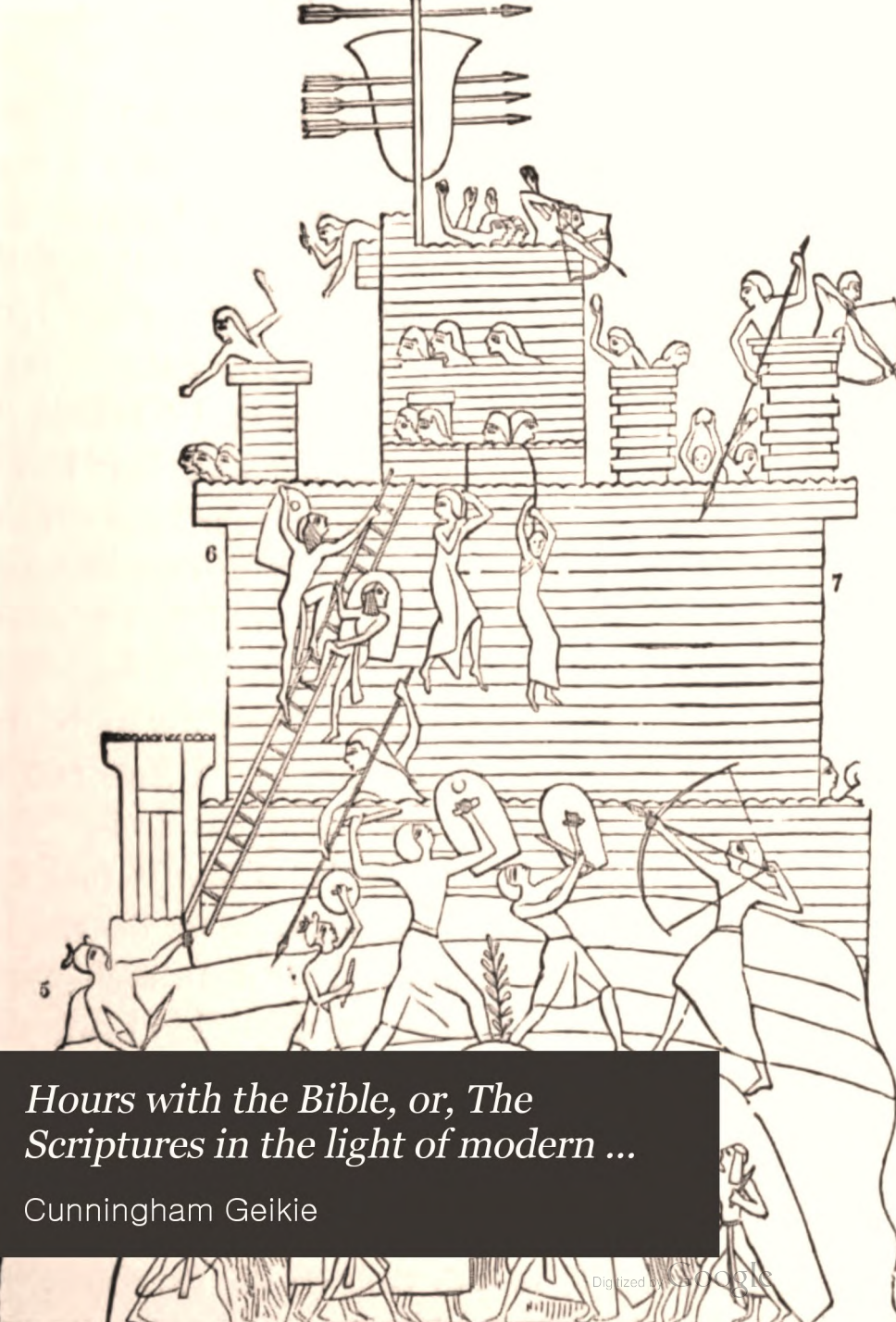

Hours with the Bible, or, The Scriptures in the light of modern ...

Cunningham Geikie

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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE;

OR,

THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE.

BY

CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D., LL.D.

AN ENTIRELY NEW EDITION, REVISED THROUGHOUT
AND LARGELY REWRITTEN.

ILLUSTRATED.

VOL. III.
FROM SAMSON TO SOLOMON.

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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

SAMSON AND ELI.

TOWARDS the close of the wild and stormy period of the Judges, the Philistines were the most active and aggressive nation of Palestine. Strong in their military organization; fierce in their warlike spirit, and rich by their position and commercial instincts, they even threatened the ancient supremacy of the Phœnicians of the north. Their cities were the restless centres of every form of activity. Ashdod and Gaza, as the keys of Egypt, commanded the carrying trade to and from the Nile, and formed the great depots for its imports and exports.[1] All the cities, moreover, traded in slaves with Edom and Southern Arabia,[2] and their commerce in other directions flourished so greatly as to gain for the people at large the name of Canaanite—which was synonymous with merchant.[3] Their skill as smiths and armourers[4] was noted; the strength of their cities attests their success as builders; and their idols, and golden mice and emerods,

[1] Plut., *Alex.*, cap. 25. Mövers, *Die Phönizier*, vol. ii. pt. i. pp. 315-317.
[2] Joel iii. 3-5. Amos i. 6.
[3] Zeph. ii. 5. This name, however, was first given, in this sense, to the Phœnicians. The word "Palestine" is derived from "Philistine."
[4] 1 Sam. xiii. 20; xvii. 5.

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show them to have been proficient in the gentle arts of peace.

But they were pre-eminently devoted to war, alike by sea and land. Egypt had been recently invaded by their fleet, and, soon after, apparently while Jephthah was struggling with Ammon on the uplands of Gilead, their ships, sweeping from the harbours of Gaza and Askelon, had attacked Sidon—the great Phœnician city in the north—defeated its fleet, and taken the town, which henceforth sank into insignificance. Its aristocracy, indeed, had to flee to Tyre, and even that city was ere long extended to an island close at hand, to be more secure from these terrible sea kings.[1] Sidon, henceforth, lost its rank of capital, and disappeared from notice for several centuries; its fall doubtless causing unspeakable joy in northern Israel, which could breathe freely when its great oppressor was thus humbled.

This clever, fierce race are represented on the Egyptian monuments as a beardless people, wearing a peculiar kind of cap or tiara, and it is thought by some scholars that they belonged to the same Mongolian stock as the Hittites. This, possibly, explains the fact that the Assyrians called the Philistine town Ashdod, "a city of the Hittites," and it may be, incidentally, more probable from the existence at the present day of two villages on the Philistine plain, called, respectively, Hatta and Kefr Hatta, which seem names preserving that of the Hittites.

It is now at least twenty centuries, however, since the name of the Philistines as a distinct people has passed away, though the race, no doubt, still survives in a more or less mixed form, in the local peasantry of to-day. Their five cities, once so terrible to Israel, though still surviving,

[1] Justin, I. xviii. 2.

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except Gath, are mere phantoms of their former selves. They were situated on the coast plain, below Joppa, but there is now hardly a trace of ancient remains, though there is much that speaks of Roman or Crusading times. Ekron, now Akir, is the most northerly, but is only a mud hamlet on a swell of sandy soil, with a few so-called gardens, inside rude borders of prickly pear. A few dry cisterns, stones of hand-mills, two marble pillars, lying prostrate, and a stone wine-press are all left of the once famous site of the Temple of Beelzebub. Ashdod, now Esdud, is a village of mud huts, with a few stone houses, and lies on a low swell of half-consolidated sand. A height somewhat more imposing rises close to it, formerly the site of a castle, but now covered with gardens fenced with prickly pear, which grows in one part over the remains of an ancient wall of dressed stone. The drift sand from the shore, two and a half miles off, has blown almost to the village, some of the gardens being already overwhelmed, while the olives and figs in others stand in pits of sand; the owners vainly fighting with the desolating progress of their enemy. Askelon still boasts the remains of its mediæval walls and towers, but here, too, the sand is burying everything beyond these, and making a steep bank even inside. Where the city once stood there are rich gardens, plentifully watered by springs, the tanks of which speak of Roman or Crusading splendour. Deep below the soil lie the marbles of ancient palaces—columns, carved stones, statues; many columns and stones dug up lying ready to be carried off, when I was there, to burn for lime or build into some modern structure. Round the town, outside the ruins of the walls, originally built on a semi-circular ridge, sixty or seventy feet high, but now buried on both sides by a steep slope of yellow sand, there is

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only desolation, above which, here and there, you may still see the tops of figs, and olives, buried under the sandy sea. Gath is believed to have stood on the isolated hill known as Tell es Safieh, which rises nearly seven hundred feet above the plain near the mouth of the great valley of Elah—the chief pass to the uplands in ancient times. There is a village on a plateau on the hill, three hundred feet up, but it is a very poor place; the whole hill is of white limestone. On the top of the hill once stood the Crusaders' castle—Blanche Garde—built in A.D. 1144, as a protection against attacks from Askelon.

Gaza is a collection of wretched mud huts within mud walls, with a few old stone houses, including some public buildings, for the town is the capital of Southern Palestine. It stands on a low hill with great gardens, within mud walls or fences of prickly pear. Its streets are mere lanes, deep in dust or mud, according to the weather. A grand old church now serves as a Mosque, and a spot is shewn where the Temple of Dagon stood, and where Samson pulled down the building on himself and the Philistine lords.

As far back as the time of Shamgar—a hundred and fifty years before—Dan and Judah had suffered from the raids of Philistine bands, who climbed to their mountain valleys, to spoil them; and, indeed, the forced emigration of so many of the former may have been caused by these.[1] But a regular conquest of the whole country was not attempted till the days of Samson,[2] about three hundred and fifty years after the death of Joshua.

On the edge of the hill country, about twenty miles almost straight behind Ashdod, on a slope overhanging the

[1] Munk, p. 200.

[2] Shamgar, B.C. 1295. Samson, B.C. 1131. But these dates are, of course, only approximate.

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north side of the green Wady Surar—the ancient Sorek—the village of Zorah nestled among its vines and fig trees, opposite Beth-shemesh. The district lies 2,000 feet above the sea, and is known as the "Arkub" or ridge—a long spur from the mountains, with numerous smaller ridges branching from it; the two valleys of Sorek and Elah lying in their northern and southern folds. The former, half a mile broad, is filled in summer with luxuriant corn, through which winds a pebbly torrent bed in the centre; low white hills bounding both sides. The ruins of Beth-shemesh—"the House of the Sun"—lie on a knoll surrounded by olive groves, where Sorek and Elah join; on the south of Sorek is Timnath; and Zorah and Eshtaol, now small mud villages, dot its north face. Sweeping down the slopes of the Shephelah, towards the Philistine plain, the broad corn valley is fair to see, whether from the high-perched home of Samson, or from the lowlands; opening as it does, in the one case, on the rich land of the plain, about eight and a half miles below Joppa, and in the other, closing with a background of high and rugged hills, through which it winds upwards, and on, for no less than forty-four miles.

Looking down from these heights, at their western end, towards the sea, there is beneath you a tumble of low hills, here and there rough with stunted brush-wood, but dotted thinly with villages, and clumps of olives. Beyond these and beneath them is the broad Maritime Plain, rough in parts with sandy uplands, but, as a whole, offering a broad, fertile bosom to the plough. Patches of grain or of lentiles checker it in the summer, but later in the year it is a wide rolling sea of brown tilth, which might bear a hundred times what is raised from it. It is in its glory, however, in the

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spring, when bright with the fresh green of early crops, or particoloured with sheets of flowers, only too brief in their loveliness.

Here, at Zorah, lived one of the few households still faithful to Jehovah amidst the ever-growing apostasy of the times, and in it was born a son, destined from his infancy to arrest the thoughts of those around, and lead them to contrast the present and the past. Before his birth his mother had not been allowed to taste wine or strong drink, or to eat anything unclean,[1] and the same prohibition was imposed from the first on the child, with the addition, that his hair should at no time be touched by scissors or razor.[2] Nor was he allowed even to eat the grape, or any of its productions, or to approach a dead body, though that of his nearest relation. He was, in fact, a Nazarite—"one consecrated" to God; in this case, for his whole life.

Such a vow of separation had been provided for in the Mosaic laws;[3] but no earlier instance is recorded of its being carried out. The distinction of clean and unclean acts had also been made for centuries, but the whole Levitical system must have fallen into abeyance during the isolation, disturbance, anarchy, and idolatry that had reigned more or less since Joshua's death. Wherever the child appeared he would, thus, be a living reproof to the people; reminding them at once of their duties and their neglect. As he grew up, moreover, it was found that this dedication to Jehovah brought with it endowments which secured what Israel, for centuries, had sighed to gain—such a resistless force and vigour, as was, in itself, a pledge of national independence, if, by a similar course, it was obtained by numbers. "The Spirit of Jehovah," which had

[1] Jud. xiii. 14. [2] Jud. xvi. 17. [3] Num. vi. 1-21.

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clothed Jephthah with courage and resolution, shewed itself in young Samson, by giving him prodigious strength and a fearlessness that never quailed. What if Israel, by returning to the worship of God, gained, as a people, the possession of gifts so invaluable in their present state? The religious revival under Samuel, himself a Nazarite from his birth,[1] may well have had its first impulse from the stories of the hero of Dan; so mighty because dedicated to Jehovah, and still alive within a few years of the great prophet's birth. His influence, indeed, can only be realized aright, by remembering the condition to which the Hebrews were reduced in his day. The Philistines had brought even the great tribe of Judah to such abject submission, that, instead of aiding the hero, who was daring all for national independence, it meanly betrayed him.[2] No such enemies had endangered Israel since the Oppression in Egypt. Aided by their slaves, the remains of the aboriginal races living in their cities, they climbed the passes at their will, and harried the valleys, carrying off not only the harvest when ripe, but even men, women, and children, to slavery.[3] As Porsena in later times prohibited the use of iron by the Romans, except for ploughs, to keep them down, and as Israel had been treated in the earlier days of Deborah, by the northern Canaanites, the Philistines to secure the permanence of their conquest had moreover not only disarmed the Hebrews, but had even required that no smith among them should ply his trade, if, indeed, they had not carried off all workers in iron as slaves, to toil for them, in their cities, and had thus made it necessary to go down to one of these for even the slightest repairs of an agricultural im-

[1] 1 Sam. i. 11; yet no mention is made of abstinence from wine.
[2] Jud. xv. 11. [3] Joel iii. 6. Amos i. 6.

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plement;[1] a policy so effective that the country was kept by it in virtual slavery for over a hundred years. It was due to Samson that resistance was kept up at all, under such circumstances. His example rekindled the national spirit and bravery, so that, in after years, however oppressed, they constantly made new attempts to shake off the yoke of the hated uncircumcised alien. The unequal combat was kept up with a grand tenacity, through successive generations, amidst frequent defeats, from the days of Eli to those of David, "the breaker of the Philistine's horn."[2] During that long interval, even when the Hebrews were at their lowest, and forced to hide in caves and clefts of the rocks, or to flee beyond Jordan,[3] single heroes, like Saul and Jonathan, fired by the stories of the past, rose amidst their unarmed brethren, sword in hand, to strike once more for freedom. The long domination of the Philistines was, indeed, thanks to Samson in a special degree, the heroic age of Israel. Men would not despair, but trusted more and more that, in the end, Jehovah would aid them. It was the time when independence and the free enjoyment of their institutions were won by God's help, through the brave struggles of the people and of single patriots. Later ages looked back with pride on the days when their valiant ancestors went out against the giant Avites who scorned Israel—against Goliath, and Ishbi-benob, with his terrible spear, and Saph, and a huge warrior with twenty-four fingers and toes.[4] Stirring tales of the deeds of these heroes doubtless roused the souls of each new generation, and were recorded by chroniclers proud to tell such stories of patriotic glory. Unfortunately, however, they are all long

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 19-21.
[2] Son of Sirach, xlvii. 7.
[3] 1 Sam. xiii. 6.
[4] 2 Sam. xxi. 20. 1 Chron. xx. 6. Sippai = Saph.

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ago lost, and we have only short notices, evidently quoted from fuller writings.

In this roll-call of noble spirits, but surpassing them all in his splendid deeds, Samson assuredly stood first. Endowed with extraordinary strength, he undertook, alone, to resist the oppressor, when Israel had submitted to the yoke. At no time had he any aid beyond such a band as he could gather from his own neighbourhood. Indifference, or want of spirit, or fear, left him unsupported by even a single tribe. His very name marks his work, and the terror and pride he raised in foe and friend, for it means "The Destroyer"—not, as has been fancied by some, "The Sunny," or "The Sun-hero."[1] His various deeds are too well known to need detailed enumeration. One thought animates him in all alike—undying hatred to the enemy of Jehovah and His people. In this aspect he is truly a heroic servant of God. The tasks such a title implies are very different at different times, and in the days of Samson lay supremely in resisting the "uncircumcised." It is in this sense only, indeed, that we are to think of the Divine Spirit and power urging him on, irresistibly, to his mighty acts, "springing on him," or "driving" him, as if with a push which he could not withstand.[2]

The incidents recorded of this Jewish Hercules are in keeping with his surpassing physical vigour. Unconscious of fear, he moves in radiant cheerfulness in the midst of dangers which would appall ordinary men. He delights in the play of humour, often simple as that of a child; some-

[1] Volck and Mühlau, and Dean Stanley understand it as "The Sun-hero" and "The Sunny," but I cannot avoid thinking that Bertheau and Schenkel are more correct in translating it "The Destroyer." See Gesenius, *Lex.*, 8th ed., "Schimson." *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 364. Art. "Simson," in *Bib. Lex.*; and Bertheau *Richter*, p. 169.

[2] So, literally.

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times terribly grim. He must have his riddles like others, at his wearisome seven days' marriage feast. His revenge for the loss of his wife by setting the jackals, with burning fire-brands behind them, into the standing corn, is a boisterous practical joke; and his irrepressible light-heartedness beams out in schemes to snare his enemies by repeatedly submitting to bonds of ropes or withes, which he knew he could snap in a moment, when they had lured his foes within reach. Even in his death he is still the same. Called out from his prison, in his blindness, to play the clown before the great folk of the Philistines, he sings, dances, and acts the buffoon amidst roars of laughter,[1] and when he has laid their suspicions asleep, prays that Jehovah may strengthen him only this once that he may by one blow avenge himself for his two eyes.[2]

The allusions in the whole story vividly illustrate the exact correspondence of the Scripture narrative, even in details, to local truth. The presence of lions in Palestine in ancient times, especially in the south part of it, where a village in Judah bore the name of "Lebaoth"—the lionesses—is undoubted.[3] There are many names for the lion in He-

[1] This is implied in the word used. Jud. xvi. 25.

[2] Jud. xvi. 28. Septuagint.

It is curious to see how persistent customs are in the East. At Druse weddings riddles are asked by the hired singers at the wedding feast, as they were at the marriage of Samson. Presents are given by the guests to the bridegroom. The bride rides on a horse in procession round the village; rice, corn, raisins, and cakes, are thrown after her; when she enters the house, the bridegroom holds a sword over her while the guests fire off guns and dance, with swords and jerids, that is, spears. The women raise shouts of joy, but the girls all weep when the bride enters the house: I suppose because they are not yet married.

Funerals are like those of Moslems; the corpse is perfumed. Swords are carried before it; professional mourners bewail the dead, but not for payment. They wave cloths and handkerchiefs after the coffin, and the family mourn from seven to forty days. Sheep are killed, and the guests and poor are fed, after a funeral, and cairns are raised over the grave.

[3] Josh. xv. 32. De Sauley came on similar traces near Masada, on the Dead Sea.

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brew ; and it not only supplied the imagery of Psalmists and Prophets, but lingered on till the time of the Crusades, and is mentioned by historians of the twelfth century,[1] as found near Samaria. That a swarm of bees should have hived in the dead carcass of the one slain by Samson would be natural in Palestine, however strange to our notions. The dry, hot climate, anticipating putrefaction, would in a few hours evaporate all the moisture of the body, and turn it into a mummy; while the ants would presently eat away all the flesh, leaving only the skeleton and the skin, and thus hollow out the creature to a shell, admirably fitted for a hive. That bees should have swarmed in such a home is, in fact, no more strange than that wrens or sparrows should build, as they have been known to do, in the dried body of a crow or hawk, in England.[2] That Samson should be able to catch three hundred jackals, as the word really means, is, moreover, not at all surprising, for these animals hunt in large packs, and are still very numerous in Southern Palestine.[3] To tear up the gates of a town may seem an incredible feat, but Samson's achievement at Gaza required only his lifting them off the pin on which they turned; for hinges are made in the East in two separate pieces—a pin and a socket. As to his pulling down the house in which the Philistine lords were gathered, we have only to think of

The lion is said still to be found in the Sinai Peninsula. Wilson's *Lands of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 739; Wilton's *Negeb*. But see, on this subject, vol. ii. pp. 42–47, and *note*. The Rabbis find seven words for the lion in Scripture. The commonest are *ari* or *aryeh*, a lion in general. *Kephir*, a strong and fierce lion, from a root = being strongly bound together—an allusion to the great muscular strength of the lion *Laish*, a strong lion. *Lâbi*, a roaring lion.

[1] Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 116.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 324. *Dict. of the Bible*, art. "Bee."

[3] See vol. ii. p. 372. Jud. xv. 4. Ovid states that foxes were let loose in the Roman games, with fire-brands burning at their tails. He adds, "Wherever they flee they set on fire the fields clothed with the harvests; the wind giving the destroying flame strength." *Fasti*, v. 707.

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it as resembling in structure not a few Eastern dwellings, to understand how this could be effected. "I have often," says Mr. Shaw, "seen numbers of people on the roof of the Dey's palace at Algiers, diverting themselves with performances carried on in the open court-yard below. The roof, like many others, had an advanced cloister over against the gate of the palace, like a large pent-house, supported by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or in the centre. Here, likewise, they have their public entertainments, as the lords and others of the Philistines had in the house of Dagon, and hence, if that structure were like this, the pulling down the front or centre pillars which supported it, would at once be attended with the like catastrophe that happened to the Philistines."[1]

Samson was the last of the twelve Judges mentioned in the book of that name. The Philistines had been strengthened some time before his birth by new immigrations of these races from Crete, and were thus able to seize and hold the hill country as well as their own fertile sea-coast plains; retaining their power more or less fully for perhaps a hundred years, till at last themselves finally broken and subdued by David in the eleventh century before Christ. The resistance to their strongly organized power was necessarily only a series of isolated and partial outbreaks, on a small scale, in Samson's day, before Samuel had drawn together into a measure of national union the scattered and unsympathetic communities of the various central and southern tribes. That Samson especially is commemorated for his heroic patriotism was, no doubt, due to the fact of his home being on the edge of the Philistine country, the daily sight of which must have roused his soul, conscious of special

[1] Shaw's *Barbary*, vol. i. pp. 391-2.

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physical gifts bestowed on him, as he no doubt felt, to be used for the cause of his nation. The story of his life is very briefly given. The child of a long unfruitful marriage and a Nazarite from his birth, he grew up amidst the laments of his people over the Philistine oppression which had crushed them for a generation. To win back independence was clearly for the time impossible, but, as the lad grew to manhood, he felt he could at least rouse the self-respect of his nation, and rekindle its spirit, which had been well-nigh extinguished. His first great deed sprang, as so many do in our early manhood, from love. A Philistine maiden, whom he had seen while he was living in "the camp of Dan," between Zorah and Eshtaol, one village apparently very near the other, had caught his fancy, and to get her he went with his parents, who had to manage the matter for him, to Timnath, down on the opposite side of the valley, west of Beth-shemesh, but within sight of his own village, nestling high above.

On his way he tore open the jaws of the lion, in whose dried-up body a swarm of bees was afterwards found by him, on his second journey to wed the young Philistine girl. The bees and the honey supply material for a riddle at the marriage feast, a very humble affair, no doubt, but it is betrayed to the company by his wife, from whom, as from other women he loved, he could keep nothing while under their spell. To pay the loss by his riddle being thus solved, he gains the required apparel promised by stripping their clothes from thirty Philistines whom he kills at Askelon—our Ascalon—a fierce enough return for his bride's treachery, to be explained, perhaps, by her being withheld from him and given to one whom he had employed as his "friend," or, we might say, his matrimonial agent. From this time

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the plot grows wilder. Furious, still, at his treatment, he collects a mob of jackals and lets them loose among the standing crops of the Philistines, with a firebrand at the tail of each ; burning down all the grain, far and near. On this the Philistines, in their rage, burnt down the bride's house, with both her and her father in it. A furious attack on the assailants, by Samson, followed ; so many falling that the brave man had to flee to Etham, and hide himself in a cleft of the rock which rose beside it.

This retreat seems to have been a rocky swell, near Surar, Zorah, now called Atab, the eagle's nest. It stands up from amidst ravines, through which trickle springs, and is bare of all soil, while it contains a long, narrow cavern in which any one could conceal himself. Indeed, it is even now called "The Refuge," and justifies the name by being two hundred and fifty feet long, eighteen wide, and from five to eight feet high, with a chasm ten feet deep at one end, while the other end is under the village itself. Tracked hither by the Philistines, and meanly given up by the villagers, he tore asunder the withes with which he was bound, and then, turning on his enemies, slew a thousand of them. Water, which he sorely needed after such a struggle, was supplied him from a spring which he found in the rock, known from its shape as Lehi, "the jaw-bone," a coincidence which has erroneously led to the idea that the water was made to flow from the jaw-bone of an ass, which, we are told, was his only weapon, and which he threw away at this place. Gaza, far in the south, is the next scene of his exploits, and, once more, it is a woman, through passion for whom he falls into danger. Watched by the Philistines, the town gates are shut, that he may be caught, but he lifts them up from their sockets and carries them, as tradition says, to the north of

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the town, but, as Judges records, to the hill near Hebron, which is more than forty miles from Gaza, up a pass which, from painful experience, I know to be very rough, steep, and exhausting; the climb in all, from the low-lying Gaza, being over three thousand feet. A third time, however, a Philistine woman brings him into trouble—Delilah. Infatuated with her, he allows her to betray him to his enemies, her countrymen, once and again, confident in his power to deliver himself; but, at last, when she worms out of him the secret of his Nazarite vow, and the sacredness of his unshorn hair, and cuts his great locks while he is asleep, he wakes powerless and is taken by the Philistines, blinded, and set to do a woman-slave's work, in turning a hand-mill as he sat on the ground—the very superlative of humiliation. Then the catastrophe of the Temple of Dagon closes the strange, eventful story.

The moral decay of Israel in these times is darkly intimated by an incident recorded of the second generation after Moses.[1] A long period of quiet had followed the defeat of the King of Elam, whose name, Chushan Rishathaim, has been supposed by Hitzig to mean the circular sword, or "Talar,"[2] bearer; an etymology which possibly receives illustration from the use of the quoit by the Sikhs, in former times, as the national weapon. Sharp as razors, they could be thrown with deadly precision, and such force as to cut off a man's head in a moment, and were so much cherished that even now an ornamental quoit is fixed in front of the head-dress of the Sikh regiments, as they go out to battle.

During this time of external peace, an incident, followed by momentous consequences, happened in the town of Gibeah,

[1] Judg. xx. 28. [2] Hitzig.

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of the tribe of Benjamin, formerly believed to have stood about a mile north of Jerusalem, but of late thought rather to have been on the hill called Tell el Ful, rising twenty-seven hundred and fifty feet above the sea, between two and three miles west of Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, and thus not far from Jerusalem. The surface round its base is flat, but from this level it swells up in a cone, the top of which shews a mound which originally formed an artificial platform, to which rough steps lead up. It is visible from the Holy City, and may have been used as a fire beacon in ancient times. Here there had been committed an outrage, recalling the worst guilt of Sodom, on the concubine of a Levite who chanced to be lodging in the place for a night. It was a violation of the sacred rights of hospitality, as well as an act of unequalled grossness, but it was bitterly revenged. In his wild indignation, the husband forthwith cut the body of his murdered wife into twelve pieces, and sent the bleeding witnesses of his wrong through the whole land. A storm of indignation followed, culminating in a great assembly of the tribes at Mizpeh, "the watch-tower;" a height apparently identical with the lofty hill now called Neby Samwil, about four miles north of Jerusalem. It towers over the whole district and is seen from all points, so that no place could be so fitted for a watch-tower. Mizpeh may have been the name of a village on this hill, many remains of an ancient village or town yet remaining on it. You can ride to the top, twenty-nine hundred and thirty-five feet above the sea, through a series of olive yards, barley patches, and gardens, within rough stone walls, or prickly-pear hedges. A mosque with a slender minaret, once a church of the Crusaders, crowns it, surrounded by olive trees, amidst which are many ancient cut stones and remains of

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walls. The view from it, often, no doubt, enjoyed by Samuel, is magnificent, though now revealing wild desolation more plentifully than the signs of a busy population. Wild excitement filled the tribes gathered on this great centre when they heard the Levite's story, and a summons was presently sent to Benjamin, to deliver up the offenders, that they might be put to death, and evil thus "put away from Israel," but it was treated with contempt. Furious at the rejection of their demand, indignant also at the crime, and, moreover, alarmed lest, if it were not punished, Divine vengeance might strike the whole race, war was now declared on the offenders. But the bravery of the Benjamites and their skill in fighting[1] gave them at first an advantage even against the overwhelming odds of the eleven tribes, who were "knit together as one man" against them. There is a strange mixture of fierceness and religious feeling in the narrative. Counsel is sought from God, through the stern Phinehas,[2] then high priest, so early in the history of the nation was the crime, and three times Israel is launched against the petty tribe, strong in their hearts, and in the defences of their hills. The host weeps, prays, fasts, and offers burnt offerings and peace offerings after two successive defeats, and then turns once more, with greater skill, to the relentless attack. Stratagem at last succeeds where direct force had hitherto failed. Benjamin, allured from the hill-top by a pretended flight, finds, ere long, the town behind it, in flames, and sees itself hemmed in on every side by multitudes. In the terrible struggle that followed the tribe was almost exterminated: only 600 men surviving out of nearly 27,000.[3] These saved themselves by flight to the

[1] Jud. xx. 16.

[2] The Ark is said to have been at the house of God, Bethel, at the time. Jud. xx. 26, 31. Yet xxi. 12, the camp is said to be at Shiloh.

[3] Jud. xx. 15, 47.

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crag of Rimmon, "the pomegranate," now the rock Rammon, beside a village of the same name, east of Bethel. This village sits conspicuously at the end of a narrow ridge, on the west side of which the rock is very steep, with caves on its south side. It can be approached only from the north; deep ravines trending off on the other sides. The Benjamites must have had a wide look-out from the top of the rock, especially to the south, while to the east they looked down on a confusion of deep gorges and great precipices, as the hills sank down to the Jordan. Here they maintained themselves for four months, dreading to descend from their height of vantage.

Remorse at such terrible vengeance now, however, seized the eleven tribes. Their national feeling was wounded at the thought that they had well-nigh blotted out one of the divisions of the people, and their only care was to undo the evil as far as possible. The whole of the women and maidens of Benjamin had been ruthlessly killed: the towns and hamlets burnt, and the very cattle and flocks slaughtered, as devoted by a curse to destruction. No wives remained for the remnant of the men. Still worse, all Israel had bound themselves, under a curse, not to give one of their daughters in marriage to them. Gathering again, therefore, at Shiloh, the people abode before "the house of God till even, and lifted up their voices and wept sore" at the thought that henceforth one of the tribes would be blotted out. But the very sternness of their former mood at last brought a remedy.

A "great oath" had been made by the former assembly, devoting to death any who failed to come up to the common help, to Mizpeh, and it was now found that the men of Jabesh Gilead had failed to attend the rendezvous. The

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town is on the east of the Jordan, six miles south of the future Pella, on the top of one of the green hills of Gilead, overlooking the rich Wady Jabis, which still preserves its ancient name, and runs down into the Jordan valley, a few miles below Bethshean, its hollow beautiful with straggling olives, patches of barley, and rich pasture. An expedition was now launched against them, for their disloyalty, and the whole population put to the sword, or, as the Hebrew expresses it, "devoted," as having forfeited their lives to God; only 400 maidens being spared. These were brought to Shiloh, and presently sent to the crag Rammon, to "proclaim peace" to the fugitive Benjamites, who were only too glad to take the olive branch thus tardily offered. The captive girls were then given to them as wives. But 200 men still remained unsupplied. A pious fraud, however, secured them partners also. No father in Israel could give his daughter to them, but they were to hide in the vineyards at Shiloh at the yearly feast, when the maidens were dancing in the open, and each catch one for himself, for a wife: the fathers soothing their consciences from a charge of having broken their oaths, by the specious defence that they had not given their daughters to Benjamites; the eager bridegrooms having taken them by force.

From such a small beginning had the tribe to found a new history for itself in Israel.

Samson appears to have lived about a hundred years before David,[1] when things were almost at their lowest in Israel. The lawlessness, disunion, and demoralization of the country are reflected in the notices preserved to us of his life; but, even amidst its roughest passages, there is evidence of an undercurrent of still life which held its own amidst

[1] About B.C. 1131. David took Jerusalem B.C. 1044. Conder.

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the troubles of the age. The vintage ripens peacefully in the sun, and the marriage feast runs through seven days, with its jests and riddles. Another glimpse of this calmer side of things is revealed in the Book of Ruth, which apparently refers to the same period, and brings before us the mountain village of Bethlehem and the sunny valleys underneath it, as they were 3,000 years ago, with their humble life, in its lights and shadows; the waving harvest falling before rows of brown reapers, and the maidens binding the sheaves behind them.

This famous hill-town stretches along the winding, flat top of a ridge, two thousand five hundred and fifty feet above the sea—that is, a hundred feet higher than Jerusalem. The road to it from the Holy City runs south through the deep ravine outside the Jaffa gate, then across the valley of Hinnom, up the slope between gray waves of limestone pasture, and so on, up and down, with a multitude of low, rounded, gray heights, nearer and farther off, on both sides, for about five miles, till, after passing the grave of Rachel on the right hand, close to the track, you turn sharp to the left, and ride into Bethlehem on a road nearly level with it. From the point where you bend east towards it, the valleys on the north, west, and south are more or less in view; each with its own pleasant charms. The slopes sink in green terraces to the broad sweep below, which stretches across to other slopes and heights, beyond. The terraces on the north side are more numerous than those on the south, and must be very old, their great supporting walls rambling along the hillsides in every direction, holding up flat breadths from which rise olives, figs, and other fruit trees. The north valley, also, is rich with olives, figs, and patches of grain, and green pastures, but the south is even more fertile, or, at least, is

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better cultivated, being in the hands of Christian owners, who are much more industrious and business-like than Mohammedans. No sight in Palestine, indeed, pleased me more than the really beautiful gardens and orchards of the wide hollow through which you pass south, to Hebron, but much of the ground is only newly enclosed, to grow vegetables and fruit for the Jerusalem market, to which great quantities of cabbages, cauliflowers, and other produce, such as we have in our own gardens, is taken each morning, by women, who also carry in a great deal of fruit in its season. The town itself is entered through a low arch, now without a gate; but, before you come to it, you pass on the left an open, flat sheet of yellow limestone, on which open three shafts leading down to great cisterns, now dry, but famous as traditionally "the well at the gate" from which David's heroes brought him the water for which he longed. The cistern is not only very large, but very ancient, and thus the well may have been one of these openings. I remember them especially, from the fear I had, while sleeping in my tent beside them, that I would fall down one or other; and from my tortures by clouds of mosquitoes which seem to have their happy hunting grounds on this spot.

The town itself winds along in a main street fringing the north side of the ridge, side streets, very rough and of no length, running across on the right-hand side, towards the south side, across a middle street parallel with the ridge, dividing the houses into two long main lines. On the south side the slope is less steep, and the houses have, in some cases, orchards before or near them. The long main street, and, indeed, the little town as a whole, is built of beautiful white limestone, the houses being often of only one story or a story and a half, with a flat roof in all cases, and a low

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dome rising like a half egg from it, marking the point where the arches, springing from each corner below, meet in the centre. Wood is so scarce that all houses, of whatever kind, through Palestine, are built in this way. At the east of the town rises the grand old Church of the Nativity, and close to it the castle-like monasteries of various sects; their buttresses reaching down the slopes like the supports of fortress walls. In the valley below, to the east, are the fields in which Ruth gleaned; along the slope, climbing up to the town, is the path by which she went down to the fields of Boaz and returned from them. Beyond these, on a slope facing west, tradition tells us the shepherds saw the Christmas angels. Whichever way you look hills meet you, gray and rounded; but to the east, the landscape soon begins to sink in great steps of gray and yellow hills, peaks, and clefts towards the Dead Sea, fourteen miles off and nearly four thousand feet below Bethlehem. On all the other sides the prospect is human and inviting, but on this there is only desolation, for it is part of Jeshimon, "the horror"—or, in other words, of the wilderness of Judæa. The population of Bethlehem, which is mostly Christian, is very industrious, men and women working together, in the manufacture of countless varieties of little memorials of the town—crosses, carved oyster shells, etc., for sale to pilgrims and visitors. The dress of the men is the same as in other parts of the country, but that of the women is very striking. Maidens wear a light frame on their heads, covered with a long white linen or cotton veil, hanging down to the elbows, and strong enough to be used, when needed, for carrying grain or what they please in it, when taken off. Under the veil is a diadem of silver or silver gilt, with ornaments of the same material at each end, leaving the forehead only

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partially visible. Their black hair falls in heavy plaits over their shoulders, but is not allowed to hide their ear-rings, and their faces are exposed, as they are Christians, and have not, like other Oriental women, to shroud themselves from their fellow-creatures. They wear a long blue or striped dress, generally of cotton, tied in loosely at the waist, with open sleeves hanging down to the knees; its front set off with pieces of red, yellow, or green cloth. Over this gown, however, those who can afford it wear a bright red, short-sleeved jacket, to the waist, or to the knees. Matrons have a somewhat different headdress, the veil resting on the top of a round, brimless felt hat, with coins in front, in most cases, as ornaments. They, too, wear ear-rings, and strings of coins hang round their necks. The veil of both married and single women is about two yards long and not quite a yard wide, so that it is large and stout enough to make an easy means of carrying what the wearer pleases, however bulky or heavy. Such was the place, and such, in our day, are the people, of the scene of Ruth's charming story.

This gentle pastoral is introduced into the canon from its connection with the history of David, the hero-king of Israel, and, through him, with our Lord. The spoilers have wasted the district round Bethlehem, or perhaps the rains have failed, and men have to wander where they can for bread. Among others, Elimelech, "My God is King," with his wife Naomi, "the Lovable," and their two sons, Mahlon, "the Sickly," and Chilion, "the Pining One," make their way to the more fortunate uplands of Moab, where the language is the same, though the faith be different. Yet the trouble which they sought to flee follows them in a worse shape, for Naomi is presently a widow. Her two sons marry women of Moab, but the bridal chamber is soon hung with

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mourning, for the two wives are ere long without husbands. Only the three widows remain.

Naomi now hears that Jehovah has "visited His people in giving them bread," and sighs, in a strange land, for the familiar scenes and faces of her old happy life. She will go back to Bethlehem, but begs her two daughters-in-law to remain in their own country, thanking them tenderly for the kindness they had shewn the dead. Orpah, "the Fawn," kisses her and stays, but Ruth, the true "Friend," will not leave her, and goes on with her to her old home. The rest of the book is simply the story of Naomi's gratitude, shewn in true womanly fashion, by her schemes to get Ruth a home. The old Jewish marriage customs required the nearest relation of a dead husband, to become his legal substitute, known as his goël, from being bound to discharge all duties of protection, blood revenge, or marriage rights, for the dead man, such as the buying back his inheritance, if estranged, and marrying his widow, if childless, to raise up a son to him, that "his name should not cease in Israel." Naomi

A Bedouin Woman. Conder.

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bethinks herself that Boaz, "the Active," one of the rich men of the village, is the goël of Ruth's dead husband, and lays her kindly plans accordingly. Ruth must go to his fields and glean, for harvest has begun, and the barley is being cut. He will see her there, and perhaps she may find favour in his eyes. Nor is she wrong, for Boaz presently notices her, and falls in love with her at first sight. Then the relationship is disclosed, with its claim on him to marry her, which he will be only too happy to honour, if he can do so legally. But there is another goël nearer than he, who must first be asked. Should that kinsman decline, he himself will be a husband to Ruth, and Naomi shall have back her inheritance. The end, as might have been expected, is that Boaz and Ruth become man and wife; and her first son is Obed, the grandfather of David.

The glimpses of ancient life in the future town of David and of Christ are full of interest. When Ruth's story opens, the little valley below the houses is yellow with ripe barley, and rich with tall green wheat that will be golden ere long. The harvest is reaped by men, but the sheaves are bound by maidens. Life is simple, as it is still in these parts, and the well-to-do Boaz courteously greets his work-people as he comes to them, and is as politely greeted in return. Their meals, while at work, are as simple as all else—only ears of the barley they are cutting, roasted and shelled by hand—and thin cakes of bread, dipped in sour wine as a relish, with clear water, drawn by the young men, for drink. Such modest fare is indeed usual, even now, in Palestine, among reapers. A fire of dry grass or withered stalks is kindled, and a quantity of ears of grain tossed on it, to lie there till the husks are burnt off. When this has happened, the whole are dexterously swept, from the embers, into a cloth

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laid to receive them, after which the grain is beaten out, and the chaff blown off by tossing the whole against the wind. After this, it is ready to be eaten. It is sometimes roasted in a pan or on an iron plate, or a bunch of ears is held over the fire till the chaff is scorched off. This is done by the women, who shew great skill in holding the grain in the flame only just as long as is proper, and then beating it out very cleverly, with a short stick. Vinegar is still often mixed with the water drunk with this pleasant kind of food, for it is pleasant to the taste. Nor is Boaz himself too grand to eat with the rest, or to join in their work. If he does not reap, he winnows the grain, after younger arms have threshed it out on the floor in the open field, and, like his successors in the same parts in our own day, he lies down to sleep by his heap at night, that he may watch it. Gleaning is allowed by the old law of Moses,[1] but the kindliness of the statute book is too often forgotten in practice; for Ruth owes it rather to her gentleness and her good looks, than to Moses, that the young men do not approach her, or order her away. But roasted corn and water are not the only food; for, when the day's work has ended, Boaz eats and drinks better fare, till his heart is merry. The elders of Bethlehem are its local council, and they and all the men of the village, with the eager curiosity and utter indifference to the loss of time, characteristic of the East, gather round Boaz and the other goël, as they make the final business arrangements, by which the former buys back her field for Naomi, and gains Ruth for himself, taking off his sandal and giving it to the vendor as evidence, according to an old Jewish custom,[2] of the sale having been perfected by a second

[1] Lev. xix. 9; xxiii. 22. Deut. xxiv. 19.

[2] See Deut. xxv. 7–10. The text implies that this custom had fallen into disuse when the Book of Ruth was written.

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goël, the first having refused to do his duty. Nor are the women less completely our sisters. What modern match-maker could be more skilful than Naomi; what maiden more modestly careful to do her best to attract than Ruth, as she "washes and anoints herself, and puts on her best clothes" when she hopes to see Boaz?[1] Even the gathering of the women on the birth of the infant Obed, and their congratulations, are true to human nature in every age.

One feature of this charming idyl, however, gives it a specially distinctive colour—its intense religiousness. Despite centuries of oppression, division, and religious decay, it breathes a lofty spirit of loyalty to Jehovah, which appears at every turn. It is He who has given His people bread; He who deals kindly with the widow; He who grants her that she may rest in the house of a husband. But it is He also who tries the children of men, and from whose hand afflictions go out against them. Indeed, He at times deals "very bitterly," even with those who love Him, but He is still their God, under whose wings they trust, and who recompenses man's work and gives him a full reward. He is no mere name to which to turn in formal rites, but a Father—the Friend and Protector, yet, also, the sovereign Judge and Lord—demanding obedience and heavily punishing sin. That such conceptions still found a home in Israel, after more than four hundred years of moral and political degradation, and still filled the life of some, at least, with the thought of God, and of their race being His chosen people, was the guarantee of future national regeneration. It was certain that, ever and again, such truths would assert

[1] Boaz gives Ruth six measures or seahs = 2 ephahs = according to Josephus to over 17 gallons of barley; according to the Rabbis, to 9 gallons. "He laid it on her," that is, doubtless, on her head, after he had measured it into her great head-veil.

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themselves in the hearts of the nation, and bring with them political as well as moral renewal; the one, indeed, as the result of the other.

But this peaceful glimpse of every-day life in the quiet of Bethlehem is only a moment of sunshine through thick clouds. That so much private worth and religious earnestness should still remain in the hidden nooks of the land was, indeed, the best pledge of its rise hereafter from the disasters of the present; but the recovery was to be delayed for a long time yet. The want of a central government still left Israel weak and helpless; for though Judges might rise in any tribe, and for a time beat off the swarming enemies round, their sphere was at best only local, and their power ended with victory. Without any lasting or general combination, the different parts of the country could be attacked in detail, and harried or enslaved. Nor was the picture shewn in the story of Ruth that of the country at large. Constant intermarriages with the heathen still continued, and had introduced a low morality that sapped the character of the nation, even in its priesthood. In this gloomy time the name of Eli emerges as both the high priest at Shiloh and the Judge of Israel, but he appears before us in his feeble old age, with a soft and yielding goodness ill suited for the times. Only gentle words come from his lips, and he is unable even to rebuke his unworthy sons with the sternness their offences demanded. Yet such a spirit must, in those rough times, have had its special worth in the influence of a blameless life, and in commending widely the religion it exemplified. Hence we may justly regard him as no unworthy agent, in the religious revival which culminated under Samuel, and raised Israel from its political degradation. Despairing hearts from Ephraim or Dan, or from be-

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yond the Jordan, must have constantly sought the high priest at Shiloh; nor can it be doubted, that they would be pointed by him to Jehovah, the God of their fathers, as the true help of the nation in its troubles, and made to feel that their having forsaken Him had brought them all their sorrow.

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CHAPTER II.

ELI.

ELI marks a transition period, when things were tending more and more to the establishment of centralized power; for hitherto, so far as we know, no high priest had been also Judge. But his pontificate may itself mark the darkness of the times, for he was of the race of Ithamar,[1] not of Phinehas, the successor of Aaron in the elder branch. Had some priestly revolution put him in power? Or was the heir of Phinehas too young at his predecessor's death to wear the ephod? Eli's elevation as Judge may perhaps have been due to some warlike deed in his earlier life; for the Philistines seem to have been driven back, when his name first occurs, from the position they held in Samson's day.[2] Or it may be that he received the name of Judge simply from his giving counsel to the warlike bands which came to Shiloh to consult the Urim and Thummim respecting their proposed enterprises; for the high priests of Israel were not wont to go out to battle.[3]

Quiet, sympathetic, and humble before God, as we find him in his old age, Eli had yet been unable to do more than sow the seed of a future reformation in the community. The

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, VIII. i. 3. 1 Sam. iv. 4, 7; xiv. 3; xxii. 20, 22. 1 Chron. xxiv. 3. The Rabbis say that the line of Phinehas was displaced because that high priest had been compromised in the matter of Jephthah's daughter.

[2] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 577.

[3] Graetz, vol. i. p. 142.

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very priesthood around him, and even his two sons, were tainted with the prevailing licentiousness. In the words of Scripture, they were men of Belial, or "the pit"—that awful abyss, which, to the Hebrews, was the home of evil spirits. As priests, they should have set an example of godliness; but, instead of that, they looked on their office simply as a means of gratifying their self-indulgence and sensual passions. The Mosaic rites were still observed at Shiloh, and these required that *burnt-offerings* should be wholly consumed by fire on the altar. *Sin-offerings*, on the other hand, were eaten by the priests. In the case of *peace-offerings*, however, the fat of the inside alone was burned on the altar. The priest had then, for his share, the breast and the shoulder, after they had been waved before the Lord; the rest of the victim being returned to the offerer, to be eaten by himself and his family, with such friends as he invited. But this appointed arrangement did not satisfy Eli's sons. "They knew not or cared nothing for Jehovah, nor for the legal due of the priests from the people."[1] Their lawful portion not contenting them, they sent their servants to the place where the share belonging to the offerer was being boiled, and these thrust "a flesh-hook of three teeth" into the pot, and claimed for their masters whatever it brought up. Nor was this all; they forthwith demanded, even before the fat had been offered on the altar, a share of the raw flesh, ostensibly to roast, but perhaps also to secure a larger booty. No greater outrage could have been committed than thus to desecrate the sacred offerings, nor was it a slight thing to take away the sacred food from those to whom it belonged. Amidst the prevailing lawlessness such an example set by the sons of the high priest soon shewed its

[1] 1 Sam. ii. 13. Wellhausen. Thenius.

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natural consequence, by men "holding in contempt" the whole service.[1]

But this was not their whole, or even their worst, offence. Women were employed outside the Tabernacle[2] to prepare the sacred bread; to attend to the holy garments, and to lead the sacred songs and dances, in which others of their sex, from all the tribes, joined at the great festivals. "The singers," says David,[3] speaking of the Tabernacle, "go before, the players on instruments follow after, in the midst of damsels playing with timbrels." Indeed, the popular poetry and music were left mainly in the hands of the women till David's time,[4] as we see in the cases of Miriam and of Deborah. The sex was not employed in cleaning the sacred Tent, because females were excluded from part of it; such work, moreover, is usually done by men in the East. These choristers, if we may call them so, the sons of Eli only too successfully corrupted; nor could the gentle high priest rouse himself to his duty further than to give godly counsels to the offenders, instead of inflicting on them stern punishment. "Why do ye such things?" said he; "for I hear of your evil dealings[5] from all the people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear the Lord's people to be spreading.[6] If a man sin against another, one can pray for him to God; but if he sin against God, who shall intercede for him?"[7] Such weakness brought with it a heavy penalty. A prophet—the first mentioned since the days of

[1] The offence taken at this lawless proceeding of Eli's sons, shows that the people as a whole, held to the exact observance of the Mosaic worship, at least in Shiloh.

[2] Exod. xxxviii. 8. 1 Sam. ii. 22. In both cases the word "assembled," is literally "did duty."

[3] Ps. lxviii. 25.

[4] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 502. *Alterthümer*, p. 379. See Exod. xv. 20. Jud v. 12; xi. 34. 1 Sam. ii. 1-11; xviii. 6-9; xxi. 11.

[5] Literally. [6] Ewald.

[7] Thenius. Septuagint. 1 Sam. ii. 23-25.

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Moses—came to Eli with the terrible message: "Thus saith Jehovah. Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father (Aaron) when they were in bondage to Pharaoh,[1] and did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel, to be My priest, to offer on My altar, to burn incense, and wear an ephod before Me? And did I give to the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore will ye wickedly trample down[2] My sacrifice and My offering, which I have commanded them; and honour your sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel My people?" "For this," he went on to say, "the days come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, and will break their strength, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou, the enemy of My sanctuary, wilt look greedily on all the good that God does to Israel,[3] and there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever. And yet I will not destroy every one belonging to thee from Mine altar, which thine eyes slight and thy soul despises;[4] but all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age."[5] As a sign that this would certainly happen, he foretold, moreover, that Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons, would die in one day: that the priesthood would be continued in the elder line, not in his; and that his race would sink to obscurity and want. How fully this curse was fulfilled will be seen hereafter.

But this was not the only announcement of the doom of the worthy but weak old man's race. A family lived in Ramathaim Zophim—"the two heights of the Zuphites"—

[1] Septuagint. 1 Sam. ii. 27–34.
[2] Literally. Thenius.
[3] Zunz. Thenius translates it, "And thou shalt look eagerly on a rock of defence, and all the good," etc.
[4] Zunz.
[5] Septuagint, "by the sword."

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perhaps "the watchers" or "lookers out" or "prophets,"[1] somewhere in the hills of Ephraim. The name of the husband was Elkanah—"whom God created;" but there were two wives—Hannah, "Grace" or "Favour," and Peninnah, "Coral;" the second having likely been taken because the first had no children. But, as might have been expected, this double marriage—a thing even then uncommon—did not add to his happiness, for even among Orientals the misery of polygamy is proverbial. "*From what I know,*" says one, "it is easier to live with two tigresses than with two wives." And a Persian poet is of well-nigh the same opinion:

"Be that man's life immersed in gloom
Who needs more wives than one:
With one his cheeks retain their bloom,
His voice a cheerful tone:
These speak his honest heart at rest,
And he and she are always blest.
But when with two he seeks for joy,
Together they his soul annoy;
With two no sunbeam of delight
Can make his day of misery bright."[2]

An old Eastern drama is no less explicit:

"Wretch! wouldst thou have another wedded slave?
Another! what, another! At thy peril
Presume to try the experiment: wouldst thou not
For that unconscionable, foul desire,
Be linked to misery? Sleepless nights, and days
Of endless torment—still recurring sorrow
Would be thy lot. Two wives! O never, never!
Thou hast not power to please two rival queens;

[1] So the Targums. "Zuph" is among the ancestors of Samuel, 1 Sam. i. 1. Ramathaim is the Arimathea of the N. Test.

[2] *Manners and Customs of the Women in Persia.* Translated by J. Atkinson, Esq. for the Oriental Translation Fund. London, 1832.

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Their tempers would destroy thee; sear thy brain;
Thou canst not, Sultan, manage more than one.
Even one may be beyond thy government!"[1]

Yet Elkanah was a worthy man, and even in these wild and evil times went up yearly, with his whole family, to Shiloh, at the Passover. But the household sacrifices there brought him trouble; for he had to give Peninnah and her sons and daughters each a share in the offerings, while the childless Hannah could have only a single portion,[2] though he loved her better than her rival.

The story of Hannah's betaking herself, after the family rejoicings, to the door of the Tabernacle, where Eli used to sit; her bitterness of soul at Peninnah's taunts; her weeping and silent prayer for a son, are exquisitely told; a state of mind which can only be understood when we realize the peculiar notions on such matters in the East. Among Orientals, a wife who has no son is inconsolable, but neither she nor her husband sets any value on the birth of a daughter. To express the very smallest thing she could imagine, a little girl in a Palestine mission school described it as being "as little as the joy of my father when I was born." But, on the birth of a son, a man ceases to be known by his own name; his neighbours, to honour him, speaking of him as the father of Mohamed, or David, or whatever the child may be called. The intense desire of both husband and wife leads, indeed, at times, to ludicrous results. I was told at Gaza, of a poor man's wife in the town who had presented her husband with two daughters, but, as he had threatened to divorce her if she had a daughter and not a son, her mother told him when the children were born that his wife had borne two sons. Nothing could exceed his delight.

[1] Atkinson. [2] 1 Sam. i. 5. Septuagint.

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He danced and shrieked for joy. At night, however, the truth came out, and his distress at having been so demonstrative was irresistibly comical; moreover, he was in trouble about his declaration that he would divorce his wife if she had a daughter. He really loved her, and did not wish to be forced to keep his word. The desire to get out of his difficulty soon found an ingenious apology for a change of front. "He had said he would divorce her if she had one daughter, but had never said he would do so if she had *two*." So he kept her! It is very common, indeed, if a daughter be born, for the father to refuse to see or speak to the mother, and her friends and relatives, especially the female part of them, upbraid her, and condole with the husband as if he had been ill treated. I was told at Beirout of a woman in the town who had been made a wretched cripple for life by her mother or father throwing her out of the window at her birth, because she was not a son. In her intense longing for a blessing so prized, Hannah, as wives often do in the East, made vows in the event of its being granted her. She vowed, therefore, that, if God granted her desire, she would consecrate the infant to Him as a Nazarite. In due time the birth of Samuel, "Heard of God," answered the lowly cry. Grief had long saddened his mother,[1] but she now rejoiced. Year after year, when her husband went up to Shiloh, to offer his sacrifice, and to pay his tithes,[2] she stayed at home with her son, till he should be old enough to take with her to the Tabernacle, and be left there as "a loan to Jehovah" for his whole life.

Intrusted, at last, to Eli, who lovingly accepted him, the child grew up in the sanctuary; at first, probably, in charge of the women of the Tabernacle. But as soon as his age

[1] 1 Sam. i. 15. Septuagint. [2] 1 Sam. i. 21. Septuagint.

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permitted, simple offices were assigned him. The House of God was thus the only home he knew, and his earliest impressions were associated with it. Even as a boy he "ministered to the Lord" in a linen ephod, the special priestly vestment originally worn by the high priests only,[1] though that of Samuel, who was a Levite by birth, but not a priest,[2] was as yet of ordinary linen; not the finer material used for the higher office.[3] It was his mother's delight to bring him his simple vestment, made by her own hands,[4] year by year, when she came up to the feast.

Through Samuel, Eli heard, even more solemnly than from the lips of the prophet, the fate awaiting his house. The child, busied by day in little cares connected with the Tabernacle, slept at night in some part of it, as did also Eli. Near the entrance of the holy place, on the left, stood the seven-branched "candlestick," now mentioned for the last time, and superseded in the reign of Solomon by ten separate candlesticks, but revived after the captivity, in the copy from the original form, still to be seen on the Arch of Titus.[5] It was the only light in the Tabernacle through the night, and after being trimmed each evening, all its lamps but one were extinguished just before morning, when the curtains of the outer entrance were once more drawn aside.[6] It was in the stillness of the early dawn, the time of "visions of the night," when heavy sleep is breaking with the approach of day, that the soft voice of a child was

[1] Exod. xxviii. 4. 1 Sam. ii. 28; xiv. 3; xxi. 18. Hos. iii. 4.

[2] 1 Chron. vi. 27, 28.

[3] The one was of *bad*; the other, of *shesh*.

[4] It is striking how generally ladies of all ranks made clothes for those they loved, in antiquity. The Emperor Augustus commonly wore clothes made for him by his wife, sister, or daughter. Sueton., *August.*, p. 73.

[5] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 377.

[6] 1 Sam. iii. 15. 1 Chron. ix. 27.

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divinely used to announce to Eli the doom of his line, because his sons had "reviled God,"[1] and their father had not restrained them.

ARK OF AMMON.

The first blow fell on the guilty priests, Hophni, "the Fighter," and Phinehas, "the Brazen-mouthed."[2] The relentless Philistines were again invading Israel, and had beaten and driven back its host, at a spot between the western entrance of the pass of Beth-horon, and Beth-shemesh, "the House of the Sun," a village on the boundary of Judah, in the broad valley of Sorek, on a line between Ashdod and Jerusalem. The Philistines were in the habit of bringing the images of their gods into the battlefield, to secure the victory;[3] could it be that the want of any similar heavenly guardianship on the side of Israel had caused its defeat? The chiefs of the host, as superstitious as their foe, concluded that it must be so. Had they had the Ark with them, it would have secured Jehovah's support, for did He not dwell between the cherubim that overarched it? Off, therefore, across the hills, to Shiloh, marched a band, and brought back to the camp the awful symbol, attended by Hophni and Phinehas, as its

[1] Septuagint. Theniius. 1 Sam. iii. 13.
[2] Perhaps "the Oracle."
[3] 2 Sam. v. 21.

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priestly guardians. Now, at last, they must triumph, and the "earth rang again" with their shouts of joy in the anticipation. Spies soon told the Philistines what had happened, but the thought that they had to strive with the mighty God who had smitten Egypt only roused them to desperate courage. "Would they be slaves to the Hebrews, as the Hebrews had been to them? No; they would quit themselves like men."

That very day, or the next, there ran from the Israelitish army, up the steep pass, over and round the countless hills, nearly thirty miles as the crow flies, to Shiloh, a Benjamite; accomplishing the distance before night. News from the army was anxiously awaited throughout the villages of the tribes, but nowhere more eagerly than in the sanctuary-town, from which the Ark had been carried forth to the battlefield.[1] Among the rest, however, two especially longed to hear the result—Eli, now 98 years old, and blind; and the wife of Phinehas. Eli, in his anxiety, sat on his wonted seat by the gate of the Tabernacle, at the road side.[2] Presently, as the evening darkened, a young man rushed up the valley to the gate of Shiloh, his clothes torn, and dust on his head, in sign of deepest grief and dismay.[3] It was not necessary to tell his message. A loud wail, like that which, on the announcement of any great calamity, runs through all Eastern towns, rang through the streets of the expectant city.[4] Making his way to Eli, the news at last came out in its terrible fulness. Israel was beaten; Hophni and Phinehas were killed; and, worse than all, the Ark of God was

[1] This was, apparently, the first time it had been so (1 Sam. iv. 7). We afterwards find the Ark on the field with the army at the siege of Ammon by Joab. 2 Sam. xi. 11.

[2] Septuagint. Thenius.

[3] 1 Sam. iv. 12.

[4] Stanley, vol. i. p. 378.

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taken. This last announcement was overwhelming. It broke the old man's heart. Struck with a fit on the moment, he fell backward heavily from his seat, and died. Tidings of the catastrophe soon reached the house of Phinehas, and there also the announcement was fatal to his wife. Not even the birth of a living son, which presently happened, could cheer her. The "Glory of Israel" was in the hands of the uncircumcised. Her child should bear in his name a memorial of the evil day. She would call him, with her parting breath, no other than Ichabod; the land was "without its glory." God had "forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men, and delivered His Strength into captivity, and His Glory into the enemy's hand."[1] The event imprinted itself on the heart of the nation, so as to be thus remembered in its psalms in after ages. An ancient manuscript of the Book of Judges, at St. Petersburg, indeed, recognizes it as an epoch in the national history; recording that the image of Micah continued to be worshipped at Dan until "the day of the captivity of the Ark."[2]

Such a calamity was appalling in an age which associated the presence of God with the symbol now lost; perhaps for ever. To the ignorant multitude it would doubtless seem as if, in gaining the Ark, the Philistines had also secured the presence and aid of Jehovah; for this was the common idea in the ancient world. It was grievous for the tribes to have lost their God; but to find Him in the hand of their enemies, was a disaster of inexpressible magnitude.

The joy of the Philistines was in proportion to the dismay of the Hebrews. To lead off the gods of a foe was the most signal mark of victory on the one side, and of humiliation

[1] Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61. [2] Jud. xviii. 30.

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on the other. The Assyrian sculptures often exhibit the idols of vanquished nations, borne in triumphal procession by the conquerors, and the prophets frequently allude to the custom. Isaiah predicts that the gods of Babylon will go into captivity, borne ignominiously on the backs of beasts of burden or in waggons.[1] Chemosh, the god of Moab, and Milcom, the god of the Ammonites, are foretold by Jeremiah as doomed to the same disgrace, "with their priests and princes together."[2] The calf, worshipped by Northern Israel at Samaria, was to be carried into Assyria as a present to the king;[3] and in the wars between Syria and Egypt, the gods of the former were to be carried captives into the latter.[4] The Philistines, in the same way, led off the Ark, and placed the trophy in the shrine or chapel of their god Dagon, at Ashdod—the New Testament Azotus, and the modern Esdud—as a recognition of his victory over Jehovah. But such spoils were held even then, by not a few, as of doubtful value; the thoughtful fearing that the hatred and vengeance of the god so insulted might be visited on his captors. Thus the wiser among the Romans criticised the conduct of Marcellus, who first brought Grecian statues and pictures of the gods to their city to adorn his triumph; thinking better of the course followed by Fabius, who, in taking Tarentum, had told his army to leave to the Tarentines the gods offended with them.

The god Dagon, worshipped at Ashdod, was a Phœnician, and also an Assyrian divinity. Indeed, the name is Assyrian, and hence the ordinary derivation of the name from "Dag," the Hebrew word for "fish," cannot be correct, as the Assyrian for "fish" is quite different. In the Assyrian inscrip-

[1] Isa. xlvi. 1.
[2] Jer. xlviii. 7; xlix. 3.
[3] Hos. x. 6.
[4] Dan. xi. 8.

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tions Dagon, "the exalted one," is coupled with Anu, "the Sky," the two reigning together in Haran, high up the Euphrates, on the road to Palestine, whither his worship could, thus, early be carried to Phœnicia, when he became a popular deity. There was a Beth-Dagon,[1] the house or temple of Dagon, in the nominal territory of Asher, near Tyre and Sidon. But it was among the Philistines in the far south of Palestine that he was especially honoured, for he seems to have been exalted by them into a "Baal," and to have been the supreme god of the confederated Philistine towns. Besides a great temple at Ashdod, he had another at Gaza, and there was a town called Beth-Dagon in the Philistine plain,[2] while other sanctuaries, not mentioned in the Bible, no doubt existed. He was probably a fish-god, with the head and hands of a man, but it is doubtful whether the figures, half man and half fish, are really figures of this deity.[3] Traditions of great benefactors who came from beyond the sea, and thus, or perhaps from their dress in marine skins, gave rise to the union of the fish and man in a divine symbol, and to the worship of sacred fish, are common to many countries, from China to the Mediterranean. At Askelon and Acre, down to the sixth century of our era, Venus had still her ponds of such holy fish, and, indeed, such is the tenacity of religious ideas, fish are still sacred in some parts of Palestine. The mosque of el Bedawi at Tripoli contains in its court-yard a pond of sacred fish, which are believed to have disappeared during the Russo-Turkish war, and to have been transformed into Moslem warriors, who fought for the Sultan. After the war they resumed their fish form and reappeared in the tank.

[1] John xix. 27.
[2] Josh. xvi. 21-30. 1 Sam. v. 1 ff.
[3] Schrader, *K. A. T.*, 182.

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At Acre, also, there is still a superstitious reverence for the fish in some ponds once consecrated to the Syrian Venus.[1] With Dagon was joined his consort, Derceto, who shared in the honours paid him as the beneficent being who first taught man the use of the plough, and gave him the priceless bounty of introducing the grain plants and teaching how to grow them.

It would, indeed, have been better for the Philistines to have acted thus, for their triumph brought the speedy humiliation of Dagon. Next morning his image was found lying on the ground before the Ark; and when it had been raised to its place again, it was found once more, on the second morning, not only cast down, but shattered to pieces in its upper half; only the lower being left whole, as if in contempt; the fragments larger and smaller lying dishonoured, on the threshold of the cell. Henceforth no one would step on the spot, but entered by leaping over it, a custom which spread even to Israel in after days.[2] An idea of special holiness seems to have been connected with the entrance to a temple, for even now, in Persia, through the influence of this fancy, the threshold of the palace is sacred and must not be touched by the foot,[3] and to touch the threshold of a temple with the forehead, from humility, was usual in Egypt and in antiquity generally, and still is, in the case of certain mosques, with the Mohammedans.[4] Moreover, when the temple of Somnauth, in

DAGON AND DERCETO.
From a Babylonian engraved stone in the British Museum.

[1] *Palestine Fund Report*, 1884, 17.
[2] Zeph. i. 9.
[3] Hitzig's *Zephanja*, p. 286.
[4] Rosenmüller, *Morgenland*, vol. iii. p. 76.

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India, was destroyed by the Mohammedans, fragments of the gods were sent to Meccah and Medina to be laid on *the threshold* of the mosques, that they might be trodden under foot in contempt; a curious side-light on the feelings of the Philistines when the pieces of their shattered god lay in the same humiliation.

But the degradation of the idol was not the only vindication of the honour of God. Ere long, a terrible plague broke out in Ashdod and its neighbourhood; for "in their land sprang up mice," a word including in the Hebrew all the small quadrupeds at any time attacking the crops, the number of these in Palestine being no fewer than twenty-three, which are all in the Bible classed by the significant name of "the corn-eater," or "the devastator of the fields."[1]

"A great and deadly destruction," moreover, soon after broke out in the city.[2] This plague is described in our version and in many besides—one following another—as that of hæmorrhoids,[3] but it is much more likely to have been a pestilence accompanied by local swellings, such as mark the Oriental plague,[4] and may have been caused by the devastations of the field vermin, which, Oken assures us, often cause famine by their ravages. Van Lennep, indeed, in 1863, saw whole fields of wheat and barley in Asia Minor disappear in a short time before the depredations of innumerable field rats, which passed over the ground like an army of young locusts. The vines and mulberry trees, also, were

[1] Tristram, p. 122. Rosenmüller, *Bib. Naturgeschichte*, vol. ii. p. 224. Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, ed. 1794, vol. ii. p. 429.

[2] 1 Sam. v. 6. Septuagint.

[3] Called "emerods" = bleeding piles.

[4] Thenius and Erdmann, on 1 Sam. v. 6. In Ps. lxxviii. 66, where this incident is alluded to, the words "hinder parts" should be translated "back," or "in their turn." Geiger. Hupfeld. Hengstenberg.

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quickly gnawed through and overthrown. All the harvest of a farm of 150 acres, which these pests had invaded, was thus entirely destroyed, and the whole neighbourhood suffered more or less.[1] In the same way, an old traveller found such vast numbers of rats and field mice in the country from Gaza northwards, that, "if nature had not provided a great plenty of birds which lived on them, the people could not have sown any seed that would not have been eaten."[2]

Smarting under such heavy visitations, the chiefs of the five confederate Philistine cities sent the Ark to Gath, and then to Ekron, but at both places disaster followed; so that, after it had been seven months among them, they were glad to send it back unconditionally to the Israelites. To propitiate Jehovah, it was determined, moreover, that small images, in gold, of the tumours and of the mice that afflicted them, should accompany it—one for each city. The custom was general in antiquity of hanging up beside the altars in the temples, such models of parts of the body that had been healed, by the god there worshipped, or of objects recalling dangers from which one had been rescued by him. In those of Greece, for example, silver models of eyes, legs, arms, etc., were displayed in great numbers; a custom still seen in the Greek churches of Russia, or the Roman Catholic churches of Italy or Switzerland. But, in the case of the Philistines, the "images" were not like these models, thank-offerings for recovery granted, since the plague still raged when they were sent off. Nor can they be compared to the talismans or amulets of astrologers and magicians of ancient or later times, which were regarded as

[1] Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, vol. i. pp. 285–6.

[2] Belon, *Observat.*, vol. ii. c. 78, p. 138. Calmet, *Comment. sur* 1 *Rois*, c. v. p. 65. Rosenmüller, *Neue u. Alte Morgenland*, vol. iii. p. 78.

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charms to effect cures or avert evils, though the details respecting such wonder-working fancies are very curious.

Thus, Apollonius of Tyana made an image of a scorpion in brass, and set it on a small pillar in Antioch, with the asserted result of banishing all scorpions from the city thenceforward. Clay models from a scorpion carved on a stone in the wall of Hamath, in Syria, were believed to cure that creature's bite, if laid on the injured spot. A crocodile in lead, marked by a charm, and buried in the foundations of an Egyptian temple, was thought to render the reptiles it represented harmless in the district. It is further related by Gregory of Tours, that, at the repair of an old bridge in Paris, the images of a serpent and of a mouse, in brass, were found, the removal of which was followed by the appearance of both serpents and mice in great numbers. Paracelsus, also, explains how a house may be freed from mice: "Make an iron mouse, under the conjunction of Saturn and Mars, in the house of ♌. Imprint on its belly ALBAMATATOX, etc. Then place this talisman in the middle of the house, and the vermin will instantly leave the place." He adds, that a live mouse tied to this image will die immediately.[1]

The Philistine images, in contrast to such thank-offerings or charms, were representations of the instruments by which punishment had been inflicted on them, and an acknowledgment that these calamities—the field-mice and the plague—had not come by chance, but had been inflicted by the God of Israel, for their having taken His Ark into captivity. It is expressly said, indeed, that they were "a trespass offering, to give glory to the God of Israel; if, peradventure, He would lighten His hand from off them, their gods, and their

[1] Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*, vol. iii. pp. 98, 100.

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land." A similar custom has prevailed from the remotest times in India. Thus Tavernier tells us, that when a pilgrim undertakes a journey to a pagoda, to be cured of a disease, he offers to the idol a present, either in gold, silver, or copper, according to his ability, in the shape of the diseased or injured member, and such a gift is recognized as a practical acknowledgment that the suffering or evil endured has been inflicted by the god.

These visible confessions of the power of Jehovah, and mute appeals to His pity, were naturally accompanied by the restoration of the Ark itself. It was set on a new cart, doubtless of the rude form still universal in Western Asia, with solid wooden wheels, a vehicle unknown in our day in Palestine, for nothing with wheels is now used by the natives. Everything is carried on the backs of asses or camels, for horses are exceedingly scarce and are used only by great men or foreigners. There are, indeed, no roads for wheels, the dry beds of torrents serving instead of them at some places, and mere tracks at others. In Asia Minor there are carts, rude enough contrivances, the creaking of the wheels of which, for want of oil, struck through my brain. There are no tires on the wheels, which are simply huge circles of thick wood. In Palestine even the bulkiest articles are carried on camels, and the harvest is borne to the threshing floor by them and by asses. The Philistine cart would probably be like the carts of Asia Minor of our day. To this vehicle, two milch cows, which had never been used for labour, were yoked; their calves being shut up at home. If, notwithstanding this, they went on up the great valley of Sorek towards Beth-shemesh, the border village of Israel, such a contradiction of their natural instincts would shew that what had been suffered had come from Jehovah. The

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incident is marked by the simplicity of the age. Attended by the five "Seranim," or princes of the Philistine cities, the cart, with its awful burden, was drawn straight to Beth-shemesh. It was June—so that the Ark had been taken in November—and the wheat was being harvested as it approached. But the sight was too gladsome to let work be longer followed, and the reapers in the valley came, rejoicing, to meet it, when it was seen slowly wending up the long valley. Beth-shemesh was a Levitical town, so that Levites, the natural guardians of the Ark, at once received it with fitting reverence, laying it and the Philistine coffer, with its jewels, on a great stone hard by, and building a hasty altar, on which the wood of the cart was laid for fuel, and the cows that had drawn it were offered as a sacrifice of grateful joy. But even amidst this general gladness there were some who, either from sheer irreverence, or from the deep taint of heathenism then prevailing, stood aloof. "The sons of Jechoniah," says the Septuagint, "did not rejoice amongst the men of Beth-shemesh when they saw the Ark of the Lord; and He smote of them threescore and ten men." In our version the number is given as 50,070,[1] but this is clearly an error of some copyist, as the whole population of a village like Beth-shemesh could not have been anything like that number.

The results of the battle in which the Ark was lost had been sad indeed for Israel. Following up their success, the Philistines seem to have subdued the whole country, as far north as Dan; the destruction of the local sanctuary there being incidentally dated, as we have seen, from the captivity of the Ark.[2] Shiloh, the religious capital, was speedily laid in ashes, though the watchful care of the Levites carried off

[1] 1 Sam. vi. 19. [2] Jud. xviii. 30. See p. 40.

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the Tabernacle in safety, before the approach of the invaders. A town had grown up round the sanctuary, as at its former site in Gilgal, and buildings had been raised beside it, for the priests and Levites, till it had assumed almost the appearance, and bore the name of, a temple.[1] But from the death of Eli, the last high priest who had his seat there,[2] it lost all importance and sank into obscurity. Built on a hill, with a pleasant valley to the south, but surrounded with higher rounded hills on all other sides, it had been for centuries the national holy place of Israel. Five and a half hours north from Bethel, it lay in the heart of the land. Thither the faithful had come, year after year, for the great feast, and to pour out their burdened hearts, like Hannah, before God.[3] There, they had presented their offerings; holding their festival on the portion of the victim which they were allowed to retain,[4] and rejoicing together "before the Lord" in the great holiday of their lives. In the vineyards on the slopes, and in the valley, the young men and maidens had held their merry-makings and dances.[5] At Shiloh, also, there is little doubt, the victories of the nation had been celebrated with a proud display of the chief prisoners and of the most noble booty; a prophetess like Deborah chanting her "song" at its head. Ewald has pictured such a scene—the incidents of the day beginning, in the still of the morning, with a song of thanks

[1] 1 Sam. i. 9. Its being raised on a stone wall (p. 51) tended further to make it like a temple.

[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 3.

[3] What feasts were kept at Shiloh is not known. Nehemiah (viii. 17) says that the Feast of Tabernacles had not been kept from the days of Joshua till his time, but this refers only to the manner of keeping it—with huts of branches. Only three cases of the observance of the Passover are mentioned after Joshua's death, to the Babylonish captivity—under Solomon, 2 Chron. viii. 13; under Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxx. 15; and under Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 21, and 2 Chron. xxxv. 1-19.

[4] 1 Sam. ii. 13. [5] Judg. xxi. 21.

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to Jehovah, who alone gave victory to His people—such a song as that for the triumph over Sisera—composed for the occasion. This Te Deum ended, the great triumphal procession would sweep along, with rejoicings and songs of its own, caught up by the multitude, and filling the air with gladness.[1] But all this was now over. Shiloh lingered, indeed, in insignificance, not wholly deserted,[2] but gradually sinking to such desolation that its fate was cited by the prophets as a warning to those who trusted in the safety of Jerusalem from its possessing the Temple.[3] "Go now," cries Jeremiah, speaking for God, "to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel."[4] So entirely, indeed, had it vanished in still early times, that even its site remained unknown till our own day, when Dr. Robinson rediscovered it, by the exact detail given in Judges,[5] and by the touching fidelity with which its name was cherished under the form of Seilun.[6]

Its ruins lie on the top of a gentle slope, covered in summer with fields of grain. A small village still crowns the hill, which is strewn with loose stones, amidst which a great number of ancient walls, of no great height, rise in squares, marking who knows what structures of the long past. They appear as if they had been basements of chambers of different sizes, and are everywhere very massive. Some of the stones are hewn, others unhewn, not a few of the latter being of great size, and, altogether, they form an irregular square of about eighty feet each way. The hills around are, as I have said, higher than Shiloh, and are girdled to the top with layers of the soft limestone of which they consist;

[1] Ewald, vol. ii. p. 533.
[2] Jer. vii. 14; xxvi. 6, 9.
[3] Jud. xxi. 19.
[4] 1 Kings xi. 29. Jer. xli. 5.
[5] Jer. vii. 12.
[6] Robinson, *Bib. Res.*, vol. ii. p. 269

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these jutting strata forming natural terraces, sometimes left waste, but, at others, planted with fruit trees. A small, shattered mosque stands below the ruins of Shiloh; part of it of very old stones, with some of the carved remains of what may have been a synagogue, in portions of the wall. Inside, it is grown up with weeds and wild flowers. The villagers are very poor, and in many cases, more or less blind, through neglected inflammation of the eyes. Blindness is, indeed, fearfully common now in Palestine; just as it was in the days of our Lord. The side-valley is lined with rock-cut tombs, a torrent bed winding down its centre; on the open plain from which this enters, the stubble of Indian corn, left from last harvest, covered the soil when I rode over it. Several carved fronts of rock-cut tombs, near the spring, had fallen away from the bed of rock on which they had been cut, and lay, still whole, in front of it. The hill of Shiloh, and all the others round, are mere bosses of limestone, of no great height—two or three hundred feet over the plain; but often less.

In one part of it, the surface has been levelled over a space 77 feet wide and 412 feet long, the rock having in some places been cut into to the depth of 5 feet—and this probably marks the site of the Tabernacle, as it is the only level spot on the "tell" large enough for it. Here, then, in all likelihood, on the north side of the ancient town, rose the sacred tent—the last memorial of the desert life—resting, say the Rabbis, on an understructure of low stone walls—the first approach to a permanent temple. A few small excavations and cisterns; numerous rock-hewn tombs; an old and now useless reservoir for the spring of Seilun, three-quarters of a mile off, also cut in the rock; and, half-way down the slope, a broad terrace, over which rises a venerable

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oak, casting wide its broad and grateful shadow—are the only memorials left of the once busy home of Eli and Samuel.[1]

The history of the Tabernacle after its removal from Shiloh is obscure. It never again boasted of the Ark, but the priests still clung to it, and some portions of its ritual, at least, were kept up. For a time it seems, under Saul, to have been erected at Nob—which, like "Mizpeh," means a "height" or "watch-tower," and is thought by many to have been the same as the place known by the latter name. It lay on the main north road, apparently in sight of Jerusalem.[2] But after the massacre of the priests by Saul,[3] Abiathar, the high priest, fled from it, taking with him the ephod and the oracular Urim and Thummim. It next appears at Gibeon, two or three miles north of Nob, where it remained till the capture of Jerusalem by David, and his erection in the new capital, of a second Tabernacle, to which the Ark was removed.[4] The old sacred tent had now only the altar of burnt-offerings[5] to connect it with the venerable past, and retained little more than a traditional sanctity. Neither people nor king, however, could bring themselves to destroy a historical memorial so precious, and hence a double service was kept up, by Zadok, as high priest at Gibeon,[6] and under Asaph, with psalms, hymns, and music, on a fuller scale than heretofore, at Jerusalem.[7] But with the building of Solomon's Temple the lingering glories of the old Tabernacle finally perished, and it vanishes from history.[8]

After its restoration at Beth-shemesh the Ark was soon removed to Kirjath-jearim—"the town of the woods"—sup-

[1] *Pal. Fund Rep.*, 1873, pp. 37, 38. Furrer, p. 226. *Tent Work*, p. 44.
[2] Isa. x. 32. Conder's *Handbook*, p. 277. [3] 1 Sam. xxii. 17.
[4] 2 Sam. vi. 17. 1 Chron. xv. 1. [5] 1 Chron. xxi. 29.
[6] 1 Chron. xvi. 39. [7] 1 Chron. xvi. 4, 37. [8] Ewald, vol. ii. p. 585.

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posed by the Palestine surveyors to have been identified as lying about four miles west of the hill overlooking Beth-shemesh, and about twelve miles from Jerusalem. Here, it found a resting-place in the house of one Abinadab, a Levite, who, in the abeyance of the priesthood, consecrated his son Eleazar as its guardian.[1] There it remained for twenty years, till David "found it in the fields of the wood," and having "prepared an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob," finally brought it to Jerusalem.[2]

[1] 1 Sam. vii. 1.

[2] Dr. Robinson proposed the village of Kuriet el Enab, seven and a half miles from Jerusalem, on the Jaffa road, as the site of Kirjath Jearim, which was on the boundary line between the lands of Benjamin and Judah, but belonged to the latter. Eusebius and Jerome speak of it as at the ninth or tenth mile from Jerusalem on the road to Lydda, which, however, leads to Joppa.

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CHAPTER III.

SAMUEL AND THE RISE OF THE PROPHETS.

THE condition of Israel, both morally and politically, had sunk to its darkest and worst in the early days of Samuel. The Ark was in the hands of her enemies; Shiloh, the national religious centre, burnt; and the Philistines, stimulated by their past success, were pushing on to the conquest of the whole country. Unhappily, the isolation of the different tribes prevented united resistance. Hence those of the south were soon completely crushed, and not only disarmed and made tributary, but forced to serve in the Philistine ranks against their countrymen.[1] To check any future rising, moreover, every smith's forge where a sword might be rudely made or a spear-head pointed, was shut up, and the people forced to go down from the hills to the Philistine towns on the plain if they wished so much as a ploughshare sharpened.[2] Indeed, as early as Samson's day the great tribe of Judah had been so utterly cowed as to lend itself actively, at the command of a Philistine officer, to the capture of the hero, and his surrender to the common enemy.[3] Ere long, fortified posts at Michmash—the present Mukhmas—eight miles north of Jerusalem,[4] and at Geba, a hill close by, made the subjugation still more absolute.[5] The south thus thoroughly overpowered, the Philistines in

[1] 1 Sam. xiv. 21.
[2] 1 Sam. xiii. 19–21.
[3] Jud. xv. 11.
[4] Kiepert's Map.
[5] 1 Sam. xiii. 2, 3.

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Eli's time had proceeded to attack the central tribes, and at last broke their power and made them tributary, by the great battle of Aphek, when the Ark was taken and Shiloh given to the flames.[1] Twenty years of Philistine oppression followed,[2] and it seemed as if the whole land were finally to pass into the hands of that race, and Israel to perish as a nation. At this hour of deepest darkness rose Samuel—the prophet—its destined saviour.

Brought to the tent-temple at Shiloh in early childhood,[3] the future reformer and restorer of his people—a Levite by birth[4]—had been surrounded from his infancy by religious influences. The yearly visits of his mother, Hannah, moreover—a woman nobly true to Jehovah, and as such, as well as by natural sentiment, filled with sorrow and indignation to see her country, God's own land, trampled under foot by the uncircumcised alien—must have turned his thoughts into lofty channels. The sacredness of his position, as pledged for life to the service of Jehovah, and consecrated by a vow of perpetual Nazarite devotion to Him, could not fail to affect him powerfully. His long hair, never touched by scissors; his required abstinence from wine; the purity demanded of him, which forbade his approach to the dead, even if the nearest relation, would keep this consecration always before him. But it must have been pre-eminently the sacred influence of his mother's character that made him what he was, if we may judge from the fact that her

[1] 1 Sam. iv. 3. Jer. vii. 12. [2] 1 Sam. vii. 2.

[3] Graetz says that the words, "And the child was young" (1 Sam. i. 24), should be, "And the child waked up," having till then been asleep in its mother's arms. *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 148.

[4] This is questioned by Hoesbach in *Bib. Lex.*, art. "Samuel," but the arguments of Nägelsbach in Herzog, art. "Samuel," seem convincing in its favour. See also 1 Chron. vi. 27, 28. Samuel sprang from one of the highest Levitical families, that of Korah, who had risen against Moses. Graetz, vol. i. p. 148.

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memory remained so dear to him to the close of his long life, that even in old age we find him still wearing a "coat" like the one she had brought him year by year in his childhood[1] —an outer garment fuller and longer than usual, but without sleeves, worn by men of birth and rank, by kings and princes, by priests, and especially by the high priests under the ephod.[2]

The state of things, both religious and political, must have impressed itself deeply on a mind trained under such influences. The profligacy of Eli's sons; the dissolution of morals in the community at large; the too general prevalence of a licentious and gross idolatry; the weakness of Eli as Judge, and his unfitness for the times, could not fail to be noted. Doubtless, also, there were some, among the priests and Levites of Shiloh, who remained true to Jehovah, and sighed over the national and spiritual decay around them, and Samuel may well have caught their spirit. In the Ark, while it was still in the sanctuary, there were, moreover, the two tables of the commandments and the Book of the Law, and it cannot be questioned that, while he would from the first know the commands and prohibitions of the former, he carefully studied the latter, day by day, for his future life was one long effort to revive its principles in the nation, and to enforce the observance of its requirements.

In those evil days, among other signs of religious decay, there were no longer, as in former times, revelations from Jehovah. "There was no vision" "scattered abroad" to

[1] 1 Sam. ii. 19; xxviii. 14. The woman at Endor says, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a *mantle*." This is the same garment as in the earlier text, and Saul knows him by it at once.

[2] Job i. 20; ii. 12. 1 Sam. xviii. 4; xxiv. 5, 12; xv. 27; xxviii. 14. Ezra ix. 3, 5. Exod. xxviii. 31; xxxix. 22. Its name was the "Mê il."

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prophets.[1] While he was still a child, however, divine communications were once more opened with Israel through Samuel, to whom "the word of Jehovah came," but we are not told how. At times, it may be, there was an audible voice, but the usual way of God's revealing himself, as recorded in Scripture, was by visions and impressions on the mind during sleep, as in the first case of revelation to Samuel. A "deep sleep" fell on Abram before the great revelation made to him of the future of his race; and Eliphaz the Temanite tells us that "a word (or oracle) stole on him, and his ear caught its soft sound when dreams wake visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men. Fear came on me, he adds, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed before me, making all the hair of my flesh stand up." Presently it stood still, but he could not distinguish its features—it was only a form before his eyes. "Then I heard a still small voice, Shall mortal man be just before his Maker?"

In some such way, we may imagine, the "word" came to Samuel; for it speaks immediately after of his crying out, in prayer, to Jehovah, all night.[2] When God thus first disclosed himself to the child, it is no wonder to learn that it was only after instruction from Eli—when the Voice had already spoken thrice—that he learned whence it came. His final answer, however, "Speak, Lord; Thy servant heareth," shewed his spiritual fitness for the honour vouchsafed him. Though the first revelation he had received from God, it presupposed a nature already in inner communion with Him, for to such only does He reveal Himself thus. Henceforth, however, similar disclosures were often repeated, till,

[1] 1 Sam. iii. 1. Gesenius. Bunsen (*Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 519) thinks the prophets had sunk into mere soothsayers.

[2] Gen. xv. 12. Job iv. 12, ff.

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even while Eli still lived, all Israel, "from Dan to Beer-sheba," felt that God was once more revealed at Shiloh, and that in Samuel they had a prophet, none of whose words fell to the ground."[1]

After the disastrous battle of Aphek, Samuel seems to have returned to his father's house at Ramah, doubtless greatly troubled and distressed. To Israel and to the Philistines alike, if not to him, it would seem that, with the Ark, God Himself had been led into captivity. In the Levitical circle in which he had grown up it would be taken for granted that the catastrophe was a punishment for national apostasy. They must have regarded it as almost equivalent to God having forsaken His people. Samuel, however, appears to have familiarized himself with what he could not remedy, and to have turned his thoughts in another direction. Mere regret was idle; true wisdom could only concern itself with the practical necessities of the situation. The cessation of offerings by the destruction of the sanctuary, would soon suggest to a mind so imbued with the spirit of the Law, whether, after all, they were indispensable to the pure worship of God or to a holy life. The formal would be felt wholly subordinate in religion to the spiritual, and the highest fulfilment of the Law would present itself as the homage of the heart and life. This elevation of the moral above the external, indeed, was the great characteristic of the prophetic order of which he was to be the founder, and the permanent safeguard against the substitution of outward form, for the vitality of inner religion. "Hath Jehovah," asked he, of Saul, in after years, "as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacri-

[1] 1 Sam. iii. 19, 20.

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fice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of the black art, and stubbornness is as idolatry and (the worship of) Teraphim."[1] The truest reverence for God is loving obedience to His commands, and these were embodied in the Book of the Law, which Samuel had so deeply studied in Shiloh. The ceremonial was no doubt prescribed in it, and had its place in the religious economy. But it was outward at best. Far more vital than ritual service, was hearty loyalty to the "Ten Words" spoken by God from Sinai, of which the whole moral and spiritual teaching of the Law was only the amplification. Israel could not have been separated from the nations merely to present formal offerings and sacrifices to Jehovah, or to pay Him external homage. They must have been thus set apart that, like Abraham, they should "keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment;[2] and obey His voice, and keep His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws."[3]

Such ponderings would have only one result in a mind like that of Samuel. Realizing for himself that loyalty to God was the first duty of man and the condition of all true well-being, he must have felt it, from his opening manhood, the work of his life as a prophet, to bring back his nation to their ancient faith. His position and training shaped his career, and predestined him to be a Reformer. It was a gigantic task, but amidst much to discourage there were still some gleams of light. Two great objects must be gained before a true reformation could be effected. Its first condition was the restoration of political independence. The worship of Jehovah could not be reinstated and rooted in a community enslaved by the heathen. National spirit must

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. *Lit.* [2] Gen. xviii. 19. [3] Gen. xxvi. 5.

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therefore be rekindled, that the tribes might gain power to strike for freedom by their union and mutual sympathy. But this could only be attained by rousing a common religious feeling. Zeal for Jehovah, such as that of their fathers, would at once infuse into all hearts a distinctive enthusiasm which would give them vigour in action, and would restore a grand ideal of individual and national life. The times were ripe for such a movement. Centuries of anarchy and suffering, from disunion, had prepared the people to subordinate their long-cherished fondness for tribal life to a wider national sentiment. The offer of the crown to Gideon, nearly 200 years before, had shown that this feeling was even then growing, and Eli's position, as at once Judge and high priest, proved that the desire for a centralized authority was now becoming paramount. Nor had proofs been wanting through the whole period of the Judges that the national spirit, though in abeyance, was still a strong latent force. Year by year the tribes had gathered at Shiloh; there had been a wide rallying in support of Deborah and Barak; in the civil war against Benjamin the tribes had acted with a fatal unanimity; and the fame of Samuel as a great prophet had been hailed with equal delight in every part of the land. The earnest appeals of prophets in past days had, moreover, sunk into many hearts, for men had not forgotten how their fathers had wept at Bochim, when reproved by one,[1] or how the words of another, at a later date, had led them, for the time, to put away the gods of the heathen from among them and serve Jehovah,[2] amidst deep confession of sin and promises of amendment. The words of Hannah's prayer, on leaving Samuel in the Tabernacle, reveal also a depth of religious feeling among some at least, which secured efficient

[1] Jud. ii. 1-5. [2] Jud. x. 16.

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help, from the first, in bringing about a great Revival. For what might not be hoped from a race, one of whose mothers could utter such thoughts [1] in such words?

"My heart rejoices in Jehovah!
Exalted is my horn in Jehovah![2]
My mouth is opened wide (in a cry of victory) over mine enemies;
For I rejoice in Thy salvation.

No one is holy as Jehovah,
For there is no God beside Thee!
No God is a Rock like our God.

Talk not so exceeding proudly;
Put away haughtiness from your lips;
For Jehovah is a God who knows all things,
And by Him men's deeds are weighed.

Heroes of the bow are struck with dismay;
But the weak are girded with strength;
The full hire themselves for bread;
But they that were hungry rejoice;
The barren woman bears seven,
But she of many sons fades away.
Jehovah kills and makes alive;
Brings down to the underworld, and raises from it.

Jehovah makes poor and makes rich,
He brings low and raises up;

[1] Ewald ascribes Hannah's song to a later period, but his criticisms are ably met by Dr. Erdmann in his *Die Bücher Samuelis*, on 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.

[2] The "horn" is a figure taken from the animal world, in which the horns, borne high on the head, seem a symbol of strength and courage. In Hannah this confidence is derived from Jehovah and rests on Him. The women of Beirût of the Lebanon till lately wore a silver horn, about a foot long, on their forehead. In Abyssinia a horn of silver, or silver-gilt, is worn on great occasions by governors of provinces, and the same custom has been noticed even among the North American Indians. Such a horn was worn by the presiding chief at the interview with William Penn, which resulted in the settlement of Pennsylvania. Daniel and St. John represent powerful kingdoms under the image of horns (Dan. vii. 7; Rev. xiii. 1-11). The false prophet "made him horns of iron," to indicate that the Syrians would flee before Ahab. In another use of the same figure, God is called "the horn of our salvation"—the means of procuring it by His almighty power in vanquishing our foes.

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He raises the weak out of the dust,
He lifts up the poor from the mire,
To give them thrones among princes;
And place them on the seat of honour.
For the foundations of the earth are Jehovah's;
On them has He set the world.

He will keep the feet of His saints,
But the wicked go down into darkness;
For by his strength shall no man prevail.
Jehovah!—confounded are they who contend with Him;
Out of heaven He thunders on them.
Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth,
To give the victory to His king.
To exalt the horn of His anointed."

This utterance strikes the key-note of Samuel's life; picturing the misery of his people, but filled with a lofty confidence in Jehovah, that He will roll away their reproach, and raise them to more than their ancient glory. The mind that bodied forth its inmost thoughts thus, must have yearned, above all things, that her son should be the hero of his race, to whom, under Jehovah, it would owe its salvation, and the aspiration of the mother coloured the life of the boy, for

"The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day."[1]

Hannah's lofty patriotism, rooted in the noblest Puritanism, would, moreover, doubtless be re-echoed by some at least of the women about the Tabernacle, to whom the care of the Nazarite infant was committed, and thus the atmosphere he breathed would insensibly influence his whole future.

There is a tradition that Samuel's first vision was granted when he was twelve years old—the age at which our Lord spoke with the Rabbis in the Temple. He had been sepa-

[1] *Paradise Regained*, Bk. iv. 220.

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rated from the mass of men, even as a child, by the Nazarite vow made for him, and by his priestly dress and Levite birth,[1] but, as has been said, his being chosen thus early as the vehicle of Divine communications implies his already possessing a spiritual fitness to receive them. The defeat of Israel, and the death of Eli and his sons, with the overwhelming calamities that followed, finally determined his career, for it left the tribes without a sanctuary, and virtually without a high priest; Ahitub, the eldest son of Phinehas, being too young for the office. The one leader to whom the nation had to look could be no other than he whom Jehovah Himself had marked out as such, by having already constituted him His prophet. At the death of Eli, therefore, he naturally took his place at the head of Israel, acting as Judge, apparently before his formal recognition as such by his countrymen, and even performed the duties of priest[2] when necessity demanded. That he should have done so, was indeed inevitable, for the regular priesthood was in abeyance by the death of Eli. But it shows, still further, the confusion and unsettledness of the times; for Samuel had no right, as a mere Levite, to discharge priestly functions. As yet, however, the state of things which we see in Micah's sanctuary and Gideon's ephod, had not passed away. Other great leaders of the nation had been only warriors, but Samuel was, above all, a Prophet; they had limited their work to soldierly deeds, his ideas were much wider and deeper. With the instinct of a profoundly religious nature he saw that the one condition of national regeneration was

[1] Elkanah is called an Ephraimite from his living in Ephraim, but he was a descendant of Korah, whose children did not share the sad fate of their father. Exod. vi. 24. Num. xxvi. 11. The name Elkanah often occurs as that of a Levitical person and as of the race of Korah Lee's *Concordance*.

[2] 1 Sam. vii. 9; ix. 12; x. 8, etc.

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the renewal of a healthy moral and spiritual tone in the people at large. Like John the Baptist and the better Rabbis, in after times, he insisted, as a first step, on individual repentance of past sins and future loyalty to Jehovah, and it is his special glory that he, in the end, breathed a new life into the nation by impressing on it these great truths. From the depth of weakness and despondency he led it into the path which in the next generation raised it, under David, to the highest glory it ever attained. If Moses was the first founder of the state, Samuel was the second.

Such a revolution in the inner life of a people could only have been accomplished by slow degrees. Stolid indifference, unthinking lightness, old habits of thought, the dislike of strictness, and the bias to idolatry are not easily overcome. But Samuel had the moral greatness which ensured him success. He set himself to educate his countrymen in his own lofty and pure conceptions of individual and national duty; enforcing the teachings of the Law as the supreme standard of obligation towards God and their neighbours, and, at the same time, carrying out with unbending sternness its denunciations of idolatry, as a crime against the invisible King of Israel. Details of the means employed are not given, but some equivalent to our modern preaching was doubtless the chief. Gifted with a ready and forcible eloquence, he had the faculty of rousing slumbering spirits. The elders of tribes or clans, who from time to time sought his counsel, would carry back to their homes new thoughts and aspirations, to spread through their neighbourhoods. Enthusiasm alone makes others enthusiastic, and Samuel must have glowed with it, to kindle such a spirit as gradually pervaded the nation. Speaking, as a prophet, in the name of Jehovah, and strengthening his appeals and

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protests, by the visions and revelations accorded him, he had the vantage ground of universally admitted inspiration. Communicated at first to the circle around him at Shiloh, or Ramah, his announcements of the Divine will, whether disclosing the future or sent to rouse and warn, and his expositions of the Law, would be carried through the land. This would be the more easy from the form in which, no doubt, they were delivered; the striking parable, the measured and rhythmical expression; perhaps the vivid symbolical action which marked the prophets after him, in all probability impressing his words on his hearers. Kindled by utterances so momentous in themselves and so strikingly enforced, it is no wonder his fame as a great prophet had been established while Eli still lived.[1] Men repeated to each other over all the land, that the Spirit of Jehovah, which had rested on Moses, rested also on the son of Elkanah. There had been no prophet, in the higher sense of the word, since the death of their first great leader, and the fact that a second Moses had now been raised up, excited the hopes of all that a better time was at hand.

