason goes with righteousness, not with sin. God remonstrated with Cain. If he did well, his offering would be accepted; if he did not well, there was the natural punishment. God told Cain that all which he had by birthright remained to him: his brother should not have dominion over him; but there was a difference between inheritance and character

A Brother's Blood.

It is added, "And Cain talked with his brother Abel." What did they talk about? About their sacrifices? About sin and punishment? Did they have a dispute, in which Cain lost his temper, as bad men often do when they have controversies about religion? The Rabbis have many conjectures, but nothing is recorded. Cain's anger burned; he could not control it; and at last he gave his brother a sudden blow. Abel staggers and falls; his heart ceases to beat; his tongue is silent; motionless he lies on the ground. Cain understands not what has happened. He knew nothing of death; he had never seen one dead or dying. He calls to Abel, but Abel answers not. Did a pang of remorse come over the heart of Cain? Did he feel that he had been the victim of his own unguarded passions? We do not know. But if he felt any compunction at

the moment, it was of short continuance. When God asked, "Where is thy brother?" Cain answered, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Cain was not capable of repentance, because he had not the consciousness of sin. The soul within him was dead; he was a mere



TRAGIC DEATH OF ABEL.—Genesis iv. 8.

The defiant answer was made in the spirit of impenitence, and after he knew that Abel was dead. His nature was brutal and wicked.

child of the earth, earthy; born of the flesh, he was nothing but flesh. He could not feel that he had done wrong until he heard the

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punishment of his wrong-doing. The voice of Abel's blood cried out for vengeance on the murderer. God tells Cain that he is cursed from the earth: when he tills the ground it shall not henceforth yield her strength; but he should be a fugitive and vagabond. And Cain answered, "My punishment is greater than I am able to bear."

A Homeless Fugitive.

Here was the fruit of the forbidden tree. The first human death was by murder, and the first man born in the world a murderer and fratricide. This first slaughter was too dreadful an offence for any but the Giver of life to judge: and He judged it, not by taking another life, but by dooming the wretched and self-convicted criminal to wander forth in wild and infertile regions, afar from his kindred and parental home, with "the voice of his brother's blood" crying always in his ears.

Under this sentence Cain wandered forth and established himself in the land of Nod. There his family increased, and his descendants built cities, and became the inventors of many useful arts. One of them, called Jabal, was the first who took to that nomadic life—living in tents, and rearing cattle—to which so many tribes of men in Asia are still devoted; another, named Jubal, was the inventor of the lyre and the Pandean pipe; another, named Tubal-cain, was the first who found out the use of iron and copper to man; another, named Lamech, seems to have been the first who devised the evil practice of polygamy, for of him it is told that he took two wives—Adah and Zillah.

Meanwhile other children were born to Adam and Eve, only one of whom, Seth, is particularly mentioned, because from him sprang the family which eventually survived the desolation of the habitable world.

Great Length of Human Life.

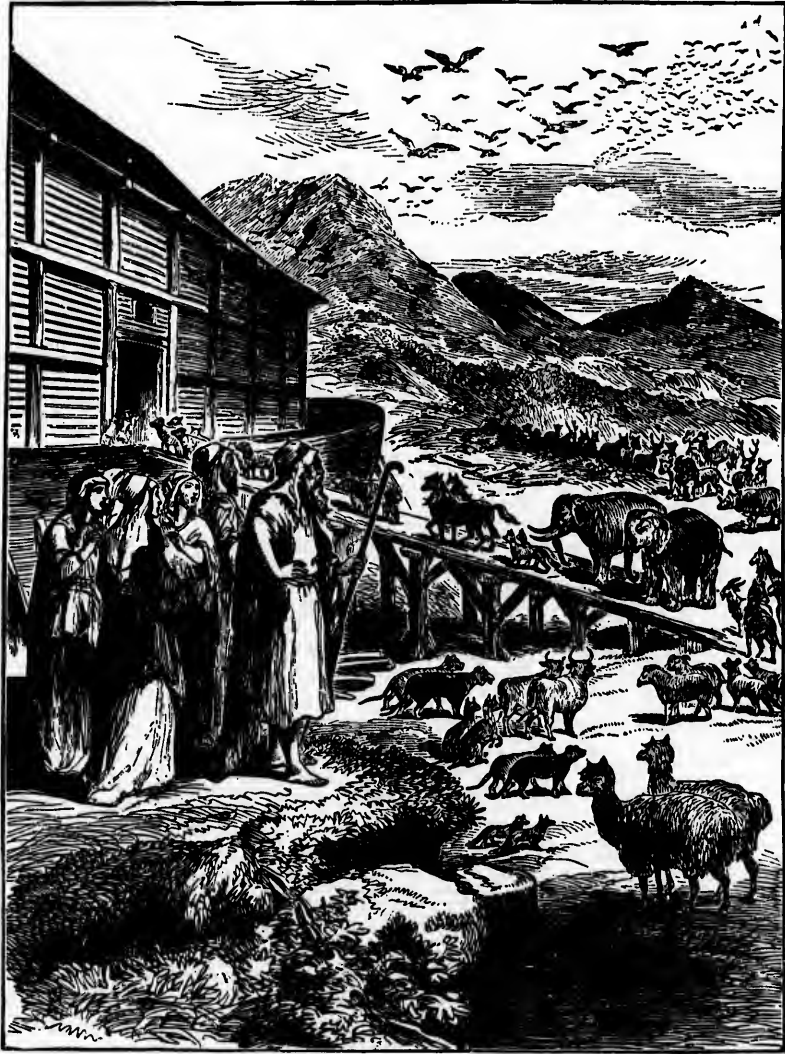
The remaining history to the Deluge is occupied chiefly with lists of names and ages, which are of importance to us chiefly by showing the length of the interval between the

Creation and the Deluge, and which on this ground is commonly estimated at one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven years. The names are not many, for before the Deluge the lives of men were of immense duration, varying from nearly eight hundred to nearly a thousand years. The shortest life recorded is that of Lamech, the father of Noah, who died at the age of seven hundred and seventy-seven years; the longest, that of Methusaleh, who lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years. This longevity must have been highly favorable to the increase of population—deaths being so few, and births so many. It must have been also favorable to much progress in the arts of life—and perhaps a correct notion has scarcely yet been formed of the extent to which the ancient world was probably peopled, or of the progress which had been made in what are now called the arts of civilization. The Scriptural intimations are exceedingly concise, and only enable us to perceive that a most corrupt and criminal condition of society was soon engendered among all the races of men which sprang from Adam.

The race of Seth seems to have the longest retained its uprightness and fidelity to God; but it was gradually led to contract alliances with the race of Cain, which in the end confounded the one and the other in the same disorders by which the earth was filled with violence and wrong. From such intermarriages sprang men celebrated not more for their larger stature than for the corruption of their manners. And in the end things came to such a pass, that the fair creation was made abominable in the eyes of its Divine Creator, and He made known to the still upright family of Noah his design to purge the face of the earth, by a Flood of waters, of all its tainted inhabitants. Noah was ordered to prepare a huge vessel, suited to float upon the surface of the waters, and spacious enough to contain not only the good man's own family, but couples of the different species of animals, destined eventually to replenish the desolated earth.

The ark was a long time in preparation,

during which the guilty men were warned of | not : and the terrible doom, so long denounced
destruction, and, urged by Noah to repentance, | and so mercifully delayed, came down at last.



ANIMALS ENTERING THE ARK.—Genesis vii. 8, 9.

had ample time in which to turn from their evil | Many have been the speculations about the
ways. But they turned not; they repented | ark of Noah, and various the forms which

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have been assigned to it. It has been usual to suppose its hull similar to that of a ship. But the hull of a ship is expressly designed for progress through the waters; whereas for the ark it was only requisite that it should be upborne, at rest, upon the surface. It was therefore, in all probability, flat-bottomed, and shaped not unlike the houses which were at that time in use. We know that it was divided into different decks, or stories, divided doubtless into various stalls or cabins for the different bestial and human inmates, and for the storing of provisions; and the whole was covered by a sloping roof. It was built of gopher wood, which is supposed to have been the same as the cypress, and it was well covered inside and out with pitch. Its dimensions were very vast, being three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. The cubit was about eighteen inches; and hence these dimensions may be expressed as equal to four hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high.

At length, about one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven years from the Creation, the word was given to Noah, and he entered the ark, with his immediate family, consisting of his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives—in all eight persons—who alone, of all the multitude inhabiting the earth, were destined to outlive the coming desolation. The righteous family, in obedience to the Divine command, took with them on board the ark seven pairs of every clean beast, and one pair of every one that was not clean.

The Deluge.

The stupendous event which now came on is related by the sacred historian in a few apparently simple phrases, but containing images of the most massive magnificence. "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." It rained forty days and nights, so violently and incessantly, that "the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills which were under the whole heaven were covered." The waters rose indeed fifteen

cubits above the tops of the highest mountains, and thus every living creature not capable of inhabiting the waters was overwhelmed and destroyed. The Flood continued for a considerable time after the inhabitants of the earth had perished; but at length the rain ceased, the waters gradually subsided, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month from the commencement of the Deluge, the ark rested upon one of the summits of Mount Ararat.

Biblical geographers are not perfectly agreed as to the region in which this mountain of Ararat should be sought; but the general current of opinion and tradition, together with the historical probabilities of the case, seem sufficiently to agree in identifying it with the mountain of Aradagh in Armenia, which travellers usually describe under the name of Ararat. Contrary to the common opinion, which supposes that the ark necessarily rested upon the highest of the mountains in its neighborhood, we should be more inclined to suppose that it rested on the lower summit, or in the gorge between the upper and the lower. It will occur to any one who gazes upon that mountain, that had the ark rested on the highest summit, covered, as that summit is, with perpetual ice, and all but inaccessible to human foot, it would not have been possible for the various inmates of the ark to descend in safety to the plain without some special miracle, of which the sacred text affords no trace, and which would be rendered unnecessary by placing the ark upon a lower level.

Sending Forth the Dove.

Forty days after the mountain tops had first become visible, Noah became anxious to ascertain the condition of the earth, and to that end let a raven fly forth from the ark. The raven went to and fro, away from the ark, then returned again to rest upon its top, and at last remained away altogether. Seven days after Noah sent forth a dove—a bird whose tender attachment to its mate gave good assurance of its return. "The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot," either

because the mountains were far off, or remote from the course she took, or, which is more likely, because doves in general fly low and covered with water, received her again into the ark. Seven more days passed, and he put the dove forth anew, and then her speedy



RETURN OF THE DOVE TO THE ARK.—Genesis viii. 11.

seek only the valleys and the plains. The dove returned, and the patriarch, who from this judged that the low lands were still of the ark, for she bore in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off, by which it was plain that

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In the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, and on the first day of the first month, the earth being completely dried, Noah began to dismantle the ark; and on the twenty-seventh day of the second month he finally quitted it, together with all his family, after having been in it a year and two days. The animals were also sent forth, and allowed to disperse themselves over the earth, excepting such of the tame animals as the only surviving family of man chose to retain, as the foundation of future flocks and herds.

Appalling Scene of Destruction.

We can form but a very weak conception of the horrors of the Flood. We may think of the awful cataracts of water pouring from the clouds; of the uprising of the mighty deep, rushing in—a wall of water—on the land; we may picture to ourselves the terror of the people, awakened but too late to a sense of their danger; we may see crowds ascending the lofty mountains as the deluge sweeps the valleys; we may see the wild beasts tamed with terror, the lion standing harmless by the gazelle, the timid hare crouching beneath the shadow of the tiger; we may see the eagles fluttering over the deep abyss, uttering shrill cries as their eyries are invaded by the water; we may see the little children clinging to the mothers' skirts, dumb with fright at the dreadful spectacle before them; we may see the wife's eyes turned in dismay upon her husband, while he in blank horror surveys the fearful scene of devastation, and with his little family around him dies a thousand deaths in dying one, but we can form no adequate conception of the dreadful scene.

There are traditions of this terrible catastrophe among all nations; there are plain evidences of its wide extent in our geological strata; it has left its indelible mark on the world.

In the ark, all living things were represented, either by single pairs or by seven pairs; and when the Flood subsided and the ark rested

on "the mount of descent," the creatures came forth, and Noah, erecting an altar, offered sacrifice and worshipped. Strange legends of the wood of the ark induced many pilgrims in ages gone by to attempt its discovery, but there is no satisfactory evidence of any part of this singular structure ever having been found.

There is something sublime and solemnizing in the contemplation of the redeemed family—the only survivors of the whole world's population—coming into a new world as it were, a new world which is but the sepulchre of the old, and prostrating themselves before that awful Being of whose judgments they have been the witness, and beseeching Him to curse the earth no more. There is a divine promise given that never again shall the earth be submerged, and lo! as a ratification of the promise is the bow in the cloud. When on the stormy sky the rainbow exhibits its rich coloring, we have the seal and the sign of God's covenant, that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter shall not cease.

But the fear of another destruction oppressed the minds of succeeding generations. The story of the Deluge told by father to son wrought a feeling of vindictiveness in many who thought it a hard thing that they should be called on to reverence a Deity at whose dread will a world was drowned. Not a cloud appeared in the sky but they were filled with terror; not a heavy shower poured down but they looked for utter destruction; if the tide rose higher than common, there was dismay, and they made light of the divine promise and felt no encouragement in the bow in the cloud. This led to an attempt to erect a building which would tower above the waters that might again drown the earth.

Thus ended that great catastrophe, which has left ineradicable traces upon the surface and in the bowels of the earth, and the memory of which has been preserved in the traditions of all mankind, in all their languages. As it seems very evident that the object of the Deluge was to extirpate evil, we must regard its resulting effects, whether physical or moral,

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NOAH'S SACRIFICE.—Gen. viii. 20.

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also the commencement of a new generation and diffusion of human beings of a superior kind, and from a selected stock, that was the least vitiated by the demoralization of the rest."

The sacrifice of Noah was a fitting recognition of the Divine goodness. Only one family of all the families of the earth had been saved from the destruction which engulfed the human race. This whole narrative of the Deluge is a striking witness of the wickedness of man on the one hand, and of the favor of his Maker on the other. We are taught to believe that the world had become desperately wicked; that such enormous and astounding crimes were committed as to exceed even the strongest imagination. A rude, rough, coarse class of men it was, with no sense of self or mutual respect; given up to the vilest vices; strong in nothing but its daring impiety. Noah, however, seems to have kept his faith, and to have been a man very different from all others of that period. He was the bright star gleaming through a night of blackness and darkness, and he and his household were rewarded for those qualities of character which marked them as peculiar and separated them from all others.

It should be noticed that the same favor of Heaven, which preserved one family during this Flood that drowned the world, still showed itself after the waters had subsided. It is not strange that men were timid, feared what might happen in the future, wondered if again the

flood-gates of the upper deep would be opened, and were anxious concerning their security. It was a question with them whether life would ever again be swept from the face of the earth, and in order that their fears might be allayed, the rainbow with its seven colors was placed in the sky—an arch beautiful even as it was prophetic, giving assurance that the floods should never descend again.

According to natural principles the rainbow must have been in existence from the beginning, unless the earth was in the first place watered only by dews. We know how it is formed, and we know that the laws of nature did not change in order that the sky might be spanned with this majestic arch. It is doubtless true that the rainbow was taken at this time and given to man as a sure sign and signal that he would be providentially preserved, and that the days of floods were ended. So on his coming forth from the ark it is pleasant to recollect that Noah built his altar, laid upon it the sacrifice, and kindled the consuming fires. The light of that sacrifice gleams against the dark sky of the early history, and its beams will not be lost to the eye which, latest in time, is turned backward toward the beginning. In short, we have here a great historic event, one that is not merely prominent in Biblical history, but in secular records and even in that book of the world whose leaves are made of solid rock, and whose lettering abides from age to age.



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CHAPTER II.

ABRAM AND LOT.



HE instant the second father of mankind set his foot upon the earth he proceeded to erect an altar, and offer burnt-offerings to God, in token of fervent adoration and gratitude to the great Deliverer, who had so wonderfully preserved him and his alone, as the sole survivors on the desolate earth. This first impulse of the preserved family God regarded with complacency, and He was pleased to renew to the appointed progenitors of a new race of men the blessing pronounced originally upon the first human pair: "Be ye fruitful and multiply."

Other matters were added for their benefit and encouragement. The original grant of dominion over the animal creation was renewed to them, but with some variations on the original appointment, and with so marked an emphasis in the permission to use beasts for food, "even as the green herb," that many have been led to suppose that there was no use of the flesh of animals before the Deluge. To obviate the apprehensions which must have been left in the mind of Noah by the terrible judgment which he had witnessed, God was further pleased to assure him that the world should never more be destroyed by "a flood of water," and that "while the earth remained, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, should not cease." Six divisions of the natural year are here indicated; and it seems that the Jews ultimately adopted the same

division of the seasons in reference to the labors of agriculture. They are still in use among the Arabs.

The rainbow, which is the effect of known natural causes, was appointed by God as the appropriate seal and pledge of this covenant. It has been thought from this that the rainbow was a new object to Noah, in which case there could have been no rain before the Deluge; and the earth must then have been watered by streams and copious dews. In support of this view, Gen. ii. 6, "There went up a mist from the earth and watered the face of the ground," is very frequently quoted.

Noah proceeded to cultivate the ground in the plains to which he had descended. A vineyard was among the objects of his culture; and the impartial sacred record, which unhesitatingly makes known the crimes and errors of its greatest and best characters, proceeds to inform us that he became inebriated with the wine, and, as he slept the sleep of drunkenness, lay indecently exposed. In this state he became the object of mockery to his son Ham, but of filial duty to Shem and Japheth. This conduct brought upon Ham the dreaded and predictive paternal curse, and the equally predictive blessing upon Shem and Japheth. The curse and the blessing seem to have been accomplished in the lot of their respective descendants, for Ham is regarded as the progenitor of the African races, and Shem of the Asiatic, and Japheth of the European families of men.

Noah lived after the Flood three hundred and fifty years, in apparent happiness and peace, and in the enjoyment of every blessing; and he died at the age of nine hundred and fifty years, bewailed by his children and their numerous descendants.

How long the fathers of mankind remained

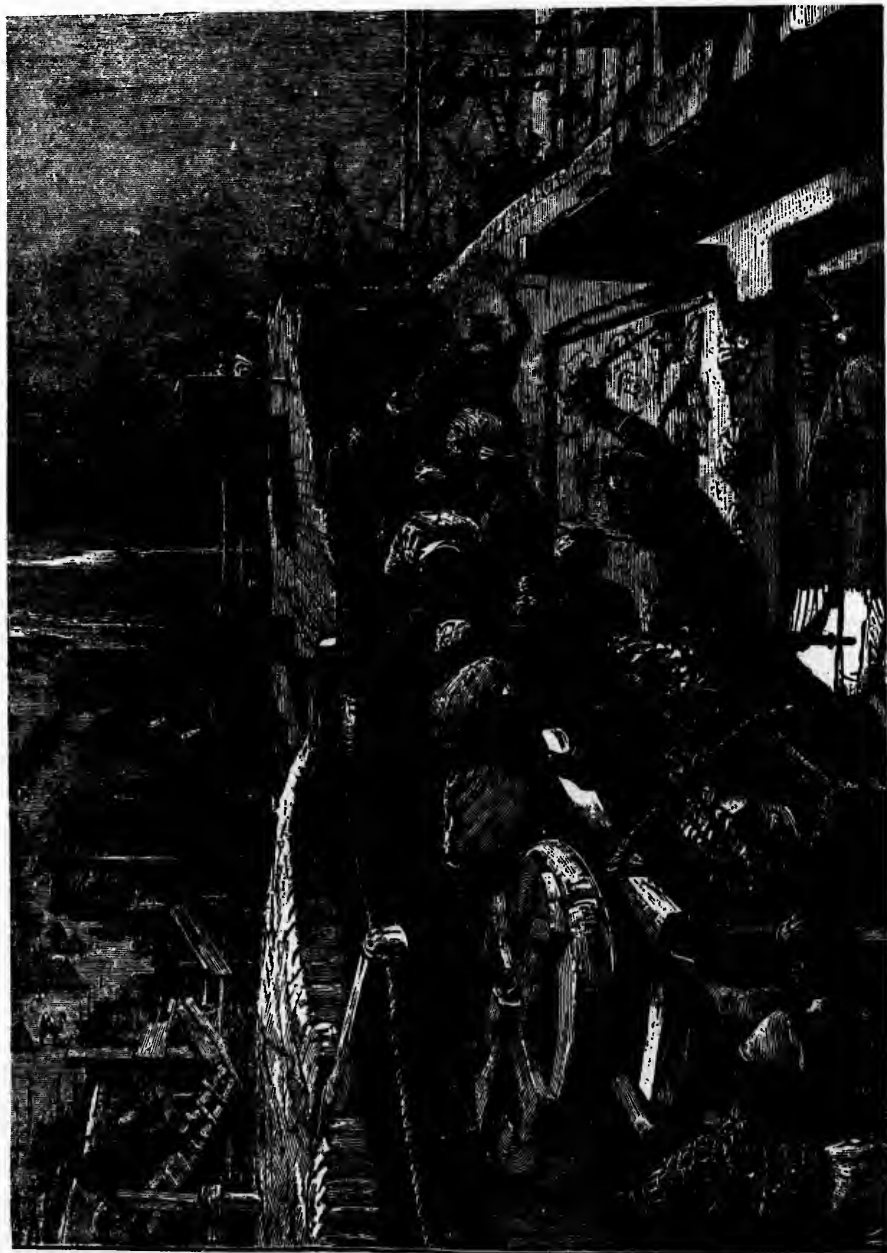
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BUILDING THE TOWER OF BABEL.—Gen. xi. 4.

together in the region where the ark rested, we are not informed. They were not likely to remove soon, or until compelled to do so by the pressure of an increased population, bound as they were together by the bonds of a known relationship, and by the ties of a common language. Eventually they arrived in the land of Shinar, where plains apparently boundless seemed to offer ample room for their increase without further wandering. This is the region watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, in which Babylon was afterwards situated. This region was then, as now, destitute of wood as well as of stone; but, deeming this a suitable home, they proceeded to make bricks, with which to build "a city and a tower." By a strong hyperbole, common in the East, they described this as a tower whose top should "reach unto heaven." This means simply a very high tower. The first of men were surely not idiots, and we have no right to suppose them capable of the exceedingly absurd intentions which have been ascribed to this erection. The plain Scriptural account is not only the best and most reasonable, but the only one on which we can rely. It amounts to this—that they feared being dispersed abroad, separated from each other, lost in their needful wanderings with their flocks in these vast plains. To prevent this, the tower was to be so high as to serve for a landmark and rallying-point to all their families.

The People Dispersed.

We know that the rotundity of the earth will, at a given distance, throw out of sight, below the visible horizon, not only the highest tower that man ever built, but the loftiest mountains. The first man after the Deluge, being, however, new to the phenomena which plains afford the best opportunities of observing, had probably been in the habit of ascribing to other and accidental causes such instances of the disappearance of visible objects as they had found occasion to notice. The design of remaining together was, however, contrary to the designs of God; and a special interposition of His providence rendered all

their plans abortive, and compelled them to disperse and people the different regions of the earth.

This was effected by causing such a diversity in their language that they were unable to understand one another, and were thus constrained to abandon their design, and to separate from each other in groups proportioned to the number of the dialects which were thus created among them.

The word Babel means confusion, and it was from this "confusion of tongues" at the place that the unfinished tower came to be called the "tower of Babel," and the city of "Babylon." The historical importance of the city was, however, of much later date, when it became the seat of a mighty empire, and when, as it would seem, the remains of the primitive fabric were made to form the basis of a tower of extraordinary form and elevation, which was counted one of the wonders of the world, and the supposed shape of which must be familiar to the reader from the numerous figures which are abroad under the name of the "tower of Babel." These figures are framed from the descriptions left by ancient Greek travellers of the tower which existed in and after the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

Modern Babylon.

On the now desolate site of the once mighty Babylon there are two lofty and large mounds or hills of ruin, the one or the other of which has been supposed to offer the remains of this celebrated tower. One of them now bears the name of Birs Nimrod (tower of Nimrod), and the other of Mujelibe; and the former is that which is now usually identified with this ancient monument.

The confusion of tongues, and consequent dispersion from Babel, took place, according to the common chronology, in the year 2230 B. C., being one hundred and seventeen years after the Deluge.

Among those who remained in this region was a person of active and enterprising habits, named Nimrod, who is described as "a mighty hunter." This person, doubtless by means of

the bold and hardy men who took part in his huntings, was enabled to establish his dominion over several of the cities of this region, and thus to form what seems to have been the first of human kingdoms.

In process of time a very general corruption of manners, connected with and arising from a forgetfulness or neglect of the God of Noah, seems to have arisen not only in the land of Shinar, but in the other countries to which the families of men had migrated, and in which they had formed communities more or less organized.

At length, about three centuries after the Deluge, the Divine Creator, who had declared that He would no more destroy the earth for man's sake, saw it right to commence the wondrous train of operations whereby He designed to keep in the corrupting world a testimony for the truth, until the arrival of the fully ripened time for the appearance of the Redeemer—of Him who was to bring in a new order of things, and to crush iniquity beneath His feet. This was to be accomplished by making a single man—a family—a nation springing from him, the special objects of the Divine care and providence, and to commit to their keeping the great truths which the world at large refused to retain in its knowledge.

The person chosen for this was a man named Abram, dwelling in the district of "Ur of the Chaldees," and probably belonging to that kingdom—if it still subsisted—which Nimrod had established. In human estimation Abram would have seemed but ill suited for the high destinies in which a numerous posterity was essentially involved, for he and his wife Sarai were already old, and they had no children. It will be found interesting to trace the successive steps by which this renowned personage was prepared for and placed under the circumstances necessary to the great designs of which he was the object.

The true history of the Israelites begins with Abram. But it is all vague and shadowy, as all very ancient history must be; Arabia was beginning to take some hold on the world; Egypt was growing into a power; but

the Jews—as we now call them—were as yet no people. Chaldea, or part of the Nimrod-territory—Yemon now called—was struggling towards the light, and Egypt was making steadier and more satisfactory advances; there was a land called Canaan, very prolific and rich under good husbandage, and capable of being turned to good account by competent hands.

In Chaldea sprang up astrology; shepherds out on the plains gazed on the stars whilst they minded their flocks, and fancied they could trace, in starry courses, in the midnight sky, God's way with a man in the world.

A Maker of Idols.

A part of the country of Chaldea was called Ur; the name is said to have signified fire or light, and we are told that this name was chosen on account of the place being notoriously idolatrous—there it was supposed heaven revealed itself and dark sayings were made clear.

In the county, if the expression may be used, or the city of Ur dwelt the descendants of Shem, the son of Noah. There were nine generations. The last was Terah, the father of Abraham.

Terah is said to have been not only an idolator, but an idol maker. No man knew better than he that the gods he made were no gods; that the statues he constructed could neither hear with their ears, see with their eyes, speak through their throats, nor breathe through their nostrils; but tradition tells us that he persisted in ascribing to them divine honor until the soul of Abram was stirred within him. One day, when his father was away from the atelier, he took a strong hammer and knocked half the idols to pieces. When Terah returned and inquired the cause, Abram told him the gods had fallen to fighting as to which was the greatest, and in the battle had reduced themselves to the sight he saw. Terah, who would not give up his faith in their vitality, was forced to silence.

As Abram grew older, he began boldly to argue about the unity of God, and the Chal-

deans, who believed in lords many and gods many, were excessively outraged by his language. He argued that the ways of all under rule—under one rule; and that hence there must be one ruler—a corollary which excited a very great disturbance indeed. The



THE EGYPTIAN KING TAKING THE WIFE OF ABRAHAM.—Gen. xii. 15.

creation showed that there was a common originator and ruler; that neither earth, nor sea, nor sky could do as it would, but was rancorous feeling aroused against the reformer made matters very serious for the family of Terah. Their best and wisest plan was to

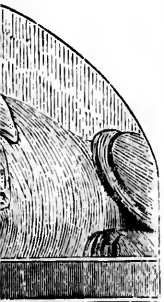
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get away from the angry people. As for Abram, he had within his own heart a deep and positive conviction that this removal would be ultimately conducive to much good. It seemed to him that close in his ear a voice had spoken saying, "Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

A Man of Moral Courage.

Abram was resolved on leaving Chaldea and taking up his abode whither he should feel himself led. The land of idols was to be forsaken, and he and those who belonged to him must go forth, but going they knew not whither. As for himself, he was seventy-five years old—comparatively young in those days—he was married; his wife's name was Sarai; but he had no child, so he adopted, as we may say, his nephew Lot, the son of Haran, who had died, leaving him an orphan.

The denunciations of the young reformer had made affairs critical in Chaldea. "Old Adam" might be "too strong for young Melancthon," but opposition and self-assertion only made Abram the stronger. He plainly and openly denounced the pagan rites, ridiculed the gods, proclaimed the name of the Infinite, without beginning, without end, immeasurable, everywhere present with every one of his creatures, the living Father of all, touched with the feeling of all natural infirmities, and never to be likened to an image graven of man's device.

A Wonderful Country.

Abram, however, saw it was his plain duty to take his departure from the land, so he emigrated into the land of Canaan: he took with him his wife—an extremely beautiful woman, and his nephew Lot—an exceedingly selfish man. Of course, such property as was usually regarded in that light, flocks and herds, they would have with them, and no doubt

money. But the land into which they went was in a sad condition. A terrible famine prevailed, and was numbering the living with the dead each day.

And yet the land was beautiful to the eye; nature seemed to have shed abundant blessings on it, and the mysterious voice still sounded in the ear of the emigrant, "This land shall thy seed possess." A wondrous land of wealth and beauty, high hills, their sides all clothed with richest vegetation, deep green valleys and pasture lands of great extent. And this land was to belong to the children of Abram: it was to be his seed's possession—where, as yet, the ground on which he stood was not his own—not even six feet of earth for a burial-place.

While the prospect of a grand fortune was very delightful, pressing necessities marred its beauty. There was a famine, and Abram felt that he must seek out some place where he and his might rest in security and obtain what they needed. The good land of Egypt was that to which he turned his eyes. In ancient history, before the days of Greeks or Romans, but three nations are prominent, the Arabians (including Assyria and Babylonia), the Egyptians, and the Jews. The Israelites were as yet no people. They were represented by Abram alone, but the country from which Abram came out was great and powerful, the land that was promised to his seed was still held by the Canaanites, and the land whither he went was Egypt, famous now in history.

History in Stone.

"O, Egypt, Egypt! fables alone will be thy future history, wholly incredible to later generations, and nought but the letter of thy stone-engraved monuments will survive." Such was the prophecy of the Hermetic books, themselves reported fabulous. Yet Egypt, so long enveloped in a mystery as deep as that which surrounds the Sphinx, has found its interpreter in the square of black basalt known as the Rosetta stone. By aid of this stone, the learned have been able to decipher the hieroglyphics, and what was dark is light.

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The dumb monuments of antiquity speak freely to us of the mighty past of Egypt. Not that they can tell us its beginning, it being impossible to fix with certainty upon any date; but the same difficulty occurs in the early chapters of more modern histories.

Perhaps, after a lengthened sojourn together, during which time they would be increasing and multiplying strongly, these children of Ham, lured southward by the fruitful valleys, would seek their settlements about the Nile, and we are told that these settlers grew into a great nation, and the priests took the supremacy, paying the fighting men to keep in subjection the laboring classes, who were doubly awed into obedience by the mystery which attached to the clergy and the unscrupulous ferocity of the military.

After some time it appears these two dominant classes came into opposition, and the troopers found themselves more than a match for the self-exalted priests; consequently they were reduced to the second place in the empire: whether the people were any better for the change is not to be ascertained in these days. Menes sat on his throne, and ruled in great pomp and power about the time, or, perhaps, a little before the time that Nineveh was being planned. This was a long time before Abram, with his wife and nephew, came into Egypt, and found there a high cultivation among the upper classes; such as he had never known—abundance and prosperity, contrasting agreeably with the condition of Canaan, out of which he came.

But Abram suspected that when the king or some of the leading nobility saw the extreme beauty of his wife they would kill him and take her away. This dread was unworthy of so great a man, but there was reason in it; so he directed her to let it be generally supposed she was his sister. This brought about the mischief he wished to avoid, for the king took Sarai, and made rich presents to her supposed brother. Before, however, he made Sarai his wife, the real state of the case was made known to him, and although he was grieved, and blamed Abram, he treated him

very kindly, and allowed Abram and Sarai to remain in the land, receiving many privileges.

When Abram returned into Canaan, he had scarcely settled down before a serious quarrel arose concerning pasturage between his own herdsmen and those who looked after the cattle of his nephew. As the quarrels were of continual recurrence, Abram determined on a separation. The land they occupied was to be divided between them, and like a generous and honorable gentleman, he gave his nephew the choice. Lot took time to consider, and then picked what to all appearance was the very best part of the possession—a fine, wide-spreading plain on the banks of the river Jordan. The uncle occupied what the nephew left, the lower grounds at the foot of the mountains, and took up his own residence in Hebron with his family.

Sodom and Gomorrah.

Lot seems to have forgotten that good land may be spoilt by bad neighbors. In the neighborhood where he set up his camp were two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, notorious for the vicious and abominable lives of their people. These people would naturally be a great trouble to him, and he had omitted this item in his calculations. They were rich and prosperous, and arrogantly insolent, as people are often made by too many of this world's goods. Their chieftains, particularly those of Sodom, raised a commotion among neighboring chieftains. The Assyrians were in the ascendant, and compelled these men of Sodom to pay tribute, which they did for twelve years. The thirteenth imposed they indignantly rejected.

The Assyrians swept the plains of Jordan, and laid siege to Sodom. Many were killed, many wounded, many carried off prisoners, and amongst the latter Lot found himself hurried off, and all his property. It is more than likely then that he discovered he had not been so wise in his choice as he imagined.

Abram heard the news. Things had not gone well with his nephew. The finest opportunities are not always the best stepping-stones to fortune. Lot was a ruined man,

am and Sarai to many privileges. into Canaan, he before a serious struggle between who looked after As the quarrels, Abram deter- land they oc- between them, and e gentleman, he Lot took time what to all ap- rt of the posses- ain on the banks e occupied what grounds at the ook up his own family.

Gomorrhah.

otten that good ighbors. In the p his camp were orrah, notorious ble lives of their d naturally be a ad omitted this ey were rich and solent, as people r of this world's icularly those of among neighbor- s were in the as- men of Sodom to welve years. The nantly rejected. plains of Jordan, any were killed, ed off prisoners, t found himself erty. It is more scovered he had e as he imagined. Things had not The finest op- ne best stepping- a ruined man,

and a prisoner in the hands of those who were total strangers to mercy. True, he had behaved badly to Abram, but what have old wrongs to do with us when our opponent is in great calamity? Although Abram had the worst of the land, he was very rich. With him everything had prospered. Instinctively he summoned his retainers, just as an old Scottish chief might have done, when the Southerners crossed the border, and the fire-cross was displayed from hill to hill. Blood is thicker than water, according to the common saying.

Abram could summon three hundred and eighteen men, all as leal to him as men could be. So they sped after the Assyrians, fell on them—made short work of the fight—rescued Lot and all that belonged to him, and put shame on the boasted powers of chieftains who fled before a mere handful of determined men.

Timely Rescue of Lot.

When the battle was over, and Abram, with his clan, his prisoners, and spoil, came down on Jordan, a holy man who dwelt in those parts came forth to bless him, and Abram made him a rich present, thereby recognizing in him a high order of priesthood. But when the King of Sodom came to congratulate and offer gifts, he gave no heed to him at all, refused to take of all the spoil even a thread, or a leather sandal, and plainly he let the effeminate monarch know it was not on his account he had come out, but simply to save his nephew's life and secure his nephew's property.

By dream, vision, or mysterious voice, Abram was encouraged. All the land was to be his and his seed's forever. But he had no seed. Eleazer, his servant, must be his successor, for children he had none. This was an occasion of much grief to Abram, and no doubt it was to his wife also; and when he was told that his children should be as numerous as the stars of heaven or the sands on the seashore it almost seemed like mockery. Still Abram believed that it would be so, in spite of all the difficulties that seemed to stand

in the way, and on this account he bears the name of the Father of the Faithful.

Birth of Isaac.

And in course of time Sarah—for her name was changed from Sarai to Sarah, both names expressing princess, but the latter of a higher dignity—bore Abram a son, and there was great rejoicing. The child was called Isaac, a word signifying laughter. It was, no doubt, chosen by Abram and Sarah to remind them how both had sometimes laughed at the thought of a child being born to them in their old age.

While these events had transpired in the house of Abram, his nephew Lot had fallen into great difficulties. He had taken up his abode in the city of Sodom, with his wife and two daughters. The wickedness of the people must have offended him every day of his life, indeed we are told that it "vexed his righteous soul;" but perhaps a residence in the city had commercial advantages which in the mind of this man counterbalanced its annoyances. However this may be, he was startled one night by the arrival of two young men, who assured him that the city, together with that of the neighboring city, Gomorrhah, would speedily be destroyed, and that he and all who belonged to him must depart the very first thing in the morning. Their abominations were such as seemed to require that they should be swept from the earth by some terrible sudden stroke, to evince that a just and holy God still governed the world.

Swift Destruction.

The avenging angels were at length sent down; and as Abram sat in his tent door in the heat of the day, he beheld them advancing in the likeness of wayfaring men, and persuaded them to accept the hospitalities of his tent. As they departed the most august of these personages tarried a while, and revealed to Abram the doom of the cities of the plain. The patriarch interceded, with respectful importunity, on their behalf, lest the righteous should perish with the wicked; and he at

length obtained the promise that if but ten righteous men were found in Sodom, the threatened ruin should not come down. the cities had lain, he saw that the whole had been destroyed by fire from heaven, and the smoke of their burning still arose "like the



FLEEING FROM BURNING SODOM.—Gen. xix. 25.

But the ten righteous men were not found ; and when Abram arose early in the morning and looked towards the fertile vale in which

smoke of a furnace ;" and the vale, once "like the garden of the Lord," has since, under the name of the Dead Sea, remained an abiding

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wonder to all who have passed that way. But Lot had not perished. The commissioned angels had urged him forth, with his wife and his two daughters; and they all escaped, save the wife, who, lingering behind, was overtaken by the destroying element, and remained, covered with a saline incrustation, like "a pillar of salt," upon the borders of the plain.

Josephus asserts that this pillar was standing when he wrote, and that he had seen it. Irenæus, who lived in the second century of the Christian era, makes the same statement. The probability is that a mass of basaltic rock, bearing some resemblance to the human figure, had come to be called Lot's wife, and was regarded with superstitious terror by the ignorant people, who infected the minds of the visitors.

A Marvellous Sea.

The scene of the horrible catastrophe which overwhelmed the cities of the plain has ever since been marked by a vast inland lake called the Dead Sea. The scenery around the lake is of the most dreary description; there is a total absence of vegetation; the ground is thoroughly impregnated with salt; the temperature is usually very high; the air seems laden with salt, and the bleak rocky mountains which rise around it have about them a horrible grotesqueness which seems well suited to the place. Throughout its neighborhood there is neither food for beast nor bird. A dreary stillness settles over the unruffled surface of the sluggish water; it seems a fit locality for all that is evil to be done, nothing but death and desolation watching.

In Arabic the Dead Sea is called "Bahr-el-Lout," that is, the Sea of Lot, thus directly associating it with the destruction of the cities of the plain. In the visitation by which they were destroyed the surrounding country underwent an extraordinary change, and is said by Moses to have become "a land of brimstone and salt, and burning," characteristics by which it still continues to be marked. In the Bible these waters are called the Sea of the Plain, the Salt Sea, and the East Sea, taking its first from its situation in the plain of the

Jordan; its second from the extreme saltness of its waters; and its third from its locality in Judea, and to distinguish it from the West Sea, by which in ancient times was understood the Mediterranean, or Great Sea.

Singular Stories.

There is no doubt that the total absence of life around this lake, or sea, has given to it the name it bears, and out of this have sprung many errors to which common currency has given the weight of truth. Even in these days we may find tolerably well-informed people asserting that no fish can live in the Dead Sea, and no birds fly over it. Both statements are quite untrue. Formerly it was asserted that once or twice a year the submerged cities were visible, and the well-worn illustration of apples of Sodom, fair to the eye but dust in the hand, was held to be truth. There are, of course, great mistakes made, and a mistake once made is endlessly repeated.

In approaching this Dead Lake, we see it many times, and lose it as many—but once—that is when it appears before us in all its dismal grandeur. When you get to the top of a height called Nebbea Moussa you catch a fair view of the sea: it is a soft deep purple, brightening into blue. The road lies down what seems a vast sloping causeway from the mountains, between two ravines, walled by cliffs several hundred feet in height. It gradually flattens into a plain, covered with a white, saline incrustation, and grown with clumps of sour willow, tamarisk, and other shrubs. All the plants look as if they were smitten with leprosy. As you draw near to the sea, the heat becomes intense, the air so dense that with some people it will bring on earache. As to the sea, it resembles a great caldron, sunk between mountains three or four thousand feet in height; and yet it is at a depth of thirteen thousand feet below the Mediterranean. You may bathe in the water if you will, but it is not refreshing; very salt and bitter; very buoyant also, but slimy and not easily to be rid of—clammy, glutinous, and sometimes leading to fever.

CHAPTER III.

TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH.



WHEN Isaac was born, Abraham was a hundred years old, and twenty-five years had passed since this blessing had been first promised to him; and it is perhaps difficult to conceive the gladness which filled the hearts of the aged pair at this accomplishment of all their hopes.

The tenderness of the paternal heart towards Ishmael was unabated; but he was no longer even mistaken for the child of the promise, no longer Sarah's adopted son, and no longer his father's heir by that adoption. He had become the son of the bondwoman. As for Sarah, the lad, who had appeared of some consequence in her eyes so long as she had no hope of a child of her own, at once became as nothing in her sight; and what might have been merely a passive feeling in her was turned into bitterness and active dislike against both Hagar and her son, by their signs of discontent and derision at her happy lot.

At the great feast which was held on the day that Isaac was weaned, these feelings were so offensively manifested, that Sarah was roused to anger, and she insisted with Abraham that they should be sent away from the camp. This demand, which she had a right of custom to make, was very grievous to Abraham because of his son; but having been assured from heaven that Ishmael, although not the promised heir, should for his sake become a special object of the Divine care, and that his posterity should become a mighty nation, his reluctance subsided, and rising early in the morning, he sent them away with

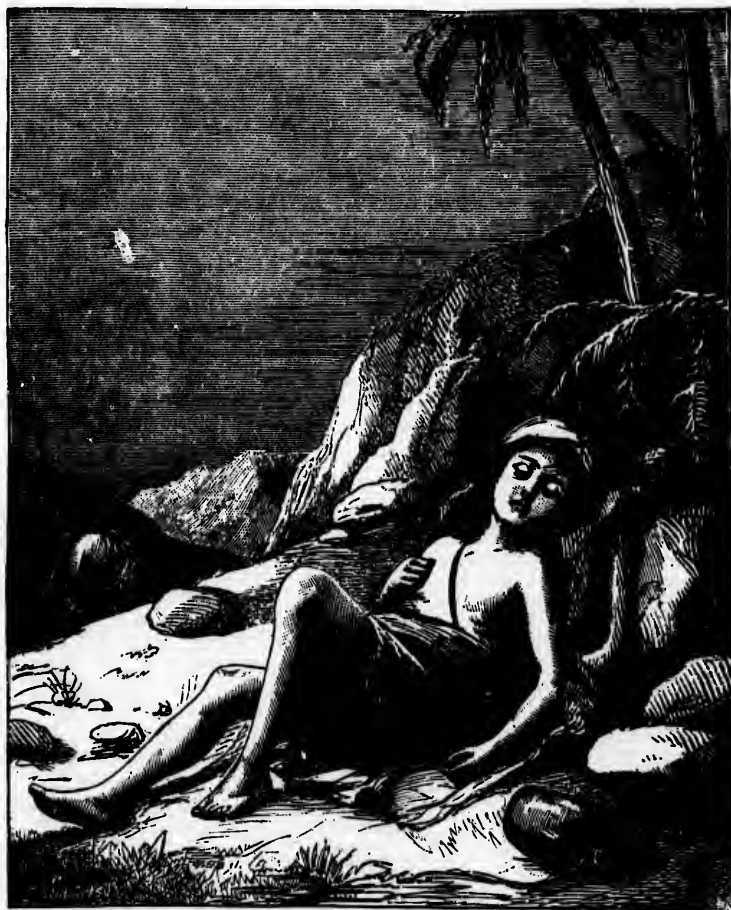
a skin of water and such other provisions as the journey required.

It seems to have been the intention of Hagar to return to Egypt, to which country she belonged. But having lost her way in the southern wilderness, she wandered to and fro, till the water, which was to have served her on the road, was altogether spent. The lad, unused to hardships, was soon worn out. Overcome with heat, fatigue, and thirst, he seemed at the point of death, when the afflicted mother laid him down under the shade of a tree and withdrew to some distance that she might not witness his dying pangs. But God had not forgotten her. A voice was heard in the solitude, uttering words of comfort and promises of peace. Thus encouraged, Hagar hastened to her son, raised him by the hand and refreshed him from a spring of water which had been disclosed to her view. Painters and poets in representing this scene usually exhibit Hagar as bearing her son in her arms, and laying him in the shade. This is an error, for Ishmael was then fifteen or sixteen years of age, and, conformably with this, the voice directed her to take him "by the hand."

After this they remained in the wilderness attached to some one of the nomade tribes by which it was frequented; and here the son of Abraham became a famous person, to whom many of the Arabian tribes have been proud to trace their origin.

The departure of Hagar and Ishmael restored peace to the tents of Abraham; and no incident of importance is recorded till Isaac had reached the age of about twenty years, when it pleased God to subject the faith of the patriarch to a far more terrible trial than any to which it had yet been subjected. He was commanded to take his son to the

land of Moriah, and there offer him up as a sacrifice to God. However the heart of the patriarch may have been wrung, whatever thoughts crossed his mind, he faltered not, which he took comfort; but the Apostle informs us that, feeling assured that God, who had promised him a posterity through Isaac, would undoubtedly perform His promise, he



HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE DESERT.—Gen. xxi. 14.

When others were in danger, he had interceded importunately with God; but now, when his own happiness and the life of his son were in question, he was silent. This was the perfection of confidence in God. We should be in some doubt as to the precise grounds in which he took comfort; but the Apostle informs us that, feeling assured that God, who had promised him a posterity through Isaac, would undoubtedly perform His promise, he

was persuaded that God would, if needful, even raise Isaac from the dead after the sacrifice had been accomplished. Thus fortified by victorious faith, and moved by a spirit of obedience, he was ready to render the offering. In the morning Abraham set out on his

journey, attended by two servants, who carried the wood for the holocaust. At the end of three days' journey Abraham discerned the appointed place (supposed by many to be the Mount Moriah on which the Temple eventually stood), and bidding the servants remain, he went onward with his son, who carried the wood destined to consume his own body. Isaac, seeing all this usual preparation for a sacrifice, inquired concerning the victim, which probably gave his father the opportunity of making known the command under which he was acting. That he did so is certain; for he could not by constraint have tied up the young man and laid him upon the altar. All was ready, the knife was uplifted to give the death-stroke, when the voice of an angel stayed his arm, and his attention was directed to a ram (probably of the four-horned species), which he gladly substituted for his son. Never were the promises made for the Father of the Faithful pronounced with such marked emphasis as in the words from heaven which rewarded this consummate act of high belief:—"By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore: and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

An Illustrious Woman.

About twelve years after this Abraham lost the companion of his long pilgrimage, Sarah, who died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years. She was buried with due observance in the Cave of Machpelah near Hebron, which the patriarch purchased on this occasion, and which became the family tomb of the patriarch. Sepulchral caves, such as that in which Sarah was buried, are common in the East.

Of the birth and parentage of Sarah we have no certain account in Scripture. Abraham speaks of her as "his sister, the daughter of

the same father, but not the daughter of the same mother." The common Jewish tradition is that Sarai is the same as Ischah, the daughter of Haran, and the sister of Lot. The change of her name from "Sarai" to "Sarah" was made at the same time that Abram's name was changed to Abraham, on the establishment of the covenant of circumcision between him and God. That the name "Sarah" signifies "princess" is universally acknowledged; but the meaning of "Sarai" is still a subject of controversy. The older interpreters suppose it to mean "my princess." Others say it means "contentious." Her history is of course that of Abraham. She came with him from Ur to Haran, from Haran to Canaan, and accompanied him in all the wanderings of his life. Her only independent action is the demand that Hagar and Ishmael should be cast out. The times in which she plays the most important part in the history are the times when Abraham was sojourning, first in Egypt, then in Gerar, and where Sarah shared his deceit towards Pharaoh and towards Abimelech. She is referred to in the New Testament as a type of conjugal obedience, and as one of the types of faith.

The Beautiful Bride.

It is not to be wondered at that Abraham had special regard for his son Isaac; he was the child of promise, and it was the land of promise, and he watched him with particular interest. After the death of Sarah a deep melancholy rested on Isaac, who appears to have been a quiet, contemplative man. Abraham was convinced that marriage would be the surest alleviation of his son's sorrow; and, therefore, after the manner of the times, he sought a wife for him among his own people. He took an old servant into council, one whom, in the old days, when he was childless, he had intended to make his heir, and still recognized as the steward, or chief man of his household; a trusty man, who was thoroughly reliable. To him he disclosed his purpose. He desired that a maiden might be chosen from the old stock; neither wealth

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ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC.—Gen. xxii. 6.

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ISAAC WELCOMING REBEKAH.—Gen. xxiv. 67.

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And now we may turn to the family whither the steps of the old servant were directed. Long years before had the patriarch quitted the old country, but still dwelt there his brother's family—a pastoral people, simple in their habits, but prosperous in their circumstances. The light of the house was Rebekah—a bright and beautiful creature, loving and well beloved. Her activity and cheerfulness offer an excellent example, and doubtless the maidens who followed her would imitate their industrious mistress; and spinning in the hot day, or hastening to the wells to draw water in the cool of the evening, would feel themselves happy in the association with their youthful leader.

Imagine, then, one fair summer's evening, a troop of girls, chatting merrily, each with a pitcher on her shoulder, sweeping forth from the gate of a small Eastern village, and turning their steps to the wells and fountains of waters. Around us is a picture of pure summer luxuriance and bloom; fields of wheat and barley stretch away to distant olive orchards, and here and there is a garden of orange, fig, lemon, and pomegranate; a breath of sweet odors overflows the land, and we can hear the plash of water as the women begin to busy themselves with their evening toil. But suddenly some of the girls cry out, and Rebekah, their leader, sees that they are not alone.

Maidens at the Well.

By the side of an ancient stone well were kneeling ten camels, with their attendants, and a venerable stranger advanced towards the maidens. It was to Rebekah he addressed himself:

"Let me sip, I pray thee, a little water out of thy pitcher?"

"Drink, my lord," she promptly answered, and gave her pitcher freely. It was no uncommon request then, and it is not, in Eastern lands, an unusual occurrence now, for thirsty travellers to ask a drink of the young women who come to draw water. Such civilities are

customary, so that there was nothing extraordinary in the incident. But Rebekah extended her courtesy. As she looked at the weary camels, chewing the cud as they knelt by the baggage, and to her apparently listening to the sound of the water, her pity was excited. She began, her damsels lending her good help, to fill the troughs for the poor brutes.

The stranger watched every movement of the blooming maid, graceful as Minerva, who, as Homer tells us, went forth to meet Ulysses, "bearing her pitcher;" and when the camels had done drinking he took out a golden ring and a pair of bracelets—presents for the bride. He felt that he had found a fitting wife for his master's son, but first he asked whose daughter she was. Her answer made his heart rejoice; she was the very relative he sought; she was the cousin to whose hand there was a sort of right; and so, without another word of inquiry or explanation, he begged for hospitality. Was there room in her father's house for himself, his servants, and his camels to lodge? "Yes," she answered him, "ample room and plenty of provender."

A Hearty Reception.

The stranger followed and those who were with him, as the girl ran on to let them know at home that guests were coming, and gathering from her lips the news, her brother came forth with much of beautiful, grave, Oriental, courtesy, to give due welcome to the stranger.

But ere the stranger would take aught but water he told his errand. He had come to seek a wife for the son of a great sheik, and their own kinsman. That aged kinsman was exceedingly rich, and the main bulk of his property would belong to his son. The matter pleased the family: there had been something of estrangement between the two branches of the family, and here was acceptable reunion. Strange as the whole proceeding may seem to us, there was nothing strange to them, and so Rebekah was to go forth and take high place elsewhere.

But Rebekah does not go forth alone. Her nurse, the industrious, kindly-beloved Debo-

rah, goes with her, so also do some of her maidens. So she travels discreetly, and her friends bless her, perhaps with tears, as she goes away, saying—"May she be the mother of thousands and millions, and may her seed possess the gates of those which oppose them!"

The thoughtful and still sorrowing son of the widowed sheik is meditating as he walks in the fields in the cool of the day. A holy calm on everything, and not a sound to disturb his reflections. Suddenly he hears the chime of the camel bells, looks up, and sees the caravan approaching. Well he knows the object for which the old servant was sent out, and now he is to learn the result. A thousand anxious thoughts may have struggled in his mind as to what was to come. The quick

eyes of Rebekah, meanwhile, have fallen on her future lord. She has hastened to array herself in the long veil proper for brides before she is presented, and when the bridegroom meets her, with a simple and beautiful courtesy which cannot be too much admired, he leads her to his mother's tent, the old abiding-place of her who was dearer to him than life.

The beauty, modesty, and worth of this pure woman could not but win the heart of her husband. All his love and confidence was hers, he forgot his sorrow and was comforted; and she was his only wife, and had to know none of the bitter pangs and stings of jealousy which follow a polygamous system. She was no wife among wives, but she won the entire and unqualified approbation of her husband, and they were happy in each other's love.



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CHAPTER IV.

JACOB AND ESAU.



MORE sons, of whom Keturah, Abraham's second wife, was the mother, helped to complete his household. He lived to see them grow up, and sent them away to settle eastward with suitable portions, that they might not interfere with Isaac, his heir and the child of the promises. At length Abraham died, at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, exactly one hundred of which he had spent in the land of Canaan. His great qualities and the dealings of God with him, while a sojourner in that land, have made his name one of the most illustrious in the world—a name preserved more than most in the general memories of men. His name is found in the traditions and annals of many nations.

Isaac was left the possessor of immense wealth, of that kind which forms the possessions of a pastoral chief. He continued to reside at Beersheba, without any other recorded trouble than the barrenness of his wife Rebekah. But at length, after twenty years of marriage, his prayers were heard, and two sons were given to him at one birth. The first born was called Esau, and the other Jacob; and it had been intimated to Rebekah, before the birth, that not the elder, but the younger, was to be the heir of the promises. This directs our attention to Jacob. As the boys grew up, a marked distinction in their habits and character appeared. Esau was of active and rough temperament, and employed

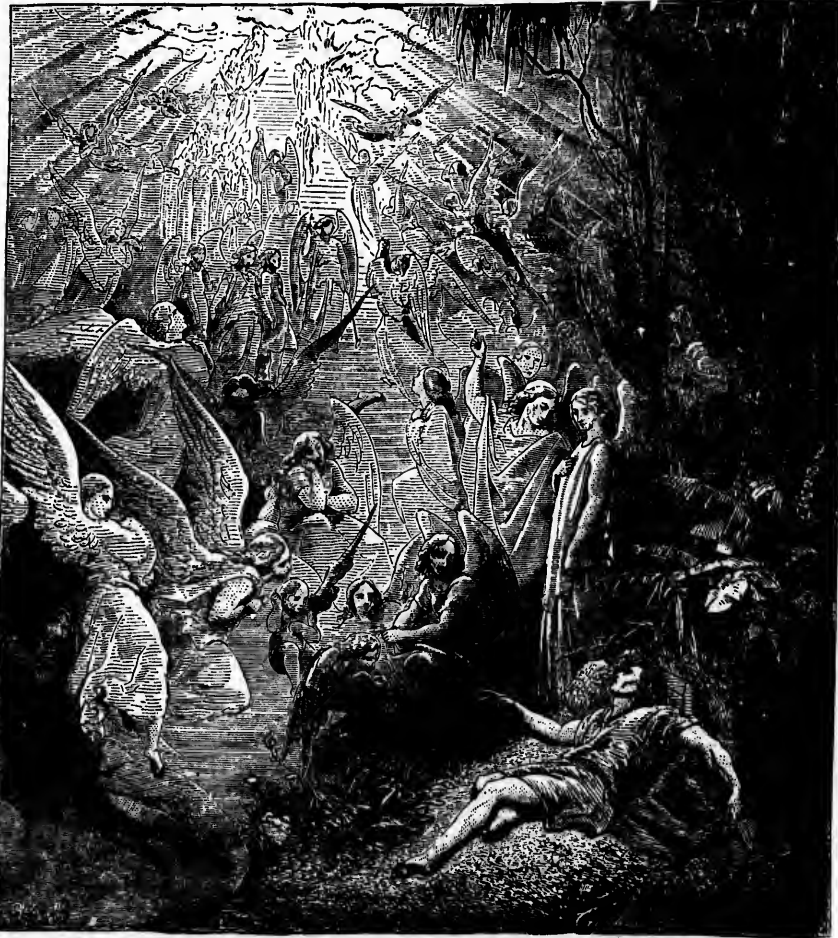
much of his time in hunting and the use of arms; whereas Jacob was of quiet and sedentary habits, abiding in the tents, and occupied among the flocks. Jacob was the favorite of his mother; but Isaac had preference for Esau, who manifested his filial duty by making his huntings the means of providing for his father the relishing food which his growing infirmities required.

A famine which afflicted the part of Canaan he inhabited inclined Isaac to withdraw into Egypt, but a Divine intimation induced him to go into the territories of Abimelech, the Philistine king of Gerar. In this more compact little state the presence of so great a person was more sensibly felt than it had been in the thinly inhabited districts in which the patriarchs had hitherto encamped. The extent of his possessions was more clearly seen, and the rapid increase they, by a perversity not unusual, regarded as at their expense.

Abraham had once been in that country, and had digged wells, which the Philistines, after he withdrew, had filled up—in order to extinguish that right to the soil which was created by forming wells therein. These wells were cleared out by Isaac, who also formed new ones; and he proceeded to cultivate the ground, which returned him increase a hundred-fold. The Philistines were, however, exceedingly averse to see a right of property in the soil created by these wells, and their opposition compelled the patriarch often to shift his encampment. But at length, seeing how rapidly his wealth increased, and believing that he was a special object of the Divine care, they deemed it more prudent to cultivate his friendship. Therefore, the king, attended by his officers, repaired to the camp

of the patriarch, and they entered into a covenant of peace in behalf of themselves and of their heirs. Isaac was now in a position to reap the fruits of his prudence and industry and feel secure in his acquired possessions.

to perish with hunger. He found Jacob preparing a savory mess of pottage, the odor of which attracted the intense longing of the famishing hunter, and for the enjoyment of it he readily surrendered the privileges which



JACOB'S VISION OF ANGELS.—Gen. xxviii. 12.

The uncertainties of the hunter's life are strikingly illustrated by the next important incident which we find recorded. Esau returned one day to the tents unsuccessful, and ready

belonged to him as the birthright of the elder son. When he had leisure to reflect and to repent, he loved not the more that brother who, taking advantage of his needs, had ex-

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acted so costly a price for so small a benefit. The reckless character of Esau is further illustrated by his taking two Hittite wives, Judith and Bashemath, in defiance of the wishes of his parents, who, as he could not but know, were highly averse to any such connection with the people of the land.

Nevertheless, the now aged patriarch still desired to regard Esau as the heir of the promises, and feeling his infirmities daily increase, and his sight being entirely gone, he deemed it high time to bestow upon his still favorite son the important "blessing" which, like a modern will, would make over to him the headship of the tribe, and the temporal and spiritual benefits which were in fact or prospect connected with it. But first he desired some of that savory venison with which his rude son knew so well how to gratify his enfeebled appetite.

This interval gave Rebekah, who overheard the arrangement, an opportunity of urging her favorite Jacob to personate his brother, and thus add the coveted blessing to the birthright he had already won. Jacob urged some faint scruples, dictated more by the fear of detection than by virtuous principle, and at length consented. It was not difficult to impose upon the dulled senses of his blind father, and he received from him that free and full blessing which could not be recalled. Esau soon came; and the strong and fierce man wept like an infant when he learned that his last hope had been riven from him. He vowed to be avenged; and yet, even in his passion being regardful of his father's peace, he postponed his vengeance till after the patriarch's death, which was then believed to be near at hand.

Jacob on his Journey.

Learning his purpose, Rebekah resolved to send Jacob out of the way to her own ancient home in Haran, where he might not only remain till his brother's anger had abated, but might obtain a wife more suitable than those which Esau had chosen. Having received the consent and blessing of his father, Jacob set forth alone upon his long journey. This was

necessary for his safety—but how differently in a former day had the servant of Abraham gone the same way, with his gifts and his camels, to seek a wife for Isaac.

As he slept, with a stone for a pillow, at Bethel, he was cheered by a vision, in which he beheld the angels ascending and descending upon a ladder placed between earth and heaven, above which sat an august personage who declared Himself to be the God of Abraham and Isaac, and ratified to him in the fullest manner the blessings originally promised to them. This was accompanied by assurances and encouragements suited to his present circumstances, which filled him with gratitude, and gave him such a lively sense of the Divine providence, that he left Bethel a wiser and more single-minded man, and with a lightened heart pursued his way to Padan-Aram.

On arriving at the well outside the town, Jacob entered into conversation with some shepherds who were there to water their flocks, and heard from them some particulars concerning the family he had come to visit. While they talked, Rachel, the younger daughter of Laban, and therefore Jacob's first cousin, came to the well to water the home-flock, which was under her charge. The stranger assisted the damsel in watering her flock, and then made himself known to her, and accompanied her to the house of her father, where he was most cordially received. Laban soon perceived the great skill and experience of Jacob in "the shepherds' gentle trade," and gladly entered into an agreement with Jacob to give him his daughter Rachel as the reward of seven years' service. The marriage was accordingly celebrated with great rejoicings; but, by some deception, Laban contrived to substitute his elder daughter Leah, for whom Jacob cared little, in the place of Rachel; and, when reproached with his conduct, alleged that the custom of the country did not allow the younger to be married before the elder sister. He, however, offered him Rachel also for seven more years of his services, and, rather than be without one whom he so tenderly loved, Jacob consented.

The depth of his affection for Rachel is beautifully suggested by the sacred historian in one of those simple but most natural strokes of moral portraiture which are seldom found out of the sacred book. "Jacob served seven years for Rachel: and they seemed unto him a few days, for the love he bore to her."

This preference for Rachel led Jacob to treat Leah with some indifference or neglect; in consequence of which the Lord made Leah the object of his favor and gave her children, which were denied to Rachel. This induced Rachel to make use of her hand-maid Bilhah, in the same capacity in which Hagar had been used by Sarah. Leah followed the example by making the same use of her handmaid Zilpah. By both there were children, and at length Rachel herself was blessed with a son, who received the name of Joseph.

Jacob's Riches.

More than satisfied with the services of Jacob, and well assured that the flocks had been much advantaged by his superintendence, Laban still desired to avail himself of his services after the fourteen years had expired; and Jacob on his part was not unwilling to remain on any terms which afforded him a prospect of acquiring a provision for his family. It was then settled that Jacob, for the services of seven other years, should be paid in kind, by reserving for his own use such of the sheep and goats as might happen to be parti-colored, which is not usual in any flocks, and very unusual in those of the East. In consequence of this arrangement, the flock under the charge of Jacob was carefully severed from that to which Laban and his sons attended; and thenceforth whenever a parti-colored lamb or kid was born in the flock of Jacob, he set it apart as his own. Through the special providence of God, who at Bethel had promised to care for and make prosperous the grandson of Abraham, an extraordinary proportion of parti-colored animals was thenceforth born, and soon furnished a large flock, which Jacob committed to the separate charge of his elder sons. By the time the seven years had expired, this

flock had increased amazingly, and with it produce Jacob had been enabled to obtain large possessions of what usually constitutes the wealth of a pastoral chief—"much cattle, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses."

It was well known to Jacob that his prosperity was regarded with no pleasure by Laban and his sons, who deemed all his gains as so much loss to them. He thence became apprehensive that any attempt to remove with his property would be resisted; and as he was now resolved to return to the land of Canaan, from which he had so long been absent, he went away secretly while Laban was at the distance of three days' journey. A pastoral migration, with slow-going sheep, young animals, women, and infants, can never be a very rapid movement. Hence we are not surprised to find that he was overtaken by Laban by the time he reached the Mountains of Gilead. We may be sure that Laban's purposes were not very amicable. But the night before he came up with Jacob, he was warned in a dream to take heed how he molested one for whom God cared. This changed his purpose; but being now so near, he went on, and joined the migrant party while at rest.

A Charge of Theft.

His sterner purposes now sunk to sharp complaints and strong expostulations that no opportunity had been afforded him of embracing his daughters and grandchildren, and of sending them away with music and with song. He also complained that his gods—certain figures called "Teraphim," used as domestic idols—had been stolen from him by some of Jacob's party. This charge was indignantly repelled by Jacob, who gave him authority to search for them, and denounced death upon any person in whose possession they might be found. Little did he know in what peril he thus put his beloved Rachel: for she had them; having secreted them for some unknown but probably superstitious motive. They were hid in the furniture of her camel; and as this formed her seat in the tent, they

escaped the search of her father, who returned home the next day, after having entered into Jacob's next care was concerning Esau, with whose present state of mind towards him he



MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.—Gen. xxxiii. 4.

solemn covenants of peace and good will with | was by no means acquainted. But he knew the man he had so wrathfully pursued. | that he had established himself in the region

of Mount Seir, and had there acquired great power as a military chief. He deemed it prudent to send a most respectfully-worded message, apprising him of his return home. The messengers returned with no other intimation than that Esau himself was coming to meet him with four hundred men. This intimation filled Jacob with real and well-grounded alarm. He made the best arrangements in his power to meet the exigency, with the view, on the one hand, of mollifying his brother, and, on the other, of securing the retreat of his troop (consisting of the women and children), in case the van should be assaulted by Esau's troop. He then sent his people across the river Jabbok, and remained behind himself, probably for the sake of that solitary "communing with God" in which the Hebrew patriarchs found so much of their strength and safety.

Wrestling with the Angel.

Here he was comforted and encouraged by the deep meanings of a mysterious conflict with an angel of God, who seemed unable to prevail over Jacob till he put forth a supernatural power, and disabled him for the time, by causing the sinew of his thigh to shrink when he laid his hand thereon. It was then that the name of Jacob, "supplanter," was changed to Israel, "a prince of God,"—"Because (said the angel) as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Halting still upon his thigh, but greatly encouraged, the patriarch passed over the river as the morning rose, and, on reaching the top of the opposite bank, beheld Esau and his troop approaching in the distance. Whatever may have been the intentions of that rude but not ungenerous person, he was fairly softened by the marks of respect and consideration which he received, as he passed along the purposely extended line of flocks, and herds, and shepherds: and when at length he came up with Jacob, who bowed before him—as one doubting of his reception and his doom—he could contain himself no longer, but "ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon

his neck and kissed him:—and they wept." Blessed tears were these:—the tears of a full heart: "tears such as angels shed," if angels ever weep.

Esau would very willingly have escorted Jacob the rest of his way; but the latter, intending to proceed very leisurely, respectfully declined the offer, and his brother then returned to Mount Seir, which continued for many ages to be ruled, and was in a great measure peopled, by his descendants, and hence obtained the name of the land of Edom and of Idumæa.

Before he crossed the Jordan, some stay was made by Jacob at Succoth, where his camp was formed of booths or sheds, made of the wood which was then, and is even now, abundant in that quarter.

On crossing the river, he did not at once rejoin his father, who was still living, but proceeded to the vale of Shechem, where Abraham also had formed his first encampment in the land of Canaan. Here he remained until the terrible vengeance, which was taken upon the people of Shechem, by the sons of Jacob, for an outrage upon their sister Dinah, made it prudent for him to quit that neighborhood. He went to Bethel. There he built an altar, and worshipped God, in grateful remembrance of the encouragements which had been on that spot vouchsafed him on his way to Padanaram.

After this, Jacob journeyed southward to visit his father. On the way, when near Bethlehem, his beloved Rachel died in giving birth to a second son, whom the mother, in her dying grief, called Benoni, "son of my scrow," but which name the father afterwards changed to Benjamin, "son of my right hand." A tomb, of Moslem construction, called "Rachel's Sepulchre," at this day marks the supposed place of her burial.

After about thirty years' absence, Jacob at length joined his aged father Isaac, who was then at the old encampment of the family at Mamre, near Hebron. Isaac himself survived the reunion with his son several years, and died at the age of one hundred and eighty years.

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CHAPTER V.

THE THRILLING STORY OF JOSEPH.



OMING now to Jacob's sons, we notice that particular interest surrounds Joseph, the first, and for a long while the only son of his much loved Rachel. Jacob's family consisted of twelve sons, the founders of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Their names were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon, sons of Leah; Gad and Asher, sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Dan and Naphtali, sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Joseph and Benjamin, sons of Rachel.

Joseph was far more dear to his father than any of his other sons. He made no secret of this, as a wise father would perhaps have done. Nay, rather he gloried in making it known, and even went so far as to clothe him in a peculiarly handsome dress—"a coat of many colors," as a mark of favor and distinction. These marks of partiality were very displeasing to Joseph's brothers, and made him odious in their eyes. These feelings were strengthened by certain dreams which Joseph dreamed in early youth, and which seemed to prefigure some unimaginable superiority and greatness to him. At one time they were binding sheaves in the field, when, lo! their sheaves rose up and made obeisance to his sheaf. At another time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to him. Another cause of dislike was found in the fact that when they had been abroad with the flocks, Joseph was in the habit of reporting to his father their misconduct, and of bringing upon

them the dreaded rebuke of their parent. One day, when Joseph was about seventeen years old, he was sent by his father, who had kept him at home, to seek his brethren, who had for some time been out in distant pastures, and bring back an account of their welfare. Joseph found them at Dothan. They knew him afar off by his coat of many colors, and immediately began to plot against his life. They had certainly killed him on the spot, but for some scruple suggested by Reuben of shedding a brother's blood. They therefore cast him into a dry cistern, intending to leave him there to perish, and to inform their father that he had been destroyed by a wild beast. Such an act as theirs shows the wild, barbarous spirit that prevailed at that time.

Soon after, however, they observed the approach of a caravan of Arabian merchants, proceeding with balm and other precious drugs to Egypt, and it immediately struck them that they might quite as safely, less guiltily, and with some profit besides, dispose of the unhappy Joseph by selling him for a slave to these travelling dealers. They accordingly drew him up out of the pit and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. They then took his coat, the envied coat of many colors, and, after dipping it in the blood of a slaughtered kid, they sent it to their father. The agonized father immediately received the conviction they desired. "It is my son's coat (he said); an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces!" He mourned long and sorely for his lost son; and when at length time brought some calm to his feelings, he remained faithful in his affection for Rachel.

Meanwhile, Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and was there sold to one of the officers of the royal court. In this country there then

existed an imperial court, with a minutely organized government, an ecclesiastical establishment, a military force, and civil institutions—all bearing the stamp of an advanced stage of civilization, and of a condition of society very different from that which we have left behind us in Palestine.

Joseph's diligence, probity, attention, and fine qualities soon recommended him to his

there was no hope, the woman's love turned to vengeful hatred, and she resolved to effect his ruin. To this end nothing seemed to her more effectual than to accuse him of attempting the very crime into which she had vainly endeavored to draw him. And it was effectual; for Potiphar was wroth, and cast his slave into prison. But even in prison Joseph's useful talents and engaging disposition still availed



JOSEPH'S DREAM OF THE SUN, MOON AND ELEVEN STARS.—Gen. xxxvii. 9.

master, Potiphar, in whose confidence he rose so high, that all the affairs of the household were eventually left in his hands.

Now Joseph was a very handsome man, and it happened that he attracted the too favorable notice of his master's wife. She tempted him to sin. But he remembered his God, he remembered the generous confidence of his master, and firmly refused. Seeing

him. He soon acquired the entire confidence of the governor of the prison, who gave all the other prisoners into his charge.

Among those who were sent into the prison after Joseph had been thus favored, were two important officers of Pharaoh's court, his chief butler, and his chief cook, or baker, who, from the nature of their offices, we should suppose to have been accused of some attempt

to poison their royal master in his food or drink, and had thereby incurred his ill-will.

Troublesome Dreams.

Dreams have always been much regarded in the East; and one night the butler and baker both had dreams which troubled them greatly. The butler dreamed that, in the discharge of his office, he presented the wine-cup into Pharaoh's hand; the baker dreamed that he was carrying upon his head baked meats for the royal table, when the birds of the air descended and carried them away. Joseph interpreted the dreams to signify that before three days had passed the butler should be restored to his office, and the baker put to death. And so it happened. On Pharaoh's birthday inquiry was made into the matter, and the baker was beheaded, and the butler was restored to his place. Joseph had earnestly represented his case to this butler, and had implored him to use his recovered influence in his behalf. But the prosperous have little remembrance for the unhappy; and the butler altogether forgot Joseph, until, in the good providence of God, an occasion arose which brought him to remembrance.

The king himself was troubled with two dreams, which, although composed of different materials, were obviously one as to any import which might be collected from them. In the first, Pharaoh thought that, as he stood beside the fertilizing Nile, seven fair and full-fleshed kine came up out of the water, and were feeding in a meadow, when seven gaunt and lean kine came up after them, and devoured them all. Then, seven ears of good and full-bodied corn seemed to spring up, all upon one stalk; and after a while came up seven thin and starveling ears, by which the former were eaten up. Yet the lean kine and the lean ears were none the better for that which they had eaten. These dreams seemed to have some unusually marked significance, and Pharaoh sent for the wise men of Egypt, requiring of them an interpretation. But this dream was beyond the depth even of their pretensions, and they could give none.

This brought to the butler's mind the Hebrew prisoner, whose interpretation of his own and the baker's dreams had been so remarkably fulfilled. He mentioned the circumstances to the king, who instantly sent to require his presence. Hastily shaving himself and putting on becoming raiment, Joseph accompanied the messengers to the palace. The king related his dreams; and Joseph said they were to be regarded as warnings from God of coming events, against which suitable provision should be made. The dreams denoted, first, seven years of great and unexampled plenty, to be followed by seven years of excessive dearth.

Joseph Providing for Famine.

He therefore very sagely counselled that the superabundant grain of the fertile years should be bought up by the government, and stored for use during the years of famine; and he ventured to suggest that some able and discreet man should be appointed, with proper officers under him, to give effect to this great operation throughout the country. Then said Pharaoh—"Forasmuch as God has showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." Saying this, the great king took from his finger the signet-ring, the impress of which gave the force of royal authority to any decree or order on which it was placed; and then he caused him to be arrayed in robes of honor; upon his neck was also placed a chain of gold, by which we are doubtless to understand one of those rich ornaments of wrought gold, such as are in the Egyptian monuments seen upon the necks of kings and nobles. Thus gloriously arrayed, Joseph—whom the morning saw a prisoner and a slave—was placed in the second of the royal chariots of state, and conducted in grand procession through the streets of the metropolis, while the heralds proclaimed before him the honors to which he had been raised.

Joseph having thus been naturalized, and

having received the name and dress of an Egyptian, was no longer regarded in that

been unusual for foreigners and slaves to rise to such distinctions. No doubt Joseph was



JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.—Gen. xxxvii. 38.

country as a foreigner, but as a noble and a well able to support the high position in which minister of state. In the East it has never he now appeared. Thirteen of the best years

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of his life had been spent in Egypt; and this time would have more than sufficed for a man of much less aptitude and talent than Joseph to acquire an intimate acquaintance with the manners and language of the people among whom his lot had been cast. One thing he wanted—family connections and the influence which they would give in the country—and, above all, such connection with the priestly caste, which was then and long after all-powerful in Egypt. One unconnected with this caste could not long hope to maintain his influence, or to work out his plans without opposition and hindrance. The king of Egypt felt this very strongly, and therefore lost no time in securing to Joseph the undisturbed enjoyment of the rank and power to which he had raised him, by bestowing upon him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, which place was afterwards known among Greek writers by the name of Heliopolis.

A Name Cut in Stone.

The account of that part of the Bible history which contains the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt has of late years received interesting illustrations—we say not confirmation, for it needed none—from the Egyptian monuments, and from critical researches in history. From such sources we now know that Potipherah means "he who belongs to the sun;" it is a very common name on the monuments, and especially appropriate for the priest of On.

We also know that among the Egyptian colleges of priests the one at On took the precedence, and consequently that the high-priest of On must have borne the first rank among that powerful body. The great antiquity of religious worship at On is also attested by the monuments. Wilkinson says, "During the reign of Osirtasen (whom he makes contemporary with Moses) the temple of Heliopolis was either founded or received additions, and one of the obelisks bearing his name evinces the skill to which they had attained in the difficult art of sculpturing granite."

The part which the king himself took in bringing about this marriage is satisfactorily

accounted for, when we remember that the sovereigns of Egypt were invested with the highest sacerdotal dignity, and were therefore not merely the civil, but the ecclesiastical superiors of the whole priesthood. By this marriage Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

During the seven years of plenty Egypt was carefully subjected to the course of operations which Joseph had at first recommended to the king of Egypt. He made a tour through the country to organize the operation of purchasing and storing up the redundant produce, and to see that his intentions were properly executed. The superabundant produce of every district was stored away in granaries in the towns of that district: and we are told, "Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering, for it was without number." These labors of Joseph are placed vividly before us in the paintings upon the monuments, which show how common the store-house was in ancient Egypt. In the tomb of Amenemhe at Beni-Hassen there is the painting of a great store-house, before whose door lies a large heap of grain, already winnowed. The measurer fills a bushel in order to pour it into the uniform sacks of those who carry the grain to the corn magazine. The carriers go to the door of the store-house and lay down the sacks before an officer who stands ready to receive the corn. This is the overseer of the store-house. Near by stands the bushel with which it is measured, and the registrar who takes the account. At the side of the windows there are characters which indicate the quantity of the mass which is deposited in the magazine. Compare this with the indication in the verse just cited, that the stored grain was carefully measured, until the enormous quantity of the increase would not allow this to be done.

The Nation Crying for Bread.

But at the predicted time this plenty ceased, and was followed by the most terrible scarcity which had ever been known. This also lasted seven years. But there was plenty of corn in the store-houses; and as long as the Egypt-

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tians had money with which to purchase out of the government stores, all was well. But when all the money of Egypt had found its way into the royal coffers, the nation cried to the government for bread. A nation could not be allowed to starve while the granaries were still full of corn. The king left the matter in the hands of Joseph, who agreed to take their cattle in exchange for corn.

This resource lasted them a year; when nothing remained to the people but "their bodies and their lands," they cried, "Buy us and our lands for bread, and we and our lands will be servants unto Pharaoh." Joseph took them at their word, and on these terms undertook to feed them to the end of the famine. The whole dispersed population was then removed into the towns containing the granaries, that the corn might be conveniently doled out to them; and in the last year of the famine seed was given to them, with which they might sow, and resume the cultivation of their lands, as tenants of the crown, at a rent of one-fifth of the produce.

Jacob Sends his Sons to Egypt.

This famine was not felt in Egypt only, but throughout all the neighboring regions. It was felt in the land of Canaan, and the family of Jacob soon began to suffer from lack of corn. It then transpired that corn might be obtained in Egypt; and Jacob lost no time in sending his sons—all except Benjamin—across the desert for the needful supply.

It seems that the permission to purchase corn was only granted to such foreigners as obtained special permission from Joseph, before whom, therefore, the ten brethren were bound to make their appearance. The ancient dreams began, in the mysterious providence of God, to be fulfilled, when they bowed themselves low and reverently before this august personage, "the lord of the country," little conceiving that he was the brother whom they had so long ago sold for a slave, and supposed to be long since dead. Him they could not know: but he knew them at once, and controlled with a strong effort

the generous emotions which filled his bosom. Ignorant of their present state of feeling, he was apparently alarmed at the absence of his own brother Benjamin. He could not but fear that they might have acted treacherously towards him also; and this probably induced him to make those experiments upon their present dispositions which form so remarkable a portion of this striking history.

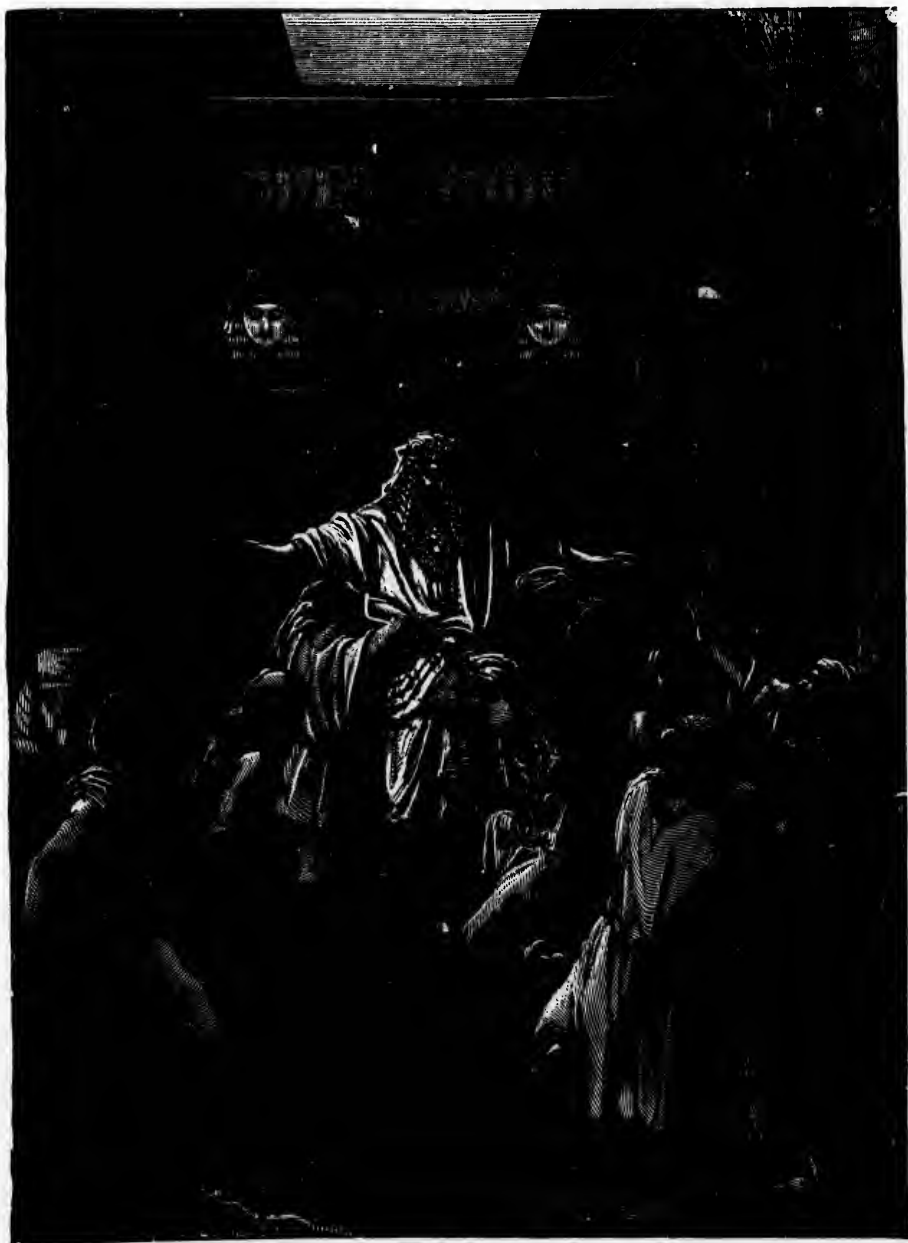
By assuming an austere manner and charging them as spies, he succeeded in eliciting from them such an account of themselves, as informed him that his aged father was still living, and that his brother Benjamin tarried with him at home. The governor of Egypt could not but have been touched when they described themselves as "twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

Still, however, maintaining the tone he had assumed, Joseph persisted in his charge, and required as a proof of their statement that one of their number should be sent back for the absent brother, while the rest were detained as prisoners in Egypt. They were then thrust away ignominiously to the prison-house, and kept there the following night. But in the morning Joseph again sent for them, and in a milder tone they were assured that, if they were indeed true men, no harm should happen to them; and it was decided that they should all be allowed to go back excepting one, who should be detained as hostage for their return to Egypt with their youngest brother. Dismayed at the predicament in which they had become involved, the brethren looked one upon another, and the same thought rose at once to their minds, that at length the cry of their brother's blood had been heard in heaven; and that at length the punishment of their sin had come upon them. This they said aloud to one another in their own language; and little did they think that the illustrious person before whom they were heard and understood, and that their words struck upon his heart: he turned away and wept.

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JOSEPH MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.—Gen. xlv. 4.

The brethren departed, leaving Simeon behind. The sacks which they had brought were filled with corn, and a further supply for the road was given to them. Thus they returned to their father; and on opening their several sacks, were astonished and somewhat alarmed to find in them not only the grain, but the money which they had paid for it. This in some degree confirmed the report which they made to their father of the strange and harsh conduct of the man—the lord of the country. Jacob, however, could not endure the idea of sending Benjamin with them to Egypt: "Me have ye bereaved of my children," said he, mournfully: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and now ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me!" But he was mistaken. All these things were for him. All were working together for the good of him and his.

Taking Back the Money.

The question stood over for a time; but when the supply of corn was exhausted the matter could no longer be delayed. The brethren were in too much dread of the austere personage in Egypt to yield to the pressing instances of their father, who urged them to go without Benjamin; and, finding that their firmness in this point could not be overcome, he gave a reluctant and sorrowing consent. This time no precaution was omitted which was deemed likely to soothe and satisfy the harsh "ruler of Egypt." They took back again the money which had been found in their sacks; and they bore from Jacob a present of the choice products of Palestine, which he knew must be acceptable in Egypt. It consisted of "a little balm, a little honey, spices, and myrrh, pistachio-nuts, and almonds."

They returned to Egypt and stood once more in the presence of Joseph. No sooner did he perceive them and discover that his Benjamin, the son of his mother, was among them, than he directed his steward to "slay, and make ready" a sufficient feast, for that all these men should dine with him at noon. They were accordingly conducted to the great

man's residence, where water was given them to wash their weary feet. Joseph came home at noon, and finding them in waiting, spoke to them. He asked if their father, the old man of whom they had told him, was well; and they bowed themselves very low, and answered, "Thy servant, our father, is in good health." He then seemed first to observe Benjamin, and asked, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?" and, without waiting an answer, said, "God bless thee, my son:" and then, dreading to display his mastering emotions, he hastily withdrew, to give vent to them in his chamber.

Singular Customs.

At the dinner which followed it seems that, although the brethren sat in the same room, they did not sit and eat together with Joseph, who sat apart by himself, while his Egyptian friends also sat apart by themselves. The reason for this is given: "Because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination to the Egyptians." Not merely as Hebrews, however, but as foreigners. And this is remarkably in accordance with Herodotus, who tells us that the Egyptians abstained from all familiar intercourse with foreigners, since these were unclean to them, because they slew and ate the animals which were sacred among the Egyptians. That Joseph also sat alone, and not with the other Egyptians, is strictly in accordance with the great difference of rank and with the spirit of caste which prevailed among the Egyptians.

The brethren were placed according to their seniority by the steward of the household, from the secret intimations of Joseph; and at this they were much astonished, as the difference of age between many of them was too slight to be distinguishable in their persons. A mess for each was sent from the table before Joseph, and, according to Eastern custom, he distinguished Benjamin by sending five times as much to him as to the others. The manner in which the Egyptians sat at meat, by ones or twos, at small, low tables, is pictured

in the ancient tombs, and throws much light on this description.

Notwithstanding this apparent friendliness of their illustrious host, the sons of Jacob were by no means free from anxiety and alarm. They were, therefore, exceedingly glad when they found themselves safely on the road home the next day, laden with the desired corn, their hostage Simeon having been restored to them. Their joy was of short duration; for they were soon overtaken by the well-known steward of Joseph's household, who roughly charged them with having stolen his master's silver cup—"the cup out of which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth." This last clause may require explanation. Jamblichus, in his book on "Egyptian Mysteries," mentions the practice of divining by cups; and that this superstition, together with many others, has survived from the most ancient times, is shown by a remarkable passage in "Norden's Travels." When this author, with his companions, had arrived at Dehr, the most remote extremity of Egypt, or rather in Nubia, where they were able to deliver themselves from a perilous situation by great presence of mind, they sent one of their company to a malicious and powerful Arab to threaten him. He answered, "I know what sort of people you are. I have consulted my cup, and found in it that you are from a people of whom one of our prophets has said: There will come Franks under every kind of pretence to spy out the land," the very same charge that was alleged against Jacob's sons.

The Silver Cup.

The sons of Jacob felt themselves deeply wronged by such a charge, of which every one among them knew himself to be entirely innocent. They invited a search, and loudly consigned to death every one with whom the cup might be found, declaring that they also would then remain the slaves of Joseph. But the steward waived this excess of zeal, by declaring that only the actual thief should remain a bondman, and the rest should be blameless. The search then began. The

sacks were opened in succession, beginning with that of the eldest, and not small was their triumph as sack after sack was opened without the missing property being found. But fearfully was their triumph checked when the steward produced the silver cup from the last of the sacks which he had examined—the sack of Benjamin. It had been placed there by the steward himself, on the order of his master.

Now came the trying point, by which Joseph was to know whether twenty-two years had passed over them in vain. He perhaps expected that they would abandon Benjamin to his fate, and hasten home. It was far otherwise. It is not clear whether they believed or not that Benjamin had stolen the cup. They probably believed it; and in that case their conduct appears the more entitled to admiration.

They thought of their father, and of his last words:—"If mischief befall him [Benjamin] by the way which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." They rent their clothes in the anguish of their hearts, and, hastily relaying their beasts, returned with their brother to the city.

Joseph Making Himself Known.

On reaching Joseph's house, they fell on the ground before him, and, in answer to his stern rebuke, they repeated the proposal they had before made—that all should remain his bondmen; but they did not this time suggest that the actual criminal should die. But Joseph declared that this would be unjust: he would detain the culprit, but they were free to depart. This drew forward Judah, who had in an especial manner made himself responsible to his father for the safe return of Benjamin; and it was probably the confidence of Jacob in his strength of character, that drew from him the reluctant consent which he at length gave that Benjamin should share the perils of the journey.

Never was the confidence of a father in the high qualities and the honor of a son more

worthily bestowed. Judah stood forward, and, in a strain of the most powerful and touching eloquence, stated the case exactly as it stood with respect to his father and Benjamin, in a manner full of those natural touches and circumstances which go home to every heart, and which a heart so tenderly interested as that of Joseph could not possibly withstand. He concluded with imploring that Benjamin might be allowed to return, and that he, who had become the surety for him, might remain a bondman in his stead. Overcome by the emotions which the speech of Judah had roused, Joseph could no longer support the part he had been acting. He wept aloud, and made himself known to them—"I am Joseph.—Doth my father yet live?" Perceiving the confusion which this announcement produced among them, he hastened to reassure them and to relieve their minds, by declaring his conviction that they, in following the impulses of their blind will, had been the unconscious instruments of accomplishing the purposes of God, whose providence had marked out for him the greatness to which he had attained, and the high duties which he had accomplished. He then proceeded to explain to them the length of time which the dearth was still to continue: and that the only course for them was to migrate to Egypt, where it would be in his power to provide every comfort and convenience for them during this terrible and trying season. He apprised them, however, that "every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians;" on which account he would procure a district called "the land of Goshen" to be assigned them, in which they might live apart, and follow their own pastoral modes of life.

We have seen that foreigners, as such, were disliked by the Egyptians; and we may understand the further aversion, now intimated, to apply particularly to those foreigners who followed the pastoral mode of life, and whose aggressive character (as at present in the Bedouin Arabs) and unsettled habits rendered them odious to the Egyptians. That shepherds of every kind were despised

by that people is shown by the fact that the artists of Upper and Lower Egypt vie with each other in caricaturing them whenever their figures are introduced in the pictured tombs. Joseph ended his explanation by embracing and weeping over his brother Benjamin without restraint. He kissed them all, and they then talked more calmly together.

It was gratifying to know that when the news transpired that Joseph's brethren had come, every one was pleased at a circumstance calculated to give him satisfaction. The king himself shared this pleasure, and, on receiving an explanation from Joseph, he expressed much kind interest in the welfare and preservation of the family, and directed that every facility should be given for their migration to Egypt and their settlement in Goshen.

"I Will Go and See Him Before I Die."

Well supplied with provisions for the journey, and with cars in which the women and children might be the more conveniently removed, the brethren set out with lightened hearts for the land of Canaan. As they drew near the patriarchal camp, some of them hastened on to announce the glad tidings to their father. This they did somewhat abruptly:—"Joseph (said they) is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!" The aged man could not readily believe this, and "his heart fainted within him." But they proceeded to explanations; and when he saw a confirmation of their marvellous story in the approach of the carriages, he could no longer disbelieve: his spirit revived, and he said, "It is enough—Joseph my son is yet alive—I will go and see him before I die."

Accordingly Jacob began his journey to Egypt, with all his family and all his possessions. On the way he paused at the old station of his family in Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to God upon the altar where his fathers had worshipped. In the following night, God appeared to him, and encouraged him in the important movement he was then making. He was assured that his family should in Egypt grow rapidly into a nation,

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and as a nation should go forth thence to take possession of the land of Canaan. Thus cheered, Jacob proceeded on his way to the land of Goshen, on the borders of which he was met by his long-lost and late-restored son, who had hastened in his chariot to meet him when apprised of his approach.

Who shall describe the emotions of that great interview? The sacred historian does not attempt it. He simply tells us that Joseph

Pharaoh. The king asked them about their occupation; and they answered, "Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers." The king then told Joseph to place them in the land of Goshen, or in any other part of Egypt that seemed best to him; adding, "And if thou knowest any men of activity among them, make them rulers over my cattle." Subsequently Jacob himself had an audience of the king, who, struck by his



EMBALMING THE BODY OF JOSEPH.—Gen. 1. 26.

"presented himself" (reverently) before his father, and then "he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while;" and so soon as strong feeling left vent for words, Israel said to Joseph, "Now, let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive!"

Not long after, Joseph introduced five of his brethren to the king. He doubtless selected those whose appearance he deemed likely to make a favorable impression upon

venerable appearance, asked him, "How old art thou?" And Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." The respect for honorable age was strong in Egypt: and it is observable that Jacob was granted a separate audience; that he omitted the usual formula of address, "thy servant;" and that,

as became a man of his age, he "blessed Pharaoh" on quitting his presence.

Now the seven years of famine were succeeded by many years of great and compensating plenty; but the position of Joseph does not appear to have been in anywise affected by the cessation of the special services, for which power had been given to him. There is no intimation that down to the time of his death his influence in the government of Egypt had been in any respect impaired.

A Pathetic Scene.

About seventeen years after the family of Israel had been settled in Goshen, the news of his father's illness induced Joseph to hasten thither with his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. The dying patriarch raised himself up in his bed to receive his ever best beloved son. After mutual endearments, Jacob related to his son the promises of God, from which he gathered the assured conviction that his posterity was to become a great nation, destined not to remain in Egypt, but to inherit the land promised to him and to his fathers. This, while it reminded Joseph of the true position of his family in Egypt—that of sojourners, and not settlers—enhanced the value of his declared intention to adopt the two sons of Joseph as his own children, thereby to give to him a double share through them in the heritage.

The eyesight of Jacob had failed from very age—but he became aware that others were present, and being told by Joseph "They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place," he desired them to be brought near to him. He kissed and embraced them with all the tenderness of one who beheld in them fresh memorials of that dear Rachel, whose presence to his aged mind even in these final moments is touchingly evinced by the words which had just before fallen from him, without any apparent connection with the subject, save that which existed in the depths of his own heart: "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the way . . . and I buried her there, in the way to Ephrath."

Having intimated his intention to bestow on

his grandsons the blessing to which so much importance was in those times attached, Joseph placed them before him, properly, as he thought—the eldest, Manasseh, being placed opposite his right hand: but Jacob, blind as he was, crossed his hands so as to place his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, the youngest; and when Joseph, supposing this a mistake, attempted to alter this position of his hands, remarking that the other was the eldest, Jacob persisted, saying, "I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall become great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he." His blessing was given accordingly, and how remarkably its purport was accomplished in the relative destinies of the tribes which sprang from Ephraim and Manasseh will appear hereafter.

After this Jacob's other sons, who had been summoned to the bedside of the dying patriarch, also arrived, and he bestowed upon them blessings significantly and distinctively applicable to each of them, and to the tribes which should spring from them. The final scene of his eventful life cannot be related in other words than those of the sacred historian: "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. And Joseph fell upon his face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

Jacob was aged one hundred and forty-seven years at the time of his death, in the year 1689 B. C.

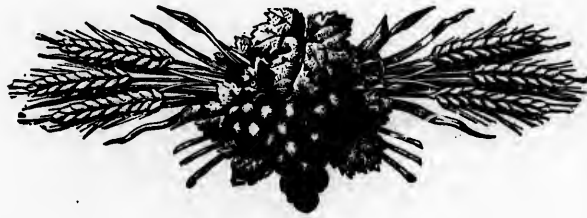
The death of the father of so great a man as Joseph could not pass without much note in Egypt; and the circumstances indicated are in the most exact conformity with the usages of that country as described by ancient historians and represented on ancient monuments. The body of Jacob received the embalmment of a prince, as we know from the fact that forty days were taken up by the different processes. These forty days, and the thirty days following, together seventy days, the Egyptians observed as days of public mourning, which also

indicates that the ceremonies were scarcely less than those which attended the death of royal personages; for we are told by Herodotus that "when a king died, all the Egyptians raised a general lamentation, tore their garments, closed the temples, offered no sacrifices, celebrated no festivals for seventy-two days."

Jacob had strictly enjoined Joseph to deposit his remains in the family sepulchre near Hebron, in the land which his descendants were to possess. Thither it was therefore conveyed in great state, being attended not only by the family of the patriarch, but by a large body of Egyptians with chariots and horses: and their presence and numbers gave a character so much Egyptian to the proceeding, that when the party paused in "the threshing-floor of Atad" to celebrate a final mourning of seven days before consigning the body to

the sepulchre, the neighboring inhabitants remarked, "this is a great mourning for the Egyptians;" whence the place received the name of "Abel-Mitzraim," "the mourning of the Egyptians." Joseph himself outlived his father about fifty-four years, and died (1635 B. C.) at the age of one hundred and ten years. Before his death he called his brethren around him, and after expressing his firm conviction that their descendants would eventually be removed from Egypt to their promised possession, he took a solemn oath from them, that when that time came, they would take away his bones with them, and not leave them behind in Egypt. After death, the corpse of Joseph was embalmed, and deposited in one of those coffins or mummy-cases which the recent spoliation of Egyptian sepulchres have in this day made familiar to us.

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CHAPTER VI.

EARLY LIFE OF MOSES.



LONG time the Hebrews remained in Goshen, where they increased with astonishing rapidity, and followed their old pastoral modes of life, without altogether neglecting agriculture.

About thirty-eight years after the death of Joseph a new dynasty, probably from Upper Egypt, obtained possession of the throne of Lower Egypt, which we are to regard as the Egypt of the patriarchal history. To the new dynasty the services of Joseph, and the circumstances attending the introduction of his family could not be altogether unknown. But they were not recognized, not appreciated, not understood with that fulness of apprehension which would belong to those who were descended from and connected with the kings and princes who were Joseph's contemporaries.

But the phenomenon of a people so different in character, habits, and religion as the Hebrews, residing within a frontier much exposed to aggression from tribes of similar habits to theirs, and with whom they might be supposed to have a common sympathy and interest, drew the attention and excited the fears of the new government. It was apprehended, in the words of the new king, "that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us." These words were spoken perfectly in accordance with the state of things in Egypt. Fruitful and cultivated Egypt has for its natural enemies the inhabitants of the neighboring deserts, and it is never in greater peril than when these enemies find allies among its own inhabitants.

It was therefore determined to adopt a re-

pressive policy towards the Israelites, with a view of checking their alarmingly rapid increase and to break their spirit of independence. Hard and constant labor was judged the means best suited to this end; and they were, therefore, in fact, enslaved, and compelled to labor on the public works. In that part of Egypt buildings are and were for the most part constructed of bricks made of clay compacted with straw, and dried in the sun. There are even some pyramids built with this material. This explains how it was that the Egyptians are said to have "made the life of the Israelites bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick;" nothing is said of stone. For the further illustration of this, it may be remarked that bricks were in Egypt made under the direction of the government, or of some person privileged by the crown, as appears by the stamp which is still found upon many of them.

A great multitude of strangers were constantly employed in the brick-fields of Egypt, this being one of the servile employments in which the native Egyptians were too proud to labor; or, in other words, the great number of slaves and captives made all unskilled labor too cheap to afford a rate of wages which they deemed adequate. We are not informed what works the Israelites constructed, excepting that "they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Rameses." The latter, and probably the other, was in the land of Goshen, and they appear to have been fortified towns, erected in the land of the Hebrews for the purpose of keeping them in subjection, and of storing the portions of their pastoral or agricultural produce which the Egyptian government required from them.

These rigid measures by no means answered the desired object. The more the Israelites

were oppressed "the more they multiplied and grew." The atrocious plan was then devised of destroying, through the midwives, all the male children of the Hebrews to issue a public order that every male child thenceforth born to the Hebrews should be cast into the river.



MOSES IN HIS LITTLE LIFE-BOAT.—EX. ii. 5.

male children of the Hebrews in the birth; but this plan of secret massacre having been frustrated by the reluctance of the midwives to be parties in it, the king no longer hesitated | The Scripture and Josephus call our especial attention to one particular family, that is the family of Amram. It appears that he was well connected among the Israelites; that he

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married and had two children, a girl and a boy—the girl Miriam, the boy Aaron, before the murderous edict was issued which compelled the slaughter of all male children. When Moses was born there was of necessity great perplexity. Three months, it appears, they hid the child—condemned to death for the great offence of being born—and then it became essential they should do something with him. The time came when concealment was no longer possible. The truth is suspected—prying eyes are all about us, and hands ready to grasp blood-money. The law is hard and cruel; our lives are risked by saving this young life. Wicked officials will demand his youthful existence as if it were a tax. Some envious and ill-natured neighbor has whispered a word: a child's cry has been heard; somebody has listened to a half-smothered lullaby; an overseer, in insolent authority, has spoken and looked, perhaps, with ill-conditioned rudeness into the face of Miriam. They were sorry times.

The Bulrush Cradle.

The girl and mother work together a light basket-work cradle all covered with bitumen, and they place the smiling child within it; and Miriam, in all the bitterness of her heart, floats the precious treasure on the cruel Nile, and then, at a little space, stands watching.

The mother cannot watch—she cannot bear the sight which may be seen; she would herself run forth and, daring all things, bring destruction on her house. Better she should be at home, while dutiful, ever-patient and tender-hearted Miriam stays to see the end.

All about the Nile the scenery is strikingly beautiful, but there would be no novelty to the girl who kept watch by the ark of papyrus or bulrush; and, even had there been novelty, she would be in no mood to wonder at the natural grandeur she beheld. She waits there pensive and lonely. Sometimes a great sense of shame and grief at the outrages to which her people are exposed will make her almost ready to neglect her charge, and think it well if there he died—never to know bondage; but

the girl has a deep trust in Heaven's eternal justice. Perhaps a deliverer may come.

Yonder is a family, the eldest—a lad of twelve—tending a mixed flock of sheep and goats; one of the lads is playing on a reed pipe, and they seem as happy as lambs; the anxious sister glances once towards them, and one of the children runs in the direction the ark has taken. There is soft music, and with solemn pomp a stately procession is seen advancing to the river. Ethiopian slaves bearing fans and screens; the princess of the land, a company of women in attendance. The guard and the musicians are left behind as her highness approaches the sacred stream, and the princess draws near the spot where the holy prayer is to be said to the divine water. A moment, and she notices the strange object, only partially concealed by the long rusies: quick the order, speedy the response: the little ark is before her, is opened, and she sees and understands it all.

A Motherly Princess.

Doubtless this poor little one is a child of the alien race, over whom a mother's heart has yearned; a mother who, in the last parting moments, has done what she could to save her infant's life. And as the princess gazes on the child it weeps. The appeal of tears is powerful to all hearts not yet grown callous to every good feeling; the appealing cry of a child is most touching. The tears awoke compassion in the heart of the royal lady—she would save the child Moses; he has been rescued from the waters; but how to act is the strange difficulty. Princess though she be, how can she openly defy the law? How can she have the child at once carried to the king's court and there attended? It must not be. One of the alien race, it is suggested, may be found to nurse the child, and by-and-by the princess will claim him as her adopted son, separate him from his people, and make him heir to all that would be his were he her own child. But how to go among these people—how to send one of her own women? See, here in this girl we may find a messenger.

Quick, O sister, the hour has come to save thy brother and to restore him to his mother's arms; quick, O sister, lest the opportunity be lost!

Affection makes us brave. Miriam would have shrunk from the groups of proud ladies and the noble princess, but her infant brother was in their midst. Could she discover some sage and tender-hearted woman who would play the mother to this poor outcast child? Yes; her highness the princess might command her; there was one, Amram's wife, a trusty woman; she was all qualified to carry out the royal behest. Then so it should be: let the woman rear the child—she should, when of sufficient age, bring it to the palace, and her wages should be good.

The Babe Restored to its Mother.

Good wages! how the mother's heart rejoiced when the little one she had laid with sighs and tears alive in its tiny coffin was in her arms again—wages enough, full surely; and proud was she of her daughter's ready wit; and there was a seriousness on Miriam as if she felt great things would come of this.

There is much that is beautiful in tender, sisterly affection; there is no passion in it; unlike a mother, unlike a wife, and, most of all, unlike a woman sought in marriage, is the pure, clear, heavenly love of sister for brother. And Miriam loved her brother Moses with a depth and earnestness of affection that it is sometimes painful to witness. It seemed to her as if she had rescued him from death: as if her very life were bound up with his; and painful indeed was the thought that they would so soon be separated.

There would be another and a very distressing thought in the mind of the girl: her brother would be taught a strange and Pagan creed; how could she hope that in his very early years such impressions could be made that would be lasting? It was a grievous trouble, a deep grief; but all was done that could be done, and the boy, when he could speak but imperfectly, was swift to learn. Still

the long, dread ordeal was before the child. The people among whom he was to be brought up were immersed in Paganism; they were said to surpass all men in the honor they paid to their gods. Prominence was given to religious subjects in the sculptures which crowded their temples and tombs; religion was immediately blended with education; their sacred rites were conducted with great state and ceremony, and the priesthood possessed marvellous dignity and power. To all these influences the child Moses would be subjected, and who could foresee any other result than that he should succumb, adopt the faith of his patrons, and turn haughtily from the simple creed of his fathers?

Miriam and her Brother.

And Miriam—would she tell the boy again and again of the land from which their people had come out, and to which, with much honor and glory, they were to be some day brought back? The earliest impressions are indubitably the most lasting. A child, we are taught, learns more before it is four years old than it ever learns afterwards, even in the longest lifetime. Moses never forgot the teachings of his sister and mother. The time came for him to go away, and in a burst of grief he would take farewell of the dear home. It is not necessary here to follow Miriam as she pours out much of her tenderness on the bold boy Aaron, and endeavors to alleviate her mother's sorrow, and ease her father's load of care.

In the court of Tharaoh, Moses was well instructed, according to Josephus; his understanding became superior to his age, nay, far beyond that standard; and when he was taught he discovered greater quickness of apprehension than was usual. "God did also give him that tallness when he was but three years old, as was wonderful; and for his beauty there was nobody so unpolite as, when they saw Moses, not to be greatly surprised at the beauty of his countenance; nay, it happened frequently that those who met him as he was carried along the road were obliged to turn again upon seeing the child, that they left what they were about, and stood still a great

while to look on him; for the beauty of the child was so remarkable and natural to him on many accounts that it detained the spectators, and made them stay longer to look upon him." This is the historical record, and

dom;" and when she had said this she put the infant into her father's hands, so he took him and hugged him close to his breast, and on his daughter's account, in a pleasant way, put his diadem upon his head; but Moses



MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER.—Ex. ii. 10.

Josephus goes on to tell us that the daughter of Pharaoh carried Moses to her father, saying, "I have brought up a child who is of a divine form and of a generous mind, and as I have received him of the bounty of the river, in a wonderful manner, I thought proper to adopt him for my son, and the heir of thy king-

'threw it down on the ground, and in a puerile mood he wretched it round and trod upon it with his feet; which seemed to bring along with it an evil presage concerning the kingdom of Egypt.'"

Moses obtained a royal home. The fair princess who found the weeping child by the

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river's brink adopted him, and he was brought up as the son of the king's daughter. We may be sure that as such he received the highest education which the most educated nation in the world could give. We are, indeed, expressly told that he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." We are also informed that he was "mighty in word and in deeds." What these deeds were we do not know, but the Jews believe that he was, on more than one occasion, intrusted with the command of the Egyptian armies, and gained great victories over the enemies of Egypt.

He, however, was aware of his origin, and acquainted with his own family. He knew the destinies of Israel, and a part with them seemed to him more desirable than the glories of Egypt. We are told that "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." But whether this refers to something which occurred before that visit to his brethren in Goshen, which the regular narrative records, or is deduced from the consequences of that visit, we have no means of knowing. At all events, when he was forty years old (1531 B. C.) Moses paid this visit, and examined, with that largeness of view which belonged to him, the condition of his people. They seemed to have remained in the same enslaved condition in which they had been left by the first decree of the Egyptian king, but the edict respecting the destruction of the male children had not continued long in operation, having been withdrawn probably at the solicitation of the princess.

Moses was much grieved and exasperated at the condition to which he beheld the descendants of Abraham reduced; and when on one occasion he saw an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, his indignation was so highly kindled that he slew the oppressor, and afterwards hid the body in the sand. This he did doubtless to save the Israelites, to whom the act would not fail to be attributed, from the consequences.

The next day Moses had one, among other, of those opportunities of perceiving how the iron of the Egyptian bondage had eaten into the soul of his countrymen, which probably occasioned his reluctance at a future day to undertake the task of their deliverance. One object of the tyranny to which they were subject had been fulfilled. Their spirit was broken, their souls had fallen into bondage; and there was nothing they so much dreaded as the displeasure of their tyrants, and they regarded with apprehension and dislike any person or any act, however generous in character or noble in motive, that seemed likely to draw upon them the unfavorable notice of their taskmasters. Perceiving two Israelites struggling with each other, he said to the one who was apparently in the wrong, "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?" To which the other replied tauntingly, "Who made *thee* a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

He fled; and his course was directed towards that region which was in after years the scene of his glory. He made his way to the country bordering on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, which was anciently called the Ælanitic Gulf, and now the Gulf of Akaba. Arrived in the land of Southern Midian, the exile rested beside a well, and while he sat there the daughters of the emir and priest of Midian, Jethro by name, arrived to water their father's flock. They had drawn up the water and filled the troughs, when some shepherds came and drove them off. These churlish shepherds were proceeding to give to their flocks the water which had been drawn when Moses interposed, and himself watered the maidens' flock. They failed not to report this kindness of "the Egyptian," as Moses appeared in their eyes, to their father, Jethro, who sent to offer him the hospitalities of his house. In the end Moses consented to remain with Jethro and take the charge of his flocks; and ere long he obtained in marriage one of Jethro's daughters, named Zipporah, by whom he had two sons.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DELIVERER OF ISRAEL.



GRIEVOUS oppressions were inflicted upon the Hebrews, and a timely deliverer was sent in the person of Moses. Forty years after he had quitted Egypt, and when he was eighty years of age, he led his flock, as usual, into these favorite pastures, when one day he was much astonished to perceive a bush burning in the distance without being consumed. He drew near to see this great sight, when a miraculous voice from out the bush charged him to unloose the sandals from his feet—the Oriental mark of respect—because the ground on which he stood was holy. By this Moses might have guessed that he stood in the presence of that God who had so often appeared to his patriarchal fathers; for only the presence of God could, in the sense intimated, render the ground holy. On this point he could not be long in doubt, for the Voice said:—"I am the God of thy father: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And when Moses heard that, he hid his face, "for he was afraid to look upon God," or even upon the burning symbol of his glory. The divine Voice then proceeded to declare the object of this appearance. God had seen the grievous and still continued oppression of his people in Egypt, and the time for their deliverance was come. And they were to be delivered, and conducted to their promised heritage, not by the naked arm of God, but by that arm clothed with visible agencies, and acting through human instruments—a human deliverer. And who was he?

Moses himself was called to the glorious task

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of bringing forth the people of God from the house of bondage, and he was encouraged to this undertaking by the assurance that all his personal enemies, all those who once sought his life in Egypt, were now dead, so that he might safely return thither. That the time was come for Israel to be delivered was matter of great joy to Moses; but time—forty years of pastoral occupation—had subdued the early ardor of him who had once been a self-appointed redresser of Israel's wrongs, and had been prematurely anxious to assume the task of a deliverer. The repulse which he then received sunk deep into his soul, and made him hopeless of rousing the spirit of a people so accustomed to their yoke, so enslaved in heart, as he knew them to be. But the Divine Being condescended to answer his objections, and reminded him that, in discharging the great duty to which he was now called, he would act in a power beyond his own.

Thus assured, Moses no longer declined the task imposed upon him. He rendered up his pastoral charge to Jethro; and, taking his wife and children, turned his steps towards Egypt. Before he reached that country, he was met by his elder brother Aaron, from whom he doubtless received full information of the state of affairs in Egypt, and of the present condition and feelings of the Israelites.

Glad Tidings for the Hebrews.

Arrived in Egypt, the brothers assembled the elders of Israel; and Moses related the mission which he had received, and exhibited the miraculous powers which had been intrusted to him to prove its truth. Then the people believed, "and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

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THE FINDING OF MOSES.

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After this, Moses and Aaron, attended by the chiefs of Israel, presented themselves before the throne of Egypt, and demanded, in

The insolent pride with which Pharaoh received the message communicated by Moses, "Who is Jehovah! that I should obey his



THE BUSH THAT BURNED AND WAS NOT CONSUMED.—Ex. iii. 2.

the name of Jehovah, that his people should go forth to hold a solemn sacrifice and festival in the desert.

voice, to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go," and the obstinacy which he afterwards exhibit, when the Divine

punishments fall upon him one after another, in choosing rather to see the destruction of his land and people, than to yield—are proved by the monuments, which the Egyptians have left behind them, to be in accordance with the genuine spirit of a Pharaoh.

A comparison of the representation of the victory of Remeses Mi-amun in Thebes, as explained by Champollion, is of special interest in this connection. The trophies of victory (the severed right hand, and other members of the body) are there laid at the feet of the king, who sits quietly in his chariot, while the horses are held by his officers, and addresses this haughty speech to his warriors: "Give yourselves to mirth; let it rise to heaven. Strangers are dashed to the ground by my power. The terror of my name has gone forth; their hearts are full of it. I appear before them as a lion; I have pursued them as a hawk; I have annihilated their wicked souls; I have passed over their rivers; I have set fire to their castles; I am to Egypt what the god Mandoo has been; I have vanquished the barbarians; Amun-Re (the greatest of the Egyptian gods), my father, has subdued the whole world under my feet, and I am king on the throne for ever." The literal truth of this translation has indeed been disputed; but the spirit which the speech breathes may easily be recognized from it. There is no doubt that the Egyptian kings, in their pride, named themselves kings of the whole world; and it has been established by their monuments, that they, in this arrogance, claimed divine honors for themselves.

Not only was the application made by Moses refused, but the exactions and the inflictions upon the Israelites were redoubled, to punish them for having made it. Hitherto they had been allowed straw with which to compact the bricks, the manufacture of which formed their chief labor; but now this was refused, and although much of their time was consumed in collecting the straw, the full tale of bricks was required from them; and the officers of the children of Israel, whom the overseers of Pharaoh had placed over them, were beaten

because the task was not performed. This scene is placed vividly before us by the Egyptians, who offer many representations of "labor stimulated by the persuasive powers of the stick," the efficiency of which cannot be doubted.

Loud Murmuring of the People.

The Hebrew people now began to complain against Moses and Aaron for having thus increased their troubles by their ill-considered demands; and Moses himself complained to the Lord that the condition of the people had not been bettered, but rendered much worse by his interference.

Then the word was given for that extraordinary series of visitations known as the plagues of Egypt, for the purpose of convincing the king of the power of the God whom the Hebrews served, and of the dread consequences of resisting his demand. The effect of some of these was weakened to the mind of Pharaoh by the impostures of his magicians, by whom some of them were simulated. But the terrible visitation which each plague brought could only be removed at the intercession of Moses; and at that intercession they were successively removed, on promises from the king of attention and compliance, which were neglected so soon as the penal effects had ceased. Hence these visitations rose in severity, till the last terrible and overwhelming calamity produced the designed result.

They were preceded by a sign, or miracle, performed in the presence of Pharaoh and his court, and intended to authenticate the divine mission which Moses had received. Attended by the elders of Israel, Moses and his brother Aaron again presented themselves before the king; and the latter having cast down his rod upon the ground, it was at once changed into a serpent, in the sight of all that illustrious audience. Instead of yielding to the force of that evidence which this miracle conveyed, the king sent for his "wise men and sorcerers," who "did in like manner with their enchantments; for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents." This hardened the king in the course he had marked out for

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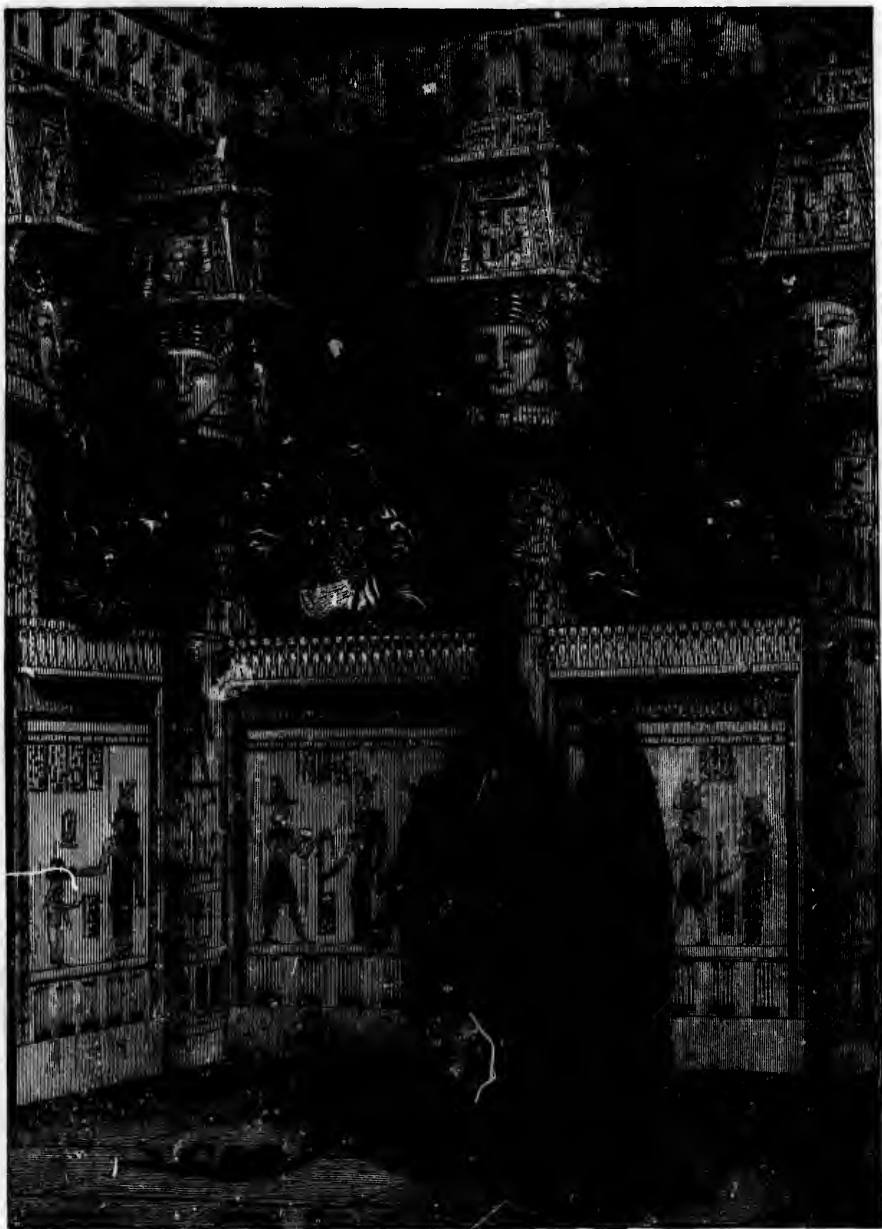
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AARON'S ROD THAT WAS CHANGED TO A SERPENT.—Ex. vii. 10.

himself; and although the inferiority of the seeming miracle of the magicians was evinced by the fact of Aaron's serpent-rod swallowing up theirs, the king persuaded himself that he had an excuse for withholding his consent to the demand made in the name of Jehovah. We are expressly told that the "wise men" of Egypt performed their simulated wonder by "enchantment," which word denotes not merely magical agencies, but any kind of legerdemain, or scientific or artistical contrivance. The Egyptian priests were deeply learned in all the secrets of nature and art, which were hidden from their contemporaries, and which, indeed, they treasured up as mysteries peculiar to their order, and to which none but the highest members, even of that order, were admitted. There is no manner of doubt that it was by such means that they were enabled to imitate, in appearance, some of the miracles performed by Moses and Aaron.

Wonders Performed by Magicians.

This counter-wonder of the Egyptian magicians was founded on the peculiar condition of Egypt: and much more so was the Mosiac sign; for through it the prophet was furnished with power to perform that which the magicians of Egypt most especially gloried in, and by which they most of all supported their authority.

The charming of serpents has been native to Egypt, from the most ancient even to the present time; and although the art is now beheld by us without those sacred associations which invested it with awe and wonder in and after the time in which Moses lived, enough remains to enable us to form some conception of the effects then produced. Even those who have entered upon an examination of the subject with the most absolute unbelief, such as the scientific commissioners attached to the French army in Egypt, have been forced into the conviction, that there was something in it, which their philosophy could not reach, and which compelled them to conclude that the Psylli (as these serpent-charmers were anciently called) were in the possession

of some secret charm, which placed them in a condition to bring about the most wonderful consequences. It was at first believed that they removed the teeth of serpents and the stings of scorpions, that they might handle them with impunity; but this suspicion has been disproved by repeated examination.

Indeed, this wondrous art is still a mystery; it descends from father to son, and the serpent-charmers in Egypt form an association claiming to be the only individuals who are able to charm serpents or free houses from them. Their sleight of hand is marvelous. They are able, according to their assertions, to make the Haje (the species of serpent they especially make use of in their tricks) rigid as a staff, and to appear as if dead; and then, at pleasure, make them relax into vitality again.

An eminent naturalist, Col. C. Hamilton Smith, informs us that the inflation of which this serpent is capable can, by a peculiar pressure on the neck, be rendered so intensely rigid, that the serpent can be held out horizontally, as if it were a rod; and that the restoration of vitality is produced by liberating the animal, or by throwing it on the ground. This seems quite to explain how the magicians were able to make their real serpents appear, at first, as rods, which, when cast upon the ground, recovered their vital action, imitating, by reversed effects, the deed of Aaron, whose real rod became a serpent.

Plagues Sent Upon Egypt.

Then began the plagues. The first changed into blood the pleasant waters of the health-giving Nile; and although they succeeded in apparently turning some water into blood, they were not able to reverse the miracle, as Moses did when signs of contrition were manifested by the king. We are not required to understand that by this miracle the waters of Egypt were changed into real blood, but only to a blood-red color; so that the blood here is the same as the "water red as blood" described in the Second Book of Kings. That there is found something analogous to this in the natural phenomena of Egypt

has long since been related. It is admitted that the waters of the Nile, a short time before the inundation, take a green, and at the beginning of the inundation a red color. The cause of this change has not been fully investigated. In common years the water when it is green and when it is red is drinkable: but sometimes, in years of great heat, this peculiarity of the water becomes a great calamity, as it then becomes so offensive that

in the ordinary course of nature; and still more, in the extraordinary character of the visitation, indicated by the fact that all the fish in the river died, which effect never ensues from the natural reddening of the waters.

There is an intended emphasis in the information that "the Egyptians loathed to drink the waters of the river," which must not be overlooked. It is founded upon the importance which the Nile water has for the



THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS.—EX. X. 12.

people of delicate stomachs cannot drink it, and content themselves with well-water. If that calamity which came at the word of Moses were the same as this, then the wonder would consist in its coming in at the time appointed by the prophet; in its coming not, as usual, gradually, but suddenly, at the moment when his rod was lifted up; and in the time itself not being the usual time, which is about the middle of the year, but many months sooner than it has ever been known to occur

Egyptians, and upon the almost passionate love of the inhabitants of Egypt for it. The water of the Nile is, in fact, the only drinkable water in Egypt; for the water of the few wells is distasteful and unwholesome. The Turks find this water so pleasant, that they are said to eat salt on purpose to be able to drink the more of it. They are accustomed to say, that if Mohammed had drunk thereof, he would have asked an immortality on earth, that he might always drink of this water.

If the Egyptians undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, or travel elsewhere, they speak of nothing but the delight which they shall experience when, on their return, they shall again drink the pleasant water of their great river. Under due reference to these circumstances we shall perceive the peculiar force of the terms employed in describing the Egyptians as loathing the water which they usually prefer before all the water in the world; and as choosing rather to drink well-water, which is in their country so unpleasant.

The second plague brought frogs in myriads upon every pleasant place in Egypt; and although the magicians simulated this miracle also, Moses only, at a time previously appointed, could remove the evil.

Repeated Calamities.

The third plague was formed by gnats, which are even in ordinary years very troublesome in Egypt, and the vast increase of which must have rendered life insupportable. In trying to imitate this, the magicians failed, and they acknowledged "This is the finger of God." But the heart of Pharaoh was still hardened.

Then came the fourth plague, that of the "flies,"—probably the dog-fly, which is remarkably troublesome in Egypt, from its disposition to alight upon the edge of the eyelid. This brought Pharaoh to urge the Hebrews to keep their feast and offer their sacrifices in Egypt. But Moses answered—"It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" This is usually understood to mean that the Egyptians would be offended by the Israelites offering the same animals which they worshipped. But an accomplished German divine, Hengstenberg, has suggested a very different view. He argues that "the designation 'abomination' is not appropriate to the consecrated animals."

This indicates that the animals which the

Israelites slaughtered were not considered too good, but too bad for offerings. The animals which were commonly taken among the Israelites for offerings were also among the Egyptians not sacred. The only one of the larger domestic animals which was usually regarded as sacred by them was the cow; and this was not offered by the Israelites, except under peculiar and unusual circumstances. The offence was, rather, that the Israelites omitted the inquiry concerning the cleanness of animals, which was practised with the greatest caution by the Egyptians. That only clean animals were offered by the Egyptians, Herodotus says, in that remarkable passage where he acquits the Egyptians from the imputation of offering human sacrifices: "For since they are not allowed to sacrifice any animals except the swine and the bullock and calves, namely, those that are clean among them, and the goose, how can they offer men?" What stress they laid upon cleanness, and how truly it was considered an abomination to offer an unclean animal, is seen from the same author. Only a red ox could be offered, and a single black hair rendered it unclean. They also placed dependence on a multitude of marks besides this; the tongue, the tail, were accurately examined. Every victim, after a prescribed examination, in confirmation of its fitness, was sealed on the horns; and to offer an unsealed ox was prohibited with pain of death.

Under the fifth plague the animals of Egypt were smitten by a grievous murrain, while those of the Israelites sustained no harm.

The plague of boils and blains upon the bodies of all the Egyptians, including the magicians, was the sixth. It was miraculous chiefly in its circumstances and in its extent; the disease itself having been so common in Egypt, that, elsewhere, it is described as "the boil of Egypt."

The seventh plague was a tremendous tempest of hail, by which men and cattle were slain, the trees broken, and the produce of the fields crushed down. The whole crop of the flax and the barley was smitten, for it had grown up; but the wheat and spelt escaped,

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PLACING THE MARK OF BLOOD UPON THE DOOR-POST.—Ex. xii. 7.

as these came later to maturity. No hail fell in the land of Goshen, which the Israelites inhabited.

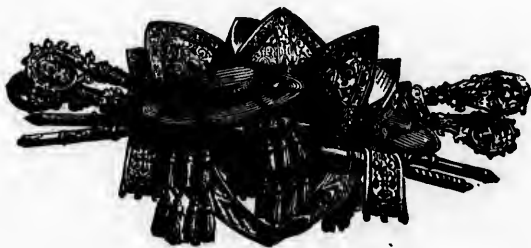
As the heart of Pharaoh was not moved by all these wonders, another plague was sent; it was that of the locusts, which came over the land in numbers without example, and speedily consumed every green thing which the hail had spared.

Then, as the ninth plague, came a terrible darkness over all that sunny land—a darkness dense beyond description—and which allowed no one to stir from his place during the three days that it lasted. But all this time the Israelites had abundant light in Goshen.

One plague more, the tenth—terrible, fatal, effectual—was threatened before it came, that timely submission might haply avert the doom. It was the death of all the first-born in Egypt, from the first-born of "the king upon his throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant behind the mill." God, who knew the effect of this terrible stroke, directed the institution of a festival in commemoration of it, and that

the Hebrews should stand ready for departure at the appointed time. The festival was called the Passover, because the destroying angel would *pass over* the doors marked with the blood of a lamb, which every Hebrew family was directed to slay, and eat in the posture of persons ready for a journey.

Already, according to the divine direction, the Hebrews had borrowed of their Egyptian neighbors various articles and ornaments of gold and silver, with which, according to custom, they might becomingly celebrate the great feast they were to hold in the wilderness. And by this time the renown of Moses had so spread among the people, and so lively a dread of his power was entertained, that the Israelites obtained freely whatever they asked. It is, indeed, evident from the whole narrative that the popular feeling among the Egyptians was by no means favorable to the course taken by the government in its obstinate and perilous refusal of the demand made in behalf of the Israelites.



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CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST NIGHT IN EGYPT.



HISTORY presents us with few events more startling than those which attended the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. The fatal night came—a night which formed a chief point of remembrance to the Jews in all succeeding generations. That night the Passover was, for the first time, celebrated by them; and in that night the first-born of all the Egyptians were smitten with instant death, so that no house was found in Egypt in which the most valued of its members had not died. Then a great cry arose in all the land, and the court, whatever might have been its own feeling, saw that the popular voice would no longer be controlled, and therefore now, in this dreadful hour, the Hebrews were not only permitted to quit Egypt, but were urged forth with importunity and haste. Of this haste some notion may be formed from the fact, that they were unable to bake or even to leaven the dough which they had prepared for bread, and which they therefore, took away with them as unleavened dough in their kneading-troughs.

They were all assembled with their flocks and herds in the land of Goshen, in the district of Rameses, and before the day had dawned the vast host of the Israelites, of whom one adult male alone numbered six hundred thousand, marched forth from the land of Egypt, and proceeded northward into the wilderness. The last day of bondage and the first of freedom is the most important in the history of any nation. So the Israelites felt theirs to be, and the Almighty fixed it in their memory by institutions more durable

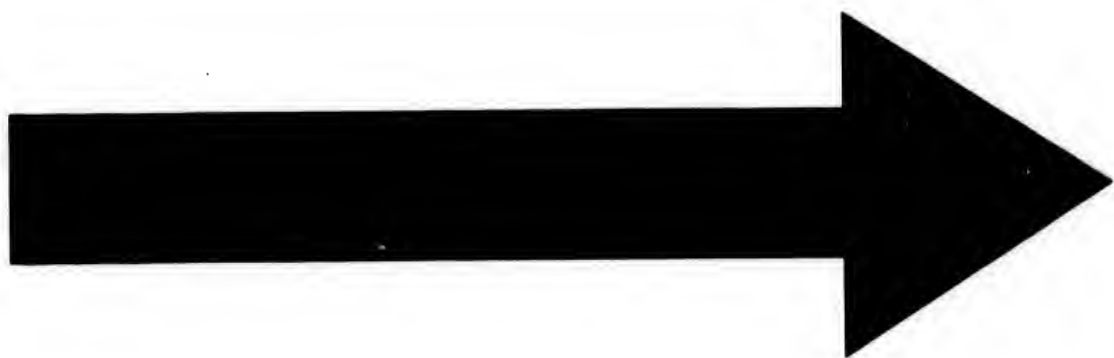
than monuments of brass or marble. Such was the Passover, and such the new decree which consecrated to the service of the Lord all the first-born of Israel in memory of their being spared when all the first-born of Egypt died.

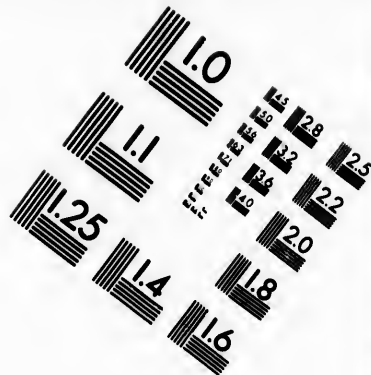
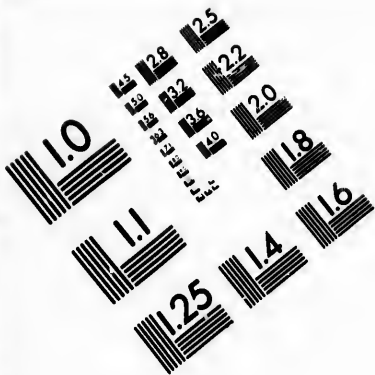
As the southern parts of Palestine were occupied by the Philistines and other warlike nations, it was deemed inexpedient to lead the undisciplined and encumbered Israelites in that direction, although it was the nearest and the most usual route.

For this, among other reasons, the departing host took the road towards the Red Sea, the neighborhood of which they reached after three days' journey.

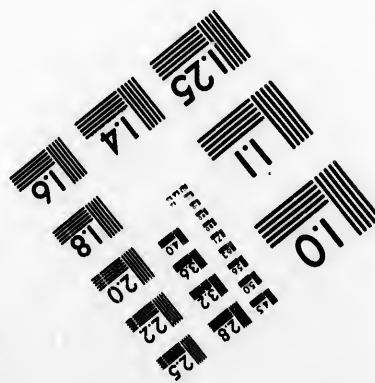
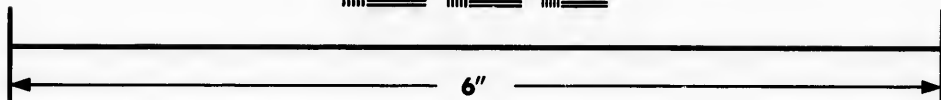
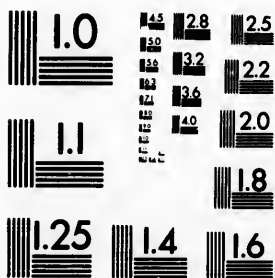
This journey from the land of Goshen to the Red Sea has received much attention from Biblical geographers, who have scarcely succeeded in relieving it from all the obscurity in which they found it involved. In a work of this description the questions connected with this and other points in the journey of the Israelites do not admit of critical examination, and we must be content to state the results of those investigations which appear to us to have led to the most probable conclusions.

It is usual, when large parties prepare for a journey in the East, for all the travellers to assemble at a common rendezvous, where they arrange the details of the journey, and prepare for a regular start. Thus a place by the river of Ahava was the rendezvous of the exiles who returned to Judea under Ezra. And at the present day the great pilgrim caravan from Egypt to Mecca assembles at Birket-el-Hadj, or the Pilgrims' Pool, which some suppose may possibly have been the very place from which the Hebrews took their departure. In the present case the Hebrews knew well that they were to depart this night, and the point





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of rendezvous seems to have been at Succoth, which was where they first halted after quitting movement in more regular order to their destination. As the name Succoth means "booths"



THE DESTROYING ANGEL PASSING THROUGH EGYPT.—Ex. xii. 29.

Rameses. To this point they seem to have hastened in detached parties, and there received the organization necessary for their or "tents," it is more than probable that it was a well-known station for such purposes. Such places are usually but a short distance from

the place which furnishes the principal number of pilgrims or travellers; and the first stage is therefore always short, being, in fact, only to the place of meeting.

This ought to satisfy those who cannot understand how the distance from Rameses to the border of the Red Sea could occupy three days; the shortness of the first stage accounts for it. On the second day they arrived at "Etham, on the edge of the wilderness." This is usually identified with the place now called Adjeroud, which is at this day the third station of the great pilgrim caravan, and where there is an ancient fortress garrisoned by Egyptian troops, with a poor village and a copious well of water. Whether this be a correct identification or not, Etham was undoubtedly situated not far from the head of the Gulf of Suez; and in such a position, with reference to it, that the course taken from it determined the direction of the journey. Accordingly the Hebrew host here received orders to turn and encamp on the shore of the gulf, between the sea and the mountains by which it was enclosed, which was the best they could do.

War-Chariots and Footmen.

The Egyptian court seems to have watched the movements of the retiring host with great interest. The ostensible demand of the Israelites was to take three days' journey into the wilderness, and there offer their sacrifices to Jehovah. At Etham they had attained a point whatever movement they made from which would determine their real intentions. That their intention was not to keep their feast at Etham and then return to Egypt was evinced by their further movements.

On learning this, the king resolved to pursue them and drive them back. In this design he was encouraged by learning the very strange position in which they were encamped, where, as he said, "they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in." He saw that from the position they had taken up, if he came upon them in the north, and cut off their retreat in that direction, they must of necessity be either driven into the sea or back

to Egypt through the valley of Badaea. Alas! he knew not that the God who protected the house of Israel was able to open a pathway through the waters for their deliverance.

The facility with which the king assembled his forces, as soon as his resolution was formed, gives us an idea of the effective military organization of the Egyptians, which is amply confirmed and illustrated by histories and monuments. The "chosen" chariots of war were in number six hundred. These "chosen" chariots doubtless formed the guard of the king; other chariots are mentioned, but not the number, which must be estimated in this proportion. We have no reason to suppose this number overwhelming; but that it composed such a body of this much dreaded force as seemed needful for the immediate service. That service was one for cavalry, and, conformably to the accounts of the sacred historian, we now know that war-chariots composed the sole cavalry of Egypt. This formed the chief arm of Egypt's military strength, and was at once the force most suited to this service, and that of which a people of pastoral habits like the Israelites have always been found to stand in the most dread.

The Hebrews Terrified.

Accordingly when the Egyptian forces actually made their appearance, the Hebrews seem not to have entertained the least notion of resistance, which indeed their position would scarcely, under any circumstances, have allowed. That position, however, protected them from being taken in flank by the Egyptians, who, on their part, finding their prey safe, as they thought, in the toils, were in no hurry to commence their operations, but rested themselves and their horses against the following day.

The Israelites, when they saw the Egyptians, were filled with alarm and terror, until they were reassured by promises of a great deliverance, and a signal and final overthrow of their haughty pursuers. Accordingly, at the dead of night, the waters of the gulf were miraculously divided, and stood up on either

hand like a wall, to afford the surrounded Hebrews a passage to the other side. Nor

which turned its radiant side to the former, and left the latter in utter darkness. This



MIRACULOUS PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.—Ex. xiv. 22.

was this all: for, to protect their rear, and to guide their passage, there was a miraculous cloud placed between them and the Egyptians,

"pillar of cloud" had been before, and was after, their guide, as a mass of cloud by day and of flame by night.

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THE LAST NIGHT IN EGYPT.

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No sooner did the Egyptians perceive the escape of the Israelites, than, with unparalleled hardihood, they hastened to pursue them by the open path through the waters. The whole host was in the channel, when He who had by His might upheld the waters, withdrew His hand, and instantly the vast void was filled, and the host of Pharaoh was overwhelmed by the returning waters. The ransomed Hebrews stood safely on the other side, and witnessed this great overthrow and destruction of their enemies. Their confidence in both their Divine and human leader was restored, and they heartily joined with Moses in the noble song of triumph with which he celebrated this great event, while all the virgins of Israel followed Miriam with timbrels, dances, and exulting chants for this signal deliverance.

The Power that Parted the Waters.

The reader is doubtless aware that there has been much dispute respecting the part of the Gulf of Suez at which the passage of the Israelites took place. The course of the account we have given has been to place it at a point several miles below the end of the gulf (probably at Ain Mousa), where the waters are of considerable depth. Many scholars and travellers have, however, strenuously contended that the passage took place at a point near Suez, where the ebb of the tide still leaves a practicable passage across the gulf. The difficulties of this notion are, to our minds, so insuperable, that it seems hard to understand how it can be held for a moment by the many gifted and pious persons by whom we know that it is entertained.

If there ever was a special interposition of Divine Providence, or, in other words, a miracle, it was this passage of the Red Sea; nor is there any single event in Scripture which the sacred writers so repeatedly declare to be such. The condition of the ford at Suez was either the same then as now, or it was not. If it was not, the grounds which are now alleged for making this the point of passage, rather than at any other place, could not then

exist; and if it were, there was no need of the miracle which is declared to have taken place; and the sacred writers are subjected to the serious imputation of claiming as a miracle a natural phenomenon of daily occurrence. If they had made such a claim, as they did, while the persons who had actually passed the sea were still living, while they still remained in the neighborhood, and when the facts of the case could not be hidden from them, the prophet would have been laughed to scorn who told them they were delivered by a miracle.

More than this, the Hebrews had been at least two days, if not three, encamped in front of this very spot, and could not fail to observe that it was twice a day left dry by the ebb of the tide. How then was it, in this case, that both they and the Egyptians deemed that no means of escape from their "entanglement" existed? And how was it that the Egyptians pursued the Hebrews, when they must have been acquainted with the condition of the tide, and could not but know that it would return upon them before they could get across? In that case, would not any man have preferred to have ridden around the beach, and attacked the Hebrews on the other side, as they came up from the bed of the gulf? These objections to the view which has of late years become popular, have never been fairly met and answered, nor do we believe that they are answerable.

A Wandering Nation.

Several wells of water are found at Ain Mousa, "the Fountain of Moses," where we assume that the Israelites encamped after passing the sea. Dr. Robinson, our eminent American scholar, counted seven; but some of them were mere recent excavations in the sand, in which a little brackish water was standing. Other of the wells are older and more abundant; but the water is dark-colored and brackish, and deposits a hard substance as it rises, so that mounds have been formed around these larger springs, at the top of which the water flows out, and runs down for

a few yards till it is lost in the sand. The
Arabs call the northernmost of these springs

rather palm-bushes, grow around in the arid
sand, and give diversity to the desert scene.



MIRIAM'S SONG OF TRIUMPH.—EX. xv. 20.

sweet, but the traveller could not perceive that
they differed much from the others. About
twenty stunted and untrimmed palm-trees, or

At this place (as we suppose) the Israelites
remained some days to refresh their spirits,
and to gather the harvest of the deep, which

was obtained from the costly spoils of the Egyptians whose bodies were washed to the shore.

After leaving the shore where they had crossed the sea, the emancipated Israelites proceeded on their journey towards the Sinai mountains, among whose solitudes they were destined to be organized as a nation, and to receive such training as was needful to fit them for the peculiar destinies which lay before them.

Their journey at first lay over "a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony alternately. On the right hand their eyes rested on the deep blue waters of the gulf so lately divided for their sake, while on their left hand lay mountain-chains, stretching away to a great distance as the pilgrims advanced. In about nine miles they would enter upon a boundless desert plain, now called El Ati, white and painfully glaring to the eye. Proceeding beyond this, the ground became hilly, with sand-hills near the coast."

Bitter Waters of Marah.

By the time they had traversed this region for three days, the water, which they had doubtless brought with them from Ain Mousa, became exhausted, and they hastened forward gladly to the well of Marah, which at length appeared to promise the water of which they stood so much in need. They found the water of this well too bitter to drink; and seeing no prospect of relief, they, who had all their lives been accustomed to drink their fill from the pleasant water of the Nile, quailed under this privation, and openly vented their discontent against Moses for having brought them into this miserable region. The water of Marah is of unpleasant taste, saltish, and somewhat bitter, and must have been intolerable to persons not yet accustomed to bad water. Moses was directed by the Lord to cast into the well the branches of a certain unnamed "tree," which grew near; and when he had done this, the water became fit for use.

Proceeding on their way, the country became more pleasant, and before them, as they ad-

vanced, the appearance of seventy palm-trees promised a supply of naturally good water, which is seldom absent where palm-trees grow. They were not disappointed, for twelve wells were found on the spot, which have the name of Elim. Here is a valley, through which a torrent flows in winter. This valley is deeper and decked more profusely with trees and shrubs than any which the Israelites had yet passed. A few palm-trees are still found there, but tamarisks and acacias are more common. The fountains, lying above a mile out of the common route, are not visited by travellers, but water brought from them by attendant Arabs is, like all the water of this region, somewhat brackish. This is still one of the regular watering-places of the Arabs. After leaving Elim, the Hebrews entered upon a more rugged country, called "the wilderness of Sinai, which is between Elim and Sinai." In this part of their route they had to pass through a plain or valley, formed by the roots of the El Tyh mountains on the left hand, and a chain of mountains which border the Red Sea on the right hand and shut out all view of and access to it. Having passed through this valley, the Hebrews came out again upon the shore of the Red Sea, and there encamped.

By this time a month had passed since the Hebrews had quitted Egypt, and the provisions which they had brought with them from that country were quite spent. This soon threw them upon their usual and most disgraceful complaints against Moses, and, by implication, against the God who had wrought such great wonders for their sakes. The abundance of Egypt rose before their minds, and they scrupled not to avow that the bondage, sweetened by the plenty, of that country, was, in their eyes, better than the glorious liberty, accompanied by privation, to which they had now attained. Yet while our indignation rises at the sight of a people so unworthy of, and so unable to appreciate, the freedom bestowed upon them, let us still remember that this enervation of soul was a natural and perhaps inevitable result of the enslaved con-

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The answer to their murmurs was, the seemingly incredible promise that they should have meat to excess before the evening closed. Accordingly that very evening a wind arose, the direction of which brought to the camp an immense flight of quails, which, being weary, flew so heavily and low, that vast numbers of them were secured by the greedy Israelites, who were thus enabled to feed abundantly on a kind of game which was highly prized in Egypt.

Bread from Heaven.

Nor was this all, for when they arose the next morning the Israelites found the ground covered with an appearance like that of hoar frost, which, on examination, appeared to be composed of grains of a pearl color and of the form and size of coriander seeds. They asked one another, "What is this?" (*Man-lu*), whence the name of Manna was given to this unknown substance. They were told that this was the "bread" with which they should henceforth be supplied every morning till the sources of natural supply from corn were open to them. Every family was directed to collect what it deemed an adequate supply; and those who collected more than enough found their labor useless, as any portion which remained over the day corrupted and was spoiled.

And yet, as if on purpose to evince the entirely miraculous nature of this provision, this quality of the manna was intermitted once in every week: for none of it fell on the Sabbath, but a double portion came and was gathered on the preceding day, and that which was not consumed on the first day continued fresh through the second. In the preparation for food this substance was dealt with like ordinary grain. It was reduced to meal by being ground in hand-mills or pounded in mortars, and it was then kneaded and baked in loaves and cakes after the usual manner. And yet, although thus prepared for food by baking, such of the manna

as remained ungathered on the ground dissolved away daily in the heat of the sun.

Eventually, also, a quantity of the manna was laid up in a golden pot in the holy place for a memorial; and, to answer the purpose of a memorial, it must have retained its original shape, although in the one instance it corrupted and in the other dissolved in a single day. Under these circumstances no one who receives the books of Moses as the truth of God can doubt that the manna, by which the Israelites were fed for forty years, was altogether miraculously supplied, or that the substance itself was altogether miraculous. It was the Divine method of supplying the wants of the people who were in the wilderness.

Any attempt to explain this matter on natural grounds involves greater difficulties than the miracle itself. Thus, it has been attempted to show that the manna was the exudation from certain trees which grow sparingly in that region. But if the gummy distillation from these trees even did correspond to the description of the manna, how were the circumstances which constitute all that requires a miracle—how are these to be accounted for? Where, above all, shall we look for the interminable forests of manniferous trees which supplied two or three millions of people with daily and unfailing provision at all times of the year and in all their wanderings?

The manna seems to have had a sweetish taste, for the bread made from it is described as being similar to the finest corn bread made with honey or with oil.

The Hebrews in the Wilderness.

In the leading narrative in Exodus, the next station, after the one distinguished by these memorable circumstances, is Rephidim. This is because that was the next station at which any remarkable circumstance occurred. We find the Israelites giving way to another outbreak of murmuring and discontent at Rephidim. The cause was the want of water; and this time their discontent grew to such a height that they were almost ready to stone

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The usual appeal to the Lord was the only

another signal miracle in their behalf. Moses
was instructed to take with him certain elders
of the people, and proceed up the valley till



SMITING THE ROCK.—Ex. xvii. 6.

resource of Moses in this emergency. The he came to a certain rock, which he was to
Lord, still merciful and forbearing towards his smite with his rod. He did so: and imme-
wayward people, delayed not to perform diately the smitten rock poured forth a stream

of water, which flowed down the valley to the Hebrew camp, and furnished an abundant supply to all the host. Moses called that place Massah, signifying "temptation," because the Israelites there tempted God; and Meribah, meaning "strife," because of the contention which there arose.

The rock which Moses smote, and from which the water flowed, is pointed out to travellers in a narrow valley in the upper region of Sinai. It is a large isolated cube of coarse red granite, which appears to have fallen down from the eastern mountain. Down its front, in an oblique line from top to bottom, runs a seam of a finer texture, from twelve to fifteen inches broad, having in it several horizontal crevices, somewhat resembling the human mouth, one above another. These are said to be twelve in number, but Dr. Robinson could only make out ten. The seam extends quite through the rock, and is visible on the opposite or back side. The holes are usually said to be manifestly artificial, but did not appear to be so to this traveller, by whom they were particularly examined. They belong rather to the nature of the seam; yet it is probable that some of them may have been enlarged by artificial means.

The rock is a singular one, and doubtless was selected on account of this very singularity as the scene of the miracle. There is no reason to suppose that this was really the rock from which the water flowed, but there is every possible reason to the contrary. Rephidim is in the very heart of the uppermost region of Sinai, where perennial springs abound, and no such supply could be needed: because there was no room for the hosts of Israel in the narrow valleys of this upper region: because when at Rephidim the Hebrews were still a day's journey from the Mount under which they finally encamped: and because the attack which was made upon the Israelites at Rephidim was scarcely possible in this upper region. The people who made that attack are known to have had a principal seat in the Wady Feiran,

which lies on the outskirts of the more mountainous region. The position of this valley agrees with all the circumstances of the history.

The Hebrews Meeting Enemies.

Hitherto the Hebrews had been unmolested by the inhabitants of the country they had entered, which seems to have been then, as at present, inhabited only by tribes of Bedouin or semi-Bedouin habits. To such a people the Hebrew host, weak by its very numbers, imperfectly organized, encumbered with women, children, old men, and flocks, and laden with valuable property, including the spoils of the Egyptians—must have seemed to offer an easy and valuable prey. The tribe which headed this attempt was that of the Amalekites, who had at least a temporary seat in the valley where the Hebrews lay encamped beside the waters which the smitten rock gave forth for their use.

It seems that the Amalekites had in the first instance fallen upon the weakest part of the host of Israel, when "faint and weary," and that it was this which induced Moses to order Joshua, a valiant young man who was attendant on his own person, to draw out a party of choice men against the following morning, and with them engage the Amalekites. This being the first warlike action in which the Israelites were engaged, was to them no light matter; and, therefore, to encourage the young commander, Moses promised to stand on the top of the hill, in view of the warriors, with the rod of God in his hands.

The next morning when Joshua went forth to engage the Amalekites, Moses proceeded to the hill-top, accompanied by his brother Aaron and by Hur, holding in his hand the rod with which such wonders had been wrought in Egypt and at the Red Sea. He held it up as an ensign, and from the sight of it the warring Israelites gathered confidence and strength; but when the weariness of the prophet's arm prevented him from holding it up longer, they became disheartened and gave way to the Amalekites. Perceiving this, the companions of Moses supported his arm, and

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the rod being no longer dropped, the Israelites prevailed till the Amalekites fled before them. The history of Israel records no resentment so implacable and deep as that with which this

The Israelites were much encouraged by this success of their first martial enterprise. The circumstances were, by the Divine command, recorded in a book, in which also a



HOLDING UP THE HANDS OF MOSES.—EX. xvii. 12.

first assault upon them in the day of their weakness was regarded, and the two nations remained bitter enemies so long as the Amalekites continued to exist as a distinct people.

direful remembrance against Amalek was written down. Moses also erected an altar whereon to offer sacrifices of thankfulness, and in memorial of the victory: and he gave it the

name of Jehovah-nissi, "the Lord is my Banner," in allusion to the lifting up of the rod upon the hill.

Before they quitted this place, Jethro, with whom Moses had lived so many long years in Midian, came to visit his now illustrious son-in-law, whose wife and sons he brought with him. This must have been a great satisfaction to Moses. He gave Jethro an account of all the wonders which the Lord had done for his people, and of all the kindness He had

Moses sat all day long administering justice among the people, the old sheikh strongly censured this waste of strength, and advised them to appoint inferior magistrates, in a gradually ascending scale, who should hear and determine all ordinary causes, and only refer matters of great difficulty, and, in the last resort, to him. Moses saw the excellence of this advice, and, after obtaining the Divine sanction, proceeded to put it in execution, to the great comfort of himself and the people.



MEETING OF MOSES AND JETHRO.—Ex. xviii. 7.

shown them: whereat, the pious old man gave praise to God, and in his priestly character offered solemn sacrifices of adoration, in which act Moses, Aaron (who was not yet a priest) and the elders of Israel joined: and they then feasted together.

Great as Moses was, in all that constitutes true greatness in man, he was not above taking hints from the experience of the aged Jethro for the better government of the nation now under his guidance. Observing that

Having seen this matter settled to his satisfaction, Jethro took his leave and returned to his own land.

The Israelites appear to have remained about a month at Rephidim, and then departed; and in about three months from their quitting Egypt reached the mount where the Lord had first appeared to Moses, and encamped before it. This was the place where the descendants of Abraham were to receive the laws and instructions necessary to fit them

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for the peculiar position which they were to occupy among the nations of the world.

The instructions through which the Israelites were to be moulded into a peculiar nation commenced by Moses being called up into the mountain to receive the Divine communications. Here the leading principle of the great compact between the Lord and his people was opened to him, and he was required to return and demand the formal assent of the people to it. The principle was this: the people on their part were required to forsake every false way—the ways of idolatry; and to worship, fear, and serve Jehovah only: and then He, on his part, would become, in a peculiar sense, *their* God—theirs by especial covenant: and not only their God, but their political Head, their King, dwelling among them by manifest symbols of presence, and directing their public affairs by oracles delivered to appointed ministers, by which they would become eminently *his* people, a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation.

The Solemn Covenant.

The people having solemnly accepted this covenant, the Lord then announced his intention, as their king, to issue a code of laws for their government; the fundamental principles of which He would publicly deliver in the audience of all the people. This was done in order to authenticate the further communications to be made through Moses alone, and to

make the people sensible that it was more expedient for them that the Divine commands should be imparted to them through him than by more direct communication. Not that God, who is a Spirit, purposed to make himself visible to the people. No: they should behold the veil only which hid the glory of his presence—the thick clouds darkening upon the mountain, and a voice issuing from the midst of them.

But before the Israelites could formally appear in the presence of the Lord, it was needful that they should be purified. Two days were given them to make their garments and their persons clean, and on the third they were to stand before the mountain and receive the Divine commands. But the presence of God upon the mountain would render it a most holy place, which feet unconsecrated might not tread: therefore bounds were set around the base of the mountain, beyond which no one, under pain of death, might pass.

At length the great day arrived. The people stood in solemn expectation around the mountain, which was already enveloped in thick clouds, which shot forth vivid lightnings and uttered mighty thunders. At length the sound of angelic trumpets announced the coming Presence. God descended in fire, and the mountain quaked beneath his feet; while the face of the mount was enveloped in flame and smoke.



CHAPTER IX.

SUBLIME SCENES AT SINAI.



LONG blast was sounded by the trumpet, and then, after a solemn pause, was heard that voice which then shook the earth, and shall hereafter shake heaven also. The words first uttered were—"I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt; out of the house of bondage." And, then, in that character, he proceeded to declare the ten commandments, regarded as the text and basis of the law afterwards to be laid down in more detail. The mode of communication, through Moses, for the future, was at the express wish of the people themselves, who were very much alarmed at the awful circumstances and stringent limitations of this high audience. They said to Moses—"Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." This was accordingly done in all subsequent communications with the people.

The prophet went up into the mountain, and received there the Divine words which, on his return, he made known to the people, and then wrote down in a book. In the present case, after Moses had written down the terms of the covenant, he read them to the people, as if it were to receive their final ratification of its contents. This they gave in the unanimous response, "All the words which the Lord hath said unto us we will do." This public act of recognition having taken place, Moses, who still acted as their priest, proceeded to confirm

and seal it in the most solemn manner known in ancient times, namely, by sacrifices. An altar was erected, and twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes, were set up; sacrifices were then offered; and Moses having once more read the covenant and the laws, and received the same answers, proceeded to sprinkle the people with the blood of the sacrifices, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." No covenant could be more deliberately entered into, or more bindingly confirmed, than this. We shall see, as we proceed, how it was kept on the part of the Israelites.

After this, Moses went up in the mountain attended by his brother Aaron, the two eldest sons of Aaron, and by seventy of the elders of Israel, as if formally to communicate to the invisible King the final acceptance of the covenant by the people of Israel. They ate and drank there upon the mountain, as was usual in the completion of human covenants, and those who were with Moses were permitted to behold the manifest indications of the Divine presence, and were thereby deeply impressed.

Moses Hidden Within the Cloud.

At a distance they beheld "the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." Moses was permitted to advance nearer to this glorious manifestation than the others; and was then enjoined to bring up two tablets of stone, on which God himself would write the words of the ten commandments, which involved the obligations of the completed covenant. This was evidently for the purpose of giving the most permanent and impeding form of record to that great compact.

When Moses went up next with the required

tablets of stone, he was accompanied only by Joshua, his personal attendant, who was directed to tarry at a distance while the prophet entered the more immediate presence of God. He was then hidden by the cloud which enveloped the mountain, and was capped by "devouring fire," which flamed upon the mountain top. This flaming appearance was called "the glory of the Lord."

sisted by Hur, until he should return. His long absence, however, created uneasiness among the people, and they at length gave him up for lost, concluding that he had been consumed by the fire which still glowed upon the mountain. They then went on to conclude that this loss left them to their own plans and resources, and their first act was to release themselves from the abstract and spiritual wor-

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WORSHIPPING A STRANGE GOD.—Ex. xix. 25.

Moses was forty days and nights in the mountain, and during this time he received full and particular directions respecting the priesthood and the ecclesiastical establishment which he was to organize for the people whom he had brought out of Egypt. Moses had been aware that his absence would be of unusual duration, and, therefore, he had delegated his authority to his brother Aaron, as-

ship which had been imposed upon them, and to betake themselves to the worship of God through such visible images and symbols as they had accustomed themselves to in Egypt.

They were not yet content to separate the idea of God from an image symbolizing his attributes. This may seem strange to us; but it was the notion in which this generation had grown up, and they found it not easy to

dissociate ideas which habit had connected. When, therefore, they said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods that they may go before us!" they did not intend to abandon Jehovah, but to have manifest to their senses such an image or symbol representing him, as other nations had of the gods they worshipped. But this had been strictly forbidden in the foremost of the commandments which they had so recently received, and which they had so solemnly pledged themselves to obey.

The reason of this prohibition is clear. Such images degraded the Godhead, associated Him with the false gods similarly represented, created the danger of transferring the worship to such other gods, and even to the very image which in its origin may have been intended for only a representative symbol. The crime and error were, however, in this case much heightened by being in such gross violation of the solemn covenant whereby the Lord had made the Hebrews his peculiar people. That, however, no direct or conscious revolt against the political authority of Jehovah was intended, is shown by the fact that the application was made to Aaron, and that his sanction was in the first place required.

Jewels for the Golden Calf.

Aaron proved unequal to this great emergency. He feared that the authority committed to him, and now acknowledged by the people, would be lost in the attempt to stem so strong a current of popular feeling. He therefore yielded to it, and contented himself with the hope of being able to make the Lord still the final end and object of all their worship. His policy was indeed that so often since, and probably before, followed—of leading public opinion and subjecting it to useful influences by yielding to it, instead of opposing its encroachments. He demanded their rings with which to fabricate the image they required; perhaps calculating that some reluctance to part with their personal ornaments would cool their ardor in this matter. If this were his thought he was mistaken.

They readily divested themselves of their

ornaments for the purpose; and Aaron fashioned with them the image of "a golden calf," obviously an imitation of the Egyptian ex-god Apis, or rather, perhaps, of the Mnevis of Lower Egypt. It is probably a mistake to suppose that this image was all of gold. No images wholly of metal appear to have been known in that country, and the mention of its being "fashioned with a graving tool," as well as all the subsequent circumstances, imply that the image was carved in wood and then overlaid with gold. This explanation, entirely consistent as it is with the text, and with the state of the arts at the time, removes many difficulties which have arisen from the notion that the image was wholly of molten gold.

This image Aaron presented to the people, and that its final object might not be forgotten, he immediately proclaimed a feast to Jehovah. That this feast was celebrated before the image is alone sufficient to establish the correctness of the interpretation which has been given. It was, however, celebrated with observances proper to the worship of the Egyptian idol, the form of which had been borrowed. We are told "the people rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play:" and afterwards they are described as singing and dancing before the golden calf. So, as known from ancient writers, the most popular rites of the ancient Egyptians were of the nature of orgies; and the fundamental character of their religion was what, for want of a better word, may be called Bacclianalian—not, indeed, in the modern sense of mere drunkenness, but as including all sorts of sport and merriment.

When these melancholy transactions had arrived at this consummation, Moses was abruptly dismissed from the mountain, with the intimation, "Go, get thee down, for *thy* people, whom *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves, and have turned quickly aside out of the way which I commanded." The prophet understood the terrible emphasis of the pronouns here employed; doubt was not indeed possible, for the Lord

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EXODUS CHAP. XX

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 Thou shalt have no other
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II.
 Thou shalt not make unto
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 any likeness of any thing
 that is in heaven above, or
 that is in the earth be-
 neath, or that is in the water
 under the earth: thou shalt
 not bow down thyself to
 them, nor serve them: for
 I the Lord thy God am a
 Jealous God, visiting the
 iniquity of the fathers upon
 the children unto the third
 and fourth generation of
 them that hate me; and
 shewing mercy unto thou-
 sands of them that love me,
 and keep my command-
 ments.

III.
 Thou shalt not take the
 name of the Lord thy God
 in vain: for the Lord will
 not hold him guiltless that
 taketh his name in vain.

IV.
 Remember the sabbath-
 day to keep it holy. Six
 days shalt thou labour, and
 do all thy work: but the
 seventh day is the sab-
 bath of the Lord thy
 God: in it thou
 shalt not do
 any work,
 thou,

nor thy son, nor thy daugh-
 ter, thy maid-servant, nor thy
 cattle, nor thy stranger
 that is within thy gates:
 for in six days the Lord
 made heaven and earth,
 the sea and all that in
 them is, and rested the
 seventh day: wherefore
 the Lord blessed the sab-
 bath-day, and hallowed it.

V.
 Honour thy father and
 thy mother, that thy days
 may be long upon the land
 which the Lord thy God
 giveth thee.

VI.
 Thou shalt not kill.

VII.
 Thou shalt not commit
 adultery.

VIII.
 Thou shalt not steal.

IX.
 Thou shalt not bear false
 witness against thy neigh-
 bour.

X.
 Thou shalt not covet thy
 neighbour's house, thou
 shalt not covet thy neigh-
 bour's wife, nor his maid-
 servant, nor his ox, nor his
 ass, nor any thing that is
 thy neighbour's.

MOSES WITH THE TABLES OF THE LAW.—EX. XX. 1-17.

added: "Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." But the latter alternative had no charm for the noble-minded prophet, who ventured reverently to represent that whatever evil befell the race of Israel in the wilderness would, in the estimation of the heathen, reflect discredit on Him in whose high name their deliverance had been effected.

The Ten Commandments.

This plea prevailed; and the prophet went down from the mountain, bearing in his hands the tablets of stone, on which the words of the ten commandments were now engraven by the hand of God. Joshua joined him in the descent. As they drew within ear-shot of the camp, Joshua distinguished a great noise in the distance, and remarked, "There is a noise of war in the camp." But the prophet answered, bitterly, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the voice of them that sing do I hear." A little further advance brought them in view of the whole affair, with the people dancing and shouting around their idol; on which the prophet, in the intensity of his indignation, flung from him the tablets of the law, which were broken in pieces, and hastened forward into the midst of the infatuated crowd, which, confused and humbled at his sudden reappearance, cowered before him, and submitted quietly to his discretion. He laid his hands upon their idol and cast it into the fire, and then the calcined mass was reduced to powder and strewed upon the waters, so that the votaries were constrained to drink their own abomination.

The painful duty then remained to Moses of calling his elder brother to account for his part in this shameful transaction. Aaron replied by giving a confused explanation of the matter, as favorable to himself as he could make it; and in a tone which would not lead us to expect from him that force of character which he afterwards found opportunities of manifesting.

A Cry from the Gate of the Camp.

After this Moses placed himself at the gate of the camp, and cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come to me!" This summons could only be answered by those who had not polluted themselves in the matter of the golden calf; and it was only answered by the men of Levi, his own tribe, who gathered around him at that call. These Moses ordered to take their swords and go through the camp, executing summary justice upon the people. And they did so, with rigid impartiality, sparing neither friend nor foe whom they could recognize as having taken a forward part in the worship of the idol. The number they slew was three thousand.

Yet the Divine indignation had not wholly turned away; and Moses, knowing this, returned to the mountain to intercede for them. He said, "Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." The answer to this noble and touching supplication was such as we might expect from the justice of God. "Who-soever hath sinned against me, *him* will I blot out of my book."

The Lord then further intimated that, although the descendants of Abraham should be conducted to the land promised to their fathers, He would no longer take the direct charge of them, lest his anger at their iniquities should break forth to their destruction, but would leave them to the guidance of an angel. When the people heard this—when their highest privilege was threatened to be taken from them—they began to be sensible of its value, and they mourned greatly. Moses himself withdrew the public tent from among them, and pitched it on the outside of the camp, and the people laid aside all their ornaments, and stood as mourners and criminals to abide their final doom. It was favorable. The plea of Moses prevailed, and the Lord promised to receive them again into his protection and peculiar care.

After this Moses was required to repair

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again to the mountain, there to receive two other tables of stone, in the place of those which had been broken, with the ten commandments engraven upon them. The people were tried forty days more, during which Moses remained in the mount; but this time they continued steady, having been much bettered by the correction they had received.

During his absence Moses received the two "tables of testimony;" the Lord thus renewing the covenant with the Israelites which their misconduct had broken. At the same time the promise of conducting them to the land of Canaan, and of making them triumphant over all their enemies, was renewed. They were, however, strictly enjoined not to imitate the idolatrous customs of the inhabitants of the land which was to be given to them, and were commanded to destroy every monument of idolatry, however costly. They were not to contract any treaties of alliance, friendship, or marriage with idolaters. They were especially warned against falling again into the crime of making an image to represent God. Moses also received a number of ceremonial precepts, which he was directed to write in a book; and being in this and the previous interview fully instructed in all the design of God respecting his people, at the end of forty days he descended to the camp.

The Hebrews Pressing Forward.

At length the long term of wandering drew near its close. All but a few of those who were above twenty years of age at the time of the Exodus were now dead; and those who were then under that age had by this time reached the wane of life or were even old and gray-headed. The active men forming the new generation had been born in the desert, and had none of those Egyptian reminiscences which had been the bane of their fathers, nor had their spirit been, like theirs, bent down under the yoke of bondage. They were a better and more manly generation. And it may be fair to attribute the misconduct into which they fell to the influence of the older men, who were not entirely free from the

Egyptian taint, having been from ten to twenty years of age when the Israelites quitted the "house of bondage."

As the appointed time drew nigh in which they were to receive possession of their heritage, we find the hosts of Israel again approaching the south of Palestine and encamping at their old station in Kadesh Barnea. Here Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, died and was buried. And here, the waters of the neighborhood having become exhausted, the people gave vent to complaints painfully similar to those in which the past generation had been too apt to indulge. They were not, however, punished, probably because the want by which they were moved to complain was real and urgent. Moses and Aaron were directed to *speak* to the rock, and told that waters should break forth at their word. Not content with merely speaking to the rock, which would much have enhanced the glory of the miracle, they *struck* it twice with vehemence, and not without impatient expressions. The waters came forth at the stroke: but the behavior of the brothers on this occasion was displeasing to God, who declared that for this neither of them should enter the Promised Land. This seems a severe sentence. But it is to be borne in mind that the eyes of all Israel were upon these two men, and any indication in them of want of confidence, or of laxity in interpretation of the Divine commands, was likely to have the most dangerous consequences upon the minds and habits of the people, unless rephended and punished.

The Host Driven Back.

Soon after it became evident to the leaders of the Hebrews that the Canaanites were too strong in the south to make it expedient for the untrained Israelites to invade the land in that quarter. It was therefore concluded to pass over into the country east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, and, by crossing the river, invade the land in its most vulnerable quarter. To this end it was desirable that the host should pass to the east country, through one of the valleys which intersect the moun-

tains of Seir. These mountains were then, and long before, occupied by the descendants of Esau, under the name of Edomites; and to their king Moses sent a deputation with a very civil request for permission to pass through his territory. He was reminded of their com-



MOSES REHEARSING HIS SONG TO THE HEBREWS.—Deut. xxxii.

Esau, under the name of Edomites; and to their king Moses sent a deputation with a very civil request for permission to pass through his territory. He was reminded of their com-

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xxii.

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pacific intentions, and that they would pay for whatever they required on the march, and abstain from touching even the wells of water without payment.

But the king returned a very sharp refusal, and manifested an intention to resist by force of arms any attempt of the Israelites to pass through the valley to which their attention seems to have been turned. Out of regard to their brotherhood the Israelites were forbidden to force a passage, and directed to return down towards the head of the Elanitic Gulf, and then pass eastward, and make their way to the north through the plains which lie beyond the mountains of Seir on the east.

Death of Aaron.

In retracing their steps they had to pass Mount Hor, the loftiest and most conspicuous of all the Seir mountains. In front of this they rested; and it was here that Aaron received the intimation that the end of his life's journey had arrived. He was required to proceed to the summit of the mountain, "and die there." Accordingly, he ascended to the mountain top, arrayed in his pontifical vestments, and attended by Moses and Eleazar. He was there divested of his robes, which were placed upon his son, and then, after one look towards the land from which he was excluded, the utmost borders of which he could view from this high place, he resigned his spirit to God, and his corpse was buried there upon the mountain by Moses and Eleazar.

Thirty days the host of Israel mourned for the high-priest; and then they pursued their way.

On again continuing their way through a region parched with excessive drought, and destitute of water, the Israelites, who had hoped that when they arrived at Kadesh they had quitted the wilderness forever, and were about to enter the Promised Land, began to murmur at the weary march before them, and to utter sharp invectives, not only against Moses, but against the Lord. This new provocation brought immediate punishment, for the Lord sent among them fiery serpents, by

which many of the people were bitten and died. The serpents are called "fiery" from their color, as some suppose, resembling polished brass, or, as others conceive, from the intense and fatal inflammation which their bites produced. Naturalists suppose this serpent to be the hooded snake, the hood of which, when inflated, has sufficiently the appearance of wings to explain the epithet "flying," which is applied to these serpents.

The Brazen Serpent.

By this terrible judgment the people were made sensible of their fault, and implored Moses to intercede for the removal of the serpents. This he readily did. The serpents, however, were not immediately removed, but relief was granted after a very peculiar manner. Moses was directed to make a serpent of brass, similar in form to those which had bitten the people, and to fix it upon a pole or standard, which was to be set up in a conspicuous part of the camp. Every one then who was bitten, and raised his eyes to this brazen serpent, was healed of his deadly wound and lived. No means could be less suited than this in itself to give relief. And therefore it was merely designed that the sufferers should by this token express their dependence upon God, and that they looked to him alone for help and cure. If we may conceive that any wanted faith in this seemingly unlikely means of cure, and neglected to look up to the brazen serpent, he undoubtedly perished in his misbelief. It may thus be seen with what exquisite fitness Jesus refers to the brazen serpent as a symbol of himself: "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

After this the Israelites proceeded quietly on their way, without any event of consequence till they reached the brook Zared, which flows into the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. Here they paused a while, and then proceeded to the Arnon, through the territories in the actual possession of the Moabites, who seem

to have wanted the power more than the inclination to oppose their march. Beyond the Arnon lay the territory of which the Canaanitish nation called the Amorites had at some previous period dispossessed the Moabites, but which is still called in Scripture "the land of Moab."

Without troubling themselves with antecedent questions, the Israelites, recognizing the actual possessors, applied to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, for permission to march through his territories to the banks of the Jordan, beyond which lay the region against which their conquering mission was directed. Sihon, however, being related to and in alliance with the nations beyond the river, was by no means disposed to grant this permission, but took the field to oppose their march. This brought on the first battle fought by the new generation of the Israelites. They were victorious; Sihon was defeated, taken prisoner, and slain; and the conquerors took possession of his dominion, with all its towns.

Og, the Giant of Bashan.

This conquest necessitated another. For they were attacked in their new possession by Og, the king of Bashan, who was in alliance with Sihon, and whom the Jabbok now only separated from the Israelites. This Og was "of the race of the giants;" and to give some idea of his height, we are told that his bedstead was thirteen and a half feet long by six feet broad, and that it was of iron, to sustain his enormous weight. This bedstead was long after preserved, as a curiosity and muniment, at the capital town of Rabbah. This gigantic monarch must have seemed very formidable to the Israelites; but over him also they were victors. Thus, contrary to their original intention, the Israelites came into possession of a fine and fertile country, extending from the Arnon to Mount Hermon, and full of cities "fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwall'd towns a great many." The host, however, was not allowed to disperse itself over the new possession, desirable as it was, but remained encamped in "the plains of

Moab," which lay immediately east of the northern part of the Dead Sea, and the lower course of the Jordan.

The neighboring Moabites viewed these transactions with discontent and alarm; discontent at seeing the Israelites in possession of a country which had formerly belonged to themselves, and alarm at the settlement on their border of a people so powerful, as compared with themselves, and so manifestly favored by Heaven. Moab is a district to the east of the Dead Sea, on the River Arnon. Particular attention has been recently drawn to it by the discovery of the Moabite stone, and the light which its inscription throws upon Scripture. The prophecies concerning Moab are numerous and remarkable, and, says Mr. Keith, who confirms his statement by unexceptionable evidence, "there is scarcely a single feature peculiar to the land of Moab as it now exists which was not marked by the prophets in delineating the low condition to which, from the height of its wickedness and haughtiness, it was not finally to be brought down."

The Moabites were governed by a king called Balak, who was eager to attack the Israelites in their camp, but was afraid to do so while they, even as he felt, enjoyed the assurance of victory in the Divine favor. There lived beyond the Euphrates a person called Balaam, who enjoyed a high reputation as one whose curse was irresistible for evil, and his blessing for good.

To this person Balak sent a deputation, with costly gifts, inviting him to come and lay his curse upon the strangers, whom the message described in terms which give a good notion of the point of view in which the Israelites were regarded by the natives in their neighborhood: "There is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the land, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that we may drive them out of the land."

CHAPTER X.

BALAAM AND THE ANGEL.



BALAAM was very willing to have gone, for he was covetous of the gain and honor which the adventure offered. But he knew that he durst not go uncommissioned; and the commission being refused him, he was constrained reluctantly to dismiss the ambassadors with this refusal. The king of Moab, however, felt too deeply interested to abandon his object. He fancied that his offers had not been high enough to tempt the known cupidity of the prophet. He therefore sent another embassy, composed of persons of higher rank, bearing richer gifts and with promises of higher rewards. The prophet was moved. But he still replied, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."

Still, however, anxious to comply, he invited them to remain in his house till he should once more have inquired the will of God. In this he did wrong, for he ought at once to have been satisfied that God, who changeth not, would not allow him to curse a people whom he had so lately declared to be in the enjoyment of his blessing. Besides, his alacrity to undertake for the love of gain what would have been to an upright prophet a painful duty, was alone likely to be very displeasing to the Most High. Nevertheless, still further to try him, he was told, when he renewed his application, that he might go.

Joyfully did he then quit his bed early in the morning, and saddle his ass to accompany the messengers. All went on very well for a time; but at length, on passing by a narrow

way on the journey, the ass, hitherto so docile, became suddenly restive, and refused, even by the urgency of blows, to proceed any further. But as Balaam with great passion persisted in forcing the animal on, the mouth of the dumb beast was opened, and he spoke, with most miraculous organ rebuking the conduct of the prophet. At the same time, an angel standing in the way with a drawn sword, the sight of whom had prevented the ass from proceeding, became visible to Balaam, and filled him with dread. After a severe reprehension from the angel, he was allowed to complete his journey, but with a strict injunction to act and speak on his arrival only as authorized.

The king of Moab rejoiced to see him, and deemed the great object of his present policy secured by his arrival. But his gladness was somewhat damped when Balaam acquainted him with the conditions under which he had come. Afterwards the king and the prophet offered seven victims upon as many altars, and Balaam viewed the camp of the Israelites from the high places of Baal. Gladly would he have laid his curse upon them: but a mighty force was on him, and, to the great disappointment of the king, he was constrained to open his mouth in blessings. Having pacified the king by explaining the inevitable necessity under which he acted, the latter took him to a different eminence where he could only behold a portion of the camp, hoping that this part might be abandoned to his curse. But the same thing happened as before; and when the king took the prophet to yet another mountain, whence only the outskirts of the camp could be viewed, he was constrained not only to bless the Israelites, but to curse their enemies. On this the king's patience was exhausted, and he sharply commanded Balaam to depart to his own house. But again he

was somewhat calmed by Balaam's reiterated declaration of his inability to say one word more or less than the Divine influence put

boring nations to the Israelites, especially in the time of David, who is not obscurely pointed out in terms which, although they



BALAAM MET BY THE ANGEL.—Num. xxii. 31.

into his mouth; and he allowed the prophet to proceed, and declare to him the things that should come to pass in the last days. He then foretold the subjugation of all the neigh-

have a primary application to him, cannot be understood but with an ultimate reference to the Messiah, who was promised long before.

Finding himself unable to accomplish the

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objects for which he came, Balaam prepared to return to his own country. But before he departed he suggested to the king of Moab a plan by which he might be able to seduce the

was known that they had already suffered, and by which their numbers might be much reduced and their power much weakened.

The Moabites, in conjunction with their



BALAK'S SACRIFICE.--Num. xxiii. 2.

Israelites, so that they might bring a curse upon themselves, or at least become deprived of the Lord's protection, and provoke such judgments against them as those by which it

neighbors the Midianites, immediately proceeded to carry this plan into effect. They opened apparently friendly communications with the Israelites, and the men were easily

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persuaded to attend the idolatrous feasts, at which every kind of licentiousness was practised, and even to join in sacrifices to Baal-Peor. The extent of this degeneracy may be estimated from the fact that many persons of high station in the several tribes were the ringleaders in this transgression.

At length the Divine anger broke forth against the transgressors, and this time it was not manifested through miraculous agencies, but by a judicial sentence to be executed by human hands. The word was given to slay every one who had joined himself to Baal-Peor. On this the people, conscious of their crime, humbled themselves before the Lord, with much weeping, in the hope of averting his displeasure.

Divine Vengeance.

Meanwhile, as the sentence of slaughter had not been executed, the Lord had taken the avengement into his own hand, for a pestilence broke forth among the people. But the high act of Phinehas was accepted as an atonement, and the plague then ceased.

The Israelites were then ordered to take arms against the Midianites, who had been peculiarly active in the too successful attempt to seduce the people of God. A thousand men from each of the twelve tribes, forming a body of twelve thousand picked men, were appointed for this service, and placed under the command of Phinehas. The contest was not of long duration. The Israelites carried all before them, and they committed dreadful carnage among the Midianites, slaying without quarter all the men who came in their way. The country was not one which they were to occupy: they therefore ravaged it completely, and destroyed the towns and strongholds, with the view of disabling the Midianites from renewing the war. The booty obtained in this expedition was very considerable, and the items of the enumeration are full of suggestive matter as regards the condition of the conquered people and the character of ancient warfare. It is thus given: sheep, six hundred and seventy-five thousand; beeves, seventy-two

thousand; asses, sixty-one thousand; persons (females), thirty-two thousand. To this is added no less than sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels' weight of gold, which had formed the ornaments of the Midianites. From the quantity and from the articles enumerated it would seem that these Midianites were well covered with "barbaric pearl and gold." These articles are named as "jewels of gold, chains, bracelets, rings, earrings and tablets."

This abundant spoil might have suggested a nice question with respect to the distribution, as it was scarcely to be expected that the comparatively small body of men actually engaged in the expedition were to have the exclusive enjoyment of it. This therefore, gave occasion for the law which appears to have given satisfaction to all the parties concerned, and which thenceforth regulated the practice of the Hebrews with respect to booty. The whole of the "prey," or beasts and captives, was divided into two parts, of which one went to the soldiers who had been in action, and the other to the general body of the people; so that the twelve thousand warriors had so much as five hundred and ninety thousand people. But the actual victors seem to have had the entire of the personal "spoil" at their disposal, and in this instance they presented it as an oblation to the tabernacle. From the "prey," or live stock, a tribute for the Lord was also levied, being at the rate of one in fifty from the share of the warriors, and one in five hundred from the share of the people. It may be remarked that the distribution of one-half to the general body of the people arose from all the adult males in the camp being regarded as forming an army composed of men fit to bear arms, and liable at any time to be called into the field; and of whom, therefore, the body at any time engaged in actual service was merely a detachment.

Including the tribe of Levi the entire number of the Israelites at this time may be estimated at 2,500,000. Not only the tribes, but the several families of Israel, were at this time registered under the names of those sons or

grandsons of the patriarchs who were the progenitors of the grand subdivisions in the several tribes. And it was directed that the division of the land in Canaan should be made according to the register thus formed. The quantity of the land was to be proportioned to the numbers of each tribe, and of each family in each tribe; and the situation of the portions both of the tribes and families was to be determined by lot. This was eventually done in the manner which we shall have occasion to describe.

Death of the Great Lawgiver.

As Moses was not to enter the Promised Land, it became evident that his days were soon to close. In preparation of that solemn event the prophet was commanded to appoint Joshua, the son of Nun, to the high task of introducing the chosen people into their promised heritage. He was not the successor of the legislator; Moses had no successor; neither had Joshua himself any when he died. They were both raised up for particular and extraordinary services of an entirely different nature—Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, and to organize the people so delivered; Joshua, who was endued with much valor and high military talents, to lead the people in those wars which were to give them possession of the land promised to their fathers.

About this time the tribes of Reuben and Gad solicited Moses for permission to take for their share of territory the lands which had been conquered from Sihon and Og, east of the Jordan. The ground of their application was that the land was peculiarly suited for pasturage, and they had large possessions of flocks and herds. Moses was not at first pleased at this application, construing it into a desire to provide for themselves on easy terms, by taking possession of what all the tribes had conquered, without assisting the other tribes in the warfare for their possession. But the applicants explained with much earnestness that this was far from their wish. If their suit were granted they would leave their families and substance in the land, but

would themselves accompany the main body of the Israelites across the river and remain in arms until they also had received their heritage. To the proposal, when stated in this shape, Moses assented; but as the territory appeared too large for two tribes, he added half the tribe of Manasseh, to which was given the northernmost portion of this fine territory. It is probable that the extraordinary increase of Manasseh, which the recent census had made apparent, suggested the selection of this tribe, and the separation in it which accordingly took place.

After this Moses assembled the whole congregation of Israel and addressed them for the last time. He recapitulated all the remarkable events which had transpired from the departure of their fathers out of Egypt to the present time. He assured them of the Divine assistance in the conquest of Canaan, and cautioned them against unbelief and distrust of the Divine word. To strengthen this caution he reminded them of the former disobedience and frequent rebellions of their fathers, in consequence of which they have been doomed to wander forty years in the wilderness and denied admission to the Promised Land. He then reminded them of their signal successes over the Amorites, whom they had attacked with the Divine permission, and assured them that Joshua was divinely appointed to put them in possession of the land of their inheritance.

Moses then proceeded to refresh the knowledge of the new generation by repeating, with some alterations which the lapse of time and the approaching change of life made necessary, the various civil laws and ordinances which had from time to time been delivered to him. With reference to these he emphatically remarked: "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this

law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them to thy sons and to thy sons' sons."

When Moses had finished the recapitulation of the laws and statutes of Jehovah, he proceeded to set before the people the abundant blessings which should attend their obedience, and the dreadful punishments which awaited their disobedience. These punishments were such that "Even all nations shall say, wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of his great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt." How truly and sadly the doom denounced against their disobedience was accomplished will in the ensuing pages appear too plainly.

The Song of Moses.

Moses now wrote all the words of the law in a book. This is the first mention of a book which occurs in the Scriptures; and the information which we possess concerning ancient books leaves no question but that it was of skins made up into rolls. We are not, however, to conclude that the skins were prepared into parchment, as that was an invention of much later date, later than even the papyrus, several interesting rolls of which are preserved in collections of Egyptian antiquities. Those who have been privileged to see the white skin robes prepared by the rude Indians from the hide of the bison, will have no difficulty in understanding how skins might be made fit for writing on, even before the invention of parchment furnished a better material for the purpose.

Moses then gave forth a magnificent poem, called in after time "the song of Moses," in which the Divine care over the people is celebrated by many interesting circumstances and striking images, such as that of the eagle caring for its young:

"The Lord's portion is his people;
Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.
He found him in a desert land,
And in the waste howling wilderness;
He led him about, he instructed him,
He kept him as the apple of his eye;
As an eagle stirreth up her nest
And fluttereth over her young,
Or spreadeth around her wings, and taketh them up
And beareth them on her wings:
So the Lord alone did lead him."

Finally, Moses bestowed upon the tribes his last and solemn blessing, similar in many respects to that which Jacob had in his last days bestowed upon his sons. The prophet then received the Divine command to ascend to the summit of Mount Nebo, and survey from thence the Promised Land before he closed his eyes in death. This summons he had long expected, and he obeyed it without demur, knowing that the appointed hour was come. He ascended from the plains of Moab, and upon Mount Nebo delivered up the charge he had received upon Mount Sinai. He died at the age of one hundred and twenty years, when "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."

