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INTRODUCTION

Of all the stories which every child should know those from the Bible should be first. They are part of the instruction of the youth that cannot be neglected without a serious omission in his culture and development.

As a general thing children find the words of the Bible hard to understand. Even the most thrilling of the stories is obscured by the old form of narrative in which it is told. The text needs to be explained and changed and interpreted in the language of the child before it can be really enjoyed.

The author of this volume has tried to write the great story of the people of Israel so that children can understand it and love it, without simplifying the words of the Bible into too familiar a style. He has adhered wherever he could to the very words of the Bible but at times has not hesitated to change them in order to strengthen the telling of the story.

The book offers no moral teachings, except those that come from the narrative itself. It is a simple story of the trials and hardships of the Jews as told in the Old Testament. The story itself is wonderful enough and carries its own meaning.

It is hoped that this volume will fill a long felt want for the nursery where the Bible story is a fitting end of the day; for the Sunday school where young children need to be told in simple words the story of the heroes of whom they are studying; for the every day school where the Bible is too much neglected and whose stories should be included among those that belong to the inheritance of every child; for the story teller everywhere who seeks for those great narratives that at all times are worth telling.

LAWTON B. EVANS

Augusta, Ga.

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CHAPTER I

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

When God first made the earth there was nothing but darkness everywhere. The waters covered all the land, and there were no animals, nor fishes, nor trees, nor any living man. To prepare the earth for living creatures God made the Light which he called Day, and separated it from the Darkness which he called Night.

Then all the great waters were gathered together into the Seas, and the dry land was made to appear. Then trees began to grow on the land, and grass, and fruits; birds flew about in the air, and made their nests in the great forests that covered the earth. The waters had fish of all kinds, and creeping things, and cattle, and beasts began to roam through the forests.

The earth was then very beautiful, the sun shining by day and the restful darkness coming at night. There were trees and grass and flowers everywhere, and all kinds of animals and birds living on the land, and all kinds of fish swimming in the rivers and seas. There was but one thing needed to make the earth perfect, and that was man, made in the image of God, who should rule over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, and over all the animals that lived upon the land.

God created man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Then God planted a garden, which was the Garden of Eden, and there He put the man He had made. And the man's name was Adam.

It was a beautiful garden. Out of the ground grew every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and that bore fruit to eat. Flowers bloomed on all sides, birds sang in the trees, and sweet waters ran by shady banks of grass and ferns. In the midst of the garden was also the tree of life, and the tree of

knowledge of good and evil. All Adam had to do was to take care of this Garden of Eden.

God said to him: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." And for a long time Adam obeyed God and ate not of the fruit of the tree. Then God brought all the animals of the field, and the birds of the air before Adam to see what he would call them, and Adam gave them names. Thus did Adam live in the garden, eating of the fruit of every tree but one, the companion and friend of all the beasts and birds, and obeying the words and commands of God.

But Adam was alone, for there was no mate for him. Of all things in the garden, he only was just one of his kind. Therefore, God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a help meet for him." And He caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and while he slept, God took one of his ribs and then closed up the place in Adam's side. Out of the rib God made a woman and brought her to Adam and gave her to him to be his wife and mate, that they should live together in the Garden of Eden. And the name of the woman was Eve.

Now, indeed, were Adam and Eve happy. All day long they wandered in the beautiful garden, gathering the fruits of the trees, listening to the song of the birds, or watching the playfulness of the animals around them. At night they lay down and slept upon the soft earth, knowing no fear for they had done no wrong.

The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field that God had made. One day Eve was walking alone in the garden and the wily serpent said to her: "Has God said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden we may not eat, for God said if we touch it we shall die," Eve replied to the serpent.

The serpent then said to the woman: "You shall not surely die. God knows that in the day you eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, and shall know good from evil."

Eve was quite overcome by the words of the serpent and looked up at the fruit of the tree. It was pleasant to the eye, and seemed good to eat. She put out her hand and gathered some of the fruit and ate it. It tasted sweet and harmless and Eve did not think about her disobedience to the words of God. She went to Adam and said:

"Here is the fruit of the tree of knowledge; the serpent says if we eat of it our eyes shall be opened and we shall be as gods knowing good from evil. I have eaten of the fruit and I would have you eat also." And Adam knowing what Eve had done ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree.

In a short while they heard the voice of God in the garden in the cool of the day and Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God among the trees of the garden, for they were afraid. And God called unto Adam: "Where art thou?"

Adam came out from his hiding place and said: "I was afraid and hid myself."

"Have you eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?" demanded the Lord.

"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat," replied Adam.

Then God said unto Eve: "What is this that you have done?" And Eve replied: "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat."

Then God told the serpent that it should be cursed above all cattle and every other beast of the field, that it should crawl upon the ground, and that eternal enmity should be between it and all men. He told Adam and Eve that they should no longer live in the Garden of Eden but should be

driven out and should henceforth work, and eat the bread they had earned by the sweat of their faces, because they had disobeyed God and had not followed his commands.

For fear that Adam and Eve would put forth their hands and take the fruit from the tree of life and eat and live forever, God drove them from the Garden of Eden. They went forth to till the ground to gain food whereby to live, and behind them God set flaming swords at the gate which turned every way to guard the entrance and to protect the tree of life.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST GREAT CRIME

After Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden they had to work hard to raise food to eat. God had told Adam that the ground would not bear fruit of itself, and unless he labored hard the earth would produce only thorns and thistles. And furthermore he told Adam that when he died his body would return with the dust out of which it was made.

Adam and Eve went forth to labor, as every one since has had to do, but we may well believe that God who made them earn their living by hard work, also made them more content and happy in occupation than if they spent their days in idleness.

After a while Adam and Eve had two sons; the older one was named Cain, the younger one was named Abel. When Cain became a man he turned to tilling the soil for an occupation, and raised grain and fruits. In fact he was a farmer as his father was before him, thereby making farming the first as it is the most necessary of all human occupations.

Abel the younger brother was a keeper of sheep. He loved the flocks and herds that gave man meat, and raised lambs for the sacrifices that God had already told them they must make. While Cain was plowing the ground, sowing the

seed, and reaping his harvest, Abel was tending to his flocks on the hillsides or following them as they wandered through the valleys searching for food and water. The brothers probably lived very happily together, so long as they obeyed God and did right.

God had told both of them that they must offer sacrifices unto the Lord, and should do so with a loving and devout heart. An altar was to be built of stones, or of earth, with a flat top and a place for wood that should consume the offering with fire. Upon the altar the offering was to be placed, the wood was to be set on fire, and while the offering was ascending to heaven in the shape of smoke, he who was making the offering was to repent of his sins and think of the goodness of God to all his living creatures.

Cain brought his offering of the fruit of the ground, such as grain and other things he had raised, and having built his altars he tried to consume his offering with fire. But the heart of Cain was wicked, and his offering did not please the Lord, and Cain knew it and was angry.

Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, a young lamb, and having built his altar, he also tried to consume his offering. And the heart of Abel was good and he loved the Lord, so that the Lord had respect unto his offering, and Abel knew it and was glad.

When Cain knew that the Lord was pleased with the offering of Abel, he became still more angry and began to hate his brother. Instead of repenting of his evil heart and offering a sacrifice that would please the Lord, he became more wicked and more jealous of his younger brother.

"Why are you so angry, and why is your face so downcast? If you do right I shall be pleased with you; if you do wrong the fault is your own and sin lies at your own door," the Lord said unto Cain.

Cain answered not a word, nor did he repent in anywise of his sin, nor did he forgive his brother for having

received favor in the sight of the Lord. Bitter words were spoken by Cain and Abel, and one day when they were in the field, Cain fell upon his young brother and killed him, and left him dead in the field beside his flocks.

Terrified at this awful crime Cain fled but he could not get away from the presence of the Lord. The voice of the Lord called unto him and said: "Cain, where is Abel, your brother?"

Cain now added falsehood to his crime by answering the Lord: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord knew very well that Cain had slain his brother, and as a punishment told him that when he tilled the ground it would not yield any harvest; only thorns and thistles, and weeds would grow for him instead of the grain and fruit he had once raised so abundantly. Since he had disobeyed God and had killed his brother he should from that time be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, always moving from place to place and never finding any rest.

Then Cain cried out: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. The Lord has driven me forth and has hidden his face from me, and now everyone that sees me shall try to kill me."

But the Lord did not intend for Cain to be killed, so He set a mark on him that anyone seeing him should know by the mark that he was to suffer for his sin, but was not to be killed. And Cain went away from the place where he was born, and wandered into a far country.

CHAPTER III

THE FLOOD

After many years the earth became full of people, but they were very wicked and did not obey the Lord as they should. The Lord was not only sorry he had made so many people, but he was angry at the way they had forsaken his teachings. Therefore, when He saw so much wickedness in the world He said: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth." At the same time the Lord said He would destroy all the animals, and the birds, and the creeping things, in fact everything that lived He intended to destroy.

There was one good man named Noah whom the Lord did not wish to destroy. He had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, for he and his sons and their wives had worshiped the Lord and obeyed all his orders, and had not followed the wicked ways of the people of the earth.

The Lord told Noah that the end of all flesh had come and that He intended to destroy all living things, except Noah and his family, and that He would do this by a great flood that should cover the face of the earth and drown all the people and everything that was alive.

God told Noah to build an ark, which was a great boat in which Noah and the others were to live while the waters covered the earth. The ark was to have a covering like a house, with a door and a window, and was to be three stories high. Everything was to be provided to care for all those that God intended to go into the ark.

It took Noah a long time to build the ark, and by the time he had it finished he was six hundred years old. Then God told him to take his wife, and his sons and their wives and go into the ark for the flood was coming and everybody and everything outside the ark would be destroyed.

God also commanded Noah to take into the ark two of every kind of animal, and bird, and creeping thing, so that when the flood was over, the earth should again have living things of all kinds upon it. And Noah did as the Lord commanded him. The animals of all kinds marched into the ark and the birds flew in and the reptiles crept in, until the ark was full of living things.

Then Noah and his family went into the ark, and closed the doors and the windows for they knew the Lord would do as he had told them. Seven days afterwards the rain began to descend and it rained forty days and forty nights. It was not a rain such as we know, for the Bible says the windows of the heavens were opened and the fountains of the deep were broken up, by which is meant that the rain came down in great torrents, and the rivers and the seas began to boil and rise over the land.

The ark rose and floated upon the waters, with Noah and his family and all the animals and birds and living things safe inside, with food to last them for a long time. The waters rose until the level ground was covered, then the trees disappeared and then the hills, until as far as one could see it was all water.

When the wicked people saw the waters rise they fled to the high places, then they climbed the hills, but they could not escape the flood. The waters rose behind them no matter where they fled until at last they were all drowned. The animals and the creeping things perished, and even the birds having no trees to rest in, fell dead into the water. At last there was no living thing left upon the earth except Noah and his family and those whom God had allowed to enter the ark.

For one hundred and fifty days the water was upon the earth and the ark floated about guided by the hand of God, Himself. Noah and his family lived in the ark, took care of all the animals and living things committed to their care and trusted in God to bring them safely out of the flood.

At last the waters began to flow back into the rivers and oceans. The tops of the mountains and of the hills began to appear. One day the ark rested firmly on the top of Mount Ararat, and Noah knew that the flood was over and that the waters were going from the land.

The ark rested on Mount Ararat for more than two months, and the waters kept on going down, and the mountains and the hills appeared. Then Noah opened a window and sent forth a raven to fly over the waters, but what became of the raven he never knew, for it did not come back to the ark. Noah opened the window again and sent forth a dove. The dove flew over the waters but could not find any trees to light on or any food to eat, so she returned to the ark and Noah put out his hand and took her in.

At the end of the week the flood had gone down still more, and Noah sent forth the dove again out of the window of the ark. The dove flew away and was gone all day, and in the evening when she returned to the ark there was an olive leaf in her mouth. Then Noah knew that the waters had gone down a great deal from the face of the earth.

Then Noah removed the covering from the ark, and opened the door, and looked out over the earth and behold, the face of the ground was dry. How rejoiced he must have been to know that the flood was not to last forever, and to see the ground, and the trees, and the grass, and to know that at last he could leave the ark and build him a home to live in the rest of his life!

Noah and his sons came out of the ark, and all the animals walked out, and the birds flew out and the reptiles crawled out and set about making homes for themselves. And Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices unto the Lord, for he loved the Lord and was thankful for his deliverance from the terrible flood.

When the Lord saw the offering that Noah was making on the altar He said to him: "I will not again curse the ground

any more for man's sake; neither will I again smite every living thing as I have done."

God promised Noah that there should never more be a flood to destroy the earth, and that he and his sons should rule over all the animals of the field and the birds of the air, and that their children should be many and that the earth would again be full of people.

In token of this promise God put a rainbow in the heavens, and whenever the rain falls and the sun shines we can still see this bow of promise reminding us of the covenant between God and the old Noah whom he had saved from the flood.

CHAPTER IV

THE TOWER OF BABEL

After the flood Noah had many children and grandchildren, so that the earth was full of people again. So long a time had passed that nobody thought that God would ever punish the earth for any wickedness, and the people turned to their sins and for all we know the world was about as wicked as it was before the flood.

God had promised that he would not send another flood but that did not mean that he would not punish people for their evil deeds. He did it in those days and he does it in these days, in one way or in another. We may be sure that when any one does wrong or breaks God's law he is sure to find some punishment waiting for him.

Everybody spoke the same language at that time, and everybody understood what every one else was saying. In these days there are a great many different languages spoken, but at that time there was but one speech. A great body of these people journeyed from the east, and came to a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there.

Then they said one to another: "Let us make brick and burn them thoroughly." So they began to make brick until they made a great many and piled them up in heaps.

"Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven," they said. And they took the brick they had burned and began to build the tower. What they intended to do with this tower, or why they wished to build it at all, we do not know. At any rate it was not pleasing to God, and He came down to see the city and the tower which the people were building in the plains of Shinar.

A great many people were working on it. Some were carrying the brick, some were bringing the mortar, and others were laying the brick in order. The tower was getting higher and higher, and the workmen were boasting that before long the top of the tower would reach the heavens. And they were all speaking the same language, and they understood one another's speech.

The tower may have been nearly finished, or just begun, or even half done we do not know, when God came down to see it, but we imagine He saw them building a round tower with steps on the outside so that when it was completed the people could walk up to the top, and perhaps worship the idols that had already taken the place in their hearts of the true God. God was angry with the people for doing this, and said: "Let us go down, and confuse their language that they may not understand one another's speech."

All at once the people began to talk different languages. One man would say something but the man next to him would not understand a word of it. No one knew what the other one was saying, and when they all talked at once there was so much confusion that the people were astonished and did not know what had happened to them. Even to this day we often speak of a babel of voices, which means that when many persons are talking at one time in the same place, no one person can be understood.

The people stopped building their tower as God intended they should, and they even left off building their city, for what was the use of people living together unless they understood what one person was saying to another?

Those who had spoken the same language went to themselves and moved away from the others, so that before long all the people who had come to dwell in the plain of Shinar were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth. In this way did God separate the people, and give them different languages to speak, and made them dwell in different parts of the earth.

CHAPTER V

ABRAHAM MOVES INTO CANAAN

There lived in Ur a man named Abraham, who was a devout man with all his household, and feared the Lord. The people of Ur were wicked people and worshiped idols. Therefore, God said unto Abraham: "Get you out of your country and leave your kindred and your father's house, and go into a land that I will show you."

Abraham rose and took his wife Sarah, and his brother's son, Lot, and his wife, and his children, and all their goods, and started on the long journey into an unknown country. Abraham was seventy-five years old but he was strong and vigorous and he knew that he was being led by the hand of the Lord.

At last the party came to the land of Canaan, and the Lord told Abraham that he would give this land to his children, and his children's children, and they should drive out all their enemies and the whole land should be theirs. And Abraham built an altar and offered sacrifices unto the Lord.

Abraham kept on moving from place to place, but the people of Canaan did no harm to the wanderers for God was

taking care of them. At last a dreadful famine arose and the grass withered in the fields and the corn refused to grow, and there was no food for the people and none for their cattle. Seeing this, Abraham and all his family moved down into Egypt and stayed there as long as the famine lasted. And when the famine was over they moved back into Canaan, and again Abraham built an altar and offered sacrifices unto the Lord.

By this time Abraham had grown very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold. His herds wandered over the rich fields of Canaan, attended by his servants and fattened under their care. He then sold them to the people of that land and saved the money he made. Lot also had grown very rich and his cattle also wandered over the fields attended by his herdsmen. Abraham and his family and Lot and his family and all the servants and herdsmen lived in tents, because they had to move from place to place in order to find food for their herds.

The cattle of Abraham and the cattle of Lot sometimes mingled together and often there was a dispute over the feeding ground, and even a question of who owned the cattle. As a result of this there arose strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, which might even have come to blows. Neither Abraham nor Lot desired to bring about a family quarrel, so Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no strife between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen for we are brethren. The whole land is before you, therefore, separate yourself from me. If you will take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you will go to the right hand then I will go to the left."

Then Lot lifted up his eyes and looked upon the plain of Jordan that was well watered everywhere. It looked like the garden of the Lord or like the land of Egypt and Lot chose all the plain of Jordan for his cattle and herdsmen. Abraham remained in the land of Canaan and let Lot go his way into the plain of Jordan.

There were two cities in the plain of Jordan, one named Sodom and one named Gomorrah and a small town named

Zoar, but the people of these towns were very wicked and did not serve the Lord. After Lot had gone, the Lord took Abraham out from his tent and told him to look over the place where he was, to the north and the east and the south and the west, and said unto Abraham:

"All the land which you see, I will give to you and to your children forever and you shall be as many as the stars in the heavens and the sands on the ground." And Abraham was content to dwell where the Lord had put him and continued to raise his cattle and to build altars and to offer sacrifices unto the Lord.

One day Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent in the heat of the day, and lifting up his eyes he saw three men standing by him. He did not know who they were, but, according to the custom of those days, when strangers appeared in need of entertainment, he arose to greet them, and running from his tent door to meet them he bowed himself to the ground. He then spoke to the three men and said:

"Go not away from your servant; let a little water be fetched and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree." And the men rested under the tree as Abraham had asked them to do.

Then Abraham hastened into his tent and called his wife Sarah and said to her: "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and make cakes upon the hearth." And Sarah at once set about preparing a meal for the strangers. Then Abraham ran to the herd and brought a young calf, which he told one of his servants to kill and get ready to serve. Then he took butter and milk and the cakes which Sarah had cooked and the meat which the man had prepared and he delivered it all to the three strangers as they sat under the tree. And the men ate of the food that Abraham had given them.

CHAPTER VI

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

After the men had eaten of the food which Abraham and Sarah had given them under a tree before the door of the tent, the men arose to depart, and Abraham went with them on their journey towards Sodom.

These three persons were not really men but we can suppose that they were angels sent by the Lord to tell Abraham how great a nation his children were to become and also to tell him what was going to happen to the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

As the men walked with Abraham they told him that the Lord intended to destroy these cities because they were so wicked. Abraham was grieved because he knew that Lot and his family lived in the plains of Jordan. He thought there must be some good men in Sodom who ought not to be destroyed along with the wicked people, therefore, after the angels had left him, he said unto the Lord:

"Will you destroy the righteous with the wicked? If there be fifty righteous people within the city, will you not spare the city because there are fifty righteous there?"

The Lord said to Abraham: "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous people within the city, then I will spare Sodom."

"If there be forty-five righteous people in Sodom, will you spare the city?" And the Lord said He would spare Sodom if there were that many righteous people.

Again Abraham asked the Lord if He would spare Sodom if there were forty righteous people there. And the Lord said He would not destroy Sodom if that many could be

found. Then He promised to save the city if thirty righteous people could be found, or even ten righteous people could be found. Abraham then returned unto his tent.

Now Lot and his wife were living in Sodom together with their children. One day Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom and two angels that looked like men appeared to him. They might have been the same ones that appeared unto Abraham. When Lot saw them he rose up to meet them and bowed himself to the ground and begged them to come into his house and tarry the night so that they might go on their way refreshed, but the angels said: "No, we will abide in the city all night."

Lot insisted that they should come into his house and when they came in he made them a feast and baked bread and set before them meat and drink, and the men ate of the food that Lot had given them.

The people of Sodom seeing that Lot had entertained two strangers, came to his door and called unto Lot: "Where are the two men that came to you this night; bring them out that we may know them." Lot went to the door of his house and begged the people to do no harm to the strangers, but the men of Sodom pressed upon Lot and told him to stand back and came near breaking down the door of his house.

The strangers inside hearing all the noise without arose and came to the door. Seeing the intent of the wicked people the men put forth their hands and pulled Lot into the house and shut the door. Then they smote the men outside with blindness, so that they could not find their way and they cried out with great rage against Lot and the strangers within his house.

The men said unto Lot: "Sodom is a very wicked city and we will destroy this place. The Lord has sent us to destroy this people because they are wicked and do not serve him, but you must arise with your family and quickly escape, for fire

and brimstone shall be rained upon the city and all therein shall be quickly destroyed."



THE BURNING OF SODOM.

When the morning came the angels told Lot to rise and take his wife and two daughters and escape out of the city, but Lot lingered for he did not wish to leave his home and all of his possessions behind him though he felt that it was the word of the Lord and he ought to go. Therefore, the men took him by the hand and led him out of the city and said to him and his wife: "Escape for your lives but look not behind you nor rest a single moment for if you do you will be consumed."

Then Lot fled to the little town of Zoar. Hardly had Lot and his wife gotten out of Sodom before the heavens opened and a great rain of fire and brimstone began to fall. The houses caught fire and the wicked people were consumed in them or were burned in the streets. Not only upon Sodom but also upon Gomorrah and the other villages of the plain did the fire and brimstone fall, until there was not left any living thing in all the plain. Lot and his wife and his two daughters fled before the awful fire, escaping for their lives as the angels of the Lord had told them to do.

The angels had told them to flee for their lives and not to look behind them, but Lot's wife was overcome with a desire to see the destruction of the city where she lived. She stopped and looked behind her, disobeying the words of the angels. When she did so she was turned into a pillar of salt so that Lot and his two daughters alone were left to escape from the burning cities of the plain. All his cattle and goods of every sort were destroyed, but he was thankful that the Lord had given him warning of the great destruction that was to come upon the wicked cities.

The next morning Abraham looked out from his tent towards Sodom and Gomorrah and saw the smoking ruins of those cities. Then he knew that there were not even ten righteous people in all that plain who served the Lord, and that the wicked cities and all the people in them had been destroyed.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah his wife was ninety years old. God had promised Abraham that his descendants should be in number as the stars so that he could not count them, and that his children should possess all the land of Canaan, but Abraham did not see how this could ever be for now he and his wife were old, and they had no children.

But God gave them a son and he was named Isaac. To celebrate the event Abraham gave a great feast when Isaac was a few months old, and all the herdsmen and the friends of Abraham came to rejoice with him.

Now Sarah had a handmaid named Hagar, who had a son named Ishmael. Sarah did not like Hagar nor her son, because the Lord had said that Ishmael should also found a great nation and that his descendants should also people the earth. Therefore, Sarah made Abraham drive Hagar away from his tents.

Abraham rose up early in the morning, took bread and a bottle of water and gave it to Hagar, putting the bottle on her shoulders for it was made of goat skin and was easily carried in that manner. Then he sent her away and she wandered in the wilderness. After a while the bread was all eaten and the water in the bottle was all gone, and poor Hagar saw that her child was about to die. She could not bear to look upon his wasted face, nor hear him cry for food and water, so she laid him under a bush, for the wilderness was very hot and there were no trees.

Then Hagar went and sat down a good way off, and cried out: "Let me not see the death of my child," and she wept because she thought Ishmael was going to die and that the

Lord had deserted her. The boy also cried out for he was weak and his mother was not near to comfort him.

An angel of the Lord heard the lad cry and saw Hagar kneeling in the sand of the wilderness, and came to her and said: "What ails you Hagar? God has heard the voice of the lad. Arise, lift him up, and hold him in your hand, for I will make of him a great nation."

Hagar opened her eyes and rose, and behold, there was a well close by her. She ran and filled her bottle with the cool water and took it to Ishmael who drank, and Hagar drank of the water herself. Then they found food also and lived in the wilderness. The child grew to be a man and became an archer and found a wife out of the land of Egypt. And all his descendants lived in the wilderness ever afterwards.

Abraham and Sarah were very happy with their son Isaac. The boy grew strong in body and learned to obey his parents and fear the Lord, and his mother and father loved him very dearly. God determined to try the faith of Abraham, and called unto him one day: "Abraham," and the old man replied: "Behold, here I am."

"Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love and go unto the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of," said the Lord to Abraham.

What a terrible thing to ask Abraham to do! Must he take his only son, his beautiful boy, whom he loved, and slay him upon an altar and burn his body as a sacrifice? How could he tell his mother Sarah, such a thing, and how could he tell the boy what the Lord had ordered him to do? The head of the poor old Abraham was bowed to the ground with a great grief.

But the word of the Lord had come and Abraham never thought otherwise than to obey. Perhaps the Lord would some day give him another son who would fulfil the prophecy that his descendants would people the land of Canaan, or perhaps the Lord had become angry with his servant and had changed

his mind. And all through the night Abraham sorrowed for he was about to sacrifice his only son.

Early in the morning Abraham rose, and saddled an ass, and took two of his young men with him, and a lot of wood for the fire, and little Isaac went along, not knowing why or where they were going. Abraham said nothing to Sarah of what the Lord had commanded him to do.

Two days went by and still they journeyed, but the Lord gave no sign that they were near the place where he wanted them to stop. Abraham said but little by the way, and the men trudged along by the side of the ass that bore the wood. Little Isaac played by the roadside or held his father's hand as they journeyed on and on, waiting for the Lord to tell them stop.

On the third day Abraham saw the place afar off, and at once knew they had come to the mountain whereon he was to offer his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. Turning to the young men he said: "Abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Then Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac and told him to carry it. Then he took some fire in his own hands and a large knife, and he and Isaac started off unto the mountain to obey the command of the Lord. Abraham's heart was very sad and he had nothing to say.

"Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" said Isaac to his father.

Abraham replied by saying: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." And he and Isaac went on together until they came to a place that God had told him of.

Isaac lay down his load of wood, and Abraham built an altar, and made it ready for the sacrifice. Isaac stood by wondering what his father would do for a lamb, but not asking any more questions. When the altar was ready Abraham seized his son and bound him with cords and laid him upon the altar,

and made ready to slay him for a burnt offering as the Lord had commanded him to do.

Before the old man lay his only son upon the altar, with his breast bare and ready for the great knife to descend and take away his life. Isaac uttered not a sound, while Abraham prayed to the Lord for a few minutes. Then the old servant of the Lord stretched forth to take the knife and slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him out of the heavens and Abraham stopped to hear the voice. Then the angel said:

"Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do anything with him, for now I know that you fear God, for you are willing to sacrifice your only son unto Him."

When Abraham heard the word of the angel, he unbound Isaac and took him down from the altar, for now he knew that God had spared his son and that he was not to be slain for a sacrifice. Then he lifted up his eyes and behold, there was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, which the Lord had provided for the offering.

Abraham seized the ram and slew it and laid it upon the altar. Then the fire was lighted and the sacrifice was made unto the Lord, and Abraham and Isaac returned unto the young men who were waiting for them at the foot of the mountain.

After this the Lord told Abraham that, because he had obeyed Him and had not withheld his only son from Him, that his descendants should be like the stars in the heavens and the sands on the seashore, and that in them all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And Abraham rejoiced because he had done right in the sight of the Lord and pleased Him.

CHAPTER VIII

SEARCHING FOR A WIFE FOR ISAAC

Sarah had grown very old, in fact she was a hundred and twenty-seven years old, and the end of her life had come. When she died Abraham wept and mourned for her, for she had been his wife for many years and now he wanted a place to bury her in. He spoke to the owners of the land saying: "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a place that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

The people had learned to love and respect the old Abraham, and they said to him, "You are a mighty prince among us; choose any sepulchre you wish and we will give it to you."

Abraham said he would like the cave of Machpelah, which was owned by Ephron and which was at the end of his field.

When Ephron heard that Abraham wanted a cave in his field to bury Sarah in, he quickly told Abraham: "The field I give you, and the cave that is therein also. Bury your dead there."

But Abraham did not want Ephron to give him the field and the cave for nothing, for he was able to buy it, and, therefore, he insisted upon paying Ephron for the cave. They agreed upon four hundred shekels of silver as the price. Abraham had the silver weighed out and paid over to Ephron before the sepulchre was made ready for the body of Sarah.

Then the cave was opened, and the body of Sarah was put inside. The mouth of the cave was sealed with a great stone and marked with the name of Sarah and of Abraham who owned it. Abraham mourned for Sarah many days and

many nights, for he loved her and now he was bereft in his old age.

Abraham was well stricken in years, and Isaac had grown to be a man. The time had come for him to choose a wife, that he might have children to possess the land of Canaan. Abraham did not want him to marry any of the women of the land where they were living, for they worshiped idols, but he wanted a wife for Isaac out of the land where Abraham came from, and where the people still worshiped God and feared him.

Abraham called his oldest servant and said to him: "Go into my country and to my kindred and find a wife for my son Isaac."

The servant was afraid that none of the women would be willing to follow him out of their country, and told Abraham that it was useless to take so far a journey for nothing. Abraham then told his servant not to have any fear, for an angel of the Lord would show him what to do when he came unto the land of his kindred.

The servant took ten camels and plenty of goods for a present and some men to help him and departed from the land of Canaan on his long journey to find a wife for Isaac. At last he came to the land of Mesopotamia near to the city of Nabor, and there the old servant and his camels and his men rested by a well at the time of the evening that the women went out to draw water.

The servant saw the women coming out of the city, and approaching the well to fill their pitchers with water, and wondered if one of them was not appointed to be the wife of Isaac. Therefore, the old servant began to pray to the Lord:

"Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down your pitcher, I pray you, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink and I shall give your camels drink also, let her be the one that shall be the wife of Isaac."

Hardly had the old servant ceased speaking when Rebekah came toward the well with her pitcher upon her shoulder. She was a young woman, fair to look upon, who had never yet loved any man. She was the daughter of Bethuel, the nephew of Abraham and thus was already related to Isaac and belonged to the very race that the old Abraham had declared must furnish a wife for his son.

The servant ran forward when he saw the beautiful Rebekah and said to her: "Let me, I pray you, drink a little water of your pitcher?" Rebekah hastened to let down the pitcher from her shoulder and gave the old servant water to drink.

Rebekah seeing the thirsty camels kneeling near by, and knowing they also needed water to drink, said to the old servant: "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have done drinking." And she emptied her pitcher into the trough and ran again unto the well to draw water, until the camels had satisfied their thirst. None of the other women who came out to draw water had paid any attention to the old servant and his tired and thirsty camels.

Then the servant began to wonder if this beautiful damsel was not the one whom God had appointed for Isaac's wife. After the camels had drunk of the water, the servant took a golden earring, and two bracelets and gave them to Rebekah, and said to her: "Whose daughter are you, and is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in?"

Rebekah replied to the servant by telling him who she was and said: "We have both straw and provender enough for your camels, and room to lodge in." Then the old servant knew the angel of the Lord had brought him on his way and that he had found the woman who was to be the wife of his master's son.

CHAPTER IX

ISAAC AND REBEKAH

Rebekah ran to her home and told her mother about the old servant and all the things she had done for him. Rebekah had a brother named Laban, who, when he saw the earring and the bracelets which the man had given his sister, and heard her tell her mother about giving water to him and his camels, ran out to the well to see the man.

When he saw the old servant and the camels he said: "Come into the house with me, for I have prepared the house and room for the camels." And the servant and his men rose up and led the camels, and they came to the house of Bethuel, where Rebekah and Laban lived. There they found straw and provender for the camels, and servants to wash the old man's feet for they were dusty with long travel.

The servants of Bethuel quickly set meat before the old servant and his men and bade them eat, but he said: "I will not eat until I have told my errand." And Laban said to him: "Speak on."

The old servant stood up before Rebekah and all her family and told his story. He said: "I am Abraham's servant. The Lord has blessed my master and he has become great. He is rich in flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and servants and in camels. My master has a son named Isaac, dearly beloved, who is the comfort of his father's age and the hope of his race. If Isaac die without children, the family of Abraham is no more. My master has sworn that Isaac shall not take a wife from among the people of Canaan for they worship idols, but he has sworn that he shall have a wife from among his own kind and kindred. Therefore, am I come to seek a wife for Isaac."

The servant told Bethuel what happened at the well, and how Rebekah had given him and his camels water to drink, and how he was led by an angel to believe that she was the one intended to be the wife of his master's son. When he had finished speaking he bowed himself to the ground and waited for them to answer.

"The thing comes from the Lord, behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord intended," said Bethuel and Laban to the old servant.

When the old servant heard this he brought out the jewels, and silver and gold, and the beautiful raiment which he had brought, and gave them as a present from Isaac to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her mother, and her brother, showing that his master was rich and was a great prince in the land where he lived.

Then there was a feast and all the men ate and drank and lay down to sleep well satisfied with the result of their mission, for they had found a beautiful relative of Isaac to be his wife, and were glad to have her go back with them.

The next morning the old servant arose and said to Bethuel: "Send me away to my master, and let the damsel go with us for we would bring her quickly to Isaac." Rebekah's mother and her brother begged for her to stay a few days, at the least ten days, before she left them to go into a strange land.

But the old servant insisted that he must go, and said: "Hinder me not, for I must return unto my master." Then they called Rebekah and asked her if she was ready to go and become the wife of Isaac or would she abide for ten days in the house of her father.

"Will you go with this man?" Bethuel said to Rebekah. And Rebekah, anxious to see the man whom she was to marry, and with all the eagerness of a maiden, said: "I will go." Then the old servant departed and with him went Rebekah and her

handmaid. The women rode upon the camels, and the men followed them, and after a while they came unto the land of Canaan.

Isaac had gone into the fields to be alone and think about the wife he was to have and all the great things the Lord had promised to his father Abraham. It was the evening and the sun was going down. Isaac looked across the fields and saw the camels coming. Then he knew the old servant was returning home and he went to meet the camels and see the one who was to be his wife. Rebekah saw him coming and said to the old servant: "What man is this that walks in the fields to meet us?"

"It is my master Isaac, he whom you will wed," the old servant replied. Rebekah lighted from the camel, she was riding and put a veil over her face so that Isaac might not see her. But Isaac came on and met the camel and the old servant told him all the things which had happened.

Isaac took Rebekah by the hand and lifted her veil, and saw that she was beautiful and fair to look upon. Then he led her to the tent which had been his mother's, and she became his wife. And from that time Isaac loved Rebekah and was comforted for his mother's death.

CHAPTER X

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT

Abraham now gave all that he had to his son Isaac, and when he was a hundred and seventy-five years old he died and was buried in the land of Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, by the side of his wife Sarah. After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac and prospered him so that he grew rich in cattle, and in silver and gold.

God gave Isaac and Rebekah two sons, Esau and Jacob, and Esau was the older of the two. Esau was a cunning

hunter and went into the field and killed deer and other animals and dressed them for his father to eat, for his father loved meat. But Jacob was a plain man who stayed about home and looked after his father's flocks and herds and managed the servants and his father's riches of gold and silver. Esau grew to be a hairy man, but Jacob was smooth and fair of skin.

Isaac, who had grown old, loved Esau more than he loved Jacob, but the heart of Rebekah turned to Jacob her younger son. Therefore there was but little love between the two brothers, for they liked not the same things and their parents were divided in their affections for them. Esau being the older had the birthright of his brother Jacob, by which is meant he had the right to more of the cattle and the gold and silver and servants and lands. Jacob being the younger must take the smaller portion of his father's goods, and Jacob was not pleased with this.

One day Jacob made a lot of food called pottage. Esau had been hunting and came back in the evening very tired and feeling sick. He saw the pottage and longed for the good food his brother Jacob had made. Therefore, he said to Jacob: "Feed me with that same red pottage, for I am faint." But Jacob would not feed with him the pottage.

Seeing how hungry his brother was Jacob turned to him and said: "Sell me this day your birthright, that I may take your place as the older one and

have the more of our father's goods."

Esau was very hungry and felt very sick. He did not care very much about his birthright anyway, so he replied to Jacob: "Behold, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright be to me? I will swear to you my birthright. Give me to eat of the pottage."

So Esau swore to Jacob, and gave him his birth right and Jacob fed his brother of the pottage that he had cooked. This was very wrong of Esau to sell his birthright for a mess of

pottage, and wrong of Jacob to buy it in this way. For when Esau had eaten he was well and strong again and rose up and went his way having despised the birthright to which he was born.

When Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see he called to Esau and said to him: "Take your weapons, your bow and arrows, and go into the field and kill me a deer. Then make me some savory meat, such as I love and bring it to me that I may eat, and my soul will bless you before I die."

Esau took his weapons and departed into the fields to do as his father had bidden him.

Rebekah heard what Isaac had said to Esau, and called Jacob to her side. She said to him: "I heard your father speak to Esau and tell him to go to the fields and kill a deer, and make a savory meat such as he loved, that he might eat it and bless Esau. Now therefore, my son, go to the flock and bring me two goats' kids and I will make the savory meat such as Isaac loves."

Then Rebekah told Jacob that he was to take the meat to Isaac and pretend to be Esau, and while his father ate, he, instead of his brother was to get the blessing from Isaac. In this way they plotted to deceive the old Isaac who was blind.

"My brother Esau is a hairy man and I am smooth of skin. My father may put out his hand and feel me; and then find I have deceived him, and I shall receive a curse instead of a blessing," Jacob said to his mother.

Rebekah told Jacob to do as she had bidden him and that she would see that no curse came upon him. And Jacob went to his flock and brought the kids and Rebekah made savory meat such as Isaac loved. Then she took some of the clothes that belonged to Esau and put them upon Jacob, and she put the skins of the goats' tails upon his hand and upon the smooth of his neck.

Jacob took the savory meat and the bread which Rebekah had prepared and went to the tent of his father Isaac. He said: "Here am I, father, and here is the meat you love to eat."

"Who are you, my son?" said the old blind Isaac, not knowing his two sons apart except as they told him, for they were of the same size, and spoke much alike.

"I am Esau, and have done according as you bade me. Arise, I pray you and eat of this venison that your soul may bless me," answered Jacob and brought the meat near to his father.

"Come near I pray you, that I may feel you whether you are my very son Esau or not," said Isaac, and when Jacob had come near, the old man felt of the hands and neck of Jacob where Rebekah had placed the skin of the kids which she had cooked.

"The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau," said Isaac. But the old man was deceived and blessed Jacob thinking after all he was blessing the older son. Then he said again: "Come near now my son and kiss me," and Jacob came near his father and kissed him, and as he did Isaac smelled the smell of the clothes he wore and of the skin upon his hands, and said: "The smell of my son is as the smell of the field, and surely you are Esau," and he blessed Jacob again, and told him that he should rule over all the land and that his brother should serve him forever.

CHAPTER XI

JACOB SERVES FOR RACHEL

Hardly had Jacob left the old Isaac when Esau returned from his hunting, and hastened to make the savory meat his father had asked for. Soon it was ready and he brought it to the tent where Isaac was lying, and said to his father: "Let my father arise and eat of my venison, that his soul may bless me."

Isaac rose and said to Esau: "Who are you?" And Esau replied: "I am your son, Esau, your first born, whom you will bless before you die according as you have said." And Isaac knew that this was Esau, and he trembled for he was very angry at the deception which had been practiced upon him by Jacob.

He then told Esau that his brother had been there and had brought the meat and the bread, and that he had eaten of it, and had already given away his blessing. Then Esau cried out with a bitter cry, and said to Isaac: "Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau fell down before his father and wept.

Isaac rose and told Esau that he should live by the sword, and that he should have the fatness of the earth, but that he should serve his brother, until the time should come when he would lift the yoke of that service from his neck. Esau hated Jacob for stealing the blessing from him, and declared that when Isaac was dead and the days of mourning were over he would slay his brother Jacob.

Rebekah heard the vow that Esau had 'made and hastened to tell Jacob: "Your brother Esau proposes to kill you, when your father Isaac is no more. You must arise and flee to my brother Laban who will take care of you until the fury of Esau is turned away." And Jacob rose and fled from his father's tents toward the land where his Uncle Laban lived.

At last he came to a certain place and because the sun was set and he was weary with his long journey, he gathered some stones and made a pillow for his head to rest upon. Then he lay down to sleep and soon there came to him a wondrous dream. There appeared a ladder set upon the earth and the top reached to heaven, and the angels descended and ascended the ladder.

The Lord spoke to Jacob out of the heavens and told him that he would give him the land where he lay, and to his children after him, and that he should found a great nation that should spread abroad to the north and the east and the west and the south. Jacob waked out of his sleep and behold the ladder and the angel were gone. But Jacob said: "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." Then he took the stones that he had used to rest his head upon and built them into a pillar and poured oil upon them and called the place Bethel, which means House of God.

Jacob went on his journey and came into the land of the people of the east. He saw a well in a field and three flocks of sheep lying near it, and there was a great stone upon the mouth of the well. When all the flocks were gathered the men would roll the stone away, and water the sheep and then close again the mouth of the well.

Jacob said to the men who were with the sheep: "Do you know Laban the son of Bethuel and grandson of Nahor?" The men said to Jacob: "We know him well, and his daughter Rachel will soon come with the sheep." And while Jacob waited Rachel came with her father's sheep for she kept them.

When Jacob saw Rachel and her sheep, he knew she was tired and the sheep were thirsty. Therefore, he went near the well and rolled the stone away from the mouth and watered all the sheep that Rachel had brought. Then Jacob knew that Rachel was his cousin, and kissed her, and because he loved her at once he shed tears of happiness.

Rachel ran to her home and told her father she had met Jacob by the well. Laban came out and embraced Jacob and took him to his home and kept him there for a month, because he was Rebekah's son. At the end of the month Laban said to Jacob: "You should not serve me for nothing; tell me what shall your wages be?"

Now Laban had two daughters, the older one was Leah, and the younger one was Rachel, and Jacob loved Rachel. Leah had some trouble with her eyes, but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. When Laban asked Jacob about the wages he should pay, Jacob thought only of his love for Rachel, and answered: "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."