It was, indeed, the special distinction of Samuel that with him began the long roll-call of the Jewish prophets, as the name is generally applied. Abraham, and even the patriarchs as a whole, had been honoured with the title,[2] because they had been favoured with visions and dreams from God, and were thus in direct communication with Him. Miriam and Deborah had been called prophetesses, the seventy elders, and Eldad and Medad, had prophesied,

[1] 1 Sam. iii. 19-21. The Septuagint reads: "And the Lord was pleased to be served in Shiloh, because the Lord was revealed to Samuel by the word of the Lord. And Samuel was trusted as a prophet to all Israel from one end of the land to the other, and Eli was very old, and his sons kept on in their course, and their way was evil before the Lord."

[2] Gen. xx. 7. Ps. cv. 15.

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and from time to time messengers of God, bearing the name of prophets, had delivered Divine warnings to the people, but the inspiration thus vouchsafed had been partial and intermittent, and left a broad distinction, between the office as it was known before Samuel, and from his time.

The prophet is essentially an appearance peculiar to early ages and to the simple state of society before the fulness of revelation has yet been made known. The ancient world at large was marked by its eager efforts to penetrate the secrets of the higher powers which control human destiny. Nothing important was undertaken either in public or private life without inquiring the will of the gods, through seers, diviners, augurs, oracles, or prophets, who claimed ability to satisfy this craving. But there was a signal difference between the representatives of the heathen gods and those of Jehovah. To the former the indications of the divine will were read in the phenomena and occurrences of outer nature and of the animal world; in the whispering of the oak leaves at Dodona, in the flight of birds, in the motions of the entrails of a sacrifice, in the sounds of birds or beasts, or in their unexpected appearances. But in the true religion, this noble instinct was met only by communications made from the unseen God, through the spirit of man, His image on earth. The superstitious arts by which the knowledge of the future was generally sought, were all alike branded by Moses as unholy. Augurs and diviners had no place in Israel, nor was any other medium of inquiry from God sanctioned, but the Urim and Thummin, which seem to have been part of the full official costume of the high priest. The prophet takes the place of all enchanters and magicians.[1] Any human power of divination is repudiated, and all dis-

[1] Num. xxiii. 23. Deut. xviii. 9–22.

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closures of the purposes of God are due to direct communications from Himself. He alone, in fact, can prophesy; the prophet is only his voice among men.[1] As He had adopted Israel as His covenant people in the past, founding their State and determining their mission, He still made Himself known among them, to help forward His plan of mercy to the world, and the prophets were the instruments through whom He did so.

Before Samuel, the prophets had been known as "seers,"[2] but from his time, the name of Nabi, which has passed over into all other Semitic languages, was given as a title of honour. It comes from a root, "to boil up," "to boil forth" like a fountain, and thus hints at the prophet as one who utters his words under the irrepressible influence of a Divine communication. His heart, to use the words of the Psalmist, as they are in the Hebrew, "bursts and bubbles over with a good matter."[3] He is "moved" or inspired "by the Holy Ghost," a phrase which in itself implies the same irresistible impulse to speak what was thus communicated to him, for the very word ghost—geist—is the same as the heaving, fermenting *yeast*, or the boiling, steaming *geyser*.[4] He is, in fact, constrained to be the "proclaimer," or the "announcer," and thus corresponds closely to the idea embodied in the Greek word "prophet"—"one who speaks for another," that is, for God; or in the Roman "vates,"[5] "the speaker." The idea of foretelling is thus not fundamentally implied, though the revelation of the

[1] Isa. xli. 23; xliv. 7, 8; xlviii. 14, 15.

[2] Roim and Hozim. Both words refer to the visions "seen" by the prophets, but the former is the old word: the latter is rather a poetical expression of the silver age of Hebrew. 1 Sam. ix. 9.

[3] Ps. xlv. 1.

[4] Müller's *Science of Language*, 2d ed., p. 386.

[5] Vates is connected with the Greek "phates," "speaking, discoursing," and comes originally from the Sanscrit "vad," "to speak."

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future, in many cases through the prophet, must have connected this sense also with the word from the first. Strictly, however, he is simply the "mouth" or "spokesman" for God, as Aaron was for Moses.[1] What he utters is in no way his own; it is "the word of Jehovah," in whom, for the time, his own personality is lost. Jehovah "puts His words in his mouth," nor can he speak as a prophet till a message is thus communicated to him from above.[2] Sometimes, indeed, he receives no "vision" even when one was expected.[3]

The Spirit of God, from whom flows all natural and spiritual life, is specially indicated in Scripture as the source of prophetical inspiration. He "comes" on the prophet, "rests" on him, "fills him with power," inspires him, or creates him "a man of the Spirit," making him speak as he is "moved," that is, literally borne along, as a ship is before the wind, by the resistless power of "the Holy Ghost." The "hand of Jehovah" is on him and overpowers him, so that he "can but prophesy," even when he has to do so against his will.[4] In many cases, when thus filled with the prophetic spirit, he passes into a state of high mental excitement. Thus Saul, when for the time inspired, was so affected as to tear the clothes from his body, "and fall down naked all that day and all that night."[5] He "hears the word of God, and sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down," prostrated by the prophetic impulse, but "having his eyes open."[6] To use the words applied to

[1] Exod. iv. 16; vii. 1. Jer. i. 9. Ezek. ii. 8.

[2] Jer. xlii. 4, 7. Lam. ii. 9. Hab. ii. 1.

[3] Num. xi. 25, 26. 1 Sam. x. 6, 10; xix. 20, 23. Hos. ix. 7. Mic. iii. 8. 2 Pet. i. 21.

[4] Ezek. i. 3; iii. 22; viii. 3. 2 Kings iii. 15. Jer. i. 7. Ezek. iii. 14. Amos iii. 8. Jer. xvii. 16. Jonah i. 1-3.

[5] 1 Sam. xix. 24. "Naked" means, here, as often—see subsequent note—stripped of his outer garment.

[6] Num. xxiv. 4. Dean Stanley illustrates the "visions" of prophets by the "visions or apparitions which in Christian times have produced remarkable conversions: as

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Saul, he was "turned into another man."[1] So often indeed did this happen, that the people not unfrequently spoke of a prophet as one who was mad.[2] The word used for Saul's prophesying is that for being frenzied or insane.[3] In Daniel's case the prophetic vision overpowered him, and brought on sickness for days.[4] Revelations frequently came in dreams, which were recognized as from God,[5] but this was a lower form of inspiration; the greatest prophets commonly receiving the Divine communications when awake.[6] The spirit was cut off from the outer world, but the eye saw and the ear heard what the senses could not perceive, when the prophetic impulse was absent. It was in fact a "vision," but the human intellect was not clouded, though carried beyond its common sphere. The prophet remembered the vision after it ended; and, even while it lasted, the clearest personal consciousness[7] and all the emotions remained as active as in ordinary men, though intercourse with the world around was for the time interrupted.

While thus, in a sense, passive and merely receptive, the prophet needed special fitness and preparation for his office. But these were in no way external. He might be of any social rank, or appear in any part of the land. Jeremiah,

of the cross to Constantine and to Col. Gardiner, and of the voices to St. Augustine." *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 425. He might have added the visions of Mr. Grimshaw of Haworth, and Mr. Tennant of Georgia.

[1] Sam. x. 6. [2] 2 Kings ix. 11. Jer. xxix. 26. Hos. ix. 7.

[3] 1 Sam. xviii. 10. See Keil, Thenius, Gesenius.

[4] Dan. viii. 27.

[5] Num. xii. 6. Deut. xiii. 3. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 15. Job iv. 13. Joel ii. 28.

[6] 1 Sam. iii. 3, 4. 2 Sam. vii. 4. Zech. i. 1; iv. 1. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even visibly, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii. 6, 8). Thus Moses was almost more than a prophet.

[7] Isa. vi. Jer. i.

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Ezekiel, Zechariah, and John the Baptist were priests; Moses, Samuel, Jahaziel, Heman, and apparently Joel, were Levites, yet there was nothing sacerdotal even in them: unlike the Egyptian prophets, who were a class of priests. But the great majority were laymen. Moses, Deborah, and Samuel were the heads of the nation under the old theocracy; Saul and David were kings. Elisha was a rich landowner, with servants and cattle. Elijah comes before us like a wandering Bedouin.[1] Amos was a shepherd at Tekoah, ten miles south of Jerusalem, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit,[2] or rather "a cutter," for the "figs" of the sycamore are too bitter for eating till they have been cut into, so that the acrid juice may ooze out for some days.[3] Than such a calling, it need not be said, there could scarcely be a more humble. Women as well as men were filled with the prophetic impulse—Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, and the four daughters of Philip. The claim of Israel to be a nation of priests and a holy people, received no grander vindication than in the choice of prophets from among all the tribes, and over the whole land. There could be no caste in a community thus impartially honoured by God—all must be equal before Him. Samuel came from the mountains of Ephraim; Gad and Nathan seem to have lived in Jerusalem. After the division of the kingdom, prophets were for a time most numerous among the ten tribes, Judah holding more firmly to the theocracy. In the rapidly apostatizing northern kingdom, Shiloh, Bethel, Samaria, Naphtali, Gilead, Issachar, and Zebulon, alike, saw prophets rise in their midst. But when the ten tribes had been led into captivity, and Judah itself was fast sinking into

[1] 1 Kings xix. 19. [2] Amos vii. 14.

[3] The word "gather" means to "cut." See art. "Maulbeerfeigenbaum," by Furrer, in Schenkel.

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heathenism, not only Jerusalem, but many localities near it, saw men rise, on whom the mysterious gifts of the prophetic spirit had been bestowed.

As Wycliffe and Wesley promoted their great movements in England by the appointment of a body of evangelists, who should spread through the country the doctrines taught by their masters, Samuel established what modern divines have called "Schools of the Prophets," to promote the reformation so near his heart. That such institutions should be possible, is a noteworthy proof that there must, already, have been a vigorous revival of religious life, for they could flourish only when there was a sympathy with spiritual truth. Of their origin, aim, constitution, and history, the Old Testament gives few details. Those who attended them were known as "sons" or "disciples," a term afterwards used for the followers of a Rabbi,[1] and their chief for the time was called "father."[2] Most of them seem to have been young, and indeed are spoken of as such.[3] They lived in communities, ate in common,[4] went abroad in companies,[5] and were so numerous, at least at a later time, that Ahab could assemble 400 at once;[6] that 100 were hidden in a cave by Obadiah;[7] that 100 are mentioned in connection with the community at Jericho; and 100 more who, at the same period, lived at Gilgal. The only "schools" of which we know were at Ramah, Samuel's town in the hills of Ephraim, at Bethel and Gilgal—also in Ephraim—and at Gibeah and Jericho in the tribe of Benjamin, places in the heart of the land. All the prophets, however, at least in after times, did not live in these centres, for Isaiah had a house in Jerusalem, and Elisha his in Samaria. The

[1] Matt. xii. 27. Mark x. 24.
[2] 2 Kings v. 23; ix. 1, 4.
[3] 1 Sam. x. 5, 10; xix. 20.
[4] 1 Sam. x. 12. 1 Kings xx. 35.
[5] 2 Kings iv. 40.
[6] 1 Kings xxii. 6.
[7] 1 Kings xviii. 4.

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great local prophetic settlements were under the care of older and well-known prophets,[1] to whom the "sons" rendered due obedience and respect, members of the company waiting on them as their personal attendants when they went abroad.[2] Nor was fatherly care wanting towards them in return, for Elisha at one time fed no fewer than a hundred,[3] and on one dying, provided his widow means of paying his debts.[4] They lived apparently, in some cases, by agriculture or cattle feeding;[5] and, doubtless, in many others, like the Rabbis in later ages, by their own industry in various callings, though they also received modest gifts from those who visited them. Admission to a company appears to have been readily granted, where there seemed to be a spiritual fitness for the prophet's life. They were generally married, as we know from the instances of Moses, Deborah, Samuel, David, Nathan, Ahijah, Hosea, Isaiah, and Ezekiel;[6] leaving the community perhaps, as a rule, on their marriage, but sometimes remaining connected with it even after.[7]

The object of these associations, as founded by Samuel, was, pre-eminently, to further the great movement for restoring and firmly establishing the ancient faith. Of the special pursuits which engaged them little is told; but we may be certain that, among others, music and singing were included, as aids to heighten the emotions, and rouse themselves and their hearers to a higher religious sensibility. The chief study, however, was the Law, not only in the letter but in its spirit, as the one source of all true religious

[1] 2 Kings ii. 3, 16; iv. 1, 43; vi. 3; ix. 1. 1 Sam. xix. 20.
[2] 2 Kings iii. 11, 22. [3] 2 Kings iv. 42-44.
[4] 2 Kings iv. 1. [5] 2 Kings iv 39.
[6] It was the same under Christ. Zacharias, Anna, and all the apostles, it is said, except John and Paul, were married. [7] 2 Kings iv. 1.

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feeling, and the basis of comprehensive theocratic ideas. Under the constant influence of their head, a Master prophet, if we may so speak, this must have been of supreme influence in the development of their character and views. It would be a mistake, however, to think of all the prophets as necessarily trained in such schools, for Amos expressly tells us that he had had no connection with them, but had been seized by the prophetic impulse while engaged in his lowly calling.[1] Skill in instrumental music, including that of the "psaltery, the tabret, the pipe, and the harp,"[2] as an accompaniment to prophetic utterance or to religious hymns,[3] distinguished the order. Its members must, moreover, in such communities, have acquired a varied knowledge of men and things, an intimate familiarity with the moral and spiritual aspects of the Law, habits of lowly devotion, and an earnest theocratic bias, of the greatest value for their future office. Even the associations around, the influence of their leader, the very spirit of the place, as subordinate aids to their efficiency, must have helped to mould them for their work. But the one vital necessity was that they should be in living communion of spirit with Jehovah, for such only could be His true prophets.[4] That they should fear God was the first requirement, and, as it were, their public credential. Nor is it in any measure a proof to the contrary, that Balaam, after seeing Israel, was forced against his will to bless its hosts, and to predict their magnificent future. It is only an evidence of the resistless power of truth, even over the perverseness of heathen inclinations. The true prophet is always marked by his enthusiasm for God, His religion, His kingdom, His honour; by

[1] Amos vii. 14.
[2] 1 Chron. xxv. 1.
[3] 1 Sam. x. 5.
[4] Deut. xiii. 2-6.

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firm faith; deep love for His people; zeal and inflexible constancy in working for the Divine purposes; hatred of all that is evil, and the strictest purity, uprightness, and sincerity. Only the heart thus at one with God could be made His oracle. The communications vouchsafed must come, not as strange and unwelcome intrusions into the soul, but like a sudden light, or Divine assurance, entering a spirit already prepared to receive it.[1]

In keeping with the dignity of their office, the prophets bore themselves as men moved by a higher than human impulse. They were the fearless champions of true religion, as embodied in the theocracy; struggling with a grand resoluteness for its interests wherever they seemed endangered. They claimed to counsel rulers, as the spokesmen for the King of kings, and to denounce the sins of all classes, as the representatives of eternal truth and righteousness. Samuel takes his place as by a divine right at the side of Saul, to advise and control in the name of the Highest. Nathan and Gad are the chosen monitors of David, and in later times the best and the worst kings alike find themselves commended or arraigned by these messengers of Jehovah. After the division of the kingdom, especially, a wider sphere opened for them; and the nearer the catastrophe of the ten tribes approached, the more vehemently did they raise their voice, denouncing, at one time, the ungodliness, the hypocrisy, the immorality of their contemporaries; at another,

[1] Even so free a critic as Nöldeke says: "The prophet feels himself touched immediately by God Himself, and speaks in His name; whence he often, indeed, speaks of God in the first person. The human personality at these moments wholly draws back, but only to reappear presently with full distinctness; for this characteristic is simply the expression of the highest inspiration, or of the deepest conviction of the oneness of the human thought and will with the Divine. He alone is a prophet who is animated by sincere morality and religion, and stands as a servant of the faith of Israel. He has, at most, a superficial analogy in merely external points with the diviner or the convulsionary." *Die Alttestamentliche Literatur*, p. 200.

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the evil, selfish rule, and false policy, of kings and nobles; now, warning men of the impending judgments of Jehovah; now, painting the contrast between their own fallen and corrupt days, and the splendour of a Messianic future, when the theocracy would emerge, in unimagined glory, from its passing eclipse. Restlessly passing from town to town, as the occasion demanded, they appear in public places, in markets, at the city gates, in the streets, and in the courts of the Temple, bearing noble witness for God; fearlessly entering even the palaces of kings and nobles to deliver their message. They were at once the preachers of repentance to the nation, its counsellors, and its consolers; the interpreters of each forward step of God in the realization of His purposes; the exponents and enforcers of the Law in its highest sense; the reformers of a degenerate political and religious life; the censors of public authorities; and the guardians and protectors of all the higher interests of the community. Their office was thus a check on the despotism of kings, and the violence or injustice of the powerful; and at the same time, they were the tribunes of the people, defending their liberties, while fearlessly denouncing their faults.

Such noble fidelity could not, however, hope to escape the resentment of those whom it assailed, and hence the story of the prophets is one of persecution and martyrdom. Venerated at first, while the glow of revived national purity and religiousness lasted, they were ere long hated when the spread of corruption made them the accusers of all classes in turn. Thus outlawed, as it were, they lived in constant danger of violence, and too often became its victims. Later generations, indeed, accused their forefathers of having "killed the prophets," and spoke of their lives as subject to every indignity and wrong. They had trials of cruel

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mockings and scourgings, says the Epistle to the Hebrews; suffered bonds and imprisonment; were stoned, or sawn asunder; or burnt,[1] or slain with the sword; or wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, in deserts, in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.[2]

The modes in which the prophets delivered their messages, though strange to our Western ideas, were in strict keeping with the spirit and manners of the East. Though simple and artless, as became those of men suddenly acted on by the Spirit of God, their utterances were marked by the rhythmic measure natural to Orientals, often passing into lofty verse, as when Isaiah tells his hearers that he will sing them a song, touching the vineyard of his well beloved.[3] Poetry, indeed, was their usual vehicle. It appears first in the songs of Miriam and Moses, and bursts into its noon of splendour in the muse of David, who was followed by most of the prophets; their writings which have come down to us, being, with rare exceptions of occasional episodes, couched in poetical forms. They spoke or sang, in many cases, as we have seen, to the music of instruments, as when Elisha prophesied to the music of a minstrel's harp; or when the company of prophets which met Saul "came down from the 'high place' or hill altar, with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp before them."[4] Physical excitement, strange to us, but familiar in the East, accompanied their "prophesyings," and to this they added, not infrequently, symbolical actions,[5] and even symbolical dress,[6] to impress their messages more deeply on their audience. Such

[1] So Tischendorff. [2] Heb. xi. 36, 37. [3] Isa. v. 1. [4] 1 Sam. x. 5.
[5] 1 Kings xi. 29. Jer. xix. 1; xxvii. 2; xliii. 9. Ezek. iv. 12, 13; xxxvii. 15.
[6] Zech. xiii. 4.

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modes of teaching were, in fact, only acted parables, as when Samuel and Ahijah rent their cloaks, or when Jeremiah concealed his girdle, or Hananiah broke the yokes. But, like our Lord, they at times used the spoken parable as well, as in that of the Ewe Lamb, by Nathan, or of the Vine, by Isaiah. Their ordinary dress was a rough hairy mantle, as in the case of Elijah and John the Baptist,[1] and this was so characteristic of the order,[2] that the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to them as wearing sheep-skins and goat-skins.[3] Indeed, in the Greek Bible, the mantle of Elijah is expressly said to have been of the former. A common girdle of leather, like that now worn by Eastern peasants, bound this round their persons: their costume forming, in its coarse simplicity, a contrast to the soft raiment of the rich, noticed by Christ Himself, in reference to His great precursor.[4] Such humble clothing was in keeping with the stern earnestness of lives which were a protest against worldliness, in even its more innocent aspects, and won the respect of men by their evident sincerity. The Baptist took no part in the pleasures of the table,[5] and Jeremiah tells us he withdrew from all festivities, and ate alone.[6] They often betook themselves to hills and mountains, or lonely places,[7] as if they liked to retire from the noise of the city and seek quiet, where their souls could better commune with God. But they were no monkish ascetics, or idle mendicants; though poor, as a rule, they maintained their wives and households by honest labour or private means, and were constantly seen in the haunts of men, carrying out their great work as opportunity allowed. Long hair and abstinence from wine,

[1] Isa. xx. 2.
[2] 1 Kings xix. 13, 19. Matt. iii. 4.
[3] Heb. xi. 37.
[4] Matt. xi. 8.
[5] Matt. xi. 18. Luke vii. 33.
[6] Jer. xv. 17.
[7] 1 Kings xix. 8. 2 Kings i. 9; ii. 16; iv. 25; vi. 17. Heb. xi. 38.

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that is, the Nazarite vow, are said, by Josephus, to have marked them in the time of Samuel.[1]

Their chief mission, as we have seen, was to keep the nation true to its allegiance to God as the Head of the theocracy, and hence to oppose all idolatry, immorality, and merely formal religion. Spoken with such aims, their discourses breathe a spirituality and depth peculiarly their own. Entirely distinct from priests, they nevertheless, when necessary, performed what were, strictly speaking, priestly duties, such as sacrifice and intercession.[2] But in later times, especially after the building of the Temple, the official observance of all theocratic forms became the exclusive right of the priesthood, while the representation of the theocracy in its spirit and essence fell to the prophets. Hence they naturally exalted moral above ceremonial duties, earnestly protesting against the separation of religion from morality, to which men in all ages are inclined. The ritualism of the Mosaic system tended constantly to supersede the inner religious life, and to check this, the prophets spared no efforts. "To obey," says Samuel, "is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Thou desirest not sacrifice," says David; "else would I give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. Sacrifice and burnt offering Thou didst not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come, to do Thy will, O God." "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," says Hosea. "I hate, I

[1] *Ant.*, V. x. 3.

[2] Samuel often sacrificed; 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9; ix. 13, etc.; appointed fasts, poured out libations (1 Sam. vii. 5, 6), appointed Levites as door-keepers of the sanctuary (1 Chron. ix. 22; xxvi. 28), and so forth. The prophets, Gad and Nathan, made the arrangements respecting the music at the Tabernacle (2 Chron. xxix. 25; 2 Sam. xxiv. 18), and, in the kingdom of Israel, Elijah restored the altar on Carmel, and sacrificed on it (1 Kings xviii. 21). The priests had, in fact, left the northern kingdom, for Judah, and the prophets alone remained to carry out the priestly duties of the worship of Jehovah.

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despise your feast days," says Amos, "and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt offerings, and meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." "Your new moons, and your appointed feasts," says Isaiah, "my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. Wash you, make you clean; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?"[1] The teaching of all the prophets is in this strain. Sacrifices, fastings, and ablutions are valueless, compared with a worthy life. To fear God and walk humbly before Him; to do justly, to love mercy; to show uprightness and truth, are of more value with Jehovah than mere ceremonies or rites, even when prescribed by Himself.

But not only were the prophets the great preachers of Israel; we owe chiefly to them the inspired writings. They were the historians, and sacred poets, no less than the teachers, of their age. We read of the Acts of David, by Samuel, Gad, and Nathan; of Solomon and Jeroboam, by Nathan and Iddo; of Rehoboam, by Iddo and Shemaiah. Samuel wrote a book on the duties of a Jewish king; Iddo, a history of King Abijah; Jehu, another of Jehoshaphat; and Isaiah, of Uzziah.[2] It may be that our present historical books were drawn from these sources among others, but had these documents come down to us, how priceless their value! In the earlier ages prophecies were apparently only

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 22. Ps. li. 16, 17; xl. 6-8. Hos. vi. 6. Amos v. 21-24. Isa. i. 14-17; viii. 6.

[2] 1 Sam. x. 25. 1 Chron. xxix. 29. 2 Chron. ix. 29. 1 Kings xi. 41. 2 Chron. xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxvi. 22.

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spoken; though, doubtless, often afterwards written down by "sons" or disciples, as those of Jeremiah by Baruch. In later times, however, they seem to have been sometimes written before delivery, as in those of Ezekiel, and some parts of Isaiah.[1]

Such an institution, apart from its priceless services to revelation, must have been of immense value in a nation exposed to Oriental despotism. The ancient popular liberties found in it their natural defenders; it was the great help to progress, and the triumphant opponent of many a wrong. The only approach in modern times to anything analogous, seems to be found in a few of the best of the dervishes of Mohammedanism, as they appear among the simpler races of Central Asia. "Without them," says Dr. Wolff, "no man would be safe. They are the chief people in the East, and keep in the recollection of Oriental despots, that there are ties between heaven and earth. They restrain the tyrant in his oppression of his subject; they are consulted by courts and by counsellors of state in times of emergency, and are, in fact, the great benefactors of the human race in the East." "The name," he adds, "comes from *daer*, door, and *wesh*, hanging, and means one who hangs at the gate of God, is inspired by Him, and trusts His bounty."[2] They strip and go naked like Isaiah; they sit at the gate; are consulted by kings; sit wrapped in their

[1] Isa. viii. 1. Authorities for the preceding notice of the prophets: Knobel *Prophetismus der Hebräer*. Winer, *Realwörterb*. Hengstenberg, in Kitto's *Cyclo*. Dillmann, in Schenkel, *Bib. Lex*. "Propheten," in Riehm. "Prophets," etc., in *Dict. of the Bible*. Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. Graetz, *Geschichte*, vol. i. Nägelsbach, in Herzog. Ewald, *Die Propheten*. Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i., etc., etc.

[2] Dr. Wolff even says: "The prophets were dervishes in dress, style, and action," and he draws a curious parallel between a dervish and John the Baptist. He adds the curious idea that Jacob's thigh was disjointed by his ecstasy in prayer, and says that he has seen this once and again in dervishes.

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A Dervish. See pages 80 and 82, and note on page 91.

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mantles in deep meditation, and, like Elijah, will answer: 'I am filled with zeal for God,' or 'I think of the time when the Restorer of all things will come, and the wolf and the lamb will lie down together.' They have each a disciple, as Elijah had Elisha, and have symbolical names expressing their relations to God. That of one, a friend of Wolff's, was given him because his mother said on the day of his birth, 'Thou shalt be a slave of the most merciful God.' A dervish signs himself, when he makes peace between kings, 'the king of Righteousness,' his spiritual title; exactly corresponding to 'Melchizedek.' That personage produced wine and bread to Abraham, and thou, dear dervish, in the desert of Merv, broughtest out wine and sherbet to the weary wanderer, Joseph Wolff, and when he asked thee, who were thy father and mother? thou repliedst humbly, 'I am without father or mother, for I have forsaken all, for God's sake.'"[1]

At the head of an order thus concentrated on the things of God and superior to any worldly interests or distractions, Samuel's great work of reformation in Israel must have been greatly facilitated. Like the preaching friars, in England, in the opening of the thirteenth century, in their first purity and self-denying enthusiasm, they brought religion into the fair and the market-place, and woke a zeal for it in the hearts of the nation, long sunk in ignorance or perverted to heathenism.

Another circumstance aided in raising the people. The great tribe of Judah had taken no share in the affairs of the nation at large during the whole period of the Judges. Isolated on the wide upland pastures of its territory, it was practically non-existent so far as the other tribes were con-

[1] Wolff's *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 483-5.

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cerned. It is not even mentioned in the triumphal ode of Deborah. It lived apart from its brethren, with no share either in their sorrows or joys, their struggles or victories. Settled among Kenites, Idumæans, and Jebusites, the men of Judah may have had their own wars, but, if so, no notice of them remains. Simeon, its vassal tribe, shared its seclusion and fortunes. It was cut off from the rest of Israel by the Jebusites, who lived between the mountains of Ephraim and those of Judah. Renewed attacks of the Philistines on the central region, in which the southern districts were overwhelmed, appear first to have roused Judah and Simeon from their supineness. To free themselves from this terrible foe who had enslaved them, they seem to have sought an alliance with their brethren. Peace had been made between these and the Amorites,[1] perhaps from common dread of the Philistines: Samuel had risen into universal notice as the leader of the nation, and union with it would strengthen the interests of all, especially since Judah had gradually pressed farther north, and now occupied Bethlehem, close to Jebus; its former settlements reaching only to Hebron.[2]

Hence, in Samuel's day, Judah and Simeon acted with the other tribes, and this alliance brought a new and potent element into the struggle for liberty. Judah had few towns in its territory, and had thus escaped the enervation of town life. Its only place of importance was Hebron; the other settlements were merely villages. The corruption introduced in other parts from intercourse with the Phœnicians was thus unknown in the south. Baal and Astarte, with their impurities, had not found a footing there; the population remaining in great measure, what they had been since

[1] 1 Sam. vii. 14. [2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 155.

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the conquest, simple shepherds, cherishing their freedom and defending it as they best could, but careless of warlike glory and without ambition. The manners of the patriarchal time had, in fact, lingered in Judah when lost elsewhere.[1]

And as with the manners, so with religion. The sections of the tribe seem to have had, each, its own place of offering.[2] Hebron, at least, boasted such a sanctuary. But the ritual had remained simple, and the God of Israel was the recognized object of worship. Beersheba, on the south, appears to have been a religious centre for Judah and also for Simeon;[3] perhaps from its having been hallowed by the altars of Abraham and Isaac.[4] Indeed, it retained its character as such after the Temple had been built, pilgrimages being even then made to it.[5] Heathen ideas may in some measure have mingled with the local worship and manners, for idolatrous races not only surrounded the district, but lived in it and were connected with the Hebrew population by intermarriages, though its simplicity saved it from the worst heathen corruptions. Hence reunion with the nation at large was of great moment.

Yet without the commanding influence and personality of Samuel no political strengthening or religious revival would have availed to deliver and regenerate Israel. But he had all the qualities needed. More a man of strong will and action, than of meditation, he had seen from the first that his work lay in raising and ennobling the moral and religious feelings of his race; and the patient labours of twenty years slowly justified his course, by a wide revival of national obedience to the Law, as that of God, the theocratic King.

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 155.
[2] Josh. xv. 28; xix. 2.
[3] 1 Sam. xx. 6.
[4] Gen. xxi. 33; xxvi. 23-25.
[5] Amos v. 5.

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Everything opposed to it was fiercely proscribed. Irregular worship, like that of Micah or of Dan, was no longer permitted. A Nazarite from his birth, and surrounded by others who had taken the same vow, Samuel demanded from the nation the devotion to the ancient faith he himself shewed. Filled with intense zeal, his enthusiasm gradually fired that of the multitude. Nor was the absence of the Ark at Kirjath-jearim, where it rested in a private house, and was virtually withdrawn from the nation, without a strong influence in reviving religious feeling. All Israel came ultimately "to lament after Jehovah," thus, as it were, no longer in their midst. Yet, with all helps of subordinate co-workers and circumstances, the triumph must have been very gradual. In the first years there could hardly have been a hope of the amazing revolution ultimately effected. But the spiritual leaven was meanwhile steadily spreading, and long before Samuel's death the nation had once more rallied to its ancient faith, with an earnestness which influenced the whole future of the race.

The signs of a great religious revolution having become evident, Samuel could at last announce to the tribes, that if they returned to Jehovah with all their hearts, putting away the foreign idols from among them, and preparing their hearts for Jehovah and serving Him only, He would deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. Nor was the counsel unheeded. Far and near, through the land, the numerous images of Baal and Ashtaroth, with their foul groves and licentious symbols, were swept away, and the nation was ready to proclaim that, henceforth, it would serve Jehovah alone.

It only remained to inaugurate this reformation by a public solemnity, and for this purpose Samuel, acting as Head

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of the tribes, convened a great assembly of the congregation of Israel at Mizpeh, the Look-out or "Watch-tower," now Nebi Samwil, the home of the prophet Samuel [1]—a hill about four miles north of Jerusalem, 2,935 feet above the sea, as previously stated, though only 500 feet above the plain below, and already the politico-religious centre of the nation in these distracted times. The Tabernacle, saved from the burning of Shiloh, had apparently been re-erected on this spot, though it did not boast of the Ark. The assembly that declared war against Benjamin had met on the same spot,[2] which was also, ere long, to witness the election of Saul as king.[3] Nor could any place have been better for the purpose. The highest summit in the district, it commands a view as far as the Mediterranean on the west, and the mountains of Moab on the east, while the range of landscape is equally grand to the north and south. If Israel met him there, Samuel would, he told them, intercede with Jehovah for them, if, haply, He would once more turn His face toward them. Vast multitudes obeyed the summons, for the "congregation" of the tribes included all Israelites over twenty years old,[4] the elders of each clan or its sections sending out the call, which was eagerly obeyed, the whole male population, apparently, hastening to the rendezvous, where they fervently joined in a solemn public humiliation. Pouring out water "before the Lord," in confirmation of the vow they were about to make, which was thus declared as irrevocable as the act of spilling the water on the ground,[5] they fasted, as on the great Day of Atonement, and sadly owned, doubt-

[1] *Kneucker* in Schenkel's *Bib. Lex.* Graetz, vol. i. p. 156. "Mizpe," in Riehm. See page 16 in this volume.

[2] Jud. xx. [3] 1 Sam. x. 17. [4] Num. i. 3.

[5] Bush, *Illust. of Script.*, p. 158. Roberts' *Orient. Illust.* It is of immemorial antiquity, in this significance, in the East.

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less with loud weeping, that they had sinned against Jehovah. On this, Samuel, thankful to plead for them, now that they were returning to their God, "cried" to Him on their behalf, accompanying his intercession with sacrifice. That the repentance was sincere was proved by the future; for, notwithstanding temporary declensions, the nation, henceforth, never fell away from God to the same extent as in the past. From the gathering at Mizpeh may be dated its fidelity to its ancient faith. Samuel had quickened into new life the almost abandoned work of Moses.

The transactions at Mizpeh continued long enough to alarm the Philistines by such a sign of revived national life, and to give them time to send forward an army to disperse the gathering. The smoke of the sacrifice offered by Samuel was still ascending when the approaching enemy was seen from the high look-out of the hill. The Hebrews had brought with them what arms they had, and, strong in the enthusiasm of the time, charged down with a fury which spread panic through the Philistine ranks. It was the time of wheat harvest, the end of May or the beginning of June, and in ordinary seasons, rain never falls, from the cessation of the "latter" showers in spring till the commencement of the "early" rains in October or November; so that rain in harvest, became an expression for anything unexpected or out of place. But now, a terrible thunder-storm broke over the landscape, as if the Jewish God were fighting for His people and uttering His awful voice in their support.

Routed and fleeing for the first time before Israel, the invaders found no pity, the pursuit continuing to the very edge of their own district. A long peace was the result of this great victory, which Samuel commemorated by a memorial stone, which he called Eben-ezer, "the stone of help,"

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raised in acknowledgment of the aid he had received from God, in answer to his prayers and those of Israel. Twenty years before, the Hebrews had fought in the same spot the momentous battle in which the Ark was captured by the Philistines, after a second defeat of Israel by them, so that the field of disaster having become the scene of victory, naturally called for some religious and historical commemora-

MEMORIAL STONES.

tion. How deeply this had impressed itself on the general mind is curiously shewn by the battleground being already spoken of in advance, by the name of the stone, though it was not raised till so long after.[1] The restoration of a number of Hebrew towns on the border of the Maritime Plain followed, but the southern tribes seem still to have been left

[1] 1 Sam. iv. 10; v. 1.

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in the hands of the Philistines, if we may judge by their helpless slavery in the early days of Saul.

In reality the Head of the nation long before the gathering at Mizpeh, Samuel was there formally appointed its Judge, and thus combined in himself both civil and religious authority.

Eben-ezer, "the stone of help," recalls the sacredness attached in antiquity to such memorials. Sacred stones are the oldest relic of worship. In Scripture we find them very early. Jacob raises several times a "Meahir" or Matzaibah —that is, a memorial stone—and at Bethel, anoints it with oil, just as the Greeks did on feast days, with sacred oil kept in the Temple of Apollo, at Delphi. Arnobius owns that, before he was a Christian, he could not keep from praying to a stone thus anointed, when he saw one. Altars, moreover, were built only of unhewn stones. Joshua made a stone circle on the Jordan, for Gilgal means such a circle; and Jacob, a stone memorial on Mount Gilead. Gideon poured out a libation on the rock;[1] Saul sacrificed on a great stone, and the tables of Gad, thrown down by Hezekiah and Josiah, may well have been dolmens, like those now so common on the east of the Jordan, for Gad is equivalent to "the god of good fortune." The Arabs, before the time of Mohammed, consecrated stones as idols, or emblems of their divinities, the name then used for them still surviving in the encampments. The black stone of Venus at Mecca, and the red stone of her companion Hobal, the stones of Asâf and Nailah, and that of Khalasah, near the Kaabah, are among the most famous examples, and it is very remarkable that the red stone of Hobal is said to have been brought from Moab to Mecca. Such stone worship was of great antiquity in

[1] Jud. vi. 26; xiii. 19.

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Arabia. The Nabatheans at Petra worshipped a square black stone before the Christian era, and Herodotus speaks of seven stones which the Arabs swore by, and sprinkled with blood. Antonius Martyr (600 A.D.) was shewn such a stone in Horeb, and the existing Sakhrah at Jerusalem must not be forgotten, for the Arabs consecrated both rocks and cubical stones alike to Allât or Mena. Seven stones also surrounded the Kaabah, and Arab authorities state that they were smeared with the blood of sacrifices—a practice mentioned in early Arab poetry, while it is also alluded to by Herodotus. It appears probable that the human sacrifices, which we read of in Moab at so late a period, continued to be offered in Arabia almost as late as the time of Mohammed. But there was never anything like such sacrifices, among the Hebrews, except when, as in the case of Jephthah, or the idolatrous multitude under the later kings, they imported into their religious usage the terrible customs of surrounding heathen nations. Moses raised twelve memorial stones when the tribes formally entered into covenant to worship and obey Jehovah as their God,[1] and Isaiah says that when Egypt turned to Him, a "pillar" or Matzaibah would be erected at its border, to Jehovah, "as a sign and a witness to Him."[2]

Such pillars, as has been said, were habitually used in connection with the Sun, or Baal, worship in Palestine and elsewhere. On a gem in the British Museum, Sin, the god of Haran, is represented by a conical stone surmounted by a star, and the "pillars of the Sun" were stones of a like form. When the Phœnician temple on the island of Gozo was excavated, two such columns were found. In Solomon's temple, built as it was by Phœnician workmen, there were

[1] Exod. xxiv. 4–7. [2] Isa. xix. 19.

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two columns of stone, Yakin (Iachin) and Boaz, set on either side of the porch.[1] When Jehu destroyed the Temple of Baal in Samaria, the Sun "pillars" were cast out and destroyed.[2] Hence they are often denounced as idolatrous, and, as such, commanded to be cast down. While, of course, their erection by Hebrews was forbidden,[3] they were, nevertheless, raised in great numbers during the reign of idolatrous kings, but under kings who honoured Jehovah they were repeatedly broken down; as for example, by Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah, the people themselves, at times, uniting in the work of destruction; the result being that while there are hundreds of dolmens, menhirs, and cromlechs[4] on the east side of the Jordan, there are none in Palestine.

[1] 1 Kings xii. 21. [2] 2 Kings x. 27.

[3] 2 Chron. xiv. 3. 2 Kings xviii. 4. 2 Chron. xxxi. 1.

[4] A *menhir* is a standing stone like that at Ebenezer. A *dolmen* is a stone table, used as an altar, often for human sacrifice. A *cairn* is a memorial heap of stones. A *cromlech* is a stone circle, like that at Gilgal. Cromlechs were sacred enclosures, and often had a dolmen or menhir in their centre, as an altar or sacred emblem.

NOTE ON THE PORTRAIT OF A DERVISH.—The illustration in the text is from a Persian drawing, kindly lent by Mrs. Isabella Bishop. In his hand is some grass, to remind all, that life fades as the grass does. From his wrist hangs his begging bowl, for he lives on alms; from his elbow, a wallet, in which he puts what is given him. On his shoulder is a club, the symbol of his calling, to fight and overcome all evil among men. In this case the hair is cut short and the head is uncovered, but most dervishes have long, matted, bushy hair, often covering their shoulders, and wear a peculiar turban, or conical felt hat, decorated with words from the Koran. They also generally carry an axe in their girdle. The hairy mantle on the dervish in the illustration is a sheepskin, doubtless like the hairy mantle of the Hebrew prophets. "A dervish like this," said Mrs. Bishop to me, "would walk up to the Czar of all the Russias, or to the Shah of Persia, and denounce any wrong act either had done."

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CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST HEBREW KING.

LITTLE is known of the history of Samuel in the years immediately succeeding the victory of Ebenezer; which, it is evident, greatly dispirited the Philistines, and secured the peace of central Palestine during the prophet's lifetime, though the southern tribes remained under the yoke of the uncircumcised. Meanwhile, his bands of evangelists continued their labours unweariedly. He himself, also, made circuits year by year from his home in Ramah, his native town, to the ancient sanctuaries of Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, Shiloh being no longer the national centre; and "judged"—or, as Graetz renders it, "taught"[1]—Israel at these places. Their nearness to each other shews, however, that little of the country was under his control, or as yet acted together, for Gilgal is only about fourteen miles east of Mizpeh, and Bethel lies midway between them, about seven miles to the north. As in former years, he probably summoned to him, on these journeys, the elders of the people, laid before them their duties, reminded them of the miseries of the past when they had forsaken Jehovah and turned to idols, and warned them against any relapse. He would also hear and decide questions between man and man, and he further acted as priest; sacrificing on the altars which had been built at Ramah and the other towns of his "circuit."

[1] *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 158.

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But a new feature in the worship of Israel now added its influence, to aid the plans of the great prophet. With the help of the "sons" of the prophets,[1] he introduced psalms, choruses, and musical accompaniments, which tended powerfully to stimulate religious feeling. The psalm of praise thus became a prominent part of the worship of God, Samuel himself, the forefather of the race of Korah, famous in later days as composers of psalms, and of music for them, probably leading the first choirs. His race indeed was musical, for his grandson Heman, with Asaph and Jeduthun, were the great religious poets and musicians of the next generation. Long before the rise of Grecian poetry or music, the hills and valleys of Palestine echoed with lofty hymns, sung to the notes of many instruments. Mere ritualism did not satisfy the reformer; everything was adopted that tended to give religion its seat in the affections and life.

Meanwhile, the destruction of Shiloh had caused a great change in the public worship of the nation. Ahitub, a grandson of Eli, the elder brother of the child born at the news of the taking of the Ark, had fled with the rescued Tabernacle to Nob, taking with him the high-priestly robes and the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim.[2] There, he seems, also, to have made an unauthorized copy of the Ark,[3] of course without its most precious distinction, the stone tables of the commandments given at Sinai. Henceforth, for many years, this spot became to some extent the religious centre of the land. Shiloh had been so for 369 years.[4]

In the later years of Samuel's life, his sphere of action had extended so far to the south that his sons were appointed by him, in his growing feebleness, to act in his

[1] Graetz calls them "Levites."
[2] 1 Sam. xxi. 2-8.
[3] 1 Sam. xxii. 20.
[4] The Rabbis say so.

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stead as "Judges," at Beersheba, on the edge of the desert,[1] but we hear nothing of the northern tribes, or of those beyond Jordan.

It is difficult to realize the greatness of a historic figure after three thousand years, but Samuel must have been more than the Luther of his day. Uniting in himself all the highest offices of his nation—its supreme prophet, its virtual high priest, and its acknowledged ruler—his influence was intensified by the lofty singleness of his life and aim. Men could not forget, as his age increased, how Jehovah had chosen to make revelations through him while he was yet a child; how he had grown up in the sacred shadow of the Tabernacle; how he had been a Nazarite from his birth; how fearless and loyal had been his enthusiasm for Jehovah; how incorruptible he had been as a Judge; and how well his life had illustrated the high morality and godliness he had enforced. They had seen the religious revolution he had accomplished. The state as a whole, in its great characteristics, owed, in fact, its noble future to his work, for he had in effect founded the order of prophets; he had prepared the way for the kings; and his revival of the Mosaic religion brought with it the future temple and its priesthood. Before his time Israel had had no real national existence, and seemed likely to perish entirely; yet he left it proud of its dignity as the People of God, and on the threshold of its highest glory under David.

But the life thus rekindled was soon found to demand new political institutions. The new wine must be put into new bottles. All the evils of the past seemed likely to return at Samuel's death, for his sons had proved themselves venal in their office as Judges, and had forfeited public con-

[1] 1 Sam. vii. 16, 17; viii. 2.

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fidence and respect. The peace that had prevailed since the battle of Eben-ezer had served to strengthen the Reformation, but it had also quickened the desire for national union, and this was endangered under the old forms of the theocracy, which provided no permanent central authority. Judah and Benjamin were still under the Philistines, and a stronger and better defined government than that of a Judge was needed, to gather all the force of Israel for their deliverance. Most of the neighbouring peoples had kings, for even the five Seranim of the Philistine towns were lords of their respective districts, acting together in their relentless hostility to the Hebrews, and they had latterly chosen the ruler of Gath as head of the whole Philistine country.[1] The wish for a king, which had shewn itself nearly two hundred years before in connection with Gideon, had been slowly growing since then and was now well-nigh universal, but Samuel's position and the profound respect in which he was held made it difficult to carry out. No one thought of displacing him, and no one but he could secure for a king the necessary authority and a hearty acceptance. Another great assembly of the elders of the tribes was therefore held, doubtless after much consultation over the country at large, and Samuel was waited on by them at his home at Ramah, with the earnest request that, as his sons had not proved like himself, he would appoint a king over Israel such as ruled the nations around.

Such a demand must have been intensely unwelcome to the aged prophet. He had devoted his life to the restoration of the theocracy as it had been instituted under Moses, and the change to a monarchy seemed irreconcilable with it. It appeared, indeed, a rejection of Jehovah, whom

[1] 1 Sam. xxvii. 2.

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alone he recognized as their King. The whole nation, he feared, would be exposed to the craft and the caprice of a single man. The equality of all before God and the law, and the independence of each family, under its patriarchal head, would be destroyed. The kings around were lawless despots, and Israel would find royalty equally fatal. The king would take the choicest young men for his chariots and horses, or for runners before him. He would levy forced labour to cultivate the crown lands, to make arms for war, and chariots. Even the young women would be taken to make spices and perfumes, to cook, and to bake. Far and near he would wrest to himself what lands he chose, and give them to his courtiers. He would take a tenth of all produce as a tax to support his favourites. He would carry off for his service or use the male and female servants, the goodliest cattle and the asses, and he would take the sheep. In fact, the nation would become his slaves.[1]

But the greatness of Samuel's character is shewn in nothing more strikingly than that, after finding the change had the sanction of God, he not only waived further opposition, but led the new movement, with calm wisdom, to a successful issue. He could no longer hope to be so great a personage as in the past, but that did not concern him. Notwithstanding his antecedents and deep-rooted convictions, if a king were inevitable he would frankly seek the right man, surrounding him at the same time with such checks against his playing the despot, or invading the supreme rights of Jehovah, as should secure alike the welfare of the people and the stability of the national faith. He would not yield, however, without attempting to dissuade the people he loved so well from a course which he believed so dangerous.

[1] 1 Sam. viii. 11-18.

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Pointing out to an assembly at Ramah the evils that would follow the change to a monarchy, he urged them earnestly to continue as they were. But the time had come for such a development of the ancient institutions, and not even his honoured voice could avail to alter the wish of the nation.

Such a ruler would necessarily stand in a unique position. As only the viceroy and representative of the true invisible King, Jehovah, he must be pointed out beforehand by special indications, and consecrated as to a sacred office. That he should, moreover, have commended himself to the nation by his qualities and deeds, was essential. Nor could it be permitted him to reign like other Eastern kings, by his mere pleasure; for the rights of Jehovah and those of His people, as a nation of freemen, demanded equal respect. He must, therefore, at all times, remember that he ruled under a higher King, whose will, expressed in His revealed law, was his absolute guide both in religion and ordinary life; its transgression, in any particular, being self-destruction. But such a man would necessarily be in loving sympathy with Him under whom he held his authority, to be a king after His heart; a man truly religious; obeying, not by mere outward constraint, but from loving choice. To find such an one would at all times be difficult, and too often impossible. All that could be done, therefore, was to make the best selection that offered, and remove him from his high dignity if he failed to answer the conditions of retaining it.

The all-important choice fell upon Saul, a member of the tribe of Benjamin—the smallest of the tribes of Israel; perhaps in the thought that there would be less danger of a Benjamite overriding the limits of his just power by any local influence, or of the tribe itself obtaining an undue pre-

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ponderance.[1] The personage selected, moreover, shewed no signs of ambition or self-assertion. His clan—that of Matri—was one of the smallest in Benjamin, but his father, Kish, was known as a valiant man,[2] powerful and wealthy[3] from his lands and herds; one from whose family, in times when as yet there was no hereditary circle of royal birth, the future ruler could well be chosen. And, indeed, in the son of Kish, the various qualities demanded appeared to centre. Of gigantic stature, in the prime of life, and noble alike in features and bearing, he realized the ideal of a king of men as conceived in antiquity.[4] Men thought fondly of him, after his death, as the roe or gazelle[5] of Israel, the emblem of swiftness and grace, of beauty and gentleness. He was now about forty years old, with a grown-up son, and modestly busied himself in his father's fields or in tending his herds, with no thoughts, apparently, beyond his own valley or hamlet; though from Samuel's language to him afterwards, that he would tell him all that was in his heart, it is possible that, like Joan of Arc when with her flock, Saul, while following his plough, may have been long brooding over the oppression of his country, and thinking how he might free it. His father's house was still his home, and he remained under paternal authority; for the patriarchal custom still survived by which the son attained self-control

[1] Winer.

[2] 1 Sam. ix. 1.

[3] 1 Sam. ix. 1. Power = substance.

[4] Euripides speaks of a "form worthy of a king." Ajax, in Homer,

"Towers over all with head and shoulders broad."

Il., iii. 227.

And Turnus, in Virgil,

"Out-tops the foremost chieftains by a head."

Æn., vii. 784.

Xerxes was noted as worthy by his stature and comeliness to be the leader of his vast hosts. Herod., *Thalia*, 20.

[5] 2 Sam. i. 19. Beauty = roe or gazelle.

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only after his father's death. Such a man seemed little likely to be self-willed, or to hesitate in accepting the guidance of a prophet like Samuel, when raised to the highest post. His home must, one would think, have been like that of the Sheik of Thebes, whom I found living in a mud-walled enclosure, inside which was not only his own modest house, but room had been found for humble dwellings for all his married sons and daughters, and their children, in all not fewer than forty persons, old and young; the whole of them, I was assured, living in peace and harmony with each other.[1]

The circumstances of his selection were in keeping with the simplicity of the age. A drove of his father's asses having strayed, Saul, accompanied by a slave, was sent to find and bring them back.[2] Three days passed, however, without their tracking them, and he was on the point of returning empty-handed, when his attendant urged him to try if the great prophet Samuel could not help him. Even on such trivial details men were then wont to "enquire of God."[3] The indispensable prerequisite of a "gift" to the seer stood, however, in the way. A cake of bread would have been enough; for in this case no more was expected than a mere form demanded by Eastern courtesy.[4] But the

[1] The sheik was a Christian, and the wall of his best room was ornamented with texts from the Arabic Bible most beautifully written. I was served with coffee during my visit, and when I left was required to mount a great black horse with cropped mane, a shining skin, eyes like lamps, and a spirit that scarcely let him stand still a moment. When I add that the stirrup irons were like square spades with sharp corners, the pleasure of bestriding such animate thunder and lightning may be imagined.

[2] This slave's name is given by Jewish tradition as Doeg the Edomite, or Syrian. (Septuagint.) In open, pastoral countries, droves of horses, asses, or cattle, are turned loose while not needed by their owner. Each drove keeps together and is readily known by a mark branded on the different animals. Rosenmüller, vol. iii. p. 81. Great part of Palestine has always been unenclosed.

[3] 1 Sam. ix. 9.

[4] So universal is the custom of giving and receiving gifts in the East, that there are

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future king had not even so much left. The fourth part of a shekel of silver,[1] which his slave had with him, served, however, instead, and, with this in their hand, they climbed the steep hill road to the prophet's "city." It was towards evening, when the maidens were coming out to draw water from the town well, and from them they heard that Samuel was to offer the periodical public sacrifices at the public "high place" that day—probably the day of the New Moon —and to preside at the usual feast on the remains of the victims, in a circle of invited guests.

Meanwhile the prophet was equally eager to meet Saul, for a Divine intimation had been given him that the Benjamite who should that day seek him was to be the king of Israel. An invitation to the feast, therefore, naturally followed ; lower cares were dismissed by an announcement that the asses were found, and the modest wonder of Saul raised by the seer telling him that he was "the desire of Israel." That he, a Benjamite, and of the most insignificant clan of the smallest tribe, should have such honour, seemed incredible. He was treated, however, with the greatest respect at the feast, the choicest part being put first before him, that he might tear off a portion.[2] He was afterwards taken home by Samuel for the night.[3] Next morning, "about the spring of day," both were astir, for early habits prevail in the East, and outside the "city," the

fifteen words for them in Hebrew. It would have been as contrary to good manners to have come empty-handed as for us to enter a parlour with our hats on.

[1] Conder gives the value of the shekel as 3*s.* 4*d.*, but money was then worth many times more than at present. Thus, five denarii, say 3*s.*, was the amount allowed under the early Emperors in Rome, more than 1,000 years after Samuel's day, as the wheat money for a man, for a month. Friedländer.

[2] 1 Sam. ix. 22. Parlour = (Septuagint) caravanseral. Ver. 24, shoulder = thigh.

[3] The Septuagint in ver. 25, last clause, reads : "He spread a couch for Saul upon the top of the house." In the hot season the roof is the pleasantest place for sleeping. Slight shelters are made on it to protect the sleeper from the dew.

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man having been sent on before, Saul received the sacred kingly anointing, and was dismissed to his home, with various intimations, the fulfilment of which would confirm his being divinely chosen for the high office.[1] Two men "by Rachel's sepulchre" informed him that the asses were found. At the terebinth of Tabor—a spot not yet identified—three others, "going up to God to Bethel," gave him, as if in homage, two loaves out of three which, with three kids and a skin of wine, they were carrying thither as an offering. Finally, at "Gibeah of God"—in the authorized version, "the hill of God"—the same place, it would seem, as Geba, now the village Jeba, of Benjamin, near Michmash, where a post of the Philistines was stationed, a band of prophets, singing to the music of instruments, met him as they came down the hill from the high place, where they had been worshipping or sacrificing. Excited by all that had happened, a crowd of emotions to which he had hitherto been a stranger agitated his mind, rousing thoughts of which he had hitherto never dreamed. The religious fervour of the prophets was irresistible. The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he also prophesied. That one silent and reserved till now should kindle into such enthusiasm might well seem strange to those around, ignorant as they were of what had gone before. It was, however, the crisis of his spiritual life. Religious feeling had hitherto only slumbered in his bosom. From this time it became the ruling power, though his after-life shewed that, however intense, it was superficial, and left his deeper nature essentially unchanged. He had been "turned into another man."[2] No

[1] The word translated "captain" (1 Sam. x. 1), *nâgeed*, is not the usual word for a king; it is rather a military head. Samuel shrinks here, as elsewhere, from the use of the word "king," which he so much disliked.

[2] 1 Sam. x. 6.

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longer the mere villager, he felt himself called to lead the nation. His soul woke into new manhood, now that he was intrusted with a commission to deliver his people. But as yet he said nothing, even in his family circle. He was waiting for an outward call—the counterpart of that which he had received within.

The ancient liberties of the nation, meanwhile, demanded a public sanction of that which had been done in private by Samuel, though it was certain that this would at once be enthusiastically accorded. A great national assembly was therefore summoned to the usual centre at Mizpeh, that the prophet might present "the chosen of God" before the freemen of Israel, for acceptance as their head. But the honour was as yet too great for the shy nature of Saul, and he was nowhere to be seen, till at last found hiding among the circle of waggons and baggage drawn up outside. Once beheld, however, his magnificent presence won instant allegiance, except from a few, in all probability of the ambitious tribe of Ephraim—and the air was rent for the first time in Israel by the loud cry, "God save the king." But Samuel, true, as became a prophet, at once to ancient popular rights and to the claims of Jehovah, the invisible King, would not allow an unconditional election. Expounding the principles of the constitution in an earnest address, he strictly limited and defined the royal power, afterwards writing down his words in a book duly laid up "before Jehovah"—presumably in the Ark, along with the other national archives already preserved there—as the supreme authority to which all future kings should have to bow.[1] What a treasure, if it were still extant!

[1] Deut. xxx. 26; xxviii. 61. Exod. xvii. 14. Josh. xxiv. 26. It is called "the book." 1 Sam. x. 25.

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It was a turning-point in the history of Israel, and the almost unbroken unanimity of the multitude augured well for the future. The gifts demanded from all on such an occasion, as an act of homage, were eagerly proffered, only a few holding back; but of these, on such an occasion, Saul took no notice. Setting off, escorted by the fighting men of the host, to his home at Gibeah—a village, according to Robinson, on the height called now Tel el Ful, two and a half miles north of Jerusalem; by others as a hill town four miles north of the present Jerusalem, and two miles south of Samuel's village of Ramah[1]—he dismissed them for the time on reaching it, and modestly entered again on the peaceful toils of his former life, till the moment arrived for action.

The name "Saul," by which the first Hebrew king is known to us, becomes significant when we remember that Jewish kings, and, indeed, all Jews, had a public as well as a private name. The one chosen by the son of Kish is given in Genesis as that of the ruling chiefs of Edom,[2] who had come from Rehoboth, a word meaning the public squares and suburbs of the capital, and is thus used of Nineveh;[3] but as the river—that is, the Euphrates—is mentioned in connection with the place from which the Edomite ruler came, this Rehoboth must have been part of Babylon. One of the principal names of the Sun-god, however, at Babylon, was Savul, or Sawal, which in Hebrew characters would become "Saul," and this god would seem, therefore, to have been worshipped in Edom, from its ruler assuming its name as his own public title. Perhaps, also, the worship had spread to Palestine, so near at hand, and the Hebrew king would

[1] *Dict. of the Bible*, "Gibeah." Conder thinks Gibeah of Saul the name of a district.
[2] Gen. xxxvi. 37. [3] Gen. x. 11.

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thus bear the name of the Babylonian god, by its having become familiar round him. The kings of Edom seem to have been accustomed to assume the names of gods they honoured, as the two who are named after Saul, in Genesis, are Baal-hanan, "the favour of Baal," and Hadad, not Hadar, a Syrian god, but probably also a god of Edom. He was the supreme Sun-god, higher even than "Saul."[1]

The position of Israel seemed so desperate that only a leader roused to the highest enthusiasm would have dared to undertake its cause. Disarming of the people had long been complete.[2] It was a repetition of the time of Deborah, when neither shield nor spear could be seen in 40,000 in Israel.[3] The very sickles,[4] coulters, axes, and goads,[5] could be sharpened only in the Philistine towns at the foot of the hills. Saul and Jonathan alone had swords.[6] Tribute officers of the conquerors oppressed the people, and their garrisons checked any hope of resistance. So entirely subdued, indeed, was Benjamin, that part of the tribe served in the Philistine ranks against their brethren. Only the favour of Providence could bring deliverance; but this was before long vouchsafed through Saul, and his illustrious son Jonathan.

That hero, one of the most attractive in the Old Testament, was now in the bloom of his early manhood, and already famous for his strength, swiftness of foot, and manly agility.[7] His skill with the bow was proverbial, and he doubtless excelled also in the other martial exercises of his tribe, "the use of the right hand and the left in hurling

[1] *Hibbert Lectures*, Sayce, i. 55.
[2] See page 7.
[3] Jud. v. 8.
[4] Septuagint.
[5] Peshito. Thenius adopts from the Septuagint the addition, "And the edges of the shares and of the coulters were sharpened at three shekels for each piece of iron, and the same for the axes, and for the sickles, and for setting the goads."
[6] 1 Sam. xiii. 22.
[7] 2 Sam. i. 23.

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stones and in shooting arrows."[1] His father and he were inseparably attached, the two always appearing in the narrative together. Inexpressibly dear to Saul, he dared not ask leave when about to imperil himself.[2] There was "nothing, great or small," which Saul did not tell him.[3] In after years he yielded to his son's voice even in the paroxysms of frenzy which often overpowered him,[4] and at last "in death they were not divided."[5] It seems, indeed, as if the son would have been fitter for king than his father. Brave to excess, he had a winning affection and mildness, and a heart proverbial for the fidelity of its attachments. His only failing, indeed, as the heir to the kingdom, seems to have been the womanly gentleness of his nature, ever too ready to yield, and shrinking from the harsher parts of kingly duty at such a time.[6] He was the popular idol.

Abner, Saul's cousin, was another hero in the impending war of liberation; a man valiant in battle, and true to his master, even after the fall of the royal house. Other members, also of the family and tribe, proud of the honour done them by Saul's election, eagerly rallied round him, and formed the nucleus of an army.

It is difficult to understand the order of events in the opening of the reign. A rapid expedition against the Ammonites comes first in the narrative as it stands; but it is not easy to imagine how the vast numbers who took part in it, could have gathered, while such a condition of things existed, as is described in the subsequent chapters.[7] Details may, however, have been omitted which would have ex-

[1] 1 Chron. xii. 2.
[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 1.
[3] 1 Sam. xx. 2.
[4] 1 Sam. xix. 6.
[5] 2 Sam. i. 23.
[6] Graetz, vol. i. p. 172.
[7] See 1 Sam. xi. compared with chap. xiii.

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plained the apparent confusion, and it is therefore safer to follow the order given.[1]

In the long interval of 150 years since the death of Jephthah, their dreaded enemy, the people of Ammon, more settled and civilized than the Israelite shepherd tribes east of the Jordan, had not only recovered themselves, but under Nahash—"the serpent"—their king, were rapidly conquering the Hebrew territory. Their doings, in fact, had first brought to a head the demand for a king over Israel,[2] to repel their possible invasion of central Palestine; but, though that had not taken place, their violence to the trans-Jordanic tribes roused the kindling spirit of nationality through the land.

Among the richly wooded hills of Gilead, on the south side of the Wady Jabis, rose the town of Jabesh, afterwards the capital of the district. Thick forests of the "oaks of Bashan" still vary the landscape around; rich olive groves, patches of barley, and luxuriant pastures filling its open spaces, as the landscape sinks down towards the deep-lying Jordan. Jabesh was about fifteen miles south-west of Beth-shean, on the other side of the river. An old tie bound it to Benjamin, Saul's tribe, for four hundred of its young maidens had become the wives of the remnant who had escaped the terrible civil war in the days of the Judges.

One evening as Saul was "coming after the herd" out of the open common—for he still followed the humble duties of his earlier life—the loud wail, which in the East announces some great calamity, suddenly met him. Runners had hurried from Jabesh Gilead to Gibeah—"Saul's hill"—with news that Nahash had laid siege to their town, and

[1] Graetz puts the expedition to Ammon after the defeat of the Philistines.
[2] 1 Sam. xii. 12. Winer, vol. ii. p. 390.

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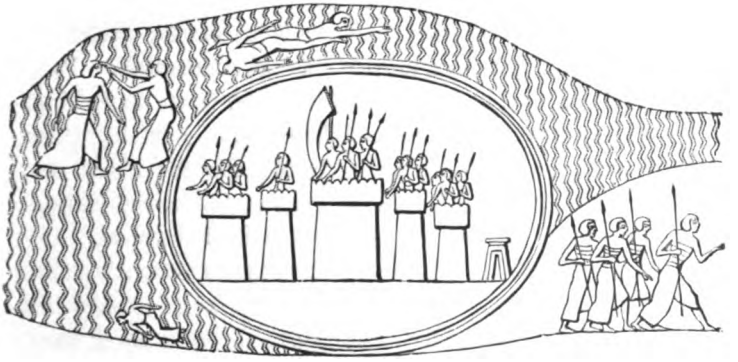
had threatened, if help did not come to them in seven days, to thrust out all their right eyes, as a mark of contempt for Israel and to make them useless in war. Such tidings might well rouse a less excitable population. They proved the spark that kindled the dormant spirit of Saul. Of an unselfish nature, which never thought of excusing itself from a patriotic enterprise, his whole soul was moved, or, as the sacred narrative expresses it, "the Spirit of God came on him," as on the ancient Judges, "mightily."[1] In a mo-



PORTION OF AN EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATION OF THE SIEGE OF A TOWN WITH TWO ENCIRCLING WALLS.

ment his self-distrust and shyness had vanished; the leader of men shone out in him from that hour. Repeating, in a less terrible form, the summons to war against his own tribe, sent through the land by the injured Levite long before,[2] he forthwith slew two of the cattle he was driving home, and having divided them into twelve pieces, sent one to each of the tribes, commanding them to come out to the help of Jabesh Gilead, on peril of death, if they refused. It was

[1] Jud. xiv. 6; xv. 14. In Amos v. 6, the same word is used of the breaking out of fire.

[2] Jud. xix. 29.

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the Hebrew anticipation of the fiery cross, which used to be sent far and near to gather to war the Highland clans of Scotland; its tip "scathed with fire" and "quenched in blood," as an emblem of the fire and sword awaiting all who neglected its summons.[1] Times had been, in the weak rule of the Judges, when even so terrible a threat might have failed to rouse the tribes. But it was now felt, that things were not as they had been in the past. The day was gone when every one could do what was right in his own eyes. The election of a king had raised over the nation a strong will, which it must obey. A vast multitude, therefore, streamed forthwith from all parts to the rendezvous. Passing at once over the Jordan, they assailed from three sides the Ammonites beleaguering Jabesh Gilead, driving them off in wild panic. To have delivered the town was not, however, the only result. Safety from any inroad of Nahash was henceforth secured for the lands west of the river.

Such a turn of the tide in Israel's fortunes naturally raised the spirits and hopes of all to the highest, as an earnest of a brighter future, and greatly strengthened the hands of Saul. The change to a monarchy seemed to be already vindicated; even Samuel lending it his support without further hesitation, and proposing that the election should be confirmed by a second great assembly held at Gilgal, on the Jordan, a spot

[1] *Lady of the Lake*, canto iii. stanzas 8-11. "When a Highland chief wished to summon his clan, he slew a goat, and, making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities at the fire and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward with equal despatch to the next village, and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief. At sight of the fiery cross every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear suffered the extremities of fire and sword, emblematically denounced by the bloody and burnt marks upon the warlike signal."

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safe from the Philistines. Once more, therefore, the people gathered to their open-air parliament, if we may so speak; this time in far greater numbers than at Mizpeh, everyone over twenty, and foreigners who had been admitted to clanship, being, as has been noticed, free to come.[1] Sacrifices were duly offered, and Saul again officially anointed as king by Samuel,[2] amidst a delirium of popular joy.

But the grand old prophet, though he had loyally carried out a revolution intensely distasteful to himself, would not let the opportunity pass without raising his voice once more, to warn all of their duty and responsibility, and justify his own career, which seemed to be challenged by the substitution of a monarchy for his rule. He had walked before them from his childhood, said he, and was now old and grayheaded, but could call on every one present, to witness before God and His Anointed, if he had taken any man's ox or ass, or defrauded or oppressed any one, or accepted, in any case, even so small a bribe as a pair of sandals,[3] to blind his eyes to justice? A loud shout of assent to this self-vindication rose at once, in reply, from the vast multitude. Reminding them, next, of the Divine goodness shewn in the past, in their deliverance from Pharaoh, Sisera, the Philistines, the king of Moab, the Midianites, and other enemies, by leaders raised by Providence, in answer to their penitent cry for help from above, he frankly told them that their conduct in now demanding a king seemed to him, in the light of such a retrospect, at once ungrateful and unwise: ungrateful, since it appeared a slight offered to Jehovah, their ever-living and glorious Lord; unwise, because it looked like trusting to a weak and mortal man, rather than in their Almighty, eternal Head,

[1] Num. i. 3. [2] 1 Sam. xi. 15. Septuagint. [3] Septuagint.

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who had so gloriously fought for them from of old. Yet, in His infinite condescension, He had sanctioned their demand, and had given them a king as they had asked, though He himself remained the great Suzerain, whom that king only represented.

If they and their ruler implicitly obeyed Jehovah, He would uphold them; if they rebelled, His hand would be against them. The unusual phenomenon of a thunderstorm in the hottest month of the year, that of the wheat harvest,[1] added solemnity to these weighty utterances, and filled all minds with terror, as their Divine corroboration. But Samuel quieted their fears, while renewing his warnings against forsaking God, and his assurances of blessing if they loyally followed Him. True to his character, above others, as a man of prayer,[2] "he would not cease to plead for them, and teach them the good and right way." He had once more set before them the true theory of the constitution, that they might not confound the new monarchy with that of neighbouring peoples. Henceforth, the leadership of the nation was left in Saul's hands; subject, however, in keeping with his position as a theocratic ruler, to the prophet's counsel, as the mouthpiece of the true, invisible King above.

The signs of national revival shown by the transition to a monarchy, and the vigorous action against Nahash which was its first result, had, meanwhile, roused the Philistines, whose supremacy was thus threatened. Always formidable, such an enemy was doubly so, in the political prostration of Israel at this time. They were now in the height of their power. Holding the most fruitful part of Palestine, they were alike industrious in the field and in the city.

[1] See p. 87. [2] Ps. xcix. 6.

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Their harvests of grain; their vines, their olives, and their fruit, were a mine of wealth. The Hebrews had borrowed from them the word for flax,[1] which they grew largely in their plains, and wove into linen in their towns. On the south, they had wide tracts of pasture land, over which vast flocks of sheep wandered.[2] The cities were busy with many crafts and occupations. As a military people their army furnished employment to numerous chariot builders, makers of coats of mail, helmets, shields, weapons, etc. Their skill in the arts of luxury has already been noticed,[3] and the massive strength of their cities attested their skill as builders.

In commerce, the Philistines were less famous than the Phœnicians, but they were still remarkable. Their ships are spoken of in the Greek version of Isaiah,[4] but they seem to have been used, principally, in the coasting trade, and in that with Egypt. The transit of goods through the country, which was crossed by the great caravan routes, was of much greater importance. That from the Euphrates, through Syria and inner Palestine, ran along the coast, to Egypt. Other tracks branched off to the Peninsula of Sinai, to the two bays of the Red Sea on each side of it, and to Arabia. The security of these high roads of trade formed the great aim of Philistine policy. Their invasion of Israel had indeed, above all, for its object, the control of the routes of traffic through the country, and the struggle against them had consequently for its theatre the neighbourhood of these great lines of commerce. One of these, leading from the lands south and south-west, wound through the central hills, from the ford of the Jordan at Jericho, through the narrow pass of Michmash, across the hill country of Eph-

[1] Pistim. Hitzig, *Urgeschichte der Philistaer*, p. 267.
[2] 2 Chron. xvii. 11.
[3] See *ante*, p. 1.
[4] Chap. xi. 14. Septuagint.

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raim ; the other ran along the plain of Esdraelon, through the hills of Gilboa and Little Hermon, to the fords of the Jordan in the depression of the river valley at Bethshean ; the entrepot of the trade to and from western Asia. Egyptian horses and chariots were a main branch of the Philistine commerce, the supply of these for Palestine and also for the Hittite and Syrian kingdoms being in their hands.[1] Gaza, moreover, was the chief depot of a great traffic with Egypt, in incense, myrrh, styrax, ladanum, cinnamon from India, and cassia and cardamine[2] from Arabia.[3] They had indeed factories and settlements on the shore of Arabia, and held their own in the trade with the great East.[4]

Their military forces were at once very numerous and complete. Squadrons of war chariots and cavalry, and a great force of infantry, subdued the neighbouring tribes ; the chariot warriors especially constituting the aristocracy of the army, and bearing a great name for valour. Like the equipment of the Spartan hoplites, that of the leaders of the heavy-armed troops was designed to strike terror into the hearts of their foes. A round helmet of copper, a coat of scaled mail of the same metal, and brazen greaves on the legs, defended the person. At their back hung a copper-

[1] 1 Kings x. 28, 29. 1 Chron. i. 16, 17. The Egyptians had succeeded in raising a breed of horses of special size and strength. In the lists of booty taken at the sack of Thebes by Assurbanipal in B.C. 665, one of the chief items is "great horses." Much better suited for war than the horses of Arabia and Syria, they were in demand over all western Asia, Solomon afterwards making them a special article of trade, as the Philistines had done before him. Lenormant, *Premières Civilizations*, vol. i. pp. 312-313. What they may have been might be judged from the creature belonging to the Sheik of Thebes, on which I had to ride in state, to the Nile. It was a magnificent animal, with shining black coat, flashing eyes, great size of body, and legs trembling with excitement to be off. I do not remember ever having seen so fine a horse.

[2] Styrax = gum of storax shrub (Palestine). Ladanum = exudation from the rock rose. Cardamine—a plant allied to our bitter cress. Its leaves were used as a drug.

[3] Heeren, *Ideen*, vol. i. p. 109 ; *Zusätze*, p. 217.

[4] Joel iii. 3, 8.

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headed spear, a sword depended at their side, and they bore in their hand a long iron-tipped lance. Each had his own armour-bearer, who always attended him, carrying a huge shield to cover the whole body of his master. The chariot fighters, also, were armed with a similar glittering panoply, and went into battle with a chariot driver and armour-bearer at their side.[1] The light-armed troops were largely archers;[2] the Crethi or Chered in their ranks distinguishing themselves so specially with the bow, that a band of them, enlisted by David as his bodyguard, are called indifferently Crethi[3] or bowmen. The name may come from that of Crete, associated with early Philistine history, or, possibly, as Conder fancies, the village of Keratiyeh still existing on the Philistine plain. As a whole, the army was divided into hundreds and thousands; the entire force of each "lord" of a Philistine district constituting a "host."[4] To fortify their camps, place garrisons and military posts, and divide their soldiery into flying columns, to overrun and devastate the territory of their enemies, was familiar to them. But the nation did not confine itself to service in its own armies; like the free-lances of the middle ages, its sons were ready to hire themselves out to fight under the standard of any prince.[5]

The first step taken by Saul towards the war of liberation was the enrolment of 3,000 men, the nucleus of a standing army. Two thousand of these remained with himself in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and 1,000 with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin, a few miles off; the rest

[1] 1 Sam. xvii. 4, 8, 41; xxi. 9; xxii. 10.
[2] 1 Sam. xxxi. 3.
[3] Literally Cherethites.
[4] 1 Sam. xvii. 1; xxix. 1.
[5] 1 Chron. xviii. 17. 2 Sam. viii. 18; xv. 18; xx. 7, 23. 1 Kings i. 38, 44. On the subject of the Philistines, see Hitzig, *Urgeschichte*, *passim*. Kneucker, in *Bib. Lex.*, vol. iv. pp. 541-559. Riehm. Winer. Herzog, etc.

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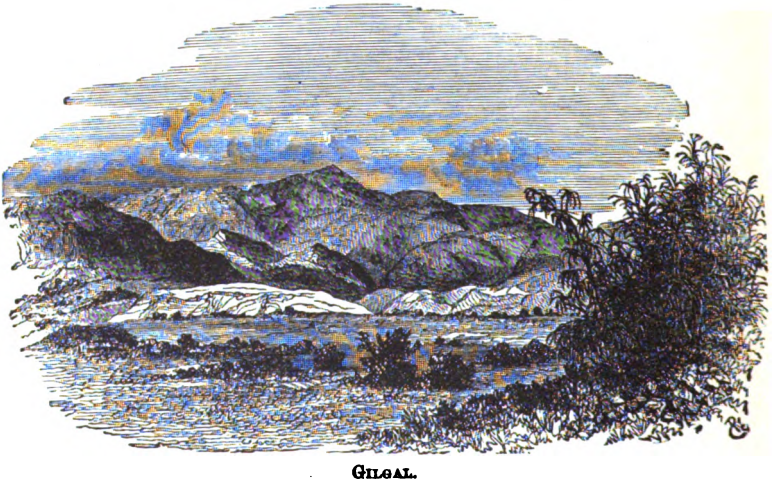
of the people having been sent home. Hostilities began by Jonathan overpowering the Philistine tribute collector,[1] at Geba, with the military post under his command—an act of daring soon known far and near in the Philistine country. The signal thus given, Saul forthwith proclaimed an insurrection, sounding the war horns through all Israel,[2] and summoning a general muster of the people at Gilgal. But



GILGAL.

North-west view over the plain of Jericho. Major Conder, R. E.

the Philistines on their side were not inactive. Three thousand chariots,[3] 6,000 cavalry, and a great force of infantry toiled up from the lowlands and crowded the passes of Benjamin. The excitement amongst the Hebrews was terrible. The braver hearts hastened to the rendezvous at Gilgal, the town farthest from the dreaded foe. The

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 4, for "garrison," read as in text. Ewald and Graetz.

[2] 1 Sam. xiii. 3. Septuagint.

[3] Peshito Version. The Hebrew number, 30,000, seems an error of copyists. "Perhaps the number ought to be 1,000." Maclear.

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less resolute fled beyond the Jordan, or hid in the caves of the limestone hills around, or in their clefts, or in the numerous grain pits, and dry cisterns,[1] the whole country abounding even now in ancient underground covered magazines and water-cisterns of great size, shaped like huge bottles, carefully excavated in the everywhere present limestone, and cemented so as to be water-tight. At Gerar I counted nearly twenty of these from one point.

Meanwhile, Samuel had directed Saul to wait for him seven days at Gilgal; for, though nominally king, it was a condition of his rule that he acted only as the prophet instructed him.[2] Under the strange theocratic constitution enforced by Samuel, he was in fact only a puppet, moved by the prophet as he chose, and forbidden to act in anything as a free agent. The only counterpart to such a state of things in modern times, was the titular rule of the Mikado, in Japan, side by side with the real emperor, the Tycoon; the one a shadow king, the other the actual sovereign power. In antiquity, strange to say, we find a parallel to Saul and Samuel among the Getæ of the century before Christ. In their wild home north and south of the Danube, that people were ruled by a chief who acted only as the servant of a holy man, without whom he was not allowed to act in anything whatever. Still stranger, the result of this extraordinary custom was the same as followed the rule of Samuel in Israel. From the lowest weakness and moral degeneracy the Getæ roused themselves under the leading of the holy man and the phantom king to a thorough and lasting reformation. Indeed, they so turned themselves to a nobler life that their national vigour shewed itself in a puritanical strictness and steadfast bravery, which carried their

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 6.

[2] 1 Sam. vii. 15; x. 8; xiii. 8, 11.

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banners far and wide over new territories, till their kingdom was indefinitely extended.[1] Once recognized, such a complete subordination to the representative of the theocracy as was demanded from Saul might become more easy to be borne, but in its early years the strong, valiant warrior must have been sorely tried by finding himself king in name, but in fact absolutely subordinate in the most minute detail to the command of Samuel. The days at Gilgal spent in waiting the seer's orders must have been trying in the extreme, when an eager spirit longed for action, but the monotony was probably broken by members of the school of the prophets at Jericho, close by, rousing their brethren to courage and devotion in the great struggle before them, by their recitals of national hymns and psalms, to the sound of their music,[2] as is still usual, more or less, in the armies of Islam.

A part of the Philistine army of invasion had now reached Michmash, the present Mukhmas, the farthest point of their occupation to the east; a spot about seven miles north of Jebus, now Jerusalem, on the northern edge of the important Wady Suweinit—"the valley of the little thorn, or acacia"—which forms the main line of communication between the sea-coast plain and the Jordan valley, and at Michmash is not unlike the dry bed of a stream. It runs through the very centre of the territory of Benjamin, contracting to a narrow fissure of rough lime cliffs, not very high,

[1] Mommsen's *Geschichte Rom.*, iii. 289.

[2] The instruments mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 5, as played by the prophets, are: 1. The Nebel—translated in our version "psaltery;" in Amos v. 23, "viol;" in the Prayer Book version of the Psalms, "lute." It was in fact a guitar with from six to twelve strings. 2. The Toph, or "tabret," was a tambourine, with pieces of metal in the hoop round it to make a jingling sound. 3. The Chalil, or "pipe," a single or double flageolet of simple construction, often played to the accompaniment of the tambourine. 4. The Kinnor, or "harp," needs no explanation. There were small harps, played while the performer was walking or in motion; others, larger, were played as with us. The smaller harp had, apparently, ten strings. Ps. xxxiii. 2. Jos., *Ant.*, VII. xii. 3.

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about a mile before we reach Mukhmas. Thence, down to the plain of the Jordan, behind the modern Jericho, it runs as a narrow sunken pass known at its lower end as the Wady Kelt. The sides of this part of the wady form walls or slopes of rough limestone, sometimes eight hundred feet high, in some places so close as to afford passage to only a small body of men abreast. The whole gorge is about twelve miles long, as it winds and wheels, serpent-like, but in that distance it sinks more than two thousand four hundred feet, for Mukhmas is two thousand and forty feet above the sea, and the Jordan plains at Jericho are about four hundred feet below the sea level. Opposite the village of Michmash on its southern side lay Geba; Bethel rose about four miles to the north, over successive hills; and Ramah and Gibeah were on the south, at short distances behind Geba. The part at which the Philistines had established themselves, consisted, Josephus tells us, of a steep bank with three tops, ending in a long sharp tongue, and protected by surrounding walls of rock believed to be unscalable.[1] Fortunately, the spot may be easily identified. Exactly such a natural stronghold exists immediately east of the present village of Mukhmas, and is still called the "fortress" by the peasantry. It is a ridge forming three knolls rising above a perpendicular crag of no great height, and ending in a narrow tongue to the east, with steep limestone banks below. Opposite this fastness, on the south, there is a crag of equal height, seemingly too steep to climb; the two forming "a sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other." Of these the one on the south is called Seneh—"the acacia"—in the Bible, and, as has been said, this name is still given in a modern form to the whole valley. That on the north

[1] Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, V. ii. 1; *Ant.*, VI. vi. 2.

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is called Bozeh, or "shining," a name very apt, as its chalky strata lie almost all day in the full light of an Eastern sun, while the other side of the ravine is as constantly in the shade. The country round is gray and stony, but not more so than the whole of Palestine, so far south, and the stoniness does not mean sterility. The village lies on a broad slope which grows excellent barley, fields of which were springing into stalk when I was there. A brook runs down the valley, north of the pass, with a number of not very large oaks, rich in mistletoe, dotting the slopes on both sides.

Fertility, in Palestine, is, of course, only a comparative term, for rocks and stones are everywhere only too plentiful, but while the pass itself is cold and desolate, the country on both sides is as good as most of southern Canaan. The rounded hills, which are in every direction like long, low gray waves, are evidently capable of terrace cultivation, which would amply repay the labour it involved, while stretches of better soil, at times forming thin pasture, vary the landscape as one rides on. Michmash is a very poor village, but its houses shew great dressed stones as lintels and doorposts, and some are built of squared stones, the wreck of former grandeur. Old pillars of some temple or public building lie about, and at one place there is a carved head of a freestone column, which must have been brought from a distance. I bought a small bronze statuette of Diana with the quivers, picked up near the village by a peasant while ploughing. On the south side of the gorge one can make his way down from the top, but to climb the north side—Bozeh, "the shining," is very difficult and might be thought by the Philistines impossible.

While the Philistines were gathering at Michmash, Saul remained at Gilgal, in eager impatience for the arrival of

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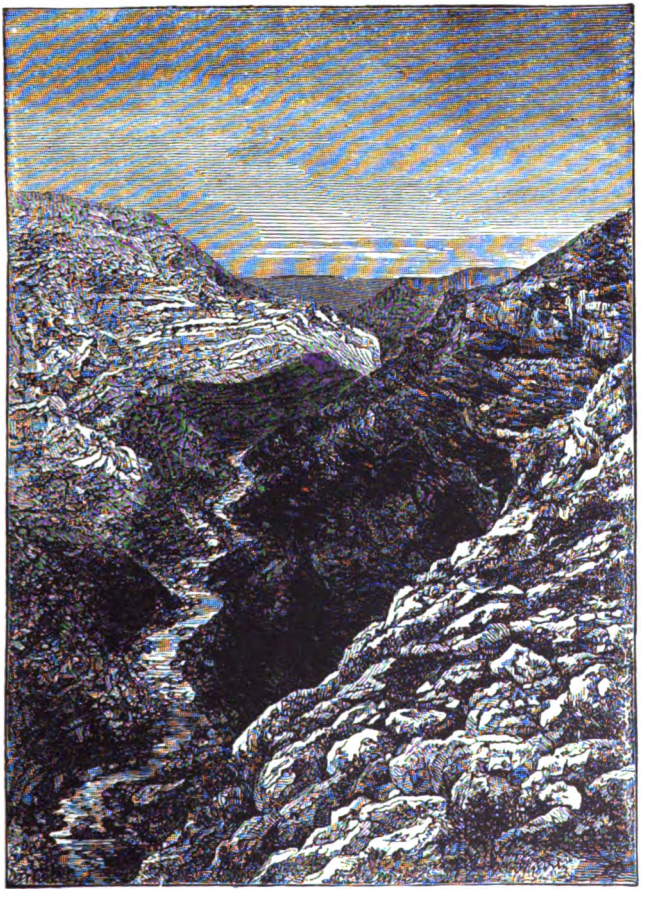
Samuel to give a religious sanction to the war. But day after day passed and he did not appear, and every hour lost



VALLEY OF MICHMASH, LOOKING EAST.
From a photograph by Col. Kitchener, R.E.

seemed to endanger the result of the levy of the tribes. It

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was to be dreaded that the Philistines would descend into the Jordan valley and attack the almost unarmed Hebrews, who, moreover, were rapidly deserting. Many had already returned home, perhaps in alarm, and it looked as if all would ere long do so. To faith like that of Gideon this would have been indifferent, but Saul had no such support, and was greatly distressed. At last, on the seventh day, to the close of which he should have waited, he determined himself to offer the sacrifices necessary before taking the field,[1] though Samuel, as the representative of Jehovah, had required him to await his coming that they might be offered by him. But while he was still beside the altar, Samuel appeared. It was no offence that he had offered sacrifices, for Solomon afterwards did so. And Samuel, who often sacrificed, was no more a priest than Saul. But he had followed his own will, instead of passively obeying that of the prophet who represented God, the true King. The offence thus involved the whole principle of the absolute subordination of the theocratic king to the prophet as the representative of Jehovah. No excuses of Saul availed. It was a question not of detail but of principle. He had acted as if independent, instead of bearing himself humbly, and in absolute obedience to Samuel. To use the prophet's words at a later time, he had fancied that "sacrifice was more than obedience, and the fat of rams more than hearkening to God's word."[2] He had broken the fundamental law by which he held his high office. It was impossible that his kingdom should continue. To his dismay, Samuel, as the representative of God, announced that he could no longer recognize him, and returned at once from Gilgal to Gibeah.

[1] 1 Kings viii. 62-63. 2 Chron. vii. 4. cc. [2] 1 Sam. xv. 22.

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CHAPTER V.

THE REJECTED OF GOD.

At once distressed and openly discredited before his people by Samuel's retirement from Gilgal, Saul made his way by some roundabout track to Gibeah,[1] where he pitched his tent under a pomegranate tree, by "the precipice,"[2] with the remnant of his force. It numbered only 600 men, but these were necessarily the bravest.[3] So small a band, however, seemed incapable of opposing the strong Philistine army, though the remembrance of Gideon's story might have cheered both them and their leaders. But Saul and Jonathan, for the time at least, forgot this. There seemed no hope for their country, and the thought filled them with the bitterest dejection, which expressed itself with true Oriental sensibility in loud weeping.[4] They alone had swords; their followers had only such rude weapons as clubs and goads.[5] Worst of all, Samuel's leaving had deprived them of the means of consulting God, a step without which nothing important was done in antiquity, either in

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 15. Septuagint. [2] 1 Sam. xiv. 2. Migron = the precipice.

[3] The Septuagint (1 Sam. xiii. 15) adds, "and the rest of the people went up to battle after the men of war," as if there had been 600 fighting men, and a crowd of volunteers behind.

[4] 1 Sam. xiii. 16. Septuagint. Jos., *Ant.*, VI. vi. 2.

The *Septuagint* reads: "And all Israel went down to the land of the Philistines, to forge every one his reaping hook and his tool, and every one his axe and his sickle. And it was near the time of vintage, and their tools were valued at three shekels for a ploughshare, and there was the same rate for the axe and sickle." Septuagint. 1 Sam. xiii. 20-21.

[5] Necessarily so, from the general disarming.

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peace or war. As the only course open in such circumstances, therefore, he sent to Nob, a priest's town within sight of Jerusalem, of which, however, even the site was unknown as early as the time of St. Jerome, for the priest Ahitub, the grandson of Eli, who had the high-priestly ephod, and could thus give the oracles desired.

But these dark hours of the infant monarchy were about to close. Geba lay on the other side of the pass of Michmash, at hardly an hour's distance, but the steepness of the rocks made access from one to the other impossible for any organized force, except by a long circuit. Broad at its eastern part, the wady here, as has been said, contracts to hardly ten paces across, and is hemmed in by perpendicular walls of rock. Precisely at this spot Jonathan undertook one day to climb up, on the Philistine side, and his armour-bearer followed him. A single false step would have hurled them to instant death, but by skill they succeeded in reaching in safety a point from which they were seen by the enemy's post. Astonished at their appearance in a spot thought inaccessible from below, the guard, though fancying they might be only the first of a number, treated the matter lightly. "Look here," cried one to the other, "the Hebrews are creeping out of the holes where they have been hiding themselves!" Then, mocking the climbers, they asked them: "Come up, won't you? We should like to make your acquaintance!"[1] It had, however, been agreed between Jonathan and his armour-bearer, that such a call on the part of the Philistines should be accepted as a sign to go to the top and attack them boldly. Once there, the mocking soon ceased, for in a few moments twenty men had fallen before the arrows of the two assailants, who followed

[1] This is the meaning of these words. See Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 98.

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up their first onset by hurling a shower of stones at their foe, and plying their slings against them ; weapons terrible in Benjamite hands. The post yielding before such a fierce assault, Jonathan and his companion pressed on, keeping up a keen fire of stones.[1] Confounded at an attack where they seemed most secure, and not knowing how many might be climbing up after the first two, the Philistines fell into wild confusion, each thinking his neighbour an enemy, and at last broke into flight, the panic spreading from the outpost to the whole host. The very earth seemed to tremble, or really did so at the moment,[2] as the multitude, with huge clamour, swayed hither and thither in its terror.[3] Meanwhile, Saul, from his look-out on the height of Gibeah, no sooner saw the confusion and wild tumult, among the enemy across the ravine, than he hastened to Michmash with his 600 men, and completed the defeat ; the Hebrews who had been drafted into the Philistine army, passing over to the side of their brethren, in the midst of the battle. Those, moreover, who till now had hidden in the clefts and caves of the hills, emboldened by the flight of their foe, eagerly joined the assailants, so that the band of Saul, which at first had been only 600, speedily rose to 10,000. Every town, besides, through which the fugitives passed, rose in their rear and helped to destroy them, Saul's troops, also, tired as they were, pressing on in their track, by Bethaven, east of Bethel, over hill and valley, more than twenty miles,

[1] 1 Sam. xiv. 14. Septuagint. The words are, "with arrows, throwing stones, and pebbles of the ground (from their slings)."

[2] "Perhaps only the tumult and confusion of the Philistine host is meant." Kirkpatrick. See chap. iv. 5.

[3] 1 Sam. xiv. 15. In 1 Sam. xiv. 18, the words, "Bring hither the Ark of God," with those that follow, seem hardly so likely to be the correct sense of the text given by the Greek Bible. "And Saul said to Ahia, Bring hither the ephod : for he bore the ephod at that time, before the children of Israel."

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to Ajalon, a place on the north side of the Joppa road, thirteen miles from Jerusalem, among the hills, and giving them no opportunity to rally.

Further pursuit, which would have secured their utter destruction, was checked by an apparently trivial accident, which, however, had momentous results. "Saul," says the Greek Bible, "committed a great error that day." With the inconsiderate rashness which was one of his defects, he had enjoined his men to taste nothing during the pursuit, and had added a curse on any one who should break the order. But Jonathan, ever among the foremost, knew nothing of this, and feeling exhausted, dipped the end of the spear or lance[1] in his hand, into one of the honeycombs in the hollow trees of a wood, through which they were passing, and took some honey.[2] Told of his father's command, he at once expressed his regret at it, as a hindrance to the complete success of the day. Meanwhile the whole host followed his example of seeking some refreshment. Utterly worn out when they reached Ajalon—"the haunt of gazelles"—on the hill-side, above a broad rich valley, stretching down to the lowlands, they rushed on the sheep, oxen, and calves, in the spoil, and, in their fierce hunger, would not wait till the blood was drained from the carcasses, but ate it with the flesh. This, at least, was a distinct sin, demanding instant prohibition. A great stone was therefore rolled before Saul, and a command sent out that all oxen and sheep should be brought to it and slain there,[3] that

[1] Gesenius.

[2] Tristram's *Natural History of Bible*, p. 322. Bees in the East, are not, as in England, kept in hives. They are left wild. In India the forests literally flow with honey. Large combs may be seen on the trees, dropping with it.

[3] The great stone was an extemporized altar; the blood was an offering to Jehovah. The idea of a single central sanctuary had not as yet risen. 1 Sam. xiv. 34, 35 See Wellhausen, *Geschichte Israels*, vol. i. p. 18.

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the blood, which in all cases was sacred to God, might properly drain away. This flagrant transgression of a law generally observed with an almost superstitious reverence, threw Saul into great distress. Ever eager to observe the Law exactly in its letter, but now much more so, to vindicate himself from blame in connection with Samuel having left him, he fancied that pouring out the blood on his rude altar would secure forgiveness for the sin committed. Night having come, and Saul having asked Ahitub, the priest,[1] whom he always kept at his side, whether he should continue the pursuit, no answer was vouchsafed by the oracle of the Urim and Thummim which he wore, with his ephod, when thus officially consulted. This was enough to rouse the superstitious mind of Saul. Some one, he felt sure, had disobeyed him, and he must put him to death, whoever he might be, in fulfilment of his oath. Eager to shew his zeal for religion, as he in his wild way understood it, he instantly demanded the name of the first offender, but no one would betray Jonathan. Determined to find out, he now resolved to appeal to the sacred ordeal of the lot. Taking Jonathan beside him, apart from the multitude, he cried aloud, as we learn from the Greek Bible, "O Lord God of Israel, wherefore hast Thou not answered Thy servant this day? If the iniquity be in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord God of Israel, give Urim; and if it be in Thy people Israel, give, I pray Thee, Thummim,"[2] which would seem to imply that the decision of the Urim and Thummim was obtained by some form of casting lots. The high-priestly oracle thus invoked, Saul and Jonathan were taken,

[1] The Septuagint reads, 1 Sam. xiv. 18: "And Saul said to Ahia, Bring hither the ephod: for he bore the ephod at that time, before the children of Israel."

[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 41. Wellhausen, Ewald, Thenius, and Kuenen thus translate the Septuagint and Vulgate.

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and then Jonathan alone. Left to himself, Saul would forthwith have put even his darling son to death, but for the determined interference of the multitude around, who rightly protected him, as the hero of a great deliverance vouchsafed by God. Saul had therefore to content himself with offering a sacrifice, probably a human one, with a prisoner for victim, in Jonathan's stead.[1]

Freed from destructive pursuit by this interruption, the remnant of the Philistines reached their cities humbled and enraged at their defeat, but determined ere long to wipe out the disgrace. The joy at so unexpected a victory, on the other hand, rekindled enthusiasm among the Hebrews. They could no longer be accused of cowardice, and once more had weapons with which they felt themselves able to fight, under a king so valiant and resolute as Saul had proved. Meanwhile, however, the rancour of the Philistines towards Israel was so intensified by what had happened that the Hebrews, we are told, were "had in abomination by their fierce enemy." It may be we have a hint of the special ground of such a feeling in the statement that Jonathan, in his sudden attack at Geba, destroyed a sacred emblem worshipped by the foe, for the word translated "garrison" is rendered "pillar," and may well have been a sacred stone or cippus, the desecration of which was as abhorrent to the Philistines as the mutilation of the Hermæ, in after ages, was to the Athenians.[2]

Two great military successes had now strengthened Saul's position, and made the people willing to submit to his rule. With such proofs of the value of national unity, they gladly supported him in the steps necessary to prevent

[1] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 51. Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 82.
[2] 1 Sam. xiii. 3-23; xiv. 1, 4, 6. Gen. xix. 26.

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the Philistines regaining the supremacy, though these involved a centralization of power very different from their ancient republican freedom. He had already gathered round him 3,000 men,[1] but they seem to have been volunteers, free to leave at pleasure. These were now, apparently, enrolled as a standing force; any strong or brave youths or men of whom he heard being constantly added to them.[2] There is no notice, however, of any posts being stationed where they would seem to have been most needed, at the mouths of the hill passes leading from the lowlands. Abner, Saul's cousin, who had contributed greatly to the victories of the past, was named to the command of the whole force.[3] A bodyguard was also formed,[4] some of whom, if not all, famous as running footmen, acted as the king's messengers. But they had other more disagreeable duties, for they were the king's executioners and police, as well as his couriers.[5] Over these was set Doeg, an Edomite by birth, who had probably passed into the service of Saul during some of his conflicts with Edom, and, having joined the community of Israel, was afterwards head of the royal herdsmen.[6] They were "the young men" in immediate attendance on the king, of whom David became afterwards the head. The fighting men, moreover, had a staff of officers, captains of thousands and of hundreds: many of them, doubtless, relatives and connections of Saul, or favoured personages attracted to the new royal centre of honour. To

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 2; xxiv. 2; xxvi. 2. 1 Chron. xii. 29.
[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 52. [3] 1 Sam. xiv. 50.
[4] 1 Sam. xvi. 15, 17; xxii. 14, 17. [5] 1 Sam. xxii. 17.
[6] 1 Sam. xxi. 7. Graetz reads: "The mightiest of Saul's runners, or couriers." The Septuagint says, "Who tended Saul's mules." David afterwards had chiefs of his camels, of his asses, and of his flocks. 1 Chron. xxvii. 30, 31. Dean Stanley compares Doeg to the Roman Comes-stabuli = constable. The word used is translated variously in our version, "footmen," "runners," "guards," "posts."

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Jonathan, Abner, and afterwards to David, however, was reserved the special favour of sitting at the king's table.[1]

The patriarchal simplicity of Samuel must have felt in these steady advances towards royal state, a foreboding of the results he had predicted, as entailed by the political revolution in which he had unwillingly played a chief part. He had, moreover, already been forced to the conclusion, from what had happened at Gilgal, that, in spite of his early hopes of him, Saul was not the man for a theocratic king. Yet, though forced to leave him, and thus publicly to disown him as such, he still clung fondly to the hope that he might yet retrace his steps. Another opportunity, at least, would be given him. The great Bedouin tribe of the Amalekites,[2] once masters of central Palestine, but long since driven out from it by the Hebrews, still continued their hereditary enemies. At Sinai, in the Wilderness wandering, and in the days of Gideon, they had harassed and troubled it, and now, in Saul's day, sorely harassed Judah and Simeon, in the south of the land. The sword

AN ARAB VILLAGE.
From *L'Egypte—État Modern.*

[1] 1 Sam. xx. 25.

[2] See vol. i. p. 301; vol. ii. pp. 290-91.

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of their chief, "Agag," "the Destroyer," had made women childless.[1] To leave him to plunder and slay their brethren, would have been unworthy of Saul and the other tribes. Judah, moreover, had only lately been won to a hearty union with the rest of the nation, and would give new life and vigour to the whole, if not weakened by an enemy.