The history of Moses is the history of Israel for forty years. It is important to trace his relation to his immediate circle of followers. In the Exodus he takes the decisive lead on the night of the flight. Up to that point he and Aaron appear almost on an equality. But after that, Moses is usually mentioned alone. Aaron still held the second place. Another, nearly equal to Aaron, is Hur, of the tribe of Judah. Miriam always held the independent position to which her age entitled her. Her part was to supply the voice and song to her brother's prophetic power.

But Moses is incontestably the chief personage of the history, in a sense in which no one else is described before or since. In the traditions of the desert, whether late or early, his name predominates over that of every one else. "The Books of Moses" are so called (as afterwards the Books of Samuel), in all probability from his being the chief subject of them. They show us the great leader and lawgiver in his majestic proportions.

He must be considered, like all the saints and heroes of the Bible, as a man of marvellous gifts, raised up by Divine Providence for a special purpose, but led into a closer communion with the invisible world than was vouchsafed to any other in the Old Testament. There are two main characters in which he appears; as a Leader and as a Prophet. The two main difficulties which he encountered were the reluctance of the people to submit to

By Moses the spies were sent to explore the country. Against his advice took place the first disastrous battle at Hormah. To his guidance is ascribed the circuitous route by which the nation approached Palestine from the East, and to his generalship the two successful campaigns in which Sihon and Og were defeated.

The narrative is told so shortly, that we are in danger of forgetting that at this last stage



MOSES VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.—Deut. xxxiv. 1.

his guidance, and the impracticable nature of the country which they had to traverse. The route through the wilderness is described as having been made under his guidance.

The particular spot of the encampment is fixed by the cloudy pillar. But the direction of the people first to the Red Sea, and then to Mount Sinai, is communicated through Moses, or given by him. On approaching Palestine, the office of the leader becomes blended with that of the general or the conqueror.

of his life Moses must have been as much a conqueror and victorious soldier as Joshua. His character as a prophet is, from the nature of the case, more distinctly brought out. He is the first as he is the greatest example of a Prophet in the Old Testament. In a certain sense, he appears as the centre of a prophetic circle, now for the first time named. His brother and sister were both endowed with prophetic gifts, yet do not appear conspicuously in the annals of prophecy.

CHAPTER XI.

ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND.



THE Israelites mourned thirty days for their great leader, and then took immediate measures with reference to the high enterprise which lay before them.

The first act of Joshua, who now took the chief place as military leader, was to send two spies across the river. It was evident that the great city of Jericho, which lay before them in the plain west of the Jordan, must become the first object of the operations of the Hebrew host; and the spies were therefore directed to make their way into the

town and obtain information respecting the strength of the place and the disposition of those who inhabited it. They succeeded in gaining an entrance into the city; but they had scarcely arrived before the king received intelligence of it, and sent to apprehend them in a house near the wall, belonging to a woman named Rahab, in which they had taken up their abode. But the hostess, having timely notice of this, concealed the spies under some flax which had been spread out to dry upon the flat roof of her house. When the men in search of them came, Rahab by her answers led them to conclude that the strangers had already taken their departure, and that she was herself very solicitous for their apprehension. Having thus succeeded in putting them on a wrong scent, she felt that the spies were no longer safe in her house. She therefore went to them on the housetop, and declaring her belief that the place would be taken by their countrymen, she requested

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them to promise that, in return for the service which she had rendered, the lives of herself and her near kindred should be spared.

The men, believing that Joshua would sanction their engagement, gave the required promise, and directed her to attach a scarlet line to her window, in order that, during the assault upon the town, her house might be distinguished from all others, and its inmates spared. In stating the grounds of her belief in their success, Rahab incidentally gave the spies much valuable information, which enables us to perceive the state of mind in which the nearer Canaanites awaited the invasion of the Hebrews.

It seems that the fame of the miracles which the Lord had wrought in Egypt on the behalf of his people, and the wonders of the wilderness, as well as the victories on the east of the river, had attracted much attention in Canaan, and had filled the inhabitants with such alarm and discouragement as accounts well for their not assembling to oppose the Hebrew host at the Jordan, across which it was now manifest that they intended to enter the country. Having given this information, Rahab assisted them in leaving Jericho unobserved, by lowering them down by a rope through the window; and on their return they gave Joshua an account of their mission.

On the very day after receiving this encouraging intelligence, Joshua took measures for the removal of the camp to the other side of the river. It was then the time of flood, when the river was full, deep and rapid, and therefore presented a greater obstacle to the passage than at any other time of the year. But this seemed no great hindrance to those who had seen the Red Sea itself separate to afford a passage to the descendants of Abraham. Indeed, it was promised that the waters of the

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THE FALL OF JERICHO.—Josh. vi. 16.



Jordan should in like manner be divided to afford them a dryshod entrance to their heritage. Pursuant to the directions which accompanied this promise, the ark, borne by the priests, went about three-fourths of a mile in advance of the great body of the host. No sooner had the feet of these sacred persons touched the river's brink, than the waters divided to give them passage. The waters below the point went on emptying themselves into the Dead Sea, while the stream above was arrested in its impetuous course, leaving the channel dry from the point where the priests entered to the head of the lake.

The priests went on, and when they reached the middle of the river's bed they rested there, beneath the shadow of the wall of waters, the ark of God being thus interposed between the impending flood and the people, who, as soon as they came up, passed across between the ark and the head of the lake. When all had gone over, the priests took up the ark and went up out of the bed of the river; and no sooner had they done this than the mighty hand which held back the flood was withdrawn.

Setting Up a Memorial.

Before the priests quitted the bed of the Jordan a singular operation was performed, which, taken in connection with other circumstances, reminds one strongly of the Druidical monuments and stones of memorial which are found in different parts of the world. Twelve men, one from every tribe, were sent back into the bed of the river, each bearing a large stone, which he deposited there, and returned with a large stone from the river. The stones thus obtained were set up as stones of memorial at Gilgal, where the Israelites formed their first encampment in the land of Canaan.

This miraculous passage of the river must have much heightened the consternation of the Canaanites; and the manner in which the Israelites obtained possession of Jericho was well framed to strengthen this feeling in them, as well as to give confidence to the Israelites, from the conviction that a Divine power would be exerted to put them in possession of those

strong cities, the report of whose high walls and towers had filled their fathers with alarm.

As soon as the Israelites had crossed the river, the miraculous supply of manna, which they had hitherto enjoyed, ceased, and they from that time ate bread made from the corn of the land. In the wilderness the rite of circumcision had been neglected, and the Passover had not been observed. But before commencing their operations in Palestine, it was deemed right that the people should be circumcised in their camp at Gilgal; and they then proceeded to celebrate the Passover, the time for which had arrived.

After this, as Joshua was out alone reconnoitring the town of Jericho, which he had placed under siege, he was surprised by the sudden appearance of a personage with a drawn sword, who announced himself as the heavenly "captain of the Lord's host," and proceeded to give to the prostrate Joshua instructions for the siege of the city. He was directed to "compass the city by all the men of war, and go round about it once; and do this six days." "And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass that when they make a long blast with the rams' horns, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people ascend every man straight before him."

This course was exactly followed. The procession, however imposing, must have seemed an idle show during six days; but on the seventh, when the wall fell down at the great shout which arose from that mighty host, and while the earth yet shook with that terrible downfall, the Israelites rushed into the now open city, which they sacked and utterly destroyed. No living creature was spared (save Rahab and her friends), and the buildings were destroyed by fire; but the silver and gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, were brought into the treasury of the Lord. In fact the

town had at the first been laid under a solemn ban, or curse of devotement, which made it a high crime for any one to save for himself any of the things doomed to be destroyed, or of those which were to be saved only for the use of the sanctuary.

The next attack of the Israelites was against the town of Ai; and they made it in all the confidence of victory, which the miraculous overthrow of Jericho inspired. But they were repulsed, and fled before the men of Ai, who sallied out against them. This was a terrible disaster, not merely from the discouragement of the Israelites, but far more from the enemy being thus enabled to perceive that the dreaded invaders were not after all invincible. It was evident from this that the Lord had, for some unknown reason, abandoned them to their own resources. A solemn inquiry was then instituted, and it was discovered that one of the men engaged in the sack of Jericho had been tempted to appropriate to his own use from the devoted spoils a "goodly Babylonish garment;" together with some silver, and an ingot of gold.

The Sin of Achan.

By this act the man, whose name was Achan, had involved the whole of the host in the infraction of a solemn covenant, which had led to the disaster at Ai. The devoted articles were taken from him and laid up before the Lord; Achan and his family were stoned, and afterwards burned; and by this expiation "the fierceness of the Lord's anger was turned from Israel." After this a second expedition against Ai was undertaken; and this time the Israelites were more successful. The city was taken and burnt, and all the inhabitants put to the sword; but the spoil, consisting of cattle and large quantities of gold and silver, was this time divided among the people.

When the Gibeonites, a people of Canaan inhabiting this neighborhood, heard of the destruction of Jericho and Ai, with the slaughter of the inhabitants, and that the Israelites were under a command to destroy all the nations of the land without entering into any league with them or giving them any quarter, they

resolved to obtain exemption by means of a stratagem. With this view they sent out some of their principal men as ambassadors, who were fitted out in such a manner that they seemed to have come from a very distant country; making it appear that the provisions which they carried were either exhausted or spoiled by the length of the journey, and even their clothes and wine-skins worn out. These persons presented themselves before Joshua and the elders of Israel, and stated that their distant countrymen had heard of the mighty deeds which God had wrought for his people in rescuing them from Egypt, and in destroying before them the powerful kings of the Amorites: and these reports had so impressed their minds as to render them highly desirous of the friendship of a people thus highly favored by Heaven. For this purpose they had undertaken a long and fatiguing journey, as their nation was even willing to become their tributaries, if they might have security that they should not at any future period be destroyed by the increasing power and dominion of Israel.

Joshua and the elders hastily deemed the condition in which these men appeared, and the state of their provisions, as sufficient evidence for the truth of this plausible tale: and they entered into a league with them, engaging by a solemn oath not to destroy, but to protect, the people they represented. The deception practised by the Gibeonites was, however, soon after discovered. But in consideration of the solemn engagement into which the Israelites had entered, their lives were spared; but their lands and cities were taken under the dominion of Israel, and the inhabitants had imposed upon them the service of providing wood and water for the use of the tabernacle—that is, they had to carry the water in their skin bags, and to cut and carry the wood for the sacrifices. This was a great relief to those by whom these servile labors had hitherto been performed. It would appear that the Gibeonites generally pursued their ordinary modes of life, and had only to provide a sufficient number of men, whether



JOSHUA COMMANDING THE SUN TO STAND STILL.—Josh. x. 13.

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in rotation or by substitute, to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

The exclusive alliance of the Gibeonites with the Israelites was highly displeasing to the neighboring states, and in particular to Adoni-zedek, the king of Jerusalem, who formed a confederacy with four other kings of the small neighboring monarchies, for the purpose of attacking them, in order to prevent others from following an example so discouraging to the defenders of the country. When thus threatened by invasion, they sent to Joshua to claim his protection. Mindful of the league between them, however wrongfully obtained, and encouraged by the Divine assurance of a complete victory—taking a considerable body of picked men, and leaving the bulk of the army at Gilgal, which was still the head-quarters of the Israelites, Joshua marched to the relief of the Gibeonites. He concerted his measures on this occasion with so much prudence, and executed them with so much vigor and despatch, that in his attack upon the enemy, the next day, he succeeded in defeating and totally routing the superior force of the confederated kings. As they fled, "the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them, and they died, and there were more that died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."

The Sun and Moon Standing Still.

A still greater miracle was that which followed: Joshua, fearing that the day would fail before he had completed his victory, cried aloud, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon!" And we are told "the sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies."

This interposition of Divine Providence at the word of man enabled the Israelites to complete their victory by utterly dispersing the enemy. The five kings who escaped from the field of battle took shelter in a cave, where they were discovered and put to death in a most ignominious manner, after the chiefs of

Israel had set their feet upon their necks, which was in those times a well-known mode of expressing triumph over a vanquished foe, and as such is often represented upon the monuments of Persia and of Egypt.

Encouraged by these successes, the Israelites no longer hesitated to attack the strong, fortified towns, which had seemed impregnable to their fathers, and under their able commander they soon made themselves masters of all the strongholds and chief cities of Southern Palestine, and with them the territories which they commanded.

The North, which, in the absence of imminent danger, had hitherto rested in quiet, now became seriously alarmed; and a powerful confederacy was formed under Jabin, king of Hazor, to resist the further progress of the invaders: all the remaining strength of Canaan seems to have been concentrated in this operation, and great reliance seems to have been placed upon the iron-armed war-chariots, which were, in fact, very dreadful to the Hebrews. So formidable, indeed, was the confederacy, and so vast the host assembled against Israel on this occasion, that the Lord judged it needful to give Joshua renewed assurances of protection and victory, and commanded him to attack the Canaanites on the following day. Joshua obeyed, and obtained a complete and apparently easy victory over the unwieldy host which lay encamped by "the waters of Merom" (the lake Huleh).

After this brilliant success, the Hebrews found no power strong enough to make head against them. They carried their victories to the northernmost parts of Palestine, and to the borders of Zidon and the Phœnician territory. On their return they destroyed Hazor, and its king, who had taken refuge in his capital, and who had been lord paramount of all the petty sovereigns in this part of Palestine. Hazor was on this account destroyed, as an example of severity; but all the other cities, which were either carried by assault or surrendered, were preserved for the use of the Israelites.

CHAPTER XII.

JOSHUA DIVIDING THE LAND.

PURSUIING the graphic narrative, we find that the operations which have been described, and which left the Israelites paramount in Canaan, occupied about five years, during which not fewer than thirty-five of the petty kings of Canaan had been dispossessed of their dominions. It then seemed that sufficient connected territory had been acquired to provide for three of the tribes, on the same liberal scale as the two tribes and a half beyond the Jordan. The decision of God in the distribution of this territory was appealed to by a solemn lot, which assigned it to Judah, Ephraim, and the unprovided half-tribe of Manasseh. This first division of lands took place in the year B. C. 1602.

Before the internal distribution to particular families was made of the territory thus assigned, Caleb put in a claim to a separate provision, in virtue of a promise made by Moses, that he should inherit the land in which he had beheld the gigantic Anakim, who had struck such terror into the other spies, but by whom his own faithful heart and that of Joshua himself had not been appalled. This Caleb, it will be remembered, and Joshua, were the only two who were adults at the Exodus, who were permitted to enter the Promised Land. The lands which Caleb had in view were accordingly assigned to him, being Hebron and its neighborhood. This territory was still in the hands of the enemy; but Caleb undertook to get possession of it when assigned to him. He did so. At Debir he offered the hand of his daughter as a prize for him who should take that place for him.

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The exploit was undertaken and successfully accomplished by his nephew Othniel, to whom custom gave a sort of right to her hand, and who would have incurred some dishonor had he allowed the superior daring of another to take that right from him. As Othniel was about to conduct home his bride, she intimated to him her dissatisfaction at the unwatered lands which Caleb had given as her dower, and got his consent to allow her to ask her father for "springs of water." This was a great thing to ask; but Caleb was kind, and gave her "both the upper and the nether springs."

Hitherto the camp had remained at Gilgal, and there was the altar and tabernacle. But it now seemed desirable to remove the headquarters to a more central place; and Shiloh, in the land of Ephraim, was deemed the most suitable station. The removal took place with much pomp. On the way, Joshua was enabled to follow the directions of Moses respecting an imposing ceremony which he had ordered to be celebrated on the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim. In the valley between the mountains were stationed the priests with the ark, while the mountains themselves were lined with the tribes, six on each side. The curses of the law upon the wrong-doer and the disobedient were then pronounced from Mount Ebal, and its blessings upon the well-doer and the obedient from Mount Gerizim; and as each clause was pronounced, one mighty "Amen" proclaimed the assent of the vast host to the conditions upon which they were taking possession of their heritage.

Surveying the Land.

A sort of desultory warfare with the unsubdued natives seems to have occupied the ensuing five or six years, without any such vigor

ous operations as had marked the earlier warfare. From this state of comparative in-ertion the tribes were roused by the reproof from Joshua: "How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land which the Lord, the God to their exertions. But experience had shown that the previous distribution had been made on insufficient information as to the extent of the land to be divided; and therefore it was directed that a new survey of all the country

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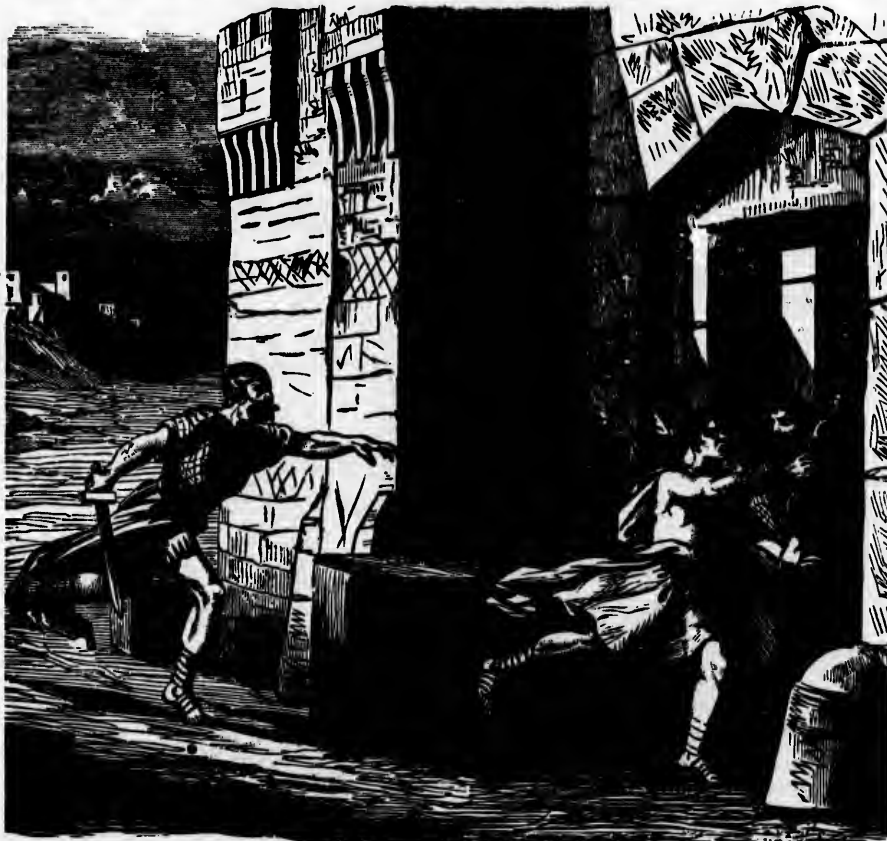


JOSHUA DIVIDING THE LAND BY LOT.—Josh. xiii. 6.

of your fathers, hath given you?" It then seems to have occurred to him that if the whole country, conquered and unconquered, were actually distributed among the seven tribes for which no provision had been made, a new and effectual stimulus would be given should be made by three competent persons from each tribe, who should write down the particulars in a book. It is not improbable that some attempt at mapping the surveyed lands was made on this occasion, especially when we bear in mind that the art of land-

surveying had its origin in the country from which the Hebrews had come. And indeed it is difficult to make out how the nice discrimination of particulars and boundary points which we find in the chapters which follow

taken "before the Lord" at Shiloh, and the lots drawn were found to be in very exact accordance with the prophetic intimations respecting the future condition of all the tribes which Jacob had delivered to his sons. This



FLEEING TO A CITY OF REFUGE.—Josh. xx. 2.

this statement, and which are manifestly the results of the survey, could have been intelligible without some kind of mapped delineations.

After seven months the surveyors returned with the requisite particulars entered in their books. The lots for the distribution of the territory among the seven tribes were then

second and final distribution took place in the year B. C. 1596.

The whole of the territory being now distributed, it was found that Judah possessed a large territory in southernmost Canaan, containing one hundred and fourteen towns, besides many villages. Jerusalem lay partly in this tribe and partly in that of Benjamin; but the

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native inhabitants, the Jebusites, were not at this time expelled from it, and retained possession till a much later period.

The inheritance of Ephraim and of the half-tribe of Manassah extended from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, across the land, and it lay to the north of Judah. This contained most of the country which was eventually known by the name of Samaria. Of this district Ephraim had the southern, and Manasseh the northern portion. The portion of Benjamin was situated between those of Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh. The survey had shown that Judah had received more than its fair proportion of territory, and therefore at this second distribution a portion for another tribe was taken out of the southwest part of it. This portion fell to Simeon.

To Zebulon fell the tract of country nearest to the lake of Gennesareth, in the region of Galilee. The possession of Issachar lay to the south of this, and reached from the Jordan almost to the Mediterranean. The lot of Asher formed the most northern portion of the land, and reached to the roots of Lebanon, and was only excluded from the sea by the strip of coast retained by the Zidonians. The inheritance of Naphtali lay to the east of Asher, and touched on the waters of the Upper Jordan and the northern part of the lake of Tiberias. Dan's proper territory lay to the north and northwest of Judah; but it afterwards acquired new possessions far to the north among the sources of the Jordan. The portions allotted to Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, on the other side of the Jordan, have already been pointed out.

Cities of Refuge.

The Levites had no share in this distribution; but, in compensation, they had the use of the tithes, and forty-eight towns for residence among the several tribes were allotted to them. Six of these towns, three on each side the Jordan, were made "cities of refuge," or places appointed under the law of Moses as asylums for persons who had committed homicide, and who, as soon as they came within the walls, were safe from the pursuit of the avenger of

blood, who, under old Eastern usages, which still subsist in many countries, claimed the right of slaying, wherever found, the slayer of his next of kin. This institution imposed a strong restraint upon a custom liable to much abuse, but which it seems to have been deemed not prudent to abolish altogether.

The forty thousand men from the two tribes and a half beyond the Jordan had hitherto, according to their agreement, faithfully attended their brethren in all their wars against the Canaanites. They had no territorial interest in the matter; but they shared and were enriched by the spoils of the armies they defeated and the towns they conquered. The time was now come when they might be dismissed to their own homes, in doing which Joshua solemnly exhorted them to "take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses, the servant of our Lord, had charged them, to love the Lord their God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all their heart and with all their soul." He then blessed them, and sent them away.

A Suspicious Transaction.

When they reached the other side of the Jordan, these men set up a great altar, probably in some distinguishing feature similar to the one at Shiloh, as a monument, to prove to future ages their relation to the tribes on the other side of the river, their interest in the worship and service of God at His sanctuary, and their right, and that of their posterity, to join in all the ordinances there administered. To their brethren, however, this transaction bore a very different and suspicious appearance. They concluded at once that the altar was intended for sacrifice, and the basis of a separate establishment for worship, contrary to the law which allowed but the one altar before the tabernacle.

This supposed defection and disobedience, therefore, threw the tribes into a state of great excitement; and they prepared for immediate war to bring the apostates to punishment.

The cooler judgment of Joshua and of Eleazer the high-priest, however, suggested the propriety of sending a deputation to inquire into the matter. The men whose act had raised this commotion were much startled at the design thus imputed to them, of seeking the very object which it had been their solicitude to avert. They explained their real intention; with which the tribes west of the river were not only satisfied, but pleased.

give them his last counsels, and receive from them the renewed assurance of their faithfulness and obedience to the Divine institutions. After briefly sketching their past history, and pointing out the special mercies of God towards them, he called upon them to decide at once and solemnly, whether they would accept the high destinies and consequent obligations to which they had been called, or would rather conform to the practices and worship of



JOSHUA SENDING BACK THE TWO TRIBES AND A HALF.—Josh. xxii. 4.

Several following years were distinguished by no great actions. The tribes, having already as many towns and as much land as their numbers allowed them to occupy, do not seem to have prosecuted the war with much vigor, but were contented with the rest and plenty they actually enjoyed.

About fourteen years after the final distribution of the lands, Joshua, being then far advanced in years, and knowing that his end drew nigh, convened the people, that he might

nations around them. "But as for me, and my house," he added, "we will serve the Lord." The people answered: "The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey!"

This amounted to a formal renewal of the covenant into which they had entered at Sinai. So they intended it, and so it was accepted by Joshua, who wrote down the terms of it in the book of the law; and by way of public testimonial, he, according to the custom

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of the times, set up a great stone of memorial under a tree which grew near the sanctuary of God. The words he used on this occasion clearly point out the object and leading idea of such stones of testimony: "Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us: it shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." Monuments of this kind, in the shape of single stones, or heaped up, or variously arranged, or formed into pillars of memorial, call to mind the still subsisting and similar records of a remote age, which are found in different parts of the world, and which are not wanting in Syria and Palestine.

Not long after this Joshua died, at the age of one hundred and ten years (B. C. 1582), being the oldest man then in Israel, unless Caleb were still alive.

An Ancient Hero.

The character of Joshua affords an interesting study to those who take interest in the history of the Jewish people. At the first view he may seem to derive his eminence only from the greatness of the circumstances in which he is placed; but a closer inspection shows him always, under the Divine King, at the head of these circumstances, and develops many traits of character which claim our admiration and respect. In him we find that rare combination of talents which go to form at once the warrior and the statesman; and if his career was less brilliant and his position less commanding than that of Moses, he showed himself equally fit for the peculiar services which devolved upon him, and for the station to which he was called. He was brave without temerity, active without precipitation, and possessed the rare art of making himself obeyed without becoming imperious. He shrank from no difficulties, he neglected no duty, and he suffered no advantage to be lost.

In the passage of the Jordan, the judgment of Achan, the taking of Ai, we find nothing neglected which might cause the miracle to

make a profound impression, the punishment to be acknowledged just, and the victory to be decisive. The generation which he governed was superior to that which came out of Egypt, and he was in consequence better obeyed than Moses. As a minister of the Divine judgments, he executed them without weakness or failure, but also with calmness, and without passion or fury. His piety is gentle, though decisive, and his confidence firm, though manifested more in action than in words. In his last charge to the people, and in the effect which his solemn farewell was framed to produce, we recognize the pupil of a Moses, and a faithful servant of the Theocracy. Lastly, we behold in Joshua a conqueror more void of pride, and more dead to ambition, than any other which history records.

The death of Joshua was soon followed by that of Eleazar the high-priest, who was succeeded by his son Phinehas. Gradually also "the elders who outlived Joshua" dropped off, and the people were left without that direction and control for general objects under which they had hitherto been. It must not, however, be supposed that they were entirely without control and government. This was by no means the case; the division into tribes gave them hereditary chiefs and heads of families, whose authority was great within the tribes to which they belonged, and quite sufficient for the purposes of internal government. This explains how it was that the Israelites managed their affairs even so well as they did in the centuries between the death of Joshua and the election of Saul. The appointment of the so-called judges does not explain it, for there were few of them who had any substantial authority, or whose influence extended over more than a part of the nation.

But although the division into tribes was, as now in Tartary and Arabia, sufficient for internal government of the tribes themselves, it was insufficient for national objects. But if it be asked how it happened that this was not provided for by the appointment of some one to succeed Joshua, it is answered that provision was made, and that the Israelites in the troubles

which befel them reaped the fruit of neglecting to avail themselves of this provision, and of carrying into effect the Divine intention respecting the general government.

Joshua's Mission Accomplished.

Moses had a special mission to emancipate the people, and to furnish them with laws and institutions suited to the condition they were destined to occupy. Joshua had a special mission to conduct the same people into the land of Canaan, and put them into possession of their heritage. Both these missions had been accomplished, and then it behooved the people to go upon the rules which the law had laid down for their government.

But the people were not sensible of their importance to them. Finding that they had in their tribes such a government as they understood and had been used to, they soon fell back upon their separate interests, and neglected the more general and larger object in which the whole nation was concerned. The theocratical government was hence neglected,

and became inoperative for purposes of good by not being used. And ere long, as they were still subject to external pressure from the Canaanites who remained unsubdued, the whole frame of society fell into disorder from the want of proper cohesion in its parts, and the nation was subject to the calamities which it is the purpose of the Book of Judges to record.

For a considerable time after the death of Joshua and the elders who outlived him, the Israelites, who had quite as much land and as many towns as they could well occupy, rested quiet, minding their own affairs, and taking no pains to drive out those Canaanites who still remained unsubdued, and held possession of the strongest posts in the country. The latter were thus enabled to gather strength and confidence, and as the wonderful victories of the Israelites and the miraculous interpositions of the Divine favor in their behalf became more remote, they began to imagine that the invaders were not, after all, so formidable as had at first been supposed, and their lost hopes were somewhat restored.

CHAPTER XIII.

REMARKABLE HEBREW WOMEN.



RESERVING that it had become necessary for them to reduce the power of the inhabitants, in order to secure what they had already won, the Israelites once more appeared in arms, bent on further conquests.

They marched against Jerusalem, and, having carried and taken possession of it, they put the inhabitants to the sword, and set it on fire. Hebron was also at this time captured from the Canaanites, as well as a great many other large towns; and the general result of the war was to put the southern part of the country in substantial possession of the Israelites. At Jerusalem only the lower city had been taken, and although the Benjamites took possession of it, as it lay within their boundary, and repaired the damage it had sustained in the war, they allowed the Jebusites to live in it with them. This course was also followed in most of the other great towns which were taken; and although it probably arose from their own numbers being insufficient to occupy advantageously all the towns which were taken by them, the intermixture was clearly contrary to the Divine intention, and proved in the end a great snare and danger to the chosen people.

They gradually adopted the manners, customs and abominable practices of the natives with whom they thus mingled, and soon began to adopt their modes of worship and to serve their idols. This was probably under the notion that these were the gods of the country—the native gods—and as such entitled to homage from all the inhabitants of the land.

This idea of local gods was the besetting sin of ancient nations; it is frequently noticed in the Scriptures, and we know that the Israelites themselves were exceedingly prone to this notion.

The downward course which the nation was now taking is exemplified by the historical anecdotes which occupy the last four chapters of the Book of Judges, forming a sort of appendix to it, the particulars in which are referred to the times of confusion which followed the death of Joshua and of the elders who survived him. The first of these anecdotes is as follows: The history of Micah furnishes a very interesting example of the extent to which even the Israelites, well disposed in the main, had become familiarized with superstitious and idolatrous practices, and the curious manner in which they managed to make a monstrous and most unseemly alliance between the true doctrine in which they had been brought up, and the erroneous notions which they had imbibed.

A woman of Ephraim had, through a mistaken zeal, dedicated a large quantity of silver (about five hundred and fifty ounces) to the Lord, intending that her son should make therewith a household deity, in the hope that by this means she might procure to her house the blessings of one who had absolutely forbidden all worship by images. Her son Micah knew not of this sacred appropriation of the money, and took it for the use of the house. But on learning its destination, and hearing his mother lay her curse upon the sacrilegious person by whom she supposed it to have been stolen, he became alarmed and restored her the silver, and received it again from her with directions to give effect to her intention. This he did. He provided an image, and all things necessary to the performance of religious ser-



THE HARVEST FIELD OF BOAZ.—Ruth. ii. 2.

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vices before it, including vestments for a priest. He set apart one of his own sons as priest, until he should be able to procure a Levite to take that character.

He had not long to wait. It would seem that the dues of the Levites were not properly paid at this time; for a young Levite who had lived at Bethlehem felt himself obliged to leave that place and seek elsewhere a subsistence. Happening to call at Micah's house, he gladly accepted that person's offer to remain and act as priest for the recompense of his victuals and two suits of clothes (one probably sacerdotal) and eleven shekels of silver. Micah was delighted at this completion of his establishment, and, with most marvelous infatuation, cried, "Now I know Jehovah will bless me, seeing I have a Levite to be my priest." Things went on tranquilly for a time. But it happened that the tribe of Dan could not get possession of more than the hilly part of its territory, as the Amorites retained the plain, which was the most rich and valuable part. They therefore sought elsewhere an equivalent territory, which might be more easily acquired. Having ascertained that this might be found in the remote, but wealthy and peaceable, town and district of Laish, near the sources of the Jordan, a body of six hundred men was sent to get possession of it.

From the persons they had previously sent to explore the country they had heard of Micah's establishment; and so far from manifesting any surprise or indignation, they viewed the matter much in the same light as Micah did himself. They envied him his idol and his priest, and resolved to deprive him of both and take them to their new settlement. They did so, notwithstanding his protest and outcries; and as for the Levite, he was easily persuaded to prefer the priesthood of a clan to that of a single family. His descendants continued long after to exercise the priestly office, in connection with this idol, at Dan, which was the name the conquerors gave to the town of Laish; and it is lamentable to have to add that there is good reason to suspect that this Levite was a grandson of Moses.

The other of these anecdotes records the atrocious treatment which a Levite and his wife received at Gibeah, in Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin, when required by the other tribes to give up or punish the offenders, refused to do either, and took arms to resist the evident intention of the others to enforce justice. A most unnatural war ensued, which ended in the all but total extinction of the tribe of Benjamin. That tribe was renowned for its valor and its skill in arms; and there was a body of young men among them who could use both hands alike in the use of the sling, wherewith they could fling stones to a hair's breadth without missing. But all their bravery, all their skill, availed them not against the united host of Israel. Their stout resistance only served to kindle the fierce passions of their opponents, and the end of the war only left six hundred men of the tribe, who had posted themselves among the rocks of Rimmon, and who were spared to prevent the utter extinction of a tribe in Israel.

Idolatry and Crime.

During the administration of Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, which continued during forty years, the nation prospered, for it remained substantially faithful to its God and King, and followed His laws and ordinances. But when the salutary control which this judge had exercised had ceased, the people gradually relapsed into idolatry and crime, and new afflictions became necessary for them.

After this the Israelites enjoyed a long period—eighty years—of peace and safety, terminating B. C. 1426, being 182 years after the passage of the Jordan. It was towards the end of this period that the Philistines, afterwards so conspicuous in the sacred history, made their first appearance in the field as the enemies of Israel. But it was probably in this instance little more than a border foray; for the party was put to the rout by a body of husbandmen with their implements, led by Shamgar, whose own weapon was an ox-goad.

It is also in this interval that we are to place the history of Ruth and Naomi, which forms



so refreshing an episode in the accounts of sin, strife, and war, which form the bulk of the history of this period. It is a domestic history, and the only one which is given with the same degree of detail in all the Scripture. It thus affords a most interesting picture of the private life of the Hebrews of a remote time, to which the abundant touches of natural sentiment,

daughters-in-law. By this time the famine had ceased in Israel, and Naomi resolved to return to her own people. Orpah and Ruth proposed to go with her; but she resisted, and urged them to remain in their own country, and among their own friends. Orpah yielded, and went to her friends, but Ruth was not to be moved. She said: "Intreat me not



RUTH GLEANING.—Ruth ii. 5.

true feeling, and unaffected piety impart that peculiar charm which is felt by every reader.

It relates that during a famine in the land of Israel a man of Bethlehem, named Elimelech, went to sojourn in Moab with his wife, Naomi, and his two sons. During their stay in that country the father died, and the widow was left with her sons, whom in due time she married to two damsels of Moab, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. Ere long her sons died also, and she was left with her two

to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Naomi could not resist this, and they returned to Bethlehem together.

Naomi was full of painful thoughts on returning to the place as a lone widow, which

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some years before she had quitted strong in her husband and hopeful in her two sons. The memory of her good name still, however, lingered in Bethlehem, and when she appeared in its streets people asked, "Is this Naomi?" to which in the reawakened anguish of her soul she answered: "Call me not Naomi, meaning 'pleasant,' but call me Mara, signifying 'bitter,' for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full: and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi?"

Kindness of Boaz.

The return was in spring, about the beginning of the barley harvest; and, as soon as they were a little settled, Ruth went forth to glean in the fields. The harvest-field to which, by the kind providence of God, this fair stranger was conducted, belonged to a pious, kind and wealthy land-owner called Boaz. Her story had become well known in the place, and her generous and faithful conduct had, unknown to her, invested her with a kind of sacredness in the eyes of the good people of Bethlehem, and won for her their respect and love wherever she appeared. Hence the overseer readily gave her permission to glean in the field; and when the owner himself came, and was told who the strange-looking damsel was, he spoke kindly to her, and told her not to seek any other place for gleaning, but to keep fast by his maidens, and partake freely of the victuals which he had provided for his reapers.

Astonished at this kindness, she bowed herself very low before him, and said: "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" He then told her the good report he had heard of her conduct to Naomi, and added: "A full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Overcome by finding so much kindness among strangers, Ruth answered: "Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me; and for that thou hast spoken friendly to thine

handmaid, though I be not like one of thine handmaidens."

Not content with this, Boaz strictly enjoined his people to treat the damsel with respect, and privately told the reapers to drop some of their corn purposely for her to gather up.

Thus favored, poor Ruth thrived well in her gleaning; and when in the evening she beat out that which she had gleaned, it made little less than a bushel of barley. This extraordinary success attracted the attention and inquiries of Naomi, who, when she heard the name of Boaz, recognized his nearness of kin, and advised Ruth to glean only in his grounds. When the harvest was over, the mother-in-law, in her care for the damsel's welfare, became aware of the duties which she owed to the childless house of her husband. By the Hebrew law it was the duty of the next of kin to marry the widow of one who died childless, that the first-born of the marriage might succeed to the estate, and be counted as the son of the deceased. Under this law Naomi conceived that it was the duty of Boaz to make Ruth his wife, and in that case it was her own duty to the deceased to claim that he should do so. The threshing in the open-air threshing-floor followed the reaping, and Naomi knew that Boaz reposed at night beside the heap of threshed corn in that place. Thither she advised Ruth to go, and to claim "that he should throw his skirt over her," and by that action avow his intention to take up the obligations which devolved upon him.

Ruth Wedded to her Benefactor.

Accordingly she went, wrapped up in one of those ample veils which women still wear in the East. Boaz hesitated at a requisition made so unexpectedly, and at such a time and place; but his hesitation arose from the knowledge that there was a nearer kinsman on whom the duty and claim in the first place devolved. This he told her, but spoke kindly to her, and said that, if the other person declined to perform the part of a kinsman to her, he would do so, "for thou art a virtuous woman." That very day Boaz repaired to the gate,

where in those days most public and judicial business was transacted, on account of the facilities offered by the constant passage of the inhabitants between the town and the neigh-

matter before him as a question respecting the right of redeeming a piece of land to be sold by Naomi. The kinsman was willing to this extent to perform the legal duty which de-



RUTH.

boring fields. He had not waited long before the nearer kinsman of whom he had spoken passed by, and he called to him, and, in the presence of the elders of the city, laid the

involved upon him; but when it was further explained that it involved the necessity of marrying Ruth, as the widow of the deceased heir, he drew back, saying, "I cannot redeem it for

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myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it." Then, to indicate the transfer of his right, he took off his sandal and gave it to Boaz, which, being done in the presence of witnesses specially called upon to notice the act, constituted a binding and legal act of transfer. It is thought that the person who received the shoe preserved it in record of the transaction; and it is possibly from this custom, or another of similar meaning, that a person who has taken the place which had belonged to another is said to stand in his shoes.

This mention of sandals affords us occasion to remark that the word translated "shoe," in our authorized version of the Scriptures, must generally be understood to denote sandals. We are not, however, to infer that shoes, or rather slippers and buskins, were altogether unknown; but such were more common in the times of the New Testament than of the Old, and were more used by foreigners than by native Jews. But in those later times, when Jews from all lands repaired to Jerusalem at the different festivals, it is probable that sandals, shoes and buskins of most of the ancient forms represented in our engravings, were seen in Jerusalem.

Israel Delivered by Deborah.

This obstacle being happily surmounted, Ruth became the wife of Boaz. The first-born son, named Obed, from whom sprang Jesse, the father of David, was considered as the grandson of Naomi, and her neighbors accordingly congratulated her:—"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him."

Towards the end of the long interval of eighty years, during which these incidents occurred, the Israelites again fell into evil courses, and were again brought under punishment.

There was a woman named Deborah, cele-

brated for her piety and wisdom, who had probably been considerably instrumental in bringing about the recent reformation, and who was so highly esteemed by the people that they brought their differences to her for decision, so that she is said to have judged Israel. Her dwelling was under the palm-tree between Ramah and Bethel, afterwards known as "Deborah's palm-tree."

To this woman the mission of deliverance came; and as she could not herself take the field, she called Barak, one of the tribe of Naphtali, to take command of the troops, which he was instructed to raise, to the number of ten thousand men.

Deborah's Triumphant Song.

A battle was fought with the opposing host, which was commanded by Sisera, the most renowned general of his time. Sisera escaped from the field of battle, after suffering utter defeat, but was slain in a tent, whither he had repaired for concealment and rest. Jael, wife of one of the nomadic chiefs, drove a nail into his temple as he was lying asleep.

He was scarcely dead when the pursuers arrived, headed by Barak himself—the commander in those ancient wars being usually solicitous of taking or slaying the opposing general with his own hand. Jael went forth to meet them, and accosted Barak with, "Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest." He then went with her into the tent, and beheld the redoubtable enemy of Israel lying dead, with the tent-nail in his temples, and knew that he had died by a woman's hand and with a woman's weapons.

This great victory was commemorated by Deborah and Barak in a triumphal ode, which forms a favorable and interesting specimen of the early poetry of the Hebrews. It begins with an animated picture of the oppressed condition in which the Israelites had lately been, marked not by descriptions of particulars, but by suggestive points

"The highways were unfrequented,
And in by-paths travellers travelled;
Deserted were the villages in Israel,

Until that I, Deborah, arose,
Until I arose to be a mother in Israel."

The song then proceeds to praise the tribes which hastened to take arms at the call of Deborah and Barak, while those who neglected it, especially the tribes beyond the Jordan, are pointedly censured:

"Among the streams of Reuben,
Great were the resolvings of heart,
Wherefore didst thou sit still among thy folds,
And listen to the bleatings of thy herds?
Gilead abode beyond Jordan;
And Dan, why remained he quiet by the ships?
Asher dwelt at ease on the shore of the sea,
And abode tranquil by his havens."

Then follows a vivid description of the battle, and of the death of Sisera; and then, by a master-stroke of poetical skill, the scene changes, and the mother of this great commander is introduced as awaiting with im-

patience for his triumphant return, of which no doubt was entertained:

"Through a window the mother of Sisera looked out,
And called through the lattice;
'Wherefore delayeth his chariot to come?
Why linger the paces of his chariots?'
The wise among her noble ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself:
'Lo, they have found, they divide the spoil,
A maiden, two maidens to each warrior;
A spoil of dyed garments for Sisera.'"

And answered, that the victors tarry to divide the rich spoils they have won. Leaving the disappointment of these high expectations to be inferred from what had been already stated, the ode, with an apparent abruptness, which is in itself a beauty, concludes with:

"So perish all thine enemies, Jehovah!
But they who love Him are as the going forth of the sun
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CHAPTER XIV.

A MAN OF VALOR.



AVING gained the great victory which the foregoing song commemorates, the Israelites secured a repose of forty years; towards the end of this period they had again fallen into their wonted idolatries, and were punished by the devastation of their country under the hands of the Midianites and other Eastern tribes. This was a very terrible visitation. It will be remembered that the Midianites had been all but exterminated by Moses, when they, in conjunction with the Moabites, had seduced the Israelites to sin in the matter of Bael-Peor. From the conduct of the Midianites, now that they had the upper hand, it would seem that this fatal event in their history was still, after two hundred years, well remembered by them and bitterly avenged. For we are told that "because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds."

It would seem from what follows that their mode of proceeding was precisely similar to that of the Arabs and other nomade people when they make annual incursions into cultivated but weakly defended districts. They did not abide constantly in the land, but came up in the early summer, soon as the early produce began to be collected, and remained through all the season of produce until the autumn, when they withdrew into their deserts. The oppression consisted therefore in seizing the produce of the ground, and of spoiling the people of all their portable possessions.

The description given of their course of

proceedings is a very graphic picture of the circumstances which take place under similar conditions at the present day: "And it was so, when the Israelites had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the East, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou comest unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number; and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and Israel cried unto the Lord."

That cry was heard in heaven, and a deliverer was raised up for them. The person chosen on this occasion was Gideon, the son of Joash, of the family of Abiezer, who, when the messenger of the Lord appeared, was threshing out corn secretly in so unusual a spot as beside the wine-press, to conceal it from the Midianites. Gideon first perceived the heavenly messenger as a man sitting under a neighboring oak. The stranger accosted him with, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." To which Gideon promptly answered, "If the Lord be with us, why then hath all this befallen us?" This misgiving answer the angel met by bestowing upon him the high commission to deliver Israel: "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel out of the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"

Gideon at first attempted to excuse himself on the ground that his family did not possess in their tribe such a degree of influence as would justify or support so hazardous an undertaking; but when further urged, he inti-

mated his willingness to encounter the toil and danger, provided that he had assurance of the stranger's own authority to bestow such a commission upon him. Nothing further passed at the moment, and Gideon hastened to prepare the refreshment which the rules of hospitality required him to offer the traveler, whereby it seemed to become an offering to God. This satisfied Gideon, but created another alarm, lest the sight of a supernatural being was the harbinger of death: "Alas, O Lord God!" he cried, "for because I have seen an angel face to face;" but before he could express all his fears the Lord said to



GIDEON'S FLEECE.—Jud. vi. 37.

and for which he prevailed upon the latter to stay. He soon returned with a dressed kid and unleavened cakes in a basket, and with broth in a pot. The stranger directed him to set them down upon the rock hard by, and then furnished the testimonial which the doubts of Gideon required, by causing the whole to be consumed by a spontaneous fire, him: "Fear not: thou shalt not die." Gideon then, in the first feeling of his gratitude, raised an altar to the Lord, whom he addressed by the name of Jehovah-Shalom, "the God of Peace;" and, without more delay, he prepared himself for the high task to which he now knew that he had been called. He seemed to be multiplied into a thousand men

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The first achievement of Gideon was the destruction of an altar to Baal, which seems to have belonged to his father's establishment, but in which the people of the place took a general interest. Taking with him ten of the servants on whom he could rely, he proceeded to demolish the idolatrous structure, and set up in its place an altar to Jehovah, on which he offered sacrifice. In the morning, when the people of Ophrah discovered what had been done, they broke out into great anger, and on hearing that the daring act had been performed by Gideon, they demanded that his life should pay for the sacrilege.

Let Baal Plead for Himself.

But Joash, who, in his anxiety for his son, forgot for the moment his own interest in the forbidden worship, interposed with an argument which seems to have had at all times extraordinary power over the minds of the idolatrous Jews—"If Baal be a God (he said), let him plead for himself;" or, in other words, leave him to avenge his own cause, if he is able, upon the frail mortal who has provoked his anger. They yielded to this: and the absence of any present stroke of Baal's anger seems to have shaken their minds, and disposed them to look upon Gideon with something of awe and confidence. It was from this that the hero obtained his second name of Jerubbaal, meaning with whom "Baal contends."

This seems to have been designed as a sort of preparation for the great work which lay before him. A great and suspicious movement took place in the wandering hordes, who, having collected their forces, passed over into the plain of Esdraelon, and lay there encamped. Upon hearing of this, Gideon felt that the time for action was come; and he summoned first his own kinsmen, the house of Abiezer, to assist him in repelling the host of Midian. Their prompt obedience enabled him to send with the name of authority to summon the northern tribes of Manasseh, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali to his standard. This call was obeyed, and he found himself at the head of thirty-two thousand men.

But while Gideon thus encouraged others, he was not himself without misgivings respecting the result of his perilous undertaking. Hence he was induced to implore an unambiguous token of the Divine concurrence, in the form of such a miracle as he should ask to be performed. Some think that it was more to encourage his followers than on his own account that he made this singular request. The sign he desired was, that the dew should fall on a fleece of wool, while the ground on which it lay continued dry. This happened according to his wish, and he wrung from the fleece a bowlful of water, while the ground was perfectly dry. The marvel was here in the copiousness of the dew; for that *some* dew should be on the fleece, while none could be perceived on the ground, would have been in entire accordance with the laws of nature. Gideon could not but know this, and therefore, to place the matter beyond all doubt or cavil, he implored that the sign should be reversed, and that the fleece should be dry, while the ground was moistened by the deposition from the atmosphere. This also was done; and here the interposition of Heaven was most manifest, for wool having a much greater attraction for moisture than common dust or clay has, it was not natural that the fleece should be dry when there was moisture on all the ground.

Cowards Not Wanted.

Having no longer any doubt that Jehovah was on his side, and that the victory with which his arms were to be crowned was to proceed from the blessing of Heaven, he readily adopted a suggestion, communicated to him from above, for impressing upon the minds of his soldiers the same salutary conviction. One would think that the number of thirty-two thousand men was by no means too large for the conflict with the innumerable hosts of Midian; but the object of the Divine King was to reduce this to a number manifestly inefficient, that there might be no mistake as to the source from whence deliverance came, and that Israel might not boast that by the strength of his own arm the yoke

of Midian had been broken. Gideon was therefore ordered to proclaim that all who were fearful and faint-hearted might withdraw to their own homes. Many whose hearts had seemed stout while the danger was remote

room for boasting might be altogether excluded, means were taken to reduce even this force to a mere handful of men, manifestly unequal of itself, or, as an instrumental means, to defeat the hordes of Midian and Amalek.



GIDEON DESTROYING THE IDOLS OF BAAL.—Jud. vi. 28.

shrunk, now that the enemy was before them, and twenty-two thousand quitted the field.

But ten thousand brave men still presented a formidable band, equal in numerical strength to the troops of Barak, who defeated the immense host of Sisera; and therefore, that

Gideon took his ten thousand men to the water, and those who went down upon their knees to drink from the stream were set apart from those who drank by raising the water to their mouths in the hollow of their hands. The former were ten thousand, the latter three

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hundred; and the smaller number was that with which the Lord declared that he would deliver Israel. In the following night Gideon, attended by his servant Phurah, went down to the host of Midian, having been promised encouragement from overhearing the remarks of the Midianites upon the state of their affairs. He heard one man report to another, beside whom he lay, a dream, representing a cake of barley bread rolling down from the hills, and overturning the tents of Midian. "This is nothing else," said his companion, "save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all his host."

Gideon's War-Cry.

Gideon needed no other encouragement than the knowledge that such an impression as this existed among the Midianites; and he forthwith returned to his men. He perceived that his best course would be to work upon the alarm which already existed among the invading host. He therefore provided every man with a trumpet in one hand, and with a lamp concealed in a pitcher in the other. He then divided his troop into three companies of one hundred men each, directing them to advance upon the host of Midian on different sides, and in all respects to follow his example. Accordingly, when they had advanced sufficiently near, they halted, withdrew the lamps from the pitchers, dashed the pitchers to the ground, and then blew a tremendous blast upon their trumpets, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" A similar cry has sounded many a time since then.

The Enemy Put to Flight.

The sudden blaze on different sides of the camp, the crash, the sound from trumpets sufficient for a large host, and the ensuing shout, perfectly confounded the rude Midianites thus aroused from sleep. They deemed themselves surrounded by a mighty host, and rushed amazedly about, slaying each other, as every one among them deemed the person he encountered an enemy. The men who had been dismissed the preceding day made themselves

useful in pursuing the fugitives, and contributed to render the rout of the enemy and the deliverance of Israel most complete. The Ephraimites, who had not been called into action, now voluntarily came forward and rendered good service by seizing the fords of the Jordan and destroying such of the defeated invaders as attempted to escape to their own country. Here two of the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, fell into their hands; and they struck off their heads and sent them to the victorious Gideon on the opposite side of the Jordan. The haughty Ephraimites were, however, not sparing in their rebukes of Gideon for not having in the first instance called them to the field; but with great tact he averted their wrath by extolling their last exploit and by speaking lightly of his own deeds in comparison.

The hero was in hot pursuit of Zeba and Zalmunna, two of the invading enemies, who had succeeded in crossing the river and were retiring with a considerable body of men to their own land. Gideon followed hard after them with his chosen band, and at length camp up with them. Then, perceiving the small number of his men, they were encouraged to stand on their defence. But the battle ended in the total discomfiture of Zeba and his colleague, who fell alive into the hands of the conqueror. When they were brought before him, he asked them what manner of men were certain Israelites whom they had surprised and slain on Mount Tabor. They answered: "As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king." On which he exclaimed with anguish: "They were my brethren—even the sons of my mother! As the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you." That he had under any circumstances intended to spare their lives, shows that the usages of war had already become somewhat more mild than they had been, or that Gideon was not disposed to enforce them rigorously.

Now, however, the duty of an avenger for his brother's blood devolved upon him; and he transferred it to his eldest son Jether, whom

he desired "to fall upon them." But the youth was awed by the majestic presence of these staid warriors, and shrunk from the task. On which the captive princes said to Gideon: "Rise thou and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength;" and on this hint he arose and slew them on the spot.

The Avenger.

Another painful matter remained; this was the punishment of certain cities, Succoth and Penuel, which had refused any succor to his weary troop when pursuing the retreating princes, and had even added insult to wrong by the manner in which the refusal was conveyed. For this he cast down the tower of Penuel, and slew the chief men of the city. The punishment of Succoth is not so well understood. He threatened "to tear their flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers;" and it is added, that on his triumphant return "he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth." The most painful interpretation of this is the most probable, namely, that the expressions allude to an ancient and very cruel mode by which persons were put to death under torture, by having thorns and briers laid over their naked bodies, and then drawing over them some heavy implement of husbandry—being, as supposed, the same treatment to which David subjected the Ammonites.

So great was the relief which the Israelites now experienced, and so sensible were they of the high qualities which Gideon had evinced, that they formally offered to make him king, and to entail the crown upon his descendants. But Gideon, knowing that they had no right to make such an offer, which was altogether adverse to the spirit of the theocratical institutions, answered with great promptness and decision: "I will not reign over you, neither shall my son reign over you. Jehovah, he shall reign over you." The only return which he required for his great services was that they should bestow upon him the collars and earrings which had been taken from the bodies

of the slaughtered Midianites. This they very willingly did; and with these spoils he made an ephod, which he placed in his own city of Ophrah.

This is supposed to indicate that he set up a sacerdotal establishment, with priests, vestments, and Urim and Thummim, at the place where he had formerly built an altar and offered sacrifice to Jehovah. If so, Gideon acted doubtless with the best intentions; but the proceeding was irregular and contrary to the law, which directed that there should be but one establishment for sacrifice to the whole people—that one being the place of the tabernacle, where the Divine Presence abode "between the cherubim." We are not, therefore, surprised to learn that this establishment eventually "became a snare to Gideon and to his house."

The Israelites enjoyed forty years of peace under the administration of Gideon, who died in 1273 B. C., leaving behind him not fewer than seventy sons. One of them, named Abimelech, succeeded in persuading the people of Shechem, his mother's native town, to bestow upon him the crown which his father had refused: as a preliminary to this step, he had massacred all his brothers except the youngest, named Jotham, who succeeded in making his escape. This person could not restrain himself from making his appearance at Shechem to give vent to his indignation and disgust when he found that the citizens had made Abimelech king. He did this in the well-known and ingenious apologue of the trees making choice of a king, which is without doubt the oldest composition of the kind which has reached our times. After delivering it, Jotham withdrew to Beer, and remained there till the death of Abimelech, who three years after was wounded by a piece of millstone cast by a woman's hand over the wall of a town he was besieging, and at his own request was despatched by his armor-bearer.

The succeeding governments of Tola and of Jair covered a period of forty-four years; and we may infer that in their time the Israelites prospered, for the Book of Judges, which

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is, in fact, an account of the diseases in the
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ing the time in which they ruled.

After the death of Jair the people relapsed
into idolatry, and for their chastisement the

oppressions to which they were subjected be-
came so grievous that they at length turned
to the Lord, confessed their sins before Him,
and implored Him to pity their great affliction.
Then, trusting in the Divine succor, they re-



ABIMELECH SLAIN BY HIS ARMOR-BEARER.—Jud. ix. 54.

Ammonites were allowed to master them, and
to keep them under subjection for eighteen
years. This calamity particularly affected the
tribes beyond the Jordan, who occupied a
country which had in part belonged of old to
the Ammonites, whose existing territory was
still upon the border of their dominions. The

solved to take the field against their enemies.
They therefore assembled in considerable num-
bers at Mizpeh, while the Ammonites lay en-
camped in Gilead. There was the impulse,
the readiness to act, and men prepared for
action. But they were without a head. After
so long a subjection, which had been preceded

by a still longer peace, there was not one among them who seemed to have sufficient experience in war to act as their leader. The only person they could think of was one Jephthah, the illegitimate son of Gilead, a person of some consequence in the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond the Jordan.

This man had been turned adrift by the family on the death of the father, and withdrew into the land of Tob, where he became the chief of a set of wild fellows of desperate fortunes, who subsisted by predatory excursions, border forays against the enemies and oppressors of Israel. This course of proceeding by no means tended to render them unpopular in Israel; and accordingly Jephthah became the person to whom all eyes turned in this singular emergency. A deputation was accordingly sent to him without delay.

Jephthah's Rash Vow.

The hero's experience in life had not been calculated to teach him confidence in man or reliance upon popular impulses. He, therefore, after some sharp remarks upon the treatment he had received in Gilead, refused to accept the arduous duties offered to him unless they would undertake that he should remain their head after his immediate service had been completed. This stipulation for power was in a spirit different from that of Gideon, by whom even regal power was refused when spontaneously offered. But the circumstances were different; and if Jephthah had not been aware of peculiar facilities which his unconnected position offered to those who might wish to shake him off, he would not have deemed it necessary to stipulate for that which it was not usual to refuse. The delegates, however, readily acceded to the terms which Jephthah offered, and swore to observe them.

The first act of the new commander was to send an embassy to the Ammonites, to demand the reason of their invasion of the territory of the Israelites. This was a very remarkable step, and seems to show that by this time society had come to expect that there should be some good reason for invasion and warfare.

Accordingly the Ammonites returned what they considered a good reason, alleging that the territory which the Hebrews possessed in that quarter had formerly belonged to them, and that they had a right to recover possession of it. Jephthah replied that the Israelites had taken the land not from the Ammonites but from the Amorites, by whom they had long before been dispossessed; and, moreover, that it was a land which the Lord had given to them, and which, therefore, they had a right to possess. The Ammonites, however, were not convinced by these reasons, and the armies advanced to give each other battle.

When Jephthah left his home to lead the army of Israel to battle he uttered the rash vow that if the Lord gave him victory over his enemies, whatsoever came forth out of his house to meet him on his return "shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." He was victorious. The Lord delivered the Ammonites into his hands, and they were smitten from Aroer unto the plain of the vineyards with a very great slaughter. He returned to his house in peace; and the one whom by his vow he had foredoomed—the one who came forth from his house to meet him on his return—was his own daughter, his only child—"beside her he had neither son nor daughter." She went forth exultingly, with timbrels and with dances, to greet her victorious father. But he no sooner beheld her than his strong heart gave way beneath the stroke, and he rent his robes, crying, "Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and cannot go back." But the daughter inherited the heroic qualities of her father. In the general blessing and benefit her own doom seemed a light matter to her, and she answered, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance of thee upon thine enemies."

All she asked was a reprieve of two months, "to bewail her virginity upon the mountains;" which must be interpreted with reference to

the fact of its being in Israel held the greatest possible calamity for a woman not to become the mother of children. At the end of two months she returned, and we are told that her afflicted father "did with her according to his vow." The plain reading of the sacred text would lead every one to conclude that he offered her up for a burnt-offering. If he did so he committed a horrid crime under mistaken views of religious duty; and this has led many pious commentators to endeavor to clear his memory from this stigma. The ground which has been taken is, that his vow implied that he would sacrifice what was fit for sacrifice; but if that which came forth to meet him were not fit for a burnt-offering, it should be the Lord's in some other way, and it is therefore concluded that the daughter was in this case consecrated in perpetual celibacy to the service of Jehovah. This ground is now, however, generally abandoned by sound scholars, and few hesitate to believe that Jephthah really did sacrifice his daughter.

A Father's Sacrifice.

The fact is so understood by Josephus, and lamented by him; and as he could not fail to know the prevailing impression among his countrymen, his corroborative testimony is of much value for the interpretation of the incident as a point of history. He says that Jephthah blamed his daughter for being so forward in coming forth to meet him; for that his vow obliged him to offer her in sacrifice to the Lord. He adds, "However, this action was not ungrateful to her, since she was to die upon occasion of her father's victory and the liberty of her fellow-citizens. She only desired her father to give her leave for two months to bewail her youth with her countrywomen, and then she consented that at the end of the forementioned time he might do with her agreeably to his vow. Accordingly, when the time was over, he sacrificed his daughter as a burnt-offering, presenting such an oblation as was neither conformable to the law nor acceptable to God; nor weighing with himself what opinion the hearers would have

of such a practice." Nothing can be plainer than this; and the general opinion of both Jewish and Christian antiquity has been in agreement with it; the notion that the hero did not sacrifice his daughter being of comparatively modern prevalence.

The fact seems to be that the Israelites, having been long plunged in idolatry and infected with idolatrous iniquities, and in habits of too familiar intercourse with their heathen neighbors, had imbibed their notions respecting the meritoriousness of human sacrifice; and a man who had led a wild life like Jephthah was not likely to be well informed on points which even quiet people had neglected.

Supinely the Israelites sank down; mingled freely with the people, indulged in their enervating luxuries, adopted their manners, bowed at their altars—made themselves vile. Then came the alternations of returning loyalty to the King of Heaven, and of open defiance and rebellion to his rule. Whenever they turned to him up rose a hero, who smote the Canaanites, and, for the time, restored the glory to Israel, and rest to the land; but when the hero died, the people turned again to their evil ways and only cried aloud for Heaven's help when the bondage was too bitter to bear.

See how these heroes rise before us: Here is Othniel, a younger brother of that Caleb who, with Joshua, came safely through the wilderness. Nothing can withstand this bold, strong man, and the land has rest.

Here is Ehud, the left-handed, with a double edged knife on his right thigh. He means to slay a tyrant, and you see him, on the pretense of a secret errand, enter the summer pavilion of king Eglon, and by-and-by spring forth without his dagger, fast close the doors, and escape to the quarries.

See Shamgar, son of Anath, wielding with his strong hand no better weapon than an ox-goad, but slaying of the enemy "heaps upon heaps."

See Gideon, secretly threshing a little wheat by the wine-press, a nervous terror on his fine, sagacious face, lest the oppressor

should come down and seize upon it; aye, and a sort of contempt for himself that he should be one of a people so enslaved. But a heavenly glory shines upon him, and he is another man. A barley-cake shall indeed—as the soldier dreams—fall into the camp, and overturn their tents; but it shall come with trumpet, pitcher, and torch, and the cry shall be, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

See, rising up the clouded face of Jephthah, offspring of a left-hand marriage. He has been cast out until, in the time of trouble, all eyes have been turned to him—knowing his prowess—he, a widower, dwelling apart with his only child. Somewhat indignantly he answers to the cry of his countrymen, goes to their help, vows a vow, and the enemy is discomfited before him.

What a triumphant march follows! what shouts, what fanfares! all nothing to the great ovation which awaits the captain when he approaches his own city—his own home, and over his threshold skips his darling child, singing and leaping with attendant maidens, resolved to be the first to meet him. See, he

is struck down! If the thunderbolt had fallen it had been better—he has sworn to sacrifice the first living thing which meets him from his home. And he has respect unto his vow.

Rises before us a strong man and a mighty—a Nazarite from his birth. “A rough believer,” so he has been called, and appropriately enough; a strong-limbed and strong-passioned man, with a depth of savage goodness, in him. These hard, haughty lords, who rule with so high a hand, shall learn something from him. He has torn a lion as he would rend a kid, and will have no mercy upon them. Wondrous are the things which he accomplishes, bravely working as a brave patriot works, but a woman—oh, shame it should be so!—a woman betrays him, and with his eyes out he gropes in blindness and darkness, the scorn and derision of his foes. There comes a day of reckoning, when, brought forth to make them sport, his strong arms on the pillars which support the house, he pulls down the light structure, and there is a very great slaughter, in which the hero's life is lost.

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CHAPTER XV.

MARVELOUS FEATS OF SAMSON.



ALTHOUGH Jephthah knew that Jehovah was the God of Israel, and that he alone ought to be worshipped by his people, he had but confused notions even on this point, for in his message to the Ammonites he appears to recognize Chemosh as their god in the same sense in which Jehovah was the God of Israel. He seems to have thought it enough to worship the Lord in the same way that other nations worshipped their gods, and to have supposed that what they deemed invaluable could not be otherwise to Him. We know that in after-times human sacrifice was practiced in Israel in the face of far greater light than existed in the generation to which Jephthah belonged, and in the presence of the temple and altar of Jehovah; and knowing this, it does afford just ground for surprise that there should have been so much hesitation felt in allowing that a rough soldier, living in an idolatrous age, and in a part of Israel less than any other open to the influence of the theocratical institutions, should have deemed himself bound by the obligations of his vow to immolate his daughter.

That the deed was unlawful is very certain; but it is not the less probable on that account. It is, however, a monstrous conception of the painters and others that the high-priest was the sacrificer, and that the sacrifice was made at the altar of the Lord. The awful deed was probably perpetrated at some old altar in the country beyond the Jordan, and there is much reason to apprehend that Jephthah himself struck the blow which left his own heart desolate.

It is singular that the victory of Jephthah over the Ammonites was followed by a mis-

understanding with the powerful tribe of Ephraim, similar to that which had followed the victory of Gideon over the Midianites. This tribe seems never to have perceived that its assistance could have been of use until the occasion for taking the field had passed away and the enemy was completely routed; and then it came forward with complaints that it had not obtained a share of the honor and the spoil. Gideon had pacified them with one of those soft answers which turn away wrath: the sterner Jephthah tried the same treatment; but having less self-control, he allowed their gross insults to arouse his anger, and he took prompt and skilful measures for making them repent of their offensive movements.

They had crossed the Jordan in arms, and were bent on mischief; and Jephthah, who had at first been disinclined to come to blows, no longer hesitated to give them battle. They were utterly routed, and when those who had escaped the battle-field attempted to recross the river into their own country, they found the fords in the hands of the men of Gilead, who hit upon an ingenious contrivance for distinguishing them as Ephraimites, which they could not have done by their persons or attire. It seems that they were unable to pronounce the Hebrew *sh*, but gave it the sound of *s*. This amounted to something like the difference in our provincial dialects; but seems more remarkable in so small a country as Palestine. All the men who came to the river, were required to pronounce the word *Shibboleth*, meaning a "stream," and if they gave it as *Sibboleth*, were smitten down as Ephraimites.

The victories of Gideon and of Jephthah appear to have secured a long period of tranquillity to the Israelites; for the historian records little more than the names of the three

following Judges. Jephthah died after having ruled Israel six years. After him was Ibzan of Bethlehem, who was the parent of thirty sons and as many daughters. He ruled seven years; and after him came Elon, who ruled ten years; and he was followed by Abdon, who during eight years judged Israel.

It required no long course of prosperity to corrupt the Israelites, and to turn them aside from that God to whom they were indebted for it. The reader of Scripture is so accustomed to this, that he only wonders at the unusual duration of some of the intervals of faithfulness and rectitude. They now sinned once more, and were brought very low under the yoke of the Philistines, which lay heavy on them for forty years.

The Deliverer of Israel.

The deliverer whom God next raised up to redress the wrongs of the chosen people was, in many respects, the most extraordinary personage who appears in the more ancient Hebrew history, and whose course of proceeding it appears most difficult to reconcile with our notions of a Divine commission and a theocratic government. This was Samson, who was born about the time this servitude commenced, and who about the middle of it was in a condition to act upon the high commission which he so imperfectly fulfilled, and to exercise the marvelous gifts which his low vices so often deprived of the effects for which alone they had been intrusted to him.

His birth was by a miracle. An angel announced that a deliverer of Israel should be born; and it was directed that he should be regarded as a Nazarite from birth, wearing his hair forever unshorn and abstaining from wine and strong drink. The father was not present at this interview. His name was Manoah, an inhabitant of Zorah, a small town of the tribe of Dan, to which he belonged. Manoah was astonished at the tidings which his wife imparted to him, and prayed that he might also be privileged to receive the assurance from the same heavenly messenger. The angel accordingly reappeared to both the des-

tinued parents, and a scene took place not unlike that which had formerly attended the angel-visit to Gideon. Manoah, as directed, offered a kid with a meat-offering upon the rock, and as the flame went up towards heaven the angel disappeared from their view in the rising flame, and vanished out of sight.

Samson's Great Strength.

The child in due time was born, the name of Samson was given to him, and he was brought up as a Nazarite. He was then found to be endowed with strength greatly beyond that of the sons of men, and which was destined to become the instrument through which he, as the champion of the Lord's people, was to work for the deliverance of Israel. He early sought for opportunities of signaling his valor and uncommon strength against the enemies of his country; and, ere long, his personal achievements appear to have attached to his name such a degree of notoriety as to render him an object of dislike and terror to the inhabitants of the Philistine border. It was, in fact, his vocation to "find occasion" against the Philistines, which might enable him to exert his mighty powers to their detriment; by which their power might be weakened and their plans confused, without exposing his own nation to responsibility for his acts.

The time for the full deliverance of Israel was not then come: it was the task of Samson to "begin" that deliverance by weakening the power and resources of the Philistines by such acts as centred their attention on himself personally. To fulfil this, his destiny, it came to pass that he, while still a youth, fell in love with a Philistine damsel of Timnath. The parents, who did not know that this attachment "was of the Lord," objected to his marriage with an idolater, when there were so many fair damsels in Israel well suited to his choice. But finding his resolution fixed, they reluctantly agreed to go with him to Timnath to ask the damsel in marriage.

The necessary preliminaries being settled, the marriage was solemnized with feasting,

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SAMSON SLAYING THE LION.—Jud. xiv. 6.

which, according to the custom of the time, lasted seven days. It was usual on such occasions for the bridegroom to invite a number of his relatives and friends, who were to do the honors of the ceremony and to perform other duties arising from the occasion. In this case, however, thirty Philistines were assigned to Samson as companions, either from his being distant from his own home, or, more probably, for a check upon a person so dangerous and formidable. It was usual in those days for the guests assembled at such feasts to exercise their wit in proposing and solving enigmas and riddles: and in compliance with this custom, Samson put forth a riddle, and proposed thirty dresses as the forfeit to be given by him if they solved it within seven days, or by them if they failed to do so. The riddle was—

“ Out of the eater came forth meat,
And out of the fierce came forth sweetness.”

It was founded on an adventure which befel him in one of his journeys to Timnath, when he slew a young lion, in the dry hide-bound skeleton of which he afterwards found a swarm of bees and a quantity of honey.

The Riddle Solved.

The solution of this riddle was beyond the skill of the Philistines; but being unwilling to seem outwitted or to incur the expensive forfeiture, they beset the bride, and by threatenings induced her to solicit from him the solution, which she imparted to them, and they were thus enabled on the seventh day to answer:

“ What is fiercer than a lion?
And what is sweeter than honey?”

Samson took no pains to conceal his disappointment and suspicion; and he made it an occasion for exercising the powers with which he had been gifted for the avengement if not the deliverance of his people. He went down to Askelon, and slew thirty Philistines, whose blood-stained raiment he brought to Timnath, and gave to their countrymen as the forfeit of his riddle. Then, in deep disgust at the part taken by his wife, and probably suspicious of

her fidelity in other respects, he returned to his paternal home, leaving her with her friends. But after a while his heart relented, and he again went down to Timnath to see his wife, and found that she had during his absence been bestowed in marriage upon the chief of the young men who had been his companions at the wedding-feast, and who had behaved so scandalously to him.

This was not only a great wrong in itself, but afforded confirmation to his former suspicions. His wrath, therefore, rose very high, and he made this another occasion of vengeance against the Philistines. This vengeance was exercised in a very singular manner. He caught three hundred foxes (or jackals), and, coupling them together, fastened burning fuses between the tails of each couple, and in this manner set them loose among the standing corn of the Philistines, which was thus at once set on fire in many different quarters. The flames at that season of the year spread so rapidly and widely among the standing crops and the vineyards as to cause a most extensive and ruinous destruction.

Some exceptions have been taken to this transaction on the score of the difficulty of catching so many as three hundred foxes. But jackals, not foxes, are usually denoted; and as they are gregarious, the number might, without insuperable difficulty, have been caught by Samson and other persons employed by him for the occasion. Jackals would also answer the purpose better than foxes, which would have fled immediately to their holes, and not have wandered about the fields of the Philistines.

The Philistines take Revenge.

When the author and occasion of this great calamity became known to the Philistines they resolved to remove at once the cause of his anger rather than expose themselves to the repetition of such attacks; and they therefore went to Timnath and destroyed by fire the parties of whom Samson had so much cause to complain. But this was not the way to pacify the Jewish hero, who no sooner heard of it than he fell upon a band of their country-

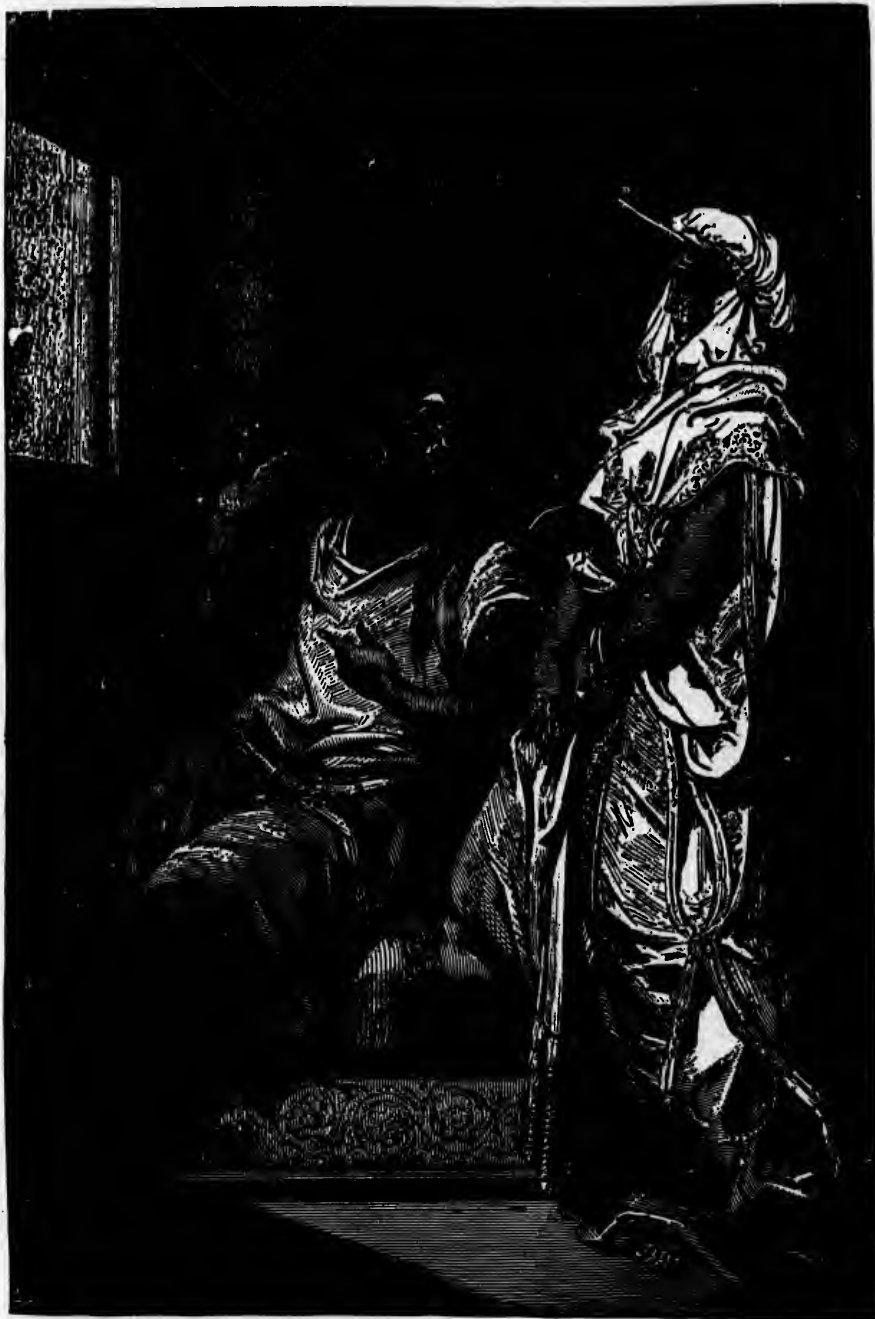
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SAMSON AND DELILAH.—Jud. xvi. 16.

men and vanquished them with much slaughter. He, then, foreseeing the consequences, withdrew to the top of the almost inaccessible rock Etam, in the tribe of Judah.

The Philistines do not appear to have regarded these feats of Samson as acts of war or revolt on the part of the Hebrews; their attention was fixed upon the person of the hero; and now, finding, by dear experience, that his enmity was as implacable as his strength was great, they determined by one great stroke to put an end to the vexatious warfare which he carried on upon their borders. They therefore marched a body of troops into Judea, with the intention of seizing this eagle in the eyrie to which he had fled, and established a regular encampment in the neighborhood, with the view, apparently, of starving him into a surrender.

The men of Judah were alarmed at these proceedings, and dreaded the consequences which the hero's acts seemed likely to bring upon their own heads. They therefore went and remonstrated with him, hinting their wish that he would allow himself to be delivered up as a pledge and security of future peace. After some hesitation he consented so far as to allow them to bind him and conduct him to the presence of the enemy. But no sooner did he come before them, and while their triumphant shout rose high in air, than the supernatural spirit was roused within him; he burst the strong cords that bound him as if they had been burnt tow, and, seizing the first weapon which came to hand, which was the jawbone of an ass, he flew upon the host and slew a thousand men therewith.

Not long after having committed this slaughter among the Philistines, Samson, with marvelous hardihood, ventured to go to Gaza, one of their fortified cities, and there took up his abode. He was not long permitted to remain in Gaza undisturbed, for the news of his arrival soon transpired, and a strong watch was set at the gate to arrest him when he should attempt to depart. But the hour of their triumph was not yet come; for, being made acquainted with this movement on the

part of the Philistines, he rose at midnight, and not content with bursting open the gates, he wrenched them away, posts, bars, and all, and bore them off upon his shoulders to the top of a hill about two miles from Gaza on the road to Hebron.

Samson was, however, at length betrayed into the power of his enemies by a woman named Delilah, for whom he entertained a base affection. The lords of the Philistines no sooner heard of this unhappy connection than they resolved to employ this woman as the instrument of his destruction. They promised her large sums of money to induce her to employ all her insinuations to find out the cause of his supernatural strength, which they manifestly supposed to depend on some peculiar observance, which, if he might be induced to neglect, his strength would fail him, and they might with impunity avenge themselves upon him.

Samson Betrayed.

Accordingly Delilah employed all her arts to gain the desired information, and after many vain efforts Samson at length disclosed to her that he had been constituted by the Lord a perpetual Nazarite, which condition was betokened by the unshorn state of his hair; but that if he renounced the condition of a Nazarite by shaving his head, the spirit of the Lord, in which lay his great strength, would depart from him, and he should become as other men. In consequence of this disclosure she contrived, while he was asleep, to shave off his hair; and the Philistines, who were lying in wait, seized upon him, put out his eyes, and, placing him in strong fetters, carried him to Gaza, where he was confined in the prison-house, and made to grind at the mill like a slave.

Milton, in his "Samson Agonistes," which, apart from its poetical merits, is a beautiful and critical study of the life and character of the hero, thus pictures him in this condition:

"Oh change beyond report, thought or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused;
With languished head unpropt,

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SAMSON GRINDING IN THE PRISON-HOUSE.—Jud. xvi. 21.

As one past hope—abandoned,
 And by himself given over;
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
 O'er-worn and soiled:

Can this be he,
 That heroic, that renowned,
 Irresistible Samson?"

Some time after this the lords of the Philis-

tines assembled to hold an annual festival in honor of their idol Dagon. Having met in the house or temple of that idol, it occurred to them to enhance their gladness and the glory of their god by the sight of their captive in his misery, and his abject condition. He was accordingly sent for, and was placed

in the area or enclosed court of the building, the flat roof of which was crowded with the Philistines, who made him the object of their mockery and sport. His hair had, however, begun to grow again, and with its growth he felt the consciousness of returning strength. In this consciousness he desired the lad who led him about to let him rest against the central pillars, upon which the main weight of the building rested. This being granted, the blind hero breathed a prayer to the Lord to strengthen him, that he might be once more avenged of the Philistines; and, laying hold of the two pillars, shook them with such violence that "the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein: and the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." Availing themselves of the consternation which this transaction occasioned in the place, the friends of Samson came down, and extricating his body from the ruins, bore it away and buried it between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the sepulchre of his father Manoah.

"God of our fathers! what is man,
That thou towards him with a hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelic orders, and the inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish, as the summer-fly,
Heads without name, no more remembered
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,
For some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect:
Yet towards these, thus dignified, thou oft
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favors past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service!"

Milton's "Samson Agonistes."

Great, brave men, these judges in Israel.
How the writer of the Letters to the Hebrews

dwells upon them as instances of Faith!
"And what shall I say more, for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah—who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong—of whom the world was not worthy."

But we must not suppose that it was the men alone who waxed valiant in fight in those terrible days which immediately followed on the Israelitish invasion of Canaan. In all ages of the world women have shown themselves strong and earnest when the hearts of men have failed within them. When a woman's naturally gentle nature is roused, her indignation knoweth no bounds; but she is circumspect in her ways, and seldom acts rashly. In the enumeration of the worthies who were raised up for the deliverance of Israel, occurs the name of Barak—he was a soldier—a captain of the host, but he achieved victory through the help of two women: Deborah taught him how and when to smite, and Jacl completed his conquest by slaying the chief enemy with her own hands. Truly a very redoubtable captain! "Up; for this is the day that the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand."

Sisera is a man of war—a hero—and is confident of success. But his troops reel and stagger; his horsemen fall upon each other; his iron chariots are overthrown; this mere handful of men have cast his whole army into the uttermost confusion; and there stands this wondrous woman, judge and prophetess, her intensity of passion sympathetically conveyed to the army—a strength to them, a weakness to the foe. And now the victory is achieved, all the great host slain or scattered, and mighty Sisera himself a fugitive.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROPHET SAMUEL.



ELI, the high-priest, appears as the person who "judged Israel" after Samson. There are many who believe this to have been actually the case: but it is now more generally understood that the

civil government of the Jews was administered by Eli from about the middle of the Philistine servitude, and throughout all the period in which Samson employed his strength on the western border against the oppressors of Israel. Under this

view, that which seemed to be the commencement of a new government, after the death of Samson, appears to be no other than a continuance of that which existed in his lifetime. Under the operation of the constitution as established by Moses, the government naturally devolved on the high-priest, in the absence of any specially appointed judge; and therefore, instead of being surprised that Eli should in this instance have been also judge, we may rather wonder that this did not oftener occur.

It was during this administration of Eli that the prophet Samuel was born under circumstances which seemed to point him out as one destined for great things in Israel. His father, named Elkanah, was a Levite. He with his wife, Hannah, used to go regularly to Shiloh, to worship at the tabernacle, which was still in that place. In one year she there prayed with great fervency for a son, and vowed that in case he were granted to her, the child should be wholly given as a Nazarite to the Lord. As she prayed, her agitation was so manifest, that it attracted the notice of Eli,

as "he sat upon a seat by one of the posts of the tabernacle:" and he hastily supposed that she was under the influence of strong drink. But she replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord;" on which the priest said, "Go in peace: the God of Israel grant thee the petition thou hast asked of him."

The prayer of the afflicted woman was heard: a son was given to her, and she called his name Samuel. From that time Hannah went no more up to Shiloh till her son was old enough to be taken to the tabernacle and left there. When this time came they all went up together, and, after the usual offerings, the now happy mother took her child and brought him before Eli. She reminded him of her former prayer, and now informed him, "For this child I prayed," and that having given him to the Lord, she had now come to perform her vow. She then gave utterance to her feelings in an exulting song, which forms a pleasing specimen of the sacred poesy of the age before David. She then departed, leaving the child at the tabernacle, who, as he grew up, was employed in such light duties as a child could discharge, and which Levitical lineage authorized him to perform. Hannah had other sons as well as daughters; but she failed not year by year to visit Shiloh, to embrace the son whom "she had lent unto the Lord."

Eli himself was a man of undoubted piety, and of the most sincere intentions; but his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, proved worthless persons, who were guilty of the most criminal abuses of their priestly office. Their conduct became at length so utterly depraved and atrocious, that the people began to shun the attendances at Shiloh, which brought them in contact with persons who made their sacred

office a cloak for all kinds of wickedness and wrong-doing. They were reprov- ed by their office. As they continued their evil courses, a prophet was sent to Eli denouncing the pun-



THE CHILD SAMUEL IN THE TEMPLE.—1 Sam. iii. 4.

father; but his reproof was too gentle, and unaccompanied by the strong measures of restraint which became his high and venerable | ishments of Heaven against them: predicting that Hophni and Phinehas should die "both in one day," and that, after Eli's death, the

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high-priesthood should be rent from his family and bestowed upon another.

Meantime the young Samuel continued under the care of Eli, in the diligent discharge of the light duties confided to him, "ministering before the Lord, girded with a linen ephod." He was chiefly employed about the person of the aged high-priest, who became much attached to him. Once, when the lad was about twelve years of age, a voice called to him in the night, as he lay in a chamber near to and within call of that of the high-priest.

The boy supposed that Eli had called him, and hastened to receive his commands. But Eli had not called, and he was sent back to his couch. The voice again called, "Samuel, Samuel!" and the lad again hastened to Eli, with the same result. This being repeated a third time, the high-priest perceived that the call was supernatural, and told the lad that if the voice again called to him he should answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." The child did so, and he then received a Divine communication to the same effect as that which the prophet had previously declared. "Behold," said the voice, "I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day will I perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Samuel lay quiet till the morning, and was afraid to impart to Eli the heavy tidings with which he had been charged. But, on being pressed by his venerable patron, who knew that something unusual had transpired, he made all known to him. On hearing the awful message, the aged priest bent his venerable head and said: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

From this time forward it became known that Samuel was a prophet favored with revelations from God, which he made known to the people; and, as for some time there had not been in Israel any person thus favored—thus

privileged with access to the counsels of the Divine King—the attention of all Israel was strongly drawn towards one who had, as it were, grown up under their eyes, in his constant attendance at the tabernacle.

During all this period the Israelites appear to have been still under the oppression of the Philistines. In the fourth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel we come abruptly to an account of warlike operations, without being able clearly to discern the object for which they were undertaken—whether from the desire of the Philistines to rivet more strongly the yoke of Israel, or from some attempt of the Israelites to shake it off. The first battle was fought at Aphek, and the Hebrews were routed with the loss of four thousand men.

Excitement in the Hebrew Camp.

On this the Israelites took up the notion that if the ark of God were brought into the field they could not fail to be victorious over their enemies. They therefore sent for it to Shiloh; and it was brought to the army under the care of the sons of the high-priest, Hophni and Phinehas. When the sacred symbol entered the camp the whole army shouted for joy, as if already triumphant. The consternation of the Philistines was proportioned to the exultation of the Hebrews; and their feelings on this occasion enable us to perceive the estimation in which Jehovah was held by them, as the God of the Hebrews, which was the point of view in which He was regarded by them. They said: "Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hands of those mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness!"

Like valiant men, however, the Philistines did not permit this dread to discourage them, but rather regarded the greatness of the danger as an incentive to mightier exertions—"Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men, and fight!" The result

read the Hebrews a terrible lesson of misplaced confidence upon mere symbols, which were as nothing apart from the living presence which the symbol represented. They were beaten; the ark of God was taken by the Philistines, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed in defending their sacred charge. By this one act, which made their death more worthy than their lives, they restore themselves, in some degree, to our good opinion; but it was no longer possible for anything that they did or left undone to avert the ruinous effects of their former misdeeds, or to recall the doom which had gone forth from heaven against them and theirs. They died both in one day, as had been foretold; and if their friends could have had any comfort left, it must have been found in the fact that no shame, but honor rather, attended their last hour.

The Ark Taken by the Philistines.

Meanwhile there were hearts at Shiloh that trembled for the fate of the battle, and for the ark of God. Among them was that of Eli, who, in his anxiety, caused his seat to be set by the wayside that he might catch the tidings as they came. Tidings of evil are seldom long delayed. A fugitive speedily came from the battle-field with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head. He announced that Israel had fled before the Philistines—that Hophni and Phinehas were slain—and the ark of God was taken. At that terrible word, the blind old man fell from his seat, and his neck was broken by the fall.

The Philistines carried the ark in great triumph to Ashdod, and supposing that they had overcome the God of Israel by the mightier power of their own Dagon, they deposited it as a trophy of victory in his temple. It was the foresight of this triumph over the Lord of Hosts which had occasioned the death of Eli and filled Israel with dread. But it proved fatal to the Philistines and to their idol; for it then behoved the Almighty to vindicate the honor of his own great name from the triumph of the heathen. According to it was found the next morning that the

image of Dagon had fallen from its place, before the ark, and was broken in pieces.

They found their idol lying on the floor, prostrate before the ark of God. This might have been an accident, they thought; and therefore they again set up their monstrous idol more securely in its high place. But the next morning it had not only again fallen down, but was broken into pieces.

Next, the inhabitants of Ashdod were afflicted with a grievous disorder, the emerods, which was very general and intensely severe; this was accompanied by a plague of mice, by which the produce of their fields was consumed and spoiled. Taking these visitations in connection with the former event, they failed not to ascribe them to the wrath of the God of Israel, for the presence of his ark among them: and resolved to try whether he might not take more pleasure in some of their other cities. They therefore sent it to Gath, the inhabitants of which being forthwith afflicted in the same manner, lost no time in forwarding it to Ekron; but the truth began by this time to be suspected, and the Ekronites received it with horror, and cried, "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people." Nor were they mistaken in their anticipations, for there was soon a grievous destruction throughout the city, for "the hand of God was very heavy there," and they were visited by severe judgments while the ark remained in their camp.

There could be no longer any reasonable doubt that the pestilence by which the Philistines were thus wasted was sent among them on account of the ark, and they resolved to restore it to the Israelites. Their priests recommended that an oblation, or trespass-offering, should be conveyed along with it, and, agreeably to the practice of those superstitious times, they further suggested that the gold of which this offering was to consist should be wrought up into figures having a direct reference to the evils with which they had been afflicted. They made five golden emerods and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, and

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WELCOMING THE RETURN OF THE ARK.—I Sam. vi. 13.

deposited them in a coffer which they placed beside the ark in the new car which they made for the purpose of conveying the sacred chest to its own land. It was usual for the heathen thus to convey their sacred arks and shrines, and they adopted it on this occasion, being ignorant that the Jewish law required the ark of God to be borne by the priests.

A Severe Judgment.

To the ark they yoked two milch cows, which had not been accustomed to the draught, and which they left to take their own course. The cows, as if directed by a Divine impulse, went direct towards the border village of Beth-shemesh in Judea, without once turning aside or attempting to go back, although their calves had been shut up at home. The villagers who were abroad in the fields employed on the crops hailed the return of the ark with the most unbounded joy; and concluding that on so remarkable an occasion they might dispense with the strict observance of the law, which forbade sacrifice to be made at any other place than that at which the tabernacle was fixed, they slew the two cows, and offered them up as a burnt-offering to Jehovah. This breach of a very stringent commandment, together with the irreverent curiosity which they manifested to examine the contents of the ark, occasioned the death of seventy persons; and by this the inhabitants were so terrified, that they besought the inhabitants of the neighboring city of Kirjath-jearim to relieve them from the care of so formidable a deposit. The men of Kirjath-jearim complied with this request, and the ark was suffered to remain twenty years in this place before it was restored to the tabernacle at Shiloh.

The Hebrews were still under the yoke of the Philistines, who soon appeared against them in strong force. The Hebrews, who had then no war in their thoughts, were terrified at this demonstration; but, being encouraged by Samuel, they stood upon their defence, and in the battle which ensued were victorious over the Philistines, who were compelled to give up the cities they had taken from the

Israelites, and to leave them their independence.

This great event completely established Samuel's influence over the people; and he took advantage of this to bring about a more complete reformation by going frequently about among them, attending to the affairs they brought before him, and exhorting them to continue steadfast in the worship and service of the Lord.

Many years passed peaceably and prosperously under the benign rule of Samuel, whose advancing years at length induced him somewhat to relax his labors by associating his sons with him in the management of affairs. He then discontinued his circuits, and fixed his residence at Ramah, where he superintended the northern part of the land; while his sons who established themselves at Beersheba, took charge of the southern districts.

The sons of Samuel grievously misconducted themselves in the high trust confided to them. "They walked not in his ways, but turned aside from hence, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." This, with the prospect of what might be likely to follow on the death of Samuel, gave the Israelites occasion to desire a king "to rule them like all the nations," and they took measures accordingly.

This was not the true remedy, to a nation privileged like theirs.

Discontent of the People.

Samuel felt all this, and was well aware that they were actuated by an impatient and discontented spirit, and by a fondness for the imitation of the customs and institutions of the neighboring nations, to the neglect of those peculiar institutions and peculiar privileges which distinguished them from all the nations of the earth.

Samuel would not venture to return a definite answer to the demand of the people for a king without first consulting the Lord, who was pleased to command him to protest most solemnly against the proposed change, and to declare in the strongest manner his reprobation of their rejection of Himself.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL.



IN the noble speech in which he set forth the evils of the kingly government, Samuel draws a striking picture of the monarchical power as it then existed and was exercised. He describes the compulsory impressment of all likely young men for the service of the king in the army and the court, and to be his horsemen, to run before his chariots, and to work for him in trades and agricultural labor. Their daughters also should be taken in the same manner for the domestic service of the royal household; and the king would not in the end fail, on one ground or another, to take their heritages from them, to bestow them in reward upon his courtiers and officers. It reminded them also that the king would demand a tithe of their produce, as was the custom of the time, to support the expenses of the state. This was the strongest point to place before them; for they already by the law were required to pay this tenth to Jehovah as their king. This could not be relinquished; and as the temporal sovereign would still expect the regal tenth, they would in fact be burdened with a charge twice as heavy as that which any other nation was called to bear. The prophet concluded with: "And ye shall cry in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

The people were not, however, moved from their purpose by this representation; they answered, "Nay, but we will have a king to rule over us:" on which Samuel, with grief of heart, dismissed them for the present to their homes, with the understanding that a king would be provided for them.

The person on whom the nomination fell was Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. This person, having gone far from home in the vain search after some strayed asses, found himself near Ramah, and concluded, by the advice of his attendant, to consult "the man of God" who dwelt in that place. He accordingly came before Samuel, furnished with a small present, according to a custom which is still kept up in the East. He no sooner appeared than, according to a premonition from God, the prophet recognized in him the destined king of Israel. He gave him a hint to this effect, which Saul met by mentioning the smallness of his tribe and his want of family influence. Nothing more passed just then: but the prophet treated the stranger with marked distinction, induced him to stay with him over night, and in the morning early walked forth with him from the town.

On the way, Samuel stopped, poured on Saul's head a vial of anointing oil, declaring that by this act the Lord anointed him "to be captain over his inheritance." He then kissed him; and to show that in this he acted by Divine authority, he proceeded to tell him all the incidents which would occur in his journey home. Everything happened accordingly. He first met two men who told him that the lost asses were found, and that his father had become anxious at his prolonged absence. At another place, "in the plain of Tabor," he met three men, one carrying three kids, another bread, and a third a bottle of wine. They saluted him, and offered him some bread, which he took. After this he encountered a company of young men belonging to the school of the prophets, who were returning from the high place, uttering sacred chants to the sound of the psaltery, tabret, pipe and harp. Here, as Samuel had foretold, a fit of

holy enthusiasm came upon him, and he hastened to join them in their sacred exercises. It was, we are told, in this circumstance that the proverb originated, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" He then reached home, but kept secret, even from his own relatives, the communication which Samuel had made to him.

Some time after the prophet again called the people together in Mizpeh, to complete the important affair which they had left in his hands. He caused the tribes to cast lots, and the lot fell on Benjamin; the lot was then taken for the families of Benjamin, and fell on that of Kish; the lot was then cast for the members of that family, and the name of Saul was produced. Saul had attended at Mizpeh, but had withdrawn from the assembly as he saw the crisis approaching. He was, however, sought for, and when brought forward, the people perceived with satisfaction that "there was none like him among the people," as he was taller by the head and shoulders than any one in all that crowd. A distinction of this sort was highly acceptable among ancient nations; and when the Israelites noticed it in Saul they shouted heartily, "Long live the King!"

Saul's Great Victory.

Shortly after these transactions, Jabesh-Gilead, a city on the borders of Ammon, beyond the Jordan, was assaulted by the Ammonites, and the inhabitants were reduced to such extremities that they offered to capitulate, but could obtain no better terms than that every one of them should have his right eye put out, to disqualify him from using the bow in war. To these savage terms the Jabesh-Gileadites agreed to submit in case nothing occurred for their advantage within seven days. In this desperate extremity they thought of applying to the newly-appointed king, who had quietly returned to his former occupations, and was engaged in following the herds when the messengers arrived.

The heart of Saul rose to the greatness of the occasion. Then and for ever he laid aside the small cares of pasture and tillage and put

on the warrior and the king. Fired with generous wrath at the indignity thus offered to Israel, he imperatively summoned, by swift messengers, the men of Israel skilled in arms to join their king. Three hundred and thirty thousand armed men almost immediately came to him in Bezek, and with this force he hastened across the river, and by a forced march appeared before Jabesh-Gilead before the seven days had expired. The Ammonites were defeated with great slaughter, and the beleaguered city relieved.

Saul's conduct on this occasion, crowned as it was by such eminent success, did more for him in popular opinion than his prophetic nomination or even his imposing figure. The people escorted him in triumph to Gilgal, where the victory was celebrated with many sacrifices, and the new king was confirmed by acclamation in his kingdom.

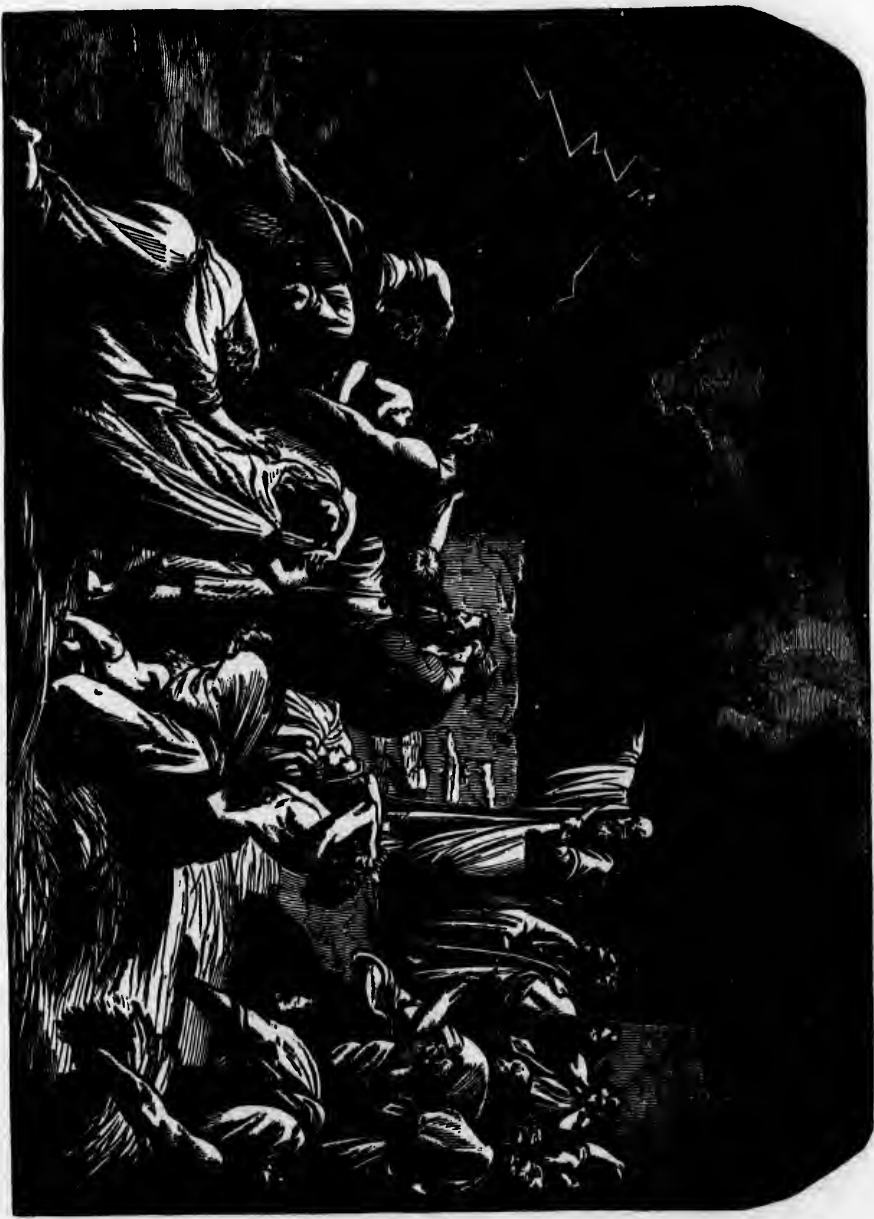
Samuel, who was present at Gilgal, and was now obviously called upon to resign his executive authority, took the opportunity of addressing the people. When we consider the greatness of the occasion—the last of an old order of government peaceably laying down his power to the first of a new line of rulers—and when we look at the vastness of the audience, composed of the flower of the nation which it represented, we are prepared to pay much attention to the speech of Samuel, as one that must be remarkable, and may be important. It was both: "Behold," he said, "I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and gray-headed: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am. Witness against me this day before the Lord and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or at whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?" Considering the circumstances under which justice and government are and always have been administered in the East, this is an appeal which few judges

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STORM IN THE HARVEST SEASON—1 Sam. xii. 18.



or governors would venture to make. But here the people answered with one voice, "Thou hast not defrauded us nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand."

Thunder and Rain.

The prophet then proceeded to explain and vindicate the course of the Divine conduct towards the nation from the commencement of their history till then; and by showing the sufficiency of the theocratic government, he again brought forward their criminality in demanding a king, "when the Lord their God was their king." Nevertheless, if they and the king over them continued to serve the Lord, his blessing should still rest upon them, and render them prosperous. The prophet then, to show that he spoke by Divine authority in denouncing the course they had taken, called upon the Lord to send thunder and rain as a sign to them; and accordingly a thunder-storm, attended by heavy rains, came on, although the time of the year, it being then the wheat harvest, was one in which these phenomena are not naturally exhibited in the climate of Palestine. This made a strong and salutary impression upon the people, and contributed to maintain Samuel in that degree of regulating authority which was most important, if not essential, at the commencement of the new order of affairs.

The victory of Saul over the Philistines appears to have established his reputation among the surrounding nations; and from this period the most warlike of them quailed before him, and were defeated in a succession of easy victories.

Now the Amalekites were invaded in their own land, and all but those who escaped the hot pursuit were destroyed. Saul, however, acting upon the impulses of pride and avarice, or moved by a sentiment of compassion which his mission did not sanction, spared the life of Agag, the king, and allowed the troops to reserve the more valuable parts of the spoil. This renewed instance of disobedience and presumption, in a matter which had become a point of blood-honor to the nation, sealed the

fate of Saul. Truly does Solomon say that "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." So it was with the first Hebrew king, who was never so well satisfied with himself, never more exalted in spirit, than at this moment, when all this glory was passing from him. In this elation of heart he set up a monument of his victory in the land of Carmel (not Mount Carmel), through which he passed on his way to Gilgal.

At Gilgal Samuel came to him. The king went forth to meet the prophet, and informed him that he had faithfully fulfilled the Divine behests. But Samuel was not deceived. The disobedience of the king had already been made known to him; already the doom Saul had brought down on his own head had been imparted to him; and so much was he attached to the wrong-headed prince, that he greatly grieved at the tidings, and "cried unto the Lord all night." When, therefore, Saul claimed the merit of high obedience to himself, the prophet answered with indignation, "What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul answered, that the cattle had been spared for the purpose of sacrifice to the Lord. On this Samuel more distinctly pointed out his disobedience; but he still persisted that he had fulfilled his commission, and made a merit of having spared the cattle for sacrifice. To which Samuel replied, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of lambs." He added, that idolatry itself was not a greater sin before God than disobedience; and concluded with the terrible words, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he also has rejected thee from being king."

Having fulfilled this painful duty, Samuel turned to depart, but Saul laid hold of the skirt of his mantle to detain him, and it was rent in his hand; and the prophet seized this as a symbol of the great fact he had already in other words declared—"The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel this day, and given

it to a neighbor of thine who is better than thee." Solicitous to preserve appearances he was offered to God, and Samuel at length consented. Before his departure he ordered



DAVID ANOINTED BY SAMUEL.—I Sam. xvi. 13.

fore the heads of the nation, Saul still, how-| Agag, the king of the Amalekites, to be put
ever, pressed him to remain while worship| to death; and the captive monarch, who

deemed himself safe under the protection of Saul, learned that there was in Israel a power above that in which he trusted.

From this time Samuel withdrew himself entirely from Saul, and never again visited him during his subsequent reign.

The Son of Jesse.

Soon after this Samuel received the Divine instructions to proceed to Bethlehem, and anoint as king, or rather, for the succession to the crown, one of the sons of Jesse, a descendant of Boaz and Ruth, inhabiting that city. Understanding that Jesse had several sons, the prophet directed them to be brought before him. But the divine intimation, which the prophet expected, did not point out any of them; and learning that the youngest son, David by name, was out with the sheep, he directed him to be sent for. He soon entered, in all the freshness of youth and beaming with intelligence; and immediately the Divine word came to the soul of the prophet, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he!" He accordingly arose, and poured upon his head the anointing oil; and then he returned to his own house in Ramah, and David to his sheep.

At this time the symptoms of the malady which darkened the days of Saul, and which threw him by turns into fits of melancholy madness and of frantic passion, became distinct and manifest. His courtiers, perceiving that this visitation was of that kind over which music had power, urged him to retain about his person a skillful player on the harp, whose strains might calm his mind and disperse the clouds which gathered round it. It happened that David was renowned for his minstrel skill, and was named as one eminently suitable for this office.

The person who mentioned his name to the king described him as "a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." Saul therefore sent a somewhat arbitrary message to Jesse, "Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep."

He accordingly came, and made himself very useful to the king, who held him in high esteem. We are told that "Whenever the evil spirit was upon Saul, David took an harp and played before him, so Saul's spirit was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." How long he remained at court is not very clear; but we afterwards find him again at home, and again feeding his father's sheep.

The Philistines had by this time recovered from their last defeat, and now reappeared in the field with a most powerful army, which they marched into the land of Israel, and encamped at Azekah, whither Saul hastened to confront them. The Philistines then put forward a gigantic warrior named Goliath, who in highly insulting language challenged the Hebrew host to send forth one of their number to engage with him in single combat, the result of which should decide the fate of the war. This huge warrior, who was about ten feet high, and of proportionate bulk, was accoutred in complete armor, the first we read of in Scripture; and the enumeration of the articles of which it was composed is, even in an antiquarian point of view, highly interesting, and shows his enormous strength.

David and Goliath.

"He had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of his coat was five thousand shekels (twelve hundred and fifty ounces) of brass, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass upon his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels (three hundred ounces) of iron, and one bearing a shield went before him." This suggests a lively idea of the ancient panoply of war, and in the details great similarity appears to the array of the Memlook guards of Egypt of a former day. Indeed, the picture given by Forbin of one of these guards and his attendant might almost stand for a picture of Goliath and his armor-bearer, and a far more interesting one than any of the

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numerous pictures from fancy which have ever a sword, which afterwards became famous in been given. The weapons are the same, also, the history of David.



DAVID AT THE BROOK.—1 Sam. xvii. 40.

with the addition of the club and battle-axe; The effect which the view and challenge of for the sequel shows that, besides the spear this enormous warrior produced upon the Is- mentioned in the above account, the giant had raelites was fully as great as the Philistines

could have expected. They were peculiarly liable to be impressed by considerations of bulk and stature; and Saul himself was head and shoulders taller than any of his people. The man and his challenge struck the Hebrew host with dismay. The custom of nations prevented them from declining this mode of settling the war when proposed by the enemy, but who among them was able to compete with this huge Philistine? Day after day the proud unbeliever strode forth from the Philistine camp and defied the armies of Israel; and among all the heroes of Saul not one was found to take up the awful responsibility which the combat imposed.

At this juncture David arrived in the camp, sent by his father to inquire after, and convey provisions to, his three elder brothers, who were with the army. He heard the challenge of Goliath, and seeing that it provoked no response, he was fired with indignation, and offered to go out himself against the haughty infidel. This being reported to the king, he sent for him; and finding him a mere youth, whom he did not recognize in his present garb, he feared to risk the fate of Israel upon his arm, and endeavored to dissuade him from the undertaking. But David assured the king that, in his reliance upon the Divine protection and succor, he felt fully confident of success, and was assured that the same power which had at different times strengthened him to slay a lion and a bear in defence of his flocks would also deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine, and win a signal victory for Israel.

The Deadly Sling.

Saul then consented, and proceeded to arm the youthful champion with his armor and to gird him with his own sword. But finding himself encumbered with accoutrements to which he was unused, David again took them off, and proceeded to action provided only with a sling and with five smooth stones, which he selected from the brook and put into his shepherd's bag. When the giant beheld the unarmed youth advance against him he felt insulted by such fragile opposition, and,

addressing David with great disdain, "cursed him by his gods." The son of Jesse retorted with great animation, expressing his full confidence that the God of Israel would show that he could save "without sword or spear," by giving him the victory that day. Then, while the giant came on with ponderous tread, the young hero nimbly fitted a stone in his sling, and cast it with so true an aim, and with an arm so powerful, that it smote Goliath in the forehead, and, crushing through flesh and bone, lodged in his brain. He had scarcely fallen when the victor flew upon him, and, having no weapon of his own, smote off the monster's head with his own sword.

The Maidens' Song of Triumph.

With a shout that rent the earth as the champion fell the Hebrew host rushed forward to follow up the stroke upon the Philistines, who fled in panic and confusion at a result so unexpected by them. A great slaughter was committed upon them, and the pursuers returned with many captives and much spoil. Great was the joy in Israel at this deliverance. The maidens came forth to meet the warriors with triumphal songs, of which David was made the hero, although Saul was not forgotten. They sang:

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands.

This preference was heard by Saul with great displeasure, and was perhaps the first circumstance which awakened that jealousy of David which troubled the rest of his reign. Jonathan, the son of Saul, was, however, of a far different mind. His admiration of the young hero was most intense, and he hastened to cultivate an acquaintance with him, which ripened into that tender and most faithful friendship which David has rendered immortal.

Saul, although vexed, was not yet become ungrateful, nor indeed was it possible for one who had wrought so great a deed in Israel as David, to be neglected without an outrage on public opinion. The king, therefore, gave him

an important command in the army. This fested, that his popularity daily increased, and afforded him an opportunity of distinguishing the jealousy of the king ripened in the same



DAVID SLAYING GOLIATH.—I Sam. xvii. 54.

himself; and so brilliant were his exploits, proportion into dislike and hatred. As he and so engaging were the qualities he mani- thus gave way to evil passions, his dreadful

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disease returned with redoubled force; and once, when the son of Jesse was attempting to soothe him, as of old, with his harp, the king in his madness cast at him his javelin with the intention of smiting him "even to the wall;" but David evaded the stroke and left the royal presence. It was possible for the purpose of removing the temptation to crime from himself that the king then sent him away to command the troops on the frontier; but his popularity still increasing, Saul ere long recalled him to court, and offered one of his daughters in marriage. This honor was due to David, as the king had held it out as an inducement to any one who should combat with and overcome Goliath; but it had hitherto been withheld.

David's Bride.

Now, however, the king happened to learn that an attachment had arisen between David and his daughter Michal, and he resolved to give her to him, in the hope of the connection being made the means of his ruin. With pretended liberality and kindness he declared that he required no other dowry for his daughter than that he should distinguish himself against the enemies of Israel, in the time which must elapse between the betrothal and the actual marriage. The hope of the king was that he would be destroyed in the daring acts into which he knew he would thus be led. But David performed all that was required of him, and returned safe and triumphant to claim his bride, who could not then be withheld from him.

This did not tend to lessen the enmity of Saul, who at length went so far as to give orders to his confidential attendants, and even to Jonathan, to seize any favorable opportunity that offered of making away with David. Jonathan, however, pleaded so earnestly for his friend, that Saul relented, "and swore, as the Lord liveth," not to slay him. After this Saul intrusted David with the command of the whole army to oppose the Philistines, who had again invaded his dominions. His usual success attended him in this expedition, the enemy being routed and completely subdued.

The increase of reputation which he thus obtained exposed him anew to the wrath of the king, who on his return to court attempted to assassinate him; but not succeeding in his design, he determined to have him arrested on the following day, that he might have an opportunity of slaying him in confinement.

Then, fearing that he might escape during the night, he stationed guards around the house, with instructions to seize him in the morning. But David was this time saved by his wife, the faithful Michal, who gained intelligence of this design, and contrived the escape of her husband by letting him down in a basket from one of the windows. He then went for counsel and encouragement to the aged Samuel at Ramah. Saul was now grown desperate, and no sooner heard of the place of his retreat than he sent a detachment of soldiers to apprehend him. But they no sooner beheld the venerable prophet among his pupils, "the sons of the prophets," uttering their holy chants, than, under a Divine influence, they laid aside all their fierceness, and sat down utterly subdued among these holy persons. Saul sent again and again, with the same result; and at length, not to be balked of his prey, he proceeded himself to Ramah; but the same influence overshadowed him; disarmed, subdued, he cast aside his upper garment, and lay down meek and humble at the feet of the prophet.

David's Faithful Friend.

When the king had returned home, David, supposing that some salutary change might have been wrought in his mind, and that it behooved him to make one more effort to maintain his position, went also to Gibeah to consult with Jonathan respecting the course he should take. That faithful friend promised to take means to ascertain his father's present feeling, and meanwhile enjoined him to remain concealed in the fields, without entering the town, that his arrival might not be suspected. The conversation which passed between these admirable friends as they walked together in the fields is reported with unusual minuteness in the sacred record, and gives a vivid impres-

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SAUL ATTEMPTS THE LIFE OF DAVID.—I Sam. xviii. 11.

sion of the nobleness of Jonathan's heart, seeing that the object of his ardent and generous friendship was one whom he knew to be destined to exclude himself from the succession to the throne. But, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "he loved him as his own soul," and was well content to think that David should hereafter sit upon the throne of Israel, and had for himself no other desire than to remain his bosom friend and counsellor.

The day after this interview was the feast of the new moon, when it seems to have been the custom of the king to dine with his princes and great officers. The king, we are told, "sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall;" by which we learn that the seat of honor was then, as at present, in the East, in the corner at the upper end of the room; and it must, as now, have been in the right-hand corner, from the king being able to throw his javelin. After what had passed at Ramah, the king expected that David would be present at table in his usual place. He, however, took no notice of the first day; but on the second inquired after him. Jonathan replied that he had given him leave to absent himself, and this would account for his absence.

Saul's Anger.

On this the evil spirit raged high in the unhappy king. He broke forth into the grossest vituperation of his own son, whom he reproached in being a party to his own dishonor, for he said, with bitterness, "as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom! Wherefore, now, send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." But Jonathan began to vindicate his friend; on which the king, quite beside himself with passion, cast his javelin at him to smite him. After this Jonathan knew that there was no hope for David, to whose hiding-place he proceeded to make known to him this result, and to give a reluctant consent that he should seek among strangers the safety which was denied him in his own country.

Before quitting the land of Israel David

proceeded to Nob, a city of Benjamin, where the tabernacle then stood, and requested the high-priest Abimelech to provide him and his few attendants with provisions for his intended journey, as well as with armor for himself. Having been led to believe that he was upon public business which required secrecy, the high-priest was prevailed upon to give him a quantity of the bread which had lately been removed from the table as shew-bread, and which, in strict propriety, it was lawful for the priests only to eat; and there being no other weapon at the tabernacle, he allowed him to have the sword which he had himself taken from Goliath, and which had afterwards been laid up in the tabernacle as a trophy of victory.

On departing from Nob David took the somewhat strange step of proceeding to Gath, one of the chief cities of the Philistines, in the hope of being allowed to remain there under the protection of the king Achish. The officers of the king were, however, by no means inclined to overlook the victory over Goliath, and the various disgraces which the Philistine arms had sustained at his hands; and they counselled the king to avail himself of the opportunity of ridding himself of so redoubted an enemy. This so alarmed David that he feigned madness, and mimicked the actions of a lunatic so well that he was allowed to depart unmolested.

In returning to his own land David found it expedient to avoid inhabited places, and to seek refuge in caverns, woods and wildernesses. In the first place he betook himself to the great cave of Adullam, where many of his relations, who had become obnoxious to Saul, joined him, some to seek his protection, and others to afford him their assistance. Here also came to him a number of men of broken fortunes and unsettled dispositions, who were glad to put themselves under the command of so renowned a leader, and who formed a small but valorous troop of about four hundred men. It was about this time that the king of Moab, being at variance with Saul, sent a messenger to David to invite him to his court. He ac-

cordingly repaired thither, and after having secured a quiet retreat for his aged parents, returned with his few troops into the land of Judah, where his friends were most numerous, and abode for a time in "the forest of Hareth," secure in his secluded retreat.

When Saul heard of David's return he called his attendants and courtiers around him, and threatened his utmost vengeance against any of them who failed to render him every assistance in discovering David, or to reveal whatever came to their knowledge of



DAVID AND JONATHAN.—I Sam. xviii. 1.

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his movements and designs. On this an officer named Doeg, by birth an Edomite, who had been present at Nob when the high-priest assisted David, stepped forward, and reported with considerable exaggeration what he had witnessed. The dark rage of Saul rose high at this information; and he immediately sent to Nob to call Ahimelech and the attending priests before him. The summons was promptly obeyed. When the king charged Ahimelech with conspiracy and treason for the assistance rendered to the son of Jesse, the high-priest firmly but respectfully vindicated himself, and declared his perfect ignorance of the alleged designs or intentions of David when he rendered him assistance as to the king's son-in-law.

But the thirst for blood was strong upon the maddened king, and he was but too happy to find any objects on which, with the slightest show of reason, it might be gratified. Without heeding the defence, he turned to his guard and ordered them to slay the priests of the Lord. But they were for the moment protected by their sacred character, and every one shrunk from the deed. On this the king turned to the accuser Doeg, and commanded him to slay them; and from this foreign mercenary he found ready obedience. Eighty-one of the priests of God fell that day under his sword; and he then, under authority from the king, proceeded to Nob, where, with the assistance of others, he destroyed the families of the priests resident there. The only person of the priestly family who escaped was Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, who fled for safety to David in the forest of Hareth. He was well received, and became the priest or chaplain of the band.

About this time the city of Keilah, in Judah, was besieged by the Philistines, and David, by the Lord's direction, hastened with his small troop to the relief of the place. He succeeded in defeating the enemy and putting them to flight, and on retiring from the pursuit entered with much spoil the city he had delivered. When Saul heard that he was in this place he prepared to march against him, intending to

blockade the city and compel the inhabitants to give up David. But he made his escape from the place before the king arrived with his troops, and withdrew into the wilderness of Ziph.

A Timely Escape.

The people of the town of that name, however, made the place of his retreat known to the king, who immediately marched in pursuit of him. Of this movement David received timely warning, and withdrew into the wilderness of Maon, whither he was closely pursued by Saul. The royal troop had nearly surrounded David and his small company, when the king received intelligence that the Philistines had invaded his dominions, which compelled him to abandon his present object, and march against them.

David was thus delivred from a most dangerous position. But the king had no sooner repelled the Philistines than he resumed with eagerness the pursuit of David, who had by this time taken refuge in the rocky wilderness of Engedi. The king followed him there, and on his arrival went into a cave unaccompanied by any of his attendants. It happened that David was at that very time in the farther parts of this same cave, and was urged by his men to avail himself of this opportunity of ridding himself of his inveterate enemy, who was so keenly bent on his destruction. But the son of Jesse repelled with horror the suggestion to "stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed." He wished, however, to let Saul see how completely he had been in his power, and therefore drew near to him stealthily and cut off the skirt of his robe.

When the king had quitted the cave David went out also, and called after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked back, he bowed low before him, and proceeded to address him in very forcible but respectful and even pathetic language. He assumed that the king had been misled by ill advisers and slanderous reports, and justified his own fidelity and the innocence of his intentions; in proof of which he produced the skirt, which had just been severed from his robe. Saul

could not withstand this; he was for the moment convinced of David's innocence and of his own guilt in pursuing him thus inveterately. His stern nature was softened, and his diseased mind rightened by a gush of tender emotions. He said, "Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept." He admitted that under the same circumstances he should not have acted so generously; he avowed his knowledge that David was his destined successor to the throne, and declared

voted services to the nation, and fully sensible of the great loss they had sustained, assembled in large numbers at Ramah to assist at his funeral, and to make lamentations for him.

While David was in the wilderness of Paran, into which the cattle-owners of Judah were accustomed to send out their flocks and herds for pasture, David, although obliged to live much after the manner of the Bedouins, restrained his troop from disturbing the abundant flocks of a wealthy sheep-master called Nabal,



DAVID SPARES THE LIFE OF SAUL.—I Sam. xxiv. 4.

that his mind would be satisfied if he would pledge himself by an oath not to extirpate his posterity when he came to the crown. David most willingly entered into the required engagement, after which they separated, Saul returning to his capital, and the son of Jesse, who had but little faith in the king's temporary convictions, withdrawing into the wilderness of Paran.

About this time the prophet Samuel died, and the people, mindful of his long and de-

and, on the contrary, protected them from the depredations of the Arabs. Afterwards, when he returned northward, he heard that Nabal was engaged in shearing his sheep; and, as the season was one of festivity, and much provision was usually laid up for the occasion, David sent to beg that some victuals might be furnished to his troop in acknowledgment of the part he had acted in the desert. This was refused by Nabal in highly insulting language, which David resented so deeply that he imme-

diately put his troop in motion to wreak vengeance upon him and his.

But on the road he was met by Nabal's wife, Abigail, who had expected some such result from her husband's churlishness, of which she no sooner heard than she directed her ass to be saddled, and, attended by two servants, she set forth with a liberal present of choice provisions to meet and pacify the incensed warrior. In this, by her good sense, address, and comeliness, she prevailed so well, that David was thankful, on second thoughts, for having been prevented in executing his fell purpose; and when he afterwards heard that Nabal was dead, he sent and solicited the widow to become his wife, when she was found to be nothing loath to share the destinies of the handsome hero and future king of Israel. David had before this entered into marriage with Ahinoam, a woman of Jezreel; his first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, being separated from him, and bestowed by her father upon another

• Saul Spared by David.

After this David removed from the wilderness of Paran to the hill Hachilah, in the wilderness of Ziph, and the inhabitants of the town so called again sent tidings to Saul of the circumstance. All his convictions and good resolutions had by this time passed away, and he was prepared to pursue the son of Jesse with all his former eagerness. He hastened after him at the head of three thousand chosen men; and having arrived, he rested his troops during that night, resolving to attack him on the following morning. David, however, succeeded during the night in secretly entering the camp of Saul, attended only by his cousin Abishai, and advancing to the place where the spear planted in the ground marked the station of the chief, without being perceived by the guards, who soundly slept, he took away the cruse of water which stood beside the king, and also the spear which was planted at his bolster, and then withdrew, after resisting the solicitation of Abishai for permission to destroy him as he slept.

David then repaired to a safe point on an

eminence at some distance, and in a loud voice called to Abner, the captain of Saul's host, reproving him for his negligent guard of the royal person, and held up the spear and the cruse of water, to show the danger to which the king had been exposed, and how completely it had been in his power to destroy him if he had been so inclined. Saul overheard all this, and his heart smote him. He could not but feel that, after what had passed at the former interview, David had stronger reason than before to feel aggrieved and wrathful; and this act of generous forbearance struck him even more forcibly than the former had done. He could not restrain his rising emotions, but cried, "Is that thy voice, my son David?" and in answer to the firm and earnest remonstrance of Jesse's son, he admitted without reserve the guilt and folly of his own conduct: "I have sinned; return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day; behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." It is these touches of relenting nature, these gleams of light, beaming now and then through the fissures of his fractured mind, which create an interest in behalf of this unhappy king, and preserve him from aversion or contempt. A mind thus capable of feeling and appreciating a noble and generous action could not itself be naturally ignoble or ungenerous.

David, however, had little confidence in the permanency of these salutary impressions on the king's mind, and, so far from accepting his invitation to return to court, he deemed it right to leave the country entirely. He therefore again repaired to Gath with his followers, who had ere this increased in number to six hundred. It seems a strange step again to venture where he had before been so ill received; but he was now in very different circumstances, and it is not unlikely that he had received from king Achish an intimation that he might now reckon upon his protection. To prevent jealousies, the Philistine king presented him with the town of Ziklag as a residence for himself and followers, and here

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he was soon joined by a considerable number of adherents from his own tribe of Judah.

Not long after they had settled in this place the Philistines resolved to invade the land of

refuse to accompany the Philistines in their march against his countrymen. He therefore went, probably leaving his course in the field to be determined by circumstances. But



SAUL SEARCHING FOR DAVID.—I Sam. xxiv. 2.

Israel and the king of Gath called upon David to join the expedition. This was a dangerous and difficult dilemma, and David felt that he could not, without great danger,

when the Philistine forces from the different states met at Aphek, the other chiefs and princes expressed surprise at the presence of David, and, being very suspicious of his in-

tentions, prevailed upon Achish to send him back to Ziklag.

On returning thither, David found that during his absence the place had been attacked and fired by the Amalekites, who not only carried away all the substance of David's people, but had also taken their wives and families as captives.

So great were the rage and consternation of David's men at this discovery that he had well-nigh become the victim of their blind fury, for they talked of stoning him to death. "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God;" and referred the matter to Him through the priest Abiathar, by whom he received a favorable answer, whereby his followers were pacified. They then hastened southward in pursuit. During the march they fell in with an Egyptian slave, who, falling sick on the road, had been abandoned by his master, one of the Amalekites who had assisted at the sack of Ziklag, and who, being refreshed by David's men, offered to lead them to the camp of the Amalekites. These marauders were found enjoying themselves in supposed safety, eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of the great spoil they had won. In this condition they were quite unprepared for the vigorous assault of David's brave followers, and only four hundred of them, who fled upon swift camels, escaped the sword.

While David was engaged on this expedition the attention of all Israel was fixed upon the great and decisive action between their king and the Philistines.

Saul and the Witch of Endor.

The armies lay encamped before each other, the Philistines at Shunem and the Israelites on the mountain of Gilboa, when, the night before the action, Saul, anxious and alarmed that he could obtain no intimation of the Divine will through the channels which were open under the theocratical institutions, left the camp at night and went to consult a reputed sorceress who resided in the neighboring village of Endor. He was disguised; but the woman, if she had never seen him

before, could not but recognize the king of Israel, by the nature of his questions, and by the towering stature for which he was renowned throughout the land.

He required her "to bring up Samuel;" and accordingly the king beheld ascending from the earth the figure of "an old man covered with a mantle;" but whether this was really the shade of Samuel, as the king believed, or a phantom resembling him, has been much contested. Saul, however, prostrated himself before the figure; and in answer to the question, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" answered, "God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called upon thee, to make known unto me what I shall do." The reply, uttered in severe language, announced that the time was come for the accomplishment of his doom, and indicated to him the fatal scene which the next day saw accomplished on Mount Gilboa. Stunned by this intelligence, and exhausted by long fasting and anxiety, that unhappy king fell prostrate on the ground; and it was not without difficulty that he was so far restored as to be able to take a little food before he quitted the dwelling of the necromancer.

The next day the opposed hosts joined battle, and Saul acted like one who was determined to deserve, if he could not win, the victory. But the Philistines attacked his position with so much resolution that the Israelites fled before them, or were cut in pieces in the attempt to escape. The sacred historian seems to state the superior skill of the Philistines in the use of the bow as the proximate cause of this defeat; the weapons of the Hebrews themselves being chiefly the spear and shield. In vain did the king attempt repeatedly to rally them, and lead them forward to renew the action: the disorder was complete. The king, supported by a few faithful friends, maintained his ground till he was mortally wounded by an arrow, and his valiant sons lay dead at his feet.

Escape was then hopeless: and dreading,

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worse than death, the ignominious treatment to which he should be exposed if he fell alive into the hands of the Philistines, he implored his armor-bearer to thrust him through with his sword. The youth, overcome by his fears, and by a very natural reluctance to shed the blood of his master, the Lord's anointed, for Ashtaroth, as trophies of their victory, and in honor of their idols. The bodies of Saul and his sons they gibbeted on the wall of Bethshan—and this circumstance gave occasion for an act of generous valor which affords a refreshing contrast to many of the transactions of this period. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead,



THE HAGARITES EXPELLED BY THE REUBENITES.—1 Chron. v. 10.

once refused obedience; on which Saul, seeing that no time was to be lost, fell upon his own sword and expired; and the faithful armor-bearer immediately followed the example.

The body of the king was found by the Philistines, who took off the head, and sent it to one of their cities to be fastened in the temple of Dagon, and his armor in that of

on the other side Jordan, no sooner heard of this ignominy, than they were aroused by a grateful remembrance of the deliverance which Saul had wrought for them at the beginning of his reign, and determined to rescue his remains from insult. Passing over the river by night, they stole away the mangled remains of the king and his sons from the wall, and

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bore them away to their own place, where, after bestowing upon them the usual honors, they buried the ashes under a tree, and fasted seven days.

At the news of the defeat in Gilboa, terror spread through all the tribes of Israel. Even those who dwelt beyond the Jordan were no sooner informed of it than they retired into their strongholds in the mountains, leaving their cities in the plain to be occupied by the Philistines.

David had not long returned to Ziklag, when the tidings of the events were brought to him by a young Amalekite, who brought with him the diadem and regal armlets of the fallen monarch. Judging that it would please David, the Amalekite embellished his account by claiming the merit of having put the king to death, at his own request, after he had been mortally wounded. But instead of obtaining the reward he expected, David, who had himself more than once testified the highest respect for the royal person, ordered him to be put to death for having presumptuously lifted his hand against the Lord's anointed. He also manifested every token of sincere grief and sorrow on this occasion by rending his clothes

and by other marks of mourning and lamentation. Especially was David grieved and distressed for his beloved friend Jonathan, and the lamentation which he composed on the occasion claims our admiration not less for the beauty of its composition than for the tone of generous affection by which it is animated.

This remarkable friendship between David and Jonathan is one of the most pleasing incidents in the Old Testament history. One was the son of the king, and the other was the son of a shepherd; yet, being widely separated by their circumstances and their lot in life, they were strongly attached. There was much of nobility and whole-souled generosity in the nature of Jonathan. He was such a young man as one would hardly expect to find in the midst of his surroundings. These same qualities were possessed in a remarkable degree by David, who was fitted pre-eminently for his great career and the sphere he occupied. Being at the head of the nation, vast responsibilities rested upon him. Many and grievous were his faults and failings, but his sincere affection for his friend Jonathan stands out in pleasing contrast to the sins by which his life was darkened.



CHAPTER XVIII.

KING DAVID.



HING Saul was dead, and David long since had been anointed by Samuel; still his right to the throne was not recognized by the people generally. Those of Judah were the first who acknowledged his claim, while Abner, Saul's uncle, proclaimed Ishbosheth, his grand-nephew, king. It would appear that no tribe save that of Judah took part in the nomination of David, but that all the other tribes agreed in the election of Saul's only surviving son. He was a weak, incapable man, and no doubt Abner merely seized upon him as a tool for his own advancement—feeble Ishbosheth might wear the crown, but Abner would practically be ruler in Israel.

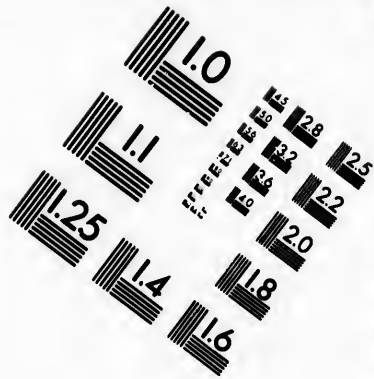
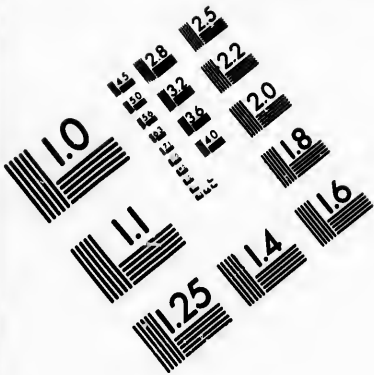
David established himself in Hebron, and for two years no hostile act was committed. At the end of that time Abner resolved on suppressing David's rule altogether. With this object he crossed the Jordan and invaded David's territory. David sent out Joab to meet him, and the opposing forces met near the pool of Gibeon. For some time they remained passive on both sides, each unwilling to strike the first blow, but at last the two generals agreed to a device to excite the flagging zeal of their followers. Twelve men on each side were matched to fight against each other between the two armies, and so well were they matched that no sooner were they within reach of one another than each man seized his opponent by the hair of the head, the scalp, or beard, and sheathed his sword in his

body, so that the whole twenty-four were killed on the spot.

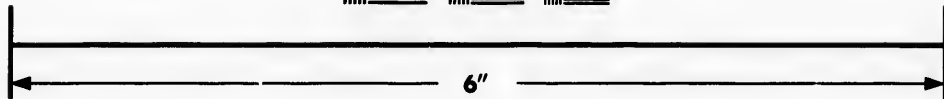
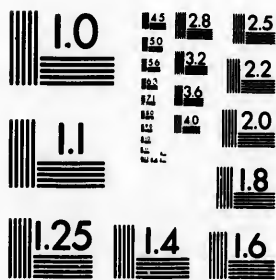
This spectacle aroused both armies, and a sanguinary battle followed. It ended unfavorably for Abner, whose army was defeated and he himself compelled to fly. Asahel, the brother of Joab, gave chase, and being a very swift runner would certainly have overtaken Abner, had not that wily and unscrupulous man stricken him with his spear and left him on the road for dead. Joab, and Abishai, another brother, were in hot pursuit of Abner, but night came on and the chase was given up, and Joab and Abner had a parley, which ended in both returning to their own places. The loss on the side of Joab was nineteen men and his brother Asahel; on that of Abner, the loss was about three hundred and sixty.

For more than five years after this engagement David dwelt peaceably at Hebron, and Abner, in the name of Ishbosheth, reigned over all but Judah. This might have gone on had not the assumption of Abner at last kindled a spark of manly feeling on the part of the weak and effeminate king. Ishbosheth ventured to expostulate with Abner, who retorted with a storm of indignation: he plainly told the king that he and he alone had placed him on the throne of his father, and that he who made kings could unmake them. His behavior was very much akin to that of the earl of Warwick with Henry VI. of England. By his threats of transferring the kingdom to David Abner entirely silenced Ishbosheth; but not content with this he made overtures to David for a treaty by which David should be recognized by all Israel. In order the more easily to facilitate this business Abner came to Hebron during the absence of Joab, and had an interview with David. Matters





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were amicably arranged between them, and Abner retired before the return of Joab.

When Joab returned he was exceedingly indignant at what had been done, and secretly sent messengers to recall Abner. Joab was suspicious of Abner and jealous of the influence which he might exercise over David; he knew very well that Abner could never rule the son of Jesse as he ruled the son of Saul, but still Joab felt that his own position in David's court would probably be compromised by Abner, and besides there was the killing of Asahel to be atoned. When Abner, therefore, returned, Joab dissembled, led him into a retired place in order to discuss the proposed change, and stabbed him to the heart.

David was overwhelmed with trouble when he heard what had been done. With all the signs of bitter mourning he followed the murdered man to the grave, and the people mourned with him and made great lamentation.

When Ishbosheth heard that Abner was killed he was completely dismayed, and the people, knowing his weakness and folly, were thrown into much anxiety. Two officers in the army, Rechab and Baanah, thinking to find favor with David, killed the king in his own bedchamber and carried his head to Hebron. They met with a well-merited reward. They were ordered for instant execution, and were hanged at the pool of Hebron.

David Proclaimed King.

A wondrous and joyous spectacle followed this act of justice. David was recognized as king over the land. Not only came the elders to Hebron, but also thousands and tens of thousands of the people; the choice men, not only of the neighboring tribes of Simeon, and Benjamin, and Ephraim, but also of the tribes beyond the Jordan, and of Issachar in the plain of Esdraelon, and of the tribes still further north, up came they in great force, and never before had the valley of Hebron been thronged by so joyful a multitude. They would have David to be king over them. But, before fully accepting the crown, he made

a league with the people, pledging himself to certain conditions; and they, on their part, pledging themselves to loyal fidelity to his rule.

As king of the land, David's great effort was to secure its future capital. He determined on the reduction of the fortress of Jebus, on Mount Zion. This had been held by the natives ever since the days of Joshua, and was thought to be impregnable. It fell before his victorious arms, and the Jebusites were put to the sword. Here, then, David established the metropolis of his empire under the name of Jerusalem, the city of David.

A Marvelous City.

Before any other city on the face of the globe, who would not prefer to visit Jerusalem? Apart from such superstition as, through the centuries of the Christian era, has inflamed the religious pilgrim seeking the Holy Land; apart from such feeling of mingled piety and patriotism as perpetually urges the Israelite, in every land of his exile, to resort to the sepulchres of his ancient kings and the site of his ancient temple; simply in view of what is grand and hallowed in the numberless and matchless memories of Jerusalem, who would not esteem it a great privilege of his life to be permitted to stand within its gates and go amidst its scenes?

The only other historic city which seems worthy of being compared, even for a moment, with Jerusalem is Rome. How much of the world's history, for two thousand years and more, is linked to the city of the seven hills on the banks of the Tiber? How venerable, how suggestive, every relic of ancient Rome, so much of which still lies buried beneath the wreck of centuries! Yet Rome cannot so well be compared with Jerusalem as it can be contrasted. The Rome of history was the head of the secular world; the Jerusalem of history was the head of the sacred world. Rome was the symbol of power and law; Jerusalem was the emblem of Divine truth and salvation. In the empire of earth Rome reigned unrivalled; in the domain of religion

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salem was equally unrivalled. | Temple of Jehovah at whose entrance for cen-



DAVID'S THREE MIGHTY MEN.—I Chron. xi. 15-22.

How are our minds stirred at the very men- | turies smoked the morning and the evening
tion of Jerusalem! We think at once of "the | sacrifice, and to which gathered the nation an-
throne of the house of David"—of God's | nually, in festal or penitential assemblies; we

think of Him, the King of the Jews—the One greater than the Temple—whose goings about this city, whose death without its gate, whose departure from its neighborhood up to the right hand of the Father, have invested its localities with a celestial sanctity and glory.

Perhaps the common impression received is that of a city crowning a sharp hill-summit, and the hill set in a basin, or amphitheatre of hills, from which, on every side, the spectator may look down upon or across to the city. This impression is only measurably correct. The general elevation of the region amidst which Jerusalem is placed is indeed great, being no less than from twenty-two hundred to twenty-six hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea, and thirteen hundred more above that of the Dead Sea. Yet, in reference to the adjacent country, the city is not elevated, and the "mountains" on which it is built can be considered such only in reference to the deep, trench-like valleys which surround and penetrate it.

The bulk of the city is not visible from any great distance, in any direction, and those approaching it from the west or south—the great majority of visitors—obtain no good view of it whatever. The few who approach it from the north are much impressed with the appearance which it presents, as seen from Mount Scopus, a mile or so from the Damascus Gate. This was the point from which Titus, the Roman general, first saw the city. But the view from the Mount of Olives, on the east, is such as one seldom obtains of any city, and is most justly renowned. Several things conspire to make this impressive. First, of course, is the great height of the spectator above the city; next is the nearness of the view, due to the steep incline of Olivet; next is the dip of the city's general surface eastward, lifting its farther edge so as to bring the whole extent the more fully under the spectator's eye; and next is the fact that the Mosque of Omar, in the midst of its great open area, the sublime feature of Jerusalem, is in the foreground, and displayed to happiest advantage.

Probably this is the most impressive view,

of any sort, presented to human eyes anywhere on the wide earth. One beholds, indeed, not merely the spectacle which greets his outward vision, but looks through this to that yet sublimer spectacle of temple and palaces, and all sumptuous splendors of marble and gold, presented first when king Solomon had realized his magnificent schemes for glorifying his capital and the place of Jehovah's abode, and again when Herod the Great had so successfully imitated him.

And the view is made still more profoundly impressive by the thought that it is the same which met the gaze of the Saviour when "He beheld the city, and wept over it." We stand where Jesus stood. And, as we look, we think of Him who, for once in His life consenting to a recognition of His kingly claims, rode towards His capital amidst the hosannas of His loyal people; who yet, when the sight of the city burst upon Him, paused in His progress, and as if all-oblivious to the joy of the moment, shed silent tears of human pity as He contemplated with omniscient eye the city's coming woe.

Massive Walls.

Jerusalem, as limited by its present walls, is nearly a square, having its sides toward the cardinal points of the compass. The walls measure a length of only a little over half a mile on each side; the entire circuit of the city being about two miles and a half. The height of the walls varies from thirty to forty feet, according to the unevenness of the ground; though around the temple area it is greater, reaching in some places even to sixty feet. The walls are about six feet thick, and are strengthened at intervals by towers and fortified gateways. Inside the parapet the space on the walls is broad enough for persons to walk; and in walking on the walls one obtains some of his best views of the city and its surroundings.

It was apparently the lower city which early yielded to the devastating power of the tribe of Judah, while the upper city still held out until the time of David. The fact that the inhabitants of the hill Jebus, or Mount

Zion, should be able thus to hold their fastness, and maintain their community for five hundred years, in the very heart of the Israelitish nation, is indicative of the great military strength of the position, and of its value to king David for his fortified capital. Hence, as soon as possible after his advancement to the throne of the united kingdom, David laid siege to Zion, with an army, according to Josephus, of over 200,000 men.

And now, like the modern city of Berlin under the hands of Frederick the Great, Jerusalem bloomed into sudden glory. All the successes of the new monarch, and all the extending prosperity of the nation, were reflected in the rising splendors of the capital. Especially was Jerusalem dignified, nay consecrated, by being made the abode of the Ark of the Covenant, the chief though not exclusive seat of the tabernacle of the congregation,



DAVID PROCLAIMED KING.—2 Sam. v. 3.

The Jebusites, exulting in the supposed impregnability of their position, set their cripples and blind people on the walls to defend them, and taunted the besiegers with their unavailing efforts even against these; but the walls were at length scaled; the stronghold was secured; David installed himself in it; and, from being recognized as the hill Jebus, it took the name of the "City of David." Then began the career of the most renowned city on the face of the earth.

and the great resort for national worship. On Mount Zion a place was prepared for the shrine of the sanctuary, which for a long time had been in exile, and with high rejoicings it was set therein; Mount Zion becoming henceforth, even after the building of the Temple on Moriah, and the transference of the ark thither, the symbol of God's kingdom.

Yet, conspicuous and mighty as Jerusalem became, under the thirty-three years of David's residence in it as his capital, the full height

of its glory was not attained until King Solomon had endowed it with the imperial magnificence characteristic of his reign. The reign of Solomon is much celebrated in the Scriptures, yet perhaps we seldom attain a just conception of its grandeur. Solomon inherited the fruits of David's vast conquests. He came into receipt of untold accumulated resources. And it was for him to realize and exhibit the glory which had been prepared for him—to construct the gorgeous fabric of which David had laid the strong foundation.

See the extent of his territory—from Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea across to Assyria. See his alliances—with the mightiest powers of his time—with the Pharaohs, by a marriage into Egypt's royal family—with Hiram of Tyre, when Phœnicia was the great maritime country of the world. See his grand schemes for national aggrandizement—by Tyrian aid building a navy and importing the riches of all lands in voyages of three years' duration. See his widespread reputation for wisdom, for wealth, for sumptuous and stately living, when, to see and hear him, the Queen of Sheba was drawn to Jerusalem from her home "in the uttermost parts of the earth."

Dazzling Magnificence.

Well, the full magnificence of Solomon's reign was realized in and expended upon Jerusalem. First of all, on the platform of Mount Moriah, prepared by substructions whose arched solidity, in vast subterranean halls, excites the modern visitor's wonder, he reared the temple of Jehovah, and Moriah shone forth in the architectural splendor of hewn stone, and polished cedar, and brilliant gold, of spacious colonnades, and glittering pinnacles. Then appeared on Mount Zion a palace for the king, and elsewhere another palace for the queen; and next a grand bridge was made to span the valley between Zion and Moriah, giving a royal ascent into the house of the Lord. At the same time the walls of the city were extended and strengthened, and a boundless supply of water was gathered into reservoirs or opened from perennial springs

beneath the city, and the lower suburbs became a paradise of gardens.

And now Jerusalem realized its character as the symbol of the church and of heaven. The law now went forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Jerusalem was now "the joy" and the "praise of the whole earth."

The Warrior King.

David as one of the first acts of his reign had brought up the Ark of God from Kirjath-jearim, and placed it in a new tabernacle; but he yearned to build for it the splendid building which Solomon had the satisfaction of accomplishing. He made known his desire to the prophet Nathan, who at first encouraged him to do so, but he was afterwards divinely instructed to forbid the work being carried on. David was not to be the builder of the Temple, but great and rich blessings were to rest on him and on his posterity; and in the days of his son Solomon the House of the Lord should be built in Zion. David had soldier's work to do to establish the kingdom in righteousness. The Philistines and Moabites were still powerful and must be subdued, and David did not shrink from the work.

With renewed energy David attacked the the Philistines, and Gath, the city of the giant, and numerous other towns, were forced to surrender. The Moabites also suffered severely. A stern, earnest, unflinching man, David spared not his enemies. Hadadezer lost, in an engagement with the king, no less than a thousand chariots, seven hundred horsemen and of cavalry twenty thousand. The Syrians of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezar, but they were speedily defeated, with the loss of two and twenty thousand men. Seeing how easily David appeared to win the victory, and how the best drilled troops broke before his assault, the king of Hamath sent messages of peace, seeking to be henceforth regarded as an ally of King David.

These victories, promptly followed by the placing of strong garrisons in all towns suspected of disaffection, helped to establish king

David on his throne. No sooner was this accomplished than he began to look about for some one survivor of the house of Saul, to whom, for the sake of Jonathan, he might show kindness. The desire of the king was soon made known, and there came an old servant, named Ziba, and he told of Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, lame in both feet on account of having been dropped in childhood by his nurse who was fleeing with him; and David received him most kindly, and made ample provision for his suitable state and dignity. He granted to him also the high privilege of eating, on certain state occasions, at the royal table; it was the same privilege which Saul had accorded to himself in the days of their old friendship, and was now gratefully returned.

A Rough Diamond.

There was a tender, affectionate nature under the rugged exterior of royal David. He remembered former kindnesses, and this is what kings who have known tribulation have not always done. But when Nahash the king of the Ammonites died, and David—calling to mind how kind the man had been to him—sent a letter of consolation by his servants, his good intention was altogether misconstrued. The young king Hanun was led to believe he had deceitfully despatched his messengers to spy out the land. The suspicion of duplicity usually springs from a deceitful heart—"all seems jaundiced to the jaundiced eye." Acting on the impulse of the moment, Hanun committed an abominable outrage on David's servants: he shaved off half their beards, an act which scarcely any indignity could exceed. In addition to this he cut off their clothes short at the girdle.

When David knew how his servants had been treated, he determined to punish the rash and impudent offender. Hanun the foolish sought help from his neighbors, and engaged at a great cost an army of hirelings—some-where about thirty-three thousand fighting men. Joab and Abishai were the commanders of the Israelitish forces, and they put the allies of the Ammonites to ignominious flight; they

did not in their retreat measure the ground by inches, but fled precipitately, the Ammonites following their example. But these Syrian allies, perhaps somewhat ashamed of their conduct, attempted some time later to defy Israel. It ended, as might have been expected, in their total overthrow. David and his mighty men brought them into such thorough subjugation that they were glad to accept terms of peace, and to engage never more to enter into alliance with the Ammonites.

An Extraordinary Crown.

These Ammonites had to pay dearly for their folly. Within a few months Rabbah, their chief city, was invested by Joab, and taken by storm under David. There was a great slaughter and many captives taken; the king who provoked the war doubtless perished, for his crown was taken by David—a crown as heavy as that described by Juvenal in his description of a Roman prætor.

A heavy gewgaw (called a crown) that spread
About his temples, drowned his narrow head,
And would have crushed it with the massy weight,
But that a sweating slave sustained the freight.

David had taken no active part in the early scenes of this Ammonite campaign. Well for him if he had done so. While Joab continued the siege David fell into that grievous transgression which has left an indelible blot on his character. We need not re-tell the painful story. The sin was deep, and deep the penitence when the heart of the king was touched by Nathan's affecting parable. Penitence, however sincere, will not always avert punishment. The royal king had to mourn in bitterness for family troubles which speedily overtook him.

Who so delightful in the eyes of the people as Absalom, who so dear to the heart of king David! And king David's heart was a great heart and a golden heart, and he poured the feelings of his heart into those wonderful psalms which have ever since taken fast hold of all men.

The psalms have been the language in

which the Jewish and the Christian Church | depth of pathos, and jubilant outburst, the
 have alike approached the throne of the | Book of Psalms has not the faintest shadow



THE NURSE FLEEING WITH MEPHIBOSHETH.—2 Sam. iv. 1-4.

Highest. For strength, nervous vigor, sub- | of a parallel. It has been rendered into nearly
 limity, of conception, versatility of matter, | all the languages of the world, and it has suf-

outburst, the faintest shadow

ferred in none; it has been put into rhymes of the rudest description, but its natural beauty has remained the same; it has been moulded into the most graceful verses which scholarly poets could produce, but its own original and exquisite grace has far outshone the scholars' work—the "apples of gold" have made us forget the baskets of silver.

The life of David is in itself a grand psalm, the like whereof has not its equal. He was a man who combined transcendent genius with simple, genuine piety. Brave in battle, wise in council, he was both poet and musician. With rare skill could he sweep his hands over the throbbing strings of the lyre, calling forth melodies so sweet and tender as to soothe even the savage soul of Saul. We may readily imagine that many of David's psalms died away unuttered. Words are of small account when the soul converses with the Great Reader of all hearts; the tear, the sigh, the moan, when the heart "lies awake in the depths of the breast," all cry out to heaven. David, in remembrance of the deep grief which came on him, could say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst it."

But to return to Absalom: Absalom, so captivating in person, so insinuating in manners, winning of all men golden opinions, was a double-tongued villain for all that. He was the favorite son of David; by subtle scheming he had stolen away his father's heart, as he afterwards stole away the hearts of the men of Israel. Handsome, affable, apparently generous, Absalom was the beloved of his father, and beloved of the nation. He was no Rehoboam to say, "My father chastised ye with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Far from this, he stood forth as the people's friend, the earnest advocate of every popular movement; and with a reticence which told powerfully against the king's government, he would offer no opinion on judgments given, but with a tone and expression easily conceivable, and well calculated to make a deep impression, would simply say: "Would God I were judge in Israel." He was an expert in the arts of the politician.

This beautiful, long-haired Absalom, this splendid creature, accessible to all men at all times, to all appearances gracious, gentle, generous, became in time the very idol of the nation. David was a saint—through a deep sinner; a sage, though he frequently erred; a songster and a soldier of the true chivalric pattern, without a doubt. But David was a rough man, and adorable Absalom, captivating alike in arts and arms, was the very reverse of the old veteran—and the people loved him. Falsehood, deceit, envy, hatred and malice may wear the most counterfeit vizards. "See what a goodly outside falsehood hath."

Plotting to Obtain the Throne.

Absalom set his heart upon the throne. It is hard to lift sword against sire; but it presented no difficulty to this young man. There stood he, everybody's favorite; or perhaps it were more just to employ an old phrase, and say, "the admiration of the one sex and envy of the other:" sinful to God, disloyal to his king, obedient to his father, treacherous to his friends, inveigling the people to their ruin, yet carrying withal so smooth and bland a countenance that he might, as it were, have deceived the "very elect."

Absalom brooded two years over a wrong done to his sister Tamar by his half-brother Amnon, and then invited all the princes to his estate to enjoy a sheep-shearing feast. Here he ordered his servants to murder Amnon, and then fled for safety to his grandfather's court at Geshur, where he remained for three years.

David was overwhelmed by this accumulation of family sorrows, thus completed by separation from his favorite son, whom he thought it impossible to pardon or recall. But he was brought back by an artifice of Joab, who sent a woman of Tekoah to entreat the king's interference in an imaginary case similar to Absalom's. Having persuaded David to prevent the avenger of blood from pursuing a young man who, she said, had slain his brother, she adroitly applied his assent to the recall of Absalom, and urged him, as he had thus yielded the general principle, to

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"fetch home his banished." David did so, but would not see Absalom for two more years, though he allowed him to live in Jerusalem.

At last, wearied with delay, and perceiving that his exclusion from court interfered with the ambitious schemes which he was forming, the impetuous young man sent his servants to burn a field of corn near his own, belonging to Joab, thus doing as Samson had done. Thereupon Joab, probably dreading some further outrage brought him to his father, from whom he received the kiss of reconciliation.

David in Flight.

When Absalom saw that the time for action was ripe, he declared himself king, and all the hearts of the men of Israel were after him. This proclamation of king Absalom was made at Hebron, but the intelligence soon reached the capital, and the old king, now stricken in years, and very weary, must hasten from Jerusalem to escape the vengeance of the child of his heart. What to him Goliath's sword, or the jewelled crown of Ammon? What to him all the work he had wrought, all the victories he had won?

It was a bitter day when David and those who remained faithful to him went forth from the palace, crossing over the brook Kidron, weeping with a loud voice; the king sorely weeping, with his head covered so as to conceal his features, and his feet bare. There is something affecting in the covered face; when an ancient painter desired to express the depth of grief, he covered the face. And as David thus went forth there came a man of the tribe of Benjamin, cursing him and casting stones, and making a mockery of his sorrow.

And in high state and glory Absalom entered Jerusalem, king in the room of his father David. Great things were to be expected, great things to be done. No love, no tender memories of old times disturb this man, or restrain him from the commission of the most audacious acts. He cares nothing for his father's suffering, flying now from his hand and concealing himself in the wilderness, as he aforetime had to do before Saul.

David was, as we may imagine, utterly miserable; but admiration for his bold son who had gained so great a triumph mingled with all his sorrow. Indeed, he felt more and more each day how much he was neglected by those who had been most loyal, how one by one they were missing from his company, but he did not despair. It was while in this condition he is said to have composed the seventy-first psalm, in which we find his heart, sickened of earth, turns naturally to heaven, and the plaintive cry rises, "Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth."

There was Ahithophel, in whom David had hitherto confided as his chief counsellor, had joined in the Absalom conspiracy—who can trust their best friends? David, however, did not seem to lose heart, for he trusted another friend, Hushai, to go over and, feigning adhesion to the prince's cause, outwit even the deep diplomatist Ahithophel. Everything seemed wrong; the times were out of joint; there was something very rotten in the state of Israel. Zeba, who had taken care of Mephibosheth, was slyly trying to win his master's inheritance; that master who had been so well used by the king, was amusing himself by the hope that this insurrection of the foolish young man, who had assumed all the insignia of royalty, would break down, and Saul's house be re-established. Israel would seem at this time to have been a great company of Ishmaelites, the only true man amongst them David, and David troubled by day and haunted by night with the dead face of Uriah.

A Scheming Traitor.

Hushai did his traitorous business exceedingly well. He meant to deceive and betray the young pretender to royal authority, who would have been a parricide if he could, and he did. Ahithophel gave the best of counsel for the furtherance of the cause he advocated—namely, prompt action, a vigorous pursuit of David, death to the king, rout to his adherents—once at war with a king, it has been said of rebels, 'tis he or you must die.

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DAVID PARDONING ABSALOM.—2 Sam. xiv. 33.

But Hushai shook his head, and he was an old soldier; and with a man who is supposed to think deeply and to see every side of a question before he speaks, the lifting of the eyebrows, nay, the very impassive silence, is argument. Evidently Hushai did not agree with Ahithophel; he counselled caution. This David was a very lion; those who stood with him were desperate men; all Israel must be gathered together, "as the sand that is by the sea-shore for multitude," hyperbolic extravagance accepted by vain Absalom, and then he—Absalom the Great—should take the command in his own hands and go forth to battle.

Gratified vanity is a strong incentive to acquiescence and to action. Absalom felt that Ahithophel had taken a liberty in suggesting that he would go forth and encounter the king. Hushai recognized his own soldierly ability, and was right in his plan. He imagined that the people would be stirred by his immediate presence, his countenance would "thaw cold fear." So Ahithophel went home a disappointed, thwarted man, to settle his affairs and then hang himself, while Hushai was sending word to David of what he had advised, and of what Absalom meant to do. The young men, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, were to convey the news; they were out of the city, but a young woman whom nobody suspected, except a boy, bore the news to them. This meddling youngster went and told Absalom. There was immediate pursuit, but with no result, for a woman hid the messengers in a well, put the pursuers on a wrong track, and then hastened on the messengers to David.

When David learned that Hushai's advice had been taken, he marched on Mahanaim, where his soldiers were refreshed and strengthened by the generosity of two leading men of the neighborhood. Then David divided his forces into three companies; these divisions were commanded—the first by Joab, the second by Abishai, and the third by Ittai the Gittite. A hasty review was held by the old soldierly king, looking with admiration on the stalwart fellows, who, even in extremity, were putting a bold face on the matter, and back

and edge would stand by the king. But there was universal remonstrance against the king himself remaining with the army; the army would take the field, the king must abide in the city; and he consented to the arrangement only that they should deal very tenderly with the young man, Absalom.

Death of the Traitor.

Forth in all the strength and glory of military array came Absalom, and the two forces encountered each other in a forest not far from Mahanaim, and known as the wood of Ephraim. It appears to have been a place totally unsuited to a battle, for we read "the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured," which we may understand to mean that by falling into pits or swamps, or by getting entangled with the brushwood, and their progress impeded by the trees, both armies were thrown into great difficulties. But victory was on the side of David, and Absalom's men were put to the rout.

Now it was Absalom's turn to be the fugitive; he had put his own father to flight, and now it was his turn to fly; and as he fled the mule on which he rode "went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away." It was while he was in this miserable condition that he was seen by one of the troopers, who came and told Joab. With Joab there was no hesitation—no pity—"he took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the tree." And they took Absalom and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him.

There is something deeply touching in the great grief of the king for his son Absalom. He was overwhelmed; it wholly unfitted him for the activities of life. His grief is beautifully expressed in these lines by Willis, pathetic enough to move the coldest heart:

Alas! my noble boy! that thou should'st die!
Thou, who wert made so beautifully fair!

That death should settle in thy glorious eye,
And leave his stillness in this clustering hair!
How could he mark thee for the silent tomb,
My proud boy, Absalom?

Cold is thy brow, my son! and I am chill,
As to my bosom I have tried to press thee,
How was I wont to feel my pulse's thrill,
Like a rich harp-string, yearning to caress thee,
And hear thy sweet "My father," from these dumb
And cold lips, Absalom!

The grave hath won thee. I shall hear the gush
Of music, and the voices of the young;
And life will pass me in the mantling blush,
And the dark tresses to the swift wind flung;
But thou no more, with thy sweet voice, shall come
To meet me, Absalom!

And oh! when I am stricken, and my heart,
Like a bruised reed, is waiting to be broken,
How will its love for thee, as I depart,
Yearn for thine ear to drink its last deep token!
It were so sweet, amid death's gathering gloom,
To see thee, Absalom!

And now, farewell! 'Tis hard to give thee up,
With death so like a gentle slumber on thee;
And thy dark sin!—oh! I could drink the cup,
If from this woe its bitterness had won thee,
May God have called thee, like a wanderer, home,
My erring Absalom!

The remonstrance of Joab, however, and the discontent of the people, roused the monarch. He went back to reascend his throne amid the plaudits of the majority of his subjects. The example of Absalom made others ready for revolt. Sheba, a Benjamite, raised a second rebellion. Amasa was made commander-in-chief of the army sent out against him. This occasioned great offence to Joab, and he took his revenge by running his sword through Amasa's body. But Sheba did not escape. Discovering that this man had secreted himself in a city called Abel of Beth Maachah, he marched upon it, laid open his trenches, and would have made a speedy end of the whole place had not a shrewd woman parleyed for peace and given him, as the price of his immediately withdrawing his troops, the head of the rebel. The ghastly price of the city's salvation was thrown to him over the wall.

After this came the famine. There was no rest for David and more fighting with the Phil-

istines hard and sore; no rest for David, but still in his great heart a sense of security, of peace and joy not to be won by purple pomp and kingly glory. He would sing sweetly to the trembling chord of the lute—even though he sang a dirge. Still the passion of the man would sometimes rise above the resignation of the saint. He grew proud of his people; in an ill-judged moment he determined on ascertaining their number, as if he who had so often expressed his real strength to be in God had forgotten all about God, and felt himself to be strong in his own strength. The evil was done and the trouble came.

Now while in his Hebrew census there appears on the surface no possible harm (it had been done by Moses), yet it seemed harmful in the sight of the people themselves, or else such a man as Joab—whose conscience was not particularly acute—would scarcely have objected to it. They did clerk's work slowly in those days, and to ascertain the population occupied more than nine months. The probability is that David was set upon conquest, and was desirous of ascertaining how many men he could rely on, and this was repugnant to the people. It was Gad, "David's seer," his wise man, who came with the awful news that high Heaven would interfere, but that of three evils David might have his choice—famine, the sword, pestilence. David chose the last, and there is something affecting in his answer:

"I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hands of man."

The plague raged through the land from Dan to Beersheba, and seventy thousand men are said to have perished. Then it stayed, and David worshipped before the Lord.

David was by this time an old man, and felt that he was becoming unequal to the leading of a great people. He determined, like a wise man, on the appointment of a successor. The right of David to appoint his successor seems to have been acknowledged by the people. Anticipating such an event, Adonijah, one of

David's sons, conspired with Joab and Abiathar the priest, and had himself proclaimed king. It was the madness of folly. All the strength of the nation was with David, and he had de-

solemnly anointed to his responsible office. Adonijah was feasting and making merry with his friends, when the intelligence of Solomon's elevation reached him. He was over-



DAVID INSTRUCTING JOAB TO NUMBER THE PEOPLE.—2 Sam. xxiv. 2.

whelmed with terror, and sought a truce until he could make terms with the young king. This matter being arranged, he returned like a disappointed coward to his own house, acknowledging with all possible expressions of humility his penitence and loyalty.

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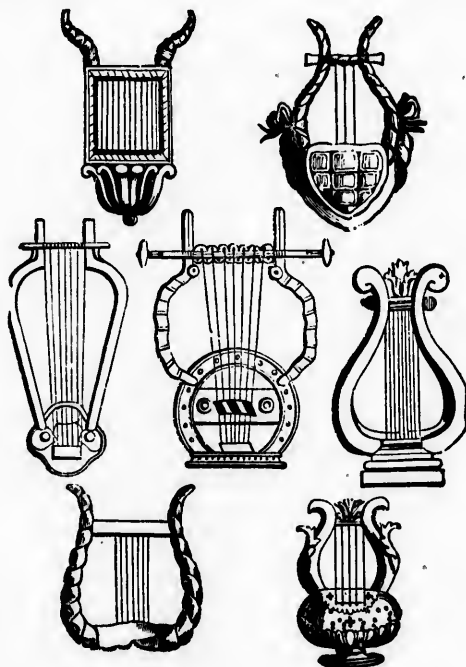
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David survived the coronation of Solomon about six months. This period he employed in the development, for the benefit of his son, of those plans and regulations which had long been formed in his own mind for the erection of the Temple, the arrangement of service, and the government of the people. Great store had he collected of material ready for the building of the Lord's house, all was prepared, and never monarch ascended a throne under more advantageous circumstances than did Solomon, when David "slept with his fathers."

David had extended his conquest on all sides; but he had taught the people to be something better than soldiers—he had cultivated amongst them the arts of peace, and Solomon's subjects were not only men of war, but men of business: though the sea-captains hugged the shore, they carried on in their argosies a considerable commerce, and the

merchants of Jerusalem and all the large towns were driving a thriving trade. The farmers knew better how to carry on their agricultural labors, how to manage their pastoral pursuits, at the end of David's reign, than they did at its beginning, and the work of the skilled artisan was better done and better paid for.

It is said of Solomon that he made gold and silver to be as stones in the streets of Jerusalem; but he would not so readily have succeeded in doing this if the way had not been cleared for him by David. Everything was very prosperous when Solomon came to the crown—a contented people, accumulated treasure, friendly neighbors, and all that could conduce to earthly happiness, except the jealousy of Solomon's eldest brother, Adonijah, the wily designs of Abiathar the priest, and the heart-burnings of the veteran Joab, a threefold occasion for sagacity.



CHAPTER XIX.

SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY.



SOLOMON was declared by David to be his successor on the throne of Israel. This choice caused Adonijah, David's fourth and eldest surviving son, to raise a revolt and proclaim himself king. The prophet Nathan informed Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, of this outbreak, and arranged with her a plan to secure the interests of her son. Bathsheba went into David's chamber, followed soon after by Nathan, to tell him that Adonijah reigned, in spite of his promise to Solomon. The aged king had lost none of his prudence and decision. At his command, Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, supported by Benaiah, with the body-guard of Cherethites and Pelethites, proclaimed Solomon king, amid the rejoicings of the people, and anointed him with the sacred oil, which Zadok took out of the tabernacle. At the news of this decisive act, Adonijah's followers abandoned him, and he himself sought sanctuary at the horns of the altar. His life was spared by Solomon upon his promise of submission. "And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed

himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, "Go to thine house." Adonijah subsequently gave proof of his disloyalty, and was put to death by Solomon's order.

Solomon very soon made it appear, by an imposing public act, that he intended to rule in the spirit of the Mosaic institutions, and in the fear of God. He convoked the tribes, their elders, chiefs, and judges, and, followed by his people, he repaired to Gibeon, where the altar and the tabernacle then stood, although the ark was in Jerusalem; and there, with great solemnity, he offered a thousand holocausts at one time. These first sacrifices were worthy of a king who was designed by Providence to give the utmost splendor of which it was capable to the ritual service established by Moses. His zeal was not without its instant reward. The Lord appeared to him in a dream, and required him to ask whatever favor or benefit his heart desired. The trial implied in this permission was most critical and awful—a man full of ardor only just become a king, offered whatever he desired. Solomon came gloriously through it. He asked wisdom; and that choice is the best proof that could be given of the wisdom he already possessed. The words in which this choice is announced, and the accompanying prayer, are most interesting, touching, and noble, and, under all the circumstances, form one of the most striking incidents in all ancient history.

The king, in that beautiful outpouring of his heart, calls to mind the benefits which his father had received from the Almighty, and the continuance of the empire in his family, his own youth, his inexperience, the extent of his dominions, the multitude of his subjects; and he implored with ardor, as the highest and most precious boon he could receive, the wisdom necessary to enable him to govern

well the chosen people of God. With a choice | ing to thy words; lo, I have given thee a wise and
 so sincere and humble the Lord was well | an understanding heart; so that there was none
 pleased, and said, "Because thou has asked | like thee before thee neither after thee shall any



SOLOMON'S CORONATION.—I Kings i. 45.

this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long | arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee
 life, nor riches, nor the life of thine enemies, | that which thou hast *not* asked, both riches
 but hast asked for thyself understanding | and honor, so that there shall not be any
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The promise of long life was also added, on condition that he walked according to the Divine statutes and ordinances.

Solomon awoke, and, fortified with these magnificent promises, returned with joy to Jerusalem, where, before the ark, he gave solemn thanks, offered new sacrifices, and feasted all his court.

Next the sacred historian proceeds to produce a proof, in a remarkable scene of Oriental justice, of the sagacity with which Solomon was now endowed, and which made that fact known to his people from one end of the land to the other. In those times, as at present in the East, persons of the most obscure condition came to state their wrongs, to plead their causes, and maintain their rights and settle their disputes at the foot of the throne; and in the matters which are thus brought before the king for judgment, the humble condition of the parties is less considered than the difficulty of the points under litigation.

The Two Mothers.

There were two women living together, both of whom were mothers. One of the children was overlaid, and died in the night; but the woman who found the child in her bed when she awoke, alleged that not this child, but the one that lived, was hers, and she charged the other woman with having transferred the dead child to her bed, and taken the living one to her own. The point at issue therefore was, to whom the living child belonged, for both claimed it, and, from the nature of the case, the claim of neither could be supported by evidence. Where there was nothing to go upon but the affirmation of the one party and the denial of another, the case seemed closed round with insuperable difficulties; but it occurred to the sagacious king that the natural feelings of a mother afforded a sure test by which the truth might be ascertained; he therefore called for a sword, and said with apparent solemnity, that as there seemed no other way of deciding between such conflicting evidence, he would divide the matter in dispute—the living child—and assign half to each.

In this or any civilized country no one would suppose such a proposal sincere; it would have been too absurd and too barbarous for any one to imagine that it would be executed. But in the East decisions as arbitrary and eccentric as this are at the present day far from uncommon, and it is manifest that both the women fully believed that the king intended to give instant effect to this monstrous award. The king keenly watched the effect which his announcement produced. All the mother rose in the heart of the woman to whom the child belonged, and she cried out, "O, my lord the king, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it!" But the other cried, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." Here the question was solved in an instant; no one could for a moment doubt which of them was the real mother, and the king said, "Give *her* the living child, and in no wise slay it—for *she* is the mother thereof!" Probably no one revered the king more than she.

A proof of sagacity like this was well calculated to strike the popular mind, and probably made upon the Israelites a stronger impressior of the king's wisdom than did all the parables, proverbs, and songs which he is said to have composed, or all the sage sayings which he is said to have uttered. "All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was with him to do judgment."

The prosperity promised to Solomon was not less signal than his wisdom. He enjoyed during his reign profound peace, in consequence of the numerous victories which his father had achieved and the conquests which he had made, whereby his undisputed dominion extended from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates. His revenues from the tribute of the conquered nations alone were therefore very great, and many nomade tribes, and nations not directly subject to his sway, found it prudent to obtain the protection and favor of so powerful a neighbor by paying annual tributes, which were ostensibly voluntary, and took the name of "presents," which seem to have con-

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sisted chiefly of vessels of gold and of silver, cloth, arms, aromatic drugs, horses, and mules.

He also clearly perceived that a well-organized government could not proceed without some regular sources of revenue, and he therefore appears to have imposed an easy tax upon his native subjects, which does not seem to have been regarded as a grievance until the latter end of his reign, when the increased expenses of the government and court, with the falling off of some other sources of income, constrained him to increase its amount.

Royal Magnificence.

He also encouraged commerce, and made it a source of revenue; and it has been calculated that the various dues and customs paid by the merchants engaged in foreign trade, including probably the produce of the royal monopolies, afforded a yearly revenue of not less than twenty-five million dollars. The principal monopoly was the trade with Egypt in horses, chariots, and linen yarn, which was managed by Solomon's factors, and which he was probably enabled to engross through the good understanding between him and the king of Egypt, whose daughter he married, and who, on account of her exalted birth, must have been his queen or principal wife. To this may be added the maritime traffic by the Red Sea, the proceeds of which were shared by Solomon and the king of Tyre.

Such were the principal sources from which Solomon drew a magnificent revenue, which he as magnificently expended in his most imperial establishments. He had four thousand stables, in which were kept forty thousand horses, with a proportionate number of various kinds of carriages. He appointed twelve officers, to whom different districts were assigned, and whose duty it was to provide in monthly rotation the provisions required for the court; and some notion of the extent of the royal household may be obtained from the account which is given of the supply required for the consumption of one day:—Thirty measures of fine flour, threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty out of

the pastures, and a hundred sheep, together with harts, roebucks, deer, and fatted fowl. These provisions would suffice for several thousand persons, of whom we may therefore conceive the royal establishment to have been composed.

The people, prospering in an equal degree from the new sources of wealth opened to them, and from the exemption from war which enabled them to enjoy the produce of their grounds in safety, disregarded the protection of walled towns, and lived dispersed upon their own lands, enjoying their abundance upon the spot where it was produced. This is the prosperous condition of life which the Scripture so often describes by "every one sitting under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, and no one to make him afraid." Thus prosperous, and thus unwasted by war, the population of Israel also amazingly increased during the reign of Solomon, and were "as many as the sand which is by the sea-shore in multitude, eating, and drinking, and making merry."

All this could not be effected at once, but was the growth of years; and we have somewhat anticipated the order of events for the sake of a connected statement of the results of Solomon's system of government, and of the position which he was enabled to take on the demise of his father David. We may now return to trace the current of events.

Embassy from the King of Tyre.

Soon after Solomon's accession, Hiram, king of Tyre, who had been a great admirer and friend of David, sent an embassy to condole with the young king on his father's death and to congratulate him on his peaceable succession. Presents of the costliest description were brought by Hiram's messengers. Solomon gladly availed himself of this opening for an intercourse and connection with the Tyrian king, whose assistance would, he knew, be of great advantage to him in the undertakings he had then in view. He therefore sent to open to him the designs he entertained, and invited him to render the same sort of assistance which

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had been rendered to David when building his
"house of cedars." Only the great forests of
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ber required for the undertakings of the Hebrew
king; and such of those forests as lay nearest

in the heights of the mountains, to the sea-
shore. Hence the assistance which Solomon
required from the king of Tyre was of very
great if not of essential importance to him.
Hiram was found to be very ready to enter



HIRAM OF TYRE SENDING PRESENTS TO SOLOMON.—1 Kings v. 1.

the sea were in the hands of the Phœnicians, into his plans; and a treaty was soon com-
among whom timber was in such constant pleted, under which Hiram engaged to provide
demand that they had acquired great and timber from the forests of Lebanon, for the
and acknowledged skill in the felling of trees, and in Temple and other buildings which Solomon
the transportation of the trunks from the woods, contemplated, to convey it to the coast, and

to float it down in the form of rafts to Joppa, the port of Jerusalem. Solomon himself was to provide a portion of the labor in the mountains; and he engaged to pay for the services of the Tyrians by a stipulated quantity of wheat and oil. By this undertaking both parties had what they most wanted—Solomon timber for building, which his own territory did not yield; and Hiram provisions, which the Phœnicians, confined to a narrow strip of land and devoted to trade and manufactures, were constrained to obtain from abroad, and could obtain with more convenience from the fertile inlying districts of Canaan than from any other quarter.

Immense Number of Workmen.

Hiram's workmen assisted in preparing and squaring stones for the Temple; and so numerous were the men—subjects of the two kings—employed in these preparations, that it required three thousand men to superintend their labors. Solomon, who had certainly a considerable leaning towards arbitrary power, being still in want of laborers, ventured to raise a levy of thirty thousand Israelites, whom he sent to assist the Phœnician timber-cutters in Lebanon—not all at once, but in alternate bands of ten thousand each, so that each band returned home and rested two months out of three. This relief, and the sacred object of the service, prevented the opposition which the king might otherwise have encountered.

For the more heavy labor in the quarries, Solomon called out the remnant of the Canaanites, probably with those foreigners (or their sons) who had been brought into the country as prisoners or slaves during the wars of David, who had, indeed, left an enumeration of all the adult males among them for this very purpose. Their number was one hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred; and according to the common custom of the East in such cases, these also, doubtless, labored in alternate bands. Such services were usually required from persons in their condition, when any public work was in progress, and was not regarded as an oppression.

Of these strangers seventy thousand were employed as porters to the others, and to the Phœnician artisans. They probably also had the heavy duty of transporting to Jerusalem the large stones, which sixty thousand more of them were employed in hewing and squaring in the quarries. Of these, the stones intended for the foundation were in immense blocks, and, as well as the others, were probably brought from no great distance, as quarries of very suitable stone are abundant in the neighboring districts. These large stones were doubtless placed upon sledges and drawn by strings of oxen, after the manner indicated in the sculptured monuments of Egypt.

Solomon also desired that Phœnician artificers of all descriptions should be sent to Jerusalem, particularly such as excelled in the arts of design, and in the working of gold, silver, and other metals, as well as of precious stones; nor was he insensible of the value and beauty of those scarlet, purple, and other fine dyes, in the preparation and application of which the Tyrians excelled. Men skilled in all these branches of art were largely supplied by Hiram. He sent also a person of his own name, a Tyrian by birth, who seems to have been a second Bezaleel, for his abilities were so great, and his attainments so extensive and various, that he was skilled not only in the working of metals, but in all kinds of work in wood and stone, and even in embroidery, in tapestry, in dyes, and in the fabrication of all sorts of fine cloths. This man was a treasure to Solomon, who made him overseer not only of the men whom the king of Tyre then sent, and of those whom David had formerly engaged and retained in his service, but also of his own workmen. Much of the glory of the Temple was due to him.

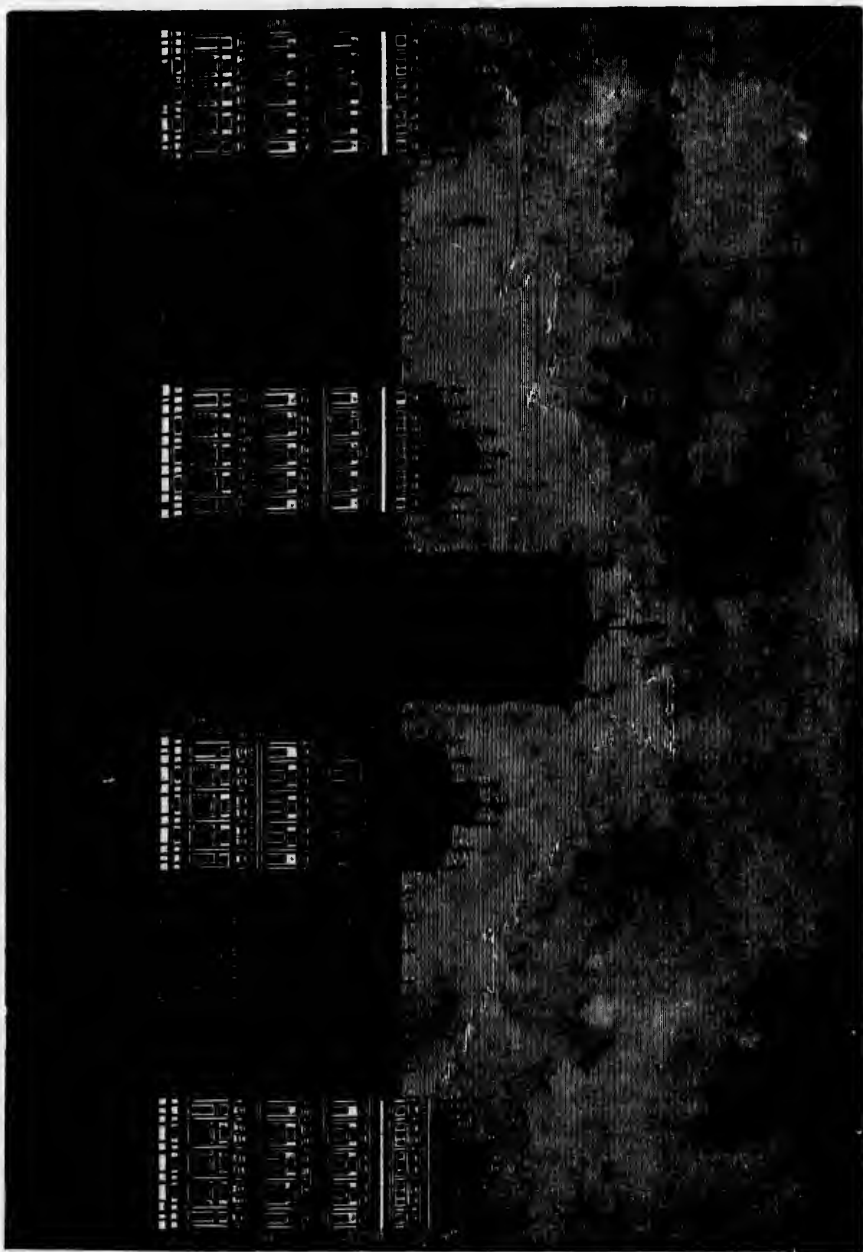
Three years were consumed in these necessary preparations for building the Temple, and it was not until the fourth year of Solomon's reign that all things were in sufficient forwardness to allow the foundations to be laid; and in about seven years after, the whole building was completed. So effective and well-arranged were all the preparations, all the stones having

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MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.—1 Chron. xxviii. 10.



been properly squared before they were brought to the spot, that the pile arose with little of the noise and confusion usually connected with the progress of so great an undertaking: we are, indeed, told that there was "neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard throughout the house while it was in building."

"No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."

Various accounts of the Temple of Solomon have been furnished by writers of different countries and ages. The subject has been indeed, so attractive, that entire volumes have been written on it. The result has, however, been far from satisfactory. The accounts have been framed from the description, which is itself not very easy to be understood, and which supplies so few facts, that much is left to be supplied by the imagination. Hence plans and descriptions have been produced bearing a most suspicious likeness to modern fabrics and styles of architecture, and which have manifestly been influenced in no small degree by the prevailing taste in the time and country to which the writer belonged. Thus, a view by a Spaniard will be very Spanish, by an Italian surprisingly Italian, and by a Frenchman wonderfully French.

Style of Architecture.

Viewing the Temple of Solomon by the light which the monuments of Egypt offer, has enabled an architectural writer, Mr. Bardwell, in his work on "Temples," to give an interesting account of this celebrated structure: and as this is the only statement respecting Solomon's Temple by a professional writer, we shall here introduce the substance of it:

"With so much information before us at the present day, it is almost needless for me to assert that the Temple of Solomon was in the Egyptian style of architecture; a moment's reflection will convince every unbiassed mind that such must have been the case; since, although Greece had been colonized from Egypt nearly two hundred years before this, it is not

at all likely, from the slow development of human improvement, that the style we call Greek had then superseded its Egyptian parent; and what is conclusive upon this point, as we shall soon see, is, the Temple of Solomon had not, in its proportions and details, anything in common with the temples of Greece. That the Jews had no peculiar style of their own, excepting so far as they were restricted from the use of figures of animals in decorations, is also probable; as, ever since they had settled in Canaan, four hundred years previous, they had been constantly engaged in the wars necessary to extend and conserve their newly acquired territory, and, consequently, had no opportunity of cultivating the fine arts.

"Besides, Solomon was in constant intercourse with the Pharaoh of his age, and married his daughter. Further, in no part of the world had temple architecture and the art of cutting and polishing stones ever arrived, before or since, to such perfection as in Egypt. The Tyrians, being at that time the great common carriers of the world, kept up an extensive commerce with Egypt. I therefore infer from this and the before-mentioned reasons, that the masons were Egyptian, and the stone all prepared, fitted, and finished by them before it was brought to Jerusalem; since, moreover, there is nothing mentioned about the expensiveness of any article but the stone, 'costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.'

"The oracle was an exact square, of thirty-seven feet six inches high, in the centre of which was a pair of folding-doors of olive-wood, seven feet six inches wide, very richly carved with palm-trees, and open flowers, and cherubim; the floor of the Temple was boarded with fir; the roof was flat, covered with gold, upon thick planks of cedar, supported by large cedar beams. The inside walls and the ceiling were lined with cedar, beautifully carved, representing cherubim and palm-trees, clusters of foliage and open flowers, among which the lotus was conspicuous; and the whole interior was overlaid with gold, so that neither wood

nor stone was seen, and nothing met the eye but pure gold, either plain, as on the floor, or richly chased, and enriched with gems, upon the walls and ceiling. At a little distance from 'the most holy place,' like the railing of a communion-table, were fixed five massive gold candelabra, on each side the entrance, and between the candelabra were chains or wreaths of flowers, wrought in pure gold

one wing of each cherubim touching the other in the middle of the Temple, while the other wings touched the wall on each side; before them was the altar of incense, formed of cedar, and entirely overlaid with refined gold; and on the sides of the Temple were arranged ten golden tables, five on each side, for the exhibition of the shew-bread, besides other tables of silver, for the display of above one



THE ARK AND FURNITURE OF THE TEMPLE.—I Kings vi. 23.

separating even the entrance of the oracle from the body of the Temple. Thus a distinction was made in the apartments, one of them being considered more holy than the others.

"Within the oracle was set the ancient 'ark of the covenant,' which had preceded them to the Promised Land, beneath two colossal cherubim, each nineteen feet four inches and a half high, with immense out-spreading wings,

hundred gold vases of various patterns, and censers, spoons, snuffers, etc., used in the service of the temple.

"It appears that the inside of the vestibule was also covered with gold; from it a grand pair of folding-doors, nine feet four inches and a half wide, opened into the Temple. These doors were also overlaid with gold, embossed in rich patterns of cherubim, and

palms, and open flowers; both pairs of doors had ornamented hinges of gold, and before the doors of the oracle hung a veil embroidered with cherubim, in blue, and purple, and crimson.

"Hiram the king had sent over from Tyre his clerk of the works, who superintended the building till it became necessary to set up the two great columns of the porch; these had the usual proportions of Egyptian columns, being five and a half diameters high, and as these gave the great characteristic feature of the building, Solomon sent an embassy to fetch the architect from Tyre to superintend the moulding and casting of these columns, which were intended to be of brass; these superb pillars were eight feet in diameter, and forty feet high. The Temple was surrounded on the north, south, and east by the inner or priests' court which had a triple colonnade around it."

Looking forward a little to the completion of the edifice, and its dedication by the king, our architect proceeds: "Magnificent must have been the sight to behold the young king, clothed in royalty, officiating before the great altar, while the thousands of Levites and priests on the east side, habited in surplices, with harps, cymbals and trumpets in their hands, led the eye to the beautiful pillars flanking the doors of the Temple, now thrown open, and displaying the interior brilliantly lighted up, while the burnished gold of the floor, the ceiling, and the walls, with the precious gems with which they were enriched, reflecting the light on all sides, would completely overwhelm the imagination, were it not excited, by the view of the embroidered veil, to consider the awful glories of the most holy place."

Superb Decorations.

After this description from the pen of an architect, it would be unfair to call the Temple of Solomon "a poor building," as some writers have done, under the impression that it owes all its greatness to the high terms which the Jewish writers employ in describing the most magnificent structure with which *they* were

acquainted. The fact seems to be, that when viewed as the work of a very early age, and with reference to the notions which then prevailed, Solomon's Temple may be considered magnificent; although it is not to be compared with more recent specimens of architecture, as exhibited in the master-pieces of Greek or Roman art, or even in the great cathedral churches of the Christian world. It is evident that the Jews knew nothing of the order of architecture; and, although it may be difficult to form a distinct idea of this their first and greatest work, it is very clear that they were fond of minute details and highly finished decorations, both in the engravings on stones and the ornaments in wood and precious metals.

Dedication of the Temple.