"It is better that I should give her to you than to give her to another man; abide here with me," Laban answered.

Then Jacob began to work for Laban, and he worked seven years, but they seemed only a few days for the love he bore Rachel. At the end of seven years Jacob demanded that Rachel should be his wife, but instead of giving her to Jacob, Laban gathered all men of the place and made a great feast. He then told Jacob that it was not the custom of his country for the younger to marry before the first-born, and that Jacob must marry Leah.

This angered Jacob greatly, but he complied with the demand of Laban and married Leah. Then he set about serving another seven years for Rachel, and those seven years again seemed but as a few days for the love he bore her. And at the end of the time he married Rachel also, according to the custom of the country.

CHAPTER XII

JACOB RETURNS TO CANAAN

Years passed and many sons were born to Jacob and his wives. Then Jacob asked Laban to let him go back to the land of Canaan that he might see his people and dwell in the land where he was born. But Laban did not want him to go for the Lord was blessing Jacob, and by his help the riches of Laban were rapidly increasing.

Jacob told Laban if he would give him some of the cattle to have for his own he would stay and feed his father-in-law's flocks as he had been doing, and Laban agreed to this. Then the flocks were divided between them, but Jacob still fed and cared for the flocks of Laban. Jacob had taken care to select the best of the rams and goats and cattle, so that his own flocks increased very fast, and soon he became a very rich man. He had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants and camels.

Laban's sons grew jealous of Jacob's prosperity and perhaps were suspicious of the way his flocks were chosen, for they soon began to complain that Jacob had taken away their father's cattle. Laban also grew jealous of Jacob, so much so that Jacob again desired to return to the land from which he had come.

He called his wives to him and said to them: "I see that your father's face is not as kind to me as before. You know I have served your father with all my power and that he has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, therefore I am resolved to flee before his face and return to the land of my birth."

Jacob rose and put his wives and his children on camels and took all his cattle and all the goods which he had gotten and started for the land of Canaan. He had a long

journey to make and rivers to cross but he moved steadily forward with his face towards Mount Gilead.

After three days, Laban heard that Jacob had fled. He took his men and pursued Jacob for seven days, and finally overtook him at Mount Gilead. But God had told Laban in a dream by night that he should do Jacob no harm but should let him go to the land of Canaan.

When Laban came to Jacob he said to him: "Why have you stolen away and carried away my daughters as though they were captives taken with the sword? Why did you flee away secretly? I might have sent you away with mirth, and songs and feastings. You did not even allow me to kiss my daughters and in all this you have done very foolishly."

"I did this because I was afraid and I fled for fear that you would take your daughters by force from me and not let me have my cattle and my sons," replied Jacob.

Laban and Jacob agreed not to quarrel because the Lord told them that they should not do so. They agreed to separate peaceably and made a covenant, which was marked by a pillar of stones. Jacob made his men gather stones into a great heap and they made a feast upon it. The name they gave the place where the pillar was set up was Mizpah, which means, "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another."

So Laban and Jacob agreed that neither of them should pass this pillar to do the other harm, but in case of strife, when either of them came to the pillar he should pass it in peace.

Early next morning Laban rose up with all his followers and called his sons and his daughters and blessed them, and departed unto his own land.

Jacob now went on his way but he feared that his brother Esau had not forgotten the evil that Jacob had done him and was still angry with him. He sent messengers ahead who told Esau that Jacob was coming and that he had great

riches. When the messengers returned they told Jacob: "Your brother Esau is coming to meet you and four hundred men are with him."

Jacob was greatly afraid and told his men to divide the flocks that they had into two bands so that if Esau should come and smite one band, the other band might escape, and he prayed the Lord to deliver him from the hand of his brother Esau.

Jacob decided to send a present to his brother Esau. So he took a great many goats and camels and cattle and gave them to his servants, and divided the drove into several parts. He told his servants who led the foremost part that if they met Esau and he asked them whose cattle they were driving, they were to say they belonged to Jacob and were a present to his brother Esau and that Jacob himself was behind.

He commanded the servants who had the second drove and those who had the third drove and those who had all the other droves that followed to answer in the same way. When the servants with their droves set out to meet Esau, Jacob took his wives and his women servants and his sons and sent them on their journey following the flocks, and Jacob was left alone.

That night a man appeared and wrestled with Jacob till the breaking of the day. The man was an angel sent by the Lord, or he might have been the Lord Himself, but Jacob was alone as he wrestled with the man. The angel could not prevail against Jacob and so he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him and the angel said: "Let me go for the day breaketh."

"I will not let thee go except thou bless me," answered Jacob. The angel then told Jacob his name should no longer be Jacob but should be Israel for he had become a prince that had power with God and with man. Then the angel blessed him and the next morning Jacob went on his way but ever afterwards he limped because his thigh was out of joint, and the sinews which held it in place had shrunken.

After awhile Jacob met Esau with his four hundred men and he ran and bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother. Esau embraced his brother and kissed him and they both wept. Esau was glad to see his brother and was astonished at the great number of cattle that he brought with him. He had long since forgotten the evil that Jacob had done him and was no longer angry with his brother.

"Who are all these with you?" Esau inquired of Jacob. And Jacob told him they were the children which God had given him and his handmaidens and menservants.

Then Esau asked him what was meant by all the droves of cattle which he had met and Jacob told him that they were a present he intended for his brother, that he might find grace in the sight of Esau whom he had wronged twenty years before for it had been that length of time since the two brothers had met.

I have enough, my brother, keep what you have for yourself," replied Esau.

After that the brothers came to an agreement by dividing the land between them so that all their flocks could find plenty of water and plenty of land to feed upon, and each one journeyed on his way. Thus Jacob came again into the land of Canaan, very much richer and very much wiser than he was when he had fled from it twenty years before.

CHAPTER XIII

JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO EGYPT

Jacob was living in the land of Canaan and his flocks and his herds fed upon the rich grass of the plains and valleys. He had twelve sons, the youngest of whom was Benjamin who was born after Jacob had come back to Canaan. The next to the youngest was Joseph whom his father loved very tenderly. He made him a coat of many colors and showed him other favors above his brethren. Seeing that his father loved him more than all the others, his brothers hated Joseph and would not speak peaceably to him.

Now Joseph was a dreamer and one night he dreamed a dream and told it to his brethren. He said: "We were binding sheaves in the field and my sheaf arose and stood upright, and your sheaves stood round about and bowed down to my sheaf."

"Will you reign over us, and will you have dominion over us?" asked his brethren. And they hated him more for his dreams and for his words.

Joseph dreamed again and told his brethren his dream. He said: "I dreamed that the sun and the moon and eleven stars all bowed down to me." And he told this dream to his father also. His father rebuked him and said: "Shall I and your mother and your eleven brethren bow ourselves down to you?" And his brothers envied him all the more but his father did not forget the dream that Joseph had told him.

One day the sons of Jacob went to feed their father's flocks in a far off land and Jacob said to Joseph: "Go and see whether it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks and bring me word again." And Joseph went looking for his brothers in the place where he thought they were.

A stranger found him wandering in the fields, looking for his brothers and asked Joseph: "For what are you seeking?" Joseph replied: "I am seeking for my brethren. I pray you tell me where they feed their flocks."



JOSEPH DRAWN UP FROM THE PIT.

"Your brethren have departed from this place and have gone to Dothan," answered the stranger. And Joseph went to Dothan seeking for his brothers.

As he came across the fields, his brothers saw him approaching. They said one to another: "Behold the dreamer comes. Let us slay him and cast him into some pit and then we will say to our father, Some evil beast has devoured him, and then we shall see what will become of his dreams."

Then they took the young Joseph who was only seventeen years of age and began to carry out their threats. One of the brothers named Reuben, however, would not allow them to kill the young Joseph but took him from the hands of his angry brothers, for he did not want to shed the blood of the lad. Reuben said to the others: "Let us cast him into this pit alive, then we will be rid of him."

So they took Joseph and stripped him of his coat of many colors and cast him into the pit. Perhaps they thought there was water in the bottom of the pit and the lad would drown, but there was no water in the pit and Joseph remained alive.

After a while the brethren sat down to eat, and while they were at their meal they saw a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with their camels loaded with spices and other things which they were going to carry into Egypt.

"What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, let us not kill him for he is our brother and our flesh," Judah said to his brothers. With this the brothers were content. They lifted Joseph out of the pit, washed the dirt from his body, and put on his clothes, though they kept the coat of many colors in their own hands.

When the Ishmaelites drew near the brothers stopped them and offered to sell Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. The Ishmaelites were glad of this bargain because they could sell Joseph in Egypt for a slave, so they bought the lad and passed on their way.

Then the brothers took Joseph's coat of many colors and dipped it in the blood of a kid which they killed. When they returned to their homes, they went to Jacob and said to him: "We have found this coat, do you know whether it is Joseph's coat or not?" And Jacob looked at the coat and said: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast had devoured him, and Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." The brothers said nothing and the old Jacob believed that Joseph had been killed in the wilderness.

Jacob was heartbroken at the loss of his son and went into mourning for him many days. His sons and his daughters tried to comfort him but he would not be comforted and cried out in his sorrow: "I will go down into the grave mourning for my son," by which he meant that he would mourn for him the rest of his life.

The Ishmaelites traveled many days until at last they came to Egypt and there they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh the king, and also a captain of the guard. Joseph became Potiphar's servant and lived in his house. He was such a good servant that his master was much pleased with him and gave him authority over his other servants.

Joseph had not only the care of the house but also everything in it and Potiphar trusted him with all things. The Lord took care of Joseph in the land of Egypt and of all the household of Potiphar because Joseph was a faithful servant.

CHAPTER XIV

JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM

The Lord continued to prosper Joseph while he was in the house of his master Potiphar. Joseph was a goodly person and well-favored in appearance. Upon one occasion Potiphar's wife became very angry with him and carried her complaint to Potiphar himself. Joseph was not at all to blame, but because his wife was angry Potiphar was willing that Joseph should be cast into prison. Joseph was stripped of all his power and position and was thrown into the king's prison. But he soon found favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison because the Lord was always with Joseph.

Shortly afterwards two of King Pharaoh's servants offended him. One of these was the baker, who attended the king's food, and the other was the butler, who attended to the service of the king's table. When King Pharaoh was angry with any of his servants he put them in prison. So these two servants, the baker and the butler, were thrown into the same prison with Joseph.

Now the butler and the baker each had a dream and what they saw in their dreams worried them greatly and in the morning when Joseph came to them they looked very sad. Joseph inquired of them why they looked so sad.

"We have dreamed a dream and there is no one here to interpret it," they told him.

Joseph then told them that if they would tell their dreams to him he would tell them the meaning.

And this is the dream that the chief butler told: "In my dream a vine was before me and on the vine were three branches and these branches budded and had blossoms and later on there were ripe grapes on the branches. Pharaoh's cup

was in my hand and I took the grapes and pressed the juice into Pharaoh's cup and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. I pray you interpret this dream for me."

"This is the interpretation of your dream," said Joseph. "The three branches are three days. Within three days shall Pharaoh take you out of this prison and restore you unto your place and you shall again hand Pharaoh his cup and serve him at his table."

Then Joseph told the chief butler his story and how that he had been stolen away from the land of the Hebrews and how he had served Potiphar faithfully and that he was unjustly accused and thrown into prison; and he begged the chief butler to ask the king to restore him to his liberty.

The chief baker then told his dream to Joseph. Said he: "In my dream I had three white baskets on my head. In one of the baskets was all manner of meats for the king and the birds ate the meats out of the basket which was on my head. Now tell me the interpretation of this dream."

Joseph answered the chief baker and said: "The three baskets are three days. Within three days the king shall deliver you from this prison and shall hang you upon a tree and the birds shall eat of your flesh. This is the interpretation of your dream."

Now it happened that after three days came Pharaoh's birthday and he made a feast unto all his servants and he sent for the chief butler and the chief baker and delivered them out of prison. Then he made the chief butler serve him as he once did but he hanged the chief baker on a tree just as Joseph had said he would. The chief butler, however, forgot Joseph and did not mention his name to King Pharaoh.

Two years passed and still Joseph stayed in prison. Then Pharaoh dreamed a dream, and behold, he sat by a river. There came up out of the river seven cows that were well-fed and fat, and they wandered in a meadow. Also there came up seven other cows that were poorly-fed and lean. As the fat

cows were feeding in the meadow the lean cows immediately fell upon them and devoured them. Then Pharaoh awoke.

Pharaoh slept and dreamed a second dream, and in this dream he saw seven ears of corn that came out upon one stalk and they were large and good. Then he saw seven thin ears that sprang up on another stalk, that were blasted by the east wind. The seven thin ears immediately devoured the seven good and full ears. And again Pharaoh awoke and his spirit was much troubled by the dreams he had dreamed.

He sent for his magicians and his wise men and told them his dreams but there was no one in all the land that could tell King Pharaoh what these two strange dreams meant. He even spoke to the chief butler about it. Then the chief butler remembered the dream that Joseph had interpreted to him and to the chief baker and how each interpretation had come true as Joseph had told them. Thereupon the butler said to the king:

"When the baker and I were in prison we both dreamed a dream in one night and there was in the prison a young man, a Hebrew, who was servant to Potiphar the captain of the guard, and we told our dream to him and he interpreted our dream to us. He told me that I was to be restored to my office in three days and he told the chief baker that he was to be hanged, and so it was, as Joseph had interpreted our dreams."

Then King Pharaoh sent at once and called Joseph out of prison and they brought him out of the dungeon into which he had been cast. Then he was shaved and bathed and his clothes were changed and he came before King Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to him: "Joseph, I have dreamed a dream and there is no one here that can interpret it, and I have heard it said that you can understand a dream and can tell me what it means."

Then Pharaoh told to Joseph the two strange dreams he had, one about the seven lean cows devouring the seven fat cows, and the other about the seven thin ears of corn

devouring, the seven full ears. And Joseph listened to King Pharaoh while he told him of these dreams.

"Oh, king, your dream is but one dream," Joseph said to Pharaoh. "The seven fat cows and the seven full ears of corn are seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt; the seven lean cows and the seven thin ears of corn are also seven years, and they shall be years of famine in all the land of Egypt, and all the years of plenty shall be forgotten and the famine shall consume the land."

Joseph then advised Pharaoh to select a discreet and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt and appoint officers who should take a part of the crops of the seven years of plenty and gather all the food of these good years into barns and lay up corn in the cities to provide against the seven years of famine which should come, so that the people should not perish when there should be no crops.

This interpretation of his dreams seemed good to Pharaoh and he said to his servants: "Where can we find a man who is discreet and wise and who shall be over my house?"

The servants turned to Joseph and said that inasmuch as his God had showed him all this, and because he was a wise and discreet man, they would appoint him to be over the king's house and he should rule the land and no one in Egypt should be greater than Joseph save the king himself.

The advice of his servants was pleasing to Pharaoh. The king took the ring off his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand and had him clad in fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. He made him ride in a second chariot which he had, and everybody ran before Joseph and bowed the knee, and Joseph was made ruler over all the land of Egypt, and he was second to none, except the king himself.

CHAPTER XV

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN COME TO BUY CORN

Joseph was now thirty years old and there was no man in all Egypt greater than he except King Pharaoh. He went through all the land of Egypt in the seven years of plenty that the earth brought forth the crops in great abundance, and gathered all the surplus food and laid it up in the cities. There was then much food stored in Egypt because Joseph knew that the seven years of famine were coming.

When the seven years of plenty had passed the famine began for no crops grew at all in all the lands. Only in the land of Egypt, where the wisdom of Joseph had stored food, was there plenty. Joseph opened his store-houses and sold corn to the people to buy and even from far countries men came into Egypt to buy corn from Joseph.

Up in the land of Canaan Jacob and all of his family began to suffer for lack of corn. Jacob said to his sons: "I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Go down there and buy for us that we may live and not die." And Jacob sent ten of his sons, who were brothers of Joseph, into Egypt to buy corn. But Jacob kept Benjamin, his youngest son, with him because he did not want any harm to befall him.

The ten sons of Jacob came into Egypt to buy corn, though they did not know that Joseph, the governor over all the land, was their brother. When they came to Joseph they bowed their faces to the earth, and Joseph knew his brothers but they did not know him. Joseph spoke roughly to his brothers and said to them: "Where do you come from?" and they replied: "We came from the land of Canaan to buy food."

Then Joseph again spoke roughly to his brothers, and said: "You are spies and have come to see the nakedness of the land."

"No, my lord, we are come to buy food," replied the men. We are all sons of one man, and we are true men and are not spies. There are twelve of us and our father lives in the land of Canaan. With him is the youngest, and there is one who is dead."

"I shall not let you go until you prove to me the truth of your story," Joseph said to his brothers. "Send one of your number back and let him bring your youngest brother, and the others shall be kept in prison, that the truth of your words may be proved, for I believe you are spies." Then he put them all together in prison for three days.

At the end of three days Joseph changed his mind about his brothers and released them all from prison and agreed to let them go, except one of them who should remain bound in prison while the rest carried corn back to the land of Canaan.

Then the brothers began to talk in their own tongue, not knowing that Joseph could understand them. Though Joseph had learned to speak the language of Egypt he had not forgotten the language of the land of his birth. As his brothers spoke together they talked of the harm that they had done their brother Joseph when he was a child and began to accuse one another of their wickedness:

"This is the consequence of what we did to our brother Joseph when he was but a child," said they.

Joseph understood what they were saying, though his brethren did not know that he understood them. Then Joseph turned himself from them and wept because his heart yearned towards his brothers, even though he had spoken roughly to them. He then took Simeon, one of the brothers, and bound him, to keep him as a pledge that the others would return with their younger brother Benjamin.

Joseph then commanded his servants to fill his brothers' sacks with corn and to put every man's money back into his sack, and to give them plenty of provisions for their

journey. They loaded their asses with the corn and started on their homeward way.

As soon as they were on their way one of them opened his sack to give his animal food, and then he saw the money in the mouth of his sack. He told the others of what he had found and they were surprised and alarmed.

After a while they came back to Jacob, their father, into the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened to them, saying that the governor of Egypt had spoken roughly to them and had accused them of being spies and had bound Simeon, one of their number, and had kept him as a pledge that they should bring back their younger brother Benjamin with them, to prove that they were not spies. Then the brothers untied their sacks, and behold, every man's money was in his sack, and when they saw this they were all afraid.

Jacob then said to his sons: "I am indeed bereft of my children. Joseph is not and Simeon is not and you will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me."

Reuben spoke up and said to his father: "You may slay my own two sons if I bring not Benjamin again into your hands. Give him to me and I will take him to Egypt, and I will bring him back safely." But Jacob was not willing that Benjamin should go.

The famine was sore in the land of Canaan and before long they had eaten up all the corn which they had brought out of the land of Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons: "Go again into Egypt and buy us a little food."

"There is no use to go into Egypt to buy unless we take Benjamin with us. The man said that we should not see his face nor buy any food until we bring our younger brother," said Judah, one of the sons.

After a while Jacob agreed that Benjamin should go, for they were in great need of corn and the brothers dared not go back into Egypt without taking young Benjamin with them.

Jacob, therefore, allowed them to depart but told them to take double money and some presents and fine honey and spices and other things,' that they might please the man in Egypt who had spoken so roughly to them and strangely enough had returned them the money that they had carried to him the first time that they went into Egypt. Then the brothers started on their second journey to Egypt, taking double money and the young Benjamin.

CHAPTER XVI

JACOB MOVES INTO EGYPT

The brothers of Joseph came again into the land of Egypt to buy corn. This time they brought the young Benjamin with them, even as Joseph had requested them.

When they came to Joseph's house they gave him the presents which their father had sent, and showed him the double money, and then bowed themselves to the earth.

Joseph looked upon them kindly and asked of their welfare, and said: "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke, and is he yet alive?" The brothers answered: "Our father is yet alive and is in good health." And again they bowed their heads.

When Joseph saw his brother Benjamin he asked of his brothers: "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke unto me?" and they told him that it was. Then Joseph, who longed to take his brother in his arms and kiss him according to the custom of that country, dared not do so, but left his brothers and went into his own room and there he wept. When he came out again he ordered food set before his brothers, all they could eat, and all the wine they could drink, and he made his servants wait upon them.

Then he commanded his steward to fill every man's sack with corn, as much as he could carry, and to put every

man's money into the mouth of his sack. He also told them to put his own silver cup into the mouth of the sack of the youngest brother and also his money for the corn. In the morning he sent them away loaded with food.

After they had gotten a little way out of the city Joseph turned to his steward and said: "Follow after the men and when you overtake them ask them why they have returned evil for good." The steward followed the men and when he reached them and asked them the question as Joseph had commanded, they were much astonished and wanted to know what evil they had done to Joseph.

The steward then opened each man's sack and discovered the money in the mouth of the sacks, and when he reached Benjamin's sack he not only found the money but also Joseph's cup, and he accused the men of taking the cup from the house of Joseph.

They fell before him on the ground and told him that they did not know who had put the money back into their sacks nor who had put the cup into the sack of Benjamin, their youngest brother. Nevertheless the steward made them all come back with him to the house of Joseph.

Then Judah stood up before Joseph and told him the story of their father's living in Canaan and how that they were once twelve brothers but that in an evil day one of them had been sold into bondage and that his father had grieved for this son; and how Benjamin was the youngest one and his father loved him; and how that the famine was sore in the land of Canaan, and that the old father was even now waiting for his sons to come back to him and would surely die if Benjamin was not allowed to return to him.

Joseph could not restrain himself any longer from making himself known unto his brethren. He had been trying all this time to learn whether they were still true men as he had hoped they were. Therefore, he made all his servants leave the

place where they were, and after they were gone there was no one left except Joseph and his eleven brethren.

Then Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. He said to them: "I am Joseph, the brother whom you did sell into Egypt. I was brought here and made a servant in the house of the captain of the guard. Then for no fault of mine was I thrown into prison and there I stayed for many years. But the Lord blessed me and gave me power to interpret the dreams of King Pharaoh himself. I knew by his dreams that there would be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Therefore, I stored up corn that I might feed this people and even my father's people in the land of Canaan. Pharaoh has made me ruler over this land and there is none greater than I save Pharaoh himself." After this he kissed all his brethren and they wept and rejoiced because their brother Joseph had not been killed and that all twelve of Jacob's sons were alive.

Joseph then asked his brethren about his father and all the people of Canaan and they told him all that had happened for many years. Joseph then told them to hasten back to his father Jacob and to say unto him: "Your son Joseph is yet alive and he is lord of all Egypt. Tell him to come down, and tarry not, and all his people shall remain in the land of Egypt, that they shall be near Joseph."

He loaded his brothers with presents and clothes and gave Benjamin three hundred pieces of silver and provided them with wagons and camels and asses, that they might bring old Jacob and all of his family back into the land of Egypt. Then he sent his brothers on their way.

When they came to Jacob their father they told him: "Joseph is yet alive and is governor of all the land of Egypt." But Jacob could hardly believe that it was true and his spirit failed him, but after a while he said to his sons: "Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Then Jacob and his family and all his servants journeyed into Egypt with all their flocks and herds and all

their possessions. It was a long journey and lasted many days but at last they arrived and Joseph made ready his chariot and went out to meet his father. When he saw him he fell on his neck and cried, and Jacob said unto Joseph: "Now let me die since I have seen your face, because you are yet alive."

After Joseph had met his father he told Pharaoh what he had done and Pharaoh was well pleased that Joseph had brought his father and all his family into Egypt. Then Pharaoh asked the brothers of Joseph: "What is your occupation?" and they said to Pharaoh: "We are shepherds, we and our fathers before us." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "The land of Egypt is before them. Let your brethren select where they shall remain. Bring Jacob before me that he may bless me, and I will take care of him in the land of Egypt."

And thus it was that Jacob and all his sons came to remain in the land of Goshen, and Joseph cared for his father and his brethren and all their household. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, until he was one hundred and forty-seven years old, and when he died they took his body back to the cave of Machpelah in the land of Canaan and buried it in the grave of his ancestors.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EARLY LIFE OF MOSES

The children of Israel were living in the land of Egypt. They increased rapidly in numbers until after many years, the land was filled with them. Joseph died when he was one hundred and ten years old and was embalmed and put in a coffin.

All of his brethren had died but their children continued to increase in numbers.

After a while there was a new king or Pharaoh over Egypt who forgot the promises made to Joseph and who looked with fear upon the numbers of the children of Israel. He said unto his people: "The children of Israel are more mighty than we; it might be if we should go to war they would join our enemies and fight against us." And Pharaoh turned his heart against the children of Israel and made up his mind to deal strictly with them.

He set taskmasters over them who made them bear heavy burdens. The lives of the children of Israel were made hard with bondage. They were compelled to work in the fields and to make brick for the building of houses. But the worst thing of all that the king did was to issue a terrible order that every son that was born of the women of Israel should be cast into the river and only the daughters should be saved alive.

One of the women of the children of Israel had a beautiful baby boy, whom she hid for three months from those who sought the child's life. Fearing that she could no longer hide him in her own house, she made an ark of bulrushes like a little boat or cradle and she daubed it with slime and put the child in it and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. Then the child's sister was made to stand a little way off so that she

could watch the ark and see that no harm came to the little boy.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river to bathe and her maidens were walking along by her side. Looking into the river she saw the ark among the flags and sent one of her maids to bring it to her.

When she opened it she saw the child, and the boy held up its hands to her and cried as little children will. "This is one of the Hebrew's children," said the daughter of Pharaoh.

The sister of the little boy came to Pharaoh's daughter and said: "Let me go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you." And Pharaoh's daughter told her to go.

The girl went and called her mother and brought her to the daughter of Pharaoh. Pharaoh's daughter did not know that the woman was the mother of the child and she said to her: "Take this child and nurse it for me and I will pay you wages." And the woman took the child and nursed it.

After a while the child grew up to be large and strong and Pharaoh's daughter took him into her house and treated him like her son, and named him Moses. The boy lived in the court of Egypt surrounded by a great deal of wealth. He became learned in all the schools of Egypt, though he never forgot that he was a Hebrew and never ceased to sorrow for the hardships of his people.

When Moses was grown, he went out one day and looked at the burdens laid upon his people. He saw an Egyptian smite a Hebrew. He looked around and saw that no one was watching and then he slew the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting and asked them what they were fighting about.

One of the Hebrews said to Moses: "Who made you a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the

Egyptian yesterday?" When Moses heard this he was afraid because he did not want it to be known that he killed an Egyptian.

Pharaoh heard what Moses had done and sought to slay him. But Moses fled into the land of Midian and sat down by a well. As he sat there some women came to draw water for their sheep. The other shepherds, however, came and tried to drive the women away, but Moses stood up and drove the shepherds away and watered the women's sheep. The women who were all daughters of the same man took Moses with them to their home. He married one of them and continued to dwell in the land of Midian.

The father-in-law of Moses was named Jethro, and Moses kept the flock of his father-in-law. One day he led the flock near to a mountain called Horeb. Suddenly he saw before him a bush that burned with fire but was not consumed. "I will see why the bush is not burned," said Moses, and he came near to the bush.

The voice of God spoke to him out of the bush and said: "Draw not near, but put off your shoes from your feet for the place where you stand is holy ground." Then Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God.

God then told Moses that He had heard the cry of the children of Israel and had seen the oppression put upon them by the Egyptians. He told Moses that He was going to send him to Pharaoh and that he should tell Pharaoh that he should allow the children of Israel to go out of the land of Egypt into the land of their fathers. Moses told the Lord that they would not believe him nor would they listen to his voice; they would say: "The Lord has not appeared unto you," and Pharaoh would not let the people of Israel go.

The Lord said unto Moses: "What is that you have in your hand?" Moses answered: "It is a rod.

"Cast it on the ground," said the Lord. And he cast it on the ground and it turned into a serpent and Moses fled before it.

"Put out your hand and take the serpent by the tail," again said the Lord. Moses put out his hand and took the serpent by the tail and it became a rod again in his hands.

"Put your hand into your bosom," the Lord told Moses. And he put his hand into his bosom and when he took it out it was white as snow and covered with leprosy.

"Put your hand into your bosom," said the Lord. And he put his hand into his bosom and when he took it out it was turned again and was like his other flesh.

Then the Lord told Moses that if Pharaoh did not believe him and did not do as he said, that he should take the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land and it would become blood upon the land.

Moses went to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him: "Let me go and return unto my brethren in Egypt and see if they are alive." Jethro told him to go in peace, and Moses began his journey toward the land of Egypt.

On his way he met his brother Aaron, and Aaron kissed him because he had not seen his brother for a long time.

Moses told Aaron of the words that the Lord had spoken unto him and of all the signs that had been given to him. Then Moses and Aaron gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel and told them what the Lord had said. When the people heard these things they bowed their heads and worshiped.

CHAPTER XVIII

EGYPTIANS ARE SMITTEN WITH PLAGUES

Aaron went to Pharaoh and said: "The Lord God of Israel has sent us to you saying: 'Let my people go that they may hold a feast in the wilderness.'" This made Pharaoh angry and he would not let the people go. On the other hand, he commanded the taskmasters of the people to make the burdens of the children of Israel heavier.

"Give the people no more straw to make brick as heretofore, but let them go and gather straw for themselves, but each one must make as many bricks as before. They are idle and need more work, because they have asked time to go into the wilderness to sacrifice to their God," said the cruel king to the taskmasters over the people of Israel.

And the taskmasters did as Pharaoh commanded and the people of Israel were beaten and their burdens became heavier day by day. Then Moses and Aaron went again to Pharaoh and told him that the Lord had sent them to give him a sign, and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and it became a Serpent.

Pharaoh called for his magicians and the magicians cast down their rods and they also became serpents. But Aaron's rod that had become a serpent swallowed up all the rods of the magicians that had become serpents. Pharaoh hardened his heart and did not believe in the signs and would not let the people go.

Moses and Aaron then went to Pharaoh in the morning as he sat by the side of the river and Moses carried in his hand the rod which had become a serpent. Moses said unto Aaron: "Take thy rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt upon their streams, rivers and ponds that they all may become blood, and that there may be blood in all the vessels of wood and stone in the land of Egypt."

Aaron stretched out his hand and lifted up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river in the very sight of Pharaoh and his servants and lo, all the waters of Egypt were turned into blood. The fish that were in the rivers died and the Egyptians could not drink the waters, because there was nothing but blood throughout the land of Egypt.

Now the magicians of Egypt did the same thing in their enchantments and Pharaoh's heart was still hardened and he would not let the people go. And the people of Egypt had to dig wells to get water to drink.

Moses then went to Pharaoh and said to him again: "Let my people go that they may serve God, and if you refuse to let them go he will smite all the land with frogs."

Pharaoh would not obey the commands of the Lord and behold, the rivers brought forth frogs abundantly. The frogs crawled into the streets and into the houses and even into the beds of the people and into the kitchens and ovens and there was a great plague of frogs until they covered the land of Egypt. The magicians did likewise with their enchantments and also brought frogs upon the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and begged them to take away the frogs and he would let the people go. The next day the frogs were gone, but Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to do as he had promised. Therefore, the Lord told Moses to send another plague upon the land of Egypt.

This time it was a plague of lice, for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and smote the dust of the earth and it became full of lice that crawled on man and beast. The magicians of Pharaoh tried to do likewise but this time they could not. Still the heart of Pharaoh would not relent. Therefore, the Lord decided to send another plague upon the land of Egypt.

This time it was a plague of flies. Great swarms of flies infested the houses of the Egyptians and all the ground where they were, but Pharaoh would not let the people of Israel go

into the wilderness to worship, even though he had promised Moses to do so if he took away the swarm of flies.

Then other plagues followed. All the cattle of Egypt died of a grievous malady but none of the cattle of the people of Israel died. Then the Lord told Moses and Aaron to take handfuls of ashes and sprinkle them towards the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh, and the ashes turned into a small dust that smote the people of Egypt with boils. Then followed terrible hail and fire in the land of Egypt so that many men and cattle in the fields were killed and all the crops were destroyed and the trees broken down. Only in the land of Goshen where the children of Israel lived was there no hail.

Still Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not believe that all these things were sent upon him by the Lord for refusing to let the people of Israel go into the wilderness to worship. Therefore, the Lord sent a great plague of locusts that covered the face of the earth. The locusts ate what was left from the hail, and filled the houses of Egypt. They covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened, and there remained no green thing in all the fields throughout the land of Egypt. Then there followed a plague of darkness over the land of Egypt. For three days not one person could see another nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. After each one of these plagues Pharaoh would agree to let the people go, but when Moses and Aaron would remove the plague at the entreaty of Pharaoh then he would break his promise and would not let the people go.

At last the Lord said: "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and upon Egypt then he will let my people go." The Lord told Moses, "I will go into the land of Egypt and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of the servants and those that work in the mills and all the first-born of the beasts and there shall be a great cry in the land of Egypt."

The Lord promised Moses, however, that He would protect the children of Israel and would save all their first-

born. Therefore, He told Aaron and Moses to tell the people of Israel that the head of each house should take a lamb that should be without blemish and kill it in the evening. Then they were to take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood of the lamb and strike each side of the door of the house and even over the door, so that the houses of the Israelites might be marked with the blood of the lamb and thus be told from the houses of the Egyptians.

The flesh of the lamb was to be roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread and all of it was to be eaten or else consumed with fire. As they ate they were to stand with their clothes girded for a journey, with their shoes on their feet and their staves in their hands and they should eat the lamb in haste.

They were to follow these orders because at night the Lord intended to send His angel through the land of Egypt and smite all the first-born both of man and beast, but wherever the angel saw the blood on the door posts he was to pass over that house and not smite the first-born. This was called the Passover and the lamb that the people ate was known as the Feast of the Passover.

The Israelites did exactly as Moses and Aaron commanded them to do. The lamb was slain, the door posts were marked with blood, the Israelites prepared for their journey and the flesh of the lamb was roasted and eaten. At midnight the angel of the Lord passed over Egypt and smote all the first-born, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon and the first-born of all cattle.

The next morning when Pharaoh rose and all the people of Egypt saw what the angel of the Lord had done, there was a great cry and weeping and wailing in all the land for there was no single house where there was not one dead. Only in the houses of the Israelites there was no mourning for the angel had passed over those houses and the first born was spared.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EGYPTIANS DROWN IN THE RED SEA

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said to them: "Get the Israelites out from my people. Go and serve your Lord as you please. Take your flocks and your herds and begone, for the Lord hath smitten me and my people and we shall have no peace until you are out of this land."

The Egyptians urged the Israelites to go. They hastened to send them out of the land and gave them jewels, and silver, and gold, and plenty of clothes and food. They did all they could to hasten the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, for fear the Lord would send another plague upon the people.

It must have been a great procession, for there were six hundred thousand of the Israelites on foot that were grown besides the children, and with them went great flocks and herds of cattle and great wagons carrying food. They had been in the land of Egypt for four hundred and thirty years and had grown to be great multitudes of people.

They left all their houses and their lands and turned their faces to the great desert, not knowing how long it would take them to reach the land of Canaan and how they were to be cared for on the way. They trusted in Moses and Aaron and in the word of the Lord. Moses took with him the bones of Joseph who had been buried in Egypt for four hundred years, in order that he might be buried again in the land from which Joseph came.

The great procession moved on into the wilderness having faith in God that he would protect them from all evil. In order to lead them in the right direction, the Lord sent a pillar of cloud that led them by day and a pillar of fire that gave them light by night.

When Pharaoh heard that the people of Israel had left the land of Egypt, and when he knew such a great multitude of workers had departed he changed his mind again as he had so often done and said to those around him: "Why have we done this and let Israel go from serving us?" Then he took his chariot and six hundred other chariots and many soldiers and pursued the children of Israel and overtook them as they were camped in the wilderness.

When Pharaoh came near the children of Israel, they lifted up their eyes and saw the Egyptians coming after them. They were afraid and cried out unto the Lord. They said to Moses: "Have you taken us to die in the wilderness? Why have you brought us out of Egypt and dealt with us in this way? It is better that we should serve Egypt than die in the wilderness."

But Moses stood up before the hosts of the people and said to them: "Fear not, but stand still for the Lord will save you from the Egyptians and after today you shall see them no more forever. Hold your peace and the Lord will fight for you."

The children were encamped by the Red Sea. In front of them were deep sullen waters; behind them was a pursuing host of horsemen and chariots led by a faithless king bent upon their destruction. They were unarmed and helpless and not accustomed to war and battle. They saw no hope but only destruction for themselves, their wives, and their children. Therefore, it was not strange that they cried out with great terror as they saw the hosts of Egypt coming upon them.

But the Lord had promised to take care of them and to provide a way for their escape and all they had to do was to trust in him and in his promise.

The Lord said unto Moses: "Tell the children of Israel to go forward. Then lift up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it that the children of Israel shall go on dry ground into the midst of the sea." Then the angel of God and the pillar of cloud which had gone before the camp of

Israel moved behind them and between them and their enemies. Thus it was that the Egyptians were in darkness and could not see the Israelites but the pillar gave light on the side of the people of Israel.

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and a strong east wind blew all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided so that there was an open way for the children of Israel to march through the sea. Then the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, and the waters were piled up like a wall on their right hand and on their left hand.

Pharaoh came on pursuing the Israelites right into the midst of the sea with all his horses, chariots and horsemen. The children of Israel hastened through the sea and reached the other side but the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud troubled the hosts of Egypt. Their chariot wheels were broken and their horses stumbled and fell and the horsemen were confused in the darkness. The men of Egypt cried out with fear. "Let us flee from the face of Israel for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

When all the Israelites had reached the other side of the sea and the Egyptians were still confused with the wall of water on either side, the Lord said to Moses: "Stretch out your hand over the sea that the waters may go together again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen." Moses stretched his hand over the sea and the waters came together and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the hosts of Pharaoh and not one of them escaped.

In this way the Lord saved Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians, and that same day the Israelites saw many Egyptians dead upon the seashore. Then the people believed the Lord and his servant Moses and knew they were safe from their enemies.

CHAPTER XX

THE LORD PROVIDES FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The Israelites took up their journey again in the wilderness. Day after day they marched forward, led by Moses and Aaron until at last all their food had been eaten and even their cattle had been devoured. The men and women were very tired and hungry and the children began to cry out in distress.

Not knowing where they were going and how they would be fed, they began to complain and murmur against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. They said: "It was better for us to die in the land of Egypt when we sat by the flesh pots and when we had plenty of bread to eat. Why has Moses brought us into this wilderness to kill us with hunger?" And the air was full of their cries and complaints and Moses did not know what to do.

The Lord spoke again unto Moses and said: "I have not forgotten the people of Israel in the wilderness, but I know they need food to eat, therefore, I will rain bread from heaven and the people shall go out and gather it every morning, one day's supply at a time and on the sixth day they shall gather two days' supply that they may have food for the Sabbath."

The Lord told Moses that in the evenings he would send flesh for the people of Israel to eat and in the mornings he would send bread for them to eat. And so it happened that every evening quails came up and covered the camp and the people gathered them and had meat to eat. In the morning there lay upon the ground a small round thing which the people called manna and which was bread for them to eat. When the people had gathered enough quail for one day then all the quails were gone and when the people had gathered enough manna for one day then all the manna was gone. The

Lord gave only one day's supply at a time except on the sixth day when he gave enough also for the Sabbath.

Those who were greedy and gathered too much found they had just enough, and those who had gathered less found they had no lack, every man had enough for his eating. In this way the Lord fed the children of Israel as long as they wandered in the wilderness.

But a wilderness is also a very dreary place and there is not much water in such a land. At one place there was no water for the people to drink and thousands of them were thirsty and began again to murmur against Moses and Aaron saying: "We will die of thirst in this land. Why have you brought us out of the land of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? There are in Egypt many wells and springs of water and here in this desert our tongues are parched and our children cry unto us for drink." And they were almost ready to stone Moses.

Moses went again unto the Lord and asked him what he was to do. The Lord said unto Moses:

"Take your rod in your hand and stand upon the rock in Horeb and smite the rock and water shall come out of it that the people may drink." And Moses did as the Lord told him and smote the rock with his rod in the presence of the people of Israel. A great stream of pure clear water came out of the rocks for the thirsty people, and they knelt down and drank and relieved their thirst. Then again they knew that the Lord would care for them in their journey through the wilderness.

There were also enemies in the land of the wilderness who sought to hinder the people of Israel as they went on their journey. There were savage tribes who fought with them and while the people of Israel were a peaceful people and were not well provided with instruments of war yet the Lord was on their side and did not allow their enemies to prevail against them.

Upon one occasion the Amalekites attacked the children of Israel and fought with them. The Amalekites were very fierce and the people of Israel were afraid of them. Moses said unto Joshua, who was one of his captains: "Choose the best men that you have and make them go out and fight with the Amalekites, and I will go and stand upon the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."

Joshua did as Moses told him, gathered his bravest men and went out to fight with the Amalekites upon the plains of the wilderness, while Moses and Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. The men of Israel and the Amalekites began a terrible fight, for Joshua wished to drive away the Amalekites who had come to destroy the children of Israel.

Moses stood on the hill and saw the men of Israel engage in battle with their enemies. Then Moses held up his hand and so long as his hand was held up the hosts of Israel prevailed. When Moses became too tired to hold up his hand and let it down the Amalekites prevailed.

Moses' hands were heavy and he was old and tired and so they took a stone and put it under him and he sat down, then Aaron held up one of his hands and Hur held up the other hand and so they were steady until the sun went down.

Joshua overthrew the Amalekites and slew many of them with the sword and they came no more to disturb the hosts of Israel. Moses came down from the mount and built an altar in the name of the Lord who had given him victory.

CHAPTER XXI

GOD TELLS MOSES TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE

The people of Israel camped before a mountain called Sinai. It was now time for them to have laws so that they could know what was the will of God toward them. Therefore, the Lord told Moses to come up to Mount Sinai and he would give him the laws for the guidance of the people.

The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai and it burned with fire, and the mountain shook and great quantities of smoke ascended to the skies. The Lord then called from the top of Sinai for Moses to come up to the top, and Moses went up and all the people in the plain below prepared themselves to receive the word of the Lord.