Samuel, therefore, once more came to Saul, commanding him in the name of God, who had anointed him as king, to undertake a sacred war against Amalek, devoting it and all it had to destruction, as accursed. Nor did Saul for a moment hesitate. Summoning the muster of all Israel, including Judah, he marched at once to the distant southern districts. Warning the Kenites, a friendly Midianitish stock descended from Hobab, or Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and his clan, who were at peace with their warlike neighbours, to separate themselves from them, he lost no time in making his attack. True to Eastern tactics, he surprised Agag, now weakened by the loss of his Kenite allies,[2] took his city, which was near Carmel, the present Kŭrmĕl, south of Hebron,[3] and slew, or made prisoners of, the whole tribe, except a remnant, who succeeded in saving themselves by hasty flight.[4] Among other captives was Agag himself, and the victors, moreover, gathered a rich booty, taken by the Amalekites—Arab fashion—in their wide raids, from the trade caravans passing between the Euphrates and Egypt. Vast flocks of sheep and goats, and great herds of oxen and camels, fell into their hands. But, in obedience to Samuel's command, all this wealth was to be destroyed, as "devoted" to God, or accursed;[5] not even a trace of Amalek

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 33. [2] 1 Sam. xv. 5. [3] 1 Sam. xv. 7. [4] 1 Sam. xv. 8.

[5] The word used, "haram," is translated in our version "utterly destroy," "consecrate," "utterly to slay," "utterly to make away with," "to devote to the Lord,"

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being left. Once in their possession, however, the Hebrews were very loath to destroy such a proud and useful reward of their valour, and drove these off with them, on their return home. Unfortunately for himself, Saul, overawed, and afraid to oppose them, winked at this disobedience, thinking, perhaps, besides, that an addition of this kind to the general wealth was needed by the people, impoverished as they had been by the oppressive tyranny of the Philistines.

Such a victory over the renowned Amalekites raised equal pride in Israel and in Saul. Jabesh Gilead and Michmash were great deeds, but it was much more glorious to have crushed the terrible Agag. Led in chains, he was brought back with the army to grace its triumph. Saul's early humility gave place to haughty pride at the thought of such exploits. A memorial of these, raised in the oasis of Carmel, must commemorate his glory; most probably a stone tablet like that of Mesha, the king of Moab,[1] though Jerome fancied it was an arch of myrtles, palms, and olives. Meanwhile, a vision had warned Samuel that the king had not fully performed his commission, and was hence finally rejected by God. The prophet, we are told, was so wroth at Saul for this renewed offence that sleep forsook him. He glowed with indignation, says the Hebrew. Intensely op-

Lev. xxvii. 28. "Devoted by men," Lev. xxvii. 29. "To forfeit," Ezra x. 8. A thing "consecrated" or "devoted" to God, could not be put to any use, and hence the consecration implied, in effect, destruction. The noun hārem, therefore, means a thing "devoted," "cursed," and in 1 Sam. xv. 21 is paraphrased "things which should have been utterly destroyed." In 1 Kings xx. 42, it is translated "whom I appointed to utter destruction."

[1] It is called "Yad," a hand. Graetz thinks it was a rock hewn into the shape of a finger-post, without writing on it. *Geschichte*, vol. i p. 186. In 2 Sam. xviii. 18, it is translated "pillar," and refers to the memorial of himself raised by Absalom. In Isa. lvi. 5, the word "place" is literally "hand." In Persia the domes of mosques are often surmounted by the figure of an outspread hand. Some Roman standards had the same ornament on the top of the staff, perhaps as a symbol of strength and power. That it was something like the Moabite Stone is the shrewd conjecture of Vigouroux, vol. iii. p. 248.

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posed to monarchical government, he could tolerate it only if the ruler was content to be entirely subordinate to himself. Judge and virtual king till Saul was elected, he must remain actual king to the end. Perhaps his "cry to God" was that an office so hateful to him should be abolished. With the morning light, he went out to meet Saul; but hearing on the way of his erection of the memorial to his own glory, instead of humbly acknowledging that the victory was from God, he turned aside and went to Gilgal. Thither, therefore, the king followed him, with his force.

As if nothing had happened amiss, Saul, on reaching Gilgal, made his way to the prophet, confidently telling him "he had fulfilled his commands." Doubtless he thought he had done so, for the necessity of his having no liberty even in details, was a thing he did not comprehend. "What then means the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen that I hear?" answered Samuel, pressing him hard. The Greek Bible adds, that as Samuel met him, "behold, he was offering the first-fruits of the spoil which he had brought from the Amalekites, as a burnt offering to the Lord,"[1] and this coloured his reply. "The people had spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to Jehovah, and the rest had been utterly destroyed." But literal obedience to the command of Samuel, which was imperative, had been neglected. Of this Samuel the prophet forthwith reminded him. Was not he, once so obscure, but now the anointed head of the tribes of Israel, the people of God, bound by covenant to obey God in all things? To seize the spoil and to spare Agag was to disobey. Explanation was vain. "Has God," said Samuel, "as much pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obedience? You say that the people have

[1] Sam. xv. 15.

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kept alive part of the spoil to sacrifice to God at Gilgal (the sacred stone circle in the neighbourhood of Jericho, then the headquarters of Jewish worship). Has Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken (to the Divine voice) than the fat of rams (offered on the altar). For (such) rebellion (as thine, in not passively carrying out my commands as the mouthpiece of God) is as (bad as) the sin of divination (that is, seeking revelations through incantations to the dead, or from the flight of arrows or the motions of entrails, and other heathen ways), and stubbornness (the following of one's own will rather than God's will in any particular) is as the worship of (public) idols, or of teraphim (or household idols)." Then came the terrible sentence, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected thee from being king over Israel." In vain the humbled king at last pleaded the simple truth—that he had been afraid of the people—and begged the prophet to turn back with him to the altar, that he might cast himself down before it and crave forgiveness.[1]

The hour was past for yielding. Samuel would not go back, but turned to leave. Still more terrified, Saul now clutched his mantle, to hold him, if it might be; but it rent in his hands. "So," said Samuel, stopping a moment, "has God rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou! And even should Israel itself be torn in two as a consequence of this, the Strength of Israel will neither lie nor repent, for He is not a man to change His mind."[2] "Honour me at least before the elders of my tribe and of Israel, and turn

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 25. [2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 187. 1 Sam. xv. 27, 28.

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back," groaned the king, as his only remaining entreaty—and Samuel gave way so far as to go to the altar, and let Saul humble himself before God, at its foot. But the prophet, though tender where free to be so, was stern and unbending in his fidelity to the command he had been divinely directed to lay on Saul. Ordering the king of the Amalekites to be brought, Agag was led to his presence in chains, crying in unmanly grief, as he came, "Oh, how bitter, bitter is death!"[1] But the only answer of Samuel was, that as women had been made childless by his sword, his mother should now be made sad as they, and he forthwith ordered him to be cut in pieces.

After that day the prophet and Saul never met again. Samuel returned to his home at Ramah; the king to his at Gibeah. It was the crisis in his life. His pride had been humbled; his victory changed to a defeat. The words of Samuel rang in his ears, that he was forsaken by God; that the kingdom would pass from his house, and, above all, that it would be given to a better than himself. If so, that rival must be now alive and would presently be anointed, to replace him. Much as he had shrunk from assuming power, he eagerly clung to it now he possessed it. Nor could he revenge himself on Samuel. Lowered in the eyes of his people, he yet dared not touch the prophet, if he would. To do so would rouse the whole people at once. His dreaded rival was unknown to him; any one round him might be he. Besides, even if he could rid himself of both prophet and rival, the curse of God was beyond his power to avert. The seeds of a brooding melancholy and wild jealousy, that soon passed into outbursts of madness, had been sown in his heart.

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 187, after Septuagint and Syriac.

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To distract his mind he threw himself into warlike excitements. There were enemies on every side. Raids were therefore undertaken against the Moabites, Ammonites, and other peoples;[1] in every case successfully.[2] Nothing seemed more likely to keep back the curse which he dreaded, than the popularity gained by warlike fame. A rival would find it harder to oppose one so much in credit with the nation.

In his desperation he thought of a last way to secure, perhaps, a return of God's favour, and thus regain his lost position. If he had fallen by neglecting to carry out one Divine command to the letter, he would shew his repentance by a harsh execution of what had been required by the Law, in other directions. Samuel had traced the decline of Israel to their adoption of Canaanite manners and religion, and there were still some settlements of the old population in the midst of the tribes. He—Saul—would now shew his zeal for the national purity,[3] by carrying out the command[4] to smite and destroy all these remnants. This he presently did; even the Gibeonites, who had voluntarily submitted to Joshua and had had their lives secured by an oath, being nearly exterminated,[5] and their town, Gibeon, apparently seized and given to Saul's relations.[6] With the Canaanites were also included in this fierce proscription, all who followed the secret magic arts of heathenism.[7] The Law commanded that all who had a familiar spirit, and all wizards, should be stoned,[8] and he would honour it. There was certainly need of reformation in regard to such unholy practices, for no fewer than eight kinds of magic are mentioned as

[1] The Septuagint adds "and against the house of Hazor," that is, against Syria. But this is doubtful, though Ewald accepts it.
[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 47. [3] 2 Sam. xxi. 2.
[4] Deut. vii. 2, 24. [5] 2 Sam. xxi. 1-6.
[6] 1 Chron. viii. 29-40, ix. 35-44. [7] 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 9. [8] Lev. xx. 27.

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having been in use. "Diviners," wrought by secret spells; enchanters used incantations; there were vendors of charms and amulets; a special class invoked familiar spirits—that is, spirits over whom they had power; wizards, or wise-men, followed other branches of the black art, and necromancers consulted the dead.[1] Superstition was rampant in all classes, from the king to the peasant: a state of things which must be remembered in our estimate of Saul. Yet he had received no personal command to assail either the helpless Canaanite population, or the dealers in magic spells and incantations, and acted solely on his own authority in this crusade against them. His own will or caprice was in this case, as in others, his law. Even his zeal, moreover, shewed his crude and gross ideas. Fanatical as to rites and the letter of the Law; the higher devotion of the spirit, which is the spring of loving trust, holy life, and cheerful acquiescence in the will of God, was strange to him. Required to ignore his own personality, and act only as the servant of God, he constantly let his self-will prevail, and acted, more or less, as if, like the kings around, he were free to do as he chose. He fancied, however, that blind passionate zeal would neutralize Samuel's reproaches of his having forsaken "the ways of God;" though while he was hunting out wizards from the land he himself still cherished a lingering faith in their arts. To crown all, altars built by him, rose at various places.[2] Who could be more zealous for Jehovah than he!

While thus eager to shew himself an enthusiastic reformer, and strict enforcer of the Law, he was equally bent on surrounding his kingly office with the pomp and circumstance

[1] *Dict. of Bible*, art. "Magic."
[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 35.

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which awe the multitude. He assumed a royal turban,[1] which he did not lay aside even in battle.[2] Once the modest tiller of his father's land, those who approached him must now prostrate themselves at his feet.[3] He must also, like other kings, have a harem. He had married his first wife, Ahinoam, while he was still an obscure youth. He now took several others; among them the fair and clever Rizpah.[4] Nor is it without significance, as marking his confused and vague religious ideas, that while the names of some of his sons were Abiel, "El is my Father;" Jehiel, "may El triumph;" Malchishua, "my king (God) is (my) help," and Meribbaal, "he who contends with Baal," known also as Mephibosheth, "he who treats contemptuously the idols;"[5] the name of one was Eshbaal, "Baal's man."

The court was made as splendid as possible. The booty from the various wars, especially from the campaign against Amalek, had brought wealth into the land. Prosperity, moreover, gradually returned, with union and a strong government, and the daughters of Israel could, after a time, boast of wearing the fine white linen of Egypt, adorned with purple stripes and ornaments of gold.[6] Saul's own daughters, indeed, wore the trailing purple-blue robes of princesses.[7]

But peace could not last while the Philistines had their defeat to avenge, and it was on the breaking out of a new war that Saul first met his future successor, David; henceforth, in his belief, the very rival he dreaded. From this time till his last fatal battle, Saul's story is that of a man struggling with ever-darkening shadows of madness and

[1] Apparently ornamented with precious stones. Zech. ix. 16.
[2] 2 Sam. i. 10.
[3] 1 Sam. xxiv. 8.
[4] 2 Sam. iii. 7; xii. 8; xxi. 8.
[5] Mühlau und Volck, p. 496.
[6] 2 Sam. i. 24. Graetz, vol. i. p. 122.
[7] 2 Sam. xiii. 18.

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jealous despair, and giving way to paroxysms of fury and despotism. So haunted was he, indeed, by his dread of David, and so inextricably are the lives of the two from this period joined, that the details will be better treated hereafter.

Many years had passed since the defeat of Goliath at Ephes-dammim, when a new invasion of the Philistines again roused the tribes. This time its scene was the great Plain of Esdraelon, through which ran the caravan route from Asia, of which the invaders wished to have the control. Their army had reached the plain by the sea-coast road, as best suited for chariots and cavalry, and had encamped at its eastern end, not far from Shunem, where Gideon, long before, had fought the Midianite host. It is now known as Solam, a poor hamlet of rough, flat-roofed stone huts, with some fruit trees beside it, lying about two hundred feet above the plain below, opposite Mount Tabor, which leaves a broad strip of level land between its foot and the hills of Gilboa. It was the centre of the Philistine position, Saul lying about two miles off, to the south, with his face northwards, towards the enemy. Hastily levying the tribes, Saul at once marched north, and, after encamping for a time at the foot of Mount Gilboa, moved to the north side of the hills near Endor, where the Philistine chariots had less room to deploy. This place is now a hamlet, between two and three miles beyond Shunem, at the foot of the hills, on the north side. Its mud hovels cling to the bare and stony hillside, which shews caves dug in recent times for lime to make mortar. It is marked by the permanent spring, Ain Dor—"the fountain of Dor"—from which the place gets its name, flowing out of it. It lies exactly opposite the top of Mount Tabor, from which one looks down on Shunem, Endor,

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Nain, and other famous spots, to south of it, across a lovely green plain. Brave as he was by nature, the sight of the vast force of horse and foot in full armour, arrayed against him—to be opposed only by the spears and slings of Israel—shook Saul's resolution and courage. His manhood, indeed, was already unstrung by long mental disease. He was in the awful position, as it seemed in antiquity, of being unable to consult either priest or prophet, for he had massacred the priests at Nob; Abiathar alone escaping. From him, a fugitive, under the hated protection of David, he could not inquire or hope for an oracle. He had driven away Samuel by his disregard of his obligation as a theocratic king. Heaven, as it seemed, was thus shut against him.[1] For years it had been ever clearer that the doom pronounced on him had been inevitable, and now, perhaps, he felt this. To begin a battle without Divine omens or counsel was enough of itself to unman him, for even the heathen around would not fight, till they had learned that they had their gods on their side. In his agony he tried to bring on dreams in his sleep, hoping thus, at least, to get revelations. But even these were refused him. Rather than want any voice from above, therefore, he turned to the very arts whose professors he had once so ruthlessly driven from the land. An old woman, a sorceress, still lingered at Endor, for where there is superstition it will find agents to turn it to profit. Seeking her, in deep disguise, by night,[2] he begged she would invoke the spirit of Samuel, who had died shortly before. Conjurations and mutterings followed, to bring some apparent phantom before him whom she might pronounce to be Samuel, but both she and Saul were

[1] Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 82. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1858, p. 46.
[2] He had to steal past the Philistines to reach her.

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appalled by the result. What she could never, herself, have done, was divinely vouchsafed. An apparition, we are told, suddenly rose before them, which Saul and the woman recognized at once, by its mantle, as Samuel. But it came with no words of comfort or hope. The doom, long before uttered at Gilgal, was once more announced, with the addition that God had indeed forsaken him and chosen David in his place, and that to-morrow, he and his sons would be in the regions of the dead, with the shade that addressed him. Unnerved by the sight and the awful words, Saul, weak with watching and fasting all the day before, and through the night, in the hope of a vision, was too faint to make his way back to the camp, till he had forced himself to take food. Then, at last, he and his attendants rejoined his army.

With a leader paralyzed by such forebodings, victory could not be expected. The ground, moreover, was as favourable to the Philistines as it was the reverse to the Hebrews. Green plains led to the slopes of Gilboa, swelling after a time into heights rising bare and stony. Behind these, the many summits of the hills shot up abruptly 500 or 600 feet, bleak, white, and barren; their only growths, spots of scrub oak and the mountain thorns and flowers, never wanting, in spring at least, in Palestine.

The attack began the next morning, and the Hebrews fought bravely all day.[1] But they could not withstand the chariots, cavalry, and heavily mailed troops of the Philistines. Driven back to Gilboa, they were pursued up the sides of the hills and utterly routed. Three sons of Saul—the darling Jonathan, with Abinadab,[2] and Malchishua—were slain in the field. Saul, still wearing his turban and

[1] Sam. xxxi. 1, ff. [2] "My father is noble."

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royal bracelet, at last found himself alone with his armour-bearer, as the Philistine bowmen pressed closer and closer; his shield cast away in his flight, but his spear still in his hand. He would not flee, and he could not let himself be taken, for a shameful death would follow. Leaning heavily therefore on his spear,[1] "trembling sore because of the archers,"[2] by whom he had been perhaps wounded, he was hotly pursued[3] by the Philistine chariots and horse; and feeling escape impossible, he called on his armour-bearer to kill him. On his refusing to do so, Saul fell on his own sword, and, as he was sinking into the darkness of death[4] but still conscious, a wild Amalekite, the deadly enemy of Israel, wandering over the field in hope of spoil, "stood on him"—as alleged, at his own request—and gave him a final stab. It may be, however, that this was a mere invention, for the sacred narrative tells us that he died by his own act, and that his armour-bearer, seeing him dead, also killed himself.[5]

The defeat was terrible. The flower of the youth of Israel and the whole of the king's bodyguard[6] lay on the

[1] 2 Sam. i. 6.

[2] Gesenius, Bertheau, and others (1 Sam. xxxi. 3).

[3] For "hit," Wellhausen and Keil read "found."

[4] Septuagint, "deep darkness is on me." The German version translates the passage, "because I am beset" (by the enemy) or "in distress." Dr. Sachs, in Zunz's *Bibel*, says, "cramp has seized me," that is, convulsions. So Ewald, Thenius, and Keil. De Wette says "anguish," "the pangs of death," but quotes others, who render the word "I am wounded," etc., etc. Mülhau und Volck, "faintness." 2 Sam. i. 9. The word Shabatz, "anguish," comes from the "being pent up," "clasped tightly," as in the case of a jewel by its setting. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1834, p. 673. The margin reads, "my coat of mail or my embroidered coat hindereth me, that my," etc. The translation "sore wounded" is doubtful.

[5] The Amalekite says that the chariots and horsemen pursued Saul closely; but if he were on the hill, they could hardly do so. 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, says the archers pursued him. Was the story of the Arab a mere invention, to get a reward for the good news?

[6] Weiss and Erdmann thus understand the words, xxxi. 6, "all his men."

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slopes of Gilboa and at its foot. Resting through the night, after the toil of the battle, the Philistines, on the morrow, while stripping the dead, found the bodies of Saul and of his three sons. Saul's head and his weapons were forthwith taken as trophies and sent to Philistia, where the skull was hung up in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod ;[1] his arms, spear, and sword, with the bow of Jonathan, being sent round the Philistine cities, and at last laid up in the temple of Astarte, at the Canaanite city of Bethshean, in the sunken oasis hard by Gilboa. There, also, the conquerors nailed up the stripped and headless corpse of Saul and that of Jonathan. All the Hebrew towns round Esdraelon and in its neighbourhood had been deserted by their population at once, after the battle, and occupied by the Philistines, who now held the entire length of the caravan route for which they had begun the war, and could give themselves up to rejoicing. The position of things was sad in the extreme for Israel. Bands of the enemy, following up their victory, marched south and west, and occupied all the important towns.[2] Approaching Gibeah, Saul's own mountain village, they spread a terror which brought with it another sad misfortune to the royal house. The nurse of the prince Mephibosheth, a boy of five, fleeing with him on her shoulder, in her wild haste stumbled, and let him fall on the rocks ; a disaster of which he bore the result in a lameness of both feet for life. Carried over the Jordan, he was finally en-

[1] Such decorations of temples were universal in antiquity. Virgil, describing that in which Latinus received the ambassadors of Æneas, says :

"Hung on the pillars all around appears
A row of trophies, helmets, shields, and spears,
And solid bars, and axes, keenly bright,
And naval beaks, and chariots seized in flight."

—*Æneid*, vii. 183.

[2] Graetz, p. 1, note 11.

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trusted to a chief of Gilead, bearing the famous name of Machir, and was brought up in his household.

Saul had reigned about twenty years.[1] At his accession only a small part of the land had been in foreign hands, the territory of Benjamin and Dan, and part of Ephraim and Judah. But the Philistines were masters of the whole country at his death. All resistance for a time ceased; one brave deed alone redeeming the picture of faint-heartedness. The men of Jabesh Gilead, across the Jordan, mindful of the deliverance of their town from Nahash, by Saul, crossed the river in the night, and having taken down his corpse and that of Jonathan from the wall of Bethshean, bore them safely off, and, after burning the flesh, to hide the mutilation already inflicted on the bodies, buried the bones, with seven days' lamentation, under a terebinth outside their home. Thus ended a reign which had dawned so brightly.

[1] Ewald says 27; Graetz, 12; Winer, 20; Dillmann, 20.

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CHAPTER VI.

DAVID.

THE action of Saul after the defeat of Amalek, had at last forced the unwelcome conclusion on Samuel, that, though once so promising, he had failed as a king. Unable to understand his position as subordinate to the prophet's speaking for God, he had proved himself unfit to advance the high aims designed for Israel, as a theocracy. Rising at a time of transition, when the old was passing away, and the new struggling into life; he had been rather a greater Jephthah or Samson than a king after God's own heart. Nor could any one easily have filled aright such a unique office, with no precedent to follow. Saul's only examples of authority, for hundreds of years back, in his own people, had been the Judges, and other nations had shewn him only Eastern despots, always consulting their priests and prophets, no doubt, but acting in the end as their own decisions prompted them. Anxious to fulfil the prophet's ideal, he had yet been unable to realize it to Samuel's satisfaction, and this we may well believe had been to the venerable seer an intense sorrow; in part for the sake of one on whom he had built such high hopes, and who had so many good qualities; but in part also from dread of his introducing despotic forms into Israel, subversive of popular liberty, and opposed to the theocratic constitution. Yet the character of this first Hebrew king is, in many respects, engag-

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ing. His story is clouded by no crime like that of David in connection with Uriah and Bathsheba, nor is there in his case any parallel to the fierce private revenge in David's threat to cut off the whole male dependents of Nabal for their master's churlish rudeness to himself and his band. The massacre of the priests at Nob had for its palliation, at least, that it was the act of a mind off its balance, and might have been regarded as a fit punishment of treason, as sheltering a supposed conspirator. At Gibeon, his diseased brain fancied he was serving God by his severity, and so with the sorcerers and enchanters whom he drove out of the land. It did not certainly shew moral turpitude that he did not wait till the seven days before Samuel's coming absolutely expired. At most, it was a disobedience to the strict letter of a command given by the prophet. In that sense only was it a moral offence. So with the slaughter of the Amalekites. His sparing any of the flocks or herds or the king, Agag, was non-compliance with the extreme entirety of Samuel's order, but it was not an offence like murder, or impurity, or anything we usually call moral guilt. Grand in his person, dignified in his bearing, upright in his life, modest in his greatness, bold and energetic in his action, able to forgive even the provocations of such an enemy as Agag, in the moment of victory, tender in his relations to his children, he wins our deep sympathy. His lofty office fills him with a new spirit and raises him to prophetic exaltation, and his action towards the agents of superstition, and even towards the Gibeonites, speaks of a strong desire to keep his people from injury by unholy or foreign elements. He does nothing without seeking to know God's will; every action of his public life opened and closed by sacrifice, and in order to keep his cath to God he is willing to put to

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death even his dearly loved Jonathan. In personal character he must be felt to stand far higher than David, but, unlike him, he never learned that he was appointed king only to carry out the will of Jehovah, the true King of Israel, as expressed through the prophet. Failure to realize this was the ruin of all else.

But the errors and defects of Saul secured the good fortune of his successor. But for the lessons of his fall there could never have been a David. How long it was after the Amalek campaign that Samuel's attention was directed to Bethlehem is not told; nor is it said how he first became acquainted with the future king; for the Divine command to anoint him does not exclude a previous knowledge of his opening character.

The family of Jesse had for centuries been famous in the little hill town, now to become illustrious as that of his favoured son. There he had had a family of eight sons and two daughters,[1] of whom David, the youngest son, appears to have been born about the year B.C. 1085.[2] The pedigree of the family reached back to the wilderness life of the nation, for Nahshon, one of its ancestors, had been head of the tribe of Judah in those days, and had led it on the march.[3] The rich Boaz, the sheik of Bethlehem, had in later generations once more brought its genealogy into

[1] In 2 Sam. xvii. 25, Amasa is said to be the son of Abigail, daughter of Nahash, and sister of Zeruiah. But, in 1 Chron. ii. 16, it is said that Zeruiah and Abigail were sisters of David, and of the other children of Jesse. The Rabbis explain this by saying that Nahash and Jesse are the same person. Dean Stanley supposes that the Nahash mentioned, was the king of the Ammonites, against whom Saul fought, and that Jesse married a woman who had been his wife or concubine, Abigail and Zeruiah being her children by Nahash. Sir G. Grove thinks that Nahash was not the name of Jesse, or a former husband of his wife, but of the wife herself. Steiner thinks Nahash may either have been a first husband of David's mother, or a second wife of Jesse. In 2 Sam. xvii. 27, there is a Nahash who is a great man of Rabbah, the capital of Ammon.

[2] Weiss, *David und seine Zeit*, p. 43.

[3] Num. i. 7; ii. 3. Ruth iv. 20.

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notice.[1] His marriage to the Moabitess Ruth, moreover, had created a relationship with her people, which may well have widened the sympathies of her great descendant, David, and have led him, subsequently, in a time of danger, to entrust his aged parents to the care of the king of Moab, and himself to seek shelter in his territory.[2]

As in the case of Saul, the name by which we know his successor seems to have been that by which he was known to his community, but not, if we may so speak, his private patronymic. His family name seems to have been El-hanan or Baal-hanan, for it is said that El-hanan, the son of a Bethlehemite, "slew Goliath the Gittite (of Gath), the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam," though this is elsewhere ascribed to David; and at the head of the thirty mighty men of David we have "El-hanan, the son of Dodo of Bethlehem," which should probably read "Elhanan, who is Dodo or David."[3]

This name David—the king's public name—is perhaps derived from that of a god locally worshipped, just as that of Saul was. Hadad was the supreme Sun-god, worshipped from Carchemish to Edom and Palestine. At Damascus he was worshipped as Rimmon—an Assyrian name—and Zechariah speaks of Hadad-Rimmon being honoured near the Canaanite fortress of Megiddo.[4] Under the short form of Dada, Shalmaneser speaks of the "god Dada of Aleppo." In the south of Syria and in Palestine, this is confounded with the word Dadu—"dear little child," in Assyrian. This is the same word as Be-Dad or Ben-Dad, "the son of Dad," father of the Edomite King Hadad,[5] and it is the same also as David, which ought to be read "Dôd," and is the male

[1] The genealogy of Boaz was well known to the elders of the town. Ruth iv. 12.
[2] 1 Sam. xxii. 3.
[3] 2 Sam. xxi. 19; xxiii. 24.
[4] Zech. xii. 11.
[5] Gen. xxxvi. 35.

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counterpart of a Phœnician goddess, whose name means "the beloved one"—the Dido of the Romans, the wife of Tammuz, the Sun-god, the chief god of Carthage. Elissa was the foundress of Carthage, not Dido. The name Dodo or David points to a worship of the Sun-god in Southern Palestine, as well as in Phœnicia—as "the beloved one." The Moabite Stone indeed shews that the Israelites of the northern kingdom worshipped a Dodo or Dod, by the side of Yaveh Jehovah, or rather, they worshipped the supreme god under both names. Mesha says he carried away from Ataroth the altar of Dodo, and dragged it before Chemosh, and from Nebo the altars of Yahoch, and dragged them also before Chemosh. It is easy to see how a name with such a meaning should have been given by his people to a king so beloved as David,[1] or perhaps his father, who was already old in David's youth, may have given him, as the son of his old age, a name so tender as "David," "the Darling," "the Beloved."

Jesse was apparently the chief man of Bethlehem, owning lands which came afterwards to his famous son.[2] Of the mother of the future hero we know nothing beyond the fact that both she and Jesse were alive after the final rupture with Saul, and that, as her husband is first met presiding at an act of religious worship, she is twice commemorated by her illustrious son as a "handmaid" of God.[3] Little is known of the rest of the family; the name of the eldest brother alone reappearing in David's after life, as the head of the tribe of Judah; a dignity to which he had been appointed[4] by his brother. The great difference in age

[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 16. Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, 55-57.

[2] From 2 Sam. xix. 37, 38, compared with Jer. xli. 17, David is seen to have granted possessions at Bethlehem to Chimham.

[3] Ps. lxxxvi. 16; cxvi. 16.

[4] 1 Chron. xxvii. 18.

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between David and the rest of the household seems indeed to have well-nigh excluded him from his proper footing in the home circle, if we may judge from their bearing towards him, as if he were rather their attendant and servant than their equal.[1] Three sons of his sister[2] Zeruiah, afterwards the three leading heroes of his army—Abishai, Joab, and Asahel—who seem to have been older than himself, and Amasa, the son of his sister Abigail, who married an Arab,[3] were part of the family group in its wider connections. Two sons of his brother Shimeah, Jonathan and Jonadab, are also mentioned; the former, afterwards a famous warrior;[4] the latter, a shrewd, crafty, unprincipled man,[5] used by David as an occasional adviser.[6] Saul had been of the tribe of Benjamin, David was of that of Judah. This secured his safety during his wanderings in the hilly wilderness of the south, and led to his reign at Hebron till Jerusalem was conquered, though the tribe afterwards supported Absalom, in its jealousy at the loss of prestige when David had transferred the capital to Jerusalem.

The early youth of the future king was spent in the calling of a shepherd, the ancient occupation of his race. The gray uplands round Bethlehem on which he fed his flocks were then no less used for pastures than when, a thousand years later, shepherds heard on them the angelic announcement of the birth of our Lord. Fortunately, his appearance in these years is recorded. Short of stature compared with his gigantic brother Eliab,[7] he was strong and manly in figure, for he speaks of himself as being as swift as a gazelle,

[1] 1 Sam. xvii. 17, 28.

[2] Whether sister by birth or simply by the marriage of her mother with Jesse is not certain.

[3] 1 Chron. ii. 17. [4] 2 Sam. xxi. 21.

[5] 2 Sam. xiii. 5, 6. [6] 2 Sam. xiii. 32, 33. [7] 1 Sam. xvi. 7

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and so strong as to be able to break a bow of steel.[1] The beauty of his eyes is especially mentioned, and his auburn hair, if, indeed, the last particular do not refer to his ruddy complexion.[2] His ordinary dress was that of his humble calling: for most of the year a single shirt-like sack of linen or wool, with short sleeves; the waist confined by a narrow leather band, and the skirts reaching below the knees; in cold weather, a rude sheep-skin coat is put on over this poor tunic, protecting the body to the loins. He wore a scrip or wallet, slung round his neck, and carried a stick to drive off the dogs,[3] and a sling for defence against wild beasts, or to guide his flocks, by stones thrown in needed directions, as is still common among the shepherds of Palestine.

But a genius like that of David could not confine itself to the lowly demands of tending sheep and goats. To the sensibility of a poetical temperament he united the glow of a fervent religious enthusiasm; and his communion day and night with nature, under the open sky, ministered to both. So bright an intelligence might in such circumstances have given itself, in some, to high speculation; with him, in keeping with the genius of his race, it found its joy in spiritual exercises and devotion. The teachings of home may have tinged his thoughts and given this bias, or he may have received it from frequent intercourse with bands of the sons of the prophets, wandering over the land; for we find him, in later years, on such friendly relations with these communities, that he sought refuge with them in their "dwellings" in Ramah, under Samuel, when afterwards in peril from Saul.[4] From them also he would catch the impulse to

[1] Ps. xviii. 32-34.
[2] 1 Sam. xvi. 12; xvii. 42. Dillmann.
[3] 1 Sam. xvii. 40, 43.
[4] 1 Sam. xix. 18, 19, 22, 23; xx. 1. In these verses the word Naioth is left untranslated.

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cast his thoughts into poetical forms, and to accompany his songs or psalms with instrumental music, in which he became so proficient. It was in the solitudes of the hills that he trained himself to become "the sweet singer of Israel,"[1] and invented the "instruments of music" long attributed to him.[2] Before he left the pastures it could be said of him, as it continued to be through life and for centuries after, that he sang songs with his whole heart, and loved him that made them.[3] His sensitive nature must have caught inspiration from the scenery around him. The lonely silence of the hills, the wild country east of Bethlehem, looking down to the Dead Sea, and over it to the purple mountains of Moab; a sea of gray, rounded heights, far and near in other directions; the thirsty uplands reaching away to the horizon on the south; the rich plains of the Philistine lands three thousand feet down, to the west, and beyond these the deep blue of the Mediterranean, with its ships passing over the great waters, made a fitting school at once for his poetry and his religious fervour. To these happy years must be assigned that loving and reverent intimacy with nature, which appears in so many Psalms. As he lay out with his flocks by night, the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars, which He had ordained, were ever shining over him in Syrian brightness. Morning by morning the sun, like a bridegroom from his chamber, came forth from the clouds over the Moabite hills. From time to time he would have to seek shelter from the storm, when "the God of glory thundered," and "His voice," in its long rolling peals, "shook the wilderness;" when the flames of the lightning leaped forth from the darkness, and the flood of

[1] 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.
[2] Amos vi. 5.
[3] Ecclus. xlvii. 8.

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"great waters" rushed down from the heavens.[1] The 23d Psalm, indeed, seems to owe its imagery to the incidents and scenery of this period. Jehovah was the Shepherd of the singer, as he himself was of the sheep and goats around him. The hollow of some wady near, would suggest the "green pastures," and the pools of rain left in the torrent bed in its depths, the "waters of rest" by which he was led, and made to lie down. As he looked from the top of the hills down the dark wilderness gorges, sinking, steep and terrible, to the Dead Sea, "the valley of the shadow of death" would seem before him. The rod and the staff with which he guided and defended his flocks, when they passed through such gloomy ravines, were the natural symbols of the care of Jehovah over himself in his darkest hours; and the simple feast spread in the shadow of a great rock, would call up the thought of the constant goodness of his heavenly Father.[2]

Nor could there have been a better school for the development of the manly virtues. The lion, which is mentioned about a hundred and thirty times in Scripture, came up from the reed-beds and thickets of Jordan, to the hill pastures of the Negeb,[3] and the hills of Judah, now so bare, were then, in part at least, covered with scrub, from which the bear stole out to attack the sheepfolds. The shepherd, among other dangers, had to defend his charge from such enemies, though armed only with his sling and his staff; and he was often able to boast how he did so, taking from their very jaws the mangled remains of their victim.[4] Such bravery had once and again been demanded

[1] Ps. xxix. 3-8; xxxii. 6.

[2] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. ii. p. 43. Dillmann, art. "David," *Bib. Lex.*, vol. i. p. 582.

[3] Jer. xlix. 19; l. 44.

[4] Amos iii. 12. "Two legs or a piece of an ear."

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from David. "Thy servant," said he to Saul, when pleading permission to go out against Goliath, "has been keeping his father's sheep. If a lion or bear came and carried off one from the flock, I went out after him, and beat him, and took the sheep from his jaws, and if he rose against me, I seized him by the beard and slew him;"[1] a brave act not infrequently repeated in our own day by the Arabs, in regions where the lion is still found.[2] Nor would his courage be limited to such exploits, for in these troublous times every brave man was necessarily committed to the defence of his country against its Philistine invaders. Roused, it may be, by the presence of a garrison of "the uncircumcised" in Bethlehem itself,[3] he had already, while still a shepherd, gained a great name for his brave deeds[4] among the rocks and strongholds of the Judæan hills, which he knew so well.

The reputation thus widely spread, may, humanly speaking, have first attracted the notice of Samuel to David; but he had no thought of him as the future king, when Divinely directed to go to Bethlehem to anoint a successor to Saul, from the family of Jesse. He had grieved long and sincerely over the failure of him whom he had raised to power; but his rejection by God was now final, and the command to anoint another in his place could not be disobeyed. The jealous suspicion of Saul watched the prophet so closely, that he could only venture to go to David's town, driving a heifer before him, as if his errand had been to sacrifice. His sudden appearance in the quiet hill city was

[1] 1 Sam. xvii. 34-36. Zunz, so, also, Thenius.
[2] Thevenot, quoted by Thenius, and Bochart, quoted by Weiss.
[3] 2 Sam. xxiii. 14.
[4] Even among the bodyguard of Saul he is spoken of, while still a shepherd, as "a mighty valiant man," and a "man of war." 1 Sam. xvi. 18.

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a great event, and filled its elders with alarm, lest he might have come to denounce some sin that had been committed, or make known some impending judgment. Reassured by the intimation that he came peaceably, he was received with all honour. It was apparently on the day of a particular new moon, when the yearly sacrifice [1] was offered, followed by a feast, in which the heads of the community usually joined. Among the elders and chief men who had come to meet him were Jesse and his sons. These were forthwith directed to sanctify themselves, that is, to wash their whole persons and put on clean clothes,[2] "that they might rejoice with him"[3] at the feast on the sacrifice he was about to offer: no others apparently being invited. One by one the sons were now summoned before him, without either Jesse or they suspecting the object proposed. Nor had Samuel, as yet, any idea on whom the Divine choice had fallen. The manly beauty and lofty stature of Eliab, reminding him of Saul, made him fancy he must be the future king. But mere physical nobleness was no longer enough; the heart, not the outward appearance, was now, more than ever, essential. The seven sons passed by in succession, but a prophetic intimation warned him not to anoint any of them. They were therefore dismissed, and David brought from the hills, whence he came in his shepherd's dress. Him Samuel was directed at once to consecrate, and this he forthwith did, with sacred oil, brought by himself, in a horn, from the Tabernacle at Nob. Even a single servant had been sent away before Saul was anointed, though no king then existed; and far greater caution was demanded now, when he was on the throne, madly jealous of any possible rival. Josephus, therefore,

[1] 1 Sam. xx. 6. For "a" sacrifice, read "the."
[2] Gen. xxxv. 2. Exod. xix. 10. [3] Septuagint.

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can hardly be wrong when he describes Samuel as taking David apart and whispering into his ear the meaning of his act,[1] as he performed it. The "prudence" for which the young man was even already noted might be trusted with the perilous secret, which neither his father nor his brethren seem to have suspected.[2] As in the case of Saul, however, the act had a supreme influence on the mind of David. In a moment it transformed him from a youth to a man. To use the words of the sacred narrative, from that time the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him.[3] But his Divine designation to the kingdom carried with it no disloyalty to Saul, who remained to David as in the past, the Anointed of God, sacred from all injury, as such. He who had rejected him would, in His own time, raise his successor to the throne, but no unworthy thought or act would hasten the day. It was a secret of the soul, for which Saul should be in no way the worse. The anointing, in fact, only amounted to a private announcement to David of his ultimate destiny, that he might prepare himself for it, and be ready to act when the decisive moment arrived. Henceforth he left all to God, putting himself in His hands, to be led at His will. Yet a higher estimate of his own capabilities must have dawned on him. Samuel's counsels became his rule of life and inner impulse. The serenity and resignation to God, exhibited in his greatest perils hereafter, were the results of the new spiritual force, caught from communion with the great prophet. To him, and no doubt also, in some measure, to the lessons of his father's house, he owed that deep and sincere trust in the Divine care and goodness,

[1] Josephus, *Ant.*, VI. viii. 1.

[2] 1 Sam. xvi. 13. The phrase "in the midst of his brethren," may as correctly be translated "from among his brethren." Weiss, *David und seine Zeit*, p. 9.

[3] 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

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which breathes through his life, and supported him in his darkest trials.

The two incidents next recorded have appeared to many to involve a difficulty hard to explain; the one assigning David's introduction to Saul to his skill in music, the other to his victory over Goliath. The order of events, it has been thought, has not been strictly retained; the second incident coming, properly, first. The young shepherd's appointment as harper to Saul is supposed to have been introduced first, to impress the mind with the beneficent influence of the Spirit of God in contrast to that of the evil spirit by which Saul was possessed, as stated in the verse immediately preceding.[1] The sacred writers, we are reminded, do not always closely adhere to chronological order,[2] but rather, like Herodotus, group their facts so as most effectively to bring out the lessons they are designed to convey.[3] Here, it is said, the conflict with Goliath is put first; then a passing introduction of David to Saul assumed; his summons to Gibeah to soothe the king's madness by his harp following later, and being repeated till he finally remains at court altogether, is made one of the armour-bearers, and sent out on forays against the Philistines. His repeated victories, however, and the praise which they bring, in the end excite Saul's jealousy, and kindle a burning hatred in place of the love he had hitherto felt for him. Others[4] retain the order as it stands, explaining Saul's question, "Whose son art thou?"—after the death of Goliath—as an inquiry as to David's connection and family rather than respecting himself. Him he had known and loved in past times as his harper and sweet singer, but his family

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 15.
[2] This is seen also in the New Testament.
[3] Graetz, vol. i. p. 416, note 8.
[4] *David und seine Zeit*. Dr. Hugo Weiss, 1880, p. 57.

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had not hitherto come into such notice as was now merited by his public services and fame. As the narrative stands, the attacks of Saul's madness are seen to be constantly more frequent and more severe. At last the possible effect of music on his diseased mind is suggested by some one—tradition says, Doeg, the Edomite—and David is named to the sufferer as famed, not only for his skill with the harp, but for his valour, his marvellous gift of speech,[1] and manly beauty. Forthwith he is summoned, with that unquestioning claim to the service of any one, which is peculiar to Eastern kings. He was still herding his father's sheep, but started at once for Gibeah, which was only a few hours distant, taking with him—as the gift which he, like all others, must have on approaching the king—the modest present of some bread, a skin of wine, and a kid. Personally winning, his natural lovableness soon found its way to the heart of Saul; and his music, it may be accompanying the words of his own noble religious poetry, speedily made him indispensable to the stricken intellect it so gently soothed.[2] The evil spirit that troubled the king was "from God," and it was fitting that it should be overcome by the holier influence of that gracious Spirit which had come so mightily on David.

Despite his secret misery, Saul had still a busy public life. The Philistines could not endure his having deprived them of their supremacy over Israel, and often made raids into the hills, since they could not for the time undertake their reconquest. The full grain pits were plundered after the

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 18. "Prudence" = wisdom of speech (LXX.) = eloquence (Heb.).

[2] In the narrative of the Survey of the Coast of Southeastern Africa, by Captain Owen, there is an account, very similar to that in the story of Saul, of the power of the music of a flute in calming madness. Captain Owen was unhappily seized with mental disease, but it was only necessary to play to him the tunes he loved, and the paroxysms at once abated. Philip V., of Spain, was cured of a fixed melancholy by the music of a famous player.

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harvest, the vineyards stripped, and men, women, and children carried off into slavery from the Hebrew towns and villages. Time after time these inroads had to be repelled, but Saul could not venture on an attempt at a counter-invasion of a people still so powerful. At last the enemy had gained sufficient confidence to make a special effort to recover their old footing. Marching across the rolling plain at the foot of the hills, they ascended the broad Wady Sunt, the Wady of the Terebinth, then known as the valley of Elah—between the towns of Shochoh, "the bushy," now Shuweikeh, on the brink "of the valley," and Azekah, "the newly tilled"—one of the many ravines worn out, in the course of ages, by winter torrents, rushing from the uplands of Judah to the lower level of the coast plain. Coming up by this hollow, as through an open gate, into the hill country, the Philistine host, in great numbers, had pitched their camp at a spot known as Ephes-dammim, "the staying of bloodshed," a name given, doubtless, from the closing of some ancient feud.[1] The wady is, as nearly as possible, three miles long, and is broad and open; a deep trench with perpendicular sides, the bed of the winter torrents winding hither and thither down its centre, impassable except at some spots, and forming a natural barrier between forces drawn up on the opposite sides of the valley. The ridges of hills on each side run nearly east and west, rising from 700 to 800 feet above the central trough; that on the north throwing out five bastions or spurs; the southern, more continuous heights, being broken only by a bifurcated recess. Marching out instantly with his standing host of 3,000 men, and such additions as might be avail-

[1] The modern Beit Fased, "the House of Bleeding," near Shochoh, seems to retain a trace of the name.

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able by a hurried levy, Saul stood at bay on the low rocky hills of the northern side of the ravine, face to face with the enemy, on those of the southern slope. Between them lay clumps of bushes, and a wide expanse of ripening barley, cut in two by the red banks fringing the white shingly bed of the torrent. The distance between the two ridges is about a mile, but the spurs on the north side run out nearly to the middle of the wady, which is here only about 400 or 500 yards wide at the bottom. Behind Saul's camp, closing in the view, rose the blue hill-walls of Judah. The heights behind the Philistines shut out the opposite view of the country, sinking, ridge after ridge, to the sea-coast plains. Judah had been invaded by the Terebinth Wady because the road from Gaza and Ekron, to Jebus, ran through it; the only road into the mountains in that district.[1]

It was at that time a custom in those parts, as elsewhere in antiquity[2]—reminding us of De Bohun at Bannockburn, or of the Norman Taille-fer at Senlac—for a champion to come forward from the ranks of either army, and challenge any one of the opposite force. In the days of Saul, at least, the result of such duel was regarded as a Divine judgment against one side or the other, and often saved much blood. This usage the Philistines now followed, choosing for their hero a gigantic warrior of Gath, named Goliath,[3] he of "the

[1] See Kiepert's *Large Map*. Conder speaks of the hosts lying north and south rom each other, but on Kiepert's map Shochoh and Azekah lie east and west from each other, with a stream-bed running north in the intervening wady. Doubtless Conder, as the later authority, is correct.

[2] *Iliad*, iii. 340 ff., Paris and Menelaos; vii. 206, Ajax and Hector. Livy, i. 23, the Horatii and Curiatii.

[3] In 2 Sam. xxi. 19, it is said that "Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, slew Goliath" but in 1 Chron. xx. 5, it is said that Elhanan, son of Jair, slew *Lahmi*, the brother of Goliath. The latter is apparently correct; a word having been omitted by the transcriber from the former. Elhanan, as we have seen, may, however, have been the private name of David. In the authorized version *italics* are inserted, making it, as in 1 Chron. xx. 5, *the brother of* Goliath who was killed; but

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shining armour,"[1] as he might well be called, for he strode forth in helmet, jerkin, and greaves, of bright copper mail, rendered still more imposing by his great bulk[2] and huge weapons—a copper-headed lance at his back, a mighty spear, iron-headed, in his hand, and a sword worthy of him girt at his side.[3]

He was one of the last of the old gigantic race of the Anakim, which Israel had overcome at the time of the conquest,[4] and round whom hung a superstitious terror. His brother Lahmi was equally huge, and bore a spear as massive, and, besides him, three others of the stock lived at Gath; one, with an extra finger and toe on each hand and foot; a second, Ishbi-benob,[5] whose armour vied in weight with that of Goliath; and a third, Sippaï, whose enormous height and size were the wonder of all.[6]

Such champions, in their public challenges, were wont to curse and ridicule, in the bitterest words, the foe, their race,

the words are not in the Hebrew. Mövers, Keil, and Graetz insert the italics, but Gesenius, Ewald, Bertheau, Böttcher, Thenius, and the Revised Version omit them.

[1] The derivation by which Goliath is assumed to mean an "exile," is abandoned by Mühlau and Volck.

[2] Our version says, Goliath was six cubits and a span high. Taking Major Conder's estimate of a cubit (16 inches) so strikingly corroborated (*Tent Work*, p. 188), this would make him about 8 feet 9 inches high. Josephus and the Septuagint, however, read 4 cubits and a span, which at the ordinary estimate of 21 inches to a cubit would make him about 7 feet 9 inches high. Taking the cubit at 16 inches, it would make him 6 feet 3 inches; but his huge helmet, likely surmounted by a plume of feathers, would add to his apparent height.

[3] "Coat of mail" = corslet of scales, made of overlapping plates of metal, perhaps fixed on cloth, and reaching almost to the knees. "5,000 *shekels*" = about 157 lbs. avoirdupois. The "target" was a javelin slung between his shoulders. The spear weighed nearly 19 lbs. The shield carried before him was large enough to cover him crouching. The Philistines shaved off the beard and whiskers. Their helmet was like a row of feathers set on a band of metal, to which were attached scales of the same material for the defence of the back of the neck.

[4] Josh. xi. 22. Jer. xlvii. 5; where "for remnant of their valley," read "remnant of the Anakim."

[5] "My dwelling is in Nob;" alluding apparently to the district from which his family had originally been driven.

[6] 2 Sam. xxi. 15-22. 1 Chron. xx. 5.

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and their gods; to force acceptance of the defiance thus insolently given. The soldiers were cowards; the people slaves; the gods had no power.[1] This, Goliath had done for forty days, proclaiming himself also, according to the Chaldee Targum, as the slayer of the sons of Eli—Hophni and Phinehas—and the hero of the capture of the sacred Ark.[2] But no taunts, however bitter, could rouse any of the Hebrews to venture his life with so dreaded an adversary. He might call them slaves of Saul, but no one would peril the fate of the nation, as he proposed, on a conflict with him. Saul and his bravest followers, in the apparent absence of Jonathan, listened in silent dismay. In vain had the most lavish promises been held out, to stimulate some hero to the encounter. He who slew such a foe would be loaded with riches, freed from taxes and military service, and would have a princess for wife. But no one stirred.

At this moment David, now, perhaps, about twenty years of age, arrived in the camp, sent by his father with food for his brothers, who were serving with the king, and to learn what they further needed.[3] His modest store marked the times and the country—some corn, wheat or barley, roasted

[1] Burckhardt (*Notes on the Bedouins*, p. 174) says, that such defiances by single combatants are still usual in their wars. So in the old poem of Antar, heroes come forward and challenge the army of the foe to meet them. One defiance runs as follows: "O my mother, sleep, be satisfied and rejoice; this day will I relieve my thirst with Antar. When thou seest the birds mangle his carcass under the dust, then extol and thank me. The slave! This day I will leave him on the face of the earth, where he shall lie dead on the barren waste. I will make him take thrusts with my spear-head, and I will smite him with my bright and unfailing scimetar. I will leave the beasts to run at him, and prowl round him in the dark night. I will wipe out my shame with the sword and spear, and wreak vengeance on the black slave!" Antar returns all this insult and abuse with wonderful fierceness and copiousness of vituperation. Roberts tells us that it is still usual in India to insult an enemy for the purpose of provoking a fight. "Begone, or I will give thy flesh to the jackals." "The crows shall soon have thy carcass." "The teeth of the dogs shall soon have hold of thee." "The vultures are ready." *Oriental Illustrations.*

[2] Targum on 1 Sam. iv. 11.

[3] For "take their pledge," the Septuagint has, "learn what they need"

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in the ear, and then rubbed out, such as we have seen used by the reapers of Boaz ; ten bread-cakes, and ten portions of the dried curd of milk, which is even now the only cheese of Palestine.[1] The lad was no doubt glad to see his brothers, but his heart glowed with manly enthusiasm to share in the dangers and glory of his countrymen, and he had eagerly seized the opportunity to come down from Bethlehem, fourteen miles to the east, that he might see the battle, for he chafed at his detention on the pastures while others were in the field against the Philistines. Leaving the provisions in charge of the keeper of the baggage, which was arranged so as to be a rude defence round the Hebrew camp,[2] as is still usual among the Arabs, or like the waggons of an African "laager," he hurried to the front, urged by the loud war cry of the host, raised on the instant. Since his visit to Saul, to soothe his madness by harp and song, he had returned to his old shepherd life ; for the charm had worked wonders, and the king's illness seemed to have finally left him, so that the music was no longer needed.

Meanwhile Goliath once more stalked out defiantly from the ranks of the enemy, and repeated his daily challenge, to the dismay of the Hebrews. David had heard the rewards promised for slaying him, and at once proposed to accept the wager of battle. Stung at the boldness which seemed to reflect on others, he was met with scoffs and derision from Eliab, his eldest brother ; but nothing could turn him. At last, the offer, repeated from man to man, reached the ears of Saul. To dissuade the stripling was vain ; no inequality of the fight affected him. The old hero spirit of Gideon, which looked with unfaltering trust to God to give victory

[1] Burckhardt. *Notes*, etc., vol. i. p. 60.

[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 20; xxvi. 7. A. V., "trench."

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in His own cause, however weak the instrument, filled him with dauntless confidence. Jehovah had delivered him from lions and bears, and could deliver him out of the hand of this Philistine.[1] The honour of God was at issue. The fight was to be fought, that it might shew Who reigned in Israel. All the army would know that Jehovah saved not with sword and spear, for victory comes from Him alone. Never Puritan went into battle with a loftier inspiration. It was a touch of the same spirit that Cromwell caught when he chose "the Lord of Hosts," for his battle cry at Dunbar, and greeted the rout of his foe with the words of the Psalm, "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered."[2] Unable to deter him, and carried away by his grand enthusiasm; remembering also, perhaps, the name he had already won for great deeds of valour,[3] Saul at last permitted him to undertake the terrible risk. Would he not, however, put on the king's armour,[4] and his helmet and sword? But "he is not used to them, they are too heavy for him;[5] he will rather go as he is." Out, then, he passes, to the open hill slope, in his shepherd's tunic; his rude wallet by his side; a shepherd's staff and a goat's-hair sling in his hand. Rash as he seemed, it was only in appearance. Like a Benjamite, he could hurl a stone to a hairbreadth and never miss.[6] Long practice on the hills, where his sling was in constant use in driving or guiding his flocks, had made him perfect in its use. His youth and slight figure

[1] Antar, in the heroic poem, boasts in the same way of having killed a wolf that had attacked his flocks. The staff was his only weapon, he tells us, and he was but ten years old.

[2] Ps. lxviii. 1. [3] 1 Sam. xvi. 18.

[4] 1 Sam. xvii. 38. Armour = war dress. The Septuagint omits the words, "Also he armed him with a coat of mail."

[5] 1 Sam. xvii. 39. That he could wear Saul's armour at all, shows that he must have been full-grown—perhaps about twenty. Kirkpatrick.

[6] Jud. xx. 16.

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filled his gigantic adversary with unmeasured rage, as an unprecedented insult. A warrior like him to be defied, in his panoply, by a youth with a shepherd's staff! He had crossed the torrent-bed in the middle of the ravine, and come up[1] the slope held by the Israelites, to beard them to their faces, but was on his way back, and had re-crossed when arrested by the shout that greeted David's advance. The young champion could thus reach the shingly bottom of the dry channel, in which he was presently lost for the moment, as he descended its steep side to gather some of the pebbles with which it was thickly strewn. But he soon re-appeared on the farther side, flinging taunts at Goliath as withering as the Philistine had hurled at the Hebrews. Roused to fury by this, the huge man turned on his foe, who on his part now ran forward, that he might sling a stone with the greater force, full at him. The first shot sufficed. Striking with terrible force on his forehead, it stunned him instantly, so that he fell to the ground, where he was, the next moment, bestridden by David, and beheaded with his own sword, while still insensible. Accepting the evil omen, so unexpected, the Philistines forthwith fled, pursued by Saul's host, who followed them with fierce slaughter beyond Ekron, and even within the gates of Gath,[2] nearly twenty-five miles,[3] mostly down-hill. The head, the sword, and the armour of the giant remained as the trophies of David; the spoils of the tents fell to Saul and his force.

The killing of Goliath was a turning point in the history of David. From the battlefield he returned for a time to his father's house, apparently, however, after a visit to Jerusalem, which, though still held by the Jebusites, was largely

[1] 1 Sam. xvii. 23-25. [2] 1 Sam. xvii. 52. Septuagint.
[3] Kiepert's *Large Map.*

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inhabited by Hebrews.[1] In the care of some of his friends among these, he left, for the present, the grisly memorial of his victory—the head of the fallen man;[2] his thoughts, perhaps, looking forward even then to a day, when the city, won for a capital to his people, would be the fittest resting-place for such a token of the triumph of God over the blasphemer. The huge armour he kept, meanwhile, "in his [own] tent" in the hills, and the sword was laid up in his father's house, till it could be transferred to the Tabernacle at Nob, as an offering of grateful thanks to Jehovah. Before leaving the camp he had been led to Saul by Abner,[3] and the king had held a lengthened conversation with him, respecting himself and his family. The results of this in the end were momentous. Henceforth, after a brief interval, David took his place permanently in attendance on Saul. It was now, also, that he first met Jonathan, over whose chivalrous and noble nature his bearing and great deed made a permanent conquest. Jealousy had no place in that princely heart. Open, unselfish, and tender, he loved the young hero with a love greater than that felt for a woman.[4] Taking off his own war cloak, he put it on him, and insisted on arming him, also, with his sword and bow, and clasping round him his costly girdle.[5] Not content even with this, he proposed a covenant of abiding friendship, to extend to their children. Nor was Jonathan alone in his enthusiasm. All Israel, and especially Judah, to which he

[1] Josh. xv. 63.
[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 54.
[3] 1 Sam. xvii 57.
[4] 2 Sam. i. 26, *lit.*
[5] That an Eastern prince should give any ornament or robe from his own person is a mark of favour shown only very rarely. In Esther, Mordecai is to be clothed with the robe "which the king useth to wear." The Persian ambassador signed the treaty between his country and Russia in 1831, as "The Lord of the Dagger set in jewels, of the Sword adorned with gems, and of the Shawl-coat already worn by the king," these having been royal gifts to him from the king's person. Morier's *Second Journey*, p. 299.

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belonged, was drawn to one so brave. His name passed from lip to lip over the land, as the pride of the nation.

Returning soon after to Gibeah, he was appointed, ere long, to the command of the bodyguard of the king,[1] and permanently exchanged the lute and the shepherd's staff, for the sword. Appointed to a post in Saul's standing force, and sent out from time to time on raids against the enemy, his genius for war and his valour were ever more conspicuous. As yet he daily grew in Saul's favour.[2] He had entered the path to fame and fortune. Not only the people, but even the bodyguard of the king[3] were loud in his praises; and in the household of Saul, himself, the princess Michal favoured him,[4] to the great satisfaction of her father, for as yet he had not thought of regarding him as a rival. Before long, he was honoured by being allowed to dine at the royal table, each new moon, in company with Jonathan, the crown prince, and Abner, the head of the army.[5] But this happy state of things was not to last.

On one occasion, when David and his men were returning from a more than usually successful foray against the Philistines,[6] the people crowded to greet them, in the various towns and villages through which they had to pass; the women and maidens—doubtless in holiday attire—singing the praises of their favourite, as they danced before the advancing column, to the music of tambourines and cymbals. Unfortunately, the popularity of David made him foremost

[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 5. Men of war = royal guard.
[2] 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14. Septuagint and Targum.
[3] 1 Sam. xviii. 5. "Behaved himself wisely" = "prospered."
[4] 1 Sam. xviii. 20; verses 1 to 5, 9–11, 17–19, and 21 are omitted in the Septuagint.
[5] 1 Sam. xx. 25. Jonathan sat opposite Saul; Abner and David, apparently, one at each side. The word "arose" should be rather "in front of." See Jos., *Ant.*, VI. xi. 9.
[6] 1 Sam. xviii. 6. "Philistines," not "Philistine." Graetz.

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in these improvisations. "Saul," they sang, "has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." Word of this soon reached Saul, and at once roused his jealousy. The rival, who had hitherto been only a vague terror, was before him. He, whom he had favoured, was the darling of the people, the man chosen of God to supplant him, as better than himself. His whole nature was shaken by the discovery. "They ascribe only thousands to me," said he, "but tens of thousands to him. They put him above me. What can he have more but the kingdom?" The words of Samuel, "Rejected of God," rang in his ears. All the love he had felt for the young hero turned, on the moment, into hate, which rose to the pitch of madness.

This changed feeling shewed itself speedily. On the day after David's return to Gibeah, a sudden fit of frenzy seized the king, and the charm of the youth's lyre was once more brought into requisition to calm him. But it had now lost its power, and only roused him to fury. Grasping his spear, always near him[1] as the sign of his royalty—like the battle-axe, the whip, and the crooked stick of the Egyptian kings,[2] or the sword and bow of the kings of Assyria[3]—he hurled it twice at the player, who, however, skilfully avoided it. That he should have twice missed, seemed to Saul a proof that God protected his enemy, and deepened the hatred he bore him. To David, however, the incident appeared only a result of passing madness, and he still remained at court. Soon, however, his destruction was sought by cunning plots; the king not daring to attack him openly, for fear of the people. Pretending to regret his violence, he promoted him to be the head of one of the "thousands" of his stand-

[1] 1 Sam. xix. 10; xx. 33; xxii. 6; xxvi. 7.
[2] Weiss, *Weltgeschichte*, 2 Aufl. vol. i. p. 205.
[3] Layard's *Nineveh*, p. 355.

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ing force, and betrothed to him Merab, his elder daughter, in marriage, in fulfilment of the promise made before the fight with Goliath. But he coupled the honour with the crafty suggestion that to win her finally he must be more valiant than ever against the Philistines; his secret desire being to spur him to efforts in which he would perish. David, however, hesitated, at least as yet, to accept an alliance with the family of the king; and meanwhile[1] Saul shewed his insincerity by marrying Merab—David's betrothed, and therefore by Jewish law virtually his wife—to Adriel, the son of Barzillai, a wealthy sheik of Meholah, on the east of the Jordan.[2] She had, indeed, been apparently affianced to Adriel before being given to David; Saul thinking, no doubt, that Adriel would resent the loss of his wife, and revenge himself on the man who had taken her from him.[3] This plot having failed, a second was planned. Michal, a younger daughter of Saul, had long been in love with the conqueror of Goliath, and the courtiers and the king caused it to be whispered that he might possibly have her. His objection that he could not provide the gift needed for such a match was overruled, by the proposal to cancel it by his slaying a hundred Philistines; the hope being that the risk might get him out of the way. But such a price he was only too ready to pay, and Saul had presently to give him Michal as wife. David had now made his first great marriage, and had reached the very foot of the throne · even the plots of Saul turning out to his advantage.[4]

[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 19.

[2] A betrothed woman was regarded as belonging to her wooer. In fact, she was legally treated as a married woman, and could not be separated from her intended husband except by a bill of divorce. Dr. Ginsburg, art. "Marriage," in Kitto's *Cyclo.* [3] 1 Sam. xviii. 19.

[4] 1 Sam. xviii. 27. The Hebrew says that David killed 200 Philistines; the Septuagint reads 200. Josephus says 600. *Ant.*, VI. x. 3. Ewald thinks David had to go

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Despairing at last to get rid of his "enemy" by secret schemes, Saul proceeded to open violence. Taking Jonathan and his own bodyguard into his counsel, he openly stated his wish that they should kill him. But "the soul of Jonathan was knit" with that of the threatened man, and he loved him as he did his own life.[1] Pleading the cause of his friend, he won Saul over to promise that he should not be injured, and David, on this assurance, returned to the king's presence as if nothing had happened.

Yet this quiet was short. Fresh forays against the Philistines gave David still greater fame, and increased his influence more than ever. This added new fuel to Saul's jealousy, and brought on a fresh paroxysm of mad fury, in which he hurled his spear again at him with such force that it stuck in the wall. It was now time to think of escape. His house was on the town wall, and to it in the first place he fled. But news presently reached him, through Michal, that it was beset, by Saul's orders, and that he must instantly flee. Letting him down through a window therefore, outside the wall, his wife had the satisfaction of once more seeing him safe for the time. But her ingenuity did not end here. Like the wife of Lavalette in the last generation, she pretended that her husband was sick, to delay the executioners sent by her father. Taking the "teraphim," a kind of household genius, or we might almost say idol, cherished by the Hebrews from the days of their crossing the Euphrates, she laid it on David's bed, covering the head with a mosquito net of goat's hair,[2] and made them believe

out against the enemy with such following as he could get, not with his body of Saul's troops. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 529.

[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 1. 2 Sam. i. 26.

[2] So Weiss and Ewald. Graetz thinks it was laid with a goat's-hair pillow below the head and a cloth over it; but the former meaning seems the better.

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it was he. Meanwhile David had fled to the settlement of the prophets, at Ramah, near by, where the presence of Samuel, and his high place and altar, seemed to promise safety. But Saul was too desperate to respect even a sanctuary. Messengers sent by him hurried to Ramah as soon as David was known to be there. The singing and music of the chorus of prophets, however, and the sight of Samuel at their head, affected them so that they returned to the king without fulfilling their errand. A second and a third band fared no better; the high enthusiasm of the sacred music and song, and the whole spirit of the place, touched them also. At last, Saul himself determined to head a fourth band; but the sights and sounds of a spot so venerable had the same effect on him as on others. Seized by a fit of prophetic excitement, he too joined in the hymns and psalms of the prophet choir, till, like a modern dervish, he rose to such a frenzy that he tore off his mantle [1] and fell down in a state of stupor which lasted a day and a night. The scene must have been strange even then, for a saying rose from it: "Saul also is among the prophets!"

The clustered huts [2] of the prophets were not, however, to be the permanent home of David. It was clear that his life was not safe even there. But all hopes of a reconciliation with Saul had not yet passed away. The king had returned to Gibeah in a quieter mood, that seemed to hold out some faint hope of his being more placable. Making his

[1] The word "naked" is not to be taken literally, but as meaning that he threw off, in his ecstasy, his royal mantle. Nehemiah commanded the Jews on the wall to keep their arms by them that the enemy might not find them *naked*. Isaiah walked *naked* and barefoot. David danced *naked* before the Ark. The word does not in such cases mean any more than a figurative expression. To be without an outer *robe* was to be *naked* in the idea of such passages as the incident of Saul. The light-armed Greek soldiers were called gŭmnētes, or *naked* soldiers.

[2] This is strictly the meaning of Naioth.

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way, therefore, secretly to Jonathan, David arranged with him to find out, once for all, whether he could return to Gibeah or would have to seek safety at a distance. The meeting was full of pathos. Jonathan would take advantage of his father's love to him, and of the fact that there was no secret between them, to find out if he really meant harm to David. Meanwhile, with a presentiment of his friend's future greatness, and an absolute oblivion of self, he pledged him by the most binding sanctions to be kind for ever to himself and his children. "Mayest thou, if I still live," says he, "mayest thou shew me the kindness of the Lord; and, if I die, cut not off thy kindness from my house for ever. And when the Lord cutteth off the enemies of David, every one, from the face of the earth, let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David, but let the Lord require it at the hand of David's enemies."[1]

But every hope was speedily dashed. David's absence from the king's table at the first day of the new moon passed without remark from Saul, but an apology for it from Jonathan, on the second, kindled his fury. Accusing his son of treachery, he added, in his rage, the most insulting language against his son's mother; stooping in his rage, to curse not only him, but her, in the coarsest terms—for Orientals when carried away by passion always vilify the relatives of those at whom they are incensed.[2] He must send and fetch David, "for he shall surely die." A respectful remonstrance only shewed the depth of the king's hatred, for it was answered by his hurling his javelin at the speaker. Rising from table in fierce anger, Jonathan forth-

[1] 1 Sam. xx. 14, 15. Septuagint. Jonathan seems to dread David's forgetting even so sacred a covenant. "May Jehovah execute judgment on David by the hand of his enemies, if he forget this covenant," is in effect its close.

[2] Rosenmuller's *Morgenland*, vol. iii. p. 107.

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with hurried to the cairn Ezel, where it had been arranged that David should await his return. There, under pretence of enjoying archery, he announced the dark result to his friend, and the two separated, amid tender weeping farewells.[1] David now felt himself virtually outlawed. He knew that Saul would hunt for his life, but whither should he turn? No part of the land of Israel was safe, and he therefore resolved to flee to his greatest enemy, Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, who, he believed, would be glad to welcome him, and thus disarm the most renowned of his foes. But he had neither food for the journey, nor arms, and above all he needed counsel from God, through the Urim and Thummim. He bent his steps, therefore, secretly, to Nob, apparently in sight of Jerusalem,[2] the only sanctuary left after the Ark had been carried off, and the site of the Tabernacle since its rescue from the flames of Shiloh. There, amidst a small colony of priests and their families, lived the high priest Ahimelech, a grandson of Eli, and apparently brother of the Ahijah whom Saul kept near him for consultation. To him he applied for Divine counsels. The sight of Saul's son-in-law, however, seemed to threaten danger, and a ready story was needed before he could get what he required. At last, the famished and unarmed fugitive obtained five loaves, of the shewbread of the preceding week, which had been withdrawn from the holy place, as the Law ordered, but had not yet been eaten by the priests.[3] He got also the sword of Goliath, which had been finally laid up as a trophy behind the veil[4] in the Taber-

[1] In 1 Sam. xx. 40, the word "artillery" is used. It is from the Latin, *ars*, used in late Latin for "an implement." Hence the Low Latin, *artillaria;* Old French, *artillerie*, "machines or equipments of war." The word was used for missile weapons long before the invention of gunpowder. *Bible Word Book*, p. 37.

[2] Isa. x. 32.

[3] *Studien und Kritiken*, 1841, p. 998.

[4] *Ibid.* 1831, p. 308.

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nacle. Unfortunately for himself, however, Ahimelech further consulted the Urim and Thummim on his behalf—a high-priestly act reserved, apparently, for the king alone, and hence easily strained into a charge of treason, when performed, however innocently, for one now so hated and feared as David.[1] But, meanwhile, a face of evil omen had appeared for a moment—that of Doeg, the Edomite chief of Saul's stables, who had first brought David to court, but had no love for him or for Israel. He had apparently been sent to the Tabernacle, to be under inspection for some real or suspected uncleanness.[2]

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 205.

[2] Weiss fancies it was from appearances which had been thought those of leprosy Lev. xiii. 4.

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CHAPTER VII.

DAVID AN OUTLAW.

ANXIOUS to secure a friendly reception, as now, seemingly, hostile to Saul, David had very possibly held communication with the Philistine king who then ruled in Gath under the hereditary title of Achish or Abimelech.[1] Or, it may be, he trusted to a feigned name, and the change in his appearance by lapse of years, for disguise, forgetful that the sword of Goliath would at once betray him. But his welcome was of the roughest; for though Achish himself was well disposed, his attendants, on his name becoming known, distrusted one who was in effect so powerful in Israel, and had been greeted by the women after his battles as having slain his tens of thousands of Philistines, while Saul had only slain his thousands. David was, therefore, in imminent peril,[2] being, apparently, thrown into the town dungeon in preparation for his death, and had to save his life by craft. Having regained his liberty, he feigned himself insane, and acted like a madman; beating on the town gates as on a tabret or drum, letting his spittle fall on his beard,[3] and foaming at the mouth. No one would touch a demented man, for insanity was held in antiquity, as it still is in the East, in some way, a divine possession. I remember seeing a

[1] Title of Ps. xxxiv. Gen. xx. 2; xxvi. 1.

[2] The title of Ps. lvi. says he was actually imprisoned.

[3] To let one's beard be defiled was possible, in Eastern opinion, only in a madman. It is so respected that any slight to it, like this, is inconceivable in a sane man.

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huge man, naked except a piece of matting round his loins, with his head shaved close and uncovered, followed by a wondering and admiring crowd, over the Bridge of Boats at Stamboul—that is, Constantinople—the ground of the reverence paid him being that he was insane. David was therefore free to escape, and speedily did so. Prophet and priest had equally failed to protect him in his own land, and now he had to flee from Philistia. Nothing remained but that he should maintain himself as he best could in the wild hilly districts of Judah which he knew so well. Fortunately a secure retreat was near at hand. About two and a half miles south of Shochoh, in the great Wady of the Terebinth where he had slain Goliath, there is a rounded hill about 500 feet high, almost isolated by valleys, and covered with ruins, shewing it to have once been a natural fortress strengthened by art. A well at its foot supplies water at all times, and near it are other ruins to which still clings the name of Aid el Ma—words identical in pronunciation with the Adullam of the Bible. To this spot David fled, seeking refuge in a cave known by that name. The sides of the lateral valley are, indeed, lined throughout with small caverns, which are still used for dwellings and folds, and there is, on the hill itself, a separate cave, low and blackened by smoke, in which a family now makes its home.[1] There are still, moreover, in the wide valley below, clumps of terebinths, like those which gave it in Scripture times, the name of "Elah," "the terebinth." It may well be that this is the identical spot in which David hid. Here he had to begin the life of an outlaw, supporting himself as he best could by forays on the neighbouring Philistine districts, or by requisitions

[1] The discovery of Aid el Ma was made by M. Clermont Ganneau, and has been adopted generally, as David's Adullam. *Tent Work*, 2:8.

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on the local population, as payment for his protecting them. His place of retreat was presently known to many, and his fame soon gathered around him not a few, led to him by various motives. Discontent with the arbitrary rule of Saul; indignation at his treatment of the popular hero; the troubles of the time; the fear of creditors; the spirit of adventure; eagerness for the excitement of war with the Philistines, all swelled the number of his adherents, till they formed a strong band, proud of his leadership. His aged parents, also, afraid of the vengeance of Saul, soon made their way to him from Bethlehem, and threw themselves on his care. The numerous caves around, and the natural stronghold on the top of the hill, offered ample accommodation.[1] Before long, he was further joined by his nephews, the sons of Zeruiah, now perhaps for the first time closely associated with him—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel: men with fiery souls, who were hereafter to become heroes, under his training. Even from the remnant of the Canaanites some threw in their lot with him, for among his most valiant followers we find the names of Zelek the Ammonite, Uriah the Hittite, and Ithmah the Moabite;[2] representatives, probably, of many others of the old races. Every part of the land, indeed, contributed some daring spirits, and, out of the whole, David was able to form a band of heroes hereafter to be the glory of his reign. One trait of this time, still preserved, lights up the darkness by a touch of pure human interest.

In the East, where water is the principal drink, great stress is laid on the taste of particular wells or springs. A steamer regularly plies between Constantinople and an island in the Sea of Marmora, to supply the Sultan's palace

[1] 1 Sam. xxii. 4. [2] 1 Chron. xi. 39, 41, 46.

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with the water of a famous spring. There are shops in Constantinople where nothing but water is sold, the price of a draught varying with the fame of the spring from which it has been brought. Egyptian vessels carry with them Nile water wherever they go, so strong is the liking among Orientals for the water of their native place or of a famous stream or spring. When the Sultan was in England, he had water from the Nile carried with him for his baths and for drinking.

As already noticed, there is a great cistern, carefully excavated in the cream-coloured limestone, about fifteen minutes' distance from the present Bethlehem, various shafts opening into it from the flat sheet of surface rock. This well is not now used, being, I suppose, dry, or perhaps because there are other cisterns near the houses. In David's time, however, it supplied the little town at least to some extent, and by its nearness to it, as well, perhaps, as from a fancy to the water from it, fond associations rose in his mind when he thought of it. He had doubtless often drunk from it in childhood, and this invested it with romantic worth. Yet he had no thought of really obtaining it, for the Philistines had a post at the time in Bethlehem, and their camp was pitched in the Valley of the Giants, close at hand. It was the harvest time,[1] which began with the barley reaping, in April, and the enemy had come up, as usual, to carry off the rich crops for which the valley was proverbial.[2] To get at the well it would be necessary to pass through their host; an act of daring which seemed too rash to be undertaken. Three of the "mighty men" round David, however, having heard his words, braved all danger,

[1] 2 Sam. xxiii. 13. The words "in the harvest-time," are, however, rendered by Graetz, "to the hold;" by Ewald, Thenius and Wellhausen, "to the rock."

[2] Isa. xvii. 5.

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and actually drew and brought to him the water he had desired. But he could not taste what had been bought at such peril, and "poured it out unto the Lord," as Alexander poured out, in libation, the helmet-full of water brought him in the desert of Gedrosia; unwilling to drink when his army was dying of thirst.

Amidst the wild and rough companions of these first days of his outlawry, David still retained in a striking degree the lofty religious enthusiasm of his youth, and must have longed for some kindred spirit with which his own could have fellowship. This also, he early found, in the arrival of the future "king's seer," Gad; perhaps from the community of "sons of the prophets" at Ramah. He could now obtain inspired direction, and enjoy communion on the sacred interests dear to both. That he should have retained his religious sensibility so undisturbed amidst a life apparently so unfavourable to a religious frame is, indeed, one of his special characteristics. It was no mere superficial sentiment, but the rooted passion of his soul, and to its absolute sincerity we owe all that has made his Psalms the consolation of every age, and the supreme utterance of true religious experience. The genuine expression of a gifted soul, touched by the Spirit of God—in laying bare the secrets of a single heart, they have embodied the experience of all, in every trial and vicissitude of life. His whole career is illustrated by sacred memorials of his spiritual hopes, fears, consolations, and penitent confessions; all alike stamped with an intense reality which bares his inmost thoughts before us.

But David's Psalms have also a surpassing interest in connection with the successive periods and incidents of his life; nor can we realize the man, unless we thus associate with

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the historical outline of his story, the self-disclosures of his inner life.

The 6th, 7th, and 11th Psalms have been attributed[1] to the time when he was with Samuel and the prophets at Ramah, on his first fleeing from Saul. Read in this light, their words have a wonderful pathos and grandeur. His "rebuke" and "chastening" are from Jehovah, but his prayer will be received. Lowly humility, as of one justly smitten for his sins, is mingled with absolute trust in the Divine mercy. His greatest trials are borne meekly, in the assurance that they are designed, by a gracious Providence, for his highest good. Thus, in the 11th Psalm we hear him singing:

> "In Jehovah put I my trust: how say ye to my soul—
> Fly to your mountain, O bird!—
> For, see, the wicked bend their bows,—
> They make ready their arrow on the string,—
> To shoot secretly at the upright in heart.'—
> When the foundations (of order and security) are overthrown,
> What can the righteous do?"

His position seemed hopeless to not a few, but his spirit is calm amidst all. Jehovah still reigns in His holy temple —the heavens. His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. The time of the wicked is coming. Looking down, it may be, as he meditates, into the gloomy ravines which open from the wilderness of Judah, on the Dead Sea, he is reminded of the fate of the cities of the plain, and finds in it the future of his enemies. "On the wicked God shall rain coals of fire and brimstone; and a burning tempest will fill their cup.[1] For Jehovah is righteous; He loves everything right; he who is upright will see His

[1] Ewald.

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face."[1] The 59th Psalm,[2] as the title informs us, dates from Saul's sending his soldiers to watch David's house and kill him. Those of the 57th and 142d refer them to the dark days when "he fled from Saul in the cave." The 56th is assigned to the time "when the Philistines took him in Gath;" the 34th, to that "when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech," or Achish, "who drove him out, and he departed;" and the 63d is said to have been composed during his subsequent wanderings in the wilderness of Judæa. Thus, while apparently, like Jephthah, only the independent chief of a band, making war on his own account, on the foes of Israel beyond the borders, as occasion offered; living, in fact, a seemingly lawless life; David was very much more. Beneath the rough exterior of the chief of such a force as his, his heart beats with the tenderest religious emotions. If fierce in war, he is no less earnest in wrestling with his own soul, and he withdraws from the din of the camp to find his purest joy in lofty communion with God.

The number of David's followers gradually swelled first to 400, and then to 600 men,[3] but it was difficult to know

[1] Ps. xi. 7, literally.

[2] The chronological value of the inscriptions of the Psalms has been much disputed, critics like Ewald and Hupfeld treating them as unworthy of serious notice. But I am contented to follow such as Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, and Kell, in regarding the immemorial age of these superscriptions—the fact that ancient Arabic compositions are very often prefaced in this way by their authors—that not a few Psalms are left without titles—that those given vary greatly in character and form; and their harmony with the contents of the Psalms to which they are prefixed—as ample vindication of their trustworthiness. Much more at least can be said in favour of their being as old as the Psalms themselves to which they are joined, than against it, nor have I any sympathy with the idea that modern acuteness can fix the dates of these inspired compositions more exactly than the Jewish Rabbis have done, even were the inscriptions their work, which I by no means grant. That these are in the Hebrew Bible carries them back at least to the age of Ezra and the Great Synagogue, and it is hardly likely that interpolations in the sacred books would be permitted in that day of superstitious reverence for the ancient text.

[3] 1 Sam. xxiii. 13.

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how to employ them. War against Saul was not to be thought of, for he was still, in their leader's eyes, the "Anointed of God," to injure whom was to sin against Jehovah. To plunder his brethren never entered his mind. But so large a number of fiery spirits could not remain idle, and they needed support. Before all, however, David felt it necessary to place his aged parents beyond the reach of Saul. Marching, therefore, southwards, over the wild hills round the lower end of the Dead Sea, he took them to Moab: his old family connection with Moab, through his ancestress Ruth, apparently leading him to select that kingdom as a refuge. There he placed them under the care of its king, at Mizpeh, a spot not hitherto identified, "till he knew what God would do for him."[1] It marks the earnestness of soul ever shining out from him, that the 27th Psalm seems to record his secret thoughts in these days of anxiety and danger:

"Jehovah is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the protector of my life: before whom need I be dismayed?

When the wicked came against me, to devour my flesh—
My foes and my enemies—mine alone—
They stumbled and fell—not I.

Should even an army encamp against me, my heart has no fear;
Though war should rise against me: still I shall be confident.

One thing have I besought from Jehovah: that I desire:
To live in the House of Jehovah all the days of my life;
To see with glad eyes His goodness,
And to meditate in His (temple).[2]

[1] 1 Sam. xxii. 3. Weiss (p. 90) supposes that Jesse and David's mother were left in Kir-Moab, the capital of the country, and that he himself and his band went to a stronghold (1 Sam. xxii. 4, 5) "half a day's journey to the south, where a steep rock affords a wide outlook to Bethlehem and Jerusalem—a true mizpeh, or watch tower."

[2] The Tabernacle is called a temple. 2 Sam. xxii. 7.

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For He hides me in His pavilion in the time of trouble;
He protects me in the covert of His tent;
He lifts me up upon a rock.

Therefore will my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me:
And I shall offer in His tent sacrifices of rejoicing;
I will sing and play to Jehovah.

Hear, Jehovah; my voice, when I cry:
Have mercy upon me, and answer me—
(When Thou sayest), 'Seek ye My face;' my heart says of Thee,
'Thy face, Jehovah, will I seek.'

Hide not Thy face from me:
Cast not Thy servant away, in anger!
Thou hast been my help,
Leave me not, neither forsake me,
O God of my salvation.
Though my father and mother may have left me,
Yet Jehovah will take me up.[1]

Shew me, O Jehovah, Thy way,
And lead me in a smooth path,
Because of my enemies.
Give me not up to the rage of my enemies;
For false witnesses stand up against me,
And such as breathe out fierceness.

Did I not believe that I would see
The goodness of Jehovah, in the land of the living -
(I had sunk into despair!)

Cling thou to Jehovah!
Be strong, and let thine heart take courage;
Yes! hope in Jehovah!"[2]

While thus across the Jordan, he appears to have formed friendly relations with Nahash, king of Ammon, the old assailant of Jabesh Gilead, by whom he would be well received

[1] Orientals often live in their father's house till his death.
[2] Ewald. Moll. Lengerke. Kay. Hitzig.

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as the supposed enemy of Saul.[1] Meanwhile the charm of safety and peace, even as an exile, almost induced him to stay permanently outside the bounds of Israel. But his higher feelings, quickened by an appeal of the prophet Gad, who had gone to Moab with him, determined him to return and risk his life, rather than stay in a heathen country. To do so would seem to be trusting in its false gods and slighting the protection of Jehovah. His enemies had driven him out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, telling him to go and serve other gods;[2] but he would rather die in the inheritance of his own God than prosper in the land of Chemosh. He evidently fancied that outside Judah he was outside the territory over which Jehovah was God, and that he would thus be forced to worship the gods of the place to which he was driven. Jehovah was thus only a local God, in his eyes. The idea of a God, over all, had not yet been realized. To be away from Israel, moreover, was to be out of the sight, and to fall gradually out of the thoughts, of his people. In its bounds, on the other hand, he might shew how faithful he was to the interests of the nation, and be at hand to use any opportunity Providence might offer, to become its deliverer and head, which he of all living men was best fitted to be.

The first rendezvous of David's band, after his return from Moab, was in the thicket of Hareth,[3] now Khâras, among the hills, nine miles north-west from Hebron, where dense patches of scrub still abound. Here, news was brought him of the terrible results of his visit to the priest-colony of Nob, on his way from Ramah to Gath. Saul, it appeared, while one day sitting, as usual, spear in hand, under the

[1] Follows from 2 Sam. x. 2. [2] 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.
[3] "City" in Septuagint.

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tamarisk tree upon the hill-side at Gibeah,[1] surrounded by his personal attendants—Benjamites, like himself—had broken out in a wild tirade against them and even against Jonathan, for their supposed conspiracy with David to dethrone him. Jealousy had mastered his whole nature, and he saw everything through its light. Would David give them fields and vineyards, and set them over hundreds and thousands, as he had done? Why had no one told him of the league between his son Jonathan, and the fugitive who lay in wait to destroy him? Doeg, the Edomite, one of those thus upbraided, forthwith only too readily revealed what he knew of David—how he had seen him at Nob, and how the high priest had given him food and the sword of Goliath. Forthwith, the whole priestly population thus compromised were summoned to Gibeah, and arraigned as traitors, for harbouring and aiding the king's enemy. The high priest, as their head, had to answer for all. He had been guilty beyond any other, by inquiring of God on David's behalf—"to find out," added Saul, "how he should rise against or lie in wait for me." In vain Ahimelech manfully defended David as no traitor, but loyal, as became "the captain of the bodyguard." As to himself, he was ignorant of the matters of which Saul spoke. Nothing would calm the king's fury. The attendants, or "runners," as they were called, from their office of swift couriers, to execute the king's pleasure, were ordered to slay all the priests on the spot. Not to have disclosed David's presence at Nob, shewed that they were on his side. But no one would touch members of the sacred order. Doeg, the alien, however, glad of an opportunity of gratifying his inborn hatred of Israel, had no such scruples, and deliberately slew

[1] 1 Sam. xxii. 6, literally.

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them all. Eighty-five "persons who wore a linen ephod" thus perished, but the massacre did not end with them. Hastening to Nob, which was close at hand, Doeg treated it as a place "devoted" to utter destruction,[1] and killed not only the men and women, children and babes, but even the oxen, asses, and sheep.

The folly of this infamous deed was only equal to its criminality. The prophets had already cast off Saul, and now he had turned the priesthood against him. It seemed as if he were intent on making himself as much hated as his rival was loved. Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech, and the sole survivor of the massacre of his family, fled to David, who thus learned what had been done. His grief knew no limits, and it is not without good grounds that his indignation at Doeg and Saul is believed to have found utterance in the words of the 52d Psalm:

> "God shall break thee down for ever,
> He shall seize thee and hurl thee away tentless (homeless),[2]
> And root thee out of the land of the living."

Regarding himself as in some measure the cause of the calamity, he at once took Abiathar under his protection, which the high-priestly dignity of the new guest amply repaid. The ephod had been saved, and David had now not only the guidance of the Urim and Thummim, but also the consideration derived from its presence with him, which lent him what had hitherto been a royal characteristic. But Saul was not to be outdone in this respect; for Zadok, the son or grandson of Ahitub, a former high priest, was raised to that dignity to give him, also, sacred responses. Abiathar had been a descendant of Eli, and through him, of

[1] Lev. xxvii. 28. Deut. xiii. 15. [2] Hupfeld.

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Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron. Zadok was of the house of Eleazar, the third son of Aaron, and his successor as high priest: his descent being the eleventh from the brother of Moses. He was still alive in the opening of Solomon's reign, and on Abiathar being put out of the high-priesthood by that king, was left sole high priest: the great dignity continuing thenceforth in his house till the final ruin of Jerusalem.[1]

The massacre of the Canaanite population of Gibeon and its confederate towns,[2] which formed so dark a stain on Saul's memory, seems to have been occasioned by that of the priests at Nob. Seized with remorse at his act, the unfortunate king appears to have determined, in his wild, blind way, to atone to Jehovah for the outrage, by shewing his zeal against the heathen remnant of the native inhabitants. Instead of the Tabernacle at Nob, now polluted by his violence, he would build another at Gibeon,[3] and transfer thither the seat of national worship; first, however, purifying the spot, as he fancied, by putting to death all its non-Israelite population. The citizens of the small Canaanitish republic may have resisted his design of substituting their town for that of Nob, and thus have drawn down on themselves his wrath; but, if so, he used their opposition as a pretext for their destruction, to mitigate the fierce indignation felt through the land for his terrible act at Nob.[4] It is very likely, moreover, that the seizure of the lands of the townsmen, which would be confiscated to the king by their death, might be another motive, as they would help him to bribe the support of additional dependents.

Meanwhile David, who still camped at Hareth, was in

[1] 1 Kings ii. 27, 35.
[2] 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2, 5.
[3] 1 Kings ii. 28, 29. 1 Chron. xvi. 39.
[4] Bertheau, *Geschichte*, p. 310.

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constant fear of being betrayed to Saul. He was no doubt glad, therefore, when news reached him that the Philistines had made a new inroad on Keilah,[1] now the village Kila, on a steep hill, overlooking the valley of Elah or the Terebinth, a few miles south of Hareth and Adullam. But inaction had demoralized his band, and it was not till a favourable answer had been twice received from the Urim and Thummim that it would move out to the attack. A swift march of a few miles, and a sharp struggle, now rescued Keilah and scattered its dreaded assailants. It seemed at last as if David had a safe retreat. But the news of his courageous act soon reached Saul, and his presence in a walled town was welcomed as an opportunity for easily seizing him. David's spies, however, gave him timely notice of Saul's approach with a large force. Dreading a severe revenge on Keilah for harbouring him, he would chivalrously have stayed to defend it, but, finding its citizens would betray him, he and his band moved away. It was now, apparently, that he uttered his thanks for this deliverance, in the words of the 31st Psalm. Jehovah was his "crag" and his fortress, and for His name's sake would lead and guide him. He would pull him out of the net they had laid privily for him; for He was his "stronghold." Into His hand he committed his spirit; for He had redeemed him, and was the Lord God of Truth.[2] "Blessed be Jehovah, for He hath shewed me His marvellous kindness in a besieged city."[3]

But it was no longer safe to return to Adullam, or the rich corn valley of Elah, or to the thickets of Hareth, close by, as Saul knew of these having been his resorts, and could easily reach them. Turning south, therefore, he betook him-

[1] Keilah is mentioned in the despatches of the Egyptian governor of Jerusalem found at Tel Amarna, and dating from long before Joshua's day.

[2] Ps. xxxi. 3-5.

[3] Ver. 21, strong = besieged.

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self to the neighbourhood of Ziph, about four miles below Hebron,[1] and about twelve miles, as the crow flies, south-east of Keilah. Here, 2,882 feet above the sea, in a region full of caves in the limestone rocks, with two roads passing the hill on which the village stood—one, south to Carmel, Maon, and Beersheba; the other, north-west—he could hope to elude his pursuers, at least for a time. It is said in Samuel that he hid in "the wood" near this place; but Major Conder questions if the word rendered "wood" in our Bibles, really means so, as it seems impossible, in his opinion, that any "trees could ever have flourished over this unwatered and sun-scorched region."[2] Yet as verdure itself attracts moisture, and its destruction leaves the exposed soil to become more and more incapable, by drought and consequent barrenness, of being covered with it again, it may be that the translation is, after all, correct. Nor is it to be forgotten that Professor Palmer found at Garaiyeh, nearly 90 miles south of Hebron, where it is much hotter and more desolate than the country round Ziph, the remains of a building in which were beams of seyel or acacia wood, with signs of mortises, bolts, etc.,[3] shewing that trees grew even there. In any case, however, there have never been what we speak of as "woods." Many of the hills in Palestine, especially in less peopled districts, though there are very few people anywhere in the land, are rough with scrub oaks and other stunted and twisted growths. These are not "woods" or thickets in our sense, but are quite sufficient to hide any band of men betaking

[1] *Great Palestine Map of Pal. Fund Survey*, sheet 21.

[2] *Tent Work*, p. 243.

[3] *The Desert of the Tih*, p. 17. The word translated "wood" in our version is Choresh, which Major Conder, himself, tells us (*Pal. Fund Report*, 1866, p. 124) means "copse or underwood," such as still exists, and is called *kish* by the peasants. There is a tell, or mound, near Ziph, now called Choreisa—evidently the same word as Choresh.

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themselves to them. Year by year, however, even this rough clothing of the hills is growing less, as charcoal burners remorselessly cut down all before them for their heaps, digging out the very roots. I have often seen their fires on the hillsides in such lonely places as the neighbourhood of Beit Jibrin, behind Gaza. The want of soil on the hills must in all ages have prevented the growth of what we should call trees, but there might well have been forests in the richer valleys. Yet even in such rich glades as lie north of Michmash, towards Bethel, the oak trees that dot the green slopes and remind one of home by the mistletoe hanging from their branches, are very small compared to English oaks.

Ziph stands near the edge of one of those great steps by which the level of the country suddenly descends, in successive plateaus, to the desert of Sinai. The level at the foot of the step is about 2,600 feet above the sea and 500 below that of the watershed of Hebron. The soil is a soft white chalk, spread out in open wolds, with hollows of arable land. There are no springs in this region; the rain sinking through the porous rocks and running off through underground chinks and rifts. Cisterns and tanks, however, formerly retained supplies for the population that wandered over it or dwelt in its towns. On the south, another step leads down to the white marl desert of Beersheba; on the west are the Philistine plains; and on the east, 300 feet below, is the dreary "Jeshimon," or waste, to which David soon after fled. The whole district is dry and treeless, but rich in flocks and herds which pasture on the sparse vegetation of the downs and wadys. Part of the Negeb, or south country, it seems to have been once the home of the Horites, or cave-men, for it is full of caves, at one time used as

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dwellings, and the name of the ancient inhabitants is preserved in those of two of the ruined towns.

In this region, secluded though it was, David found no rest. His presence was soon betrayed to Saul, and a large force sent off to capture or kill him. But Jonathan, true to his noble friendship, took care to forewarn him, in a personal meeting, undertaken, probably, for the special purpose. That David would be the future king, and that Saul would not be able to injure him, was, he declared, known to his father. For himself, he only wished to be next below him.[1] Then, renewing their old covenant of mutual fidelity, the two parted, never to meet again; David returning to the thickets, Jonathan to his house at Gibeah. The meeting had strengthened David's trust in God,[2] but the greatest caution was still needed to escape the dangers around. The Ziphites, grateful, perhaps, to Saul for his victory over the Amalekites, in the neighbourhood, a few years before, sent to him to say that they would, if he wished, betray his foe into his hands. But, once more, the fugitive received timely warning. Descending the crags from the plateau of Ziph[3] to that below it, he and his men fled to Maon, about five miles south of Ziph, and hid in the ravines of a hill close by, which rises in a great hump of rock, 2,887 feet above the sea.[4] But the pursuers followed so closely, led by the Ziphites, that he had barely time to descend the one side of the mountain while they were climbing the other. A great gorge in the neighbourhood of Maon, called the Valley of Rocks, may have been the scene of this escape. It is a narrow but deep chasm, impassable except by a detour of many miles, so that Saul might have

[1] 1 Sam. xxiii. 17. [2] 1 Sam. xxiii. 16.
[3] 1 Sam. xxiii. 24, "came down into a rock," literally "descended a rock."
[4] *Large Map of Palestine, Palestine Fund Survey*, sheet 25.

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stood within sight of his enemy, while still quite unable to get at him. At this moment, however, news came to Saul, who led the pursuit in person, that the Philistines, taking advantage of his absence from Gibeah, had again invaded the land, and he had for the time to let David escape, and to call back his force.

Hunted like a partridge,[1] from hill to hill, his very footsteps tracked,[2] there was, indeed, only a step between the outlawed man and death.[3] But these terrible months, or, it may be, years, were not without their high value as a discipline for the future. In the demands of a position so uncertain and so constantly changing, all the resources of David's mind were developed. The command of his force in so rude a scene, was preparing him to be the ruler of men on a greater scale. His constant danger and realized weakness threw him, moreover, with a fulness he might not otherwise have felt, on the supporting providence of God. He alone could be his "fortress," "his high crag," "his strength," his "deliverer," his "rock in which he found refuge, and trusted," his "shield," the "horn of his salvation," and his "high tower."[4] The wilderness of Judah, tradition informs us, heard his pathetic cry: "O God, thou art my God; early[5] will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."[6] It was there he sang—

> "Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life,
> My lips shall praise Thee. . . .

[1] 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. For the words, "come out to seek a flea," *read* "come out to seek my life." Septuagint.

[2] 1 Sam. xxiii. 22, for "where his haunt is," *read* "where his passing foot is." Ewald. Thenius.

[3] 1 Sam. xx. 3.

[4] Ps. xviii. 2.

[5] Or, earnestly.

[6] Ps. lxiii. 1.

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ENGEDI, FROM UNDER JEBEL SHUKIF.
From a water-colour by W. C. P. Medlycott.

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Because thou hast been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.

My soul followeth hard after Thee,
Thy right hand has upheld me.

But those who seek my life,
Let them go into the lower parts of the earth.[1]

Let them be given over to the sword!
Let them be a portion for jackals![2]

The 54th Psalm, also ascribed to this period, expresses the same trust in God amidst the utmost peril. It was a hard school, but it made David all that he afterwards became.

To escape a fresh pursuit from Saul in the same region, he seems now to have led his men into the dreary solitude known as Jeshimon, or The Waste, and in latter times the wilderness of Judæa—on the east of Ziph—a district of white peaks and cones of chalk, and deep narrow wadys, stretching away to the great pointed cliff of Ziz, above Engedi, with its line of precipices 2,000 feet high, over the Dead Sea.[3] Uninhabited and uninhabitable for about 60 miles north and south, from the oasis of Jericho to the Wady Fikrah—with an average breadth of about 15 miles—it is a wide plateau, from the rough surface of which rise many low hills and ridges of rock; in some parts forming continuous lines, in others sinking, by steps, towards the Dead Sea, where they form a lofty table-land from 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the level of the waters. This plateau is cut up by deep gorges, worn by the torrents and also by volcanic action. Nothing green refreshes the eye over the wide landscape.

[1] = "Let them descend to the darkness of Sheol"—the under-world; that is, "let them die."

[2] Ps. lxiii. 3, 7-10

[3] The pass of Ziz = that of Engedi.

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No stream waters it, except when the rains, for a time, fill the wadys with rushing torrents. Only the black tents of some poor Arabs who manage to find pasture for their goats in the clefts and hollows of its almost bare rocks, give any human interest to the forbidding landscape. It is indeed the ideal of a desert, torn into narrow ravines, which lead to dark and deep gorges, or rising from the bare gullies into narrow ridges of dark brown sandstone, with blinding white chalk above it, worn into countless cones and points. There is no grass to be seen, or any tree, or sound of water, and hardly a passing sign of life, and the sun for most of the year, beats down on it from a cloudless sky; its heat sent back from the burning rocks, and its light from the shining chalk. It would be hard to conceive anywhere of a more awful solitude. Nor is it more tolerable in the time of wintry storms, for it is then swept, often, by terrible rains, and wild whirls of sleet and hail, not seldom accompanied with piercing cold. Yet, now, the home of David; it was afterwards that, by choice, of John the Baptist. The only relief from the awful monotony of desolation is where the mouths of ravines shew the Dead Sea far below, and the mountains of Moab beyond it.