If the expenditure of vast sums of money be taken as a standard of comparison, the pre-eminence of Solomon's Temple is more striking, as we have no knowledge of any building which has been recorded to have cost so much in its erection. There is, indeed, great difficulty in forming an exact estimate of this cost. Some find the amount so large as would have sufficed to build the Temple with solid gold; and without going into such extravagance of estimate, but contenting ourselves with the lowest ever proposed, being thirty-five million dollars, it could not well have been otherwise than a glorious structure, however little its general proportions or arrangements of parts may have been in accordance with modern taste. The many thousand laborers employed on it for seven years and a half is in accordance with the impression which we derive from the statement of the expense.

All the works of the Temple being finished (B. C. 1005), the dedication of it was reserved for the next year, which was a year of Jubilee—that great periodical holy year of rest and joy to the Israelites, which few could hope to witness more than once in their lives.

As the principal object to be served by the Temple was to afford a resting-place to the ark, the dedication was no sooner resolved

upon than preparations were made for introducing it with due pomp into the sanctuary. In the presence of nearly the whole nation, assembled at Jerusalem, including all the courses of priests and orders of Levites, the procession commenced from the city of David, where the ark lay, to the portals of the splendid edifice, accompanied with many instruments of music, and the cheerful sound of psalms chanted by the Levitical choirs. The psalms were selected or composed for this solemn service; and when the sons of Levi, bearing their precious burden, drew near the eastern porch, the singers broke forth in the triumphal strain—

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
And be ye lift, ye everlasting doors,
That the King of glory may come in."

At the moment when the ark of the covenant was deposited in the holy of the holies, between the cherubim, the innumerable Levitical choirs thundered forth their well-known song—sent to the heavens by their united voices, and by the harmonious concord of a thousand instruments—

"Praise ye Jehovah! for He is good;
For His mercy endureth forever!"

At that moment, suddenly, as at the consecration of the tabernacle, the holy building was covered with a thick cloud, which filled it wholly, and which enveloped the priests in such profound obscurity that they were unable to continue their ministrations. This was a manifest symbol that the Lord had accepted this building as His house, and that His presence had descended to dwell therein. The deep silence that ensued was broken by the voice of Solomon, who stood upon a brazen platform in front of the altar. He spread forth his hands towards heaven, and gave utterance to the noble and affecting prayer by which the house was set apart to the worship of the God of Israel, and in which the divine blessing was invoked upon all who should thereafter join in the venerable rites to which it was dedicated. It is observable how prominently and beauti-

fully the idea is brought forward that the temple was to be regarded as a *house*, a palace, which the Divine King was to fill with His presence, and in which he was to reside among His people. This was the true idea of the establishment, under the peculiar circumstances of the Hebrew theocracy, and it is interesting to find that this view of the subject was so distinctly present to the mind of the young king. Yet the idea of any human structure, however magnificent, being the abode of the Lord of heaven and earth, struck him in the point of view which must be taken by any thoughtful mind. "But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" he cried: "behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee;—how much less this house which I have builded?" Great was his astonishment.

Costly Sacrifices.

This great festival was followed by an entertainment of a more ordinary nature, suitable to the joyful commemoration which usually marked the feast of tabernacles. On this great occasion Solomon is said to have offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. In the first act of sacrifice the same mark of the Divine acceptance and favor was given as at the original establishment of the ritual service in the wilderness; for the victims, when laid out upon the altar, were consumed by fire from heaven; and the fire thus kindled was sacredly preserved and kept up—was never lost or extinguished, till the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans. The festivities of the season were continued a week beyond the usual period; "and on the three-and-twentieth day of the seventh month, he sent the people away unto their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

Having thus accomplished this great duty, the king turned his attention to the construction of various sumptuous buildings and great public works, suited to the honor of his crown and the dignity of his kingdom.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, which is supposed to have been written by him, there appears a distinct and interesting allusion to these undertakings: "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit; I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood

of all sorts. So I was great, and possessed more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me." Connected with what precedes, there seems a very significant emphasis in this last clause, which it is not our present duty to develop.

This passage is finely paraphrased, and the



FIRE FROM HEAVEN AT THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.—2 Chron. vii. 1.

that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; I gat me men singers and women singers; and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that

glories of Solomon's reign beautifully embodied, in the following extract from Heber's well-known poem on "Palestine."

Triumphant race! and did your power decay?
Failed the bright promise of your early day?
No:—by that sword, which, red with heathen gore,
A giant spoil, the stripling champion bore;
By him, the chief to farthest India known,
The mighty master of the ivory throne;

In Heaven's own strength, victorious o'er her foes,
Victorious Salem's lion banner rose;
Before her footstool prostrate nations lay,
And vassal tyrants crouched beneath her sway;
And he, the kingly sage, whose restless mind,
Through nature's mazes wandered unconfined,
Who every bird, and beast, and insect knew,
And spoke of every plant that quaffs the dew,
To him were known—so Hagar's offspring tell—
The powerful vigil and the starry spell,
The midnight call hell's shadowy legions dread,
And sounds that burst the slumbers of the dead.
Hence all his might; for who could these oppose?
And Tadmor thus, the Syrian Baalbec rore

Such, the faint echo of departed days,
Still sound Arabia's legendary lays;
And thus their fabling bards delight to tell
How lovely were thy tents, O Israel!

For thee his ivory load Behemoth bore,
And fag Sofala teemed with golden ore;
Thine all the arts that wait on wealth's increase,
Or bask and wanton in the beam of peace.
When Tiber slept beneath the cypress gloom,
And silence held the lonely woods of Rome;
Or ere to Greece the builder's skill was known,
Or the light chisel brushed the Parian stone;
Yet here fair Science nursed her infant fire,
Fanned by the artist aid of friendly Tyre:
Then towered the palace, then in awful state
The Temple reared its everlasting gate.

Of the royal buildings erected by Solomon, particular notice is taken in Scripture of the palace which he built for himself, which the Jewish writers describe in very glowing language; another palace which he built for the residence of Pharaoh's daughter; and "the house of the forest of Lebanon." Most writers take these to have been distinct and separate fabrics, but to those acquainted with the eastern style of building and the arrangements of palaces, it will appear very clear that the king's own palace and that of his queen were no other than different quadrangles of the same great pile of buildings—separate in their economical arrangements, but communicating with each other. The description given by Josephus confirms this impression, or at least shows that he took the same view of the subject. The quadrangle into which the great gate of gen-

eral entrance opens usually contains the state apartments and offices, particularly the hall in which the sovereign gives audience, sits in judgment, and transacts all public business. Hence the royal court is very often called "the Gate," of which a familiar example is offered in the Ottoman Porte.

The account of Josephus suggests that the palace, as a whole, consisted of three distinct courts, and communicating with their appropriate buildings and offices; of which the one in the centre contained the state apartments, while that on the right hand formed the private residence of the king, and that on the left the harem or palace of the Egyptian princess; and this arrangement is so conformable to the usages which have always been maintained in the East, that we are disposed to take it as an ascertained fact. In this case "the house of the forest of Lebanon" was probably formed by the buildings of the central quadrangle, containing the hall of state.

"It would be an endless task," says the Jewish historian, "to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of buildings; so many courts and other contrivances; such a variety of chambers and offices, great and small; long and large galleries; vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be with costly furniture and gilding; besides that all the service for the king's table was of pure gold. In a word, the whole palace was in a manner made up, from the base to the coping, of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver; with precious stones here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings."

Solomon's Gorgeous Throne.

It is and always has been the etiquette of Eastern courts, that the king, as supreme magistrate, should to a certain extent administer justice in person, and be accessible to the complaints of all his subjects. In conformity with this usage, Solomon was wont to sit in the open porch of his palace, which was therefore called "the porch of judgment;" and this was an obvious application of the very ancient and still subsisting practice of making the gate the

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seat of justice. Solomon's porch of justice seems to have been a large covered apartment, supported by pillars and entirely open in front.

Here, upon a raised platform to which there was an ascent by steps, was placed the throne of Solomon, which is mentioned with such marked admiration in the Scriptural accounts, and with still stronger praise by Josephus.

This consisted of a magnificent seat, placed upon a dais or platform, to which there was an ascent of six steps, on each of which were fixed the figures of two lions in gold, forming a sort of fence or balustrade to the ascent. The ascent between the twelve lions of gold, with the splendid seat at the top, must have formed a very magnificent throne, probably not unlike those which, in the mural paintings of Egypt, are appropriated to the gods and kings. The throne itself was of ivory, studded and enriched with gold, and over it a semispherical canopy appears to have been suspended. Although there was no throne equal to this in any kingdom for costliness and splendor, yet in its general plan and character it corresponded with the thrones of the ancient and modern East.

Solomon built a new city and gave it the name of Tadmor (palm-tree), and this is the same city which afterwards became historically, as well as commercially, illustrious under the Greek name of Palmyra. The importance to which this city rose, and the prosperity which it long maintained, afford the best possible evidence of the wisdom of the great king by whom it was founded. Here the caravans not only found water as before, but every advantage of shelter and rest; and here also the merchants, finding persons ready to take their commodities and to furnish whatever they required in exchange, would be inclined to end their journey, leaving the distribution of their goods to the nations farther west, either to the factors of Solomon or to private merchants; for we know not to what degree the king found it advisable to leave this trade free to his own subjects. That he took some mercantile part in it is probable from his course of proceeding with respect to the land trade with Egypt and

the maritime commerce; but there were circumstances in this branch of trade which required more delicate management, and which might have occasioned any stringent attempt to monopolize the trade to have been fatal to the objects which he contemplated.

Indeed, we see that the great fault of Solomon's commercial policy, apart from its unsuitableness to the Hebrew institutions, lay in the attempt of the government to engross its benefits as a source of royal revenue. No traffic can have healthy growth under such a system; and hence, probably, more than from any other single cause, the measures of Solomon had no permanent effect upon the pursuits or character of the nation, which subsided into its accustomed channels as soon as the immediate and urgent impulse given by the crown ceased to operate.

How Wealth Was Employed.

Much of the wealth acquired from the various sources which have been indicated was spent by king Solomon in building, and in the general improvement of the country. Many important towns and fortresses were built or rebuilt by him. Among these we find the name of Baalath, which has usually been supposed the same with Baalbec in the valley of Lebanon, the ruins of which have been so much admired and so often described by travellers. No one, indeed, supposes that the ruins which still exist are those of the very buildings erected by Solomon. These are known to have been of Roman origin; but it is conceived that the present ruins occupy the site of Solomon's city, and that some of the foundation walls, composed of enormous blocks of stone, may have belonged to ancient towns founded by him.

The Scripture directs our attention in a very marked manner to the arrangements of Solomon's court, not only as admirable in itself, but as being, in fact, the wonder and admiration of neighboring and even of remote nations. The statement to which we must look for giving some insight into these arrangements contains at the first view little more than a list

of names and officers; but on a closer inspection persons acquainted with the existing usages of the East are able to recognize in this list much which is suggestive of an orderly arrangement and a wise distribution of administrative functions. It may, indeed, be noticed that most of the offices thus specified have reference to the supply of the wants of the court and the maintenance of the royal authority; and it must be admitted that these have been practically the chief objects of Oriental governments.

Several officers appear in the time of Solomon, of which we find no previous trace in Israel; of these were the "Governor of the Palace," who had charge of whatever belonged to the household affairs of the royal establishments; and the twelve "princes" who were stationed in different parts of the country to collect in turn from each tribe a month's provision for the court.

The orderly manner in which such vast quantities of provisions were brought together, distributed and prepared for use, seems not less to have engaged the admiring wonder of strangers, and particularly of the Queen of Sheba, than the magnificent appointment and attendance at the king's own table.

Fine Horses and Horsemen.

We must be content to note very briefly a few other circumstances connected with the court of king Solomon. His chariots and horses, obtained from Egypt, have been already mentioned. As we are now well acquainted with the chariots of that country, there can be no doubt respecting their form and furniture. With regard to the horsemen our information is less distinct. There can be no doubt that Solomon had a body of cavalry mounted on trained Egyptian horses, and that such cavalry existed in Egypt. But it curiously happens that in the whole range of Egyptian sculpture and painting there is but one figure of a man on horseback, and that does not much assist our ideas with respect to the cavalry of times so ancient. In all likelihood the equipment of Solomon's horsemen did not much differ from that which is and has

long been in use in Western Asia, and which bears many marks of a remote origin.

Josephus reckons the number of Solomon's horses as twenty thousand; and he says that they were the most beautiful in their appearance, and the most remarkable for their swiftness, that could anywhere be seen. The riders, he says, were in their appearance quite worthy of their horses. They were young men in the beauty and flower of their age, and the tallest in stature that could be found in the country. Their undress was of Tyrian purple, and their long hair, which hung in loose tresses, glittered with the gold-dust wherewith they daily sprinkled their heads. But when they attended the king they were in complete armor, and had their bows ready strung. Often, in the fine season, he adds, the king rode down to his beautiful gardens at Etham, six miles from Jerusalem, attended by these young men. On such occasions he rode loftily in his chariot, arrayed in white robes. But we have a better description of these excursions from the pen of Solomon himself. This occurs in Canticles iii. 6-11, where he is described as approaching in a splendid palanquin or litter, surrounded by three-score valiant men. The chorus of virgins dwells upon the subject of this litter with great admiration:

"King Solomon hath made for himself
This couch of the wood of Lebanon:
Its pillars hath he made of silver,
Its bases of gold, its cushions of purple;
The middle of it is spread with love
By the daughters of Jerusalem."

These last two lines indicate that the bottom of the litter was spread with cushions, ornamented with flowers wrought in the most elegant manner by the damsels of Jerusalem. From the mention of pillars it appears to have had a covering or canopy, as is still usually the case. The only litter represented in the Egyptian paintings is borne by men and has no canopy, the shade being supplied by an umbrella borne by an attendant. This article was probably known to the Hebrews.

From the song of Solomon much information respecting the arrangements of the royal

harem may be gathered. And this is a matter of some consequence, as this king multiplied wives unto himself beyond any monarch before or after him. In fact his female estab-

or equipage, and was mainly designed to augment the pomp which belonged to his character and station.

In the midst of all these undertakings and



THE QUEEN OF SHEBA AT THE COURT OF SOLOMON.—I Kings x. 2.

lishment resembled those which the kings of the East have in all ages desired to form; but it may be understood that the harem formed, properly speaking, a branch of the royal state

operations, surrounded by all this glory and magnificence, Solomon's wisdom did not cease to be a matter of admiration, not only to his own subjects, but among neighboring and

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even distant nations. So great was his knowledge, so wonderful in its variety and extent, that "there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, for all kings of the earth had heard of his wisdom." Among the princes who thus rendered their homage to the genius of Solomon was the queen of Sheba, whom some suppose to have come from Abyssinia, but who is believed by others to have reigned in the southernmost parts of Arabia. She came with a very great and splendid retinue; and in her train were camels laden with spices, gold, and precious stones. It is stated that in her interviews with Solomon she "tried him with hard questions"—a mode of testing wisdom which was common in that age, and which every one who made unusual pretensions to sagacity and knowledge was understood to invite.

The sage monarch found no difficulty in solving all the enigmatical questions which the royal stranger proposed: and we are told that when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house which he had built, and the food of his table, and the station of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, with their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his burnt-offerings, which he offered in the house of Jehovah, there was no more spirit in her, and she said to the king, "True was the report which I heard in my own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Yet that report I believed not till I came, and saw with mine own eyes; and, lo! the half had not been told me: thy wisdom and thy greatness far exceed the report that I heard. Happy thy men! happy these thy servants, who stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom! Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who was so pleased with thee as to set thee on the throne of Israel!"

The great glory of Solomon's reign was sadly dimmed towards its close. Among the many wives he had taken unto himself

were many women of neighboring nations, "worshippers of strange gods." At their solicitation he was eventually led into allowing them the public exercise of their idolatries, and by easy steps was at length induced to take some part in them. Under what notions he disguised the heinousness of this crime to himself we are not informed, and it is useless to conjecture. By this fall he forfeited the benefits and privileges which had been promised as the condition of his rectitude; and it was not long before the doom which he had so weakly and wickedly incurred was made known to him.

This was, that his kingdom should be rent from him and given to his servant; but, tempering judgment with mercy, the Lord was pleased to promise that this great evil should not befall his house in his own reign, but in that of his son. This was for the sake of his father David; and for his sake also, who had derived so much satisfaction from the prospect which he had been allowed to indulge of the perpetuity of his race, it was further promised that the ruin of his dynasty should not be absolute, for that it should still reign over one tribe—that of Judah, with which that of Benjamin had by this time coalesced.

Nevertheless the troubles which were to end in the disruption of the kingdom which he had taken so much pains to organize were allowed to commence in his own reign, and greatly to trouble its peace. He thus witnessed the growth of the baleful tree he had planted, although he was spared from gathering all its poisonous fruit. The threatened evils were made to grow out of the weak parts of his own policy. The foreign sources of wealth seem in the latter years of Solomon to have declined; and then, to support the disproportionate magnificence which he had established in his kingdom, he was obliged to lay upon his own subjects heavier burdens than they were able or willing to bear.

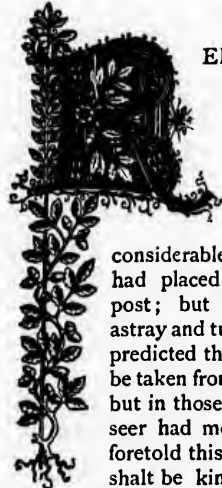
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CHAPTER XX.

THE PROPHET ELIJAH.



EHOBOAM, the son of Solomon, succeeded to his father's throne—at the least he laid claim to it, but he had in one Jeroboam a powerful adversary. This Jeroboam was a man of very considerable ability, and Solomon had placed him in an honorable post; but when Solomon went astray and turned to idolatry, it was predicted that his kingdom should be taken from him—not in his days, but in those of his son. An aged seer had met with Jeroboam and foretold this thing to him, "Thou shalt be king hereafter;" the seer had taken off his own garment and torn it into twelve pieces, ten of which he gave to Jeroboam, thereby intimating that ten of the twelve tribes would one day be under his rule.

Intelligence of what had occurred appears to have reached the ears of Solomon, and he attempted to take the life of Jeroboam, who found a safe asylum in Egypt. Thence, on the death of Solomon, he was summoned by several of the principal men, and with them waited on the new king to ascertain what line of policy he intended to adopt. They complained in strong terms of what they had suffered in the late king's reign. "Thy father made our yoke grievous."

Jeroboam and the great men of the country, acting as representatives of the people, made a very strong appeal to Rehoboam in order to induce him to relax what they regarded as heavy burdens. Rehoboam delayed his answer, but promised to respond within three days. In the meantime, he took counsel with his father's old friends, and was advised by them

to speak fairly and moderately, so as to conciliate the multitude. This advice he rejected, preferring that of his youthful associates, who recommended the taking of a very high hand with the people and promptly letting them know that it was no weakling who sat on the throne of Solomon.

When the day of assembly came, and the deputation again waited on Rehoboam, he received them with great hauteur, and gave them to understand that so far from relaxing any of the burdens of which they complained, it was his intention to increase them. At this the people, Josephus says, "were struck as it were by an iron hammer," and were so indignant that they declared they would have nothing more to do with the house of David. "We only leave to Rehoboam the Temple which his father built." Finding too late the mischief he had done, he attempted, all in vain, to pacify the people; and at last, finding his life in danger, fled to Jerusalem, where the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, whose interests were consolidated, received him as their king—all the rest of the people, the other ten tribes, forsook him and elected Jeroboam as their sovereign.

Here we have the beginning of the two kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel, represented by the ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah, composed of the united tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Rehoboam died at the age of fifty-seven, having reigned over Judah seventeen years; and was succeeded by his son Abijam. Jeroboam sank very deep into various kinds of wickedness, especially idolatry. He was warned that the kingdom should be rent from him as it had been from the house of David, but neither spiritual warning nor ordinary common-sense deterred him. On the death of Rehoboam, he made war on his suc-

cessor Abijam. Abijam exhibited a degree of spirit and courage very creditable to him; in an animated speech he roused the patriotism of his subjects, and, himself leading them against Jeroboam, put his army to entire and

took their strongest cities by force, and spoiled them."

Jeroboam did not recover himself during the reign of Abijam, which, however, lasted but three years. He was succeeded by his



KING ASA DESTROYING IDOLS AT THE BROOK KIDRON.—I Kings ix. 13.

complete rout: "A slaughter," says Josephus, "which is never recorded to have happened in any other war, whether it were of the Greeks or of the barbarians, for they overthrew and slew five hundred thousand of their enemies,

son Asa, under whose rule the land had peace for ten years. In the second year of Asa's reign died Jeroboam, king of Israel.

King Asa appears to have been a most virtuous and upright prince, and one of his first

acts was to suppress the idolatry which had occasioned so much mischief to the people. He would not even permit pagan rites to be encouraged by his own mother, but destroyed the grove in which she was wont to worship, and burnt the idol that she called her god. But the reformation effected by Asa, although he reigned for one-and-forty years, was not complete—the rebellious spirit of the people still longed after the strange gods. Josephus tells us that when he was assailed by Zerah, king of Ethiopia, and in presence of an apparently overwhelming force, his piety was as conspicuous as his bravery. He openly besought God to give him the victory: "For," said he, "I depend on nothing else but that assistance which I expect from Thee, which is able to make the fewer supreme to the more numerous, and the weaker to the stronger; and thence it is alone that I venture to meet Zerah and fight him." Asa won a complete victory and took much spoil.

It was in the thirty-first year of the reign of Asa, king of Judah, that Omri began to reign in Israel. He was a wicked prince, and followed in all the evil ways of those who had gone before him. At his death the government passed into the hands of a man, if possible, worse than himself, namely, Ahab his son, who, to add to his wickedness, married Jezebel—the worst woman of her age, and unsurpassed in none—daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. She was an idolatress, and stubbornly bent on making others idolaters also. She made no disguise of her religion, nor of her open enmity to the Jewish priests, nor of her intentions to overthrow the established faith. Soon the heart of her husband was turned after her strange gods, groves were planted, a priesthood was ordained, a temple built, and the idol Baal set up for worship—a species of idolatry unknown in Israel since the days of Samuel.

It now seemed as if the knowledge of the true God would be forever lost among the Israelites. But suddenly the prophet Elijah boldly stood up among them, to stem the overwhelming tide of corruption, and succeeded in

preserving many of his countrymen in the worship of Jehovah. The record of the reign of Ahab is chiefly occupied with an account of the struggle which this great prophet waged against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places, in honor of Jehovah and his earthly kingdom.

Elijah's Sudden Appearance.

He is introduced with considerable abruptness, by the name of Elijah the Tishbite—from the name of a town beyond the Jordan to which he belonged—as announcing punishment in the shape of a long-continued drought, and consequently famine, which should be removed only at his own intercession. This great calamity commenced about the sixth year of Ahab's reign; and it then became needful that the prophet should withdraw from the presence and solicitations of the king. Accordingly he concealed himself in a cave near the brook Cherith—one of the streams which fall into the Jordan—where the kind providence of God sent him bread and meat every morning and evening.

When the brook Cherith was dried up, the prophet was instructed to cross the country into the dominion of Jezebel's father. He accordingly went to Sarepta, near Sidon, and as he came near that place, met a poor woman who had come out to seek a few sticks for fuel; the prophet asked her for a little water; and notwithstanding the distress and the scarcity of water which prevailed, she readily complied with the request of the travel-worn stranger. But when he also begged of her some bread, she declared to him that she had nothing left in the world but a handful of meal and a little oil, with which she was then about to prepare her last meal; and when that was done, nothing remained for her and her young son but to die.

Elijah, however, encouraged her not to fear, but to prepare him some food, promising in that Great Name, which even foreigners had learned to dread, that her scanty supply should not fail until the bountiful heavens once more gave forth relief. Her faith was such as en-

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abled her to comply with this request; and the consequence was that for above two years she and her son, and the prophet, were supplied miraculously with sufficient food; for "the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sent rain upon the earth."

The implicit faith of this poor widow in the power and mercy of the God of her foreign guest was strengthened, and at the same time

was so severe that the king in person had gone through one part of his dominions in search of provisions, while he sent Obadiah, his principal steward, into another part for a similar purpose. Obadiah was a good man; he had used his high influence in protecting the persecuted servants of Jehovah. Elijah met this person, and prevailed upon him to conduct him to the king. Ahab had long been seeking him in vain, with the view of punishing him as



ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF SAREPTA.—I Kings xvii. 10.

rewarded, by a more signal miracle which Elijah effected during his abode with her. Her son, who had died of some grievous disorder, was restored to life by the intercession and prayers of the prophet, and she now confessed her full conviction that Elijah was "a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in his mouth was truth."

In the third year of his absence Elijah received the Divine command to go and present himself before Ahab. At this time the famine

the author of the calamities which Israel suffered, or of extorting from him the intercession through which they were destined to cease; and he no sooner saw him than he broke forth into reproaches against him as the troubler of Israel. But the prophet boldly retorted the charge, and affirmed that all the complicated miseries under which the nation suffered had befallen it on account of his rejection of the God of Israel, and of the idolatries with which he and his queen had polluted the land.

Then, in order to satisfy Ahab and the whole nation of the vanity and impotency of the god to whom they had turned, and of the priests and prophets by whom these gods were served, he offered singly to confront the whole of them in the sight of Jehovah, that it might be seen by manifest signs who was the true God and worthy of worship. Awed by the rebuke and the decisive manner of the prophet, and perhaps apprehensive of some further judgment if he refused, the king ordered the attendance of all the priests of Baal, in number about eight hundred, near Mount Carmel, to bring the matter to a final and fair decision.

Fire on Mount Carmel.

The people assembled in great numbers to witness this momentous contest, in which they were so deeply interested. The prophet then proposed that two bullocks should be prepared for sacrifice, the one by the priests of Baal, which they should cut in pieces and lay upon the wood, but put no fire underneath; and the other by himself, in precisely the same manner. And then continued Elijah, "Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." Nothing could be more fair and open than this; but it is very awful to think that the supremacy of Jehovah should ever have become a question—for it was the question—among so large a proportion of the chosen nation which He had redeemed from the house of bondage.

When every preparation had been completed according to the directions of Elijah, the priests of Baal called upon their idol to hear them, and to attest his power by consuming with fire from heaven the victim laid upon the altar. But Baal heard them not: "there was no voice nor any that answered." In vain were all their efforts, although they continued to call upon their god until the time of offering the evening sacrifice. No answering fire appeared; and as the day advanced, the priests, in the frenzy of a losing cause, "cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."

"How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be the God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him"—were the words in which Elijah had already proposed to the assembled multitude the great matter which was at issue. And now, when the priests of Baal had been suffered to consume most of the day in their useless invocations, he advanced to prepare the altar for his offering. He reared it with twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes; and having laid on the wood and the victim, caused the whole to be inundated with water from the river. He then advanced, and called upon the Lord to interpose on this great occasion, that all Israel might know that He was the true God, the God of their fathers and of their nations; and that their hearts might be turned back from vain idols to Himself.

Accordingly, at that word, the fire of heaven came down, and in one instant consumed the victim, and dried up, by its intense heat, all the water which had been poured out around. When the people beheld that sight, contrasted as it was with the abortive efforts of Baal's priests, they yielded to the mighty impulse of the conviction which oppressed them and fell upon their faces, exclaiming, "Jehovah, He is the God! Jehovah, He is the God!" The scene, as described, is most impressive.

The prophet availed himself of the disposition thus created in the people, by commanding the priests of Baal to be slain; and his order was immediately carried into effect. The idolatry of Israel having thus received a considerable check, and its chief abettors having been brought to condign punishment, the prophet intimated to Ahab the approach of relief from the awful calamity under which the land had groaned so long, and directed him to return to his home in that confidence. The prophet himself then proceeded to the top of Mount Carmel, and prayed fervently for rain seven times; the promise of which, speedily followed by fulfilment, soon appeared in the shape of "a little cloud like a man's hand" rising out of the Mediterranean—a phenomenon which in warm climates is not an unusual

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ELIJAH'S SACRIFICE ON MOUNT CARMEL.—1 Kings xviii. 38.

harbinger of rain. The prophet then "girded up his loins," for speed, and ran till he overtook the chariot of the king, and ran before it to the gate of Jezreel; for meanwhile "the heavens had grown black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

Flight of the Prophet.

These stupendous incidents had probably produced some salutary impressions upon the feeble mind of Ahab; but they soon disappeared before the higher energies of his wife's character, and her commanding influence upon him. Jezebel was enraged to the uttermost by the destruction of her priests and vowed to be revenged upon the author of the massacre. Elijah heard of this, and giving her full credit for the will and power to execute her threat, he deemed it right to withdraw himself for the present beyond her reach. He therefore resolved to retire for a while into the wilderness, where Israel had first received from God the law which he had labored to uphold. When he had travelled about one hundred miles south of Jezreel, the travel-worn prophet, exhausted with thirst and hunger, found the strength of mind and body which had hitherto upheld him give way. He cast himself under the shade of a juniper-tree, and prayed for death to end his troubles. "It is enough," he cried; "now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." But God had not forgotten his servant. An angel was sent to comfort and sustain him, and by encouraging promises urged him to pursue his journey to Horeb, "the Mount of God."

With renewed confidence and strength he travelled on through the valleys and among the mountains so renowned in the early history of Israel, till he reached the solitudes of the uppermost Sinai, where, as is usually supposed, he stationed himself in the cave where Moses was when he beheld the glory of Jehovah from "the cleft of the rock." In this spot the Lord appeared to him, preceded by a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire, and speaking to him in a still small voice, commanded him to repair to Damascus, and anoint

Hazael to be king over Syria, after which he should anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, and appoint Elisha to be his own successor. The prophet then delayed not to return, but of his commissions the last was the only one which he deemed it necessary to execute in person. Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Manasseh, beyond Jordan, he found ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and cast his prophet's mantle (probably of hair) over him as he passed. Elisha understood the sign, and after he had bidden farewell to his parents, followed the prophet, to whom he thenceforth remained constantly attached through all his fortunes.

A Bold Invasion.

About this period Benhadad, the king of Damascene Syria, invaded the land of Israel, with a very powerful army; and meeting with little resistance, quickly advanced against Samaria, and closely blockaded the city. The return of seasonable rains could not at once restore plenty to the land, or restore the population, which the famine had decimated. Hence the enfeebled Israelites were so much dismayed by the advance of the Syrians, that, instead of attempting resistance, those who abode not in fortified towns fled for refuge to the caverns and fortresses of the wilderness. This state of affairs raised the boldness of the invaders to insolence, and very insulting was the language in which Benhadad challenged Ahab to surrender his capital.

Aware of his defenceless condition, Ahab felt obliged to curb his indignation, and consented to become tributary to the Syrian king. This readiness of submission induced Benhadad to rise in his demands, and by a second message he required the immediate and unconditional surrender of all that belonged to him and to his subjects. The spiritless Ahab was disposed to purchase peace, even on terms so ignominious, but here the elders of Israel interposed, and would not allow him to consent. On this, a third message from the Syrian monarch threatened the immediate destruction of Samaria and the massacre of all its inhabitants. At this point the Lord, whose protection he

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ELIJAH VISITED BY AN ANGEL.—I Kings xix. 5.

had forfeited, and, indeed, wilfully abandoned, interposed to show to the king and to the house of Israel that He was able to deliver those who found no help from the idols they had served and worshipped. By the command of a prophet, and under the assurance of victory which that prophet conveyed, the king ventured to make a sally against the vast host of the Syrians, at the head of a small band composed of the ser-

having been encouraged by a prophet to believe that the Lord had devoted Benhadad to destruction, and would not fail to deliver him into his hands, that he might execute judgment upon him. Accordingly the Syrians were again overthrown, and those who escaped the sword of Israel were crushed by the falling of the wall of Aphek, under which the battle took place. Benhadad, with a few



ELIJAH CASTING HIS MANTLE ON ELISHA.—I Kings xix. 19.

vants and retainers of the nobles then in Damascus, and was victorious.

It does not appear that Ahab made any suitable return for this deliverance, or was induced by it to turn from his evil courses and obstinate unbelief. He seems also too hastily to have concluded his victory final, and, therefore, neglected a prophetic intimation that the Syrians would next year resume the warfare with recruited strength. Return, however, they did, with a more powerful force, and encamped near Aphek. Here Ahab, at the head of a very unequal force, marched against him,

attendants, escaped the general slaughter and succeeded in gaining entrance into a house in Aphek, where they concealed themselves, though closely pursued by some of Ahab's followers. The arrogant Syrian now saw that he had no resource but in submission to the man he had so grievously insulted. Some of his attendants were accordingly sent clothed in sackcloth, and with ropes around their necks, to implore quarter from the king of Israel. This submission and humiliation to him so flattered the vanity of Ahab that, unmindful of his own safety and the interests of

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his kingdom, he granted unconditionally all that was asked by the crafty Syrians.

Ahab's Startling Warning.

He sent for Benhadad, and not only treated him with marked respect, but contracted a very disadvantageous peace with him, and then allowed him to depart. In consequence of this violation of the command by which Benhadad had been devoted to destruction, a prophet, wounded, and disguised in sackcloth and ashes, placed himself in the way of Ahab and passed upon him the sentence of God, warning him that his life should be lost in fighting against the man he had delivered, and that his subjects should become the victims of his sword. On hearing this the king of Israel went to his house "heavy and displeased."

Not long after this the king was disposed to enlarge his garden in Jezreel by taking into it the patrimonial vineyard of a person named Naboth. The owner, however, declined to part with it; on which the king, in a very childish spirit, took to his bed, refused his food, and lay with his face to the wall. On learning this his wife Jezebel came to him, and hearing his complaint, was delighted at the opportunity it offered of confirming him in his disposition to rely on herself. She urged him to rise and enjoy himself without further care, for that she would obtain for him the vineyard of Naboth. And she did so. On the authority of letters sealed by her with the king's signet, the unhappy Jezreelite was accused of blasphemy at a public feast, for which he was stoned to death and his possessions confiscated to the crown. Jezebel then gleefully apprised the king that the coveted vineyard was his, and doubtless informed him in which way it had been acquired. Ahab then hastened to inspect his new possession, but he had scarcely entered the place when the most unexpected and unwelcome sight of the prophet Elijah met his view. His conscience made known to him the errand of his stern monitor, and "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" burst from his lips. Elijah an-

swered, "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the eyes of Jehovah." He then proceeded, in that Great Name, and in words every one of which bore a terrible emphasis, to denounce the doom of utter extermination upon himself and his house for the iniquities with which he had polluted the land; and then, with a pointed reference to the last most iniquitous deed, he said "Hast thou slain and also taken possession? In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood—even thine." And as for Jezebel, he foretold a coming time in which dogs should devour her by the wall of Jezreel.

The King Alarmed.

Ahab was greatly terrified at this message, and for once "he humbled himself before the Lord." His humiliation, indeed, was merely formal and superficial; yet, as he allowed the justice of God and acknowledged his sin, the Lord had pity upon him, and was pleased to grant a respite of judgment, so far as regarded his family, and he was spared the anguish of witnessing the ruin of his house.

While the land of Israel was thus, during the reign of Ahab, frequently distracted by intestine calamities and foreign wars, the kingdom of Judah enjoyed profound tranquility and increasing prosperity under the mild and pious government of Jehoshaphat, the son and successor of Asa. The excellent prince began to reign 929 B. C., being the third year of Ahab in Israel. He commenced his reign by reforming the religious abuses which had crept in during the later years of his father's life, or which he had not in his best years ventured to remove. Thus he not only destroyed the idols, and every vestige of idolatry throughout his dominion, but even demolished "the high places," which were not directly idolatrous, but at which an irregular worship, often merging into idolatry, was carried on. He indeed went deeper than any other king in his salutary reforms. He knew that all these corruptions were but the outward signs, the visible excrescences, of

the disease of ignorance, and that every remedy must be insufficient which left untouched the inner and exciting cause.

and villages; and so much interest did he manifest in this matter that he made a tour through the country to see that his beneficent



ELIJAH AND AHAB IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD.—1 Kings xxi. 20.

He therefore took measures to provide for the people sound instruction in the law of God at their own homes—in their several towns

intentions were carried into effect. A thorough reformation was by such means wrought in the land of Judah; and the king's devoted-

ness to God and his paternal government were rewarded by the attachment of his subjects, and by a degree of temporal prosperity such as had not been enjoyed by any king since Solomon.

Ahab was at no time in a condition to seek or gain any advantage over so prosperous a neighbor; and by this time the kings of Judah had come to consider the existence of the separate kingdom as an accomplished fact, in which they could not but acquiesce. On this basis a sort of friendship, or rather absence of hostility, grew up between them, of which we observe the first manifest signs in the time of Jehoshaphat and Ahab. This might seem in itself good, but, considering the unequal condition of the two kingdoms, was more likely to be detrimental to Judah than beneficial to Israel. And this proved to be the case.

A Prophet Imprisoned.

Jehoshaphat could not be insensible to the vile character of Ahab and his queen; and it is not likely that he was the first to seek the alliance. But a certain degree of softness which we may trace in his character, and which, however amiable in private life, misbecame him as a king, seems to have rendered him incapable of resisting the flattering advances of Ahab; and from one step to another the intimacy at length became so close that Jehoshaphat consented to the marriage of his heir with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The alliance being thus strengthened, we cease to be surprised to find the king of Judah present at the court of Israel. This was after the events which have already been recorded; and when Ahab was preparing for a campaign against the Syrians, who, having recovered strength, had invaded the territories of Israel east of the Jordan, and made themselves masters of the important fortified town of Ramoth-Gilead, he invited Jehoshaphat to join in this expedition, and the latter, as usual, too easily consented. He was not, however, accustomed to embark in any important undertaking without consulting the Lord, through a prophet or the high-priest;

and he therefore intimated a wish that this should be done on the present occasion.

Ahab had no lack of pretended prophets, and they with one accord promised a signal victory over the Syrians. Jehoshaphat, however, was not satisfied, and asked if there was no other prophet of Jehovah whom they might consult. Ahab admitted that there was another, named Micaiah, but declared that he hated him, because he never prophesied good of him, but evil. He was, nevertheless, sent for; and with great dignity and force of language he declared that the expedition would be fatal to the king himself, but not disastrous to his army.

On this Ahab, in a high rage, commanded him to be kept in prison on mouldy bread and unwholesome water till his return in peace. The prediction of Micaiah, however, sunk into his mind, and to avoid his doom, he proposed, under pretence of honoring Jehoshaphat with the chief command, that he should wear his royal robes in the action, while himself would go disguised as one of his officers. This expedient had nearly cost Jehoshaphat his life, as the Syrian soldiers, according to their instructions, made it their object to kill the king or take him prisoner; but when they perceived their error, they desisted. Yet Ahab escaped not. An arrow "shot at a venture" penetrated the joints of his harness, and inflicted a mortal wound. He then withdrew from the field to have his wound dressed, but, being anxious not to discourage his troops, he hastened back to the battle, and towards evening died in his chariot. As soon as his death was known, hostilities ceased on both sides, and the Israelites dispersed quietly to their own homes without defeat or loss. Thus was the prediction of Micaiah to the very letter fulfilled. The body of Ahab was carried to Samaria, and buried there. The chariot, soaked with his blood, was washed in the pool of Jezreel, and there, according to the prediction of Elijah, did the town dogs lick up his blood, as they had before licked that of Naboth. Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, B. C. 909.

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THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.—2 Kings ii. 12.

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The prophet Elijah, having previously received the Divine intimation that the Lord was about to distinguish him from the rest of mankind by translating him into heaven without undergoing death, and now knowing that the day was at hand, visited the sons or pupils of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho, and took leave of them with such solemnity, that they were impressed with the conviction that they should see him no more. This conviction was shared by the prophet's destined successor, Elisha, who therefore resolved not to leave his side till he saw the result. They came to the Jordan, where the prophet took off his mantle, and smote therewith the waters, which divided to give him a passage over.

When they had reached the eastern bank, the great prophet told Elisha that the time was come for him to prefer his last request. The other with a strong feeling of the importance of the duties which were about to devolve upon him, answered, "Let a double portion

of thy spirit rest upon me." Elijah told him that he had asked "a hard thing;" but, he added, "nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee." As they went on, engaged in earnest conversation, suddenly there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up in a whirlwind into heaven."

The falling mantle was, according to the still existing customs of the East, an emblem of his bequeathing to Elisha the office which he had himself filled; and on his return to Jericho the latter tested the virtue of the bequest by smiting the waters of the Jordan as his master had done, asking, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The call was answered; the waters were sundered before him; and the young prophets of Jericho, who stood watching in the distance, knew by this sign their future master, and gave him the allegiance they had given his illustrious predecessor.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE YOUNG HEBREW CAPTIVE.



YOUTHFUL characters are often made conspicuous in the Scriptures, as will be seen from the history of Naaman and that great prophet who was the immediate successor of Elijah. The miracles performed by Elisha are related with considerable detail, and were so signal and important as soon evinced to the court and people of Israel that in him God had raised up another witness for the truth in the midst of a corrupt generation.

Two of the earliest of these followed almost immediately the foregoing transactions, and were well calculated to authenticate his mission in the sight of the people. The town of Jericho was favorably situated, but the water of the principal spring was unwholesome, probably saline, and useless for drink or irrigation. When this was represented to Elisha he took a new vessel full of salt, and repairing to the springhead, cast in the salt, and from that moment the waters were sweetened, "and there was no more death or barren land."

The next was an act of judgment: he was going up from Jericho to Bethel, the seat of one of the golden calves, when some of the youths of that polluted city insulted him as he passed and followed him with shouts of "Go up, thou bald head! go up, thou bald head!" thereby deriding the recent translation of Elijah into heaven, and mockingly urging the prophet to go up after his master. Feeling that God was himself mocked in this derision of an event so signal and so glorious, and knowing that he was wont to vindicate the honor of his great deeds, Elisha "turned back and cursed them in the name of the

Lord." These blasphemous children saw their homes no more; for, ere they could return, two she-bears came forth upon them out of the wood and destroyed them; and many houses in the sinful city were filled with wailing that day.

Jehoram, the new king of Israel, was of a somewhat better disposition than his father and brother. He discountenanced the worship of Baal, but made no attempt to break down the corruptions and evils which Jeroboam had introduced, and which, in the course of time, had more and more become a habit with the people.

The first public measure of Jehoram was to reduce the Moabites, who, in consequence of the heavy tribute in cattle which had been imposed upon them by Ahab, had revolted after he had been slain by the Syrians. Jehoshaphat was prevailed upon to join him with his forces in this expedition, probably from the fear that the revolt, if successful, might encourage his own tributary, the king of Edom, to follow the example. The army of Israel, to avoid crossing the Jordan, marched southward through the land of Judah, with the view of invading the land of Moab by going round by the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and in its march was joined by the forces of Judah and Edom.

This circuitous route occupied seven days, towards the end of which the army and horses were greatly distressed from thirst, probably occasioned by the failure of the wells and brooks, from which a sufficient supply had been expected. Already much loss and discouragement had been sustained, and the army now lay on the border of Moab, and in the face of the enemy, who had assembled in force to repel the invasion. In this extremity the good Jehoshaphat, as usual, thought of

seeking council of God through one of his prophets; and on inquiring for one, it was at once repaired. His greeting, addressed to Jehoram, was not very encouraging: "What



THE CHILDREN OF BETHEL.—2 Kings ii. 23

found that Elisha, "who had poured water on the hands of Elijah," was present in the camp. To him the kings of Judah, Israel, and Edom have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother!" And he added that, were it

not from respect to Jehoshaphat, he would not have admitted them to his presence. But now he called for a minstrel, and as the minstrel played upon his harp, "the hand of the Lord came upon him," and he promised that ere the morning dawn water should be abundant; and also that victory should crown their arms.

Death in the Enemy's Camp.

And so it came to pass. Before the morning the dried-up beds of the torrents and rivulets were filled to overflowing; and in the action which followed, the Moabites were utterly defeated, and the victors in their pursuit of the army desolated the country with fire and sword, till they arrived before Kir-haraseth, a strong city, into which the king of Moab had thrown himself. Here he was soon reduced to such extremities that he made a desperate sally at the head of seven hundred valiant swordsmen, in the hope of forcing his way through the lines of the besiegers. Being foiled in this, he resorted to the horrid expedient of endeavoring to render his cruel gods propitious by offering up to them in sacrifice his only son—the heir of his throne. He did this publicly, upon the very walls, in the face of the besiegers, who were so horror-struck at the sight that they immediately raised the siege and departed to their own homes. This movement, however natural, probably had the lamentable effect of encouraging the king of Moab to believe his dreadful act had been effectual in bringing down from his gods the desired relief.

The Moabites seem to have been highly exasperated at the part taken by Jehoshaphat in this expedition: for not long after we find them united with kindred and neighboring nations in a most formidable invasion of his territories. They formed their camp near Engedi, and their force seemed so overwhelming, that Jehoshaphat felt at once that he was utterly unable to meet them in the field; and that he had no resources but in God, whom he might infer to have been offended at his alliance with the unclean court of Israel. He

therefore, and the people with him, betook himself to prayer and supplication, and was answered by the assurance that the invaders should fall without one stroke from his sword.

He then marched out against them; but when he came "to the watch-tower in the wilderness," and there obtained the first view of the enemy's camp, "behold, they were all dead bodies fallen to the earth!" They had, it seems, quarrelled among themselves, probably about the division of the spoil, and had fought together with such desperate animosity that none escaped. The Hebrews were occupied for three days in gathering the abundant spoil, which was of immense value. They then returned laden with wealth to Jerusalem, which they entered to the sound of psalteries and harps, rejoicing in the favor of God, who had blessed them with success so signal and so unexpected.

This event instilled into the minds of the neighboring nations a salutary dread of the good king, and the remainder of his reign was spent in profound peace. He died B. C. 904, after he had lived sixty years and reigned twenty-five.

He was succeeded on the throne by his son, Jehoram, who had wedded Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel; and whose conduct soon evinced the malignant and fatal influence of this connection. When we consider the subsequent conduct of his wife, there is little room to question that the measures of Jehoram were stimulated by the counsels of the daughter of Jezebel.

Palace and Temple Plundered.

Immediately upon his accession, Jehoram concentrated the claims of the royal line in his own person by destroying all his brethren. He then proceeded to subvert the worship of Jehovah, and introduced the Phœnician idolatries, which had caused so much calamity in the neighboring kingdom, and which had hitherto been unexampled in Judah. In Jerusalem the mass of the people were induced by the influence and example of the court, and in other parts of the country by persecutors, to

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give in to these new abominations. For this the prophet of Israel, Elisha, was commissioned to denounce the Divine vengeance against Jehoram and his family.

The prophet discharged this awful duty by letter; and the doom which he predicted was not long delayed. First, Edom, which had since David been subject to Judah, revolted, and succeeded in casting off the yoke it had so impatiently borne. This sign of weakness encouraged other neighboring nations to invade the land, which they plundered and laid waste.

Even Jerusalem was entered; the treasures of the palace and the Temple were plundered, and so great was the helplessness of the king and so utter his degradation, that even the sanctity of the royal harem was invaded, and all its fair inhabitants were carried off, save only Athaliah, the queen, who remained to be the source of future misery and punishment to Judah. All the royal princes were also slain except Ahaziah, otherwise called Jehoahaz, the youngest of them all. To complete these miseries, the miserable king was himself smitten with an incurable disease in the bowels, under which he languished for two years in horrible torments, and then died. The voice of the people denied to his remains the honors of a royal funeral and of a place in the sepulchres of the kings.

Befriending a Poor Widow.

Ahaziah, the only surviving son of Jehoram and Athaliah, then ascended the throne of Judah. Unhappily for him, "he walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedness." His near relationship to that house, the reigning king being his mother's brother, drew still closer the bands of intimacy between the two courts, and, in the event, involved him in that utter ruin of Ahab's house which had been denounced by Elijah.

In Israel, the "schools of the prophets" had come under the supervision of the prophet Elisha; and the next of his recorded acts was a miracle of benevolence in behalf of the widow of one of the "sons of the prophets."

Having died without satisfying a debt he had incurred, the creditor proposed to indemnify himself by making bondsmen of the two sons. This Elisha prevented by so multiplying a small quantity of oil which the woman possessed, that the price for which it was sold enabled her to discharge the claim of the harsh creditor.

Another of his acts arose from the desire to make some suitable acknowledgment for the kindness of a benevolent pair, who observing how often the prophet passed on the way to Shunem, prepared for his separate use "a chamber upon the wall," furnishing it with a bed, a table, a seat, and a lamp, which at their solicitation he occupied whenever he came to Shunem. The hospitable couple were childless, and, being informed by his servant Gehazi of their distress on that account, he foretold that in due time a child should be given to them in recompense for their kindness. A son was accordingly born, and lived, and grew up; but one day as he went forth to his father in the harvest-field he was smitten apparently by a sun-stroke, and complaining of his head was taken back to the house, where he died upon his mother's lap. Elisha was then absent, having gone to Mount Carmel.

The mother went and laid the child upon the prophet's bed, and hurried away in search of him. Elisha recognized her at a distance, and sent his servant to meet her with inquiries after the welfare of her house. In answer to the question, "Is the child well?" she answered with touching significance, "He is well;" and without disclosing her errand pressed forward to the prophet. She threw herself at his feet, and more by her tears than words made known her grief. The prophet was much moved, and, delivering his staff to Gehazi, directed him to hasten on and lay it on the face of the child. The mother seems to have had small faith in this, and remained with the prophet, who at length concluded to return with her. They were met as they went by Gehazi, who reported that he had followed his instructions, but that "the child was not awakened." On reaching the house the

prophet shut himself up with the child; and ere long he called for the mother and presented to her the living boy. frugal meal of pottage had been prepared it was found that a poisonous gourd had been put into the pot by mistake. The young



NAAMAN'S CAPTIVE MAID.—2 Kings v. 3.

Another time, when there was a scarcity in the land, Elisha was at the school of the prophets in Gilgal; and one day when their prophets cried out in much alarm, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" and thereupon the prophet cast therein a handful of meal,

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when every obnoxious quality was taken away.

The next event in the history of Elisha is the transaction between him and the Syrian general Naaman, the date of which is not easily fixed with exactness, and which may therefore be noticed in the place which it occupies in the sacred narrative.

Naaman was an able and successful commander, who stood very high in the favor of his master Benhadad: but he was afflicted with leprosy, which, from the narrative, would appear not to have disqualified from public service in the same degree as it would have done in Israel. Among the slaves of Naaman's wife was a little Hebrew girl, who had been among the prisoners taken in some one of the many incursions of the Syrians into the land of Israel. This girl, pitying the condition of her master, one day said to her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy." These words excited attention and inquiry, but were not very clearly understood; and when the king became acquainted with the matter he said that Naaman should go with a letter from him to the king of Israel to be cured of his leprosy. The great man accordingly set forth with a noble retinue, and with camels laden with valuables intended for presents. When he came to Samaria he caused his letter to be delivered in all due form to the king, to whose presence as a leper he could not be admitted. The letter was to the effect that the king of Syria had sent his servant Naaman that the king of Israel might lay his hand upon him and cure him of his leprosy. On reading this, king Jehoram felt it as a mockery and insult. He rent his clothes and cried, "Am I a God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to cure a man of his leprosy?" and he could find no other motive for so unaccountable an application than to quarrel with him.

The news of this strange affair soon spread through the place, and reached the ears of Elisha, who forthwith sent to desire that the Syrian noble should be sent to him. Naaman,

who by this time must have distrusted the success of his mission, gladly repaired to the abode of the prophet, and halted in his chariot, and with his grand retinue, before his door. As a leper he could not go into the house; and he expected that the prophet would come out and place his hands upon him, and that he should then recover. Instead of this, Elisha sent his servant to tell him to go and dip seven times in the river Jordan, and that he should then be clean. The pride of Naaman was offended at this message, and he cried, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters in Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

The Syrian Captain Cured.

His attendants, more calm, judged better of the order which he had received; and the chief of them, in the name of the rest, drew near respectfully, and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith unto thee, Wash, and be clean?" This reflection, so simple and so natural, struck Naaman, and he consented to obey. Seven times he plunged into the stream, and at the seventh time he rose purged of all malady and stain. His skin, before so much disfigured and broken by his frightful disease, became pure and soft as that of a new-born child. Then, full of joy and with gratitude proportioned to his previous disgust, he returned forthwith to Elisha.

He now entered the house, and stood before the venerable man to tender his acknowledgments. His first word was admirable; it was a profession of faith. "Behold, now I know," he said, "that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel." His second was an expression of gratitude to the prophet, upon whom he pressed the rich presents he had brought. This the holy man refused, that the who'e honor of this great act might be referred to its Divine Author.

Naaman then, with sincere intentions, but not with very clear notions of the subject,

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begged that he might take home a mule's load of the soil that he might therewith make an altar in Damascus for his own devotions to the God of Israel, whom alone he was determined to adore. Yet it belonged to his rank to accompany his king to the great temple



NAAMAN AT THE DOOR OF ELISHA.—2 Kings v. 9.

an altar in Damascus for his own devotions to the God of Israel, whom alone he was determined to adore. Yet it belonged to his rank to accompany his king to the great temple

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a full and happy heart the stranger then took leave of the prophet and departed towards his own home. The young maid was his benefactor.

Elisha's servant Gehazi felt much annoyed that his master had let slip so rare an opportunity of enriching himself, and his cupidity was so strongly excited that he hastened after the retiring chariots to see what he could get in his master's name. He was no sooner observed than the grateful Syrian stopped his chariots, and alighted to meet even the servant of the man to whom he owed so great a blessing. Gehazi stated that a sudden emergency had arisen to render desirable to his master a portion of what he had at first declined. Naaman made him take double what he asked: and when he had deposited his precious spoil—silver and dresses—in a place of safety, he repaired to his master.

Elisha plainly taxed him with his offence, which he described as graphically as if the scene had passed before his eyes. "Went not my heart with thee," he said, "when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" and after pointing out the enormity of his sin, he pronounced the awful punishment, that the leprosy of which Naaman had been cured should adhere to him and his forever. And he went forth from his presence a leper as white as snow.

The kingdoms of Israel and Syria were soon again at war with each other. In the first campaign the Syrians were unsuccessful, as all their plans and operations were known to the prophet, and were communicated by him to the king of Israel. Benhadad suspected there was a traitor in his camp; but his officers assured him that it was the doing of Elisha, who, said they, "tellethe the king of Israel the words thou speakest in thy bed-chamber." On this the Syrian prince resolved to put him to death; and with this view he sent by night a body of his best troops to invest Dothan, the place where the prophet then dwelt, in such a manner that he could not possibly escape.

Indeed, the servant of Elisha himself deemed all lost when, at the break of day, he beheld

the surrounding country covered with Syrian horsemen and chariots. "Fear not," said the prophet, "for there be more with us than with them;" and he opened his eyes to behold the air more abundantly filled with angelic hosts, assembled in defence of Jehovah's servant, than was the land with the invading Syrians. Then, at the prayer of the prophet, God smote the Syrians with blindness; and in that state he conducted them to the gates of Samaria, where he gave them leave to depart, after warning them that they were entirely at his mercy.

Elisha Saves his Life.

But this lenity made no impression upon the heart of Benhadad, who resolved to prosecute the war with the utmost vigor. He laid siege to the capital, which was soon reduced to the utmost distress, so that the inhabitants were obliged to have recourse to the most unwholesome and unnatural food. So dreadful were the extremities of famine, that several women, deaf to all cries of natural affection, and even to the common feelings of humanity, fed upon the flesh of their own children. When the king heard this in public, he rent his royal robes, and the people saw that under his magnificence he wore the sackcloth of a mourner upon his skin. Rendered frantic by the miseries that saluted his eye and ear on every side, he gave orders to lay hands upon Elisha, whom he now accused as the author of all the miseries which the nation endured. He commanded an officer to go to his house and take off his head, while he himself followed, apparently to ensure the execution.

At that moment the prophet announced to him, in the name of God, that before twenty-four hours had passed, food, which was at that moment unattainable at any price, should be sold for next to nothing in the gate of Samaria.

Next morning the prediction was fulfilled; for during the night the Syrians had been struck with a supernatural panic, deserted their camp, and fled in the utmost confusion, leaving behind them an immense quantity of provisions, which easily became the spoil of their victorious pursuers.

CHAPTER XXII.

DESTRUCTION OF THE ASSYRIAN HOST.



SHALMANESER governed the house of Israel for forty-five years. That sagacious king pitched on the strong hill of Samaria as the site of his capital. The princes of his house cultivated an alliance with the kings of Judah, which was cemented by the marriage of Jehoram and Athaliah. The adoption of Baal-worship led to a reaction in the nation, to the moral triumph of the prophets in the person of Elijah, and to the extinction of the house of Ahab in obedience to the bidding of Elisha.

Unparalleled triumphs, but deeper humiliation, awaited the kingdom of Israel under the dynasty of Jehu. Hazael, the ablest king of Damascus, reduced Jehoahaz to the condition of a vassal, and triumphed for a time over both the disunited Hebrew kingdoms. Almost the first sign of a restoration of their strength was a war between them; and Jehoash, the grandson of Jehu, entered Jerusalem as the conqueror of Amaziah. Jehoash also turned the tide of war against the Syrians; and Jeroboam II., the most powerful of all the kings of Israel, captured Damascus, and recovered the whole ancient frontier from Hamath to the Dead Sea. This short-lived greatness expired with the last king of Jehu's line.

In these paths of righteousness Hezekiah, king of Judah, found prosperity and peace, during and after the very time which brought ruin upon the sister kingdom. He more than repaired the losses of power and dominion which the kingdom had sustained in the lifetime of his father.

The king of Judah was at length encouraged by this prosperity to withhold the heavy tribute

which his father had agreed to pay to the Assyrians. As he took this bold step, when the Assyrians were too much engaged elsewhere to attend to him, he did not immediately experience its full consequences. At length, however, Shalmaneser died, and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who very soon invaded the kingdom with a great army, with the full intention of reducing Judah to the same condition to which the land of Israel had been reduced by his father.

He subdued the whole country with little difficulty, as Hezekiah deemed himself unable to meet him in the field; and Jerusalem itself being threatened with a siege, the king of Judah at length sent to Sennacherib, who was then besieging Lachish, humbly acknowledging his offence, and offering to submit to the conditions which the Assyrians might think proper to impose. The desire of Sennacherib to proceed against Egypt, which formed his ulterior object, made him willing to listen to this application; and he demanded three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold; and this was paid by Hezekiah, although to raise it he was constrained to exhaust the royal and the sacred treasures, and even to strip off the gold with which the doors and pillars of the temple were overlaid.

Sennacherib received the treasure of Hezekiah; but after he had taken Ashdod, one of the keys of Egypt, he began to think that it would be imprudent to have the power of Judah essentially unbroken in the rear. He therefore determined to complete the subjugation of Judah in the first place—and his recent observations, with the humble submission of Hezekiah, could not lead him to expect much delay or difficulty in the enterprise. He soon reduced all the places before which he appeared, except Libnah and Lachish, and ex-

to pay to the bold step, when engaged elsewhere did not immediately consequences. At he died, and was Sennacherib, who very with a great army, reducing Judah to the land of Israel.

country with little and himself unable Jerusalem itself Hezekiah, the king of Judah, who was probably acknowledged to submit to the Assyrians might think of Sennacherib which formed his plan to listen to him. He had sent three hundred talents of silver to Hezekiah, although to exhaust the resources, and even to the doors and windows were laid.

Hezekiah, the measure of Hezekiah, Ashdod, one of the cities, to think that it was the power of the Assyrians at the rear. He had made the subjugation—and his recent submission of the city to expect much more. He soon after which he approached, and ex-

SENNACHERIB SLAIN BY HIS SONS.—2 Kings xix. 37.



cept Jerusalem, to which he sent his general Rabshakeh, with a very haughty summons to surrender.

Isaiah the prophet was sent to Hezekiah with the assurance—"Lo, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." The rumor by which Sennacherib was alarmed and interrupted was no other than the report which was spread abroad that Tirhakah, the Ethiopian king of Upper Egypt, was marching with an immense army to cut off his retreat. He then determined to withdraw; but he first sent a boastful and insulting letter to Hezekiah, defying the God of Israel, and threatening what destruction he would execute upon the nation when he returned. But that very night an immense proportion of the Assyrian host, even one hundred and eighty thousand men, were smitten by the blast which the prophet had foretold. Sennacherib, being unable to meet Tirhakah with the shattered remains of his army, returned to Nineveh, where in the exasperation of his overthrow and loss he behaved with great severity to the captive Israelites. But his career was soon closed; for fifty-two days after his return he was slain, while worshipping in the house of the god Nisroch, by his two eldest sons. Thus was the prophecy of Isaiah in every point accomplished. The parricides fled into Armenia, leaving the throne open to their younger brother, whose name was Esarhaddon. These blows so weakened the Assyrian monarchy as not only to relieve Hezekiah from his apprehensions but enabled the Babylonians and the Medes to assert their independence.

This destruction of Sennacherib's proud host is vividly portrayed in one of the poems of Lord Byron:

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;

Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved—and forever grew still.

And there lay the steed, with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride,
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent—the banners alone—
The lances unlifted—the trumpets unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broken in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

The miraculous overthrow of the Assyrians made a strong impression on the people, and probably went far in curing the idolatrous predilections which had been fostered during the reign of Ahaz. To this we may also in part attribute the embassy which Hezekiah received from Merodach Baladan, the king of Babylon, although this may be primarily ascribed to the desire of this monarch, who had thrown off the yoke of Assyria, to establish a good understanding with a monarch whose position, with regard to that empire, resembled his own.

Great Display of Wealth.

Since the time of Solomon no embassy from so distant a region had been seen in Jerusalem; and Hezekiah felt much flattered by the respect and honor which it implied. He took great pains to magnify his importance, and to let the stranger see that he was really entitled to all the attention he had received from their master. He displayed to them his treasures, his rarities, his arsenals, his establishments—he was at the very summit of self-exaltation when he was suddenly cast down by the appearance of the prophet Isaiah, who asked him what he had shown to the strangers. The king ingenuously acknowledged that there was nothing in his palace or among his

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treasures that he had not displayed before them; on which the prophet uttered the chilling oracle, "Behold the days come that all that is in thine house, and all that thy fathers exalted spirits much; but as he understood that these evils were not to come to pass in his own days, he abstained from giving way to his grief.



HEZEKIAH EXHIBITING HIS TREASURES.—2 Kings xx. 15.

have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried unto Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord." This must have damped his
 Hezekiah was "gathered to his fathers" after having reigned twenty-nine years and lived fifty-four. If this king had died fifteen

years before, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, a prophecy which was reversed and failed of fulfilment by reason of Hezekiah's prayer for life, he would have left no son, for his son Manasseh was only twelve years old when his father died; and it would have been better for Judah that he should have died childless than to leave a son who took delight in undoing all the good of his father's reign—and such was Manasseh.

This prince was on his accession unfortunately soon surrounded by princes and courtiers friendly to idolatry, and opposed to the reformations which the late king had taken so much pains to accomplish. They were not slow to perceive that their return to power depended upon the degree of influence which they might be enabled to establish over the mind of the young king; while the friends of the established institutions felt perhaps too secure in their position to hold a proper guard against the machinations of their invidious opponents. The latter, by flattering and humoring Manasseh, succeeded in training him to rely upon them, and to concur in their wishes.

A Wicked Ruler.

In the end, he probably went further than his leaders intended; for he proved the most impious and wicked king that had ever reigned either in Jerusalem or Samaria. He not only restored the idolatries of his grandfather Ahaz, but he totally suppressed the worship of Jehovah, converting the temple into a house of Baal, by placing altars dedicated to that idol in its courts, and setting up his image in the very sanctuary of God. He filled his dominions with high places, groves, and altars consecrated to the service of Baalim, and caused his children to pass through the fire to Moloch.

The nation, too, readily falling in with the king's designs and wishes, both to obtain his favor and to gratify their own corrupt inclinations, hastened to introduce every kind of idolatry practised by the surrounding nations; and proceeded to such excess of wickedness, that they became more corrupt and abandoned

than the ancient Canaanites, who had been driven from the land to make room for their fathers. Prophets were in mercy sent to reprove the infatuated king, and call him to repentance; but their rebukes and opposition only roused his anger, and he caused several of them to be put to death. The venerable Isaiah, who had prophesied in Judah ever since the year that king Uzziah died, is generally believed by the Jews to have been among the victims of his wrath. God at length made known, by one of the prophets, the full extent of his anger against this guilty king and apostate generation, and declared that he would "bring such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth it both his ears shall tingle, because they had done that which was evil in his sight to provoke him to anger."

The Captive King.

Surrounding himself with a company of necromancers, magicians, soothsayers and the like, Manasseh listened to them with content, and closed his ears against all good advice. A tyrant as well as a fool, he made blood to flow in the streets of Jerusalem like water, and devoted his own children by fire to strange gods in the blood-stained valley of Ben Hinhom. Then, when things were at the worst, came the Assyrians, and made conquest, and took Manasseh alive, and bound him with fetters, and carried him away captive, and in captivity he remained for about twelve years. We read in the second book of Chronicles that "when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his father, and prayed unto Him." The Apocrypha contains a prayer which purports to be that of Manasseh. When he was permitted to return to his kingdom, he endeavored to right the wrong he had previously done, and no doubt ran, as such men do, from one extreme to the other.

Amon, his son and successor, reigned for two years only: he imitated his father's example in everything but penitence, and was murdered by his own servants at the age of four and twenty, leaving the kingdom in the

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hands of his child, Josiah. Josephus says, "He was of a most excellent disposition, and naturally virtuous, and followed the actions of king David as a pattern and a rule to him in the whole conduct of his life."

According to this historian, when Josiah was twelve years old "he gave demonstration of his religion and righteous behavior;" for he brought the people to a sober way of living, and exhorted them to leave off the opinion they had of their idols, because they were not

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ernment, and in piety, with regard to the
Divine worship; and this happened because
the transgressions of the former kings were
seen no more, but quite vanished away; for
the king went about the city and the whole
country, and cut down the groves that were
devoted to strange gods, and overthrew their
altars; and if there were any gifts dedicated
to them by his forefathers, he made them igno-
minious, and plucked them down; and by this



KING JOSIAH DESTROYING THE IDOLS.—2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.

gods, but to worship their own God; and, by reflecting on the actions of his progenitors, he prudently corrected what they did wrong, like a very elderly man, and like one abundantly able to understand what was fit to be done; and what he found they had well done, he observed all the country over, and imitated the same; and thus he acted, in following the wisdom and sagacity of his own nature, and in compliance with the advice and instruction of the elders; for by following the law it was that

means he brought the people back from their opinions about them to the worship of God. Josiah repaired the temple; he made public collections, and without waiting for the receipt of any large amount, put the contractors to work, relying on the liberality of the nation."

The nation handsomely responded to the call; there was money enough, and more than enough subscribed for all essential expenses; the rest of the money Josiah ordered to be expended in golden vessels for the holy service—

sacramental plate, as it were, in place of that which had been carried off by invaders or misappropriated by kings and priests. In the thorough restoration of the Temple, the books of Moses were discovered, and taken to Josiah.

Startling Words.

When the king heard the great and terrible words from the book of the law, which was read to him by Shaphan, he rent his clothes, and evinced great consternation and fear. From this it is generally supposed that the portion which was first read to Josiah was the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Deuteronomy; and these were doubtless well calculated to convince him that the guilt and danger of his people were much greater than he had apprehended, and to draw forth the signs of sorrow and humiliation which he manifested. Being thus led to fear that the sentence of wrath had already gone forth, on account of the notorious disobedience of his predecessors, and the crimes of his own generation, Josiah sent to Huldah, the prophetess, to inquire of the Lord for himself, and for the people, concerning the words of the book that was found. The answer was, that the kingdom and the city were indeed doomed to ruin, but seeing that he had himself manifested sincere dispositions towards God, he should have his reward in being gathered to his fathers before the evil days came. But although the strict terms of this response left Josiah to conclude that the day of mercy for Judah had gone by, he none the less endeavored to recall the people to a sense of their enormous guilt and wickedness, and to make them engage with piety and sincerity in the worship of God. Accordingly, having assembled the people in the spacious courts of the Temple, he caused the law to be there read to them, after which he on his part, and they on theirs, bound themselves in the most solemn manner to serve the Lord only, and to observe the commandments of the book which had been read.

After this the king made another tour through his kingdom, thoroughly to root out

every fragment of the accursed thing which had brought so much evil upon the land. The zealous king even extended his pious labor into the land of Israel, at least so far as Bethel, which had been the chief seat of the golden-calf idolatry under the kings of Israel. He destroyed the altar and high place of Jeroboam, after first polluting them by burning upon them the bones of men taken out of the adjoining sepulchres. In the course of this proceeding the king observed that one of the sepulchres was distinguished by an inscription, and when informed that it was the tomb of the man of God who had, ages before, foretold the very deed in which he was then engaged, he forbore to disturb the dust which it enclosed.

Celebrating the Passover.

After this Josiah returned to Jerusalem and prepared to celebrate the Passover, which had again been neglected, but which was on this occasion observed with a degree of solemnity and magnificence even exceeding that exhibited in the celebrated Passover of Hezekiah. In describing that Passover, the historian affirms that there had been none like it since the time of Solomon; but in describing Josiah's Passover, he goes much further, and affirms that there had been none like it since the time of Samuel the prophet.

Josiah continued to reign thirteen years after this remarkable solemnity; and during these years he walked steadily in the ways of righteousness and truth. But as for the people, although they were restrained from open idolatry, it appears that, to a large extent, they relapsed secretly to their old abominations, and under a fair outside were ripening inwardly for the dire judgment which hung over their heads.

Meanwhile the Assyrian power was getting weak in the East, and was beginning to give way to the encroachments of the Medes and Chaldeans, by which it was ere long overthrown. The enterprising monarch of Egypt, Pharaoh Necho, desiring to avail himself of this disadvantageous position of his old enemies, assembled a large army, and com-

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SHAPHAN READING THE LAW BEFORE KING JOSIAH.—2 Chron. xxxiv. 18.

and other strong posts on the Euphrates, ever justified by the result—to forego all
The error of preceding kings of Judah had| their other obligations. Aware of this error,

as well as mindful of his relation to Assyria, and of his obligation to defend the frontier against Egypt, Josiah resolved to oppose the march of Necho through his territories. This zeal in the discharge of what he believed to be his duty to that power of which he was a vassal cost him his life. The king of Egypt was very reluctant to employ his arms against the king of Judah, but finding that Josiah was resolved to oppose his passage, he gave him battle. The vast host of Egypt, under one of the ablest commanders of the age, soon broke down and dispersed the thin ranks of Judah and proved themselves conquerors.

A King in Disguise.

Josiah himself fought in disguise, but a commissioned arrow found him out, and inflicted a mortal wound in his neck. His attendants hastened to remove him from the field, and, placing him in another chariot, conveyed him to Jerusalem, where he died. This death, in the heroic and undaunted discharge of what he felt to be his duty, was not unworthy the excellent life which was thus prematurely brought to a close at the early age of thirty-nine years. The prophet Jeremiah, who foresaw but too clearly the evils of the coming time, lamented the death of the last good king in a mournful ode, which has not been preserved. "The singing men and singing women," adds the historian, "speak of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day;" which clearly evinces how long and how tenderly the memory of this excellent king was cherished among the people.

The king of Egypt, intent upon his original design, tarried not to take advantage of the victory he had gained, which amounted to nothing less than the conquest of the kingdom. The people in these difficult circumstances took the very unwise course of raising Jehoahaz, the second son of Josiah, to the throne, passing by the natural heir; and, aware of the respect with which the ceremony of anointing was regarded by the Egyptians, they took the unusual course of anointing him king, with the apparent view of making it more

difficult for Necho to annul their proceedings. When, however, the Egyptian king returned, about three months after, victorious over the Assyrians, and understood what had taken place, he was highly displeased.

The new king was summoned to meet his new sovereign master at Riblah in Syria, where he was deprived of the crown he had too hastily assumed, and the land was condemned to pay in tribute a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. When Necho proceeded homeward, Jehoahaz followed in his train to Jerusalem, and the city of David once more saw its own king enter its walls a captive. On his arrival, Necho bestowed the crown on Eliakim, the eldest son of Josiah, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim, according to a custom frequently observed by lords paramount towards subject princes and slaves. This was a mark of subjection, but does not appear to have been much felt as such by those on whom it was imposed. Then, bearing off the silver and gold which had been levied upon the people, Necho returned to Egypt, taking with him the captive Jehoahaz, who there terminated his short and inglorious career, according to the prophecies of Jeremiah.

Jehoiakim, the vassal of Egypt, was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he sat eleven years upon the throne of Judah. He was little disposed to carry out the designs of his excellent father; but suffered all the goodly order which he had established to be broken up, and neglected to enforce and exemplify the principles by which his conduct had been guided. The people, who had never cordially entered into the late king's reformations, now gladly availed themselves of the license which the example of the court afforded, and hastened to plunge with new zest into their old abominations. On this the prophet Jeremiah, being divinely commissioned, proceeded to the palace, and in the presence of the king denounced the judgments of God upon him and his, unless by timely repentance he turned the Divine wrath aside.

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DEATH OF KING JOSIAH—2 Chron. xxxv. 24.



the Temple, and called the people to repentance, intimating that their incensed God might yet be pacified if they would but turn from their evil way; and forewarning them that their impenitence would ere long be punished by the overthrow of their great city, and the destruction of their holy place: the priests then present were angered by this last intimation, and they laid their hands upon the prophet and took him before the royal council. But in that council Jeremiah had a warm friend in Ahikam, who pleaded for and even justified him with so much earnestness, that he was dismissed without injury.

One cannot but be impressed with the fidelity of the Prophet Jeremiah. He foresaw the coming downfall, and by it his whole soul was stirred. Gladly would he have saved his nation and delivered it from the impending crisis; his weapon, however, was the tongue of prophecy, and not the sword of steel. It seems singular to us that a bold, conscientious, devout man like Jeremiah, speaking the truth, should have been so resisted and persecuted by those whose welfare he was seeking. Yet so it is; the best things in the world and the truest have to fight their way.

It needed just such a man as Jeremiah for the emergency which had come upon the

Hebrew nation. The star that had shone so long refulgent in the sky was waning, and the murky gloom of dying empire was settling upon the land of Solomon, David and Moses. There comes a time in the great onward movement of national affairs when disaster is not to be averted. Nations and men travel on to their doom, and each step is but the natural successor of what has gone before.

There is something sad in the contemplation of the Hebrew nation face to face with Babylonia, as we find her at the present time. The powers of the East are bent upon the destruction of the powers of the West—the Orient and the Occident in conflict, while it is as true in this early period as it is to-day that "Westward the star of empire takes its way." That the captivity of the Jews should have been so complete and overwhelming is but the natural outcome of those sins and idolatries against which they had been repeatedly warned. Yet how sad, how strange, that a chosen people should thus be humiliated and ground to powder as between upper and nether millstones! Let nations take warning that the time of their retribution does not slumber, and know that

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceedingly small."



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CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTIVITY AND RETURN OF THE JEWS.



EREMIAH was then Divinely charged to declare the doom which impended over the nation, the desolation of the land, the exile of its people, and the captivity of seventy years. But as all this had no effect upon their obdurate minds, the prophet was directed to take a roll, and write thereon all the prophecies which he had at different times uttered against the city and people. This he did by the hand of one of his disciples, named Baruch, a ready scribe, who wrote them down from his lips. When the roll was finished, the prophet, who was then in prison on account of his former predictions, sent Baruch to read it in the Temple, to the people then assembled at the great feast of Expiation; which he was suffered to do without molestation.

Soon after this, the Chaldeans appeared before Jerusalem, which held out against them for five weeks, when the holy city was taken, and the king was put in chains to be carried to Babylon. But having humbled himself before the conqueror, who was still desirous to maintain a barrier on the side of Egypt, he was restored to his kingdom, as a tributary prince, and Nebuchadnezzar was content to withdraw with the vessels and other golden spoils of the Temple, with which he sent away to Babylon several members of the royal family, and sons of the principal nobles, to aggrandize his triumph, and to serve as hostages for the fidelity of their king.

The later exiles found themselves not altogether strangers at Babylon, or in the other places to which they were transplanted. Their

countrymen of the earlier captivities were settled in various stations and employments, and some of them held posts of trust under the government. By that government they were regarded not as prisoners, but as useful emigrants; and, after a while, they appear to have experienced no other inconveniences than those which naturally flowed from their regrets after their own beautiful land; from their position as strangers in a strange country; from the derision of the natives at the peculiarities of their religion; and, very probably, from a distinctive poll-tax, from which the natives were exempt.

When Nebuchadnezzar died, he was succeeded by his son Evilmerodach, who immediately released king Jehoiachin, who had grown old in prison, and gave him the highest place among the discrowned kings who figured in his court and took their meat at his table. But he, who had been thirty-seven years in his prison, survived not long his release, for the record implies that he died before his benefactor, who himself reigned but three years.

It may be well to bear in mind that at the time of the accession of Cyrus, who issued the decree for the restoration of the Jews to their own land, all but a few very old people had been born in the country of their exile, and had grown up, and formed connections, and found sources of profitable employment in it. This being considered, we have the more reason to admire the strength of that religious zeal, and that attachment to the land of their fathers, which led them to brave the horrors of the desert, and the discomforts of a desolated country, rather than to feel surprise that a large proportion deemed it better to remain in the land of their exile.

It had long before the event been announced by the prophets that the period of the exile

was to be seventy years, counting from the first captivity under Jehoiachin. When those seventy years had expired, Cyrus, the Persian, had just succeeded to the throne of the East, on the death of his uncle Darius. This monarch was the restorer of Israel, to which work he had been appointed by name many years before he was born. At his accession to power in Babylon, Daniel the prophet was still alive, and there is every reason to conclude that this venerable personage was high in the esteem of that illustrious conqueror. The prophet knew well that the time was come for the restoration of the captives to the land of their fathers, and there is every probability that it was through his influence that the decree in favor of the Jews was issued.

It is highly probable that those important prophecies which refer to Cyrus were shown to him and explained to him by the prophet. If not, this must have been done by some other Jew; for the decree itself indicates his acquaintance with these prophecies, stating what he could only have known through them. It begins—"Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia: Jehovah, the God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." This as plainly as possible states that he had acted under the injunctions of Jehovah, whom he recognizes as "the King of heaven," and by implication the King of earth, seeing that he had "given him" all the kingdoms of the earth.

The importance of this decree has been somewhat exaggerated. It by no means involved the political emancipation of the Hebrews, or conferred upon them any new or distinguishing privileges. The yoke of civil bondage was still left upon their necks, they were still subjects—not merely tributaries, but subjects—of the Persian empire, and their fair country was but a province of it, to be ruled by Persian governors. They were simply permitted to remove from one part of the empire to another, from the plains to which their conquerors had removed them, to the ancient hills in which their fathers dwelt, with encourage-

ment to re-establish themselves there in the full enjoyment of the worship to which they were known to be strongly attached.

In these facts we have another explanation of the circumstance that there were very many Israelites—a great majority—who found in the famous decree no sufficient inducement to abandon the possessions they had acquired in the land of their exile; and it has always been the impression of the Jews themselves that the flower of their nation declined to avail themselves of the benefit extended to them, but chose rather to remain amidst the comforts and ease of Babylon.

The Exiles Returning.

The noble, the high-descended, the wealthy, are called "the flower" of any nation; and these were the classes who chose to remain in the East: but we cannot well refuse to regard as the real flower of the Hebrew nation the zealous and devoted minority, who sighed for the land of their fathers, and who, in the face of danger and privation, resolved to return to it. Those who were thus disposed were awakened by the decree as by the sound of a trumpet, and hastened from all parts to Babylon, the place of rendezvous.

This first caravan of returning exiles was organized and directed by Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiachin, and by Jeshua the high-priest. The number of persons which composed it was fifty thousand, including about seven thousand male and female slaves. Before their departure Cyrus restored to them the more valuable of the sacred vessels of gold and silver which had been taken from the Temple of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and preserved by his successors, and which were now destined to be again employed in the service of the sanctuary. Zerubbabel was also intrusted with large contributions towards the expenses of the projected Temple by those Jews who thought proper to remain in the land of their exile, and who probably hoped in this way to compensate for the deficiency of their personal service in the sacred cause.

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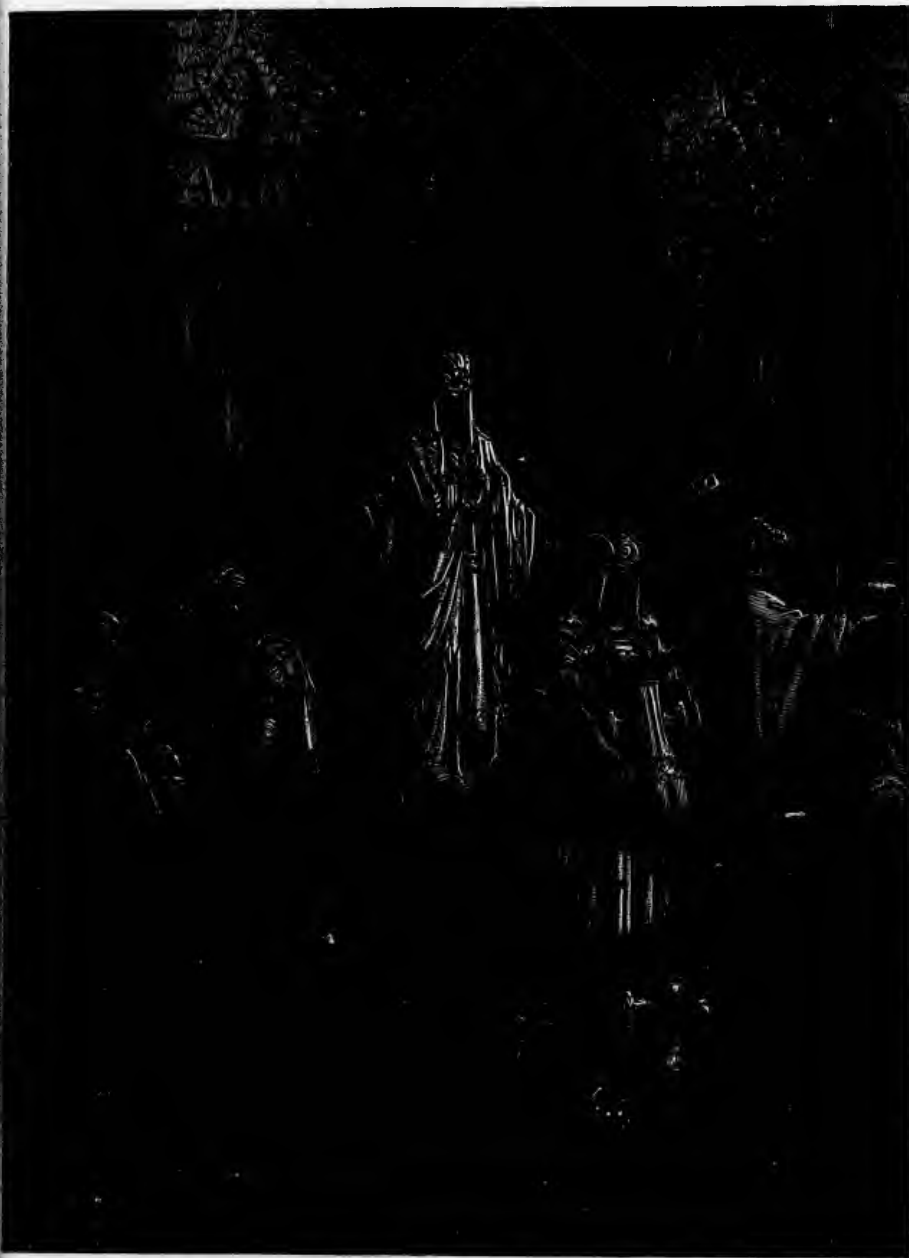
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KING CYRUS BRINGING FORTH THE VESSELS OF THE LORD'S HOUSE.—Ez. i. 7.

ceeded eight thousand, and in the Book of Ezra the names of those families which returned then, and in the subsequent migration, are very carefully set down, as if to do them honor.

The persons who prepared to accompany Ezra to Jerusalem rendezvoused on the banks of the river Ahava, and their body was found to contain one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four adult males. This number, with the

yet so weak, and known to be in possession of much treasure, would then, and would at this day, be exposed to great danger from the predatory Arab tribes which, from the date of the earliest historical records to the present day, have infested the desert country between Palestine and Babylonia. Ezra knew this well, and knew that he could easily obtain from the king a sufficient military escort across the desert. But this, for the honor of



ARTAXERXES GIVING THE LETTER TO EZRA.—Ez. vii. 11.

usual proportion of females and children, would give about six thousand souls for the entire party; but it is likely that the women and children were *not* in the usual proportions of settled and domestic life, but that the opportunity was embraced chiefly by young men unburdened with families. This idea is confirmed by the too great readiness which we find among the returned Hebrews to contract marriages with the daughters of their heathen neighbors in Palestine. A party so large, and

God, the pious priest was unwilling to do. He had largely explained to the monarch the greatness of the God he served, as well as His power and readiness to preserve all His worshippers from harm; and after this he felt that it behooved him to evince his own confidence in that protection which he had declared to be all-sufficient. Therefore a day was solemnly set apart for fasting and prayer, upon the banks of the Ahava, by which, before they commenced their march, they cast themselves

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without reserve upon the mercy and care of God during the perilous journey they were about to commence.

This confidence in the Divine protection was well rewarded, for after a long journey of four months—which implies long halts—the new settlers arrived safely at Jerusalem.

Ezra without delay opened his commission to the royal officers in that quarter, and then applied himself with much zeal to the arduous task which had devolved upon him.

A Great Evil.

In the book which bears his name Ezra does not himself particularly record any of his acts, excepting the measures which he took to insure the removal of the foreign and idolatrous women, whom many of the people, and even of the priests and Levites, had married, and by such marriages had been insensibly led into much sin against God and against the first principles of the Mosaic institutions.

When Ezra was first informed of this, the horror which he manifested was well calculated to impress the people with the enormity of their offence. He says: "When I heard this thing I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished." At the evening sacrifice he arose from his stupor, and having again rent his robes he fell upon his knees and spread out his hands before God, confessing the iniquity of his people, and imploring forgiveness for them. The whole congregation was deeply affected, even to tears; and the leading men expressed their readiness to concur in any measures he might deem suited to meet this great evil.

On this a proclamation was issued for all Jews who had married foreign women to appear in three days at Jerusalem, under pain of forfeiture of their goods. The large assembly which responded to the call evinced the extent of the evil. Ezra addressed them earnestly, and convinced them of their wrongdoing; but as the autumnal rains were set in and flooded every open place in Jerusalem, he was content to take their solemn promise to

put away their strange wives, as well as the children by them, allowing them time for giving effect to their engagement. Ezra and others formed a court at Jerusalem; and at appointed times the inhabitants of the several cities who were implicated in this matter repaired thither, accompanied by the elders and magistrates of their several towns, and submitted their cases separately to the judgment of the court. After sitting nearly three months the court completed its labors, and the chosen people were then deemed to be purged from this stain.

While Ezra was thus laboring among his brethren in Jerusalem, a danger came from a quarter quite unexpected, which threatened to involve the whole nation in utter ruin. This event is minutely recorded in the Book of Esther, which will require us to look backward a few years, that the circumstances may be clearly understood.

A Magnificent Feast.

In the third year of his reign the king made a great feast, or rather a succession of feasts, to all the great lords and princes of his empire. The whole was finished by a separate feast, held in the court or garden of the palace, to all the nobles, councillors and great officers in immediate employment at the court. The description of this establishment is very interesting to the student of ancient customs; and the more closely they are in this instance examined the more they are found to resemble those which the same country still exhibits, affording a remarkable example of the permanent character of Oriental ideas and usages.

The magnificence of this entertainment seems to have greatly exceeded all that went before. The tessellated pavement of the court was of red, blue, black, and white marble; and the splendid curtains and coverings of white, green, and blue, by which the court was for the occasion turned into a pavilion, were fastened to pillars of marble by rings of silver, and by cords of purple and fine linen; and the couches on which the guests reclined were framed in silver and gold.

The guests drank "royal wine," which was the wine of Helbon (now Aleppo), from vessels of gold, of elaborate workmanship; and we are informed that they drank their wine "according to the law," which was, it seems, an excellent rule laid down at the first, that none should be forced to drink more than he liked. It does not seem that they much needed compulsion in this matter, for it is manifest that the monarch and his guests had all drunk quite enough when the circumstance occurred to which these preliminaries lead. There is no doubt about this, for it is expressly said that "the king's heart was merry with wine."

It seems that in their cups these great personages began to talk about the beauty of their women. The king vaunted of the supreme loveliness of his queen, Vashti, and at length, to prove his assertions, resolved to produce her unveiled before them. This gross breach of all Oriental proprieties, which preclude a woman from showing her face to strangers, could not have occurred to any one in his proper senses, and is a clear sign to mark how far the great Ahasuerus was gone in drink.

The queen Vashti was at this time giving a grand entertainment to the women of the harem; and when the eunuchs unwelcomely appeared with the strange and unexpected summons to the presence of the king and his courtiers, her womanly modesty and dignity was shocked, and she very properly refused to go. This gave the affair quite a new aspect. The man whose slightest expression of will was a law in that vast empire had been publicly disobeyed by a woman. An earthquake could not have created a stronger sensation in the palaces of Shusan; and all the grandees partook of the royal indignation and alarm. The fact could not but be bruited abroad, and how, hereafter, could any man expect to be obeyed in his own house, after it became known that the king himself had been disobeyed? The matter was too grave to be settled in a summary manner, and the king sought the advice of his state council.

Memucan, one of the council, very clearly expressed the feeling we have described—the alarm at the ill effect of the queen's example upon "the ladies of Media and Persia," if the crime were suffered to go unpunished; and he proposed that Vashti should no more come into the king's presence, and that her royal state should be given "to another that is better than she." This was agreed to, as was also the further and very sage proposal of this same great councillor, that the king should put forth a decree in all the languages of his great empire, enacting that "every man should bear rule in his own house," and that "all the wives should give to their husbands honor, both to great and small."

Queen Vashti Dethroned.

History has not recorded the effect of this decree upon "the ladies of Media and Persia." Vashti was, however, deposed from her high place, and all the provinces of the empire were ransacked for a suitable successor. The fairest damsels of the empire were, on a hint from the court, taken and sent to the harem by the provincial and other governors; and from the number thus collected, after they had become the inmates of the royal harem, the selection was to be made. Time was consumed in this; but at length it proved that of all the damsels thus brought together none was so agreeable to the king as a young Jewess named Hadessah or Esther, who was accordingly advanced to the high but precarious honor of "queen."

Esther was an orphan, who had been brought up by her uncle Mordecai, who, when her father and mother were dead, "took her for his own daughter." Mordecai was of the tribe of Benjamin, descended from a man who had been exiled with King Jehoiachin. He seems to have been one of the officers about the royal court, as his duty kept him in attendance at the gate of the royal palace. In this capacity he became privy to a plot between two of the chamberlains to assassinate the king; but he contrived to make it known to Esther, and through her to the king, whereby the

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QUEEN VASHTI REFUSING TO OBEY THE KING'S COMMAND.—Est. i. 12.

design was frustrated, and the traitors brought to punishment.

The person who became highest in favor at court was an Amalekite named Haman. Mindful of the old enmity between the races of Israel and Amalek, and of the ancient wrongs which Israel had sworn never to pardon or forget—Mordecai remained erect among the crowd of nobles, courtiers, and officers who waited in the palace courts, and who rendered their bending homage to the great man as he passed. This occurred so often that the eye of Haman at length marked the person of this unyielding Jew, and none but those who are aware of the importance which the Orientals still at this day attach to external marks of respect can apprehend that dire wrath which filled his mind at this studied disrespect.

Fiendish Resolve.

When he learned that Mordecai was a Hebrew he could not but be aware of the class of feelings by which he was actuated; and if an Israelite had cause to hate an Amalekite, had not an Amalekite as good cause to hate a Jew? Had not the Hebrews sworn to exterminate the Amalekites; and to the extent of their power had not they done so? Had not that power which was once so great, that "higher than Agag" had become a proverbial description of the highest human greatness—had it not been broken and reduced to nought by the conquering sword of Hebrew kings? And their hate was not yet appeased; for this one Jew could be but regarded as the exponent of the feeling which burned in every Hebrew bosom against the line of Amalek.

Thoughts like these must have dwelt upon the mind of Haman, for they enable us to discover, which we cannot do under any other explanation, a train of ideas and feelings which might in an ill-regulated mind lead to the resolution which Haman formed, to use the vast power which the confidence of the king left in his hands for the destruction of the whole Hebrew race.

Not a little remarkable is the mode in which Haman proceeded to realize his object.

He took an occasion of mentioning to the king that there was dispersed through his empire a people (not naming them) "whose laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws;" he hence argued that it was detrimental to the interests of the crown that such a people should be suffered to exist; and he, therefore, recommended that they should be destroyed.

The only reasonable objection which could be urged would be the loss to the revenue of the capitation tax which these people paid; and, to obviate this, Haman offered to deposit in the roya' treasury not less than ten thousand talents of silver. The offer of this immense sum, which, computed by the Babylonian talent, is equal to ten million dollars—and that for the mere purpose of gratifying a bloody whim—evinces the vast wealth which such favorites of the crown under the ancient monarchies were able to accumulate; and this is the more remarkable when we consider that this high post was, as in this case, often occupied by foreigners and slaves, or by the descendants of such. The king declined this offer, but consented to what he ought to have declined. With culpable, but truly Oriental, indifference in a matter which concerned the lives of so many thousands of people, he took the signet ring from his finger and consigned it to Haman, by which act he authorized him to issue in the king's name whatever orders in this matter he might think proper.

A Horrid Massacre Decreed.

Thus empowered, Haman hurried the royal scribes in preparing copies, in different languages, of a decree which he drew up to accomplish his fell intentions, and which were despatched by swift couriers to all the provinces of that mighty empire, which extended "from India to Ethiopia." This decree directed that all the Jews, wherever found, were to be slain in one day, "both young and old, little children and women." The one day appointed for this horrid massacre was the thirteenth of the month Adar, and the people were incited to become the willing agents of the slaughter

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It will be seen that the desire of Haman to
 make the destined stroke complete, instant,
 and effectual, induced him to take measures
 which required time to bring into action; and
 during that time, in the wise providence of
 God, circumstances occurred which Haman
 could not have foreseen, and which brought
 his deep-laid scheme to nothing.

When the decree was first put forth in the
 metropolis, "the city Shushan was perplexed;"
 but "the king and Haman sat down to drink."

No sooner did Mordecai become acquainted
 with the decree than he "rent his clothes, and
 put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into
 the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and
 bitter cry." This appears to have been not
 only the expression of his consternation in the
 usual way, but to have been designed to draw
 the attention of the Jews to the extent of their
 danger, and to rouse them to pray to God for
 deliverance from the frightful doom which
 hung over the chosen race.

Esther within the harem was as one dead to
 all that happened beyond its walls. She knew
 nothing of the evil that threatened her people,
 and Mordecai could have no direct access to
 her or communication with her. Her slaves
 and eunuchs, however, knew of her relationship
 to Mordecai; and his conduct was duly re-
 ported to her by them. This was doubtless
 partly his object in giving vent to such public
 demonstrations of his grief. For Esther no
 sooner heard of the sorrow her beloved uncle
 manifested, than she sent Hatach, one of the
 royal eunuchs, to inquire the cause of his
 grief. This gave Mordecai the desired oppor-
 tunity of apprising the queen of these trans-
 actions, and of urging her, by every consider-
 ation dear to a Hebrew heart, to exert her
 influence with the king in subverting the plot
 of the bloodthirsty favorite. Esther was
 greatly shocked; but surrounded by the iron
 barriers of etiquette, which in the Persian court
 were "strong as death and cruel as the grave,"
 she demurred as to the practicability of her in-
 terference.

No one, not even the queen, could venture,
 without danger of death, to appear uncalled in
 that portion of the royal palace which the king
 occupied; and for her to quit the harem and
 enter the forbidden precincts would peril her
 life, unless the capricious king might chance,
 in a fit of good humor, to extend to her the
 golden sceptre of his mercy. When this dif-
 ficulty was made known to Mordecai, his an-
 swer called her to the high resolves which be-
 came a daughter of Israel, and he plainly in-
 timated that it was her duty to risk her life for
 the deliverance of her people. He with some
 sternness warned her that if she declined this
 high vocation, God would certainly raise up
 help to his people in some other quarter,
 while she and her father's house would perish:
 "And who knoweth," he added, "whether
 thou art not come for such a time as this?"

Esther Risks Her Life.

On receiving this answer through Hatach,
 Esther hesitated no longer; she rose to what
 she believed to be her destiny, and showed
 herself equal to the great task which had de-
 volved upon her. She sent one message more
 to her uncle, desiring him to call upon the
 Jews in Shushan (Susa) to devote themselves
 to fasting and prayer to God for his blessing
 upon her terrible emprise: "I also and my
 maidens," she said, "will fast likewise: and
 then will I go into the king, which is not ac-
 cording to the law;—and if I perish, I perish."

On the third day from this Esther put on
 her royal apparel, and passing from the harem,
 presented herself in the court of the king's
 own house, in front of the open hall or divan
 where the monarch was seated upon his throne.
 When the king beheld her in all her imperial
 beauty he was moved by the danger she had
 incurred to gain access to his presence, and,
 extending the golden sceptre towards her,
 said, "What wilt thou, queen Esther, and what
 is thy request?" What a trying moment was
 that! what a relief in his gracious act and
 words to the full heart of one not by nature or
 education suited to daring acts, but who had
 wrought up her woman's heart to the mighty



QUEEN ESTHER TOUCHING THE KING'S SCEPTRE.—EST. V. 2.

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task which had fallen upon her! She knew that she was safe, that all danger to herself was passed, and that through her her people might yet be delivered. She advanced and touched the golden sceptre; but ventured no other request than that the king and Haman would that day come to a banquet which she had prepared.

The king knew that this banquet was but preliminary to some request that Esther had to prefer: and accordingly, when he honored it with his presence, he asked her, "What wilt thou, queen Esther, and what is thy request? Even to the half of my kingdom it shall be performed." She answered by inviting him and Haman to another feast the ensuing day, with an intimation that she would then make known the favor she had to ask.

Haman departed that evening, elated that he was thus a second time invited to accompany the king to Esther's banquet. It filled the cup of his honors; but in that cup there was still one bitter drop—the disrespect of Mordecai; for as he passed out of the palace in this happy mood, his eye fell upon the form of that unbending Jew, who seemed posted there to rebuke his spirit, and whose eye probably glared upon him that day (knowing he had been with Esther) with some peculiar meaning, prophetic of his doom. This made him uneasy, and turned his joy to bitterness.

Haman Erects a Gallows.

When he reached home he reported to his wife the favors which were showered upon him; adding, as to crown all, "Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come into the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king:" but he continued with bitterness: "Yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." On which his wife and friends advised him to prepare a gallows fifty cubits high, "and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon—then go thou merrily unto the banquet." Haman determined to take this advice; and in the morning

early, he was, as his duty required, at the palace, to receive the king's commands for the day—with an intention of also making his small request in the matter of Mordecai.

In the wise providence of God it was ordered that in this night the king had been unable to sleep; and he ordered, therefore, that the chronicles of his kingdom should be brought and read before him. The hand of the reader was guided by an unseen power to that part of the volume in which the plot against the king's life by two of his chamberlains was recorded, as well as its disclosures by Mordecai. Then said the king, "What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" to which an officer in attendance replied, "There hath nothing been done for him." Struck with this neglect of so great a service, the monarch determined to repair the wrong forthwith. He directed that any minister in attendance in the ante-chamber might be called. This was Haman, come to ask the king to hang this very Mordecai.

The king asked, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Now Haman had not the slightest suspicion that the king could delight to honor anyone but himself, and his answer under this impression betrays the inordinate pride and vanity of his heart. He advised that this favored man should be arrayed in the most illustrious dress of honor—raiment that the king himself had worn—by the hands of the king's most noble princes—and that thus arrayed he should be by them conducted on horseback through the city, while the heralds proclaimed before him—"Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

Was ever man cast down from the pinnacle of his pride into the lowest depths of mortification so abruptly as Haman, when the king told him, as one of "the king's most noble princes" to whom he himself had assigned this task, to "go and do as thou hast said to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth in the king's gate!"—to Mordecai, the man in all the world whom he most hated, and whom he had that very morning intended to get hanged! But he had only to





MORDECAI REFUSING TO PAY HOMAGE TO HAMAN.—Est. v. 9.

obey. With trembling hands he invested with imperial robes the man he would much sooner have torn in pieces; and conducted him through the city with all the state and ceremony which he had intended for himself.

These events, strange as they appear to us, are eminently characteristic of Persia; and so enduring are the essential features of Oriental character and usages, that there is scarcely a single circumstance which might not in the same country have occurred at the present day without any marked contrariety to existing manners. The dress of honor, and, above all, one that the king has worn, is still the highest personal distinction which a Persian courtier desires.

The Queen's Banquet.

Haman was no sooner relieved from the terrible restraint imposed upon him, than he hastened to his home "mourning and having his head covered." When he made known to his wife and friends the cause of his grief, he found but little consolation from them. From the sudden and extraordinary elevation of one whom Haman had destined for the gallows—they seem to have argued the special interposition of a higher power in his behalf, and to have inferred that the star of Haman was destined to grow pale before that of Mordecai. "If," said they, "Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt certainly fall before him." They were still speaking when the royal chamberlains arrived to hurry Haman off to queen Esther's banquet.

The king and his favorite proceeded together to the banquet—the former doubtless curious to know what the important matter it might be for which Esther had in the first instance perilled her life, and which she deemed it needful to introduce with so much careful preparation. Accordingly, at this banquet he asked again, "What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even unto the half of my kingdom."

Esther saw that the trying moment was come, to be then taken or to be forever lost.

It was not lost. She at once poured forth the great burden of her soul in earnest supplication:—"If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted to my petition, and my people at my request. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, and to be slain, and to perish. If we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage."

Haman's Downfall.

The king was thunderstruck at the charge involved in this passionate address, of a conspiracy in some quarter against the life of the queen and her people; and he exclaimed with energy, "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" The queen answered, "The adversary and enemy is—this wicked Haman!" At that word the king rose from his seat, and walked forth into the garden. Haman saw from his manner and the kindling of his eye that all was lost unless he could turn that precious moment to account in softening the indignation of Esther. He rose from his place and drew near to her, and in earnest entreaty sought to disperse the dark wrath which he saw gathering around him. But she gave no sign of peace; and in his agony he fell, in a state of only half-consciousness, upon the low divan whereon the queen reclined.

At that moment the king entered, and in the blindness of his passion drew the worst inferences, from the position in which he was found, as to his intention in approaching the queen. The exclamation which rose to his lips, announced to the ever-ready eunuchs that the doom of Haman was sealed; and they approached him and covered his face—for it was the etiquette in Persia that no criminal might look upon the king. Every miserable eunuch now felt free to hasten the descent of the falling favorite; and one of them at that moment mentioned—"Behold also the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standing in the house of Haman." The sense



of poetical justice supplied the king with a prompt decision; and the sentence, "Hang him thereon!" went forth from his lips.

So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. We are satisfied with this; but are not altogether satisfied that the king, who had, by his culpable neglect of his duties and his indifference to human life, made himself a party in the crimes of Haman, should be the person to pronounce his doom. But the secret consciousness of the king that he had himself been in the wrong, only made him the more wroth against the man who had brought this unpleasant consciousness upon him by abusing his confidence.

Mordecai was now introduced to the presence of the king, whom Esther had made acquainted with their relationship; and the combination of circumstances in his favor induced the king to confide to him the signet ring (or as we should say, "the seals of office") which had been given to Haman.

The great work of delivering the Hebrew people from their doom was, however, not yet accomplished. Haman was dead, but the decree of the king lived. Therefore, Esther besought him, even with tears, to complete his work by delivering her people from their still impending doom:—"For how," said she, "can I bear to see the evil that will come upon my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" The king evinced every willingness to rectify the error into which Haman had led him; but he shrunk from the open acknowledgment of error which a directly counter decree would have involved. The words of the Persian kings were laws, and respect for them as such could only be maintained by their being made inviolable. Hence the usage which had confided this power to the king is said to have constrained him to caution by precluding him from retracting a decree which had once been issued. All he could therefore now do was to authorize the Jews to stand upon their defence against those who attempted to execute the first edict. This might seem no great privilege; but in fact it served to apprise the authorities of the altered

mind of the king, and intimated to them that they would win more favor by neglecting than by enforcing the first decree.

The execution of this measure was entrusted to Mordecai; and he did not deem it of small importance. Copies of the order, sealed with the king's signet, were prepared with all possible dispatch and forwarded to all parts of the empire by couriers, who were severally mounted on the kind of animal best suited to the journey they had to perform. Those who had an ordinary journey went on horseback; those who had to traverse mountains rode on mules; and those who had to speed across wide plains and arid deserts were mounted on young camels and swift dromedaries.

They were commanded to travel with the utmost speed to anticipate the day appointed for the massacre; for, in the wise providence of God, the very delay which had been afforded by the desire of Haman to make his stroke effectual, left just the time required for turning its edge aside. Haman under a superstition about lucky and unlucky days, still common in the same country, sought a propitious day for the execution of the grand design which has rendered his memory infamous. The fourteenth day of the month Adar had been chosen by lot, and who shall say that the lot had not been determined to this day by that Divine Providence which shines throughout the Book of Esther, although the name of God does not once appear in it?

The Jews Saved from Death.

The new decree saved the Jews from destruction, but it did not prevent a horrid massacre of them and by them. There were many who hated the Jews, and there were others who coveted their possessions, which had been secured to those who should slay them; so that in many places the Jews had a hard fight for their lives on the fourteenth of the month Adar. On that day they very wisely assembled in bodies in the places where they resided, ready to defend themselves; and in some places they appear to have gone beyond the strict limits of self-defence, but nowhere did

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AHASUERUS ORDERS THE EXECUTION OF HAMAN.—Est. vii. 8.

they touch the spoils of those who fell before them.

One would think that in Shushan, in the presence of the court, no attempt to enforce the edict would be made. But it would seem that the ten sons of Haman, and others adverse to the altered state of affairs, organized an attempt to carry it into effect. The Jews, however, had the advantage, for, while it is not recorded that many of them were slain, not fewer than eight hundred of their assailants fell before them. Throughout the empire the slaughter made by the Jews amounted to not less than seventy-five thousand men. The ancient Jewish writers believe that these were chiefly *malekites*, and there can be no doubt such of this nation as were dispersed through the Persian empire would evince peculiar animosity against the Hebrew race. At all events one fact shines out very clear, which is, that seventy-five thousand human beings perished because the king had been careless and unguarded over his wine.

The Feast of Purim.

This result of a danger which had seemed to threaten the existence of the nation filled the Jews with a degree of joy commensurate to its importance; and it was resolved to transmit the memory of it to future generations by observing the day of deliverance as a yearly festival. Mordecai confirmed this design by sending letters to all the provinces enjoining the future observance of the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, as "the days in which the Jews had obtained rest from their enemies, and the month in which their sorrow had been turned into joy: that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing, and of sending presents one to another, and gifts to the poor."

This festival, which is observed among the Jews to the present day, obtained the name of Purim, from the Persian word *Pur* or "lot," on account of the lot which Haman had cast to obtain a good day for the execution of his purpose. It is difficult to see by what authority Mordecai could appoint this festival. But

he had become the foremost man of the nation, and his enactment was too much in accordance with the popular sentiment to be rejected. If, however, we may believe the Jewish writers, it did meet with some opposition from eighty-five elders, who resisted it as an innovation not sanctioned by the law. During this festival the whole Book of Esther is twice read in the synagogue, once in the morning when the feast begins, and again in the next morning; and whenever the name of Haman is mentioned, the very children are taught to beat on the benches and to stamp for joy. After the second reading of the law is finished, the remainder of the day is spent in sports, with music and dancing, until the time for feasting arrives, when usage sanctions, or even demands, a degree of indulgence by no means usual among this temperate people.

It is now time to return to Judea, where Ezra still remained much occupied, probably in that revision and arrangement of the Scriptures of the Old Testament which is usually ascribed to him. Little progress, however, appears to have been made with the public works calculated to give strength and dignity to Jerusalem. This is accounted for by the fact that permission to surround the town by a wall had not yet been obtained, and in those days men liked not to erect buildings of cost in places unprotected by a wall. It was not until the twentieth year of Ahasuerus that permission to fortify the town was obtained, and this was then brought about in the following manner, which, however we approve the result, shows that in the court of Persia in that age, as in the present, questions affecting the public interest were determined not on their intrinsic merits, but through the personal influence of favorite servants and ministers.

A Hebrew Patriot.

We have already seen in the case of Haman and Mordecai that a foreign extraction was no bar to advancement in the court of the Persian kings: accordingly we are not surprised to find that the high post of cup-bearer to the

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king was held by a Jew called Nehemiah. This office was one of great importance, not only in real dignity, but because it gave access to the king in his less formal hours, named Hanani, who had lately arrived from Judea, such a description of the condition of the holy city as afflicted him greatly. The signs of mourning and the traces of grief



CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF PURIM.—Est. ix. 19.

and afforded him opportunities of establishing a feeling of personal kindness towards himself on the part of the sovereign.

This Nehemiah, who was a very pious and zealous Jew, had received from a person

were forbidden things in the Persian court, where the sunshine of the king's presence was supposed to spread happiness around, and where every countenance was expected to be radiant with cheerfulness, however the heart

might be dried up by fierce passions or rent by anguish.

Nehemiah, however, could not altogether obliterate from his countenance all trace of grief: the keen eye of the monarch noted this, and he was asked the cause of his sadness. At this question Nehemiah was, with reason, "greatly afraid." But he was incapable of evasion, and thinking it best to speak out, he said, "Let the king live forever; why should not my countenance be sad when the city—the place of my fathers' sepulchres—lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" The king then said, "For what dost thou make request?" Nehemiah felt the importance of this moment, and after a silent aspiration to "the God of the heavens," he was encouraged to say, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me to Judea, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may rebuild it." The king's first question was, "How long will thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?" and on receiving a satisfactory answer the king sent him to Judea as governor of the Jews, and furnished him with letters to the Persian governors in those parts, requiring them to support his authority, and to supply whatever materials he required for all the works he was authorized to undertake—the building of the walls being specially included.

Preparation for the Work.

This was a great event for the Jews, and gave them dignity in the eyes of the Persians, who were sensible of Nehemiah's personal favor at court, which indeed was evinced by the escort of cavalry which was given him for the journey to Jerusalem. The real Persians were therefore disposed to promote the views of the new governor to the extent of their power; but the old enemies of Israel, the Samaritans and Ammonites and Moabites, were "exceedingly vexed" when they heard that "a man had come to seek the welfare of the Israelites." Sanballat the Samaritan, and Tobiah the Ammonite, are particularly mentioned as the most

active enemies of the Jews. The latter had been a slave, but was raised to the government of some one of the provinces into which Syria was divided, under the general governor.

Nehemiah did not immediately on his arrival disclose the full extent of the powers with which he was intrusted, as regarded the fortification of the city; and he seems to have desired to keep them secret till he should be in a condition to commence operations. After he had been there three days, and had recovered from the toil of travel, the governor rode around the city by night to obtain a clear notion of the labor he had undertaken.

The People's Zeal.

The next day he convened the priests and leading men, and said to them, "Ye see the distress that we are in, how that Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire; come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem that we be no more a reproach." He adds, "Then I told them of the kind hand of my God towards me, as also the words the king had spoken to me." The evils to which they had been daily accustomed struck them less forcibly than they did the newly-arrived governor; nevertheless they were perfectly sensible of the importance of the privilege now obtained, and expressed their eagerness to commence the work.

As soon as such a commencement was made as evinced the design to rebuild the walls, the attempt was treated with derision and insult by adverse parties already named. But the work proceeded with great steadiness and rapidity, every available hand being called to the service. They worked in bands under their several chiefs, each band knowing its allotted task. Work was found for every willing hand, and even goldsmiths, apothecaries, and shopkeepers ("merchants") are named among those who wrought.

The gates were restored, and made strong with bolts and bars, and the wall arose with wonderful expedition from the ground. The rapidity of the work indeed was such as to suggest to the enemies of Israel an unfounded

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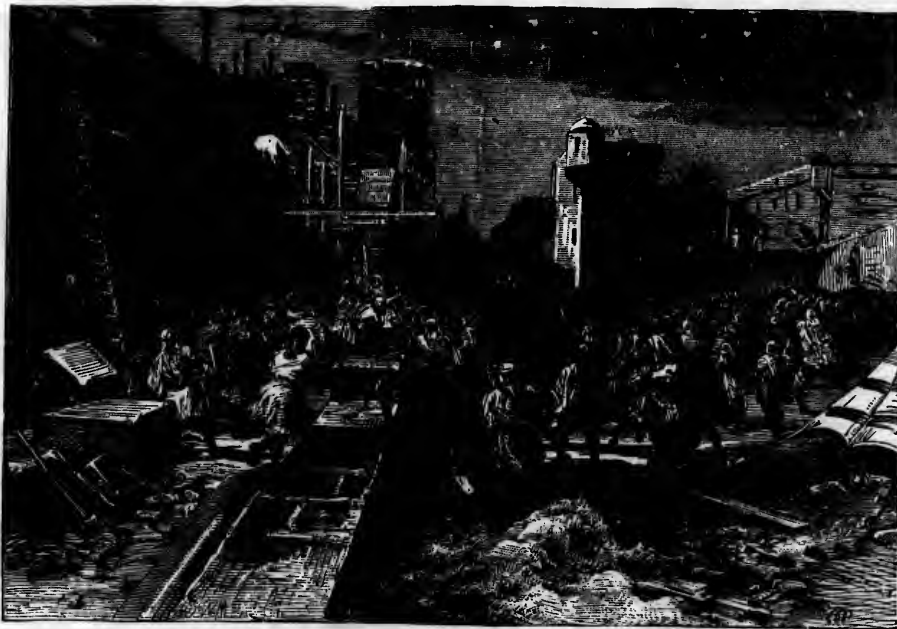
NEHEMIAH COLLECTING MONEY.—Ne. vii. 72.

impression of its slowness, and many excellent Oriental jokes were passed by them on the subject:—"Were a jackal to go up against the stone walls they are building, he would break them down," was the remark with which Tobiah made Sanballat and his people merry.

Nehemiah felt these taunts very strongly, as evincing how his people were despised; but, nevertheless, the labor proceeded briskly, "for the heart of the people was engaged in the work," and great was their enthusiasm.

"Remember Jehovah, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

By these careful preparations the enemy became aware that their plot was known; and as this, even in their view, rendered doubtful the success of what they had intended as a sudden surprise, they reluctantly abandoned their design. Nehemiah did not, however, deem it prudent to abate the vigilance which he had established. The hands which had



BUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.—Ne. iv. 6.

Finding this to be the case, and seeing the walls rising, the enemies of Israel became seriously alarmed, and plotted to put an end to these operations by force of arms. Information of this design transpired, and was brought to Nehemiah by Jews residing on the borders. On hearing this, the governor established a constant watch over the work, by night and day, and stationed at proper points men well armed with swords, spears, and bows, whom he encouraged, in case of being attacked, to

thus been taken from the work were indeed restored to it; but every man who wrought on the wall, and who carried burdens, labored with one hand, while with the other he held his weapons of war. This state of things is not unusual in the East, where men may often be seen well armed while laboring in the fields. Nehemiah did not spare his own servants, for half of them labored in the work, while the other half stood at arms. Nehemiah himself, in his anxiety to expedite the work, was con-

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stantly present, with a trumpeter to give signals in case of danger. Thus they wrought and watched "from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared;" and Nehemiah declares that during an entire month neither himself nor any of the people once put off their clothes.

After this an internal disorder, fully as grievous as the outward danger by which they had been threatened, engaged the attention of the governor. The last season had been comparatively unproductive, so that the less wealthy of the people had been obliged to mortgage their lands, houses, and vineyards, to obtain corn or to pay the Persian tribute. The extent to which the wealthier Jews had availed themselves of the necessities of their brethren to enrich themselves, will appear from the fact that several of the people complained that some of their children had already been brought into bond-service; "nor is it in our power to redeem them," said they, "for other men have our lands and vineyards."

Nehemiah Indignant.

When all these things were reported to Nehemiah, he became very angry, and convened a public assembly, in which he exposed and denounced the evil of this proceeding, and drew from the parties a solemn promise to restore all that they had in this way obtained. Then, says Nehemiah, "I shook my lap and said, So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor, that performeth not this promise: even thus may he be shaken out and emptied." It is gratifying to learn that the promise thus obtained was kept very strictly.

Nehemiah was enabled to act with the more confidence in this matter, as, although he was entitled to a large allowance for the expenses of his large establishment as governor, he forbore to require anything from the people, and, with unexampled liberality, not only gave his care and solicitude without pay or reward, but bore all the charges of his expensive office entirely out of his private fortune. Nor did this consideration make him sparing in his ex-

penditure, for his hospitable and generous temper carried him far beyond the obligations of his office. Above one hundred and fifty Jews, not belonging to his establishment, were entertained at his table, the daily supply of which required one ox and six sheep, besides fowl, and once every ten days a large supply of wine.

As the Orientals are but sparing consumers of animal food, this consumption implies a larger expenditure on other commodities than would be necessary in northern climates. Those who are acquainted with the exactions and oppressions exercised by the officers and attendants of Persian governors even at the present day, will best understand the intimation given by Nehemiah, who, speaking of former governors, says, "Even their servants bare rule over the people; but I did not thus, because I feared God in my heart."

The enemies of Israel—Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian—seeing that the wall was now finished, and all strong and complete, save only the gates, saw that the time for any acts of direct violence had passed. They therefore sought to ensnare the governor, to whose influence and energy they justly attributed the prosperous aspect which the affairs of the Jewish people were beginning to assume, and laid a plot to entangle him.

Hurrying the Work to Completion.

Being themselves invested with petty governments under the Persians, they invited Nehemiah to a conference, as if on matters of common interest, at Chepirim, in the plain of Ono. Suspicious of their intentions, he returned the discreet answer, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" They, however, repeated the invitation not less than four times, and, always receiving the same answer, Sanballat at length sent a servant to him bearing an open letter in his hand. In this letter it was stated to be commonly reported that it was his intention to revolt against the Persians, whose interests they were bound to watch.

Nehemiah contented himself with a strong denial of so improbable a charge, and hastened the completion of the gates, knowing that his best security, under God, from all these machinations, lay in securing the defences of the city. The accusers had, however, some influential partisans even in the town, who believed, or affected to believe, that the strength of the fortifications might give the Persians reason to credit the accusation; and who supposed that the fact of the probable grounds for such a suspicion would justify the adversaries to the Persian government, under the cover of over-zeal for the Persian interests, in any acts of violence to which they might resort.

These urged Nehemiah to shut himself in the Temple—on the ground that an assault, which they alleged to be in contemplation, was directed entirely against his own person; but he knew that this act of shutting himself up in what was then in fact the citadel of Jerusalem, would give color to the worst devices of the enemy; and with becoming spirit he answered, "Should such a man as I flee? And who like me would go into the Temple to save his life? I will not go in."

Beset by spies, who carried his words to his enemies, and annoyed by offensive letters which were repeatedly sent to him, Nehemiah yet persevered steadily in his great task, and at length, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, only fifty-two days from the commencement—so earnestly had the work been carried on—he had the satisfaction of seeing it completed, B. C. 445.

The walls being thus finished and the gates complete, Nehemiah was enabled to establish greater order in the city than had before been possible: keepers were stationed at every one of the gates, and over the whole was Hanaiah, "a faithful man, who feared God above many," who had it in charge to see the gates closed in the evening and properly secured with bolts and bars, and also not to open them in the morning until "the sun was hot." Such regulations are still usual in the walled towns of the East, and in this case

were peculiarly necessary, as the town, although large, was but thinly peopled, the houses which it contained being still very few, while the apprehension of danger from the enemies of Israel had not yet passed away.

After the term of his civil commission had ceased it appears that Ezra remained at Jerusalem, and is supposed, as already intimated, to have devoted much of his time in collecting and arranging the sacred books which now form the canon of the Old Testament. He was now called forward to read to the people the law of Moses, of which it seems to have been known that he had now provided a perfect copy. It seems also to have been the season in which it was directed that the law should be publicly read to the people, being every seventh year at the feast of tabernacles. This regulation had been much neglected, but now the people present at Jerusalem for the feast "assembled as one man in the street before the water-gate," and required Ezra to bring forth and read the book of the law.

Ezra Reads the Book of the Law.

The worthy man gladly responded to this call, and he read the law in the street to all "who could hear with understanding, from morning till night." He stood upon a pulpit or platform of wood which had been made for the purpose, so that the people might both see and hear him. The brief notices of this great solemnity are suggestive and interesting: "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, and when he opened it all the people stood up, and Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God. And all the people with uplifted hands answered Amen, Amen; and they bowed their heads and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground."

There was one serious difficulty which had, perhaps, hitherto prevented, since the return from exile, the law from being thus publicly read. The mass of the people, born in a foreign country, or the children of parents to whom the language of that country had become a mother-tongue, no longer understood the language in which the sacred books were

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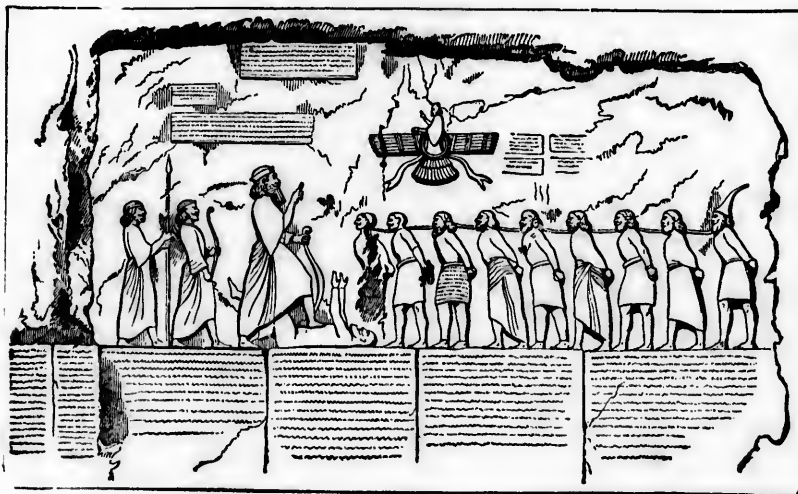
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written. The Chaldee was indeed but another dialect than Hebrew of the same great Aramæan branch of languages; but the difference was sufficient to prevent the one from being generally intelligible to those who were only acquainted with the other.

To meet this difficulty several priests and Levites were conveniently stationed to repeat to the people in the Chaldee language that which Ezra read to them in the Hebrew. The people, few of whom had been previously acquainted with more than the traditions of the law, were deeply concerned at much which they now heard, and wept and mourned greatly. But they were reminded that the day was a festival, a day of joy and not of grief, and Nehemiah dismissed them for the day with the words: "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is provided; for

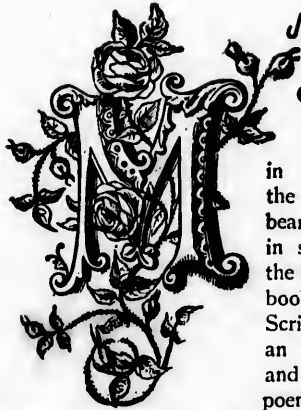
this day is holy to our Lord." The people followed this counsel and "rejoiced exceedingly because they understood the things that were declared to them."

The readings of the law, after the same manner, were continued throughout the week. The extent of the ignorance of their own institutions into which the people had fallen is shown by the fact that they knew not until the second day, when Ezra arrived at that portion of the law which enjoins the observance, that they were to abide in huts or booths of green boughs during the very feast which they were then celebrating. On hearing this they applied themselves with great alacrity to remedy the oversight. They set forth to gather olive branches, pine branches, palm branches, myrtle branches, and branches of all thick trees, to make such verdant booths as the law required and prescribed.



CHAPTER XXIV.

JOB AND HIS FRIENDS.



MORE than any other man Job was famous in his day, and the book that bears his name is, in some respects, the most singular book in the Holy Scriptures. It is an argumentative and descriptive poem, with a prose introduction and conclusion, which forms the plot or story of the work. This story is very simple.

In the land of Uz lived Job, an upright and good man, who had seven sons and three daughters. He was the wealthiest man in the country; and the description of his wealth shows that the condition of life intended to be represented is patriarchal, similar to that led by Abraham, and similar to that now led by the Arabian Emirs; or rather to that intermediate condition in which the patriarch has a fixed residence, and cultivates the ground, without having relinquished the pastoral habits of life. Under this condition the homestead is permanent, cultivation surrounds it, and the necessary migrations of the flocks are performed under the care of sons and servants.

This is the kind of life at one time led by Isaac, by Laban in Padan-aram, and by the churlish Nabal, whose flocks were sent forth to feed in the distant wilderness while he abode in Maon, and had his agricultural possessions in Carmel. Job had thus a mixed

pastoral and agricultural property, and was very rich in flocks and herds.

It was a custom of Job's sons, who were grown up and had separate establishments, to give each in his turn a feast to his brothers and family, and to this feast the three sisters were always invited. At the end of such feasts Job used to send for his children and purify them by ablation and other observances, apprehensive lest, in the gayety of the festival, they might not have been duly mindful of God and his worship.

Leaving Job in this prosperous condition, we have next an allegorical representation of the courts of heaven, where the sons of God—the angels—duly present themselves before the Most High. Among them appears Satan, the evil one, the accuser of the just, whose unusual presence is noted, and he is asked whence he came. He answers, "From wandering over the earth and walking up and down in it." He is then asked whether in his wanderings over the earth he had taken notice of the upright Job, whose integrity defied the powers of evil. Satan answered, with a sneer, that Job had good reasons for cultivating the service in which he thrived so well; "but only put forth thine hand and touch whatever he possesseth, and to thy face will he renounce thee." On this Satan was permitted to try the virtue of Job to the extent of all his substance, but was not allowed to afflict his person.

The effect of this was soon seen. One day, when the children of Job were feasting, in due course, in the house of their eldest brother, a messenger came in alarm and haste to announce that the Arabians had fallen upon

the oxen as they were ploughing in the field, and had driven them off, together with the asses, and that all the servants, except himself, had been put to the sword. This man had scarcely done relating the loss of Job's agricultural cattle, when another came in equal alarm to announce that his flocks, together with his shepherds, had been destroyed by lightning from heaven. Then another swiftly followed to relate that the Chaldeans had driven off his camels, and destroyed those who had the charge of them. Only one thing was then wanting to complete Job's desolation, and that came too soon: another terrified messenger arrived to tell that the house in which his sons and daughters were feasting had been blown down by the winds of Heaven, and all had perished in that overthrow.

Job's Dreadful Affliction.

On hearing this, the desolate man arose and performed the usual acts of a mourner. He rent his mantle and shaved his head: but the strength of his soul was not broken; he fell upon the ground and worshipped God, saying, "Naked came I forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away: blessed be the name of Jehovah." It is then added, that "in all this," that is, up to this time, "Job sinned not, and uttered nothing rash against Jehovah."

Again we are conducted to the gates of heaven, and behold the Lord rejoicing over the uprightness of his servant, and in the utter defeat of Satan's devices against him. But Satan suggested that all other calamities were light compared with those which took away ease of body and threatened life. Job had indeed come forth from the trial which made him poor and had taken the lives of others: "But," he said, "put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and to thy face he will renounce thee." But God had confidence in his servant, and said, "Behold, he is in thy hand, but spare his life."

In consequence of this, Job was speedily afflicted with a grievous disease which ren-

dered him loathsome to himself, and an object of pity to others. Being in the first stage of the disease covered with sore boils, "from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot," the afflicted man—so lately "the greatest of all the men of the East"—sat down mournfully among the ashes, with a potsherd to scrape his sores.

In this state of affairs Job's wife next appears upon the scene. She says to Job, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Renounce God and die." This was the very object that Satan himself had in view—to induce him to renounce his confidence in God through the greatness of his losses and the poignancy of his sufferings. But the trust of Job was still firm, and he rebuked her in the words: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And here again the author pointedly remarks, "In all this," that is, thus far, "Job sinned not with his lips."

The tidings of the great calamities which had befallen Job ere long reached his distant friends, some of whom set out to give him comfort; Bildad the Temanite, from Teman of Edom; Eliphaz the Shuhite, from the country east of the Jordan; and Zophar, from some unknown place or city called Naamah. These three persons after their journey drew near his once prosperous and pleasant home: and they beheld their friend at a distance at which they could once have easily recognized him. Disease had so altered his appearance that at first sight they knew him not; but when they found that the wretched object before them was no other than Job, "they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven." This mode of expressing their grief forcibly brings to mind that of Achilles when informed of the death of Patroclus, as narrated in Homer's *Iliad*:

A sudden horror shot through all the chiefs,
And wrapped his senses in the cloud of grief;
Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread
The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head;



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His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears;
On the hard soil his groaning breast he threw,
And rolled and grovelled, as to earth he grew.

They then "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights:—and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great." This conduct of theirs is so different from that usually pursued under such circumstances, that we are prepared by it to entertain a very favorable opinion of their discretion and right feeling. Seven days, it will be observed, was the customary time of mourning among the Orientals: but we are not to understand that they remained in the same place and posture during all the seven days, but that they mourned with him during all that time in the usual manner.

At the end of the seven days' mourning, when no hopes of recovery from his afflicted condition were entertained by Job, and not a word of consolation had been offered by his friends—who in their hearts believed that he was suffering for his sins, and that the displeasure of God was manifested against him—he then unburdened his heart in the language of complaint, lamentation, and despair, and bitterly bewailed his lot.

Job Charged with Wickedness.

Then came an earnest discussion between Job and his friends. The first speaker was Eliphaz the Temanite. He argued that Job must have committed some great sin, otherwise he would not have been so afflicted. He said, "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed." But Job did not admit the validity of Eliphaz's arguments. He defended himself against the charge of wickedness, telling them that they overwhelmed the fatherless and digged a pit for their friend.

Then Bildad the Shuhite took up a similar discourse to that of Eliphaz, and told Job of

the prosperity of the righteous, while the wicked are cut off like the rush or flag, that grows in moist places, and perish while they are yet green. "So," says Bildad, "are the paths of all those that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish." And again he says, "God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He help the evil-doer."

Job's Answer.

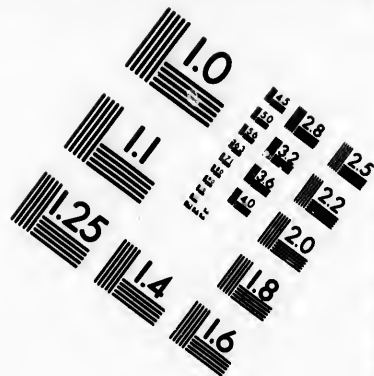
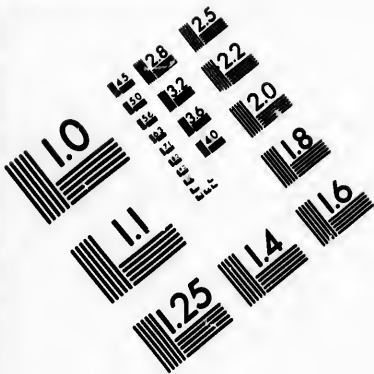
But Job answers that there is no such equal retribution in the world as Bildad supposes. There are, so far as we can see, many irregularities. God does not, in temporal affliction, discriminate between the just and the unjust. He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. He does not interfere to prevent calamities befalling the just. In truth, "the earth is given into the hand of the wicked." Job says that though he were to wash his hands with snow-water, yet God would plunge him in the ditch, and his own clothes would abhor him, that is, his integrity would not keep him from being covered with boils as he now is.

Then Zophar the Naamathite speaks, and charges Job with babbling, with telling lies, and with mocking. Job seemed to want reverence, and to be calling to account the justice of God; but Zophar tells him that God sees wickedness and considers it; but vain man, though born like the wild ass's colt, would yet conceive himself to be wise and able to judge even of God's dealings with men. He answers Job that the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their life shall be like giving up the ghost.

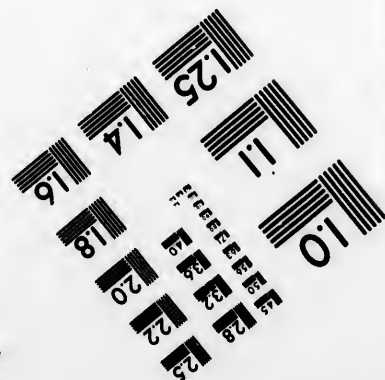
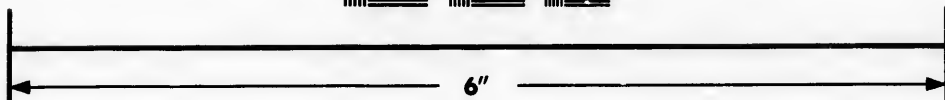
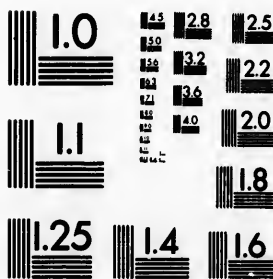
Job has borne the reproaches of his three friends, he has heard their arguments, which were clothed in pious words, and though many things had been said by them which were good in themselves, yet he rebuts the main inference that his sufferings are a punishment for his secret sins. He answers at first in a tone of raillery, and tells them that they are the people, and wisdom would die with them. So far from prosperity always attending the upright, we often see the tabernacle of the robbers prosper.







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If Job could speak to the Almighty, he would reason with Him; but as for his friends, he said, "Oh that ye would altogether hold

cries of man, and the little hope he has of a day of recompense. He does not try to defend or apologize for God, but looks at facts



JOB AND HIS COMFORTERS.—Job iii. 11.

your peace, for that would be your wisdom;” as they are presented to the ordinary view of men. but he adds, “though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him; but I will maintain mine own ways before Him.” Job draws a mournful picture of human life, setting forth the mis-

Eliphaz, shocked by Job's apparent blasphemy, reproaches him with greater severity than he had done before, and refers to cases

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of great wickedness being punished; but Job cries out, "Miserable comforters are ye all!" Other men may have been punished for wickedness, but all suffering is not punishment.

The other friends urge the same arguments, and Job points out facts which overthrow all their reasoning. "Mark me," he said, "and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth. Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." That is, they are saved from all the terrors of death and the pains of sickness; and so they ask who is the Almighty that they should serve Him, when they see the good and the bad go down to the grave together, and the worms consume them.

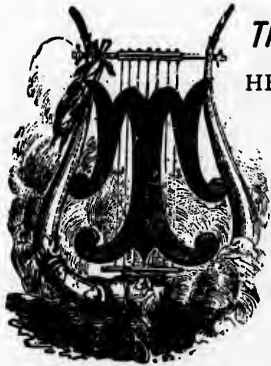
Many parts of the Book of Job are highly poetical and beautiful. In one part he launches forth into a vivid description of the miseries of man's life, and implores for a temporary refuge in the grave till the days of trouble are overpast. This latter part contains some of the finest passages in the book.

It begins thus, according to the translation of Noyes:

Man that is born of woman
Is of few days, and full of trouble:
He groweth up like a flower—and is cut down;
He fleeth also like a shadow and stayeth not.
There is hope for a tree
If it be cut down that it shall sprout again,
And that its tender branches will not fail.
Though its roots may have grown old in the earth,
And though its trunk be dead upon the ground,
At the scent of water it shall bud,
And put forth boughs like a young plant.
But man dieth—and he is gone for ever!
Man expieth—and where is he?

This is but one illustration of the wonderful force and beauty of this remarkable book.

In the end God justifies Job. He is rewarded with new possessions, a second family, and great temporal prosperity. God was angry with Job's friends, for they had not spoken the thing that was right, as Job had.

THE PSALMS AND PROVERBS.

THE Book of Psalms is not only very devotional, but it embodies some of the finest poetry of the Bible.

There are, indeed, a few specimens of lyric poetry before the time of David; but they scarcely

enter into consideration compared with the fertility of that period in which he lived. In the earlier history it is but occasionally that the voice of poetry is heard, as in the song of Moses at the Red Sea, of Deborah, and of Hannah. We are therefore surprised, after so few attempts at lyric poetry, to see so accomplished and fertile a poet as David rise up, as it were, all at once, with several others in his company.

So rapid a progress presupposes some adequate occasion, some preparatory steps. Seeking for these, many critics have lighted upon the schools of the prophets, which existed in the immediately preceding times of Samuel, if they were not founded by him. Here it is assumed that the composition of Psalms was cultivated and brought to perfection, and that here David and others received their education in minstrelsy. But this position, when closely examined, rests on no solid foundation. If David had frequented the schools of the prophets, he must have been known to Samuel; but there is not the least sign that the prophet knew him; there is much to show that he did not know him till he went to anoint one of Jesse's sons at Bethlehem, up to which time

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David appears to have been entirely occupied with his father's flock.

Indeed, the great intimacy of David with all that belonged to the shepherd's life, which supplies so many beautiful and picturesque images to his Psalms, evinces that his youth was entirely spent in the care of flocks, and not in the schools of the prophets. In fact, David was already famed for his minstrelsy before Samuel knew him; and as music and song were not in those ages separated, we may conclude that as a poet also the son of Jesse was already known and celebrated. Natural taste and capacity, joined to the much practice which open-air leisure of the shepherd's life afforded, might have done quite as much for David as that mere artificial system which is supposed, without good reason, to have prevailed in the schools of the prophets. Indeed, the well-known tendency to connect poetry and music with the pastoral life, as followed in more genial climates than our own, shows that David, left so much alone with his flock, with his God, and with nature, was in the best possible school for creating such a poet and such a minstrel as he became.

Notwithstanding the scantiness of the indications of a pre-existing taste for lyric poetry among the Hebrews, there is quite enough to prove that it did not spring at once out of the dry ground in the time of David, but existed in at least a sufficient degree to impart the bent of mind which his pastoral occupation enabled him with much advantage to cultivate. This is shown even by the short pean with which the maidens of Israel celebrated David's own victory over Goliath:

Saul smote his thousands,
But David his ten thousands—

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which exhibits a species of poetry truly lyric of its kind, though rude and uncultivated.

Still earlier, and in addition to the songs of Moses, Deborah and Hannah, to which we have already alluded, we find, particularly among the women, the practice of music and

having been called "to play" before the Philistines, which, even if understood, as it usually is, of the dance, does not exclude the accompaniments of song and instrumental music. Facts like these seem abundantly sufficient to evince the existence of a poetical taste and



HARVEST SCENE IN ANCIENT PALESTINE.—Ps. lxxv. 13.

the dance, with which song could not fail to be connected. Jephthah's daughter came out to meet her father with timbrels and with dances. At Shiloh the damsels held a yearly festival with dances. It has been questioned whether Samson was not a minstrel, from his

capacity among the Hebrew people before the appearance of David, and relieve us from any necessity of sending David himself to the schools of the prophets for his poetical education.

In connection with some of the preceding

remarks, our attention is drawn to the pastoral images contained in the Psalms. There is no single psalm in which a larger number of images are embodied than in the twenty-third.

The poet, gathering comfort in all troubles from the conviction of the loving-kindness, no less than of the power of the God whom he had served, argues, "The Lord is my Shepherd: therefore can I want nothing." This image is obviously suggested by the care, the forethought, the management, and the tenderness exercised by the Eastern shepherds to provide for and to defend their flocks in the unfrequented and wild regions into which they were often led for pasture.

In another psalm this comparison is even more emphatically produced: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel—Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." In the same sense kings are also described as standing in this pastoral relation to their people; and although David did not originate this comparison, no man ever lived who could use it with the same degree of force and propriety as one who, like him, had been called from the pastures to a throne. This may be instanced by reference to another psalm: "He chose David also His servant, and took him away from the sheepfolds. He took him, that he might feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power."

To apprehend the force of this idea we should recollect some of the peculiar conditions of the ancient pastoral life. The Hebrew patriarchs, and in a great measure their descendants, when settled in Canaan, did not usually intrust their flocks to menials and strangers, but either tended them in person or intrusted them to their sons or near relations. The flock which David himself tended was that of his father Jesse. In later times the increase of population and of the town life led to the use of hired shepherds; but the difference of treatment which the flock received under the different circumstances was most strongly felt by the Jews, and was on one occasion most pointedly indicated by our

Saviour, who, in comparing Himself to the shepherd-owner of a flock, says: "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." This position of our Saviour is admirably illustrated by the conduct of David himself, who combated and slew both a lion and a bear in defence of his father's flock. If, therefore, the sheep under the care of the shepherd-owner may rest in quiet, confident of lacking nothing which the care of that shepherd can provide, how much more he whose Shepherd is the Lord!

Green Pastures.

The psalm pursues the image by considering that this kind and powerful Shepherd "shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." This is but one of many beautiful passages of Scripture alluding to the practice of the Eastern shepherds in leading their flocks from one region to another in search of green pasture. In winter and early spring the rains compel the roots and seeds of the desert to shoot, which in summer were kept down by excessive drought. But the moisture clothes the wilderness with verdure, and with the succulent and nutritive herbage in which the flocks luxuriate and prosper. And when the periodical drought returns to the wilderness, the shepherd leads off his flocks to the mountains, the streams, and the habitable districts where herbage yet remains.

Thus it is an important point of the Eastern shepherd's character, that he should possess such a knowledge of the country and its pasture-grounds as may enable him to move his flock from one point to another with the moral certainty of finding good pasturage in the place to which he is going. The bad, that is, the ignorant shepherd, exposes his flock to the danger of perishing from hunger or fatigue: from hunger, if no pasture is found in the ex-

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pected place; from fatigue, in hurrying the flock from one place to another, in the vague expectation of finding that which he knows not where to find.

The Eastern shepherd has a staff of considerable length, with which he keeps his sheep in order. This is of great use both to

dangerous and dreadful places), I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

Many of David's Psalms were written in times of trouble, when his enemies encompassed him about, or were too strong for him. The fifty-fifth psalm, for instance, is supposed



GOING FORTH TO LABOR.—Ps. civ. 23.

the shepherd and the sheep. It helps the former to guide his sheep in the right way, to keep them from danger, to extricate them from difficulties, and to collect those that stray. Hence the rod or staff is throughout the Scriptures described as a source of confidence, and not of fear, to the sheep. It is to this the psalmist alludes, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (that is, through

to relate to the rebellion of Absalom and the treachery of Ahithophel. His heart was sore pressed and the terrors of death fell upon him, and he cried out in his misery, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." Glad would he have been to rise above the earth and to escape its sorrows. The forty-second psalm referred to the revolt of Absalom, when David crossed the fords of

the Jordan and took refuge at Mahanaim. He says that his tears had been his meat day and night, while his enemies taunted him that God had forsaken him. Then he cried out, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar."

The fifty-ninth psalm is said to refer to the emissaries of Saul watching the house of David, that they might kill him. It begins: "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men."

Hebrew Music.

"The Psalms of David," says a prominent writer, "place him among the most eminent of prophets and holy men. In humility and tenderness of expression, in loftiness and purity of religious sentiment, they are without parallel. They embody the universal language of religious emotions. The songs which cheered the solitudes of Engedi, or animated the Hebrews as they went along the glens or hillsides of Judea, have been repeated for ages in almost every part of the inhabitable world. How many hearts have they softened, purified, consoled and exalted, by the deep devotional seriousness they have kindled, and the views of the Divine wisdom, holiness, and love to which they have led!"

The Psalms contain more allusions to music and musical instruments than any other portion of Scripture. Music is coeval with poetry. Musical instruments were the invention of Jubal; and as early as the time of Laban we are introduced to a whole choir. After this, music and poetry went hand-in-hand, and with equal pace. Music and (as we have seen) poetry were held in high estimation; and so long as such poetry as that of the Hebrews was cultivated, we may conclude that music was not neglected. This might also be inferred from the frequency of its use among them.

They had music at marriages, at birth-days,

on the days which reminded them of victories over their enemies, at the inauguration of their kings, and it even enlivened the journeys which the law required the Jews to make three times a year to Jerusalem. In the service of the holy tabernacle and of the Temple the Levites were the musicians; but on other occasions any one might use musical instruments. The magnificent choir of Levites, under suitable leaders and directors, which David organized for the Temple service, was kept up by Solomon after the erection of the Temple, and was preserved till the overthrow of Jerusalem, although subject to occasional interruption under idolatrous kings. This choral establishment must have tended much to the cultivation of musical taste and power among the Hebrews. Hence the music and songs of Zion seem to have had a charm to the Babylonians.

One of the most beautiful of the Psalms, composed during the captivity, represents the exiles as disconsolately hanging their harps upon the willows growing beside the Euphrates, and as being pressed by the Babylonians to sing to them one of the songs of Zion, which produced the striking reply—"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" After the captivity, however, both the music and poetry of the Hebrews became much deteriorated, and lost its earlier charm.

Sweet Melodies.

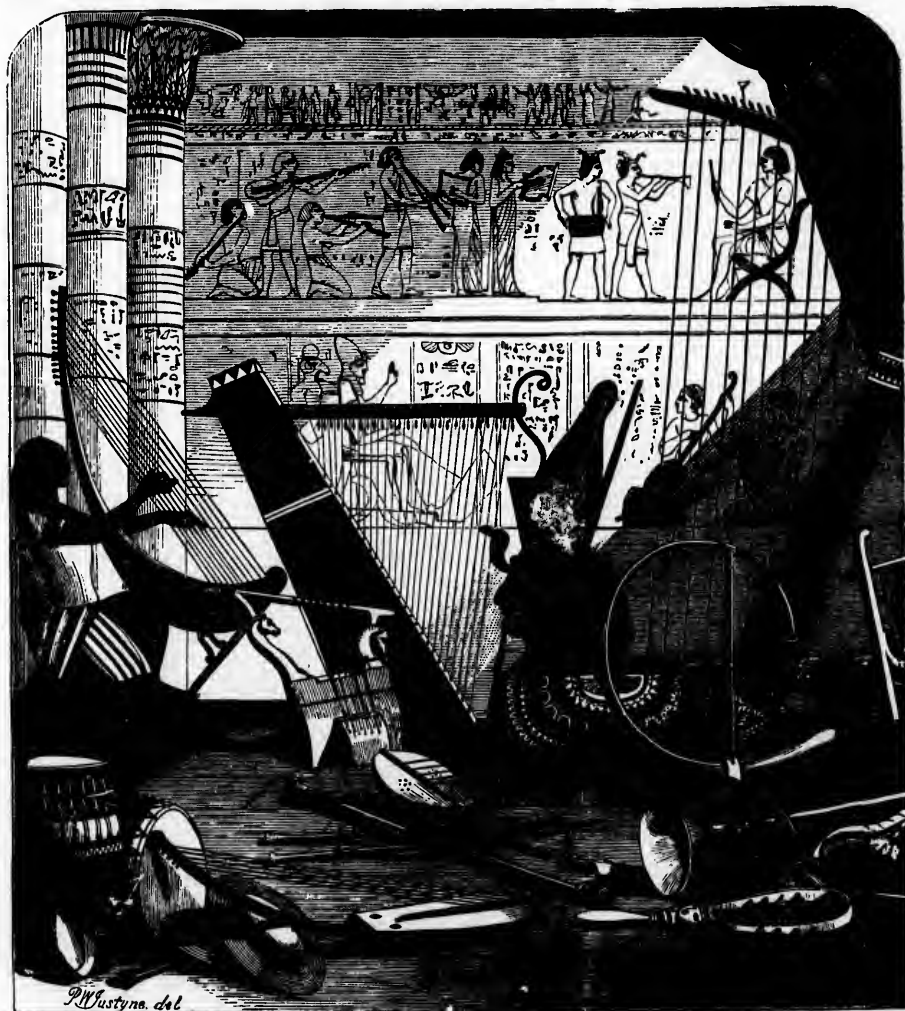
Respecting the nature of the Hebrew music, our information is very scanty; but the similar history of the art among other ancient nations may assist our conclusions. It then consisted not so much in harmony as in unison or melody. This is the music of nature, and for a long time, even after the period of antiquity, it was common among the Greeks and Romans, and at this day characterizes the music of the East. It was not the harmony of differing or dissonant sounds, but the voice, modulated after the tones of the lyre, that constituted the charm of the ancient music. The whole of antiquity is full of stories in praise of this music, and relating the wonderful influence

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over human passion and feeling which it acquired. That this ancient music did possess a wonderful mastery over the heart of man seems the Book of Psalms. It is a very singular fact that no instrument answering to a harp exists in the modern East; and we could not be cer-



ANCIENT MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.—Ps. cxl.

as well established as any of the historical facts concerning which no doubt is entertained. Frequent mention of the harp is made in the Book of Psalms. It is a very singular fact that no instrument answering to a harp exists in the modern East; and we could not be certain that it even ever did exist, but for the figures which appear in the Egyptian tombs, where we find harps of different kinds. The

word translated "harp" in our version is "kinnor," and was more probably a sort of lyre than a harp. It is one of the instruments of which Jubal was the inventor, and is that of which David was so complete a master. One circumstance highly in favor of this conclusion is, that the ancient versions of the Scripture translate the Hebrew word by terms which were applied by the Greeks and Romans to their different kinds of lyres, of which there were many, thus leaving us in great uncertainty as to the kind of lyre that might be intended.

The Oldest of Stringed Instruments.

It may be further remarked, that from the brief intimations in Scripture respecting the "kinnor," it appears that it was not a large and heavy instrument resting on the ground when played, as the word "harp" would suggest to our minds; but a light and portable instrument, which the musician bore upon his hand or arm, and might walk or dance as he played thereon. In fact, the "kinnor" is described as being used for the purposes, on the occasions, and in the manner in which we know the ancient lyre, and not the harp, to have been employed.

It is also to be observed that the "kinnor" is described in the Scripture as the most ancient of stringed instruments; and it is to the lyre that the classical ancients ascribe the same priority of origin; and in Egypt the lyre is found on monuments more ancient than those on which the harp is seen. The lyre was also the most common stringed instrument among the ancient nations. It is impossible, therefore, that it should not have been in use among the Hebrews, and being known to them, there is no other of their instruments than the "kinnor" which can be with any probability referred to it.

On the Egyptian monuments no lyre occurs exactly similar to that which is supposed to be the representation of a Jewish lyre by an Egyptian artist. The difference forms its distinctive character as a foreign instrument, for it is undoubtedly foreign, whether it be Jewish

or not. Yet it does not greatly differ from the Egyptian instrument. They are the same in size, in power, and in the general form and principle of construction. In both alike the strings are stretched upon an open frame, and then prolonged over a hollow and sonorous body of wood. Several other lyres are found on the monuments, and although their shapes and ornaments are different, this is the principle in all of them.

The Grecian fable respecting the origin of the lyre shows that this must have been the case with all the more ancient lyres, with which the weight of evidence would class the Hebrew "kinnor." It is very remarkable also that this fable refers the origin of the lyre to the banks of the Nile, showing that the Greeks at least had their instrument from that quarter. It is thus related by the Athenian mythologist, Apollodorus:—"The Nile, after having overflowed the whole country of Egypt, when it returned within its natural bounds left on the shore a great number of animals of various kinds, and among the rest a tortoise, the flesh of which being dried and wasted by the sun, nothing remained but nerves and cartilages, and these, being braced and contracted by the drying heat, became sonorous. Mercury, walking along the banks of the river, happened to strike his foot against this shell, and was so pleased with the sound produced, that the idea of a lyre presented itself to his mind. He therefore constructed the instrument in the form of a tortoise, and strung it with the dried sinews of dead animals."

Hence we observe that many of the Greek lyres have that tortoise-shape which this story would lead us to expect. The fable itself is, with some variation, related by Homer in his "Hymn to Hermes." The description of the primitive instrument is thus rendered by a modern poet:

And through the stone-shelled tortoise's strong skin
At proper distances small holes he made,
And fastened the cut stems of seeds within,
And with a piece of leather overlaid
The open space, and fixed the cubits in,
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all

Symphonious chords both strong and rhythmical.
When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
He tied the chords, and made divisions meet,
Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
Up from beneath his hands a tumult sweet
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
A strain of unpremeditated wit,
Joyous and wild.

grave, the mean, and the acute, he made the grave answer to winter, the mean to spring, and the acute to summer; and it is a well-known fact that not only the Egyptians, but the Greeks, divided their year into not more than three seasons, spring, summer, and winter, corresponding to the three sounds."

It may further illustrate this to remark that

The tambourine or tabret must be described



JEWISH CAPTIVES IN BABYLONIA.—Ps. cxxxvii. 4.

Hermes, or Mercury, to whom the invention of the lyre is thus ascribed, was himself of Egyptian origin, like many other of the gods of the Grecian mythology. So, Diodorus Siculus makes him one of the counsellors of Osiris in Egypt; and by this author he is said, among other useful things, "to have invented the lyre, furnishing it with three strings, in allusion to the seasons of the year. For these strings, producing three different sounds, the

generally as a wooden frame covered with skin, and struck by the hands. But they were by no means all of one shape; and it appears that the Hebrew word comprehends every known shape of the instrument, just as we should undoubtedly call every instrument of the kind a "tambourine," whether it were round, oval, square, or oblong.

Tambourines were undoubtedly known in Syria before the Hebrew fathers had any

knowledge of Egypt for we find that Laban lamented that no opportunity had been given him of sending Jacob away "with songs, with tabret, and with harp." Miriam, the sister of Moses, and the females with her, accompanied their song of victory with the sound of this instrument. Job was acquainted with it, and

"timbrel-playing damsels," and is nowhere described as being employed in battle, or for any warlike purpose. In short, it was applied to exactly the same purposes as by other nations, who used it in dances, in attestations of gladness, at festivals, and on such like occasions. So we find it represented in the Egyp-



THE SWEET SINGER OF ISRAEL.—Ps. lxxii. 20.

David employed it in all the festivities of his religion. Isaiah adduces it as an instrument employed by voluptuaries, but left in silence on the breaking out of wars and desolations.

The occasion on which this instrument is mentioned is always one of joy; and, for the most part, those who play upon it are females, who on this very account have the name of

tian sculptures, and it is more than likely that the forms which are represented in these sculptures are the same as those of the Hebrew instrument, as there is a strong resemblance between them.

These are of three kinds, differing probably in sound as well as in form: one is circular, another oblong, and a third consisting of two

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squares separated by a bar. They were all beaten by the hand and used as an accompaniment to the harp and other instruments. Men and women used them, but most usually the latter, who are often represented as dancing to them unaccompanied by other instruments.

A Popular Instrument.

From the imperfect representation of those in the tombs at Thebes, it is difficult to say whether the Egyptian tambourine had the same movable piece of metal let into its wooden frame, as in those of the present day, but their mode of playing it was similar; and, from the manner in which it is held up after having been struck, we may venture to conclude that they were furnished with metal rings, for the free emission of whose sound this position was peculiarly calculated. These appendages of the tambourine were certainly very ancient. It is seen from the paintings at Herculaneum that the Greek tambourine was furnished with balls of metal, pendent from the front part, or from the centre of its circular rim, to which each appears to have been attached by a short thong. Here also, on classic ground, the instrument was mostly confined to women, and chiefly used in the festivals of Bacchus and Cybele.

There is even now no instrument of music more common in the East than the tambourine. And it is also constantly met with in Northern and Western Africa. The Arabian tambourine, which may be taken as a type of the whole, is a broad hoop covered with a stretched skin. In the rim there are usually thin, round pulleys, or wheels of metal, which also make some noise. It is played in the same way as with us; and, indeed, our tambourine is derived from this indirectly through Spain.

No musical instrument is perhaps so much employed in Turkey as this. When the females in their harem dance, the time is always beaten with this instrument. It would seem that the Egyptian females, dancing and singing to the tambourine, and bearing palm branches and green twigs, were wont to visit the tombs of

their deceased friends. Something of this may be traced in the Friday visit of the Moslem women to the cemeteries, and, what is more remarkable, the tambourine is still used on these occasions, when the death is recent, to accompany the notes of wailing. For the same purpose it is used by the professed wailing-women when employed in the house of mourning. In this respect it seems now to occupy the place of the funeral pipe of the ancient Hebrews; and yet we are not sure that they had not some such use for the tambourine; for the image in Nahum in which women in the act of mourning are described as "tabering upon their breasts," would seem to have been derived from some such usage.

Religious Processions.

Painters usually represent the Hebrew tabret by a small kettle-drum, and although the tambourine is, without doubt, the instrument principally denoted, we should be reluctant to aver that a kind of kettle-drum may not have been included. From its general shape, as well as from being beaten by the hands, it appears to have been similar to the present darookha drum of Egypt and Arabia. It is made of parchment strained and glued over a funnel-shaped case (often of pottery), which is a hollow cylinder, with a truncated cone attached to it. It is beaten by the hand, and when relaxed is braced by exposing it for a few moments to the sun or the heat of the fire.

Cymbals are often mentioned in the Psalms; and it is not doubted that instruments of this kind are really to be understood by the word thus translated. These instruments were known to the ancient Egyptians, of a shape nearly similar to our own, and made of a mixed metal, apparently brass, or a compound of brass and silver. The classical cymbals were also similar, and the same shape is still preserved in the East. Cymbals were much employed in the religious processions and sacred mysteries of the ancients.

Among the Israelites the use of trumpets was prescribed by a Divine regulation, by which

Moses was directed to make two trumpets of beaten silver for sacerdotal uses. There is little doubt that the original form of these trumpets was perpetuated in those in after ages made for the Temple service; and of these we happen to have authentic figures in the sculptures on the arch of Titus, which fully correspond with the Mosaical intimations, and also with the description of Josephus, who, as a priest, doubtless framed his account after those which were in his time actually in use. Moses, he says, "invented a species of trumpet of silver. Its length was little less than a cubit, and it was somewhat thicker than a flute. Its opening was oblong, so as to permit blowing in it with the mouth. At the lower end it had the form of a bell."

These accounts tally very closely with the figures of trumpets which we observe on the Egyptian monuments. It is about a foot and a half long, apparently of brass (being colored yellow); and when sounded it was held with both hands, and either used singly or as part of the military band, with the drum and other instruments. It was straight, like the Roman tuba, or our common trumpet, and appears to have been particularly, although not exclusively, appropriated to martial uses.

Moses was commanded to make only two trumpets, because the priests for whose use they were intended were then only two. Afterwards far more of them were made. When, however, riches disappeared from Palestine, baser metal was employed in the manufacture of these trumpets. They were employed in calling the congregation together, in sacrifices, and in battles.

The Hebrew Flute.

It is agreed that pipes or flutes of some kind or other were used by the Hebrews. People employed these instruments in connection with others at the feast of tabernacles, and in general at every feast, especially, however, while journeying up to Jerusalem to celebrate these feasts there. At least Isaiah refers to such a use:—"Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept; and

gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord." To accompany travelling with music and singing is common in the East even at the present day. We also find a general usage of this kind, for the sons of the prophets went forth to meet Saul with various kinds of music, and among others with pipes. This instrument was also employed at the anointing of Solomon. For the most part it was consecrated to joy and pleasure; hence, in the time of Judas Maccabæus, the Israelites complained "that all joy had vanished from Jacob, and the pipe and the cithara were silent."

It was, however, employed also on serious occasions, as there was a distinct pipe of plaintive tone adapted to such occasions. Players on such instruments were present in the death-chamber of Jairus's daughter; and the attendance of pipers at funerals and lamentations is often mentioned by the Jewish writers. Josephus speaks of them, and says that many hired pipers led the way in the wailings. We learn also from the Rabbinical writers that even the poorest Israelite, when his wife died, had two pipers and one wailing woman to make lamentations; and the sick had more, according to their dignity or means of payment.

Much speculation respecting the form of the Hebrew pipes may be regarded as superseded by the discovery of those figured on the Egyptian monuments. These are of two kinds, single and double. The former is sometimes of extraordinary length, and the holes placed so low that when playing the musician was obliged to extend his arms. It is of equal breadth throughout, not spreading out at the lower end like those in modern use. This pipe seems to have belonged principally, if not exclusively, to male performers, who held it with both their hands, and either stood, knelt, or sat upon the ground. The double pipe consisted of two pipes, which seem to have been occasionally united together by a common mouthpiece, and played each with the corresponding hand. It was not only used on solemn occasions,

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"HE HEAPETH UP RICHES, AND KNOWETH NOT WHO SHALL GATHER THEM."—Ps. XXXIX. 6.



but very generally at festive banquets, both among the Egyptians and the Greeks. Men, but more frequently women, played upon it.

The Psalms are lyrical in the strict and proper sense; for with the Hebrews, as in the ancient world generally, song and music were connected, and the titles of most of the Psalms manifestly point to their connection with music, although not in a manner very intelligible to us. Moreover, these compositions deserve the name of lyric on account of their character as works of taste. The essence of lyric poetry is the immediate expression of feeling; and feeling is the sphere to which most of the Psalms belong. Pain, sorrow, fear, hope, joy, confidence, gratitude, submission to God, everything that moves and elevates the soul, is expressed in these hymns. Most of them are the warm outpourings of the excited, susceptible heart; the fresh offspring of inspiration and elevation of thought: while only a few seem like the colder productions of artificial imitation; and a few others are simply forms of prayer, Temple hymns, and collections of proverbs.

There is a striking peculiarity in the Psalms which often adds great force to the meaning. It consists in this, that the thought or expression of a preceding verse is resumed and carried forward in the next; for example, in psalm cxxi, we read thus:

"I lift mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.

*My help cometh from Jehovah,
Who hath made heaven and earth.*

He suffereth not my feet to be moved:
Thy keeper slumbereth not.

Lo, he slumbereth not, nor sleepeth,
The keeper of Israel.

*Jehovah is thy keeper;
Jehovah the shade at thy right hand.*

The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.

Jehovah preserveth thee from all evil,
Preserveth thy soul.

Jehovah preserveth thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth for evermore."

The antithetic parallels of Hebrew poetry are those which next offer themselves to our notice. In this species of parallelism two lines usually correspond with one another by an opposition of terms and sentiment; when the second is contrasted with the first, sometimes in expressions, sometimes in sense only. This is not confined to any particular form. Thus in Proverbs we read:

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."

"A wise son rejoiceth his father;
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother."

In which instance every word has its opposite; "father" and "mother," in the last, being relatively opposite. Of the same kind are the following:

"The lip of truth shall be established forever;
But a lying tongue is but for a moment."

"The house of the wicked shall be overthrown;
But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish."

Here the antithesis is very beautiful and effective. The most substantial structure, the *house* of the wicked, shall be thrown down; but the frailest tenement, the *tabernacle*, or shed, of the righteous, shall endure.

Much indeed of the elegance, acuteness, and force of a great number of Solomon's wise sayings arise from this opposition of sentiment and diction. We are not, therefore, to expect frequent instances of it in the other poems of the Old Testament; especially those which are elevated in the style and more connected in the parts. But although it is of comparatively rare occurrence, it is by no means inconsistent with the superior kinds of Hebrew poetry, nor are examples wanting in them. A beautiful instance occurs in Hannah's thanksgiving ode:

"The bow of the mighty is broken;
And they that stumbled are girded with strength.
The full have hired themselves for bread,
And the hungry have ceased to hunger."

This striking peculiarity is one of the captivating charms of Hebrew poetry. Also we find it in some of the Psalms:

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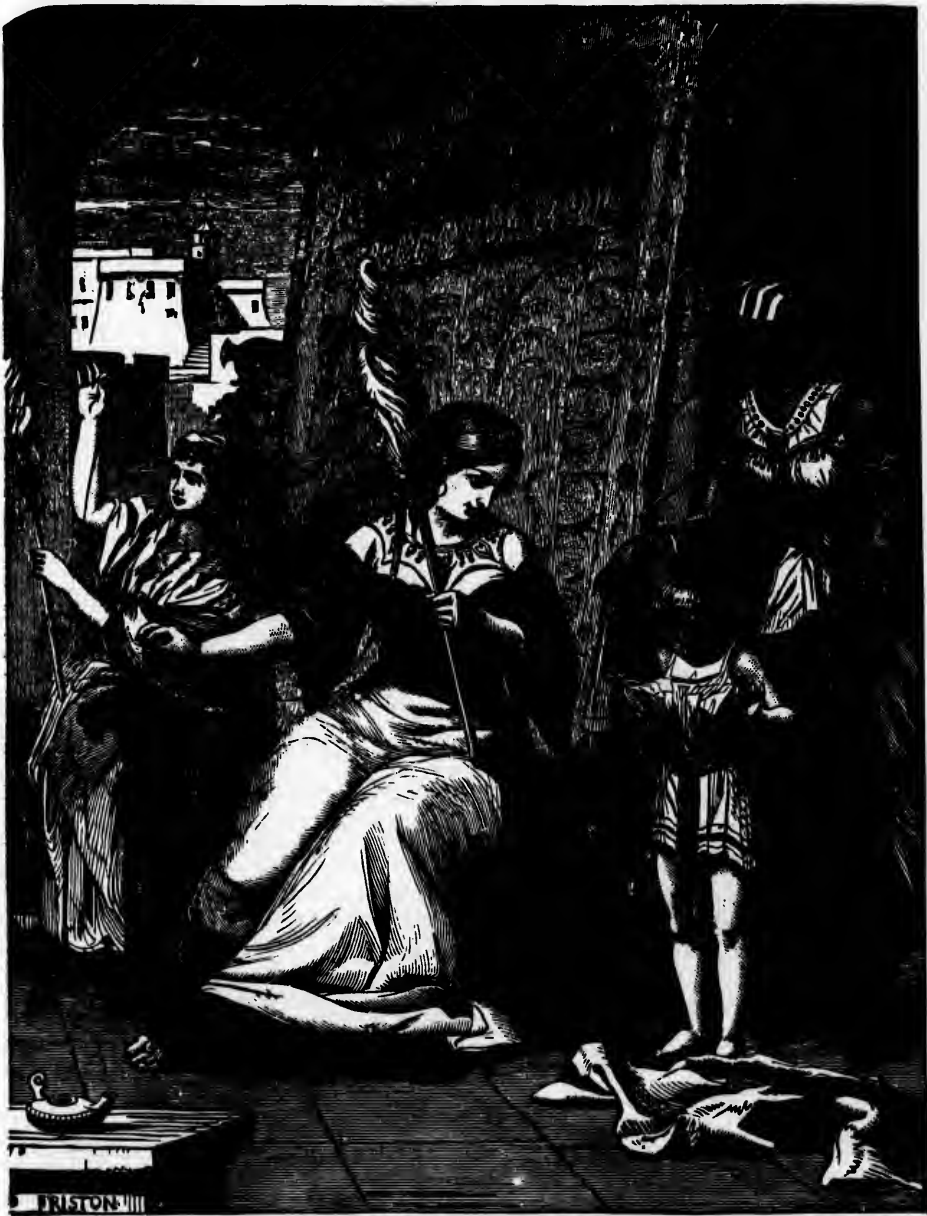
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THE GOOD WIFE.—Prov. xxxi. 27.

"These in chariots, those on horses,
But we, in the name of Jehovah—will be strong;
They are bowed down and fallen;
But we are risen, and maintain ourselves firm."

"In whose eyes a vile person is contemned,
But he that feareth the Lord honored:
Who swears to the wicked, and breaks not his oath."

"For his anger endureth but a moment,
But his favor through life:
Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy cometh in the morning."

Even Isaiah sometimes makes use of these opposites in thought and sentiment by which, without departing from his usual dignity, he adds much to the beauty of his composition:

"In a little anger have I forsaken thee;
But with great mercies will I receive thee again.
In a short wrath, I hid my face for a moment from thee;
But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.

"Behold, my servants shall eat,
But ye shall be famished;
Behold, my servants shall drink,
But ye shall be thirsty;
Behold, my servants shall rejoice,
But ye shall be confounded."

There is sometimes a change of parts in the same line, besides the opposition of the two lines, forming a kind of double antithesis. Thus in Proverbs we read as follows:

"There is that maketh himself rich,
Yet wanteth all things;
There is that maketh himself poor,
Yet hath great riches."

And likewise in the Song of Solomon:

"I am swarthy, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem;
As the tents of Kedar, as the pavilions of Solomon."

The last line here is to be divided and separately applied to the preceding: "Swarthy as the tents of Kedar, comely as the pavilions of Solomon." No mode of expression could be more striking than this.

To this class belongs also the riddle of Samson, referred to in a former chapter:

"Out of the eater came forth meat,
Out of the fierce came forth sweetness."

The Proverbs, as we are informed at the beginning and in other parts of the book, were written by Solomon, king of Israel; and that he was the author of by far the greater portion of the proverbs which the book contains is admitted even by those who allege that the final chapters contain a supplement, the authorship of which must be ascribed to other writers.

The Book of Proverbs.

We are informed in Scripture that this wisest of kings, being desirous of employing, for the benefit of mankind, the wisdom which it had pleased God to bestow upon him, composed various works for their instruction; and these works doubtless did much in their day to form and advance the Hebrew mind in the various branches of knowledge to which they belonged. They had thus an important use, and served the purpose to which they were directed; and although it would be curious and interesting to possess all the works of this ancient sage, we have the less reason to regret that the present book, and, as most think, the Canticles and the Book of Ecclesiastes, are all that remain of the various works of him who is related to have spoken "three thousand proverbs;" whose "songs were a thousand and five;" and who "spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" and who "spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes."

The greater portion of these works was probably not admitted into the sacred canon on account of their not being designed for religious instruction, or not being regarded as emanations of those higher inspirations which the books accounted sacred. In the possession of Solomon's doctrinal and moral works, we may be consoled for the loss of his physical and philosophical productions; and enough happily remains to bear evidence of the exalted wisdom of their author.

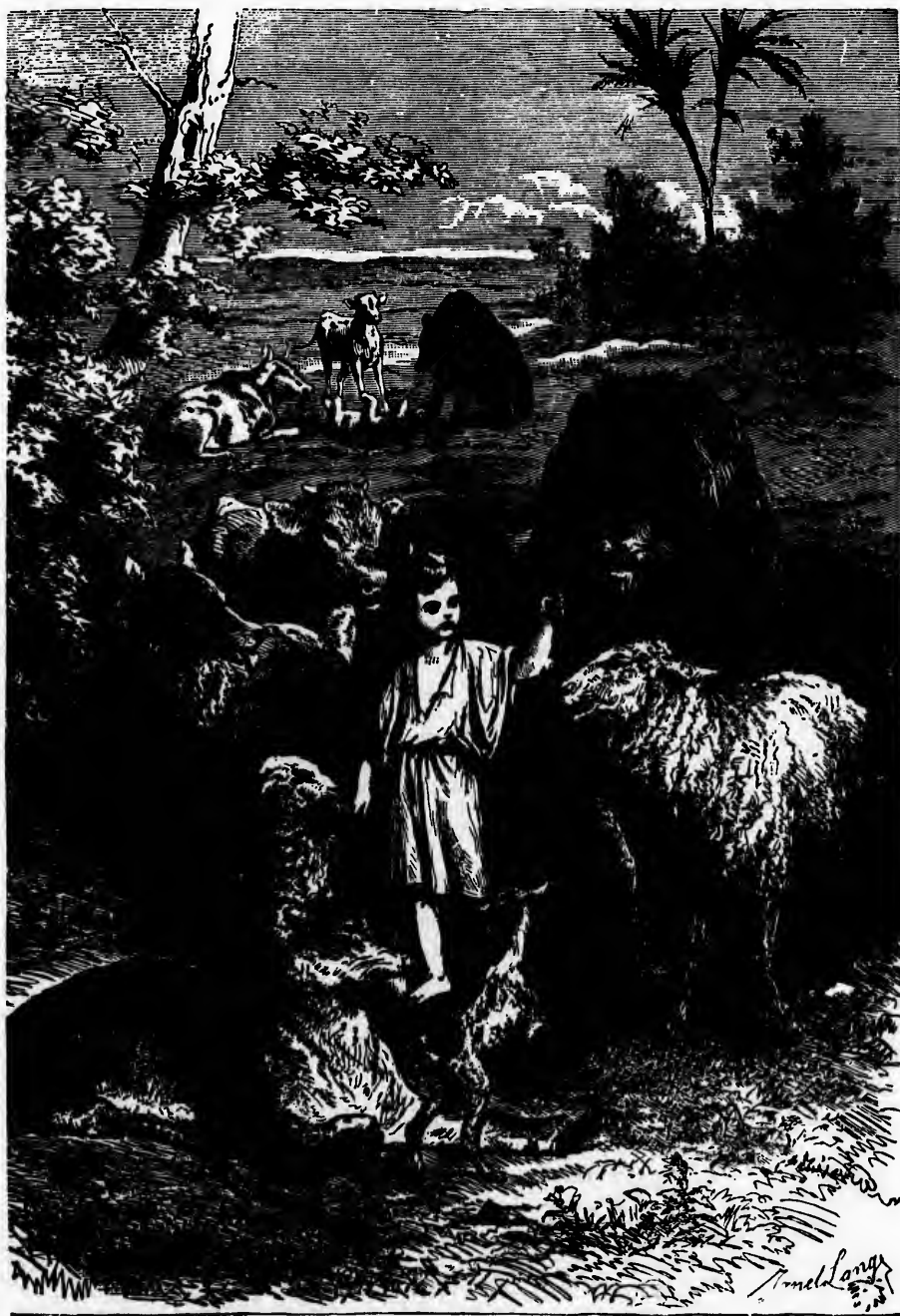
This Book of Proverbs, then, contains the maxims of long experience, framed by one who was well qualified, by his rare gifts and talents, to draw just lessons from a compre-

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"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."—Is. xi. 6.

hensive survey of human life. His proverbs are justly founded on principles of human nature, and so adapted to the permanent interests of men that they agree with the manners of every age, and may be assumed as rules for the direction of our conduct in every condition and rank of life, however varied in its complexion or diversified by circumstances: they embrace not only the concerns of private morality, but the great objects of political importance. Subsequent moralists have done little more than dilate on the precepts and comment on the wisdom of Solomon.

Wise Sayings.

The Chinese and the Persians retain their partiality for proverbs, although they are not wanting in works in which "wisdom is digested, methodized, and reduced to order and connection." Burckhardt has also given us a collection of Arabic proverbs, with a commentary, many of which convey the same illustrations of the usages of the people which we find in the sacred Book of Proverbs. In fact, it is necessary, to be thoroughly acquainted with the physical and intellectual condition of a people, to understand their proverbs well; and he who has acquired this by diligent study, will best understand and most entirely enjoy the Proverbs of Solomon. As Burckhardt's book is not common, the reader will not be displeased to see a few specimens of the proverbs which it contains:

"Rather be sacrificed with an axe than require favors from others.

Work (were it only) for a single grain, and reckon up the profits of him who does nothing.

Follow the owl; she will lead thee to a ruined place.

The corn passes from hand to hand, but comes at last to the mill.

A well from which thou drinkest, throw not a stone into it.

The value of every man consists in what he does well.

Advice given in the midst of a crowd is loathsome.

A day that is not thine own, do not reckon it as of thy life.

On the day of victory no fatigue is felt.

Be diligent, and God will send profit.

How many are the roads that lead not to the heart!

Him whom goodness cannot mend, evil will not mend.

The soil of labor rather than the saffron of indolence.

Those are the best riches which are spent in the proper place.

God bless him who pays visits, and short visits!

A tree that affords thee shade, do not order it to be cut down.
In every bead is some wisdom."

The Proverbs of Solomon, and the other works ascribed to him, contain not a few of those allusions to water which we expect to find in an Oriental book. Such references in fact pervade the Bible from the beginning to the ending; and rivers of water, wells, and gushing springs supply to the sacred poets and prophets some of their most vivid and happy images. In Proverbs alone we find such a graphic illustration as the following:

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
And running waters out of thine own well."

Which is very much elucidated by the fact that even at the present day every respectable house in Jerusalem has a reservoir or cistern sunk in the court-yard, which during the later spring rains is filled up with water, lasting over the long and dry summer, and is then again filled by the early rains of autumn. This is in fact the main dependence of the inhabitants of a region where springs of water are few, and where nearly all the rivers dry up very early in the summer. Therefore, a man who has no cistern must depend upon the cisterns of others, and be constantly asking what is really a great favor and an inconvenience to them, while the supply from this source is in danger of being cut off as soon as the owners of the cistern think their supply is likely to run short.

We also find the following reference:

"Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad,
And rivers of water in the streets."

This to an Oriental is an image of the highest degree of abundance and blessedness. It is, however, founded on facts. It could indeed not often occur in Palestine that the waste water of a fountain should run in streams through different streets; but it does occur in some places where water is unusually abundant, as in Damascus: and to those who have been inured to the heat, the thirst, and the scarcity of water in Eastern climates, this run-

ning of the precious fluid to waste gives an idea of redundant plenty and luxurious extrav- although it has passed from the Bible into common use among ourselves, is with us com-



agance, which the inhabitants of well-watered regions cannot easily apprehend. The proverb—"Stolen waters are sweet" comparatively unmeaning. No one steals water here. The proverb is only felt in its due force in such climates as those in which it origi-

nated; where water is often scarce, and, therefore, so valuable as to be an object of care and solicitude to the owners; is often bought at a price we should consider exorbitant; and often stolen by those who will not or cannot buy. Many illustrative passages will occur, to those familiar with Scripture. The strifes about wells of water and the watering of flocks; the offer of the Israelites to buy (that is, not steal) the water they required in passing through Edom; the doleful complaint of the prophet, "We have bought our water for money," and other like passages, may be instanced:

"The liberal soul shall be made fat;
And he that watereth others shall be watered."

The sentiment indicated by this figure is obvious; but the fact on which it is founded cannot be apprehended or felt strongly in a moist climate like ours, where real thirst for water is scarcely known. But it follows that, where water is scarce and precious, and where also the heat of the climate makes every one need a large quantity of water daily, the liberality of "watering others," that is, of giving water freely to the thirsty, is most strongly felt and gratefully acknowledged. In fact, in the Scriptures, liberality is as frequently instanced by giving water to the thirsty as by giving bread to the hungry. In another place the idea involved in the present verse is dwelt upon very strongly: "If thine enemy thirst, give him drink;" and in the New Testament the Divine King, in the grand parable of the final judgment, mentioned, to the commendation of the righteous: "I was thirsty and ye gave me drink;" and the denial of drink to His thirst is noticed in His condemnation of the wicked. In another case our Saviour uttered the memorable words: "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

"The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." That is, that although the breach may seem at first unimportant, it is widened by the action of the water, which at length bursts forth in a mighty stream which

can be checked no longer, and not only exhausts and wastes the fertilizing waters of kindness and love, but spreads damage and ruin all around.

"The law of the wise is a fountain of life." A fountain of life is a living fountain, that is, a perennial spring, or a spring which sends forth a running stream. In this sense it is contrasted with dead or stagnant water, such as that of reservoirs, lakes and ponds.

"Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water;
But a man of understanding will draw it out."

This very fine proverb refers to the depth of wells before the water is reached. In Palestine this is often very great. The celebrated well of Jacob, near Shechem, is stated by travellers to be one hundred and five feet deep, with only five feet of water in it—now, at least. It is not improbable that Solomon had this very well in view. The labor of drawing from such a well may possibly have contributed to the first unwillingness of the woman of Samaria to give drink therefrom to the thirsting Saviour: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." From such wells water is often drawn by hand in a not too heavy leathern bucket, sometimes by a windlass, but oftener by means of the shadow, which is the most common and simple of all the machines used in the East for raising water, whether from rivers or from wells.

An Ancient Well-Sweep.

It consists of two posts or pillars of wood, or of mud and canes or rushes, about five feet in height, and less than three feet apart, with a horizontal piece of wood extending from top to top, to which is suspended a slender lever, formed of a branch of a tree, having at one end a weight, chiefly composed of mud, and at the other, suspended from two long palm-sticks, a vessel in the form of a bowl, made of basket-work, or of a hoop and a piece of woollen stuff or leather; with this vessel the water is thrown up.

That this mode of raising water is very ancient is shown by an example which is rep-

represented in the mural paintings of the Egyptians. The difference between this and that more ancient mode is preserved in Syria, and indeed in most other countries where the prin-



of which we have given the description is, chiefly, that the lever is not suspended from, but balanced upon the cross-beam. And this principle of the balance and lever is applied to the raising of water. This principle is extensively applied to that purpose throughout Asia, was

formerly used extensively in Europe, and is now in use from one end of Russia to the other, where the numerous levers "kicking the beam," and therefore rising high in the air, is a striking characteristic of the villages. In this case, as in China, the lever is usually balanced upon a stout pole, forked at the upper end; and it of course follows that the stock is higher, and the lever and rope longer in proportion to the depth of the well or stream from which the water is to be taken, or to the height to which it is to be raised. In Syria, where the wells are deep, the stock is high and the rope long; but in that country (including Palestine) the shadoof is less common than in other parts of Asia; but where it is found, as in the neighborhood of Jaffa, the lever is balanced and not suspended.

With this simple machine, which is like our old-fashioned well-sweep, the chief labor is not to raise the bucket when full, but to overcome the resistance of the lever's loaded end in lowering the bucket when empty. When the river is too low or the banks too high for shadoofs on the same level to bring water to the surface of the soil, a series of four or five shadoofs, or sets of shadoofs, is rendered necessary. The water is then raised from the river by one set, and discharged into a trench, from which it is taken by another set, and raised to a higher trench, and so on to the top.

Watered Gardens.

There is every reason to think that the contrivances for irrigation now used in Western Asia are as old as the art of husbandry itself in the same region, and we are led to suppose that similar contrivances existed among the ancient Hebrews. Under this view the subject assumes a degree of Biblical interest, from the frequent allusions in Scripture to "watered gardens," and to the general importance of irrigation.

We have already described the shadoof, which is so much used for raising water. Another machine much employed for the same purpose is the sackiyeh, or Persian wheel. The name seems to indicate the

country of its origin, but it is now largely employed on the banks of all the principal rivers of Western Asia for the purpose of raising water for the irrigation of fields and gardens.

The sackiyeh mainly consists of a vertical wheel, which raises the water in earthen pots attached to cords, and forms a continuous series; a second vertical wheel, fixed to the same axis, with cogs, and a large horizontal cogged wheel, which, being turned by a pair of cows or bulls, or by a single beast, puts in motion the former wheels and pots. The construction of this machine is of a very rude kind, and its motion produces a disagreeable creaking noise. It will be perceived that the revolution of the wheels takes down the string of buckets empty on one side, and brings them up full on the other. It is thus, by the wheel and string of buckets, that water is usually raised from wells in Palestine and Syria, although the shadoof is sometimes employed.

A Novel Sight.

The Scottish Missionary Deputation observed at the public well outside the village of Khanounes near Gaza, what they call a Persian wheel, at work: it was turned by a camel, and poured a copious supply of water into a trough. What these pious and intelligent travellers say of this well applies to all other public Eastern wells, and illustrates the usages which the Scriptures indicate. "The well is evidently the rendezvous for idlers, gazers, and talkers, and as much a place of public resort as the market. Old and young, cattle and camels were crowded together. The coolness of the spot and the prospect of meeting others no doubt induced many to take their seat by the well-side." This brings to mind the adventures of Eleazer and Jacob at the well of Haran, of Moses at the well of Midian, and even in some degree of that which befell our Lord at Jacob's well.

Another and more simple mode of raising water, which the travellers just cited observed in Palestine, gave them much amusement, but which is very familiar to persons of wider travel in the East. At Doulis in Philistia,

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" while the servants were pitching the tent we | rope is attached by one end to a large bucket
wandered through the place, and sitting down | made of skin, and let down over a pulley,



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draw water. The well is very deep, and the | which is driven up and down the slope of the
mode of drawing up the water curious. A | hill; the skin of water is thus hauled up to

the top, where a man stands ready to empty it into the trough, from which women receive

of raising water from rivers, canals, and reservoirs, to irrigate fields and gardens, is thus de-



the water into earthenware jugs. To us this was a novel and amusing sight."

Another very simple mode for the purpose

scribed: Where the elevation of the bank over which water is to be lifted is trifling, they sometimes adopt the following simple method:—A

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light water-tight bucket is held suspended, on ropes between two men, who by alternately relaxing and tightening the ropes by which they hold it between them, give a certain swinging motion to the bucket, which first fills it with water, and then empties it with a jerk upon the higher level, the elastic spring which is in the bend of the ropes serving to diminish the labor to a very great extent.

Grounds intended to be artificially irrigated are usually divided into squares by ridges of earth or furrows. The water is conducted from the machine, or from the trough or cistern which is connected therewith, by a narrow gutter, and is admitted into one square after another by the gardener, who is always ready, as occasions require, to stop or divert the torrent, by turning the earth against it with his foot, and opening at the same time with his mattock a new trench to receive it. This mode of distributing water over land rarely refreshed by rain is more than once alluded to in the Scriptures; and, indeed, a distinction is founded upon it between Egypt and the land of Canaan:—"The land whither thou goest to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven."

This evidently expresses that the land of Canaan was naturally so much better watered by rain than the land of Egypt, that this mode of artificial irrigation would not there, as in Egypt, be required for arable lands, but only for gardens; and this distinction exists at the present day. In Palestine artificial irrigation is only used for gardens; for the irrigation of the arable lands the inhabitants trust to the rains of heaven, the moisture afforded by which is sedulously economized and preserved as long as possible in the soil, by the cultivation of the hills in successive terraces, which is the usual mode of culture among the hills of Palestine and Lebanon, for those objects of culture which do not afford their produce till

late in the season. Grain does not need this care, as it is harvested before the summer heats have absorbed the moisture of the plains. The above explanation of "watering by the foot" is the only one which can be deduced from any present practice in Egypt.

A Singular Illusion.

Having thus been led to give attention to the subject of water, we may add a few words respecting the mirage, or the illusive appearance of water, often witnessed in the dry plains of Egypt and Syria. The Scottish Missionary Deputation, when in Egypt, noticed this illusion: "In the distance we observed the well-known phenomenon of the mirage, to which the prophet Isaiah is supposed to allude: 'The parched ground shall become a pool.' At one time we saw what appeared to be a calm flowing water, reflecting from its unruffled surface the trees growing on its banks, while some object in the background assumed the appearance of a splendid residence amidst a grove of trees. At another time there appeared castles embosomed in a forest of palms, with a lake of clear water stretched between us and them. Generally the mirage may be well known by its continually shifting the view, and by the hazy movement of the atmosphere over the apparent waters."

Another traveler describes the same phenomenon as seen by him in the lowlands of Sinai:—"During the early part of the day we several times beheld the phenomenon of the mirage, or false water of the desert. Its resemblance to a diminutive lake was certainly very striking, since it not only reflected the bushes on its margin, but had something of the ripple of water, and was streaked by those narrow shining particles of light observable on the surface of lakes when viewed from a distance, producing a very striking effect."

Natural History in Proverbs.

So acute an observer, and one so interested in the study of natural history, as Solomon, was likely to have his attention attracted by the art to which, in the East, some persons

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have in all ages pretended, of being able to exercise a strange power over the venomous serpent will bite without enchantment, and a babbler is no better." David also has a



serpents, and to handle them freely without harm. We accordingly find an allusion to this remarkable fact in his writings: "Surely, by an oriental mind: similar and even more distinct allusion to same fact which would be readily understood

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Their poison is like the poison of serpents;
They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear,
Which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer,
Charming never so wisely."