On the top of the mount the Lord told Moses to say to the people of Israel that He had delivered them out of the hands of the Egyptians and that He would take care of them if they would obey His commandments. He told Moses to make the people wash their clothes and make themselves clean and not commit any sin for on the third day the Lord was to come again on Mount Sinai. Moses went down the mountain and told the people all the things the Lord had spoken to him.

After Moses had spoken to the people the Lord told him to come up again into the mountain, and He would give him the Ten Commandments written upon tablets of stone. Moses took Joshua with him and went up into the mountain, and a cloud came and covered the mountain for six days. The Lord called to Moses out of the cloud, and Moses went into the cloud and stayed forty days and forty nights. On the plain below the people of Israel saw the cloud and the bright burning light and knew that the glory of the Lord was upon the mountain.

The Lord then spoke to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments. He also told him that the children of Israel should build a tabernacle, which was to be a place of worship. He told Moses how this tabernacle was to be built and all the things which were to go in. It was to be a very beautiful place of worship, and have many objects of gold and silver and brass in it. There were to be curtains of fine linen richly embroidered, and many altars, for the worship of the people. It was to be made in such a way that it could be taken down and moved as the people journeyed from place to place.

God also told Moses to have an ark made, which was to go in the tabernacle. The ark was a box or chest made of wood and covered with gold inside and out, so that no part of the wood could be seen. Inside the ark Moses was to place the two tables of stone which God was going to give him. The cover on top of the ark was to be made of pure gold with the golden cherubim, or angels upon it, one at either end. These cherubim were to have their wings outspread and were to face each other. The cover of the ark was to be known as the Mercy Seat. Inside the tabernacle there was to be a table made of wood, and covered with gold, and also a golden candlestick which was to hold the candles that gave light in the tabernacle. God also told Moses to make still another altar, out of the wood and covered with gold, which was to be placed in the room with the golden table and the golden candlestick. Upon this altar incense was to be burned. Incense was a kind of gum mixed with spices which when burned sent up sweet smelling smoke. This smoke represented the prayers of the people ascending to heaven.

Around the tabernacle there was to be a wall or fence making a kind of yard or court. In this court there was to be an altar made of wood and covered with brass, and large enough to hold sacrifices of oxen, sheep and goats. This altar was to stand before the door of the tabernacle. Moses was also to make a great basin or laver out of brass, to hold water. It was to stand near the brass altar, in the court outside the tabernacle.

And the Lord set aside Aaron and his four sons to be the priests at the tabernacle. Aaron was to be the high priest and his sons were to be called priests. Aaron was to wear a beautiful garment, with a linen cap for his head, and a plate of gold on which were the words Holiness to the Lord. Next to his skin he was to wear a coat made of fine linen with embroidery on it, which should reach to his feet. Over the linen coat he was to wear a robe of blue, around the lower end of which were to be ornaments like pomegranates and between the pomegranates were to be hung heavy golden bells. Over the robe there was still another robe shorter than the others, made without sleeves and called the ephod.

On his breast Aaron was to have a square piece of cloth with twelve precious stones set in it, and richly embroidered. The stones were to be rubies, and sapphires and diamonds. Aaron's sons were also to have rich dresses but not so fine as the one Aaron was to have.

When the tabernacle had been built and was ready to be used for worship, Moses was to bring Aaron and his sons to the door and there he was to wash them with water. Then he was to put the beautiful garments on them and anoint Aaron's head with oil. In this way the people might know that Aaron and his sons had been set aside or consecrated as priests for the service of the Lord.

After God had told Moses all about this wonderful tabernacle and how it was to be made, he also told him who was to make it. One was named Bezaleel and the other was named Aholiab, both of whom the Lord had taught to work in silver and gold and brass, and to set precious stones. Besides those, there were many others whom the Lord had instructed, so that there was no lack of workmen to make ready this beautiful tabernacle and the altars and to prepare the garments for the priests. When God gave Moses the two tables of stone, which He had written with His own hand, He told him to go with Joshua down the mountain and return unto the people in the plains below.

CHAPTER XXII

THE GOLDEN CALF

When the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, they went to Aaron and said: "As for this man Moses who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. He went up into Mount Sinai and has disappeared from our sight. We would that you should make us gods to worship that shall go before us."

Aaron told them to take the gold earrings out of the ears of their wives, and of their sons and of their daughters and bring them to him. All the people took off their gold earrings and brought them to Aaron. They also brought him their golden ornaments so that he had a great quantity of gold. With it he made a golden figure of a calf and set it up before the people for them to see. The people exclaimed, "These are our gods which brought us up out of the land of Egypt." And the people bowed down and worshipped the golden calf.

Then Aaron built an altar before it and told the people that on the next day there should be a feast to the Lord, and they should offer burnt offerings and peace offerings and have plenty to eat and drink and that they should bow before the golden calf.

Moses was still up in the mountain of Sinai where he was receiving from the hands of the Lord the tables of stone that contained the Ten Commandments and directions about building the tabernacle. The Lord told him that the people had corrupted themselves and were worshiping idols, and that he should hasten down from the mountain and punish them according as the Lord should tell him.

Moses hastened down from the top of the mountain with the two tables of stone in his hands. The tables were slabs

of stone and the writing on the tables was the writing of God and the tables were written on both sides.

When Moses came near the people, Joshua said: "There is the noise of war in the camp." And Moses replied, "It is not the voice of those that shout for victory, but the noise I hear is like those who sing." And he came near the camp and saw the people dancing before the golden calf.

Moses was so angry with the people for this idolatry that he cast the tables of stone out of his hands and they broke in pieces as they fell to the ground. Then he took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire and ground it to powder and strewed the ashes into the waters.

Then Moses turned to Aaron and said: "Why did you let the people bring such a great sin upon themselves?" And Aaron began to excuse himself and say that the people wanted gods to worship and that he thought that Moses had left them altogether and told him how he had made the golden calf. This story made Moses angrier than ever.

Then Moses stood before the people and cried out, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come onto me." And all the sons of Levi came and stood by Moses. Then he told the sons of Levi to take their swords and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man who had been concerned in the idolatry, for the Lord wanted to purify the camp of all wickedness.

The sons of Levi did as Moses commanded them. They drew their swords and fell upon the worshipers and pursued them from gate to gate throughout the camp and there fell on that day about three thousand men.

Moses knew that God was angry with the people of Israel for worshiping the golden calf, so he prayed to Him to forgive the people for their ins, and lead them on to the promised land. God promised Moses to forgive the people, and said: "Whosoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book."

The Lord then told Moses to hew two tables of stone like those he had broken and to come again to the top of Mount Sinai, and to bring no man with him, nor to let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain, nor to let the flocks and herds feed near the mountain. Moses rose up early in the morning, took the two tables of stone which he had cut out of the mountain and went up alone into the mount to talk with God. He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights, and neither ate nor drank all that time.

The Lord again gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the words of the covenant written upon the tables of stone, and Moses went down the mountain unto the people, and the skin of his face shone so brightly that the people were afraid to come near him. But he called to them and put a veil over his face and told the people all the things the Lord had commanded them to do.

Then the people prepared to build the ark according to the way the Lord had directed them. They brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings and all their ornaments of gold, then they brought fine linen and purple and blue and scarlet cloth, and goats' skins, and badger skins, so that there was plenty of material to build the tabernacle and the altars. The rulers also brought jewels and precious stones for the ephod and the breastplate, and spices and oil for the light and for the anointing. Everybody who had anything needed for the tabernacle gave it to the Lord for the building of His place of worship.

Then Bezaleel and Aholiab and the wise hearted men of Israel wrought every man according to his wisdom. The women spun the cloth and wove the curtains. The tabernacle was soon ready, the poles were set in the ground, the curtains were hung, the ark and the altars and laver were made, the priests were consecrated, and the tabernacle was complete. Then the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and a cloud covered the tent of the congregation.

The Lord told Moses that when the cloud stood over the tabernacle the people were to rest at that place on their journey, no matter how long the cloud rested over the tabernacle. When the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, and moved before it, the people were to journey as long as the cloud led them. And so the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by night, and the people could see the will of the Lord throughout all their journey.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE WANDERINGS OF THE ISRAELITES

The people of Israel stayed at the foot of Mount Sinai for more than a year but now the time had come when they must leave Mount Sinai and take up their journey to the land of Canaan. They were divided into companies called tribes. There were twelve of these tribes each one taking its name from the descendants of Jacob or Joseph. The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to number the people of Israel, and to count them all by tribes. When Moses and Aaron had done this they found there were six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty people. This was a great crowd to wander forty years in the wilderness but the Lord had promised them that they should suffer no harm and be brought safely into the land of Canaan.

The men that belonged to the tribe of Levi were not numbered with those who were to fight the enemies of Israel but were appointed to take care of the tabernacle. Whenever the children of Israel moved in their journey, the men of the tribe of Levi were to take down the tabernacle and carry it along on the journey following the cloud that was to lead them. When the cloud stopped it was the duty of these men to set up the tabernacle again. The tabernacle was holy and none but the priests and the Levites were allowed to go near or touch any part of it.

When the time came for the people to leave Mount Sinai, the cloud arose from over the tabernacle and the people took up their march. Each tribe had its own place and over each one was a captain. They marched like an army carrying standards and banners with them. The Levites went along carrying the different parts of the tabernacle. They marched for three days until they came to the wilderness of Paran when the cloud stopped, and here the people made their camp and rested.

Now the people had no meat to eat in the wilderness. The quails that the Lord had sent them in the beginning of their journey had been for a very short time and they had eaten nothing but manna. They began to complain and cry out: "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions and the garlic. Our soul is dried away, for there is nothing besides this manna before our eyes."

Moses heard the people cry out in the door of his tent and Moses was displeased with them and so was the Lord. The Lord then told Moses to tell the people that they should have flesh to eat not only one day or two days but for a whole month and that they need not eat their flocks nor their herds in order to satisfy their hunger for meat. Then there came a strong wind and great quantities of quails were blown up from the sea. They fell over the camp until the ground was covered with them. The people gathered the quails and began to eat. Hardly had they put the meat in their mouths when the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them and the people were smitten with a great plague so that many of them died. In this way the Lord punished them for not depending on Him and for desiring things He did not furnish.

Soon the cloud was lifted again and the people followed it until they came to a place called Hazeroth. At this place the cloud stopped and again the people made their camp.

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, found fault with him because he had taken a wife who was not one of the

children of Israel. So Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, and said: "Has the Lord only spoken by Moses? Has He not spoken by us also?" And the Lord heard what Miriam and Aaron said and His anger was kindled against them.

He called Aaron and Miriam and told them to go to Moses to the tabernacle. Here He told them that Moses was His servant and that He would speak to the people only through Moses. Then the cloud left the tabernacle and Miriam was covered with leprosy and was as white as snow.

When Aaron saw that his sister had become a leper, he said to Moses: "Lay not our sins upon us and let her not be as one dead." And Aaron was overwhelmed with the sin he had committed and sorry for his sister's leprosy.

Moses cried unto the Lord and said: "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee!" The Lord heard the prayer of Moses and had her shut out from the camp for seven days and after the seven days her leprosy was healed. Then the people journeyed from Hazeroth into the wilderness of Paran.

CHAPTER XXIV

SPYING OUT THE LAND OF CANAAN

The people of Israel were now not very far from the land of Canaan. Moses told them they should go into the land and take possession of it as the Lord had promised. Moses sent spies into the land of Canaan that they might see the land and the people that lived in it and report whether they were strong or weak, few or many, and what cities they had and whether they dwelt in tents or in forts. He told the spies to find out whether the land was fat or lean and to bring back some of the fruits of the land.

Then the spies went into Canaan and searched all the land from one end to the other. They came to the brook of Eschol where they found such wonderful grapes that they cut

down a branch of a vine which had but one cluster of grapes, but it took two men to bear it between them upon a staff. They also gathered pomegranates and figs and after forty days returned to Moses.

They told Moses of the people of the land, that the land was fat and there was plenty to eat and to drink, also that there were many people and they were strong and lived in cities. They declared that the men were of great stature and that they saw the sons of Anak which were giants.

This made the people afraid and they murmured against Moses and Aaron and said: "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt or in the wilderness. Why has the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, and our wives and our children to be a prey to the wolves in the land of Canaan? Let us choose another captain and return to Egypt."

Then Joshua and Caleb who had been two of the spies said to the people: "The land through which we passed is a good land, a land which flows with milk and honey. Let us march into the land for the Lord has led us and we will fear them not!"

But all the people tried to stone Joshua and Caleb after what they had said. The Lord was angry with the people of Israel and told Moses that He would send a pestilence and destroy many of them. But Moses prayed to the Lord not to destroy the people and to bear with them for they were not ready to enter the promised land.

The Lord then told Moses that the people should turn back into the wilderness and there they should wander forty years until all those who refused to go into the land of Canaan were dead. He would bring their children into the land of Canaan, and Caleb and Joshua the two good spies, should they be alive, would lead the people into the land of Canaan. Then the people turned back into the wilderness for their long wandering of forty years.

CHAPTER XXV

PUNISHING THE ISRAELITES

While the people of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. They brought him to Moses and Aaron, who ordered him to be put in a place of confinement until the will of the Lord should be made known. The Lord said to Moses: "The man shall be put to death. All the people shall stone him to death with stones outside the camp." And so they stoned him, to death for disobeying the word of the Lord and breaking the Sabbath day.

Now there were three men Korah, Dathan, and Abiram who persuaded two hundred and fifty others to join them in a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. They went to Moses and said: "You and Aaron take too much upon yourselves; there are many others in this camp as good as you; why do you lift yourself above all the congregation of Israel?"

When Moses heard this and saw the men in rebellion against him and Aaron, he was overcome with distress and bowed himself to the ground. Now Korah was one of the tribe of Levi and was one of those who waited on the priests of the tabernacle. He wanted to be a priest himself and wanted someone besides Moses to be the ruler of the people.

Moses told the men who had come to him that each one of them should take a censer and burn incense in it on the next day and Aaron should do likewise. They were all to come to him with their censers burning and the Lord would show them who was to be the high priest.

The next day came Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and the two hundred and fifty men with their censers burning with incense, and Aaron came also with his censer. They stood before the door of the tabernacle for the Lord to choose which should be the high priest, and all the people stood near.

The Lord then said to Moses and Aaron: "Separate yourselves from these men that I may consume them in a moment. And tell all the people to separate themselves from Korah and his men." And Moses and Aaron and all the people of Israel did as the Lord commanded. Then Moses told the people that if the ground should open and swallow up these men they would know that Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had offended the Lord.

Hardly had Moses and Aaron and all the people separated themselves from the wicked men, when the ground opened and swallowed them up with all their tents and goods and everything that was theirs. Seeing the earth open the people fled with a great cry saying: "Lest the earth swallow us up also."

Then there came a fire from the Lord that consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. When the people of Israel saw these men destroyed by fire they murmured against Moses, saying: "These were good men and meant no harm. You have killed the people of the Lord."

Again was the anger of the Lord kindled against the people of Israel for their murmurings and he sent a great plague among them, and many began to die. Then Moses told Aaron: "Take a censer and put fire from the altar in it, and go quickly among the people and make an atonement for their sins."

Aaron did as Moses told him, and with his censer stood between the living and the dead, and prayed the Lord to stop the plague. The Lord heard the prayer of his servants and the plague ceased, but not before nearly fifteen thousand had died.

The Lord then told Moses to make each head of a tribe bring a rod, and every man who brought a rod was to have his name written on it. Aaron's name was to be written upon the rod of the tribe of Levi. Moses was to take those rods and lay them before the ark and let them stay there all night. God said: "The rod of the man whom I shall choose shall blossom." In

this way the people of Israel were to know whom the Lord wanted for His high priest.

The people did as Moses said and every tribe sent a rod. Moses wrote the names of the princes or leaders upon the rods and laid them before the ark in the tabernacle and left them there all night. The next morning he went to look for them and behold, the rod of Aaron had budded, and grown blossoms, and borne almonds in the night.

Moses then brought all the rods before the people of Israel so that each man might take his rod. When the princes saw that the rod of Aaron had grown blossoms and borne almonds they knew that the Lord had chosen him to be high priest. God ordered Moses to take Aaron's rod and put it again in the tabernacle and keep it there so that the children of Israel might always know that Aaron and his sons were to be priests of the tabernacle.

The children of Israel continued on their journey and came to the desert of Zin. Here Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, died and was buried. There was no water for the people and they gathered together and complained to Moses: "Why have you brought us into this wilderness that we and our cattle should die? Why have you made us come out of Egypt into this evil place? Here there are no figs, or vines, or pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink."

Moses and Aaron left the complaining multitude and went into the tabernacle and fell upon the ground, and prayed that God should tell them what to do. The Lord said to Moses: "Take your rod and gather all the people together and speak to the rock which is before the people, and it shall gush forth with water so that all the children of Israel and their cattle shall drink."

Then Moses and Aaron called all the people together before the rock and said to them: "Hear now, ye rebels! must we bring you water out of this rock?" And the thirsty people watched him with great eagerness. Moses lifted his hand and

smote the rock twice and the water came out abundantly, and all the people drank and their cattle also.

In their journeyings the children of Israel came to Mount Hor. Here the Lord told Moses and Aaron that Aaron should not enter into the promised land but should die in the wilderness. He then told Moses to bring Aaron and Eleazor his son up into Mount Hor. After they had ascended the mountain the Lord told Moses to strip the garments from Aaron and put them on Eleazor his son. And Moses did as the Lord had directed him to do. Then Aaron died upon the top of the mountain, and Moses and Eleazor left him there. They then came down the mountain, and told the people that Aaron was dead. When the people heard this they mourned for Aaron for thirty days.

CHAPTER XXVI

BALAAM IS MADE TO PROPHECY

The Israelites next journeyed by the way of the Red Sea to march around the land of Edom, and the people were much discouraged on account of the way. Again the people began to complain and abuse Moses. They said to him: "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread, neither is there any water and we loathe this manna."

To punish the people for their lack of faith the Lord sent fiery serpents among them, that crawled over the ground and into the tents and bit the people, so that many of them died.

Moses prayed for the people and asked God to spare them. The Lord said to Moses: "Make a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, if he shall look upon the serpent, he shall live." And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole so that

the people could see it. If any man was bitten by any of the fiery serpents, all he had to do was to look up at the brass serpent on the pole, and he lived.

After the fiery serpents had disappeared, Israel marched onward, and at last came to the plains of Moab. The king of the country was named Balak, and he feared the children of Israel for they were many and the Lord had made them powerful against their enemies. He thought they had come to make war against him and he did not have enough soldiers to fight so great a company. Therefore, he sent to a man named Balaam, saying: "There is a people come over from Egypt; they cover the face of the earth and they abide over against me. Come now and curse these people that I may smite them and drive them out of the land." And he promised many things to Balaam if he would curse the children of Israel and bring evil upon them.

Balaam did not want to go, and sent the messengers back to Balak. Again the king sent more messengers, princes this time, saying: "Let nothing hinder you from coming to me. I will promote you to very great honor, and I will do whatever you ask me to do. Come, therefore, and curse these people that I may smite them and drive them out of the land."

At last Balaam was persuaded, and rose up in the morning and saddled his ass, and went away with the princes of Moab. But God's anger was kindled against him for going, and for yielding to the temptation of riches and honors to do wrong in trying to bring evil upon the people of Israel.

As Balaam rode along on his ass an angel of the Lord stood in the way, with a sword drawn in his hand, and the ass saw the angel but Balaam could not see him. And the ass turned aside out of the way and went into the field. Balaam could not understand why the ass left the path and smote her to turn her back in the way.

A little further on they came to a narrow path with a wall on either side and again the angel stood in the path. Again

the ass saw the angel and Balaam could not see him. When the ass saw the angel she thrust herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the hard stone. Balaam cried aloud and smote the ass again. Then the angel disappeared and Balaam rode on not knowing why his ass was behaving in the way she did.

They came to a narrow path where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. Again the angel appeared to the ass, which frightened the poor animal so much that she fell down in the path and refused to move. Balaam was very angry and began to beat the ass with his long staff.

Then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass and she began to speak to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you should beat me three times?" she said.

"Because you have made sport of me. If there were a sword in my hand I would kill you," answered Balaam.

The ass spoke up and asked Balaam: "Am I not your ass, upon which you have ridden ever since you have owned me, and have I ever before made sport of you, and have I not always done your bidding?" And Balaam was compelled to confess that the animal had always been a faithful servant.

Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand. Then Balaam bowed his head and fell flat on his face. The angel spoke to him and said: "Why have you smitten this poor beast three times? It was I who stood in the way because the Lord is not pleased with what you do. The ass saw me and turned three times; unless she had turned I would have slain you and saved her alive."

"Go with the men, but only the word which I shall speak to you shall you speak," said the angel to Balaam. And Balaam rode on with the princes of Moab until he came to King Balak.

Balak went out to meet him on the way and greeted him, and promised him all honors if he would curse the children of Israel. But Balaam answered: "Have I now any power to say anything? The word that the Lord puts in my mouth that only shall I speak." With that the king was compelled to be content. He sent oxen and sheep to Balaam and showed him great respect hoping thereby to get him to curse the children of Israel.

On the next day Balak took Balaam into a high place where he could see the hosts of Israel. Balaam said: "Build me here seven altars and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams." And Balak built the altars and he and Balaam offered on each altar a bullock and a ram. Then Balaam told the king to stand by the burnt offering while he went off to speak to the Lord. Then God met Balaam and put words in his mouth that he should speak when he came back to Balak.

Balaam returned and Balak expected him to bring curses upon the people of Israel, but instead of that Balaam began to speak the words that God had put in his mouth. He said: "How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? How shall I defy whom the Lord has not defied?" Then he told Balak that the people of Israel should be blessed above all nations. Balak was very angry and said to Balaam: "What have you done to me? I brought you here to curse my enemies and see you have blessed them altogether."

Then Balak took him to another high place where he could see the hosts of Israel and built seven altars and offered up seven bullocks and seven rams and asked Balaam to curse his enemies. But again the Lord put words into Balaam's mouth and he told Balak that the people of Israel should rise up like a lion and not lie down until they had eaten of the prey and drunken of the blood of the slain.

Then Balak tried again in a third place, and again they built seven altars and offered seven bullocks and seven rams as they had done before. By this time Balaam knew that the Lord would not let him curse His people, and so he looked

toward the wilderness where the people of Israel were abiding in their tents. Then the spirit of God came upon Balaam and he prophesied a great future for the people of Israel while King Balak and the princes of Moab stood by in anger and listened to his words.

Then Balak's wrath was great. He said to Balaam: "I had thought to promote you to great honor. I had called you to curse my enemies and behold, you have blessed them three times. You shall have neither the riches nor the honor I had promised. Therefore, go you back to your own home." And Balaam rose and went back to his home and Balak also went his way.

CHAPTER XXVII

ON THE BORDER OF THE PROMISED LAND

The time had come to number the people of Israel again, and Moses and Eleazar, the high priest, began to count the men in the tribes, as Moses and Aaron had done at Sinai. After the counting was over it was found that all those who had been afraid to go over into Canaan the first time were dead, just as the Lord had said. Only Caleb and Joshua, the good spies, were left, for the Lord had promised that they should live and lead the people into the promised land.

Now the Midianites had tempted the children of Israel to worship idols and to commit sin in the eyes of the Lord. In order to punish these heathen, Moses sent twelve thousand men against them to give them battle. God gave the Israelites a great victory over their enemies, and their kings were slain.

The Midianites were despoiled of all their goods, and all their cattle, and thousands of their oxen, asses, and sheep. Their cities were burned, and even the castles which they lived in were destroyed by fire.

After the battle was over the leaders of the hosts of Israel came to Moses and said: "Thy servants have taken count of the men under our charge, and there is not one missing." Thus did the Lord give the children of Israel a great victory over their enemies.

At last the people of Israel came near the land of Canaan. For forty years they had been wandering in the wilderness, and a new generation of them had been born, and grown into manhood. During all these years the Lord had provided them with food and water, had protected them from their enemies, had punished them for their sins, had given them laws, and had led them on with his pillar of cloud by day and his pillar of fire by night. Now they were near the river Jordan and there they made their camp.

While they waited for the Lord to direct them, two of the tribes of the children of Israel came to Moses and told him they did not wish to go over Jordan, but desired to stay in the land of Gilead where they were. They had a great many cattle, and the land was rich and well watered and they were satisfied as they were. They said to Moses: "Let this land be given to thy servants for a possession and bring us not over Jordan. We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones."

Moses was angry with these tribes, for he thought they were afraid to go to war with the people of Canaan and asked their leaders: "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall you sit here?"

The leaders had no such intention, and told Moses they would leave their cattle and their wives and children in the land of Gilead, and the men would go forward and help their brethren conquer the land of Canaan. After that the men would return and live in the land of Gilead where they had built them sheepfolds and left their families.

Moses told the two tribes which were the tribes of Reuben and Gad, that they might have the land of Gilead for

their own, provided the men go across Jordan and help the others conquer the country. And so the men built their sheepfolds, and houses for their wives and children to live in on that side of Jordan, but the men themselves made ready to accompany their brethren in their march to the promised land. Half of the tribe of Manasseh asked to join the tribes of Reuben and Gad and stay on that side of Jordan, and Moses allowed them also.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST DAYS OF MOSES

When the children of Israel were in camp near the river Jordan, Moses talked to them for the last time. He reminded them of how the Lord had brought them out of Egypt, and had kept them for forty years in the wilderness and had promised to make of them a very great nation. He went over all the laws and commandments of the Lord and instructed the people in the service of God, and told them what was His will concerning them.

He told them the time had come for them to march into the promised land and to take possession of it. There they would find beautiful cities which they had not built, and houses full of goods which they had not bought, and wells they had not digged, and vineyards and olive trees they had not planted. There should be plenty to eat and to drink, only they must not forget the Lord.

Always they must remember their journey in the wilderness, and how for forty years they had been led by the Lord, and how the manna had fallen for their food, and how their clothes had not worn out, and how their feet had not been sore or swollen on the long marches. The Lord would take care of them in the new land just as he had in the wilderness.

Moses told the people that the Lord would go before them as they passed over Jordan, and that He would give them the victory over the nations they would find there. When they reached this land they would find streams that ran through the fields, and springs of water that ran out of the ground. They would find land where the wheat grew, and grapes and figs and pomegranates and olives. Under the ground there was iron and other metals from which they could make the things they needed to use.

The people of Canaan worshiped idols, and built altars on the mountains and high places where they offered sacrifices. They even slew their own sons and daughters in offerings to their heathen gods. Moses told the people of Israel to destroy all these idols and tear down all the altars and images to the false gods. By no means must the children of Israel be led into the worship of these heathen gods, lest the wrath of the Lord be kindled against them.

Some of the cities of Canaan were to be set aside as cities of refuge. They meant that certain places should be named, where any man who had killed another by accident might flee and be safe from punishment. All murders, of course, were to be punished by death, but if one killed another without intending to do it, he was to flee at once to one of these cities of refuge, where he could live safely and not suffer from the vengeance of the relatives and friends of the man he had unintentionally killed.

Finally Moses told the people that if they would obey the word of the Lord they would become greater than any other nation. The Lord would bless them and their children, and their enemies would be afraid and flee before their faces. They were the chosen people and God's care was to be always about them in the land of promise. If they did not heed the words of the Lord and did not obey his commandments they should suffer great disasters. The seed they sowed would bear but little grain, and the locusts would destroy even that; the grapes they hoped to gather would be eaten by worms; and

they should have sickness that no one could cure. Worse than all, their enemies should take them captive and destroy all their cattle and food, and take them away as slaves to distant lands.

All this and much more did the old Moses tell the people of Israel as they camped by Jordan. They listened to him day after day as he preached to them and instructed them, and told them of the life that was before them in the land of Canaan.

The time had come for them to have a new leader, for Moses was old and was not to go over Jordan with the hosts of Israel. The Lord was going to take him to Himself and Joshua would be the leader of Israel. Then Moses took Joshua into the tabernacle, and the Lord appeared to them in a pillar of cloud. Then he anointed Joshua to be the leader of Israel after Moses had died.

Moses wrote all the laws down in a book and gave them to the priests. Then he commanded them every seven years to gather the people together and read these laws to them, so that they might know them well and obey them. He gave the book to the Levites who put it in the ark which they bore on their journeys from place to place.

The time had come for Moses to die. He was a hundred and twenty years old; but his eye was not dim nor was his body weak. He had been kept by the Lord in all the vigor and power of his manhood, so that no man could say he was old and feeble. The Lord told him to go to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, and Moses did as the Lord had commanded. There he looked over all the land of Gilead, and across the Jordan to the places where the people of Israel were to go. The Lord then said to Moses: "This is the land which I swore with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. I have caused you to see it but you shall not go over there." Then Moses died alone with God on top of the mountain and God buried him, but no man knew where, nor has any one found his grave to this day.

The people of Israel wept for Moses thirty days as was their custom. Joshua the son of Nun became their leader, for Moses had laid his hands upon him, and the Lord had given him wisdom. Therefore, the people of Israel obeyed the words of Joshua even as they had obeyed the words of Moses.

CHAPTER XXIX

RAHAB SAVES THE SPIES

After the death of Moses the Lord said to Joshua: "Moses my servant is dead; now, therefore, arise and go over this Jordan with all this people, into the land which I will give you." Then Joshua called the officers and told them to get the people ready and prepare food for the march, for within three days they would pass over Jordan.

Joshua sent two men to spy out secretly the land where the people were going, even as far as Jericho. The spies left, crossed the river, and after a while came to the house of a woman named Rahab, who lived in Jericho. Rahab took them into her house and gave them food and shelter.

But some one told the king of Jericho: "There came two men into the city by night and they are of the children of Israel, who are camped beyond Jordan. Perhaps they come to search out the land." And the king sent men to search the house of Rahab that they might find the spies.

When they came to the house of Rahab they called out: "Bring out the men who are with you for they are spies of the children of Israel and have come to search the country."

Rahab had no intention of betraying the spies, and quickly hid them under the stalks of flax which she had piled up on the roof of the house. Then she replied to the king's men: "There came men here but I did not know who they were nor where they came from. The men went out about the time

the gates of the city were shut, but where they went I do not know. Pursue after them quickly and you will overtake them."

The men departed and sought for the spies as far as the fords of the river Jordan, but they did not find them for they lay safe under the flax on the roof of the house of Rahab.

Rahab went to where the spies were and said to them: "I know the Lord has given you this land, and that terror has fallen upon all of us and we faint because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea, and slew your enemies and fed you in the wilderness, and there remains no courage in us because of you." Rahab then begged the spies to spare the lives of her father, her mother, her brothers and her sisters because she had hidden them from the men of the king of Jericho. The spies promised Rahab that they would spare all those whom she wished saved. They said: "When the Lord has given us this land we will deal kindly and truly with you." The spies told Rahab to bind a scarlet thread in the window of her house and to get all her kindred inside, and that her house should then be safe from the hosts of the children of Israel.

Rahab was satisfied and since the gates of the city were shut and the guards were placed at the entrances, she purposed to let the spies down the walls of the city.

Rahab's house was upon the walls of the town, and her windows overlooked the walls outside. She took a cord and bound it around each spy, and let him down the wall from her windows, until each spy was safe on the outside of the city. She had already told them to fly to the mountains and hide for three days, lest their pursuers meet them at the fords of the river. After three days the pursuers would return and the men could go their way.

The spies did as Rahab told them and were safe from those who sought their lives. Rahab brought her father and mother and sisters and brothers into her house and kept them there. She bound a scarlet thread on the window of her house

as the spies had told her to do, so that when the hosts of Israel came they might know the place where she lived and that all her people were to be saved.

CHAPTER XXX

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO

After the spies had returned to Joshua and the three days had passed in which the people were to get ready for the march, Joshua moved all the children of Israel to the river Jordan. Then Joshua said to the people: "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." He then ordered the priests to take up the ark of the covenant and march before the people, and the priests did as Joshua commanded them.

Then Joshua told the people that the priests should bear the ark to the river Jordan, and that as soon as the feet of the priests touched the waters of the river the waters would open and the people should cross the river on the dry ground. The next day all the hosts of Israel, according to their tribes, stood before the river ready to march into the promised land.

The priests came with the ark to the brink of the river. As soon as their feet touched the water, the river ceased to flow and all the waters were held back and the dry ground appeared. The priests then stood firm with the ark and all the people marched across the dry bed of the river, carrying their tents and household goods and driving their cattle with them, until all Israel was across the river Jordan, except those whom Moses had promised should live in the land of Gilead.

Joshua commanded that each tribe should select one man and each man should gather a stone from the bottom of the river and bring it over Jordan and leave it in a heap as a memorial to the fact that the waters divided and that the children of Israel marched over the dry ground. After all the

people had passed over, the priests came with the ark of the covenant.

When everybody was safe across the river the waters came together and the river Jordan flowed on as before.

After the people came up out of Jordan they made their camp at a place called Gilgal, not far from Jericho. The twelve stones which Joshua had ordered to be brought from the bottom of the river were set up, there. He said to the people: "When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, What mean these stones? then they shall answer, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land."

At Gilgal the people kept the Passover and after that rested and prepared for the conquest of Jericho. Up to this time the manna had been falling every day for the people to eat, and there had never been any lack of food. But at Gilgal the people found old corn of the land of Canaan, and they parched it and ate of it. After that the manna fell no more, for the people had abundance of the fruit and grain of the land where they were.

When Joshua came near to Jericho there appeared a man before him with a sword drawn in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked: "Are you for us or are you for our enemies?" The man answered: "Nay; I am captain of the host of the Lord."

Joshua knew that he spoke unto the Lord who had appeared to him in the shape of a man and he fell with his face to the ground and worshiped the Lord. Then the man said to Joshua: "Loose your shoes from off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua took off his shoes as the man had commanded him.

Now the city of Jericho was surrounded by a wall, and the gates were shut and closely guarded for fear of the children of Israel. None went out and none came in the gates of the city.

The Lord commanded Joshua to put the children of Israel in marching order and march them around the city once a day for six days. Seven priests were to bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark and blow them as they marched around the city of Jericho. On the seventh day the people were to march around the city seven times and the priests were to shout with a great shout so that the walls of the city should fall down flat before the noise and shouting of the people of Israel.

Joshua called the people and the priests and appointed them to their duties as the Lord had commanded. The people marched around the city and the seven priests blew their trumpets before the ark as it was carried in the processions once a day for six days.

The people of Jericho did not know what to make of this strange procession, as it moved around their walls day after day. The people made no noise on those days but moved silently, only the seven priests blew the seven trumpets. The people of Jericho doubtless made sport of this procession and thought it was a strange kind of warfare and a poor way to conquer a walled city full of armed soldiers.

On the seventh day, however, the Israelites rose about dawn and the procession started. The long line had encompassed the city, and the priests were blowing their trumpets. Joshua said to the people:

"Shout, for the Lord has given you the city." The people shouted with a great shout, every man at the top of his voice, the priests blew their trumpets, and behold, the walls of Jericho began to shake, then to waver, and then they fell flat on the ground. The people of Israel rushed in and took the city, and captured all the rich possessions of the people and made the city their own. Joshua told the two young men who had been spies to find the house of Rahab and see that nothing happened to her or to her family, as the spies had promised her.

So the spies searched the city and found the house of Rahab unhurt by the fall of the walls and the scarlet string was on the window. They went in and found her and all her family and brought them out unhurt with all their goods. They took them outside the city and left them in the camp of Israel.

Then the children of Israel set fire to Jericho and burned it to the ground, but they saved all the silver and gold and the vessels of brass and iron and put them into the treasury of the Lord. Rahab and her family went to dwell in the camp of Israel where they spent the rest of their days because they had hid the spies which Joshua had sent out to search the country.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CAPTURE OF AI

Joshua sent men from Jericho to a city called Ai, saying to them: "Go up and view the country." And the men went up and explored all the land around Ai. When they came back to Joshua they reported that the people were few in number and that it would take only two or three thousand men to capture the land.

So Joshua sent three thousand men to capture Ai, but when they reached the city and the men of Ai came out to give battle, the soldiers of Joshua were afraid and fled before the men of Ai, and about thirty-six of them were killed. When Joshua heard of this he tore his clothes and fell with his face to the ground and put dust upon his head, according to the custom in those days of expressing grief.

"What shall we do when Israel flees before the face of its enemies?" Joshua cried aloud to the Lord. "Behold, the Canaanites shall hear of it and shall surround us and cut us off from the face of the earth."

The Lord told Joshua to rise up from the ground, and sanctify the people for there was one among them who had sinned and that was the reason why the soldiers of Israel fled before the men of Ai. He must find out who had done wrong and punish him before the people could hope to conquer their enemies. Then the Lord told Joshua to have all the people march by tribes, then by households, then by man and man, and he would show him the guilty one.

So they marched before Joshua, and first a tribe was marked by the Lord, then a household was marked, and finally a man named Achan was marked as guilty of sin. "My son, tell me now what you have done, and hide it not from me," Joshua said to Achan.

Achan told him that he saw among the spoils of Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold and he wanted them. So he took them for himself and hid them in his tent with some silver also, instead of bringing them into the treasury of the Lord.

Joshua hastened to send messengers to the tent of Achan, who searched his tent and found the spoils and the silver. They took all they found and brought it to Joshua, who laid it before the people of Israel. Achan stood before them and confessed to the crime of stealing that which belonged to the Lord.

Then Joshua and the people of Israel took Achan and all his family, and all his property and carried them to the valley of Achor. There they stoned them with stones and burned them with fire. Afterwards they raised a great heap of stones over the dead bodies to let the people know that the Lord would punish those who disobeyed him.

Then the Lord told Joshua: "Fear not; take all the people of war with you and go against Ai. I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people and his city and his land." Joshua then chose thirty thousand men and sent them away by night, and told them to lie in wait behind the city but

not very far and be ready when he needed them. So the thirty thousand men went and hid in ambush behind the city of Ai.

Joshua took other soldiers with him in the morning and came near Ai and left five thousand in another ambush before the city. Then he approached the city with a few men, and the king of Ai came out with his soldiers to give battle. Joshua made as if he were beaten and fled before the soldiers of Ai, and all the people of Ai and the soldiers of Ai pursued them until there was not a soul left in the city.

Then Joshua turned and stretched out his hand as the Lord commanded him, and the ambush arose behind the city and on one side of the city, and the great army of Israel rushed into Ai and set fire to it.

Then the soldiers that were with Joshua turned and caught the men of Ai between the burning city and themselves. Other soldiers of Israel came from behind and from one side until the men of Ai were surrounded and could not escape. They were slain, every man of them, except the king of Ai, who was captured alive and brought to Joshua. Joshua afterwards had him hanged on a tree and his body covered with a great heap of stones at the gate of the city, which had been destroyed by fire.

CHAPTER XXXII

JOSHUA CONTINUES THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

All the kings gathered together with one accord to make war on Joshua. The inhabitants of Gibeon, however, did not wish to make war but wanted to make a treaty of peace. Therefore, they sent messengers to Joshua, who took old sacks upon the backs of their asses, and old wine bottles, and old shoes on their feet, and worn out clothes, and all the bread they brought was dry and mouldy.

When they came to Joshua they said to him: "We are come from a far country, for we have heard of your God, and all the things He has done for you. When we left our country our bread was good, and our clothes were new and our shoes were not worn, but now the bread is dry and our clothes and shoes are worn and the wine bottles are broken because of the long journey. We beseech you to make a covenant with us and our people."

Then Joshua made a league with them to let them live, and the princes of the people also swore to keep the league. After three days they heard that these men had not come from a long distance, but were from Gibeon and belonged to those wicked tribes that Joshua had been commanded to destroy.

Joshua would not break the league he had made with the men of Gibeon and destroy them, but he said that when this city was overcome, they should be bondsmen or slaves and should work for the priests in carrying water and cutting wood and doing other things for the tabernacle.

When the king of Jerusalem heard of all that had happened he called four other kings and went with their soldiers to the city of Gibeon, resolved to capture that city and destroy all the people. The men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua: "Come to us quickly and save us and help us for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us."

Joshua hastened to Gibeon to help the people with whom he had made a league of peace. A great battle was fought in which five kings and their soldiers were put to flight. As they fled great hail-stones fell from the heavens and killed more men than were slain by the swords of the people of Israel.

While the soldiers of Joshua were pursuing the enemy, the sun was going down and darkness was coming on. It seemed that the Amorites would escape the men of Israel. Therefore, Joshua raised his hand towards the heavens and

cried out: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And the sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people avenged themselves upon their enemies. Then Joshua returned to the camp at Gilgal, while the five kings fled and hid in a cave at Makkedah.

It was told Joshua: "The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah." And Joshua replied: "Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave and set men by it to keep them." And so it was done.

After all the people of Israel had returned from the slaughter of their enemies, Joshua said: "Open the mouth of the cave and bring out those five kings unto me." And his men opened the cave and brought forth the five kings. Joshua then ordered his captains to put their feet upon the necks of the kings, and the captains came and did as Joshua told them. Then Joshua said in the hearing of all the people: "Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom you fight."

Then Joshua smote the five kings, and slew them and hanged their bodies on five trees and let them stay there until the evening. When the sun went down the bodies of the five kings were taken down and cast into the cave where they had hid, and great stones were placed before the mouth so that the people might not even give their kings any other place of burial.

Joshua fought other battles against the kings of Canaan for there was much land and many cities to conquer. Each king ruled over a single city or else a small portion of land.

At last the people came to Shiloh and set up the tabernacle there. They had carried it all the way from Sinai, taking it down when they moved and putting it up again when they stopped. But now they were in Canaan and their long wanderings were over. So the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh to stay, for the Lord had chosen that place for it.

Joshua now asked the people to choose three men from each tribe that was to live in the land of Canaan. When the men were chosen he sent them as spies throughout all the land that had not yet been taken. He ordered them to write down in a book all that that they saw and afterwards to return to him in Shiloh.

The men went on their mission as Joshua ordered them, and explored every part of the land, and wrote down in a book a description of it. They then brought the book to Joshua. After this Joshua divided the land into parts and each tribe drew by lot the portion which it was to have.