Retiring gradually to the eastern edge of this desolate region, on the short-lived spring herbage of which he had often pastured his flocks in happier days, David at last sought a retreat in the cliffs of Engedi—"the Spring of the Goats," on the edge of the Dead Sea. The scenery here is savage in the extreme. Precipices on three sides, bounded by tremendous gorges, run down to the shore beneath. A winding track cut in the perpendicular rocks is the only means of descent; a single false step is death, for it would hurl one to the bottom, 2,000 feet below. A warm

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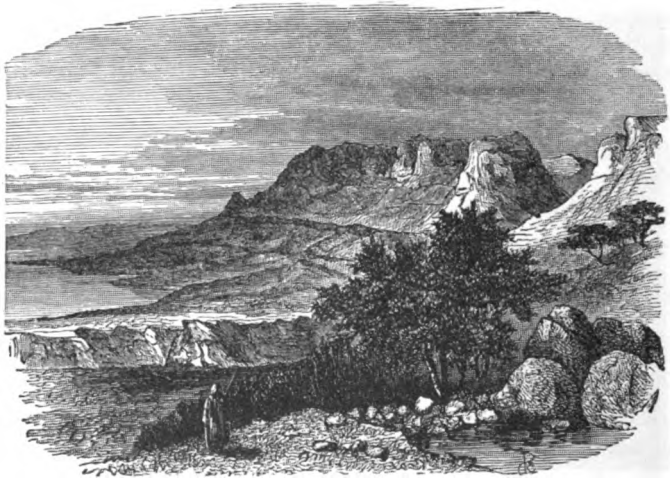
spring, from which the place takes its name, bursts from under a huge boulder 1,340 feet beneath the summit; the water streaming over the steep from amidst a thicket of canes and bushes, the home of thrushes, grackles, and warblers; its course marked by a fringe of vegetation as it falls. Six hundred feet below, outside the slope of débris from the heights above, a small oasis is reached, once famed for its palms, balsam, and wine.[1] To this wild spot, well called



ENGEDI, LOOKING SOUTH.—Major *Conder, R.E.*

the "rocks of the wild goats," since only they and the gazelle could find footing on the narrow ledges of the cliffs, David had to flee, hiding in the caverns with which the whole of the mountains are filled.

But even here Saul followed him, in his jealous hatred, with a force of no fewer than 3,000 men. He was fated, however, to meet a rebuke little expected. He had retired

[1] Cant. i. 14. Jos., *Ant.*, IX, i. 2. Graetz, vol. i. p. 73.

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one day to a roomy cave in which, as it happened, David and his men sat, unseen, in the darkness, as he entered from the outer light. Nothing could have been easier than to kill him, and it was whispered to David by his companions that he should do so, or let them do it. But the magnanimity of the persecuted man was only equalled by the religious awe in which he held the person of "the Anointed of Jehovah," and no inducement would tempt him to such treason. Stepping gently, however, towards Saul, as he sat with his face outwards—the skirts of his wide mantle reaching far behind—he silently cut off a piece of its edge; an act which, innocent as it seems, smote his heart on the moment, as an offence against one so sacred. Waiting till Saul had left the cave, he followed, and calling after him, discovered himself, shewing, as he did so, the piece of the skirt in his hand, that he might judge how guiltless he was of designs against him, since he had left him uninjured when thus most in his power. The better spirit of the king, touched by the sight of one he had loved, and by such a proof of fidelity, could not withstand an incident so tender. Weeping aloud, he owned that David was a better man than himself. It was clear, he added, that God intended to give him the kingdom, and that permanently; not for a time, as in his own case. Would he only promise that on coming to the throne he would not cut off his—Saul's—family and destroy his name? Willingly swearing this, the two parted in peace for the moment. But David was too much afraid of the king's jealousy waking again, to trust himself in his reach, and still remained in the wilderness.

The death of Samuel, which happened about this time, plunged the nation into grief; but David, much as he must

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have desired it, dared not be present at his burial. Wails and lamentations were heard in every town and village of the land, such as had once risen as a last tribute to the worth of Moses and Aaron,[1] and the rare honour of burial within the walls of a town—Ramah, his home—was accorded to his remains. Except kings, no one but the high priest, Jehoiada, had such an intramural interment in the long course of Jewish history.[2]

After the death of the great prophet, David returned to his old haunts in the Hebron district, where, for a time, he supported himself and his band, as is still the practice of Bedouins, by protecting outlying herds and possessions from outside marauders, in return for contributions of food, and other forms of blackmail. It was now that an incident happened which vividly illustrates his wilderness life. The great man of the hill town of Maon, south of Hebron, was one Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, the owner of large flocks and of rich possessions in Carmel, now the ruined town of Kŭrmŭl, close by. Having heard that he was holding his yearly feast of sheep-shearing, David sent ten of his men with a courteous message, wishing him prosperity—reminding him of the security he had enjoyed through the protection of the envoys and their fellows—and finally asking for a gift on their behalf, of "whatsoever came to his hands." Even in our own day, an Arab sheik wandering near a town or village could hardly fail, on occasion of such a yearly feast as that of Nabal, to come in person, or to send by his

[1] Num. xx. 29. Deut. xxxiv. 8.

[2] Antiquity was very strict in this matter. At Rome, even as early as the Laws of the Twelve Tables, intramural burial was strictly prohibited. The only exception was in favour of the vestal virgins, and the families of one or two great men; of Valerius Poplicola and Fabricius, for example. But this privilege was abandoned by their descendants, no doubt in deference to public feeling. See, also, Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 162.

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messengers, to ask that his services, as the protector of the flocks in the wilderness, from other tribes, should be remembered, and it would go hard with all concerned if his request were refused. In Nabal's case, a rough, insolent answer, however, was the only response. Fierce when roused, David, with Arab-like excitability, forthwith vowed vengeance, declaring that before next morning every male of the household should perish. Luckily for all, one of the herdsmen hurried to Nabal's wife, Abigail, a woman as prudent as her husband was the reverse, hastily telling her how David, who must have been well known as the conqueror of Goliath and the king's son-in-law, had sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute Nabal, and how they had been met with insolent words, and told that David was no better than a runaway slave from his master Saul. Yet he and his men, added the speaker, had been a wall to the flocks and herds, day and night, protecting them from enemies; and had at all times been kind and courteous. Knowing what would follow under such circumstances, she instantly ordered asses to be laden with bread, wine, sheep ready dressed, roasted corn, raisins, and cakes of figs, and herself took them to David, whom she found actually on the way with his men to carry out his revenge. Throwing herself on her face, and pleading her husband's folly and churlishness as his excuse, her prudent words saved her household and even won the thanks of David, for stopping him from "entering into blood-guiltiness."[1] That night, Nabal—"the Fool"—had been holding a special rejoicing, "like

[1] 1 Sam. xxv. 26, 33. Abigail's expression, "The soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life," is illustrated by the Hindoo use of the same figure. An upright judge is "bound up in the bundle of justice;" an enamoured youth is "bound up in the bundle of love." Abigail intended to say that the life of David would be under Divine protection. Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations.*

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the feast of a king," and was too full of wine to be told either the danger he had run, or his escape. Next morning, however, the whole situation flashed on him so fully that he sank, struck with apoplexy or paralysis, and never rallied. Ten days later he was dead. But Abigail's charms, aided perhaps by her wealth, had won the heart of David at first sight, and, as soon as her seven days' mourning [1] for Nabal were over, the rich and beautiful widow became his wife.[2] Michal, Saul's daughter, his first wife, had been illegally torn from him, and given by her father to Phalti, or Phaltiel, of Gallim, a village apparently near Bethlehem,[3] perhaps to attach him to the dynasty, but David had already consoled himself for her temporary loss by marrying Ahinoam, from Jezreel, near Nabal's estate at Carmel.[4] That he should now have married Abigail also, was an evil omen for his future peace. As the first step towards polygamy, it led the way to all the miseries of his later years. Sensuality was David's besetting sin.

These marriages shew that in spite of the dangers he had run, David's fortunes were steadily rising. His nephews, who early joined him, had been the beginning of constant accessions of fierce and skilful warriors, who came, attracted by his fame or discontented with Saul. But his troubles were not yet ended. Saul's furious jealousy ere long broke out again, and a second large force, under Abner, but accompanied by the king himself, marched south, to try once

[1] Ecclus. xxii. 13.

[2] It is to be noticed how Abigail came at once, of her own accord, to David, to be his wife, on his messengers going to her, after Nabal's death, with the message, "David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife." He seems already to speak like a king commanding any one he chose to come to his harem. 1 Sam. xxv. 40.

[3] Armstrong's *Names and Places*, p. 65.

[4] In 1 Sam. xxv. 43, for "took" read "had taken." Ahinoam comes before Abigail in chap. xxvii. 3. Amnon, her son, is also called David's firstborn—2 Sam. iii. 2

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more to take his enemy, through the treacherous help of the Ziphites. Eagerly watching from the top of some hill, David noted, by the clear light of a Syrian moon and the stars, or by the camp fires—where his force, tired by their march, had at last rested, within the usual ramparts of waggons and baggage.[1] Knowing the carelessness of Arab encampments—for the Israelites were as yet Arabs in their ideas of war—he determined, like Gideon, to steal into their midst by night, and, if possible, end this renewed pursuit by a stroke that would appeal to Saul's better nature. Descending from the hills, therefore, with Abishai, in the darkness, they penetrated, unobserved, to where the king lay asleep, surrounded by Abner and his bodyguard, in the very midst of his men.[2] His long spear, the badge of his rank, was stuck in the ground at his head,[3] and a cruse of water, bound to the saddle of his ass by day,[4] lay near. Abishai would have had David seize the opportunity and kill him, but again he refused to lift his hand against the Anointed of Jehovah. Contenting himself with taking the spear and the water cruse, he returned to the top of the hill Hachilah, apparently a ridge east of Ziph, but near it. The excitement in Saul's camp at daybreak was great, and it was increased when David was seen high up, on the other side of a deep gorge,[5] with both spear and cruse in his hands. In the clear air he was instantly known. Calling aloud to Abner, he taunted him with his want of care of the king, and hold-

[1] 1 Sam. xxvi. 5.

[2] Morier tells us that the army of the king of Persia was encamped in a vast circle round his tent, so that no one could get at him without passing through the whole host. *Second Journey*, p. 269.

[3] "We recognized the sheik's tent among a group of twenty others, of which the encampment consisted, by a tall spear planted against it." Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 259. *Land and Book*, p. 367.

[4] Furrer, p. 81.

[5] 1 Sam. xxvi. 13.

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ing aloft his trophies, pleaded also with Saul himself, to cease from hunting after a subject incapable of successfully opposing him, and so unmistakably loyal. Touched with this renewed proof of magnanimity from one whom he sought to destroy, the king returned to Gibeah, leaving David for the time in peace.

There was no permanent rest, however, for the object of so deadly a hatred, and it seemed very soon no longer safe for the sore-hunted man to remain in the limits of Israel. He resolved, therefore, to go once more to Achish, at Gath; his force, now risen to 600 men, giving him a weight and rank that would secure a hearty welcome, as a supposed enemy of Saul. Anxious, however, to be out of the way, to avoid compromising himself in any inroads against his own countrymen, he asked and obtained the gift of Ziklag,[1] a distant frontier town, placed, in Kiepert's map, on the edge of the desert, 20 miles south-east of Beersheba, and nearly 50 from Gath, and thought to be now represented by a heap of ruins bearing the name of Asluj. There he could be of use in defending Achish from Arab raids, and at the same time escape the necessity of attacking his own country. He remained here for a year and four months,[2] as a border chief, busy in forays against the Amalekites and other related tribes of the desert farther south—the old enemies of Israel. Meanwhile, to win the confidence of Achish, he did not scruple to represent his raids as made against different parts of the Negeb settled by Judah, and its hereditary allies, descended from Jethro or Hobab, the Kenites; supporting this by relentlessly killing all the Amalekites and others, of both sexes, who fell into his hand, to prevent news

[1] From this gift Ziklag became an appanage of the kings of Judah. 1 Sam. xxvii. 6.

[2] 1 Sam. xxvii. 7.

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of his duplicity reaching Gath.[1] Thither, moreover, part of the herds and flocks taken were sent as tribute, in compliance with the league made between them. That one who could compose such Psalms as his, should be capable of habitual deception and unrestrained slaughter, even of women and children, only illustrates the low moral standard of the age, and the strange contradictions of human nature. Nor is it to be forgotten that the higher and nobler side of David's nature is the more to be honoured, by its contrast with characteristics in which he resembled the men around him. Spiritual development such as his, in an age so rude, crafty, and bloodthirsty, is in itself a miracle of which the only explanation is that he owed it to Divine inspiration.

His stay at Ziklag was marked by a great addition to the number of his followers, of whom not a few were now men of note. Among others came Jashobeam, of the clan of Hachmon, apparently a descendant of the Korah who perished in the wilderness[2]—his fellows boasted of him that in one of David's raids he himself speared 300 men;[3] Eleazar, one of the three chief men in David's army, who, in one of the repeated encounters with the Philistines at Ephes-dammim, in a foray into Judah by that pass, stood firm when the Israelites fled, and smote the enemy till his hand was weary, the people returning from flight only after the victory, to seize the spoil; Shammah,[4] who, when the men round him had fled, kept his ground against the Philistines, in defence of a plot of barley, and drove off the enemy. Benaiah, also, the son of the high priest Jehoiada, throwing off his

[1] 1 Sam. xxvii. 8-12. [2] 1 Chron. xii. 6.

[3] 800 in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. For "Adino the Eznite," read "lifted up his spear."

[4] 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12. The notice of Shammah is omitted from the parallel passage in 1 Chron. xi. 13, and in the opinion of many critics should be inserted after the word "battle." For "lentiles" in the passage in Samuel, read "barley."

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ephod, came from Kabzeel, in southern Judah, towards the borders of Edom ;[1] a man already famous, but destined to win still further laurels in David's future war with Moab, in which he slew two of the royal princes.[2] He was also known to have let himself down into a cistern, in which a lion, driven by a snow-storm in winter from his haunts, had sought refuge, and to have killed it there. A huge Egyptian, whose spear was like a weaver's beam, had also fallen before him, though he had only a staff as a weapon : closing with him, he had wrenched his huge spear from his hand and slain him with it.[3] There was Sibbechai also, who slew Sippaï, one of the old gigantic race of the Canaanites ; and Jonathan, David's brother, who slew a huge man of Gath, famed for an extra toe on each foot and an extra finger on each hand ;[4] Eliam, the son of Ahithophel, and father of Bathsheba, afterwards the occasion of David's terrible crime, and well-nigh of his ruin ; Uriah, of Hittite blood, her husband, had already joined the swelling force at the cave of Adullam. Nor were the additions confined to individuals. A band from Saul's own tribe, Benjamites, armed with bows, and able to use them and their slings equally well with both the right hand and the left, arrived. Eleven men from Gad, mighty in handling shield and spear,[5] with faces like lions, and feet swift as the gazelles on the mountains, swam the Jordan when it was in flood, and made their way to Ziklag. Thirty men also joined from Reuben, with their captain ;[6] others came in from Judah ; and even a band from Manasseh, all famous braves of the tribe,[7] joined immediately before Saul's death.

[1] Bertheau.
[2] This is Bertheau's rendering.
[3] 1 Chron. xi. 22.
[4] 1 Chron. xx. 4–8.
[5] For "buckler," read "spear" (1 Chron. xii. 8).
[6] 1 Chron. xi. 42.
[7] 1 Chron. xii. 21.

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"Day by day," says the sacred writer, "there came to David, to help him, till he had a great host, like the host of God."[1] In all, he found himself now at the head of 600 men, of whom thirty-seven formed a special body of heroes, three—Jashobeam, Shammah, and Eleazar—being distinguished even among these, as the bravest of the brave.

But a change in David's position was near. The Philistines had resolved on a decisive war with Saul, to obtain control of the caravan route through Esdraelon. Things had never prospered with him since he had turned against his son-in-law. His doing so had made David involuntarily a rival, to whom the best men of the tribes were attracted, and he himself had lost spirit. An invasion of the northern plain was a far greater danger than he had yet had to face, for the chariots and cavalry of the Philistines would be able to manœuvre on it freely, and it was hard to resist them with only arrows and slings. His enemies, moreover, strained every nerve to secure victory. Besides their own troops, David had been ordered to add his band to the invading force. Fortunately, however, the Philistine chiefs distrusted him, and demanded his dismissal before a battle had taken place; a resolution gladly welcomed by their unwilling ally.

Returning, therefore, to Ziklag, he found that misfortune had overtaken it in his absence. A remnant of the Amalekites whom he had harried so terribly the year before, had taken advantage of his being away; and, after burning the town to the ground, had carried off all the women and children. A wild scene of grief and passion followed, David and his strong men "lifting up their voice and weeping," like true Orientals, "till they had no more power to weep." A

[1] 1 Chron. xii. 22.

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bitter cry even rose to stone him, as the cause of their trouble, by having led them, as a corps of the Philistine army, against their brethren—a service they must have abhorred. But, it is added, "David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God,"[1] trusting His promise that He would preserve him from all danger. Grief and recrimination presently, however, gave place to action. Abiathar, the high priest, having consulted the Urim and Thummim, and a favourable answer having been given, David, with his 600 men, started off in a pursuit so swift that 200 had to be left behind, with the baggage, at the torrent bed of Besor,[2] south of Gaza.[3] An Egyptian, found on the way, almost dead with thirst and hunger, proved invaluable as a guide. He had fallen sick, and had been ruthlessly left behind by his master, without food or water, three days before. Led by him, they soon reached the "troop" of plunderers, who, thinking themselves safe, were feasting, and dancing for joy, at the huge spoil they had carried off from the land of Judah and of the Philistines. Taken by surprise, they could offer little resistance; and were cut down, with the exception of four hundred young men, who rode off on swift camels. The wives and children of the colony of Ziklag were found uninjured, having been intended to be sold, or kept as slaves. Moreover, booty so vast was left in David's hands, that he was now, for the first time, able to send gifts to the towns and villages of the Negeb, which had shewn friendliness in the past to himself and his followers. It was on this occasion, we are told, that the rule was laid down, to be henceforth permanently honoured, that the whole force serving in the field, should

[1] 1 Sam. xxx. 4–6.

[2] Perhaps Bi-Shur, "near the wilderness of Shur," but this is only conjectural. It must, however, have been far on the south.

[3] Kiepert's *Large Map*.

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be treated alike in the division of spoil, whether actual combatants, or appointed to guard the baggage.

But a crisis had come in the fortunes of David. Two days after his return to Ziklag, a runner came from the camp of Saul, his clothes rent and dust on his head, to announce the defeat at Gilboa, and the death of the king, with Jonathan, and two of his brothers.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE REIGN OF DAVID.

[B.C. 1055–1015.]

THE death of Saul had at last ended the long proscription of David, and he was free to move back from the wild uplands of the Negeb, to the midst of his people. For a time, however, it was difficult to know what step to take. The utter demoralization of the country after the defeat at Gilboa, and the death of the king and three of his sons, with the very flower of the youth of Israel, and almost his whole bodyguard, who had died fighting at his side, like the hus-carls round Harold at Senlac, made it impossible to act vigorously on the instant. Nor would David on any account begin a civil war for the crown; and it was uncertain as yet whether some of Saul's family might not succeed to it. He resolved, therefore, to remain for a time at Ziklag before a final determination was taken.

Meanwhile, his grief at the overwhelming calamity that had befallen the royal house was deep and sincere. On first hearing it he and those round him alike gave way to their feelings as only Orientals can, rending their clothes, filling the air with loud wailing, weeping like women, and refusing food till the evening.[2] The Amalekite who had brought the bad news was then led to David and questioned. That

[1] B.C. 1055–1015: Graetz, Winer. 1051–1011: Conder. 1047–1007, *Bib. Lex.* 1066–1026: Ewald.

[2] 2 Sam i. 11.

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Saul was dead could not be doubted, for the royal turban or diadem he had worn as his kingly badge, and his armlet, which the stranger bore, were proofs of it.[1] But his story, tested by the narrative in the sacred text,[2] was a mere invention, made up to gain David's favour, and secure a reward.[3] He had reckoned falsely, however, on the character of the man he thus sought to please by the announcement that the throne was vacant. To the eyes of David the person of Jehovah's Anointed was sacred. He had himself spared Saul twice when he was at his mercy, and now this stranger, of a race which for ages had been the inveterate enemies of Israel, and but as yesterday had laid waste the whole south of Judah, almost to Hebron, with fire and sword,[4] killing the men, sweeping away the flocks and herds, and carrying off even the women and children, had, according to his own statement, killed Saul after his own armour-bearer had refused to do so. Death, instead of a reward, was the only return for such an act, in the code of those ages.

To David's grief for the death of Saul and of Jonathan, the ideal of friendship, we owe one of the finest odes in Hebrew poetry. It was known in after times as the Song of the Bow,[5] and has come down to us as a gift from David to the youth of Judah and Israel, which he himself taught them to sing as one of the national lyrics.[6]

"Thy glory,[7] O Israel,
Lies slain on thy heights.
Ah! how are the heroes fallen!

[1] Both men and women wore armlets. Num. xxxi. 50. The kings of Egypt likewise wore them, and so did Assyrian generals.

[2] 1 Sam. xxxi. 3-5. [3] 2 Sam. iv. 10. [4] 1 Sam. xxx. 14.

[5] So Gesenius, De Wette, and Keil. See verse 22.

[6] 2 Sam. i. 18. "Israel" is supplied by Graetz. It is used instead of "Judah" in a MS. of the Septuagint.

[7] The Syriac and Ewald translate it the gazelle, or wild roe, in allusion to Saul. Graetz translates it "the glory," as referring to the slain of all Israel.

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Whisper it not in Gath,[1]
Tell it not in the streets of Askelon;[1]
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult!

Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let no dew come upon you, or rain;
Let no fruitful fields on your heights yield offerings;[2]
For there the shield of the heroes has been stained,[3] (with blood and dust,)
The shield (also) of Saul!
The weapons of him who was anointed with oil!—
The bow of Jonathan,
Which never resounded
Without drinking the blood of the slain,
And piercing the fat of the mighty:
The sword of Saul
Which was sheathed only when satisfied!

Saul and Jonathan,
Loved and loving in their lives,
Even in death were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles,
Braver than lions!

Ye daughters of Israel,
Weep for Saul!
Who clothed you in purple, to your delight;
Who hung your apparel with golden adornments.
Ah! how are the heroes fallen in battle!
On thy high places (Gilboa) is Jonathan slain!

Woe is me, for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Dear wast thou to me beyond words;
Wonderful was thy love to me,
More than man's love of woman.

How have the heroes fallen!
How have the mighty men of war perished!"[4]

[1] The chief towns of the Philistines.
[2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 225, incorporated with Furrer, *Palästina*, p. 260. So, Erdmann
[3] Not "cast away."
[4] Literally "instruments" = Saul, Jonathan, and the slain of the host.

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But grief at the national calamity, that had for the time overthrown the monarchy, and given the country into the hands of the "uncircumcised," could not be allowed to paralyze the action needed, especially at such a moment. Unfortunately, David's alliance with Achish, though only nominal, had temporarily lessened his influence with his countrymen to such an extent, that, though the whole land had sought to have him as king in times gone by,[1] no voice was now heard, even from Judah, his own tribe, calling him to the vacant throne. He had therefore to regain his lost popularity before any aggressive steps were possible. Always shrewd in his public relations, his first act towards this was to send gifts from the booty taken from the Amalekites,[2] to the different towns of the Negeb,[3] at once to repay their friendliness in the past and to propitiate them for the future. The favour shewn him by Samuel; the presence with him of the prophet Gad and of the high priest Abiathar; his noble lyrics, and hymns; his marriage with the daughter of Saul; his great deeds in war from the day of Ephes-dammim to his flight from Nob; and, not least, the strong force he had organized and now led, with its famous heroes—the pride of all Israel—must have told in his favour. But they led to no popular action on his behalf. He resolved, therefore, after consulting the Urim and Thummim, to go to Hebron, uninvited, and make it his centre in the future. As an ancient

[1] 2 Sam. iii. 17. [2] See p. 204.

[3] The position of the towns thus rewarded shews on how small a theatre the actions of Jewish history were transacted. "Bethel," or rather Bethul, is not the Bethel in Benjamin, but probably the small village Beit Aula, about five miles north of Hebron. Jattir is the present Athir, in the hills near Socoh; Eshtemoa is now Es Semua, in the uplands south of Hebron; the name of Aroer survives in that of the ruin *Ararah*, twelve miles east of Beersheba. So with the other places named: they are all hamlets, towns, or villages of the uplands of southern Judæa, dotted over a surface not so large as a small English county. 1 Sam. xxx. 26-31.

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holy city, the territory of the famous hero Caleb in the old days of the Conquest, and the capital of Judah, in which the chief men of the tribe resided, it was best suited for his plans. Besides, it lay out of the range of the Philistine occupation, and was in no danger of invasion. Before coming prominently on the great theatre of events, he had to see what Saul's party would do, and to wait till his strength enabled him to attack the victors of Gilboa. Taking with him, therefore, his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, and his 600 men with their families, he settled in the venerable city. A footing thus obtained, his personal qualities and the influence of friends soon won over to him the elders of Judah, who before long were glad to put at their head a fellow tribesman [1] so famous. The death of Saul, moreover, opened the way for independent action, such as the pride of Judah craved, and once chief, David was soon chosen as king; the tribe confirming the election in a popular assembly.[2] Northern and Central Palestine were still entirely in the hands of the Philistines. Vast numbers of the population had fled in terror to the other side of the Jordan,[3] leaving their cities and towns, without an attempt to defend them, to fall into the hands of the enemy. Judah almost alone had escaped, by its southern position, and in the wreck of the state might well desire an independent leader, who should save it, at least, from the universal ruin. The claim of the house of Saul, moreover, was subordinate to popular election; for mere legitimacy had not yet superseded the free action of the national will. As among our own ancestors down to the time of the Conqueror, the king held his throne not by descent, but by the vote of the people, and Judah was, therefore, justified in

[1] 2 Sam. ii. 4. [2] *Ibid.* [3] 1 Sam. xxxi. 7.

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acting for itself in this matter in a time of such utter national disorganization. It is quite possible, however, that, besides these considerations, a feeling of haughty superiority, which claimed pre-eminence among the tribes, had its own force. Nor can David be blamed if he accepted a dignity which opened the way to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose for which he had been anointed by Samuel.

That Hebron should have been left undisturbed by the Philistines, so as to be a secure centre for David's new-born petty kingdom, seems strange, for a pass leads up from the sea-coast plains, through the hills, directly to it. The bottom is rough and narrow, with a torrent bed occupying it, in one part, but there is a fine spring bursting from the hillside, about half-way to Hebron—a great matter in such a thirsty land. The hills are covered with myrtle and other bushes and plants, but there is, now, no road, though traces of a narrow Roman one remain, and the whole journey is lonely and forbidding. Yet, as a gate into the hills, it lay always open, and it is hard to imagine why it was not used, as it leads directly from the Philistine country to the southern parts round Hebron.

In that venerable place—very small, according to our notions—David was to spend seven and a half years,[1] before he was finally king over the united nation. Through the great arches in the two square towers, its outer and inner gates, he must often have passed, or, at least, through their predecessors; past the great square pool, on the left as you go out, he and his band must often have marched; the open valley east and west, and the slopes across it, all, alike, dotted with olives, and fertile beyond most landscapes in Palestine, must often have delighted his love of nature in

[1] 2 Sam. v. 5.

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their beauty; and he must often have looked up, when returning, on the lines of flat-roofed houses, rising over each other, on the gray hillside. Meanwhile, he carefully increased his influence, as opportunity offered. Hearing the valiant act of the men of Jabesh Gilead in carrying off the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from their dishonourable exposure on the wall of Bethshean, he sent messengers to them, thanking them for their deed, promising to requite it, and at the same time telling them of his election by Judah as its king. As usual with Eastern chiefs and princes, marriages also played a great part in this diplomatic policy. Four wives were added to his household from different parts of the country—the first of them Maacah,[1] the daughter of Talmai, chief of the old native population of Geshur, a section of the wild and rugged district of the Lejah, in the north-east corner of Bashan, bordering on the territory of Damascus, and never conquered by the tribe of Manasseh,[2] in whose bounds it lay. Is it too much to think that her son, Absalom, born at Hebron, may have inherited from her his wild lawlessness, so natural in the child of an Arab mother from the wild frontier of Aram? Of Haggith—"the dancer"—David's second new wife, we know nothing, except that she was the mother of Adonijah, who, like Absalom, was famed for his beauty. His next wife, Abital—"the child of the dew"—is known only as the mother of an obscure prince called Shephatiah. Eglah—"the heifer"—the fourth new wife, was, according to a strange Hebrew tradition, no other than Michal, Saul's daughter, the wife of his youth. It is added that she died when Ithream, her son, was born.[3]

[1] Maacah is the name of a small kingdom in the neighbourhood of Geshur Deut. iii. 14. Josh. xii. 5. [2] Josh. xiii. 13. Comp. 1 Chron. ii. 23.
[3] Jer. Targ. on 2 Sam. iii. 5; vi. 23. Michal was childless

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The chiefs of Saul's army who escaped from the defeat at Gilboa, had fled to the east of the Jordan. Among these, Abner, the cousin of Saul, and the head of his forces, proved splendidly faithful to the fallen house. Taking the youngest of Saul's four sons, Eshbaal—"the man of Baal"—latterly known as Ishbosheth—"the man of shame"[1] or "humiliation,"—he proclaimed him king; choosing for his capital the ancient sanctuary of Mahanaim, on the east of the Jordan, north-west of the Jabbok, on the border between Gad and Manasseh, and beyond the reach of the Philistines, or, possibly, now represented by the heap of ruins called Mahunh, fourteen miles south-east of Beth-shean, and near Jabesh Gilead. If venerable associations could have strengthened the new throne, those of such a spot must have done so, for it was here that the vision of the two hosts of angels was vouchsafed to Jacob on his return journey from Haran. It was, moreover, judiciously chosen as to its situation, for the great caravan road from the Red Sea to Damascus seems to have passed through it. But Ishbosheth was too weak and irresolute for his position. Though thirty-five years old at his father's death,[2] and his legitimate heir, according to Eastern rules of succession,[3] he was from the first only a puppet in the hands of Abner, who, however, bore himself as a thoroughly loyal subject, though in fact the virtual king. If any lingering wish to

[1] The dislike of the name Baal in that of a Hebrew prince seems to have led to the change, though the same meaning was, in the opinions of most scholars, retained. Bosheth is supposed to have been, in fact, a word of contempt for Baal. So, Jerubbaal was changed into Jerubbesheth (2 Sam. xi. 21), and Meribbaal into Mephibosheth (2 Sam. iv. 4. 1 Chron, viii. 34; ix. 40). These three cases were all in Saul's family. Vaihinger, however, thinks Bosheth, which means "humiliation," "overthrow," as well as "shame," was the name given to Saul's children after the final ruin of their father's dynasty. He quotes in support of this Ps. xxxv. 4; cxxxii. 18 Herzog, vol. vii. p. 83.

[2] *Dict. of Bible.* Vaihinger, seemingly in error, speaks of him as 40.

[3] Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, was by these rules, ineligible.

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have David over them still remained among the people after the battle of Gilboa, it was quickly suppressed by Abner's vigorous action on behalf of Ishbosheth. Organizing what force he could, that brave and generous soldier, slowly but steadily, won back much of the country west of the Jordan from the Philistines. From the first the eastern tribes had recognized his master. Step by step he conquered for him the district of Geshur,[1] Esdraelon, Ephraim, Benjamin—Saul's own land—till, at last, after a struggle of five years, he could speak of him as king over all Israel, except the tribe of Judah.[2] That he should have been able to accomplish so much could have been possible, however, only from warm affection felt by the nation at large, outside Judah, for the house of Saul, and its existence, after such disasters, speaks strikingly for the tender memories Saul had left behind him.

Brought thus, at last, face to face with David, and conscious of the weakness that must rise from the division of the kingdom, Abner at once foresaw and dreaded the outbreak of civil war. Neither David nor Ishbosheth would resign, and, indeed, it is questionable whether their chief men, Joab and Abner, were willing to sink into obscurity. There was, moreover, a jealousy between Judah and the other tribes, which hindered union. Ephraim had always been haughty and overbearing, as the representative of Joseph; and Judah, which was despised as a race of peasants, had only latterly allied itself closely with its brethren. The sword, therefore, alone could decide the future, though

[1] By mistake written "Ashur," 2 Sam. ii. 9.

[2] 2 Sam. ii. 10, speaks of Ishbosheth as forty when he began to reign over all Israel, and of his reigning two years. But we know that David reigned more than seven years at Hebron, and began his reign over Israel at the death of Ishbosheth which would make the latter thirty-five at the battle of Gilboa.

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why David should have allowed himself to take this attitude towards the legitimate heir to the throne is hard to understand. The way could assuredly have been opened to him without this division of the kingdom, which might have anticipated that which rent the nation under Rehoboam. His refusal to acknowledge Ishbosheth must, we fear, be set down to a very human motive—the unwillingness to play a subordinate part where the highest position seemed possible, and the petty throne at Hebron was already held by him. The blood shed in this civil strife was a sacrifice to his resolution to displace the rightful heir to the throne of the nation, and rule in his place, on the strength of his nomination to it by Samuel.

The advantage in the contest thus inevitable seems to have been from the first with Judah. Though outnumbered by two-thirds, it was united; while the tribes under Ishbosheth were torn by internal rivalries. There was no band in his forces like the valiant 600 who followed David. Over the wide kingdom of Israel, moreover, there was only the weak, unwarlike Ishbosheth, named by Abner as king, living far from the centre of affairs, beyond the Jordan, never consecrated by a prophet, so far as we know; while Judah could boast of David, anointed as king by the great Samuel, the hero of the land from his youth, a trained and skilful warrior, an able and energetic statesman, who from his seat at Hebron could himself direct everything.

Hence when war actually broke out between the houses of Saul and David, the results were steadily unfavourable to the former, in spite of the greater numbers of its adherents.[1] Few details have been preserved, but it would seem that Judah, under the leadership of Joab, gradually won from

[1] 2 Sam. iii. 1.

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Israel, under Abner, parts of Benjamin and Dan: for the towns of Zareah and Eshtaol, which had belonged to Dan; the "town of the woods," Kirjath-jearim, whither the Ark had been brought on its recovery from the Philistines; and Mizpeh, on its height, where Saul had been anointed as king, with other towns of Benjamin, were from this time incorporated with Judah.[1] At last the territory of Judah reached Gibeon, on the north-west, a place belonging to retainers of Saul, and the seat of the Tabernacle after Nob had perished.

Known now as El Jib, it lies east of Bethhoron, on an isolated hill, the limestone beds of which are perfectly level, and form step-like terraces, cultivated in their slovenly way by the villagers. In old times the position must have been very strong, but a few guns from the rounded heights east of it would, nowadays, force its surrender very quickly. The rock has been scarped in some places to make the defence easier, and there is a covered way, with various openings atop, to rich springs at the foot: a tunnel, in fact, to let the inhabitants have water under any circumstances. No fewer than eight smaller springs burst from the hill, besides a much larger one on the south, which flows into a tank thirty feet long, seven feet wide, and the same in height, which is at the bottom of the hill subway. The water is three or four feet deep and is beautifully clear. There are still other springs, one of which flows out of a scarp on the rock into a tank in the limestone eleven feet long and seven broad. This may have been the pool to which the sacred narrative refers; if indeed it be not a still larger one, though some think it of later date, fifty-nine feet long and thirty-six feet wide. The scenery round Gibeon

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 230.

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is very pleasant, hill and plain stretching out in attractive interchange to the west, south, and north, while the hills leading to Bethel run to the east. With so much water it must have been a charming spot, when there was a dense, industrious population.

Fierce struggles for its possession had been often renewed, till, finally, Abner, to spare further effusion of blood, proposed that the matter should be decided by a combat of twelve men from each host. Goliath had long before demanded a similar fight of single champions, and Joab now accepted the contest invited. Twelve men from David's chosen band forthwith stepped out and were met by twelve Benjamites; but the issue was unexpected. The twelve Benjamites, with the dexterous use of their left hand, for which the tribe had long been famous, seized, each, the head of his adversary with the one hand, and ran him through the side by a sword-thrust with the other. But the men of Judah, equally dexterous, had on the instant acted similarly with their foes, and thus the whole twenty-four fell at the same moment.[1] At such a sight the two main bodies could not be kept apart. A fierce battle arose, in which Abner and his men were beaten and fled. Then occurred one of the sad episodes of such warfare. Three of David's nephews or cousins—Joab, the eldest, Abishai, and Asahel, the youngest, the darling of his brothers—were in David's force, and joined in the pursuit of Israel. Asahel, especially, "light of foot as a wild roe," and rash as swift, singled out Abner, and, refusing the mighty warrior's re-

[1] Scott, in the *Fair Maid of Perth*, relates an incident in Scottish history not unlike this. Quoting from the chronicler Fordun, he mentions a feud, in 1396, between two clans, which it was proposed to settle by a combat of thirty from each. Twenty men of the one clan and eleven of the other fell almost at once. *Fair Maid of Perth*, preface.

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peated entreaty to turn back, and not force him to a deed which would raise a blood feud between him and Joab, pressed closer and closer, till Abner, to save his own life, thrust the sharp butt[1] end of his spear fiercely behind him and pierced the pursuer through and through. But the sight of their youthful hero lying dead only infuriated Joab and his band the more, and the wild chase of the men of Israel continued as fiercely as ever, till Abner's band, despairing of escape, and determined to sell their lives dearly, gathered close round their leader on the top of a hill. From this height Abner, shouting aloud, demanded that the pursuit should cease, to prevent the breaking out of a war of extermination; and prevailed on Joab to call back his men. But, even in doing so, his hard, relentless nature broke out. "As God liveth," he cried back to Abner, "unless thou hadst spoken, my people would have followed you till the morning."[2] Only nineteen men of David's force, exclusive of Asahel, had fallen; but Abner had lost three hundred and sixty.[3] Taking with him the corpse of his brother, to bury it in the family tomb at Bethlehem, Joab hastened back with his men to Hebron so swiftly that they reached it by daybreak. Abner, descending into the gorge of Jordan, and striking up that of the Jabbok, made equal speed towards Mahanaim.

The unhappy event at Gibeon seems to have led to a virtual truce between Judah and Israel; the war, which was caused wholly by David's determination to crush the house of Saul for his own elevation, nominally continuing, but active hostilities being suspended.[4] Two years passed thus;

[1] The butt end of the spear was pointed to thrust into the ground when the weapon was not in use.

[2] This is the substance of his words.

[3] 2 Sam. ii. 30, 31.

[4] Keil, *Komment.*, p. 236.

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Judah, under the fine genius of David, still increasing its power; Israel, under the weak Ishbosheth, losing what it had gained.[1] A fatal quarrel of its shadow-king with Abner, the pillar of his house, at last brought matters to an issue. Among other members of Saul's family at Mahanaim was his concubine Rizpah,[2] apparently a descendant of a famous Hivite chief, Aiah, or Ajah,[3] "the falcon." She had borne Saul two sons—Armoni, "born in the king's house," and Mephibosheth—but was still young and attractive. Rightly or wrongly—perhaps only through the whisper of idle gossip—Ishbosheth had been led to believe that Abner had married her; a serious matter in an Eastern court, where alliance with the wife or concubine of a deceased king is considered as a step towards the throne.[4] That he should thus be accused of treachery by his master after such multiplied proofs of fidelity, stung him to the heart; for, even had he wished to marry into Saul's family, he deserved the honour far more than David. Turning on the helpless king in fierce anger, he denounced such treatment at his hands. "Am I," said he, "only a contemptible dog's head?[5] Am I not fighting against Judah to support the house of Saul thy father, his brethren, and his adherents, instead of delivering thee into the hands of David, as I might have done, and yet do you charge me with a fault concerning this woman? The curse of God be on me if I do not henceforth carry out the will of Jehovah, as sworn to David, and trans-

[1] 2 Sam. iii. 1.

[2] = The glowing coal.

[3] Gen. xxxvi. 24. In this verse, for "mules" read "hot-springs." 1 Chron. i. 40.

[4] Michaelis, *Mos. Recht*, §54.

[5] The dog is regarded in the East with aversion and disgust, from the frequently filthy nature of its food, and from its being ceremonially unclean. See Isa. lxvi. 3. Matt. vii. 6. Dogs are the scavengers of Eastern towns, and thus prevent pestilence; but though permitted to enter houses to eat the crumbs that fall from the table, are not encouraged as with us, or kept in the house as pets. They belong rather to the town, and are everywhere a nuisance as well as a blessing.

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fer the kingdom to him, from the house of Saul, and set up his throne over Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba."[1] Utterly powerless before his imperious vizier, Ishbosheth could not challenge even such defiant treason. His fate was sealed. Overtures were forthwith sent by secret messengers from Abner to David, proposing to transfer his allegiance to him, and to use his influence to bring over all Israel. It was clearly the beginning of the end with Ishbosheth; but David, however pleased at Abner's defection in his own favour, was too cautious to act on his advances without a proof of their honesty. He would only open negotiations if Michal, the wife of his youth, were sent back to him. She had been given by Saul to Phalti, or Phaltiel, a man of Gallim, perhaps to gain his support; and it was desirable that she should be restored, at once for his own sake, from a shrewd wish to have at least a nominal connection with the house of Saul, and also to test Abner's power and sincerity. Sending a message to this effect to Ishbosheth, the long-lost wife was at once surrendered, and an excuse made for a visit of Abner to David, as her conductor to him. Phaltiel's grief weighed nothing in such a case. Following her, weeping, as far as Bahurim, perhaps on the Mount of Olives,[2] he only turned back at the rude command of Abner, and Michal went passively on towards Hebron.

Communications had been opened by Abner with the elders of Israel, and even of Benjamin, in the interval between his first message to David and this visit, to decide the conditions on which all the tribes would transfer their allegiance from Mahanaim to Hebron. He and twenty atten-

[1] Erdmann. Ewald. Keil. Thenius.

[2] Possibly Beit Jala, near Bethlehem. Conder, *Handbook*, p. 411. But this hardly suits the proposed identification of Bahurim as on the Mount of Olives. *Rept. Pal. Fund*, Jan., 1881, p. 45.

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dants who had come with him, were received with marked favour, and honoured by a feast, which seems, in effect, to have been a solemn ratification of the arrangements proposed. Afraid of the rough fierceness and jealousy of Joab, his chief warrior, David had sent him out of the way, in pursuit of some Arabs or Philistines who had been harrying the neighbourhood, but he unfortunately returned, laden with spoil, a short time after Abner had been dismissed by David with every expression of friendship. The news that the chief supporter of Ishbosheth had been at Hebron, and had been feasted, at once roused the worst passions of the savage. He had not only the grudge of Asahel's blood to avenge, but very probably feared that Abner would supplant him in his position and in David's favour. Sending a hurried message after him, therefore, as if from the king, he induced him to return, but only to carry out a treacherous design. Meeting him in the shadow of the deeply-arched gate of Hebron, and pretending to wish a secret conversation, he drew him aside, and forthwith ran him through with his sword. He had at once avenged his dead brother, and slain a possible rival.

David's grief at this foul murder was profound and sincere. Rending his own garments, and putting on sackcloth, he forced Joab to do the same, and to walk before the bier, with the great ones of the kingdom: himself reverently following it. He who alone was at once able and ready to unite all Israel under one standard, and thus secure David the throne for which he had kindled a bloody civil war, had been remorselessly butchered on the eve of his rendering so great a service! Suspicion might fall on himself of having allured Abner, the single support of Ishbosheth, to his destruction, and this might turn the tribes against him.

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It seemed, moreover, to stain the steps of his future elevation with blood, and to involve him in the basest crime, when with his whole heart he was striving, even while acting in so doubtful a way politically, to lead a worthy private life.[1] All he could do was to honour the dead by such a burial as should vindicate his own innocence in respect to him. Refusing food all the day, he lamented him with tears at the grave, moving the whole assembly to weeping by his sadness :

"Should Abner," wailed he, "have died like a good-for-naught!
Thy hands were never bound (like one),
Thy feet were never touched by fetters ;
Thou hast fallen by the hand of wickedness!"[2]

But that such a deed should have been possible revealed only too vividly the power of Joab. David could venture to denounce him in his own trusted circle, but dared not even reproach him to his face. "Know," said he, to his private friends, "that a great prince in Israel has fallen to-day, but I am too weak to avenge him, for I am not yet anointed king over the tribes, and the sons of Zeruiah are more powerful than I. May Jehovah repay the doer of this deed according to his wickedness, for I am not able."

The news of Abner's murder had a widespread result For a time Israel, abiding loyal to the memory of Saul, withdrew from further relations with one who seemed to have basely murdered a man so much honoured. But this hesitation passed off as the truth became known. To Ishbosheth himself, the death of his great supporter was fatal. Knowing nothing of his treasonable advances to David, he felt only his loss, and sank into listless dejection. Who should

[1] See David's rules for his conduct. Ps. ci. 3, ff.
[2] 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34.

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now defend the land against the Philistines, or even against David? But the end of his troubles was near. His bodyguard, like that of his father, was taken from his own tribe of Benjamin. Amongst the Benjamites, however, was numbered the Canaanite population of Beeroth, the present Bireh, one of the towns in league with Gibeon, whose citizens Saul had so ruthlessly murdered. It lay a day's journey from Jerusalem, on the main road to Shechem and the north. Alarmed by the massacre, the people of Beeroth had fled to Gittaim, a place unidentified, but apparently near their own town. Two of their number, Baanah and Rechab, brothers, had wandered to Mahanaim, and had been enrolled in the bodyguard of Ishbosheth, against whom they bore a deadly grudge, as a son of the murderer of their kinsmen. This blood feud they now determined to carry out by killing Ishbosheth; feeling sure that David would reward them for doing so. He had winked, as it seemed, at the murder of Abner, and would therefore be pleased with their act. Ishbosheth's palace, apparently, was not unlike some large country houses still found in Palestine, built round the four sides of a hollow square; chamber side by side of chamber, each with its own door; their roofs of rough stems of trees, over and under which, earth had been stamped hard; huge corn-bins, also of earth, leaning against the front walls beneath.[1] The murderers chose the heat of the day, when the king would be taking the rest usual with all, at noon, in such a climate. In the Hebrew text they are said to have gone into the inner court on pretence of getting wheat; but in the Greek Bible the account is more circumstantial. The woman that kept the gate of the house, it tells us, had been cleaning wheat, but had fallen asleep,

[1] Furrer, *Palästina*, p. 114.

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and thus the murderers were able to slip past her,[1] and enter the king's chamber. There they stabbed him, and, having cut off his head, took it with them, and fled with all haste to David at Hebron, with their ghastly burden. But he who had ordered the wild Amalekite to be killed for his pretended death-thrust to Saul when already fallen, was not likely to spare men who had slain a king in his bed, in cold blood. "As the Lord liveth," said he, "who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity, they shall die." A nod to his men around sufficed, and Baanah and Rechab ceased to live. Ordering their hands and feet, the instruments of their guilt and of their flight to Hebron, to be cut off, the dishonoured corpses were forthwith hung up over "the pool in Hebron;" one of the two tanks still existing; probably that at the bottom of the valley, south of the town; a huge reservoir, 84 feet square and 54 deep, solidly built of hewn stones. The head of Ishbosheth was reverently laid in the grave of Abner; a mark of respect than which nothing could be better fitted to gain the hearts of the tribes at large.

The only male member of Saul's family now surviving was Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, a boy of twelve,[2] lame of both feet, who could only reign, for years to come, under some one's guardianship. Dreading the perils of a royal minority, the collective tribes had, thus, no choice but to give their adhesion to David, the one man left who could protect and rule the nation. A great deputation of elders from all Israel waited therefore on him at Hebron, announcing the popular decision; their tribesmen in large numbers attending them.[3] With a revived sense of national unity, they proclaimed themselves as of "his bone and flesh;"

[1] Graetz, Ewald, Thenius, and Wellhausen adopt this reading.
[2] Eisenlohr says 8 to 10. *Das Volk Israel*, p. 239.
[3] 1 Chron. xii 23-37.

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even Benjamin, Saul's own tribe, sending three thousand men to represent it. The joy was universal, for the fame of David was again on all lips. The homage and fidelity to a new monarch shewn in modern nations, on the part of public servants, by taking a solemn oath, have been expressed in the East, from the earliest ages, by gifts presented by the population at large, to their new ruler. Such offerings, in the simple forms alone possible in a rustic community like Israel, now poured in from every part; even Issachar, Zebulon, and Naphtali contributing freely from the farthest north.[1]

Vast quantities of the thin, dry bread of the country; loads of meal or flour,[2] of figs pressed into cakes, and of raisins, arrived on long trains of asses, camels, mules, and oxen; wine and oil, and cattle and sheep, in herds and flocks, filled the Hebron valley: at once a demonstration of the unanimous election of David, and provision for the usual feast of the Accession, which was held for three days at Hebron, with unprecedented rejoicings. The narrative reminds us of the exciting scenes of early Teutonic history, when the free-men, under the leadership of their dukes and chiefs, gathered on the plains of the Rhine, and chose as king, through their representatives, the hero they trusted and admired.[3] The men of Israel, with one consent, had assembled, ready armed for war, to "turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of Jehovah."[4] But liberty had always been dear to the tribes, and securities for its continuance were demanded from their favourite, even in this hour of excitement. It was only after he had made an agreement with their elders, like that secured by Samuel

[1] 1 Chron. xii. 40.
[2] "And meal" (1 Chron. xii. 40) = things made of flour. Zunz.
[3] Eisenlohr, *Das Volk Israel*, vol. i. p. 329.
[4] 1 Chron. xii. 23.

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from Saul, that he was finally anointed a second time as king.[1] He was now in his thirty-eighth year.[2] His proudest wish was at last realized. From a shepherd lad he had risen, first, to be the head of a tribe, and, now, he had become ruler of the whole nation. The old heart-burning between Judah and Ephraim was for the moment forgotten, and the divisions of the past had ended in the union of the entire people. Judah now eagerly joined in a movement in which its pride and ambition were fully gratified by its elevation over its rival Ephraim, jealousy of that great tribe having kept it aloof from Saul, and ready for the overtures of David to set up a petty separate kingdom of Judah alone, at Hebron. The priesthood and prophets ranged themselves on his side; not, as in the case of Saul, against him. Hitherto he had had with him, in Abiathar, the representative of the younger branch of the house of Aaron—that of Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son, from whom Eli had descended. Now, the tribe of Levi sent 4,600 of its members to honour him, while Jehoiada, the high priest of the branch of Eleazar, the third son of Aaron, came at the head of 3,700 priests. Benaiah, his son, a famous warrior, had joined David long before, and Zadok, the future high priest under Solomon, did fealty to the new king, with twenty-two chiefs of his father's clan, and, apparently, nine hundred men.[3] Everywhere "men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do," hastened to acknowledge David.[4] He had long enjoyed the presence and counsel of the prophet Gad, but, henceforth, the order had a second representative at his side—the illustrious Nathan. Nor was

[1] 2 Sam. ii. 4; v. 3. [2] 2 Sam. v. 4, 5.

[3] 1 Chron. xii. 26. There were 4,600 of the tribe of Levi, of whom Jehoiada brought 3,700, leaving 900 for Zadok.

[4] 1 Chron. xii. 32.

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it a slight matter that the new king chose such men for his habitual guides and advisers.

Nothing could be more propitious than the dawn of the new reign. All the tribes were finally united as a nation; the various parties among them reconciled, and the popular desires in the way of realization. David stood before all, as king by their own choice, and thus the principle had been asserted that the crown of Israel was no mere hereditary appanage of a family, but the gift of the people freely assembled. Would David keep to his coronation oath? Would he fulfil their expectations? They did not need to wait long to be able to decide respecting this. His genius and statesmanship were seen in his first step.

Hebron, in the far south, was too remote from the centre of the country for a capital. But, on the borders of the territories of Judah and Benjamin was the stronghold of Jebus, which had apparently borne the name of Jerusalem in the fifteenth century before Christ, when it was the seat of an Egyptian governor, and Palestine in great part, if not as a whole, was a dependency of the Pharaohs, in much the same way as India is now a dependency of Great Britain. It had originally been settled by a mixed population of Hittites and Amorites,[1] and had for a short time, in the first rush of the Hebrew invasion, been held by Judah, but had soon regained its independence, though numbers of Benjamites and members of the tribe of Judah still made it their home. For many generations, however, its dominant citizens had been a small class known as Jebusites—"the conquerors"—of uncertain local nationality.[2] Defying capture, now, for centuries, it had come to be regarded as

[1] Ezek. xvi. 3.

[2] Jebus = trodden under foot = the conquered. Jebusites = the conquerors Mühlau und Volck, p. 322.

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impregnable. Its position, in fact, was naturally very strong, for it was built on twin hills, known as Zion and Moriah; the latter famous, for ages, as the seat of a temple and oracles; the name of Zion being older than the Israelitish invasion of Palestine. It may be, indeed, that only Moriah and its southern spur, Ophel, was included in the actual town, but Zion was apparently embraced by its defences; perhaps to use its surface for crops, in case of an attack. In laying out the burial-ground near Bishop Gobat's school, on Mount Zion, vast masses of rubbish had to be removed, and in doing so the scarped rock, cut into a strong defence by the ancient Jebusites, was brought to light. There is a broad terrace, ending on the north in a perpendicular face of rock, carefully cut. On the top of this, remains of the ancient city wall were found, when it was first laid bare, and a number of hewn stones lay around. There are, besides, rock-hewn steps, and a number of rock cisterns, with the covering stones still on them, shewing the round hole through which the daughters of Jebus used to draw up the water, long before David's time. Such defensive works indicate that this part, at any rate, was included in the city at that time, but it could not have covered Moriah to any great extent, as the deep valley of the Cheesemakers lay between it and Zion, and was still unconnected with it, after David captured it. Besides, we know that part of the top of Moriah was neither built on nor enclosed, but served as Araunah's threshing floor. Both Zion and Moriah, moreover, were cut off from attack on all sides except the north-west by deep valleys, into which Jebus looked down from a safe height, while walls and defences, as we have seen, strengthened every part in any respect weak. On this spot, David, with a masterly instinct, fixed as his future capital.

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Having first proposed its peaceable surrender, perhaps in return for payment of money, he received only an insulting refusal, its chiefs daring him to attack it, and boasting that the blind and the lame were enough to keep him out of a place so strong.[1] Such a taunt sealed its fate. Yet the height of the two hills above the valleys beneath made the task of assailing it formidable, for, on the south, they swell up three hundred and three feet over the valley of Hinnom; two hundred and forty-two feet on the south-east; and a hundred and fifty-nine on the west.[2] The torrent beds of Kedron and Hinnom are, indeed, at their lowest part, about five hundred feet below the hills on which Jerusalem is built. An order for its escalade was, nevertheless, at once issued: the spot selected being one where there was some secret passage known in our version as "the gutter," the word thus translated being found only once besides in the Old Testament, and there rendered "waterspouts."[3] Josephus explains it as meaning "a moat," telling us that the Jebusites set the blind, lame, and maimed, on the walls in mockery of David's attempt on the city, for, though he took the lower part of it by storm, the citadel still held out. To any one, therefore, who should first cross the moat and get at the enemy, he made the greatest promises.[4] It is hard to imagine, however, that there could ever have been a moat round either Zion or Moriah, for there is nothing but rock and no traces shew themselves of the implied excavation. It seems much more probable that Joab took advantage of some hidden aqueduct, to creep upwards to the town and thus surprise it. There is such a covered conduit at the foot of Mount Zion—hewn in the limestone just above the lowest

[1] 2 Sam. v. 8.
[2] Ordnance Survey Map.
[3] Ps. xlii. 7.
[4] Jos., *Ant.*, vii. 3, 1.

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part of the depression anciently known as the Tyropean valley, now filled up for ages. This winding aqueduct, twelve feet deep by four wide, is cut in the narrowest part of that valley just above its bed, and on the shelving base of the hill, out of the live rock.[1] Some have supposed that this, which would bring the attacking party out on Mount Zion, is the "watercourse" intended in the Bible narrative. Others, however, have fancied that Joab and his forlorn hope made use of the aqueduct still existing at the Fountain of the Virgin. A rock shaft rising from this, in the south-east of the Temple area, and thus connected with Ophel, the spur of Moriah, to the south, on which much of the Jerusalem of that day was built, has been thought by not a few the means of access to the town, of which Joab availed himself.

Sir C. Warren's account of it is as follows. After crawling through the Virgin's Fountain, when the water was unusually low, they had to pass through a tunnel fifty feet long, and then came on the "new passage," seventeen feet long, opening into the shaft. In this shaft they quickly reared a rough scaffolding to twenty feet above the bottom, and from this a second, twenty-seven feet in all, above the bottom. A third landing made, was thirty-eight feet above the bottom. About six feet above this, the shaft opened out to the west into a great cavern, up an ascent at an angle of forty-five degrees, covered with loose stones a foot in cube, on an average. At about thirty feet up this came a landing place in a cave twenty feet wide. Fifteen feet higher, they came to a level plateau. From this a passage, eight feet wide and from three to four feet high, ran for forty feet, where they found a wall, through a hole in which they

[1] *Report of Palestine Fund*, 1890, p. 195.

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squeezed. On the other side the passage sloped up again at an angle of forty-five degrees, the passage being two feet high. Pushing up this on their backs for fifty feet, they came to another wall, to block the passage, but getting through this, they came to a vaulted chamber, nine feet wide and twenty feet high and long. Next, came a pit, twenty feet deep, opening into a smaller one, eight feet deeper, and there all passage seemed to be blocked up. Lamps, jars, dishes, and charcoal were found in the vaulted chamber, which had been used as a refuge. It was subsequently found that a shaft from the hill above communicated with these works below, giving access to them and enabling the citizens to go down to the water, even when an enemy lay outside. This upper shaft is in all forty-five feet deep. The whole of the passages and chambers are cut in hard limestone rock. If, as seems probable, this was the way by which Joab scaled the city, he certainly deserved the reward he received.[1] Yet it has been used in our own day, for the same hostile end, for in 1834 the Fellahin actually got possession of Jerusalem for a time, entering by the sewer from the south-east, and thus reaching the Armenian quarter, near David Street.

The fierceness of one side of David's nature was keenly raised by the gibes of the head men of Jebus. They had sent him word that the lame, blind, and maimed were enough to defend the walls against him, and now, stung by this taunt, he ordered the volunteers who were setting out on the task of surmounting the defences, to hurl down the cliff, the poor creatures thus played off as a mock garrison—for they were hated of David's soul.[2] Before long the assailants emerged from their hidden approach, and the Hebrew

[1] *Recovery of Jerusalem*, 248.

[2] Ewald's rendering of 2 Sam. v. 8.

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war-cry soon rose triumphant from within Jebus. But, to David's mortification, Joab, the man whom of all others he would most eagerly have kept back, had won the honours of the attack. The Jebusites were permitted to remain on the eastern hill, Moriah,[1] the south of which was henceforth the royal residence, and became the City of David. Taught by his own success, however, he took care to build strong defences round the whole city, which Joab repaired throughout.[2] Long known as Jebus, the town now once more received the name of Jerusalem,[4] which it seems to have first had. A quarter, called, after the famous band of the six hundred, the House or Street of the Mighty Ones,[5] was set apart for that body, and was occupied by them and their families.

The choice of Jerusalem as his capital was no doubt, in part, determined by its virtually belonging to Judah, as well as by its strength. David could count on the loyalty of his own tribe, but he knew that Ephraim, its rival, could not be trusted. During the centuries of the Judges it had claimed the first place, with its two dependent tribes, Benjamin and Manasseh; and under both Gideon and Jephthah, though men of its kindred tribe Manasseh, it had resented with fierce jealousy and haughtiness their temporary and hard-won supremacy. Judah, envious of its assumed leadership of the nation under Saul, had sullenly stood aloof from that monarch. Seated among the central hills, in the richest part of Palestine, "the blessing had come on the head of Joseph," in Ephraim, his representative, and the splendour of its inheritance added to its overbearing pride.

[1] Moriah seems a name given afterwards by the Hebrews. It appears to mean the hill where Jehovah revealed Himself. Mühlau und Volck.

[2] Zion = the dry.

[3] 2 Sam. v. 9. 1 Chron. xi. 8.

[4] Jerusalem = Place of Peace.

[5] Neh. iii. 16.

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In Shechem and Samaria it possessed two sites, either of them worthy of forming the centre of the united land, and both afterwards, successively, the capitals of the Ten Tribes. But David wisely preferred the security of Jerusalem. Nor was it long before the wisdom of his choice was apparent, when the secession of Ephraim and the whole north, from his grandson, Rehoboam, left only Judah and part of Benjamin faithful to his house. Most probably he felt that a union of rivals, so bitterly hostile, could last only for a time, and prepared himself for the anticipated rupture by making Jerusalem his capital. Yet it may be asked whether there would have been any secession, had the choice of a central instead of a southern capital identified Ephraim more thoroughly with the dynasty, and, in a measure, soothed its pride.

In his mountain throne, as Jerusalem might well be called, David had added a city not to the nation alone, but, as it were, to the history of the world. Henceforth his race were to cling to it with a passionate love, only deepened by the lapse of time.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,"

said the exiled Psalmist at Babylon,

"Let my right hand forget her cunning;
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I do not think of thee:
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."[1]

Nor have ages diminished this supreme devotion to their famous capital, for, in every synagogue over the world, public prayers still rise, imploring that Jehovah, in mercy, would return to Jerusalem, His own city, and rebuild it

[1] Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6.

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for an everlasting glory.[1] The erection of the Temple drew towards the whole city a religious veneration. To the Psalmist, after the defeat of Sennacherib,[2] the thought that God was in the midst of it seemed a pledge that it should never be moved.[3] "God would help her when the morning dawned." The spring believed to burst from Moriah, the fancied source of the waters then filling the vast Temple cisterns, was to become a perennial river "whose streams would make glad the city of God; the holy place of the Tabernacle of the Most High."[4] There was no hill like Zion. Bashan might be a hill of God—high, and of many peaks[5]—but Zion was that which He had desired, and in which He would dwell for ever. Its elevation above the landscape around endeared it to the race. "Thither the tribes went up."[6] Hebron might be really higher, but it lay in an upland valley, and thus the sense of its lofty position was lost. But Jerusalem was approached from at least the east and west by a perpetual ascent, and seemed, when reached, to dominate the whole land. The ravines by which it is surrounded on three sides gave a completeness and connected isolation to all its parts which added to its charms. It was a city that is compact together.[7] Looking out from its walls, it seemed guarded by hills on every side. "The mountains were round about it"—Olivet, close at hand; farther off, Mizpeh; to the north, Gibeon and Ramah; on the south, the ridge towards Bethlehem; away to the east, the purple hills of Moab, everywhere, hills and mountains, higher or lower. Its natural features, its history, and its religious associations united to endear it to the Jew. Even in the first days of

[1] Isaac's *Customs of the Jews*, p. 211. [2] So, Hengstenberg, Ewald, and Hupfeld.
[3] Ps. xlvi. 5. [4] Ps. xlvi. 4.
[5] Ps. lxviii. 15, literally. [6] Ps. cxxii. 4. [7] Ps. cxxii. 3.

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its conquest, to love it was held an earnest of good,[1] and to-day the fondest desire of a godly Israelite is that he may die within its gates, or at least that some of its earth may be sprinkled over his coffin.

The capture of Jerusalem was the beginning of a grander national history. From that moment, David "went on growing great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him"[2] —a name of God unknown to the Pentateuch, Joshua, or Judges, but marking, from the time of its first introduction, in the opening story of Samuel, by its constant use, thenceforward, an ever increasing realization of the dependence of the nation on Jehovah as its defender against all its enemies.[3] One of his first steps, in addition to fortifying the city, was to build a palace worthy of such a capital. Jewish skill, however, was unequal to the task, nor did the country afford the large timber needed. Arrangements were, therefore, made with Hiram, king of Tyre,[4] to float rafts of cedar-beams down the coast from the forests of Lebanon, and to send masons and carpenters to erect the building. The Phœnician ruler had, indeed, sent envoys[5] to congratulate David on his accession and conquest of Jerusalem, and their visit had probably been utilized to set matters afoot for the construction of the palace. Its successful completion followed in due time, and seemed an additional proof that the kingdom had been firmly established by God.[6] Following his doubtful policy when first chosen king

[1] Ps. cxxii. 6. [2] 2 Sam. v. 10. [3] 1 Sam. i. 3.

[4] Thenius thinks it was Abital, the father of the Hiram who assisted Solomon in building the Temple. Josephus, quoting Menander of Ephesus, says that Hiram reigned 33 years. But as we find him still alive in the twentieth year of Solomon's reign, this would make his accession only 13 years before David's death at the age of seventy, and would require the incident of Bathsheba to have happened when David was a gray old man. It seems better, therefore, to suppose that Hiram's father is meant.

[5] 2 Sam. v. 11. Thenius. [6] 2 Sam. v. 12.

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at Hebron, David further sought to strengthen his position by additional marriages from the chief families of Jerusalem. But though he added to his dignity, according to Eastern ideas, by thus having a royal harem, he was unconsciously laying the foundation of unspeakable evil, to himself, his house, and to the nation.

Among other motives for seeking the friendship of David, Hiram very probably had been anxious to secure his help against the Philistines, who had once before conquered Phœnicia, and were still dangerous neighbours. Such, at least, they soon shewed themselves, again, to Israel. Roused by its seizure of the new capital, and alarmed at the possibilities of the future, under so warlike a leader, they again attacked the Hebrews with their whole forces.[1] But it was now no longer as it had been when David had no central fortress in which to await them. Shutting himself up in the castle of the city, he gathered round him a strong force, and awaited the fitting moment for action. At last this came. The Philistines had penetrated to the Valley of the Giants, south of the Valley of Hinnom, an open hollow rising between gray slopes and low rounded swells, in its ascent towards Bethlehem, but David burst upon them, at a place known from the result as Baal Perazim, "the place of defeats,"[2] in an attack swift and terrible as that of a mountain flood, and drove them back to the sea-plains in such utter confusion, that they abandoned their idols, which, as usual, they had brought into the field to secure their victory.[3] These, as became the king of a theocracy, were not

[1] "All the Philistines," 2 Sam. v. 17.

[2] Mühlau und Volck. Weiss thinks Baal Perazim meant originally "Baal of the Valley," and marked an ancient site of Baal worship, but was changed by David to mean "the place of breaches," *i.e.*, the place where he had burst through on his foes like a flood from the hills. See 1 Chron. xiv. 11. *David*, p. 157.

[3] 2 Sam. v. 21.

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carried off in triumph, to grace the Tabernacle, as the Ark had been borne away to the temple of Dagon, but, in compliance with the requirements of the Law, were contemptuously burned.[1] A second invasion soon followed, by the same pass, but it also was vigorously repulsed. Making a wide circuit, David suddenly took them in the rear, aided, in doing so, by the cover and rustling of a wood of mulberry trees, or, perhaps, aspens, or trembling poplars,[2] which enabled him to fall on them before they knew of his approach. The Valley of Rephaim, or "the giants," had hitherto been famous as a Philistine battle-field, and vaunted in its name Baal Perazim—the name, we may suppose, of a high place erected by them to Baal—for the many defeats wrought there upon Israel, but this crushing defeat, suffered by them, at length broke their power. Driving before them their forces, which had moved from Rephaim to Gibeon, north of Jerusalem, the Hebrews pursued them, with fierce slaughter, down the steep passes of Bethhoron, to Gezer, on the edge of the Maritime Plain, a royal Canaanitish city, the site of which has been discovered in recent years by M. Clermont Ganneau.[3] Examining closely the Tell el Jeser, a ridge east of Ekron, rising seven hundred feet above the Mediterranean, at a distance of fourteen miles inland, and standing in noteworthy isolation from the hills near, he found on the rocks an inscription in Hebrew —"Boundary of Gezer"—the writing being earlier than the Christian era. The hill is long and irregular, with terraces at the sides; kept up by a great wall of unhewn stones.

[1] Deut. vii. 5, 25. 1 Chron. xiv. 12.

[2] Dr. Royle (Kitto's *Cyclo.*) and Dr. Tristram. Eisenlohr calls them balsam trees, but the balsam does not grow on the high plateau of Central Palestine, which is too cold for it.

[3] *Revue Politique et Littéraire*, 1873, p. 939. Inscriptions found by M. Ganneau mark the exact limits of a Sabbath day's journey round Gezer.

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Near the east end is a square platform of earth, about two hundred feet on each side, sprinkled with blocks of stone. These are all that is left of Gezer. It was advantageously situated, having a fine spring on the east, while corn land reaches away towards the sea, from the foot of the hill. This lonely height was once covered with a town so considerable as to have been thought worthy to form part of the dowry of Pharaoh's daughter, when she became one of the queens of Solomon. There are wine-presses, tombs, and traces of houses cut in the rock, and signs of outlying villages, "the daughters" of the mother town, on the isolated smaller hills. The capture of such a place must therefore have been of great importance. Indeed, centuries later, the memory of these battles still remained fresh, for Isaiah speaks of Jehovah rising up as in Mount Perazim, and wroth as in the Valley of Gibeon.[1] But, with true humility, as became a theocratic king, David made no claim to these victories as wrought by his own might. Before both, he had consulted the Urim and Thummim, and his warriors stole on to the second, through the murmuring trees, in the firm belief that the whisper of the leaves was the footfall of Jehovah "marching" before them to smite down their enemies.[2] But repeated conflicts, in which David's heroes were to win their proudest laurels, were still to take place, before so fierce a nation as the Philistines was finally subdued. The battles of Perazim and Gibeon, however, so weakened them that he was, ere long, able to lay on them the ignominious yoke of tribute, they had hitherto imposed on Israel. Gath, the old capital of Achish, and the most important of the Philistine cities, passed into his hands, with its dependent district, and villages.[3] Such a conquest, to use the words of

[1] Isa. xxviii. 21. [2] 2 Sam. v. 24. Going = marching. [3] 1 Chron. xviii. 1.

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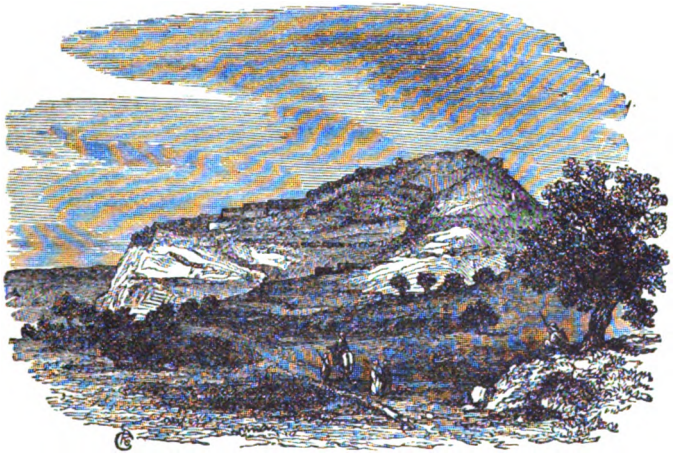
the sacred narrative, was no less than "the taking the bridle of their supremacy out of their hands" for ever.[1]

It is striking to notice in the case of Gath, what is so often met in the study of antiquity—how places once of great importance have long utterly vanished. Such has been the case with this famous Philistine town, the very site of which has given rise to many different conjectures.



TELL-ES-SAFIEH, THE SITE OF GATH, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST.
Major Conder, R.E.

The most probable identification is that which supposes it to have been built on the hill Tell-es-Safieh, which rises in striking isolation from the Philistine plain, to the height of six hundred and ninety-five feet on its eastern face, climbing to the elevation by a gradual slope, but sinking steeply on the other sides. When surrounded by walls it must have

[1] 2 Sam. viii. 1. Metheg-ammah = "the bridle of the arm," *i.e.*, the supremacy. Ewald. Bertheau. "The bridle of the chief or mother city," *i.e.*, "Gath" (the authority of their capital). Gesenius. Keil.

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formed an almost impregnable fortress, while its lofty position would make it an unrivalled "look-out" over the whole broad plain below. So naturally, indeed, does it lend itself to military purposes, that a strong castle—Blanche-garde—was built on it by the Crusaders, A.D. 1144, to protect the country round from incursions sent out by the enemy at Ascalon. Even this stronghold is gone: only a few stones of it remaining. The rest, no doubt, have been carried off to build into more or less modern constructions.

NOTE TO PAGE 228.—The east of the two hills on which Jerusalem stands was originally known as Zion, and was the seat of a Canaanite oracle before the Israelite conquest. The name Moriah is very seldom applied to it in Scripture, which almost always means the temple hill when it speaks of Zion. In our times, Zion means the western hill: Moriah that of the Temple, on the east of the present city.

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CHAPTER IX.

ORGANIZATION OF THE KINGDOM.

THE development of the new monarchy, thus triumphant against its once formidable enemies—the Philistines—perhaps with the assistance of Tyre, was specially favoured by the circumstances of the times. Egypt, formerly so powerful, had sunk into weakness under the last kings of the Twentieth Dynasty—successors of the great Rameses—and Assyria, which under Tiglath Pileser I.[1] had spread its conquests to Lebanon, and overshadowed all Western Asia, had suffered such a humiliation after his death, that the inscriptions almost cease. That monarch, though constantly engaged in military expeditions, did not found a lasting empire: his campaigns being rather plundering raids than systematic conquests. His son was unable to retain the wide empire, and after him Assyria fell into decay. Its frontier cities were wrested from it, and for two hundred years it sinks out of history. Its revival dates only from the ninth century before Christ, when Assur-nasir-pal and his

[1] B. C. 1130–1100 (about). Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, p. 293. A notice of this Tiglath Pileser in an inscription of Sennacherib shews how Assyria, in his reign, had suffered the most humiliating of all disasters in the carrying away of its gods: a proof of the weakness of his government, for a king thus bearded in his capital must have been utterly unable to act with vigour in keeping his empire, in its distant provinces, together, ready as they were to break away from the forced subjection which made them tributary. "My soldiers," says Sennacherib, "seized the gods which dwelt there (in Babylon), and broke them in pieces, plundering their treasuries. The gods which Merodach-Nadin-Achi, king of Akkad, took from Tiglath Pileser and carried to Babylon, I rescued and brought away, 418 years after, and set them up in their former places!"

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son, Shalmaneser II., made Assyria once more the terror of Western Asia. When the ancient line of princes failed, and the usurper Pul seized the throne, there was no name he could take so splendid as that of Tiglath Pileser II., "the servant of Uras, the divine son of Esarra."

After the first Tiglath Pileser the power of the Hittites was not what it had been, thanks to his wars, and thus the small states of Syria could make head against them, nor had they any one to fear for more than a century. Egypt had likewise sunk, through division between rival dynasties, and thus Joab and David could push their conquests, with no Assyrian, Hittite, or Egyptian king to dread. Egypt was the first to recover strength, but it did not do so till the reign of Solomon, when the monarchs of the Twenty-second Dynasty once more united the whole Nile valley under one crown, so that Shishak or Shishouk I. was able to turn his arms, in Rehoboam's day, once more against Palestine.

The loyal and intense devotion of David to the theocratic constitution was, meanwhile, strikingly shewn by the impulse he gave to the national religion. From the moment of his establishment in Jerusalem he seems to have determined on making it the ecclesiastical as well as the political centre of his kingdom, and to have begun arrangements for a grander ritual and more imposing services in public worship than had hitherto been known. From his reign dates that development of the Mosaic system, or at least its fuller establishment, which maintained itself till the overthrow of Jerusalem. Political no less than religious considerations made it desirable that the people should look to the capital as the home of their faith no less than the seat of their king. Hitherto there had been no single national sanctuary, for even in the days when the Tabernacle was at Shiloh

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we read of Gideon, Manoah, Micah, the people of Dan, and many others, worshipping at different spots.[1] At Bochim, near Gilgal, sacrifices were offered to Jehovah ; a sanctuary existed at Mizpeh, in Gilead, in the time of Jephthah ; and at Mizpeh, near Jerusalem ; at Bethel, at Gibea, at Gilgal, on the Jordan ; and at Nob, doubtless among other places not mentioned, sacrifices and offerings were constantly made. "The people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built to the name of Jehovah, until those days," says the Book of Kings.[2] Nor was it fancied that any slight had been shewn to God by this custom, or any approach made to idolatry, for even Samuel, the earnest enemy of all gods but Jehovah, prayed and sacrificed at Mizpeh, before the assembled people, and so at Ramah, and at Bethlehem, and Gilgal.[3] To wean the nation as far as possible from this local worship, and to associate his capital with the religious emotions of the whole country, would naturally tend to strengthen the dynasty of David, and to prevent future secession. How great the influence such a centralization of worship exerted, was indeed shewn when the rupture between Judah and Ephraim took place, for Jeroboam set up his rival temples at Bethel and Dan, expressly because the people, if they went to Jerusalem to sacrifice, would have their hearts turned again to the house of David.[4]

Arrangements were therefore made to bring the Ark from Kirjath-jearim, on the outskirts of the hills of Judah,

[1] Jud. vi. 24 ; xiii. 19 ; xvii. 5 ; xviii. 30.

[2] Jud. ii. 5 ; xi. 11 ; xx. 1 ; xxi. 5. 1 Sam. x. 5, 13 ; xi. 15. 1 Kings iii. 2.

[3] 1 Sam. vii. 5, 9 ; x. 19 ; xi. 12 ; vii. 17 ; xvi. 2 ; xx. 6 ; x. 8.

[4] 1 Kings xii. 27. It seems impossible that Samuel could have known of any passage in the Law regarding sacrifice to be made only in one place, else one so exact in his fulfilment of the very letter of God's will would never have acted as he did. Yet, as there was no temple, he might have referred Deut. v. 6 to the future.

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where it had remained since its restoration by the Philistines. This place has been identified by Conder with a heap of ruins called Khurbet Erma, four miles east of Bethshemesh, but a thousand feet higher, amidst scarped faces of rock; some of the walls shewing signs of ancient mortar; others consisting only of rough stones piled on each other, but the whole place giving indications of having been the site of an ancient town. There is a rock-cut wine-press to the east, and a great cistern, with a very ancient stone cover over it. The ground is more or less strewn with bits of old pottery, and there are some rude caves which may have been tombs. A flat platform, fifty feet by thirty, rises about ten feet above the ground below it, as if raised to be the floor of some ancient temple or "high place," and seems to have once been shut in by walls. Perhaps on this levelled sheet of rock the sanctuary stood, within which the Ark was carefully guarded for twenty years. Renan makes Kirjath-jearim only five miles from Jerusalem, but this is a mistake. In Josh. xv. 60, one of the groups of cities belonging to Judah is given in these words: "Kirjath Baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah, two cities, with their villages." Now, within a mile of Khurbet Erma, on the same side of the main wady, but across a small side valley, there is another ruin of about equal size and importance, Khurbet Rab'a, "the ruin of Raba," so that we find, in close juxtaposition, the two cities of Jearim and Rabbah, "the two cities with their villages," which seems to prove the identification of Kirjath-jearim to be right.[1]

Having prepared a sumptuous tabernacle or tent for it on Mount Zion, in "the City of David," the king summoned a great national assembly, at which all the tribes[2] were invited

[1] *Palestine Fund Reports*, 1887, 111. [2] 1 Chron. xiii. 1, 2.

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to attend its removal to this new sanctuary. The excitement spread over all Israel. "We heard men say at Ephratah,[1] in the south of the land, and we found them repeat it in the woody Lebanon," sings the writer of the 132nd Psalm, according to Ewald's rendering.[2] "Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool." The very words of the summons were fitted to rouse the deepest feelings of the nation, for they were to gather at Baalah, of Judah, another name for Kirjath-jearim, to "bring up thence" to the mountain capital "the Ark of God called by The Name; the name of Jehovah of Hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubim."[3] It "had not been enquired at in the days of Saul," but, when restored, the nation would have their great palladium once more in their midst, and could "appear before God in Zion," and be "instructed and taught in the way that they should go." To David the event had an absorbing interest. "He sware unto Jehovah, and vowed to the mighty God of Jacob, that he would not enter his house, or go up into his bed, or sleep, till he had found a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."[4] Such a high festival had never before been held in Israel. Men came to it in multitudes from the torrent Shihor—now the Wady el Arish, 50 miles south of far southern Gaza—and from Hamath, in the valley of the Orontes, deep in the upper valley of Lebanon—250 miles, as the crow flies, from Jerusalem. Having been duly set on a new cart,[5] drawn by oxen—contrary to the Mosaic law, which required that it

[1] Bethlehem.

[2] *Die Dichter des alt. Bundes*, vol. ii. p. 450. Others understand it as meaning that David first thought of the matter at Bethlehem, and found the Ark at Kirjath-jearim.

[3] 2 Sam. vi. 2. [4] Ps. cxxxii. 3, 5.

[5] The Philistines and Phœnicians carried their sacred images in carts. 1 Sam. vi. 7. Münter, *Religion der Karthager*, p. 120.

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should be carried only by consecrated Levites[1]—the sacred Ark left the house of Abinadab, on the hill of Kirjath-jearim, where it had been for many years, one of his sons, Uzzah, going beside the cart, and another, Ahio, before it.[2] The third son, Eleazar, who had acted as priest in the little sanctuary, is not mentioned. As it moved down the hill, the vast multitude joined in the procession, with the most excited joy; bands of singers mingling their voices with the music of larger and smaller harps, tambourines, castanets, clarions, and cymbals;[3] no voice or music being louder than those of David himself. Slowly descending the height, they passed safely along the rough track till they came to a spot known as the threshing floor of Nachon, or Chidon. There, the oxen having unfortunately stumbled and shaken the Ark, so as to throw it forward,[4] Uzzah, afraid that it would fall, put out his hand to save it. Suddenly he sank dead at its side; by what agency is not mentioned. The 29th Psalm, however, is connected in the Septuagint, by its title, with the removal of the Ark, and as it describes a thunderstorm, his death may possibly have resulted from a stroke of lightning. Dismayed at a catastrophe so clearly coming from the hand of God, and afraid lest it might be an omen of future evil, David forthwith closed the festivities, and caused the Ark to be taken aside to the house of a Levite, Obed-edom, originally from Gath-Rimmon, in Manasseh.

Three months having elapsed, however, with no bad results to its new guardian, but rather an evident blessing, it was resolved that it should no longer remain away from Jerusalem. Warned by the past, every requirement of the

[1] Num. iv. 15. Exod. xxv. 14.
[2] 2 Sam. vi. 3. Septuagint.
[3] 2 Sam. vi. 5. 1 Chron. xiii. 9.
[4] Targum.

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Law was now rigidly carried out. Instead of being drawn by oxen, it was to be carried on its staves by Levites, and no one was allowed to come near it till he had previously sanctified himself with the utmost care. The preparations throughout were worthy of an event so august as the reception of the emblem of the Divine Presence into the new capital. The chief men of all Israel were summoned, and nearly 1,000 of the most eminent priests and Levites, with the flower of the army and its most famous leaders, were appointed to take part in the solemnity. The sacred relic, borne on the shoulders of chosen men, at last moved forward, amidst the shout of assembled thousands, repeating the chants of the wilderness life—nearly 500 years before—"Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest: Thou and the ark of Thy strength."[1] After advancing six paces a pause was made, while bullocks and rams[2] were sacrificed, to invoke the Divine favour. Then, the vast procession once more moved on, amidst loud flourishes of trumpets, blown by mighty warriors—Amasai and Benaiah, among others—and the anthems and music of Levitical choirs. The two high priests—Zadok, from Gibeon, and Abiathar, from the palace of David—followed in their gorgeous robes, and behind them came long companies of turbaned priests and Levites in spotless white; the great captains of David's army in all their splendour; and the heads of each priestly and Levitical house—among others, Heman, the grandson of Samuel, Asaph, and Ethan or Jeduthun—men famous as musicians, and so illustrious as sacred poets that psalms ascribed to them appear in the canon.

The dignitaries of the land and their attendants came

[1] Ps. lxviii. 1; cxxxii. 8. [2] 2 Sam. vi. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 26.

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next—the princes of Judah and Benjamin from the country round Jerusalem, and those of Zebulon and Naphtali from the far north, attended by long companies of their tribesmen, being particularly noted.[1] All were filled with the spirit of the occasion, but no one more so than David himself. Instead of his kingly mantle he had put on the long white robe of fine linen, especially worn by the high priest,[2] and over it the priestly ephod, and bore his well-loved harp. As in all similar religious festivities in the East, bands of singers and players moved along with the procession, circling in religious dances as they went, and into these rejoicings, David, accustomed to them in his connection with the schools of the prophets, threw himself with all his heart.[3] The Ark advanced like the chariot of a great conqueror, ascending the sacred hill in triumph, to Jerusalem. The long-drawn peal of the trumpets echoed among the hills around; the shout as of a victorious host rang through the valleys of Hinnom and of the Kedron. Its entrance into the gates appeared almost that of Jehovah Himself. A formal summons to surrender to Him the city, henceforth His own, lent additional vividness to the scene. The procession had approached the ramparts amidst chants of

[1] Ps. lxviii. 27.

[2] The Mĕîl, a long robe, without arms, worn over the universal undergarment, the chĕtoneth. It was used both by men and women (2 Sam. xiii. 18), especially by the great or rich (Job i. 20; ii. 12); but was peculiar, above all, to kings and their families. 1 Sam. xviii. 4; xxiv. 11. The prophet Samuel, however, wore it. 1 Sam. xv. 27; xxviii. 14. As part of the official dress of the high priest it is mentioned, Exod. xxviii. 31; xxxix. 22. As it was put on under the ephod, it was known, when worn by the high priest, as the "robe of the ephod." With the modern Jews it is the custom at the Passover for the master of the house to wear a fine white linen garment—a sort of blouse, which the bride presents to her bridegroom on the wedding-day, and which is never worn by him, but during the commemoration of the Passover, on the Day of Atonement, and when he is laid in his coffin. Is this perhaps a resumption of the priestly right of the head of the household—wearing the ephod—and was it some such claim as this that David intended when he wore the linen ephod?

[3] Ps. lxviii. 25.

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priests and Levites, in alternate choirs, proclaiming the glory of Him who was drawing nigh, and the purity required from all who ascend into His holy hill. Then, as if addressing the warders on the walls, a chorus demanded that the gates be thrown open :

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;
Be ye lift up, ye ancient doors :
That the King of Glory may enter in."

But the warders, hesitating, forthwith answered with responding chant :

"Who is this King of Glory ?"

Then came the reply, in triumphant strains :

"Jehovah, strong and mighty ;
Jehovah, mighty in battle."

Both choirs, on this, united in a grand chorus, as the gates were thrown wide, and the procession swept through :

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
Lift them up, ye ancient doors ;
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory ?
Jehovah of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory."[1]

Renewed sacrifices, offered by David himself, acting as a priest, marked the entrance of the Ark into the tent prepared for it, and Asaph and his brethren sang a magnificent psalm, composed by David for the occasion ;[2] the vast multitude responding with a loud Amen, after which David dismissed them with a priestly benediction, though the two

[1] Weiss, pp. 184, 185. See Ps. xxiv.

[2] 1 Chron. xvi. 8–36. This Psalm is repeated in part in Ps. cv. 1–15 ; xcvi. 1, ff. ; cvi. 1, 47, 48 ; cvii. 1 ; cxviii. 1 ; cxxxvi. 1.

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high priests were present. But such a day could not end without active and unconstrained bounty to all. Festivities on the most generous scale, and the distribution of bread,[1] flesh, and a raisin cake to the multitude, for whom room was wanting, fitly closed it.

One incident only had clouded the perfect happiness of the day. The fervour David had displayed found no sympathy in Michal, his wife, who could not enter into his feelings of ecstatic enthusiasm, and, perhaps, felt painfully the elevation of David, to the exclusion of her father's house. Instead therefore of hailing him joyfully on his return, she could only think of him as having lowered his dignity by the part he had taken in the proceedings. Had he not danced among the common women,[2] bearing himself thus like one of the low class of men who, alone, did so in public? But his answer was noble. "To be allowed to dance and play before Jehovah, who has chosen me in the stead of thy father and of all his house, to rule over Israel, has been an honour too great for me. As to the maidens of whom you speak, should I seek praise from them? What they think of my act is nothing."[3] It was God that had turned his long mourning into dancing; that had put off his black robe of sackcloth and girded him with the white raiment of gladness he had that day worn.[4] It had been a glory to humble himself in His sight, and he felt himself as unworthy as the humblest citizen to rejoice before Him. On such a day he was far enough from caring for praise or the reverse from his fellow-men! It is added that Michal was childless till her death, as if her pride had been punished in the way most painful to a Hebrew woman,

[1] 2 Sam. vi. 19, for "a flagon of wine," read "a cake of raisins."
[2] 2 Sam. vi. 20. Handmaidens = slaves.
[3] Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 174. [4] Ps. xxx. 11.

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by her never having that motherly joy granted to those whom she had despised.

The installation of the Ark at Jerusalem was a great historical event. Henceforth the heathen Jebus was not only Jerusalem, but "the Holy City." The feelings of David respecting it are seen in the Psalms. From this time he would fain make it holy, in fact as well as in name. Those only who had clean hands and a pure heart; who had not lifted up their soul to vanity,[1] nor sworn deceitfully, were in his eyes fit to enter it.[2] He fondly hoped indeed to form an ideal community worthy of the place in which Jehovah had chosen His dwelling. The 101st Psalm records his desire thus to have round him a people worthy of such a spot. For himself, he says, he would give heed unto the perfect way. He would walk within his house with a perfect heart. The man of froward heart should depart from him: he would not know wickedness. The slanderer and the proud would not be suffered by him. His eyes would be on the faithful of the land, that they might dwell with him, and he would seek those who walked in a perfect way for his servants; deceit and lying he would not endure; they would neither dwell in his house, nor tarry in his sight. No merely ritual or ceremonial religion would content him. Prayer would rise from the midst of this city of God like incense, and the lifting up of the hands would be as the evening sacrifice.[3] The priests would be clothed with righteousness, and the saints shout aloud for joy.[4] The glorious hills of Bashan, the pride of the land, were eclipsed in their charms for ever by Zion, now that it was known as "the hill which God desired to dwell in, and in which He would abide for

[1] Literally "thing of nought."
[2] Ps. cxli. 2.
[3] Ps. xxiv. 3, 4.
[4] Ps. cxxxii. 9.

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ever and ever."[1] "He had chosen it as His seat."[2] Even the glories of Sinai were ascribed to it. "The chariots of God were twenty thousand, even thousands twice told. Jehovah is among them; He has come from Sinai into His sanctuary."[3] Jerusalem would be the centre of a world-wide glory. Princes would come to it from Egypt to do homage to Jehovah; Ethiopia would soon stretch out her hands to God.[4]

David had now passed from the obscurity of a chief of the tribes, or of a local king such as those around, to the dignity of an Eastern monarch on a far grander scale. With an army like his, and such a capital, the centre of the national religion as well as the seat of political government, he could wield the whole forces of the monarchy at his will. The priesthood were helpless to oppose him, had they wished, now that the Ark was in Jerusalem, and themselves, thus, under control. The prophets cordially sympathized with him as the chosen of Samuel, and as thoroughly loyal to their ideas. In the wars which soon broke out, he had, therefore, no internal distractions to weaken him, and was able to found an empire which raised Israel for the time to the rank of a great power.

The organization of the kingdom must have been early begun, and perhaps was only gradually perfected. At its head stood David, "the Anointed of the Lord;" sacred in the eyes of his people, as such, though neither deified by them like the Pharaohs, nor, like these, inaccessible.[5] His power was limited by the Constitution drawn up by Samuel, and carefully preserved as the national Magna Charta.[6] It

[1] Ps. lxviii. 16.
[2] Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.
[3] Dean Perowne.
[4] Ps. lxviii. 17, 31.
[5] 1 Sam. xxiv. 7, 11; xxvi. 11, 16, 23. 2 Sam. i. 16.
[6] 1 Sam. x. 25. Manner = law.

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was also tempered by the ancient institution of the "elders" of the people, the "princes" of the tribes,[1] and the heads of clans, and families. These were confirmed by David in their authority and were destined to survive even the Exile, returning to play a great part in Jewish history down to the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, within prescribed limits, the throne enjoyed great power, and gathered round itself a dignity hitherto unknown in Israel. David was the "Patriarch" or founder of the dynasty.[2] Even the highest personages, on approaching him, including his chosen counsellor, the prophet Nathan, "fell before him, with their face to the ground."[3] His attendants and courtiers were spoken of as his slaves,[4] though up to the death of Saul they had been generally known as "young men." In ordinary matters his power was so direct and uncontrolled that "none could turn to the right hand or to the left from aught that he had spoken." He rode on his own royal mule,[5] known as such. As supreme judge he sat regularly at the gate of the palace to decide the causes brought before him.[6] Among the officials connected with the court or the royal domains, were a keeper of the treasures, in Jerusalem; superintendents of store-houses in the field, in towns, villages, and towers or strongholds, in which the produce of the royal estates was kept; chief overseers of the forced or free labour on arable lands and in the vineyards; keepers of the local wine vaults or cellars; overseers of the royal olive and sycamore plantations on the foot-hills of the central range known as the Shephelah and in the wide Sea-coast Plain, formerly held by the Philistines; of the stores of oil,

[1] 1 Chron. xxvii. 16, ff. [2] Acts ii. 29. [3] 1 Kings i. 33 (*Bĕkhr*).
[4] 2 Sam. vi. 20; xxi. 15. Servants = slaves. But Saul's followers had, also, been known by the same term. 1 Sam. xvi. 17, 18; xxii. 7; xxviii. 7.
[5] 1 Kings i. 33. [6] 2 Sam. xv. 2.

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and of the herds of cattle, the camels, and the flocks of sheep and goats which grazed on the coast lands of Sharon, or in different parts of the country.[1] The princes were under the charge of a separate governor. A noble—Ahithophel—reputed the most astute man in Israel, was specially known as David's secret counsellor,[2] and he had also for his constant adviser the court prophet, Nathan. In the Book of Chronicles, court eunuchs are mentioned, but the word had acquired only the meaningless sense of "official" in the age when it was thus used,[3] though a royal harem implies the employment of these degraded beings. A royal remembrancer brought official business before the king,[4] and perhaps wrote the annals of the kingdom; acting thus as the royal scribe[5] or secretary. The sons of the king and some chosen dignitaries were privy counsellors.[6]

The army, as might have been expected, received David's special care. Its nucleus consisted of the famous 600 who had gathered round him in the days of his persecution by Saul, and had gradually gained the name of the Gibborim, or "mighty ones," by their bravery. A few were of alien birth,[7] but the great majority were Hebrews.[8] Faithful to David in his early adversity, they remained immovably true to him to the end, even through the rebellion of Absalom.[9] At the head of this "Old Guard" stood a band of thirty who had been promoted to the command of their brethren

[1] The officer or governor of the royal flocks was common in antiquity. Under David each kind of cattle had its own governor, with a large number of men under him.

[2] 1 Chron. xxvii. 25–33.

[3] 1 Chron. xxviii. 1. Officers = eunuchs.

[4] 2 Sam. viii. 16. [5] 2 Sam. viii. 17.

[6] 2 Sam. viii. 16, 17; xx. 23, ff. 1 Chron. xviii. 15, ff.; xxvii. 32, ff.

[7] 2 Sam. xxiii. 37, 39. 1 Chron. xi. 4.

[8] 1 Chron. xii. 1, ff.

[9] 2 Sam. xv. 18; xvi. 6. 1 Kings i. 8.

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for special valour.[1] Over each 200, moreover, was a separate officer, and, above all, a commander of the whole 600.[2] Besides this corps David formed a distinct bodyguard, apparently while still at Hebron, enrolling in it, not Hebrews, but foreigners, known in our version as the Cherethites and Pelethites,[3] apparently Philistines, whose arms were then to be hired, like those of the free-lances of the middle ages, by any community, and who would naturally gather round David on his invitation after their own country had fallen before him.[4] Over these Benaiah, son of the high priest, a tried veteran, was set. The bodyguard of an Eastern king has always the task of executing the capital sentences of its master, and they are also his runners, to convey his wishes to distant parts, and thus Benaiah, as head of this body, put to death with his own hand those condemned for treason at David's death.[5] It was the same indeed in Egypt and in Chaldæa, and it is still in Turkey the duty of a similar officer to put to death personally, or see executed, those condemned by the Sultan. To have a bodyguard of foreigners has, moreover, been a custom with princes in all ages. The Roman emperors had German troops in this relation to them; the Bourbons and the Popes, Swiss; the Caliphs, Turks. The doubtful attitude of Israel before and after

[1] There were three chief heroes; three second in fame and rank; and thirty of a third dignity. These probably had special badges of honour, like our medals, crosses, etc. It was thus among the Romans. The monumental bas-relief of M. C. Lacubo, a tribune of the 18th legion, who fell in the defeat of Varus, shews this: his breast is covered with decorations—wreaths, a necklace, and five medals. This monument is now in the University of Bonn.

[2] 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. 1 Chron. xi. 10, ff.

[3] 2 Sam. viii. 18; xx. 23; *lit.* Crethi and Plethi.

[4] The Cherethites are mentioned as a people, dwelling apparently on the coast, and hence probably Philistines. Pelethites is probably a contraction of Plischti—Philistines. Ewald and Bertheau, Gesenius, Thenius, Keil, and Riehm.

[5] 1 Kings ii. 25, 34, 46. Gen. xxxvii. 36. Captain of the guard = chief of the executioners. Jer. xxxix. 9, 11, 13; xl. 1. Dan. ii. 14, 15 (margin).

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Saul's death, and their hesitating and tardy submission, may readily account for David's following a similar course. When, therefore, after he had broken the power of the Philistines and taken Gath their capital, Ittai, a soldier of that city, joined him with a band of his countrymen, he shewed his trust in them by placing them next his person. Nor was his confidence misplaced, for they served him as his body-guard with unwavering loyalty;[1] Ittai himself shewing such parts and fidelity as, in the end, to gain the command of the third division of the army.[2]

The general force of the kingdom was known as "The Host," and was, in fact, an organized levy of the whole military strength of Israel. It was only called out in sections, however, in case of war, each being liable to a month's service, and having its own commander, selected by David.[3] The aggregate muster of the twelve divisions was reckoned at 300,000 men, and thus each month's army would average 25,000. This corps was divided into thousands and hundreds, with their respective officers.

The supreme command had been held under Saul by Abner,[4] who was succeeded in it by Joab after his daring capture of Jerusalem. As generalissimo he had a chief armour-bearer of his own, and ten attendants to carry his equipment and baggage.[5] The trumpet sound for retreat or advance, formerly given by command of the Judge or king, was left to his orders,[6] and he was honoured by the high titles of "lord," and "prince of the king's army."[7] As commander in chief, Joab was, in fact, the first subject after

[1] 2 Sam. xv. 18. 1 Kings i. 1, 38, 44.
[2] 2 Sam. xv. 19; xviii. 2.
[3] 1 Chron. xxvii. 1–15.
[4] 1 Sam. xiv. 51.
[5] 2 Sam. xxiii. 37.
[6] 2 Sam. xviii. 16.
[7] 2 Sam. xi. 11. 1 Chron. xxvii. 34.