Jeremiah also :

"Behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you,
Which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith
the Lord."

These passages refer to a practice so opposed to all our notions and knowledge, as to give some interest to the explanation to which they point, and which is perhaps only needed because of our own immunity from the evils which the presence of poisonous serpents creates. They afford in fact the earliest existing references to the practice of serpent-charming. Our other ancient information is founded on the practices of the *Psylli*, a people of Cyrenaica, who were the most celebrated serpent-charmers of antiquity, and who are frequently mentioned by the classical writers. Their gift was supposed to be a natural power inherent to the race—a kind of gypsies, apparently. Lucan makes the same statement, and affords many additional particulars. A body of these *Psylli* undertook to protect the Roman camp in Africa from serpents, by which the region was much infested. They kept marching around it chanting their "mystic songs;" but also employed the natural and probably more effective expedient of surrounding the camp by a line of fires, made of different kinds of wood, the smell of which was to keep the serpents from approaching. When any soldier abroad in the daytime happened to be bitten, the *Psylli* undertook to cure him. First, to prevent, as they said, the poison from spreading while they used their arts in charming it forth, they rubbed the wounded part with saliva.

Then sudden he begins the mystic song,
And rolls the numbers hasty o'er his tongue;
Swift he runs on, nor pauses once for breath,
To stop the progress of approaching death:
He fears the cure might suffer by delay,
And life be lost but for a moment's stay.
Thus oft, though deep within the veins it lies,
By magic numbers chased, the mischief flies.

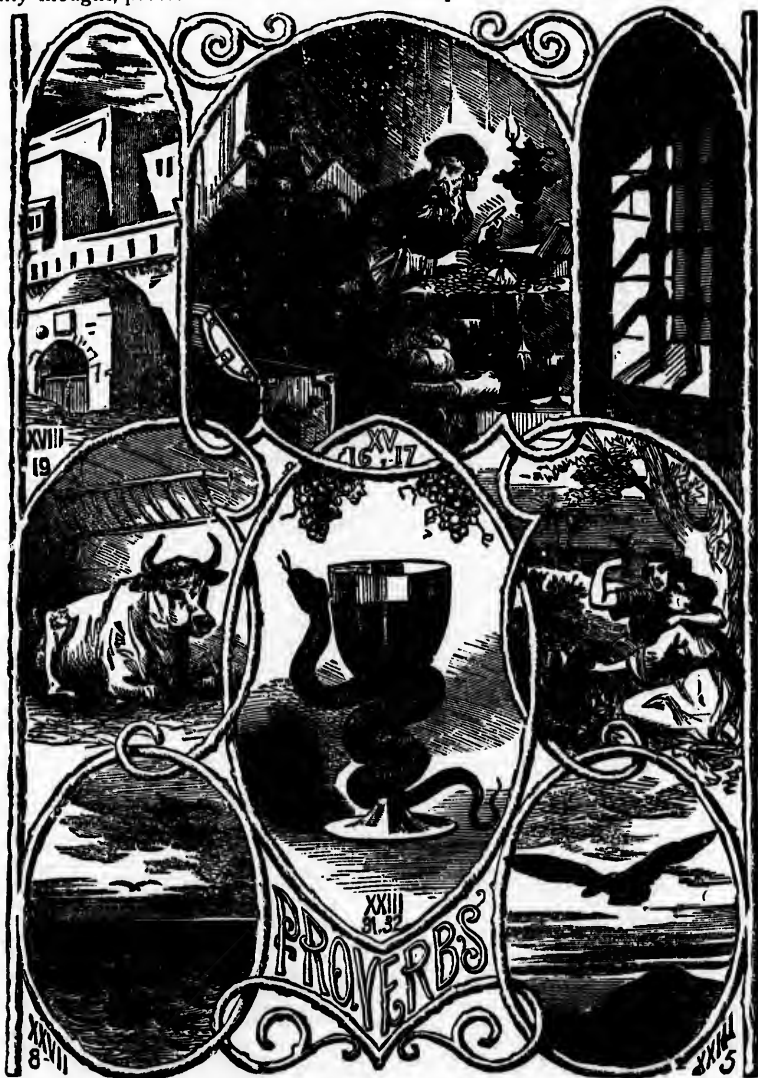
But if to hear too slow—if still it stay,
And scorn the potent charmer to obey,
With forceful lips he fastens on the wound,
Draws out and spits the venom to the ground.

—*Pharsalia*.

In this account the voice is repeatedly mentioned as the instrument by which the charmers worked; and it is to "the voice of the charmer" that the psalmist refers in the text we have cited. The charmers, doubtless, as in the case mentioned by Lucan, used a form of words as a charm, or chanted a song in some peculiar measure; and to the words of the song or the charm were attributed the effects really assignable to the human voice.

Egypt and Northern Africa in the West, and India in the East, are the countries where serpent-charming in all its forms is now most generally practiced. *Ælian*, speaking of the power possessed by the Egyptians over snakes and birds, says: "They are said to be enabled by a certain magical art to bring down birds from heaven, and to charm serpents so as to make them come forth from their lurking-places at their command." Sir J. G. Wilkinson remarks, with reference to the practice of the modern *Psylli*: "The Egyptian asp is a species of the cobra de capello, and is still very common in Egypt, where it is called *Nashir*, a word signifying 'spreading,' from its dilating its breast when angry. It is the same which the *Psylli* of modern days use in their juggling tricks, having previously taken care to extract its fangs; or, which is a still better precaution, to burn out the poison-bag with a hot iron. They are generally about three or four feet long, but some are considerably larger, one in my possession measuring exactly six feet in length. They are easily tamed. Their food is mice, frogs and various reptiles, and they mostly live in gardens during the warm weather, where they are of great use—the reason probably of their being chosen in ancient times as a protecting emblem. In the winter they retire to their holes and remain in a torpid state, being incapable of bearing cold, as I had reason to observe with two I kept in the house at Cairo, which died in

one night, though wrapped up in skin and, | sound of the human voice, while others are
as I fully thought, protected from the air." | exempt from it, and cannot be subjected by



The facts of serpent-charming seem to be | the charmer, "charm he never so wisely." It
these: That certain species of serpents really | is to these doubtless that the psalmist and
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urally poisonous serpents, having their poison-fangs extracted or the poison-bag destroyed, and being then tamed, are played with by the charmer and even suffered to bite him. The process of destroying the poison-fangs is obviously alluded to by the psalmist, where, in the verse immediately following that which we have cited, he says: "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth." No instance of the wound of a really poisonous serpent being cured by serpent-charmers has been met with. In the case recorded by Lucan, it may be clearly perceived that the serpent-bites which the Psylli pretended to cure by charms, songs, and saliva, were the bites of serpents not poisonous; but when the symptoms evinced that the wound was from a poisonous serpent they resorted to the very natural and by no means occult expedient of sucking the wound to extract the poison.

The author of "Oriental Illustrations" says: "The serpent-charmer may be found in every village, and some who have gained great fame actually live by the art. Occasionally they travel about the district to exhibit their skill. In a basket they have several serpents, which they place on the ground. The charmer then commences playing on his instrument, and to talk to the reptiles, at which they creep out, and begin to mantle about with their heads erect and their hoods distended. After this he puts his arm to them, which they affect to bite, and sometimes leave the marks of their teeth."

This writer expresses, "from close observation," the same conviction with respect to the fangs having been extracted, which Sir J. G. Wilkinson declares with respect to those used by the serpent-charmers of Egypt. He adds: "Living animals have been repeatedly offered to the man for his serpents to bite; but he would not allow it, because he knew that no harm would ensue. It is, however, granted that some of these men believe in the power of their charms, and there can be no doubt that the serpents even in their wild state are affected by the influence of music. One of these men once went to a friend of mine with

his serpents and charmed them before him. After some time the gentleman said, 'I have a cobra de capello in a cage; can you charm him?' 'Oh! yes,' said the charmer. The serpent was let out of the cage, and the man began his incantations and charms: the reptile fastened upon his arm, and he was dead before the night."

In an interesting account of Egyptian serpent-charming, given by Mr. Lane in his "Modern Egyptians," the writer states that the men for the most part profess to detect the presence of serpents in houses, and to draw them forth from their retreats. He says that the serpent-charmer assumes an air of mystery, strikes the walls with a short palm-stick, whistles, makes a clucking noise with his tongue, and spits upon the ground, and generally says: "I adjure you by God, if ye be above, or if ye be below, that ye come forth; I adjure you by the most great name, if ye be obedient, come forth, and if ye be disobedient, die! die! die!" The serpent is generally dislodged by his stick from a fissure of the wall, or drops from the ceiling of the room. Mr. Lane adds, that he has known this to be effected under circumstances in which deception could hardly take place, and is inclined to think that the persons are acquainted with some real physical means of discovering the presence of serpents without seeing them, and of attracting them from their lurking-places, wherever these may be.

Biblical References to Lions.

These noble animals are mentioned about sixty times in Scripture, and several of these notices are in the Psalms. This frequency of allusion, united to the intimate acquaintance with the habits of the lion which these allusions evince, renders it manifest that the animal was in ancient times far from uncommon in Palestine. Indeed there are passages in which the presence of the lion in the country is distinctly mentioned, as in Samson's conflict with the lion in his journey to Timnath, in David's defeat of the lion which sought to prey upon his flock, and in the allusion of

Jeremiah to the coming up of the lions from the brakes of the Jordan, when that swollen in certain regions where they were once com-



river periodically overflowed its lower banks. There are certainly no lions in Palestine now; and this is, therefore, one of the many

instances of the disappearance of wild animals from Palestine than the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; for they prefer the banks of rivers, on account

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of the more abundant prey which they obtain from among the animals which resort to the streams for drink. It was thus that they infested the Jordan in the time of Jeremiah. On the rivers mentioned they live in dens, whence at night they prowl forth for prey, or dart forth suddenly upon such animals as unwarily draw near their hiding-place.

While at the mouth of his den or elsewhere watching for his prey, the position and manner of the lion is like that of a cat while watching the movements of a mouse. He eyes the approach of his victim with the most cautious attention, carefully avoiding the least noise, lest he should give warning of his presence and designs. This is the habit alluded to by the psalmist, "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor; he croucheth and humbleth himself that the poor may fall by his strong ones." Again, "Like a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places." From his lurking-place the lion commonly leaps upon his victim at one spring, the extent and force of which are tremendous.

The great force with which the mighty beast strikes dead and rends its prey, supplies a figure in psalm vii.: "Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces while there is none to deliver;" and many other of the Scriptural allusions to the lions are to the same effect.

In psalm xvii. the allusion to the greediness of the lion, "like a lion that is greedy of his prey," must be understood with reference to the indisposition of this powerful beast to allow any other carnivorous animal to feed in its presence or to share its prey. A very remarkable example of this occurred recently in one of the menageries. A lion had been brought to permit two leopards to share its cage, and they lived together on easy if not on friendly terms. The leopards were always withdrawn at the time of feeding, but it was at length resolved to try the dangerous experiment of feeding them together. The meat was thrown in, but no sooner did the leopards lay hold of their pieces than the lion rushed upon

one of them and slew him on the spot; and the other would have shared the same fate but for the keeper's interference.

This is, without doubt, the habit which the psalmist had in view; and the minute accuracy of observation evinced in all the Scriptural allusions to the habits and character of animals is the more remarkable by comparison with the fables and absurd or incorrect statements which disfigure all our ancient accounts.

The Stork.

The stork is known in Scripture by a name which means "kind," in manifest allusion to the great kindness of disposition, the almost human consideration manifested by the pairs, by the old ones to the young, and by the young to the old. Their constant return to the same localities in towns and upon the tops of buildings, also suggested the idea of local attachments, to which, by the associations which they convey, the notion of "kindly" dispositions is inseparably connected.

Besides, its constant return, as often happens, to the higher points of those house-tops to which the inhabitants themselves constantly resort conveys the notion of personal and family attachment; and it is impossible to see these large and respectable-looking birds return to the same house-top year after year at the appointed time, and to the same large nest every evening after the labors of the day, making themselves so quietly comfortable, without regarding them as old and attached members of the family, or retainers of the house.

And the manner in which they turn or lift up their heads when one comes to the house-top, and then relapse into repose, or resume their former posture, implies something like personal recognition; nor is there much reason to doubt that they do become acquainted with the persons of the inmates of the house which they have chosen for their own domicile. The degree of confidence in man which all this implies is never in any country abused. In some countries the murder of a man would occasion far less sensation than the killing of a stork. In many places this is a criminal of-

fence punishable by the laws, and in others have attributed all the calamities of their lives the slayer of a stork would be very roughly to their having unintentionally destroyed a



handled, if not torn in pieces, by the populace. It is known that many persons in high station, in the countries which the stork frequents, stork; and there are thousands now living in the world who would consider this as nearly the greatest misfortune which could befall them.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WEEPING PROPHET.



ANY of the prophets are furnished with a biography more complete than that of Jeremiah. Hilckiah, his father, is supposed by some to be the same who was high-priest in the reign of Josiah. This is uncertain: but we know that he was of sacerdotal extraction. He was a native of Anathoth, a town of the priests, about three miles to the north of Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin. He was called to the prophetic office nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the thirteenth year of king Josiah, when he was of very early age. Thus, like David, the shepherd, he began his public life very young.

He then diffidently sought to decline the appointment on the score of his youth, until, under the Divine encouragements, he obeyed, and continued to prophesy upward of forty years, during several successive reigns of the degenerate descendants of Josiah, to whom he fearlessly revealed those marks of the Divine vengeance which their fluctuating and rebellious conduct drew on themselves and their country. As he had all along counselled submission to the power of the Chaldæans, he was favorably noticed by them after the destruction of Jerusalem, and he was suffered to remain, to bewail the miseries and desolation of Judah.

He knew, however, that the exile and deso-

lation had an appointed term, and he failed not to send consolatory assurances to that effect to his captive countrymen.

Eventually, Jeremiah was carried away, with his disciple Baruch, into Egypt, by Johanan, who, contrary to his advice and prophetic admonitions, resolved to remove thither, out of dread of the undistinguished vengeance of the Chaldæans for the slaughter which Ishmael had perpetrated. According to the account preserved by St. Jerome, he was stoned to death at Tahpanhes, a royal city of Egypt, about 586 B. C., either by his own countrymen there settled, as is usually stated, or by the Egyptians, to both of whom he rendered himself obnoxious by the terrifying prophecies which he uttered.

The Chronicle of Alexandria alleges that the prophet had incensed the Egyptians by foretelling that their idols should be destroyed by an earthquake at the time that the Saviour of men should be born and placed in a manger. This is of course a fiction; and, as Bishop Gray remarks, his prophecies, which are still extant, respecting the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, must alone have been sufficient to excite the fears and hatred of those against whom they were uttered. There are, however, other accounts which relate that the prophet returned to his own country; and travellers are still shown a place in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, where, as they are told, Jeremiah composed his prophecies, and where a monument to his memory was erected by Constantine. There is, however, more reason to conclude that he ended his life in Egypt.

Many circumstances relating to Jeremiah are interspersed in his own writings. He lived in that most eventful period when the kingdom of Judah, torn asunder by intestine disorders, could only by the special protection of God

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—to which it had forfeited all claim—be prevented from falling a sacrifice in the collision of the two prevailing powers, Babylon and Egypt. His efforts to retard or prevent the ruin of his country, which he loved with the most exalted patriotism, were rewarded by his corrupt contemporaries with ingratitude, and even with a prison and attempt at murder.

ent times collections of what he had delivered. The first seems to have been formed in the first year of Jehoiakim, when the prophet was expressly commanded by God to write upon a roll all the prophecies which he had uttered concerning Israel, Judah, and other nations; and this he did by means of Baruch. But this roll having been burnt by Jehoiakim, another



ANCIENT JERUSALEM.—I Chron. xii. 23.

He himself touchingly complains of this treatment :

"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me,
A man of strife and contention with all the land !
I have neither borrowed nor lent on usury,
Yet every one doth curse me."

Again :

"I knew not that they had devised devices against me,
[Saying], Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,
And let us cut him off from the land of the living,
That his name may be no more remembered."

Jeremiah appears to have formed at differ-

ent times collections of what he had delivered. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the prophet seems to have collected into one book all the prophecies which he had delivered before the taking of Jerusalem. To this he probably added such further revelations as he had occasionally received during the government of Gedaliah, and during the residence in Egypt, the account of which terminates with the fifty-first chapter.

Jeremiah appears to have been pre-ordained as a prophet, both to the Jews and Gentiles.

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He certainly delivered many prophecies relative to foreign nations. His name translated is, "he shall exalt Jehovah." His reputation was so considerable, that some of the fathers fancifully supposed that as his death is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, he was living in the time of Christ, whom, as the gospel informs us, some supposed to have been this prophet. They likewise apply to him and to Elias what St. John mysteriously speaks of—two witnesses that should prophesy 1260 days; which superstitious fictions serve, at least, to show the traditional reverence that was entertained for the memory of the prophet, who long afterwards continued to be venerated as one of the greatest saints that had flourished under the old covenant; as having lived not only with the general strictness of a prophet, but, as was believed, in a state of celibacy; and as having terminated his righteous ministry by martyrdom.

The literary character or style of Jeremiah's prophecies has been examined by different Biblical scholars with much attention. By none has it been more carefully discriminated than by De Wette, who thus writes on the subject:

"In Jeremiah's prophecies the spirit of his time and the condition of his people are faithfully reflected. His humor is sad, and melancholy, and depressed. His thoughts have no great elevation, and only attempt short, single flights. But he is by no means destitute of noble and expanded ideas; nor does he lack deep feeling. Of the last the following among other specimens may be quoted:

'For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded;
I mourn; amazement hath taken hold of me;
Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then are not the wounds of my people healed?
O that my head were waters,
And mine eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain of the daughter of my people.' "

His style is without uniformity or consistency in regard to expression or rhythm. It is un-

equal; frequently energetic and concise, especially in the first twelve chapters. It is full of repetitions and of fixed thoughts and expressions. But it is not without certain charms of its own. Jerome says of him: "As he is simple and easy in his language, so is he the most profound in the majesty of his thoughts. In language he seems more rustic than Isaiah or Hosca, and some other prophets among the Hebrews, but in thought he is equal to them. The style, with its alternations, now rising to rhythm, now sinking to prose, is attractive. It is like the flickering of a flame which finds not sufficient fuel. Sometimes whole passages are repeated; sometimes images, thoughts, and expressions."

Jerusalem's Calamity.

This writer adds, that the passages in the prophecies of Jeremiah which relate to foreign nations are distinguished by a more energetic tone, and by a more animated style, which has a tendency to rhythm. Of this peculiarity different explanations have been given. It is probably because most of these passages are composed of threatenings; for it has been remarked that the threatenings in the more domestic portions of his prophecies are distinguished by the same characteristic. His admonitions are very little elevated above prose.

To understand the great events in the life of Jeremiah it will be needful to remember that Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the king of Babylon, who had taken a multitude of captives, and had even robbed the holy Temple of its sacred furniture.

King Jehoiakim, who had been unfaithful to his obligations, was not at all amended by this calamity and degradation, for his was one of the minds which suffering hardens and not reforms. His obvious policy was to adhere to the solemn vows of allegiance which he had taken to the Chaldæans; and this was the policy which the prophet Jeremiah urged upon him with the utmost earnestness. But the Egyptian party was strong at court, and, yielding to their views and to the flattering prospect which they drew, the unhappy king

had the temerity to renounce his fealty to the king of Babylon, to whose clemency he owed his life and his throne, before the echo of his vows had well passed away.

The consciousness of the dangerous posi-

punishment. As these things, amid general threatenings of calamity, had no effect upon the king's obdurate spirit, his own personal doom was no longer hidden from him. Jeremiah foretold that his death should be such



ZEDEKIAH CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE.—Jer. lii. 11.

tion in which he was placed by this act did not tend to soften his character; his conduct became even more harsh, tyrannical and oppressive, and the streets of Jerusalem were frequently sprinkled with the blood of innocent and upright men. Among these was the prophet Urijah, whom the king slew with the sword for his declarations of coming evil and

that none should lament, as for other kings. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had been interrupted in his operations for the subjugation of Egypt and Western Asia by the news of his father's death, on which he crossed the desert with a few attendants and took possession of the throne. When the news of Jehoiakim's revolt reached him he was still at

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Babylon; but, having no present leisure to chastise him in person, he was content to send orders to his lieutenants, in command west of the Euphrates, to act against him. This brought upon Judah a constant succession of harassing invasions from the neighboring nations subject to Babylon, in which the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites in particular manifested the most malignant activity, while the Syrians and Arabs were not behindhand in cruelty and violence.

Deeds of Cruelty.

At length the person of Jehoiakim was secured, and he was sent off to Nebuchadnezzar, who had by that time returned to Syria, and was then at Riblah. The monarch at first put him in chains to send him to Babylon; but he altered his mind and took him back in his train to Jerusalem. There, a degraded captive in the royal city of his fathers, the miserable king died, his end being probably hastened by mortification and grief; and we are bound to conclude that his corpse was refused a place in the sepulchre of the kings, and was treated with all the ignominy which Jeremiah had foretold.

When Nebuchadnezzar thus arrived in person at Jerusalem he found that the people had already raised Jehoiachin (called also Jeconiah and Coniah), the son of Jehoiakim, to the throne. But this appointment, made without his concurrence, he refused to sanction. Still, however, desirous to keep up the monarchy under its native princes, he bestowed the throne on Mattaniah, a younger son of Josiah, and uncle of Jehoiachin. He changed his name to Zedekiah and bound him to loyalty by solemn oaths and covenants.

The conqueror then departed, having first sent away to Babylon the king, Jehoiachin, together with his mother, his wives, his officers, and his nobles, and all "the mighty men of valor," to the number of ten thousand out of Jerusalem only, besides the smiths, the carpenters, and other artificers. These, added to a similar deportation of warriors and artificers which had previously taken place, de-

nuded the country of the flower of its population and left little more than the crude mass of the people subject to the powerless sceptre of Zedekiah. Among the captives sent to Babylon on this occasion seems to have been Ezckiel, who in his captivity was called to be a prophet, and for many years exercised his ministry by the river Chebar in Babylonia, at the same time that Daniel enjoyed his honors in the imperial court.

This severe punishment of the guilty kingdom was calculated to have been a salutary warning to the new king, who besides owed to the conqueror a crown which he would never have possessed in the ordinary course of events. But, with amazing infatuation, he soon began to attend to the supporters of the Egyptian policy, who still held their ground as a party in the land; and in proportion as he manifested inclinations towards an Egyptian alliance, which had never produced any good for Israel, he necessarily neglected the obligations under which he had been placed to a power against which he was helpless, and independence of which could at the best be only obtained at the expense of dependence upon Egypt.

Invasion by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah vehemently protested against the errors of this policy, and distinctly foretold the evils which would flow from it; and Ezekiel in his exile poured forth prophecies to the same effect, for it seems that the exiled Hebrews were as sanguine of being restored to liberty as those in Palestine were of recovering their independence.

At length, having concluded his alliance with Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt, Zedekiah, in the eighth year of his reign, ventured to cast off his allegiance to the Chaldeans, and by this act drew upon himself that war which ended, as the prophets had foreshown, in the utter ruin of his kingdom. It was not, however, until the next year that Nebuchadnezzar, having assembled a most powerful army, marched against the land of Judah. On his way through Syria he received intelligence

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that the Ammonites had also revolted, and he then hesitated which country first to invade. Therefore, at "the parting of the way," or at

On, therefore, the Chaldeans marched, clearing the country before them with fire and sword, and at length appeared before the walls



JEREMIAH BUYING HIS KINSMAN'S FIELD.—Jer. xxxii. 6-12.

the point where the roads divided, a lot was cast with the arrows of divination, by which it was decided that Judah should be first attacked.

of Jerusalem, which they immediately invested. The king, expecting no mercy, and being confident of relief from Egypt, determined to defend the place to the last extremity. The

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city was very strong and well supplied with water, so that it might hold out till the defenders were weakened by starvation; knowing this, the siege seems to have been turned by the besiegers into a close blockade which, in the course of time, reduced the people to the extremities of fatigue.

Resisting the Chaldeans.

In all this time the prophet urged submission and foretold the consequences of continued obstinacy. Annoyed at the continual remonstrances of Jeremiah, and fearful of their effect upon the people, the king again sent him to prison. Soon after this the hopes of the besieged were raised to the highest pitch by the actual advance of the Egyptians to their relief, when the Chaldeans deemed it prudent to raise the siege and meet their new enemies half-way. The excitement of that interval may be easily conceived. Hour by hour they watched for the signal fires upon the hills and for the swift messengers which should announce the advance of the Egyptians over the slaughtered hosts of the common enemy.

The banners of the Chaldeans were ere long visible over the tops of the hills, and the mountains round about Jerusalem were covered and the valleys filled with the returning hosts, at whose approach and formidable appearance the Egyptians had retired in alarm to their own country without striking a single blow for their miserable ally of Judah. Jeremiah, who had been removed to an easier confinement in the court of the prison, again renewed his exhortations to surrender the city to the Chaldeans; but there were not wanting false prophets, who buoyed up the hopes of Zedekiah with assurances that the city would not be taken.

Terrible Effects of the Siege.

So the king still held out, till the miseries of the people became so great that women, naturally tender and pitiful, devoured their own children for food. This could not last; and at length Zedekiah, perceiving that all

hope of saving the city was vain, endeavored with his few remaining troops to escape from the place by a private postern which the enemy had not secured. But the fugitives were pursued and overtaken in the plains of Jericho, where the royal guards were soon dispersed, and the king and all his children were taken prisoners.

The wretched king, together with his family and nobles, were then sent off to Riblah in Syria, where Nebuchadnezzar at that time held his court. Here he was regarded and dealt with as a traitor. His children were slain before his eyes, and it was with ingenious cruelty ordered that this should be his last sight, the horrid image of which should haunt all his remaining days, for immediately after his eyes were put out, and he was sent away in chains to Babylon, where he ended his days in prison.

In the following month Nebuzar-adan, the Chaldean commander in charge of the siege of Jerusalem, took possession of the city and committed the most dreadful carnage among those who had survived the calamities of the siege. Nebuchadnezzar, enraged at the long and obstinate defence of the place, resolved that it should give no more trouble to himself or his successors. He commanded Nebuzar-adan to raze the city to the ground without even sparing the Temple. Accordingly the general began his operations two days after he had taken possession of the city. After the Temple had been stripped of all its treasures and valuables, and after the city had for two days been abandoned to pillage, both the Temple and the city were set on fire, and were thus consumed and desolated. The black masses of wall, fortress and tower that the fire left standing were demolished and razed to the very ground, so that of the city of David and the Temple of Solomon nothing but a heap of ruins remained.

In memory of this great national calamity two fasts were instituted, which are kept up even to this day: the first on the seventeenth of the fourth month (answering to our June); and the second, on the ninth of the fifth

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month (corresponding to July): the first, for the taking of the city; and the other, for the destruction of the Temple. That holy fabric

parture of the Israelites from Egypt, thus completing the great calamity.

The miserable end of a city endowed with



JEREMIAH WARNS THE REMNANT NOT TO GO TO EGYPT.—Jer. xlii. 18.

was destroyed four hundred and twenty-four years after its foundation by Solomon, and nine hundred and three years from the de-

such eminent privileges as had belonged to Jerusalem, and the ensuing sending into exile of all the people, save only the poor of the

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land, who were left to till the ground, was lamented in doleful strains by the Prophet Jeremiah :

"How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!
How is she become a widow, that was great among the nations!
The princess among the provinces—how is she become tributary."

This beautiful personification of the city as a woman sitting in desolate widowhood is repeated elsewhere in the graphic line—

"She, being desolate, sitteth on the ground;"

and it might almost seem to have been present to the minds of the Romans, when, in the medals representing the second destruction of the same city, they represented "the Daughter of Zion" as sitting desolate under a solitary palm-tree.

The prophet proceeds :

"She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks:
Among all her lovers, she hath found none to comfort her;
All her friends have dealt treacherously, and have become her enemies.
Judah is gone into captivity.
She dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest:
The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts:
All her gates are desolate: her priests sigh;
Her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness."

And then the bitterness of these evils was enhanced by the remembrance of past blessings:

"Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries
All the pleasant things that she had in the days of old."

Jeremiah himself was released from prison when the city was taken by Nebuzar-adan, who was made acquainted with the earnestness with which the prophet had counselled timely submission to the Chaldæans. He offered, in the name of his master, to take him to Babylon and provide for him there; but the prophet chose rather to remain in the land, to which he was the rather induced by his friend

Gedaliah being appointed governor of the country and of the miserable remnant left in it. Gedaliah was a good man, of easy temper and unsuspecting character, and not perhaps the better fitted by these qualities for the difficult place he was appointed to fill. He fixed his residence at Mizpeh, and, if left to himself, might perhaps have succeeded in establishing something like order and quiet among the fragments of a nation which had been left in his charge.

But, as soon as it became known that the Chaldæan forces were withdrawn, many turbulent men who had fled into the neighboring countries began to return, and they were not well affected towards the government of Gedaliah; some because they deemed his claims inferior to those of others, and some because they hated to see a Jew in the position of a Babylonian governor. Among these returned fugitives was Ishmael, a member of the royal family, who little brooked that even the shadow of a sceptre should be wielded in Judah by one who belonged not to his illustrious house. He organized a conspiracy to take away the governor's life.

Gedaliah had a friendly warning of this, but the good man refused to give it any credit; and this generous confidence was rewarded by his being shortly after murdered, with all his attendants and partisans, at Mizpeh, by Ishmael and his associates. They knew very well that the Chaldæans would not fail to avenge this act, and therefore hastened to escape to the land of the Ammonites. In doing this they attempted to carry off with them several of the few remaining persons of consequence, including one of the daughters of the blinded king Zedekiah, that royal captive in chains.

Now, however, the friend who had warned Gedaliah of Ishmael's designs got together a number of resolute men and pursued after them; and not only recovered the persons who had been taken away, but dispersed or slew his followers, so that he escaped with only eight men to the Ammonites. Johanan himself, and those who were of sufficient note in the land to be objects of attention to the

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THE MOABITES TAKEN INTO CAPTIVITY.—Jer. xlviii. 46.

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Chaldeans should have distinguished themselves by their resolution, but since they were not,

The fore of the king, the viceroy, and the king had been left to the mercy of the Euphrates, so that the king found no person to see the king, and, through the king's in some main habit of brewing the s

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Chaldeans, then became apprehensive that they should become the victims of the undistinguishing vengeance of the conquerors, and resolved to withdraw into Egypt. This intention was vehemently opposed by Jeremiah, but so far from heeding his remonstrances, they constrained him to go with them.

They had not long taken their departure before Nebuzar-adan arrived in the country with the view of avenging the murder of Gedaliah, and the slaughter of the Chaldean guard which had been left with him. But there were none left to punish, save by sending another party of the inhabitants into captivity beyond the Euphrates; and the country had now become so thin of people, that the Babylonian general found not more than seven hundred and fifty persons whom he deemed it worth his while to send away. Thus signally was the long-foretold depopulation of the land completed; and, although nomadic tribes wandered through the country, and the Edomites settled in some of its southern parts, yet the land remained on the whole comparatively uninhabited, and ready for the return of the Hebrews, whose restoration had been as much the subject of prophecy as their exile.

Horrible Barbarity.

We have seen that Zedekiah reigned for eleven years, and then—an act of extreme folly—he rebelled against the Babylonians. The bitter end came surely and speedily. Jerusalem was invested; famine did its horrible work within the walls, and the enemy destroyed the land without. The besieged endeavored to escape by stratagem, but utterly failed. The king was taken, and brought before Nebuchadnezzar, who condemned him to have his eyes put out, the last thing those eyes of his were permitted to see being the murder of his own sons; he saw their blood spilt, and then came endless night. Bound in brazen fetters, Zedekiah was taken to Babylon.

Had not the prophet Ezekiel asserted that it should be so—"I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there?" and had

not Jeremiah foretold, "He shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes?" And so it was: he saw Nebuchadnezzar face to face—he saw his own sons executed—but he never saw the land into which he was carried away captive.

After this the walls of Jerusalem were levelled; the city sacked; the Temple burnt, and Babylonia completely triumphant.

This scene of desolation affords a graphic theme for one of England's sacred poets:

"Oh weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken spell;
Mourn! where their God hath dwelt the Godless dwell!

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet,
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leapt before its heavenly voice?

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave."

The bitter end which the prophets had foreseen and foretold had come. The meridian splendor of Solomon's reign had gradually faded into twilight, and now the purple twilight had deepened into night. No doubt, of the captives carried away into Babylon, there were some who read, however obscurely, the Divine promise of a Redeemer, and the brightness of the glory they held in anticipation rendered them oblivious of all the troubles that must first come. The bitter lamentations of Jeremiah, the heart-stirring appeals of Isaiah, the marvelous visions of Ezekiel, the pathetic words of Micah, the revelations of Amos, were familiar to them.

They all pointed to a latter-day glory, but the Jews counted the latter days to be near at hand: doubtless a deliverer would soon arrive as strong as Samson, as brave as Gideon, as good as Samuel; a soldier and a statesman who should overthrow these Babylonians, teach these blaspheming idolaters there was still a God in Israel, and set up a kingdom





THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.—Ez. xxiv. 15-18.

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that should be the joy of the whole earth, and last till time should be no more. That even the most clear-sighted, the most spiritually-minded should foresee that the kingdom to be set up was not a kingdom of this world; that He who set it up should in earthly estimation be no higher than a carpenter, with a log for His throne, and an adze for His sceptre—would appear most improbable.

Renowned Tyre.

A considerable part of the prophecies of Ezekiel is devoted to the famous city of Tyre. Great is the renown of Tyre, "whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were among the honorable of the earth." Its antiquity, manufactures, commerce, colonies, and its connection with remote nations unknown, or known but faintly, to the ancients, are all points of as high interest as any which former times can offer to modern investigation. The reader of the Bible has also his own peculiar interest in this city, from the frequency with which it is mentioned in the sacred books, from the amicable relations which subsisted between the kings of Tyre and some of the greatest of the kings of Israel, from the remarkable results of these relations in the time of Solomon, and, more than all, from the prophecies of the overthrow of this great city, and the exact fulfilment which these prophecies have received. Ezekiel devotes two entire chapters to this city, which have always been regarded as among the most remarkable documents which the ancient world has left to us. The first describes the future *history* of Tyre, which was afterwards accomplished to the very letter; the other gives a minute and most interesting account of the commerce of Tyre, and its great markets and fairs.

The prophet proceeds to inform us that the masts of the Phœnician vessels were of "cedar." In Lebanon the most celebrated grove of cedars is near the village of Eden; and it is remarkable that Ezekiel mentions the trees of Eden as the choicest in Lebanon. The inhabitants of the mountain devoutly believe that this is the grove from which Solo-

mon drew the cedar wood for the Temple, and that the few large and ancient trees which still remain were in being in his time. They have also a superstitious notion that they cannot be counted, as every person gives a different number who sees them. This is a fact, however accounted for, as no two travellers agree in the number—probably from interpreting differently the term "largest" in counting them up. The native Christians of the mountain, every year upon the anniversary of the Transfiguration, perform mass upon a homely stone altar, reared under the most venerable of the trees, in the open temple of nature.

Cedars of Lebanon.

With respect to the employment of cedar-trees for masts, this may be taken to imply the large size of the Tyrian ships; for we seldom read of their being used but in ships of unusual bulk. The Romans usually employed firs; but the enormous ship which conveyed the obelisk of the Vatican from Egypt to Rome had for her mast a very tall and large cedar, cut in the woods of Cyprus. The ship itself was sunk in the harbor of Ostia, by order of Caligula, to serve as a foundation for a pier and some towers. The main-mast in the galley of king Demetrius was also made of a cedar felled in Cyprus, one hundred and eighty feet long and eighteen in diameter.

The negotiations of the king of Tyre with David and Solomon, for the cutting down of the timber and the carriage of it when cut, teach us that at that period cedar was used generally, in the surrounding countries, in the construction of temples and palaces; as there is no appearance of anything out of the ordinary course of business in the agreement. Nothing could be fitter for the purpose required than cedar wood. Its size and straightness, and above all its durability, were most desirable for buildings that were to last. The beauty of the wood, the high polish of which it was susceptible, and its fragrance, also recommended it equally for the temple and the palace; and that for centuries it continued to be sought for such purposes, we find from

Jeremiah's denunciation of woe to the rich, who built themselves houses with large rooms, and made wide their windows, and with ceilings of cedar, which were painted with vermilion.

The ships of fir-trees, masted with cedars, are further described as being provided with oars made of the oaks of Bashan, which seems to show that the ships of Tyre were no other than galleys, designed to be propelled by rowers, as was the case with most of the more ancient shipping, the sails being only used as an assistance and relief to the oars, just as sails are now used in vessels mainly propelled by steam.

With this impression agrees what follows—"the Assurites have made thy benches of ivory," if these benches were those on which the rowers sat, as is usually supposed. If so, the Hebrew poet gives a lively idea of the magnificence of the Tyrian vessels, by describing the mean use to which so costly a material was applied. It is not, however, to be understood that these or any other benches were made wholly of ivory, but that they were inlaid and enriched with it. The ivory itself was doubtless the produce of their trade with India and Ethiopia, and, as manufactured by the Phœnicians into various ornaments and articles of taste, was extensively in use among the Israelites, especially in the furniture of royal residences. We see from the Egyptian monuments that ivory was abundant at remote times in Egypt, for in the procession of tribute-bearers we see crisp-headed bearers of huge teeth from Ethiopia and Central Africa, and white men similarly laden, who also bring ivory and the Asiatic elephant, and who must have come from the East.

Costly Sails for Ships.

We are next told that the sails of these ships were of fine linen from Egypt; which is an interesting corroboration of our knowledge from other sources, that weaving was one of the principal occupations of the ancient Egyptians, and the products of their looms in great demand among the neighboring nations.

The prophet then proceeds to enumerate the products which the merchants of various countries brought to the great mart of Tyre, and for which they received in exchange the merchandise and manufactures of the Phœnicians.

The intercourse of Solomon with Tyre enables us to perceive the kind of commodities which the inhabitants of that state were likely to require from Palestine; and the account in Ezekiel perfectly corresponds with the intimations so long before conveyed—"Judah and the land of Israel traded with thee; corn of Minnith, honey of raisins, oil and balm, gave they to thee for thy wares." The corn of Judæa was in fact highly prized; it excelled even that of Egypt. It was not therefore merely the proximity of the country which led the Phœnicians to prefer this market, but the better produce. The other productions also mentioned by the prophet are among those which the Holy Land was famous for producing of a superior quality. The strong vine which had been native in this country from time immemorial afforded them an abundance of delicious grapes. The "oil" of Palestine even still excels that of Provence, notwithstanding the depressed state of the culture under Turkish despotism. The "balm" was collected in the plain of Jericho and in the lands about the Lake of Gennesareth; and was of the same sort as that which still bears a high repute under the name of the balm of Mecca. The fact thus brought before us, that Palestine was the granary of the Phœnicians, explains in the clearest manner the good understanding which subsisted between those two nations. It is a striking feature in the Jewish history, that with the other nations around them they lived in a state of almost continual warfare; and that under David and Solomon they became conquerors and subdued considerable countries; and yet with their nearest neighbors, the Phœnicians, they were never engaged in hostilities. But if a sense of their weakness prevented them from attacking these mighty cities, the natural policy of the Phœnicians no less, on the other hand, restrained them from any hostile attempts upon a country from which

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they drew their subsistence: to which it may be added, that it seems to have been a maxim among them to avoid all wars and forcible

Lebanon: but after his buildings had been finished, timber could not well have formed the staple of the commercial intercourse be-



THE CAPTURE OF TYRE.—Ez. xxvi. 2, 3.

extension of their dominion upon the continent of Asia.

What Palestine received from Tyre in exchange for its produce is not directly stated in Scripture. Solomon obtained timber from

tween the countries. We may, however, with tolerable safety conclude that in this way the Israelites obtained such of the manufactures of the Phœnicians, and such of the commodities which they imported from foreign parts,

as they required. We know that the Phœnicians excelled in the manufacture of ornaments of dress, implements, utensils, baubles and gewgaws, for which they found a ready sale among the less civilized of the nations with which they had intercourse: and it is very likely that most of the ornaments worn by the Jewish women were obtained from them. A curious list of such articles appears in Isa. iii. 18-23.

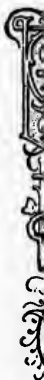
"The wool of the wilderness," translated "white wool" in the authorized version, was one of the wares supplied by the pastoral tribes, who then, as now, wandered their flocks over the Syrian as well as the Arabian deserts. The fleece of these sheep is the finest known; improved as it is by the heat of the climate, the continual exposure to the open air, and the care that these people bestow upon their flocks, which constitute almost their only business—all which circumstances tend to render it more precious.

In Ezekiel, "Tubal and Meshech" are said to have brought to the markets of Tyre "slaves and vessels of brass." It seems to be agreed that the names Tubal and Meshech apply to the countries lying between the Black and

Caspian seas. This probability is strengthened by the fact that the wares in question are exactly such as these regions produced. Cappadocia, together with the Caucasian districts, from the very earliest times was the chief seat of the slave-trade, and always continued so in the ancient world.

The finest race of men has always been preferred: and it is well known that at the present day the harems of the princes and nobles of Turkey and Persia are peopled with the most beautiful of the Georgians and Circassians. Regular bands of kidnappers were formally established throughout these countries, whose sole occupation was to surprise and carry away boys and girls for the markets of Constantinople and Cairo.

Prophecy lifted its voice against this renowned city. Tyre, with ships and wealth, with merchant princes and nabobs, was destined to be overthrown. There are gales that ships cannot withstand, and a decay that wealth cannot arrest. Just as the prediction had been uttered, so it came to pass. When Tyre was at the height of her splendor it was foretold that she would fall, and Tyre fell, ignominious in her ruins.



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CHAPTER XXVII.

DANIEL IN BABYLON.



DANIEL was of the tribe of Judah and of the race of David. He with other young nobles, was transported at an early age to Babylon by order of Nebuchadnezzar, as a hostage for the

good conduct of Jehoiakim, who was then on the throne of Judah; or rather, perhaps, under that policy which sought to aggran-

dize the imperial court by the presence and services of the noblest and most handsome youths of the subject states.

At Babylon, Daniel received the Chaldæan name of Belteshazzar, and was placed with other young captives whom Nebuchadnezzar willed to be instructed in the science of the Babylonians. Already well instructed in the best of sciences, that of his holy religion, Daniel resolved to deny himself the use of viands forbidden by the law and prepared by the hands of idolaters. The three companions with whom he was more intimately associated followed his example. And God rewarded their faith; for, notwithstanding the fears of Melzar, the eunuch to whose charge they had been intrusted, it was found, when they were produced for examination, that not only had they not suffered in appearance by their simple fare, but were more hale and ruddy than the youths who had feasted on the meats and wines of Babylon.

The education of these youth in the sciences of the East lasted three years, at the end of which it was found that Daniel and

his three companions surpassed in science and wisdom all the magi of Babylon; and they forthwith commenced their services under a king, who, from all that appears, well knew how to discover and reward merit.

Of these magicians, astrologers and sorcerers Kitto remarks: "It is no use to distinguish these various professors of what seemed to have formed the boasted learning and science of the Babylonians, and which appears to have consisted in the neglect of really practical and useful knowledge for the vain pursuits, and not very humble profession, of that which must ever be unattainable to man, and which would be useless and mischievous could it be attained. The present was made the handmaid of the future; and the abilities which might have profited for the existing time were exhausted in the attempt to unveil the secrets of the time to come.

"Their boasted cultivation of astronomy was merely an accident resulting from the attempt to read the future in the stars. Astronomy, as it ever has been in the East, was attended to so far, and no farther, than the vain science of astrology made it necessary. The best account we possess of the learning and science of the Chaldæans is that given by Diodorus Siculus; and although he speaks of it with respect, it is easy enough, from his account, to see its false foundations and delusive character. He mentions the Chaldæans, and so called by the Babylonians themselves, and intimates the distinction by describing them as 'the more ancient Babylonians.' They seem, in fact, to have formed the learned caste, occupying the same station as the priests did in Egypt. They spent all their time in the study of 'philosophy,' and were especially famous in the art of astrology. They were greatly given to divination and the

foretelling of future events, and employed themselves, either by purifications, sacrifices or enchantments, in averting evils, and in procuring good fortune and success.

"They were also skilful in the art of divination by the flying of birds and in the interpretation of dreams and prodigies; and the presages which they derived from the exact and diligent inspection of the entrails of sacrifices were received as oracles by the people. Diodorus makes some approving observations on their method of study, stating that their knowledge and science were traditionally transmitted from father to son, thus proceeding on long-established rules; and he then proceeds to inform us that the Chaldeans held the world to be eternal, that it had no certain beginning and should have no end. But they all agreed that all things were ordered by a Divine Providence; and that the motions of the heavens were not performed by chance, or of their own accord, but by the determinate will and appointment of the gods.

"Therefore, from long observation of the stars, and an exact knowledge of the motions and influences of every one of them (in which they excelled all other nations), they professed to foretell things that should come to pass. The five planets, the Sun, Mars, Venus, Mercury, and Jupiter, they called 'Interpreters,' as being principally concerned in making known to man the will of the gods. Future events they held to be foreshown by their rising, their setting, and their color, presaging hurricanes, tempestuous rains, droughts, the appearance of comets, eclipses, earthquakes, and all other circumstances which were thought to bode good or evil, not only to nations in general, but to kings and private persons in particular. The planets also, in their courses through the twelve signs into which the Chaldeans divided the visible heavens, were held, as by more modern astrologers, to have a great influence, either good or bad, on men's naticities, so that, from a consideration of their several natures and respective positions, it might be foreknown what should befall people in after life.

"The following is remarkable: 'As they foretold things to come to other kings formerly, so they did to Alexander, who conquered Darius, and to his successors, Antigonus and Seleucus Nicator; and accordingly things fell out as they declared. They also tell private men their fortunes so certainly that those who have found the thing true by experience have esteemed it a miracle, and beyond the art of man to perform.' After giving some account of their astronomical system, Diodorus adds: 'This we may justly and truly say, that the Chaldeans excell all men in astrology, having studied it more than any other art or science.'

A Startling Dream.

A test as to Daniel's power soon occurred. The king was troubled in his sleep by a dream, which agitated him exceedingly. He summoned before him his wise men, who came with the expression of Oriental loyalty, "O king, live forever." They desired to know the nature of the dream, but Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten every particular; he demanded that they should tell him the dream on pain of cruel death and lasting disgrace. It was not, as some may suppose, a very absurd request; if these men knew all things, and could explain the meaning, surely it was not very unreasonable to suppose that they might ascertain the dream itself. "Tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof." All declared the matter impossible, and the king, being in this instance, at all events, a man of his word, gave instruction for the execution of all the magicians and astrologers.

Having been included in the general proscription of the magi who were unable to discover and interpret a dream which the king himself had forgotten, but which filled his mind with concern, Daniel obtained from the captain of the guard the suspension of the execution of the sentence while he interceded with the king, and from the king himself he obtained further time on engaging to solve the mystery.

As soon as he had made known his power

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THE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE.—Dan. iii. 25.

to afford Nebuchadnezzar the information he desired, he was immediately conducted before the monarch, and proceeded to remind him that he had seen a compound image and to explain to him how this image represented "the things that should come to pass hereafter." This image had a head of pure gold, which the prophet explained to denote Nebuchadnezzar himself, and his successors in the dynasty which he had aggrandized; the breast and arms of silver denoted the second and inferior empire of the Medes and Persians; the belly and thighs of brass, the next succeeding empire of the Macedonian Greeks; the legs of iron, the empire of the Romans; and the toes, partly iron and part clay, the various states and kingdoms into which that empire should be divided.

Lastly, the king had seen a stone which smote the image and became a great mountain that filled the whole earth, which was so interpreted by the prophet as to show to us that it was intended to apply to the kingdom of the Messiah, which was to be established upon the ruins of these various imperial kingdoms and empires, and to continue forever. The prophet said to the king in the first place, "Thou art this head of gold;" but he did not indicate the names of the other empires as we have set them down.

The vastness of the view thus presented before the mind of the king, and the deep and magnificent import of his dream, overwhelmed him not less than the mysterious power which had enabled the young prophet to discover and unravel that which had baffled the boasted skill of the Chaldean soothsayers. In the height of his astonishment and admiration the king cast himself at the feet of his captive, and would have worshipped him as more than human, commanding an oblation and sweet odors to be offered to him.

But Daniel respectfully directed his attention to the Great God in heaven whom he served, and who had revealed the secret to him; on which the king declared with all sincerity of conviction, "Of a truth your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings."

Nebuchadnezzar was not slow in rewarding one so highly gifted, and so greatly favored of Heaven. He made him governor over the whole province of Babylon, and bestowed on him the distinguished office of Rab-Mag, or chief of the Magians. The former appears to have been the highest civil employment in the state, as the latter was certainly the highest among the learned offices of the kingdom. At the request of Daniel the king also promoted his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to important trusts in the province of Babylon under him.

Idolatry Commanded.

The king soon after caused to be set up in the plain of Dura, near Babylon, a colossal image of gold, and set forth a decree, that whenever harmonious sounds were heard from "the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, or any kind of music," every one should, on pain of death, fall down and worship it. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, it would seem as if the king had become discontented with the particular import of the vision, the vastness of which had at the first so filled his mind; and that it was in order to counteract or defy its application to himself that he now acted. In the visionary image his kingdom was but the head of gold, destined to be superseded and overthrown; but he now sets up an image wholly of gold, as if to express under the same symbol the unity and continuance of his kingdom.

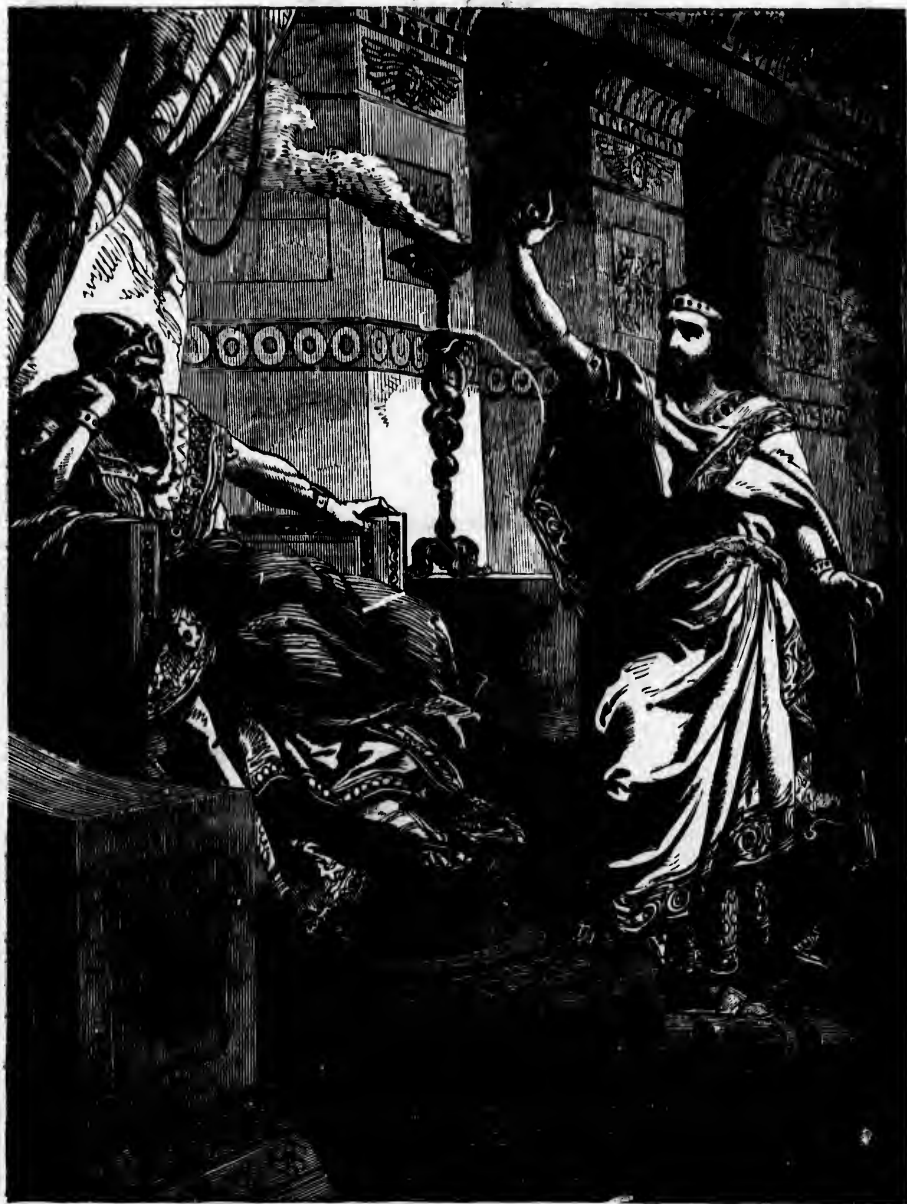
It would even seem as if he repented of his acknowledgment of the supremacy of Daniel's God, the God by whom the vision had been sent, seeing that his present orders were so adverse to that admission. The decree as set forth was one with which no pious Jew could comply, and it was soon made known to the king that the three friends of Daniel paid no regard to his command. Daniel himself they were probably afraid to accuse, on account of his high place and his presumed favor at court.

The king, in great wrath, summoned the accused to his presence, and deliberately recited to them the terms of his decree and the

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DANIEL INTERPRETING THE DREAM OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.—Dan. iv. 20.

penalties of disobedience, adding, "Who is that God that should deliver you out of my hands?" They unflinchingly answered that their God was able to do so; and resolutely declared that they would not serve his gods, nor worship the image he had set up. This filled the king with fury, and he commanded that they should be cast into the "burning fiery furnace," heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. But these holy men remembered Him who had said, "Though thou walkest through the fire, I will be with thee;" and they walked about in the furnace untouched by the devouring flames, and singing the praises of Jehovah.

A Miraculous Deliverance.

This marvelous sight brought the king to his senses; he called them forth; he acknowledged the exceeding greatness of the God whom they served, and by whom they had been preserved; and in the warm enthusiasm of the moment he made a decree that whosoever spoke a word against this Mighty God henceforth, should be destroyed "because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." As for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they were not only restored to favor, but promoted to higher offices in the metropolitan province of Babylon.

Some time after these transactions Nebuchadnezzar was warned of the consequences of that excessive pride which formed the chief defect in a character by no means destitute of great and generous qualities. He was "at rest in his house, and flourishing in his palace," when he saw a dream which made him afraid. He beheld a tree which grew till it overspread the earth, and all the fowls of heaven roosted in its branches, and all the beasts of the field reposed beneath its shade. But suddenly "a holy one" came down from heaven and commanded the tree to be hewn down, leaving only the stump in the earth; and by one of those transitions usual in dreams, the language of "the holy one" passed from the condition of the tree to that of the human being it represented: "Let his portion be with the beasts

in the grass of the earth; let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given to him, and let seven times pass over him."

This dream no one could interpret but Daniel. When the king recited it to him, and the perception of its strange and afflicting import came upon him, concern and astonishment held him mute; but when he recovered himself, he proceeded to open its meaning to the king. The tree represented himself and the greatness of the kingdom which God had given to him; and the words of "the holy one" were explained to mean—"That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

The Glory of Babylon.

When these words were uttered there were no outward indications that the proud monarchy was doomed, but all appearances pointed to the contrary. Babylon, the capital of the kingdom of Babylonia, had reached the height of its splendor. According to Herodotus, the city was built on both sides of the Euphrates, the connection between its two divisions being kept up by means of a bridge made of wooden planks, laid over stone piers. The streets are described as being parallel, and the houses from three to four stories in height; the city was surrounded by a broad and deep ditch, and by a wall flanked with towers, and pierced with one hundred gates of brass. The wall was built of bricks formed from the earth taken out of the moat, and cemented by a composition of heated bitumen and reeds, the former being brought from Is, on the Euphrates, about one hundred and twenty-eight miles from Babylon. The statements vary with regard both to the height and thickness of the wall. Herodotus says it was three hundred feet high, and seventy-five feet thick, a statement which seems highly improbable.

Strabo reduces the height to seventy-five feet, and further says, that two chariots driving in opposite directions could pass each other on the summit of the wall.

In the centre of the city was the Temple of Jupiter Belus. It was the square tower, from which rose seven other towers, in regular succession; in the topmost tower was a splendidly-decorated chapel having a table and couch of solid gold. The building was ascended from without by means of a winding-stair; the walls which surrounded it enclosed a space of thirty-three acres, and it was approached by brazen gates of enormous strength and magnificent workmanship. This tower, it has been conjectured, was none other than that of Babel, erected by presumptuous builders not long after the flood.

Wonderful Hanging-Gardens.

Herodotus visited the city shortly after the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus, and he describes its wondrous hanging-gardens, containing nearly four acres of land, elevated far above the level of the city, and bearing lofty trees that would have done no discredit to the forests of Media. These gardens consisted of a series of terraces raised one above the other, like seats in an amphitheatre, and resting on arches and pillars, some of which were filled with earth. We are also told of a great engineering work, namely, the tunnel under the Euphrates, and there is no doubt that the city was most extensive and remarkable. Its area has been estimated at seventy-two square miles; but it must be borne in mind that these ancient cities had but few points of resemblance to a modern town; they were rather enclosed districts, agricultural and pasture land being within the walls, and its population bearing no proportion to the density of that of our great cities at the present time.

Babylon was in all its glory when the Jewish prophets foretold its speedy destruction. "And Babylon," said Isaiah, "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never

be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch tents there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and apes (satyrs) shall dance there. Thou shalt take up this taunting speech against the king of Babylon and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The golden city! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked and the sceptre of the rulers." These words were uttered in the time of Ahaz, years before Babylonia had established herself as a separate kingdom.

Not content with faithfully interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerning the tree, Daniel in the depth of his concern ventured to let fall a word of counsel. "Wherefore, O king," he said, "let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing kindness to the poor; perhaps it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

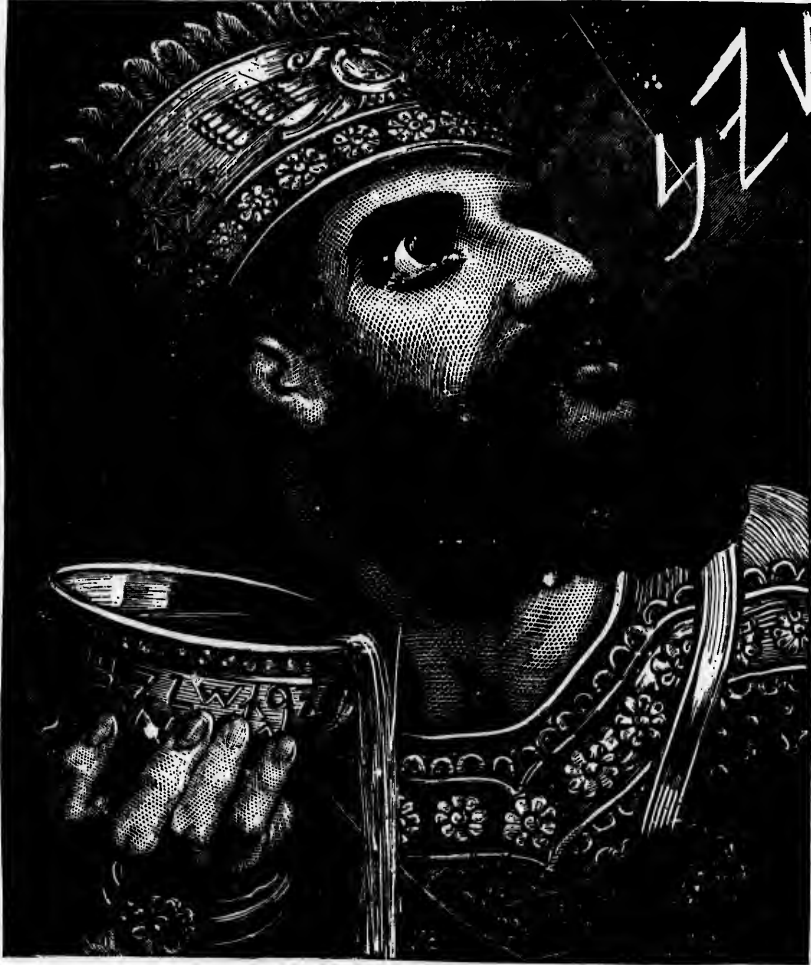
This, doubtless, made some temporary impression upon the king; but such impressions have seldom great effect in changing a pervading bent of mind. At the end of about twelve months, as Nebuchadnezzar was walking on the roof of his palace, with all the glories of Babylon, which he had made the greatest city in the world, spread out before him, he was lost in the contemplation of his own greatness and the magnificence with which he was surrounded. "Is not this," he cried, "great Babylon, which I have built for a royal habitation by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" The words had scarcely passed his lips when he heard a voice from Heaven saying, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, thy kingdom is departed from thee!"

The King Stricken with Insanity.

And in that same hour his reason departed from him—he was smitten with a singular disease of mind, which unfitted him not only for the rule of kingdoms, but for the society of men. He was then suffered to follow the bent

of his diseased impulse, under which he appears to have supposed himself transformed into a beast; and he went forth into the parks and meadows, where he abode among the cat-

his nails grew like the unsightly claws of birds. The account of these transactions is given in a proclamation which Nebuchadnezzar issued after his recovery. He there states, that



BELSHAZZAR SEEING THE WRITING ON THE WALL.—Dan. v. 5.

tle, and lived on vegetables. In this mad and savage state he remained, his body being nightly wetted by the dews of heaven, till his hair grew out like the plumage of eagles, and after continuing in this state for seven years, "Mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and glorified Him that liveth forever and ever,

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whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom: from generation to generation." This was the result which had been sought by this awful visitation; and no sooner had he realized the conviction that "the Most High doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" than his kingdom and his glory were restored to him. His nobles and courtiers repaired to him, as soon as the change was known; he was once more invested with the imperial purple, and reconsecrated reverently to his throne. "Now," the proclamation concluded, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and glorify the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

Belshazzar's Tyrannical Reign.

Nebuchadnezzar did not long survive his restoration, and the reign of his son and successor, Evil-merodach, was of short duration, as he was in 561 B. C. slain in a battle with the Medes and Persians. He was succeeded by his son Belshazzar. The end only of this monarch's reign is minutely noticed in the narrative of Daniel; but from other sources we obtain information respecting acts in the early part of his reign, of which only a barbarous and jealous tyrant could have been capable. His last and most heinous offence was the profanation of the sacred vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem, which had been respected by his illustrious grandfather, and even by his incapable father.

He made a great feast "to a thousand of his lords," and ordered the sacred vessels to be brought, that he and revelers might drink wine from them. That there was in this a studied insult to the Most High God, whom Nebuchadnezzar had been taught by many severe lessons to hold in reverence, is plain from the words in which the account is given: "He praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, and stone; but the God in whose hand was his breath, and whose were all his ways, he glorified not."

In the midst of this profane revelry, a hand suddenly appeared writing words of mysterious import upon the wall, over against the king. The monarch was sobered in an instant. The writing was unintelligible to him, for, although the words were, as appears from the sequel, written in the vernacular Chaldean language, the characters were the old Hebrew, with which he was unacquainted.

The King Terrified.

The attendance of the magi and astrologers was then commanded: but they were quite unable to read the words, much less to give an explanation of them. This increased the alarm of the impious king; and when the terror was at its height, the queen-mother (or rather, perhaps, grandmother) made her appearance, and reminded him of Daniel, whom she mentioned as one "in whom is the spirit of the Holy God, and in the days of thy grandfather, light and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him." That Belshazzar needed to be thus reminded of the character and services of Daniel seems to imply that he no longer retained his high office at court, but had withdrawn into private life.

It was the custom in most Oriental courts for the archimagus, or the officer whose station corresponded the nearest to that which Daniel occupied, to lose his office on the death of the king to whose court he was attached; and this was probably the case in Babylon. It is, however, supposed by some that Daniel, in prospect of events then rapidly approaching, had voluntarily withdrawn from court, to avoid an official connection with the fortunes, and thereby involve himself in the ruin of a falling house. But those who offer this conjecture forget, or do not know that the acceptance or abandonment of court employments is not and never was optional in any eastern kingdom.

Daniel was sent for; and the king repeated what he had heard of him, and explained the circumstances which required his presence. The monarch promised that if he could but explain the mysterious words, his rewards should

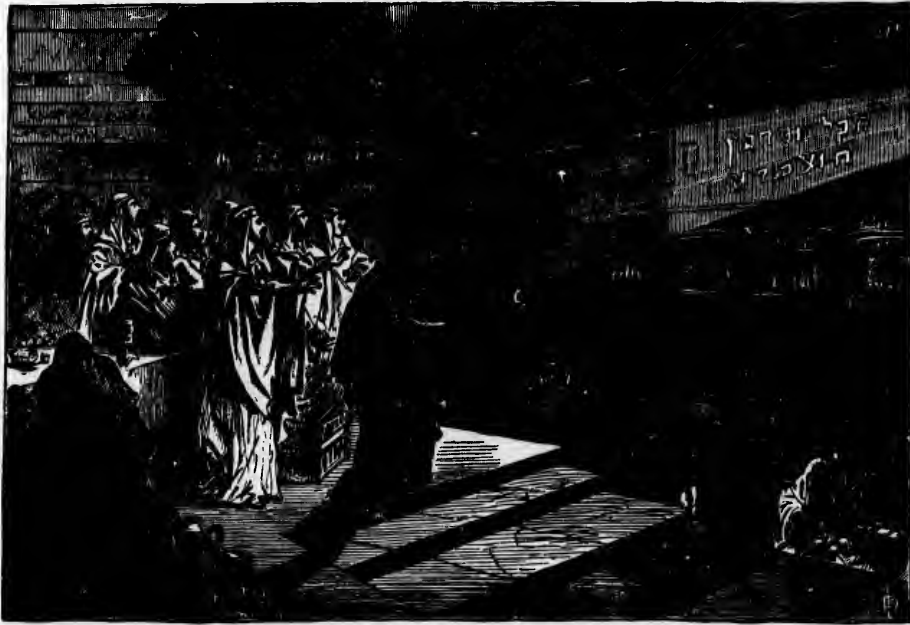
be the highest in his power to bestow—he should be clothed in scarlet, be privileged to wear a chain of gold, and should rank as the third person in the kingdom. But such honors were valueless in the sight of the venerable prophet, who had already filled the highest stations at court, and to whom the future was open as a book. "Thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king." And he did so.

experiences and resulting convictions of his renowned grandfather, adding—"And thou, his grandson, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this." He then proceeded to read the inscription—

MENE (*number*), MENE (*number*), TEKEL (*weight*), PERES (*division*), UPHARSIN (*and divisions*); and explained the words thus:

MENE, God hath *numbered* thy reign.

[MENE], and *finished* it (the repetition of the



DANIEL INTERPRETING THE WRITING.—Dan. v. 26.

It was not enough to read off the mere words as they stood. It is probable that any educated Jew among the captives in Babylon could have done that; but it was necessary that the true import should be affixed to words which were in themselves merely indicative of the great prophetic truths hidden in them. This required a prophet instructed from on high, and was such a task as no man then in Babylon, save Daniel, could accomplish. Before proceeding to explain these great words the prophet undauntedly reminded the king of the

word giving intensity and completeness to the signification).

TEKEL, thou art *weighed* in the balance, and found wanting.

PERES, thy kingdom is *divided*—

UPHARSIN, *and* given to the Mede and the Persian (Darius and Cyrus).

The king understood this well. His mind took in all the fearful significance of these oracular sentences. But he royally restrained his emotions, and dismissed the prophet, with orders that the promised rewards should be

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bestowed upon him. The sacred historian adds—"That same night was Belshazzar, king of the Chaldæans, slain." How he came by his death we are not told; but we may collect from Xenophon that he perished through a conspiracy against his life by two nobles upon whom he had inflicted the highest indignities which men could receive.

He was succeeded by his son, Laborosarchod, a boy, who died in less than a year, in consequence of which the Scriptural account relates, as immediately following the death of Belshazzar, that "Darius the Mede took the kingdom." The family of Nebuchadnezzar was in fact extinct, and the Median king, Darius (the Cyaxares of secular history), the brother of the queen-mother, took the kingdom, as next of kin, through her, to the Chaldæan crown. The claim of Darius may not have been very strong; but it was as strong as any which could be opposed to it, and was backed by a power which had risen very high under the generalship of his nephew, Cyrus, and which no power in those parts was in a condition to oppose.

Babylon Overthrown.

A very singular circumstance, impossible for any human foresight to have reckoned upon, occurred during the siege of Babylon, and was most pointedly mentioned by the prophets. It was, that the river should be dried up before the city should be taken: "A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up;" "I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry." This, as Bishop Newton remarks, was most unlikely ever to happen, the river being two furlongs broad, and deeper than two men standing upon one another, so that the city was thought to be better fortified by the river than by the walls. But so it was, that Cyrus turned the course of the river Euphrates, which ran through the midst of Babylon, and, by means of deep trenches and canals, so drained the waters, that the river became easily fordable for his soldiers to enter the city. It was by this means that the mighty Babylon, which was deemed impregnable, and was sup-

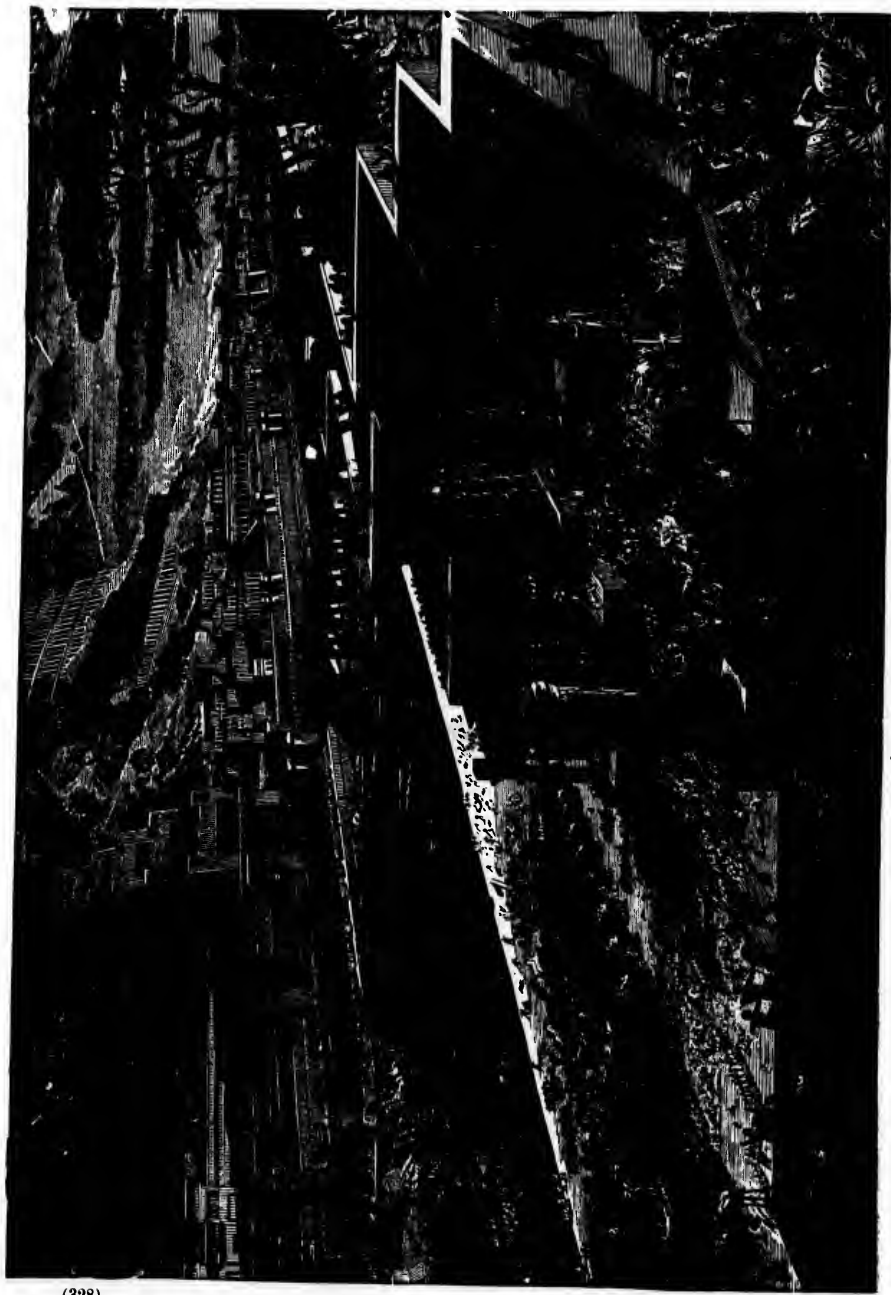
plied with provisions for many years, was most unexpectedly taken.

It is not a little singular that the capture of Babylon should be described as involving the destruction of its idols. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground." "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon their beasts, and upon their cattle." There are other prophecies to the same effect. Now the Persians, by whom Babylon was taken and retained, detested idolatry nearly as much as did the Jews themselves, and destroyed the idols of the places they conquered, when not restrained by prudential considerations. What was actually done in this respect, history does not state. We know that Cyrus readily gave up the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, although they had been consecrated to the god Bel; and some years after Xerxes plundered and destroyed the temples and idols of "the great city." This he did from professed hostility to image worship, for which he was indeed notorious; but partly to reimburse himself for the vast expenses of his wars by the precious metals of which their idols were composed, or with which they were covered. It will be remembered that the image which Nebuchadnezzar set up was of gold.

Striking Fulfilment of Prophecy.

With equal minuteness and precision, by prophetic vision, it was foretold that this great event, the capture of Babylon, should take place during a feast. And this also came to pass: for the city was taken in the night of a great annual festival, while the inhabitants were dancing, drinking, and revelling, so that the extreme parts of this vast city were already in the hands of the enemy before those who dwelt in the central parts were aware of their danger.

But, although taken by an enemy, the human probabilities were that a town so great, so advantageously situated for the seat of a great empire, would only sustain a temporary shock from such a calamity; and would then, under its new masters, recover its strength and



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BABYLON TAKEN BY CYRUS.—Dan. v. 31.

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greatness. This has happened to other great cities of the East and West, and why might it not happen to Babylon? How but through Divine inspiration could the prophets know that Babylon should become desolate and utterly forsaken, and that man and beast should remove from it?

It did so happen, however. The conquerors had a city of their own not very far off, and much more conveniently situated, with regard to their native dominions, as the seat of empire; and, although for a time they made it the residence of the court during a part of every year, Susa, the Shusan of Scripture, on the river Tigris, became the real capital of the empire. This was a sore blow to the prosperity of Babylon; and when Alexander conquered the East, it was no longer the mighty city which it had been when the prophets gave forth their denunciations against it. It was still, however, great; and the Macedonian conqueror contemplated making it the central seat of his vast empire. But the downward doom of Babylon was sealed in the counsels of heaven, and the hero, in the midst of his magnificent projects, died there, and his empire was divided.

The Den of Lions.

However, the favor which Daniel received at the hands of the new king was highly displeasing to the native princes and governors, and they resolved to compass his ruin. They knew too well the purity of his public administration to indulge any hope of substantiating any charge against him in that respect; but they also knew his uncompromising adherence to the obligations of his peculiar religion, and were not without hope of thereby effecting his downfall. The fear of arousing the suspicion of Darius to their design obliged them to cast their net very widely. They proposed to the king that he should issue a decree that whoever should petition to any god—but himself—for the space of a month, should be cast into the den of lions. In this assumption of Divine honors by kings there was nothing unparalleled; and the easy and some-

what vain king, taking it as a mark of affection and loyalty to him on his accession, too readily consented; and gave to it all the solemnity of one of those decrees which, when once issued, could not be recalled.

Daniel could not but know that this measure was really levelled at himself; yet he in no wise altered his customary services to the God of Israel. He did not even stoop to make his devotions secret; but thrice a day, as he had always been wont to do, he offered up his orisons with his windows open towards Jerusalem. Due note of this was taken by the enemies of Daniel, who hastened to the king, and accusing him of contempt and of rebellion against the royal decree, demanded the instant execution of its dreadful penalties against him.

The unhappy king at once saw the snare which had been laid for the prophet and himself; but he saw also that he was under the most binding of known obligations to enforce the decree he had issued. His grief, his remorse, his rage, were alike impotent; and nothing was left him but to turn to the vague hope that the God whom Daniel so faithfully served, and by whom he had been so signally favored, would interfere for his deliverance. Comforting himself with this assurance, which he imparted to the prophet, the king abandoned him to the punishment which the decree had awarded. Daniel was cast into the den of lions, the mouth of which was immediately closed with a large stone, which was sealed up with the king's own signet.

Darius, the king of the Medes and Persians, passed that night in sleepless sorrow; he refused to take his usual food, and forbade the instruments of music to be played before him. Very early in the morning he left his bed and hastened to the den of lions, still cherishing the faint hope that Daniel might be yet alive. When he drew near he called out, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" A voice answered from the cavern, "O king, live forever! My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions'

mouths; inasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me, and also against thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

Overjoyed to find that the man whom he so highly esteemed had been thus miraculously preserved, Darius ordered that he should be immediately released from the dungeon, and directed that his accusers should be cast into the lions. The mighty power which had restrained the ravenous beasts from harm was then withdrawn, and the wretched plotters became in an instant the victims of their rage and hunger.

Several figures of lions have been found among the ruins of Babylon; some coins represent a lion's den under the walls of a fortress, and an intaglio found in the same quarter represents a man between two lions. It would perhaps be too much to say that any of this had special reference to the incident we have recorded; but they afford interesting corroboration to the Scriptural account by showing that lions were well known at Babylon, and that there were one or more dens of these animals in that great city. In the fulness of his satisfaction and astonishment the king issued a decree to all the nations of his vast empire, commanding "that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God, and steadfast forever."

The Prophet's Last Days.

It is recorded of Daniel that he lived through the reign of Darius the Mede, and into that of Cyrus; indeed, one of his visions is dated in the third year of Cyrus, when he must have reached the ninetieth year of his age. There is no reason to doubt that Daniel retained his authority and influence under the latter monarch, and there is much reason to conclude that he brought that great prince acquainted with those prophecies which had a long time before predicted not only the restoration of the Jews to their own land, but that this restoration was to be effected under a king named Cyrus. But although he had thus probably an important part in bringing

about this result, there is no evidence that he availed himself of the privilege conceded to his countrymen.

Some have asserted that he returned from captivity with Ezra, and took upon him the government of Syria; but it is more likely that he was too old to take part in so great a charge, and that, according to the usually received opinion, he died in Persia. Epiphanius and others affirm that he died at Babylon; and they say that his sepulchre was to be seen there, many ages after, in the royal cave. But it seems more probable that, according to the common tradition, he was buried at Susa or Shusan, where he sometimes resided, probably in his official capacity, and where he was favored with some of his last visions. Josephus says that there was at Susa a magnificent edifice in the form of a tower, which was said to have been built by Daniel, and which served as a sepulchre for the Persian and Parthian kings. This, in the time of the historian, retained its perfect beauty and presented a fine specimen of the prophet's skill in architecture. That this tower was built by Daniel there is little ground to believe; but that a monument of the kind would be ascribed to him by the numerous Jews resident in those parts in and before the time of Josephus is highly probable.

Benjamin of Tudela mentions that he was shown the reputed tomb of Daniel at Susa on the Tigris; and at the present day a tomb bearing his name is the only standing building among the ruins of Shus, the ancient Susa. The city itself is now a gloomy wilderness inhabited by lions, hyenas, and other beasts of prey; and the tomb stands at the foot of the most elevated of the heaps of ruin, which time, by covering with mould and drift, has converted into mounds or hillocks. The structure is modern and of the usual form of the tombs of holy men throughout that country; but nothing could have led to its being built there but the belief, attested by some previous monument, that it was the real site of the prophet's sepulchre. The tomb is a small building, but affords shelter to a few

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DANIEL TOUCHED BY THE ANGEL.—Dan. x. 10.

dervishes, who are supported by the alms of the pilgrims who visit the sepulchre. These dervishes are now the only inhabitants of Susa, and various species of wild and ravenous beasts roam at large over that spot on which some of the proudest palaces ever raised by human art once stood.

Daniel's Visions.

The last six chapters of Daniel's book are occupied by the prophecies, in the form of visions, which were delivered at different times, but which are all in some degree connected as parts of one grand scheme, in which the interests of the Hebrew and Christian churches are concerned. They extend through many ages, and exhibit, under the most striking representations, the rise and fall of successive kingdoms: they characterize, in terms highly descriptive, the four great monarchies of the world, to be succeeded by that kingdom which is an everlasting dominion, and which shall not be destroyed. They even point out intermediate subdivisions of empires, particularly that of the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexandria should be broken.

The prophet Daniel must be considered as one of the most remarkable characters of which the Scriptures give us any record. All through his history the representation is that he was in alliance with supernatural power. He was more than a Hebrew captive; he was more than a Daniel; he was more than man, for he was Divinely guided and upheld. Raised up for a special purpose, as so many of the great men of the Bible were, he fulfilled his mission with a fidelity, a courage and a zeal conspicuous even among the renowned heroes of Biblical history.

It is interesting to notice that although he lived to a very great age, although the furrows and cares of many years, even decades of years, were written upon his face, he never lost his sublime confidence, never failed in any emergency. One great reason for this is undoubtedly the fact that all through his checkered career he was blessed with visions from on high. It would seem as if the prophet Daniel had but to

open his eyes to see the invisible, and to stop and listen to hear the unutterable. He rose to every occasion, was not appalled by threats, was not made giddy by flatteries, and maintained his lofty character to the end.

In the tenth chapter of the book which bears his name, a very interesting account is given of one of those visions by which he was so frequently cheered. He affirms that he had been in mourning for the space of three weeks; no pleasant bread had he eaten; neither flesh nor wine had been taken for sustenance; neither had he anointed himself according to the custom of those days.

A Mysterious Visitor.

In stern severity, as was the manner with the old Hebrew prophets, he had humiliated himself, and in that lowly frame of mind, the windows of his soul being open, it was fitting that the light of Heaven should come in. He narrates particularly the circumstances of this vision. It was on the four and twentieth day of the first month, and he was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel. He lifted up his eyes, and lo! before him was a certain man of extraordinary appearance. He was clothed in linen and his loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz. From the further vivid description which is given, it seems that his body was like beryl, while his face had the appearance of lightning, and his eyes were as lamps of fire. His arms and his feet were like in color to polished brass. The man spoke and his voice was like the sound of many waters, or, as the language expresses it, "the voice of his words was like the voice of a multitude."

The prophet is careful to tell us that he alone saw the vision; it appeared to be a special revelation to himself. Others were with him, but their eyes, it seems, were holden, and, although this mysterious messenger from the other world was so near, they were not sensible of his presence. Yet, conscious that something unusual was transpiring, a great quaking fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. Daniel affirms that no strength was left in himself, and in this burning presence

his comeliness was turned into corruption. Still he heard what was spoken, and having heard it he fell into a deep sleep on his face, and his face was toward the ground.

While thus overawed and faint under the power of the wonderful vision, behold, a hand touched him, and he was lifted from the ground upon which he had fallen. Thus upheld, he received the communication, the message intended especially for him. There he stood, trembling, face to face with a reality in human shape and form from the other world. He was told not to fear and was given to understand that whatever calamities might come upon the kingdom whose destruction he had foretold, he himself should still be guarded and preserved, and that his times and seasons and the various events of his future life were

all in the hands of that God of Israel who had hitherto directed and miraculously preserved him.

He was told what should befall his people in the later days. Having heard this, he set his face toward the ground and became dumb. He complains that by the vision his sorrows were turned upon him, and he retained no strength. Then the angel came again and touched him and said, "Oh, man, greatly beloved, peace be unto thee. Be strong; yea, be strong." With this announcement there came to him renewed strength. The vision vanished: the mysterious messenger departed. Daniel, who had been touched by the very hand of Omnipotence, went longer than Elijah did in the strength which had been received from God.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

JONAH AT NINEVEH.



LET us fix our minds upon the events which transpired during the period of the Prophet Jonah's public life. A description of the great Assyrian empire and its capital, Nineveh,

with a narrative of Jonah's visit to this famous city, will necessitate a return to Jewish history.

Jehoash, or Joash, reigned in Judah, and while the priest Jehoiada lived, he did well and justly, a commendable sort of character, and very young. He gave orders for the repair of the Temple, and gave instructions to the clergy to see that his orders were carried out; but while they took the money, they did not do the work, and when Joash had been on the throne more than three and twenty years the Temple was still unrepaired, and nobody seemed to know what had become of the money collected for the work.

At last the high-priest interfered—and it was a marvel he did not interfere sooner—and gave instructions that the people were not to pay any money to the priests at all, these gentlemen forgetting very often what they had received, but that they were to drop their contributions through the slit in the lid of a very large money-box, and that when the box was tolerably full the king's scribe, acting on the part of the laity, and the high-priest on the part of the clergy, should together open the chest, count up the money, make the necessary memoranda, and then settle so far as they could with the trades-people. Under this arrangement the work went on very well indeed. It is said of those who had the work

in hand that they "dealt faithfully," and a higher compliment could not be paid.

Towards the end of the reign of Jehoash the Syrian king Hazael marched on Jerusalem and so terrified the weak monarch that he yielded up all the church plate, and having thus satisfied the cupidity of his enemy, was permitted to remain in an ignoble peace. But not long; two of his chief men rose up against him, and "smote him and he died," and then his son Amaziah became king.

While these events were transpiring in the kingdom of Judah, Jehu, the soldier who had won the crown of Israel, led a careless and indifferent life, and dying, left the throne to Jehoahaz his son. The young king was almost immediately involved in a terrible war with Hazael of Syria; one defeat followed another; army after army was overthrown; city after city was captured. Elisha had foreseen all this: he saw plainly that when Hazael had murdered his sovereign lord and usurped his throne, he would not be slow in bringing heavy calamity on Israel. The army, by repeated engagements, was reduced to ten thousand infantry, fifty cavalry, and ten chariots; the emphatic language of Scripture is that the people were made "like the dust by threshing."

We are told that at present in the East, as in the times to which the Scriptures refer, the threshing-floor is in the open air, and is the most level and hardest piece of ground which can be found near the harvest-field. The top of the hill is preferred when it can be obtained, for the advantage of the subsequent winnowing. For use, as the regular threshing-floor on the estate, this spot is often prepared by the removal of about six inches depth of the soil and filling the vacancy with a firm com-

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post of manure and clay. Still, with all this care to prevent the intermixture of gravel and earthy particles, much very fine dust from the surface of the threshing-floor is produced by the act of threshing, and remains when the corn and straw are removed. Add to this that the straw itself is much crushed and broken by the treading of the cattle so that small particles of broken straw lie mingled with the small dust of the threshing-floor. These circumstances render the figure employed by the writer very vivid and distinct to



JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA.—Jon. i. 5.

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an eastern imagination and full of meaning. After a while, however, the people obtained peace, only again to resort to idolatrous practices, and to do as wickedly as they had done before. Then Jehoahaz died and was succeeded by his son Joash. Our Scriptures assert that he was a wicked man, that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord," whereas Josephus tells us "He was a good man, and in his disposition was not at all like his father." It is most likely that these different characters of Joash suited the different parts of his reign, and that he was, as according to our Bible, at first a wicked king, and then, as according to Josephus, he was reclaimed, and became a good one, and so continued thereafter.

Brilliant Victories.

It was in the reign of Joash that Elisha the prophet died; shortly before his death he was waited on by Joash, who was bemoaning the wretched condition of his people by reason of the ravages of the Syrians; Elisha "comforted him," says Josephus, "and bade the king bend a bow that was brought him; and when the king had fitted the bow for shooting, Elisha took hold of his hands and bade him shoot; and when he had shot three arrows, and then left off, Elisha said, If thou hadst shot more arrows, thou hadst cut the kingdom of Syria up by the roots; but since thou hast been satisfied with shooting three times only, thou shalt fight and beat the Syrians no more times than three, that thou mayest recover that country which they cut off from thy kingdom in the reign of thy father. So when the king had heard that he departed, and a little while after the prophet died."

On the death of Hazael, king of Syria, Joash made war on his successor Adad, obtained a victory in three battles, and recovered the country which Hazael had captured.

Meanwhile, Amaziah had ascended the throne of Judah, and executed summary vengeance on his father's murderers. After this he assembled a large army, and with a hundred thousand men from the tribes of Israel, made war on the Amalekites, Edomites, and Ge-

balites. But he was warned not to war with the Israelites for his auxiliaries; Amaziah—although the pecuniary loss was very great, as he was bound to pay the men he had hired—availed himself of the caution, sent away his allies, and with his own comparatively small army achieved very decided victories over the nations already named. The old sin that had so often brought evil on Judah and Israel was repeated. Amaziah patronized and practised idolatry, and puffed up with vanity at his own successes, commanded all Israel to return to their allegiance to the house of David.

Speedily came the answer: "King Joash to king Amaziah. There was a vastly tall cypress tree in Mount Lebanon, as also a thistle; this thistle sent to the cypress tree to give the cypress tree's daughter in marriage to the thistle's son; but as the thistle was saying this, there came a wild beast and trod down the thistle: and this may be a lesson to thee not to be so ambitious, and to have a care, lest upon thy good success in the fight against the Amalekites, thou growest so proud as to bring dangers upon thyself and thy kingdom."

On the receipt of this letter the wrath of Amaziah burnt hot and fierce; he assembled his troops, and began his invasion of the dominions of Joash, but his men were either unwilling or afraid of the issue of battle; they forsook the king, who fell into the hands of the enemy. At first Amaziah despaired of his life; he looked for nothing from the hands of the provoked Joash but death. The king of Israel, however, proposed terms; they were hard terms, no less than the surrender of Jerusalem; but the humiliated monarch, with the fear of death on him, consented. He was led as a captive to his own capital; his conqueror, disdainful to enter by the gate, ordered a considerable part of the wall to be levelled, and drove his chariot through the breach.

He then appropriated to his own use all the treasures of the holy Temple and the royal palaces, and taking hostages for the good behavior of the king, left Amaziah at Jerusalem, and returned to Samaria. Unhappy king, he felt himself now to be a mere "thistle" to the

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"cypress" of Israel, felt that the "wild beast" had indeed trodden. His old prestige was never recovered, and years afterwards, when Joash had been fifteen years in his grave, and Jeroboam II. was on the throne of Israel, a conspiracy was raised against Amaziah, who fled to Lachish, and was there sought out and slain.

The son of Amaziah, a lad of sixteen, Azariah by name, was permitted to ascend the vacant throne of Judah, but he does not appear to have distinguished himself in any remarkable way either for good or evil. As to Jeroboam of Israel, he at the first was thoroughly bad, and "departed not from all the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin;" but it has been conjectured that although he began wickedly, and was the cause of a vast number of misfortunes to the Israelites, he was afterwards reclaimed, and became a good king. This seems probable on account of his being encouraged by a prophet to undertake a great military enterprise in which he was highly successful.

Prophecies of Jonah.

The prophet who encouraged Jeroboam was Jonah, who foretold that he should make war with the Syrians, conquer their army and enlarge the bounds of his kingdom in the northern provinces as far as the city called Hamath, and southerly as far as the Dead sea. Jeroboam achieved what had been predicted, and relieved many of his subjects from the dread of the Syrians. It was a good work well done.

But turning from the connected history of Judah and Israel, we must fasten our attention on this singular man, Jonah.

Jonah's prophecy stands as the fifth of the twelve lesser prophets in our canonical arrangement; chronologically, it should stand first of all, before Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Jonah was the first of the prophets whose books have come down to us. About thirty years, it is conjectured, before he delivered his message to Jeroboam, this Jonah was sent with a warning and threatening to one of the

largest cities in the world. He was commanded to go to Nineveh, and denouncing the extreme wickedness of its inhabitants, proclaim its destruction within forty days. Jonah was afraid, and, as Josephus has it, "he ran away from God." The impossibility of doing so is plain, but he ran away from his duty, brought misery on himself and trouble on others; was cast out of the ship, and is said to have been swallowed by a great fish, who threw him at last on dry land; then he went to Nineveh on his important errand.

A Famous City.

It appears that this city, the capital of the kingdom of Assyria, extended its length along the eastern bank of the Tigris, while its breadth reached from the river to the eastern hills. All the ancient writers concur with Jonah in describing Nineveh as an "exceeding great city." But as none of these writers lived till after its destruction, their accounts, derived from old records and reports, are necessarily brief and incomplete. The best account which we possess is that furnished by Diodorus, who states that Ninus, having surpassed all his ancestors in the glory and success of his arms, resolved to build a city of such state and grandeur as no sovereign coming after him should be easily able to exceed.

Accordingly, having brought a vast number of his forces together, and provided the necessary treasure, and everything which his design required, he built near the Tigris a city very famous for its walls and fortifications.

Diodorus adds, that the founder was not deceived in his expectations, for no one ever after built a town equal to it for the extent of its circumference and the stateliness of its walls. These were a hundred feet high, and so wide that three chariots might be driven upon them abreast. There were 1,500 towers upon the walls, all of them two hundred feet high. Ninus appointed the city to be chiefly inhabited by the richest of the Assyrians, and freely allowed people from other nations to dwell there. He also granted to the citizens a large surrounding territory, and gave his

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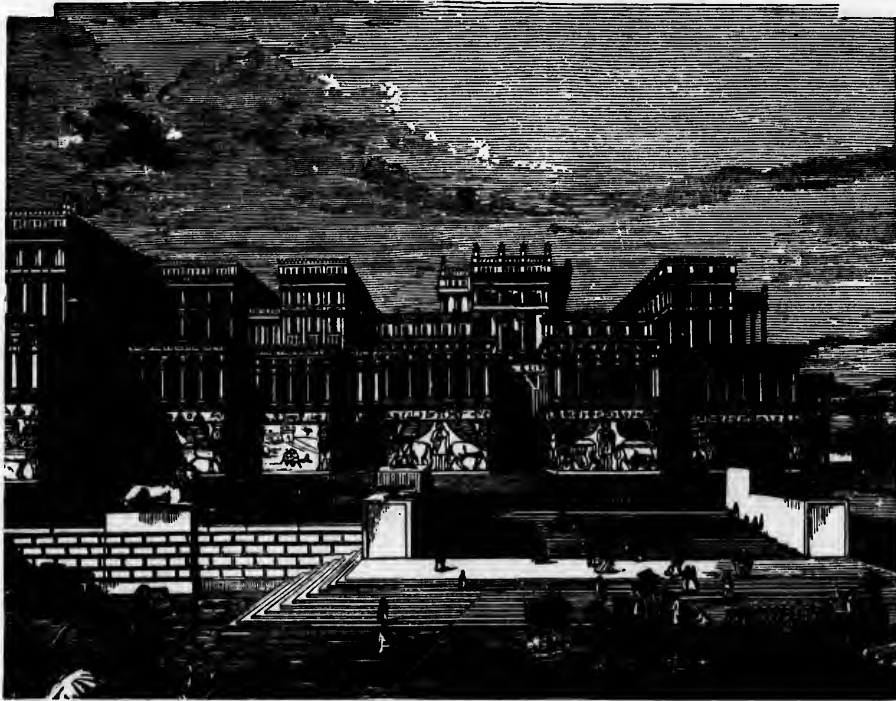
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own name, Ninus, to the town. It may be added, that Strabo and other ancient writers say that Nineveh was more extensive than even Babylon.

We are not to suppose that the whole of the vast enclosure of Nineveh was built upon. It was no doubt loosely built, with the houses much apart, as at Babylon, and containing extensive plantations, parks, gardens, fields and

pared nothing happened; the city was not overthrown, and he who had uttered the prediction, and had looked for the fulfilment of his words, was very angry. It seems that he would have preferred the utter destruction of the city rather than that his threatening should not be executed.

Years afterwards Nineveh did fall; the sands of the desert swept over her; she was dead,



ROYAL PALACE AT NINEVEH.

open grounds, as the larger Oriental towns still do.

To this great city Jonah declared his message—forty days and Nineveh was to be destroyed. The people listened with awe and wonder as they heard the terrible denunciation, and they believed the words of the prophet. A solemn fast and national humiliation was proclaimed; the Ninevites cried to the God of Jonah, and when the forty days ex-

buried, forgotten—the site of her wealth and glory unknown, her very existence doubted.

But a few years ago we were not acquainted with a single great monument of Assyrian art. Travellers who visited the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris brought back with them to Europe bricks covered with a multitude of little, graphic, nail-shaped characters, seals, and tubes or cylinders, bearing strange representations of men and fantastic animals;

and these little curiosities, which were found for the most part at a few days' journey from Bagdad, in the neighborhood of Hillah, were lodged in the various collections, without any one suspecting the erudition which might some day spring from them, and help to clear up the ancient history of Assyria. Reports were also brought of two or three shapeless remains of sculpture, such as a lion devouring a man, and the robe and feet of an unknown female.

In December, 1842, Mons. Botta, the French consul at Mosul, commenced a series of excavations opposite Mosul, in one of the mounds on the eastern banks of the Tigris. Tradition, as well as the works of travellers, had long pointed out the mounds opposite Mosul as being the site of ancient Nineveh. Mons. Botta discovered but very few fragments of any importance at this spot, and advanced a little farther, to Khorsabad, situated on the east of the Tigris, at a distance of about ten miles north-east of Mosul. In a few days he laid bare walls of brick and gypsum—in fact, an entire palace decorated with colossal sculptures, representing scenes of the religious, royal, military, and private life of one of the most celebrated nations of antiquity, with whom we were hitherto but vaguely acquainted, from the sacred writings, and the accounts of Herodotus.

It is with a kind of stupor that the spectator at the present day contemplates some of these sculptures in the galleries of the Louvre. So remarkable an event could not fail to excite the emulation of English explorers. One of them, Mr. Austen Henry Layard, did not long delay excavating other mounds, near the small village of Nimroud, at about twenty-two and a half miles from Mosul, and thirty-nine miles from Khorsabad, on the left or eastern bank of the Tigris, and at a distance of less than three miles from that stream. His zeal has been crowned with no less success than that of Mons. Botta; he has enriched the British Museum with prodigious evidences of ancient Assyrian civilization, and many famous relics have found their way to our own country.

These discoveries, which were more unex-

pected and more important than any others of an analogous nature which have preceded them in the present century, have given an extraordinary impetus to the science of archæology and history. The French and other consuls and archæologists of various nations continued with great ardor the work commenced under such happy auspices by Messrs. Botta and Layard. Mons. Place, French consul at Mosul, discovered on the site of Khorsabad the first Assyrian statue dug up, for previously to his so doing the figures found were in half-relief only. This statue is four feet and a half high, and represents a person holding a kind of bottle. Mons. Place discovered, also, a wall, five feet high, of painted and enamelled bricks, on which are represented animals, men, trees, etc. Arguing from this rapid success, it is no longer possible to doubt that most of the brick mounds scattered about in the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris contain immense ruins of the Assyrian empire; the pioneers of science may dig into the bowels of the earth with confidence, for they will certainly make discoveries of invaluable importance towards aiding us to study the religions, the annals, and the manners of Asiatic antiquity.

Exploits of Sennacherib.

Among the most interesting and important discoveries of Mr. Layard is a full history of the exploits and victories of Sennacherib, copied from the bulls placed by the royal personage in his palace at Nineveh. One inscription reads as follows: "Hezekiah, king of Judah," says Sennacherib, in his inscriptions on the bulls excavated by Mr. Layard, "who had not submitted to my authority; forty-six of his principal cities, and fortresses, and villages depending upon them, I captured, and carried away the spoils. The fortified towns, and the rest of the towns which I spoiled, I severed from his country and gave to the kings of Ascalon, Ekron, and Gaza, so as to make his country small. In addition to the former tribute imposed upon their country, I added a tribute, the nature of which I fixed. I also took from Hezekiah the treasures he had col-

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SELLING THE CHILDREN OF JEWISH CAPTIVES.—Joel iii. 6.

lected in Jerusalem; thirty talents of gold, and eight hundred talents of silver, the treasures of his palace, besides his sons and his daughters, and his male and female servants, and brought them all to Nineveh."

Mr. Layard observes, "There can be little doubt that the campaign against the cities of Palestine, recorded in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, is that described in the Old Testament. We are told there, in the Book of Kings, that the king of Assyria, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, 'came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.'" This feat Sennacherib records in his inscriptions. What is very striking, and indeed conclusive, is that the amount of treasure in gold taken from Hezekiah is the same on the Assyrian monument as in the inspired record. Thus the gigantic stone bulls, long hidden under the accumulated *débris* of ages, respond to the labors of Layard, and come forth into noonday light, and proclaim that the history recorded in the Book of Kings is alike authentic and reliable, and therefore safe from the bitter assaults on its integrity in which sciolists and sceptics delight to indulge.

The most instructive history of the final destruction of Nineveh is given by Ctesias in a statement preserved in Diodorus Siculus. It is worth extracting in full. Arbaces, a Mede, a valiant and prudent man, and general of the forces which were sent every year out of Media to Nineveh, was stirred up by Belesis, the governor of Babylon, to overthrow the Assyrian empire. Hereupon Arbaces prevailed with the Medes to invade the Assyrian empire, and drew the Persians, in hopes of liberty, to join the confederacy. He sent messengers into Arabia, and gained that prince for a confederate. Sardanapalus, being informed of the revolt, led forth the forces of the rest of the provinces against them, whereupon, a battle being fought, the rebels were totally routed, and, with great slaughter, were driven to the mountains, seven furlongs from Nineveh.

While Sardanapalus was rejoicing at these victories, and feasting his army, Arbaces induced the Bactrians to revolt, fell suddenly on

the king's camp, and making a great slaughter of some, forced the rest into the city. Hereupon Sardanapalus committed the charge of the whole army to the queen's brother, and took upon himself the defence of the city. But the rebels twice defeated the king's forces, and the king, being afterwards besieged, many of the nations revolted to the confederates, and Sardanapalus, perceiving that the kingdom was like to be lost, sent forth into all the provinces of the kingdom in order to raise soldiers, and to make all other preparations necessary to endure a siege; and he was the more encouraged to this in that he was acquainted with an ancient prophecy that Nineveh could never be taken by force till the river became the city's enemy.

Destruction by Fire.

The siege continued two years. The third year it happened that the river, overflowing with continual rains, came up into a part of the city, and tore down the walls, twenty furlongs in length. The king, hereupon, conceiving that the oracle was accomplished in that the river was an apparent enemy to the city, utterly despaired; and therefore, that he might not fall into the hands of his enemies, he caused a huge pile of wood to be made in his palace court, and heaped upon it all his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and enclosing his eunuchs and concubines in an apartment within the pile, caused it to be set on fire, and burnt himself and them together, which, when the revolted came to understand, they entered through the breach in the walls, and took the city, and clothed Arbaces with a royal robe, and committed to him the sole authority, proclaiming him king.

The prophecy of Nahum leads us to believe that Nineveh was a magnificent, great, and powerful city; that it was overthrown in its meridian grandeur, when its prestige, and its wealth, and population were greatest. While the people that were destined to overthrow this great city are not mentioned by name, the description of the invading army, as composed of chariots and horsemen, indi-

ates the Medes as the victors. Media relied on her cavalry most of all for success, and her armies were composed chiefly of horsemen.

The prophet also predicts that the city would be plundered, its inhabitants slain with the sword, and its chief places set on fire.

quake, or depopulated by pestilence, the prophecy of Nahum would remain unfulfilled, and therefore untrue. If the city had been weakened, and continued, like Rome or Athens, the thin shadow or skeleton of what it was, the inspired prophecy would not be fulfilled.



ASSYRIAN WINGED BULL.

Those very things which the secular historian has recorded are just the facts predicted in the inspired record. The events were predicted a century before they occurred; while the historians who tell the story of her ruin were totally unacquainted with the word of God. If Nineveh had been swallowed up by an earth-

quake, or depopulated by pestilence, the prophecy of Nahum would remain unfulfilled, and therefore untrue. If the city had been weakened, and continued, like Rome or Athens, the thin shadow or skeleton of what it was, the inspired prophecy would not be fulfilled.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.



OUR attention is next directed to the history which follows the ancient prophecies, and precedes the advent. The interval of four centuries, from the close of the records of the Old Testament to the events which heralded the birth of Jesus Christ, may be divided into four periods: the continuance of the Persian dominion, till B.C. 331; the Greek empire in Asia, B.C. 331-167; the independence of Judæa under the Asmonæan princes, B.C. 167-'63; and the rule of the house of Herod, commencing in B.C. 40, and extending beyond the Christian era to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The last two periods also include the relations of Judæa to Rome. There is little that possesses any great intrinsic interest, except the struggle of the Maccabees for religion and liberty against Antiochus Epiphanes.

The first two of these periods—a space just equal to that from the death of Elizabeth to the accession of Victoria in England—form almost a blank in the history of the Jews. They seem to have been content to develop their internal resources and their religious institutions under the mild government of Persia. Their affairs were managed by high-priests, who were possessed of large power, and for many years were content to let the nation remain passive, thankful for the privilege of maintaining an existence among other and more powerful realms.

Eusebius assigns twenty years to the pontif-

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icate of Jaddua, who was high-priest both under Darius Codomannus and after the fall of the Persian empire. Josephus tells a romantic story of an interview between Jaddua and Alexander the Great. While Alexander was besieging Tyre, he sent to demand the submission of the Jews, who answered that they were the faithful vassals of Darius. After taking Gaza Alexander marched against Jerusalem. Jaddua, by the command of God in a vision, hung the city with garlands, and went forth in solemn procession to meet the conqueror at Sapha (the *watch*), an eminence in full sight of the city and the Temple. On seeing the high-priest in his state robes, the priests in their sacred dresses, and the people clothed in white, Alexander fell prostrate in adoration, and, rising, embraced the high-priest.

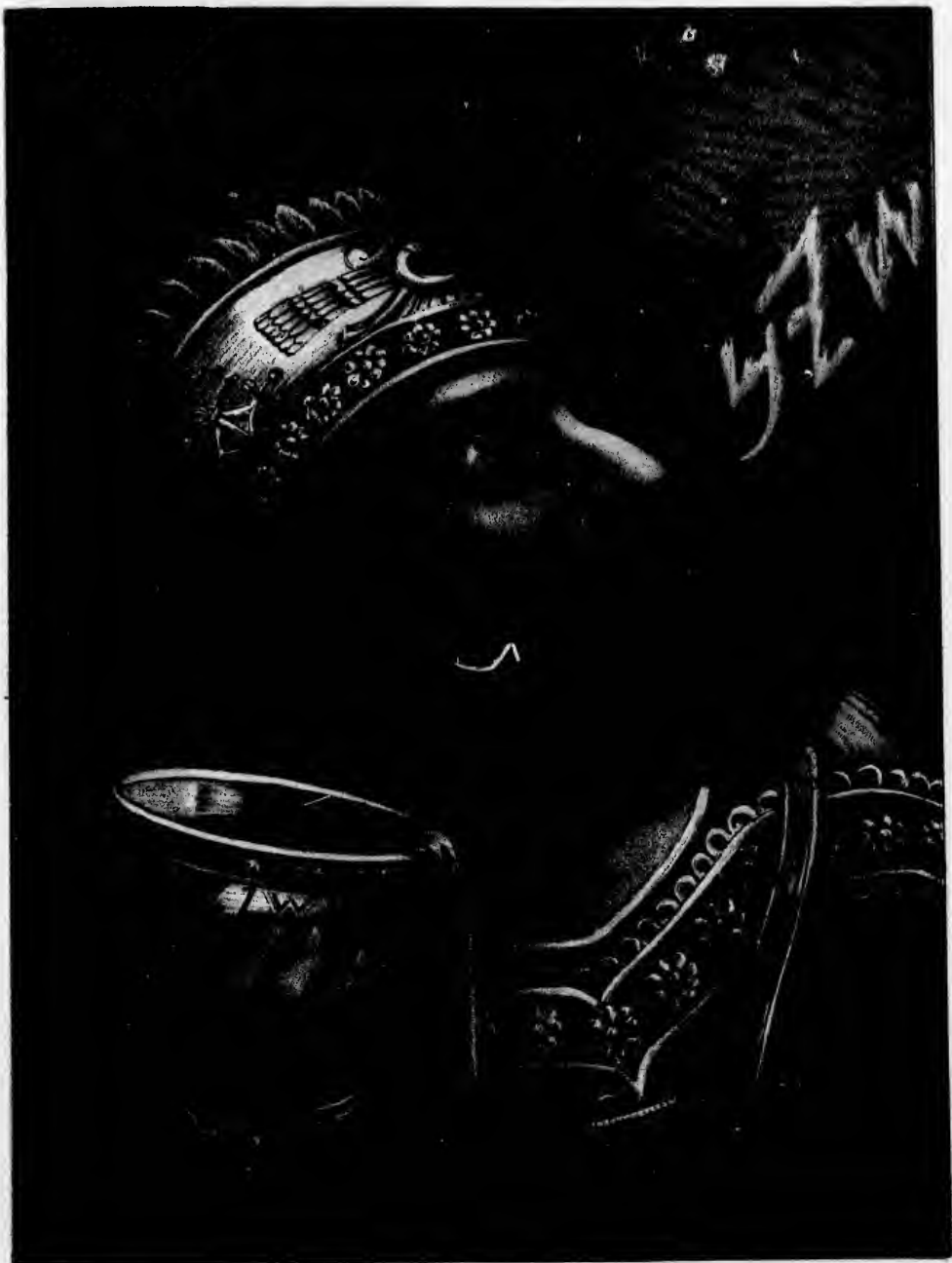
To the remonstrances of Parmenio he replied that he worshipped, not the priests, but the Name engraved upon his frontlet, and that he recognized him in a figure that had appeared to him in a vision in Macedonia and bidden him to conquer Persia. Entering Jerusalem, he offered sacrifice, and was shown the prophecies of Daniel relating to himself. He granted the Jews, not only in Judæa, but also in Media and Babylonia, the free enjoyment of their own laws, and exemption from tribute during the Sabbatic year. The statement of Justin, that on Alexander's advance into Syria he was met by many eastern princes with their diadems, affords some confirmation to the story of the high-priest's coming out to meet him in person.

It is certain that Jerusalem and Judæa submitted to the conqueror, and there are traces subsequently of the privileges he is said to have granted to the Jews. Alexander's homage to Jehovah, and his pleasure at being named as the instrument of destiny, are points thor-

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oughly consistent with his character. There is nothing improbable in his having received the submission of Judæa from the high-priest and princes about the time of the siege of Gaza. At all events Jerusalem was too important to have been passed over by Alexander himself, as it is by the historians. He enlisted Jewish soldiers, and removed a large number of Jews to Egypt, to aid in peopling his new city of Alexandria.

The Samaritans are said to have claimed the same privileges as the Jews, which Alexander refused to grant. Hence probably arose the rebellion in which they murdered the Macedonian governor, Andromachus, and which Alexander punished by the destruction of Samaria. Palestine thenceforth remained quiet under Alexander, who died B. C. 323.

The Macedonian conqueror must not, however, be dismissed without some further notice of his real place in Jewish history, and in the sacred history of the world—a place not dependent on any incidental circumstances, such as his visit to Jerusalem.

The Young Macedonian.

In the prophetic visions of Daniel the influence of Alexander is necessarily combined with that of his successors. They represented the several phases of his character; and to the Jews nationally, the policy of the Syrian kings was of greater importance than the original conquest of Asia. But some traits of the "first mighty king" are given with vigorous distinctness. The emblem by which he is typified suggests the notions of strength and speed; and the universal extent and marvellous rapidity of his conquests are brought forward as the characteristics of his power, which was directed by the strongest personal impetuosity. He "ruled with great dominion, and did according to his will; and there was none that could deliver out of his hand."

He was not simply a Greek, nor must he be judged by a Greek standard. He approached the idea of a universal monarchy from the side of Greece, but his final object was to establish something higher than the paramount suprem-

acy of one people. His purpose was to combine and equalize—not to annihilate; to wed the East and West in a just union—not to enslave Asia to Greece. The time, indeed, was not yet come when this was possible; but if he could not accomplish the great issue, he prepared the way for its accomplishment.

The first and most direct consequence of the policy of Alexander was the weakening of nationalities, the first condition necessary for the dissolution of the old religions. The swift course of his victories, the constant incorporation of foreign elements in his armies, the fierce wars and changing fortunes of his successors, broke down the barriers by which kingdom had been separated from kingdom, and opened the road for larger conceptions of life and faith than had hitherto been possible.

The contact of the East and West brought out into practical forms thoughts and feelings which had been confined to the schools. Paganism was deprived of life as soon as it was transplanted beyond the narrow limits in which it took its shape. The spread of commerce followed the progress of arms; and the Greek language and literature vindicated their claim to be considered the most perfect expression of human thought by becoming practically universal.

Privileges Granted to Jews.

The Jews were at once most exposed to the powerful influences thus brought to bear upon the East, and most able to support them. In the arrangement of the Greek conquests, which followed the battle of Ipsus, Judæa was made the frontier land of the rival empires of Syria and Egypt; and though it was necessarily subjected to the constant vicissitudes of war, it was able to make advantageous terms with the state to which it owed allegiance, from the important advantages which it offered for attack or defence. Internally also the people were prepared to withstand the effects of the revolution which the Greek dominion effected. The constitution of Ezra had obtained its full development. A powerful hierarchy had succeeded in substituting the idea of a church for

that of a state, and the Jew was now able to wander over the world and yet remain faithful to the God of his fathers.

Through a long course of discipline, in which they had been left unguided by prophetic teaching, the Jews had realized the nature of their mission to the world, and were waiting for the means of fulfilling it. The conquest of Alexander furnished them with the occasion and the power. But at the same time the example of Greece fostered personal as well as popular independence. Judaism was speedily divided into sects, analogous to the typical forms of Greek philosophy. But even the rude analysis of the old faith was productive of good. The freedom of Greece was no less instrumental in forming the Jews for their final work, than the contemplative spirit of Persia, or the civil organization of Rome; for if the career of Alexander was rapid, its effects were lasting.

A Man Unlike all Others.

The city which he chose to bear his name perpetuated in after ages the office which he providentially discharged for Judaism and mankind; and the historian of Christianity must confirm the judgment of Arrian, that Alexander, "who was like no other man, could not have been given to the world without the special design of Providence." And Alexander himself appreciated this design better even than his great teacher; for it is said that when Aristotle urged him to treat the Greeks as freemen and the Orientals as slaves, he found the true answer to this counsel in the recognition of his Divine mission to unite and reconcile the world.

One high-priest rapidly succeeded another among the Jews until we come to Simon II., B. C. 226. Four years later the crown of Egypt passed to Ptolemy IV. Meanwhile the rival kingdom of the Seleucidæ, in Syria, had reached the climax of its power, and the throne had just been ascended by the most ambitious of its kings, Antiochus III., the Great. He made war on Ptolemy for the provinces of Phœnicia, Cœlesyria and Pales-

tine; but was defeated at the battle of Raphia, near Gaza. After this victory, Ptolemy went to Jerusalem; and, not content with offering sacrifices, he entered the Holy of Holies, whence he is said to have been driven out by a supernatural terror. He gave vent to his resentment by a cruel persecution of the Jews at Alexandria, the first example of such measures for nearly two hundred years. Its consequence was the alienation of the Jews both of Palestine and Egypt.

The death of Ptolemy, when his son Ptolemy V. was only five years old, gave a new opening to the ambition of Antiochus the Great. That king, who had been occupied for the last twelve years in subduing a revolt in Asia Minor and attempting in vain to recover the provinces beyond the Tigris from the Parthians and Bactrians, formed a league with Philip V. of Macedon, for the partition of Ptolemy's dominions. After a fierce contest, in which Judæa suffered severely, Antiochus became master of Cœlesyria and Palestine. The Jews, who had again been ill-treated by Scopas, the general of Ptolemy, welcomed Antiochus as a deliverer. He granted them an annual sum for the sacrifices, and forbade foreigners to enter the Temple.

Attempt to Seize the Sacred Treasures.

The conquered provinces were restored to Ptolemy as the dowry of his bride, Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus; but the Syrian king did not give up their possession and afterwards he resumed them altogether. It is under his son and successor, Seleucus IV., that the writer of the second book of Maccabees places the attempt of Heliodorus to seize the treasures of the Temple, and his miraculous repulse. The graphic account is given in detail as follows:

"Now when the holy city was inhabited with all peace, and the laws were kept very well, because of the godliness of Onias the high-priest, and his hatred of wickedness, it came to pass that even the kings themselves did honor the place, and magnify the Temple with their best gifts; insomuch that Seleucus

king of Asia, of his own revenues, bare all the costs belonging to the service of the sacrifices. But one Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin, who was made governor of the Temple, fell out with the high-priest about disorder in the city.

"And when he could not overcome Onias, he gat him to Apollonius the son of Thraseus, who then was governor of Cœlesyria and Phenice, and told him that the treasury in Jerusalem was full of infinite sums of money, so that the multitude of their riches, which did not pertain to the account of the sacrifices, was innumerable, and that it was possible to bring all into the king's hand. Now when Apollonius came to the king, and had shewed him of the money whereof he was told, the king chose out Heliodorus his treasurer, and sent him with a commandment to bring him the aforesaid money.

Terror in Jerusalem.

"So forthwith Heliodorus took his journey, under a color of visiting the cities of Celosyria and Phenice, but indeed to fulfil the king's purpose. And when he was come to Jerusalem, and had been courteously received of the high-priest of the city, he told him what intelligence was given of the money, and declared wherefore he came, and asked if these things were so indeed. Then the high-priest told him that there was such money laid up for relief of the widows and fatherless children: and that some of it belonging to Hircanus, son of Tobias, a man of great dignity, and not as that wicked Simon had misinformed; the sum whereof in all was four hundred talents of silver, and two hundred of gold: and that it was altogether impossible that such wrongs should be done unto them, that had committed it to the holiness of the place, and to the majesty and inviolable sanctity of the Temple, honored over all the world."

"But Heliodorus, because of the king's commandment given him, said, that in any wise it must be brought into the king's treasury. So at the day which he appointed, he entered in to order this matter: wherefore there was no

small agony throughout the whole city. But the priests, prostrating themselves before the altar in the priests' vestments, called unto heaven upon him that made a law concerning things given to be kept, that they should safely be preserved for such as had committed them to be kept. Then whoso had looked the high-priest in the face, it would have wounded his heart: for his countenance and the changing of his color declared the inward agony of his mind. For the man was so compassed with fear and horror of the body, that it was manifest to them that looked upon him, what sorrow he had now in his heart.

"Others ran flocking out of their houses to the general supplication, because the place was like to come into contempt. And the women girt with sackcloth under their breasts, abounded in the streets; and the virgins that were kept in ran, some to the gates, and some to the walls, and others looked out of the windows. And all holding their hands toward heaven, made supplication. Then it would have pitied a man to see the falling down of the multitude of all sorts, and the fear of the high-priest, being in such an agony. They then called upon the Almighty Lord to keep the things committed of trust safe and sure for those that had committed them. Nevertheless, Heliodorus executed that which was decreed. Now as he was there present himself with his guard about the treasury, the Lord of spirits, and the Prince of all power, caused a great apparition, so that all that presumed to come in with him were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid.

"For there appeared unto them a horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his fore-feet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes.



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REPULSE OF HELIODORUS IN THE TEMPLE.—2 Macc. iii. 27.

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"And Heliodorus fell suddenly unto the ground, and was compassed with great darkness: but they that were with him took him up, and put him into a litter. Thus him, that lately came with a great train and with all his guard into the said treasury, they carried out, being unable to help himself with his weapons: and manifestly they acknowledged the power of God: for he by the hand of God was cast down, and lay speechless without all hope of life. But they praised the Lord, that had miraculously honored his own place; for the Temple, which a little afore was full of fear and trouble, when the Almighty Lord appeared, was filled with joy and gladness.

Treachery Suspected.

"Then straightway certain of Heliodorus' friends prayed Onias, that he would call upon the Most High, to grant him his life, who lay ready to give up the ghost. So the high-priest suspecting lest the king should misconceive that some treachery had been done to Heliodorus by the Jews, offered a sacrifice for the health of the man. Now as the high-priest was making an atonement, the same young men in the same clothing appeared and stood beside Heliodorus, saying, Give Onias the high-priest great thanks, insomuch as for his sake the Lord hath granted thee life; and seeing that thou hast been scourged from heaven, declare unto all men the mighty power of God. And when they had spoken these words, they appeared no more. So Heliodorus, after he had offered sacrifice unto the Lord and made great vows unto him that had saved his life, and saluted Onias, returned with his host to the king. Then testified he to all men the works of the great God, which he had seen with his eyes.

"And when the king asked Heliodorus, who might be a fit man to be sent yet once again to Jerusalem, he said, If thou hast any enemy or traitor, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him well scourged, if he escape with his life; for in that place, no doubt, there is an especial power of God. For He that dwelleth in heaven hath His eye on that place, and de-

fendeth it; and He beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it. And the things concerning Heliodorus, and the keeping of the treasury, fell out on this sort."

The accession of Antiochus IV. Epiphanes secured the triumph of the Syrian party in Judæa. This prince, whose conduct, as well as his end, gained him the nickname of "Epimanes" (the madman), had been sent by his father, Antiochus the Great, as a hostage to Rome. He returned with a contempt for his subjects added to that love of oriental luxury which the kings of Syria had now acquired; but his vices might have been chiefly dangerous to himself had not his Roman education inflamed the ambition which he inherited from his father. He found the Jewish high-priest at Antioch, whither Onias had gone to clear himself from the accusations of Simon, which were backed by the hostility of Apollonius, the governor of Cœlesyria. The Greek party were represented, not only by Simon, but by the high-priest's own brother, Joshua (Jesus), who went so far as to adopt the Greek name of Jason, and set aside his own nationality.

Crime Avenged.

By an enormous bribe in money and promises of annual tribute, Jason obtained the high-priesthood, while Onias III. was deposed, and detained at Antioch. For the first time, Greek customs were openly introduced into Judæa, with a success which shows to what an extent the Jews had already become Greek in spirit. Not content with surrendering the privileges of free worship obtained from former kings, and neglecting the services of the Temple, Jason built a gymnasium, where the Jewish youth practised the Greek athletic exercises. Jason also sent representatives to the quinquennial games of the Tyrian Hercules, with large presents, which even his envoys scrupled to apply to the heathen sacrifices, but bestowed them for building ships.

In three years, however, Jason was in his turn undermined by Menelaus, whom he had sent to Antioch with the tribute, and who had obtained the high-priesthood by flattering the

king's vanity and offering a higher bribe. He arrived at Jerusalem, "having the fury of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a wild beast," while Jason fled to the Ammonites. Unable to raise the money he had promised, Menelaus was summoned to Antioch. He sold some of the vessels of the Temple to the Tyrians, in order to bribe Andronicus, who governed Antioch during the king's absence in Cilicia.

The deposed high-priest, Onias, who was still at Antioch, charged Menelaus with sacrilege, and fled for sanctuary to the sacred grove of Daphne. At the instigation of Menelaus, Andronicus enticed Onias from the sanctuary and put him to death. Antiochus, who returned about this time, was moved to pity by the blameless character of Onias; and, perceiving doubtless the treasonable schemes of Andronicus, he put the murderer to death.

Meanwhile a great tumult had broken out at Jerusalem, in consequence of the sacrileges committed by Lysimachus, the brother and deputy of Menelaus. Lysimachus was killed, and Menelaus was accused before Antiochus, when he reached Tyre on his way to attack Egypt; but Menelaus escaped through bribery, and his accusers were punished for the insurrection. Thus the affair ended.

Jerusalem Stormed and Captured.

We must here glance at the relations of Syria toward Egypt. Ptolemy VI. Philometor was an infant when he succeeded his father, B. C. 181; but the government was ably conducted by his mother Cleopatra, the sister of Antiochus Epiphanes. Her death led to a war with Syria, and Antiochus successfully conducted four campaigns against Egypt, from which he only retired on the haughty mandate of the Roman ambassador, M. Popillius Lænas. During the second of these campaigns a report was spread of the king's death. Jason attacked Jerusalem at the head of 1,000 men, and drove Menelaus into the citadel; but, after great cruelties against the citizens, he was compelled to fly to the land of Ammon. Thence he fled to Egypt, and afterward to Sparta, where he sought protection on some

claim of kindred, and there he "perished in a strange land." Meanwhile his attempt had the most extraordinary consequences in the history of the Jews.

Antiochus was led to believe that Judæa had revolted, an idea no doubt encouraged by Menelaus, in order to get rid of his own enemies. The king returned from Egypt in a state of fury; took Jerusalem by storm, slaying young and old, women and maidens. Forty thousand fell in the conflict, and as many were sold into slavery. Guided by Menelaus, he entered the Temple, profaned the altar by the sacrifice of a swine, and having caused part of its flesh to be boiled, he sprinkled the broth over the whole sanctuary, and polluted the Holy of Holies with filth.

He carried off the sacred vessels and other treasures, to the amount of 1800 talents, and returned to Antioch, leaving a savage Phrygian, named Philip, as his governor at Jerusalem, and Andronicus at Gerizim, where the Samaritan temple seems to have been profaned in like manner. Menelaus, who is stigmatized as the worst of all the three, is not again named in the books of Maccabees. His subsequent death under Antiochus Eupator was regarded as a judgment for his crimes.

Two years later Antiochus vented upon Judæa the exasperation of his dismissal from Egypt. Policy too, as well as passion, may have urged him to destroy a province now thoroughly disaffected, and likely soon to fall into the power of Egypt. Apollonius, the old enemy of the Jews, was sent to Jerusalem at the head of 22,000 men, with orders to slay all the male adults, and to seize the women and children. Pretending that his mission was friendly, he waited till the Sabbath, and then fell upon the unresisting people.

A frightful massacre took place: the city was pillaged and set on fire: its fortifications were dismantled: and a tower was erected on Mount Zion, overlooking both the Temple and the city, from which the garrison sallied forth upon all who dared to resort to the deserted sanctuary. Then followed one of the severest persecutions recorded in the history of relig-

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ion. Antiochus issued an edict for uniformity of worship throughout his dominions, and committed its execution in Samaria and Judæa to an old man named Athenæus, one of those fanatics who have been produced by heathenism, as well as by religions that claim a more earnest faith. A strong element of such fanaticism may be traced in the character of Antiochus himself.

While his quick and versatile Greek temperament, trained in Roman ideas of power, and corrupted by oriental luxury, led him to indulge in all the vices and freaks for which despotism supplied the means—at one time rioting through the streets of Antioch with his boon companions, at another going through a mock canvass for the Roman magistracies, and pretending to hold them—he was all the while a munificent and bigoted supporter of the Greek worship. "The admirers," says Dean Milman, "of the mild genius of the Grecian religion, and those who suppose religious persecution unknown in the world to the era of Christianity, would do well to consider the wanton and barbarous attempt of Antiochus to exterminate the religion of the Jews and substitute that of the Greeks."

Temple of Olympian Jove.

The Samaritans submitted without resistance, and their temple on Mount Gerizim was dedicated to Zeus Xenius. At Jerusalem Athenæus began his work by converting the sanctuary into a temple of Zeus Olympius. Its courts were polluted by the most licentious orgies; the altar was loaded with abominable offerings; and the old idolatry of Baal was re-established in the obscene form in which it had been carried to Greece. The copies of the Book of the Law were either destroyed, or profaned by heathen and doubtless obscene pictures.

The practice of Jewish rites, and the refusal to sacrifice to the Greek gods, were alike punished with death. Two women, who had circumcised their children, were led round the city with the babes hanging at their breasts, and then cast headlong from the wall. A company

of worshippers were burned by Philip in a cave, to which they had fled to keep the Sabbath. The favorite test of conformity was the compulsion to eat swine's flesh; and two particular cases of heroic resistance make this one of the brightest pages in Jewish and Christian martyrology. A chief scribe, named Eleazar, a man of noble person and ninety years of age, when a piece of swine's flesh was thrust into his mouth, spat it out, and willingly offered his body to the torments. When some of the officers, for old acquaintance sake, besought him to provide some meat, and eat it as if it were the unclean food, he made a reply which contains the whole justification of the martyr's constancy to death:

"It becometh not our age in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being fourscore years old and ten, were now gone to a strange religion, and so through mine hypocrisy, and desire to live a little time, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain to my old age, and make it abominable. For though for the present time I should be delivered from the punishment of men, yet I should not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive, nor dead."

He concluded by declaring his resolve, "to leave a notable example to such as be young to die willingly and courageously for the honorable and holy laws." His tempters, incensed at his obstinacy, grew doubly cruel, and, as he was expiring beneath their blows, he cried: "It is manifest unto Jehovah, that hath the holy knowledge, that whereas I might have been delivered from death, I endure sore pains in body by being beaten; but in soul am well content to suffer these things, because I fear Him." Thus was he "tortured, not accepting deliverance, that he might obtain a better resurrection;" and he is included, with the other martyrs of the age, in the "cloud of martyrs," "of whom the world was not worthy, who obtained a good report through faith." Some Christian writers have called him "the proto-martyr of the Old Covenant," a glory, however, which belongs to Abel.

"Others had trial of mockings and scourgings." Such was the fate of the seven brethren who, with their mother, were brought into the king's own presence, and, having refused to eat swine's flesh, were put to death with insults and torments, of which the horrid details may be read in the original text. From the eldest to the youngest they displayed not only constancy, but triumph; and the mother, after encouraging each in his turn, herself suffered last. The atrocities committed at Jerusalem were rivalled in the country. But at this very crisis, when the worship and the people of Jehovah seemed doomed to extinction, a new light arose for both; and the result showed how needful was the baptism of fire to purify the people from Grecian corruptions.

Meanwhile the persecutor himself became a signal example of the retribution which awaits despotic power and unbridled passion; and, before relating the resurrection of Judæa under the Maccabees, we may anticipate the short period of four years, to notice the fate of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Mad Antiochus.

He was in the eastern provinces when he heard of the revolt of Judæa and the defeat of his general Lysias. Hastening back to avenge the disgrace, he attacked a temple at Elymais, the very place where his father had lost his life in a similar attempt. The mortification of being repulsed seems to have brought to a climax the madness which despotism usually engenders; and he died in a raving frenzy at Tabæ in Persia, B. C. 164. His end was regarded, by Greeks as well as Jews, as a judgment for his sacrilegious crimes; and he has left to history a name as odious as that of Nero, with whose character he had many points in common.

It is very remarkable that this great persecution, and the subsequent history of the glorious regeneration of Judæa under the Maccabees, should have been passed over by the Greek and Roman historians. The contemptuous summary given by Tacitus is even more significant than the silence of the rest, and shows how far prejudice can lead even the

most careful writers from the truth. He speaks as follows:—"During the dominion of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians, the Jews were the most abject of their dependent subjects. After the Macedonians obtained the supremacy of the East, king Antiochus endeavored to do away with their superstition and introduce Greek habits, but was hindered by a Parthian war from reforming a most repulsive people."

Magnificent Achievements.

The spirit of this passage may explain the indifference of other authors. The uncompromising devotion of the Jews to their religion and their national traditions, and their claim to be worshippers of the only true God, excited among the heathen, and especially those who laid claim to philosophy, the same affected contempt and unaffected resentment which led Gibbon to sneer at Palestine as a country no larger nor more favored by nature than Wales. Nor is it only this brilliant passage of the Jewish annals that escaped the notice and the sympathy of the western historians. The period of 370 years, from the decree of Cyrus to the revolt of the Maccabees, embraces the most brilliant events of Greek and Roman history. The aristocratic republics of Greece and the monarchy of Rome had reached their climax: at its commencement, amidst the rapid growth of philosophy and art.

Its first quarter of a century beheld the expulsion of the Pisistratids from Athens and the Tarquins from Rome. The struggles which placed Rome at the head of the Italian states, and formed her republican constitution, the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, the conflict of the Greek states for the supremacy which they at last yielded to the Macedonian, and the very conquest which brought Alexander to Judæa, are all related just as they might have been if there had been no such nation as the Jews.

The keen inquiries of Herodotus, who visited Egypt and Tyre at the very time when Ezra and Nehemiah were regulating the restored state, produced nothing but the notice

of Necho's victory over Josiah and capture of Cadytis (probably Gaza), the mistake "that the Syrians of Palestine" learned circumcision from the Egyptians, and the mention of them as serving with the Phœnicians in the fleet of Xerxes.

The silence of the historians of Alexander and his successors about the Jewish people is the more remarkable, as they have to mention Judæa as the scene of war; it is matched by the Romans even when they came into contact with Syria and Egypt; nor is it even broken when (if we may believe the historian of the Maccabees) Rome formed an alliance with Judas Maccabæus. A century later, when Pompey penetrated into the temple, the sacred city suggests even to Cicero nothing better than a nickname for his distrusted leader; nor does Tacitus notice the very advent of Christ with half the interest he shows in the relations of the Herodian princes to the Cæsars. Surely we cannot but see in all this a Divine purpose, that the outer, like the inner life, of the chosen people, should lie hidden from the world at large, and pursue a course apart from the ordinary current of warlike and political conflict, till from their bosoms should emerge the band of lowly and unworldly men, who were to proclaim "a kingdom not of this world."

Religious Zeal.

In preparation for that event, the Jewish people had a history of its own, for which we could wish to possess more abundant materials. They had resumed the ordinances of their religion, purified from their old idolatries by the captivity, and with their zeal constantly stimulated by antagonism with the Samaritans. Politically they were subject first to Persia, and then to Egypt; but, as long as their tribute was paid, their relations to their sovereign were kindly, and they were left to the government of their high-priests and patriarchal princes till the great Syrian persecution. The extinction of royalty, after it had served its purpose by giving an image of Messiah's kingdom, removed the chief influence which had led to apostasy in Israel

and to idolatry in Judah; and the very dependence which debarred them from political freedom gave them the better opportunity for religious organization.

The band by which the "people of God" were held together was at length felt to be religious and not local; and all the more so from the existence of large portions of the nation separate from the rest, in the great eastern "dispersion," or in the new community formed in Egypt. The Jews incorporated in different nations still looked to Jerusalem as the centre of their faith. The boundaries of Canaan were passed; and the beginnings of a spiritual dispensation were already made.

Maccabæan War of Independence.

The Jews restored to Palestine resumed their agricultural life on a land rendered doubly fertile by having "enjoyed her Sabbaths as long as she lay desolate, to fulfil threescore and ten years;" and it may be observed in passing, that the ordinance of the Sabbatic year, which had been so systematically neglected before the captivity, was observed in the Maccabæan age. How the land was divided among the returned families we are not told; but this much seems clear, that it soon fell chiefly into the hands of the nobles, who, becoming rapidly enriched through the fertility of the soil, resumed that course of oppression toward the poor, which the old prophets had so vehemently denounced as the crying sin of their class. An order which thus sets itself above the social bonds of mutual kindness is prone to maintain its consequence against popular discontent by foreign influence; and, just as the princes of Judah headed the idolatrous and Egyptian party in the last days of the monarchy, so now they were the leaders of the Syrian party. Their influence was resisted, as formerly by the prophets, so now by the priests, who headed the glorious uprising of the nation in defence of their religion. The issue of that contest proves that the nation was still sound at heart at the time of the Syrian domination. The persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes

called forth a glorious resistance, which ended in establishing the independence of Judæa under the Maccabæan or Asmonæan princes. This was accomplished by the instrumentality of human virtues, the lofty patriotism, adventurous valor, daring and sagacious soldiership, generous self-devotion, and inextinguishable zeal of heroic men in the cause of their country and their God.

Deeds of Valor.

In Modin, a town on an eminence commanding a view of the sea, the exact site of which is unknown, lived an aged priest of the line of Joarib, named Mattathias. He was the father of five sons in the prime of life, Johanan, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan. When Apelles, the officer of Antiochus, arrived at Modin to enforce the execution of the royal edict against the Jewish religion, he made splendid offers to Mattathias, as a man of great influence, to induce him to submit to the king's command. The old priest not only rejected his advances, but publicly proclaimed his determination to live and die in the faith of his fathers. Other Jews were found more ready to apostatize, and one of them advanced to the altar to sacrifice to the heathen gods. The sight so incensed Mattathias, that he sprang upon the apostate and slew him upon the altar, and then turning upon the royal commissioner he struck him dead at his feet.

This bold act brought matters to a crisis, and Mattathias, calling upon all the citizens who were zealous for the Law, to follow him, fled to the mountains, where he was joined by his sons, and by many of his countrymen. Their numbers rapidly increased, but the Syrian troops having surprised one thousand in a cave, attacked them on the Sabbath-day, and meeting with no resistance, slew them without mercy. This led Mattathias and his followers to declare that it was lawful to engage in defensive warfare on the Sabbath.

The insurgents conducted their revolt with equal enterprise and discretion. For a time they lay hid in the mountain fastnesses, and, as

opportunity occurred, poured down upon the towns; destroyed the altar of the heathen gods; circumcised children by force; inflicted severe punishments upon all apostate Jews whom they captured; recovered many copies of the Law, which their enemies had wantonly defaced; and re-established the synagogues for public worship—the Temple being defiled and in possession of the enemy.

But the age of Mattathias was ill-suited to this laborious and enterprising warfare; having bequeathed the command to Judas, the most valiant of his sons, he sank under the weight of toil and years. So great already was the terror of his name, that he was buried without disturbance on the part of the enemy's troops, in his native city of Modin.

Marvelous Triumphs of Maccabæans.

Judas, the third and most warlike of the sons of Mattathias, and hence surnamed "Maccabæus" (the Hammer-), is one of the grandest characters in Jewish history. If his youth added vigor and enterprise to the cause, it lost nothing in prudence and discretion. He had already done good service under his father, and was by far the best qualified leader the patriot army could have been given. He succeeded in collecting a force of 6,000 men, and having tried his troops by many surprises, and night attacks, in which he captured a number of cities, which he fortified and garrisoned, he ventured to meet the enemy in the open field. He first encountered Apollonius, the governor of Samaria, who marched against him from that city. Judas routed him and captured his sword, which he ever afterwards wore. Sceron, the deputy-governor of Cœlesyria, advanced to revenge the defeat of Apollonius, but was met and beaten by Judas in the strong pass of Beth-horon, where Joshua had defeated the Canaanites centuries before.

Antiochus was furious when he heard of these disasters to his army, as they occurred at a time when his extravagance had exhausted his treasury. His eastern provinces, Armenia and Persia, refused their tribute. He there-

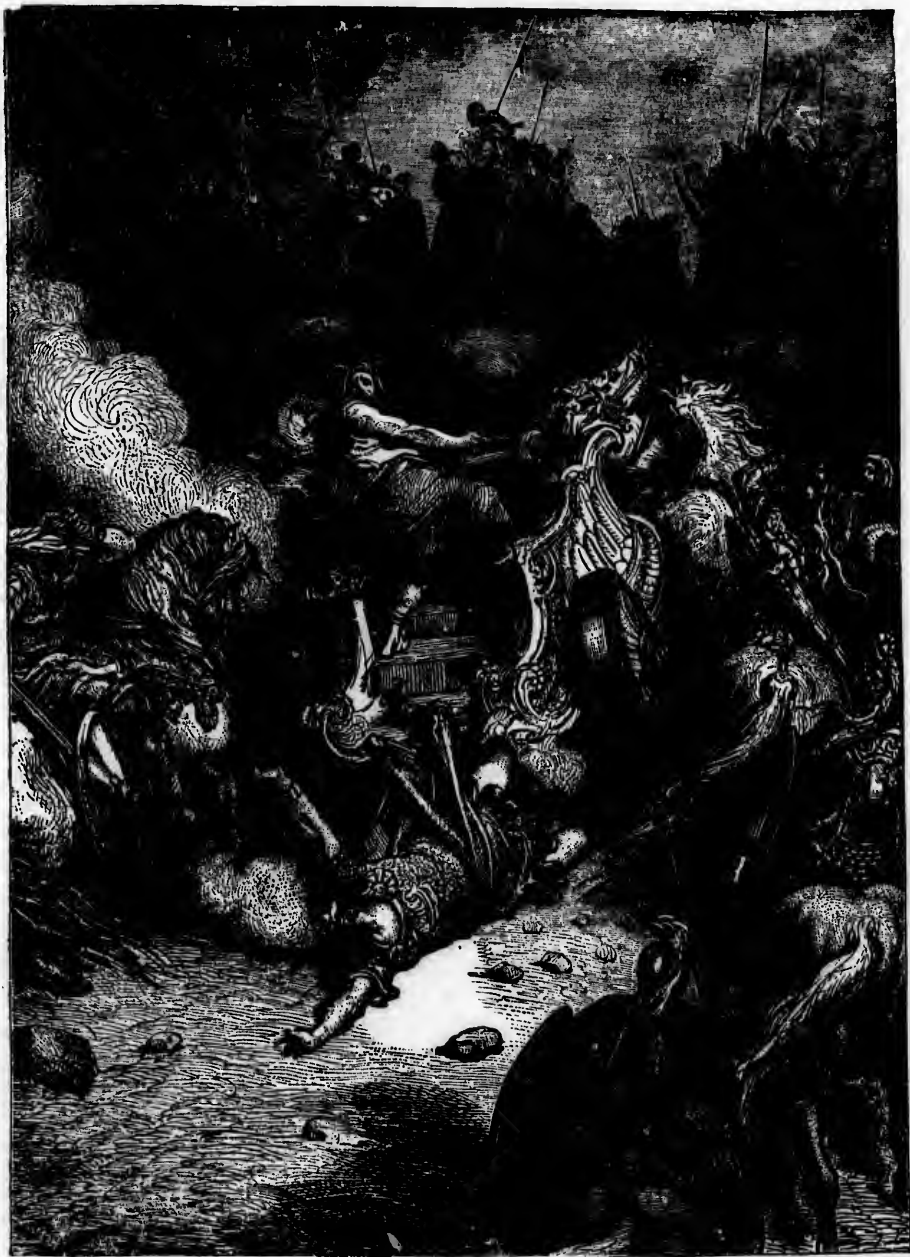
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PUNISHMENT OF ANTIOCHUS.—2 Macc. ix. 7.

fore was constrained to divide his forces, marching himself into the East and leaving Lysias, his general, to crush the insurrection in Judæa. The rapid progress of Judas demanded immediate resistance. Philip, the Syrian governor in Jerusalem, sent urgent solicitations for relief.

The vanguard of the Syrian army, amounting to 20,000 men, under the command of Nicanor and Gorgias, advanced rapidly into the province; it was followed by the general-in-chief Ptolemy Macron, their united forces assuming an army of 40,000 foot and 7,000 horse. A number of slave merchants came with them, Nicanor having suggested the policy of selling as slaves as many of the Jews as they could capture, in order to discharge the arrears of tribute due to Rome.

Judas assembled his little band of 6,000 men at the ancient sanctuary of Mizpeh; there they fasted and prayed; and then Judas, who knew that his only hope, save in his God, was in the enthusiastic zeal of his followers for the law of Moses, issued, in strict conformity to its injunctions, the appointed proclamation, that all who had married wives, built houses, or planted vineyards, or were fearful, should return to their homes. His force at once melted away to 3,000 badly armed but devoted men. With the audacity of genius, he marched rapidly with this little force to Emmaus, where the enemy lay encamped, and having learned that Gorgias had been detached with 5,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, all picked men, to gain his rear and attack him in the night, the enemy still supposing him to be at Mizpeh, he boldly resolved to storm the Syrian camp before Gorgias could return.

His trust in Jehovah was not in vain. He communicated his resolution to his men, as they arrived on the heights overlooking the hostile camp at daybreak, and hurled them with terrific force upon the still unsuspecting foe. The Syrians made but a feeble resistance, and fled on all sides unto Gazara, and unto the plains of Idumæa, and Azotus and Jamnia. Three thousand Syrians fell in the battle. The excellent discipline of the Jewish army

now made itself conspicuous. Judas was aware that Gorgias would soon return, and he held his troops from the plunder of the camp until the arrival of that general, who came back disappointed at not finding the Jewish insurgents among the mountains where he had hoped to surprise them.

To his dismay he beheld his own camp a blaze of fire, and before his forces had recovered from their astonishment, Judas and his men were among them, sword in hand. The contest was short and decisive. The Syrians fled without making a stand, and in their flight suffered immense loss. The rich booty of the camp fell into the hands of the Jews, "much gold and silver, and blue silk and purple of the sea, and great riches."

The Conqueror's Rejoicing.

The Jews, with just retribution, sold for slaves as many of the slave merchants as they could find. A due share of the spoil was given to the maimed, the widows and the orphans; and the rest was divided among the conquerors. The next day was the Sabbath, a day indeed of rest and rejoicing. But this success only excited the honorable ambition of the Maccabee. Hearing that a great force was assembling beyond the Jordan, under Timotheus and Bacchides, he crossed the river, and gained a great victory and a considerable supply of arms. Here two of the chief oppressors of the Jews, Philarches and Callisthenes, perished; one in battle, the other burnt to death in a house where he had taken refuge. Nicanor fled in the disguise of a slave to Antioch. So closed the first triumphant campaign of the Maccabees.

We may recall here a striking passage in 2 Maccabees:

"About that time came Antiochus with dishonor out of the country of Persia. For he had entered the city called Persepolis, and went about to rob the temple, and to hold the city; whereupon the multitude, running to defend themselves with their weapons, put them to flight; and so it happened, that Antiochus was put to flight and returned with shame.

"Now when he came to Ecbatane, news was brought him what had happened unto Nicanor and Timotheus. Then swelling with anger, he thought to avenge upon the Jews the disgrace done unto him by those that made him flee. Therefore commanded he his chariotman to drive without ceasing, and to despatch the journey, the judgment of God now following him. For he had spoken proudly in this sort, That he would come to Jerusalem, and make it a common burying-place of the Jews. But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an incurable and invisible plague.

"Howbeit, he nothing at all ceased from his bragging, but still was filled with pride, breathing out fire in his rage against the Jews, and commanding to haste the journey: but it came to pass that he fell down from his chariot, carried violently; so that having a sore fall, all the members of his body were much pained. And thus he that a little afore thought he might command the waves of the sea (so proud was he beyond the condition of man), and weigh the high mountains in a balance, was now cast on the ground, and carried in a horse-litter, shewing forth unto all the manifest power of God."

Further Exploits of the Maccabee.

The next year an army of 60,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, commanded by Lysias in person, appeared at Bethsura, a little north of Hebron, towards the southern frontier of Judæa. Judas attacked this force promptly with 10,000 men, and gained a decisive victory, inflicting a loss of 5,000 killed upon the enemy. Thus on all sides triumphant, Judas led his heroic army into the ruined and desolate capital of his people—Jerusalem.

They found the courts of the Temple overgrown with tall shrubs, and the chambers of the priests thrown down. With wild lamentations and the sound of martial trumpets they mingled their prayers and praises to the God of their fathers. The Syrians still held the tower on Mount Zion, and Judas took the resolution to hold them in check with a strong

force, while he proceeded to install the most blameless of the priests in their office, to repair the sacred edifice, to purify every part from the profanation of the heathen, to construct a new altar, to replace out of the booty all the sacred vessels, and at length to celebrate the feast of Dedication—a period of eighty days—which ever after was held sacred in the Jewish calendar. It was the festival of the regeneration of the people, which, but for the valor of the Maccabees, had almost lost its political existence.

The neighboring tribes beheld with undisguised jealousy the re-establishment of a powerful state in Judæa. But Judas, having strongly fortified the Temple on the side of the citadel, anticipated a powerful confederacy which was forming against him, and carried his victorious arms into the territories of the Idumæans and Ammonites. Thus discomfited on every side, the Syrians and their allies began to revenge themselves on the Jews who were scattered in Galilee and the provinces beyond the Jordan. Judas revenged a cruel stratagem of the inhabitants of Joppa, who decoyed 200 Jews or families on board their ships and threw them into the sea. He made a descent upon the place, and burned many houses on the harbor and many of their ships. In Jamnia another treacherous massacre was committed, and he revenged it by burning the town, the flames of which were seen from Jerusalem, a distance of twenty-five miles.

A great force from Tyre and Ptolemais advanced into the neighboring country. Timotheus, son of a former general of the same name, laid waste Gilead with great slaughter. Judas divided his army into three parts. He took 8,000 men himself, and crossed the Jordan into Gilead; sent 3,000 under his brother Simon into Galilee; and left the remainder, under Joseph, the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, to defend the liberated provinces, but with strict orders to refrain from attacking the enemy. The Maccabees, as usual, were irresistible. Both expeditions were successful, and future dangers were guarded against.

THE ANGEL SENT TO DELIVER ISRAEL.—2 Macc. xi. 8.



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But the commanders who were left at home failed to obey their orders; and having undertaken an expedition against Jamnia, a seaport, were defeated with severe loss by Bacchides, the ablest of the Syrian generals. The defeat was shortly after revenged by the indomitable Judas; but not without loss. When they proceeded, after observing the Sabbath in Adullam, to bury the dead, small idols were found in the clothes even of some of the priestly race. A sin-offering was sent to Jerusalem, not only to atone for the guilt of these men, but for the dead, in whose resurrection the Maccabæan Jews had full faith.

Elephants in Battle.

About this time Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews, died, as has been related already. His young son, Antiochus V. Eupator, B. C. 164-162, was placed on the throne by Lysias; Demetrius, the rightful heir, being a hostage in Rome. The first measure of Lysias was to attempt the subjugation of Judæa, where in Jerusalem itself the garrison of the unsundered fortress on Mount Zion, joined to a strong party of the apostate Jews, anxiously awaited his approach. The royal army at once laid siege to Bethsura on the Idumæan frontier, not far from Hebron, which Judas had strongly fortified. Their force consisted of 80,000 or 100,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, and thirty-two elephants. The elephants seem to have excited great terror and astonishment. According to the Jewish annalist, each beast was escorted by 1,000 infantry, splendidly armed, and 500 horsemen; and each beast bore a tower containing thirty-two armed men. To provoke the elephants to fight, they showed them the blood of grapes and mulberries.

The whole army in radiant armor spread over the mountains and valleys, so that the mountains glistened therewith, and seemed like lamps of fire. Bethsura made a gallant defence, and Judas marched promptly to its relief. Wherever he fought the Israelites were successful, and his heroic brother, Eleazar, ex-

cited the admiration of his countrymen by rushing under an elephant, which he stabbed in the belly, and was crushed to death by its fall. The force of the enemy was overwhelming, however, and Judas was compelled to retreat to Jerusalem. Bethsura, pressed by famine (it was the Sabbath year, the land lay fallow, and supplies were scarce), capitulated on honorable terms; and the royal army joined the siege of that part of the capital which was held by Judas. Jerusalem resisted all their assaults; the Syrians began to suffer from want of provisions; and intelligence arrived that affairs at Antioch needed their immediate attention.

The second Book of Maccabees gives a full description of the appearance of an angel in behalf of the Hebrews, and the signal victory which took place under his supernatural guidance and help:

"So he [Lysias] came to Judæa, and drew near to Bethsura, which was a strong town, but distant from Jerusalem about five furlongs; and he laid sore siege unto it. Now when they that were with Maccabæus heard that he besieged the holds, they and all the people with lamentations and tears besought the Lord that He would send a good angel to deliver Israel.

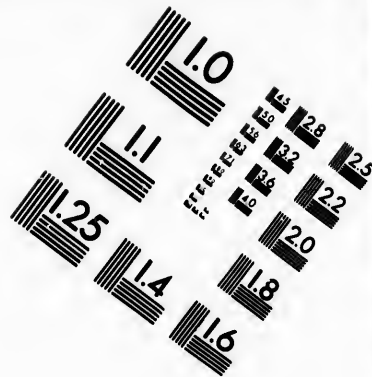
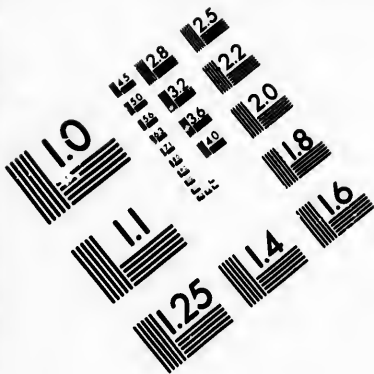
"One in White Clothing."

"Then Maccabæus himself first of all took weapons, exhorting the others that they would jeopard themselves together with him to help their brethren; so they went forth together with a willing mind. And as they were at Jerusalem, there appeared before them on horseback one in white clothing, shaking his armor of gold.

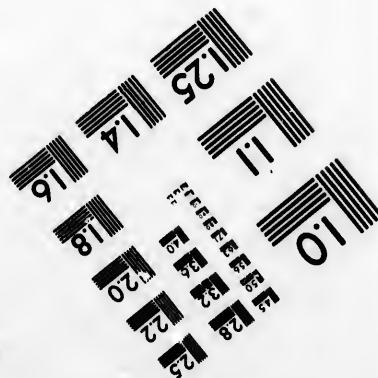
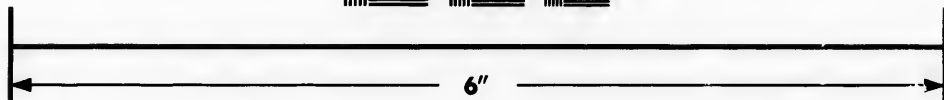
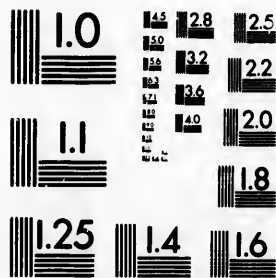
"Then they praised the merciful God all together, and took heart, insomuch that they were ready not only to fight with men, but with most cruel beasts, and to pierce through walls of iron. Thus they marched forward in their armor, having a helper from heaven; for the Lord was merciful unto them."

The army which Antiochus Epiphanes had led into Persia returned under Philip, who claimed the guardianship of the young king.





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Upon this Lysias advised Antiochus to make peace with the Jews. The king was no sooner admitted into the city, than he broke the terms just made by pulling down the new wall of Judas, after which he retired to Antioch, and recovered the capital from Philip. His triumph was brief, for Demetrius, the son of Seleucus IV.—whose rightful inheritance had been usurped by his uncle Antiochus Epiphanes—returned from Rome, where he had been a hostage, overthrew and put to death Antiochus and Lysias, and became king. Affairs now took a sudden turn.

Swift Punishment.

The new king adopted a more dangerous policy against the independence of Judæa than the invasion and vast armies of his predecessor. The looser and less patriotic Jews ill-brooked the severe government of the party of Judas. Many, perhaps, were weary of the constant warfare in which their valiant champion was engaged. Menelaus, the renegade high-priest, had accompanied the army of Lysias, and endeavored to form a faction in his favor; but, on some dissatisfaction, Lysias had sent him to Berea, where he was thrown into a tower of ashes, and suffocated—a fit punishment, it was said, for one who had polluted the altar fires and holy ashes of God's shrine.

Onias, son of the Onias murdered by means of Menelaus, the heir of the priesthood, fled to Egypt, and Alcimus, or Jacimus, was raised to the high-priesthood. By reviving the title of high-priest, to the supreme authority, Demetrius hoped, if not to secure a dependent vassal in the government of Judæa, at least to sow discord among the insurgents. He sent Alcimus, supported by Bacchides, his ablest general, to claim the sacerdotal dignity. The zealots for the Law could not resist the title of the high-priest. Jerusalem submitted. But no sooner had Alcimus got the leaders into his power than he basely murdered sixty of them.

Bacchides returned to Antioch, leaving the high-priest as governor; while the indefati-

gable Judas went through the cities of Judah rallying the patriots. Alcimus again repaired to Antioch for help; and Nicanor, who was sent to restore him, was defeated by Judas at Capharsalama. He retired to the citadel of Zion, where his refusal to listen to the overtures of the priests until Judas was delivered up to him, and his ferocious cruelties, reunited the patriots in resistance and prayer for his overthrow. A battle ensued at Adasa, near Beth-horon, where Judas gained his most glorious victory, on the 13th of Adar (end of February, B. C. 161), a day which was kept as a national festival. Nicanor was slain, and his head and hand were exposed as trophies at Jerusalem. The independence of Judæa was won, though it was not finally secured till after several years of contest, and the death of all the Maccabæan brothers. Meanwhile the land enjoyed a brief interval of rest.

Death of Judas Maccabæus.

It is at this juncture that the name of Rome first appears in Jewish history. The imagination of Judas was captivated by the successes she had gained against the Gauls and Spaniards, and especially with those Greek powers with which he was so fiercely struggling. He had heard of their defeats of Philip, Perseus, and Antiochus the Great, and of their power to set up and cast down kings; but he seems to have been most attracted by their republican form of government. He sent to Rome Eupolemus the son of John, with Jason the son of Eleazar, to propose a league against Syria; and the envoys brought back a letter, inscribed on brazen tablets, containing the articles of alliance between the Romans and the Jews.

But before they reached Judæa, the career of Judas was closed; gloriously, indeed, but in a manner which we can scarcely doubt that one of the old prophets would have regarded as a judgment for seeking strength from a heathen alliance, as the only error of his life.

Demetrius had sent his whole force, under Bacchides, to restore Alcimus and avenge

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THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.



Nicanor. The treaty with Rome seems to have offended the extreme party of the As-sidæans; and Judas had only three thousand men to oppose to the enemy's twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse. Their camp was at "Berea" (probably Beeroth), and his at "Eleasa." His men, terrified by the disparity of numbers, continued to desert, till only eight hundred remained. These urged Judas to fly, and wait for a better opportunity. His reply shows that prophetic instinct which has often warned a hero of coming death: "If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honor!"

He took post, with his chosen warriors, over against the right wing of the Syrians, where Bacchides commanded. He defeated this wing, the strength of the Syrian army, pursuing them to Azotus. But the Syrians on the left, scarcely meeting with opposition, fell upon the rear of the victorious Jews. The odds were overwhelming; and the disaster was crowned by the death of Judas, whereupon his followers fled. His brothers, Jonathan and Simon, recovered his body, and buried him in his father's sepulchre at Modin, amidst the lamentations of all Israel, as they cried, "How is the valiant man fallen that delivered Israel!"

A Patriot and Hero.

As Adasa was the Marathon of the Jewish war of freedom, so Eleasa was its Thermopylæ; and, when Scripture history recovers its place in the literature of Christendom, the fame of Leonidas will no longer eclipse that of Judas Maccabæus. His best eulogy is the simple record of his deeds, of which his historian assures us that they were too many to be written. "Among those lofty spirits," says Dean Milman, "who have asserted the liberty of their native land against wanton and cruel oppression, none have surpassed the most able of the Maccabees in accomplishing a great end with inadequate means; none ever united more generous valor with a better cause; none, we may add, more completely gave God the glory. There is at least one worthy tribute to his honor, in the splendid oratorio of Handel.

The triumph of Bacchides and the "impious faction" was aided by the distress of a great famine and the friends of Judas were hunted down on every side. But, as before, this want of moderation compelled resistance. Jonathan surnamed Apphus (the wary), the fifth and youngest son of Mattathias, was chosen leader, as the most warlike of the three surviving brothers; Simon aiding him with his counsel. They established themselves in the wilderness of Tekoah, where their first exploit was to avenge their eldest brother John (Jonathan), surnamed Gaddis, who was treacherously killed by the Arabs, while conveying some of the effects of the patriots to the care of Nabathæans. Incensed by this deed, Bacchides, on a Sabbath, attacked their position in the marshes of the Jordan; but they escaped by swimming across the river, having slain 1,000 of the Syrians.

Rival Rulers.

Bacchides now occupied himself with fortifying Jericho, Emmaus, Beth-horon, Bethel, and other strong cities in Judah, and he placed in them hostages from the chief families. Alcimus had set to work with equal ardor to pull down the walls round the Temple, when he was struck with a palsy, and died in great torment. Upon this, Bacchides returned to Antioch, and the land had rest for two years. At last Bacchides gave up the enterprise. Before he retreated, however, he accepted the invitation of Jonathan to make peace; restored his prisoners and hostages; and promised not again to molest the Jews, a promise which he kept. Jonathan established himself at the fortress of Michmash, so renowned in the history of his great namesake, the son of Saul. There he governed the people, and "destroyed the ungodly men out of Israel." This state of things lasted for about six years.

The claim of Alexander Balas, a pretended son of Antiochus Epiphanes, to the crown of Syria, led to a new advancement of Jonathan and the Jews, who were courted by both rivals. Demetrius wrote first, authorizing Jonathan to raise an army, and commanding

that the hostages in the tower of Zion should be delivered to him. This was at once done, and Jonathan then began to repair the fortifications of Jerusalem. Meanwhile all of the hostile party fled from the fortified cities, except Bethsura.

Next came the letter from Alexander, nominating Jonathan to the high-priesthood, which had been vacant since the death of Alcimus, and sending him a purple robe and a crown of gold. Jonathan assumed these insignia at the feast of Tabernacles, and thus began the line of the priest-princes of the Asmonæan family. Demetrius, in despair, now made new and unbounded offers; freedom for all the Jews of his kingdom from tribute, from the duties on salt, and from crown-taxes; and exemption from the payment of the third of the seed and the half of the produce of the fruit-trees. The three governments of Apherema, Lydda, and Ramathen, including the port of Ptolemais, were to be taken from Samaria and annexed to Judæa forever, under the sole government of the high-priest. An army of 30,000 Jews was to be raised at the king's expense, to garrison the cities and act as a police. Jerusalem, with its territory, was declared holy, free from tithe and tribute, and a place of asylum.

Terrible Destruction.

A large annual sum was promised for the works of the temple and the fortifications of the city, and the revenues of Ptolemais were assigned for the ordinary expense of the sanctuary. All Jewish captives throughout the Syrian empire were to be set free, and all the feasts were to be holidays for them. More moderate offers might have been a better proof of good faith. The Jews had more confidence in Alexander, who was, moreover, favored by Rome; and, after he had defeated and killed Demetrius, B. C. 150, he gave Jonathan a magnificent reception at Ptolemais, on his marriage with Cleopatra, the daughter of Ptolemy Philometor.

Three years later, the younger Demetrius (who afterwards reigned as Demetrius II.

Nicator) attempted to recover his father's kingdom; and his adherent Apollonius, governor of Cœlesyria, advanced to Jamnia, and sent a challenge to Jonathan. A battle was fought near Azotus, in which the infantry of Jonathan stood firm against the Syrian cavalry, who attacked them on all sides, till the fresh forces of his brother Simon routed the wearied horsemen, who fled to the temple of Dagon at Azotus. Jonathan burned the city and temple, with the men in it to the number of 8,000; and after receiving the submission of Ascalon he returned to Jerusalem.

A new enemy now took the field against Alexander, in the person of his father-in-law, Ptolemy, who marched into Syria, professedly as a friend. Jonathan met him at Joppa, and was favorably received, in spite of the accusations of his enemies. We need not here relate the alliance of Ptolemy with the young Demetrius, nor the defeat and death of Alexander: followed by the death of Ptolemy and the accession of Demetrius II. Nicator to the throne of Syria.

Jonathan's political tact not only brought him safe through this revolution, but gained new advantages for his country. During the confusion, he had laid siege to the tower on Zion, for which act his enemies accused him to the new king, who summoned him to Ptolemais. Leaving orders to press the siege, he went with a body of priests and elders, carrying splendid presents. He gained great favor with Demetrius, who confirmed him in the high-priesthood; and a present of 300 talents to the king secured for Judæa most of the privileges which had been promised by Demetrius I.

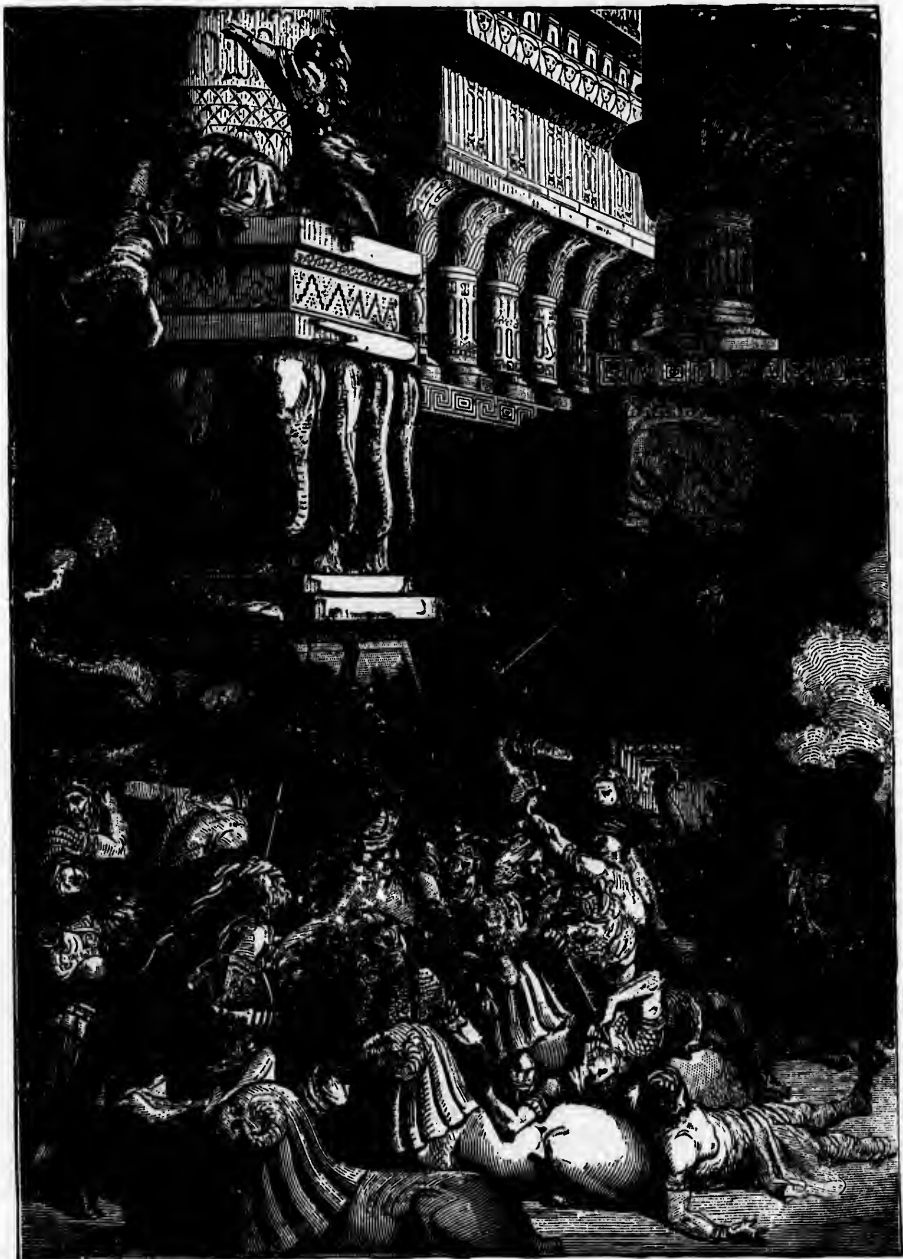
The unpopularity of Demetrius, in consequence of his disbanding the Syrian troops and replacing them by mercenaries whom he had brought with him from Crete, opened the door to the schemes of Tryphon, who claimed the throne for Antiochus, son of Alexander Balas. Jonathan seized the opportunity to obtain from Demetrius a promise of the evacuation of the long-contested tower, and sent him a body of 3,000 Jews, who had saved his

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JONATHAN DESTROYING THE TEMPLE OF DAGON.—I Macc. x. 84.

life in a tumult at Antioch. But the immediate danger was no sooner past than Demetrius became estranged from Jonathan, and failed to fulfil his promises.

The defeat of Demetrius by Tryphon placed Antiochus VI. Theos on the throne B. C. 144. Jonathan was confirmed in all his honors, and his brother Simon was made captain-general of the country from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt. Gaza and Bethsura were reduced, and Jonathan defeated the partisans of Demetrius near the lake Gennesareth, and again in the region of Hamath, and advanced as far as Damascus; while Simon secured Ascalon and took Joppa. Having renewed the alliance with Rome, and also, if we may trust our leading authority, with the Lacedæmonians, Jonathan summoned the elders to fortify the cities of Judæa, to heighten the walls of Jerusalem, and to block out the tower on Zion by a great mound from the city and the Temple. They were engaged on this work when Tryphon, who was plotting a usurpation, and regarded Jonathan as his chief obstacle, enticed him to Ptolemais, with a guard of only 1,000 men, who were slain, and Jonathan was made prisoner. Quick results followed.

Jonathan Put to Death.

The enemies of the Jews now rose in every quarter; but Simon was acknowledged as leader, and marched to Adida to meet Tryphon, who was advancing to invade Judæa. When Tryphon found with whom he had to do, he opened negotiations. Pretending that Jonathan had been seized for money due to the king, he promised to release him on the payment of 100 talents of silver and the delivery of two of his sons as hostages. Simon expected treachery; but, lest his motives should be mistaken, he accepted the terms.

Tryphon verified his fears; and, after being foiled by Simon in all his attempts to advance to Jerusalem and relieve the Syrian garrison, he marched into Gilead, still carrying Jonathan with him, and killed and buried him at Bas-cama. On his retiring to Antioch, Simon removed the bones of Jonathan to Modin, where

he built a stately monument, with seven obelisks, for Mattathias, his wife, and their five sons; the whole forming a sea-mark for passing ships, which could be seen from a distance.

Independence Secured.

Simon, surnamed Thassi, the second of son Mattathias, and the last of the five brethren, was high-priest from B. C. 143 to B. C. 135. He was not the least glorious for the vigor and wisdom of his administration. He openly espoused the party of Demetrius against Tryphon, and received from that monarch a full recognition of the independence of his country. Instead, therefore, of interfering in foreign affairs, he directed his whole attention to the consolidation and internal security of the Jewish kingdom. He sent an embassy, which was honorably received at Rome; he fortified Bethsura on the Idumæan frontier, and Joppa, the great port of Judæa; reduced Gazara; and at length broke off the last and heaviest link of the Syrian fetters, by taking, by the aid of famine, the tower of Jerusalem. He at once demolished the tower, and then, with incredible labor, levelled the hill on which it stood, so that it no longer commanded the hill of the Temple. Simon executed the law with great impartiality and vigor; repaired the Temple, and restored the sacred vessels.

The wasted country began, under his prudent administration, to enjoy its ancient fertility. "The ancient men sat in all the streets, communing together of good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel." While his internal government was just and firm, he opened up a commerce with Europe through the port of Joppa, and renewed the treaties with Rome and Lacedæmon. The letters in favor of the Jews, addressed by the Roman senate to the states and islands of Greece and Asia Minor, and to the great potentates of Asia, including even the Parthian Arsaces, are a striking evidence of the wide dispersion of the Jewish race, even in those times, and of the all-commanding policy of Rome, which was reaching out to compass the world.

In the meantime Demetrius the rightful sovereign of Syria, had been taken prisoner in an expedition against the parthians. Antiochus VII. Sidetes, his brother, now levied an army to dispossess the usurper and murderer, Tryphon, whom he quickly defeated, and besieged in Dora. Simon openly espoused his party, but Antiochus considered Simon's assistance dearly purchased at the price of the independence of Palestine, and, above all, the possession of the important ports of Joppa and Gazara. Athenobius, his ambassador, sent to demand tribute and indemnification, was struck with astonishment at the riches and splendor of Simon's palace; and on the Jewish sovereign refusing all submission, and only offering a price for the possession of Joppa, Antiochus sent his general, Cendebeus, to invade the country, and thus began the last war which the Maccabees had to wage with Syria. Simon, now grown old, entrusted the command of his forces to Judas and John Hyrcanus, his sons. They defeated Cendebeus, and took Azotus, and returned to Jerusalem in triumph.

A Renowned High-Priest.

But the Maccabæan race seemed destined to perish by violence. Ptolemy, son of Abubus, the son-in-law of Simon, under a secret understanding with Antiochus, king of Syria, formed a conspiracy to usurp the sovereignty of Judæa. At a banquet in Jericho, he contrived basely to assassinate Simon and his elder son; and at the same time endeavored to surprise the younger son, John Hyrcanus, in Gazara; but John managed to escape, and went at once to Jerusalem, where he was unanimously proclaimed high-priest and ruler of the country, and began at once to show his illustrious qualities.

John Hyrcanus was the second son of Simon, under whom he had been commander of the army. He inherited the vigor and ability of his family, and was high-priest for thirty years. His first act was to march against Jericho, to avenge the base murder of his father and brother; but Ptolemy had in his power the mother and brethren of Hyrcanus.

He shut himself up in a fortress, and exposed his captives on the walls, scourging them, and threatening to put them to death. The noble-minded woman exhorted her son, notwithstanding her own danger, to revenge his father's murder; but Hyrcanus hesitated; the siege was protracted; and, at length, according to the improbable reason assigned by Josephus, the year being a Sabbatic year, entirely raised the siege.

Ptolemy fled to Philadelphia; of his subsequent fate we know nothing. The rapid movements of Hyrcanus had disconcerted the confederacy between the assassin and Antiochus. Still, however, the Syrian army overran the whole country. Hyrcanus was besieged in Jerusalem, where he was reduced to the last extremity by famine. He had been compelled to the hard measure of expelling from the city all those, the young and old, of both sexes, who were incapable of contributing to the defence. The besiegers refused to let them pass; and many perished miserably in the ditches and on the out-works.

But Antiochus proved a moderate and generous enemy; on the feast of Tabernacles he conceded a week's truce, and furnished the besieged with victims for sacrifice, bulls with golden horns, and gold and silver vessels for the Temple service. He was gratefully called Antiochus Eusebes (the pious). Finally he concluded a peace, of which the terms, though hard, were better than Hyrcanus, in the low condition to which he was reduced, could fairly expect. The country was to be reduced to a tributary state, and the fortifications of Jerusalem were to be dismantled. The king treated Hyrcanus with favor, and summoned him to attend him on the expedition which he made against Parthia, ostensibly to release his imprisoned brother Demetrius Nicator.

Hyrcanus returned before the defeat which lost Antiochus his throne and life. Demetrius escaped, and recovered the throne of Antioch. Hyrcanus seized the glorious opportunity of throwing off the yoke of Syria, and the Jewish kingdom regained its independence, which was never again lost until it was compelled to ac-

knowledge the Roman dominion—first under the Asmonæan dynasty, then under the house of Herod.

The Syrian monarchy being distracted by rival competitors for the throne, the prudent and enterprising Hyrcanus lost no opportunity of extending his territory and increasing his power. He took Samega and Medaba, in the trans-Jordanic region. But his greatest triumph, that which raised him the highest in the opinion of his zealous countrymen, was the capture of Sichem or Samaria, and the total destruction of the rival temple on Mount Gerizim. It was levelled to the earth; not a vestige remained. The sanctuary on Mount Zion thus regained its pre-eminence in the Holy Land, and the Jews once more imposed upon the Samaritans the sacred law, "that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

A Remarkable Triumph.

The reduction of Samaria was effected by Aristobulus and Antigonus, the sons of John Hyrcanus, in the twenty-sixth year of his rule. The city of Samaria was utterly destroyed, and its site converted into pools of water from its own abundant springs. Most of Galilee submitted to the authority of the high-priest, who again renewed the alliance of his family with Rome. Of his buildings at Jerusalem, the most important was the Tower of Baris, at the northwest corner of the enclosure of the Temple. It was afterward the Antonia of Herod.

Thus the Holy Land, under the name of Judæa, was restored to its ancient limits, and the people enjoyed their worship, under a race of priest-princes, who held their authority in submission to the Divine law. But no human affairs ever reached the climax of prosperity without taking the downward turn; and it was taken with frightful rapidity by the successors of John Hyrcanus, who displayed a personal ambition unknown to the pure patriotism of the Maccabees, and were soon engaged in fierce contests for supreme power. Then began those family murders, which form the most horrid

feature of oriental despotism, and which reached their climax under Herod.

One chief source of these evils was the rupture of the religious unity of the nation, by the rise of the opposing sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which, springing from a doubtful origin, and from causes long at work, had become established during the government of John Hyrcanus. Toward the end of his reign, Hyrcanus, provoked by an insult from one of the leading Pharisees, joined the party of the Sadducees, a step which left a heritage of trouble to his successors. "The cause of this rupture," says Dean Milman, "is singularly characteristic of Jewish manners. During a banquet, at which the chiefs of the ruling sect were present, Hyrcanus demanded their judgment on his general conduct and administration of affairs, which he professed to have regulated by the great principle of justice (the 'righteousness' which was the watchword of the Pharisees), and by strict adherence to the tenets of their sect.

"The Pharisees, with general acclamation, testified their approval of all his proceedings; one voice alone, that of Eleazar, interrupted the general harmony:—'If you are a just man, abandon the high-priesthood, for which you are disqualified by the illegitimacy of your birth.' The indignant Hyrcanus demanded the trial of Eleazar for defamation. By the influence of the Pharisees he was shielded, and escaped with scourging and imprisonment. Hyrcanus, enraged at this unexpected hostility, listened to the representations of Jonathan, a Sadducee, who accused the rival faction of a conspiracy to overawe the sovereign power; and from that time he entirely alienated himself from the Pharisaic councils."

John Hyrcanus died exactly sixty years, or the space of two complete generations, after his grandfather Mattathias. As he began a new generation of the Maccabæan house, so was he the first who escaped the violent end to which his father and uncles had succumbed. His death marks the transition from the theocratic commonwealth, under the Maccabæan leaders, to the Asmonæan kingdom, which was

established by his son Judas or Aristobulus, whose Greek name is but too significant of the Grecian character of the new era.

The only two of the first generation of the Maccabæan family who did not attain to the leadership of their countrymen like their brothers, yet shared their fate—Eleazar by a noble act of self-devotion, John, apparently the eldest brother, by treachery. The sacrifice of the family was complete; and probably history offers no parallel to the undaunted courage with which such a band dared to face death, one by one, in the maintenance of a holy cause. The result was worthy of the sacrifice. The Maccabees inspired a subject-people with independence; they found a few personal followers and they left a nation.

Contending for the Holy City.

The great outlines of the Maccabæan contest, which are somewhat hidden in the annals thus briefly epitomized, admit of being traced with fair distinctness, though many points must always remain obscure, from our ignorance of the numbers and distribution of the Jewish population, and of the general condition of the people at the time. The disputed succession to the Syrian throne, B. C. 153, was the political turning-point of the struggle, which may thus be divided into two great periods. During the first period the patriots maintained their cause with varying success against the whole strength of Syria: during the second they were courted by rival factions, and their independence was acknowledged from time to time, though pledges given in times of danger were often broken when the danger was over.

The paramount importance of Jerusalem is conspicuous throughout the whole war. The loss of the Holy City reduced the patriotic party at once to the condition of mere guerrilla bands, issuing from "the mountains" or "the wilderness," to make sudden forays on the neighboring towns. This was the first aspect of the war; and the scene of the early exploits of Judas was the hill-country to the north-east of Jerusalem, from which he drove

the invading armies at the famous battle-fields of Beth-horon and Emmaus (Nicopolis).

The occupation of Jerusalem closed the first act of the war, B. C. 166; and after this Judas made rapid attacks on every side—in Idumæa, Ammon, Gilead, Galilee—but he made no permanent settlement in the countries which he ravaged. Bethsura was fortified as a defence of Jerusalem on the south; but the authority of Judas seems to have been limited to the immediate neighborhood of Jerusalem, though the influence of his name extended more widely.

On the death of Judas, the patriots were reduced to as great distress as at their first rising; and as Bacchides held the keys of the "mountain of Ephraim," they were forced to find a refuge in the lowlands near Jericho, and after some slight successes Jonathan was allowed to settle at Michmash undisturbed, though the whole country remained absolutely under the sovereignty of Syria. So far it seemed that little had been gained, when the contest between Alexander Balas and Demetrius I. opened a new period. Jonathan was empowered to raise troops; the Jewish hostages were restored; many of the fortresses were abandoned; and apparently a definite district was assigned to the government of the high-priest. The former unfruitful conflicts at length produced their full harvest.

Patriots and Martyrs.

The defeat at Eleasa, like the Swiss St. Jacob, had shown the worth of men who could face all odds, and no price seemed too great to secure their aid. When the Jewish leaders had once obtained legitimate power, they proved able to maintain it, though their general success was checkered by some reverses. The solid power of the national party was seen by the slight effect which was produced by the treacherous murder of Jonathan. Simon was able at once to occupy his place and carry out his plans. The Syrian garrison was withdrawn from Jerusalem; Joppa was occupied as a sea-port; and "four governments"—probably the central parts of the

old kingdom of Judah, with three districts taken from Samaria—were subjected to the sovereign authority of the high-priest.

The war, thus brought to a noble issue, if less famous, is not less glorious than any of those in which a few brave men have successfully maintained the cause of freedom or religion against overpowering might. The answer of Judas to those who counselled retreat was as true-hearted as that of Leonidas; and the exploits of his followers will bear favorable comparison with those of the Swiss, or the Dutch, or the Americans.

It would be easy to point out parallels in Maccabæan history to the noblest traits of patriots and martyrs in other countries; but it may be enough here to claim for the contest the attention which it rarely receives. It seems, indeed, as if the indifference of classical writers were perpetuated in our own days, though there is no struggle—not even the wars of Joshua or David—which is more profoundly interesting to the Christian student. For it is not only in their victory over external difficulties that the heroism of the Maccabees is conspicuous; their real success was as much imperilled by internal divisions as by foreign force. They had to contend on the one hand against open and subtle attempts to introduce Greek customs, and on the other against an extreme Pharisaic party, which is seen from time to time opposing their counsels. And it was from Judas and those whom he inspired that the old faith received its last development and final impress before the coming of our Lord.

The history of the Herodian family presents one side of the last development of the Jewish nation. The evils already seen found an unexpected embodiment in the tyranny of a

foreign usurper. Religion was adopted as a policy; and the Grecian designs of Antiochus Epiphanes were carried out, at least in their spirit, by men who professed to observe the Law.

Side by side with the spiritual "kingdom of God," proclaimed by John the Baptist, and founded by Christ, a kingdom of the world was established, which in its external splendor recalled the traditional magnificence of Solomon.

Ancestry of the Herods.

Various accounts are given of the ancestry of the Herods; but, neglecting the exaggerated statements of friends and enemies, it seems certain that they were of Idumæan descent, a fact which is indicated by the forms of some of the names which were retained in the family. But though aliens by race, the Herods were Jews in faith. The Idumæans had been conquered and brought over to Judaism by John Hyrcanus; and from the time of their conversion they remained constant to their new religion, looking upon Jerusalem as their mother city, and claiming for themselves the name of Jews.

The general policy of the whole Herodian family, though modified by the personal characteristics of the successive rulers, was the same. It centred in the endeavor to found a great and independent kingdom, in which the power of Judaism should subserve the state. The protection of Rome was in the first instance a necessity; but the designs of Herod I. and Agrippa I. point to an independent eastern empire as their end, and not to a mere subject monarchy. At this moment He appeared of whom it was prophesied that the government should be upon His shoulder, and His kingdom should never end.



ADVENT OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CHILD IN THE MANGER.



COME now to the important period in the Bible narrative which commemorates the life of Christ. The sublime prophecies which had gone before all pointed to the "fulness of time," and gave sign of the appearing of One who should outrank the grand old patriarchs and heroes of the earlier ages. His is the one majestic figure, which, in resplendent glory, gives immortal interest to the sacred annals, and now, after waning centuries, fills the eye of the world.

The time when the history of Christ commences was that period of civil quiet when the Romans had subjected nearly all the known world to their power; and their empire—the widest the world had ever seen—extended from the Tigris to the Atlantic, and from the Northern ocean to Mount Atlas and the borders of Ethiopia. The various nations comprising this mighty empire had ceased their struggles for independence, and their contentions among themselves, and the whole lay in the stillness of exhausted strength under the iron yoke of imperial Rome. Most of these nations were under the direct rule of governors sent from

Rome; but a few were allowed the shadow of independence, inasmuch as the internal government was administered by native princes tributary to Rome.

Among these comparatively favored nations was Judea, which was at this time governed by a king of its own, called Herod, and surnamed the Great. The family of Herod was of recent importance in the country, and had risen upon the downfall of the Asmonæan dynasty, founded by the illustrious Maccabees. Its prosperity began with Antipater, the father of Herod, who was of Idumæan (Edomitish) origin, and, under himself and his son, owed its growth to the patronage and favor of the successive masters of the Roman world, Julius, Anthony, Augustus; the last of whom seems to have entertained a personal liking for Herod, to whom he allowed as much power as was perhaps compatible with his position as a vassal of the empire.

The repose in which the world lay at this time was somewhat animated by a very general expectation of some great event—of the coming of some mysterious personage, who was to set right the wrong things of the world, and subdue all things to his power. The Jews claimed a peculiar property in him, knowing from their prophecies that the Messiah was to arise from among themselves, out of the house

of David. But the expectation was not confined to them; for there were abroad the whisperings of mysterious oracles, which may be traced in the Roman Virgil's ode, entitled *Pollio*, where we recognize them as reflected from the inspired strains of the Hebrew prophets.

And He, for whom the earth was thus waiting, came—and men knew Him not—knew Him not then, because He appeared not with the visible glories and conquering powers which all expected; but came in poverty and lowliness, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

But the Messiah was not to enter without a harbinger the world he came to redeem. The turn of an old priest called *Zacharias* arrived to enter the sanctuary, and to offer incense there in behalf of the people, who remained in prayer outside. While employed in this sacred service, an angel appeared suddenly before him, and saluted him as the parent of the appointed harbinger, on whom the name of *John* and the abstinence of a *Nazarite* were even then imposed. The astonished priest, knowing that he and his wife *Elizabeth* had lived childless to old age, could not conceal his bewilderment and doubt, and mourned his wish for some sign from which he might gather confidence. To punish this incredulity, the required sign was made somewhat penal, and it was declared that he should be speechless for a season. Accordingly he went forth dumb to the wondering people, and he remained dumb until the things of which he had doubted were accomplished.

About six months after this, the same angel appeared in *Nazareth*, an obscure town of *Galilee*, to a virgin named *Mary*, and hailed her as the destined mother of the Saviour of the world. The pious virgin, however, startled at so strange a visitant and his momentous announcement, ventured to hint a doubt naturally suggested by her unmarried condition; but she was assured that this immortal birth was not to be according to the ordinary course of nature, but would owe its origin to the “power of the Most High.”

She therefore bowed her head in pious submission, saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word, even as thou hast said.” When we consider the misconception under which even the chosen disciples of *Jesus* labored as to the real objects of His mission, it seems very possible that *Mary* did not at this time fully understand the greatness of her own destiny. She knew, however—she could not but understand—that her promised son was to be the long foretold and earnestly desired Messiah, “the desire of all nations;” and that her lot was that which had been one of intense desire to the daughters of *Israel* in past and present generations. But the vastness of the idea which was presented to her, the magnificence of the event, awed her spirit, and kept down the joyfulness that afterwards arose.

Marriage Customs.

It was a custom among the Jews for damsels to be betrothed, or legally pledged, to husbands for a long while, a year or much more, before they were actually united. Now *Mary*, although not yet actually married, was under betrothment to a pious man of the same place, *Joseph* by name, and a carpenter by trade. Such betrothal was in the view of the Jewish law regarded as partaking so far of the nature of an actual marriage that any unfaithfulness to the engagement was regarded and punished.