The Levites were given forty-eight cities for themselves and their families. Six cities were also chosen to be cities of refuge where any person might fly for safety in case he had killed another by accident. Then Joshua told the people to drive the heathen out of their lands and go up and possess it, for the Lord had promised it to them and would help them conquer their enemies.

The time had now come for Joshua to die. He called all the elders and leaders of the people of Israel to him and exhorted them again to live in the fear and obedience of the Lord. He reminded them of how the Lord had driven their enemies before them, and given them cities and fields and vineyards for their own. He told them the heathen worshiped idols and that they must not be led astray into the worship of these false gods, for if they did the Lord would surely punish them.

He said to the people: "Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Ammonites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

All the people answered with a loud voice: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods." Then Joshua took a great stone and set it by an oak that stood near

the tabernacle, and told the people it should be a witness to remind them of the promise they had made to serve the Lord. Then the people departed every man to his own home.

Joshua was a hundred and ten years old, and he died. They buried him on the borders of his own inheritance, the land that had been given him, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. The bones of Joseph which the people had brought out of Egypt were buried in Shechem, in the very land where Joseph when a boy, and wearing his coat of many colors, had gone to find his brethren.

CHAPTER XXXIII

GIDEON IS GIVEN A SIGN

When Joshua was dead the people of Israel went out to war with their enemies, and the Lord gave them many victories. They did not drive out the Canaanites from all their cities, however, but allowed some of them to live in the land. In fact they mingled with the heathen people, and even married among them. The men of Israel married heathen women, and the women of Israel married heathen men. In this they disobeyed the Lord and came to grief as he had told them they would.

In many cases the people began to worship the heathen gods, Baal and Ashtaroth. When they did this the Lord sent enemies to fight against them, and overcome them and treat them as captives and servants. Thus Israel went on in the land of Canaan for three hundred years, sometimes sinning and then repenting, sometimes victorious over their enemies and sometimes being conquered by them. Often the Lord punished them for their sins, and then always forgave them when they repented and turned again to him and to his worship.

One time when the people had behaved wickedly and had displeased God, the Midianites arose against them and

made servants of them and treated them very harshly. They even drove the people from their cities and their homes so that they had to live in dens and caves in the mountains.

The Midianites destroyed all the growing crops of the Israelites, or took away that which was ripe. They seized the oxen and goats and sheep so that nothing was left for the people to eat.' The Midianites were as grasshoppers for multitude' and their camels were without number. And the Israelites were distressed, and cried unto the Lord.

There was a man of Israel named Gideon. He sat under an oak tree one day threshing wheat and hiding it from the Midianites. An angel appeared unto him and said to him: "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor. Go in your might and you shall save Israel from the hands of the Midianites."

But Gideon was in doubt and asked the angel: "Wherewith shall I save Israel? My family is poor in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house."

The angel, who was the Lord himself, replied: "Surely I shall be with you, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man."

But Gideon wanted a sign, for he could not believe that he was chosen of the Lord. So he killed a kid and brought the flesh with some bread, and also some broth, and set them all before the angel as he stood under the oak tree. Then the angel said:

"Take the flesh and the unleavened bread and lay them upon this rock and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so.

Then the angel put forth the end of his staff and touched the flesh and the unleavened bread and there rose fire out of the rock and consumed all the flesh and the bread. Then the angel left him, and Gideon built an altar there to the Lord.

The Lord then ordered Gideon to throw down the altar of Baal and cut down the grove that was near it. Gideon took ten men and did as the Lord told him. Then the Lord directed

Gideon to build an altar unto Him and offer burnt offerings upon it, and use the wood of the grove he had cut down. And Gideon did that also.

When the Midianites saw what Gideon had done they were very angry and asked: "Who has done this thing?" When they found out that Gideon had done it they wanted him put to death, but the Lord had other purpose for Gideon, and the people refused to deliver him into the hands of the Midianites.

The army of the Midianites came down against Israel and camped in a valley near them. Then Gideon asked the Lord to give him another sign to show that he would help him against the Midianites. Gideon said to the Lord: "I will put a fleece of wool on the floor. If the dew be on the fleece only and if it be dry upon the earth beside it, then shall I know that you will save Israel."

In the morning when Gideon arose and took the fleece in his hand it was wet with dew, so much so that he wrung a bowl full of water from it, and the ground all around the fleece was dry. Gideon again said to the Lord: "I will put a fleece of wool on the floor. If the fleece be dry and the dew be upon the ground only, then I shall know that You will save Israel."

In the morning Gideon arose and took the fleece in his hand and it was dry, and all the ground was wet around it. By this Gideon knew that he would overcome the enemies of Israel.

CHAPTER XXXIV

GIDEON OVERCOMES THE MIDIANITES

The Lord said unto Gideon: "The people that are with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands. Israel will boast that they saved themselves. Now, therefore, let all who are afraid depart to their homes." When Gideon told the people this, twenty-two thousand of them left, and ten thousand stayed with Gideon to fight the Midianites.

"The people are yet too many," said the Lord to Gideon. "Bring them down unto the water, and every one that laps water with his tongue like a dog you shall set to one side, and every one that kneels down to drink you shall set to one side." Gideon did as the Lord told him and found that three hundred men put their hands to their mouths to drink water and lapped it as dogs do, but all the rest knelt down to drink.

"By the three hundred that lapped the water will I save you and deliver the Midianites into your hands. All the others may go, every man to his own home," commanded the Lord.

Gideon took the three hundred away, and gave them food and trumpets and sent all the others away. And the hosts of the Midianites were encamped in the valley. They were in numbers like a cloud of grasshoppers, and their camels were many.

Gideon went down into the valley with his servant to hear what the Midianites said and he came near to the camp. When he had come near, there was a man of the Midianites who told his dream to his fellow. He said: "I dreamed a dream, and a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the hosts of Midian and came unto a tent, and smote it, so that it fell along the ground." And the fellow replied to the dreamer: "This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon, for into his hand has God delivered Midian and all his hosts."

Gideon returned to his men at once and called to them: "Arise for the Lord has delivered into your hand the host of Midian." And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in each man's hand, and an empty pitcher, with a lamp in each pitcher.

He then told his men: "Watch me and do as I do. When I come to the outside of the camp and blow my trumpet then shall each of you blow your trumpet and cry aloud, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

Gideon and the three hundred men came to the outside of the camp in the middle of the night, and the Midianites did not know they were anywhere near. Then Gideon blew his trumpet, and all the three hundred men blew their trumpets, and broke their pitchers, and held aloft the lamps in their left hands while they held the trumpets in their right hands.

They made a tremendous noise, with their trumpets and shouting, and their lamps looked like the oncoming of a great host of soldiers. The Midianites were overcome with fear. They ran from their tents and fled in great haste. In the confusion they began to slay one another not knowing who were their enemies. They fought among themselves throughout the host, and continued to flee as long as they heard the trumpets and the shoutings of Israel.

The hosts of Israel gathered for the pursuit and followed the Midianites to the River Jordan. They took two kings captive and slew them and brought their heads to Gideon. Thus were the Midianites overthrown and the children of Israel had to serve them no longer.

Gideon went again to his own home and lived to a good old age. When he died he was buried in the sepulchre of his father, and forever after the people of Israel told their children the story of how he and his three hundred men put to flight the great hosts of Midian.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE PUNISHMENT OF ABIMELECH

After Gideon was dead, the people of Israel turned again to the worship of strange gods, and bowed down to Baal and the idols of Canaan. Now, Gideon had seventy sons, and one of these was Abimelech. He was a wicked and ambitious man who plotted much mischief against his brothers, in order to make himself king.

He went to Shechem and spoke to his mother's people saying: "Is it better for you that all the sons of Gideon which are seventy in number rule over you, or that one reign over you? Remember I am your bone and your flesh." The people of Shechem inclined their hearts towards Abimelech and agreed to make him king, and gave him money and hired men to follow him in his wicked purpose.

Abimelech and his hired men went to Ophrah, where his brethren lived, and fell upon them and slew them all upon one stone, except the youngest son, who hid himself from his brother. Thus did Abimelech begin his wicked career with the foul murder of his brothers. Then the men of Shechem made Abimelech king, and all the people shouted and for a time forgot the crimes of which he was guilty.

But Jotham who was the youngest brother and had escaped by hiding himself, came before the people of Shechem and told them a parable.

He said: "The trees went forth on a time to select a king and said to the olive tree, Come and reign over us. But the olive tree refused to leave its fatness to become king over the trees. The trees said to the fig tree, Come and reign over us. But the fig tree refused to leave its sweetness and its good fruit to become king over the trees.

"Then the trees said to the vine, Come and reign over us. But the vine refused to leave its wine, which cheered man, to become king over the trees.

"Then all the trees said to the bramble, Come and reign over us. And the bramble said, Come and put your trust in my shadow: if not, let fire come out of the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon."

In this way Jotham warned the people of Israel against Abimelech, and then he fled and hid himself for fear of his brother. And after three years the warning came true, for God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the people of Shechem and they began to deal treacherously with their king.

They said one to another: "This man Abimelech slew his brethren and persuaded us to help him. Now their blood is upon us and we should be rid of so vile a man, even if he is our king." And they set watch on the road by which Abimelech was accustomed to go that they might slay him, and they robbed all who came that way.

When Zebul, the ruler of the city, who was a friend of the king, heard what the people were saying he was angry and sent word to Abimelech that the people were rising up against him. He then said: "In the morning as soon as the sun is up, rise early and set upon the city and do unto the people of Shechem whatever you will." So Abimelech divided his men into four companies and came by night and laid in wait against the city of Shechem.

In the morning Zebul went to the gates of the city with the leader of the people of Shechem whose name was Gaal, and the leader said: "Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountain." But Zebul answered him: "You see the shadow of the mountain, as if it were men."

Gaal looked close and saw the hosts of Abimelech coming down the middle of the land, and another company coming along the plain. Then Gaal went out with the men of Shechem and fought Abimelech, but Abimelech chased him

and he fled back into the city leaving many of his men dead and wounded.

The next day Gaal and his men came out again to give battle to Abimelech, and again Abimelech rose up and smote them. The armies fought all day, but Abimelech took the city, slew the people that were in it, beat down the houses and sowed salt in the streets. Some of the men escaped, however, and hid themselves in the house of their idol and where they thought Abimelech could not reach them.

Abimelech then went up into a mountain with all his people. He took an axe and cut a bough from a tree and laid it on his shoulders. He said to his men: "What you have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done." And all the men took axes and cut boughs and laid them upon their shoulders.

They then marched with Abimelech to the towns where the people of Shechem had hid themselves and piled the boughs by the tower and set fire to the boughs. And the people of Shechem, about a thousand men and women were burned in the fire.

Abimelech then marched against another city, named Thebez, and captured that also. There was a strong tower in the city where all the people fled and shut themselves up, and some stood on the top of the tower. Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and tried to burn the door of the tower with fire.

Now, there was a woman upon the top of the tower, who watched Abimelech pass beneath her. She took a large piece of stone in her hand and dropped it upon the head of Abimelech and it broke his skull, so that he fell down before the tower.

Abimelech knew he was about to die and called his armor bearer and said to him: "Draw your sword quickly and slay me so that men may not say a woman slew him." And the armor bearer drew his sword and thrust it through the body of Abimelech and slew him in the street before the tower where

he fell. Then the people of Israel departed every man to his own home.

Thus God punished the wickedness of Abimelech for the murder of his brothers, and for all the evil he did to the people of Shechem.

CHAPTER XXXVI

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

About forty-five years passed after the death of Abimelech and again the people of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They went after the heathen gods, Baal and Ashtaroth, and all the gods of the heathen people, and worshiped them. The Lord was angry with the people of Israel for doing this and allowed the Philistines and the Amorites to overcome them and make slaves of them.

Now their lives were hard indeed, for the heathen oppressed them sorely. The children of Israel cried out to the Lord: "We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken Thee and have served Baal." The Lord told the people that He would deliver them no more from the hands of their enemies for as often as He forgave them they returned to their sins and to the worship of strange gods.

The Lord said to them: "Go, cry unto the gods you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." The people told the Lord they had sinned and prayed Him to deliver them from their slavery to the Amorites. Then they put away their strange gods and began again to serve the Lord. When the people had returned to His worship, the Lord was no longer angry, but was sorry for the misery of His people.

The Amorites gathered together and were camped in Gilead, on the other side of Jordan. The children of Israel also gathered together and made their camp at Mizpeh. But the

people of Israel had no man to lead them, so they asked one of another: "Where is the man that shall lead us in the fight against the Amorites? He shall be ruler over the people of Gilead."

There was a man of Israel named Jephthah, a mighty man of valor. One time his brothers were angry with him, and drove him away from his home, so that he fled and lived in the land of Tob, and the people almost forgot that he was one of them.

Now the Amorites had come down to war with the children of Israel and the children of Israel were resolved no longer to be slaves of the Amorites and had gathered together and were in sore need of a leader, the elders of the people remembered Jephthah. They recalled that he was a mighty man of valor, and was living over in the land of Tob. So the elders went over to the land of Tob to bring Jephthah back to his own people. They came to him and said: "Jephthah, come and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon."

"Did you not hate me and expel me from my father's house? Why have you come to see me now in your distress?" asked Jephthah.

The elders begged him to come back to his people for they needed him. They told him how the Amorites had treated his people and how they were now encamped for their destruction.

Jephthah asked them: "If I go again to my people and fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them into my hand, shall I be your head?" And the elders promised that Jephthah should be ruler over them.

Jephthah went with the elders and the people made him captain and ruler over them. Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Amorites saying: "Why have you come to fight against the children of Israel?"

To this the king replied: "Because Israel took away our lands, when they came out of Egypt. Now restore those lands peaceably and there shall be no war."

Jephthah sent other messengers, saying that the land had been given them by the Lord, and belonged as much to Israel as it did to the Amorites, and that Israel was not going to give up the land to the enemies of the Lord. He said: "The Lord be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon."

Jephthah assembled his men and came to the place where the Amorites had made their camp. Jephthah prayed to the Lord and said: "If Thou shalt deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then whatsoever comes out of the door of my house to greet me when I return from the victory over the Amorites, shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it as a burnt offering."

There was a great battle and Jephthah smote the Amorites with a great slaughter. The rest fled before him until they were scattered far and wide over the face of the earth. Then Jephthah turned towards his own house at Mizpeh with all the people shouting and blowing their trumpets for joy that their enemies had been overcome.

Jephthah came near his own home, little knowing what was coming out to meet him. His heart was glad that he had been given the victory and in his mouth was a song of rejoicing. Just then the door opened and out ran his daughter, dancing before him and beating timbrels with her hands. She was his only child and he loved her dearly.

Jephthah cried aloud in great agony: "Oh, my daughter! You have brought me a great grief. My heart is bowed with sorrow. I have vowed to the Lord that I would offer as a burnt offering whatsoever came first to meet me from my house, and behold, it is my only child, my beloved daughter!" And Jephthah bowed to the ground and wept.

"My father, let it be done as you have promised the Lord," his daughter replied, "but let me go for two months into the mountains with my companions that I may prepare for the sacrifice." And Jephthah sent her and her companions into the mountains and there she stayed for two months.

At the end of that time she came back to her father, and was offered as a burnt offering to the Lord, but the people wept before the sacrifice and set apart four days in every year to lament the fate of the daughter of Jephthah.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE YOUNG SAMSON

The people of Israel had been in bondage to the Philistines for forty years, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. They were compelled to work for the Philistines as though they were slaves, and their lives were very hard and miserable.

There was a man of Israel named Manoah, who feared God and served Him. He and his wife had no children and for that they were greatly distressed. One day an angel in the appearance of a man came to the woman and told her she would have a son, and that she must never cut his hair, and never let him drink strong drink nor eat any unclean meat. He was to be a Nazarite, which meant that he was set apart for the service of God.

The woman ran to her husband and said to him: "A man of God has appeared to me, and his face was like the face of an angel. He would not tell me his name, nor tell me whence he came. But he promised me a son, who was to be a Nazarite, and who would deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines."

Then Manoah prayed to the Lord to let the man appear again to them and teach them what to do with the child that

was to be born. One day the woman was in the field by herself and the angel in the appearance of a man came again and stood by her. Then she ran quickly and called her husband and together they came to the place where the man was.

Manoah then said to the man: "Are you the man that spoke to my wife and promised her a son?" And the man said he was. Then he told Manoah not to let his wife drink wine or any strong drink or eat any unclean thing, for her son was to be a mighty man and would deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.

Manoah begged the man to wait while he went to kill a kid and dress it and prepare food for him. But the man said: "I will not eat of your bread, nor of your meat. If you make an offering it must be to the Lord." Manoah did not know that the man was an angel of the Lord.

Manoah then said to the angel: "Tell us your name so that when our child is born we may do you honor." But the angel would not tell his name, declaring it was a secret. So Manoah ran quickly and killed a kid and offered it as an offering upon the rock near where the angel stood.

When the flame of the offering ascended toward heaven the angel went into the flame and disappeared from Manoah and his wife. When they beheld this strange sight they fell on their faces, for they knew the man was no other than an angel of the Lord. Then they arose and went to their house for they knew the Lord had blessed them and their prayers would be answered.

After a while a child was born, and they named him Samson. The boy grew to be a man and the Lord blessed him as he grew.

When Samson became a man he went down to Timnath and saw a woman of the Philistines who pleased him greatly. When he came back he told his father: "I have seen a woman in Timnath, one of the Philistines; I pray you get her for my wife."

But his father answered: "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among my people, that you should go to the Philistines for a wife?"

Samson replied fiercely: "Get her for me, for she pleases me well!" And with that his father had to be content, for the matter was of the Lord and his father knew it not.

Then Samson with his father and mother went down to Timnath and came near the vineyards, and as they went a lion roared in the path before them. Samson sprang upon the lion and with his bare hands tore him to pieces as he would a kid, for Samson was by now a man of mighty strength. But his father and mother did not see him kill the lion and he said nothing to them about it.

They went on to Timnath and talked with the woman. She still pleased Samson, and he wanted her for his wife. After a short time he came back to Timnath to see her again, and turned aside to see the carcass of the lion he had slain. It still lay by the side of the road, but the bees had made a hive in the body of the lion and it was full of honey. Samson took some of the honey in his hands and ate it, and brought some to his father and mother and they ate it, but Samson did not tell them where he had gotten his honey.

His father went down with Samson again to see the woman that his son was going to marry and they made a great feast for her and for thirty of the men of the Philistines. Samson said to them: "I will now put forth a riddle for you. If you can answer it in seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments. If you can not answer it you shall give me thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments."

The men answered him: "Put forth your riddle, that we may hear it."

Then Samson stood up before them and said: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." And for three days the thirty men could not guess

what was the meaning of the riddle that Samson had put to them.

Seeing they could not guess the riddle the men went to Samson's wife and said to her: "Persuade Samson to tell you the answer to the riddle. If you do not we shall burn you and your father's house with fire."

Then the wife of Samson cried, and begged him to tell her the answer to the riddle, for she was afraid of the men who had threatened her life. She said to Samson: "You do not love me, for you have put forth a riddle to my people and would not even tell me the answer of it." And she kept on crying and weeping before him.

"I have not told it to my father, nor to my mother. Why should I tell it to you?" Samson replied. But she cried all the more until Samson was so tired of her that he told her the riddle and she went and told it to the men of the Philistines.

Then on the seventh day, before the sun went down, the men said to Samson: "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" And by that Samson knew his wife had betrayed him and told the secret of the riddle to the men of her people. And Samson was very angry with her and with the Philistines.

In order to pay the wager he had lost, he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty men of the Philistines and took their spoil and changes of garments and gave them to the men who had guessed the riddle. Then in his anger he went back to his father's house and left his Philistine wife with her people.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES

After a while Samson longed to see his wife again, so he went down to visit her and took with him a kid for a present. When he came to her father's house, her father said to Samson: "I thought you utterly hated her for what she had done, and I gave her to be the wife of another man. But her younger sister is here and fairer than she; take her I pray you, instead of the one you had chosen."

Samson was indeed very angry at this treatment, and went out into the fields and caught three hundred foxes, and tied blazing pieces of wood to their tails. Then he turned them loose, so that they ran into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt the corn and the shucks, and also the vineyards and the olive trees.

The Philistines saw the disaster to their crops and said: "Who has done this?" Some one answered them: "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, has done this, because his wife has been given to another man." Whereupon the Philistines rushed upon the house of the Timnite and burnt the wife of Samson and her father with fire. Samson was overcome with rage and grief when he heard what had been done, and being a man of mighty power, he smote the Philistines with a great slaughter, and then went to live on the top of a rock, named Etam.

The Philistines came up and pitched their camp in the land of Israel. The men of Israel said: "Why have you come up against us?" And the Philistines answered: "We have come up to bind Samson, and to do to him as he has done to us."

The three thousand men of Israel went to the rock of Etam, where Samson was living, and said to him: "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us, and what is this that you have done, that they come here to bind you?"

Samson replied: "I but did to them what they did to me. I slew many of them for they burned my wife and her father and his house."

But the men of Israel were afraid of the Philistines and told Samson: "We have come to bind you and deliver you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson let them bind him with two new cords and they brought him from the rock Etam and to the camp of the Philistines.

When the Philistines caught sight of Samson bound with cords they shouted with a great noise and rushed upon him. But Samson only waited until they came near, then he stretched forth his great arms and broke the cords that bound him as though they were flax that had been burnt with fire, and his limbs were free.

Then he found the jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hands and took it and slew a thousand men of the Philistines, until they were piled up heaps upon heaps. Then he threw away the jaw-bone out of his hands, and was thirsty and weak. Whereupon the Lord opened a spring, and water flowed abundantly, and Samson drank until his thirst was relieved and his strength came back to him.

Then Samson became a judge and judged Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines. Samson went down to a place named Gaza and went into a house there to spend the night. The Philistines lived in Gaza and some one told them: "Samson has come here and abideth the night in a certain house." Whereupon they surrounded the house, and lay in wait all night at the gate of the city saying: "In the morning when it is day, we shall kill him."

At midnight Samson arose, and pushing aside those who had surrounded his house, came to the gates of the city and found them closed and locked. But with his great strength he dragged up the posts of the gates and took the gates themselves upon his shoulders, bars and all, and carried them to the top of a hill afar off.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE DEATH OF SAMSON

Samson was a Nazarite, as we have already learned, and Nazarites never cut their hair. Samson's hair was thick and long, and hung down over his shoulders, but he alone knew that in his long hair lay his great strength and without it he would be weak as other men. So long as he obeyed the Lord and kept his hair uncut, so long would his strength remain with him.

It came to pass that Samson loved a woman whose name was Delilah. When the lords of the Philistines found this out they went to Delilah and said to her: "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lies, and by what means we may prevail against him. We wish to bind him and to afflict him; and we will give you every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver."

Samson came to Delilah's house, and she said to him: "Tell me wherein your great strength lies, and with what must you be bound that others may afflict you?"

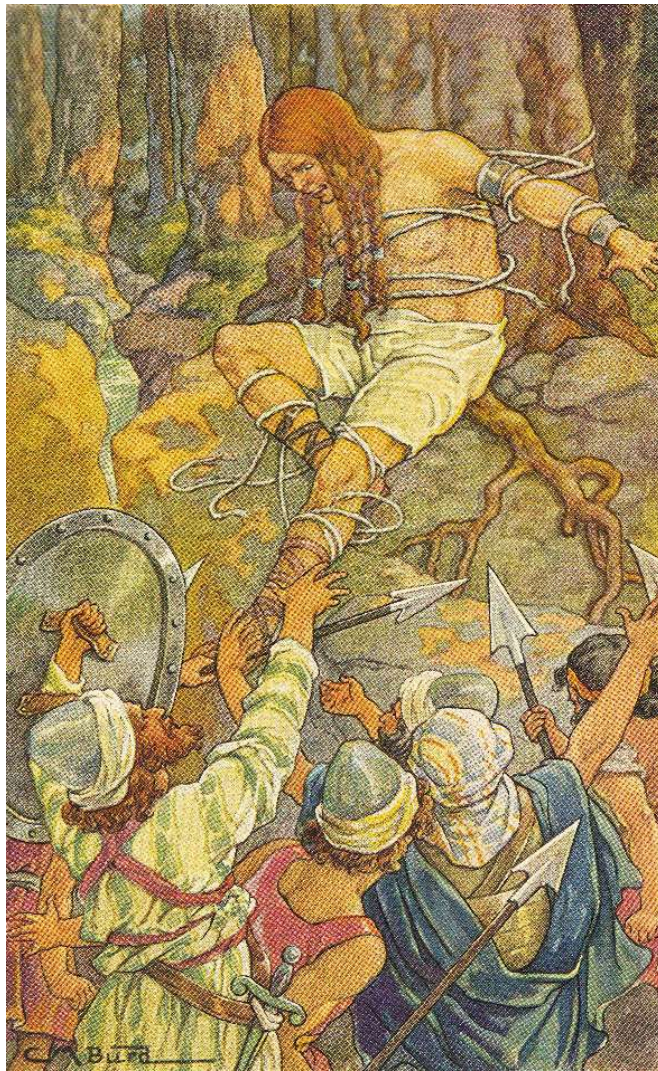
Samson desired to make sport of her and replied: "If they bind me with seven green withes that were never dried, then shall I be weak and be as other men." Now, a withe was a kind of cord made of twigs or the small branches of trees, and was by no means strong.

When Delilah told this to the lords of the Philistines, they brought her the seven withes and Samson let her bind him with them. The men were lying in wait to capture Samson, and when he was bound with the seven withes, Delilah cried out: "The Philistines be upon you, Samson!"

But Samson broke the withes as though they were thread, and the Philistines ran away. The secret of his great

strength was not yet known, and Samson laughed at them and at Delilah.

"You have mocked me and deceived me. Now, tell me, wherewith may you be bound that others may afflict you?" Delilah said again to Samson.



SAMSON BREAKS HIS BONDS AS THE ENEMIES ARE UPON HIM.

Again Samson desired to make sport of Delilah, and replied to her: "If they bind me fast with new ropes that have never been used, then shall I be as weak as other men."

Again Delilah told the Philistines and they brought her new rope and Samson let himself be bound. There were men lying in wait as before, and Delilah cried out: "The Philistines be upon you, Samson!"

But Samson broke the ropes as though they were threads, and the Philistines who sought to take him, ran away, and Samson laughed at them and at Delilah. The secret of his great strength was not yet known to his enemies.

"Tell me, I pray you, wherewith you may be bound that others may afflict you?" Delilah a third time said to Samson.

Then Samson told her to weave his long hair into plaits and fasten them with a pin and he would be as weak as other men. Delilah did this also and again called out: "The Philistines be upon you, Samson!" But again Samson chased them away and kept the secret of his great strength.

Delilah was not to be put off by what Samson had told her and kept on asking him wherein his strength lay. Every day she begged him to tell her. At last he was worn out by her questions and reproaches and finally told her: "If I be shaven and my hair cut, and I be no longer a Nazarite then, indeed, shall I be weak as other men."

Delilah hastened to tell the lords of the Philistines what Samson had confessed to her. She said to them: "Come up at once, for he has showed me his heart." And they came and brought the money they had promised to give her.

Samson went to sleep upon the knees of Delilah, thinking no harm could come to him. His long hair fell to his feet and she ran her fingers through it, knowing now she had the secret of his great strength. She called for a man, and caused the locks to be cut from his head until they lay in great

piles upon the floor. Then Samson awoke and Delilah cried out: "The Philistines be upon you, Samson!"

Then came the lords of the Philistines and bound him, for he was weak as other men. They put out his eyes and took him to Gaza and made him grind corn in the prison in that place. His enemies mocked him as he worked at the wheel, and said: "Where now is your mighty power, and where is your Lord that gave you such strength to slay a thousand Philistines?" But Samson uttered no word, and ground the corn in the prison house of Gaza.

But the hair of Samson had grown out again and no one thought to cut it off. And as it grew his strength came back to him, and he was again the mighty man, though the Philistines did not know it.

One time the lords of the Philistines gathered together to make a great sacrifice to their heathen god Dagon, and to rejoice, for they said: "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands. He no longer is a mighty man and we are avenged of his slaying the Philistines." And they sent to the prison that the blind Samson might be brought into the temple of the heathen god, and that they might make sport of him.

Samson came in, and they set him between the pillars of the temples and they began to make sport of him. Then Samson said to the lad that held him by the hand: "Let me feel the pillars whereon the house stands that I may lean upon them." And the lad led him to the great pillars that held up the house.

The house was full of men and women, and all Ole lords of the Philistines were there, and upon the roof there were three thousand men and women, and they all made sport of Samson. Then Samson prayed to the Lord: "O, Lord, remember me and strengthen me, only this once, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and said: "Let me die with the Philistines." And he bowed himself with all his might, and wrapped his great arms about the pillars, and broke them from their bases until they came down before him. And the house fell upon the lords, and upon Samson, and upon all the people that were in it, so that the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

His brethren and all his household came down and took his body and buried it in the burial place of his father, Manoah.

CHAPTER XL

NAOMI AND RUTH

In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, there was a famine in the land. A certain man who lived in Bethlehem went down with his wife and his two sons to the country of Moab, where there was food to be found. The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife was Naomi.

Soon after reaching the country of Moab, Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons. These sons married two women of Moab. The name of one was Orpah, the name of the other was Ruth. And they dwelled in the land of Moab for about ten years. Then the sons died, and Naomi was left with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

Naomi had heard that bread was to be had in the land of her own people, and so she arose with her two daughters-in-law to leave the country of Moab and to return to Judah and to her own people.

When they had started on their way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law: "Go, return each of you to your mother's house. You need not follow me if you do not desire. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with

me. The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you, in the house of a husband."

Then Naomi kissed Orpah and Ruth, and they wept upon the shoulders of their mother-in-law, for they loved her, and remembered the many years they were happy together in the land of Moab. The two young women said to Naomi: "Surely, we will return with you unto the land of your people."

Naomi said to them: "Why will you go with me? I pray that you leave me in my age to return to my kind and kin, and that you find husbands among the men of Moab." Then Orpah kissed Naomi, and weeping, turned aside to the land of her own people.

But Ruth loved her mother-in-law more dearly and refused to turn back. Naomi said to her: "See, your sister has gone back unto her people, and unto her gods. Why do you not return also?"

To this Ruth replied: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God. Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried."

When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to follow her, she kissed her again, and left off persuading her to return. So they went on together until they came to Bethlehem. When the people of that city saw them coming there was great excitement, and they asked: "Is this Naomi, who, for so many years has lived in the land of Moab?"

But Naomi replied: "Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara, which means bitterness, for the Lord has dealt very bitterly with me in all these years. I went forth full of hope and joy but I return empty; His hand has been hard upon me and He has afflicted me."

Thus Naomi returned and Ruth, the Moabitess with her, and they dwelt in Bethlehem, and it was the beginning of the barley harvest.

CHAPTER XLI

RUTH AND BOAZ

Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of wealth, whose name was Boaz. He was the owner of rich fields of barley, and his reapers were making ready to gather in the harvest of the year. Ruth said to her mother-in-law: "Let me go to the field and glean ears of corn after the reapers." And Naomi told her that she might go.

Ruth went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and it so happened that she gleaned in the fields that belonged to Boaz. And Boaz came out from Bethlehem to speak to his reapers and saw the young woman gathering up the leavings, and said to his servants: "What damsel is this?"

The servant, who was set over the reapers, replied to his master: "It is Ruth, that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. She begged to gather after the reapers among the sheaves, 'and has been, here since the early morning.'"

Then Boaz said unto Ruth: "Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but stay with my maidens. I shall charge the young men that they shall not touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink the water which the young men have drawn." And Boaz looked kindly upon Ruth, for she was fair and comely.

Ruth bowed herself before the master of the field and replied: "Why have I found favor in your eyes, seeing that I am a stranger?"

To this Boaz answered: "I know what you have done for Naomi, your mother-in-law, since the death of your husband, and how you left your father and mother and the land of your people, and came among strangers for her sake." And he spoke still more gently to her.

He then told her to come at meal time and eat the bread and drink the wine that had been prepared for the reapers. And the reapers gave her parched corn and whatever else they had for themselves, and Ruth ate and received strength.

When she had risen from her eating, Boaz commanded his men, saying to them: "Let her glean wherever she will, even among the sheaves, and let her take what she desires and reproach her not. Also let fall some of the handfuls on purpose for her and leave them that she may glean them." And the reapers did so, and Ruth gathered in the grain for herself and her mother-in-law, and Boaz watched her as she gleaned and was pleased.

When evening had come and the gleaning was over, Ruth went into the city and showed her mother-in-law what she had gathered. Naomi said to her: "Where have you gleaned today, and where have you worked? Surely some one must have taken notice of you, and given you abundantly." And Ruth told Naomi that she had gleaned in the field of Boaz, her kinsman.

Then Ruth said to her mother-in-law: "He also told me to follow by his young men until they had ended all the harvest, and to go out with his maidens and to drink of the water in his vessels, and he was gentle to me and did give me wherewith to eat."

Naomi told her daughter-in-law that it was good for her to go out with the maidens of Boaz and to glean in the fields of her kinsman, and not to glean in any other field. So Ruth went out every day and gleaned the grain that the reapers left for her, even to the very end of the harvest, and every evening returned unto her mother-in-law.

After the harvest had been gathered, Naomi told Ruth that Boaz was going to winnow his barley. Barley is a kind of grain, like wheat. After it was gathered from the fields it had to be threshed, which was to separate the grain from the straw in which it grew. This was done by beating the straw with sticks called flails.

After the barley was threshed it had to be winnowed, which meant that the grain had to be separated from the small bits of straw that had been left in the threshing. This was done by throwing the grain into the air, and letting the wind carry off the straw while the heavier grain fell back to the floor. The ground where the threshing was done was called the threshing floor.

Boaz was to winnow his barley the night that Naomi spoke to Ruth. Naomi said to her daughter-in-law: "Wash yourself and anoint yourself with oil and go down to the threshing floor, and attend Boaz, my kinsman."

Ruth did as her mother-in-law told her, and went to the threshing floor and waited upon Boaz. After the winnowing was over Boaz had a great feast, in which he ate and drank until he was merry. Seeing the woman near him he asked her: "Who are you?" And Ruth told him who she was, and begged him to be kind to her.

Boaz was already in love with the beautiful Moabitess and told her not to fear. He said to her: "Fear not; I will do to you all that you ask, for all the people of the city of Bethlehem know that you are a good and gentle woman."

Then Boaz said to her: "Bring here the veil that you wear and hold it before me." And she brought him her veil and he filled it with six measures of barley and told her to take it to her mother-in-law.

When Naomi saw what Boaz had done, she told Ruth to wait and, see what her kinsman had in mind.

Soon after Boaz went and sat at the gate of the city. In those days the cities of Canaan had walls around them to protect the people from their enemies, and in the walls were gates for the people to go in and out. At those gates sat the rulers of the city to judge the people, and also there were markets where things were bought and sold. Indeed, when any man had a cause to present he went to the gates of the city, for many people were gathered there during the day.

Boaz sat at the gate of the city and called a man who was nearer of kin to Naomi and Ruth than he himself was. He said to the man: "Naomi sells a parcel of land, but with it must go Ruth, her daughter-in-law, according to the custom of Israel. You have the first right to buy the land and with it to take Ruth for your wife."

But the man said: "I cannot buy the land, nor take Ruth for myself. You are next kin to me; take the land and the woman yourself." And with that Boaz was well content. So he called ten elders of the people and said aloud to them:

"I have bought the land of Elimelech, that was Naomi's, and I have also taken Ruth to be my wife." And all the people who were at the gate and all the elders said: "We are witnesses."

So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife, for he loved her. A son was born to them, which Naomi took care of and nursed. The child was named Obed, and in after years became the grandfather of David, of whom we shall learn later on.

CHAPTER XLII

THE YOUNG SAMUEL

There was a man of Israel whose name was Elkanah, and the name of his wife was Hannah. Hannah was old and had no children and for that she was grieved, for she longed for a child of her own. In fact, the other women made sport of her and made her weep because it was a kind of disgrace in those days not to have children.

One time, when Elkanah went up to Shiloh to offer sacrifices to the Lord, Hannah went with him, and when the women made sport of her, Hannah wept and would not eat because she was childless. Elkanah was sorry for his wife and grieved to see her distressed. So he said to her: "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat? Am I not better than ten sons?"

But Hannah continued to weep in the bitterness of her soul and prayed unto the Lord to give her a child. She promised the Lord that if he would give her a man child that she would give him unto the Lord all the days of his life and that his hair should never be cut.

The Lord heard her prayer and after awhile she had a son and she named him Samuel. Thus Hannah's tears were changed to smiles and she was very happy because she had a little son whom she had promised to the Lord.

Eli was the priest at the temple at Shiloh and he had two wicked sons named Hophni and Phinehas. They did great evil in the sight of the Lord and distressed their father because they would not obey him nor the words of the Lord. These sons were also priests as their father was.

When any man came to the tabernacle to offer peace offerings it was the rule that some of the offering should be

given to the priests to eat and some for the men themselves to eat. Hophni and Phinehas took more than their share and if the men who brought the offerings objected they took it from them by force. They did other things, also, that they should not have done as priests.

Little Samuel did what was right in the sight of the Lord always. His mother made him a coat, and every year when she went up with her husband to offer sacrifices she took Samuel with her. When he became old enough to leave his mother and father he went to live with Eli at the tabernacle. His mother was very glad that she had given up her son entirely to the service of the Lord.

Eli, the priest, was very old and had heard of all the evil things that his sons had done to the people of Israel. He reproached his sons, saying to them: "Why do you such things, for I have heard of all your doings to all the people and it is not a good report that I hear. You make the people break the laws and my head is bowed in sorrow on account of you." But the sons only laughed at the old Eli and continued in their wicked ways.

Eli should have sent his sons away from the tabernacle and punished them but he did not. One day there appeared a prophet to Eli and said to him: "You honor your sons above the Lord and because you let them do evil in His sight you also are guilty of sin; therefore, the time comes when you shall no longer be priest nor any of your household and your two wicked sons shall die the same day. Then the Lord will raise up a faithful priest who shall do according to His word, and the time shall come when everyone left of your household shall crouch before me and beg for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, for they shall be poor and in want."

The child Samuel continued to live in the tabernacle and waited on Eli, the priest. Eli grew older and his eyes began to fail him so that he could not see. One night Eli lay down to sleep in the tabernacle and Samuel lay down also. The Lord called Samuel and the child answered: "Here am I." Samuel

thought Eli had spoken to him and he arose and ran to the old priest and said: "Here am I, for you called me."

"I called you not; go, lie down again," replied the old priest, and Samuel went and lay down.

But the Lord called again: "Samuel, Samuel," and again Samuel arose and went to Eli and said: "Here am I, you surely did call me."

"I called you not, my son, go lie down again," said the old priest to the child. Samuel went again and lay down for he did not know the voice of the Lord. So when the Lord called Samuel again the third time, he arose and went to Eli and said to him: "Here am I, for you surely did call me."

Then Eli knew that the Lord had called the child. He, therefore, said unto Samuel: "Go, my child, and lie down, and if you hear the voice again, you must say, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down again in his place.

Again the voice came and spoke to the child and said as before: "Samuel, Samuel," and Samuel answered: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Then the Lord told Samuel what he was going to do in Israel at which both ears of every one that heard it would tingle. He said he was going to punish Eli and all his household for the sins they had committed and that when he began he would not stop until he had finished. And Samuel lay down upon his bed until the morning and then arose to open the doors of the house.

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the things that the Lord had told him, but Eli called Samuel and said: "Samuel, my son, what is the thing that the Lord hath told unto you; do not hide it from me." Then Samuel told him all that the Lord had told him and hid nothing from him.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE PHILISTINES CAPTURE THE ARK

Samuel continued to grow and the Lord was with him. He attended faithfully to the duties of the tabernacle and everybody knew that he was to be a prophet of the Lord. The Lord appeared to Samuel again in Shiloh and told him many things that he should know, for he was to become one of the great prophets of Israel.

Now the time came when the people of Israel went out to give battle to the Philistines. The Philistines attacked the people of Israel so fiercely that they smote them and slew about four thousand men. The elders of Israel cried out: "Why has the Lord smitten us at the hands of the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant out of Shiloh that it may save us out of the hands of our enemies."

The people then went to Shiloh to bring the ark of the covenant. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there and helped bring the ark to the camp of Israel. When the ark was brought into the camp all the people of Israel shouted with a great shout for they thought that the presence of the ark would surely bring them victory over the Philistines.

When the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting of the Israelites they were afraid and said among themselves: "Their God is going into their camp. Who shall deliver us out of the hands of this mighty God? This is the God that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues!"

The leaders of the Philistines went among their ranks and called out to the people: "So be strong, and carry yourselves like men, oh you Philistines! for if you do not you shall be servants unto the Hebrews as they have been to you. You must go as men and fight."

But the Lord was not with Israel, though the ark of the covenant was in their camp. The Philistines fought and Israel was smitten and fled every man into his tent, and there was a very great slaughter, for there fell that day, thirty thousand men of Israel. The ark of God was taken by the Philistines and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain just as the voice of the Lord had said to Samuel.

A man of the tribe of Benjamin ran out of the camp to Shiloh with his clothes torn and with earth upon his head. When he came near Shiloh he saw the old priest Eli, sitting upon a seat by the way-side, watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. The man ran into the city and told the people that the Philistines had slain thirty thousand of the Israelites. Then all the people cried out with a great cry.

Eli heard the cries and wailings of the people and said to those around him: "What means the noise of all this turmoil?" and the man who had run out of the camp of Israel to Shiloh came where Eli was and told him what had happened. Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see.

"Tell me what has happened to my sons?" Eli said to the man.

"Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has been a great slaughter among the people and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken by the Philistines," the messenger answered.

When the old Eli heard that his sons were dead and that the ark of God had been taken he fell over from his seat backward by the side of the gate of the city. His neck was broken and he died. He was an old man and heavy of weight and had judged Israel for forty years.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE PHILISTINES RETURN THE ARK

The Philistines had captured the ark of the Lord in the battle with the people of Israel. They took the ark and brought it from Ebenezer, where the battle had been fought, up to Ashdod, their own heathen city. There they brought it into the temple of their heathen god, and set the ark by the side of Dagon.