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the royal family, and founded a branch of the Jewish nobility, which survived the Captivity.[1]

The army consisted entirely of infantry, since horses and chariots were still regarded as unworthy of a people for whom Jehovah Himself fought. Rather than adopt them, the Canaanites had been left in possession of the plains where alone they could be used, and Israel had contented itself with seizing the hill country. The sword and the spear were the principal weapons, the former always short, but sometimes two-edged.[2] Worn from the girdle, as with us, the frightful wound it could give when held in the left hand of a practised swordsman, is seen in the picture of the dying Amasa and his murderer. The victim lies actually disembowelled by a single stroke, "wallowing" in his blood on the roadway; Joab standing over him, bespattered from his girdle to his shoes with the blood that had spouted from the gash.[3] Of spears the most formidable was the long and heavy weapon which Saul always carried about with him. It was stuck into the ground by his tent, during the night, when he was on an expedition, or held in his hand when mustering his forces, and it was on this he is leaning heavily when we catch our last glimpse of his stately figure on Mount Gilboa.[4] The fury of his madness may be better realized by the fact that it was this terrible weapon, not the lighter javelin, which he hurled at David[5] and Jonathan.[6] Its weight

[1] Neh. vii. 11.

[2] 2 Sam. ii. 16; xviii. 14. Exod. xxxii. 27. Num. xxv. 7.

[3] 1 Kings ii. 5. See page 350.

[4] 1 Sam. xxv. 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 22; xxii. 6. 2 Sam. i. 6.

[5] By casting a spear at David, Saul virtually absolved him from his allegiance. By the customs of ancient Asia, to throw a dart at a free man, who escaped from it by flight, was equivalent to the dissolution of all obligations of fealty towards him who threw it. Col. Hamilton Smith. "Arms," Kitto's *Cyclo.*

[6] 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11; xix. 9, 10; xx. 3.

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and power are seen in its mere back-thrust by a strong arm being enough to drive the point of its butt end, used to fix it in the ground, through the body of Asahel.[1] A lighter spear also in use, for distant throwing, was carried slung across the back; and a third is mentioned without details of its characteristics.[2] Maces, sometimes of iron, seem to have been used by the chiefs; the rod of iron with which the Messiah is to dash His enemies in pieces seeming to point to such a weapon.[3] Bows, arrows, and slings were the only other arms in the Hebrew army, so far as we know, and in the use of these the Benjamites alone were famed for special skill.[4] Defensive armour, except the shield, is hardly mentioned. Here and there among the very highest in rank there might be "a coat of mail," like that of Goliath, or a quilted doublet,[5] or greaves for the legs, or a helmet; but they were very rare.[6] A large shield, screening the whole person, was carried by a bearer before the chieftain when in the field; but the smaller "buckler," borne on the left arm, was used by the soldiery at large.

Compared with the troops of the neighbouring states, those of Israel were thus very rude. Armed only with bows and arrows or slings, and swords or spears, and consisting solely of unprotected infantry, they had to meet forces strong in cavalry and chariots, and warriors clad in mail. But under the command of such a leader as David, full of the religious enthusiasm of Joshua and Gideon, they caught a measure of his spirit, and fought with a bravery which bore down all opposition. Their wars were once more, in

[1] 2 Sam. ii. 23. See page 218.
[2] The Chamith, the Cidôn, and the Romach.
[3] Ps. ii 9. [4] 1 Chron. xii. 2.
[5] Exod. xxviii. 32; xxxix. 23. Habergeon = "coat of mail," R.V.
[6] This is seen from the words for them occurring so seldom.

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their opinion, "holy," and they themselves the warriors of Jehovah.[1] The Psalms are coloured with this feeling throughout. Lower or common aims were forgotten. Their enemies were the enemies of God, and He fought on their side against them. The Israelites were His subjects, living in the land over which He reigned as the invisible King; and, with Him as their Helper, victory was certain. Like the Swedes under Gustavus Adolphus, or the Puritans under Cromwell, or the Arabs in their first religious fervour, the very belief that they were the soldiers of God made them indifferent to life, and unconquerable in their fiery zeal.[2]

It was the profound conviction of David that he had been "taken from the sheepfolds, and from following the ewes great with young," to feed Jacob, God's people, and Israel, His inheritance,[3] as an under-shepherd directly responsible to their Divine Lord, and knowing only His will with the flock. As ruler, he was only the "slave"[4] of Jehovah. He was thus prepared to be a *king*—not, necessarily, a *man*—after God's own heart; that is, to administer the government as that of a theocracy, in which he was simply the representative of the Divine Sovereign. His first step marked the spirit of his whole reign. Jerusalem, by the removal of the Ark to it, had become the religious as well as the political capital. From this centre a victorious kingdom of God could be established among men on the basis of the Law of Sinai. It was necessary, however, to organize it afresh, for not even the tribe of Levi, whose care it especially was to superintend public worship, had kept themselves clear from the corruption of the days of the Judges. Samuel had

[1] Num. xxiii. 21. Isa. xiii. 13. Jer. li. 27.
[2] This is well shown in Eisenlohr's *Das Volk Israel*, vol. i. p. 100.
[3] Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71.
[4] Literally, "slave."

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doubtless done much to restore its purity; but the massacre of the priests by Saul at Nob, had brought back the old confusion, amidst which so little interest had been taken respecting the Ark, that it was virtually forgotten.[1] But this state of things ended with its triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. As he never hid his early obscurity, but gloried in his elevation to the throne from a lowly calling, David did not shrink from the open acknowledgment of his religious obligations and convictions. Two prophets, as we have seen, appear as his constant advisers; Gad, his companion in the wilderness; and Nathan, whom we meet after the removal of the capital to Jerusalem. The heads of the two rival branches of the priesthood, the descendants of Eleazar and Ithamar respectively—Zadok, who having joined him after the death of Saul, was afterwards, as the supporter of Solomon, raised to the headship of the family of Aaron; with Abiathar, the descendant of Eli, and David's companion when an outlaw—were personally recognized and confirmed as high priests; the former, with those of his line, at Gibeon, where the old Tabernacle of the wilderness still stood, and the altar of burnt offering;[2] the other, with his son Ahimelech, at the new Tabernacle on Mount Zion, the resting-place of the Ark. Gibeon, however, remained the spot on which the legal sacrifices were offered.[3] From the chiefs of the Levite septs six were chosen, with their clans, to assist the priests—four from the branch of Kohath, the son of Levi, and one each from the branches of Gershom and Merari, his other sons. Himself an enthusiast in music, looking to Samuel, the introducer of vocal and instrumental music in religious services, as his spiritual father, David developed the choral service in public worship to an extent

[1] 1 Chron. xiii. 3. [2] 1 Chron. xxi. 29. [3] 1 Chron. xxi. 29.

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hitherto unknown. Gershomites were appointed to sing and play at the Tabernacle at Jerusalem, under the superintendence of Asaph, himself a great musical composer, the author of various Psalms, and in after times famous as a seer or prophet.[1] Kohathites and Merarites discharged the same duties at Gibeon, under the leadership of Heman and Ethan, or Jeduthun. Of these, the former, as has been noticed, was a grandson of Samuel, and was known as "the singer," or musician, but also, like Asaph, as a seer; indeed as "the king's seer in the matters of God."[2] Ethan, or, rather, Jeduthun, similarly, was known as "the king's seer."[3] Thus, all three superintendents of the Tabernacle music ranked as prophets, doubtless, in part, from the identification of music and the singing of sacred lyrics, with the characteristics of the choirs of the prophetic communities. Other Levite officials guarded the gates and the sacred treasures amassed from private gifts, or from spoils won in battles, and dedicated to the service of God's house.[4]

But this organization was reckoned by David only imperfect and provisional. It seems as if from the first he had wished to build a magnificent temple like those of other countries round, as the centre of the national religion. He was dissuaded from doing so, however, by the prophet Nathan, and finally gave up the idea, on learning that it would not be acceptable to God, to have a house built for Him by one who had shed so much blood in war.[5] The keen spiritual insight of the prophet doubtless foresaw the injurious results likely to follow the introduction of a splen-

[1] Ps. l. and lxxiii. to lxxxiii. are attributed to him, but Vaihinger thinks that only the 50th, 73d, and 77th are his, the others being of a later date. See notices of him in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. Neh. xii. 46.

[2] 1 Chron. xxv. 5.

[3] 2 Chron. xxxv. 15.

[4] 1 Chron. xxvi. 20-28. See ver. 27.

[5] 1 Chron. xxii. 8.

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did temple service, diverting the popular mind from the essential to the outward and ritual. It seems clear, moreover, that the proposal was not so popular as David expected. It might grieve him that he dwelt in a house of cedar while the Ark of the Lord was under curtains, but he was reminded by Nathan that God had always lived in a tent, both in the wilderness and since, and had never commanded any one to build Him a house.[1] The strong conservatism of the nation appears to have shrunk from any change in the institutions of Moses, or such an imitation of the customs of the heathen as a temple implied, nor was this popular aversion to the idea overcome till after David's death. The king's disappointment, however, was softened by Nathan's announcement that though he could not build a house for God, God would build a house for him, that is, by a play on the word, would establish the throne to his descendants. Moreover, if he sinned, he would not be rejected as Saul had been, but chastened, in love and tenderness. The lyric in which David thanks the Eternal for such surpassing mercies is fortunately preserved. This incident, and the Psalm thus springing from it, are momentous in the history of Israel as the special ground in after ages of the vivid Messianic hopes of the nation. God had confirmed to Himself His people Israel, to be a people to Him, and had become their God, and had promised to establish the house of David for ever.[2] Its founder doubtless pictured to himself an unfading kingdom of God amongst men, and when, in after ages, the spiritual blessings enjoyed by Israel were more and more traced back to him, the hopes of the future were also associated with his house. A great Descendant was to rise

[1] 1 Chron xvii. 1–6. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1831, p. 311; 1832, p 403.
[2] 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16, 24, 25, 29.

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as the Messiah, who should realize all the visions of Jewish glory which the nation built on the promises now given.

Though thus hindered from gratifying his cherished desire of building a temple, David, in preparation for its erection by Solomon, continued to organize and develop the priestly and musical services. The priesthood was divided into twenty-four courses, of which sixteen represented the house of Eleazar, and eight that of Ithamar: Zadok remaining over the former, and Abiathar over the latter. Each course was under a head, and ministered week by week in an order determined by lot. The Levites also were similarly arranged in twenty-four divisions, each of 2,000, to assist the priests at sacrifices and to render other services in connection with public worship. No fewer than 4,000, similarly divided into twenty-four courses, were set apart as singers and musicians, under leaders and music masters, and 4,000 as watchers of the gates and doors of the sanctuary. Six thousand were also appointed to enforce due obedience on the part of the people at large to all theocratic requirements; to act, indeed, with authority in all matters pertaining to God and the king, as civil and ecclesiastical magistrates.[1]

The organization thus created proved so admirably adapted for its object that it remained unchanged till the final downfall of the State. In discipline and zeal its members formed a spiritual army, not inferior, for the support of the religious life of the kingdom, to the host entrusted with the maintenance of its political and external strength. Both, indeed, were lasting memorials to the practical genius of David.

But the mere appointment of priestly or Levitical com-

[1] 1 Chron. xxiii. 3, ff.; xxiv.-xxvi.

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panies for the various services of the Tabernacle did not content one so sincere in his religious feelings. Music and poetry were the very breath of his being, but both, from his early youth, had caught the devotional colour of his mind. Some of his Psalms, as we have seen, carry us back to his shepherd life on the Bethlehem hills, and not a few mark the vicissitudes of his perilous years when an outlaw. Himself raised to a higher religious fervour by his Psalms, expressed in song and music, he instinctively felt that similar influences promised the best results on the spiritual life of the nation. To this we are indebted for the Psalter, which, though ultimately comprising the inspired hymns of later ages, was at first a collection of sacred lyrics, composed by David and his illustrious brethren connected with the Tabernacle choirs. It is impossible, after so many ages, to decide with certainty in every case as to the date or authorship of all the compositions it now includes, but respecting not a few there can be little reasonable doubt. The 24th Psalm bears in its language the evidence of having been composed, as has been noticed, for the entrance of the Ark into Jerusalem, and the one inserted in 1 Chron. xvi. 8–36, is expressly stated to have been delivered by David on the same great day "into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the Lord." Others, written on earlier occasions, would naturally be added to these, and they would be supplemented, from time to time, by fresh compositions. More than fifty Psalms bear the inscription, "for the chief musician," marking them as officially designated for use by the various choirs of Levites in public worship. Of these, thirty-nine are ascribed to David, nine to the famous minstrels of the Korahite clan, and five to Asaph; only two, the 66th and 67th, being anonymous. Possibly less varied at

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first while the Psalms were fewer in number, each week-day service had ultimately, as it would seem, its own Psalm.[1]

Amidst all the cares of empire, indeed, David was still pre-eminently the sacred poet and musician. Singing men and women celebrated his victories and charmed his quiet hours in his own house.[2] Bands of Levites, already well trained by Chenaanah, their chief, had escorted the Ark to Zion, amidst songs, and the strains of psalteries, harps, and cymbals. The 4,000 members of the Tabernacle choirs, divided into twenty-four separate bodies under distinct heads, and led by 300 specially skilled singers and players, sang to the accompaniment of instruments invented or improved by David himself.[3] A chant composed by him was known for ages by his name, and was sung by the Levites before the army of Jehoshaphat; then, centuries later, on laying the foundation of the second temple; and again by the army of the Maccabees after their great victory over Gorgias.[4] Wind instruments[5] mingled with the clash of cymbals and the murmur of harps, and high over all rose the voices of the singers. Women and children were not, it would seem, excluded from the sacred choirs, for the fourteen sons and three daughters of Heman are said to have "all been under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord."[6] It is a disputed question whether the music was played and sung in harmony of parts, or as simple melody. Some of the terms used in connection with it have been thought to imply the former; Alamoth being understood as meaning soprano, and Sheminith, bass.[7] But there

[1] Delitzsch, *Bibl. Com. über die Psalmen*, p. 23.
[2] 2 Sam. xix. 35. [3] 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.
[4] 1 Chron. xvi. 34, 41. 2 Chron. vii. 6; xx. 21. Ezra iii. 10, 11. 1 Macc. iv. 24.
[5] Ps. lxviii. 25.
[6] 1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6; see also Ps. lxviii. 25.
[7] 1 Chron. xv. 20, 21. Gesenius. Weiss. Keil.

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is much probability in the opinion that, at least as a rule, the music and singing were similar to the Gregorian chants, which may have been formed on the basis of the old Temple music; for the early Christian Church long retained a sympathy with the institutions of Judaism, and in fact, at first, sprang from their midst. The service appears to have opened with a prelude of the larger and deeper sounding harps,[1] after which mingled vocal and instrumental music discoursed, till a "rest," marked as Selah, was reached. The congregation bowed or prostrated itself at this pause; the instruments, alone, meanwhile, playing a brief interlude till the full choir once more began.[2] To the worshippers as a whole was left the utterance of a solemn Amen or Hallelujah, or short response, at prescribed places in the service.

It is difficult to realize a character so various as that of David. His military genius, as shewn by the organization of his army, and by his wide conquests, presents him, in one aspect, as pre-eminently a soldier. His prudence in his early years; his dexterous management of men during the troublous period of his exile, and his able government of a great empire in after years, shew all the qualities of a statesman. His Psalms and musical gifts reveal a born poet, of high sensibility and refinement of nature. But he was, above all, the open and avowed servant of God. Prophets, as we have seen, were his constant and intimate advisers; the organization of public worship, on a scale of grandeur before unknown in Israel, occupied for a time his whole heart; the building of a great temple to Jehovah was his lifelong ambition. As the expression of his inmost being, his Psalms point to the tone of his habitual life and thought. He counted it his glory to join, like a common man, in the

[1] Weiss, on 1 Chron. xv. 21.

[2] Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, vol. i. p. 15.

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religious dances before the Ark, and played with his own hand, as he sang, in the crowd, while the sacred relic advanced to Mount Zion. Nor did he hesitate to take public part in the most demonstrative act of the Tabernacle worship. Singing aloud and praising God, he joined in the religious processions which "compassed the altar," while the priests ministered, and the great crowd of worshippers stood around.[1] Besides all, though not even a Levite, so completely did he identify himself with religion, that we see him bearing himself frequently as a priest; wearing the priestly dress, offering sacrifice, and giving the priestly benediction. The title of priests indeed was given to his sons,[2] and even his military officers were in various ways associated in this unusual alliance. Benaiah, the captain of his bodyguard, was at once a priest and one of the leaders of the choirs, and the captains of the host were associated in the arrangement of the musical service.[3] Such an identification of Church and State may have been often imagined, but perhaps it was never realized before or since, in ancient or modern times.

[1] See Ps. xxvi. 5, ff. The above is the sense assumed by Ewald and Lengerke—religious dances round the altar.

[2] 2 Sam. viii. 18; Hebrew.

[3] 1 Chron. xxv. 1. It is to be noticed that the chief singers and musicians are said to "*prophesy* on the harp," etc., that is, their singing and playing was similar to those of the sons of the prophets. Mere public worship is thus called *prophesying* by Elizabethan authors.

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CHAPTER X.

THE WARS OF DAVID.

THE resolutions with which David had entered on his reign were fitted to endear him to all. An Oriental king, whose ideal was "to walk before God with a perfect heart;" to surround himself with the best of the land, and make Jerusalem, what after generations pictured it as really becoming under his sceptre, "the faithful city, full of justice, a city in which righteousness had its abode,"[1] could not fail to attract to himself an unequalled enthusiasm. He was clearly no despot like neighbouring kings. A sense of responsibility to God as His representative marked his conduct. To carry out the high principles of the sacred law in public and private, and make them in all respects the code of the nation, was his great aim; though failures or misconceptions, in some cases, were no doubt inevitable.

His treatment of the surviving members of the house of Saul would assuredly have illustrated this lofty tone, but for an incident over which he appears to have had no control. For three years, rain had not fallen in sufficient quantity to secure a good harvest, and famine was pressing sore on the people. In this extremity David consulted the oracle, and was told that the drought was sent because blood rested on Saul and his house[2] for his massacre of the Gibeonites. How this answer was given we do not know, and can scarcely

[1] Isa. i. 21.

[2] 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

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doubt that those who announced it, attributed their own thoughts, erroneously, to God. Nothing however remained to the king but to summon the Gibeonites, and ask them what ransom in money they would accept to satisfy their feud, and remove the guilt from the nation. But, true to the Arab law of blood revenge, nothing save blood would content them. As, however, they dared not kill any of Saul's house, their demand could only be satisfied by David's inflicting the death penalty. The feeling of the ancient Hebrews on this point may be best gathered from that of the Bedouins of the present day, among whom primitive Semitic customs have continued unweakened by time. The right of the avenger extends, among them, to the most distant relations of the murdered person, and may be carried out on the remotest connections of the murderer. A whole tribe, indeed, regards itself as bound to retaliate on the slayer of any one of its members. Atonement is often made by money, but is regarded as discreditable. So inexorable was the custom among the Israelites, that even the only son of a widow could not hope to be spared, if he chanced to be the next relative to a homicide.[1] In the law of Moses, blood revenge was sanctioned, with fixed limitations. Fathers were not to be put to death for the sins of their children, nor children for those of their fathers; every man was to be put to death for his own sin.[2] But this humane limitation in the Law, had failed to suppress the terrible customs which they inherited from their Bedouin ancestry. With them, as in the East generally, the clan feeling regarded all connections of the murderer, however distant, as forming one family, on any member of which revenge could be

[1] 2 Sam. xiv. 7.

[2] Exod. xxi. 12. Num. xxxv. 19, 21. Lev. xxiv. 17. Deut. xxiv. 16; see 2 Kings xiv. 6.

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taken. This, rather than the merciful restraints of the Law, had become their practice. Saul had not only shed the blood of the Gibeonites, but had broken the solemn oath sworn to them by Joshua, and such an offence, in the public opinion of the times, could only be atoned by blood; even that of the children being demanded for the sin of the father, if no other could be had. By the Divine Law which he had made "the man of his counsel," David was forbidden to give up Saul's descendants; but he had not enough of moral courage, or, perhaps, enlightenment, to follow its humane prescriptions, and, it may be, was not above the temptation, so strong to an Eastern king, and so universally acted on, to remove in this way the possible rivalries of surviving members of the dynasty he had put aside. When, therefore, seven victims were demanded from Saul's house, he at once ordered them to be delivered up. Two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine—whom Abner, perhaps, had married—and five sons of Merab, Saul's eldest daughter, were handed over as the sacrifice, and, after being put to death, were impaled beside the altar on the hill-top of Gibeah, Saul's own village. The catastrophe happened in April, at the beginning of the barley harvest, but the bodies—"hung up before the Lord," to shew that, in the rude and ferocious idea of the time, an atonement had been offered for the blood shed at Gibeon—were wetted by no shower till the end of October or the beginning of November, when the early rains always fall. All these months, however, they had served to draw forth an unspeakably touching instance of maternal love. Through the fierce days of summer and early autumn, when no cloud tempers the overpowering heat, Rizpah, having spread sackcloth on the bare hill-top, beneath the corpses of her sons, watched them as they hung,

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braving the sun by day and the cold by night, to guard them from jackals and vultures, and to bury the bleached bones when permitted; for to leave a body unburied was regarded by all ancient nations as the greatest wrong to the dead. But the autumn rain came at last, and being taken as a proof that the ghastly atonement was accepted, the bodies were allowed to be removed. As a poor mitigation of a grief so sad, the bones were ordered by David to be gathered for honourable interment, and were laid, along with those of Saul and Jonathan, in the family tomb of Kish, at Zelah, in Benjamin. He had, now, no need of fearing disturbance on the throne by any one of Saul's blood. It was virtually wiped away from the face of the earth.

David's constant loyalty and magnanimity to Saul himself, under the greatest provocation, makes one hesitate before imputing to him unworthy motives in this disaster to the dead king's house. Probably, like his contemporaries, he believed in the necessity for the sacrifice. False conceptions of the character of God, and erroneous ideas as to natural phenomena, had created a dark and hateful superstition which controlled the mind of the age. Contrary even to the letter of the Law, it was held that the sin of the father must be visited by man on the children, to appease the Divine wrath. But how much that was heathen in its spirit long held its place in Christianity? It is only 200 years since a victim was burnt alive for witchcraft in England,[1] and barely 170 years since the same scene disgraced Scotland, while in Posen a witch was burnt so lately as 1793. David may have been free from any deep plot to root out Saul's family, but he did in effect cut it off by his action in this hideous incident; and, where a great advan-

[1] 1682.

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tage is gained by a particular deed, it is inevitable that we question whether the motive that led to it could be entirely disinterested or pure.

The only survivor of the family of the first king was now Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, but so terrified was he at the fate of his house, that his retreat was only ascertained by David from an old slave of Saul, who, apparently by doubtful means, had acquired property since the defeat of Gilboa; owning personally no fewer than twenty slaves. The fallen prince lived, it seemed, at Lodebar, not far from Mahanaim, among the mountains of Gilead. Thence David brought him, and having restored to him the private lands of his father, which appear to have lain near Jerusalem, appointed Ziba, with his slaves, and his household of fifteen sons, to superintend them, and pay over to him the income they yielded. Mephibosheth himself had apartments given him in the palace, and ate at the royal table. Helplessly crippled, and wholly dependent on the favour of David, his deformity and the misfortunes of his race seem to have broken his spirit. The son of one whose agility had been like that of the gazelle on the hills, he never forgets in his humility that he is a poor lame slave,[1] unable to walk; a dead dog;[2] the last survivor of his father's house;[3] laying no weight on the oath sworn to his father, the matchless friend of David, to be kind to his race; and regards the king as an angel of God for sparing his life.[4] It is pleasant to know that the race of Jonathan did not die with him. He already had a son, Micha, when he came to Jerusalem. Through him the family rose to a numerous posterity, noted for their many sons and grandchildren;[5] one of

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 26. [2] 2 Sam. ix. 8. [3] 2 Sam. xix. 28.
[4] 2 Sam. xix. 27. [5] 1 Chron. viii. 35–40; ix. 40–44.

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them, in the eleventh generation, boasting of sons famous as "mighty men of valour, archers," like their ancestor Jonathan. The race of Saul must, therefore, have been prominent even after the Exile, though permanently thrust into private life.

The first twenty years of David's reign seem to have passed in comparative peace. Local wars with the Philistines, indeed, broke out from time to time, but their power had been crippled at the two great battles of Mount Perazim and the Valley of Gibeon.[1] Since the capture of Gath, tribute had been imposed on them, but it was long before they quietly submitted to such a reversal of their position towards Israel. It was, apparently, in the frays and forays of these years that David's famous heroes won their greatest honours, and it was in one of them that he himself encountered the greatest peril of life he ever ran. Faint with the battle, he had been attacked by a huge Philistine warrior, and was like to be overpowered, when Abishai came to his rescue and killed his assailant. Henceforth his men would not let him fight in the front ranks, lest, as they said, with fond endearment, the "Light of Israel" should be quenched.[2]

Wars, however, destined to extend David's kingdom to an empire, now began on a great scale.[3] The first was with

[1] Isa. xxviii. 21. [2] 2 Sam. xxi. 15-18.

[3] The note of Graetz justifying his belief that these wars broke out twenty years, at least, after David's accession, is as follows: "They are to be assigned to the second half of David's reign. For Solomon, who was young at his accession—at most twenty—was born after the Ammonite war. He seems to have been born in the same year as Bathsheba's elder child died (2 Sam. xii. 24). In any case hardly twenty years intervened between the incident of Bathsheba and David's death. Amnon's bad conduct happened not long after his father's fall and the close of the Ammonito-Syrian wars (2 Sam. xiii. 1). Amnon as the eldest son must have been grown up to manhood, since he was born at Hebron, and Absalom is spoken of as a young man. They must, at any rate, have been fully 20, and consequently David must have reigned at least as long, when Amnon sinned. Eleven years passed between the

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Moab; a people with whom, as we have seen, he was connected by blood through Ruth, and towards whom he had been so friendly as to make their country at one time his refuge from Saul, and the place of safety for his parents. The cause of hostility is not stated, but Jewish tradition asserts that it was the murder of David's father and mother by the Moabitish king.[1] More probably the Moabites had attacked the trans-jordanic tribes, inflicting on them such terrible cruelties as those practised by their neighbours, the people of Ammon, in similar cases;[2] conduct which would bring David promptly to the rescue of the invaded territory. It must, at least, from some cause, have been regarded as a war of revenge, for David treated them, when vanquished, with sternness remarkable in the light of the friendly past. Making the prisoners lie close together on the ground, the space they occupied was measured, and only those on a "full" third of it were spared; that is, he put to death two out of three of the male population he had captured. The whole country, moreover, was laid under tribute, which was ordered to be paid yearly at Jerusalem.[3] Yet this severity must not be laid to the sole charge of David. Like the Koran, the law of Moses had enjoined that if a city yielded when summoned, the lives of the inhabitants were to be spared, tribute being imposed on the community. If, however, it resisted, "every male" was to be put to death; the women and children led off as slaves; the place sacked, and its cattle and all the plunder shared among the con-

death of Amnon and that of Absalom. Two years were spent in cherishing revenge; Absalom lived three years in exile at Geshur; two years were spent in disgrace at Jerusalem; and he rebelled four years after this. These eleven years fall in the second half of David's reign, so that Absalom's rebellion must have happened only a few years before his father's death." Graetz, vol. i. p. 251.

[1] Talmud, *Tract. Sanhedrin*, p. 39 b.

[2] See Amos i. 13.

[3] 2 Sam. viii. 2.

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querors.[1] In sparing a "full" third of the men taken, David, therefore, leaned to the side of mercy, according to the usage sanctioned even by the Law; nor is there any hint that he reduced the women or children, or the survivors of the men, to slavery. We must, in fact, guard against transferring to a remote age the tenderness towards the vanquished that has very gradually obtained a footing in modern warfare. Meanwhile, the army brought back a rich booty, part of which, in silver and gold,[2] David dedicated to God. As the war was "His," the spoils rightly belonged to Him.

This war with Moab unfortunately drew others, much more severe, in its train. The kingdom of Ammon, lying to the north, between the Arnon and the Jabbok, had hitherto been friendly with David, perhaps from its dislike of Saul, who had worsted its army at Jabesh Gilead in the early part of his reign. Nahash—"the serpent"—its king, had shewn him favour for a time during his troubles: according to Jewish tradition, in protecting one of his brothers, the only survivor of the massacre of his family by the treacherous ruler of Moab. Nahash having died, David sent an embassy of condolence to Hanun, his son, at Rabbah Ammon, the capital, and of congratulation on his own accession; an act of courtesy which seemed little likely to lead to the results that followed. Alarmed at the subjugation of Moab, Hanun saw in the messengers from Jerusalem only spies, and was so unwise as to insult them and their master grossly. Seizing them, he inflicted on them a disgrace which, even among the Arabs of to-day, is held to be an unspeakable affront; causing one-half of their beards to be shaved away,[3] and their robes to be cut short at their girdle,

[1] Deut. xx. 10, ff. [2] 2 Sam. viii. 12.
[3] See Isa. vii. 20; l. 6. Ezek. v. 1. Gesenius, *Iesaia.* vol. i. p. 320.

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so that their persons were exposed, for, among the Hebrews, none but the priests wore drawers or trousers, and in this plight turned them out of the country. Ashamed to return thus dishonoured, for the cutting of the beard, not to speak of the outrage inflicted besides, was, and still is, thought worse than to have had even their noses cut off;[1] they would not go up to Jerusalem, but having sent word of their treatment to David, remained for the time at Jericho. Such an outrage on royal messengers, whose persons were always sacred, left no choice but war. The army was set in motion, including the 600 Gibborim or "heroes," and apparently, also, the bodyguard of Crethi and Plethi,[2] under the famous priest-warrior Benaiah. Alarmed at the prospect of an invasion by the conquerors of Moab, Hanun forthwith hired large bodies of troops from the different Syrian or Aramean kings between Lebanon and the Euphrates. The petty kingdom of Rehob in the north, near Laish or Dan, and thus west of the Jordan, sent some; Hadadezer, ruler of Zobah, a kingdom stretching apparently from the eastern slopes of Lebanon, from near Hamath[3] on the west, to the Euphrates, sent 20,000 footmen, besides chariots and cavalry;[4] the king of Maacah, the district east of Bashan and the Lejah, contributed 1,000 men; and the community of Tob, the name of whose district is still preserved as that of Taiyebeh, a village between Jerash and the Sea of Galilee, furnished 12,000. A thousand talents of silver[5] were expended by Ammon in the hire of these mercenaries.

David did not himself take the field, but entrusted the sole command to Joab, who proved well worthy of such confidence. Crossing the Jordan, he found the Ammonite

[1] Thenius.
[2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 252.
[3] 2 Sam. x. 1-7.
[4] 2 Sam. x. 6. 1 Chron. xxi. 6.
[5] A talent of silver = 660,000 grains = 114½ lbs. Troy.

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army encamped near their capital, and that of the Aramean mercenaries posted at different parts towards Medeba,[1] a city on the main line of road, about 25 miles to the south.[2] Marching swiftly between the two armies, he divided his force so that one half faced south and the other north, and gave the command of the latter corps to Abishai, his brother, retaining for himself that of the former, which included the flower of the army. In a brief soldier-like address, which sounds strangely from one guilty of hideous murders, he now inflamed the minds of his men for battle. "Be of good courage," said he, "and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good."[3] Fired with the belief that they were fighting for Jehovah, and had His aid, the Israelites rushed on their foes and scattered them in precipitate flight; a result so alarming to the northern army, that they also hastily fled before Abishai, into Rabbah Ammon, to have the protection of its walls.[4] It had been a great day, and might well give confidence for the future. Leaving his brother to prosecute the siege of the capital, Joab hastened to Jerusalem with news of his victory, and to prepare for another campaign. The Aramean kings, though defeated, were not yet crushed, and would doubtless soon resume hostilities on a still greater scale.

The whole military strength of Israel was therefore called out, and led over the Jordan by David himself, when the next season opened. Nor were such great preparations unneeded, for Hadadezer had collected from all parts of Aram, including Mesopotamia, a fresh and much larger army than the one he had lost, and had launched it against Israel,

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 252.
[2] 2 Sam. viii. 9.
[3] 1 Chron. xix. 13. 2 Sam. x. 12.
[4] 2 Sam. x. 8-14. 1 Chron. xix. 15.

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under the command of his chief warrior, Shobach. A great battle was presently fought near Helam, a town now unknown, and the Hebrews gained a second victory; Shobach himself being among the slain.[1] The vassals of Hadadezer forthwith hastened to make peace with the conqueror and transfer their allegiance to him, and thus at a stroke the kingdoms of Rehob, Maacah, and Tob, passed under the rule of David. Hadadezer himself was pursued to the Euphrates,[2] and defeated at his capital, Thapsacus.[3] A thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand infantry prisoners fell into the hands of the victors; but, with the grand national disdain of any force but infantry, they destroyed all the horses, except enough for a hundred chariots. The towns and cities yielded immense plunder, including a thousand shields overlaid with gold, the arms of Hadadezer's guard, and "exceeding much brass," or rather copper, afterwards used by Solomon in making the brazen sea, the pillars and the vessels of the Temple.[4] The wide territories of Zobah thus became part of the Hebrew dominions.[5]

The Syrian king of Damascus, who had supported Hadadezer, was involved in the same ruin, that city and its territory likewise passing into David's hands, and being held, like the rest of the vast conquered regions, by Hebrew garrisons.[6] Between the Euphrates and Lebanon, officials from Jerusalem levied tribute for the new Jewish empire.[7] The promise given, ages before, to Abraham, was at last ful-

[1] 2 Sam. x. 18.
[2] 2 Sam. viii. 3.
[3] Reading of 2 Sam. viii. 8 for Betah. Graetz.
[4] 2 Sam. viii. 7, 8. 1 Chron. xviii. 7, 8.
[5] 1 Kings xi. 23, 24.
[6] 2 Sam. viii. 6.
[7] 2 Sam. viii. 5, 6; x. 16, 19.

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filled, for his descendants now held the whole territory it had been foretold they would inherit.[1]

The splendour of such a series of victories spread the name of David far and near, and impressed the recollection of his greatness on outside nations.[2] The king of Hamath, the Hittite city on the Orontes, in gratitude for the destruction of a foe so dangerous to him as Hadadezer, and to secure the alliance of David against their common enemy, the Syrians, sent a congratulatory mission to Jerusalem by his son, with gifts "of all manner of vessels of gold, silver, and copper."[3] The chariots reserved from the spoil, graced the triumphal entry of the conqueror to his capital, and the golden shields, pillars, and vases were hung round the walls of the Tabernacle, where they long reminded Israel of the deeds of their fathers.

But peace was yet distant. The Edomites, south of the Dead Sea, afraid of the preponderance of Israel, had aided the Ammonites, and fought against David. Leaving the siege of Rabbah Ammon, therefore, to Joab, an army was sent under Abishai,[4] to crush this new enemy. It was the first appearance of Edom in Israelitish history since the days of Moses, and it was a disastrous one. A battle fought under the salt hills of Us-dom, at the foot of the Dead Sea, resulted in a decisive victory for Abishai.[5] Closely pursuing the fugitives, and penetrating to their rocky capital, Petra, the Strong City,[6] he became master of the country. Joab was then sent to finish the war, and did so with fierce ruth-

[1] Gen. xv. 18-21.

[2] This campaign is noticed by Nicolaus of Damascus (Jos., *Ant.*, VII. v. 2), and Eupolemus (Euseb., *Præp. Evan.*, ix. 30).

[3] 1 Chron. xviii. 9-12. Sayce, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. vii. p. 252.

[4] 1 Chron. xviii. 12.

[5] 2 Sam. viii. 13, for Syrians read Edomites.

[6] Ps. lx. 9; cviii. 10.

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lessness. Extermination was to his taste, and he carried it out as far as possible. For six months, during which he remained in the country, every accessible ravine of the Edomite mountains was invaded, and its population put to the sword, till his own men had to bury the dead to prevent a pestilence.[1] One child of the royal house, however, escaped; carried off hastily to Egypt by some faithful slaves of his father. But such was the abiding terror left by the wide massacre of his people, that he would not return to his native state till both Joab and David were dead.[2] The latter, himself, came to Edom after all was over, to give directions for the future. The remnant of the nation were granted their lives, but became his tributaries, and Hebrew posts were established in the mountain passes. Peace thus secured, he returned to Jerusalem and celebrated his triumph by a monument,[3] perhaps an inscribed tablet carved on the rocks of Edom, after the manner of Eastern kings.

The crisis thus happily surmounted had been momentous, and might well have dismayed a spirit less resolute, and less firmly sustained by religious enthusiasm. But amidst the dangers which threatened the State, David had remained not only unshaken but confident of victory. Feeling himself the Anointed of God, he had an abiding faith in his destiny, and this alone went far to secure success. The Philistines in the west were always ready for war, and, on the east, the north, and the south, a great confederacy had combined against him. If merely human force could have done it, Israel would have been blotted from the roll of peoples. Thus surrounded by foes, however, he never wavered or

[1] 1 Kings xi. 15, 16. [2] 1 Kings xi. 21.
[3] 2 Sam. viii. 13, "he gat him a name"—rather, "made him a monument."

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blanched. One of the Psalms, composed, as its title indicates, at this time, discloses his secret thoughts. Recalling, first, the ruinous condition of the State at his accession, he passes on, in notes of triumph, to anticipate his victory over his foes :[1]

"O God, Thou hast cast us off, Thou hast broken us down;
Thou hast been displeased: restore us again!
Thou hast made the state tremble; Thou hast broken it in pieces:
Heal Thou its wounds, for it reels!
Thou hast shewn Thy people hard things;
Thou hast made us drink the wine of confusion:
Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee,
To flee unto (as a rallying point)[2] from the bow;
(Not to lead us to victory,
But only) that Thy loved ones may be saved:
Help, now, with Thy right hand, and hear us!

God has spoken in His sanctuary—for that shall I be glad—
'I will divide Shechem,[3]
And measure out the Vale of Succoth;
Gilead is mine; Manasseh also is mine; (my weapon and my robe of war)—
Ephraim is the defence of my head;
Judah my Ruler's sceptre.
(But) Moab is my washing basin;[4]
Over[5] Edom[4] I throw my shoe.
Cry out, O Philistia, because of me!'

Who will bring me to the Strong City? (Petra.)
Who will lead me to Edom?
Whom but Thou, O God, who hadst cast us off?
Thou who (before) didst not go out with our armies?

[1] Ps. lx. [2] Jer. iv. 6.

[3] "The enemy will not do it. I, Jehovah, will portion it as I please, for it is Mine." Shechem and Succoth, the old holy places of the land on this and the other side of Jordan, stand for the whole country.

[4] Moab is degraded to the most menial service. Edom is taken possession of. See Ruth iv. 7, 8. Deut. xxv. 9. Philistia need have no hope of casting off the yoke. The conqueror will come with terrors, after his victories elsewhere.

[5] Or "Unto," as to a slave.

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Give us help against our foes,
For help of man is vain!
THROUGH GOD SHALL WE GAIN THE VICTORY,
He will tread down our enemies!" [1]

The Ammonites had now lost all their allies, and stood alone to brave the victorious forces of David. Their capital, Rabbah Ammon, "the chief city of Ammon," lay 2,800 feet above the sea—among the eastern hills, 20 miles back from the Jordan, on a line of about 15 miles north of Jerusalem. The Ammân, on which it lies, rising a little west of Rabbah, bends gradually into a great horseshoe, as it flows north, so that for the most of its seventy miles or more of winding and twisting it runs nearly from east to west. The long valley it thus makes its channel is very fertile, and still shews remains of ancient canals which once irrigated its hollow, far and wide. Some of these pass along the ledges of the enclosing lofty and often steep side rocks, or round cliffs, and reveal great skill for a period so remote. Far down in its picturesque bed, often broken into a foaming, wheeling, and noisy torrent, the stream rushes on to the east slope of the Pisgah range, entering the Jordan about twenty-five miles above its mouth, after scattering its bounty in a full flood which made the Ammonite territory both wealthy and strong.

The sides of the ravine on which the city stood rose in steep cliffs, the north one dominated by a citadel, round which spread out the upper town, while the lower town lay at the foot of the rocky wall. The natural strength of the citadel was great, for the projecting point on which it stood sank, steep, on three sides, while the fourth was scarped, for additional protection. Immense walls, moreover, surrounded

[1] Moll. Eisenlohr. Hitzig. Ewald.

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SIEGE OF DAPUR, IN THE COUNTRY OF THE AMORITES, BY THE ARMY OF RAMESES II.

1, 2, 3, 4. Four sons of Rameses in command of four testudos, under cover of which an approach is made to the fortress. 5. A soldier climbing the rock by thrusting an iron spear into the crevices. The soldiers on a line with him represent the light infantry and archers. 6. Two of the princes on a scaling ladder—the one thrown off. 7. Two heralds let down from the fort, to treat with the besiegers. Above are the towers of the citadel, and at the top, the standard of the Amorites. The three arrows in it are understood by Wilkinson to be a sign of defeat, added by the Egyptian painter. Others think them part of the standard.

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it, though in itself it was well-nigh impregnable from its massy solidity. Unprovided with battering rams or other military siege engines, harassed by vigorous sorties,[1] and unable to cut off the water supply, even the energy of Joab was baffled for nearly two years. At last, however, the town was taken. But the citadel yet held out, though its fall was certain, as it had only one well in it,[2] and the communication with the stream below was now cut off. The supreme honour of its conquest Joab reserved for David—a touch of devotion which marks the brightest trait in his character. The king was then, unhappily for himself, as it had proved, in Jerusalem, embittered by remembrances of his foul treachery to Uriah, yet clinging to his base relations to the shameless wife of his victim, a woman, perhaps fair, but so utterly heartless as apparently to have gloried in the position obtained even at such a price. "I have fought against Rabbah," wrote Joab, to the king, his uncle, "and have taken the City of Waters (the lower town); (but the citadel still holds out). Now, therefore, gather the rest of the people together, (and come) and sit down against the citadel and take it, (so as to finish the siege), lest I have the honour of taking it and the victory be ascribed to me instead of to you."[3] This summons roused the king from his inglorious life, and on his arrival the citadel was taken by storm. Crowded with the richer inhabitants of the lower town, who had fled to it with their wealth, the stronghold was given up to plunder,[4] David reserving for himself what was most precious. The crown of the king, which Josephus describes as weighing a talent of gold, and famed for its precious stones, especially a sardonyx[5] in its front, was

[1] 2 Sam. xi. 17 ff. [2] Jos., *Ant.*, VII. vii. 5. [3] 2 Sam. xii. 26 ff.
[4] Jos., *Ant.*, VII. vii. 5. 2 Sam. xii. 30. 1 Chron. xx. 2.
[5] A reddish-yellow quartz crystal.

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henceforth, he tells us, worn by David himself. Jewish tradition, however, asserts that it was the crown of the idol Moloch, "the king," as it was called, which is thus alluded to; adding, that as the victorious army approached the god, it was afraid before him, till Ittai of Gath tore the vast golden diadem[1] from his head and brought it to David; doing thus what no Israelite could have done for fear of pollution.[2] The retribution inflicted on the conquered was in keeping with the ferocious spirit of the ancient world. Attempts have been made to[3] explain the statements given,[4] as referring merely to slave labour, in smoothing and polishing building stones, threshing grain with iron rollers, felling wood with axes, and making bricks. But though it is evident that only a small portion of the population, perhaps only the prisoners of war, were the objects of the tortures described, it would be a violence to other parts of the sacred narrative, if barbarous acts, simply as such, were fancied inadmissible. Fierceness towards the vanquished was a characteristic of antiquity from which the Hebrews could not escape. The feeling of human brotherhood is a fruit of Christianity, and was unknown till Christ enforced it. Before His day, the Greek saw a brother man only in the Greek, the Roman only in the Roman, and the son of Israel

[1] This crown is said to have weighed a talent, or 114 lbs. troy. This, however, may mean that it was *worth* a talent, rather than *weighed* so much. But it was common to hang crowns over the throne or to place them on it. Athenæus describes a crown composed of 10,000 pieces of gold and placed on the throne of King Ptolemy, and Benjamin of Tudela speaks of a crown of gold and gems suspended over the throne of the Emperor Comnenus.

[2] *Dict. of the Bible*, art. "Ittai." The law forbade an Israelite to touch either the gold or silver of an idol. But it was lawful for David to take it from the hand of Ittai, though not from the head of the god. Graetz thinks the crown was that of the idol, and that David henceforth wore it as his own crown. *Gesch.*, vol. i. p. 255. In 2 Sam. xii. 30, the words "their king," are Milcom or Molech. In the Septuagint, the words "their king," follow "Milcom."

[3] By Danz, in last century, and by Graetz in our own day.

[4] 2 Sam. xii. 31. 1 Chron. xx. 3.

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only in a member of the Hebrew tribes or peoples related in blood. Other races had no rights. "Where the foreigner," says Mommsen, "had not put himself under a Roman protector, and did not thus live as his client or dependent, he had no rights, and could hold no property. What the Roman citizen took from him was as legally seized as the shell-fishes, which one picks up, as without owner, on the sea-shore. The unprotected foreigner had no more rights than the wild beast which one may hunt down." [1]

Readers of Herodotus will remember how the Phœnicians, trading on the shore of Argos, carried off Io, after attacking the natives who had come to buy from them—treating them as mere objects of robbery and plunder; and the Anabasis and Odyssey shew how Xenophon and Ulysses, in their respective ages, had no higher idea of the claims of man, as man. Ammon, remotely connected with Israel by descent, had forfeited all claims for mercy by its fierce resistance, its idolatry, and the insults it had heaped on David. It was itself, moreover, infamous for its cruelty towards prisoners. Its king had threatened to put out the right eye of every man of Jabesh Gilead, when the city was taken, to prevent them using the bow thenceforth; and the prophet Amos speaks of their indescribable atrocities to the women of Gilead in their marauding forays.[2] That David should have acted towards them as they would have acted to Israel had they been the victors, may not be the higher rule of Christianity, but it was the natural course in his age, and the best of men are creatures of their times. Even the mild Gideon, infuriated at the conduct of the elders of some Reubenite villages, threshed them to death with branches of

[1] Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*, i. 159, 161.
[2] Amos i. 13.

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the thorny acacia, "tearing their flesh" from their bones.[1] At Moab, David spared a full third of his prisoners, contrary to the usage which doomed all to death, but he had ordered the other two-thirds to be killed. While even in his wilderness days, when only the head of a band of outlaws, he had ordered the massacre of everything male, old or young, in the great establishment of Nabal, at Carmel, in the south, in his fury at the churlishness of the master. Even some of the Psalms, moreover, reflect the spirit of the age in which they were written, for they speak of washing the feet in the blood of the enemy; of their being dipped in it, and of the tongues of dogs being red with it; of a victor boasting that the hollows of the battle-field were filled with dead bodies, and that he would dash in pieces the heads of his foes, over a wide country, or many countries, breaking in their skulls with an iron club, as one shivers a potter's vessel.[2]

In Edom, Joab, acting for David, had remorselessly cut down every man he could, and we shall meet with other cases of equal ferocity, in future passages of Hebrew history. We must not, let it be repeated, expect the humanity of our own time in that of David, a thousand years before Christ. Nothing but "woe to the vanquished" was as yet known. Egypt gloried in the piles of hands and heads of the foe gathered before the tent of the king after a battle. Assyria flayed its captives alive; put rings through their lips and noses, and led them like beasts by a cord; blinded them, and in fact multiplied their tortures of every kind.[3] It is not, moreover, to be forgotten, that even in the middle ages it was usual to kill all common soldiers taken in battle, reserving only knights and the rich, who could pay ransom.

[1] Jud. viii. 16.
[2] Ps. lviii. 10; lxviii. 23; cx. 6; ii. 9.
[3] See vol. ii. p. 449.

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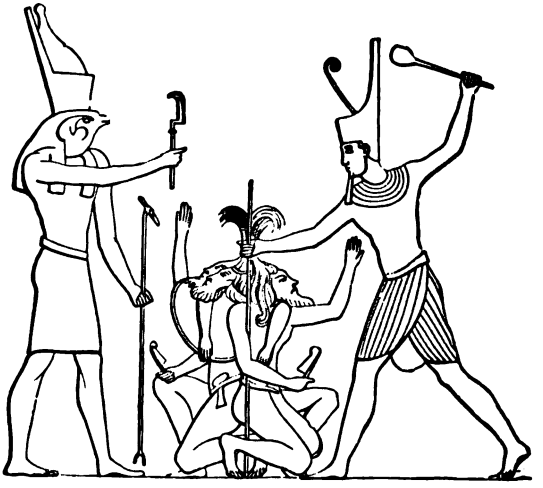
The massacre at Limoges, under the sanction of one commonly so gentle as the Black Prince, shews how natural it was for David, nearly three thousand years before, to act as he did. Before the invention of gunpowder, men fought hand to hand, and the passions were roused to far wilder fierceness than now, when the enemy is almost too far off to be seen. We must therefore, I fear, accept the plain statement in its literal sense, that, on the taking of Rabbah and



THE PHARAOH SLAYING PRISONERS, THE GOD HORUS LOOKING ON.

the other Ammonite cities, David allowed the same terrible punishments to be inflicted on some of the prisoners, as the Ammonites themselves were accustomed to inflict on their captives of war. Not to have done so would have been resented by his own army. Even in the days of Joshua, the host had been with difficulty kept from exterminating the Gibeonites, notwithstanding the solemn agreement to spare

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their lives sworn to by the great leader himself.[1] As the text stands, therefore, so we must read it, noting it as a mark of the spirit of the times. "He sawed them with saws, cut them with iron cutting instruments, tore them with iron-toothed threshing sledges, and burned them alive in brick furnaces," or, as Thenius understands it, in their own idol of Moloch, in which they were wont to burn many victims to their gods. Hanun the king, who had kindled the war, had either been killed or had fled, and David seems to have put Shobi, his brother, in his place.[2]

Thus at last the wars had ended. The limits of the kingdom, a short time before, had been Dan and Beersheba, on the north and south. But David reigned now from El Arish, the River of Egypt, to the Euphrates; from Gaza on the west to Thapsacus on the east, and from all the subject nations in this vast empire yearly tribute was exacted; in part, probably, in the form of drafts of slave labour to toil on the royal buildings and other public works.[3]

It is hard to realize in an age like ours the spirit of one so different as that of David, but it is necessary to do so, to understand the enthusiasm which carried him and his army so triumphantly through such a series of wars. His peaceable relations with Phœnicia shew that he had not desired them, nor is there any sign of his having been urged by the lust of conquest, which we see in many great Eastern

[1] Josh. ix. 18.

[2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 256. His note is worth copying. "It is not said in Samuel that Rabbah Ammon was destroyed at this time, but only in Chronicles, where the reference may be to *the walls*. Since we read in 2 Sam. xvii. 27, that Shobi, son of Nahash, was friendly with David, it follows that Rabbah had been left standing, and that he had apparently put a brother of Hanun over it asking, for which the favoured personage was grateful. It results from this, also, that David could not have inflicted such awful punishments on the Ammonites as commentators imagine from verse 31." Then comes a learned defence of his explanation as given above.

[3] Graetz, vol. i. p. 257. See Herzog, *Real Encyc.*, vol. iii. p. 308.

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monarchs. Yet the whole region between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates was ablaze with war at the same moment; and Israel, hardly reorganized after the exhaustion and ruin of Saul's final disaster, seemed in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed. The address of Joab to his soldiers before the first battle at Medeba gives the key to the feelings of the day.[1]

Zeal for Jehovah, as their God, and for their country and brethren as His land and people, had become for the time a deep-rooted passion in every bosom. There was, in fact, a revival of the ancient fervour of the days of Joshua, such as from time to time had burst out even in the darkest hours of the past. This enthusiasm might have been chilled and well-nigh lost where the nation was much in contact with heathenism, whether on the sea-coast or in the inland Canaanite towns. But in the mountain valleys of central Palestine, and in the secluded pastures of Judah and the south, the heart of the people still beat sound. Even during the time of the Judges, appeals made in the name of Jehovah had always found a zealous response from larger or smaller districts. The great deeds of Deborah, Gideon, and Jephthah, would have been impossible but for the slumbering religious life, which they knew how to rouse to a vigorous enthusiasm. This latent fervour, and hereditary loyalty to Jehovah, had been at last rekindled in such power throughout the land, by Samuel, that it thenceforth became at intervals the passionate, almost the fanatical, glory of the nation. Of this restoration of the spiritual vigour of Israel, David, the anointed of Samuel, was a supreme illustration. In an age especially Puritan, he was the foremost representative of its spirit. With him

[1] See page 277.

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as with it, religion, as he understood it, was the first thought in all relations of life, public or private. The whole community, citizen, soldier, magistrate, and king, alike moved in an atmosphere of the supernatural. They "were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him, was with them the great end of existence."[1] Israel, as a whole, was the peculiar people of God; its country was especially His earthly kingdom. Its enemies were foes to Him, and its battles were fought for Him and under His eye. Even in Mohammedanism the enthusiasm kindled by a religious war is seen in the fanatical bravery of the Ghazis of Afghanistan, or of the Dervishes of the Soudan, and by the irresistible fury of the first Arab conquests. It was the same with the Hebrew of David's age. Every victory heightened his national pride in his Divine Leader, to whose protection and aid all was due. "It was well with the people whose God was Jehovah: the people He had chosen for His own inheritance."[2] Their confidence in David as "the Anointed," rose in proportion to his success. The 110th Psalm, in its primary reference, seems to express the feelings of both the king and the nation in the midst of their greatest danger,[3] though, as we know, it points in its secondary but far higher application, to that Messiah of whom he was only the faint type.[4]

[1] Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*. [2] Ps. xxxiii. 12. [3] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. iii.
[4] See the essay on "Messianic Psalms" in the *Prophecies of Isaiah*, by Canon J. K. Cheyne, vol. ii. pp. 175-183.

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"Jehovah said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou at my right hand[1]
Till I lay thine enemies for a footstool below thy feet.'
Yes! Jehovah will send to thee the sceptre of power out of Zion.
Rule thou in the midst of thy enemies!
Thy people, in holy adornment, are full of devotion to thee in the day of battle:
Thy youths flock to thee, countless as the drops of the morning dew!

Jehovah has sworn and will not repent:
'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'[2]
Jehovah, on thy right hand, will shiver kings in pieces in the day of His wrath.
He shall judge among the heathen;
The slaughter of His battles will fill the land with the dead;
He will crush the heads of thine enemies over wide lands;
(When faint) He will drink of the brook by the way,
And lift up His head, (refreshed, to continue the pursuit)."

That a spirit so fierce should breathe through verses so instinct with trust in God, marks the age in which they were written. The river is stained by the soil through which it flows, and even religion takes the hue of the times. The faith of the Covenanters or Puritans expressed itself very differently from that of their descendants of to-day. Indeed, the heroes of every age, in their struggles for God and the truth, have found in the language of the Psalms the fittest utterance of their feelings. The Reformers over Europe; the Pilgrim Fathers; the great men of the English Commonwealth; the Scotch champions of religious liberty against the Stuarts, alike turned to the Old Testament, and especially to the Psalms, as the embodiment of their strong trust in God, and of their zeal against foes whom they regarded as no less His enemies than theirs. Nor are we to

[1] Jehovah commands His anointed, David, to take the right-hand place in His war chariot, to go forth with Him to war.

[2] David united in himself, as earthly head of the theocracy, the priestly and royal dignities, as Melchizedek had done. But at the same time the words have an especial reference to David's Lord.

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forget that David lived a whole millennium before Christ had come to temper the passions of mankind, and substitute the gentleness of the Gospel for the terrible sternness of the Law. The 18th Psalm, written by him, according to the title, in gratitude to God for final deliverance from all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, shews still more strikingly the union of lofty idealism and the sternest severity. The earth seems to shake and tremble, and the pillars of the heavens to move before the presence of God, coming to avenge His anointed.

"He bowed the heavens and came down;
Dark clouds were beneath His feet;
He rode upon a cherub and did fly:
Yea, He swooped down on the wings of the wind!
He made darkness His veil:
Round about Him, like His tent,
Were the storm-black waters and thick clouds of the skies.
From the splendour before Him the clouds rolled away,
(Sending forth) hailstones and flaming lightnings;
Jehovah thundered from the heavens,
The Highest called out, aloud,
(And then fell) hailstones and flaming lightning."

Such is the coming forth of the Mighty One against the enemies of His servant. Now follows their discomfiture and David's deliverance:

"He sent forth His arrows and scattered them,
He shot out lightnings and discomfited them.
The beds on which the sea rests shewed themselves:
The foundations of the earth were laid bare
At thy rebuke, O Jehovah!
At the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils!

Reaching down from on high He took me:
He drew me out from many waters,
He delivered me from my terrible foe,
And from those that hated me;

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For they were too strong for me.
They fell upon me in the day of my need,
But Jehovah was my stay;
He led me out into an open place—
He freed me, because He loves me."

The ground of this interference on his behalf is, he maintains, the knowledge by God of his earnest efforts after a godly life.

" Jehovah did to me according to my uprightness,
He rewarded me according to the cleanness of my hands;
For I took heed to the ways of Jehovah,
And turned not aside wickedly from my God.
All His commands I kept before my eyes,
His laws did I not put away from me.
Thus was I upright before Him;
I kept myself from my sins;
Therefore has Jehovah rewarded me according to my innocence;
According to the cleanness of my hands before Him."

A comment on the ways of God to man now reveals the singer's conceptions in this respect:

" To the merciful Thou shewest Thyself merciful;
To the upright Thou shewest Thyself upright;
To the pure Thou shewest Thyself pure;
To the wilful Thou shewest Thyself perverse;
Thou savest the humble,
But lowerest Thy brows against the haughty."

Feeling that he has tried to be upright, pure, and humble, his victories are the gracious return from God.

" Thou, Jehovah, makest my light shine,
Jehovah, my God, enlightens my darkness;
For through Thee I dash to pieces armies (sent against me);
Through my God I bound over the rampart;
That God whose ways are perfect;
The promise of Jehovah is well tried,
He is a shield to all who trust Him."

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Even the physical endowments of man are His gifts—

"For who but Jehovah is God,
Who is a Rock save our God!
The God who girds me with strength;
Who keeps me safe on my way;
Who gives me the swiftness of the fleet gazelle,
And sets me in safety on my hills;
Who teaches my hands to war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze:
Thou givest to me the shield of Thy help;
Thy right hand has held me up,
And Thy gracious goodness has made me great!"

All his success has come through God alone.

"Thou makest room for my steps under me,
And my feet Thou hast kept firm.
I have pursued my enemies, and overtaken them,
I have not turned back till I had consumed them.
I have dashed them down so that they cannot rise,
They are fallen under my feet.
It is THOU who girdest me with strength for war,
And makest my adversaries bow beneath me.
Thou madest mine enemies turn their backs to me,
Them that hated me I rooted out.

They cried, but no deliverer came to them;
(They cried) to Jehovah, but He gave them no heed;
So I beat them small as dust before the wind,
I trod them down like the mire of the streets.
Thou didst deliver me from the stripes of the nations,
Thou hast preserved me to be the head of the heathen;
Peoples (till now) unknown to me do me homage,
At the report of my fame they obey me;
Sons of foreign races pay court to me.
Sons of strange nations grow pale before me,
And in trembling fear abandon even their castles."

The Psalm ends with a grand doxology.

"Jehovah liveth! blessed be my Rock,
Exalted be the God of my salvation!

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That God who has given me my revenge,
And subdued the nations under me;
My Deliverer from my enemies;
He who has lifted me up above my foes:
Who has rescued me from the violent man,[1]
Therefore will I praise Thee, Jehovah, among the nations,
And sing to Thy name.
Thou art the Mighty Helper of Thy King,
Thou shewest favour to Thine Anointed,
To David and to his seed for ever."[2]

The man who could write a Psalm like this, in which, nevertheless, gleams out the remorseless fierceness of antiquity to a foe, may have had his human weaknesses and manifold failures and sins, as who has not? but he was in his heart true and godly. Even now, such a thanksgiving ode stirs the blood and lifts the thoughts in unwonted reverence to the heavens, but what must have been its effects when first sung, while the victories and deliverances it records were great events of the day; when Benaiah, fresh from the storming of Rabbah, took his wonted place in the Levite choirs, who sang this great Te Deum, and the open space round the Tabernacle was crowded with heroes of the wars, listening, with what emotion we may fancy, to the clash of the music, and the loud voices of the singers! By what effort of imagination could we conceive a modern hero-king, or commander-in-chief, even if he had the genius of David, celebrating our victories now, in strains of equal loftiness!

"David, king of Judah," says Carlyle, "a soul inspired by Divine music and much other heroism, was wont to pour himself forth in song; he, with seer's eye and heart, discerned the God-like among the Human! struck tones that were an echo of the sphere-harmonies, and are still felt to

[1] Saul (?). [2] Ewald. Moll. Lengerke. Hitzig. Kay.

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be such. Reader, art thou one of a thousand, able still to *read* a Psalm of David, and catch some echo of it through the old dim centuries; feeling far off, in thy own heart, what it once was to other hearts made as thine?"[1]

The amazing results of David's wars impressed two thoughts indelibly in the hearts of the Hebrew nation. The one is expressed repeatedly in various parts of the Bible:

"The king is not saved by the multitude of an host:
A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
A horse is a vain thing for safety,
Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength."[2]

"Through Thee will we overthrow our enemies;
Through Thy name tread down our adversaries!
I will not trust in my bow,
Neither will my sword save me."[3]

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses,
But we will remember the name of Jehovah, our God."[4]

"Jehovah delighteth not in the strength of a horse,
He takes no pleasure in the strong limbs of a man;[5]
He taketh pleasure in them that fear Him,
In them that hope in His mercy.[6]
The horse is prepared against the day of battle,
But victory comes from Jehovah."[7]

All that was most heroic in David's age rose from this trust in God, and it fired the souls of the Maccabee heroes, centuries later; for man never rises to his grandest or noblest in war, except when he believes in the sacredness of the cause for which he contends. It created a profound belief that Jehovah always led the armies of Israel to vic-

[1] *Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. vii. p. 124.
[2] Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17.
[3] Ps. xliv. 5, 6.
[4] Ps. xx. 7.
[5] Neither in cavalry nor in infantry.
[6] Ps. cxlvii. 11.
[7] Prov. xxi. 31.

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tory, when they went forth to the battle, to make His name great or to save His people. He was the "God of Hosts," that is, of the armies of Israel. Jehovah Zebaoth was invoked before every war, and the troops marched to the field believing that they were invincible through His aid.

David was now at the height of his glory. His enemies had been subdued under him, and he had won a vast empire; wealth from many tributary nations poured into Jerusalem; alliances were eagerly sought by neighbouring powers. His capital had been in great part rebuilt, and he himself had a Tyrian palace of cedar and polished stone. His army was covered with glory. Priest, prophet, and people, alike honoured and loved a king who was first in war and first in peace, and whose life had been in many respects exemplary. But there are dangers to even the best in extreme prosperity. How easily might he imperil the public liberties, now that he was the centre of a power so absolute! At the head of an irresistible soldiery, to whom his nod was law, how hard might it be for him to restrain himself within the checks of the Constitution? Other kings of his day were worshipped as divine. The lives and property of their subjects were counters with which they might sport as it pleased them. It is to David's honour that, with every temptation to play the Eastern despot, he bore himself, on the whole, with a moderation which never invaded the ancient liberties of the nation, endearing him in life, and making his memory sacred among his people for ever.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE FALL OF DAVID.

It is a striking distinction of the Bible, that while it dismisses in a few verses the story of David's victories, which, if won by an Egyptian or Assyrian monarch, would have been the great theme of their chroniclers, it dwells with sad detail on the lesson of his fall. It is his glory that he avoided to so great an extent the sins to which his position might so easily have led him; but he did not wholly bear himself as became his nobler characteristics. The higher the glory he enjoyed, the greater the necessity to guard against temptation; but though he did so for the most part, one terrible crime is recorded against him; that connected with Uriah and Bathsheba. That he should have sinned like other men, was only to be expected; but how nobly free and morally healthy must a people have been, to value the dignity, purity, and sacredness of the family so highly, as to insert in its public records this sad blemish in the life of their greatest hero; a king wielding absolutely the power of life and death. Far from slavishly flattering him, and drawing a veil over his private life, it seeks to guard its youth, whose morals these records would form, by a story so full of warning.

Nor does David suffer in the final estimate of his true greatness by this unique fidelity in the disclosure of a sin so dark and calamitous. It would have been kept a palace

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secret among any other people; but it does not in the end lower a just estimate of him whom it exposes. How much greater does he appear, amidst all his human weakness, by the penitent depth of his sorrow and shame, his noble struggle towards a better life, and his humility under the heaviest calamities, sent as the just punishment of his guilt! "David," says Carlyle, "had fallen into sins enough; blackest crimes; there was no want of sins. And thereupon the unbelievers sneer and ask, Is this your man according to God's heart? The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults? what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, true, often-baffled, never-ended struggle of it, be forgotten? 'It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' Of all acts, is not, for a man, *repentance* the most divine? The deadliest sin, I say, were that same supercilious consciousness of no sin;—that, is death: the heart so conscious is divorced from sincerity, humility, and fact; is dead: it is 'pure' as dead dry sand is pure. David's life and history, as written for us in these Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever, with tears, repentance, true, unconquerable purpose, begun anew."[1]

The calamity which threw so dark a shadow on the hitherto splendid fame of David, as one who realized in his public relations the ideal of a just and noble ruler,[2] and in his private life that of a sincerely religious man, happened

[1] *Lectures on Heroes*, p. 43.

[2] 2 Sam. viii. 15.

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in the opening of the second year of the siege of Rabbah. Joab had returned with the army to Ammon "at the time when kings go forth to battle,"[1] but David remained in Jerusalem. An officer of the Gibborim or "braves"—Uriah,[2] a Hittite by race, and thus a foreigner, like others of David's officers, Ittai of Gath, Ishbosheth, the Canaanite, and Zebek, the Ammonite—lived on the slope of Mount Zion, immediately below the palace.[3] A valiant soldier, he had earned the rank of one of the famous thirty-seven decorated heroes of that splendid corps;[4] but, though an alien, he had adopted the Hebrew religion.[5] His wife, Bathsheba, the daughter of one of his brother officers, and granddaughter of Ahithophel, David's wisest counsellor,[6] a woman of extraordinary beauty, appears to have been loved by him with a rare and passionate tenderness.[7] The flat roof of her house was overlooked from the palace, yet, though thus exposed, she had, with strange immodesty, gone to it to bathe, in the cool of one of the fierce summer days. Unfortunately for himself, the king, who had just risen from his siesta, was enjoying the evening breeze on the palace roof at the time, and was seized on the moment with a wild and lawless desire to make her his own. He had already added to the six wives whom he had brought from Hebron.[8] Each lived in a separate house,[9] and there were, besides, a large number of concubines, who lived in the palace.[10] To this great harem, however, he determined

[1] 2 Sam. xi. 1. 1 Kings xx. 22, 26. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10.
[2] = "Jehovah is my light." [3] 2 Sam. xi. 2.
[4] 2 Sam. xxiii. 39. [5] 2 Sam. xi. 11.
[6] 2 Sam. xi. 3; xxiii. 34.
[7] To be inferred from Nathan's parable, 2 Sam. xii. 3.
[8] 2 Sam. v. 13-16; xv. 16. [9] 2 Sam. xiii. 7, 20.
[10] 2 Sam. xv. 16; xix. 5. The ten left in Jerusalem were evidently only part of the whole number.

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to add Bathsheba. Sending for her, therefore, by his officers, with the harsh despotism of Eastern kings, he at once removed her to his women's apartments ; nor does she seem to have shewn any disinclination, though, in Israel, even a maiden could oppose the royal will in such matters.[1] Such an act was only what was habitually done by the kings around, for they claimed the right, so strange to us, of taking any one they liked as wife or concubine.[2] But David stood in a different position from a heathen ruler. It had been expressly forbidden by the Law that a Hebrew monarch should have many wives,[3] and while so zealous in other respects, he had grossly sinned in this particular. Now, however, he added a mean and selfish crime to his sensual offences. After a long life, passed with universal recognition of his lofty and sincere uprightness, he had thrown away his good name. In an age of fervent religious enthusiasm, his sin must have created a profound sensation, and it went far to undo all the good of his former life. He was a man of about fifty,[4] and could not plead the folly of youth. Moreover, the partner of his guilt was no obscure person, but the wife of a high officer of his guards. Uriah might seek his life, when he found out the disgrace brought on his home. The whole corps of Gibborim, indeed, might rise in revolt to avenge the outrage on one of their most famous officers.

Feeling all this, David instantly saw the necessity of trying to hide his crime ; but, as one sin too often leads to another, he only increased his guilt by the measure he took to conceal it. Having first caused Bathsheba to return to her own house, he sent to the camp for Uriah, and brought

[1] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 224. [2] Vol. i. p. 319. Gen. xii. 15 ; xx. 2.
[3] Deut. xvii. 17.
[4] So Ewald. Graetz would make him about fifty-eight.

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him to Jerusalem, on pretext of wishing to hear news from the seat of war. A hollow audience ended, he courteously dismissed the veteran, with the crafty recommendation to go home and refresh himself after his fatigues, flattering him at the same time by sending thither a dish from the royal table, for his entertainment. But the wily scheme was destined to fail. Uriah had caught the austere and lofty spirit of David's better days, and refused any self-indulgence while the Ark of God was in the field; the army in rough booths of branches; and Joab, and his comrades of the Gibborim, sleeping on the ground. Nothing would induce him to spend the night anywhere but in the quarters of the watch, at the gate of the palace. On the second day the king vainly tried to gain his base end by inducing him to drink to excess, but he still retained his high idea of duty, and slept, as before, with the guard.[1]

Seeing his plan thus balked, a third crime, of appalling meanness and blackness, seemed the only remaining way of escape, and David, more reckless as his position grew desperate, did not hesitate to adopt it. He would add murder to adultery, and use Uriah himself to carry back his own death-warrant to Ammon. The victim was, therefore, dismissed with a letter to Joab, to "set Uriah in the front of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die." No reason was given, and perhaps Joab thought that the brave soldier had done some wrong, for which this was the penalty. At any rate, it was for the king to command, and for him, unscrupulous as he was, to obey. Uriah was sent to attack a part of the city most strongly defended, and not being properly supported, was

[1] Uriah's conduct throws a strong light on the admirable spirit and temper of the army in that strict and Puritan age.

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presently killed, with some others, in a fierce sally, or struck down by a missile from the walls.[1]

Ever since the death of Abimelech at Thebez, by the piece of a millstone thrown down on him by a woman, it had been a maxim in Hebrew warfare never to approach the walls of a besieged city too closely.[2] In sending off a courier therefore to David, with the news that his command was obeyed, Joab took care to warn the messenger, in case the king expressed anger at what had happened, to add the words, that Uriah the Hittite was dead. Such a close of the message, as was foreseen, prevented any indignation. "It was only the chance of war," said David, with smooth hypocrisy; "Joab must not be discouraged." Bathsheba was now free, and, after a formal mourning of seven days[3] for her husband, the wretched woman went, it would seem gayly, to the house of his murderer and became his favourite wife.

It would have been well for David had he died, like Uriah, in the wars, before such a stain soiled his hitherto splendid fame. But the wickedness possible to even the best of us had for a time got the mastery of him. Meanwhile, as months passed the secret came out, for the marriage could not be hid, and Uriah's death had raised whispers in both the palace and city. Such a sin in a king might have been hushed up elsewhere, but the national conscience in Israel, thanks in great measure to David himself, was for the time nobly sensitive. The mutterings of the bazaars at last found an open expression in the palace. Nathan, the prophet, still young,[4] though already David's adviser, deter-

[1] 2 Sam. xi. 16, 17. Ewald thinks he was killed by a stone cast from the walls of Rabbah. *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 225.

[2] 2 Sam. xi. 20, 21.

[3] See 1 Sam. xxxi. 13. Gen. l. 10. Job ii. 13. Judith xvi. 24. Ecclus. xxii. 12.

[4] He must have been so, since he lived till late in the life of Solomon. Jewish tradition makes him the eighth son of Jesse, but there is no proof of this.

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mined, under an impulse from above, to venture into the royal presence, and bring home to his master, in all their blackness, the sins he had committed. Seeking an audience, therefore, and having cast himself on his knees, and touched the ground with his forehead, in the lowly prostration demanded in coming before the king,[1] he began his finely courageous task with a dexterous skill that demands admiration. Using the form of a parable, so natural in an Oriental, and shrinking from no detail which might make David's conduct the blacker, he forced an unreserved admission of his guilt from his own lips. Nor did he end with merely rousing the fallen man's conscience. Careless of personal danger in thus addressing an Eastern king, he announced in the name of God that as he had slain Uriah, the sword should never depart from his own house. Because, moreover, he had married Uriah's wife, thus obtained, he would himself be dishonoured in his own household, and that not secretly as Uriah had been, but openly, in the sight of the sun.[2] A child had been born from the shameless union, and David's heart doted upon it; but it would die, because, by his deed, he had "given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme."[3] It was indeed too certain that he had done so, for how was the glory of the theocracy dimmed, when the Divine law was thus dishonoured even by the king of God's chosen people!

An Oriental despot would have punished such a bold indictment from any one but a "holy man," by instant death or imprisonment, but it recalled David to his better self. Stricken to the soul, he could only answer that he

[1] 1 Kings i. 23. [2] 2 Sam. xii. 1-13.

[3] 2 Sam. xii. 14. Geiger translates these words, "Because thou has blasphemed the Lord greatly;" but De Wette, Erdmann, Sachs, and Thenius give the sense of our Authorized Version.

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had indeed sinned. Nor was his contrition a mere form of words. It could not have been more sincere. The first chastisement for his sin presently deepened it. Love for his children was a special characteristic of his nature, and the child of Bathsheba had won his heart. But the prophet had told him it would die, and it sickened almost forthwith. In vain David prayed for its life, and fasted, and lay, night after night,[1] upon the earth, in broken humility, if perchance, it might be spared; but after lingering for seven days, it died. "The hand of God was heavy upon him," and he felt that it was just that it should be so. Yet recovery from such a fall as his is only slow. To regain peace of mind; to renew a godly life so sadly interrupted; to crush attempts at self excuse; to suppress the evil passions so long allowed to prevail, implies many a prayer, and long struggles of soul. In the 51st and 32d Psalms we may trace the spiritual restoration of the penitent. In the 51st his whole soul pours itself forth in a confession of his guilt, the transparent sincerity and depth of feeling of which has made it for three thousand years the chosen utterance of broken-hearted contrition. Never has the inner soul revealed itself more humbly; never have its longings for a purer spiritual life found more touching expression.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness;
According to the greatness of Thy compassion wipe out my iniquity
(from Thy book).
Wash me thoroughly from my misdeed,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I fully own my transgressions;
My sin is ever in my sight.

[1] 2 Sam. xii. 16: the word implies that he lay on the earth night after night.

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Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in thine eyes.
(From Thee, therefore, alone, can I hope for pardon and peace,—
And this I say), that Thou mayest be (owned) righteous in Thy chastisements,
And justified as my judge.

Alas! in sin was I born,
In guilt did my mother conceive me;
But Thou desirest truth in the chambers of the heart.
In the hidden depths of the soul make me to know (true) wisdom.
Purify me (from guilt) with hyssop, that I may be clean;
Wash me, that I may be whiter than the snow!
Make me to hear joy and gladness,
That the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

O hide Thy face from my sins;
Blot out all my iniquities:
Create a clean heart in me, O God,
Renew a right (calm) spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence,
Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,
Uphold me by (the gift of) a spirit devoted (to Thy will).

I will teach Thy ways to those who have wandered from them,
And sinners will turn themselves to Thee.
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation!
That my tongue may sing aloud of Thy righteousness.

O Lord, open Thou my lips,
And my mouth will shew forth Thy praise.
For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it;
In burnt-offering Thou hast no delight.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and crushed heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Do good, in Thy good pleasure, unto Zion;
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.[1]

[1] "Let not my sin turn Thee against Thy holy city." The walls of Jerusalem were not yet built. See 1 Kings iii. 1; ix. 15, 19.

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Then wilt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with
burnt-offerings of part, and burnt-offerings of the whole victim
Then young oxen shall be laid on Thine altar."

No truer conceptions of religion than those embodied in this Psalm can be found. Surrounded by priests; accustomed to ritual offerings and sacrifices, he sets the merely outward and ceremonial at its true value, and recognizes the broken and crushed heart as alone of weight with the Eternal. The soul, not the external form, is with him the essential. He has caught the spirit of Samuel and the prophets, and sees in religion not an act but a life.[1] Loathing the sin he had committed, he yearns after a better future in which it will be seen how thoroughly he has forsaken evil, and returned to a pure, just, and godly spirit.

In the 32d Psalm the heavens begin to clear. He has confessed his sin and forsaken it, and has found mercy. His health had given way through the long anguish of his spirit, but, at last, he could believe that even so great a sinner as he had been, could be restored to God's favour.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah does not impute iniquity,
In whose spirit is no self-deception.

While I kept silent (and had not confessed my guilt) my very bones
wasted away,
Amidst my moaning all day long.
For day and night Thy hand pressed heavily on me:
My moisture was changed into the dryness of the burning summer.

[1] The same feeling occurs more than once. Thus: "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also will please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." Ps. lxix. 30, 31. So Asaph, Ps. l. 13, 14: "Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High." So, again, David: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; so hast thou revealed to me: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. . . . I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." Ps. xl. 6. 8.

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(Then) I acknowledged my sin to Thee: not hiding my guilt;
I said: 'I will confess my transgressions to Jehovah;'
And (forthwith) Thou liftedst off from me (by Thy forgiveness) the burden of my sins.

Therefore let every godly man pray to Thee in the time (of trouble;) when He may (surely) find Thee.
So, when the floods burst on him, in mighty waters,
They shall not come nigh to him.

Thou art my hiding place; Thou wilt guard me in the hour of need;
Thou wilt ever compass me with songs of deliverance.
(Thou sayest) 'I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shouldest go.
I will counsel thee, keeping mine eyes upon thee.
Be not as the horse or the mule, without understanding,
Whose mouth must be held in by bit and rein
Else they will not come kindly toward thee.'

Many sorrows has the ungodly man,
But Jehovah surrounds with His goodness him who trusts in Him.

Rejoice in Jehovah, and be glad, ye upright,
And shout for joy, all ye that are true of heart."

The bow on the cloud shone out fully at last, on the birth of a second son of Bathsheba. David had called his name Solomon; perhaps in the belief that the gift of a child in the place of the one that had died, was a pledge of the fully restored favour of God. That he was right, if this were in his thoughts, was seen forthwith. Nathan once more appeared in the palace, announcing that repentance so sincere had been accepted, and changed the name of the infant, by Divine monition, to Jedidiah, the "Beloved of Jah."

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CHAPTER XII.

THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM.

THE great sin of David had been followed by such deep contrition and open confession that no one could use it as an excuse for acts of vice. But its evil results were beyond control, especially since he still retained the worthless but beautiful woman whose immodesty had led to it. Had he dismissed her, as certainly was the proper course, providing generously for her maintenance, the sincerity of his repentance would have been evident, but there was room to question it, while he condemned himself as the murderer of her husband and still kept the wife he had obtained by his shameful guilt. His further sin against the Law he was bound to obey, in "multiplying wives to himself,"[1] was already leading to fatal consequences. A great family, of different mothers, was growing up in an impure and corrupting atmosphere; and would inevitably lead to plots as to the succession. Could the ideal of Isaac and Rebekah in their marriage simplicity have been adopted, at least for the royal house, the worst calamities of the future might have been averted. But other kings had harems, and David was a great king and must on no account be behind his neighbours in so necessary a detail of royal state! Like his son, moreover, his besetting sin was sensuality, for even while a fugitive in the wilderness he had added wife to wife.

[1] Deut. xvii. 17.

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It would seem, however, that, in one respect, the seraglio of David differed from that of modern Oriental kings, his wives and concubines having, apparently, separate establishments, or, at least, distinct apartments in the royal dwelling. The princes, also, like the wives, had each a separate house,[1] and thus the court was broken up into a number of small circles. A curious blending of simplicity and formal dignity in these mark at once the remoteness of the times and the growing importance of the monarchy. Each of the princes had his own mule,[2] and his own retainers, while Absalom, at least, soon imitated royal state by having chariots and horses, preceded and attended, when he came abroad, by fifty running footmen,[3] such, no doubt, as we still see running before the carriages of officials and others in Cairo: men gayly dressed, with a long staff in their hand, nominally to clear the way, which they do with loud cries to those whom they wish to turn aside. Yet the sheep-shearing on a pasture farm he held near Ephraim or Ephron, seemingly near Bethel, was a great yearly festival, to which all the king's sons might be invited,[4] and Tamar, his full sister, was famous for her skill in making dainty cakes.[5] The eldest born of the royal family was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel, near Carmel, in the Negeb. He had been born in Hebron, and was regarded by his father as heir presumptive to the throne, but we know nothing of him except that he had, as his special friend, Jonadab, a nephew of David—a man very "subtile," but evidently unprincipled. Of Chileab, or Daniel, the son of Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow, we also know nothing, though he was the second born; but the third son, Absalom, and his full sister,

[1] 2 Sam. xiii. 8, 20. [2] 1 Sam. xiii. 29.
[3] 2 Sam. xv. 1. [4] 2 Sam. xiii. 27. [5] 2 Sam. xiii. 6.

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Tamar, have a special though unfortunate prominence in Jewish history. They were the only children of David of royal blood on both sides, their mother, Maacah, having been the daughter of the chief of Geshur, a small principality in the north-east of Bashan. In them, above all the other children of their father, the beauty of his race had been preserved, though in this respect Adonijah and Solomon were also famous. Absalom especially was deemed the handsomest man in the kingdom. "In all Israel there was none to be praised for his beauty like him." "From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him." His glorious hair won universal admiration, and its weight when cut seems to have been minutely noted, year by year. His sister's name, Tamar—"the Palm"—may perhaps be a reminiscence of the counterpart she offered to his personal charms.

Unfortunately, the loose morals fostered by polygamy, and very possibly his father's conduct with Bathsheba, had excited in Amnon a wild and lawless passion for his half-sister Tamar, from whom he was secluded by the Eastern isolation of the royal maidens. In an evil moment, Jonadab, his friend, noticing his growing pale and thin, wormed from him the secret of his love, and suggested to him the means of its gratification. He was to pretend illness, and ask her attendance on him as his nurse.[1] What followed is too shameful to repeat. Coming to him[2] with sisterly kindness, her shameful treatment was henceforth remembered as the beginning of the disasters of David's later years. Brutal passion had turned at once, in Amnon, into unmanly and

[1] As a kind nurse, to please him, "Tamar took flour and kneaded it, and made cakes in (Amnon's) sight, and baked the cakes, and took a pan and poured them out before him." 2 Sam. xiii. 8, 9.

[2] Septuagint.

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furious hatred. Driven from his room, the injured woman, frantic at the indignity she had suffered, tore the long-sleeved robe which, as a princess, she wore, and putting ashes on her head, and laying her hand on it, as further signs of grief, passed on towards Absalom's house, screaming aloud.[1] Such a wrong done to his sister touched at once her brother's heart and his pride; while, according to the Eastern code of honour, it entailed on him the duty of revenge.[2] Meanwhile he waited to see if David would do anything in the matter. But, though enraged at such a crime, the king's weakness towards all his children kept him from any act of justice against the offender. "He vexed not the spirit of Amnon, for he loved him; for he was his first-born."[3] Absalom, however, though forced for the time to confine his hatred of the offender to avoidance of his company, was determined that he should not escape. At last, after two years, suspicion of any designed revenge had died away sufficiently to enable him to carry it out. Celebrating the annual sheep-shearing feast on his farm, the equivalent of our harvest-home, on a great scale,[4] he made it the pretext for inviting all David's sons, by their father's permission—Amnon among them. But, as the carousal after the feast went on, the unfortunate man was suddenly stabbed, by Absalom's order. Terrified each for his own life, the other princes forthwith mounted their mules in hot haste, and fled back to Jerusalem, whither dark rumours had

[1] Where Tamar (2 Sam. xiii. 13) speaks of the king as perhaps letting Amnon marry her, Graetz assumes that she must have been her mother's daughter by a marriage previous to that with David. But this is only an attempted solution of the difficulty. It is the general belief that David possessed a dispensing power that might have legitimatized even the marriage of Amnon to his half-sister. See vol. ii. p. 121.

[2] Gen. xxxiv. 25, 31. [3] Septuagint.

[4] Septuagint, "Like a king's feast." Mills, *Samaritans*, p. 106.

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already preceded them, magnifying the catastrophe into a general massacre of the royal family; a crime of which Absalom seems to have been thought quite capable. The palace was in consternation, for David's life also seemed likely to be taken. But Jonadab, always intimate with the dark side of those round him, was able to calm the excitement, in a measure, by telling the king that he had seen the light of revenge on Absalom's face ever since Tamar's disgrace. As the secret designer of that crime, indeed, he may well have been in the prince's confidence as well as in that of Amnon. The morals of the palace had become in every way corrupt. Absalom, however, had to flee to the principality of his grandfather, beyond the Jordan, where he remained for the next three years.[1]

With the guilt of a brother's blood on his hands, the retirement of Geshur might well have sobered Absalom, and made him a better man. But his physical beauty was in striking contrast with his mental and moral defects. Tamar's shame had, apparently, been only one of the motives for murdering Amnon, who was the heir to the throne. Abigail's son was either dead, or too insignificant to succeed, and the death of the eldest born would make Absalom, himself, heir. With a princess for mother, and himself of such kingly splendour of person as attracted universal admiration, his whole soul was absorbed by vanity and ambition. David, unsuspicious by nature, and weakened by a remembrance of his own fall, though uneasy at the state of things which Amnon's murder revealed, contented himself with firmly refusing to allow Absalom to return to Jerusalem.[2] In the

[1] Graetz thinks Geshur was in the Negeb, but he seems alone in this opinion. *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 401.

[2] Graetz thinks that David was inclined to make war against Geshur, to secure the person of Absalom, basing his opinion on 2 Sam. xiii. 39; xiv. 1. But Eisenlohr

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mean time, palace intrigues were rife. Joab, all-powerful with the army, was secretly against Solomon, and in favour of Absalom as heir to the throne, thinking it better to run the risk of temporary confusion with the eldest living prince as king, than to meet the troubles likely to rise from the doubtful birth of the son of Bathsheba. But the mainstay of Absalom's faction was Ahithophel, the grandfather of Bathsheba, a man of surpassing astuteness, with whom was joined in this secret treason his son Eliam, Bathsheba's father, one of the Gibborim; both holding their honour compromised by David's sin. Determined on revenge, they only waited an opportunity to make use of Absalom against his father, and the prince's banishment helped them. Nor could any propitiation made by David in the least abate their hostility. Instead of putting away Bathsheba as he ought on every consideration to have done, he had raised her to the position of first queen, and had nominated her infant son, Solomon, as his heir; but they were inexorable. Adonijah, the next prince after Absalom, and, like him, born at Hebron, while apparently passive as regarded his elder brother, was no less bitterly opposed than he to Solomon, since his own claim to the throne would be worthless, if this latest-born child of David were named his successor. Plots enough were thus simmering in the different palace circles, the mother of each claimant playing an important part in them, as usual in the East.

The king's anger at Absalom and his keen grief for the death of Amnon, having at last been abated by time, Joab,

shews forcibly that there is no ground, even in the Hebrew, for such a notion (p. 277). Besides, how opposed is it to the weakness which would not hear of violence being used against Absalom even after his rebellion. Thenius understands the passage, that David had at first intended to pursue Absalom, but gave up the design as his grief for Amnon passed off. *Samuel*, p. 189.

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eager to secure the favour of the heir presumptive, with whom he was probably in secret communication, fancied that he might now move towards getting him recalled. For this end he employed a female emissary, a woman of Tekoa, a mountain village five miles south of Bethlehem, afterwards the birthplace of the prophet Amos.[1] Skilful with her tongue, and trained to her part by Joab, she sought the presence of David, probably when he was sitting as judge at the gate of the city. Dressed in deep mourning, and falling prostrate on the ground in obeisance, she pleaded for the king's help. Then followed an invented tale. She was, she said, a widow, and had had two sons, one of whom, however, had been killed by the other. All the family connections demanded that the second son should be surrendered to them, to give his life for that of his brother, and this fierce blood revenge threatened to leave her dead husband with no descendant, to continue his name in Israel; a calamity beyond measure terrible to a Hebrew. David, thinking a word enough, dismissed her kindly with the promise that he would give orders for her son's protection. But the wily diplomatist had not yet gained her point. She wanted to get him to say that the blood revenge in the supposed case was unjust. "My lord, O king," said she, "if it be wrong to leave blood-guilt unpunished, let the penalty strike me, not thee, as it will if thou takest the part of the homicide."[2] "If any one threaten you, let him be brought to me," replied David, "and he will not touch you any more." This might have been enough; but it was the woman's part to repeat herself with feminine persistency, and thus draw the king into confirming by an oath, what he had said, and this she succeeded in doing. She prays that the avengers of

[1] Amos i. 1. [2] I paraphrase the dialogue, to make it more easily understood.

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blood may not be allowed to keep up the feud, lest they should kill her son; for the death of one son is surely enough. "As Jehovah liveth," replies the king, "not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth." Begging to be allowed to add one word more, the woman continued: "If thou hast acted thus in this case, prohibiting the carrying out of blood revenge, why dost thou carry out that revenge to the loss of thy subjects, the people of God? For in speaking as thou hast done, thou art as one guilty, in giving the promise thou hast made, and in the decision thou hast expressed, so long as thou dost not fetch home thy banished son. Thou mayest indeed well pardon him, for we must all die, and are, when dead, like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Nothing will bring back the dead man, Amnon; nothing, even if thou wert to kill Absalom for the murder. God does not take the life of the sinner when he transgresses; but He takes heed not to drive away from Him the wanderer from right, when he penitently seeks to return." This must have struck home to David's conscience; for did he not think himself forgiven, though he had acted so foully in the case of Uriah? But the woman continues, wishing to veil somewhat her reference to Absalom, and renewing her artificial garrulity: "I have come to thee to speak of this matter, in terror at the demand for my son; for I thought, perchance, thou wouldst grant my prayer, and save my son. Therefore I besought thee, 'Let the word of my lord the king, I pray thee, be comfortable; for, as an angel of God, thou listenest with patience and wisdom to good and bad. The Lord thy God be with thee.'"[1]

[1] I have followed Thenius in this paraphrase. In 2 Sam. xiv. 7, the woman speaks of "quenching my coal which is left." In the same way, in Ceylon, children are spoken of as "coals." To put out the fire on the hearth is the idea in both cases.

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Knowing what he did of the feelings of Joab, David at once saw that the whole scene had been prepared by him, to secure the return of Absalom; the woman herself, indeed, admitting the fact. An order for his recall was accordingly issued and handed to Joab, who received it with the wonted lowly prostrations.[1] Hurrying now to Geshur, he presently brought Absalom back. He might henceforth live at his country home, but was forbidden to enter Jerusalem.

The prince had thus so far triumphed, but his plans were still impeded by the refusal of his father to let him appear in the capital, or resume his full standing. A spirit in any degree noble would have accepted gratefully the kindness shewn, even though thus, for the time, restricted on one point, and would have sought to atone for the faults of the past by future loyalty and merit. But Absalom had inherited no trait of his father's character, for even his ambition was mean and selfish. That any restraint should be imposed on him was enough; he would have revenge; his father should suffer for it. He would drive him from his throne and seize it himself. He had three sons, and a daughter,[2] called Tamar, after his sister, and like her in beauty, so that he could hope to establish a dynasty if he were king. But he could do little till he was back in Jerusalem, and restored to his full honours. Two years, however, passed without permission being granted him to appear at court. Even Joab, his secret supporter, could not venture to ask the king to grant a full pardon. But Absalom knew how to force him to do so. Always reckless, he punished the fancied slight, by causing a field of barley belonging to his friend to be burned down. This had the desired effect. Furious at the insult, Joab hurried to see him, only to be won over by

[1] 2 Sam. xiv. 22. [2] 2 Sam. xiv. 27.

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his splendid presence and specious words. Intercession with David presently obtained his recall to court, and smooth hypocrisy completed a hollow reconciliation. Prostrating himself on the ground, in prescribed form, before his father, to simulate frank homage and penitence, he only rose at his command, to receive the kiss of forgiveness and pardon. He had triumphed again, and forthwith began to use his victory to bring about his father's ruin.

It was now at least five years since Amnon's death, and about ten since the scandal of Uriah and Bathsheba.[1] Peace had reigned through the wide empire, and David's upright life had proved that his fall was only a passing lapse from which he had recovered himself. Some time during this period, however, he seems to have taken the one false step in his policy which has come down to us. Urged, apparently, by the growing expense of the monarchy, which demanded additional taxes; by the desire, perhaps, to have more easy command of labour, for his public undertakings; or, it may be, to consolidate his power by an exact knowledge of his resources: he had resolved on taking a census of the whole nation. But, whatever his secret thoughts, the project was intensely distasteful to his subjects. A law of Moses prescribed that whenever the people were numbered, a tax of half a shekel a head should be paid by every man above twenty[2]—"that there be no plague among them"—and Josephus has fancied that David had sinned against the Law in its not being levied. But there is no hint of this in the narrative, nor is the collection of the tax mentioned in earlier numberings of the people.[3] The probability is, that

[1] The birth of Solomon was, say, two years after the death of Uriah; Amnon's offence, two years before his murder; there were three years of Absalom's exile; and two years of his stay at Jerusalem = 9. Amnon's crime was perhaps a year after Solomon's birth. [2] Exod. xxx. 13. [3] Num. xxvi.

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the proposal was justly regarded as a step towards the formal enrolment of the whole male population for stricter military service than they had hitherto rendered. They had formed a vast reserve of militia, but it had been under the orders of their local or tribal chiefs, and they had been liable, in ordinary cases, only to a month's service a year. The new census may have been intended to furnish the king with a muster roll of the whole population, which he might use to prejudice the national liberties and to aggrandize the power of the throne. Regarded, thus, as a first step towards despotism, it was not only a breach of the divinely established Constitution, but provoked great opposition from the people at large, and led to the most painful results.[1] Even Joab, to whom David's will was usually law, shrank from a step so unpopular. "May the people increase one hundredfold," said he, "however many there be, and may the king live to see it, but why should he wish such a thing?" No excuse, however, would be taken, and so Joab and the great officers of the "host"—not the priests and Levites as hitherto—had reluctantly to go out to "muster," not merely to number, the men fit for war in Israel. The ungrateful task was commenced at Aroer on the Jabbok, in the tribe of Gad, east of the Jordan; the officials and others appointed, camping in the open fields near, that there might be room for the multitudes who came from the district around, of which Aroer was the chosen centre. Thence the commissioners made their way northwards, through Gilead, then westward to the borders of Tyre and Sidon; proceeding, finally, south as far as Beersheba, the

[1] It is very striking to notice how the proposal to take the census is said to have risen in the mind of David, in the purposes of Providence, on account of the sins of the people. Quiet and prosperity were sapping the high tone of the earlier years of David's reign 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

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border town of Israel. Nearly ten months had been consumed, and the tribe of Benjamin had not yet been registered, nor that of Levi, since it was free from military duty. The muster-rolls of the rest, however, shewed an aggregate of 800,000 able-bodied men, fit for war. But if David felt kingly pride at such a result, it was speedily humbled, for now, once more, the stern words of a prophet denounced his course as an offence to God. Instead of relying on the promise of Jehovah to protect His own land, he had carried out a haughty scheme, without the permission of the supreme King, and for ends involving distrust of Him. This time it was Gad, not Nathan, who had been directed by God to approach him. Both he and his people had sinned,[1] but it was left to him to choose the chastisement. Three[2] years of famine, three months' flight before invaders, or three days' pestilence were the terrible alternatives. But the heart of David had once more regained its healthy tone, and the answer was worthy of him. "I am in a great strait: let us now fall into the hand of Jehovah; for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." An outbreak of the plague followed soon after. It was the time of the wheat-harvest,[3] and as usual in the hot and dry Eastern summer, and amidst towns and villages densely peopled and deficient in all sanitary arrangements, the awful visitation raged with terrible severity. In three days 70,000 persons died. A vision of the angel of Jehovah, seen on the top of Moriah, the hill just outside the Jerusalem of that day, his hand stretched out over the city to destroy it, intensified the agony of the hour. Before the capital had been struck, however, the plague was mercifully

[1] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.
[2] So, in 1 Chron. xxi. 12, and also (Septuagint) in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.
[3] Septuagint.

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stayed. But the remembrance of it was not suffered to pass away. The awful angelic presence had sanctified the spot where he was seen. He had stood on the flat crown of the hill used, from its breezy height, as a threshing-floor, by one Araunah, a Jebusite, perhaps formerly the king of Jerusalem.[1] Thither, therefore, by the direction of Gad, David repaired, the same day, with his bodyguard and attendants, to consecrate it for ever, by erecting an altar and offering sacrifice on it. Honoured by such a visit, and doubtless awed by its object, Araunah would fain have put the ground at David's service as a free gift. But it would have been unworthy of him to offer to God what had cost him nothing, and he therefore bought both the threshing-floor and the oxen, which at the moment were treading out the grain. A rude altar was then built, the oxen slain, a fire kindled with yokes and implements given for the purpose, sacrifices consumed as an acknowledgment of past guilt, and peace offerings presented in grateful thanks that the pestilence had ceased. From that time till now the spot has been in an especial sense holy ground. A few years after the plague, the threshing-floor became the site of the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple. Moriah had, however, as we have seen, been crowned with another temple in remote times before the invasion of the Hebrews.

The popular feeling against the enrolment, and the association of the outburst of the plague with it, may have made the task of Absalom in gaining the hearts of the nation more easy. The forced unity under a king was besides, still felt a restraint on their old tribal independence, and left them restless and not indisposed to change. They

[1] 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. But Wellhausen reads, for "did Araunah," etc., "doth the servant of my lord, the king, give," etc.

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had gained by substituting David for Saul; why not by a second revolution? The charm of personal respect and reverence for David had been sadly broken by the incident of Bathsheba. Fear of his turning despotic had been roused by the military census. Old jealousies, moreover, had gradually rekindled. Judah had lost some of its importance since the capital was removed from Hebron to Jerusalem, and had become only part of the nation instead of a separate kingdom. Thus embittered, it was ready to leave David and elect Absalom in his stead, at its capital, Hebron. So deep, indeed, was this feeling, that as it shewed itself the first to revolt, it proved the last to return to allegiance, after the rebellion was crushed.[1] The great house of Ephraim, also, ill brooked a king not of its own blood, and the tribes in the north had, probably, their own complaints, however petty or ill-founded; for no government can long escape giving some offence.