When, therefore, this good man discovered that his betrothed was anticipating motherhood, his mind was filled with trouble both on her account and on his own. He was reluctant to make *Mary* a public example, and to bring upon her the harsh penalties of the law; but was more inclined to find some quiet way of dissolving the engagement between them, and of thus releasing her from the worst consequences of her supposed transgression. While these thoughts filled *Joseph's* mind, he was unexpectedly relieved by a visit from the angel, who made known to him the real circumstance, and encouraged him to complete his engagement with *Mary*, by taking her

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THE ANNUNCIATION.—Luke i. 28.

home as his wife and thus afford her protection. This was accordingly done, and it was thus that Jesus came to be considered the son of Joseph.

It happened that Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, was a cousin of Mary, and when Mary heard that her aged relative was likely to become at length a mother, she went to congratulate her upon an event which was always a matter of great gladness to Hebrew women. When they met, circumstances arose which enabled the mother of John the Baptist to recognize in Mary the mother of one greater than he; and her ardent recognition of this fact kindled in turn the happy virgin, who broke forth in that beautiful chant, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," which is not the less—which is much the more, touching to us, from its being, in a great degree, composed from recollections of the Psalms and of the song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. We thus gather how well the mother of Jesus was versed in the Sacred Scripture; for her words are the outpouring of a mind thoroughly imbued with the ideas and phrases of the prophets and poets of the Old Testament.

The Song of Praise.

The fact of this visit, and the relationship from which it arose, have suggested the probability that Christ and John were known to each other in childhood. There is probability in the conjecture.

In due time Elizabeth gave birth to a son. The father still continued speechless; but on the eighth day, when the child was to be circumcised and named, some difficulty was felt about the name, which it was the usual province of the father to bestow. The neighbors were disposed to call him Zacharias, after his parent; on which the father took a tablet and wrote, "His name is John," being the name which had before been given by the angel. On this his dumbness passed away, and he broke forth into an exulting hymn, praising God that the long-expected time of the Messiah was come, and that his son was destined

to be His prophet and forerunner. That Zacharias so readily apprehended the position which his son was to take is explained by the fact that the Jews generally expected that the Messiah was to be preceded by a dignified harbinger. This expectation was founded upon passages in the prophets, which also led to a prevalent notion that this forerunner was to be no other than Elijah the Tishbite in person; although some were content to expect one equal to that great prophet in power, and endowed with the same spirit.

The Roman emperor, not long after this, issued a decree for a general registration or census to be taken; and, according to the policy observed on such occasions, the decree required every one to be registered in his paternal city. This obliged Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem, to which, being of the house and lineage of David, they belonged. The village being full of people, they were compelled to take up their lodging in the stables which run behind the eastern inns or caravanseries, the lodging-room being already occupied.

Here, among the beasts of the stall, was born the Saviour of the world; and here, when he had been wrapped in swaddling-clothes, a manger was made to serve for his cradle.

This was the greatest event the world had ever seen—for it was the coming of its Redeemer; but it occurred, and might have passed as a common occurrence on the earth—the birth of a son to a humble pair—had not the angels of God taken notice of it. There were abroad that night in the fields around Bethlehem shepherds keeping their flocks; for in the eastern countries, where there are no enclosures, flocks must needs be watched by shepherds night and day. They were aroused from their half-slumbering watch by a sudden radiance which shone around them from the presence of an angel, whose appearance filled them with dread. But they were reassured by the glad and cheerful voice with which he announced the glad tidings of great joy: "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour—who is Christ, the Lord."

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BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Luke i. 57.

There was not a man, woman, or child in Israel who was not familiar with the general expectation of such a personage. The shepherds there had not the slightest difficulty in understanding this joyous intimation. And where were they to seek this greatest of women born? They were told to seek him,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

The shepherds thought no more of their flocks, but hastened away to Bethlehem, and having found the infant lying in a manger, as the angel had described, they made known all that they had seen and heard. Many won-



WRITING THE NAME ON THE TABLET.—Luke i. 63.

not in regal palaces or priestly courts, nor lapped in splendor in the mansions of the great, but—"Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger." And immediately there gathered around the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, who broke forth in praise to God for his love to man, and proclaiming in exultant chants—

dered, but most, even those who wondered, let the matter pass from their mind, till some thirty or forty years after, when the history of "the prophet of Nazareth" became a matter of general talk, and then probably some old people called to mind the circumstances which attended the birth of the holy child at Bethlehem. Mary, now a blessed mother, wondered

also ; but she forgot nothing—" *she* pondered these things in her heart."

One mile from Bethlehem is a little plain, in which, under a grove of olives, stands the bare and neglected chapel known by the name of "the Angel to the Shepherds." It is built over the traditional site of the fields where, in the beautiful language of Luke—more exquisite than any idyll to Christian ears—"there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them," and to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy.

The associations of our Lord's nativity were all of the humblest character, and the very scenery of His birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil. On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrelsy ; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the "light and sound in the darkness and stillness," and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture painted in the colors of heaven.

But in the brief and thrilling verses of the evangelist we are not told that those angel songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village ; and those shepherds, amid the chill dews of a winter night, were guarding their flocks from the wolf and the robber, in fields where Ruth, their Saviour's ancestress, had gleaned, sick at heart, amid the alien corn, and David, the despised and youngest son of a numerous family, had followed the sheep.

It might have been expected that Christian piety would mark the spot by splendid memorials, and enshrine the rude grotto of the shepherds in the marbles and mosaics of some stately church. But, instead of this, the Chapel of the Herald Angel is a mere rude crypt ; and as the traveller descends down the broken steps, which lead from the olive-grove into its dim recess, he can hardly persuade himself that he is in a consecrated place. Yet a half-unconscious sense of fitness has, perhaps, contributed to this apparent neglect. The poverty

of the chapel harmonizes well with the humble toil of those whose radiant vision it is intended to commemorate.

As already stated, the shepherds, when those angel songs had ceased to break the starry silence, started for Bethlehem. Their way would lead them up the terraced hill, and through the moonlit gardens, until they reached the summit of the gray ridge on which the little town is built. On that summit stood the village inn. The khan (or caravansary) of a Syrian village, at that day, was probably identical, in its appearance and accommodation, with those which still exist in modern Palestine.

A Humble Birthplace.

A khan is a low structure, built of rough stones, and generally only a single story in height. It consists for the most part of a square enclosure, in which the cattle can be tied up in safety for the night, and an arched recess for the accommodation of travellers. The paved floor of the recess is raised a foot or two above the level of the court-yard. A large khan—such, for instance, as that of which the ruins may still be seen at Khan Minyeh, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee—might contain a series of such recesses, which are, in fact, low small rooms with no front wall to them. They are, of course, perfectly public ; everything that takes place in them is visible to every person in the khan. They are also totally devoid of even the most ordinary furniture. The traveller may bring his own carpet if he likes, may sit cross-legged upon it for his meals, and may lie upon it at night. As a rule, too, he must bring his own food, attend to his own cattle, and draw his own water from the neighboring spring. He would neither expect nor require attendance, and would pay only the merest trifle for the advantage of shelter, safety, and a floor on which to lie.

But if he chanced to arrive late, and the floors were all occupied by earlier guests, he would have no choice but to be content with such accommodation as he could find in the court-yard below, and secure for himself and

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his family such small amount of cleanliness and decency as are compatible with an unoccupied corner on the filthy area, which must be shared with horses, mules, and camels. The litter, the closeness, the unpleasant smell

who happens to have been placed in similar circumstances.

In Palestine it not unfrequently happens that the entire khan, or at any rate the portion of it in which the animals are housed, is one of



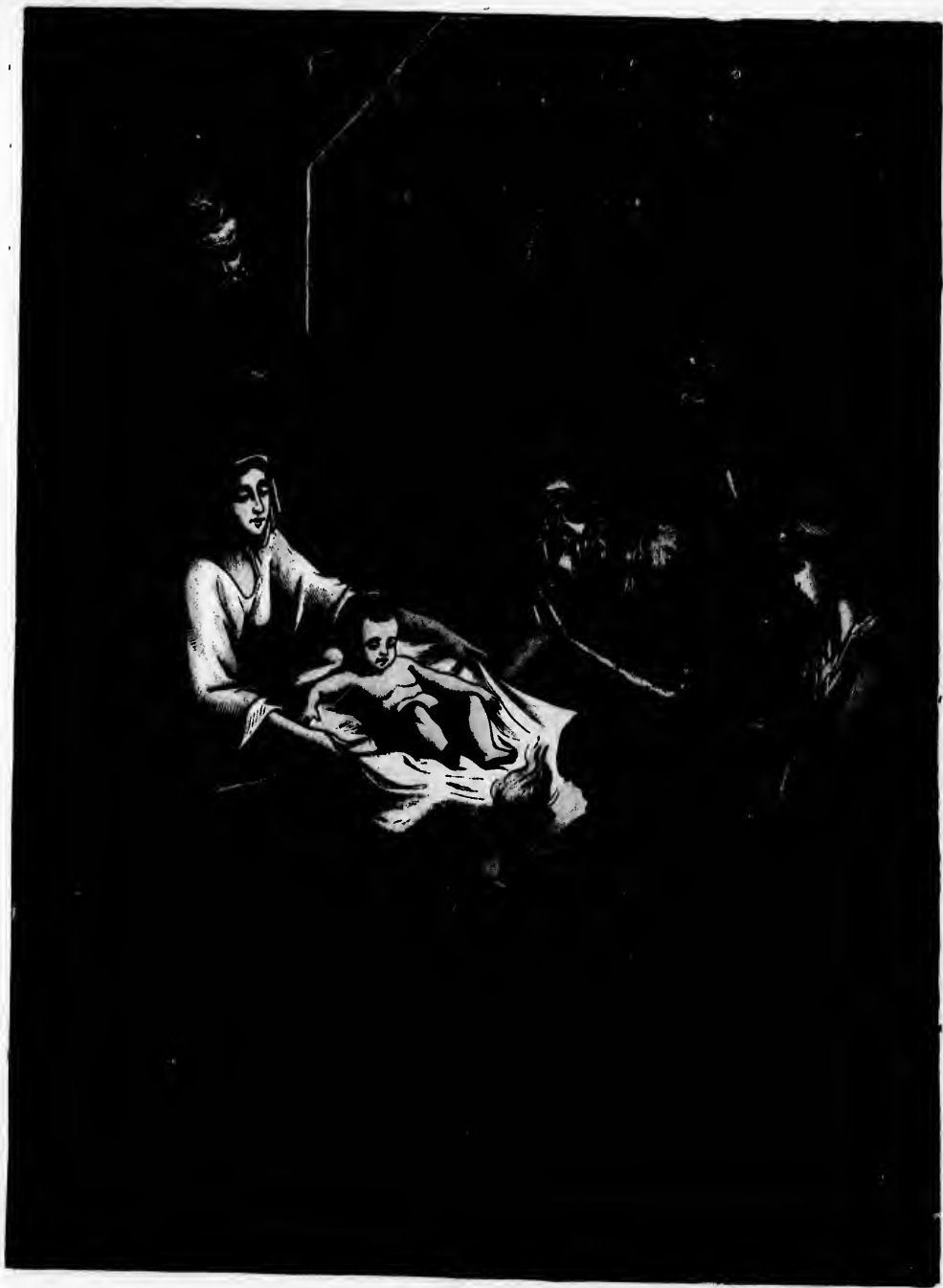
THE ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.—Luke ii. 10.

of the crowded animals, the unwelcome intrusion of the pariah dogs, the necessary society of the very lowest hangers-on of the caravanary, are adjuncts to such a position which can only be realized by any traveller in the East

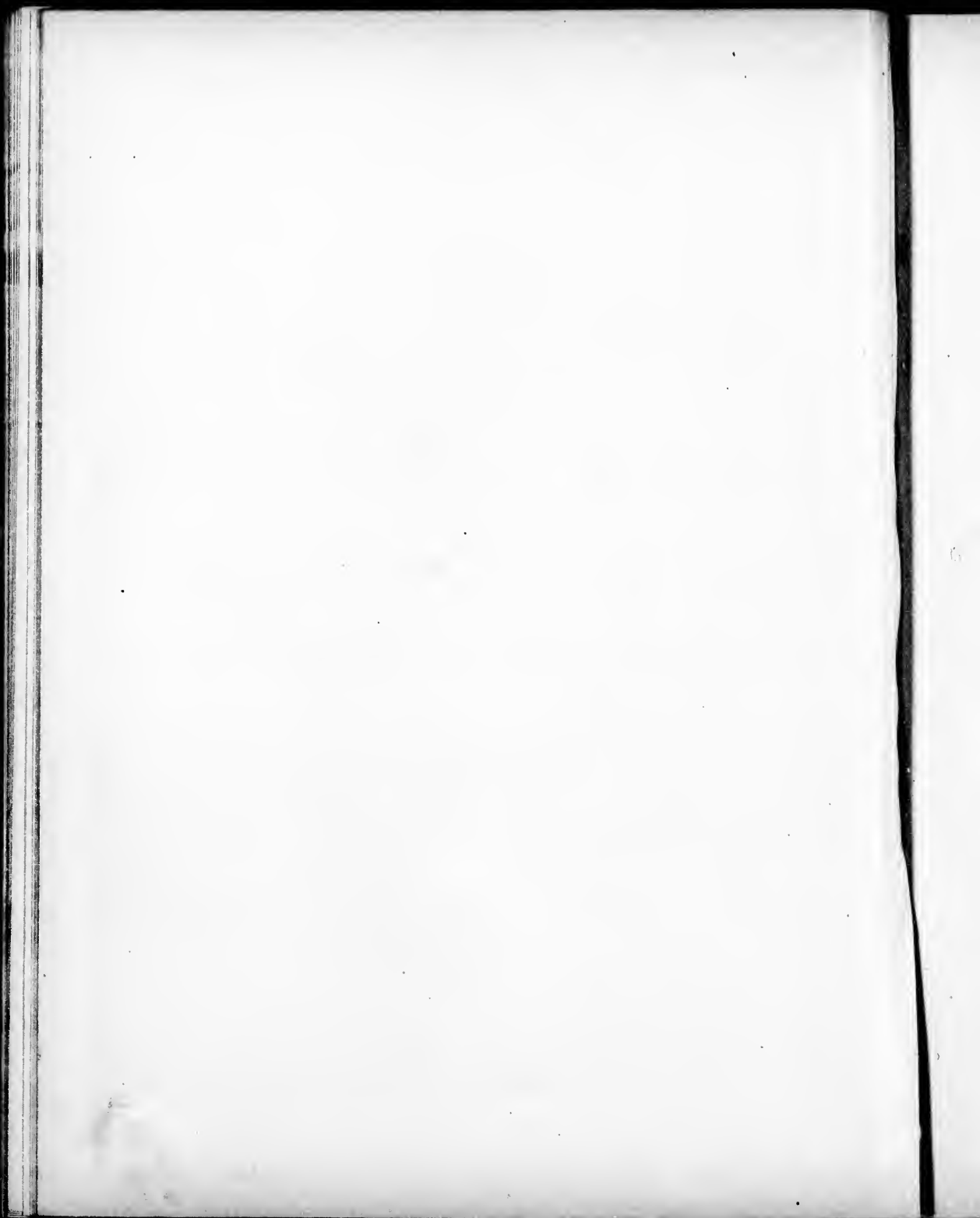
those innumerable caves which abound in the limestone rocks of its central hills. Such seems to have been the case at the little town of Bethlehem-Ephratah, in the land of Judah. Justin Martyr, the apologist, who, from his

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THE NATIVITY.



birth at Shechem, was familiar with Palestine, and who lived less than a century after the time of Christ, places the scene of the nativity in a cave. This is, indeed, the ancient and constant tradition both of the Eastern and the Western Churches, and it is one of the few to which, though unrecorded in the gospel history, we may attach a reasonable probability.

Over this cave has risen the Church and Convent of the Nativity, and it was in a cave close beside it that one of the most learned, eloquent, and holy of the fathers of the church—that great St. Jerome, to whom we owe the received Latin translation of the Bible—spent thirty of his declining years in study, and fasting, and prayer.

Guided by the lamp which usually swings from the centre of a rope hung across the entrance of the khan, the shepherds made their way to the inn of Bethlehem. The fancy of poet and painter has revelled in the imaginary glories of the scene. They have sung of the "bright harnessed angels" who hovered there, and of the stars lingering beyond their time to shed their sweet influences upon that smiling infancy. They have painted the radiation of light from His manger-cradle, illuminating all the place till the bystanders are forced to shade their eyes from that heavenly splendor. But all this is wide of the reality.

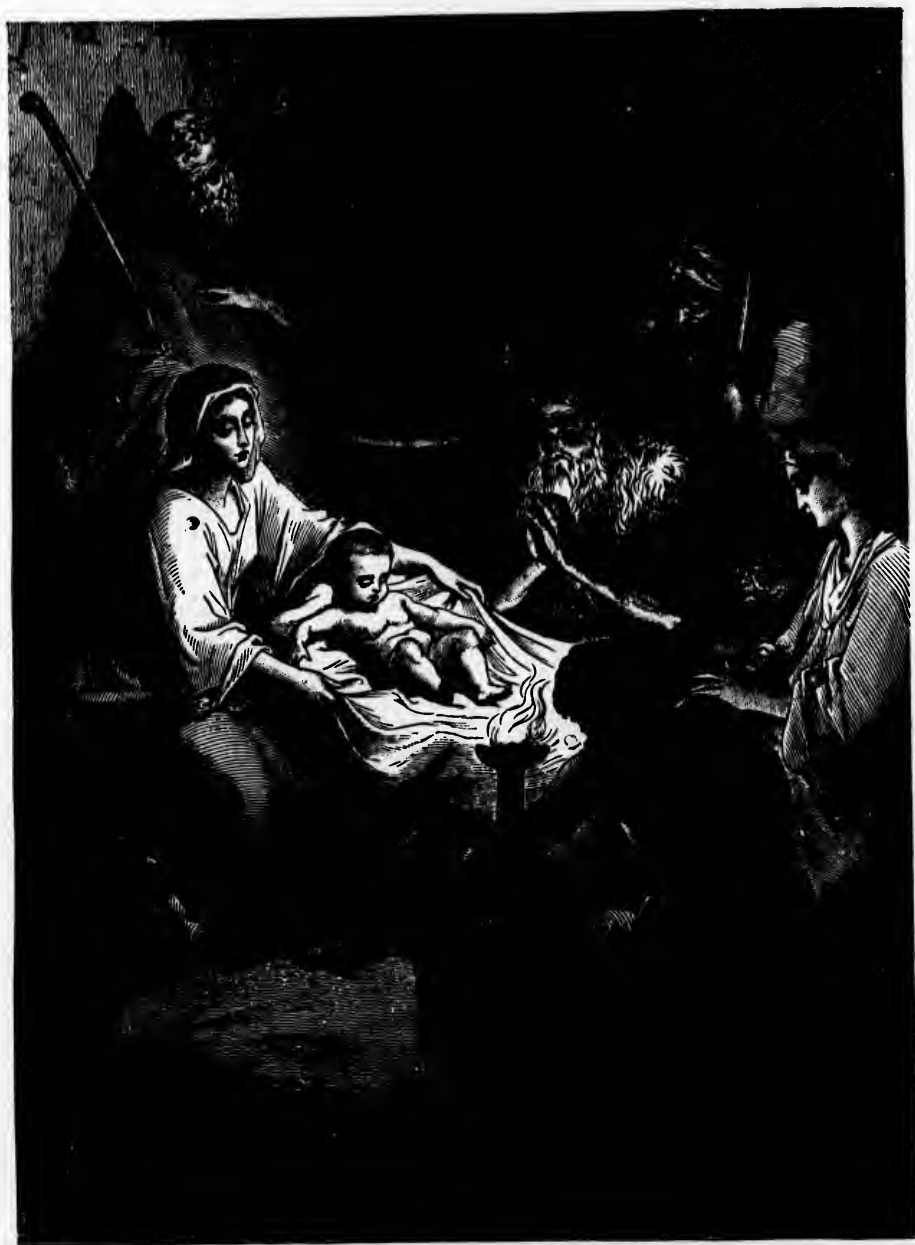
Such glories as the simple shepherds saw were seen only by the eye of faith; and all which met their gaze was a peasant of Galilee, already beyond the prime of life, and a young mother, of whom *they* could not know that she was wedded maid and virgin wife, with an infant child, whom, since there was none to help her, her own hands had wrapped in swaddling-clothes. The light that shone in the darkness was no physical, but a spiritual beam; the Dayspring from on high, which had now visited mankind, dawned only in a few faithful and humble hearts.

And the Gospels, always truthful and bearing on every page that simplicity which is the stamp of honest narrative, indicate this fact without comment. There is in them nothing of the exuberance of marvel, and mystery, and

miracle, which appears alike in the Jewish imaginations about their coming Messiah, and in the Apocryphal narratives about the infant Christ. There is no more decisive criterion of their absolute credibility as simple histories, than the marked and violent contrast which they offer to all the spurious gospels of the early centuries, and all the imaginative legends which have clustered about them. Had our Gospels been unauthentic, they too must inevitably have partaken of the characteristics which mark, without exception, every early fiction about the Saviour's life. To the unilluminated fancy it would have seemed incredible that the most stupendous event in the world's history should have taken place without convulsions and catastrophes.

Strange Legends.

The Apocryphal Gospel of James has a striking chapter, describing how, at that awful moment of the nativity, the pole of the heaven stood motionless, and the birds were still, and there were workmen lying on the earth with their hands in a vessel, "and those who handled did not handle it, and those who took did not lift, and those who presented it to their mouth did not present it, but the faces of all were looking up; and I saw the sheep scattered and the sheep stood, and the shepherd lifted up his hand to strike, and his hand remained up; and I looked at the stream of the river, and the mouths of the kids were down, and were not drinking; and everything which was being propelled forward was intercepted in its course." But of this sudden hush and pause of awe-struck nature, of the mysterious splendors which blazed in many places of the world, of the painless childbirth, of the perpetual virginity, of the ox and the ass kneeling to worship Him in the manger, of the voice with which immediately after His birth He told His mother that He was the Son of God, and of many another wonder which rooted itself in the earliest traditions, there is no trace whatever in the New Testament. The inventions of man differ wholly from the dealings of God. In His designs there is no haste, no



ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.—Luke ii. 16.

(378)

rest; all things are done by Him in the majesty of silence, and they are seen under a light that shineth quietly in the darkness, "showing all things in the slow history of their ripening." "The unfathomable depths of the Divine counsels," it has been said, "were moved; the fountains of the great deep were broken up; the healing of the nations was issuing forth: but nothing was seen on the surface of human society but this slight rippling of the water: the course of human things went on as usual, while each was taken up with little projects of his own."

How long the virgin mother and her Holy Child stayed in this cave, or cattle-enclosure, we cannot tell, but probably it was not long. The word rendered "manger" in Luke ii. 7 is of very uncertain meaning, nor can we discover more about it than that it means a place where animals were fed. It is probable that the crowd in the khan would not be permanent, and common humanity would have dictated an early removal of the mother and her child to some more appropriate resting-place. The magi, as we see from Matthew, visited Mary in "the house." But on all these minor incidents the Gospels do not dwell. The fullest of them is Luke, and the singular sweetness of his narrative, its almost idyllic grace, its sweet calm tone of noble reticence, seems clearly to indicate that he derived it, though but in fragmentary notices, from the lips of Mary herself. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine from whom else it could have come, for mothers are the natural historians of infant years.

On the eighth day from the birth, the child was circumcised; and, according to the custom of giving a name at the time of circumcision, He then received the name of Jesus, which had been given to Him by the angel who first announced His birth. Jesus is the Greek form (the New Testament being written in Greek) of the Hebrew name Joshua, which was not uncommon among the Hebrews. It means a *Saviour*; and was therefore the most proper name in actual use which could have been chosen for the Messiah.

The law required that every Hebrew woman

should be separated from the congregation for forty days after the birth of a male, and for eighty days after the birth of a female child. At the expiration of that time the mother was to repair to the Temple, to make the offerings for her purification. This offering was a lamb for those who could afford it; but those who were not able to bring a lamb might offer a pair of turtle doves or of young pigeons. The mother of Jesus gave the humbler offering, and as she probably would not have done this if a lamb could have been afforded, we have thus an incidental but touching evidence of the humble circumstances under which He—who was greater than all potentates—was born and reared.

The Jewish traditions allege that mothers appeared at the Temple on this occasion in white raiment. At the same time the child was to be presented before the Lord, and if it were a first-born son he was to be redeemed from the obligations of sacerdotal services by the payment of five shekels of silver. The presentation of Jesus was distinguished by a very remarkable circumstance.

Impressive Scene in the Temple.

There was an aged man at Jerusalem of the name of Simeon, whom some identify with a venerable Rabbi of that name who is described by the Talmudical writers as the father of that Gamaliel under which St. Paul completed his Jewish education at Jerusalem. Whether so or not, this aged Simeon was one of those who lived in earnest expectation of the manifestation of the long-promised Messiah, and it had been revealed to him that his aged eyes should behold the Lord's Christ before they closed in death. He entered the Temple at the moment of the presentation, and recognizing in the Holy Child the fulfilment of his hopes, he took Him in his arms, and we may conceive that tears of joy bedewed his venerable face as he blessed God that the long-hoped-for day had dawned at last. A very aged and devout woman, called Anna, who was a constant frequenter of the Temple, was also present, and shared in the recognition

and the joy, awakened by the wonderful event. Some time after the holy family returned to Bethlehem, a strong sensation was produced at Jerusalem by the arrival of certain eastern

cigners had reached the ears of Herod, and excited in him much jealousy and alarm. He was led at once to conclude that the expected Messiah was at length come; and as he par-



THE OFFERING OF PURIFICATION.—Luke ii. 22.

sages inquiring publicly for Him who was born King of the Jews, and declaring that, while in the far East, they had seen His star and had come to offer Him their homage.

The inquiries of these distinguished for-

took of the general delusion respecting the nature of that kingdom which Christ would establish, he saw nothing in this but ruin and overthrow to the dynasty which he had taken so much trouble to establish. Nevertheless,

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although thus beholding in this event the accomplishment of ancient prophecies, and of the desire on which the heart of the nation was fixed, he arrived at the horrid resolution of destroying in time so dangerous a claimant of sovereignty.

To this end he assembled the ecclesiastical authorities, and inquired of them the place which prophecy indicated as the birthplace of Christ. Citing Micah v. 2 as their authority, they with one voice declared that Bethlehem was the appointed place; and accordingly the crafty and unscrupulous tyrant directed the magi to seek Him of whom they inquired in that city; and he desired that, when they had found Him, they would return and impart the result to him, that he also might go and tender his homage.

The magi then repaired to Bethlehem, and, being guided by the star, which reappeared before them, they soon discovered the infant Jesus. The unexpectedly humble circumstances by which they found Him surrounded made no change in their purpose: "they fell down and worshipped Him," and then, according to the custom of the East for all persons admitted to an audience to offer gifts of more or less value, the strangers "opened their treasures, and presented to him gold, frankincense and myrrh," and these gifts are supposed by many to have been typical of their allegiance and their hopes.

Herod Decrees Murder.

They then returned home, without passing through Jerusalem as Herod had required, according to a warning which they had received in a dream. Another warning, similarly conveyed to Joseph, occasioned the holy family to withdraw into Egypt, which was then, and had long been, the general refuge for all who were oppressed, or discontented, or apprehended danger in Israel.

When king Herod saw that the eastern magi had gone home without again visiting Jerusalem his vexation was great, for he thereby lost all means of distinguishing from among all the infants of Bethlehem the one

whom he had destined to destruction. He was not a man who ever paused at any steps necessary to the accomplishment of the designs which he had once taken into his mind. From this cause his reign was full of horrors; and much as we may be shocked, those who know his character feel no surprise to find that he at once determined to sweep away all the infants of Bethlehem under two years old, that the one he had doomed might not escape. This purpose was accomplished. The evangelists give no particulars of the dreadful scene, and the mind willingly declines the contemplation of details so full of horror.

Soon after this Herod the Great expired, thirty years after he had been declared king of the Jews by the Roman senate, and thirty-four years from his actual possession of the throne. He was honored with a more magnificent funeral than any king of Israel before him; but few, if any, were the real tears shed at his death.

Meanwhile the holy family remained in Egypt. The gifts of the eastern sages, no doubt, enabled them to travel thither, and to live there in comfort. But we have no authentic accounts of the travel or the sojourn. An old tradition of the Greek Church alleges that the family tarried at Hermopolis; and at a place called Matarieh, between Cairo and Heliopolis, corresponding to the situation of the ancient city of that name, there is a fountain at which it is pretended that the virgin was wont to lave the infant Jesus, and which is on that account held in much veneration throughout the country.

When Herod was dead the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, and enjoined him to return to the land of Israel. He accordingly took the young child and its mother, and returned into Judea. It seems to have been his first intention to remain there, probably at Bethlehem; but finding that Archelaus reigned, and fearing that he might have inherited the temper of his father, it was deemed more prudent to proceed to Nazareth, which, being in Galilee, was under the different government of Herod Antipas.

The abode from infancy in Nazareth, coupled with the fact that Mary and Joseph belonged to that place, occasioned Jesus to be regarded and called "a Nazarene," although, in fact, a native of Bethlehem. This was afterwards often alleged as an objection to his being recognized as the Messiah; for it was well known (especially since the formal decision which the

Not more than one incident of our Lord's childhood is recorded in the Scriptures, and that occurred when He was twelve years of age. There have, indeed, been many spurious anecdotes of this period, some of which, picked up in the days of ignorance, still linger in the memories of uneducated people. These originated in certain traditions and Apocryphal



THE WISE MEN PRESENTING GIFTS.—Matt. ii. 11.

priests and scribes had communicated to Herod) that Bethlehem was the place from which the Messiah was to come. Hence the strongly expressed objection of some people, when at a future time his claim was under discussion—"Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

gospels, some of which still exist among the curiosities of literature, but which no one regards as entitled to the slightest credit in any of the statements which they offer. The canonical Gospels are the only sources of our real information concerning Jesus, and to them we must adhere. The great facts of this history need no support from contemporary legends and incredible traditions.

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The law of Moses required that all the males of fit age in Israel should three times in the year appear before God, at the place of his altar and sanctuary. These times were, at the feast of the Passover, of the Pentecost, and of Tabernacles, of which the first was by far the most important as a matter of obligation, and the most generally observed. Children were not usually taken to Jerusalem till twelve years of age, at which time they were deemed to come under the obligation of this law, and then commence their periodical attendance at Jerusalem.

Women were not required to take these journeys, nor did they usually do so; but they seldom failed to accompany their sons when they went for the first time to discharge a duty to which much importance was attached by the Mosaical institutions, and which marked the point of transition from childhood to adolescence. The son then assumed one of the responsible obligations of manhood. It was therefore one of those marked points in the life of a son in which mothers wish to take part, and which they love to celebrate. We have in this the reason why Jesus was accompanied not only by Joseph, but by Mary, when, at the age of twelve years, he went up to the Passover-feast at Jerusalem.

Journey to Jerusalem.

This, the first visit to Jerusalem, was an occasion to which every male child in Israel looked forward with eager expectation and desire. Conceive the glad assemblage of neighbors in the early morning, outside the town or village, and the animated interchange of salutations and farewells till the appointed voice cried, "It is time to depart." Then they marched on leisurely, with minstrelsy and psalms, and as they went were joined at the meeting of the roads, and in the villages, by new parties bent on the same object—their happy faces suiting well their holiday attire.

They needed no provision for this journey; for wherever they passed they were received with shouts of joy and blessing; and before every door tables laden with bread, honey and

dates were set forth for their refreshment. Conceive the pride of the lads who were for the first time privileged to join this cheerful pilgrimage; conceive the sorrow of those who were not yet of the due age, when those who were going thus up to "the city of the Great King," and to walk in the courts of His "holy and beautiful house," passed on, leaving them behind.

When they drew near the city, parties who had already arrived, and many of the stated inhabitants, would hasten forth to meet the new-comers and conduct them to their respective quarters. At that season no inhabitant of Jerusalem considered his house as his own. The city was the city of the whole people, not of the inhabitants alone; and when Israel came up to appear before Jehovah, every citizen regarded his dwelling as belonging to his brethren as much as to himself. Every house was thus filled with strangers, and the master was usually the worst accommodated person in it. But the utmost liberality of the inhabitants could not provide lodging for all the vast multitudes which repaired on these occasions to Jerusalem.

A large proportion of the pilgrims, therefore, remained in tents during the festival. The whole environs of Jerusalem were then turned into an encampment, and all the streets and open places, and all the hills and valleys around the city, were covered with tents. But the feast was at the finest season of the year; the days were balmy and the nights enjoyed the full moon, so that those who remained altogether without shelter experienced little inconvenience.

Having celebrated the feast in Jerusalem, the party from Nazareth returned; and it was not until the evening of the first day's journey that Mary and Joseph became alarmed at the absence of their son, whom they had supposed to be with some kinsfolk or neighbors in another part of their large company. But as in such cases the different members of the same family join each other in the evening camp, and as Jesus came not, and could not be found, they returned the next day to Jerusalem to seek

Him there. This return occupied the second day.

On the third day they searched the city and at length found Him in the Temple, "sitting

self, which none but the priests might enter, but in the area of the Temple—in one of the courts or porticoes, where the doctors of the law used to sit and deliver their instructions.



CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.—Luke ii. 46.

in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and His answers." We are not to suppose that He was in the building of the Temple it-

Neither are we to suppose that He thus early, and among these venerable persons, took the part of a teacher, for the allusion to His "questions" and His "answers" is quite sufficiently explained by our knowledge that the Jewish

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doctors pursued such a plan of instruction as dealt much in interrogation on the part both of the teacher and the taught. The fact that He sat among them does not require that explanation; for they might naturally wish to show this indulgence towards so extraordinary and highly-gifted a child.

In answer to the gentle remonstrance of His mother, who said, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing," Jesus answered, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This was a hard saying, and was not understood by those that heard it; but Mary, ever mindful of his mysterious birth, kept this among the other hard sayings which she pondered in her loving heart.

They then returned to their home in Nazareth, where Jesus rendered that willing obedience which children owe to their parents. This obedience He rendered not only to Mary, but to Joseph as His reputed father, to whom He owed His living, and who seems to have instructed Him in his own trade of a carpenter. Thus Jesus remained many years, "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

There is no spot in the world equal in interest to Palestine. Sacred as the home of the Nazarene and the scene of His teachings and wonderful works, it is well fitted to in-

spire such a beautiful apostrophe as we find in these rare lines of John Greenleaf Whittier:

Blest land of Judea! thrice hallowed of song,
Where the holiest of memories pilgrim-like throng;
In the shade of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee.

With the eye of a spirit I look on that shore,
Where pilgrim and prophet have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit I traverse the sod
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God.

Lo, Bethlehem's hillside before me is seen,
With the mountains around and the valleys between;
There rested the shepherds of Judah, and there
The song of the angels rose sweet on the air.

Oh, here with His flock the sad wanderer came—
These hills He toiled over in grief are the same—
The founts where He drank by the wayside still flow,
And the same airs are blowing which breathed on His brow

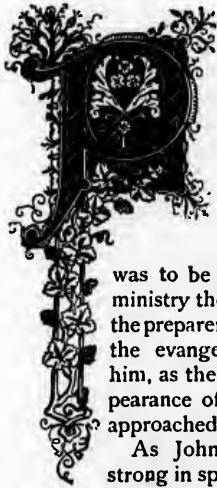
And what if my feet may not tread where He stood,
Nor my ears hear the dashing of Galilee's flood,
Nor my eyes see the cross which He bowed Him to bear,
Nor my knees press Gethsemane's garden of prayer!

Yet, Loved of the Father, Thy Spirit is near
To the meek and the lowly, and penitent here;
And the voice of Thy love is the same even now
As at Bethany's tomb, or on Olivet's brow.

Oh, the outward hath gone!—but, in glory and power,
The Spirit surviveth the things of an hour;
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same!

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JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY.



PURSUING the concise and simple narrative of the Gospels, we come now to the public life and teachings of Jesus. John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, afterwards surnamed the Baptist, was to be both in his birth and ministry the harbinger of Christ—the preparer of His way—and hence the evangelical record returns to him, as the time for the public appearance of Jesus as the Messiah approached.

As John grew up he became strong in spirit, and every day manifested in him the endowments needful for the high mission to which he had, even before his birth, been appointed. In his native mountains, for he was of "the hill country of Judea," he gradually formed habits of life in accordance with his Heaven-imposed condition of a Nazarite, and suitable to the austere character of his destined ministry. At length he assumed the camel's hair vesture, and withdrew into the rocky wildernesses near the Dead sea and the Jordan.

The precise date at which his ministry commenced is uncertain. The voice of God at length came to him in the wilderness, and he commenced his mission by proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The appearance of the prophet of the wilderness, whose garb and manner reminded the people of Elias, in whose spirit and power he came, produced a strong sensation throughout the country. Multitudes of all classes and sects followed him, or resorted to him.

He paused at Bethabara, one of the fords of

the Jordan, and there baptized in that venerable stream such of his hearers as were duly impressed by what they heard from him. Many flocked to his preaching at Bethabara, to whom he gave exhortations suited to their condition and their faith. Some of these have been preserved by the evangelist, and convey to us a clear impression of the important matter and the pointed and forcible style of his instructions. The burden of all his preaching was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" and he constantly declared that his was the foretold "voice in the wilderness" appointed to cry, "prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

Alarmed by the warnings and encouraged by the hopes which he held forth, the Jews were numerously baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. To the questions of the diverse classes of people who addressed him, the prophet replied by exhortations to charity and truth. The publicans he warned against extortion; the soldiers in the pay of Herod Antipas, he warned against violence; and the formalists, the scribes, and Pharisees, he attacked with a severity which showed him in this also a precursor of Christ. "O generation of vipers," he cried, "who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come! Think not to say unto yourselves, we have Abraham for our father (that is, relying on that as an all-sufficient merit); for verily I say unto you, that God is able even out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." This was a hard saying for them, especially from one who himself belonged to the priesthood.

All these things, and this new style of discourse, drew the most earnest attention towards the prophet. The ecclesiastical authorities at Jerusalem sent some of their own body to obtain clear information respecting his

claims, and the character in which he appeared. They asked him if he was not himself the Christ so long expected; but, faithful to his trust, and humble in his highest glory, he readily admitted that he was not. Receiving similar answers to various other conjectures, they at length impatiently asked, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" He gave his usual answer to such questions—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

They then asked on what ground he baptized, if he were not the Christ. To which he answered, "I, indeed, baptize with water unto repentance; but One mightier than I cometh, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

All this time that John was preaching the near approach of the Messiah, he remained in ignorance of His person. In all probability he was acquainted with Jesus, who was his near relation, but he knew not, he could scarcely suspect, that He was the Messiah: he, however, knew that in due time the Christ of God

would be pointed out to him in a manner not to be mistaken, and with this he was satisfied.

At length, among those who came to be baptized at Bethabara was Jesus, who had hitherto lived and labored with Joseph and Mary at Nazareth. When He first came to the banks of the Jordan, the great forerunner, according to his own emphatic and twice repeated testimony, "knew Him not." And yet, though Jesus was not yet revealed as the Mes-

siah to His great herald prophet, there was something in His look, something in the sinless beauty of His ways, something in the solemn majesty of His aspect, which at once overawed and captivated the soul of John. To others he was the uncompromising prophet; kings he could confront with rebuke; Pharisees he could unmask with indignation; but before this Presence all his lofty bearing falls. As when some unknown dread checks the



JESUS OF NAZARETH.

siah to His great herald prophet, there was something in His look, something in the sinless beauty of His ways, something in the solemn majesty of His aspect, which at once overawed and captivated the soul of John. To others he was the uncompromising prophet; kings he could confront with rebuke; Pharisees he could unmask with indignation; but before this Presence all his lofty bearing falls. As when some unknown dread checks the flight of the eagle, and makes him settle with hushed scream and drooping plumage on the ground, so before "the royalty of inward happiness," before the purity of sinless life, the wild prophet of the desert becomes like a submissive and timid child. The battle-brunt which legionaries could not daunt—the lofty manhood before which hierarchs trembled and princes grew pale—resigns itself, submits, adores before a moral force which is weak in

every external attribute, and armed only in an invisible mail. John bowed to the simple stainless manhood before he had been inspired to recognize the Divine commission. He earnestly tried to forbid the purpose of Jesus. He who had received the confessions of all others now reverently and humbly makes his own. "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

Jesus received it as ratifying the mission of His great forerunner—the last and greatest child of the Old Dispensation, the earliest herald of the New; and He also received it as the beautiful symbol of moral purification, and the humble inauguration of a ministry which came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. His own words obviate all possibility of misconception. He does not say, "I must," but, "Thus it becometh us." He does not say, "I have need to be baptized;" nor does He say, "Thou hast no need to be baptized of me," but He says, "Suffer it to be so now."

So, Jesus descended into the waters of Jordan, and there the awful sign was given that this was indeed "He that should come." From the cloven heaven streamed the Spirit of God in a dove-like radiance that seemed to hover over His head in lambent flame, and the voice which to the dull, unpurged ear was but an inarticulate thunder, spake to the ears of John—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Temptation.

It was immediately after His baptism and public recognition as the Messiah that Jesus withdrew into the wilderness, where He remained for forty days without food. It was usual for those who entered upon the prophetic office to prepare themselves for its important duties by fasting and prayer—by prayer so earnest and long-continued that they sometimes neglected to take food, and this seems to have been the case with Jesus. At the end of the forty days, Satan was permitted to subject His virtue and high purposes to such a trial of proof as might suitably introduce Him to His public ministry. The particulars of this

temptation are recorded, with some slight variations, in the fourth chapter of Matthew and the fourth of Luke.

Jesus was hungry, and Satan tempted Him to obtain food by an unwarranted exercise of the miraculous powers which belonged to Him. Failing in this, he placed Him in danger on the highest point of the Temple, and urged Him to cast Himself down, in the assurance that the angels would bear Him harmless up, if He were indeed the Son of God. Foiled also in this, Satan transported Him to the top of a high mountain, and promised Him, in exchange for His homage, dominion over the wide lands which he surveyed; but receiving a signal and final rebuff, he departed, leaving Jesus still in the mountainous wilderness beyond the Jordan.

Returning thence towards Galilee, Jesus had to cross the Jordan at the ford of Bethabara, where John was still baptizing, and made some pause in the neighborhood. He was probably present at the interview already mentioned between John and the commission from Jerusalem. It was the very day after that interview that John, seeing Jesus coming towards him, publicly pointed Him out as the Messiah to all who were then present in the emphatic words, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is preferred before me." The next day John again pointed out Jesus as "the Lamb of God," when he observed Him walking by.

Two of John's own disciples who heard this then went and followed Jesus. One of these was John and the other Andrew, both of them fishermen of the lake of Tiberias. Jesus, observing that they were following His steps, turned and asked: "What seek ye?" Which they answered by another question, indicative of their desire to attach themselves to Him, and to know Him better—"Master, where dwellest thou?" He courteously answered, "Come and see." They accordingly attended Him to the place where He lodged, and remained with Him the rest of that day, which was then near its close.

Andrew, after quitting Jesus for the day, rested not till he had found his brother Simon, to whom he had imparted the glad tidings—"We have found the Messias!" and the next day he took him to Jesus. On his approach, and before he had been announced, Jesus saluted him with, "Thou art Simon the son

with Philip of Bethsaida, and said to him, "Follow me." Philip was of the same town as Andrew and Peter, and having been probably apprised by them that Jesus was the Messiah, he unhesitatingly obeyed the call. This was the first case in which Christ employed this form of summon, which he used



THE TEMPTATION ON THE MOUNTAIN.—Matt. iv. 1

of Jonah: thou shalt be called Cephias!" This word means "a stone," and is accordingly rendered in Greek by "Peter," which has the same meaning. It was not unusual in those times for chiefs, masters, and teachers to impose new and significant names, after this manner, upon those who became their servants or disciples.

The next day Jesus proceeded into Galilee on His return to Nazareth, and on the way met

in making choice of those whom He intended inseparably to follow Him as His disciples.

Andrew and Peter, although they had in a certain sense attached themselves to Jesus, had not yet been called in that peculiar manner which required them to be in constant attendance upon his person: it is, therefore, to Philip that we may assign the honor of being the first "called" disciple of Christ. In this, as in the former case, the discovery of the Christ

so long expected, and so earnestly desired, was a matter of too high interest and importance, a secret too exciting, to be hidden by those to whom it was imparted.

Accordingly, no sooner did Philip meet with an old acquaintance called Nathaniel than he cried out, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nazareth, being a mean place, and the inhabitants of indifferent character, was despised even among the Galileans, who were themselves condemned by the people of Judea. Knowing this, and being aware that the Christ was expected to come from Bethlehem, Nathaniel caught at the word Nazareth, and asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip gave the best possible answer, "Come and see." They accordingly went to Jesus, who no sooner saw Nathaniel approach than He said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Surprised beyond measure at this recognition, Nathaniel asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

It was not unusual for educated men among the Jews to study the law under fig-trees, and sometimes, although more rarely, to pray there. This may indicate the act which Jesus had in view. This answer implied our Lord's cognizance of the private conversation between Philip and himself, and also of acts performed by him in the secrecy of his own house or garden. Overcome by this, he at once burst out into the free and full confession—"Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel!" This gave occasion for what may be regarded as the first prophecy of our Saviour, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Many think from this that Nathaniel had been studying under the fig-tree Jacob's vision at Bethel, of the ladder reaching into heaven, and the angels of

God ascending and descending thereon; and that Christ designed to strengthen his conviction by disclosing His knowledge of this fact.

Jesus had scarcely arrived at Nazareth when He was called with His disciples to a marriage feast at Cana, to which His mother had, it seems, already gone; we find him there on the third day after leaving Bethabara. That Joseph was not also present has led to the notion that he was already dead; and this is more than probable, as he is not once mentioned as living, nor does he on any occasion appear throughout the period of Christ's ministry. Cana was a small place about five miles to the north of Nazareth, and was called Cana of Galilee, to distinguish it from another place of the same name.

The First Miracle.

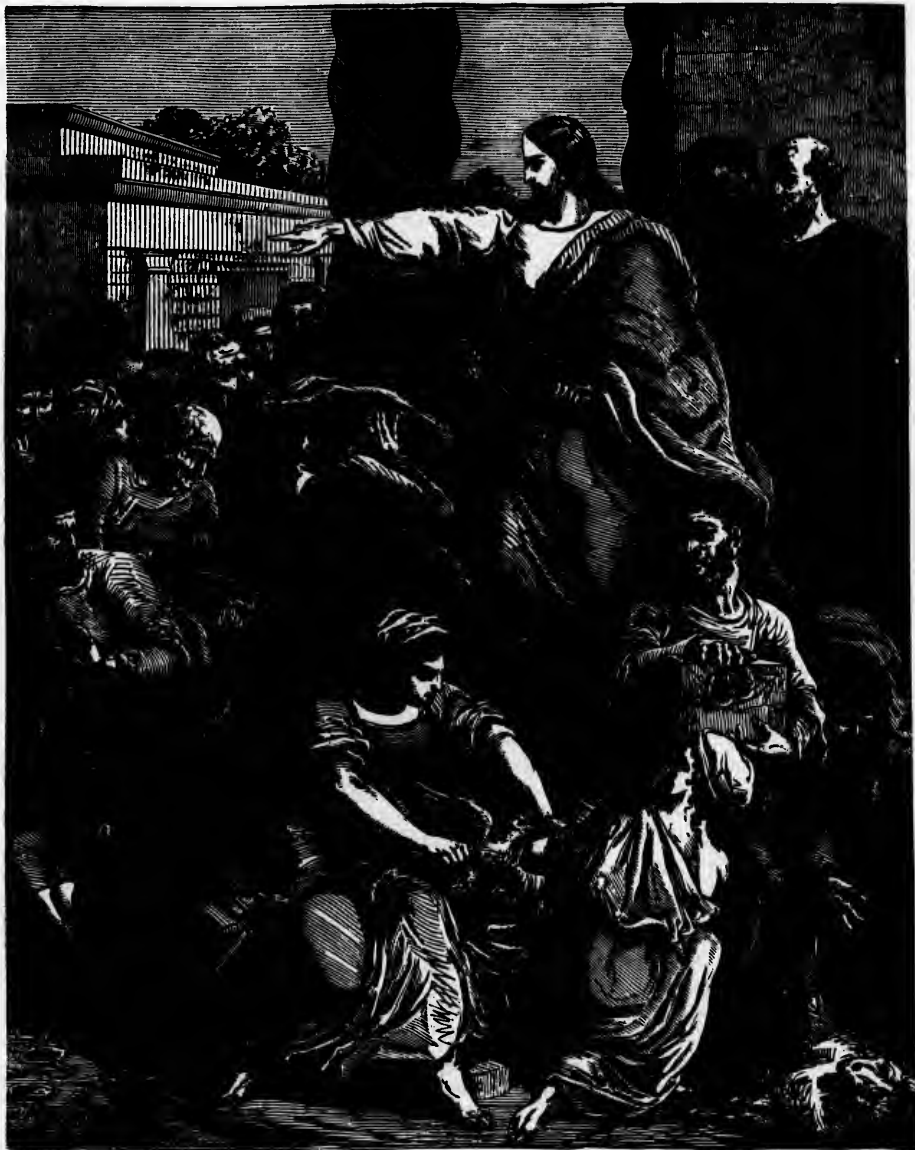
The persons then married are supposed by some to have been relations to Mary. It is shown to be probable that her sister, the wife of Cleophas, had lived at Cana, and had a grown-up family in which this marriage may have taken place; and the somewhat prominent part taken by Mary in giving general orders to the attendants has been cited in support of this conjecture. Among the Jews a wedding-feast lasted seven days: and it would seem that Christ and His disciples arrived in some of the latter days. The wine then began to run short, probably from the arrival of more guests than had been expected. The presence of Jesus, for instance, could not have been provided for, as it could not be known that He would return in time to be present, or that He would return with several persons in His company.

At such feasts the guests were composed of two sorts of persons—those who came by special invitation and those who went of their own accord, but were expected to make a present to the bridegroom and his bride. A lack of wine towards the end of a feast might therefore very naturally arise under the most careful provision; and that this happened at the marriage in Cana by no means implies, as usually stated, that the persons then married

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DRIVING THE MONEY-CHANGERS FROM THE TEMPLE.—John ii. 15.

were in humble and destitute circumstances. The attention of Jesus was drawn to this want of wine by His mother. The intent with which she did this has been much disputed. That she expected that He would remove it by a miraculous supply is the general interpretation, and is the one which seems to agree best with all the circumstances. Jesus, however, answered, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour has not yet come." The form of this answer was, among the Jews, anything but disrespectful: but the sense implies a gentle reprehension of any dictation to Him in that capacity in which He was above all human control, adding that the time for this manifestation of His miraculous powers was not fully come. Gathering from this that the want would eventually be supplied in the way she expected, Mary instructed the attendants to pay exact attention to whatever instructions they might receive from Him.

The Marriage Feast.

There were on the premises six of those large stone jars or water-pots in which the Jews in those parts kept their water for use, which had been brought in smaller vessels from the well or fountain. They were preferred because they kept the water cool in summer, and it is a remarkable fact that such jars of ancient date are at this day found in the neighborhood of Cana. These water-pots Jesus secretly instructed the servants to fill with water; and they fill them to the very brim.

It was usual among the Jews and other ancient nations, at all their larger entertainments, to appoint one person as master of the feast, to preserve order and to keep up a good and cheerful feeling. Among the Jews a priest was usually chosen for this purpose, as the influence of his character enabled him the more easily to keep the festivities within the bounds of sobriety and prudence, while his acquaintance with the law afforded some security against ceremonial transgression. There was accordingly a master to this marriage-feast at Cana.

Jesus now directed the servants to fill their

goblets from the jars which had been filled with water, and submit them to the governor of the feast. They did so, and he, unknowing whence the beverage came, pleasantly animadverted upon the impropriety of which the bridegroom had been guilty in holding back the best wine till the end of the feast. It was the custom of the Jews to give the best wine at the beginning of a feast, and afterwards, when the taste became blunted, an inferior sort. "But thou," said the master of the feast to the bridegroom—"thou hast kept the good wine until now."

This was the first miracle of Christ; and it appears to have had a specific significance, in drawing attention at the outset to the difference between the severities of John the Baptist's ministry and the milder features of His own.

Not long after this the approach of the Passover rendered it necessary that Christ should go to Jerusalem, there to celebrate the feast, as the law required. The incidents of the journey are not related. But on His arrival, Jesus commenced His public ministry at Jerusalem by expelling the money-changers, and the dealers, who at that season were wont to establish themselves in a certain part of the Temple's outer court. It was not a common market; but was temporarily held for the use of those who resorted to the Temple in great numbers at this feast.

Such animals were there sold as were required for sacrifices—oxen, sheep, lambs, and also doves; and there were tables, where the money-changers gave Jewish money for the current Roman coins, it being held unlawful to pay a Temple tribute of half a shekel with heathen money. This offended Jesus, who provided Himself with a scourge of small cords, and by the severity of His countenance and of His words, rather than by His action, He compelled all these traffickers to withdraw in confusion, as He exclaimed, "Take these things hence: Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise!"

This action of Christ is carefully to be distinguished from the similar action which He

performed towards the end of His ministry, and which is the only one related by the other evangelists. The second purification of the Temple took place during the last week of our Lord's life, after the death of John the Baptist, when it could not be said, as is said here, that afterwards Christ dwelt and baptized in Judea.

Soon after Jesus quitted Jerusalem with His disciples; but, instead of at once returning to Galilee, He remained some time in "the land of Judea" (as distinguished from Jerusalem, the metropolis), and began to baptize through His disciples.

Jealousy of John's Disciples.

As John the Baptist was at the same time baptizing at Ænon, near Salim, a place near the Jordan, not far from that where Christ had been baptized by him, some of his disciples took offence at this. In general the disciples of John had more than those of Jesus of the things which belonged to the strict character of Judaism; they also fasted much. For this reason the Pharisees were displeased that Jesus was soon more followed and baptized more disciples than John, and by their representations, probably, did much to foment in John's disciples a discontent at the apparent rivalry of Jesus, and a jealousy of His superior claims.

Some of John's disciples came and reported these matters to him, expecting, doubtless, that he would feel aggrieved at such proceedings of one who had received baptism from his hands. But the truly humble Baptist, who felt satisfied with his own Divine calling as a harbinger, and was ever mindful of his true position, first directed their attention to the fact, that if any one was called to occupy so great a sphere of action, this certainly could not be done without the will of God. He therefore would not obtrude himself, for this state of things was by no means unexpected by him, as he had announced from the beginning that he had himself only come to prepare the way of Christ.

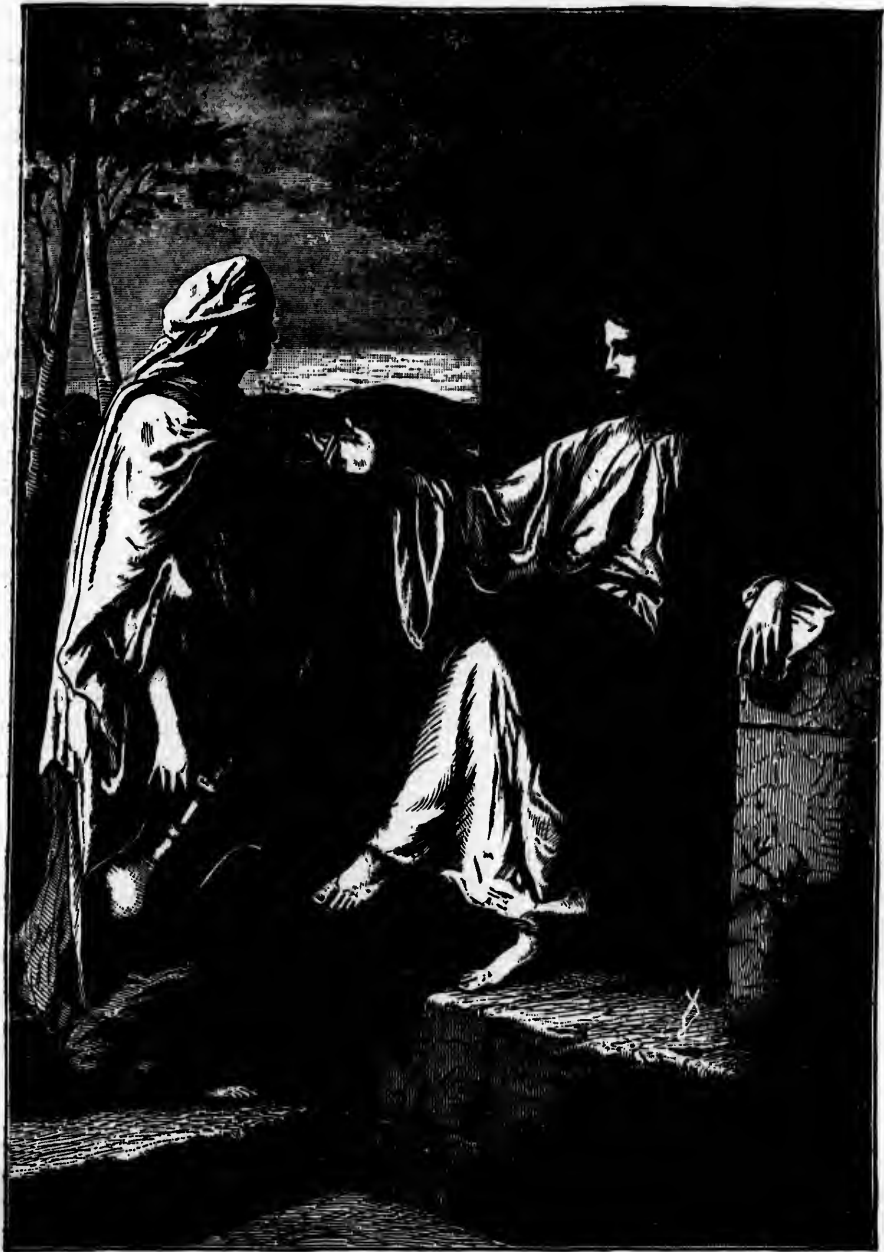
It was not long after this that the Baptist was put in prison by Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. The occasion was this:

Herod Antipas had at first married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. On a journey to Rome he visited his brother Herod, surnamed Philip, whose wife was Herodias, daughter of another brother, Aristobulus, and consequently niece both to her husband and to Herod Antipas. With this lady the tetrarch formed an attachment, and induced her to engage that on his return she would quit her own husband and live with him, on his undertaking to divorce the daughter of Aretas.

She accordingly divorced herself from Philip, and was then married to Herod, whose own wife had retired to her father as soon as she heard of this atrocious engagement. This affair, of course, made a strong impression in the country. Few, however, ventured to say all they thought of the matter. But the Baptist, with the honesty and boldness which belonged to his character, publicly condemned the conduct of the tetrarch, and plainly told him that it was not lawful for him to live with his brother's wife. For this Herod put him into prison, not, it would appear, with any view of further punishment, but to stop him from speaking in this manner to the people, with whom his voice had great influence, of a transaction which would not bear the light. Herodias, herself, indeed, wished to have him put to death, but the fear of the people who regarded John as a prophet, hindered Herod from yielding to her barbarous desire at this time. It was not until John had been cast into prison that Jesus returned from Judea to Galilee. In doing this He must needs go through the intermediate region of Samaria.

Jacob's Well.

In the valley below the mountain on which their Temple stood, lay the chief city of the Samaritans. It was the ancient Shechem; but at this time bore among the Jews the name of Sychar, which seems in its origin to have been a bye-name, imposed upon the city in disparagement. On the approach to the town was a well, which being on the spot of ground which was the private property of Jacob, and which he bestowed on his son Joseph, bore the



THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.—John iv. 7.

name of Jacob's well. The present well, which passes under this name, and which is in all probability the same, is situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim, near the entrance of the valley toward Jerusalem. It is above a mile from the present town, which accounts for its being now deserted; but it was probably nearer when the town was larger, and extended farther in this direction. It bears marks of high antiquity, and is dug in the solid rock.

Jesus on His way to Galilee reached this well about noon, and being weary with the journey, rested here while His disciples went forward into the town to purchase victuals. By this it would seem that He intended, after rest and refreshment, to continue His journey without stopping in, or, perhaps, going through the Samaritan city. From the depth at which the water lay, Jesus, although thirsty, was unable to obtain drink from it; when, therefore, a woman came from the town to draw water, He said to her, "Give me to drink." It was not usual for Jews to speak to women in public, and they avoided occasions of speaking to the Samaritan people, and of eating or drinking with them, or of using, in eating or drinking, the vessels which they employed.

Therefore, both as a woman and a Samaritan, this woman was astonished, and asked, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" Jesus answered, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." Living water means water from a perennial spring; and from the fact concerning the well which had just been pointed out, we are led to conclude that Jesus here intended an emphatic allusion to the circumstance that the well to which she had then come was not (as usually has been supposed) of living water, or at least not from an unfailing spring.

The woman understood Him literally, and answered accordingly: and when Jesus endeavored to draw her attention to His deeper meaning, she still persisted in the literal understanding, by saying, "Sir, give me this water,

that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Perceiving that she did not yet comprehend Him, He changed the conversation, and, by intimating His knowledge of private circumstances of her life, which was discreditable, so wrought upon her, that she acknowledged Him to be a prophet: but she hastened to change a topic so unpleasant to her, by reverting to the standing controversy between the Jews and Samaritans—the Temple at Gerizim, and whether that or the one at Jerusalem "were the place where men ought to worship." Much astonished was the woman to find a topic which never failed to rouse a Jew quietly set aside by the Divine Teacher with the remark, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither at this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The Woman's Astonishment.

This was still a deep matter for the Samaritan woman, and she answered only by referring, as was the custom of the time, to the expected Messiah, for the solution of this and all other difficult and obscure matters. "I know," she said, "that Messiah cometh; when He is come, He will tell us all things." Jesus answered, "I that speak unto thee am He!" Astonished, silenced, convinced, by this announcement, which cast a sudden and strong light upon all that she had not previously understood, the woman cared no more for her water-pot, but hastened away to the town, to make the glad tidings known to her friends and neighbors, to whom she cried, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?"

The disciples returned from the town before this conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria was quite concluded. For the reasons assigned, they were astonished to find Him talking with a woman and a Samaritan; but they made no remark. They pressed Him to partake of the food which they had brought; but He said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" and finding they understood Him

literally, He added, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

The intelligence of the woman brought a large number of the Samaritans from the town to the well. They pressed Him to make some stay with them. This a mere Jew would have refused; but Jesus entered the town, and remained there two days, during which many of the Samaritans became believers in Him as the Messiah promised to the Hebrew fathers.

Jesus then pursued His journey into Galilee, where He began to preach His Gospel. His proceedings at Jerusalem, and the undescribed miracles which He had there wrought, drew much attention to Him on His return to Galilee; and the position of a public teacher, which He now assumed, soon spread His fame throughout that region, and He was for the time well received.

A Son Restored to Health.

On again reaching Cana of Galilee, where His first miracle had been performed, an officer in the court of Herod Antipas, whose son was at the point of death, at Capernaum, came to implore Him to proceed to that place and restore His son to health. This application shows that the unspecified miracles of Christ at Jerusalem were of the same character as those which He afterwards performed. Jesus told him to return home and he would find his son well. Believing this, he returned, and on the way he was met by messengers who had been sent to inform him that his son was recovered. Finding that the fever had left his son at the very time that Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth," he and his became believers in Christ.

Jesus then proceeded to His own town of Nazareth, where He attended the synagogue on the Sabbath-days. The synagogues were buildings in every town, in which the Jews assembled for public worship, and reading and expounding the Scriptures on the Sabbath-days. In the time of Christ there was no town in Judea which had not one or more of these synagogues. Its affairs were managed by ten

persons of property and influence, three of whom enjoyed a kind of superiority, and were called rulers of the synagogue. These formed a kind of magistracy for the decision of differences between the members of the congregation, for the maintenance of discipline, and for the proper ordering of the public worship.

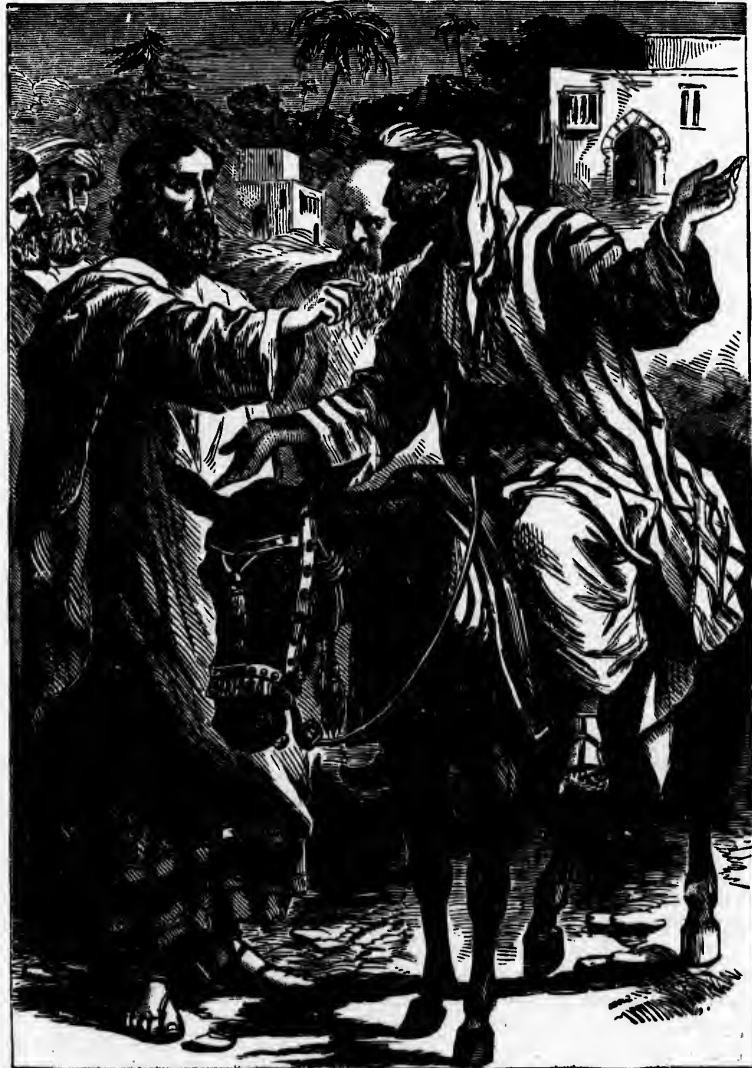
Each synagogue had a minister, whose duty it was to offer public prayer, and to exhort, if no one else undertook the duty. The reading of the Scriptures formed no part of his ordinary duty: but every Sabbath he called out seven of the congregation in succession to perform that service. He of course called forth only such as he knew or supposed capable of reading correctly. If a priest were present, he was first called, then a Levite, afterwards any persons on whom the minister might fix. The person called upon went to the desk or raised platform in the middle of the synagogue, and unrolled the volume till he came to the section he was to read; he read standing, and when he had finished, was at liberty to add any words of exhortation which he desired.

Jewish Worship.

There was but one synagogue in the little town of Nazareth, and probably it resembled in all respects, except in its humbler aspect and materials, the synagogues of which we see the ruins at Tell Hum and Irbid. It was simply a rectangular hall, with a pillared portico of Grecian architecture, of which the further extremity (where the "sanctuary" was placed) usually pointed towards Jerusalem, which, since the time of Solomon, had always been the consecrated *direction* of a Jew's worship, as Mecca is of a Mohammedan's. In wealthier places it was built of white marble, and sculptured on the outside in alto-relievo, with rude ornaments of vine-leaves and grapes, or the budding rod and the pot of manna. On entering there were seats on the one side for the men; on the other, behind a lattice, were seated the women, shrouded in their long veils.

At one end was the ark of painted wood, which contained the sacred Scriptures; and at one side was the elevated seat for the reader.

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HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON — John iv. 47.

or more "men of leisure," or leading elders ; keep the sacred books; the sacristan or vergger;
 and pre-eminent among these the chief or and the shepherds, who in some respects acted

as deacons. These were the various officials. The service of the synagogue was not unlike our own. After the prayers two lessons were always read, one from the Law, and one from the Prophets; and as there were no ordained ministers to conduct the services—for the office of priests and Levites at Jerusalem was wholly different—these lessons might not only be read by any competent person who received permission from the chief, but he was even at liberty to add his own comment.

The reading of the lesson from Moses was apparently over when Jesus ascended the steps of the elevated seat. Recognizing His claim to perform the honorable function of reader, the clerk drew aside the silk curtain of the painted ark which contained the sacred manuscripts, and handed Him the roll of the prophet Isaiah, which contained the lesson of the day. Jesus unrolled the volume, and found the well-known passage in Isaiah lxi. The whole congregation stood up to listen to Him. The length of the lesson might be from three to twenty-one verses, but Jesus only read the first and part of the second; stopping short, in a spirit of tenderness, before the stern expression, "The day of vengeance of our God," so that the gracious words, "The acceptable year of the Lord," might rest last upon their ears and form the text of His discourse. He then handed back the roll to the clerk, and, as was customary among the Jews, sat down to deliver His sermon.

A Remarkable Prophecy.

The passage which He had read, whether part of the ordinary lesson for the day or chosen by Himself, was a very remarkable one, and it must have derived additional grandeur and solemnity from the lips of Him in whom it was fulfilled. It referred to works of mercy, the healing of the broken-hearted, and the deliverance of captives. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed upon Him with a gaze of intense earnestness, and we may imagine the thrill of awful expectation and excitement which passed through the hearts of the listeners, as, in a discourse of which the sub-

ject only is preserved for us by the evangelist, He developed the theme that He was Himself the Messiah, of whom the great prophet had sung 700 years before. His words were full of a grace, an authority, a power which was at first irresistible and which commanded the involuntary astonishment of all.

But as He proceeded He became conscious of a change. The spell of His wisdom and sweetness was broken, as these rude and violent Nazarenes began to realize the full meaning of His Divine claims. It was customary with the Jews in the worship of their synagogue to give full vent to their feelings, and it was not long before Jesus became sensible of indignant and rebellious murmurs. He saw that those eager, glittering eyes, which had been fixed upon Him in the first excitement of attention, were beginning to glow with the malignant light of jealousy and hatred. "Is not this *the carpenter?* is he not the brother of workmen like himself—James and Joses and Simon and Judas—and of sisters who live among us? do not even his own family disbelieve in him?"

Such were the whispers which began to be buzzed about among the audience. This was no young and learned Rabbi from the schools of Gamaliel or Shammai, and yet he spoke with an authority which not even the greatest scribes assumed! Even a Hillel, when his doctrines failed to persuade, could only secure conviction by appealing to the previous authority of great teachers. But *this* teacher appealed to no one—this teacher who had but been their village carpenter! What business had *he* to teach? Whence could he know letters, having never learned?

When He began by saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," they were charmed with His words, expecting to see the same beneficial acts performed among themselves, which were wonderful things for "Joseph's son" to do. This was not His intention; and He proceeded to explain why this could not be. They looked upon Him as the son of Joseph the carpenter, the relative of persons well known to them, and were little disposed to recognize in such a one, whom

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they had seen daily in their streets, the illustrious personage of whom the prophets had no miracles among them, but would confer His benefits on others, of whatsoever country, who



DELIVERANCE FOR THE CAPTIVE.—Luke iv. 18.

spoken. Therefore, because they despised Him, were desirous of His doctrine, and willing to receive His instructions.

because they would not see Him in the character which He claimed—because in this, as Jesus did not leave unobserved the change in every other instance, "a prophet hath no which was passing over the feelings of His honor in his own country," He would work audience. He at once told them that He *was*

the Jesus whom they described, and yet with no abatement of His Messianic grandeur. Their hardness and unbelief had already depressed His spirit before He had even entered the synagogue. The implied slur on the humility of His previous life He passes by; it was too essentially provincial and innately vulgar to need correction, since any Nazarene of sufficient honesty might have reminded himself of the yet humbler origin of the great herdsman Amos.

Nor would He notice the base hatred which weak and bad men always contract for those who shame them by the silent superiority of noble lives. But He was aware of another feeling in their minds; a demand upon Him for some stupendous vindication of His claims; a jealousy that He should have performed miracles at Cana, and given an impression of His power at Capernaum, to say nothing of what He had done and taught at Jerusalem—and yet that He should have vouchsafed no special mark of His favor among them. He knew that the taunting and sceptical proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," was in their hearts, and all but on their lips.

But to show them most clearly that He was something more than they—that He was no mere Nazarene like any other who might have lived among them for thirty years, and that He belonged not to them, but to the world—He reminds them that miracles are not to be limited by geographical lines—that Elijah had only saved the Phœnician woman of Sarepta, and Elisha only healed the hostile leper of Syria.

What then? were they in His estimation (and He but "the carpenter!") no better than Gentiles and lepers? This was the climax of all that was intolerable to them, as coming from a fellow-townsmen whom they wished to rank among themselves; and at these words their long-suppressed fury burst into a flame. The speaker was no longer interrupted by a murmur of disapprobation, but by a roar of wrath. With one of those bursts of sanguinary excitement which characterized that strange, violent, impassioned people—a people

whose minds are swept by storms as sudden as those which in one moment lash into fury the mirror surface of their lake—they rose in a body, tore Him out of the city, and then dragged Him to the brow of the hill above.

The little town of Nazareth nestles in the southern hollows of that hill; many a mass of precipitous rock lies imbedded on its slopes, and it is probable that the hill-side may have been far more steep and precipitous two thousand years ago. To one of these rocky escarpments they dragged Him, in order to fling Him headlong down.

Jesus Escapes from His Foes.

But His hour was not yet come, and they were saved from the consummation of a crime which would have branded them with everlasting infamy. "He passed through the midst of them, and went on His way." There is no need to suppose an actual miracle; still less to imagine a secret and sudden escape into the narrow and tortuous lanes of the town. Perhaps His silence, perhaps the calm nobleness of His bearing, perhaps the dauntless innocence of His gaze overawed them. Apart from anything supernatural, there seems to have been in the presence of Jesus a spell of mystery and of majesty, which even His most ruthless and hardened enemies acknowledged, and before which they involuntarily bowed.

It was to this that He owed His escape when the maddened Jews in the Temple took up stones to stone Him; it was this that made the bold and bigoted officers of the Sanhedrim unable to arrest Him as He taught in public during the feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem; it was this that made the armed band of His enemies, at His mere look, fall before Him to the ground in the garden of Gethsemane. Suddenly, quietly He asserted His freedom, waved aside His captors, and overawing them by His simple glance, passed through their midst unharmed. Similar events have occurred in history, and continue still to occur. There is something in defenceless and yet dauntless dignity that calms even the fury of a mob.

And so He left them; did any feelings of

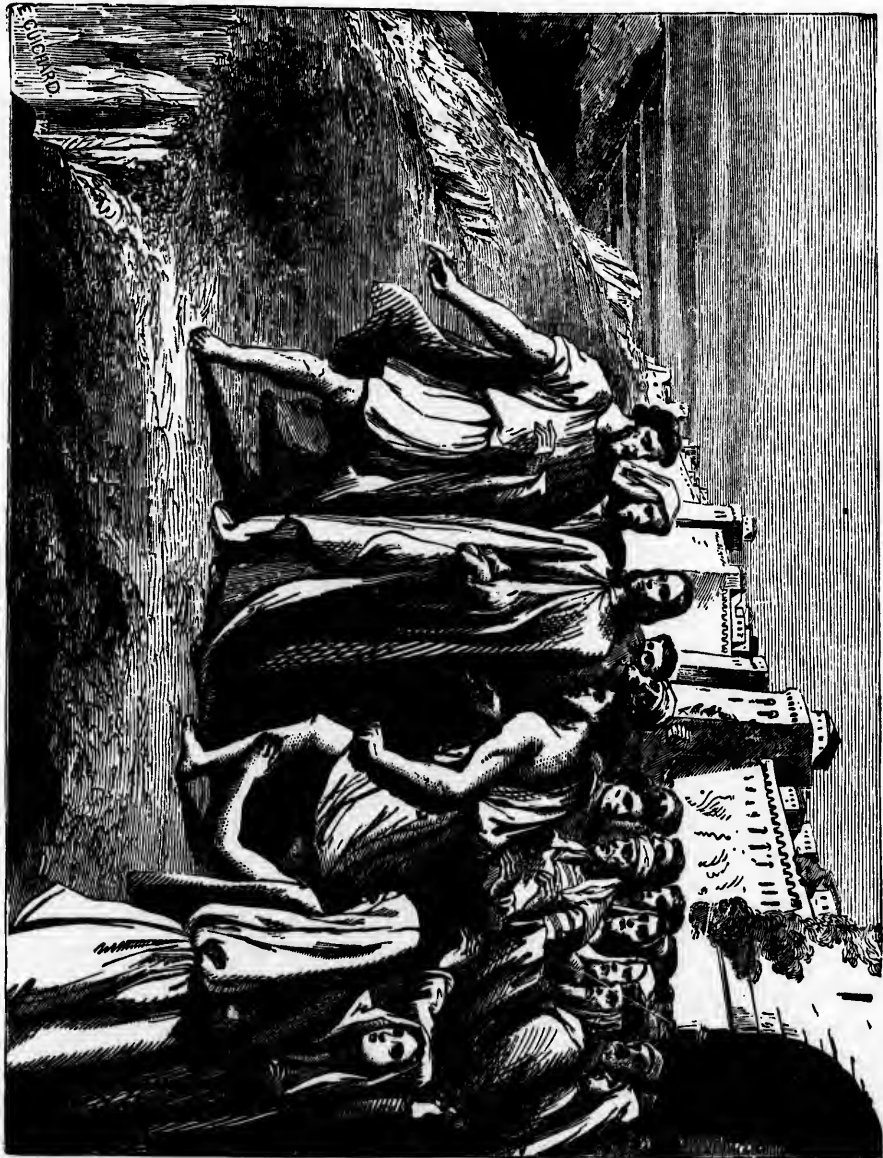
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ATTEMPTING TO CAST JESUS DOWN FROM THE BROW OF THE HILL.—Luke iv. 29.



merely human regret weigh down his soul while He was wending His weary steps down the steep hill-slope towards Cana of Galilee? Did any tear start in his eyes unbidden as He stood, perhaps for the last time, to gaze from thence on the rich plain of Esdraelon, and the purple heights of Carmel, and the white sands that fringe the blue waters of the Mediterranean? Were there any from whom He grieved to be severed, in the green secluded valley, where His manhood had labored, and His childhood played? Did He cast one longing, lingering glance at the humble home in which for so many years He had toiled as the village carpenter? Did no companion of His innocent boyhood, no friend of His sinless youth, accompany Him with awe and pity, and regret? Such questions are not, surely, unnatural; not, surely, irreverent; but they are not answered. Of all merely human emo-

tions of His heart, except so far as they directly affect His mission upon earth, the Gospels are silent. We know only that thenceforth other friends awaited Him away from boorish Nazareth, among the gentle and noble-hearted fishermen of Bethsaida; and that thenceforth His home, so far as He had a home, was in the little city of Capernaum, beside the sunlit waters of the Galilean lake. There He found more congenial surroundings.

On several occasions Jesus withdrew from His enemies, quietly departed from their jibes and insults to more welcome treatment, and in calm dignity pursued His lofty purpose and addressed Himself to His merciful mission. Destined to suffering, He was resolved not to suffer before His time; doomed to martyrdom, He was not ready to meet His fate until He had preceded it with the eloquent, convincing testimony of His life.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

JESUS IN GALILEE.



UNTIL His rejection by the people of Nazareth, Jesus considered this town as His home. He now proceeded to Capernaum, where He henceforth usually resided when in Galilee. Often as this place is mentioned in the New Testament there yet occurs no specification of its local situation, except the somewhat indefinite intimation that it lay upon the sea-coast, that is, the Sea of Tiberias, upon the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim. It must, therefore, have lain on the western shore of the lake, and some incidental notices in the Gospels enable us to determine that it lay on that part of the western shore known as the region of Gennesareth, which was a fertile plain down upon the shore, below the mountains which on that side form the basin of the lake.

This small plain occurs in about the mid-distance between the town of Tiberias and the northern extremity of the lake, and is contained within a triangular expansion of the shore from the backward bending of the mountains. Capernaum was evidently a place of some importance in the time of Christ; but all trace of it has long since disappeared, and the very site which it occupied has become uncertain. In this we may find a striking fulfilment of Christ's denunciation: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day."

Here Jesus commonly resided when in this

part of the country. Home, in the strict sense, He had none; but the house of which He made ordinary use appears to have been that which belonged to His chief apostle. It is true that Simon and Andrew are said to have belonged to Bethsaida, but they may easily have engaged the use of a house at Capernaum, belonging to Peter's mother-in-law; or, since Bethsaida is little more than a suburb or part of Capernaum, they may have actually moved for the convenience of their Master from the one place to the other.

The first three evangelists have given us a detailed account of Christ's first Sabbath at Capernaum, and it has for us an intrinsic interest, because it gives us one remarkable specimen of the manner in which He spent the days of His active ministry. It is the best commentary on that finest of all encomiums that "He went about doing good." It is the point which the rarest and noblest of His followers have found it most difficult to imitate; it is the point in which His life transcended most absolutely the attainment of His very greatest forerunners. Nothing is more glorious on the one hand, or more difficult on the other, than the unwearied toil of a self-renouncing love.

The day began in the synagogue. If Capernaum was indeed the town now called Tell Hum, then the white marble ruins which still stand on the little eminence above the lake, and still encumber the now waste and desolate site of the town with their fragments of elaborate sculpture, may possibly be the ruins of this very building.

The synagogue, which is not very large, must have been densely crowded; and to teach an earnest and expectant crowd—to teach as He taught—not in dull, dead, conventional phrase, but with "thoughts that breathed and words that burned"—to teach as they do who



THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.—Luke v. 6

are swayed by the emotion of the hour, while heart speaks to heart—must have required no slight energy of life, must have involved no little exhaustion of the physical powers. But this was not all. While he was speaking, while the audience of simple-hearted yet faithful, intelligent, warlike people were listening to Him in mute astonishment, hanging on His lips with deep and reverential admiration—suddenly the deep silence was broken by the wild cries and obscene ravings of one of those unhappy wretches who were universally believed to be under the influence of impure spirits, and who—in the absence of any retreat for such sufferers—had, perhaps, slipped in unobserved among the throng.

Even the poor demoniac, in the depths of his perturbed and degraded nature, had felt the haunting spell of that pure presence, of that holy voice, of that Divine and illuminating message. But, distorted as his whole moral being was, he raved against it, as though by the voices of the evil demons who possessed him, and while he saluted "Jesus the Nazarene" as the Holy One of God, yet, with agonies of terror and hatred, demanded to be let alone, and not to be destroyed.

Casting Out an Evil Spirit.

Then followed a scene of thrilling excitement. Turning to the furious and raving sufferer, and addressing the devil which seemed to be forcing from him these terrified ejaculations, Jesus said, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." The calm, the sweetness, the power of the Divine utterance were irresistible. The demoniac fell to the ground in a fearful paroxysm, screaming and convulsed. But it was soon over. The man rose cured; his whole look and bearing showed that he was dispossessed of the overmastering influence, and was now in his right mind. A miracle so gracious and so commanding had never before been so strikingly manifested, and the worshippers separated with emotions of indescribable wonder.

Rising from the seat in the synagogue, Christ retired into the house of Simon. Here again

He was met by the strong appeal of sickness and suffering. Simon, whom He had already bound to Himself on the banks of the Jordan, by the first vague call to his future apostolate, was a married man, and his wife's mother lay stricken down by a violent fever. One request from the afflicted family was sufficient: there was no need, as in the case of the more worldly nobleman, for importunate entreaty. He stood over her; He took her by the hand; He raised her up; He rebuked the fever; His voice, stirring her whole being, dominated over the sources of disease, and, restored instantaneously to health, she rose and busied herself about the household duties.

An Impressive Spectacle.

Possibly the strictness of observance which marked the Jewish Sabbath secured for Jesus a brief interval for refreshment; but no sooner did the sun begin to set than the eager multitude, barely waiting for the full close of the Sabbath hours, began to seek His aid. The whole city came densely thronging round the doors of the humble home, bringing with them their demoniacs and their diseased.

What a strange scene! There lay the limpid lake, reflecting in pale rose-color the last flush of sunset that gilded the western hills; and here, amid the peace of nature, was exposed, in hideous variety, the sickness and misery of man, while the stillness of the Sabbath twilight was broken by the shrieks of demoniacs who testified to the presence of the Son of God:

"A lazar house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, and racking tortures, quærens
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Demoniac phrenzy, morose melancholy
And moonstruck madness;"

and amidst them all, not

"Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch,
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook,"

but far into the deepening dusk, the only per-

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.—LUKE V. 6



son there who was unexcited and unalarmed—hushing by His voice the delirium of madness and the screams of epilepsy, touching disease into health again by laying on each unhappy and tortured sufferer His pure and gentle hands—moved, in His love and tenderness, the young Prophet of Nazareth.

Unalarmed, indeed, and unexcited, but not free from sorrow and suffering. For sympathy is nothing else than a fellow-feeling with others; a sensible participation in their joy or

farthest parts of Syria, and we might well have imagined that the wearied Saviour would have needed a long repose. But to Him the dearest and best repose was solitude and silence, where He might be alone and undisturbed with His heavenly Father. The little plain of Gennesareth was still covered with the deep darkness which precedes the dawn, when, unobserved by all, Jesus arose and went away to a desert place, and there refreshed His spirit with quiet prayer. Although the work which He was



JESUS TEACHING BY THE SEA-SIDE.—Luke v. 3.

woe. And Jesus was touched with a feeling of their infirmities. Those cries pierced to His inmost heart; the groans and sighs of all that collective misery filled His whole soul with pity; He bled for them; He suffered with them; their agonies were His; so that the evangelist Matthew recalls and echoes in this place, with a slight difference of language, the words of Isaiah, "Surely He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows."

The fame of that marvelous day rang through all Galilee and Peræa, and even to the

sent to do obliged Him often to spend His days amid thronging and excited multitudes, He did not love the tumult, and avoided even the admiration and gratitude of those who felt in His presence a spring of life.

But He was not suffered thus to remain, even for a brief period, in rest and seclusion. The multitude sought Him persistently; Simon and his friends almost hunted for Him in their eager desire to see and to hear. They even wished to detain him among them by gentle force. But He quietly resisted their

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importunity. It was not His object to become the centre of an admiring populace, or to spend His whole time in working miracles, which, though they were deeds of mercy, were mainly intended to open their hearts to His diviner teaching. His blessings were not to be confined to Capernaum. "Let us go," He said, "to the adjoining country towns to preach the kingdom of God there, also; for therefore am I sent."

The Unsuccessful Fishermen.

It is doubtful, however, whether Jesus put His intention into instant effect. It seems as if He so far yielded to the anxiety of the multitude as to give them one more address before He set forth to preach in that populous neighborhood. He bent His steps towards the shore, and probably to the spot where the little boats of His earliest disciples were anchored, near the beach of hard white sand which lines the water-side at Bethsaida. At a little distance behind Him followed an ever-gathering concourse of people from all the neighborhood; and while He stopped to speak to them, the two pairs of fisher-brethren, Simon and Andrew, and James and John, pursued the toils by which they earned their daily bread.

While Jesus had retired to rest for a few short hours of the night, Simon and his companions, impelled by the necessities of a lot which they seem to have borne with noble-minded cheerfulness, had been engaged in fishing; and, having been wholly unsuccessful, two of them, seated on the shore—probably in that clear, still atmosphere, within hearing of His voice—were occupying their time in washing, and two, seated in their boat with their hired servants, and Zebedee, their father, were mending their nets. As Jesus spoke the multitude—some in their desire to catch every syllable that fell from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, and some in their longing to touch Him, and so be healed of whatever plagues they had—thronged upon Him closer and closer, impeding His movements with dangerous and unseemly pressure.

He therefore beckoned to Simon to get into his boat and push it ashore, so that He might step on board of it, and teach the people from thence. Seated in this pleasant pulpit, safe from the inconvenient contact with the multitude, He taught them from the little boat as it rocked on the blue ripples, sparkling in the morning sun. And when His sermon was over He thought not of Himself and of His own fatigue, but of His poor and disappointed disciples. He knew that they had toiled in vain; He had observed that even while He spoke they had been preparing for some future and more prosperous expedition; and with a sympathy which never omitted an act of kindness, He ordered Peter to push out his boat into the deep, and all of them to cast out their nets once more. Peter was in a despondent mood; but the mere word of One whom he so deeply revered, and whose power he had already witnessed, was sufficient. And his faith was rewarded. Instantly a vast haul of fishes crowded into the nets.

A Multitude of Fish.

A busy scene followed. The instinct of work first prevailed. Simon and Andrew beckoned to Zebedee and his sons and servants to come in their boat and help to save the miraculous draught and straining nets; both boats were filled to the gunwale with the load.

Peter's previous hesitation makes us the better appreciate the amazement with which he was filled by this event. A landsman might not so readily have apprehended the full force of all the bearings of this miracle; and Peter himself had been less astonished to see Christ heal the sick—perhaps from a notion, common among the Jews, that the prayers of holy men accompanied by imposition of hands might have power to heal diseases and to cast out evil spirits. But here was a miracle more distinctly addressed to his own perceptions, and which assured him that Jesus of Nazareth held dominion even over the sea and its inhabitants. He could not but conceive that there was some peculiar presence of God with a person who could perform a

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THE FINAL CALL OF PETER.—LUKE V. 10.

miracle like this, and the consciousness of sin made him fear to appear in the presence of such a One, lest some infirmity or offence should expose him to more than ordinary punishment.

When, therefore, he perceived that the fish which had been taken at this draught filled both the boats to that degree that they began to sink, he fell down at the feet of Jesus, crying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But the Lord encouraged him and Andrew, whose sentiments he expressed, by saying, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." They understood this conventional formula of "Come after me," or "Follow me," as a summons to exclusive attendance upon Him henceforth, and, accordingly, they had no sooner landed than they abandoned all their fishing concerns and followed Him. John and James appear to have hastened to the shore with their fish and nets in the other vessel, and had not heard this call, though they shared in the feelings which produced it. When, however, Christ had landed with Peter and Andrew, and proceeded a little way along the shore, he beheld them busily engaged with their father Zebedee in mending the broken nets. He called to them, "Follow me," and they immediately arose and followed Him, leaving their father in the boat with the hired servants.

Jesus in the Synagogue.

During his residence at Capernaum Jesus followed his usual practice, and taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day. It may be remarked that He was not now in His native place, where He might be supposed to have had more facilities in this respect, according to the rules of the synagogues. But the fact is, that the Jews in their synagogues were always desirous of hearing any stranger who had taken the character of a public teacher, or who seemed to have any wish to address them, and hence when such persons happened to be present, they were usually called upon by the minister of the synagogue. Thus it was that at Capernaum and other places, Jesus found

frequent opportunities of "teaching in the synagogues."

When Christ taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, the people were astonished at His doctrine, "for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." By this we understand, that He taught not as a commentator on the law of Moses, and on the traditions of the fathers, but as a prophet greater than Moses, come with a new law and a new doctrine, and not bound by the literal obligations of a covenant completed and finished by His own appearance on the earth. Well might they who regarded the law and the traditions as the eternal counsel of God, be "astonished" at the new doctrine which Jesus taught.

The renown of His preaching and miracles had by this time spread throughout Syria, and multitudes followed Him, or gathered around Him wherever He went. Many persons came from the remotest parts of the land to hear and see Him—even from Jerusalem and Judea, and from the country beyond the Jordan. Those who know what throngs of diseased persons, at this day, in the East, gather around any stranger who is supposed or rumored to possess medicines, or to be gifted with unusual powers of healing, and with what urgent importunities and cries they appeal to him for relief, may form some notion of the crowds of diseased persons who would and did gather to One whose word, whose touch, whose look, had power to drive away every kind of sickness and disease. Then, and constantly during the sojourning of Christ upon earth, were accomplished the prophecies which one of the English poets has so beautifully embodied:

The Saviour comes! by ancient bards foretold:
Hear Him, ye deaf; and all ye blind behold!
He from thick films shall clear the visual ray,
And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day.
'Tis He the obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
And bid new music charm the unfolding ear;
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.

Of all the miraculous cures which were effected during this journey, only one has been



THE FINAL CALL OF PETER.—LUKE V. 10.

selected by the evangelist for particular notice: this was the cure of a leper.

Leprosy was a skin disorder to which the ancient nations appear to have been much subject, and which was so common even in Europe during the middle ages, that numerous hospitals, or rather "lazar-houses," were established for reception. The disease, in at least one of its most usual forms, imparted an unearthly pallor to the complexion, whence, when Gehazi was punished with the leprosy of which Naaman had been cured, he is said to have gone forth from his master's presence "a leper as white as snow."

A Loathsome Disease.

The disease was deemed incurable by medicine; it was certainly contagious, and was even believed to be hereditary. Lepers were hence compelled to live in a state of separation outside the towns by the laws of Moses, and so rigidly was this law enforced, without respect of persons, that the sister of Moses and Aaron, when smitten with leprosy, was put out of the camp, and king Uzziah, when visited with a similar affliction, was compelled to relinquish the government, and live secluded in a separate house.

The dread of this disease and of the disabilities connected with it was so great, that still further precautions were judged necessary to prevent contamination by accidental or unknowing contact with the leper. He was compelled to wear his dress in such a manner as sufficiently distinguished him even at a distance. His outer garment was rent open in front, his head bare, and his lip was to be covered either with his hand or the skirt of his garment. Nor was this all, for it was his bounden duty by cries of "Unclean! Unclean!" to give warning of his presence to those who might happen to be near him. These latter precautions were found so effectual, that, although lepers resided outside the towns, they were allowed to enter them in day-time, and to appear in the streets and public places.

As this state of the leper was one into

which no one would willingly enter, it may easily be supposed that persons were not brought into it without some kind of legal process or examination. When a person was suspected of being afflicted with leprosy, it became the interest of all his friends and neighbors to have the fact determined, as they might all be subjected to unpleasant consequences by continued intercourse with him. He was, therefore, taken before the priest, whose business it was to be qualified, under certain rules laid down by the law, to distinguish true leprosy from any disease which might appear like it; and if it were a real leprosy, the priest pronounced the man unclean, and he went into separation. And from this condition no one could be relieved but by the same sanction.

The Outcast Restored.

If a leper believed himself healed, he was to go before the priest, who examined him, and pronounced whether he were really cured or not. If it were so, the man then underwent the ceremonies of purification, which are minutely described in Leviticus. These chiefly consisted in the slaughter of one of two birds which had been brought for the purpose, and the sprinkling of the person with its blood after the body had been burned. The other bird was set free, either to signify that the leprosy had departed, or, as others allege, to indicate the man's restoration to the free intercourse of society in life. This restoration did not, however, take place all at once. The man remained apart both from lepers and from clean persons for a week after the purification; and he then again presented himself before the priest, when, if no symptom of leprosy had reappeared, he presented a sacrifice, and all restraint was withdrawn from him.

Under these circumstances we can have no difficulty in understanding how fervently a leper would desire to be relieved from his miserable condition, and considering the usually incurable nature of the disease we can the better appreciate the strength of faith manifested by the leper who fell down before Christ,

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and besought Him, saying, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!" The Saviour of men was touched with compassion. He put forth His hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be thou clean;" and immediately the man's leprosy departed from him. Jesus then charged him not to declare the manner of his cure, but to go and show himself to the priest in the usual course. This was indeed necessary to restore the man to his civil privileges; but in this case it had also the effect of rendering the inspection of the priest instrumental in authenticating the miracle. The man, however, was unable to control the expression of his wonder and gratitude. He published the matter wherever he went, and such was the effect that Christ was unable to enter any town openly on account of the crowds which beset his path.

Jesus returned to Capernaum, where diseased persons continued to be brought to Him, and large numbers of people from different parts of the country attended His instructions. He was once teaching in a house so crowded with auditors, even to the door, that all means of access were cut off. Here a man entirely laid up with palsy was brought to be cured by Jesus; and when his bearers found that they could not in any other way bring him before Christ, they took him to the top of the house, and lowered him down through the tiling, in his bed, to the feet of Jesus. This transaction appears somewhat difficult, owing to the great difference between the construction of eastern houses and of our own.

A little explanation will make it clear. The houses have flat roofs, protected by a rail or parapet, and forming a fine terrace, to which the people resort for air and exercise, and where they sleep during the nights of summer. There is usually a flight of steps near the door, and another in the interior part of the house communicating with the roof. If the bearers of the palsied man could not get access to the door, they doubtless carried him to the roof of a neighboring house, and then passed him over the separating parapet to the roof of that house in which Christ was.

The buildings of an eastern house form one or more sides of an interior court or quadrangle. The ground floor is usually occupied by offices; the first floor is fronted by a covered gallery, into which all the principal apartments of the house open. If there be a second story, there is a similar gallery to it. Now the nature of the operation performed by the person in charge of the paralytic depends entirely upon the position which Christ at that time occupied. He was not in the court preaching to the people there, because in that case it would not have been needful to remove any tiling in order to let the sick man down to Him. Neither was He in a room, as is usually interpreted, for that would have necessitated the removal or opening of the roof; and this, from the materials of which the roofs are composed, and from the manner of their construction, would not only have been a work of much time and labor, but would have filled the room below with dust and rubbish.

Difficulties Overcome.

It only, therefore, remains to conclude that Christ was in the gallery. This was not only the position likely to be taken by any person desirous of being heard by the largest number of persons, but the one which best agrees with all the circumstances of the case. The bearers of the paralytic man had, then, only to remove the covering or pent-house of the gallery, which is usually formed of materials easily removed, and to let the sick man down.

The faith implied in the trouble taken and the means employed in gaining access to His presence, was that which first and most strongly engaged the attention of Christ when this poor creature was lowered down to His feet. Therefore, he bestowed upon him a greater boon than he came to seek, in the words, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee!" This saying utterly confounded all the learned and high-notioned persons—the scribes and Pharisees—who happened to be present. They knew that, although a man honored by the Almighty might work marvels, as the prophets of old had done, the forgiveness of sin was a

peculiar and special attribute of God, and hence they thought among themselves, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Although they did not speak this out, but only thought it, Christ perceived their feeling in this matter, and, turning to them asked, "What reason ye in your heart? Whether is it easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk?'" These were surprising questions.

The Paralytic Cured.

And then, using His power to say the latter as an argument of His right to say the former, He added: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (and here He turned to the palsied man) "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house!" And immediately the man felt his miserable limbs loosened from their long bondage, he felt them gather strength and substance, he felt them roused to vital action; and he sprang upon his feet, he took up the couch on which he had the moment before lain helpless and impotent, and he hastened therewith to his own house, glorifying God. The astonished crowd also dispersed; and men said to one another, "We have seen strange things to-day!"

If there were any people whom the Jews detested more than even the Samaritans, more than even the very heathen, it was the publicans. This constantly appears in the Gospels, where the proud Pharisees make it a frequent matter of reproach to Christ that He associated with "publicans and sinners." The publicans were tax-gatherers—a body of men not much liked in any country, but absolutely loathed in Palestine. This requires some explanation.

The government taxes under the Romans were usually sublet by persons of family and consideration, and although they were called publicans by the Romans, they are not to be confounded with the publicans of the New Testament. Even this office, however, had considerably declined from its ancient reputation, as the traffickers in the revenue began to let it appear that they cared considerably more

for their own profits than for the revenues of the state, or for the well-being of those by whom the taxes were paid. These personages of course employed large numbers of persons to collect the taxes and customs, who were mostly natives of the country in which the taxes were collected.

These were also called publicans, and were in general discredit—first, for their rapaciousness in the endeavor to make a purse for themselves by extortionate exactions upon their own countrymen, and that too in the payment of tributes odious in themselves; and, then, on account of their connection with and dependence upon the conquering people. In a conquered nation we always find those persons odious who enter into the service of the conquering people, and much more when the service in which they engage is one which would be odious under any circumstances. Now, if this were the case generally, we may judge with what intensity these feelings would operate among such a people as the Jews; who abhorred the Roman yoke, who regarded as almost impious the payment of tribute to the heathen, and who deemed that intercourse with the heathen, which the office of the publican involved, as amounting to an absolute defilement.

Matthew Called.

This disrepute of the office naturally operated in throwing into the hands of low and unprincipled persons, whose conduct aggravated and in some degree justified the odium in which the employment was held. This was so strong that the publicans formed, as it were, a caste by themselves, with whom few would sit down to meat, and into whose houses few would enter. No doubt there were some exceptions to the character thus given to them; no doubt there were among them respectable and fair-dealing men; but this was their general character, and there were probably fewer persons who thought well of the publicans than there were publicans who deserved to be well thought of.

One day when Jesus went forth from the

town of Capernaum to the border of the lake, attended by a crowd as usual, He observed a publican named Matthew "sitting at the receipt foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea-shore. They received tolls from those who crossed the water, and delivered a ticket



HEALING THE PALSIED.—Mark ii. 4

of custom." Some think that he sat in the maritime gate of the town, but it appears that which exempted the person from any further payment on the other side. In the present case Matthew probably re-

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ceived the tolls of those who crossed the Lake of Gennesareth at this point, trafficking in fish and other goods. Jesus called to this person, "Follow me;" and immediately, "he left all, rose up, and followed Him." This readiness to follow Him who had not where to lay His head is the more praiseworthy when we reflect that Matthew was a man of some substance, as indeed most of the publicans were, even the fair gains of the occupation being very considerable. That Matthew was such appears from the great feast which he gave to Jesus and His disciples that same evening, at which so many publicans were present as gave occasion for the first murmur against Jesus as one who kept company with publicans and sinners.

The time of the Passover again came round, and Jesus proceeded to Jerusalem with his disciples.

The Pool of Bethesda.

The gate by which sheep, especially those destined for the service of the Temple, were brought into the city, was called the Sheep-gate. Not far from this gate was a bath or pool, called the Pool of Bethesda. Under the north wall of the Temple there is still a deep reservoir which travellers identify with this pool. This reservoir measures three hundred and sixty feet in length, one hundred and thirty in breadth, and seventy-five feet in depth to the bottom, besides the rubbish which has been accumulating in it for ages. It has obviously been used as a reservoir, for the sides have been cased internally with small stones, and these again covered with plaster; but there are some signs that this is a comparatively recent appropriation; and Dr. Robinson is strongly persuaded that it anciently formed part of the trench or ditch which on this side bounded the Temple. This matter requires and will doubtless receive further investigation, and meanwhile we must be content to remain in some doubt whether any traces of the Pool of Bethesda now exist.

This pool was a kind of bath with some healing property in its waters, which occasioned it to be the resort of diseased persons,

for whose accommodation the place was provided with five porches. The account given of this bath by the evangelist is: "An angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

In the porches of the bath at this time lay a large number of diseased persons, the blind the halt, the withered, waiting the opportunity of going into the water as soon as the commotion should be observed. As Jesus passed this way His attention was directed to a man who had been in a helpless condition for thirty-eight years. To him Christ put the thrilling question—"Wilt thou be made whole?" But the man, not apprehending the full drift of the question, replied by explaining that hitherto he had been unable to step into the water at the time of cure; for others, when the commotion was observed, went in before him and reaped the benefit. Then Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!" And He was instantly obeyed; the man arose perfectly whole and departed to his home bearing the bed on which he had a moment before lain in cureless paralysis.

Sabbath Observance.

It happened to be the Sabbath-day on which it was deemed unlawful to carry any burden. The man was reminded of this by the persons whom he passed. He pleaded the order of the person who had made him whole, but who was unknown to him. He afterwards, however, saw Christ, and was spoken to by Him in the Temple, and then he went and reported who it was that had made him whole.

Now the man probably did this with good intentions, but it furnished the Jews with a ground of reproach against Him, not as one who had directed another to break the Sabbath, but as one who had broken it Himself by performing this cure on the Sabbath-day. It was only in cases of urgent and extreme necessity that the sick received the usual attention on the Sabbath-day, the rule being not to do anything for them which could be post-

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HEALING THE IMPOTENT MAN AT THE POOL.—John v. 8.

seeing the man had lain so long in this state, | any intention to slight the Sabbath. The no-
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not sanctioned by the law of Moses, but were the preposterous refinements of a later age. But even if they had been required by the law of Moses, He—with His equal, His far higher commission—was not bound by its restrictions: for He came with a greater law of His own, and was "Lord, even of the Sabbath-day."

It is remarkable how many circumstances are reported by the evangelists to have taken place on the Sabbath-day. From this we must infer that Christ purposely wrought His more signal miracles on that day, for the reasons already indicated, or the evangelists select these on account of the discussions to which they gave rise. The latter seems the more probable conclusion. The next case on which this discussion was raised was, however, an incident involving no display of Divine power.

Plucking the Ears of Corn.

On the Sabbath following that on which the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda was cured, Christ and His disciples were passing through the corn-fields, when some of the latter, being hungry, plucked some of the ears, and ate the grain after rubbing it out between their hands. Some Pharisees who were present seized hold of this incident and asked, "Why do ye that which it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day?" The reader conversant with the law of Moses will marvel at this question, for there is certainly no law on the books of Moses, forbidding eating on the Sabbath-day, or forbidding the plucking of the ears of corn, or rubbing them in the hands. It arose from one of those preposterous refinements upon the law to which the Jews of that age were prone.

Every simple prohibition of the law was traced out to its remotest associations, which were all deemed unlawful by the Pharisees, which is another name for persons strongly given to such refinements, and who deemed the observance of them essential matters of the law. The act of the disciples they would consider as forbidden by the command: "Thou shalt do no manner of work on the Sabbath-day." Now plucking the corn they regarded

as a manner of work, a sort of reaping or of plucking up corn—which is a mode in which it was gathered among them; nor was this all, for the rubbing with the hands they held to be also a manner of work of the same nature and equivalent to the threshing of corn.

The remark made to the disciples was answered by Jesus Himself, with one of His usual arguments, namely, that even assuming that such acts were contrary to the law, He had a power above the law and was not bound by the restrictions which it imposed. In this case He alluded to David, who without blame, ate, when hungry, of the shew-bread, which it was most decidedly unlawful for any but the priests to eat. He also pointed out that, according to their view, the very priests, in the sacrificial acts of their sacred service, constantly profaned the Sabbath-day, and yet were blameless. If they enjoyed such exemption, how much more He, who was greater than even the Temple by which their priestly acts were consecrated.

In conclusion Jesus added: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath: therefore, the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." All this is more precisely levelled at particular Jewish notions than we can find room to explain. But it must be understood that the last expression amounted to an explicit claim to be regarded as the Messiah; for it was believed by the Jews themselves that the Messiah was Lord of the Sabbath, and that in His day all that was burdensome in its observance would be removed. The gist of the argument, therefore, is: "I am the Messiah; and I claim the privileges which you admit to belong to that character."

The Man with a Withered Hand.

Jesus the same day, apparently, attended at one of the synagogues in Jerusalem. There was conspicuously present a man whose hand was withered, and the Pharisees present, now fully alive to His views in a matter which they deemed so essential, watched him closely to observe His course of action, in order that they might, if possible, find some ground of

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accusation against Him in the Sanhedrim. Perceiving this, Jesus told the man to stand forward; on which the Pharisees, unable to contain themselves, asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" This seems a most pre-

shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? how much then is a man better than a sheep?" They could not answer this; and Jesus, after looking around upon



CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES IN THE CORN-FIELDS.—Luke vi. 1.

posterous question, and such it was; but we have already explained the view on which it was founded. Christ answered by referring to a case which the law itself declared to be legal: "What man shall there be among you, that

them with righteous indignation, bade the man stretch forth his shrunk-up hand. That hand, powerless so long, no longer refused to obey his will; he stretched it forth sound and perfect as the other.

On this the Pharisees left the place in high exasperation; this act having been the first which was performed contrary to and in defiance of their previous remonstrances. They then first began to consult with the Herodians how they might destroy Him. These Herodians seem to have been a political party, anxious to secure for Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, the regal titles and powers which had been enjoyed by Herod the Great, and who, therefore, had just the same grounds for resisting the claim of Jesus to be regarded as the Messiah, which had at a former time induced the elder Herod to seek the destruction of the heaven-born "King of the Jews."

A Malicious Plot.

The sole object of the scribes, Pharisees, and Herodians was to watch what He would do, and found upon it a public charge before the Sanhedrim, or if not, at least to brand Him thenceforth with the open stigma of a Sabbath-breaker. Therefore, they met the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" by stolid and impotent silence. But He would not allow them to escape the verdict of their own better judgment, and therefore He justified Himself by their own distinct practice, no less than by their inability to answer. "Is there one of you," He asked, "who, if but a single sheep be fallen into a water-pit, will not get hold of it, and pull it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep?" The argument was unanswerable, and their own conduct in the matter was undeniable; but still their fierce silence remained unbroken. He looked round on them with anger; a holy indignation burned in His heart, glowed on His countenance, animated His gesture, rang in His voice, as slowly He swept each hard upturned face with the glance that upbraided them for their malignity and meanness, for their ignorance and pride; and then suppressing that bitter and strong emotion as He turned to do His deed of mercy.

Thus in every way were His enemies foiled

—foiled in argument, shamed into silence, thwarted even in their attempt to find some ground for a criminal accusation. For even in healing the man, Christ had done absolutely nothing which their worst hostility could misconstrue into a breach of the Sabbath law. He had not touched the man; He had not questioned him; He had not bid him exercise his recovered power; He had but spoken a word, and not even a Pharisee could say that to speak a word was an infraction of the Sabbath, even if the word were followed by miraculous blessing!

They must have felt how utterly they were defeated, but it only kindled their rage the more. They were filled with madness and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus. Hitherto they had been enemies of the Herodians. They regarded them as half-apostate Jews, who accepted the Roman domination, imitated heathen practices, adopted Sadducean opinions, and had gone so far in their flattery to the reigning house that they had blasphemously tried to represent Herod the Great as the promised Messiah. But now their old enmities were reconciled in their mad rage against a common foe. Something—perhaps the fear felt by Antipas, perhaps political suspicion, perhaps the mere natural hatred of worldlings and renegades against the sweet and noble doctrines which shamed their lives—had recently added these Herodians to the number of the Saviour's persecutors. As Galilee was the chief centre of Christ's activity, the Jerusalem Pharisees were glad to avail themselves of any aid from the Galilean tetrarch and his followers. They took common counsel how they might destroy by violence the prophet whom they could neither refute by reasoning nor circumvent by law.

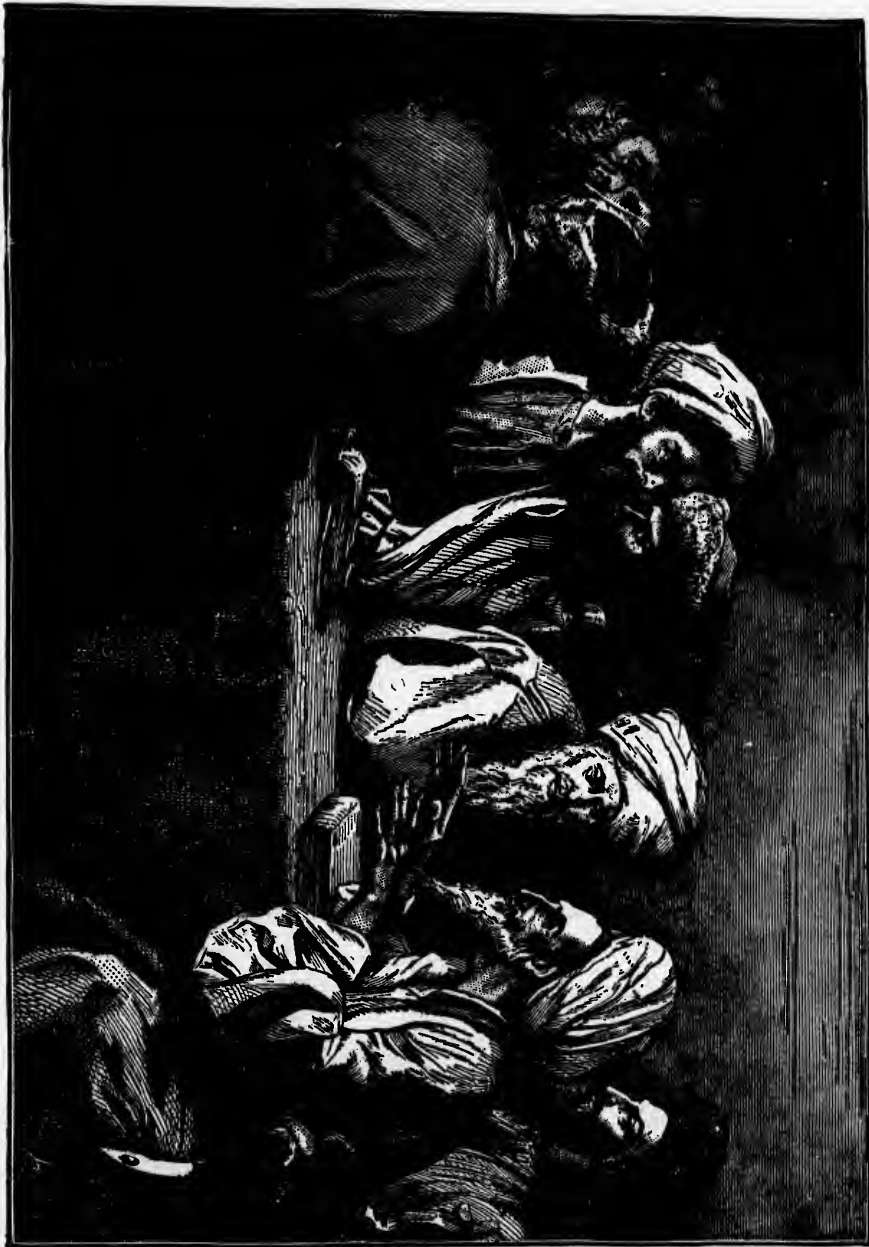
This enmity of the leaders had not yet estranged from Christ the minds of the multitude. It made it desirable, however, for Him to move to another place, because he would "neither strive nor cry, neither should any man hear His voice in the streets," and the hour was not yet come when He should "send forth judg-

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THE PRIESTS TAKE COUNSEL WITH THE HERODIANS.—Mark iii. 6.



ment to victory." But before His departure there occurred scenes yet more violent, and outbreaks of fury against Him yet more marked and dangerous. Every day it became more and more necessary to show that the rift between Himself and the religious leaders of His nation was deep and final; every day it became more and more necessary to expose the hypocritical formalism which pervaded their doctrines, and which was but the efflorescence of a fatal and deeply seated plague.

Ceremonial Cleansing.

His first denunciation of the principles that lay at the very basis of the Pharisaic system was caused by another combined attempt of the Jerusalem scribes to damage the position of His disciples. On some occasion they had observed that the disciples had sat down to a meal without previous ablutions. Now these ablutions were insisted upon with special solemnity by the oral tradition. The Jews of later times related with intense admiration how the Rabbi Akiba, when imprisoned and furnished with only sufficient water to maintain life, preferred to die of starvation rather than eat without the proper washings. The Pharisees, therefore, coming up to Jesus as usual in a body, ask Him, with a swelling sense of self-importance at the justice of their reproach, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread."

The traditional ablutions observed by the Pharisees and all the leading Jews were extremely elaborate and numerous. Before every meal, and at every return from market, they washed "with the fist," and if no water was at hand a man was obliged to go at least four miles to search for it. Beside this there were precise rules for the washing of all cups, banquet-couches, and brazen vessels. A compendium of Rabbinical usages drawn up by Josef Karo in 1567, contains no less than twenty-six prayers by which these washings were accompanied. To neglect them involved a forfeiture of eternal life. And yet the disciples dared to eat with unwashed hands.

As usual, Jesus at once made common cause with His disciples, and did not leave them, in their simplicity and ignorance, to be overawed by the attack of these stately and sanctionious critics. He answered their question by a far graver one. "Why," he said, "do you too violate the commandment of God by this 'tradition' of yours? For God's command was, 'Honor thy father and thy mother;' but your gloss is, instead of giving to father and mother, a man may simply give the sum intended for their support to the sacred treasury, and say he is exempt from any further burden in their support! And many such things ye do. Ye hypocrites!"—it was the first time that Jesus had thus sternly rebuked them—"finely do ye abolish and obliterate the commandment of God by your traditions; and well did Isaiah prophesy of you, 'This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandment of men.'"

The Traditional Law.

This was not only a defence of the disciples—because it showed that they merely neglected a body of regulations which were in themselves so opposed to the very letter of the sacred law as, in many cases, to be more honored in the breach than the observance—but it was the open rebuke of One who assumed a superior and fearless authority, and a distinct reprobation of a system which was more revered than the books of Moses. The Jews distinguished between the written law and the traditional law, or "law upon the lip," and the latter was asserted, by its more extravagant votaries, to have been orally delivered by God to Moses, and orally transmitted by him through a succession of elders. So extravagant did the reverence for the traditional law become, that it was said to read the Scriptures was a matter of indifference, but to read the traditions was meritorious and received the richest recompense.

And it was this foolish system of revered commentary and pious custom which Jesus now so completely discountenanced, as not

only to defend the neglect of it but even openly to condemn and repudiate its most established principles. He that consigned to oblivion and indifference the entire mass of "legends" and "rules," which, though up to that period they had not been committed to writing, were yet devoutly cherished in the memory of the learned, and constituted the wisdom of the Rabbis, or learned teachers.

The Pharisees Offended.

Turning away from them as though they were hopeless, He summoned the multitude, whom they had trained to look up to them as little gods, and spoke these short and weighty words: "Hear me, all of you, and understand! Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, that defileth a man."

The Pharisees were bitterly offended by this saying, as well indeed they might be. Condemnatory as it was of the common infatuation for all that is merely ceremonial, that utterance of Jesus was the final death-knell of ceremonialism. His disciples were not slow to inform Him of the indignation which His words had caused, for they probably retained a large share of the popular awe for the leading sect. But the reply of Jesus was an expression of calm indifference to earthly judgment, a reference of all worth to the sole judgment of God as shown in the slow ripening of events. "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

A little later, when they were in-doors and alone, Peter ventured to ask for an explanation of the words which He had uttered so emphatically to the multitude. Jesus gently blamed the want of comprehension among His apostles, but showed them, in teaching of deep significance, that man's food does but affect his material structure, and does not enter into his heart, or touch his real being; but that "from within, out of the heart of

men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Evil thoughts—like one tiny rill of evil, and then the burst of all that black overwhelming torrent! "These are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

The time for Jesus to suffer death had not yet come; His mission on earth was not yet accomplished; and therefore He left Judea, attended by His disciples, and returned to the borders of the Lake of Gennesareth. In this journey He was followed by crowds of people, anxious to hear Him and to see His mighty works—not only from Jerusalem and Judea, and from the remote parts of Galilee, but from Idumæa, the region beyond the river Jordan, and even from Phœnicia.

Jesus in the Throng.

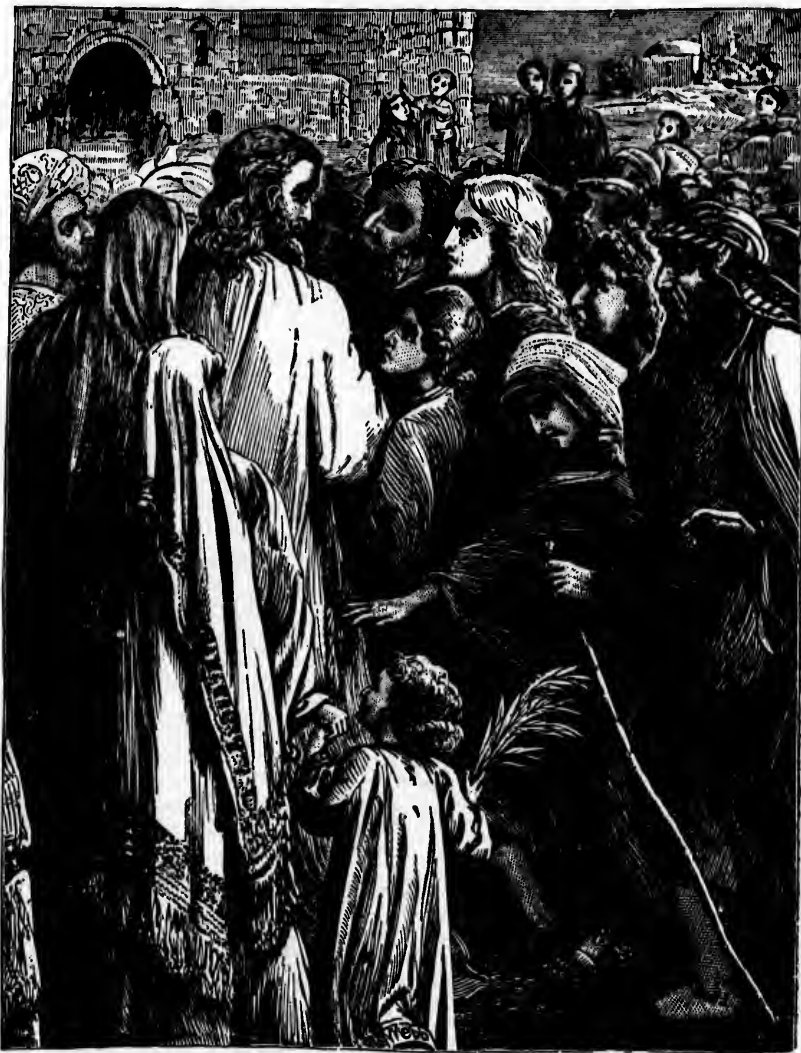
Besides the thronging of this mixed multitude around the Saviour whenever He appeared in public, those who were afflicted with diseases pressed close around Him, in the hope that, if they might but touch Him, the virtue which transpired from His sacred person would suffice to accomplish their cure. The inconvenience of this became at length so urgent, that it was arranged with the disciples, who had been fishermen at this place, that a boat should be in attendance on the shore to receive Him when incommoded by the crowd.

Jesus had now returned to Capernaum, which has been indicated as His usual place of residence when in Galilee. The crowds by which He was followed from day to day, wherever He appeared, made more dear to Him the solitude, meet for prayer and meditation, which He could only secure by withdrawing secretly from the town, and remaining all night in the neighboring mountains and wildernesses. Often in those days—

"Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer."

We are told of one night in which He thus withdrew to a mountain, and "continued all

night in prayer to God." This was preparatory to the nomination of the twelve apostles. by many important considerations; the chief of which seems to have been that they, being



JESUS HEALING THE MULTITUDE.—Luke vi. 19.

The selection of twelve from among His more constant followers, to be always with Him, and to act in His name, was dictated

ever about Him, hearing all He said and seeing all He did, might, after His decease, become competent witnesses of His whole

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course of life and action; and be so well instructed in the things of God, as to carry on the work which it was His commission only to commence. The persons chosen included the six who had been already called to follow Christ, namely, the brothers Peter and Andrew; the brothers John and James; Philip and Matthew; and six whose names have not before occurred—Bartholomew (supposed to be the same with Nathaniel); James and Jude, sons of Alphæus and first cousins of Christ, on which account they are sometimes called His "brethren." Their mother appears to have been a sister of the Virgin Mary. The others were Thomas, surnamed Didymus, or the "twin;" Simon, surnamed Zelotes; and Judas, surnamed Iscariot.

A Memorable Discourse.

A great multitude, composed as usual, and brought together by the usual motives, had by this time gathered to Jesus in the open country. Perceiving this, He ascended an eminence, and there delivered the famous sermon on the mount.

That which is supposed to be the mount from which this sermon was delivered is now called by Christians the Mount of Beatitudes. The evangelists specify no particular mountain, and there are near the lake perhaps a dozen mountains which would answer to the circumstances of the history.

But the sermon itself:—who can speak of these Divine words according to their claims upon our admiration and respect? How different from all that the philosophers and poets of the heathen taught!—and how different even from the teaching of the ancient Hebrew prophets!—and, above all, how different in spirit and essential matter from the mean talk and petty questions with which the great Jewish doctors of that age amused their disciples! No wonder that this new style of teaching attracted such multitudes to hear Jesus, and drew from them, on more than one occasion, the acknowledgment that never man spake like Him.

The scope of this discourse is to correct the

false notions which the Jews entertained concerning the Messiah's kingdom, and to teach what kind of happiness was to be expected from it, and to describe the dispositions which were necessary to its attainment. Of the multitude which Jesus addressed, a great part were men of mean station and humble circumstances, held in contempt by the rulers, the priests, and the Pharisees. Many of them, perhaps all of them, expected from the Messiah—and, in acknowledging Christ to be the Messiah, expected from Him—at least the blessings promised by Moses, affluence, prosperity, and whatever is thought promotive of worldly well-being. But of that there seemed little hope from Jesus, as those who had hitherto followed Him were not, in that respect, in any very enviable condition. Jesus therefore teaches them what was to be expected and aimed at by those who should submit themselves to His direction.

In order, too, that He might render His hearers the more attentive, and that they might the better remember his utterances, He conformably to eastern custom, propounds His doctrine by certain paradoxes, which seem at first sight false, but on examination turn out to be true. In this discourse also He advances in a very marked manner His claim to be considered as a legislator, not only equal to Moses, but superior to him. The Jews allowed that the Messiah would be greater than Moses, and, therefore, in advancing this claim, Jesus declares Himself the Messiah, and was so understood.

It is often supposed that Christ here comes forward to explain what the law of Moses really meant—thus making Himself in fact a commentator on that law: but it may rather appear that He refers to the law of Moses in order to illustrate by particular examples the superiority of the new doctrine which He came to teach—of the new law which He came to promulgate. So when He says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say unto you that ye resist not evil." He surely does not mean to develop any inner

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—Matt. v. 1.

meaning of the old law which He cites, but to produce a new and better law of His own.

It seems very certain that in delivering this discourse Jesus had in view the city of Sapheth, which is seated upon the summit of a tall and very steep mountain, where it seems perched high in air, and scarcely accessible to mortal foot. In fact this mountain and city must have been visible from almost any point of the locality in which the sermon was delivered. This fact gives much force to some of the allusions in the sermon, as, "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;" and above all to the magnificent conclusion of the discourse:—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

A Roman Soldier.

Jesus then returned to Capernaum, where an incident awaited Him different in character from any which had yet occurred. It seems that there was a garrison of Roman soldiers stationed in or near this place, one of whose officers—perhaps the officer in command—was a centurion (captain of a hundred men), who entertained towards the Jews a kind feeling, and for their religion a respect, by no means common among the Roman legions. He had even built for the people at Capernaum the synagogue in which they worshipped, and in which they had heard the words of Christ and seen His miracles.

This centurion had a favorite slave, who had fallen dangerously ill, and for whom he experienced great concern. Having heard—of whom had not heard?—of the wonderful cures performed by Christ, hope for his beloved ser-

vant arose within him. He was filled with a far more exalted idea of the person and character of Jesus than the Jews themselves entertained; and, diffident of obtaining attention from Him, he persuaded the chief Jews of the place to apply on his behalf, and to say that for him which he could not say for himself. They did so, saying that he was worthy for whom He should do this, "for He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue."

Healing the Centurion's Servant.

Then Jesus went with them to the centurion's house, but before they reached it, came a message from the centurion, saying, "Give not Thyself this trouble; I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof; nor did I deem myself worthy to come in person to Thee: but speak one word only, and my servant will be well." Jesus was much struck by this. The Jews admitted His power to heal, but deemed it needful that He should be personally present and touch the diseased person with His hand. But here was a foreigner, a heathen, who had the faith—who believed that a word from Christ, spoken in the absence of the diseased person, would suffice to effect the cure.

Christ therefore turned round to the people who followed Him, and said, "I have not found such great faith—no, not in Israel;" and He added, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." This is to us a very intelligible allusion to the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews; but to the people it was obscure; and as they probably interpreted it to mean that many such heathen would become proselytes to Judaism, it did not give the offence with which some of the later and plainer declarations on this point were received.

The friends who had brought to Jesus the message of the centurion returned to the house, and found that he had received the reward of his faith in the perfect recovery of his servant.



The day after this Jesus proceeded to Nain, some consequence, but has now dwindled to a thirteen miles to the south of the place where small hamlet under the name of Nein. On



THE WIDOW'S SON RESTORED TO LIFE.—Luke vii. 14.

the sermon on the mount is supposed to have approaching the gate of this town the crowd been delivered. This was then a place of which attended Him was met by another,

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probably as numerous, issuing from the city. It was the becoming custom of the Jews to bury their dead outside of the towns: nor was this peculiar to them, but common to all the nations of the East and West, until the present custom of burying in or near churches, first introduced in honor of the martyrs, was extended into general use.

The crowd which issued from the gate of Nain was in attendance upon the funeral of a young man, the only son of a poor woman, and her only stay—for she was a widow. The attendance was so great on account of the number of persons who were anxious to testify their sympathy and respect.

This scene was well calculated to move the compassion of Him "who went about doing good;" and to lead Him to do a greater work than any which He had yet performed. Full of Divine tenderness, He cheered the desolate mother, and said unto her, "Weep not;" and the bearers of the corpse He directed to lay down their melancholy burden. Among the Jews the dead were carried to the grave upon open biers, and not in closed coffins, the use of which was, in the time of Christ, confined to the higher classes. Turning to the bier, Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The "dull, cold ear of death" heard His voice; the youth rose up, and gave the most satisfactory proof of his restoration to consciousness and life by speaking to the persons around him. Jesus then consigned him to his mother. Who can tell the mysteries of human feeling with which that mother received her son from the dead, and held him once more in her embrace? Then indeed did the "widow's heart sing for joy"—a joy so great that in her case all wonder was doubtless absorbed in it.

Now it was not so with the people present. To heal the sick and to cast out unclean spirits were indeed acts of wonder to all who saw them; but to restore defunct nature, and snatch from the grave its prey, was a prodigy so great as filled the beholders not only with amazement, but fear. They glorified God for visiting His people by sending a great prophet

among them; for although this act taken alone did not evince that Jesus was the very Christ, the greatness of the deed satisfied them of the Divine power with which He was invested. They could not but see in Jesus one greater than even Elisha, inasmuch as without the use of prayer, or stretching himself upon the body, but by a simple order, He had in a manner utterly unexampled restored the dead to life.

John's Disciples Visit Jesus.

This great miracle gave a new impulse to the general discussion respecting the prophet of Nazareth. It attracted the attention of John the Baptist in his prison, and decided him to require of Jesus an explicit declaration as to whether He was or was not the promised Messiah. He therefore sent two of his disciples to Christ to ask the question, "Art thou He that should come? or look we for another?" Jesus, at the time the messengers came, was engaged in healing the diseased, casting out evil spirits, and restoring sight to the blind. Instead of returning a direct answer, He desired the disciples to tell their master the things they had seen performed:—"Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

When John's disciples had departed, Jesus began to speak to those around him of John and his character and mission. He passed a high encomium upon the austerity and holiness of his person, the greatness of his function, and the Divine character of his mission. He affirmed that John was greater than any preceding prophet, indeed, the greatest of men born of woman; for besides his wonderful birth and being himself the subject of ancient prophecies, he had seen and known the Messiah and had been His precursor. He was a burning and a shining light, the second Elias of the prophets—and yet, added Christ, with startling abruptness, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he;" meaning that, as belonging to the old system about to be done away, or at most occupying an

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intermediate place between the old and the new, any Christian teacher, instructed in the things pertaining to Christ's spiritual kingdom, had points of superiority over even John the Baptist.

Jesus concluded with a striking illustration of the perversity of the nation, by reference to the reception which He and the Baptist equally met with, notwithstanding the difference in their course of conduct and procedure. The Baptist, who came neither eating nor drinking, that by his austere and mortified deportment he might gain the reverence of the people, could not obtain acceptance; neither could Jesus, who, on the contrary, came eating and drinking—that, by a moderate and affable life, framed after the common use and habits of men, He might make to Himself a place in their sympathies and affections. The austerities of the one they ascribed to insanity; and the sociality of the other to a conviviality of disposition unseemly in a teacher and a prophet. This gave Him occasion more especially to reprehend the towns which had witnessed His greatest works, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, in that their hardness and unbelief had remained unmoved. For this a doom

harder than that of Sodom was declared to be in store for them; for even Sodom had sinned against less light than had been shed upon them.

Jesus concluded His admirable discourse by calling upon His auditors to exchange the heavy burden of the Levitical law for the ease, rest, and peace offered by the new revelation of the Divine will, which He came to promulgate. This invitation, equally applicable to all the weary and heavy laden, from every cause, in every age, was couched in the emphatic and ever-memorable words—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

This strain sounds through all of His teachings. His words had in them healing for human hearts, even as His touch had health and life in it for the sick and dying. With warm breathings of sympathy He moved among the multitudes who were as sheep without a shepherd. His look was compassion, and His word was mercy.

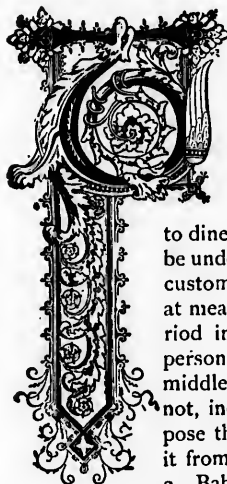
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CHAPTER XXXIII.

A CLUSTER OF PARABLES.



THE foregoing discourse seems to have made considerable impression upon some even of the Pharisees who were present, and one of them, named Simon, invited Jesus to dine at his house. It must be understood that the Roman custom of reclining on couches at meal-time was at this period in common use among persons of the higher and middle classes in Judæa. It is not, indeed necessary to suppose that the Jews borrowed it from the Romans. It was a Babylonian and Persian custom, which, found its way to the west of the Euphrates, and which the Hebrews probably acquired during their subjection to the kings of the East.

Three benches were placed so as to form three sides of a hollow square which contained the table. The guests reclined upon the benches or couches, with their feet turned out behind and their faces toward the table, resting their bodies in a half-raised position upon cushions or upon the left arm. This explains several passages of the New Testament, especially those which describe Lazarus as lying in Abraham's bosom and John as leaning on the bosom of Christ at the last supper; the person so described as lying on the bosom of another was of course the one who reclined next below that other, and whose head necessarily approached to the bosom of the one who lay above him. There was usually a good space between the walls of the guest-chamber and the back of the couches.

It was quite easy for any persons, at an entertainment such as that to which Simon invited Christ, to gain access to the public guest-chamber, and to remain unmolested so long as they did not interfere with the operations of the servants, which they were in little danger of doing while they remained in the side space between the walls and the back of the couches, seeing that the business of the servants was almost confined to the open side of the square which the triclinium formed.

While they were at meat, a woman of the place came and planted herself behind the couch where Jesus reclined. She is described as one "who had been a sinner," by which it is understood that she had led an impure life, and we see no reason to disturb this conclusion. We must only remember that this woman, described distinctively as "a sinner," is not to be confounded with Mary Magdalene, nor with Mary, the sister of Lazarus, of Bethany, of whom transactions nearly similar are recorded. Much confusion has arisen from regarding as one, three distinct persons and transactions.

This woman, as Jeremy Taylor finely expresses it, "came to Jesus into the Pharisee's house, not—as did the staring multitude—to glut their eyes with the sight of a miraculous and glorious person; nor—as did the centurion, or the Syro-Phœnician, or the ruler of the synagogue—for the cure of sickness, or in behalf of friend, or child, or servant; but—the only example of so coming—she came in remorse and regret for her sins, she came to Jesus to lay her burden at His feet, to present Him with a broken heart, a weeping eye, and great affection." She came trembling, and wept bitterly for her sins at His feet. Simon had neglected to order his servants to wash the feet of Jesus, although this was an act of

civility and attention then frequently observed in Palestine, although less so than it had been in more ancient times.

Perceiving this, the weeping sinner let fall her tears upon them, and, having bathed them with that tribute of her grief, wiped them with the hair of her head. This in itself might have been misunderstood, but as a preparation for the act which followed, it becomes very intelligible. She came to anoint his feet with costly ointment. It was necessary they should first be washed, and finding that this had been neglected by the host, her fast-flowing tears suggested the means to which she resorted.

Having thus bathed His feet, the woman drew forth the vessel of precious nard, and breaking off the stopple, the place was filled with the rich odor of the perfume she cast upon her Saviour's feet.

This anointing of the feet was by no means a common act, and the anointing them with this kind of ointment was accounted a luxurious extravagance even in kings. It must have been worth fifty dollars of our money, or probably more in comparative value, when the great difference in the general cost of commodities is considered.

The Woman Forgiven.

The fragrance of the ointment drew the general attention of the guests to this act of the woman. They formed their different opinions upon it, and narrowly watched the effect which it would have upon Jesus Himself, and the manner in which it would be noticed by Him. The thought which arose in the mind of the host himself was eminently characteristic of the Pharisee. We are told that "he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." It was this unuttered thought of the Pharisee which Jesus saw fit to mark out for His most pointed notice.

"Simon," He said, "there was a certain creditor who had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly for-

gave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon could not but answer, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave most." Jesus answered, "Thou hast rightly judged;" and then turning towards the woman, He added—"Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house: thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

He then said more formally to the woman herself, those great words which man or woman never heard from mortal lips before: "Thy sins are forgiven." This created a deep sensation among those who heard it; for they knew it was not for man to forgive sins; and yet they were by no means prepared to recognize Jesus as more than man. While they were murmuring among themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Christ, again turning round to the woman, dismissed her with—"Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace!"

The touching words of an English poet may serve as the best comment on this beautiful incident:

"She sat and wept beside His feet; the weight
Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame,
And the poor malice of the worldly shame,
To her were past, extinct, and out of date;
Only the sin remained—the leprous state.
She would be melted by the heat of love,
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
And purge the silver ore adulterate.
She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair,
Still wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch;
And He wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much."

After this Jesus set forth upon another tour in Galilee, performing His usual works of mercy, and seizing all suitable occasions of pouring forth those persuasive utterances on

which the people generally hung with admiration and delight, while those who were wise in their own conceits, the bigots of a system, found in all He said matter for cavil and reproach. In this excursion He was attended by the twelve apostles, and also by some women of property and consideration, who out of their abundance felt it their duty to provide food and such other necessaries as the party required.

Among these women we find particular mention of Mary Magdalene, so called from Magdala, near Capernaum, her native place; she was probably a widow, and is not to be confounded with "the woman who was a sinner," who has just been under our notice. She owed a debt of deep gratitude to Christ, who on some former occasion had dispossessed her of "seven devils." Another of these women was the wife, or more probably widow, of Chuza, the steward of Herod Antipas; and another is only known by her name of Susanna. This incidental statement by Luke is corroborated, also very incidentally, by Mark, who, speaking of the women who were present at the crucifixion of Christ, says that when Jesus was in Galilee, "they followed Him and ministered unto Him of their substance."

We thus obtain information respecting the mode in which Jesus and his apostles were principally supported during those constant movements which precluded them from earning their own subsistence. Most of them had lived by their labor; and the few who may be supposed to have had some property could not long have supported the expenses of so large a body, but through the assistance obtained from these and other pious women, who appear for the most part to have received from Jesus—in the cure of painful diseases—benefits which they estimated beyond all price.

The travelling of men and women in parties from all parts of the country to Jerusalem, at the great festivals, familiarized the mind to such travel, and relieves all that seeming impropriety which the absence of any such circumstance in our own social habits might induce us to connect with it.

Jesus did nothing more in this town which is recorded, and at length again returned to Capernaum. On His arrival He went with His followers to the house which He commonly frequented, which was speedily so beset by people anxious to see and hear Him that the inmates were unable to take their usual meals. Heedless of this, Christ, although just arrived from a journey, and needing refreshment, went forth and spoke to the multitude; but when His friends within knew this, they declared that He was carried by His zeal away beyond Himself; and they went forth and constrained Him to come in and obtain refreshment and rest.

Jesus Cures a Demoniac.

The next recorded act of Christ, probably on the following day, was the relief of a poor creature who was brought to Him, "possessed with a devil, deaf and dumb." At His word, the man's tongue was loosened, and his ears unstopped, and he who had long been mute to all the world, and all the many-voiced world mute to him, both spake and saw. A man in his plight is usually well known in any place which he inhabits. This miracle, therefore, made a strong impression upon the people, and led them to throng after Jesus with a fresh ardor wherever He appeared.

The Pharisees, and others of their mode of thinking, were much troubled at this; and seeing that they could not deny so plain a miracle, they proceeded to account for it after a peculiar fashion of their own. "This fellow," said they, "doth not cast out devils but through Beelzebub, the prince of devils;" that is, he expels the weaker demons by the aid of the stronger.

Christ was not slow in exposing the absurdity of this reasoning. Citing a well-known proverb, He said:—"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand;" and by way of applying this, He continued, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" And then He added—

"If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?" This question supposes, what indeed appears from other passages of Scripture, that besides Jesus and His apostles, several at this time went about pretending to cast out demons, both by exorcisms and medical treatment. It is probable that these exorcisms were sometimes effectual by means of the accompanying medicaments. This superstition continued for some time after the apostles, and even led in part to the use of exorcisms in the early Christian Church.

Most of those whom Jesus addressed were in such humble circumstances of life, as to be in less danger from setting their hearts upon earthly treasures, than from the cares of the passing day and overmuch solicitude about the necessary supplies of life. Against this He therefore proceeded to caution them, and encouraged them to ease of mind in all these respects, by the consideration that Divine Providence would not fail to make adequate provision for the real wants of all those who made the kingdom of God and His righteousness the first objects of their solicitude. This He enforced, as usual, by lively illustrations drawn from actual circumstances.

Divine Providence.

Observing a flight of "ravens," or rather "crows," He said, "Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap, neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?" There is the more force in this, when we bear in mind how specially observable, in the opinion of the ancients, was the good providence of God with respect to this kind of bird. Several of them remark that young crows are driven away from the nest as soon as they are able to fly, and are afterwards supported, we scarce know how, by a remarkable providence of God. Philo, a learned Jew of those times, also remarks that many are naturally forgetful, and often fail to return to their nests; yet, by the wise and merciful providence of God, they instinctively heap together in their nests whatever may breed worms, by which their

abandoned young are nourished and preserved. Some of these notions concerning crows are now known to be incorrect; and we mention them merely to show the emphasis which their existence in the popular mind must have afforded to the beautiful allusion which Jesus makes to these birds.

Again, lilies are abundant in Palestine—and at the time of the foregoing discourse they were probably in bloom. Referring to these Jesus said, pursuing his illustration, "Consider the lilies of the field"—not of the garden, cultivated with care—"how they grow. They toil not"—as men in their laborious employments—"neither do they spin"—like women in their more sedentary occupations; "and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." And then came the forcible application: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith!"

This will be the better understood when it is remarked that after the moisture of spring has been absorbed, all wild herbage and decayed plants become rapidly dry in Palestine, under the fervent heat of summer and are, with all other decayed and dried vegetable products, collected for fuel. There was, and is, much scarcity of fuel in Palestine; but except in the depth of winter, there was little need of it but for cooking and baking bread. This is the reason that fuel is usually described as being "cast into the oven." And this phrase may be better understood if we remember that the oven was usually a pit in the floor, the fire in which served both for fuel and, in winter, for warmth. These dry stalks and twigs were particularly suitable for the baking of bread, and were therefore preferred for the oven when bread was to be baked.

Fall of the Siloam Tower.

When Jesus had concluded His discourse, some of the persons present began to speak of a matter which excited much attention at that time. A demagogue named Judas of

Gaulonitis went about asserting that God was the only Sovereign of the Hebrew nation, and that consequently it was utterly unlawful to many followers, chiefly in Galilee, who gave much trouble to the Roman government. Lately Pilate had slain a body of these men,



SOWING THE GOOD SEED.—Matt. xiii. 3.

acknowledge any human sovereignty, much less to pay tribute and yield obedience to a heathen people like the Romans. He obtained when they had gone to Jerusalem at one of the public feasts, so that, in effect, "their blood was mingled with (that of) their sacrifices."

Now the Jews firmly believed that grievous disorders or heavy calamities were sent by God in punishment for sin. Perceiving that the case was mentioned by those present with this feeling, Jesus took occasion to give this notion His authoritative contradiction; affirming that those who heard Him were equally sinners before God, and should also perish unless they repented. With the same view He also referred to an accident which formed the talk of the day—the fall of the tower of Siloam, in Jerusalem, whereby eighteen persons had been killed; asserting that these persons were not necessarily sinners above others for having been thus destroyed; although this was the undoubted persuasion of all His auditors. Mohammedanism, which borrowed much from the Gospels, has produced a change of opinion in this respect in western Asia, so that any one who now dies by such an accident as the fall of a tower, or of a wall, is regarded as a martyr.

The same day Jesus left the town, and went out by the sea-shore; and, being still attended by a great multitude of people, He went into a boat, and addressed them from thence. His discourse was still chiefly in parables. Speaking of this, Jeremy Taylor remarks: "He taught them by parables, under which were hid mysterious senses." Being taken from the culture of the soil, these were suggested by the agricultural operations then actually in progress before the eyes of the audience upon the sides of the surrounding hills.

Parable of the Sower.

The first was the significant parable of the sower, in which the different reception which the truth finds in different hearts is compared to the different soils in which the seed, broadcast by the sower, falls. The imagery of it was derived, as usual, from the objects immediately before his eyes—the sown fields of Gennesareth; the springing corn in them; the hard-trodden paths which ran through them, on which no corn could grow; the innumerable birds which fluttered over them ready to feed upon the grain; the weak and withering

struggle for life on the stony places; the tangling growth of luxuriant thistles in neglected corners; the deep loam of the general soil, on which already the golden ears stood thick and strong, giving promise of a sixty and hundred-fold return as they rippled under the balmy wind.

To us, who from infancy have read the parable side by side with Christ's own interpretation of it, the meaning is singularly clear and plain, and we see in it the liveliest images of the danger incurred by the cold and indifferent, by the impulsive and shallow, by the worldly and ambitious, by the preoccupied and the luxurious, as they listen to the truth. But it was not so easy to those who heard it. Even the disciples failed to catch its full significance, although they reserved their request for an explanation till they and their Master should be alone. It is clear that parables like this, so luminous to us, but so difficult to these simple listeners, suggested thoughts which to them were wholly unfamiliar.

Parable of the Tares.

Then followed the parable of the tares sown maliciously among good corn. These the indiscreet zeal of the husbandmen would have rooted up as soon as they appeared; but was prevented by the sage discretion of the master, who feared that the tares could not be pulled up without damage to the young wheat: "Let both grow together unto the harvest," he said: "and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

The three following parables, that of the insensible growth of corn, certain and timely while man goes about the daily business of life and heeds not of it; that of the smallest of seeds becoming a large tree, in whose branches the birds of the air find shelter; and that of the small piece of leaven which, left in three measures of meal, leavened the whole mass; all have seemingly the same reference to the gradual but sure spread of the gospel under the preaching of the apostles;

while, without doubt, there is in them a secondary reference to the rise and progress of the new kingdom in the soul. expounded to them some of the parables which He had delivered to the people. To them He then added some other short parables



SOWING TARES.—Matt. xiii. 25.

After this Jesus returned to the town ; and designed yet further to illustrate the character when He was alone with His disciples He and objects of the Divine kingdom. First, he

compared it to a treasure hid in a field, which when a man had discovered, he joyfully hastened to sell all he possessed to buy that field. This, like most of the other parables, had a foundation in local impressions which are not at once apparent to a western reader. But in the East, where in times of trouble large amounts of property are concealed, the owners of which are slain, or go away and never return to reclaim what they hid, every one is more or less a treasure-seeker, and lives in the hope of being some day or other enriched by the discovery of hidden treasure. The same feeling was in England a growth from the civil wars and troubles of former ages, till at length "treasure-finding" became a distinct branch of the occult sciences; and at this day there are perhaps not many villages in the rural districts which do not possess some tradition referring the enrichment of some principal family in the neighborhood to the discovery of a crock of gold.

Parable of the Goodly Pearl.

The next parable, of a merchant—that is, a travelling dealer in jewels—seeking goodly pearls, and selling all that he had to buy one pearl of great price which he had found, describes a circumstance which at present occurs often to the highly intelligent and most respectable class of men who follow that vocation, and who not seldom spend the best years of their lives in travelling to and from distant lands in search of "goodly pearls" and other precious stones. There is perhaps not one of them who has not at times met with a jewel of such great beauty and high price, that he has been obliged to sell all his inferior jewels and every valuable article he possessed in order to obtain it.

The next parable compared the kingdom of heaven to "a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind; and when it was full they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." This is of course done more or less by all fishermen, but it has perhaps not occurred to many readers that this selection was a nice

and important matter among the Hebrews, who were forbidden to eat fish devoid of fins or scales, and among whom, therefore, the fish described as "bad" must have been more numerous than among other people.

Afterwards Christ, perceiving that the crowd of persons assembled in the neighborhood began to increase very rapidly by arrivals from the surrounding districts, thought it expedient to pass over to the other side of the lake. But before He departed, He found occasion to deliver some emphatic and pointed answers to the declarations of two or three persons.

The first was one of the scribes, who being about to depart, said, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus neither declined nor permitted this attendance, but said what probably was enough to deter a man in his condition—"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head"—meaning that He had no certain dwelling-place, no home, for anyone who followed Him; which may satisfy us that even in Capernaum, which seems to have been His most usual residence, He neither occupied a hired residence or lived in the house of a disciple.

Another expressed the same intention, but said:—"Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." It might certainly have been expected, in the first view, that Jesus, full of kind affections, would have complied with this, when even Elijah, severe as was his character, allowed Elisha to bid adieu to his parents. But Jesus answered in a kind of paradox, turning upon the meaning of the word "dead." "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the gospel." Of two duties the lesser must yield to the greater; and the duty of following Christ and preaching His gospel was more urgent and quite as sacred as that which prevented the high-priest among the Jews from approaching the dead of his house, or showing any signs of mourning for them.

When another said, "Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell

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that are at home in my house;" the reply of Jesus was in an agricultural metaphor—"No man having put his hand to the plough and from the peculiar necessity which the plougher is under of keeping his attention fixed upon the furrows and not allowing them to deviate;



FINDING HIDDEN TREASURE.— Matt. xiii. 44.

looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." This interdiction, "to cast one longing, lingering look behind," is beautifully appropriate, and this necessity was peculiarly imperative in eastern countries, as the extreme shallowness of the furrow, where the plough does little

more than scratch the surface of the soil, renders a deviation the inevitable effect of the slightest inattention. It is indeed from this circumstance that the proverb—for it is one—originated and has come into general use.

Peace, Be Still.

Jesus then entered the vessel that was to bear Him to the other side of the lake. While they were on the passage they encountered one of those sudden and furious storms which not unusually arise in lakes surrounded by mountains. The waves broke over the frail bark, and the danger was very great. And where was Jesus? He was quietly asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, and slept on undisturbed by the noise and uproar the tempest occasioned. At length, the disciples, who, although familiar with the lake, were alarmed at this danger, went and awoke Him, with the words, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Christ immediately arose, and rebuked the wind, and said to the raging sea, "Peace, be still!"—and in an instant the storm went down. It did not merely abate, but ceased altogether for, "immediately there was a great calm"—not only a calm, but a *great* calm. In one instant the storm was raging at the highest pitch, in the next scarcely a ripple was upon the surface. Jesus then turned to the disciples and said: "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith!" thus gently rebuking them for not having expected to be saved by Him asleep as well as awake. We must certainly deem them to have been somewhat excusable in not having expected this, even from Him. They were filled with astonishment, and said one to another, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and sea obey Him?" They had seen Him heal the sick, which was no more than physicians professed to do; but now they see the winds and the sea submissive to Him, and in this they recognize a superhuman power.

Jesus then passed to the other side of the lake, and came into the country of the Gadarenes, of which Gadara was the chief town,

and also the capital of Petræa. This country was inhabited by a mixed population of Jews, proselytes, and Syrians, who were looked down upon by the less mixed Jews of Judæa. They were placed by them much on the same level with the Galileans, and deemed but one degree, better than Samaritans.

Near the place where Jesus came to shore there were many tombs, which were either excavations in the living rock or such roomy constructions as we still find in the East. These then, as now, often furnished places of shelter to those destitute of or expelled from human habitations; and at the present day such sepulchres are deemed the suitable abode of ghouls and unclean spirits. From these tombs came forth a man to meet Jesus as He came up the road. This man was one of those demoniacs of whom we so often read in the New Testament. He was one of a very peculiar and terrible sort. He "had devils a long time, and wore no clothes, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains; because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. And always, day and night, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones."

Casting Out Demons.

This man, seeing Jesus afar off, ran and worshipped Him, and cried with a loud voice, acknowledging Him as the Son of the most high God, and imploring Him not to inflict torments upon him. This supplication is supposed to have been dictated by a vivid recollection in such unfortunate persons of the whips and chains with which they had been constrained, the severe operations to which they had been subjected, and the nauseous medicines which had been forced upon them. The like of this they would naturally dread from one in whom they recognized the power to cast out devils. The man said, in the name of his indwelling demons, that their name was Legion, "for we are many:" and, perceiving

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THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.—Matt. xiii. 45.

swine which was feeding hard by upon the | Jesus granted this request, "and the un-
 mountains. This was done seemingly under the | clean spirits went out and entered into the

swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (there were about two thousand), and were choked in the sea."

It has been remarked that this and the cursing of the barren fig-tree are the only examples of severity recorded of Christ. The present case is usually explained by supposing that the owners were Jews, whom the Levitical law prohibited from eating or keeping swine. It is certain that they might not eat them, or touch their dead carcasses, but it would be difficult to find any order against feeding and taking care of them. The prohibition of touching the dead carcass implies that the living carcass might be touched; and it has been suspected that when Moses ordered the commutation of a shekel and a half in lieu of the first-born of unclean animals, he had chiefly swine in view.

There is, in fact, no ground for the notion that the Jews might not keep swine, except that there seems a want of sufficient reason for keeping them when they were not used for food. But they might rear them for sale to the heathen, among whom they were in great demand. And it appears that they did so till about seventy years before Christ, when the ceremonial pollution occasioned by the introduction of a hog into the Temple led to the issue of an order against keeping hogs. And the terms of this order led to the conclusion that the Jews then not only reared hogs for sale, but used their skins, and employed the fat for tallow and ointment. This order seems, however, not to have been very strictly observed; but its existence sufficed to justify Christ in public opinion for permitting this catastrophe.

The owners, however, and the people of the neighborhood, who seem to have had more of these herds, were by no means satisfied with this view of the matter. The swineherds ran away and spread the news around. This brought many people to meet Jesus, and that apparently with no very friendly intention; but when they saw the late furious maniac sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus, "clothed and in his right mind," they were afraid to act offen-

sively, and were content to beseech Christ that he would depart from them.

Jesus complied and returned to the ship. The man who had been healed implored leave to go with Him. He probably feared that he should again fall under the power of the devils, if separated from his deliverer. But Jesus would not allow this, but told him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had compassion upon thee." The man more than obeyed, for he went far and wide through Decapolis, proclaiming the great deed which had been wrought in his behalf.

Dwellers In Tombs.

The circumstances of this remarkable transaction are worthy of the most careful observation. Amid all the boasted civilization of antiquity, there existed no hospitals, no penitentiaries, no asylums; and unfortunates of this class, being too dangerous and desperate for human intercourse, could only be driven forth from among their fellow-men, and restrained from mischief by measures at once inadequate and cruel. Under such circumstances they could, if irreclaimable, only take refuge in those holes along the rocky hill-sides which abound in Palestine, and which were used by the Jews as tombs.

It is clear that the foul and polluted nature of such dwelling-places, with all their associations of ghastliness and terror, would tend to aggravate the nature of the malady; and this man, who had long been afflicted, was beyond even the possibility of control. Attempts had been made to bind him, but in the paroxysms of his mania he had exerted that apparently supernatural strength which is often noticed in such forms of mental excitement, and had always succeeded in rending off his fetters and twisting away or shattering his chains; and now he had been abandoned to the lonely hills and unclean solitudes, which, night and day, rang with his yells as he wandered among them, dangerous to himself and to others, raving, and gashing himself with stones, a terror to all beholders.

It was the frightful figure of this naked and homicidal maniac that burst upon our Lord almost as soon as He had landed at early dawn; and perhaps another demoniac, who was not a Gadarene, and who was less grievously afflicted, may have hovered about at no great distance, although, beyond this allusion to his presence, he plays no part in the narrative. The presence, the look, the voice of Christ, even before He addressed these sufferers, seems always to have calmed and overawed them, and this demoniac of Gergesa was no exception. Instead of falling upon the disciples, he ran to Jesus from a distance, and fell down before Him in an attitude of worship. Mingling his own perturbed individuality with that of the multitude of unclean spirits which he believed to be in possession of his soul, he entreated the Lord, in loud and terrified accents, not to torment him before the time.

Astonished Swineherds.

That the whole scene was violent and startling appears in the fact that the keepers of the swine "fled and told it in the city and in the country." The people of Gergesa, and the Gadarenes and Gerasenes of all the neighboring district, flocked out to see the Mighty Stranger who had thus visited their coasts. What livelier or more decisive proof of His power and His beneficence could they have had than the sight which met their eyes? The filthy and frantic demoniac, who had been the terror of the country, so that none could pass that way—the wild-eyed dweller in the tombs who had been accustomed to gash himself with cries of rage, and whose untamed fierceness broke away all fetters—was now calm as a child. Some charitable hand had flung an outer robe over his naked figure, and he was sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus.

"And they were afraid"—more afraid of that Holy Presence than of the previous furies of the possessed. The man indeed was saved; but what of that, considering that some of their two thousand unclean beasts had perished! Their precious swine were evidently in danger; the greed and gluttony of every

apostate Jew and low-bred Gentile in the place were clearly imperilled by receiving such a one as they saw that Jesus was. With disgraceful and urgent unanimity they entreated and implored Him to leave their coasts. Both heathens and Jews had recognized already the great truth that God sometimes answers bad prayers in His deepest anger. Shakespeare aptly says:

We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
Deny us for our good.

The converse is stated in these striking words by Mrs. Browning:

God answers sharp and sudden on some prayers,
And flings the things we have asked for in our face;
A gauntlet with a gift in't.

Jesus Himself had taught His disciples not to give that which was holy to the dogs, neither to cast their pearls before swine, "lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." He had gone across the lake for quiet and rest, desiring, though among lesser multitudes, to extend to these semi-heathens also the blessings of the kingdom of God. But they loved their sins and their swine, and with a perfect energy of deliberate preference for all that was base and mean, rejected such blessings, and entreated Him to go away. Sadly, but at once, He turned and left them. Gergesa was no place for Him; better the lonely hill-tops to the north of it; better the crowded strand on the other side.

And yet He did not leave them in anger. One deed of mercy had been done there; one sinner had been saved; from one soul the unclean spirits had been cast out. And just as the united multitudes of the Gadarenes had entreated for His absence, so the poor saved demoniac entreated henceforth to be with Him. But Jesus would fain leave one more, one last opportunity for those who had rejected Him. On others for whose sake miracles had been performed He had enjoined silence; on this man—since He was now leaving the place—He enjoined publicity. "Go home," He said,



JESUS EATS WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.—Luke v. 30.

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"to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And so the demoniac of Gergesa became the first great missionary to the region of Decapolis, bearing in his own person the confirmation of his words; and Jesus, as His little vessel left the inhospitable shore, might still hope that the day might not be far distant—might come, at any rate, before over that ill-fated district burst the storm of sword and fire—when

"E'en the witless Gadarene,
Preferring Christ to swine, would feel
That life is sweetest when 'tis clean."

On the return of Jesus to Capernaum, the apostle Matthew made a great feast for his Master and fellow-disciples in his own house. The other persons who were present at this feast were chiefly "publicans and sinners," as might be supposed from the position which Matthew had filled, and the connections which that position had led him to form. The Pharisees failed, not, as usual, to take malicious notice of this; and some of them said to the disciples, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" This was probably at the end of the feast, when they were leaving the house, for it was not likely that Pharisees would enter the house of a publican. Jesus heard this and He answered, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

On the same occasion Jesus had to meet

the implied objections of some of the disciples of John. "Why," they asked, "do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" This, doubtless, refers to private fasts; such, probably, as John's disciples kept on account of the imprisonment of their master, and such as the Pharisees observed in obedience to the rules of their great doctors. Jesus beautifully answered: "Can the children of the bride-chamber (the attendants on the bridegroom) fast while they have the bridegroom with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." This, while it justified the disciples of John for fasting, seeing that their bridegroom had been taken from them, excused His own disciples for not fasting, seeing that their bridegroom was still with them.

Jesus added several short parables, probably suggested by their present circumstances. One of them was—"No man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottle and be spilled, and the bottle shall perish; but new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved." And this is only intelligible with reference to the skin bottles, or bags made of the skins of kids, goats, and even oxen, such as are still in use throughout the East, and even in some parts of Europe, such as Spain, Hungary and Turkey.



JESUS EATS WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.—LUKE V. 30.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WONDERFUL WORKS.



WHILE Jesus was still at the house of Matthew, engaged in the kindly teaching which arose out of the question of John's disciples, another event occurred which led in succession to three of the greatest miracles of His earthly life. A ruler of the synagogue—or chief elder of the congregation, to whom the Jews looked with great respect—came to Jesus in extreme agitation. It is not improbable that this ruler of the synagogue

had been one of the very deputation who had pleaded with Jesus for the centurion by whom it had been built. If so, he knew by experience the power of Him to whom He now appealed.

Flinging himself at His feet with broken words—which in the original still sound as though they were interrupted and rendered incoherent by bursts of grief—he tells Him that his little daughter, his only daughter, is dying, is dead; but still, if He will but come and lay His hand upon her, she shall live. With the tenderness which could not be deaf to a mourner's cry, Jesus rose at once from the table, and went with him, followed not only by His disciples, but also by a dense expectant multitude, which had been witness of the scene. And as He went the people in their eagerness pressed upon Him and thronged Him.

But among this throng—containing doubtless some of the Pharisees and of John's disciples with whom he had been discoursing, as well as some of the publicans and sinners with

whom he had been seated at the feast—there was one who had not been attracted by curiosity to witness what would be done for the ruler of the synagogue. It was a woman who for twelve years had suffered from a distressing malady, which unfitted her for all the relationships of life, and which was peculiarly afflicting because in the popular mind it was regarded as a direct consequence of sinful habits. In vain had she wasted her substance and done fresh injury to her health in the effort to procure relief from many different physicians, and now, as a last desperate resource, she would try what could be gained without money and without price from the Great Physician.

Perhaps, in her ignorance, it was because she had no longer any reward to offer; perhaps because she was ashamed in her feminine modesty to reveal the malady from which she was suffering; but from whatever cause, she determined, as it were, to steal from Him, unknown, the blessing for which she longed. And so, with the strength and pertinacity of despair, she struggled in that dense throng until she was near enough to touch Him; and then, perhaps all the more violently from her extreme nervousness, she grasped the white fringe of His robe. By the law of Moses every Jew was to wear fringes or tassels, bound by a thread of symbolic blue, to remind him that he was holy to God.

Two of these fringes usually hung down at the bottom of the robe; two hung over the shoulders where the robe was folded round the person. It was probably one of these that she touched with secret and trembling haste, and then, feeling instantly that she had gained her desire and was healed, she shrunk back unnoticed into the throng. Unnoticed by others, but not by Christ. Perceiving that

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HEALED BY TOUCHING CHRIST'S GARMENT.—Matt. ix. 22.



healing power had gone out of Him, recognizing the one magnetic touch of timid faith even amid the pressure of the crowd. He stopped and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" There was something almost impatient in the reply of Peter, as though in such a throng he thought it absurd to ask, "Who touched me?" But Jesus, His eyes still wandering over the many faces, told Him that there was a difference between the crowding of curiosity and the touch of faith, and as at last His glance fell on the poor woman, she, perceiving that she had erred in trying to filch the blessing which He would have graciously bestowed, came forward fearing and trembling, and, flinging herself at His feet, told Him all the truth. All her feminine shame and fear were forgotten in her desire to atone for her fault.

The Daughter's Death.

Doubtless she dreaded His anger, for the law expressly ordained that the touch of one afflicted as she was caused ceremonial uncleanliness till the evening. But His touch had cleansed her, not hers polluted Him. So far from being indignant, He said to her, "Daughter"—and at once the sound of that gracious word sealed her pardon—"go in peace: thy faith hath saved thee; be healed from thy disease." Jesus addressed no other woman by the title "Daughter." Legend has assigned to this woman Veronica as a name, and Paneas (Cæsarea Philippi) as a residence. An ancient statue of bronze at this place was believed to represent her in the act of touching the fringe of Christ's robe; and Eusebius and Sozomen both mention this statue, which is believed to be a curious testimony to the reality of Christ's miracle.

The incident must have caused a brief delay, and, as we have seen, to the anguish of Jairus every instant was critical. But he was not the only sufferer who had a claim on the Saviour's mercy; and, as he uttered no complaint, it is clear that sorrow had not made him selfish. But at this moment a messenger reached him with the brief mes-

sage—"Thy daughter is dead;" and then, apparently with a touch of dislike and irony, he added, "Worry not the Rabbi."

The message had not been addressed to Jesus, but He overheard it, and with a compassionate desire to spare the poor father from needless agony, He said to him those memorable words, "Fear not, only believe." They soon arrived at his house, and found it occupied by the hired mourners and flute-players, who, as they beat their breasts, with mercenary clamor, insulted the dumbness of sincere sorrow and the patient majesty of death.

Probably this simulated wailing would be very repulsive to the soul of Christ; and first stopping at the door to forbid any of the multitude to follow Him, He entered the house with three only of the inmost circle of His apostles—Peter, and James and John. On entering, His first care was to still the idle noise; but when His kind declaration—"The little maid is not dead, but sleepeth,"—was only received with coarse ridicule, He indignantly ejected the paid mourners. When calm was restored, He took with Him the father and the mother and His three apostles, and entered with quiet reverence the chamber hallowed by the silence and awfulness of death.

Then, taking the little cold dead hand, He uttered these two thrilling words, "*Talitha cumi*"—"Little maid, arise!" and her spirit returned, and the child arose and walked. An awful amazement seized the parents; but Jesus calmly bade them give the child some food. And if He added His customary warning that they should not speak of what had happened, it was not evidently in the intention that the entire fact should remain unknown—for that would have been impossible, when all the circumstances had been witnessed by so many—but because those who have received from God's hand unbounded mercy are more likely to reverence that mercy with adoring gratitude if it be kept like a hidden treasure in the inmost heart.

No one can fail to admire the ease and unostentatious simplicity which reigns throughout this transaction, as well as in the raising of

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the widow's son at Nain. The Divine tranquillity, the simple words, "I say unto thee, Arise," speak the presence of One who is the conscious master of all things—even of death.

The silence which Jesus imposed on the parents of the maiden was obviously founded upon the dangers which this news, inconsiderately spread, might bring upon His person and

The time was coming when these miracles might be referred to by competent witnesses in proof of His divine mission, and then the benefit which the cause of the Gospel must derive from them would be realized. There was, however, nothing contradictory in His appealing to His works in proof of His mission, as when He says—"If I do not the works of



CHRIST RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.—Mark v. 41.

doctrine. His hour, as He repeatedly declared, was not yet come. The renown of this great miracle, after He had so recently raised the son of the widow of Nain, would be sure to bring upon Him in tenfold activity the hate of His enemies, and lead them to plot against Him, as actually happened afterwards, when He raised Lazarus from the dead.

my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." For he had only under particular circumstances enjoined this silence; and when it had been enjoined, silence had rarely been observed as He desired and directed that it should be.

On His return from the house of Jairus, two blind men, hearing who passed by, followed after Him, crying, "Thou son of David, have mercy on us!" This calling Him "the son of David" was a recognition of Him as the expected Messiah; and it is not a little remarkable that this, in gospel narratives, comes from blind men almost exclusively. Is it that the celestial light "shines inward," in proportion to the privation of the outward sense? Is it that the inner vision is "purged with cuphrasy and rue," till it is enabled to behold "things invisible to mortal sight?"

Be this as it may, the blind were, in Christ's own time, ever the foremost to acknowledge Him in His true character; and the blind of that age, one would almost suppose, had left the heritage of their faith to the blind of latter ages; as among them we still find unusual intensity of love towards the person and character of Jesus Christ, unusual reliance of all the affections on Him, and unusual strength of hope in His salvation and glory.

"Let There Be Light."

Jesus did not appear to notice them till He reached the house to which He was going. He then said to them, "Believe you that I am able to do this?" They answered "Yea, Lord;" on which He touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." And they had much faith, for their eyes were opened. The light of day shone in upon them, and the visible glories of this beautiful world were no longer mysteries.

Already Christ had begun to check, as it were, the spontaneity of His miracles. He had performed more than sufficient to attest His power and mission, and it was important that men should pay more heed to His Divine eternal teaching than to His temporal healings. Nor would He as yet sanction the premature, and perhaps ill-considered, use of the Messianic title, "Son of David"—a title which, had He publicly accepted it, might have thwarted His sacred purposes, by leading to an instantaneous revolt in His favor against the Roman power. Without noticing the men or their

cry, He went to the house in Capernaum, where he abode; nor was it until they had persistently followed Him into the house that He tested their faith.

Like so many whom He healed, they neglected His stern command not to reveal it. There are some who have admired their disobedience, and have attributed it to the enthusiasm of gratitude and admiration; but was it not rather the enthusiasm of a blatant wonder, the vulgarity of a chattering boast? How many of these multitudes who had been healed by Him became His true disciples? Did not the holy fire of devotion which a hallowed silence must have kept alive upon the altar of their hearts die away in the mere blaze of empty rumor? Did not He know best? Would not obedience have been better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams? Yes. It is possible to deceive ourselves; it is possible to offer to Christ a seeming service which disobeys His inmost precepts—to grieve Him, under the guise of honoring Him, by vain repetitions, and the hollow semblance of a dead devotion.

Better, far better, to serve Him by doing the things He said than by a seeming zeal, often false in exact proportion to its obtrusiveness, for the glory of His name. These disobedient babblers, who talked so much of Him, did but offer Him the dishonoring service of a double heart; their violation of His commandment served only to hinder His usefulness, to trouble His spirit, and to precipitate His death.

Soon after this Jesus once more visited Capernaum, being attended by His disciples. On the first Sabbath after His arrival He taught in the synagogue. But the men of Nazareth were not now better prepared than formerly to respect His character and office. Their minds dwelt upon "all the disadvantages of His youth, and kindred, and trade, and poverty; still retaining in their minds the infirmities and humiliations of His first years, and keeping the same apprehensions of Him as a man and a glorious prophet which they had to Him as a child in the shop of a carpenter."

Jesus himself indicated the principle of their conduct to Him by quoting the well-known proverb—"A prophet hath nowhere less honor than in his own country;" a proverb still constantly verified by the daily experience of many who, after having gathered renown and honor among strangers, find that in their native town the circumstances out of which they have risen are far better remembered and more thought of than those to which they have attained, so that at home they are greater strangers than in remote cities and lands.

Failure to Perform Miracles.

The influence of this feeling prevented the Nazarenes from seeing Christ in His true greatness; for it is emphatically remarked that "He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief;" and this in two ways—for, first, their knowledge of His humble birth effectually prevented that implicit reliance upon His power which He invariably exacted, and which could alone render them worthy of His protection and help; and then from the influence of the same feeling, they would not think it worth their while sedulously to bring their sick to Jesus, and humbly to seek aid.

It was not long after this that Jesus conferred upon the twelve apostles power to accomplish such miracles as He had Himself wrought, even to the extent of raising the dead; and they were then sent forth, two and two, to preach the gospel throughout the country.

Before sending them He naturally gave them the instructions which were to guide their conduct. At present they were to confine their mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not extend it to Samaritans or Gentiles. The topic of their preaching was to be the nearness of the kingdom of heaven, and it was to be freely supported by works of power and beneficence. They were to take nothing with them; no scrip for food; no purse for money; no change of raiment; no travelling shoes in place of their ordinary palm-bark sandals; they were not even to procure a staff for the journey if they did not happen already to possess one; their mission

—like all the greatest and most effective missions which the world has ever known—was to be simple and self-supporting.

The open hospitality of the East, so often used as the basis for a dissemination of new thoughts, would be ample for their maintenance.

Renan notices the modern analogy. "When travelling in the East no one need ever scruple to go into the best house of any Arab village to which he comes, and he will always be received with profuse and gratuitous hospitality. From the moment we entered any house, it was regarded as our own. There is not an Arab you meet who will not empty for you the last drop in his water-skin, or share with you his last piece of black bread. The Rabbis said that Paradise was the reward of willing hospitality."

The Blessing of Peace.

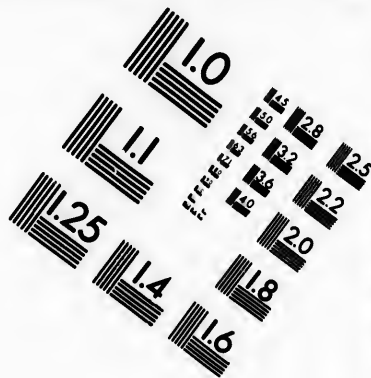
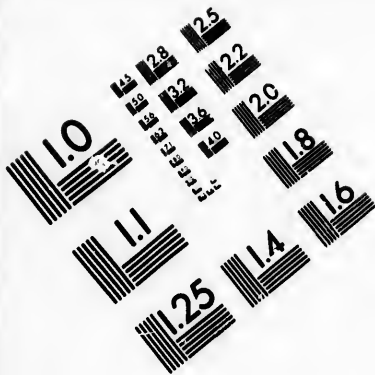
On entering a town the disciples were to go to any house in it where they had reason to hope that they would be welcome, and to salute it with the immemorial and much-valued blessing, "Peace be to you," and if the children of peace were there the blessing would be effective; if not, it would return on their own heads. If rejected, they were to shake off the dust of their feet in witness that they had spoken faithfully, and that they thus symbolically cleared themselves of all responsibility for that judgment which should fall more heavily on wilful and final haters of the light than on the darkest places of a heathendom in which the light had never, or but feebly, shone.

So far their Lord had pointed out to them the duties of trustful faith, of gentle courtesy, of self-denying simplicity as the first essentials of missionary success. He proceeded to fortify them against the inevitable trials and persecutions of their missionary work.

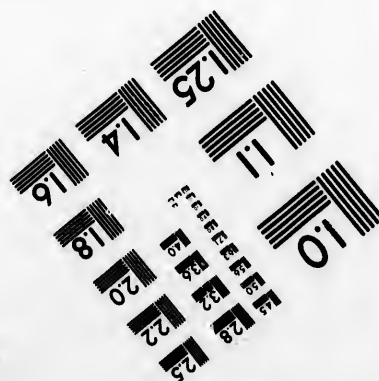
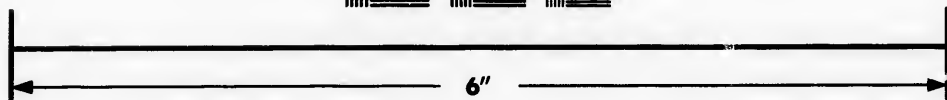
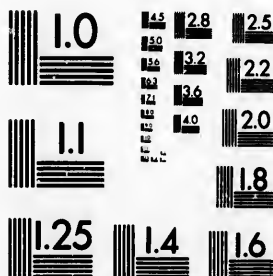
They needed and were to exercise the wisdom of serpents no less than the harmlessness of doves; for He was sending them forth as sheep among wolves.

Doubtless these discourses were not always





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delivered in the continuous form in which they have naturally come down to us. Jesus seems at all times to have graciously encouraged the questions of humble and earnest listeners; and at this point we are told by an ancient tradition, that Peter—ever, we may be sure, a most eager and active-minded listener—interrupted his Master with the not unnatural question, "But how then if the wolves should tear the lambs?" And Jesus answered, smiling perhaps at the naive and literal intellect of His chief apostle, "Let not the lambs fear the wolves when the lambs are once dead, and do you fear not those who can kill you and do nothing to you, but fear Him who after you are dead hath power over soul and body to cast them into hell."

Patient Endurance.

And then, continuing the thread of His discourse, He warned them plainly how, both at this time and again long afterwards, they might be brought before councils, and scourged in synagogues, and stand at the judgment-bar of kings, and yet, without any anxious premeditation, the Spirit should teach them what to say. The doctrine of peace should be changed by the evil passions of men into a war-cry of fury and hate, and they might be driven to fly before the face of enemies from city to city. Still let them endure to the end, for before they had gone through the cities of Israel, the Son of man should have come.

Then lastly, He at once warned and comforted them by reminding them of what He Himself had suffered, and how He had been opposed. Let them not fear. The God who cared even for the little birds when they fell to the ground—the God by whom the very hairs of their head were numbered—the God who held in His hand the issues of life and death, and who was therefore more to be feared than the wolves of earth—He was with them; He would acknowledge those whom His Son acknowledged, and deny those whom He denied. They were being sent forth into a world of strife, which would seem

even the more deadly because of the peace which it rejected, but they were wrapped in impenetrable armor, and shielded by the Divine presence.

Even their nearest and dearest might side with the world against them. But they who would be His true followers must for His sake give up all; must even take up their cross and follow Him. And then, for their comfort, He told them that they should be as He was in the world; that they who received them should receive Him; that to lose their lives for His sake would be to more than find them; that a cup of cold water given to the youngest and humblest of His little ones should not miss of its reward.

That the whole of this discourse was not delivered on this occasion, that there are references in it to later periods, that parts of it are only applicable to other apostolic missions which as yet lay far in the future, seems clear; but we may, nevertheless, be grateful that Matthew, guided as usual by unity of subject, collected into one focus the scattered rays of instruction delivered, perhaps, on several subsequent occasions—as, for instance, before the sending of the seventy, and even at the parting utterances of the risen Christ. It was a wise and merciful provision that He sent the disciples out two and two; it enabled them to hold sweet converse together, and mutually to correct each other's faults. Doubtless the friends and the brothers went in pairs; the fiery Peter with the more contemplative Andrew; the sons of thunder—one influential and commanding, the other emotional and eloquent; the kindred faith and guilelessness of Philip and Bartholomew; the slow but faithful Thomas with the thoughtful and devoted Matthew; James with his brother Jude; the zealot Simon to fire with his zeal the dark, flagging, despairing spirit of the traitor Judas.

During their absence Jesus continued His work alone, perhaps as He slowly made His way towards Jerusalem; for if we can speak of probability at all amid the deep uncertainties of the chronology of His ministry, it seems

extremely probable that it is to this point that the verse belongs—"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." There are ample reasons, as far as the text is concerned, and as far as the time required by the narrative is concerned, for believing that this nameless feast was in all probability the feast of Purim.

The Purim Festival.

But how came Jesus to go up to Jerusalem for such a feast as this? a feast which was the saturnalia of Judaism; a feast which was without Divine authority, and had its roots in the most intensely exclusive, not to say vindictive feelings of the nation; a feast of merriment and masquerade, which was purely social and often discreditably convivial; a feast which was unconnected with religious services, and was observed, not in the Temple, not even necessarily in the synagogues, but mainly in the private houses of the Jews?

The answer seems to be that, although Jesus was in Jerusalem at this feast, and went up about the time that it was held, the words of John do not necessarily imply that He went up for the express purpose of being present at this particular festival. The Passover took place only a month afterwards, and He may well have gone up mainly with the intention of being present at the Passover, although He gladly availed Himself of an opportunity for being in Judæa and Jerusalem a month before it, both that He might once more preach in those neighborhoods, and that He might avoid the publicity and dangerous excitement involved in His joining the caravan of the Passover pilgrims from Galilee.

Such an opportunity may naturally have arisen from the absence of the apostles on their missionary tour. Jesus had friends and well-wishers at Jerusalem and in its vicinity. He must doubtless have paid visits to those regions which are not recorded. Perhaps it was among those friends that He awaited the return of His immediate followers. We know the deep affection which He entertained for the members of one household in Bethany, and it is not un-

natural to suppose that He was now living in the peaceful seclusion of that pious household as a solitary and honored guest.

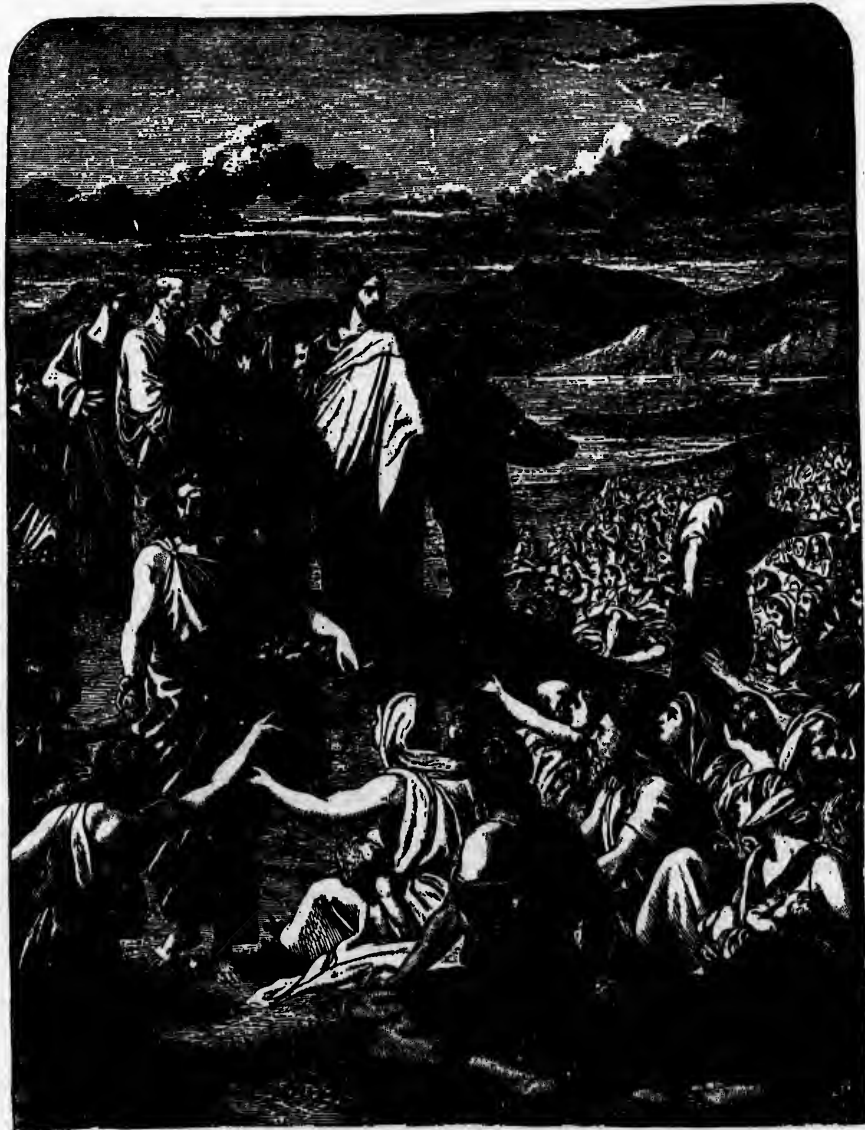
But even if John intends us to believe that the occurrence of this feast was the immediate cause of this visit to Jerusalem, we must bear in mind that there is no proof whatever of its having been in the time of Christ the fantastic and disorderly commemoration and free carousal which it subsequently became. The nobler-minded Jews doubtless observed it in a calm and grateful manner; and as one part of the festival consisted in showing acts of kindness to the poor, it may have offered an attraction to Jesus both on this ground, and because it enabled Him to show that there was nothing unnational or unpatriotic in the universal character of His message, or the all-embracing infinitude of the charity which He both practised and enjoined.

Vengeance of Herodias.

Just about this time the birthday of Herod the tetrarch was celebrated with great festivity in the court of Galilee. On this occasion Herod was so much charmed with the dancing of young Salome (so Josephus calls her), the daughter, by her former husband, of that Herodias whom Herod had taken away from his brother Philip, that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask.

From the effect which this dancing produced upon the tetrarch, it would appear that it was not that comparatively rude and unformed style of dancing which was anciently used by the Jewish maidens at public rejoicings; but that lascivious and pantomimic sort which, by the movements of the hands and other members of the body, expressed human manners and affections, and which had then lately been introduced from neighboring nations into the Jewish court.

The damsel was old enough to know the value of the promise thus given, and, instead of giving utterance to any girlish wish, went to ask her mother concerning the suit which she should prefer. Herodias hated John the Baptist on account of the protest he had uttered



CHRIST FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.—Matt. xiv. 19.

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against her connection with Herod, but had never been able to prevail upon the tetrarch to bring him to any further punishment than imprisonment, and she seized with avidity the occasion now offered, by instructing her daughter to demand the head of the Baptist—"in a charger" (salver), a barbarously-minute addition, strikingly characteristic of a peculiarity often noticed in a woman's vengeance. Most men would have been content simply to demand the head of the Baptist; but she phrased it—"Give me here the head of John the Baptist in a charger"—"here" and in "a charger!"

Herod was sorry that such a demand should have been made, for he had a sort of awe for the Baptist, and justly dreaded the effect which so barbarous an act might produce upon the people, by whom the prophet was held in high veneration. But as his oath had been taken in the presence of so many witnesses, he fancied that he could not draw back. The word was given; John was beheaded in the prison where he had so long been confined, and his head was brought in a charger to Salome, who carried it to her mother. All the circumstances of this transaction are exceedingly revolting, and give a lively idea of an age in which blood was poured out like water, and when even "tender and delicate women" were familiar with all kinds of violence and with every ghastly form of death.

Herod Perplexed.

The people were greatly disgusted and provoked at the slaughter of John, and although they did not rise in sedition, as perhaps Herod had apprehended, Josephus informs us that they failed not to ascribe to this enormity the destruction of his fine army by Aretas, king of Arabia (the father of the tetrarch's former wife), which soon afterwards took place.

It was not long after this that the doings of Christ first came under the notice of Herod, and perplexed him greatly: "John," he said, "have I beheaded; but who is this of whom I hear such things?" This implies doubt, and it would seem that he was at length led to conclude that Jesus was no other than the

Baptist raised from the dead, and became very desirous to see him. Jesus probably heard of this; and, if so, we may conclude that it was from the desire to avoid the court of Herod and the snares of the tyrant, that He took ship and withdrew into the more solitary regions bordering the Lake of Tiberias.

The apprehension that the people, enraged at the murder of John, and always prone to sedition, might rise into actual rebellion, and He incur the blame, may also have been one of the reasons for this step. The need of rest and refreshment after the season of excessive fatigue to which He and His apostles, who had by this time rejoined Him, had been exposed, is also mentioned as a further reason for this retirement.

Feeding the Multitude.

The desert place to which He withdrew was not far from the town of Bethsaida. The solitude which He sought was not, however, allowed Him there. The people followed Him, so that even in this solitary place He was soon surrounded by a great multitude. When Jesus beheld this large body of people, so far away from their homes in the wilderness, He was moved with compassion towards them, "because they were as sheep not having a shepherd;" and He ascended an eminence with His disciples, and He taught them many things. Then perceiving that the day was far spent, and that the people were exhausted with walking and want of food, while the places were so distant where food might be procured, Jesus said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" This, we are told, He said to prove him, His own intentions having been already formed.