In the morning when the people arose early to go into their temple, they were astonished to see Dagon, their heathen god, fallen down on his face before the ark of the Lord. No one knew how it had happened, and there was much talk among the people. They took Dagon and set him in his place again.

The next morning the people again arose early to go into the temple, and again they saw Dagon fallen down before the ark of the Lord. This time his head and his hands were broken off, and only the body of the heathen god was left.

So greatly were the people and priests frightened at this strange occurrence that none of them would afterwards walk over the place where the idol had fallen, though they set him up again the best they could.

Now the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod. He smote them with sickness and many of them died, not only in Ashdod, but in the country around. When the people saw the calamity upon them they cried out: "The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us, for His hand is sore upon us and upon Dagon, our god."

They sent to the lords of the Philistines and asked them: "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" and they answered: "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried

to Gath. "Gath was one of the cities of the Philistines, and so the ark was carried there and placed in sight of the people.

At Gath the people were no better off than at Ashdod, for the hand of the Lord smote the people of that city with sickness, and there was a great destruction. Therefore, they hastened to move the ark from Gath to another place called Ekron, but when the people of Ekron saw the ark coming they cried aloud: "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people."

By this time the Philistines were afraid to have the ark in any of their cities, for wherever it went there came sickness and calamity to the people. So they gathered the lords of the Philistines and said to them: "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, for there is destruction wherever the ark goes among us." And the cry of the cities of the Philistines was heard everywhere, for many people were dead with the sickness, and others were smitten.

The ark was in the country of the Philistines seven months. There was not a city that wanted it to abide among the people, and something had to be done to relieve the people of their suffering. The lords of the Philistines called the priests and the diviners together, saying to them: "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we shall send it to its own place."

The priests and diviners then told the lords of the Philistines: "If you send away the ark of the Lord, you must not send it away empty, but you must send with it a trespass offering."

"What shall this trespass offering be that we must send with the ark of the Lord?" asked the Philistines of the priests. And the priests told them to make five golden images, to represent the sickness with which the people had been afflicted, and also five golden mice, and to send these as a trespass offering.

The priests also said: "Make a new cart, and take two cows that have never borne a yoke, and tie them to the cart, and keep their calves at home. Then take the ark and put it upon the cart, and put all the golden images in a box by the side of the ark, and then turn the cows loose that they may draw the cart, in whatever way they will, without any one to drive them."

Then the priests told the people: "If the cows leave their calves at their homes, and of their will draw the cart into the land of Israel, then the people will know that it was the hand of the Lord that brought them all their troubles and that he was angry with them for having captured the ark from the Israelites.

"If, however, the cows do not leave their calves and their homes and do not take the ark back into the land of Israel, then the people would know that the Lord was not punishing the Philistines, and that they might keep the ark, for all their trouble had come upon them by chance."

The men did as the priests directed them to do. They made a new cart, and tied two cows to it that had never borne a yoke, and shut up the calves at home. They laid the ark upon the cart, and the box with the golden mice and the golden images representing the sickness. Then they turned the cows loose to go their own way without any guidance or any hand to drive or to lead them.

The cows took the straight way to the land of Israel, and went along the highway, drawing the cart behind them, and lowing as they went. They did not turn to the right hand nor to the left, nor did they seek to find their own homes nor their own calves. The lords of the Philistines went after them until they came to the borders of the land of Israel.

The men of Israel were reaping their wheat in the valley and they raised their eyes and saw the ark of the Lord coming in a new cart drawn by two cows. The men stopped from their labors and gave a great shout of joy. The cart came

into the field of a man named Joshua, and stood there, where there was a great stone. The men of Israel broke up the cart and slew the cows and made a burnt offering to the Lord for restoring them the ark that had been in the hands of the Philistines for seven months.

Then the Levites took the ark of the Lord, and the box that held the golden mice and set them upon the great stone. All the men of Israel continued to offer burnt offerings, while the lords of the Philistines returned to their own homes.

CHAPTER XLV

SAUL IS ANOINTED KING

When Samuel was old, he decided to make his sons judges over Israel, because he thought they were young and better able to manage the affairs of the people than he was. But his sons were not good men; they walked not in the ways of the Lord, but were bent on making money, and taking bribes, and had little care whether justice was done or not.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to see Samuel and told him: "Samuel, you are old, and your sons do not walk in the ways of the Lord, and they are not good judges. You must select a king to rule over us like other nations that we know."

When the people asked Samuel to give them a king he was displeased, and did not know what to do. So he prayed to the Lord for guidance. The Lord told him: "Listen to the voice of the people and hear all they say to you. They have not rejected you but they have rejected me. If they will have a king, let it be as they wish, but tell them the kind of king I shall send over them." And the Lord told him the kind of king that He would send.

Samuel went forth before the people and said as the Lord had told him: "This shall be the kind of king that shall

reign over you: He shall take your sons and make them work for him, and make them take care of his chariots and horses. He will make them cultivate the ground and reap the harvests, and make implements of war. He will take your daughters and make them cooks and bakers. He will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive trees and give them to his servants, and he will take all your servants, and your asses and make them do his work."

Notwithstanding all this, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and said: "Nay; but we will have a king over us. We wish to be like other nations and have a king that will judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

When Samuel told all this to the Lord, He said to Samuel: "Listen to what they say and make them a king." And Samuel told all the elders to go back to their cities and he would find them a king.

There was a man of Benjamin named Kish, and he had a son whose name was Saul. There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than Saul. From his shoulders up he was taller than any other of the people. Saul took care of his father's asses and one time when some of them were lost, Kish said to his son:

"Take one of the servants, and arise, go find the asses which have strayed away and are lost."

Saul wandered through many places looking for the lost asses, but nowhere were they to be found. When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant: "Come, let us return, lest my father cease to worry about the asses and begin to worry about us." But the servant replied: "There is in this city a man of God. All that he says shall surely come to pass. Let us go seek him, probably he can show us the way we should go."

"If we go, what shall we give the man of God?" answered Saul. "The bread is gone and I have no present for him." But the servant said he had a small silver coin to give

the seer, for so the man of God was called. Then they went into the city to find the seer, and ask of him the way they should go.

As they went up the hill they found young maidens coming out to get water from the wells, and asked them: "Is the seer here?" The maidens replied that the seer was coming into the city that day to make a sacrifice, and that, if they would make haste, they would find him. Then Saul and his servant hurried into the city to find the seer, who was no other than Samuel, the prophet and the man of God.

The Lord had already told Samuel: "Tomorrow, about this time, I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be captain over my people." When Saul and his servant came near to the place where Samuel was, the Lord said again to him: "Behold the man of whom I spoke to you. This is he who shall reign over my people."

Saul did not know Samuel and asked him to show him the house where the seer lived. But Samuel answered: "I am the seer. Go up to my house, for you shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let you go. As for the asses, worry no longer about them for they are found. As for yourself, all the desire of Israel has come upon you and your father's house."

Saul was greatly astonished at these words and replied to the old prophet: "I am a Benjamite, the smallest tribe of Israel. My family is the least of that tribe. Why do you speak thus to me?"

Samuel made no answer but brought Saul and his servant into the parlor, and made them sit in the best place among all the guests he had invited, and made the cook bring the best meat and put it before them.

After the feast was over Samuel took Saul to the top of the house and talked with him a long time, and found out many things about him and his family, and told him many things about the children of Israel: When they came down from the top of the house, Samuel made Saul send away his

servant, in order that he might show him more of the word of God.

Then Samuel took a small bottle of oil and poured the oil upon the head of Saul, and kissed him, and said: "This is because the Lord has anointed you to be captain over His people." And the old prophet then told him many things which would happen to him as he went his way.

And it happened as Samuel had foretold. When Saul came to the place of Rachel's sepulchre, he found two men and they said to him: "The asses which you went to seek are found, and your father has ceased to worry over the asses, and now is concerned for the safety of his son."

Then Saul came to the plains of Tabor and there he met three men, one carrying three kids, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a bottle of wine. The men greeted Saul and one of them gave him two loaves of bread which he took from them. Saul went on his way and came to a place where there was a garrison of the Philistines. There he met a company of prophets coming down with musical instruments, and they began to prophesy. The spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and he began to prophesy also and became a changed man from that time.

When all those who had known Saul before this heard him prophesy, they said one to another: "What is this that has come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" And this saying became a proverb with the people of Israel.

Saul's uncle said to him: "Where did you and the servant go?" And Saul told him that while they were seeking the asses they also went to Samuel, and that Samuel told them that the asses were found. But Saul did not tell his uncle the other things the old prophet had said to him.

When Samuel called the people together at Mizpeh, in order to have a king set over them as they wished, he told them to present themselves by tribes and by their thousands.

When all the tribes had assembled, the tribe of Benjamin was selected to be the one from which a king was to be chosen.

When the tribe of Benjamin came by their families, the family of Matri was taken, then the household of Kish was taken, and out of that household Saul was chosen to be king over Israel. When they sought to find the young man he could not be found.

Therefore, they asked of the Lord: "Shall the young man come and be king, and where shall he be found?" And the Lord told them that Saul had hidden himself, and that they would find him among the stuff of the fields.

The people ran and found Saul as the Lord had said and brought him in before them and as he stood among them he was taller than any other of the people from his shoulders upwards.

Then Samuel cried out: "See him whom the Lord has chosen to be your king! There is none like him among all the people."

And all the people shouted: "God save the king!"

CHAPTER XLVI

JONATHAN AND THE PHILISTINES

During all the time that Saul was king there was war with the Philistines. Saul had need of soldiers, so that when he saw any strong man, or valiant man, he made a soldier or servant of him and took him into his service. Oftentimes Saul overcame the Philistines but then, again, the Philistine army bore hard upon the people of Israel.

One time the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel. There were thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and as for the soldiers of the Philistines, they were in multitudes like the sand on the seashore.

When the men of Israel saw this great host coming up against them they were so frightened that they hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and among the rocks, and in pits. And some even ran away over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul was in Gilgal, and some of the people came to him trembling. Saul was waiting for Samuel, but Samuel came not, though Saul waited seven days. Then Saul said: "Bring a burnt offering and a peace offering to me." And he himself offered the sacrifice unto the Lord.

As soon as he had made an end of the offering, Samuel came and Saul went out to meet him and to salute him. Samuel said: "What have you done?" And Saul answered: "Because I saw the people scattered, and you came not, and the Philistines were gathered to destroy the people of Israel, I hastened to make the offering unto the Lord myself."

"You have done foolishly," was the reply of the old prophet. "You have not kept the commandment of the Lord, and now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord will seek another man after His own heart." And Samuel rose and left Saul and went into the land of Benjamin.

It came to pass upon a certain day that Jonathan the son of Saul, said to the young man that bore his armor: "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." But he did not tell his father, nor did the people know that he was going.

In order to get to the garrison of the Philistines, Jonathan and the armor bearer had to go between two sharp rocks, one on either side of a passage. Jonathan said to the armor bearer: "It may be that the Lord will work for us, for it does not matter to Him whether we be few or many, He can give us the victory."

"Do all that is in your heart, I am with you," replied the young man. And so they came along the passage between the

sharp rocks, and the Philistines did not know they were coming.

Then the two men discovered themselves to the garrison of the Philistines and made a great noise as if an army were behind them. The Philistines cried out in alarm: "Behold, the Hebrews have come out of the holes where they had hidden themselves, and are upon us!"

Then Jonathan and the armor bearer fell upon the Philistines with their swords, and the Lord was with them. At the first onset they slew twenty men, within, as it were, a half acre of land. Then all the

Philistines began to tremble for fear of the Israelites, and the earth also trembled, and the mighty host of the Philistines began to beat upon one another, and went away in their fear, until there was a great slaughter.

"Number the people and see who has gone out from us to do battle with the Philistines," commanded Saul. And when the number was taken it was found that Jonathan and the armor bearer were not there. Then Saul and all the people pursued after the Philistines and slew many more as they fled before them.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE DISOBEDIENCE OF SAUL

Now Saul had sent forth an order, saying: "Cursed be any man that eats any food until evening, that I may be avenged on my enemies." So none of the people tasted any food.

As the soldiers passed through a wood, there was honey upon the ground, but no man touched it for fear of the curse of Saul. But Jonathan was not with the people when his father sent forth the order, and did not know that he should not

touch food. So he took the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honey-comb, and then put the honey in his mouth.

Then one of the people said to Jonathan: "Your father charged the people with an oath that they should not eat any food this day." But Jonathan replied that his father had troubled the people by such an oath and that they were faint, and that it would have been better if they had eaten while they were giving battle to their enemies.

"If the people had eaten freely of the spoil of their enemies this day, they would have had strength to slay more of the Philistines," said he. Still, the slaughter was very great, for the Lord was with Israel.

Then the hungry people fell upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground, and ate the flesh raw, with the blood yet upon it, which was a sin in the sight of the Lord. And when Saul heard what the people had done he desired to know who had led the people into this sin and called all the chief men of the tribes together. He said to them:

"As the Lord liveth, though it be Jonathan, my son, he shall surely die." But there was not a man among all the people that answered him.

Then Saul spoke again: "Let all the people be on one side and Jonathan and I will be on the other side, and let the Lord decide which is guilty, the people or one of my household." And when the lot was decided Jonathan was taken.

"Tell me, what you have done?" demanded Saul of his son.

"I but tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and for that must I die?" asked Jonathan. And Saul told him he must die as the curse had declared.

Then the people shouted:

"Shall Jonathan die,

who has saved Israel from her enemies this day? As the Lord liveth there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground." So the people rescued Jonathan from the wrath of his father, and he did not die.

The word of the Lord came to Saul again: "Go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not." And Saul gathered all the people together, and they came to a city of the Amalekites and laid in wait in the valley. When the Amalekites came out to give battle to Israel, they were smitten by the sword and utterly defeated according as the Lord had told Saul.

But Agag, the king of the Amalekites, was taken alive, and the best of the sheep, and oxen, and lambs, and all that was good, were spared. Only that which was vile and refuse did Saul and his soldiers destroy.

The Lord spoke to Samuel and said: "Saul has not done as I commanded him, and he is turned back from following me. I repent that I have made him king of Israel." This grieved Samuel so much that he cried unto the Lord all night.

When Samuel came to Saul, the king said: "Blessed be you, Samuel, for I have performed all that the Lord told me."

"What means this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and lowing of oxen which I hear?" asked the prophet. Saul then told him that the people had brought them from the Amalekites, and had spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to offer as a sacrifice to the Lord.

When Samuel saw that Saul was trying to excuse himself for his disobedience, he said to him: "I will tell you what the Lord has said to me this night. When you were little in your own sight, you were made head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel, and sent you to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all that they had. But you did evil in the sight of the Lord and fell upon the spoil and did

not destroy it, and have brought away Agag, their king, and the best of their sheep and oxen and lambs."

"The people took the spoil which should have been destroyed to offer sacrifices unto the Lord," replied the king.

But Samuel answered: "Has the Lord more delight in sacrificing than in obedience to His word? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Rebellion against the word of God is sin, and for that you shall be made to suffer. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He will reject you from being king."

As Samuel turned to go, Saul lay hold of the skirt of his mantle, but it tore in his hands. Whereupon Samuel said: "This means that the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you and your household and given it to some one else, that is better than you."

Then Samuel left Saul and came no more to see him.

CHAPTER XLVIII

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

Saul was no longer pleasing in the sight of the Lord and He had rejected him from reigning over Israel. Therefore, he said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil, and go to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have chosen a king among his sons."

"How can I go? If Saul hear it he will kill me," said Samuel. But the Lord told him to take a heifer and say he had come to sacrifice, and when he had called Jesse to the sacrifice the Lord would tell him what to do and whom to anoint to be king over Israel.

Samuel did as the Lord had told him and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the town trembled when they heard he had come, and said: "Do you come peaceably?" And Samuel told them he came peaceably and that he had come to

sacrifice to the Lord. He then called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice.

When they had come, Samuel looked upon Eliab, one of the sons of Jesse, and said: "Surely, the Lord's anointed is before me." But the Lord said to Samuel: "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. The Lord sees not as man sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel, but Samuel replied: "Neither has the Lord chosen this one."

Then Jesse called Shammah and made him pass before Samuel, but Samuel said again: "Neither has the Lord chosen this one."

In the same way Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and to each one the old prophet made the same answer: "Neither has the Lord chosen this one."

"Are these all of your children?" he asked Jesse. To which Jesse replied: "There remains yet the youngest but he keeps the sheep."

"Send and have him brought here, for I shall not sit until he is brought before me," ordered Samuel. And they sent and brought him in, and Samuel saw that he was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon. Then the Lord said: "Arise, anoint him, for this is he."

Samuel then took the horn of oil and anointed David as he stood before him in the midst of his brethren and from that day the spirit of the Lord was upon David.

At the same time the spirit of the Lord departed from King Saul and an evil spirit troubled him. His servants said to him: "It is an evil spirit from God that troubles you. Command your servants to seek out some one who can play on the harp so that when the evil spirit is upon you he shall play the harp and you shall be well again."

"Go, find a man that can play well and bring him to me," said the king.

One of the servants said: "I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing and a valiant man and a man of war. He is prudent in all matters, comely to look upon and the Lord is with him."

Saul at once sent messengers to Jesse telling him to send David, his son, to him. David came to Saul and stood before him, and Saul loved him greatly so he made him his armor bearer. When the evil spirit was upon Saul, David took his harp and played to him.

CHAPTER XLIX

DAVID AND GOLIATH

The Philistines gathered their armies together to do battle to the people of Israel., The Philistines were on a mountain on one side of the valley and the people of Israel stood on a mountain on the other side of the valley.

There was a giant out of the camp of the Philistines whose name was Goliath. He was very tall and fierce and strong. He wore a helmet of brass upon his head and was armed with a coat of mail. The staff of his spear was as large as a beam and a man went before him carrying his shield.

He came before the armies of Israel and said in a loud voice: "Why do you come to give battle to the Philistines? Choose a man from among you and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me then we will be your servants, but if I kill him you shall be our servants and shall serve us. I defy the armies of Israel today. Give me a man that we may fight together,"

When Saul and all Israel heard the words of the Philistine giant, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

In this way the giant came out before the people every morning and every evening and defied them for forty days, but there was no man strong enough to give him battle.



DAVID MEETS THE BOASTFUL GOLIATH.

Now three of David's brethren were among the soldiers of Israel and followed Saul to battle, but David had returned

from Saul and gone back to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem, while Israel was engaged in war with the Philistines.

One day Jesse sent David to the camp of Israel to take food to his brothers. When he came to them and was talking to them, Goliath marched out in front of the armies and again defied Saul and his soldiers. David saw the men of Israel fleeing from the giant and saw how greatly they were afraid.

The men of Israel said: "Have you seen this man who has come up against us and defies us to battle? It shall be that the man who kills him will receive great riches from the king and the king will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel." David spoke to the men that stood near him and said: "Why does not some one kill this Philistine and who is he that he should defy the armies of God?"

David's brethren turned upon him in anger and told him that he could go back to his sheep in the wilderness, but David kept right on talking and wondering why some one did not go out and fight the giant.

At last Saul heard that David was in the camp and sent for him. Then David said to Saul: "I am not afraid of the Philistine giant; I will go and fight with him myself."

"You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him," replied Saul, "for you are but a youth and he has been a man of war for many years."

Then David said to Saul: "I keep my father's sheep and once there came a lion and took a lamb out of the flock and I went after him and smote him and took the lamb out of his mouth. When the lion rose against me I caught him by his beard and slew him. I slew a bear in the same way and I shall do the same thing to this Philistine who defies the armies of God."

"The Lord that delivered you out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear will also deliver you out of the hand of this giant," said

Saul to the young David;" Go, and the Lord be with you."

Then Saul offered David his own armor, and his helmet to put upon his head, but David said: "I cannot fight with these for I have never tried them." Then he laid aside the armor and the helmet and the sword and went out with his staff in his hand.

He went out by a brook and chose five smooth stones and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had. He carried his sling in his hand and in this way drew near Goliath who was again in front of the armies of Israel, defying any man to come out to combat.

When the Philistine looked about and saw David he scorned him, because David was only a youth and was ruddy and of a fair countenance. "Am I a dog that you come to fight me with stones?" said the Philistine to David, in disdain.

"Come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field," cried Goliath again to the youth before him.

But David answered: "You come with a sword and with a spear and with a shield but I come in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. I will smite you and cut off your head and give the dead bodies of many of the Philistines to the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth that all the world may know that there is a God in Israel."

Goliath roared with a mighty voice when he heard these words of David and started towards the youth to slay him. David did not run from the giant but hastened to run towards him to meet him. As he ran he put his hand in his bag

and took out a stone and put it in the sling. When he came near the Philistine, he stopped and hurled the sling about his head and let the stone go. It went straight as an arrow and smote the Philistine in his forehead.

The stone sank deep into the head of the giant and he fell dead upon his face to the earth and all the people of Israel and the armies of the Philistines looked on in amazement.

There was no sword in David's hand, therefore, he ran and stood upon the dead Philistine and took his sword and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead and that David had cut off his head they fled in great dismay and the men of Israel shouted and pursued them for a long way. They slew many of them and spoiled their tents of all the goods they had. David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem but he put the mighty armor of the giant in his own tent.

CHAPTER L

SAUL IS JEALOUS OF DAVID

After David had slain Goliath, Saul took him into his own house and would not let him return any more to his father's people. Jonathan, the son of Saul, loved David as he loved his own soul, and stripped himself of his robe and his garments, and his bow, and his sword, and gave them all to David.

David went wherever Saul sent him and behaved wisely. He was set over the soldiers and they followed him gladly; he went among the people and they found him wise and kind; he dealt with the servants justly and they loved him.

It happened that when the people of Israel returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, that the women came out of all the cities, singing and dancing, to meet the soldiers. As

they danced and sang they said: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

When Saul heard them say this he was very angry, and cried out: "They have given David ten thousand, and to me only a thousand. What can he have more than my kingdom itself?" And Saul began to envy David, and looked upon him with evil and jealous eyes, for the people honored him more than they did the king himself.

The evil spirit came again upon Saul, and David played upon his harp to soothe the king. Saul sat before him thinking evil thoughts that he could not banish, and his javelin was in his hand. As David played upon the harp, Saul cast his javelin at him, not only once but twice, thinking to slay him. But David escaped from his presence, believing it was the evil spirit that made Saul attempt his life.

Saul was now afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and because he behaved wisely in all his ways. He thought to be rid of David by making him fight the Philistines, hoping some day they would slay him. So he made him captain over his soldiers.

Now, Michal, the daughter of Saul, loved David and was willing to marry him. When Saul heard of it he was pleased and said: "I will give her to him that she may be a snare to him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." And he sent his servants secretly to tell David that he could have Michal for his wife.

But David said: "I am a poor man, and it is no light thing to be a king's son-in-law." But Saul sent an answer that all David had to do was to kill a hundred Philistines and Saul would be satisfied to have him for a son-in-law.

So David rose and went with his men and slew two hundred Philistines and word was brought to Saul that they were slain. He could do no otherwise than give Michal to be David's wife, but he feared David more and more and was his enemy continually.

Saul told Jonathan and all his servants that they must kill David. Jonathan warned David and made him hide in a secret place until his father's anger had passed. But Saul began to fear David more and more, especially when David would return from the slaughter of the Philistines and the people would sing his praises.

Again the evil spirit came upon Saul, and David played upon the harp to soothe him. Again the king cast his javelin at David to slay him, but again David escaped from the wrath of the king, and the javelin smote the wall.

Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, and to slay him in the morning, but Michal, his wife, told David: "If you do not save yourself tonight, tomorrow you will be slain." So Michal let David down through a window, so that he escaped those who watched him outside, and fled to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to live in Naioth.

CHAPTER LI

DAVID AND JONATHAN

After a while David came back to the house of Saul, and again was received in his household and sat among the king's servants. One day David said to Jonathan: "What have I done, and what is my sin, that your father seeks continually to kill me? Truly, as the Lord lives, there is always but one step between me and death."

They agreed that David was to hide himself in a field, for three days, and if Saul missed him then Jonathan was to say: "David asked leave to go to

Bethlehem, for there is a yearly sacrifice there by his family."

If Saul should say it was well, then they were to know that he intended no evil against David, but if Saul was angry then they were to know that David was in danger of the king's wrath. Then they both went into the field and swore eternal love to each other, before that David should hide himself.

"Who shall tell me and how shall I know if your father, the king, be angry with me?" asked David of Jonathan.

Then Jonathan told him: "At the end of three days, come to a certain place and I will shoot three arrows as though I shot at a mark. And I will send a lad after the arrows. If I tell this lad that these arrows are on this side of him you may know there is peace and the king means you no harm; but if I tell the lad the arrows are beyond him, then you will have to go your way, for the king's anger will be against you."

So David hid himself in the field, and when the morrow was come the king sat down to eat. David's place among the king's household was empty, but Saul said nothing, thinking that something had befallen him.

On the next day David's place was still empty, and Saul said to Jonathan: "Why does not the son of Jesse come to his meat, neither yesterday, nor today? "

"David asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. His family has a yearly sacrifice there, and his brothers sent him word to come, and I let him go, as he asked of me," replied Jonathan to the king.

At this Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan. He arose from his seat in wrath and said to his son: "You have chosen this son of Jesse to your confusion. So long as he lives you shall never be established king. Send at once and bring him to me, for again I swear he shall surely die."

"Why shall he be slain; and what has he done?" asked Jonathan of the king, ready to defend his friend from the wrath of his father. Saul gave no answer to his son, but seized his javelin and cast it at him with all his might, as if he would slay

Jonathan along with David. But Jonathan escaped from the wrath of the king and arose from the table in fierce anger and would not eat with his father and the rest of the household.

The next morning Jonathan went into the field at the time appointed with David and took a little lad with him. He said to the lad: "Run, find the arrows which I shoot." And as the lad ran he shot an arrow beyond him.

When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, he called out to him: "Is not the arrow beyond you? Make haste and stay not." And the lad gathered up the arrows and came back to Jonathan, not knowing why he had been sent, or the meaning of the words which Jonathan had spoken.

Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrow to the lad and said to him: "Go, carry them back to the city." And the lad departed, leaving Jonathan alone in the field.

As soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of his place and bowed himself three times to the ground. Then he and Jonathan kissed each other, knowing that they must be separated, for the king's wrath was now known to David. Then Jonathan said to his friend: "Go in peace, for we have sworn, both of us in the name of the Lord, that he shall be between us and our children forever." And David rose and departed and Jonathan went back into the city.

CHAPTER LII

THE MADNESS OF SAUL

David fled to Nob, where lived Ahimelech, the priest. When Ahimelech asked him: "Why are you alone and no man with you?" David told him the king had sent him on a secret mission, for he did not wish the priest to know that he was fleeing from Saul. He then asked Ahimelech to give him bread to eat, for he was hungry. Ahimelech had nothing to give David but the shewbread, which was hallowed bread for use in the temple, so he gave him that to eat.

Then David asked Ahimelech to give him a sword, for he had no weapon in his hand, saying the king's business had required haste.

"The sword of Goliath, whom you slew in the valley, is here, wrapped in a cloth," replied Ahimelech. "You may have that, for there is no other."

David told the priest there was no sword like that, and so he took it and went his way.

He next came to Achish, the king of Gath, where lived the Philistines. When the servants of King Achish saw David, they said: "Is not this man named David, and is he not the one of whom the people say that he slew his ten thousands, while Saul slew but his thousands?" When David heard the servants say this he knew he was recognized and was afraid of the people and the king.

David now pretended he was a madman, and scrabbled on the doors of the gates of the city, and dribbled at the mouth as though he had lost his wits. When Achish saw David in this condition he said: "See, the man is mad, why have you brought him to me? Have I need of madmen that you have brought this

fellow into my presence?" And they let David loose so that he could leave Gath and the Philistines.

He came to the cave Adullam and made his dwelling there. When his brethren and all his father's house heard where he was they came to see him. Others came also, those in distress, those in debt, those who were discontented, until at last, about four hundred people gathered around David as he dwelt in the cave. At length a prophet named Gad, said to David: "Live no longer in this cave, but arise

with your people and go into the land of Judah." And David listened to the word of the prophet and left the cave.

of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards and make you captains of hundreds and thousands? All of you have conspired against me, and there is none of you that is sorry for me."

Then Doeg, who was set over the servants of Saul, said to the king: "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech gave him food to eat and the sword of Goliath."

At this Saul was very angry and sent at once for Ahimelech and all the priests and made them come before him. Angrily he demanded of the priest: "Why have you conspired against me, and given bread and a sword to David, the son of Jesse? Do you not know that he will rise against me and lie in wait for me?"

"There is none of your servants so faithful as David," replied the priest. "He is your son-in-law, and goes at your bidding, and is honored in your house. I made no inquiry of him as to his mission: far be it from me. Let not the king think evil of me or of my household."

But Saul was again in a great rage and shouted aloud: "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your household," and he commanded the footmen that stood near to slay the priests, saying their hand was with David and that

they knew where he fled and would not tell the king. But the servants of the king would not raise their hands against the priests of the Lord, and stood still before Saul.

The king turned to Doeg and told him: "Fall upon these priests and slay them, every one." And Doeg did as the king told him and slew all the priests and Ahimelech. Then Saul went with his soldiers to Nob, the city of the priests, and slew all the men, women and children, and all the cattle, because a great madness was upon him.

CHAPTER LIII

DAVID SPARES THE LIFE OF SAUL

Saul continued to pursue David in hopes to find him and slay him. He pursued him from city to city, into the woods, and even into the deserts. The king said to those about him: "Take knowledge of all the lurking places, where he hides himself, and come and tell me, and I will go with you. If he be in the land I will search him out through all the thousands of Judah.

But always David escaped him and Saul grew more and more bitter in his enmity of David, for he knew the Lord had appointed him one day to be king over Israel.

One time when Saul was returning from a battle with the Philistines, it was told him: "David is in the wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand men and went to seek David and his men among the rocks where the wild goats lived. The king came to a cave and went inside and lay down to rest. Soon he was fast asleep, not knowing that David and his men were also in the same cave and were in hiding from the king.

The men whispered to David: "Your enemy is in your hands. Do to him as it seems good to you to do." David would not kill the king because he was the Lord's anointed, but he

took his knife and cut off the skirts of Saul's robe. He held back his men also, who desired to rush upon the king and end his life. After awhile Saul arose and went out of the cave.

David and his men followed after him. David called out: "My lord and my king," and when Saul looked behind him David bowed his face to the ground and spoke to him.

"Why, oh king, do you believe men's words that say David seeks to do you harm? This day the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave and some bade me kill you, but I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, see the skirt of your robe that is in my hand. I could have killed you but I would not."

"Is this your voice, my son David?" said Saul, as he looked upon the young man. "You are more righteous than I am, for you have done good towards me, whereas I would have done evil toward you," and the king was so overcome that he wept.

"Now I know well that you shall surely be king, and the kingdom of Israel shall be in your hands," said Saul, and calling his men he went back to his home, leaving David in the wilderness.

Now the good old Samuel had come to his last days. When he died all the people of Israel came together and lamented his death, and buried him in his house at Ramah. David then went to live in the wilderness of Paran, and afterwards into a wilderness called Ziph.

It was not long before Saul's wrath against David returned. As often as he would forget his enmity, as often it would return, and each time he sought again the young man's life. Saul heard that David was in the wilderness of Ziph, and his anger kindled against him, for in his heart he feared David. He took three thousand men with him to seek David and his band. When David heard that Saul was coming after him he sent spies to find out if it was true, and they returned and told him that Saul was on the way.

David arose with his men and went to the place where he had made his camp, and no one saw him and his men as they came. Saul lay asleep in a trench, and near him was Abner, the captain of his men, also asleep and the others were sleeping near by. David, with but one man, came near the king and his men, and saw him asleep with his spear stuck in the ground.

His companions urged David to slay the king as he lay before him, as once before in the cave he had a chance to do. But David spoke: "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed, but I pray you to take the spear that is stuck in the ground and the bottle of water and let us go."

So they took the spear and the bottle of water and went away and no man saw them, nor knew what had 'Happened, and not one awoke from his sleep, for the Lord had sent a deep sleep upon Saul and his soldiers. And David went and stood on the top of a hill afar off, and cried in a loud voice, for Abner to awake and answer him.

"Who are you that cries to the king?" was the angry reply of the captain as he awoke from his sleep and heard the voice. "Why have you not kept the lord, your king?" said David. "There came one to destroy him, and you were not on watch. See, here is the king's spear and the cruse of water."

Then Saul awoke and called out: "Is this your voice, David?" And David answered: "It is my voice, my lord and king." Then David told the king he had spared his life, and meant him no harm, and that he was pursuing David for doing only his duty. Saul then declared that he would not pursue David any longer, and would return to his home and leave David alone. And so he sent one of his young men over to get the spear and the bottle of water, and went on his way.

CHAPTER LIV

THE LAST DAYS OF KING SAUL

David went and dwelt in the land of the Philistines, with Achish, the king, in the city of Gath, and when Saul heard that David had fled to Gath, he sought him no further. The time that David dwelt in the land of the Philistines was a full year and four months. While he was there he led the soldiers of Achish against the heathen nations that dwelt in the land and smote them with great slaughter.

After a while the Philistines gathered their armies together to war against Israel. When Saul saw the hosts of the Philistines he was sore afraid, and his heart troubled greatly. Then he said to one of his servants: "Find me a woman that has a familiar spirit that I may go to her and ask her advice." By this Saul meant some witch or some one who was supposed to talk with the spirit of the dead.

"There is a woman at Endor, that has a familiar spirit," replied the servant. And Saul disguised himself and took one man with him and came to the witch at night and said to her:

"I pray you, speak to me by the mouth of some departed spirit and bring him up to me, the one whom I shall name."

Now the woman did not know that it was Saul, the king, who was speaking to her, and said to him: "Saul, the king, has cut off all those who have familiar spirits, and if I do as you ask me, I shall surely die." But the king told her that no harm should come to her, and asked her to bring up the spirit of the dead Samuel that he might speak to him.

And behold, the spirit of Samuel arose before Saul, and the king stood with his face to the ground and bowed himself

very low. The spirit asked Saul: "Why have you disturbed me, to bring me up?"

And Saul told Samuel that the Philistines were come up against him, and that the Lord had deserted him, and he did not know what to do.

Then the spirit of the old prophet spoke with an awful voice: "Why do you ask me, seeing that the Lord has departed from you and become your enemy? The Lord has taken the kingdom out of your hands and given it to David, because you did not obey the words of the Lord and punish the Amalekites as He ordered you. Tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me, and the Philistines shall conquer the hosts of Israel, and the Lord will deliver them into the hands of their enemies."

Saul fell upon the ground with his face hidden, for fear of the words of Samuel. There was no strength in him for he had eaten nothing all that day nor the night before. The woman made him rise and sit upon the bed in her room while she prepared him food. She hastened to cook meat and bread and set it before the king and his servant, who ate and were refreshed. Afterwards they arose and left the woman and went back to their own tents.

The next day the Philistines fell upon the hosts of Israel, and pursued them with great slaughter. David fought not against Israel, for the princes of the Philistines were not willing for him, an Israelite, to fight along with them. So King Achish sent him back to the land of the Philistines.

The Philistines followed hard upon Saul and his sons. The battle went against him, and the archers hit him, and he was sore wounded. Jonathan was slain and two other of Saul's sons fell in battle. The enemy was close upon the king, so that he cried to his armor bearer: "Draw your sword and thrust me through, lest these heathen take me and slay me." But the armor bearer would not slay his king, and turned away.

Saul quickly drew his sword and, placing the point against his breast, fell upon it, so that the blade ran through his

body and he was dead. When his armor bearer saw that the king had killed himself he also fell upon his sword and died with his master. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor bearer and all his men. And the Philistines came the next day and cut off Saul's head and stripped his body of its armor. Saul's armor they put in the house of their heathen goddess, and fastened his body to the walls of Bethshan.

And when the people of Israel saw that Saul was dead and the soldiers had fled, they forsook their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. When the people of Israel heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men rose and went by night to take the body of Saul from the walls of Bethshan. They brought it to Jabesh and there they buried it. They took the bones of his body and buried them under a tree.

CHAPTER LV

DAVID BECOMES KING

After the death of Saul and Jonathan, David asked the Lord: "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" The Lord answered him: "You shall go up." David then said: "Where shall I go?" And the Lord told him to go up to Hebron. So David took his household and all his followers and went to live in the cities of Hebron. While he was there, the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the tribe of Judah.

Now Saul had a son, whose name was Ishbosheth. Many of the tribes of Israel chose him to be king over them so that for a time the people of Israel had two kings. There was now a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. It so happened, however, that after some years two captains of the hosts of Ishbosheth went to his house in the heat of the day and found him lying in bed. They went through the house as though they were bringing wheat to him, but when they reached him they slew him in his bed. Then they cut off his head and fled with it.

They brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron and there they said to the king: "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, who is your enemy and who sought your life. The Lord has avenged you this day upon the house of Saul."

But David was not pleased with this action of the captains and said to them in an angry voice: "You are wicked men who have slain a man in his own house and upon his own bed. I shall require his blood at your hands and shall have you taken away from the earth." So David made his soldiers slay the murderers and cut off their hands and their feet and hang their bodies over a pool in Hebron. Then they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in a sepulchre.

All the elders of Israel now came to David at Hebron and anointed him king over all Israel. He was thirty years old and was king for forty years. As soon as he was anointed king he went to Jerusalem and took possession of the strong fort which was called Zion and which, ever afterwards, was called the City of David. His friend Hiram, king of Tyre, sent cedar trees and carpenters and masons and built David a beautiful house for his palace. Thus, David established himself king over Israel.

All this time the ark of God was in the house of Abinidab that was in Gibeah. The time had come for the ark to be brought to Jerusalem. David gathered all the chosen men of Israel, as many as thirty thousand, and went after the ark to bring it to his city. They put it upon a new cart and the two sons of Abinidab drew the cart.

As they brought the ark through the country, David and the people who were with him, played upon harps and trumpets and cornets and made music before the Lord. When they came to a place known as Nachon's threshing floor, one of the sons of Abimelech, named Uzzah, put out his hand to steady the ark and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it and Uzzah was afraid it would fall.

The anger of the Lord arose against Uzzah and He smote him dead by the side of the ark. When David saw what had happened he was afraid and carried the ark aside into the house of Obbededom. The ark stayed in the house of Obbededom for three months. While it was there the Lord blessed him and all his household. After that, David went and brought the ark into Jerusalem, and all the people of Israel shouted and played trumpets as the cart that drew the ark moved into Jerusalem.

One day as the king sat in his house, the beautiful house which Hiram, king of Tyre had built for him, and the Lord had given him victory over all his enemies, he said to Nathan the prophet: "See, now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God has no temple nor any good house wherein it shall dwell."

It was in the heart of David to build a beautiful temple that should hold the ark. Nathan told him that the Lord was with him and he would let him know what the Lord said. That very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan in a dream, and this is what the Lord told Nathan to say to David:

"Tell him that I and the ark are one and that it stands for my presence with the people of Israel and where it is, there I am. Tell him that I have not dwelt in any house since I brought the children of Israel out of Egypt but have been in a tent and a tabernacle. Tell David I took him from following sheep and made him ruler over my people and that I was with him wherever he went and gave him victory over his enemies and made him a great name."

The Lord told Nathan also to say to David that He would appoint a place for the people of Israel to live in and would plant them there, and that they should move no more and that their enemies should afflict them no more; that David himself should not build the temple to the Lord, but that after he was dead and buried with his fathers that one who came after him would build a great temple for the Lord and establish his kingdom forever.

Nathan told all this vision to David. And King David went into his room and gave thanksgiving to the Lord, saying: "Let Thy name be magnified forever. The Lord God of Hosts is King over Israel and let the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee."

After this, David smote the Philistines and subdued them everywhere, and God gave him victory and dominion over all the land. When his enemies were subdued his heart turned to his friend, Jonathan, who had been slain in battle at the time his father was slain. One day David said: "Is there any living of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

There was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. They called him to David and the king said to him: "Is thy name Ziba?" and he answered: "My lord, that is my name."

"Is there any living of the house of Saul that I may show kindness unto him?" asked David of the servant. Ziba told him that Jonathan had a son who was lame on his feet.

The son's name was Mephibosheth. When he was five years old his nurse had taken him in her arms and was fleeing from the enemies of Saul, his father. As she was fleeing the boy fell from her arms and became lame ever afterwards. This was he, of whom Ziba spoke to David.

David commanded Ziba to bring Mephibosheth to him. When he was come, he bowed his face to the ground and did reverence to the king.

"Fear not, for I will show you kindness for Jonathan, your father's sake, and will restore you the land of your father, and you shall eat at my table," said David, in great kindness to the son of Jonathan. Mephibosheth bowed very low to the king and replied: "What is your servant that you should look upon him with such kindness and treat him in this way?" But David told him how he loved his father and now he wanted to do something for Jonathan's son.

So Mephibosheth came to live in the house of David and ate every day at his table and had servants to wait upon him and lands were restored unto him, but all his life he went lame on both his feet.

CHAPTER LVI

THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM

David had a beautiful son named Absalom. In all Israel there was no one so much praised as Absalom for his beauty. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there was not a blemish in him.

But he was a rebellious son and did a great many things to grieve the heart of his father, King David. At last it came about that he dwelt in his own house and the king would not let him see his face.

After two full years had passed and Absalom had not seen the king, he sent for Joab, the king's captain, but Joab would not come. He sent for Joab the second time and again he would not come. Then Absalom said to his servants: "Joab's field is near mine and barley is growing there, go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field of Joab on fire.

Joab hastened and came to Absalom and said to him: "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

"I sent for you and you would not come, therefore, I set your field on fire that you might come, for I would see the king's face and if he finds any iniquity in me, let him kill me." And Joab went and told the king what Absalom had said. Then David let Absalom see him and the young man fell on his face before the king and David lifted him from the ground and kissed him, because he was very fair and much beloved by his father.