Things thus seemed promising for the success of the conspiracy. Restored to court, Absalom could surround himself with his own creatures, and prepare his measures as circumstances allowed. David had been contented to go abroad on his royal mule, but the prince now astonished Jerusalem by the novelty of chariots and horses, which, though part of the state of other kings, had hitherto been seen only in his father's triumphal procession, after his victories. Absalom, as we have seen, had even before his exile appeared in public, like David, preceded and accompanied by a body of running footmen, keeping pace with his equipage, and clearing his way. He now resumed the same pomp.[2]

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 11.

[2] Chardin mentions that a candidate for the office of a king's runner in Persia accomplished about 120 miles in fourteen hours, and was thought slow for not having done it in twelve.

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It had been usual, moreover, for the king to sit as judge at the gate of the city, on certain days, to settle disputes brought from all parts of the land. Among the crowds of suitors, it was inevitable that some should suffer delay, and the decisions given must necessarily be always unsatisfactory to one side. Absalom now began to move among these strangers, affecting as great condescension as, on other occasions, he shewed lordliness and glitter. Speaking freely to all, assuring every one that his case was undoubtedly good; regretting that the king had appointed no deputy to hear cases, so as to expedite settlement; hinting at the different state of things there would be, if he were made the chief judge; and in all ways assuming the air of easy good fellowship and sympathy, he won himself high favour. It was usual to approach the king or any one of high rank with a lowly prostration, but this Absalom would not permit; raising such as proffered "obeisance," he would embrace and kiss them. Vague hopes were thus excited; discontent fanned; the popular favour turned from David to himself; the awful incident of the plague, which they regarded the king as having brought on them by his sin in regard to the census, doubtless weighing heavily to his disadvantage.

Four years[1] having passed in this insidious plotting, it seemed to the conspirators that they might now take open action. Joab, though ready to support Absalom against Solomon, was too loyal to David to be trusted against him, and had therefore been kept in ignorance of the proposed revolution. Ahithophel, however, in his hatred of the king, had thrown himself into the movement with his whole soul, and was Absalom's chief adviser. A plan was now formed which promised success. Under the specious pretext of

[1] 2 Sam. xv. 7. For forty read four.

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having made a vow while in Geshur, that, if restored to Jerusalem, he would offer sacrifices, in thanksgiving, at Hebron, the ancient sanctuary of the tribe, and his native town, Absalom obtained permission to go thither. His real motive was to begin his revolt in the capital of Judah, where he could take his final steps more freely than at Jerusalem. Before starting, messengers were sent off to every part of the country, to proclaim Absalom as king, at the sound of signal trumpet blasts, which were to be repeated from point to point, announcing that he had actually been crowned at Hebron. To prevent suspicion, the prince himself set out for that city, with a train of two hundred citizens of Jerusalem, many of them, it may be supposed, of the best families. Entirely in ignorance of his schemes, they went with him only to take part in the religious solemnities, but their presence gave him weight, as they seemed to belong to his party. Ahithophel also came from Gilo, in the Hebron mountains, to meet him, and openly espoused his cause. A public feast had been arranged, as usual, in connection with the sacrifices. At this, Absalom, to whose bounty the multitude owed the holiday, was proclaimed king; the duped and excitable crowd entering into the plot only too eagerly. The proclamation thus made, was speedily published throughout the land, with the exception of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, word was brought to David of the breaking out of the revolution, and of its wide success. He had loved Amnon, but his affection for Absalom was so much greater that he had never dreamed of his treachery. Numbers from all the tribes were hastening to Hebron, to do homage to the new king, and the conspiracy was daily growing. Even Amasa, David's nephew, jealous of Joab, had

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joined it. The calamity was overwhelming. That his darling Absalom should be a traitor and seek his throne and his life, and that not only the tribes at large, but his own tribe, Judah, should have deserted him, for a time unnerved and dismayed even the strong heart of David. His resolution, however, was quickly taken. To shut himself up in Jerusalem would be fatal, for the city could not withstand an attack from the whole strength of the land, and, at best, the destruction of life would be fearful. His only course was to leave, and escape beyond Jordan, to gain time. Orders were therefore given to the court and its dependants to make ready for instant flight. Ten of the royal concubines, only, were left behind "to keep the house."

The incidents of this momentous day are given with a greater fulness than those of any other in Old Testament history. Followed by all his household, David set out, with bare feet, as a sign of mourning. The first halt, to gather his followers, was near a house known as the "Far off."[1] It was then seen that if he had enemies he also had true friends. Crowds of the citizens had gone with him to share his fortunes, and, with his bodyguard and the Gibborim, in their full number of 600,[2] now gathered before him. The sight of the crowd and of these heroes, was a glimpse of sunshine through the gathering storm, and roused at once David's gratitude and magnanimity. Addressing Ittai, of Gath, and thus a Philistine, apparently the commander of the 600, who had snatched the crown from the image of Moloch at the taking of Ammon, he generously urged him, as a stranger and exile, connected with the army for only a few years past, not to throw himself into a doubtful cause. He had better, he said, "go home again and cause his

[1] 2 Sam. xv. 17. [2] 2 Sam. xv. 18.

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brethren to return with him and abide with the king," doubtless Achish, his former lord.[1] "Why should he," David, "make him wander to and fro with him? He would advise him to go, and the Lord shew him mercy and truth!" But men who had braved all the perils of his wilderness life, when hunted by Saul, had no thought of deserting him when he was once more driven into exile. Their wives and children were with them, but that did not matter. "As Jehovah liveth," replied Ittai, "and as my lord the king liveth, wherever the king is, there shall I be." Nor was the band, as a whole, less faithful. David could not reject a devotion so touching, and having given them permission to follow him, they and their families passed on before, and took up their places in the procession. The excitement, meantime, was intense, the vast concourse weeping and wailing aloud. The whole population, indeed, were moved by the spectacle of a king so illustrious, the conqueror of wide realms, a national hero from his youth, and lately on such a pinnacle of glory, driven from his throne by the treason of his son; a fugitive, bareheaded, barefooted, and wrapt in the long cloak of a mourner. The deep gorge of the Kedron, then a stream, now dry, was presently reached; the king, already past sixty, standing by the brook, once more, till all his followers had crossed over.[2] A little farther on, he rested again beside an olive tree, at the branching of the roads beneath the Mount of Olives. Zadok and Abiathar, the two high priests, with the whole body of the Levites, had hurried from Jerusalem, bearing the Ark, that David might have that sacred pledge of the Divine presence and blessing with him in his flight. But he had

[1] The Septuagint omits the words "the king." 2 Sam. xv. 19.
[2] Wellhausen. 2 Sam. xv. 23.

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already recovered his equanimity, and his noble spirit of trust in God. It was better, he told them, to carry back the Ark to its resting place on Mount Zion. If God pleased, he would ere long see both it and the Tabernacle once more; but if Jehovah had no delight in him: "Behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him." His promptness and vigorous shrewdness were, also, once more in full play. The sons of the priests could serve him better than their fathers, in this emergency. He would wait at the fords of the Jordan[1] till they brought news to him how matters went in the city.

The long procession now began the ascent of the Mount of Olives, the turn in the road soon bringing the last view of Jerusalem. Weeping aloud as he went; his head covered in his mantle, in token of sorrow, David climbed slowly upwards, walking on painfully, without sandals, amongst the crowd, who, like him, veiled their heads in their grief, and gave way to general lamentation. News of the defection of Ahithophel now reached him; a calamity so great that it evoked a prayer that his counsel might be defeated. A little farther, and it seemed as if the prayer were already heard. At a spot on the top of the hill, known as one of the "high places,"[2] then the only sanctuaries of the land, David's "friend" or "companion,"[3] Hushai, from the district of the Archites, a clan on the southern edge of Ephraim,[4] suddenly came up to cast in his lot with him, his coat rent and earth on his head, in token of profound grief. But he could be of far more use in Jerusalem, as a counterpoise to Ahithophel, in the counsels of Absalom, and David therefore

[1] 2 Sam. xv. 28. Thenius. Keil.

[2] 2 Sam. xv. 32, "where he worshipped God;" rather, "where God was wont to be worshipped." Keil. Thenius.

[3] 2 Sam. xv. 37. 1 Chron. xxvii. 33. [4] Josh. xvi. 2.

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induced him to go back and make friends with the new king, that he might neutralize the influence of that arch enemy. Whatever he learned, could be communicated to Zadok and Abiathar, whose sons would forthwith hasten on with the news.

The journey had scarcely been resumed when, after reaching the first slopes of the eastern descent, another stoppage was caused. Ziba, formerly a slave of Saul, but now of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, and the steward of his lands, overtook the king. He had been the means of bringing the prince to Jerusalem, by making known to David his existence and hiding place in Gilead, but having been made over to him, once more, as a slave of his House, had contrived a deep-laid plot to regain his freedom at the cost of his master's ruin. He brought with him two asses, ready saddled for riding, and bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred of figs,[1] and a skin of wine; a gift than which none could be more acceptable under the circumstances. Presenting them with a skilful affectation of loyalty, he told the king, in answer to an inquiry, that his master had stayed in Jerusalem in the belief that he would be made king now that David had fled; a statement afterwards proved to be a base calumny, invented for Ziba's own ends. Meanwhile, it answered his purpose; for David, excited by the events of the day, and hastily believing the words of a slave against his master, and that master Jonathan's only surviving child, took for granted that Mephibosheth, like Absalom, had betrayed him, made over all the unfortunate prince's possessions to his accuser, ungratefully and dishonourably forgetful of his infinite obligations to his dead father, his early, incomparable friend. At Bahurim,

[1] Septuagint, dates.

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at the head of the pass towards Jericho, where Phaltiel, the husband of Michal, had been turned back, a fresh humiliation awaited the king. Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, and a member of the house of Saul, suddenly made his appearance on the crest of the hills lining the road. The long-cherished hatred of his tribe to one whom they regarded as at once a usurper, and the murderer of the fallen dynasty, found utterance from his lips. Running along the top of the ridge, which is separated by a deep wady from the steep track down which David was passing, he kept hurling stones and handfuls of dust at the king, cursing him as he did so, with frantic bitterness. The vengeance of Jehovah, he cried out, had at last overtaken David for all his deeds to the house of Saul. He was the "Man of Blood," stained with the slaughter of Abner and Ishbosheth, and of the seven kinsmen of the fallen dynasty, at Gibeon. Furious at such an attack, Abishai, who was marching at David's side, would fain have crossed the ravine and killed him, but permission was refused. His curses seemed to the stricken king as if sanctioned by God. Having allowed even Absalom to revolt, He might well have sent Shimei to complete the dishonour. It might be, moreover, that if he bore such insults calmly, God would hereafter requite him with good. But the curses were not forgotten, and were to come back, long after, on the reviler's head. At last there was once more peace, and before long the fugitives reached the open plain, sloping down to the ford of the Jordan, where they were for the moment safe.

Absalom entered Jerusalem in triumph very soon after David had left it. A vast multitude escorted him, and Ahithophel, the soul of the conspiracy, rode by his side. It was still early in the day, for David had fled in the morn-

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ing, and there was yet time, before night, for decisive action. Among the first to meet and congratulate the new king was Hushai, whose apparent treachery to "his friend," shocked even Absalom for the moment. But a courtier's ready flow of words dispelled his suspicions, and induced the weak man to admit the seeming traitor to his confidence. One great point had been gained for David. He had in the very palace a tried friend, on whom he might depend to turn things as far as possible in his favour. A council was now held, to decide further action; Ahithophel taking the lead, by suggestions the astuteness of which was in keeping with his fame. Absalom, he urged, should, at once, publicly take to himself the concubines left behind by his father. To do so would be recognized as committing him finally to a hopeless breach with David, and would give the people confidence in his not deserting them, if they fully identified themselves with him. It was, moreover, a recognized form of assuming the throne, for the wives and concubines of a king were always the special inheritance of his successor. Absalom was only too easily persuaded to this step, and the royal tent was therefore spread on the flat roof of the palace, that his open appropriation of the royal harem might be seen by all. But more must be done, in Ahithophel's opinion, before the new king could give himself up to security or to luxurious self-indulgence. As wise as he was unprincipled, he gave advice which justified the exaggerated belief of the people, that he spoke like an oracle.[1] David, he said, was as yet weary and weak-handed, and might be easily surprised and overcome. Twelve thousand chosen men, whom he himself undertook to lead, would be enough. He would start after him forthwith, and before morning

[1] 2 Sam. xvi. 23.

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would have fallen upon him and killed him. The people with him would at once flee, and no life but his would be lost. There would be no bloodshed to raise popular feeling. It was a critical moment for David. The counsel pleased not only the weak-headed prince, but the elders of Israel, before whom, apparently, it was given. Hushai, however, proved equal to the emergency. Summoned before Absalom to give his opinion, he at once, with the readiest duplicity, urged a totally opposite course. David and his braves were, he said, heroes, and the course of events had roused them to a fierceness like that of a bear robbed of its cubs. The king was, moreover, a great master of war, and would take care to encamp apart from the women and children, and civilians. He would, doubtless, have chosen some separate defile for his quarters, so that when Ahithophel fell on the multitude, it would raise a cry that harmless citizens had been slaughtered, and turn the people against the new king. Moreover, his bravest men, on discovering the mistake, would be filled with terror, for the massacre would rouse David, himself a great soldier, and would infuriate beyond bounds the heroes round him. He advised, therefore, that Absalom should call out all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, in numbers like the sand on the sea-shore, and that he should lead them in person. In that case he would come on his father and crush him, by multitudes countless as the dewdrops of the morning, and leave none of his adherents alive. Or, if David had gone into some city, he, Absalom, would be able to assail it with such a force, that after it was taken, his men might drag it down with grappling irons and throw it stone by stone into the wady at hand, till no one should be able to tell where it stood.[1] Hushai must

[1] 2 Sam. xvii. 1 13.

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have known the man well with whom he had to do, else such a braggart speech would have defeated his aim. But it suited Absalom, for it set him in the front and inflamed his imagination to play the part of a great conqueror. David was virtually saved, for if his son could gather an army, so could he, now that time was gained. Communicating his success as soon as possible to Zadok and Abiathar, Hushai directed them to send word to David, not to stay even a night on this side of the Jordan fords, but to pass over instantly to the eastern districts. The two young men, their sons, who were to take the message, both famous runners,[1] as nearly all the youth of Israel seem to have been, had been waiting by the Fuller's Spring, in the Kedron valley, outside the Water Gate, which opened 130 feet above them, on the south-west of the city. A maid sent to tell them, was able to do so without detection, but they were noticed by a boy as they were starting, and he, divining their purpose, set off hurriedly to Absalom and betrayed them. They had, however, suspected the treachery, and pressing on at their swiftest, reached Bahurim in time to take refuge in a friendly house. Here, an underground cistern in the court offered a ready hiding-place, and in this they secreted themselves ; the housewife aiding them by spreading a cloth over the narrow mouth and heaping ground corn on it, so as to conceal it effectually.[2] Nor was the care unneeded, for Absalom's men arrived forthwith ; only, however, to be sent off in a wrong direction. Once out of sight, the two young priests were drawn up from their dismal prison, and before night David had heard the message of Hushai from their lips. Acting promptly on it, the camp was at once in

[1] 2 Sam. xviii. 26.

[2] Rainwater cisterns are like huge bottles excavated in the soft rock. The mouths are only a little wider than a man's body.

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motion, and, in spite of the darkness, the whole body had crossed the Jordan safely before morning.

Not the least of the benefits from Hushai's counsel was the effect on Ahithophel of its being followed. Feeling himself displaced by this new rival, and seeing not only that he could not hope for the supremacy, on which his ambition had counted, but that Absalom was incapable of bringing to a successful issue the revolution he had begun, he retired to his house at Gilo, and, having duly made his will, quietly withdrew from the evil of which he had been the chief cause, by hanging himself.

The details given of the further course of the revolt, and of David's measures for its suppression, are very meagre. Not less than three months[1] appear to have passed before things came to a crisis. In these, Absalom, having been solemnly anointed in Jerusalem,[2] proceeded leisurely to call out and muster the whole military strength of Israel, over which he placed Amasa, a nephew of David, but, on his father's side, of wild Arabian blood. David had retired to Mahanaim, the former capital of Ishbosheth. It was now seen how prudent his course had been in leaving Jerusalem. The eastern tribes, always in a measure indifferent to the action of those west of the river, rallied round him, while his position enabled him to overawe Moab, Ammon, Zoba, and other regions which he had conquered. Nor was friendly help wanting. Shobi, the Ammonite, of Rabbah —the son of Nahash, its former king; and Machir, the son of Ammiel,[3] a powerful sheik of eastern Manasseh, or Gad —the friend and host of Mephibosheth in former years; and Barzillai,[4] an old and wealthy Gileadite, sent to Mahanaim

[1] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 249.
[2] 2 Sam. xix. 10.
[3] = "The people of God."
[4] = "The iron one."

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sleeping mats, metal and earthen dishes, and household utensils,[1] for the king and his household, and lavishly supplied them with food from the rich produce of their districts.[2] The defences of Mahanaim were also, no doubt, strengthened; and the fighting host vigorously kept in hand; but no particulars are given by which to picture closely the state of affairs as the decisive moment approached.

Happily, however, the same obscurity does not rest on the feelings with which David awaited the issue. Some of his Psalms, written either at this time or as a retrospect, bring before us his fears and hopes, and shew the strength of his trust in God amidst all his troubles. The 41st, the 55th, the 69th, and the 109th have been from remote antiquity supposed to refer to his betrayal by Ahithophel, "his own familiar friend, whom he had trusted, and who ate of his bread," but had now "lifted up his heel" against him.[3] Except the treachery of Absalom, nothing had affected him more.

"It was not an enemy that contemned me; then I could have borne it.
He did not openly rise against me; then I could have hidden myself from him.
But it was thou, a man mine equal;
My friend and my acquaintance.
We took sweet counsel together,
We walked to the house of God together.

* * * * * * *

He has put forth his hands on such as be at peace with him;
He has broken his covenant;
His lips are smoother than honey, but war is in his heart;
His words are softer than oil; yet were they drawn swords.

* * * * * * *

[1] Septuagint and Ewald, vol. iii. p. 250.
[2] 2 Sam. xvii. 28, 29. Ewald. [3] Ps. xli. 9.

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Cast thy burden on Jehovah, and He will sustain thee;
He will never suffer the upright to be moved."[1]

The terrible maledictions of the 69th and 109th Psalms have their best explanation in the intensity of feeling roused by Ahithophel's course. Nor, let it be repeated, must we forget how long David lived before the gentleness of Christ tempered the sternness of the Old Dispensation, or taught the Oriental to curb the passion for cursing his opponents in every form of malediction, which in all ages has distinguished him.

In the 3d Psalm we seem to have a hymn of joyful confidence in God, marking the refreshment of mind and body after strengthening rest, when worn out by the toil of the flight from Jerusalem.

"Jehovah, how are my enemies increased;
Many are they that rise up against me.
Many say of my soul,
'There is no help for him in God.'

But Thou, O Jehovah, art a shield around me,
My glory, and the lifter up of my head.
I called aloud on Jehovah,
And He heard me from His holy hill.

I laid me down and slept;
I awoke, because Jehovah sustained me:
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,
Who have encamped themselves round about me.

Up then, Jehovah! help me, my God!
Thou smitest the jaw-bone of all my enemies,
Thou breakest out the teeth of the wicked.
In Jehovah alone is help found!
May Thy blessing rest on Thy people!"

[1] Ps. lv. 12-14, 20-22.

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The 4th Psalm forms a striking companion to this fine lyric. In it, David, in the consciousness of his innocence, rises nobly above the calumnies and injurious bearing of his enemies; and, in reliance on the protection of God, finds that confidence which enables him to lie down in the quiet of night with full peace of soul.

"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness:
Thou who hast made wide room for me when in distress,
Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer!
Ye sons of men, how long, dishonouring my glory,
Will ye love vanity, will ye seek after lies?[1]

Know that Jehovah has chosen him who is true to Him;
Jehovah will hear when I call upon Him!

Stand in awe and keep from sin;
Meditate in your heart, on your bed, and be still.
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And trust in Jehovah!

Many say, 'Who will give us to see good?'
Lift Thou the light of Thy countenance on us, O Jehovah!

Thou hast shed a gladness in my heart
Higher than when corn and wine most abound.
I lay me down in peace, and will calmly sleep,
For Thou, Jehovah, alone
Givest me to dwell in safety."[2]

To this time, rather than any other, may be perhaps ascribed the exquisite expression of trust in God which breathes through the 23d Psalm. No earthly darkness can be allowed to trouble the calm serenity of soul which long experience of the goodness of God inspires.

[1] By rebellion and slander. They insult and dishonour David by it; but that in which they trust—the rise of Absalom—is a vain and false hope.

[2] Psalms iii. and iv. are ascribed to this time by Ewald, Eisenlohr, and others.

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"Jehovah is my Shepherd: I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures:
He leads me beside the still waters.
He revives my soul,
He leads me in paths of righteousness,
For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through a vale dark as death,
I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff alike comfort me![1]

Thou preparest a table for me before the eyes of my enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil,[2] my cup runneth over!

Pure goodness and mercy alone will follow me all my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever."[3]

Under a leader of such high worth, and filled with a confidence in God so touching and elevating, the triumph of David's force over a movement like that of Absalom was only a matter of time. The decisive battle was fought on the east of the Jordan, in a district known as the Wood of

[1] "When on a narrow bridle path, cut out on the face of a precipitous ridge, I observed a native shepherd with his flock, which, as usual, followed him. He frequently stopped and looked back; and, if he saw a sheep creeping up too far, or coming too near the edge of the dangerous precipice, would go back, and putting his crook round one of the hind legs, would gently pull it to him. Though a Grampian Highlander, I now for the first time saw the real use of the crook in directing sheep in the right way. Going up to the shepherd, I noticed, moreover, that he had a long rod as tall as himself, with a thick band of iron round the lower half. The region was infested with wolves, hyenas, and other dangerous animals, which were apt to prowl in the night about the place where the sheep lay. When any did so, the shepherd would strike the animal such a blow with this rod as drove it off. This brought to my mind the expression of David, the shepherd, 'Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.' The staff clearly means God's watchful, guiding providence; the rod, His omnipotence in defending His people from all foes without or within." *Life of Dr. Duff*, vol. ii. pp. 165-6. This reminds one of Coleridge's expression, "Thy rod and Thy staff, both, comfort me."

[2] It was a special mark of honour to a guest that his host should anoint his head. Luke vii. 46.

[3] Kay, Olshausen, Mills, Ewald, Hitzig, and Lengerke. I have retained "for ever," instead of "length of days." Eisenlohr has "for ever."

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Ephraim.[1] Mahanaim had apparently been first attacked, without success,[2] and Absalom's vast host forced to a trial of strength which might end the strife. It seems to have been posted without skill in a position from which retreat was difficult; in this respect comparing unfavourably with the arrangement of David's battalions. Carefully divided and subdivided into regiments and companies of 1,000 and 100 respectively, each under selected officers, these were massed in three divisions, commanded by Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, the Philistine colonel of the 600 Gibborim, or Guards. David himself, no longer "fearful and trembling," or wishing the wings of a dove to flee far away and be at rest,[3] proposed to take the command in chief; his old military instincts reviving at the sound of the trumpets. But the "Light of Israel"[4] was too precious to be endangered, and once more, as in the old Philistine wars, the army insisted on his not going into battle. If they were beaten, said they, or if half of them fell, it would be of less moment than if his life were lost; for, as leader, he was worth ten thousand men. He was, therefore, constrained to remain within the walls with a body of reserve, to succour the rest of the troops, if necessary. The various battalions, numbering we know not how many thousands,[5] marched out to battle, defiling before him at the city gate. One command only, so far as we know, was given them; but that was repeatedly enforced—that Absalom was to be spared and gently treated if he fell into their hands. Wise in most things, his fatherly affection made the great soldier weak to an extreme in dealing with his sons.

[1] Graetz calls it "the Wood of Rephaim," or the Giants.
[2] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 251. [3] Ps. lv. 5, 6. [4] 2 Sam. xxi. 17.
[5] Ewald thinks that David's army numbered 20,000, judging from the words of 2 Sam. xviii. 3. "Half" = 10,000. *Gesch.*, vol. iii. p. 252.

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Absalom's army greatly outnumbered that of David, and the fiercely contested hand-to-hand struggles of antiquity were necessarily very bloody. But the victory remained with the king. Twenty thousand of the prince's men lay dead on the field, and his huge force broke into helpless rout. The pursuit, however, was even more fatal than the open field; the manifold hindrances of the woods arresting, breaking up, and bewildering the fugitives, so that escape was difficult. Among others, Absalom himself met his end. There is nothing in western Palestine like our forests, and it would seem, even in the old Jewish times, to have been the same, else the kings would not have been so dependent on Phœnicia for timber. The more or less bare limestone humps, which form the Palestine hill country, were, apparently, then, as now, covered, where not terraced for cultivation, with scrub and stunted, twisted tree-growths, very hard to get through. The vast quantities of loose stones, moreover, everywhere met with, add to the difficulty, which is still more heightened by numberless holes and pits, natural or artificial, in the broken surface. In many valleys, however, there are trees, though neither so lofty nor umbrageous as ours, sometimes singly, sometimes in clumps, as in the glens near Michmash, or Nazareth. But Absalom fought on the east of the Jordan, where the numerous permanent streams and the richer soil yield landscapes as richly wooded as an English park, at every turn in which accident might catch an unwary rider on some projecting fork. It was thus with the prince. Hurrying through the woody glades on his tall mule, one of the branches of a great terebinth, under which he chanced to pass, caught in his thick hair and held him fast, while his beast, running from under him, left him suspended in mid-air. Hearing of this,

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Joab himself hastened to the spot, with three light javelins,[1] and thrust them into the prince as he struggled to free himself from the bough; the ten armour bearers[2] who always followed the "Captain of the Host," finishing the bloody work.

This stern but politic and just act at once ended the war. The trumpet call to cease pursuit forthwith sounded, by Joab's orders, far and near, for he wished to spare the people.[3] Absalom's death saved many lives. It had been ignoble, but his burial was still more so. Cutting down the body from the tree, Joab's men threw it, as it was, into a hole in the ground hard by, and piled a heap of stones over it, as a sign of bitter anger at the traitor; such a cairn, in fact, as was raised over Achan, or over the fallen king of Ai, and as still marks the graves of notorious criminals, or objects of common hatred. Thus, at Damascus, I saw a huge pile of stones, rising above a high garden wall. It was a cairn raised over the supposed grave of Cain: its enormous size resulting from every passer-by, for generations, throwing another stone on the heap. He had raised a pompous monument to himself in the "King's Vale," a quarter of a mile from Jerusalem,[4] to preserve his memory; his three sons having already died. But, instead of this, his crimes left his place of rest marked only by a rough cairn, on which every passer-by afterwards, doubtless, threw a stone, as Arabs still do with detested graves.

[1] The word translated "darts" is never used for a weapon except in this case. It always means rods of wood. Were the darts of sharpened wood? On the incident, see *Studien und Kritiken*, 1841, p. 1007.

[2] The "armour bearers," or "arms-bearers," were those who carried extra spears, etc., and the great shield of the combatants. They also fought at his side, if necessary. 1 Sam. xiv. 12.

[3] 2 Sam. xviii. 16; for "held back" read "spared."

[4] Jos., *Ant.*, VII. xi. 3. It is called a "pillar," 2 Sam. xviii. 18, and also a "hand" (place, A.V.). See page 111.

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In the Kedron valley, a tomb is still pointed out as that raised for himself by the rebellious son of David, but its architecture shews that it is not so old as even the Christian era. It seems, indeed, to be of the date of Hadrian, in the second century. To this day fathers use it, however, to point a moral to their children, leading their young sons to it, and making them spit and cast stones at it, in abhorrence of the conduct of Absalom to David. In the Bible narrative the memorial erected by the unfortunate prince for himself is called "a hand;" perhaps an allusion to the practice common in Phœnicia of carving a hand on funeral monuments, as a vow of gratitude to this or that god, "because he heard my voice, and blessed me," a form of words common on such memorials found in Carthage.

Only the difficulty now remained of breaking the news to David of his favourite son's death. Ahimaaz, the young priest, would fain, for love of the king, have run with the intelligence to Mahanaim, but Joab, in kindness to him, that he might not be the bearer of evil tidings, ordered an Ethiopian who was on the spot, to hurry on and announce what had happened. Ahimaaz might hesitate to make the whole truth known, but no such delicacy would stand in the way of the other. The priest, however, was allowed to follow, a little later, and being famous for swiftness,[1] soon outstripped his competitor. David, meanwhile, anxiously awaited news at the gate, on the tower over which stood watchmen to tell the approach of any messenger. But it was left to the Ethiopian to break the fatal secret. That Absalom was dead instantly eclipsed all other thoughts in the king's mind. Hasting to the chamber over the gate, he

[1] 2 Sam. xviii. 23, "by the way of the plain" = circle. Ewald thinks this means running in a style peculiar to himself. *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 254.

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gave himself up to uncontrollable grief, lamenting that he had not died in his stead. The triumphal army had marched out under his smile ; but his terrible grief threw such a cloud over their return that they stole back into the fortress like men ashamed. Nor would he appear, till Joab, always faithful to him, pointed out the impolicy of thus dispiriting men who had ventured their lives for his cause, and the danger that, if he did not at once thank them publicly, they would disband themselves that night. Then, at last, he took his seat in the gate, and once more summoning the army from their tents, rewarded their enthusiasm by fitting words of praise, as they marched proudly past.

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CHAPTER XIII.

CLOSE OF DAVID'S REIGN.

It was imperative that David at this crisis should suppress his private feelings and act with prudence and decision. The tie between the tribes was still very loose, and the rivalry between Judah and Ephraim, the South and the North, might burst into a flame at any moment. No private rights of the throne over the nation were recognized. The free action of the people was indispensable for the acceptance even of a hero-king as their sovereign. What should be done, was everywhere a question. Should the old independence and isolation of the tribes be restored, or should they re-elect David, or choose some one else as king, now Absalom was dead? Public feeling, at last, turned once more to David. The northern tribes, with Ephraim at their head, were, strange to say, the first to renew their homage to one, who, they justly said, had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies. News of their proposed return speedily reached Mahanaim, cheering him by the prospect of a peaceful restoration, which, however, was clouded by the fact that Judah, his own tribe, still held back. Anxious to win it again to loyalty, Amasa, one of its members, was sent to its chief men to gain them over; a promise that he should be made head of the army instead of Joab stimulating his zeal. A hearty invitation to the king and all his followers to return, followed presently.

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Things were now settling down into their old course. A great deputation from Judah, which unfortunately, through its bitter jealousy, acted in this matter without concert with the northern tribes, came at once to Gilgal, to escort David back in triumph to Jerusalem, and, without dreaming of giving offence to their brethren, he proceeded to the east side to meet them. Among others, a thousand men of Benjamin, Saul's tribe, had come down, in attendance on Shimei of Bahurim, who had so shamefully insulted him on the day of his flight from Absalom. Terrified for his life, he eagerly pressed forward to seek pardon, now that David's fortune was again in the ascendant. A ferry-boat[1] plied to and fro, to bring over the royal household and its effects, and in this Shimei hastened to cross. Throwing himself at David's feet, he was now as craven as he had before been insolent; pleading that if he had grievously offended, he was at least the first of the house of Joseph[2] to meet "his lord the king." The fiery Abishai could hardly be restrained from killing him on the spot, but David would not permit the day to be stained by any bloodshed, and even condescended to swear to the offender that his life should be spared. Another, very different suppliant was then announced—Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, David's early and peerless friend. He came stumbling into the presence, on his helpless feet, with beard untrimmed; his feet and clothes unwashed from the day of the king's flight. He had thus visibly mourned for his patron's troubles as he would for the greatest calamity, though Absalom had been in power in Jerusalem, and might at any moment have killed him for such fidelity to the dethroned king. His explanation of not having followed over the Jordan was

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 18. [2] 2 Sam. xix. 20.

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simple and perfect. Ziba, his father's slave, now his own slave-steward, had gone off with his ass, instead of bringing it to him as ordered, and his lameness made it impossible to join in the king's flight. His humility in the presence of David was touching in the extreme. He had been stripped of all his lands by him, through the slanders of Ziba. But David was "as an angel of God:" let him do what might be good in his eyes. He had, he felt, though innocent, no claim on the king, since he belonged to the house of Saul, every member of which, according to Eastern usage, might expect only death at the hands of a new sovereign. Entirely without blame as he was, he could only leave all to the king, for his birth left him no civil rights[1] to plead for pity or help. So utterly humbled was he, indeed, that he thanked the king for having let him eat at the royal table, instead of taking his life. But Ziba and his fifteen sons and twenty slaves had forestalled the unhappy prince in his audience of David. Coming down among the first, with Shimei, a fitting companion, he had crossed over and done homage before Mephibosheth arrived, and had had the opportunity of telling his own story. It seems strange that David should have been so wanting in true-heartedness to the memory of Jonathan, to whom he owed so much more than he could ever repay, and to whom he had sworn to be a friend to his children for ever, as to listen again to the charges of a slave against him and to forget the proofs of years, from day to day, in his own presence, of Mephibosheth's perfect loyalty. It is impossible to resist the feeling that jealousy of the dethroned family and determination to humble it utterly

[1] Ewald fancies that Mephibosheth did not deny that he had at one time hoped the kingdom would come to him. But thoughts without overt acts are not indictable. Eisenlohr thinks his whole speech to David betrays a guilty conscience. It may be so, but I cannot see it.

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and thus render it impotent in the state, tempted him to the shameful injustice of which he was guilty towards one who had a thousand claims not only to be treated uprightly, but to be loaded with generous kindness. It grieves one to have to write, even after three thousand years, that, instead of obtaining his grandfather's lands in full, and seeing the slanderer justly punished, the prince was dismissed with the restoration of only half of his patrimony, Ziba receiving the other. So far as the brief notice left of the incident goes, David had little to be proud of in his treatment of the son of such a matchless friend.

The great sheik Barzillai, the Gileadite, though a man of eighty, had also come to the Jordan, to bid farewell to the king. He had provided for David's sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim, and he, feeling under great obligations to him, would fain have had him return with him to Jerusalem and enjoy his favour. But the ambitions of life were over with the old man. His greatest desire was to die in his own city, and be buried beside his father and mother; and he therefore, with due thanks, declined the invitation. His son Chimham, however, joined the king's party, and henceforth lived at Jerusalem or at Bethlehem, where a building —perhaps a ruin—known by his name, still existed in Jeremiah's day, four hundred years later. These brief stoppages being over, the king and his followers crossed the Jordan.

But his troubles were not even yet ended. The jealousy of the other tribes towards Judah had been keenly roused by the fact that, though they were the first to return to their allegiance, it had forestalled them in the honour of leading the king back to his throne. The politic step of that tribe, in sending an escort to Jordan to meet him, had given it the whole glory of the restoration, though it had

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been last to submit. Soon after the arrival of the men of Judah, a great gathering from all Israel had assembled at Gilgal to receive David, but the rival tribe had anticipated them, and had, as it were, appropriated him to themselves. Thus apparently overreached, the northern tribes kindled in a moment into a paroxysm of jealous hatred, and the old feud between South and North broke out in unchecked fierceness. Angry complaints on each side led to biting retorts. The boast of the men of Judah, that David was one of themselves, was met by the answer, that if they had one share in David, the other tribes had ten, and that, besides, Ephraim, not Judah, was the first-born of Joseph, and thus the rightful head of the nation.[1] Did not they, also, first advise that the king be brought back? A bitter quarrel broke out; the words of the men of Judah being even fiercer than those of the men of Israel. But the crisis soon came. Amidst the strife the blast of a trumpet was suddenly heard. It was blown by one Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, from the mountains of Ephraim, a man of position, and a fanatical partisan of the supposed rights of the ten tribes, in opposition to those of Judah. Some one presently raised the ominous cry, now heard for the first time, but to be repeated at the breaking up of the nation under Jeroboam: "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse—every man to his tents, O Israel." The spark fell on dry tinder, and in a moment burst into wide flame. The cry was caught up and re-echoed far and near, and to a man the members of the ten tribes present drew off, leaving David with the men of Judah alone.[2] Then, as

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 43. For "we have more right in David," read, "are, also, rather, the first-born." Septuagint.

[2] A number of Benjamites adhered to Judah, from living among them or on their borders. But Judah was the only complete tribe still loyal to David.

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even after, they resolutely stood faithful to him and his house.

Under such gloomy circumstances the entry to Jerusalem must have been shorn of its glory. A new rebellion had broken out, far more dangerous than that of Absalom. No time must be lost. Amasa, as the new commander-in-chief, received orders to collect the muster of Judah within three days, and report himself and them to the king. Not returning, however, within that time, and the affair being urgent, Abishai[1] was ordered to start at once in pursuit of Sheba—with some volunteers collected by Joab, and the king's guards, and the Gibborim—lest he should seize some strong town and matters be made still more serious.[2] Amasa reached Gibeon as this force marched out. Fear of being supplanted in the supreme command had, long before, led to the murder of Abner by Joab; and now that he met one who had actually been appointed to his old honours since the death of Absalom, his jealousy burst out afresh. Going up to the new generalissimo, and taking him reverently by the beard, with the right hand, as if to kiss it—still a mode of salutation marking intimate friendship and special respect—he managed, in bowing, to let his sword, hanging under his war cloak, slip from its sheath. Picking it up quickly with his left hand, of which he could make dexterous use, while Amasa's attention was diverted by the salutation, and while he was powerless by his beard being held, Joab plunged the blade into his bowels with such force that the one stab was fatal. The appearance of the murderer as he stood over the dying man, his dress and even his sandals red with the blood that had spurted from the terrible gash, was long

[1] The Hebrew has Abishai: the Septuagint, Amasa: the Syriac, Joab.
[2] 2 Sam. xx. 6: "Throw a shadow over our eye (give us trouble)." Septuagint.

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remembered, but, the deed once done, he turned forthwith to the pursuit of Sheba as if nothing had happened; firm in his unswerving fidelity to David. For a moment, indeed, there was a pause in the advance; the men standing still when they came to where the dying Amasa writhed in his blood, but one of Joab's men having dragged the body, still living, off the path, and spread a cloak over it, the march was resumed with no more delay.

Sheba had ere this passed through all the central and northern cities, as far as the meadow of Beth Maacah—a place of some importance, since it is called "a city and a mother in Israel." It lay six and a half miles west of Banias, in Naphtali, on a rounded hill, and was called "a mother" from its size, and from its being the protector of the villages near it. A bright, noisy stream from the heights to the north, flows by it, giving it in old days the additional name of Abel Maim—Abel of the Waters—and, as it had a ditch and a wall, besides this copious supply of water, it would be regarded in David's time as a very strong place. Everywhere the new revolution seemed popular: the country at large flocking after its banner. A stand was at last made at Beth Maacah—so-called, perhaps, from some connection it may have had with Queen Maacah, the mother of Absalom—and thither Joab pressed, to crush the insurrection if possible at a blow. A huge wall or bank of earth was forthwith thrown up round the town to prevent egress or ingress, and a deep ditch dug close to the walls to undermine them. A woman of the place, however, calling to Joab, as he passed, brought matters to a favourable crisis before an assault was delivered. Quoting an old local saying, "Act on the advice of the men of Abel, and you are sure to succeed,"[1] she urged him to communicate with

[1] Thenius (in effect). See Lenormant, *La Divination*, pp 19-20.

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them. "We are peaceful and faithful," said she, "and you seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why will you destroy the inheritance of Jehovah?" Repudiating such a desire, Joab consented that if Sheba were delivered up, he would raise the siege at once. It was enough. In a short time the head of the arch-rebel was thrown contemptuously over the wall, and the trumpets thereupon sounded the recall, leaving the city forthwith in peace. One death had extinguished the whole movement, lately so threatening.

The suppression of the two rebellions of Absalom and Sheba took place apparently about ten years before David's death, but we know hardly anything of his life during that period. The ten concubines whom his son had dishonoured were set apart, in virtual widowhood, till their death; the strict laws of Eastern usage demanding that they should be so. Beyond the intimation of this, these last years of David are veiled in almost complete silence. But if it be true that the nation with no history is happy—since to have one means, largely, war and inquiet—the very silence is a mark of the calm close of his reign. His last trial had been surmounted. He had bitterly atoned for his errors, and the discipline had made him a wiser man. The lofty spirit and the resignation with which he had met his troubles, and the victorious humility and penitence with which he had emerged from them, were a pledge that the rest of his life would be that of a true hero. A harsh experience had also taught men the folly of rash hopes from revolution, and had thus united them with greater heartiness than ever before, in support of a king whose substantial worth and greatness had been proved by his whole reign.

The evening of David's life seems, hence, to have passed

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in the quiet development of the kingdom and empire; the way being thus prepared for the reign of Solomon. Trying to live close to God, the great thought of the now aged king's heart appears to have been to accumulate treasures of all kinds for a Temple to be built by his son; he himself not being permitted to raise it. The dark clouds had at last broken away, and his sun was moving towards its setting in a clear heaven. One short break in the calm, at the very close of life, alone disturbed his peace.

The hardships of his early life; his exposure in his wars; the troubles in his family; Amnon's crime and his murder; Absalom's revolt and death, and his own bitter regrets at his crime in connection with Uriah and Bathsheba, had told on his strength, and left him a worn-out old man before he was seventy. His life gradually freezing at its source, left him utterly enfeebled and helpless. His mind still retained its clearness and strength. It was evident, however, that death was near, and this was the signal for a new palace conspiracy. Adonijah, the son of Haggith, who had been born to David at Hebron, and was thus a man of between thirty and forty, had become, by the death of Absalom, the heir to the throne, if the succession were determined by strict descent. Like his elder half-brother, he was famous at once for his manly beauty, and by shewing no fitness for the throne, intellectually or otherwise.[1] Following his example, he had for some time affected regal state, in chariots, horses, and running footmen; but his father, always weakly blind to the faults of his children, shut his eyes to these dangerous assumptions, as he had, before, to the faults of Amnon and Absalom. Joab, now stained with two murders—those of Abner and Amasa—though still loyal as ever to David, had

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, XIV. vii. 4, says he was just such a man as Absalom had been.

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never looked kindly on Solomon; recalling, as his birth did, the dark fate of the noble-hearted Uriah and the shameful character of Bathsheba. He had favoured Absalom rather than this youngest prince, and, now that Absalom was gone, his sympathies passed to Adonijah, the next heir. Abiathar, representative of the younger branch of the priesthood, perhaps from scruples of conscience at supporting the child of so unworthy a marriage, but, it may be, from the fact that Zadok, his brother high priest, was in the lad's favour, leaned also to the eldest living prince. The evident unfitness of Adonijah to reign, however, and the promising gifts of Solomon, who had been apparently brought up under the care of Nathan, the prophet, led the wisest of David's counsellors strongly to espouse that prince's cause. Shimei, a surviving brother of the king,[1] and Hushai, his "friend;"[2] Zadok, the representative of the elder branch of the priesthood; Benaiah, himself a priest, and also captain of the bodyguard; and Nathan, were determined that he should be king. David, moreover, had sworn to Bathsheba to appoint him his successor, and Providence had ordained his being so. Adonijah's party, however, had attracted, through Joab, the support of the king's guards, of the captains of the army of Judah, and of the sons of David as a body.[3] The conspiracy had at last come to such a head that Adonijah fancied he might take overt action. The chiefs of his party were, therefore, invited to a sacrificial feast, intended as that of his inauguration. The spot chosen for it was the Fuller's Spring, in the valley of Kedron, outside the city walls; the spring supplying the necessary water for the sacred rites, and a great stone serv-

[1] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 266.
[2] 1 Kings i. 8. Thenius reads "Hushai" for "Rei." So Graetz, vol. i. p. 297.
[3] 1 Kings i. 18, 11, 25.

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ing for a natural altar. The exact scene of the memorable gathering seems to be identified by the fact that while the stone used as an altar is called in Scripture Zoheleth, the scarped steep wall of rock on which the village of Siloam hangs, opposite the south-east corner of Jerusalem, as it now is, still bears the name among the villagers, of Zehweileh—"the slippery place"—a word very nearly like Zoheleth, so that it seems to mark the spot of Adonijah's conquest. The dwellings of the village are only caves in the rock and very ancient tombs, with a very few houses of the rudest type, built at the mouth of these. In very ancient times the hill has evidently been at this place a quarry. En Rogel, "the Spy's Fountain," but later "the Fuller's Fountain," apparently the spot known at this time as Job's Well, lay close by, to supply the water needed for the sacrifice and for ablutions. But, unfortunately for Adonijah, Nathan had heard of the scheme on the day when the feast was to be held. Hastening instantly to Bathsheba, he informed her of the facts, and urged her to go to David and tell him, so as to save her own life and that of Solomon. Both would be taken if Adonijah succeeded. Acting on his counsel, she forthwith approached the king, and, after lowly prostration, reminded him of his oath that Solomon should sit on his throne, and told him of Adonijah's plot. Nathan coming in while she was yet speaking—after the same humble obeisance—corroborated her words. David, feeble as he was, saw the whole situation at a glance, and took action with all his old promptness and vigour. Renewing his promise to Bathsheba with a solemn oath by "Jehovah who hath redeemed his soul out of all distress,"[1] he ordered Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah into his presence, and com-

[1] 1 Kings i. 29.

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manded them to set Solomon on the well-known royal mule, and lead him to Gihon,[1] thought to have been what is now called "the Virgin's Fountain," higher up the valley than Zoheleth, and on its opposite side. There Zadok and Nathan were to anoint him king over Israel, announcing their act by trumpet blasts and shouts of "God save King Solomon." Finally, they were to bring him back to Jerusalem and set him on the throne, as a formal sign that he had been appointed king with his father's official sanction. This vigorous action decided the matter at once. Issuing with Solomon, on David's mule, escorted by the Crethi and Plethi—the king's bodyguard—Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah proceeded to Gihon. There, Zadok solemnly anointed the young prince with a horn of sacred oil from the Tabernacle at Gibeon, of which he was guardian, amidst the blasts of trumpets and the shoutings of the multitude; Nathan assisting in the ceremonies as Prophet. The return to Jerusalem was in keeping with this auspicious commencement. Vast crowds joined the procession with music, dancing, and loud rejoicings,[2] which re-echoed to En Rogel, where Adonijah and his party were now ending their feast, before proceeding to hail their chief as king. The news of Solomon's coronation, of his having been seated "on the throne of the kingdom," and of the court having already accepted him, and done homage to David for his choice, fell like a thunderbolt on the conspirators. In a few moments the hall was empty, and Adonijah had fled to the Tabernacle,

[1] Thenius has Gibeon, but it does not seem to suit as well. Adonijah had held his feast opposite or near the Fuller's Spring; Solomon was to be anointed at Gihon; the ceremonies at both places being religious acts, accompanied by sacrifices to propitiate God, and hence in each case held near a spring, for the necessary ablutions, etc. The same feeling led the "places for prayer"—the Jewish proseuchae—chosen near water, to be adopted in the early church (Acts xvi. 13).

[2] 1 Kings i. 40. Hebrew and Septuagint.

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to catch hold of the horns of the altar,[1] as a sanctuary from Solomon's anger. His fears, however, were groundless; for Solomon, with his instinctive wisdom, and perhaps with a feeling of kindly clemency towards a half-brother, sent to assure him that, if he came and did homage, and henceforth acted more prudently, he would not be hurt.

The Book of Chronicles happily furnishes us with a few additional glimpses of the last months or weeks of David's life. His preparations for the temple which Solomon was to build, continued to the end,[2] and were still his chief thought. Masons were collected from Phœnicia to hew and square stone, for the Hebrews knew nothing of architecture or its subsidiary branches, compared with the men of Tyre, famous for their great temples and public buildings. Skilled workmen not being found among the Hebrews, he gathered all the Phœnician masons his officials could meet with in Israel, and set them to hew stones. Cedar trees were brought on Phœnician rafts to Joppa, and then laboriously dragged to Jerusalem, up the steep, rough wadys. Iron, perhaps from the mines of Macedonia and of the Black Sea, or from the island of Elba, was bought in Tyre; and the spoil accumulated in the Syrian wars supplied immense quantities of the precious metals. The House of Jehovah was to be "exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all lands,"[3] and vast preparations were, therefore, required. Not only did he further give a solemn charge to Solomon to carry out his wish in this particular; the heads of the tribes, gathered, with the priests and the Levites, in special assembly,[4] were urged to support him

[1] Perhaps, however, the great brazen altar at Gibeon; more probably that on which sacrifices had been offered on Mount Zion.

[2] 1 Chron. xxii. 14. [3] 1 Chron. xxii. 5.

[4] 1 Chron. xxii. 17; xxiii. 2.

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with their utmost zeal. Nor did even this exhaust the interest of the king in this direction. A great convocation was held, attended by the princes of the tribes, the leading officers of the army, the chief men of the royal estates, of the Crethi and Plethi, and of the Gibborim.[1] At this, David, collecting his failing energies, rose once more to his feet and earnestly exhorted all to promote his cherished desire. Solomon, who was present, was also touchingly reminded of his duties, and again cautioned that all his glory and security depended on his loyalty to Jehovah. Full plans of the temple buildings, and the whole of the treasures amassed for their construction, were likewise formally made over to him. Nothing could be finer than David's closing words: "Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed. For the Lord God, my God, will be with thee. He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the House of the Lord."[2] Then turning to the assembly, he reminded them that "the work was great, for the palace was not for man, but for the Lord God,"[3] and modestly recounted his contributions towards it. Such an example, from one so honoured, roused the spirit of all, and gifts were offered for the great undertaking with a splendid liberality. The assembly could not be allowed, however, to break up from its last audience of the great king without receiving his priestly blessing, for, to the end of his life, he was the priest no less than the prophet. Spreading out his withered hands, as we may suppose, those nearest heard the majestic words; the choirs of the priests and Levites, it may be, intoning parts of it in their choicest music.

[1] 1 Chron. xxviii. 1. [2] 1 Chron. xxviii. 20.
[3] 1 Chron. xxix. 1.

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"Blessed be Thou, Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; yea, all that is in heaven and in the earth. Thine, Jehovah, is the kingdom, and Thou art exalted over all, as Head. Both riches and honour come from Thee, and Thou reignest over all; in Thy hand are power and might; in Thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and sing praises to Thy glorious name. For who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers. Our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is no hope of abiding here. Jehovah, our God! all this store that we have prepared to build Thee a house for Thy holy name comes from Thy hand, and is all Thine own. But I know, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness; therefore, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things. And now have I seen with joy Thy people, here present, offer willingly to Thee. O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep it ever in the inmost thoughts of Thy people to build Thee a temple, and to direct their heart towards Thee. And give to Solomon, my son, an undivided heart, to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to carry out all, and build Thee the palace[1] for which I have prepared."[2]

The occasion of such a great gathering of the heads of the nation seems to have been used for a second and more public consecration of Solomon as king. The grand benedic-

[1] Literally, fortress. [2] 1 Chron. xxix. 10-19.

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tion ended, David called on those present to "bless the Lord their God; and all the congregation blessed Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and did reverence to God and to the king." Great sacrifices followed, and then a grand coronation feast, at which the whole assembly, as representing the nation, hailed Solomon as the king of their choice, and he was anointed before them a second time. The ancient liberties of Israel had been left undisturbed by David, so that its vote was still needed to make the succession legitimate and unquestionable.

A few notices of the last words of David embrace all that we further know of his life. His final counsels to Solomon, as given in the Book of Kings,[1] are a vivid illustration of the grandeur of his conception of kingly duty, and at the same time of the imperfect ideal of religion as yet attained even by such a man. Nothing could be loftier than the principles marked out for the new king as those in which he should act. He was to be strong, and shew himself a man, and keep the charge of Jehovah his God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes and His commandments, His judgments and testimonies, as written in the Law of Moses. Such a course only, he was reminded, had the Divine promise of blessing, and would secure the throne to his children. The sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite, were commended to his favour, in remembrance of their father's kindness when David was at Mahanaim. Then followed two strangely contrasted injunctions, breathing the dark and wild spirit of the age. Joab had served David with a grand loyalty for many years, but he had been stained with the guilt of two murders, those of Abner and Amasa. Yet David himself had acted as wickedly in regard to Uriah, and Joab's ser-

[1] 1 Kings ii. 2-9.

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vices in the revolt of Sheba had saved the throne after Absalom's death. But the lifelong thraldom in which the fierce soldier[1] had kept him, and the crimes by which he had retained his place as commander-in-chief, had filled the king's mind with a dislike of him which nothing could abate. Solomon was therefore charged not to let his hoar head go down to the grave in peace; an injunction only too likely to be obeyed now that the veteran had supported Adonijah. Shimei, also, who had cursed the king so fiercely at Bahurim, but had afterwards extorted an oath from him that his life would be spared,[2] was left to be put to death when Solomon ascended the throne, thus keeping his promise in the letter, but getting another to break it when he was gone.

While we feel that such death-bed curses are sadly out of keeping with our ideal of the last hours of a true man, it is very certain that David deserved the name if any man ever did, in such a position, amidst such temptations, and in such an age of twilight revelation and imperfect civilization. Let us once more remember that the recognized morality of the Jewish religious world, even a thousand years later, held that we should love our neighbour and hate our enemy. Man first heard from the lips of Christ that he was to love his enemies, and pray for them who despitefully used him.[3] But David's "last words," as recorded, have the note of true worth, amidst all the imperfections of his remote times.

[1] 2 Sam. iii. 39. Joab, with Abishai and Asahel, were sons of Zeruiah, and thus nephews of David. 2 Sam. ii. 18; iii. 39; viii. 16. 1 Chron. ii. 16. Schenkel, a very acute critic, thinks she was David's sister. Winer leaves it an open question, whether she was his sister or step-sister. *Dict. of Bib.*, art. "Zeruiah." *Bib. Lex.*, vol. v. p. 716, etc.

[2] 1 Kings ii. 7. The oath was not binding under a new reign.

[3] Matt. v. 43.

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"The saying of David, the son of Jesse;
The man who was set over Israel;
The anointed of the God of Jacob;
He who sang sweet psalms for Israel.

The Spirit of God spoke in me,
His word was upon my tongue:

The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
'When one rules justly over men;
Rules in the fear of God—
It is like the going forth of light in the morning without clouds;
Like the shining of the sun after long trouble of the rain—
When the tender grass springs out of the earth,
And the earth grows green in the brightness.'

Yea, is not even my house thus before God?
Because it is so, He has made an everlasting covenant with me,
Established and preserved for all time.
Yes, all my salvation and all my desire,
Will He not make them flourish!

But evil rulers are worthless thorns which He thrusts away;
Which cannot be taken hold of with the hand:
He who would touch them
Must prepare himself with iron,
And with the shaft of a spear:
With fire shall men burn them up."[1]

Like the relics of the Black Prince at Canterbury, or of Henry the Fifth at Westminster, David's arms, the spears and shields of his battles, and his swords, including doubtless that of Goliath, were preserved for ages in the Temple, with jealous care, as sacred memorials of the past.[2]

According to Josephus, David was seventy years old when he died. The unbending rule, by which burials were re-

[1] Ewald. Graetz. Eisenlohr. [2] 2 Kings xi. 10.

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quired to be made outside the walls of cities or towns, was deservedly relaxed in the case of one so illustrious. A great many-chambered tomb had been hewn out in the city-hill, with fitting external adornment, and there he was laid, doubtless with much pomp and amidst universal lamentation. At his side were gradually gathered a long succession of descendants. As late as the time of Christ, a spot so sacred was still fondly pointed out at Jerusalem.[1] Josephus says, indeed, that one of the chambers of the royal tomb had been broken open by Hyrcanus (B.C. 137–105), who took from it three thousand talents, and that a second chamber was opened by Herod, who plundered it of "furniture of gold and precious jewels," desisting from farther sacrilege because two of the guards were killed by fire. The tomb was, therefore, closed, and a propitiatory monument built at its mouth; but they were still intact, and worshipped, as Dio Cassius tells us, with the greatest reverence till the siege of the city under Hadrian, when they were thrown down like the other public buildings.[2] The cave in which the royal bodies lay could not, however, have been affected by the destruction of the architecture connected with it, but doubtless lies buried under the rubbish which covers even the Jerusalem of the Romans to a depth of about twenty feet. Some day, perhaps, it may be discovered, but meanwhile no one can tell with precision in what spot it may be expected to be found.

According to Nehemiah,[3] the Tombs of the Kings were, apparently, on Zion, but they seem to have been in the southwest part of it. All the principal tombs in Jerusalem are cut in a soft limestone, which forms a bed cropping out, originally, on both sides of the Tyropœon valley, and running

[1] Acts ii. 29. [2] Dio Cassius, lxix. 14. [3] Neh. iii. 16.

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on to the south. In this layer of rock, probably, were the tombs of David and other kings buried in Jerusalem, and they must be sought for by excavation through the rubbish lying deep over the rock at the mouth of the valley, both on Mount Zion and on the Temple mount.

Renan thinks that "the tombs of David and of the kings, his successors, were towards the southern extremity of Ophel, a little way above the foot of Siloah."[1] On the other hand, Dr. Sayce says: "The Tyropœon or Cheese-maker's valley once divided both the Temple hill and the southern hill from the hills on the west, though it is now choked up with the rubbish which the numerous destroyers of Jerusalem have thrown into it. In some places the rubbish is more than seventy feet deep, and under it, if anywhere, we must look for the tombs of the kings that were cut in the rocky cliff of the city of David."[2] But, if so, they must have been buried under the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's siege, and could not have been shewn in Christ's day. Sir C. Warren thinks David's tomb was outside the present north wall of Jerusalem, near the quarries which run under the city. Major Conder, on the other hand, thinks, or thought, that it was inside the space now covered by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and now called the Tomb of Nicodemus. He shews that this is a very ancient tomb, and would hold at least twelve bodies, so that it might be the tomb of other kings also.

The so-called Tomb of David now shewn on Mount Zion, was a holy place in the time of the Crusaders, but is comparatively modern. It is possible that ancient tombs exist under it, but what is now shewn is hardly worth visiting. It is in the east end of a chamber which appears to have

[1] *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, ii. 733. [2] *Records of Past, N. S. I.*, 174.

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been the crypt of a Crusading church, and is now part of a whole group of buildings standing on the waste space of the flat crest of Mount Zion, with half a dozen domes, marking the arches inside of as many chambers, and a larger dome and minaret of a mosque. A huge sarcophagus of rough stone, covered with rich cloths, and standing in a small room, is shewn as the veritable resting-place of the great Jewish king!

The greatness of David was felt when he was gone. He had lived in harmony with both the priesthood and the prophets; a sure sign that the spirit of his government had been thoroughly loyal to the higher aims of the theocracy. The nation had not been oppressed by him, but had been left in the free enjoyment of its ancient liberties. As far as his power went, he had striven to act justly to all.[1] His weak indulgence to his sons, and his one great sin besides, had been bitterly atoned, and were forgotten at his death in the remembrance of his long-tried worth. He had reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem, and seven and a half at Hebron.[2] Israel, at his accession, had reached the lowest point of national depression; its new-born unity rudely dissolved; its territory assailed by the Philistines. But he had left it an imperial power, with dominions like those of Egypt or Assyria. The sceptre of Solomon was already, before his father's death, peacefully owned from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from the Orontes to the Red Sea. In the blaze of so much glory the few spots in his reign were lost, and as generations passed he became more and more the ideal of a great and good king. Nor was such reverent honour undeserved. Devout and lofty in his aspirations, even in his youth, he had shewn his bent, while still with

[1] 2 Sam. viii. 15. [2] 2 Sam. v. 5.

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Saul, by seeking the society of the prophets—and the child had been the father of the man. In his ripe manhood, amidst great wars and the burden of a wide empire, he had borne himself as a true prophet, and he continued unchanged in this respect to the last. Not that he publicly came forward in this character, or that he even wished to claim it, far less to make it a source of power and influence; it was an irresistible impulse of his inner life. He might have reigned in honour and closed his life in peace without such a prophetic enthusiasm, but its presence raised him to a glory all its own. The Psalms, in which he breathes out his inmost thoughts during the revolt of Absalom, are replete with true religious fervour, glowing alike in its love and its indignation. Conscious of his election as king by God, his words embody an intense bitterness towards enemies, who, in rising against him, are opposing the Divine will; but they also breathe a lowly resignation, and pass naturally to supplications for all the godly.[1] The song of thanksgiving for the restoration of spiritual peace, after his agony of remorse for his great sin, shews the same devotional exaltation. But this frame is seen nowhere more vividly than in his last words, which announce his confidence that his house, as firmly established in God, will flourish after his death.[2] No prince, especially no one whose kingdom had come to him without any hereditary claim on his part, could close his life with a brighter and more confident anticipation of the distant future.

The life of David, in fact, illustrated that spiritual development which had been advancing in Israel for more than a century, since the early days of Samuel. The times had demanded a man who should be only in a subordinate degree

[1] Ps. iii. iv. [2] 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7.

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a spiritual leader. The greatest need of the day was to complete the political work left imperfect since the days of Joshua; to secure in permanence a fatherland for the nation, and to unite all its hitherto isolated sections. Thus only could full independence and peace be attained for the future advancement of the true religion, entrusted to Israel on behalf of mankind. The youth of the nation must pass into manhood, before it could accomplish the high task divinely assigned it. Only a warrior could bring about such a state of things, but it was imperative that he should, besides, be a man penetrated with the religious spirit. Such a hero appeared in David, who, rising from among the people, was marked by trust in God as his chief strength, by deep sympathy with the prophets, in whom lay the hope of the future, and by the tenacity with which he honoured all the great spiritual characteristics of his race. The religious movement in the community as a whole, in fact, received a new impulse from his influence and example.

The success of such a career was striking. Israel, for the first time, rose to be a nation, and gained permanent possession of its own country, after which it had striven in vain from the time of Moses. All the distinctive marks of an independent and united people henceforth displayed themselves among them. David was at once a warrior and a poet; a ruler, yet honouring the wishes of his subjects; a man of the people, and also, when necessary, a priest;[1] a powerful king, who still, without compromising his dignity, listened to the prophets of the day and acted in perfect agreement with them. All the peculiarities of his race were, in fact, reflected in him. It was, moreover, a great advantage that he was neither a prophet by profession nor a born

[1] Ps. cx. 4.

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priest, but strictly a layman. Priests and prophets had made Israel the "people of God," but it was reserved for one from the general community, to set the nation on a firm basis and open to it an unlimited future. The manhood of the race was thus ennobled; for every citizen, in his sphere, could be loyal to what one of themselves had so successfully established. The surviving institutions of the past could no longer be used to injure the State, though all that was good in them was perpetuated. Even the humblest Israelite might cherish the loftiest aspirations. The rule of a priesthood, cramping the spiritual life of the nation, was impossible, and on the other hand the Prophet, in his office of tribune of the people and spokesman for God, had his claim recognized to advise the king in his guidance of affairs. The ideal of the theocracy had been realized, when David and the Prophets thus worked harmoniously together. Such a king necessarily coloured the whole future of his country. The promises given to him of permanent and world-wide dominion[1] were cherished by subsequent generations as an unfailing trust, in the darkest days of the nation. A ruler descended from David, the promised Messiah or Anointed of God, would, infallibly, rise again and restore the kingdom to Israel. The only question was *how* Israel was to take the lead of the world. That it was destined to attain it was a firm belief in every heart.[2]

To the world at large he is especially dear as the "Sweet Singer of Israel." There had been no room for poetry in the early Mosaic ritual,[3] and its absence is, indeed, a proof of the antiquity of the Mosaic institutions. Samuel had introduced music and minstrelsy in connection with public

[1] 2 Sam. xvii. 12, 14. 23. 27. Ps. lxxii. 8–11.
[2] Ewald, vol. iii. pp. 265–275.
[3] Ewald, vol. i. p. 511.

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worship, but it was left to David to develop them, as only a man of his genius, vested with kingly power, possibly could. His harp is as natural an accompaniment of his presence[1] as the staff was to Moses or the spear to Saul. The Talmud has a tradition that it hung over his bed, and gave forth its sounds at midnight when the wind passed through its strings.[2] As has been noticed already, singing men and singing women were permanently attached to his court, and musical instruments were invented by him.[3] To such a delight in music, united with the gifts of a poet, we owe the origin of the Psalter. It was natural for him to utter his thoughts in song, and his devotion made that song religious.

As it now stands, only a portion of the Book of Psalms claims David as its author. Other inspired poets in successive generations added, now one, now another contribution to the sacred collection, and thus, in the wisdom of Providence, it more completely reflects every phase of human emotion and circumstances than it otherwise could.

The power of the Psalter over the minds and hearts of men in all ages, springs, indeed, in great part from its many-sided presentation of spiritual experience. This breadth and universality of influence illustrated throughout, is especially seen in the case of David. His early years stored his soul with the imagery of nature, and drew out his sympathies with man as man. His life in the camp brought him into contact with various nations, widening his ideas, and kindling the virtues of a brave and self-reliant struggle. His throne made him familiar with the conception of supreme majesty and power. His simple and lowly youth

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 23; xviii. 10. [2] *Dict. of Bib.*, art. "Harp."
[3] 2 Sam. xix. 35. Amos vi. 5.

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kept him humble to the last. His sufferings and trials disciplined all his graces. His long abode amidst the lonely vastness and silence of the wilderness, brought him face to face with God. The crowded streets of Jerusalem brought life under his eyes in its thousand occupations and contrasts. In the troubles in his household he felt the whole circle of parental emotions. His own failings taught him the pain and the bliss of contrition and amendment, and his lofty communion with God made him the interpreter for all time of those who aspire to imitate his devotion.

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CHAPTER XIV.

PALESTINE IN SOLOMON'S DAY.

THE reign of David, which had raised Israel from the lowest state to the splendour of a great empire, extending over 15,000 square miles, necessarily gave a great impulse to the whole national life. Hitherto it might boast of its forefathers, and of the deeds of Joshua and its heroic Judges, but now its self-consciousness was raised to the highest, in the pride of its new strength and glory. As Greece reached her zenith after the Persian wars—a struggle in which the deepest interests of the race had been involved, and a hearty co-operation of hitherto isolated fragments had given, for the time, a lofty feeling of national unity—so, among the Hebrews, the wars of David led to a great advance of popular life in every direction. Israel had, for the moment, now gained its highest aspirations as a race: the apparent effacement of tribal jealousies and disputes; a worthy place, and commanding respect, among the peoples around, and marked external prosperity. It had, besides, the ennobling conviction that all these great deeds had been achieved, in the fulfilment of a divinely appointed destiny. Like Islam, it regarded its wars as undertaken not for policy, or ambition, but in obedience to the will of God—a belief which bound all together in a common pride and enthusiasm.

But such religious and intellectual excitement naturally expressed itself in varied forms. Among others, it resulted

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in the literary development of the times, of which David, in his widely diffused psalms, was the most characteristic illustration, and these lyrics led the way, under Solomon, to a much wider activity in the same direction. Not only religious, but secular poetry flourished, and historians commemorated the story of the past.[1]

Yet there was a darker side to the picture, threatening the national future, if not carefully watched. The religious ideas of even the noblest were still, in some directions, far below the pure and lofty standard demanded by God. The harsh exclusiveness and contemptuous insolence with which other nations were regarded, cut off Mosaism from its legitimate influence for good, on other communities. The gentle spirit of Christian charity was needed, to discountenance the dark revenges and relentless cruelty, at times shewn even by such a man as David. The outer forms of religion, moreover, were still bound up, at every step, with ritual precept and ceremony; a state of things in which lay a great danger of the triumph of the external over the essential; for ritualism, in all ages, tends directly to ossify and destroy the vitality of a faith. A few of the loftiest spirits might realize a noble religious ideal, but the conceptions of the mass continued strangely gross. If even a princess like Michal had her household god, the common people would long retain other superstitious usages, and readily yield to corrupting influences from without.

The new political position of the country had dangers of its own. The establishment of a Hebrew empire might have advantages, but it was yet to be seen how such a change would affect the spirit of the theocracy. The throne might become despotic, like the thrones around, and thus come

[1] Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. i. p. 174.

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into collision with the genius and liberties of the nation. It might forget the true calling of Israel, and involve itself in high politics and schemes of conquest. The chief priest, moreover, and the public ordinances of religion, were virtually dependent on the king. Zadok was appointed, Abiathar displaced, by his word, and the centre of public worship was at Jerusalem, where, also, the upper classes of the priesthood lived under the shadow of the palace. The glow and spirituality which marked the reign of a king like David, might only too easily pass into cold formalism and lifeless hypocrisy, under a worldly monarch. And should the throne, no longer looking to the people, give itself up to the pursuit of outward splendour, political power, and aggrandizement, the simple religion of Israel might readily be undervalued, in comparison with the faith and morals of the great heathen nationalities around.

Under David, the people of Israel had lost their previous isolation from the surrounding idolatrous communities, and had thus entered on that critical time in the history of a nation, when it passes from the narrow circle which had previously contented it, into relations with the world at large. Such a stage is the counterpart of youth leaving the quiet of the family, for the wider sphere of manhood; a time which determines whether it will nobly resist the hurtful influences around or yield to them; whether it will grow to manly strength of character or prove weak; purify and ennoble, or debase, itself; rise or sink. National life, in the same way, may become richer, more various, more stirring, by a similar transition; may rise to a higher and clearer self-consciousness, or may darken and be corrupted. Instead of continuing a nation of shepherds and farmers, Israel was about to enter on the pursuits of trade and com-

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merce, and be brought into contact with mankind at large. The monotony and uniformity of the past were henceforth impossible. But such a new sphere of many-coloured, stirring life, at home and abroad, is perilous to the spirit of any nation. It endangers the simplicity of its faith, and is apt to lead to a depreciation of its best peculiarities and its ancient virtues. What is foreign attracts, what is native seems tame and rustic; family life, the basis of healthy national life, loses its former sacredness; and simplicity, discipline, and morals ere long decay, if the expansion of public activity be not well-guided and sound. Some communities in their passing to manhood begin to decline, others to advance to a nobler future.

At the accession of Solomon, Israel had reached this critical period. Hitherto, like the original cantons of Switzerland, it had led a secluded life among its mountains. Only the north and north-western tribes of Dan, Issachar, Asher, Zebulon, and Naphtali, had come much into contact with the great outer world, which then, in Palestine, was represented by the Phœnicians. To a large extent they lived among that people, and were associated with them, as gardeners and farm labourers, caravan drivers, sailors, boatmen, and in other humble occupations.[1] The middle, south, and eastern tribes, however, among whom Judah and Ephraim were the great centre of national force, retained a proud, rugged independence, which repelled all intercourse

[1] Mövers, *Phönizier*, vol. ii. i. p. 308. Jud. i. 29–33; v. 17. Gen. xlix. 20. Eisenlohr thinks the words in our version, "He shall yield royal dainties," mean that Asher purveyed delicacies for the table of the court, at Tyre. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 6; see 1 Kings v. 14. For Dan, see Jud. v. 17. For Issachar, Gen. xlix. 14. They became serfs. For Zebulon and Naphtali, Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19. "They shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand"—is a reference, apparently, to the collecting of the snail from which purple dye was prepared, and to fisheries, and glass-making.

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with the heathen, denouncing them, contemptuously, as "the uncircumcised," and contented itself with its hereditary occupations of pasturage and farming.

Under David, the various tribes, almost against their will, had been drawn into closer relations with the communities around. From the time of Saul, the struggle with their eastern foes, the Ammonites, had spread ever more and more widely. It had led to a coalition of that people, in David's reign, with the neighbouring Syrian powers, and compelled Israel to defend itself, with all its energy, against so threatening a confederacy. The result had been, a succession of conquests and the subjugation of a number of foreign races, transforming the nation, from political insignificance, to a great ruling power. By the conquest of Edom they had come into immediate contact with the Egyptian empire. Through the defeat of the Syrians they had touched the Euphrates, and controlled the caravan roads from the East, to Phœnicia and Egypt. The old isolation from everything foreign was henceforth impossible; refusal to come in contact with the heathen must necessarily cease, if the conquests made were to be retained. Their retention, moreover, involved, or was thought to involve, a vital change in the military system of Israel. Horses and chariots were deemed indispensable, though the old infantry were still the trust of the people at large. The ancient simplicity could not withstand the temptations and opportunities of national wealth and foreign example, and art and literature naturally followed the general elevation.

The influences of the higher civilization around were, unfortunately, in absolute opposition to the spirit of the religion of Moses. Art, culture, and morals, in the heathen communities, rested, ultimately, on a worship of the powers

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of nature associated with the grossest immorality. Hence a struggle arose from the first, between the conservative element in Israel and the party of progress, and it continued through the whole future history of the nation, till Jerusalem perished. On the one hand stood the throne, intent, in too many cases, on reproducing and rivalling the institutions and culture of the heathen; on the other, the prophets, earnestly denouncing such departure from the genius of the theocracy; a struggle, the result of which, in the end, was to ruin the nation, in its impossible attempt to reconcile contradictions. When heathenism had finally triumphed and carried off Israel to Babylon, an intense reaction set in amongst the exiles, against everything idolatrous. But the dead externalism then adopted bore in it the seeds of its own certain overthrow, and thus, involuntarily, prepared the way for breaking down the arbitrary partition, between the heathen world and the Jewish, by the spiritual liberty and all-embracing love taught by Christianity.

The country with which Israel, at Solomon's accession, came into closest contact, and by which it was most affected, was Phœnicia; though it stood in a dangerously close relation to Egypt also. The great routes of trade being now in the hands of the Jewish king, and the Phœnician towns forming the great depots for the commerce of Palestine and Western Asia, the two peoples were inevitably drawn closely together. The result of this was early seen. Even under David, court life, including the creation of a harem, was largely modelled upon Phœnician ideas. Phœnician workmen and artists built and decorated his palace, and Phœnician masons squared the stones for the future temple.[1] Till then the relations to the Canaanites had been widely different,

[1] 2 Sam. v. 11.

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Friendly intercourse, however, henceforth increased in every direction, and soon shewed its effects in all departments of public and private life. The religion, the politics, and the social and civil institutions and customs of Israel, were, henceforward, more or less coloured by those of its mighty neighbour. It is important, therefore, even at the risk of trifling repetition, to understand what were the characteristics of the nation which thus so largely influenced the future of the people of God.

Phœnicia, "the land of palms," was only a narrow strip of coast on the north-west of Palestine.[1] Thanks to the mighty Lebanon range behind it, the climate, hot on the sea-shore, was cool and delightful on the neighbouring heights, as all who have visited it can easily realize. The landscapes, from which glorious mountains are nowhere absent, were magnificent. The products of the soil varied with the altitude, sub-tropical productions and even the sugar-cane flourishing on the sea line, while the elevated slopes and valleys yielded those of temperate regions in great variety. Fertility was everywhere assured by the multiplicity of springs and streams, some worthy the name of rivers, which rush from the upper heights, or burst out of the rocks in amazing volume. Forests of incalculable commercial value, as well as surpassing beauty, clothed the hills, and furnished choice timber to the nations round; the cedars and fir trees being carried as far as Nineveh, Jerusalem, and Egypt. Berytus, now Beirût, with its wondrously beautiful neighbourhood, now famous, among other things, for its wide culture of the silkworm, and its production of silk, and Tripolis, now Trablus, in the north, were especially fruitful, and, in the south, the plains of Sidon and Acre had an equal reputation.

[1] See vol. ii. p. 529.

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Hindered by the sea from farther advance to the west, the first settlers in these parts early began to develop the local resources of their home. Their genius was not contented with the crops or pasture of their fields or slopes. Traders by instinct, they applied themselves to commerce, recognizing in the ocean along their coast, a highway to unknown regions, where they might hope to realize large gains. Providence, in bringing a race so energetic to such a spot, had provided all the natural aids required to fulfil its great mission, of spreading the culture and ideas of the East to the still barbarous West. Phœnicia alone, in Palestine, possessed timber for shipbuilding, in rich abundance; the cedars and cypresses of Lebanon offering inexhaustible supplies. The mountains also furnished iron, so indispensable for ships, and the neighbouring plains grew splendid hemp and flax, for ropes and sails. The want of bays, creeks, and anchorages on the west of Palestine, was not felt in the Phœnician territory, which abounded in them. In many parts, moreover, reefs extended parallel with the shore, creating natural havens, protected from the storms which often came with terrific violence from the south-west. Small islands formed by higher fragments of these rocks supplied, besides, places of refuge from the mainland, in time of war, and secured the rich contents of the commercial magazines from sudden raids.

In addition to these advantages, Phœnicia lay in the centre of the Old World, and was thus the natural entrepôt for commerce, between the East and West. The trade routes from all Asia converged on the Phœnician coast; the centres of commerce on the Euphrates and Tigris forwarding their goods, by way of Tyre, to the Nile, to Arabia, and the West; and, on the other hand, the productions of the vast

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regions bordering the Mediterranean, passing through the Canaanite capital to the Eastern [1] world.

Such a position developed numerous towns and cities on the Phœnician coast. At its southern end lay the ancient royal city of Sidon,[2] a name equivalent to that of Bethsaida; the famous Tyre,[3] and Aradus. Farther north were Byblus, Berytus, Sin, Smyrna, and Arca; while Hamath, partly a Phœnician city, flourished amidst a Hittite population,[4] on the Orontes. From the time of the capture of Sidon by the Philistines,[5] however, Tyre took the lead of all these cities, and hence touched most closely the history of Israel. Its position was eminently favourable to its ambition. It was "situate at the entry of the sea," says Ezekiel, "a merchant of the people for many coasts." "Its borders were in the midst of the seas," for it stood in part on an island, and "its builders had perfected its beauty." [6] "O Tyre," adds the prophet, "thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. I am a god, and a godlike throne have I in the midst of the seas." [6] He can compare her to nothing more fitly than to one of her own great merchantmen or Tarshish ships, then the wonder of the world. The island was the seat of the national sanctuary—the temple of Melkarth, and ultimately the great centre of commerce. On the mainland, the city was surrounded, except to the west, with a wide plain of unexampled fertility, watered by copious springs in all directions. Its fruits and vines were especially famous, and even the sugar cane flourished. This was old Tyre, renowned for its palace and its ancient temples. Its population may be judged from the circuit of the city being no less than

[1] Mövers, *Phönizier*, vol. i. pp. 83, 86. [2] See vol. i. pp. 306, 308.
[3] Tyre = Tzur = rock, from the island on which part of the city was built. See p. 2.
[4] Sayce, in *Trans. Bib. Arch.*, vol. vii. p. 270.
[5] Ezek. xxvii. 3, 4. [6] xxviii. 2. [7] xxvii. 5.

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eighteen miles. Gradually, however, the island, by its security, became a notable rival in its buildings and splendour. Islets near were joined to it to increase the space; the shallows round it filled up and incorporated with the city, and on the ground thus gained docks and warehouses stretched far and near, to meet the necessities of a gigantic commerce.

The ideas of Tyre based on ancient descriptions need comparison, however, with those of to-day to enable us to form a correct estimate of their value. The whole length of the site of insular Tyre is only about twelve hundred yards, from north to south, and about a third less from east to west. The docks of London enclose twice as large an area as the whole of the old Phœnician city, the two harbours of which, the northern and southern, occupied only about twelve acres each. There was, in fact, no room at Tyre or Sidon for even the shipping of Dundee or Aberdeen, while a single London dock would accommodate more vessels than the docks of both Tyre and Sidon. Thus what was so wonderful in antiquity is much less so now.

These enlargements of the island mark the brightest period in the history of Tyre, which was that also of the rise of monarchy in Israel.[1] But even then the Phœnicians looked back on a remote past. "Its antiquity," says Isaiah, "is of ancient days."[2] According to Herodotus, indeed, it was founded 2,700 years before Christ.[3] Sidon had held the foremost place among the cities of Phœnicia before the entry of Israel into Palestine; and their religion and culture had even then spread amongst the Canaanitish peoples. Numerous colonies had been established already, but they

[1] From the 10th to the 11th century, B.C. [2] Isa. xxiii. 7.

[3] This is, of course, only traditional. Mövers, however, hesitates to challenge it; so ancient was the city. *Phönizier*, vol. ii. p. 134.

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were now largely increased. Cyprus, Crete, the islands of the Ægean, Sicily, and Sardinia, were dotted with trade factories and settlements; and the coast of North Africa shewed a line of Phœnician towns.[1] Touching at these, huge merchantmen from Palestine sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar to Tarshish, the Peru and California of those days; Gades, "the stronghold," now Cadiz, at the mouth of the Guadalquiver,[2] being founded, as its great port. The shock of the Israelitish invasion, driving the Canaanite peoples to the coast, or forcing them to emigrate, had, apparently, led to this vast development of colonization.[3] Till the days of Samuel,[4] however, the cities of Phœnicia were still strong enough to defy the Hebrew invaders, and even to bring the northern tribes into more or less complete subjection. Meanwhile, about B.C. 1200, Sidon fell before the Philistines,[5] Tyre taking the lead, and growing, thenceforward, steadily greater, till, in the time of David and Solomon, its influence was supreme.[6] Under Hiram I., the contemporary of these princes, it rose to its highest glory and power. A great change in the political constitution of Tyre had happened under his father. Instead of a government by Sufetes—the counterpart of the Hebrew Shophetim or Judges—a monarchy had been established, which raised the city to supremacy. On this royal dignity Hiram entered at about the age of twenty. To beautify his capital was his great ambition. It was he who filled up the shallow edge of

[1] Utica was founded about B.C. 1100.

[2] Guadalquiver is the name given to the river by the Arabs while they were in Spain. They had no word for a river in our sense and called it "G'dol-keber," "the great wady," or water-course. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 16. In Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, however, it is derived from Wad-al-Kebir = the great river.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 462.

[4] In Sirach xlvi. 18, it is said that Samuel waged a successful war with Tyre.

[5] See p. 2.

[6] 1 Kings v. 18; xvi. 31.

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the sea to obtain additional space, and on this he built great temples and palaces, like those which his architects and workmen were afterwards to construct for Solomon in Jerusalem. The local idolatry, also, grew in splendour under his munificent patronage. Nor was he without his wars; for he conquered and annexed the island of Cyprus, perhaps for its copper.[1]

The victories of David, which hemmed in Phœnicia by the new Jewish territories, and gave their ruler control of the trade routes from the East and to Arabia, naturally led Hiram to cultivate friendly relations with him and Solomon, since their hostility would have been a serious commercial injury. He, therefore, shewed himself "ever a lover of David,"[2] and remained equally friendly with his son; though, in his bearing to David, personal regard for so famous a man doubtless mingled largely with mere state policy. Among the first to greet him after the conquest of Jerusalem,[3] he had cheerfully supplied both materials and skilled workmen to build him a palace, and afterwards forwarded vast contributions for the construction of the proposed temple.[4] It seems, in fact, as if all had been sent as a free gift, to gain David's favour, for there is no mention of anything paid in return.

Such an intimate relationship of Israel with a great heathen state could not fail to produce momentous results. From this time, indeed, Hebrew life, public and private, became gradually leavened with Phœnician influences. The vast wealth and far-reaching commercial activity of the

[1] Copper was called Cyprian brass. Our word copper is the Greek Kupros (Cyprus); Low Latin, cuprum; German, Kupfer.

[2] 1 Kings v. 1. [3] 2 Sam. v. 11.

[4] 1 Chron. xxii. 4. The metal mentioned in the preceding verses must have come from Phœnicia, in so far as it was not the spoil of war.

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Canaanite community made itself felt in all directions. The accumulation of riches from world-wide trade, and from the plunder of helpless foreign coasts, led to a surprising development of luxury in Phœnicia. All that could please the taste abounded in the mansions and palaces of Tyre. Her social magnates lived like princes, and knew no wish which they could not gratify. But along with the refinements of life, grosser indulgences held too much sway; the restless activity of the race alone preventing their growth to a dangerous degree.

Tarshish, which was destined to yield so much profit to the Tyrian merchants, and to lead to the wide spread of Carthaginian influence in Spain, which gave Hannibal in future ages his military base in attacking Rome, had been originally settled by an Aryan race, as it is only a form of the Sanscrit word Tarisha, the sea, or sea-coast; a name given it, according to the Rabbis, from very early times. Thus, before the Phœnicians settled in the region, another race had given it a name which these adopted, and which was afterwards applied to the whole district. It had been famous from the remotest antiquity for the abundance of silver and other metals yielded by its mines; and no less for its corn. Already in the time of Solomon, a thousand years before Christ, the huge vessels which sailed to it were known as Tarshish ships, as in later days we spoke of "Indiamen," and the name even came to be applied to any very large merchantmen, to whatever port they sailed.[1] From the busy wharves of Tarshish, huge cargoes were borne away, of iron,

[1] Thus the ships navigating the Red Sea, and trading to Ophir (South Arabia), are called "Tarshish ships." Isa. xxiii. 1, 14. 1 Kings ix. 28; x. 22; xx. 49. 2 Chron. ix. 21; xx. 36, 37. Luther calls these vessels "Sea-ships," using the name Tarshish in its Sanscrit sense of "the sea," which is adopted also by the Vulgate, the Septuagint, and the Syriac.

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tin, silver, lead, and other commodities, including, at least in later times, consignments of delicate lampreys, and heavy freights of wheat; for which, doubtless, Tarshish received a proportionate importation of the productions of the East. The world was as busy then as now; the fisher with his net, the miner with his pick, the sailor with his vessel, the smith with his hammer, the jeweller with his art, and countless others, each in his way.

The discovery of Tarshish, in Spain, had greatly affected the condition of the Phœnicians.[1] All accounts agree as to the vast wealth they drew from it. In exchange for oil and worthless trifles, it is related, the first adventurers received more silver than their ship could carry, so that they made new ship gear of the precious metals, even to the anchors, leaving the old behind. The Grecian poets spoke of the river Tartessus as rising in a mountain of silver. Strabo says that Tarshish was surpassed by no region, in its rich abundance of all blessings of the earth and sea. Neither gold nor silver, copper nor iron, were found elsewhere so pure or so plentiful. The gold was obtained both from mines and from washing the sand of the streams and rivers, and huge nuggets were not uncommon. Rock salt abounded. Cattle, and sheep producing the finest wool, wandered over the hill pastures in great herds and flocks. Grain and wine were local staples. The shores were rich in a large variety of the sea snails which produced the famous Tyrian purple, and the fisheries of all kinds were exhaustless. Wax, honey, pitch, and cinnabar[2] were also to be had in large quantities. Attracted by a land so rich, Phœnician settlements soon covered the south and west coasts of Spain, and among these,

[1] Mövers' *Die Phönizier*, vol. ii. pp. 1, ff.; *Die Colonien der Phönizier;* the article "Phönizier," in Ersch und Gruber; and Dunker's *Geschichte*, vol. i. pp. 121, f.

[2] Native red sulphuret of mercury, known as vermilion.

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even so late as the time of Strabo,[1] Cadiz, though founded on a small and poor island, was second to no other city in wealth, and to Rome alone in population. Sailing to the north, the Phœnicians added to the Spanish trade that of the tin of Cornwall and the Scilly Islands. From the coasts of the Baltic they obtained amber, of which, as early as the tenth century before Christ, they made costly necklaces and personal ornaments. From the mines of the island of Thasos, on the south of Thrace, they procured gold to the value of about a million pounds sterling a year.[2]

At an incredibly early date we find them, says Mommsen,[3] in Cyprus and Egypt, in Greece and Sicily, in Africa and Spain, and, indeed, on the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. Their commerce reached from Sierra Leone and Cornwall, in the west, to the Malabar coast on the east. Through their hands went the gold and pearls of the Orient, the purple of Tyre, the slaves, the ivory, the lion and leopard skins of inner Africa, the incense of Arabia, the linen of Egypt, the pottery of Greece, and its noble wine, the copper of Cyprus, the silver of Spain, the tin of England, and the iron of Elba. To every nation the Phœnician mariners carried what it needed and was likely to buy, and having cleared their ventures, turned back with ever longing heart to the narrow home which they loved beyond all spots on earth.

Such a vast commerce necessarily developed a great activity in the arts and manufactures of Phœnicia. Its people stood in the same relations to the Thracian, Greek, Sicilian, Libyan, and Spanish populations, as the Portuguese and Spaniards to the natives of the East and West Indies, 2,500 years later. The richest treasures which the heroes of the

[1] Born A.D. 19.

[2] From 200 to 300 talents yearly. A talent = about £3,900.

[3] Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*, i. 493.

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Iliad and Odyssey boasted—the drinking vessels of bronze and silver, "rich in invention," and the many-coloured robes, which "shone like bright stars"—were productions of Sidon. But the Phœnicians traded not only in their own manufactures or art creations; their towns were the ports of Babylon and Nineveh. The commerce of the whole ancient world, from the Persian Gulf to the Pillars of Hercules, was gathered into the warehouses of Tyre. The overland trade with the east and south-east was as great as that by sea. A succession of Phœnician colonies occupied points on the chief caravan routes. Of these, one ran by Baalbek, Emesa, and Hamath, to Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, and thence by Haran and Nisibis to the Tigris, Armenia, and Assyria, as well as down the river to Babylon. Another stretched eastward by Tadmor, or Palmyra, and Circesium—Carchemish—to the same regions, passing over the plain of Esdraelon, and thence along the Philistine coast to Gaza, on the way to Egypt. Laish, afterwards Dan, on the north of Palestine, at the crossing of the roads from Damascus and Syria, was a Phœnician colony. We find traces of their factories, indeed, even on the Persian Gulf, where they intercepted the commerce of India, Africa, and Southern Arabia. The Delta in Egypt, as we have seen, was called the Greater Phœnicia from the number of Phœnicians long settled in it.[1] A constant stream of traffic passing to and fro made the name of Tyre a household word in every country.

Fortunately we have a picture of this restless and wonderful activity from no less trustworthy a source than the prophet Ezekiel.[2]

In his comparison of Tyre to one of her own magnificent ships, he describes her planks as of cypress wood from Senir,

[1] See p. 2[illegible].

[2] Ezek. xxvii. 5-36.

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the Amorite and Assyrian name for Hermon, the mighty crest of Lebanon; her masts as formed from cedars of Lebanon; her oars as of the oak of Bashan; her deck,[1] inlaid with ivory, as of planks of larch from the isles of Chittim, that is, the Mediterranean, but especially Cyprus. Common linen would not do for her sails; they were of the finest, richly embroidered, from Egypt. The awning over her deck was dyed with the costliest blue and purple brought from the isles of Elishah, a name for Greece, the best sea snails for the purple dye coming from the coasts of Laconia.[2] Men of Sidon and Arvad sat in the banks of the rowers; ship carpenters from Gebal sailed with her to stop a leak, if needed; and Tyre furnished the pilots.[3]

Leaving his metaphor,[4] the prophet proceeds to describe the characteristics of the great city in plainer language. All the ships of the sea and their crews came to her docks, he tells us, to receive and deliver cargoes. Her armies were composed of mercenaries from the opposite ends of the earth; from Paras—perhaps Persia—and from Lud and Phut, remote parts of Africa. Men of Arvad and other brave warriors lined her walls, and hung their shields on her towers. She traded with Tarshish for silver, iron, tin, lead, and much else. Javan,[5] that is, Ionia; Tubal, and Meshech[6]

[1] Smend's *Ezechiel*, p. 196. See also Schroeder's *Hezechiel*, p. 249.

[2] Smend, p. 197.

[3] These places were all Phœnician cities.

[4] Ezek. xxvii., second part of ver. 9.

[5] *Javan*—the Greek islands and the coast settlements of Asia Minor. Sennacherib defeated the "Ionians" in a sea fight off Cilicia. (Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, 81.) Javan is the Greek word "Ionia," but in the Old Testament it is generally applied to the island of Cyprus, which is called the island of Yavnan, or the Ionians, on the Assyrian monuments. A more specific name for it in Hebrew is Kittim, derived from the name of the Phœnician colony of Kition, now represented by Larnaka. Cyprus was part of the empire of Sargon of Accad, B.C. 3800.

[6] *Tubal* and *Meshech* appear not only as barbarian warriors, riding on steppe horses; but, in some branches of their stock, at least, as a trading people, who brought vessels of iron and copper to Tyre for sale. Tubal, in fact, is simply the

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—tribes of Scythia—gave slaves and vessels of brass for her wares; Togarmah, in Armenia, supplied her with horses, horsemen, and mules. Syria, in its widest sense, sold to her merchants purple cloths, robes of different colours, fine linen, pearls from the Indian Ocean, and precious stones from the far East. Judah and the land of Israel gave them wheat, millet, date syrup, oil, and mastix, or terebinth balm. From Damascus came the wine of Helbon—the only wine drunk by Persian kings—and the white wool of the vast flocks of Eastern Palestine. Southern Arabia and the Syro-Arabian desert[1] sent bright iron, cassia, and calamus for anointing-oil and incense. Trappings and fine cloths for horses and chariots came from distant parts of Arabia. Thence also were slowly driven flocks of lambs, sheep, and goats to the Tyrian markets. Sheba and Raamah, in the same vast peninsula, sent their perfumes, and precious stones, and gold; and places now unknown, throughout Mesopotamia and Babylon, sent caravans laden with bales of their costly dyed robes, purple embroidered mantles, carpets, tapestries, and tent cloths; whatever, in short, made the looms of Western Asia famous.

The political and social condition of Phœnicia was peculiar. The different cities had kings, who boasted of great harems, and surrounded themselves with female singers and

Persian word for brass or copper, and Meshech is thought by some to be the neighbouring people, the Chalybes, who were especially known in antiquity for their copper mining. It seems to support this explanation, that Herodotus mentions the Tibarenes and the Moschi together, as nations living south-east of the Black Sea, and says that they worked copper mines, and were included in the nineteenth satrapy of the kingdom of Darius. The Assyrian inscriptions, moreover, speak of a people and land of Muski, in North Assyria, which there is hardly room to doubt is the Meshech of Scripture.

[1] Ezek. xxvii. 19. For Dan read Waddan, a town between Meccah and Medina. Read also Javan of Uzal, that is, Arabia: perhaps referring to travelling Greek merchants. Smend, p. 206.

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dancers. Their courts displayed a splendour from which Solomon copied his own kingly state. But, as in Israel, a council of elders, still associated with the throne, preserved the memory of its original limitations. The king was chosen, at least in theory, by this body, and the consent of the citizens. Despotism could never, therefore, reign unchecked, and hence Phœnicia ranked next to Israel in the forms of popular liberty. The citizens, divided into trade guilds, took part in the government. The king, senate, and people, in certain cases acted together; the decision, in weighty cases, resting practically with the last. Usually, however, both king and people were oppressed by the nobles, who engrossed the public offices and thus held the chief power. The peasantry in the Phœnician territory, whether foreign or native, were especially tyrannized over. The land was the property either of the king, the priesthood, or the nobles, and the cultivators were virtually serfs. So great privileges on the one hand, and inferiority on the other, led to habitual restlessness in the cities, the populations of which, intelligent by their trade pursuits, would not quietly submit to despotic treatment. Such a constitution could not compare with that of Israel, in which only the remnant of the Canaanites were enslaved; all Hebrews enjoying equal rights before the law, as free owners of the land and as citizens. But unfortunately these ancient liberties were hereafter to be seriously invaded, and the people brought more nearly to the level of the populations around, with their strong contrast of rich and poor, lordly and humble, noble and commoner.

In Phœnicia, as in Israel, religion was under the supreme charge of a high priest, who was practically under the reigning monarch, though at times both high priest and king.

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His influence had originally been great, for he was the head of the aristocracy, controlled the wealth of the priesthood, and presided in all religious affairs. But being generally a brother of the king, political rivalry with the throne was thus avoided, and the king kept the real power in his own hands, dictating his pleasure in religion as well as in politics.

The Phœnician religion had originally been based on the belief in one supreme God, known to the whole Semitic race, as El,[1] "the Strong One." But this primitive belief soon passed into mere nature worship—the deification of the powers and laws which they saw acting around and over them, and adoration of the objects in which these powers and laws seemed present, deriving their activity and effects through this. The kindling life of spring as seen in the renovated verdure of the year, the quickening of nature at large in all its forms, then, or at any time, the flow of streams from the hills, the glow of summer, the darkness of winter, were all ascribed to their divinities, of whom the sun, the moon, and the stars were the radiant symbols and visible witnesses. Thus had the mystery of the universe been interpreted by the Eastern fancy of these artless children of the early world. The Magian worship in Persia, represented still by that of the Parsees, retained its simplicity to later ages, permitting no symbol of the Godhead but the sacred fire, and worshipping the sun or stars only in the open air or on the roofs of their dwellings. Nor is it easy to blame the childhood of the world for thinking the orbs of an Eastern sky divine. How great the temptation to do so was, is owned by Job himself, true as he was to Jehovah

"Had I looked at the sun when it shone," says he;
"At the moon walking in brightness;

[1] See vol. I. p. 265.

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Had my heart been so carried away in its thoughts
That I had sent a kiss with my hand to them—
It would have been a punishable offence,
For I should have denied the God that is above." [1]

But there was nothing to palliate the grossness of the Phœnician nature worship as it shews itself when history opens.

The supreme god among the Phœnicians was the sun-god Baal. His worship had been long established in Canaan before the Israelites entered it, and, indeed, as we have seen, they had been familiar with it among the Phœnicians and Asiatic tribes in the Egyptian Delta.[2] The name was equivalent to "lord" and "ruler," for Baal governed the material universe, but it seems especially to have referred to his relation to Ashtoreth, his feminine counterpart, as her husband. He was also the "lord" of men, having a right to their homage as his subjects, or, in the Eastern mode of expression, his slaves.[3] But the idolatrous use of the title prevented its adoption by the Hebrews, except as an indication of human dignity; its equivalent Adon or Adonai being always substituted by them in speaking of God.[4] Baal was the great father from whom came the wool and flax; the bread and water; the oil, the wine, the corn, and all else which the earth yielded for the happiness and wants of man.[5] "High places"—on the summits of hills and mountains—were especially sacred to him, for the sun shone longest on them, and they rose as it were into the midst of his full splendour. So deeply, indeed, had this reverence for

[1] Job xxxi. 26-28.

[2] See vol. ii. p. 317.

[3] See 2 Kings x. 19, 21, 22, 23. The same word is used of the worshippers of Baal and of those of Jehovah, servants = slaves. "Worshippers" is the same Hebrew word as "servants."

[4] Yet in private usage "Baal" seems at times to have been applied to Jehovah. Thus: "At that day, saith Jehovah, thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband); and shall call me no more Baali (my Lord)." Hos. ii. 16.

[5] Hos. ii. 5, 8.

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heights entered into the religion of the age that they became equally sacred to the Hebrews, and were especially selected by them as holy till the Captivity. Alike in Phœnician and Hebrew religionism this reverence for heights was a relic of the Euphrates from which they, alike, had last wandered to the west. The races that peopled Babylonia brought with them, from the mountains of various regions, a reverence for hills, but as these did not exist on the plain of Chaldæa, this worship was transferred to the mounds which rose over the wreck of ancient temples, or to the towers which rose from them, for the rites of the priests. In the Babylonian version of the building of the Tower of Babel it is spoken of as "the illustrious mound." These tumuli were to the Babylonians the sacred altars of the gods, on whose summits worship could most fittingly be paid to the deities of heaven. And, like the mountains, they were something more than altars: they were themselves divine, the visible habitations of the spirits of the air. It is hence possible that the Assyrian word *Sadu*—a mountain—is the source of the Hebrew name of God—El Shaddai. At all events, God is compared to a rock in the Old Testament,[1] and the worship of sacred stones was widely spread through the Semitic world.[2]

In every landscape in Palestine one sees on some rounded hill-top a small domed building, generally reputed to be the burial place of some unknown saint. But they are really the counterpart, still remaining, of the chapels with which high places, such as hills, were marked from the most ancient times.