The feeding of the five thousand is one of the few miracles during the ministry of Christ which are narrated to us by all four of the evangelists.

The novel journeyings of the apostles, the agitation of His own recent conflicts, the constant pressure of a fluctuating multitude which absorbed the whole of their time, once more rendered it necessary that the little company

should recover the tone and bloom of their spirits by a brief period of rest and solitude. "Come ye yourselves," He said, "apart into a desert place, and rest a while."

At the north-eastern corner of the lake, a little beyond the point where the Jordan enters it, was a second Bethsaida, or "Fish-house," once, like its western namesake, a small village, but recently enlarged and beautified by Philip, tetrarch of Ituræa, and called, for the sake of distinction, Bethsaida Julias. The second name had been given it in honor of Julia, the beautiful but infamous daughter of the emperor Augustus. These half-heathen Herodian cities, with their imitative Greek architecture and adulatory Roman names, seem to have repelled rather than attracted the feet of Christ; and though much of His work was accomplished in the neighborhood of considerable cities, we know of no city except Jerusalem in which He ever taught.

But to the south of Bethsaida Julias was the green and narrow plain of El Batihah, which, like the hills that closed it round, was uninhabited then as now. Hitherward the little vessel steered its course, with its freight of weary and saddened hearts which sought repose. But private as the departure had been, it had not passed unobserved, and did not remain unknown. It is but six miles by sea from Capernaum to the retired and desolate shore which was their destination.

The Waiting Throng.

The little vessel, evidently retarded by unfavorable winds, made its way slowly at no great distance from the shore, and by the time it reached its destination, the object which their Master's kindness had desired for His apostles was completely frustrated. Some of the multitude had already outrun the vessel, and were crowding about the landing-place when the prow touched the pebbly shore; while in the distance were seen the thronging groups of Passover pilgrims, who were attracted out of their course by the increasing celebrity of this unknown prophet. Jesus was touched with compassion for them,

because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. We may conjecture from John that on reaching the land He and His disciples climbed the hill-side, and there waited a short time till the whole multitude had assembled. Then descending among them He taught them many things, preaching to them of the kingdom of heaven, and healing their sick.

The day wore on; already the sun was sinking towards the western hills, yet still the multitude lingered, charmed by that healing voice and by those holy words. The evening would soon come, and after the brief oriental twilight, the wandering crowd, who in their excitement had neglected even the necessities of life, would find themselves in the darkness, hungry, and afar from every human habitation. The disciples began to be anxious lest the day should end in some unhappy catastrophe, which would give a fresh handle to the already embittered enemies of Christ. But His compassion had already forestalled their considerate anxiety, and had suggested the difficulty to the mind of Philip, who was especially thoughtful.

Barley Loaves and Fishes.

A little consultation took place. To buy even a mouthful apiece for such a multitude would require at least two hundred denarii (more than thirty-five dollars); and even supposing that they possessed such a sum in their common purse, there was now neither time nor opportunity to make the necessary purchases. Andrew hereupon mentioned that there was a little boy there who had five barley-loaves and two small fishes, but he only said it in a despairing way, and, as it were, to show the utter helplessness of the only suggestion which occurred to him.

"Make the men sit down," was the brief reply.

Wondering and expectant, the apostles bade the multitude recline, as for a meal, on the rich green grass which in that pleasant spring-time clothed the hill-sides. They arranged them in companies of fifty and a hundred, and

as they sat in these orderly groups upon the grass, the gay red and blue and yellow colors of the clothing which the poorest Orientals wear, called up in the imagination of Peter a multitude of flowers-beds in some well-cultivated garden.

And then, standing in the midst of His guests—glad-hearted at the work of mercy which He intended to perform—Jesus raised His eyes to heaven, gave thanks, blessed the loaves, broke them into pieces, and began to distribute them to His disciples, and they to the multitude; and the two fishes He divided among them all. It was an humble but a sufficient and to hungry wayfarers a delicious meal.

And when all were abundantly satisfied, Jesus, not only to show His disciples the extent and reality of what had been done, but also to teach them the memorable lesson that wastefulness, even of miraculous power, is wholly alien to the Divine economy, bade them gather up the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost. The symmetrical arrangement of the multitude showed that about five thousand men, besides women and children, had been fed, and yet twelve baskets were filled with what was over and above that which had been eaten.

Each of the twelve apostles may be supposed to have filled a basket, and probably carried down to the boat the basket he had filled. The supply was more than enough.

An Impressive Miracle.

This was in many respects the most convincing, if not in itself the greatest, miracle which Christ had yet performed. It accordingly had a corresponding effect upon the multitude, who said, "This is, of a truth, that Prophet that should come into the world." Believing Him to be the Messiah, they were disposed to constrain Him to take the temporal sovereignty, which they conceived to belong to that character, and which He was manifestly reluctant to assume. Many have attained to thrones in this world with a less promising beginning than the adhesion of five thousand

men; and if Christ had any objects of worldly ambition, an opportunity which few would have neglected was here offered to Him. But far different were the objects of His coming, far different the mission to the world with which He was charged.

The miracle produced a profound impression. It was exactly in accordance with the current expectation, and the multitude began to whisper to each other that this must undoubtedly be "that Prophet which should come into the world;" the Shiloh of Jacob's blessing; the Star and the Sceptre of Balaam's vision; the Prophet like unto Moses to whom they were to hearken; perhaps the Elijah promised by the dying breath of ancient prophecy; perhaps the Jeremiah of their tradition, come back to reveal the hiding-place of the Ark, and the Urim, and the sacred fire. Jesus marked their undisguised admiration, and the danger that their enthusiasm might break out by force, and precipitate His death by open rebellion against the Roman government in the attempt to make Him a king. He saw too that His disciples seemed to share this worldly and perilous excitement.

The time was come, therefore, for instant action. By the exercise of direct authority, He compelled His disciples to embark in their boat, and cross the lake before Him in the direction of Capernaum or the western Bethsaida. A little gentle constraint was necessary, for they were naturally unwilling to leave Him among the excited multitude on that lonely shore, and if anything great was going to happen to Him they felt a right to be present. On the other hand, it was more easy for Him to dismiss the multitude when they had seen that His own immediate friends and disciples had been sent away.

So in the gathering dusk He gradually and gently succeeded in persuading the multitude to leave Him, and when all but the most enthusiastic had streamed away to their homes or caravans, He suddenly left the rest, and fled from them to the hill-top alone to pray. He was conscious that a solemn and awful crisis of His day on earth was come, and by

communing with His Heavenly Father, He would nerve His soul for the stern work of the morrow, and the bitter conflict of many coming weeks. Once before he had spent in the mountain solitudes a night of lonely prayer, but then it was before the choice of His beloved apostles, and the glad tidings of His earliest and happiest ministry. Far different were the feelings with which the great High-priest now climbed the rocky stairs of that great mountain altar which in His temple of the night seemed to lift Him near to the stars of God. The murder of His beloved forerunner brought home to His soul more nearly the thought of death; nor was He deceived by this brief blaze of a falsely-founded popularity, which on the next day He meant to quench as something worthless.

The Boat in the Tempest.

The storm which now began to sweep over the barren hills; the winds that rushed howling down the ravines; the lake before Him buffeted into tempestuous foam; the little boat which—as the moonlight struggled through the rifted clouds—He saw tossing beneath Him on the laboring waves, were all too sure an emblem of the altered aspects of His earthly life. But there on the desolate hill-top, in that night of storm, he could gain strength and peace and happiness unspeakable; for there He was alone with God. And so over that figure, bowed in lonely prayer upon the hills, and over those toilers upon the troubled lake, the darkness fell and the great winds blew.

Hour after hour passed by. It was now the fourth watch of the night; the ship had traversed but half of its destined course; it was dark, and the wind was contrary, and the waves boisterous, and they were distressed with toiling at the oar, and above all there was no one with them now to calm and save, for Jesus was alone upon the land.

Alone upon the land, and they were tossing on the perilous sea; but all the while he saw and pitied them, and at last, in their worst extremity, they saw a gleam in the darkness,

and an awful figure and a fluttering robe, and One drew near them, treading upon the ridges of the sea, but seemed as if He meant to pass them by; and they cried out in terror at the sight, thinking that it was a phantom that walked upon the waves.

A Voice in the Storm.

And through the storm and darkness to them—as so often to us, when, amid the dark-nesses of life, the ocean seems so great, and our little boats so small—there thrilled that Voice of peace, which said, "It is I: be not afraid."

That voice stilled their terrors, and at once they were eager to receive Him into the ship; but Peter's impetuous love—the strong yearning of him who, in his despairing self-consciousness, had cried out, "Depart from me!"—now cannot even await His approach, and he passionately exclaims—

"Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."

"Come," exclaimed the voice, that even the winds obeyed.

And over the vessel's side into the troubled waves he sprang, and while his eye was fixed on Christ, the wind might toss his hair, and the spray might drench his robes, but all was well; but when, with wavering faith, he glanced from Him to the furious waves, and to the gulfy blackness underneath, then he began to sink, and in an accent of despair—how unlike his former confidence!—he faintly cried, "Lord, save me!"

Nor did Jesus fail. Instantly, with a smile of pity, He stretched out His hand, and grasped the hand of His drowning disciple, with the gentle rebuke, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" And so, his love satisfied, but his over-confidence rebuked, they climb—Jesus and His abashed apostle—into the boat; and the wind lulled, and amid the ripple of waves upon the moonlit shore, they were at the haven where they would be; and all—the crew as well as His disciples—were filled with deeper and deeper amazement, and some of them, addressing Him by a title

which Nathaniel alone had applied to Him | was situated. It was then morning, and before, exclaimed, "Truly Thou art the Son | Christ being immediately recognized He was of God." This was their bold confession. | soon attended by the usual crowd. Wherever



PETER SAVED BY JESUS.—Matt xiv. 31.

They came to shore in the "Land of Gen- | He went the news of His coming went before nesaret," in which the town of Capernaum | Him, and all the sick were brought out has-

tilly in their beds and laid in the streets through which He was to pass; and they who were so happy as but to touch the hem of His garment as he went by, were immediately cured of the diseases with which they were afflicted.

The morning after Christ had recrossed the lake, the people who had partaken of the loaves and fishes, still continuing their search for Him, concluded, from the absence of the vessel in which He had arrived, that He had taken His departure.

On this, so many of them as could find boats to convey them over hastened across the lake after Him. When they had found Him at Capernaum, they asked, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" which He answered by reprehending them, as now seeking Him, only because they had been, through Him, satiated with food for the body, and were now in hopes that He would exhibit new miracles for their external benefit. Then, taking advantage of the state of consciousness which this accusation had produced, He proceeded to urge upon them the obligation of seeking that spiritual nourishment, "the bread of life," which He only could bestow.

The important discourse in which this view was enforced is continued in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel; and it is remarkable, beyond many other parts of the sacred narrative, for the marked effect produced on the hearers, who frequently interposed their objections and remarks, and who were so much offended at some of Christ's sayings on this occasion, that many, even of the disciples, who had hitherto followed Jesus, left Him and departed to their own homes. The chosen twelve, however, remained steady. When Christ pointedly asked them, "Will ye also go away?" Peter in the name of the rest answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It was now the time of the Passover, being the third Passover since the baptism of Jesus. But this year He did not go up to Jerusalem, knowing that the Jews of Judæa only sought

an occasion to put Him to death. He, therefore, remained in Galilee with His disciples. He was not, however, allowed to carry on His proceedings unquestioned in Galilee, for certain adepts in the law came to Him from Jerusalem after the Passover, hoping to confound Him with their objections; but they were only confounded by the attempt.

Visiting the Gentiles.

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the regions of Tyre and Sidon."

Such is the brief notice which prefaces the few and scanty records of a period of His life and work of which, had it been vachsafed to us, we should have been deeply interested to learn something more. But only a single incident of this visit to heathendom has been recorded. It might have seemed that in that distant region there would be a certainty, not of safety only, but even of repose; but such was not the case. We have already seen traces that the fame of His miracles had penetrated even to the old Phœnician cities, and no sooner had He reached their neighborhood than it became evident that He could not be hid.

A woman sought for Him, and followed the little company of wayfarers with passionate entreaties—"Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

We might have imagined that Christ would answer such a prayer with immediate and tender approbation, and all the more because, in granting her petition, He would symbolically have been representing the extension of His kingdom to the three greatest branches of the pagan world. For this woman was by birth a Canaanite, and a Syro-Phœnician; by position a Roman subject; by culture and language a Greek; and her appeal for mercy to the Messiah of the chosen people might well look like the first-fruits of that harvest in which the good seed should spring up hereafter in Tyre and Sidon, and Carthage, and Greece, and Rome. But "Jesus answered her not a word."

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In no other single instance are we told of a | themselves: He may have desired to test the
similar apparent coldness on the part of Christ; | feelings of His disciples, who, in the narrow



THE SYRO-PHŒNICIAN WOMAN.—Mark vii. 24.

nor are we here informed of the causes which | spirit of Judaic exclusiveness, might be un-
influenced His actions. Two alone suggest | prepared to see Him grant His blessings, not

only to a Gentile, but a Canaanite, and descendant of the accursed race. It was true that He had healed the servant of the centurion, but he was perhaps a Roman, certainly a benefactor to the Jews, and in all probability a proselyte of the gate. But it is more likely that, knowing what would follow, He may have desired to test yet further the woman's faith, both that He might crown it with a more complete and glorious reward, and that she might learn something deeper respecting Him than the mere Jewish title that she may have accidentally picked up. And further than this, since every miracle is also rich in moral significance, He may have wished for all time to encourage us in our prayers and hopes, and teach us to persevere, even when it might seem that His face is dark to us, or that His ear is turned away.

An Agonizing Petition.

Weary with the importunity of her cries, the disciples begged Him to send her away. But, as if even *their* intercession would be unavailing, He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then she came and fell at His feet, and began to worship Him, saying, "Lord, help me." Could He indeed remain untouched by that sorrow? Could He reject that appeal? and would He leave her to return to the life-long agony of watching the paroxysms of her demoniac child? Calmly and coldly came from those lips, that never yet had answered with anything but mercy to a suppliant's prayer—"It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs."

Such an answer might well have struck a chill into her soul; and had He not foreseen that hers was the rare trust which can see mercy and acceptance even in apparent rejection, He would not so have answered her. But not all the snows of her native Lebanon could quench the fire of love which was burning on the altar of her heart, and prompt as an echo came forth the glorious and immortal answer:

"Truth, Lord; then let me share the con-

dition, not of the children, but of the dogs, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

The Victory of Faith.

She had triumphed, and more than triumphed. Not one moment longer did Jesus prolong the agony of her suspense. "O woman," He exclaimed, "great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And with his usual beautiful and graphic simplicity Mark ends the narrative with the touching words, "And when she was come to her house she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."

How long our Lord remained in these regions, and at what spot He stayed, we do not know. Probably His departure was hastened by the publicity which attended His movements even there, and which—in a region where it had been His object quietly to train His own nearest and most beloved followers, and not either to preach or to work deeds of mercy—would only impede His work. He therefore left that interesting land. On Tyre, with its commercial magnificence, its ancient traditions, its gorgeous and impure idolatries, its connection with the history and prophecies of His native land—on Sarepta, with its memories of Elijah's flight and Elijah's miracles—on Sidon, with its fisheries of the purple murex, its tombs of once-famous and long-forgotten kings, its minarets rising out of their groves of palm and citron, beside the blue historic sea—on the white wings of the countless vessels, sailing to the isles of the Gentiles, and to all the sunny and famous regions of Greece and Italy and Spain—He would doubtless look with a feeling of mingled sorrow and interest.

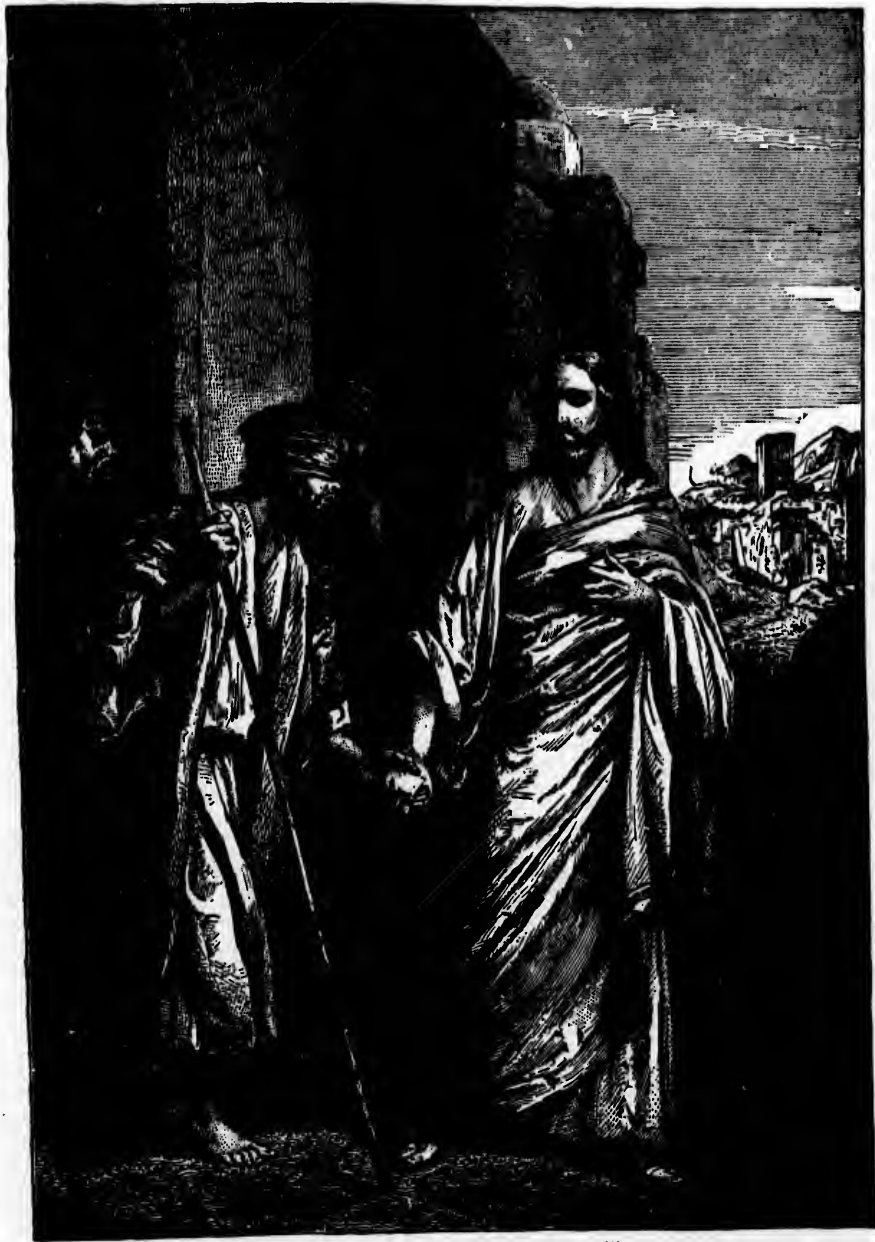
But his work did not lie here, and leaving behind Him those Phœnician shrines of Melkarth and Asherah, of Baalim and Ashtaroth, He turned eastward—probably through the deep and beautiful gorge of the rushing Leontes—and so reaching the sources of the Jordan, travelled southward on its further bank in the regions of Decapolis.

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JESUS LEADS THE BLIND.—Mark viii. 22.

Decapolis, was the name given to a district east of the Jordan, extending as far north (apparently) as Damascus, and as far south as the river Jabbok, which formed the northern limit of Peræa. It was a confederacy of ten free cities, in a district which, on their return from exile, the Jews had never been able to recover, and which was, therefore, mainly occupied by Gentiles, who formed a separate section of the Roman province. The reception of Jesus in this semi-pagan district seems to have been favorable.

Hearing Restored.

Wherever He went He was unable to abstain from exercising His miraculous powers in favor of the sufferers for whom His aid was sought; and in one of these cities He was entreated to heal a man who was deaf, and could scarcely speak. He might have healed him by a word, but there were evidently circumstances in his case which rendered it desirable to make the cure gradual, and to effect it by visible signs. He took the man aside, put His fingers in his ears, and spat, and touched his tongue; and then St. Mark preserves for us the sigh, and the uplifted glance, as He spoke the one word, "Ephphatha!" "Be opened!" At that word the string which had so long held the tongue in bondage was severed, and the ears dead so long, became at once sensible of each joyful sound. He heard distinctly and spoke plainly. And the Lord then returned him to his rejoicing friends, who, although enjoined to silence, could not control their gladness, but proclaimed the matter everywhere, saying, "He hath done all things well; he maketh the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

Some commentators remark that in the previous miracle Jesus, by curing an idolatrous woman, and in this by curing one who, as being deaf and dumb, was an atheist, knowing nothing of any religion, showed He was the Saviour of the whole human race: this assumes that the youth had been born deaf and dumb; and, even so, this may be a mistake, for do we not thus limit the truth, which can

find entrance to the soul of man when all the ordinary avenues of human intercourse are shut in silence or in darkness?

A lady who was traveling in Palestine was attended by a deaf and dumb guide; and on occasion of an accident which befell her daughter, and might have been attended with dangerous consequences, his manner touched the lady much. "He looked earnestly at me and then pointed towards heaven, as if to direct my gratitude thither. As Syria is not likely to have produced a saint, this poor man's sense of religion must have been innate, and its impression was the more pure and remarkable. I had observed it on another occasion; on dividing some bread with him, he first kissed it, and then looked upward most devoutly."

The people who had gathered around Jesus at this time were so drawn on by their wonder at the miracles of mercy which they were constantly witnessing, that they followed about for three successive days. They became so much exhausted that the benevolent Saviour was unwilling to dismiss them to their homes without food, "lest they should faint by the way." The recent miracle was, therefore repeated. The whole multitude, numbering four thousand persons, was fed from seven loaves and a few small fishes, the gathered fragments of which filled seven baskets.

Immediately after this Christ and his disciples took ship upon the Lake of Tiberias, to the coasts of Magdala and Dalmanatha. On the passage the disciples were much concerned on discovering that they had neglected to bring with them a supply of bread. Christ at the same time began to caution them to beware of the "leaven of the scribes and Pharisees." This was levelled at the hypocritical professions and self-exalting doctrines of these classes. But the disciples, with their minds preoccupied with the want of bread, fancied that this discourse was aimed at their neglect. Jesus discerned this, and reproved them for their anxiety in this matter by reminding them of the recent miracles.

At Bethsaida Julias, probably on the following morning, a blind man was brought to Him for healing. The cure was wrought in a manner very similar to that of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis. It has none of the ready freedom, the radiant spontaneity of the earlier and happier miracles. In one respect it differs from every other recorded miracle, for it was, as it were, tentative. Jesus took the man by the hand, led him out of the village, spat upon his eyes, and then, laying His hands upon them, asked if he saw. The man looked at the figures in the distance, and, but imperfectly cured as yet, said, "I see men as trees walking." Not until Jesus had laid His hands a second time upon his eyes did he see clearly. And then Jesus bade him go to his house, which was not at Bethsaida; for, with an emphatic repetition of the word, he is forbidden to either enter into the town, or to tell it to anyone in the town.

We cannot explain the causes of the method which Christ here adopted. The impossibility of understanding what guided His actions arises from the brevity of the narrative, in which—as is so often the case with writers conversant with their subject—the evangelist passes over many particulars, which, because they were so familiar to himself, will, he supposes, be self-explaining to those who read his words. All that we can dimly see is Christ's dislike and avoidance of these heathenish Herodian towns, with their spurious Greek notions, their tampering with idolatry, and even their very names commemorating, as was the case with Bethsaida Julias, some of the most contemptible of the human race. We see from the Gospels themselves that the richness and power displayed in the miracles was correlative to the faith of the recipients; in places where faith was scanty it was but too natural that miracles should be gradual and few.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING.



YOUR attention is next directed by the New Testament narrative to a remarkable conversation between Jesus and the disciples. He began to question them respecting the opinions which they had heard of Him. He was answered that some supposed He was John the Baptist; some Elias; others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. "But whom," asked Jesus, "say ye that I am?" Peter, as usual, speaking for the rest, answered this important question by repeating the declaration which he had made on a former occasion: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This called forth from Jesus the memorable words—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona [son of Jona]; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter [a 'rock,' in Hebrew 'Cephas'] and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

From that time Jesus began to speak openly of the mode in and by which the great objects of His coming were to be accomplished, namely, by His death on the cross, to be followed by His resurrection from the dead. Much had already occurred to prepare the disciples for this; but having as yet no clear notion of Christ's spiritual kingdom upon earth, they were much distressed at this declaration.

Peter, in his ardent attachment to his Master, was more especially moved, and he

began to reprehend notions so unworthy the glory of the Messiah, saying: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." This interference drew from the mild Jesus one of the severest reprehensions he ever uttered, and which is the more signal in connection with the high encomium which the faith of this apostle had lately drawn from the same lips which now reproved him.

About eight days after this, Jesus, accompanied by His three most favored apostles, Peter, James, and John, withdrew into the solitude of a mountain, supposed to be Mount Tabor, to pray. While they were there, the apostles were favored with a glimpse of that heavenly glory in their Divine Master which belonged to His higher nature." "He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Suddenly there also appeared with Him Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and were heard by the apostles to speak with Him of the death He was soon to suffer in Jerusalem.

There was a significance in this, which may escape a reader who is not informed that there was a general notion among the Jews that Moses and Elias were to appear on earth in the time of the Messiah. Peter, absorbed in the splendor of this appearance, and forgetful of life's cares and troubles, cried out in a rapture, "Master, it is good to be here:—and let us make three tabernacles—one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." By "tabernacles" he meant booths formed of branches of trees, such as travellers construct when they meet with a pleasant spot, unmindful of time and business.

The words had scarce been finished, when a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice was heard from out of the cloud, saying:—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

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pleased; hear ye Him." Overpowered by the radiant light, and awed by that voice, the men fell to the ground as if struck by lightning; and they stirred not until Jesus Himself touched them and told them to arise. When then they looked up, they saw that no one but their Master was present, and He had resumed His usual appearance. He charged them to relate this glorious vision to no one, till the Son of man should have arisen from the dead; and they promised compliance, although they could not but question one another as to what His "rising from the dead" might mean.

On rejoining the other apostles below the mountain, they were found to be under much perplexity and concern: it was about a very distressing and violent case of demoniacal possession, which the apostles, in the absence of their Master, had attempted to relieve; and the attempt being abortive, had been much ridiculed on that account, by the scribe who happened to be present. When the approach of Jesus was perceived, one man hastened out of the crowd to meet Him, and kneeling down before Him explained the matter. He said, "Lord, have mercy on my son (for he is mine only child); for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And lo! a spirit taketh him and teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not." He added, that he had been thus affected from infancy.

Christ then directed the lad to be brought to Him, and no sooner did he appear in that august presence, than he fell into one of those violent convulsions of which the father had spoken, and who now implored more earnestly for relief: "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion upon us, and help us." Jesus answered, "If thou canst believe—all things are possible to him that believeth." The man replied, with tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Touched by this answer, Jesus at once commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to come forth; and He was obeyed, though not without such rending throes as

left the lad like one dead. Some, indeed, said that he was dead; but Jesus took him by the hand, lifted him up, and restored him perfectly cured to his amazed and rejoicing parent. The disciples afterwards took an opportunity of asking Him why they could not effect this cure; and, as might be expected, He said that it arose from the defect of their faith, and from their want of sufficient confidence in the powers which He had bestowed upon them.

Paying Tribute.

There was a sacred tribute paid yearly by every adult male in Israel to the treasury of the Temple. The amount was half a shekel, regarded in the time of Christ as equivalent to a didrachma, by which name the piece of money that paid it is called in the Gospels. When the usual time of payment came round, the collectors at Capernaum inquired of Peter whether his Master paid the tribute. He replied in the affirmative; but when he mentioned the matter to Jesus, he was asked: "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter of course replied, "Of strangers;" and Jesus rejoined, "Then are the children free." But although thus free, He directed the tribute to be paid, that there might be no occasion to allege that He despised the Temple. But they had not the money. The Saviour of the world was not possessed of fifteen pence. But all things were in His power and knowledge. He directed Peter to go and angle in the lake, and open the mouth of the first fish he took. The apostle did so; and he found in the fish a coin called a stater, equal to a shekel, which the fish had doubtless lately swallowed. This was enough to pay two tributes, and Christ directed Peter to pay with it for both.

When Jesus was afterwards with His disciples in the house which they occupied, He questioned them respecting a discussion in which they had been engaged on the road. But no one answered; all being ashamed to confess that they had been disputing which of them should be the greatest in their Mas-

ter's kingdom, which they still conceived to be of this world.

At the time Jesus took no notice of the dispute. He left their own consciences to work. But when they reached Capernaum

Then He sat down, and taught them again, as He had done so often, that he who would be first must be last of all, and servant of all, and that the road to honor is humility. And wishing to enforce this lesson by a symbol of



TEACHING HUMILITY BY A LITTLE CHILD.—Luke ix. 47.

and were in the house, then He asked them what they had been disputing about on the way. Deep shame kept them silent, and that silence was the most eloquent confession of their sinful ambitions.

exquisite tenderness and beauty, He called to Him a little child, and set it in the midst, and then, folding it in His arms, warned them that unless they could become as humble as that little child, they could not enter into the king-

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dom of heaven. They were to be as children in the world; and he who should receive even one such little child in Christ's name should be receiving Him, and the Father who sent Him.

The expression "in my name" seems to have suggested to John a sudden question, which broke the thread of Christ's discourse. They had seen, he said, a man who was casting out devils in Christ's name; but since the man was not one of them, they had forbidden him. Had they done right?

"No," Jesus answered; "let the prohibition be removed." He who could do works of mercy in Christ's name could not lightly speak evil of the name. He who was not against them was with them. Sometimes indifference is opposition; sometimes neutrality is aid.

Children of the Kingdom.

And then, gently resuming His discourse—the child yet nestling in His arms, and furnishing the text for His remarks—He warned them of the awful guilt and peril of offending, of tempting, of misleading, of seducing from the paths of innocence and righteousness, of teaching any wicked thing, or suggesting any wicked thought to one of those little ones, whose angels see the face of His Father in heaven. Such wicked men and seducers, such human performers of the devil's work—addressing them in words of more bitter, crushing import than any which he ever uttered—a worse fate, He said, awaited *them*, than to be flung with the heaviest millstone round their neck into the sea.

And He goes on to warn them that no sacrifice could be too great if it enabled them to escape any possible temptations to put such stumbling-blocks in the way of their own souls, or the souls of others. Better cut off the right hand, and enter heaven maimed—better hew off the right foot, and enter heaven halt—better tear out the right eye, and enter heaven blind—than suffer hand or foot or eye to be the ministers of sins which should feed the undying worm. Better be drowned in this world with a millstone round the neck,

than carry that moral and spiritual millstone of unresisted temptation which can drown the guilty soul in despair.

For just as salt is sprinkled over every sacrifice for its purification, so must every soul be purged by salt, or by fire, or by both; by the salt of God's truth freely applied to the soul by the reason and the conscience; or, if not, then by the fire of God's afflicting judgments—the fire which purges, and so saves from the worse fire which consumes. Let this refining, purging, purifying salt of searching self-judgment and self-severity be theirs. "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

And thus, at once to confirm the duty of this mutual peace which they had violated, and to show them that, however deeply rooted be God's anger against those who lead others astray, *they* must never cherish hatred even against those who had most deeply injured them. He taught them how, first by private expostulation, then if necessary by public appeal, at once most gently and most effectually to deal with an offending brother.

The Forgiven Servant.

Peter, in the true spirit of formalism, wanted a specific limit to the number of times when forgiveness should be granted; but Jesus taught that the times of forgiveness should be practically unlimited. He illustrated that teaching by the beautiful parable of the servant, who, having been forgiven by his king a debt of ten thousand talents, immediately afterwards seized his fellow-servant by the throat, and would not forgive him a miserable little debt of one hundred pence, a sum 1,250,000 times smaller than that which he himself had been forgiven. The child whom Jesus had held in His arms might have understood that moral.

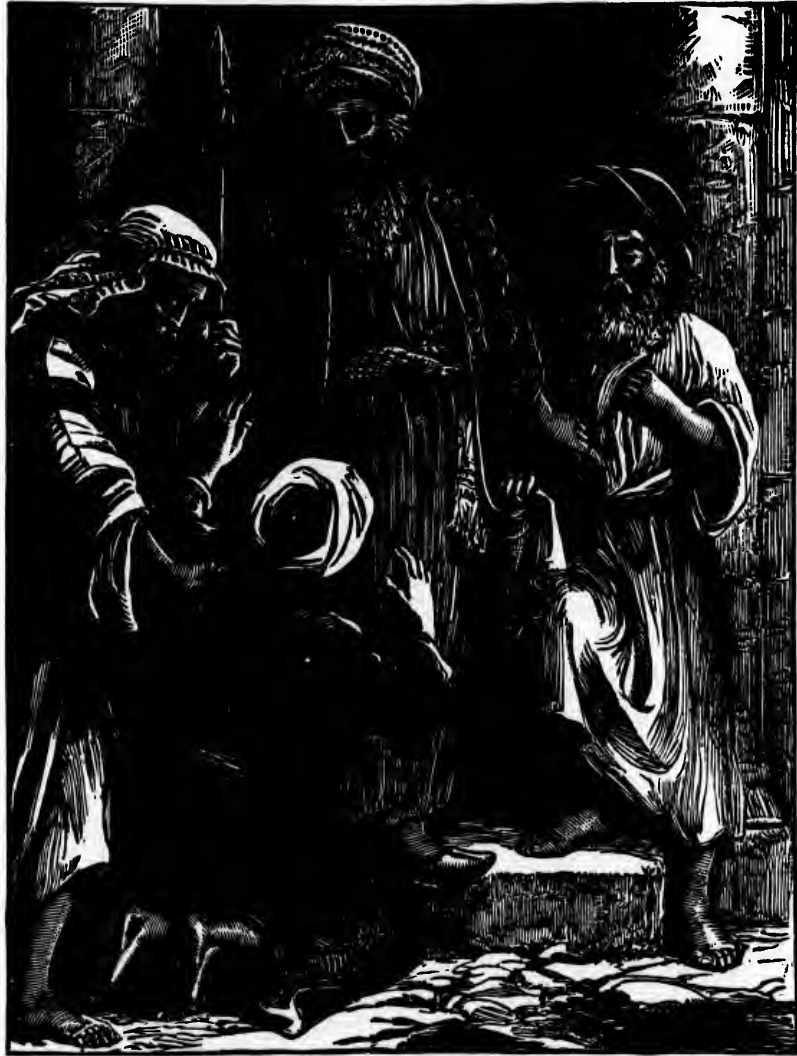
Jesus had abstained from attending at Jerusalem at the last Passover. Autumn had now come, and with it the pleasant feast of Tabernacles. The "brethren" of Jesus perceiving that He manifested no intention to attend this feast either, urged Him to do so. Their feel-

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THE CRUEL SERVANT.—Matt. xviii. 23.

Christ before their eyes, found it peculiarly difficult to believe in Him with entire fixedness. The miracles which they saw Him perform of the Divine dignity to which He laid claim. They now wished to see Him in the great theatre of the metropolis; still expect-

ing, probably, the arrival of a decisive moment in which He would reveal Himself with power as the Messiah.

This moment, they supposed, would come as soon as matters should be brought to a crisis by His appearance among his enemies at Jerusalem. Jesus, however, being unwilling to excite attention without necessity, did not consider the present moment, when the bulk of the people were in the road, as the most suitable. He suffered His brethren to depart alone; but afterwards went up to the holy city in a private manner with his disciples.

At Jerusalem the expectations of the assembled multitudes were alive concerning Him, and with different feelings men talked eagerly to one another about the probabilities of His appearance. At length he appeared.

After His arrival, He taught His doctrines in His usual manner openly in the porticos of the Temple; and people who knew how strongly the learned and priestly classes were irritated against Him, felt some surprise that no one attempted to molest Him. "His hour was not yet come," is the simple and abundantly satisfactory reason for this which the evangelist assigns.

On the last day of the feast, the Pharisees, who were in authority, did send officers to apprehend Him as He taught in the Temple; for by that time they perceived that the current of popular opinion was setting in strongly in favor of His claims. Then said one to another, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than those which this man hath done?" Some averred, "Of a truth this is the Prophet (which Moses foretold)." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some objected, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scriptures said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" The officers sent by the Pharisees paused to hear His discourse, and were so impressed by His words that they made no attempt to arrest Him, but returned to their employers, saying, "Never man spake like this man." They were confounded by His wisdom.

There was a poor beggar, blind from his birth, who was well known in the streets of Jerusalem. This man's eyes Jesus anointed with clay, and then sent him to wash them in the Pool of Siloam. Instead of deriding means of themselves so inefficient, the man obeyed, and he returned from the pool with the perfect use of both his eyes. This cure upon a person so well known excited more attention than any other miracle which Christ had yet performed.

The Man Blind from Birth.

All the Jews were trained to regard special sufferings as the necessity and immediate consequence of special sin. Perhaps the disciples supposed that the words of Jesus to the paralytic at Capernaum might seem to sanction such an impression. They asked, therefore, how this man came to be born blind. Could it be in consequence of the sins of his parents? If not, was there any way of supposing that it could have been for his own? The supposition in the former case seemed hard; in the latter, impossible. They were perplexed.

Into the unprofitable regions of such barren speculation Jesus refuses to follow them, and He declined, as always, the tendency to infer and to sit in judgment upon the sins of others. Neither the man's sins, He told them, nor those of his parents had caused that lifelong affliction; but now by means of it, the works of God should be made manifest. He, the Light of the world, must for a short time longer dispel its darkness. Then He spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and smearing it on the blind man's eyes, bade him "go wash in the Pool of Siloam." The blind man went, washed, and was healed.

The saliva of one who had not recently broken his fast was believed among the ancients to have a healing efficacy in cases of weak eyes, and clay was occasionally used to repress tumors on the eyelids. But that these instruments in no way detracted from the splendor of the miracle is obvious; and we have no means of deciding in this, any more than in the parallel instances, why Jesus, who

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sometimes healed by a word, preferred at other times to adopt slow and more elaborate methods of giving effect to His supernatural power.

In this matter He never revealed the principles of action which doubtless arose from His inner knowledge of the circumstances, and from His insight into the hearts of those on whom His cures were wrought. Possibly He had acted with the express view of teaching more than one eternal lesson by the incidents which followed.

The People Amazed.

At any rate, in this instance, His mode of action led to serious results. For the man had been well known in Jerusalem as one who had been a blind beggar all his life, and his appearance with the use of his eyesight caused a tumult of excitement. Scarcely could those who had known him best believe even his own testimony, that he was indeed the blind beggar with whom they had been so familiar. They were lost in amazement, and made him repeat again and again the story of his cure. But that story infused into their astonishment a fresh element of Pharisaic indignation; for this cure had also been wrought on a Sabbath-day. The Rabbis had forbidden any man to smear even one of his eyes with spittle on the Sabbath, except in cases of mortal danger. Jesus had not only smeared *both* the man's eyes but had actually mingled the saliva with clay!

This, as an act of mercy, was in the deepest and most inward accordance with the very causes for which the Sabbath had been ordained, and the very lessons of which it was meant to be a perpetual witness. But the spirit of narrow literalism and slavish minuteness and quantitative obedience—the spirit that hoped to be saved by the algebraical sum of good and bad actions—had long degraded the Sabbath from the true idea of its institution into a pernicious superstition. This kind of Sabbath, with all its petty servility, was in no respect the Sabbath of God's loving and holy law. Paul calls it a "beggarly element."

And these Jews were so imbued with this utter littleness, that a unique miracle of mercy awoke in them less of astonishment and gratitude than the horror kindled by a neglect of their Sabbatical superstition. Accordingly, in all the zeal of letter-worship, they led off the man to the Pharisees in council. Then followed the scene which John has recorded in a manner so inimitably graphic in his ninth chapter.

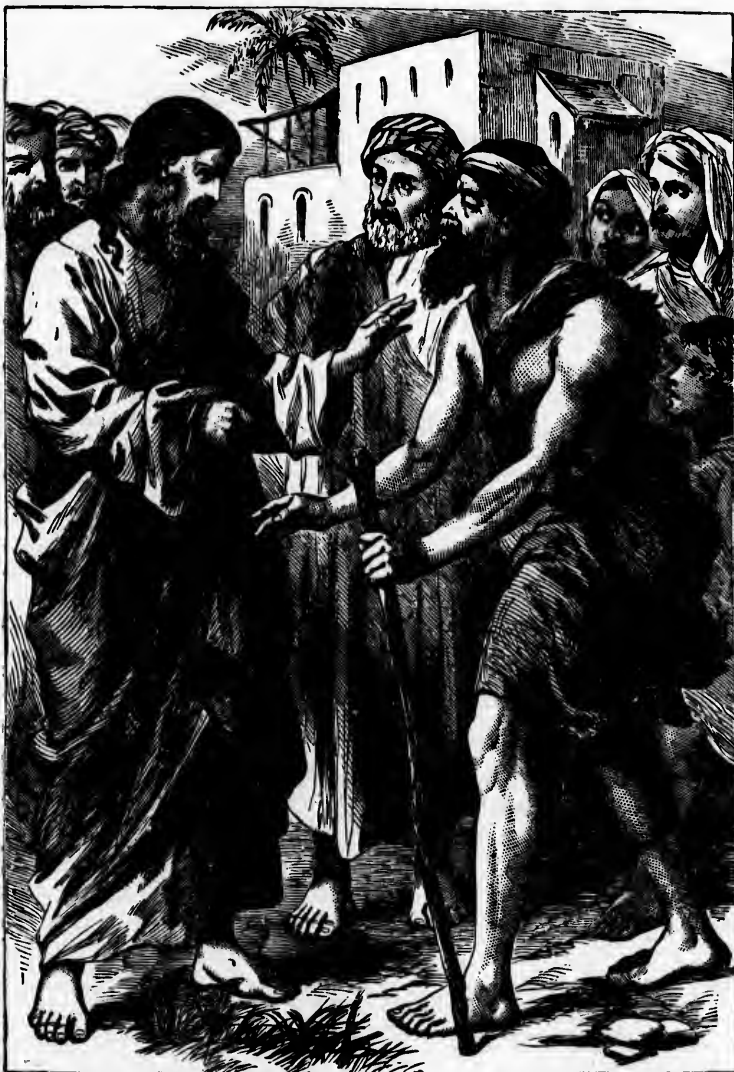
First came the repeated inquiry, "how the thing had been done?" followed by the repeated assertion of some of them that Jesus could not be from God, because he had not observed the Sabbath; and the reply of others that to press the Sabbath-breaking was to admit the miracle, and to admit the miracle was to establish the fact that He who performed it could not be the criminal whom the others described. Then, being completely at a standstill, they asked the blind man *his* opinion of his deliverer; and he—not being involved in their vicious circle of reasoning—replied with fearless promptitude, "He is a Prophet."

The Parents Questioned.

By this time they saw the kind of nature with which they had to deal, and anxious for any loophole by which they could deny or set aside the miracle, they sent for the man's parents. "Was this their son? If they asserted that he had been born blind, how was it that he now saw?" Perhaps they hoped to browbeat or to bribe these parents into a denial of their relationship, or an admission of imposture; but the parents also clung to the plain truth, while with a certain servility and cunning, they refused to draw any inferences which would lay them open to unpleasant consequences. "This is certainly our son, and he was certainly born blind; as to the rest, we know nothing. Ask him. He is quite capable of answering for himself."

Then—one almost pities their sheer perplexity—they turned to the blind man again. He, as well as his parent, knew that the Jewish authorities had agreed to pronounce the ban of exclusion from the synagogue, on any one

who should venture to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah; and the Pharisees probably or ignore the miracle, and to accept their dictum that Jesus was a sinner.



HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND.—John ix. 1.

hoped that he would be content to follow their advice, to give glory to God, that is, to deny his parents. He was not to be overawed by

their authority or baffled by their assertions. He breathed quite freely in the halo-atmosphere of their superior sanctity. "We know," the Pharisees had said, "that this man is a sinner." "Whether He is a sinner," the man replied, "I do not know; one thing I do know, that, being blind, now I see."

Then they began again their weary and futile cross-examination. "What did He do to thee? how did he open thine eyes?" But the man had had enough of this. "I told you once, and ye did not attend. Why do ye wish to hear again? Is it possible that ye too wish to be His disciples?" Bold irony this—to ask these stately, ruffled, scrupulous Sanhedrists, whether he was really to regard them as anxious and sincere inquirers about the claims of the Nazarene Prophet!

Clearly here was a man whose presumptuous honesty would neither be bullied into suppression nor corrupted into a lie. He was quite impracticable. So, since authority, threats, blandishments, had all failed, they broke into abuse. "*Thou* art His disciple: *we* are the disciples of Moses; of *this* man we know nothing." "Strange," he replied, "that *you* should know nothing of a man who yet has wrought a miracle such as not even Moses ever wrought, and we know that neither He nor any one else could have done it, unless He were from God." What! was a mere blind beggar, a natural ignorant heretic, altogether born in sin, to be teaching *them*! Unable to control any longer their transport of indignation, they flung him out of the hall and out of the synagogue.

But Jesus did not neglect His first confessor. He, too, in all probability had, either at this or some previous time, been placed under the ban of lesser excommunication, or exclusion from the synagogue; for we scarcely ever again read of His re-entering any of those synagogues which, during the earlier years of His ministry, had been His favorite places of teaching and resort. He sought out and found the man, and asked him, "Dost *thou* believe on the Son of God?" "Why, who is He, Lord," answered the man "that I should believe on Him?"

"Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He who talketh with thee." "Lord, I believe," he answered; and he did Him reverence.

It must have been shortly after this time that Jesus pointed the contrast between the different effects of His teaching—they who saw not, made to see; and those who saw, made blind. The Pharisees, ever restlessly and discontentedly hovering about Him, and in their morbid egotism always on the lookout for some reflection on themselves, asked "if they too were blind." The answer of Jesus was, that in natural blindness there was no guilt, but to those who only stumbled in the blindness of wilful error a claim to the possession of sight was a self-condemnation.

True and False Shepherds.

The thought naturally led Him to the nature of true and false teachers, which He expanded and illustrated in the beautiful apologue—half parable, half allegory—of the true and false shepherds. He told them that He was the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep; while the hireling shepherds, flying from danger, betrayed their flocks.

He, too, was that door, of the sheepfold, by which all His true predecessors alone had entered while all the false—from the first thief who had climbed into God's fold—had broken in some other way. And then He told them that of His own free will He would lay down His life for the sheep, both of this and of His other flocks, and that of His own power He would take it again. But all these Divine mysteries were more than they could understand; and while some declared that they were the nonsense of one who had a devil and was mad, others could only plead that they were not like the words of one who had a devil, and that a devil could not have opened the eyes of the blind.

Thus, with but little fruit for them, save the bitter fruit of anger and hatred, ended the visit of Jesus to the feast of Tabernacles. And since His very life was now in danger, He withdrew once more from Jerusalem to Galilee,

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—John x. 11.

for one brief visit before He bade to His old home His last farewell.

About this time follow several important discourses of Christ. One of them contained the beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan.

This parable arose in discourse with a Pharisee, who, having stated the great commandments of the law were—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" was told "Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live." But he, being willing to justify himself in the narrow construction which he and all other Jews of his class put upon the latter duty, asked, "And who is my neighbor?" To which Jesus answered by this parable, if it be right to describe as a parable an incident real in all its circumstances, and which might have happened on any day.

It describes a man as "going down" from Jerusalem to Jericho, which stands on a plain many hundred feet below the level of Jerusalem, and the road to which lay in part through a rocky wilderness, which was in those days (as Joseph vouches) more beset by robbers than any other road in Palestine. This man was attacked by thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, which is at this day almost always done by Eastern robbers, because the loose clothes of the Orientals can be worn by almost any person of average stature into whose hands they come.

And they not only stripped him, but as he had made some resistance, they handled him so severely, that he lay by the roadside half dead with wounds and bruises. Jericho was then a great station for the priests, and priests and Levites were continually passing on the road to and from Jerusalem. A priest, who had been at Jerusalem offering up prayers for the safety of the people, came hard upon the wounded man on his return home; "but when he saw him, he passed by on the other side."

Soon after a Levite passed on his way to Jerusalem: he stopped, and even drew nigh and looked upon the poor wretch; but he also went on without rendering assistance to

one whom he could not have but recognized as a Jew, and as such a "neighbor," to whom the law required him to show mercy. Next came a Samaritan, one of the people between whom and the Jews an inexorable enmity existed. But he paused not to consider this. Although in haste, and on horseback, he instantly alighted; and hastened to comfort him with wine, and to mollify his stiffening sores with oil. He then placed him carefully upon his own beast, and led him tenderly to the nearest inn, where he left him in charge of the keeper to provide for his wants, with the words, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." This was genuine compassion.

Who Was the Neighbor?

When he had concluded this parable, Jesus pointedly asked the questioner, "Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?" He could not but answer, "He that showed mercy on him;" to which Jesus rejoined, "Go thou and do likewise."

About this time the seventy disciples returned to their Master from the mission on which they had been sent. "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name," was their exulting report to Him. He replied, "Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." But to repress in them all pride and conceit, in these preternatural gifts, and to correct the notion that these formed their greatest honor, He added—"Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

The future life is here brought forward under the image of an earthly commonwealth, in which the names of citizens were inscribed in a book, from which were occasionally expunged the names of those who were thought unworthy, and who thereby lost their civil rights. The image which ascribes such a book to God is frequent in the Bible.

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN.—Luke x. 33.

We cannot, of course, suppose that the seventy returned in a body, but that from time to time, two and two, as Jesus approached the various cities and villages whither He had sent them, they came to give Him an account of their success. And that success was such as to fill their simple hearts with astonishment and exultation. Though He had given them no special commission to heal demoniacs, though in one conspicuous instance even the apostles had failed in this attempt, yet now they could cast out devils in their Master's name.

Jesus, while entering into their joy, yet checked the tone of over-exultation, and rather turned it into a nobler and holier channel. He bade them feel sure that good was eternally mightier than evil; and that the victory over Satan—his fall like lightning from heaven—had been achieved and should continue forever. Over all evil influences He gave them authority and victory, and the word of His promise should be an amulet to protect them from every source of harm. They should go upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon should they tread under feet; because He had set His love upon them, therefore would He deliver them: He would set them up because they had known His name. And yet there was a subject of joy more deep and real and true—less dangerous because less seemingly personal and conspicuous than this—on which He rather fixed their thoughts: it was that their names had been written, and stood unobliterated, in the Book of Life in heaven. This was occasion for rejoicing.

The Pharisee and Publican.

And besides the gladness inspired in the heart of Jesus by the happy faith and unbounded hope of His disciples, He also rejoiced in spirit that, though rejected and despised by scribes and Pharisees, He was loved and worshiped by publicans and sinners. The poor to whom He preached His Gospel—the blind whose eyes He had come to open—the sick whom He had come to heal—the lost whom it was His mission to seek and save;—

these all thronged with heartfelt and pathetic gratitude to the Good Shepherd, the Great Physician.

The scribes and Pharisees as usual murmured, but what mattered that to the happy listeners? To the weary and heavy-laden He spoke in every varied form of hope, of blessing, of encouragement. By the parable of the importunate widow He taught them the duty of faith, and the certain answer to ceaseless and earnest prayer.

By the parable of the haughty, respectable, fasting, alms-giving, self-satisfied Pharisee—who, going to make his boast to God in the Temple, went home less justified than the poor publican, who could only reiterate one single cry for God's mercy as he stood there beating his breast, and with downcast eyes—He taught them that God loves better a penitent humility than a merely external service, and that a broken heart and a contrite spirit were sacrifices which He would not despise. Nor was this all. He made them feel that they were dear to God; that, though erring children, they were His children still.

There was soon another opportunity for Jesus to enter a practical protest against the notions concerning the Sabbath which in His time were entertained. He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath-day, when He noticed the presence of a woman who was doubled up by a disease under which she had been suffering for eighteen years. He called the afflicted creature before Him, and when He laid His sacred hands upon her, her bent body became straight, and she glorified God.

The ruler of the synagogue was filled with indignation by this act, which he regarded as a profanation of the holy day; and he said to the people, "There are six days on which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day." The severe answer of the benevolent Saviour rebuked him for thinking it a matter of small importance that the afflicted should be relieved one day sooner from their sorrows. "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the

Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to the watering; and ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?" No one could answer this.

The Mustard Seed.

Soon after, Christ took occasion to compare the small beginnings and eventual extension of "the kingdom of God," meaning the church, to a grain of mustard-seed, "which a man took and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it." He again compared it to leaven, "which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." These familiar comparisons, certain to be remembered, were prophetic in their purport, and would be called to mind with much interest, when the result which they indicate had been realized—when the seed became a great tree, and when the morsel had leavened the whole mass.

It was probably on the next Sabbath that Christ dined in the house of a Pharisee, and took notice of the manifest anxiety of the guests to secure the most honorable places. This is, at the present day, a matter of vast solicitude and importance among the Orientals, the rank and estimation of a man being determined by the place which he occupies; and that among the Jews there were frequent disputes about seats at a banquet, we learn from Josephus and the Rabbinical writers.

JESUS, with the freedom which belonged to His character and office, reprehended this practice, and proceeded to inculcate the superior merits of those who feasted the afflicted and needy, over those who bestowed their feasts only on those from whom they expected a corresponding return. He does not in this prohibit the reciprocation of hospitality among the rich; but He prefers the acts of beneficence which are performed without the hope of reward. Some one on this remarked, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," by which he probably intended

to express the blessedness of those who should live in the kingdom which he believed the Messiah was to establish on the earth.

To this Jesus replied in the striking parable of the great supper, the obvious intention of which is to reprove the prejudices which, from notions of secular felicity and grandeur, the nation in general entertained on this subject, in consequence of which, that which they, in prospect, regarded as a period so full of blessing to themselves, would, when present, be exceedingly neglected and despised.

The parable describes a person as making a good supper to which a large number of friends were invited. When all things were ready, the servants were, according to custom, sent to call the persons previously invited. But they all excused themselves on one ground or another. One said he had bought (conditionally) a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it; and another, that he had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go and prove them. These excuses allude to a custom of proving articles during a treaty for their purchase. Another alleged that he had "married a wife, and therefore could not come."

The Lost Sheep.

These excuses might be very good separately taken, and on their own merits; but agreement among all the guests to excuse themselves showed much disrespect for the host, and a disposition to undervalue him and the feast which he had provided. And thus he felt it; for he was wroth, and commanded his servants to bring in from the streets and highways the destitute, the afflicted, the poor, and the miserable, that they might enjoy the feast which the invited guests had refused. The application of this parable, under the considerations which have been indicated, is obvious, and must have been exceedingly galling to the auditors.

Not long after this, Christ, finding that He had incurred the blameful sneers of the Pharisees, on account of the number of "publicans and sinners" who flocked to hear Him, explained and justified His conduct in several

striking parables. In the first He describes a man possessing a flock of a hundred sheep, and when one of them has gone astray, proceeds in search of it, and when it was found, lays it on his shoulders (after a custom of the Jewish shepherds which is still common in the East), and returns home exulting more in the one sheep he had recovered than in the ninety and nine which he had not lost.

The beauty of these references to the shepherd and the sheep must be evident to all.

the Old Testament had for their occupation the tending of sheep. David, the renowned king of Israel, was summoned from the fields, and, with the glow of health upon his cheek, and the mark of the shepherd's crook still upon his hand, he was called to the high sphere which he filled so illustriously. It is easy to see that Jesus in His endeavor to convey to the minds of the people some knowledge of the great things He came to teach, would be likely to draw illustrations from the flock, the



FINDING THE LOST SHEEP.—Luke xv. 4.

The Great Teacher always drew His illustrations and parables from objects which were most familiar to the Jewish mind. He does not wander far into abstractions and metaphysics; He is not among the clouds of speculation while His hearers are on earth, living a practical life.

The office and duties of the shepherd were well known in Palestine at this time, even as they are at the present day. Some of those who stand among the illustrious characters of

fold and the shepherd. And perhaps none of His utterances are more beautiful and suggestive than those which deal with this common occupation. It is not a little significant that the first announcement of the Saviour's birth in Bethlehem, that event which has stirred the world ever since, was made by the angelic chorus to those who were guarding their flocks by night.

Here we have a parable so simple and captivating that a child can understand it, while at

the same time there is a depth of meaning in it sufficient to interest the wisest sage. "If one poor, wayward sheep go astray, what man is there among you who would not leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost?" That one poor sheep which we would naturally think would hardly be missed from the fold, is the very one that the shepherd seeks and is anxious to recover. For the time being he appears to have forgotten the ninety and nine, and his whole thought is fixed upon the one that has gone astray. And he is willing to search for it, is ready to submit to the toil and weariness of that search, and cannot rest until the lost one is found.

The Anxious Pursuit.

Across the fields, down through the dales, over the rugged slopes, through brambles and bushes, he presses on, casting his eager eye to the right and the left, hoping at every moment that he will hear the plaintive bleat, or discover the sheep that has departed from the fold. Hours he spends; it may be that even the sun sets and the stars come out; but neither rugged hills nor lowering night can turn him back from his anxious pursuit. At length, after searching long and wearily, he is rewarded by finding the sheep that was lost.

One of the most exquisite touches in this remarkable parable is brought out in the words, "He laid it on his shoulders rejoicing." The shepherd is not represented as ill-treating the sheep; he does not beat nor bruise it; rather is there great rejoicing in his heart, as when friend has met with friend. His treatment might have been far otherwise, but all this is resolutely excluded from the parable. Perhaps the wanderer by this time is faint and weary, but the shepherd has a strength which he is ready to supply.

Carefully he lifts it, places it upon his shoulder, and turns his footsteps homeward. He is not happy that his sheep has been lost, but he rejoices in the fact that it is found. With lighter footstep now he moves across the fields, and, though heavy the burden may be upon his back, he is not represented as laying

it down. His return is different from his going, happier by far. Ninety and nine he left behind him; now the hundredth is brought back, and he finds a greater joy in this restored one than in all the others.

The interior meaning of this parable is sufficiently plain. There were those who considered themselves righteous, who had a very high opinion of themselves, and who considered that no particular fault could be found with their lives. They were puffed up in their own conceit, and did not think for a moment that they had any need of righteousness beyond what they possessed already. One who owns himself a poor penitent, one wanderer from the fold of the Great Shepherd, lost on the mountains, weary and sad nigh to death, having been found in his extremity of suffering, brings by his return a satisfaction deep and inexpressible. Very vivid are the colors of this picture—the scene drawn by a masterly hand. Very graphic is the language and very sweet is the meaning which it conveys. Unique among all human utterances, whether of Platos, or Homers, or Shakespeares, is this simple illustration, this scene by the wayside, this fascinating picture among the craggy hills and under the skies of the Orient.

The Prodigal Son.

The next parable has the same scope. In it a woman possessed of ten pieces of silver loses one of them, and proceeds to light a candle, and sweeps the house, searching diligently till she has found it; and when it is found, rejoicing in that one piece.

The parable of the prodigal son, which next follows, has the same general purport with the others, teaching that God would have no one perish, but willingly receives those who repent of their sins, and grants them His forgiveness. In this beautiful parable, which has all the air of a fact from common life, and which might easily be such, Jesus represents a wealthy landholder having two sons.

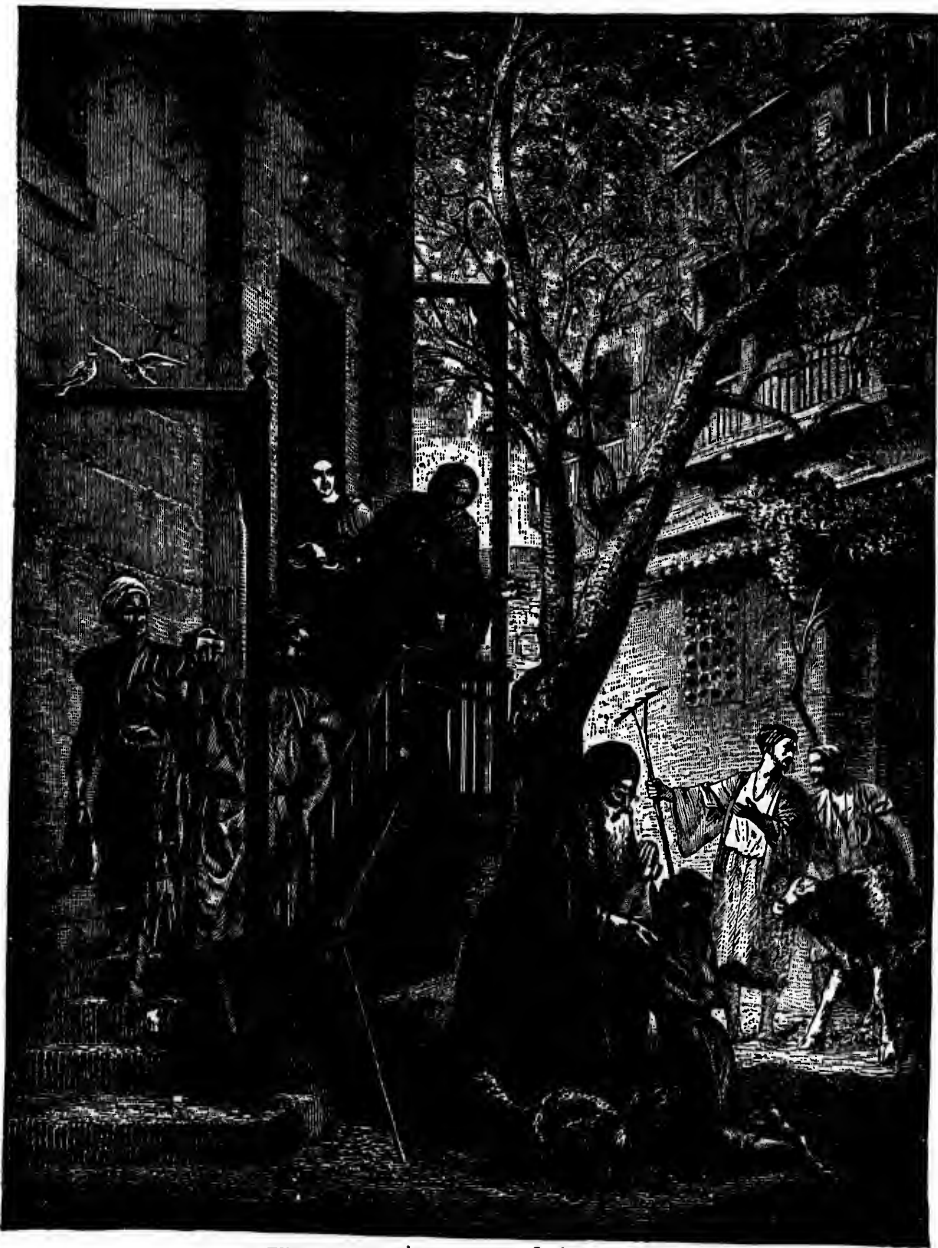
The younger of them, full of animal spirits, and impatient of the restraints of his father's house, obtains from him his share of the patri-

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THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.—Luke xv. 20.

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mony, and hastens away to a distant place, where he may take his fill of sensual pleasures without notice or control. Soon, all his ample means were wasted in riotous living, "and he began to be in want." At the same time a famine arose in the land; the gay companions of his pleasures departed from him, and he had no resource but to hire himself out as a swineherd to "a citizen of that country." The famine made provisions scarce and dear, and his employment kept not from him the pangs of hunger, so that very often he would fain have appeased his appetite with the coarse fruits of the carob-tree, which were given to his hogs, and which none but the poorest of human beings eat.

Thus degraded, thus miserable, the youth at length "came to himself," for he had been morally insane before: and then he thought of the blessings of his father's house, the hired servants in which had bread enough and to spare, while he was perishing with hunger. This brought him to the resolution—"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The Compassionate Father.

He did as he had said. When he drew nigh to his father's house, he doubtless considered much of the manner in which he should make his approach: but he needed not; for his father, with the true instinct of paternal love, knew the wretched prodigal "while he was yet a great way off;" and he was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. The son began to confess his unworthiness; but the only answer of the father was to tell his servants—"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

In the height of their rejoicing, the elder

brother (representing the Pharisees) came in from the fields; and when he understood the cause of this unwonted gladness, he was offended and would not enter the house; and when his father came out to him he complained that, while his faithful services and steady conduct had obtained no reward, no sooner did his wasteful brother return than the fatted calf had been killed for him. The glad father answered, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Never certainly in human language was so much—such a world of love and wisdom and tenderness—compressed into such few immortal words. Every line, every touch of the picture is full of beautiful eternal significance.

The poor boy's presumptuous claim for all that life could give him—the leaving of the old home—the journey to a far country—the brief spasm of "enjoyment" there—the mighty famine in that land—the premature exhaustion of all that could make life noble and endurable—the abysmal degradation and unutterable misery that followed—the coming to himself, and recollection of all that he had left behind—the return in heart-broken penitence and deep humility—the father's far-off sight of him, and the gush of compassion and tenderness over this poor returning prodigal—the ringing joy of the whole household over him who had been loved and lost, and had now come home—the unjust jealousy and mean complaint of the elder brother—and then that close of the parable in a strain of music—all this is indeed a Divine epitome of the wandering of man and the love of God such as no literature has ever equalled, such as no ear of man has ever heard elsewhere.

Put in the one scale all that Confucius, or Zoroaster, or Socrates ever wrote or said—and they wrote and said many beautiful and holy words—and put in the other the parable of the prodigal son alone, with all that this single parable suggests and means, and can any candid spirit doubt which scale would

outweigh the other in eternal preciousness—record of it which the evangelist Luke has
 in Divine adaptation to the wants of man? happily preserved. We seem to hear through-
 So this great journey grew gradually to a out it an undertone of that deep yearning



close. The awful solemnity—the shadow, as it were, of coming doom—the half-uttered “too late” which might be dimly heard in its tones of warning—characterize the single which Jesus had before expressed—“I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!” It was a sorrow for all the broken peace

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and angry opposition which His work would cause on earth—a sense that He was prepared to plunge into the "willing agony" of the already kindled flame. And this seems to have struck the minds of all who heard Him; they had an expectation, fearful or glad according to the condition of their consciences, of something great. Some new manifestation—some revelation of the thoughts of men's hearts—was near at hand. At last the Pharisees summoned up courage to ask Him "when the kingdom of God should come?" There was a certain impatience, possibly also a tinge of sarcasm and depreciation in the question, as though they had said, "When is all this preaching and preparation to end, and the actual time to arrive?"

His answer, as usual, indicated that their point of view was wholly mistaken. The coming of the kingdom of God could not be ascertained by the kind of narrow and curious watching to which they were addicted. False Christs and mistaken Rabbis might cry, "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" but that kingdom was already in the midst of them; nay, if they had the will and the wisdom to recognize and to embrace it, that kingdom was within them.

That answer was sufficient to the Pharisees, but to His disciples He added words which implied the fuller explanation. Even they did not fully realize that the kingdom had already come. Their eyes were strained forward in intense and yearning eagerness to some glorious future, but in the future, glorious as it would be, they would still look backward with yet deeper yearning, not unmingled with regret, to this very past—to these days of the Son of man, in which they were seeing and their hands handling the Word of Life.

In those days, let them not be deceived by any "Lo there! Lo here!" nor let them waste in feverish and fruitless restlessness the calm and golden opportunities of life. For that coming of the Son of man should be bright, sudden, terrible, universal, irresistible as the lightning flash; but before that day He must suffer and be rejected. Moreover, that

gleam of His second advent would flame upon the midnight of a sensual, unexpected world, as the flood rolled over the festive sensualism in the days of Noah, and the fire and brimstone streaming from heaven upon the glittering rottenness of the cities of the plain.

Jesus then addressed more particularly to His own disciples, some of whom were wealthy, the parable of the unjust steward, with the view of inculcating the true use of riches, and how they might be employed so as to ensure advantage from them in a future state. As, however, the parable describes a dishonest contrivance of the steward to gratify his lord's debtors at his expense, that they might thereby be induced to support him when dismissed from his stewardship, the moral, or application, is to be adduced, not from the act itself, which was culpable, but from the anxiety which the man felt to make his present means available for his future good.

The Slave of Mammon.

Jesus here showed His disciples the necessity of care and faithfulness, of prudence and wisdom, in so managing the affairs and interests and possessions of this life as not to lose hereafter their heritage of the eternal riches. It was impossible—such was the recurrent burden of so many discourses—to be at once worldly and spiritual; to be at once the slave of God and the slave of mammon. With the supreme and daring paradox which impressed His Divine teaching on the heart and memory of the world, He urged them to the foresight of a spiritual wisdom by an example drawn from the foresight of a criminal cleverness. If such immense and needless difficulties had not been raised about this parable, it would have seemed almost superfluous to say that the point held up for imitation in the steward is not his injustice and extravagance, but the foresight with which he anticipated, and the skill with which he provided against, his ultimate difficulties. It really seems as if commentators were so perplexed by the parable as hardly to have got beyond Julian's foolish idea that it sanctions cheating!

What can be clearer than the very simple deductions? This steward, having been a bad dishonesty: be ye faithful stewards, and show the same diligence, purpose, sagacity, in sub-



THE UNJUST STEWARD.—Luke xvi. 1.

steward, showed diligence, steady purpose, and clear sagacity in his dishonest plan for extricating himself from the consequences of past ordinating the present and the temporal to the requirements of the eternal and the future. Just as the steward made himself friends of

the tenants, who, when his income failed, received him into their houses, so do ye use your wealth—and time, opportunity, knowledge, is wealth, as well as money—for the good of your fellow-men; that when you leave earth poor and naked, these fellow-men may welcome you to treasures that never fail.

Thrift Commended.

The lesson is, in fact, the same as in the famous traditional saying of Christ, "Show yourselves approved money-changers." The parables of the unjust judge and the importunate suitor show quite as clearly as this parable that the lesson conveyed by a parable may be enforced by principles of contrast, and may involve no commendation of those whose conduct conveys the lesson. It is very probable that both these parables were drawn from circumstances which had recently occurred.

The importance of this parable is such that the reader will be pleased to get the comments upon it of Dr. Geikie, the celebrated author of the "Life and Words of Christ." Jesus is represented as saying:

"A certain rich man had a steward, to whom he left the entire charge of his affairs. He learned, however, from some sources, that this man was acting dishonestly by him, and scattering his goods; so he called him and let him know what he had heard, telling him, at the same time, to make out and settle all his accounts, as he could no longer hold his office.

A Shrewd Scheme.

"The steward, knowing that he was guilty, was at a loss what to do. 'I cannot dig,' said he, to himself, 'for I have not been accustomed to it, and I am ashamed to beg.' At last he hit on a plan which he thought would serve his end, and at once set himself to carry it out. Going to all his master's tenants, one by one, he asked each how much rent or dues he had to pay, though, in fact, he knew all this beforehand. When told, he pretended to have been commissioned, in compliance with his own suggestion, to lower the amount in each case; and he thus secured the favor of all. For

example, he went to one and asked him, 'How much owest thou to my lord?' and when told 'A hundred pipes of oil,' bade him take back his bill, and write another, instead, for fifty. A second, who owed a hundred quarters of wheat, he told to make out a fresh writing with only eighty. In this way, by leading them to think him their benefactor, he made sure of friends, who would open their houses to him when he had been dismissed.

"Some time after, when his master heard how cleverly he had secured his own ends, he could not help admiring his shrewdness. And, in truth, it is a fact, that bad men like this steward—the sons of this world, not of the next—are wiser in their dealings with their fellows than the sons of light—my disciples—are in theirs with their brethren, sons of my heavenly kingdom, like themselves.

"As the master of that steward commended him for his prudence, though it was so worldly and selfish, I, also, must commend to you a prudence of a higher kind in your relations to the things of this life. By becoming my disciples, you have identified yourselves with the interests of another Master than Mammon, the god of this world—whom you have hitherto served—and have before you another course and aim in life. You will be represented to your former master as no longer faithful to him, for my service is so utterly opposed to that of Mammon that, if faithful to me, you cannot be faithful to him, and he will, in consequence, assuredly take your stewardship of this world's goods from you—that is, sink you in poverty, as I have often said.

"I counsel you, therefore, so to use the goods of Mammon—the worldly means still at your command—that, by a truly worthy distribution of them to your needy brethren—and my disciples are mostly poor—you may make friends for yourselves, who, if they die before you, will welcome you to everlasting habitations in heaven, when you pass thither, at death. Fit yourselves, by labors of love and deeds of true charity, as my followers, to become fellow-citizens of the heavenly mansions with those whom you have relieved.

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"If you be faithful, thus, in the use of your possessions on earth, you will be deemed worthy by God to be entrusted with infinitely misused the lesser cannot hope to be entrusted with a greater. If you show in your life that you have not been faithful to God in the



greater riches hereafter, in heaven, for he that is faithful in this lesser stewardship has shown that he will be so in a higher, but he who has use of this world's goods, entrusted to you by Him to administer for His glory, how can you hope that He will commit to you keeping the

unspeakably grander trust of heavenly riches? If you have proved unfaithful in the stewardship of what was not yours—the worldly means lent you for a time by God—how can you hope to be honored with the great trust of eternal salvation, which would have been yours had you proved yourself fit for it?

“Be assured that if you do not use your early riches faithfully for God, by dispensing them as I have told you, you will never enter my heavenly kingdom at all. You will have shown that you are servants of Mammon, and not the servants of God; for it is impossible for any man to serve two masters.”

Open Derision.

Such unworldly counsels, so contrary to their own spirit, were received with contemptuous ridicule by the Pharisees standing round, as the mere dreams of a crazed enthusiast.

The love of money had become a characteristic of their decaying religiousness, and it seemed to them the wildest folly to advise the rich, as their truest wisdom, to use their wealth to make friends for the future world, instead of enjoying it here. It is quite possible, indeed, that some of them felt the words of Christ as a personal reproof, and were all the more embittered.

Patient as He was in the endurance of personal wrongs and insults, the indignation of Jesus was roused at such sneers at the first principles of genuine religion, and He, at once, with the calm fearlessness habitual to Him, exposed their hypocrisy and unsafeness as spiritual guides.

“You hold your heads high,” said He, “and affect to be saints, before men—such perfect patterns of piety, indeed, that you may judge all men by yourselves.

“But God, who knows all things, and judges, not by the outward appearance, but by the heart, knows how different you are in reality from what you make men believe. Your pretended holiness, which is so highly thought of by men, is an abomination before God. You ignore, or explain away the commands of His law, when they do not suit

you, and thus are mere actors, for true godliness honors the whole law. I condemn you on the one ground on which you claim to be most secure. You demand honor for your strict obedience to the law; I charge you with hypocrisy, for your design and deliberate corruption of that law, to suit yourselves.

The Law of Divorce.

“Sincerity is demanded from those who wish to serve God. That which Moses and the prophets so long announced—that to which all the Scriptures point, the kingdom of the Messiah—has come. From the time when the Baptist preached, that kingdom is no longer future, but is set up in your midst, and with what success? Every one presses with eagerness into it. But, as you know, I, its Head and King, make the most searching demands from those who would enter it, and open its citizenship only to those who are willing to overcome all difficulties to obtain it. You charge me with breaking the law, but, so far from doing so, I require that the whole law, in its truest sense, be obeyed by every one who seeks to enter the new kingdom. It is easier for heaven and earth, I tell men, to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to lose its force. But how different is it with you!

“Take the one single case of divorce. What loose examples does not the conduct of some of your own class supply? What conflicting opinions do you not give on the question? I claim that the words of the law be observed to the letter, and maintain, in opposition to your hollow morality, that any one who puts away his wife, except for adultery, and marries another, himself commits adultery, and that he who marries the woman thus divorced is also guilty of the same crime. Judge by this whether you or I most honor the law—whether you or I are the safer guides of the people. How God must despise your boasts of special zeal for His glory!”

Although Christ had been speaking to the apostles, some of the Pharisees seem to have been present and to have heard Him; and it

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is a characteristic fact that this teaching, more than any other, seems to have kindled their most undisguised derision. They began to treat Him with the most open and insolent disdain. And why? Because they were Pharisees, and yet were fond of money. Had not they, then, in their own persons, successfully solved the problem of "making the best of both worlds?" Who could doubt *their* perfect safety for the future? nay, the absolute certainty that they would be admitted to the "chief seats," the most distinguished and conspicuous places in the world to come? Were they not, then, standing witnesses of the absurdity of the supposition that the love of money was incompatible with the love of God?

Our Lord's answer to them is very much compressed by Luke, but consisted, first, in showing them that respectability of life is one thing, and sincerity of heart quite another. Into the new kingdom, for which John had prepared the way, the world's lowest were pressing, and were being accepted before them; the gospel was being rejected by them, though it was not the destruction, but the highest fulfilment of the law. Nay, even to the law itself, of which not one tittle should fail, they were faithless, for they could connive at the violation of its most distinct provisions.

In this He alluded, in all probability, to their relations to Herod Antipas, whom they were content to acknowledge and to flatter, and to whom not one of them had dared to use the brave language of reproach which had been used by John the Baptist, although by the clearest decisions of the law which they professed to venerate, his divorce from the daughter of Aretas was criminal, and his marriage with Herodias was doubly criminal, and worse.

Dives and Lazarus.

Then followed the grand and somewhat mysterious parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It represents a wealthy and luxurious personage, "clad in purple," which, although originally confined to royal and noble person-

ages, was, in the time of Christ, affected by the rich and opulent; "and in fine linen," which, being in those days used chiefly by women, was regarded as effeminate. The portal or porch of a great man's house was a usual resort of beggars; and at this rich man's gate was daily laid a beggar named Lazarus, who, as often happens with persons in his wretched condition, was "full of sores," the result of some cutaneous disorder brought on by hard fare and dirt.

He was thus brought to the rich man's gate, that he might be fed with the crumbs that fell from his table. This, it seems, he obtained from the servants, but nothing from the rich man himself—no kind inquiry, no notice, no attempt to alleviate his condition—although he must daily have observed this miserable object as he went in and out. How great that misery was, which this rich man deigned not to notice, is shown by the fact that the street dogs came and licked the sores of Lazarus, which shows that they were open sores, and that they were not "either closed, or bound up, or mollified with ointment."

An Impassable Gulf.

In course of time the rich man and the poor man died; and then their conditions were reversed. Lazarus—poor no more, no more full of sores—"was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom," that is, to the society of Abraham in heaven; while the rich man lay in fiery torments afar off. In this painful condition he implored that Lazarus might be sent with one drop of water to cool his parched and burning tongue. Abraham replied, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." This is expressed conformably to the notions of the Hebrews, who used the phrase "receiveth his world" for a course of secular felicity, and were wont to say, "He who shall pass forty days without chastisements has received his world, a full abundant reward for all the good he hath done here."

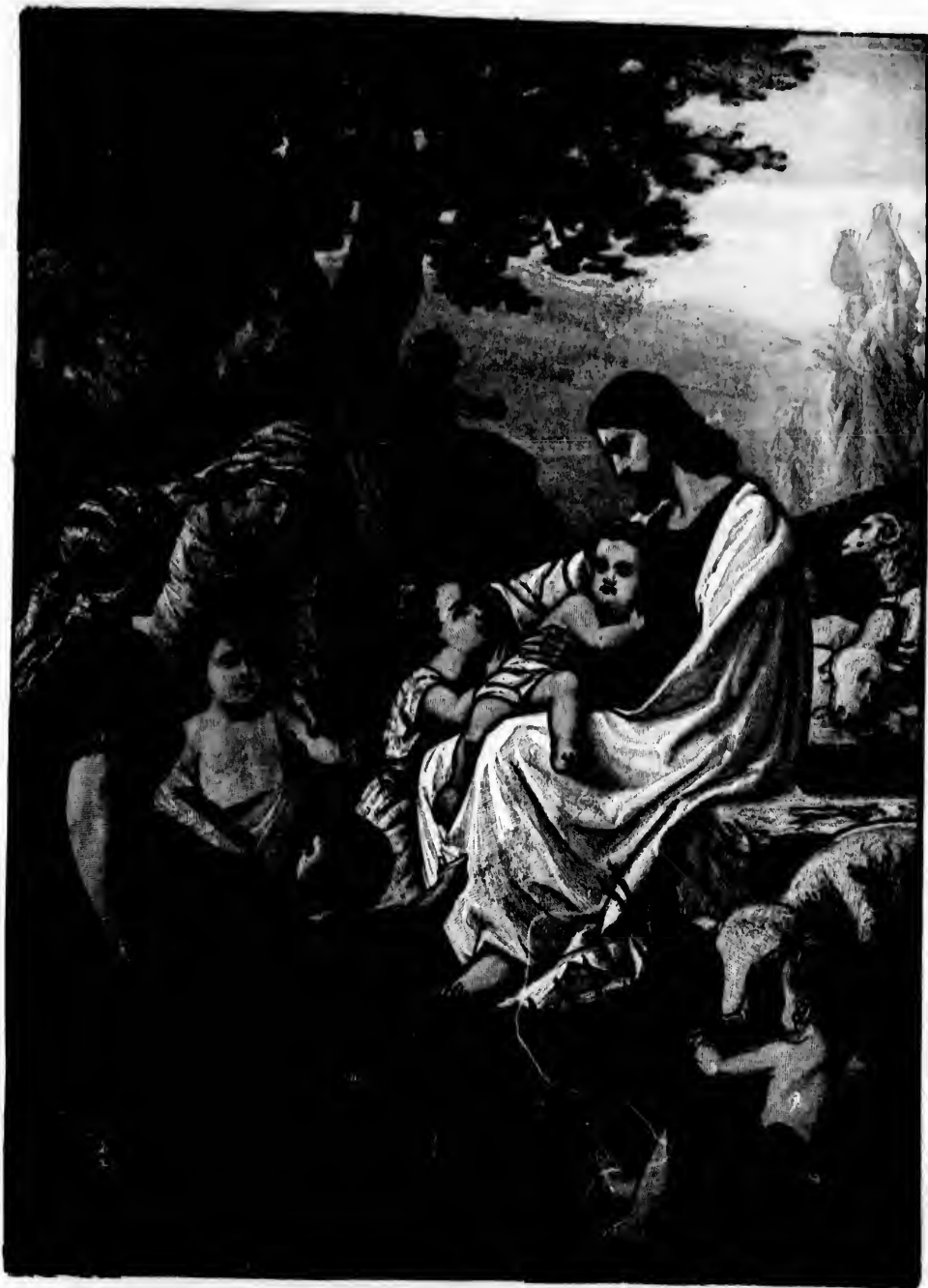
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existed in the "great chasm," impassable to either party, which lay between them. On hearing this, the wretched soul's thoughts then took another direction, and he implored Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brethren, still living in his father's house (which implies that he had himself died young), to warn them lest they also should come to that place of torment. Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." But the other urged, "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent;" a common but most erroneous belief, to which Abraham cogently and truly answered, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." As Doddridge remarks, "The impenitence of many who saw another Lazarus raised from the dead, and the wickedness of the soldiers who were eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and yet that very day suffered themselves to be hired to bear false testimony against it, are most affecting and astonishing illustrations of this truth."

After this Jesus addressed His disciples in sundry discourses, in which He taught them to avoid giving cause of offence, and to be forgiving and merciful to one another, even under repeated provocation. The disciples then, having been taught so much respecting charity and benevolence towards men, expressed a desire to be taught also concerning faith towards God, of which He had so often spoken to them, and that they might have more of that faith imparted to them, to which He had so often alleged all things to be possible.

Approaching Conflicts.

It may be while He was resting with them in the cool of the evening, the incidents of the whole day were passed in review, and Jesus noticed that the words and bearing of His opponents, respect for whom, as the teachers of the nation, was instinctive with every Jew, had not been without their effect even on His disciples. It was evident that the very nature of His demands—the trials and persecutions to come, and the weakness of human nature—

would raise moral hindrances to the full and abiding loyalty of not a few.

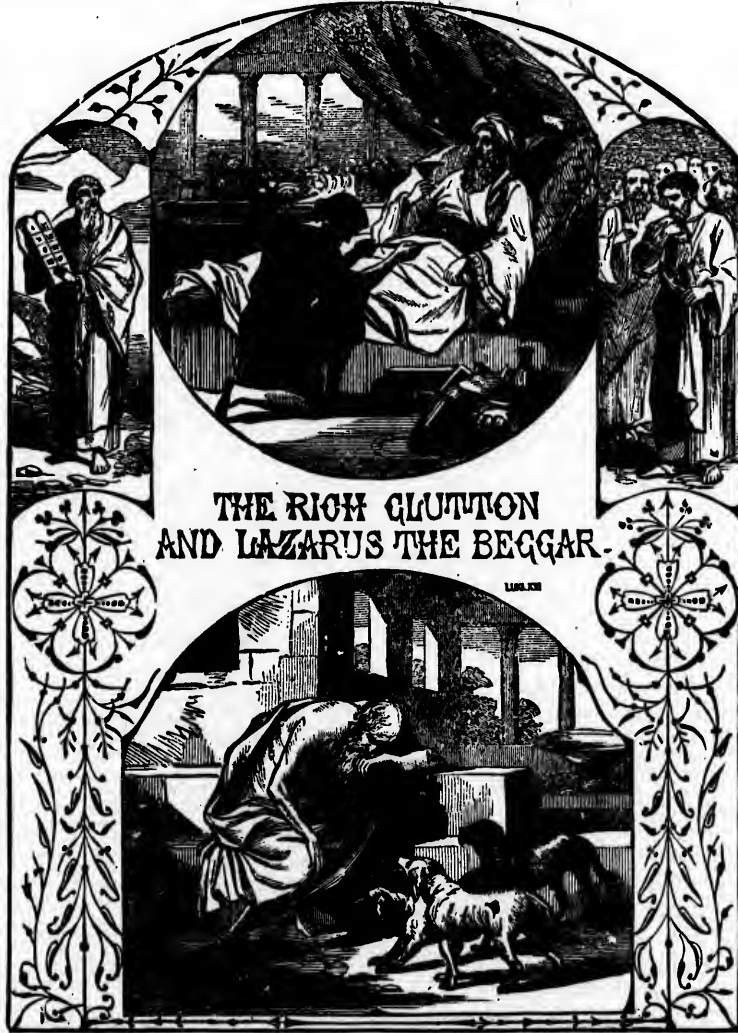
By way of caution, therefore, He now warned them on this point. "It is impossible," said He, "to prevent divisions, disputes, and even desertion and apostasy, on the part of some of you, in the evil times to come. Misrepresentation, prejudice, the bent of different minds; the weakness of some, and the unworthiness of others, will inevitably produce their natural results. The progress of my kingdom will, I foresee, be hindered more or less from this cause, but it cannot be avoided. Yet, woe to him who thus hinders the spread and glory of the Truth. It were better for him, if, like the worst criminal, he were bound to a heavy millstone, and cast into the sea, than that he should cause a single simple child-like soul, who believes in me, to fall. Take heed that you neither mislead nor are misled! Remember that I tell you that offences must be prevented or removed by a lowly, forgiving spirit on your part. You know how far you are yet from this; how strong pride, love of your own opinion, harshness, and impatience, still are in your hearts. To further my kingdom when I am gone, strive above-all things for peace and love among yourselves.

Love and Forgiveness.

"The one grand means of avoiding these causes of offence and spiritual ruin is unwearied, forgiving love; by that frame of mind which you see so wholly wanting in the Rabbis, that they have even now murmured at my so much as speaking to sinners, from whom such simple, lowly brethren are to be gathered. If such an one sin against you, and turn away from your fellowship, rebuke him for his sin, but if he see his error and repent of it, and come back, forgive him; aye, even if he wrong you seven times in a day, and feel and acknowledge his error and promise amendment, as often, you must each time forgive him freely."

The twelve had listened to these counsels with intense interest, but their moral grandeur almost discouraged them. They felt that

nothing is harder than constant patience and meekness. They had talked over the whole loving humility—never returning evil for evil, matter, and saw only one source of strength, but ever ready to forgive, even when repeat- Coming to their Master, full of confidence in



edly injured without cause. It needed, as His Divine power to grant their request, they they feared, stronger faith than they yet had, openly, and with a sweet humility, prayed to create such an abiding spirit of tender Him that He would increase their faith.

"This request," answered Jesus, "shows that faith, in a true and worthy sense, is yet to be begun in your hearts. If you had it, even in a small measure, or, to use a phrase you hear every day, as a grain of mustard-seed, instead of finding obedience to these counsels too difficult, you would undertake and perform even apparent impossibilities—acts of trust which demand the highest spiritual power and strength.

Master and Servant.

"To such efficiency and eminence in my service will true faith in me lead you: but beware, amidst all, of any thought of merit of your own. Your faith must grow, and cannot be given as a mere bounty from without: it is a result of your own spiritual development and true humility, which looks away from self to me, as the one condition of this advancement. You shall have the increased faith you seek, but it will be only by your continued loving dependence on me, your Master.

"If any of you had a servant ploughing or tending your flock, would you say to him when he comes home from the field in the evening, 'Come near immediately, and sit down to meat?' Would you not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, and make yourself fit to wait on me at table, and after I have supped, you shall eat and drink?' Would you think yourself under obligation to the servant because he has been working for you, or because he waits on you as required? Assuredly not, for your servant had only done what it was right he should do as a servant. Be, you, such servants. There is a daily work, with prescribed tasks, required from you.

"The great supper will not be till this life is ended; but when it is ended, you must not think of yourselves, on account of it, except as becomes servants; and should you be rewarded or honored, you must not forget that it is only from my free favor, and not as payment of any claim; because, in fact, you have done only what it was your duty, as servants, to do. The servant who does less than his

duty, is guilty before his master, but he who has done his duty, though he has avoided blame, has no reason to think himself entitled to reward. Feel, therefore, in any case, that your work has not been beyond your rightful duty, and that, though you have escaped condemnation, you have no claim for any merit."

The hostility of the Rabbis was growing daily more bitter, after each fruitless attack. At each town or village they gathered round Him, and harassed Him at every step by attempts to compromise Him with the authorities.

On one of these last days of His journey towards Jerusalem, a knot of Pharisees had, thus, forced themselves on Him, and sought to elicit something that might serve them, by asking Him:

"Master, you have often represented yourself, both by words and by mighty deeds, as the Messiah, but we see no signs as yet of the coming of the kingdom of God. When will it come? It has been long promised."

The New Kingdom.

"The kingdom of God," answered Jesus, "is something entirely different from what you expect. You look for a great political revolution, and the establishment of a Jewish empire, with its capital in Jerusalem. Instead of this it is a spiritual kingdom, in the hearts and consciences of men, and, as such, cannot come with the outward display and circumstance of earthly monarchy, so that men may say, 'Lo, here is the kingdom of God,' or, 'Lo, there.' The coming of the kingdom develops itself unobserved. I cannot, therefore, give you any moment when it may be said to have come, for, in fact, it is already in your midst. I, the Messiah, live and work amongst you, and where the Messiah is, there is His kingdom."

The malevolent question thus met a reply which at once balked curiosity, and laid on all the most solemn responsibilities; for, if the Messiah was really among them, how imperative to fit themselves for entering His kingdom! The interrogators presently left, and Jesus resumed the subject with His disciples.

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"I have only spoken to these men," said He, "of the growth and development of my kingdom, unseen, and silently, in the hearts of men. To you I would now speak of the future. Days will come when trouble shall make men's hearts long for one of the days of the Son of man back again, and false Messiahs will arise, pretending to bring deliverance. But when they say to you, 'Lo, there is the Messiah come at last,' 'Lo, here He is,' go not out after them; do not follow them. For the coming of the Son of man will be as sudden, as striking to all eyes, as mighty in its power, as when the lightning leaps from the cloud and suddenly sets the whole heavens in flame. There is no need of asking of the lightning, 'Where is it?' or for any to tell you of it.

"But this coming will not be now. I must first suffer many things for this generation, and be rejected by it. Far from approaching with slow, royal pomp, seen and welcomed from afar; far from the world hailing my coming, and preparing for it, as for that of an expected king; they will be busied in their ordinary affairs when it is nearest; till, suddenly, wide ruin and judgment burst on them, as the flood on the men of the days of Noah, and the fire from heaven on Sodom, in the days of Lot, bringing destruction on all. Men lived in security then; they ate and drank; they married and gave in marriage, with no thought or preparation for the impending catastrophe.

Startling Predictions.

"It will be the same at my coming. Men will be as secure; the day will burst on them as suddenly, when I shall be revealed in my glory. When it comes, there will be an awful and instant separation of man from man. The good and evil will no longer be mixed together. He who would save himself must, on the moment, part from them whom the peril threatens. He who lives in a town, must, as the destruction approaches, so hasten his flight, that if he be on the housetop when it draws near, he must not think of going into the house to save anything, but must flee, at the

loss of all earthly possessions. He who is in the open field, must not turn back to his house for his goods, but must leave all behind him, and escape with his life. You hear my words; see that, in that day, you give heed to them. Remember Lot's wife, who perished for looking back, in disobedience to the Divine command. Whosoever, in that day, shall seek to preserve his life, by unfaithfulness to me, shall lose life eternal, and he who loses this life for my sake, will secure heaven for ever."

Jesus continued to instruct His disciples. To their remarkable words, "Increase our faith," He replied by the strong hyperbole, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine (sycamore) tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." Hyperboles like this, expressive of physical impossibilities were common among the Hebrews, and are to be taken not as literal propositions, but as illustrative expressions.

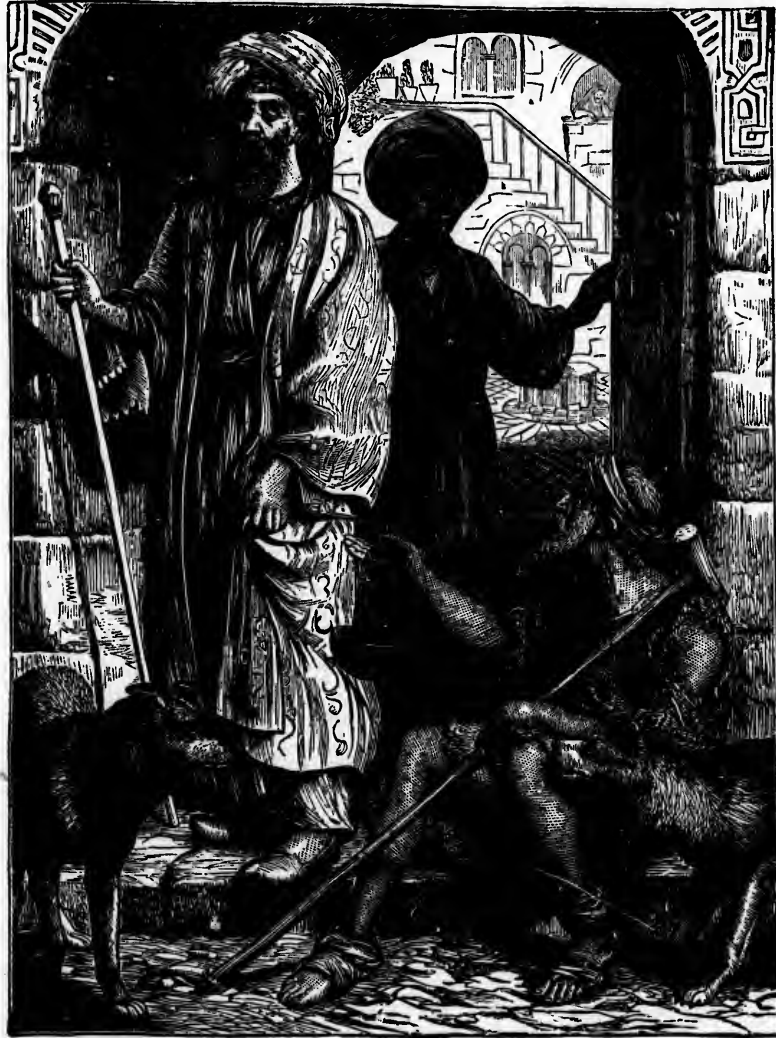
Sons of Thunder.

It seems that Christ had returned from Jerusalem to Galilee, where some of the above transactions occurred, for we next read that He is again about to journey to Jerusalem, probably to attend the feast of Dedication. As His object was to preach the gospel on His journey, He sent messengers before Him as He went through Galilee and Samaria; and we cannot question that the intelligence of the coming of the Prophet of Nazareth drew large audiences to hear His utterances and to witness His miracles. Once they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him; but, as He was on the way to one of the feasts, they refused to receive him.

The annual festivals at Jerusalem were odious to this people, who believed that they ought to be celebrated at their own temple on Mount Gerizim, and the feast of Dedication was particularly disliked by them, as it was of human institution, and they recognized no festivals or observances but such as Moses had established. This refusal awakened the indignation of the two sons of Zebedee—those

"sons of thunder"—and they said, "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down out of heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?"

At another village ten men who were lepers heard with joy of the approach of one by whom so many of their afflicted brotherhood had



LAZARUS AT THE RICH MAN'S GATE.—Luke xvi. 19.

did?" But He turned and rebuked them, saying, "The Son of man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." They had been made whole. Not being allowed to enter towns, or to mix with sound men, they stood afar off, outside the town, and as the Saviour

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drew nigh they cried loudly, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." A cry for mercy was never heard by Him in vain. Yet He did not immediately heal them, but, to try their faith, sent them to show themselves for examination by the priest, intending that they should be healed on the way. Believing that He could heal them, even when already gone, they turned their steps with glad hearts towards the holy city.

It is observed that Christ told them to go and show themselves to the *priests*; and as there was no need for one person to show himself to many priests, it is hence inferred that, the matter being one of merely medical jurisdiction, He sent those of the lepers who were Jews to Jerusalem, and those who were Samaritans to Mount Gerizim, to be inspected by their own priests. This is doubtful; but it is certain that they were perfectly cured as they proceeded on their way.

A Happy Company.

It is easy to conceive with Bishop Hall, "what an amazed joy there was among these lepers when they found themselves thus suddenly cured; each tells other what a change he feels in himself; each comforts other with the assurance of his outward clearness; each congratulates other's happiness, and thinks, and says, 'How joyful this news will be to their friends and families!'" They hastened on their way to show themselves to the priest and claim the certificate of recovery, which would restore them to the society of men and to the pleasant intercourse of life.

There was among them one only whose grateful emotions overcame for the moment even this natural desire to realize the privileges of his new condition; and he who returned to thank his deliverer was a Samaritan. Jesus could not but remark on this circumstance. He said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"

Soon after this, some of the Pharisees took occasion to question Him when the kingdom of God would come. By this they doubtless meant the manifestation of the Messiah as a

conqueror and king; and from the tenor of His answers we may infer that the question was asked in some derision of His own claims. He told them in reply, that the Son of man would not come with any of the external show and pomp which they expected. He then more particularly addressed His own disciples, and warned them of the impostors who should hereafter arise, claiming to be the Messiah, and seducing many to follow them to their ruin.

Then, in many striking comparisons, He illustrated the suddenness and effect of His coming to execute judgment upon the nation from which He was about "to suffer many things." "As it was in the days of Noah," He said, "so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, till the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

The Pharisee and Publican.

From this, by a natural transition, He passed to enjoin the importance of constant prayer and implicit reliance on the Divine assistance, in the parable of the importunate widow, who day after day urged an unjust and impious judge to do her justice upon her adversary. She could not upon the merits of her case or from his compassion obtain attention; but at length he did her the justice she required, for no other reason than to release himself from her worrying applications. "And," said Jesus, "shall not God," the just and merciful, who does not despise, but love "His own elect," repel all injury from them, even though He seem for a while regardless of their prayers?

Jesus having thus taught the importance and use of urgent prayer, proceeded to show by another parable the spirit in which prayer

should be offered. Two men went up to the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood wrapt in himself, and said, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other



THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.—Luke xviii. 1.

a publican. They both stood, no other post-men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—| or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, | kings, who were not forbidden to sit. But | I give tithes of all that I possess."

This he said silently, or "within himself," since the rest of the congregation, who might have supposed that he was praying for the welfare of the people, would have taken umbrage if they had discovered that he was only speaking evil of others. In his unuttered words he claimed a righteousness beyond the law, and rested with proud confidence upon it. The fasting twice in the week was not required by the law, but was observed by Pharisaic devotees; the title of *all* that he possessed was not exacted by the law, but was minutely and rigidly enforced by the Pharisees.

In this confidence of a claim on Heaven, the Pharisee had planted himself in the interior part of the Temple court, as near to the sanctuary as the regulations of Divine service would admit; but the publican humbly stood afar off in the outer borders of the Temple court, "and would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" "I tell you (added Jesus) that *this* man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

Jesus at Bethany.

It was not on the road from Galilee to Jerusalem, as some suppose, that Jesus was hospitably entertained in the house of Martha. She lived at Bethany, quite in an opposite quarter; which shows that Christ early visited the place after his arrival at Jerusalem, and perhaps lodged there, returning daily to the city, Bethany being only just on the other side of the Mount of Olives. Martha appears to have been a widow, with whom lived her sister Mary and her brother Lazarus. With this family Jesus was very intimate, and Lazarus, in particular, was favored with His friendship and love. They were all rejoiced to see Him again; and Martha, "on hospitable thoughts intent," busied herself in preparing for the entertainment of Him and His disciples. This was *her* way of showing her regard for Christ; but her sister Mary chose rather to remain near Him, that she might not lose the opportunity of profiting by His heavenly instructions and gracious words.

The task which Martha had imposed upon herself of providing handsomely for so large a party, suddenly arrived, was heavy, and its hurry and solicitude made her regard the course taken by her sister as idleness, and as neglect of a matter in which Christ and the friends He had brought with Him were essentially concerned. Confident that Jesus must view it in the same light, and must fully appreciate her bustling care for His entertainment, she ventured to complain to Him, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me." But how much was she astonished to hear Him answer, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about *many* things; but *one* thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." She could not but understand this pointed contrast of the many cares of this life, with that *one* matter of infinite concern to man—the salvation of his soul.

This scene suggests some very practical lessons. It was natural that there should be some stir in the little household at the coming of such a Guest, and Martha hurried to and fro with excited energy to prepare for His proper entertainment. Her sister Mary, too, was anxious to receive Him fittingly, but her notions of the reverence due to Him were of a different kind. Knowing her sister was only too happy to do all that could be done for His material comfort, she in deep humility sat at His feet and listened to His words.

The Sisters of Bethany.

Mary was not to blame, for her sister evidently enjoyed the task she had chosen of providing as best she could for the claims of hospitality, and was quite able, without any assistance, to do everything that was required. Nor was Martha to blame for her active service; her sole fault was that, in this outward activity, she lost the necessary equilibrium of an inward calm. As she toiled and planned to serve Him, a little touch of jealousy disturbed her peace as she saw her quiet sister sitting—"idly," she may have thought—at the

feet of their great Visitor, and leaving the trouble to fall on her.

If she had taken time to think, she could not but have acknowledged that there may have been as much of consideration as of selfishness in Mary's withdrawal into the background in their domestic administration; but to be just and noble-minded is always difficult, nor is it even possible when any one meanness, such as petty jealousy, is suffered to intrude. So, in the first blush of her vexation,

An imperfect soul, seeing what is good and great and true, but very often failing in the attempt to attain to it, is apt to be very hard in its judgments on the shortcomings of others. But a divine and sovereign soul—a soul that has more nearly attained to the measure of the stature of the perfect man—takes a calmer and gentler, because a larger-hearted view of those little weaknesses which it cannot but daily see. And so the answer of Jesus, if it were a reproof, was at any rate an infinitely



MARY AND MARTHA.—Luke x. 40.

instead of gently asking her sister to help her, if help, indeed, were needed—an appeal which, if we judge Mary aright, she would instantly have heard—Martha almost impatiently, and not quite reverently, hurries in, and asks Jesus if He really did not care to see her sister sitting there with her hands before her, while *she* was left single-handed to do all the work. Would He not tell Mary to go and help, and no longer sit idle?

gentle and tender one, and one which would purify but would not pain the poor, faithful heart of the busy, loving maiden to whom it was addressed.

“Martha, Martha,” so He said—and as we hear that most natural address may we not imagine the half-sad, half-playful, but wholly kind and healing smile which lightened His face?—“thou art anxious and bustling about many things, whereas but one thing is need-

ful; but Mary chose for herself the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Paul, as has well been said, in his most fervent activity, had yet the contemplativeness and inward calm of Mary; and John, with the most rapt spirit of contemplation, could yet practise the activity of Martha. Jesus did not mean to reprobate any amount of work undertaken in His service, but only the spirit of fret and fuss—the want of all repose and calm—the ostentation of superfluous hospitality—in doing it; and still more that tendency to reprobate and interfere with others, which is so often seen in Christians who are as anxious as Martha, but have none of Mary's holy trustfulness and perfect calm.

A Joyous Festival.

It is likely that Bethany was the home of Jesus during His visits to Jerusalem, and from it a short and delightful walk over the Mount of Olives would take Him to the Temple. As already remarked, it was now winter-time, and the feast of the Dedication was being celebrated. This feast, according to Wieseler, fell this year on December 20th. It was founded by Judas Maccabæus in honor of the cleansing of the Temple in the year B. C. 164, six years and a half after its fearful profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. Like the Passover and the Tabernacles, it lasted eight days, and was kept with great rejoicing. Besides its Greek name of Encænna, it had the name of "the Lights," and one feature of the festivity was a general illumination to celebrate the legendary miracle of a miraculous multiplication, for eight days, of the holy oil which had been found by Judas Maccabæus in one single jar sealed with the high-priest's seal. Our Lord's presence at such a festival shows that He looked with no disapproval on the joyous enthusiasm of national patriotism.

The eastern porch of the Temple still retained the name of Solomon's porch, because

it was at least built of the materials which had formed part of the ancient Temple. Here, in this bright colonnade, decked for the feast with glittering trophies, Jesus was walking up and down, quietly, and apparently without companions, sometimes, perhaps, gazing across the valley of the Kidron at the whitened sepulchres of the prophets, whom generations of Jews had slain, and enjoying the mild winter sunlight, when, as though by a preconcerted movement, the Pharisaic party and their leaders suddenly surrounded and began to question Him.

Perhaps the very spot where He was walking, recalling as it did the memories of their ancient glory—perhaps the memories of the glad feast which they were celebrating, as the anniversary of a splendid deliverance wrought by a handful of brave men who had overthrown a colossal tyranny—inspired their ardent appeal. "How long," they impatiently inquired, "dost thou hold our souls in painful suspense? If thou really art the Messiah, tell us with confidence. Tell us *here*, in Solomon's porch *now*, while the sight of these shields and golden crowns, and the melody of these citherns and cymbals, recall the glory of Judas the Asmonæan—wilt thou be a mightier Maccabæus, a more glorious Solomon? shall these citrons, and fair boughs, and palms, which we carry in honor of this day's victory, be carried some day for Thee?" It was a strange, impetuous, impatient appeal, and is full of significance. It forms their own strong condemnation, for it shows distinctly that He had spoken words and done deeds which would have justified and substantiated such a claim had He chosen definitely to assert it. And if He had in so many words asserted it—above all, had He asserted it in the sense and with the objects which they required—it is probable that they would have instantly welcomed Him with tumultuous acclaim, and hailed Him as their King.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

DISCOURSES AND MIRACLES.



WHEN the feast was ended, Jesus left Jerusalem; but, instead of returning to Galilee, He went beyond the Jordan, to the place where John

at first baptized, and remained there for some time. He was here in a neighborhood, the people of which had heard much of the Baptist's instructions, and had

witnessed his course of proceedings; and the presence of Jesus reminded them, and many others who flocked to Him, of the testimony which John himself, whose memory they venerated, had here borne to Christ. They considered that John had wrought no miracles, and yet many had been disposed to regard him as the Messiah; how much, then, were they bound to recognize the Messiah in Jesus, who had wrought so many miracles, and to whom John himself had borne his most distinct testimony. The people were thus predisposed to believe in Him; and many, moved by the testimony of John and by His own discourses, did receive Him as the expected Messiah. There, then, in comparative quiet, among a well-disposed people, free from the plots of the Sanhedrim and the malignant opposition of the Pharisees, the Saviour of men spent some portion of the last four months of his life. It was one of those seasons of repose which we often note to occur in the history of men, before they come to the great and crowning struggle of their lives, and which even the Saviour did not deem it unfit to realize before He entered upon the tremendous scenes of that "hour" which He had

so often said was not yet come; but which He knew to be now nigh at hand.

While still in the Peræan Bethany—Peræa being the country east of the Jordan—Jesus had received from the other Bethany, where He had so often found a home, the solemn message that "he whom He loved was sick." Lazarus was the one intimate personal friend whom Jesus possessed outside the circle of His apostles, and the urgent message was evidently an appeal for the presence of Him in whose presence, so far as we know, there had never been a death-bed scene.

But Jesus did not come. He contented Himself—occupied as He was in important works—with sending them the message that "this sickness was not to death, but for the glory of God," and stayed two days longer where He was. And at the end of those two days He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judæa again." The disciples reminded Him how lately the Jews had there sought to stone Him, and asked Him how He could venture to go there again; but His answer was that during the twelve hours of His day of work He could walk in safety, for the light of His duty, which was the will of His Heavenly Father, would keep him from danger.

And then he told them that Lazarus slept, and that He was going to wake him out of sleep. Three of them at least must have remembered how, on another memorable occasion, He had spoken of death as sleep; but either they were silent, and others spoke, or they were too slow of heart to remember it. As they understood Him to speak of natural sleep, He had to tell them plainly that Lazarus was dead, and that He was glad of it for their sakes, for that He would go to restore him to life. "Let us also go," said the affectionate but ever despondent Thomas, "that we may

die with Him"—as though he had said, "It is all a useless and perilous scheme, but still let us go." The evangelist adds, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," as if designedly to point our attention to the seemingly unaccountable conduct of Jesus in remaining still for two days in the place without apparent notice of the tidings which had been brought to Him. So convinced were the disciples that, from the exasperated feeling of the Jews, this journey would end in the death of their Master, that they followed Him as men prepared for that result, and ready to die with Him.

The Resurrection and the Life.

Starting early in the morning, Jesus could easily have accomplished the distance—some twenty miles—before sunset. But, on His arrival, He stayed outside the little village. Its vicinity to Jerusalem, from which it is not two miles distant, and the evident wealth and position of the family, had attracted a large concourse of distinguished Jews to console the sisters, and mourn with them; and it was obviously desirable to act with caution in venturing among such determined enemies. But while Mary, true to her retiring and contemplative disposition, was sitting in the house, unconscious of her Lord's approach, the more active Martha had received intelligence that He was near at hand, and immediately went forth to meet Him. Lazarus had died on the very day that Jesus received the message of his illness; two days had elapsed while He lingered in Peræa, a fourth had been spent on the journey. Martha could not understand this sad delay. "Lord," she said, in tones gently reproachful, "if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died," yet, "even now" she seems to indulge the vague hope that some alleviation may be vouchsafed to their bereavement.

The few words which follow are words of most memorable import—a declaration of Jesus which has brought comfort not to Martha only, but to millions since—"Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha evidently had not dreamt that he would now be awakened from the sleep of death, and she could only answer, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said unto her, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he have died, shall live; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

It was not for a spirit like Martha's to distinguish the interchanging thoughts of physical and spiritual death which were united in that deep utterance; but, without pausing to fathom it, her faithful love supplied the answer, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Having uttered that great confession, she at once went in quest of her sister, about whom Jesus had already inquired, and whose heart and intellect, as Martha seemed instinctively to feel, were better adapted to embrace such lofty truths. She found Mary in the house, and both the secrecy with which she delivered her message, and the haste and silence with which Mary arose to go and meet her Lord, show that precaution was needed, and that the visit of Jesus had not been unaccompanied with danger.

The Jews who were comforting her, and whom she had thus suddenly left, rose to follow her to the tomb, whither they thought that she had gone to weep; but they soon saw the real object of her movement. Outside the village they found Jesus surrounded by His friends, and they saw Mary hurry up to Him, and fling herself at His feet with the same agonizing reproach which her sister also had used, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." The greater intensity of her emotion spoke in her fewer words and her greater self-abandonment of anguish, and she could add no more. It may be that her affection was too deep to permit her hope to be so sanguine as that of her sister; it may be that with humbler reverence she left all to her Lord.

The sight of all that love and misery, the pitiable spectacle of human bereavement, the utter futility at such a moment of human consolation, the shrill commingling of a hired and simulated lamentation with all this genuine anguish, the unspoken reproach, "Oh, why didst Thou not come at once and snatch the victim from the enemy, and spare Thy friend from the sting of death, and us from the more bitter sting of such a parting?"—all these influences touched the tender compassion of Jesus with deep emotion. A strong effort of self-repression was needed—an effort which shook His whole frame with a powerful shudder—before He could find words to speak, and then He could only ask, "Where have ye laid him?" They said, "Lord, come and see."

Scene at the Tomb of Lazarus.

As He followed them His eyes were streaming with silent tears. His tears were not unnoticed, and while some of the Jews observed with respectful sympathy this proof of His affection for the dead, others were asking dubiously, perhaps almost sneeringly, whether He who had opened the eyes of the blind could not have saved His friend from death? They had not heard how, in the far-off village of Galilee, He had raised the dead; but they knew that in Jerusalem He had opened the eyes of one born blind, and that seemed to them a miracle no less stupendous.

But Jesus knew and heard their comments, and once more the whole scene—its genuine sorrows, its hired mourners, its uncalmed hatreds, all concentrated around the ghastly work of death—came so powerfully over His spirit, that, though He knew that He was going to wake the dead, once more His whole being was swept by a storm of emotion. The grave, like most of the graves belonging to the wealthier Jews, was a recess carved horizontally in the rock, with a slab or mass of stone to close the entrance. Jesus bade them remove this.

Then Martha interposed—partly from conviction that the soul had now utterly departed from the vicinity of the mouldering body, partly afraid in her natural delicacy of the

shocking spectacle which the removal of that stone would reveal. For in that hot climate it is necessary that burial should follow immediately upon death, and as it was the evening of the fourth day since Lazarus had died, there was too much reason to fear that by this time decomposition had set in. Solemnly Jesus reminded her of His promise, and the stone was moved from the place where the dead was laid.

"Lazarus, Come Forth!"

He stood at the entrance, and all others shrank a little backward, with their eyes still fixed on that dark and silent cave. A hush fell upon them all as Jesus raised His eyes and thanked God for the coming confirmation of His prayer. And then, raising to its clearest tones that voice of awful and sonorous authority, and uttering, as was usual with Him on such occasions, the briefest words, He cried, "Lazarus, come forth!"

Those words thrilled once more through that region of impenetrable darkness which separates us from the world to come; and scarcely were they spoken when, like a spectre, from the rocky tomb issued a figure, swathed indeed in its white and ghastly cerements—with the napkin round the head which had upheld the jaw that four days previously had dropped in death, bound hand and foot and face, but not livid, not horrible—the figure of a youth with the healthy blood of a restored life flowing through his veins; of a life restored—so tradition tells us—for thirty more long years to life, and light, and love. This, and similar deeds of power and compassion, vividly recall those glowing lines of Bickerstith:

From His lips
Truth, limpid, without error, flowed.
Disease

Fled from His touch. Pain heard Him and was not.
Despair smiled in His presence. Devils knew,
And trembled. In the Omnipotence of faith,
Unintermittent, indefectible,
Leaning upon His Father's might, He bent
All nature to His will. The tempest sank,
He whispering, into waveless calm. The bread

Given from His hands fed thousands, and to spare.
The stormy waters, as the solid rock,
Were pavement for His footstep. Death itself,
With vain reluctances, yielded its prey
To the stern mandate of the Prince of Life.

act was too stupendous not to draw general attention, and, in the actual state of public feeling towards Christ, to be attended with important consequences. It was also per-



CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.—Matt. xix. 15.

The mixed emotions with which the re-appearance of one so many days dead affected the sisters and friends of Lazarus and the disciples of Jesus, we must leave to the imagination of the reader, unless so far as they are demonstrated by subsequent events, for the

formed in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, and upon a person who appears to have been well known.

Most of the Jews present, overcome by this exhibition of Divine power, believed in Jesus as the Messiah; but there were some whose

sense being alienated from Divine things, would not acknowledge it, but went away and gave a perverted account of the transaction to the Sanhedrin. This assembly, the high spiritual council of the Jews, held its meetings in the stone hall of the Temple, and, when full, consisted of seventy-one members, although twenty-three sufficed for the transaction of business. The council was much alarmed at the report of the resurrection of Lazarus. They could not deny that Jesus ("this man," as they contemptuously described Him) had actually wrought miracles; but in their exasperation and prejudice against one who taught doctrines so opposite to their own practices and expectations, they allowed this circumstance to weigh little with them.

But this conviction obliged them to take a fresh ground for their hostility against Him. If His party prevail, they said, He will excite political commotions, which will result in bringing down upon us the deprivation of the privileges which the Romans have left to us. This was probably no other than an ostensible pretext for the course they then began to contemplate, for the purpose of silencing the minority in the Sanhedrin which thought favorably of Jesus, and which had already caused its voice to be heard. It is impossible that this view could have been taken in sincerity; for Jesus never affected an earthly kingdom, or inculcated any principles likely to lead to revolt or tumult: whereas the Jews themselves desired nothing better than to find in the Messiah one who would have led them on to shake off the hateful yoke of the Romans; and if Jesus had appeared in that character, would have received Him and followed Him. It was now, however, determined to lose no time in bringing about the death of Jesus on the ground which had thus been taken; and in regarding their ensuing conduct as the effect of this design, the reader will be better able to apprehend the connection of the incidents which compose the closing scenes of the Redeemer's life. At once we hear low whisperings, and see crafty men putting their heads together and hatching deadly plots.

Jesus himself, being aware of this design, withdrew with His disciples to Ephraim, a small city a few miles to the east of Jerusalem, in what was called the wilderness of Judæa, whence he is supposed to have soon returned to the parts beyond the Jordan from which He had lately come. Here, as usual, He was attended by large numbers of people, whom He taught, and the diseased among whom He healed. He was here among a well-disposed people; and on one occasion many mothers brought their children that he might bestow his blessing on them.

Jesus and the Little Ones.

Jesus had been speaking against the practice of divorce, which was then very common among the Jews, and then, like a touching and beautiful comment on these high words, and the strongest of all proofs that there was in the mind of Christ no admiration for the "voluntary service" which Paul condemns, as a proof of His belief that marriage is honorable in all—He took part in a scene that has charmed the imagination of poet and painter in every age. For as though to destroy all false and unnatural notions of the exceptional glory of religious virginity, He, among whose earliest acts it had been to bless a marriage festival, made it one of His latest acts to fondle infants in His arms.

It seems to have been known in Peræa that the time of His departure was approaching; and conscious, perhaps, of the words which He had just been uttering, there were fathers and mothers and friends who brought to Him the fruits of holy wedlock—young children and even babes—that He might touch them and pray over them. Ere He left them forever, they would bid Him a solemn farewell; they would win, as it were, the legacy of His special blessing for the generation yet to come.

The disciples thought their conduct forward and officious. They did not wish their Master to be needlessly crowded and troubled; they did not like to be disturbed in their high colloquies. They were indignant that a number of mere women and children should come ob-

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truding on more important persons and interests. Women were not honored nor children loved in antiquity as now they are; no halo of romance and tenderness encircled them; too often they were subjected to shameful cruelties and hard neglect.

The Disciples Rebuked.

But He who came to be the friend of all sinners, and the helper of all the suffering and sick, came also to elevate woman to her due honor, centuries before the Teutonic element of modern society was dreamt of, and to be the protector and friend of helpless infancy and innocent childhood. Even the unconscious little ones were to be admitted into His Church by His sacrament of baptism, to be made members of Him, and inheritors of His kingdom. He turned the rebuke of the disciples on themselves; He was as much displeased with them as they had been with the parents and children. "Suffer the little children," He said, in words which each of the Synoptists has preserved for us in all their immortal tenderness—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And when He had folded them in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them, He added once more His constantly needed, and therefore constantly repeated, warning, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, shall not enter therein."

When this beautiful and deeply instructive scene was over, Matthew tells us that He started on His way, probably for a new journey to the other Bethany; and on this road occurred another incident, which impressed itself so deeply on the minds of the spectators that it, too, has been recorded by the evangelists in a triple narrative.

The Rich Young Man.

A young man of great wealth and high position seems suddenly to have been seized with a conviction that he had hitherto neglected an invaluable opportunity, and that

one who could alone explain to him the true meaning and mystery of life was already on His way to depart from among them. Determined, therefore, not to be too late, he came running, breathless, eager—in a way that surprised all who beheld it—and, prostrating himself before the feet of Jesus, exclaimed, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit life?"

If there was something attractive in the mingled impetuosity and humility of one so young and distinguished, yet so candid and earnest, there was in his question much that was objectionable. The notion that he could gain eternal life by "doing some good thing" rested on a basis radically false. If we may combine what seems to be the true reading of Matthew with the answer recorded in the other evangelists, Jesus seems to have said to him, "Why askest thou me about the good? and why callest thou me good? One is good, even God." He made no unfounded claim.

An Unexpected Answer.

He would as little accept the title "Good," as He would accept the title "Messiah," when given in a false sense. He would not be regarded as a mere "good Rabbi." So far, Jesus would show the youth that when he came to Him as to one who was more than man, his entire address, as well as his entire question, was a mistake. No mere man can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, and if the ruler committed the error of simply admiring Jesus as a Rabbi of pre-eminent sanctity, yet no Rabbi, however saintly, was accustomed to receive the title of "good," or prescribe any amulet for the preservation of a virtuous life. And in the same spirit He continued: "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The youth had not expected a reply so obvious and so simple. He cannot believe that he is merely referred to the Ten Commandments, and so he asks, in surprise, "What sort of commandments?" Jesus, as the youth wanted to do something, tells him merely of those of the second table, for, as has been well re-

marked, "Christ sends the proud to the Law, and invites the humble to the Gospel." "Master," replied the young man in surprise, "all these have I observed from my youth." Doubtless in the mere letter he may have done so, but he evidently knew little of all that those commandments had been interpreted by the Christ to mean. And Jesus, seeing his sincerity, looking on him loved him, and gave him one short crucial test of his real condition. He was not content with the commonplace; he aspired after the heroical, or rather thought that he did; therefore Jesus gave him a heroic act to do. "One thing," He said, "thou lackest, and bade him go, sell all that he had, distribute it to the poor, and come and follow Him.

It was too much. The young ruler went away very sorrowful, grief in his heart, and a cloud upon his brow, for he had great possessions. He preferred the comforts of earth to the treasures of heaven; he would not purchase the things of eternity by abandoning those of time; he made, as Dante calls it, "the great refusal." And so he vanishes from the Gospel history; nor do the evangelists know anything of him farther. But the sad, stern imagination of the poet follows him, and there among the myriads of those who are blown about like autumn leaves on the confines of the other world, blindly following the flutter of a giddy flag, he sees the shade of him who made through cowardice the great refusal.

The Camel and the Needle's Eye.

We may hope and believe a fairer ending for one whom Jesus, as He looked on him, could love. But the failure of this youth to meet the test saddened Jesus, and looking round at His disciples, He said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." The words once more struck them as very severe. Could then no good man be rich, no rich man be good? But Jesus only answered—softening the sadness and sternness of the words by the affectionate title "children"—"Children, how hard it is to enter into the kingdom of God;" hard

for any one, but, He added, with an earnest look at His disciples, and doubtless specially addressing Peter, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." They might well be amazed beyond measure; things impossible to nature are possible to grace; things impossible to man are easy to God.

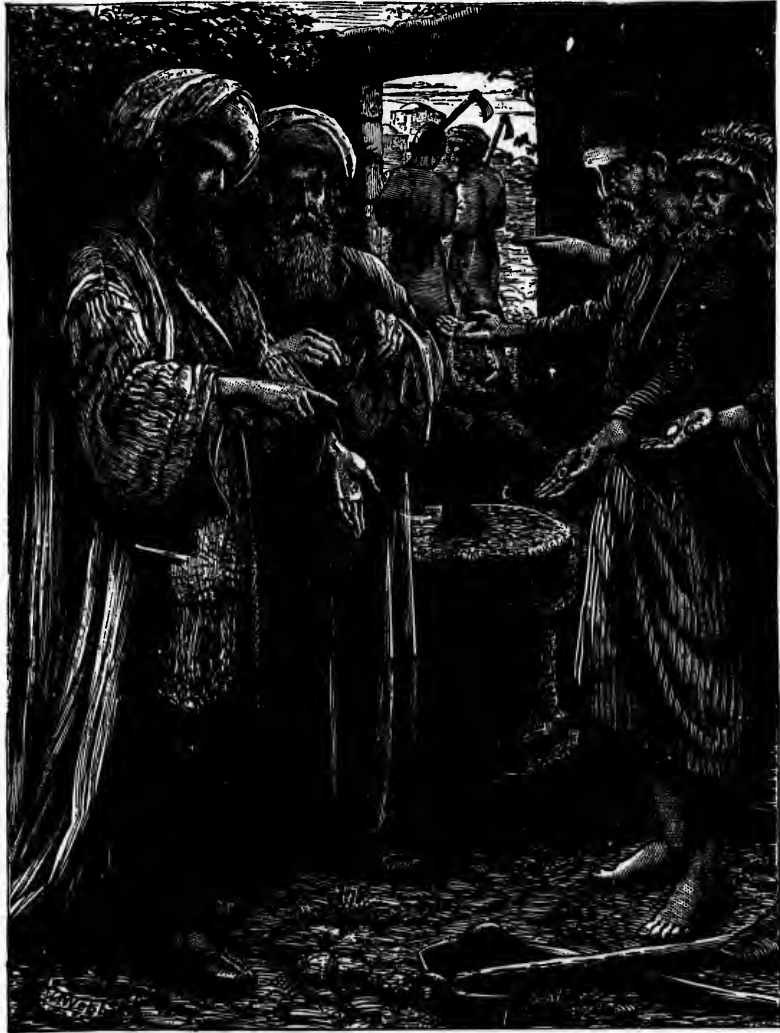
Then with a touch—was it of complacency, or was it of despair?—Peter said, "Lo, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee," and either added, or implied, In what respect, then, shall we be gainers? The answer of Jesus was at once a magnificent encouragement and a solemn warning. The encouragement was that there was no instance of self-sacrifice which would not even in this world, and even in the midst of persecutions, receive its hundred-fold increase in the harvest of spiritual blessings, and would in the world to come be rewarded by the infinite recompense of eternal life; the warning was that familiar one which they had heard before, that many of the first should be last, and the last first.

A Striking Parable.

And to impress upon them still more fully and deeply that the kingdom of heaven is not a matter of mercenary calculation or exact equivalent—that there could be no bargaining with the Heavenly Householder—that before the eye of God's clearer and more penetrating judgment Gentiles might be admitted before Jews, and publicans before Pharisees, and young converts before aged apostles—He told them the memorable parable of the laborers in the vineyard. That parable, amid its other lessons, involved the truth that, while all who serve God should not be defrauded of their just and full and rich reward, there could be in heaven no murmuring, no envyings, no jealous comparison of respective merits, no base struggling for precedency, no miserable disputings as to who had performed the greatest service, or who had received the least of grace.

The householder early in the morning went out into the market-place to hire laborers for

his vineyard, and agreed with them for the eleventh hour. When they came to be paid, wages of a denarius (about fifteen cents) a day. those who were hired last received a denarius,



HIRING LABORERS FOR THE VINEYARD.—Matt. xx. 1.

At the third hour he hired others, promising to give them what was right; and so again at he sixth hour, the ninth hour, and even the more. But the master reminded them of their

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contract for the day's wages, and asserted his own right to make the last comers equal to them in the reward of labor. By this, Jesus appears to have incu' .ed that God regards not how long a man works in spiritual things, but how well; and that ardor of intention and singleness of motive will often make the labor of one hour as valuable, in a moral calculation, as the ordinary labor of an entire day.

The time of the Passover now drew nigh, and Jesus set forth for Jerusalem, much to the consternation of the disciples, who expected the most disastrous results from the hostility and known designs of the Sanhedrin. But He told them plainly that His hour was now nigh at hand: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the chief priests and to the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again." This they did not then understand. They understood the facts as stated. They could not misunderstand them; but they expected that the Messianic reign on earth with which their minds were filled would commence after the resurrection.

The Mother of Zebedee's Children.

This is shown by the petition which two, certainly not the least intelligent of Christ's apostles, namely, the sons of Zebedee, set their mother upon asking of Him, "Grant that my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom." This amounted to a request that they might enjoy the first and second places among the subjects of His earthly kingdom, the degree of dignity being in oriental courts denoted by proximity to the throne.

Let us ask what it was that induced Salome to make the request that she did—in other words, why did she seek to place her two sons, the one upon the right hand, the other upon the left, of the Saviour? That which caused her to take this step was a conversation our

Lord held with His twelve disciples, originated with the design of preparing their minds to meet the changes about to come.

In this conversation He stated that when He, the Son of man, should sit upon the throne of His glory, they, His twelve disciples, should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Now she, in common with her two sons and the rest of the apostles, interpreted this prophecy according to her own preconceived ideas. Indeed, they all thought that the kingdom He was about to establish must be an earthly one, like unto the existing kingdoms, only with this difference, that it would gradually extend its boundaries until all other kingdoms became absorbed in it, and the whole earth became full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Places of Honor.

To a certain extent they were quite correct in their supposition, but they went astray from losing sight of the fact that the nature of Christ's kingdom was not a temporal so much as a spiritual one; and as one mistake generally leads to others, so it was in this case. Supposing it to be an earthly kingdom that was spoken of, they concluded that its affairs must be administered after some existing earthly model; and so, as was natural, their thoughts reverted to their own Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin, we read, was the highest ecclesiastical court of the Jews, and Josephus has given us a description of its constitution. From his description we learn that the prince, or president of the court, sat between two rows of senators, or elders, having upon his right hand and upon his left each a man of great influence and authority. The person upon his right hand was called the "Father of the Court," and the person upon his left was named the "Sage;" and in the absence of the prince, or president, these two officers represented him, and conducted the business of the court. Bearing this in mind, the dignities to which James and John aspired were the highest He could bestow—in fact, as He Himself stated, they were higher than He could

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bestow: "To sit upon My right hand and upon My left is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of bly. They thought to act for and stand in the place of Christ, and conceived it possible for mortal men to exercise His authority, and



SALOME'S REQUEST FOR HER SONS.—Mark x. 35.

My Father." They aspired to hold the same relation to Jesus that the "Father" and the "Sage" of the Jewish Sanhedrin did towards the prince or president of that august assembly. They thought to act for and stand in the place of Christ, and conceived it possible for mortal men to exercise His authority, and represent His presence when absent. But they were mistaken.

It is not given to man to take the place of Christ, and this they learned from their Mas-

ter's lips in the reply He gave: "Ye know not what ye ask;" and then, as if to assure them of what He said, He adds: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"—an interrogation which they, nothing daunted by his assertion of their ignorance, answered in the affirmative: "They say unto Him, We are able."

Symbols of Suffering.

His cup and His baptism! Here was a further display of ignorance upon their part. They could not have known what these symbolic words foreshadowed. At furthest they could only have supposed them to stand for obstacles and difficulties in the enterprise upon which they, in common with their Master, had embarked: and such a view is borne out by what followed. "Yes," says our blessed Lord, replying to them, "yes, ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."

He knew that His sufferings and shame would be shared by these two men ere they quitted this life, but he knew that it would not be now, and that a long training was necessary to enable them to go through with it: for although John suffered banishment in the Isle of Patmos for Christ, and although the head of his brother James fell by an order of Herod in the same glorious cause, yet these things did not take place until Jesus had passed from earth to heaven, and left His followers an ever-memorable example of what real shame and suffering were.

Before they were called upon to suffer, they saw upon their Leader's head the crown of thorns, upon His shoulder the purple robe, and in His right hand the derisive sceptre. They could not forget the betrayal, the trial, and the insults offered Him by the Roman soldiery. When summoned to death, they, too, recollected the morning on which He passed forth to execution, His feet tottering with the burden of the cross He carried; and the cry that then broke forth from the lips which had so often breathed health upon the

sick and life upon the dead, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!" still rang in their ears, and added resolution to their will.

The transaction is of importance as showing the entire misconception concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom under which the apostles still labored. Their views as to the actual reign were not very different from those which others entertained; but they believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah by whom these views were to be brought out. They also had modified notions as to the manner of His reign; for there can be no doubt that they applied to the conduct of His temporal kingdom much which He intended to apply, and which we now apply, to His kingdom in the souls of men. It was left for a future day to correct all their erroneous notions, and to make plain all that they had previously misunderstood.

The Publican Zaccheus.

On arriving at Jericho, which was the second city of Judæa, the people gathered in crowds to see Him pass. Among them was the chief of the tax-gatherers, Zaccheus, who being too short to see Him in the crowd, in the intensity of his desire to view one of whom he had heard so much, mounted a sycamore-tree for the purpose. Jesus when He came to the place looked up, and called to him by name, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

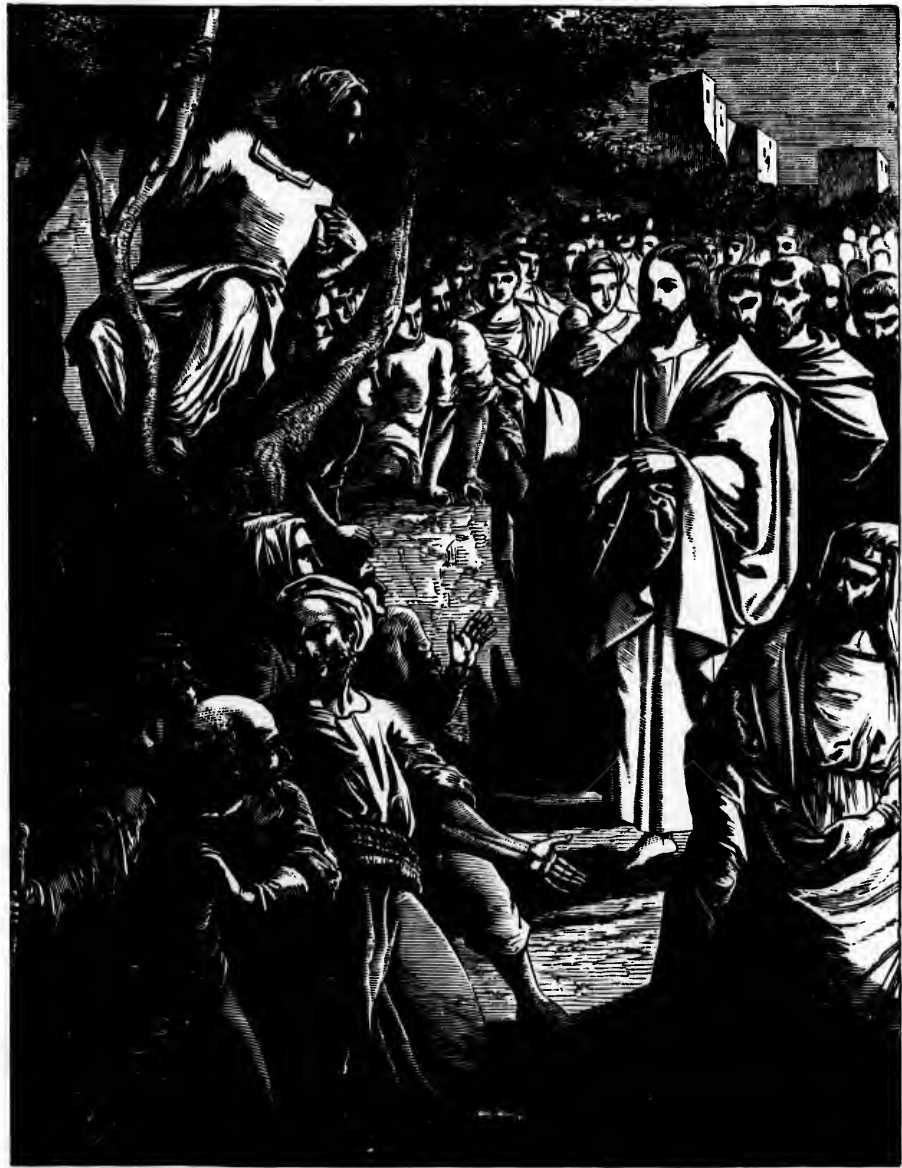
Overwhelmed by an honor which he probably desired, but had not dared to ask, he left the tree and hastened home to receive his great guest, who alone of all the holy men of His age did not despise even the publicans. The mob as usual murmured at this preference; but Zaccheus, in the fulness of his heart and his awakening convictions, stood forth and declared that from that hour he would bestow half his wealth to feed the poor, and would restore fourfold the wrong which any man could lay to his charge.

On leaving the city the next morning, a blind man, who sat begging by the wayside, hearing the noise of the passing crowd, inquired what it meant; and being told that

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ZACCHEUS CALLED BY JESUS.—Luke xix. 5.

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Jesus of Nazareth was going by, began to cry out, in his loudest voice, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," till the Saviour heard him and stopped. When he was told of this, the blind man rose, and, in his eagerness, cast off his impeding outer garment as he hastened to the place where Jesus stood.

On seeing him, Jesus asked, "What wilt that I should do unto thee?" He answered, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." And Jesus had compassion upon him, and said, "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee." Here we have again a striking instance of an acknowledgment of Christ as the Messiah, in the very first cry of a blind man, in the epithet "Thou Son of David." And this faith—that Christ was the Messiah, and that He could restore his sight—was that to which the Lord referred, and which touched Him so deeply.

Jesus at Bethany.

It was customary for those who lay under ceremonial defilements to go up to Jerusalem earlier than others, that they might undergo the legal purifications before the commencement of the Passover. Those who were thus early at Jerusalem, as well as the residents, met together in the fore-courts of the Temple, and speculated anxiously on the probabilities of Christ's appearance at the feast. As He must have known of the resolution concerning Him at which the Sanhedrin had now arrived, most people concluded that He would keep Himself out of the way.

However, six days before the feast, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where He had lately raised Lazarus from the dead. Here He spent the remainder of the day, and the night. Many persons at Jerusalem having heard of His arrival at Bethany, went over in the hope of seeing Him and the man He had raised from the dead together; and they were not disappointed, for Lazarus was among those who "sat at meat" with Jesus, at the supper which was that evening provided. The mention of this circumstance leads the evangelist to record that many ruling men were so hardened as to meditate the death of Lazarus himself, on ac-

count of the attention drawn towards Christ by the presence and existence of a man He had raised from the dead.

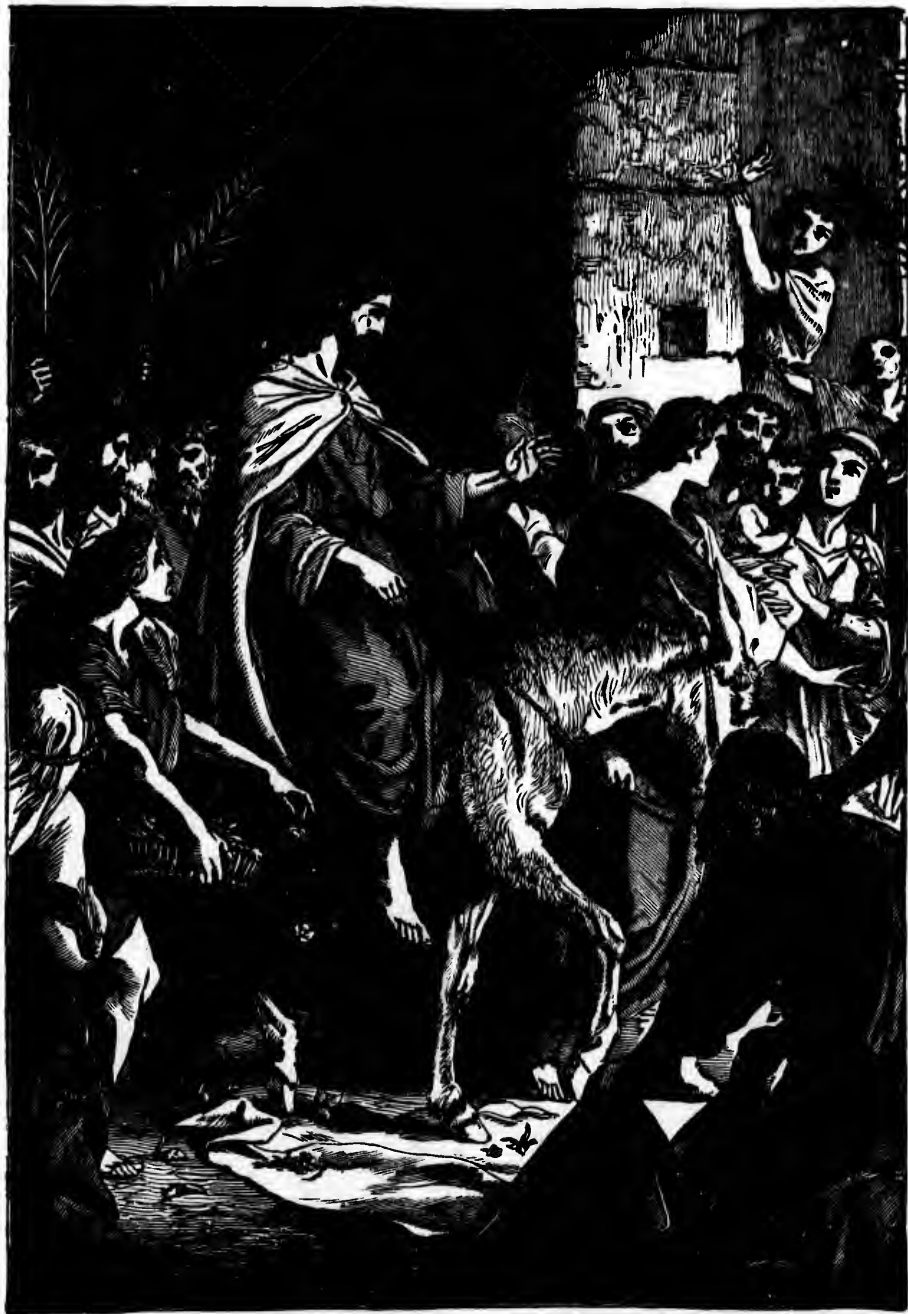
As we might expect from our previous knowledge of the sisters Martha and Mary, they took very different parts in the entertainments of this remarkable evening. As women, they could not seat themselves at the table; but Martha, as usual, attended to the preparations of the supper, and busied herself in the outward service, while Mary surrendered herself to the full feeling of affectionate devotion to Christ's person, rendered more lively and intense, we may well suppose, on account of her brother's resuscitation. She possessed a large quantity of costly ointment; and in order to testify her love, she sacrificed it all. She did what "the woman that was a sinner" had done before; she anointed His feet with the precious "nard," till the house was filled with the powerful fragrance.

An objection to this act as a wasteful extravagance arose this time from no other personage than Judas Iscariot; and the evangelist John neglects not the opportunity of connecting with this objection another trait in his character. He had already pilfered from the common fund of the disciples of Jesus, which had been confided to his charge; and hence the secret source of his discontent that Mary had not thrown the proceeds of her spikenard into the common treasury, if she desired to afford evidence of her love. Under an objection of ostensible worth, in which some well-meaning disciples concurred, he concealed his true character and disposition, which was apparent only to the Saviour, who answered by a touching justification of Mary's deed as a preanointing for His coming burial, followed by the pregnant remark—"The poor ye have always with you; but Me ye have not always."

Entry into Jerusalem.

By the following morning it was well known in Jerusalem that Jesus would be that day in the city, and the people generally determined to give Him a grand reception. Impure hopes may in part have prompted this course, and





CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.—Matt. xx. 19.

they may have expected that if a proof of attachment, of recognition, so public and so general, were exhibited, Jesus might be induced to appear openly as the King Messiah. A great multitude, therefore, went forth to meet Him, with such demonstrations of honor as were anciently shown to oriental kings. A great many palms grew on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho; from these they broke off blooming branches and strewed them in the way: some also carried green boughs and branches of blossoms in their hands, as was customary when they celebrated the tabernacle and dedication feasts, while they sang songs of gratulation and praise.

"Hosanna in the Highest."

Accompanied by the Jews who had come over to see Lazarus, the Saviour left Bethany the same morning and came to Bethphage—a row of houses on each side of the public way surrounded by fig-trees, whence its name "place of figs." The multitude had probably come thus far to meet Him. Seeing the favorable disposition of the people towards Him, Jesus concluded to avail himself of it, in order to make an abiding impression upon the disciples, when they should afterwards reflect upon the manner of His entrance into Jerusalem. That He was really the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and the true nature of the Messianic character—these were the facts which He desired to impress strongly upon their minds.

Now the prophet Zechariah had described the arrival of the Messiah as that of a peaceful King who felt interested in the welfare of His people, and who would enter the metropolis of His kingdom riding upon an ass. The ass was an animal used for riding in time of peace, while the horse was employed in times of war. In order to lead His disciples to the consideration that the prophetic view of Zechariah, in regard to the condition of the expected Deliverer, was fulfilled in Him, Jesus made choice of this very mode of entrance. He sent two of His disciples forward to a place where He told them they would find a colt

"on which no man had ever yet sat." This specification is not without meaning, as yearlings which have never borne the yoke, and never been employed for common purposes, were reserved for sacred uses.

This colt they were to unloose and to bring to Jesus; they found the colt, and were proceeding to unloose it when the owners objected; but when the disciples said, "The Lord hath need of him," they, sharing in the general feeling, felt glad and honored, and allowed them to take not only the colt, but the dam, which from natural instinct followed her young. They brought them to Jesus, and laid their clothes upon them both, not knowing which of them he would choose to ride. He mounted the colt, and rode onward, attended by the rejoicing crowd, who spread their garments in His path, and waved their branches with exulting shouts.

The disciples fully shared in the enthusiasm of that hour; and when the triumphal multitude came near to Jerusalem at the descent of the Mount of Olives, they broke forth in singing the verses from the 118th psalm, which were usually sung at the feasts already mentioned, and which were always considered to bear a reference to the Messiah:

"Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel,
That cometh in the name of the Lord!
Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,
That cometh in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!"

All the city was moved by various emotions at this public entry of the Redeemer. Doubtless general attention was directed to His movements, and to observe the step which would next be taken by Him. He entered at the gate near the Temple, and straightway proceeded to the sacred courts. The blind and lame of the city no sooner heard of His arrival than they hastened to Him there, and He healed them. This was no other than His usual course. It was wonderful, beneficent, great; but it was not for Him extraordinary, and the ill-founded expectations which had been raised were sorely disappointed. The children in the Temple still kept up the cry

which had before been raised; and the priests and scribes in high displeasure called his attention to it: "Hearst Thou what these say?" To which He answered, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?"

After some further discourse, which with the previous proceedings occupied the rest of the day, Jesus left the city and returned to Bethany, where he lodged.

The next morning Jesus and His disciples,

"Let no man eat fruit of thee henceforth forever." He then proceeded to the city, on entering which He went to the Temple, and expelled from the sacred court the dealers and money-changers, by whose merchandise and tables it was thronged in the week before the Passover. This act was similar to that with which, three years before, He had commenced his ministry in Jerusalem. He then remained teaching in the Temple, and the attention with which the people heard Him pre-



THE WITHERED FIG-TREE.—Mark xi. 14.

again left Bethany to spend the day in Jerusalem. On the way Jesus observed a fig-tree in full leaf, and, being hungry, went to it, expecting to find fruit thereon. As the fruit of the fig-tree is perfected before the leaf, it was natural to expect fruit upon a tree which made this show of leaves; as the time of fig-gathering was not yet come, it was certain that the fruit which this tree ought to bear had not yet been gathered. But Jesus found the tree without fruit, and said, in the hearing of His

ventured His enemies from venturing to lay hands upon Him. In the evening Jesus again repaired to Bethany.

On returning to Jerusalem on the next morning, the fig-tree on which He had the preceding day laid the weight of His curse, and which was then so rich in foliage, was found to be dried away even to the roots. This proceeding must probably be regarded in the light of a symbolical action, teaching that His power to punish the guilty was as strong as

that which He had more usually exercised in conferring benefits. But with the usual beneficence of His character and actions, He demonstrated this truth in the way least of all others calculated to inflict injury or pain. It was exercised upon a fig-tree, barren, and therefore unprofitable to any one, but having the show, though it lacked the reality, of useful life; it was, moreover, a tree standing by the public way, and therefore belonging to no one who could complain that his property had been destroyed, or in any way damaged.

A Cunning Snare.

On proceeding to teach in the Temple, the priests and others in authority gathered around Him, requiring to know by what authority He taught in that place; for it was the province of the Sanhedrin to grant the right of teaching in the Temple, and this Christ had never received. They perhaps hoped that He would answer that He acted under Divine authority as the Messiah, and that they might thus obtain matter of accusation against Him. At another time He would perhaps so have answered; but now, being aware of the snare laid for Him, He refrained from a direct answer, but, as on some other occasions solved the question by another:—"The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?"

A sudden pause followed. "Answer me," said Jesus, interrupting their whispered colloquy. And surely they, who had sent a commission to inquire publicly into the claims of John, were in a position to answer. But no answer came. They knew full well the import of the question. They could not for a moment put it aside as irrelevant. John had openly and emphatically testified to Jesus, had acknowledged Him, before their own deputies, not only as a Prophet, but as a Prophet far greater than himself—nay, more, as *the* Prophet, the Messiah. Would they recognize that authority, or would they not?

Clearly Jesus had a right to demand their reply to that question before He could reply to theirs. But they could not, or rather would not answer that question. It reduced them in

fact to a complete dilemma. They would not say "from heaven," because they had in heart rejected it; they dared not say "of men," because the belief in John (as we see even in Josephus) was so vehement and so unanimous that openly to reject him would have been to endanger their personal safety. They were reduced, therefore—they, the masters of Israel—to the ignominious necessity of saying, "We cannot tell."

There is an admirable Hebrew proverb which says, "Teach thy tongue to say, 'I do not know.'" But to say, 'We do not know,' in this instance, was a thing utterly alien to their habits, disgraceful to their discernment, a death-blow to their pretensions. It was ignorance in a sphere wherein ignorance was for them inexcusable. They, the appointed explainers of the law—they, the accepted teachers of the people—they, the acknowledged monopolizers of Scriptural learning and oral tradition—and yet to be compelled, against their real convictions, to say, and that before the multitude, that they could not tell whether a man of immense and sacred influence—a man who acknowledged the Scriptures which they explained, and carried into practice the customs which they revered—was a divinely inspired messenger or a deluding impostor!

Questioners Confounded.

Were the lines of demarcation, then, between the inspired Prophet and the wicked seducer so dubious and indistinct? It was indeed a fearful humiliation, and one which they never either forgot or forgave. And yet how just was the retribution which they had thus brought on their own heads! The curses which they had intended for another had recoiled upon themselves; the pompous question which was to be an engine wherewith another should be crushed, had sprung back with sudden rebound, to their own confusion and shame.

Jesus did not press upon their discomfiture, though He well knew—as the form of His answer showed—that their "do not know" was a "do not choose to say." Since, how-

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ever, their failure to answer clearly absolved Him from any necessity to tell them further these things." By this they were silenced.



RESPONSES OF THE TWO SONS.—Matt. xxi. 28.

of an authority about which, by their own confession, they were totally incompetent to decide, He ended the scene by simply saying, So they retired a little into the background. He continued the instruction of the people which they had interrupted, and began once

more to speak to them in parables, which both the multitude and the members of the Sanhedrin who were present could hardly fail to understand. And He expressly called their attention to what He was about to say. "What think ye?" He asked, for now it is their turn to submit to be questioned; and then, telling them of the two sons, of whom the one first flatly refused his father's bidding, but afterwards repented and did it, the other blandly promised an obedience which he never performed, He asked, "Which of these two did his father's will?"

They could but answer, "the first;" and He then pointed out to them the plain and solemn meaning of their own answer. It was, that the very publicans and harlots, despite the apparent open shamelessness of their disobedience, were yet showing *them*—them, the scrupulous and highly reputed legalists of the holy nation—the way into the kingdom of heaven. Yet these sinners, whom they despised and hated, were streaming before them through the door which was not yet shut. For John had come to these Jews on their own principles and in their own practices, and they had pretended to receive him, but had not; but the publicans and the harlots had repented at his bidding. For all their broad fringes and conspicuous phylacteries, they—the priests, the separatists, the Rabbis of these people—were worse in the sight of God than sinners whom they would have scorned to touch with one of their fingers.

The Husbandman and Vineyard.

Then He bade them "hear another parable," the parable of the rebellious husbandmen in the vineyard, whose fruits they would not yield. That vineyard of the Lord of Hosts was the house of Israel, and the men of Judah were His pleasant plants; and they, the leaders and teachers, were those to whom the Lord of the vineyard would naturally look for the rendering of the produce. But in spite of all that He had done for His vineyard, there were no grapes, or only wild grapes. "He looked for judgment, but be-

hold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

And since they *could* not render any produce, and *dared* not own the barren fruitlessness for which they, the husbandmen, were responsible, they insulted, and beat, and wounded, and slew messenger after messenger whom the Lord of the vineyard sent to them. Last of all, He sent His Son, and that Son—though they recognized Him, and could not *but* recognize Him—they beat and slew.

When the Lord of the vineyard came, what would He do to them? Either the people, out of honest conviction, or the listening Pharisees, to show their apparent contempt for what they could not fail to see was the point of the parable, answered that He would wretchedly destroy those wretches, and let out the vineyard to worthier and more faithful husbandmen. A second time they had been compelled to an admission, which fatally, out of their own mouths, condemned themselves; they had confessed with their own lips that it would be in accordance with God's justice to deprive them of their exclusive rights, and to give them to the Gentiles.

The Beloved Son.

In this parable of the rebellious husbandmen and the vineyard we have another instance of the text taken from an object which was very familiar to the Jews. Palestine was a vine-growing country; warm and genial was the sun, sweetening the rich clusters of grapes; mellow and productive in many places was the soil; heavy was the dew which fell in the evening, while at night the sharp breath was taken from the air, and balmy influences nursed the young and growing life. A parable dealing with a husbandman, his son, and his vineyard would be readily understood, and this one before us has a meaning no less deep than others which fell from the lips of Him who spake as "never man spake."

Among the prominent characters are the lord of the vineyard and his son. It was but natural to assume that the son was dear to the heart of his father. He had nestled at the

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parental feet, had been watched in his early life with tender interest, had come forth in the affections of human nature; a son always being



THE SPEECHLESS GUEST.—Matt. xxii. 12.

fulness of his strong, young manhood, and, to those who loved him, was more than vine-
yards and their rich products. All this we

a dear object of parental regard, around whom hopes cluster as the vines cling to their support, and whose welfare is always guarded.

Repeated messages, it seems, were sent by the lord of the vineyard to the keepers of it, and that which was expected in return was only such as would reasonably be demanded. No return, however, was made; the vineyard was a barren, fruitless thing, yielding no profit, and only occupying the fertile ground which might have been employed for other purposes. Now the lord of the vineyard resolves to send his son, thinking that, of course, he will be revered, and his mission will prove successful.

Not for a moment does the tender-hearted father imagine that a sad, unhappy fate awaits the one whom he loves so much. He does not fully understand the malicious nature of those with whom he is dealing. A deep plot is laid and bold men are ready to execute it. The resolve is nothing less than the slaying of the son when he arrives, putting him out of the way entirely, robbing the lord of the vineyard not only of the fruits of the vintage, but also of his darling child.

Plain Truths.

Here a very startling question is asked. (When the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do with the wicked husbandmen who have cruelly taken the life of his son? Only one answer, of course, could be given. It was felt by those who listened to this parable that but one course could be pursued. The lord of the vineyard would destroy those who had been guilty of acts so unjust and wicked. Of course, this parable, like many others spoken by Jesus, refers to the Jewish people and their treatment of the prophets, and especially of the Messiah who stood in their midst, unknown to them; present, yet distant as the unseen God. The Jewish people were the wicked husbandmen, who, having failed in many respects, resolved to take the Son and put Him out of the way, and thus continue in their wickedness.

And to show them that their own Scriptures had prophesied of this their conduct, He asked them whether they had never read (in the 118th psalm) of the stone which the builders rejected,

which nevertheless, by the marvellous purpose of God, became the headstone of the corner? How could they remain builders any longer, when the whole design of their workmanship was thus deliberately overruled and set aside? Did not their old Messianic prophecy clearly imply that God would call other builders to the work of His Temple?

Woe to them who even stumbled—as they were doing—at that rejected stone; but even yet there was time for them to avoid the more crushing annihilation of those on whom that stone should fall. To reject Him in His humanity and humiliation involved pain and loss; but to be found still rejecting Him when He should come again in His glory, would not this be “utter destruction from the presence of the Lord?” To sit on the seat of judgment and condemn Him—this should be ruin to them and their nation; but to be condemned by Him, would not this be to be “ground to powder?”

They saw now, more clearly than ever, the whole bent and drift of these parables, and longed for the hour of vengeance! But, as yet, fear restrained them; for, to the multitude, Christ was still a Prophet.

The King's Son.

One more warning utterance He spoke on this day of parables—the parable of the marriage of the king's son. In its basis and framework it closely resembled the parable of the great supper uttered during His last journey, at a Pharisee's house; but in many of its details, and in its entire conclusion, it was different. Here the ungrateful subjects who receive the invitation, not only make light of it, and pursue undisturbed their worldly vocations, but some of them actually insult and murder the messenger who had invited them, and—a point at which the history merges into prophecy—are destroyed and their city burned. And the rest of the story points to yet further scenes, pregnant with still deeper meanings. Others are invited; the wedding-feast is furnished with guests both bad and good; the king comes in, and

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notices one who had thrust himself into the company in his own rags, without providing or accepting the wedding garment, which the commonest courtesy invariably required.

teeth; and then follows, for the last time, the warning urged in varying similitudes, with a frequency commensurate to its importance, that "many are called, but few are chosen."



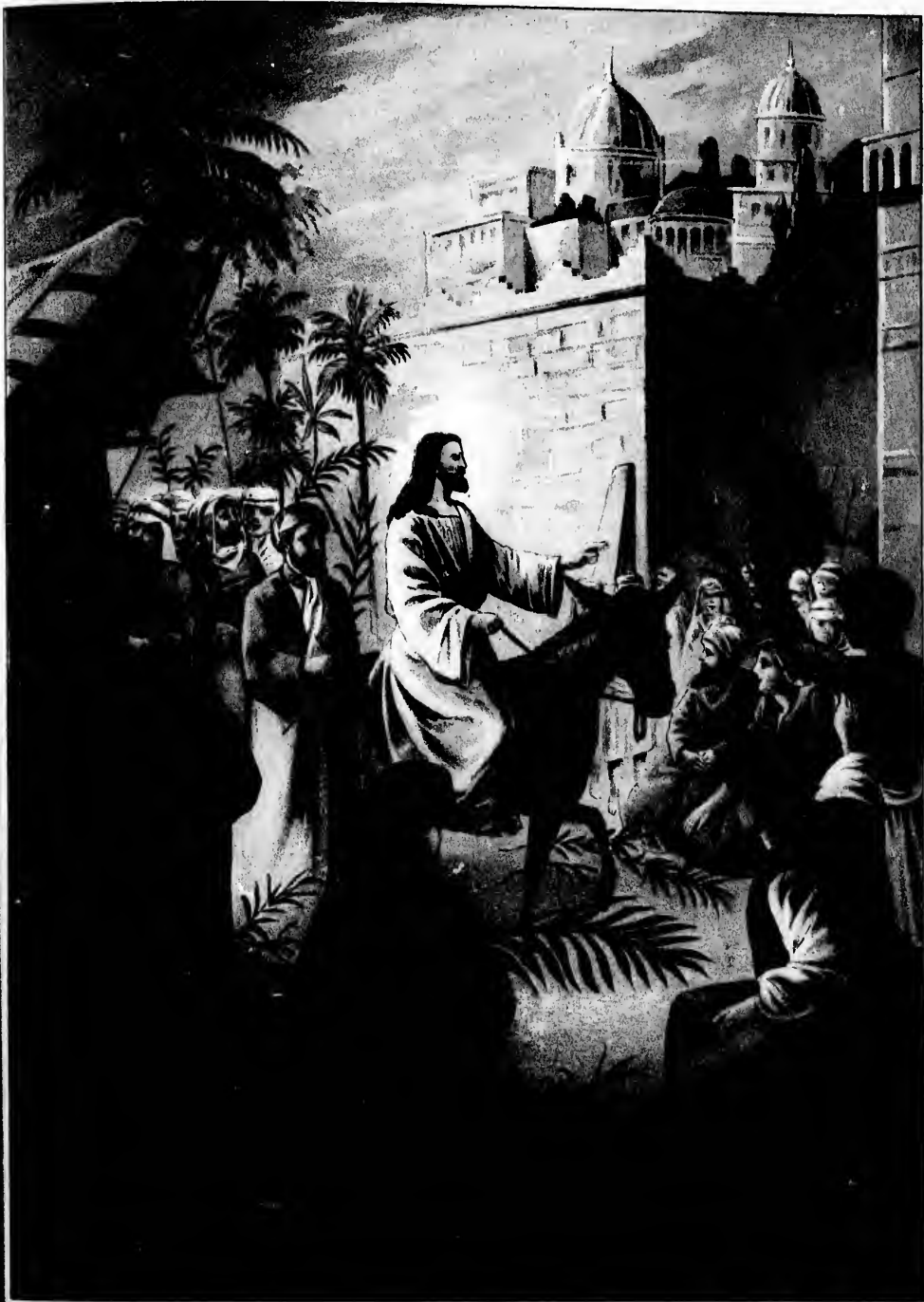
This rude, intruding, presumptuous guest is cast forth by attendant angels into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; and then follows, for the last time, the warning urged in varying similitudes, with a frequency commensurate to its importance, that "many are called, but few are chosen."

Teachings so obvious in their import filled the minds of the leading priests and Pharisees with a more and more bitter rage. To bad

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CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM.

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men nothing is so maddening as the exhibition of their own self-deception. So great was the hardly concealed fury of the Jewish hierarchy, that they would gladly have seized Him that very hour. Fear restrained them, and He was suffered to retire unmolested to His quiet resting-place. But either that night or early on the following morning, His enemies held another council—at this time they seem to have held them almost daily—to see if they could not make one more combined, systematic, overwhelming effort “to entangle Him in His talk,” to convict Him of ignorance or of error, to shake His credit with the multitude, or embroil Him in dangerous relations towards the civil authority.

He was scarcely seated in the Temple when the result of the machinations of His enemies on the previous evening showed itself in a new kind of strategy, involving one of the most perilous and deeply laid of all the schemes to entrap and ruin Him. The deadly nature of the plot appeared in the fact that, to carry it out, the Pharisees were united in malicious conjuncture with the Herodians; so that two parties, usually ranked against each other in strong opposition, were now reconciled in a conspiracy for the ruin of their common enemy, and were united to dismay and perplex Him. It was a confederacy of evil.

Who the Herodians Were.

The Herodians occur but seldom in the Gospel narrative. Their very designation—applied to the Greek-speaking courtiers of an Edomite prince who, by Roman intervention, had become a Judæan king—showed at once their hybrid origin. Their existence had mainly a political significance, and they stood outside the current of religious life, except so far as their worldly interests led them to show an ostentatious disregard for the Mosaic law. They were, in fact, mere provincial courtiers; men who basked in the sunshine of a petty tyranny which, for their own personal ends, they were anxious to uphold.

To strengthen the family of Herod by keeping it on good terms with Roman im-

perialism, and to effect this good understanding by repressing every distinctively Jewish aspiration—this was their highest aim. And in order to do this they changed their names, adopted Pagan habits, frequented amphitheatres, familiarly accepted the symbols of heathen supremacy, even went so far as to obliterate, by such artificial means as they could, the distinctive and covenant symbol of Hebrew nationality.

That the Pharisees should tolerate even the most temporary partnership with such men as these, whose very existence was a violent outrage on their most cherished prejudices, enables us to gauge more accurately the extreme virulence of hatred with which Jesus had inspired them. And that hatred was destined to become deadlier still. It was already at red-heat; the words and deeds of this day were to raise it to its whitest intensity of wrath, and awaken its terrible fury.

A Fresh Attack.

The Herodians might come before Jesus without raising a suspicion of sinister motives; but the Pharisees, astutely anxious to put Him off His guard, did not come to Him in person. They sent some of their younger scholars, who (already adepts in hypocrisy) were to approach Him as though in all the guileless simplicity of an inquiring spirit. They evidently designed to raise the impression that a dispute had occurred between them and the Herodians, and that they desired to settle it by referring the decision of the question at issue to the final and higher authority of the Great Prophet. They came to Him circumspectly, deferentially, courteously.

“Rabbi,” they said to Him with flattering earnestness, “we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou regardest not the person of men.” It was as though they would entreat Him, without fear or favor, confidentially to give them His private opinion; and as though they really wanted His opinion for their own guidance in a moral question of practical importance, and were

quite sure that He alone could resolve their distressing uncertainty. But why this sly serpentine approach? The forked tongue and the envenomed fang appeared in a moment.

"Tell us, therefore"—since you are so wise, so true, so courageous—"tell us, therefore, is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? This capitation tax, which we all so much detest, but the legality of which these Herodians support, ought we, or ought we not, to pay it? Which of us is in the right?—we who loathe and resent, or the Herodians, who delight in it?"

He must, they thought, answer "Yes" or "No;" there is no possible escape from a plain question so cautiously, sincerely, and respectfully put. Perhaps He will answer, "Yes, it is lawful." If so, all apprehension of Him on the part of the Herodians will be removed, for then He will not be likely to endanger them or their views. For although there is something which looks dangerous in this common enthusiasm for Him, yet if one, whom they take to be the Messiah, should openly adhere to a heathen tyranny, and sanction its most galling imposition, such a decision will at once explode and evaporate any regard which the people may feel for him.

Cunning Hypocrites.

If, on the other hand, as is all but certain, He should adopt the views of His countryman Judas the Gaulonite, and answer, "No, it is not lawful," then, in that case too, we are equally rid of Him; for then He is in open rebellion against the Roman power, and these new Herodian friends of ours can at once hand Him over to the jurisdiction of the Procurator. Pontius Pilatus will deal very roughly with His pretensions, and will, if need be, without the slightest hesitation, mingle His blood, as he has done the blood of other Galilæans, with the blood of the sacrifices.

They must have awaited the answer with breathless interest; but even if they succeeded in concealing the hate which gleamed in their eyes, Jesus at once saw the sting and heard the hiss of the Pharisaic serpent. They had

fawned on Him with their "Rabbi," and "true" and "impartial," and "fearless;" He "blights them with the flash" of one indignant word, "Hypocrites!" That word must have undeceived their hopes, and crumbled their craftiness into dust. "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Bring me the tribute-money." They would not be likely to carry with them the hated Roman coinage with its heathen symbols, though they might have been at once able to produce from their girdles the Temple shekel. But they would only have to step outside the Court of the Gentiles, and borrow from the money-changers' tables a current Roman coin. While the people stood round in wondering silence they brought Him a denarius, and put it in His hand. On one side were stamped the haughty beautiful features of the Emperor Tiberius, with all the wicked scorn upon the lip; on the obverse, his title of Pontifex Maximus!

It was probably due to mere accident that the face of the cruel, dissolute tyrant was on this particular coin, for the Romans, with that half-contemptuous concession to national superstitions which characterized their rule, had allowed the Jews to have struck for their particular use a coinage which recorded the name without bearing the likeness of the reigning emperor.

"Whose image and superscription is this?" He asked. They say unto Him, "Cæsar's." There, then, was the simplest possible solution of their cunning question. "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." That alone might have been enough, for it implied that their national acceptance of this coinage answered their question, and revealed its emptiness. The very word which He used conveyed the lesson. They had asked, "Is it lawful to give?" He corrects them, and says, "Render"—"Give back." It was not a voluntary gift, but a legal due; not a cheerful offering, but a political necessity. It was perfectly understood among the Jews, and was laid down by their greatest Rabbis in later days, that to accept the coinage of any king was to acknowledge his supremacy.

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THE TRIBUTE MONEY.—Luke xx. 22.

By accepting the denarius, therefore, as a current coin they were openly declaring that Cæsar was their sovereign, and they—the very best of them—had settled the question that it *was* lawful to pay the poll-tax, by habitually doing so. It was their duty, then, to obey the power which they had deliberately chosen, and the tax, under these circumstances, only represented an equivalent for the advantages which they received. But Jesus could not leave them with this lesson only. He added the far deeper and weightier words—"and to God the things that are God's."

Imperial Cæsar.

To Cæsar you owe the coin which you have admitted as the symbol of his authority, and which bears his image and superscription; to God you owe yourselves. Nothing can more fully reveal the depth of hypocrisy in these Pharisaic questioners than the fact that, in spite of the Divine answer, and in spite of their own secret and cherished convictions, they yet made it a ground of clamorous accusation against Jesus, that He had "forbidden to give tribute unto Cæsar!"

The Sadducees, a sect which disbelieved in a future life, and whose opinions were very prevalent among the upper classes in Judæa, then put a question to Him, proposing the case of a woman who, under the law, married seven brothers in succession, and asking whose wife she would be in the life to come. This question Jesus answered without reserve, declaring that the relation of husband and wife did not exist in heaven; and perceiving the covert blow at the notion of a future life which the question involved, He added further a proof of it from that part of Scripture (the Pentateuch, or books of Moses) which alone they received as the revealed will of God.

This he did by reminding them that when God called to Moses from the burning bush, he said, "I *am* the God of Abraham," which was a proof that then Abraham really lived, seeing that He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. This was a sufficient answer to their question.

Soon after Jesus broke forth into a terrible denunciation of the Pharisees and their doctrines, which He concluded by declaring that the existing generation should not have passed away till all the blood they had shed, and all the iniquities they had committed, had been terribly avenged. Then, foreseeing the miseries which awaited the devoted city, He added mournfully, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"

And has not that denunciation been fearfully fulfilled? Speaking of the murder of the younger Hanan, and other eminent nobles and hierarchs, Josephus says, "I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge His sanctuary by fire, that He cut off these their great defenders and well-wishers; while those that a little before had worn the sacred garments and presided over the public worship, and had been esteemed venerable by those that dwelt in the whole habitable earth, were cast to the wild beasts."

Jerusalem's Doom.

Never was a narrative more full of horrors, frenzies, unspeakable degradations, and overwhelming miseries than is the history of the siege of Jerusalem. Never was any prophecy more closely, more terribly, more overwhelmingly fulfilled than this of Christ. The men going about in the disguise of women with swords concealed under their gay robes; the rival outrages and infamies of John and Simon; the priests struck by darts from the upper court of the Temple, and falling slain by their own sacrifices; "the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses—priests, strangers, profane—standing in lakes in the holy courts;" the corpses themselves lying in piles and mounds on the very altar slopes; the fires feeding luxuriously on cedar-work overlaid with gold, friend and foe trampled to death on the gleam-

ing mosaics in promiscuous carnage; priests, swollen with hunger, leaping madly into the devouring flames, till at last those flames had done their work, and what had been the Temple of Jerusalem, the beautiful and holy House of God, was a heap of ghastly ruin, where the burning embers were half-slaked in pools of gore. The work of destruction was terrible. casses?"—to experience the "deep silence" and the kind of deadly night which seized upon the city in the intervals of rage?—to see 600,000 dead bodies carried out of the gates?—to see friends fighting madly for grass and nettles, and the refuse of the drains?—to see the bloody zealots "gaping for want, and stumoling and staggering along like mad



CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM.—Matt. xxiii. 37.

And did not all the righteous blood shed upon the earth since the days of Abel come upon that generation? Did not many of that generation survive to witness and feel the unutterable horrors which Josephus tells?—to see their fellows crucified in jest, "some one way, and some another," till "room was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the carcasses?"—to hear the horrid tale of the miserable mother who, in the pangs of famine, had devoured her own child?—to be sold for slaves in such multitudes that at last none would buy them?—to see the streets running with blood, and the "fire of burning houses quenched in the blood of their defenders?"—to have their young sons sold in hundreds,

or exposed in the amphitheatres to the sword of the gladiator or the fury of the lion, until at last, "since the people were now slain, the Holy House burnt down, and the city in flames, there was nothing further left for the enemy to do?"

In that awful siege it is believed that there perished 1,100,000 men, besides the 97,000 who were carried captive, and most of whom perished subsequently in the arena or the mine; and it was an awful thing to feel, as some of the survivors and eye-witnesses—and they not Christians—did feel, that "the city had deserved its overthrow by producing a generation of men who were the causes of its misfortunes;" and that "neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, since the beginning of the world."

It must have been clear to all that the great denunciation just recorded involved a final and hopeless rupture. After language such as this there could be no possibility of reconciliation. It was "too late." The door was shut. When Jesus left the Temple His disciples must have been aware that He was leaving it forever.

True and False Giving.

But apparently as He was leaving it—perhaps while He was sitting with sad heart and downcast eyes in the court of the women to rest His soul, troubled by the unwonted intensity of moral indignation, and His mind wearied with these incessant assaults—another and less painful incident happened, which enabled Him to leave the actual precincts of the House of His Father with words, not of anger, but of approval.

In this court of the women were thirteen chests, each shaped like a trumpet, broadening downwards from the aperture, and each adorned with various inscriptions. Into these were cast those religious and benevolent contributions which helped to furnish the Temple with its splendid wealth. While Jesus was sitting there the multitude were dropping their gifts, and the wealthier donors were conspicuous

among them as they ostentatiously offered their gold and silver. Raising His eyes, perhaps from a reverie of sorrow, Jesus at a glance took in the whole significance of the scene.

At that moment a poor widow timidly dropped in her little contribution. The lips of the rich contributors may have curled with scorn at a presentation which was the very lowest legal minimum. She had given two of the very smallest of current coins; for it was not lawful, even for the poorest, to offer only one. The coin was worth less than half a cent of our money, and with the shame of poverty she may well have shrunk from bestowing so trivial a gift, when the rich men around her were lavishing their gold.

Contempt for the Poor.

We cannot understand the full force of this act of the poor widow; we cannot really appreciate Christ's commendation of her, until we call to mind the social position of the humble poor at that time. If it is true now that money is power, it was even more true then, for of all the great the rich were the greatest, and of all the lowly the poor were the lowliest. Men had not yet learned to strip off the external and see beneath it man with immortality in his breast, and the name of God written on his brow. Men were judged, not as the offspring of a common Creator, not as great in soul and possessed of Divine endowments. This has been the mistake of the ages, that man was estimated and measured, not in himself, but by what he possessed, or by what he could achieve.

Think of that climax in the answer of Jesus to the disciples of John. Nothing could have been more astonishing than that the poor should have the gospel preached to them, and, if man could have discovered it, nothing was more truly an evidence of the Divine character of Christ than His condescension and His regard for the lowly; and so, in His estimation, the poor garments of the widow who casts her gift into the treasury are finer than the purple of kings, and the two mites are brighter than the gems of coronets.

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The commendation of this poor woman, we say, is all the more remarkable because the poor were despised and never commended, and remarkable also because the rich and the great

spirit. That is a great gift which has a heart in it, although it may be nothing more than the look of an eye or the grasp of a hand. The commercial spirit of the world weighs



THE WIDOW'S MITE.—Luke xxi. 3.

were praised, and all they did was considered things in scales, rattles the gifts upon the counter, and counts them up; looks at the figures on the subscription list, and sees whether they are two or three in number, or more; calculates in dollars and cents the benefit of

the contribution. This is what the world does, and in the eye of the world alone, the poor widow is not more queenly than those who wear diadems, and is not richer than those who live in palaces. Christian principle here, as in many other instances, stands in contrast with this commercial spirit. One throb of sympathy, one sigh from a noble soul, two mites freely given, are to be commemorated in histories where the lines are never obliterated, and where the glory of the page is never dimmed.

It is a beautiful consideration that all along through the Gospels we have these little incidents, just those things which happen from day to day, but which have a meaning so vast. These incidents are fixed in the world's thought and memory; they live there in the world's great heart as truly as the stone pyramids live on the sands of Egypt. It was by little things of this description, weighing so heavy, that Jesus taught many of His most blessed truths, and gave to men His heavenly wisdom. There were those in the Temple, great and influential, who saw nothing in this poor widow's act to admire, but when those two mites dropped into the treasury, the sound rang through all heaven; more than this, it rang through all the ages to come, and the poor widow in the Temple has an immortal fame.

The names of empires may be lost, the glory of conquerors may be quenched in oblivion, but, like the Mary whose story of spikenard and tears is told wherever the gospel is preached, so this loving act of the poor widow is a part of that same gospel, and the news of it sounds equally far. Jesus was pleased with the faithfulness and the self-sacrificing spirit of the gift. It was like the "cup of cold water" given for love's sake, which in His kingdom should not go unrewarded.

He wished to teach forever the great lesson that the essence of charity is self-denial; and the self-denial of this widow in her pauper condition was far greater than that of the wealthiest Pharisee who had contributed his gold. "For they all flung in of their abundance, but she of her penury cast in all she

had, her whole means of subsistence." "One coin out of a little," says Ambrose, "is better than a treasure out of much; for it is not considered how much is given, but how much remains behind." "If there be a willing mind," says Paul, "it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Splendor of the Temple.

And now Jesus left the Temple for the last time; but the feelings of the apostles still clung with the loving pride of their nationality to that sacred and memorable spot. They stopped to cast upon it one last lingering gaze, and one of them was eager to call His attention to its goodly stones and splendid offerings—those nine gates overlaid with gold and silver, and the one of solid Corinthian brass yet more precious; those graceful and towering porches; those bevelled blocks of marble forty cubits long and ten cubits high, testifying to the toil and munificence of so many generations; those double cloisters and stately pillars; that lavish adornment of sculpture and arabesque; those alternate blocks of red and white marble, recalling the crest and hollow of the sea-waves; those vast clusters of golden grapes, each cluster as large as a man, which twined their splendid luxuriance over the golden doors.

They would have Him gaze with them on the rising terraces of courts—the court of the Gentiles with its monolithic columns and rich mosaic; above this the flight of fourteen steps which led to the court of the women; then the flight of fifteen steps which led up to the court of the priests; then, once more, the twelve steps which led to the final platform crowned by the actual Holy, and Holy of Holies, which the Rabbis fondly compared for its shape to a couchant lion, and which, with its marble whiteness and gilded roofs, looked like a glorious mountain whose snowy summit was gilded by the sun.

It is as though they thought that the loveliness and splendor of this scene would intercede with Him, touching His heart with mute appeal. But the heart of Jesus was sad. To

Tim the sole beauty of a Temple was the sincerity of its worshippers, and no gold or marble, no brilliant vermilion or curiously-carved cedar-wood, no delicate sculpturing or votive gems, could change for Him a den of robbers into a House of Prayer. The builders were still busily at work, as they had been for nearly fifty years, but their work, unblest of God, was destined—like the earthquake-shaken forum of guilty Pompeii—to be destroyed before it was finished.

Not One Stone Left Upon Another.

Briefly and almost sternly Jesus answered, as He turned away from the glittering spectacle, "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down." It was the final "Let us depart hence." Tacitus and Josephus tell us how at the siege of Jerusalem was heard that great utterance of departing gods; but now it was uttered in reality, though no earthquake accompanied it, nor any miracle to show that this was the close of another great epoch in the world's history. It took place quietly, and God "was content to show all things in the slow history of their ripening." Thirty-five years afterwards that Temple sank into the ashes of its destruction; neither Hadrian, nor Julian, nor any other, was able to build upon its site; and now that very site is a matter of uncertainty.

Henry Hart Milman, in his famous poem entitled "The Siege of Jerusalem," represents the Roman general, Titus, as viewing the Holy City, and exclaiming:

It must be—
 And yet it moves me, Romans! It confounds
 The counsel of my firm philosophy,
 That ruin's merciless ploughshare must pass o'er,
 And barren salt be sown on yon proud city.
 As on our olive-crowned hill we stand,
 Where Kedron at our feet its scanty waters
 Distils from stone to stone with gentle motion,
 As through a valley sacred to sweet peace,
 How boldly doth it front us! how majestically!
 Like a luxurious vineyard, the hill-side
 Is hung with marble fabrics, line o'er line,
 Terrace o'er terrace, nearer still, and nearer

To the blue heavens. There bright and sumptuous
 palaces,
 With cool and verdant gardens interspersed;
 There towers of war that frown in massy strength;
 While over all hangs the rich purple eve,
 As conscious of its being her last farewell
 Of light and glory to that fated city.

And, as our clouds of battle, dust, and smoke
 Are melted into air, behold the Temple
 In undisturbed and lone serenity,
 Finding itself a solemn sanctuary
 In the profound of heaven! It stands before us
 A mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles
 The very sun, as though he worshipped there,
 Lingers upon the gilded cedar roofs,
 And down the long and branching porticos,
 On every flowery-sculptured capital,
 Glitters the homage of his parting beams.
 By Hercules! the sight might almost win
 The offended majesty of Rome to mercy.

Returning to the narrative, sadly and silently, with deep thoughts in their hearts, the little band of disciples turned their backs on the sacred building, which stood there as an epitome of Jewish history from the days of Solomon onwards. They crossed the valley of Kidron, and climbed the steep foot-path that leads over the Mount of Olives to Bethany.

At the summit of the hill they paused, and Jesus sat down to rest—perhaps under the green boughs of those two stately cedar trees which then adorned the summit of the hill. It was a scene well adapted to inspire most solemn thoughts. Deep on the one side beneath Him lay the Holy City, which now, on this day, had shown finally that she knew not the time of her visitation. At His feet were the slopes of Olivet and the Garden of Gethsemane. On the opposite slope rose the city walls, and the broad plateau crowned with the marble colonnades and gilded roofs of the Temple.

Turning in the eastward direction He would look across the bare, desolate hills of the wilderness of Judæa to the purpling line of the mountains of Moab, which glow like a chain of jewels in the sunset light. In the deep, scorched hollows of the Ghôr, visible in patches of sullen cobalt, lay the mysterious waters of the Sea of Lot. And thus, as He gazed from

the brow of the hill, on either side of Him there were visible tokens of God's anger and man's sin. On the one side gloomed the dull lake, whose ghastly and bituminous waves are a perpetual testimony to God's vengeance upon sensual crime; at His feet was the glorious guilty city which had shed the blood of all the prophets, and was doomed to sink through yet deadlier wickedness to yet more awful retribution. And the setting sun of His earthly life flung deeper and more sombre colorings across the whole scene of His earthly pilgrimage.

Seeking a Sign.

It may be that the shadows of His thought gave a strange solemnity to His attitude and features, as He sat there silent among the silent and saddened band of His few faithful followers. Not without a touch of awe His nearest and most favored apostles—Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew—came near to Him, and as they saw His eye fixed upon the Temple, asked Him privately, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Their "when?" remained for the present unanswered. It was the way of Jesus, when some ignorant or irrelevant or inadmissible question was put to Him, to rebuke it not directly, but by passing it over, and by substituting for its answer some great moral lesson which was connected with it, and could alone make it valuable. Accordingly, this question of the apostles drew from Him the great discourse of the last things, of which the four moral key-notes are "Beware!" and "Watch!" and "Endure!" and "Pray!" The words show plainly the deep solicitude which He felt for His beloved disciples.

In this discourse, Jesus first warned them of false Messiahs and false prophets; He told them that the wild struggling of nations and those physical commotions and calamities which have so often seemed to keep time with the great crises of history, were not to trouble them, as they would be but the throe, the first birth-pang of the coming era. He prophesied of dreadful persecutions, of abounding

iniquity, of decaying faith, of wide evangelization as the signs of a coming end. And as we learn from many other passages of Scripture, these signs, as they did usher in the destruction of Jerusalem, so shall reappear on a larger scale before the end of all things is at hand.

The next great paragraph of this speech dwelt mainly on the immediate future. He had foretold distinctly the destruction of the Holy City, and He now gives them indications which should forewarn them of its approach, and lead them to secure their safety. When they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies—when the abomination which should cause desolation should stand in the Holy Place—then even from the fields, even from the housetops, they were to fly out of Judæa to the shelter of the hills, from the unspeakable horrors that should follow.

The Sudden Appearing.

Nor even then were they to be carried away by any deceivableness of unrighteousness, caused by the yearning intensity of Messianic hopes. Many should cry, "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" but let them pay no heed; for when He came, His presence, like lightning shining from the east even to the west, should be visible and unmistakable to all the world, and like eagles gathering to the carcass should the destined ministers of His vengeance wing their flight.

By such warnings the Christians were preserved. Before John of Giscala had shut the gates of Jerusalem, and Simon of Gerasa had begun to murder the fugitives, so that "he who escaped the tyrant within the wall was destroyed by the other that lay before the gates"—before the Roman eagle waved her wing over the doomed city, or the infamies of lust and murder had driven every worshipper in horror from the Temple courts—the Christians had taken timely warning, and in the little Peræan town of Pella were beyond the reach of all the robbery, and murder, and famine, and cannibalism, and extermination which made the siege of Jerusalem a scene

of greater tribulation than any that has been recorded since the beginning of the world. | the shaking of the powers of heaven—signs which may have a meaning both literal and



THE VIRGINS.—Matt. xxv. 13.

Then Jesus passed to the darkening of the sun and moon. and the falling of the stars, and | metaphorical—which should precede the appearing of the Son of man in heaven, and the

gathering of the elect from the four winds by the trumpet-blast of the angels.

That day of the Lord should have its signs no less than the other, and He bade His disciples in all ages to mark those signs and interpret them aright, even as they interpreted the signs of the coming summer in the fig-tree's budding leaves. But that day should come to the world suddenly, unexpectedly, overwhelmingly; and as it should be a day of reward to all faithful servants, so should it be a day of vengeance and destruction to the glutton and the drunkard, to the hypocrite and the oppressor.

Therefore, to impress yet more indelibly upon their minds the lessons of watchfulness and faithfulness, and to warn them yet more emphatically against the peril of the drowsy life and the smouldering lamp, He told them the exquisite parables—so beautiful, so simple, yet so rich in instruction—of the ten virgins and of the talents.

The Householder and Thief.

"Take heed," He says, "and watch: for ye know not when the hour may strike. It will be like the coming of a man who has taken his journey into a far country, and has left his house in the hands of his servants, and given authority over it to them—to each his own special work—and has commanded the keeper of the gate to watch for his return. Watch, therefore, like faithful, diligent servants, for ye know not the hour when I, the Master of the house, shall come, whether it will be in the evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, if I come suddenly, I find you asleep. And what I say to you, My apostles, I say to all, Be awake and watchful at all times, that ye may be able to escape all the terrors of My coming, by being found faithful, and thus may be set before Me by the holy angels, to enter into My glory, and stand before Me, as My servants, in My heavenly kingdom.

"You know how a householder would have acted had he known beforehand at what watch of the night the thief would come, to plunder his goods. He would have watched, and not

have suffered his house to be broken into. Therefore, be ready at all times, for the Son of man will come, when, perhaps, ye least expect Him.