But Absalom was wicked in his heart and always rebellious against his father. He had for himself, chariots, horses, and fifty men who ran before him that he might make a great display of his rank. When he wanted to be popular with the people he would rise early in the day and stand by the gate of the city where the people came to have their causes judged.

When any one would come with a complaint he would say to them: "Your matters are good and right and there is no one sent by the king to hear them. If I were made judge in the land then every man which had a suit or a cause could come to me and I would do him justice."

It also happened that when any man came near to Absalom and bowed before him as to a king's son, then Absalom would put forth his hand to him and would kiss him. In this way Absalom won the hearts of the people of Israel and David did not know what Absalom was doing.

After many years and much preparation on the part of Absalom, he said to the king: "Let me go and pay my vow in Hebron for I have made a vow that if the Lord should bring me to Jerusalem, I would serve Him." The king said to Absalom: "Go in peace," and the young man arose and went to Hebron.

But it was not Absalom's intention to pay his vow in Hebron, as he had told his father. Instead, he sent spies throughout the tribes of Israel, saying: "As soon as you hear the sound of trumpets, then you shall say, Absalom reigns in Hebron." The spies did their work well and the conspiracy against David became very strong and the followers of Absalom continually increased. The messenger came to David saying: "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom and there is a great conspiracy to make Absalom king over Israel."

David was in great alarm at this news and said: "Arise, and let us flee for we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and smite the city with the sword." Then the king fled from Jerusalem, he and all

his servants and many of the people and they crossed the brook Kedron and went into the wilderness.

The priests and the Levites came after him, bringing the ark of the Lord, but David told them to take it back into the city so that the Lord would be kind to him and bring him back into the city. And when the ark had been sent back, David went over the mountain Olivet, weeping as he went with his head covered and barefoot, and all they that were with him went with covered heads and barefoot. After David had left Jerusalem, Absalom and his rebellious followers came and entered the city but David and his followers passed over Jordan and came into the land of Gilead. All of his followers were weary with their long flight and when they had come to the city of Manhanaim, the people there brought beds for them to rest upon and also wheat and barley, and flour and honey and butter and other things to eat and David and his men ate and were refreshed after their long flight through the wilderness.

CHAPTER LVII

THE DEATH OF ABSALOM

Absalom gathered his army together and followed his father, and David knew that there was to be a battle between him and his son. He, therefore, numbered the people that were with him and set captains over them and he made Joab the chief captain.

David himself knew that the hosts of Absalom were pursuing him and made ready for battle. He desired to go into battle himself but the people told him:

"You shall not go into battle, for it matters not if we flee or if we die. You are worth ten thousand of us, therefore, sit here and preserve your life in case the battle goes against us and for Absalom."

"What seems best to you, I will do," said the king simply, for he was an old man and much broken by the acts of his rebellious son.

David sat by the side of the gate on the side of Manhanaim, and all the people came out by hundreds and thousands on their way to battle with the hosts of Absalom. The king called Joab and his other captains to him as they were passing and said to them: "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, Absalom," and the people heard what David said to the captains about Absalom, but Joab made no promises of what he would do.

The battle was in the wood of Ephraim. The hosts of Absalom were slain before the servants of David and there was a great slaughter of twenty thousand men. The battle was scattered over the face of the country and many of the men of Absalom perished in the woods.

Absalom fled from the soldiers of David. He rode upon a mule and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak. Absalom's head was caught in the branches of the tree and he was held there between heaven and earth and the mule that was under him ran away, leaving him hanging by his head in the tree.

A man saw him hanging there and ran to Joab, saying: "I saw Absalom hanged in an oak." Joab replied to him: "When you saw him, why did you not smite him to the ground? I would, have given you ten shekels of silver and a girdle."

"Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son," said the man. For all Israel had heard that David had asked that no one touch the young man Absalom.

But Joab was not so careful of the king's words. He left the man and came to the tree where Absalom was hanging. He took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive and hanging in the tree.

The young men that were with Joab also smote Absalom until he was quite dead. Then Joab blew the trumpet and the people returned from pursuing after the hosts of Absalom and they all saw how Joab had slain the son of David.

Then they took the body of Absalom and cast it into a great pit in the wood and covered it with a heap of stones and the men of Israel went back to their tents.

King David was waiting at the gate of the city to hear news of the battle, and his thoughts were upon his son. Joab said to Cush, one of his servants: "Go, tell the king what you have seen." And Cush bowed himself before Joab and started upon his mission. Another messenger named Ahimaaz said to Joab: "I pray you, let me run after Cush that two of us may bear the message of the victory over the king's enemies." Joab said unto him also: "Go, tell the king what you have seen," and Ahimaaz ran after Cush.

David sat between the two gates of the city. The watchman went up to the roof over the gate and saw a man running alone. He called down to the king what he saw and the king said: "If he be alone he is a messenger with tidings in his mouth." And the messenger drew near. Then the watchman saw another man running and called to the king, and the king said: "He also brings tidings."

Ahimaaz had outrun Cush and brought the message first to the king and said: "Blessed be the Lord which delivered up the men that lifted their hands against the king."

But the old David was not thinking of the victory, and he said to the messenger: "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered: "Joab sent me with the message. I saw a great tumult and I knew not what it was and I do not know whether Absalom is safe or not." Ahimaaz stood aside while Cush ran toward the king.

Cush came and fell before the king and said: "Tidings, my lord, my king. God has avenged you this day of all them that rose up against you." But David was not thinking of his

enemies and asked of this second messenger: "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Cush bowed his head and tried to tell the news to David. At last he said: "May the enemies of my lord and king and all who rise against him to do him hurt be as that young man now is."

Then David knew that Absalom was dead and his heart was bowed with grief. He rose from his seat and went up to the room over the gate and wept. As he went, he said: "O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

CHAPTER LVIII

SOLOMON BECOMES KING

David was now old and feeble with the weight of his years. The time had come for him to appoint one of his sons to be king after him, and God had chosen Solomon to be king. Solomon was to be a man of wisdom, and peace, and was especially charged with building the temple in which the ark was to be placed.

David had another son named Adonijah. This son said: "I will be king after my father is dead, and so I will make myself king at once." He prepared chariots and horsemen and men to run before him, and conferred °with Joab, the captain, and Abiathar, the priest, who promised to help him.

Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle, and called his brothers, the king's sons, and many of the people to a great feast, and they proclaimed Adonijah king. But Nathan, the prophet, and Solomon, his brother, he did not call to this feast. When Nathan heard what the people had done, and heard the cries of "God save King Adonijah!" he went to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, and said to her: "Have you heard that

Adonijah has been made king by the people, and David knows nothing of it?"

Bathsheba went to the king in his bedchamber, and the king was very old, Bathsheba bowed low and the king said: "What would you have?"

"My lord, you swore once that my son, Solomon, should reign after you and sit upon your throne, but now Adonijah has been made king, and you know it not," replied Bathsheba.

"I knew it not," said the king. "Solomon has been chosen by the Lord to be king after me. What else do you know?"

"Adonijah has slain oxen and cattle and sheep and has called the sons of the king together, and Abiathar, the priest and Joab, the captain, but not Solomon nor Nathan," said Bathsheba. Just then Nathan came before the king and told him the same thing that Bathsheba had told him. He also told the king that the people had made a great feast and were saying: "God save King Adonijah."

This did not please the old David, and he swore: "As the Lord liveth, Solomon shall reign after me, and shall sit upon my throne in my stead. This very day I shall do as the Lord commanded me toward Solomon."

When Bathsheba heard these words she bowed very low, and said: "Let my lord, King David, reign forever."

Then David told Nathan to take the servants and go where Solomon was, and place him upon a mule that belonged to the king, and bring him down to Gihon. There Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, were to anoint him king over Israel, and blow trumpets and say, "God save King Solomon."

"You shall then bring him to my house, and let him sit upon my throne for I have appointed him king over Israel and over Judah," said David.

They found Solomon, and the servants put him on a mule that belonged to the king and brought him to Gihon. Zadok, the priest, took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle and anointed him king, and all the people that were with them shouted:

"God save King Solomon!" Indeed, there were so many people crying for Solomon, and playing upon pipes and shouting, that the air was full of noises and the earth shook with the sound.

Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they were making an end of their eating. When Joab heard the trumpets he said: "Wherefore all this noise and the city being in an uproar?" And while he was speaking, the son of Abiathar came in, and Adonijah called out: "You are a brave man and bring good tidings, I hope."

But the man answered with alarm: "Our lord, King David, has made Solomon king, and the people rejoice and cry, God save King Solomon, and that is the uproar in the city which you hear."

Adonijah and his guests were astonished and afraid and asked for more tidings. The man replied: "Solomon now sits on the throne of David, and the servants bow before him, and say: God make the name of Solomon greater than the name of David! And furthermore," continued the son of the priest to those around him, "David himself has blessed this day when he has seen his son Solomon on his throne."

And then also, the guests that were with Adonijah were in great fear, and went every man his own way. Adonijah also feared, because of Solomon, and went and caught hold of the horns of the altar. Some one came to Solomon and said:

"Adonijah has fled to the altar, and has caught hold of the horns of it for safety of his life and begs that Solomon will not slay him with a sword for making himself king."

And Solomon told the men to tell Adonijah that he would not slay him if he would thereafter show himself to be a worthy man.

The servants went and brought Adonijah from the altar and sat him before Solomon, and Adonijah bowed himself very low, and Solomon said: "Adonijah, my brother, I mean you no harm, if only hereafter you be worthy. Go now to your own house."

CHAPTER LIX

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The days drew near when King David should die. His form was bent, his eye was dim, and his voice was low. He called Solomon to his side and said: "My son, I go the way of all the earth, but you must be strong and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the Lord and walk in His ways, and keep His statutes and commandments that you may prosper in whatever you do. If you will follow the words of the Lord, there shall not fail you one to sit on the throne of Israel."

Soon after David had said this to Solomon, he died and was buried. He had reigned forty years, seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. And now Solomon sat on the throne of Israel and his kingdom was firmly established throughout all Israel.

Solomon loved the Lord, and obeyed the statutes of David, his father. He sacrificed and offered burnt offerings on the mountains and in high places. He went to Gibeon to sacrifice, for there was a great high place there and he offered a thousand burnt offerings.

In Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and asked of him: "Ask what I shall give you."

Then Solomon answered the Lord in these words: "O, Lord, You have made me king in place of David, my father. I am but a little child, and I do not know how to go out or to come in. I am in the midst of a great people, therefore, give me an understanding heart to judge this people with wisdom, that I may decide between good and bad." This speech pleased the Lord greatly, in that Solomon had asked for wisdom and an understanding heart.

Then the Lord spoke to Solomon in his dream and said: "Because you have not asked for long life, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but have asked for an understanding heart, I shall give to you the thing you have asked for. There shall be none like you for wisdom. Nor shall any one come after you that shall be wiser than you."

And that was not all the Lord promised Solomon. He promised to give him honors and riches also, so that there should not be any like him among the kings of the earth. He promised that his life should be a long one and full of good works, and that his kingdom should be a great kingdom. Thus does the Lord reward those who seek wisdom and an understanding heart rather than the mere vanities of the world.

Solomon awoke and went to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord, and made a feast for all his servants.

Soon the king had a chance to show the wisdom with which the Lord had blessed him. Two women came before the king and asked him to decide between them as to which one owned a child. One of them said: "My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. My child was born while she was in the house, and three days after her child was also born, and there was no one else in the house with us."

The king waited while the woman told her story. She continued and said: "This woman's child died in the night, because she lay heavy upon it, but my child did not die. When

she found that her child had died she rose at midnight and took my son from beside me while I slept and laid it in her own bed, and laid her dead child beside me while I was in a deep sleep and knew not what she did."

The woman stopped a while and the king listened: "When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, lo! a dead child laid beside me, and I knew it was not my child. She has my child, and the dead child was hers. O, my lord, and king, judge between us and restore me my child which this woman has taken."

But the other woman said: "My lord, the living child is my son, and not this woman's son. I laid not the dead child in her bed. She claims my son for that her son is no more." And then they disputed before the king, as to which one was the mother of the living child and which was the mother of the dead child.

The king thought for a while and said to those around him: "Bring me a sword," and they brought a sword to the king and showed it to him.

Then said the king: "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one and half to the other of these women, for there is no way of telling to which one the child belongs. Let them share the child between them." And the men took the sword and prepared to divide the child in two before the very eyes of the women.

But one of the women sprang forward eagerly and cried out: "O, my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. Do not divide it but let her have it all, for the child would be dead to us both and my soul yearns that he should live."

The other woman cruelly said: "Divide the child with the sword. Let it be neither mine nor hers, but give each of us a share." She knew her own child was dead and did not care whether this one lived or not.

Solomon turned to his men and said: "Slay not the child, but give it to the woman who would spare its life. She is its mother, and not the one who would have it divided by the sword."

And all Israel heard of the judgment of Solomon, and they feared the king, for they saw the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.

CHAPTER LX

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

Solomon was king over all Israel, and there was peace in the land. The people were many, like the sands of the sea, eating and drinking and making merry. And Solomon reigned over all the country from Jordan to the land of the Philistines, and to the borders of Egypt.

The king lived in great abundance for the Lord had given him riches. Every day the provisions for his household consisted of thirty measures of flour, sixty measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty taken from the pastures, a hundred sheep besides deer and fowl. By this we can see that a great crowd of servants and attendants waited on him continually.

All Judah dwelt safely, every man under his vine and his fig tree all the way from Dan to Beersheba, for there was peace on all sides, even as the Lord had promised.

Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. These officers provided food for the king's table and for all that came to his house, so that every man had plenty and lacked for nothing, also they provided straw and barley for the horses and for the dromedaries which belonged to the king.

God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, so that his wisdom was greater than the wisdom of the people of the

east and all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man, and his fame was in all the nations round about. He spoke three thousand proverbs or wise sayings, and over a thousand songs. He spoke of trees, from the cedar of Lebanon down to the hyssop that grows out of the wall, and of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes. And people came from all parts to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

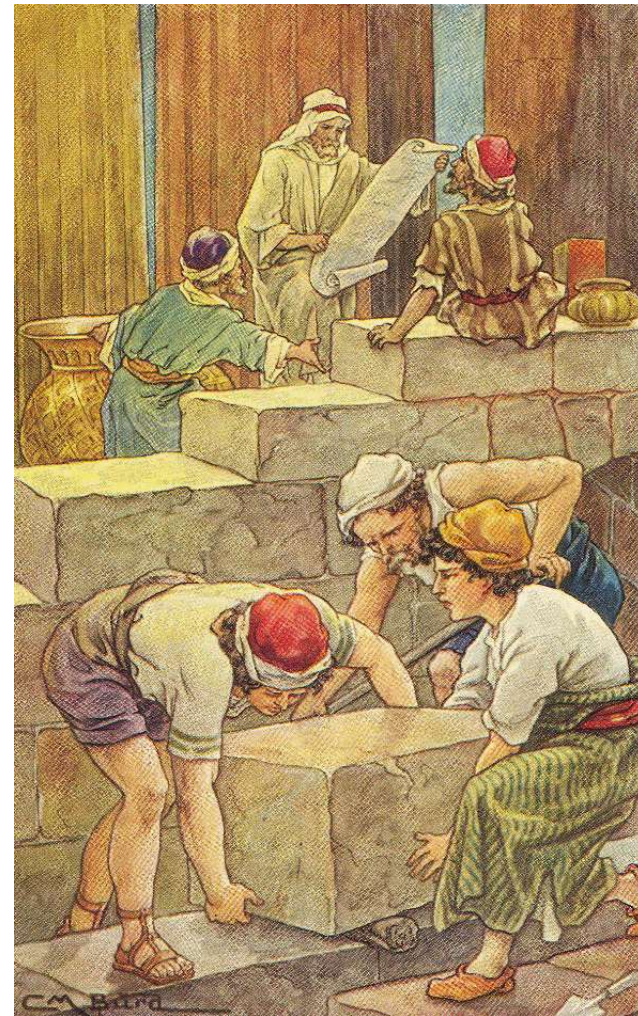
The time had come for Solomon to obey the words of his father David and to set about building the temple even as the Lord had commanded. He sent word to Hiram, king of Tyre, saying: "You know how David, my father, could not build a house for the Lord, on account of the wars which were about him on all sides. But now the Lord has given me rest on every side, so that no enemy besets the people, and I purpose to build a house in the name of the Lord. Now, therefore, order your servants to hew cedars out of Lebanon, and my servants will be with your servants, and I will pay your servants for their work, for there is none among us skilled in hewing timber as your workmen."

When Hiram received the message, he rejoiced greatly and said: "Blessed be the Lord, who has given unto David a wise son over this great people." He then sent word back to Solomon that he would do all that the king wished him to do, in hewing the timber of cedar and the timber of fir. He said: "My servants will bring the trees down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will convey them in floats to the place which you shall appoint, and discharge them there for your servants to receive. You will provide food for my household while they are engaged in the work."

So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according as he needed them, and Solomon gave Hiram wheat and also oil, every year while the work was going on. And Hiram and Solomon made a league of peace between them while they were engaged in building the temple of the Lord.

In order to provide men for the work, Solomon appointed thousands of his subjects and sent them into

Lebanon to hew the timber. He also had thousands of burden bearers, and thousands of hewers of stones, all of whom labored unceasingly under the direction of those who knew how the temple was to be built.



BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

The temple which King Solomon was to build, was to be about one hundred feet long, thirty-three feet wide, and

fifty feet high. This was not a large temple compared with many of the present day, but it was a great building in those days, and every part of it was costly and beautiful. In front of the temple was a porch with a top over it like a tower, about two hundred feet high.

The temple also had narrow windows to give light inside, and rooms against the outside walls for the priests to live in, while they were attending to the duties of the temple.

The temple was built of stone. Each stone had been carved in the mountains and made ready to fit in its place before it was brought down, so that in the building there was no sound of hammer, or axe, or any tool of any kind, heard near the temple. It was built with as little noise as possible, for everything was made to fit before it was brought to its place.

After the walls were built they were covered with cedar carved in the shapes of flowers and the flowers were covered over with gold. The floor of the temple and even the inside of the porch was also covered with gold. Inside the temple there was a curtain of blue, crimson, and purple, which was called the veil. It was hung in such a way that it divided the temple into two rooms. The innermost of these rooms was called the Most Holy Place and was designed for the ark of the covenant.

The walls of the Most Holy Place were also covered with wood which was carved into figures representing cherubim and shapes of palm trees and flowers. These also were covered with gold. Solomon also made two cherubim which were fifteen feet high, out of the wood of olive trees and these he covered with gold. They were in the Most Holy Place and stood with their faces toward the wall and their wings outspread.

The doors of the temple were made out of wood from the fir tree and upon them were carved most beautiful shapes covered with gold.

In front of the house were two great pillars of brass, one on the right hand and one on the left hand. There was also

a brass altar four times as large as the one that had been used for the tabernacle. There was also a great basin which was made to rest on the backs of twelve brass oxen. This basin held the water for the priests to wash their hands and their feet whenever they attended to the sacrifices. There were lavers of brass on the walls so they could be moved about and each would hold water for the sacrifice to be washed in.

In addition to these there were ten golden candle-sticks to give light in the temple and there was a golden table to hold the shewbread, besides censers of gold and golden hinges for the doors. Around the temple there was a court in which was placed the altar for the burnt offerings and the great basin of brass and the ten lavers of brass. Outside of this there was still another court for the people themselves. It took seven years to build this temple and when it was finished it was one of the great wonders of the world and the people of all nations knew about its magnificence.

CHAPTER LXI

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

After the temple was finished, Solomon called all the elders and chief men that they might be there when the ark was brought into the temple. Then the priests took the ark and with great ceremony carried it into the temple, even unto the Most Holy Place, and set it under the wings of the cherubim. Inside the ark were still the two tablets of stone on which the ten commandments had been written. When the priests left the ark in the Most Holy Place a cloud filled the temple so that the priests could not go back into it for a while because the glory of the Lord filled all the place.

Solomon now gave thanks to the Lord for helping him build this wonderful temple. Before all the people he knelt down and prayed that the Lord would answer all the prayers of the children of Israel.

If the time should come when their enemies would be sent against them because of their sins, or if their fields should parch by not having rain, or if the seeds, and vines, and fruit they planted should not grow, or if any pestilence should come into the land and locusts and caterpillars eat the grain, or, indeed, if anything should happen to them because they had disobeyed the Lord, Solomon prayed that the Lord would forgive the people if they came to the temple and asked forgiveness.

When the king had finished dedicating the temple, fire came down from heaven and burnt up all the offerings which he had placed upon the altar and the people saw the glory of God and bowed their faces to the ground.

The queen of Sheba, which was a far off country, heard of the magnificent temple which Solomon had built, and of his wisdom and riches. She journeyed to Jerusalem with a great company of her people; with camels that bore spices and gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon she talked to him about many things and asked him many questions. Solomon answered all her questions and explained to her everything she asked about his God and his people.

When the Queen of Sheba had seen the temple that Solomon had built and listened to his wise words and saw the number of his servants and the cup-bearers and the splendid way in which they were trained and the great quantities of food that were consumed at his table every day, she was astonished beyond measure.

"It was a true report that I heard in my land of your acts and of your wisdom," said she to Solomon. "I did not believe what I heard until I came and saw it with my own eyes. The half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceeds far more than I heard. Happy are the men and happy are the servants which stand continually before you and hear your wisdom." The queen gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold and a great store of spices and precious stones.

Indeed, no one gave Solomon such an abundance of spices as the Queen of Sheba gave him.

King Solomon gave to the queen all that she asked and loaded her and her servants down with many presents. Then she returned to her own country.

CHAPTER LXII

THE REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES

King Solomon had many wives, according to the custom of those days. Many of them were heathen women, whom the Lord had forbidden the children of Israel to marry. It came to pass when Solomon was old that his heathen wives turned away his heart from God and made him worship idols, and even build a temple to worship them in.

The Lord was angry with Solomon for disobeying His orders, and for going after heathen women and strange gods. Therefore, the Lord said to him: "Since you have not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded you, I will surely rend the kingdom from you and give it to some one else. I will not do it while you live for David, your father's sake, but I will rend it out of the hand of your son. I will leave him two tribes only for his kingdom, but the other tribes I will take from him."

Enemies began to rise and give trouble to Solomon. There was a young man named Jeroboam, who was a mighty man of valor. He was industrious and strong, so much so, that Solomon had put him in charge of important work. One day as he was going out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah met him in a field, and they two were alone.

Ahijah caught the new garment that Jeroboam was wearing and tore it in twelve pieces. "Take ten pieces," said the prophet to the young man, "for the Lord will take the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes."

He then told Jeroboam that the Lord was doing this because Solomon had turned to strange gods, but that He would not divide the kingdom until after Solomon was dead. He also told him that the son of Solomon should still keep two tribes and reign in Jerusalem, the city of David.

When Solomon heard what the prophet had said, he tried to kill Jeroboam, but the young man arose and fled into Egypt and lived there until Solomon was dead.

Solomon was king over Israel for forty years, and when he died he was buried in Jerusalem. As soon as the king was dead the people sent word to Jeroboam in Egypt and he hastened to return to his own land. He and all the people went to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, to make him king. They said to Rehoboam:

"Your father made our yoke heavy. If you will make the burdens lighter and not treat us so harshly nor take our possessions for your own use, we will serve you."

Rehoboam was not ready with his answer, so he replied: "Leave me for three days and then come again and I will tell you what I will do." And the people left him.

Rehoboam sent first to the old men, who had stood by his father, Solomon, and asked them: "How do you advise that I answer this people?"

"If you will serve this people, and speak good words to them, and promise to lighten their burdens, they will be your servants and subjects forever," replied the old men, who knew how heavily the people had been burdened.

But Rehoboam was a spoiled son, and did not like the advice of the old men. He sent for the young men that had grown up with him, and asked them: "What counsel do you give me to answer this people who want their burdens made lighter?"

The young men were not wise and they advised Rehoboam to answer the people harshly and to show them no

mercy and not to lighten their burdens. The advice was pleasant enough to the foolish man.

On the third day the people returned for their answer. Rehoboam spoke to them roughly, saying: "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

The people went away dissatisfied. They said among themselves: "What have we under Rehoboam but burdens and taxes and heavy work? Let us have our own kingdom and select our own king and make our own laws." And so ten tribes of Israel revolted from Rehoboam and made Jeroboam king over Israel, and went off by themselves, leaving Rehoboam in Jerusalem to reign over the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. And thus was the kingdom divided as the prophet had foretold to Jeroboam that day in the field.

As soon as Rehoboam saw that the ten tribes had left him, he sent Adoram to them, saying they must return to him and be his subjects and still pay the taxes. But the people of the tribes stoned the messenger until he was dead, which so alarmed Rehoboam that he hastened to shut himself up in Jerusalem for fear of the people.

But Rehoboam was not going to let his kingdom leave him without a struggle. He assembled the house of Judah and the house of Benjamin, a great host of warriors to fight against the house of Israel and bring back the kingdom to himself.

As he was ready to depart, a prophet came to him and said: "This thing is of the Lord, and it is His will that the kingdom be divided, and your valiant men cannot change His purpose. Go not up to fight against your brethren of Israel, but let every man return to his own home." When Rehoboam heard these words he let his men depart to their homes and left Jeroboam to be king over the ten tribes of Israel as the Lord had said.

CHAPTER LXIII

THE WICKEDNESS OF JEROBOAM

Now Jeroboam, king over the ten tribes that had revolted from Rehoboam, was worried for fear the people would return to their allegiance to the son of Solomon. He wished to remain king over Israel, and was afraid if the people went up to Jerusalem to worship in the great temple that Solomon had built, that they would forsake him and return to Rehoboam.

Therefore, he made two calves of gold and set them up for the people to worship, one in Bethel and one in Dan. Then he said to the people: "It is too much trouble for you to go to Jerusalem. Be hold your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

And the foolish people went to Bethel and to Dan to worship the golden calves, which was a great sin in the sight of the Lord. Jeroboam built temples and made priests of the lowest of the people that were not Levites, and gave a great feast and offered sacrifices upon the altars of the heathen gods. He did this to keep the people from going to Jerusalem to worship God in the temple that Solomon had built.

A man of God came from the tribe of Judah and stood by the heathen altar when Jeroboam was offering sacrifice. The man cried out aloud: "O, altar, altar, a child shall be born from the family of David and Josiah shall be his name. Upon this altar he shall offer a sacrifice, the priests of the high places and men's bones shall be burned here. The altar shall be broken and the ashes shall be scattered."

When Jeroboam heard these words of the man of God he stretched out his hand and said to those around him: "Lay hold on that man." But his hand which he stretched out dried up so that he could not pull it in again to him. Then the altar

was broken and the ashes were scattered even as the man of God had said.

Then Jeroboam begged the prophet: "Pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." And the man of God prayed to the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as it was before.

Jeroboam then begged the man to go with him and refresh himself and accept a reward. But the prophet replied: "If you were to give me half the riches of your house, I would not go with you nor eat bread nor drink water in this place, for the Lord charged me not to eat nor drink nor rest while I was here." And the prophet turned and went back to his own land.

There was also an old prophet who lived in Bethel. His sons came to him and told him what the man of God had done that day. The old prophet then said to his sons: "Which way went he?" And his sons told him the way the man of God had gone. The old prophet then said: "Saddle me the ass." And his sons brought him the ass with a saddle on it, and the old prophet rode after the man of God.

He found him sitting under an oak and the old prophet said to him: "Are you the man of God that came from Judah?" and he answered: "I am."

"Come home with me and eat bread," said the old prophet. "I will not return with you, nor eat bread nor drink water, nor rest, while I am in this place, for the Lord commanded me not to do so," replied the man of God.

Then the prophet said: "I am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me saying that I should bring you back and that you should eat bread and drink water in my house." The prophet was telling a falsehood, but the man of God believed him, and went back to his house and ate and drank with him.

As they sat at the table the Lord made the old prophet say to the man of God: "You have disobeyed the word of the Lord, and have not kept His commandments. You have come

back, and have eaten bread and have drunk water and have rested in this place." Then the old prophet saddled the ass and put the man of God on it and sent him away.

When the man was on his way back to Judah, a lion met him and slew him. The lion did not eat his dead body but stood by it, and the ass did also. Some men passed by and saw the dead man's body and the lion and the ass standing by it, and they went and told the old prophet in Bethel what they had seen.

"It is the man of God who disobeyed the word of the Lord. Therefore, the lion has slain him by the way," said the old prophet. Then he told his sons to saddle the ass and the old prophet rode to the place where the man of God was lying and brought back his body to Bethel where he buried it in the prophet's own sepulchre.

CHAPTER LXIV

ELIJAH BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

After Jeroboam died, there were many kings of Israel, but none so wicked as Ahab. He married a heathen woman, named Jezebel, and worshiped gods and built temples for them which provoked the anger of the Lord against Ahab more so than against all the kings of Israel that were before him.

There was a prophet named Elijah. The Lord told him to say to Ahab: "There shall not be dew nor rain upon the land these years except as I say." The Lord then told Elijah to get up and go eastward and hide himself by a brook named Cherith. There he should drink of the water of the brook and the ravens would come and feed him. Elijah did as the Lord commanded him and went and sat by the brook. In the morning the ravens brought him bread and meat and also in the evening.

After a while the brook dried up because there was no rain in the land. Then the Lord said to Elijah: "Go to Zarehath and there you will find a widow, whom I have commanded to take care of you."

Elijah arose and went to Zarehath. When he came to the gate of the city the woman met him and she was gathering sticks. Elijah called to her and said: "Bring, I pray you, a little water in a vessel that I may drink, and a little morsel of bread in your hand."

"As the Lord liveth," replied the woman, "I have not a cake but only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse. I am gathering sticks that I may go in and prepare it for me and my son that we may eat it and die, for we are near starving to death." Elijah said to the woman: "Have no fear, but go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me, and afterwards make for yourself and your son."

The woman was astonished at the words of the prophet, because there was not enough to do this but Elijah looked at her and said: "The barrel of meal shall not waste nor shall the cruse of oil fail until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth." And the woman went and did as Elijah commanded her, and she and her son had enough to eat for many days. The meal did not give out nor did the oil fail, just as the prophet had said.

Now it happened that the son of the woman fell sick and died and his mother was sore distressed. She cried out to Elijah and begged him to help her.

Elijah said to her: "Give me thy son." Then she took him and carried him into the loft, which was the prophet's room, and laid him upon the bed. And the prophet prayed to the Lord that the son might be spared.

After that Elijah stretched himself upon the child three times, saying: "Lord, I pray you, let this child's soul come into

him again." The Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came into him again and he was alive.

Elijah took the child and brought him down into the house and gave him to his mother, saying to her: "See, your son lives."

The woman fell on her knees before Elijah and cried out in her joy: "Now I know you are a man of God and the word of the Lord is in your mouth."

CHAPTER LXV

ELIJAH DESTROYS THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

There was a terrible famine in the land, because no rain had fallen for a long time. Ahab knew that the curse of Elijah was upon him and the land, and he sought to find him. At last Ahab met Elijah and said to him: "Are you he that troubles Israel?"

But Elijah answered: "I have not troubled Israel. But you have done so in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have worshiped heathen gods."

Elijah told Ahab to gather the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty in number and the prophets of the grove, four hundred in number, all of whom ate at the table of the wicked Jezebel, and bring them to Mount Carmel. Ahab did as Elijah commanded him and all the heathen prophets came to Mount Carmel where Elijah was.

Many people came together at the time to see what Elijah was going to do. Elijah stood up and said: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; if Baal is God, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

"I, even I, am the only prophet of the Lord that is here, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men, as you see," said Elijah to the people. "Give us two bullocks, let these false prophets take one bullock and cut it in pieces and lay it on wood and put no fire under it. I will dress the other bullock and lay it on wood and put no fire under it. Let the prophets of Baal call on their gods and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god that answers by fire, let him be God."

When the people heard these words of Elijah, they answered: "It is well spoken. Let us have a trial and see who is the true God."

The prophets took the bullock that was given them and they dressed it and laid it on the wood and put no fire under it. Then they called on the name of their god and prayed him to send fire to burn the bullock. They leaped upon the altar, and danced round it but there was no answer.

Elijah mocked them and said: "Cry aloud, for Baal is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he may be asleep and must be awakened."

The prophets cried aloud and cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them but there was no voice and no answer to their prayers.

Elijah said to the people: "Come near to me," and they came near to him. Then he took twelve stones and with them he built an altar in the name of the Lord and made a trench around the altar. He put the wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces and laid it on the wood.

He said to those around him: "Fill four barrels of water and pour on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." After they had done that, he said: "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. He said: "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. The water ran around about the altar and filled the trench.

Then Elijah called to the Lord and said: "God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that You are the true God, and I am Thy servant and that I have done all these things in Your name."

The fire came down from heaven and consumed the bullock and the wood and the stones of the altar and licked up the water that was in the trench. When the people saw it they bowed themselves to the ground and said: "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!"

Then Elijah said to them: "Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape." And they took them and Elijah brought them down to the brook of Kishon and slew them there.

Then Elijah said to Ahab: "Get you to your house and eat and drink, for it shall rain, and there shall be no more famine." And in a short while there was a great rain, even as the prophet had said.

CHAPTER LXVI

ELISHA IS MADE A PROPHET

When Ahab returned to his home and told the wicked Jezebel what Elijah had done and how he had slain the prophets with the sword, Jezebel was exceedingly angry. She sent a messenger to Elijah, saying: "May the gods destroy me if I do not make your life as the life of one of the dead prophets by tomorrow about this time." This threat meant that she intended to kill Elijah if she could.

When Elijah received this message, he hastened to go to Beersheba. Leaving his servant he went a day's journey into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree and said to himself: "It is enough, now, O Lord; take away my life, for the wicked Jezebel pursues me and will slay me if she can find me."

Soon he fell asleep under the juniper tree. An angel appeared to him and touched him and said to him: "Elijah, arise and eat."

Elijah looked around and saw a cake baked on the coals and a cruse of oil on the ground near his head. He ate the cake and drank the water and laid down again and slept.

The angel came again the second time and touched him and said: "Elijah, arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." Elijah awoke from his sleep and ate the cake and drank the water and then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights, till he came to Mount Horeb.

He entered into a cave and lived there and the word of the Lord came to him and said: "What are you doing there, Elijah?"

"I have been jealous for the Lord," replied Elijah, "and the children of Israel have forsaken His commandments and thrown down His altars and slain His prophets and I am the only one that is left and now they seek my life to take it away."

Then the Lord said: "Go forth from the cave, Elijah, and stand upon the mount," and Elijah went forth and stoop upon the mount as the Lord had directed. Then the Lord passed by and a great wind shook the mountain and broke in pieces the rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind.

After that there was a terrible earthquake and all the earth shook and split in pieces, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there came a great fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire came a still small voice and Elijah stood and listened to what the voice said to him.

When Elijah heard the small voice speaking to him he wrapped his face in his mantle and went and stood near the entrance of the cave and the still small voice said to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

"I have been very jealous for the Lord," said Elijah, even as he had said before, "but the children of Israel have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thrown down the altars and slain the prophets and I am the only one that is left and they seek my life to take it away."

Now the still small voice was the word of the Lord speaking to Elijah and it said to him: "Go on your way to the wilderness of Damascus and when you come there anoint Hazael to be king over Israel. Elisha you shall anoint to be prophet in your place after you are gone."

The Lord told Elijah not to be discouraged for there were yet seven thousand men in Israel who had not bowed their knees unto Baal, the heathen god. He promised Elijah to take care of him and told him to keep on prophesying for the Lord would take care of His own.

Then Elijah disappeared, to do as the Lord said. As he was going on his way he found Elisha plowing in a field with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and with him were eleven others, each with a yoke of oxen and Elisha was with the last yoke. When Elijah passed by and looked upon Elisha, he knew he was the man whom the Lord had chosen to be prophet.

Elijah took off his cloak or mantle which he had around him and laid it across the shoulders of Elisha and Elisha knew by this token that he was chosen to be a prophet. Elisha then left the oxen in the field and went after Elijah saying: "Let me kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow you." And Elijah told him to do so. Then Elisha took his yoke of oxen and slew them and boiled their flesh with the plowshares that he had and gave the flesh to the others to eat. Then he arose and went after Elijah and became his servant.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE DEATH OF AHAB

The king of Syria, named Ben Hadad, gathered all his men together and went up to besiege Samaria, the capital of Israel, and to make war against Ahab and his people. He sent messengers to Ahab to tell him that all the silver and gold that he had and the wives and the children and everything else that was good in his land belonged to the king of Syria and that he was going to take it.

The hosts of Ahab and the hosts of Ben Hadad then gathered for war and for three years there was strife between Syria and Israel.

There was a man named Naboth who lived in Jezreel, near the palace of Ahab in Samaria. This man had a vineyard which Ahab greatly desired.

Ahab sent word to Naboth, saying: "Give me your vineyard that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near my house and I will give you a better vineyard or I will give you its worth in money."

But Naboth did not wish to sell his vineyard and sent word back to Ahab: "The vineyard is an inheritance of my father and I would not part with it."

When Ahab received his reply he was much displeased and laid down upon his bed and turned away his face and would not eat. Jezebel, his wife, came to him and said: "Why is your spirit so sad that you eat no bread, my lord?"

"I spoke unto Naboth, of Jezreel, and asked him to give me his vineyard or else to sell it to me. He would neither give it to me nor sell it to me," replied Ahab to his wife.

"Do you not govern this kingdom of Israel? Why should you be displeased for such a small matter? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be merry. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite," said Jezebel to Ahab.

Now Jezebel was a wicked woman and was always stirring up her husband to evil deeds. She never hesitated to do evil things to gain her way, so she wrote letters in Ahab's name and put his seal upon them. She sent these letters to the elders and nobles that were in Jezreel where Naboth lived and told the elders to proclaim a feast and set Naboth on high among the people and to get two men who were willing to bear false witness against Naboth and to say that he blasphemed against God and the king.

The elders and nobles did as Jezebel directed. They proclaimed a feast and set Naboth on high among the people. The two men came in and sat before him. They then rose and declared that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king. Then the elders and the nobles took Naboth out of the city and stoned him with stones until he died, even as Jezebel had told them to do.

When Jezebel had received word that Naboth was dead she went to Ahab and said to him: "You may take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you or to sell you, for now he is dead." And Ahab went down to the vineyard and took possession of it.

When Elijah heard how the wicked Jezebel had acted and that Ahab had taken possession of Naboth's vineyard, he went down to Samaria and found Ahab in possession of the vineyard. The prophet then spoke to him harshly:

"You have killed Naboth and taken his vineyard. I tell you in the name of the Lord that in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall the dogs also lick your blood, you wicked king."

Ahab was overcome with the words of Elijah and cried out: "Have you found me, oh, my enemy?" Elijah answered:

"Yes, I have found you. You have worked an evil in the sight of the Lord and I will bring evil upon you and upon Jezebel. The dogs shall eat the flesh of the wicked Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel and calamity shall befall all of your house." Ahab was so overcome by the words of the prophet that he tore his clothes and put sack-cloth upon his body for he knew that Elijah was a prophet and the words that he spoke would some day come true.

The war between Syria and Israel was going on. In the third year of the war Jehosaphat, the king of Judah, came down to help Ahab, the king of Israel. Together with their men they went up to Rehmoth, in Gilead, to give battle to the hosts of the Syrians.

Now the king of Syria had commanded all his captains to kill Ahab and Ahab knew that the king of Syria had told this to his captains, therefore, was Ahab much afraid of his life. So he said to Jehosaphat: "I will disguise myself and enter into the battle so that they will not know who I am. You put on my robes so that they will think you are Ahab." And Jehosaphat put on the robes of Ahab and went forth to battle.

When the captains of the Syrians saw Jehosaphat in battle they said: "There is the king of Israel, whom we are commanded to kill," and they pursued Jehosaphat. As they pursued him Jehosaphat cried out that it was he and not Ahab, whom they sought. Then the captains ceased from pursuing Jehosaphat and turned again to find Ahab.

Ahab was fighting in a distant part of the field in disguise and he was in his chariot. A soldier of the Syrians drew his bow and shot at a venture and his arrow went between the joints of the armor of King Ahab and wounded him. Ahab said to the driver of his chariot: "Take me out of the battle, for I am sorely wounded."

The battle was going on furiously and the driver of the chariot held King Ahab up in his arms but the blood ran out of his wound and covered the floor of the chariot. At last, about

the time the sun went down, the battle went against Israel. Word came that every man should flee to his own home and Israel fled, every man to his own city and to his own country.

Ahab died of his wound and was brought to Samaria and there they buried him. They took the king's chariot to the pool of Samaria and washed it and as they were washing it the dogs came and licked the blood off the chariot and from the king's armor, even as the prophet had spoken.

CHAPTER LXVIII

THE SICKNESS OF AHAZIAH

After Ahab was buried, his son, Ahaziah, became king. Now it happened that Ahaziah fell out of his window in Samaria and was so badly hurt that he was about to die. He told his messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the heathen god, if he should recover of his sickness.

As the messengers were going to inquire of the heathen god they met Elijah, the prophet, and Elijah spoke sternly to them and said: "Is there no God in Israel? Why should you go to Baalzebub, the heathen god? You may tell your king that the Lord says that he shall not arise from the bed of sickness upon which he lies but that he shall die," and then Elijah departed.

The messengers came back to Ahaziah, and the king said to them: "Why have you returned and what did Baalzebub say?"

"There came a man who met us," replied the messengers, "and the man said that there was a God in Israel and that we should not inquire of Baalzebub, the heathen god, and he also said that the king should not arise from his bed but should die."

When Ahaziah heard this he asked: "What kind of a man was it that met you and said these things?" The messengers told him that he was a hairy man, that wore a girdle and leather about his waist. Then the king knew it was Elijah, the prophet.

The king sent a captain with fifty men to bring Elijah to him. They found the prophet sitting upon the top of a hill. The captain called out to him: "You man of God, the king says come down." Elijah replied to the captain of the fifty men: "If I am a man of God let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." Then fire came from heaven and consumed the men.

Again Ahaziah sent another captain with fifty men and when he had found Elijah, he also said to him: "Come down quickly, O man of God."