Baal was the symbol of creative power, for the sun was the great generative force in nature. Originally worshipped without any image, and typified only by pointed stone pillars

[1] Deut. xxxii. 15. Ps. xviii. 2. [2] Sayce, *Hibbert Lecture*, 407.

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embodying an obscene symbol, he was ultimately represented in a human form, riding on a bull, with bunches of grapes and pomegranates[1] in his hands. The loftiest names were given him. He was the king of the universe, the light of the gods, their creator, and father. In different districts he was distinguished by such local names as Baal of Lebanon, or of Tyre, and he also bore various titles as the personification of particular powers of nature. Thus he was in different places Baal-zebub, the driver away of flies and other similar pests; Baal-gad, the source of good fortune; Baal-berith, the god of agreements or treaties. Or he was invoked by names designed simply to honour him, as Baal-shemesh, the sun-god; Baal-shemaim, "the lord of the heavens;" Baal-salah, the god of piercing rays; or Baal-zephon, the god who conquers darkness[2] and tames the fierce north wind, so dangerous to the Phœnician sailors.

Alongside this god stood his female counterpart—Ashera—the representative of the receptive and producing principle in nature. Her symbol was the rough trunk of a tree with some twigs left on it, and this was raised alongside the pointed stone pillars of Baal, though stone obelisks of small size, consecrated to her, were also raised before his altar. "They sacrificed upon the tops of the mountains (to Baal), and burned incense (to Ashera) upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and terebinths, because their shadow was good."[3]

But if Baal and Ashera were the symbols of the quickening and producing powers of nature, they were also representatives of its destructive forces, for the Phœnician gods

[1] The pomegranate was sacred to Baal as a fit emblem of fertility from the many seeds it contained.

[2] Zephon = North, which was thought to be covered with perpetual darkness, in contrast to the sunny south.

[3] Hos. iv. 13.

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and goddesses were, impartially, authors of both good and evil to mankind.

By the side of Baal stood Ashtoreth, the Greek Astarte, or Venus Aphrodite—another counterpart, visible, it was believed, as the planet Venus, and as the moon.[1] As the goddess of Love, she vied with Ashera in the gross sensuality of her worship. The island of Tyre was sacred to her, as the consort of Baal, and she was honoured with the titles of "the Name of Baal," and "the Face of Baal." Creatures sacred to her for their beauty, strength, or fecundity, were maintained at her sanctuaries, as in that at Paphos in Cyprus, where her temple grounds shewed sacred goats, great flocks of sacred doves, and ponds of sacred fish. Some trees and fruits in the same way were consecrated to her for their fruitfulness, size, unfailing verdure, or early budding; among others the terebinth, the pine, the cypress, the pomegranate, and the almond-tree, which blossoms as early as January in some parts of Palestine.[2] Such trees were, indeed, held as her visible embodiment, and were worshipped as such. In Philistia, however, she seems to have been also a goddess of war, for Saul's weapons were hung up in her temple there. In Jeremiah she is the "queen of heaven," worshipped by incense, cakes and libations.

The god known as Moloch in Palestine was worshipped in Tyre, as Melkarth, "the king of the city," and hence its patron deity and protector, as Ashtoreth was that of Sidon. King Hiram had introduced his special worship into the capital, or at least greatly developed it.[3] His temple was famous from the glittering gold which covered it, in imita-

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 4. Jer. vii. 18; xliv. 17.

[2] Winer, *Mandelbaum*. See Isa. lvii. 5. Jer. ii. 20; iii. 6, 13; xvii. 2. Ezek. xx. 28.

[3] Movers, vol. ii. 386.

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tion of the brightness of the sun. His image in it wore a golden beard, and two famous fire-pillars—one of pure gold, the other of smaragdis stone, which shone by night—stood before it. Like Baal, he dispensed both good and evil to mankind, but at least outside Tyre was more to be dreaded than adored, for he was the symbol of the sun in his fierce summer heat, scorching the pastures, drying up the streams, smiting the land with unfruitfulness and pestilence, and begetting poisonous winds; the emblem, in fact, of the destroying principle in nature, before which its bloom withered and life perished, and hence, very fittingly, he was also the god of war. But, if he was the consuming and destroying fire, he was also the fire that purifies from defilement and raises above decay. But the cold of winter, which as fatally arrested vegetation, was also his embodiment. When the cloudless heat of summer parched the seed and burnt up the springing corn, when plagues desolated the cities, when the calamities of war smote the land, it was his doing. The ox in his fierce, untamed strength was sacred to him, and so was the wild boar, which the glow of summer excited to madness. He was hence represented in the form of an ox, or as a human figure with a bull's head. His worship was a hideous distortion of the primitive worship of fire. Among the Moabites he became Chemosh, the destroyer,[1] or Ariel, the fire-god; among the Ammonites, Malcom or Milcom,[2] whose worship Solomon sanctioned at Jerusalem,[3] where at a later day, through Assyrian influence, it was again introduced and only too firmly established.[4] His star was the planet Mars, from its appearing at different times, fiery, clear, or blood-red.

[1] Num. xxi. 29. Jer. xlviii. 46. [2] Jer. xlix. 1. [3] 1 Kings xi. 7. 2 Kings xxiii. 13.
[4] 2 Kings xvi. 3; xxi. 3. Jer. ii. 23; vii. 9, 18; xix. 5; xxxii. 35.

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Thus, the friendly and hostile, the producing and destroying powers of earth and heaven, were opposed to each other in this strange religion. But as the Egyptians in the myth of Osiris conceived the beneficent god in conflict with the malignant, and saw in the process of vegetation and the course of the seasons his final conquest of evil, the Phœnicians united the opposing fancies of the kindly and hostile powers—Baal and Moloch—in the person of another god. When the sun retreated to the depth of the heavens in winter, it became the Baal of Tyre, who as a conqueror led it back from the regions of summer heat and winter cold, to begin anew the beneficent labours of spring. When the sun appeared farthest off, Baal of Tyre was asleep or dead, till in the early spring, at the end of February or the opening of March, his awaking or resurrection was once more celebrated. When at its highest in the fierce summer, the god was consuming himself, that he might return, in new and vigorous youth, as the sun of harvest, to shed a milder light once more on the earth.[1]

The Israelites were familiar with this mythical Sun-hero, no less than with the other forms of Baal worship. "Call louder," said Elijah to the heathen priests at Carmel, "for he is a god."[2] "Perhaps he is meditating" (he was the god of wisdom), "or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he sleeps, and must be waked." He might possibly be away on his fabled journey to Libya, or Typhon might have killed him!

The myth of Adonis, who, it may be, was the same as Tammuz or Hadadrimmon[3]—another form of the Phœnician

[1] Duncker, vol. i. p. 167. [2] 1 Kings xviii. 27.

[3] Ezek. viii. 14. Zech. xii. 11. Von Baudissin thinks that Hadar-Rammon should be read for Hadadrimmon, and that this name was never given to Adonis. It means, apparently, "glorious is the exalted one." The letters "d" and "r" (ר ד)

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worship—was equally spread through Israel. Adonis[1] is nature in its highest glory and fruitfulness, to perish ere long by the burning heat of summer and the storms of autumn. Hence he was represented as a splendid youth who was killed in his early beauty by a wild boar. A widely spread public lamentation was held yearly in his honour when spring was passing into summer;[2] the idea being to symbolize and mourn over the evanescence of all things earthly, and especially of human life. The festival began by a search, on the part of the women, for the lost Adonis. Its date was fixed in the north of Phœnicia by the Adonis River growing red, through the earth brought down by the rains from the mountains. He had been killed, as they fancied, while hunting the wild boar on the hills, and it was his blood that reddened the stream. A wooden image of him, which had been hidden in an earthenware vessel, filled with mould and planted with wheat, barley, lettuce, and fennel—and known as the garden of Adonis—was made the object of a pretended search; the withering of the plants being regarded, in another legend, as symbolizing his having been slain by the fire-god Mars. When found, a seven days' wake began,[3] with all the demonstrativeness usual in the East, and the license habitual to Syrian idolatry. The image was washed,

are constantly confounded in Hebrew MSS. See Bandissin, *Studien zur Semit. Religionsgeschichte*, Heft 1. 1876. But Mövers, Merx, and Wellhausen think the Hadadrimmon, Tammuz, and Adonis legends and worship were interconnected.

[1] Döllinger, vol. i. p. 158, makes Adonis = the yellow reaped corn.

[2] The feast of Adonis is thought by Mövers to have been celebrated in the late autumn. The Rev. W. A. Wright, in article "Tammuz," in the *Dict. of the Bible*, thinks it was held about July, at the time of the summer solstice.

[3] *Amm. Marc.*, xx. 1. The resurrection of Hercules was celebrated on the 25th December, about the time of the winter solstice, when the sun seems to die, but presently wakes, young again from his death sleep. This beautiful fancy led, no doubt, to the selection of the 25th December, as the day on which to celebrate the appearance of Christ, the better Sun, rising to bring back light to the world after its long spiritual darkness.

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anointed, put in a coffin, and laid on a bier, which the priests bore round; their robes torn and their heads and beards shaven. The people sat on the ground with rent clothes; the women cut off their hair,[1] mangled their breasts with knives, and pierced the air with wild howls, intermingled with loud cries of "Oi lanu"—Woe is me![2] A shrill discord of piercing fifes[3] added to the excitement, and the whole ended by sacrifices for the dead and the burial of the wooden figure. But a violent contrast to this lamentation was shewn when the advancing green of a new spring proclaimed the god awaked once more from his mortal sleep. His resurrection was then celebrated with corresponding jubilation.[4]

Such a nature worship, if it had remained true to what we may conceive to have been its original simplicity, might have been a comparatively innocent system. But, unfortunately, no moral or spiritual elevation was associated with it, and it had sunk to be an embodiment, under religious forms, of all that is most hateful and gross.

[1] Hence forbidden to the Hebrew women. Lev. xix. 27, 28; xxi. 5. Deut. xiv. 1. Jer. xvi. 7.

[2] Literally, "Alas, to us!" [3] Matt. ix. 23.

[4] "In Palestine, from the earliest time, a dualism of the godhead prevailed. For though the contrast of the wilderness and rank fertility is not so marked as in Egypt, yet the same hill often shews both. Mother Earth, which from the opening of March celebrates with bright splendour the re-awakening of her Adonis and of the virgin soil, is very different from the scene which, from the end of May, shuts up all life in itself and lets no grass blade grow on the mountains. The spring heaven, through which the mild air and warm sunshine breathe, after the cold of winter, is very different from the summer sky, which, pitilessly, month after month, sends down consuming heat. Then the springs dry up, the villagers anxiously guard the rain-water stored in their cisterns; the wanderer can cross the Jordan in many places dry-shod, and the hind pants in vain by the dried-up Kishon for running brooks." Furrer, *Geographie*, p. 7.

Of the Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and Bethshean, in summer, when Moloch was supposed to reign, we are told: "I am within the mark when I say that there are many hundreds of places where we might have walked across, without wetting our feet, on the large rocks and stones." Molyneux, *Journ. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, vol. xviii. p. 115.

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In its most prominent aspect it had indeed become a mere formal sanction of impurity. The Mylitta worship of Babylon[1] was vile enough, but the hotter blood of the Phœnicians, and the sensuality of its great trading cities, carried similar abominations to excess. The central idea of the worship of Ashera was lewdness. At the feasts of the goddess, and at that of the resurrection of Adonis, the high places, the sacred groves, the very roads, became scenes of universal prostitution; its gains being made over to the temple treasuries.[2] Every temple had, besides, at all times, great bands of women and mutilated men consecrated to impurity.[3] The Syrian Baal-Hercules and the goddess Ashtoreth were in some cases a hermaphrodite idol, and, as such, were worshipped with an exchange of dress by the sexes; the men appearing as women, the women wearing men's clothes and weapons.[4]

Devotees of all the gods were circumcised,[5] and were known by shaving off their hair so that only a round crown was left, and by removing their whiskers and beard, in violent contrast to the custom of Orientals generally.[6]

But such mild peculiarities could not satisfy the impulses roused by a worship so contrary in its grossness to the better instincts of our nature. If therefore it was, on one hand, marked by the foulest sensuality, the revulsion from such

[1] Herodotus, i. 199.

[2] Hence the prohibition in Deut. xxiii. 18.

[3] It is striking to notice that the words Kadesh (masc.) and Kadeshah (fem.), by which these unhappy beings were known, mean "holy" or "consecrated." The widow Tamar is called a Kadeshah, from the dress she assumed, so that the class she represented was well known in the days of Jacob. See Gen. xxxviii. 14. 1 Kings xiv. 24. 2 Kings x. 22. Jer. iii. 2. Hos. iv. 13, 14.

[4] Hence the prohibition in Deut. xxii. 5.

[5] Eisenlohr, vol. ii. p. 35.

[6] Hence the Mosaic prohibition of making baldness on the head or shaving off the corners of the beard, in Lev. xix. 27; xxi. 5. See Dillmann, *Lev.*, p. 557.

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excesses drove men into an opposite extreme of violence against themselves, as if in revenge for their passions having for the time enslaved them. Hence, in despair to overcome the tendency towards their indulgence, wild fanaticism broke out into the most revolting self-inflictions and mutilations. Men sought to atone for their former impurities by taking revenge on their own bodies, or by offering human sacrifices to appease the gods. The priests of Baal Melkarth, it will be remembered, slashed themselves with swords and daggers at the sacrifice on Carmel, to induce their god to hear them, and also, no doubt, as a milder evil than giving up their lives on his altars.[1] Self-mutilation was the highest and most acceptable offering to Ashtoreth.[2] "On the days when the festival of the Syrian goddess is held," says an ancient author, "a great crowd of priests[3] and many Galli[4] and

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 28.

[2] She was the Istar of Assyria, and the planet Venus was sacred to her, as well as the moon. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1874, p. 337.

[3] On one occasion he saw 300 priests employed at one sacrifice.

[4] Self-mutilated men. These Galli wandered through the country. The following is a description of a band of them. "A trumpeter went before them who proclaimed their arrival in the villages, the farmyards, or the streets of towns, by flourishes on his instrument—a twisted horn. The begging Galli followed in fantastic array, after a leader; an ass in their midst, carrying their begging bag * and a veiled image of the goddess. They were dressed in women's clothes of different colours; their faces and eyes painted like those of women, and their head wound round with a linen or silk turban. Their arms were bare to the shoulders, and they danced along the streets to the sound of wild music, holding huge swords and bills, with whips for scourging themselves, in their hands, and making a hideous noise with rattles, fifes, cymbals or kettle-drums. When they came to a farmyard they began their ravings. A wild howl opened the scene. They then flew wildly one past the other; their heads sunk low towards the earth, as they turned in circles; their loose hair dragging through the dust. Presently they began to bite their arms, and next to hack themselves with the two-edged swords they carried." It was such a dance that took place before Elijah at Carmel, and as was joined in by the Emperor Heliogabalus, when, as priest of the Syro-Canaanite Sun-god, he leaped round the altar to the loud music of many instruments.† Then began a new scene. "One of them, the leader in this frenzy, commenced to prophesy,‡ with sighs and groans, lamenting aloud his past

* They lived by begging, like the mendicant friars.

† The dances of the dervishes in Egypt very much resemble what is told of the dances round the altar of Baal.

‡ 1 Kings xviii. 29.

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Kadeshim [1] take part in the rites, cutting their arms and lashing their backs, as they circle the altar in wild religious dances, amidst the din of flutes, cymbals, and songs to the god. Carried away by the wild excitement, not a few of the spectators lose all self-control, and, breaking into frenzy, mutilate themselves with a sword laid ready for the purpose."[2] What followed is unfit to be told. But so deeply did the revolting heathenism of Phœnicia taint Israel in after years that Josiah found numbers of such wretched men established in the precincts of the Temple at Jerusalem, along with a body of women who openly wove tents for the impurities of the worship of Ashera.[3]

But still more terrible were the human sacrifices which marked this idolatry. Children were thrown by their mothers from the top of the temple walls during the feast of Ashtoreth, to be afterwards burnt on the altar. It was in the worship of Moloch, however, that this fearful perversion of human instincts was most terribly seen. The Rabbis describe his image [4] as a human figure with a bull's head and outstretched arms, and this is confirmed by Diodorus.[5] The huge figure, which was of metal, was made glowing hot by a fire kindled within it, and the children, laid in its arms, rolled off into the fiery lap below. The parents stilled the cries of the intended victims by fondling and kissing them—

sins, which he would now avenge by the chastisement of his flesh. He then took the knotted whip and lashed his back, cutting himself also with his sword till the blood ran down. A collection wound up the whole. Some threw copper money to them, or even, in some cases, silver. Others brought wine, milk, or cheese, which was greedily accepted, and stuffed into the sack on the ass, beside the goddess. . . ." In the evening, when they reached a caravanserai, they made up for the bloody chastisements of the day by a debauch, and, if the opportunity offered, gave themselves up to every abomination. *De Syria Dea*, ascribed to Lucian, § 43 ff.

[1] Kadeshim is the masculine plural of Kadesh, a man consecrated (to impurity) See note, p. 398.

[2] *De Syria Dea*, § 15, 22, 27, 49–51.

[3] 2 Kings xxiii. 7.

[4] Jarchi, on Jer. vii. 31.

[5] Diod., xx. 11.

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for their weeping would have been unpropitious—and their shrieks afterwards were drowned in the din of flutes and kettle drums.[1] Mothers, says Plutarch, stood by, restraining all signs of grief, which would have lost them the honour of their sacrifice, without saving the children.[2]

These hideous scenes were renewed each year on fixed days as an atonement for all the sins committed in the past

MOLOCH.

twelve months. They also took place before great enterprises, or after great misfortunes. The more bitter the sorrow for the loss of an only son, the more pleasing the sacrifice to the god, and the greater its benefit. The numbers burned were sometimes very large. The Carthaginians,

[1] Von Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, etc., vol. ii. p. 427.
[2] Plut., *De Superst.*, 13.

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we are told, having lost a battle, it was ascribed to the anger of Moloch (Saturn), to whom boys from the noblest families had formerly been offered, instead of boys bought and fed up for the purpose, as had come to be the rule. An enquiry having been made, it was discovered that a number of parents had hidden away their sons, and therefore two hundred boys from the first families were offered at once together; three hundred others voluntarily giving themselves up afterwards, as free-will offerings for the good of their fatherland,[1] for every first-born male was consecrated to him as a human sacrifice,[2] or to enter his priesthood, and was, hence, rightly his!

It seems hard to imagine how such a religion could ever have been developed, or how it could have been adopted, and zealously cherished by whole populations. But the masses do not, and, indeed, cannot question and criticise where their fears and their ignorance alike arrest the judgment, and excite the imagination. The very splendour of its temples, and the pomp of its ritual, with the apparent corroboration of its doctrines by the phenomena of nature, combined to overawe scepticism, and intensify faith, except in the few minds born, like the writer of the essay on the Syrian goddess, to examine evidence even in things claiming Divine sanction. The grand sanctuaries of Phœnicia, built after Egyptian models,[3] were filled with countless priests in Egyptian priestly robes of byssus, and wearing an upright

[1] Diod., xx. 14.

[2] The claim of God to have the first-born child given to Him, to be redeemed only by a stipulated form, shewed in effect that what the heathen held to be due to Moloch, was in reality due to Jehovah (Exod. xiii. 12. Lev. iv. 5; xviii. 21; xx. 2). These texts imply that, already, in Egypt, Israel had become familiar with human sacrifice—burning their first-born to the Asiatic Moloch. For this, therefore, dedication of these to Jehovah was substituted. See Lengerke, p. 295. Also vol. ii. pp. 22, 312,

[3] Lucian, *De Syria Dea*, §§ 2, 3.

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tiara. Vast bodies of pilgrims, from far and near, from Asia and Africa, gathered to the festivals, which were celebrated with the greatest splendour. So numerous, indeed, was the priesthood that, as will be remembered, the Temple of Baal, in Samaria, had a staff of four hundred and fifty, while that of Ashera had four hundred.

It was with a religion so revolting,[1] alike in its impurity and cruelty, that the pure worship of Jehovah had to contend, nor can its value to mankind be better realized than by the contrast they offered. The struggle between the two was one of life and death, for they could not exist together. Nor could any spectacle be of loftier interest for the history of our race than th t which this sustained battle of light and darkness exhibited during the centuries after Solomon. Through these ages, the true religion continued

[1] The Assyrian tablets throw interesting light on the worship of Baal and the other gods and goddesses common to the Euphrates and Phœnicia. A sacred calendar fixed the time of the various sacrifices and rites. On the feast of Anu and Bel—at the appearance of the new moon on the first night of the month Elul, the king offered a gazelle without blemish to the moon—"raising his hand at the high place of the god." Each day of the month was sacred to a particular god or goddess, or to a deity of each sex. On the 6th, in the night, before the east wind, the king made an offering to Rimmon. The 7th was a sabbath. "The prince" (or shepherd) "of many nations ate no flesh of birds or cooked fruits; did not change his clothes, or put on white robes, or offer sacrifices, or ride in his chariot, or make laws, or appoint garrisons, or use medicine 'for sickness of body.'" In the night he offered sacrifices to Merodach and Istar. On the 8th, he himself sacrificed a sheep to Nebo and Tasmit. Each night in fact had its own sacrifices. On the night of the 10th he sacrificed "in the presence of the Milky Way and the star called the Son of the Moon." On the night of the 11th, when the moon "lifts up a halo of pale light," there were sacrifices to the sun and moon The 14th was a sabbath, like the 7th. The 16th was the feast of Merodach, on which the king did no business. The 19th was another sabbath, known as the white day, or holiday, of Gula. The 20th was "a day of light and gift-making to moon and sun—a festival." The 21st was the anniversary of the moon and sun, and a sabbath, with the same sacred prohibitions and duties as the others. The 22d was "the Jubilee of the Lady of the Temple." The 23d that of the sun and the air-god; and so on to the 28th, which was the rest-day of Nergal, and a sabbath. The 29th, the last day of Elul, was the "rest-day of the moon, the day when the spirits of heaven and the spirits of the earth are invoked." Elul corresponded roughly with our August. *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 157-167.

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to attack the foul abominations of heathenism with an invincible energy, a tenacious persistency, and an exhaustless enthusiasm, under the most unfavourable circumstances, till it not only gained the victory, but drove from its midst whatever could remind it of the idolatry it abhorred.

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CHAPTER XV.

SOLOMON.

[B.C. 1015-975.]

THE kingdom had reached its highest glory at the death of David. It was in perfect peace, and so thoroughly organized that no one for a moment disputed its continuance in his line. There was good reason, indeed, to anticipate that its power and greatness would continue to increase, as, in some ways, they did. The fullest development of material prosperity, and the greatest splendour of the theocracy, are associated with the reign of Solomon. But, underneath this glittering exterior, the elements of decay were already at work, and hence the forty years during which he wore the crown, form the central point of Jewish history—the period of its highest glory and also that of its commencing decline.

Solomon was about twenty years old at his father's death. Nathan the prophet had given him the name Jedidiah—"Beloved of Jehovah"—perhaps only from admiration of his infantile comeliness, as we give tender names to the innocence of babyhood. The public name, however, by which he was known to his own age and is remembered since, was Solomon, given him, apparently, in the fond belief that peace would flourish in his reign, instead of the sad wars and distractions through which David had passed. It was, however, a name not unknown in those times, for

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Sallimannu, or Solomon, "the god of peace," was a deity so much honoured in Assyria, that his name is incorporated in that of more than one famous king, as, for example, Shalmaneser. He seems to have been a fish-god, for he is spoken of as such in some of the inscriptions. In the time of Tiglath-pileser III. there was a Sallimannu, king of Moab, B.C. 732, so that the god was known in that country and his name given to a man, as in the case of the son of David and Bathsheba. In Assyria, moreover, long before David's time, one of the kings bore the name of Shalman-garradu—"the hero-god Solomon"—and a royal scribe of Nineveh, in the century after our Solomon, bore the strange name, "Solomon, the fish, is king of the gods."[1]

The early training of Solomon seems to have been left to the prophet Nathan, but the influence of his mother and father, and of the court, must have contributed largely to the formation of his character. Gifted with splendid abilities, and, at least in his earlier life, enthusiastically loyal to the ancient religion, his career was to shew the most striking contrast of qualities: a penetrating intellect which delighted in exploring every department of knowledge, but a sensuality more gross than Louis XV., with his Parc aux Cerfs and his Œil de Bœuf; a zeal for Jehovah which offered hecatombs at His altar and crowned Moriah with a unique temple in His honour, but a cynicism and indifferentism which raised other sanctuaries, in sight of it, to the foul worship of "Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians"—that is, of Sidon; and to Milcom, or Moloch, "the abomination of Moab," and to all the gods of his foreign wives, including Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;[2] a business shrewdness and energy which spread

[1] Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, 58.

[2] 1 Kings xi. 1, 5–8.

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Jewish commerce to distant lands, and filled the country with wealth, but a love of Oriental magnificence and a short-sighted and utterly heartless selfishness, which not only drained the wealth of the nation into his own coffers, but stooped to enslave his subjects, by the most bitter forced and unpaid labour, in his personal service; an enthusiasm of religious emotion, which rose at times to the sublime, but so little true religious feeling, that the stones of which he built the temple to Jehovah were quarried by wretched gangs of his subjects, wearing out their lives in low-roofed subterranean galleries, below Jerusalem, the hideous roughness of which, even now, sends a shudder through the chance explorer. Altogether, a character not to be had in much honour.

The question of the succession to the throne had at first been unsettled, and it seemed to have been generally assumed that Absalom would be heir.[1] But at that prince's death, if not earlier, a secret promise had been made by David to Bathsheba that her son should be the next king;[2] and he was actually anointed and seated on the throne, as we have seen, some time before David's death, when the plot of Adonijah threatened to set him aside. We may well imagine how earnestly David strove to secure for his son a life very different from his own; not of hardships and wars, dark crimes, and passionate repentance, but from first to last pure, blameless, and peaceful; realizing the ideal of glory and righteousness, after which he had fondly but vainly striven. Whether the seventy-second Psalm be his composition or that of Solomon,[3] it doubtless expresses the aspirations with which the dying father looked forward to

[1] 2 Sam. xiv. 13; xv. 1-6. [2] 1 Kings i. 13.

[3] The Septuagint, Vulgate, Aben Ezra, and others think it Solomon's composition, Kimchi, Claus, and Stier believe it was written by David for Solomon.

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the reign of his son, and as such throws a strangely interesting light on the spiritual life of Israel in those days, in its highest manifestations. It points, in its higher application, to the glorious reign of the Messiah, in whom the kingdom of God on earth, then represented by Israel, would attain its supreme and unfading glory. But it none the less expresses the ideal of earthly monarchy in the minds of the nobler Hebrews of the age of David and of his son; an ideal rare, indeed, in the conceptions either of subjects or monarchs of any age.

"Give the king Thy judgments,[1] O God:
Thy righteousness to the king's son;
That he may judge Thy people righteously;
Thy poor with justice;
That the mountains may bear peace to the people
And the hills, through righteousness.[2]

May he judge the poor of the people,
Help the children of the needy,
And break in pieces the oppressor!

They will fear Thee[3] as long as the sun endures,
As long as the moon, throughout all generations.
He will come down like rain upon the mown grass;
As showers that water the earth.
In his days shall the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace while the moon endureth.

And he will reign from sea to sea;[4]
From the river[5] to the ends of the earth.

The dwellers in the wilderness[6] shall bow before him;
His enemies shall lick the dust.

[1] Communicate to him by Thy Spirit Thy judgment respecting cases brought before him.

[2] That the blessings of peace may cover the land through the righteousness of king and subject.

[3] The ideal king, and still more the Messiah.

[4] From the one side of the ocean that surrounds the world to the other.

[5] The Euphrates, or perhaps the river of the ocean at the extremity of the world.

[6] The disaffected. Ewald.

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The kings of Tarshish and of the isles [1] shall bring presents,[2]
The kings of Sheba and Saba [3] shall pay tribute:
All kings shall fall down before him (in homage),
All the heathen shall serve him.

For he delivereth the needy when he cries,
The wretched also who have no helper:
He spares the weak and miserable:
He saves the souls of the poor.
He redeems their soul from oppression and violence,
And precious is their blood in his sight.

Under him the poor shall live, and give him of the gold of Sheba;
And men shall pray for him continually,
And bless him day by day.

There will be abundance of corn in the land, even on the tops of the mountains;
Its harvests will rustle [4] like the leaves of Lebanon;[5]
Men shall spring up in the cities
Thick as the grass of the earth.

His name shall endure for ever;[6]
It will last as long as the sun exists;
Men shall be blessed through him;
All nations shall gladly praise him.

Blessed be Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel;
He, who only does wondrous things;
And blessed be His glorious name for ever,
And let the whole earth be full of His glory.
Amen! and Amen!

The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."[7]

[1] Or sea-coasts. Tarshish in Spain; "the isles" or "coasts" of the Mediterranean.

[2] Such as inferiors always offer to a superior in the East; the mark of dependence and submission.

[3] Sheba in Arabia Felix, Saba on the Upper Nile.

[4] The Septuagint and Ewald translate this, "will top the hills."

[5] Lengerke. Moll.

[6] Most translators render this line, "Let His name," etc.

[7] The closing doxology and this last line are believed by Moll, Lengerke, and most

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An incident recorded of Solomon in the beginning of his reign is in keeping with such an ideal of kingly glory, as springing from devout wisdom and goodness, rather than from mere splendour or power. It was a period of transition, for, though David's new Tabernacle stood in Jerusalem, the people still "sacrificed in high places," "because there was as yet no house built to the name of Jehovah."[1] The law had commanded that sacrifices should be offered only at the door of the Tabernacle,[2] and the tribes had been required to destroy "the places on the high mountains" consecrated to idolatry,[3] but both injunctions had long been disregarded, from necessity or the force of ancient custom. Gideon and Manoah had both built altars on such spots; Samuel had repeatedly done so; and David had sacrificed on the threshing-floor of Ornan at the top of Mount Moriah.[4] The instinctive feeling that hill-tops are most suitable for worship, as nearer heaven, and raised above the din and disturbance of the world, yielded indeed only slowly before the heathen abuses to which they had been devoted. It was, therefore, in accordance with ancient practice that Solomon betook himself to the height, now known by the name of El Jib, the modern form of Gibeon, about six miles north of Jerusalem, marked by its limestone beds jutting out horizontally, in broad bands up to the top; the softer material between each layer having been, more or less, washed away. Hither, or to a low height immediately south, but so close to the ancient town of Gibeon as to be all

translators, to belong to another Psalm; but Kay thinks them, as I believe, correctly, in their proper place; regarding the Psalm as the composition of David. The Septuagint has, as the inscription of the Psalm, "of Solomon;" the Targum has, "by the hand of Solomon."

[1] 1 Kings iii. 2.
[2] Lev. xvii. 3-5.
[3] Deut. xii. 2.
[4] Jud. vi. 25, 26; xiii. 16-23. 1 Sam. vii. 10; xvi. 5. 1 Chron. xxi. 26.

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but a part of it,[1] Solomon determined to make a solemn progress. The ancient Tabernacle, a sacred memorial of Sinai and the wilderness, stood, as a venerated relic, on its height, behind the great brazen altar, made by Bezaleel, under the shadow of the Holy Mount, more than 500 years before. A staff of priests had been appointed by David, to offer the daily sacrifices, and fulfil the other requirements of the law.[2] Zadok, the high priest, was at their head, assisted by the famous musicians Heman and Jeduthun. True to his passion for magnificence, afterwards so fatally developed, the young king set forth from Jerusalem in high state, accompanied by the chiefs of thousands and of hundreds, the judges, governors, and heads of the fathers, who had been summoned from all Israel to attend him.[3] His object was noble, for he wished to inaugurate his whole reign by a public religious service. But the outward form of the worship offered shews, already, a decline, from the high spirituality of David, to an exaggerated ritualism, which in itself had no moral significance. Less than a thousand burnt offerings were held insufficient, and hence the sacrifices must have lasted for many days: the clang of trumpets and cymbals and the exulting strains of "musical instruments of God"[4] resounding ever and anon, far and near, as the king, and the vast multitude of the great of the land, knelt in worship. It was at this time, we are told, that the first of three recorded visions of God to Solomon took place. While asleep by night, a Divine appearance was vouchsafed to him in a dream, and he was invited to ask what should be given him. Remembering how the glory of his father had followed his "walking in truth, in righteous-

[1] Sir G. Grove thinks the "high place" on which the Tabernacle stood was a lower eminence between El Jib and Neby Samwil.

[2] 1 Chron. xvi. 40. [3] 2 Chron. i. 2. [4] 1 Chron. xvi. 42.

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ness and uprightness of heart before Jehovah," and feeling himself still "but a little child, knowing neither how to go out nor come in," he nobly asked for "an understanding[1] heart, to judge God's people," and "discern justly between good and bad." Such a choice found special favour, and was answered by a promise, not only of the wisdom craved, but of unequalled riches and honour.

The beginning of Solomon's reign was not, however, entirely peaceful. He had treated his brother Adonijah and his supporters with the most generous magnanimity, after the suppression of their plot against him in the last days of his father. But the spirit of disloyalty had not been laid aside. In the East no act is more directly associated with suspicions of treason than a subject's marrying, or attempting to marry, a widow of the deceased king. Abner's wish to marry Rizpah led to a fatal quarrel between him and Ishbosheth, and a similar incident was now to lead to the death of Adonijah. Going to the queen mother, Bathsheba, the personage of highest influence in an Oriental court,[2] he asked her kind offices to procure him permission to make Abishag, the last concubine of David, his wife. This was enough. Benaiah, the head of the bodyguard, though a priest, was at once sent to put him to death. It was determined, further, that his party should finally be broken up. Abiathar, the priest, was banished to his own lands at Anathoth; his life being spared, only on consideration of his long fidelity to David; and Zadok, his rival, was appointed in his place. Thus, at last, the curse long before pronounced on the house of Eli was fulfilled. It had been reduced to the single life of Abiathar by the slaughter of its other members, at Nob, by Saul, and now the last glimmer

[1] Literally, hearing. [2] 1 Kings ii. 19. 2 Kings xxiv. 12. Jer. xxix. 2.

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of its ancient honours was extinguished. Only once again, in Ezra, is there a feeble reminiscence of the line of Ithamar, in the priest Daniel, who returned from Babylon in the time of Artaxerxes. Its sun had for ever set. How it had at first dispossessed the elder line from Aaron is not told us, nor do we know how Zadok came to be put in its place. It may be that Saul appointed him to take the place of the slaughtered high priest at Nob, but this seems contradicted by the fact that when the representatives of the nation assembled at Hebron, to raise David to kingship over the tribes as a whole, one Jehoiada appeared as the leader of the Aaronites, attended by three thousand seven hundred priests, while, with him, Zadok came, as "a young man mighty of valour," and the head of a great priestly clan which included twenty-two "captains," or heads of minor divisions. He could not, then, have been high priest at that time, but it seems as if his high social position soon gained him special honour, while his descent gave him a claim to supreme priestly rank, especially as his house was twice as numerous as that of Ithamar, supplying sixteen out of twenty-four courses or companies of priests.[1] Hence, probably, David appointed him high priest as soon as he had attained the proper age, Jehoiada being, we may suppose, dead, and Abiathar being put virtually in the second place, for Zadok's name, not his, henceforward stands always first. Was it from jealousy of one who had thus supplanted him that the faithful Abiathar, who, to the end, "was afflicted in all wherein David was afflicted,"[2] and was one of his chief counsellors,[3] turned, at last, to support Adonijah, on finding Solomon finally preferring his rival ?

[1] Ezra viii. 2. 1 Chron. xxiv. 4.
[2] 1 Kings ii. 26. 2 Sam. xv. 24, 29, 35, 36 ; xvii. 15–17 ; xix. 11.
[3] 1 Chron. xxvii. 34.

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Solomon having shewn himself harsh and stern enough, young as he was, to take the life of his elder half-brother, for what may have been a mere idle folly, or at worst could have been refused and punished by a smaller penalty than death, for banishment would have been quite enough to make him harmless, Joab, denounced by David on his death-bed, notwithstanding lifelong fidelity and matchless services to him, felt that the hour was come when, to use David's words, his "hoar head was to go down to the grave" by a violent death,[1] since a pretext for his murder had been given in his support of the unfortunate Adonijah. Fleeing, therefore, to the sacred enclosure of the Tabernacle, perhaps at Gibeon, he clung to one of the horns projecting from the four corners of the great altar, where no one could injure him without an audacious violation of the sanctity of the House of God. But Solomon and his priestly headsman, Benaiah, son of the chief priest Jehoiada, but like some ecclesiastics of the middle ages much more a fighting man than a cleric, knew no respect even to the altar, but butchered the old warrior there, as he vainly grasped what should have been an inviolable protection. He had been fierce and unscrupulous in his jealousy of rivals in the favour of David, and had stained his hands with the blood of Abner and Amasa, to secure his place, but he had no such hideous crime against him as the murder of Uriah to get the worthless Bathsheba. David, however, with the true spirit of an Oriental, had imprecated a curse on "the head of Joab" and on "all his father's house," praying that there "should not fail from his house one that had an issue, or that was a leper," or "that, like a woman, was good only for handling a distaff," or "that should fall by

[1] 1 Kings ii. 6.

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the sword, or lack bread,"[1] and Solomon did not forget it, ordering his death that it might take away the innocent blood of Abner and Amasa, which he had shed, from himself and "from his father's house."[2] One wretched charity only was shewn him: his body being allowed to be carried off and buried in his own ground, "in the wilderness," that is, the pasture land where his home had been. He left descendants, but nothing is known of them, their successive generations no doubt dwindling away in all senses as a race known to bear on them the curse of both David and Solomon.

A third offender was Shimei, who had so bitterly cursed David at the time of Absalom's rebellion; but he was only required to stay within the limits of Jerusalem; any attempt to go beyond them involving his immediate death. His ultimate fate was singular. For three years he never passed the Kedron, but at the end of that time, two of his slaves having escaped to Gath, he was foolish enough to pursue them. In such an age this violation of his conditional pardon was no doubt regarded as a Divine indication that his death was required for his past guilt,[3] and accordingly he was forthwith killed.

But these were not the only troubles of Solomon's early reign. The various warlike nations which David had conquered, fretted at their dependence, and hailed the great king's death, and that of Joab, his renowned captain, soon after, as the signal for revolt. Hadad, apparently a grandson of the last king of Edom, had escaped to Egypt, after many adventures, at the close of the fiercely sanguinary war in which Joab desolated the country. The reigning Pharaoh had not only received him kindly, but had given him an

[1] 2 Sam. iii. 29. [2] 1 Kings ii. 31. [3] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 392.

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establishment, and had allowed him to marry the sister of his own queen, no doubt with the design of securing his support, if necessary, against the rising power of Israel. On the accession of Solomon, Hadad sought permission to return to Edom, to get back his own again, but was refused, Egypt being for the time on a friendly footing with the Jewish kingdom. The young Edomite, however, managed to escape, and flew to his native mountains, where he was forthwith acknowledged king by many of his countrymen, and was able to give Solomon great trouble, though he never succeeded in gaining the entire independence of his race.[1]

About the same time commotions rose in the north. Rezon, a Syrian, formerly an officer of the fallen king of Zobah, had risen as a local chief even in David's reign, and had roamed through the deserts as a freebooter.[2] On Solomon's accession an opportunity for bolder action seemed to offer, and, swooping down on Damascus, he took it, and made it the centre of a new power. He was not able, however, to hold it long, though his audacity continued to disturb Israel. Hamath on the Orontes[3] also revolted, but Solomon soon reconquered it. Disturbances rose likewise in the west, where Gezer, on the edge of the hills over the Philistine cities, a place taken by David, and already described in these pages, strove to regain its independence, probably with the help of various allies.[4] The king of Egypt, however, having after a time attacked it, apparently as a tributary state revolted from him, it was handed over to Solomon as part of the dowry of the Egyptian princess

[1] 1 Kings xi. 14-22. Verse 25 says, "He," Hadad, "abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria;" but the Cod. Alex. reads *Edom*, which seems necessary to make the narrative intelligible.

[2] 1 Kings xi. 23-25. [3] 2 Chron. viii. 3. [4] 1 Kings ix. 15, 16.

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whom he then married.[1] It may be that the turbulence of this and other remnants of the Canaanites in his opening reign, perhaps indicating an attempted general insurrection on their part, explains the severe measures taken against their race by Solomon at a later period.

Such a beginning of his rule was fitted to test the true character of the new king. His father had borne himself in his wars, not as an ordinary soldier or conqueror, but as the instrument of Jehovah, to carry out His will; and this of itself gave dignity and loftiness to his undertakings. Solomon seems, for the time, to have shared the same exalted conception of his position. Trained by Nathan, familiar with the lofty ideas of his father, solemnly anointed as the vicegerent of God, and at the moment swaying the sceptre of a great empire, he appears to have been filled with a Puritan enthusiasm which expressed itself, like that of David, in fervent religious lyrics. The second Psalm, while distinctly Messianic in its higher application, is believed to have been composed by him at this time as, primarily and in a limited sense, a triumphal ode over the final conquest of all his foes.[2]

"Why do the heathen band themselves together,
And the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth have risen up,
And princes have taken counsel together
Against Jehovah and His Anointed.
'Let us break their chains asunder,
And cast away their bands from us.'

He that is throned in heaven laughs;
The Lord holds them in derision.
He will speak to them in His fury,
And put them in terror with His glowing wrath

[1] 1 Kings ix. 15, 16.

[2] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 296

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'It is I, even I, who have anointed My king
Upon Zion, My holy hill.'
Let me tell the decree: Jehovah said to me,
'Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee!
Ask Me, and I will give thee the heathen nations for an inheritance,
The uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.
Thou wilt break them in pieces with a mace of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings:
Let me warn you, ye judges of the earth.
Do homage to Jehovah with fear,
Bow before Him with trembling.

Kiss (that is, do homage) truly (to Him),
Lest he be angry and ye perish on the way,
For His wrath is easily kindled.
Happy are all they that put their trust in Him.[1]

The kingdom having at last been firmly "established in his hand,"[2] Solomon, following the usual policy of Eastern kings, strengthened his position by marriages into the royal families of the kingdoms round. With Phœnicia he was already on the most friendly terms, the interests of Israel and Tyre securing their permanence. Egypt, however, might turn against him, and he therefore sought and readily obtained the hand of a daughter[3] of the reigning Pharaoh, as queen. According to Brugsch, a dynasty founded by an ambitious high priest[4] had been on the Egyptian throne for about 100 years; the ancient line of the descendants of Rameses having been dispossessed. But the surviving princes of that race, he tells us, though exiled, never ceased to conspire for their restoration to the

[1] This is the translation in the earlier part of the last four lines of Jerome and other Fathers. The emendations in the last two lines are a literal rendering of the Hebrew.

[2] 1 Kings iii. 1. Septuagint. [3] 1 Kings iii. 1.

[4] Brugsch, *History*, vol. ii. p. 191.

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throne of their fathers, and at last, in Solomon's day, succeeded in effecting a marriage alliance with the "great king of the Assyrians," which was destined to secure their object. Civil war between the exiled princes and the usurping house was perpetually breaking out; reducing the country to great wretchedness. It is not likely that Solomon would marry a princess of a dynasty evidently insecure, and hence it is more probable he took his wife from the legitimate stem of the old royal house, which was now supported by Assyria. Brugsch seems to throw further light on the matter by saying that, about this time, an Assyrian army invaded Egypt, and virtually annexed it to Nineveh; Sheshouk, or Shishak, the son of the Assyrian king, ascending the Egyptian throne, as the Pharaoh, and founding the dynasty of the Bubastites.[1] This, however, is a doubtful rendering of the story of the times, for, according to Naville, the foreigners were Libyans, not Assyrians, which, he tells us, is proved. The kings known as the Bubastite dynasty, from the city of Bubastis, were, he says, the hereditary commanders of a foreign guard, one of whom, Sheshonk, the Shishak of the Bible, succeeded in gaining the throne, legitimatizing his line by subsequently marrying his son to the daughter of his dispossessed predecessor. This Sheshonk, Naville further tells us, was at once the founder of the new dynasty, and the Shishak who invaded Judah and humbled Rehoboam, describing his expedition in an inscription, which I have seen, on the wall of the great Temple of Amon at Thebes, in the part called "the portico of the Bubastites."[2] This leaves the details of Solomon's Egyptian marriage as yet

[1] According to Brugsch, the grandfather of the Shishak who conquered Rehoboam. Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 198.

[2] Naville, *Bubastis*, 1887-1889. *Eighth Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund.* London, 1891.

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unrevealed, and puts aside any attempt at theory respecting it.

Solomon being at last in quiet possession of a great empire, it was of supreme moment to Israel in what direction he would lead it. A career of conquest was alien to the genius of the people, for its wide sovereignty had been rather thrust on it as the result of defensive wars than gained by active aggression. The new position of the nation made it impossible, however, to retain the simplicity of the past. Born in the purple, and hence accustomed to royalty from his childhood; endowed with high intellectual gifts; of a fervent and imaginative nature; quick in decision, and yet emotional; fond of splendour and magnificence; it remained to be seen in what way Solomon would seek to perfect what David had so nobly begun.

Disinclined to war, in which, besides, so far as it was not inevitable, his subjects would not have heartily supported him, Solomon turned to the less ostentatious but far more lasting victories of peace. First, however, he put his kingdom in a perfect state of defence, a work involving the labour of many years before it could be completed. Jerusalem, which was then apparently a town of only about ten thousand inhabitants, was strengthened by the repair of a part of the old Jebusite defences known as Millo, apparently a tower or castle which dominated the "City of David," and rose on the north-west side of the valley running between Zion and Moriah, on the southern spur of which, known as Ophel, and also on the sides of the little valley itself, the city then stood. Fortified now by Solomon, it was afterwards restored once more by Hezekiah, and within it one of the kings, Joash, was murdered.[1] The whole city,

[1] 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. 2 Kings xii. 20. 1 Kings ix. 15, 24. Millo = filled up. Per

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moreover, was apparently surrounded by walls, the overseer of these great undertakings being no other than Jeroboam, then a young man.[1] The whole territory of the twelve tribes was also protected for the first time by a number of strongholds, as if in anticipation of future invasions. A strong fortress was built in Lebanon, to command the road to Damascus.[2] Hazor on the north, near Lake Merom, commanding the entrance to the south from Syria; Megiddo on the plain of Esdraelon, barring an advance into the central hills; Gezer—now, as has been said, the large ruin Tell Djezer—on the outer edge of the hill country, almost west of Jerusalem, which it protected from the people of the Maritime Plain; the upper and lower ends of the great pass of Beth-horon, so often used by invaders from the coast; and Baalath, not far from Gezer, are especially named as thus fortified.[3]

This was not the only innovation on the characteristics of the past. Contrary to all former usage, Solomon introduced into the army chariots and cavalry, till now almost unknown in Israel. Nor were they intended merely for royal display, but henceforward formed a main branch of the military service. Egypt especially was then famous as the market for horses, and for the manufacture of the best chariots, and this, with the marriage of Solomon to a princess of that country, helped to turn his thoughts to the Nile, to procure both. "The squadrons of horses in Pharaoh's chariots at Jerusalem" ere long became famous through the land.[4] Fourteen hundred, with the horses required for them, and 12,000 trained cavalry horses, were imported, and quartered,

haps from the filling up with earth between two outer walls. The authority for population is Renan.

[1] 1 Kings xi. 27, 28.
[2] Cant. vii. 4.
[3] 1 Kings ix. 15, 17.
[4] Cant. i. 9.

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partly in the capital, partly at small garrison towns built for them up and down the country.[1] Stables also were established for them and for dromedaries, on an enormous scale.[2] But though Solomon might think he had thus strengthened his kingdom, such an assimilation to heathen institutions, called forth the first of many permanent protests against it, on the part of the prophets, and the upholders of the old ideas of the theocracy.[3]

Hitherto, Israel had had no foreign trade and very little of any kind, but the new relations with Phœnicia early led Solomon to endeavour to create and develop commercial activity in his own dominions, for his own no less than the public benefit, as is not unfrequent with Oriental kings.[4] It was through him that the trading spirit which has since specially distinguished it, took possession of the Hebrew nation, developing the tenacity, keenness, and worldly wisdom which have marked it since that time. Hitherto they had been mainly an agricultural people, though even in Deborah's time there are indications of luxury, on the part of a few, which to some extent imply trade.

Solomon's measures were alike judicious and large-minded. As the great military and commercial roads to Babylon and Assyria were in his hands, so as to give him the command of all the trade between the Euphrates and the Nile, he built towns at suitable points, as centres of commerce and depôts of goods for sale; a system long established in Egypt. They

[1] 1 Kings ix. 19; x. 26. The two towns, Beth Marcaboth = House of chariots; and Hazar Susah, or Susim = Horse-town, may have received their names from Solomon's time. 1 Kings v. 6; x. 26. 2 Chron. i. 14; ix. 25.

[2] 1 Kings iv. 26, 27. [3] Isa. xxxi. 1; xxxvi. 9. Ezek. xvii. 15.

[4] The rulers of Egypt have often been the chief merchants of their kingdom. Gesenius translates 1 Kings x. 28: "And a company of the king's merchants brought (from Egypt) a multitude of horses." Fürst says, "A company of the king's merchants brought from Coa (some market) the horses."

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were principally in the north of the kingdom, where intercourse with other nations was brisk, and in the new territory which he had conquered from Hamath.[1] To intercept the trade of Egypt and Phœnicia with Western Asia, he founded Tadmor, long afterwards known as Palmyra, in a happily chosen oasis of the desert, 130 miles from the Mediterranean, on a line with Tripolis in Syria, where it continued to flourish for more than 1,000 years, thanks to its position and to the numerous springs around.[2] In what the trade of this route consisted is left to conjecture, except in one detail, which, however, shews how active it became. Egypt was then famous for a breed of horses of unusual size and strength, originally, it would seem, brought from Asia to the Nile valley, the counterpart of the great war horses of the middle ages, and these were in demand among the various Hittite and Syrian kings.[3] But as the key to this commerce was in Solomon's hand, so long as he was friendly with Egypt, he used it for the benefit of his own people, granting licenses to them, subject to their paying him a tax on every horse or chariot sold.[4] But trading posts and towns would have been of little use, without easy communication between them. Special roads, therefore, were constructed, leading, from Jerusalem, to the north and south,

[1] 1 Kings ix. 19. 2 Chron. viii. 4, 6; xvi. 4.

[2] Tadmor or Palmyra = city of palms, gave a much shorter route to caravans from Babylon. Following the Euphrates till on a line with Tadmor, these could strike to the west and reach it after a journey of 150 miles over the desert. When there they were only about 110 miles from Damascus. Kiepert's map, however, makes the caravan route branch off to Tadmor from a lower point on the Euphrates, involving 270 miles of desert, but making the whole journey from Babylon considerably shorter.

[3] *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. pp. 50–52, and the plates. See page 112.

[4] 1 Kings x. 28, 29. Verse 28 should be read, "As for the trade in horses, which Solomon got from Egypt, a band of king's traders used to fetch a troop (of horses) at a price." Mövers and Ewald think the sums mentioned in ver. 29, are the royalty paid to Solomon, 600 shekels = about £79, for a chariot and its gear; 150 shekels = about £18 10*s.*, for a horse. But Keil believes these the gross cost.

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and along these commerce could pass for once, readily, from every part of Palestine to the neighbouring lands. Josephus[1] says, they were carefully paved with black basalt, but there is no intimation of this in the Bible, and basalt was not to be found except at a great distance. They were more probably only tracks cleared from loose stones, and made comparatively level.[2]

The mere overland trade, however, would not satisfy the enterprising spirit of Solomon. Roused by the example of the Phœnicians, he determined to cultivate foreign commerce by sea. The Mediterranean trade was in the hands of the northern power, which, even centuries later, so keenly resisted all attempts to share its monopoly, as to bring on itself the long conflict with the Romans which ultimately ruined Carthage. The first Punic War was caused by the determination of the Phœnicians to keep Rome from participating in the sea trade of the Mediterranean.[3] But Solomon, since the conquest of Edom, had in Ezion-geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, on the north end of the Red Sea,[4] a port from which ships could sail to the East; indeed, it was probably that from which the Phœnician ships had hitherto sailed for India. The extension of the Hebrew kingdom had, however, now transferred the whole region to the hands of Solomon, and interest and friendly policy alike inclined Phœnicia to give its help to that from which, otherwise, it might be wholly excluded. Timber was floated from Tyre to Joppa, the haven in Palestine nearest the Red Sea, and thence dragged laboriously to

[1] *Ant.*, VIII. vii. 4.

[2] Winer, art. "Strassen."

[3] Dean Stanley thinks Solomon had a mercantile navy on the Mediterranean also, but it seems to me very doubtful. *Jewish Church*, vol. ii. p. 154.

[4] Kiepert places Ezion-geber, or the Giant's backbone, so called from the mountains on each side of it, at Ain el Ghudya, ten miles up what is now dry ground, but was then, as he supposes, the northern end of the gulf.

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Ezion-geber; a work of immense labour.[1] Phœnician carpenters and shipwrights there constructed from it great Tarshish-ships, like those sailing from Tyre to the farthest West, and crews were obtained, partly from Phœnicia, partly from Dan and Zebulon, who were familiar with the sea by their residence on the coast. The cargoes to be taken out for exchange, were doubtless brought by camel caravans from Tyre, which alone could supply the purple stuffs, the glass ware, and the productions of the Western world, needed for barter with foreign parts. Solomon himself may have bought these, or they may have been purchased by trading companies or individual merchants, but, in any case, he would secure a full share of the profits. Israel itself had nothing to export, except perhaps the balm of Gilead, which was highly valued in antiquity for its healing and lenitive qualities.

The voyage extended to the mouths of the Indus, but every port at which the ships dropped anchor on the way would furnish a market. India, however, was the great mart. Thence, after three years' absence, the vessels returned, laden with wealth and curiosities hitherto unknown in Palestine. Long trains of camels bore the accumulated riches to Jerusalem, to the wonder of its citizens. More than 400 talents of gold, silver in great abundance, ivory, ebony, hideous apes and resplendent peacocks, with fragrant sandal-wood, aloes, cassia, cinnamon, and costly perfumes, enriched or delighted the community, while the foreign words used for some of them in the Hebrew narrative shew whence they were procured. Ivory is the "elephant's tooth," the Sanscrit word for elephant being used; peacocks bear the Hebrew rendering of the Tamul name for these

[1] It cannot be supposed that suitable timber grew on the spot.

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gorgeous birds, used on the coast of Malabar.[1] Aloes, cassia, and cinnamon are connected with India and Ceylon, either by name or by growth. From the ivory Solomon had a throne constructed, and the sandal-wood was used for the frames of harps and other instruments, and for balustrades of the bridges from the palace to the temple.[2] From its bright red colour and its sweet perfume it was greatly esteemed by the Hebrews, but no more of it came to Jerusalem after Solomon's day. The navy put to sea once every three years, at the time of the monsoon, when there is nothing to do but put up the sail and let the wind drive the ship, so that one reaches while asleep, the port he desires to make. Had the expedition returned direct from Bombay or Goa to Ezion-geber, the voyage would not have extended over three months. That they were away three years, proves that the fleet went all round the coast of India, and perhaps also of Indo-China,[3] but it may also indicate that they sailed down the coast of Africa as well, to the far south.

Herodotus tells us that Pharaoh Necho (617–601 B.C.) sent out ships which circumnavigated Africa, so that the voyage of Solomon's ships to India was not more than might have been expected, with his Tyrian crews. Necho's vessels started from the Red Sea, landed in the proper season, where they saw best, planted grain, waited till it was reaped, and then sailed off once more, always, no doubt, keeping close to the coast, and thus, after three years, got back to the Nile by the Pillars of Hercules—that is, Gibraltar.

Where Ophir was has been a matter of great dispute, some fancying it was Sumatra or Malacca; others, Western India,

[1] "Shēn habbim" = elephant's tooth: Sanscrit ibha, an elephant. Tuk hūm = peacocks: Togëi (Sanscrit) on Malabar coast. Algum tree = sandal-wood: Sanscrit Valgum. Kopim, apes: Sanscrit Kapi, apes or monkeys.

[2] 2 Kings x. 12. [3] Renan, *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, ii. 97.

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while recent discoveries of ancient gold mines and extensive ruins in Mashona Land, in South Africa, have led fancy to think it was even in that remote region. Ezion-geber became a populous town, multitudes of the Hebrews settling in it.[1] Can it be that we have a reminiscence of this period, the only one in which Israel entered largely into maritime adventure, in the Psalms which speak of the perils of the ocean, "the great and wide sea on which go the ships"?

"They that go down to the sea in ships,"

—down from the hills of Israel—says the 107th Psalm,

"That do business in great waters;
These see the works of Jehovah,
And His wonders in the deep.
For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths:
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And He bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet;
So He bringeth them unto their desired haven." [2]

Nor was this world-wide commerce the only new source of revenue and prosperity to Solomon and his people. The nations and tribes subject to him, from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates and from Syria to the Red Sea, paid a fixed tribute yearly, while their kings and chiefs, according to Eastern custom, sent rich gifts to Jerusalem annually, as expressions of homage: vessels and vases of silver and gold, rich garments and robes, costly arms and armour, spices—

[1] 2 Kings xvi. 6. [2] Ps. cvii. 23-30.

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that is, vegetable perfumes—of great price,[1] and the noblest horses and mules.[2] Such prosperity had never been seen in Israel, and was never to return after Solomon's death. Silver became "as stones" in Jerusalem and through the kingdom, and was "nothing accounted of,"[3] and the costly cedar-wood superseded the common sycamore hitherto used in the splendid mansions that rose on every hand.[4] It may, indeed, well have been so, for if Solomon got 420 talents of profit from a single venture, it was equal to £4,000,000. What then must have been the aggregate gain of all this commerce, and how great the wealth of Phœnicia, compared to the marine of which, his marine was insignificant? But wealth was not the greatest blessing of the times. Above all, peace blessed the land, every man dwelling safely under his vine and fig-tree,[5] from Dan to Beersheba;[6] the population meanwhile, we are told, increasing "as the sand by the sea for multitude," and "passing their days in plenty and gladness."[7]

Such results of his government must have raised the fame of Solomon to the highest, both in his own empire and in neighbouring lands, but it was not less illustrious from his immense reputation for wisdom. One incident dating from the beginning of his reign—his decision respecting the child claimed by two women—seems indeed to have specially impressed the popular fancy, and to have spread the conviction far and wide, while he was yet a youth, that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.[8] Other instances,

[1] "Spices" = especially the balsam plant.

[2] 1 Kings x. 25. [3] 1 Kings x. 21. [4] 1 Kings x. 27.

[5] The vine is often trained up the fig-trees in a vineyard, so as to spread a delightful shade underneath by their intermingling leaves.

[6] 1 Kings iv. 25. [7] Weil, pp. 175-213.

[8] 1 Kings iii. 28. The story of Anopharnes, king of Thrace, given in Diodorus Siculus, is not unlike this incident. Three young men claiming to be the son of the

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also, have been handed down by tradition, such as his decision that a dispute respecting a treasure should be settled by the son of the one claimant marrying the daughter of the other.[1] It is evident, moreover, from the ideal of kingly duty presented in the 72d Psalm, that, at least in the opening of his reign, the desire to dispense even-handed justice, to which the "poor and needy" might appeal with confidence, and before which the strong should be curbed in every attempt at oppression or injustice, was one of his most marked characteristics. Nor were shrewd and penetrating sense and fearless uprightness in the dispensation of justice the only splendid moral and intellectual traits for which he was famous. In the widest sense he was reputed wiser than "all the children of the East"—the Idumæans, Chaldæans, and Arab tribes of every name, whose wisdom was proverbial—or than the sages of Egypt. "God gave him wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of intellect as the sand on the sea-shore." "He was wiser than all men."[2]

To such endowments was added a restless, unwearied mental activity, which refused to confine itself to the cares of an empire, but expatiated, far and wide, over every domain of knowledge or thought. He filled the earth, says an ancient writer, with dark parables. The countries marvelled at him for his songs and proverbs, and parables and interpretations.[3]

Yet the great king had his weaker side, and it was a very weak one. The examples of royal splendour and despotic power seen in the courts of Egypt, Tyre, and the Euphrates, harmonizing with his own love of magnificence, led him

king of the Cimmerians, he adjudged him to be really so, who, when ordered, would not thrust a spear into his father's corpse.

[1] Weil's *Legends*, p. 163. [2] 1 Kings iv. 29, 31. [3] Ecclus. xlvii. 15, 17.

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into the gravest moral and political errors. Instead of contenting himself with a glory compatible with the ancient liberties of his people and their theocratic constitution, he steadily extended the authority of the throne till he made it supreme, and in great measure despotic, and surrounded himself with a pomp which weighed ruinously on the nation. His will was the law. He was the soul of the state, with whom everything must commence, and towards whose personal glory all things must contribute. The full import of the warnings of Samuel[1] respecting kings was first realized under his reign.

A numerous harem has always been a part of royal dignity in the East. Even in Egypt, in spite of the ancient law, the Pharaohs had a multitude of wives and concubines, and the kings of Palestine and of Western Asia also boasted of their seraglios. David himself had had sixteen wives, but that was insignificant, compared to the domestic establishments of royalty in Phœnicia and elsewhere. True to his character as the type of a great Eastern monarch, Solomon determined to outshine them all; partly, no doubt, to secure the friendship of rulers by matrimonial alliances, but still more for royal magnificence. Seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines testified at once to his pride, his wealth, and his sensuality. His first wife, the mother of Rehoboam, whom David, perhaps, had already won for him,[2] was Naamah—"the beautiful"—daughter of the king of Ammon. Others were brought from the courts of Moab and Syria, and even Edomite, Phœnician, and Hittite beauties were added, presumably from royal or noble houses, contrary to the law.[3]

[1] 1 Sam. viii. 11-17.

[2] 1 Kings xi. 1. Chosroes, king of Persia, boasted of 3,000 ladies in his harem Malcolm's *Persia*.

[3] Exod. xxxiv. 16. Deut. vii. 3, 4.

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Everything else was on the same scale of selfish grandeur, involving immense expenditure. The royal banquets were of the most costly kind. All the plate and drinking vessels were of gold, for silver was held too poor for the use of the court. Immense numbers of servants, or, rather, slaves; crowds of officials and courtiers; guests, such as Chimham and his brothers; embassies from subject kings and from distant nations; and the thousand inmates of the harem, with their multitudes of attendants, required a daily provision of no small magnitude. Ten fed oxen, and twenty from the pastures; 100 sheep, besides harts and roebucks, and fallow deer—which are still found in Carmel, under the same name as is used for them in the Hebrew, one of the Carmel valleys, indeed, being called Yahman, after them[1]—fatted swans and other fowls, with thirty measures, or about six hundred and sixty gallons, of fine flour, and twice as much meal, were consumed daily, making a supply sufficient for about fourteen thousand persons.[2] The cost of all this may be imagined from the fact that the far smaller seraglio of the Grand Turk costs his impoverished empire about three million pounds sterling a year. David had left his son great herds and flocks, extensive vineyards, oliveyards, etc., but these were quite insufficient to meet the vast wants of a court like that of Solomon, which was, in effect, a town in itself. As the crown dominions, therefore, were quite insufficient to provide such immense supplies,[3] they had to be furnished by the general country population. The whole land, therefore, was divided into twelve districts,

[1] 1 Kings iv. 22, 23. Conder's *Tent Work*, 91. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, 171.

[2] Thenius, *Könige*, 44.

[3] Tavernier says that at the court of the Sultan in his time, 500 sheep and lambs, on an average, were consumed daily. *A. u. N. Morgenland*, p. 167. For David's herds, etc., see p. 221. Athenæus says that the kings of Persia needed 1,000 oxen a day for their courts. *Deipnos*, iv. 10.

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each under a great officer, known as a "deputy," two being sons-in-law of Solomon. These dignitaries, among other duties, provided for the royal table and household, each taking the task for a month in the year.[1] They seem, indeed, to have been virtually the governors of their districts, to carry out the king's will in all things in their respective bounds. It must thus have been much the same in regard to the maintenance of Solomon's table—that is, of his vast palace community—as it is now, with Turkish pashas in Palestine, whose officers, to the terror and often ruin of a neighbourhood, send soldiers to it, to "requisition" from each village, by force, whatever they may need for the wants of their households, their horses, or their swarms of retainers.

This itself was a great innovation, for it abolished the old divisions by tribes. That of Benjamin was left untouched, as too small to be divided, but districts on the Jordan, and on the west borders, were taken from Ephraim; while Western Manasseh was broken up into three "departments." The northern tribes were equally remodelled, and the three on the east of the Jordan were made into two divisions. Only Judah, as the tribe of Solomon, and hence the favoured of all, retained its bounds undiminished, and seems to have been exempted from this heavy, tyrannical, and heartless imposition.[2] Such an irritating and despotic novelty in public burdens, among a people so conservative and so jealous of their liberties and tribal privileges as the Hebrews, was a first step towards the dissolution of the kingdom.

Besides the twelve "lord-lieutenants" of these new "departments," there were twelve other high officials, dignified

[1] 1 Kings iv. 7-19.

[2] Reuss, *Histoire des Israelites*, p. 422.

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in this case with the name of princes,[1] though the word is commonly translated captains or chiefs. These seem to have formed the council of state, so far as there could be such a body under a despotism. They held, however, various offices. Some were scribes, having for their duty, apparently, the drawing up of all ordinances respecting the taxes and the civil life of the nation, the countersigning royal decrees, the preparation of the tax lists, and doubtless much else. Jehoshaphat, who had filled the office of recorder or annalist at the court of David,[2] retained his post, which was in effect that of the chancellor or vizier of the kingdom. The Hebrew word for it[3] means "the mentioner," who, as "the king's mouth," brought all weighty matters before him—such as the complaints, petitions, and wishes of subjects or foreigners. He also drew up papers for the king's guidance, and prepared drafts of the royal will for the scribes. All treaties came under his oversight, and he had the care of the national archives and records, to which, as royal historiographer, like the same state officers in Assyria and Egypt, he added the current annals of the kingdom.[4] Benaiah, formerly the captain of the 600 Gibborim under David, held the high post of commander-in-chief of the army, after the death of Joab. Zadok, and for a short time Abiathar, were the royal priests. One son of Nathan the prophet was placed over the twelve officers for supplying the royal table, and another filled the specially confidential post of "king's friend." The commander of the bodyguard

[1] 1 Kings iv. 2. Dean Stanley speaks of this title "sarim," having till this time been "almost confined to Joab" (*Jewish Church*, vol. ii. p. 160); but it frequently occurs even for inferior officers of the army. It is generally, however, translated "captain" or "captains;" *e.g.*, 1 Sam. xxii. 7. 2 Sam. iv. 2; xviii. 1. 1 Kings i. 25; ii. 5; etc., etc., etc.

[2] 2 Sam. viii. 16.

[3] Mazkir.

[4] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 365.

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—doubtless the Crethi and Plethi—was also one of the great officers;[1] and Adoniram, an old servant of David, who had been over the forced labour demanded even by that king from the Canaanites, and perhaps also over the military levy,[2] retained this office under Solomon.[3] It is curious to find that the son of Nathan is called a priest, though not of the family of Aaron; but the title is no longer given, as it had been, under David, to members of the royal family.[4] One of the most important offices was that of the steward of the palace,[5] a dignitary created in imitation of the usage of the Egyptian and Assyrian courts. It was a position of great influence, for the steward had the right of introducing persons or matters to the king, and, indeed, in many cases represented him. Before such a dignitary even the recorder or remembrancer gradually had to give way; the steward in the end taking the foremost place in the realm. Under David, Joab had been the chief subject during the troubled years of war. Under Solomon, the high priest had this honour,[6] at least in the earlier years of the king. But as the kingdom declined, under later reigns, the steward became the chief minister, combining with his proper office, that of keeper of the royal treasury and armoury,[7] and marked by an official robe and girdle; the gigantic key of the house of David resting on his shoulder, like a sword of state, when he went abroad.[8] In Solomon's reign this evil had not yet come, though in that of Hezekiah, we shall see even Isaiah,

[1] 1 Kings iv. 6. Septuagint.
[2] 2 Sam. xx. 24. 1 Kings iv. 6.
[3] 1 Kings iv. 2-6.
[4] 2 Sam. viii. 18; xx. 26. Hebrew.
[5] Steward meant originally "sty-ward," one who looked after the domestic animals and gave their food, and hence gradually came to mean one who provides for his master's table, or superintends his household affairs. We should, now, call him chamberlain.
[6] 2 Sam. viii. 16; xx. 23. 1 Chron. xxvii. 34. 1 Kings iv. 2.
[7] 1 Kings xiv. 27. Isa. xxii. 15.
[8] Isa. xxii. 21, 22.

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denouncing the pride, luxury, and tyranny of the alien Shebna, who held this high dignity.[1]

As yet, however, only Israelites held place round the king. Foreigners were first admitted to high office at a much later time. Eunuchs to preside over the harem were unknown till introduced under the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, but the kings of Judah gradually copied the evil example, and these degraded beings ultimately became prominent and influential in general state affairs.

At first Solomon contented himself with appearing in public, like David, on a mule, but before long this was too humble. Sixty of the valiant Gibborim guarded his litter as he made his royal progresses,[2] and his chariots and runners were famous. The person of highest authority in the court —above that of any of the ministers—was the king's mother—thanks to polygamy, which prevented the due influence of a queen. So great was her power, as we shall see, that Athaliah, contrary to all precedent in Israel, was able to seize on the throne itself.[3] The sceptre had been the most notable sign of royalty in former times, but Saul had worn a royal turban, and David had assumed the crown of the king of Ammon.[4] Solomon does not seem to have worn one till after his Egyptian marriage, but from that time it became the distinguishing sign of royalty. According to Ewald, a high official, as in all heathen courts, had it in charge, from the days of Saul, to prepare the king's sleeping chamber, and to bear to him at home and abroad a basin for his toilet.[5]

[1] Isa. xxii. 15, 16, ff. [2] Cant. iii. 7, 8. [3] 2 Kings xi.

[4] 1 Chron. xx. 2. The word for Saul's "crown"—Nâzer—is that used for the high priest's diadem, which was a kind of turban: that used for the crown of Ammon is the usual word for a royal crown—Atarah.

[5] *Geschichte*, vol. iii. pp. 130, 372.

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The magnificence of the court in all its details was in keeping with its numerous grades of officials. For the first years of his reign, till the temple was built, Solomon made his home in the modest house which David had built for himself, but it did not satisfy his love of display. A site was chosen, apparently on a southern spur of the temple hill, known as Ophel.[1] It consisted rather of a series of buildings than of a single great structure; their size and splendour being indicated by the fact that thirteen years—a longer time than was required by the temple—were spent in their erection.[2] They were, in fact, a monument of his glory not less splendid than that structure itself. As with the sacred House, Tyrian architects, artists, and workmen were employed, for those of Israel could not have built it. The chief building, 150 feet long, 75 broad, and 45 high, was in three stories, with a grand porch of fifteen lofty pillars, in three rows, of the costliest and tallest cedars—a feature which gained it the name of the House of the Forest of Lebanon.[3] Close to this, so as sometimes to be spoken of as, itself, the House of the Forest,[4] rose the Tower of David, famous for the shields which hung on its walls, in accordance with the custom in antiquity to adorn fortresses in this way. The shields hung on those of the castles of Tyre are celebrated by Ezekiel.[5] Arms were hung round the walls of the second temple at Jerusalem.[6] At Rome, the temple of Bellona was adorned with shields, and at Athens the round marks of shields, which once hung on the walls of the Parthenon,[7] are still to be traced. The Tower of David shone with a glory beyond that of any other fortress, from the number and variety of these glittering ornaments. A

[1] = Hill. [2] 1 Kings vii. 1; ix. 10. [3] 1 Kings vii. 2
[4] Isa. xxii. 8. [5] Ezek. xxvii. 10, 11.
[6] Jos., *Ant.*, XV. xi. 3. [7] Stanley's *Jewish Ch.*, vol. ii. p. 168.

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thousand golden bucklers, all shields of mighty men, gleamed round it.[1] Five hundred of these had been made by Solomon for his bodyguard,[2] but there were five hundred besides, taken, long before, by David, from the guard of King Hadadezer of Zobah, in the Syrian wars.[3] Hebrew poets likened the tower, as it glittered with them, to the neck of a bride decked out, in Eastern style, with rows of golden coins.[4] The residences of the king and of the harem were separate structures, and distinct from them was the great Judgment Hall, built, like the rest, of squared stone and lined with cedar wood.[5] Here stood the throne, so famous as a wonder of art and magnificence—made of ivory, inlaid with gold. It stood at the top of six steps, on which were twelve lions—doubtless because the lion was the standard of Judah.[6] A lion stood also on each arm of the throne itself. The back ended above in a half-circle.[7] The seat itself was a golden bull, its head turned over its shoulder; probably the ox or bull of Ephraim.[8] This was "the throne of the House of David"—"the seat of judgment." Standing in a "porch," it preserved the traditional custom of sitting for judgment at the gate,[9] as David had been wont to do of old, and as had been done, before him, from the remotest past.

Other buildings, resting, like those of the palace itself, on substructions of immense squared stones, were required for the harem, for the members and attendants of the court, and for the entertainment of distinguished visitors. A special mansion for Solomon's Egyptian queen was also

[1] Cant. iv. 4.
[2] 2 Sam. viii. 7.
[3] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 341.
[4] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 341.
[5] 2 Sam. xv. 2.
[6] 1 Kings x. 16, 17.
[7] Cant. iv. 4.
[8] Gen. xlix. 9. Ezek. ix. 2.
[9] 1 Kings vii. 8.

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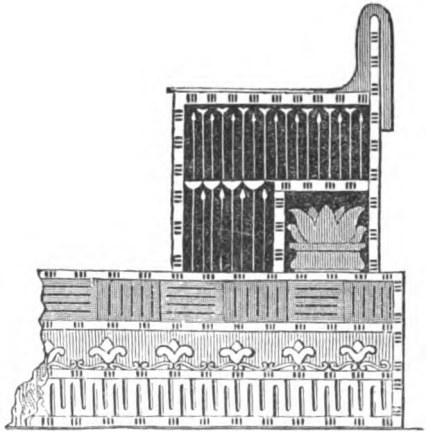
erected, of squared stone throughout, resting on courses of stones of 12 and 15 feet in length, and entered by a porch copied in miniature from that of the Judgment Hall; the pride and glory of the whole mass of structures. She had lived at first in some mansion in the "City of David," the king scrupling to receive a heathen, though she was his queen, into his father's palace, which had once been hallowed by the presence of the Ark.[1]



An Egyptian Throne.

But these palaces, however splendid, could not be regarded as complete, especially in the East, without great gardens, displaying every triumph of horticultural art. The kings of the Ten Tribes could easily create such delights, in the fertile neighbourhood of Samaria and Jezreel, but Solomon, alone, attempted to make a royal "paradise" amidst the bare hills of Judæa, hills as bare as the stones of a paved street. Streams of clear water had been brought from a distance in covered aqueducts, and gathered in great reservoirs, for the supply of the temple and of the city, besides feeding conduits, which afforded the necessary means of irrigation for his gardens. One of these pleasure grounds seems to have been formed immediately under the walls of

[1] 2 Chron. viii. 11.

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Jerusalem, near the junction of the valleys of Hinnom and of the Kedron. It is not improbable that the water which created it passed through the small tunnel which runs underground, from the so-called Virgin's Fountain towards the Pool of Siloam, further down the valley. If so, an inscription discovered in it some years since, but now, unhappily, destroyed, brings up for a moment the every-day life of the far-distant reign of the great king. The latest translation by Professor Sayce is as follows: "(Behold the) excavation! Now this is the history of the excavation, while the excavators were still lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbour, and while there was yet three cubits to (excavate, there was heard) the voice of one man calling to his neighbour, for there was an excess (?) in the rock on the right hand (and on the left). And after that on the day of excavating, the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against another, the waters flowed from the spring to the pool, for a distance of twelve hundred cubits. And (part) of a cubit was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators."[1] Dr. Sayce thinks that the Pool of Siloam is older than the time of Hezekiah, and that what the king did was to hew out a second conduit from the pool, not like the rock passage that has the inscription, in a winding direction, but straight along the west side of the City of David. Such a conduit has been found leading from the Pool of Siloam to another reservoir once existing below it, but that it should run along the west side of the City of David implies that it was carried quite through the hill Ophel, and there made to flow the way suggested. There is thought to be additional evidence in Isaiah, that this tunnel of Siloam was much earlier than Hezekiah's day, in the fact that the

[1] *Records of the Past.* New series. Vol. i. 174.

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prophet (viii. 6), while Ahaz was on the throne, speaks of "the waters of Shiloah that go softly." This can hardly refer to anything but the gently flowing stream which still runs through the tunnel of Siloam.

The characters used in the inscription are the same as those on the Moabite stone—the Jewish branch of the old Phœnician alphabet. They shew not only that writing was common, but that the usual writing material was papyrus or parchment, not stone or metal. The language is the purest Hebrew.

One strange result follows from the texts respecting Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 30. 2 Kings xx. 20). The tunnel made by him was "brought straight down to the *west* side of the City of David." This, which was the same as Zion, must, therefore, have stood on the spur of the Temple hill, immediately south of the Haram wall, though it may, or, perhaps, must, have covered half of the present Haram enclosure, which was thrown into the Temple grounds, for the first time, by Herod. Hence the present Zion is not that of David. But how small must David's Jerusalem have been!

But bewitching as the gardens under Jerusalem may have been, they were quite eclipsed by the splendour of others created by copious irrigation, chiefly from artificial supplies of water at Urtâs, a little south of Bethlehem, where a spring called Ain Atan—the spring of Etham—still turns a part of the generally barren valley into verdure and fertility. Or it may have been at the square-topped hill known as El Fureidis; "the Paradise"—seven miles from Jerusalem, whence it is reached by the Wady Urtâs. There, it would seem, the great Sultan "planted vineyards, made gardens and parks, or paradises, planting trees in them of all kinds of fruits"—the whole kept fresh under the blazing Eastern

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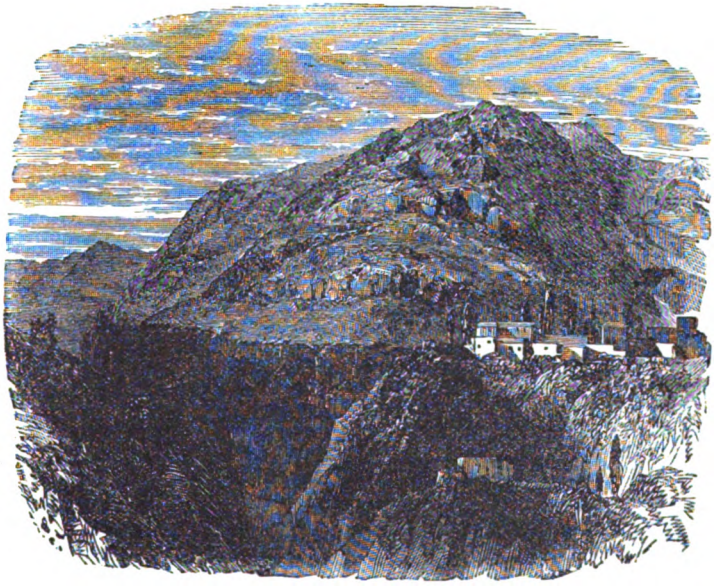
sky by streams from "pools of water," made for the purpose, "to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." Here his court could wander among "beds of spices," and "gather lilies," and sit under the shadow of branching trees "with great delight;" "pomegranates, with precious fruits, henna, spikenard, and saffron; calamus and cinnamon; with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes,



A View in Lebanon.

and all the chief spices;" growing freely or forced by art, delighted the senses; "garden fountains, and living waters in rills and streams,"[1] adding to the enchantment.

To these thoroughly Oriental splendours, Josephus tells us, Solomon—conspicuous by his always wearing white robes

[1] Cant. vi. 2; iv. 13-15.

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—was wont to ride out in a magnificent chariot drawn by horses of matchless speed and beauty, and attended by an escort of mounted archers, all young men of special stature and noble features, in robes of Tyrian purple, over which hung glittering arms;[1] their long black hair, shining with gold dust sprinkled on it each day, flowing free in the wind as they swept on.

But the heat of Judæa in summer was too overpowering to be endured when it might be avoided by temporary removal to the cool heights of Lebanon. On these, therefore, a summer palace was built.[2] The royal vineyard at Baal-hermon was especially noted for its richness. From the airy slopes of the mountains the black tents of the Arabs could be seen far below, contrasting with the hangings of the pavilions in which for the time the king and his court chose to live."[3] The peaks of Amana, Shenir, and Hermon, then known as the haunt of lions and leopards, were the scenes of holiday rambles.[4] The far-off approach of Solomon to these mountain retreats, as announced by watchmen on the heights, is perhaps referred to in Canticles, in the questions, "Who is this that cometh up from the pasture land, clouds of incense rising before him?" as they rose in our own day before the Prince of Wales as he entered Beirut.[5] "Who is this that cometh veiled in the fragrance of myrrh and frankincense, and all the sweet-smelling roots of the merchant? Behold his litter, it is Solomon's. Sixty Gibborim are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all bear swords, and are famous in war; every man has his sword on his thigh to guard the king by night. King Solomon has made himself a state palanquin,

[1] *Ant.*, VIII. vii. 3. [2] Cant. iv. 8; viii. 11.
[3] Cant. i. 5. "Curtains"—hangings at the entrance of a tent.
[4] Cant. iv. 8. [5] Cant. iii. 6-10.

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of the wood of Lebanon. Its pillars he made of silver, its seat of gold, its cushions of Tyrian purple, its sides inlaid with ebony, and it was carpeted, as a token of love, by the daughters of Jerusalem."[1] In such magnificence did he move from place to place.

Of his personal appearance and immediate characteristics we have, still, a few details. He appeared in public with his crown, which the queen mother placed on his head on the day of his marriage.[2] Allusion seems to be made in the 45th Psalm to this grand ceremony, though to which of his queens it refers is not known. The robes of the king are described as so laden with the richest perfumes of India and Arabia, that they seem made of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. The joyous music of stringed instruments floats round him, out of ivory palaces. A crowd of beautiful women—his wives and concubines—stand by him; most of them the daughters of kings. The queen, their head, sits on his right hand, in robes glittering with the gold of Ophir. Tyre, the richest of nations, honours the occasion with sumptuous gifts. As he leads the new king's daughter he has espoused, to the inner palace or harem, she is a blaze of grandeur. She is now to forget her own people and her father's house, and find her glory in her children, whom the king will make princes in all the earth.[3] Nor will it be difficult, if splendour and lavish refinements of luxury can do so, for round her are silver and gold, the magnificent gifts of kings and the wealth of provinces, while men singers and women singers, and all the delights of the sons of men, have been gathered together to please her.[4]

[1] Cant. iii. 6-10; translation from various authorities.
[2] Cant. iii. 11.
[3] Ps. xlv. 10, 16.
[4] Eccles. ii. 8. The meaning of the last phrase of the verse is very doubtful.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

THE popular feeling against the erection of a temple to Jehovah, like those raised by other nations to their idols—so strong in the earlier reign of David, when Nathan became its mouthpiece—had gradually died away, at least in Jerusalem and Judah, when Solomon ascended the throne. It was doubtless felt that such a central holy place would increase the importance of the city in which it was built, both in its wealth and dignity, while it would necessarily give it the supreme place over the other cities and towns of the land, and raise the tribe who could boast of it to the virtual headship of all the others. Ephraim—that is, the tribes north of Jerusalem, Benjamin, from its position, being divided in sentiment, though insignificant in territory and numbers—had nothing to set against such an honour as the National Temple would bring to the new capital, and through it, to the hated tribe of Judah, from which all the others were in heart separated by ancient jealousies and feuds. To the king himself a central temple would be a distinct advantage, placing the priesthood directly under his control, by drawing them to the city where he had his court, and tending to create a loyalty to his dynasty from its being identified with their national sanctuary. The elements of division, and local independence or opposition, must survive while the people worshipped on countless high

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places over all the country, and could choose between the Tabernacle at Gideon and that of David at Jerusalem. Unity of worship would tend directly to unity in other directions, especially politically. Besides all, it must have seemed to a mind so passionately given to external magnificence as that of Solomon, that a kingdom, or rather empire, like his, without a grand temple to its God, wanted something of the splendour due to his greatness.

Secure from without, and rich alike from the inherited accumulations of his father, and his own policy, Solomon, therefore, resolved at the beginning of his reign to carry out the design which David had so earnestly cherished, but had been forced to lay aside. The site had already been determined by the vision of the angel to David, on Mount Moriah, at the time of the great plague. He had bought the open-air threshing-floor of Araunah, the spot on which the awful apparition had stood. It lay, not on the very summit of the hill, but some yards below it, the rough top being pierced by a cave which served for storing the grain, which is still to be seen, with the hole in the roof, through which, one may suppose, the harvest was passed into the rough granary. On this highest peak, as will be seen, the Ark was hereafter to rest in the Holy of Holies. Materials had been provided in great abundance by David, but they were not sufficient.

He had gathered and stored away an immense amount of gold towards the cost of the great work, and for the ornamentation of the sanctuary itself, and the gains of Solomon's trading must have added to this huge wealth, in spite of his prodigal expenditure on himself and his court. When we remember the richness and variety of the spoil gathered by Thothmes and Rameses, from Palestine and Syria, before

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the Hebrews were in the land, it is easy to imagine that the results of David's wars, when the country had necessarily grown much richer by the lapse of centuries, would be immense in the booty they yielded. But it is hard to conceive of such an amount of gold, as is said by the compiler of the Book of Chronicles, to have been left by David to Solomon. A hundred thousand talents of gold, and a million talents of silver, are said to have been thus put at his disposal, but it would seem as if these figures were given, not as precise numbers, but rather as a primitive way of expressing what we mean by a very great and almost incalculable amount. The personal gifts of David seem to point to this, for they were only 3,000 talents of gold, and 7,000 talents of silver, while the contributions of the "princes" of Israel, were, in all, 5,000 talents of gold, 10,000 golden darics, and 7,000 talents of silver—great sums, no doubt, but insignificant in comparison with the larger figures. As a proof of the extraordinary wealth of Solomon, moreover, we are told, that his yearly revenue was 666 talents of gold, equal to perhaps £30,000,000 or $150,000,000, and the Queen of Sheba, it is related, gave him 120 talents of gold, and King Hiram as much, these sums being noticed by the compiler of the Book of Kings as extraordinarily great. Yet what are they to 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver? Attempts to lower the value, by depreciating that of the talent, have no solid ground, and we can only fall back on the supposition of round numbers being given to express an amazing amount, without their being intended to be understood with literal exactness.[1]

Stone was got from quarries in the hill on which Jerusalem stands, and perhaps, also, from excavations at Mount

[1] 1 Chron. xxii. 14; xxix. 4, 7. 1 Kings x. 10, 14. 2 Chron. ix. 9. 1 Kings ix. 14.

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Moriah, required to level the temple grounds, and to create reservoirs for the vast supply of water needed for its services. The great source of the building material employed was, however, the quarries near the Damascus gate of the city. I got into them through a low opening, about a hundred yards east of that gate, scrambling over the rubbish and earth that nearly filled the rude entrance, the floor being about five feet lower on the inner side of this mound. The roof is about thirty feet high, and remains as rough as when first created by the rude toil of the quarrymen. The ground is deeply bedded with fragments chiselled off the rough blocks by the masons, and with others fallen from the roof. The size and form of the tools used—the chisel or the pick—are as fresh as if made yesterday. Five or six hewers seem to have worked together: each man cutting down into the rock perpendicularly, a chink four inches broad, to a fixed depth. Wedges of wood were then inserted, and these having been swollen by wetting them, split off the block required. Some such blocks still remain where the poor toilers left them nearly three thousand years ago. Here, in utter darkness, but for lamps, and in unhealthy air, the virtual slaves of Solomon, though his own free-born subjects, must have sweated their lives away for long years, to make ready the enormous stones demanded for the construction of a House of God! They got no wages: all was forced labour. No wonder Israel rebelled at Solomon's death. The size of the quarries is very great: in some places not less than seven hundred feet from the entrance, and as broad, forming a vast confusion of rough pillars, rough footing, and rough sides and roof, all hidden in utter darkness, outside the little circle of the light of one's candle. One of the great stones at the south-east angle of the temple

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enclosure, laid bare in the shafts of the Palestine Fund Survey, is estimated to weigh a hundred tons, and this vast mass reached its place on the sacred hill only by being dragged from its bed in the quarries by the toil of great gangs of men! Another stone is over thirty-eight feet in length. Is it any wonder that amongst the bits of ancient pottery and charcoal, occasionally found in the awful depths of the quarries, and under the smoke of lamps, still left by those of the poor miners in those evil days, the bones of animals and men have been from time to time met with? One huge stone that had been split, as it was being dragged out, still lies as it was left thirty centuries ago.

But while the rude task of the quarryman was within the power of the Jew to carry out, the temple could not have been either built or adorned had not foreign help been attainable. David had, already, secured this from Phœnicia, and to that country Solomon was indebted for the masons, carpenters, workers in metal, and artists of other kinds, or skilled workmen, needed for the great undertaking. The clever and skilled men of Tyre had no special style of architecture that could be called their own, but had adapted the best points of that which was to be seen on the Nile, and also on the Euphrates. Jerusalem owed its palaces and its temple alike, to the worshippers of Baal and Ashtaroth, whom they affected to treat with insolent contempt as immeasurably their inferiors. But in spite of this hatred of the foreigner, which perhaps was not so intense as it became in later times, Solomon was able to arrange with King Hiram of Tyre for the services of all the varied artificers needed. The Egyptians and Assyrians employed cedar largely for their sacred and royal buildings. Indeed, it had been exported to the Nile from Lebanon before the time of

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Abraham, for these purposes, and the kings of Nineveh continuously imposed a tribute of cedar and cypress wood on the people of the Lebanon range. With a rare magnanimity he agreed to supply Solomon with as much cedar and cypress timber as he might need,[1] asking only, in return, that the barley, wheat, oil, and wine required by the army of labourers employed in cutting it down, and transporting it to Jerusalem, should be supplied to them,[2] their labour, it is to be presumed, being only that of slaves, and as such not charged for by him. The timber itself was a royal gift.[3] Carried to the sea-shore near Lebanon, it was floated in rafts to Joppa, and then dragged toilsomely up to the capital. But the site itself needed to be prepared. The hill did not offer a level space sufficient for the building intended, and had to be cut away at one part and built up to the needed elevation at another. To enable this to be done, the central crest of Moriah was enclosed by huge walls reaching nearly to the level of the highest point, that which now forms the Dome of the Rock, originally the crown of Araunah's threshing floor. These supporting walls were of extraordinary thickness, and were formed of enormous blocks of stone fastened together by iron clamps, all the empty space between them and the living rock being filled up with stones, so as to form a level surface. At the north-west corner, however, the hill rose much higher than the level required, so that it had to be cut away, leaving a natural wall rising in the angle, to the height of 26 feet. On the north-east corner, on the other hand, the empty space which needed

[1] The Book of Chronicles adds "almug" (sandal-wood) "out of Lebanon." But sandal-wood grows only in India. (2 Chron. ii. 8.)

[2] 2 Chron. ii. 15. 1 Kings v. 9.

[3] *Western Asiatic Inscriptions*, vol. i. p. 45. Smith's *History of Assur-banipal*, pp. 513, 335. Menant, *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, pp. 196, 198, 213, 246, etc.

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to be filled up with stones was no less than 123 feet deep; while, on the south side of the plateau, there was a labyrinth of vaults, cisterns, and chambers on which was heaped a mass of earth and stones. How great the labour required must have been, may be judged from the wall at the south-east angle having risen not less than 110 feet above the living rock, to secure the level needed. The result of this immense toil was the creation of a level space, in shape like a badly cut leaf of a book, 1,520 feet on one side, 1,611 on the other, while one end is 921 feet across, and the opposite one 1,017: a trapezoid containing, altogether, about 35 acres. The defence of this sacred space was easy on all sides but the north, the ground falling steeply away except there. In that direction, however, the hill extended outside the temple ground, and hence to guard against attack from this point, a huge trench was cut in the rock on the north-east, while on the north-west there was a gigantic moat, known in our day as Birket Israel, still measuring 104 feet broad and 65 feet deep, though filled up for two-thirds of its length. It is hard to imagine the grandeur of such an undertaking, in such an age, for some parts of the vast walls are 143 feet from the rock to the old surface of the temple courts; indeed, Sir Charles Wilson speaks of the south wall as having been almost equal in height to the tallest of our church spires.[1] Before beginning the temple itself, moreover, provision had to be made for the water supply, so essential for the innumerable sacrifices to be offered. There is no spring in the hill, so that vast cisterns had to be hewn out, and a series of these were therefore excavated, capable of holding over 10,000,000 gallons. All these were supplied with water

[1] *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 9. Babelon's *Manual of Oriental Antiquities*, 205 ff. *Underground Jerusalem*, 47.

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brought by an aqueduct from Solomon's pools near Bethlehem, a system of channels connecting the whole. The final overflow, after they were filled, passed off by a conduit into the Kedron. One cistern alone, that known as the Great Sea, the roof of which is supported by pillars of rock, would contain nearly 3,000,000 gallons.[1]

As soon as the stones and the timber were ready, the building began on the levelled space, now represented by the wide area which encloses the Dome of the Rock. Three years were consumed in the various preparatory labours, which were all completed at a distance from the actual site, so that no sounds of the mason or carpenter might be heard on the sacred hill.

> No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung;
> Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.

The walls had been raised under the direction of Phœnician builders, and in the Phœnician style; some of the marks made by the Tyrian masons, with red pigment, still remaining when the Survey sank its shafts at the south-east corner. They were of squared stones, with bevelled edges, and in many cases, as we have seen, of gigantic size, each silently placed at once in its proper position. One after another, the huge masses varying from over thirty-eight feet long to only about a yard, and from over six feet in thickness to about three, were laid one on another, without mortar; the Phœnician masons bevelling them so exactly that they fitted with amazing closeness into a complete whole. The building of the vast substructions of arches, vaults, cisterns, conduits, chambers, and passages had been completed: the gaping spaces between the outer walls and the rough slopes of the hill filled up with fragments of stone; the high rock at the

[1] Conder's *Handbook*, p. 363.

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north-east corner, where it was cut away, and the vast excavation for the trench, and the Birket Israel, helping greatly by their immense quantities of broken material, and now, at last, when the upper level had been perfected and the whole great space made ready, the building of the temple and of its courts began.[1]

The size of this famous building, compared to that of our cathedrals or even churches, was insignificant; for, like all sacred edifices of the nations of antiquity, it was designed not for the assembling of the people—the fore-courts were for that—but as the especial dwelling-place or "House" of God. Hence it was only about 90 feet long, 30 feet broad, and 45 feet high, and was divided into a Holy of Holies of 30 feet long, and a Holy Place of 60, the two separated by a thin wall pierced by a connecting door. These dimensions, it is curious to notice, are like all the other arrangements of the temple and its courts, either the same as those of similar parts of the ancient Tabernacle, or in a fixed proportionate scale with them: so strong was the veneration in the popular mind for the venerable relic of the wilderness days, still, in those times, standing in its final decay, at Gibeon.

The plan of the temple itself was very simple. The Holy of Holies stood higher than the rest of the building. At the entrance of the Holy Place was an open pillared court, or porch, as broad as the building, and 15 feet deep, but rising to the enormous height of 180 feet,[2] if the present reading of the text be correct. The Septuagint, however, makes it only 30 feet high, and some of the best critics think 45 must have been the original number given,[3] though Ewald fancies the figures in our version correct.[4] In this

[1] *Underground Jerusalem*, 420-423.
[2] Thenius. Keil. Bertheau.
[3] 2 Chron. iii. 4.
[4] *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 321.

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case, however, it would have dwarfed the whole structure behind. Whatever its height, it rested on two great pillars of brass, which were reckoned a marvel of workmanship. Their shafts were 27 feet high and 18 feet in circumference, in the shape of the stalk of a lily, broadening above into a capital of lily leaves, round which hung wreaths of 100 bronze pomegranates, which swayed in the wind. The pillar on the left was called Boaz, that on the right Jachin, they, and all the brass ornaments and vessels, being cast in the clay ground, "between Succoth and Zarthan," that is, near the mouth of the Jabbok, in the Ghor of the Jordan.[1] The meaning of the names thus given, has been much disputed. Gesenius thinks they were called after the givers or constructors; Ewald, that they were after sons of Solomon. Thenius supposes that the two words were to be read together, as an ascription of the glory of the whole temple—of which they seemed the supports—to Jehovah. He would read them: "He (Jehovah) founded or established it (jachin) with might;" Boaz being separated into the two words, Ba Oz. St. Ephrem had already suggested this solution. The words, Thenius thinks, were engraved on the two pillars, so as to be read by all.[2] Renan says: "It is by no means impossible that these two words were written by the Phœnician (metal) founders upon the columns"—"Let (God it) keep upright by (His) strength."[3] Schrader translates them: "(God) founded it." "In Him is might," and remarks that in Babylon one of the walls was named "Bel is well pleased," while the other was called "Bel is the lofty one."[4]

Along the two sides and the back of the temple rose

[1] 1 Kings vii. 45, 46.
[2] *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, ii. 117.
[3] *Könige*, 105.
[4] *Keilinschriften*, 185.

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buildings half the height of the main structure, in three stories, each 7½ feet high, divided into chambers for the priests and Levites, and for store-rooms for temple necessaries, but they were not allowed to touch the outer walls of the Holy of Holies. Windows, with close lattice work, opened on the sides for light, but there were none at the back. The entrance to the temple was at the west, for it was desirable that Israel should not, like other nations, honour the sun as divine. Hence comparatively little light entered the building, its interior remaining dimly obscure; for temples, in antiquity, were always left in partial gloom, and their holy of holies kept absolutely dark. The roof was of cedar, and, in part, apparently, flat, for gilded chambers were built on it.[1] The half-doors of the Holy of Holies were of olive, covered with golden cherubim, palms, and the open cups of flowers.[2] The two half-doors of the Holy Place, and its floor, were of cypress, similarly adorned and plated with gold: the doors moving on golden hinges. In the Holy of Holies there were only the cherubim and the Ark, which rested, as already noticed, on a jutting pinnacle of the hill, known to the ancient Jews as the "Stone of foundation." It was the highest point of the rock, and is still almost worshipped by its present Mohammedan guardians, under the name of the Sakhrah, or Dome of the Rock. The cave vault excavated beneath this, perhaps, as has been said, the old granary of Araunah, served now to insure the purity of the spot on which the Ark stood.[3] It is still open to all who are admitted into the Harem enclosure, and is entered by rough steps from the outside of the Dome of the Rock. The roughness of its first appearance, fortunately still remains,

[1] 2 Chron. iii. 9.
[2] 1 Kings vi. 32.
[3] Conder's *Handbook*, p. 365.