"Who among you will prove himself a good and faithful servant? He will be like a servant of him of whom I have spoken, who took his journey to a far country—a servant set over the household to give them their food in due season, during his absence: who faithfully did it. Blessed will be that servant, whom his lord, when he returns, shall find so doing! Verily I say to you, he will advance him to a far higher post, for he will set him not only over the food of his household, but over all his substance. And blessed, in like manner, will he be whom I, on My return, will find faithful to the charge committed to him in My kingdom!

"But if, instead of being faithful, you fail in your duty, you will be like a servant of the same master who should say in his heart, 'My lord delays his coming,' and begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, at his master's cost. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he does not look for him, and in an hour when he does not expect him, and will punish him to the uttermost, and make him bear the just fate of a hypocrite. Even so the hypocrite, in My kingdom, shall be cast out into outer darkness.

Meeting the Bridegroom.

"In that day it will be as when, at a marriage, the maidens invited to play and sing in the marriage procession prepare to go out to meet the bridegroom, to lead him to the house of the bride, where the marriage is to be celebrated. Let me suppose there were ten such maidens—five wise, five foolish. The five foolish ones took their lamps with them, to help the display, and lighten the path of the bridegroom, but they forgot to take oil with them, besides, to refill the lamps, when they had burned out.

"But the wise not only took their lamps, but oil in their oil-flasks as well. All the ten, thus differently prepared, went forth from the

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home of the bride, and waited in a house, on the streets had heard the loud music and the way by which the bridegroom must come, shouts, and had seen the light of the lamps



to be ready to go out and escort him, when he passed by.

"But he delayed so long that they all grew heavy, and fell asleep. At last, at midnight, they were suddenly roused; for the people in

and torches of the procession afar, and raised the cry at the doors—'The bridegroom is coming, go ye out to meet him.'

"Then they all arose, and trimmed each her own lamp, to have it ready. The foolish

ones now found that their lamps were going out, because the oil was all burned, and asked the wise ones to give them of theirs. But they answered, 'We cannot possibly do so, for our oil would assuredly not suffice both for ourselves and you: go, rather, to the sellers, and buy for yourselves.'

"While they were away buying it, however, the bridegroom came, and the five who were ready joined the procession, and went in with the bridegroom to the marriage and the marriage-feast, and the door was shut. After a time the other five came, and knocked at the gate with anxious entreaty—'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'I do not know you. You were not among the other maids of the bride in the procession, and, therefore, you are strangers to me, and as such have nothing to do at my marriage.'

"Learn from this parable that they who patiently watch and wait, doing the duty I have assigned them, till I come, though they know neither the day nor the hour when I shall do so, will have a part in the joys of My heavenly kingdom. All My followers will then be it were, My bride, and I their Bridegroom; but those who are not faithful and true to the end will be shut out from the marriage-feast."

The King and his Servants.

With that marvelous power of turning every incident to practical account which marked His teaching, He proceeded to repeat a parable borrowed, in many particulars, from facts in their recent or passing national history. Archelaus had set out for Rome, most likely from Jericho itself, not many years before, to obtain investiture in the kingdom left to him by the will of his father Herod, and the Jews had sent a fruitless embassy after him to prevent his obtaining it. All the princes of the house of Herod had, indeed, been only vassals of Rome, and had had to go to the imperial city, in each case, to seek their kingdom as a gift from the Roman senate.

"A certain man," said He, "of noble birth, went to a distant country to receive for himself the dignity of king over his former fellow-

citizens, and then to return. Before doing so he called ten of his servants, from whom, as such, he had the right to expect the utmost care for his interests in his absence. He proposed, in his secret mind, to entrust them with a small responsibility, by their discharge of which he could judge, when he returned, of their fitness and worthiness to be put into positions of greater consideration; for he wished to choose from them his future chief officers for the administration of his affairs.

The King's Return.

"In the meantime he gave them, each, only a mina, one hundred drachmæ (about eighteen dollars of our money), and said to them, 'Trade with this, on my account, till I return.' If they proved to be faithful in this small matter, he would be able to advance them to higher trusts.

"It happened, however, that he was so unpopular, that his fellow-citizens, in their hatred of him, sent an embassy after him to the supreme power, complaining against him, and contemptuously declaring that they would not have such a man to rule over them. But their embassy failed, for, in spite of it, he obtained the province, and was appointed their king.

"On his return, after he had thus received the government, he ordered the servants to whom he had given the money to be called before him, that he might know what each had gained by trading. The first came and said, 'Lord, thy talent has gained ten.' 'Well done, good servant,' replied his master, 'because thou wast faithful in a very little, be thou governor of ten cities.' The second came, saying, 'Lord, thy talent has gained five.' 'Be thou governor of five cities,' replied his master.

"But another came and said, 'Lord, here is thy talent, I have kept it safely tied up in a napkin: you will find it just as I got it. I did not know what to do with it, and I was afraid of thee; for I know you are a hard man in money matters, looking for great profits where you have laid out next to nothing—taking up, as they say, what you had not put down, and,

if needs be, reaping where you had not sown | “I will judge you out of your own mouth,
—making good your loss, if there were any, | wicked servant,’ replied his master. ‘You



THE TALENTS.—Matt. xxv. 14.

at his expense who caused it—and so, to keep | say you knew I was a hard man in money
myself safe, I thought it best to run no risk | matters, seeking gain where I had laid
one way or other.' | nothing out to secure it, and reaping where

others have sown—why then did you not at least give my money to some exchanger to use at his table, that thus, on my return, I might have got it back with interest?' Then, turning to the servants standing by, he continued, 'Take from him the mina, and give it him that has ten.' 'He has ten already,' muttered the servants, half afraid. But the king went on in his anger, without heeding them—'I tell you that to every one who shows his fitness to serve me, by having already increased what I at first gave him, I shall give more; but I shall take away what I first gave from him who, by adding nothing to it, has proved his unfitness to use what might be put in his hands.'"

A Sacred Trust.

The lessons of the parable could hardly be misunderstood. To the Jewish people, who would not receive Him as the Messiah, they spoke in words of warning alarm; but the twelve, themselves, heard a solemn caution. They had each, in being selected as an apostle, received a sacred trust, to be used for his Master's interests, till the coming again in glory. Well for him who, when his Lord returned to judgment, could give a good account of his stewardship; woe to him who had neglected his trust! Though called to the same honor at first as the others, as an apostle he would be stripped of his rank, and receive no share in the glory and dignities of the Messianic kingdom. As to the Jews who rejected Him, His coming would be the signal for the sorest judgments.

On that day those who had shown the least kindness to the least of these His brethren should be accounted to have done it unto Him. But then, lest these grand utterances should lead them to any of their old mistaken Messianic notions, He ended them with the sad and now half-familiar refrain, that His death and anguish must precede all else. The occasion, the manner, the very day are now revealed to them: "Ye know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

So ended that great discourse upon the Mount of Olives, and the sun set, and He arose and walked with his apostles the short remaining road to Bethany. It was the last time that He would ever walk it upon earth; and after the trials, the weariness, the awful teachings, the terrible agitations of that eventful day, how delicious to Him must have been that hour of twilight loveliness and evening calm; how refreshing the peace and affection which surrounded Him in the quiet village and the holy home.

Jesus did not love cities, and scarcely ever slept within their precincts. He shrank from their congregated wickedness, from their glaring publicity, from their feverish excitement, from their featureless monotony, with all the natural and instinctive dislike of delicate minds. An oriental city is always dirty; the refuse is flung into the streets; there is no pavement; the pariah dog is the sole scavenger; beast and man jostle each other promiscuously in the crowded thoroughfares.

The Approaching Passion.

And though the necessities of His work compelled Him to visit Jerusalem, and to preach to the vast throngs from every climate and country who were congregated at its yearly festivals, yet He seems to have retired on every possible occasion beyond its gates, partly it may be for safety—partly from poverty—partly because He loved that sweet home at Bethany—and partly, too, perhaps, because He felt the peaceful joy of treading the grass that groweth on the mountains rather than the city stones, and could hold gladder communion with His Father in heaven under the shadow of the olive-trees, where, far from all disturbing sights and sounds, He could watch the splendor of the sunset and the falling of the dew, and feel the awful hush before the coming storm.

And surely that last evening walk to Bethany on that evening in Passion week must have breathed deep calm into His soul. The thought, indeed, of the bitter cup which He was so soon to drink was doubtless present to

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Him, but present only in its aspect of exalted victory—the full, perfect, and sufficient atone-
sacrifice, and the highest purpose of love ful-|ment—these we may well, though reverently,

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

MATT. XXV.



filled. Not the pangs which he would suffer, but the pangs from which He would save; not the power of darkness which would seem to win a short-lived triumph, but the redeeming
believe to have been the subjects which dominated in His thoughts. The exquisite beauty of the Syrian evening, the tender colors of the spring grass and

flowers, the ravines around Him paling into solemn gray, the distant hills bathed in the primrose light of sunset, the coolness and balm of the breeze after the burning glare—what must these have been to Him to whose eye the world of nature was an open book, on every page of which He read His Father's name!

And this was His native land. Bethany was almost to Him a second Nazareth; those whom He loved were around Him, and He was going to those whom He loved. Can we not imagine Him walking on in silence too deep for words—His disciples beside Him or following Him—the gibbous moon beginning to rise and gild the twinkling foliage of the olive-trees with richer silver, and moonlight and twilight blending at each step insensibly with the garish hues of day, like that solemn twilight-purple of coming agony into which the noonday of His happier ministry had long since begun to fade?

The Mount of Olives.

Of the many scenes connected with the early life of Jesus, there is none more sacred to the Christian mind than the Mount of Olives. The Lake of Galilee may be said to be next in point of interest, but the associations connected with the two places are altogether different. The shores of the lake witnessed the first events in the ministry of Christ, but the Mount of Olives belongs to its close. The one speaks of Jesus as full of gladness, the other speaks of Him in the days of His sorrow and tribulation. Gennesareth belongs to joyous Galilee, but Olivet is associated with dark Gethsemane. The first sermons of Jesus—those preached by the lake—are redolent of nature; they flowed like streams of pure water from His yet untroubled soul; but His last words and His last actions—those connected with Olivet—have more of anguish and sorrow.

The Mount of Olives is west of Jerusalem. The ascent begins as soon as the traveller has crossed the brook Kidron. The top is two hundred feet higher than Mount Moriah, so that it commands a complete view of Jeru-

salem. The first mention of Olivet in the Bible is when David heard of the conspiracy of Absalom. It is recorded that he fled from Jerusalem, and "went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." It was a mount of sorrow to David as well as to David's greater Son. He too wept over Jerusalem, and in a sense suffered for the sins of its children.

A Historic Spot.

Only once again is Olivet mentioned by name in the Old Testament. In the Book of Zechariah there is a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which is spoken of as contemporaneous with a coming of the Lord. It is said, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." There are, however, several indirect allusions to the Mount of Olives. It is said of king Solomon, when his wives turned away his heart after other gods, that he built "an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem." Because of these high places it was called "the mount of corruption." In Ezekiel it is said that "the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city." In the Book of Nehemiah, the people were instructed to keep the feast of Tabernacles with olive, and pine, and myrtle, and palm branches, brought from the Mount of Olives.

Jesus loved the country. The simplicity of nature accorded with His spirit. It was His Father's work—or, rather, the sphere of His Father's working. Everywhere God was present to Him: all scenes in nature, all sounds, all forms, ever spoke to Him of His

Father. The town was the abode of sin. There men festered in moral corruption: the atmosphere was impure; but in the green fields, on the hill-sides, and in quiet hamlets, Jesus found the purity of God.

It was on Olivet that Jesus wept for Jerusalem. He knew its impending doom. This lamentation over the great city seems to have intervened during the great triumphal procession towards the city. Jesus was going to His cross; but He was also going to His kingdom. He could rejoice, for He saw before Him His final victory; but He wept for those who were not to share it, those who had rejected Him, and were soon to be His murderers.

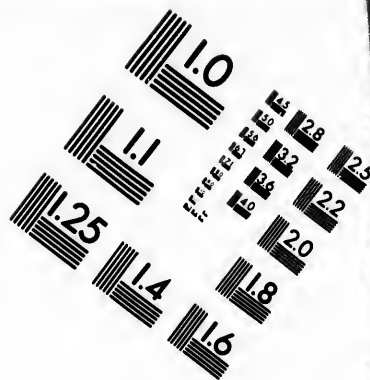
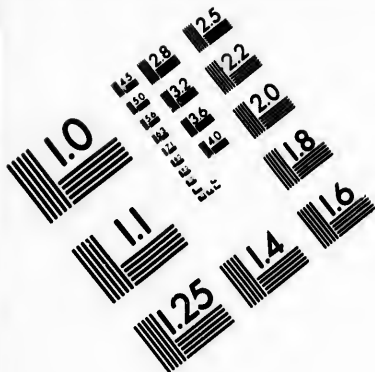
It is in the last scene of the life of Jesus that the Mount of Olives occupies the most conspicuous place in the Gospel history. After the Paschal supper, "He came out, and went, as He was wont," Luke says, "to the Mount of Olives." John says that He went "over the brook Kidron, where was a garden." This was Gethsemane, at the foot of Olivet, the scene of His agonies in the prospect of crucifixion. Into this garden His disciples are not permitted to enter, except the chosen three, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. But even they had to stand at a distance in the moments of His wrestling with God. Three times did

He utter the prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and twice He expressed submission to the Divine will.

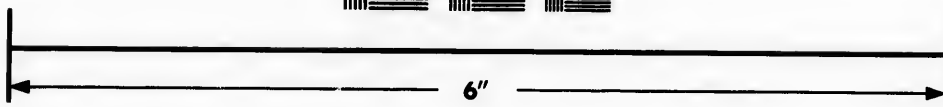
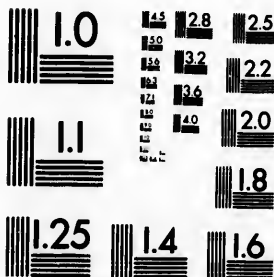
The Christian traveller in the Holy Land can gaze on no spot with more interest than on the green slopes of Olivet. The olive-trees are now but few in number, and the aspect of Jerusalem from its summit is not what it was when the Holy City was in its splendor. Gethsemane is now enclosed by the wall of a monastery. It contains eight large and venerable olive-trees, so old that the imagination may not be wrong in supposing them the very trees under which Jesus knelt when His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death.

Dean Stanley says: "They are now, indeed, less striking in the modern garden enclosure, built round them by the Franciscan monks, than when they stood free and unprotected on the rough hill-side; but they will remain, as long as their already protracted life is spared, the most remarkable of their race on the surface of the earth. Their gnarled trunks and scanty foliage will always be regarded as the most affecting of the sacred memories in or about Jerusalem; the most nearly approaching to the everlasting hills themselves in the force with which they carry us back to the events of the Gospel history."





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CHAPTER XXXVII.

CLOSING SCENES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

HAVING determined to put Jesus to death, the Sanhedrin held a private sitting in the house of the high-priest, Caiaphas, where they deliberated on the best means of apprehending Him with the least danger of creating an uproar among the people.

Unhappily, they found one willing to assist them. This was Judas Iscariot, who came to them, and agreed, for thirty pieces of silver, to seek an opportunity for betraying Him into their hands. The motive of this wretched man has been very much disputed. The more simple and harsh view is that which holds that he betrayed his Master to death for this sum of money; but this has been judged inconsistent with the fact of his repentance so soon as he saw that Jesus was actually condemned. This seems to show that he expected a different result, and the paltry sum of money might easily have been acquired by one who had charge of the bag, without staining his soul with so black a crime.

Upon the whole, we may readily believe that Judas was a man whose character was of less unmingled evil than the popular judgment deems; although it will always be difficult to determine the precise considerations by which his conduct was influenced. It has been supposed by some, that in the conviction that Christ could and would, as on former occasions, deliver Himself out of their hands, he intended merely to trifle with the priests in making this offer to them. But others think the whole proceeding best accounted for by supposing that Judas, annoyed at the tardi-

(540)

ness of Jesus in openly avowing Himself to be the Messiah, and of taking upon Him the great power which belonged to Him in that character, was solicitous to place Him in a position which would compel Him to declare Himself, and by that act commence His reign on the earth.

Thursday at length arrived, when all the inhabitants of Jerusalem prepared to celebrate the Passover. At this feast strangers from all parts of the land flocked to Jerusalem, and the residents felt themselves bound to set apart and make ready all the spare rooms in their houses, for the use of the strangers in celebrating the Passover. The ceremony itself consisted in eating a lamb with particular ceremonies, in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt. As it was necessary that a lamb should be eaten and that none of it should be left, parties sufficiently large for the purpose were usually formed. The number who sat at the table was usually from twelve to fifteen; and as Jesus and His apostles were thirteen, they were enabled to take this last and solemn meal by themselves, without the presence of strangers.

The time being fully come, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city, and told them that they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water whom they were to follow, and make ready the Passover in the house to which he went. It so happened: and on asking the master of the house to show them the chamber he had prepared for strangers, they were conducted to "a large upper chamber, ready furnished and prepared" with the requisite seats, table, and utensils. Here the Passover was made ready by the disciples, and in the evening Jesus came and sat down with them to eat of it.

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THE LAST SUPPER.—Matt. xxvi. 27.



self with a towel, like a slave, after laying aside His upper garments, He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. Pride and selfish ambition could not be more strikingly and touchingly reprov'd, than by such an act on the part of one so exalted.

No greater proof could be shown of His love, than that such an act of humility should be its natural expression. Had they all been true-hearted, it would have been amazing in one so transcendently above them, but it was still more so, when He knew that one of them was already a traitor. He had proclaimed Himself the Son of God, the future judge of the world, the Messiah in whose gift were the honors of heaven, and whose voice was to raise the dead, and they were simple Galilæan fishermen. There could be no commentary on His demand for lowliness, as the true ground of advancement in His kingdom, more vivid than His voluntarily performing the lowliest act of personal service to them all.

Peter's Rash Refusal.

He seems to have begun with Simon Peter, His chief apostle, but the warm heart and the impulsive nature of the rock-like man shrank from letting his Master humble Himself thus. "Lord," said he, "dost *Thou* wash *my* feet!" He had not realized the meaning of an act intended as symbolical. "What I do," replied Jesus, "thou understandest not now, but wilt know hereafter." "*Thou* shalt never wash *my* feet, Lord," reiterated the apostle. "If I do not wash thee," said Jesus: "thou hast no part with Me." "Lord, if that be the case," broke out Peter, "wash not my feet only, but my hands and my head." "It is not necessary," said Jesus. "He who, according to Jewish ways, has taken a bath before his meal, needs no more than to cleanse the dust from his feet, which has clung to them on the way from the bath. Except this, he is clean, and it is the same with you, except him who intends to betray Me.

"By My word, which I have spoken to you, and the faith waked in you by it, you are al-

ready clean in the sense I mean—right in the desire of your heart towards Me. Yet, though thus clean, the dust of earth still clings to you in part, and makes a last washing needful." The hour was at hand for this last crowning act of love, and He would now prepare them for it by this tender symbol, for it taught not only humility, but that He alone could take away sin. Having washed their feet and resumed His garments, He once more took His place on the couch.

A Startling Announcement.

"Do you know," He asked, as He did so, "the meaning of what I have now done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for I am both. Learn, then, that, if I, your Master and Lord, wash your feet, you, also, ought to wash one another's feet, for I have done this as an example to you, that you should do to each other as I have done to you. You know, and I would have you remember it, that a servant is not greater than his lord, nor an apostle than He who sent him forth, so that you may well imitate Me, your superior, in My humility. If you understand what I say, it will be well for you if you act, on My teaching."

It was just after this that Jesus took occasion to intimate that among the trusted disciples then present there was one who would betray Him to His enemies. This gave them great concern; and, after a pause, they began to ask Him severally, "Lord, is it I?" At this time they were seated, or rather reclining, on the bench, or triclinium, which enclosed the table; and they were placed in such a manner that the "beloved disciple," John, lay with his head towards his Master's bosom; and to him Peter beckoned that he should put the question more distinctly.

He did so, by asking, probably in a low voice, "Lord, who is it?" To which Jesus answered, probably also in a subdued voice, "He to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it;" and immediately He dipped the sop and gave it to Judas. It was usual after the second cup of wine at the Paschal

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meal for the father of the house, or head of the party, to take a piece of unleavened bread, break it in pieces and give a bit to each of those present, most commonly after having dipped it in the broth. This was probably the "sop" in question, and we may suppose that it was the turn of Judas to receive it.

On this Judas, who, as being near enough to receive this, had probably overheard John's question, asked, in a low voice, "Lord, is it

very night, in completion of the engagement into which he had already entered.

As the Passover repast began late in the evening, and it was now already more than half completed, the night must then have already set in when the traitor separated himself from this circle of humility and love, and hastened through the lonesome darkness to the enemies of Jesus.

When Judas had actually withdrawn, and



JESUS WASHING PETER'S FEET.—John xiii. 5.

I?" and was answered in an undertone, "It is thou," by Jesus, who then added, aloud, "What thou doest, do quickly:" on which Judas immediately left the place. The disciples generally had evidently not caught this conversation, for they supposed that he had gone forth on some charge connected with the distribution of alms from the common purse, with which he was intrusted. But in fact he went to the priests to arrange the plan of operation for betraying his Lord to them that

with that the certainty of his horrible deed was fully determined, the consciousness of victory over sin and death rose triumphant to the mind of the Saviour, and absorbed for the moment all other considerations; and He said, "Now the Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He then intimated to the apostles that the time was near in which He was to be taken from them, and added, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

Although Jesus had more than once expressed Himself with sufficient accuracy and plainness respecting His approaching death, and even the manner of it, the disciples, still warped by their early notions respecting the Messiah and His reign, could not understand His words in the sense He intended to convey. Possibly they thought only of a temporary removal of the Redeemer, through which He might escape from treason and from the plots of His enemies.

Therefore the ardent Peter endeavored to lead Him to a more definite explanation—"Lord, whither goest Thou?" Jesus answered, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." Gathering from this, perhaps, that some danger was connected with the removal of his beloved Master, Peter rejoined, "Why cannot I follow thee *now*? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." But Jesus, looking through the soul, perceived that this declaration arose more from a swell of generous feeling, than from a firmly-grounded purpose; and therefore warned him to look well to his own heart. The idea of forsaking his Master, whom he loved so dearly, was too inconceivable, however, to Peter, in the self-confidence of his affection, to allow him to accept it as possible. "Other men may, perhaps, be offended on account of Thee, Lord," said he, "but if all the world were to be so, there is no fear of my failing. I, at any rate, will never leave Thee."

Peter Warned.

"Simon, Simon," replied Jesus, using the old name by which He had known him long ago—"take care. Self-confidence will be your undoing. Satan has seen it, and has sought to get God to give you over into his power, as he once did Job, and he has got you for the time, to sift you as wheat is sifted. He would fain have it that your professions are only chaff, and he will shake and test you by temptations, dangers, and troubles, to try to make you turn against Me, and thus prove that it is so.

"But I am mightier than your enemy, and I

have prayed for you that, though you fall, you may rise again, and that your faith in Me may not give way altogether, and separate you entirely from Me. Though you will assuredly fall, yet you will repent, and when you have done so, see that you strengthen the faith of your fellow-disciples, and become their helper, to support and confirm them, if they, like you, waver." This warning was as kind as it was faithful, and was deeply impressive.

The Base Denial.

Peter was sorely distressed at such words. Conscious of his honest love and fidelity, it seemed as if Jesus doubted both. His warm Galilæan heart was full. He felt as if his Master spoke of his acting in a way of which he could not believe himself capable. "Lord," said he, "I care not what happens to Thee. I am ready to go with Thee to prison, or to die with Thee, but I will never leave Thee, nor be untrue to Thee." "Do you think so, Peter?" replied Jesus, with a voice full of tenderness—"I tell you that this very night, before the cock crow the second time, you will thrice deny that you know Me." "If I were to die for it," answered the apostle, "no one will ever hear me deny Thee." "I can say the same," added all the other apostles.

There was now a pause for a short time in the conversation. Presently Jesus recommenced it. "You may wonder at My speaking as I have done to-night," said He, "but there are good grounds for it. Your circumstances will be entirely different, henceforth, from what they have been in the past. A time of care and struggle lies before you. When I sent you to travel through the country, preaching the kingdom, and you had neither purse, nor bag for food, nor sandals—did you miss any of these, or want for anything?" "Nothing, Lord," said all the eleven.

"It will be very different now," replied Jesus. "Whoever has money, let him take it, and let him take provisions for the way, as well; and let him that has no sword sell his coat to buy one, to defend himself. He who has money and provisions can help himself on

by them in his journeys, but he who has none will need to ask hospitality, and, as he need not hope to receive it, let him, at least, have the means of protection. I speak in a figure, for I do not really mean you to fight, or to carry or use a sword, but I wish to impress on you how hostile the world will, henceforth, be to you, as you go on your journeys as my apostles; and what earnest energy and struggle will be needful, on your part, while you are thus carrying the news of the kingdom through the world. For I tell you, solemnly, that the words of Isaiah, 'And He was reckoned among transgressors,' must be fulfilled in Me, for that which has been written of Me in Scripture is about to be accomplished."

This was the picture, tinged with gloom and deeply shadowed by sorrow, which He painted. Jesus plainly told His disciples that they would share His sufferings, and also that their reward was sure, both for their toils and pains and their deeds of charity. This thought is beautifully expressed by the poet Montgomery in his pathetic poem entitled "The Stranger and His Friend:"

A poor wayfaring man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never answer "Nay."
I had not power to ask His name,
Whither He went, or whence He came;
Yet there was something in His eye
That won my love—I knew not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered. Not a word He spake.
Just perishing for want of bread,
I gave Him all; He blessed it, brake,
And ate;—but gave me part again.
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

I spied Him where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock; His strength was gone;
The heedless water mocked His thirst;
He heard it, saw it hurrying on.
I ran to raise the sufferer up;
Thrice from the stream He drained my cup,
Dipped, and returned it running o'er;—
I drank and never thirsted more.

'Twas night; the floods were out—it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard His voice abroad, and flew
To bid Him welcome to my roof;
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest—
Laid Him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the earth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

Stripped, wounded, beaten nigh to death,
I found Him by the highway side;
I roused His pulse, brought back His breath,
Revived His spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment; He was healed.
I had, myself, a wound concealed—
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw Him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored Him 'midst shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for Him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, "I will."

Then in a moment, to my view,
The stranger darted from disguise;
The tokens in His hands I knew—
My Saviour stood before mine eyes.
He spake; and my poor name he named—
"Of Me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not! thou didst them unto Me."

The wine-cup was repeatedly handed round during the Paschal suppers, and the Jewish writers inform us that the wine was mixed with water; although, indeed, this would be scarcely needed with such weak wines as are used at meal-times in the East. When they had come to the last of the wine-cups usually taken, Jesus proceeded to institute the Sacrament of His Supper, in the well-known words which implied that the drinking of the cup and eating of the bread was henceforth to be taken as an act commemorative of Him—the wine of His blood shed, and the bread of His body given up for the sins of the world. By this act, He in fact formally established a new religion, to be ratified by His outpoured blood and wounded body, of which ratification the wine and bread were to become the symbols.

After this, Jesus perceiving that the disciples were still very much distressed at what He had before said, confirmed as it was by the solemn intimations of the rite which had been just established, proceeded to console them in the beautiful discourse which occupies the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, beginning "Let not your heart be troubled." In this He first consoles them by the consideration, that by going from them (that is, by His death and passion), mansions on high would be prepared for them; but being interrupted by Thomas with a remark which showed that he was still thinking of an earthly palace, Jesus proceeded to explain that He was Himself the way to this high heritage, and that only through faith could it be secured.

The Heavenly Comforter.

This faith they were to manifest by acts of obedience to what they had already heard from Him, or might hereafter be taught; and especially by obedience to His new commandment of mutual love. Then, to excite them to the fulfilment of His commands, He added a new promise, that of a Helper. During His stay among them, their weakness and faithlessness had been so great, that they had never been able to dispense with Him as a stay and support; and now that He was about to leave them, "another Comforter" would come to them, from Him and from the Father, "even the Spirit of Truth," by whom they should be guided aright, and be taught much which had hitherto been purposely left obscure and unexplained.

Jesus then arose as if to depart, saying, "Arise, let us go hence;" but the importance of these last precious moments, and His love to His disciples, constrained Him, and He sat down again. That He abides with them although He departs, then became the theme of His discourse; and He warned them that adhesion to Him in faith, and to each other in brotherly love, was the only way in which they could prosper. That this might be the better understood, He employed a similitude derived from a well-known object, namely, a

vine and its branches—which has suggested to some the probability that the tendrils of a vine had climbed up the wall and grown in through the window of the room in which they were sitting.

The Cross and Crown.

He then proceeded to explain that it was not for them to expect prosperity and enjoyment in this life. Far otherwise: He warned them that many calamities, trials, and persecutions awaited them, arising from the world's hatred of those principles which it would be their privilege and duty to promulgate. Being thus forewarned, they would know, when these things befel them, that the high purpose of God was not frustrated by the sufferings to which they were exposed, but accomplished; and that they did not come to them merely as unforeseen misfortunes and accidents.

Jesus had now spoken a long time, and He at length wished for some reply, to the end that He might, as His custom was, add thereupon new instructions. But perceiving the disciples around Him in silence, surrendering themselves up in sorrow at the idea of that separation which He had brought so distinctly before them, He proceeded to animate and encourage them by bringing before their minds once more the great consequences which would follow His departure, especially as regarded the manifestation of the Comforter, and the high teachings, powers, and succors which He would impart. He added that although He was Himself to be taken from them, it was but to the end that He might soon, in a more perfect and glorious manner, be restored to them. Much of what He said to them on this point they appear not then to have understood; and perceiving this, Christ admitted that He had often spoken to them in such sayings, but the time was near at hand in which all things would be made plain to them.

An Impressive Prayer.

The hour of His passion was drawing on now with rapid pace, and Jesus, having before

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His eyes a distinct perception of the depressing influence which it would exercise upon the disciples, proceeded to offer up on their behalf the earnest and beautiful prayer contained in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel. Nor was it for them only, for in this most impressive and comprehensive address He contemplated with satisfaction His almost finished work:—"I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He then prayed for the disciples, "those whom He had chosen out of the world;" and for the Church to be formed through their teaching.

Not unworthy of remark are the words of Tholuck, who, in reference to this striking address, states: "Before the happy Spenser left the world, he caused this address to be read to him three times. 'In which we are to suppose,' says his biographer, 'that he loved this chapter with a peculiar affection, though he was never willing to preach on it, with the protestation that he did not understand it, and that a correct understanding of the same transcended the measure of faith which the Lord is accustomed to communicate to his followers in their pilgrimage.'"

In describing this marvelous exhibition of Christ's love to His disciples, Keble refers to the touching story of Andromache in Homer's "Iliad," and then finely depicts the Saviour's ardent passion:

"Father to me thou art and mother dear,
And brother too, kind husband of my heart"—
So speaks Andromache in boding fear,
Ere from her last embrace her hero part—
So evermore, by faith's undying glow,
We own the Crucified in weal or woe.

Strange to our ears the church-bells of our home,
The fragrance of our old paternal fields
May be forgotten; and the time may come
When the babe's kiss no sense of pleasure yields
Even to the doting mother; but Thine own
Thou never canst forget or leave alone.

We are as much His care, as if beside
Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth;
Thus sunbeams pour alike their glorious tide
To light up worlds, or wake an insect's mirth;

They shine and shine with unexhausted store—
Thou art thy Saviour's darling—seek no more.

Ye vaulted cells where martyred seers of old
Far in the rocky walls of Sion sleep,
Green terraces and arched fountains cold,
Where lies the cypress shade so still and deep,
Dear sacred haunts of glory and of woe,
Help us, one hour, to trace His musings high and low:

One heart-ennobling hour! It may not be.
Th' unearthly thoughts have passed from earth away,
And fast as evening sunbeams from the sea
Thy footsteps all in Sion's deep decay
Were blotted from the holy ground; yet dear
Is every stone of hers; for Thou wast surely here.

There is a spot within this sacred dale
That felt Thee kneeling—touched thy prostrate brow:
One angel knows it. O might prayer avail
To win that knowledge! sure each holy vow
Less quickly from th' unstable soul would fade,
Offered where Christ in agony was laid.

Might tear of ours once mingle with the blood
That from His aching brow by moonlight fell,
Over the mournful joy our thoughts would brood,
Till they had framed within a guardian spell
To chase repining fancies, as they rise,
Like birds of evil wing, to mar our sacrifice.

So dreams the heart self-flattering, fondly dreams;—
Else wherefore, when the bitter waves o'erflow,
Miss we the light, Gethsemane, that streams
From thy dear name, where in His page of woe
It shines, a pale kind star in winter's sky?
Who vainly reads it there, in vain had seen Him die.

Jesus at length went forth from the house, and proceeded across the valley of the Kidron to a garden near the foot of the Mount of Olives. The garden was called Gethsemane, which name it derived from the oil-presses which were or had been there. Arrived in this place, Jesus desired the apostles to remain, while He Himself retired to some distance, attended only by His favored disciples, Peter, James, and John. Then "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy;" and turning to His disciples, who now witnessed the deep distress of Him whom they had seen glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration, He declared to them His anguish, and desired them to tarry there in watchfulness and prayer, while He withdrew to a more retired part of the

garden, about a stone's-throw distance from them.

Here He underwent that terrible and mysterious agony of soul which made Him cry, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but He humbly added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He then rose and went over to the three disciples, and found them all asleep. He chid them gently, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" but kindly admitted that in them the spirit indeed was willing, though the flesh was weak.

Agony in the Garden.

He then returned to the place he had quitted, and again poured out the anguish of his soul before God:—"O, my Father, if this cup may not pass from Me without My drinking it, Thy will be done." Returning to His disciples, He found them again asleep; and, after rousing them, went back again to the former place. This time His agony became more intense, and his prayer more fervent; so dreadful were His sufferings, that, "as He prayed, His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," although He was then in the open air, and in the cool of the night. Then, in that awful moment, there appeared an angel from heaven standing near Him in a visible form, strengthening Him by that sensible token of the Father's favor, and suggesting such holy consolations as were suitable to animate His soul in such a struggle.

Rising after this dreadful mental conflict, Jesus repaired once more to His disciples, and found them again "sleeping for sorrow." Knowing that His enemies had already entered the garden, He said, "Sleep on now and take your rest; behold, the hour is come, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." This roused them effectually: but they had scarcely risen to their feet when a band of armed men appeared with lanterns and torches, sent by the Sanhedrin to apprehend Him. They were led on by Judas, who was well acquainted with this favorite resort of His Master, and had given them the token that the

man whom they should see him kiss was the one they were to apprehend.

Accordingly the traitor went up straight to Jesus, saying, "Hail, Master!" and kissed Him. Jesus said, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" and, immediately advancing to the armed men, asked them, "Whom seek ye?" With that misgiving which accompanies an evil conscience, associated in their case with a vague impression of the dignity of the person they came to seize, they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." He answered, "I am He;" on which the Divinity flashed through their darkened consciences, which had been already roused, and they fell to the ground.

The abettors, meanwhile, as is customary in such cases, seeing that those to whom the affair was properly intrusted did not immediately press forward, seem themselves to have laid hands upon Jesus. Enraged at this, the ever ardent Peter drew his sword, and the stroke which he gave with it cut off the right ear of one of the most forward of the number, a servant of the high-priest, named Malchus. On this Jesus commanded him to sheathe his sword, saying, "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He then put forth His hand and healed the wound of His bitterest assailant, thus affording a splendid example of that return of good for evil which He so constantly enjoined.

The House of the High-Priest.

When the immediate impression upon the minds of the band by the Divinity in Jesus had passed away, and when they had once more succeeded in silencing the voice of conscience, they seized the Saviour, and led Him back to the city, to the house of the high-priest, in which a sufficient number of the Sanhedrin had already assembled for the occasion. This was illegal, as the law then in operation is known to have enjoined that all judicial proceedings before that body should take place in the day-time, and in the usual hall of assembly.

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CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.—Luke xxii. 39.

away by his enemies, they dispersed in different directions, as Christ had foretold, apprehensive of being involved in His peril. Peter and John, however, followed at a distance, and, after a brief interval, the latter, who was personally known at the house of the high-priest, applied for admittance, and was allowed by the portress to enter. Knowing that Peter was outside, John then sought admission for him, and obtained it.

The woman who kept the gate, seeing him with John, concluded that he also was a disciple of Christ, and made a remark to that effect. She seems to have done so without any particular meaning or ill intention, but Peter, being thoroughly alarmed, denied the charge with some vehemence. On entering the court they found themselves in front of the public-room, or hall of audience, open in front where sat the Sanhedrin, before which Jesus then stood. The apostles remained in the court, and joined the party of officers of the high-priest and others, who were gathered round a fire which they had kindled in the open air; for although at the time of the Passover the days were warm in Judæa, the nights were cool. They thus became witnesses of the transactions, which then took place.

False Witnesses.

The high-priest at first attempted to draw from Christ such admissions as would afford easy ground for proceedings against Him. But Jesus, knowing that the high-priest had predetermined to condemn Him, and that His answers were only sought as a ground and support to that determination, appealed to His public teachings, and declined to give any specific response to an examination so invidious.

Failing in the design of condemning Him from His own mouth, false witnesses were produced against Him, whose testimony was, however, found to be of little importance, till two of them avowed that they heard Him say that He was able to overthrow the Temple of God, and in three days rear it up again. This was, according to existing views, an accusation of blasphemy against God, conformably with

which the religious tribunals of the Jews could lawfully condemn Him. It was, therefore, eagerly taken hold of, and He was asked if He admitted this charge. He was silent.

The high-priest then asked Him plainly whether He was actually the Messiah. Christ, who knew his disposition, answered, "If I should tell you, you would not believe Me." But on being pressed for a definite answer, "Art Thou then the Messiah?" He answered, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man in His glory at the right hand of God." They were incapable of understanding the expression of the Divine consciousness which was contained in this answer, but they understood it as conveying the admission which they sought; and they, therefore, rent their clothes as at some horrid blasphemy, and, declaring that no further evidence was required, they hastened to procure His final condemnation from the Roman governor, by whom alone it could be granted.

Peter's Denial.

While these transactions were taking place, Peter, perceiving that he began to be eyed with suspicion by the party around the fire, withdrew towards the gate. Here he was again charged by the portress as being "one of them;" which he again peremptorily denied, and then went back to the group around the fire. Here he was soon again accused of being one of the followers of Christ. One, a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off, began to recollect that he had seen him in the garden; another alleged his Galilæan dialect as a proof of the fact.

The fear of man prevailed. Peter again most solemnly denied that he knew "the man of whom they spoke," and while he was confirming this protestation with many oaths, the crowing of the cock rang through the court and struck him dumb. At the same moment Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. That sorrowful look, so full of tender reproach, smote the apostle to the soul. He went out and wept bitterly.

After He had been condemned by the high-priest, Jesus was exposed to the insults and

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maltreatment of the servants and officers while waiting till the morning should be far enough advanced to take Him before the Roman governor. He was buffeted and spit upon; and they even went so far as to blindfold Him, and then to smite Him, asking, derisively, "Prophesy who is it that smote thee?" "All which injuries might have been greater than His patience," remarks Jeremy Taylor, "had His patience been less than infinite."

Remorse of Judas.

When the wretched and mistaken traitor Judas, who had been anxiously watching the result of these proceedings, saw that Jesus was condemned—that His acknowledgment that He was the Messiah had not been attended with the expected effects—and that Christ Himself had not exerted the Divine powers which rested in Him for the maintenance of His claim—he was conscience-stricken and terrified at the part he had himself taken.

He went forthwith to the council, and, casting down the silver he had received, cried, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood." But they dismissed him with the cool assurance that this was not their affair, but his; upon which the miserable man went away and hanged himself. The money which he had left with them could not be put into the treasury, because it was "the price of blood;" and they therefore bought with it a field in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, called the Potter's Field, and set that field apart as a burying-place for strangers.

Although the Jewish council had in fact condemned Jesus to death as a false prophet and a blasphemer, the sentence could not be carried into effect without being confirmed by the Roman procurator, the power of life and death having already been taken away from the Jewish tribunals. The procurator was always present in Jerusalem with a strong force at the Passover, to repress any disturbances which might arise among the vast numbers of people whom this festival never failed to bring to the Holy City. The actual procurator was named Pontius Pilate, who had already held

the office for six years, during which he had made himself so odious to the Jews by his venality, exactions and severities, that he began to be alarmed lest they should forward complaints of his government to Rome, and thus bring him into disgrace with the Emperor Tiberius, who was known to be very attentive to complaints against the provincial governors.

He was, therefore, at this time in a frame of mind not further to disoblige the Jewish authorities, but rather to take the line of conduct which he supposed would give them pleasure. To this person Jesus was hurried away in the early morning, that his confirmation of the judgment passed by the Sanhedrin might be obtained. The public business was transacted in the Prætorium, which had formerly been Herod's palace, and to this place Christ was taken. The Jews could not enter the Prætorium, lest they should contract defilement in the house of a heathen; and therefore Pilate caused his seat to be set in the Gabbatha, or Pavement, in front of the porch, where on such occasions he was wont to hear the matters that were brought before him.

Accused of Sedition.

In order rather to determine the governor to confirm their sentence, the accusers sank as much as possible the religious point, which was uppermost in their own minds, and strove to give prominence and coloring to the political aspect of the accusation, alleging that Christ wished to excite a tumult, and to establish an earthly kingdom. Pilate had already, without doubt, heard some things respecting Jesus, for he would seem from the beginning to have formed a definite view with regard to Him, as being a well-meaning enthusiast.

Entertaining this view, and being well aware how prone the Jewish ecclesiastics were to act upon the impulses of private hatred, he commenced the proceedings by putting questions with the view of ascertaining whether these fanatical persons had really just cause for condemning to death the man they had brought before him. The members of the

Sanhedrin, who had been accustomed to see the governor generally give a simple assent to their decisions, were obviously unprepared for any such investigation; and they answered, somewhat impertinently, "If this fellow were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee."

Pilate, however, obviously considering that there was nothing in the case to bring it under his jurisdiction, told them to go and put in force the enactments of their own law against Him—implying that he considered the punishment of scourging, or of expulsion from the synagogue, quite sufficient for the occasion.

"Art Thou the King of the Jews?"

Their quiet answer, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," gave him very plainly to understand that no less punishment would satisfy them. Then seeing clearly that Pilate, who had so often been compelled to listen to their religious disputes, would not take up the case on such grounds, they pressed more strongly the charge of treason against the Roman government, alleging that He had forbidden tribute to be paid to Cæsar, saying, that "He Himself was Christ, a King."

On hearing this, Pilate went into the porch, where Jesus stood in custody of the guard, and asked, "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" To this Jesus, as if to ascertain the sense in which he asked the question, whether in the earthly sense which it must have had among the Romans, or in the higher spiritual sense which it had or should have had among the Jews, asked, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell thee of it?" Pilate answered with some heat, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have brought Thee unto me: what hast Thou done?"—which seems to imply that he desired his question to be understood in the sense which the term commonly bore among the Jews.

Jesus then readily replied, that His kingdom was not of this world: adding, that He who had permitted Himself to be apprehended by His enemies, and brought before his tribunal without resistance, could have no political de-

signs. Still desirous of adhering to a point which was necessary for a judicial opinion, without troubling himself with other matters, Pilate asked, "But dost Thou still claim to be a king?" Jesus denied not that He was a King, but He guarded the admission by intimating that His kingdom was not earthly—its subjects being such as sought after and loved the truth.

Pilate's Great Question.

Pilate, with all the contempt of a superficial man of the world towards the higher objects of existence, exclaimed, "What is truth?" and, without waiting for an answer, went out to the accusers, confirmed in his first notion, that Christ was merely a well-meaning enthusiast, whom, as innocent of the designs laid to His charge, he felt some sympathy for, and wished to deliver from His malignant persecutors.

He declared to the excited assembly that he could not find any crime in Him. On this the accusers vehemently answered that He had set the whole country in an uproar from Judæa even unto Galilee. The mention of Galilee, which was not in his jurisdiction, but under the notorious Herod Antipas, suggested to Pilate a means of getting rid of this affair—without, on the one hand, shedding innocent blood, or, on the other, offending the Sanhedrin—by sending the prisoner to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem. The doubts which Herod entertained respecting Jesus have already been indicated. He was, therefore, glad to have Him before him, in the hope of seeing some miracle performed by Him.

But Jesus was not minded to use His high powers for the mere purpose of gratifying an idle curiosity. Not only so, but when He saw the empty and vain reasons of the worldling before whom He stood, He remained silent while questioned by him. Provoked at the indignity which he fancied to be thus offered to him, the tetrarch abandoned Jesus to the scornful treatment of his soldiers. It was a matter of unconcern to him what fate befell Jesus of Nazareth.

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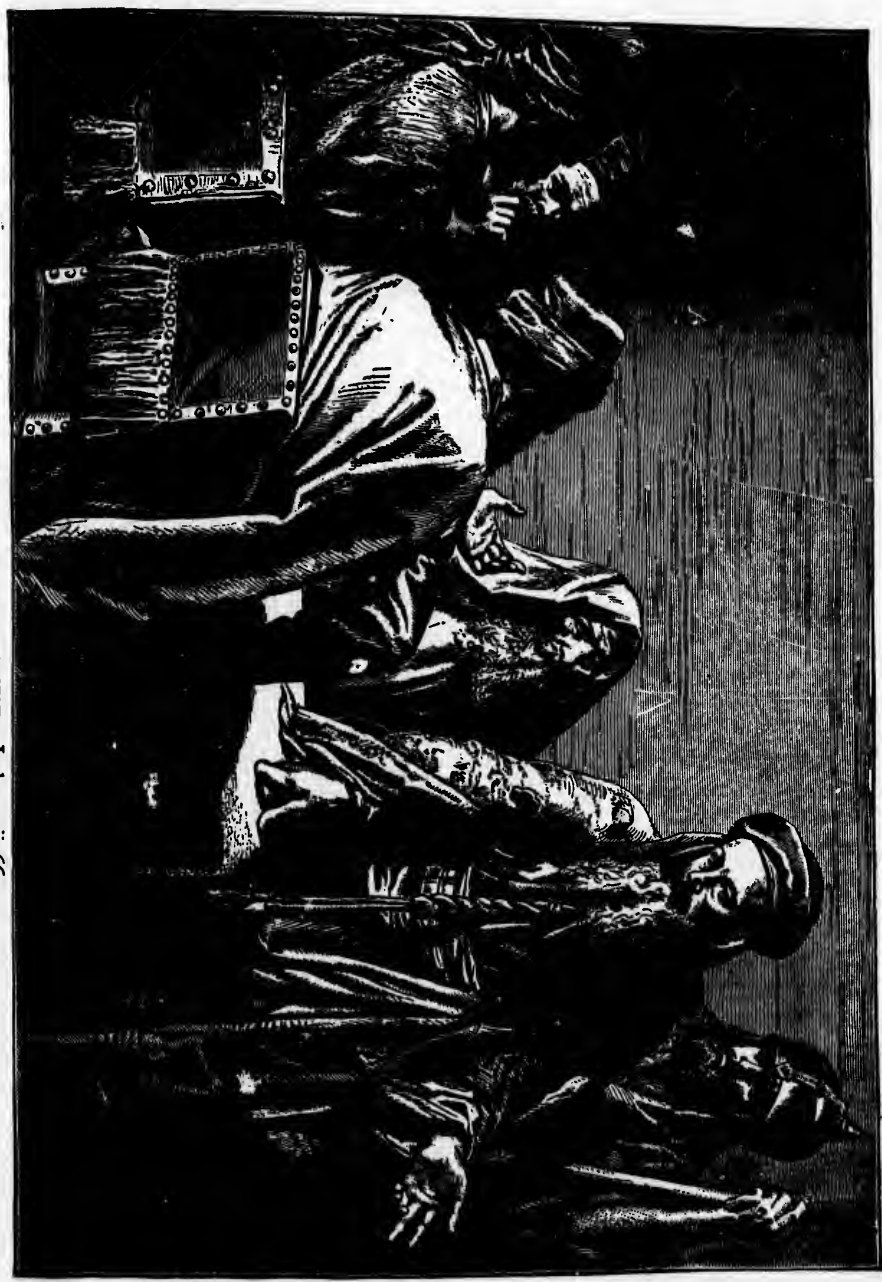
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SERVANTS OF THE CHIEF PRIEST.—Luke xxii. 66.



nity which He assumed, Herod sent Christ back again to the Roman governor. The latter, finding the case thus returned upon his hands, had again to contend with the embarrassment between his fear of man and his dislike to abandon a person so clearly innocent to His fate. One further alternative then occurred to his mind. It was a custom at this feast that the governor should set free a prisoner; and there happened to be then in prison a notorious robber and murderer named Barabbas, whom he supposed the Jews would not willingly liberate. He therefore proposed to them the choice between this man and "the king of the Jews," as he denominated Jesus.

Jesus Scourged.

The members of the Sanhedrin then present forthwith exerted themselves to induce the crowd to call for the release of Barabbas. It was at this stage of the proceedings that Pilate received a message from his wife, entreating him to deal justly with the person now before him, on whose account she had been visited with painful dreams that night. This had some effect upon Pilate, but not enough to induce him to stem that strong current of popular clamor which, contrary to his expectation, was expressed in the loud cry of "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Yet the governor was willing to try one last resource. He resolved to scourge Jesus, in the hope that this might suffice to appease the madness of the people; and he had the more reason to hope this, as the Roman scourging was very far more severe than the flagellation in use among the Jews themselves. It was inflicted by a scourge of thongs twisted together; and sometimes, in order to increase the severity of the lash, small cubic pieces of bone were woven into it. It is described, by those who witnessed its effects, as lacerating the flesh, and laying bare the veins and arteries.

To this terrible punishment was Christ subjected; and the soldiery, not satisfied with inflicting the agonies of the scourge, but taking the hint from the treatment He had

already received from Herod, proceeded to invest Him with the mock insignia of royalty. They set a diadem of sharp thorns upon His head, they placed in His hands a reed for a sceptre, and they cast over His bleeding shoulders a purple robe. Then they scornfully greeted Him with the salutation which was commonly bestowed upon the emperor, and smote Him with their rods upon the head, causing the thorny diadem to tear his sacred brows. At length Pilate bade them give over their cruel sport, and bring forth their prisoner to the people. Pilate preceded them, and said to the Sanhedrin, "I have brought Him forth that ye may know I find no fault in Him; and pointing to the pale and bleeding figure which then appeared arrayed in the robes of mockery, he cried, 'Behold the man!'" And were they not touched with compassion now? Was not their vengeance now satisfied? No; they no sooner saw Him than they cried with one voice, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!"

Pilate Alarmed.

Pilate seems to have been appalled at the mad fury which he witnessed; and he told them to crucify Him themselves, for he would himself have no hand in an act so unrighteous. This, however, conveyed no formal permission; and, accordingly, the Jews proceeded to urge their demand for the death of Christ as a matter of right. At first they had not wished to found their accusation against Jesus upon His alleged violation of their religious laws, concluding that they might bring the affair more quickly to a close by investing it with a political aspect. But when they saw that the governor did not take it up as they had expected, they reverted to their religious accusation. They cried, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He hath made Himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he feared still more. He had already observed something extraordinary in the conduct of Christ; and when to this was added the dream of his wife, a sort of shuddering apprehension came upon him, that there might possibly be something super-

natural in this Jesus, and that He might be hence the question was whether he claimed the son of some heathen god. He therefore to derive His origin from heaven. Knowing



CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.—John xix. 17.

turned to Him and asked, "Whence art Thou?" that a further discussion would be vain and He already knew He was from Galilee, and idle, Jesus was silent.

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Thus left to his own impressions and sentiments, which had become painful, the governor endeavored to compel an answer by threats. "Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" Perceiving the inward anguish which Pilate felt in his judgment concerning Him, Jesus strengthened this impression by awakening in him the consciousness of his dependence upon a higher power; but knowing far better than His judge the awful significance attached to his judgment upon the Son of God, He added that the great guilt contained in it attached less to him than to the accusers. The more this expression of Jesus showed that He was free from every feeling of personal hostility, the more heavily did His case press upon the mind of Pilate, and he wished with the more sincerity to be able to release him. He seems to have expressed himself to this effect to the people.

"They Cried, Crucify Him!"

They were therefore full of fury at the prospect that their prey might be torn from them; and delayed not to discharge the last arrow in their quiver; and it was effectual. They had recourse to the means which they knew would work most effectually upon Pilate. "If thou lettest this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." Knowing how easy it was to awaken suspicion in the mind of the Emperor Tiberius against the governors of distant provinces, this expression was full of terror to Pilate, who was conscious of acts in his government which would not bear examination, if the Jews should be so far influenced against him as to denounce him to the emperor. Regard for his own personal safety prevailed over every higher consideration, and he sought to suppress the loud voice of conscience within.

He ascended the judgment-seat, and, causing Jesus once more to be led out before the palace, said sarcastically, "Behold your king!" Then arose the rabid cry of "Crucify Him!"

But Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" To which the Jews, who had in fact no desire more intense than to separate themselves from the Romans, answered by hypocritically pretending the utmost attachment to them: "We have no king but Cæsar." Still torn between the reproofs of his conscience and the fear of man, the governor sought to allay the former by calling for water, in which he washed his hands before the multitude, intending by this symbolical act to express that he wished to have no part in this unrighteous condemnation; "I am innocent," he said, "of the blood of this righteous person: see ye to it." With one voice they answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"—a most fatal imprecation, and most dreadfully fulfilled upon them at the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

The struggle was now over; the deep malice of the many had prevailed, and the judge had abandoned Jesus to their rage, while believing Him to be innocent. The place of execution was near the city. In other cases it was not usual among the Jews to carry into effect sentences of execution immediately after they were pronounced; but in this case the popular madness would suffer no procrastination. Having been condemned by the Roman tribunal, the execution itself took place after the Roman manner, and by the hands of Roman soldiers. Under the Jewish law the death would have been by stoning, but Jesus Himself had long before predicted that the lingering torture of crucifixion was the death appointed for Him.

Among the Romans it was common for the condemned to carry their own cross to the place of execution. Jesus carried His through the city itself; but having been exhausted by His previous sufferings, when He arrived at the gate the soldiers placed the cross upon a certain Jew of Cyrene, named Simon, who had probably manifested some sympathy for Christ, and who with his family was attached to Him. As the sad procession thus moved on, it was followed by a large number of

people, particularly women, who, in the fulness of their sympathy, wept and lamented for Him greatly. Touched by their grief, the Saviour turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children!" which He said in reference to the calamities which, as He had already declared, were to befall the city and nation before that generation had passed away, and which were sadly fulfilled.

The Cross and its Victim.

On arriving at a place called Calvary, otherwise Golgotha ("skull-place"), the cross was planted in the earth. The form of the cross and the mode of execution upon it are too well, and in the main correctly, known from paintings to require particular description. It may suffice to mention that the cross consisted of a piece of wood erected perpendicularly, and intersected by another at right angles near the top, so as to resemble the letter T. There is no mention in ancient writers of anything on which the feet of the crucified person rested; but near the middle of the perpendicular beam there projected a piece of wood, on which he partly sat, and which served as a support to the body, the weight of which might otherwise have torn the hands from the nails driven through them.

The naked victim was first elevated to this small projection, and the hands were then tied with a rope to the transverse beam, and nailed through the palm. The feet were then nailed to the perpendicular beam, not, as some allege, by one nail through both feet, but by two nails or spikes being driven one through each foot.

The Romans were in the habit of affixing to all criminals a roll containing a record of the crimes for which they were punished, which was by them denominated "titulus" (title). Pilate manifested his sarcastic contempt of the Jews by causing the title upon the cross of Jesus to bear the inscription of "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Sorely annoyed at this, the Jews endeavored to get it

altered to "Jesus of Nazareth, who said, I am the King of the Jews;" but the governor seems to have found enjoyment in their mortification, and sent them away with the answer, "What I have written I have written."

Those who were condemned to the cross were crucified naked; and their clothes always became the portion of the soldiers to whom the completion of the punishment was intrusted. It would appear that Christ's crucifixion was performed by four soldiers, and they divided His clothes among them; but finding the outer garment woven of one piece, and consequently without seam, they cast lots for the possession of it, thus unwittingly fulfilling a prophecy of David in one of the Messianic Psalms: "They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots." Thus history confirms prophecy.

Devoted Women.

Many Jewish women, who had attached themselves to Christ as His disciples, and had followed Him from Galilee, were now, in this hour of agony, assembled around the cross of their beloved Teacher. Among them were the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the sisters of Jesus's mother, the wife of Cleopas, and Salome, the mother of John the evangelist. Consideration of this last circumstance, the presence of John's own mother, will give an increased interest to the touching incident which followed. Although suffering under the burden of His own intense anguish, and borne down with the feeling of the guilt of sinful humanity, Jesus had still an affectionate remembrance of those whom He left behind. He perceived the presence of John, the disciple who was honored with His special attachment, and, referring to His own mother, Mary, He said to him, "Behold thy mother;" which was as much as to say, Be a son to her, even as to thine own mother now present. John understood Him, and from that hour made his house the home of the bereaved Mary. From the circumstance that we find John at Jerusalem a long time after the ascension, it would seem that he had a dwelling in

that city; and the fact that he alone was personally known to the people connected with the high-priest, affords much corroboration to this conclusion.

Christ was now upon the cross, undergoing one of the severest deaths which the cruel ingenuities of men ever invented; and surely now the malice of His enemies was satiated? Scarcely so. Even on the cross He was exposed to their insults and mockeries. "They that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." The chief priests, with the scribes and elders, also repeated the bitter scoff at One who, after having delivered others, proved unable, as they supposed, to deliver Himself. "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." To all this, and even with regard to the sufferings and death to which they had brought Him, Jesus only answered, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The Two Thieves.

Christ suffered not alone: two robbers were crucified, one on each side of Him. One of these two men, in the bitterness of his sufferings, railed at Him, saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, save Thyself—and us." But his companion rebuked him, by reminding him that they were suffering the just penalty of their transgressions, whereas Jesus had been convicted of no wrong-doing: and this man then said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The sense in which the man made this wish may be doubted; but Christ was touched by it, and answered it in that sense by which the suppliant might best realize the benefit he desired: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise!" We may be sure that, after that, this man's agonies fell lightly on him. What mattered the fleeting sufferings of noon, to one who, before the setting sun, was to taste the joys of Paradise?

By this time it was high noon, and nature refused any longer to withhold her dread

sympathies—the sympathies which man denied. Darkness overspread the land from that time till three o'clock, the ninth hour, when Christ cried out, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsakem Me?"

The conflict was soon ended, and Jesus called for something to revive Him, in the words "I thirst;" which thirst has been shown to be the natural result of the manner in which this kind of capital punishment acted upon the physical system of those who underwent it. It was customary at the commencement of a crucifixion to offer spiced wine to those who were to be executed, for the purpose of stunning them and of deadening their sensibilities. This the soldiers had offered to Christ, but He refused it, as He desired to go through these last sufferings with a clear and perfect consciousness. The soldiers had afterwards, in contemptuous sport, offered Him sour wine to drink; and now a Jew, hearing His words, raised a sponge dipped in vinegar, on a hyssop stem, to His mouth.

When Jesus had received this, He said, "It is finished!"—the great work He came to do was accomplished; the dread penalties which He had incurred had been paid—all was finished; and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost."

Startling Phenomena.

At that greatest event which had ever happened in the world of spirits the irrepressible sympathies of nature were again manifested. The earth trembled. And now the curtain of rich tapestry, which in the Temple separated the sanctuary from the Temple wall, was rent in twain, signifying that, by the death of Christ, the human race were admitted to behold, without veil, the mysteries which had from the beginning of the world been hid with God.

Among the Romans the bodies of the crucified commonly hung upon the cross a considerable time, although in many cases they may have been given over to the friends of the deceased for the purpose of burial. But the Jewish law prescribed that criminals who were hanged up should be taken down on the

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THE CRUCIFIXION.—Mark xv. 25, 26.

same day. It was in particular deemed highly improper that the corpse of a criminal should be exposed to the eye upon a feast-day; and as, in this case, the Sabbath would commence at sunset, it became important that the bodies of those who had been crucified should be disposed of early. The soldiers, therefore, came to the crucified men in order to dispatch them, for it was not usual to find them dead so soon. The two robbers were still alive, and their legs were broken with heavy blows to end their lives.

But when they came to Jesus for the same purpose, they found that He was already dead, and forbore. Thus in the true Lamb of God was accomplished a fact typified in the Paschal lamb, of which it was directed that "a bone of Him should not be broken." A soldier, however, either to assure himself that he was indeed dead, or to destroy Him in case there should still be life in Him, thrust his spear into His side. Blood and water flowed from the wound, which seems to be mentioned by the evangelist to show that He was already dead, and that if He had not been so, the wound would have sufficed to extinguish whatever remained of life.

Burial in Joseph's Tomb.

It now became an object of solicitude to the disciples of Jesus that the body of their Divine Master should not be treated with disrespect. Among these disciples were several persons of consideration and influence; one of them, called Joseph, a native of the town of Arimathea (supposed to be the present Ramleh). He was one of those Jews who, like old Simeon, "waited for the kingdom of God;" and hence had a living desire for the commencement of the Messianic period, and had already enrolled himself among the disciples of Jesus.

He was a member of the Sanhedrin, and, as we may be sure, one of those who, as elsewhere mentioned, had opposed the madness of that assembly. His rank among the Jews assured him attention from Pilate, to whom he forthwith applied that the body might be

given up to him. Notwithstanding the hours which had passed since the commencement of the crucifixion, Pilate manifested some surprise at hearing that Jesus was already dead, and sent for the centurion who had charge of the execution to assure himself of the fact. He then freely placed the corpse at the disposal of Joseph, without requiring the money which the greedy Roman governors usually exacted for such a favor.

As the Jews were very anxious in matters of sepulture, and desired beyond most things an honorable grave for those they loved, this concession must have been regarded with great triumph by Joseph and the other friends of himself and of the crucified Saviour, who awaited the result of his application. Among these was Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin, and the same who had come to Jesus by night at the commencement of his ministry.

He had provided a large quantity—not less than a hundred pounds weight—of myrrh and aloes; costly articles, in which the body might be laid, and which evinces at once the wealth of Nicodemus and his veneration for Christ. The body was then taken down from the cross and wrapped up in linen clothes with the spices; and as the time was but short, they hastened, without completing the operations usually observed on such occasions, to lay the corpse in the new sepulchre, hewn in a rock, which Joseph had prepared for himself in a garden belonging to him, which was hard by the place of crucifixion.

The Sepulchre Guarded.

The body of Jesus being thus decently and even honorably deposited in the sepulchre, His enemies, the priests and Pharisees, finding that the corpse had been given up to His friends, called to mind the words of Christ concerning his rising from the dead: and in fear of the consequences which might ensue, they repaired to Pilate, requesting him to set a guard over the sepulchre to prevent the disciples from stealing away the body, and afterwards saying that their Lord had risen

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from the dead; "which last error," they said, "would be worse than the first." Pilate told them that they had a military guard at their disposal, and that they might, if they pleased, employ it on that service.

The sepulchre being thus given up to their custody, they sealed up the door, that they might know if it had been opened; they then rolled a large stone to the entrance to render the opening difficult; and, to crown all, a guard of soldiers was set to watch and keep the sepulchre. Thus it was providentially ordered that the custody of the tomb should be in the hands of the bitterest enemies of Christ, who had brought Him to an ignominious death, to render it impossible that they, or any doubters after them, should, with any show of reason, be able to allege that deception had been practised by the friends of Jesus.

The Sabbath passed with the usual observances, and then came the first day of the week, when the faithful disciples of Jesus could finish the decent observances towards the body, which on the Friday evening they had been constrained to leave incomplete. Many disciples were waiting for the morning, that they might hasten to the tomb; but, as usual in all cases where the finer feelings and inner sentiments are engaged, the women were foremost in their attentions and their cares.

"Love," says good Bishop Hall, "is restless and fearless. In the dark of night these good women go to buy their spices, and ere the day break are gone from their own houses towards the tomb of Christ to bestow them. This sex is commonly fearful: it was much for them to walk alone in that unsafe season; yet, as despising all fears and dangers, they thus spent the night after their Sabbath. Might they have been allowed to buy their perfumes on the Sabbath, or to have visited that holy tomb sooner, can we think they would have stayed so long? Can we suppose that they would have cared more for the Sabbath than for the 'Lord of the Sabbath,' who now keeps His Sabbath in the grave? Sooner they could not come, later they would not, to present their last homage to their dead Saviour."

On the way to the garden, they talked of the difficulty of getting access to the tomb, on account of the stone at its mouth, which was far too great for their united strength to move.

The lively sorrow of Mary Magdalene led her, as they approached the sepulchre, to hurry on before the other women. She saw the great stone which had been placed at the mouth of the cave rolled aside and the tomb open. Terrified at the sight, she hastened away to impart the tidings to the male disciples of Jesus. When the other women drew nigh, they also were astonished to find that the sepulchre was open. Tremblingly they saw at once that the body had disappeared.

The White Messenger.

Much were they alarmed at this, and not less alarmed to perceive an angelic youth, vested all in white, who was seated on the right side of the tomb. On seeing him, they bowed their faces to the earth; and the angel said to them, "Be not affrighted: for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." He also reminded them how distinctly this had been foretold by Jesus Himself; and after showing them the place where the Lord had lain, he enjoined them to go and declare these matters to Peter and the other disciples. They then hastened from the sepulchre "trembling and amazed," and hurried, with feet winged by joy, back to the city with their glad tidings.

And how had all these things come to pass, and what had become of the guard appointed to watch the tomb? There had been, at the first dawn of that morning, a great earthquake, in the midst of which the keepers of the tomb beheld an angel descend from heaven and roll back the stone from the door and seat himself thereon. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and through fear of him the keepers did shake and become as dead men."

When they had sufficiently recovered, they sped away to the chief priests and rendered an account of what they had seen. This at first

confounded them; but a council having been called, it was concluded to give money to the soldiers to induce them to say that the disciples of Jesus had come and taken away the body of their Lord while they were asleep.

proceeding to the sepulchre. She, not having heard the communication of the angel to the other women, or indeed having seen the angel, eagerly stated what she herself inferred from the stone being rolled away and the door being



THE ANGEL AT THE TOMB.—Mark xvi. 5.

This was accordingly the story which they thenceforth promulgated, and which, the evangelist states, was "commonly reported among the Jews unto this day." Thus they would account for His disappearance.

Meanwhile Mary Magdalene in her way to the city met with Peter and John, who were

open: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him," the answer indicating her disappointment and grief.

On hearing this, both the disciples began to run off to the sepulchre; and the enthusiasm of the "disciples whom Jesus loved" urged

him on, and first at the entrance, he was indeed in which he hid behind; perhaps being un- seven days tomb inv-

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him on, so that he outran Peter and arrived first at the tomb. Stooping down at the entrance, he perceived that the body of Jesus was indeed absent, and that the grave-clothes in which He had been wrapped were left behind; but he went not into the tomb, being perhaps overcome by a natural aversion, or being unwilling to incur without reason the seven days' uncleanness which entrance into a tomb involved.

By this time Peter also had come up, and being desirous of more exact information, went at once into the tomb, where he perceived that the napkin which had enveloped the head was not lying with the other linen clothes, but lay wrapped up by itself. On reporting this fact to his companion, John also went in to assure himself of it. From the importance attached to this circumstance, it would appear that they gathered from it that the body had not been stolen away. Had this been the case, the robbers would not first have carefully taken off the bandages, and have placed each one in a particular place; and hence it was natural for them to infer that He had risen from the dead. They therefore hastened away to impart these tidings to the other apostles.

Two White-Robed Angels.

Mary Magdalene, who had turned back with them to the sepulchre, remained behind after they had departed. She had not been aware of this new evidence, perhaps from not having arrived at the garden till Peter and John had gone away; or being aware of it, she had not drawn from it the same conviction which it brought to them. Full of anxious solicitude, Mary looked once more into the sepulchre, and beheld two angels in white, sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.

They said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" In the simplicity of her heart, she told them in plain words the cause of her grief, without immediately thinking on supernatural aid. "They have taken away my Lord," she said, "and I know not where they have laid him." When she had said this, a

voice close behind her asked, "Whom seekest thou?" Taking the person who thus accosted her to be the gardener, and only half turning to him, she said in her usual simple and childlike manner, without any transport of fancy—"Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou has laid Him, and I will take Him away."

On this the person to whom she had been speaking pronounced her name, "Mary!" in that dear and well-remembered voice, whose accents had more than once brought peace to her soul. On hearing it, she responded, "Rabboni!" and turning quickly round, fell at the feet of her risen Lord. Imagining that she now beheld Him in His higher being, she would have rendered Him such homage as He had never yet received on earth; but He prevented her by intimating that his glorification was still future: "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

The Walk to Emmaus.

He then sent her away to impart the fact of His resurrection to the apostles, and make known to them that He intended to meet them in Galilee. This was the same commission which the other women had received from the angel, and they were earlier than Mary in their intelligence. The disciples received their account with a kind of doubting confidence; some believed less and some more; but as a body they were left in a state of mind to require further evidence of a fact so strange and unexampled.

The same evening, two men who had been disciples of Jesus and whom many suppose to have been among the seventy, were returning to Emmaus, where they lived, from Jerusalem, where they had probably been attending the Passover. Emmaus was a small village distant about eight miles north-west of Jerusalem. On the way they were talking earnestly of the circumstances attending the death of Christ, and of the strange report which the women who went into the sepulchre had that morning brought to the disciples.

These men, after the death of Christ, seem no longer to have regarded Him as the Mes-

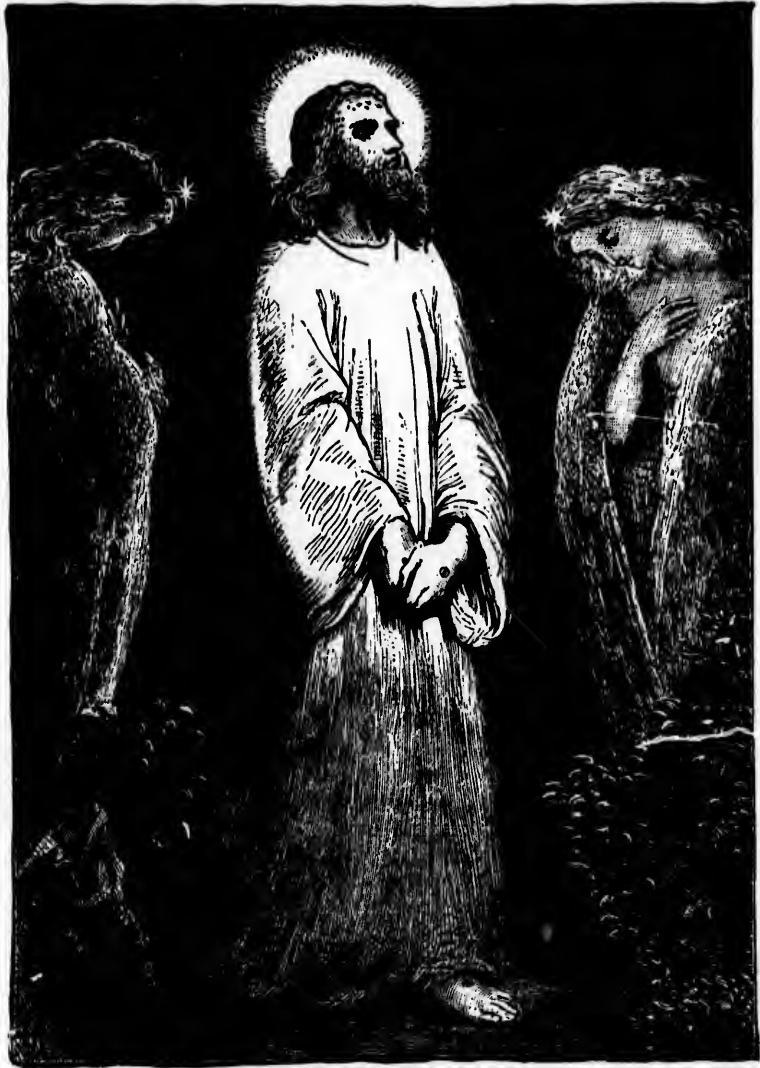
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siah; nor had they any faith in the accounts given by the women, though their minds had been so far struck with those accounts, that they were, it seems, discussing their probability, and hesitating to give credence to them, since the disciples had not themselves seen



"HE IS RISEN."—Mark xvi. 6.

been so far struck with those accounts, that they were, it seems, discussing their probability, and hesitating to give credence to them, since the disciples had not themselves seen

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into conversation with them. This was Jesus Himself. But, probably through Divine influence in connection with the difference in his dress and the absence of any expectation of such a circumstance, He was not recognized by them.

He asked them, "What manner of communications are these which ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?" In answer they expressed their surprise that any one coming from Jerusalem could be ignorant of things which had for some days been the common talk of the Holy City. Jesus still asked, "What things?" Then they briefly recited how that Jesus of Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people, had been delivered unto death by the chief priests and rulers;" and this put an end to the hopes which they and many others had cherished, for they had, they said, trusted that "this was He who should have delivered Israel."

And besides this, some of their women had thrown them into amazement by asserting what seemed incredible—that they had been told by angels that Jesus was still alive. Then Christ broke forth, "O misjudging! and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" Then beginning at Moses, and so down through all the prophets, He opened to them the Scriptures concerning Himself, showing how the ancient purposes of God had been accomplished, and salvation brought to mankind by those very things which appeared to them so mysterious and dark.

A Joyful Revelation.

By the time He had ended His discourse, the party had arrived near Emmaus, when perceiving that the instructive companion of their walk made a motion as if intending to proceed farther, they urged Him to accompany them to their home in the village, and remain with them for the night, as the day was drawing towards its close. He yielded to their friendly importunities, and went.

What further passed until supper-time we know not; but at that meal the peculiar manner in which Jesus took and blessed the bread, and gave it to them—which besides was an unusual thing for a guest to do—revealed Him to their knowledge. But before they could express their delight or reverence, He disappeared from their view.

On this, although it was night, they girded up their loins and hastened back to Jerusalem, to make known to the apostles that the Lord had indeed risen. On the way they had new and higher matter for discourse, and they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" On their arrival at Jerusalem, they found the apostles and chosen disciples of Christ assembled together, and already well assured, from the evidence of Peter, that their Lord had risen from the dead.

A Gracious Blessing.

While they were talking of these matters, Jesus Himself appeared unexpectedly and suddenly among them, and saluted them in His usual manner—"Peace be unto you!" They were at first terrified at His appearance; for although they believed He was risen, the first appearance of one who had been dead, and had lain in the grave, suggested to their imagination the idea of a disembodied spirit. To disabuse them of this impression, He called their attention to the scars which the nails had left upon His hands and feet; and to feel that He still possessed a material body.

The apostle Thomas was not present at the time, and when told by the others that they had seen the Lord, he immediately expressed a strong doubt of the fact. They assured him that they had seen the marks of His wounds; and he then declared that he must not only see, but put his finger into the prints of the nails, and his hand into the wounded side, before he could believe. Eight days after, Jesus again appeared to the disciples, when Thomas was among them. He addressed himself directly to the incredulous apostle,

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saying, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." On this the rebuked apostle was seized with a full and overflowing feeling of the supernatural in the fact which his cool mind had been disposed to distrust, and with intense acknowledgment he exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!"

After this, the apostles, who were all of Galilee, returned to their own province and to their friends, because Jesus had told them beforehand that they might there expect to hold further intercourse with Him.

The apostles at once returned to their usual occupations; which does not, however, imply that they had abandoned the expectation of being employed in preaching the doctrine of Christ, since among the Jews the office of a teacher seldom excluded the prosecution of some trade, but, on the contrary, the two were frequently combined. Seven of the disciples, all fishermen, were by the lake of Tiberias, and launched forth one evening to catch fish. They toiled all the night, and caught nothing.

Jesus on the Shore of Galilee.

When the morning broke, Jesus stood upon the shore, but in the dusk of the morning the fishermen knew not their Master. He called to them, to ask if they had any fish. They still knew Him not by His voice, but probably supposed Him one who wished to purchase fish. They answered that they had none; on which He told them to cast their nets in on the right side of the ship, and they would find enough. Supposing that He might from the shore have observed something which led Him to conclude that there were fish in that place, they followed the directions of the supposed stranger, and then they were unable to draw the net, from the multitude of fishes which it enclosed.

This miraculous draught immediately suggested to John that the stranger upon the shore was no other than Christ, and he mentioned this to Peter, who no sooner heard it

than he cast himself into the sea and swam to the land. The others came in their boat, dragging after them the net, which contained not fewer than one hundred and fifty large fishes, and, although there were so many, the net was not broken. On landing, the disciples found a fire already kindled, with fish broiling thereon, with bread provided for their refreshment, and after some of the fish just caught had been added, Jesus said unto them, "Come and dine," an invitation at once accepted.

Peter Questioned.

After He had assured their minds, by this act of confidential intercourse, Christ addressed Himself in a very pointed manner to Peter, who must be supposed in a peculiar state of mind with reference to the recent denial of his Lord, and asked him whether he now, according to his former declaration, loved Him with more entire devotedness than others, in the words, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" Peter dared not again make a bold promise. He mistrusted his own knowledge of himself, and answered only by a touching appeal to the consciousness of Christ—"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

Then Christ called upon him to prove his words by his actions, in the emphatic words, "Feed my lambs!" After a while Jesus repeated the question, and having received the same answer, charged him—"Feed my sheep." Once more he pronounced the question; and although Peter was distressed at the doubt implied in the repetition of the question, the feeling of inward attachment was now so strong within him that he appealed with entire confidence to the high knowledge of the heart which his Divine Master possessed: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." To this Christ repeated the same significant charge; and then at once proceeded to apprise Him, in language not to be mistaken, of the testimony of love to Christ which would thereafter, in his old age, be required from him, by the violent death which he would then be called upon to suffer.

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John, who had always been present at confidential conversations, also joined them here. Peter, actuated more by idle curiosity than by real solicitude for John, was led by this to ask what was to be his future lot; but Jesus, who in His answers had always regard to the moral condition of the questioner, answered evasively: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." This doubtless refers to the time of the destruction of the Hebrew polity and Temple, which John survived; but some were led to conceive by this that the beloved disciple would never die, and the curious inquirer into ecclesiastical history meets with many traces of this opinion.

"Sick or healthful, slave or free,
Wealthy, or despised and poor—
What is that to him or thee
So his love to Christ endure?
When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?"

The Great Commission.

Forty days after the Passover came the feast of Pentecost; and some days before this the disciples returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. There they were again met by Jesus, who gave them His last and most important charge, enjoining them to remain at Jerusalem till they were gifted with powers from on high, after which they were to go abroad among the nations, "preaching the Gospel to every creature."

He then led them forth to the Mount of Olives as far as Bethany, where He lifted up His hands to bestow on them His last solemn blessing; and while His hands were still outspread as in the act of blessing, He arose gradually from among them, and disappeared in the heavens—"where he sitteth on the right hand of God." The disciples then returned with joyful hearts to Jerusalem, where they were constantly in the Temple praising and blessing God.

The graphic lines of Alexander Pope, commemorating the sublime scenes in the life of Christ, which were antecedent to His peaceful, beneficent reign on earth, may well close this

description of the most momentous events in the world's history:

From Jesse's root behold a branch arise,
Whose sacred flower with fragrance fills the skies:
The ethereal spirit o'er its leaves shall move,
And on its top descends the mystic dove.
Ye heavens! from high the dewy nectar pour,
And in soft silence shed the kindly shower!
The sick and weak the healing plant shall aid,
From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade.
All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail;
Returning justice lift aloft her scale;
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed innocence from heaven descend.

Swift fly the years, and rise the expected morn!
Oh spring of light, auspicious Babe, be born!
See nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,
With all the incense of the breathing spring:
See lofty Lebanon his head advance,
See nodding forests on the mountains dance:
See spicy clouds from lowly Saron rise,
And Carmel's flowery top perfumes the skies!
Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers;
Prepare the way! a God, a God appears:
A God, a God! the vocal hills reply,
The rocks proclaim the approaching Deity.

Lo, earth receives Him from the bending skies!
Sink down, ye mountains, and, ye valleys, rise;
With heads declined, ye cedars, homage pay;
Be smooth, ye rocks: ye rapid floods, give way;
The Saviour comes! by ancient bars foretold!
Hear him, ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold!
He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eyeball pour the day:
'Tis He the obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
And bid new music charm the unfolding ear;
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.
No sigh, no murmur the wide world shall hear,
From every face He wipes off every tear.
In adamant chains shall death be bound,
And hell's grim tyrant feel the eternal wound.

As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,
Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects,
The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms;
Thus shall mankind His guardian care engage,
The promised Father of the future age.

No more shall nation against nation rise,
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,

Nor fields with gleaming steel be covered o'er,
 The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;
 But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
 And the broad falchion in a ploughshare end.
 Then palaces shall rise; the joyful son
 Shall finish what his short-lived sire begun;
 Their vines a shadow to their race shall yield,
 And the same hand that sowed shall reap the field.
 The swain, in barren deserts with surprise
 Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;
 And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds, to hear
 New falls of water murmuring in his ear.
 On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
 The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods.
 Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
 The spiry fir and shapely box adorn;
 To leafless shrub, the flowering palms succeed,
 And odorous myrtle to the noisome weed.

The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
 And boys in flowery bands the tiger lead;
 The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
 And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
 The smiling infant in his hand shall take
 The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
 Pleased, the green lustre of the scales survey,

And with their forky tongue shall innocently play.
 Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
 Exalt thy towery head, and lift thy eyes!
 See, a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
 See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
 In crowding ranks on every side arise,
 Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
 See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
 Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
 See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
 And heaped with products of Sabeen springs;
 For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
 And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.
 See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
 And break upon thee in a flood of day.

No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
 Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn;
 But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
 One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze
 O'erflow thy courts; the Light Himself shall shine
 Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine!
 The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
 Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
 But fixed His word, His saving power remains;
 Thy realm forever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns!



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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM.



THE apostles had been instructed by their Lord to remain together at Jerusalem till they should be endowed with power and enlightenment from on high, in preparation for the great work to which they were appointed. After having witnessed the ascension of their risen Lord into the heaven of heavens, they therefore returned into the city and hastened to the privacy of the upper chamber in some private house (perhaps that which John occupied), where they might pray together and discourse with one another without restraint. In the houses both of the Greeks and Orientals there were certain upper apartments, usually so constructed as to serve for the purpose of dining-rooms, parlors, apartments for taking exercise, and so forth; and from their stillness and privacy were often appropriated as oratories for the purposes of united and family worship, or religious retirement and prayer. In such a chamber the apostles, and those of the immediate disciples of Christ who had witnessed the ascension, to the number of one hundred and twenty, appear to have spent most of their time together in this place during the few days which were still to elapse before the feast of Pentecost.

On one of these intervening days Peter stood up and urged upon the brethren then present the expediency of appointing someone to fill the place among the twelve apostles which had been left vacant by the treason and death of Judas. It was judged important that

the person who might succeed to this office should be one who had from the first been a witness of the life and works of Jesus: and among those then present there were two who seemed so equal in claims and qualifications that it was found difficult to determine which of them was the best fitted for the office.

One of these was Joseph surnamed Barsabas; and the other was called Matthias, both of whom are, with good reasons, supposed to have been among the number of the seventy disciples. As there was some doubt in the choice between persons whose claims were so nearly balanced, the apostles invoked in solemn prayer the direction of God upon their choice, and then cast lots between them. The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was thenceforth numbered with the eleven apostles.

The mode in which the lot was in this instance cast cannot be determined, the ancient methods of doing this being various. The most usual mode, however, was to cast the names written on equal substances, into an urn, and decide the question by the act of drawing them forth; and this is generally supposed to have been the plan adopted in this choice of an apostle.

Forty-nine days since the Passover had at length elapsed, and the fiftieth day, being the Feast of Pentecost, had fully come, when the one hundred and twenty disciples (or, as some suppose, the apostles only) were assembled "in one place," which we may conceive to have been the same place which has already been mentioned. They are supposed by some to have assembled on this occasion with some expectation that on the very day on which the memory of the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai was celebrated, the promise of Christ respecting the Holy Spirit to be sent from heaven would have its completion; and

that God would, by some sign striking to the senses, declare that the religion of Christ was now to be more widely promulgated through them.

But although they were thus waiting apparently for the manifestation of the Spirit, they were wholly unprepared for the sudden and very remarkable manner in which He came upon them. At once the house was filled with the sound as of a mighty wind sweeping along like a tempest, and at the same instant there appeared upon the head of every one of them a lambent flame, described as "cloven tongues of fire," from the resemblance of a pointed flame to a tongue; and this was an external sign or symbol of the mighty change which at the same instant took place within them, for "they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

From that time they became as new men. All their previous misconceptions concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom passed away, and the whole plan of the Divine economy of man's redemption was open to them. They were thus qualified to declare to others those great mysteries of God; and seeing that they would have to declare them to many nations whose languages they understood not, they were enabled to speak at once in any human tongue the great message intrusted to them.

Three Thousand Converts.

There were at this time in Jerusalem Jews from almost all the known countries of the world—countries in which they were born, and whose languages were their mother-tongues. When the news of this strange event was noised abroad, many of them, with others, hurried to the spot; and great was their amazement when they heard the uninstructed disciples of Christ, most of them natives of Galilee, speak to them in all their different languages. Some of those who were thus drawn together hesitated what judgment to form, but others hastily concluded that they were under the influence of wine.

This dishonor to the great gift of God

roused Peter, who, courageously standing up with the eleven, that the multitude might behold in them the chief of Christ's followers, refuted the calumny by calling attention to the early time of the morning, the third hour, or nine o'clock, being the time of morning prayer, before which those who had any regard for religion among the Hebrews never took food or drink.

Not content with this, the earnest apostle proceeded to show how the ancient prophecies were accomplished by this event, as well as in the death and resurrection of Christ, whom he proved to be the Messiah promised to the fathers. Under the Divine blessing, the effect of this calm, resolute, and well-reasoned discourse—this first Christian sermon—was most wonderful. A great part of the audience were smitten to the heart, and three thousand of their number were that very day received by baptism into the infant church. These, from that hour, frequented the society of the apostles, and joined in their holy feast and devotions, showing a commendable zeal.

A United Band.

Most of them were strangers in Jerusalem, and, probably, on publicly professing themselves as the disciples of Jesus and remaining in the city longer than they had at first intended, had become excluded from the hospitality and kindness which the Jews commonly exercised. This would all the more unite them to the other disciples; and now regarding themselves as one family, having common wants and interests, without any separate objects in life, they threw their possessions into a common stock, "and parted them to all men, as every man had need." This was not compulsory upon them—it was the spontaneous act of their own minds, suited to the circumstances of these first converts and to the peculiar necessities of the infant Church.

Being thus disencumbered of the cares of life "they continued daily with one accord in the Temple (at the stated hours of prayer), and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness

of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." Had then the mass of the people become favorable to the doctrines of the cross? This is not implied; but it is understood that the humble, serious, and devoted lives of the converts, disarmed for a time the enemies of Christ, and won for them a degree of tolerance and favor which secured for the infant days of the Church a brief interval of repose, needful to strengthen the arms which were destined to overturn the rank idolatries and dark systems of the world.

It is clear that the disciples continued to resort to the Temple for devotion at the customary hours of prayer. Whether they joined in the sacrifices of the Temple is not said, but it is by no means improbable that they did; as they did not yet clearly understand the great truth that the whole system of sacrificial worship was, in fact, abolished by the death of Christ, seeing that there remained "no more sacrifice for sin" when He, in whom all the sacrificial types were accomplished, was offered up, "once for all," for the sins of the world. The Temple was the place, and its ritual service the manner, in which they and their fathers had worshipped, and they came very slowly to the conclusion that they were to abandon this sacred place and its services, as things which had become old and had passed away.

We are told in general terms that, after the outpouring of the Divine Spirit, many signs and wonders were wrought by the apostles. Of these wonders one is selected by the sacred historian as an example of the others; and it is well suited to convey a distinct impression of the great powers with which the apostles were now vested; and to convince us that they were adequate to the great services for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind which they were called to perform. It is of much importance for the confirmation of the truth that this narrative has been given to us; and the evangelist, instead of contenting himself with the general statement that *much* was done, proceeds to say in one marked instance *what* was done, and in relation to whom and

under what circumstances a great miracle was performed. By the Jews, and the ancients generally, no provision was made in hospitals for the afflicted, or in almshouses for the poor. They were, therefore, dependent upon the charitable feelings of those who were in better circumstances. It thus became important that they should be placed where they could see many people; and hence it was customary to place them at the gates of rich men; and they also sat by the side of the highway to beg where many persons would pass.

Under such circumstances the entrance to the Temple became a favorite station for begging, not only from the great numbers of people who resorted thither, but because that, going up for the purposes of religion, they would be more disposed to give alms than at other times: and this was particularly true of the Pharisees, who, beyond all men, did their alms "to be seen of men."

"Rise Up and Walk!"

Peter and John went up together to prayer at the Temple, at the hour of afternoon prayer, being the ninth hour, or three o'clock. They entered by that large and splendid gate, made of Corinthian brass, near Solomon's porch, which bore the name of Beautiful. Here they observed a most afflicted creature, who had been lame from his birth, and who had for many years been carried daily to the Beautiful Gate, to ask alms of those that entered in at the Temple. From this circumstance his person and condition were well known to the Jews, not only of Jerusalem, but of the country, who constantly attended the sacred services of the Temple during their periodical visits to Jerusalem.

Perceiving that he had attracted the notice of the apostles, the man asked alms of them. Peter said to him, "Look on us," with the view of drawing his attention to the act he was about to execute, so that the man might know him as the doer, and know that the benefit he was about to receive came from him. The beggar, expecting to receive some large alms, failed not to take heed to the

apostle; but Peter, looking earnestly upon him, said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

Then, to show him that he was sincere in this strange command, and to induce him to make the required effort, he took the poor man by the right hand and assisted him to rise. Immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength, and the man, who had never stood, walked—he who had never walked, ran

The abounding gratitude of the man failed not to point out his benefactors; and Peter, finding that he and his companion had thus become objects of marked attention, took occasion to proclaim aloud, that it was not by any power or virtue in themselves, but through the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had slain, but whom God had raised from the dead, that this man had been healed. He admitted, however, that to a certain extent they had done this through ignorance, and assured



PETER AND JOHN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE.—Acts iii. 6.

—and not only ran, but leaped in the fulness of his joy, exulting and praising God.

The amazed and thankful man followed the apostles into the magnificent covered way or passage on the east side of the Temple, which bore the name of Solomon's porch. Here a wondering crowd soon gathered around them, the people being greatly astonished to see the lame beggar whom they knew so well, and had just beheld lying at the Temple gate, walking with so much agility among them.

them that the door of repentance was still open, and exhorted them to enter therein. To induce them to this, he went on to prove that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers—the seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of men were to be blessed.

His discourse was interrupted by the chief priests, who had required the assistance of the guard in the tower of Antonia in dispersing the crowd. This guard was stationed there to preserve order and repress disturbances; and

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the priests resorted to this summary mode of arresting the impressions which seemed likely to be made by the discourse of Peter, taken in connection with the signal miracle which had been performed. The more effectually to secure their object, they seized the apostles and consigned them to the custody of the guard, till the next day; for it was now evening, and the council, before which the matter was to be brought, was not then sitting. When the conspiracy was against the Lord Himself, the council could meet irregularly in the dead of the night; but this less important matter could abide the usual hours.

Peter and John Arrested.

When Peter and John were the next day brought before the council and asked, "By what power or in what name have ye done this?" Peter, who, when his Master had lately stood on his trial before this very tribunal, had shrunk with shameful timidity from his duty, was now filled with the Holy Spirit, and undauntedly seized the opportunity which the question offered, of declaring the truth, and of stating the evidence for the doctrine of Christ.

The council was much struck by the boldness of the apostles, as well as by the matter of their address, especially as they perceived that they were uneducated and illiterate men. Certain members of the council then recollected that Peter and John were among those who had usually been seen in the company of Jesus, and knew that what was said by them concerning their Master was a matter of authority, and would have weight with the people.

It was also perceived that the man who had been healed was in attendance, ready to attest and extol his miraculous cure. Therefore, after some consultation, it was deemed prudent to let the matter drop, and to dismiss the apostles with an injunction not in future "to speak at all, or preach in the name of Jesus." But the apostles resolutely declined to give any such pledge, and were at length discharged with a warning as to their future course of proceedings. That they thus escaped was not

owing to any want of inclination in the council to inflict punishment; but they knew that the popular feeling was in favor of the apostles, in consequence of the great and benevolent act which they had performed: "for all men glorified God for that which was done."

The liberated apostles returned to their companions, who received with joy the account of what had passed, and lifted up their voices in praise to God, who by the mouth of David had foretold the things which had now come to pass: "And now, Lord," they concluded, "behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus." When they had concluded, the place in which they sat was violently shaken, and as they were all at the same time filled with the Holy Ghost, they received this as a favorable answer to their prayer, and were greatly cheered.

A Generous Giver.

It has already been mentioned that there was a great anxiety among the more wealthy of the new converts to prevent their poorer brethren from feeling the pressure of want. They therefore sent in plentiful contributions, and selling their possessions, gave the price they brought to the apostles, who received it of them for the public use, and distributed it to every one as his necessities required.

Among these benevolent and faithful men, none distinguished himself more than one Joses, a Jew of Cyprus, of Levitical descent, who received from the apostles the appropriate surname of Barnabas (Son of Consolation), who sold a piece of land which formed his private property, and brought the full price of it to the apostle, that they might dispose of it according to their discretion. This man afterwards became eminent—second only to an apostle, and sometimes called an apostle, in the Church. His conduct in this matter appears to be mentioned for the sake of painting the contrast which was offered by the conduct of another disciple, whose name was Ananias.

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The following exquisite poem by one of our modern poets is an appropriate eulogy upon the benevolent spirit so beautifully exemplified in Barnabas :

The world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest ;
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
Is his, who skills of comfort best ;
Whom by the softest step and gentlest tone
Enfeebled spirits own,
And love to raise the languid eye,
When, like an angel's wing, they feel him fleeting by :—

Feel only—for in silence gently gliding
Fain would he shun both ear and sight,
'Twixt prayer and watchful love his heart dividing,
A nursing father day and night.
Such were the tender arms, where cradled lay
In her sweet natal day
The Church of Jesus ; such the love
He to His chosen taught for His dear widowed Dove.

Warmed underneath the Comforter's safe wing
They spread th' endearing warmth around :
Mourners, speed here your broken hearts to bring,
Here healing dews and balms abound :
Here are soft hands that cannot bless in vain,
By trial taught your pain :
Here loving hearts, that daily know
The heavenly consolations they on you bestow.

Sweet thoughts are theirs, that breathe serenest calms,
Of holy offerings timely paid,
Of fire from Heaven to bless their votive alms
And passions on God's altar laid.
The world to them is closed and now they shine
With rays of love Divine,
Through darkest nooks of this dull earth
Pouring, in showery times, their glow of "quiet mirth."

O happy spirits, marked by God and man
Their messages of love to bear,
What though long since in heaven your brows began
The genial amarant wreath to wear,
And in th' eternal leisure of calm love
Ye banquet there above,
Yet in your sympathetic heart
We and our earthly griefs may ask and hope a part.

Comfort's true sons ! amid the thoughts of down
That strew your pillow of repose,
Sure 'tis one joy to muse, how ye unknown
By sweet remembrance soothe our woes,
And how the spark ye lit, of heavenly cheer,
Lives in our embers here,

Where'er the cross is borne with smiles,
Or lightened secretly by love's endearing wiles :

Where'er one Levite in the Temple keeps
The watch-fire of his midnight prayer,
Or issuing thence, the eyes of mourners steep
In heavenly balm, fresh gathered there ;
Thus saints, that seem to die in earth's rude strife,
Only win double life :
They have but left our weary ways
To live in memory here, in heaven by love and praise.

These glowing words are none too warm in praise for such as Barnabas, but Ananias presented a different character.

This man was no doubt sincere in his convictions of the truth of the Christian religion ; for the condition of the early Church offered no inducement to a worldly man, and least of all to a Jew in good circumstances, to embrace its doctrines. Having joined himself to the disciples, he was not willing to appear behind the foremost in liberality and zeal : and yet his heart grudged the sacrifice which he had made from regard to appearances ; and therefore, instead of bringing to the apostles the whole price of the land which he had sold, he kept back a considerable portion, and presented the remainder as if it had been the whole.

Lying Punished.

How greatly was this man surprised and confounded when Peter, instead of receiving this offering with the expected approbation, plainly charged him with the fact, in terms of severe reprehension. The enormity of the offence was indeed very great ; the meanness, the hypocrisy, the worldliness of the whole affair, is almost without known parallel, and had it been allowed to pass unpunished, the purity of the infant Church could not long have remained free from the stain of worldly influences.

That the act of selling the land was entirely voluntary on his part, and that even when sold the whole sum rested entirely at his disposal, were strongly urged upon him by Peter, to point out the enormity of an offence committed solely with a view to the praise of men, through an imposition upon the disciples and

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upon God. "Thou hast not lied," said the indignant apostle, "unto men, but unto God." This denouncement and exposure were instantly fatal to one so covetous of human praise. It came upon him with all the suddenness and effect of a thunderbolt, and he fell down and gave up the ghost.

Death of Sapphira.

Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, entered the place about three hours afterwards, before the meeting had separated. She was ignorant of what had happened, but appears to have taken an active part, if her suggestions did not originate the infamous transaction. Of her, Peter, with marked emphasis, asked whether the land had been sold for the sum which Ananias had named: she readily and unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative, on which Peter, with the sternness of a judge, said: "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them who have buried thy husband are at the door—and shall carry thee out."

On hearing these terrible words, she also fell to the ground and died: on which the young men who had just returned from burying her husband, carried her also away. The manner of the death of Sapphira was even more striking than that of Ananias. Peter had not distinctly doomed him to death; and he might be supposed to have died from the stroke of an over-burdened conscience; but in the other case the direct judgment of God is brought out more distinctly. Sapphira dies at the word of Peter, and falls down death-struck at his command.

This signal judgment made a profound impression upon the Church. It tended to purge away all low and selfish motives: to urge great singleness of purpose, and to induce that respect for the power and authority of the apostles which was essential to their influence. It seems however to have tended for a time to prevent other men of substance from joining the apostles: but, it is added with strong emphasis—"but *the people* magnified them."

Many miracles were also wrought by them;

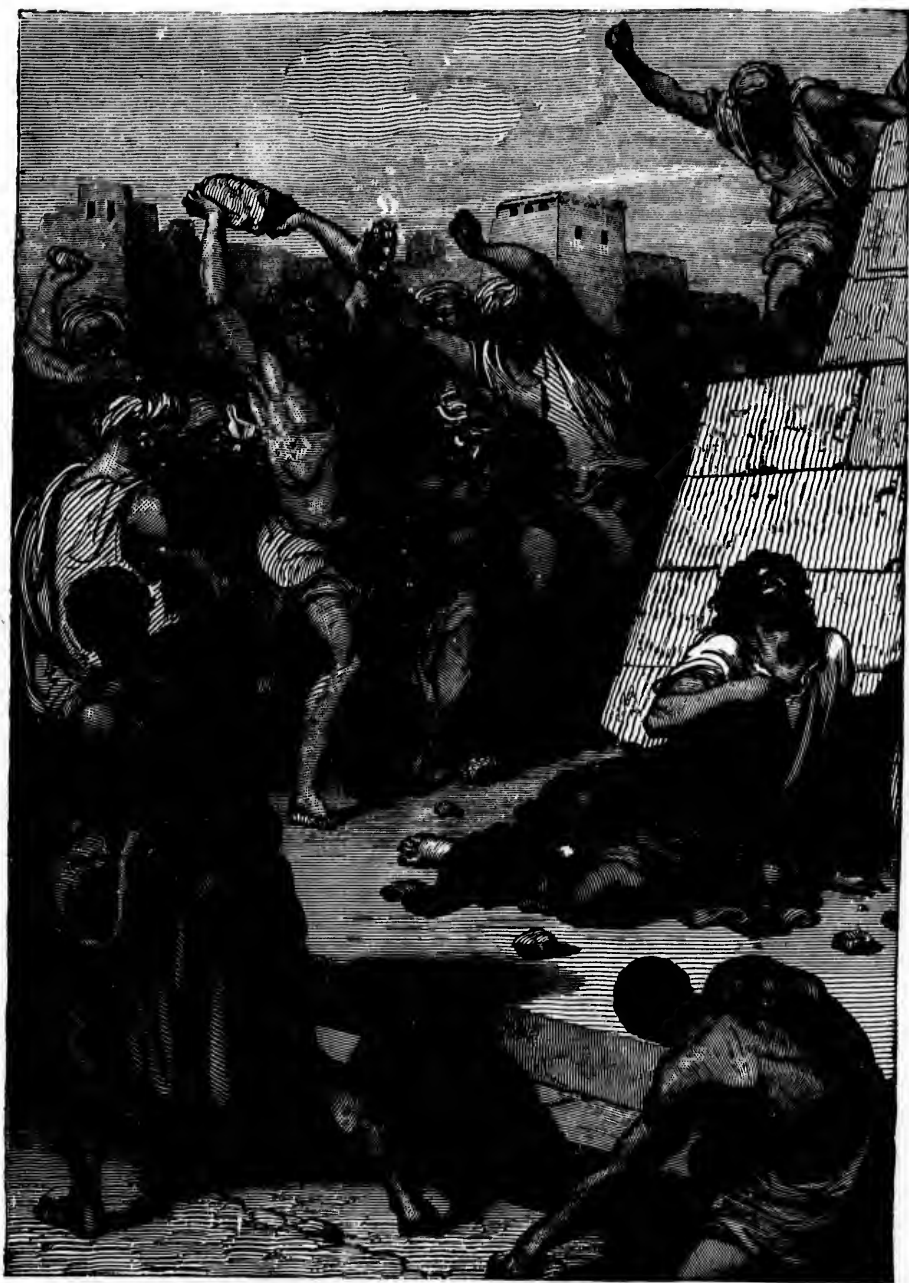
and their reputation became so high "that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." Whether they were by this means healed is not stated, and is left for us to conjecture. The news of this even spread to the neighboring towns, whence the diseased were brought in great numbers to Jerusalem to be cured by the apostles.

The sensation which was thus excited attracted the attention of the high-priest and others, and by their orders the apostles were apprehended and cast into the common prison. But the night following they were delivered by an angel of God, who opened the prison-doors and brought them forth, with a charge to proceed in their high course, speaking boldly to the people in the very Temple the words of eternal life. Next morning the Sanhedrin assembled to examine the prisoners, and officers were sent to bring them forth. But they soon returned, stating that the prisoners had disappeared, although the prison-doors were still closed, and the keepers carefully upon guard.

Escape from Prison.

While they were confounded at this, a messenger arrived with the intelligence that the men whom they had cast into prison were then actually in the Temple exhorting the people. The officers then went and brought them thence before the council; but they did this without disrespect or violence, as they feared to excite a tumult among the people, who were, as we have seen, favorable to the apostles, and had probably just heard from them how marvelously they had been delivered.

On their appearance before the council, the high-priest taxed them with disobedience to the positive order they had received no more to preach in the name of Jesus: "But, behold," said the pontiff, "ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." To this Peter, in the name of all the apostles, quietly answered, "We



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THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN.

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ought to obey God rather than men;" and forthwith, in a few cogent words, stated with-out reserve or qualification the great doctrine which they, as chosen witnesses, felt bound to testify. They were then taken outside for a time, while the council deliberated on the matter.

Some of the more violent were for putting them to death; but there was among them a renowned teacher and expounder of the law, named Gamaliel, who urged more prudent counsels. He sagaciously observed, that if this doctrine were of God they could not and ought not to interfere to suppress it, and if it were not of God it would certainly without their interference come to nothing. He therefore counselled the great "let alone" policy; and his high reputation and influence gained so much attention for it, that, after they had scourged the apostles, they allowed them to depart with an injunction that they should not again speak in the name of Jesus.

But the apostles, rejoicing that they were deemed worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, ceased not to preach Christ crucified in the Temple and in every house they entered. And their labors were blessed: for the number of the disciples daily increased, and the funds which their liberality and confidence placed in the hands of the apostles were so large, that the distribution became a matter of great anxiety and labor to them, and there was danger that this business would so take up their time as to prevent the due discharge of more important duties.

Choosing Deacons.

A dispute which arose between the Greek and Hebrew converts, the former alleging that their widows were comparatively neglected in the daily ministrations, convinced the apostles that it was time for them to seek relief from such comparatively secular charges. "It is not meet," said they, "that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." They therefore recommended the brethren to look out seven men in whom they could confide, to have the management of this department.

Seven such persons were accordingly nominated by the disciples, and were instituted by the apostles in this important office by prayer and the imposition of hands. These were the first deacons. One of them, named Stephen, was so active and so devoted, so powerful in speech, and so mighty in deeds, that he speedily attracted the attention of the Hellenistic and African Jews in Jerusalem: and in their frequent disputations he so foiled them in argument that they became exasperated and determined to get rid of him. Despairing to do this in the ordinary course of affairs, as then conducted under the cognizance of the Romans, they suborned false witnesses to testify that they had heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.

The First Christian Martyr.

On this allegation they excited the people against him, and then the chief men ventured to seize him and to bring him before the council. The charge was there more formally urged; and when the council turned their attention to the man against whom such heinous things were urged, they beheld a man whose countenance was radiant with holiness and peace—"as the face of an angel."

To the question of the high-priest, "Are these things so?" Stephen answered by taking a rapid view of the dispensations of God's providence towards His people, with an apparent view to the development of the Messianic character of Christ as foreshown in these dispensations. We say apparent, for, as his address was interrupted by the excited passions of the audience, its entire scope is not clearly manifested. He had reached so far in his illustrative exposition as to the building of the Temple by Solomon, when he was much interrupted by the angry clamor of the audience, and was provoked to exclaim: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain those who showed before the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now

been the betrayers and murderers. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

When the audience had heard thus far, their rage and indignation passed all bounds, and they even gnashed on him with their teeth. Then, foreseeing his danger, and feeling that there was no safety even in the great council of the nation, nor any prospect of justice at its hands, the holy man cast his eyes towards heaven, and there beheld "the glory of God." This phrase usually denotes the visible symbols of the Divine Presence in some magnificent representation, or some resplendence—such as that which in the old Temple abode between the cherubim.

Stephen Assailed.

In Stephen's case there is every indication of a vision representing what was most likely to encourage him in that perilous moment, "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." He declared what he beheld; and on hearing this the auditors cried out with one voice, and stopped their ears as against the pollution of some horrid blasphemy, and ran upon him with one accord. He was hurried outside the city, and there in the madness of that hour stoned to death as a blasphemer. He died calling upon God, and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and praying that this act might not be laid to the charge of his murderers. Thus worthily died the first of the noble army of martyrs, who have sealed with their blood the testimony of Jesus.

The council had no power to inflict death, as we have already seen; and although this proceeding could not have been displeasing to them, it had not their formal sanction; but was entirely the ebullition of popular feeling, which would not and could not abide the result of judicial movements. In this case the witnesses, as was usual, took the first and most active part in the execution; and casting off their outer robes for vigorous exertion.

they placed them in charge of a young man named Saul, who had manifested much zeal against the new doctrines, and on the present occasion against Stephen.

Saul must have been impressed with the calm dignity of the Christian martyr, the peaceful resignation which he exhibited in the presence of his enemies, that wonderful serenity which stood in such striking contrast to the madness of his foes; and, more than all, he must have been impressed with the Christ-like spirit of the martyr, showing itself in his heartfelt prayer for those who were so cruelly taking his life. Here was a proof of the self-sacrifice inspired by the Christianity, the heroism that endures to the end, and the lofty faith which sees the invisible and hears the unutterable.

It is not strange that the Christian Church made such rapid progress as it did immediately after that period, for that is a true saying concerning the blood of the martyrs: As the drops of rain come from the clouds and bring summer to the earth, so the baptism of blood renews the Christian spirit and the generation of those who endure and serve is born from the generation of those who perish. Very rapidly Christianity advanced. When histories are unfolded, and secret causes are traced, it will undoubtedly be seen that the martyr spirit of that early period has had much to do with the existence and success of the Church of Christ, which is now changing the face of the earth, and "making the wilderness to blossom as the rose."

If it appears strange that one of such faith, courage, self-denial and excellence of character should be left, as Stephen was, to the cold mercy of a Jewish mob, it would be well to remember that although the road he travelled was rough, the end of it was glory. He passed through storm and conflict, yet came to his rest as sweetly as if his death-bed had been made of down, and his attendants had been ministering angels.



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CHAPTER XXXIX.

SAUL'S REMARKABLE CONVERSION.



SAUL was a native of Tarsus, in Asia Minor, where many Jews were settled, and enjoyed, by his birth, there, of free parents, the privileges of a Roman citizen. His education in his native city was necessarily less exclusive—more Greek—than that which prevailed among the Jews in Palestine. But as the exclusive Jewish learning, in the law, was supposed to be best taught in Jerusalem, it was usual to send young Jews, born in foreign lands, thither, to complete their education.

Saul was accordingly sent to the Holy City, where he studied the law with great diligence and much distinction under its most eminent living teacher, Gamaliel. This fiery youth threw all the ardor of his soul into the movement against the innovating disciples of Jesus, which was commenced by the death of Stephen; for the popular rage was too thoroughly excited to be satiated with the blood of that holy man, but sought new objects for its fury. A great part of the converts fled before the storm into other parts of the country, and many returned to their houses in Asia Minor, Cyprus, and other places, where they had made known the Gospel they had received.

Philip, one of the seven deacons, left Jerusalem about this time to preach the Gospel in Samaria. He was heard with great attention; and the miracles of benevolence which he performed, in casting forth evil spirits and in healing the diseased, were witnessed with joy and conviction by the right-minded. Among those who were converted and baptized was a man named Simon, who had acquired much influence over the people by his skill in the

magic arts, and by impressing upon them that he was in truth some great and mysterious personage.

This man, when Peter and John had been brought down to Samaria by the tidings of Philip's success, saw the new converts receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost at the prayer of the apostles and the imposition of their hands. Still really unconverted, and perhaps regarding the holy apostles as only greater masters of the art in which he was an adept, Simon had the temerity to offer them money if they would impart to him the power which they possessed of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of their hands. This brought down upon him a severe rebuke from Peter, who plainly told him that "his heart was not right with God."

Phillip and the Ethioptian.

After the apostles had by their labors confirmed and extended the work of God in Samaria, they returned to Jerusalem; but Philip was directed by a Divine impulse to proceed southward into the country lying towards Gaza on the road to Jerusalem. In this quarter, which was the usual route from Jerusalem to Egypt, Philip encountered a great man of Ethiopia, who was returning home in his chariot from Jerusalem, where he had been to attend the Passover.

Whether this personage was a Hebrew, who had been raised to high office in Ethiopia—like Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, and Mordecai in Persia; or was a native of Ethiopia, in which distant country it has been alleged that Judaism had made considerable progress—cannot with any certainty be determined. He was, however, treasurer to Candace, queen of the Ethiopians; and Philip perceived that, as he rode, he was reading in a

book; and as the Orientals always read aloud, he found that his attention was engaged by the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Philip then saw the purpose for which he had been sent into this remote quarter, and he accosted the reader with "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The eunuch candidly replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" And then he desired Philip to come and sit with him in the chariot, for his question implied that he could give the instruction desired.

What perplexed the eunuch was to know whether the very striking words of the passage of Scripture which engaged his attention applied to the prophet himself or to some other person. It was easy for Philip to show that they applied to Jesus, the mysteries of whose Gospel he fully opened to the astonished Ethiopian, who received them with the most sincere conviction. Being thus instructed, he asked, on coming to some water, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest;" and on his replying "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," he consented to baptize him. The chariot was then stopped, and they went down together into the water, where the Ethiopian was baptized in the name of Christ. Philip then left him, and the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing, even as one who had found a pearl of great price."

Saul Struck Blind.

Meanwhile the zeal of Saul against the followers of Jesus had not escaped the notice and approval of the Sanhedrin, from which he was intrusted with a commission to proceed to Damascus, where the Jews were settled in great numbers, and, with the co-operation of the synagogues in that place, to apprehend and bring to Jerusalem those who had become followers of Christ. He proceeded on his way with a suitable escort, full of the conviction that he was doing God service, and his heart overflowing with bitterness and wrath against the believers in a crucified Messiah.

He had already nearly reached Damascus, when he was suddenly blinded and struck to

the ground by the excess of light which fell upon him, while a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He then naturally asked, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and was answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." On hearing this, all the proud confidences of this man broke suddenly from him; his fierceness passed away, and he became gentle and submissive. Trembling and astonished, his only question was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and he was told to proceed to Damascus, and wait further directions in that city, which would be furnished him.

Saul Visited by Ananias.

The attendants had seen the light, and had heard the sound of a voice without distinguishing the words. Saul had not only seen that light, but had seen in it the glory of Jesus, who had been the object of his contempt and hate. He had instinctively closed his eyes when that effulgence beamed upon him. Now he opened them, but saw not: he was blind; and his attendants had to lead him by the hand to Damascus. There he remained three days without sight, and during those days he partook not of meat or drink—his absorbing thoughts and new convictions being food enough for him.

At the end of that time, a disciple of Damascus, named Ananias, was instructed in a vision to go to him. Having heard of his character and his mission to Damascus, Ananias was astonished at this charge: but the Lord said unto him, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear thy name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Thus encouraged, Ananias went to the house where Saul lodged, and putting his hands upon him, he said, in terms which recognized him as a fellow-Christian, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." On this his

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sight was on the instant restored to him, and immediately after he joined himself by baptism to the Church of Christ.

Thus marvelously was the most determined enemy of the truth in Jesus struck down "in his pride of place," and humbled to the very feet of Him whose servants he had so relentlessly pursued: and thus were all his high talents and the indomitable energies of his character, forcibly and against all probable circumstances, enlisted into the service of that great cause which he had so zealously labored to destroy.

The reader will be interested in the poem of Keble, finely descriptive of the conversion of Saul, and picturing the remarkable scene in vivid colors:

The midday sun, with fiercest glare,
Broods o'er the hazy, twinkling air;
Along the level sand
The palm-tree's shade unwavering lies,
Just as thy towers, Damascus, rise
To greet yon wearied band.

The leader of that martial crew
Seems bent some mighty deed to do,
So steadily he speeds,
With lips firm closed and glaring eye,
Like warrior when the fight is nigh,
Nor talk nor landscape heeds.

What sudden blaze is round him poured,
As though all heaven's refulgent hoard
In one rich glory shone?
One moment—and to earth he falls:
What voice his inmost heart appals?
Voice heard by him alone.

For to the rest both words and form
Seem lost in lightning and in storm,
While Saul, in wakeful trance,
Sees deep within that dazzling field
His persecuted Lord revealed
With keen yet pitying glance:

And hears the meek upbraiding call
As gently on his spirit fall
As if th' Almighty Son
Were prisoner yet in this dark earth,
Nor had proclaimed His royal birth,
Nor His great power begun.

"Ah wherefore persecut'st thou Me?"
He heard and saw, and sought to free

His strained eye from the sight;
But Heaven's high magic bound it there,
Still gazing, though untaught to bear
Th' insufferable light.

"Who art Thou, Lord?" he falters forth:
So shall sin ask of heaven and earth
At the last awful day.
"When did we see Thee suffering nigh,
And passed Thee with unheeding eye?
Great God of judgment, say!"

Ah! little dream our listless eyes
What glorious presence they despise,
While in our noon of life,
To power or fame we rudely press—
Christ is at hand, to scorn or bless,
Christ suffers in our strife.

Though heavenly gates long since have closed,
And our dear Lord in bliss reposed
High above mortal ken,
To every ear in every land
(Though meek ears only understand)
He speaks as He did then.

"Ah wherefore persecute ye Me?
'Tis hard, ye so in love should be
With your own bitter woe.
Know, though at God's right hand I live,
I feel each wound ye reckless give
To the least saint below.

"I in your care My brethren left,
Not willing ye should be bereft
Of waiting on your Lord.
The meaneast offering ye can make—
A drop of water—for love's sake,
In Heaven, be sure, is stored."

O by those gentle tones and dear,
When Thou hast stayed our wild career,
Thou only hope of souls,
Ne'er let us cast one look behind,
But in the thought of Jesus find
What every thought controls.

As to Thy last apostle's heart
Thy lightning glance did then impart
Zeal's never-dying fire,
So teach us on Thy shrine to lay
Our hearts, and let them day by day
Intenser blaze and higher.

And as each mild and winning note
(Like pulses that round harp-strings float,



THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.—Acts ix. 3-7.

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When the full strain is o'er)
Left lingering on his inward ear
Music, that taught, as death drew near,
Love's lesson more and more:

So, as we walk our earthly round,
Still may the echo of that sound
Be in our memory stored:
"Christians! behold your happy state;
Christ is in these, who round you wait;
Make much of your dear Lord!"

After having continued for some time in daily intercourse with the disciples at Damascus, Saul began to declare in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God. This excited a profound sensation among the Jews of that city, who were well acquainted with the nature of the business which he came to transact with those very synagogues in which he now preached the name of Jesus. But he daily wielded with increasing power the weapons which God had placed in his hands, proving by irrefragable arguments that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah.

Saul's Life in Danger.

After this Saul withdrew for a time into Arabia, we know not for what purpose, and then returned to Damascus, where he for a long while pursued his evangelical labors with success, till the Jews became so highly exasperated against him that they watched the gates of the city day and night to slay him in his going forth. Being apprised of this, the disciples let him down in a basket over the wall and he proceeded to Jerusalem, which he entered a very different man from the Saul who had set forth, three years before, on his persecuting mission to Damascus.

The disciples at Jerusalem, better informed of his original character than of his conversion and subsequent proceedings, were at first afraid to admit him into their societies. But Barnabas, who had probably been intimate with him in former times, was convinced of his sincerity, and introduced him to the apostles, describing to them the remarkable circumstances of his conversion, and how boldly he had preached Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus.

The doctrine of Christ was daily advocated by Saul in public during his stay in Jerusalem, especially among those foreign Jews, speaking the Greek language, who had come to the Holy City. These became at last so exasperated against one who had lately been so distinguished a member of their own body that they formed a plan for causing him to be put to death as an apostate.

Saul at Tarsus.

On the other hand, the prospect opened to him of a wider sphere of action among heathen nations. As he was one day in the Temple, and by prayer lifting up his soul to the Lord, he was borne aloft from earthly things. In a vision he received an assurance from the Lord, that although he would be able to effect nothing in Jerusalem, through the animosity of the Jews, he was destined to carry the doctrine of salvation to other nations and to remote regions.

Accordingly, after a stay of only a fortnight at Jerusalem, he was obliged to leave it through the machinations of the Jews. He now returned to Tarsus, his native place, where he spent several years, certainly not inactively, for by his labors the gospel was spread both among Jews and Gentiles in Tarsus and throughout Cilicia; and there is good reason for believing that to him the Gentile Churches, which in a short time we find in Cilicia, owed their origin.

During this interval the turn of public affairs in Judæa became, upon the accession of the Emperor Caligula, so critical and exciting to the Jews, that it engaged all their interest and attention. Under this influence the persecution of the followers of Jesus abated, and the Churches thus obtained an interval of rest, by which they were strengthened for new conflicts. Peter availed himself of this to make a tour through the country, to visit and strengthen the communities of believers. In the course of this journey he came to Lydda, a town six miles inland from Joppa, on the road from Jerusalem.

Here his attention was directed to a man



named Eneas, who, from his Greek name, was probably a Hellenist Jew, and had been for eight years kept to his bed with the palsy. Him, Peter cured; commanding him to arise from the bed on which he had lain so long, in words carefully framed to refer all the power and glory of the act to Jesus. He said, "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed." This signal miracle

the disciples sent to him tidings of this heavy loss to the Church, and desired his presence to sustain and comfort them in their affliction. The apostle immediately obeyed the call, and went over to Joppa. He was, by his own desire, conducted to the chamber where the corpse lay, and was much moved when he witnessed the lamentations of the poor widowed women who had been supported by her beneficence,



ANANIAS AND SAUL.—Acts ix. 17.

made a strong and convincing impression upon the minds of many persons in that neighborhood, who thereupon "turned to the Lord."

At Joppa there was among the believers an excellent woman named Tabitha (in Greek, Dorcas), who "was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." This woman was taken ill and died, and the body was prepared in the usual manner for interment, and laid out in an upper chamber. As Lydda, where Peter was known then to be, was not far from Joppa,

and who recounted to one another the charitable deeds of their benefactress.

Peter desired to be left alone with the body; and then he kneeled down and prayed, probably with more agonizing fervor than he desired that they should witness. His faith being thus strengthened, he turned to the body, and cried, "Tabitha, arise!" She then opened her eyes, as one awakening from sleep, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He then presented her his hand, and she arose, and was presented alive to those who had so lately bewailed her

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dead. This was the first miracle of the kind which was performed by the apostles, and it produced an impression fully corresponding to its importance.

After this Peter remained some time in Joppa, dwelling with one Simon, a tanner, whose house was by the sea-shore.

A Remarkable Vision.

Joppa was but a few miles south from Cæsarea, which was the seat of the Roman governor, and the political metropolis of Judæa. In the Roman cohort which formed the garrison of that place was a centurion named Cornelius, a Gentile, who, dissatisfied with the old popular religion, and seeking after one which would tranquillize his mind, had been led to Judaism, and had become a proselyte of the gate. Having with his whole family professed the worship of Jehovah, he testified by his benefactions the sympathy which he felt with his fellow-worshippers of the Jewish nation, and observed the hour of prayer customary among the Jews.

It was customary with the Jews, and became so with the early Christians, to devote themselves to fasting and prayer when, in any emergency from inward or outward distress, they sought relief and illumination from God. In some such emergency Cornelius had for some days fasted and prayed before God. What was it that troubled him? It may be supposed that he was disturbed by the various opinions which he heard respecting the doctrines of Christ, and his only object and interest being to find in the truth rest to his soul, he sought in earnest prayer, accompanied by fasting, guidance in the right way.

While he was thus engaged, he beheld an angel, who was sent to apprise him that his abundant alms were accepted as an evidence of piety towards God, and he was enjoined to send to Joppa for Peter, who was able to instruct him in all truth. No sooner had Cornelius received this gladdening intimation, than he sent two slaves, and a soldier who waited on him, to solicit the presence of the long-wished-for teacher and guide.

But it was necessary that Peter himself should be prepared for a call so unexpected, and so adverse to the notions which still filled his mind, that the blessings and promises of the Gospel were limited to the seed of Abraham.

It was about noon the next day when Peter withdrew to the flat roof of the house in which he lodged, in order to offer up his midday devotions. He then beheld, as in a vision, a multitude of various beasts collected together, and a voice was heard, "Arise, Peter; slay and eat." At this, although hungry, he demurred, seeing that most of the beasts were such as the Jewish law declared unfit for food. He said, therefore, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice answered, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Peter at Cæsarea.

While Peter mused as to the purport of this vision, the messengers from Cornelius came inquiring for him and the mystery on which he pondered was unravelled when the voice enjoined him to go with them "nothing doubting." He accordingly departed on the following day, accompanied by six other disciples, to whom he had imparted the matter, and who awaited the result with eager expectation. As the distance was too great for one day's journey, they made two of it, and it was not until the fourth day from the departure of the messengers that they arrived at Cæsarea. When at length the centurion saw the holy man cross his threshold, he fell down at the feet of one whom, after what had passed, he was disposed to regard as a super-earthly being. Peter, however, raised him with the words, "Stand up, I myself also am a man."

Cornelius, in expectation of the arrival of the divinely appointed teacher, had assembled his household and friends to meet him, forming, with those who accompanied Peter, a considerable audience, to which he proceeded to explain how he had been taught to disregard the common scruples of the Jews respecting intercourse with heathens, which would have

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precluded him from attending to the call, or from coming under that roof. Cornelius in like manner explained how he had been induced to send for Peter, and concluded with expressing an anxious desire to hear the things which God had commissioned him to speak.

Peter was affected and astonished; his perceptions were enlarged in witnessing this anxiety for Divine truth in one who had been born and brought up in the midst of heathen abominations; and he expressed his conviction in the remarkable words, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." He proceeded to preach to them the doctrine of Christ. His words fell like dew from heaven upon their thirsty souls, and as he proceeded they were impelled to express their feelings in inspired praises to God.

Good News for all Men.

This prevented any of the Jewish Christians present from urging objections when Peter proposed that these Gentiles should be baptized into the Church of Christ; and the same facts furnished Peter with unanswerable grounds of justification, when his conduct, in thus unclosing the gates of hope to the Gentiles, was shortly afterward called in question.

"Go up and watch the new-born rill
Just trickling from its mossy bed,
Streaking the heath-clad hill
With a bright emerald thread.

"Canst thou her bold career foretell,
What rocks she shall o'erleap or rend,
How far in ocean's swell
Her refreshing billows send?

"Perchance that little brook shall flow
The bulwark of some mighty realm,
Bear navies to and fro
With monarchs at their helm.

"Even so, the course of prayer who knows?
It springs in silence where it will,
Springs out of sight, and flows
At first a lonely rill:

"But streams shall meet it by and by
From thousand sympathetic hearts,

Together swelling high
Their chant of many parts.

"Unheard by all but angel ears
The good Cornelius knelt alone,
Nor dreamed his prayers and tears
Would help a world undone.

"The while upon his terraced roof,
The loved apostle to his Lord
In silent thought aloof,
For heavenly vision soared.

"Far o'er the glowing western main
His wisful brow was upward raised,
Where, like an angel's train,
The burnished water blazed.

"The saint beside the ocean prayed,
The soldier in his chosen bower,
Where all his eye surveyed
Seemed sacred in that hour.

"To each unknown his brother's prayer,
Yet brethren true in dearest love
Were they—and now they share
Fraternal joys above.

"There daily through the open gate
They see the Gentile spirits press,
Brightening their high estate
With dearer happiness.

"What civic wreath for comrades saved
Shone ever with such deathless gleam?
Or when did perils braved
So sweet to veterans seem?"

Peter, on his return to Jerusalem, found that his having admitted Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel was little relished by the Jewish converts, who had hitherto not apprehended that such privileges were other than the peculiar heritage of the seed of Abraham. They were not, however, selfishly desirous of engrossing these privileges; for when they understood, from the plain account of the matter which the apostle gave them, that such was the will of God, "They held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath also God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life."

In their convictions on this subject they were confirmed by hearing that some of the disciples who had dispersed during the persecution, had ventured to preach the Lord Jesus to Gentiles as well as Jews at Antioch, and

that their labors had been attended with the most signal success. Whether or not the disciples at Antioch had been encouraged to this step by having heard of the proceedings of Peter cannot be known; but the manifest blessing from heaven upon it abundantly justified the disciples in the eyes of the Church at Jerusalem, which forthwith despatched Barnabas to carry on the work which had been thus auspiciously commenced.

Saul's Name Changed to Paul.

That good man, on his arrival, was gladdened to witness the progress which the Gospel had made in the metropolis of the East, and employed his most ardent exertions to advance the work. The extensive prospect of efficient labor in the cause of Christ which was here opened led him to invite Saul, who had been active among the Gentiles in Cilicia, to become his fellow-laborer.

From this point in the history the Hebrew name of Saul is exchanged for the corresponding one of Paul, a common Roman name, by which he had been known among his Gentile neighbors.

An evidence of the power with which the doctrine of Christ spread itself in an independent manner among the Gentiles was the new name of "Christians," which was at Antioch first given to believers; among themselves they were called the Disciples of the Lord, the Brethren, the Believers. By the Jews, names were imposed upon them which implied undervaluation or contempt, such as the Galileans, the Nazarenes, the Paupers, and so forth, and they of course would not give them a name literally meaning the Adherents of the Messiah. The Gentiles had hitherto, on account of their observance of the ceremonial law, been unable to distinguish them from Jews. But now, when Christianity was spread among the Gentiles unconnected with the observance of the law, its professors appeared as an entirely new religious sect; and as the term "Christ" was held to be a proper name, the adherents of the new religion were distinguished by a word formed from it, as the

adherents of any school of philosophy were wont to be named after its founder.

From that time forth Antioch occupied a most important place in the propagation of Christianity, for which there were now two central points; what Jerusalem had hitherto been for this purpose among the Jews, that Antioch now became among the Gentiles. As there grew up considerable intercourse between the two Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch, Christian teachers frequently came from the former to the latter. Among these was a prophet named Agabus, who prophesied an approaching famine, which would be felt severely by a great number of the poor Christians in Jerusalem, and he called upon the believers at Antioch to assist their poor brethren. This famine actually occurred in the year 44 A. D.

The Church at Antioch cheerfully responded to this call, and sent their contributions, before the beginning of the famine, to Jerusalem by the hands of Paul and Barnabas.

A Storm of Persecution.

The Church at Jerusalem had enjoyed eight years of repose since the persecution which commenced with the martyrdom of Stephen, but was now assailed by a violent though transitory tempest. King Herod Agrippa—a grandson of Herod the Great, who had been brought up at Rome—to whom the Emperor Claudius, in whose favor he stood high, had granted the government of Judæa, deemed it prudent to affect great zeal for the strict observance of the ancient ritual, in order to ingratiate himself with his subjects. He therefore manifested great animosity against the teachers of the new doctrine, concerning whom, indeed, none but unfavorable reports had gained access to him.

He caused James, the son of Zebedee, and brother to John, who probably by some act or discourse had excited the anger of the Jewish zealots, to be put to the sword; and finding that this act was highly pleasing to the Jews, he, during the Passover of the year 44, cast Peter into prison, intending that after

the feast he also should suffer death. Shut up in prison, in charge of four quaternions (or sixteen) soldiers, to two of whom he was fastened by chains, one on each side, and subject to the fell purposes of an unscrupulous tyrant—there seemed no human hope of escape for the apostle.

he had been aroused, and passing safely between the first and second guards who were fixed in preternatural sleep, he reached the iron gate leading to the city. This opened of its own accord before the angel, who conducted him beyond the reach of immediate pursuit, and then departed from him.



DELIVERANCE OF PETER FROM PRISON.—Acts xii. 7.

But the Church, which knew that all things were possible with God, despaired not, but offered up most fervent prayers on his behalf. And God, who had yet great services for this his servant to accomplish, heard their prayer. It was the night immediately preceding the day on which Herod intended to bring forth the apostle to his death, and Peter lay fast asleep between the two soldiers to whom he was chained, when he was smitten on the side, and a voice urged him to rise up quickly and go forth. As he arose, the chains fell from his hands; and hastily casting his garments about him, he followed the angel by whom

Touched by a strange hand, he started up; his chains were unbound; the breath of freedom floated through the old dungeon, and he stepped out, a free man.

Overcome by amazement, the apostle deemed all that passed a vision, and in the suddenness and rapidity with which it was done, he had no time for cool reflection. But when the angel had left him, he became alive to his real position, and hastened to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark. Many of the disciples, knowing the danger that awaited him on the morrow, were at that moment, and in that house, engaged

in prayer on his behalf. Having with some difficulty obtained admittance to them, he briefly reported to them all that had passed between him and the angel, and taking leave of them, withdrew to a place of greater safety.

Herod Smitten with Death.

The next morning there was no small stir in the palace of Herod and in the common prison; for the prisoner, so securely guarded, was nowhere to be found. Vexed and disappointed, the tyrant ordered the keepers to be slain, and then departed to Cæsarea; where, in the excess of his pride, he, on some public occasion, not only did not repel, but received with complacency the Divine honors which were tendered to him. For this he was smitten of God with one of the most loathsome and terrible diseases with which the pride of man was ever humbled: "He was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

It seems to have been in the midst of the trouble occasioned by the measures of Herod Agrippa, that Paul and Barnabas arrived at Jerusalem with the benefactions of the Church at Antioch. It is probably for this reason that their stay was short, and that nothing of importance connected with their visit is recorded; although in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul himself relates that he was well received by James, Peter, and John, who recognized him as an apostle specially appointed to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, as they were, they believed, "to the circumcision," or to the seed of Abraham.

Paul himself knew that he was not inferior in authority and power "to the very chiefest of the apostles," and this claim was now recognized by those who seemed to be regarded at Jerusalem as "the pillars of the Church." On their departure Paul and Barnabas took with them the above-named John, surnamed Mark, who was the nephew of Barnabas, and who is usually supposed to be the same with the evangelist Mark, but this is not certain.

They first proceeded to Antioch, and were there soon joined by Peter, who appears to have proceeded thither after his deliverance.

Peter at first freely associated himself, even in the eating of food, with the Gentile converts; but when some came from Jerusalem who alleged that James had expressed an opinion unfavorable to this course he ceased to do so. Many other Jewish Christians, and even Barnabas, were carried away by this example; and a marked line would thus have been drawn between the Jewish and Gentile converts had not Paul interposed and publicly rebuked Peter, in the presence of the congregation, for the painful inconsistency and discouraging effect of his proceedings.

The Apostles at Cyprus.

They first repaired to Cyprus, to which Barnabas belonged, and traversed the island from east to west, from Salamis to Paphos. In the latter place they found the proconsul, Sergius Paulus—a man dissatisfied with all that the popular religion and all that philosophy could offer for his religious wants, and anxious to avail himself of anything that might offer in the shape of a communication from heaven. In this frame of mind he had given ear to a Jewish impostor, Bar-Jesus, but better known by his foreign title of "Elymas," which means the same as Magian, or "wise man."

Feeling that his influence and personal interests were in danger, this man vehemently opposed Paul and Barnabas in the presence of the proconsul. But Paul, being filled with holy indignation, declared that the Lord would punish him with the loss of his eyesight. The sentence was immediately fulfilled; the darkness of night came upon him, and he went about seeking some one to lead him by the hand.

Paul and his companions, on quitting Cyprus, passed over to Pamphylia in Asia Minor, and proceeding along the borders of Phrygia, Isauria, and Pisidia, made some stay at the considerable city of Antioch, distinguished as Antioch in Pisidia. On the first Sabbath-day after their arrival in this place they repaired to the synagogue, and after the reading of the law they were asked by the rulers of the synagogue if they would address the people.

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Paul gladly accepted the call, and his address, which is given in Acts xiii. 16-42, is an admirable specimen of the wonderful power which this extraordinary man possessed of adapting his discourse to the audience he addressed, as well as of his peculiar antithetical mode of developing Christian truth. Uttered as it was, with all the impressiveness of firm conviction, and yet evincing great tenderness towards the Jews, it made at first a favorable impression upon the audience, and he was requested to expound the same doctrine more fully on the next Sabbath.

This was the general feeling; but there were among them some, especially those who had been converted from paganism to the Jewish religion, who were more deeply affected than the rest by the power of truth. These could not wait till the next Sabbath, but hastened after Paul, who had left the synagogue with Barnabas, and besought more ample instruction.

Paul and Barnabas gladly availed themselves of this opening, and employed themselves during the week in explaining the doctrine of Christ in private houses, and likewise in making it known to the Gentiles. Hence, by the next Sabbath, the new doctrine had acquired notoriety throughout the city, and a great number of Gentiles flocked to the synagogue along with the Jews to hear Paul's discourse. But the temper of the Jewish audience had changed. Their spiritual pride was shocked to perceive that the redemption which Paul preached was not to be regarded as the peculiar property of the seed of Abraham, but was freely offered, "without money and without price," to the Gentiles also.

He was therefore interrupted by violent contradictions and reproaches; on which he at length plainly told them that he had discharged the obligation he was under of declaring to them the mercy of God in Christ, and that, since they rejected it, to their own condemnation, he would now turn to the Gentiles, who were more disposed to receive it, and were equally with them entitled to its benefits.

Paul and Barnabas then left the synagogue, followed by the Gentile believers; and a suitable chamber in the house of one of them was probably the first place of assembly for the congregation which was now formed. Christianity then spread with great rapidity through the city and the surrounding district. But the Jews were meanwhile not idle; they contrived, by means of the female proselytes to Judaism, belonging to the most respectable families of the city, and through their influence on their husbands, to raise so strong a persecution against Paul and Barnabas that they were obliged to leave the place.

They repaired to a city about ten miles to the east, in Lycaonia, called Iconium (now Konieh), where they had access to both Jews and Gentiles. The former, however, here proved quite as hostile as at Antioch, so that they were soon driven from this city also. They then repaired to other cities in the same province, and first tarried in the neighboring town of Lystra.

Paul Heals a Cripple.

Here there were few Jews and no synagogue; so that Paul and Barnabas could make known the Gospel only by entering into conversation, in places of public resort, and thus leading persons to listen to their discourse on religious subjects: gradually small groups were formed, which were increased by many persons, who were attracted by curiosity to enter into the subject of conversation, and hear the new doctrines.

One day, while Paul was thus occupied, he noticed a poor cripple, who had never walked, looking steadfastly on him, and drinking in with eager attention the precious words which fell from his inspired lips. The apostle called to him with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet;" and he stood up and walked. This miracle, parallel to that which Peter and John had performed at the beautiful gate of the Temple in Jerusalem, attracted here at least equal attention with that which the earlier had done in the Holy City. The sight drew together a vast crowd, and the credulous multi-

tude took up the notion that the gods had very superior order. The unthinking multitude come down to them in the likeness of men. Men have always been inclined to hero-worship. There would have been less mistake in worshipping Paul



PAUL COMMANDING THE CRIPPLE TO STAND UP.—Acts xiv. 10.

worship, and we have the authority of Mr. Carlyle for saying that the hero idolized by them were not seeking homage of any kind. A the mad populace has not always been of a most profound impression must have been pro-

duced by them; they were clothed with a mystery which had something unearthly about it.

Now in this city, Zeus, or Jupiter, was worshipped as the tutelary god, and a temple dedicated to him stood near the gate. Accordingly the people supposed that their own tutelary god Jupiter had come down to them, and they identified him with Barnabas, probably from his grave manner and noble presence, while the eloquent and active Paul they took to be Hermes, or Mercury. The news of the appearance of these supposed divinities soon reached the Temple, and the priests hastened with oxen and with garlands to adorn them, purposed to offer sacrifice to the descended gods for the welfare of the city. Paul and Barnabas were filled with consternation as soon as they discovered this design. They rent their clothes, and rushed among the crowd exclaiming, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God." Even by this assurance they scarcely prevailed upon them to desist from their purpose.

Yet the impression which had been made, strong as it was, had no duration, being made rather upon the senses than the heart; and when, soon after, some Jews came to Lystra from Iconium, they found little difficulty in instigating a large body of the people against Paul, whom they had lately been ready to worship. He was stoned in a popular tumult, and dragged out of the city for dead. But it seems that he had only been rendered insensible by one or more of the blows he had received; and while the believers stood around him, he arose strengthened by the power of God, and returned with them to the city.

He remained only for the rest of that day, and departed the next morning to the neighboring city of Derbe, with Barnabas. When they had for a time labored in that city, they had the Christian courage to return to the towns from which they had been driven by stoning and persecutions; the welfare of the infant Churches being of far more consequence to them than their own safety. After this

they returned by their former route to Antioch in Syria.

They remained "a long time" at Antioch. In fact there is a period, variously computed from five to eight years, during which no account of their movements is given by the sacred historian, and which would at the first view seem to measure the period of their stay at Antioch. It is certain, however, that Paul made several journeys, of which we have no particular account in the New Testament, and it is possible that some of these journeys occurred during this interval. Thus he preached the Gospel as far as Illyricum; and there is an account of trials and persecutions, of many of which we have no distinct record, and which might have occurred during this period.

Trials and Dissensions.

While in this manner Christianity spread itself from Antioch, the parent Church of the Gentile world, a schism gradually arose between it and the other parent Church at Jerusalem, by which the cause of the Gospel seemed at first to be placed in great peril.

There came to Antioch many strictly pharisaical-minded converts from Jerusalem, who took upon them to assure the Gentile converts that without circumcision they could obtain no part in the kingdom of God. These persons reproved Paul and Barnabas for their lax and unauthorized proceedings, in dispensing with the observances of the old covenant, and they raised so much dissension and controversy that it was at length determined that Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by certain leading men in the Church at Antioch, should proceed to Jerusalem, and confer with the other apostles in this great matter.

The proposal of such a deputation probably originated with Paul himself; for he informs us, in the Epistle to the Galatians, that he knew, from Divine revelation, that an explanation on the subject had become essential to the well-being of the Church. He took with him a converted youth of Gentile descent, named Titus, who afterwards became his chief associate in preaching, in order to exhibit in his

person a living example of the power of the Gospel among the heathen.

Before a public consultation was held at Jerusalem, there were many private conferences among the apostles. The most important result was, that after Paul had given a full account to the apostles James, Peter, and John, of his course in publishing the Gospel among the heathen, and of the fruit of his labors among them, they acknowledged fully and

Barnabas recounted what the Lord had effected through their preaching among the Gentiles, their accounts were received with much interest and satisfaction. But at length some converts, who had passed over from the school of the Pharisees, began to demur at the exemption of the Gentiles from circumcision, and hinted at the necessity of subjecting Titus to that rite. But Paul strenuously asserted the equal privileges of the Gentiles in the kingdom of



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ANTIOCH.—Acts xiv. 27.

unreservedly the divine origin of his apostleship, instead of presuming to dictate to him as superiors. They agreed that he should continue to labor independently among the Gentiles, making only one stipulation, that the Gentile churches should continue to relieve out of their abundance the temporal wants of the poor brethren at Jerusalem. "The same which I also was forward to do," says Paul, in giving his account of these transactions.

In the private circles in which Paul and

God, and affirmed that their faith placed them in the same position towards God as believing Jews. This controversy gave rise to so much vehement discussion, that it was thought necessary that the subject should be considered and settled in a convention of the whole Church; but this was afterwards changed into a meeting of chosen delegates.

In this first Council of the Christian Church, held in 52 A. D., Peter stood up and appealed to the testimony of his own experience in the

matter of Cornelius, in favor of the view which Paul had taken. The weighty words in which he urged the conclusions derivable from this experience were heard with profound attention; and, as no one undertook to answer them, Paul, and after him Barnabas, rose to state the results of their own experience to the same effect, and appealed with great force to the miracles by which God had been pleased to aid and sanction their labors.

When the minds of the assembly had been thus prepared, James came forward with a proposal suited to his own peculiar moderation, and well suited to compose the existing differences. James was held in great respect by the Jews, from his strictness in observing the law, and therefore his words had the greater weight with the Jewish converts.

A Message to the Churches.

Referring to the preceding statements, he skilfully demonstrated that in this admission of the Gentiles into the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, the eternal purposes of God, as announced in old time by the prophets, had been fulfilled; and it behoved them to be careful not to obstruct or retard so great a work.

He therefore proposed that they should enjoin nothing further upon the converted Gentiles than abstinence from meat offered to idols; or of animals strangled, from blood, and from unchastity. Most of these things belong to the precepts to which men were trained before the giving of the law; and, therefore, although included in the law of Moses, were not peculiar to it. The observance of these offered a sort of common ground, in which the Jewish and Gentile converts could meet; and the suggestions of James approved themselves to the good sense of the meeting, and under the influence of that higher spirit by which their councils were animated, were immediately adopted, and were forthwith carried into effect by being formally communicated to the Gentile Churches in Syria and Asia Minor, in an epistle drawn up in the name of the assembly.

Two persons of high repute in the Church, *Joses*, surnamed *Barabas*, and *Silas*, were

chosen to be the bearers of this important message, and to accompany Paul and Barnabas, whose authority would be much supported by the presence and aid of persons known to be delegates from the Church at Jerusalem. A copy of the letter, the earliest public document of the Christian Church, is given in Acts xv. They were also accompanied by the nephew of Barnabas, John surnamed Mark, who had been the companion of the first journey of Paul and Barnabas into Asia, but who had left them when they entered Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem. Here Barnabas met him again, and having brought him to a sense of his former misconduct, induced him to become once more their companion.

After Paul and Barnabas had spent some time with the Church at Antioch, they resolved to revisit the Churches which they had in their former journey into Asia Minor established, and to extend their operations still further in the same direction. Barnabas wished to take his nephew, Mark, again with them as a companion; but Paul thought that his unfitness for this vocation was evinced by the lightness with which he had formerly cast off its obligations, and refused his assent to the proposal.

Young Timothy.

Barnabas took this so ill that he parted company from one with whom he had hitherto so diligently and affectionately labored. He struck out another sphere of action for himself; and, taking Mark with him, departed for Cyprus, his native country. Paul then, on his part, adopted *Silas* for a companion, and proceeded to work out the original plan of the journey. Good came out of this seeming evil; for the sphere of labor was enlarged by this separation; and Mark himself seems to have profited by this severity of Paul towards him, for he afterwards continued faithful in his vocation.

On leaving Antioch, Paul travelled through the neighboring parts of Syria, to Cilicia, Pisdia, and the towns in which he had labored in his first journey. At *Lystra*—the town where he had been first worshipped and then stoned

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—he found a young man named Timothy, who, by the instructions of his mother—a pious Jewess, but married to a heathen—had received religious impressions which had an abiding effect. His mother was converted when the apostle first visited the town, and young Timothy also became a zealous confessor of the Gospel.

Even at Iconium Paul heard of his Christian zeal; and the Church to which he belonged entertained the belief that he was destined for great things in the Church of Christ. Paul heard this of his young convert with great joy, and gladly permitted him to accompany him in his travels, to render him the services which in those days disciples rendered to their teachers, and to witness and to take part in his labors and sufferings.

After Paul had visited the Churches already founded in those districts, he proceeded to Phrygia. It was scarcely possible that he should visit all the large towns of this large and populous province; and he therefore seems to have left much to be accomplished by his pupils, such, for instance, as by Epaphras at Colosse, who afterwards founded a Church there, and in the towns of Hierapolis and Laodicea. It is evident that Paul took much interest in these Churches, to the first of which he wrote an invaluable epistle, in which the others are mentioned, and in which the name of Epaphras repeatedly occurs; and it seems most probable that the relation which he formed with them, and which led them to regard him as their spiritual father, took place during this journey in the way which has been indicated.

From Phrygia Paul proceeded northward to Galatia, where his Divine message appears to have been well received. Some interesting particulars concerning this visit are preserved in the Epistle to the Galatians, which the Acts of the Apostles do not record. Paul often speaks of unusual affliction, which he calls "a thorn in his flesh—the messenger of Satan to buffet him," by which he was often humbled and brought low, and out of which Divine grace was magnified.

What this was cannot be known. Some think it was a diminutive stature; others, diseased eyes; others, an imperfect utterance; others, more probably, that it was some acute bodily pain, which gave to his person a wasted and wan, if not a distorted appearance. He was under the strong influence of this infirmity when he visited Galatia; but the Divine power of his word and his works contrasted so strikingly with the feebleness of the material organ, that the stronger impression was made.

Paul's Infirmity.

He mentions this very gratefully in his epistle to them: "My temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Jesus Christ." He adds afterwards, "I bear you witness that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked your own two eyes and have given them to me;" and this is the passage which has chiefly led some to suppose that the "infirmity" of Paul lay in his eyesight.

On leaving Galatia, Paul was at first uncertain in what direction to turn, since new fields of labor opened to him on different sides. At one time he contemplated going in a south-westerly direction, to Proconsular Asia, and afterwards of passing in a northerly direction into Mysia and Bithynia; but either by an inward voice or a vision he received a monition from the Divine spirit which caused him to abandon both these plans. He then formed an intention of passing into Europe; but waiting to see whether he should be encouraged or withheld by a higher guidance, he betook himself to Troas; and a nocturnal vision, in which he beheld a man in the garb of a Macedonian calling to him for aid, confirmed his resolution to visit Macedonia.

At Troas he met with Luke the physician, perhaps one of the proselytes who had been converted by him at Antioch, and who now joined the party of Paul, and remained attached to it in labor and travel till the inspired record terminates. That record, as contained in the Acts of the Apostles, is usually held to have been written by Luke; and it would appear

that he wrote it at Rome during Paul's first imprisonment, and while his cause, which he had referred to the imperial tribunal, was still undecided.

At least the narrative is, as we shall find, brought down to that point, and there stops with some abruptness—which is strongly in

Luke was a faithful friend. He clung to Paul through all his varying fortunes, and was his companion in the old Roman dungeon. Others forsook the great hero, but Luke was not of the number.

We have been accustomed to consider Paul as a rugged sort of man, one whose external



PAUL WRITING HIS EPISTLES IN PRISON.—2 Tim. iv. 11.

favor of this conclusion. Henceforth Luke is to be regarded as a companion of Paul, except during a short interval, although he scarcely allows his own presence to be indicated in his narrative, otherwise than by the occasional use of the pronoun *we*, in recording the proceedings of the apostolic mission.

appearance was not very attractive; but, as when Moses smote the rock in the wilderness the sweet waters came forth, so there may be a rugged, rocky nature which contains fountains of deep feeling. Paul was not only remarkable for his intellectual endowments; he was equally remarkable in his emotional na-

ture, in the strong affections which he displayed, which are brought to our notice in many parts of his history, and which come to us as a sudden, pleasant surprise.

How strongly attached had he become to Luke! Think of his wonderful fondness for the young Timothy, whom he regarded almost as his son. This part of the history that we have just passed shows us the apostle in company with Luke, the historian. There were those who clung to Paul even to the last, and if anyone did prove to be a heretic, it was on account of the doctrines which the apostle preached more than on account of any offensive traits that he possessed.

His disposition was such as to draw people to himself. He was bold, he was magnetic, he was devout, he was a thousand men in one. Paul had something to do with empires. Paul had something to do with subsequent history. His life has entered into the life of the world, and he is one of those few men whom history does not dwarf. He is one of those majestic figures that look the more majestic through the backward vista of time.

This much may be said of him as we see him for a moment in the old dungeon with his faithful companion by his side, the companion of his travels and the chronicler of his marvellous deeds, making records that are destined to immortality.

"Look in, and see Christ's chosen saint

In triumph wear his Christ-like chain;
No fear lest he should swerve or faint;
'His life is Christ, his death is gain.'

"Two converts, watching by his side,
Alike his love and greetings share;
Luke the beloved, the sick soul's guide,
And Demas, named in faltering prayer.

"Pass a few years—look in once more—
The saint is in his bonds again;
Save that his hopes more boldly soar,
He and his lot unchanged remain.

"But only Luke is with him now;—
Alas! that even the martyr's cell,
Heaven's very gate, should scope allow
For the false world's seducing spell.

"Vainly before the shrine he bends,
Who knows not the true pilgrim's part:
The martyr's cell no safety lends
To him, who wants the martyr's heart.

"But if there be, who follows Paul
As Paul his Lord, in life and death,
Where'er an aching heart may call,
Ready to speed and take no breath;

"Whose joy is, to the wandering sheep
To tell of the Great Shepherd's love;
To learn of mourners while they weep
The music that makes mirth above;

"Who makes the Saviour all his theme,
The Gospel all his pride and praise—
Approach: for thou canst feel the gleam
That round the martyr's death-bed plays."



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CHAPTER XL.

PAUL AT PHILIPPI AND ATHENS.



BEFORE making an extended tour through Macedonia, Paul remained a short time at Philippi, an important place which derived its name from its founder, Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, and which acquired celebrity from several battles being fought there during the civil wars of the Romans, particularly the great battle between Brutus and Antony, which decided the fate of the Roman empire. It was here that Brutus killed himself; and this is the Philippi to which Paul eventually wrote the epistle which bears its name.

The number of Jews at this place was not sufficient to enable them to establish a synagogue. Probably they were only proselytes from heathenism; and they had outside of the town, among the trees on the banks of the Strymon, a small place for prayer, such as were used in the absence of a synagogue, and which appears to have had much resemblance to the analogous prayer-places of the Moslems. Paul repaired to this place the first Sabbath after his arrival, and addressed the women whom he found assembled there, with his usual impressiveness, respecting the things of Christ. His words strongly affected the heart of Lydia, a dealer in purple from the town of Thyatira, in Lydia; and at the conclusion of the day's service she and her whole family were baptized by him; and he and his companions were constrained by her hospitable importunities to take up their abode in her house.

(598)

There was in Philippi a female slave, who, in a state resembling somnambulism, was accustomed to answer, unconsciously, questions proposed to her, and was regarded as possessed by the Pythian Apollo, or as a prophetess inspired by him when the afflatus came upon her. She had then, and afterwards, frequent opportunities of hearing Paul, and his words made an impression upon her mind. In her convulsive fits these impressions were revived, and, mingling what she had heard from Paul with her own heathenish notions, she frequently followed him and his companions when on their way to the place of prayer, crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation!"

This testimony from a woman, supposed to be inspired was calculated to draw the attention of the people to the new doctrine. But it was far from the temper of Paul to avail himself, or even to endure, a testimony which, although true, was rendered impure by the medium through which it passed. At first he took no notice of her: but at length he turned to her, and in the name of Jesus commanded the spirit which held her powers in bondage to depart from her.

The masters of the woman had driven a thriving trade by the fees which they received from those who desired to obtain the benefit of her oracular responses; and seeing all their gains cut off by her cure, their rage against the strangers became boundless, and they seized upon Paul and Silas, and haled them before the magistrates of the place. Before this tribunal they accused them, not immediately of their own grievance, which would have rendered their motive too transparent, but as turbulent Jews, whose religious practices were contrary to the Roman laws.

This charge aroused the multitude against these holy men; and the magistrates, without hearing the matter further at present, directed them to be publicly scourged, and then sent them to the town prison, probably with the view of punishing them on a future day according to the forms of law. The smart of the lash, the gloom of the prison, the painful confinement of the stocks in which their feet were fastened, and the expectation of suffering and wrong which lay before them, could not depress their souls—nay, rather their hearts exulted in the consciousness that they suffered in the cause of Christ—and even at midnight they gave vent to their feelings in singing the praises of God.

A Startling Earthquake.

As they were thus employed the place was shaken by an earthquake to its very foundation, so that every door was burst open and the bonds of every one fell from him. The governor of the prison being thus awakened suddenly from his sleep, and finding all the prison doors wide open, concluded that the prisoners, for whose safe keeping he was responsible, had made their escape; and, in his agitation and alarm, drew his sword with intent to destroy himself therewith. This resource to a man from dangers which he could not escape was approved by the philosophy of the time, and was recommended to the heathen by many eminent examples; but, happily, the jailor of Philippi was spared from it, for Paul and Silas calmed his fears by calling out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!"

The earthquake, which gave them the opportunity to escape, their neglect to avail themselves of the opportunity, made them appear as something more than men to the relieved jailer. "He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas: and besought them and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" That momentous question was answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Gladly did the

apostles avail themselves of this opening to declare the great message with which they were charged, and to bring light and gladness to their prison walls. The jailer and his household received that light into their souls, and were gladdened by it. They were baptized without delay; and the jailer brought them to his private residence, bathed their wounds, and caused food to be placed before them.

The next morning early the magistrates sent the lictors to the jailer, enjoining him to let his prisoners depart. But having been ignominiously whipped the preceding day, Paul thought that it became him to assert the civil privileges which belonged to him as a citizen of Rome; and he and Silas (who must also have been in possession of the Roman citizenship) refused to leave the prison unless the magistrates came in person to release them, in attestation of their innocence.

Paul and Silas Released from Prison.

So alarmed were the magistrates at having committed the high crime of subjecting Roman citizens to the scourge, that they came and conducted them out of the prison. They had intimated a wish that Paul and Silas should leave the city, with which they thought proper to comply after they had visited the house of Lydia, and imparted some final comfort and encouragement to their friends.

Luke and Timothy, who had not been involved in the recent tumult, remained behind, but afterwards rejoined their party—Timothy at Thessalonica, or Beræa, and Luke at a later period. The Church which was thus formed at Philippi continued to entertain the most affectionate attachment to Paul, which they evinced by bringing contributions for his maintenance, although he was by no means prone to seek such gifts from his converts, but often chose rather to labor with his hands for a subsistence than be suspected of interested motives.

From Philippi Paul and Silas proceeded to Thessalonica, about twenty miles distant, the largest city in Macedonia, and a place of considerable traffic, where many Jews resided.



MACEDONIAN CHRISTIANS BRINGING THEIR GIFTS TO PAUL.—Acts xvi. 9 and xx. 1-3.

Here they found a synagogue, which for three weeks Paul visited on the Sabbath-days. The Jews were obstinate, but many of the "devout Greeks"—who in dissatisfaction with their native idolatries had become proselytes to the Jewish religion—rejoiced in the glad tidings which he brought, and found in the doctrine of Christ a firmer and happier resting-point for their troubled minds than Judaism offered.

"Chief women, not a few"—that is, women connected with families of rank and influence in the place—are specially mentioned among those who were favorably affected by the preaching of the apostle. The same had happened on other occasions, as at Antioch in Pisidia, and, more recently, at Philippi; and perhaps we may conclude from such instances, which are probably but examples of many other cases not specified, that women of this class and character bore a more important part and exercised a more important influence in the early propagation of the Gospel than they have had credit for. At a subsequent period Paul wrote two epistles to the Church which he founded in Thessalonica; and from that we learn that he was not long content with addressing the proselytes only once a week at the meetings of the synagogue, where his preaching would have been confined to the small number of the Gentiles who had joined the Jews in their worship, and where also he was obliged to adopt such a method and form of address as was suited to the peculiar condition of the Jews.

He availed himself of all openings and opportunities for making the Gospel known in the city; and ere long those Gentiles, whose attention had been awakened by the proselytes assembled in various places to hear the apostle, and from them chiefly was formed that body of Christians which, as Paul himself testifies, became "ensamples to all them that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." From the epistles another interesting point transpires. It was a custom among the Jews that all their sons should learn a manual craft of some kind or other. Even those whose circumstances

suggested no probability that their sons would ever need this provision against the changes of life, deemed it criminal to neglect this mode of securing to them a means of support.

Under this view Paul had been taught the trade of a tent-maker; and he now found good use of the attainment. Being now cut off from the resources which his birth and connections opened to him, he had but two alternatives—either to subsist on the bounty of the converts, or to work for his maintenance.

Paul Working at his Trade.

Our apostle acted in this matter according to the circumstances. He accepted freely what was freely offered; or if on any occasion he suspected that his motives might be misconstrued, he chose rather to work night and day, to provide not only for his own wants, but for those of his companions—availing himself of such opportunities of declaring the gospel as the incidents and intervals of labor offered. This he did at Thessalonica. "Ye remember, brethren," he says, "our labor and travail; for, laboring night and day, because we would be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of Christ."

The speedy and cordial reception which the Gospel met with among the Gentiles of this place soon roused the indignation and anger of the Jews. They had themselves little power in a heathen city: but by their misrepresentations of the character and objects of the apostolical party, they stirred up some of the common people, who forced their way into the house of Jason, a Christian, with whom Paul was staying. Not finding the apostle, they dragged Jason himself and those who were with him before the judgment-seat.

The accusation here rendered was different from the usual one, but was well calculated to gain the attention of the magistrates, and was chosen for that reason. Paul had spoken much of the future kingdom of Christ, and the accusers took hold of this to lay a charge of political delinquency against him. The terms of the accusation, indeed, convey a remark-



able intimation of the extent to which Christianity had already become a matter of wide report among the nations, as well as of the vague notions which were entertained of it.

"These that have turned the world upside down," cried the mob, "are come hither also; whom Jason has received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying there is another king, one Jesus." But the authorities would not credit or entertain so vague a charge against the respectable and well-known citizens who were brought before them as being implicated in it; and after they had taken security from Jason that there should be no violation of the public peace, and that the parties whose proceedings were questioned should soon leave the city, the complaint was dismissed.

A Tumult at Beræa.

The same evening Paul and Silas departed from the city—much sooner than they wished, or than they thought good for the Church they had been enabled to establish. Paul, however, formed the intention of returning as soon as the excitement against him should have subsided.

Paul and Silas proceeded to Beræa, a town about ten miles distant; and here they had the same pleasure of finding Jews open to conviction, and disposed to examine by the Scriptural tests to which they referred the doctrines which they advanced. Some impression was also made upon the Gentiles in this place; but the stay of Paul and Silas was but short, as some Jews from Thessalonica soon arrived at Beræa, and raised such a tumult against them that Paul was constrained to quit the place, accompanied by some of the believers, leaving Silas and Timothy behind him.

From Beræa, which was near the sea, Paul proceeded to Athens—a new and memorable scene for the labors of our great apostle. Hannah More, who in her very eloquent "Essay on the Character of St. Paul," has put forth all her strength in describing his proceedings at Athens, here remarks:—"Though the political and military splendor of Athens

had declined, and the seat of government, after the conquest of Greece by the Romans, had been transferred to Corinth, yet the sun of her glory was not set. Philosophy and the liberal arts were still carefully cultivated; students in every department, and from every quarter, resorted thither for improvement; and her streets were crowded by senators and rhetoricians, philosophers and statesmen. As Paul visited Athens with views which had instigated no preceding, and would probably be entertained by no succeeding traveller, so his attention in that most interesting city was attracted by objects far different from theirs.

"He was in all probability qualified to range with a learned eye over the exquisite pieces of art, and to consult and enjoy the curious remains of literature—theatres and temples, and schools of philosophy, sepulchres and cenotaphs, statues of patriots and portraits of heroes—monuments by which the artist insured to himself the immortality he was conferring. Yet one edifice alone arrested the apostle's notice—an altar of the idolatrous worshippers. One record of antiquity alone invited his critical acumen—the inscription 'To the Unknown God.'"

Supremé Court of Athens.

While Paul waited at Athens the arrival of his companions, "his spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry;" or rather, "filled with temples, altars, and idols." He could not withhold his testimony to the truth of God against these lying abominations. In the synagogues he debated with the Jews and proselytes, and in the market-places with the people who there congregated. A stranger with a new doctrine soon attracted the attention of the most idle, curious, and critical population in the world; for as the sacred writer, with characteristic accuracy, remarks, "All the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."

Among the rest the apostle encountered some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers; and

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PAUL ON MARS' HILL.—Acts xvii. 23.



when they heard him speak of Jesus and the resurrection, some said, "What meaneth this babbler to say?" Others, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange doctrines." The former were probably Epicureans, who denied the possibility of a future life, while they stigmatized the doctrine of the resurrection "the hope of worms;" and the latter Stoics, who regarded Jesus as some new demon or hero whom Paul recommended to their notice.

Paul's Eloquent Discourse.

By them the apostle was conducted to the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, which was the place where the Areopagites, the celebrated supreme judges of Athens, were wont to assemble. It was a hill almost in the middle of the city, which is almost entirely a mass of stone, and is not easily accessible, its sides being abrupt and steep. On many accounts this was the most celebrated tribunal in the ancient world. Its decrees were distinguished for justice and correctness; nor was there any court in Greece in which so much confidence was placed.

It had cognizance of all kinds of offences against the public weal, and was particularly attentive to blasphemies against the gods, and to the due performance of the sacred mysteries of religion. It does not appear, however, that this tribunal, which usually met by night, was at this time sitting, or that Paul was in any way brought to trial: there were no accusations, no witnesses, none of the forms of judgment. They seem to have resorted thither merely because it was the place where subjects of religion were usually discussed; and because it was a place of concourse for the judges, philosophers, and citizens of Athens.

A trial might, however, have been the ultimate result; and this contingency, together with the conflicting opinions and high education of the audience, made the occasion sufficiently solemn and trying, and called for all the fine tact and ability with which the apostle was so eminently gifted. Nor did they fail him in this great emergency: the consummate address with which Paul acquitted himself on this new and difficult occasion, and the readi-

ness with which his opulent mind found resources equal to the demands upon him, have won the admiration and respect of all ages.

The writer of the "Essay of the Character of St. Paul" has furnished an eloquent and discriminating account of this discourse, with some portions of which we may indulge the reader:

"The disposition of this people, their passion for disputation, their characteristic and proverbial love of novelty, had drawn together a vast assembly. Many of the philosophical sects eagerly joined the audience. Curiosity is called by an ancient writer the wantonness of knowledge. These critics came, it is likely, not as inquirers, but as spies. The grave Stoics probably expected to hear some new unbroached doctrine which they might overthrow by argument; the lively Epicureans, some fresh absurdity which would afford a new field for diversion; the citizens, perhaps, crowding and listening, from the mere motive that they might afterwards have to tell the new thing they should hear.

Ignorant Worship.

"Paul took advantage of their curiosity. As he habitually opened his discourse with great moderation, we are the less surprised at the measured censure, or rather, the implied civility of his introduction. The ambiguous term translated 'superstitious,' which he employed, might be either construed into respect for their spirit of religious inquiry, or into disapprobation of its unreasonable excess; at least he intimated that they were so far from not reverencing the acknowledged gods, that they worshipped one that was unknown.

"With his usual discriminating mind, he did not reason with these eloquent and learned polytheists 'out of the Scriptures,' of which they were totally ignorant, as he had done at Antioch and Cæsarea before the judges who were trained in the knowledge of them; he addressed his present auditors with an eloquent exposition of natural religion, and of the providential government of God, politely citing passages from one of their own authors."

These quotations enabled him, without having recourse to Scripture, to controvert the Epicurean doctrine, that the Deity had no interference with human concerns; showing them, on their own principles, that "we are the offspring of God," and that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being;" and it is worth observing that he could select from a poet sentiments which come nearer to the truth than any from a philosopher.

The orator, rising with his subject, after briefly touching on the long-suffering of God, awfully announced that ignorance would be no longer any plea for idolatry; that if the Divine forbearance had permitted it so long, it was in order to make the wise not only see but feel the insufficiency of their own wisdom in what related to the great concern of religion; but he now "recommended all men, everywhere, to repent." He concludes by announcing the solemnities of Christ's future judgment and the resurrection from the dead.

Athenian Idolatry.

In considering the apostle's manner of unfolding to these wits and sages the power and goodness of that Supreme Intelligence who (as the Unknown God) was the object of their "ignorant worship," we are at once astonished at his intrepidity and his management; intrepidity, in preferring this bold charge against an audience of the most accomplished scholars in the world—in charging ignorance upon Athens! blindness on "the eye of Greece!"—and management, in so judiciously conducting his oration, that the audience expressed neither impatience nor displeasure till he began to unfold the most obnoxious and unpopular of all doctrines—Jesus raised from the dead.

The great command of language, argument, and temper which the apostle manifested, will be better understood, if we consider how utterly repugnant to all his ideas and feelings were the various objects which met his view from the high place in which he stood. Inspired by feelings that were implanted from his youth in the mind of a pious Jew, and glowing with zeal for the honor of God, the

apostle must have been really horror-struck at the spectacle of idolatry which met him wherever he turned his eyes.

A graphic writer in Mr. Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature" thus describes the objects which met the view of the apostle: "Having come up from the level parts of the city where the markets (there were two, the old and the new) were, he would probably stand with his face towards the north, and would then have immediately behind him the long walls which ran down to the sea, affording protection against a foreign enemy. Near the sea, on one side, was the harbor of Peiræus, on the other that designated Phalerum, with their crowded arsenals, their busy workmen, and their gallant ships. Not far off, on the ocean, lay the island of Salamis, ennobled forever in history as the spot near which Athenian valor chastised Asiatic pride, and achieved the liberty of Greece.

"The apostle had only to turn towards his right hand to catch a view of a small but celebrated hill rising within the city, near that on which he stood, where, standing on a block of bare stone, Demosthenes and other distinguished orators had addressed the assembled people of Athens, swaying that arrogant and fickle democracy, and thereby making Philip of Macedon tremble, or working good or ill for the entire civilized world.

Magnificent Works of Art.

"On the left, somewhat beyond the walls, was beheld the academy, with its groves of plane and olive trees, its retired walks and cooling fountains, its altars to the Muses, its statues of the Graces, its temple of Minerva, and its altars to Prometheus, to Love, and to Hercules, near which Plato had his country-seat, and in the midst of which he had taught, as well as his followers after him. But the most impressive spectacle lay on his right hand, for there, on the small and precipitous hill, named the Acropolis, were clustered together monuments of the highest art, and memorials of the national religion, such as no other equal spot of ground has ever borne.

"The apostle's eye, in turning to the right, would fall on the north-west view of the eminence, which was here (and all around) covered and protected by a wall, parts of which were so ancient as to be of Cyclopean origin. The western side, which alone gave access to what, from its original destination, may be termed the fort, was, during the administration of Pericles, adorned with a splendid flight of steps, and the beautiful Propylæa, with its five entrances and two flanking temples, constructed of finest marble, at a cost of two thousand and twelve talents, or nearly two and a half million dollars. In the times of the Roman emperors there stood before the Propylæa equestrian statues of Augustus and Agrippa. On the southern wing of the Propylæa was a temple of the Wingless Victory; on the northern a superb picture gallery.

"On the highest part of the platform of the Acropolis, not more than three hundred feet from the entrance buildings first described, stood (and yet stands, though shattered and mutilated) the Parthenon, justly celebrated throughout the world, erected of white Pentelican marble, and adorned with the finest sculptures from the hand of Phidias.

Sanctuary of the Gods.

"Northward from the Parthenon was a compound building, which contained the temple of Minerva Polias. This sanctuary contained the holy olive-tree sacred to Minerva, the holy salt-spring, the ancient wooden image of Pallas, and was the scene of the oldest and most venerated ceremonies and recollections of the Athenians. Near was the colossal bronze statue of Pallas Promachos, the work of Phidias, which towered so high above the other buildings that the plume of her helmet and the point of her spear were visible on the sea between Sunium and Athens. Moreover, the Acropolis itself was occupied by so great a crowd of statues and monuments that the account, as found in Pausanias, excites the reader's wonder, and makes it difficult to understand how so much could be crowded into a space which extended, from the south-east

corner to the south-west, only eleven hundred and fifty feet, while its greatest breadth did not exceed five hundred feet.

"On the hill where Paul had his station was, at the eastern end, the temple of the Furies and other national and commemorative edifices. The court-house of the council, which was also here, was, according to the simplicity of ancient customs, built of clay. In the same place were seen two silver blocks, on one of which stood the accuser and on the other the accused. Near them stood two altars erected by Epimenides, one to Insult and the other to Shamelessness."

This description will furnish the reader with a distinct impression of the innumerable symbols and monuments of idolatry which met the apostle's view, and will suggest the grounds on which, even before he stood on Mars' Hill, "his spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

A Bold Announcement.

The very skilful use to which, in his discourse, Paul applied the inscription on the altar may claim a few words of further notice. "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by," he said, "and beheld your devotions, I saw an altar with this inscription, 'To the Unknown God;' whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship declare I unto you."

If the word translated "superstitious" was employed in its good sense, as is now generally believed, we perceive that the apostle, after applauding the strength of the sentiment of religious dependence among the Athenians, cites as an instance of it this altar and its inscription to the unknown God.

This inscription, certainly, as understood by those who framed it, by no means proved that they had attained to the conception of an unknown god exalted above all other gods; but only that, according to their belief, they had received good or evil from some unknown god. But Paul cites this inscription in order to attach a deeper meaning to it. "I announce to you Him," he said, "whom without know-

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ing him, ye worship;" and proceeded to impress the idea of one God, whose offspring, by one act of creation, all mankind equally were; and after ably tracing the latent consciousness of this great fact evinced by their own acts, and even by the words of their poets, he came to speak of Jesus and the resurrection.

As soon as he began to touch upon the doctrine of the Gospel—calling his proud audience to repentance through Jesus Christ, and declaring his resurrection from the dead as the confirmation and zeal of this great mission upon earth, and as a testimonial of a general resurrection to take place hereafter—he was interrupted with ridicule on the part of some of his hearers. Others said, that they would hear him speak of the matter another time—thus courteously intimating to the apostle that they wished him to close his address, or else really intending to hear him again.

There were only a few individuals in the assembly who joined themselves to the apostle, listening to his further instructions, and became believers. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagite council, and "a woman named Damaris." Of Dionysius nothing more is certainly known than is here stated, although he became the subject of many legends. The only authentic tradition concerning him seems to be, that he was the principal instrument of forming a Church at Athens, and became its overseer.

While Paul was at Athens, Timothy returned from Macedonia, and the anxiety of Paul for the new Church at Thessalonica induced him to send his young fellow-laborer thither, that he might contribute to the establishment of their faith, and to their consolation under the sufferings to which they were exposed; for Timothy had communicated to him many distressing accounts of the persecutions which had befallen this Church.

Paul then quitted Athens himself, travelling alone. He proceeded to the city of Corinth, the metropolis of the province of Achaia, and the seat of the Roman governor. This city, within a century and a half after its destruction by Julius Cæsar, once more became the centre

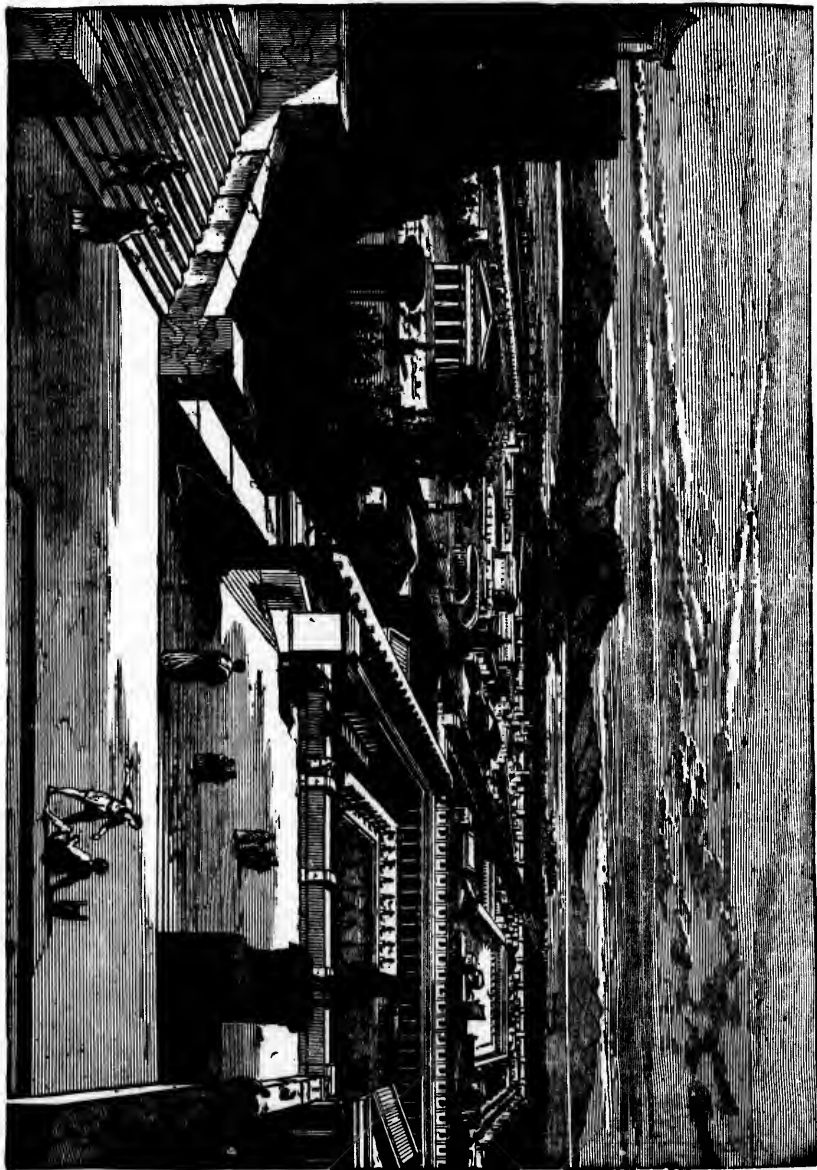
of intercourse and traffic to the eastern and western parts of the Roman empire, for which it was eminently fitted by its natural advantages, namely, by its situation on the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the main land of Greece; and by the possession of two ports, on the opposite sides of the isthmus, one facing towards the Lesser Asia and the East, and the other towards Italy and the West. Being thus situated, Corinth became an important position for spreading the Gospel through a greater part of the Roman empire; and hence Paul chose the city, as he had chosen others similarly situated, to be the place where he made a long sojourn.

Paul at Corinth.

At Corinth Paul found two opposite mental tendencies strongly opposed to the reception of the doctrine he came to promulgate. The first of these was an inordinate devotedness to speculative inquiries, to the neglect of all matters of practical importance; and the other, the disposition to mingle the sensuous tendency with the religious sentiment. Hence the large measure of attention which the apostle devoted to these matters in the admirable epistles which at a subsequent period he addressed to the Corinthian Church. The first he designates by the phrase "seeking after wisdom," and the other by "seeking after a sign."

The first of these tendencies was chiefly manifested among the large number of persons in Corinth who made pretensions to mental cultivation. And these were not few; for the new Corinth was distinguished from the more ancient city chiefly by becoming, in addition to its commercial celebrity, a seat of philosophy and literature, so that a tincture of high mental cultivation pervaded the place. The second was more apparent among the numerous Jews who had settled themselves in that great commercial emporium, and who entertained the common material conceptions respecting the Messiah and his kingdom.

And, besides, a great obstacle to the Christian doctrine was found in the gross corrup-



ANCIENT CORINTH.—Acts xviii. 1

tion of morals which at this period pervaded all the great cities of the Roman empire, and which at Corinth was especially promoted by the worship of Venus Aphrodite, to which a celebrated temple was here erected, and which in some degree consecrated that sensual indulgence, to which the usual incitements of a place of great wealth and traffic were already too numerous.

An Enterprising Tent-Maker.

The efficiency of Paul's ministrations in this important but very difficult station appears to have been much promoted by his meeting there a friend and zealous advocate of the Gospel in the person of Aquila, a Jew of Pontus, at whose house he lodged, and with whom he obtained employment at tent-making for his livelihood. Tent-making was in those times and climates a profitable business, and it seems to have been conducted on a large scale by Aquila.

He was lately from Rome, which does not, however, appear to have been his fixed residence; for he is supposed to have taken up his abode at different times, as his business might require, in various large cities, the seats of commerce and luxury, where he found himself equally at home. This is a mode of conducting certain kinds of business still common in the East; and the present is not the only trace of it which we find in the Scriptures. He had, however, been constrained to leave Rome under a decree of the Emperor Claudius, who found in the turbulent disposition of the Jewish residents at Rome, who were mostly freed-men, a reason or a pretence for banishing them from the imperial city.

It is not clear whether Aquila was already a Christian when Paul met with him at Corinth. The circumstance that Paul needed employment in his trade will sufficiently account for their coming together, without this supposition; and there is something pleasing to the mind in contemplating the holy apostle as, during or in the intervals of his honest labor, discoursing to his friendly employer of the great facts and doctrines which filled his soul,

and which he was always ready and anxious, "in season and out of season," to impart to others; till at length he was enabled to add Aquila and his excellent wife Priscilla also to the number of those who looked to him as their spiritual father.

But whether first converted to Christianity or not through the instrumentality of the apostle, his intercourse with them had doubtless great influence in the formation of their views of Christian truth; and from this time we find Aquila a zealous preacher of the Gospel, in which his frequent journeys and changes of residence gave him no ordinary advantages; and in all his labors he was worthily seconded by his wife Priscilla, so that Paul emphatically designates both of them as his "helpers in Christ Jesus."

Paul Accused.

Paul, as usual, commenced his public services at Corinth by preaching on the Sabbath days in the synagogues; but he was soon driven, by the hostile disposition which the Jews manifested, to direct his labors to the Gentiles, through the medium of the proselytes, to whom a small number of Jews joined themselves. The great cause to which the apostle was devoted soon made such progress at Corinth as must have consoled the apostle greatly for his small success at Athens; and the fact of the contrast thus formed in his mind serves to illustrate many allusions in his Corinthian Epistles.

From this source we learn that he came to Corinth with a very depressing conviction of the insufficiency of human means—of address, of learning, of eloquence—in procuring acceptance for the Divine Word; and that therefore he had determined at Corinth to address himself at once and directly to the main point—salvation through Jesus Christ. The success which attended this course of proceeding very soon excited the ill-will of the Jews, who availed themselves of the arrival of a new proconsul, Annæus Gallio, a brother of Seneca, the philosopher, to arraign Paul before his tribunal.

The ground of accusation in this case was

that divisions among them were promoted by Paul, which they alleged to be contrary to the law, under which they were allowed the free and unmolested enjoyment of their religious privileges. But the mild Gallio was by no means inclined to involve himself in what must have appeared to him the idle, internal disputes of the Jews; and instead of listening to them, he caused them to be driven from his tribunal. "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews," he remarked, "reason would that I should hear you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters."

On this declaration from the judgment-seat, the heathen auditors, always glad to be let loose upon the Jews, took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him severely as he was leaving the tribunal. He had probably headed the Jewish party on this occasion; but there is reason to hope that he afterwards became a convert, like Paul himself, to the faith he had once persecuted, and that he eventually joined the apostle in his labors, for his first epistle to this very Church begins, "Paul . . . and Sosthenes our brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth."

Successful Labors.

The frustration of this attempt against the apostle enabled him to pursue his labors for a good while without further molestation in this quarter, so that their influence at length became apparent throughout the whole region of Achaia; but it is not certain whether in these more discursive labors he used the instrumentality of his disciples, or occasionally suspended his residence at Corinth by a journey into other parts of the province, and then again returned to the principal scene of his ministry.

At length, after having been joined by Timothy from Thessalonica, Paul resolved, before entering upon new operations, to revisit his former fields of labor, and also proceed to Jerusalem. His soul was grieved at the differences which appeared to be again arising be-

tween the Gentile and Jewish converts, and he hoped to be able to mollify them by his personal influence in the Asiatic Churches, as well as by taking measures to remove the only plausible ground of accusation which the Jews and Jewish Christians urged against him, namely, that he was an enemy of their nation and of the religion of their fathers.

There was at this time a custom among the Jews, arising apparently out of Nazariteship, under which a person visited with sickness, or subject to any other calamity, vowed, if he were restored, to bring a thank-offering to Jehovah in the Temple, to abstain from wine for thirty days, and to shave the head. Paul, on his deliverance from some danger during his residence in or journey from Corinth, resolved publicly to express his grateful acknowledgments in the Temple at Jerusalem. The form of his doing this was in itself a matter of indifference, and in the spirit of that Christian wisdom with which he was so eminently endowed, he felt no scruple to become, in respect to form, to the Jews a Jew, as to the Gentiles a Gentile. When he was on the point of sailing with Aquila to Lesser Asia, from Cenchrea, he began the fulfilment of his vow by shaving his head.

Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, and hastened to Jerusalem, where he visited the Church and presented his offering in the Temple. He then travelled to Antioch, where he made a considerable stay, and met with Barnabas and other old friends and former associates in the labors and hopes of the Gospel. On quitting Antioch he passed through Phrygia and Galatia, strengthening the Churches in those parts in his way to Ephesus, which he had chosen as his next scene of labor, and where he had indeed promised to rejoin Aquila and Priscilla.

The ancient writers, in speaking of Ephesus, were prodigal of epithets describing its glory and excellence. It is mentioned by Strabo as one of the best and most glorious of cities, the great emporium of Asia Minor; while others distinguish it as one of the "eyes" of Asia—Smyrna being the other. But all this glory

has long since departed, and long has this great city been venerable only for its ruins. A few unintelligible heaps of stones, with some mud cottages untenanted, are all that remain of the great city of the Ephesians.

Even the sea has retired from the scene of desolation, and a pestilential morass, covered with mud and rushes, has succeeded to the waters which brought up the ships laden with merchandise from every country. The most interesting ancient ruin is that of the amphitheatre—the very same, no doubt, which is mentioned in the apostolic record, and which is deemed to have been capable of containing thirty thousand spectators.

Paul at Ephesus.

Ephesus owed much of its distinction to the famous temple of Artemis (Diana), which was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world, and which drew devotees and pilgrims from all parts to worship at the shrine of the goddess, whom we are not to picture as

“The huntress chaste and fair”

of classic sculpture and poesy, but, as represented at Ephesus, under the more homely but certainly not less significant symbol of a woman covered with breasts—an apt emblem of prolific and abundant nature. Ephesus was also eminent as a seat of heathen occult arts, which originally proceeded from the mythic worship of Artemis; and here also the Jewish magic, connecting itself with the heathen, became very prevalent, for the Jews, as Josephus informs us, were very numerous in Ephesus, and enjoyed there the highest class of municipal privileges.

After for three months declaring the gospel in the synagogues, the apostle was, as usual, constrained by the opposition and deep malignity of the Jews to turn his attention to the Gentiles, by whom his message was more willingly received. He met his hearers daily in a school belonging to one of their number, a rhetorician named Tyrannus. It was perhaps important in a place like Ephesus that the Divine authority under which the new doctrine

was offered to the people should be manifested by some striking miracles and “signs.” And these were not refused: “God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul, so that from his body some brought unto the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirit went out of them.”

Jugglers Confused.

One remarkable occurrence is forcibly related, as it probably tended more than any other single circumstance to evince the opposition of the Gospel to those juggling arts which held the people in mental bondage. There were at Ephesus a number of Jews who went about pretending they could expel evil spirits from possessed persons by means of incantations, fumigations, the use of certain herbs, and other arts which they had derived from Solomon; and these people could at times, whether by great dexterity in deceiving the senses, or by availing themselves of certain powers of nature unknown to others, or by the influence of an excited imagination, produce apparently great effects, although none which really promoted the welfare of mankind.

When these persons observed the marvellous effects which were produced by Paul in the name of Jesus, they also resolved to use it as a charm for the exorcism of evil spirits. On hearing the words “We adjure thee in the name of Jesus whom Paul preacheth,” the demon answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?” On which the demoniac, worked into ungovernable rage, flew at them, and with the strong arm of madness “drove them from the house naked and wounded.”

This circumstance, by showing the real difference between the miracles wrought by the apostle and those to which these Jewish impostors pretended, brought great honor upon the name of Jesus; and many who had before regarded Paul merely as a more skilful magician than themselves, and the name of Jesus as a name which might be employed in

their magical arts, could they but use it had professed "curious arts" brought their rightly, were now not only convinced, but magical books—the books explaining and



PAUL PREACHING AT EPHEBUS.—Acts xix. 19.

alarmed. They repaired to Paul and confessed teaching their art, and committed them to the their former practices, and many of them who flames. This was no small sacrifice at a time

when all books, and especially books of this sort, were so rare and costly; and in this case it is therefore remarked, with peculiar commendation, that the books were worth, or would have sold for, "fifty thousand pieces of silver."

The temple which existed at the time of Paul's visit was the second, the first having been destroyed by fire, kindled by Erostratus to immortalize his name, on the night that Alexander the Great was born. The voluntary offerings of the citizens, and the liberal contributions sent in from all parts, soon supplied the means for its restoration to more than its ancient magnificence. The building was four hundred and twenty-five feet in length, and two hundred and twenty in breadth, supported by one hundred and twenty-seven marble columns sixty feet high, of which thirty-six were curiously sculptured, and the rest polished.

The Temple of Diana.

These pillars are said to have been the gifts of as many kings! and the bas-reliefs of one of them were wrought by Scopas, one of the most famous of ancient sculptors, and the altar was almost entirely the work of Praxiteles. The first architect, and he who seems to have planned the whole work, was Dinocrates—the same who built Alexandria, and who offered to carve Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander the Great.