"If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men," replied the prophet. And again fire came down from heaven and consumed the men.

The third time Ahaziah sent the captain with fifty men to take Elijah but this captain fell on his knees before the prophet and prayed to him, saying: "O, man of God, let my life and the lives of these fifty men be precious in thy sight." The angel of the Lord told Elijah to spare these men and to go with the captain to Ahaziah.

When Elijah came to Ahaziah upon his bed of sickness he said to him: "Inasmuch as you sent messengers to ask Baalzebub whether you should die or not and did not send to the true God, therefore, I tell you, you shall not arise from your bed of sickness but you shall surely die."

And so it was as the prophet had said, for Ahaziah died and was buried and his son, Jehoram, reigned in his place.

CHAPTER LXIX

THE LAST DAYS OF ELIJAH

The time had come for Elijah to be taken to heaven. He went with Elisha out of Gilgal, the place where they were staying. As they were journeying, Elijah said to Elisha: "Tarry here, I pray you, for the Lord has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said: "I will not leave you." So they two went on to Bethel.

When they came to Bethel, Elijah said again to Elisha: "Tarry here, I pray you, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But Elisha answered: "I will not leave you," and so they two came to Jericho.

When they came to Jericho, Elijah said again to Elisha: "Tarry here, I pray you, for the Lord has sent me to Jordan," but Elisha answered again: "I will not leave you," and so they two went on to Jordan. When they came to Jordan there were fifty men of the sons of the prophets who stood afar off and watched them.

Elijah took his mantle and smote the waters of the river and they were divided so that the prophets went over on dry ground. When they had gone over, Elijah said to Elisha: "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken away."

Elisha looked upon his master and said: "I pray you, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

"You have asked a hard thing," replied Elijah, "however, if you see me when I am taken away it shall be as you ask, but if you do not see me when I am taken away, it shall not be as you ask."

As they stood and talked, behold, there came a chariot of fire and horses of fire and Elijah was caught up in the chariot and went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

When Elisha saw Elijah depart, he cried aloud: "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" Then he saw Elijah no more and so great was his grief that he tore his clothes in pieces.

When he journeyed back to Jordan he took the mantle of Elijah and smote the waters of the river and again they parted and Elisha went over on dry ground.

When he came to the place where the sons of the prophets were, they bowed themselves before Elisha and said: "The spirit of Elijah rests upon Elisha and he is now our prophet."

When they came to Jericho, the men of that place said to Elisha: "The situation of this city is pleasant but the water is not good to drink and the ground is barren so that nothing will grow."

"Bring me a new cruse and put salt in it," replied the prophet, and they brought it to him. He then went to the spring of the waters and cast salt into the spring and said: "Thus, saith the Lord, I have healed these waters. There shall not be any more death from them or any barren land."

So the waters of Jericho were made pure and sweet and remained so according to the words of the prophet Elisha.

The prophet journeyed from Jericho up to Bethel. As he was going by the way, there came little children out of the city and mocked him. They said to the old prophet: "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." And Elisha turned and looked at them and called on the Lord to punish them.

There came two she-bears out of the wood and tore forty-two of the children as a punishment for making sport of the prophet of the Lord.

CHAPTER LXX

THE MIRACLES OF ELISHA

Jehoram, the son of Ahab, was now king over Israel. While he was king the Moabites rebelled against Israel and came against Jehoram with a large host.

Jehoram sent to Jehosaphat, who was king of Judah, and said: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me against him to battle?" And Jehosaphat sent back the answer that he would go. So the king of Israel and the king of Judah journeyed into the wilderness to meet their enemies and they went a seven-day's journey. There was no water for the men or for the cattle that followed them and they were much distressed.

Jehosaphat said: "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord that we may inquire of him what to do?" One of Jehosaphat's servants answered and said: "Elisha is here, the servant of Elijah, upon whom his mantle has fallen." And the king went to Elisha and asked him what to do to keep the people and the cattle from dying of thirst.

Now Jehosaphat was a godly man and served the Lord. So Elisha said to Jehoram, the king of Israel: "I have no regard for you, for you are a wicked king, but since Jehosaphat, the king of Judah, is a godly man I will save this army from destruction."

The prophet then told the kings to bring him a minstrel, and as the minstrel played upon the harp he began to prophesy and said: "Make the valley full of ditches for there shall be no wind nor rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water that you may drink, you and your cattle, and the Lord will deliver the Moabites into your hand."

The kings went back to their tents and when they arose in the morning and looked in the valley, behold, the country was filled with water, even as though it had rained.

Now the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them and so they gathered and marched against the hosts of Judah and Israel. When they reached the valley early in the morning they saw the sun shining upon the water in the ditches and the Moabites saw the water as red as blood.

"This is blood; the kings are surely slain; they have smitten one another; now, therefore, Moab, hasten and gather in the spoil," cried all the men of Moab. But the Israelites had only withdrawn a short ways off and when the Moabites came near the camp the Israelites arose and fell upon the Moabites so that they fled before them.

They followed them into their own country and beat down their cities and despoiled the land and filled up the wells and cut down the trees. Thus was the kingdom of Israel saved from the Moabites.

There was a woman who was a widow of one of the sons of the prophets who came unto Elisha, and said: "My husband is dead and you know he did fear the Lord. The man to whom he owed money has come to take my two sons. What shall I do to save myself and my household?" Elisha then asked her what she had in her house and the widow told him that she had nothing but a pot of oil.

"Go, borrow vessels of thy neighbors, even empty vessels, and borrow not a few," said the prophet to her. "And when you have them, shut the door of your house and pour oil into the empty vessels out of the little pot which you have."

The widow went from the prophet and borrowed empty vessels of her neighbors and took them to her house and shut the door. She began to pour oil out of her pot into the empty vessels until the vessels were full. The oil did not fail to keep on coming so long as there was a vessel to be filled. Finally

she said to one of her sons: "Bring me yet another vessel," and he told her there were no more vessels and all were full.

Then the widow went to Elisha and told him what had happened, and Elisha said to her: "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt and you and your children shall live on the rest."

One time, as Elisha journeyed through the land, he came to Shunem, a great city. There lived here a rich woman who begged him to stop at her house and eat of her food. She was very kind to Elisha so that whenever he passed that way he always stopped and ate of her food.

The woman said to her husband: "I see that this is a holy man of God who passes our way. Let us make a little room and set for him a bed and a table and a stool and a candlestick, so that it shall be his room that he may turn into it whenever he comes this way." And so they made a room for the prophet.

One day as he lay in the room, he said to Gehazi, his servant: "Call this Shunamite woman." When she came to the prophet he said to her: "You have taken good care of my servant and of me. What may I do for you? Would you have me speak to the king or to the captain of the host for you?"

The woman answered: "I dwell among my own people. There is nothing my lord can do for me," and the Shunamite departed.

After she had left, Gehazi said to Elisha: "She has no child, and if the Lord would send her a son, it would be well." And the prophet told Gehazi to call the woman back.

When she came to Elisha he said to her: "The Lord will send you a son," and the woman rejoiced, and after a while a son was born and grew up to be a lad.

One day when the lad was out in the field with the reapers he was overcome and said to his father: "My head, my head!" They took the lad to his mother and put him in her lap and there, after a few hours, he died. After he was dead she

took him up into the room of the man of God and laid him on the bed and shut the door and went out.

The Shunamite woman hastened to find Elisha, who was on Mount Carmel. She told him her child was dead. Elisha arose and followed her and when they came into the house he saw that the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. Elisha went in and shut the door and prayed to the Lord. He then laid down by the side of the child and put his mouth and his eyes upon the child's mouth and eyes and his hands upon the child's hands. After a while the flesh of the child became warm and life returned to him. The child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha called his servant Gehazi and said to him: "Call the Shunamite woman." Gehazi called her and she came in. When she saw her son alive she fell at the feet of the prophet in thankfulness. She then took her son and went her way.

CHAPTER LXXI

NAAMAN IS CURED OF HIS LEPROSY

Naaman was captain of the host of the king of Syria and was a mighty man with his master. He was honored in the land because he was a mighty man of valor but he was a leper.

One time when a company of Syrians had gone out to fight the people of Israel they brought away captive a little maid from the land of Israel and she waited on Naaman's wife. One day she said to her mistress: "I would that my lord was with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

Some one went and told Naaman and said to him: "There is a maid of Israel whom the Syrians brought away captive and she says there is a prophet in the land of Samaria who can cure my lord of his leprosy."

When the king of Syria had heard what the maid of Israel had said, he called Naaman and said to him: "I will send a letter to the king of Israel, and also some presents, that he may cure the captain of my host of his leprosy." And Naaman departed, taking ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

Naaman brought the letter to the king of Israel. The king opened the letter and in it read that the king of Syria had sent his servant Naaman to him that the king of Israel might cure him of his leprosy. But the king of Israel himself had no such power, for that belonged to the prophet of the Lord only.

When the king of Israel had read the letter from the king of Syria, he said to Naaman and those around him: "Am I a god to kill and make alive, that the king of Syria sends his servant unto me to cure him of his leprosy? I think he seeks to make a quarrel with me, for he knows I cannot cure leprosy," and the king was much annoyed at the letter he had received.

Elisha, the prophet, heard that the king of Syria had sent his captain, Naaman, to the king of Israel to be cured of his leprosy and that the king of Israel was greatly distressed by the message. Elisha sent word to the king of Israel to send Naaman to him that he might talk with him and show him that there was a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

Elisha knew that it was Naaman who stood before his door but he did not ask him in, though he was a mighty captain and Elisha's house was a very poor one. Elisha sent a messenger to the door who said to Naaman: "Go and wash in the River Jordan seven times and your flesh shall come again to you and you shall be clean."

This made Naaman very angry and he went away, saying: "I thought the prophet himself would come out to me and call on the name of the Lord and strike his hand over my body and recover me of my leprosy. Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel, and may I not

wash in them and be clean?" And Naaman turned and went away in his rage.

His servants came to him and said to him: "If the prophet had told you to do some great thing would you not have done it? how much rather, then, when he said to you, Wash and be clean."

Naaman thought this was good advice and as soon as he recovered himself of his rage he went down and dipped himself seven times in the River Jordan and behold, his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

Naaman was so rejoiced of being cured of his leprosy that he and all his company went again to Elisha's house and stood before the man of God and said: "Now, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel, therefore I pray you, take a present from me." And Naaman offered Elisha the presents he had brought from Syria.

Elisha refused to take the presents. Naaman then said to him: "I shall take with me two mules' burden of earth away from this land and shall henceforth offer neither burnt offering or sacrifice unto any other god but unto the Lord alone." Naaman then departed on his way.

Now Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, heard what Naaman had said and saw the presents he had offered to his master. He said to himself : "My master has spared Naaman this Syrian and has not received at his hands the presents which he has brought, but I will run after him and take somewhat of him." So Gehazi ran after Naaman.

When Naaman saw him coming he stepped from his chariot and went to meet Gehazi and asked him: "Is all well?"

Gehazi answered : "All is well, my lord Naaman, but my master has sent me to say that just now there had come two young men of the sons of the prophets from Mount Ephraim and he would that you should give them a talent of silver and two changes of raiment."

Of course, Naaman was overjoyed to do this and gladly offered Gehazi not only one talent of silver but made him take two talents in two bags and two changes of garments. He laid them upon two of his servants and they went back with them to the house of Gehazi.

When they arrived Gehazi took the load from the hands of the servants and stored the talents and the raiment away in his house and let the men go. He then went to Elisha and stood before his master.

"From whence do you come, Gehazi?" said Elisha unto him. Gehazi looked down and told his master he had been nowhere. Elisha was a man of God and knew all the doings of his servants. He knew Gehazi was telling him a falsehood, therefore, he turned to him and said in his wrath: "I knew what you did when Naaman turned in his chariot to meet you. This was no time to receive money and garments and you have deceived me, therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall take hold of you." Elisha stretched forth his hand towards his guilty servant and at once the flesh of Gehazi became white with leprosy and he went forth from the presence of his master.

CHAPTER LXXII

THE FLIGHT OF THE SYRIANS

The king of Syria again made war against the people of Israel. His hosts moved down into the land of Israel, and the king told his servants: "In such and such a place I shall make my camp."

Elisha, the man of God, knew what the king of Syria was doing and sent word to the king of Israel, telling him where the king of Syria had placed his camp and warning him not to pass that place.

No matter where the king of Syria moved his army, always the king of Israel knew of it through Elisha, and this greatly astonished the king of Syria.

The king of Syria called his men around him and said to them: "Which one of you is working for the king of Israel and tells him where my men are placed so that he knows my movements before-hand?" But none of them knew who was giving information to the king of Israel. At last one of them said: "There is a prophet in Israel, named Elisha, who can tell the king of Israel even the words that you speak in your room. It may be he that has told these things to the king of Israel."

"Go, spy where he is, that I may send and get him," were the orders of the king of Syria. Then it was told him that Elisha was in Dothan. To Dothan the king of Syria sent horses and chariots and a great host of men who came by night and surrounded the city that they might take Elisha.

When the servant of Elisha rose early in the morning and went from his house he saw a great host of horses and chariots about the city. He came back to his master and said to him: "Alas, alas! what shall we do?"

"Fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that are with them," answered the man of God. Elisha prayed to the Lord and asked Him to open the eyes of the servant that he might see the things that the man of God saw. The Lord opened the eyes of the young man who was the servant of Elisha and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire all around about, and the chariots came down from the mountain and near to Elisha.

Then Elisha prayed again to the Lord and said: "Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness." And at once all the hosts of the king of Syria were blind, even as Elisha had prayed.

Then Elisha went where they were and said to the hosts of the king of Syria: "This is not the way and neither is this the

city that you seek. Follow me and I will lead you to the man whom you wish to find."

Elisha then led them to Samaria and, though blind, they followed him as he went before them. At last they came to Samaria, and Elisha said to the Lord: "Open the eyes of these men that they may see." Then their eyes were opened and they saw that they were in the midst of Samaria and at the mercy of the people of Israel.

The king of Israel said to Elisha: "Shall I smite them?" But Elisha told the king that he should not smite them but that he should set bread and water before them that they might eat and drink and go back to their master.

Now there was a great famine in the land of Israel. It was a time when Ben Hadad, king of Syria, was besieging Samaria. The people of that town were so hard pressed for food that they ate anything they could find. When the king of Israel saw how distressed the people were he became angry with Elisha and laid the blame on him. He declared that he would have the head of Elisha that very day and forthwith went to the house of Elisha.

Elisha sat in his house and the elders sat with him. The king sent a man on before him but before this man could arrive, Elisha said to those around him: "This son of a murderer has been sent to take away my head. When this messenger comes, shut the door and hold him fast at the door, because his master is close behind him."

When the king's messenger and the king himself had both arrived at the door of Elisha and found it shut they sat without but Elisha spoke to them and said: "Tomorrow, about this time, a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley shall be sold for a shekel in the gate of Samaria. Tomorrow no famine shall be in the city."

Then a messenger who was with the king spoke up and said: "The Lord would have to make windows in heaven that this thing might be." When Elisha heard him say this he told

the messenger that he would see it with his eyes but he should not eat thereof. After this the king and his messenger departed from the house of Elisha.

There were four lepers sitting at the foot of the gate of Samaria and they said one to another: "Why sit we here idle, until we die? If we enter the city the famine is there and we shall certainly die; if we sit here we shall die also. Let us go to the hosts of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we shall live; if they kill us we shall but die."

The lepers rose up in the twilight and went to the camp of the Syrians. When they came to the outposts of the camp, there was no one there, for the Lord had made the hosts of the Syrians hear a noise of chariots and a noise of horses and a noise of a great host of people. The Syrians had said one to another: "The king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt." Therefore, they had fled in the twilight and had left their tents and their horses and even the camp as it was and had fled for their lives. This is the reason that the lepers found the camp deserted.

The lepers went into a tent and ate and drank and took away silver and gold and raiment and hid them. They went into another tent and ate and drank and carried away more silver and gold and raiment and hid them.

The lepers went back to the gates of the city and told the people that they came to the camp of the Syrians and there was no man there and only horses and food and raiment and the tents: Then the people told those who were in the king's house.

The king arose in the night and said to his servants: "The Syrians know we are hungry and they have gone out of their camp to hide themselves in the field, thinking that when we go out of the city they shall catch us alive." But his servants persuaded him to send to the camp of the Syrians and see what had happened.

When the king's men came to the camp they found it deserted, even as the lepers had said. They followed the way the Syrians had fled and found the way full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. Then the messenger returned and told the king.

The people of Samaria went out to the camp of the Syrians and spoiled the camp of all that they held. There was plenty of barley, silver, gold and raiment so that the words of Elisha came true and a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley were sold for a shekel.

The king appointed the messenger who had gone with him to the house of Elisha to have charge of the gate of the city. As the man stood before the gate, the people went out and came back from the tents of the Syrians in such a great multitude that they trod the messenger under foot and he died, for Elisha had said that he should see plenty of food in the city but should not eat thereof.

CHAPTER LXXIII

JEHU IS ANOINTED KING

Elisha called one of the children of the prophets and gave him a box of oil and told him to go to Ramoth-Gilead and when he had reached there, he was to find Jehu, the son of Jehosaphat. He told him he would find Jehu sitting among his brethren but he was to make him rise and follow the messenger into an inner chamber and there the messenger was to take the box of oil and pour it on Jehu's head and say to him: "The Lord has anointed you king over Israel." Then the messenger was to open the door and flee.

The young man did as the prophet told him. When he came to the place where Jehu was, he found him sitting and said to him: "I have a message for you, captain." Jehu was a captain of the host and he turned to the messenger and said: "Is

your message for me or for some of these others?" The messenger told him that the message was for him and Jehu arose and followed him into the inner chamber.

Then the young man poured the oil on the head of Jehu, and said to him: "The Lord God anoints you king over Israel. You shall smite the house of Ahab that the Lord may be avenged of the blood of his servants, the prophets. The dogs shall eat Jezebel, his wife, and there shall be none to bury her." When the young man had said this he opened the door and fled.

Jehu came out and told his companions what the young man had said to him and that he had poured oil upon his head and anointed him king of Israel. Then the companions of Jehu blew their trumpets and cried aloud: "Jehu is king!"

Now King Joram was in Jezreel, where he lay sick of the wounds which the Syrians had given him when he fought against Hazael, king of Syria. Jehu told his companions not to let anyone leave the city or tell King Joram that he had been anointed king.

Then Jehu mounted his chariot and rode towards Jezreel where King Joram was. Ahaziah, king of Judah, was also at Jezreel to see Joram. A watchman stood on a tower in Jezreel and saw the company of Jehu coming. He said to Joram: "I see a company." Joram said: "Take a horseman and send to meet the company and let him ask them, Is it peace?"

One horseman was sent out to meet Jehu and said to him: "King Joram wishes to know if you come in peace?" But Jehu told the horseman to get behind him.

Then a second horseman was sent out and came to Jehu and said: "King Joram asks, do you come in peace?" Again Jehu told the horseman to get behind him.

The watchman on the tower told Joram that the horsemen did not return and that the company was driving furiously and it seemed as if the leader was Jehu.

Joram arose from his bed of sickness and mounted his chariot. Ahaziah also mounted his chariot and went out to meet Jehu and his company. When they came near to the place where Jehu was, King Joram cried out: "Jehu, do you come in peace?" But Jehu answered him that he had come to avenge the blood of the prophets in the name of the Lord and that it was death to the house of Jezebel. When Joram heard these words he turned to flee. As he fled Jehu pursued him and drew his bow with all his strength and shot an arrow that smote the king in the back so that he sank down dead in his chariot. Then Jehu told his captain to take up the body of Joram and cast it in the field of Naboth.

Ahaziah, the king of Judah, had also fled before the hosts of Joram. Jehu followed him and smote him also in his chariot. But the servants of Ahaziah brought his body to Jerusalem, where they buried him in the sepulchre of the kings.

When Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it and painted her face and put on her ornaments and looked out of the window. When Jehu reached the gate Jezebel called to him and he lifted up his eyes to the window and said: "Who is on my side?" Then there looked out of the window two or three officers. Jehu called out to the officers: "Throw her down." The officers took the queen and threw her down out of the window and against the wall of the city. Some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and as she fell the horses of Jehu trod her under foot.

"Go find this cursed woman, for she is a king's daughter, and bury her," commanded Jehu, of his company after they had entered the city. When they went back to find her they found no more than a skull and her feet and the palms of her hands, because the dogs had fallen upon her and devoured her. And thus also was fulfilled the prophecy of Elisha.

CHAPTER LXXIV

THE STORY OF JOASH

When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, heard that he had been killed by Jehu and his men, she took the children of Ahaziah, which were her own grandchildren, and had them all put to death, in order to make herself queen. Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, and the aunt of the children, took one of the sons, a little baby named Joash, and hid him away so that he was not slain.

He was hid in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem for six years, and Jehoida, the high priest, took care of him and watched over him. Athaliah knew nothing of this, but made herself queen and ruled over the land.

When Joash was seven years old, Jehoida sent for the Levites and the rulers and the captains and brought them into the temple and showed them Joash, and told them how he had taken care of the king's son. He made them take an oath that they would make Joash king. They were glad to get rid of Athaliah and to make the son of Ahaziah king so they agreed to do as Jehoida had told them.

And there were in the temple spears and shields and bucklers that belonged to King David. Jehoida gave them to the men and told them to stand on the right side of the temple and around the young child, so that no one could hurt him. Then they brought Joash out of the room where he had been kept and Jehoida and his sons anointed him king. Then everybody shouted: "God save the king!"

When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and the shouts of the people, she came to the temple. When she looked in she saw the young king standing by a pillar with a crown on his head and the princes and the trumpeters and the guards around him. The people were singing and shouting and

rejoicing and crying: "God save the king," so that Athaliah knew that the end of her reign had come. She was very angry and tore her clothes and cried out: "Treason! Treason!"

Jehoida commanded the captains and the officers to drive her away, and make her leave the temple. "All those that follow after her you shall kill with the sword," were his orders. "Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord."

So they drove her out of the temple and nobody followed her, except the captains and the officers. She went quickly toward the palace and was going through the gate which the horses used, when the men overtook her and slew her, for she had been a wicked queen and had not served the Lord.

Then the people went into the temples of Baal, the heathen god, whom Athaliah had set up and worshiped, and broke down the idols and images and the altars and slew the priests of the heathen god. Then the rulers and the captains brought Joash out of the house of the Lord, and into the king's house, and he sat on the throne. The people rejoiced and shouted aloud, and then the city was quiet, for the wicked queen was slain. The idols of Baal were overthrown, and the young Joash, who had been reared in the house of the Lord, was king.

Joash reigned in Jerusalem forty years, and did what was right in the sight of the Lord, as Jehoida, the priest, had taught him. Seeing that the temple had fallen into decay and had been broken in many places, while Athaliah was queen, Joash said to the priests: "Collect money from all the people, and repair the broken places in the temple." But a long time passed and not enough money had been collected and the broken places in the temple were not repaired.

Joash ordered the priests to collect no more money from the people, but instead, he took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one came into the temple. Then he made a proclamation

throughout Judah and Jerusalem, that every man should bring a piece of money and put it into the chest.

The people were glad to do this, and as they crowded into the temple they dropped their coins into the chest until it was full. When the Levite saw that it was full they carried it off and emptied it and brought it back to be filled up again. This they did day by day until there was money in abundance to repair the temple.

Then the king and Jehoida gave the money to those in charge of the repairs of the temple, and they hired masons and carpenters, and workers in brass and iron to do all the work that was needed. The workmen labored steadily until at last the temple was repaired in every part, and was as before it had been broken by the wicked Athaliah, when she was queen.

When the temple was finished it was found that all the money had not been used. So they brought the rest of it to the king and Jehoida, who used it to make vessels of gold and silver, and spears for the service of the temple, to take the places of those that had been taken away by Athaliah.

So the temple was repaired and all the people came again to offer burnt offerings upon the altars. This they continued to do so long as Jehoida, the good priest, lived.

Jehoida was now a hundred and thirty years old, and he died. He was buried in Jerusalem, in the sepulchre of the kings, for he had done good all the days of his life, and had taught the people to worship God.

Sometime after Jehoida was dead, the princes of Judah, whose hearts were wicked, came to Joash and asked him to let them worship in their own groves and bow down to their own idols. Joash consented for them to do as they asked, and they went their way and began to worship idols as before. This was wrong of Joash and brought him and his people into great trouble.

Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, himself a priest, stood before the people and said: "You cannot prosper if you do not follow the commandments of the Lord. If you forsake God He will forsake you."

But Joash, the king, paid no attention to the words of the priest, and said to the people: "Stone him with stones until he is dead." Then the foolish people seized great rocks and stoned the priest to death for warning them of their sins.

At the end of the year, the hosts of Syria came up against Joash, and made war on Judah and Jerusalem. They entered the city and slew the wicked princes. They took all their silver and gold and whatever else they wanted and sent it to their own king at Damascus.

The strange part of it was that the army of the Syrians was very small, but a great host of the people of Judah was captured, for the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies on account of their wickedness.

After the Syrians had left with their spoils, a great sickness fell upon Joash, and he lay upon his bed in pain. His own servants saw their master ill and helpless and conspired to kill him. So they fell upon him in his bed and slew him. The people came and took his body and buried it in Jerusalem, but not in the sepulchre of the kings.

CHAPTER LXXV

THE LAST DAYS OF ELISHA

There was a king of Israel named Jehoash. He heard that the old prophet Elisha was ill and about to die, and went down to his home to see him.

When he came to the room of the prophet, he bent over him and said: "Oh, my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

By this he meant that Elisha was not only a prophet of the Lord but was also a means of defence against the enemies of Israel.

"Take your bow and your arrows," ordered the prophet of the king. And the king took his bow and arrows.

"Put your hand upon the bow," and the king did that also.

"Now open the window," and the king opened the window.

The old prophet looked out of the window, and again said to Jehoash, "Shoot," and the king shot his arrow out of the window.

"The arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria," said Elisha, "for you shall smite the Syrians and consume them." Elisha then turned to King Jehoash and told him to take his arrows and strike upon the ground with them. Jehoash took the arrows and struck upon the ground three times and then stopped. The man of God was angry with the king for stopping and said to him:

"You should have struck the ground five or six times, then you would have smitten Syria until you had consumed it, whereas now you shall conquer them but three times."

Then Elisha died and they buried him. Not long afterwards the Moabites invaded the land, and a band of them came near the sepulchre of Elisha. The people were burying a man but when they saw the band of the Moabites coming, in their haste they cast the dead man into the sepulchre of Elisha. As soon as he touched the body of the prophet, behold, he was made alive again and stood upon his feet.

After the death of Elisha, Jehoash fought against the Syrians and took from them the cities which they had captured from the people of Judah. Three times did Jehoash defeat the Syrians, but was not able to completely subdue them, even as

Elisha had foretold before his death. Then Jehoash died and his son, Jeroboam, became king of Israel.

Many years passed, during which the kingdom of Israel had rulers, most of whom were wicked kings that did not serve the Lord. The people also followed the heathen nations that were around them, and worshiped false gods. The Lord sent prophets to warn them, and at times punished them for wicked deeds, and sometimes the people would return to the worship of the Lord, but not for long.

At last the Assyrians came up and besieged Samaria, the capital city of Israel, and after three years took it, and made captive all the people of Israel and carried many of them away to Assyria. The king of Assyria sent people from his own country to dwell in the cities of Israel, and to work the fields and vineyards. The ten tribes that had revolted and set up their kingdom were scattered abroad and we do not read that they ever returned to their own land.

CHAPTER LXXVI

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

About the time that the ten tribes of Israel were made captive by the king of Syria, there came against Jerusalem a king of Assyria, named Sennacherib. The king of Judah, at the time, was Hezekiah. When he saw the hosts of Sennacherib encamped against Jerusalem, he called together his priests and his mighty men.

The first thing they did was to fill up the cisterns and the wells which were outside the city so as to cut off the water supply from the Assyrians as much as possible.

Then Hezekiah built up the walls of the city, raised towers and repaired the breaches and made darts and shields in abundance for his soldiers. Then he appointed captains over the soldiers, and called them together and spoke to them.

He said to his soldiers: "Be strong and courageous; be not afraid nor dismayed on account of the multitude that is with the king of Assyria. There is more with us than there is with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord, our God, who will help us fight our battles."

Now Hezekiah was afraid of the king of Assyria, in spite of his boasting, so he put him off by sending him a great deal of gold and silver and begging him not to fight any more against Judah. Sennacherib took the presents from Hezekiah and went up to his own country, but it was not long before he came again to besiege Jerusalem.

Again did Hezekiah call the people together, and exhort them to be brave and courageous, for the Lord would defend them. Sennacherib sent his servants to Jerusalem to tell the people that he was coming against them with a great army and would destroy them.

His servants said to the people: "Why do you trust in Hezekiah and give yourselves over to die by famine and thirst? The hosts of Sennacherib will encompass the city and their gods will overcome your God. Let not Hezekiah deceive you; your God cannot keep you out of the hands of Sennacherib."

The servants of Sennacherib stood close to the wall of Jerusalem on the outside and spoke to the people on the walls in their own tongue and tried to frighten them and make them give up the city to Sennacherib. The servants spoke against God and tried to persuade the people to surrender their city without a struggle.

The people on the wall made no reply to the servants of Sennacherib but held their peace, for Hezekiah had told them to answer not a word.

Then the servants of Sennacherib called out again: "If you will pay our king tribute of gold and silver then he will spare you and your city and every man shall have his own vine and fig tree and drink the waters of his own cistern." But still the people answered not a word.

When King Hezekiah heard the threats of the king of Assyria, and what his messengers had said to the men on the walls, he went into the house of the Lord to pray. He sent priests and elders to Isaiah, the prophet, and asked him what he should do. Isaiah, the prophet, told the priests to say to Hezekiah: "Be not afraid of the words which you have heard and the threats of the servants of the king of Assyria. The Lord will send a blast upon him and his army shall be destroyed and he shall return to his own land and there he shall fall by the sword." The priests returned to Hezekiah and told him what Isaiah had said and he was much comforted.

He sent word to the servants of Sennacherib out-side the walls, that he would not surrender his city and that the Lord would help him to defend it and this defiance the messenger took back to the king of Assyria.

Sennacherib then wrote a letter to Hezekiah. In that letter he said: "You have heard what the king of Assyria has done to other lands by utterly destroying them, and do you hope for deliverance? The kings of Assyria have overcome the kings of all other nations and surely they will overcome the king of Judah."

When Hezekiah received this letter, he went up into the house of the Lord and spread it on the floor and knelt down in front of it and began to pray: "O, Lord, Thou hast heard the words of Sennacherib and his defiance to the living God. It is true that the kings of Assyria have destroyed the kings of other nations and have cast their gods into the fire, but they were not, gods, because they were the work of men's hands and were made of wood and stone, therefore, they have destroyed them. But Thou art the living God and can save us out of the hands of these Assyrians, that all the gods of the earth many know that Thou art the Lord God, and Thou only."

Isaiah, the prophet, knew of the prayer of Hezekiah, and sent him word that the Lord had heard his prayer against Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and would deliver him and Judah from the hands of his enemies. Hezekiah went forth

from the temple and told the people not to be afraid, for the Lord would rid them of the Assyrians and defend them from their enemies.

That night the people of Judah went to sleep inside the walls of their city and the great hosts of the Assyrians slept in their camp outside. As the Assyrians slept the angel of the Lord passed over the camp and smote the Assyrians with death, one hundred and eighty-five thousand of them, and in the morning, when the people of Jerusalem went out to see what had become of their enemies, they were all dead.

Sennacherib, however, was spared by the destroying angel and went quickly back to Nineveh. Shortly afterwards, when he was worshiping in the temple of his god his sons took him and slew him with their swords. Thus came to grief the great army of the Assyrians and Sennacherib, their proud leader.

CHAPTER LXXVII

JUDAH LED INTO CAPTIVITY

There was a king of Judah, in Jerusalem, named Jehoiakim. He was a wicked king and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came up to make war against him. Jehoiakim was not able to fight against the hosts of Babylon, so he promised to serve Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar then carried off the vessels out of the house of the Lord and put them in the temple of the heathen god in Babylon.

After Jehoiakim had been king for four years and had been very wicked, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, and said to him: "Take a roll of a book and write down all I shall tell you that will happen to Judah, on account of the sins of the people."

Jeremiah sent for Baruch, a scribe, and Baruch wrote on a roll the words of Jeremiah, as he spoke them, even the words that the Lord had put into the mouth of Jeremiah. When the roll was finished, Jeremiah said to the scribe: "Go, read the roll which you have written from the words of my mouth, to all the people in the Lord's house upon the day of their fasting." Then the scribe took

roll and went up to the temple where the people were gathered, and read to them the words of the prophet.

The princes heard of the roll which Baruch had read to the people and sent for him to come and read it to them as they sat in the king's palace. Baruch took the roll and went to the king's palace; and began to read it to the princes.

"We will surely tell the king all these words," said the princes to Baruch, for they were afraid of the punishments which Jeremiah had foretold. "Tell us how you wrote these words?"

"Jeremiah spoke all these words with his mouth and I wrote them with ink in a book," answered the scribe. Then the princes told Baruch to hide Jeremiah and himself, for the king would be very angry when he heard the words which the prophet had spoken.

The princes told Jehoiakim about the book, and he sent one of his servants to bring it to him. Then the servant began to read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. It was winter and there was a fire burning on the hearth before the king. When the servant had read three or four leaves of the book, the king took his penknife and cut them from the book and threw them into the fire. He did this to each leaf until the entire book had been consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.

Three of the princes begged the king not to destroy the book as it was read to him and them, but he paid no heed to their requests. The king and the princes were not afraid when they heard the prophecy of the punishment which was to come

upon Judah, and by no means repented of their sins. On the other hand the king was angry with Jeremiah for speaking the words and with Baruch for writing the book, and sent his officers to get them. But the Lord hid the prophet and the scribe so that the soldiers could not find them.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: "Take another roll and write down all that you wrote in the book which the king has destroyed in the fire." And Jeremiah took another roll and gave it to Baruch and the scribe wrote all the words of the prophet which he had written before and many more words besides.

In that book the prophet said that the king of Babylon should certainly come and destroy the land, and that the Lord would punish the people for their sins. But Jehoiakim paid no attention to the words of the prophet and the people of Judah continued in their iniquity. Then Jehoiakim died and his son, Jehoiachin, became king in his place.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came up again with his hosts and besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiachin was not able to fight so strong an army and surrendered to the king of Babylon, even as his father had done. Nebuchadnezzar spoiled the temple of the Lord and carried all the treasures of the temple and of the king's palace to Babylon. He cut in pieces all the vessels of gold that Solomon had made and carried away all the princes and mighty men of valor, and all the craftsmen and smiths, so that none remained in Jerusalem except the poorest sort of people.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Nebuchadnezzar carried Jehoiachin and his mother and his wives and all the rulers of the land of Babylon, and made captives of them. He took all the strong and brave men and all the workers of all sorts, so that there was none left in Jerusalem that could make war. Then he made Zedekiah, the brother of Jehoiachin, to be king over what was left in Judah.

Jeremiah, the prophet, wrote a letter to the captives in Babylon, telling them to be content with their lot, and to plant vineyards and raise crops, for they were to be captives seventy years. After that the Lord would deliver them from the hands of their enemies, because they would repent of their sins, and then they would come back to their old land and Jerusalem would be restored to them.

Zedekiah was no better than the other kings of Judah before him, for he did evil in the sight of the Lord and at last, after nine years of service, he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Of course, the king of Babylon came with another great army of Chaldeans and surrounded Jerusalem. He built forts around the city and cut off all the supplies of food so that there was nothing for the people to eat and there was a great famine.

Now, Jeremiah was also in Jerusalem, even as the rest of the people. Zedekiah sent word to him: "Pray now unto the Lord for us, that he may drive our enemies away." But Jeremiah replied to the messengers: "Tell the king that the Chaldeans shall fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire." When the princes heard this answer of the prophet they smote him and put him in prison, and accused him of conspiring with the Chaldeans who were besieging the city.

The king sent secretly for Jeremiah and took him out of the prison and had him brought to the palace. "Is there any word from the Lord?" he asked of the prophet. "Yes, there is; the Lord says you shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon," replied Jeremiah.

The prophet furthermore told the princes and the people that those who surrendered to the Chaldeans should be saved alive, but those who stayed in the city should die by the sword, by famine and by pestilence. All this so angered the princes that they cast the prophet into a dungeon, and let him down with cords. There was mire at the bottom of the dungeon, so that the poor old prophet sank down into the mire. One of the officers told Zedekiah what had been done by the princes and that Jeremiah was likely to die if he were allowed to remain in the mud at the bottom of the dungeon.

"Take thirty men and draw Jeremiah out of the dungeon before he die," were the king's orders. So the men took some pieces of old cloth and some rags and made a kind of rope of them, and let it down into the dungeon. Then they called out: "Put these old cloths and old rags under your armholes and we will pull you out of the dungeon." So Jeremiah did as the men told him and they drew him out of the dungeon. They did not let him go free, but they kept him in another part of the prison.

The Chaldeans still besieged Jerusalem. Eighteen months passed and all the food was gone and the people had nothing to eat. When Zedekiah saw that it was useless to fight any longer, he fled by night out of the city, with all his soldiers. But the Chaldeans pursued him and overtook him and his men, and brought the king before Nebuchadnezzar for judgment.

The king of Babylon thereupon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and all the nobles of Judah that were with him. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with chains and sent him captive to Babylon. There he was kept in prison until the day of his death.

Then Nebuchadnezzar and the army of the Chaldeans broke down the walls of Jerusalem and burnt the temple, and the palace of the king, and destroyed the city itself. The treasures of the temple, the pillars of brass which Solomon had made, and the sea of brass that stood on the backs of the twelve oxen in the court of the temple, and all the gold and silver vessels of the temple were carried away.

Many of the people were slain, but those who were not, were carried away captives to Babylon. Only the very poor were left to care for the fields and vineyards, and over these Nebuchadnezzar appointed a governor. The kingdom of Judah had lasted nearly four hundred years.

There had been twenty rulers in all, fifteen of whom did wickedly in the sight of the Lord, and five of whom served Him. The people had worshiped idols and disobeyed the word of God and rejected His prophets, and at last the punishment for their sins had come upon them. They were now captives in the city of Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans where they were to serve for seventy years.

As for the prophet, Jeremiah, he was released from his prison and was allowed to remain in the land of Judah among the poor people who had not been carried away.

CHAPTER LXXIX

DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM

When Nebuchadnezzar was in Jerusalem, he ordered one of his chief men to choose from among the princes of Judah certain young men who were to be trained as servants in the king's palace. They were to be children in whom there was no blemish, and well favored, and skilful in wisdom, and cunning in knowledge. He wanted only the most beautiful and brightest young men in all the land.

The officer selected them as the king had directed,, and fed them of the king's food and taught them the things they should know, and did this for three years, so that they might be ready to serve the king.

Among these were four young men, Daniel, Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego. They also were brought to Babylon, and had teachers appointed for their instruction. Each day the king sent them meat and wine from his own store, so that they 'night be well fed and favored by the time they were ready to serve the king.

Now, the meat and drink that came from the king's table was a portion of that which had been offered to the heathen idols, and, besides that, some of the meat was of the kind that the Jews were ordered not to eat. It was unclean meat and was forbidden. The other young men may not have minded this, but to Daniel and his three friends it was an offence, and to eat it meant defilement.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat and wine. He said to the officer who had charge of him: "I pray you not to make me and these others eat of the meat and drink of the wine from the king's table, for in so doing we defile ourselves."

The officer had grown to love Daniel and his friends, but did not wish to displease the king. He said to Daniel: "I am afraid of the king, for if he should see your faces and find you thin and pale and worse looking than the others, then he would order my head to be cut off." And the officer was perplexed as to what he should do, and turned them over to the steward.

"Give us a trial of ten days, and let us have nothing but pulse to eat and water to drink," said Daniel to the steward. "Then let our faces be compared with the faces of those who eat of the king's meat. If, then, we are not to your liking, deal with us as you will."

The steward consented, and for ten days, Daniel and his three friends were fed on pulse, which was a kind of

vegetable, and drank only water. At the end of ten days their faces were fairer and fatter than those who had eaten of the king's meat. Then the steward took away the portion of their meat and wine, and gave them only pulse and water.

During the time of their instruction, the Lord made Daniel to understand dreams and visions, and the meaning of them. At the end of three years, Daniel, Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego, were brought before the king and the king talked with them. Among all whom the king talked with, there were no others like them. In all matters of wisdom] and understanding, and in all the things that the king asked of them, he found them better than the magicians and wise men of his kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream that troubled him so much that he could not sleep. He called all the magicians and sorcerers, and wise men, and said to them: "I have dreamed a dream and my spirit is troubled to know the meaning of it."

"Tell us what you have dreamed, O, king, and we will interpret the meaning for you," said the { men as they stood before the king.

But the king answered: "The thing has gone from me, and I have forgot. You must make known to me what I dreamed and what was the meaning of it, or you shall be cut in pieces and your houses destroyed."

The wise men were dismayed, and cried out: "There is no man on earth that can do that. The king requires too much, that we should know both his dream and the interpretation of it. Only the gods can do that."

The king was angry and furious and sent out a decree that all the wise men should be put to death. This decree included Daniel and his fellows, for they were also among the wise men of Babylon. When Daniel heard of it he said to the king's guard:

"Why is the decree so hasty from the king, and why should the wise men be put to death?" And the captain of the guard told him what had happened.

Daniel went to the king and begged him time and he would tell the king his dream and his interpretation of it. Then he went back to his home and told the others. Together they prayed that the secret might be revealed and the wise men spared. That night Daniel slept and in a vision God told him all that he needed to know to answer the king.

In the morning Daniel went to the captain of the king's soldiers and said to him: "Destroy not the wise men of Babylon, bring me before the king and I will show him the meaning of his dream." Then the captain hastened to the king and told him what Daniel had said and the king ordered Daniel to come before him.

"Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have forgotten, and to tell me the meaning of it?" said Nebuchadnezzar, to the young man.