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for it is simply a limestone cavern, rudely dug out of the top of the hill. In the roof there is a round hole, and the ground below, on being struck, sounds hollow. It is not large. The venerable peak of Moriah, above, is enclosed in one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, and is especially sacred to the Mohammedans as the spot from which their prophet was borne up to heaven by the beast Alborak, but it is open to visitors as well as worshippers, after the shoes have been taken off, for they cannot be allowed to defile a holy place. You see only a rough, yellowish-gray hump, with no soil, for the hill, like all round Jerusalem, has always been a mass of bare rock. But no one can approach further than a railing which encloses it on all sides. The doors into the Holy of Holies were secured by golden chains passing across and fastened to the walls.[1] The inner cedar walls of the whole building were adorned throughout with cherubim, palms, and carved work of lilies, in stalk and leaf and flower; for the lily and lotus were then the equivalent of our rose, from China to Lesser Asia; the rose being as yet unknown.[2] The walls were also enriched with precious stones.[3] Along one side of the outer area ran a porch, with chambers over it for the priests, the covered walk beneath being destined hereafter to be the favourite place, with the prophets, for addressing the people and instructing their disciples.[4] On the wall of this porch hung, apparently, the shields and spears of David's army; perhaps also the sword and skull of Goliath, originally kept in the Tabernacle, as the head and hands of Nicanor were hung over the gate bearing his name, in the second temple.[5]

[1] 1 Kings vi. 21. [2] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 327. 1 Kings vi. 29.
[3] 2 Chron. iii. 6.
[4] 2 Kings xxiii. 11. 1 Chron. ix. 26, 33. Jer. xxvi. 2; xxxv. 4; xxxvi. 19, 20.
[5] 1 Sam. xvii. 54; xxi. 9. 2 Chron. xxiii. 9. 2 Macc. xv. 35.

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Hereafter this porch was continued all round, by the later kings, but even in the temple of Herod the name of the original portico, from which the rest had sprung, was retained, and clung to that erected on its ruins; the whole colonnade then built being known as Solomon's porch.[1]

A spacious quadrangle, on all sides enclosed by a wall, formed the boundary of the sacred grounds. Part of this, on a higher level than the rest, and nearest the temple, was enclosed by a low wall of squared stones, with a coping of cedar beams, and formed the court of the priests. A higher wall ran all round the area, which, however, if we can trust the statement of Josephus,[2] was only half as large as that enclosing the temple of Herod; or about 550 feet east and west, and 500 north and south,[3] and as it was lower than the temple, the holy building rose above it on all sides. Trees adorned the open space—the dark cedar, the palm, and the olive, especially.[4] This was in keeping with the universal custom of having a sacred grove connected with every temple, and with the old patriarchal worship under the shade of terebinths or tamarisks; a usage perpetuated in the shady trees—the cypresses and olives, the grass, and the yellow and red flowers—which still delight the eye, in the same enclosure, under its Mohammedan masters. "I am like an olive tree in the house of God;" "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall put forth their leaves in the courts of our God," was imagery natural to the Hebrew, amidst the verdure of the temple grounds. But these trees were destined hereafter to be debased to far other than their intended uses, for under them the licentious rites of Phœnician idols, were one day to be celebrated.

[1] John x. 23. Acts iii. 11; v. 12.
[2] *Bell. Jud.*, I. xxi. 1.
[3] Conder's *Handbook*, p. 367.
[4] Ps. lii. 8; xcii. 12, 13.

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Immediately before the temple, in the fore-court connected with the porch, stood the altar, above the lower level of the rest of the temple grounds. It was a square chest of wood, covered outside with plates of brass, with raised corners or horns; the inside filled with stones and earth; a brass grating covering the top; large rough stones underneath forming its support.[1] It was 30 feet long, the same in breadth, and 15 feet high,[2] and took the place of the ancient brazen altar, then at Gibeon. But, huge as it was, it was destined to be replaced in the second temple by one more than twice as large.

The arrangements within the temple itself were nearly the same as in the Tabernacle. The interior was lined with cedar, on which were carved figures of palm trees, cups of flowers, and cherubim, and these were overlaid with gold. The ancient Ark was preserved, but a fresh cover was made for it, with two new cherubim. They were of olive wood, plated with the finest gold, 15 feet high, with outspread wings, each $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in expanse;[3] those of the one cherub touching those of the other, as they overarched the mercy seat. They could not, however, be seen from the Holy Place; only the long staves on which the Ark was to be borne were visible from it. A thick curtain of blue, purple, and crimson, on a white ground of the finest linen, covered with figures of cherubim, hung outside the doors of the Holy of Holies, to screen it from all eyes. In the Holy Place stood a table covered with plates of gold, but instead of the single seven-branched candlestick of the Tabernacle, ten separate lamps of gold were placed, five on the north and five on the south side; the snuffers, tongs and snuff dishes being also of pure gold.[4] In the fore-court,

[1] *Middoth*, iii. 4. [2] 2 Chron. iv. 1. [3] 1 Kings vi. 23-28. [4] 2 Chron. iv. 7.

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which was for the use of the priests alone, beside the great brazen altar, rose, on the south-east, a vast brazen laver, for the numerous ablutions required by those on duty. Standing 7½ feet high, and measuring 15 feet from side to side, it well deserved the name of the brazen sea. Its edge was turned down like that of a ewer, and adorned by overhanging lilies; two rows of floral ornament surrounding it, and twelve brazen oxen, three to each quarter of the heavens, supporting it beneath.[1] Ten brazen lavers, resting on as many wheeled stands,[2] served to bear water to any part where the washing of the sacrifices and cleansing the temple might require it. They and the laver were trophies of the victories of David, for they were made of copper taken during his Syrian wars.[3] The palace of Solomon standing behind the temple was connected with it by special stairs and galleries, on which the costliest material was lavished, and by this private approach the king had access to gilded chambers built for himself alone.[4]

The superintendent and designer of the finer portions of this elaborate structure, and of its accessory details, was one Huram, or Hiram, the son of a Hebrew woman, who had lived at Dan, though of the tribe of Naphtali,[5] and a Phœnician of Tyre, where he had acquired great skill in metal

[1] 2 Chron. iv. 2-7. [2] 1 Kings vii. 27-39. [3] 1 Chron. xviii. 8.

[4] Some have thought, but apparently without reason, that the remains of a bridge still found at the south-western corner of the temple area, mark this "approach." In any case, however, the bridge must have been a magnificent structure. One of the stones in the fragment of it still left measures 24 feet in length, and another 20. When complete, it would seem to have been composed of five arches, each 41 feet in span, and its elevation above the then existing ravine could not have been less than 100 feet. It is mentioned in Pompey's time, twenty years before Herod ascended the throne. If this was what the Queen of Sheba saw, she may well have admired it.

The chambers of the priests were their dwelling places while they were on duty, and as such had kitchens, etc. 1 Kings vi. 8. 2 Chron. xxxi. 11. Jer. xxxvi. 10. Ezek. xl. 45; xlii. 1; xlvi. 20, 24. *Ant.*, VIII. iii. 2.

[5] 1 Kings vii. 14.

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working and other similar arts, for which that great capital was then pre-eminently famous. So eminent, in fact, did he become that his genius was recognized by all, as that of one specially "skilful to work in gold, silver, brass, iron, stone, or timber, and no less so in purple, blue, fine linen, and crimson," besides being noted as able to execute "any kind of graving, and to devise all kinds of curious work." So great, indeed, was his name, that he was called "my father," both by Solomon and by Hiram,[1] a mark of esteem and respect still known in the East.

Compared with the religious buildings of Assyria, Babylon, or Egypt, a structure like the temple, apart from its vast substructions, was hardly worthy of notice either for size or splendour. The great temple of Amon, at Thebes, for example, ultimately extended to a length of 1,170 feet, while the ruins of its associated edifices still cover a plateau nearly four miles in circumference.[2] That of Belus, at Babylon, was of no less amazing size and grandeur.[3] Nor is the contrast between the simplicity of the Israelite temple and that of those on the Nile, less striking. Its exterior seems to have been entirely plain, and, though there was a pillared porch, it shrank into insignificance before the long avenues of mighty columns in Egyptian sanctuaries, the alleys of sphinxes, the obelisks, and the vast pylons, all, in common with the temples themselves, covered with sculpture and ornament. But the lavish employment of gold for the decoration of the interior of Solomon's building exceeds anything told us of other ancient temples. Yet the reverence thus shewn for their sanctuary by the Hebrews displayed itself rather by the richness of the material so freely

[1] 2 Chron. ii. 13, 14; iv. 16.
[2] Kugler, *Gesch. der Baukunst*, 1855, pp. 37–39. [3] See vol. i. p. 219.

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expended on it, than in form and proportion; for when intrinsic value is the predominant feature, art has only limited scope. Israel, moreover, was still wholly dependent on foreign artistic skill, and at the same time was rigidly excluded from whatever even remotely pointed to the heathen ideas which were then the basis of all art. Only innocent details could be sanctioned. The bas-reliefs of palms and flowers, the forms of lions and oxen, and the mystical shapes of the winged cherubim were the widest range of invention or fancy permitted. Even in these, however, Phœnician art, borrowed from Assyria, may be traced, for the ruins of Nineveh still disclose allied conceptions and style of ornament. It is, indeed, impossible for any age to be entirely original either in its architecture or its arts, for the present is, in all things, only the development of the past. Our churches and cathedrals embody, necessarily, though perhaps in new combinations, the ideas presented by others of earlier date, and those of any given period almost inevitably shew a more or less complete imitation of the taste of the day, alike in design and details. The temple at Jerusalem, built by Tyrian architects who drew inspiration from the Nile and the Euphrates, could not be an exception to this rule.

It is, therefore, alike interesting and instructive to trace the points of similarity between the sanctuary raised by the Jewish king and those already famous in other lands. The interior of the temple of Bel-Merodach bore a striking resemblance to that of Solomon. At the extreme end was a "holy of holies," concealed by a curtain from the eyes of the profane. Here, according to Nebuchadnezzar, was "the holy seat," the place of the gods, who determine destiny, the spot where they assemble together (?), the shrine of

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fate, wherein, at the beginning of the year, the divine king of heaven and earth, the lord of the heavens, seats himself, while the gods of heaven and earth listen to him in fear, (and) stand bowing down before him.[1] Here, too, Herodotus tells us, was a golden image of the god, with a golden table in front of it, like the golden table of shew-bread in the Jewish temple; and in the holy of holies of the "god of dreams" at Makhir, moreover, was a marble coffer, containing two stone tablets recording Assur-natzir-pal's victories, and the erection of the temple.[2] The cedar work of the great temple of Bel-Merodach at Babylon was overlaid by Nebuchadnezzar with gold and silver, and its furniture, like that of Solomon's temple, was of massive gold.

The temples of Babylonia were, in the same way, provided with large basins, used for purification, and called "deeps," or "abysses." They stood in the open air before the temples, and, at least in some cases, rested on brazen bulls.[3]

Nor were the coincidences limited to the building or its accessories. The Assyrians and Babylonians, like the Jews, had their sabbaths, festivals, and fasts, their "peace offerings" and "heave offerings," their meal offerings, their libations of wine, and their sacrifices. "Unclean food," including swine and creeping things, was as strictly forbidden on the Euphrates as in Israel. Their gods were carried, in processions, on "ships," resembling closely the Hebrew Ark, staves which passed through rings, as in the case of the Ark, supporting it on men's shoulders. The priest in Phœnician temples had his tariff of fees for his various services, but we do not know if those in the Jewish temple had more than a share in the sacrifice or offering. A Phœnician

[1] *Western Asiatic Inscriptions*, i. 54; ii. 54–62.
[2] Comp. 1 Kings viii. 9.
[3] *W. A. I.*, iv. 23, No. 1.

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priest was paid ten shekels for offering a bullock, and three hundred shekels weight of the flesh; rather more than one shekel for offering a sheep or a goat, and so on. We read in the tariffs of the Phœnician temples of Marseilles and Carthage, of "architects," "guardians," "overseers," men who "tended the cattle," "bakers," who made the cakes for the Queen of Heaven, "masons," "scribes," "shepherds," and "barbers," but there must have been more varieties of dependents on each temple, and it must, in this, have been largely the same with the temple at Jerusalem. The barbers were needed to shave the heads of the priests, but the priests among the Jews retained their hair, by way of contrast[1] to the practice of the heathen. There were maidens in the Phœnician temples, as singers or musicians, and we find the same word, alamoth, as the name of the same class among the Jews, employed in a similar way in the temple worship: they are the damsels, "playing with timbrels," of the Psalms.[2] The animals offered on the Euphrates were such as oxen, sheep, or gazelles, and the sacrifices were accompanied, sometimes by hymns and incantations, sometimes by prayers. Various special dresses were worn during the performance of the religious ceremonies, and ablutions in pure water were insisted on. Seven, too, was a sacred number, whose magic virtues had descended to the Semites from their Akkadian predecessors. The Assyrian title of the high-priest shews that his main duty was to pour out libations in honour of the gods. Under him were several subordinate grades of priests: one whose official name implies that they were "bound," or attached to a particular deity, as his slaves and bondsmen; another, "the anointers," whose duty it was to purify with

[1] Lev. xix. 27; xxi. 5. [2] Ps. lxviii. 25.

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oil both persons and things. The cleansing of objects by anointing them with oil was, indeed, of great importance, even stone tablets and foundation-stones being ordered to be cleansed in this way. The use of "pure water" for washing the hands and body occupies also a conspicuous place in the ritual texts of Babylonia, and we know how important ablutions of person and things were in the eyes of the Hebrews. All these correspondences came to Israel through the Phœnicians, for they had as yet no direct relations with Mesopotamia. It was, in fact, to a large degree, the same in the case of Jerusalem as in that of the many towns and cities of later ages in which everything was modelled after the reigning foreign ideas and style of the time. Jerusalem copied Tyre, as Tyre had copied Egypt or the Euphrates, and so, in Cæsarea, men saw Herod reproduce an Italian port, as he created at Herodium an Italian country town. The dress of the Hebrews, their arms, manufactures, temples, their musical instruments, ships, chariots, and architectural details, thanks to the Phœnicians, were copied partly from those of Assyria, partly from those of Egypt. Solomon's throne and brazen laver have their counterpart in Phœnicia, in existing antiquities; and fresh illustrations of Jewish customs are constantly being brought to light as fresh antiquities are discovered in the territory of their great ancient northern neighbours.

Yet in spite of these trifling analogies, there was a fundamental contrast between the temple of Solomon and all other sacred buildings of antiquity, in the mysterious vacancy of the Holy of Holies. No idol, statue, or sacred animal profaned it. The pure spirituality of Jehovah was sublimely indicated by the absence of any symbol of His presence. He might be conceived as dwelling between the

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cherubim, but He was at the same time the God whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain,[1] and the thought of His abode in a house made with hands was felt to be only an accommodation to the narrowness of human ideas. Heaven was still His dwelling place,[2] from which He heard the prayers of His people, though, in condescension to the weakness of their nature, they were permitted to pray towards the holy building erected to His name.[3]

The loftiness and purity of the true religion thus shone out, from the new temple, into the thick darkness of heathenism around. The circumstances of its dedication alone, vindicated the faith of which it was the supreme symbol. The whole building, so far as Solomon designed to carry it at the time, was completed in the eighth month of the eleventh year of his reign, so that the erection had taken just seven and a half years.[4] That the months and years of its progress should be thus recorded, shews the importance attached to the undertaking; for such minuteness does not occur in reference to any previous event except the Exodus. Nearly a whole year, however, passed before its public consecration, the great harvest feast of Tabernacles, which attracted the nation from all parts, and was thus best suited for the imposing ceremony, having been a month past when the temple was finished. There was hence a delay till the seventh month of the next year. Then, however, a week's festivity was allotted to the dedication, in addition to the usual seven days of the great harvest-home.

Vast preparations were made for an occasion so august. All the sheiks of tribes, clans, or subdivisions, of Israel, were summoned to attend at Jerusalem, with the priests,

[1] 1 Kings viii. 27.
[2] 1 Kings viii. 30.
[3] 1 Kings viii. 29.
[4] 1 Kings vi. 1, 37, 38.

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from all parts, in the various grades. The first step on the day of inauguration was to bring the sacred and venerable Tabernacle of the wilderness from Gibeon, where it still rose—worn, no doubt, and much repaired—as a local sanctuary. The ancient hangings of fine linen, leather, and camel's hair; the planks of acacia, tipped or plated with gold, silver, or copper; the bars and hooks; the curtain of the entrance; the ancient brazen altar; the seven-branched candlestick and the table of shew-bread, were borne on the shoulders of Levites to the new temple, everything being carried out in accordance with the rules laid down at Sinai, nearly five hundred years before. Loud rejoicings greeted the procession as it moved along, amid the harsh music of the Levites, the singing of choirs of priests, and the festive dances of bands of maidens. Among other relics of the venerable past, men saw the mysterious form of the brazen serpent, which was afterwards erected, either in the temple courts or somewhere in Jerusalem, beside an altar, on which incense was burnt before it.[1] The Tabernacle raised in Zion by David was also taken down, and borne with equal solemnity, to the great centre on Moriah. The winding pageant at last reached the sacred precincts. Entering them, all that belonged only to the past was carefully laid away, in the store-chambers of the temple buildings. The Ark alone entered the Holy of Holies, and was solemnly deposited on the rough peak of the natural rock within, destined to be its final resting-place. A new covering had been prepared for it, and in removing the ancient one to substitute this, the interior was seen for the first and perhaps the last time since the days of Moses. The pot of manna, the rod or sceptre of Aaron, and his golden censer, once preserved

[1] 2 Kings xviii. 4.

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beside or within it, were now gone, perhaps in the confusion and violence of its capture by the Philistines, or at the burning of Shiloh. Only the two tablets of the granite of Sinai remained, bearing the sacred characters in which were expressed the Ten Commandments.[1] The new covering once shut down on these, they disappeared, to be seen no more, so far as we know. Inside the veil, on its rocky site, the Ark henceforth remained, under the wings of the overarching cherubim, hidden from all eyes till the destruction of the temple, except when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, once a year. As if to shew that it would no more be removed, the staves on which it had anciently been borne were drawn out, so as to appear through the veil, and served to guide the steps of the high priest in his yearly advance into the thick darkness of the chamber. Besides the Ark, the ancient altar of incense and the table of shew-bread were still kept for use in the Holy Place.

The people had gathered in vast throngs from every part —from the southern boundary of the land at the Wady el Arish, the River of Egypt, to Hamath, far north, on the Orontes—and crowded the temple area, outside the court of the priests. In this last, as many of the sacred orders as the space permitted now took their appointed places. A full choir of Levites, under Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, were at the east end of the great altar, with 120 priests, bearing trumpets, very probably, in a religion so conservative, simple ram's horns like those carried by their predecessors in their processions round Jericho.[2] A scaffold of polished brass, 4½ feet high and 7 feet square,[3] had been placed for the king in the midst of the court, and to this he now approached, surrounded by all the magnificence which he so much loved;

[1] 1 Kings viii. 9. [2] 2 Chron. v. 12. Josh. vi. 4–6. [3] 2 Chron. vi. 13.

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500 guards attending him,[1] with golden shields. The high officers of his court followed in their robes. But so great a monarch could not enter by the same gate as his subjects. A private door, as has been noticed, had been made specially for himself, connected with the palace on a lower part of the hill behind, by a magnificent staircase of sandal-wood. The brazen scaffold served for a temporary throne.

An outburst of music from a multitude of performers and singers presently filled the air, the spectators catching up the ever-recurring refrain—"For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever."[2] Meanwhile the temple was seen to be filled with a thick darkness, in which all recognized the cloud of the Presence,[3] once the symbol of the Divine glory over the Tabernacle of Sinai. So dense was it that it stopped the ministrations of the priests. But Solomon instantly caught its immense significance as a pledge of the acceptance of the temple by Jehovah as His dwelling-place, instead of the Tent of Meeting, which it superseded. Turning, therefore, to the people, he broke the silence such an awful appearance had imposed. "Jehovah," said he, "has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness," or, as the Targum reads, "in Jerusalem." "But I have built a house for Thee" (not a mere tent, as hitherto): "even a fixed place for Thy dwelling for ever."

The monarchs of Western Asia, whom Solomon sought to resemble, performed many of the functions of a high priest, offering sacrifices and pouring out libations to the gods. Thus Assur-ris-elim is called "the appointed of the divine Father Bel, the priest of Assur," and Nebuchadnezzar styles himself at once "the worshipper of Merodach, and the

[1] 1 Kings xiv. 28.
[2] 2 Chron. v. 13.
[3] 2 Chron. v. 13. Septuagint.

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supreme high priest, beloved of Nebo."[1] The Hebrew king himself, therefore, as if high priest as well as king, now proceeded to perform the supreme sacerdotal act by solemnly blessing the assembled people, who stood reverently before him. This ended, he went forward to the great altar.[2] Here, instead of the usual standing posture in devotion, he knelt down,[3] the first instance in Scripture of this attitude, and, stretching out his hands towards heaven, uttered a prayer of almost unequalled sublimity, that in all troubles of the nation or individuals, at home or in foreign lands, God might hear and answer the cries directed towards His holy hill. A second priestly benediction from his lips closed this part of the ceremonial.

The usual sacrifices on such an occasion now began on the grandest scale; 22,000 oxen, and no fewer than 120,000 sheep, being said to have been offered in the aggregate; necessarily on many successive days,[4] if indeed these numbers be correctly given. At, or rather near, Syracuse, I saw the great altar built by Hiero II. (*c.* B.C. 306–216), for the offering each year of a great sacrifice of four hundred and fifty oxen, to commemorate the expulsion of the tyrant Thrasybulus. It is of hewn stone, with several steps all round it, and is six hundred and forty-five feet long and sixty feet broad; its height above the two or three steps being such as suited the office for which it was designed—about that of a very high table. It is thus the eighth of a mile long and would hold several rows of oxen, yet it was designed on this colossal scale only for the sacrifice of four hundred and fifty.

[1] *Western Asiatic Inscript.*, iii. 3, 12; i. 53; i. 5; iii. 3, 39.
[2] 1 Kings viii. 22. "Stood before" = "went forward to."
[3] 1 Kings viii. 54.
[4] The Greeks were accustomed to offer at times 450 bulls to Zeus and 500 goats to Artemis. Döllinger's *Gentile and Jew*, vol. i. p. 230.

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What preparations must it imply to provide for the sacrifice by Solomon, in the confined space at his command, of twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep! It is impossible to realize such an incident, but, indeed, it is almost as hard to understand how the many thousands of lambs and kids could be killed, flayed, cleaned, and offered up, each year, at the Passover. The number of priests and Levites employed must have been very great, but, even with any conceivable numbers, what an almost inconceivable task was to be carried through! We are told, indeed, that, at the dedication festival, the huge brazen altar, which, however, was only about thirty-two feet long, was too small for such hecatombs, and that the inner court had to be used in addition, but what was even this for such innumerable victims?[1] As fixed by the Law, however, only a small part of each victim was consumed; the rest was given to the people, that they might rejoice in a great sacred feast. The Book of Chronicles adds that when the king had made an end of praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices.[2] Foremost among the sacrificers, moreover, stood Solomon. It is expressly said that it was he, not Zadok, the high priest, or any of his subordinates, who hallowed the inner court, and having done so, "offered," like a sacrificing priest, "burnt-offerings and the fat of the thank or peace-offerings."[3]

Such was the great feast of the dedication of the temple; an event of paramount importance in the Jewish history. The nation had now a fixed religious centre to which, as a mere work of human art, they could look with pride. In

[1] 2 Chron. vii. 7. In our version, "the middle of the court."
[2] 2 Chron. vii. 1.
[3] 2 Chron. vii. 7.

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the past their God had only dwelt in curtains.[1] The period of irregular local worship was closed, and the thoughts of all concentrated on a common sanctuary. Hitherto the Mosaic system had not had free development; now it was established in all its details, in the capital of the land. The priests and Levites, no longer the ministers of a mere tent like the Tabernacle, rose, by their official connection with the new sanctuary, to an importance they had never hitherto possessed, and to this Solomon forthwith gave adequate expression by formally adopting all the arrangements respecting them left by David, his father. But even in the hour of their highest glory they were strictly subordinated to the civil power. It was not one of their members, not even the high priest, who had presided throughout these august solemnities. The king alone prayed, blessed, offered, or consecrated. Nor was the priesthood thus controlled only on this occasion. They received from Solomon their organization and special appointments, and his will ruled them so absolutely in all things, that they did not dream of "departing from his commandments concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures."[2] Nor was the assertion of supreme authority over the Church merely temporary. Three times a year during his reign, on the great festivals, he not only sacrificed,[3] but even offered incense in the Holy Place, a function afterwards reserved for the priests alone.[4] Thus in the fullest sense he claimed to act as both king and priest. In Egypt the priests ruled the State, controlling even the Pharaoh; elsewhere they formed a caste dominating the people; in Israel, the hierarchy from the first had

[1] 1 Chron. xvii. 1.

[2] 2 Chron. viii. 15. The gifts to the temple and the money received from the sacred tax.

[3] 2 Chron. viii. 13. [4] 1 Kings ix. 25.

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no other than a moral power: the Church was subordinate to the State.

The temple, so wondrously consecrated, became from that moment the pride and glory of the nation, and, as years passed, the reverent love of a spot so holy rose almost to superstitious adoration. All that was best in the community turned to it, alike in their joys and sorrows, in their moments of grateful thanksgiving and in their darkest trials. To see it periodically, and to worship in its courts, became the intensest desire of every Hebrew, wherever his lot might be cast. Three times a year long trains of pilgrims turned to it from every part of the land, and before the Passover, especially, vast multitudes crowded towards it from the most distant countries, as the scattered Phœnicians did to the great festival of Melkarth at Tyre. Nor were these great national gatherings only occasions for listening to sermons or joining in sacrifices. They were the high festivals of the race. But even these fond associations were infinitely less tender and sacred than the spiritual links which bound Israel to the "Holy Place." In his thoughtful hours, especially when pressed with trial, the words of one of the Psalms became the instinctive utterance of every godly Hebrew:

> "One thing have I craved from Jehovah: that do I seek after:
> To dwell in the House of Jehovah all the days of my life;
> To look with glad eyes at the beauty of Jehovah,
> And to refresh my soul at His Temple." [1]

From "the land of Jordan and of the Hermons, from the hill Mizar," and from many other spots near or afar, rose the lament of those unable to go up to Jerusalem.

[1] Ps. xxvii. 4.

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"As the hart pants (under the sultry sky) for brooks of water,
So pants my soul after Thee, O God!
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God—
When shall I come and appear before [1] God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say to me, 'Where is thy God?'
When I remember it, my soul overflows with sorrow;
How I used to go up with the multitude, to Jerusalem;
How I went with bands, in procession, to the House of God—
The multitude that kept the joyful feast
With the voice of praise and loud rejoicing!" [2]

The 84th Psalm is, throughout, a similar yearning of the inmost soul for a sight of the Holy Hill.

"How amiable is Thy abode, O Jehovah of Hosts!
My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of Jehovah;
My heart and my flesh cry aloud for the living God.
The very sparrow finds a house, and the swallow a nest,
Where she lays her young
Beside Thine altars, O Jehovah of Hosts,
My King and my God!

Happy are they that dwell in Thy house,
They will be still praising Thee.

* * * * * * *

A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand:
I would rather lie at the threshold of the house of my God,
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness." [3]

So, in the hours of brightest rejoicing, a visit to Jerusalem and the temple, was the ideal of happiness.

"I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go into the House of Jehovah.'

Our feet stand already within thy gates, O Jerusalem!
Jerusalem, the close-built city,

[1] Or "see."

[2] Ps. xlii. 1-4. Apparently the cry of an exile from beyond Jordan, on his way to Babylon. Ewald, *Dichter*, vol. ii. p. 185. See also Ps. lxiii. 1, 2.

[3] Ps. lxxxiv. 1-4, 10.

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Dwelling on dwelling stand together in thee.
Thither the tribes go up—the tribes of Jehovah—
To the memorial feast of Israel.
To praise the name of Jehovah!
For there are set thrones for judgment,
Thrones of the House of David." [1]

Once more, in another Psalm, we hear the same thought.

"Happy is the man whom Thou choosest,
And causest to approach unto Thee,
That he may dwell in Thy courts!
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house—
Even of Thy holy temple." [2]

The fame of Solomon's magnificence naturally spread to all parts, through the wide commercial relations of his people. His palaces and gardens, at Jerusalem and elsewhere; his docks and fleet at Ezion-geber; his busy cities on the great lines of trade; the roads that connected them; his fortresses on the borders of his empire; the temple, and, not least, the great aqueducts and pools he constructed to bring water to his capital, were well fitted to strike the general mind with a sense of his grandeur. But the splendour and prosperity which shewed in their fulness in the sovereign, shone also, with softer light, over the community. Apart from the substantial comfort and happiness of the trading population, there was only too striking a display of luxury and wealth among the higher classes, whose mansions rose on the western hill, now known as Zion. Though still, according to our ideas, a very small place, Jerusalem must have grown largely since the beginning of Solomon's reign, not only from the space covered by luxurious private dwellings, and by palaces, but from the influx of new citizens, attracted by the stir of the times, and by the great

[1] Ps. cxxii. 1-5. Herder's translation. [2] Ps. lxv. 4.

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works in progress, the temple, itself, affording varied employment. The City of David had spread its narrow limits over the south portion of Moriah, to the limits of the temple walls, and had covered the sides of the little Tyropœon valley dividing Moriah from the hill now known as Zion. The Levites and priests on duty lived in their cells along the sides of the temple grounds; the castle Millo looked down from its top upon these, from across the Tyropœon; and on the lower spur of Moriah, called Ophel, were the sordid quarters of the descendants of the Gibeonites, who, with the Nethinim, perhaps all persons of illegitimate birth, were doomed to spend their lives as slaves, in the humbler services needed about the temple. Here, on Ophel, also lived the despised class of mixers of unguents, apparently Phœnicians. Others of the same nation had settled in the city as merchants, money-changers, or money-lenders. They formed a guild by themselves, under protection of a treaty between Hiram and Solomon, retaining their own laws, customs, and usages, and even celebrating their own idolatrous rites and worship.[1] Jerusalem and Israel at large were, in fact, gradually losing that safe isolation which had in a great measure kept them from dangerous contact with the nations around.

The reports spread through distant regions doubtless attracted strangers in great number from motives of curiosity, profit, or religious feeling; for Solomon's sailors and traders must unconsciously have spread the name of the God who had blessed their king with such prosperity. Even the security and peace enjoyed under him would allure many from other lands to settle in his dominions, and not a few would be drawn, like Ruth, by the desire to put themselves

[1] Mövers, vol. ii. 3, p. 115.

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under the safe protection of the "wings" of the God of Israel.[1]

Among other distant countries to which fame had carried the name of Solomon, was Sabæa, or Sheba, a region of south-western Arabia, famous for its incense, balm, and myrrh, and reputed one of the richest countries, in the Bible ages. The Arabian Peninsula is no less than fourteen hundred miles in length, and half as much in breadth: a weary waste of sand and rock, for the most part, there being not one river deserving the name, in its whole extent, though the south-western portion, being fortunate enough to boast of some small perennial streams, is known as Yemen, or "the blest," from the comparative fertility thus secured for some favoured wadys or isolated spots.

In early ages the Arabs were the carriers of the world, between the east and west, for the sea was in these times greatly dreaded, and commerce confined itself almost exclusively to the land. A continent, now the greatest obstacle to traffic, was, then, its chief facility. The steppes of Central Asia and of Arabia were the ocean of the ancients, and companies of camels their fleet. The caravans they formed had to move, however, along fixed routes and at settled times, to secure safety, the spots at which they from time to time encamped becoming larger or smaller towns. Sheba had profited so greatly by this state of things, that at a later day Ezekiel speaks of the large commerce carried on by Saba, still the capital of Yemen, between Aden, as an entrepôt for Indian exports, and the wide region of Western Asia,[2] not confining itself, indeed, to any locality, but drawing gain from traffic with every available market.[3] Like many

[1] Ruth ii. 12.

[2] Ezek. xxvii. 19-24; xxviii. 13. Job vi. 19.

[3] Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, ii., iii.

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Eastern kingdoms, Egypt among others, the throne of Sheba was filled during Solomon's day, by a queen, and this great personage, having heard about the Hebrew monarch's wisdom and riches, determined to pay him the great honour of making the very long journey required to reach Jerusalem and see him.

Great interest must have been felt in Jerusalem when it was learned that this great queen had undertaken a camel journey from her remote dominions, to see and hear for herself respecting the Wise King. This was heightened, when she came, by the splendour of her attendance and the richness of the gifts she presented to Solomon, as was usual on approaching a monarch. "She came to Jerusalem," we are told, "with a very great train, with camels," and "gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold,[1] and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon."[2] Orientals have always been fond of playing with riddles and intellectual puzzles, and by these this illustrious visitor tested the wisdom of Solomon, who readily solved all her questions. Legend has been busy with an account of them. She had dressed, we are told, 500 boys as girls, and 500 girls as boys, and collected 1,000 carpets of gold and silver tissue, a crown adorned with pearls and diamonds, and a great quantity of perfumes. All these were sent to Jerusalem, and with them a single pearl, a diamond cut through in zigzags, and a crystal goblet in a box. Her envoy brought also a letter to Solomon, which intimated that if he was really a prophet, he would tell which were boys and which girls, in the train of her ambassadors; guess the contents of the box, pierce the pearl, thread the

[1] £1,250,000. *Speaker's Com.*, 1 Kings ix. 14. [2] 1 Kings x. 2, 10.

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diamond, and fill the goblet with water which came neither from earth nor heaven.

The king told the contents of the letter, we are informed, before it was opened; distinguished the boys from the girls as they washed their hands—the boys only dipping their hands in the water, the girls tucking up their sleeves to their shoulders, and washing their arms as well; by the help of a magic stone he drilled a hole through the pearl at once; and he threaded the diamond by making a worm pass through it, with a fine thread in its mouth. The crystal goblet he filled with water gathered from the sweat of a wild horse ridden furiously over the plain.[1]

The simple narrative of the Bible is infinitely better, however, than these wild inventions. The Arab queen "communed with Solomon of all that was in her heart," and received answers to all her questions. But his magnificence seems to have filled her with as much wonder as his wisdom. "The house which he had built, the meat of his table, the sitting of his servants, the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and the ascent by which he went up into the House of the Lord,"[2] especially roused her admiration. The pomp and expenditure of such a court may, indeed, well have been overpowering to a simple stranger; for Solomon, we are told, received each year, in gold alone, 666 talents, perhaps £30,000,000 sterling, besides his revenue from the taxes on merchants and traders, and the vast gifts brought by subject kings and princes.[3] A memorial of the visit was believed to remain in the balsam plantations at Jericho.[4] The Abyssinians, moreover, en-

[1] B. Gould, *Old Testament Legends*, vol. ii. pp. 196, 197.
[2] 2 Chron. ix. 3, 4. [3] 2 Chron. ix. 13, 14. [4] Jos., *Ant.*, VIII. vi. 6.

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couraged by the title—Queen of the South—given her in the Gospels [1] and in the Arabic version, boast of her as the ancestress, through Solomon, of their kings; but the fact that Arabia was the seat of her kingdom strips the African monarchy of any such doubtful honour.

[1] Matt. xii. 42.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE LATER DAYS OF SOLOMON.

THE glittering external prosperity of Israel under Solomon continued throughout his reign, though there were ominous indications, towards its close, that the heartless selfishness of the Great King, which diverted so much of the national wealth to gratify his own self-indulgence and love of magnificence, and the equally heartless and unwise tyranny with which this was accompanied, were creating a spirit of bitter disaffection, as, beneath the splendour of our sun, the orb itself rolls, black and dark. "Our sons," says an ancient Psalm ascribed by most critics to this period,[1] "are grown up in their youth like stately plants; our daughters are like polished corner pillars, the ornaments of a palace; our garners are full, giving forth all manner of store; our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; our oxen are great with young; there is no breach of our walls by a foe; no sallying out in defence; no battle cry in our streets. Happy is the people whose lot is such; happy is the people of whom Jehovah is God."

But the highest glory of Solomon's age lay neither in such wide material prosperity, nor in the extent of his empire, nor in his fame as a great builder. In this last respect, indeed, he stood far below not a few kings of Babylon and Egypt. Israel had a higher and nobler boast in its

[1] Ps. cxliv. 12-14. Thought by Ewald, Hitzig, Hupfeld, Delitzsch, Moll, and others to be a fragment from another Psalm, and distinct from what precedes and follows.

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quickened intellectual activity, to which the Church and the world owe abiding gratitude. While Assyria, Babylon, and Phœnicia, though Semitic states, had, each, a more or less extensive literature, it bears no comparison, for its real value, to that which burst out in Palestine, during Solomon's reign, with a fulness of mental energy, in many directions, marked alike by its originality and its surpassing results.

To this period must be referred the rise of the literary class in Israel. The Book of the Law, as the Pentateuch was termed, had indeed been the priceless treasure of many past generations;[1] the Book of Jasher had been compiled; that of "Joshua" had been composed, at latest, in the beginning of the reign of Saul; the Books of Judges and Ruth in that of David.[2] To that king, also, the nation had been indebted for the first collection of Psalms. But it was in the peaceful and happy days of Solomon, when the long national struggles were over, that Jewish literature developed itself most freely, as that of Greece was destined to do at the close of the Persian War. It must have been soon after David's death that Nathan and Gad wrote his life.[3] From Solomon's reign we find regular chronicles of the kingdom written by a State official,[4] and the Books of Samuel seem to have been put in their present form during the Great King's life by some prophet-author of the day.

A broad stream of religious poetry, which had its rise in the time of David, distinguishes that of his great son, and henceforth flows on in majestic fulness to the latest times of

[1] It is quite impossible to reconcile the theories of Bleek, De Wette, Ewald, Holtzmann, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Stade. Nor do I think the late origin of Leviticus and Deuteronomy at all proved. Of course, I do not hesitate to admit that they may have been more than once revised and expanded by men inspired to do so.

[2] See table in Lange's *Genesis*.

[3] 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

[4] 1 Kings xi. 41.

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Jewish history. Seventy-one Psalms are ascribed to David in the superscriptions, while only the 72d and the 127th bear the name of Solomon, though the 2d and the 132d also are thought by some to be his. It is recorded, however, that he wrote no fewer than 1,005 songs,[1] now nearly all lost; many of them doubtless religious, but not a few, in all probability, not directly so. Eighteen apocryphal Psalms of Solomon are still extant in a Greek translation, but they belong to a much later date. Such a time of national glory, however, produced, as might have been expected, a whole series of poets, singers, and thinkers, of whom the names of Ethan or Jeduthun, Asaph, Heman, Chalkol, and Darda still remain.[2]

The special literary feature of the Solomonic age, nevertheless, was not its poetry, but, rather the compositions henceforward distinctively associated with the name of "Wisdom." Hitherto the expression had been rarely used, so far as we know; but from Solomon's day, it occurs at least 300 times in Scripture. A new class of men sprang up, distinct from prophets and priests, and known as the Wise.[3] The rest and leisure prevailing, and the example of the king himself, led reflective minds from details of history, or the emotions of poetry, to meditate on the relations of man and the world to God; to investigate their laws, in illustration of Divine Order and Truth, and to inquire into their causes, grounds, and aims. Such studies were neces sarily religious, for it was a fundamental principle in Israel that "the fear of God was the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One understanding."[4] The mysteries of Providence as developed in the many-coloured

[1] 1 Kings iv. 32.
[2] 1 Kings iv. 31.
[3] Prov. i. 6; iii. 35; x. 8.
[4] Prov. ix. 10. Delitzsch.

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life around irresistibly attracted graver spirits. Intercourse with foreign peoples had widened the intellectual range of the nation, bringing before it new faiths and modes of thought, and larger ideas of the great problems of the universe. The wisdom of the East and of Egypt, by their attempts at the solution of the mysterious questions of life, naturally incited the study of these from the Hebrew point of view also. Phœnicia and Sheba brought men in contact with fresh lines of thought, and even the musings of the sages of India may have reached Jerusalem through the wide spread of commerce.

The incomparable superiority of Hebrew Wisdom to that of all other ancient nations is, however, beyond dispute. Nor is it difficult to understand the cause. While, among other races, philosophy speculated on questions altogether beyond our faculties, in Israel it contented itself with accepting the great first truths of religion, and only strove to discover their practical bearings. India might elaborate metaphysics, the Jew contented himself with faith; the Aryan intellect might seek to think everything out for itself, the Hebrew received revealed doctrines with a calm and resolute faith. The "Wisdom" of the one pursued cold and airy abstractions, which the keenest thought is unable to follow beyond a certain length; that of the other derived its power and depth from a living relation to the Holy God; a sense of His nearness, His perfections, and His inflexible laws. Other "wisdom" is distinct from morality; that of Israel demands it in its highest and purest sense. According to it, as I have said, all right action rests on the fear of the Lord, who searches the heart and knows all things. The wisdom[1] thus learned creates true humility; is the root

[1] Prov. x. 27; xiv. 27; xv. 3, 33; xvii. 3; xix. 21, 23; xxii. 4.

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of all earnest efforts after perfection; insists that no man is free from sin; urges him to a frank confession of sinfulness; teaches him to watch his thoughts and life, and impels him to a fruitful self-examination, which is the ultimate condition of spiritual health.[1]

The creation of this religious philosophy, as it may be called, in Israel, is one of the great distinctions of Solomon. In harmony with the form it assumed in other Oriental nations, it expressed itself in the shape of short, pointed sayings, known as Proverbs. In these were embodied weighty opinions, in the most sententious form, on the great questions of life—its ends, its difficulties, and the true principles for its guidance. The word is scarcely used before Solomon's day, though Balaam's prophecies are called "proverbs,"[2] and Jotham, Nathan, and the woman of Tekoah had already used the allied form of a parable. With Solomon, however, the use of proverbs is especially associated. He wrote, we are told, no fewer than 3,000, but of these many are lost, for the Book of Proverbs contains only 915 verses, and the last two chapters are expressly assigned to other authors. Yet the whole book bears the impress of his genius and that of his age. Gold, silver, and precious stones are now for the first time made the subject of frequent allusions; the busy ways of commerce are introduced, and much is said on the duties and authority of kings.[3] As might have been expected also from an age in which Solomon set the example of the study of nature, lessons are drawn from the habits and instincts of the lower creation. We have, further, the first ideas of systematic education and

[1] Prov. i. 7; vi. 23; viii. 10; xv. 23; xx. 9; xxviii. 13.

[2] Num. xxiii. 7, 18; xxiv. 3, 15, 20, 21, 23.

[3] Prov. i. 9; iii. 14, 15; vii. 16, 17; viii. 10, 11; x. 20; xiv. 28; xvi. 10–15, 16; xvii 3; xx. 15; xxii. 1; xxv. 4; xxvii. 21; xxxi. 10; xxxi. 14, 21–24, etc.

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training, and the earliest pictures of character, as was natural in the waking of the general mind to the laws and conditions of human society. Examples are also given of the riddles which delighted the Queen of Sheba, and Hiram of Tyre, and Solomon himself.

The Book of Proverbs is the concentrated wisdom of clear and devout intellects, looking at religion from the practical side. Its central principle is that goodness is wisdom, and vice and wickedness, folly; that, in short, even apart from the sin of evil doing, it is the greatest mistake; that, in the words of Carlyle, "the worst figure of misfortune is misconduct." Compared with the "proverbs" of other nations, its whole tone and spirit are indefinitely loftier; its wisdom immeasurably more searching and profound. The contrast, indeed, must always bring out with ever clearer light the spiritual grandeur of Israel, compared with the mere human prudence embodied in the "wisdom" of other ancient races. Only a high religious and moral culture could have looked on life in a way so intensely human on the one side, and nobly spiritual on the other, and have reconciled both in utterances so striking and true. The great conceptions of God and duty in their widest relations must have long filled the Hebrew mind before such compositions were possible.

Another production which marks the literary development of Solomon's reign is the Song of Songs, or Canticles.[1] No book has been more variously interpreted by Jewish and Christian scholars. Men like Michaelis, Jacobi, Herder, Umbreit, Ewald, Delitzsch, Pye-Smith, and Ginsburg, some of them nobly orthodox, see in it a charming poem designed to teach a lesson of practical goodness, and to exalt the glory

[1] Even Ewald assigns it to the age, if not to the pen, of Solomon.

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of pure and honourable married life. The simple story, it is maintained by this school, is as follows. A village girl, the daughter of a widow of Shulem,[1] north of Jezreel, is betrothed to a young shepherd, whom she had met while tending his flock. To guard against possible scandal from the frequent interviews of the lovers, her brothers employ her in their vineyard. On the way to this she one day meets Solomon, as he is making a grand progress through the land. Struck with her beauty, the king orders her to be taken charge of for him, brings her to his splendid tent, and thence, with great pomp, to Jerusalem, where he finally puts her into his harem, in hope that the honour shewn her, and the magnificence round her, may win her to accept him as her lover. But all is useless. True to her shepherd, she resists the royal blandishments, and turns a deaf ear to all his promises to raise her to the highest rank. Her betrothed has followed her to the capital, and, having gained a meeting with her, is assured that she is faithfully and for ever his. In the end Solomon feels that he cannot change her mind, and allows her to return home. The two faithful ones go off together, hand in hand, from the palace, and on their way to their native village renew, under the tree where they first met, their pledge of deathless love. On their arrival they are welcomed by the other shepherds, and the maiden is rewarded by her brothers for her matchless constancy and incorruptible virtue.

As an allegory, the poem is naturally susceptible of many interpretations, but it is neither desirable, nor, indeed, possible, to enter into these fully. Hengstenberg, one of the latest upholders of an allegorical interpretation, understands that in the first part we meet with the heavenly Solomon.

[1] The present Sulem. Conder.

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the Messiah, whose advent is preceded by severe afflictions of the Church from the powers of the world. Through means of the ancient people of God, the heathen are received into the kingdom of Christ. In the second part, there are first sin and judgment; then repentance and reconciliation through the influence of the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, of the heathen; and last, full restoration of the old relation of love, in consequence of which the daughter of Zion again becomes the centre of the kingdom of God; the covenant thus renewed enduring for ever. Whichever view be adopted—and men of the purest loyalty to revelation are found holding each—it cannot be said that even the humbler is unworthy a place in the Canon, for morality and religion in a nation, rest on the chaste purity of betrothed or married love, and an enforcement of this was supremely needed in Israel, where polygamy exerted so baleful an influence. Hence, as in Proverbs we constantly meet the praise of a pure and virtuous wife, many recognize in the Song of Songs a similar commendation of true and chaste love before marriage.[1]

But the breadth of mind in Solomon which expended itself in proverbs, and sacred or moral compositions, was not confined to these. He, first, so far as we know, gave himself to the scientific study of nature. "He spake," we are told, "of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon to the moss[2] that springs out of the wall," and also "of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."[3] His capacious intellect could leave no region of knowledge unexplored. Josephus, indeed, expands the list of his attainments and

[1] The fascination which Canticles has always had for devout spirits is not to be forgotten. It was the favourite book of St. Bernard, and no less dear to Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Bunyan.

[2] So most translators.

[3] 1 Kings iv. 33.

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mental achievements to the incredible, for, besides an intimate knowledge of all vegetable and animal nature, he adds that he wrote parables on each kind of creature or plant.[1] Nor was even this enough. He was the greatest magician of any age, and could cast out devils at his will. Arabic legend, indeed, makes him understand the languages of beasts and birds; control the genii by a wondrous ring; ride on their wings with lightning speed; make them build cities for him, and in all ways act as his slaves. Josephus contents himself with telling us that incantations, said to have been invented by Solomon, for the cure of diseases, and exorcisms for casting out devils, were still in use in Palestine in his own day.[2]

It is a curious but distinguishing feature of Eastern character, that a mind so all-embracing should have earned, apparently, its highest intellectual fame, among its contemporaries, from its skill in propounding and solving hard questions and riddles. Such, however, is the fact. In the legends associated with the visit of the Queen of Sheba, this has already been noticed. The highest personages in the East have, indeed, in all ages delighted in such play of words and tests of mental quickness. Tyrian historians say that Hiram maintained a constant interchange of riddles with Solomon, who, however, was successful in explaining most of those submitted to him, till at last a Tyrian boy got the victory by not only solving some which had foiled the wise king, but by proposing others beyond his powers to explain.[3] These intellectual puzzles were not, however, like those familiar to us in the West. They seem rather to have been a form of question and answer thrown into a

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, VIII. ii. 5. Graetz adopts this view.
[2] *Ant.*, VIII. ii. 5.
[3] Jos., *Contra Apion*, i. 17, 18. *Ant.*, VIII. v. 3.

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poetical form, in many cases serious enough. Examples still occur, indeed, in Proverbs, shewing that the experiences of life were often made the basis of useful or instructive reflections. Thus we have the question asked :

"There are three things which are never satisfied,
And a fourth which never says 'enough.' (What are they?)

A. The grave (sheol) and the barren womb,
The (parched) earth which cries for water,
And fire, which never says 'enough.'[1]

Q. Three things are wonderful to me,
And a fourth I do not understand ?

A. The way of the eagle in the heavens,
The way of the serpent on the rock,
The way of the shipman on the sea,
And the way of a man with a maiden.[2]

Q. Under three things the earth is troubled,
Under a fourth it can no longer endure?

A. Under a slave when he rises to power,
Under a low man when he is full of bread,
Under a hateful woman when she is married,
And under a female slave when she takes the place of[3] her mistress.

Q. Four things are small on the earth,
Yet are they wise and clever?

A. The ants, a weak little folk,
Prepare their food beforehand in the harvest;
The conies[4] are a feeble little folk,

[1] Prov. xxx. 15–31.
[2] All four leave no trace behind.
[3] Ewald, "is heir to." Gesenius, "dispossesses."
[4] The coney (*Hyrax Syriacus*) is no larger than a rabbit, and has a soft fur. It is, however, neither a ruminant nor a rodent, but is classified by naturalists between the hippopotamus and the rhinoceros, though it has the unique power of walking, fly-like, on the under surfaces of objects: pads on its feet, acting like "suckers," enabling it to do so, by the pressure of the external air, on their close adhesion to anything. There are no rabbits in Palestine, but the coney is very like them in its

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But they make their houses in the rocks;
The locusts have no king,
Yet they march out in armies;
The lizard you may catch with your hands,
Yet she dwells in the palaces of kings.[1]

The condition of Israel in these days of its highest glory was a strange union of simplicity and Oriental luxury. Almost five hundred years had passed since the Exodus, and in that time the tent had disappeared, except in the wilderness pastures, and houses had taken its place. The tops of the hills were covered with towns; open spaces for grazing, with their picturesque flocks and shepherds, were no longer seen in the heart of the land; fields of grain covered the valleys and the soft upland slopes, yielding copious harvests when the rains had duly fallen. Every valley was rich in shady trees and luscious fruits. Vineyards ran along the hillsides, their clusters drawing sap from the carefully tilled earth, and colour from the unclouded sun. "Men bound their asses to the vine, and their ass's colt to the choice grape; they washed their garments in wine, and dipped their clothes in the blood of grapes. Their faces were red with wine, and their teeth white with milk."[2] Agriculture,

habits and manners. Difficulty has been found in its being classed in Leviticus with creatures that chew the cud. But the Hebrew word simply means "chew over again," and no one can watch the constant motion of the creature's jaws without feeling the naturalness of the expression, which the law-giver uses as describing appearances, not as a scientific definition. Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 76. The "harvesting" by ants has often been fancied a mistake. But the following quotation is apparently decisive, on the side of the "Proverbs:" "The harvesting of the ants is everywhere to be seen on the Philistine plain, and how any one can have doubted that the ants (either grub or mature) do use grain, seems impossible. Not only are the tracks leading out of the cornfields converging all on to the mouths of the ant holes, but every ant hole has about it a fringe of husks and chips, carried out as waste material. The *débris* is proof positive that the useful material has been consumed. At the present moment there is a line of ants, each struggling with a grain of barley which they are carrying off from what is spilt from the donkey's food." (Flinders Petrie, *Pal. Ex. Fund*, p. 240, October. 1890.)

[1] Graetz and Delitzsch. [2] Gen. xlix. 11, 12.

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gardening, and the culture of the vine were the chief occupations under Solomon. Houses had, heretofore, been built of sun-dried bricks and sycamore, but he introduced the squared stone, and the cedar and cypress of Tyre.[1]

The spread of commerce with foreign countries had led to improvements in the medium of exchange. In ancient times value had been reckoned in sheep,[2] only barter prevailing; circular pieces of silver[3] had afterwards come into use, but Solomon found it necessary to fix the worth of the precious metals, as Babylon and Phœnicia had done, according to a prescribed scale. A pebble of a certain weight—the shekel—formed a unit of calculation, and was known as the Royal Stone.[4] The great shekel bore the name of the sacred weight. For large transactions, heavier pieces of silver and gold, of disk form, were prepared, weighing 3,000 shekels. Measures of length, and surface, and of capacity, were also developed.[5]

The Hebrews do not seem to have thought, as yet, in those times, of dividing the day into hours. They spoke of morning, noon, and evening, and the night was divided into three watches. The day was reckoned from sunset to sunset.[6] The week was not of ten days, as among the Egyptians, who reckoned by the sun, but of seven days, from the changes of the moon, the circuit of which formed the national calendar. Every new moon was a feast day, but it is not known how the excess of nearly two days a month was made to agree with the calculation by weeks. The common year began with the close of harvest,[7] but the ecclesiastical

[1] Stadi. [2] Kesitah. [3] Gerah.
[4] Eben ha Melech. Stone weights were common. There are some now in the collection of the Palestine Fund Society. Deut. xxv. 13 (Heb.). Prov. xi. 1.
[5] Graetz, vol. i. p. 334. [6] Lev. xxiii. 32.
[7] Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22.

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dated from the anniversary of the Exodus in spring, and the harvest feast of Tabernacles fell in the seventh month.[1] Whether the regulation of the religious calendar for each year was in the hands of a special commission, or left to the priests, is not known.[2] In public life, however, it began to be the custom to date from the accession of kings, in imitation of the Egyptian practice.

The population was divided into three or four classes: the pure Hebrews, who formed the ruling caste; native Canaanites, who had gradually sunk in social position, till, under Solomon, they were finally degraded to more or less complete serfdom; foreigners who had settled in the land for trade or security; and slaves, either taken in the old wars, or Canaanites who had sold away their freedom.[3] The whole of the Gibeonites, as we have seen, had been made over to the priests as temple slaves, to cut wood and draw water for the altar, and for other menial work.[4] Fragments of the old native clans, who lived near Jerusalem, were apparently used as slaves of the palace, and for public servile work generally—though some of them, it would appear, were, rather, serfs, with part of their time at their own control, and supporting themselves as labourers or mechanics.[5]

In the eyes of the law, all men, in the most vital respects, were equal. No distinction was made between the life of an Israelite and of a slave; whoever murdered either must die, for all men were made in the image of God. Even as late as the middle ages the guilt of killing a bondman was reckoned trifling compared with that of killing a freeman, but

[1] Num. xxix. 12.

[2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 335.

[3] Lev. xxv. 44, the slaves bought with money. See *Monatsschr.* (Frankel-Graetz), 1871, p. 239.

[4] Josh. ix. 23.

[5] Graetz, vol. i. p. 336.

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there was no such artificial rule among the Hebrews. The master who did his slave a bodily injury was forced to set him free. But the hot blood of the south maintained a terrible evil in the form of blood revenge. It was a sacred obligation on the next of kin to a murdered person to avenge his death by killing the homicide or murderer. But the law sought to mitigate what it could not uproot, by the provision of cities of refuge for any one, whether Israelite, foreigner, or Canaanite, who had unintentionally taken life.[1] The trial of causes and the punishment of the guilty had originally been left to the elders who represented each town or community, but, under the kings, judges seem to have been named by the Crown[2] for graver questions; the old tribunals still retaining their power in simpler matters. Trials took place in the open air, at the town gate, where there is always an open space, and the greatest concourse. The judge sat in the middle of the crowd, which stood in circles round, according to their social rank.[3]

God Himself was regarded as the source of all law, and the protector of the innocent. He was the Judge of the whole earth, to whom wickedness was an abomination. Trials were therefore considered as held in His sight; His unseen presence watching that justice was done. Two witnesses at least were required for condemnation. The scribe or notary of the court was charged with seeing the sentence carried out. The law, however, prescribed, in humane distinction from that of many ancient communities, that, in cases of capital offence, only the immediately guilty should die, so that, for example, children should not be put to death for the crime of their parent. This, however, was

[1] See vol. ii. p. 497. Num. xxxv. 15.
[2] 2 Chron. xix. 5.
[3] Exod. xviii. 14. Deut. xxii. 15; xxv. 7. Lam. v. 14. Amos v. 15.

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not always observed, as the execution of Saul's descendants, for his offence at Gibeon, only too sadly shews.[1]

It was also a noble provision of the Hebrew law, that there should be no poor in the nation. The kindred of an impoverished man were required to restore him to a simple independence.[2] All debt was cancelled at the end of each seven years, and if a patrimony had been alienated and not redeemed, it reverted to the original owner or his family in the fiftieth year.[3] An Israelite who had sold himself to pay his obligations was free in the seventh year. But it is a question how far these laws were in force during the reign of Solomon. The Levites, at least, had no part in the beneficent provisions regarding property, for they had no tribal district assigned them. But their wants were supplied on a moderate scale. The priests were charged with the maintenance of their brethren, who aided them in the temple sacrifices; part of the offerings and gifts being assigned to them. Those Levites, however, who had other functions—the watchers of the temple gates, the under-helpers at the offerings, and the singers and musicians—had no share in the sacrifices or sacred gifts. They depended on tithes, which Solomon appears to have strictly exacted in their behalf, though Hezekiah is first mentioned as having formally assigned them as their right.[4] The Levites who were not on duty at the temple lived in the Levitical towns throughout the various tribes, and perhaps engaged in the instruction of the people. Poor by birth, and without the prospect of a share in the wealth open to all others, they were yet well cared for during Solomon's reign.

But the long and bright summer day of the great king's

[1] 2 Kings xiv. 6.
[2] Deut. xv. 4.
[3] Lev. xxv. 25.
[4] 2 Chron. xxxi. 4.

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reign was fated to set with gloomy indications of gathering evil. Notwithstanding the amazing prosperity which his peaceful commercial policy spread throughout the land, it must very soon have been felt how seriously the ancient liberties of the nation were endangered by the centralization he had introduced, and by his undue exaltation of the throne. Hitherto they had been the freest of all ancient communities, but Solomon was founding a monarchy which threatened to reduce them, under his successors, to the level of the subjects of an Oriental despotism. They might have borne any outlay for the temple, as for a great national undertaking, without a murmur. But it was different when vast sums were sunk in successive royal palaces on the grandest scale, and on a civil list which exhausted the resources of provinces. To maintain such a harem as had been created, with its army of attendants; such numberless officials of all grades as the magnificence of the court demanded; such personal expenditure as the imperial tastes of Solomon involved, was to enslave the country for the glory of an individual. Israel had been unused to taxes, but burdens of many kinds now pressed on all in the most irritating forms—not for national objects, but for the maintenance of a luxurious court. The private domain of the Crown had hitherto in large measure sufficed to meet the necessary cost, and was regarded as the basis of the revenue.[1] But not even the immense sum received for tribute from subject nations; the rich gifts of noble and royal visitors and embassies; or the large amounts from foreign commerce carried on for the king, and from licenses to trade, sold to merchants, were enough to meet the constant drain of the palace expenditure. Tithes and first-fruits had been long

[1] Isa. iii. 6, 7.

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recognized as an established tax from the land to its Lord and Protector, Jehovah; but, as the condition of things changed, these were appropriated largely by Solomon to his own uses, ostensibly for national purposes.[1] The division of the whole country into twelve revenue districts was a serious grievance, especially as the high official over each could make large profits from the excess of contributions demanded.[2] That extortion of the worst kind prevailed in many cases, is only to say that the officials were Orientals. The prophets abound with denunciations of oppression, bribery, and violence towards the people on the part of local dignitaries, and it would, no doubt, be too often in Solomon's day as it was in the days of Isaiah and his brethren. What the tyranny may have been is illustrated by that of the Pasha of Mosul, in our own day, who raised a compensation from all the villages in which he rested, for the wear and tear of his teeth in eating the food supplied him by the villagers. The tax collectors were told by him, "Go destroy, eat." "To eat money," that is, to get it by force or illegally, is a common expression in the East. Districts thus peeled take revenge by plundering caravans or travellers, or by laying waste the cultivated parts of the Pashalic. The villages are deserted, and the roads become little frequented and very insecure.[3] Such anarchy did not break out in Solomon's time, but discontent took a still worse revenge in the secession of the great bulk of the nation from the House of David. The old Canaanite

[1] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 402.

[2] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 405. A comparison of the lists of the Canaanite towns in Israel (Jud. i.) and the districts of the collectors under Solomon shews that these towns were their special headquarters, doubtless as the points most heavily taxed (see 1 Kings iv. 8-19).

[3] Layard's *Popular Nineveh'n*, 12, 13.

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population doubtless shared this dissatisfaction, for the royal burdens must have been made specially onerous in their case. It seems probable, indeed, that, at least in the later years of Solomon's reign, a poll tax was levied universally, on Israelite and Canaanite alike—though such a tax was equally hateful to both. The imposts, in fact, became in the end so unendurable, that they contributed largely to the secession of the ten tribes.

Another grievance that sapped the loyalty of the people was the systematic enforcement of compulsory or virtually slave labour, to carry out the various schemes of the king. The temple; the vast series of royal buildings at Jerusalem; the fortifications of the little city; the erection of strongholds at different points; the construction of roads; the creation of the royal gardens and parks; the building of the huge aqueducts and reservoirs at the capital, and much else, had required an amount of labour which could not be obtained by ordinary means. In imitation of the Pharaohs, therefore, he established and enforced a system of forced, unpaid labour, on the community at large. The remnants of the native races had, indeed, already been subjected to this oppression under David, but the severity of the demand on them was now much increased.[1] Thirty thousand men were drafted to toil in the forests of Lebanon and in the quarries at Jerusalem, felling trees and hewing vast stones; 10,000 serving a month in rotation, with an interval of two months at home, to attend to their own affairs; a tax of four months' labour a year from each of the 30,000.[2]

It was generous of Hiram to permit this importation of foreign labour to his dominions, for Lebanon was Phœnician, and especially so as Solomon by this means saved paying

[1] 2 Sam. xx. 24. Tribute = forced levies. [2] 1 Kings v. 13, 14.

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wages for felling or squaring the timber, if not also for dragging it down to the sea-shore: nothing, apparently, being left to the local owner of slaves but the profit on floating the beams from Phœnicia to Joppa. The Lebanon Mountains rise grandly, a few miles back from the shore, and were in those ages covered apparently, far and near, with forests, so that the bringing logs down to the sea, hard though it must have been, was a very much easier task than dragging them from Phœnician Joppa to Jerusalem, which lies half a mile above the sea level, and is at least forty miles from the port by the winding passes of the hills.

But even this army of unwilling labourers was insufficient, as the buildings and other undertakings of the king increased.[1] A levy was, therefore, raised from "all Israel,"[2] not from the native races only,[3] amounting to 70,000 men to carry loads, and 80,000 to hew down and square timber in Lebanon, and to quarry and prepare building stones in Jerusalem; 3,300 officers watching that the tasks were performed. How great the suffering imposed by these corvées must have been, is easy to imagine. Continued through years, involving exposure for months together on the mountains, or toil in the darkness of quarries worked like mines, where, as has been noticed, the smoke of their torches, used in the thick darkness, may still be seen, they must have been fatal to many. But, besides all this, there was the exhausting labour of getting down huge beams and trees to the sea-shore; and on their reaching Joppa, dragging them up the steep mountain passes to Jerusalem; or

[1] 1 Kings v. 15, 16. [2] 1 Kings v. 13.

[3] In 1 Kings ix. 22, it is said that only Canaanites were subjected to forced labour, but this appears rather a general expression for the fact that the Canaanites bore the far heavier burden, as we find, in 1 Kings xi. 28, that Jeroboam, the master of the public works, was "over all the charge of the house of Joseph." The word charge is elsewhere translated "burdens." Thenius and Ewald translate it "forced labour."

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transporting immense blocks of stone on rough sledges, from the quarries to the temple site on Mount Moriah. Forced labour in the East has in all ages been as fatal as war, and it was probably as destructive in Solomon's time.[1]

Nor could it have been without a hurtful effect that, after supplying the labourers for twenty years with an annual amount of grain, wine, and oil, which itself was a heavy tax, Solomon found himself so much in debt to Hiram, for money advanced and materials bought, that he had to alienate to him twenty towns in Galilee, near the Phœnician border. It would do little to smooth down offended national pride that, with Oriental sharpness, he obtained 120 talents of gold in abatement of the gift, or that the wit of the Tyrians made light of their king's bargain by calling the district Cabul, "How little!"[2] It seems to have lain in the northern part of the territory of Naphtali, on the boundaries of Tyre, and, being probably peopled mainly by Phœnicians and others of native blood, could have been of little value to the Jewish king. Renan says that it was a fertile region, much superior to Palestine generally; but, if so, it seems strange that Hiram should apparently have refused it, as not worth accepting. But, whether worthless or of high value, its alienation must have been unpopular in Israel.[3] No king can afford to give away permanently any part of his dominions.

The relations of Solomon to the priesthood and the prophets, with whom his authority was, in its basis, so closely connected, tended also to weaken the kingdom. The wide extent of the empire, embracing many heathen nations

[1] See vol. ii. p. 98.

[2] 1 Kings ix. 13. There is still a village called "Kabul," about eight miles slightly S. E. of Acre. Furrer's *Palästina*, p. 299. Kiepert's Map.

[3] 2 Chron. viii. 2. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, 750 ff.

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and communities, made it difficult, if not impossible, to retain the strict intolerance which the laws of Moses demanded. It had not, indeed, been at any time rigidly enforced, for heathen towns even in the limits of Israel had always, apparently, retained their idolatrous worship. But now that Ammon, Moab, Syria, Edom, and the Philistine country were under Solomon, and Israel had been thus opened to intercourse with them, toleration seemed a necessity. Numbers of each heathen race, as, for example, of the Phœnicians, had settled in Jerusalem and elsewhere; and Solomon, to bind the subject people to his throne, had married heathen princesses from Sidon, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and the Hittite tribes. Whether from a desire to propitiate the resident foreign population by tolerating their religions, or from a weak and sinful indifference which treated such matters lightly, he permitted a high place[1] to be built for Chemosh, "the abomination of the Moabites," on "the hill east of Jerusalem"—traditionally, on the south side of the Hill of Offence; for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon; and for each of the other gods of "all his foreign wives."[2] Incense and the smoke of sacrifices to idols—such sacrifices, in some cases, as even nature abhors—were thus seen rising close to the temple of Jehovah, and under the very walls of the holy city. It would be pleasant to think that Solomon himself took no part in such rites, but it is expressly said that he "went after Ashtoreth and Milcom, or Moloch."[3] Such desecration of all that was sacred must have prejudiced the priesthood against the

[1] The modern peasants of Palestine still worship at what they call the Mukam or High Place, not in mosques, which are very rare. The Mukam is a building of about ten feet square, on a hill-top, and has a round dome carefully white-washed, and a point on the south wall, to mark the direction in which to pray—that is, towards Mecca.

[2] 1 Kings xi. 7, 8. [3] 1 Kings xi. 5. Mill's *Samaritans*, p. 209.

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throne, and would spread from them through the people. Nor was it less fatal in its results on the attitude of the prophets. David, like Solomon, had always kept the priesthood in the strictest dependence, but he had known how to reconcile his own dignity with loyalty to the prophets, of whom Gad and Nathan were his familiar and honoured advisers. Even at the beginning of Solomon's reign these two independent powers worked together in harmony, for Nathan had been the chief agent in securing his succession. But from the time of that seer's death, which took place apparently soon after that of David, we hear no more of any prophet acting with Solomon. Relying on his own "wisdom," he seems to have thought that he could do without such interference. But his course with regard to idolatry brought to a head the slumbering unquiet which such a state of things had long caused. Towards the middle and close of his reign, we hear again of prophets, like Ahijah of Shiloh, and Shemaiah, and Iddo, who survived the king about twenty years.[1] But their relation to the throne had changed. Nathan had been not only the tried friend and counsellor of early days; his two sons had supported the king as ministers. The younger race of prophets, however, turned wholly against him, from the conviction that, under his rule, Israel was being transformed into a despotism which imperilled the liberties of the nation and the interests of religion. Nothing could be more disastrous, for the glory of the past had been the direct result of the harmonious working together of prophets and kings, not by defined laws or formal agreement, but by hearty sympathy. But Solomon's exalted ideas of kingship, and perhaps the remembrance of the Divine promise that he should receive an

[1] 2 Chron. xii. 15; xiii. 22

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especial gift of wisdom, had led him gradually to act alone; not always in opposition to the prophets, but simply apart from them, though we must suppose an exceptional conflict with them in his course respecting the idolatry he so widely favoured. It was doubtless his sincere belief that "a Divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment."[1] Nor could any one have understood better the conditions of a noble and happy reign. It was a saying of his that "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."[2] "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but He honoureth him that hath mercy on the poor," was one of his proverbs.[3] Others were in keeping. "It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness."[4] "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment sifteth away all evil with his eyes."[5] "A wise king sifteth the wicked, and tears them to pieces under the threshing sledge."[6] "The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah; as the streams of water He turns it whithersoever He will."[7] "Mercy and truth are the defence of a king: his throne is upholden by mercy."[8] And as if holding the mirror up unconsciously to his own course, at least in his later years, he tells us that to oppress the people, is a sign of the want of understanding in a prince, and to hate gains thus secured is the condition of a long life on the throne.[9] But, as in many other cases, he had been wise for others rather than himself. The prophets had perhaps expected that, in him, they would rejoice over the ideal king, for whom they and the

[1] Prov. xvi. 10.
[2] Prov. xiv. 34.
[3] Prov. xiv. 31.
[4] Prov. xvi. 12.
[5] Prov. xx. 8.
[6] Prov. xx. 26. So Hitzig, Ewald.
[7] Prov. xxi. 1.
[8] Prov. xx. 28.
[9] Prov. xxviii. 16; see also xxix. 4; xii. 14.

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best of the nation were longing, who should unite the loftiest devotion to God, with the purest wisdom and integrity in his human relations; such a king as was described in the Law,[1] and as Nathan had spoken of to David, as hereafter to be settled over the house and kingdom of Jehovah for ever.[2] But they had slowly come to see their hopes disappointed, and had been forced to believe their expectations of such a "Messiah" as not borne out; though, indeed, had they known it, this must have been the case with any sinful and imperfect man; the true Messiah, then still far distant, being of an infinitely different type.

The friendly relations with heathen countries around; their absorption into the empire; the influence of their populations, to whom the land was now open; the temptation to follow, in religion and morals, communities so much more advanced in arts and culture; and, withal, the natural tendency of national wealth to luxury and its vices, had further excited profound dissatisfaction in the best and most solid portion of the community, and also in the prophets—the representatives of ancient simplicity and obedience to the law of God, as the true King of Israel. Things had, indeed, completely changed since the Syrian conquests of David. Instead of a secluded nation of shepherds and farmers, Israel had become the centre of a wide and restless commercial activity, which brought its people into contact with all the world. Almost the whole trade of the earth, as it then was, passed through the territories of Solomon. Nothing could reach Tyre from Asia or Arabia except over Hebrew soil; nothing be exported to either except across it. The entrance to Egypt and the routes from it were through Palestine. Phœnicians, Arabs, Babylonians, Egyptians;

[1] Deut. xvii. 14. [2] 1 Chron. xvii. 14.

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caravan drivers, and attendants, with a stream of foreign merchants, travellers, and visitors, must have been continually passing through the country.[1] Strings of camels and dromedaries from Midian and Ephah, and Sheba, and in the north and south of Arabia, and from Seba, the ancient kingdom of Meroe in Upper Nubia, to the north of Kordofan, Sennaar, and Abyssinia, on the direct caravan route between Arabia and India, on the one hand, and the interior of Africa, on the other; vast flocks for the temple sacrifices, from Kedar and Nebaioth, or Nabatæa, both in the wide pastoral regions of northern Arabia; traders to the fairs of Palestine, with yarn and linen, from Egypt; cloths and foreign goods, trinkets and jewellery from Tyre; were every-day sights. Every village and hamlet was now familiar with the travelling "merchant," the peddler of those days. But foreign intercourse brought foreign morals. The "strange" or foreign "woman" followed the "strange man," and spread immorality to such an extent through the land as to occasion the constant warnings of the Proverbs.[2] It was clear to all thoughtful minds that mere external glory had not fulfilled the ideal of Israel.

The outlook, indeed, was sad in the extreme. The conscription for military service might be borne; royal monopolies of trade were only what prevailed around; but that the free people of God should be sinking into the slaves of a despot—ground down by a "heavy yoke," by "grievous service," by "the chastisement of the taskmaster's whip," like the degraded fellahin of Egypt;[3] that the abomination

[1] Isa. lx. 6.

[2] Prov. v. 3-20; vi. 24-35; vii. 5-27; ix. 13-18. In chap. vii. 20, the husband is, strikingly, said to be a travelling merchant, who has "gone a long journey, and has taken the money bag with him, and will not come home till the full moon."

[3] 1 Kings xii. 4, 7, 11, 14.

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of the heathen should be publicly worshipped under the shadow of the temple, on altars built by Solomon, the anointed representative of Jehovah, the true King of Israel; that the flood-gates of heathen immorality should be opened, and the country filled with the impurity of the nations around, was not to be endured. Unfortunately, there seemed no alternative but revolution. It was soon to be shewn that royal pride had risen above all considerations of prudence, and would grant no reforms—a result which the prophets seem instinctively to have foreseen. The old tribal jealousies, moreover, never really laid aside, had been rekindled in alarming intensity by the favour shewn to Judah, and the burdens laid on Ephraim, always its haughty and fierce rival, but now justly discontented. The splendour and wealth of Jerusalem, its palaces, and, above all, its temple, awakened bitter feelings. Ephraim had at least an equal claim, she fancied, to the sunshine of the royal presence, and the temple was daily drawing to itself the veneration which had hitherto been associated with the ancient holy places of the tribes. The change from Saul to David had formerly been of signal advantage; might not another be as great an advancement compared with Solomon? Terms might be dictated to a new king. He might be pledged to maintain the ancient liberties of the people, and to honour Jehovah alone; and the prophets might once more work with him in trying to realize the ideal of the theocracy.

Such must have been the train of thought in the mind of prophets and people as the reign of Solomon drew to a close. At last, the erection of the heathen altars for his wives led to their open expression. Whether by a prophet or in a dream, it was announced to him that the kingdom would be

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rent from him and given to one of his servants; a single tribe—that of Judah—being alone left, not for his sake, but for that of David and of Jerusalem.[1] Nor was the successor thus designated long unknown. It was Jeroboam, the son of an Ephraimite of the name of Nebat, whom Jewish tradition identifies with the traitor Shimei. His mother is said to have been a woman of indifferent character,[2] early a widow, but supported afterwards by her son. His birthplace, Zereda, or Sarira, is identified by some with Zarthan or Zaretan, in the Ghor of the Jordan, near the mouth of the Jordan, where the brasses were cast for the temple. Active and of bright intelligence, he had been employed in some subordinate post in the new fortifications of Jerusalem, planned by Solomon in the beginning of his reign, and having attracted the notice of the king, was made superintendent of the taskwork exacted from the northern tribes.[3] Thus brought into prominence, he seems to have used his invidious office wisely and gently, raising no personal dislike, but making himself the champion of his tribesmen, though carrying out his duties thoroughly. Indeed, he was afterwards known as he who had "enclosed the city of David."[4] But a higher destiny was in store for him. As he was on his journey one day from Jerusalem to Ephraim, the prophet Ahijah, of Shiloh, suddenly stopped him; the two being alone in the open country. With the license of his order, the prophet caught hold of a new mantle worn by Jeroboam, and tore it into twelve pieces, giving him ten. Then followed the announcement of which this strange act was the symbol—that God had rent ten tribes from Solomon on account of his having favoured idolatry, and had chosen

[1] 1 Kings xi. 11-13.

[2] Septuagint, Vat. Text; 1 Kings xii. 24. This may well have been an addition made by Jewish hatred. [3] 1 Kings xi. 28. [4] 1 Kings xii. 26. Septuagint.

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him, Jeroboam, as king over them. The hope in Ahijah's heart, in anticipation of such a revolution, shaped itself in his closing words. The throne of Jeroboam would be safe for his posterity if he, unlike Solomon, walked in the ways of God, did what was right in His sight, and kept His statutes and commandments as David had done.[1]

This extraordinary communication, which, in the hands of an instrument so able and unscrupulous as Jeroboam, carried with it the earnest of its fulfilment, is a striking illustration of the anomalous position of the prophet in Israelitish history. One of the order had anointed David after proscribing Saul, though the throne was not, as it proved to be, vacant for yet many years, and though there was an heir apparent of the highest character; another prophet secured the succession to Solomon before David had died; and, now, a third virtually instigates rebellion while Solomon is still reigning, choosing the person to raise it who was of all others sure of success, and stimulating him to the attempt by his assurance, as speaking for God, that he would be triumphant. To reign under such circumstances was difficult for any one, but next to impossible except by passive submission to the prophetic order. We shall hereafter see even the quiet and gentle Elisha sending off a secret messenger to Jehu, urging him to revolt against a king with whom the prophet had long been on more or less friendly terms, and who had, at least, protected him from Jezebel, the Queen Mother—the commission given to the traitor, who was, on the spot, secretly anointed king in the room of his wounded master, being that he, the trusted head of the army, should slaughter every member of the immense family of Ahab, whose son Jotham was.

[1] 1 Kings xi. 38-38.

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How long this happened before Solomon's death is not said, but it had, apparently, an immediate effect on Jeroboam. He seems to have set himself henceforth to prepare for his coming fortune. He even gradually, like Absalom, affected almost royal state, for we read of his maintaining in Ephraim no fewer than 300 chariots.[1] But this, ere long, excited the suspicions of Solomon, and Jeroboam had, for the time, to flee. Hurrying therefore to Egypt, he found the same protection from Shishak, of the Assyrian dynasty, as Hadad of Edom in the past, and, like him, was honoured by having a princess given to him in marriage. As long as Solomon lived, he could not venture to return, but communications, eagerly maintained with his countrymen, prevented his being forgotten, and in due time he was to re-appear as the Nemesis of Solomon's guilt, by breaking up his kingdom.

[1] 1 Kings xii. 25. Septuagint.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS AND THE SONG OF SONGS.

A BRIEF notice of the Book of Proverbs has already been given in the preceding pages, but it forms so characteristic a feature of Hebrew literature that a fuller reference to it seems demanded.

As it now stands, this collection of sententious utterances on all subjects embraced by the Jews under the name of Wisdom, appears to have been gradually formed in the three hundred years between Solomon and Hezekiah:[1] a great part of it, but not the whole, being the composition of the wise king. Ewald's opinion is that the oldest section dates from about two centuries after Solomon, though still breathing the spirit of his age; that under Hezekiah a second part was formed, with much in it from Solomon's time; that the introduction followed a hundred years later; then some additions in the body of the Book, and finally the last two chapters immediately before the Exile.[2] Bertheau fancies that it was mainly collected under Hezekiah, though additions were subsequently made.[3] Hitzig thinks the first chapters date almost from Solomon's time; that a second portion was added shortly before the time of Isaiah; a third immediately after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and other smaller sections still later.[4] Delitzsch and Bleek sub-

[1] Zöckler, *Die Sprüche Salomonis*, p. 22.
[2] *Poet. Bücher des A. T.*, vol. iv. pp. 2 ff.
[3] *Kommentar*, Einl., pp. 23 ff.
[4] *Kommentar*, Einl., pp. 17 ff.

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stantially agree in the opinion that the first and larger half of the collection is older than Hezekiah, while the second dates from the age of that monarch. The compiler of the first half, they think, lived in the reign of Jehoshaphat, about a hundred years after Solomon. The great source of the collection, in its older parts, was, they assume, the rich treasure of 3,000 proverbs composed by Solomon himself, which, in Jehoshaphat's day, must have been carefully preserved. With these, however, may well have been included the best utterances of men like the four sons of Mahol—Ethan, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda—whose wisdom was only less famous than that of Solomon himself.[1] The first and larger half thus formed, constituted, it is thought, essentially, a Book of Youth; the second half, a Book for the People; a treasury of wisdom for kings and subjects; the body of which consisted of proverbs collected during the reign of Hezekiah. A few additions made at a later time completed the whole.[2] Graetz holds that the collection now known as the Book of Proverbs was "not only compiled, but enriched, under Hezekiah."[3]

The Proverbs in their simplest shape are brief, and consist generally of two members, which illustrate and enforce the thought designed to be expressed, or present an instructive contrast. Of such sententious maxims there are more than five hundred, dating, as we have seen, from different times, but all alike in their style and character. Their usually studied language shews that they were not proverbs in the ordinary sense—mere thoughtful embodiments of popular wit or wisdom—but the careful composition of men who set a value on beauty of style, and could employ it. Besides

[1] 1 Kings iv. 31.
[2] Delitzsch, *Sprüche Salomo's*, in Herzog, vol. xiv. pp. 707 ff.
[3] *Gesch.*, vol. ii. p. 265. Bleek, Einl., pp. 631 ff.

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Solomon, the class known as THE WISE were, no doubt, chiefly their authors; men, who, like the Psalmists, belonged generally to the schools of the prophets, and sought, under Divine guidance, the religious instruction of the nation. Venerable members of these communities may well have proposed to instruct their "sons" or disciples, by such pithy and easily remembered sayings, how to look at life wisely and know its realities from different sides. Hence the Proverbs are often couched in the form of an address, in which even individuals are approached by the words, "Hear, my son," or "Hast thou seen?" By such vivid and simple means the WISE sought to impart to the young and old their own experience of life. Hence the Proverbs form a mirror of moral precepts and reflections fitted to benefit all classes in every age, and it is pleasant to find that some of them are still current among even the Moslem peasantry of the Holy Land.

"Many a one feigns [1] himself rich and has nothing;
Many a one feigns himself poor yet has great riches." [2]

"A bribe seems a magician's jewel to him who has it to give;
Which way soever he turns it, it seems to bring him good." [3]

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But a desire realized is a tree of life." [4]

"Him who keeps back corn (till famine prices come) the people curse,
But they pour blessings on the head of him that sells it." [5]

The monarchy gave rise to many proverbs which are laudatory or the reverse, according to the character of the king for the time being. A series which ascribe great importance to the ruler seem to date from the age of

[1] Ewald. Graetz. Delitzsch. Hitzig. [2] Prov. xiii. 7.
[3] xvii. 8. [4] xiii. 12. [5] xi. 26.

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Solomon. Some have been given already,[1] but the following are of the same class.

"The lips of the king are an oracle;
His mouth is unerring in its decisions.
A just weight and scales are (as it were) God's;
Even the smallest stone weights are not beneath His regard.[2]
Righteous lips are the delight of kings,
They love them that speak the truth.
The wrath of the king is like the angel of death,
But a wise man knows how to appease it.
In the friendly looks of the king is life,
His favour is like the clouds of the latter rain."[3]

Solomon was followed by kings many of whom were unworthy of their office; governed by caprice, and setting no bounds to their despotic temper. Such also have their niche in this temple of wisdom.

"The terror caused by a king is like the roaring of a lion;
To provoke him to anger is to throw away one's life."[4]

"Like a roaring lion and a bear ranging after its prey,
Is a wicked ruler over a poor people."[5]

A series of Proverbs is devoted to the duties of woman. A wife in Israel held a high place compared with that of her sex in some other Eastern nations. She was the helpmeet of her husband and the manager of all household affairs, reigning as a queen in her family. If worthless, she ruined her husband and brought disgrace and shame on her children. The Book of Proverbs assumes that a man has only one wife, and praises or condemns her, according to her deserts.

[1] Page 501.

[2] This seems the sense of the clause. Hitzig. Graetz reads "the king's" for "God's," but on what authority I know not.

[3] Prov. xvi. 10-15. The Septuagint has the singular "king's," for the plural "kings," in verses 12, 13.

[4] xx. 2. See xix. 12.

[5] xxviii. 15.

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"An honest woman is a crown to her husband;
A worthless wife is as rottenness to his bones." [1]

"The wisdom of a woman builds up her house;
But folly in her pulls it down with her own hands." [2]

"A virtuous woman obtains honour,
The diligent obtain riches." [3]

"Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers;
But a prudent wife is the gift of God." [4]

"He who finds a good wife has found a blessing,
And obtained a sign of favour from God." [5]

"The beauty of a woman who has not sense
Is like a ring of gold in the snout of a swine." [6]

"Better to live on the unsheltered roof (exposed to all weathers),
Than with a brawling woman in a wide house." [7]

"Better to dwell in the wilderness
Than to have the vexation of a brawling woman." [8]

"A continual dropping (through the soaked earthen roof) in a time of hard rain,
And a quarrelsome woman, are alike:
He who tries to hold her in tries to hold in the wind,
Or tries to take up oil with his fingers." [9]

The authors of the Proverbs, however, as was befitting, lay especial stress on a religious and moral life, the ideal of which is pure and lofty in the extreme. Their allusions to God, especially, are among the sublimest in the whole Scriptures.

[1] Prov. xii. 4.
[2] xiv. 1.
[3] xi. 16. For "strong" read "diligent." Septuagint. Hitzig. Graetz.
[4] xix. 14.
[5] xviii. 22. Hitzig.
[6] xi. 22.
[7] xxi. 9.
[8] xxi. 19.
[9] xxvii. 15, 16. Hitzig.

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"The eyes of Jehovah are in every place,
Beholding the evil and the good." [1]

"The underworld, and the kingdoms of the dead, are bare before Jehovah:
How much more, then, the hearts of the children of men." [2]

"Every man thinks his own life right,
But Jehovah is the weigher of spirits." [3] (He puts them into His balances.)

"A man's heart devises his way,
But Jehovah directs his steps." [4]

"By love and truth (towards God) sins are atoned for; [5]
By the fear of God we may shun evil." [6]

"To do justice and right
Is more pleasing to Jehovah than sacrifice." [7]

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah,
But the prayer of the upright is His delight." [8]

"The way of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah,
But He loveth him that striveth after righteousness." [9]

"A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah,
But a full weight is His delight."

"Double weights and double measures,
Both, alike, are hated of God." [10]

"Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean,'
I am pure from my sins?" [11]

In such sentences one seems to read the utterances of the prophets. So true is it that the same Divine spirit pervades all Scripture!

[1] Prov. xv. 3.
[2] xv. 11.
[3] xvi. 2; xxi. 2.
[4] xvi. 9.
[5] Hitzig. Graetz. Schmoller.
[6] xvi. 6. See Isa. xxvii. 9.
[7] Prov. xxi. 3.
[8] xv. 8.
[9] xv. 9.
[10] xi. 1; xx. 10. See Deut. xxv. 13.
[11] Prov. xx. 9.

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The Proverbs bearing on the right conduct of life are especially numerous, and form a body of pure wisdom which may in vain be sought in any other literature. The fundamental thought is that "He who walketh uprightly walketh surely."[1] On this basis rest all the counsels given for the guidance of our life and the restraint of our impulses and passions.

"He that is slow to anger is the greatest of heroes,
And he that rules his own temper
Is greater than he who conquers a city."[2]

"The wisdom of a man makes him slow to anger;
His glory is to pass by a fault."[3]

"A man who does not control his own temper,
Is like a city with its walls broken down."[4]

"Better is a little with righteousness,
Than great revenues without right."[5]

"Better a dry morsel and peace,
Than a house full of choice flesh of offerings, with strife."[6]

Activity, diligence, and industry were especially commended, and idleness bitterly reproved.

"He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread;
He has no understanding who runs after idle trifles."[7]

"Wealth gained quickly soon passes;
But he that gathers little by little, by honest work, shall increase."[8]

"One who is slothful in his work
Is brother to him that is a great waster (destroyer)."[9]

"Though the slothful have his hand in the dish (of food),
He is too lazy to lift it to his mouth."[10]

[1] Prov. x. 9. [2] xvi. 32. [3] xix. 11. [4] xxv. 28.
[5] xvi. 8; xv. 16. [6] xvii. 1. Hitzig. xv. 17. [7] xii. 11; xxviii. 19.
[8] xiii. 11; xx. 21. [9] xviii. 9. [10] xix. 24; xxvi. 15.

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"The sluggard who will not plough for the cold
Will beg in the harvest—in vain." [1]

"I went by the field of the slothful,
By the vineyard of a man without understanding,
And lo! it was all overgrown with nettles,
Thorns covered the face of it;
The stone wall round it was broken down.
When I saw it, I considered it well,
I looked at it, and took warning for myself!
'A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep.'
So comes thy poverty stealing softly on thee like a robber;
Thy want like an armed man!" [2]

The twenty-fifth chapter consists of "Proverbs of Solomon," which, we are told, "the men of Hezekiah copied out." These nameless benefactors of mankind were, as the Septuagint tells us, the counsellors of the king, and are mentioned only in this place. They must have been learned men, skilled in literary composition, for the honour of collecting the scattered proverbs of Solomon would be given to none but persons of the highest culture and erudite skill. If Hitzig be right in thinking that verbal peculiarities shew many of the sayings thus collected to bear marks of the dialect of the northern kingdom,[3] it throws an interesting light on the mode in which they were brought together. Hitzig fancies that the "men of Hezekiah" received a commission from the king, after the catastrophe of the Ten Tribes, to travel over the former home of the exiles and collect from the few people still left the remains of the culture and wisdom of their departed brethren, yet to be found; the proverbs still on the lips of the survivors, and the liter-

[1] Prov. xx. 13; xxvi. 13.

[2] xxiv. 30-34. Graetz translates: "Thy poverty meets thee like a king's messenger of death: thy want like a man with a shield."

[3] Hitzig, p. 302.

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ary memorials cherished in their homes. Graetz fancies Chapter XXV. to be a collection of sentences specially intended to guide those round the throne in their duties towards the king and to each other; that they might neither, on the one hand, be too ready to accuse imaginary treachery, nor too backward in their zeal to defend the throne. "One of the WISE MEN in the court," says he, "appears to have put the counsels in the form of proverbs, to point out the narrow line between too much zeal and too little. There should always be an opportunity for warning the king of what was wrong, but accusations on hearsay should be avoided; and, above all, no one should be too troublesome."[1]

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing;
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.
As the heavens are too high and the earth too deep for our comprehension,
The heart of the king is beyond our finding out."

"As, when the dross is purged from the silver,
The refiner is able to prepare a fair vessel;
So, when the wicked are removed from before the king,
His throne is established in righteousness."

"Thrust not thyself too much forward in the presence of the king,
And take not the place of the Great;
For it is better that it be said to thee, 'Come up here,'
Than that thou be humbled before the king whom thine eyes have seen."[2]

"Be not hasty to make an accusation,
Lest you know not what to do in the end,
When your neighbour has put you to shame."[3]

[1] *Gesch.*, vol. ii. p. 271.

[2] "Whom thine eyes have seen." Graetz translates these words: "What thine eyes have seen—speak out." Luke xiv. 8, 9, 10.

[3] Schmoller, Bertheau, and Graetz translate it: "Go not out (to the street) to mix

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"Make good your own complaint against your neighbour,
But do not betray the secret of another,
Lest some hearer accuse you of doing so,
And shame be fastened on you for ever."

"Like golden apples chased [1] on a silver ground,
So is a word aptly spoken."

"A wise reprover of one who has a listening ear,
Is like a golden nose-ring and costly adornment."

"As a draught cooled with snow in the fierce heat of harvest,[2]
So is a faithful messenger to his senders;
For he refresheth the soul of his masters."

"Like clouds and wind without rain
Is he who boasts of gifts which he never bestows."[3]

"Patience convinces a prince in the end,
And the soft tongue breaks bones."

"If you have found honey, eat only moderately,
Lest you sicken yourself and vomit it all;
And so, set your foot seldom in your neighbor's house,
Lest he weary of thee and hate thee."

"A false witness against his neighbour
Is a club, a sword, and a pointed arrow."

"Confidence in a faithless man in the day of need
Is like trust in a loose tooth or in a sprained foot."

"He who sings songs to a heavy heart
Is like one who takes away a man's garment in cold weather,
Or like vinegar on a raw wound."[4]

hastily in strife, that you may not be excited to do something you will regret, in the end, when your opponent has treated you roughly."

[1] "Chased," etc., Gesenius, Ewald, and Delitzsch, translate "in silver baskets."

[2] Snow is still brought down from Lebanon, in summer and autumn, for sale in the hot lowlands, to cool water and other liquids used for drinking. From this verse it would seem that the trade is as old as the Bible times. There was snow on Hermon, in large quantities, when I crossed Lebanon, in the month of March.

[3] Bertheau. [4] Graetz.

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"If your enemy be hungry, give him bread;
If he be thirsty, give him water;
For thus you heap glowing coals on his head,[1]
And Jehovah will reward you."

It is difficult to say when the last of the Proverbs in the canonical book were composed, for we know nothing whatever of Agur and King Lemuel, whose names are prefixed to the last two chapters respectively.

As an illustration of the interpretation of the Song of Songs by recent scholars it may be interesting to quote that of Graetz, a Jewish writer of the highest merit, though not free from a rationalistic tendency.

In contrast with the impure love of the heathen world, says he, the author created as an ideal being—a fair shepherdess—Sulamith, the daughter of Aminadab. She has a deep, heartfelt, inextinguishable love for a shepherd who feeds his flocks among "the lilies." Yet she remains modest and chaste. Her beauty is heightened by her natural and acquired gifts. She has a charming voice; a sweet enchaining eloquence; and her every movement in the dance shews grace and attractiveness. She loves her shepherd with the whole glow of a youthful heart, and is so mastered by her affection that she tells us—

"Love is strong as death,
Ardent love is mighty as the grave;
Its darts are darts of fire; a flame from Jehovah;
Many waters cannot quench love;
Floods cannot wash it away.
If one were to give all he had for love,
He would be utterly contemned."[2]

[1] You shame him to the uttermost, so that he glows with the sense of his wrongdoing, and can no longer refuse to honour your forbearing love. See Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 20.

[2] Cant. viii. 6, 7.

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This glowing love protects her from every immodest act, unworthy word, or impure thought. As her eyes are like the eyes of doves, her heart is like the dove's in innocence :

" There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,
With damsels beyond number;
But my love, my pure one, stands alone—
The one child of her mother,
The beloved of her that bare her!
The maidens saw her and praised her,
Queens and concubines joined to laud her;
' Who is she, who looks out like the red of morning?
Fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
Spreading awe like an army with banners.' " [1]

Her friend—so she always calls him—testifies to her stainless purity—

" Honey sweetness drops from thy lips,
My sister-bride!
Honey and milk are on thy tongue,
The smell of thy robes is like that of Lebanon.
A fenced garden is my sister-bride,
A fenced well, a sealed-up spring!" [2]

In her chaste modesty Sulamith will not sing before strange ears, but she does so, willingly, to please her Love, and tells her maiden friends, the daughters of Jerusalem, that she has done so.

" My beloved spake, and said to me,
' Up, up, my friend, my fair one, and come forth:
For, see, the winter is past,
The rainy months are over and gone,[3]
The flowers shew on the earth,
The time of singing is come,

[1] vi. 8, 10. [2] iv. 11, 12.

[3] The winter is past ; the heavy winter rains have ceased. It is then, when the warm spring weather commences, that the flowers appear, and it is during this pleasant period that the latter rain falls, at intervals. Gen. vii. 12. Ezra x. 13. *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1883, 12.

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The voice of the wandering turtle dove is already heard in our land,
The fig-tree has already given flavour to its young fruit,
And the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance.
Up! up! my friend, my fair one, come forth!
My Dove in the clefts of the rock!
In the secret place of the steep hills!
Let me see thy form,
Let me hear thy voice,
For thy voice is sweet
And thy form is fair.'" [1]

In answer to this tender invitation, Sulamith sings to him a brief song on shepherd life. But when he tries to induce her to sing before strangers—

"Thou that lingerest in the gardens;
Companions listen for thy voice;
Let us now hear it" [2]—

she declines to grant his request—

"Flee away, my beloved!
Be like the gazelle, or a young hart,
On the mountains of spices!" [3]

And, thus, as often as her friend asks her anything she thinks unbecoming, she turns aside his wish—

"Before the day blows cold
And the shadows bend down,
Take thyself away, my beloved,
And be like the roe or the young gazelle,
On the cloven mountains!" [4]

When pressed by strangers to let them see her dance—

"Come back, come back, O Sulamith!
That we may gaze at thee,
How fair are thy shod feet, O daughter of Aminadab,

[1] Cant. ii. 10-14. [2] viii. 13. [3] viii. 14. [4] ii. 17.

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The movements of thy limbs like those of golden chains,
The work of a cunning workman"—

she answers with warmth:

"Why would you wish to look at Sulamith
As if she were a dancer of the public choirs?"[1]

This reply is all they receive from the chaste maiden. To her beloved she says:

"Would that thou wert my brother
Who drew milk from my mother's breast!
If I found thee on the street and kissed thee,
They could not then give me blame!
I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother's house,
Into the chamber of her that bare me;
I would give thee to drink of spiced wine,
I would refresh thee with pomegranate juice!"[2]

Such is the ideal maiden whom the author of the Song of Songs sets before his countrymen as the pattern of her sex. He makes her appeal to the daughters of Jerusalem:

"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes and the gazelles of the field,
That you stir not up, nor excite (unhealthy) love
Before (true) love rises, of itself, unbidden."[3]

Thus, the poet reproves, with the tenderest imagery, the special evils of his day—the artificial sensual love bought by gold and willing to be so; the unchasteness of female dancers and singers, and the countless others of their sex who were far from pure; the life of towns, with its effeminacy; the degrading and dishonouring pleasures of the table and of the drinking feast. He lifts a warning voice against the moral corruption which had already affected even the daughters of Jerusalem.[4]

[1] Cant. vi. 13. [2] viii. 1, 2. [3] ii. 7. [4] Graetz, *Gesch.*, vol. iii. pp. 257-261.

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Such is Graetz's conception of the Song of Songs, which in the main is that of most recent critics, including even the strictly evangelical. Whether, however, he put the right construction on details, is a question no one can decide, for no two translators understand them alike.

Renan, on the other hand, thinks that it was written at a date much later than Solomon's, and expresses the angry feelings of the true Israel . . . with regard to a reign for which they had paid so dearly, and from which they had reaped so little profit.[1]

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

	B.C.
ABRAHAM'S VISIT TO EGYPT	c. 2120
JOSEPH IN EGYPT	c. 1912
EXODUS	c. 1460
CONQUEST OF CANAAN	c. 1420
SAMUEL	c. 1141
SAUL	c. 1095
DAVID	1066–1025
CONTEMPORARIES OF DAVID.	
Phœnicia:—Hiram I. Ahibal. Hiram II.	
Edom:—Hadad.	
SOLOMON	1025–985
CONTEMPORARIES OF SOLOMON.	
Phœnicia:—Hiram II.	
Edom:—Hadad.	
Damascus:—Rezin.	

[1] Renan, *Histoire*, ii. 1

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