Not long after this a violent popular tumult was raised in the city against the apostle, which indirectly furnishes striking evidence of the signal success which attended his labors in this quarter. The devotees who flocked to the temple of Diana were wont to take home with them as relics small models in gold and silver of that far-famed shrine. This branch of manufacture contributed much to the wealth of the city, and formed a most lucrative business to the Ephesian silversmiths.

A man named Demetrius, who had a large manufactory of such models, and a great number of workmen, felt that the sale of his wares had been considerably affected by the

success of the Gospel, and apprehended that if means were not taken to arrest its progress, the gains of his trade would soon be lost. He assembled his numerous workmen, and easily inflamed their anger against the enemies of their gods, who threatened to deprive Artemis of her honor, and them of their gainful craft.

Great Excitement.

A great tumult was thus easily kindled, and all hastened to the theatre, where they usually assembled, some crying one thing, and some another, without any clear notion why they were thus congregated. The Jews, living precariously in the midst of a heathen population, began to fear that they would be regarded as the authors of this tumult, as the heathen did not distinguish very accurately between Jews and Christians. They therefore put forward one Alexander to speak on their behalf; but no sooner did the mob perceive that he was a Jew, than they broke forth into a mighty shout of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," which they kept up at intervals for the space of two hours.

These feelings were, however, confined to the populace; for when Paul himself attempted to enter the place to address the excited crowd, some of the high magistrates who were that year at the head of the religious ceremonies of Lesser Asia, sent to request him not to expose himself to so great a danger. At length the chamberlain of the city succeeded in gaining a hearing, and managed to calm the minds of the people by his representations, and by requiring from them the reason of their assembling, of which most of them were totally ignorant.

As this transaction took place in the amphitheatre, it might naturally suggest to the apostle images derived from the enforced combats of men with beasts, and with one another, which often there took place. It is thus that we may interpret the allusion which the apostle makes in the Epistle to the Corinthians, which seems to have been written from this place: "If, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it

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me?" Some, however, hold the expression more literally, and believe that the apostle did actually on this or some other occasion combat with wild beasts in the theatre of Ephesus.

We know that it was certainly often the case in later times, in the persecutions of the early Christians, that the raging multitude called for the enemies of the gods to be cast "to the lions" or "to the beasts." The crowd raised by Demetrius might certainly have uttered such cries, but there is no sign that it received any attention from the authorities. It would, however, be hazardous to affirm that Paul did not literally "fight with beasts at Ephesus," as it appears from the apostle's own writings that in the course of his labors he was exposed to many dangers which are not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

Corinthian Games.

The probability that this is merely an allusion to the combats of the amphitheatre is, however, much strengthened by the fact that not only are there many such allusions in the Epistles of this apostle, but some are found in the very Epistle in which this occurs. Thus in First Corinthians there are strong images taken from the games of manly contest—the racing, boxing, and wrestling—for which Corinth itself was famous; as well as allusions to the training which the intended competitors in those games were obliged to undergo, and to the "corruptible crowns" which became the reward of their triumph.

If Paul literally fought with the beasts at Ephesus, it could hardly have been a more frightful experience than many he passed through. Whether he was ever in the arena, engaged in such a terrible combat, certain it is that through struggles equally terrible he was compelled to pass while carrying on his great work, and fulfilling the mission upon which

he was sent. If the way had been blocked with wild beasts from Jerusalem to Asia, he would not have swerved, nor would he have turned aside. When told to advance, he had nothing to do but to go forward; when told to halt, he had nothing to do but to stop; when told to live, he had nothing to do but to live and labor; when told to die, he had nothing to do but to peacefully lay down his life. This was Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, and the great hero of the early Church.

No sooner did one journey end than another was planned, and, unless he stops to work at his trade incidentally, or is shut up in prison, as good men have been in all the past ages, we see him constantly occupied in his Divine calling. From one place to another he passes swiftly: the older he grows the brighter does the flame of his devotion burn; his zeal is always on fire, and his tongue is always touched with the live coal from the altar. Undaunted in conflict, unmoved in affliction, he presses on with his eye lifted up and his footsteps firm. To write his history is simply to write his eulogy.

We shall soon see him engaged in healing the dissensions which from time to time sprung up in the Churches he founded. Human nature was the same then as at the present time: we have troubles in Churches now, and sometimes it seems as though the brethren hated each other with Christian fervor. The apostle found the same to be true in his day, and undoubtedly this will always come to pass so long as the world endures, and human nature is not transformed into the angelic. Paul himself could get mad, or it would be better to say he could become indignant and show righteous resentment. This he did on several occasions, and still he was Paul, the child of grace and the herald of the cross.

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CHAPTER XLI.

PAUL AND HIS PERSECUTORS.



PAUL had some time since planned a journey into Greece, for the purpose, among others, of rectifying the irregularities which had grown up in the Corinthian Church, and to re-establish his apostolical authority, which the Judaizing converts had been disposed to impugn. Ample information concerning the points which required his attention is given in his two Epistles to the Corinthians, both of which appear to have been written from Ephesus. Finding it needful to delay this journey, the apostle, some time after the first of these Epistles had been despatched, sent Timothy to forward the collection which he was making for the Church in Jerusalem, and to observe and report on its effect; and after the return of Timothy, the apostle sent another Epistle by Titus.

It is uncertain whether or not the tumult at Ephesus induced the apostle to set forth upon this journey sooner than he had intended, but it is certain that he departed shortly after on his second journey into Greece. Arriving at Troas, he remained some time there before he embarked, in the hope that Titus would there return to him with an account of affairs at Corinth, and of the effect which his second Epistle had produced. But as Titus came not, he departed with feelings somewhat troubled, to meet him in Macedonia.

In the Churches which he had formerly established in this region he met with gratifying evidences of their advance in the Christian life and doctrine, which their conflict with the

world had only tended to promote. The converts in those parts had suffered much; not, indeed, that any persecution against Christianity had been commenced by the authorities of the state, but because that by withdrawing from the national religion they had excited the enmity of the people among whom they lived, and had besides to contend with the bitter and untiring enmity of the Jews. The extent, and in the same degree the manner, in which the great and influential majority might in such cases oppress and injure, at least in their worldly prospects, those who had turned aside from the common course, may, as Neander remarks, be seen in what the converts of India have had to endure from their heathen relatives and connections, although under a Christian government.

But the Macedonian Christians cheerfully endured all things for the cause of the Gospel; and, however much their means of subsistence had been injured, they were ready, even beyond their power, to take an active part in the collection which Paul was then making for the Church in Jerusalem, which it was his intention to visit.

In Macedonia Paul met with Titus, and received from him very encouraging accounts of the effects which his last Epistle had produced among the Corinthian converts. He spent the rest of the summer and autumn in Macedonia, probably extending his labors into the neighboring country of Illyria, after which he removed into Achaia, where he spent the winter.

It was the intention of Paul that, after visiting Jerusalem in the ensuing spring, he would change the scene of his labors in the West, and visit for the first time the Roman metropolis. It must therefore have been gratifying to him that during his stay in Achaia he was enabled to form a sort of anticipatory acquaint-

ance with the Church in that city. The journey of Phœbe, a deaconess of the Church at Cenchrea, to the great city, gave him a suitable opportunity, while at the same time he recommended her to the care and kind offices of the Church in Rome. To this we owe the Epistle to the Romans.

The number of persons at Rome, manifestly of Gentile origin, who were known to Paul, and to whom he sends his salutations at the end of this Epistle, enables us to see that he had in fact a stronger existing connection with the Christian Church at Rome than might at first sight appear. As he could only have known these persons in the places where he had previously labored, it would appear that many persons resident at Rome, or who had occasion to repair to that great centre of many nations, had been converted by him or his followers, and that they at Rome became the founders and leading men of the Church in that city—formed at first, doubtless, by the reunion in one body of men who had abroad, in different parts, been brought to the knowledge of the Gospel, principally through Paul and his followers, who regarded it as their vocation to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Gifts of the Gentile Churches.

After Paul had spent about three months in Achaia, he purposed to close his mission to the East by proceeding to Jerusalem with the collection which had during the past year been making under his direction in Lesser Asia and in Greece. That the sum thus obtained was equal to his expectations appears from the intimation made some time before in the Epistle to the Corinthians, that if the amount were such as he wished, he should himself convey it to Jerusalem. It would be taking too narrow a view of a matter which engaged much of his solicitude, if we limit his intention merely to the relief of the temporal necessities of the Church in Jerusalem.

His great object and desire was to heal the differences which had unhappily grown up between the Jews and Gentile Christians; and he justly considered that this magnificent act

of liberality on the part of the Gentile Churches towards the parent Church at Jerusalem, which was entirely composed of converted Jews, would go far to produce a better state of feeling, not only from the act itself, but as a recognition of their unity in Christ, and as a tribute of that love which should exist between all those who are one in Him.

Paul departed from Corinth in the spring of the year, A. D. 58 or 59, about the time of the Jewish Passover, with the intention of being in Jerusalem at the Pentecost. His six companions (Sopater, Aristarchus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus) went before him to Troas, and there waited for him. He first himself visited Philippi, where he joined Luke, whom he had left there some time before, and whom he now took with him.

Paul Restores Eutyclus.

After five days' voyage the apostle landed at Troas, and remained there seven days. The day before his departure was "the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread;" and having to quit them on the morrow, perhaps forever, the earnest apostle was induced to prolong his discourse far into the night. The meeting was held in a large upper chamber, the window of which was open to admit the air; in this window sat a young man named Eutyclus, who, being overpowered with sleep, lost his balance and fell backward into the court below, and lay there for dead.

Paul immediately hastened down, and cast himself upon the seemingly lifeless body, which he embraced in tenderness and compassion. Whether he had been only stunned by the fall, and the apostle then discovered the signs of life, or that he had been killed outright, and was restored to life under the strong action of the apostle's faith, is a point much doubted, and has never been satisfactorily determined. It is certain, however, that Paul in raising himself from the body said to the alarmed and afflicted congregation, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him."

He was then committed to the care of his friends; and the apostle returned to finish his discourse. By the time he had concluded and taken some refreshment before his departure, the morning broke; and Eutychus was then introduced alive and well, to the great comfort of the assembly. Having left Troas with his companions, Paul, pressed for time, did not venture to go to Ephesus, but when at Miletus sent for the elders of the Ephesian Church to meet him there.

Paul was by no means ignorant of the great dangers which awaited him at Jerusalem and he longed to avail himself of this opportunity of pouring out the feelings of his full heart to those who had engaged so large a portion of his solicitude, and of bestowing upon them what might prove his last counsels and his benedictions. "Behold," he said to them, "I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."

An Affecting Parting.

Jesus, and all the blessedness stored with Him, then rose to the mind of the apostle, and he added: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more." He then, in that strong conviction, called them solemnly to witness that he was "pure from the blood of all men," inasmuch as he had "not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God." He warned them of the dangers arising from false teachers coming among them:—"I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock;" while even among themselves perverse men would arise, striving to alienate them from the simplicity of the great truths which he had taught.

He closed his address by a becoming reference to the example which he had set during his long residence among them:—"Remember

that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears. I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Finally, "When he had thus spoken he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell upon Paul's neck and kissed him: sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."

No words can heighten the simple pathos of this scene. Accompanied by these attached friends the apostle forthwith proceeded to the ship, and, bidding them finally farewell, continued his voyage. The ship took a straight course to Coos, a small island of the Greek Archipelago, a short distance from the southwestern point of Asia Minor, celebrated for its wine and silk; and the day following arrived at the island of Rhodes, so called from its abundant roses. The principal town, also called Rhodes, was chiefly noted for the brazen colossus which had formerly stood across the mouth of the harbor, and which strode so high that vessels could pass between its legs. This useless thing was one of the seven useless things called "the wonders of the world;" but it had been thrown down by an earthquake long before this time.

Paul at Renowned Tyre.

From Rhodes the ship proceeded to Batara, which was a maritime city of Lycia in Asia Minor, over against Rhodes. This was the port to which the ship was bound; and here, therefore, the apostle and his party embarked in another ship bound for Phœnicia. They passed Cyprus with its coast on their left hand, and soon arriving in Syria, landed at Tyre, at which still great emporium the ship was to discharge her cargo.

We have not before read that the Gospel had been introduced into Tyre; but Paul found there Christian brethren among whom he remained seven days; they were so strongly impressed with the perils which awaited the

apostle at Jerusalem, that they urged him to abandon his intention of proceeding thither; but, earnest in the course which his duty seemed to enjoin, the apostle could not be moved from his purpose. Then, says the narrator, who was himself one of the party, "We departed and went away; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed."

After having taken leave of them the apostle

Here also Christian brethren were found with whom Paul enjoyed one day's happy intercourse, and then proceeded to Cæsarea, a city which had been built by Herod the Great, who by means of a mole had formed there a safe and commodious harbor, which made it a seat of maritime traffic, and the usual point of embarkation and debarkation from and to Palestine. Here also was the seat of the Roman government, and the chief station of the cohorts which held the country in military



PAUL PARTING FROM THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS.—Acts xx. 37.

entered another ship, bound for Cæsarea. In those days ships coasted along, and put in at every port; and so Paul's ship put in at Ptolemais or Acre, a place which, although of very ancient date, is but little mentioned in Scripture. It became of great importance after the close of the Old Testament canon, and is often mentioned in the books of the Maccabees and in the pages of Josephus; and there is no city which has figured more in the modern history of Palestine.

occupation. Of this most flourishing and celebrated city, built with a magnificence unexampled in Palestine, scarcely a trace now remains, and even the site is forsaken by man, and abandoned to the jackals and other beasts of prey.

At Cæsarea the apostle was entertained at the house of Philip, one of the seven deacons, where he remained "many days." During his stay, a believer named Agabus—the same who had foretold the dearth which came to

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pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar—arrived at Cæsarea, and by a significant action premonished Paul of the treatment in store for him at Jerusalem. He loosened Paul's girdle, and bound therewith his own hands and feet, saying, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

On this Paul's own companions, and all the friends at Cæsarea who heard the prophet's words, implored the apostle to desist from his intention. He was much moved by their earnestness, but made answer: "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When the friends found that he could not be prevailed upon by the prospect of personal danger to change his well-considered purpose, they ceased to importune him, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

Soon after Paul proceeded to Jerusalem, which was distant but two days' journey from Cæsarea. The day after his arrival he called on James, sometimes called "the Lord's brother," which may, perhaps, mean no more than that he was a cousin or other near relative of Jesus. At the house of James he met the presbyters of the Church at Jerusalem, who listened with much interest to the account which he gave of his proceedings and success among the Gentiles.

But James called his attention to the fact that a great number of Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but who were yet zealous and strict observers of the Mosaical law, were prejudiced against him; for those Judaizers, who had everywhere sought to obstruct the ministry of Paul, had, it seems, circulated the report that, not content with insisting on the freedom of the Gentiles from the observance of the Mosaical law, he had required the Jews who lived among them not to observe the law, and not to circumcise their children.

As this charge was not true, and as it is important to remove the impression which it had created, Paul readily consented, at the suggestion of James, to give a practical refuta-

tion of the charge openly, by taking part in the Jewish worship, in a mode which was highly esteemed among pious Jews. He joined himself to four members of the Church who had taken a Nazarite's vow for seven days: he submitted to the restraint which this vow imposed, and intimated to the priests that he would be answerable for the expense of the offerings, which were to be presented on the accomplishment of the purification.

Paul Bound in Chains.

But although this measure may have satisfied the minds of all the well-disposed Jewish Christians, the inveterate zealots among the Jews were not thus to be conciliated. On the contrary, they were only the more incensed that the man who, as they said, had everywhere taught the people of God to blaspheme the Law and the Temple, had ventured to take a part in the Jewish worship. They had seen one of the Gentile Christians, Trophimus, in company with him, and hence the fanatics concluded that he had taken a Gentile with him into the holy place and defiled it.

A violent tumult hence arose in the Temple; and Paul was only rescued from being torn in pieces by the enraged multitude through the interference of the Roman tribune, who hastened to the spot from the tower or citadel of Antonia, which was close to the Temple, and in which the Roman garrison was stationed. But to let the multitude see that there was no intention to rescue a criminal from justice, but only to keep the peace, the apostle was bound with two chains, and led off as a prisoner to the castle.

Arriving there, he requested and obtained permission from the tribune to address the excited mob, and therefore, mounting the stairs, he turned round and beckoned with his hand for silence, which, in the curiosity of some and anxiety of others to hear what he would say, was easily secured. He began to speak to them in the mongrel Hebrew, which had at that time become the vernacular language of Palestine, not only because it would be understood by a larger number than the Greek, but

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because it would in some degree conciliate the people to be addressed in their own language. He had not in this miscalculated, for, "when they heard him speak in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence."

The charge against Paul was that he had everywhere endeavored to prejudice the minds of men against the Jews, their Law and their Temple. To meet this charge, he showed that he had been born a Jew, and had enjoyed the advantages of a first-rate Jewish education

broke forth into a storm of human fury, crying at the top of their voices: "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live!" and in the madness of their rage they cast off their outer garments, as intending to stone him, and tossed about their arms, throwing dust into the air.

From that frightful scene the tribune withdrew the apostle into the castle; and all that had passed being unintelligible to him, he was proceeding, according to the custom of the



PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE COUNCIL.—Acts xxiii. 1.

under Gamaliel, the most eminent of their doctors. He then recounted the circumstances of his conversion, with the reasons which led him to believe that he was called to preach the Gospel. He proceeded to state the reasons why he went among the Gentiles, and evidently designed to vindicate his conduct there: but he was not allowed to finish his address; for no sooner did he begin to open the subject of his mission to the Gentiles, than the mob, "which had given him audience to that word,"

Romans, to extort from him a confession as to the cause of all this tumult by scourging, when Paul saved himself from this ignominy by declaring himself a Roman citizen. It was, however, still necessary to the tribune, in the discharge of his public duty, to ascertain the real nature of the demonstration raised against the apostle; and he therefore on the next day summoned a meeting of the Sanhedrin, or great judicial council of the nation, before which he produced his prisoner.

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After a brief but earnest survey of the body before which he stood, Paul began his address: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day." Offended at this bold declaration, Ananias, who had been formerly high-priest, and who, during the vacancy which at present existed, discharged the functions of that high office, commanded the men that stood near the prisoner to smite him on the mouth. Warned by this indignity, the apostle cried out, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall! for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

Those who stood by reproved him for speaking so disrespectfully to "God's high-priest;" on which Paul, who knew that the office was really vacant, declared he knew not that Ananias was the high-priest, and had not accosted him in that capacity. The survey which Paul had made of the assembly assured him that it was composed partly of Sadducees and partly of Pharisees, the latter greatly preponderating, and extremely bigoted.

The Apostle Cheered by a Vision.

"Men and brethren," he said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This bore on the great point of controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and these words at once had the effect of uniting the former in favor of the prisoner, and of involving them in a hot debate with the Sadducees, to whom the officiating high-priest himself belonged. The Pharisees became at once unable to find any fault in him.

If he had said that the spirit of a deceased person or that an angel had appeared to him (alluding to what he had said concerning the appearance of the risen Jesus), whatever he might mean by that, or whatever he averred, whether true or not, they did not pretend to determine, nor trouble themselves about it; still the thing was possible, and afforded no ground on which to criminate him. In the confusion that arose, the Roman tribune, who must have been much struck and not much

edified by the scene, took upon him to withdraw the prisoner, for whose safety among the eager disputants he began to entertain apprehensions.

In the following night the apostle was cheered by a vision which assured him that he was in the path of duty, and that all these confusions were but accomplishing the purposes of the Divine will: "Be of good cheer, Paul," were the words of encouragement which he heard; "for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou do also at Rome." We have now to see how this was brought about.

A Terrible Vow.

The enemies of Paul now despaired of accomplishing his destruction through the ordinary forms of judicature; and some of the more desperate of them resolved to remove him by a more summary and certain process. Not less than forty of them bound themselves by a vow not to eat or drink till they had destroyed him. They made this known to some members of the Sanhedrin, and prevailed upon them to require the tribune again to produce him before the council, intending to fall upon him and murder him on the way. This plot however became known to Paul's nephew, and was by him imparted to the tribune, who forthwith resolved to clear his hands of the business by sending the prisoner off under a guard to Cæsarea, that the whole matter might be examined by the procurator Felix.

Knowing the desperate character of the men who were leagued against Paul, the escort was made very strong, consisting of nearly five hundred men, and departing with the prisoner at nightfall, they by a quick march had reached Antipatris, which was thirty-five miles from Jerusalem, by the morning. Immediate danger being here passed, the soldiers and spearmen returned, leaving the horsemen to escort the apostle the remaining twenty-five miles to Cæsarea.

Felix, the Roman procurator, before whom Paul was brought on his arrival at Cæsarea, was originally a slave, as was also his brother Pallas, of the emperor Claudius, and received

human fury, cries: "Away with him, for it is not fit for the madness of the outer garments, and tossed about to the air.

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their freedom from him. This weak emperor was in fact governed by his freedmen, of whom Pallas held the highest place in his favor, and Felix himself was very dear to him. This personal favor of the emperor, coupled with the influence of Pallas, procured him high and profitable employment. He first received promotion in the army; and while serving in Syria, he rendered himself so acceptable to the Jews, that on the recall of Cumanus they solicited and obtained the appointment of Felix to the vacant government. They soon had reason to repent their choice.

A Roman Governor.

It is a saying in the East that no man is so hard a master as he who has been once a slave; and this proved true in the case of Felix. As governor, he displayed a very different character from that in which he had first appeared; and the Jews soon had cause to groan under his cruelty, injustice, and avarice. This man's wife, Drusilla, was a daughter of Herod Agrippa, and sister of the "King Agrippa" mentioned hereafter. She had left her husband Azizus, King of Emesa, who had submitted to the initiatory rite of Judaism to obtain her, and joined herself to the Roman governor, and for his sake renounced Judaism, even as her former husband had renounced Paganism for hers. This absolute want of principle in high quarters strikingly illustrates the corruption of manners which had at this time overspread the land.

On the arrival of Paul at Cæsarea, the escort surrendered him to the governor, who declined to adjudicate upon the case till his accusers should arrive from Jerusalem. In five days they arrived in great force, with Ananias at their head, and accompanied by one Tertullus, a Roman advocate, whom, being themselves but imperfectly acquainted with the Roman law, they had engaged to state their case. The accusation which the Sanhedrin, by their counsel, brought against Paul, was the only one which they could with any show of reason have made—namely, that he everywhere disturbed the Jews in the enjoyment of

the privileges secured to them by the Roman law, the peaceful exercise of their religious worship; that he excited disturbances and divisions among them, and that he had at length even desecrated the Temple.

The tribune at Jerusalem was also accused of having unduly interfered to prevent them from exercising judgment upon him according to the privileges secured to them by law. This was the amount of the charge which the orator urged against the apostle. Paul answered it in a very solid manner; and Felix, who was by no means disposed to meddle in the internal disputes of the Jews, and perceiving that no offence tangible to the Roman law could be brought against the accused, broke up the court without announcing any decision.

Felix Trembles.

He would in fact have dismissed the prisoner, if he had not hoped, as was his practice, to make justice venal, by obtaining money from him or his friends. He therefore detained him in the easy custody of a centurion, with the privilege of free intercourse with his friends. He afterwards saw him several times, once with his notorious mate Drusilla, who seems to have had a wish to hear something of the new sect from one of its leading men. The undaunted apostle availed himself of this hearing to discourse before the unprincipled but powerful Felix, and the equally unprincipled but very beautiful Drusilla, of such unpalatable subjects as "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come;" and this he did with such force and eloquence that the hard conscience of the governor was touched, he trembled in his high place, and abruptly closed the audience by saying that he would hear the rest—"at a more convenient season."

Paul remained in custody, as he was not willing to purchase his freedom and thereby bring suspicion upon himself and the holy cause to which his life was devoted. Therefore Felix, who was at that time unwilling to disoblige the Jews without a strong pecuniary inducement, left him still in custody when he was recalled to Rome.

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Paul had been in custody two years when Porcius Festus, the new procurator, arrived in Palestine, and proceeded to Jerusalem. While in that city the high-priest and other leading men among the Jews brought the case of Paul under his notice, and desired that he might be brought back to Jerusalem to be tried there. Their intention was, it appears, to employ a set of murderous ruffians, who might at that time be had in any number for money, to way-lay and destroy him. Festus probably got

any palpable or gross injustice against one who was protected by the rights of Roman citizenship. When, therefore, he perceived that he could make nothing of the case as against the prisoner, he asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem and have the matter tried there.

Perceiving from this that the governor was disposed to sacrifice him to his enemies, the apostle at once took his stand upon his right as a Roman citizen; and said—"I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be



PAUL BEFORE FELIX.—ACTS XXIV. 25.

intelligence of this design, and, feeling it his duty to protect a Roman citizen, answered that he was himself about to proceed to Cæsarea, and that they could then go also and appear against the prisoner before his tribunal. With this they were obliged to be content.

Paul was accordingly brought before the judgment-seat of Festus, as soon as the latter arrived at Cæsarea. He was very willing to please the Jews, so that he could do so without

judged: I appeal unto Cæsar!" This settled the question; for whenever a citizen had once appealed to the imperial tribunal, all other processes were superseded, and nothing remained but to send him with all care and expedition to Rome. Paul knew this: and his determination to make this appeal was probably influenced by his previous wish and intention to preach the Gospel of Christ in the imperial city.

A short time after this King Agrippa, th

son of Herod Agrippa and grandson of Herod the Great, arrived at Cæsarea with his sister Berenice, to compliment the procurator on his arrival in his government. Agrippa had been brought up at Rome, and was much attached to the Roman people; and as he was also well instructed in the Jewish religion, Festus had the advantage of obtaining the judgment of a qualified person on the case of Paul, which was to himself unintelligible. He could not now judge him, seeing that he had appealed to Rome; but he wanted materials on which to found the report which it was necessary he should send with the appellant. It was therefore arranged that a hearing should be given to Paul before Festus, Agrippa, and Berenice.

King Agrippa.

When Agrippa intimated to Paul that he was at liberty to speak for himself, the apostle stretched forth his hand, and commenced an eloquent address by declaring the satisfaction which he felt in having his case brought before one so competent to apprehend its merits. His defence on former occasions had been before Roman magistrates, who had but little acquaintance with Jewish customs and opinions, and who listened with impatience to the discussion of subjects which they were utterly unable to understand.

Thus, in order to gain a hearing, the accusers had to lay their charge and the accused his defence upon points not involving the real merits of the case, but such as were supposed to be within the grasp of the Roman judge. Paul therefore sincerely rejoiced that his case was now before one who was on the one hand well acquainted with the Jewish religion, and on the other, from having been brought up among Gentiles, was not disposed to be so much shocked as the great body of the Jews at the doctrine of Paul—that the Gentiles were not shut out from the mercies of God, and the Redeemer's kingdom.

The apostle knew that he was not now upon his trial, but that the impression made upon Agrippa would, through Festus, determine the tone of the report to be sent with him to Rome.

He therefore gave a plain but impressive account of his education and conversion, and of his call to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. Whenever he arrived at this point in his narrative in the presence of Jews, he had almost invariably been tumultuously interrupted; but Agrippa manifested no impatience or offence, and the apostle then proceeded—“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing both to great and small, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:—that Christ should suffer, that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and that he should show light unto his people and to the Gentiles.”

Here, however, he had come upon a matter—the resurrection from the dead—which was nearly as much a stumbling-block to the Gentiles as the preaching of the Gospel beyond the Hebrew pale was to the Jews—and Festus, unwilling to seem altogether passive in the matter, and having found something which he fancied he could grasp, cried out, “Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning hath made thee mad.”

But with calm confidence the apostle answered, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness!” and then said:—“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?—I know that thou believest.” Under a sudden but, unhappily, also transient, impulse of conviction, Agrippa said—“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!” To which the apostle, who with the manacles on his arms, knew that he possessed that which was worth much more than all the glory of the world, answered in the noble words: “I would to God that not only thou, but also all who hear me this day, were not only almost, but altogether, such as I am—except these bonds.”

After this the court broke up; and Festus and Agrippa agreed that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds, and might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to the emperor, which rendered it obligatory that he should be sent to Rome.

CHAPTER XLII.

LAST DAYS OF PAUL.



It was by no means unusual to send from Judæa to Rome persons who, under the right of Roman citizenship, had appealed to the imperial tribunal; and there seems to have been a considerable number embarked at the same time with the apostle in a ship belonging to Adramyttium. They were placed under the charge of an officer named Julius, who was a centurion in "Augustus's band" or cohort. Two of Paul's friends and followers, Luke and Aristarchus, took their passage in the same ship, to share his dangers, to comfort him by their presence, and to enjoy the benefit of his society and friendship. The presence of Luke is only indicated by the use of the pronoun "we," and in the phrase, "Aristarchus being with us."

The ship in which the prisoners were embarked voyaged along the coast; as was usual in these times touching at different ports on its way. A day after the departure from Cæsarea the ship reached Sidon, where the centurion, who must have been apprised of the favorable opinion which was entertained by Festus of the apostle's case, courteously allowed him to land that he might "go unto his friends to refresh himself." He had often travelled this way in going to and from Jerusalem, and probably had friends in all the principal towns; and doubtless the friends at Sidon availed themselves of the opportunity of providing such supplies as might make more comfortable the voyage which lay before him, which voyage was in those days long and perilous.

The original plan of the voyage, which was to go along by the coast of Asia Minor,

would have taken the ship between the north of Cyprus and the southern coast of the peninsula; but contrary winds obliged them to leave the coast, and take a direct course from Sidon to the coast of Lycia, thereby passing Cyprus on the south. Having then crossed what is called "the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia," they at length entered the port of Myra, which was at that time the metropolis of Lycia.

To this place the ship in which the voyage had been thus far performed was bound; but a ship of Alexandria bound for Italy was found in the harbor, and to this the centurion removed the prisoners. From the sequel this appears to have been one of the numerous vessels employed in conveying corn from Alexandria to Italy, and which usually crossed over to Myra, and there took in supplies for the remainder and more perilous part of the voyage. Having sailed slowly for several days, they passed the gulf of Caria, and had arrived "over against the promontory of Cnidus," intending to pass to the north of Crete, when they were again driven out of their course by adverse winds, and were constrained to round the Salmone promontory, and pass to the south of the island, when they found refuge from the adverse weather in the Fair Havens near the town of Lasea.

Much time having been consumed through contrary winds, the season had become far advanced; and they had still to perform a part of the voyage, which they expected to have by this time completed. This navigation was at this time of the year considered highly dangerous from tempestuous winds, and was seldom attempted by the mariners of ancient days. The danger was real, through the imperfect build of the ships, the unskillfulness of the sailors, and, above all, from the want of

the compass. All parties were sensible of this, and it was agreed to winter in Crete; but although Paul, who had established his claim to respect on board the ship, advised that the vessel should remain in the Fair Havens to avoid the calamities which he foresaw, Julius deemed it most prudent to rely upon the experience of the captain and supercargo of the vessel, who urged the propriety of endeavoring to gain the safer harbor of Phenice at the western extremity of the island.

In this attempt the vessel was encountered by a fierce wind which blows at this season, called euroclydon. It blows from all points between N.E. and S.E., frequently shifting within this range, and is called by British mariners a Levanter, and by the Italians tufone—from the ancient name, typhon.

The Ship in a Gale.

Going from the Fair Havens, the ship was caught by this wind and driven "under" far south of the small island of Clauda (now Gaudos), which is twenty-five miles south of the port of Phenice, which they had hoped to reach.

At this point they had much difficulty in securing the boat attached to the vessel from being dashed to pieces. Every ship had a boat, but in those times it was not taken up and secured on deck, as is now done, but was towed at the stern of the vessel. The reason for this difference is clear. Our mariners on leaving port bid adieu to the land; whereas the ancient mariners in creeping along the coast maintained much intercourse with the shore, for which the boat was always kept ready. When, however, a storm arose, the boat was secured by being drawn up close under the stern, which doubtless was the mode in which the boat was in the present case secured.

Having taken this precaution, the voyagers became apprehensive lest the ship should be driven upon the dreaded quicksands of the African coast, and there go to pieces; and they therefore "used helps, undergirding the ship," which seems to mean that they drew

strong cables around the hull to keep its timbers together or break the shock of a concussion. Instances of such a practice occur even in modern voyages; and that it was resorted to anciently appears from the following lines of Horace:

The wounded mast
And sail-yards groan beneath the southern blast;
Nor without ropes the keel can longer brave
The rushing fury of th' imperious wave.

Further to avoid the danger of being driven on the dreaded quicksands, they struck sail, and, as our sailors would say, "scudded under bare poles." This striking of the sail was in ancient ships effected not by reefing the sails to the yards, but by lowering both the yards and sails together to the deck. This explanation relieves some of the obscurity which involves the nautical details of this portion of our history. On the third day from the commencement of the storm, it was found necessary to lighten the ship by throwing overboard all the tackling which was not indispensable to its preservation.

After this the mariners entirely lost their reckoning, and knew not whither they were going; for, in the absence of a compass, the ancient seamen, when out of sight of land, relied upon the sun by day and the stars by night; but now neither the sun nor stars had been visible for many days. Under these discouragements the spirits of both the crew and passengers gave way, and all hope that they should be saved was abandoned. At this juncture Paul stood forth, and, after reminding them that this danger would not have been incurred had his advice been taken, he exhorted them to be of good cheer, for that, although the ship itself must be lost, all their lives would be saved.

As his authority for this, he alleged that in the night he had been visited by an angel "of the God whose I am and whom I serve;" who said to him, "Fear not, Paul: thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." The apostle added, "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even

as he hath told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island." As men in desperate circumstances readily grasp even the shadow of a hope, there is no doubt that Paul's intimation was received with more gladness and confidence than any intimation from him might in more prosperous days have commanded.

This tempestuous scene recalls the graphic description of a shipwreck and the remarkable faith of a child, given in the following lines :

As thus we sat in darkness,
Each one busy in his prayers,
"We are lost!" the captain shouted
As he staggered down the stairs.

But his little daughter whispered,
As she took his icy hand,
"Isn't God upon the ocean
Just the same as on the land?"

Then we kissed the little maiden,
And we spoke in better cheer,
And we anchored safe in harbor
When the morn was shining clear.



ANCIENT SHIPS.—Acts xxvii. 2.

We were crowded in the cabin,
Not a soul would dare to sleep,—
It was midnight on the waters
And a storm was on the deep.
'Tis a fearful thing in winter
To be shattered by the blast,
And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder, "Cut away the mast!"
So we shuddered there in silence,—
For the stoutest held his breath,
While the hungry sea was roaring,
And the breakers talked with Death.

On the fourteenth night from the commencement of the storm the mariners deemed by the soundings that they were approaching the land, and fearing to be dashed to pieces on the rocks, they stayed the ship by casting four anchors out at the stern, and remained longing for daylight to disclose the position in which they lay. The seamen having let down the boat under color of getting the anchors out at the foreship also, manifested an intention to escape in it from the ship: but Paul de-

clared to the centurion and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;" on which, such was the influence he had acquired, they cut the rope and let the boat go adrift.

While they remained waiting for the day, the apostle repeated his assurance that not a hair of any one of their heads should fall to the ground, and in that assurance he urged them to take some refreshment after the long abstinence which their distress had occasioned, and he cheerily set them the example by eating some bread in their presence. On this, "they were all of good cheer, and also took some meat." Being thus strengthened, they applied themselves to the task of still further lightening the ship, by throwing overboard the corn with which it was laden.

The Ship Stranded.

At length the wished-for dawn appeared; they found themselves near a shore which none of them could recognize. Opposite them was a creek which seemed to offer a practicable harbor and safe anchorage, and into this they concluded to carry the ship. They therefore again took up their anchors and hoisted their sails. But falling into a place "where two seas met" at the entrance of the creek, the ship went aground, so that the fore part stuck fast among the rocks, while the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves.

The soldiers who had charge of the prisoners on board then proposed that they should all be killed, lest they should swim ashore and escape. This shocking proposal was, however, overruled by the centurion, chiefly, as it appears, out of regard for Paul, who would have been involved in the massacre; and a general order was given that all who could swim should cast themselves into the sea and endeavor to reach the land. This they did, and then those who could not swim managed to reach the shore by the help of boards and broken pieces of the wreck, so that every soul on board, to the number of two hundred and seventy-six, reached the shore in safety, without the loss of a single life.

Having reached the shore, it was soon ascertained that they were upon an island called Melita, which is generally supposed to have been the present Malta. Here "the barbarous people," says the historian, "showed us no little kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold."

Paul and the Viper.

The apostle, with his usual cheerful alacrity in every useful labor, employed himself in collecting sticks for this fire. Concealed in the bundle which he collected was a poisonous serpent, in a torpid state. But when the wood was cast upon the fire, the viper became warmed by the heat, and darted forth, and fastened upon Paul's hand. When the natives of the island beheld this, and concluded that he must needs die, they said among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the vengeance of the sea, yet justice suffereth not to live."

In reaching this conclusion the people reasoned in strict accordance with the prevalent notions of the age, which indeed are not yet wholly extinct. It was believed that great criminals were often preserved by Divine justice from one kind of death to perish by another more painful and horrible. It was also a general impression that the offending member in most cases received the punishment; and the people of the island doubtless felt that in the case before their eyes, the viper had fastened upon the very hand which had taken the life of a fellow-being.

It was also generally believed, by both heathen and Jews, that no murderer, however he might evade human justice, ever finally escaped the righteous judgments of Heaven. Serpents were to a certain extent regarded as the appropriate instrument of such punishments. The Jewish writers themselves give the story of a man who slew his friend, but was immediately after bitten by a serpent and died. They also allege that when the power of inflicting death was taken from the nation by the Romans, all the guilty did not

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escape; if a man deserved to be burnt, he fell into the fire, or a serpent bit him; or if he deserved to be strangled, he fell into a river, or was taken off by the quinsy. These remarks will go to illustrate the class of impressions under which the kind people of Melita conceived that the hand on which the viper fastened was stained with blood.

But the apostle quietly cast off into the fire the snake which they knew to be venomous; and they stood watching the effects of the

the centurion concerning Paul, and the wonder so lately wrought as regarded the serpent, introduced the apostolical party to the especial and favorable notice of this personage. This was amply repaid by Paul through the powers more precious than wealth which were vested in him.

The father of Publius lay ill of the dysentery, by which he had been brought to the brink of the grave; and the apostle no sooner heard this than he entered the chamber in which the afflicted man lay, and, after having



PAUL BITTEN BY A SERPENT.—Acts xxviii. 5.

poison which they believed to have entered his frame. But he remained cheerful and unharmed; and then the people changed their minds, and believed that he whom they had just regarded as a murderer could not be less than a god.

The shipwrecked men received a most kind and courteous entertainment from Publius, the Roman governor of the island, who, numerous as they were, provided them with lodging and provisions during their stay. The report of

prayed, laid his hands upon him and restored him to health. When this was noised abroad, the people of the island hastened to bring their sick friends to obtain the like benefit, and they all received health and cure from the hands of the apostle. The good people of the island did all in their power to express their sense of favors so important. "They honored us with many honors," says the narrator, "and when we departed they loaded us with such things as were necessary."

The departure did not take place till three months after the shipwreck; for not till then, when the winter had passed, was any vessel willing to leave for Italy. Then they embarked in another ship of Alexandria, doubtless a corn-ship, which had wintered at the island, and which "bore the sign of Castor and Pollux," whose special province it was, in the classical mythology, to succor persons in danger of shipwreck.

The ship put in at the port of Syracuse, on the eastern coast of Sicily, and then the capital of that island. Syracuse was founded by the Corinthians about seven hundred years before Christ; and the enterprising colonists, being greatly enriched by commerce, soon raised this, their principal seat, to great importance and magnificence. In its best state it was accounted the largest and richest city belonging to the Greeks. It was twenty-two miles in circuit, and was considered to rival Carthage in wealth. It was often styled "quadriplex," being divided into four parts, each of which was equal to a large city. The ancient writers are untired of expatiating on the fine prospects of Syracuse—its port, banked up with marble, and surrounded with elegant buildings—its magnificent public statues and monuments—and its splendid and commodious residences.

Remains of a Magnificent City.

Syracuse long maintained its power as an independent state; and the Carthaginians and Athenians assaulted it in vain. But about two hundred years before Christ, it was taken by the Romans, although not until the siege had been protracted for three years by the mechanical contrivances of Archimedes. Syracuse remained a flourishing commercial town under the Romans; and although now no longer the chief city of the island, it still survives as a considerable town, belonging, with the rest of the island, to the kingdom of Naples.

As there has always been much intercourse between Malta and Sicily, the ship had probably taken in some lading or passengers to discharge

at Syracuse. Although Syracuse had even then declined from its ancient importance, it still exhibited the magnificence for which it had been renowned; and although this had now disappeared, it is still a place of some importance. Here the passengers landed, and remained three days, the ship having probably to discharge a portion of her cargo at this port.

The Voyage Ended.

Again departing, the vessel coasted along the eastern side of Sicily, and arrived in due course at Rhegium, nearly opposite Messina, and on the Italian side of the strait which separates Sicily from the peninsula. At this place, which still subsists under the name of Reggio, the ship tarried one day, when the wind, blowing from the south, became favorable to their passage through the strait, and brought them on the next day to Puteoli, on the north side of the Gulf of Cumæ, now called the Bay of Naples, and about eight miles northwest from the city of that name. This was the end of the voyage, as ships from Alexandria and the East usually put in and landed their cargoes and passengers, partly to avoid doubling the dreaded Promontory of Circeium, and partly because there was no commodious harbor nearer to Rome.

Puteoli was thus well known to travelled Jews, who landed and embarked here in their journeys to and from Rome. This place was celebrated for its numerous hot springs, reputed to cure various diseases. Within its limits were thirty-five natural baths of different sorts of tepid water; and from these baths or pits of water, called in Latin *putei*, the place is said to have derived its name of Puteoli. Baia, on the other side of the creek of Puteoli, and similarly noted for its warm springs, is frequently noticed by the Latin writers as a favorite resort of the emperors for relaxation or health, being in fact the popular watering-place of Italy; and Puteoli partook of its distinction and prosperity, being connected with it by a line of villas. Puteoli is now called Pazzuoli, and has a few thousand inhabitants.

At Puteoli Paul found Christian brethren,

Syracuse had even ancient importance, its importance for which it was although this had a place of some importance where messengers landed, and the ship having probably her cargo at this

Ended.

The vessel coasted along and arrived in due season opposite Messina, at the mouth of the strait which is called the peninsula. At this place, under the name of Puteoli, one day, when the vessel's mouth, became favorable through the strait, and the next day to Puteoli, on the Gulf of Cumæ, now about eight miles from the mouth of that name. This was as ships from Alexandria were put in and landed, partly to avoid the punishment of Circeium, and was no commodious

place known to travellers who had embarked here in their ships. This place was famous for its hot springs, reputed to be of great value.

Within its limits were several baths of different sorts, and these baths or pits were called Putei, the place is said to be the mouth of Puteoli. Baizæ, on the neck of Puteoli, and the warm springs, is frequented by Latin writers as a favorable place for relaxation or popular watering-place. It is distinguished by its connection with it by a name now called Pazzuoli, and its inhabitants.

Christian brethren,

with whom he tarried for a week, and was then conducted towards Rome. At Appii Forum, a town upon the celebrated Appian Road from Rome to Capua, and about midway between Puteoli and Rome, from which it was distant fifty-one miles, Paul and his party seem to have taken rest, the probability of which circumstance had drawn several Christian brethren all the way from Rome to meet them. About half way between this place and Rome there was another resting-place, called Tres Tabernæ (translated "three taverns"). This name has suggested to most commentators the probability that there were here three hosteleries, or places for the entertainment of the numerous travellers upon this road. This may have been the *origin* of the name, but the place appears to have become a town, which in the time of Constantine was of sufficient consequence to be the seat of a bishopric.

The Apostle met by Friends.

At the Tres Tabernæ other brethren from Rome met the apostolical party, including probably many persons who had become personally acquainted with Paul in Greece and Asia Minor; and when he saw so many, who by coming so far to meet him evinced the interest they took in his labors and welfare, "he thanked God and took courage." He had long desired to see the Christians at Rome, and he was now grateful to God that he was permitted to do so, although in bonds.

At length they arrived at Rome—the imperial city—then the mistress of the world, and at the height of its external greatness and magnificence; that marvelous city, whose dominion, which has passed away; whose religions, which have changed; and whose arts, laws, literature, and history, which are imperishable, have in all ages, even to this day, by their direct or indirect influences, held captive the minds of men, and ruled them as with a rod of iron.

At Rome the kind centurion, who had so much befriended the apostle, resigned his charge of the prisoners into the hands of the commander of the Prætorian cohort, called

"the captain of the guard," to whose custody prisoners arriving from the provinces were usually consigned.

After a time the frivolous and malignant nature of the charges against Paul being known through the rescript of the governor Festus, and through the representations of the centurion, the apostle was allowed to remain in what was considered the easiest confinement consistent with his safe custody. He was permitted to live in a house which he hired for himself, in the charge of a soldier, to whose arm his own arm was chained, and whose consequence was always with him.

Chained to a Soldier.

This kind of custody was less averse to ancient Roman or Eastern habits than to ours; and Paul probably regarded it as little more than a petty annoyance, seeing that it interfered less than any other kind of custody with his great vocation of declaring the Gospel of Christ, which he freely preached to all who came to him.

One of the first steps taken by the apostle after his arrival was to call the chief of the Jews in Rome together. He had probably two objects in view in this: one to vindicate himself from the suspicion of crime, or to convince them that the charges alleged against him were false; and the other, to explain to them the Gospel of Christ. He thus, in accordance with his general custom, seized the earliest opportunity of making known to his own countrymen the Divine message which was committed to him; and he naturally supposed that charges highly unfavorable to his character had been sent forward against him to the Jews in Rome by those in Judæa. They assured him that this was not the case, as no letters or messengers had arrived to create an impression to his disadvantage; and for the rest they said, "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against."

They accordingly came again on an appointed day to his lodging, when, from morning till night, he explained to them the doctrine

of Christ, meeting their objections, answering their questions, and "persuading them concerning Jesus out of the Law and out of the Prophets."

Some of the auditors were awakened to further inquiry, but the general result was as usual discouraging, and the apostle plainly told them—"Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles—and they will hear it."

Paul Two Years in Rome.

After this Paul remained "two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

With these words the apostolical record concludes. Why Luke closed his history at this point is unknown. It may be that he was not afterwards the companion of Paul; or that he may have been himself removed by death. It is agreed on all hands that he did not attend the apostle in his subsequent travels; and we should infer from the conclusion of the book, that he did not survive the apostle, as it is almost incredible that, in case he did, he should not have mentioned his release and death. It is the uniform account of antiquity that Luke, after the transactions with which the Acts of the Apostles closes, passed over into Achaia, where he lived a year or two, and then died at the age of eighty-four years.

The reader is naturally anxious to know something further of the life and labors of that great apostle whose course he has doubtless followed with much of interest and instruction. The materials for this purpose are but scanty, and not altogether satisfactory; but they have been collected and arranged with great care by Cave, Lardner, Neander and others; and we cannot better occupy the small space left to us than in stating the result of such researches.

Paul's imprisonment, so far from reducing him to an inactive condition, opened to his eager mind new and extensive means of usefulness. During his confinement, anxiety for

the extension of the kingdom of God, and for the prosperity of the Churches which he had founded, occupied him far more than his personal concerns. As all persons had free access to him, his opportunities of preaching the Gospel were not few. Through the soldiers who relieved one another in standing guard over him, it became known among their comrades of the prætorian cohort, and hence to a wider extent in the city, that this remarkable prisoner was in confinement not for any civil offence, but for his zeal in behalf of the new religion; and this tended to promote it, since a cause for which its foremost advocate had suffered the loss of all things was sure of attracting attention. By his example the Roman Christians were also roused to publish the truth with zeal and boldness.

Untiring Zeal.

The concern of the Churches in Asia Minor also engaged the apostle's solicitude, and to this we owe several of those invaluable Scriptures, known as the Epistles of Paul, which have become the heritage of ages, and which alone would be rich and ample fruits of his imprisonment. The investigations concerning the dates and circumstances of these Epistles do not belong to this place, although the intimations which they contain afford the landmarks which direct our course.

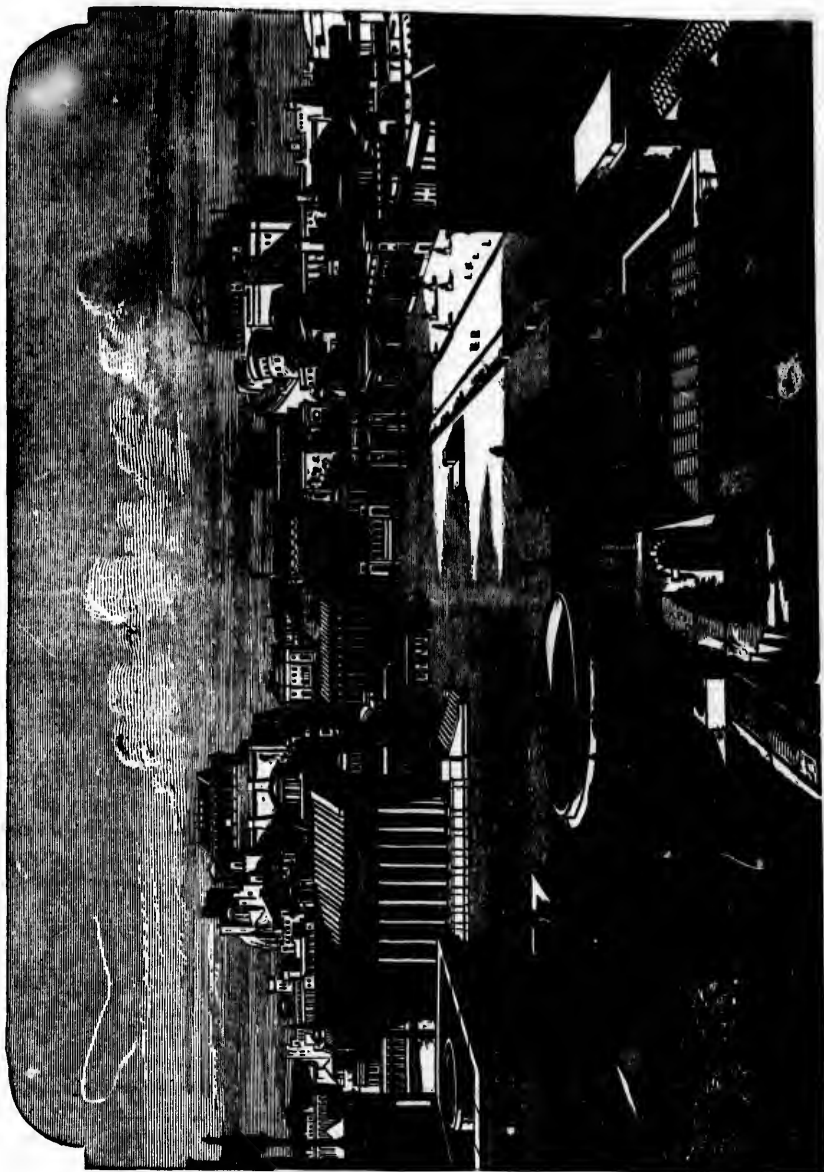
Up to a certain point we can form a tolerably clear notion of the apostle's condition and course of proceeding at Rome: but beyond that point all is uncertain and obscure. The first question which arises is, whether he ended this confinement with martyrdom, or whether he was released from it, and entered afresh upon his apostolical labors? The decision of this question depends partly upon the depositions of historical witnesses, and partly upon the result of an examination of Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy. The question is, whether this Epistle, which was evidently written during a confinement at Rome, must be classed among those written during his first imprisonment, or whether we may assume the existence of a second?

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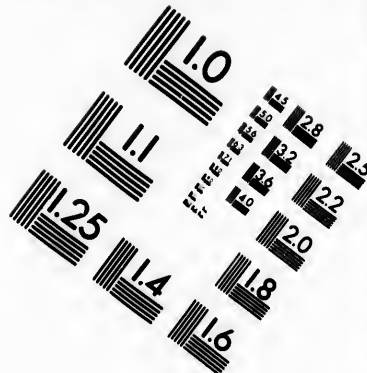
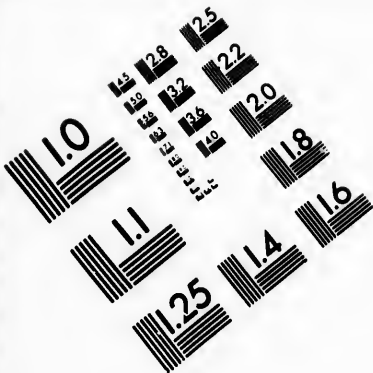
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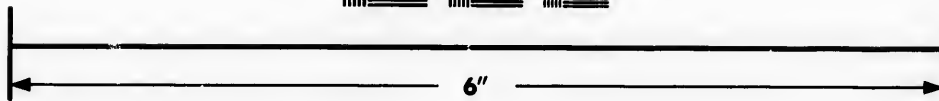
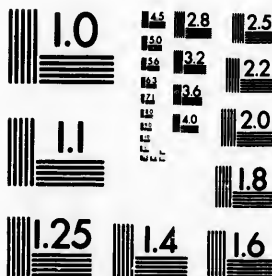
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ANCIENT ROME.—Acts xxviii. 16.





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The narratives of the fourth century, which allege that he was set at liberty and published the Gospel in Spain, cannot be taken into account, for they may all have been founded upon what he says in his Epistle to the Romans of his intentions of visiting Spain. More attention is due to the testimony of a man who was in part a contemporary and probably a disciple of the apostle. Clement of Rome says expressly, in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, that Paul suffered martyrdom after he had travelled to the boundaries of the West. By this expression we naturally understand Spain; and although Clement might have had in view some other place or country, and perhaps even Britain, as some allege, yet we cannot in any case suppose that a person writing, as Clement did, at Rome, could intend by "the farthest limits of the West" that very city, but some region more remote.

From this account of Clement's, if we must infer that Paul carried into effect his intention of travelling into Spain, or that at least he went beyond Italy, we shall also be obliged to admit that he was released from his confinement at Rome. A close examination of the Second Epistle to Timothy indicates a very dissimilar set of circumstances from those which attended the apostle's first imprisonment, and shows feelings and expectations entirely different from those which are known from internal evidence to have been written during the first confinement. It is in fact a solemn farewell to his beloved adherent, in the knowledge that his end was approaching: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

All comparison of circumstances tends to show that these impressions were not applicable to the first confinement, from which he confidently expected to be released; and therefore the conclusion is inevitable, and in accordance with the intimation of Clement, that he was released, and that the Second Epistle

to Timothy was written during a subsequent and final imprisonment.

Now if Paul was released from his first imprisonment, it must have been before the persecution against the Christians, raised by the conflagration of Rome in the year 64; for had he been at that time a prisoner, he would most assuredly not have been spared; and it agrees with other chronological data, that after more than two years' imprisonment, he regained his freedom in the latter end of 62 or the beginning of 63—a result of the proceedings which, in the circumstances described in these pages, is by no means improbable, but such as the reader is naturally led to expect.

An Ancient Tradition.

The accusation of raising a tumult in Jerusalem was proved to be unfounded; and the inherent antagonism of Christianity to the religion of the Roman state had not then been so understood as to attract public attention. It could not altogether have escaped notice; but no definite law existed on the subject, and under Nero, who derided the established religion and gave himself little concern about the ancient Roman enactments, such a point might the more easily be waived. The friends whom Paul had gained by his behavior during his confinement would probably exert their influence in his favor.

Thus he might and probably did regain his freedom; and, as Neander justly observes, "the ancient tradition that he was beheaded, and not crucified like Peter, if true, favors his not having suffered death in the persecution of 64; for had he been put to death in that persecution, so much regard would not have been paid to his Roman citizenship as to spare the hated leader of a detested sect from the more painful and ignominious mode of execution."

We have therefore to assume that Paul was released from his first confinement, and did not perish in the persecution of the year 64.

We know from the epistles written during his first confinement what Paul intended to do in case he obtained his liberty; and by

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comparing these intentions with the fact recorded by Clement, some notion of his subsequent proceedings may be obtained.

Last Journeys.

Before his confinement, Paul had formed the intention of visiting Spain; and the testimony of Clement leads to the belief that he eventually fulfilled that intention. But during his imprisonment it appears that he altered his views, and concluded to visit once more the field of his early labors in Lesser Asia, and a question arises as to which of these intentions he first executed after his release? It would be possible that after his release he travelled first into Spain; that he there exerted himself in the establishment of Christian Churches, and then revisited the former sphere of his ministry; and that he was on his return to the West, in order to close there his apostolical commission, but, before he could reach his destination, was detained and put to death at Rome.

But the want of any memorial of Paul's labors in Spain does not favor the supposition that he spent any length of time in that country; and hence the other explanation, that he first renewed his labors in the East, and then proceeded to Spain where he was soon seized and sent a prisoner to Rome, and there beheaded, seems to have the best claim upon our confidence.

Under this explanation, it may not be altogether impracticable to trace the course of the apostle's journeys. It seems, then, that he in the first place executed his intention of revisiting the Churches in Asia Minor, and found them fallen into disorder, which he labored hard to rectify. After spending some time in those parts, he left Ephesus to visit the Churches in Macedonia. On his way thither he appears to have revisited the island of Crete. The circumstances of his former visit to that island during the stormy voyage which ended in the wreck at Malta, have been already noticed. It does not appear that there were then any Christians in the island, as Luke does not there, as usual with him, record the

kind attentions of Christian brethren; and it is therefore probable Paul even then formed the intention of planting the Gospel of Christ upon its shores. After having accomplished this intention, he left Titus to complete the work he had commenced, and proceeded to Macedonia, whence he wrote the Epistle to Titus, which exists in the Christian Scriptures. The apostle had then the prospect of spending the winter at Nicopolis, and wished Titus to join him there. There were many places of this name; but it is supposed that the present was the one in Epirus, which was built by Augustus to commemorate his great victory at Actium.

The Crown of Life.

It would seem, however, that circumstances induced the apostle to go back to Ephesus, where he left Timothy, and once more proceeded westward. It was now probable that he executed his long-cherished intention of visiting Spain, as already intimated, and was from thence sent as a prisoner to Rome. The Second Epistle to Timothy, which affords an important clue to these movements, shows that the situation of Paul in the imperial city was by no means what it had been during his previous imprisonment.

It was then universally allowed that he was in custody for no usual or political offence, but only for preaching the Gospel, and many were encouraged by his example boldly to confess their faith; whereas *now* he was in fetters as an "evil doer," for all Christians were then regarded at Rome as criminals, and only a few had courage openly to avow themselves as his friends and companions in the faith of Jesus. *Now*, he considered his martyrdom far more probable than his release; whereas before his deliverance had seemed by far the more probable event. His feelings in the prospect of that event are inimitably expressed: this, his last Epistle—his elevated composure, his self-forgetfulness, his tender fatherly care for his disciple Timothy, his concern for the cause of the Gospel, which he was about to leave exposed to so many attempts to adulterate it; yet his confidence in the Divinity of that

cause, and of its certain triumph over every obstacle, rose high above every doubt or fear, being based upon the almightiness of Him who watched its progress and conducted all its developments.

him. It was doubtless in one of the last years of Nero's reign, and probably in or about the year 67 A. D. The general account, which rests on no certain authority, and which has been shown to be scarcely compatible with



"I AM NOW READY TO BE OFFERED."—2 Tim. iv. 6.

With the particulars of the last scene of all the facts of the case, alleges that Paul and Peter were at Rome in A. D. 64; and that they were unacquainted, and are not even certain both perished in the furious and bloody persecution which was in that year excited against the Christians in consequence of the dreadful

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A Historic Dungeon.

At this time it is alleged that Peter was crucified, while Paul was, as a Roman citizen, beheaded. That he was put to death at Rome, and that by being beheaded, is highly probable, although both the time and the occasion appear to be in this tradition erroneously stated. The prison in which Paul and Peter are supposed to have been confined is still shown at Rome; and it is alleged that Paul was beheaded at a place called the Salvian Waters, about three miles from Rome, and that he was buried in the Ostian Way, where a magnificent Church was afterwards erected over his supposed sepulchre. But the name of Paul needeth not such memorials. His record is on high; and his memory is embalmed, beyond the wreck of worlds, in the thousands of immortal souls, who, through his living ministrations and his imperishable words, now bear their triumphal palms in that innumerable host of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We are unwilling to quit the great apostle whose labors we have endeavored to trace, without recalling the attention of the reader to the leading points of a character of inferior interest to none which the Scriptures offer, and perhaps as difficult to understand distinctly and truly to appreciate as are those of Moses and David. The contradictions which go to make up human character usually consist of qualities and defects warring against each other, and of virtues and vices which might seem to exclude each other. But in the character of Paul, the antagonism seems to be that not of virtues and contrary vices, but of opposing virtues. Under this point of view, Paul almost stands alone.

Never was man more equal, or more various. He was humble, yet never himself cast down; he was most gentle, yet terrible to those who

had by their bad faith compromised the great cause to which all his energies were devoted. He was wise and prudent, yet possessed of an ardor which irresistibly carried him onward to the accomplishment of his designs, and was endowed with a frankness which no fears could check or deference arrest. Firm in danger, and unshaken in affliction, he was yet careful of his safety, and never exposed his life or person to needless risk.

A Heroic Soul.

Of indefatigable activity, a severe taskmaster upon himself, and indifferent to his lot, so that the great objects which he had set before him were advanced, no man ever possessed a heart more tender, or a soul more open to the peaceful emotions of friendship and joy. His will had all the tenacity and his conduct all the perseverance essential to the accomplishment of great enterprises; whatever he willed, he willed with his whole heart; half-measures and partial successes were both unpleasant to him; he threw himself wholly into every undertaking which his judgment approved, or to which his duty called him, and he deemed nothing accomplished while anything remained to be done.

The example of Paul shows very clearly that the points which constitute a man's character and give him his individuality among men, remain unchanged under circumstances which entirely alter his sentiments and condition. In this respect we see that Paul was the same under the Gospel as under the Law. He had the same ardor, the same force of will, the same moral courage in coming forward to take great responsibilities upon him. He has changed his weapons, and his course is different, but we recognize the same champion whose ragings under Judaism have become heroisms under Christ.

Before his conversion Paul had already become a man of note among the Jews; and it may be safely said that in any age, in any country, in any moral or social condition of a people—a man of his character and genius would, according to all ordinary probabilities,

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have become great among his fellows—must have taken a chief part in whatever religious, political, or moral movement the circumstances of the age might originate. The ordinary circumstances of life would have been insufficient to exercise and regulate the mighty energies which were bound up in him; and when it pleased the Almighty to press them into the service of the Gospel, not only was one who would have probably become the most bitter enemy of the cause turned into its friend, but Paul himself received a task sufficient to occupy even to the uttermost all the peculiar talents and powers which had been given to him. This task was the greatest that man could receive.

The Gospel for All Men.

Under God Moses formed a people for his service; and under Him Paul became the chief instrument of throwing open the doors of the New Covenant to a far more numerous and a mightier host, and of extending to the whole race of Adam higher privileges than those which had till then been specially reserved for Abraham's children.

The dignity of his appointment to his great mission was commensurate to the greatness of the occasion; and with what sublimity of genius, of eloquence, of devotedness, and of virtue did he not embrace and accomplish his grand vocation! And all that he did was done, and all he suffered was suffered, without any taint of that sin by which angels fell.

The traditions and the historical statements respecting the last days of Paul and his death have already been presented to the reader. It seems not a little singular that one so gifted, so devoted, so useful in his day, should have been left to a fate so cruel, and, in our thought, so unsatisfactory. As we take in the full measure of the man and follow him through his brilliant career, we cannot help wishing him a happy old age and a peaceful translation to the skies. Nothing could have been more fitting in our estimation than that

he, who has found a home in the great heart of the world, should have had a quiet home in his later life, should have been freed from persecutions and cares, and should calmly have awaited the setting of the sun, the approach of the twilight, and the coming out of the stars.

Such, however, was not to be the case. And here we have one of those mysteries forced upon us, of which there are so many in the providence of God and in the history of His Church. The most worthy of earth's heroes have been those who toiled the hardest, fought the bravest, suffered the most. Their march has been through fiery furnaces; their breath has been a long-drawn sigh; their voices have been like the wail of troubled winds; while they have endured as seeing the invisible, it has certainly been an endurance and a very hard one. The great apostle is no exception to this rule.

Let it be so; he and they who were like sufferers have in this tempestuous manner proved their faith, and have shown themselves superior to the world and its spirit. Christianity has needed such confessors, and Christianity has had them. While their names and the memory of their deeds endure, those great truths, which have given light to man, comfort to human hearts, and hope of celestial glory, will abide, and mankind will cherish them as its richest legacy.

We close the history of the apostle Paul with tender reflections upon his heroic character, and the great service which he has rendered to after ages. Monument of marble or bronze he has none; but the world is filled with his personality, and this grows more majestic and attractive with the advance of time. Men may write epics concerning Achilles and Leonidas; here is one who writes his own great story in the hearts of men, and no brilliant epic is equal to his greatness, and no history can do justice to his marvelous achievements. Great Paul, born for conquest, born for immortality!



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CHAPTER XLIII.

TEACHINGS OF THE APOSTLES.



THE lessons learned from the various Epistles sent to the Churches, and from others of a general character, are vivid and impressive. It is impossible to read what is said so vigorously by Peter, James and Paul, as well as others, without being deeply affected thereby. Among the wonders of the sacred volume must be classed the prominent teachings of the apostles, those great facts and truths which are made so plain by the men who, untaught in the schools of philosophy, were yet teachers who could draw the attention of the world.

One of these very prominent lessons relates to self-sacrifice and suffering in the cause of Christianity. Nothing good was ever yet brought into the world without pain; trial is the birth-pang of new ideas, destined to revolutionize society. As in the teachings of Christ, persecution, suffering, martyrdom, are distinctly set forth as the heritage of His followers, so in the teachings of the apostles, the same ideas are brought out, and in such a way as to arrest the attention of every reader. It will not be amiss to trace this heroic spirit, sooth in the lives of the apostles and, in some instances, among their successors of a later period.

The predictions of sufferings for which Jesus prepared His disciples were, according to the New Testament and subsequent history, literally fulfilled to most of those who listened to them. In the first onset of danger, "they forsook Him and fled"—they could not, as He said to Peter, follow Him then, but they did "follow Him afterwards."

To Peter himself Jesus said, "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands,

and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Accordingly we learn from the very general tradition of antiquity that Peter was crucified at Rome under Nero.

James was "killed by the sword" by Herod, the king, at Jerusalem.

We have not the evidence of Scripture confirming the violent deaths of the other apostles and evangelists; but early Christian writers say that Paul was beheaded at Rome, under Nero, from anger at the conversion of his favorite cup-bearer. Many historians have mentioned the early traditions that Andrew suffered death in Achaia, James in Palestine, Philip in Phrygia, Bartholomew (or Nathanael) in Armenia, Thomas in India, Matthew in Ethiopia, Jude in Persia, Simon Zelotes at Jerusalem, Mark at Alexandria, and Luke in Greece.

Ere these things happened to them they were, as St. Paul tells us, "counted the scourging of all things;" "troubled on every side;" "persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed;" "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus;" "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake; beaten, stoned, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in death oft." Such was the history of the apostles. The New Testament comes down to us through a line of crowned heads, but their crown was the crown of martyrdom.

The first Pagan persecution against the Christians was raised by the emperor Nero, about thirty years after the crucifixion. This is mentioned by the great Roman historian, Tacitus. He says, that "Rome being set on fire, Nero declared it was the work of the

Christians, and put great numbers of them to death, after frightful tortures." Other heathen writers mention the Christians as being "punished with the troublesome coat," which was made like a sack, of coarse cloth, besmeared with pitch, wax, and sulphur, and, being dressed in this coat, they were hung by their chins on sharp stakes fix'd in the ground, and then burnt:

"In that pitched shirt in which such crowds expire,
Chained to the bloody stake and wrapped in fire."

Nero had them burnt at midnight, as he said, "for torches to the city." This persecution lasted for three or four years, and spread through the Roman empire. An inscription dug up in Spain shows that the Gospel had already penetrated that country, and that the Church there had her martyrs.

Persecutions in Britain.

In the reign of Nero, Suetonius was sent into Britain, and attacked the Druids in their strongholds in Mona. He caused many of them to be burned in the fires they had prepared for their expected captives, and destroyed their groves and altars. St. Paul was sent to Rome, according to Eusebius, in the second year of Nero, that is, A. D. 56, and he stayed there, according to Luke, two years. The British prince Caractacus, and his father Bran, were sent to Rome in the year 51, and stayed there, as hostages, for seven years. It is said, in the Welsh "trads," that Bran was the first who brought the Christian faith to the Cymry, or Welsh. He had, therefore, in all probability, received it from Paul at Rome; thus early came the pure Gospel to Wales. It is said that Bran brought back with him three Christian teachers—Illtid, an Israelite; Cyndaf; and Arwystli, which is Welsh for Aristobulus, to whom Paul sends salutation in the sixteenth chapter of Romans.

Tacitus likewise informs us that London at that time contained many merchants and much merchandise. How unlike was the London of which he speaks to the London of to-day! Its very pathways were different; for traces of

Roman floors and highways are found twenty feet below our present streets. There is little doubt that the Romans brought in their train, from the large family of Christian brethren in Rome, some manuscripts of the Gospels, some teachers of the Story of Peace among those men of war; and that there would be hymns sung to Jesus Christ in some corner of the old Roman town. Christianity, through the labors of the apostles, had taken deep hold of the people in the south of Europe; and many flourishing churches were, as we know, established in Greece.

Death Preferred to Dishonor.

A person asked Apollo how he should cause his wife to relinquish Christianity. "It is easier, perhaps," replied the oracle, "to write on water, or to fly into the air, than to reclaim her. Leave her alone in her folly, to hymn in a faint mournful voice, the praises of the dead God, who publicly suffered death from judges of singular wisdom."

As an account of the great woe that came upon the Holy City has already been given, we will append only a brief notice of the dreadful destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A. D. 70. The Jews having refused the usual tribute to the Romans, he came to enforce it. The city and Temple were burnt, and the ground ploughed up, for the purpose of obtaining the precious things buried in the rubbish. The wicked Jews had said, "His blood be on us and our children," and it was so. Never was destruction of any city or people so terrible. A hundred thousand were sold as slaves to the neighboring nations; multitudes were transported to the mines of Egypt; and more than a million perished by famine and sword, by pestilence and crucifixion. Only those among the Jews who were believers in Christ were prepared for this final breaking up of their national glory and the visible splendors of their Temple—having learned that the priesthood of Christ took the place of all other priesthoods, and rendered utterly useless any further ceremonies or sacrifices at Jerusalem.

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sought one to come. The Epistle of Paul to these Hebrews is full of consolation, especially suited to their sorrowful hearts.

In the year 81 occurred the Domitian persecution, during which Christianity appears to have been carried to Scotland by some of the disciples of the apostle John. These persecutions, of which there are said to have been ten, were always the means of scattering still more widely the seed of the Word. Wherever Christians were driven, they were sure to take some portions of their Scriptures with them. No historian, like Tacitus, celebrated their heroic sacrifices and secret escapes. Heroes and statesmen have their records here; the saints, on high.

Binding the Strong Man.

Jesus related a parable in which He declared Himself as come to take possession of a house, and of the things in it: this house was the world, and the things in it were the souls of men. He had come to rescue these from Satan's power. He compares Satan to the strong man who was in the house, and who tried to prevent the Saviour from entering in. He said he must first bind the strong man, and then he would spoil his goods.

The first century was alone that in which the persons lived, who were inspired to record Christ's sayings; and the living teaching of inspired persons, although very precious, could not have been continual. The apostles were all missionaries. They went forth into all the world to plant Churches, and seldom stayed long in one place. The Gospels and Epistles were only in course of writing—not written, and gathered together till the close of the century—therefore very few Churches and still fewer individuals were in possession of more than separate manuscripts.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were not written, as Mr. Horne thinks, till about the time of Nero's persecution, A. D. 62, and these, with the inspired Epistles or letters to the already founded Churches, became eminently necessary to check the errors and heresies which had arisen in them.

Yet internal frictions, amounting in some instances to warm dissensions, were tame compared with the difficulties which the disciples in the early centuries encountered at various periods from outside foes. It was thought that by burning the believer the belief could also be burned. Superstitious notions sometimes appeared in connection with these fiery persecutions.

There is a quaint old poem called "The Legend of the Roses," which accounts in a singular way for the origin of this flower. It is found in a work entitled "The Voyage and Travel of Sir J. Maundevile, Knight," which was published in 1332.

A fair maiden was slandered
For wrong she had not done;
Doomed to the death to pay her sin,
And yet her sin was none.

She prayed unto our Saviour dear
That He might give her aid,
And prove thereby to all the world
She was a holy maid.

Then forth she stepped with great faith,
Unto the stake she hied;
Meekly she bowed her head to all
A farewell ere she died.

The angry crowd, for blood athirst,
Unto the pile set fire—
The blazing flames mount to the sky
With piercing strength full dire,

When, sudden at her feet, instead
Of brands and fiercest flame,
Are roses fair of simple troth,
And roses red from shame,

To see so cruel, wicked deed
Against the pure and true—
They clasp her feet, they climb around,
They shroud her in from view.

None other roses till this day
Had yet been seen on earth,
'Tis sure they came from Paradise
To prove this fair maid's worth.

That many of the early Christians had struggles and conflicts to pass through, foes to face, and sufferings to endure, may account in part for what is said so eloquently in the New

Testament concerning charity, and that heavenly sympathy which is due toward those who are in distress.

Not only in the writings of the apostles, but

teachings. Sympathy, the disposition to suffer with another and help the heavy-laden to bear their burden, is one of the great themes of the apostles, especially of Paul, and it will



“DOOMED TO THE DEATH.”

throughout the whole range of literature those beautiful sentiments of love and charity are expressed which fell from the lips of Jesus, and formed so large a part of his public

be interesting to notice how this sweet Bible strain is echoed in the writings of uninspired authors whose brilliant productions have charmed the world.

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The Rev. Thomas Guthrie, of Scotland, whose eloquence in the pulpit was equalled only by his missionary spirit and his self-denying labors among the poor, says: "Though the lower animals have feeling, they have no fellow-feeling. Have not I seen the horse enjoy his feed of corn when his yoke-fellow lay a-dying in the neighboring stall, and never turn an eye of pity on the sufferer? They have strong passions, but no sympathy. It is said that the wounded deer sheds tears; but it belongs to man only to 'weep with them that weep,' and by sympathy to divide another's sorrows and double another's joys.

"When thunder, following the dazzling flash, has burst among our hills, when the horn of the Switzer has rung in his glorious valleys, when the boatman has shouted from the bosom of a rock-girt loch, wonderful were the echoes I have heard them make; but there is no echo so fine or wonderful as that which, in the sympathy of human hearts, repeats the cry of another's sorrow, and makes me feel his pain almost as if it were my own. They say that if a piano is struck in a room where another stands unopened and untouched, who lays his ear to that will hear a string within, as if touched by the hand of a shadowy spirit, sound the same note. But more strange how the strings of one heart vibrate to those of another; how woe wakens woe; how your grief infects me with sadness; how the shadow of a passing funeral and nodding hearse casts a cloud on the mirth of a marriage party; how sympathy may be so delicate and acute as to become a pain.

"There is, for example, the well-authenticated case of a lady who could not even hear the description of a severe surgical operation but she felt all the agonies of the patient; grew paler and paler, and shrieked and fainted under the horrible imagination. Not a fancy; for the dog has that, and, asleep on the warm hearth, he dreams of battles and of hunts: not reason; for there is an intelligence in his honest eye, and a skill in his tasks, that at least apes and imitates the intellect of man—it is not these, but fellow-feeling, which elevates

our race above the unimmortal brute, and brings us near to Him whose sympathy is our chief comfort in sorrow, and of whom we are assured—thank God in life's dark hour for the assurance—that 'in all His people's affliction He is Himself afflicted.'"

Equally striking is the tribute paid by Mrs. Norton to the little child, whose tender heart is easily touched and whose love it is not difficult to awaken:

"A child's eyes; those clear wells of undefiled thought: what on earth can be more beautiful? full of hope, love and curiosity, they meet your own. In prayer, how earnest; in joy, how sparkling; in sympathy, how tender. The man who never tried the companionship of a little child has carelessly passed by one of the great pleasures of life, as one passes a rare flower, without plucking it or knowing its value. A child cannot understand you, you think; speak to it of the holy things of your religion, of your grief for the loss of a friend, of your love for someone you fear will not love in return;—it will take, it is true, no measure or soundings of your thought—it will not judge how much you should believe, whether your grief is rational in proportion to your loss, whether you are worthy or fit to attract the love which you seek—but its whole soul will incline to yours, and engraft itself as it were on the feeling which is your feeling for the hour."

Value of a Friend.

One of the finest things Lord Byron ever wrote is contained in these truthful lines:

"There's nought in this bad world like sympathy;
'Tis so becoming to the soul and face—
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace."

Among the many sayings of Jeremy Taylor, those brilliant gems which lend so rich a lustre to English literature, the following must be accounted as one of the choicest:

"Every man rejoices twice when he has a partner of his joy; a friend shares my sorrow and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy and makes it double.

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"For so two channels divide the river and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable and apt to be drunk up by the first revels of the Syrian Star; but two torches do not divide but increase the flame; and though my tears are the sooner dried up, when they run on my friend's cheeks in the furrows of compassion, yet when my flame hath kindled his lamp, we unite the glories and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God, because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy."

Henry Ward Beecher also adds the following beautiful tribute to those already quoted:

"Happy is the man who has that in his soul which acts upon the dejected as April airs upon violet roots. Gifts from the hand are silver and gold, but the heart gives that which neither silver nor gold can buy. To be full of goodness, full of cheerfulness, full of sympathy, full of helpful hope, causes a man to carry blessings of which he is himself as unconscious as a lamp is of its own shining. Such a one moves on human life as stars move on dark seas to bewildered mariners; as the sun wheels, bringing all the seasons with him from the south."

F. W. Robertson uses the following striking language:

"We must not make too much of sympathy, as mere feeling. We praise feeling and praise its possessor. But feeling is only a sickly exotic in itself—a passive quality, having in it nothing moral, no temptation and no victory. A man is no more a good man for having feeling, than he is for having a delicate ear for music, or a far-seeing optic nerve. The Son of man had feeling—He could be 'touched.' The tear would start from His eyes at the sight of human sorrow. But that sympathy was no exotic in His soul, beautiful to look at, too delicate for use. Feeling with Him led to this, 'He went about doing good.' Sympathy with Him was this, 'Grace to help in time of need.'"

It is said of the saintly George Herbert, the quaint old English Church poet, that once in

a walk to Salisbury, to join a musical party, he saw a poor man with a poorer horse that was fallen under his load. They were both in distress and needed present help, which Mr Herbert perceiving, put off his canonical coat, and helped the poor man to unload, and afterwards load his horse. The poor man blessed him for it and he blessed the poor man, and was so like the good Samaritan, that he gave him money to refresh both himself and his horse.

Objects of Charity.

Thus he left the poor man; and at his coming to his musical friends at Salisbury, they began to wonder that Mr. Herbert, who used to be trim and clean, was so soiled and discomposed. But he told them the occasion; and when one of the company told him "he had disparaged himself by so dirty an employment," his answer was "that the thought of what he had done would prove music to him at midnight, and that the omission of it would have upbraided and made discord in his conscience whensoever he should pass by that place; for if I be bound to pray for all that be in distress, I am sure that I am bound, so far as it is in my power, to practice what I pray for; and let me tell you, I would not willingly pass one day of my life without comforting a sad soul, or showing mercy, and bless God for this occasion." Oh, how many might have anxious thoughts which often infest their midnight hours changed into sweet music, if they would only be more frequently seen with full hands and friendly words in the abodes of poverty and suffering! These are the places in which to attune one's conscience to midnight harmonies.

Says the celebrated Dr. Chalmers: "Nothing seems much clearer than the natural direction of charity. Would we all but relieve, according to the measure of our means, those objects immediately within the range of our personal knowledge, how much of the worst evil of poverty might be alleviated! Very poor people, who are known to us to have been honest, decent, and industrious, when industry was in their power, have a



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BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.—Gal. vi. 2.

claim on us, founded on our knowledge, and on vicinity and neighborhood, which have in themselves something sacred and endearing to every good heart. One cannot, surely, always pass by in his walks for health, restoration, or delight, the lone wayside beggar, without occasionally giving him an alms. Old, careworn, pale, drooping, and emaciated creatures, who pass us by without looking beseechingly at us, or even lifting up their eyes from the ground, cannot often be met with, without exciting an interest in us for their silent and unobtrusive sufferings or privations. A hovel, here and there, round and about our own comfortable dwelling, attracts our eyes by some peculiar appearance of penury, and we look in, now and then, upon its inmates, cheering their cold gloom with some small benefaction. These are duties all men owe to distress; they are easily discharged; and even such tender mercies as these are twice blessed."

These glowing tributes to that fellow-feeling which comes to the weary world as the summer sun comes with soft gales and fragrant blossoms, making the earth glad, are in keeping with the teachings of the New Testament, and in fact were born of the sayings of Christ and the apostles. What they uttered is echoed in the words of a thousand others, and finds a response in every human heart.

One of the great themes of Paul is found in his short, practical precept: "Bear ye one another's burdens." The thought of human suffering is always present with him; the vision of want and distress throws its dark shadow across his path; the sigh of another is a pang in his own soul; the tear that falls so silently awakens in his heart unutterable sympathies. In the presence of his foes he is a lion; in the presence of sorrow he turns to a ministering angel.

"Let us not be weary in well doing," he says, "for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men." The warm and limitless charity of the apostle stands here in striking contrast to that selfishness which seeks only its own good.

"Forever the sun is pouring his gold

On a hundred worlds that beg and borrow;
His warmth he squanders on summits cold,
His wealth, on the homes of want and sorrow.
To withhold his largess of precious light
Is to bury himself in eternal night:

To give is to live.

"The flower shines not for itself at all,

Its joy is the joy it freely diffuses;
O' beauty and balm it is prodigal,
And it lives in the life it sweetly loses.
No choice for the rose but glory or doom—
To exhale or smother, to wither or bloom:

To deny is to die.

"The seas lend silvery rain to the land,

The land its sapphire streams to the ocean;
The heart sends blood to the brain of command,
The brain to the heart its constant motion;
And over and over we yield our breath—
Till the mirror is dry and images death:

To give is to live.

"He is dead whose hand is not opened wide

To help the need of sister or brother;
He doubles the worth of his life-long ride
Who gives his fortunate place to another;
Not one but a thousand lives are his
Who carries the world in his sympathies:

To deny is to die.

"Throw gold to the far-dispersing wave,

And your ships sail home with tons of treasure;
Care not for comfort, all hardships brave,
And evening and age shall sup with pleasure;
Fling health to the sunshine, wind, and rain,
And roses shall come to the cheek again:

To give is to live."

It is one of the happy characteristics of the Bible that it takes such account of human weakness and infirmity. While the ancient Stoics believed that the only way for overcoming sorrow was to steel the heart against it, thereby turning the sufferer into a creature of bronze or granite, the Gospel comes to us with hope and good cheer. Paul affirms that the strong should support the weak, and this in effect is reiterated again and again; it comes out through all the Bible, and especially in the teachings of Christ and the great apostle. The spirit of the Bible is found in the angelic song of good-will to men.

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oppression and violence, for the strong to crush the weak, "breaking the bruised reed," and "quenching the smoking flax." A new method of dealing with the weak, that of lifting them up, befriending them, helping them, acting the part of the good Samaritan, was so contrary to the prevailing ideas and principles of the time that strong opposition was awakened against Christianity because it took such tender account of the poor and oppressed.

The great lesson that we are considering here is not merely a lesson from the human heart moved to sympathy, but it may even be found in other realms. While the whole creation groans and travails in pain, the whole creation seeks a remedy for its groanings and its complaints. Think how, in the brute creation, dumb suffering appeals to creatures themselves dumb, but which seem to have somewhat of the feeling of human brotherhood. There is a motherhood in the animal creation which is sometimes as striking as that to be found in our humanity. The fierce beasts, the lions, the tigers, the panthers, the bears, all show this wonderful affection for their young, for the helpless little ones that would perish except for maternal care. Thus the terrible ferocity of the brute creation is softened, and the wild beast that would rend you in pieces turns toward its helpless offspring in a ministry as unexpected as it is beautiful.

Birds Rescuing their Mates.

Think also how a bird will place its own feathered breast between its young and danger. This is a lesson that we may see around us in our summer fields, derived from these creatures of the air which are so often used in the Bible as symbols for teaching the most blessed and comforting truths.

Instances are well known where the older birds have gone to the relief of one of their wounded companions, and have actually borne it aloft, away from further harm; when, by reason of its own broken and helpless wings, it could not bear itself. This is a happy illustration derived from natural history, and reminding us of the words of Paul, that "they

who are strong should bear the infirmities of the weak."

An interesting writer gives us the following striking thoughts, which we take the liberty of quoting: "When we see how the active, the earnest, and the devout often suffer, it were well if we pondered what a kindly word can do, and, above all, if we avoided sharp and bitter ones. Let unkindness never send another arrow into the hearts around us. They will not be with us very long, nor we with them. Let unfilial carelessness never wound; let pride never pass over the poorer friends with cool indifference. Let us help men and women, seeing there is enough, indeed, to make them sigh.

"One of Solomon's proverbs shows the connection that exists between the mind and the man: 'Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it to stoop.' The picture is beautiful. We see how weakened men become by heavy-heartedness. They seem less able to cope with difficulty; and so, indeed, it is. Make a man's heart light, and you make him stronger; weaken him there, and he is enfeebled—he stoops as though age and infirmity were coming upon him. He is not so able to face his adversary as he was before; not so able to bid defiance to the storm and breast the waves.

"We should soon become a stooping race if it were not for the smile of man and the kind blessing of God. Of course, I have felt as you have, that this truth runs through the Bible, that God's favor and blessing makes us happy—happy even in tribulation; but we have also as clearly revealed the relation we sustain to each other: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

The Golden Rule.

There is something sweet and beautiful in the very derivation of the word "benevolence." *Bene volens*, good willing, or willing the good. This is the burden of that glorious song which broke across the world when the mysterious and despised Nazarene came into it. It was His mission; and because of it there has passed out upon the world, since His death, a fragrance

that shall cling to it while time endures. Be- | To give rightly we must have given purely
nevelence, as the meaning of the word indi- | with the heart before putting forth the hand.



THE STRONG SUPPORTING THE WEAK.—Rom. xv. 1.

cates, has much a passive as an active virtue; | Then will come the right gift. The heart's
or rather, which is the better way of putting it, | suggestions being right, true deeds will follow
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unto others as ye would that they should *not* do unto you?" There is evidently something wrong here. We are really noble as we feel and act for others. Platitudes, it may be said, to which all can subscribe without prejudice, but which business men cannot attend to. Nevertheless, men are chiefly worthy as they reduce such things from platitudes to practicalities.

A life spent in good deeds must, of necessity, bring pleasant reminiscences in old age, and *vice versa*. The closing scenes of the lives of men who have been benefactors to mankind would be much more desirable than those of the ill-livers—Wycherley, for instance. We are told of the dramatist, that in his declining years he frequently looked at the portrait painted of him when at the age of twenty-eight, by Lely, but never without a sigh; and that when he did so he murmured, "Quantum mutatus ab illo!" How changed, indeed! but had he thought of others, instead of his own passions and their gratification, the review would not have been so bitter, for some kind act might have broken in like a sunbeam upon the gloomy firmament.

Not that the fact of having lived well is enough to support the spirit, alone and unaided, when the present world recedes and the next advances; but if there be a pleasure in doing good, that pleasure can be enjoyed as a reminiscence in after life as well as at the time of the performance of the deed. The brothers Cheeryble must surely descend into the grave more honored and beloved than the mere Jacob Astors—the accumulators—of society.

There is one little preliminary to the exercise of benevolence to be mentioned which some are in the habit of forgetting, namely, that they must first get in order to give. This is only another mode of reading the adage, "Be just before you are generous." It is really astonishing, even in this world of appropriation, to see how many there are who can afford to be lavish with the resources of others.

One of the principal features of New Testament teaching relates to the ministry of angels. Heaven and earth are placed side by

side, and glad messengers pass and repass from one to the other. In the writings of the apostles the veil which divides two worlds is repeatedly drawn aside, and celestial beings appear in white raiment and immaculate beauty.

Entertaining Angels.

"Some have entertained angels unawares," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Abraham did so. When sitting at his tent door, under the shade of the terebinth of Mamre, while the eastern sun blazed fiercely around, he saw three mysterious men near his habitation.

He rose, went forward to greet them, made ready a lordly meal; and thus entertained, "unawares," messengers from the unseen world. Lot did so. Sitting at the gate of Sodom, as the sun shot slanting beams along the western sky, he discerned in the gloaming two strangers approach the city. These he pressed to spend the night under the shelter of his roof; and thus unconsciously did honor to the heavenly ambassadors whom God had sent to deliver him and his from the destruction impending the place. Gideon did so.

While threshing out his father's corn at Ophrah, he was startled by the sudden appearance of an unfamiliar form. He made ready some food for the wayfarer; but this was made to serve as a sacrifice, in the flame of which the stranger rose as a seraph to the sky. In these cases, "angels that do always behold the face of our Father in heaven" stood face to face with man; and those whose voices swell the symphonies of the skies spoke to human ears. Thus heavenly messengers disguised in earthly garb, received as men, entertained as "strangers," disappeared with their higher nature disclosed.

Not thus visibly do angels appear now; but often still do heavenly messengers visit us in veiled form, so that we do not recognize their high origin until they "brighten as they take their flight;" and sometimes not even then does their true nature appear to us. It is well, then, that we should be prepared to receive them in disguise, and should be ready to en-

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tain God's servants, whatever form they may assume. Let us, then, think of some of the "angels" whom we are apt to "entertain unawares."

Scarcely any subject, however, is more prominent in the teachings of the apostles than faith. This is the master virtue, and its praises are sounded on every page of Scripture.

"All men," says Dr. Guthrie, "are born with faith. Faith is as natural to a man as

turns; and when the babe holds out its little arms to her, I see in these arms the arms of faith; and when, like a believer restored to the bosom of his God, it is nestling in a mother's embrace and the cloud passes from its brow, and its tears are changed into smiles, and its terror into calm serenity, we behold the principle of faith in play.

"This is one of its earliest and—so far as nature is concerned—one of its most beautiful developments. So natural indeed is it for us



"ANGELS UNAWARES."—Heb. xiii. 2.

grief or love, or anger. One of the earliest flowers that spring up in the soul—it smiles on a mother from her infant's cradle; and living on through the rudest storms of life, it never dies till the hour of death.

"On the face of a child which has been left for a little time with strangers, and may be caressed with their kisses and courted with their smiles, and fondled and dandled in their arms, I have seen a cloud gathering and growing darker till at length it burst in cries of terror and showers of tears. The mother re-

to confide, and trust and believe, that a child believes whatever it is told, until experience shakes its confidence in human veracity. Its eye is caught by the beauty of some flower, or it gazes up with wonder on the starry heavens; with that inquisitiveness which in childhood, active as a bee, is ever on the wing, it is curious to know who made them, and would believe you if you said you made them yourself.

"Such is the faith which nature gives it in a father that it never doubts his word. It believes all he says, and is content to believe

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where it is not able to comprehend. For this as well as other reasons, our Saviour presented in a child the living model of a Christian. He left Abraham, the father of the faithful, to his repose in heaven; He left Samuel undisturbed to enjoy the quiet rest of his grave; He allowed Moses and Elias, after their brief visit, to return to the skies and wing their way back to glory. For a pattern of faith He took a boy from his mother's side, and setting him up in his gentle, blushing, shrinking modesty before the great assembly, He said, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in nowise enter therein.'

The Queen of Graces.

Says quaint old Thomas Adams: "When Samuel came to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, Eliab was presented to him, and he said, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.' He was deceived; he might have a goodly countenance and a high stature; but it was not he. Then passed by Abinadab; nor is this he. Then Shammah; nor is this he. Then seven of his sons were presented: 'The Lord hath chosen none of these.'

"'Be here all?' saith Samuel. Jesse answered, 'No; the youngest is behind, and he keepeth the sheep.' 'Then,' saith Samuel, 'send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come.' When he was come, he 'was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look on. And the Lord said, Arise and anoint him, for this is he.'

"If we should make such a quest for the principal grace; temperance is a sober and matronly virtue, but not she; humility in the lowest is respected of the highest, but not she; patience, a sweet and comfortable virtue, that looks cheerfully on troubles, when her breast is red with the blood of sufferance, her cheeks are white with the pureness of innocence, yet not she; charity is a lovely virtue, little innocents hang at her breasts, angels kiss her cheeks: 'Her lips are like a thread of scarlet, and her speech is comely; her temples are like a pomegranate within her locks;' all the ends of the earth call her blessed, yet not she.

"Lastly, faith appears, beautified with the robe of her Saviour's righteousness, adorned with the jewels of His grace, and shining in that fairness which He gave her. *Jam regina venit*, now comes the queen of graces: this is she."

Faith Needs to be Trained.

Richard Cecil one day went into a room where his little girl was, bright-eyed and happy as she could be. Somebody had just given her a box of very beautiful beads. The little child ran to her papa immediately to show this little gift. "They are very beautiful, my child," he said; "but now, my dear, throw them into the fire." The little girl looked for a moment. It was a great trial. "Now I shall not compel you to do it; I leave it to you; but you never knew papa ask you to do a thing that was not kind to you. I cannot tell you why, but if you can trust me, do so."

It cost a great effort; but the little child began in her own way to think, "Father has always been kind to me; I suppose it is right," and she took the box, and, with a great effort, threw it into the fire. The father said no more for some time. The next day, however, he presented her with something far more beautiful, and which she had long desired. "Now," said he, "my child, I did this to teach you to trust in that great Father in heaven. Many a time in your life He will require you to give up and to avoid what you cannot see the reason for avoiding; but if you trust that Father as you have trusted me, you will always find it best." That was training the child's faith.

Only benefit can come from the trial of faith. There was a British regiment once ordered to charge a body of French cuirassiers. The trumpets sounded and away they went boldly at them; but not to victory. They broke like a wave that launches itself against a rock. They were sacrificed to trader's fraud. Forged not of truest steel, but worthless metal, their swords bent double at the first stroke. What could human strength or the most gallant

bravery do against such odds? They were much to be proved as his faith—its truth and slaughtered like sheep on the field. And ever genuineness? This in effect is what Dr. since I read that tragedy, I have thought I Guthrie says concerning the trial of faith,



FAITH.—Heb. xi. 1.

would not go to battle unless my sword were proved. I would not go to sea with anchors that had not been tried. But of all things for a man's comfort and peace, what needs so

“Triumphant Faith!
Who, from the distant earth, looks up to heaven,
Seeing invisibility, suspending
Eternity upon the breath of God.

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She can pluck mountains from their rooted thrones,
 And hurl them into ocean; and from pain,
 And prisons, and contempt, extort the palm
 Of everlasting triumph. She doth tread
 Upon the neck of pride, like the free wind
 On angry ocean. Lo! with step erect
 She walks o'er whirlpool waves and martyr fires,
 And depths of darkness and chaotic voids;
 Dissolving worlds, rent heavens, and dying suns;
 Yea, and o'er paradises of earth's bliss,
 And oceans of earth's gold, and pyramids
 And temples of earth's glory; all these pave
 Her conquering path to heaven—all these she spurns
 With feet fire-shod, because her hand is placed
 Immovably in God's; her eye doth rest
 Unchangeably on His; nor will she stop
 Till, having crossed the stormy waves of pain
 And fiery trial, she may lay her head
 Upon her Father's breast and take the crown
 From love's rejoicing hand."

Faith and Works.

Faith and works are as necessary to our spiritual life as Christians, as soul and body are to our natural life as men; for faith is the soul of religion, and works the body. Says Longfellow:

Therefore love and believe, for works will follow spontaneous,
 Even as the day the sun; the right from the good is an offspring.
 Love is a bodily shape; and Christian works are no more than
 Animate faith and love, as flowers are the animate spring-tide.

The second chapter of the Epistle by James seems to describe a spiritual wedding. We are "bidden to a marriage." And as at the older marriage in Cana of Galilee, the Holy Master is present, and consummates the nuptials. The parties to be united are but symbolic personages, and yet are real and lifelike too. The bride is young and beautiful—ever young, and ever clothed upon with light as with a garment. Like Milton's Eve, she was

"For softness formed, and sweet attractive grace."

Her face is clear as the day—her look is firm, and yet trustful. She is not of the earth, but heaven-born, and wears her celestial parentage in every lineament of her radiant countenance. Her name is Faith. She is the daughter of God.

And beside her stands one whose lusty form was made for deeds of daring and endurance. He is sinewy and athletic. There is valor in his eye, and "cunning in his ten fingers," and strength in his right arm. He was created to act, to do, to suffer. He was formed for strife and struggle. His name is Action.

With solemn rites the two are joined in wedlock. They are both to love and both to obey. They are always to live, and move, and suffer, and conquer together. They are to be the fruitful parents of everything good on earth. On them, while united, Jehovah pronounces a "blessing" richer than that which gladdened the nuptials of Isaac and Rebekah, or of Jacob and Leah. While united, they are to live, and grow, and conquer. When separated, they are to droop and perish. For each other, and in each other, and with each other, their days of struggle and victory are to be passed, until time shall be no longer. And so Faith and Works were coupled by Infinite Wisdom, and in the presence of the world it was solemnly announced, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

From that union has sprung up a glorious progeny. All the mighty deeds which have ennobled and elevated humanity own that parentage. Faith and Action have been the source, under God, of everything good, and great, and enduring, in the Church of Christ; the very Church itself exists through them. The early apostles went out with their glad evangel to the nations under this double impulse, and with this double watchword. It was not enough to "believe my Gospel;" they were also to "preach my Gospel." It was not enough to love in the heart; the whole life was to be an embodiment and outflow of love. It was not enough to have a meek and gentle spirit; the young Church was to return good for evil, and thus overcome evil with good.

The Church was not only to be sound in heart, but active in limb and sinew also. It was to be a militant Church, contending earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints; a

courageous Church, standing fast for the Gospel; a suppliant Church, praying without ceasing; a busy Church, redeeming the time; a patient Church, bearing with all long-suffering; and a conquering Church, to evangelize all nations.

Its model men were men of faith and action. The great apostle seems to fly like a thunderbolt, kindling, and consuming! He is all ablaze with zeal. At Lystra rebuking the deluded worshippers—at Jerusalem confronting the Pharisees and the rulers on the castle-stairs—at Cæsarea startling Agrippa on his tribunal—at Rome preaching the reviled Gospel, both in his "own hired house" and in Cæsar's palace—he is everywhere the believer in full action, with the heart to feel and the hand to do.

Two gentlemen were one day crossing the river in a ferry-boat. A dispute about faith and works arose; one saying that good works were of small importance, and that faith was everything; the other asserting the contrary. Not being able to convince each other, the ferryman, an enlightened Christian, asked permission to give his opinion.

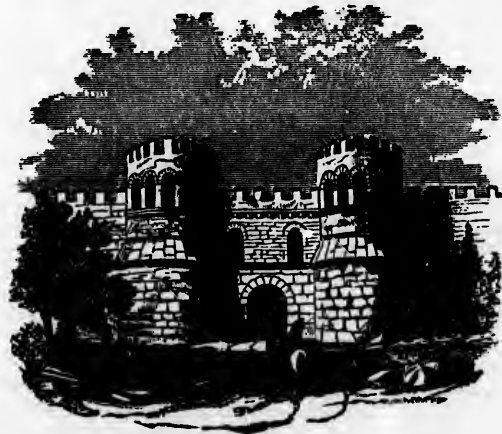
Consent being granted: he said: "I hold in my hand two oars. That in my right hand I call 'faith'; the other, in my left, 'works.' Now, gentlemen, please to observe: I pull the oar of

faith, and pull that alone. See! the boat goes round and round, and the boat makes no progress. I do the same with the oar of works, and with a precisely similar result—no advance. Mark! I pull both together: we go on apace, and in a very few minutes we shall be at our landing-place. So, in my humble opinion," he added, "faith without works, or works without faith, will not suffice. Let there be both, and the haven of eternal rest is sure to be reached."

As the flower is before the fruit, so is faith before good works. Faith is the parent of works, and the children will bear a resemblance to the parent.

It is not enough that the inward works of a clock are well constructed, and also the dial-plate and hands; the one must act on the other, the works must regulate the movement of the hands.

"Lo! when the boatman stems the flowing tide,
And aims direct his little boat to guide;
With both oars working he can headway make,
And leave the waters foaming in his wake;
But if one oar within the boat he lays,
In useless circles round and round he plays.
So faith and works, when both together brought,
With mighty power and heavenly life are fraught,
To help the Christian on his arduous road,
And urge him forward on his way to God;
If faith or works, no matter which, he drops,
Short of his journey's end he surely stops."



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CHAPTER XLIV.

THE VISION OF JOHN.



MOST remarkable book is the last in the Bible, which is the Revelation of John. There is a mystery about it which even adds to the interest with which all readers peruse it. Its language is lofty; its imagery is sublime, at times even terrible; its meaning is now plain, and now inscrutable, and throughout woful denunciations of evil are mingled with glowing descriptions of the heavenly world.

A brief account of the author of the book will serve to show his remarkable traits, and will help to a correct understanding of his various writings.

The epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem, at which the Son of man visited as a judge the city that had rejected its King, and inaugurated that spiritual kingdom upon earth which had now been established in Churches gathered from every nation of the civilized world—that epoch does not close the New Testament History. One apostle, of those whose names are prominent in the foundation of the Church, not only remained upon the earth to fulfil his work, but the more special part of that work—according to the views generally held of the date of his writings—may be said to have been but just beginning. It was not till the foundation of Christianity was historically complete, that the apostle John was divinely commissioned to utter prophecies of its future course, and to develop in his Epistles and Gospel those doctrinal aspects of Christ's teaching which were needed to correct the heresies now rapidly taking their rise.

The prominent place filled by John in the Gospel history, as one of the four disciples

who formed the innermost circle of the friends of Christ, and the high distinction of being "the disciple whom Jesus loved," might raise our surprise at reading so little of him in the Acts, did we not reflect that his special work is to be sought for in his writings. The portion of his life which stands out in the broad daylight of the Gospels is preceded and followed by periods over which there brood the shadows of darkness and uncertainty.

In most passages of the Gospels, John is named in connection with his brother James; and from the prevailing order it is inferred that he was the younger. Their father was Zebedee, their mother Salome, whom tradition makes the daughter of Joseph by his first wife, and consequently the half-sister to Jesus. They were brought up at Bethsaida, on the lake of Galilee, the town of that other pair of brothers—the sons of Jonas—who were to share with them Christ's closest intimacy, and with whom we find them partners in their occupation of fishermen.

The mention of the "hired servants," of Salome's "substance," of John's "own house," implies a position removed by at least some steps from absolute poverty. The fact that John was known to the high priest Caiaphas—as that acquaintance was hardly likely to be formed with a disciple of Christ—suggests the probability of some early intimacy between the two families. Of Zebedee we know nothing beyond his interposing no refusal when his sons were called to leave him; and his disappearance from the Gospel narrative leads to the inference that his death set Salome free to join her children in ministering to Christ.

Her character presents to us the same great features that were conspicuous in her son. From her—who followed Jesus and ministered to Him of her substance, who sought for her

two sons that they might sit, one on His right hand, the other on His left, in His kingdom—he might well derive his strong affections, his capacity for giving and receiving love, his eagerness for the speedy manifestation of the Messiah's kingdom.

The early years of the apostle were passed under this influence. He would be trained in all that constituted the ordinary education of Jewish boyhood. Though not taught in the schools of Jerusalem, and therefore in later life liable to the reproach of having no recognized position as a teacher, no Rabbinical education, he would yet be taught to read the Law and observe its precepts, to feed on the writings of the Prophets with the feeling that their accomplishment was not far off. For him too, as bound by the law, there would be, at the age of thirteen, the periodical pilgrimages to Jerusalem. He would become familiar with the stately worship of the Temple, with the sacrifice, the incense, the altar, and the priestly robes. May we not conjecture that then the impressions were first made which never afterward wore off?

Assuming that there is some harmony between the previous training of a prophet and the form of the visions presented to him, may we not recognize them in the rich liturgical imagery of the Apocalypse—in that union in one wonderful vision of all that was most wonderful and glorious in the predictions of the older prophets?

Concurrently with this there would be also the boy's outward life as sharing in his father's work. The great political changes which agitated the whole of Palestine would in some degree make themselves felt even in the village town in which he grew up. The Galilean fishermen must have heard, possibly with some sympathy, of the efforts made (when he was too young to join in them) by Judas of Gamala, as the great asserter of the freedom of Israel against their Roman rulers.

Like other Jews, he would grow up with strong and bitter feeling against the neighboring Samaritans. Lastly, before we pass into a period of greater certainty, we must not for-

get to take into account that to this period of his life belongs the commencement of that intimate fellowship with Simon Bar-jonah of which we afterward find so many proofs. That friendship may even then have been, in countless ways, fruitful for good upon the hearts of both.

The Beloved Disciple.

Of the four who enjoyed their Lord's especial intimacy, while Peter appears as the leader of the apostolic band, to John belongs the higher distinction of being "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" and this love is returned with a more single undivided heart by him than by any other. If Peter is the one who loved Jesus, John is the one whom Jesus loved. Some striking facts indicate why this was so—what was the character thus worthy of the love of Jesus of Nazareth. They hardly sustain the popular notion, which is fostered by the received types of Christian art, of a nature gentle, yielding, effeminate. The name Boanerges implies a vehemence, zeal, intensity, which gave to those who bore it the might of Sons of Thunder.

That spirit broke out once and again—when they joined their mother in asking for the highest places in the kingdom of their Master, and declared that they were able to drink of the cup that he drank, and to be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with—when they rebuked one who cast out devils in their Lord's name, because he was not of their company—when they sought to call down fire from heaven upon a village of the Samaritans.

This energy added to the love of him who reclined at the Last Supper with his head upon his Master's breast the courage to follow Him into the council-chamber of Caiaphas, and even the prætorium of Pilate, and to stand by His cross—with Christ's mother and his own, and Mary Magdalene—when all the rest forsook Him and fled. There he received the sacred trust, which must have influenced all his subsequent home life, giving him a second mother in the blessed Virgin. He gave a home also to the penitent Peter; and when they, first of the apostles, learned from Mary

Magdalene throws a light that John is most eagerly restrained by look.

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So, too, with the Lake of Tiberias, in the twilight, the first to go toward the shore. The friends. It is his own future question—"L do?" The rep into the legend John's life, sur a rebuke of P "If I will th doubtless a pro and they seem the apostles, J trophe of the C tion of Jerusalem coming in His

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Magdalene the resurrection of the Lord, it throws a light upon their respective characters that John is the more impetuous, running on most eagerly to the rock-tomb; Peter, the less restrained by awe, is the first to enter in and look.

Peter's Ardent Nature.

So, too, when Jesus appeared to them by the Lake of Galilee, John is the first to recognize, in the dim form seen in the morning twilight, the presence of his risen Lord; Peter, the first to plunge into the water and swim toward the shore where He stood calling to them. The last words of the Gospel reveal to us the deep affection which united the two friends. It is not enough of Peter to know his own future. That at once suggests the question—"Lord, and what shall this man do?" The reply of Jesus, which was perverted into the legends that gather about the close of John's life, surely means something more than a rebuke of Peter's curiosity. The words—"If I will that he tarry till I come"—are doubtless a prophecy, as well as an hypothesis; and they seem to intimate that, alone of all the apostles, John should survive that catastrophe of the Old Dispensation in the destruction of Jerusalem, which made way for Christ's coming in His kingdom.

The association of Peter and John appears still in the opening scenes of the Acts—their attendance together to worship in the Temple—the miracle of healing the blind man—the confessorship before the Sanhedrin—the gift of the Holy Ghost to those very Samaritans on whom John once wished to call down fire from heaven.

This is his last appearance in the Acts; and he is not mentioned either in connection with Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, nor as engaged in labors like those of Peter at Lydda, Joppa, and Cæsarea, nor in the persecution in which the sword of Herod divided him from his brother James. Neither does John appear as taking an active part in the so-called "Council at Jerusalem;" but he was present at the private conference of the apostles with Paul and Barnabas; and Paul

names John, with James and Cephas, as a "pillar" of the Church, and as one of those whose mission it was to "go to the circumcision."

This one passage proves that the scene of John's labors thus far was Jerusalem and Judæa. To the work of teaching, organizing, and exhorting the Hebrew churches may have been added special calls, like that which had drawn him with Peter to Samaria. The fulfilment of the solemn charge intrusted to John may have led him to a life of loving and reverent thought, rather than to one of conspicuous activity. We may, at all events, feel sure that it was a time in which the natural elements of his character, with all their fiery energy, were being purified and mellowed, rising step by step to that high serenity which we find perfected in the closing portion of his life.

A Tradition Concerning John.

The tradition which ascribes to him a life of celibacy receives some confirmation from the absence of his name in 1 Cor. ix. 5. It harmonizes with all we know of his character, to think of his heart as so absorbed in the higher and diviner love that there was no room left for the lower and the human.

After a long interval, the apostle reappears in that close connection with the Churches of Asia Minor, which is attested alike by the Apocalypse and by the uniform tradition of the Church. It is a natural conjecture that he remained in Judæa till the death of the Virgin released him from his trust. Tradition carries him from Judæa to Ephesus; but it gives us no clear light as to the motives of his removal: the time is so variously fixed, under Claudius, Nero, or even Domitian, as to prove that nothing certain was known: and our only safe conclusion is to reject the two extremes.

The Pastoral Epistles of Paul absolutely exclude the idea of any connection of John with Ephesus down to their date, that is, to A. D. 66 at the earliest. On the other hand, it seems almost a necessary inference, from John's Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, that the apostle who writes to them with such high

authority and such familiar knowledge of their condition, had already labored some time among them. This is in accordance with the analogy of Paul's letters to churches which he had recently visited—for example, the Thessalonians and Galatians; but these cases may also warn us not to exaggerate the time of the previous ministration.

It is the plain meaning of John's own words, in the opening of the Apocalypse, that he had been banished as a Christian confessor to the island of Patmos at a time of general persecution; and the place seems to suggest that he had been arrested in the province of Asia. Though his banishment may have resulted from some more local and temporary cause, the question has been generally narrowed to the issue between the two great persecutions under Nero and Domitian. The consent of Christian antiquity is in favor of the latter view: the former is a modern theory, based on the internal evidence of the book, and connected with a particular scheme of interpretation. Some of those who hold the later date regard the Apocalypse as the latest book of the New Testament; but others place the Gospel and the Epistles after it.

Persecution and Banishment.

The tradition of the Church uniformly represents the apostle as spending his last days at Ephesus, and the general outline of his work there may be gathered from the Revelation and the Epistles. The facts which these writings assert or imply are—that, having come to Ephesus, some persecution, local or general, drove him to Patmos: that the Seven Churches, of which Asia was the centre, were special objects of his solicitude: that in his work he had to encounter men who denied the truth on which his faith rested; and others who, with a railing and malignant temper, disputed his authority.

If to this we add that he must have outlived all, or nearly all, of those who had been the friends and companions of his maturer years—that this lingering age gave strength to an old imagination that his Lord had promised

him immortality—that, as it remembering the actual words which had been thus perverted, the longing of his soul gathered itself up in the cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"—that from some who spoke with authority he received a solemn attestation of the confidence they reposed in him—we have stated all that has any claim to the character of historical truth.

Singular Legends.

The picture which tradition fills up for us has the merit of being full and vivid, but it blends together, without much regard to harmony, things probable and improbable. He is shipwrecked off Ephesus, and arrives there in time to check the progress of heresies which sprang up after Paul's departure. Then, or at a later period, he numbers among his disciples men like Polycarp, Papias, Ignatius. In the persecution under Domitian he is taken to Rome, and there, by his boldness, though not by death, gains the crown of martyrdom. The boiling oil into which he is thrown has no power to hurt him. He is then sent to labor in the mines, and Patmos is the place of his exile.

The accession of Nerva frees him from danger, and he returns to Ephesus. There he settles the canon of the Gospel history by formally attesting the truth of the first three Gospels, and writing his own to supply what they left wanting. The elders of the Church are gathered together, and John, as by a sudden inspiration, begins with the wonderful opening, "In the beginning was the Word." Heresies continue to show themselves, but he meets them with the strongest possible protest. He refuses to pass under the same roof (that of the public baths of Ephesus) as their foremost leader, lest the house should fall down on them and crush them. Through his agency the great temple of Artemis (Diana) is at length stripped of its magnificence, and even levelled with the ground! He introduces and perpetuates the Jewish mode of celebrating Easter. At Ephesus, if not before, as one who was a true priest of the Lord, he bore on his brow the plate of gold with the sacred name

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More true to the New Testament character



THE APOSTLE JOHN AT PATMOS.—Rev. i. 10.

tion, a later tradition tells us how the old man used to find pleasure in the playfulness and fondness of a favorite bird, and how he defended himself against the charge of unworthy

of the apostle is the story, told by Clement of Alexandria, of his special and loving interest in the younger members of his flock; of his eagerness and courage in the attempt to rescue

one of them who had fallen into evil courses. The scene of the old and loving man, standing face to face with the outlaw chief whom, in days gone by, he had baptized, and winning him to repentance is one which we could gladly look on as belonging to his actual life.

The Closing Scene.

Not less beautiful is that other scene which comes before us as the last act of his life. When all capacity to work and teach is gone—when there is no strength even to stand—the spirit still retains the power to love, and the lips are still open to repeat, without change and variation, the command which summed up all his Master's will—"Little children, love one another."

The very time of the apostle's death lies within the region of conjecture rather than of history, and the dates that have been assigned for it range from A. D. 89 to A. D. 120.

In relation to Christian doctrine, John is, as in the title of the Apocalypse, "John, the Holy Divine"—not in the modern sense of a theologian, but from his witness that "the Word was God." This also was the fruit of his intimate converse with his Lord, and of a spirit fitted for such fellowship. Nowhere is the vision of the Eternal Word, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," so unclouded; nowhere are there such personal reminiscences of the Christ in His most distinctively human characteristics.

It was a true feeling that led the latter interpreter of the mysterious forms of the four living creatures round the throne—departing in this instance from the earlier traditions—to see in him the "Eagle" that soars into the highest heaven, and looks upon the unclouded sun. Descending from the regions of fancy to those facts on which the truth of the Gospel rests, it is this testimony to Christ that is so emphatically asserted alike in the opening of his General Epistle, and in what we may call the attestation clause of his Gospel—whether that clause was penned by an inspired self-consciousness, or added as the testimony of those among whom he lived and wrote: "This is the

disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true."

The way is now prepared for us to consider the extraordinary vision recorded in the closing book of the Bible.

The book entitles itself: "A revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John; who hath declared this word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, according as he saw." Blessed they who read, hear and obey:—the time is at hand! "John, to the seven Churches in Asia," wishes grace from the Eternal God and the seven spirits before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Everlasting glory to Him for our redemption! Amen!

The Angelic Messenger.

"Lo, He cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, even they that pierced Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen. I am Alpha and Omega (the beginning and the ending), saith the Lord God, who is and was and is to be—the Almighty."

John proceeds to state that he, their brother in Christian hopes and trials, was in the island of Patmos on account of his Christian profession; and being in the spirit on the Lord's day, he heard a trumpet-like voice commissioning him to write in a book, and send to each of certain seven Churches of the province of Asia the several messages following.

Looking round, he saw, in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, a majestic and dazzling vision of Christ, with seven stars in his right hand. He falls down as if dead before this celestial personage, who raises him and bids him not fear, saying, "I am the first and the last and the living, living forever though I was dead, and possessing the keys of death and Hades." The seven candlesticks allegorically mean the Churches to which he is to

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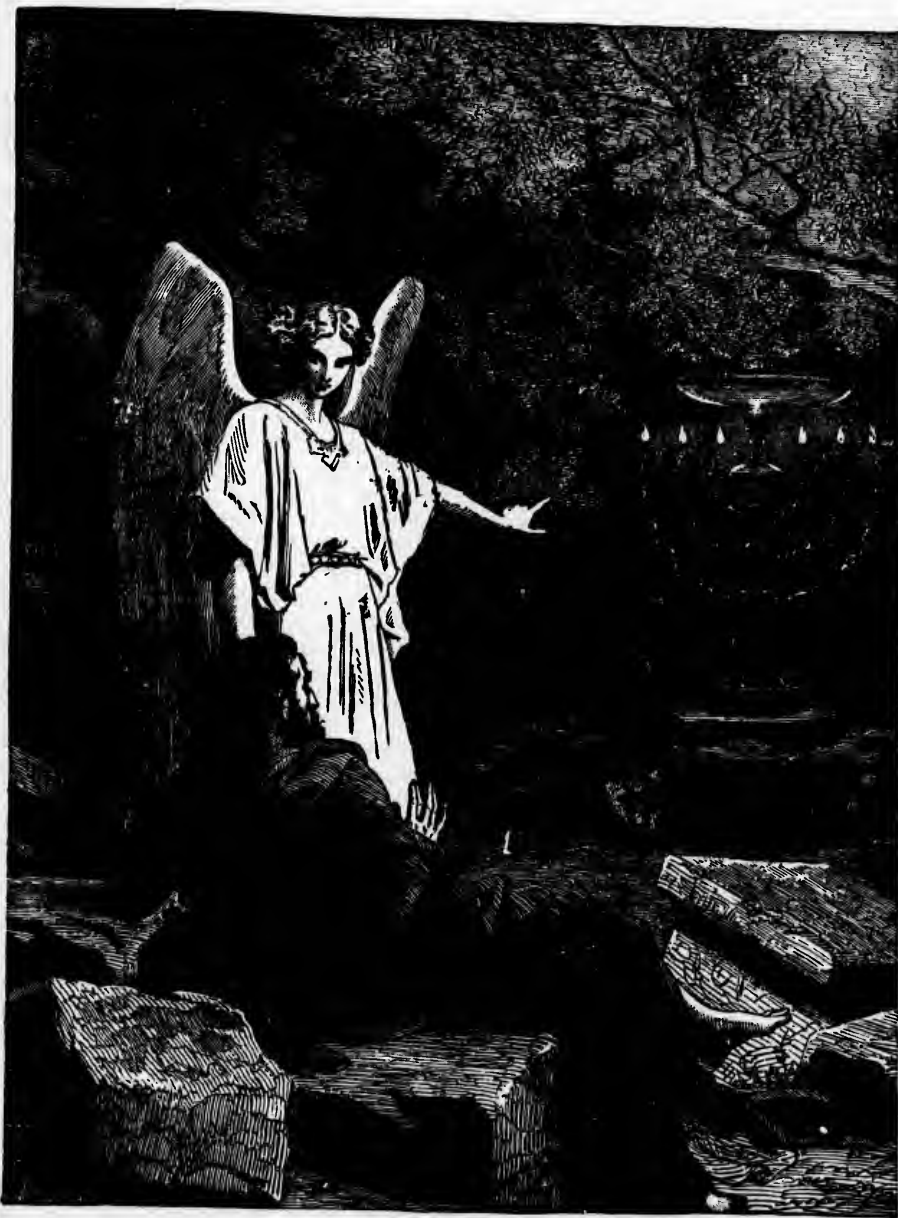
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VISION OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK —Rev. i. 12.

write, and the seven stars the angels of those Churches.

To the angel of the Church at Ephesus he is to write in praise of his faithful zeal in opposing false apostles, and his patient endurance; reminding him, however, that he has relaxed from his earlier generosity and kindness, and urging him to resume it, lest his candlestick be removed. He is to be especially commended for his antipathy to the Nicolaitans. He that conquereth shall eat of the tree of life in God's Paradise.

Patient Endurance Commended.

The message to the angel of the Church at Smyrna praises their endurance of poverty and reproach at the hands of the Jews (that synagogue of Satan!). Some of them will suffer imprisonment. Let them be faithful even unto death. The conqueror shall not suffer harm from the second death.

The angel of Pergamos has been faithful to the name of Christ, though the throne of Satan is near his dwelling. But there are among that Church some followers of Balaam. As that false prophet led the Israelites to idolatry and fornication, so, among the Pergamene Christians, there were some who adopted the hateful Nicolaitan practices. The conqueror shall eat of the stored-up manna, and receive a white stone inscribed with a new name.

The Church at Thyatira is commended, and its later works are pronounced better than its first. But there is a false prophetess, a Jezebel, seducing the servants of Christ into the same practices as the Balaamite prophets at Pergamos and Ephesus. She and her votaries shall be smitten with illness. Let those who have hitherto escaped this corruption persevere; and the conqueror shall rule over the nations and have the brightness of the morning star.

Stern Reproof.

To the angel of the Church of Sardis the message is one of deep reproof. If they do not forthwith repent, the judge will come upon them unawares. Yet there are a few names, even in Sardis, of those who have not defiled

their garments, and who shall walk with Christ in white.

To the angel of Philadelphia it is written, that the opposing synagogue of Satan (who wrongly call themselves Jews!) shall come and fall at his feet, and this Church shall be kept safe in the coming trial; after which the conqueror shall become a pillar in the temple of God, inscribed with the names of God and of the New Jerusalem, and with the new name of Jesus.

The angel of the Laodicean Church is reproached for indifference, wordliness, and carelessness; he is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm; says he is rich, and does not know that he is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. The Lord rebukes and chastens those whom He loves. Let these repent. He knocks at the door, and will come in to those who open for Him. The conqueror shall sit with Him on His throne.

The Celestial Throne.

A second vision shows the elder "a door opened in heaven." The same voice that he had heard before says: "Come up hither and I will show thee what must come to pass after these things." Immediately he is "in the spirit," and sees the Divine throne, much in the manner of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel's visions. It is encompassed with twenty-four other thrones, on which the twenty-four elders sit, clothed in white, with golden crowns on their heads. Seven lamps represent the seven administrative spirits of God. Four living creatures "full of eyes," and each having six wings, with the faces respectively of a lion, a calf, a man and an eagle, adore before the throne continually.

A book sealed with seven seals is produced, and proclamation is made, demanding who is worthy to open the book. None could do it, except a little lamb that stood before the throne as if it had been slaughtered. It had seven horns and seven eyes, representing "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." It took the book from the right hand of Him upon the throne; and then the four creatures

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and the twenty-four elders sang blessings upon the name of the Lamb; myriads of angels responded; and all creation joined in praise of Him upon the throne and of the Lamb.

The opening of the seven seals then takes place. On the first being broken, there comes forth a rider on a white horse, conquering and to conquer (doubtless the emblem of Christianity, if not of Christ personally).

On the second seal being broken, a rider on a bay horse comes forth, commissioned to take peace from the earth—the messenger of War.

The third seal being broken, a rider appears on a black horse, representing Famine.

The fourth being opened, a pale horse, with a rider named Death, appears; and the grave goes with him. He is empowered to kill one-fourth of the earth's population.

On the opening of the fifth seal, the souls of Christian martyrs are seen under the altar, crying for vengeance. White robes are given to them, and they are told to rest a while, till their number should be filled up by those who were still to be slain.

Terrible Phenomena.

The Lamb opens the sixth seal, and there is a mighty shaking of sun, moon, and stars; the heaven shrivels up as a roll of parchment; hills and islands are moved; men of all grades hide themselves in dens and mountains, and say to the hills and rocks, Fall on us!

The opening of the seventh seal is delayed. Four angels stand at the four corners of the earth restraining the four winds. Another angel hastens from the east with a warrant from the living God, crying out to the four not to hurt earth or sea till the servants of God shall have been sealed on their foreheads. A hundred and forty-four thousand are so sealed, namely, twelve thousand of each tribe. A vast multitude from all nations, clothed in white, with palm branches in their hands, praise God and the Lamb.

The seventh seal is opened, amid silence in heaven for half an hour. The seven angels have their trumpets given them. Another angel comes and stands by the altar with a golden

censer, in which he offers much incense, that incense being "the prayers of the saints." Then he fills the censer with fire from the altar, and throws it upon the earth; and amid thunder, lightning, and earthquake, the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets.

Sounding the Trumpets.

The first angel sounds his trumpet; hail and fire destroy a third of the trees and all the grass.

The second angel sounds; and a third of the living creatures of the sea die, and a third of the vessels upon it are destroyed.

The third angel sounds his trumpet; and a third part of the water becomes wormwood, and many die from the bitterness of the waters.

The fourth angel sounds; and the third of the sun, moon, and stars are smitten; whereupon a compassionate angel is heard lamenting for what still impends.

The fifth angel sounds; and a star falls from heaven to earth. The angel unlocks the bottomless pit; and amid the smoke, locusts come out to torment those who had not the seal of God on their foreheads. For five months these awful locusts harass their victims. They have a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose Hebrew name is Abaddon, and Greek Apollyon (Destroyer). This first woe is to be followed by two more.

The sixth angel sounds his trumpet; whereupon a voice from the horns of the golden altar commands him to "loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates." They come forth commissioned for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, to slay a third part of mankind. Their army is two hundred millions. They do their commission; but the rest of mankind do not repent of their idolatry and wickedness.

Another mighty angel then descends, with a little book open in his hand; and setting his right foot upon the sea and his left upon the land, swears that there shall be no longer delay, but that so soon as the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet, "the mystery of God shall be finished, according to His glad-tidings



THE ANGEL WITH THE BOOK.—Rev. x. 1.

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to His prophets." John receives from the angel the little open book, which he is directed to eat. He does so, and finds it sweet to the taste, but bitter afterwards. The angel tells him that he must prophesy further respecting many peoples and nations, and tongues and kings.

He gives him a measuring-rod, and bids him measure the Temple, exclusive of the outer court, which is given to the Gentiles, who will tread the holy city under foot forty-two months. Two witnesses meanwhile shall prophesy 1,260 days in sackcloth; they are "the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." But when they have finished their testimony, the beast from the bottomless pit will kill them, and their bodies will be exposed in the city of Jerusalem, "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." The Gentiles will exult over their death; but after three days and a half they will rise to life again, and ascend into heaven in a cloud; a great earthquake will destroy one-tenth of the city and 7,000 men; and the survivors, alarmed, will give glory to God. This is the second woe; the third is close at hand.

War in Heaven.

The seventh angel sounds; and great voices in heaven proclaim that "the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." The twenty-four elders fall on their faces and thank God that He has taken to Him His great power, and that the time has come for judging the dead and recompensing His saints. The Temple of God in heaven is laid open to view.

Another scene now opens. A woman, clothed with the sun, having the moon at her feet and twelve stars on her head, seems to represent religion, or the Gospel, or the Church. A huge dragon is her antagonist. She brings forth a son, destined to "tend the Gentiles with an iron crook." The child is carried away to the throne of God; the woman retreats to the wilderness for 1,260 days.

There is war in heaven between Michael and his angels and this dragon, who is the Devil and Satan. The latter and his angels are thrown down to the earth. Heaven rejoices; but woe for the inhabitants of the earth and sea, against whom the Devil now rages, conscious that his time is coming to an end. He pursues the woman, to whom wings are given to escape from him. He pours a torrent of water from his mouth to carry her away; but the earth drinks it up in her rescue. The dragon then "makes war upon the rest of her offspring who keep God's commands and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The narrator is next standing on the seashore (in Patmos, we suppose), when he sees a wild beast coming up out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns, a diadem on each horn, and a name of blasphemy upon each head. This wild beast is mixed up of leopard, bear and lion; and the dragon gives him his own power and throne and authority. One of his heads seems to receive a deadly wound, but it is healed; and the beast, aided by the dragon, receives new homage everywhere. He is enabled to make war on the saints and overcome them, and has power, for forty-two months, over all but those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. But retribution shall come. Let the saints have patience! Another beast comes up out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb, but with speech like a dragon. He wields the authority of the first beast, performs wonders, and seduces men to the worship of the principal beast, putting a name or number on their right hands or foreheads, without which no one may buy and sell. This mysterious number seems to be 666.

Vision of the Glorified.

The next vision, amid the sound of heavenly music, shows the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, with the 144,000 redeemed Israelites before mentioned in the seventh chapter. They are "the first fruits to God and the Lamb," pure from all taint of idolatrous pollution. Another angel flies forth with the Gospel, to offer it with all urgency to every nation, de-





THE ANGELS WITH THE VIALS.—REV. XVI. 1.

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claring that the hour of Divine judgment is come. Another angel follows, crying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (evidently meaning Roman paganism).

A third angel follows, proclaiming everlasting Divine wrath against all who worship the beast and receive his mark. Let the saints be patient! A voice from heaven proclaims, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord henceforth! Then a Son of man appears upon a white cloud, with a sickle in his hand; and another angel, from the Temple, bids him reap the ripe harvest of the earth. A third angel from the Temple, armed with a sickle, is ordered by a fourth from the altar (who has power over fire) to gather the earth's vintage and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. All this is done accordingly.

The Vials of Wrath.

Another vision shows seven angels having the last seven plagues to complete the wrath of God. Those who have successfully resisted the beast and his image and his mark are singing the songs of Moses and of the Lamb to the One Almighty. The seven angels are seen coming out of the Temple. One of the four living creatures gives them each a golden vial full of the wrath of the ever-living God. A voice from the Temple bids them go and pour their vials out upon the earth. The first vial produces ulcers upon those who worship the image of the beast. The second is poured upon the sea and turns it into blood, destroying all life. The third is poured upon the rivers and springs, and they become blood. Then the angel of the waters acknowledges the justice of this retribution upon those who had shed the blood of the saints; and an angel from the altar responds.

The fourth vial is then poured upon the sun, causing it to scorch men; and they blaspheme instead of repenting. The fifth vial is poured upon the beast's throne and darkens his kingdom; and blaspheming increases. The sixth is poured upon the river Euphrates, drying it up so that the kings from the east can pass over.

Three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, and go to all the kings of the whole world to summon them for one final and desperate battle at "Armageddon" (mount of assembling). Then the seventh angel pours his vial into the air, and Heaven shouts, It is done! Amid awful thunder, lightning, earthquake and hail, the great city breaks into three parts, and the other Gentile cities fall, and the great Babylon is remembered in wrath. But men blaspheme still.

Great Babylon.

One of the seven angels calls the seer in spirit into the wilderness, and shows him this judgment under another emblem—that of a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns, whose idolatrous abominations and persecution of the saints are described. Upon her head is the mysterious (or enigmatical) inscription, "Babylon the Great," etc. The beast upon which she sits "was, but is not, and will appear again;" it is "about to ascend out of the bottomless deep and go to perdition."

The enigma is then expounded as follows: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits." "They are also seven kings, of whom five have fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue but a short space. And the beast that was and is not is himself both an eighth and one of the seven, and is going to destruction." The ten horns are ten future kings, of transient power, to be derived from the beast, and used in his service in warring against the Lamb. The Lamb will overcome them, and they will then turn their power against the woman, Babylon.

A powerful and glorious angel now proclaims, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen!" Another voice calls upon the people of God to come out of her, lest they partake of her sins and punishment. In language recalling to mind that of the old Jewish prophets against the literal Babylon and Tyre and other doomed heathen cities, this voice denounces her and



makes the heathen earth mourn for her, while |struction and oblivion that shall befall her,
heaven and apostles and prophets rejoice over | So shall the blood of the saints be avenged!



OVERTHROW OF DIABOLUS.—Rev. xx. 8.

her; and a mighty angel dashes a millstone | All heaven praises God for this execution
into the sea, as an emblem of the utter de- | of vengeance. The four-and-twenty elders

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and the four living creatures worship and praise God for it. Heavenly voices proclaim the approaching marriage of the Lamb. His bride is ready, clothed in the righteous deeds of the saints. The seer falls down and would have done homage to the angel that showed him these things; but the angel forbade, saying, "I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren: worship God."

Heaven opens again, and the rider upon a white horse appears. His name is "Faithful

and descends from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit and a chain, and binds the dragon, that old serpent, the Devil and Satan, and casts him into the pit for a thousand years.

Thrones are set out, and those who sit upon them are deputed to pass judgment. The souls of martyrs and of all who had refused to worship the beast and his image come to life, to reign with Christ the thousand years. This is the first resurrection. Happy he who shares



THE RIVER OF LIFE.—Rev. xxii. 1.

and True," "The Word of God," "King of kings and Lord of lords." An angel, standing in the sun, invites the birds of prey to banquet on the enemies of God. The beast and the kings of the earth gather their armies together against the rider upon the white horse; the beast and the false prophet are seized and cast into the lake of burning brimstone; and the rider slays the rest with his sword which issues from his mouth, and the birds banquet on their carcasses. An angel

in it! The second death will have no power over such. The rest of the dead are not to come to life till after the thousand years.

At that period Satan will be set loose again, and will seduce the nations, Gog and Magog among the rest, to attack the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but they are destroyed by fire from heaven, and the Devil, their seducer, is finally cast into the fiery lake, to join the beast and the false prophet in torment forever and ever. Then all the dead are

judged according to their works. Death and the grave are thrown into the lake of fire, with all who are not written in the book of life. This is the second death.

A more minute vision of the Millennium is now presented. Earth and heaven pass away, and a new earth and heaven arise. The New Jerusalem descends from heaven, and God will dwell with mankind in it. He who sits on the throne proclaims the blessedness of every one that conquereth, and devotes all the wicked to the "second death." One of the seven angels of punishment carries the seer away in the spirit to a high mountain, where he sees the New Jerusalem, "the Lamb's wife," as it descends from heaven.

The First and the Last.

A gorgeous description of it follows. Its extent, on measurement by the angel, proves to be 12,000 furlongs (about 1,380 miles) square. It has twelve gates, denoting the tribes of Israel; and its walls have twelve foundations (all of precious stones), denoting the twelve apostles of Christ. There is no Temple in this holy city, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it;" nor are sun and moon needed to light it. The nations shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring honor and glory to it. Nothing that defiles shall enter it.

A pure river of living water, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, flows along its streets; and between the street and the river, at intervals, the tree of life grows, bearing fruit every month, and healing the nations by its leaves. There the servants of

God, with His name upon their foreheads, shall worship Him and behold His face, and reign forever and ever.

The angel (Jesus apparently) asserts the truth of these visions, and their speedy fulfilment: "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." John falls down at the angel's feet to do him homage (as once before), and is, as before, directed to worship God.

He must not seal up this prophecy, for the time is at hand. He that is unjust will now remain so, and he that is righteous will be righteous still. "Behold, I come quickly" (the angel pursues), "and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

"Blessed they who do his commandments," the seer responds.

The angel resumes: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel" (my messenger, John) "to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and offspring of David and the bright morning star. And the spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him that heareth say, Come! And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Imprecations are uttered by the seer against any who should add to, or take from, the words of this prophecy; and the book concludes with the often-repeated intimation that its fulfilment is immediately at hand:

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."



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BIBLE STORIES FOR THE YOUNG,

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NARRATIVES OF SCENES AND EVENTS.



THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.—Gen. iii. 6.

THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.—The Bible begins with an account of the creation of the world. The sun, moon and stars, the land and water, the trees, plants and animals, were made, and the whole work was pronounced to be very good. Then Adam was formed from the dust of the earth, a living soul was breathed into him, and Eve was given to be his companion and helpmeet. A beautiful garden for their abode was planted eastward in Eden, and they were permitted to eat of every tree of the garden with the exception of one. If they tasted the fruit of this tree they would die. Eve was tempted by the serpent, and was told that disobedience would not result in death, but she would become as a god, knowing good and evil. She listened and ate, and from that moment the curse of sin came upon

the earth. She in turn became the tempter of Adam, who yielded to her persuasions, as she did to those of the serpent. This is the Scriptural narrative of the fall of our first parents. Having been created holy in the image of God, by one great act of folly they lost their first estate.

ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FROM PARADISE.—The banishment of the guilty pair from the bowers of Eden followed their sin. They were startled by a voice which was heard in the garden in the cool of the day. Suddenly alarmed, they hid themselves among the trees and endeavored to escape. Fear was awakened when it was too late, and the Lord God having called unto Adam, he was put on trial for his sin, and both he and Eve were driven forth from their happy home.



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FROM PARADISE.—Gen. iii. 23, 24.
(671)



BANISHMENT FROM PARADISE.—Gen. iii. 19.

AFTER THE BANISHMENT FROM PARADISE.—The exiles from Eden went forth into an inhospitable world. Their life henceforth was to be one of toil and sorrow. Bereft of their fair Paradise, they were to learn the meaning of suffering and death. The fatal moment was past; the early innocence could not be recalled; on every side were signs of woe; the dust to which the guilty ones were destined to return must be wet with their tears. The ground which, in its virgin state, could give birth to the bloom and beauty of Eden, now bore thorns and thistles, and the ruined earth presented a pathetic contrast to the loveliness of the garden which formed the first abode. Yet it must not be supposed that no gleams of hope and mercy tinged the dark cloud which had so suddenly appeared. There was to be enmity between the evil tempter and the woman, and the assurance was given that the serpent should be bruised and his power finally destroyed. While we have in the first chapters of the Bible the unhappy narrative of a

Paradise lost, we have in the closing chapters a Paradise regained.

SACRIFICE OF CAIN AND ABEL.—Two sons were given to Adam and Eve, and in time they grew to be men. The name of the elder was Cain, whose occupation was tilling the ground; the name of the younger was Abel, who was a shepherd. The practice of worship and sacrifice had already been commenced; the smoke from the altar's flame had already ascended toward heaven. Abel understood quite well that an offering from his flock, the lamb, which is an emblem of innocence and purity, would be acceptable to God. Cain also wished to make an offering, and so brought of the fruits of the earth, and was

professedly as devout a worshipper as his brother. The Lord had respect to the offering of Abel, but that of Cain was rejected. The anger of Cain was excited at once, and showed a sudden jealousy and hatred of his brother. God asked the occasion of his wrath, and assured him if he did well he would be accepted. Alas, he had done a great wrong.



SACRIFICE OF CAIN AND ABEL.—Gen. iv. 4, 5.

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DEATH OF ABEL.—Gen. iv. 8.

THE DEATH OF ABEL.—In the very morning of creation the earth was stained with blood. The fires of sacrifice kindled by these two brothers had gone out, but not the fire of envy and revenge in the heart of one of them. Cain talked with Abel, and at the same time watched his opportunity to strike the fatal blow. When they were in the field together Abel was slain, and now in the annals of the first family of the human race we have the first record of the greatest crime that can be committed. The elder brother was a murderer. Sin had grown with startling rapidity, and had proved its desperate nature. Promptly, as appears from the narrative in Genesis, the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? Cain, as if hoping like all criminals to conceal his guilt, replied that he did not know. No language could be more graphic than that in which his crime was stated. He was told that his brother's blood was crying from the ground. From that hour Cain was a marked man; swift punishment overtook him; the Divine judgment

was speedily pronounced, and the guilty criminal went forth to be a wanderer in the earth.

NOAH COMMANDED TO BUILD THE ARK.—Coming to the history of Noah, we find that during his time the earth had grown to be very wicked. A race of mighty men had appeared, but very little of good could be said concerning them. The statement is that every thought and imagination were only evil continually, and that God resolved to send a flood of waters to sweep away the wicked generation. Noah, however, endeavored to be an upright man, and preparations were made to save him and his family. He was commanded to build an ark which should float upon the

great deep, and for the space of one hundred and twenty years he patiently worked upon the huge vessel, receiving Divine direction as to its construction. The kind of wood to be used, the length, breadth and height, the number of stories, the position of the door and window, the method of stopping the crevices to keep the water out, were all stated.



NOAH COMMANDED TO BUILD THE ARK—Gen. vi. 13-18.



iv. 4, 5.



NOAH LEAVING THE ARK.—Gen. viii. 18, 19.

NOAH LEAVING THE ARK.—Upon the completion of the ark Noah and his family, comprising in all eight souls, entered it, and took with them two of a kind, male and female, of beasts, fowls, and everything that creepeth, in order that life in the earth might not be entirely destroyed. Then the foundations of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven opened. Forty days and nights the torrents poured down, turning the land into a sea, filling the valleys, rising above the mountains, and carrying destruction far and wide. One world was drowned, but a new one was floating in the ark. A vivid picture is given in Genesis of the desolation which prevailed. Everything, even to the herbs of the field, perished. One hundred and fifty days the waters prevailed. During this period Noah took measures to ascertain whether the waters were subsiding. We have the picture of a dove going forth from the window of the ark and returning without finding a resting-place. Again it went forth, and came back with an olive

branch, showing that land was somewhere to be found. On its next excursion it did not return, but settled itself in its new home. The wandering ark finally rested on Mount Ararat.

NOAH'S THANK-OFFERING.—The first act of Noah and his family upon leaving the ark was that of worship and thanksgiving. An altar was erected and loaded with offerings. As the consuming fire flashed heavenward the Lord was well pleased with the fragrance of the sacrifice, His infinite pity was moved, and He resolved in His heart never to flood the earth again. Seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, were promised so long as the earth re-

maineth. One of the most attractive parts of this scene of worship is the making of a covenant, and fixing the sign of it in the heavens. In this covenant every living creature was included, and was assured of the Divine protection and care. The seven-colored rainbow, arching the sky, was made the pledge that the covenant never would be broken.



NOAH'S THANK-OFFERING.—Gen. viii. 20.



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NOAH CURSES HAM.—Gen. ix. 24, 25.

NOAH CURSES HAM.—Looking again at the history in Genesis we learn that Noah, after leaving the ark, followed the life of a husbandman. Broad fields were to be tilled, and the promise had been given that seed-time and harvest should not fail. The earth would yield its increase and labor would be rewarded. Noah planted a vineyard, drank of the fruit of the vine, and became drunken. Lying uncovered in his tent, he was seen by Ham, one of his three sons, who, instead of concealing his father's weakness and shame, called his two brothers to come and witness it. This was showing a disrespect which brought down the curse of the father upon the head of the son. The two brothers took a garment, and laying it upon their shoulders, went backward and covered their father's nakedness. This dutiful act stands in strong contrast to the conduct of Ham, who was ready to expose the shame of his father. When Noah awoke he knew what had been done by his thoughtless, ungrateful son, and he pronounced a curse upon Ham

and his descendants, declaring that they should be servants unto their brethren. At the same time he gave his blessing to Shem and Japheth.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.—After the family of Noah took possession of the earth the number of inhabitants was soon greatly increased. All are represented as speaking one language which was easily understood. As the tide of population rolled eastward it came to a plain in the land of Shinar, where a settlement was speedily made. The people, not profiting by former examples of sin, resolved to build a tower that should reach to heaven. Their plea was that they were anxious to make for themselves a name, lest they should be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. They wished to found a city, and by the erection of a tower gratify their pride. The Lord, we are told, saw their ambitious project, their language was at once confounded, the tower of Babel was overthrown, and from that time the human race spoke with many tongues.



THE TOWER OF BABEL.—Gen. xi. 7, 8.



ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND.—Gen. xii. 3-7.

ABRAHAM SEES THE PROMISED LAND.—One of the best men whose lives are recorded in the Bible was Abraham, sometimes called "the father of the faithful." In the land of Ur, where he resided, idolatry was almost universally practised. He received Divine direction to go forth, and pursue his journeys until he should reach a land which the Lord would show him. He was to leave his kindred and his father's house, and in so doing the promise was made that he should have many descendants and become a great nation. He did not know the country which was to be his future abode, nor the way to it, but being a man of strong faith he immediately departed to his new home, taking with him his nephew, Lot, and Sarah, his wife. The journey was long and was attended with many difficulties. They finally came to the land of Canaan, a country which during all the centuries since has been associated with the history of the Jewish people. Abraham passed through until he came to the plain of Moreh. The Divine promise was

given that this land should belong to him and his posterity, and he built an altar unto the Lord. Passing on he came to a mountain on the east of Bethel, and there erected another altar, carrying his spirit of worship wherever he went.

GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.—Abraham was in a strange country, and was among people not altogether friendly to him and his religion, but he was protected and dwelt in security. When a famine arose he and Lot went for the time being to Egypt, yet not intending to remain long. Upon their return they repaired to the plain of Moreh, where an altar had previously been erected. These men had met with great prosperity; had become possessed of many flocks, and had grown to be rich. Their herdsmen could not agree, and Abraham and Lot resolved to separate, each going his own way and selecting his own place of residence. Lot made choice of the plain of Jordan, and thus the peace was secured which Abraham earnestly desired. It seemed to him an unhappy thing to have any quarrel.



GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.—Gen. xv. 5.



LOT AND SODOM.—In the wickedness we are to Sodom. Abraham ing. W behalf o ten right in the ci was also warned danger, some of Lot, his by the h city. T their live lay; to mountai be overth of Lot t to flee t was gra his daug steps; b Lot's wi

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LEAVING SODOM.—Gen. xix. 24-26.

LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS LEAVING SODOM.
—In the plain of the Jordan two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, had become notorious for their wickedness. After separating from Abraham we are told that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. This city was to be destroyed, and Abraham was told by angels what was coming. With great earnestness he interceded in behalf of Lot, and was told that if ten righteous men could be found in the city it would be spared. Lot was also visited by two angels, who warned him of the approaching danger, and urged him to flee to some other place. The angels took Lot, his wife and his two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city. They were told to escape for their lives; to flee without any delay; to betake themselves to the mountain, for the city would surely be overthrown. The special request of Lot that he should be permitted to flee to a small place called Zoar was granted, and thither he and his daughters directed their hasty steps; but the representation is that Lot's wife lingered in the plain, and

stopping to look back, was turned to a pillar of salt. The storm of fire descended from the heaven and consumed the wicked cities.

JACOB'S DEPARTURE FOR CANAAN.—Jacob had been instructed by his father Isaac not to take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan. He went to Padan-aram to visit Laban, his mother's brother. There, after a service of fourteen years, he obtained Rachel, one of Laban's daughters. Being thrifty, industrious and upright, he prospered and gained large possessions. The time at length came when he wished to return to Canaan to visit the relatives from whom he had long been separated. Laban sought to detain him, realizing that his own

fortunes had been blessed through the Divine favor granted to Jacob, and had some harsh things to say concerning the contemplated departure. A Divine message which came at this time to Jacob determined his conduct and brought him to a decision. He prepared to leave, and take with him his wives, children and cattle. All finally reached Canaan.



JACOB'S DEPARTURE FOR CANAAN.—Gen. xxxi. 17-46.



WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL.—Gen. xxxii. 24.

JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL.—All through the Bible accounts are given of the visits of angels, who are represented as bringing messages to men, befriending those who are in trial, protecting those who are in danger, and performing various offices of mercy and love. On one of his journeys Jacob found himself alone as night came on, and we are told that a man wrestled with him until break of day. It was a remarkable contest, and the description of it forms one of the exciting incidents related in Genesis. Jacob was very much in earnest, for he was seeking a blessing, and when the angel wished to break away and take his departure, Jacob refused to let him go. The angel wished to know the name of the one who was so determined to detain him, and having received the answer he assured Jacob that a new name should be given to him, and he would be called Israel, the meaning of which is prince, for as a prince he had prevailed with God. The spot where the wrestling took place was considered sacred by Jacob.

while Moses went up into the rugged mountain to receive from God his law, and also directions for building the tabernacle. During his absence, which lasted forty days, the people became very uneasy, and wished Aaron to make a god for them to worship. He took the jewelry of the women and made a golden calf, and the people worshipped it.



MOSES DESTROYING THE TABLES.—Ex. xxxii. 19.

MOSES DESTROYING THE TABLES OF THE LAW.—In a little bulrush life-boat beside the river Nile, a daughter of Pharaoh one day found a little babe. It had been concealed by its mother to escape the decree of the king that every new-born son of the Hebrews should be destroyed to prevent them from becoming too numerous. The child was named Moses, was adopted by the princess, and brought up at the court of Egypt. Afterward he became a shepherd, and when the Hebrews were brought out of Egypt, where they had been in bondage for more than four hundred years, Moses was made their leader. They departed in a single night, passed the Red Sea, and soon came to Mount Sinai, where they halted

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THE DEATH OF MOSES.—Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.

DEATH OF MOSES.—The account of the death of Israel's great leader and lawgiver brings to a close the history of a very remarkable man. He conducted the people during the forty years in which they were seeking the promised land, but he was not permitted to enter the land, and died before the great host he had led so long crossed over the river Jordan to their new home. We are told that he went up to Mount Pisgah, and was there shown the fair country which the Lord had promised to his people. From the summit of this mountain he could look far away beyond the Jordan, and behold cities and plains, hills and valleys, palm-trees and shepherds' pastures. This was the goodly land which the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were to possess. This was his last look upon earth. His work was done; his departure was at hand. He was not old as age was reckoned in those days, when men lived much longer than they do now. His eye had not grown dim, when he fell asleep at the age of one hundred and twenty.

JOSHUA DIVIDING THE LAND.—After the death of Moses the duty of settling the Hebrews in Canaan was intrusted to Joshua. He, with Caleb, had come out of Egypt forty years before, and on account of their uprightness and obedience were permitted to live, and enjoy the inheritance from which others had been excluded. When the people came into their new country, a large part of it was still in possession of the first inhabitants. Surveying parties were sent out to measure the territory, and learn what would be required in the attempt to conquer it. Forty-eight cities were set apart for the priests and Levites, and these they were to occupy. The people were also directed to choose cities

of refuge. These would be places of safety to any one who by accident had killed another, provided he could reach a city of refuge in advance of his pursuers. Thus provision was made for the exercise of mercy. The land was partitioned and divided up according to the various tribes. By the casting of lots Joshua determined where the tribes were to be located.



xii. 19.



DIVIDING THE LAND AMONG THE TRIBES.—Josh. xiii. 6, 7.



JEPHTHAH'S RASH VOW.—Judges xi. 34.

JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER.—In olden times a vow was considered as something very sacred, and having once been made, on no consideration could it be broken. Jephthah, we are told, was a mighty man of valor. A battle with the Ammonites was to be fought, and Jephthah made a vow that if the Lord would grant him the victory he would make a burnt-offering of whatever met him at his own door on his return from the battle. The forces fought with bravery, Jephthah proved his generalship, and victory perched upon his banner. To his surprise and grief, his only daughter came out with music and dancing to greet her father. He rent his clothes, and manifested all the signs of sorrow and remorse. He told his daughter that he had opened his mouth unto the Lord, and could not take back his word. With the most dutiful submission she answered that if he had made a vow he should do as he had said. She gave her life that her rash father might keep the word which never ought to have been spoken.

SAMSON AND THE LION.—In the book of Judges an account is given of Samson and his wonderful feats of strength. From his birth he seems to have been marked for an extraordinary career. As he grew up the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan. On a visit to Timnath to obtain a wife from the Philistines, Samson performed his first great feat of strength. Being met by a young lion, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and seizing the lion he rent him in pieces. Samson paid a visit to the daughter of the Philistines whom he was seeking, and she pleased him well. After a time he returned to take her, and turning aside to see the carcass of

the lion he had slain, he found a swarm of bees had made a hive in it, and had deposited honey. He took away some of the honey, and, according to the custom of the young men of the time, made a feast and invited his companions. The story in Judges gives a full description of this feast, and the failure of the young men to guess Samson's riddle.



SAMSON SLAYING A LION.—Judges xiv. 6.



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SAMSON SLAYS THE PHILISTINES.—Judges xv. 16.

SAMSON AND HIS ENEMIES.—Having been deceived by his wife's father, the narrative states that Samson caught three hundred foxes, tied them together in pairs, attached a firebrand to each pair, set these on fire, and sent the foxes into the harvest-fields of the Philistines. The standing corn, as well as that already cut, and also the vineyards and olives, were burned, and a great amount of injury was inflicted. Samson fled to the top of a high rock and three thousand Philistines went to capture him. They promised him that if he would permit himself to be bound they would not put him to death. He was brought into camp bound with strong cords, but suddenly his great strength was aroused, and he broke the cords as if they had been nothing more than spiders' threads. Seizing the jawbone of an ass he slew a thousand of his enemies, and carried consternation through their ranks. We next find him at the city of Gaza, where he seized the gates and their posts and carried them away, proving that no city's gates were strong enough to imprison him.

THE GIANT LOSES HIS STRENGTH.

—The Philistines tried to capture their foe and deprive him of his extraordinary strength. Here a woman whose name was Delilah appears upon the scene, and we find her in company with Samson for the purpose of ascertaining the secret of his power. If she succeeded she was to be rewarded with a large sum of money. Samson told her to try tying him with seven cords made of the thin branches of trees. This was done when he was asleep, but on waking he was as mighty as ever. Then he told Delilah to bind him with new ropes, but these proved to be useless. Next he deceived her by requesting that his hair should be arranged in

a certain way. This also failed. As Samson was a Nazarite, his hair had been allowed to grow, and here was the secret of his strength. In an unguarded moment he revealed this secret, and when he was asleep his locks were shaved off, his doom was sealed, and, having fallen into the hands of his enemies, his eyes were put out, and he was thrust into prison.



SAMSON SHOWS HIS STRENGTH.—Judges xvi. 21.



SAMSON'S VENGEANCE AND DEATH.—Judges xvi. 29, 30.

SAMSON SLAIN.—The prisoner was rudely treated. His victories had been too many for him now to escape the revenge of the foes who had finally captured him. In his blindness he was made to grind the mills in the prison-house. Samson's hair had been shorn, but the roots remained; it grew again, and his wonderful strength returned to him. It was the custom of the people to invite him to their merry-making festivals, and he entertained them and made himself a general favorite. The Philistines were idolaters, and after the capture of Samson they offered a great sacrifice to Dagon, their god, because, as they supposed, Dagon had delivered their foe into their hands. A large number of the people were assembled in the temple, and to this place Samson was led by a boy. He asked to be allowed to feel the pillars of the temple. Then he grasped them in his mighty arms, and with a violent shake brought them to the ground. The building fell, large numbers were killed, and among them was Samson, who lost his life taking vengeance on his foes.

RUTH AND HER BENEFACTOR.—The beautiful account of Ruth given in that book of the Bible which bears her name represents her as strongly attached to Naomi, who was her mother-in-law. Each had lost her husband, and being companions, a warm affection existed between them. From wealth they had been reduced to poverty, and as Ruth did not wish to leave Naomi and return to Moab, her own land, she resolved to support herself by gleaning in the fields of Boaz, a rich man who was well known for his kindness to the poor. Boaz took a special interest in Ruth, told the workmen to show her kindness, and directed that she should glean in no field except his

own. In a short time Ruth became the wife of her benefactor, Boaz, and one of the ancestors of Christ. The friends of Naomi were much pleased at the happy lot which had befallen Ruth, telling her that after all her trials she would find comfort in her daughter-in-law, and her old age would be free from care and sorrow.



RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.—Ruth ii. 5.



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PARTING OF DAVID AND JONATHAN.—1 Sam. xx. 42.

DAVID AND JONATHAN.—Saul, the king of Israel, was anxious that his son Jonathan should finally come to the throne, and as he knew David was likely to be made king, he wished to put David to death. David and Jonathan were firm friends. When Jonathan became aware of his father's plot, he sent David away from the palace. Saul was enraged, declaring that his son could never be king so long as his rival was alive. But Jonathan was more anxious to insure the safety of the one he dearly loved than he was to gain the throne, and they agreed upon a sign. David was to hide behind a rock, and Jonathan would shoot three arrows, and send a lad to pick them up. If Jonathan should call to the lad that the arrows were on one side of him, David would know that Saul was no longer angry; if the arrows were on the other side, David must flee for his life. David was compelled to flee, and the two friends separated after promising to continue their love for each other, and each gave expression to his grief at parting.

DAVID AND ABIGAIL.—We have here an interesting incident in the life of David. On one occasion he was encamped near the residence of a man named Nabal, who was noted for his meanness. He was unneighborly and ill-tempered. Although David's men were hungry, Nabal refused to allow them to take even one sheep from his flocks which were feeding near. When David sent some of his men to obtain food, they returned without any, and reported that Nabal had treated them and their master with contempt. The anger of David was aroused, and choosing four hundred men he set out to deal with Nabal as he deserved. Nabal's wife, a beautiful woman named Abigail, heard of her husband's insolence, and taking a number of asses and loading them with food, and mounting one herself, she started to meet David, to appease his anger, and save Nabal from the merited chastisement. In this she was successful, her appeal to David was not in vain. A few days after this Nabal died, and David obtained Abigail to be his wife.



DAVID AND ABIGAIL.—1 Sam. xxv. 34. 33.



SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR.—1 Sam. xxviii. 16, 17.

KING SAUL AND THE WITCH.—Saul was in great trouble because his enemies, the Philistines, were preparing to make war against him. They had a large army, and Saul was afraid they would obtain the victory. In his alarm he sought the Lord, but on account of his sins the Lord would not answer him. Saul consulted a woman at Endor who professed to have control over spirits that would come when she called them. Although Saul had sent many such persons out of the kingdom, maintaining that they were deceivers, yet he was ready to consult this woman. He disguised himself, went to her at night, and asked to have an interview with Samuel, who had been dead many years. Saul was told that the Lord had forsaken him, that he would lose the kingdom and it would be given to David, that the Philistines would obtain the victory, and on the morrow he and his sons would be among the dead. All this came to pass as had been foretold. David was an upright man, well fitted to reign, and he was made king in the place of Saul.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW'S SON.

—The prophet Elijah came at a time when a dreadful famine was in the land. He was sent to a poor widow at Sarepta, with whom he was to live for a while, and share her scanty store. She had only a handful of meal in her barrel, and a little oil in her cruse; but being requested by the prophet to prepare him something to eat, she cheerfully complied, and was assured that her stock of food would not grow less. Neither the barrel nor the cruse failed, a happy instance of the reward that comes to those who are willing to bless others. At length the son of the widow died. In her distress and grief she appealed to Elijah, whose heart was touched by

her sorrow. He took the child away to his own chamber, and called on God. The cry of the prophet was answered, and we have here the picture of a life restored, and a dead son returned to his mother to be her comfort and joy. Now more than ever the woman was convinced that Elijah was a man of God, and was endowed with miraculous power.



THE WIDOW'S SON RESTORED TO LIFE.—1 Kings xvii. 21.



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GOD APPEARING TO ELIJAH.—1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

ELIJAH AT MOUNT HOREB.—Elijah in his flight from Jezebel, who was seeking his life because he showed how false was the religion of her prophets, came to a juniper tree in the desert. Here an angel brought him food that gave him strength for forty days. He continued his flight to a rocky mount named Horeb. Here he lodged in a cave, and the word of the Lord asked him what he was doing there. He replied that he had been very jealous for the religion of the God of Israel, had thrown down the altars of false prophets, and his enemies were now seeking his life. He was directed to go and stand on the mount. A strong wind rent the mountains and broke the rock in pieces, but the Lord was not in the wind. After this came an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then a fire appeared, but the Lord was not in this. When all these had passed there came a still, small voice, and the prophet knew that God was there. He was directed to return and finish the work that had been given him to do.

THE CHARIOT OF ELIJAH.—We are told that the manner of Elijah's departure from the earth was in keeping with his extraordinary career. He had made a powerful impression upon the nation, remarkable deeds had been performed by him, and when his earthly life was ended he was translated without suffering death. He and Elisha were walking together, and Elisha expressed the earnest desire that a double portion of the spirit of his friend and companion might rest upon himself. Elijah replied that this was a hard thing to be granted, but if Elisha should see him when he departed, the blessing which was sought might be obtained. Suddenly there appeared a chariot of

fire, with flaming steeds, and Elijah was soon lost to view. Elisha exclaimed, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" The chariot and horsemen were emblems of power and victory, and the exclamation meant that Elijah was the great helper and defender of Israel. His mantle, fell toward the earth, and Elisha secured it.



THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.—1 Kings ii. 11



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.—Dan. vi. 19, 20.

DANIEL AMONG THE LIONS.—At the time of the captivity, when the greater part of the Jewish nation was carried away to Babylon, a remarkable youth was among the number. Daniel secured the favor of the king of Babylon by his interpretation of dreams, and his sturdy, upright character. He believed in the religion of the Hebrews, and when commanded to cease performing his religious duties for a certain number of days, he flatly refused. Some jealousy had been excited against him on account of the power he had gained in the nation, and his enemies thought they would obtain advantage over him by forbidding him to pray, under penalty of being cast into a den of lions. The king's heart was troubled, but having signed the law he was resolved to carry it into execution. Daniel was cast to the wild beasts, and early in the morning the king hastened to see what was his fate. Daniel assured him that his God was able to shut the mouths of lions, and, by his angel, had already done it, so that he was unharmed.

JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES.—Judith was a Hebrew woman of strong will, great decision of character, and, in her blind zeal, capable of any deed which she thought would promote her religion and confound God's enemies. She was even ready to take human life, and commit the crime of murder, under pretence of thereby accomplishing some good. Holofernes was considered to be the enemy of her nation, and believing she had authority to destroy all such she took his life. Pretending to be friendly, she gained access to his tent, fascinated him by her beauty and wit, gained his confidence by fair speeches, and soon had him completely in her power.

When he was under the influence of wine she took down his falchion, and with a double blow severed his head from the body, and handed it over to her maid. Her plot had succeeded, and her deed was applauded by her own people. When they saw her at the gate of the city with the head of Holofernes, they praised God for thus delivering them from the hand of their enemy.



JUDITH BEHEADS HOLOFERNES.—Judith xiii. 9, 10.



JOHN THE BAPTIST.—John the Baptist was a prophet of Christ who appeared to the world before he would be announced to the world. He was born in the city of Bethsaida, in the region of Galilee. His name was John, but he was called the Baptist because he baptized people in the Jordan. He was a man of great power and authority, and he was the first to announce the coming of Christ. He was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth, and he was the cousin of Jesus Christ. He was a man of great faith and courage, and he was the first to die for the sake of Christ. He was a man of great power and authority, and he was the first to announce the coming of Christ. He was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth, and he was the cousin of Jesus Christ. He was a man of great faith and courage, and he was the first to die for the sake of Christ.



BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Luke 1. 62-64.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.—It was foretold by the prophet Malachi that previous to the advent of Christ a forerunner, or prophet, would appear to prepare the way for him. His duty would be to call the people to repentance, and announce that the kingdom of God was at hand. During the reign of King Herod in Judæa there was a priest named Zacharias; the name of his wife was Elizabeth. An angel appeared to Zacharias one day in the Temple, and announced that he would have a son, and was to give him the name of John. Zacharias was told that he would be unable to speak until the child was born. The people wondered why the priest remained so long in the Temple, and when he came out they saw that he was dumb. The promised son was born, and when he was eight days old he was brought to the Temple. The people wished to name him after his father, but the mother insisted upon calling him John. They objected because none of his kindred bore that name, but Zacharias wrote on a tablet that John was to be the child's name.

THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.—In Judæa, near the village of Bethlehem, there were shepherds who watched their flocks by night. The time had come for Christ to be born. As far back as the days of Adam and Eve the Divine assurance had been given that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, and sin would be destroyed. The birth of John the Baptist was the sure sign that one greater than John would soon come. As the shepherds were guarding their flocks one night an angel suddenly visited them. They were afraid, but were told by the angel not to fear, for a message of great joy had been sent to them, which was to be for all

people. The happy announcement was made that a Saviour was born in Bethlehem. Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host appeared, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, and, to their surprise and joy, found that what the angel told them was true.



THE ANGEL AND SHEPHERDS.—Luke 11. 10, 11.



THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.—Luke II. 10-12.

THE NATIVITY.—The shepherds who had heard the song of the angels and the statement that a Saviour had been born, left their flocks and went to Bethlehem to see what had come to pass. Naturally excited over the glad tidings brought to them, they made haste, and when they arrived in the village they were rewarded by a sight of the new-born child. There they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. The shepherds having satisfied themselves of the truth of the message brought by the angel, hurried away with the joyful news, and spread the glad tidings to others. All who heard what had happened were filled with wonder. We are told that Mary, the mother of Jesus, kept these things in her heart, and thought about them. The shepherds returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard. This is the beautiful description given us of the birth of Jesus. Every Christmas we celebrate the advent of Christ, whose name is Wonderful.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—The parents of Jesus brought him to the Temple at Jerusalem. They could not remain there; their first concern was to save the young life committed to their love and care. They knew the cruelty of Herod, and his wicked design to slay the children, in the hope that Jesus would be among the number. They obeyed the Divine warning, and taking their young treasure fled with all possible speed to Egypt, a country which was outside of Herod's dominions. There was a place of safety, and having reached it, they remained until the death of Herod put an end to his ambition and cruelty. Then the angel of the Lord appeared again unto Joseph,

assured him that those who sought the life of the child were dead, and directed him to return to his own country. He did so, and made his home in the despised town of Nazareth, where the early life of Jesus was spent. Thus the prophecies were fulfilled that Israel's ruler would come out of Egypt and would be a despised Nazarene, one of the poor and lowly.



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—Matt. II. 14, 15.



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was expected who were according to would return to Bethlehem to see what had happened. However, it tells us that Herod, in his own country, gave orders for the children of Bethlehem thereof to be slain. This was great fulfillment of the prophecy that a ruler would come out of Egypt and would be a despised Nazarene, one of the poor and lowly.



DEATH OF THE CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM.—Matt. ii. 16.

PUTTING THE CHILDREN TO DEATH.—It was expected by Herod that the wise men who were seeking the child, whose name, according to the prophet Isaiah, was Wonderful, would return to him at Jerusalem after their visit to Bethlehem. They found the marvelous babe, presented their gifts, and worshipped at His feet. They did not return, however, to Jerusalem. The history tells us that they were warned by God in a dream not to go back to Herod, and so they departed to their own country by another way. This apparent slight on the part of the wise men made Herod very angry; it looked very much as if one had been born who was expected to become king of the Jews. He gave orders for all the male children in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof to be put to death. There was great sorrow in the land, and the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled that there would be weeping and mourning. The object of the horrible massacre was not accomplished, although many lives were sacrificed.

JESUS BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE.

—As already stated, when Jesus was eight days old His parents brought Him to the Temple to make an offering of two pigeons, according to Jewish custom. There was a good old man at Jerusalem named Simeon. It had been revealed to him by the Spirit that he should not die until he had seen Jesus. He was directed to go to the Temple, and when Joseph and Mary appeared with their child, Simeon knew that he was to be gratified by a sight of the infant Saviour. The old man took the child in his arms, blessed God, and said, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." The parents

of Jesus wondered at the things which were spoken concerning Him. Simeon blessed the child, and told His mother that through Him many would receive a blessing, while a woe would come to others. A prophetess, named Anna, was also present, and she, too, gave thanks. The Jews had the happy custom of taking young children to the Temple.



THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.—Luke ii. 27, 28.



CHRIST TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE.—Luke ii. 46, 47.

CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.—The most important feast of the Jews was the Passover, and the parents of Jesus were accustomed to go to Jerusalem every year to attend it. When Jesus was twelve years old He accompanied His parents. After the feast was over they started to return to their home, but He remained behind. It was not long before they missed Him, but supposed He was in company with their relatives, who were with them on the journey. Failing to find Him, they became very anxious, and went back to Jerusalem in search of Him. After three days they discovered Him in the Temple talking with the learned doctors, and showing such wisdom as astonished His hearers. They were amazed that one so young should have such knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. When His parents asked Him why He had forsaken them, He replied: "Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Thus early in life He showed the spirit of obedience to His Father's will, and set us a good example.

JESUS AND THE MONEY-CHANGERS.—At the feast of the Passover offerings were made as a part of worship, and persons who desired to make a profit by the sale of animals offered in sacrifice had gone to the Temple, taken possession of the court of the Gentiles, and converted it into a place for buying and selling. There were also those who made a business of exchanging Roman money for Jewish money, and gained something by the transaction. Jesus was very indignant when He found that one part of the Temple was used for a market, and driving those who were engaged in the business of selling offerings and changing money, He made a whip of small cords, and drove them out, telling them it was

written that the house of God should be a place of prayer, but they had made it a den of thieves. The tables were overturned, the money was poured on the ground, the animals were driven away, and all unlawful traffic ceased in the courts of the Lord's house. He had a better right to drive out the "thieves" than they had to carry on their trade there.



JESUS DRIVES OUT THE MONEY-CHANGERS.—John ii. 15, 16.



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John ii. 15, 16.



CHRIST TEACHES NICODEMUS.—John iii. 2, 3.

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.—One of the rulers of the Jews, a man named Nicodemus, came to Jesus one night to learn more of Him and His doctrine. Jesus began at once to instruct him, told him many things he did not know before, and some things hard to be understood, among them the mystery of the new birth. When Nicodemus was not able to fully understand what was said to him, Jesus spoke of something that happened a long time before when the children of Israel were in the wilderness. The people had been bitten by poisonous serpents, and to save them from death Moses was directed to make a brazen serpent, place it on a pole in the camp where all could see it, and those who looked upon it would be healed. Just so, said Jesus to Nicodemus, the Son of man must be lifted up, and those who turn the eye of faith to Him will receive the blessing of life and forgiveness. We read of Nicodemus after this, and are told that he was among the friends of Jesus who stood by Him faithfully to the last.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.—Jesus had been in Judæa, and was returning to Galilee. On his way He passed through Samaria, and He and His disciples came to Jacob's well. Being weary with His journey, He sat down to rest while the disciples went into a village not far away to procure food. A woman of Samaria came to the well, and He asked for water to drink. The woman was surprised at this request because the Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with one another. Jesus made use of the water as an emblem of the water of life, assuring the woman that those who drank of that would never thirst again. She asked that this water might be given to her. Then He spoke of her past life, and by convincing her that He knew all about it, convinced her also that He was a prophet. She told Him she knew Messias would come, who is called Christ. He answered, "I that speak unto thee am He." Many people in the city believed on Him on account of what He said to this woman, and became His followers.



CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.—John iv. 25, 26.



CHRIST RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON.—Luke vii. 14, 15.

THE WIDOW'S SON RESTORED TO LIFE.—The Biblical narrative points in numerous instances to works of Christ which showed that He was possessed of all power. One day He came to the city of Nain, and was accompanied by His disciples and a large number of people. As He approached the gate of the city a funeral procession was passing out. The only son of a widowed mother had died, and the relatives and friends were on their way to bury him. The scene touched the heart of Jesus, and with great compassion and tenderness He said to the bereaved mother, "Weep not." He put His hand upon the bier, and those who were carrying it stood still. Then He said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" His omnipotent voice pierced the ear of death, and new life quivered through the body which a moment before was cold and stiff. The young man sat up, and began to speak. Jesus gave him back to his rejoicing mother. This miracle, which was performed in the presence of a large company, filled them with awe.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.—A ruler of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came to Jesus and informed Him that his daughter was lying at the point of death, and requested Him to go to the house and lay His hands upon her that she might be healed. Soon certain persons arrived who told Jairus that his daughter was already dead, and asked why he should trouble the Master any further. Jesus told him not to fear, but to believe. He took with him Peter, and James, and John, and went to the ruler's house, where a number of persons were assembled. When Jesus asked why they wept, and assured them that the maid was not dead, but only asleep, they laughed Him to scorn.

The first thing to do was to put the scoffers out of the house. This He did, and taking the father and mother, and the disciples who were with Him, He entered the room where the damsel was lying. Grasping her hand, He called upon her to arise. To the astonishment of all she immediately obeyed, arose to her feet, and walked as well as ever.



CHRIST RAISES THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.—Matt. v. 41, 42.



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SENDING FORTH THE TWELVE APOSTLES.—Matt. x. 5-7.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.—The time had come for the glad tidings to be made known, and Jesus sent out His disciples, telling them to go first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, because they were the chosen people of God, and the Gospel must be preached to them first. They were to announce that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Power was given them to cure diseases, and do many other wonderful things. A good Providence would watch over them, and therefore they were not to take any money in their purses, nor were they to provide themselves with two coats. They were to go without shoes for their feet, and without even a staff for the journey. When they entered a city they were to find out who were worthy, and there make their abode. On entering a house they were to salute it, and their peace was to rest upon it, if it was worthy; if not, the blessing of peace was not to be given. If they were not well received, they were to depart, and, as a sign of righteous resentment, they were to shake off the dust of their feet.

JESUS AND PETER ON THE WATER.

—Jesus had directed His disciples to get into a boat, and cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The wind that night was high, and the disciples were in danger. During the fourth watch of the night, or some time after three o'clock in the morning, Jesus went to them, walking on the water. They saw Him, and were in great fear and trouble. They supposed they had met a spirit, and they were alarmed. Jesus at once quieted them by saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Peter replied, "If it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." Jesus took him at his word, and told him to come. Peter stepped out of the boat and made the attempt, but finding the wind very boisterous, and waves very high, his courage failed, and he began to sink. Jesus immediately stretched forth His hand and caught him; and rebuked him for his lack of faith. When they had entered the boat the wind ceased, and the disciples worshipped Jesus, saying, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God."



JESUS SAVES PETER FROM SINKING.—Matt. xiv. 30, 31.





THE GOOD SAMARITAN.—Luke x. 33, 34.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.—A certain lawyer asked what a person was to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him to love God with all his might, and his neighbor as himself. The lawyer immediately asked, "Who is my neighbor?" The reply was stated in the form of a parable, namely, that a man who was on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves, and was not only robbed, but was severely injured. The highwaymen fled, leaving him half dead. A priest came along, a man who might have been expected to befriend a sufferer, but he passed by on the other side. A Levite did the same, and left the wounded man to his fate. Then came a Samaritan, and although the Samaritans had no dealings with the Jews, he took pity on the poor sufferer, had him conveyed to the nearest inn, directed that he should receive good care, promising on his return to pay all the expense. The lawyer saw at once from this story who was the neighbor, and was directed to go and show to others a similar spirit.

THE LOST FOUND.—We have here the picture of a wanderer who went away to another country. There he fell in with bad company, became a spendthrift, and at length his money was all wasted. A distressing famine came upon the country, and he was in great want; he would have been glad to get the husks that were eaten by the swine, but no one gave him even these. His condition was very different from what it had been in the comfortable home he had forsaken. Having returned to his senses, he began to think of the hired servants in his father's house who had more than enough for all their wants, while he was perishing with hunger. He resolved to go back; and when

his father saw him coming he ran out to meet him, gave him the kiss of love, and welcomed him home. The best robe and ring were put upon him, and there was great rejoicing in the household. Nothing was too good for him now, for "he that was lost was found, and he that was dead was brought to life." Both father and son were happy.



THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.—Luke xv. 22.



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JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.—Mark x. 14.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."—The Jewish mothers naturally wished to bring their children to Jesus that they might receive His blessing. This was something that pleased Him, yet gave offence to His disciples. They appeared to think He could not be expected to take any notice of little children, and so they attempted to prevent the mothers from gaining His attention, and were ready to rebuke those who were seeking His blessing. When Jesus saw this He was displeased. He knew that childhood, which is the forming period of the whole life, was not to be despised; and, besides, there was too much love in His heart to exclude even a little one. The words spoken by Him on this occasion are familiar to all readers of the Bible. Having said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," He took them in His arms, put His loving hands upon them, and blessed them. The Jewish mothers were made very happy that day on account of the love shown by Jesus to the little ones.

THE BOX OF OINTMENT.—Jesus came to Bethany, a little village a short distance from Jerusalem. There was the residence of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, in whose house He had frequently been a guest. Here, on this occasion, a feast was made for Him in the house of Simon, the leper. He received a beautiful expression of affection from Mary, who, we are told elsewhere, had sat at His feet, heard His words, and chosen the good part which would not be taken away from her. Mary brought a box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed His head and feet. It appeared to the disciples to be simply a waste of money. Jesus commended her act, saying

she had come to anoint Him for His burial, which was near. She had done what she could, and this offering of her heart was gratefully accepted. Wherever the Gospel should be preached this anointing by Mary would be spoken of for a memorial of her. This has come true, for whoever has heard the Gospel has heard of this act of Mary of Bethany.



MARY ANOINTING JESUS.—Mark xiv. 9.





CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.—Matt. xxi. 8, 9.

CHRIST WELCOMED WITH HOSANNAS.—The narrative in the Gospels states that when Jesus and His disciples came nigh to Jerusalem, He sent two of them to bring Him a colt on which no man had ever ridden. If the owner asked any questions, or made objection to their taking the colt, they were simply to say that the Lord had sent them. This proved to be sufficient, and having obtained the colt the disciples put their clothes on him and placed Jesus thereon. As He rode along He was greeted by a great multitude who spread their garments in the way, while others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in His path, seeking thus to show their respect. Crowds went before Him, and others followed. We are told that they cried, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest!" He passed through the gate, and found the people were greatly moved on account of His coming. His triumphal entry was ended. Soon the sad cry was heard, "Away with Him!"

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

—There had been a dispute among the disciples as to who should be greatest, and Jesus wished to show them that His true followers are humble, and to serve is their highest calling. The Jews had the custom of washing the feet of their guests; this was something commonly done by the servants of the household. The last supper being over, Jesus took a towel and basin of water, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. Peter was surprised that Jesus should do such a thing, and said he would not allow it. Jesus replied that although what He did now was not understood by Peter, it would be hereafter; He also assured the impulsive disciple that he could have no place in the new kingdom unless he was submissive, and willing to have this act of service performed. Peter then told Jesus to wash not only his feet, but also his hands and his head. Christ assured the disciples that He had done this to set them an example of humility, and show them how they ought to love and serve one another.



CHRIST WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.—John xlii. 2-5.



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THE END OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.—Matt. xxvii. 3-5.

A TRAITOR.—There was one disciple who was unlike all the others. He was fond of money, and was willing to do anything to obtain it. This man betrayed Christ, and for thirty pieces of silver sold Him to the chief priests, and aided in His arrest and condemnation. A sign was agreed upon between Judas and the men who came to take Jesus. This sign was a kiss. When the hour arrived, and the men were ready to make the arrest, Judas went to Jesus, exclaimed, "Master, Master," and kissed Him. Jesus said to him, "Judas, dost thou betray me with a kiss?" Then the men laid hands on Jesus and took Him. At this moment all the disciples left Him and fled. Judas, seeing now that his wicked act of betrayal would result in the death of Jesus, became alarmed, and bringing the thirty pieces of silver threw them down before the high priest, saying he had betrayed one who was innocent. The history states that he then went away and hanged himself. No name is more despised than that of Judas Iscariot.

CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.—After Jesus was sentenced to death, the Roman soldiers took off His purple robe and put upon Him His own clothes. He was scourged, and was made the victim of every possible insult and indignity. The excited crowd jeered and mocked Him, and in derision called Him the king of the Jews. When the hour arrived for Him to be put to death His cross was laid on Him, and He was led away to Golgotha, the place where criminals were executed. He was already weary with His sufferings, and His strength was not equal to bearing the heavy load; He sank down under it, exhausted and helpless. A certain man named Simon, a Cyrenian, was there, and the mob

laid hold of him, put the cross upon him, and made him carry it. A great company of people, including women, followed, and expressed their sorrow at the sufferings of one whom they had come to love. Jesus told the daughters of Jerusalem not to weep for him. Two thieves were in the company, who were also sentenced to death.



CHRIST FALLS UNDER THE CROSS.—Luke xxiii. 26.



THE CRUCIFIXION.—John xix. 28-30.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—In his last hour Jesus showed His love for His mother, and His anxiety for her future welfare. He asked her to henceforth look upon John as her son, and told John to regard her as his mother. John afterward took her to his own house, and gave her a home. After this Jesus said, "I thirst." A sponge filled with vinegar was offered Him. In the accompanying engraving may be seen an inscription of four letters written upon the cross; the meaning of these is, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"—an inscription placed there in mockery. On each side of Him was one of the thieves who had also been condemned to death. One of them asked the Lord to remember him when He came into His kingdom. He was assured by Jesus that he would be in Paradise that day. One of the most remarkable utterances of Christ on the cross was His dying prayer for His enemies, asking His Father to forgive them, for they knew not what they did. The crucifixion lasted from the morning until the middle of the afternoon.

JESUS BURIED.—It was contrary to Jewish custom to allow the bodies of those who had been crucified to hang upon the cross over the Sabbath. A request was therefore made to Pilate, the Roman governor, that the body of Jesus, with those of the malefactors, should be removed. The soldiers came to break their legs, as was customary, but Jesus being already dead, His body was not molested, and so the prophecy was fulfilled that not a bone of Him should be broken. A rich man, Joseph by name, had a new tomb in a garden near Golgotha, and having obtained the body of Jesus, he wrapped it in fine linen, and laid it in his sepulchre. Jesus had said

that after three days He would rise again; Pilate feared the disciples would come and take away the body, saying He had risen from the dead. To prevent this he sent soldiers to guard the sepulchre. They took every precaution to make the sepulchre safe. This was a sad ending to the life of Jesus, which was employed in doing good to others.



THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.—John xix. 41, 42.



RESURRECTION.—Pilate was which Jesus. The narrative third day down from the nance was white as were gual fear, and was but n from the ing some been the were mou spices to surprise t away, and an angel angel qui not to fe they wer assured and aske the place then dire glad new



THE RESURRECTION.—Mat'. xxviii. 2-4.

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.—The soldiers of Pilate who were sent to watch the tomb in which Jesus was laid met with a sudden fright. The narrative states that on the night of the third day after the crucifixion an angel came down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the door of the sepulchre. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow. The keepers who were guarding the tomb shook with fear, and became as dead men. It was but natural that they should flee from the place. In the early morning some of the women who had been the firm friends of Jesus, and were mourning His death, came with spices to the sepulchre. To their surprise they found the stone rolled away, and as they entered they saw an angel clothed in white. The angel quieted them by bidding them not to fear, telling them he knew they were seeking Jesus. Then he assured them that He was risen, and asked them to come and see the place where the Lord lay. He then directed them to go and tell the glad news to the disciples.

THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB.—A full account is given of the visit to the sepulchre on the morning of the third day after Jesus was crucified. Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James, all came together. It was a practice among the Jews to prepare the bodies of the dead for burial by anointing them. These women hastened to the tomb at the early dawn of the third day, bringing with them sweet spices. They knew a great stone had been placed at the door, and as they came near and looked, they were amazed to find that the stone was removed. They ventured in, and there on the right side saw a young man of startling appearance, clothed in a long white garment.

They were frightened, but were told by the angel not to be afraid. Having assured them that the Lord had risen, and was not there, he sent them away to tell the disciples, Peter especially, that Jesus would go before them into Galilee, and they were to meet Him there. Quickly the women departed, for they trembled and were amazed.



THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST.—Mark xvi. 5, 6.



CHRIST APPEARS TO TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES.—Luke xxiv. 15.

THE WALK TO EMMANUS.—On the day when the resurrection took place, it is related that two of the disciples went to Emmaus, a village a few miles from Jerusalem. While they were engaged in earnest conversation Jesus drew near and walked with them; but they did not know Him. He asked them what they were conversing about, and why they appeared so sad. Cleopas inquired if He had not heard of the things that had come to pass. He asked, "What things?" They answered, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth." Then they spoke of the crucifixion, and said they had trusted that Jesus was the one who would redeem Israel. They also related the visit of the women to the tomb, and the fact that they had found it empty. Jesus told them these things seemed strange because they did not understand what had been foretold by the prophets. When they arrived at the village He accepted their invitation to tarry with them, and as they were breaking bread together He vanished from their sight. Then they knew who He was.

THE ASCENSION.—A full account is given us of the departure of Christ from the earth. According to His promise He met His disciples, and told them to go and preach the Gospel to all nations. He assured them that all power was given Him in heaven and earth, and He would be with His people even unto the end of the world. Not only did He have interviews with the apostles, and make Himself known to them, but we are told that He appeared to five hundred brethren at once. The closing scene was quite as extraordinary as any of the miraculous wonders that preceded it. After forty days had passed Jesus met His disciples again at Jerusalem. He told them

to tarry there until they were endowed with power from on high. The hour had now come for Him to be separated from them; He was to be with them no longer in bodily shape and presence. Then He led them out to Bethany, lifted up His hands and blessed them, and while doing this He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.



THE ASCENSION.—Luke xxiv. 50, 51.



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PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.—Acts xiv. 14, 15.

PAUL AND BARNABAS.—At Lystra there was a cripple, a man who had never been able to walk. Paul and Barnabas, who were on a missionary tour, came to Lystra, and as Paul was preaching this lame man heard him. The attention of the apostle was drawn to the poor sufferer, who evidently had faith and believed the words that were spoken. Paul therefore felt convinced that there was a blessing for him and, calling to him with a loud voice, told him to stand up. The impotent man obeyed, and leaped to his feet, although he had never done such a thing before in his life. It is not strange that the people who saw what had been done were greatly amazed; it seemed to them that more than human power had been employed in curing the lame man, and they looked upon Paul and Barnabas as gods. The priests went to the idols' temple and brought oxen to sacrifice to them, but the apostles rent their clothes, and ran among the people, forbidding any sacrifice, as they were only men. They had difficulty in preventing their worship.

PAUL PARTING WITH THE ELDERS.—A Church had been planted at Ephesus, and Paul was anxious to visit it, but being in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, he sent to Ephesus for the elders of the Church to come down to the sea-shore where the vessel in which he was making his journey was waiting. The greeting they gave Paul was very hearty and affectionate. He told them he knew very well that afflictions and persecutions awaited him, but he could not remain with them, for duty called him away. He assured them that he was not only willing to go to Jerusalem, but was ready to even die for the Lord Jesus. He spoke of his fidelity in declaring the whole truth, said he had coveted no man's silver or gold and with his own hands had worked for his support. Then he kneeled down and prayed with them all. The parting was with sadness and tears. The elders wept as they bade him good-bye, and were especially sorrowful at the thought of seeing him no more. They went with him to the ship, and he pursued his journey.



PAUL TAKING LEAVE OF THE ELDERS.—Acts xx. 37, 38.



OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL.—Rev. viii. 1-6.

THE SEVENTH SEAL.—The book of Revelation is mostly taken up with the visions of the apostle John. He saw many wonderful things, the meaning of which is not in all instances very plain. The opening of the seventh seal in heaven was followed by silence for the space of half an hour. Seven angels were seen, and to them were given seven trumpets; these are represented in the foreground of the engraving. Another angel came with a golden censer, and stood at the altar. We have in the picture a cloud of incense ascending from the censer in the angel's hand. Then he filled the censer with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth. This was followed by voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. The trumpets of the seven angels then sounded, one after another, and there were terrible signs in the earth. When the seventh angel sounded it was announced that the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.—The apostle John also tells us that in one part of his vision he saw a new heaven and a new earth. He draws a beautiful picture of the glory of the heavenly world. The city of the New Jerusalem, in other words the redeemed Church, was seen coming down from heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband. A great voice said that the tabernacle of God was now with men, and He would dwell with them, and would wipe away all tears from their eyes. A glowing description is given of the peace and joy of the new Paradise. A river of water of life flows from the throne, on the banks of which the tree of life is growing. The servants of God serve Him

day and night in His temple. They behold the face of the King in His beauty, and are sealed with His name. The inscription at the top of the accompanying engraving announces that they are blessed who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the one near the bottom says, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"



THE NEW JERUSALEM.—Rev. xxi. 1, 2.

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