"There is a God in heaven which reveals all secrets and who has spoken to the king in his dream of things that are going to happen. He has told me the dream and the meaning thereof," boldly replied Daniel, as he bowed to the king.

"Then tell me the dream," demanded Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel spoke to the king: "O, king, you saw a great image. It was very bright and its form was terrible. Its head was of fine gold, its breasts and arms were of silver, and its body and thighs were of brass. Its legs were of iron, and its feet were part iron and part clay.

"Then there came a stone out of the mountains which struck the image upon its feet, which were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then the iron and clay, the brass, silver and gold, we all broken in pieces together, and the wind blew them away so that there was nothing left. And the stone

that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the earth."

"That was my dream," said the king; what is the meaning?"

Daniel spoke again to the king: "You, O king, are a great king, with power and strength and glory. Wherever men dwell you have dominion over them. You are the head of gold. After you shall arise other kingdoms; the silver, the brass, the iron and the clay, mean these other kingdoms. There shall arise one kingdom greater than all, that shall subdue all kingdoms and shall cover the earth. The stone which came out of the mountain means this kingdom."

And Daniel bowed before the king after he had told him his dream and the meaning of it. The king made Daniel a great man and gave him many gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon. He also gave Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, high places in his kingdom, because Daniel had revealed to him the secret of his dream and the meaning thereof.

CHAPTER LXXX

THE FIERY FURNACE

Nebuchadnezzar, the king, made an image of gold and set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. He then gathered together the princes and governors, the captains and all the rulers of the province to come to the dedication of the image which he had set up.

When they had come together a herald cried out aloud: "It is commanded that when you hear the sound of music you shall fall down and worship the golden image that the king has set up. "Whoever does not fall down and worship the image shall be cast into a fiery furnace."

When the people heard this order and heard the music, they at once fell down and worshiped the image according to the words of Nebuchadnezzar. There were those who came to Nebuchadnezzar and said to him: "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have not regarded your orders and they did not bow down and worship the golden image which you have set up."

Nebuchadnezzar was in a rage and fury when he heard this and commanded the three young Jews to be brought before him. When they came, he asked them: "Is it true that you do not serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? If it is true and if you worship not the image you shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace and then we will see whether your God shall deliver you out of my hands."

The three young men were not alarmed at this threat of the king and replied to him: "We shall not bow down to the image which you have set up and if you cast us into the burning fiery furnace our God is able to deliver us."

Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury at this defiance of the young Jews and gave orders to his officers that they should heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was ordinarily heated. He then commanded his men to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

So the three young Jews were bound in their coats, their stockings and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace that was so exceedingly hot that the flame of fire killed the men that cast Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar stood where he could see the three men cast into the furnace. To his surprise, instead of three, he saw four men in the furnace. He rose up in haste and said to his counsellors: "Did we not cast three men into the midst of the fire?" and the counsellors told him that only three men had been bound.

"I saw four men loose and walking in the midst of the fire and they received no harm. I saw the three young Jews but the fourth is like the Son of God," said Nebuchadnezzar to those around him. The king then came as near to the mouth of the burning, fiery furnace as he could and called out: "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, you are servants of the most high God, come out of the furnace for I see that the fire does you no harm." Then the three young men came out of the midst of the fire.

The princes, governors and captains gathered around the young men in great astonishment and saw that the fire had had no power over their bodies nor was a hair of their heads singed nor were their coats changed nor was the smell of fire upon them anywhere.

The king approached the young men and said: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants out of the fire that they might not worship any gods except their own God."

Nebuchadnezzar then made a decree that any one who spoke anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach or Abednego, should be cut in pieces and their houses should be destroyed. Then he promoted them into the province of Babylon and did them great honor.

CHAPTER LXXXI

THE MADNESS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Babylon, the city, in which Nebuchadnezzar lived was a wonderful city. It was surrounded by walls which were sixty miles long, in which were beautiful gates made of brass and on which were many high towers. The palace of Nebuchadnezzar was a magnificent house filled with gold and silver ornaments which he had captured in his wars.

He was a great king, surrounded by princes and rulers who flattered him and made him think that he was greater than he really was. At first Nebuchadnezzar was a good man and worshiped God, but after a while he became very proud of his greatness and thought only of his riches and power. God sent a strange punishment upon him and this is the way it happened:

Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in his house, surrounded by all his wealth and vain of his power. He lay down to sleep and a dream came to him. He saw a tree in the midst of the earth, the height of which was very great. The tree grew and was strong and reached unto heaven and the branches spread out to all the ends of the earth. The leaves were fair and beautiful and the tree was full of fruit which was good to eat. The beasts of the field lay down under the tree to rest and the birds of the air made their nests in the boughs of the tree.

Then the king also saw in his dream an angel come down from heaven and cry with a loud voice: "Hew down the tree and cut off the branches and shake off the leaves and scatter the fruit. Let the beasts get away from under it and drive the birds from the branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of the tree in the ground where it shall be wet with the dew from heaven."

When the king awoke from this dream he sent for the magicians and wise men and told them of it, but they could not explain the meaning of the dream to the king. He then sent for Daniel and said to him: "Daniel, all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to explain to me the dream which I have had, but you are able to do so for the spirit of God is in you." He then told Daniel about his dream.

Daniel was troubled for about an hour and was afraid to tell the king the meaning of his dream, but Nebuchadnezzar told him not to let the dream nor the interpretation trouble him, but to speak out what was in his mind.

Daniel then interpreted the dream of the king: "O, king, the tree which you saw which grew and was strong and whose

height reached to heaven and whose branches reached to the ends of the earth and whose leaves were fair and whose fruit was, abundant, under which the beasts of the field lay down to rest and in whose branches the birds of the air did roost, that tree, O, king, is you, yourself. You have grown and become strong, your greatness reaches to heaven and your dominion is to the ends of the earth." Daniel, furthermore, said to the king: "The voice of the angel which you heard means that you shall be driven from the sight of men and from your dwelling and you shall live with the beasts of the field and shall eat grass as an ox. This you shall do for seven years until you shall know that God is the ruler of men and greater than you."

It came to pass just as Daniel had said. At the end of the twelve months the king was walking in his palace. He was still vain and proud and said to those around him: "Is not Babylon a great city? I have built it up by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." His heart filled with pride when he saw the gold and the silver and the statues and the many ornaments which he had captured from his enemies. He looked at the great walls which were strong enough to resist any enemy and gazed upon the mountain which he had built and planted with flowers to please his beautiful wife.

Hardly had he spoken before a voice came from heaven, saying: "Nebuchadnezzar, your kingdom has departed from you. You shall lose your reason and dwell apart from men and be like unto the beasts of the field."

And it happened as the voice said, for that very same hour Nebuchadnezzar lost his mind and went forth from his beautiful palace and many friends and much wealth and dwelt in the fields and ate grass like an ox and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, his hair grew long like the feathers of an eagle and the nails of his fingers and toes became like the claws of birds. Everybody shunned him and spoke of him as the mad king who was no longer fit to rule.

Seven years passed, and one day Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes to heaven and suddenly his understanding

came back to him. He returned to his kingdom and put on again his raiment and lived again in his palace, surrounded by his nobles. But he was no longer the vain and proud man, but a humble king who worshiped God and kept His commandments. He said: "I praise and honor the King of Heaven who is greater than I or any other man."

CHAPTER LXXXII

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

There was a king of Babylon, named Belshazzar. He made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine with them. While he was drinking, he ordered his servants to bring the glasses and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem many years before so that he and his companions might drink out of them. His servants brought the vessels and Belshazzar and his friends drank wine out of them, at the same time praising their own gods of brass, and iron, and wood, and stone. This was a very wicked thing to do and God prepared a punishment for the king, as we shall see.

While the feast was going on there came a man's hand and wrote on the wall of the room where they sat, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote the words. He was so alarmed at seeing the hand writing words on the wall that he grew pale, and his thoughts troubled him, and his knees trembled with fear.

"Bring the wise men that they may read and explain this writing," cried Belshazzar. "Whoever reads this writing and shows me the interpretation of it, shall be clothed in scarlet and have a chain of gold about his neck and be the third ruler in the kingdom."

The wise men came in and looked at the writing, but no one of them could read it nor make known its meaning. The king was still more troubled in his mind.

The queen came into the banquet house and, when she saw how the king was troubled she said to him: "Let not your thoughts trouble you nor your face be so sad. There is a man in your kingdom, named Daniel, in whom is the spirit of the Holy God. Your father, Nebuchadnezzar, made him master of the magicians and ruler over the wise men. Let him be called and he will show you the meaning of the writing."

Daniel was brought before the king. "Are you Daniel, of the children of Judah, whom my father brought from Jerusalem?" asked Belshazzar, and Daniel told him he was.

"I have heard of you," said the king, "and how you interpret dreams and strange signs and dissolve doubts. Now, if you can read the writing and make known to me the meaning you shall be clothed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about your neck and be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel looked at the writing and at once knew the meaning of it. He answered the king: "Keep your gifts and rewards for another, but I will read the writing and tell you the meaning thereof."

Then Daniel told Belshazzar that in times past God had given to Nebuchadnezzar a great kingdom and much glory and honor; that all nations and people trembled before him and were afraid of him; that his heart was lifted up with pride and vanity, so much so, that God had driven him out into the fields for a while and made him eat grass like an ox. "But as for you," continued Daniel, "you have not humbled your heart, though you knew all these things. You have brought the vessels of the Lord's house and you and your companions have defiled them by drinking wine from them, and praising your own gods."

Then Daniel pointed to the writing on the wall and said to the king: "This is what is written: Mene, Mene, Tekel

Upharsin. Mene: God hath taken your kingdom and finished it; Tekel: You are weighed in the balance and found wanting; Upharsin: Your kingdom is divided, and is given to the Medes and Persians."

This was not at all pleasing to Belshazzar, but, according to his promise, he ordered Daniel to be clothed in scarlet, and a chain of gold to be put around his neck. He then issued a decree that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

That very night, however, Cyrus came with an army of Medes and Persians and entered the city of Babylon. He did this by changing the course of the River Euphrates, which ran under the wall of Babylon and through the city so that the bed of the river was dry ground on which his soldiers could walk.

The people were celebrating their feast and were given over to revelry. Belshazzar was slain, and Darius, the king of the Medes and Persians, took the kingdom of Babylon for his own. In this way was the prophecy of Daniel fulfilled.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

After Darius had captured the city of Babylon, he set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes. Over these princes he set three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first. This made Daniel the chief man in the kingdom of Darius, and everybody was required to pay him the greatest respect and homage.

The princes and the presidents were jealous of the power of Daniel, and envious of the respect that the people paid him. They tried to find some occasion to complain to the king, or some fault in Daniel, but they could find nothing against him for he was faithful in all things and there was no fault or error in anything he did.

The princes and presidents then said: "We shall not find any occasion against Daniel, unless we find it in the way he serves his God. In all other things there is no fault in him. We will conspire against him on account of his worship of the Lord."

They went to King Darius, and said to him: "All the presidents and princes and governors and counsellors and captains have consulted together, and they wish for the king to make a law that whosoever shall ask anything of god or man for thirty days, except from the king himself, shall be cast into the den of lions. They pray for the king to sign the writing that it be not changed according to the laws of the Medes and Persians."

Darius was persuaded to issue the decree and to sign the order, which, according to the law, could not be changed.

When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he paid no attention to it, but went into his house, and, his windows being open in his room toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks to God, just as he had been accustomed to do.

The men who had asked the king to sign the decree were watching Daniel to see what he would do. When they saw Daniel kneeling and praying to God as he had always done, they went forthwith to the king and said:

"O king, have you not signed a decree that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or any man for thirty days, except of the king himself, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

"What you say is true, and cannot be changed, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians," replied Darius, the king.

"Daniel, who is one of the Jews in captivity and is also the chief of the presidents of the kingdom, regards not the decree," said the men, "but prays and makes petitions to his God three times a day."

When the king heard that his favorite ruler had paid no attention to his decree, he was grieved and did not know what to do. He did not wish to punish his faithful servant, yet he knew he could not change his own laws. Therefore he commanded that Daniel be brought and cast into the lions' den;'

Before the order was carried out, Darius said Daniel: "Your God, whom you serve continually, will deliver you from the mouth of the lions." Then the men cast Daniel into the den of lions, and a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own seal so that his decree might not be changed.

Darius went to his house in deep trouble. He would not eat, nor would he listen to the music which was played before him. All night long he lay awake wondering what had become of Daniel, and if he were yet alive.

Early in the morning he arose and hurried to the den where the lions were kept. He had but little hope that the wild beasts had spared his servant, but he wished to be sure. As he came near the door he called out in a tearful voice: "O, Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to save you from the lions?"

What was the joy in the king's heart when he heard the quiet voice of his servant say: "O, king, live forever. My God has sent His angels to shut the mouth of the lions and they have not hurt me. God knew that I was innocent of any wrong toward Him and toward you, therefore, has He saved me from the fury of the wild beasts."

Darius was exceedingly glad to know that Daniel was safe, and at once commanded his men to break the seal and roll away the stones and take his servant out of the den. And he also commanded that the men who had conspired against Daniel, with their wives and children, should be cast into the den.

So Daniel was taken out of the den and the wicked princes and their families were thrown into the lions. The wild beasts caught them as they fell and broke all their bones to pieces before they had even touched the bottom of the den.

After that Darius made a decree that all the people should worship the God of Daniel. And as for the prophet himself, he prospered all the time that Darius was king in Babylon.

CHAPTER LXXXIV

JONAH IS SWALLOWED BY A GREAT FISH

There was a prophet named Jonah who lived in a small town in Israel. One day the word of the Lord came to him and said: "Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it for the people are wicked and I will punish them."

Now Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and was one of the greatest cities at that time. It is said that the walls that surrounded the city were sixty miles in length and one hundred feet high and so thick that three chariots could be driven side by side upon their top. There were one hundred towers, some of them two hundred feet high, and many beautiful gates for the people to go in and out. Inside the city there were beautiful palaces, gardens, and wonderful temples for the worship of the heathen gods. It was a great, splendid and wicked city.

Jonah was an humble prophet whose home was five hundred miles away from this great city of Nineveh and when the Lord told him to go and preach against this great and wicked city and to warn the people that the city would be destroyed he was troubled in his mind and dismayed at the size of his task. He said to himself: "What can I do, an insignificant prophet, against so mighty a host of heathen and so great a city as this Nineveh?" Therefore, Jonah was afraid to undertake the task which the Lord had set for him to do.

Jonah ran away from the mission which the Lord had set. Instead of going to Nineveh he went to Joppa, and there he found a ship going to Tarshish. It was a little town in Spain, about the end of the then known world. He paid his fare and went down into the ship, and soon was fast asleep because he had walked a long ways and was very tired.

Hardly had the ship set sail, when the Lord sent a great wind into the sea and there was a mighty tempest so that the ship was likely to be lost with everybody on board.

The sailors were much afraid and every man cried unto his own god to save the ship from the fury of the storm. They cast into the sea all the wares that were on the ship in order to lighten it. Still the storm raged and the shipmaster did not know what to do. He went down into the sides of the ship and saw Jonah fast asleep. "What do you mean by sleeping at such a time?" said he to the prophet. "Arise and call upon your God so that He may help us and that we may not perish."

Then every one said to his fellows: "Come, let us cast lots that we find out which one of us is the cause of this storm." So they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah.

The sailors then turned upon Jonah and asked him: "What have you done to bring this storm upon us, what is your occupation, and what is your country and who are your people, and from whence do you come?"

"I am a Hebrew," replied Jonah, "and I fear the Lord, who is the God of heaven, and who hath made the sea and the dry land."

The men were very much afraid for they had heard that Jonah was a Hebrew and served the Lord, and they said unto him again: "The anger of the Lord is against us."

Jonah then told them what the Lord had commanded him to do and that he was afraid to go to Nineveh and was fleeing from the task which had been set him.

"What shall we do to you," asked the sailors, "that the sea may be calm, and that our ship may not be wrecked and that we be not destroyed?"

Jonah said to them: "Take me up and cast me into the sea, so shall the sea be calm, for I know that it is on my account that this great storm is upon you."

The sailors did not wish to throw Jonah over-board, so they rowed very hard to bring the ship to the land, but they could not for the tempest was great and the waves were high. Therefore, they said: "We must not perish all for one man's life.' Then they took up Jonah and threw him overboard', into the sea. As soon as they did this, the winds, stopped blowing and the sea became calm and the ship went upon its way.

When Jonah was thrown overboard a great fish which the Lord had prepared, came out of the depths of the sea and swallowed up Jonah. And the prophet stayed in the body of the fish for three days and three nights.

While Jonah was inside the fish he prayed to the Lord to deliver him out of the body of the fish and he would do what the Lord had commanded him to do. He saw now, how wrong he had been to flee from the great task which had been set him and he promised the Lord that if he should be delivered from the body of the fish that he would do whatever was commanded of him.

After three days and three nights, the great fish which the Lord had prepared, came near the land and cast Jonah out of its mouth upon the shore. The prophet arose and walked to his home in Israel and waited the word of the Lord to tell him what to do.

CHAPTER LXXXV

JONAH WARNS NINEVEH

After Jonah had returned to his home, the word of the Lord came to him the second time and said to him: "Jonah, you must arise and go to Nineveh, which is a great and wicked city, and there you must preach to the people the words that I will tell you."

Jonah was no longer afraid to do as the Lord had told him, and instead of fleeing from his task, he undertook it with willingness. Therefore, he arose and walked across the Syrian desert for five hundred miles and at last came to the walls of the great and magnificent city.

When he reached Nineveh, he entered the cit and walked through its streets and by the sides of its great temples and buildings. He must have presented a queer sight, this pilgrim prophet. He was a Jew from a far distant country with a pack on his back and a staff in his hand. He was poor and unknown and a stranger among strange people, yet he was not afraid, for he began at once to cry up and down the streets: "Forty days from now Nineveh shall be overthrown."

He kept on saying these words, telling the people where he came from and why the city would be destroyed unless they should repent of their wickedness. At first they paid little attention to him but after a while they began to take heed. They already: knew of the wonders that the God of Israel had, performed and had heard that the words of the prophets had come true.

The people of Nineveh began to listen to the preaching of Jonah and at last many of them believed in his God and proclaimed a fast and put on, rough clothes from the greatest of the people to the least of them. Thousands of the people of

Nineveh were stirred by this great revival and began to repent of their sins.

Then the king of Nineveh in his great palace heard of the preaching of Jonah and the commotion among the people. "What does all this mean, and what does the prophet say?" he asked of his officers. They told him what was going on. So he arose from his throne, laid aside his rich robes and put on rough garments and covered his body with ashes. The king then made a proclamation and sent word throughout Nineveh: "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock taste anything; let them not eat nor drink water; let every man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry unto the God of Israel. Let every one turn from his evil way so that the God of the Hebrews will not punish us with His anger, nor will Nineveh perish."

When the Lord saw that the people were repenting of their sins, He decided not to destroy the city of Nineveh and told Jonah that He had repented of His words and that Nineveh would not be over-thrown.

Strange to say, Jonah was disappointed in what the Lord told him, after he had expected Nineveh to be overthrown. He, therefore, said to the Lord: "Take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live, for I am now a false prophet and no one will believe me hereafter when I say this is the word of the Lord."

Then Jonah went out of the city and built for himself a little booth and hut in which he lived, and he sat in the shadow of it and waited to see what would become of the city.

It was very hot and Jonah became faint with the heat and weariness of his body. Therefore, the Lord prepared a gourd vine and made it grow over the hut of Jonah so that it might be a shadow over his head and protect him from the heat. Jonah was very glad of the shade from the gourd vine.

Then God sent a worm and the worm ate the gourd vine so that it withered. Then a hot east wind arose and the sun

beat upon the head of Jonah so that he fainted and wished himself to die. He cried out again to the Lord: "It is better for me to, die than live."

Then the Lord said to His prophet: "You have had pity on the gourd and did not wish it to perish, such a small thing as a gourd vine, which came up in a night and perished in the night. Because it flourished one day and was cut down the next day you have grieved and you wanted a gourd vine to live. Why should I not spare Nineveh, in which there are more than eighty thousand persons that do not know good from evil and also children and cattle?" Then Jonah knew that the Lord was right and he was much comforted.

CHAPTER LXXXVI

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

There were a great many Jews living in the land of Persia. Over this land there reigned a king named Ahasuerus. In the third year of his reign, he made a great feast for all his princes and servants in the city of Shushan, where he had a great palace. When the princes and servants came to the feast the king showed them all his riches and glories and entertained them for many months. Then the king made a feast unto the people that were in Shushan and this feast lasted seven days.

The king lived in a magnificent palace. There were white, green, and blue curtains, which were fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The people drank out of vessels of gold and were given wine and food in great abundance. Every man was allowed to eat and drink as much as he chose according to his pleasure.

Vashti, the queen, also made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to the king. It was the custom in those days for women to live in a separate part of the same

house and never show themselves to men without wearing veils over their faces. On the seventh day of the king's feast, Ahasuerus commanded his seven chamberlains to bring Vashti, the queen, before the king, that the people and princes might see her beauty, for she was fair to look upon. Vashti refused to come at the king's command. Therefore, the king was very angry and said to some of his princes: "What shall we do to Queen Vashti because she has not obeyed the orders of the king and has not come to the feast as I bade her, that the princes and people might see her beauty?"

"Vashti, the queen, has done wrong to the king," said one of the princes, "and also to us and to all the people. This deed of the queen will make all the women despise their husbands and they will no longer obey them."

The princes then advised King Ahasuerus to issue a royal commandment that Vashti should come no more before the king and that her royal estate should be given to another, who was better and more obedient than she. In this way all the wives of Persia would understand that they must honor their husbands and do as they were told.

This saying pleased the king. He sent letters throughout his kingdom that every man should bear rule in his own house, and whatever he ordered his women should obey. Then he put Vashti away and she was no longer his queen.

Ahasuerus, now set out to get another queen. Everywhere there was a search for fair and beautiful young women that they might be brought to the king's palace for the king himself to choose. The maiden which pleased the king should be queen instead of Vashti.

There was a servant at the palace, named Mordecai, who was a Jew and who had a cousin named Esther. Her mother and father were dead and Mordecai had taken her for his own daughter. The maid was fair and beautiful, so that those who were choosing maidens brought her also unto the king's palace and gave her to the keeper of the women. Esther

did not tell that she was a Jewess, for Mordecai had advised her to keep her counsel. The officer who had charge of the women was more pleased with Esther than with any other of the women and gave her maidens to wait upon her and put her in the best part of the house.

When the time came for the king to choose among the maidens, his heart turned towards Esther above all the women and she obtained grace and favor in his sight. He set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. The king made a great feast unto all his princes and servants and he called it Esther's feast. He also gave gifts to the people and the servants for her sake. But all the time Esther was careful not to let the king know that she was a Jewess, for her cousin Mordecai had warned her to keep her own counsel.

It so happened that two of the king's officers were angry with the king and plotted to kill him Mordecai, who was also a watchman at the king's gate, heard them plotting against the king. He told Esther about it and she at once went and told the king. Ahasuerus ordered the two officers to be hanged on a tree and thus it was that Mordecai saved the king's life and the king knew that Mordecai had done it.

There was another servant in the palace of the king named Haman. The king favored him a great deal and set him above all the other princes, so much so, that all his servants had to bow down and do reverence to him. Mordecai, however, would not bow down and would not do reverence to Haman.

Those who were at the king's gate advised Mordecai to do as the king commanded but Mordecai refused. Whereupon, they went to Haman and said: "Mordecai, who watches at the king's gate will not bow down to you and you had better see how matters stand with him."

Haman was full of wrath and made up his mind not only to destroy Mordecai but all the Jews that were throughout the

whole kingdom of Ahasuerus. Therefore, he went to the king and said:

"There is a certain people everywhere in the province of your kingdom, and their laws are different from your laws, and they do not keep the king's laws, and they are dangerous to have in your dominion. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed and I will pay ten thousand talents into the king's treasury."

The king, not thinking of the evil that he was about to do, agreed to the request of Haman and issued the decree that all the Jews in his kingdom should be destroyed. He sealed the decree with his own ring. Then the scribes wrote to the governors and rulers in every province in the name of the king and told them all the Jews, both young and old, women and little children, should be destroyed, and the decree went forth throughout Persia, even as the king had commanded.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

THE VENGEANCE OF HAMAN

When Mordecai heard of the decree which had gone out that all the Jews should be destroyed, he put on sackcloth and went into the streets of the city and cried aloud a bitter cry. He then came to the king's gate, but beyond that he could not go, because no one could pass the gate who was clothed in sackcloth. There was mourning among the Jews throughout every province in Persia and fasting and weeping and wailing.

Esther's maids came and told her that Mordecai was before the king's gate and that he was clothed in sackcloth and was crying with a loud and bitter cry. The queen called for one of the king's chamberlains and told him to ask Mordecai what was the matter. The chamberlain went to Mordecai and learned of the decree of the king. He came back and told Esther that the king had ordered all the Jews in the province

destroyed and that Haman had advised him to do it and had promised ten thousand talents of silver to be paid into the king's treasury. The chamberlain also gave the queen a copy of the writing of the decree which Mordecai had given to him.

Mordecai had also told the chamberlain to beg Esther to go to the king and make a prayer to him that all her people should be saved.

Esther was greatly grieved at the decree of the king but she knew that it was the law that if one went to the king without being called, even the queen herself, he would be put to death by the king's guards, unless the king held out his golden scepter as a sign that his life should be spared.

It had been thirty days since Esther had been sent for by the king and she knew if she went before the king the guards would slay her at the door, for such was the law of the palace. The chamberlain told Mordecai of this law and asked him what Esther should do.

Mordecai sent Esther this message: "If you hold your peace and do not go before the king you and your people will be destroyed. If you go before the king there is a chance for your life and it may be you are now the one to save your people."

When Esther received this message she sent word to Mordecai to gather together all the Jews that were in Shushan and fast for three nights and three days and she and her maidens would do likewise and then she would go to the king and make her prayer. She said to herself: "If I perish, I perish, and there is some hope for my people if I go to the king."

Mordecai went his way and gathered all the Jews in Shushan and they fasted and prayed and the queen made ready to go before the king with her petition.

On the third day, Esther put on her royal apparel and sat in the court of the king's house. The king stood upon his royal throne with his court around him.

When Esther appeared at the door she was very beautiful and very radiant. The guards, knowing that she had not been called, started toward her with their weapons in their hands according to the laws of the palace, but the king, seeing his queen standing so beautiful and so humble before him, at once stretched out the golden scepter which he held in his hand. Whereupon the guards drew back and Esther smilingly approached the king and touched the top of the scepter with her hand.

"What is it you wish, Queen Esther, and what is your request, and why do you come without being called? Whatever you want, it shall be given to you, even to the half of my kingdom," said the king.

"If it seems good to my lord, the king," replied the queen, "will you and Haman come unto the banquet that I have prepared for the king?"

This was very pleasing to Ahasuerus and he sent at once for Haman to make haste and come to the banquet that Esther had prepared. So the king and Haman came to the banquet. While they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther: "What is your wish and what is your request? It shall be granted to you, even to the half of my kingdom."

Esther then told the king that she wanted him and Haman to come to the banquet which she had prepared for the next day and then she would let him know what she desired the king to do for her. This also pleased the king, who loved his beautiful wife, and so he gave orders that Haman should come to the banquet with the queen on the following day.

Haman was much delighted with the honors that were shown him and he went forth with a joyful heart. When Haman passed the king's gate, Mordecai saw him but he stood not up nor moved for him, therefore, was Haman full of indignation. But he said nothing and passed on to his own house.

When he reached home he called for his friends and his wife and told them the story of his glory and riches and the honor which the king had done for him. He also said that Esther the queen had invited him and the king to the banquet that day, and there were no others except the king and himself, and the next day he was invited to another banquet with her and the king.

But all this did not soften the heart of Haman against Mordecai, the Jew, who sat at the king's gate and scorned him. He told his friends how Mordecai treated him and how full of rage against the Jew was his heart.

Haman's wife and friends said: "Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high and tomorrow ask the king that Mordecai may be hanged upon it; then you can go merrily with the king to the banquet."

This thing pleased Haman and he had the gallows made ready, thinking that thereon he would have his enemy hanged.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

ESTHER SAVES HER PEOPLE

Ahasuerus, the king, was troubled in his mind and could not sleep. He ordered his men to bring him the book in which the records of his kingdom were kept. The king lay upon his couch while they read to him, and they happened to read that portion which told how Mordecai, the Jew, had saved the life of the king from the two chamberlains who had plotted to kill him.

"What honor and dignity have been done to Mordecai for this?" demanded the king. And they told him that nothing had been done.

"Who is now in the court of the palace?" asked the king.

It so happened that Haman had come into the outer court for the very purpose of asking the king to hang Mordecai upon the gallows which he had prepared for him. The king's servants, therefore, answered: "Haman stands in the outer court."

"Let him come in," ordered Ahasuerus. So Haman came in and stood before the king.

"What shall be done with the man whom the king delights to honor?" asked Ahasuerus of him. Haman thought in his heart: "Whom does the king delight to honor more than myself?" And with this joyful thought he answered:

"Let the royal apparel which the king wears, and the horse on which the king rides, and the royal crown which the king wears be brought, and let the apparel and the horse be given to the hand of one of the most noble princes and also the crown, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Let the princes lead him on horseback with the crown on his head, and proclaim in the streets: "Thus it is that shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."

"You have answered well," said Ahasuerus. "Make haste and take the apparel, and the horse, and the crown, and do as you have said to Mordecai, the Jew, that sits at the king's gate. Let nothing be left undone of all you have said."

So Haman did as the king commanded, and himself led through the streets of the city the horse upon which Mordecai sat, wearing the king's royal robes and the king's crown. Haman cried in the hearing of all: "This is the man whom the king delights to honor." But the cry was a bitter one for Haman, and at the end he went to his house in great wrath and mortification.

His wife and friends gathered around him to console him, but they foresaw the fall of Haman before the king's favor

and could say but little that was comforting. While they were talking, the king's chamberlain came to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared for him and for the king.

At the banquet the king turned to his beautiful wife and said: "What is your petition, Queen Esther? And what is your request? It shall be granted you, even to the half of my kingdom."

"If I have found favor in your sight," replied the queen, "and if it please the king, I pray that you spare my life and that of my people. We are sold to be destroyed and slain and to perish, and I, your queen, am among those whose lives are to be taken away."

Then was Ahasuerus in great wrath. "Who is he and where is he, who dares do such a thing?" asked the king in an angry voice.

Esther turned and pointing her finger at Haman, said: "The man who has dared to do this is Haman, for he has plotted to destroy all the Jews in your kingdom. Mordecai, who saved your life and I, Esther, your queen, are of that tribe. I pray you, avenge us of our wicked enemy."

The king arose from the banquet in his wrath and went into the palace garden. His face was clouded and his heart was full of anger. Haman saw him go and knew that the king would not spare him. He stood trembling before Esther and begged her to intercede with the king that he be not slain. Esther gave him no answer and Haman fell upon the queen's couch, not knowing what he did.

Soon Ahasuerus returned from the garden and saw Haman lying upon the queen's couch. This made him angrier than ever and he called for his men to get him and take him out of the palace and keep him until he should decide what to do with him.

One of the king's men came in and said: "Haman has made a gallows, fifty cubits high, upon which he had hoped to

hang Mordecai, the Jew, who saved the king's life. The gallows yet stand in the yard of Haman."

The king turned to the man and said: "Take Haman and hang him thereon." And so they hanged Haman upon the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's wrath was appeased.

Then Esther told Ahasuerus that Mordecai was her kinsman, and the king gave him a ring which he had taken from Haman. The king gave Haman's house to Esther, who gave it to Mordecai and put him in charge of it. Then the question arose as to what was to be done to save all the Jews that the king had decreed to be slain upon a certain day.

Esther went to the king and knelt down before him. She had tears in her eyes as she said: "How can I endure to see the destruction of my people?" And she prayed the king to reverse the decree which he had issued.

The king could not reverse his own decree, but he issued another one in which he said: "All the Jews in all the provinces of my kingdom will stand together and fight for their lives." And the decree was sent forth under the king's seal to all the people in all the provinces, and there was great rejoicing among the Jews and they made ready to defend themselves.

When the day came the Jews smote all their enemies with the sword for the Lord was with them, and they took vengeance upon them that hated them. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white and with a crown of gold upon his head. The city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad, for the people loved Mordecai and paid him great respect. And he was next to Ahasuerus himself and great among the people, for he sought only the welfare of the king and the glory of his kingdom.

CHAPTER LXXXIX

THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

The Jews had been in captivity in Babylon for seventy years. During this time some of them were allowed lands and houses of their own, and a few had become wealthy. Most of them, however, were slaves and were treated with cruelty. They were made to work hard, were often beaten severely, and many were put to death. Nearly all those who were made captive had died, and we may well imagine how their children longed for the time to come when they should return to Jerusalem and live in the land of their fathers. Cyrus was now king of Persia. The Lord stirred up his spirit so that he made a proclamation in which he said: "The Lord has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem."

The proclamation called upon all the Jews in Babylon to go to Jerusalem and there build the temple of the Lord, and also called upon the people of Persia to help them by giving them silver and gold and cattle and goods and free-will offerings of all kinds. Cyrus even brought all the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple and counted them out, to the number of five thousand, four hundred, and gave them to Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah, who was going to Jerusalem with his people, that the vessels might again be placed in the temple of the Lord.

So the Jews, to the number of about fifty thousand, marched back to Jerusalem, led by Zerubbabel. When they reached the city they found it in ruins, just as Nebuchadnezzar had left it. The temple had been burned, the houses were destroyed, and the walls were broken down. The first thing which the people did was to build an altar unto the Lord and offer burnt offerings upon it, morning and evening.

Then they set to work to rebuild the temple. They hired laborers from Tyre to cut down cedars from Lebanon and bring them to Jerusalem, and gave the laborers meat and drink. They also paid money to the carpenters and masons who worked upon the temple. When the stones were laid the priests and Levites played upon trumpets and cymbals. The people shouted and gave praise to God because the building of the temple was started. But there were some old people who wept and mourned because they remembered the wonderful temple which stood there when they were children.

The Samaritans, who worshiped idols, though they pretended to worship God, came to Zerubbabel and said to him: "Let us build with you, for we serve the same God." But Zerubbabel told them: "We will have nothing to do with you. We will build the house of the Lord ourselves." This made the Samaritans angry and they did all they could to hinder the Jews in their work of building the temple.

When Cyrus died, Artaxerxes became king of Persia. The Samaritans wrote him a letter in which they said: "If you allow these Jews to build this city of Jerusalem and set up these walls again, they will rebel as they did in the old time and no more pay toll and tribute."

Artaxerxes searched the records and found that the Jews had been a rebellious people in former days, so he wrote a letter to the Samaritans saying: "Command the Jews in my name, to cease building the temple." This order the Samaritans hastened to carry to the Jews and then the building of the temple was stopped so long as Artaxerxes was king. The people turned their attention to building houses for themselves.

Artaxerxes died and Darius became king of Persia. The Lord sent prophets to the people of Jerusalem, who told them to leave off building their own houses and start again to build the temple of the Lord. So the temple was started again, and again the Samaritans troubled the people of Jerusalem and wrote a letter to Darius, the same as they had done to Artaxerxes. But this time they met with no success, for Darius

answered that they must not only leave Jerusalem alone, but that they must give the Jews young bullocks and rams for their burnt offerings, and wheat and oil for the priests. Darius also said that some of the tribute money which the Samaritans had been paying to him should now be paid to the Jews.

The Samaritans were afraid to disobey the king. They stopped troubling the Jews, and gave them bullocks and rams and wheat and oil as Darius had commanded them. So the Jews went on building their beautiful temple until it was quite finished. Then they placed in it all the gold vessels which they had brought back with them from captivity, and dedicated the temple to the Lord.

From this time on the Jews had no trouble with their enemies. They went on building their houses, and cultivating their fields and working their vine-yards, and worshiping in their temple. They were not serving the Lord, however, as faithfully as they should, for many of them had married the heathen women of the nations around them, which the Lord had commanded them not to do.

There was a Jew still living in Babylon, named Ezra. He was a priest and teacher, and learned in the laws of Moses. He begged the king of Babylon to let him go to Jerusalem and teach his people their own laws that they might serve God more faithfully. The king agreed to this and loaded Ezra and his companions with many costly gifts of gold and silver for the temples and the priests.

After a long journey the company came to Jerusalem, and Ezra gave the presents to the priests and Levites to be placed in the temple. When he heard how the men of Israel had married heathen wives he was grieved and sat down in great distress. Then he prayed to the Lord to deliver the people from their transgressions.

Word was sent throughout all the land of Judah for the people to come together. If any one did not come inside of three days, he should have his goods and his cattle and

everything he had taken away from him. All the people came inside of three days, and gathered near the temple to hear what Ezra had to say. They were trembling with fear of the anger of the Lord. At the same time a great rain was falling and the people were wet to their skins.

Ezra called out to the people: "You have broken God's law, and taken heathen wives. You must put away the strange women, and do as the Lord commanded you." The people answered: "We will do as you say, but we cannot stand always in the rain. Let those who have offended come to the judgment." Then the people departed, and those who had strange wives came to Ezra to be judged.

Ezra and the judges sat for three months, deciding each man's case, as he came before them. All who had heathen wives confessed their sins and promised to send their wives away. Then Ezra told all the people what they should do to keep the favor of the Lord.

CHAPTER XC

NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS

Ninety years passed since Zerubbabel had led the people of Israel back to Jerusalem. The temple had been rebuilt, the people were living in houses, and were planting their vineyards just as they had done in the olden days. Still the walls had not been rebuilt, but were left in ruins, so that the city was open to attack from its enemies.

Artaxerxes was the name of the king of Persia. He had a cupbearer named Nehemiah, who attended him in his palace at Shushan. One day some men came from Jerusalem and Nehemiah asked them: "How fare the Jews who were led out of captivity?" The men replied: "The Jews are in great affliction and reproach. The walls of Jerusalem are broken down and the gates are burned with fire."

Then Nehemiah wept and prayed, and made up his mind to ask the king to allow him to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of the city of his fathers. Nehemiah was very sad and his face showed his grief. One day as he handed wine to the king, Artaxerxes asked him: "Why are you so sad, seeing you are not sick? You have some sorrow in your heart."

Nehemiah then told the king he was sorrowing on account of the walls of Jerusalem not being built and said: "If it please the king let me be sent to the city of my fathers that I may rebuild the walls."

"How long will your journey take you?" inquired Artaxerxes. "And how soon will you return?" Nehemiah told him and the king consented for him to go.

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem but told no one why he had come. At the end of three days, he arose at night secretly and took a few men with him, and examined the walls of the city. He rode around the ruins and saw the broken places and the gates that had been burned and wept again to think how easily the city could be captured by its enemies.

Then Nehemiah called all the Jews together and said to them: "You see the condition you are in, and how much danger there is to you. Come, let us rebuild the walls that our enemies do not overcome us." After he had talked to the people a long time he persuaded them to set to work. The priests and Levites, all the people, even some of the women, began to build its walls.

Now there arose the enemies of the Jews and began to make fun of them. "What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they trying to fortify themselves? Can they build a wall out of the rubbish of the streets?" asked one of their leaders.

"If they build a wall," said another, "even a fox if he should climb over it would break it down." And with that all the enemies laughed at what the Jews were doing. But the workmen paid no attention to the scoffers and kept straight on building the walls as Nehemiah directed them. After a while

the wall was built half way up all around the city, for the people had worked with a will. The gates were put in and strengthened, and it looked as if the Jews were building a defence that could not be taken down.

When the heathen enemies of the Jews saw that the walls were being built and the broken places mended they were very angry, and conspired together to fight the Jews and stop them from their work. The heathen planned to come secretly and not to be known until they were in the midst of the workmen, when they would draw their weapons and slay all the Jews. But Nehemiah was told of their purpose and set men behind the wall with swords and spears to protect the workmen. When the heathen heard that the Jews were prepared to defend themselves they did not come to fight them.

From that time on half the workmen were kept laboring on the walls, while the other half were armed with spears and swords to defend those who worked. Nehemiah seeing that the walls were long and that the workmen were separated from one another set a trumpeter on the walls, whose duty it was to sound his trumpet to call all the workmen together at one point as well as to call those who carried the spears and swords in case an enemy appeared anywhere.

The people labored day after day and the walls rose higher and higher. Stones were brought from a distance to take the place of the broken ones, and those that were not broken were put back in place. Thousands of the people worked on the walls, while thousands stood guard day and night to protect them. The women and children brought food and water to the laborers and did what else they could to hasten the work. So eagerly did the people labor that neither Nehemiah nor any of the men took off their clothes day and night except to have them washed.

While the work was going on, two of the enemies of Israel, named Sanballat and Tobiah, sent word to Nehemiah: "Come down into some one of the villages that we may meet

and talk together." But Nehemiah knew they intended him harm and he sent word to them: "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should my work stop just to come down to talk to you?"

Four times did Sanballat send word to Nehemiah to come down to see him in one of the villages, and four times did Nehemiah return him the same answer.

Then Sanballat and Tobiah sent Nehemiah a letter telling him they would report to the king of Persia that he was building the walls in order to set up the city for himself, and to rebel against the king. But Nehemiah paid no attention to the letter and kept on building the wall.

Again Sanballat and Tobiah hired a man named Shemaiah to deceive Nehemiah and frighten him. Shemaiah went to him and said: "Come down into the temple with me and shut the doors, for there are those who also seek to slay you. This very night they seek your life."

"Should a man flee at such a time as this?" replied Nehemiah. "Why should I go into the temple to save my life? I am not afraid, and I will not go in and shut the door for fear that some one will slay me."

Then Nehemiah knew that Shemaiah had been hired to frighten him, and that what he said was not true.

Fifty-two days had all the people labored, and at last the great walls were finished. When the time came to dedicate the walls, the people with the priests and Levites walked around the top singing and blowing trumpets and playing harps. They marched down into the temple and offered sacrifice to God for taking care of them, for bringing them back into their own city, for defending them from their enemies, and for allowing them to build again the walls around Jerusalem.

THE END.